

300 Tribals Gherao Police Station in Orissa

2 tribals killed in police firing in Narayanpatna

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BHUBNESWAR: Violence once again vitiated the atmosphere in the already heated Naxal-dominated Narayanpatna tribal panchayat with at least two tribals were on Friday killed in police firing. Several others are reported injured when police opened fire at the agitating tribals at Naryanpatna nearly 500 km from here.

Officials said the police had to open fire "in self-defence," when the protesting activists of Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangh (CMAS) turned violent and attacked the police station in a bid to loot the weapons.

The Maoist-backed organisation was demanding withdrawal of CRPF and frequent patrolling by the police in the area, where the Naxals have been calling the shots for more than a year.

More than 300 CMAS activists, including women and children armed with the traditional tribal weapons, gheraoed the police station in protest against the massive deployment of security forces in the area. They later turned violent breaking the grills of the police station apparently to run away with the arms and ammunitions.

"Two persons died in police firing. Situation is tense but under control. One company of CRPF and another company of Indian Reserve Battalion have been deployed in the area to maintain law and order," deputy inspector general of police (southern division) Sanjeev Panda told media persons.

The security forces were guarding the police station to prevent any fresh attack by the CMAS members when the incident took place. More forces are being mobilised from the district headquarters town of Koraput for their deployment in the area.

The bodies, which were still lying inside the police station, were yet to be identified, police said. The number of protestors [who] might injured in the police firing is not yet confirmed by the officials.

Nayaranpatna has been hitting the headlines in the newspaper as the Maoists were trying to turn it into a new red corridor for their smooth passage between Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, though Orissa. The Left-wing ultras laid frequent siege on the tribal-dominated block with the help of locals. The tribals also managed to take away land belonging to the non-tribal lands while the administration remained helpless.

In the meanwhile, the union home secretary, G K Pillai on Friday ruled out military action against Maoists. "No military action is being planned against the Maoists. Coordinated operations by different states with help from the Centre could be beneficial for fighting the Left-wing ultras," Mr Pillai said. The Home Secretary was here on a day's visit to Orissa to review state police preparedness to tackle the Maoist menace

Asked if the operation against the Maoists would be supported by aerial strikes, he said, "We do not need to go for aerial attack on the extremists to destroy their bases in the forests and hilly terrains".

Mr Pillai, who held a discussion with senior officials of the Orissa government including chief secretary T.K.Mishra, state home secretary A.P. Padhi and director general of police Manmohan Praharaj on the issue, termed the Maoists as "terrorists, who do not deserve sympathy." **ET**

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