

## **"Maoists must abjure violence for talks"**



**P. Chidambaram**

New Delhi, Feb 24 (IBNS) Union Home Minister P Chidambaram on Wednesday questioned the seriousness of the Maoists in holding talks while reiterating that the rebels must abjure violence if they are indeed for peace.

"All I want the Maoists to say are four words: We will abjure violence. I have said this earlier also," said Chidambaram reacting to a question at the NDTV Indian of the Year function when told that a "courtship" has unfolded over exchange of phone numbers with the Maoists after rebel leader Kishenji provided a phone number to the Home Ministry for holding talks after the ministry gave them a fax number.

He said he told the Maoists that if they abjured violence then he would get back within 72 hours after speaking to the Prime Minister and other concerned like the chief ministers of eastern states.

"Three hours after their statement (of ceasefire) they attacked a joint patrol party (in West Bengal's Katapahari)," Chidambaram said questioning the sincerity of the rebels in holding talks in an atmosphere of peace.

The Maoists made a ceasefire offer but followed it up by an attack at the Katapahari CRPF camp in West Midnapore district.

Maoist-backed People's Committee Against Police Atrocities (PCPA) president Lalmohan Tudu was killed in the encounter along with two others, police claimed.

The police force, with their morale down since the Silda camp attack that left 24 jawans dead, on Tuesday tasted a semblance of success after the Katapahari camp attack was foiled and Tudu killed.

On Tuesday, the Maoists gave a mobile number to the Union Home Ministry to call them for talks.

Maoist leader Kishenji told the media the home ministry's representative could call them on the mobile number 9734695789 after 5pm on Thursday, Feb 25.

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