

Trinamool men on Maoist hit list in Nandigram

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KOLKATA: The Maoists in East Midnapore have turned their guns on the Trinamool Congress their one-time ally in the district. Three Trinamool leaders of Nandigram have been branded as class enemies in a recent hit list of the Red guerrillas.

Earlier, Nishikanta Mondal, a prominent Trinamool leader in Nandigram, had been annihilated' by Maoists. The new names, distributed through leaflets, seem to be a warning to the accused' three to mend their ways or meet the same fate.

Days before a fresh round of offensive against Maoists in Jangalmahal, the leaflet hinted that they have gained a foothold in coastal West Bengal far from the strike zone and were in a position to launch their trademark annihilation programme in the area.

On November 13, villagers of Sonachura in Nandigram found several printed leaflets pasted on the walls. The posters accused Trinamool Congress of torture and corruption. The printer's line read: Selim, for CPI (Maoist) Nandigram Zonal Committee'.

This was the third instance of Maoists leaving their message in leaflets at Nandigram. In June, days after Nishikanta Mondal's murder, Selim had issued a statement, claiming responsibility for the killing. Senior Maoist leader Kishanji had also confirmed their involvement.

"Mondal had turned into a Fascist. Like CPM leaders, he began torturing common people. We warned him but he did not heed to it. We were forced to punish him," Kishanji had said.

The latest leaflet accuses both Mamata Banerjee and her party MP Shubhendu Adhikary of unleashing terror in the area. They named Trinamool activists Khokon Sit and Laltu as well as Kendamari panchayat pradhan Sahabuddin. Locals alleged the trio were involved in various corrupt deals and had assumed the same high-handedness of CPM leaders.

Trinamool leaders in Nandigram though, are putting up a brave face. They don't agree to Maoist activities in their bastion. "We suspect these posters are the handiwork of CPM who are posing as Maoists," said Nandigram-I panchayat samity president Abu Taher.

Sk Sahabuddin, who has been accused by Maoists, said he had heard that Narayan, an alleged Maoist leader, had been frequenting Nandigram. "We have evidence that Narayan is not a Maoist but a CPM man working for Lakshman Seth," he said.

Villagers in Sonachura area, however, admitted that a group of local youths had turned into active Maoist supporters. "During the BUPC movement, more than 50 local youths had taken arms training from Maoists at their camp in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Later they trained more youths. It is

through these youths that the rebels have gained a considerable support base in Nandigram," said a villager.

Senior police officers also acknowledged that rebels were active in the coastal belt of the district. "We know about a Narayan, who is in charge of Maoist organisation in East Midnapore. But his team is working under cover of some mainstream political parties," said a senior police officer.

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