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# 14 CRPF jawans killed in Naxal attack a day after CM promises to make Chhattisgarh 'Naxal free'

PTI

Published  
UpdatedDec 1, 2014, 11:30 pm IST  
Jan 10, 2016, 8:38 am IST

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***Home Minister Rajnath Singh terms the incident as an 'act of cowardice'***



File photo: Bodies of CRPF and the police personnel who were killed in an attack by the Maoists near Tongpal in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh (Photo: PTI)

**Raipur:** 14 CRPF personnel, including 2 officers, were killed on Monday while an equal number were injured in an encounter with Maoists in the Naxal hotbed of Sukma in Chhattisgarh.

A senior Chhattisgarh police official said the attack on a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) squad by a large group of armed Naxals took place near Chintagufa, about 450 km from here, at 10:30 am in the dense forests in south Bastar region when the security personnel were returning to their camp after combing and area domination operation in the region that lasted for several days.

"Two officers, one in the rank of Deputy Commandant and an Assistant Commandant, have been killed," R K Vij, Chhattisgarh's Additional Director General of Police (Naxal Operation), said. The Deputy Commandant and Assistant Commandant were identified as B S Verma and Rajesh. A CRPF officer here said over a dozen personnel have also been injured and there could also be casualties on the Maoist side in the encounter during when the rebels opened indiscriminate firing. The squad comprised personnel from the 223 and 206 battalions of CRPF and its commando unit CoBRA.

A senior officer said the Maoists fired at the CRPF patrol party using villagers as human shield and hence the force had to fire with restraint. Most of the troops suffered bullet injuries and have been air-lifted to Jagdalpur and the state capital here for treatment. ^ Incidentally, five CRPF personnel were injured last week in the same area in an encounter

with Maoists. Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh strongly condemned the attack as an act of cowardice and a "dastardly act" of violence. He is leaving for Chhattisgarh on Tuesday for an assessment of the situation.

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"I express my condolences to the families of our brave CRPF men who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. It is an act of cowardice. I strongly condemn this dastardly act of violence. Deeply saddened and disturbed to know of 14 CRPF men being killed by the Naxals during an ongoing encounter in Chhattisgarh," he said.

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Singh also spoke to Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh and asked him to monitor the situation. A CRPF officer said that the Maoists fired at the CRPF patrol party using the cover of locals and villagers and hence the force had to fire with restraint. One squad was in the jungles for the last 10 days to carry out operations, he said. Most of the victims suffered bullet injuries, he said, adding the injured and the dead will be airlifted to Jagdalpur and the state capital tomorrow.

Reinforcements are being sent to the area and the offensive by security forces is being led by CRPF Inspector General (Chhattisgarh), HS Sidhu. Incidentally, five CRPF personnel were injured on November 21 in the same area in an encounter with Maoists who also attacked an IAF helicopter. An IAF commando was also injured. The attack came a day after Chief Minister Raman Singh said the day is not far when Chhattisgarh will become "Naxal-free" due to the joint efforts of the State Government and the Centre.

In the recent months, several dozen Naxals have surrendered in Chhattisgarh, one of the worst states to be affected by Left Wing Extremism.

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