



## 14 CRPF men die in Maoist strike

**Pavan Dahat**

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### 13 more grievously injured; bodies still at the encounter site

Ending an eight-month calm, Maoists killed 14 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel, including two officers, in Sukma district of South **Chhattisgarh** on Monday.

The ambush took place near Kasalpara village. "The deceased personnel include Deputy Commandant D.S. Verma and Assistant Commandant Rajesh Kapuria of the CRPF," R.K. Vij, Additional Director-General of Police, Naxal Operations, Chhattisgarh, told The Hindu.

Thirteen more were grievously injured, said D. Upadhyay, Deputy Inspector-General, CRPF, Dantewada range.

A joint team of more than 200 personnel had left for an area domination and combing exercise on Saturday. "They were ambushed on the way back to the base camp," Mr. Upadhyay said.

Rescue operations were launched immediately, but officials said the search parties had not returned to the base camp.

"The bodies are still at the encounter site," Mr. Upadhyay said.

"Most likely, our jawans will have to spend the night in the forest. Fortunately, firing has stopped now."

Sukma Superintendent of Police D. Shrawan said he had not been able to establish contact with the parties.

"We are working out a plan to send reinforcements," he told The Hindu.

There were reports of six Maoists being killed in the encounter, but officials refused to confirm this.

*Devesh Pandey writes from New Delhi:*

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh said he would visit Chhattisgarh on Tuesday to take stock of the situation.



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