

Maoism in Telangana

August 10, 2020

With members of the banned CPI (Maoist) regrouping in parts of Telangana, the State administration faces an old and familiar challenge. Skirmishes took place between Maoists and the police. The search operations were conducted in the **hamlets which fall under the Mangi Gram Panchayat of Tiryani mandal in Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district.**

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The recent incidents occurred about five months after the Communist Party of India (Maoist) began fresh attempts to **revitalise the organisation in parts of Telangana from where it had retreated over a decade ago.** According to senior police officers in the State, the Maoists are determined to prove their relevance in the region. Sources said Maoist leaders operating in the Dandakaranya forests are under **tremendous pressure to prove their mettle on their home turf in Telangana where socio-economic and political conditions have changed drastically over the last few years.**

Sources said that the Maoists have been barred by the leadership from carrying out violent activities in Telangana lest they attract the attention of the security forces. So far, they have restricted themselves to reviving links with old contacts and recruiting rural youth in areas where they are present.

All activities of the underground outfit are concentrated in the **forest areas in the eastern side of the State comprising the former undivided districts of Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal and Khammam.** These areas border the left-wing extremism-affected areas in what is popularly known as **Dandakaranya comprising Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district and parts of Chandrapur district, as well as parts of**

Chhattisgarh.

Among the north Telangana districts, the former undivided district of Adilabad occupied a special status in the history of left-wing extremism in the country. It was in Adilabad that the Maoists, then known as the CPI (Marxist-Leninist) People's War Group, had, for the first time in the history of left-wing extremism, ambushed a police party in the forest of Allampalli in present-day Kadem mandal of Nirmal district in August 1987.

The Maoists are camping in select villages and discussing tribal issues like the **Forest Rights Act, the impact of the Supreme Court order scrapping Government Order 3 issued by the undivided Andhra Pradesh government in 2000 making provision for 100% reservations in some categories of government jobs in Scheduled Areas, and the Adivasi-Lambada conflict on the issue of tenability of Scheduled Tribe status of the Lambadas.** The discussions are apparently aimed at influencing the minds of young tribals and eventually recruiting some of them.

Kolam Tribe

Kolams are tribal people of **Telangana, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh being categorised as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)** as they are among the most backward among aboriginal tribes in the country. Unlike Chenchus and Konda Reddis, who speak only Telugu, the Kolams have a **language of their own which belongs, like Gondi, to the intermediate group of Dravidian languages.** The social organization of the Kolams is based on a system of **exogamous patrilineal descent groups, each of which is associated with ancestral territory and a common cult centre.** Several of such lineages are grouped together in larger equally exogamous units which bear names identical with those of some Gond clans.