

Villagers abduct 2 policemen, hand them over to Maoists

RAKTIMA BOSE, The Hindu, November 11, 2009

Villagers on Tuesday abducted two policemen near the Gohmidanga outpost, 10 km from Lalgurh in West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur district, and handed them over to Maoists.

One of them, Rajendra Hela, was released in the evening on being told that a member of his family was ill, Maoist Polit Bureau member Koteswar Rao alias Kishenji told *The Hindu* over telephone from his hideout in the district. He described the two policemen as "prisoners of war."

The other, Ramcharan Hela, would also be released if there was an appeal from his family.

According to the police, the two sweepers with 8 battalion of the State Armed Police were on their way to Midnapore, when a group, protesting against the killing of a Trinamool Congress supporter allegedly by CPI(M) workers, abducted them at Munidaha. "For the last two days the security forces were wrecking havoc on the neighbouring villages, torturing and arresting innocent villagers.

Also, a Trinamool supporter, Khagen Majhi, was killed by CPI(M) cadres last [on Monday] night. So the villagers arrested the two men and later handed them over to the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA)," Kishenji said.

A senior police official said a search operation was on. The abduction came within 21 days of the kidnapping of Atindranath Dutta, officer-in-charge of the Sankrail thana in the district, following a daring attack by Maoists there on October 20, resulting in the killing of two police officers. Mr. Dutta was, however, released later.

Earlier on Tuesday, two jawans [soldiers] of the Central Reserve Police Force suffered bullet injuries when suspected Maoists opened fire at a group of security personnel on a combing operation in the Madhupur forest in Salboni. Sanjib Das and Sanjit Kumar were admitted to the Midnapore Medical College and Hospital.

<http://www.thehindu.com/2009/11/11/stories/2009111159750500.htm>