

Naxalites stage bold jailbreak in central India

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Over 100 Naxalite rebels and a mix of 200 supporters and general prison population staged a daring jailbreak in Chhattisgarh, central India, yesterday. Naxalite leader Sujit Kumar 'overpowered' a guard during mealtime, grabbed his weapon and opened fire on two other guards to secure his freedom and liberate his comrades.



Naxals training

Naxalites originally formed from the landless peasantry, tribals and rural underclass of India. Hundreds of years of oppression have resulted in this group adopting the armed struggle model of Maoist guerillas. The Indian PM has accurately cited this group as the most dangerous internal threat in India today – perhaps more effort in eradicating centuries old feudal practices may have prevented the movement's rapid growth and expansion throughout the subcontinent. However, the rich and powerful know only the rule of the gun.

Chhattisgarh is known to be a rebel stronghold -- claims by the authorities that the jailbreak may have involved underpaid prison staff seem credible. In any event the rebels have taken to the jungle where they will continue their armed struggle against the forces that enslave them.

Unless India undertakes drastic rural reforms and offers the underclass some hope, the movement can only gain in strength. It should not be forgotten that Nepal's Maoists succeeded in taking government. India will suffer a similar fate if it doesn't learn from the successful rebellion in the north. People who have nothing to lose form the most formidable rebel opponents; a fact not lost on the Indian Prime Minister but rich feudal landlords and business magnates who have been profiteering and exploiting the underclass for centuries exercise huge political influence in India. Perhaps the military could be utilised more effectively in situations where the mega-wealthy corrupt government at every level.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/17/world/asia/17india.html>

