The rank and file of the Police Department was shocked with the daredevil attempt by naxalites belonging to the People’s War (PW) to blow up an APSRTC bus carrying over 70 passengers, including several schoolchildren, with the sole aim of eliminating a handful of policemen travelling in it.

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The Deputy Inspector-General of Police of Guntur Range, Anjani Kumar, told The Hindu that the naxalites did not want to blast the bus. The blast was so meticulously planned that the naxalites, who were aware that armed police personnel were travelling in the bus, wanted to segregate the policemen from the civilian public. It is the second time that the PW naxalites exploded a landmine at Remidicherla village, located on the fringes of the Nallamala forest, under Bandalamottu police station limits in Vinukonda Assembly constituency of Guntur district.

The naxalites exploded a landmine on the road 3.5 km north of the place of Saturday’s explosion, in which a jeep carrying seven policemen and a driver was blown up killing all of them on the spot, on August 21, 2001 when polling for the Panchayat Raj bodies was going on. The aftermath of the explosion on Saturday was even more serious. Whenever a police party has a providential escape, it is not uncommon for the policemen to take positions and fire in the direction from where the landmines or Claymore mines are triggered.

If they cannot find anybody, they usually conduct combing operations with the help of additional forces. The police adopt a technique called 'area domination' whenever such an incident occurs. After the naxalites exploded the landmine even as the bus was coming, the police, as expected, took positions and opened fire. As many as five special parties from Guntur, four from Prakasam district another four from Narasaraopet were sent to Remidicherla for area domination, cordon-and-search operation and also thorough combing. What the police could not guess was that the naxalites would have planted another landmine right on the road, just a km away from the place where they exploded a landmine earlier in the day.

Even as the police were engaged in an exchange of fire, the naxalites triggered the landmine planted right under the feet of the policemen killing two of them. The DIG said that the deceased policemen had no bullet injuries on their bodies and that they were killed in the landmine blast.

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