Unearthing of landmines causes concern to police (India)

Unearthing of six landmines, apparently planted by the People’s War naxals in different parts of the State last week, has come a cause of concern for the State police Department in the run-up to the coming elections.

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The revelation shows that the naxals could have planted a large number of landmines all over the State. "There is nothing new for them and us in this regard. Nevertheless, we'll make all-out efforts to face the challenge," the DGP, S.R. Sukumara, told reporters here on Tuesday.

Speaking at the 'Meet the Press' programme organised by the Andhra Pradesh Union of Working Journalists (APUWJ), the DGP observed that unearthing of landmines recently at Mahaboobnagar, Guntur, Nalgonda, Prakasam, Adilabad and Vizianagaram had shown that the naxals were determined to disrupt the democratic process of elections. "It appears that naxals are prepared to kill anybody and everybody. By planting landmines, perhaps, they were planning to obstruct and attack the police, politicians or even the polling parties," Mr. Sukumara observed.

In addition to detection of landmines, 127 bombs and 15 firearms were seized so far. Responding to queries about policing in the backdrop of elections, he said that special measures are being initiated to tackle left wing extremists apart from factionalism and communal disturbances. There was nothing wrong if the naxals appealed to people to boycott the polls. But, threatening some political parties not to campaign attracted criminal liability, he observed.

The DGP made it clear that the police were there only to assist the Election Commission in peaceful conduct of the elections. "The police cannot even go inside the polling booth unless called by the presiding officer for assistance," he said. Referring to allegations of the nexus between the Telangana Rashtra Samithi and the naxals, Mr. Sukumara maintained that a probe would be ordered if a specific complaint was lodged.

Asked about charges of some police officials siding with a particular political party, the DGP admitted that there "are some black sheep in the Police Department like in all other departments." Stringent action would be initiated against police officers showing partisan attitude by accepting money, he assured.

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