NEWS WRAP

AGD

At end june 2012, at least nineteen suspected Maoists were killed in two places, a few kilometres apart from each other in Chattisgarh state, in a big shoot out 'encounter', as an outcome of joint operations by para-military security forces and district police. Seventeen Maoists were killed in Sarkeguda (Bijapur district) and two maoists were killed in Jagargunda (Sukma district). A fifteen-year-old girl was killed in Sarkeguda. Ten of those killed were aged between fifteen and twenty eight years. Two were aged eighteen and two others nineteen. Among those injured were two Maoists and six COBRA constables. Even though the 'encounter' occurred late at night and deep in the Dandakaranya jungles, about 400 km south of Raipur, the security forces succeeded in recovering, all the bodies. The Maoists rarely leave behind bodies of their cadres, in fatal casualty. Security forces scarcely succeed in recovering dead bodies of ultra radicals. Sprinting from directions of Basaguda, Jagargunda and Chintalnar, the security forces had attacked an undisclosed destination, suspecting that around 200 Maoist cadres from Odisha, were camping in Basuguda area. The police are jubilant over the killing of 'hardcore Naxals' and 'jail-breakers'. Locals in the area suspect that police fired at innocent tribals, who were holding a routine village meeting, mistaking them for Maoists. Except one or two, probably none of the bullet victims is a Maoist or even a supporter. Police have recovered only one rifle, two country made guns and a tiffin box bomb from the encounter site. Some Maoist rebels had gathered in the jungles, to help settle a land dispute between two village groups. In Chattisgarh, tribals have been displaced from 1100 acres of land, for developing industry.

DRUG REGULATIONS

Officials in India's drug regulator, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), under the Union Ministry of Health, have been colluding with pharmaceutical firms, to speed up medicine approvals. Several large pharmaceutical companies, including Germany's Bayer AG, have been found colluding with the CDSCO. Letters of recommendations in support of anti-blood clotting medicine were purportedly written by different Indian University experts, thousands of miles apart, and yet were ''word to word identical''. At least 31 drugs have been approved by the CDSCO without adequate local clinical trials. The Regulatory process is yielding the most insignificant benefits. Indians gain access, to new drugs much later than ill consumers in the developed world. While the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved products are not being automatically registered in India, the Indian market is flooded with huge volume of substandard, and poorly made drugs. Fake anti-biotics are increasing drug resistance and infectious diseases.

INDIA'S GRAINS TO IRAN

Iran is purchasing rice, sugar, soymeal and wheat from India. Paying a premium for its purchases, Iran has emerged as one of the top buyers of Indian soy meal. Iran has been

scouting for food supplies, due to western sanctions. Tightening of Western sanctions has made payments in dollars difficult. Indian oil importers are making 45% of their payments in rupees, which Iran deposits in a local bank, and uses to settle payments to Indian exporters. Iran's wheat imports have become more difficult amid sanctions and tightening global supplies. Russian exports have fallen to 15.5 million tons from 17 million tons, due to lower than estimated production. Iran insists that grain from India must be free from Karnal bunt, a fungal disease found in India's northern states. India aims to export four million metric tons of grain to Iran this year. 300,000 tons of soy meal is being shipped to Iran, during the marketing year ending 30 September. With a storage crunch of more than ten million tons of grain, India's grain exports have acquired greater urgency. A bumper crop has made India anxious to export agricultural commodities. The competitiveness of Indian wheat has increased with a weak rupee against the US dollar. □□□