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## **Buddhadeb criticised for not being able to track Maoist leader**

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NEW DELHI - West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's statement of not being able to track down Maoist top leader Koteswar Krishna Rao alias Kishanji received a wide range of criticism on Monday.

On Sunday, Bhattacharjee had said: "It is very difficult. He (Kishanji) is talking to hundreds of journalists every day. But it's very difficult to track them out. You can get an idea of his location, but his exact location is very difficult to confirm."

Congress Spokesperson Manish Tewari said the statement is symptomatic of the complete collapse of the administration.

"Either the Chief Minister is completely clueless about the public utterances that he is making or the government of West Bengal has a vested interest in protecting the Maoists," Tiwari said. Terming Bhattacharjee's statement as careless, the BJP spokesman Rajiv Pratap Rudy said, it reflected the ineptness and complete collapse of the state administration.

The Trinamool Congress has accused the State government of lack of will to end the Maoist menace.

Party's spokesperson Dinesh Bajaj said: "This is a total intelligence failure on the part of the state government. The Maoist problem has been created by the Marxists [CPM]."

Former Intelligence Bureau (IB) Chief Arun Bhagat said the Chief Minister is perhaps, not aware of technologies available to track down the callers.

Despite a crackdown in West Bengal's Lalgarh area, the Maoists are far from being subdued. And despite using the latest tracking technology, the state police have been unable to lay hands on top Maoist leader.

Recently, Rao had a seven-minute conversation with the state's Principal Secretary (Environment) Madan Lal Meena to complain about polluting mines. Although his phone was being tapped, security agencies were unable to pinpoint his location.

Six months since anti Maoist operation was launched, the state government has admitted it is difficult to trace him. (ANI)

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