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Long-term steps to end dacoit menace

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JAURA, April 15.

LONG-TERM measures proposed to be taken by the state government for a lasting solution of the dacoity problem are expected to be announced by the chief minister, Mr. P. C. Sethi, here tomorrow when a second batch of outlaws, led by Madho Singh, will surrender before Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan.

Speaking at a meeting held shortly after the surrender of 85 bandits yesterday, Mr. Sethi described their action as an "event of great importance".

Plea justified

Expressing the hope that the lives of the outlaws would be spared, the Sarvodaya leader said his plea for mercy for the "misguided desperadoes" was fully justified.

He affirmed that he was in no way making heroes of the dacoits; he was only "making men of them."

Meanwhile, speculation is rife here on the future course of action against the bandits in custody. According to reliable sources, the supreme court may be approached to set up a special tribunal to try the dacoits whose depredations covered three states—

Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and U.P. Originally, 101 dacoits were to surrender before Mr. Narayan yesterday, but only 85 turned up. No explanation was forthcoming from authoritative quarters.

Similarly, there is no explanation for the fact that when the surrendered dacoits were counted on reaching the Gwalior central jail, only 82 were found.

Madho Singh, who will lead the second batch and had been helping Sarvodaya workers in establishing contacts with various gangs in the Chambal ravines, dominated the surrender ceremony yesterday.

The chief minister had talks with him for five minutes at the function.

(Madho Singh is understood to have presented a memorandum to Mr. Sethi expressing the concern of the dacoits for the welfare of their families.)

New Delhi: Mr. P. C. Sethi, declared on Saturday that the Chambal ravine dacoits would be prosecuted according to "normal legal procedures."

Mr. Sethi told newsmen that a reclamation programme of small and medium ravines, envisaging a total expenditure of Rs. 100 crores, would be launched in the Chambal region.

—P.T.I.