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Charges framed on Dr Sen

By Sudhir K.Singh

Bhopal/Raipur, Feb. 4: Legal charges under the Indian Penal Code and other acts were formally framed at the February 2 hearing of the fast track court at Raipur against the national vice-president of the People's Union of Civil Liberties (PUCL), Dr Binayak Sen, for providing logistical support to the banned CPI (Maoist).

Arrested in May 2007, Dr Sen has been booked under Section 120-B (criminal conspiracy) 121-A (conspiracy to commit offences punishable under Section 121 i.e. war against state) and 124-A (sedition) of the IPC as well as the relevant provisions of

the Unlawful Activities Act, 2004, and the Chhattisgarh People's Security Act, 2005. He had allegedly been acting as a courier-cum-go-between for the Naxalites under the cover of running an NGO right out of his various residences in the Chhattisgarh capital, the police claimed.

Dr Sen, who made a rare appearance in the courtroom last Saturday, however, pleaded not guilty, saying that the whole case was a "frame-up". The case has been attracting huge media attention following the shrill worldwide campaign launched by assorted human rights bodies. They

have described it as a glaring instance of "state-sponsored terrorism". Chhattisgarh IG (anti-Naxalite cell) Girdhari Nayak informed this newspaper that legal charges under the above provisions had also been framed against the jailed Naxalite leader, Pijush Guha, whose arrest last year had led to the seizure of documents and letters which, according to the police, confirmed their long time suspicion that Dr Sen had been in regular touch with the Naxalites for several years. It was on the basis of this evidence that Justice Balinder Singh Saluja had in his order dated January 17 cleared the framing of charges against Dr Sen and Pijush Guha.