



Naxal-Free India

Integrated Strategies Defeated Left-Wing Extremism

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On 31 March 2026, India achieved a historic milestone. After nearly six decades of violence, the country became effectively free from Left-Wing Extremism. This achievement marks the culmination of twelve years of sustained efforts by the Government. The transformation was guided by the pillars of Vishwaas, Nirman, and Jan Kalyan. A balanced strategy combined decisive security operations with development and welfare initiatives. Technology-enabled interventions strengthened intelligence, surveillance, and coordination. Rehabilitation policies encouraged thousands of cadres to surrender and rejoin society. These efforts expanded infrastructure and improved access to public services. They restored trust in governance and strengthened democratic participation. Most importantly, they delivered a sharp and sustained decline in violence across all key indicators. The success of Naxal Mukta Bharat demonstrates the power of a whole-of-government approach to lasting peace and development.

New Era of Peace and Security

For nearly six decades, India grappled with Left-Wing Extremism (LWE). It was not a distant or abstract challenge, but a lived reality for millions of tribal families, villages cut off from roads, schools, and the broader promise of inclusive development. Violence was persistent, and uncertainty defined everyday life.

On 31 March 2026, this changed, marking a historic milestone in India's internal security journey as the country became effectively free from Naxalism. When the current government assumed office in May 2014, the Red Corridor remained one of the most serious internal security challenges. Earlier approaches were largely fragmented and incident-driven, managing symptoms rather than addressing the structural roots of the problem. A more comprehensive and integrated strategy was subsequently pursued to resolve it.



Over the last twelve years, the transformation was guided by three defining pillars - **Vishwaas**, **Nirman**, and **Jan Kalyan**. **Vishwaas** focused on restoring trust through strengthened security operations, improved inter-agency coordination, structured surrender and rehabilitation frameworks and sustained community outreach. **Nirman** emphasized expanding physical and digital connectivity, improving governance presence in remote areas, and creating durable economic opportunities through infrastructure development. **Jan Kalyan** prioritized dignity, welfare delivery, cultural inclusion, and the mainstreaming of affected communities into the national development process.

Each pillar reinforced the other. Security created space for development. Development deepened trust. Trust accelerated welfare delivery. It was not a sequence; it was an inseparable chain of progress.

VISHWAAS — Restoring Faith in the State

Vishwaas focused on rebuilding trust through sustained state presence in vulnerable and remote regions. It strengthened coordination between security agencies and governance institutions to ensure effective responsiveness. The approach bridged long-standing gaps between communities and the state system.

Peak of Violence and Strategic Vulnerabilities Before 2014

LWE grew from the Naxalbari uprising of West Bengal in 1967, inspired by Maoist ideology and the doctrine of armed revolution. Its guiding principle was simple and violent: *power flows from the barrel of the gun*. Nearly 92 per cent of Naxalites' weapons were looted directly from police armouries. Over time, several extremist organisations merged under CPI (Maoist) in 2004, making it India's biggest internal security challenge.

2004–2014: A Decade Marked by Intense Naxal Violence



Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

The decade from 2004 to 2014 was among the most violent in LWE history. Violence peaked in 2010 with 1,936 incidents and 720 civilian deaths in a single year. The full decade recorded 17,542 violent incidents, 1,913 security force deaths, and 5,019 civilian deaths.

There was no consistent national policy. State governments operated in silos. Even then government publicly acknowledged in 2009 that *Naxalism was the biggest internal security challenge facing India*, one that exceeded even Kashmir and the Northeast in geographic spread.

Policy Shift: From Scattered Response to Unified Strategy

The first decisive action came in 2015 with the approval of the **National Policy and Action Plan** to address LWE. This replaced the earlier, ad hoc approach with a structured, whole-of-government framework. It deployed **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)**, provided specialised training, and allocated funds through the Security Related Expenditure, Special Infrastructure Scheme, and Special Central Assistance schemes, while addressing socio-economic root causes alongside security.

For the first time, India implemented a structured and comprehensive approach based on three pronged strategy against LWE- **Dialogue, Security, and Coordination**. The government's response was guided through a more **centrally coordinated framework** under the Ministry of Home Affairs, bringing greater coherence to policy implementation.

Three-Pronged Strategy Against Left Wing Extremism

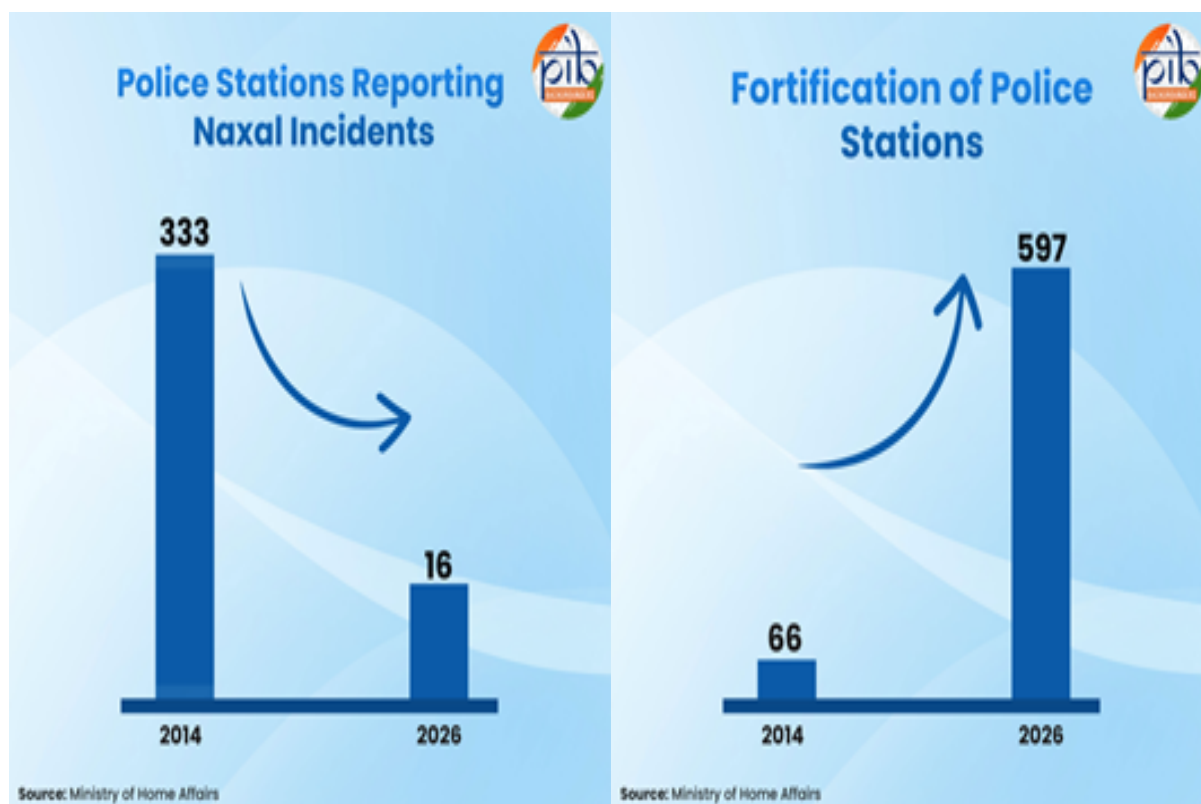


Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

The goal of making India free from the fear and violence of Naxalism was achieved through focused planning and coordinated action. On 24th August 2024, the Government of India set a target to make the country Naxal-free by 31 March 2026. The target was achieved on schedule through intensified security operations, stronger coordination, infrastructure expansion, and accelerated development outreach.

Building the Security Grid

The Government systematically filled the security vacuum in Naxal-affected areas, through infrastructure expansion, specialised forces, and improved operational coordination. This integrated approach enhanced state presence, mobility, intelligence sharing, and counter-insurgency capabilities across the Red Corridor.



597 fortified police stations were constructed, compared to just 66 before 2014. Police stations reporting Naxal incidents dropped from 333 to 16. Additionally, over the past seven years, 408 new CAPF security camps were established to tighten the security grid, improve area domination, and sustain continuous

operations in remote forest zones. (68 night-landing helipads) were built for rapid deployment in remote areas, enabling troop movement, casualty evacuation, and surveillance. Security forces received 400 bullet-proof and blast-proof vehicles, and 5 hospitals were constructed for their welfare and medical support.

Integration of Elite Forces: CoBRA, DRG, STF and Greyhounds

A layered, specialised security architecture was developed, bringing together **CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action)**, **CRPF, District Reserve Guard (DRG)**, and elite state units such as Jharkhand Jaguar, Chhattisgarh Police units, and Andhra Pradesh's Greyhounds. Joint training across DRG, STF, CRPF, and CoBRA created an integrated, interoperable force with a clear command structure.

Technology: The Game Changer

After 2014, the Central Government transformed counter-Naxal operations through the extensive use of modern technology. **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), drones, satellite imagery, and AI-based data analysis enabled real-time monitoring and precise surveillance.** Advanced location-tracking systems, scientific call-log analysis, mobile data analytics, and social media monitoring were operationalised. The Ministry of Home Affairs used technology-driven inputs to track movements, analyse communication patterns, and sharpen operational efficiency.

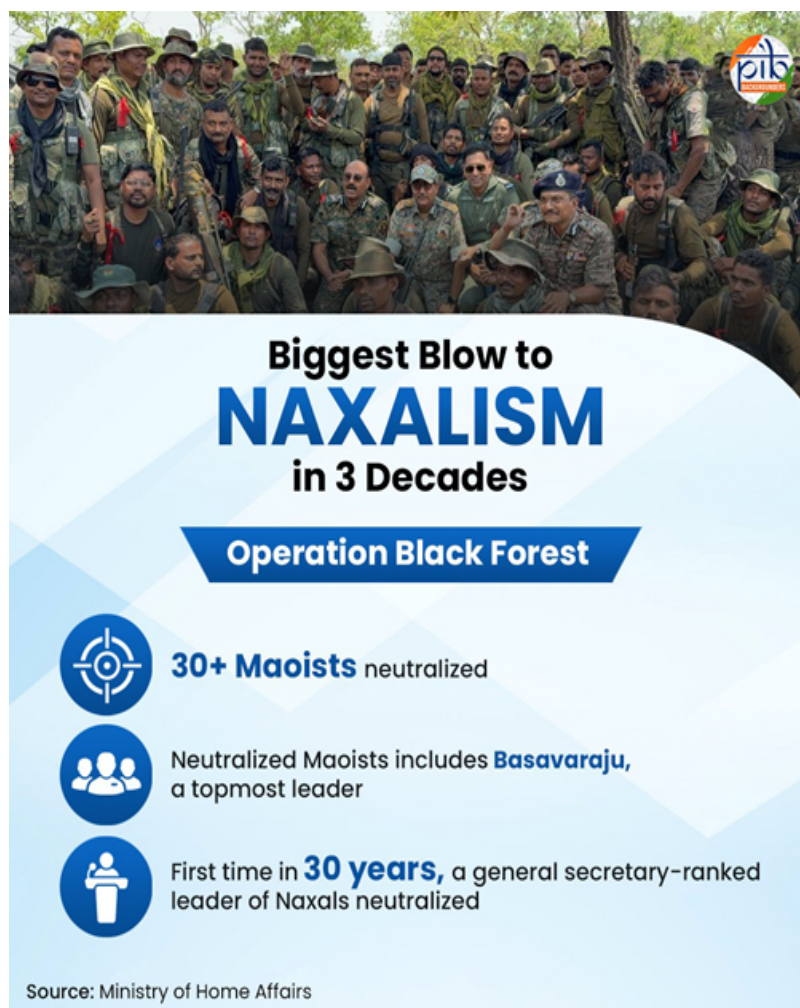
Landmark Operations to Trace, Target, Neutralise

The Government's **"Trace, Target, Neutralise"** doctrine delivered remarkable results. Through sustained security operations and focused intelligence-based strategies, the Government reclaimed areas that had been under LWE influence for over three decades.



A series of coordinated operations, including **Operation Black Forest, Operation Octopus, Operation Double Bull, Operation Thunderstorm, Operation Bhimbarg, and Operation Chakrabandha**, significantly weakened Maoist networks across affected regions. Among them, Operation Black Forest

emerged as a major breakthrough, dismantling a key Maoist stronghold, leading to the elimination of over 30 Maoists, and triggering a sharp rise in arrests and surrenders. Operation Double Bull resulted in Gumla, Lohardaga, and Latehar districts becoming Naxal-free. Collectively, these operations restored state presence in long-affected areas, reduced extremist influence, and created conditions for improved security, governance, and development outreach.

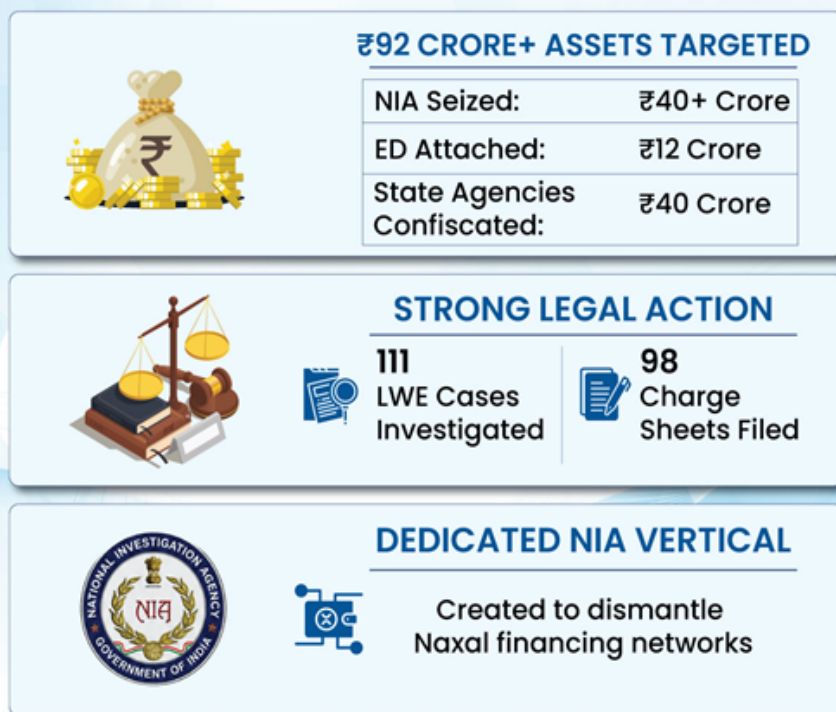


Choking the Support System

The Union Government adopted a comprehensive All-Agency approach, targeting not just armed cadres, but the entire ecosystem supporting them. For development, this meant a Whole-of-Government approach. For security operations, it meant a Whole-of-Agency strategy.

A dedicated vertical was established within the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to disrupt Naxal financing networks. As of December 2025, the **NIA had seized assets worth over ₹40 crore**. The **Enforcement Directorate (ED) attached assets worth ₹12 crore**, while State agencies **confiscated an additional ₹40 crore**. **By December 2025, 111 Left Wing Extremism (LWE) cases had been investigated and 98 charge sheets filed**. As of June 2026, the total number of NIA cases reached 112, with 100 charge sheets filed.

Crackdown on Naxal Financing



Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

(As of Dec'2025)

Red Carpet for Surrender

The Government's firm security response was complemented by a rehabilitation-focused approach. Its message remained clear: *"For those who lay down their arms, there is a red carpet."* Surrendering cadres received an immediate grant of ₹5 lakh for higher-ranked cadres and ₹2.5 lakh for others, along with a monthly stipend of ₹10,000 for 36 months. An additional incentive of ₹50,000 was provided for surrender, doubled in cases of group surrenders, with extra compensation for depositing weapons.



The success of the rehabilitation policy was reflected in the rising number of surrenders. In 2025 alone, 2,337 Naxalites laid down their arms, while 3,927 cadres surrendered between 2024 and March 2026. These outcomes were strengthened by the efforts of civil society members, journalists, community leaders, and public representatives, who helped build confidence in rehabilitation measures and encouraged affected individuals to rejoin the mainstream.

The achievements under Vishwaas extended beyond security outcomes. They created the foundation for long-term development and state-led transformation. Every fortified police station, every CAPF camp, and every surrendered cadre expanded the reach of governance into previously inaccessible areas. Security opened the door for roads, schools, healthcare facilities, banking services, and digital connectivity to reach tribal communities. It was this restoration of stability and trust that laid the groundwork for the next pillar of transformation—Nirman.

NIRMAN — Building a New Future

The resolve to end Naxalism was never merely about eliminating Naxalites. It was about ensuring that every facility available in big cities reaches the poor tribals of the region, so their children, too, can have a bright future. Nirman focused on expanding infrastructure, connectivity, and governance outreach in remote regions. It improved access to essential services, roads, and digital networks. These efforts helped integrate previously underserved areas with mainstream development and governance systems.

Road Connectivity: Over 12,249 km of roads were constructed in LWE-affected areas since 2014. Projects totalling 17,319 km were approved at a cost of ₹20,557 crore.

Digital & Mobile Connectivity: Telecom connectivity has emerged as the foundational bedrock of progress in modern societies. It's even more important in case of rural tribal communities as it acts as a crucial catalyst for socio-economic development, bridging the digital divide, providing access to education and health, and fostering economic opportunities. Keeping in this mind, **more than 9,600 mobile towers have been set up under various schemes of the Department of Telecom.** In the areas that were most LWE affected, 96% of villages (44,728 out of 46,592 villages) now have mobile connectivity, opening doors to education, online delivery of services & economic growth.

Financial Inclusion: The Central Government significantly expanded financial inclusion in LWE-affected districts over the last twelve years. During April 2015 to March 2026, **1,804 bank branches opened, 1,321 ATMs installed, 74,720 banking correspondents appointed, and 6,025 post offices established.**

Education & Skill Development: During the last twelve years, **259 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) has Sanctioned by the government of India, and 179 EMRS were developed.** Additionally, **46 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), and 49 Skill Development Centres (SDCs)** were also developed in these areas. Altogether with an investment of nearly ₹800 crore. These expanded education, vocational training, and employment opportunities for tribal youth, helping integrate remote communities with the mainstream economy. Skill training was provided to over 90,000 youth and women.

Civic Action Programmes: Under civic action programmes, the Government of India undertook works worth ₹212 crore for health camps and distribution of medicines, Tribal Youth Exchange Programmes to deepen engagement with communities, **at Rs. 50.45 Crore under Media Plan Scheme.**

The infrastructure built under *Nirman*, roads connecting villages, mobile towers enabling communication, banks facilitating economic participation, schools opening doors for tribal youth, directly translated into *Jan Kalyan*. It created the physical and institutional platform upon which genuine welfare, dignity, and cultural renaissance could finally be delivered.



Overall infrastructure development in the affected region strengthens regional integration through sustained infrastructure development. Improved connectivity drives economic opportunity and mobility. Long-term investments ensure durable and inclusive growth pathways.

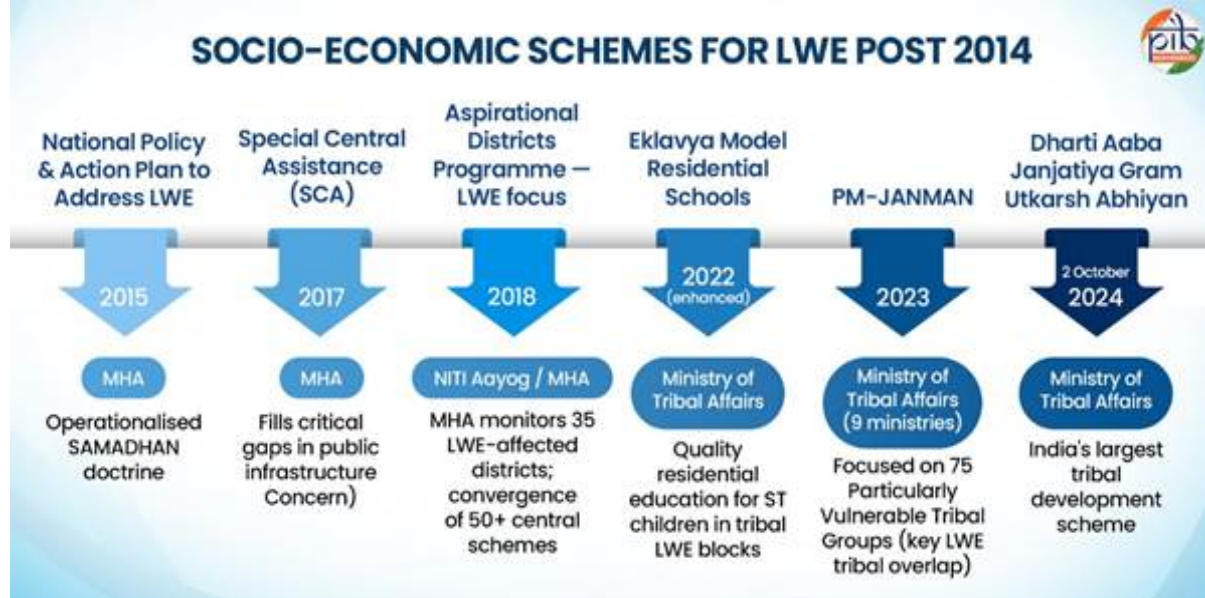
JAN KALYAN — People's Welfare & Dignity

Jan Kalyan emphasizes welfare delivery with dignity and inclusivity. It strengthens last-mile service delivery for marginalized communities. The approach ensures equitable access to essential public services.

Strengthening Tribal Livelihoods

A sustained focus on tribal welfare has played a vital role in reducing LWE's influence, by expanding development, improving access to opportunity, and strengthening the connection between tribal communities and democratic institutions. Alongside security measures, the Government has ensured that development reaches remote tribal regions through better education, infrastructure, healthcare, housing, and livelihood support.

The **rehabilitation framework** for surrendered cadres has encouraged their integration into mainstream society through skill development, livelihood assistance, housing support under *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana*, and financial assistance for self-employment. **Development grants** were provided to villages that eliminated Naxal influence and established democratically elected panchayats. Children of surrendered cadres received free education up to Class XII, helping families build a more secure future.



Several targeted initiatives accelerated this transformation. The **National Policy and Action Plan** combined security, development, and protection of community rights. **Special Central Assistance** built critical public infrastructure in the most affected districts. The **Aspirational Districts Programme** converged multiple welfare schemes to improve outcomes in health, education, financial inclusion, and connectivity.

Education emerged as a key pillar of transformation. Enhanced support for **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** expanded access to quality residential education for Scheduled Tribe children, including those in Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected regions. The **PM-JANMAN** initiative further focused on **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** by improving access to housing, safe drinking water, education, healthcare, and essential connectivity, helping bring underserved communities into the mainstream of development.

The launch of the ***Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan*** further strengthened efforts to bridge infrastructure gaps in tribal villages. Through coordinated interventions by multiple ministries, the programme aims to improve living standards, expand economic opportunities, and ensure tribal communities participate fully in India's development journey.

Case Study: Chhattisgarh's Journey from Naxalism to Development

For decades, Bastar in Chhattisgarh remained one of the country's most Naxal-affected regions. Limited connectivity, weak administrative presence, and difficult terrain enabled extremist groups to establish a strong foothold. In the last 12 years, a coordinated strategy combining security, development, and tribal participation transformed the region's trajectory.

A key turning point came in 2017 with the formation of the **Bastariya Battalion**. The battalion recruited 1,143 personnel, including around 400 local youth from Bijapur, Sukma, and Dantewada. Local participation strengthened intelligence networks, improved trust between security forces and tribal communities, and helped restore confidence in state institutions.

BASTAR'S TRANSFORMATION

From Conflict to Development

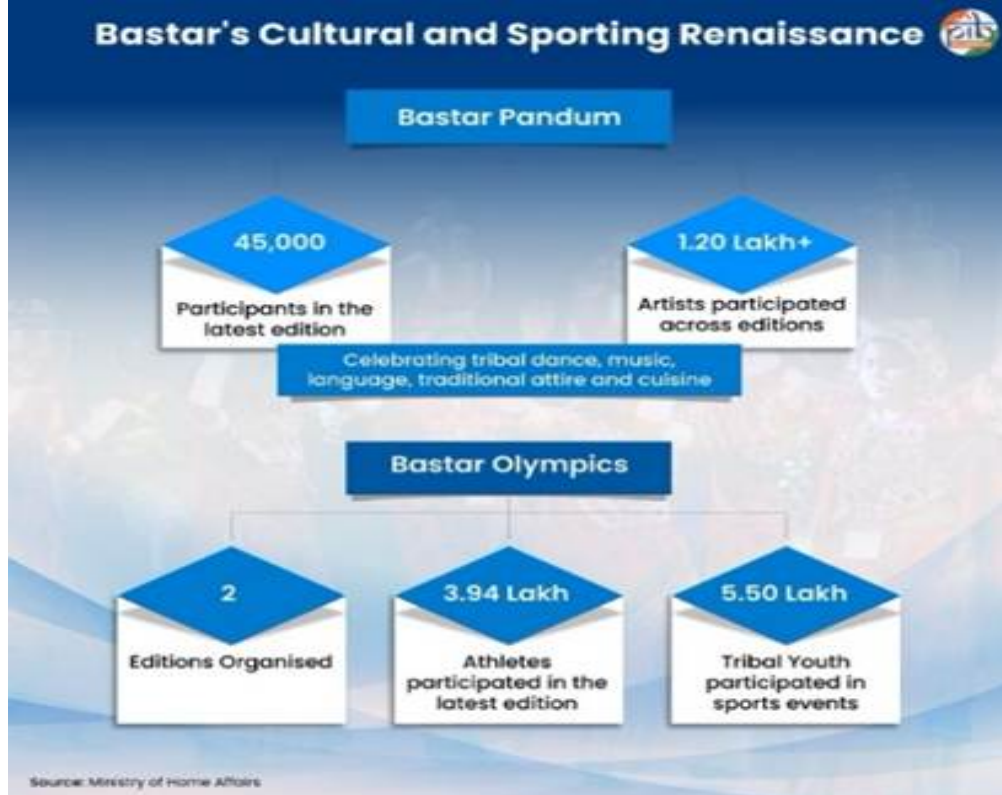


As security conditions improved, development gained momentum. More than 3,240 kilometres of roads were constructed across the Bastar region, covering Bastar, Bijapur, Dantewada, Sukma, Narayanpur, Kanker, and Kondagaon districts. Also 889 mobile towers were installed to improve digital connectivity. Villages that were once isolated became connected to markets, schools, healthcare facilities, banking services, and government programmes.

The Government also focused on rehabilitation and reintegration. A dedicated plan was prepared for around 3,000 surrendered cadres, supported by an initial **allocation of ₹20 crore for skill development, education, and livelihood opportunities**. The initiative aimed to replace the cycle of violence with pathways to economic empowerment.

In May 2026, the **Shaheed Veer Gunda Dhur Seva Dera** initiative was launched to convert security gains into lasting development. Around 70 CAPF camps are being transformed into service centres providing access to government schemes, healthcare, banking, agricultural support, skill development, and other citizen services. The establishment of a **Common Service Centre** in Netanar, the birthplace of Veer Gundadhur, symbolises the return of governance to areas once affected by extremism.

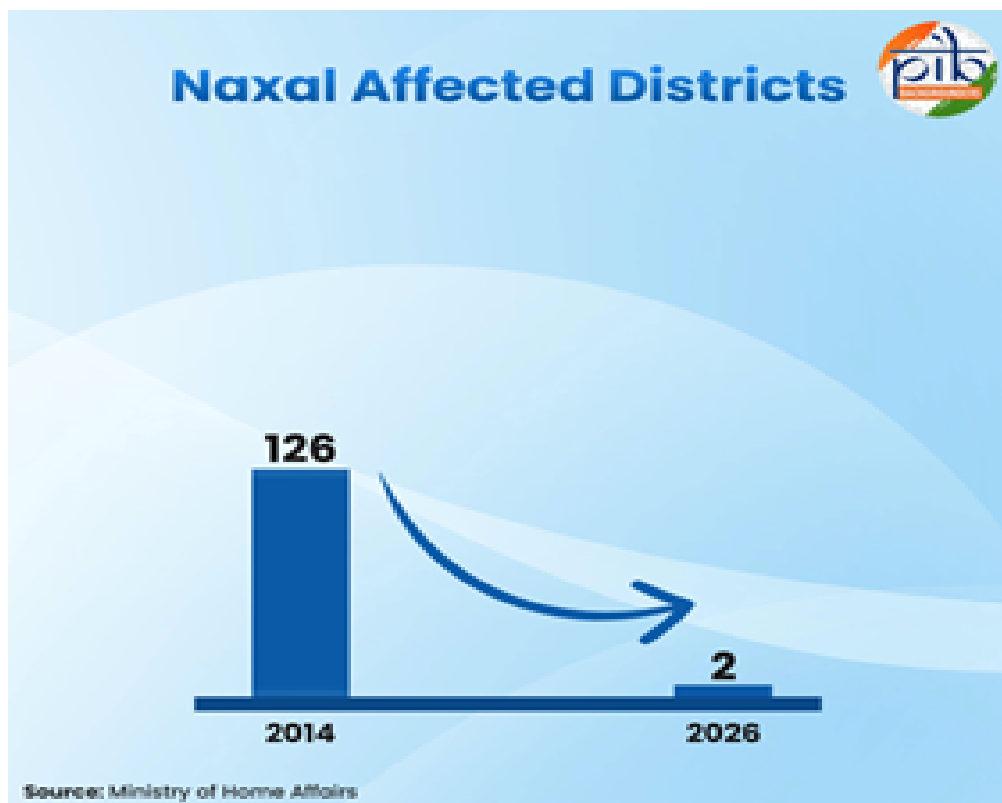
Alongside infrastructure and welfare, cultural initiatives such as **Bastar Pandum** and the **Bastar Olympics** strengthened community participation and tribal identity. These platforms brought together lakhs of tribal youth and artists, promoting social integration and creating new opportunities for engagement and leadership.



The transformation of Bastar demonstrates that lasting peace is achieved when security measures are followed by development, welfare delivery, and community empowerment. Chhattisgarh's experience shows how sustained government presence, local participation, and inclusive growth can turn a conflict-affected region into a pathway for development and prosperity.

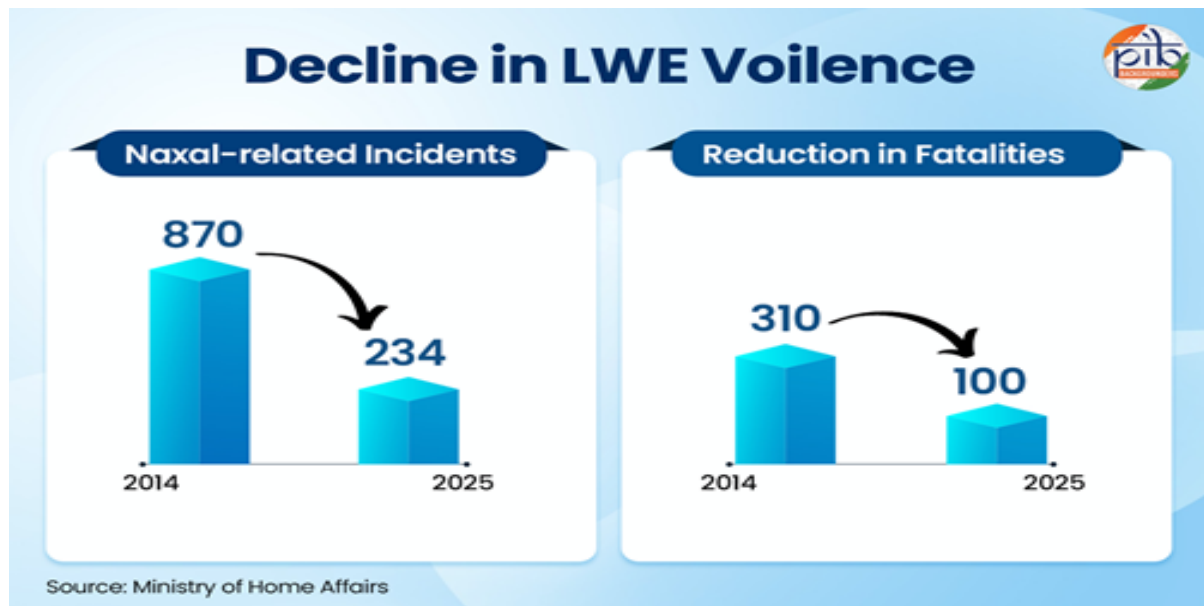
Results of a Decade of Transformation

In 2014, 126 districts across India were affected by the LWE. By 2026, this number has reduced to the just 2 districts. Further, the count of the most affected district has also declined from 35 to zero, making a decisive shift in the security landscape.



The impact became visible across all major indicators of violence. The year 2010 marked one of the deadliest phases in the history of Naxalism, with 1,936 Naxal-related incidents and 1,005 fatalities reported. Since then, sustained security operations, development interventions, and improved governance

significantly weakened Left Wing Extremism (LWE) networks. Naxal-related incidents declined from **870 in 2014 to 234 in 2025**. Fatalities also dropped sharply from **310 in 2014 to 100 in 2025**. The sustained fall in violence indicates the weakening operational capabilities of Naxal groups and the gradual restoration of security, connectivity, and public confidence in affected regions.



The trend reflects a significant improvement in the security environment. Areas once affected by frequent violence have witnessed a marked improvement in peace and public safety.

A Defining Chapter in India's Security and Development Story

India's achievement of a Naxal-Free India on 31 March 2026 stands among the most important internal security successes in the country's independent history. It reflects the impact of decisive leadership, sustained policy implementation, and a multi-dimensional strategy combining security, development, and rehabilitation.

Over the last decade, India transformed its approach to Left-Wing Extremism, from reactive containment to proactive elimination. The next journey has already begun. The achievement of a Naxal-Free Bharat is not merely the end of an insurgency. It is the beginning of a new chapter of peace, inclusion, and progress for some of India's most vulnerable communities.

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