

Naxal-Free India

Integrated Strategies Defeated Left-Wing Extremism

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India has achieved the historic milestone of becoming effectively free from Left Wing Extremism (LWE), with no district in the country remaining LWE-affected. This transformation was driven by an integrated strategy combining security operations, infrastructure expansion, rehabilitation of surrendered cadres, tribal welfare, and improved governance. The coordinated approach sharply reduced violence, restored state presence in remote regions, and accelerated inclusive development, creating a lasting foundation for peace and prosperity.

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 mutually reinforcing strands of action. **Restoring trust and faith** involved strengthened security operations, improved inter-agency coordination, structured surrender and rehabilitation frameworks, and sustained community outreach. **Expanding infrastructure** meant improving physical and digital connectivity, extending governance presence into remote areas, and creating durable economic opportunities. **Delivering welfare** focused on dignity, inclusive service delivery, cultural inclusion, and the mainstreaming of affected communities into the national development process.

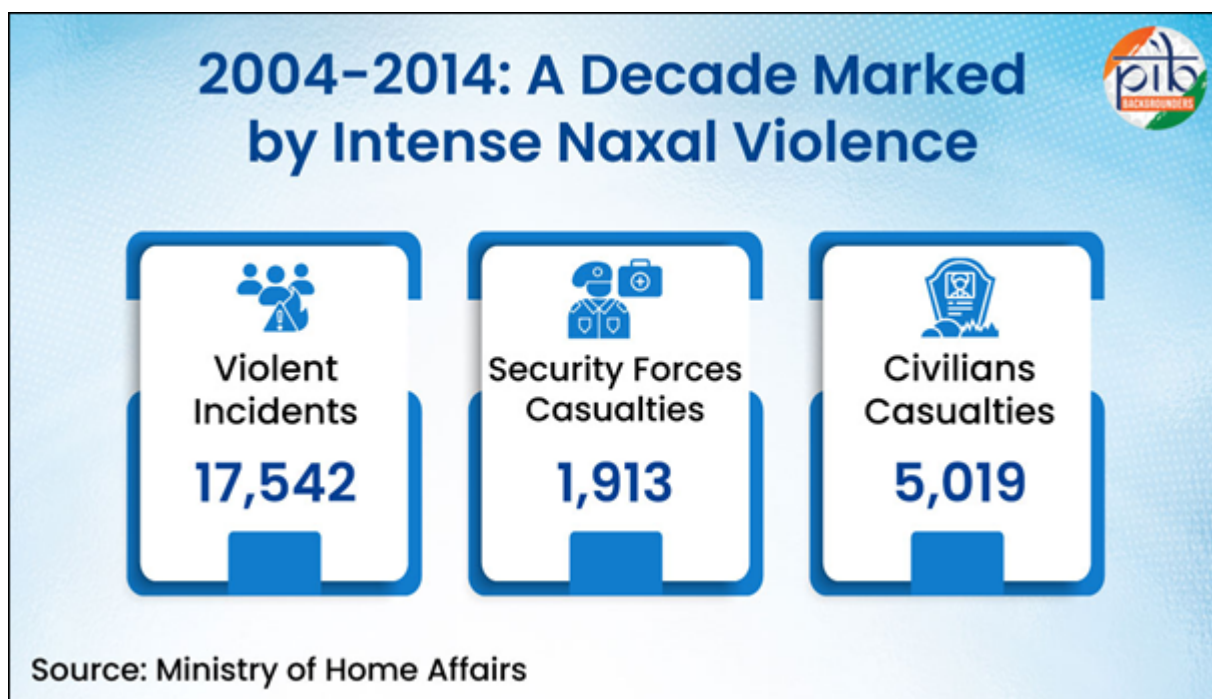
Each of these strands reinforced the other. Security created space for development. Development deepened trust. Trust accelerated welfare delivery. It was not a sequence; it was an inseparable chain of progress.

Restoring Faith in the State

This effort focused on rebuilding trust and faith 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 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.



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 (SCA) schemes, while addressing socio-economic root causes alongside security. Till now, approximately ₹4,289.20 crore have been released since the inception of SCA Scheme in 2017.

Under the Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS), projects worth ₹1,761 crore have been sanctioned for LWE-affected States to strengthen Special Forces, Special Intelligence Branches, District Police and the construction of Fortified Police Stations.

Since 2014-15, ₹3,805.04 crore has been released under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme to support operational needs, capacity building and training of security forces, rehabilitation of surrendered Left Wing Extremism cadres, and ex gratia assistance to families of martyred security personnel and civilians.

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.



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.



663 fortified police stations were constructed, compared to just 66 before 2014. 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.



Biggest Blow to **NAXALISM** in 3 Decades

Operation Black Forest

-  **30+ Maoists** neutralized
-  Neutralized Maoists includes **Basavaraju**, a topmost leader
-  First time in **30 years**, a general secretary-ranked leader of Naxals neutralized

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

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



₹92 CRORE+ ASSETS TARGETED

NIA Seized:	₹40+ Crore
ED Attached:	₹12 Crore
State Agencies Confiscated:	₹40 Crore



STRONG LEGAL ACTION



111
LWE Cases
Investigated



98
Charge
Sheets Filed



DEDICATED NIA VERTICAL

Created to dismantle
Naxal financing networks

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

(As of Dec'2025)

Red Carpet for Surrender

The Government's firm security response has been complemented by a rehabilitation-focused approach, with a clear message: **"For those who lay down their arms, there is a red carpet."** Surrendering cadres receive 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** is provided for surrender, which is doubled in cases of group surrenders, along with extra compensation for depositing weapons.

Red Carpet for Surrender

Choosing Peace, Embracing Progress



Up to
₹5 Lakh
Immediate
Grant



₹10,000
Monthly
Stipend for
36 Months

Comprehensive
Rehabilitation
Package



₹50,000
Additional
Surrender
Incentive



Extra
Incentives for
Depositing
Weapons

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

The rehabilitation policy has contributed to a steady rise in surrenders. **In 2025 alone, 2,337 Naxalites laid down their arms, while 3,927 cadres surrendered between 2024 and March 2026.** These efforts have been strengthened by civil society members, journalists, community leaders and public representatives, who have helped build confidence in rehabilitation measures and encouraged affected individuals to return to the mainstream.

Recent developments have further demonstrated the effectiveness of this combined strategy of sustained security operations and rehabilitation. On **28 July 2026**, under '**Nayi Disha, Nayi Pahal**' anti-Naxal campaign, **16 active Maoists** from the Kolhan and Latehar regions surrendered in Ranchi. The surrendered cadres included **one Regional Commander, three Zonal Commanders, three Sub-Zonal Commanders, six Area Commanders and three cadre-level members.** They surrendered with **11 sophisticated firearms, 38 magazines and 1,562 rounds of ammunition.**

Additionally, on **29 July 2026, eight more Maoists** carrying a combined reward of **₹49 lakh** surrendered before the Bijapur Police, marking another significant success in the campaign against Left Wing Extremism. On the same day, security forces also arrested top Maoist leader and Politburo member, carrying a reward of **₹1 crore**, from the Dhanbad-Giridih border. During the intelligence-based joint operation, **Regional Committee Member** carrying a reward of **₹15 lakh**, one Maoist cadre, and two villagers were also apprehended.

These security achievements extended well beyond restoring order. They created the foundation for long-term development. 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 infrastructure transformation that followed.

Building a New Future: Infrastructure and Connectivity

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. This Phase 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: A total of 15,189 kilometres of roads have been constructed under the two LWE-specific schemes, the Road Requirement Plan (RRP) and the Road Connectivity Project for LWE Affected Areas (RCPLWEA), to strengthen road connectivity in affected regions.

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, **9,497 towers have been commissioned.** In the areas that were most LWE affected, 96% of villages (44,728 out of 46592 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. Also, 179 EMRS Schools have been made functional.** Additionally, **47 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.

Under the Tribal Youth Exchange Programme (TYEP), tribal youth from erstwhile LWE-affected areas are taken on exposure visits across the country to promote national integration, cultural awareness and developmental exposure. Since 2014, a total of 37,655 tribal youth have participated in the programme.

Civic Action Programmes: Under the Civic Action Programme, the Government of India provides financial assistance to the CAPFs to undertake welfare-oriented activities in their operational areas. These include organising medical camps, sports competitions and distributing essential items among local communities.

Since 2014, ₹221.88 crore has been released under the programme, helping strengthen trust and bridge the gap between the security forces and local communities.

This infrastructure, roads connecting villages, mobile towers enabling communication, banks facilitating economic participation, and schools opening doors for tribal youth, translated directly into welfare on the ground. 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.



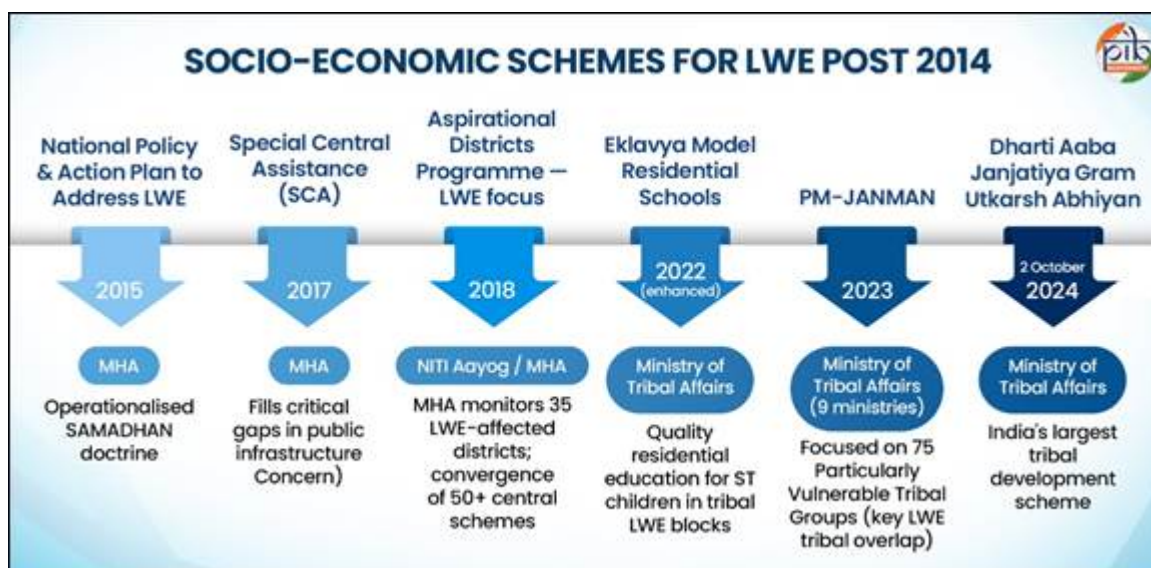
Did you know: Presently, 37 districts in India have been categorised as Legacy and Thrust Districts, where continued security and developmental support is being provided. One district has been placed under the category of District of Concern to ensure sustained surveillance and consolidation of gains.

People's Welfare & Dignity

This final strand of the strategy 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.

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, these 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.



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.

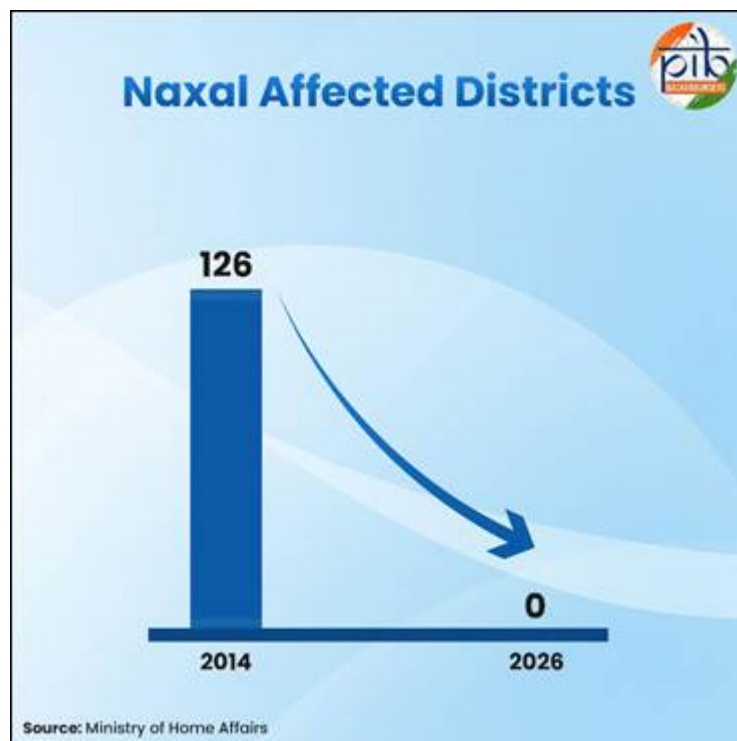
Alongside infrastructure and welfare, cultural initiatives such as **Bastar Pandum** and the **Bastar Olympics** strengthened community participation and tribal identity. These platforms brought together lakhs of tribal youth and artists, promoting social integration and creating new opportunities for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

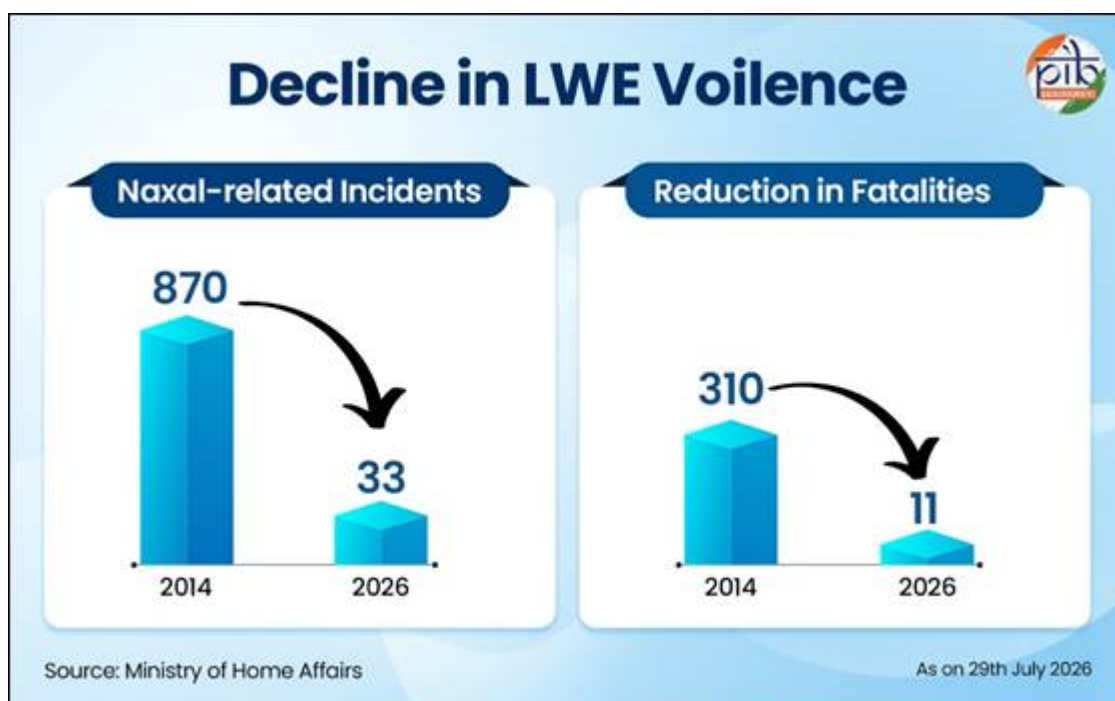
Results of a Decade of Transformation

The number of Left Wing Extremism-affected districts declined from 126 in 2014 to zero by March-April 2026. 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 sharply from **870 in 2014 to just 33** in 2026 (as on 29 July 2026). During the same period, **fatalities reduced from 310 to 11**.



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 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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