

# OPERATION BLACK FOREST: GOVERNANCE

**NEWS:** Security forces claim top Maoist leaders either killed or injured in 'Operation Black Forest'

## WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Operation Black Forest, India's longest anti-Naxal campaign, marks a significant push toward eradicating Left Wing Extremism by 2026 through combined military, developmental, and community outreach strategies.

### Context:

- India recently conducted Operation Black Forest, the longest continuous anti-Naxal operation to date, to support the government's goal of achieving a Naxalism-free India by March 31, 2026.

### About Operation Black Forest:

- Joint Operation: Conducted by CRPF and State Police, marking 21 days of continuous ground action.
- Strategic Location: Focused around Karreguttalu Hill (KGH) on the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border, a known Naxal stronghold.
- Command Base: Operations were directed from Ghalgam Forward Operating Base, established in 2022.
- Civic Outreach: Security forces combined combat efforts with delivery of welfare schemes and community engagement to dismantle support networks.

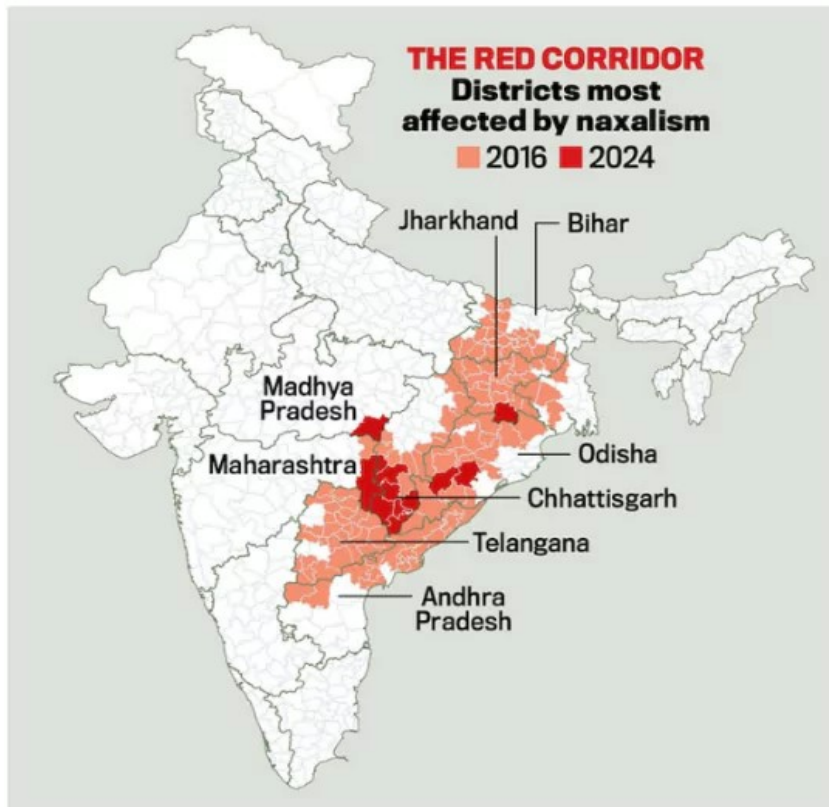
### Understanding Naxalism / Left Wing Extremism (LWE):

- Ideological Roots: Inspired by Maoist ideology, aims to overthrow democratic governance through armed revolution.
- Origins: Traces back to the 1967 Naxalbari uprising in West Bengal, expanding across the Red Corridor—a region covering forested, tribal belts of central and eastern India.
- Present-Day Reality: Despite claims of fighting for tribal rights, activities now include extortion, forced recruitment, sabotage, and violence.

### Success in Containing LWE (2014–2025):

- Territorial Shrinkage: Maoist influence reduced from 18,000 sq. km in 2014 to 4,200 sq. km in 2025.

- Violence Reduction: Annual incidents dropped from 1,936 in 2010 to 374 in 2024 (81% decline).
- Casualties Decline: Death toll decreased from 1,005 in 2010 to 150 in 2024 (85% reduction).
- Surrenders & Rehabilitation: Over 8,000 cadres surrendered in 10 years; 13,000+ individuals reintegrated from conflict zones.
- Core-affected Districts Now Limited: To just 6 – Bijapur, Kanker, Narayanpur, Sukma (Chhattisgarh), West Singhbhum (Jharkhand), Gadchiroli



(Maharashtra).

### Government Strategy: SAMADHAN Framework (2017)

Soft Approach – Development & Empowerment:

1. Special Central Assistance (SCA):
  - ₹3,563 crore released to bridge infrastructure gaps in LWE-affected districts.
2. Civic Action Programme (CAP):
  - CAPFs conduct health camps, skill training, and aid distribution; ₹196.23 crore spent.

### 3. Telecom & Digital Access:

- 10,505 telecom towers sanctioned; 7,768 operational.
- Aims to connect remote villages, boosting governance and security.

### 4. Financial Inclusion:

- Opened 1,007 bank branches, 937 ATMs, and 37,850 banking correspondents.
- Enhanced post office network and digital payment access.

### 5. Skill Development & Education:

- 48 ITIs, 61 Skill Development Centres, and 178 Eklavya Schools for tribal students.

### 6. Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (2024):

- Focused on saturation of welfare services in 15,000 tribal villages (benefiting 1.5 crore people).

## Hard Approach – Security Operations:

### 1. Infrastructure Build-Up:

- Fortified Police Stations increased from 66 (2014) to 612 (2024).

### 2. Security Deployment:

- 6 new CRPF battalions, 15 Joint Task Forces, and 280 security camps added.

### 3. Offensive Operations:

- In 2024:
  - 290 Naxals neutralized
  - 1,090 arrested,
  - 881 surrendered

### 4. Financial Crackdown:

- Enforcement Directorate & NIA actions under PMLA & UAPA, blocking over ₹1,000 crore in funds.

## 5. Security-Related Expenditure (SRE):

- ₹3,260 crore allocated for training, logistics, intelligence, and ex-gratia payments.

## Persistent Challenges in Eradicating LWE:

- Geographic Complexity: Dense forests (e.g., Bastar, Dandakaranya) provide natural cover.
- Residual Hotspots: Maoist activity remains in Sukma, Bijapur, West Singhbhum, etc.
- Ideological Exploitation: Maoists leverage tribal grievances, land disputes, and poverty.
- IED Threat: Improvised Explosive Devices are a persistent danger to forces and civilians.
- Porous Inter-State Borders: Forest borders among Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Maharashtra allow easy insurgent mobility.
- Trust Deficit: Past human rights violations and fear of reprisals limit community cooperation.
- Urban Support Networks: Maoists still receive funds, ideological backing, and logistics from sympathizers in urban centers.

## Way Forward:

### 1. Saturation Governance:

- Ensure 100% coverage of services like healthcare, education, PDS, housing, roads, and internet in affected areas.

### 2. Targeted De-Radicalisation:

- Counselling, employment opportunities, and civic reintegration for surrendered cadres.

### 3. Persistent Security Operations:

- Improve intelligence sharing, build night landing helipads, deploy drones for surveillance in forest terrain.

### 4. Financial Disruption:

- Continue aggressive action under PMLA and UAPA to choke Maoist funding and arms networks.

## 5. Legal & Judicial Support:

- Set up fast-track courts, increase legal aid, and simplify surrender policies.

## 6. Civic Engagement & Trust Building:

- Expand CAPFs' civic outreach, youth sports, and education campaigns to build public trust.

## Conclusion:

- Operation Black Forest reflects India's integrated security and development strategy to combat Naxalism.
- With measurable success in reducing violence and insurgent presence, continued vigilance, governance, and outreach can achieve the goal of a Naxal-free India by 2026.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/security-forces-claim-top-maoist-leaders-either-killed-or-injured-in-operation-black-forest-101747234931173.html>