Chhattisgarh's Crackdown on Maoist Insurgency

Why in news?

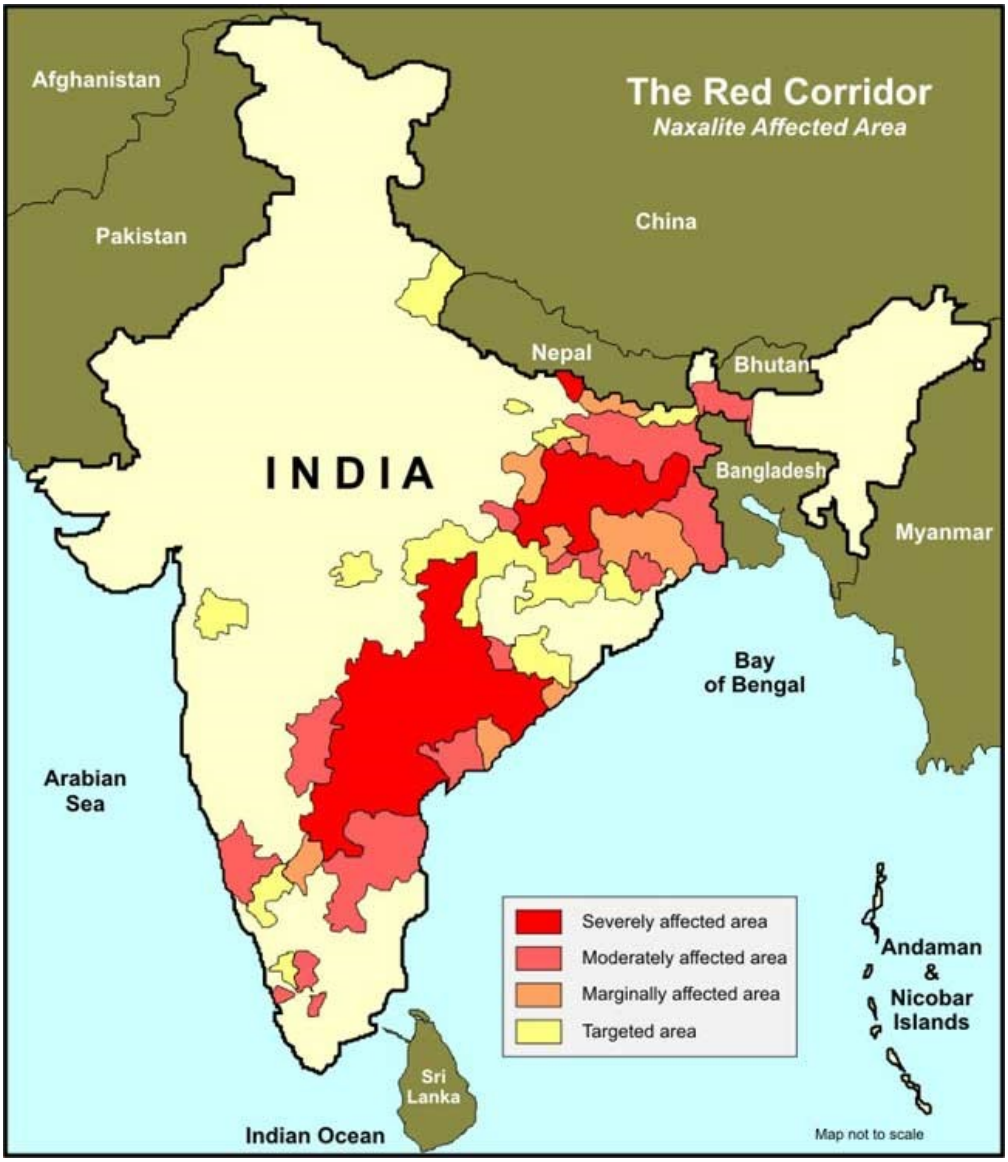
Chhattisgarh has intensified its crackdown on Maoist insurgents since December 2023, resulting in many arrests and surrenders.

What is Maoism?

- It is a form of communism developed by Mao Tse Tung.
- It is a doctrine to capture State power through armed insurgency, mass mobilization, and strategic alliances.
- The Maoists also use propaganda and disinformation against State institutions.
- Mao called this process the 'Protracted People's War,' focusing on the 'military line' to capture power.
- Prioritizes rural agrarian communities as the primary revolutionary force.

What are the Most Affected Regions?

- Ministry of Home Affairs identifies the following states as affected by Left Wing Extremism, though to varying degrees:
    - Chhattisgarh
    - Jharkhand
    - Odisha
    - West Bengal
    - Andhra Pradesh
    - Telangana
    - Maharashtra
    - Madhya Pradesh
    - Kerala



- **Decline of Maoist Influence -** in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Bihar, where they once had influence.
- **Reduction in Affected Areas -** have decreased from 220 (early 2000s) to less than 40 (as per Ministry of Home Affairs reports).
- Violence is now concentrated in a few pockets of Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra.

What are the Challenges in Dealing with Maoism?

- **Security Challenges - Entrenched Insurgency -** Maoists control remote tribal regions, creating a security vacuum and running parallel governance systems.
- **Violence & Intimidation -** Maoist cadres use terror tactics to suppress local resistance and hinder governance.
- **Socio-Economic Challenges - Underdevelopment -** Lack of roads, healthcare, and education fuels discontent, which Maoists exploit.
- **Tribal Displacement-** Infrastructure projects cause displacement, providing Maoists with easy recruits.
- **Administrative Challenges - Governance Vacuum -** Weak state presence allows Maoists to dominate and control local administration.
- **Coordination Issues -** Differences between central and state agencies hinder counter-insurgency efforts.
- **Ideological & Perception Challenges - Public Sympathy -** Some intellectuals and activists

support Maoist ideology, complicating efforts to counter extremism.
- **Human Rights Concerns -** Aggressive security actions risk civilian casualties, fueling further alienation.

What are Legal Framework to Deal with Maoism?

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967

- **Objective-** Prevent unlawful activities that threaten India's sovereignty.
- **Key Provisions - Unlawful Associations-** Govt. can ban organizations disrupting national integrity.
- **Terrorist Organizations**- CPI (Maoist) designated as a terrorist outfit (2009).
- **Strict Penalties**- Criminalizes membership, support, and fundraising for such groups.
- **Extended Detention-** Allows detention without charge for up to 180 days.

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), 1958

- **Objectives-** Empower armed forces to maintain public order in disturbed areas.
- **Key Provisions - Disturbed Areas-** Govt. can declare regions as disturbed under AFSPA.
- **Special Powers-** Armed forces can use force, arrest without a warrant, and conduct searches.
- **Legal Immunity-** Protection from prosecution without central govt. approval.

National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, 2008

- **Objective-** Establish NIA as India's central counter-terrorism agency.
- **Key Provisions - NIA Formation-** Investigates offenses related to national security.
- **Scheduled Offenses**- Covers laws like UAPA, Atomic Energy Act, etc.
- **Concurrent Jurisdiction-** NIA can take over state police cases with central approval.

Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996

- **Objective -** Strengthen self-governance in tribal regions.
- **Key Provisions - Empowers Gram Sabhas -** Control over natural resources and local disputes.
- **Consultation on Land Issues -** Required before land acquisition in Scheduled Areas.
- **Local Governance -**Enhances tribal autonomy over development programs.

What are Steps Taken by the Indian Government to Counter Maoism?

Security Measures

- **Operation SAMADHAN -** A focused counter-insurgency strategy integrating intelligence, modern technology, and security forces.
- **Deployment of CAPFs -**Increased presence of CRPF, BSF, ITBP, and state police in affected areas.
- **Special Forces -** Formation of elite anti-Maoist units like Greyhounds (Telangana), CoBRA (CRPF), and STF (various states).
- **Unified Command -** Coordination between state and central forces for joint operations.

Development Initiatives

- **Road Connectivity Project for LWE Areas-** Focuses on constructing roads in Maoist-affected districts.

- **Skill Development Schemes** - Programs like ROSHNI and Skill Development Scheme in 47 LWE districts to provide employment.
- **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) -** Set up for tribal children to improve education access.
- **Special Central Assistance (SCA) -** Additional funding for LWE-affected districts for infrastructure and welfare projects.

What are the Rehabilitation and Surrender Policies?

- **Surrender and Rehabilitation Scheme -** Financial assistance, vocational training, and housing support for surrendered Maoists.
- **Relief for Affected Families -** Compensation for civilians and security personnel affected by Maoist violence.

What Lies ahead?

- Dealing with Naxalism in India needs a balanced strategy. Focus on both security measures and root causes like poverty.
- Improve infrastructure, education, and job opportunities in affected areas. Engage in open dialogue with local populations to strengthen ties.
- Combining security efforts with socio-economic development and community engagement can help India effectively address Naxalism and create a safer future.

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Refer to - Indian Express| MAOIST

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