Maoism in its Violent Form

What is the issue?

PLA's attack on Assam Rifles convoy in Manipur and the death of 26 rebels in a police operation in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra recently are evident that left wing terrorism is still haunting the Indian state**.**

What are the two recent attacks?

> *PLA was founded in 1978 under the leadership of N. Bisheshwar, after breaking away from its parent body - United National Liberation Front. The PLA's political wing Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) was set up in 1979.*

- **Manipur Convoy Attack -** The People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Manipur Naga People's Front have attacked an Assam Rifles convoy killing seven including a Commanding officer and his family.
- It is one of the biggest in the state since the attack on the Dogra Rifles in 2015.
- Since the Indian Army's **Operation All Clear** in 2003-4, active insurgents have been driven out of the country into Myanmar.
- Insurgent leaders have pointed to the Myanmar coup as a reason for the revival of insurgent activity.
- The PLA has been one of the most active groups in the past, but has remained dormant over the past 5-6 years.
- PLA even ignored the social programmes such as anti-drug campaigns, anti-AFSPA and other such protests but their sudden violent activity has caused surprise.
- **Gadchiroli Operation** – Gadchiroli is a largely forested and tribal-dominated district in Maharashtra and the Maoists have expanded their presence extending from Chhattisgarh.
- There have been major encounters in the district - the death of 40 Maoists in two operations in April 2018 and a landmine blast claiming 15 police personnel and a driver in May 2019.
- It remains one of the districts "severely affected" by left-wing extremism.

- The violence between insurgents and the security forces led to losing of combatants and affects the poor tribal people whose lives are caught in a prolonged crossfire.



What is the status of valley groups in Manipur?

- Unlike the tribal groups such as the NSCN-IM, NNPGs,Kuki/Zomi groups, the Meitei valley-groups have till date not come to the table to discuss a solution with the Indian Government.
- There are 6 main valley groups in Manipur – the UNLF, PLA, KCP, KYKL, PREPAK, and MPLF along with other numerous splinter groups.
- All the groups operate out of Myanmar and raise funds for operations and arms largely through extortion.
- They use guerrilla tactics in their operations and attacks Indian security forces in the north east.

What are the effects of Left wing extremism (LWE)?

- Frequent skirmishes have affected the security forces.
- It has left many tribal civilians caught in the crossfire.
- Human rights' violations were reported in naxal prone areas.
- It has added to the alienation among the poor in these areas.
- It also has its effect on the government exchequer.
- LWE widened the backwardness in terms of social and economic development.
- It affected the democratic setup by hindering the elections.

What has led to the withdrawing of the insurgents from the armed struggle?

- Significant losses to its leadership in military operations or due to physical infirmities
- Indian security establishment
- Development schemes in marginalised remote areas
- Shrinking of the areas of influence - According to the data provided by Ministry of Home Affairs, the geographical influence of Maoists has contracted from 96 districts in 10 States in 2010 to 41 districts .
- Reducing support base – Absence of peasantry support unlike Chinese Revolution.
- Pointless cause of the insurgents such as
    - Refusal to acknowledge the diverse industrial base

- Rejection of liberal democratic instruments in the Indian state
- Faith of the poor in the robust electoral system

How can the issue be tackled?

- Empowerment of tribal people and civil society activists to promote peace in these areas.
- Surrendered LWE cadre should be used for intelligence collection to the maximum possible.
- The country's best weapon against ultras is extending the welfare state to areas it hasn't quite reached.
- The government must act continually in winning over the support of tribals in the region and retaining their faith in the liberal democratic institutions of the state.

References

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