Tackling Maoists in Chhattisgarh

Why in news?

Seven Maoists were killed recently in an encounter with the Chhattisgarh Police in the Bagnadi area of Rajnandgaon district bordering.

What are the recent happenings?

- A week previously (on July 27, 2019), another 7 had been killed in Machkot in Bastar, Chhattisgarh.
- With these operations, over a week, 16 Maoists have been killed.
- The security forces have made continuous inroads into the disturbed areas.
- On the other hand, the CPI (Maoist) has repeatedly admitted that their base area has shrunk, fresh recruitment almost dried up, and desertions increased.

What contributed to police's success?

- The anti-Maoist operations do get restricted by various seasonal factors.
- However, operations continue to be launched if there is actionable intelligence of Maoist movement.
- Further, security forces have learnt to overcome many impediments.
- Use of satellite technology helps in keeping track of jawans' movement from any location, and the target can be identified with more clarity.
- Staff trained in 'battlefield nursing' courses (conducted by the Army) can treat wounded jawans on the field itself.
- Night helicopter landing facilities keep the jawans motivated even at odd hours.
- Therefore, despite peak monsoon, the police were able to launch operational teams and emerge successful.
- In both instances, security forces were successful to a great extent in recovering weapons and the bodies of the deceased Maoists.
- Of late, local police in the form of DRG (District Reserve Guard) have been more and more successful in countering Left Wing Extremism (LWE).

What are the other supporting factors?

- Chhattisgarh's state police, with the support of specialised training institutes, have built up capacity and raised specialised forces.

- The institutes include the Counter Terrorism and Jungle Warfare (CTJW) College, Kanker and four CIAT (Counter Insurgency & Anti Terrorism) Schools.
- The Centre, besides helping the state strengthen training capacity and capabilities, is also providing financial support.
- This helps strengthening the specialised wings of STF (Special Task Force) and SIB (State Intelligence Bureau).
- DRGs have been constituted in many districts consisting of local policemen of affected areas.
- They have the best knowledge of the terrain as well as are well-versed in the local dialect.
- Their natural instincts have been supplemented with professional ethos from the Counter-Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School of Vairengte, Mizoram.

What was the Maoists' plan?

- The CPI (Maoist), following a decision taken in the 2014 Central Regional Bureau (CRB) meeting, is trying to develop the new MMC Zone.
- The recent encounter was in the Maoist-proposed 'MMC Zone' (Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh Confluence zone.).
- Maoists intend to create an entity like the Dandakaranya (DK) Special Zonal Committee in Bastar.
- It broadly incorporates the districts of Gondia in Maharashtra, Balaghat in Madhya Pradesh, and parts of Rajnandgaon, Kabirdham, and Mungeli in Chhattisgarh.
- This area is predominately tribal, forested and hilly, and suitable for guerrilla warfare.
- It is also contiguous to the North Gadchiroli Maoist Division of the DK.
- Except for a few, most of the cadres in the MMC Zone were transferred there from Bastar.

What are the governments' measures?

- The governments of the states involved took proactive steps by deploying additional resources, and are trying their best to check Maoists' expansion.
- In Chhattisgarh, many new police stations and security camps have been established.
- A number of awareness campaigns were organised in remote areas which are most vulnerable to Maoist influence.
- Arrangements for villagers' training were made and government employment for hundreds was facilitated.

- The administration has also taken steps to expedite developmental work.
- Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra too have intensified anti-Maoist operations in these areas.
- Though the Maoists are yet to find their roots here, the efforts need to be continued.
- The Darrekasa Area Committee of the Gadchiroli-Rajnandgaon-Balaghat (GRB) Division of MMC was almost wiped out in the recent attack.

What is the way forward?

- **Further attacks** - The overall strength of the CPI (Maoist) has thinned and the capacity of the security forces has improved.
- However, Maoists can still manage to strike security forces and cause casualties.
- So, the security forces need to be extra vigilant in the coming future.
- **IEDs** - One way to avoid destruction and casualties caused by IEDs (improvised explosive device) is to ensure that these are successfully detected and defused in time.
- Visual surveillance or technical gadgets could be employed here.
- Law-enforcement agencies can crack down on miscreants who supply explosive substances to the Maoists.
- Explosive substances and most importantly detonators can be made identifiable at the production stage.
- Better technologies, including Ground Penetration Radar, are required to detect and defuse IEDs.
- Security forces also need to learn from previous tactical errors and adhere to time-proven Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- **Development** - The information network should improve with better road and telecom connectivity in far-flung areas.
- Surrender and rehabilitation policies must be implemented in letter and spirit.
- The administrative and political vacuum in remote areas must be filled.
- 'The Forest Rights Act' should be interpreted in favour of forest dwellers.
- The root cause of the problem that is exploited by the Maoists i.e. the socio-economic deficits must be bridged.
- The human rights of the local populace must be protected by the administration and security forces if the credibility of efforts taken so far is to be established.

Source: Indian Express



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