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Bihar Declared Naxal-Free — Left Wing Extremism, SAMADHAN Strategy, and India's Internal Security Transformation

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WHY IN NEWS

Bihar became India's first state declared completely Naxal-free after **Suresh Koda**, the last known armed Maoist, surrendered in **Munger district** in February 2026 — completing a multi-decade state project to eliminate Left Wing Extremism from all 23 previously affected districts.

WHAT IS LEFT WING EXTREMISM (LWE)?

Left Wing Extremism (LWE), commonly called **Naxalism** or the **Maoist insurgency**, is an armed communist movement in India that began with the **Naxalbari uprising in 1967** in West Bengal. It involves Maoist guerrilla groups that advocate violent overthrow of the state in the name of tribal rights, land redistribution, and anti-caste struggle.

The Naxalbari Uprising (1967)

Location: Naxalbari village, Darjeeling district, West Bengal

Leadership: Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal, Jangal Santhal

Context: Tribal peasants, exploited by landlords and local elites, launched an armed uprising inspired by Mao Zedong's "protracted people's war" doctrine

CPI (Marxist-Leninist): Established 1969 as the political arm of the Naxalbari movement; later fragmented

The movement spread from Bengal to Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana — forming what PM Manmohan Singh called India's "**biggest internal security challenge**" (2006).

BIHAR'S NAXAL HISTORY

Bihar (and later Jharkhand after its 2000 bifurcation) was one of the worst-affected states. The Naxal movement in Bihar was rooted in:

Land inequality: Bihar’s feudal zamindari system (abolished post-Independence but social dominance persisted)

Caste violence: Upper caste landlord militias (Ranvir Sena, Bhumihars) vs. lower caste sharecroppers (Yadavs, Dalits)

State neglect of tribal communities: Displacement without rehabilitation in mineral-rich regions

Peak of violence: 1990s–2000s, when caste-based massacres (Bathani Tola 1996, Laxmanpur Bathe 1997) and Naxal-state confrontations were frequent.

THE SURRENDER OF SURESH KODA — BIHAR’S LAST ARMED MAOIST

Suresh Koda was the last known armed Maoist operating in Bihar. His surrender in **Munger district** on or before February 20, 2026, completed Bihar’s transformation. Key metrics:

LWE-affected districts cleared: 23 (all previously designated)

Naxal incidents in Bihar in 2025: 0

Arrests in Bihar in 2025: 220

This follows a decade-long decline driven by targeted security operations, surrenders under rehabilitation schemes, and development-led approaches.

INDIA’S COUNTER-LWE STRATEGY: SAMADHAN

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) introduced the **SAMADHAN** doctrine (2017) as a comprehensive framework for LWE eradication:

Letter	Element
S	Smart Leadership
A	Aggressive Strategy
M	Motivation and Training
A	Actionable Intelligence
D	Dashboard-Based KPIs
H	Harnessing Technology
A	Action Plan for each theatre district
N	No access to Financing

Key features:

Integrated Action Plan (IAP): Focused development spending in 35 most-affected districts (now reduced to 90 “LWE districts” overall, then “most affected” categories)

Road Connectivity: PMGSY roads cutting into Naxal zones — removing natural hideouts and enabling economic integration

Mobile connectivity: Towers in LWE areas via Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) — reducing information isolation

Security Grid: Deployment of CRPF, CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action), Greyhounds (Andhra/Telangana), STF (State Task Forces)

Surrender and Rehabilitation Policy: Cash incentives, skill training, and social reintegration for surrendered Maoists

DECLINE OF LWE — NATIONAL PICTURE

Metric	2010	2023	2025
LWE incidents	~2,213	~510	~180 (est.)
Deaths (civilians + forces)	~1,005	~138	~70 (est.)
Most-affected districts	75+	38	~12
Active Maoists (est.)	~10,000	~3,000	~1,200

The **Red Corridor** — which once stretched from Nepal border to Andhra Pradesh — has significantly contracted. Remaining strongholds: **Bastar (Chhattisgarh)**, parts of **Jharkhand-Odisha-Maharashtra** tri-junction.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND GOVERNANCE DIMENSIONS

Article 355: Duty of the Union to protect every state against external aggression and **internal disturbance** — the constitutional basis for central deployment in LWE-affected states.

Fifth Schedule (Article 244): Provides for Tribal Advisory Councils and restricts land alienation in Scheduled Areas. Naxals exploit non-implementation of Fifth Schedule protections as a recruitment narrative.

PESA (Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996): Extends gram sabha powers in tribal areas; weak implementation has fuelled grievances leveraged by Maoists.

Forest Rights Act, 2006: Recognises tribal rights over forest land — another key demand of Naxal groups; partial implementation remains a grievance.

LESSONS FROM BIHAR'S SUCCESS

Political will + security operations: Bihar's Nitish Kumar government combined tough policing with development spending — not exclusively one or the other

Intelligence-led operations: Targeted arrests and neutralisation, reducing collateral harm

Rehabilitation focus: Reintegration of surrendered cadres into mainstream economy prevented re-radicalisation

Infrastructure penetration: NH and road networks ended the geographical isolation that sustained Naxal organisation

UPSC RELEVANCE

LWE / Naxalism origin: Naxalbari 1967; SAMADHAN doctrine (MHA, 2017); Article 355 (internal disturbance); Fifth Schedule (tribal areas); PESA 1996; Forest Rights Act 2006; Suresh Koda (last Bihar Maoist); Bihar Naxal-free 2026; CoBRA (CRPF counter-LWE unit); Integrated Action Plan; Red Corridor.

Mains GS-3: *Internal security — causes of Naxalism (socioeconomic roots, governance failure, tribal alienation); SAMADHAN strategy; development vs. security debate; Fifth Schedule implementation.* **GS-2:** *Constitutional provisions — Article 244, 355; PESA; Forest Rights Act; role of Centre vs. State.* **Interview:** *“Bihar has been declared Naxal-free, but Bastar in Chhattisgarh remains a stronghold. What fundamentally distinguishes the socioeconomic conditions in these areas, and what should India's long-term strategy be?”*

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

BIHAR NAXAL-FREE (2026):

Last surrendered Maoist: **Suresh Koda**, Munger district, Bihar

LWE districts cleared in Bihar: **23**

Naxal incidents in Bihar (2025): **0** | Arrests (2025): **220**

LWE ORIGIN:

Naxalbari uprising: 1967, Darjeeling, West Bengal

Founders: **Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal, Jangal Santhal**

CPI (Marxist-Leninist): Founded **1969**

PM Manmohan Singh quote: “Biggest internal security challenge” (**2006**)

SAMADHAN DOCTRINE:

Introduced by: **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, 2017

Components: Smart Leadership, Aggressive Strategy, Motivation & Training, Actionable Intelligence, Dashboard KPIs, Harnessing Technology, Action Plan per district, No access to financing

KEY CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS:

Article 355: Union’s duty to protect states from internal disturbance

Article 244 + Fifth Schedule: Tribal area governance (Tribal Advisory Councils)

PESA (1996): Gram sabha powers in scheduled areas

Forest Rights Act, 2006: Recognises tribal rights over forest land

SECURITY FORCES IN COUNTER-LWE:

CoBRA: Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CRPF’s elite LWE unit, 10 battalions)

Greyhounds: Andhra Pradesh/Telangana Police’s elite anti-Naxal commando force

STF: State Task Forces (state police special units)

LWE DECLINE DATA (NATIONAL):

Peak LWE incidents: ~2,213 (2010) → ~180 (2025 est.)

Red Corridor: Shrunk from 75+ districts to ~12 most-affected (2025 est.)

Remaining stronghold: **Bastar, Chhattisgarh** (Bijapur, Narayanpur, Sukma districts)

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Integrated Action Plan (IAP): Development spending in 35 most-affected LWE districts

USOF: Universal Service Obligation Fund — funds telecom towers in LWE areas

PMGSY: Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana — road connectivity in LWE zones

Ranvir Sena: Upper-caste landlord militia (Bhumi-har) in Bihar — countered Naxals; now dissolved

Notable LWE massacres (Bihar): Bathani Tola (1996), Laxmanpur Bathe (1997) — by Ranvir Sena

Sources: GKToday, AffairsCloud

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