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Andhra Pradesh Declared Naxal-Free — India's LWE Elimination Deadline Achieved

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✍ WHY IN NEWS

Andhra Pradesh was officially declared Naxal-free on March 30–31, 2026, meeting the Union Government's March 31, 2026 deadline for nationwide elimination of Left Wing Extremism (LWE). Key CPI (Maoist) Central Committee member Chelluri Narayana Rao (alias Suresh) surrendered alongside the declaration, symbolising the collapse of the Andhra-Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee (AOBSZC) — the state's last active Maoist unit.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DECLARATION

What “Naxal-Free” Means

An area is classified Naxal-free when:

- No active Maoist armed squads operating in the region
- No extortion/violence incidents recorded in 12–18 months
- Security forces have full operational control
- Development infrastructure (roads, schools, banks) can operate without threat

Andhra Pradesh joins a growing list of formerly LWE-affected states — including **Telangana** (declared largely free in 2022) and **Chhattisgarh** (significant reduction) — where the movement has been significantly degraded.

The March 31, 2026 National Deadline

The Union Government set a **March 31, 2026 deadline** for complete LWE elimination as part of the **SAMADHAN** strategy — a comprehensive approach combining security, development, and rehabilitation. The deadline pushed states to intensify operations.

Remaining LWE districts nationwide (as of March 2026): Fewer than 25 core districts — primarily in Chhattisgarh’s Bastar region and parts of Jharkhand.

THE NUMBERS — LWE DECLINE

INDICATOR	2010	2026
LWE-affected districts	120+	< 25 (core)
Annual violence incidents	~2,000+	~89% reduction
Active cadre strength	~10,000–12,000	Significantly depleted
States with active presence	13+	~4–5

In Andhra Pradesh specifically:

- 18 Maoists neutralised in recent operations
- 120+ weapons recovered (including INSAS rifles, .303 rifles)
- AOBSZC — the last active Maoist unit in AP — dismantled

THE NAXAL MOVEMENT — ORIGINS AND TRAJECTORY

Naxalbari Uprising (1967)

The LWE movement traces its origin to the **Naxalbari Uprising of 1967** — a peasant revolt led by Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal in Naxalbari village, Darjeeling district, West Bengal, against zamindari exploitation. The movement spread through Bengal, Bihar, and Andhra Pradesh in the 1970s.

CPI (Maoist) — Formation

- **People’s War Group (PWG)** — active in Andhra Pradesh from 1980s
- **Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI)** — Bihar-based
- **Merger (2004):** PWG + MCCI → **CPI (Maoist)** — the current unified organization
- Classified as a terrorist organization under **UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act)**

The Red Corridor

The “Red Corridor” — stretching from Nepal border through Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh to the Andhra-Telangana coast — was the operational zone at peak strength. The **AOBSZC (Andhra-Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee)** was the joint structure managing operations across the AP-Odisha border.

SECURITY FORCES — THE GREYHOUNDS MODEL

Greyhounds — AP’s Anti-Naxal Elite

The **Greyhounds** — Andhra Pradesh’s dedicated anti-insurgency force — are widely credited as the primary driver of AP’s LWE elimination.

ATTRIBUTE	DETAIL
Raised	1989, Andhra Pradesh
Type	Special operations forest force
Training	Counter-insurgency, jungle warfare, intelligence
Effectiveness	Among most effective anti-Naxal units in India
Model	Adopted/adapted by other states (Chhattisgarh’s COBRA)

The Greyhounds' combination of **local intelligence networks**, **small-team jungle operations**, and **civilian-friendly doctrine** proved far more effective than large-scale military-style operations.

SAMADHAN Strategy

The Union Government's **SAMADHAN** framework:

- **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
- **N** — No complacency

Combined with the **Aspirational Districts Programme** (ADP) — economic development in LWE-affected districts — SAMADHAN addressed both the security and socioeconomic roots of insurgency.

REHABILITATION POLICY — GAPS AND CHALLENGES

Despite the security success, surrender and rehabilitation policy faces criticism:

- Surrendered cadres receive cash incentives and skills training — but reintegration is often incomplete
- Families of surrendered cadres face social stigma in villages
- The Andhra Pradesh surrender scheme is among the more generous: lump-sum of ₹1–5 lakh depending on rank + vocational training + land
- The Chelluri Narayana Rao surrender — a senior Central Committee member — signals the movement has lost ideological cohesion at the top

UPSC RELEVANCE

Naxalbari Uprising (1967); CPI (Maoist) formation (2004: PWG + MCCI merger); SAMADHAN strategy; Greyhounds (AP); AOBSZC; UAPA classification of CPI (Maoist); Red Corridor definition.

MAINS GS-3 (INTERNAL SECURITY):

“Andhra Pradesh’s declaration as Naxal-free marks a security milestone. Critically evaluate the SAMADHAN approach and assess what remains for complete LWE elimination in India.”

MAINS GS-2:

“Left Wing Extremism in India is as much a governance failure as a security problem. Discuss with reference to the interplay of development deficit and armed insurgency.”

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

AP NAXAL-FREE DECLARATION:

Date: March 30–31, 2026

Government deadline for nationwide LWE elimination: March 31, 2026

Key surrender: Chelluri Narayana Rao (alias Suresh), CPI(M) Central Committee member

Last active unit: AOBZC (Andhra-Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee)

Weapons recovered: 120+ (INSAS, .303 rifles); 18 Maoists neutralised

LWE DECLINE (NATIONAL):

Affected districts: 120+ (2010) → < 25 (2026)

Violence reduction: ~89% since 2010

NAXAL MOVEMENT ORIGINS:

Naxalbari Uprising: 1967 (Darjeeling, West Bengal)

Leaders: Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal

CPI (Maoist) formed: 2004 (PWG + MCCI merger)

UAPA: Classified as terrorist organisation

GREYHOUNDS (AP):

Raised: 1989

Type: Special anti-insurgency forest force

Influence: Model for COBRA (Chhattisgarh), other states

SAMADHAN STRATEGY:

Launched by MHA; multi-dimensional approach

Combines: security operations + intelligence + development (Aspirational Districts Programme)

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Red Corridor: Nepal border → Bihar → Jharkhand → Chhattisgarh → Odisha → Andhra Pradesh

Aspirational Districts Programme: Launched 2018; covers 112 districts including LWE-affected

Rehabilitation: AP scheme — ₹1–5 lakh lump sum + vocational training

Vikas Darshan initiative (MHA): Expedited development in LWE-affected blocks

Sources: [Ministry of Home Affairs](#), [PIB](#), [The Hindu](#)[← PREVIOUS ARTICLE](#)[Current Affairs Today — March 31, 2026](#)[NEXT ARTICLE →](#)[Supreme Court Allows CANH Withdrawal —
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