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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

# AP Naxal-Free: A Security Victory, Not Yet a Governance Triumph



31 March 2026

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# AP Naxal-Free: A Security Victory, Not Yet a Governance Triumph

 The Indian Express

31 March 2026

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The Indian Express

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## INTERVIEW ANGLE

*"Andhra Pradesh is Naxal-free but the tribal communities that once supported the Maoist movement still face land alienation, forest rights denial, and displacement. Has security success addressed the root causes?"*

## WHY IN NEWS

Andhra Pradesh was declared Naxal-free on March 30–31, 2026, meeting the Union Government's March 31 deadline. Key CPI (Maoist) Central Committee member Chelluri Narayana Rao (alias Suresh) surrendered. LWE-affected districts nationally have fallen from 120+ to fewer than 25 since 2010 — an 89% reduction in violence incidents.

## THE SECURITY ACHIEVEMENTS ARE REAL

The AP declaration is not rhetorical. The Greyhounds, raised in 1989, systematically dismantled CPI (Maoist) networks over three decades — using superior jungle intelligence, small-team tactics, and local recruitment. The SAMADHAN strategy gave the security response a doctrine that combined operations with development. LWE violence nationally has collapsed to a fraction of its 2010 peak.

The surrender of a Central Committee-level leader signals ideological exhaustion, not just military defeat. When senior leaders surrender, it reflects a breakdown in the movement's ability to recruit, feed, and sustain cadres in the forests. The Maoist promise — a revolutionary alternative state in the Red Corridor — has demonstrably failed to deliver, and its potential recruits increasingly have access to mobile phones, MGNREGS wages, and Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana houses.

## WHAT “NAXAL-FREE” DOES NOT MEAN

A Naxal-free declaration means armed squads are gone. It does not mean the grievances that created the movement have been resolved. In the *erstwhile* Andhra-Odisha border zones, tribal communities still contend with:

- **Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006:** Individual and community forest rights are still to be fully settled in many tribal districts. The gap between FRA’s promise and its implementation remains wide.
- **Land alienation:** Scheduled Areas under the **Fifth Schedule** of the Constitution are meant to protect tribal land from transfer to non-tribals — but encroachments and industry-linked acquisitions continue.
- **PESA (Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996:** The law extending Gram Sabha powers to tribal areas has been only partially implemented in most states.
- **Displacement:** Mining and infrastructure projects in tribal areas have historically been undertaken without adequate consent or compensation.

## THE REHABILITATION QUESTION

The AP surrender scheme — offering ₹1–5 lakh plus vocational training — is among India’s more generous. But rehabilitation is only as good as its follow-through. Studies of earlier surrender programmes document high rates of social ostracism, difficulty obtaining government employment, and family insecurity. A senior CPI (Maoist) leader like Chelluri Narayana Rao surrendering is a political signal; his actual rehabilitation outcome will determine whether others follow.

More systematically, the thousands of ordinary cadres who surrendered over the past decade need livelihood security. MGNREGS, PM Mudra Yojana, and Skill India can serve as vehicles — but only if surrenderees are actively mainstreamed rather than left to navigate bureaucracy alone.

## GOVERNANCE MUST FOLLOW THE SECURITY VACUUM

The Maoist retreat leaves an institutional vacuum in remote tribal areas — the movement had, for all its violence, provided a form of parallel administration: dispute resolution, protection from contractor exploitation, a channel for grievance. The state must now provide legitimate alternatives: functioning gram sabhas under PESA, transparent FRA settlement, responsive district administration.

The March 31 deadline created pressure to declare victory. The real benchmark is whether, five years hence, the children of the AP forest belt have schools, healthcare, and economic opportunity. Security without governance produces not peace but the conditions for the next insurgency.

**UPSC RELEVANCE**

SAMADHAN doctrine; Greyhounds (AP); CPI (Maoist) formation (2004: PWG + MCCI); AOBSZC; Naxalbari 1967; FRA 2006; PESA 1996; Fifth Schedule (Scheduled Areas).

**MAINS GS-3 (INTERNAL SECURITY):**

“The decline of LWE in India reflects both security successes and developmental changes. Critically evaluate whether the root causes of Maoism have been addressed.”

**MAINS GS-2 (GOVERNANCE + SOCIAL JUSTICE):**

FRA implementation gaps; PESA vs Fifth Schedule; tribal self-governance.

## ★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPIEDIA

### LWE DECLINE:

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

Violence reduction: ~89% since 2010

AP declared Naxal-free: March 30–31, 2026

### KEY SECURITY ELEMENTS:

Greyhounds: AP anti-Naxal elite force; raised 1989; model for COBRA (Chhattisgarh)

SAMADHAN: MHA doctrine (Smart, Aggressive, Motivation, Actionable intelligence, Dashboard, Harnessing tech, Action plan, No complacency)

CRPF COBRA: CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) — central paramilitary for LWE

### TRIBAL RIGHTS FRAMEWORK:

Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006: Individual + community forest rights for tribals; implemented under MoTA

PESA 1996: Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act — Gram Sabha powers in tribal areas

Fifth Schedule (Art. 244): Scheduled Areas — governor's special powers to protect tribal land

### OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Naxalbari Uprising: 1967, Darjeeling, West Bengal (Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal)

CPI (Maoist): Formed 2004 (PWG + MCCI merger); classified under UAPA

AP rehabilitation: ₹1–5 lakh lump sum + vocational training for surrenderees

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

Sources: [Ministry of Home Affairs](#), [Indian Express](#), [PIB](#)

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