



NaXalism

A Quarterly Analysis

April-June 2026

Aradhita Singh

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About the Author

Aradhita Singh is a Research Fellow at India Foundation. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Hindu College, University of Delhi, and is currently pursuing a postgraduate degree in Public Policy at O.P. Jindal Global University.

Before joining India Foundation, she served in the Office of the Hon'ble Vice President of India, where she worked on research, strategic communications, and parliamentary affairs. She contributed to high-level parliamentary engagements and official delegations in India and abroad, including visits to Brazil, Greece, Azerbaijan, and New Zealand, engaging with policymakers, diplomats, academics, journalists, and civil society representatives.

Her research focuses on national security, internal security, governance, and development, with particular interest in conflict-affected regions, counter-insurgency, and people-centric approaches to policymaking.

Ms. Singh is a regular contributor to public policy discourse. Her articles and commentaries have been published in Dainik Jagran, Zee News, The Pioneer, Dainik Swadesh, Firstpost, and Chintan. She has participated in policy consultations and expert discussions with members of India's security establishment, academia, and the wider policy community on issues including Left-Wing Extremism, terrorism, radicalisation, and internal security. Through her research and writing, she seeks to contribute to evidence-based policymaking and informed public discourse.

INTRODUCTION

A movement once considered India's single biggest internal security challenge is now nearing its end in 2026. The second quarter of the year (April-June) marked a significant phase in India's campaign against Left-Wing Extremism, combining sustained security operations, improved intelligence coordination and governance-led interventions. A sharp decline in violent activity was recorded in this period, with the overwhelming majority of recorded incidents comprising surrenders, arrests, recoveries, security reviews and developmental initiatives rather than armed confrontations. While there were instances of residual violence in isolated pockets - particularly in the Saranda Forests of Jharkhand - the overall trajectory of the movement pointed towards the continued weakening of the CPI (Maoists) organisational and operational capabilities. The Government of India adopted a multipronged approach to consolidating gains achieved over the past year, including large-scale surrender initiatives, such as the surrender of senior cadres, intensified counter-insurgency operations, significant recoveries of arms and explosives, and the expansion of state-led development initiatives.

SURRENDER WAVE AMONG CADRES

Surrenders emerged as the defining feature of the quarter, underscoring the sustained erosion of the Maoists' organisational strength. The scale of capitulations across multiple states reveals the impact of intensified security operations, improved intelligence gathering and active rehabilitation policies. In previous years, surrenders were largely confined to lower-ranking cadres; the April-June period witnessed the surrender of several senior leaders and experienced operatives, signalling growing disillusionment within the organisation and a weakening of the command and control structure. This surrender of the top brass of the Naxal leadership is bound to have long-term implications for the group's operational capabilities, recruitment abilities and cadre morale.

The period opened dramatically in April with the surrender of 170 Maoist cadres, including Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee member Paparao, in Chhattisgarh's Bastar Division. The surrender was accompanied by the recovery of 343 weapons, ₹6.75 crore in cash and 8 kg of gold, a major blow to the organisation's military and financial infrastructure. Telangana also saw successive waves of surrenders in Hyderabad, with nearly 30 cadres surrendering on 6 April, followed by 42 on 10 April and 47 on 25 April. These surrenders yielded light machine guns, AK-47 rifles and Self-Loading Rifles (SLRs), further reducing the insurgents' operational capabilities. The most significant development occurred in May, when Central Committee member Pasunuri Narahari, reportedly an expert in IED fabrication, surrendered alongside his wife, State Committee member Danamma, before the Telangana Director General of Police.

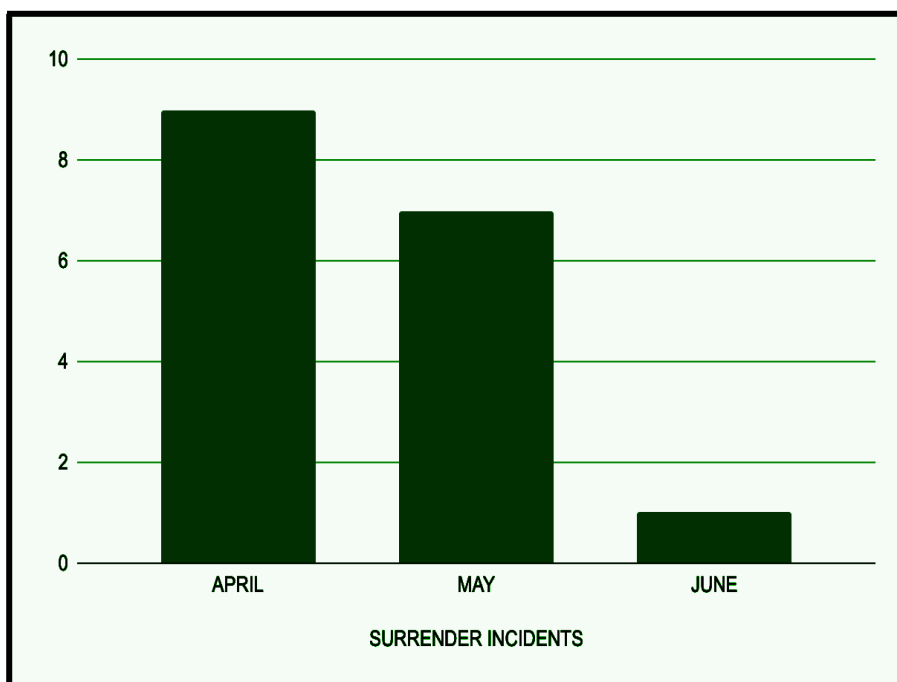


Fig ; Distribution of Surrender Incidents in Q2

CONCENTRATION OF VIOLENCE TO CERTAIN POCKETS

While the surge in surrenders dominated the quarter, security operations continued against the remaining active Maoist formations. Violence was geographically concentrated rather than widespread, indicating the Naxals' shrinking operational footprint. Most encounters were confined to the Saranda and Porahat forests in West Singhbhum district, Jharkhand, which increasingly emerged as the insurgency's last major stronghold. The concentration of violence in this region underscores both the security forces' success in clearing former Maoist-affected areas and the strategic importance of Saranda as a refuge for the group's remaining leadership and armed cadres.

Encounters in April, followed by another significant operation in May, resulted in the deaths of at least seven Maoist cadres, including two senior leaders and IED expert Amrit, alias Israel Perti. In addition, security forces launched one of the largest coordinated operations in recent years, deploying nearly 10,000 personnel from the CRPF, CoBRA, Jharkhand Jaguars and district police, and issuing a surrender ultimatum to politburo member Misir Besra. By June, the operation had expanded into a four-state coordinated offensive targeting senior leaders, including former General Secretary Ganapathi. This effort was supported by drones, electronic surveillance and inter-state intelligence sharing. These developments illustrate an increasingly intelligence-driven counter-insurgency strategy aimed at eliminating the remaining leadership rather than merely responding to isolated attacks.

Chhattisgarh recorded the quarter's most significant security force loss when three District Reserve Guard personnel were killed in an IED blast during a demining operation in Kanker in May, while Jharkhand witnessed the killing of two former Maoists, suggesting continued internal reprisals within the organisation. Casualty figures, however, remained at a historic low, reinforcing the broader trend of declining armed confrontation across the LWE-affected region.

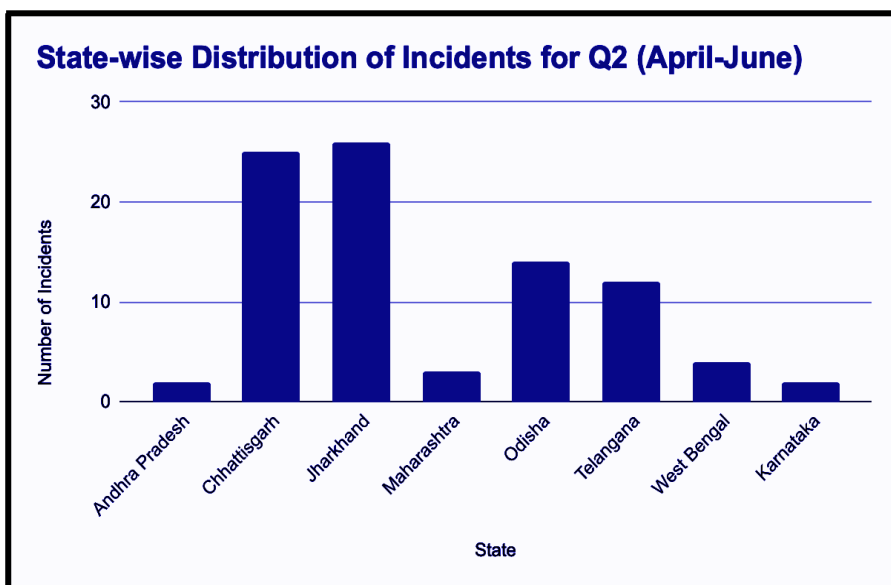


Fig ; State - Wise Distribution of Incidents in Q2

PREVAILING THREATS

While there was a marked decline in armed engagements and a growing wave of surrenders among the Naxals, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) remained the most significant security challenge during the April-June quarter. As the Naxals' conventional fighting capabilities suffered a severe blow, they relied heavily on hidden explosives and similar tactics to inflict casualties, delay security successes and retain a measure of deterrence. This shift highlights the evolving nature of the LWE movement in India, where residual threats stem from legacy explosive networks rather than a sustained armed confrontation between the Security Forces and the Naxals. The quarter's deadliest incident occurred in May in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district, where three District Reserve Guard personnel were killed in an IED blast during a demining operation. In Jharkhand's Saranda forest, a CoBRA commando was injured in another blast, while an elephant was killed by a suspected

Maoist-planted IED, illustrating the indiscriminate humanitarian and ecological risks posed by abandoned explosives.

Officials estimated that nearly 1,300–1,400 IEDs remain buried across Bastar, despite the recovery of around 450 devices in recent operations. Security forces continued intensive recovery operations, seizing cooker bombs, pipe IEDs, Claymore mines, tiffin bombs, detonators, gelatin sticks and large quantities of ammonium nitrate across Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Jharkhand. Counter-IED capabilities also saw innovation during this quarter. Surrendered Maoists with technical expertise assisted in training security personnel in explosive detection and disposal at the Counter Terrorism and Jungle Warfare College in Kanker. Such initiatives not only strengthen operational preparedness but also demonstrate how rehabilitation programmes can directly enhance the state’s counter-insurgency capabilities.

INCIDENT-WISE ANALYSIS

Most reported incidents in Q2 were related to surrenders and arrests. The clearest pattern is the geographic split in the character of the conflict. Jharkhand’s West Singhbhum/Saranda Forest region remains the last zone of active violence in this phase. Chhattisgarh is defined mostly by large-scale recoveries rather than the previous trend of active violence and direct combat. Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, an important region of the red corridor, have now essentially moved into a steady post-insurgency phase marked by surrenders, rehabilitation programmes and official declarations of being “Naxal-free regions.” Violence itself has become increasingly IED-centric rather than involving direct firefights.

Most casualties reported in this phase stem from blasts during demining operations rather than from active encounters. While estimates suggest that over 1000 IEDs remain buried in Bastar alone, recoveries consistently outpace casualties, indicating

an evolving counter-insurgency strategy of attrition through dismantling logistics and encouraging surrenders, rather than large-scale confrontations. This approach aligns with repeated references to “Operation Kagar” and the stated 2026 target for eliminating Naxalism, as reiterated by the Hon’ble Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah, time and again. Finally, a parallel thread has emerged around urban and overground networks — FIRs over foreign funding, NIA searches in Kolkata, and arrests tied to social media activity — indicating that as the rural insurgency contracts, law enforcement attention is shifting towards financing structures and support networks outside the forest belts.

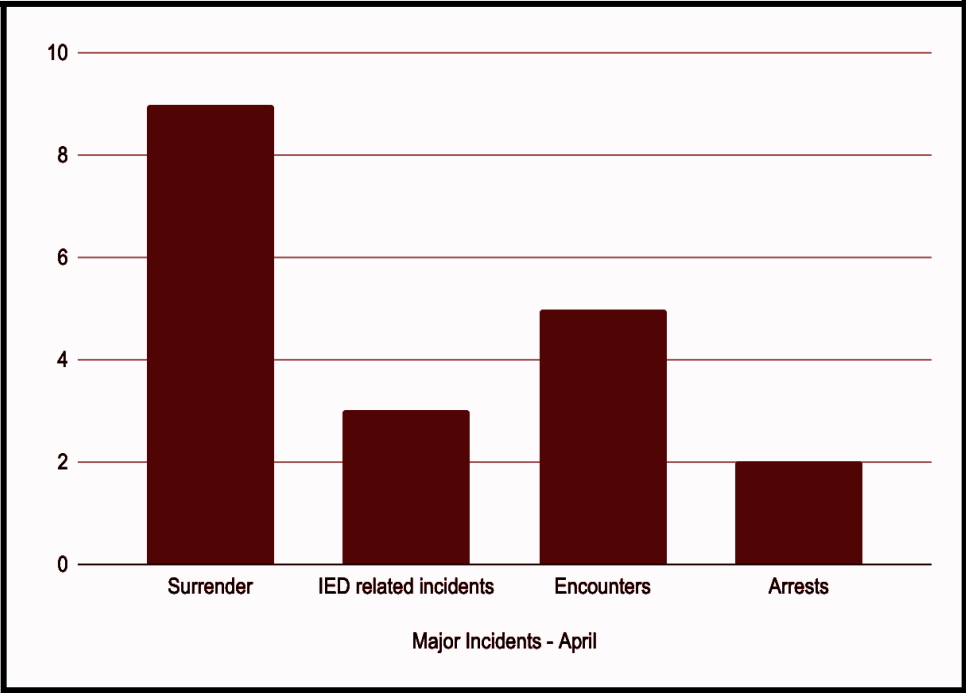


Fig: Major Incident Table (April)

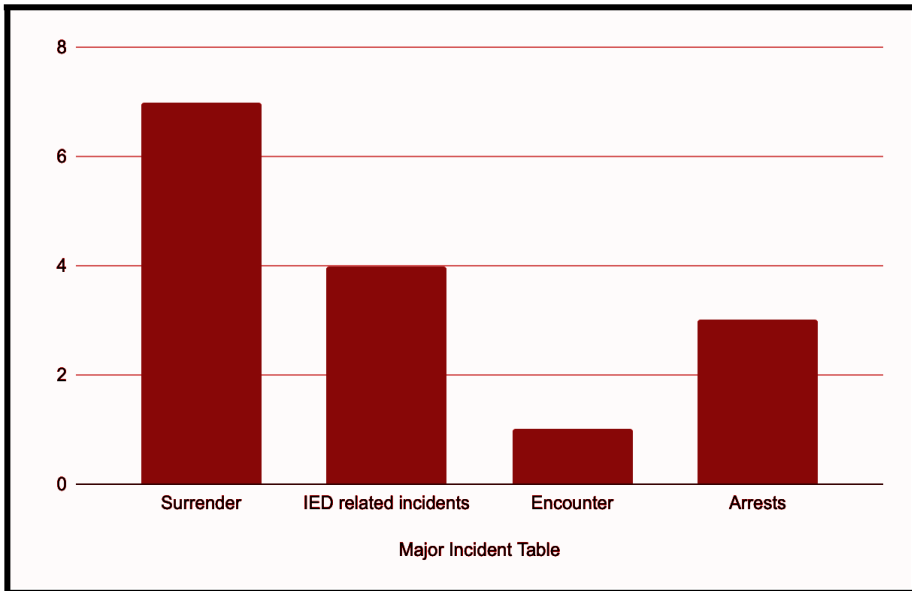


Fig: Major Incident Table (May)

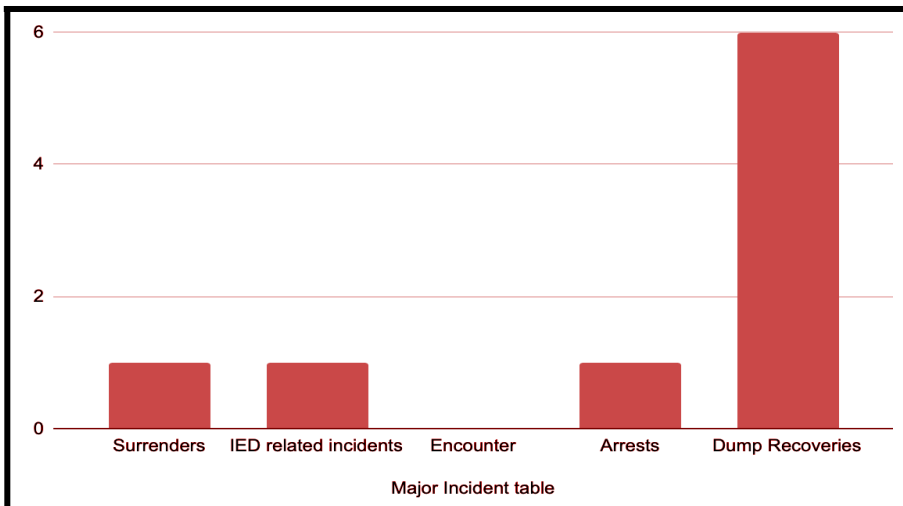


Fig: Major Incident Table (June)

GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENTAL MEASURES

Governments at both the state and central levels, along with sustained security operations, continued to strengthen governance interventions to consolidate counter-insurgency gains. The quarter was marked by a growing emphasis on extending state presence into formerly Maoist-affected regions through infrastructure development, welfare delivery, rehabilitation and administrative outreach. These measures aimed to address the governance deficits that historically enabled Maoist influence and to reinforce the state's legitimacy in remote tribal areas.

Several states reported significant progress in curbing Left-Wing Extremism. Odisha Police stated that LWE no longer posed a major security threat within the state, while Telangana formally declared itself LWE-free, even as it maintained vigilance along its borders to prevent infiltration from neighbouring states. Chhattisgarh reviewed the implementation of the **Niyad Nellanar** scheme and initiated plans for an expanded second phase, while Odisha accelerated the implementation of the **Gramodaya** programme to improve service delivery in vulnerable districts. One of the quarter's most significant governance milestones was the completion of the first formal land survey since Independence in Konge village of Abujmad. By providing residents with land records and legal ownership rights, the initiative marked an important step towards integrating one of India's most historically inaccessible regions into the formal administrative framework.

Legal and financial action against the insurgency also intensified during the quarter. Karnataka registered cases against individuals accused of financing the CPI (Maoist), while the National Investigation Agency (NIA) filed chargesheets, conducted searches and continued investigations targeting the organisation's support networks. Meanwhile, the Railway Protection Force enhanced surveillance of vulnerable railway infrastructure through the deployment of drones during the Maoists' so-called "Anti-Oppression Week." These measures reflect an increasingly

comprehensive counter-insurgency approach that seeks not only to neutralise armed cadres but also to dismantle the financial, logistical and ideological ecosystems that sustain the movement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is recommended:

- The post-March 2026 approach to Naxalism should focus on rebuilding the erstwhile Maoist-affected society through development, good governance and community participation. The face of governance in these regions must shift from armed security forces and security camps to public service delivery institutions such as schools, hospitals and banking facilities. Some security camps in areas no longer facing extreme violence may be converted into schools, skill centres and administrative offices.
- The period following the decline in violence, as witnessed in the second quarter, is of utmost importance. Any instance of poor governance can create new forms of instability and revive a dying movement. Heavily affected regions and Naxal strongholds like Bastar must have area-specific plans devised for them. Policies must be area-specific and sensitive to local needs.
- Surrendered Naxals could be divided into two broad groups - those who joined out of fear, poverty or pressure, and those who remain ideologically committed. The first group must be integrated into mainstream society through practical skills training and employment, while the second group must be continuously monitored and employed only in non-sensitive areas to prevent them from influencing vulnerable populations.

- Greater support and recognition must be provided to the victims of Naxal violence through compensation, pensions, housing, livelihood opportunities and education for children in the household.
- Women should be empowered through self-help groups, agriculture, forest produce processing and handicrafts, while the youth should receive vocational training, sports opportunities and education to reduce the risk of future radicalisation. Education should focus on residential schools, local teachers, tribal languages and bridge courses for school dropouts.
- The rural economy should be strengthened by promoting agriculture, forest produce, small industries and cluster-based businesses. Schemes and initiatives to improve road and mobile connectivity, electricity, healthcare and public service centres must be prioritised to improve governance in these regions. Promotion of local culture, tribal traditions and eco-tourism must be pursued while recognising the positive role of NGOs in community development.
- Finally, longer tenure and postings for government officers in Naxal areas may be encouraged, along with training in tribal culture, to better equip them to deal with these areas more appropriately.

CONCLUSION

The Q2 2026 data suggests that the Left Wing Extremism movement in India is in its final stages of collapse rather than an active conflict. Violence has been confined entirely to one contested pocket, while the rest of the traditional Maoist corridor has effectively transitioned into a post-conflict phase dominated by surrenders, rehabilitation, and infrastructure and governance outreach initiatives. The approach of security forces has shifted from direct engagement and confrontation to attrition, steadily recovering arms, cash and explosives. Mass surrenders are encouraged through rehabilitation initiatives, and a conscious effort is being made to clear remaining IED threats rather than fighting large cadre formations. Senior leadership remains the primary target, and law enforcement is simultaneously turning towards urban financing and overground networks. The overall trajectory strongly supports the government’s stated goal of ending LWE by 2026 — the movement appears to be dying out, both logistically and organisationally, even where pockets of violence persist.

NOTE

This report has been compiled from publicly available information, primarily from open media sources, newspaper reports, and other publicly accessible publications. The term “incident” is used in a value-neutral manner. Each row in the tracker represents a reported incident and includes both violent and non-violent developments related to Left-Wing Extremism. These include casualties, IED blasts, arrests, surrenders, security-force operations, recoveries, and development or public-outreach initiatives. The figures should therefore not be interpreted solely as a measure of Maoist violence. They represent the overall range of security, administrative, and developmental activity associated with Left-Wing Extremism during the period under review.

Following the significant decline of the Naxal movement, we are discontinuing the periodic tracker. Moving forward, this report will serve as the primary source for updates.



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