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Maoism in its Violent Form

What is the issue?

PLA's attack on Assam Rifles convoy in Manipur and the death of 26 rebels in a police operation in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra recently are evident that left wing terrorism is still haunting the Indian state.

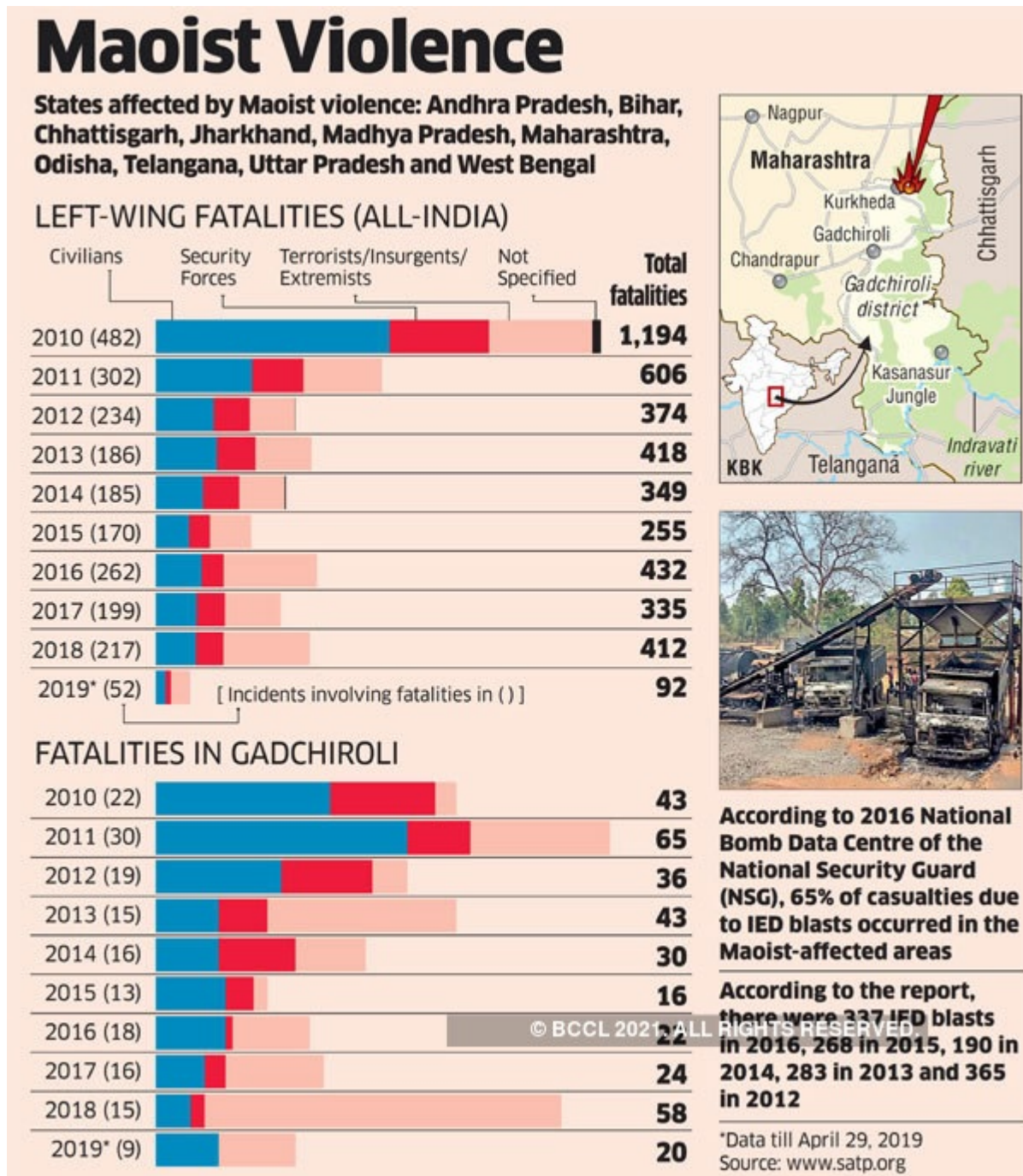
What are the two recent attacks?

PLA was founded in 1978 under the leadership of N. Bisheshwar, after breaking away from its parent body - United National Liberation Front. The PLA's political wing Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) was set up in 1979.

- **Manipur Convoy Attack** - The People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Manipur Naga People's Front have attacked an Assam Rifles convoy killing seven including a Commanding officer and his family.
- It is one of the biggest in the state since the attack on the Dogra Rifles in 2015.
- Since the Indian Army's **Operation All Clear** in 2003-4, active insurgents have been driven out of the country into Myanmar.
- Insurgent leaders have pointed to the Myanmar coup as a reason for the revival of insurgent activity.
- The PLA has been one of the most active groups in the past, but has remained dormant over the past 5-6 years.
- PLA even ignored the social programmes such as anti-drug campaigns, anti-AFSPA and other such protests but their sudden violent activity has caused surprise.
- **Gadchiroli Operation** - Gadchiroli is a largely forested and tribal-dominated district in Maharashtra and the Maoists have expanded their presence extending from Chhattisgarh.
- There have been major encounters in the district - the death of 40 Maoists

in two operations in April 2018 and a landmine blast claiming 15 police personnel and a driver in May 2019.

- It remains one of the districts “severely affected” by left-wing extremism.
- The violence between insurgents and the security forces led to losing of combatants and affects the poor tribal people whose lives are caught in a prolonged crossfire.



What is the status of valley groups in Manipur?

- Unlike the tribal groups such as the NSCN-IM, NNPGs, Kuki/Zomi groups, the Meitei valley-groups have till date not come to the table to discuss a solution with the Indian Government.

- There are 6 main valley groups in Manipur – the UNLF, PLA, KCP, KYKL, PREPAK, and MPLF along with other numerous splinter groups.
- All the groups operate out of Myanmar and raise funds for operations and arms largely through extortion.
- They use guerrilla tactics in their operations and attacks Indian security forces in the north east.

What are the effects of Left wing extremism (LWE)?

- Frequent skirmishes have affected the security forces.
- It has left many tribal civilians caught in the crossfire.
- Human rights' violations were reported in naxal prone areas.
- It has added to the alienation among the poor in these areas.
- It also has its effect on the government exchequer.
- LWE widened the backwardness in terms of social and economic development.
- It affected the democratic setup by hindering the elections.

What has led to the withdrawing of the insurgents from the armed struggle?

- Significant losses to its leadership in military operations or due to physical infirmities
- Indian security establishment
- Development schemes in marginalised remote areas
- Shrinking of the areas of influence - According to the data provided by Ministry of Home Affairs, the geographical influence of Maoists has contracted from 96 districts in 10 States in 2010 to 41 districts .
- Reducing support base – Absence of peasantry support unlike Chinese Revolution.
- Pointless cause of the insurgents such as
 - Refusal to acknowledge the diverse industrial base
 - Rejection of liberal democratic instruments in the Indian state
 - Faith of the poor in the robust electoral system

How can the issue be tackled?

- Empowerment of tribal people and civil society activists to promote peace in these areas.
- Surrendered LWE cadre should be used for intelligence collection to the maximum possible.
- The country's best weapon against ultras is extending the welfare state to

areas it hasn't quite reached.

- The government must act continually in winning over the support of tribals in the region and retaining their faith in the liberal democratic institutions of the state.

References

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