



## CURRENT AFFAIRS



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### **The Maoists Issue [GS III, SECURITY]**

**CONTEXT:** Home Minister Amit Shah noted in a meeting with State leaders and representatives that the influence of the Maoists in geographical area has reduced from 96 districts in 10 States to 41 now in 2010.

**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:** Two major Naxalite groups have merged into the proscribed Communist Party of India (Maoist) and it has opened the way for the armed struggle to expand beyond select pockets untouched by development issues or linkages with the welfare state concept, as continued so far.

Since the organisation is limited to the remote and densely forested terrains of central and east-central India, it may also have contributed in restricting the area of maoists- influence, as recorded by Govt. security forces.

**CHANGE IN MAOISTS IDEOLOGY-** Rather than mobilising discontents with the Indian state by projecting its weaknesses and ensuring inclusion and welfare, as the earlier followed modus-operandi, the Maoists have

privileged armed struggle, invited state repression and sought to use this to recruit adherents.

Consequence- for example, in the Philippines and Peru, most Maoist insurrections retaining armed struggle to achieve the targeted objectives, left behind death and violence rather than the genuine upliftment of the poor, that they show them as dreams.

In Spite of these factors, the Maoists have not moved from their misunderstanding of the nature of the Indian state and democracy.

They are unwilling to accept that the poor people, whom they claim to represent, seek greater engagement with the electoral process and democratic system and can be benefitted only after being the part of welfare Indian State.

SPREAD:- (still in)

- South Bastar in Chhattisgarh,
- Andhra-Odisha border
- some districts in Jharkhand.

These States must focus on expansive welfare programs and infrastructure building activities in addition to the already driven process of our security forces, to weaken the Maoists and their spread.

Frequent skirmishes and attacks often led to the damages and casualties as far as security forces and tribal civilians are concerned.

Though the insurgency has weakened, but its potency in select areas has not reduced, which should be the next target of Govt. in general and security forces in particular.

**Problem-** A purely security-driven approach fraught with human rights' violations has only added to the alienation among the poor in these areas.

**Probable solution-** To empower tribals, civil society Activists promoting peace

**WAY FORWARD:** The Indian government should not be satisfied with the mere weakening of the Maoist insurgency and reduce commitments made for the developmental needs of some districts of concern in States such as Jharkhand, as its Chief Minister has alleged.

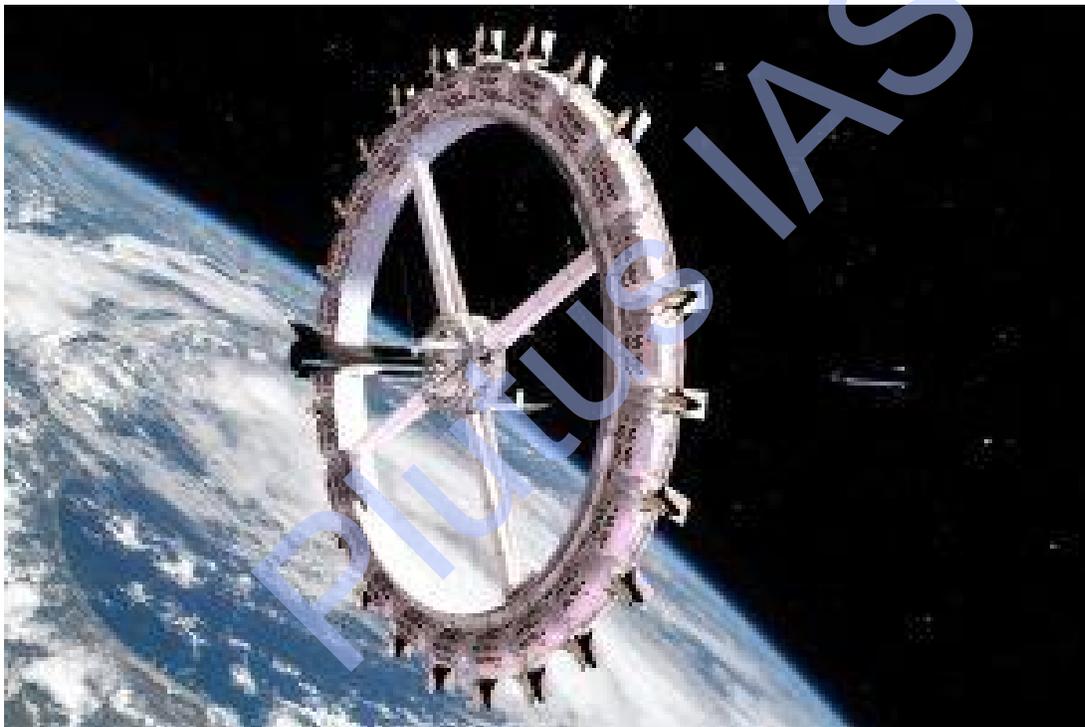
The Union government and the States must continue to learn from successes such as the expansion of welfare and rights paradigms in limiting the movement and failures that have led to the continuing spiral of violence in select districts.

The welfare programs along with Health, Education, Infrastructure developments and others should be extended and with a pace.

Furthermore, people have to be included in the electoral process and they should participate willingly. Though it may take time, the participation of civil society, tribal people, activists and others will be fruitful in the times to come.

Rajeev Yadav

## Outer Space and its Growing Strategic Importance (GS 3, Economics, The Hindu, Indian Express)



**Context:** We are witnessing a new emphasis on the importance of Outer Space when countries across the world are coming together. Even Private companies are marking tremendous technological achievements. SpaceX, a private company has made history as being the first private company to send humans into space.

**Outerspace and Quad:** In a bilateral talk on the sideline of Quad meeting 2021, President Joe Biden and PM Modi called on the US and India to “continue and expand their partnership in new domains and many areas of critical and emerging technology —cyber, space, security, health, AI, semiconductors, 5G/6G and future generation telecommunication technology, and blockchain, that will define innovation development, and the security and economic landscape for the next century”. India will engage more productively with a rapidly evolving domain of outer space that is witnessing more commerce and contestation.

The strategic interest of India in outer space is based on the recognition of two important trends. One is regarding the emerging technologies, which will be shaping the global order in 21st-century, and the other is about the urgent requirements of writing new rules for the road to peace and sustainability in outer space.

Although human intervention into space began in the middle of the 20th century, the intensity of that activity as well as its commercial and security implications have dramatically increased in recent decades. Outer Space is becoming a location for a profitable business as well as a site of military competition between countries. The Strategic importance of outer space in India is yet to get the attention it deserves.

Until recently, States were the sole players in Outer space. But private companies are now major players in space commerce. Along with this, space is becoming a critical factor in shaping the military balance of countries on the earth. There is growing competition among countries.

In the commercial domain of outer space, the US has no doubt, traditionally dominated. Its military competition with Russia during the days of cold war set the norms in the security field.

India has developed significant space capabilities over the decades and is a deeply invested party. India and US in Space: The India-US joint statement issued in Washington mentioned plans to finalise, “a Space Situational Awareness Memorandum of Understanding that will help in sharing of data and services towards ensuring the long-term sustainability of outer space activities by the end of the year”. Space situational awareness (SSA) involves monitoring the movement of all objects — man-made (satellites) and natural (meteors) and tracking space weather. Today, space has become integral to our lives and any disruption of space-based communication and earth observation will have grave consequences.

**Outerspace and China:** The emergence of China as a major space power in both civilian and military dimension, is reshaping the astropolitics. Chinese space capabilities and Beijing’s ambition to dominate outer space have lent a new urgency for democratic powers to come together for securing their national interests as well as to promote sustainable order in the skies above.

**Way Forward:** India requires a substantive National Policy Action in the backdrop of the growing strategic importance of outer space. The Indian government has undertaken some reforms in recent years like letting the private sector participate in space activity. It has created the **Indian national space Promotion and authorization Centre (IN-SPACe)**, which will assess the needs and demands of private players, including educational and research institutions, and, explore ways to board these requirements in consultation

with ISRO. India is taking tentative steps to cope with the unfolding military challenges in outer space. It has also commenced space security dialogue with close partners like the US, France, and Japan

The challenges, as well as opportunities in outer space, are huge and promising and that's why demand more immediate and comprehensive reform. These can only be mandated by the highest political level and requires international cooperation.

**MD. Layeeque Azam**

# **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission**

## **GS-2 Government Policies & Interventions, Central Sector Schemes, Health, Human Resource**

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### **CONTEXT**

The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission was recently launched by the Prime Minister through a video conference. The nationwide rollout of the project coincides with the National Health Authority (NHA) celebrating the third

anniversary of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY). The National Health Policy envisaged Ayushman Bharat as a flagship scheme of India which was launched in 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

## **SALIENT FEATURES OF THE SCHEME**

It aims to provide digital health IDs for all Indian citizens to help hospitals, insurance firms, and citizens access health records electronically when required. The pilot project of the Mission had been announced by the Prime Minister from the ramparts of the Red Fort on 15th August 2020. The project is being implemented in the pilot phase in six States & Union Territories.

**Health ID:** It will be issued for every citizen that will also work as their health account. This health account will contain details of every test, every disease, the doctors visited, the medicines taken and the diagnosis. Health ID is free of cost, voluntary. It will help in doing analysis of health data and lead to better planning, budgeting and implementation for health programs.

**Healthcare Facilities & Professionals' Registry:** The other major component of the programme is creating a **Healthcare Professionals' Registry (HPR)** and **Healthcare Facilities Registry (HFR)**, allowing easy electronic access to medical professionals and health infrastructure. The HPR will be a comprehensive repository of all healthcare professionals involved in delivering healthcare services across both modern and traditional systems of medicine. The HFR database will have records of all the country's health facilities.

**Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission Sandbox:** The Sandbox, created as a part of the mission, **will act as a framework for technology and product testing** that will help organisations, including private players intending to be a part of the **national digital health ecosystem** become a **Health Information Provider or Health Information User** or efficiently link with building blocks of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.

**Implementing Agency: National Health Authority (NHA)** under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

#### **MERITS OF THE SCHEME:**

- **Ensure ease of doing business** for doctors and hospitals and healthcare service providers.
- **Enable access and exchange of longitudinal health records** of citizens with their consent.
- **Create integration within the digital health ecosystem**, similar to the role played by the **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** in revolutionising payments.

#### **CHALLENGES OF THE SCHEME:**

- The lack of a data protection bill could lead to the misuse of data by private firms and bad actors.
- Exclusion of citizens and denied healthcare due to faults in the system are also a cause of concern.

#### **WAYFORWARD**

The NDHM still does not recognize Health as a justiciable right. There should be a push draft at making health a right, as prescribed in the draft National Health Policy, 2015. In addition, the failure of a similar National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom must be learnt from and the technical and implementation-related deficiencies must be proactively addressed prior to launching the mission on a pan India scale. The standardisation of NDHM architecture across the country will need to find ways to accommodate state-specific rules. It also needs to be in sync with government schemes like Ayushman Bharat Yojana and other IT-enabled schemes like Reproductive Child Health Care and NIKSHAY etc.

**BY ANSHUM VERMA**

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