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Newsletter by Counter Terrorism Centre



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Amit Shah Reaffirms Naxal-Free India by 2026

On 9 February 2025, India's Union Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Amit Shah, hailed the elimination of 31 Naxalites in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh, as a significant achievement in the ongoing efforts to make India Naxal-free.

He highlighted the recovery of a large quantity of weapons and explosives during the operation, emphasising the security forces' success in fighting left-wing extremism.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to eradicating Naxalism from the country by March 31, 2026.

However, the operation also resulted in the loss of two brave soldiers, and the Home Minister extended his heartfelt condolences to their families.

He praised their sacrifice in the fight against Naxalism and assured that the

nation would remain forever indebted to these martyrs.

CM Sai had also expressed grief over the martyrdom of both the soldiers. He has expressed condolences to the families of both the soldiers by releasing a message on X.

The security forces have intensified their operations in Chhattisgarh, especially in the Bastar division, which includes Bijapur. As of this year, 81 Naxalites have been killed in the state, with significant successes in multiple encounters, including the neutralisation of 219 Naxalites last year.

The government's ongoing efforts against left-wing extremism have led to several major operations, with a strong resolve to eliminate Naxalism from the region by the 2026 deadline.

- [*ETV Bharat*](#)

Ocalan Calls for PKK to Disarm, Paving the Way for Peace

In an interesting turn of events, Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), has called for his group to disarm and disband, urging a historic move that could end the 40-year conflict with Turkey.

In a letter made public by Turkey's pro-Kurdish DEM Party, Ocalan expressed his desire for peace and asked the PKK to hold a congress to formally dissolve itself.

"I am making a call for the laying down of arms, and I take on the historical responsibility of this call," Ocalan said in a letter made public by Turkey's pro-Kurdish DEM Party members.

If the PKK leadership responds positively to Ocalan's call, it could lead to a historic shift in the region, significantly impacting both Turkey and its neighbouring countries.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan would have an opportunity to end the long-standing violence in south-

eastern Turkey, where the PKK's insurgency has killed over 40,000 people and left the region economically devastated. Ocalan, now 75, has been isolated on Imrali Island since 1999, and a peace agreement would fulfil his dream of peace during his lifetime.

While the PKK has not yet responded, Kurdish-led forces in Syria have viewed Ocalan's appeal as a positive step toward peace.

A resolution to the PKK conflict would not only ease Turkey's internal tensions but also help stabilise neighbouring regions, including Kurdish-run areas in northern Iraq and Syria.

Turkey's ruling party sees this as a chance to relieve security burdens and boost the economy in the southeast, while the pro-Kurdish movement hopes it will lead to democratic reforms and greater cultural rights for Kurds in Turkey. –

[Reuters](#)

US Strikes AQ and ISIS Terror Networks

American counter-terror efforts have reaped notable rewards recently in Puntland and Syria.

On 17 February 2025, a spokesperson for American security operations in the Puntland region, Brigadier General Mohamud Mohamed Ahmed, disclosed that the U.S. airstrikes in northern Somalia, conducted in partnership with the United Arab Emirates, resulted in the death of 16 militants affiliated with the Islamic State (ISIS).

Among those killed were two senior bomb-makers, and a bomb factory was destroyed. The airstrikes targeted villages in the Cal Miskaad mountain range in Puntland's Bari region.

In response, ISIS militants launched drone attacks against Puntland security bases, though five of the seven drones were shot down by Puntland forces. No civilians were reported harmed, according to the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), which continues to assess the operation.

The U.S. military has been actively involved in efforts to combat ISIS in Somalia, where the group has established strongholds in the mountainous regions.

This recent airstrike follows a similar operation earlier in February, which resulted in the death of several key ISIS operatives, including a prominent recruiter and financier linked to the group's activities in the U.S. and Europe - Ahmed Maeleninine. Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud praised the U.S. strikes.

Meanwhile, in Syria, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) carried out an airstrike targeting a senior member of Hurras al-Din, an Al-Qaeda affiliate.

The strike, which occurred in northwest Syria, killed a key finance and logistics official within the group. The U.S. military emphasised that these operations are part of a broader commitment to counter terrorist activities and protect civilians and military personnel from attacks by terrorist groups. – [*VOA News, Hindustan Times*](#)

Australia Fined Telegram Nearly \$1M for Delayed Response on Online Safety

Australia's online safety regulator, eSafety, has fined encrypted messaging app Telegram AUD 957,780 for failing to respond to a notice regarding its efforts to combat terrorism and child abuse material. Telegram delayed providing the requested information for 160 days, obstructing the regulator's work under the Online Safety Act.

The company has 28 days to either pay the fine, request an extension, or challenge the notice. Telegram has expressed its intention to appeal, calling the penalty "unfair and disproportionate." The company's CEO, Pavel Durov, was recently arrested in France over similar issues and is now more committed to cooperating with global regulators. – [The Guardian](#)

ISKP Threatens to Kidnap Foreigners during ICC Champions Trophy

Pakistan's Intelligence Bureau issued a warning about a potential threat from the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), which is reportedly planning to kidnap foreigners who will visit the country to attend the ongoing ICC Champions Trophy 2025 for ransom. The terror group is specifically targeting Chinese and Arab nationals and has been observed renting properties in secluded areas to use as safe houses for kidnapping operations.

In 2024, ISKP-affiliated Al Azaim Media released a 19-minute long video saying cricket is a Western tool for intellectual warfare against Muslims. The group claimed that the sport promotes nationalism and propaganda, which is against Islam's jihadist ideology, criticising the Taliban for supporting the Afghanistan cricket team. Afghanistan's intelligence agency has heightened vigilance in response, warning about possible attacks on key locations linked to ISKP. – [ETV Bharat](#)

US Labels 8 Latin American Drug Groups as Global Terrorists

The US has designated eight Latin American criminal and drug-trafficking groups as "global terrorist organisations." In a Federal Register notice filed on Wednesday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated, the groups have committed or pose a risk of committing "acts of terrorism that threaten the security of United States nationals or the national security, foreign policy, or economy of the United States". The eight groups named in Wednesday's notice are the Tren de Aragua, Mara Salvatrucha (also known as MS-13), Cartel de Sinaloa, Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion, Carteles Unidos, Cartel de Noreste, Cartel del Golfo and La Nueva Familia Michoacana. – [Al Jazeera](#)