

## Integrated plan to reach 78 Maoist-hit districts

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The Integrated Action Plan (IAP), currently being implemented in 60 most affected Naxal-hit districts, will be expanded to 78 districts.

Planning Commission member secretary Sudha Pillai told *The Pioneer* that Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia has given his nod to the proposal. Formal announcement of this might come within few days or during Budget speech next year.

She further informed that the scheme would be carried forward in initial two years of the 12th five year Plan following which it furtherance will be decided based on its performance.

When Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs had approved the scheme last year, it was to be completed in the last years of the 11th Plan only.

IAP is aimed to boost development in Naxal areas by providing healthcare, drinking water, education and basic infrastructure. As per the scheme, the Centre had released ₹25 crore for each of the Maoist-affected districts of nine States: Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. As per the new proposal the fund is to be increased to ₹30 crore.

The development comes weeks after Home Minister P Chidambaram's statement that Left Wing Extremism is a greater challenge than terrorism in terms of number (10 times more) of people killed in violence.

In September, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh too had stressed the need for integrated development to counter the menace of Naxalism.

During the same workshop,



Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh had said the Government is aiming to add 20 more districts to the scheme. He added, "There is unanimous view among all the District Collectors and State Governments that I have interacted with that the district should not be model for the intermediate model. But we should actually be talking about blocks."

However, Pillai said that the scheme would be implemented district-wise only since implementing at block level will have administrative hassles.