

18 more districts added to new list

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The official Left Wing Extremism (LWE) districts have gone up to 78, after the Centre approved the proposal of the ministry of home affairs, which was vetted by the Planning Commission, to add another 18 districts. The Centre, while also approving an annual budget of each such district covered under the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) of ₹30 crores to be spent by local administration, also approved in-principle of focus on blocks in the LWE districts for focused development of the areas.

Though the proposal was for adding 20 districts in the LWE list, the Planning Commission, sources said, did not agree for inclusion of West Champaran and Sitamarhi districts in Bihar, which border Nepal, on the grounds that they were not contiguous.

The 18 districts, which are now part of the IAP programme after the Union Cabinet approval on

Wednesday, are six from Andhra Pradesh (Karim Nagar, Warangal, East Godawari, Visakhapatnam, Vijaywada, Srikakulam and Vizianagaram), three each from Orissa (Ganjam, Jajpur and Nayagarh) and Jharkhand (Giridih, Kunthi and Ranchi), two from West Bengal (Bankura and Purulia), two from Bihar (Munger and Kaimur) and two from Uttar Pradesh (Mirzapur and Chandouli).

While the local administration consisting of district collector, superintendent of police and district forest officer themselves can decide how to spend the annual ₹30 crores in their districts, the Centre is now working on a plan to rope in political representatives also in the process, which could include the gram panchayats to begin with, said a senior official.

Now the expanded 78 IAP districts will get dedicated attention from the Planning Commission and other ministries, including the ministry of rural development.