

THE HINDU EDITORIAL ANALYSIS REPORT

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ARTICLE 1: Fire in the sky: on Deepavali and the battle for clean air

URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/fire-in-the-sky-on-deepavali-and-the-battle-for-clean-air/article70182571.ece>

Status: Success

■ ORIGINAL EDITORIAL CONTENT

This Deepavali, firecrackers are being burst under legal sanction in Delhi. The Supreme Court, in an order this week, modified a ban it had sanctioned since 2018, allowing the use of green crackers during the festival. While the decision comes with caveats on implementation, it underscores the continuous challenge authorities face in dealing with pressures from cultural norms and economic activity while prioritising public health and environmental safety. The re-introduction of legally sanctioned, less-polluting options marks a shift in government policy after the BJP came to power and aims to accommodate traditional celebrations while acknowledging the severe environmental impact of conventional fireworks in Delhi, which is disproportionately affected by noxious winter air. This move recognises that for many across India, the use of fireworks is an integral cultural expression of joy during the festival of lights. Furthermore, the firecracker industry supports the livelihoods of lakhs of people, making economic considerations part of the regulatory landscape.

However, as the history of Delhi's air pollution shows, the battle for clean air is a complex interplay of meteorology, economic structure, population, and geography. Multiple expert bodies and task forces have deployed science and widespread measurement—at a scale few cities in the world have attempted—to conclude that air quality is impacted by diverse sources: transport, industry, agriculture-waste burning, biomass burning, construction, and road dust at different periods. Evidence also suggests that intervals of extended rains often have the largest effect on improving average air quality levels. While the contribution of firecrackers to the annual pollution problem may be temporary, the data confirms that the resultant spike makes an already bad air situation worse. Allowing the use of scientifically developed 'green' crackers—which are estimated to be about two-thirds less noxious—is an effort to tolerate a temporary surge under controlled conditions. This approach seeks to find a middle ground between honouring tradition and minimising harm. But while green crackers represent an improvement over conventional ones, they are not zero-emission products. In legalising this less-effulgent option, governments and courts must be careful not to take the focus away from the need for public commitment to stricter environmental norms rooted in science and reason, and not in hope and faith. There is no alternative to comprehensive, consistent action against all sources of pollution.

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■ GEMINI ANALYSIS

■ CENTRAL IDEA

The Supreme Court's decision to allow 'green crackers' for Deepavali in Delhi reflects a complex balancing act between cultural traditions, economic livelihoods, and the severe environmental

impact of air pollution. While this move attempts to find a middle ground, the article emphasizes that it should not distract from the urgent need for comprehensive, science-based action against all sources of pollution to ensure long-term clean air.

■ **AUTHOR'S TONE**

ANALYTICAL

■ **PARAGRAPH-WISE SUMMARY**

- 1. The first paragraph discusses the Supreme Court's modification of a firecracker ban, allowing green crackers for Deepavali, highlighting the challenge authorities face in balancing cultural norms and economic activity with public health and environmental safety in Delhi.
- 2. The second paragraph elaborates on the complex nature of Delhi's air pollution, noting that while firecrackers contribute temporarily, their spike worsens an already bad situation, and argues that 'green' crackers, though less noxious, are not a complete solution, stressing the need for comprehensive action against all pollution sources.

■ **VOCABULARY BUILDER**

Word	Meaning	Example Usage
sanction	official permission or approval for an action	The project received official sanction from the city council.
caveats	warnings or conditions that must be considered before something is done	The agreement was approved with several important caveats.
disproportionately	to an extent that is too large or too small in comparison with something else	The new tax will disproportionately affect low-income families.
noxious	harmful, poisonous, or very unpleasant	The factory released noxious fumes into the atmosphere.
interplay	the way in which two or more things affect each other	The interplay of light and shadow created a dramatic effect.
effulgent	shining brightly; radiant	The effulgent sun rose over the horizon, signaling a new day.
comprehensive	including or dealing with all or nearly all elements or aspects of something	The report provided a comprehensive analysis of the market trends.

■ **CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

- 1. What is the primary dilemma the author discusses regarding the Supreme Court's decision on firecrackers? (*main_idea*)
- 2. What does the author imply about the long-term effectiveness of 'green' crackers in solving Delhi's overall air pollution problem? (*inference*)
- 3. What assumption does the author make about the public's role in achieving stricter environmental norms? (*assumptions*)

■ **KEY TAKEAWAY**

Pay attention to how authors present complex issues by balancing multiple, often conflicting, perspectives and proposed solutions, while also highlighting underlying challenges.

ARTICLE 2: For a new path: on the surrender of key Maoist leaders

URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/for-a-new-path-on-the-surrender-of-key-maoist-leaders/article70182993.ece>

Status: Success

■ ORIGINAL EDITORIAL CONTENT

That the Maoist insurgency is on the back foot has been evident for months now. The Maoist presence has been limited to 11 districts, with its core areas whittled down to three — the forested and remote districts of Bijapur, Narayanpur and Sukma in Chhattisgarh. The credit for weakening what was once termed India's "greatest internal security threat" must be shared by security forces that adapted counter-insurgency tactics to the realities on the ground, and district administrations and successive governments since the mid-2000s which accelerated developmental work. The defeat of the Maoists in hitherto impoverished tribal regions of central India followed a similar retreat from united Andhra Pradesh, which saw the same strategy. This made it near impossible for the insurgents to build alternative governance structures, eventually encircling cities — a plan followed by the Chinese Communist Party a century ago to defeat the Nationalists. The Maoists aimed to form base areas in remote districts of central and north-central India, in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, eastern Maharashtra, western Odisha and northern Andhra Pradesh. They expected support from tribals, many nursing disaffection due to the absence of the state and its developmental arms.

While areas such as Abujmahad in south Chhattisgarh, Gadchiroli in Maharashtra and parts of Odisha initially provided conditions for the Maoists to establish alternative institutions, over time, tribal unrest grew, with resentment over being used as pawns in militarist battles against the Indian state. This was partly because the Maoists privileged armed struggle over the economic uplift of tribals. The Maoists gained strength in the late 2000s when the Salwa Judum campaign resulted in massive displacement and brutal internecine battles, providing discontented recruits. However, the Supreme Court's ban on the campaign and the professionalisation of anti-insurgency forces weakened the militant insurgency. Simultaneously, tribal people saw more benefits from a proactive state — despite persisting limitations — leading to growing disillusionment with the Maoist idea of a violent route towards an alternative state. This experience mirrors what transpired in Peru, Colombia, the Philippines and Malaysia. That this realisation has dawned upon senior Maoist leaders is evident when surrendered Politburo member Mallojula Venugopal Rao suggested that the only task left was to "abandon the dogmatic practice of the Chinese and Russian lines, regardless of the change in circumstances and time [in India]". This opens the opportunity for the cadres to utilise spaces within Indian democracy for political engagement. Even if it has not convinced all the insurgents as yet, it will serve the people of the remaining districts and those committed to their uplift well if the Maoists abandon their struggle.

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■ GEMINI ANALYSIS

■ CENTRAL IDEA

The Maoist insurgency in India is significantly weakened, now confined to a few districts, primarily due to effective counter-insurgency tactics, accelerated developmental work by the state, and growing disillusionment among tribals. This shift, coupled with a senior leader's call to abandon dogmatic armed struggle, opens avenues for political engagement within India's democracy.

■ AUTHOR'S TONE

ANALYTICAL

■ PARAGRAPH-WISE SUMMARY

1. The first paragraph details the significant decline of the Maoist insurgency, crediting adaptive security forces and accelerated developmental work for limiting their presence and preventing the establishment of alternative governance structures. It highlights the failure of the Maoists' strategy to gain sustained tribal support despite initial expectations of disaffection.
2. The second paragraph explains the reasons for tribal disillusionment with the Maoists, noting their prioritization of armed struggle over economic uplift and the state's increasingly proactive role. It also discusses how the professionalization of anti-insurgency forces and the Supreme Court's ban on Salwa Judum further weakened the militants, leading a surrendered leader to advocate abandoning dogmatic practices for democratic engagement.

■ VOCABULARY BUILDER

Word	Meaning	Example Usage
insurgency	A rebellion or uprising against a government or authority.	The government launched a major operation to quell the ongoing insurgency in the region.
whittled down	Gradually reduced in size, amount, or extent.	The budget cuts slowly whittled down the department's resources.
hitherto	Until this time; previously.	The new policy addresses issues hitherto ignored by previous administrations.
disaffection	A state of dissatisfaction with people in authority or a system of control.	Growing economic inequality led to widespread disaffection among the populace.
internecine	Destructive to both sides in a conflict; mutually destructive.	The internecine conflict between the two factions weakened the entire organization.
dogmatic	Asserting opinions as if they were facts; rigid or unbending in beliefs.	His dogmatic approach to problem-solving often alienated his colleagues.
cadres	A small group of people specially trained for a particular purpose or profession.	The party is training new cadres to lead its grassroots campaigns.

■ CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. What are the primary reasons cited in the article for the significant decline of the Maoist insurgency in India? (*main_idea*)
2. Based on the article, what can be inferred about the effectiveness of a purely militaristic approach against insurgencies without addressing socio-economic factors? (*inference*)
3. What assumption does the author make about the 'spaces within Indian democracy for political engagement' in the context of former insurgents? (*assumptions*)

■ **KEY TAKEAWAY**

Notice how the author uses a cause-and-effect structure to explain complex socio-political shifts, linking state actions, insurgent strategies, and public sentiment.