



## Naga Insurgency

**For Prelims:** [National Investigation Agency \(NIA\)](#), [Naga Peace Process](#), [Naga Hills](#), [Armed Forces \(Special Powers\) Act \(AFSPA\)](#), [Shillong Accord of 1975](#), Bru Accord 2020, Bodo Peace Accord 2020, Karbi Anglong Agreement 2021, Mizo Peace Accord 1986, [Citizenship \(Amendment\) Act 2019](#), [National Register of Citizens \(NRC\)](#)

**For Mains:** [Naga Peace Process](#), [Free Movement Regime \(FMR\)](#)

**Source:** TH

### Why in News?

Recently, the [National Investigation Agency \(NIA\)](#) filed a charge sheet in a Guwahati court, accusing the "China-Myanmar module" of the **National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM)** of supporting cadres of **two banned Meitei outfits** to infiltrate India.

- The NIA alleges that the NSCN-IM's actions were [aimed at exploiting ethnic unrest](#) in Manipur, destabilising the state, and waging war against the Indian government.

### What is the Naga Insurgency and Related Issues?

- **Nagas:**
  - The **Nagas** are an **indigenous community** residing in the northeastern part of India and the neighbouring areas of Myanmar.
    - It is widely believed that they are **Indo-Mongoloids** who migrated to India around the 10th century BC.
- **History of Nagas:**
  - **Nagas under British rule:** The Nagas came under foreign rule for the first time when the British occupied their land in the **19th century**.
  - **Nagas during World War II:** During [World War II](#), the Nagas assisted the British forces.
  - The **Naga National Council (NNC)** was founded in 1946 and signed a **Nine-Point Agreement** with the Assam [Governor](#), granting Nagas control over their territory.
    - [Naga independence](#) was declared on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947.
  - In the 1950s, the **NNC took up arms** and resorted to violence over Naga's sovereignty.
    - The NNC formed the underground **Naga Federal Government (NFG)** and its military wing, the **Naga Federal Army (NFA)**, in 1952.
  - Following the [Shillong Accord \(1975\)](#) the **NNC split into NSCN**, which further split into **NSCN (IM)** and **NSCN (Khaplang)** in 1988.
- **Naga's Issue:**
  - Naga groups are primarily seeking [Greater Nagalim](#), which involves redrawing boundaries to **unite all Naga-inhabited areas in the Northeast** under one administrative jurisdiction, ultimately aiming for sovereign statehood.
    - It includes various parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Assam and Myanmar as well.

- The demand also includes the **separate Naga Yezabo (Constitution) and Naga national flag.**

#### ▪ Peace Initiatives:

- **Shillong Accord (1975):** A peace accord signed in Shillong saw the NNC leadership **agree to disarm**, but dissent among leaders led to a split in the organisation.
- **Ceasefire Agreement (1997):** The NSCN-IM signed a ceasefire agreement with the government to **stop attacks on Indian armed forces**. In return, the government would stop all counter-insurgency offensive operations.
- **Framework Agreement with NSCN-IM (2015):** In this agreement, the Government of India **recognised the unique history**, culture and position of the Nagas and their sentiments and aspirations.

## What is the Status of Conflicts in Nagaland and Manipur?

#### ▪ History of Conflict in Manipur:

- There are 16 districts in Manipur, but the state is commonly thought of as divided into **'valley' and 'hill' districts.**
  - The **valley region is mostly dominated by the Meitei community.**
- The Manipur valley is surrounded by low hills and is home to **15 Naga tribes** and the **Chin-Kuki-Mizo-Zomi group**, which includes the Kuki, Thadou, Hmar, Paite, Vaiphei, and Zou peoples.
- The **Kangleipak kingdom of Manipur**, a British protectorate, was raided by Naga tribes from the northern hills. The British political agent brought Kuki-Zomi from the Kuki-Chin hills of Burma to protect the valley from plunder by acting as a **buffer between the Meiteis and the Nagas.**
- The Kukis, fierce headhunting warriors like the Nagas, were **given land along the ridges** to act as a **shield for the Imphal valley below.**

#### ▪ Kuki-Meitei Divide: The hill communities (Naga & Kuki) and the Meiteis (valley) have had ethnic tensions since the kingdom era. The [Naga movement](#) for independence in the 1950s triggered insurgencies among the [Meiteis and Kuki-Zomi.](#)

- The Kuki-Zomi groups militarised in the 1990s to demand a state within India called **'Kukiland'(a state within India).** This **alienated them from the Meiteis**, whom they had earlier defended.
  - Whereas the meiteis are seeking to restore their tribal status, as recognized before Manipur's 1949 merger with India.

#### ▪ Reason For Recent Conflict:

- **Issues in Delimitation Process:** In 2020, during the first [delimitation process](#) in the state since 1973, the Meitei community claimed that the Census figures used were inaccurate, while tribal groups (**Kuki and Nagas**) argued they were **underrepresented** in the Assembly **despite constituting 40% of the population.**
- **Intrusion of Migrants from Neighbour Area:** The February 2021 [coup in Myanmar](#) has triggered a **refugee crisis** in India's Northeast, with Meitei leaders claiming a sudden **increase of migrants in villages in Churachandpur district.**
- **Trigger For Violence:** The initial violent protest arose from the **eviction of a Kuki village**, with 38 villages in the **Churachandpur-Khoupum Protected Forest** area termed as "**illegal settlements**," allegedly violating [Article 371C.](#)

#### ▪ Convergence of Interest of Militants: The recent filing of charge sheet signifies the **links between the NSCN-IM based in Nagaland and Imphal valley-based insurgent groups** during the current ethnic crisis.

- One of the arrested individual is a **trained cadre of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), one of the eight Meitei insurgent groups** that have been banned by the Ministry Of Home Affairs (MHA) for "**advocating secession of Manipur** from India through armed struggle."
- The **PLA was formed in 1978** and continues to be one of the most violent terror outfits in the northeast and is **currently led by M.M. Ngouba.**

## Status of Conflict in Other North-Eastern States

- **Mizoram:** Before gaining statehood in 1987, [Mizoram was a part of Assam](#) and faced militancy due to the Union government's inadequate response to its request for aid during the "**Mautam famine**," with the **Mizo National Front** led by Laldenga demanding independence in 1966.
- **Tripura:** The influx of Hindus from British-ruled East Bengal led to the **reduction of indigenous tribal people** to a minority, sparking a [violent backlash](#) and the rise of militant groups demanding **restoration of tribal rights**.
- **Assam:** The call for deporting illegal migrants led to the [emergence of militant groups](#) like the United Liberation Front of Assam (**ULFA**) in 1979, alongside others such as the **Bodo Liberation Tigers** and National Democratic Front of Bodoland (**NDFB**).
- **Meghalaya:** The creation of [Meghalaya from Assam](#) aimed to meet the distinct requirements of major tribes, including the **Garos, Jaintias, and Khasis**, but also sparked **insurgent movements such as the GNLA and HNLC** due to tribal autonomy aspirations.
- **Arunachal Pradesh:** Throughout history, [Arunachal Pradesh](#) has generally remained peaceful, but proximity to the Myanmar and Nagaland borders has led to a recent increase in insurgency, with the **Arunachal Dragon Force (ADF)**, later renamed the East India Liberation Front (EALF) in 2001, being the **only indigenous insurgency movement in the region**.

## Way Forward

- Need to assess the **criteria for ST status (for Meities)** in accordance with recommendations from various Committees such as the [Lokur Committee \(1965\)](#) and the [Bhuria Commission \(2002-2004\)](#).
- Increase surveillance along the border regions to deter the infiltration of migrants from Myanmar.
- Improving **economic and diplomatic relationships** with neighbouring nations can contribute to bolstering regional stability and security.
- **Preserve the identity of border region communities** and negotiate peace agreements with insurgent groups to ensure stability.
- **Regularly reviewing AFSPA** is essential, along with implementing confidence-building measures.
  - The government ought to encourage the **involvement of the local population** in decision-making in order to cultivate a feeling of ownership and connection.

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

Q. Discuss the internal security challenges prevalent in the North Eastern region of India. Evaluate the effectiveness of government measures in addressing these challenges.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### **Mains**

Q. How far are India's internal security challenges linked with border management particularly in view of the long porous borders with most countries of South Asia and Myanmar? **(2013)**

Q. How does illegal transborder migration pose a threat to India's security? Discuss the strategies to curb this, bringing out the factors which give impetus to such migration. **(2014)**

