



Assam-Mizoram Border Dispute

Why in News

Recently, several IED (Improvised Explosive Device) blasts were carried out inside Cachar district of Assam allegedly by miscreants from Mizoram. These blasts signal the **re-emergence of long-unresolved Assam-Mizoram Border Dispute**.

- The [boundary issue between Assam and Mizoram](#) has existed since the formation of Mizoram — first as a union territory in 1972, and then as a full-fledged state in 1987.
- In India, Inter-state disputes are multifaceted, besides disputes over boundaries, there are [disputes over sharing of water \(rivers\)](#) and migration also impacts the federal polity of India.

Note

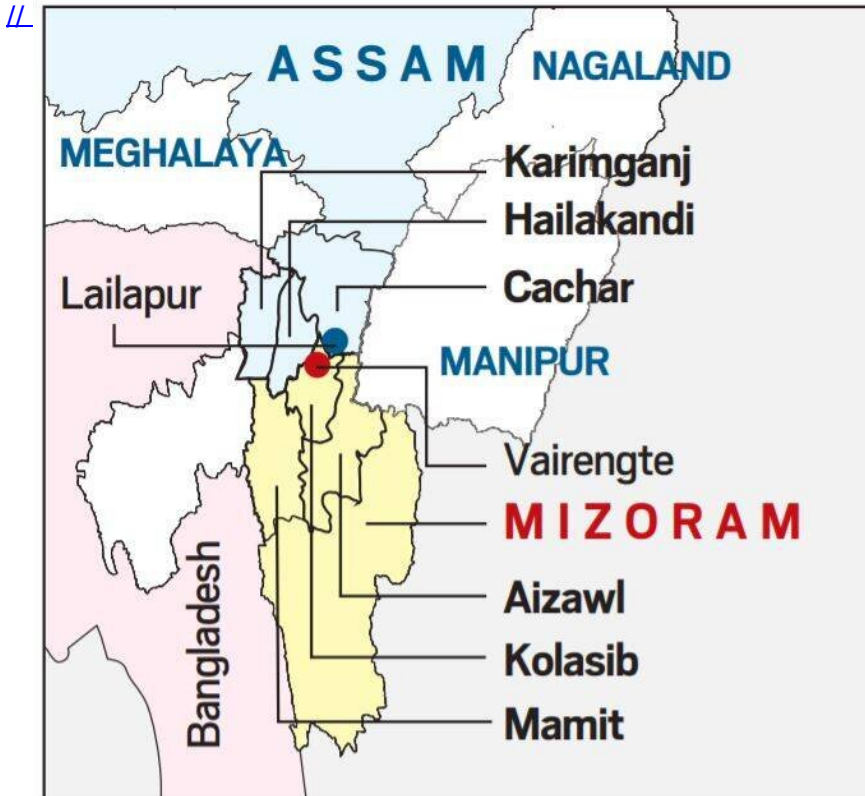
- During colonial times, **Mizoram was known as Lushai Hills**, a district of Assam.
- Mizoram was granted **statehood in 1987** by the State of Mizoram Act, 1986.
- **Assam became a constituent state of India in 1950** and lost much of its territory to new states that emerged from within its borders between the early 1960s and the early 1970s.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - The boundary issue between present-day Assam and Mizoram **dates back to the colonial era** when inner lines were demarcated according to the administrative needs of British Raj.
 - The Assam-Mizoram dispute **stems from two notifications passed under British era**.
 - First, **notification of 1875**, that differentiated Lushai Hills from the plains of Cachar.
 - Second, **notification of 1933**, that demarcates a boundary between Lushai Hills and Manipur.
 - Mizoram believes the **boundary should be demarcated on the basis of the 1875 notification**, which is derived from the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR) Act, 1873**.
 - Mizo leaders are against the demarcation notified in 1933, according to them, the **Mizo society was not consulted**.
 - On the other hand, the **Assam government follows the 1933 demarcation**.
 - As a result both states continue to have a **differing perception of the border** and that is the point of conflict.
 - There is a **164.6-km inter-state border that separates Assam and Mizoram**, with the three Assam districts of Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj sharing a border with Kolasib, Mamit and Aizawl districts of Mizoram.
 - Further, the boundary between Mizoram and Assam **follows naturally occurring**

barriers of hills, valleys, rivers and forests, and both sides have attributed border skirmishes to perceptual differences over an imaginary line.

- In the **Northeast's complex boundary equations**, clashes between Assam and Mizoram residents are less frequent than they are between other neighbouring states of Assam, like with Nagaland.



▪ **Overall Condition of Inter-State Disputes in India:**

- **Issue of Boundary:** Boundary disputes between the states are one of major reasons for Inter-state disputes in India. For example,
 - **Karnataka and Maharashtra both lay claim to Belgaum**, and every now and then the matter comes up.
 - The **North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971**, changed the political map of northeast India, by establishment of the states like Manipur and Tripura and the formation of Meghalaya.
 - However, this reorganisation has resulted in many boundary disputes in the northeastern region, like Assam-Nagaland, Assam-Meghalaya, etc.
- **Issue of Migration:** There have been violent agitations in some states over migrants and job seekers from other states.
 - This is because the existing resources and the employment opportunities are not enough to meet the needs of the growing population.
 - The **'sons of the soil' concept** for preference in employment in the states concerned tends to destroy the roots of a healthy federalism.
- **Disputes over Sharing Water Resources:** The most long standing and contentious inter-state issue has been the **sharing of river waters**.
 - Most of the Indian rivers are inter-state, i.e., they flow through more than one state.
 - Due to an increase in demand for water, a number of inter state disputes over sharing river waters have surfaced.

Way Forward

- Boundary disputes between the states **can be settled by using satellite mapping of the actual border locations.**
- **Reviving the Inter-state council** can be an option for resolution of an Inter-state dispute.
 - Under **Article 263 of the Constitution**, the Inter-state council is expected to inquire and advise on disputes, discuss subjects common to all states and make recommendations for better policy coordination.
- Similarly, **Zonal councils** need to be revived to discuss the matters of common concern to states in each zone—matters relating to social and economic planning, border disputes, inter-state transport, etc.
- India is the epitome of unity in diversity. However, in order to strengthen this unity furthermore, both the centre and state governments, need to imbibe the ethos of **cooperative federalism.**

Source: TH

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