



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 14th 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)**

