

Insurgency in North East

1. Geography of North East India

Geography of North East:

Northeast India is the eastern-most region of India. It is connected to East India via a narrow corridor (Siliguri corridor) squeezed between independent nations of Bhutan and Bangladesh.

It comprises the contiguous **Seven Sister States** (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura), plus the Himalayan state of Sikkim.



Comparative Status of North East

States	Population(as per Census 2011)	Area(Sq Km)	Percentage All India		Person(per Sq Km)
			Population	Area	
Arunachal Pradesh	1382611	83743	0.11%	2.54%	16.51
Assam	3,11,69,272	78438	2.57%	2.38%	397.37
Manipur	2721756	22327	0.22%	0.67%	122.17
Meghalaya	2964007	22429	0.24%	0.68%	132.15
Mizoram	1091014	21081	0.09%	0.64%	51.75
Nagaland	1980602	16579	0.16%	0.50%	119.46
Sikkim	6,07,688	7096	0.05%	0.21%	85.63
Tripura	36,17,032	10486	0.29%	0.31%	344.93
Total NE	4,55,33,982	262179	3.07%	7.97%	173.67
All India	121,00,00,000	32,87,263			374.17

2. Strategic Importance:

Strategic Importance of North East: Northeast India has an extraordinarily important international strategic dimension and is a vital part of the nation's defence architecture. Its importance is enumerated below:

International Border:

These states share their borders with other countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and China. It makes up close to 40% of India's land borders with its neighbours.

1. Bridge to South East Asia:

The region is at the crossroads of India and Southeast Asia. It is a bridgehead between India and the vibrant economies of Southeast Asia, including southern China.

2. Economic Significance:

North East is endowed with huge natural resource (oil, gas, coal, hydro, fertile land, etc) which can be harnessed for nation development.

3. Overview of conflict in North East:

- India's North east region has been land of thousand mutinies. These mutinies have been taking place since pre-independence times. The insurgencies in north east are a reflection of its social, cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity, terrain, socio-economic development, politico-economic conditions, historical evolution and changes in the environment of the area.
- A cursory look at the demographic mosaic of northeastern India would show that this region is home to a curious amalgam of cross-cutting societies. What compounds the problem of this plurality is the fact that the tendency for ethno-political assertion is high among almost all the groups. This is primarily because the political boundaries in most cases do not coincide with the existing social boundaries. The northeastern units of the Indian federation, in spite of several political permutations and combinations have not been able to cater to the demands of all the ethnic categories clamouring for recognition of their distinctive identity.
- This is reflected in the pattern of conflicts, which are varied in their nature and causes and the stance of insurgent groups which remain divergent and ever changing. These range from secession to autonomy, movements against foreigners and immigrants, ethnic integration and reaction to perceived imposition of Indianness. The common factor is resorting to violence in articulation and mobilization of the demands.

Conflicts in the region can be broadly grouped under the following categories:

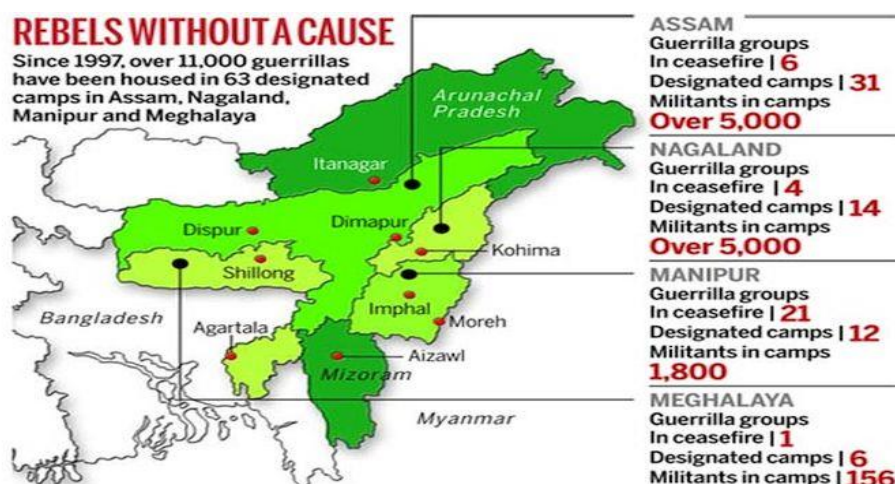
- **National conflicts:** Involving concept of a distinct 'homeland' as a separate nation and pursuit of the realization of that goal by use of various methods both violent as well as non violent. Ex: ULFA demand for sovereign Asom, NSCN for Greater Nagaland.
- **Ethnic conflicts:** Involving assertion of numerically smaller and less dominant tribal groups against the political and cultural hold of the dominant tribal group. In Assam this also takes the form of tension between local and migrant communities.
- **Sub-regional conflicts:** Involving movements which ask for recognition of sub-regional aspirations and often come in direct conflict with the State Governments or even the autonomous Councils. Ex: UPDS in Assam.

General conditions favoring Insurgency:

- Large scale migration has created a fear in the minds of people that they will be reduced to minority in their own states or regions. Migrants threaten their culture and traditions and also occupy already limited employment opportunities. Migration of Muslims has also imparted it a communal color.

- Lack of economic opportunities and governance deficit making it easier for people to feel alienated and left out and thus providing support for insurgency.
- Porous international borders and easy availability of arms.
- Difficult terrain and weak infrastructure facilitating insurgents involved in conflict.
- Deep sense of alienation due to human right violation and excesses by security forces.

4. Insurgents groups in Northeast India:



Major Insurgent Groups operating in North Eastern States

ASSAM	
(i)	United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)
(ii)	National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB)
(iii)	Kamtapur Liberation Organisations (KLO)***
MANIPUR	
(i)	People's Liberation Army(PLA)
(ii)	United National Liberation Front(UNLF)
(iii)	Peoples' Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK)
(iv)	Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP)
(v)	KangleiYaolKannaLup (KYKL)
(vi)	Manipur Peoples' Liberation Front (MPLF) and
(vii)	Revolutionary Peoples' Front (RPF) and
(viii)	Coordination Committee Cor-com (conglomerate of six valley base UG outfits).

MEGHALAYA	
(i)	Hynniewtre National Liberation Council (HNLC)
(ii)	Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) ***
TRIPURA	
(i)	All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF)
(ii)	National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT)
NAGALAND	
(i)	The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (IsakMuivah) - [NSCN(IM)]
(ii)	The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) [NSCN(K)]**
(iii)	The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khole-Kitovi)[NSCN(KK)]
(iv)	The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Reformation)[NSCN(R)]
<p>* All the militant outfits mentioned above except NSCN/IM, NSCN/KK and NSCN/R, have been declared 'Unlawful Associations' under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. In addition, the outfits named above in respect of Assam, Manipur and Tripura have also been listed as 'terrorist organizations' in the schedule to the above Act.</p> <p>** NSCN/K declared as 'Unlawful Association' & terrorist organisation.</p> <p>*** KLO and GNLA declared only as a 'terrorist organizations'.</p>	

Reasons for conflicts (State-wise)

Assam:

- 1st state of NE India post 1947
- Radical turn in Assamese nationalism can be traced back to the influx of illegal migrants from East Pakistan after Partition in 1947 and later since 1971 onwards after the formation of Bangladesh
- Massive migrant flow created immense anxiety amongst the Assamese middle classes and the rural masses
- Violent protests erupted
- Assamese thought → India is exploiting Assam's oil
- Revenues from Assam's other famous product—tea—were also going to the head offices located in West Bengal
- Most proximate cause of the Assam Agitation (1979-1985) was however malpractices in the electoral procedure in 1978
- All Assam Students' Union (AASU) led an agitation demanding the 1951 National Register for Citizens be utilized to determine the citizenship of all those living in Assam
- State tried to use force and suppress the agitation
- Creation of one of the most persistent of violent ethnic movements in Assam—the **United Liberation front of Asom (ULFA)**. **7 April 1979 -ULFA was formed on at Ranghar, in Sivasagar, a sight of historical significance since the time of the Ahom rule**
- ULFA wants Assam's status to the **Ahom ruled** Assam, pre-1826 treaty of Yandaboo between the British and the Burmese, which brought in British rule in Assam
- Recruits of the ULFA were drawn from the Asom Jatiyabadi Parishad (AJYCP)-Swadhin Asom → (Independent Assam).
- 3 September 2011, peace talk. Tripartite agreement for Suspension of Operations (SoO) against ULFA

- Signed between Indian Government, Assam government and ULFA July 2012, violence broke out with riots between indigenous Bodos and Bengali-speaking Muslims (who were suspected to be **illegal Bangladeshi muslims**).
- Violence in Assam later had its repercussions in other parts of India, Azad maidan riots in Mumbai, Rumour mongering (via sinister SMSs) triggered exodus of NE Indians.

Statehood demands in Assam

1. Bodoland
2. Karbi Anglong
3. Dimaraji
4. Kamtapur

Post Telangana, revival of statehood movements by four ethnic groups — the Bodos, the Karbis, the Dimasas and the Koch-Rajbangshis

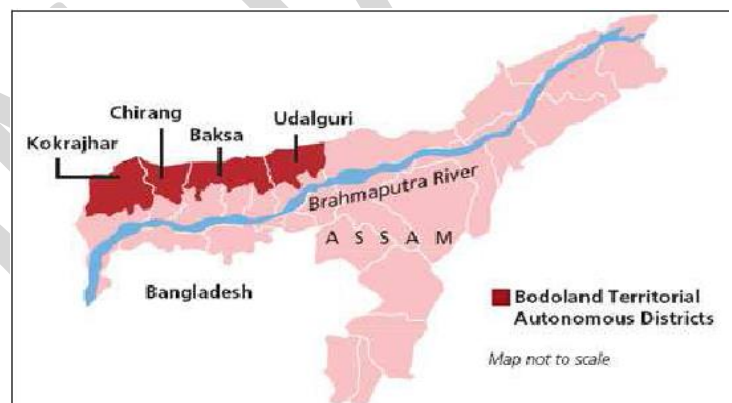
General reasons behind their demand of separate statehood

- To **preserve and promote** their ethnic identity
- For rapid economic development in backward areas
- To ensure control over natural resources like land

1. Bodoland

Demand for state consisting of areas located extreme north of north bank of Brahmaputra river in the state of Assam, by the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh; inhabited predominantly by the Bodo people

Bodoland Movement for an independent state of Bodoland started on March 2, 1987 under the leadership of Upendranath Brahma of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU)



The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC)

- BTC has legislative, administrative, executive and financial powers over 40 policy areas in the Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts comprising four districts (**Kokrajhar, Baksa, Chirang and Udalguri**) of Assam.
- It was established in **2003 following a peace agreement between the Government of India and Bodo rebels** and is functioning since 2003 under the provision of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India

National Democratic Front of Bodoland

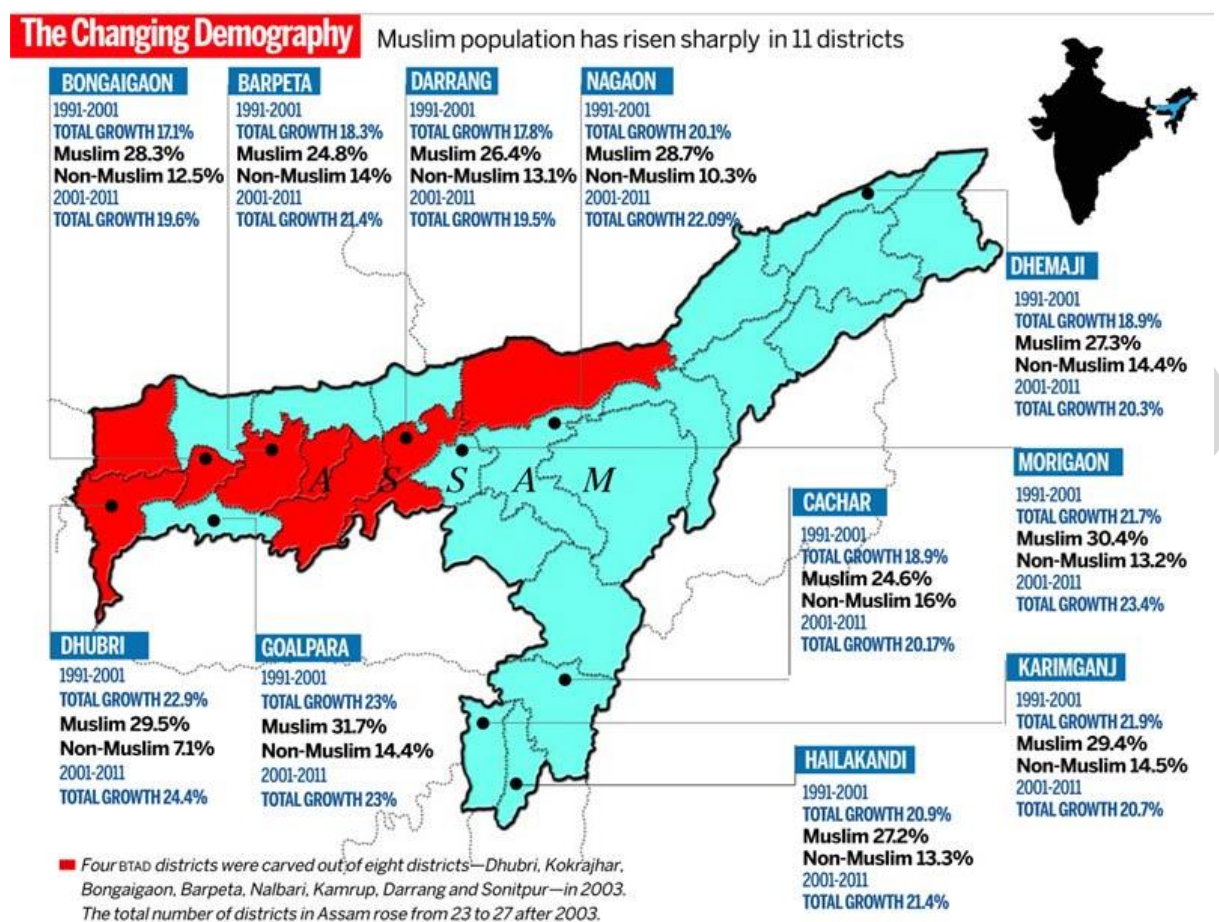
NDFB (Songjit faction) had turned up the fire in Assam in the year 2014, December by attacking districts of Sonitpur and Kokrajhar, killing nearly 78 and leaving many seriously injured. It appears that this carnage started in retaliation to the death of three NDFB (S) cadres during a counter-insurgency operation conducted by the Mahar Regiment on December 21 against the outfit's camp in the Chirang District along the Assam-Bhutan border.

Causes of these recurring violence in the area:

First, the political empowerment of the minority communities in the Bodo Territorial Area District (BTAD) in recent years has resulted in growing unease in the Bodo community.

- The fear is about non-Bodo communities dominating the political process as seen in the election of Sarania.

Second, political tension in the area is further compounded by the perception among the Bodos that illegal migration from Bangladesh is relegating them to a minority status in their own land. (**changing demography**)



Third, the ‘perception’ of massive illegal migration has generated a fear psychosis in the Bodo community that their ancestral lands will be illegally taken away by the migrants. The lack of any reliable data on the number of people migrating from Bangladesh into Assam further aggravates the situation.

Fourth, the inclusion of illegal migrants in the voters list is viewed as a deliberate ploy to empower an outside group *vis-à-vis* the Bodos, so that the latter lose their distinct indigenous identity. This has created a siege mentality among Bodos.

The situation has been further compounded by the failure of the Bodo Territorial Council (BTC) to mitigate the fears of the Bodos.

- For instance, the Bodo Accord of 2003 clearly stated that the BTC will “fulfill the economic, educational, and linguistic aspirations and the preservation of land-rights socio-cultural and ethnic identity of the Bodos.” Despite these provisions the Bodos continue to feel insecure *vis-à-vis* the minority communities due to weak administrative institutions that have failed to lock in their rights.

The divisive politics of the members of the BTC have also added to the insecurity.

- For example, in May 2012, the BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary had accused the minority representative in the BTC, Kalilur Rehman of the Congress, of instigating the minority community against the Bodos, which had led to the death of nearly 96 people (both Bodo and non-Bodo), without offering concrete evidence to back up his claims.

- The BTC has failed to assuage the fears of the non-Bodos too. In terms of composition, the BTC has 46 seats of which 30 are reserved for Scheduled Tribes (read Bodos), five for non-tribals, five are open to all communities and the remaining six are to be nominated by the governor of Assam from among the communities.
- In a Council, where policy decisions in terms of development packages, land revenue, business tax and so on are based on a majority vote, it is clear that the Bodos are the privileged lot. The BTC is also vested with powers under the Panchayati Raj system.
- While the Bodo Accord explicitly states that the non-tribal population will not be disadvantaged by the provisions of the Accord, in reality, their rights are not duly acknowledged by the BTC, creating enormous apprehensions.

The final cause of the recurring violence is the existence of armed groups like the NDFB-S, the Birsas Commando Force (BCF) representing the Santhals, etc., which have the capability to challenge the authority of the state administration.

The way out

- establish a land record system that is computerised and accessible to the local people, and which can address the fear of loss of land to the outsiders
- Improve the presence of both the state civil administration and the law enforcement agencies in areas that are identified as highly susceptible to ethnic violence.
- The state and union governments need to work together to collate credible data on the flow of migrants into areas that have been included in the BTAD.

Assam Nagaland Border Crisis

More than 20 protestors were injured and two killed in police action at Rangajan, Golaghat District, Assam against an economic blockade on Asian Highway 1 (also called NH 39) leading into neighbouring Nagaland. (2014)

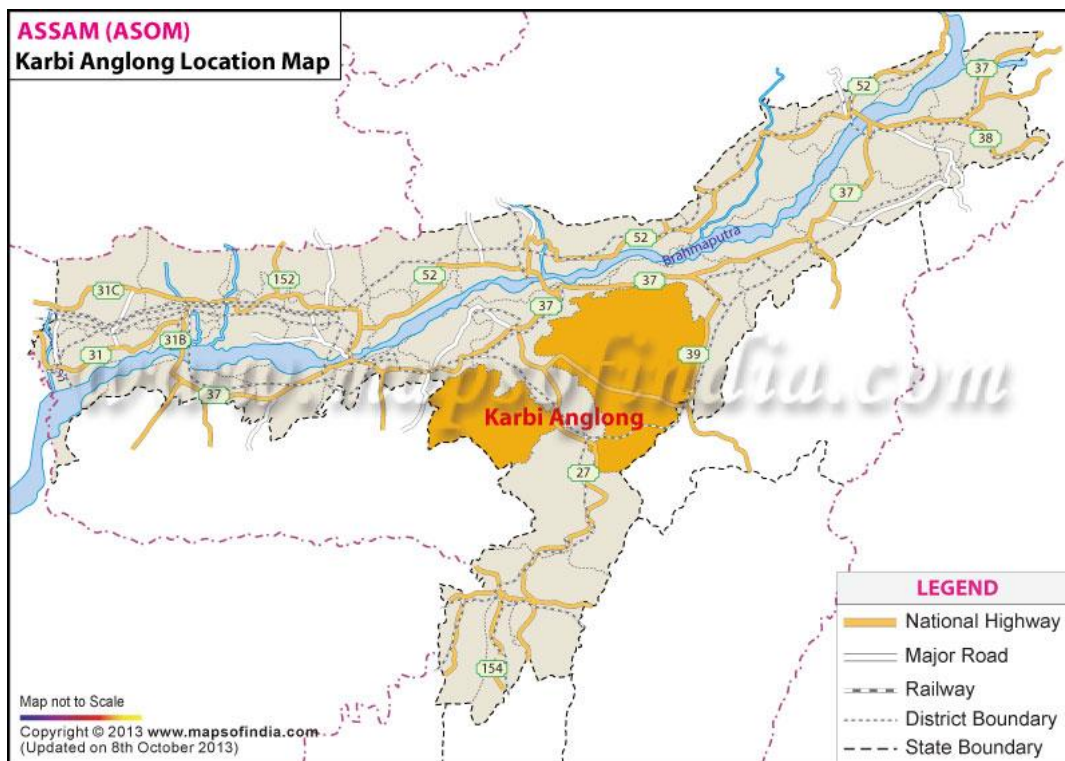
Major Groups involved were:

- AsomJatiyatabadiYuvaChhatraParishad,
- All Assam Tea Tribes students Association,
- All Assam Tai Ahom Students Union, and
- All Adivasi Students Association

The Assam-Nagaland border is disputed since Nagaland achieved statehood in 1963. The disputed land is claimed by private individuals and communities on both sides of the official border based on historical rights in the absence of bona fide documents. In spite of the Supreme Court's intervention, the dispute remains unresolved with an interim agreement between Assam and Nagaland to place the disputed border areas under the control of a neutral Central Police force.

2. Karbi Anglong

- Government has created **Autonomous hill** districts of Assam in Mikir hills
- Demand Separate state of KarbiAnglong (Homeland) is being made by people of **Karbi tribe**
- Karbi Anglong district is the largest amongst the 27 administrative districts of Assam
- 2006- Indian government named KarbiAnglong one of the country's 250 most backward districts



3. Dimaraji

Dimsa people demanding a separate state called Dimaraji or "Dimaland" comprise the Dimasa inhabited Areas

- -DimaHasao district,
 - parts of Cachar district,
 - parts of Nagaon district and
 - **KarbiAnglong district in Assam together with**
 - **Part of Dimapur district in Nagaland**

Conflict

Government has created **The DimaHasao Autonomous Council (DHAC)** in response to the demands.

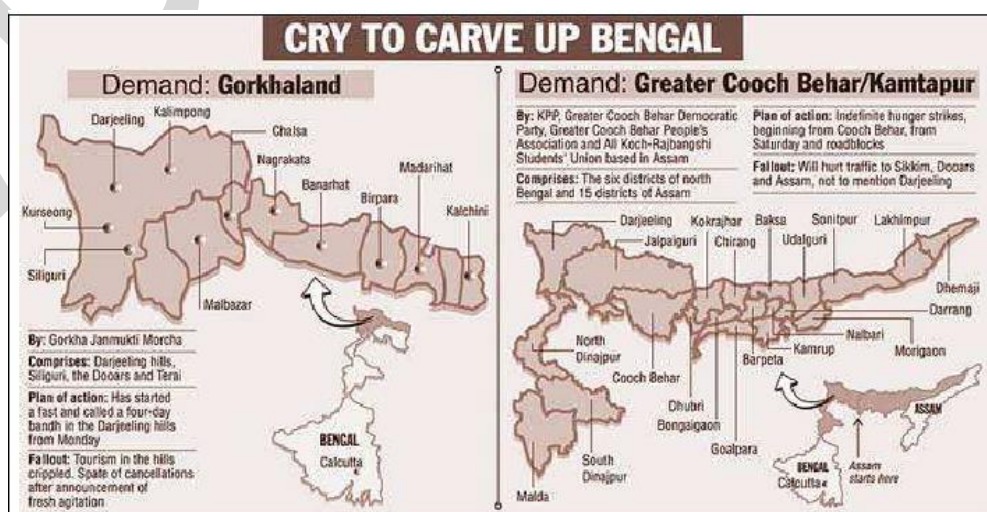
4. Kamtapur

They do not have an autonomous council

Demand of state in North West Bengal and Assam by the Koch-Rajbanshis (Rajbongshis) people

some districts of West Bengal + districts of Assam.

areas demanded under Kamatapur also overlap the areas which were demanded under the statehood of Gorakhaland



Conflict:

Rajbanshis-Gorkha Rajbanshis-Bodo Insurgency: Kamtapur liberation Organisation

The KLO is contrastingly clear in its cessationist demand and is campaigning for restoration of the so-called past independence of a notional Koch Kamta kingdom, which existed during the 12th to the 15th century under the control of the Khen dynasty, with capital near Moynaguri in present Alipurduar sub-division of Jalpaiguri district. The KLO's activities encompass the six districts of north West Bengal and Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Dhubri and Goalpara districts of west Assam.

Recent developments

- Currently, one faction of ULFA (Arabinda Rajkhowa) is talking with government and they have dropped their demand of sovereignty. However another faction led by Paresh Barua has rejected the talks.
- Assam has been affected by insurgent movements initiated by Karbi and Dimasas tribes, the Adivasis and also the Islamists. Karbi and Dimasas have demanded autonomy for their homelands whereas the Adivasis have demanded greater recognition of their rights. Many small outfits like 'Dima Halam Daogah' have also started demanding autonomy in their areas.
- Violence in 2012 on communal lines and recent protests for complete statehood post Telanagana formation has kept the region disturbed. Bodos are not satisfied as their complete demand of statehood has not been met while other communities inhabiting the region resent the dominance of Bodos, thus peace remains fragile.
- Assam also faces challenge on Maoist front. Maoist presence has been noticed in Assam and border areas of Arunachal Pradesh and several maoist leaders have been arrested from Assam.
- In light of above factors government has imposed AFSPA in Assam and continues to be in force. (till January 2016 it is still in force)
- UPDS (United People's Democratic Solidarity) signed Memorandum of settlement (MoS) on 25.11.2011 and subsequently dissolved itself.
- DHD (Dima Halam Daogah) which signed the MoS on 8th October, 2012 has also subsequently dissolved itself.
- ULFA (United Liberation Front of Assam) talks are continuing. Last meeting on 15.5.2015. Suspension of Operation (SoO) is valid from 3.9.2011 and is continuing indefinitely.
- NDFB(P) [National Democratic Front of Boroland (progressive)] signed the Suspension of Operation (SoO) agreement first on 1.6.2005 and is presently valid upto 31.12.2015.
- NDFB (RD) [National Democratic Front of Boroland (Ranjan Daimairi)] a splinter group of NDFB has signed Suspension of Operation (SoO) agreement on 29.11.2013. SoO is valid upto 30.9.2015.
- Karbi Longri NC Hills Liberation Front (KLNLFF) is presently under Suspension of Operation (SoO) agreement with the Government w.e.f. 11.2.2010.
- 9 Adivasi outfits surrendered on 24.1.2012. Their demands are being discussed.

Manipur:

- Kingdom of Manipur was merged with the Indian Union on 15 October 1949. However, only after a protracted agitation interspersed with violence, it was declared a separate state in 1972.
- The emergence of insurgency in Manipur is formally traced to the emergence of the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) on 24 November 1964. The alleged 'forced' merger of Manipur and the delay in the conferring of full-fledged statehood to it was greatly resented by the people of Manipur.
- Since then several other outfits, like the People's Liberation Army (PLA), founded on September 25, 1978, People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) set up on October 9, 1977 and the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) that came into being in April, 1980 have emerged in the valley areas consisting of four districts of the State.
- All these insurgent groups have been demanding a separate independent Manipur.

- From Nagaland, violence by the Naga groups has also spilled over into Manipur, a substantial part of which is claimed by the Isak-Muivah faction of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) as part of Nagalim, the proposed unified territory of the Nagas as claimed by the Naga rebels. Several clashes between the NSCN-IM and the Khaplang faction of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-K) have been reported from the hill districts of the State.
- Kuki tribals in the early 1990s initiated their own brand of insurgency against the alleged oppression by the NSCN-IM. Following ethnic clashes between the Nagas and Kukis in the early 1990s, a number of Kuki outfits were formed. Several other tribes, such as the Paite, Vaiphei and Hmars have also established their own armed groups. Similarly, Islamist outfits like the People's United Liberation Front (PULF) have also been founded to protect the interests of the 'Pangals' (Manipuri Muslims).
- Today, Manipur is one of the worst affected states in the Northeast where at least 12 insurgent outfits are active at present. A report of the State Home department in May 2005 indicated that 'as many as 12,650 cadres of different insurgent outfits with 8830 weapons are actively operating in the State'.
- According to government sources, the strength of those concentrated in the valley districts, is assessed at around 1500 cadres for the Revolutionary People's Front (RPF) and its army wing, the PLA, 2500 cadres for the UNLF and its army wing Manipur People's Army (MPA), 500 cadres for the PREPAK and its army wing Red Army, while Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL) and its Yawol Lanmi army is assessed as having a strength of 600 cadres. The Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP)'s strength is assessed at 100 cadres.
- The UNLF, PLA, KYKL, PREPAK and the KCP have been involved in some of the serious attacks on security forces. The insurgents have an avowed policy of not targeting the state police personnel, unless circumstances demand it. The practice of directing their attack on the Army and the central para-military personnel is an attempt to create a divide between Manipur and India and to secure vital popular support.
- Unlike other conflict theatres of the Northeast, not many 'surrenders' have been reported from Manipur, thus indicating the tight control that the outfits have maintained over their cadres. Armed with an extremely efficient intelligence network and superior fire power, the militants have been able to carve out a number of liberated zones across the State.
- Manipur had been declared a 'disturbed area' in its entirety in 1980 and the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) 1958 was imposed in the State on 8 September, 1980, which continues to be in place till now. The implementation of this Act resulted in the State witnessing an unprecedented civic uprising, including the infamous "mothers' nude protest" and Irom Sharmila protest against the Act. The AFSPA is still embroiled in controversy and the people of Manipur are continuing their protest against the Act.

In short, Manipur continues to be an active arena for a multiplicity of violent conflicts. Further lack of industrialization and economic development has not helped either.

Recent Development:

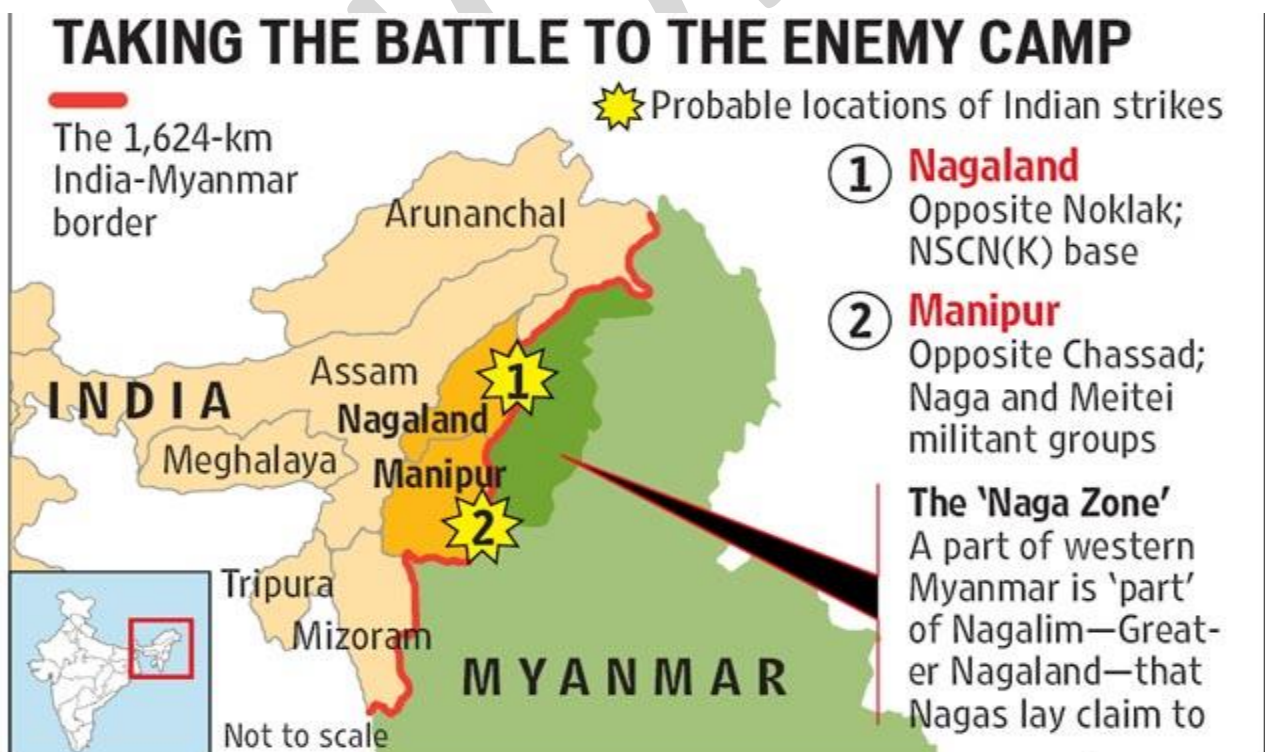
June 4, 2015 Incident:

18 Indian Army jawans were killed and several others were injured when suspected militants ambushed their convoy in Manipur's Chandel district.

18 army men killed in an ambush in Manipur's Chandel district at 8 AM on June 4, 12 others injured



In response to the killing of 18 of its troops by militants in Manipur, the Indian Army in one of its biggest covert missions sent troops into Myanmar to strike at two camps and, according to official estimates, killed over 20 suspected militants.



Inner Line Permit controversy in Manipur

Manipur witnessed a series of protests starting in July 2015, following demands for the implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP) system in the State. The protesters have demanded that the government introduce the ILP bill in the State Assembly. If the bill is passed and enacted into law, it will require outsiders to obtain a special pass or permit to enter the State. The system is in force in the neighbouring States of Nagaland and Mizoram and also in Arunachal Pradesh.

What is the Inner Line Permit?

- The Inner Line Permit (ILP) is an official travel document issued by the Government of India to grant inward travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period. It is obligatory for Indians residing outside those states to obtain permission prior to entering the protected areas.
- Currently, the Inner Line Permit is operational in Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland.
- The document has been issued under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873 and the conditions and restrictions vary from state to state.
- The system was introduced by the British to protect their commercial interests, particularly in oil and tea, and continues now essentially as a mechanism to firewall the tribal peoples and their cultures from onslaughts by outsiders.

The history of ILP in Manipur

The ILP in Manipur region remained in force until 1950, when it was revoked by the then Commissioner of Assam, whose jurisdiction also covered Manipur. Since Manipur, which attained Statehood in 1972, is not officially a tribal State, there are constitutional challenges to implementing the ILP system.

Who is protesting?

Among the three major communities of Manipur — Meitei, Kuki, Naga — the ILP system has been demanded only by the Meiteis. The Kuki population is wary of the motives of the ILP campaign. The apprehension has recently been heightened by the fact that some within the Meitei community have called the Kukis 'foreigners'. Though the Kukis are an indigenous group in Manipur, there are some who fear that the Meiteis could use the ILP to advance their stand of Kukis being foreigners. This seems to be an important reason why many within the Kuki community do not support the ILP or the Meiteis' demand for tribal status.

Government Response:

After few months of protests of Meitei for Inner Line Permit system to prevent "outsiders" from buying land or settling in the state, the state assembly passed three bills to give more rights to indigenous groups. This was followed by counter protests by the Kukis and Nagas to withdraw the bills resulting in violence and deaths. The tribal groups claim that the new bills, would allow Meiteis to buy land in the hill districts of Manipur where the Nagas and Kukis live. Further they argue that these bills were passed without consulting them. This has led to a tense situation till now.

Concerns over Naga Accord:

NSCN (IM) in its recent peace accord with has given up its demand for Greater Nagaland providing much relief to the Manipuris. But the Khaplan faction still continues to resort to violence and was involved in the attack on the Indian Army along with ULFA and Bodo groups in Manipur in June killing 20 jawans. This was followed by India's hot pursuit in the Myanmar territory killing about 50 terrorists.

Possible Solution:

One possible amicable solution for the government is to implement the Sixth Schedule in the hill areas. Under such a political arrangement, the Kukis and Nagas would enjoy autonomy in their respective areas but remain within the State of Manipur

Nagaland:

The Nagas were the inhabitants of the Naga hills along the Northeast frontier on the Assam-Burma border. They numbered nearly 500,000 in 1961, constituted less than 0.1% per cent of India's population, and consisted of many tribes speaking different languages.

How old is the Naga political issue?

- The British annexed Assam in 1826, and in 1881, the Naga Hills too became part of British India. The first sign of Naga resistance was seen in the formation of the Naga Club in 1918, which told the Simon Commission in 1929 "to leave us alone to determine for ourselves as in ancient times".
- In 1946 came the Naga National Council (NNC), which, under the leadership of Angami Zapu Phizo, declared Nagaland an independent state on August 14, 1947.
- The NNC resolved to establish a "sovereign Naga state" and conducted a "referendum" in 1951, in which "99 per cent" supported an "independent" Nagaland.

When did the armed movement begin?

- On March 22, 1952, Phizo formed the underground Naga Federal Government (NFG) and the Naga Federal Army (NFA). The Government of India sent in the Army to crush the insurgency and, in 1958, enacted the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act.

When did the peace efforts start?

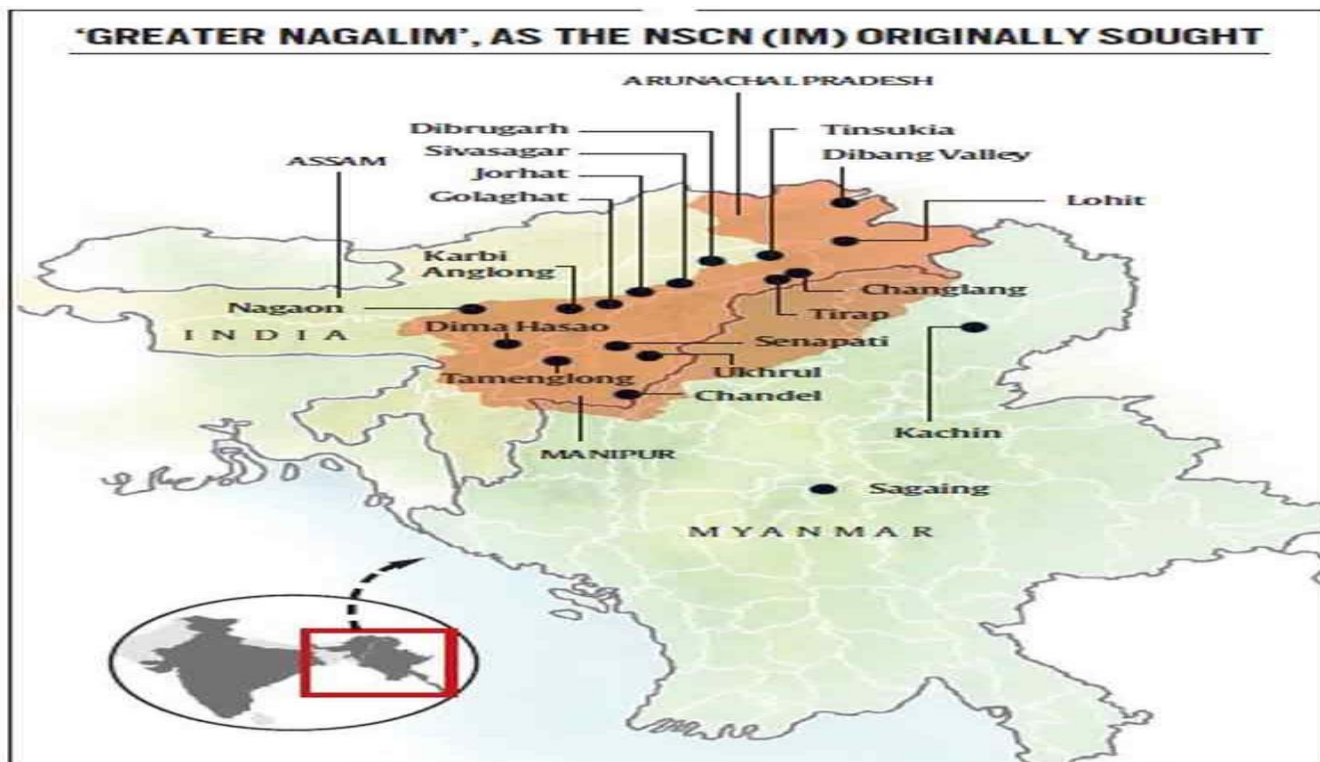
- Almost simultaneously with the resistance. On June 29, 1947, Assam Governor Sir Akbar Hydari signed a 9-point agreement with moderates T Sakhrie and Aliba Imti, which was almost immediately rejected by Phizo.
- The Naga Hills, a district of Assam, was upgraded to a state in 1963, by also adding the Tuensang Tract that was then part of NEFA.
- In April the next year, Jai Prakash Narain, Assam Chief Minister Bimala Prasad Chaliha and Rev. Michael Scott formed a Peace Mission, and got the government and NNC to sign an agreement to suspend operations that September. But the NNC/NFG/NFA continued to indulge in violence, and after six rounds of talks, the Peace Mission was abandoned in 1967, and a massive counter-insurgency operation launched.

When did the NSCN come into being?

- On November 11, 1975, the government got a section of NNC leaders to sign the **Shillong Accord**, under which this section of NNC and NFG agreed to give up arms.
- A group of about 140 members led by Thuingaleng Muivah, who were at that time in China, refused to accept the Shillong Accord, and formed the National Socialist Council of Nagaland in 1980.
- In 1988, the NSCN split into NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K) after a violent clash. While the NNC began to fade away, and Phizo died in London in 1991, the NSCN (IM) came to be seen as the "mother of all insurgencies" in the region.

What did the NSCN (IM) want?

A "Greater Nagalim" comprising "all contiguous Naga-inhabited areas", along with Nagaland. That included several districts of Assam, Arunachal and Manipur, as also a large tract of Myanmar. The map of "Greater Nagalim" has about 1,20,000 sq km, while the state of Nagaland consists of 16,527 sq km. The claims have always kept Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh wary of a peace settlement that might affect their territories. The Nagaland Assembly has endorsed the 'Greater Nagalim' demand — "Integration of all Naga-inhabited contiguous areas under one administrative umbrella" — as many as five times: in December 1964, August 1970, September 1994, December 2003 and as recently as on July 27, 2015.



When did NSCN (IM) join peace talks?

The Government of India signed a ceasefire agreement with NSCN (IM) on July 25, 1997, which came into effect on August 1, 1997. Over 80 rounds of talks between the two sides were held subsequently.

Naga Peace accord 2015:

- **Nagaland peace accord** is the accord signed in August 2015 by the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) to end the insurgency
- The framework agreement is based on the "unique" history of Nagas and recognising the universal principle that in a democracy sovereignty lies with the people.
- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) has given up its demand for 'Greater Nagaland' and vowed allegiance to the constitution of India. The details of the accord are yet to come in public domain.
- Government of India has also made clear that existing boundaries of states will not be altered.
- It will restore peace and pave the way for prosperity in the North East.
- It will advance a life of dignity, opportunity and equity for the Naga people, based on their genius and consistent with the uniqueness of the Naga people and their culture and traditions.
- The Government of India recognized the unique history, culture and position of the Nagas and their sentiments and aspirations. The NSCN understood and appreciated the Indian political system and governance.

How have Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh reacted?

Leaders cutting across party lines have preferred to wait and watch. Nobody in these three states would allow even an inch of their land to be added to a 'Greater Nagalim', if at all that term is part of the accord.

What about S S Khaplang?

In March 2015, he abrogated the ceasefire he had signed in 2001, and is sure to oppose the accord. Security forces have been already alerted across Nagaland, Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

TRIPURA:

- **Insurgency in Tripura finds its root in the influx of refugees from the** newly emerged East Pakistan after partition, post independence and post 1971 war liberation in Bangladesh.
- Migration fuelled discontent and demographic inversion in Tripura.
- The ratio of population of tribals and non-tribals which was 70:30 at the time of independence in 1947 changed to 70: 30 in favour of non tribals. This injustice has led to insurgency.
- The evolution of insurgency in Tripura can be traced to the formation of the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti (TUJS) in 1971, followed by the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) in 1981.
- The National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) was formed on March 2, 1989 and its armed wing, the National Holy Army and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), in July 1990, queering the pitch.
- The two outfits came up with a secessionist agenda, disputed the merger of the kingdom of Tripura with the Indian Union, and demanded sovereignty for Tripura, deportation of "illegal migrants," the implementation of the Tripura merger agreement and the restoration of land to the tribal people under the Tripura Land Reform Act, 1960.
- Between 1990 and 1995, the insurgency remained low-key.
- But it grew in extent and magnitude between 1996 and 2004 — and then started melting.

How Tripura succeeded in controlling insurgency: Tripura model

The State took on the problems in a strategic and resolute manner under the sagacious and visionary leadership of Chief Minister Manik Sarkar. It formulated a multi-dimensional and fine-tuned construct to respond creatively to the situation. It consisted of following:

- Counter-insurgency operations intent on swift area-domination and ascendancy
- Psychological operations and confidence-building measures
- Accelerated development thrust
- Management of the media
- Civic action programmes of the security forces
- Political processes

Counter insurgency operations (C.I.Ops):

1. C.I.Ops, potent instrument in any fight against insurgency, formed the core of the interventions. These were not set as exclusive, hawkish, one-dimensional combat in the nature of conflict-management. The combat was invested with a broader meaning and constructive contents in the nature of a productive conflict-resolution aimed at defusing insurgency.
2. Remarkably, the counter-insurgency operations, intensive, extensive and covert as they were, did not take the Army on board — as had happened in other insurgency-bound States. Only the Central paramilitary forces and State police forces were drafted.
3. Special Police Officers (tribals included) were inducted and channelled into the operations. This proved to be valuable in terms of gathering intelligence and keeping a tab on the activities and movements of the insurgents, collaborators and harbourers.

4. The Central and State security forces were forged into a synergetic, coordinated and cohesive mode to derive optimal gains. Their conduct was under close observation at the highest level (including at the level of the Governor and the Chief Minister), in order to check personnel from going berserk and being ruthless, trigger-happy, oppressive and violative of human rights.
5. This paid off: no complaint of human rights violation. No antipathy against the security forces or the establishment surrounded the minds of citizens.

Psychological operations and confidence-building measures along with Media Management :

1. Psychological interventions were focussed on correcting the tribal person's negative perception about the state and the mainland, and inducing confidence in and credibility about the State's intentions.
2. Psychological operations were forged to work on the minds of the target group — for all conflicts, big or small, begin in the human mind. Brainstorming sessions centred on unwinding the deeds, misdeeds and subversive designs of insurgency and to unmask its hypocritical conduct, promotion of monetary interests, the lavish lifestyle of the leaders in contrast to the abject living conditions of the rank and file, sexual exploitation of women cadre, forced induction of adolescents into the outfits and a game plan to keep the region in perpetual backwardness.
3. This strategy was carried through the media, both print and electronic, art groups, intellectuals, and interactive seminars and discussions.
4. Confidence-building exercises and healing touches encompassed special recruitment to the security forces and other government services, especially in the insurgency-bound pockets. The provision of jobs to tribals in particular, and to the family members of victims, attractive rehabilitation packages comprising monetary benefits, and vocational training to induce insurgents to return to the mainstream and earn a peaceful living and decent livelihood, were other features.
5. The Governor and the Chief Minister, in the course of their public programmes, sought to impress upon those misguided insurgents to see reason, return to the mainstream and be active stakeholders and participants in the well-being and prosperity of the State and the people

Accelerated development thrust

1. As the security forces achieved success in area-domination, no time was lost in implementing governance and developmental interventions swiftly and vigorously.
2. The government reached out to the tribal people with the delivery of basic services such as health care, rural connectivity, drinking water supply, employment generation and income accretion. Socio-economic advancement and a change in the quality of life were ushered in.
3. They discovered a connect with the mainstream and the state. The outcomes were active community participation in the development process and in the fight against insurgency, the militants' return to the mainstream and consequential retreat from insurgency.

Civic action programmes of the security forces

1. The security forces, both Central and State, spread all over the insurgency-bound pockets as the only visible face of the State, came up with civic action programmes, offered succour and basic services.
2. The work included health care, medical aid and drinking water supply. The provision of study and sports material to students, repair of dilapidated school buildings, construction of community centres, vocational training in computer learning, tailoring, embroidery and so on, and close interaction with the local people, were ensured
3. The security forces thus presented a human face, a pro-citizen, people-friendly, development-oriented face of the State, and earned the trust, admiration and gratitude of the people.

Political processes

1. The political process initiated by Chief Minister Sarkar went a long way in dissolving the malaise of insurgency.
2. Peace marches were organised in far-flung insurgency pockets to instil confidence in the people and display the sincerity and commitment of the State towards accelerated development and prosperity for all segments of society.
3. Micro-democratic institutions such as autonomous development councils, *gram* panchayats and village councils were strengthened, revitalised and legitimised. They turned vibrant and actively functional as local governance modules. This brought all the communities, notably the tribals in particular, into the development stream, bringing about substantial empowerment and a sense of fulfilment.

Tripura scripted a story of triumph over insurgency and conflict-resolution, and demonstrated that insurgency was not an insurmountable phenomenon.

Recent Development:

- The changing religious composition of tribal groups (particularly, the Jamatiyas) is giving rise to newer tensions with apprehension of increased inter-tribal conflicts.
- While the tribal non-tribal clashes are on the decline, there is growing resentment among the tribals due to the restrictions on their 'freedom to use' the forests and their nominal participation in district development.
- Despite impressive strides made by the State in the last decade lack of economic opportunities and improper connectivity has made situation fragile.
- As a result of Land Boundary Agreement with Bangladesh border dispute will be resolved.

MEGHALAYA:

The Meghalaya state was carved out of the Assam state, with an aim to address the unique needs of the major tribes in the region: the Garos, the Jaintias and the Khasis.

However, discontent grew among the tribals due to the alleged high-handedness of the security forces, inter tribal conflicts, the youth unemployment and the inability to compete with non-tribal businesses, illegal migration from Bangladesh. This led to the rise of several insurgent groups in the state. The few insurgents group active in the state are Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) and Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC).



GNLA:

- The **GNLA** is largely a home-grown insurgent force in the state.
- It sustains by extortions and smuggling activities which can be contained with better deployment of the available force and with support from the local people.
- It was formed in 2009 is fighting for a '**sovereign Garoland**' in the Western areas of Meghalaya.

- It has links with other militant outfits like ULFA and NDBF. It was involved in violence against security forces last year.

HNLC:

- It is a militant organization operating in Meghalaya, India.
- It claims to be a representative of the Khasi-Jaintia tribal people, and its aim is to free the Meghalaya from the alleged domination of the Garos and the non-tribal outsiders

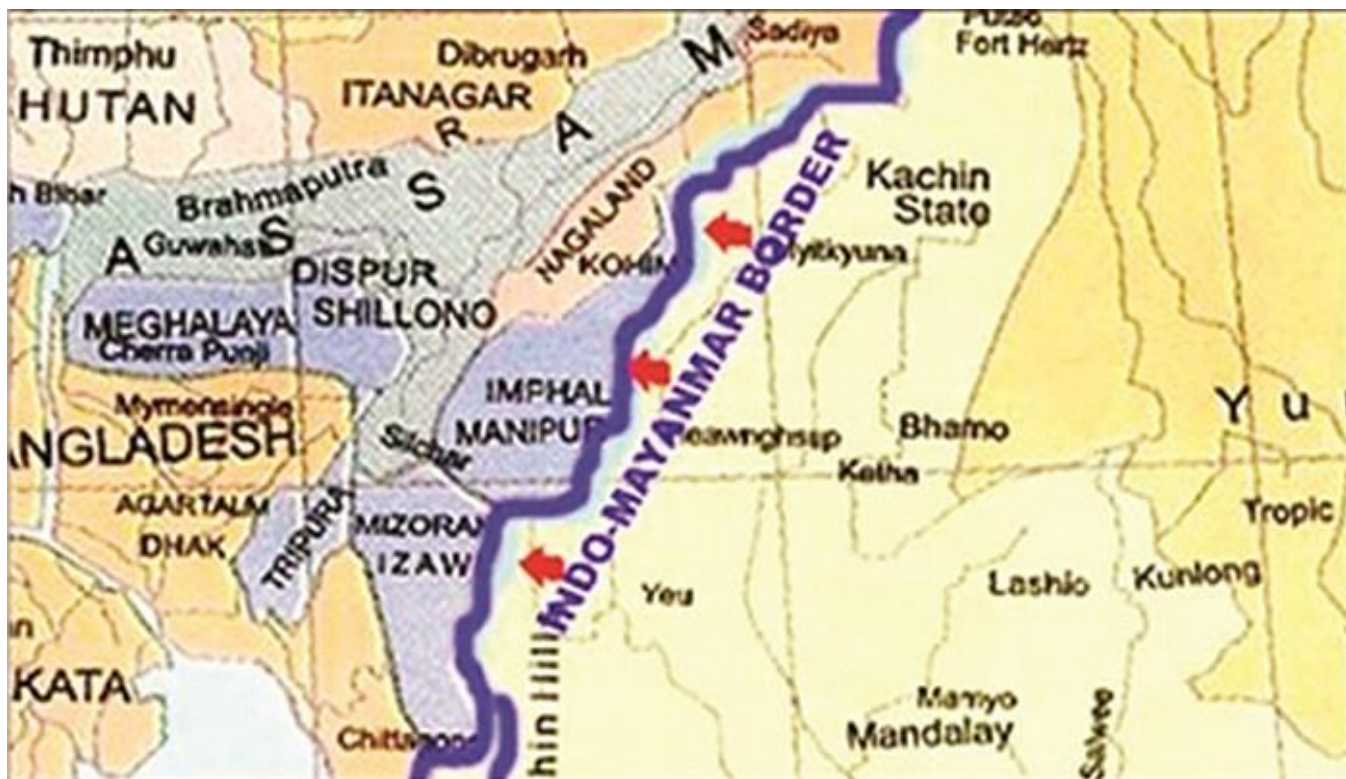
Recent Development:

- A holistic appraisal of the internal security environment in the seven North-Eastern States, excluding Sikkim, shows that Meghalaya is relatively better placed..
- On November 2, 2015, the Meghalaya High Court issued a *suo moto* Order directing the Government of India to consider promulgation of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in the Garo Hills region of the State.
- This was delivered in the context of the Court's negative perception of the internal security milieu in the southern parts of the State, particularly in the South-West, South, West and East Garo Hills districts, and regions bordering Bangladesh.
- The High Court has cited various recent instances of widespread lawlessness in the region including extortions and kidnappings by Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) insurgents.
- The same Court had taken a forthright stand on similar subversive activities by another insurgent group – the Hynniewtre National Liberation Council (HNLC), which, though presently subdued, has been trying to make its presence felt in the Khasi and Jaintia Hill districts of the State.
- In an Interim Order issued on May 27 2015, the Court had directed the State Government to restrain the media from publicising statements or calls of bandh issued by the HNLC, so that the fundamental rights of the citizens guaranteed under the Constitution are not jeopardised. The Court had threatened to initiate 'contempt of court' proceedings against authorities and organisations which fail to uphold its Order. The Court pointed out that HNLC was carrying on its activities inimical to the State and its people, despite being proscribed till November 2019 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, and confirmation in this respect by the relevant Tribunal on May 25, 2015.
- But the worrisome part is the low-key approach of the established political parties towards the insurgents, and the politician-middlemen-contractor nexus at the district level in siphoning off funds allotted under various development schemes. This nexus is breeding corruption and also distorting the visibility of many of the Central schemes among the common people. Often projects undertaken under such schemes are made to appear as though they are being sanctioned at the behest of the local politicians.
- Strengthening of social audit could lead to greater public awareness about the role of the state in promoting development and welfare of the people to counteract the insurgents

ARUNACHAL PRADESH:



- Arunachal Pradesh, spread over 83,743 square kilometres in north-eastern India, was hailed until recently as the abode of peace. However, the State is gradually being afflicted by insurgency. Neither the State government nor the Centre have taken stock of the situation, nor drawn up an action plan to arrest the downside
- The only case of indigenous insurgency movement in Arunachal Pradesh was the rise of the Arunachal Dragon Force (ADF), which was rechristened as East India Liberation Front (EALF) in 2001. The outfit remained active in the Lohit district, before being neutralised by the state police forces.
- Indigenous insurgency movements have only been a fraction of the problem that Arunachal Pradesh has come to encounter in the past years.
- A variety of factors including its geographical contiguity with Myanmar and ethnic similarities among the residents in some of Arunachal Pradesh's districts with the locals in Nagaland has been the reasons why insurgent outfits from Assam and Nagaland have exploited the State for their activities.
- Traditionally, the south-western districts of Tirap and Changlang, in the proximity of Nagaland, have been a happy hunting ground for both the factions of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN).
- While the Khaplang faction (NSCN-K) made its first inroads into the virgin territory in the early 1990s, the NSCN-IM faction soon made its move and carved out separate areas of influence in the district.
- Arunachal Pradesh has also been used as a transit route by the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA). While the movement of the ULFA cadres between the easternmost districts of Assam and the outfit's facilities in the Sagaing division in Myanmar through Arunachal Pradesh can be traced back to the late 1980s, the State's strategic importance for the ULFA has grown manifold after the outfit's December 2003 ouster from Bhutan, following a military crackdown. The outfit's dependence on its 28th battalion headquartered in Myanmar, for its hit and run activities in Assam, has become almost irreversible.



- ULFA cadres traversing the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar route had set up transit camps and safe houses in the Manabhum Reserve Forest, spread over 1500 square kilometres in the Lohit district.
- There were also a few incidents which revealed a nexus between the militants and the politicians, like the arrest of a NSCN (IM) militant from the residence of a former Minister of Arunachal Pradesh in Itanagar. Instances of forceful recruitments of tribal youths by the militant organizations, especially NSCN-K were also found.
- In a Conference of Chief Ministers on internal security, held at New Delhi on August 17, 2009 and attended by the Prime Minister and the Home Minister, the Arunachal Pradesh government asked the Centre to seal the entire stretch of the 440-km-long India-Myanmar border along the state in order to check the movement of insurgent outfits.

Impact of insurgency:

The impact of insurgency on the State has been serious. According to intelligence sources, every government employee and businessman in Tirap is forced to pay nearly twenty-five per cent of his gross income as a tax for the Republic of Nagalim. In the districts of Tirap and Changlang, branches of the State Bank of India have been shut down after they were served with extortion notes by the NSCN-K. In 2001, the operations of the Oil India Limited in Changlang district were brought to a halt after the NSCN-IM demanded an amount of Rs. 60 lakhs (US\$ 125,000). The oil major had to pull out 130 of its technical staff from the area.



MIZORAM:

A situation **similar** to Nagaland developed a few years later in autonomous Mizo district of the Northeast. Sessionist demand backed by some British officials had grown there in 147 but had failed to get much support from the youthful population. However, unhappiness with the Assam government's relief measure during famine of 1959 and the passage of the Act in 1961, making Assamese the official language of the state, led to the formation of Mizo National Front (MNF), with Laldenga as president.

While participating in the elections MNF created a military wing which received arms and ammunition and military support from East Pakistan and China. In March 1966 MNF declared independence from India, proclaimed a military uprising. The GOI responded with immediate massive counter insurgency measures by the army. Within a few weeks insurgency was crushed and government control was restored.

In 1973, after the less extremist Mizo leaders had scaled down their demand to that of a separate state of Mizoram within the Indian Union, Mizo district of Assam was separated from Assam and, as Mizoram was given the status of a Union Territory.

Mizo insurgency gained some renewed strength in the late 1970's but was again effectively dealt with the Indian armed forces.

A settlement was finally reached in 1986. An 'accord' was signed between the Union Government and the Mizo National Front in 1986, according to which insurgents group agreed to surrender before the Union and re-enter the constitutional political stream. A year later, statehood was conferred. Since the MNF has a formidable political force in the state.

Hmar insurgency

Not satisfied with the Mizo Accord of 1986 that ended two decades of insurgency led by the Mizo National Front (the peace deal did not grant the Hmar tribe administrative autonomy), some Hmar leaders formed the Hmar People's Convention (HPC), and began a struggle for autonomy. The insurgency raged until 1994, when the Mizoram government set up the Sinlung Hills Development Council for Hmar-inhabited areas. The HPC joined the political mainstream, but Mizoram police and politicians say their best weapons were never surrendered, and an offshoot — the Hmar People's Convention Democrats (HPCD) — emerged almost immediately and pressed on with the old demands.

Who are Hmar?

They are a tribal people living in Assam, Mizoram and Manipur, mainly in the area where these states meet. Although the Hmar identity is strong, Mizos in general consider them as part of the community, or at least as one of tribes that make up the Zohnahthlak, a loose grouping of tribes with largely similar customs, dialects and dress who live in Mizoram or its immediate vicinity. Many Hmars are members of Mizoram's middle class; most no longer speak the Hmar dialect, and are fully integrated into Mizo society. In Manipur, the tribe is sometimes loosely included in the Kuki group, evidenced from the fact that one of the main Hmar armed groups — the HPCD — is considered part of the "Kuki armed groups" (more specifically, the United People's Front group of militants).

Demands of the Hmar Insurgents:

The HPCD's stated demand is a separate tribal autonomous district, and sometimes a state called Hmar Ram, for the Hmar tribe.

It suffers from two main weaknesses:

1. The outfit is largely based in Manipur and a corner of southern Assam and has only thin physical presence in Mizoram
2. There are two HPCD factions

5. Maoist Consolidation in North East:

- The Maoists have been able to extend the red corridor to the Northeast.
- The arrests of various top Maoist leaders in this region during 2013 revealed the extent of Maoist infiltration in Northeast India.
- Though at present they are restricted to certain pockets of this region, like along the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border areas, there is every possibility that they can extend their influence further in 2015.
- The Maoist rebellion in Northeast India is at present in its latent phase. The 'latent phase' involves mobilization of the masses, political awakening, visiting villages, engaging in small struggles on local issues, picking up students' issues, fighting corruption, short-listing shelter and arms dumps and identification of local militant elements. This exactly is what the Maoists in Northeast India are doing at present.
- But this phase may soon pass away. With the arrested Maoist leaders already revealing that they were in touch with youths from Meghalaya and they being able to create a support base in the districts of Goalpara, Bongaigaon, Silchar, Karimganj and Kamrup in Assam¹², it is a possibility that the Maoists may be able to consolidate their presence further in the region during 2015 and we may see the Maoists begin to engage in violent activities against the state machinery.

6. Spread of Islamist Militancy:

- Northeast India, shares an 1880 km long porous border with Bangladesh, a country that is a hotbed of Islamist militancy.
- Though radical Islam has not yet seeped into the Muslim population in the region, the arrests of twelve persons in Assam during November-December 2014 with links with the Islamist terror outfit Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) shows that radicalization of a section of Muslim population has begun in the region.
- The arrested persons have confessed that JMB was eyeing pockets inhabited by people of Bangladesh origin as well as districts like Sivasagar in eastern Assam, where it is said to have motivated some people.
- Though Islamist militancy is yet to find a root in Northeast, we may see efforts from Islamists to spread radical Islam among the Muslim population in the region in 2015.

- With low levels of development and lack of access to proper education and healthcare services in various parts of the region, especially in the Muslim-dominated Char or riverine areas of Assam, fundamentalists may try to lure people towards their fold using these issues.

7. Security of India's Northeast: External Linkage:

Introduction:

Many ethnic groups in the region especially in the areas bordering the international boundaries have more in common with the population living across the boundary than with their own nationals. The affinity of groups with their kin groups across the border and the sense of support (both material and non material) they derive from them, have had serious implications. The social continuities that stretch across the territorial frontiers have led to demands by the politically



fragmented groups to redraw international boundaries and also to reorganise states within the Indian Union.¹ In many cases due to external manipulations and support, these fragmented ethno-political groupings have taken to arms and have adopted a line of confrontation with the state and central administration. The scope for resolution of conflicts at the internal level has been affected by such external involvement. This has had tremendous impact on the overall security situation in India. This paper seeks to throw light on the external coordinates of the conflicts in the northeast.

Countries surrounding India have been active in exploiting the volatile situation presented by the turmoil in the northeast. Not only countries such as China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, but also smaller powers such as Bhutan and Nepal have been involved in the region. Through political backing, economic assistance, logistic support, military training or arms supplies these countries have varyingly contributed to the ongoing violence in this region.

China:

- Northeastern India is inhabited by Mongoloid tribes who have close ethnic and cultural ties with the tribes in China, Tibet and Burma. Barring Khasis and Jaintias of Meghalaya, almost all hill tribes belong to the Tibeto-Chinese fold and to the Tibeto-Burmese family.
- It was this feeling of affinity towards the border people of erstwhile East Pakistan and Burma that led some of these tribal groups to turn towards their own stock rather than towards the country they resided in.
- The strategic location of the northeast and the access of the disaffected groups to China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal, together with material and moral support of foreign intelligence agencies to these groups, have facilitated insurgency in the northeast region.
- Among these, the Chinese support to insurgents in the northeast came early in the 1960s and continued through the 1970s. In May 1966, the Nagas approached Peoples' Republic of China for 'any possible assistance'.
- It was in Yunan that the Naga fighters were imparted with the knowledge of arms and guerrilla tactics and they were also taught Maoism.

- With the Chinese support the Naga insurgency became stronger and more intense with better tactics and modern weapons.
- Apart from the Nagas, the Chinese also extended moral and material support to the Mizo and Meiti insurgents by arranging for their training in guerilla warfare and subversion in training centres in Yunan province of mainland China and Lhasa in Tibet.
- The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) was busy building an unmetalled road track heading towards the Line of Actual Control (LAC) across Arunachal Pradesh even as the joint working group was trying to thrash out solutions to the lingering border dispute.
- The Chinese in their endeavour to normalise relations with India have been assuring New Delhi that they have stopped all aid to the insurgents in the northeast.
- It has been discouraging insurgent groups from trekking to China for receiving instruction in guerilla tactics.¹² Pakistani analysts have taken this policy change as a shift in China's position in South Asia.
- They have written that 'from a policy of granting open support to Pakistan *vis-a-vis* India during the 1960s and 1970s, China's strategic priorities changed in South Asia during 1980s and 1990s. From an active hostile relationship with India, China changed its India's policy to passive hostility and finally neutrality'. Nevertheless, India is yet to be convinced about Chinese intentions.

Bhutan:

- Given India's porous borders with Bhutan, the militant groups from Assam have very often sought refuge in Bhutanese territory.
- In 1990 India launched Operations *Rhino* and *Bajrang* against Assamese separatist groups. Facing continuous pressure, Assamese militants relocated their camps to Bhutan.
- It has proved really difficult on the part of the security forces to handle these forces operating from Bhutan. At least 4,000 cadres of the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and more than a thousand tribal Bodo militants from Assam are estimated to have crossed the borders and are based in camps in southern Bhutan.
- Bhutan has cooperated with India in uprooting the militant groups from its soil.
- **Operation All Clear** was a military operation conducted by Royal Bhutan Army forces against Assam separatist insurgent groups in the southern regions of Bhutan between 15 December 2003 and 3 January 2004. It was the first operation ever conducted by the Royal Bhutan Army.
- Sustained action by Bhutan against groups like ULFA, NDFB, BLTF etc has eliminated their support and operations from Bhutan.
- Recently in 2015, Bhutan has assured India that it will soon launch an operation to flush out anti-India insurgents — active in West Bengal and northeastern states — operating from its territory. Bhutan is expected to launch anti-terror operations in the next couple of months to flush out cadres of Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) and northeastern insurgent groups operating from southern Bhutan. India had shared this information with Bhutan and urged action against the insurgents.



Nepal:

- Nepal is acting as the safest entry point for intelligence operations unleashed by Pakistani intelligence against India.
- The fact that Nepal was being used as a corridor to smuggle in ISI agents has been established after the tracking down of Yakoob Memon, one of the accused in the Bombay Blast case in 1996 from Kathmandu.

- The hijacking of an Indian aircraft from Kathmandu revealed the dangerous face of cross-border intelligence activities targeted at Indian national security.
- Many of the ISI agents have found the Nepal route safe to enter into northern India and then spread out to the northeast and other regions.
- It is also a conduit of counterfeit Indian currency.

- ISI agents operating from Nepal has been a point of serious concern for New Delhi as the militants have been taking advantage of the 1,800 km porous Indo-Nepal border in fomenting trouble in various parts of India.

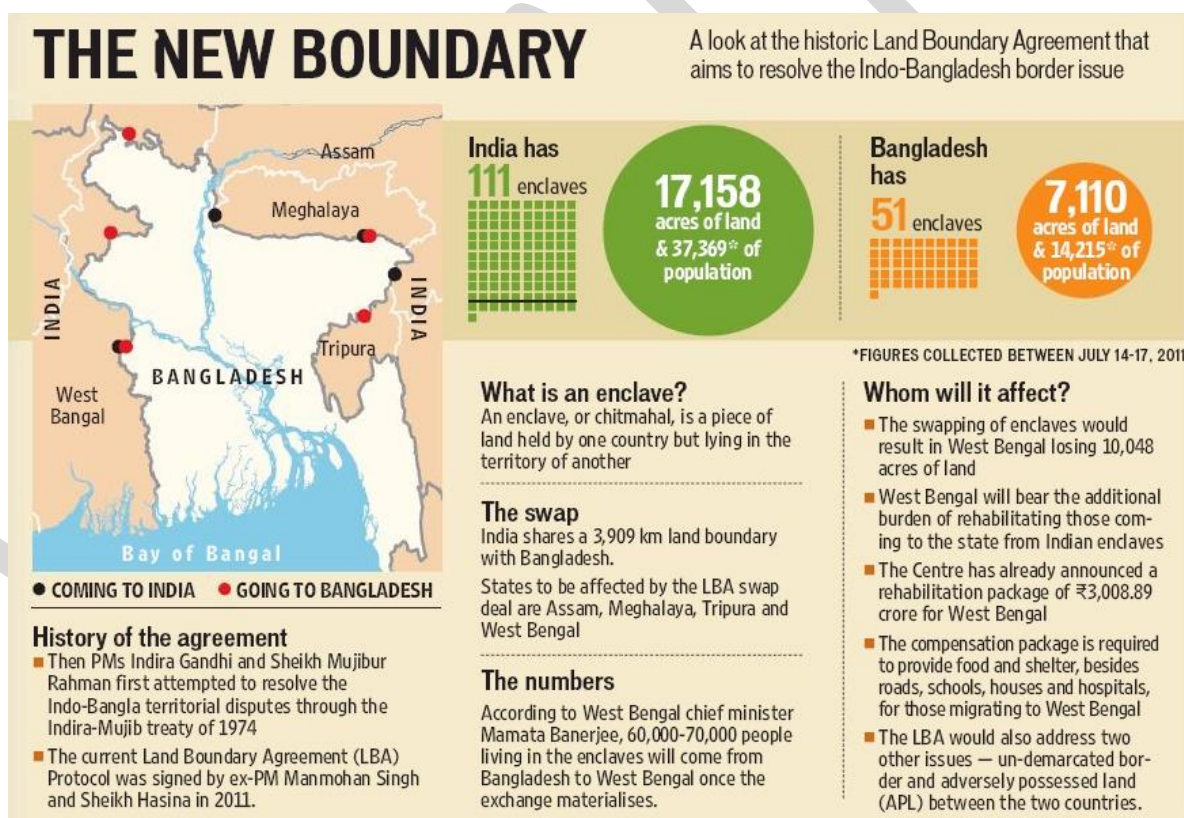


- Nepal has co-operated with India in carrying out covert operations in targeting any anti-Indian activity on its soil.

Bangladesh:

- East Pakistan, Bangladesh since 1971 was host to many insurgent activities unleashed against India in the northeastern region.
- With the emergence of Bangladesh, the tribal insurgents operating under Pakistani intelligence cover within East Pakistan suffered a setback.
- The *status quo* was maintained till Sheikh Mujib's regime was pulled down. Immediately after the assassination of Mujibur Rehman, the new regime allowed the Mizo insurgents to establish their bases in Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- various Bangladeshi governments till the present one headed by Ms. Sheikh Hasina had allowed Pakistan Intelligence operatives to launch their anti-India activities from Bangladeshi soil. In most of the cases the government turned a blind eye to the ISI operations inside Bangladesh. This has facilitated the ISI channelization of money and materials through Bangladesh to insurgent groups in the northeast
- The anti-India operations have been largely possible because of the presence of an overwhelming illegal immigrant Bangladeshi population in the northeast. The porosity of the Indo-Bangladesh border has led to many unanticipated problems for India.⁴² The porous border between Indian states of Assam, West Bengal and Bangladesh has led to the smuggling of jute, rice and other commodities. Smuggling in itself is not a problem but it is symptomatic of the difficulties in the relations of the two states.⁴³ As the entire Indo-Bangladesh border is porous and prone to large-scale illegal immigration, infiltration and smuggling from Bangladesh, the Centre had sanctioned work on the Indo-Bangla border roads and fencing project in 1986. This has not been completed as yet.
- Due to the porosity of the borders, the northeast has also become a hotspot for large-scale migration across the borders. The ethnic affinities that cut across the boundaries have traditionally facilitated the movement of people from poor states to richer neighbours.⁴⁴ India has been the victim of large-scale immigration from bordering countries. Its booming economy, liberal democratic society and ethno-cultural commonality with the bordering states has encouraged people from the neighbourhood to migrate to India. This population has been the prime target of the Pakistani intelligence in every likelihood. Moreover, the local population within India has treated these migrants as unacceptable aliens. This has added to the complexity of the problem in the northeastern region.

- The resentment over the increase in the number of Chakmas in Mizoram is another cause for worry. Mizos allege that a large number of Chakmas from Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region of Bangladesh have settled in the Chakma Autonomous District Council in the state. Again, the tribal-outsider dichotomy has generated violence in Meghalaya, Tripura and Assam, thus leading to a silent out-migration of the non-tribal population from these states.
- Apart from assisting insurgent groups in northeast India, Bangladesh is being increasingly used for smuggling ISI agents into India through its porous borders with West Bengal, as Nepal is used for sending them into North India, particularly Uttar Pradesh. Meanwhile, the ISI's operations have spread to other parts of India like Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.
- Media reports suggest that the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) has started several lucrative income-generating projects in Bangladesh to sustain its anti-India activities in this country. These include three hotels, a private clinic and two motor driving schools in Dhaka, a number of grocery and drug stores in Sylhet, poultry farms in Mymensingh, and two schools in Narsingdi
- Current government of Bangladesh has been very keen in improving relations with India. The Government has been cooperating with Indian Intelligence in flushing out militants in its territory. It has arrested many terrorists of ULFA, NSCN, BPDF etc and deported them to India.
- Signing of LBA will address the issue of porous border and related smuggling of arms and drugs and infiltration.
- However, illegal migration from Bangladesh continues to pose a challenge to internal security which needs to be addressed by our neighbor.
- India Bangladesh signed a historic boundary agreement in 2015.



Myanmar:

- India shares a 1670 km long land border and a maritime border of 200 km with Myanmar.
- The present day population along the India-Myanmar border has a strong socio-cultural affinity, which is the outcome of a long historical process of intermingling among the people of the area. They belong to the Tibeto Burmese stock and trace their origin to the east i.e. through Burma or from Burma.

- The Indo-Myanmar border remains comparatively peaceful and there is no remarkable border conflict between the two countries. However, the separatist feeling and legacy of discontent among the various tribes straddling the borders still survives.
- Many northeastern insurgent groups, like the Nagas, the Mizos and the Meitis, had bases in Burma as well.
- During mid-1966 NNC established contact with the Kachin Independence Army in the Kachin Hill tracts of Burma. The Mizos and Tripuris were also able to establish links with the Burmese insurgents and found safe sanctuaries in the lightly administered border areas of Burma.
- Some Burmese tribals belonging to the Kuki Chin Group are fighting for merger of lands inhabited by them with India. The underground Zomi Liberation Front in Myanmar used to recruit cadres for guerilla warfare against Myanmar. After the crackdown on pro-democracy supporters, many of these have sought shelter in Manipur and Mizoram.
- Apart from the question of promotion of border trade India and Myanmar have agreed to check movement of militants across the border. They also agreed to strengthen communication networks along the international border.
- Moreover, the two sides have also agreed to step up measures to check narcotics smuggling across the Indo-Myanmar border.
- The two sides have also discussed the possibility of launching joint operations against the militants operating out of Myanmar, the last joint operation code named 'Operation Golden Bird' was very successful and it dealt a heavy blow to ULFA.
- Given that the vulnerability of the India-Myanmar border is posing a serious challenge to the internal security of the country, the Government of India should pay immediate attention to effectively manage this border.

8. Way Forward

Although varying in their demands and methods, there is a common thread running through the insurgency infested north-east, that is of identity and development. Hence, some solutions that are common need to be explored with specifics derived from them for specific regions and groups.

- Meeting the political aspirations of groups by giving them autonomy. Implementing sixth schedule provisions in these areas will help them to preserve their identity and culture while giving them greater autonomy.
- Economic development of the area in a calibrated manner. Any development should be sustainable and should have the participation and acceptance by the locals.
- Improving Governance and delivery mechanisms of the government and administration.
- The pre-condition of complete abjuring of violence for holding peace talks is a flawed notion. If violence is discarded and peace is established then the need of peace talks become futile. Dialogue should be ongoing process to reach concrete solutions by involving all the stakeholders and not a single group.
- Coordinating operations with the neighboring countries and use of force only when needed. Draconian laws like AFSPA should be repealed as it is one of the causes for inflating insurgency in north east.
- Rebel groups must also be more pragmatic by seeking greater autonomy within the constitutional mandate rather than demanding newer states and regions based on ever narrowing ethnic and linguistic identities, which are beyond acceptance.
- Centre and states should coordinate in decision making. In the recent agreement of the Centre with NSCN (IM), it did not take concerned state governments and other groups on board. It should be avoided.
- State police and central forces should cooperate on intelligence sharing, investigation and operations against militants. It has been alleged by the army that the June ambush of the army became possible because state police did not share the intelligence about the attack with it. It is unfortunate and counter-productive.

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