



Assam-Meghalaya Border Dispute

For Prelims: Assam-Meghalaya border dispute, Article 263 of the Constitution

For Mains: Interstate-border disputes and related issues and way ahead

Why in News

Ahead of [Meghalaya's 50th Statehood Day celebration on 21st January](#), the Home Minister is expected to seal the **final agreement to end the dispute** in six areas of the **Assam-Meghalaya boundary**.



Key Points

▪ About:

- Assam and Meghalaya share an **885-km-long border**. As of now, there are **12 points of dispute along their borders**.
- The Assam-Meghalaya border disputes are the areas of Upper Tarabari, Gazang reserve forest, Hahim, Langpih, Borduar, Boklapara, Nongwah, Matamur, Khanapara-Pilangkata, Deshdemoreah Block I and Block II, Khanduli and Retacherra.
- Meghalaya was carved out of Assam under the **Assam Reorganisation Act, 1971**, a law that it challenged, leading to disputes.

▪ Major Point of Contention:

- A major point of contention between Assam and Meghalaya is the **district of Langpih in West Garo Hills** bordering the Kamrup district of Assam.
- Langpih was part of the Kamrup district during the British colonial period but post-Independence, it became part of the **Garo Hills** and Meghalaya.

- Assam considers it to be part of the **Mikir Hills in Assam**.
- Meghalaya has questioned Blocks I and II of the Mikir Hills -now Karbi Anglong region - being part of Assam. Meghalaya says these were parts of erstwhile United Khasi and Jaintia Hills districts.

▪ Efforts to Resolve Disputes:

- Both Assam and Meghalaya have constituted **border dispute settlement committees**.
- It has been decided to set up **two regional committees to resolve the border disputes** in a phased manner and five aspects will be considered while resolving the border dispute.
 - They are historical facts, ethnicity, administrative convenience, mood and sentiments of the people concerned and the contiguity of the land.
- Six sites are in consideration in the first phase. These are Tarabari, Gijang, Hahim, Baklapara, Khanapara-Pilingkata and Ratacherra.
- These disputed areas are part of Cachar, Kamrup Metro and Kamrup Rural on Assam's side and West Khasi Hills, Ri Bhoi district and East Jaintia Hills on Meghalaya's side.

▪ Assam and Border Issues:

- The states of the **Northeast were largely carved out of Assam**, which has border disputes with several states.
- Assam's border disputes with **Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland** are pending in the **Supreme Court**.
- Assam's **border disputes with Mizoram** are currently in the phase of resolution through negotiations.

▪ Other Border Disputes between Different States:

- **Belagavi Border Dispute** (between Karnataka and Maharashtra)
- **Odisha's Border Disputes**

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