



Naga Peace Talks

Why in News

Recently, the Nagaland Government appealed to all Naga political groups and extremist groups to cooperate in establishing unity, reconciliation and peace in the region.

- The **peace process between the central government and two sets of the Naga extremist groups** has been delaying for more than 23 years.

Nagas

- Nagas are a **hill people who are estimated to number about 2.5 million** (1.8 million in Nagaland, 0.6 million in Manipur and 0.1 million in Arunachal states) and living in the remote and mountainous country **between the Indian state of Assam and Burma**.
- There are also Naga groups in Burma.
- The Nagas **are not a single tribe**, but an ethnic community that comprises several tribes who live in the state of Nagaland and its neighbourhood.
- Nagas **belong to the Indo-Mongoloid Family**.
- There are **nineteen major Naga tribes**, namely, Aos, Angamis, Changs, Chakesang, Kabuis, Kacharis, Khain-Mangas, Konyaks, Kukis, Lothas (Lothas), Maos, Mikirs, Phoms, Rengmas, Sangtams, Semas, Tankhuls, Yamchumgar and Zeeliang.

Key Points

THE NAGA STRUGGLE

1918: Naga Club formed. Seeds of Naga nationalism sown	Agreement interpreted as offer for sovereignty by NNC
1946: Naga National Council (NNC) born under the leadership of A.Z. Phizo	1955: NNC begins armed insurgency. Delhi imposes Assam Disturbed Areas' Act
August 14, 1947: NNC declares independence	1958: AFSPA comes into force
June 1947: Haidari	1963: Nagaland born
1964: Nagaland Peace Mission created, ceasefire signed	
1975: Shillong Accord signed, calls for unconditional ceasefire, termed a 'complete sellout'	
	1980: National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN) formed
	1988: NSCN splits into NSCN (K) and NSCN (I-M)
	1997: NSCN (I-M) signs ceasefire
	2001: NSCN (K) signs ceasefire
	March 2015: NSCN (K) breaks ceasefire
A.Z. Phizo	August 2015: Naga peace accord signed

▪ Background of Naga Insurgency:

- The **Naga Hills became part of British India** in 1881.
- The effort to bring scattered Naga tribes together resulted in the **formation of the Naga Club in 1918.**
 - The club aroused a sense of **Naga nationalism.**
- The club **metamorphosed into the Naga National Council (NNC) in 1946.**
- Under the leadership of Angami Zapu Phizo, the **NNC declared Nagaland as an independent State on 14th August, 1947**, and conducted a "referendum" in May 1951 to claim that 99.9% of the Nagas supported a "sovereign Nagaland".
- Nagaland **achieved statehood in December 1963.** Nagaland was formed out of the Naga Hills district of Assam and the then North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) province (now Arunachal Pradesh).
- In **1975**, under the **Shillong Accord**, some factions of NNC and NFG (Naga Federal Government) agreed to give up arms.
- **A group of about 140 members led by Thuingaleng Muivah**, who was at that time in China, **refused** to accept the Shillong Accord and **formed the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) 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.

▪ Demands of Naga Groups:

- The key demand of Naga groups has been a **Greater Nagalim** (sovereign statehood) i.e redrawing of boundaries to bring all Naga-inhabited areas in the Northeast under one administrative umbrella.
 - 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 was signed in Shillong in which the NNC leadership agreed to give up arms.
 - However, several leaders refused to accept the agreement, which led to the split of NNC.
- **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 (2015):** In this agreement, the Government of India recognised the unique history, culture and position of the Nagas and their sentiments and aspirations.
- Recently, the State government decided to prepare the [Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland](#) but later due to pressure from various factions, the decision was put on hold.

▪ Issues:

- The 2015 agreement apparently made the peace process inclusive but it created suspicion about the central government **exploiting divisions within the Nagas on tribal and geopolitical lines.**
- The issue of integration of contiguous Naga-inhabited areas of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in view of the demand for territorial unification of 'Greater Nagalim' **will trigger violent clashes in the different affected states.**
- Another major hindrance to the peace process in Nagaland is the **existence of more than one organisation**, each claiming to be representative of the Nagas.

Way Forward

- The Centre **must negotiate with all the factions and groups of the Insurgents** to have a long-lasting peace. Further, their **cultural, historical and territorial extent** must be taken into consideration.

- Any arrangement to be worked out **should lead to social and political harmony, economic prosperity and protection of the life and property** of all tribes and citizens of the states.
- Another way of dealing with the issue can be **maximum decentralisation of powers to the tribal heads and minimum centralisation at the apex level**, which should mainly work towards facilitating governance and undertaking large development projects.
- **Greater autonomy for the Naga inhabited areas in these states can be provided** which would encompass separate budget allocations for the Naga inhabited areas with regard to their culture and development issues.
- Moreover, the Centre must keep in mind that most of the armed insurgencies across the world do not end in either total victory or comprehensive defeat, but in **a grey zone called 'compromise'**.

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