

# General Knowledge Today



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## Internal & External Security - 1/4 - North East Insurgency

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## Contents

Model Questions .....	3
Meaning of Internal and External Security .....	5
Overview of North East Insurgency .....	5
Arunachal Pradesh .....	5
Assam .....	5
Manipur .....	6
Nagaland .....	6
Tripura .....	6
Meghalaya .....	6
Mizoram .....	7
Conclusion .....	7
Drivers of Insurgency in North East States .....	7
Political Mobilization by Insurgents .....	7
Porous International Border and Availability of Arms .....	8
Tough Geography .....	9
Issue of Governance & AFSPA .....	9
Other Drivers .....	10
Insurgency in Nagaland .....	11
The Naga Club and NNC .....	11
The Hydri Agreement .....	12
Talks with Gandhi and Nehru .....	12
In Search of Peace .....	13
Creation of Nagaland State and Amendment of Constitution .....	13
Circumstances that led to Shillong Accord .....	14
Aftermath of the Shilling Accord .....	14
What are demands of Nagas? .....	14
The Cause of Naga Nationalism .....	15
Various Problems in Peace Settlement .....	16
Burning Questions .....	16
Current Status and Perspectives .....	17
Current Concerns .....	17
Insurgency in Manipur .....	18
Current Status .....	19
Insurgency in Tripura .....	20
Illegal Immigration Problem in Tripura .....	20
Insurgency in Assam .....	20
ULFA and the Demand of Swadhin Asom .....	20
Ideological stand of ULFA .....	21
ULFA and Local Support .....	21



Current Position .....	22
The Bodoland Problem .....	22
Demand for Seperate Bodoland .....	22
Bodoland Territorial Council .....	23
Murky Politics of Bodoland .....	24
Demand for Separate Bodoland State: Analysis .....	24
Kamtapur Liberation Organization .....	25
Security Concerns .....	25
Current Status .....	26
Analysis .....	26
Development Angle .....	26
Ethnic Clashes Between Bodos and Muslims .....	27
Illegal Migration in Assam .....	27
Insurgency in Mizoram .....	28
The Mautam Famine .....	28
Mizoram Towards Peace .....	29
Factors for success of Mizo Accord .....	29
Current Other Insurgencies in Mizoram .....	30
State Response to North Eastern Insurgencies .....	30
Greater Statehood .....	30
Provisions of the Sixth Schedule .....	32
Analysis: Assessment of Sixth Schedule in North East .....	32
Remedies to sixth schedule problems .....	33
Special Treatment to Nagaland .....	34
Counter Insurgency (COIN) in North East .....	34
Use of (proportionate) Force .....	34
Dialogue and Negotiations .....	35
Linkages between Development and Extremism in North East .....	36
Colonial History .....	36
Post Independence .....	37
Development Extremism Links: Various Facets .....	37
The Development Efforts of Government in North East .....	39
Other Notes: .....	40
Look East Policy as structural change .....	40
Current Issues .....	40
UNLFW: The New Name of Terror in North East .....	40
Perceiving the Threat .....	41
Analysing : Implications of UNLFW .....	41



## Model Questions

### MCQ Topics for Prelims

Provisions of Article 371-A with respect to Nagaland, Kabaw Valley, Naga Hoho, Apunba Lup, Operation All Clear, Operation Rhino, Bodoland Territorial Council, Mautam Famine, Chronological order of creation of North East States (refer Greater Statehood sub-heading), Provisions of the Sixth Schedule, The ten such Councils and their respective states, Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR), North Eastern Council (NEC), trilateral connectivity project, KMMT Project, UNLFW

### Mains Model Questions

1. "The problems of North East have been a complex combination of conflict in nationalism, bargaining for autonomy, tribal matters, issues of illegal immigration and various socio-economic problems." Explain.
2. Critically examine the drivers of various conflicts and insurgency in north east region in India.
3. "Feasibility factor in north east allows the insurgents to use violent means for political ends." Explain.
4. What are various insurgent groups active in Nagaland? Which of them are currently in peace talks with Government? Discuss the progress made so far towards restoration of peace in Nagaland.
5. "Constitution of India gives the Nagas a complete self-determination for themselves, as much or as little administrative isolation from the rest of India." Discuss in the light of relevant provisions.
6. Describe the circumstances in which Nagas signed the Shillong Accord. Why Shillong Accord could bring peace in Nagaland? Discuss.
7. Critically examine the internal and external reasons that brought the spirit of nationalism among the Nagas. To what extent, this spirit was responsible for making Nagaland an epicentre of insurgency in North East? Examine.
8. "So far, the peace in Nagaland remains elusive." Discuss in the light of recently signed framework agreement.
9. What are the various factors that led to growth in the resentment in Manipuri people? List various insurgent groups active in Manipur.
10. On what grounds, ULFA insists on its demand for Swadhin Asom? Discuss current status of peace process in Assam.



11. To what extent the sixth schedule has been successful in pacifying the demands of people of North East states. Examine Critically.
12. “Indian Constitution does not guarantee a separate homeland on ground of racial ethnicity but Bodoland seems to be an exception to this.” Do you agree with this view? Discuss.
13. Mizo Accord is said to be the only insurgency in the world that ended with a “stroke of pen”. Critically discuss the factors that made this accord successful.
14. “Sixth schedule has ended up creating multiple power centers instead of bringing in a genuine process of democratization or autonomy in the North East”. Opine.
15. Do you think that an all out operations against the armed outfits in north east is feasible? Argue.
16. To what extent, the policy to make the North East a developmental frontier is responsible for its economic backwardness. Discuss.
17. “Underdevelopment breeds insurgency and insurgency retards development”. Discuss giving reference to India’s North East Region.
18. Comment on various development efforts of Government of India in North East.
19. Give a critical appraisal of the North Eastern Council. in/module/ias-general-studies
20. Critically assess the internal security threats from the recently created United Liberation Front of Western South East Asia (UNFLW).



The dictionary meaning of security is protection from harm. National security is the protection of state and citizens from all kinds of national crises using political, military, economic or diplomatic power. The two aspects of National Security are Internal and External Security. Kautilya has written that a state has *four kinds of security threats* viz. internal, external, internally added external and externally added internal. Even today, we face the same four kinds of threats.

### Meaning of Internal and External Security

- Internal Security refers to upholding national law and maintenance of peace, law and order within a country's territory. Internal Security comes within the realm of Ministry of Home Affairs in India.
- External Security refers to security against aggression by foreign countries. External Security comes under Ministry of Defense.

There are several aspects of Internal security such as domestic peace, rule of law, public safety, peaceful co-existence and communal harmony. The main internal security challenges to the country include militancy & terrorism, insurgency or left wing extremism, organized crimes, communal, caste, ethnical problems, regionalism, cybercrime, coastal security, data security etc. There are several historical and non-historical reasons for causing these problems such as hostile neighbours, porous borders, poverty, unemployment, inequality, failure of administration, increasing communal divide, casteism, sectarian politics, linguistic issues, poor justice delivery system, nexus among criminals, politicians and bureaucrats in India, lethal non-state actors and so on.

## Overview of North East Insurgency

North Eastern states are connected to the rest of India by the *Siliguri Corridor*, a 23 kilometres wide strip of land. The states of *Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur* and *Tripura* have been plagued by separatist tendencies and insurgencies right since independence. Several armed as well as unarmed outfits with complex links with external state and non-state actors, illicit economies and electoral politics have been active in these regions. While some of them demand greater autonomy within the framework of Indian Constitution, others insist on complete independence from India. Here is a brief overview of these.

### Arunachal Pradesh

A group called *National Liberation Council of Taniland* (NLCT) is active at the Assam-Arunachal Border. This group demands a *Tani Land* for Tani tribes in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Tani refers to a group of tribes including Mishing, Miri, Adi, Nyishi etc.

### Assam

Throughout the history of Independent India, the Separatist movements have been an integral part of the Assam politics. There are 30 insurgent groups but most of them are just nameplate



organizations that engage in sporadic activities such as extortion and pressure groups. There are three groups currently active viz. United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNLF), Kamtapur Liberation Organization (KLO) etc.

ULFA was formed in 1979 to establish a sovereign state of Assam through armed struggle. NDBF was formed in 1989 as the *Bodo Security Force*. Its demand was to establish an autonomous region for Bodos. KLNLF is operating in the Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts of Assam. This group was formed in 2004 and it is fighting for self rule for Karbi People. It has close connections with ULFA. The Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) is seeking to carve out a separate Kamtapur State that would comprise six districts in West Bengal and four districts of West Bengal.

### Manipur

Manipur was once the most insurgency affected state. There past groups include United National Liberation Front of Manipur (UNLF); *People's Liberation Army* (PLA). Another group *Kanglai Kana Yan Lup* (KYKL) has been active in recent times. Manipur has also been affected due to factional fights in NSCN groups in Nagaland. Due to this, the Kuki tribals have created their Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and its armed Wing, Kuki National Army (KNA). Skirmishes between Nagas and Kukis are common in that region.

### Nagaland

Nagaland is the epicentre of insurgency in north east. The Nagas unilaterally declared themselves independent on 14 August 1947 and since then peace has been elusive to this state. The first insurgent group was Naga National Council led by AZ Phizo, who infused the *Naga Nationalism* among Naga youth. Currently, NSCN(IM) and NSCN(K) are two groups active in the state. Both are currently in ceasefire truce with Central Government.

### Tripura

The key reason behind Tripura insurgency is the conflict arisen due to illegal Bangladeshi infiltration in the state. The immigrants have outnumbered the native tribal population and created troubles for them. There are two groups active in the state viz. National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF). The Core objective of ATTF is expulsion of all Bengali-speaking immigrant settlers who entered Tripura after 1956 and restore land to tribals under 'Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act', 1960.

### Meghalaya

Meghalaya was created from Assam in 1971 to meet the demands of Khasi, Garo and other tribes. However, this state has been cradle of conflict between Indian Nationalism and the newly infused Garo and Khasi nationalisms. The situation has been further accentuated by factional fights among other groups. In Meghalaya, the first militant group was Hynniewtrep Achik Liberation



Council (HALC), formed in 1992 to protect Meghalaya's indigenous population from rise of non-tribal immigration. However, this group soon split into Garo dominated Achik Matgrik Liberation Army (AMLA), and the joint Systeng-Khasi alliance of Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC). HNLC wanted to set up Meghalaya into an exclusive Khasi region. Currently, the most active outfit in Meghalaya is Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) which was formed in 2009. Its demand is a 'sovereign Garoland' in the Western areas of Meghalaya.

### Mizoram

Mizo insurgency ended with 1986 Mizo Accord, which is most successful agreement so far in North East India. Some demands for autonomy are still raised by Hmars, chakmas and Brus people. In 1995, the Hmar People's Convention-Democracy was created for an independent Hmar State.

### Conclusion

The above overview makes it clear that the problems of North East have been a complex combination of conflict in nationalism, bargaining for autonomy, tribal matters, issues of illegal immigration and various socio-economic problems. The secessionist/separatist movements could be attributed to several reasons for example, Central Government's neglect of the area, feeling of alienation among the tribals, changes in the demographic pattern caused by the influx of people from Bangladesh, Myanmar; assistance to rebel groups by neighbours, availability of sanctuaries in the bordering countries etc.

### Drivers of Insurgency in North East States

There are several drivers of various conflicts and insurgency in north east region, for example-political mobilization by insurgents, porous international border in north east, availability of arms, tough geography, lack of administrative reach and other socio-economic reasons. They have been discussed in detail here:

#### Political Mobilization by Insurgents

Most insurgent groups in North East garner popular support for their violent activities citing social/political reasons that are important to the population in question. The political mobilization is considered to be the first vital phase of any armed movement. Moreover, any insurgency is hard to be destroyed once it is successful in acquiring the popular social support. The insurgent groups construct a *social imaginary* based on real or perceived political or ethnic or cultural subjugation by other communities. By doing so, they vindicate the need for violent assertion of their concerns. The insurgent leaders also showcase their armed cadres, weapons and financial power in the affected regions which attracts the unemployed youth to join them. The most basic premise of such political mobilization would be that the state administration has failed in providing the basic amenities to the population and decent alternative livelihoods to the youths.



- The agenda for political mobilization for NSCN (IM) is the Naga Territorial unification and sovereignty based on its own narrative of independence of Nagas before the Naga Territories were occupied by the British.
- Similarly, ULFA claims Assamese exploitation by the colonial rule of New Delhi and cites that Assamese will get due recognition only when Assam becomes a separate Swadhin Asom, though there are really few takers of this idea in Assam.
- Similarly, in Manipur, the contention that bought political mobilization was the argument that the accession of Manipur in Union of India was a forced merger by India on a gunpoint and Manipur was to be an independent state after British left India.

Each of the insurgent groups claims that once they become free of India, they would improve the overall economic and social conditions of their target populations. Based on these political narratives, youths from these areas are motivated to join the armed movements.

It is true that most of the rural India suffers from economic backwardness. This problem is more glaring in North East and LWE affected areas that are constantly prone to violence. In north east, the backwardness coupled with lack of infrastructure makes the states heavily dependent on centre for their political survival. [suraj\\_winner](#) | [rajawat.rs.surajsingh@gmail.com](#) | [www.gktoday.in/module/ias-general-studies](#)

### **Porous International Border and Availability of Arms**

The 4500 kilometre long International Border of India in this region is porous and has resulted in easy flow of arms, illegal immigrations, drugs to India. Due to the porous border, the insurgents can easily flee to neighbouring countries such as Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh and also establish their underground insurgent bases. Moreover, the youth of north east is vulnerable to drug addiction due to the flourishing drug trade in the so called **Golden Triangle**. Certain insurgent groups such as UNLF, NSCN (IM) and NSCN (K) have been found to be involved in Drug trade along with the Karens and the Kachins in Myanmar.

### **Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent**

Golden Triangle includes Myanmar, Thailand and Laos. It is Asia's one of two main opium-producing areas. Another one is Afghanistan's Golden Crescent. Most of the world's heroin came from the Golden Triangle until the early 21st century when Afghanistan became the world's largest producer.

Thus, **Feasibility factor** in north east allows the insurgents to use violent means for political ends. The Feasibility hypothesis says that where rebellion is **materially feasible**, it will occur. The easy availability of arms to insurgents enables them to sustain their movements. All the prominent insurgent groups in North East possess AK series of rifles, advanced assault rifles and other weapons and explosives.



### Tough Geography

North East India is connected to the Indian mainland by a narrow stretch of land called **Siliguri Corridor** (aka Chicken's neck) which is only few kilometres wide. The isolation, geographic fragmentation, and the problems associated with being viewed as peripheral to India's imagination of itself are dominant drivers of alienation in the Northeast.

Geography and terrain of north east has proved to be vital for continuation of insurgent movements. Without supportive terrain, lightly armed, highly mobile insurgent cadres cannot sustain the superiority of the Indian Army. The Northeast terrain is hilly and not easily accessible because of incessant rain during the months of April to July, an insurgent group once established, takes years to be detected and countered by the state. Due to supportive terrain, the groups are able to surprise the Military by tactics of guerrilla warfare and hit and run. The NSCN (IM) functions in the hills of Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. They also use the hill tracts of Nagaland spilling over into the hill tracts of Myanmar. The terrain is densely forested and weather conditions are extreme. Similarly, the ULFA takes advantage of less connectivity of districts and thickly forested areas in the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh-Bhutan border.

### Issue of Governance & AFSPA

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Some of the past and present policies and issues related to Governance have also contributed in the aggravation of the conflict situation in North East India. The seven sisters plus Sikkim are populated by nearly 40 million inhabitants who vary in language, race, tribe, caste, religion, and regional heritage. When all of them are clubbed under the "North East" tag, it tends to represent a "one shoe fits all" approach for this extremely diverse region. The creation of sixth schedule has firstly created multiple powers of centre, secondly more and more regions demanding such autonomous council. This implies that somewhere the government policy has failed to bring in a genuine process of democratization or autonomy in the region.

The lack of adequate political measures is also reflected in the imposition of AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Power Act). This act was passed on 18 August, 1958, as a short-term measure to allow deployment of the army to counter an armed separatist movement in the Naga Hills. Now this act is in place for the last five decades and was extended to all the seven states of the Northeast region.

This act was a part of the bundle of provisions, passed by the central government, to retain control over the Naga areas. In all these years, AFSPA has become a powerful measure for the central and the state government to act against actors challenging the political and territorial integrity of India. It was this act via which the Indian army was for the first time after independence deployed for an internal conflict.

The major issues with AFSPA are as follows:



1. This act has escalated the conflict by bringing it on a military level.
2. There are regular allegations of violation of human rights by the Indian Army.
3. AFSPA has tended to create apathy to Indian army's endeavours in north east. The supporters of a political solution have also turned away. One of the fact finding commissions in 2004 reported that AFSPA has become a symbol of oppression, an object of hate and an instrument of discrimination and highhandedness.

### Other Drivers

#### Ethnic / Factional Violence

Violence is endemic to the Northeast though in some states such as Tripura, Meghalaya and Mizoram, it has been handled more effectively. The heavy presence of Indian army also makes them prone to future violence. All north eastern states except the Arunachal Pradesh have been inflicted with ethnic violence at one time or another in recent history.

#### Cultural Differences

The tribes of the Northeast are mostly of Mongoloid stock and they view themselves as different from the Aryan and Dravidian races of India.

#### Pressure on Land

This is a combination of various factors such as increasing population, lack of state land reforms, oral traditions of land ownership, jhum cultivation, migrant population, intensive cultivation etc. State has been unable to efficiently settle these land related insecurities. Thus, pressure on land has created tribal and ethnic "security dilemmas" in the North East India.

#### Ethnic Security Dilemmas

North East India is home to multi-ethnic and multi-tribal societies. Conflict arises when one ethnic group harbours armed members and other leads to rival arming.

#### Political Corruption

The political culture of most north east states is fraught with corruption, lack of representation in power structures at the centre, and nexus between politicians and insurgent groups. The result of this is an insecure state structure and insecure public. Further, some of the laws such as **Inner Line**

**Permit** and **Restricted Area Permit** inhibit access of outsiders into the region. The result of such laws is a "siege mentality" among the public. Moreover, the extortion networks are being run by the insurgent groups whereby, every person needs to pay some part of his / her income to insurgents.

#### Low quality of Education

North East India states have one of the highest literacy rate in India. Yet, the quality of education is lacking which results in dearth of well qualified people to run the affairs of these hill states.

#### Under development

North East has underdeveloped Transportation and communication. The national highways are broken and need repair. In monsoon, North East almost becomes inaccessible.



### Perceived Feelings of Neglect

People of North East India have a perceived feeling of neglect by New Delhi due to their peripheral situation and cultural differences.

#### Factors Responsible for insurgency in the North-East

- 1 Feeling of alienation and deprivation among the tribal population
- 2 Similar ethnicity across the border on Myanmar side
- 3 Porosity of the border with Myanmar due to difficult terrain
- 4 Change in demographic pattern due to infiltration from across the border
- 5 Disconnect with the other parts of India and fellow Indians
- 6 Widespread corruption among the ruling elite
- 7 Lack of visionary leadership among the tribal communities
- 8 Lack of development and basic amenities
- 9 Easy availability of arms and ammunition
- 10 Political support from various factions
- 11 Instability in Myanmar

### Insurgency in Nagaland

To understand the insurgency in Nagaland, we need to go into its history. The present Nagaland state is home to the Naga people, who did not have any strong social, legal, cultural, commercial or political relation with rest of the India. Like many other small sovereign states before the arrival of British, the Nagas were also free people.

The British invasion brought many kingdoms under single political authority and this applied to Naga people also. The first British invasion happened in areas of present Nagaland state during 1830s but their repulsion was so strong, that Britishers did not interfere in their civil and criminal administration. By 1880s, Nagas had agreed to Great Britain having one military base in limited areas in Naga Hills.

#### The Naga Club and NNC

In 1918, the educated Naga youth created a *Naga Club* at Kohima with an objective to represent Naga interest to British Government. By that time, a clear picture of what later was known as *Naga Nationalism* had not appeared. In 1929, the Naga Club submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission and requested the British Government to leave the Nagas as free people and not to



include them within the Indian Federation in the upcoming Government of India Act. In the Government of India Act 1935, the Naga Areas were declared as *Special Backward Area* and later the *Excluded Area* status. Before India's independence, the Nagas wanted such an arrangement by which they could remain directly under the British. [This implies that when British leave, Nagas are not left alone, and then forced to be a part of *indestructible union of destructible states*].

However, the Naga areas were parts of Assam province then. Before British left India, the Naga Club was renamed as Naga Nationalist Council (NNC) in 1946 and this NNC asserted Naga's inalienable right to be a separate nation and an absolute right to live independently.

### **The Hydri Agreement**

To resolve the problem, Sir Akbar Hydri, Governor of Assam visited Kohima. A *Nine-point Hydri agreement* was signed between Assam and Kohima in June 1947. This agreement recognized the indisputable rights of Nagas to protect their culture, society and customary law as per their own free wish but article 9 of this agreement became contentious and later proved to be crux of the political problem. This article read as follows:

*"The Governor of Assam as the Agent of the Government of the Indian Union will have a special responsibility for a period of 10 years to ensure the due observance of this agreement; at the end of this period, the Naga National Council will be asked whether they require the above Agreement to be extended for a further period, or a new agreement regarding the future of the Naga people arrived at."*

The wording of the above article was too vague and created a dispute very soon after it was signed. The NNC interpreted that after end of ten years i.e. in 1958, they would be free to claim independence and secede from the Union of India. But the government interpreted that after ten years, there would be a review of the situation and a fresh agreement widely accepted to the Nagas would be arrived at [without sovereignty to Nagas].

### **Talks with Gandhi and Nehru**

In July 1947, the NNC led by Dr. A.Z. Phizo met Mahatma Gandhi and asserted their right to freedom. They substantiated their assertion by declaring that they would be declaring independence on 14 August 1947. They indeed declared their independence on 14th August 1947. The Nagas also boycotted the Indian Constitution and its sixth schedule which was incorporated for the welfare of the tribals of the North Eastern Region. They decided to fight for freedom and Indian government initiated action against their secessionist tendency. Phizo was arrested in 1948 and was released later. In May 1952, a Naga delegation met Jawaharlal Nehru who denied them the right to claim freedom. In 1954, a *Sovereign Republic of Nagaland* was established. The already strained relations further soured when armed conflict broke out between Indian army and so called Naga army of underground Nagas. In 1956, Phizo replaced the Sovereign Republic of Nagaland with *Naga Central*



Government and later in 1959 the Federal Government of Nagaland. They also boycotted the general elections of 1957 because as per Hydri agreement they were supposed to be free next year.

### In Search of Peace

When blood started flowing from both sides, people got fed up. There was growing difference among various Naga leaders, which led to internal violence among various factions. In late 1950s, some moderates abandoned the violent path and decided that it would be better to be with India rather than a separate country. The *Naga People's Convention* thus came into existence with *Dr. Imkongliba* as its President. The NPC spearheaded the movement to create *Nagaland State* within the Indian Union with a *high degree of autonomy*. But these adventures of peace loving NPC were not acceptable to the underground groups. They felt that NPC leaders were actually working as agents of the Indian Government. Meanwhile, a 16 point agreement was signed between NPC and Government of India in 1960. This miffed the underground groups and they assassinated NPC president *Dr. Imkongliba*. This invoked sudden response from Central government.

### Creation of Nagaland State and Amendment of Constitution

While taking effective measures to put down the insurgency, the government decided to meet the genuine aspirations of Nagas and, therefore, carved out a separate State of Nagaland on December 1, 1963. Earlier, the parliament also passed the Constitution 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act, 1962 and provided special treatment to Nagaland via **Article 371-A**. This article says that no Act of Parliament in respect of

- Religious or social practices of the Nagas,
- Naga customary law and procedure,
- Administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law,
- Ownership and transfer of land and its resources

shall apply to the State of Nagaland unless the *Legislative Assembly of Nagaland* by a resolution so decides.

The above amendment in the constitution and separate Nagaland state gave the Nagas a complete self-determination for themselves, as much or as little administrative isolation from the rest of India as they wished but this did not amount to the sovereignty they demanded. Thus, creation of a separate state also did not have the desired effect. A ceasefire agreement was signed on in 1964 between the underground Nagas and the Government of India but this also failed to bring peace because frequent violation of ceasefire continued. The Naga insurgents with active help from Burma and China as well as from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) carried on their guerrilla activities and Indian army also carried on its operations against the Nagas.



### Circumstances that led to Shillong Accord

A number of events happened in 1970s that eventually led to the signing of the Shillong Accord on November 11, 1975. Firstly, the eastern wing of Pakistan was clipped in 1972 and Bangladesh was born. The underground Nagas were deprived of safe sanctuary after this. Secondly, the Indira Gandhi government imposed emergency in the country and security forces got a free hand to deal with situation. Thirdly, the Kashmir problem appeared to have settled and the underground Nagas pondered over if they should follow path of Sheikh Abdullah. Fourthly, the people of Sikkim voted in favour of joining India in a referendum and Sikkim became a part of India in 1975.

All these events gave a setback to the violent Nagas and moderate leadership started thinking in terms of staying as a protectorate of India. The Naga Peace Council and Sarvodaya leaders played an active role to bring the underground Nagas to negotiating table.

### Aftermath of the Shilling Accord

The Shillong accord of 1975 is made of two agreements viz. three point agreement (signed in November 1975) and a supplementary agreement that was signed shortly after the first one in January 1976. They key points were as follows:

- Via this agreement, the rebels had to accept the Constitution of India without condition, surrender arms and renounce the demand for secession.
- The underground groups would have reasonable time to formulate their issues for discussion and bring them to negotiating table through the Nagaland peace council.

However, this agreement was opposed by some leaders in the NNC, who called it as total betrayal of Naga interests. Three such leaders viz. Isak Chishi Swu, Thuingaleng Muivah and SS Khaplang formed a Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in late 1970s. This NSCN started an underground Naga Federal government having both Civil and Military wings. But in late 1980s, it split into two factions viz. NSCN (Isak-Muivah) and the NSCN (Khaplang). This split brought a series of killings and fractional hostility grew day by day. The NSCN (IM) remained most formidable insurgent outfit in India's north-eastern states. It was active not only in Nagaland but also in the Naga-inhabited areas of Arunachal, Manipur and Myanmar.

On August 01, 1997, a cease-fire agreement was negotiated between the Government of India and the NSCN-IM. Since then, more than fifty rounds of peace talks have been held between the representatives of the Government of India and the rebel Naga leaders. In August 2015, the NDA Government has signed the framework agreement with NSCN-IM.

### What are demands of Nagas?

Apart from sovereignty, the Naga rebels demand creation of a 'Greater Nagaland' or Nagalim, whose territory not only consists of current Nagaland state but also Naga-inhabited areas of Assam,



Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and some portions Myanmar. They call the Nagalim as rightful homeland of the Nagas. According to NSCN, the Nagalim lies in the Patkai range at the tri-junction of China, India and Myanmar.



Establishment of Nagalim has been the stated objective of NSCN (IM). While NSCN-IM has been engaged with the government of India in peace talks, in December 1994, the Nagaland state assembly had also passed an unanimous resolution to integrate all the Naga-inhabited areas of Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh with the present state of Nagaland. The demand for integration of the Naga inhabited areas into one (sovereign) unit is though they are diverse and heterogeneous by nature, the Naga groups and communities of the region were living in these areas from pre-colonial times in single continuous habitat that was subsequently divided by the British as well as the Indian and Burmese governments into multiple political and administrative units as per their convenience.

The NSCN-IM maintains that at present Nagalim has been subdivided by the Government of India into four different administrative units viz. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland. Likewise, they claim that Myanmar too has parts of Nagalim and has divided it under two administrative units of Kachin State and Sagaing division.

### **The Cause of Naga Nationalism**

The demand for a Nagalim means taking large chunks of territories of three neighbouring States, Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, along with some portion of Myanmar. The demand was accentuated by the Naga nationalism infused initially under the leadership of A Z Phizo. He was an efficient communicator who garnered support from majority of the Nagas and convert the demand



for a separate homeland into a Naga nationalist movement. The further impetus was given by the organizations such as Naga National Organization, People's Independence League etc.

The Naga cause was furthered on religious lines also. Since majority of Nagas are Christians, the Naga leadership spread the rumours that the *Hindu Government in India would soon put an end to Christianity and it will force Nagas to even stop eating beef.*

Thus, there are several internal and external reasons that brought the spirit of nationalism among the Nagas. Among internal reasons; *firstly*, Nagaland has not been a part of India and had no strong political and legal relations with it. *Secondly*, Nagas saw Indian government with fear and suspicion that it would force them to follow their customs. *Thirdly*, Nagas are different from mainland people and can be differentiated easily and so they don't easily merge with them. *Fourthly*, Indian Government did nothing to alleviate the fear among Nagas that the taxes and alien culture is not to be imposed on them. They feared that there area would be slowly indianized. Among external reasons, firstly, Nagas had their base camps in Myanmar and East Pakistan helped them. Secondly, China provided them training and ideological support and meddled with issue of Nagas.

### Various Problems in Peace Settlement

Fulfilling the demand of a Greater Nagaland would affect the integrity of other states. In 2010, the UPA had made it clear that it will not change the boundaries of the current states. Further, Delhi has also kept insisting that it would negotiate only with one entity and not several factions. But the Naga Problem has too many stakeholders with wide differences among them. Each of them claims mandate to represent the Nagas. However, the majority of the Nagas have their own resentment towards Delhi, which according to them is pampering a few gun-toting men with little resonance with broad Naga family. Further, there are several factors that make things complicated. These include: origin and spread of the Naga-Kuki clashes; failure of administration to reach out and meet the basic demands; distance from Delhi and difficult terrain; sense of being second citizens and neglect from mainland.

Further, the intervention of Delhi in Naga affairs has been quite reckless because Naga Polity is made of 25 tribes and each of these tribes is a proud owner and inheritor of distinct culture, language, tradition and geography within the broad framework of Naga family. However, Delhi has dealt with them as if it was a homogenous collective with common aspirations. Making a deal with one set does not mean that it satisfies all sets.

### Burning Questions

There are several burning questions whose answer would define if the Naga problem is really solved. Firstly, New Delhi is engaged with NSCN-IM and it is not clear if any deal with the NSCN-IM is actually going to solve the Naga problem? It is often alleged that NSCN-IM has mainly the people



from Tangkhul tribes of Manipur, having little resonance with other Nagas. The other powerful groups such as NSCN(K), NSCN (KK) and NNC have been largely ignored. This brings in another question – who is real representative of Nagas?

### **NNCN-K, NSCN-KK and NNC**

NSCN (K) reportedly holds sway over almost the entire eastern Nagaland and its people and resonates well with the locals including the Konyaks, the largest of Naga tribes.

Similarly, the NSCN (KK)- essentially a militia of the Sumis, one of the larger Naga tribes — control a large swathe of Nagaland adjoining Manipur and also has heavy presence in Dimapur district.

The Naga National Council (NNC), the mother of all Naga militias though now a rump of its older self, deeply resonates with the Angamis, the second largest Naga tribe, and their kin tribes in Kohima and adjoining regions.

Secondly, whether the government takes into confidence the *Naga Hoho*, the apex Naga tribal council?

### **Current Status and Perspectives**

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So far, the peace in Nagaland remains elusive. There is a ceasefire agreement in force since 1997. In August 2015, a 'framework agreement' between the Central Government and the NSCN-IM was signed. The deal has been struck by interlocutor Mr. R N Ravi, who knows this issue and the region in-depth. He is also the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee and a former Special Director of the Intelligence Bureau. This agreement itself is not a final settlement but is a framework agreement; but despite all its limitations; it is of far reaching importance. *Firstly*, it shows the flexibility and realism of the NSCN (IM) in terms of the willingness to alter goals. For example, their demand has changed from a complete sovereignty and Greater Nagalim to "shared sovereignty" and *greater autonomy to Naga inhabited areas outside of Nagaland through the establishment of autonomous district councils within constitutional framework*. Secondly, the signing of the accord shows that Nagas are insistent on a peaceful path to conflict resolution. Thirdly, it brings to an end to an 'almost two-decade-old' ceasefire and endless rounds of 'talks' and opens up windows of peace talks with several other militias.

### **Current Concerns**

However, there are several concerns. Firstly, the other Naga rebel factions, particularly the Khaplang-faction of the NSCN or the NSCN-K that is now outside the purview of the peace process. NSCN-K had abrogated its 14-year-long ceasefire with New Delhi in April 2015 and has since carried out the biggest attack on the Indian army in two decades when it ambushed and killed 18



soldiers of the Dogra Regiment in Manipur's Chandel district on 4 June 2015. The NSCN-K could now try and strike in a bid to demonstrate its presence and relevance, and that is precisely the reason why the Naga civil society is stressing on the need to once again try and get the outfit back on the road to peace. Then there are other factions as well. In such a situation, how durable peace could be secured in the Naga hills is another critical question. Without bringing all the factions on the table there are still chances of insurgencies erupting once again in the state. Thirdly, the most contentious clause in the demand put forward was the integration of Naga inhabited areas in neighbouring states of Nagaland, a demand that has faced intense opposition from the concerned states, particularly Manipur. This may not be acceptable to Manipur dominated by martial Meitei population whose chief minister Ibobi Singh has already declared assertively that there would be no compromise on Manipur's territorial integrity. [We note here that territorial integrity of states is not guaranteed. All states are destructible parts of indestructible union].

Nevertheless it's a landmark development because it has confirmed that the two sides have succeeded in narrowing down their differences and are on the verge of reaching a Peace Accord. But to make the accord a success there needs to be more consultations with the involvement of civil society etc. There is a belief that the agreement with the NSCN-IM could impact on the insurgent groups in states like Assam, Meghalaya or Manipur and encourage them to shun violence and join the peace bandwagon, but that will turn into reality only if the final deal with the Isak-Muivah faction is reached fast.

### Insurgency in Manipur

In ancient times, Manipur was known as Meitei Kingdom. During British Era, it was under princely state of *Kangleipak* since 1891. Via a *Manipur Merger Agreement*, the princely state acceded to the Union on 15th October 1949 when *Maharaja Bodhachandra* ceded "full and exclusive authority, jurisdiction and powers for and in relation to the governance of the State to Dominion Government of India". However, it was alleged that this accession was a forced merger at gunpoint. In the imagination of the people of the state, Manipur was to be an independent state after British left India. This was nothing new as all the 562 princely states were independent at some point in their history. However, the legitimacy of the accession of Manipur was challenged by persons and organisations that claim to be the true inheritors independent Meitei Kingdom and who seek to restore the sovereign state of Manipur. Thus, the roots of trouble in Manipur go back to the circumstances under which the annexation/merger of Manipur into the Indian Union was achieved — or manipulated. From 1962 till 1972, Manipur remained a Union Territory. In January 1972, Manipur became the full fledged state of the Indian Union. Some more developments took place which led to *growth in the*



resentment. Firstly, the ceding of the *Kabaw Valley* to Myanmar. Secondly, imposition of AFPSA, which is more recent issue.

### Kabaw Valley

Kabaw Valley was always viewed as an integral part of Manipur, to Myanmar, though Myanmar had been in *de-facto* control of the territory as part of the truce negotiated after the Anglo-Burmese war of 1826. In 1953, the territory was gifted way by Jawaharlal Nehru to Myanmar.

### Rise of Insurgency

Insurgency started in Manipur as early as in the 1960s. Manipur has been greatly disturbed by armed violence with the formation of the *United National Liberation Front of Manipur* (UNLF) on November 24, 1964. Another significant Manipuri armed separatist group known as the *Revolutionary People's Front* (RPF) and its armed wing, the *People's Liberation Army* (PLA), has been engaging in armed struggle since 1976. The RPF and the PLA were supposedly trained by the Chinese in the 1960s and 1970s in Maoist guerrilla warfare and both outfits aim at violent revolutionary change to bring about a classless society in Manipur.

Yet another outfit in Manipur is the *Kanglai Kana Yan Lup* (KYKL), which has taken up social afflictions such as fighting corruption, drug trafficking and sub-standard education practices. Another group known as the *Peoples' Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak* (PREPAK) was established in the 1970s. The total strength of the various insurgent groups is estimated to be around 10,000.

The objectives of these organizations are same: independence and sovereignty of Manipur, however, there are three tiers of problem as follows:

- The Meiteis are active in the Valley districts
- Nagas in the Hill districts
- There are inter-tribal clashes between Nagas and Kukis over the control of illicit drug traffic with Myanmar.

Moreover, the **Apunba Lup**, an umbrella organization of the Meiteis has been demanding withdrawal of the Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act, 1958. The Jeevan Reddy Committee, which was appointed to report on the desirability of continuing the enactment, recommended its withdrawal, which we discuss later on.

### Current Status

Once upon a time, Manipur used to be most insurgency affected state in the North East with more than 30 outfits active there. However, over the last five years, few incidents were reported. The militancy in Manipur got weaker because of arrests of the militant leaders and splits within the outfits.



In June 2015, 20 Army personnel of the 6 Dogra Regiment were killed in Manipur's Chandel district. The fingers were pointed at Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), People's Liberation Army (PLA) or the Khaplang faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-K).

### Insurgency in Tripura

Tripura became a part of dominion of India after Maharani Regent of Tripura signed the **Tripura Merger Agreement** on 9 September 1949. First it was made a Part C state. In 1956, it became a Union Territory. On 21 January 1972, it came into existence as a separate state of India along with Meghalaya and Manipur.

The evolution of insurgency in Tripura can be traced to the formation of the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti (TUJS) in 1971. This was 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. These two outfits had secessionist agenda as follows:

- They disputed the merger of the kingdom of Tripura with the Indian Union
- They demanded sovereignty for Tripura
- They demanded deportation of "illegal migrants"
- They demanded nullifying the Tripura merger agreement and the restoration of land to the tribal people under the Tripura Land Reform Act, 1960.

### Illegal Immigration Problem in Tripura

The major issue behind the insurgency in Tripura was the illegal immigration that led to ethnic strife. After the partition of India, many Hindu Bengalis migrated to Tripura as refugees from East Pakistan. This inflow further increased after the 1971 war between India and Pakistan. Before that, the indigenous population was a majority in Tripura which became a minority after creation of Bangladesh. It's worth note that in recent times, Tripura has been a peaceful state and has remarkably won over the insurgency.

### Insurgency in Assam

#### ULFA and the Demand of Swadhin Asom

ULFA is the oldest outfit of Assam, founded by *Pareesh Baruah* in April 1979, with the aim of liberating Assam "from the Indian colonial regime" through "armed struggle" and to bring about a "radical transformation of the Assamese society through scientific socialism".

This outfit had its support base in Brahmaputra Valley, with training camps and sanctuaries in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh as well as in Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. It has operational links with other factions particularly with the NSCN.



ULFA's stated objective is the attainment of *Swadhin Asom*. It has declared its readiness to talk with the government on the condition that *Swadhin Asom* is on the agenda.

The outfit suffered a major setback in 2003 when Bhutan flushed them out of its territory via its *Operation All Clear*.

### Operation All Clear

In December 2003, Operation All Clear was launched by the Royal Bhutanese Army, with the 'logistical support' of the Indian security forces. The objective was to clear southern Bhutan of camps of the ULFA, the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), and the Kamatapur Liberation Organisation (KLO). Several senior ULFA, NDFB and the KLO leaders were captured and handed over to the Indian Army.

### Ideological stand of ULFA

The ULFA takes its ideological stand from the Treaty of Yanbadu of 1826 which brought peace after the First Anglo-Burmese War. Treaty was signed between East India Company and King of Ava (Ava was capital of Burma from 1364-1841). As per this treaty: Assam, Manipur, Arakan, Taninthai were ceded to British. The Burmese had to cease interference in Chachar Kingdom and Jaintia Hills. Burmese agreed to pay an indemnity of one million Pounds Sterling to British. Burmese agreed to allow diplomatic representatives from British. Burmese also agreed to sign a commercial treaty in due course of time. The first among the above 5 conditions was very important, which led to *Annexation of Assam* into territories of British East India Company.

However, ULFA does not consider itself a secessionist organisation, because it claims that *Assam was never a part of India*. It says that Assam was always an independent country which defended itself from the Mughal attacks as many as 17 times. Though Assam became a British colony after the Treaty of Yandabu, yet the people of Assam launched movement against the British; which later united with the Indian freedom struggle. Hence, after the departure of the British, Assam should have been an independent country, according to ULFA.

The Government of India has classified ULFA as a terrorist organization and banned it under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in 1990. The Government of India also conducted military offensives against ULFA which include the *Operation Bajrang of 1990*, *Operation Rhino of 1991* and *Operation Rhino-2* in 2000s. Till today, the anti-insurgency operations of Indian army are going on.

### ULFA and Local Support

At one time, ULFA claimed itself to be an articulator of Assamese 'national aspirations'. Its ideological claim has been that its armed struggle for 'Swadhin Asom' was a response to the Indian state's colonial attitude. However, not all stakeholders of the Assam are supportive of *Swadhin Asom*. Political parties that accept the Constitution of India and represent the interests of Assamese people



are insistent on the demand for talks.

### Current Position

Government of India has more than once offered to hold unconditional talks with the ULFA leaders, but their obstinacy in insisting on recognition of their sovereignty has proved to be a stumbling block. The emergence of Islamist groups in Assam has further added to the complexity of the situation. ULFA has also links with ISI of Pakistan and GDFI of Bangladesh. It has been alleged to launch a proxy war against India.

ULFA has been most horrific terror organization with the capacity to strike at will. In recent times, it has suffered splits and desertions. Most of its top leaders are in exile. Its Vice President and General Secretary are in Prison in Guwahati and Dhaka.

### The Bodoland Problem

The Bodos are an ethnic and linguistic community centered on the Udalguri and Kokrajhar of Assam. They are largest of the 18 ethnic sub-groups within the Bodo-Kachari group.

### Demand for Seperate Bodoland

The demand for a separate land for Bodos has its roots as back as 1930s when Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, a leader of the Bodos submitted memorandum to Simon Commission demanding for a separate political set up for the indigenous and tribal people of Assam. This demand was met neither by British India nor by Independent India.

The second wave of demands came up in 1960s and the third one in 1980s. This time, demand for Bodoland began on 2 March 1987 under the leadership of *Upendranath Brahma* of the *All Bodo Students Union* (ABSU) and its political organization Bodo Peoples' Action Committee (BPAC). The objective of the ABSU/BPAC movement was to get Assam divided 50-50 between Bodoland and Assam.

The movement became violent soon. In 1993, the Assam Government entered into a bipartite *Bodo accord* with ABSU to form a Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC) to fulfill socio-economic aspirations of the Bodos. This experiment failed due to non-implementation of various provisions of the Accord. It collapsed within a year. The statehood demand was again revived by ABSU in 1996.



In 2003 under the NDA Government, a second tripartite *Bodo Accord* was signed between the *Bodo Liberation Tiger (BLT)*, a militant outfit, the Central Government and the Assam Government. Via agreement, the Bodos were granted the *Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC)*, within the State of Assam under *Sixth Schedule*.

### **Bodoland Territorial Council**

The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) has *legislative, administrative, executive and financial powers over 40 policy areas* in the Bodoland Territorial Areas Districts comprising four districts of Assam. The objective of BTC was to fulfill economic, educational and linguistic aspirations and the preservation of land-rights, socio-cultural and ethnic identity of the Bodos; and speed up the infrastructure development in BTC area. The districts of *Kokrajhar, Chirang, Udalguri and Baksa* came under the BTC administrative area.

As per the 2003 accord, the BLT was required to surrender all their arms and converted into *Bodoland People's Front (BPF)*, a political party now ruling the Council.

However, the democratic and unarmed sections of the Bodo groups – the ABSU and the erstwhile Coordination Committee for the Bodoland Movement (CCBM) were sidelined at the time of the signing of the second Bodo Accord even though they enjoyed more popular support than the erstwhile BLT. However, they backed the peace deal, and this allowed the leaders of the erstwhile BLT to get the upper hand when it came to the constitution of the BTC under the amended provisions of the Sixth Schedule.



### Murky Politics of Bodoland

What happened later was more to internal murky politics of the BTC. Some of the former militants of the BLT and leaders of ABSU-CCBM leaders constituted a Bodoland People's Progressive Front (BPPF). This BPPF got split into BPPF (Hagrama), led by Hagrama Mahilary, the erstwhile BLT chief and BPPF (Rabiram), led by Rabiram Narzary, former ABSU president. When the first elections to the BTC took place, these two factions got engaged into violence. People gave mandate to BPPF (Hagrama) because they felt that Mahilary, being the signatory to the Bodo Accord, would be in a better position to bring more funds and development to BTC areas. The BPPF (Hagrama) was later renamed as Bodoland People's Front (BPF).

There are two more organizations active in Bodoland as follows:

#### National Democratic Front of Bodoland

The NDFB, originally known as the Bodo Security Force (BdSF), was founded on October 3, 1986. Its stated objective is the attainment of a sovereign Bodoland. This was a militant outfit engaged in several blasts in the region. Its founder president Ranjan Daimary, who was handed over by Bangladesh to India in 2010, was under arrest till recently and was granted bail in June 2013. This organization had also split into NDFB (Progressive) and the other faction as the NDFB (Ranjan Daimary) in 2009.

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#### Bodo National Conference

A new umbrella organization of the Bodos, called the Bodo National Conference (BNC), was formed at a two-day Bodo National Convention in Kokrajhar on November 19, 2010, with the objective of providing a common platform for all Bodo organizations – political and non-political – to fight for their common causes, including the demand for a separate State of Bodoland.

#### Karbi Longri North Cachar Hills Liberation Front (KLNLF)

This is the youngest of the active insurgencies in Assam. It came into being on May 16, 2004, following the ceasefire signed with the government by the United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS), the Karbi Anglong-based insurgent outfit, two years earlier. A faction of the UPDS opposed to the ceasefire split and constituted itself as the KLNLF. Though it includes the North Cachar Hills in its name, yet the KLNLF is active principally in Karbi Anglong, which, with the North Cachar Hills district, constitutes the Autonomous District (ST) Lok Sabha constituency. Its stated objective is greater autonomy for the district, not sovereignty or independence. However, it has carried out some dreadful actions of ambush, kidnapping for ransom and murder. Its activities have severely hampered power and railway construction projects in the region in which it is active.

#### Demand for Separate Bodoland State: Analysis

The demand of Bodoland state is *based on the racial ethnicity* but the Indian Constitution does not guarantee a separate state based on racial ethnicity. A deeper analysis of issues of the Bodo



community points out their fight for identity over land, territory and natural resources. The Bodo areas have been encroached and settled upon by others. The other problems are related to their low socio-economic status. Their demand for separate state by means of violence is however not acceptable. The creation of a separate state would not promise to resolve their issues. Rather it would create more problems by eruption of demand for statehood from other separatist groups.

The Bodo's issue should be dealt by the government by adopting policies to protect their cultural-linguistic identity and socio-economic development. The government should strengthen the autonomous, administrative divisions in Assam established on the basis of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Assam government should ensure wider people participation in implementation of the provisions of the Constitution for the Bodo community. At the same time, the government should strictly take action against the separatist groups who are creating organised violence in the region. Efforts to divide Bodo and non-Bodo people should be countered effectively. Granting of funds and special status to Bodo people is not just sufficient; the government should take measures to improve the other economic sectors of the region like development of agro-based industries, tourism and hydroelectric power generation etc. It will create more employment opportunities. On social development front, government should take efforts to create more educational opportunities and improve health facilities in the region. Measures to protect their language and cultural identity should be taken. The failures to implement the earlier measures should not be repeated.

### **Kamtapur Liberation Organization**

Formed in the year 1995, Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) is an organisation responsible for piloting the Kamtapur movement. For last one and half decade, this organisation has been disrupting civic life and undermining civil administration particularly in the area of North West Bengal. Many cases of extortion from traders and industrialists have also been highlighted against KLO in its area of operation. Reports reveal that the organisation has developed an implicit relation with Kamtapur Peoples' Party (KPP), a political party formed way back in 1997. KPP is known for its demands of a unified territory and statehood for the *Koch Rajbanshis* inhabiting the North West Bengal and west Assam, with no cessation from India. The economic conditions of the above mentioned areas are not very ideal. However, the present government has also not yet taken up an effective strategy for rejuvenating these areas.

### **Security Concerns**

The movement, led by the KLO, had carried out at least three violent attacks in the latter part of 2013. The last one on December 26 at Paharpur in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. This movement has potential serious security implications, not only in West Bengal, but also the sensitive eastern and north eastern part of India. Besides disrupting civil and administrative life in north



districts of West Bengal, it has developed logistical and operational linkages with militant organizations like ULFA, NSCN(IM) and the NDFB (anti-accommodation Songbijit faction) etc.

### Current Status

In November 2014, Central Government has banned Kamatapur Liberation Organisation (KLO).

### Analysis

The KLO has been apparent with respect to its demands relating to cessation and is campaigning for restoration of the so-called past independence of a notional *Koch Kamta Kingdom* (believed to have 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).

Though the movement led by KLO has not yet become a menace to India's security since the organisation does not have the armed might of outfits like the ULFA, NSCN (IM) and the NDFB, nevertheless, it has a *enough potential to threaten the Indian security system as it has gradually developed operational and logistical coordination with these outfits*. The impact of the KLO's activities is more in West Bengal; therefore, an internal proactive and long-term multifaceted policy is required to be adopted by the West Bengal government soon. The scenario is little different in Assam where management is the main concern, specifically in the region inhabited by different ethnic groups, as it may stir up the convergence of interests between Koch-Rajbanshis and other ethnic groups. Any such situation can however be tackled by providing certain special benefits to Koch-Rajbanshi community through specific targeted government investments.

### Development Angle

Underdevelopment and economic distress incentivize the spread of dissatisfaction and separatist sentiment among people. The economic conditions prevailing in the Dooars and Buxa Reserve areas of North West Bengal, substantially inhabited Koch Rajbangshis further adds to their discontent. The West Bengal budget (2013-14) does not have an appropriate area development sub-plan covering the areas inhabited by this community. The KPP's demands concern among others, cultural protection of the Koch-Rajbangsi's.

Therefore, current situation demands a strategic approach both from the security perspective and development angle.

- To tackle security issues, ground-level coordination towards intelligence sharing and prophylactic operations between the Assam Police and its West Bengal counterparts is required. There is a dire need to revive state-level police action like 'Operation Shadow' which was undertaken jointly by West Bengal and Assam Police in 1990.
- Coordination with Bhutan will also be indispensable e.g. 'Operation Flush Out' in 2003 to evict the militant outfits from India who were regrouping and training in Bhutan.



- Since the impact of the KLO's activities is more in West Bengal, the state government will have to adopt an internal proactive and long-term multifaceted policy to contain the outfit.
- On development angle, a package which enables comprehensive economic development on the lines of the 'Saranda Action Plan', in respect to Naxalism affected areas in Jharkhand, could also be considered for the affected West Bengal districts.

Moreover, the demands of KPP such as cultural protection of the Koch-Rajbanshis and the inclusion of Kamtapuri (Rajbangsi) language in the Eighth Schedule of India's Constitution can be suitably accommodated without affecting the interests of other communities living in the region.

### **Ethnic Clashes Between Bodos and Muslims**

Bodoland is made of four districts-Kokrajhar, Udalguri, Chirang and Baksa. The area has been gripped in a serious ethnic violence since many years. They have been further aggravated by militancy. There are several reasons for these clashes.

The relations between Bodos and Muslims has been strained since late 1980s when the Bodos started resisting the Muslims to settle down in the Bodo Heartland. On one hand, they were demanding the separate Bodoland while on other hand they suspected that they would be marginalized and would be turned into minority in their own land by Muslims and infiltrators from Bangladesh.

After the formation of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), it was well understood that the political rights in the area rested with the Bodo tribe and not the non-Bodos. This did not augur well with the Muslims and non-Bodos. Thus, the resentment grew – why only Bodos have fun? The non-Bodos contend that only Bodos now enjoy exclusive rights over government jobs and mostly benefited from all government welfare schemes in BTC areas.

On the other hand, Bodos say that even after they have won social and political dominance, they live in fear of becoming a minority in their own land and thus try to dominate smaller factions.

In summary, the violence is electoral rather communal. The deliberate ignorance by state leads to frequent spate of violence. The political masters have thus refused to pay any heed to the growing lawlessness which has taken lives of many innocents and also displaced an entire community.

### **Illegal Migration in Assam**

Like any other region of India, Assam too has seen large scale migration throughout history specifically from Bangladesh. The first wave of large-scale migration post-independence was in 1971 – about 10 million Bengalis took refuge in India during the liberation war of Bangladesh as they were persecuted by erstwhile West-Pakistani Army.

Over and above the migration caused by such cataclysmic events, extraordinary population density and pressure on land in East Bengal also contributed to the migration. Many of them never returned and started competing with the native Assamese for land and resources.



Not surprisingly the indigenous Assamese people started to agitate for deportation of Bangladeshi refugee turned immigrants and the agitation reached its peak during early 80s and accordingly Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) (IMDT) Act was enacted in 1983 by Indira Gandhi government.

It was struck down by the Supreme Court of India in 2005. It's common knowledge that the ruling Congress struck gold in terms of huge number of assured votes in the form of grateful Bangladeshis. That was one of the first instances of Congress's perhaps hugely successful experiment with vote bank politics that entire India is familiar with today and obviously is one of the reasons the violence in Assam was all about. This ongoing danger is not for Assam alone the same is situation in whole NE region and was never addressed by political ruling parties.

### Insurgency in Mizoram

The antecedent causes of the Mizo conflict included dissatisfaction with the *Lal (chieftainship) system, the British colonial policy residue of treating Mizo-inhabited areas as 'excluded areas'*, resulting in separatist tendencies, lack of civic amenities, economic backwardness, and the continuous insensitivity and regional hegemony of Assam.

Mizo society had started reacting against the oppressive rule of the Lals, even before independence and this took on an organized political form under the aegis of the Mizo Union (MU), which was formed on 9 April 1946. Besides fighting the Lal's oppressive rule, the other main objectives of the MU were autonomy in matters of land, customary laws, culture, and identity, and recognition of the Mizo dialects.

The interim Government of India in 1946 had made an attempt to address these issues by setting up the North East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee of the Constituent Assembly in 1947, which was headed by then Assam Chief Minister *Gopinath Bardoloi*. The committee recommended the provision of District Councils in Article 244 (2) of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution whereby Autonomous District Council status was accorded to *Lushai Hills*.

### The Mautam Famine

The immediate reason for conflict in Mizoram was a dreadful famine of 1959 as a result of bamboo flowering and consequent boom rodent population. When rodents finished bamboo seeds, they turned towards crops and houses and causes devastating loss to cash crops. The devastation of this famine called "Mautam Famine", was so terrible that the Mizos needed to collect roots and leaves from jungles to survive and thousands of Mizos died of starvation.

In the wake of the famine, a Mizo Cultural Society renamed itself to "Mautam Front" and took lead in raising demands of the Mizos. This resulted in political mobilization and mass support.

In 1960, this Mautam Front again renamed itself to Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) and



thereafter dropped the name “Famine” from its name to become the Mizo National Front (MNF) in 1961 under the leadership of under the leadership of Pu Laldenga with stated objective to achieve sovereign independence of Greater Mizoram.

Thus, within two years, the lack of state action to address the condition of the hill state led MNF to launch insurgency and seek independence from India. The MNA started taking various posts in not only India but also in Burma. In the initial fights, the Indian Army recovered the posts and forced the guerrillas to shift their headquarters across border to East Pakistan. By 1966, the MNA merged into population and started launching guerrilla strikes against army.

The rise of MNF resulted in large scale disturbances in Mizoram. In 1967, Government outlawed MNF.

### Mizoram Towards Peace

During the Indira Gandhi regime, the demand for sovereignty turned into a demand for a separate state; the MNF outfit came to the negotiable table with the centre. The Central Government offered the proposal to turn the Mizo Hills into a Union Territory in 1971, and this proposal was accepted on the condition that UT will be soon converted into a full-fledged state. Thus, in January 1972, the Union Territory of Mizoram came into existence.

In 1985, Pu Laldenga met with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and this paved the way for both sides to be flexible enough to pursue a path to peace. On pre-condition of statehood to Mizoram, the Mizo Accord was signed on 30 June 1986. The MNF fighters surrendered en masse and government fulfilled its promise by giving full-fledged state status to Mizoram. In this way, the Mizo Accord, signed in 1986, put an end to a bloody conflict. *This is considered to be the most successful agreement with insurgents in India.* The MNF leaders, who once challenged the democratic system of India, ended up becoming a part it. Laldenga, eventually fought elections and became an elected chief minister of the state.

### Factors for success of Mizo Accord

Mizo Accord is considered to be the most successful agreement with insurgents and in fact it's the only successful accord in India. Further, it is called the only insurgency in the world that ended with a “stroke of pen”. Further, this accord has stood the test of time in North East India.

There are several factors behind this. *Firstly*, there was a sincere attempt to all inclusive identity of the Mizos (Lushai and non-Lushais) and the demand for separate homeland for Mizos was based on the basis of common geographical location and not on common ethnic kinship. The other insurgencies in North East demand separate home on ethnic lines rather. Thus, the demand of Greater Mizoram united the Mizo clans instead of dividing them. *Secondly*, both the sides (centre and insurgents) were flexible. While Laldenga was flexible in giving up the idea of sovereign Greater



Mizoram, the other leaders accepted it and gave way to MNF to talk with the centre. Centre also tried to accommodate all legitimate demands of the Mizos. *Thirdly*, various stakeholders of the Mizo civil society including Church, Young Mizo Association (YMA) and the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP) [This means Mizo Student Association] played a crucial role in sustaining the peace process. They worked in tandem without contradicting each other's objectives.

### Current Other Insurgencies in Mizoram

Some demands for autonomy are still raised by Hmars, Chakmas and Brus people. In 1995, the Hmar People's Convention-Democracy was created for an independent Hmar State.

## State Response to North Eastern Insurgencies

There are several components of Government of India's response to insurgencies in the North East India. These include: Meeting the political aspirations of the ethnic groups by giving them autonomy; Economic development of the area; Improving governance; Engaging the outfits in peace dialogues and coordinating operations with the neighbouring countries and lastly use of force.

We can study the Government of India's response to insurgencies in the Northeast broadly in four parameters viz. Structural Changes in administration; Dialogue and Negotiations; Use of Force and Development activities. suraj\_winner | rajawat.rs.surajsingh@gmail.com | www.gktoday.in/module/ias-general-studies

### Basic guiding principles of Government

- 1 Special Schemes for development for North-East
- 2 Special packages for infra structural development of North-East region
- 3 Proportionate use of force
- 4 Dialogue and negotiations
- 5 Structural changes to give political autonomy
- 6 Decentralisation and protection of tribal rights
- 7 Improving road and rail connectivity in entire region
- 8 Look East Policy viz-a-viz North-East region
- 9 Business Summits to attract investment in North-East region
- 10 Exhibitions and Seminars

### Structural Changes in Administration

#### Greater Statehood

The government has given considerable attention to reduce the conflicts by conferring greater



statehoods in the north east. At the time of Independence, India's north east region was made of three entities as follows:

- Assam since 1912 as Assam Province of British India.
- Princely states of Manipur and Tripura
- North East Frontier Province (NEFA)

Manipur and Tripura became Union Territories in 1949. The fifth entity in North East emerged on 1 December 1963 as Nagaland via the State of Nagaland Act in 1962. Sixth entity was Meghalaya, which first emerged in 1970 as a autonomous state within Assam via the Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act of 1969 as per sixth schedule of the constitution. On 21 January 1972, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura were given status of fully fledged states via the North East Reorganization Act 1972. Meanwhile in 1972, Mizo Hills region of Assam was converted into a Union Territory. After the Mizoram Peace Accord (1986), Mizoram emerged as a full-fledged state of India in 1987. NEFA was first converted to a Union Territory in 1972 and then full-fledged state in 1987.

The above reorganization of the states of North East is arranged in following table in chronological order:

Assam	1912 as Assam Province in British India	
Nagaland	1 December 1963	
Manipur	21 January 1972	
Meghalaya	21 January 1972	
Tripura	21 Jan. 1972	
Sikkim	16 May 1975	
Mozoram	20 February 1987	
Arunachal Pradesh		20 February 1987

### The Sixth Schedule and Autonomous Administrative Areas

The most prominent and important structural change in the administration is the grant of political autonomy and statehood in North East India. This process goes back to the British Era when the Interim Government of India had appointed a sub-committee to the Constituent Assembly, viz. *North- East Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas Committee* under the Chairmanship of first Assam Chief Minister, Gopinath Bardoloi. The committee recommended setting up of autonomous district councils to provide due representative structures at the local level to the tribal population.



The recommendation was later incorporated into Sixth Schedule (article 244 (2) & Article 275(1)) of the Indian Constitution.

### Provisions of the Sixth Schedule

As per the Sixth Schedule, the four states viz. *Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram* contain the Tribal Areas which are technically different from the Scheduled Areas. Though these areas fall within the executive authority of the state, provision has been made for the creation of the *District Councils and regional councils* for the exercise of the certain legislative and judicial powers. *Each district is an autonomous district* and Governor can modify / divide the boundaries of the said Tribal areas by notification. Currently, there are ten such Councils in the region as listed below:

#### Assam

- Bodoland Territorial Council
- Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council
- Dima Hasao Autonomous District Council

#### Meghalaya

- Garo Hills Autonomous District Council
- Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council
- Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council

#### Tripura

- Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council

#### Mizoram

- Chakma Autonomous District Council
- Lai Autonomous District Council
- Mara Autonomous District Council

### Analysis: Assessment of Sixth Schedule in North East

First, we should note that the Sixth Schedule was primarily adopted to address the political aspirations of the *Nagas*. But the *Nagas* refused it because they said it was too little.

The Sixth schedule lays down a framework of autonomous decentralized governance with *legislative and executive powers* over subjects like water, soil, land, local customs and culture. The Legislations passed by the Autonomous councils come into effect only after the assent of the Governor. Except Tripura and Bodoland councils, these bodies have also been given *judicial powers* to settle certain types of civil and criminal cases also.

Thus, the councils under the sixth schedule have been given *more power than the local governments* under the 73rd and 74th amendments in the rest of the country. It has been established that this autonomy paradigm has brought a degree of equilibrium within the tribal societies mainly via the



formal dispute resolution under customary laws and through control of money-lending etc.

In Assam, Tripura and Mizoram, the autonomous councils have power to decide if a State legislation on subject matters under the autonomous councils should apply to their territories or not. Similarly, the Union legislations on similar subjects can be excluded from applying to these areas by the State Government in Assam and the union Government in the other two States.

However, there are *certain issues* due to which the sixth schedule has ended up creating *multiple power centers* instead of bringing in a genuine process of democratization or autonomy in the region. They are as follows:

### **Conflict of Power**

There are frequent conflicts of interest between the District Councils and the state legislatures. For example, in Meghalaya, despite the formation of the State, the whole of the State continues to be under the Sixth Schedule causing frequent conflicts with the State Government.

Para 12 (A) of the Sixth Schedule clearly states that, whenever there is a conflict of interest between the District Councils and the state legislature, the latter would prevail. Thus state enjoys the superiority, but then it is alleged that autonomous councils are mere platforms for aspiring politicians who nurture ambitions to contest assembly polls in the future.

### **Disparity among Autonomous Bodies and Local Bodies**

This is another important area of conflict. The local bodies established via Seventy-third Amendment are more liberally funded through the *State Finance commissions*. In a state where there are more than one autonomous councils; one claims that it is being treated less favourably than other. For example, in Assam, there is a perceived preferential treatment to Bodoland Territorial Council in matters of budget allocations.

### **Functioning of Governor**

The Legislations passed by the Autonomous councils come into effect only after the assent of the Governor. However, Governor works as per the aid and advice of the state Council of Ministers. This makes many a times, the autonomous councils irrelevant as far as power to legislate is concerned.

### **Remedies to sixth schedule problems**

Several measures can be taken up as remedy to above problem. Firstly, there is a need that *Sixth Schedule is amended and Autonomous Councils are made to benefit from the recommendations of the state finance commission*. Secondly, state governments and the Autonomous Councils should identify powers under the Sixth Schedule that Governors may exercise at their discretion without having to act on the 'aid and advice' of the Council of Ministers. *Thirdly*, the administration of the district autonomous councils should be periodically reviewed by a commission under Union Government.



### Special Treatment to Nagaland

In our country, two states viz. Jammu and Kashmir and Nagaland are different from other states on account of their special treatment by the Constitution via Article 370 and Article 371-A respectively. Article 371-A states that no Act of Parliament in respect of *religious or social practices of the Nagas, Naga customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice and ownership and transfer of land and resources will apply to Nagaland* unless passed by the State Assembly.

### Counter Insurgency (COIN) in North East

There are two components of centre's counter insurgency (COIN) strategy in North East viz. Use of Force and Dialogue and negotiations.

#### Use of (proportionate) Force

In 2011, the government of India had identified 79 armed insurgent groups active in six states of North East. Half of them are splinter groups while others range from small ethnic militias to well equipped rebel armies. Many of these groups have been involved in formal as well as informal talks with the Government. Their aspirations, demands and activities vary greatly. More than half of the groups are in Manipur. The states of Nagaland, Assam and Tripura also have long-established armed groups. There are groups in Mizoram as well as Arunachal Pradesh, where insurgency is at lower levels since the Mizo peace accords of 1987.

Here are important observations and issues with Militarisation and counter-insurgency in North East:

- The first notable thing is that *only a handful* of the total 79 armed groups have been formally called "terrorist organizations". These terrorist organizations are generally those which have a political programme of greater autonomy or independence. Many of the smaller groups are tolerated mainly because of their opposition to the independence seeking groups.
- The history of counter-insurgency in North East is as old as insurgencies themselves. India's oldest paramilitary force *Assam Rifles* was set up to conduct counter-insurgency operations in the north-eastern region and other areas, where deemed necessary, under the control of the Army.
- North East India is highly militarised since the Second World War. More troops were stationed permanently after the Indo-China war in the early 1960s. The counter insurgency operations were at their peak in 1970s and again in 1990s when more and more troops and paramilitary forces were deployed to the region to contain the insurgencies and remained there permanently. Large battalions have also been established to police the borders with China, Burma and Bangladesh.
- However, the Government of India has **proportionately** used Indian Army in its **Counter**



**Insurgency** (COIN) strategies. Indiscriminate use of forces has been avoided mainly because groups such as ULFA, the NSCN (IM), the UNLF and the PLA project a certain degree of social support and any disproportionate use of force can be counter-productive. In this context, the below operations are worth note:

- In 1990, the government conducted Operations Rhino and Bajrang against ULFA, NSCN, NDFB, Bodo Liberation Tigers Force (BLTF) and Kamtapur Liberation Organization (KLO) etc. The insurgents relocated their camps to Bhutan. India exerted diplomatic pressure on Bhutan. Initially Bhutan tried to resolve the issue peacefully but soon, Bhutan realized that peaceful talks would not be able to drive out the militia from its territory. Consequently, Royal Bhutan Army conducted the first operation ever called “Operation All Clear”. This led to death and capture of several militants.
- Many of the militants fled to Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh also under the diplomatic pressure captured and handed over to India several militant leaders including Arabinda Rajkhowa and Anoop Chetia of ULFA.

Assam has witnessed the gradual change in its overall counter-insurgency strategy due to the measured military responses by the army after the 1990s. In the recent years, the attitude of the locals has also changed but still Indian army is routinely accused of human rights violations. There has been a social apathy against counter-insurgency operations and militarization of society. Due to the public resistance to armed operations, an *all out operations against the armed outfits has never been used* in north east.

### Dialogue and Negotiations

The dialogue and negotiations have always been a serious alternative option for the Indian state’s response to the armed conflicts in the Northeast.

- In the Naga conflict, the dialogue started as early as 1947 with the Akbar Hydri agreement, the civil society interactions of the 1950s, the Naga Peace Mission of 1964, the Shillong Accord of 1975 and the now ongoing peace negotiations with the NSCN (IM) and the NSCN (K).
- In the ULFA case, the jailed ULFA leaders have been released followed by “unconditional talks” with the outfit falling within the framework of negotiations. In 2011, ULFA submitted to the Centre its **charter of demands** which sought amendment in the Constitution for finding “meaningful” ways to protect the rights and identity of the indigenous people of Assam. ULFA’s other demands include discussion on grounds for its struggle, status report on missing ULFA leaders and cadres (numbering around 50) and other socio-economic issues.



- In 2011, a tripartite agreement for Suspension of Operations (SoO) was signed among the Centre, the Assam government and ULFA. According to the pact, both the ULFA and the security forces will not carry out operations against each other. According to this pact, the members of the rebel group, around 600 in number, will be put in special camps which will be called “*nabanirman kendras*.” However, ULFA has denied surrendering arms and ammunitions.
- In 2015, the NDA Government has signed the framework agreement on peace with NSCN-IM.

### Linkages between Development and Extremism in North East

*Insurgency is development in reverse.* {←Essay Topic} India's North East Region is a quagmire of economic backwardness, though it certainly does not deserve to be so. The economic backwardness of the region can be partly attributed to its chequered colonial history, its integration with the Union of India and then the history in independent India. Its backwards is partly because it is a part of a large developing country and its geographical and economic isolation from the rest of the country. We can see the development and its links to the extremism in North east via two perspectives viz. Colonial history and Post Independence History.

#### Colonial History

Since ages, India's north east is home to a large number of tribes and communities living in a relative isolation in their own cultural niches. They were largely autonomous and had their own ways of social and economic organizations, which in some ways rivalled the modern practices. The British formally entered in North East in 1826 and with this, the process of integration of this extremely diverse region into the British Empire commenced. Two significant aspects of British arrival and conquest are important here to note. One is that the North East Region was brought under a single administrative umbrella by subjugation of many distinct and interior territories. Second is that the focus of the activities was **not the people** of the region but the **natural resources** such as oil, tea and timber, which served the direct interests of the Colonial masters. This second aspect became detrimental to the people and generally to the region as a whole, because it promoted a policy to make the North East a *developmental frontier*. The treatment of North East as a developmental frontier also led to a culture of carpetbaggers.

#### Carpetbaggers

Carpetbaggers refer to any outsider who attempts to gain political or economic advantage. This term has its origin from the westward movement in the United States, especially after the railway network expanded. The western parts were swarmed in by new townships of land-grabbers, prostitutes, cowboys etc. who degraded the culture of

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the indigenous population.

The north east as a developmental frontier remained under exploitation of the outsiders.

### Post Independence

After freedom, first two decades of India kept the country marred with great difficulties including resettling post-partition displacements, integration of the country as a single unit, food shortages, three wars and other problems. During this period also, the North East remained as a *Developmental Frontier* of the colonial era. The North East region's natural resources such as Oil, Tea, Timber and mineral wealth such as coal, Uranium remained a focus but NOT the aspirations of various people, tribes, their customs, languages, cultures and so on. Moreover, natural resource systems of the region are quite fragile and needed careful management while utilising them.

When the second five year plan was launched with industrialization as its buzzword, the natural resources essentially meant the mineral resources. This began a faster rate of exploitation of the natural resources. Apart from oil and coal, the region is also endowed with rich timber resources and hydro-electric potential. The industrialization of the country did not pass the benefits of the natural resources to the people and it did more harm than good to the region.

After the India was opened to the economics of Globalization in the early 1990s, Indian economy started growing with leaps and bounds with the advent of foreign collaboration, investment and increasing external sector trade and commerce. However, the North East India could not reap the benefits because of its geographical isolation from the Indian mainland. This was because; the products and services from this region would take more time and money to reach anywhere else because of fewer roads and rail connectivity. Thus, this region remained backward. During almost the last two decades, quick progress has come to other countries nearby such as Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. This implies that if the communication and external trade was promoted and appropriate physical linkages were developed with this region, North East could have benefited immensely. However, still today, the seven sisters remain to tackle the backlogs in their basic minimum services and infrastructural needs.

### Development Extremism Links: Various Facets

The development and Extremism are linked into two ways. First, development is vital for tackling extremism or strengthening national security. Second, growth of extremist organisations, coupled with their ability to influence the process of legitimate politics and the alleged nexus of political parties with such forces, are undoubtedly impeding the development process. Thus, underdevelopment breeds insurgency and insurgency retards development. This two are mutually reinforcing and created a vicious cycle of underdevelopment-insurgency-underdevelopment.

Underdevelopment is more prominently linked to left wing extremism in central India in



comparison to North East India, yet, it is linked to other drivers of the extremism, which are discussed below.

### Infrastructure

North East region is grossly deficient of infrastructure to tap the available resources and push the economy forward. The lack of infrastructure has not only spoiled the prospect of economic development but has also given a thrust to extremism by creating a horizontal division among various ethnic groups affecting the fabrics of social harmony in the region. Due to absence of connectivity, all the “constituent states of the region are internally locked–themselves and unable to connect with each other physically in terms of poor transport links, and more seriously, unable to make connections intellectually and emotionally with their closest neighbours, or even with and among their own people. The result is the displacement of common understanding and linkages for peaceful coexistence and regional cooperation. Thus, speedy development of infrastructure in the North Eastern region is absolutely necessary, if it is to be saved from the curse of extremism.

### Human Development

In terms of human development index capturing the three dimensions of human development viz. economic, education and health-the region have done reasonably well than most of the states of Indian union. Among the eight states, Assam ranked the lowest, which has been placed in lower middle category and Mizoram in high category while rest of the states are either in high middle or middle category. The success of these states in this regard is mainly induced by the **education sector**. Apart from Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya the literacy rate in the remaining states are higher than the national average.

However, quality of education is an issue that is linked to extremism. Most of the educational institutions in the region are like those in rest of the country. They churn out the army of unemployable degree holders. In absence of quality jobs, and further absence of other avenues for a respectable livelihood, youth can be easily attracted to path of militancy.

### Economic Development

The economy of the north east region primarily depends on agriculture sector. Ninety per cent of the people in the Northeast depend on agriculture for their livelihood. But increasing population, lack of state land reforms, oral traditions of land ownership, jhum cultivation, immigrant population, and intensive cultivation, the pressure on land for food and livelihood is on the rise. This leads to a sense of insecurity among the tribals.

### Industrial Development

Industrial sector in the region continues to be in pathetic condition. Industrially the region is one of the most backward regions in India. Only Assam, and to some extent Meghalaya, have moved ahead of the rest of the states in terms of industrial development whose industrialization also is centred on



tea, oil and timber.

### The Development Efforts of Government in North East

The Government of India had set up the Department of Development of North Eastern Region in September, 2001 and upgraded it to a Ministry in May, 2004 underscoring the its complete commitment to ensure development with equity for the NER to unleash the potential of its human and natural resources. This ministry is unique in the sense that its activities are regional and advocate the region which comprises the seven sisters of North East and Sikkim. Important activities of this ministry include:

- Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR)
- North Eastern Council
- Social and Infrastructure Development Fund (SIDF) – Finance Minister’s Package for NER, 2008-09
- North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd (NERAMAC)
- North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC)
- North East Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi)

#### Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) www.gktoday.in/module/ias-general-studies

The broad objective of the Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) is to ensure speedy development of infrastructure in the North Eastern Region and Sikkim by increasing the flow of budgetary financing for specific viable infrastructure projects/schemes in the region.

#### North Eastern Council (NEC)

The North Eastern Council (NEC) came into being by an Act of Parliament, The North Eastern Council Act, 1971 to act as advisory body in respect of balanced socio-economic development of the North Eastern Areas consisting of the present States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. The NEC started functioning in the year 1972. The NEC Act was amended in 2002. As a consequence thereof, Sikkim is now a member of the NEC and NEC is now made the Regional Planning Body for the North Eastern Region.

The amended NEC Act provides that NEC will function as the Regional Planning Body for the North East and will formulate specific projects and schemes, which will benefit two or more States. NEC was instrumental in the preparation of **North Eastern Region Vision 2020**, which provides the road-map, outlines the goals, identifies the challenges and suggests implementation strategies for various sectors for peace, prosperity and development of the North Eastern Region. It helps in formulation of an integrated plan for the development of the North Eastern Region.

#### Critical Appraisal of the North East Council

Created with the twin objectives of balanced development and security, the North-Eastern council has remained halfway point to make any progress in either sphere. North Eastern Council (NEC)



was expected to be instrumental in setting in motion a new economic endeavour aimed at removing the basic handicaps that stood in the way of development of the region. However, it became merely a funding agency and an unwitting platform of acrimony and mutual suspicion, where every state is more interested in getting its schemes, oblivious of long term interests, approved.

### Other Notes:

- The seven States of the region enjoy **special category status** to develop backward areas.
- They get preferential treatment in the matter of distribution of Central assistance bypassing the Gadgil formula which gives weightage to population, incidence of poverty and performance. Dilution of the formula meant plan assistance to the States to the extent of 90 per cent grant and 10 per cent loan.

### Look East Policy as structural change

Another structural change that has been envisioned through the 'Look East' policy is economic development and trade routes to South East Asia via land and sea to bring about prosperity to the North Eastern states. This policy is pertinent to insurgency in North East because it would be persuading people to reject violent means projected by the armed groups and embrace peace and development into their lives.

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Several measures have been undertaken under the aegis of India's Look East Policy including the proposals to build rail / road connectivity and Natural Gas Pipeline. For example, in 2012, India, Myanmar and Thailand reviewed the eagerly awaited **trilateral connectivity project**. The three countries decided to make all efforts to implement this by 2016.

It is a trilateral highway construction project that aims to connect India, Myanmar and Thailand. The idea was conceived at the trilateral ministerial meeting on transport linkages in Yangon in April 2002. The trilateral highway will connect **Moreh in Manipur to Mae Sot in Thailand through Myanmar**. The project will be a significant step towards establishing connectivity between India and South East Asian countries.

Another such project is the [\*Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport\*](#) (KMMT) network, which is designed to encourage closer links between the port of Kolkata, Myanmar's Sittwe port and, through road networks in Myanmar, India's north-eastern states.

## Current Issues

### UNLFW: The New Name of Terror in North East

In April 2015 several outfits of North East (based in Myanmar) such as United Liberation Front of Assam (Independent), Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang, Kamatapur Liberation Organization (KLO) and National Democratic Front of Bodoland-Songbijit have come under an umbrella organization called *United Liberation Front of Western South East Asia* (UNLFW). This new

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and larger outfit is headed by SS Khaplang, the head of the NSCN-K as the chairman.

### Perceiving the Threat

Such umbrella organizations are not new in North East. This is the fourth umbrella organisation of its kind. Earlier, in 1986, ULFA, UNLF and NSCN came together to send a combined group to China for training and weapons. In 1989, the Indo Burma Revolutionary Front (IBRF) was formed by UNLF, the NSCN-K, ULFA and Kuki National Army. In mid 1990s, United Liberation Front of Seven Sisters was formed by ULFA and NSCN-K. With a split of ULFA, all the earlier groups became defunct.

### Motives

In March 2015, the Khaplang led Myanmar-based NSCN (K) had terminated the ceasefire agreement with Indian government. With increased pressure from the Indian security forces, Khaplang took the initiative to form the UNLFW with other North-East Indian based militant outfits. After its formation it claimed the responsibility of the deadly attack on Indian Army's Dogra Regiment in Manipur in June 2015.

The UNLFW was formed to launch an effective campaign of independence for the North-East India and the contiguous Naga inhabited region in the Myanmar. These insurgent terror outfits have been demanding secession from India and they have been using the term Western South East Asia (WSEA) to describe the North-East India. The UNLFW stated that the objective of the coalition is the "unified and total struggle" for the liberation of "ancestral homes."

### Analysing : Implications of UNLFW

The UNLFW would be operating from the Myanmar. India government's repeated pleas to the Myanmar government to eliminate terror activity have fallen on deaf ears. The NSCN-K concluded a ceasefire agreement with the Myanmar in 2012. Though the terror groups are operating in Myanmar, the Myanmar government has categorically denied the presence of militants on its soil. Myanmar, in its present situation is not in a position to take hostile front with northeast militants as it is already facing troubles with ethnic rebels in Shan State. Since 2012, there has also been an outbreak of communal violence between the Buddhists and Muslims in Rakhine State. It is in this backdrop, the UNLFW assumes significance. It is also believed that China was involved with the UNLFW. The coalition could be used by China to further its objectives in Myanmar and also keep an eye on the northeast. The UNLFW already started pursuing its goals with violent attacks. Its continued activities in northeast may pose threat to the developmental activities undertaken by the Indian government in North-East. North-East India is of strategic importance to India to further its 'Acting East' policy. To counter the activities of the UNLFW, the Indian government should seriously take up the issue with Myanmar government for eliminating their hideouts in Indian border areas of Myanmar. The formation UNLFW also points to the failure of the Indian



government to take forward the talks with militants quickly to find a political solution.

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