

Delaying Naga Peace Accord

What is the issue?

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- A Framework Agreement was signed in 2015 to end the decades-old Naga insurgency.

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- However, the Naga peace process (accord) is yet to be finalised.

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What is the Nagaland issue?

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- Few sections of the Naga people are particular of forming a separate new country.

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- This 'Greater Nagalim' incorporates the entire state of present Nagaland and some Naga-inhabited parts.

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- These include parts of Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar.

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- While the area of Nagaland is around 16,500 sq km, Greater Nagalim sprawls over 1,20,000 sq km.

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- The demand for Nagalim has always agitated Assam, Manipur and Arunachal.

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- Peace talks with Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) [NSCN(I-M)], the then most lethal insurgent group started in 1997.

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- In 1997, the insurgent group leaders agreed to a ceasefire.

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What is the 2015 agreement?

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- The Framework Agreement was a culmination of so many rounds of negotiations over the years.

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- It was signed by the Centre's interlocutor for Naga peace talks, RN Ravi and leader of the NSCN (I-M).

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- It aimed at facilitating stronger ties among Nagas across the region.

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- However, it does not change substantially the jurisdictional and administrative authority of neighbouring states.

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- The framework agreement did accept special status for the Nagas.

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- This gave due regard to the uniqueness of Naga history.

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How has the progress been?

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- The Centre's interlocutor recently made a submission before a Parliamentary Standing Committee.

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- He noted that it was implied in the agreement that "some special arrangement" would be made for the Nagas.

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- With respect to Nagaland there is already a special arrangement.
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- Article 371A of the Constitution makes this very clear and a special status has been accorded to them.
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- The Nagas initially insisted on the unification of Naga inhabited areas - “no integration, no solution”.
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- But they have now reached an understanding with the government.
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- Accordingly, the current boundaries of Northeastern states will not be touched.
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- Besides the NSCN-IM, the government also held discussions with six other groups.
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- The NSCN-K, which violated the ceasefire in 2015, was not part of the peace process.
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- It was declared an unlawful association under The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
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Why is the delay in finalising the accord?

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- All stakeholders other than the government appear keen on a conclusion.
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- Many details of the 2015 agreement are concealed in mystery.
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- The Naga groups have given up the demand for sovereignty and redrawing of boundaries.
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- But the issues like a separate passport, flag and armed Naga battallions are still unresolved.
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Source: Indian Express

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