

## UNLF Peace Accord

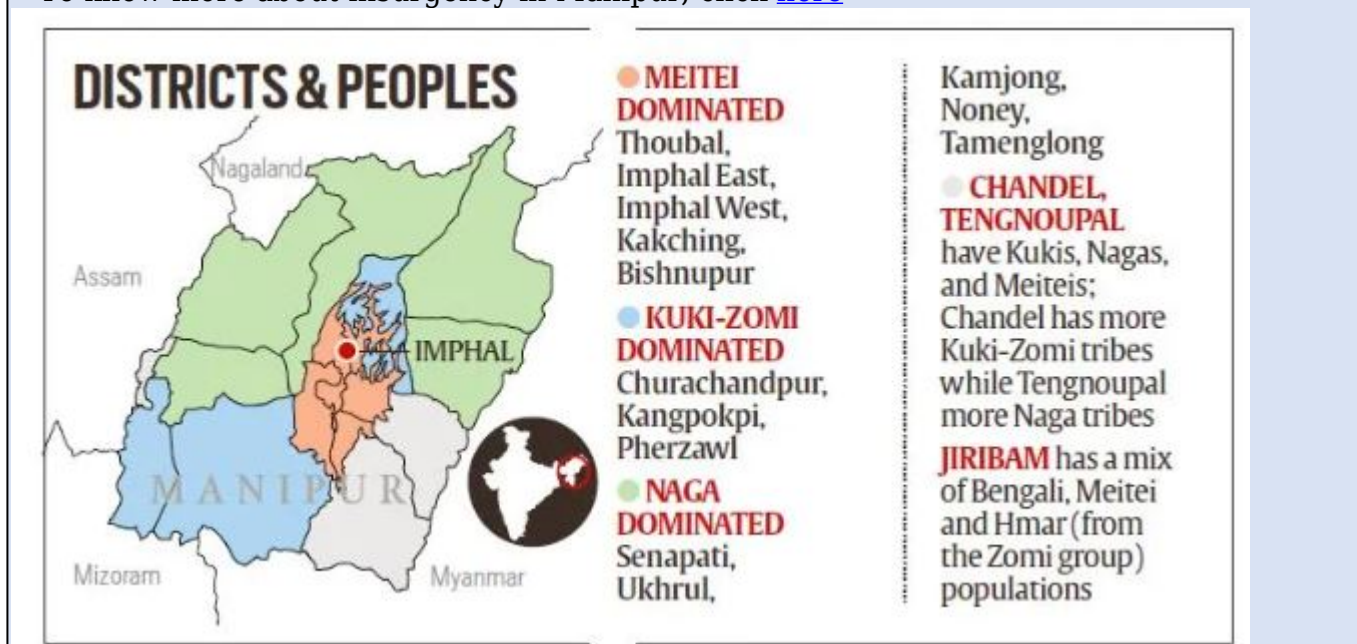
### Why in news?

Recently, the Centre and Manipur government signed a peace agreement with the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), the oldest valley-based armed group in Manipur.

### History of insurgency in Manipur

- Manipur has been in the cross-currents of India's oldest insurgent movements.
- **Naga movement**- It is the country's longest-running insurgency which fights for the Greater Nagaland or Nagalim.
- **Kuki** - They also have fought the Indian government for an '*independent Kuki homeland*', spread across Manipur.
- The **Kuki insurgency** gained momentum after ethnic clashes with the Nagas of Manipur in the early 1990s.
- **Meitei** - The **Meiteis in Manipur** opposed the merger agreement between the Manipuri king and the Indian government in 1949.

To know more about insurgency in Manipur, click [here](#)



### What is the history of UNLF?

*It is Manipur's oldest militant group dominated by the Meitei community and one of the seven "Meitei Extremist Organisations" banned by the Union government under the [Unlawful Activities Prevention Act](#).*

- **Established**-1964
- **Founder**- Arambam Samarendra

- **Aim-** To liberate Manipur from India and to form an independent socialist state of Manipur.
- It is distinct from the insurgent groups active in the state's Naga-dominated and Kuki-Zomi dominated hills.
- **Objective-**
  - It favoured a long-term programme to ***secede from India***, form alliance mainly with China and gradually capture political power with the help of an indoctrinated young population and the intelligentsia.
  - It aimed at reclaiming the ***Kabow Valley in Myanmar***.
- **Manipur People's Army-** It is an armed wing formed in 1990 which has carried out attacks on India's security force.
- **4 point proposal-** In 2005, it mooted a proposal to bring the Indo-Manipur conflict to an end.

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| <b>Plebiscite</b>             | It should be conducted under United Nations (UN) supervision to elicit the opinion of the people of the State on the core issue of restoration of Manipur's independence. |
| <b>UN peace keeping force</b> | They should be deployed in Manipur to ensure that the process is free and fair.   |
| <b>Arms surrender</b>         | Arms to be surrendered to UN force by UNLF, matched by the withdrawal of Indian troops  |
| <b>Political authority</b>    | Handing over of political power by the UN in accordance with the results of the plebiscite.   |

- **Government's response-** The Central government didn't accept the 4-point proposal by UNLF.
- **Factions-** UNLF split into 2 factions due to internal differences.
  - **Khundongbam Pambei-** Signed the peace agreement recently with the government.
  - **NC Koireng-** Remains opposed to talks.

### What is the significance of the deal?

- **Historic milestone-** The pact marks a historic milestone, as it is the 1<sup>st</sup> time a valley-based proscribed organization has engaged in peace negotiations since the eruption of [ethnic violence](#) in 2023.
- **Establish peace-** The UNLF, known for its armed struggle, has agreed to renounce violence and participate in the peaceful democratic process.
- **Success of tripartite agreements-** The tripartite accords initiated by the Centre since 2014 have led to surrendering and a substantial decline in violence in terms of security forces, civilian casualties and number of violent incidents.
- **Rehabilitation-** The agreement provides for the rehabilitation and re-settlement of UNLF's armed cadres.
- **Institutional support-** A *Peace Monitoring Committee* will oversee the enforcement of agreed ground rules.

## What are the challenges?

- **Multiple stakeholders-** The peace agreement can be complex to implement due to multiplicity of stakeholders and their divergent interests and grievances.
- **Unknown terms-** The terms of the agreement are not known and the involvement of militants in the latest ethnic conflict may complicate the issue further.
- **Opening up of issues-** If criminal cases are withdrawn, then similar concessions have to be given on the other side to the Kuki militants who professedly are continuing with the [Suspension of Operations](#) agreement.
- **Diverse demands-** Each group has distinct historical grievances, aspirations and demands, making it hard to arrive at a resolution that satisfies all parties.
- **Vulnerability-** The fragility of peace agreements also lies in their vulnerability to disruptions caused by extremist factions or splinter groups within these communities.
- **Distrust-** Lack of trust in the government's commitment to fulfil promises outlined in peace agreement undermines its effectiveness.
- **Geopolitical factors-** The reluctance of neighbouring countries to support peace processes or interference by external actors can destabilise the region.

## What lies ahead?

- The UNLF Manipur Peace Pact represents hope for lasting peace, but the challenges need to be addressed.
- The road ahead requires commitment, transparency, and genuine reconciliation.

## Quick facts

**Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)**

- **Aim-** To prevent and punish unlawful and terrorist activities that threaten the sovereignty and integrity of the country.
- **Definition-** The Act defines unlawful activities as any action that
  - supports, propagates, or advocates secession from India,
  - disclaims or questions the territorial integrity of India,
  - causes or intends to cause disaffection against India,
  - supports any terrorist organization or individual.
- **Declaration of unlawful associations-** The Act empowers the Central government to declare any **organisation or individual** as unlawful.
- **Tribunal-** The declaration is subject to judicial review by a tribunal constituted by a sitting or retired judge of a High Court.
- **Punishment-**
  - **Unlawful activity-** Imprisonment ranging from 5 years to life, and fine.
  - **Terrorist activity-** Death penalty or imprisonment for life, and fine
- **National Investigation Agency (NIA)-** It is authorized to investigate any offence under the Act, and to arrest any person who is reasonably suspected of having committed such offence.
- It also provides for the attachment and forfeiture of any property that is derived from, or used for, any unlawful or terrorist activity by NIA.
- **Special courts-** It is established by the Central or State government to try any offence under the Act.
- **Appeal-** It provides for the appeal and revision of the judgments of the special courts by the High Court and the Supreme Court.

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### UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES PREVENTION ACT (UAPA)

**The Act was enacted in 1967 to deal with matters of profound impact on the 'Defence of India' and to address threats to the very existence of our Nation**







**Permits keeping a person in prison for up to 180 days, without even filing a charge sheet.**

**Empowers the government to declare an organisation or an individual as "terrorist" and ban it.**

**An investigating officer needs prior approval of Director General of Police for seizure of properties.**

**Deprives the accused of the right to bail thus making them live under detention.**

**Investigation is done by officers of rank of Deputy Superintendent or ACP or above, & in case of NIA, the rank of Inspector or above.**



## References

1. [Indian Express- Why one pact is not peace](#)
2. [Indian Express- History of UNLF](#)

