



Nagaland - Manipur issue

What is the issue?

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Last week, Nagaland Chief Minister Shurhozelie Liezietsu travelled to Imphal, Manipur to discuss inter-state matters with his counterpart Biren Singh.

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Conflicted states:

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- For years, both states have seen street protests against the other, with the mere mention of the 'other' state triggering road a blockade or bandh by some or the other group.

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- The 105-km stretch of National Highway 2 (the erstwhile NH39) leading to Manipur had mostly remained shut or disrupted for more than a decade.

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- Manipur and Nagaland have been held hostage to **entrenched ethnic and tribal loyalties and rivalries**, which flare up at regular intervals.

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- The Naga tribes are not domiciled strictly within the state of Nagaland and those living in neighbouring states, like Manipur, harbour trans-state solidarities.

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What is the impact of the meeting?

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- The CMs underlined the **potential win-win situation** once they started working together, with the Centre's Act East Policy holding out the promise

of bringing economic benefits to the two states that share international boundaries with Myanmar.

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- They agreed to resolve a range of issues, pending for years.

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- The **Meitei people** are expected to come forward to play the role of the big brother to other communities in the region.

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- Learned scholars and intelligentsia from the Meitei community is expected to come forward and create a conducive environment for the return of lasting peace and harmony.

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- If both governments agree to sit across the table and resolve inter-state matters, which range from travel and trade to territorial issues, the outcomes will be truly transformational for the region.

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- The government and the **Joint Action Committee against the Anti-Tribal Bill** have now reached an agreement, whereby the government will compensate the families of those who died in the protests in 2015, set up a memorial for them, and engage with tribal opinion in all future action.

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Act East Policy:

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- The present bridge-building is also the outcome of the political churn in the region.

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- Since the 2014 general election, the BJP has courted parties and politicians in the region by floating the North-East Democratic Alliance (NEDA).

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- The alliance holds office in both Manipur and Nagaland: Liezietsu's Naga People's Front leads the NEDA in Nagaland and is part of the BJP-led government in Manipur.

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- The alliance has a historic opportunity to leap above the old faultlines and realise the Act East Policy of New Delhi, which holds the potential to transform the region.

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Source: Indian Express

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