



Place in News - Assam- Nagaland Border Dispute

Context: The border conflict between Assam and Nagaland escalated when armed individuals, reportedly from Nagaland, set fire to nearly 100 homes in a village predominantly inhabited by minorities, located in the contested B Sector of Golaghat district, Assam.

THE CONFLICT ZONE

Naga tribesmen still raid villages on the border land. The contention: Their land was gifted to Assam by the British Raj

BORDER DISTRICTS
Assam: Dima Hasao, Karbi Anglong, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivasagar
Nagaland: Peren, Dimapur, Wokha, Mokokchung, Longleng, Mon

THE GENESIS: The 1925 boundary of erstwhile Naga Hills district of Assam became inter-state boundary in 1963. But Nagaland staked claim to more land as it was taken away during 1898-1925

REBEL AGENDA: NSCN (Isak-

Muivah) group hijacked the dispute and armed locals for raiding Assam to pursue its agenda of bringing Naga-inhabited areas of Arunachal, Assam and Manipur to form Greater Nagalim

ELUSIVE SOLUTION: Centre set up Sundaram, Shastri commissions but Nagaland rejected them as they allegedly favoured Assam. Assam approached SC in 1988, which sought status quo

About Assam–Nagaland Border Dispute:

The Assam–Nagaland border dispute pertains to the territorial assertions made by Nagaland regarding portions of Assam’s Golaghat, Jorhat, and Sivasagar districts, particularly within the Disputed Area Belt (DAB)—a region comprising reserved forests and forested land. Both states assert ownership, and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has been stationed as a neutral entity since 1979.

Historical Background:

- **Colonial demarcations (1826–1925):** Following the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826, the British established the Naga Hills District in 1866. Subsequent notifications altered boundaries without consulting the Naga people.
- **Post-Independence tensions (1947–1963):** The Naga people proclaimed independence in 1947; subsequently, the Naga Hills–Tuensang Area Act of 1957 and the Nagaland State Act of 1962 formalized the statehood of Nagaland, albeit without a definitive boundary resolution.

Commissions & Agreements:

- **Sundaram Commission (1972):** resulted in four Interim Agreements aimed at preserving the status quo.
- **Shastri Commission (1985), J.K. Pillai Commission (1997), and Variava & Chatterjee Commissions (2006)** endeavored to resolve the boundary issue but were unsuccessful.

About the Disputed Area Belt:

- The border dispute focuses on Nagaland's territorial claims over substantial areas of land that are legally recognized as part of Assam's administrative boundaries.
- **Disputed Area Belt (DAB):** The conflict is primarily focused in the Disputed Area Belt (DAB)—a stretch of forest land (Reserved Forests) that extends along the 512.1 km inter-state boundary, mainly covering the districts of Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivasagar, and Karbi Anglong in Assam.

The Claim:

- Assam asserts the constitutional boundary as it was established at the time of Nagaland's formation as a state in 1963.
- Conversely, Nagaland argues for a boundary that is rooted in historical pre-colonial or colonial agreements (such as the 16-Point Agreement of 1960), which would necessitate the “restoration” of Naga ancestral lands that were transferred out of the Naga Hills district by the British for administrative purposes.
- Assam claims that Nagaland has encroached upon more than 60,000 hectares of its land within the DAB.