

Manipur-Violence on the Rise Again

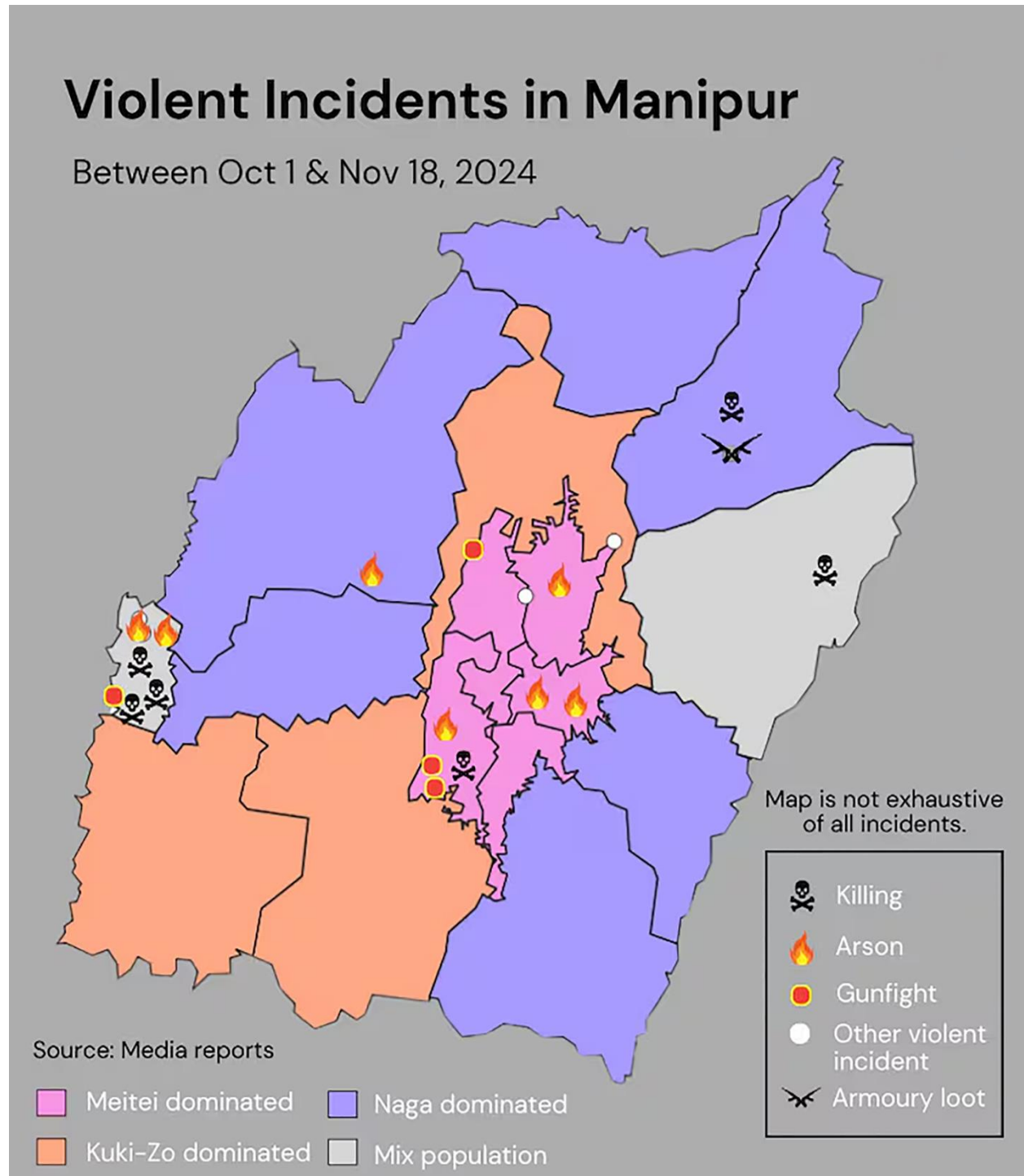


Context:

- In a significant move, **MLAs** of the ruling **BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA)** in **Manipur** recently passed a resolution urging a "**mass operation**" against **Kuki militants** allegedly involved in the **killing of three women and three children in the Jiribam district**.
- A **civil society group** has **junked the resolution** adopted by **CM Biren Singh-led NDA government** of Manipur and has **issued a 24-hour ultimatum**.

The history of Manipur and its ethnic conflicts along with its tribes is explained later in the document.

1. What are the reasons for the recent spurt of Manipur violence?



Date	Event
<p>October 27</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh gunfights, including bomb explosions, erupted at two different locations in Manipur on October 27. • Imphal West district police suspect that Kuki militants launched an attack around 7 PM at Koutruk Ching Leikai village, under the jurisdiction of Lamshang Police Station, using sophisticated firearms and bombs. • Meanwhile, Bishnupur district police stated that suspected Kuki militants launched an attack on Tronglaobi village, located around 6 km south of Moirang Police Station in Bishnupur district.
<p>November 7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The latest violence flared this month after a 31-year-old Kuki woman was found burned to death in a village in Jiribam district, an area that was untouched by the conflict until June. • The woman belonged to Hmar tribe, mother of three little children and school teacher, was allegedly raped, shot in the leg, killed and set on fire by suspected Meitei militants in Jiribam's Zairawn village. • The autopsy report of a woman who was killed in a night attack by suspected insurgents in Manipur's restive Jiribam district mentions eight wounds that include broken bones and "burnt and separated" skull. • The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) and other Kuki civil society groups have alleged the Meitei armed group Arambai Tenggol (AT) was involved in the November 7 night attack.



November 11

- Days after the incident, **10 armed Kuki men were killed in a gunfight with security forces** after they tried to attack a police station in Jiribam district.
- The same day, **six members of a family from the Meitei community were taken hostage by suspected Kuki militants.**
- The bodies of the **two women and a child were recovered from Barak River in Jiribam on November 16**, while three other bodies, including those of a **woman and two children, were found on the night of November 15.**



November 16

- **Protestors staged violent protests** over the deaths, attacking the residences of **three state ministers and six MLAs**.
- Agitators ransacked the houses of three legislators, including that of **Chief Minister N Biren Singh's son-in-law R K Imo**, who is also a **BJP MLA**, and set their properties on fire while security forces fired tear gas shells to disperse protesters in different parts of Imphal.
- **Curfew was imposed for an indefinite period in Imphal East and West, Bishnupur, Thoubal and Kakching districts** of Imphal valley **due to developing law and order situation**.




2. What is the coffin protest?



- **Hundreds of protesters with empty coffins** and dressed in black took out a silent rally in **Churachandpur** on Tuesday in “**honor of and protest against**” the **killing of the 10 Kuki-Zo men** who were killed in an encounter with security forces in **Manipur’s Jiribam district on November 11**.
- **Kuki-Zo organizations hold CRPF personnel responsible** for the death of the 10 “**village volunteers**” whom the **police have accused of being armed militants**.
- The “**mourners**” **marched for over 2km from the Public Ground to the Wall of Remembrance**, a protest site that came up after the ethnic conflict in the state started.
- The nearly two-hour rally was organized by the **Joint Philanthropic Organisation (JPO)** and supported by student organizations such as the **Kuki Students’ Organisation (KSO)**, **Hmar Students’ Association (HSA)** and **Zomi Students’ Federation (ZSF)**.

3. How is the Manipur crisis different in its form?

Dimensions	Analysis
<p>Civilian-on-civilian violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipur is experiencing a unique situation of civilian-on-civilian violence that is different from traditional insurgency (Mizoram) or terrorism-related conflicts (Jammu & Kashmir). 
<p>Ordinary citizens forced to engage in violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinary citizens are not just victims, but are being forced to engage in violence for self-protection. • This is creating a cycle of violence.
<p>Breakdown of state machinery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government has failed to protect its citizens' basic liberties and maintain law and order. • The central government's interventions to control the violence have been unsuccessful.
<p>Central government's interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 355 of the Constitution of India requires the Union government to protect states from internal disturbances and external aggression.


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The central government's interventions have been unsuccessful in controlling the violence.
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4. How is Manipur violence a concern for National Security?

- **National security has multifarious dimensions.**
- In the contemporary world, **national security is viewed beyond military security.**
- This security framework analysis of **Manipur violence** would trigger some **pertinent questions which are beyond the localized nature of the conflict** or rather merely viewing the conflict from the perspective of ethnic clashes between Meitei and Kuki community.
- The security threat in **Manipur can be deciphered from four levels.**

Security threat	Analysis
<p>Illegal migration in Manipur from Myanmar.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims and counterclaims on land, revenue and economic opportunities have been the catalytic factor in igniting clashes between various communities in Manipur. • This claim and counterclaim on land, revenue and economic opportunities have become a bone of contention because of the increasing influx of migrants from the porous Manipur-Myanmar border, especially from the Chin state of Myanmar. • Alarming migration of Chin communities from Myanmar has led to several changes in the demographic composition of the region, which has surfaced as one of the major reason for or the on-going conflict in Manipur.

<p>Illegal drug trafficking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The present crisis in Manipur is also the manifestation of illegal narcotic trade. • There are various consequences of trafficking in narcotics like it is a major source to raise funds for the insurgent. • The linkages between arms, drugs and insurgency depend upon various interrelated factors. • As per various reports available, it is evident that intruders from cross borders have links with insurgent groups in Myanmar and are involved in poppy cultivation inside the Indian territory. • Increasing poppy cultivation has led to huge earning of money which subsequently has been used to procure arms which further causes fear and attempt to disintegrate Manipur. • The additional superintendent of police in the Narcotics and Affairs of Border Bureau, Thounaojam Brinda had alleged that the wife of the chief minister of Manipur had connections to an alleged drug lord from the Kuki-Zo community. • In an affidavit to the Manipur High Court, she accused the chief minister of pressuring her to drop the case against an alleged “drug kingpin”, BJP leader and former head of Autonomous District Council (ADC), Lhukhosei Zou.
<p>Smuggling of sophisticated weapons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As reported by various media platforms, the significant consignment of weapons, which were used to spread violence in Manipur even on the day of so-called peace rally, were smuggled via Myanmar.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was reported that these weapons were kept on the Myanmar-China border, before being transported to Manipur. • It can be deciphered that presently Manipur has been inflicted with combined forces of threats as drug money, arms and terror (in the form of narco terrorism). • Sophisticated weapons such as M16s, M18s and M4A1 Carbines are being used in the ethnic conflict in Manipur. 
<p>Chinese conspiracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North-East insurgents receive manifold support from the implacable and bitter northern neighbor, China. • It has been evident by various reports that insurgent outfits in the North East, including Manipur have links with armed groups such as Arakan National Army and United Wa State Army in Myanmar. • Through these outfits, China is able to find a route for their weapons in Manipur.


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is observed that the present conflict in Manipur needs to be looked at from a national security perspective rather than merely adopting myopic approach.
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5. Enlist steps taken by the government to curb violence in Manipur?

- The Centre is working on a **three-pronged approach** to bring the warring **Meitei and Kuki communities** into a narrow **common ground for lasting peace in trouble-torn Manipur**.
- These include **dialogue with the affected people, rehabilitating those who had to leave their homes with enhanced security and control over insurgents**.

Steps taken	Analysis
<p>Deployment of additional forces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired a high-level meeting on November 18 to discuss the ongoing situation in Manipur as the violence in the state escalated. • The Centre is dispatching an additional 50 companies of CAPF to the state. • This comes after an earlier deployment of 20 companies, bringing the total to 70 CAPF units now being mobilized to ensure law and order in the state.

	
<p>Confidence building measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The major task before the government is to build confidence between the Meitei and Kuki communities.• Hence, the Centre is making all efforts to reach out to every segment of the society in Manipur and working to bring them into a narrow common ground for lasting peace. 
<p>Relief and Rehabilitation measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An immediate financial package of ₹101.75 crore was provided for the relief and rehabilitation of the people living in shelter camps.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate relief materials availability ensured that at every camp, 30,000 MT rice was allotted through FCI during current Manipur violence. • The government has set up relief camps for the over 50,000 people who have been internally displaced. • The Manipur Cabinet has also constituted a sub-committee to oversee the rehabilitation and relocation of internally displaced persons. 
<p>Three-member Inquiry commission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Central government appointed a three-member Commission of Inquiry headed by Ajai Lamba, former Chief Justice of the Guwahati High Court, to probe the ethnic violence in Manipur. • The panel, also comprising retired IAS officer Himanshu Shekhar Das and retired IPS officer Alok Prabhakar, was mandated to make inquiry with respect to the causes and spread of the violence and riots targeting members of different communities, which took place in Manipur since May 3, 2023.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The commission was supposed to submit its report to the central government “as soon as possible but not later than six months from the date of its first sitting”. • According to the fresh notification: “The Commission shall submit its report to the central government as soon as possible but not later than the 20th November, 2024”.
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6. How Manipur’s peace - keepers became agents provocateur?



- **Meira Paibi** is a women's social movement in Manipur, India that is known for its **peaceful protests and grassroots activism**.
- The Meitei women started the meira paibi movement in the **1970s in Manipur, India**.

- The movement began in the **late 1970s and early 1980s** in response to the **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) and other socio-political turmoil.**
- The name comes from the **flaming torches, or meira**, that the women carry while **marching through the streets.**
- **The Meira Paibis are generally composed of married women in the age group of 35 to 60, who have studied at least up to the secondary level.**
- The **Meira Paibis** have taken responsibility **to defend human rights and also try to maintain peace** in the difficult situations that Manipur has faced.
- They have managed to a large extent to **bridge the physical gaps** between the **private and public spaces for women.**
- Various reports alleged that **Meira Paibis played an active role** in instigating **Meitei mobs to commit atrocities against Zo people**, during the **violence in Manipur.**
- In April 2024, **Meira Paibis had taken 11 members of radical Meitei outfit Arambai Tenggol** from the **custody of the Mahar regiment of the Indian Army**, and obstructed the **seizure of illegal arms from them.**
- Each time there is **movement of security forces in the valley** for any **raid to recover the weapons** that were looted, these **groups come together and congregate to block roads**, compelling the personnel to retreat.
- The name of the **Meira Paibis has been maligned for their alleged role in the sexual attacks on women**, particularly in the **clashes that took place between a Meitei mob and Kukis** in the **Nongpok Sekmai incident.**
- It has been reported that **one of the leaders of the Meira Paibis has upheld these sexual attacks** as justified in a **situation of war.**

7. What is the opposition party's view on the Manipur crisis?

- Opposition political parties alleged that the **Union government has allowed the crisis in Manipur to become a frozen conflict.**
- Since **BJP controls both the Union and state government** in Manipur, Delhi is reluctant to act in any way that **would taint the BJP government in Manipur.**
- **Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha** raked up the ongoing Manipur violence issue, and asked why the **President's rule was not being imposed in Manipur.**
- He questioned why the **Central government was violating Section 355 and 356** by not imposing **President's rule in the state.**
- He further asked that if the **Congress, Aam Aadmi Party, Trinamool Congress, RJD,** or any other party had **formed the government in Manipur,** wouldn't the **BJP-led central government impose the President's rule in the state then?**

8. What are the constitutional provisions for imposing president's rule in Manipur?

- As per the **Constitution of India, under Article-355** it shall be the **duty of the Union to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance** and to ensure that the government of **every State** is carried on in accordance with the **provisions of this Constitution.**
- The **Article 355** is part of emergency provisions contained in **Part XVIII** of the Constitution of India, from **Article 352 to 360.**
- **Article 356 empowers the President** to issue a proclamation if he is **satisfied** that a situation has arisen in which the **government of a state cannot be carried on in accordance** with the provisions of the constitution.

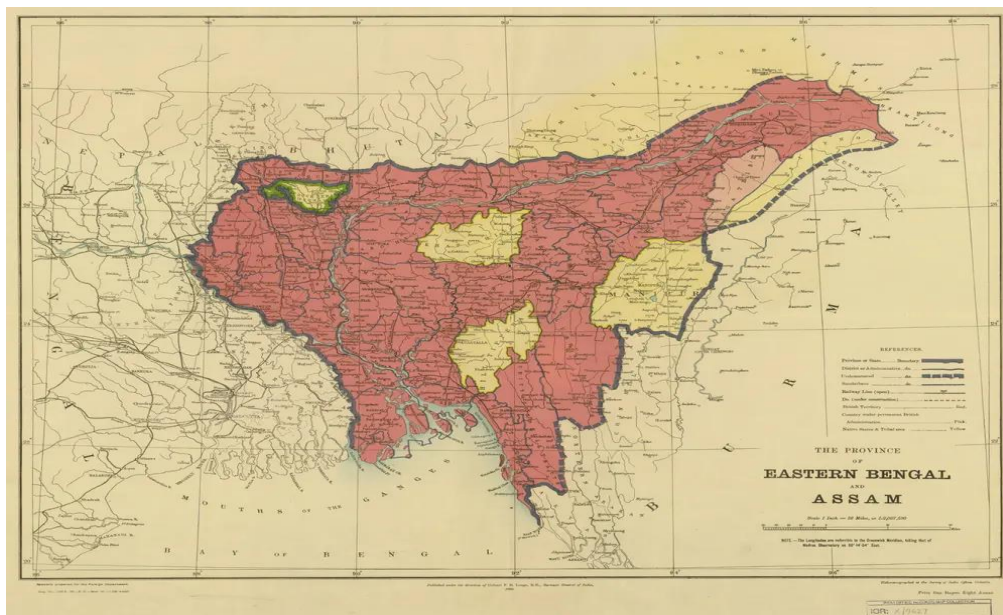
- A proclamation imposing the president's rule must be **approved by both the houses of parliament within two months from the date of its issue.**

9. How can peace be restored in Manipur?

Stakeholders	Role
<p>Central government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should prioritize dialogue between the warring communities over military intervention to address the conflict. • With state security forces, civil society organizations, and insurgent groups starkly divided by ethnicity, the solution must come from the Meiteis and Kukis, supported by the other ethnic communities in the state. • Ashang Kasar, the convener of the Forum for Restoration of Peace (FRPM), suggests forming a peace committee to mediate between the two groups. • This committee should include representatives from all Manipur communities except the Meiteis and Kukis to • Ensure an objective, inclusive policy with a consensus-based action plan and strategy. • New Delhi should explore opportunities for affected individuals, including those displaced, to continue their education and find jobs.
<p>Civil society organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally, civil society organizations must unite to rebuild trust between the Meiteis and Kukis.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state government should provide financial assistance and security for these efforts. • These organizations should also conduct awareness programs to combat misinformation and disinformation and initiate programs to de-radicalize the affected youths.
<p>State government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Policing by deploying well-trained security forces, including specialized anti-riot units, to sensitive areas. • Use technology like drones, CCTV, and improved human intelligence networks to monitor potential flashpoints. • Identify the root causes of conflict, such as land disputes, unemployment, or perceived marginalization, and address them through policies and programs.

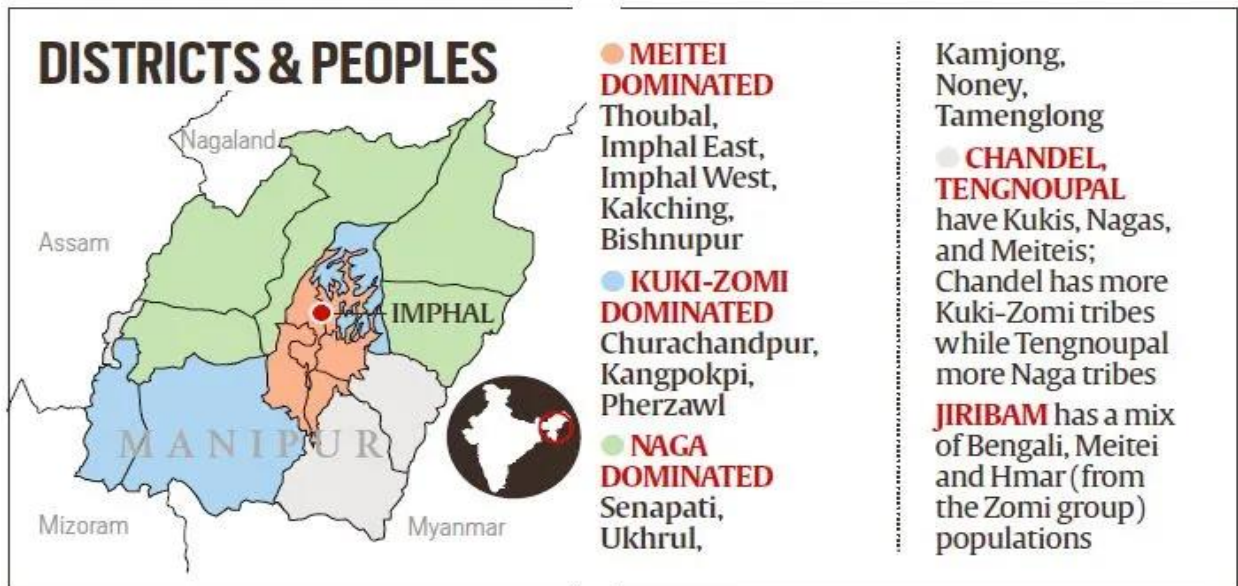
10. What is the history of Manipur?



- **Royal chronicles, Cheitharol Kumbaba, document the history of Manipuri kings of Ningthouja dynasty to 33 AD, one of the longest-ruling dynasties of India.**
- **The kings and people of Manipur followed an indigenous faith known as Sanamahism until the 18th century.**
- **At the very beginning of the 18th century, some scholars say in 1704, king Charairongba converted to Hinduism along with his family.**
- **Meidingu Pamheiba (named Garib Nawaz by Muslims) was the son of king Charairongba, who is known for his conquest of the Burmese capital.**
- **In 1824, Manipur became a protectorate of the British East India Company.**
- **In the year 1891 Manipur became a Princely State under British Rule after the Anglo-Manipur war.**
- **The British abolished slavery and forced labor, and constructed roads.**
- **Manipur was the site of many battles between the Japanese and Allied forces during World War II.**
- **In 1947, Maharaja Budhachandra signed a Treaty of Accession merging Manipur into India.**
- **Manipur became a Union Territory in 1956 and in the year 1972 it was granted the status of full fledged state.**
- **The Kangleipak State developed under King Loiyumba, and had its first written constitution in the early 12th century.**
- **The legendary burning of sacred scripture occurred in Manipur under the 18th-century king Pamheiba.**

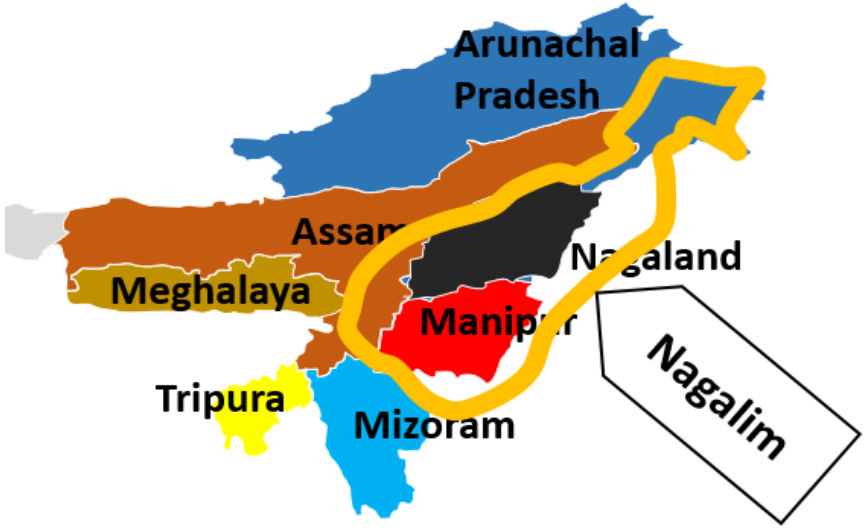
11. What is the history of ethnic conflicts in Manipur?

- Manipur is no stranger to violent protests, but the ongoing violence between the **Kuki-Zomi tribals** and the largely **Hindu Meiteis** is the **first time in three decades** that the state has witnessed **direct clashes between two ethnic groups**.



Events	Analysis
<p>During British era</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kangleipak kingdom, then a British protectorate, was repeatedly raided by Naga tribes who came down from the northern hills. The British political agent in Manipur is believed to have brought the Kuki-Zomi from the Kuki-Chin hills of Burma to protect the valley from plunder by acting as a buffer between the Meiteis and the Nagas. The Kukis, like the Nagas, were fierce headhunting warriors – and the Maharaja gave them land along the ridges, where they could act as a shield for the Imphal valley below.

<p>Kuki-Meitei divide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic tensions between the hill communities and the Meiteis have existed from the time of the erstwhile kingdom, but the friction started escalating with the advent of the Naga national movement in the 1950s, and the call for an independent Naga nation. • The Naga insurgency was countered by the rise of insurgent groups among the Meiteis and Kuki-Zomi.
<p>Movement for ‘Kukiland’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the 1990s, as the NSCN-IM pushed harder for self-determination, the Kuki-Zomi groups began to militarize, and the Kukis launched their own movement for ‘Kukiland’. • Even though the Kukis had started out as protectors of the Meitei people, the Kukiland demand created a rift between the communities.
<p>Naga-Kuki clashes of 1993</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the Naga-Kuki clashes of 1993, NSCN-IM cadres allegedly went from village to village in areas they claimed as belonging to Nagas, emptying them of Kuki residents. • Many Kukis fled to Churachandpur, a district dominated by the Kuki-Zomi people.
<p>Meitei nationalism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Naga and Kuki movements fuelled Meitei nationalism, and numerous groups sprung up in the valley. • Concerns over demographic change and shrinking of traditional Meitei areas started to surface in the 1970s. • The Meitei population feared the possible

	<p>creation of Greater Nagalim would lead to shrinking of Manipur's geographical area.</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were some demands for Scheduled Tribe status for Meiteis. • The Meiteis contend that in a state where the government is the largest employer and there are very few other opportunities, reservation for STs in jobs amounts to an unfair advantage.
<p>Extension of Ceasefire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2001, the Indian government's decision to extend its ceasefire with the IM to states other than Nagaland led to widespread violence in Manipur.
<p>Demand for an Inner Line Permit (ILP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2015, as the Meiteis of the valley protested demanding ILP in Imphal city, equally intense protests were seen in Churachandpur countering the demand, and protesting the introduction of laws by then Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh, one of which said the state would determine who was a Manipuri and who was not.

12. What are some of the historical factors responsible for violence in Manipur?

Manipur's ethnic faultlines: Kuki-Meitei divide & recent unrest

There are 16 districts in Manipur, but the state is commonly thought of as divided into 'valley' and 'hill' districts.



In these hill areas, which comprise the bulk of Manipur's geographical area, live 15 Naga tribes and the Chin-Kuki-Mizo-Zomi group.

Imphal (East and West)

Kukis and Nagas point out that tribal areas are 90% of state's geographical area, but the bulk of its budget and development work is focused on the Meitei-dominated Imphal valley.

The Manipur valley is encircled by skirts of low hills that spread into Nagaland and Mizoram.

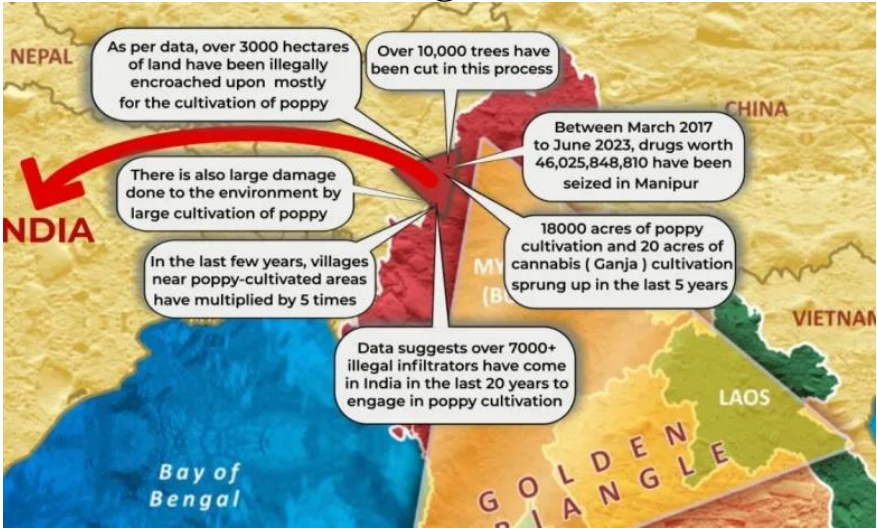
While tribals can buy land in the valley, Meiteis are prohibited from buying land in the hills

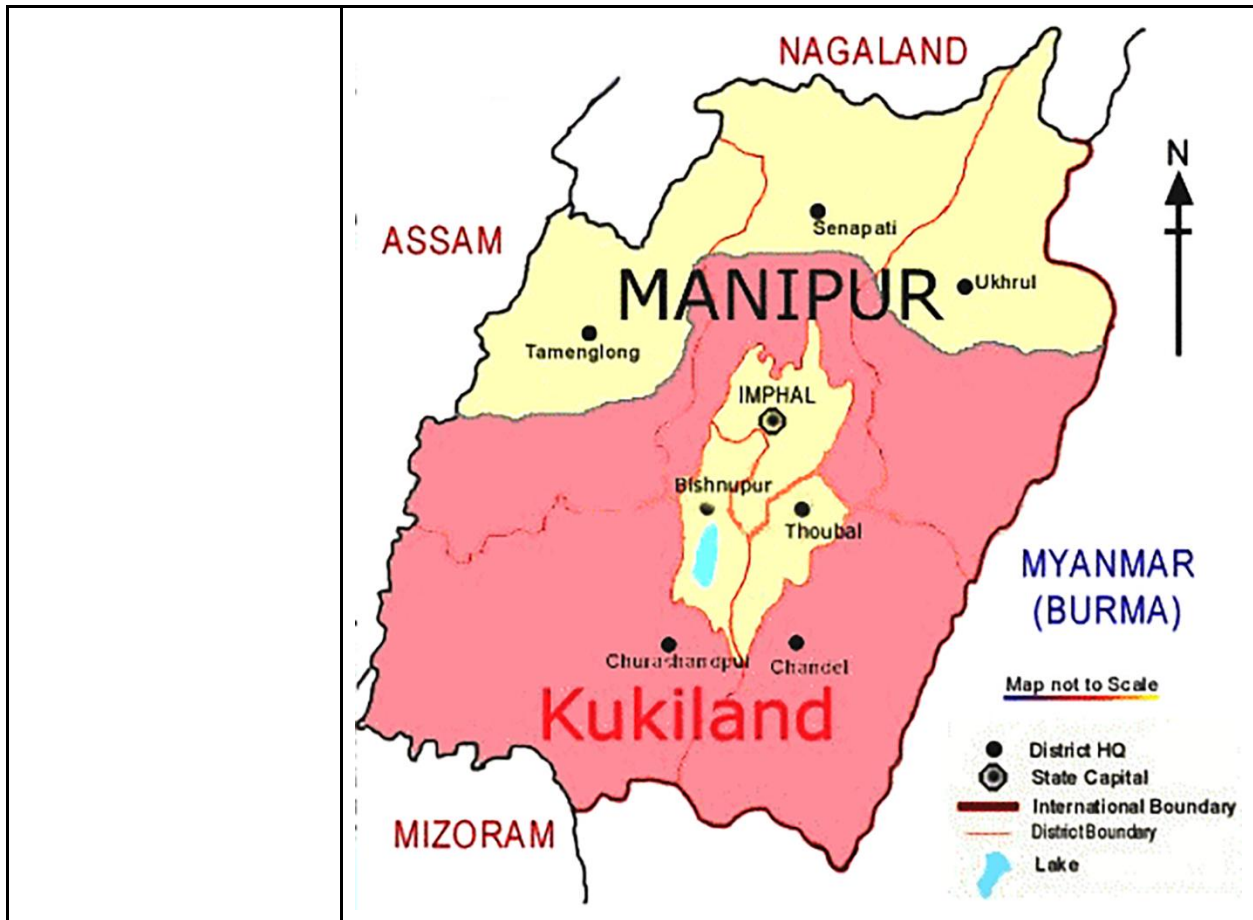
Valley areas

Bishnupur
Thoubal
Kakching

Factors	Analysis
Historical conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical ethnic conflicts and tensions between Kukis(Hill tribe) and Meiteis in Manipur have contributed to the unrest, as both communities compete for political representation, resources, and cultural recognition.
The Ethnic Fault lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meiteis comprise a little more than half of the population while the tribals, Kukis and Nagas, are nearly 40% of which 25% are Kukis and 15% are Nagas. • Most of the Meiteis live in the Imphal valley while the tribals live in the hill districts. • The Meiteis are more educated and also better represented in business and politics of the state than Kukis and Nagas.
Meitei dominance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic dominance: Meiteis form 52% of the population of Manipur and predominantly reside in valley areas which are 10% of the total land of the state. • Political dominance: Meitei dominate the political establishment in Manipur with 40 out of the 60 Assembly constituencies. • People from the hill areas claim that despite hill districts of Manipur comprising 89% of the geographical area, there were only 20 MLAs from these areas in the Manipur Assembly.

<p>Land issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meiteis are limited to only around 10% of the land in the state, as the rest of the state is classified as tribal areas. • They live in the small patch of plain area in the state, the Imphal Valley, while the Kuki(tribals) reside in the protected Hill Areas, exclusively reserved for them. • Being classified as non-tribals, Meitei people can't buy land in over 90% of the state. • According to STDCM(Scheduled Tribes Demand Committee of Manipur) Meiteis have been gradually marginalized in their ancestral land as they cannot buy land in tribal / hill areas of Manipur and are confined to 10% of the land. • While the tribals can buy land in Imphal Valley, thereby further reducing the land availability. • The Hill Areas in Manipur comprising 90% of the total land in Manipur are declared by the government under the provisions of Article 371C of the Constitution.
<p>Issues in Delimitation Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020, as the Centre began the first delimitation process in the state since 1973, the Meitei community alleged that the Census figures used in the exercise did not accurately reflect the population break-up.
<p>Drug trafficking and cross-border crime</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proximity to the Golden Triangle and porous international borders make Manipur vulnerable to drug trafficking and other cross-border criminal activities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These illegal activities can fuel violence and social unrest in the region. 
<p>Influx of Migrants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The coup in Myanmar has led to a refugee crisis in India’s Northeast. • Meitei leaders have alleged that there has been a sudden mushrooming of villages in Churachandpur district. • Chief Minister N Biren Singh has repeatedly echoed and fed these fears — pointing to the presence of Myanmarese in Churachandpur, and linking them to the cultivation of poppy, and repeatedly making references to “foreigners” and “outsiders”.
<p>Demand for autonomy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic groups, particularly the Nagas and Kukis, seek greater political autonomy or the creation of separate administrative units. • These demands are often rooted in historical claims and cultural identities.

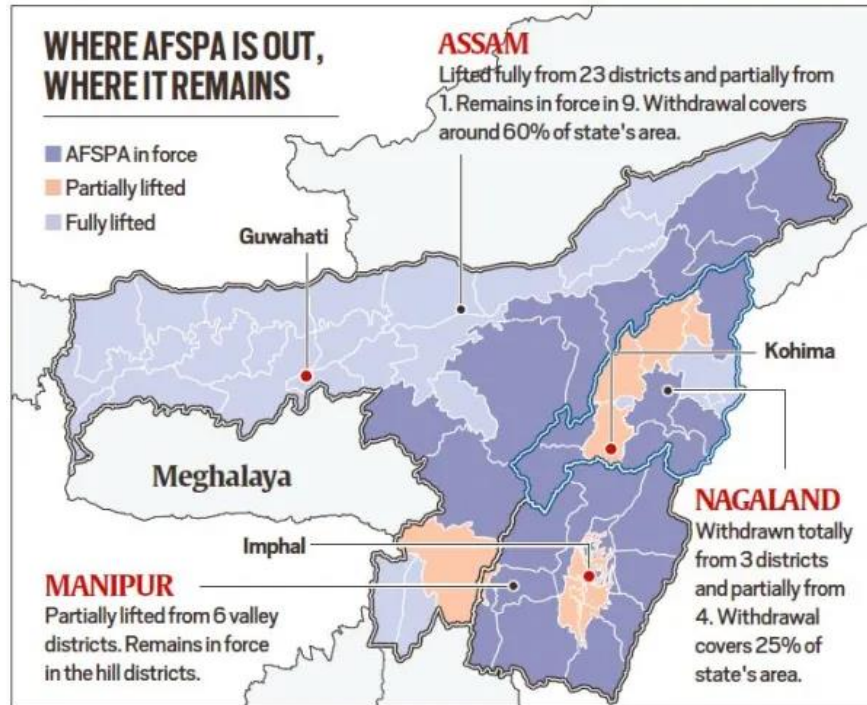


Insurgent Organization	Ethnic Group	Primary Location	Demands	Current Status
National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isaac Muivah (NSCN-IM)	Naga	North of Imphal Valley	Creation of independent Nagalim – Nagaland	Secret Framework agreement signed, temporarily ending hostilities
Kuki National Organisation (KNO)	Kuki/Zomi	South of Imphal Valley and Sadar Hills areas to the north	Creation of new Kuki (Zomi) State – “Zalengam,” or Freeland	Signed secession of operations agreement, currently in political negotiations
United People’s Front (UPF)	Kuki/Zomi	Same as KNO	Creation of new Zomi (Kuki) State or territorial council within Manipur	Same as KNO
Various “Valley-based” organizations	Meitei	Imphal and on eastern border with Myanmar	Independence or increased autonomy of Manipur	Most refuse to negotiate with India

Application of AFSPA

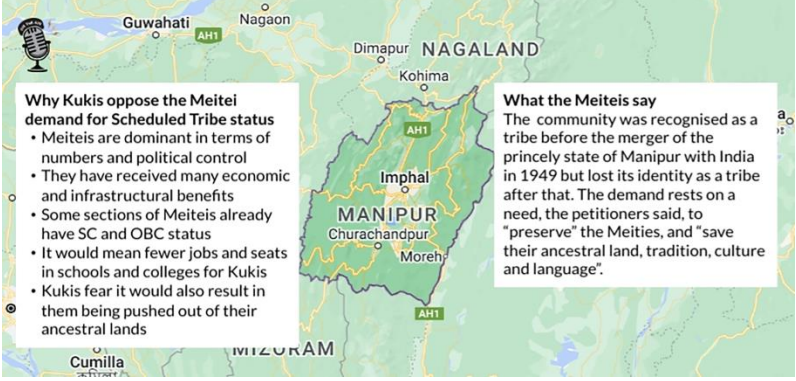
- The implementation of the **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)** grants **extensive powers to the military.**
- This has resulted in **allegations of human rights abuses.**

- The act's presence is seen as a symbol of oppression and has **catalyzed protests and demands for its repeal.**



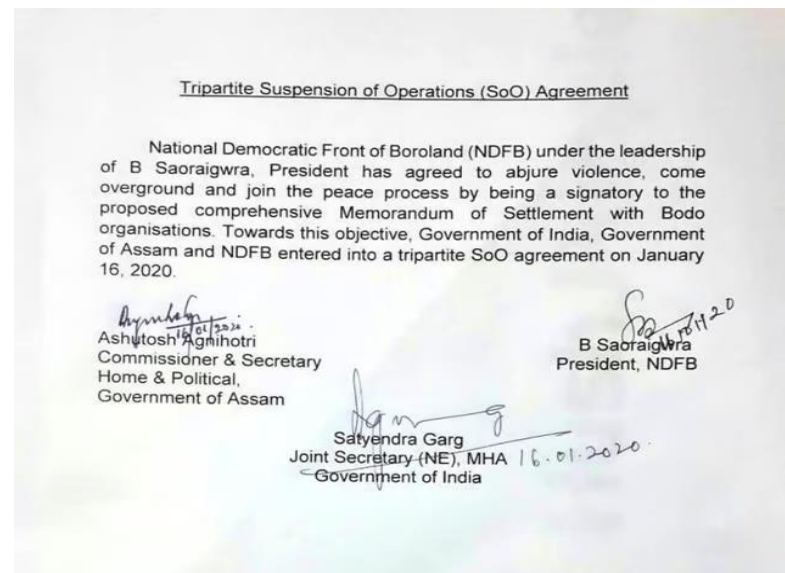
13. What are some immediate factors which triggered Manipur violence?

Factors	Analysis
<p>Meitei Community's Demands for ST Status</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 2012, there has been a constant demand led by the Scheduled Tribes Demand Committee of Manipur (STDCM) for granting the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to the Meitei community. • The Meitei Tribe Union had filed a petition before the Manipur High Court and had argued that the Meitei community was once recognised as a "tribe" before

	<p>the merger of the princely state of Manipur with the Union of India in 1949 and that it lost its identity as a tribe after the merger.</p>  <p>Why Kukis oppose the Meitei demand for Scheduled Tribe status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meiteis are dominant in terms of numbers and political control • They have received many economic and infrastructural benefits • Some sections of Meiteis already have SC and OBC status • It would mean fewer jobs and seats in schools and colleges for Kukis • Kukis fear it would also result in them being pushed out of their ancestral lands <p>What the Meiteis say</p> <p>The community was recognised as a tribe before the merger of the princely state of Manipur with India in 1949 but lost its identity as a tribe after that. The demand rests on a need, the petitioners said, to "preserve" the Meiteis, and "save their ancestral land, tradition, culture and language".</p>
<p>Manipur High Court direction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 20 April 2023, a judge of the Manipur High Court directed the state government to "consider the request of the Meitei community to be included in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list". • The Kukis feared that the ST status would allow the Meiteis purchase land in the prohibited hilly areas. • The tribal groups called for a total shutdown on 28 April 2023 in protest of the state government actions.
<p>Government eviction drive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In February 2023, the government of Manipur evicted a small settlement of 16 Kuki tribal households, claiming that they were encroaching on protected forest land. • However, tribal groups protested that the eviction drive was targeting legitimate residents.


Suspension of Operation agreements

- **The SoO agreement with Kuki was signed in 2008** as a ceasefire agreement between the **Indian government** and various **Kuki militant groups** operating in the northeastern states of **Manipur and Nagaland**.
- Under the agreement, the **Kuki militant groups agreed to stop carrying out violent activities** and come to designated camps to be monitored by security forces.
- In return, the **Indian government agreed to suspend its operations** against the Kuki groups.
- On March 10, 2023 the **Manipur government decided to withdraw from the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with two militant groups, Kuki National Army (KNA) and Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA), alleging their involvement in inciting agitation among forest encroachers.**



14. Why is the administration not able to control Manipur violence?

Reasons	Analysis
<p>Position of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Manipur</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Meiteis community wants CM Biren Singh to continue while the Kukis want CM Biren Singh to resign. • Thus have created a serious law and order crisis in the state. • On November 16, a mob in India's Manipur state attempted to storm the home of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh and attacked properties of other ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders.
<p>Role of Chief Minister of Manipur is in question</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is alleged that the chief minister has been promoting the BJP's Hindu majoritarian ideology by backing the primarily Hindu Meitei. • This has deepened distrust of the minority tribal groups of Manipur, known as the Kuki-Zo, who are mostly Christian. • There is an allegation on administration for providing political protection to militant Meitei groups like the Arambai Tenggol, which have attacked the Kuki-Zo.
<p>Imposition of President's rule(A356)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to restore normalcy there is need to impose President's Rule (Article 356) in the state as the present Manipur government has been able to control

	<p>violence and does not enjoy the confidence of all Manipuris.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruling party feels that the resignation of C.M.Biren Singh or imposition of President's Rule would be seen as admission of guilt that its government was not able to handle the situation
<p>Complex ethnic dynamics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipur’s diverse ethnic landscape, with multiple tribes and communities, makes it difficult to address the grievances of all at one table. • The ongoing conflicts between Meiteis, Nagas, Kukis, and other tribes make it challenging to find a solution that satisfies everyone.
<p>Lack of coordination among forces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are instances of lack of coordination among various forces deployed in Manipur like Assam Rifles, Indian Army, CRPF, State police. • This has led to multiple standoffs between Assam Rifles and Manipur police. 

<p>Armed men disguise in police uniforms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been instances of men in uniform, firing at Central security forces deployed in buffer zones using automatic weapons, preceded by blockade and protest by women-led groups. • As per the officials, police uniforms are readily available in the state while weapons looted from police armories are being sold in black market.
<p>Lack of development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipur, faces significant developmental challenges, including poor infrastructure, limited access to resources, and high unemployment. • These factors exacerbate existing tensions and make it harder to resolve unrest.
<p>Influence of external factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military coup in Myanmar and subsequent crackdown have led to an influx of refugees who have further influenced the unrest in Manipur. • External factors add another layer of complexity to the situation in Manipur. • There is a possibility that the recent coup in Bangladesh may further exacerbate the situation in Manipur.

15. What is Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (AFSPA) and why has the center reimposed it?

WHAT IS ARMED FORCES SPECIAL POWERS ACT?

➤ **Introduced in 1958**, AFSPA confers on members of the armed forces special powers to rein in suspects in areas declared “disturbed” on account of insurgent activities or similar threats. It has been in **force in Manipur since 1980**, and the alleged **excesses committed under it are the reasons** why activist **Irom Sharmila** has been on a **hunger strike since 2000**.

WHAT ARE SPECIAL POWERS?

AFSPA allows any commissioned officer, warrant officer and non-commissioned officer – or any other



person of equivalent rank – to:

➤ Fire upon or use force against any person acting ‘in contravention of any law for the time being in force in the disturbed area’

➤ Arrest suspicious people without warrant

➤ Destroy any structure suspected to house an arms dump, shelter from which armed attacks are made or are likely to be made

➤ Conduct searches without warrants for evidence, to recover a wrongfully confined person or property or arms or explosives

➤ **AFSPA bars prosecution or proceedings – except with Centre’s nod – against personnel for action committed while exercising powers under the Act**

- The **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act** was enacted in **1958**.
- The act grants extraordinary powers and immunity to the armed forces to bring back order in the “**disturbed areas**”.
- The Act came into force in the context of **increasing violence** in the **Northeastern States** decades ago, which the State governments found difficult to control.
- Armed forces have the **authority to prohibit a gathering of five or more persons in an area**, can use force or even open fire after giving due warning if they feel a person is in contravention of the law.
- Currently, **AFSPA is in effect in parts of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh**.
- The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** on November 14, 2024 has reimposed the **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)** declaring six police station limits in **five districts of Manipur** as “**disturbed areas**”, in the wake of the ongoing ethnic violence in the State.

- The **Sekmai and Lamsang police station limits in Imphal West, Lamlai in Imphal East, Jiribam station limits in Jiribam, Moirang in Bishnupur and Leimakhong in Kangpokpi districts** were declared disturbed areas on November 14.
- AFSPA is **reimposed to carry out well-coordinated operations** by the security forces and contain the activities of insurgent groups.
- AFSPA has been reimposed in the fringe or buffer zones, areas where **Kuki-Zo and Meitei villages converge**.
- Members of various civil society organizations, held a rally in **Manipur's Imphal West district** to protest against the reimposition of AFSPA in parts of the northeastern state.

16. What is the role of surrounding countries in Manipur unrest?

Country	Role
<p>Myanmar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many communities in Manipur, such as the Kukis, Nagas, and other tribal groups, share ethnic, cultural, and linguistic ties with similar groups in Myanmar, particularly in the Chin State and Sagaing Region. • The Chin and Kuki-Zo people are among the large number of refugees who have arrived, escaping brutality and persecution at the hands of the Myanmar military. • The lack of effective control by the Myanmar government and the ongoing conflict in Myanmar provide the insurgent groups with spaces to regroup, train, and launch operations against Indian security forces.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The India-Myanmar border is a significant route for drug trafficking, particularly heroin and synthetic drugs like methamphetamine. • In August 2023, Home minister of India stated that the situation in Myanmar had added to the ongoing conflict in Manipur and announced that the porous border between Manipur and Myanmar would be fenced and the free movement regime (FMR) would be suspended.
<p>Bangladesh</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are historical and cultural connections between certain Manipur communities and those in Bangladesh, especially those of Bengali descent. • In the past, some insurgent groups from Northeast India, including Manipur-based insurgent organizations like the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), have used Bangladeshi territory as a base for training, regrouping, and launching operations. • The presence of Bangladeshi migrants in the Northeast, including Manipur, has been a contentious issue. • Local communities sometimes view these migrants as competing for jobs and resources, adding to existing social tensions. • Bangladesh Ex Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina recently revealed that several Western nations, including the United States and Britain, are reportedly conspiring to create a Christian state by annexing parts of Bangladesh, Myanmar, and India.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This agenda has found secret allies in the Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF) and other regional insurgent groups. • Bangladeshi authorities have noted connections between the KNF and other groups in India and Myanmar, suggesting a coordinated effort to establish a separate eastern state. • The KNF’s alliance with the Islamist militant group Jamaat Ul Ansar Fil Hind Al Sharqiya (JAFHS) is seen as a strategic move to destabilize the region and further their own agenda under the guise of religious conversion and militancy.
<p>China</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are logical historical reasons to look at the probable Chinese involvement in aggravating the current conflict especially when the region was witnessing a relative peace over the last nine years and was on path of development under Act East policy of the Modi government. • China sees the Act east policy as an attempt by India to tilt the balance of power. • Various insurgent outfits in the Northeast, including Manipur, continue to have links with armed groups such as Arakan Army and United Wa State Army in Myanmar from where Chinese weapons are finding their way into the Northeast.

17. Enlist main tribes involved in the Manipur conflict?


- **Manipur is a multi-ethnic state** located at the **easternmost part of India.**


- The **hills are inhabited** mainly by the **tribals** with a total population of **11, 67,422** of which, there are **33 recognised tribes** (in Manipur) which **either fall under the Nagas or the Kukis**, the two different conglomerates of Manipur tribals.
- The two communities are **differentiated mainly from their distinctive dialects, costumes, cultures and traditions.**
- The **Meitei people**, also known as the **Manipuri people**, are an **ethnic group** in Manipur, India that have been **considered for inclusion in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list**, but have **been rejected.**
- Based on the available information, the Meitei community **“does not appear to possess tribal characteristics”**.
- It noted that historically, the term **Meiteis** had been used to describe the **non-tribal population in the Manipur valley.**

Tribes	Description
Kuki tribe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kuki people are an ethnic group in the Northeastern Indian states of Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram, as well as in the neighboring countries of Bangladesh and Myanmar. • They form one of the largest hill tribe communities in this region. • In Northeast India, they are present in all states except Arunachal Pradesh. • The Chin people of Myanmar and the Mizo people of Mizoram are kindred tribes of the Kukis and collectively they are termed as “Zo” people. • In 2023, a consensus seems to have developed among the Kuki tribes of Manipur to use the compound term Kuki-Zo to refer to themselves.

- **The Kuki tribe** has faced many challenges and conflicts in their history, such as the **Kuki Rebellion (1917-1919) against British rule**, the **Kuki-Naga clashes (1960s-1990s)** over land and identity issues, and the **Kuki-Zomi ethnic violence (1997-1998)** that resulted in displacement and loss of lives.
- **Christianity is the predominant religion among the Kuki people**, with some significant minorities following animism or other faiths such as **Judaism or Islam**.
- **Dominic Sominthang Haokip and Hatchinghoi Haokip**, siblings from the **Kuki community of Churachandpur district**, created history by clearing the prestigious **Civil Services Exam 2023** conducted by the UPSC.
- **While Dominic** secured the **994 rank** in the CSE exam in his very first attempt, his **elder sister Hatchinghoi**, secured the **898 rank**.



<p>Naga</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nagas are a hill people who are estimated to number about 2.5 million (1.8 million in Nagaland, 0.6 million in Manipur and 0.1 million in Arunachal states) and living in the remote and mountainous country between the Indian state of Assam and Burma. • Nagas traditionally are tribally organized, with a strong warrior tradition. • Their villages are sited on hilltops and they make frequent armed raids on the plains below. • The Naga tribes practice terraced and slash-and-burn agriculture. • They are known for both their fishing methods and woven and carved goods. • One of the main cultural events of the Naga people is the genna, a religious ceremony occurring 11 times throughout the year.³
<p>Chothe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are settled in Chandel and Bishnupur districts and speak a Kuki-Chin dialect. • Their main occupations are cultivation, livestock rearing, blacksmith and weaving. • They are divided into seven clans. 

Hmar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They belong to the Kuki-Chin-Mizo group concentrated mainly in Churachandpur district.• Agriculture and weaving are their main occupations.• Hmars built their villages on hill -tops & houses constructed on wooden planks.• They adopted Christianity from 1910.• Hmar have their village administration consisting of Lal (Chief), Khawnbawlupa (chief minister), Khonbols (ministers). 
Kom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Koms are settled in Churachandpur, Tengenoupal and Senapati districts.• They speak languages similar to that of Koireng, Aimol and Chiru and closely related to the Hmar.• Christianity is its main religion.• Some major festivals of Koms are Seling, Hlungphun, Belam and Lamkut.



Aimol


- **Aimol is listed under the Kuki tribes** found living both in **Assam and Manipur**.
- They speak Aimol language, classified under **Kuki-Chin-Mizo language**.
- They are based in parts of **Chandel district**, **Senapati district** and **around Loktak Lake** in **Bishnupur district**.
- They practice **slash and burn agriculture** and are **primarily Christians**.




Meitei Community

- The **Meitei people** are the predominant **ethnic group** of **Manipur State** speaking the **Meitei language**.
- The Meitei ethnic group represents about **53% of Manipur's population**.
- The Meiteis **primarily settled** in the **Imphal Valley region** in modern-day Manipur, though a sizable population has settled in the other **Indian states of Assam, Tripura, Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram**.
- **Majority** of the Meitei community follows **Hinduism**.

18. What are the implications of the Manipur violence?

Implications	Analysis
<p>Loss of Human life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to government figures, as of 3 May 2024, 221 people have been killed in the violence and 60,000 people have been displaced. • Other details of the violence include: Over 1,000 injuries, 32 people reported missing, 4,786 houses burned, and 386 religious structures vandalized. 

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass burial of 87 tribals in the hill district of Churachandpur, Manipur.
<p>Violence against women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidents of sexual violence have garnered both national and international attention, bringing to light the harrowing reality faced by women in Manipur. • Meitei mobs have repeatedly targeted women as a means of control of the rival faction, including burning homes and subjecting them to assaults, and even forcing women to strip under threats of violence or shooting them in the face, causing disfigurement. • In a shocking charge, the CBI has alleged that personnel from the Manipur Police allegedly drove the two women to a mob of around 1,000 people, which stripped and paraded them before they were gang-raped, in an incident that shook the nation. • The 26-second clip showed two Kuki tribal women paraded naked by a mob of men who were groping their genitals and assaulting them. 

<p>Economic Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence and instability have markedly impeded infrastructure projects. • Exports of handwoven textiles, medicines and food items have fallen by nearly 80 per cent. • Economic stagnation fuels a cycle of poverty and further unrest, as disenfranchised youth are often recruited by insurgent groups. • Ex: Helena Kshetri has seen her fruit sales wiped out since an ethnic conflict engulfed the northeast Indian state of Manipur in early May. • Her sales have crashed from 30,000-40,000 rupees (\$360-\$480) per day to barely 4,000 rupees (\$48).
<p>Social Fabric</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The constant conflicts have strained inter-community relations, leading to societal fragmentation and mistrust. • The displacement of communities due to violence further destabilizes the region. • It creates humanitarian crises and exacerbates social tensions.
<p>Growth of militancy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolonged unrest could provide fertile ground for militant groups to expand their influence and recruit more people, leading to a rise in extremist activities and further destabilizing the region.

Tension with neighboring countries


- The **unrest in Manipur** could have implications on **India's relations** with neighboring countries like **Myanmar, Bangladesh, and China.**



Challenges to India's Act East Policy


- The **unrest in Manipur** could impact **India's Act East Policy**, which aims to boost economic and strategic ties with **Southeast Asia.**





<p>Internal displacement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per the report published by the Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) Manipur violence accounted for 97% of displacements in South Asia in 2023. • It is the highest number of displacements triggered by conflict and violence in India since 2018. 
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19. What steps should be taken to normalize the situation in Manipur?

Steps	Analysis
<p>Rehabilitation of victim</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to identify the victims and rehabilitate them and those in rehabilitation camps, with the help of the Govt and the civil society. • The government should foster the participation of the civil society of the region in the decision-making process to instill a sense of ownership and belonging.

<p>Disarming of the Civil Society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A huge quantity of weapons and ammunition are still being held by the warring communities in the conflict-driven state of Manipur. • The entire civil society needs to be disarmed on priority. 
<p>Prevent Fake News</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourage International / national media from bias reporting by exposing fake news being pedaled.
<p>Inclusive dialogue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage all stakeholders, including various ethnic groups, in a dialogue to understand their grievances and find common ground. • The Mizoram Accord of 1986 between the Government of India and the Mizo National Front (MNF) serves as an example of successful engagement with all stakeholders.
<p>Transparency and Fairness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to remove the trust deficit, the government should ensure that the legal system is fair and transparent to prevent the misuse of power by security forces.

<p>Evaluation of Criteria for declaring a community as SC/ST.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is need to evaluate the criteria for ST status for all, as per present status, in line with recommendations given by Committees like: • The Lokur Committee (1965) which recommended 5 criteria for identification, namely, primitive traits, distinct culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the community at large, and backwardness.
<p>Surveillance of the International Border</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government should increase surveillance along the Myanmar Border to keep check on infiltration. 
<p>One District One Force (ODOF)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ODOF will result in better coordination and operations to restore normalcy. • Under ODOF arrangement, personnel of one security force will be responsible to maintain law and order in one district. • This will increase accountability and reduce the possibility of conflict amongst the security forces.

<p>Repeal of AFSPA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The repeal of AFSPA, Armed Forces Special Powers Act 1958, is necessary to improve the human rights situation in the region. • The government should ensure that the legal system is fair and transparent to prevent the misuse of power by security forces. 
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20. What is the relevance of the topic for UPSC CSE?

- **For Prelims:** Meitei Tribe, Kuki Tribe, Naga Tribe, 6th schedule, Inner Line Permit (ILP), Lokur Committee 1965, Bhuria Commission, Xaxa Committee, Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA).
- **For Mains:** Issues related to North-East region, Ethnic conflicts, Demand for 6th Schedule and issues related to ILPs, Issues related to Reservation.

Some previous years prelims questions.

Q1. Consider the following pairs: (2018)

- | <i>Tradition</i> | <i>: State</i> |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Chapchar Kut festival | : Mizoram |
| 2. Khongjom Parba ballad | : Manipur |
| 3. Thang-Ta dance | : Sikkim |

Which of the pairs given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Ans: (b)

Some previous years mains questions.

Q1. If a particular area is brought under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India, which one of the following statements best reflects the consequence of it? (2022)

Some questions from this year and previous years interview transcripts.

Board Lt gen Raj shukla sir:

- What are the causes of the Manipur crisis?
- As in charge of Law and order issues, how would you tackle the Manipur issue?
- Should we have a CM from a different community (3rd community) in charge of the peace process in Manipur to solve the issue?
- Board Suman Sharma mam:
- What's happening in Manipur, other factors apart from HC directive?
- Can Meitei buy land in hilly areas?

Board Suman Sharma mam:

- What's the root cause of Manipur conflict
- Why do you think ethnic conflicts occur?
- Is relative deprivation an issue of actual development or perception management?
- How would you ensure resolution - in the long term?

Board Dinesh Dasa sir:

- Are you aware of the latest agreement in Manipur between various stakeholders?
- There are a lot of cases of insurgency in the North East.
- Government has banned many organisations. What is the use of banning these organizations?
- What are the actions taken by State and Police in Tripura to improve the security situation

Board BB Swain sir:

- What was the reason for the Manipur crisis and as an outsider what more should be done to resolve it?
- What is the current status of HC order on Meiteis?
- Why is there still violence after the stay order?
- What is the ratio of the Meitei population and legislators?

Some questions for QUIZ.

Q1. Consider the following States:

1. Assam
2. Manipur
3. Meghalaya
4. Tripura
5. Mizoram

How many of the above states are part of the Sixth schedule?

- (a) Only two
- (b) Only three
- (c) Only four
- (d) All five

Ans: (c)

Some questions for POLL.

Q1. Do you think that the current government is unable to curb Manipur violence?

- (a) YES
- (b) NO
- (c) Can't say.

Q2. Do you think AFSPA should be revoked?

- (a) YES
- (b) NO
- (c) Can't say.

