10 August 2021

BORDER DISPUTES IN THE NORTHEAST:
THE RAGING WAR WITHIN

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BORDER DISPUTES IN THE NORTHEAST:
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1. Executive summary and recommendations

The violent armed clashes between the Assam Police and the Mizoram Police on 26 July 2021 led to the death of seven persons including six policemen from Assam and injuries to 60 others. The death of at least 157 persons and injuries to at least another 361 persons and displacement of more than 65,729 persons from 1979 to 2021 (26 July) in the clashes over border disputes between Assam on one hand and the states curved out of Assam i.e. Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland on the other warrant permanent peace building measures.

i. The border disputes and failed attempts for solutions

The border disputes primarily relate to Assam and the States which were born out of Assam i.e. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya over claims on territories as per boundaries drawn by the colonial British. The dispute between Assam and Mizoram relates to the claim of Mizoram that its border in the northern side is based on the boundary set for application of the Inner Line of 1875 under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873 and not as per the boundary redrawn as per 1933 notification. Similarly, the boundary dispute between Assam and Meghalaya relates to the boundaries of the erstwhile United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district notified in 1835. The boundary dispute between Assam and Nagaland relates to the rejection of the Nagaland State Act of 1962, which had defined the state’s borders as per the 1925 notification under which Naga Hills and Tuensang Area, by Nagaland that demands the inclusion of all the Naga-dominated areas in Assam into its territory. The boundary dispute between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh relates to the transfer of about 30,000 sq km of land from then North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), the current Arunachal Pradesh, to Assam.

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2. Arunachal Pradesh, former North East Frontier Agency was not a part of Assam. It was a centrally administered territory usually looked after the Governor of Assam and it was initially under the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India
5. Ibid
based on the recommendations of the Bordoloi Committee report of 1951.\textsuperscript{6} The States usually approach the Supreme Court to resolve disputes. The demarcation of boundaries is an executive task and the Supreme Court usually recommended the formation of the boundary commissions. However, if any of the States does not accept the recommendations of the boundary commissions including those appointed by the Supreme Court, little progress can be made.

In the past, the recommendations of the boundary commissions have been consistently rejected. On the Assam-Meghalaya border dispute, Meghalaya had rejected the recommendations of Justice YV Chadrachud Committee which had awarded Langpih to Assam while Assam had accepted the recommendations.\textsuperscript{7} But, Assam itself had rejected the recommendations of the three-member boundary commission appointed by the Supreme Court on the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border dispute which in its 2014 report recommended the transfer of around 70-80 per cent of the disputed land to Arunachal Pradesh.\textsuperscript{8} The Centre had also constituted two boundary commissions i.e. the Sundaram Commission (1971) and the Shastri Commission (1985) to settle the Assam-Nagaland border disputes but both the States rejected the recommendations of these committees.\textsuperscript{9}

\textbf{ii. The human toll of Indian citizens}

The failure to maintain the ‘status quo’ led to loss of lives, mass displacement and other human rights violations.

Apart from regular destruction of the standing crops by the police, from 1979 to 2021 (26 July), at least 157 persons were reportedly killed, at least 361 persons were injured and more than 65,729 persons were displaced in the border clashes between Assam in one hand and Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya,
Mizoram and Nagaland on the other based on the major incidents reported.

Out of the 157 reported deaths, the maximum number of deaths took place in Assam-Nagaland border dispute with 136 deaths followed by Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border dispute with 10 deaths, Assam-Mizoram border dispute with 7 deaths and Assam-Meghalaya border dispute with 4 deaths.

Out of the 361 persons injured, the maximum number of people were injured in Assam-Nagaland border dispute with 184 persons, followed by Assam-Mizoram border dispute with injuries to 143 persons, Assam-Meghalaya border dispute with injuries to 18 persons and Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border dispute with injuries to 16 persons. The border dispute between Assam and Mizoram mainly intensified in 2018 and the injuries to 143 persons indicate the intensity of the clashes.

iii. Renewed peace initiatives or one upmanship?

Following the violent clashes between Assam and Mizoram Police on 26 July 2021, the Assam and Nagaland governments on 31 July 2021 agreed to withdraw their armed police forces from the disputed areas in the Dessoi Valley reserve forest area within 24 hours. This was followed by the Nagaland House adopting a resolution on 5 August 2021 for resolving the border dispute with Assam out of court and amicably with the involvement of the local people of both the States.

On 6 August 2021, Assam and Meghalaya governments also decided to start settling the “less complicated” areas of dispute first along the 884.9 km border and formed three regional committees consisting of five member each headed by Cabinet Minister to first get the views of the people living in the disputed areas and prepare a recommendation within 30 days for a decision at the level of the Chief Ministers.

With the aim to bring down the temper following the clashes on 26 July 2021, Assam and Mizoram signed an agreement on 5 August 2021 to withdraw forces from all disputed border areas and work towards lasting peace.

10. Assam, Nagaland agree to withdraw forces from two disputed locations in Dessoi Valley, Scroll.in, 31 July 2021, https://scroll.in/latest/1001655/assam-


13. Assam, Mizoram to withdraw forces; travel advisory dropped, The Hindustan Times, 6 August 2021,
On 15 July 2021, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu stated Assam and Arunachal Pradesh have agreed to find an out-of-court solution to their inter-state boundary dispute.\(^{14}\)

It remains to be seen whether Assam’s initiatives are part of the attempts to find genuine solution with its neighbours or one-upmanship to counter allegations of expansionism by leaders from Mizoram.\(^{15}\)

**iv. Recommendations**

The reference to the will of the ‘local people’ and public announcement of the political leaders to not give “an inch” from the territory of the State have been the common refrain. The Union of India too preferred to remain as a mute witness.

The issue has never been the absence of technology and expertise to draw the boundaries of the States but the absence of political will. Satellite mapping to demarcate boundaries and settle such disputes as being suggested by the Ministry of Home Affairs\(^{16}\) cannot manufacture the political will over claims on territories based on borders drawn by the colonial British as early as 1835 i.e. about 186 years ago.

As the attempts to finding solutions to the border disputes continue, considering the toll on the citizens of the country living in these disputed areas and peace hanging by a thread, there is an urgent need to take a number of measures to prevent conflicts and further loss of lives.

The Rights and Risks Analysis Group (RRAG) recommends the following for maintaining status quo till final resolution of the boundary disputes:

- Identify the line of *de facto* control of the areas and deploy police from both the States who will operate under coordination of the Central Reserve Police Force with respect to any dispute including maintenance of law and order;

- Jointly ensure maintenance and enforcement of law and order along the line of *de facto* control;

- Conduct biometric documentation of the residents living within the disputed areas on both sides of the States and

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\(^{16}\) Centre to use satellite mapping to resolve NE border disputes, The Hindu, 01 August 2021, [https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/centre-to-use-satellite-mapping-to-resolve-ne-border-disputes/article35663862.ece](https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/centre-to-use-satellite-mapping-to-resolve-ne-border-disputes/article35663862.ece)
issue IDs and declare their names through gazette notification to prohibit settlement in new areas unless agreed by both parties;

- Prohibit new settlement or establishment of structures by any individual and entity including the State entities in the disputed areas; and

- Ensure mutual consent from both the States for any activity including entry of the police along the line of de facto control.
The North East consists of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura though Sikkim has been added as part of the North Eastern Council because of its cultural similarities even though it does not share direct border with any of the North Eastern States.

The border disputes are mainly between Assam and the States which were curved out of Assam i.e. Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland with the claims over boundaries drawn by the colonial British.

The clashes over border disputes have taken a heavy toll as provided in the Table below prepared based on the major incidents reported and excluding the sporadic incidents.

Table: Major incidents of killings, injuries and displacement during border clashes in Northeast India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Date of Incident</th>
<th>No. of Persons Killed</th>
<th>No. of Persons Injured</th>
<th>No. of Persons Displaced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assam-Mizoram</td>
<td>08.03.2018(^{17})</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.08.2020(^{18})</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Border Disputes in the Northeast: The Raging War Within

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number Injured</th>
<th>Number Dead</th>
<th>Number of Casualties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17.10.2020</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.02.2021</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.07.2021</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>143</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number Injured</th>
<th>Number Dead</th>
<th>Number of Casualties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assam-Nagaland</td>
<td>05.01.1979</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>23,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June 1985</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>32,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>07.04.1989</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 2007</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August 2014</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May 2017</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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23. Ibid
24. Ibid
26. Examining the Assam–Nagaland Border Crisis, Namrata Goswami, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 21 August 2014, [https://idsa.in/idsacomments/examiningtheassamnagalandborder_ngoswami_210814](https://idsa.in/idsacomments/examiningtheassamnagalandborder_ngoswami_210814)
### BORDER DISPUTES IN THE NORTHEAST:
#### THE RAGING WAR WITHIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Border Dispute</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sub-total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assam-Meghalaya</td>
<td>14.05.2010</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam-Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.01.2014</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>157</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


8
Apart from regular destruction of the standing crops by the police, from 1979 to 2021 (26 July), at least 157 persons were reportedly killed while at least 361 persons were injured and more than 65,729 persons were displaced in the border clashes between Assam in one hand and Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland on the other.

Out of the 157 reported deaths, the maximum number of deaths took place in Assam-Nagaland border dispute with 136 deaths followed by Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border dispute with 10 deaths, Assam-Mizoram border dispute with 7 deaths and Assam-Meghalaya border dispute with 4 deaths.

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2.1 Boundary dispute between Assam and Mizoram

Mizoram was originally a part of undivided Assam and was known as the Lushai Hills district. It became a Union Territory (UT) in 1972 and got Statehood in 1987 following the signing of the Mizoram Peace Accord. However, the boundary dispute between Assam and Mizoram remain unresolved.

The boundaries of the Lushai Hills were demarcated on the basis of the 1875 notification under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873. The boundaries were further re-drawn by a notification in 1933. While Mizoram accepts the 1875 demarcation claiming that its leaders were consulted, it does not accept the 1933 notification on the basis of which it became a UT and State on the ground that its leaders were not consulted. Assam on the other hand accepts resolution based on the 1933 notification.

The issue remained unresolved and both states continue to have a differing perception of the border, leading to clashes over the years.

The initial border clashes over control of land between the two States took place in 1994. Thereafter, major clashes took place in 2006, 2018, 2020 and the latest one on 26 July 2021, which escalated to unprecedented level.

Several dialogues were held since 1995 to resolve the dispute but without any success.

i. Location of the dispute and claims

Assam and Mizoram inter-state boundary is 164.6 km. Three districts of Mizoram - Kolasib, Aizawl and Mamit share the border with Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts of Assam. Both States accuse each other of encroachment along the bordering districts. However, most of the dispute and clashes have been reported along the border between Lailapur village in Cachar district, Assam and Vairengte in Kolasib district, Mizoram.

Mizoram claims 509 sq mile or about 1,318 sq km area of the inner-line reserve forest notified based on the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873. However, Assam is not willing to give up any of its territory. In fact on 12 July 2021, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma informed the State Assembly that Mizoram has encroached upon 1,777 hectares of land in Assam spread across three bordering districts of Hailakandi, Cachar and Karimganj. These included about 1,000 hectares of land in Hailakandi district, 400 hectares of land in Cachar district and 377.58 hectares of land in Karimganj district.

ii. Chronology leading upto 26 July violence

The 26 July violent clashes did not take place out of sudden. The crisis has been building up since 2020 as the incidents described below show:

9 August 2020:

On 9 August 2020, a border dispute had flared up between the two neighbouring states when Karimganj district administration, Assam allegedly set fire to a farm hut and damaged plantation on disputed land near Thinghlun village in Mamit district of Mizoram.

17 August 2020:

On 17 August 2020, at least seven persons from Mizoram side were injured when villagers of Lailapur in Cachar district of Assam clashed with residents of Vairengte in Kolasib district, Mizoram. The clashes reportedly started after some people from the Mizoram


side torched some huts made by Lailapur residents on a disputed area.\(^{37}\)

17 October 2020:

On 17 October 2020, at least 50 persons were injured and several shops and houses were burnt down on either side of the Mizoram-Assam border. The clashes took place after Mizoram government set up a COVID-19 testing centre at Lailapur in Cachar district allegedly without permission of the Assam government. Following objection, some youths allegedly from Mizoram came to Lailapur on 17 October 2020 and attacked the truck drivers, villagers and burnt more than 15 small shops-cum-houses. On the other hand, villagers of Mamit district, Mizoram which is contiguous to Cachar district alleged that miscreants from Cachar came to their villages and attacked shops and houses, causing huge damage.\(^{38}\)

24 October 2020:

On 24 October 2020, a school building was destroyed following a blast triggered by miscreants at Khulicherra area in Cachar district near the inter-state border.\(^{39}\)

27 October 2020:

On 27 October 2020, Mizoram security personnel had allegedly prevented the Assam Forest Department officials, led by Divisional Forest Officer, Cachar district from visiting some forest areas at Haowaifung along the border, saying it falls in their territory.\(^{40}\)

28 October 2020:

On 28 October 2020, several agitators blocked the National Highway 306, the life-line of Mizoram which connects Vairengte in Kolasib district. The protestors demanded that Mizoram withdraw its security personnel from territory of Assam in Cachar and Karimganj districts. According to Assam police, more than 100 people had blocked the highway at Lailapur, leaving more than 100 goods-laden vehicles stranded on the either side of the inter-state border.\(^{41}\)

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\(^{41}\) Ibid
2 November 2020:

On 2 November 2020, Intyaz Ali (48), a resident of Lailapur in Cachar district, Assam, died in a hospital at Vairengte in Kolasib district, Mizoram after he was allegedly arrested for drug peddling. The death triggered border tension between the two states.42

7 November 2020:

On 7 November 2020, a bomb blast took place at a primary school in a remote forest area of Sadirkhal in Dholai area in Cachar district, Assam near the interstate border. The school was destroyed in the explosion that was carried out by unknown miscreants.43

3 February 2021:

On 3 February 2021, a school building was damaged in a powerful bomb explosion at Kachurthal area in Hailakandi district of Assam near Mizoram-Assam border.44

9 February 2021:

On 9 February 2021, at least six persons were injured when a fresh border dispute took place on the disputed land along the Mizoram-Assam border at Zophai area near Bairabi town in Kolasib district of Mizoram. Several houses were also torched by miscreants in the area.45 The area is also called Kachurthal by Assam and falls within Hailakandi district. The incident took place when Assam allegedly constructed a link road into the disputed land. Mizoram police claimed that two staff of State’s Power and Electricity department and a member of Bairabi Village Council, who had gone to conduct a survey for power extension, were beaten up by residents of Assam when they took pictures, which resulted in bitter clash between residents of the two States.46 Following the incident, Section 144 was imposed along the Assam-Mizoram border in Hailakandi district.47

44. Blast Damages Assam School Near Mizoram Border: Police, NDTV, 4 February 2021
47. Assam: Section 144 imposed in Hailakandi after 20 houses burnt near Mizoram border, East Mojo, 10 February 2021, https://www.eastmojo.com/news/2021/02/10/
2 June 2021:

On 2 June 2021, standing crops of four farmers were allegedly damaged when Assam police attempted to build camp posts at Ailawng in Kolasib district, Mizoram.48

4 June 2021:

On 4 June 2021 night, two houses in Gutgutia-Gallacher area were burnt down by unknown miscreants near Assam-Mizoram border. Both the states claimed that the incident took place inside their territory. Vanlalfaka Ralte, the Superintendent of Police (SP) of Kolasib district, Mizoram claimed that the abandoned houses were located in Zophai area near Bairabi town in the district. While Ramandeep Kaur, SP of Hailakandi district, Assam claimed that miscreants from Mizoram burned down the two houses and they also erected a structure 300 metres inside Assam’s territory near Gutguti area in the district.49

30 June 2021:

On 30 June 2021, Mizoram accused Assam of encroaching upon its land in the Kolasib district which borders Assam. While Assam accused Mizoram of building structures and planting betel nut and banana saplings allegedly 10 km inside Hailakandi in Assam. Vanlalfaka Ralte, Superintendent of Police (SP) of Kolasib district claimed that over a hundred officials and policemen led by Deputy Commissioner and SP of Hailakandi district, Assam entered Mizoram’s territory and were camping there.50

10 July 2021:

On 10 July 2021, standing crops and betel nut trees belonging to a Mizoram farmer were reportedly damaged during the eviction drive as claimed by Assam Police and officials at Buarchep near Phainuam village, Mizoram. On the same day, a grenade was allegedly hurled on an Assam government team visiting the border by unknown people.51

25 July 2021:

On 25 July 2021 at about 11.30 pm, eight farmers’ huts were reportedly set ablaze by unidentified miscreants near Aitlang stream at Vairenge, the nearest border village, according to Mizoram Deputy


51. Ibid
Inspector-General of Police (Northern Range), Lalbiakthanga Khiangte. The area, locally known as ‘Aitlang hnar’ or the source of river Aitlang, is considered as a part of Mizoram and is about 5 km from Vairengte village in Kolasib district which borders Assam.52

On 26 July 2021, the dispute further escalated to unprecedented levels, as firing on the inter-state boundary left at least seven persons including five Assam police personnel dead and over 60 persons injured along the border between Lailapur village, Cachar district and Vairengte in Kolasib district. The Assam government claimed that Mizoram had begun constructing a road from Vairengte towards Rengti Basti in Assam, destroying the Inner Line Reserve Forest in Lailapur area. A team of Assam officers had gone there to defuse the situation and resolve the matter. While Mizoram claimed that the Assam police entered Mizoram’s territory and committed arson.53

2.2 Boundary dispute between Assam and Meghalaya

Assam and Meghalaya share an 884.9 km long border. The Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act of 1969 is the source of the border dispute between Meghalaya and Assam. Meghalaya opposed this Act, which gave Blocks I and II of the Mikir Hills (present day Karbi Anglong district) to Assam.

Meghalaya claims that Blocks I and II of then the Mikir Hills formed part of the erstwhile United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district when it was notified in 1835. Meghalaya’s claims are based on survey maps of 1872 and 1929 and certain notifications of 1878 and 1951.

The State government of Meghalaya claims 12 disputed areas along Meghalaya-Assam border covering an area of 2,765.14 sq. km.54 These 12 disputed places along the inter-state border are 1) Upper Tarabari, 2) Gazang reserve Forest, 3) Hahim, 4) Langpih, 5) Borduar, 6) Boklapara, 7) Nongwah, 8) Matamur, 9) Khanapara-Pilangkata, 10) Deshdemoreah Block I and Block II, 11) Khanduli and 12) Retacherra.55

The Assam government says those places belong to Assam.56 In 1985, a

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52. Ibid
56. Assam, Meghalaya CMs hold discussions over border dispute, India Today, 24 July 2021, https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/assam-
Committee headed by YV Chandrachud, retired chief justice of India had awarded Langpih to Assam based on the maps presented by the State. Meghalaya had rejected the recommendations of the Chandrachud Committee based on maps provided by the then United Khasi and Jaintia Hills District Council and the traditional chieftains (syiem) of the area.

In 2020, the Meghalaya government informed the State Assembly that 56 incidents of border dispute with Assam had taken place since 2017.

In a major border clash, four persons from Meghalaya were killed and at least 18 others were injured when Assam police opened fire after clashes broke out in Langpih village bordering the Kamrup district of Assam and the West Garo Hills district of Meghalaya in May 2010.

On 24 April 2021, a 17 member team comprising Assam Police and Forest Department officials allegedly entered Umbah village near Kyrsai in West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya and destroyed four houses of villagers residing along Meghalaya-Assam border and also damaged vegetables fields. The houses belonged to Drooling Rani, Jenes Dia, Rajesh Sangma and Kolphet Swangre. The incident resulted in tension in the border area.

The latest border tension resurfaced between the two states on 26 July 2021 after Meghalaya Energy Corporation attempted to erect poles in Pillingkata area at Khanapara, which Assam government claimed as part of its territory.

### 2.3 Boundary dispute between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh

Assam shares 804.10 km inter-state boundary with Arunachal Pradesh. The

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dispute over boundary between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh started when about 30,000 sq km of land was transferred from then North Eastern Frontier Agency, the current Arunachal Pradesh to Assam based on the Bordoloi Committee report in 1951.\textsuperscript{63}

The boundary disputes between Assam-Arunachal Pradesh reached the Supreme Court which in 2006 appointed a three-member boundary commission headed by retired High Court judge Tarun Chatterjee along with two other members i.e. M Kamal Naidu, a retired Indian Forest Service officer, and S K Goel, additional surveyor general of India to resolve the disputes. In 2014, the Supreme Court appointed commission in its report submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs recommended that around 70-80 per cent of the disputed land along the inter-state boundary should be given back to Arunachal Pradesh.\textsuperscript{64} Assam has rejected the report of the Supreme Court appointed commission.

The boundary dispute between the two states has led to violent clashes and protests in the two states.

In January 2014, 10 people were killed by miscreants inside the Behali reserve forest in Sonitpur district in Assam, bordering Arunachal Pradesh. The Assam government claimed that 15,069.65 hectares of land around Behali, covering as many as 30 reserve forests along the border, were encroached upon by Arunachal Pradesh.\textsuperscript{65}

On 30 July 2021, the forest department and police officials of Assam destroyed newly planted tea saplings of one Ngurang Soli during an eviction drive at Lora village under Kimin Circle in Papum Pare district, Arunachal Pradesh.\textsuperscript{66}

On 19 July 2021, armed personnel of the Assam police reportedly destroyed a paddy field in Longkhojan village under Kanubari circle in Longding district, Arunachal Pradesh. Assam officials claimed that the area belonged to Assam.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{63} ‘Disputed land should be returned to Arunachal, says panel report,’ The Indian Express, 1 February 2014, https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/disputed-land-should-be-returned-to-arunachal-says-panel-report/
\textsuperscript{64} ‘Disputed land should be returned to Arunachal, says panel report,’ The Indian Express, 1 February 2014, https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/disputed-land-should-be-returned-to-arunachal-says-panel-report/
\textsuperscript{67} Assam battalion destroys paddy field in Kanubari, Nyoooz.com, https://www.nyoooz.com/news/arunachal-
2.4 Boundary dispute between Assam and Nagaland

The border dispute between Nagaland and Assam is the longest, which began soon after Nagaland became a State in 1963. The Nagaland State Act of 1962 had defined the state’s borders as per the notification in 1925 when the Naga Hills and Tuensang Area (NHTA) were integrated into a new administrative unit. However, Nagaland does not accept the boundary delineation and has demanded that the new state should also include all Naga-dominated areas in Assam.

Assam and Nagaland share a 434 km-long border. The interstate border area has been divided, for administrative convenience, into six sectors – A, B, C, D, E and F – spread over Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat and Karbi Anglong districts. All of these are presently in Assam. The Nagas say they should be granted sectors A, B, C and D having a total area of 12,883 square kilometers. The Nagas claim that this region historically belongs to their tribes.

However, Assam claims that Nagaland has been encroaching in Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat and Karbi Anglong districts. The encroached area includes over 80 per cent of reserved forests. On the other hand, Nagaland insists that more tracts under Assam “occupation” belong to Nagaland.

Assam had filed a case in the Supreme Court to resolve the border dispute and for a permanent injunction restraining Nagaland from encroaching areas within the constitutional boundary of Assam. The Centre had constituted two boundary commissions - the Sundaram Commission (1971) and the Shastri Commission (1985), to settle the Assam-Nagaland border dispute. But these Commissions failed to resolve the dispute as both the states did not accept their recommendations.

Over the years, a series of violent incidents were reported over border dispute between the two States. The first border clashes between the two States took place in 1965, followed by major

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68. All you need to know about Assam's border disputes with NE states, The Tribune, 29 July 2021,

69. Assam, Nagaland agree to withdraw forces from two disputed locations in Dessoi Valley, Scroll.in, 31 July 2021,
https://scroll.in/latest/1001655/assam-

70. Explained: Assam vs Nagaland, a border dispute of five decades, The Indian Express, 22 August 2014,
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clashes in 1968, 1979, 1985, 2007 and 2014.\textsuperscript{72}

On 5 January 1979, 54 Assam villagers were killed, 39 persons were injured and over 23,500 persons fled to relief camps in a series of attacks by armed men from Nagaland in Chungajan, Uriamghat and Mikirbheta of Golaghat district.\textsuperscript{73}

In June 1985, at least 41 persons including 28 Assam police personnel were killed and 101 persons were injured at Merapani in Golaghat district on the Assam side. Further, 32,229 persons were displaced.\textsuperscript{74}

In August 2014, eleven persons were killed and at least 20 were injured in firing and arson by alleged miscreants from Nagaland in Uriamghat area of Golaghat district. About 10,000 people fled to relief camps after 200 houses were set ablaze by the miscreants.\textsuperscript{75}

The latest incident took place in May 2021 when Rupjyoti Kurmi, then a Congress MLA in Assam, his security officers and others came under gunfire in the Dessoi Valley area. Mr Kurmi had visited the area to check alleged encroachment when they were fired at from the Nagaland side. Mr Kurmi managed to escape but three media persons were injured in the incident.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{72} All you need to know about Assam’s border disputes with NE states, The Tribune, 29 July 2021, \url{https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/all-you-need-to-know-about-assams-border-disputes-with-ne-states-290060}

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