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## **Centre-Tripura Peace Accord**

### **About**

The Tripura Peace Accord was signed on September 4, 2024, marking the end of decades of insurgency in the state. The agreement was between the Government of India, the Tripura state government, and two major insurgent groups—the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF). The pact was facilitated by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha.

As part of the agreement, 328 militants from the insurgent groups laid down their arms. In exchange, the Indian government announced a ₹250 crore rehabilitation package aimed at reintegrating the militants into society. This accord is seen as a major step towards peace and development in Tripura, ending over 35 years of insurgency.

### **Insurgency in Tripura**

The insurgency in Tripura was a long-running conflict that spanned over 35 years, beginning in the late 1970s. It was primarily driven by the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), both insurgent groups seeking greater autonomy and rights for the indigenous Tripuri population. These groups advocated for the protection of Tripuri culture and identity, which they believed was being eroded by the influx of Bengali migrants after India's partition in 1947.

The insurgency was marked by violence, including guerrilla warfare, extortion, and attacks on civilians. Both groups demanded sovereignty for the indigenous people and aimed to establish an independent Tripura. The groups often operated from bases in Bangladesh, and the conflict resulted in significant loss of life, displacement, and economic instability in the region.

Government efforts to negotiate peace culminated in several accords over the years, but the final breakthrough came with the 2024 Tripura Peace Accord. This agreement saw both the NLFT and ATTF lay down their arms, with the government offering rehabilitation packages for the surrendered militants and promising development initiatives aimed at improving conditions for the indigenous population.

The insurgency officially ended with this accord, paving the way for greater political stability and economic progress in Tripura.

## Significance

The significance of the Tripura insurgency and its resolution through the 2024 peace accord lies in several key aspects:

- 1. End of Decades-Long Conflict:** The insurgency had destabilized Tripura for over 35 years, causing loss of life, displacing populations, and hindering development. By bringing two major insurgent groups, NLFT and ATTF, into the mainstream, the accord marks a definitive end to the violent conflict that plagued the region.
- 2. Regional Stability:** The resolution of the insurgency enhances peace and stability in the broader northeastern region of India. The region has long faced ethnic and political unrest, and this accord adds to a series of peace initiatives that have successfully calmed tensions across Northeast India. It strengthens India's national security efforts by reducing insurgent activities.
- 3. Focus on Development:** The peace agreement includes a ₹250 crore rehabilitation package for the insurgents and their families. This initiative is aimed at reintegrating former militants into society, thus promoting long-term economic development and reducing the possibility of future insurgency.
- 4. Political Inclusivity:** The accord represents a victory for political dialogue and inclusivity. By addressing the grievances of indigenous Tripuri communities and ensuring their participation in development projects, the government aims to foster greater unity and trust within the state's diverse population.
- 5. Impact on Indigenous Rights:** The conflict was deeply rooted in ethnic tensions and fears of cultural erasure among the indigenous Tripuri people due to large-scale migration. The peace accord, by including indigenous rights and development concerns, acknowledges and addresses the unique identity and needs of these communities.

In essence, the 2024 Tripura Peace Accord is a transformative event that concludes a dark chapter in the state's history, ensuring a focus on peace, development, and cultural preservation.

## **Implications**

The implications of the Tripura Peace Accord are far-reaching, affecting political, social, and economic spheres in both Tripura and the wider Northeastern region of India:

### **1. Strengthening Peace in Northeast India**

The 2024 peace accord is part of a broader strategy by the Indian government to stabilize the Northeast, a region historically plagued by insurgencies. By bringing the NLFT and ATTF to the negotiating table, it showcases the success of India's ongoing peace process, which has resolved several insurgencies in the region in the last decade. The settlement creates a precedent for other insurgent groups in the Northeast to seek peaceful resolutions to conflicts.

### **2. Boost to Development**

The peace accord paves the way for enhanced socio-economic development in Tripura. With insurgency no longer a deterrent, the state can attract greater investment and implement long-delayed infrastructure and development projects. The ₹250 crore rehabilitation package will help reintegrate former militants, but the long-term impact includes the creation of jobs, better governance, and improved livelihoods, particularly for the indigenous communities.

### **3. Cultural and Political Representation**

The accord implies a stronger recognition of the rights and identity of indigenous Tripuri people. By addressing ethnic grievances through political dialogue, the government aims to ensure that Tripura's tribal populations have a stake in governance and development. This could lead to greater political stability and representation for marginalized groups.

### **4. National Security**

The cessation of insurgency in Tripura contributes to improving national security, especially along India's border with Bangladesh, where militants often operated from across the border. The peace accord may also reduce cross-border smuggling and illegal arms trading, fostering better bilateral ties with Bangladesh on security issues.

### **5. Potential Influence on Other Insurgent Groups**

The success of this agreement could encourage remaining insurgent groups in Northeast India to pursue peace talks. As other groups observe the benefits of rehabilitation, political inclusion, and economic support, it could lead to similar accords across the region.

These implications signal a future where Tripura, and possibly other parts of the Northeast, can break free from insurgency-driven instability and focus on peace, growth, and inclusivity.

## **Way Ahead**

The way ahead following the Tripura Peace Accord involves several critical steps to ensure long-lasting peace, development, and inclusion for all stakeholders. These steps include:

### **1. Effective Rehabilitation of Former Insurgents**

The government must ensure that the ₹250 crore rehabilitation package is effectively implemented, providing former militants with access to education, job training, and employment opportunities. Proper reintegration into society is essential to prevent a relapse into insurgency or criminal activities. Additionally, continuous monitoring and support for these individuals will be needed to ensure their successful transition.

### **2. Development and Infrastructure Growth**

With insurgency no longer hindering progress, the focus should shift to infrastructure development in rural and tribal areas of Tripura. This includes improving transportation, healthcare, education, and communication networks. By creating jobs and improving the standard of living, the state can foster economic growth and reduce poverty, which has often fuelled discontent.

### **3. Political Representation and Inclusion**

The indigenous communities of Tripura, whose rights were central to the insurgency, must be given adequate political representation and a voice in decision-making processes. The government should work closely with tribal leaders to ensure that policies are inclusive and address the concerns of indigenous groups. This will foster trust and ensure the stability of the peace accord.

### **4. Security and Border Management**

Although the insurgency has officially ended, security measures along the Bangladesh border should remain strong. The government should continue to cooperate with Bangladesh to prevent any resurgence of militancy or cross-border activities like smuggling. This will also bolster bilateral ties and contribute to regional security.

### **5. Continued Peace Talks in the Northeast**

The success of the Tripura Peace Accord can serve as a model for resolving other insurgencies in the Northeast. The government should continue engaging with remaining insurgent groups in the region through dialogue, focusing on development and political solutions. By addressing the root causes of insurgency, such as ethnic identity and economic marginalization, the government can ensure a peaceful future for the entire Northeast.

### **6. Long-Term Governance Reforms**

The accord offers an opportunity to strengthen governance in Tripura by ensuring that both tribal and non-tribal populations benefit from development programs. Reforms in local governance, land rights, and resource management are crucial for creating an equitable society. This will prevent future ethnic tensions and promote sustainable development.

By focusing on these areas, Tripura can move toward a peaceful and prosperous future, building on the foundation laid by the 2024 peace accord.