

Tripartite talks over district creation issue held, next round of talks on November 10



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The crucial tripartite talks on the district creation issue on Friday ended with a plan for further discussion, but no concrete course of action.

The talks between the Centre, [Manipur](#) government and United Naga Council (UNC) held at Senapati headquarters, Senapati district closed by reaching an agreement to hold the next round of tripartite dialogue on November 10 next.

The meeting aimed at ending the months-old stalemate [over](#) the creation of seven new districts by the previous [Congress](#) government also agreed to put the matter with the Centre concerning setting up of a Boundary Commission by the [Manipur](#) government for the newly created districts.

UNC [leaders](#) raised an eyebrow during the meeting questioning the move of the government to set up the Commission. At this, the [Manipur](#) government side told the UNC representatives that it would put the matter before the Centre for further discussion.

The meeting also agreed to adhere to the proceedings of the rounds of talks held earlier and bring them in line with the agreement.

The talks held on March 19, 2017 [over](#) the district creation issue agreed to redress the grievances of UNC in respect of the creation of new districts, and that the Government of [Manipur](#) will initiate appropriate steps in right earnest in this regard.

Both [state](#) government and UNC agreed upon to mutually respect the agreements signed in the previous talks to avoid any provocative actions till the dialogue process is taken to its logical end.

Last time, the tripartite meeting on the pressing demand of rollback of creation of districts by the UNC was held on August 11, 2017 at Senapati district headquarters after the dialogue was upgraded to political [level](#) by the Ministry of [Home](#) Affairs (MHA) with the hope to find a solution where all sides can win.

UNC president Gaidon Kamei who led the council's team in Friday's meeting was optimistic of positive result, saying, "The nature of this issue is very serious and complicated. We've put up our position. The government is trying to solve the issue."

UNC has strongly protested creation of districts, especially Kangpokpi district, after allegedly bifurcating “Naga ancestral land” by the previous [state](#) government headed by Okram [Ibobi](#) Singh.

The Naga body has the contention that the then [Manipur](#) government had failed to take stakeholders into confidence while creating the new districts.

In the talks, Joint Secretary ([North East](#)), Ministry of [Home](#) Affairs Satyendra Garg represented the Government of [India](#).

Additional Chief Secretary Dr J Suresh Babu, Commissioner (Works) K Radhakumar, Agriculture Minister V Hangkhalien, [Tribal](#) & Hills Area [Development](#) and Fisheries Minister N Kayishii and [Education](#) Minister Thokchom Radheshyam represented the [Manipur](#) government in the meeting.

From the UNC side, president Gaidon Kamei, general secretary S Milan, All Naga Students’ Association [Manipur](#) (ANSAM) president Seth Shetshang and Naga Women’s Union president Asha Wungnam attended the meeting.

But [Manipur](#) Chief Minister N Biren Singh recently said in the [state](#) assembly, “The [Manipur](#) government is not considering any reversal of the decision on the creation of districts.”

On December 9, 2016, the previous Okram [Ibobi](#) Singh headed [Congress](#) government issued a gazette notification creating seven new districts by bifurcating seven of the [state](#)'s existing nine districts, taking the number of districts in the [state](#) to 16.

Okram [Ibobi](#) Singh had stated that the creation of new districts was officially for reasons of administrative efficiency.

The 139-day long blockade call enforced by UNC to protest the district creation was lifted in March after negotiations initiated by the BJP government after it took office in [Manipur](#). The Naga body had hoped that the creation of the districts will be rolled back through talks.

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