

Naga peace accord signed



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[National](#) Socialist Council of [Nagaland](#) (IM) and Government of India signed a peace accord on Monday at [New Delhi](#).

Text of PM's remarks after witnessing the signing of the historic agreement between Government of India and NSCN

Shri Rajnath Singhji, [Home](#) Minister

Shri Muivah and all senior [leaders](#) of the [National](#) Socialist Council of [Nagaland](#).

My warm greetings to all those present here today on this historic occasion!

I wish that Shri Isak Swu, who played a leading role in reaching this agreement, was present today. He could not be here because of poor health. I wish him speedy recovery. Just [as](#) his contribution to this agreement has been huge, his guidance will remain crucial in the times ahead.

The Naga political issue had lingered for six decades, taking a huge toll on generations of our people.

*I sincerely
thank Shri Isak
Swu, Shri
Muivah and
other Naga
[leaders](#) for
their wisdom
and courage,
for their efforts
and
cooperation,
which has
resulted in this
historic
agreement.*



*I have the
deepest
admiration for the great Naga people for their extraordinary support
to the peace efforts. I compliment the [National](#) Socialist Council of
[Nagaland](#) for maintaining the ceasefire agreement for nearly two
decades, with a sense of honour that defines the great Naga people.*

*My relationship with the North East has been deep. I have travelled to
[Nagaland](#) on many occasions. I have been deeply impressed by the
rich and diverse culture and the unique way of life of the Naga
people. It makes not only our nation, but also the world a more
beautiful place.*

*The Naga courage and commitment are legendary. Equally, they
represent the highest levels of humanism. Their system of village
administration and grass-root democracy should be an inspiration for
the rest of the country.*

*The respect for the infirm and elders, the status of women in society,
sensitivity to Mother [Nature](#), and the emphasis on social equality is a
natural way of Naga life. These are values that should constitute the
foundation of the society that we all seek.*

Unfortunately, the Naga problem has taken so long to resolve because we did not understand each other. It is a legacy of the British Rule. The colonial rulers had, by design, kept the Nagas isolated and insulated. They propagated terrible myths about Nagas in the rest of the country. They deliberately suppressed the reality that the Nagas were an extremely evolved society. They also spread negative ideas about the rest of India amongst Naga people. This was part of the well known policy of divide and rule of the colonial rulers.

It is one of the tragedies of Independent India that we have lived with this legacy. There were not many like Mahatma [Gandhi](#), who loved the Naga people and was sensitive to their sentiments. We have continued to look at each other through the prism of false perceptions and old prejudices.

The result was that connectivity between [Nagaland](#) and the rest of India remained weak across this divide. Economic development and progress in [Nagaland](#) remained modest; and, durable peace was elusive.

Since becoming Prime Minister last year, peace, security and economic transformation of North East has been amongst my highest priorities. It is also at the heart of my foreign policy, especially the '[Act East](#)' Policy.

I have been deeply concerned about resolving the Naga issue. Soon after entering office, I appointed an interlocutor for talks with the Naga [leaders](#), who not only understood the Naga people [as](#) also their aspirations and expectations, but has great affection and respect for them.

Given the importance of this initiative, I asked my office to supervise these talks; and I personally kept in touch with the progress. I want to especially thank my senior colleague, [Home](#) Minister Shri Rajnath Singhji, whose support and advice was invaluable in bringing us here today.

Today's agreement is a shining example of what we can achieve when we [deal](#) with each other in a spirit of equality and respect, trust and confidence; when we seek to understand concerns and try to address aspirations; when we leave the path of dispute and take the high road of dialogue. It is a lesson and an inspiration in our troubled world.

Today, we mark not merely the end of a problem, but the beginning of a new future. We will not only try to heal wounds and resolve problems, but also be your partner [as](#) you restore your pride and prestige.

Today, to the [leaders](#) and the people of [Nagaland](#), I say this: You will

not only build a bright future for [Nagaland](#), but your talents, traditions and efforts will also contribute to making the nation stronger, more secure, more inclusive and more prosperous. You are also the guardians of our eastern frontiers and our gateway to the world beyond.

Equally, the rest of the nation will join you in shaping a future of dignity, opportunity and prosperity for the Naga people.

Today, [as](#) you begin a new glorious chapter with a sense of pride, self-confidence and self-respect, I join the nation in saluting you and conveying our good wishes to the Naga people.

Thank you.

AT New Delhi

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