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# Tripura 'insurgent free', declares CM as top rebel leaders surrender, with hundreds

Nearly 600 members of NLFT and ATTF put down arms, in the second round of surrenders after a Memorandum of Settlement signed with insurgent groups.

Written by [Debraj Deb](#)

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Chief Minister Manik Saha on Tuesday claimed the state to be “insurgent-free.”

Three weeks after the Centre and the Tripura government signed a Memorandum of Settlement with insurgent groups National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), Chief Minister Manik Saha on Tuesday claimed the state to be “insurgent-free”.

His declaration followed the surrender of 584 members of the two groups, including top leaders, at Jampuijala.

“It is a matter of happiness that they (insurgents) have returned to mainstream life, leaving the path of violence. Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) and Union Home Minister [Amit Shah](#) want to take the country ahead on the path of peace and development. The insurgents have taken a step in that direction,” Saha said.

Those who laid down arms included NLFT chief Biswamohan Debbarma, NLFT (PD) supremo Parimal Debbarma, NLFT (Original) leader Prasenjit Debbarma and ATTF chief Alendra Debbarma. Biswamohan claimed that of the 380 cadres of his outfit, 261 had laid down arms while the remaining were “stranded” in Bangladesh.

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584 members of NLFT and ATTF surrendered.

Officials said the cadres surrendered with 168 firearms, including Chinese grenades, land mines, RPG-7, M-20 pistols, and Kalashnikov guns. Many of them were of American and German make, the officials said.

On September 8, four days after the Memorandum of Settlement was signed, 328 cadres of the banned groups had laid down arms.

Claiming that insurgency has come down to “almost zero” in the Northeast due to the Modi government’s “12 peace accords with different groups over the past 10 years”, Saha said three of these agreements had been signed with Tripura-based outfits.

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“Over 10,000 cadre have laid down arms so far. Violence and insurgency are not the solution to problems,” he added.

Biswamohan thanked Shah and the security agencies and said he was happy to return to normal life. “We are moving towards peace in the Northeast. Many others think like us. Talks between the Centre and NSCN (of Nagaland) are ongoing,” he said.

He also appealed to other groups to follow his path, but added that the government must be “sincere” in solving political issues. “This is our country. My family and I are from the state. There is a reason why we took up arms. We have come back (to normal life) for the sake of the deprived and suppressed classes,” the NLFT chief said.

Skirting questions about a possible political plunge, like by former rebel leader Dasaratha Dev (Debbarma) of the Jana Siksha Andolan in the 1940s, Biswamohan said nothing is certain and that he “would see what happens” after the peace accord is implemented.

The NLFT was established on March 12, 1989, with Dhananjoy Reang, a former insurgent leader of the Tripura National Volunteers (TNV), as its leader. The NLFT’s leadership turned to Biswamohan after Nayanbasi, who had been ousted from the group, formed a new outfit known as the Tripura Resurrection Army (TRA), but eventually surrendered with all of its members a few years later.

The Centre banned it in 1997, and they face stringent laws the Unlawful Activities

**(Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).**

Prasenjit, who surrendered with 212 cadres, hoped that the promises made Centre – of a Rs 250 crore fund, free education for children and benefits for in the accord would be fulfilled while Parimal claimed he laid down arms as impressed with the government's work for tribals.

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**Long armed conflict**

Although armed struggle in Tripura dates back to 1967, when a small outfit called Sengkrak took up arms, the thick of insurgency came in the late '80s, when a series of insurgent groups including the NLFT and the ATTF rose.

An offshoot of the TNV, the ATTF came into existence in July 1990 as the All Tripura Tribal Force and in 1992 was rechristened as ATTF. Its first leader Ranjit Debbarma is now an MLA of the [BJP](#)'s ally TIPRA Motha.



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The ATTF was mostly restricted to pockets of North Tripura and South Tripura districts and emerged as a major stakeholder in 1991 by raising a significant cache of weapons, recruiting youths etc.

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