

# Letter from the Executive Board

Greetings Delegates,

We trust you are doing well. It is a pleasure to serve as your Executive Board for REUMUN'23. We hope you understand the significant role you play as a member of this influential committee and that our objective is primarily to ensure that you consider this an amazing learning experience which hones your leadership skills, while having fun all the way through. We look forward to having you in our committee and hope that you find this background guide helpful for your extensive research.

The agenda for this committee is a prominent topic in Indian Politics which has come to the fore recently, “Deliberating upon on the rise in national security threats to India” based on recent geo-political developments. Each of you will be representing a prominent Indian politician and each of you is governed by a specific set of powers and have access to a fixed number of resources.

To develop a foundation for you with your research, we have prepared this background guide so that you are familiar with the agenda and its nuances. Please note this guide is to merely provide you with a basic overview of the agenda, so it is a must that you go beyond this guide and research thoroughly.

We will function as a **semi crisis committee**. Delegates will receive crisis updates occasionally throughout the committee at the discretion of the Executive Board. Most of these updates will be in response to the actions and directives.

To those of you who might have queries, feel free to contact us and we will get back to you at the earliest.

Disclaimer: The views expressed throughout the conference are for academic purposes only, they do not reflect the views of the EB or the organization.

Yours sincerely,  
The Executive Board

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## **Introduction to Committee**

AIPPM is an acronym for All-India Political Parties Meet. It was created for Indian politicians so that they may engage in public debate, discussion, and deliberation without having to succumb to the intricate mandate and procedure of the Parliament of India, also known as the Lok Sabha House of the People, or "legislative functions of the parliament." Typically called before the session of the Parliament or before the introduction of a bill, this committee aims to arrive at a consensus before the sessions begin. It is a supplementary body to the Parliament without any legislative provisions.

An AIPPM committee in Model UN strives to achieve the same, The All-India Political Parties Meet is a committee that simulates political reality by discussion and deliberation on various levels of policy and governance in our country today. It is a non-technical yet powerful committee for unconstrained political debate. Members of this committee are expected to be duly updated in case of any developments outside the committee that are of relevance to the agenda and shall be expected to respond to such dynamic circumstances while keeping their assigned portfolios i.e., the ministers they are representing and their political interests in mind. Therefore, keeping oneself updated with the latest changes in every dynamic field of Indian Politics is a must.

This meeting will adhere to neither parliamentary rules of procedure nor MUN rules of procedure. It would have its own independent set of rules of procedures which are subject to circumstantial changes.

# **Introduction to Crisis**

## **1. Directives**

Members of the committee can send in directives to the EB, highlighting what they want to do next in response to crises and recent updates. The EB will have complete discretion over the passage of directives & other crisis notes. The EB can also decide if the committee will be voting on it, should the need arise. This will be decided based on the nature of the directive. Delegates must keep in mind the capabilities & powers of their nation while sending in their crisis notes. Any crisis note that is practically not feasible, jeopardizes the flow of committee or goes beyond the caliber of the portfolio shall be scrapped.

**a) Overt Directive:** This is a type of directive wherein the details concerning the contents of the directive & the sender of the directive shall be revealed to the committee.

**b) Covert Directive:** This is a type of directive where the details concerning the contents of the directive & the sender of the directive will be kept a secret and not revealed on the committee floor.

**c) Joint Directive:** Two or more delegates can send in a Joint Directive together. This is generally used to show support for a delegate's plan of action and to provide military or any other assistance to them.

**d) Committee-wide Directive:** As the name suggests, committee-wide directives are sent by the committee. A committee directive must be introduced via a motion, formally debated & deliberated upon, and called to vote via a motion to move into voting procedure. The EB will decide

upon the number of signatories necessary for each directive on a case-to-case basis. A simple majority is required to pass committee-wide directives.

Format:

Covert/Overt Directive (Give a Title)

From: (Author/Authors)

To: (The EB/Receivers)

Signatories: (Only in case of Joint & Committee-wide Directives)

Objectives: (Main reason to send directive)

Plan of Action: (Detailed explanation on execution of objectives)

Outcome: (Expected outcome should the directive pass)

## **2. Communiques**

Communiques are tools used to contact entities outside the committee to involve them with the crisis at hand. They are written as formal correspondence to outside actors that are not under your direct control but are pertinent & imperative to the actions that the delegate/delegates want to take. Communiques are not limited to the powers of the State represented by a delegate.

- a) **Committee Communique:** Committee Communiques can be written by any delegate but representing the committee collectively. It does not require signatories. It must be formally introduced & voted upon just like committee wide directives.
- b) **Private Communique:** Private communiques can be sent by an individual delegate to any external entity, be it a person or an organization. They are not introduced in committee & voted upon.

### **Format:**

<p style="text-align: center;">Communique</p> <p>From: (Author/Authors)</p> <p>To: (The EB. external entity)</p>
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### **3. Press Releases**

Press releases can be written by any delegate in committee and they make their statement as themselves. They do not require signatories.

### **4. Bills**

Bills are drafted by members of the house. It can be authored and submitted by any member of the house. There are two kinds of bills- Public Bills and Private Bills. For the purposes of this conference, we will strictly have only committee wide or bloc-wide bills to discuss solutions on the agenda at hand. A sample bill of the actual Parliament is shown below for your perusal. However, the Executive Board would go through the nuances of drafting a bill and its necessary formatting at an appropriate time during the conference.

[https://prsindia.org/files/bills\\_acts/bills\\_parliament/2022/Weapons%20of%20Mass%20Destruction%20Bill,%202022.pdf](https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/bills_parliament/2022/Weapons%20of%20Mass%20Destruction%20Bill,%202022.pdf)

## ***Introduction to the agenda***

The Executive Board (EB) has chosen to deliberate upon the rise in national security threats to India with the utmost consideration. This topic is deemed profoundly important due to its geopolitical, socio-political, and socio-economic dimensions. The late General Bipin Rawat emphasized the need for India to be prepared for a two-and-a-half front war. This committee will now analyze whether such a scenario exists, and if so, discuss the preparedness for such a scenario and explore how India can better equip itself to tackle the challenges in its security posture.

The EB expects the committee to primarily focus on recent events in Manipur and Punjab. These areas have been identified as major areas for research, as they have not garnered sufficient attention in the mainstream discourse. Nonetheless, they are equally critical in the context of national security alongside the well-known fronts of China and Pakistan.



## ***Security situation with Pakistan.***

### **Brief History**

India and Pakistan have engaged in four major wars, occurring in 1947, 1965, 1971, and 1999. The wars in 1947 and 1965 were primarily centered around the Kashmir region. In 1971, the conflict extended to both the eastern and western fronts, resulting in the division of Pakistan into present-day Bangladesh and Pakistan.

The war of 1947, also known as the First War of Kashmir, concluded with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru bringing the matter to the United Nations, a move that is often criticized as one of the significant post-independence missteps for India.

In 1965, Pakistan perceived an opportunity following India's conflict with China in 1962 and launched an attack. The war ended in a stalemate, though many experts consider it an Indian victory.

Beyond these major conflicts, it's essential to understand Operation Meghdoot in 1984 and Operation Rajiv in 1987, both concerning the Siachen Glacier region.

In 1999, India and Pakistan entered another war. This conflict occurred at a time when India was striving for peace with Pakistan, with the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee leading diplomatic efforts. The war ended in an Indian victory, with India regaining control of strategically important peaks that had been occupied by Pakistan.

## **The First War of Kashmir (1947-1948):**

- Context: This war erupted immediately after the partition of British India in 1947. It centered around the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, which was given the choice to accede to either India or Pakistan.
- Outcome: The war resulted in a ceasefire and the establishment of the Line of Control (LoC), which divided the region into Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir, and Pakistan-administered Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

## **The Indo-Pak war of 1965**

- Context: Tensions flared over territorial disputes, particularly in the Rann of Kutch and the Kashmir region. Pakistan, emboldened by India's 1962 conflict with China, initiated hostilities.
- Outcome: The war ended in a stalemate, with both nations agreeing to return to pre-war boundaries. However, it is generally considered an Indian strategic victory.

## **Bangladesh Liberation war (1971)**

- Context: The conflict began in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and spread to the western front. The war resulted from long-standing political and economic grievances of the Bengali population against the ruling West Pakistan.
- Outcome: India played a crucial role in supporting the Bangladesh Liberation War. The war ended with the creation of Bangladesh.

## **Kargil war (1999)**

- Context: This conflict arose due to territorial disputes in the Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistani soldiers and militants infiltrated the area, leading to a full-scale conflict.
- Outcome: The conflict ended with India regaining control of the territory and reestablishing the status quo along the Line of Control.

## **Operation Meghdoot and Rajiv**

- Context: Both operations were related to territorial disputes in the Siachen Glacier region, known as the highest battlefield in the world.
- Outcome: India gained control of the glacier and surrounding areas, securing a strategic position in the region.

## **Security situation with Pakistan post 2000**

Pakistan has adopted the strategy set by their forefather, Bhutto's "thousand years war" with 'Bleed India Through A Thousand Cuts' doctrine using covert and low intensity warfare with militancy and infiltration. Examples of this includes the 2001 parliament attack, the 26/11 bomb blasts. In addition to this, infiltrations and attacks along the LoC keep happening, examples for this are the URI incident, Pathankot incident, Gurdaspur incident, Pulwama incident, etc.

### **Major Incidents:**

#### 2001 Parliament Attack:

- Context: On December 13, 2001, five armed gunmen attacked the Parliament of India in New Delhi.
- Significance: The attack aimed to destabilize India's political core, leading to a major escalation in tensions between India and Pakistan.

#### 26/11 Mumbai Attacks (2008):

- Context: On November 26, 2008, a group of heavily armed terrorists launched coordinated attacks across Mumbai, targeting various locations including the iconic Taj Hotel.
- Significance: These attacks were one of the deadliest acts of terrorism in India's history, causing widespread panic and loss of life.

## **Line of Control (LoC) Incursions**

Pakistan's proxy warfare extends to continuous provocations along the LoC, resulting in significant Indian casualties. Since 2013, India has experienced a series of attacks:

**URI Incident (2016):** In September 2016, militants attacked an Indian Army base in Uri, near the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. This attack resulted in the deaths of 19 Indian soldiers.

**Pathankot Incident (2016):** In January 2016, militants attacked the Indian Air Force base in Pathankot, Punjab. The attack left several Indian security personnel dead.

**Gurdaspur Incident (2015):** In July 2015, armed militants launched an attack in Gurdaspur, Punjab, targeting a police station and a bus.

**Pulwama Attack (2019):** In February 2019, a suicide bomber attacked a convoy of Indian security forces in Pulwama, Kashmir, leading to the loss of 40 personnel.

**Kupwara Incident (2017):** In April 2017, militants infiltrated into the Indian side of the LoC in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir. The ensuing encounter resulted in the loss of Indian soldiers.

**Naugam Incident (2016):** In May 2016, militants crossed the LoC and targeted an army camp in the Naugam sector of Jammu and Kashmir. This incident led to Indian soldiers losing their lives.

**Rajouri Incident (2018):** In June 2018, militants infiltrated into the Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir. A fierce encounter followed, resulting in the loss of Indian soldiers.

**Krishna Ghati Incident (2017):** In May 2017, militants infiltrated into the Krishna Ghati sector of Poonch district, Jammu and Kashmir. This incursion led to the unfortunate loss of Indian soldiers.

**Tangdhar Incident (2019)** In October 2019, militants infiltrated into the Tangdhar sector of Kupwara district, Jammu and Kashmir. This incident resulted in the loss of Indian soldiers.

Pakistan's continued use of proxy warfare presents a significant challenge to regional stability and security. The LoC incidents, along with major attacks like the Parliament Attack and Mumbai Attacks, underscore the need for concerted efforts to address these threats and promote a lasting resolution to the India-Pakistan conflict.

## ***Security situation with China.***

### Historical Context:

- The 1962 Sino-Indian War: This conflict over border disputes led to a significant setback in bilateral relations. China emerged victorious, and the border dispute remains unresolved. The main reasons for India's defeat in this war is seen its lack of preparedness and being very trustful of the Chinese

### Border Disputes:

- The Line of Actual Control (LAC): This is the de facto border between India and China, but it remains undermarketed and prone to disagreements. Both countries have differing interpretations of where the actual border lies.
- Doklam Standoff (2017): This 73-day standoff occurred between Indian and Chinese troops in the Doklam plateau near the India-Bhutan-China trijunction. It was triggered by Chinese construction activities in the region. The situation eventually de-escalated through diplomatic channels.

## **Security Concerns:**

### 1) Territorial Disputes:

- The unresolved border issue remains a significant security concern. It periodically leads to tensions, military standoffs, and increases the potential for conflict.
- The Aksai Chin region, administered by China but belonging to India, and Arunachal Pradesh, which China refers to as South Tibet, remains a concern.

### 2) Strategic Competition:

- Both India and China have strategic interests in the Indian Ocean region. China's growing presence in the region, particularly through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is a problem for India.

## **Recent Developments:**

### **Background:**

The Galwan Valley is in the Aksai Chin region, an area that has been a subject of territorial dispute between India and China for decades. The valley holds strategic importance due to its proximity to the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the de facto border between the two nations.



**Incident:**

In early June 2020, a confrontation took place between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley. The situation escalated rapidly, leading to a violent clash. For the first time since 60s, there was a major military casualty along the LAC. The exact sequence of events and the number of casualties on both sides remains a subject of debate, but it is known that the incident resulted in significant loss of life.

**Casualties:**

The clash resulted in casualties for both Indian and Chinese soldiers. This incident was a stark reminder of the potential dangers and volatility inherent in the disputed border region.

**Escalation and Diplomatic Response:**

The Galwan Valley clashes led to an immediate escalation of tensions between India and China. Both sides engaged in military mobilization and heightened alertness along the LAC. Diplomatic channels were also activated to defuse the situation.

**Long-Term Significance:**

The Galwan Valley clashes serve as a reminder of the ongoing complexities and sensitivities surrounding the India-China border dispute. It highlighted the potential for unforeseen escalations, even in areas where tensions have historically been managed.

## **Internal security issues**

As mentioned from the outset, India contends with various internal security challenges throughout the nation. Our committee will be specifically addressing the recent developments in Manipur and Punjab. However, it is imperative that we also acknowledge the persistent issues in Kashmir, the Naxal-affected areas, and the resurgence of regional chauvinism in the southern parts of India.

### **Security Concerns in the North-Eastern part of India (with special reference to recent Kuki-Meitei clash in Manipur)**

The Meiteis are the majority and dominant ethnic group of Manipur, which consist of majorly Hindus. Meiteis are also a minor share of the population in neighbouring regions like Myanmar (Burma), Bangladesh and Nagaland.

The Kuki tribes are a group of indigenous communities primarily found in the northeastern regions of India, including states like Manipur, Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland, and Tripura. Most of the Kuki tribes are recognized as Scheduled Tribes (STs) by the government. They are known for their rich cultural heritage and distinctive way of life. The Kuki tribes are made up of various subgroups, and they are generally characterized by their strong sense of identity, traditional customs, and close-knit communities. They comprise of mostly Christians belonging to the protestant sect.

## The Conflict:

The Meitei-Kuki conflict in northeastern India is a complex and historical dispute between the Meitei, an ethnic group primarily inhabiting the Manipur Valley, and the Kuki, who are spread across several states in the region, including Manipur. This conflict has had various phases and underlying causes, and it is essential to understand that the situation is multifaceted and ongoing, with several dimensions to consider.

### 1. Historical Background:

The Meitei-Kuki conflict has its roots in historical grievances and territorial disputes. The Meitei people, who primarily inhabit the Imphal Valley in Manipur, have historically sought to maintain control over their ancestral homeland. The Kuki, on the other hand, have traditionally lived in the hill areas surrounding the valley.

### 2. Land and Territorial Disputes:

One of the central issues in the conflict is land and territorial disputes. The Kuki have laid claim to some of the hill areas surrounding the Manipur Valley, leading to tensions with the Meitei, who consider these areas integral to their cultural and territorial identity.

### 3. Ethnic and Identity Factors:

The Meitei-Kuki conflict is also influenced by ethnic and identity factors. Both groups have distinct languages, cultures, and traditions. These differences, combined with historical grievances, have fueled tensions, and led to clashes.

#### 4. Violence and Insurgency:

Over the years, the conflict has resulted in violence and insurgency. Various Kuki militant groups and Meitei insurgent outfits have been involved in armed struggles, demanding territorial autonomy, and asserting their ethnic and political rights.

#### 5. Peace Efforts:

Efforts to resolve the conflict have been made at different times, with peace talks between various insurgent groups and the Indian government. These negotiations have aimed to address grievances and work towards a peaceful coexistence.

#### 6. Ongoing Challenges:

The Meitei-Kuki conflict remains a challenge in the region, with sporadic incidents of violence and tensions persisting. The multifaceted nature of the dispute, including land, identity, and political aspirations, continues to complicate the path to a lasting resolution.

It is important to note that the Meitei-Kuki conflict is part of the broader mosaic of ethnic and tribal conflicts in northeastern India, which have been influenced by historical, cultural, political, and economic factors. Efforts to address these conflicts often involve complex negotiations and the need for inclusive solutions that respect the rights and identities of the various communities involved.

## Demand for ST status by Meiteis:

The Meitei community has been advocating for the inclusion of Meitei in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list for a significant period. This call for inclusion was initially raised in 1981 by the then Chief Minister of Manipur, Rishang Keishing, during a session in the State Legislative Assembly. However, discussions on this matter did not yield any concrete results due to dissenting opinions within the Meitei community regarding their ST status.

In 1995, the Meitei community was designated as an Other Backward Class (OBC), and it's worth noting that two subgroups within the Meitei community, namely the Chakpas (formerly known as lois) and Thoubal Khunous (formerly Yaithibis), had been recognized as Scheduled Castes (SC) since 1956.

Nonetheless, the Meitei community's demand for ST status gained momentum with the establishment of the Scheduled Tribes Demand Committee of Manipur Valley (STDTCM). In November 2012, the STDTCM submitted a memorandum to Governor Gurbachan Jagat and, in July 2013, they met with then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to reiterate their request for ST status. On May 29, 2013, the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs requested the Manipur government to provide a formal recommendation, along with the most up-to-date socio-economic survey and ethnographic report, in support of including the Meitei community in the ST list. The state government did not respond to this letter.

In April 2022, the Meitei Tribe Union (MTU) once more submitted a formal request to the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry, urging the consideration of including the Meitei community in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list. Subsequently, the Ministry forwarded this letter to the Manipur government in May 2022. Once again, the state government remained unresponsive to this appeal. In 2023, Mutum Churamani and seven other members of the MTU took legal action by filing a writ petition in the High Court, seeking the issuance of a writ mandamus to compel the Manipur government to provide a

response to the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs' letter. The High Court's decision was a direct result of this writ petition.

It is noteworthy that, although both the Kuki and Naga communities are opposed to the Meitei community's request for ST status, the solidarity marches in Naga-dominated regions remained peaceful, in stark contrast to the situation in Kuki-dominated areas. The Naga community has distanced itself from the violent protests, asserting that the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), involved in various acts of violence, does not represent the entire tribal population of Manipur.

#### Violent clashes between Kuki and Meiteis tribes:

Although the High Court's order to the Manipur government was the immediate catalyst for the conflict between the Meiteis and the Kukis, the Kuki community had been harboring a growing resentment towards the Meitei-dominated state government for some time. Over the past few months, the Manipur government had implemented several measures and made decisions that have led to a perception of bias and insecurity among the Kuki community. To start with, Chief Minister Biren Singh had been asserting that a considerable number of undocumented immigrants from Myanmar had settled in the state, particularly within reserved and protected forest areas.

Furthermore, the Biren Singh government also carried on with the land survey of reserve forests, protected areas, wetlands, and wildlife. During the survey, the state government 'identified' the encroachers, and served them eviction notices.

However, the Manipur government had claimed that of the total 291 encroachers removed from Manipur's forests between 1 January 2017 and 18 April 2023, 160 belonged to Meitei community, which shows that the Kuki community was not exclusively targeted. But it appears that the Kuki community continues to remain aggrieved.

In addition to all this there has been a demand for a separate Kuki-land for quite a while. The Kuki community argued that the system of electing the village chief under the Village Authorities Act of 1956 was a means to “do away with the rights of the chiefs over land”, and given that the Kukis had traditional system of unelected village chieftains, they opposed it. This desire to safeguard their interests was also reinforced by the fact that the Kukis do not share a cordial relationship with the Meiteis and the Nagas.

## **Security Concerns in Punjab (with special reference to Khalistan)**

Khalistan refers to the land of the pure, it stems from sikh nationalism and aims to create a sperate nation for the sikhs in the Punjab region.

### **Historical angle**

- Guru Nanak Dev, born in 1469, played an instrumental role in shaping Sikhism with his profound teachings. His emphasis on monotheism, equality among all, and the significance of honest living laid the foundation for Sikh philosophy and community. Guru Nanak embarked on extensive journeys, known as 'Udasis', spreading his spiritual message far and wide. These journeys became pivotal in disseminating Sikh values and establishing a strong spiritual tradition.
- Guru Ram Das, who lived from 1534 to 1581, was the visionary fourth Guru of Sikhism. Under his guidance, the city of Amritsar was founded in the 16th century. This city, chosen for its spiritual significance, would later become home to the magnificent Harmandir Sahib, also known as the Golden Temple. Amritsar emerged as a vibrant epicenter of Sikh spirituality and culture, drawing pilgrims and devotees from around the world.

- Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru from 1563 to 1606, further enriched Sikh heritage. His legacy is closely tied to the construction of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, a monumental feat completed in 1604. This sacred shrine, surrounded by the tranquil waters of the Amrit Sarovar, stands as an enduring testament to Sikh architecture and spiritual devotion. The Golden Temple continues to be a revered pilgrimage site, symbolizing the unifying spirit of Sikhism.
- The 17th and 18th centuries witnessed a tumultuous period of Sikh-Mughal conflicts. Rooted in religious and territorial disputes, Sikhs resisted Mughal suppression and fought fervently for their religious freedom. These struggles gave rise to prolonged periods of conflict, marking a critical chapter in Sikh history. The Sikh communities' unwavering resilience against the might of the Mughal Empire is a testament to their steadfast commitment to their faith.
- In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the emergence of Maharaja Ranjit Singh heralded a new era for the Sikh community. Through astute leadership, he unified various Sikh factions, establishing a formidable state. Lahore became the capital, and under his reign (1799-1849), the Sikh Empire thrived, bringing stability, prosperity, and international recognition. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule stands as a pivotal period in Sikh history, showcasing their ability to govern and flourish.
- However, after the Anglo-Sikh War of 1848-49, the region of Punjab came under British control. This marked a significant shift in the political landscape and the end of Sikh sovereignty. The annexation led to far-reaching socio-political changes, reshaping the destiny of Punjab and its people. The legacy of these historical events continues to resonate today, highlighting the enduring significance of Sikhism in the broader context of South Asian history and culture.



## **The Gurudwara Reform Movement of 1920 and subsequent events**

The Gurudwara Reform Movement of 1920, or Gurdwara Sudhar Lehar, was a crucial socio-religious campaign in British India. It sought to reclaim Sikh gurdwaras from corrupt mahants (custodians) who had seized control, undermining the sanctity of these places of worship. The movement was spearheaded by the Shiromani Akali Dal, established in 1920, as the political arm advocating for gurdwara reforms.

The Akali Dal organized peaceful protests, petitions, and acts of civil disobedience. One of the seminal events was the Jaito Morcha in 1923, a protest to reclaim the historically significant gurdwara in Jaito, Punjab. Another pivotal moment was the Nankana Sahib Morcha (1921-1925) aimed at liberating the birthplace of Guru Nanak Dev from a British-backed mahant.

The culmination of these efforts was the passage of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act in 1925. This legislation transferred control of important gurdwaras to elected committees, wresting authority from the corrupt mahants. The Act marked a triumph of the Gurudwara Reform Movement, ensuring democratic management of these religious institutions.

The movement's legacy endures as a testament to Sikh resolve in safeguarding the sanctity of their religious spaces. It set the stage for the continued democratic administration of gurdwaras, affirming their role as centers of spiritual and communal well-being. The Gurudwara Reform Movement remains a defining moment in Sikh history, characterized by selfless sacrifice, non-violent resistance, and the successful reclamation of their sacred sites.

This movement gave rise to a prominent figure, Master Tara Singh. Master Tara Singh was a prominent Sikh leader known for his pivotal role in the Sikh community during the pre-independence and post-independence era of India.

## **Master Tara Singh**

- Master Tara Singh (1885-1967) was a highly influential figure in Sikh politics. He was a staunch advocate for Sikh rights and played a crucial role in the Sikh struggle for political and religious autonomy.
- He was a key leader of the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Akali movement, which aimed to safeguard Sikh interests, particularly in relation to gurdwara reforms and the preservation of Sikh identity.
- Master Tara Singh was known for his passionate speeches and strong advocacy for the political rights of Sikhs. He actively participated in various movements, including the demand for a Punjabi-speaking state.

## **Rise of Sikhistan**

- The concept of "Sikhistan" refers to the idea of an independent Sikh state or homeland. This idea gained traction, especially during the pre-independence era when there were discussions about the political future of India.
- Some Sikh leaders, including Master Tara Singh, advocated for the creation of a separate Sikh state, arguing that it would provide a secure environment for the Sikh community to practice their religion and preserve their distinct identity.
- However, the idea of Sikhistan did not materialize, and after India gained independence in 1947, the Sikh-majority regions were integrated into the Indian Union as part of Punjab.
- The demand for an independent Sikh state resurfaced in the 1980s, leading to the rise of the Khalistan movement, which sought to establish a separate Sikh state called Khalistan. This movement, however, faced significant challenges and ultimately did not succeed in achieving its goal.

It's important to note that while the concept of Sikhistan and later Khalistan represented the aspirations of certain segments of the Sikh community, it did not come to fruition, and the majority of Sikhs continue to be an integral part of the diverse fabric of India.

## **Post-independence:**

The partition of British India in 1947 brought about profound changes in the socio-political landscape, particularly in the historically rich Punjab region. This division was marked by the tragic separation of communities along religious lines. The western expanse, encompassing the ancient city of Lahore, was now part of Pakistan, while the eastern sector was integrated into the Indian state.

In the ensuing years, the intricacies of governance and the need to accommodate diverse regional identities prompted the establishment of the State Reorganization Commission in 1956. Tasked with delineating state boundaries, the commission deliberated the proposal for a Punjabi-majority state. The wounds of partition were still fresh, and the potential for renewed communal tensions weighed heavily on their considerations. Consequently, the commission opted against creating a Punjabi-majority state at that juncture.

However, the call for a distinct Punjabi-speaking state persisted. The Punjab Suba movement gained fervent momentum, becoming a resounding expression of the Punjabi-speaking populace's preservation of their cultural heritage. Responding to these impassioned appeals, the government, led by Indira Gandhi, took decisive action in 1966.

In a move, they implemented linguistic reorganization, culminating in the establishment of Punjab as a state primarily dedicated to Punjabi speakers. This development not only addressed the linguistic identity of the region but also validated the unique cultural legacy of the Punjabi-speaking population.

Concurrently, the government created Haryana for the Hindi-speaking population, acknowledging the linguistic diversity within the broader Punjab region. Additionally, Chandigarh, strategically situated, was designated as the shared capital.

## **The story in 70s**

With the demand for greater autonomy and calls for a separate Sikh nation gaining traction, particularly among the Sikh diaspora in countries like Canada, the US, and the UK, and with the rise of leaders like Jagjit Singh Chauhan, the Anandpur Sahib Resolution was endorsed.

The Anandpur Sahib Resolution, adopted in 1973 during a session of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), encapsulates the core concerns of the Sikh community in India. It calls for greater political, economic, and religious autonomy for Punjab, reflecting a desire for self-governance. The resolution emphasizes economic reforms to address disparities and promote fair resource distribution. It also underscores Punjab's rightful claim to its river waters, advocating for a just resolution of water-sharing disputes. Protection and promotion of Sikh religious and cultural rights are central, alongside a push for fiscal independence, allowing Punjab control over its financial resources. The document stresses the importance of Punjabi language and Sikh heritage in education and demands fair representation of Sikhs in governmental bodies. Security and well-being of the Sikh community, a reevaluation of India's federal structure, and a Demand of Chandigarh to the state of Punjab are additional key points of the resolution.

However, it is pertinent to note the central government led by Indira Gandhi saw this document as a secessionist document.

## **In the 80s**

Following the end of the state of emergency in 1977, the political landscape in India witnessed a significant shift. The Congress party, which had previously enjoyed dominance, faced a decline in popularity, leading to the rise of the Janata Party at the national level.

In Punjab, the Akali Dal, a regional political party with a strong Sikh identity, gained prominence and formed the state government. This marked a departure from the Congress party's earlier dominance in the region.

Recognizing the growing influence of Sikh voters, the Congress party, particularly leaders like Sanjay Gandhi and Zail Singh, sought to connect with the Sikh community. As part of this strategy, they played a role in elevating Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a Sikh leader known for his advocacy of Sikh rights and concerns.

Bhindranwale's increased visibility and influence had significant ramifications, ultimately culminating in the complex and contentious events of the 1980s, including the Operation Blue Star in 1984. This period was marked by escalating tensions between Sikh separatist groups and the Indian government, profoundly impacting the landscape of Punjab.

The 80s saw a lot of violence in Punjab, the important events include, the killings of Baba Gurbachan Singh, Lala Jagat Narin, DIG Atwal and 6 hindu passengers in a bus, all in separate events. It is also important to note India was supposed to conduct Asian Games in Delhi in 82'.

### **Bhindranwale**

Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale played a pivotal role in the Khalistan movement advocating for the establishment of an independent Sikh state. As tensions escalated in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Bhindranwale emerged as the face of Sikh grievances, rallying support for Sikh rights and autonomy.

His fiery speeches and uncompromising stance against what he perceived as the erosion of Sikh identity by the Indian state galvanized a significant following. Bhindranwale's rhetoric resonated with many Sikhs who felt marginalized and sought a stronger voice in national affairs.

However, the escalation of the Khalistan movement also led to increased confrontations between Sikh militants and the Indian government. The situation came to a head with the military operation known as Operation Blue Star in June 1984, when the Indian army stormed the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar, where Bhindranwale and his armed supporters had taken refuge. Bhindranwale lost his life in the operation.

## **Operation Blue Star**

Operation Blue Star was a significant military action carried out by the Indian government in June 1984. It was aimed at flushing out armed militants, led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who had fortified themselves inside the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar, Punjab. This operation remains one of the most controversial and emotionally charged events in India's modern history.

### The Siege

By early 1984, the situation had escalated to the point where Bhindranwale and his armed supporters had taken refuge inside the Golden Temple complex, one of the most revered Sikh religious sites. The complex, however, had been fortified, and the presence of militants within a holy sanctuary posed a significant challenge for the Indian government.

### Planning and Execution

In early June 1984, the Indian government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, decided to launch a military operation to remove the militants from the Golden Temple complex. The

operation was named "Operation Blue Star" and was led by Lieutenant General Kuldeep Singh Brar.

The operation involved a multi-pronged approach, with the army deploying ground forces, supported by tanks and artillery. The government imposed a media blackout and curfew in the region, limiting information flow and restricting movement.

### Casualties

From June 4th to June 6th, 1984, the Indian army engaged in fierce combat with the militants entrenched inside the Golden Temple complex. The narrow and labyrinthine pathways within the complex made progress slow and difficult for the army.

The fighting resulted in significant casualties on both sides. Exact figures remain a subject of dispute, but it's estimated that hundreds, possibly thousands, lost their lives during the operation. The destruction caused extensive damage to the historic structures within the complex.

### Aftermath

The operation concluded with the Indian army gaining control of the Golden Temple complex. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was killed in the operation, along with many of his armed supporters. The operation's success, however, came at a considerable cost - not only in terms of lives lost but also in the damage inflicted on a site of immense religious and cultural significance.

### Repercussions

Operation Blue Star had profound and far-reaching repercussions. It triggered widespread outrage and anger, particularly among Sikhs who saw the attack on the Golden Temple as an assault on their religious and cultural identity. This event further fueled sentiments in favor of the Khalistan movement.

The operation also led to a surge in violence across Punjab and other parts of India, including the *assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards in October 1984*. This tragic event, known as the anti-Sikh riots, resulted in the deaths of thousands of Sikhs. Post this operation, the infamous Air India flight bombing took place. Two major assassinations also happened apart from that of Indira Gandhi, that is the assassination of General Vaidya and Harchand Singh Longwal. Militancy continued in Punjab post OP Blue star, hence the government launched operation Black Thunder.

**Operation Black Thunder** was a significant military operation conducted by the Indian security forces in May 1988. Its objective was to flush out militants who had taken control of the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar for the second time, following the events of Operation Blue Star in 1984. Operation Black Thunder was executed with the aim of minimizing collateral damage and preserving the sanctity of the holy Sikh shrine.

## Background

In the years following Operation Blue Star, militant activity and separatist sentiments remained prevalent in Punjab. The Sikh militancy, driven by demands for an independent Sikh state, Khalistan, continued to pose a challenge to the Indian government.

## The Siege

In April 1988, armed militants, belonging to various Sikh extremist groups, once again infiltrated the Golden Temple complex. They took control of the shrine, using it as a fortified base for their operations.

## Planning and Execution



Recognizing the need for a surgical operation to reclaim the Golden Temple complex, the Indian security forces, under the leadership of the Punjab Police, devised a meticulous plan. This operation was named "Operation Black Thunder."

The operation involved a carefully orchestrated approach, with an emphasis on minimizing damage to the historic structures within the complex and avoiding civilian casualties. Negotiations were attempted to persuade the militants to surrender, but these efforts proved unsuccessful.

### Conflict and Resolution

From May 9th to May 16th, 1988, Operation Black Thunder unfolded. The security forces faced stiff resistance from the militants, who were well-entrenched within the complex. The operation was characterized by close-quarter combat and careful maneuvering to ensure the safety of civilians trapped inside.

Ultimately, the operation succeeded in dislodging the militants from the Golden Temple complex. Many of the militants were apprehended, and the sanctity of the holy Sikh shrine was preserved.

### Aftermath

Operation Black Thunder marked a significant victory for the Indian security forces. The operation's success was attributed to meticulous planning, tactical execution, and an emphasis on minimizing collateral damage.

The operation was viewed as a more measured and focused response compared to the controversial Operation Blue Star in 1984. It demonstrated a commitment to protecting the religious and cultural heritage of the Sikh community.

### Legacy

Operation Black Thunder stands as a testament to the Indian government's resolve to maintain law and order while respecting the sentiments of religious communities. It also underscored the complexities of dealing with internal security challenges, especially in regions with deep-seated historical and religious significance.

### ***FROM 90s TO NOW***

During the 1990s, Punjab experienced a turbulent period marked by both militancy and political instability. Much of this turmoil was attributed to a leadership vacuum left by the Akali Dal, a prominent Sikh political party. However, the Akali Dal managed to regain its influence after a significant the Moga convention, where key decisions were made and agreements were reached.

The resurgence of militancy in Punjab can be linked to a strategic approach adopted by Pakistan, which aimed to weaken India through a sustained campaign of low-intensity conflict. This approach, often referred to as "bleeding India with a thousand cuts," involved supporting and fueling insurgent movements within India.

The Khalistan issue, which advocates for the establishment of an independent Sikh state, gained attention on the global stage, especially in countries with substantial Sikh diaspora populations such as the UK, Canada, the US, and Australia. Recently, figures like Amritpal Singh have emerged as influential voices associated with this cause. Notably, the farm bill protests, which garnered international attention, also saw participation from elements aligned with pro-Khalistan sentiments.

Several factors contribute to the reemergence of the Khalistan issue. One crucial element is a perceived political void in Punjab. The Akali Dal, once strongly associated with Sikh interests, has sought to broaden its appeal by presenting itself as a secular party, which has raised concerns among Sikhs about the representation of their specific concerns.

Another void is social in nature. An incident that occurred in 2015 in Bargari, Punjab, which remains unaddressed by political parties in the region, has left a void in social justice and accountability.

Unfortunately, these voids in political and social representation have paved the way for the rise of criminal gangs, which have gained a degree of legitimacy in certain quarters. Furthermore, Punjab grapples with a significant drug problem. The roots of this issue can be traced back to a well-known historical fact during the Soviet-Afghan War, the USA, in collaboration with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), facilitated the narcotics trade, utilizing connections with opium cultivators to undermine the war-fighting capabilities of Soviet forces.

Adding a diplomatic dimension to this complex issue, relations with key countries like the US, UK, and Canada have been influenced by the Khalistan narrative. These nations have sometimes employed the Khalistan cause as leverage to advance their respective interests. For instance, in the US, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, who leads the SFJ foundation, a pro-Khalistan organization, played a prominent role in orchestrating the Referendum 2020 campaign.

Similarly, the UK has leveraged the Khalistan issue in its negotiations for a free trade agreement. Notably, individuals like Avtar Singh Khaadawas, who operated Khalistan TV, have been central to the dissemination of pro-Khalistan sentiments.

In Canada, organizations like the Poetic Justice Foundation, led by Anita Lal, have garnered support from members of the Trudeau cabinet. Recently, Canada's government made the serious

accusation that India was involved in the death of a pro-Khalistan advocate, a claim made without substantial evidence. Interestingly, this accusation came shortly after the G20 meeting in Delhi,

The resurgence of the Khalistan issue in Punjab is thus a complex interplay of political, social, economic, and diplomatic factors, reflecting the intricate dynamics of regional and international politics.