

STOP INFLUX FROM MYANMAR: CENTRE

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure, Dispute Redressal Mechanisms, and the Centre-State Relations

Strict vigil: Army personnel in Mizoram patrolling the banks of Tiau River, along the India-Myanmar border. AFP

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has written to the Chief Secretaries of Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh to “take appropriate action as per law to check illegal influx from Myanmar into India.” The directive comes weeks after the military coup and subsequent crackdown in the neighbouring country led to several persons crossing over into India.

The Ministry said the State governments had no powers to grant “refugee status to any foreigner” and India is not a signatory to the United Nations Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol. More than a dozen people including policemen and women from Myanmar have fled to Mizoram fearing a military crackdown.

The Tatmadaw, or Myanmar military, had taken over the country after a coup on February 1. India and Myanmar share 1,643-km border and people on either side have familial ties.

Large-scale flow

In a letter dated March 10 to the four States and Assam Rifles, the Ministry said, “As you are aware, there is a probability of large-scale illegal influx into Indian territory through IMB (India-Myanmar border) due to current internal situation in Myanmar. In this regard, the MHA has already issued an advisory Dated 25.02.2021 to Chief Secretaries of Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh and also to Border Guarding Force (BGF) along IMB (Assam Rifles) to stay, alert and take appropriate action to prevent a possible influx into Indian territory.”

The letter stated that it has been reported that “illegal influx from Myanmar has started.”

It recalled the guidelines addressed to all States on August 8, 2017 “wherein instructions were issued to sensitize all law enforcement and intelligence agencies for taking prompt steps in identifying the-illegal migrants and initiate the deportation processes expeditiously and without delay.” It also mentioned another set of guidelines to States sent on February 28, 2018 “advising them to sensitize the law enforcement and intelligence agencies for taking appropriate prompt steps for identifying illegal migrants, their restrictions to specific locations as per provisions of law, capturing their biographic and biometric particulars, cancellation of fake Indian documents and legal proceedings including initiation of deportation proceedings as per provisions of law.”

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