

ASSAM, MEGHALAYA INK PACT TO END BORDER ROW

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The agreement was based on a draft resolution signed between the two States on January 29. The six disputed sectors are Tarabari, Gizang, Hahim, Boklapara, Khanapara-Pillangkata and Ratacherra under the Kamrup, Kamrup (Metro) and Cachar districts of Assam and the West Khasi Hills, Ri-Bhoi and East Jaintia Hills districts of Meghalaya.

The two States had in June 2021 adopted a “give-and-take” policy to start the process of resolving the boundary dispute by constituting three regional committees each.

The draft resolution, prepared on the basis of the recommendations of the regional panels, proposed dividing the disputed 36.79 sq. km land in the six areas of difference between the two States.

While Assam will get 18.51 sq. km of the disputed areas, Meghalaya will get the remaining 18.28 sq.km. Mr Shah said about 70% of the inter-State boundary has now become dispute-free with the signing of the agreement. “We will resolve the problem in the six other areas in the near future. I congratulate both sides on behalf of (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi *ji* and the Government of India,” he said. Lauding the “political will” of the two Chief Ministers, Mr. Shah said he was confident that the northeast could be free of interstate boundary disputes in the days to come.

Apart from Meghalaya, Assam has boundary disputes with Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland. All these States, two as Union Territories initially, were carved out of Assam between 1963 and 1972. Mr. Sarma called the boundary deal historic and thanked Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah for their “guidance in achieving this feat”. “We hope to resolve the disputes in the remaining six areas soon,” he said.

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