

## Naga talks still on, panel told

R.N. Ravi

Naga interlocutor R.N. Ravi told a parliamentary panel here on Monday that “no deadline” could be fixed for the Naga peace agreement and talks were on with at least five or six Naga groups other than the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah).

Mr. Ravi is learnt to have told the parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs that the NSCN-IM had been insisting that since it was the “legitimate Naga group”, negotiations should take place only with it but that was not the stand of the Government of India.

### Framework agreement

On August 3, 2015, Mr. Ravi had signed a “framework agreement” on behalf of the Union government with the NSCN (Isak-Muivah) group to end the decades-old Naga insurgency.

The agreement was signed at the residence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### Open to all

On Monday, Mr. Ravi who was asked to appear before the panel to explain the status of the Naga peace deal told parliamentarians that the “Government of India wanted to take all the Naga groups on board.”

“All members wanted to know when the details of the framework agreement will be disclosed by the Centre? The Naga interlocutor said negotiations were still on and the Government of India was not comfortable with only one or two main groups such as the NSCN-IM coming on board, but wanted to take into the fold the other groups as well,” an MP who attended the meeting told *The Hindu*.

The Centre recently gave a year’s extension to Mr. Ravi.

### Nagalim plan

The NSCN-IM has been fighting for ‘Greater Nagaland’ or Nagalim — it wants to extend Nagaland’s borders by including Naga-dominated areas in neighbouring Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, to unite 1.2 million Nagas.

Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, all BJP-ruled States that have Naga populations have refused to part with even an inch of land to make the peace deal a success.

The Centre is yet to spell out the details of the Naga agreement. An official said the Naga peace talks were delayed after the death of one of the leaders of NSCN (IM), Isak Swu, last year.

Mr. Swu (86) passed away on June 28 in a Delhi hospital.

The other leader T. Muivah has been carrying on the negotiations on behalf of the group.

The parliamentary panel that had met earlier to discuss the security situation in the Northeast States had asked Mr. Ravi to appear before it on Monday to discuss the Naga deal.

The Centre and the NSCN-IM had earlier issued a joint statement that they were “closer than ever before to the final settlement and hope to conclude it sooner than later.”

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