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Title: Need to find peaceful and democratic process to resolve the conflict in Nagaland.

SHRI NEIPHUI RIO (NAGALAND): Madam Speaker, at the outset, I thank you for giving me the time and opportunity to bring to the attention of the House on the subject of the Naga political issue and the ongoing peace process.

The Naga political issue is termed as the mother of all insurgencies and the conflict is more than seven decades. A ceasefire was declared between the Government of India and the Naga political groups in 1997. However, even after 17 years of ceasefire and dialogue, a solution to the protracted problem remains elusive till today.

We appreciate the Government of India for appointment of a new Interlocutor and welcome the statement of the National Security Adviser who has expressed the sincerity of the Government of India in the ongoing peace process. The Naga people have been crying out for peace and the peace process has the popular support of the people including the mass-based civil societies, church organization, tribal hohos, NGOs, and political parties. In the previous House of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, all the 60 MLAs under the banner of the Joint Legislators Forum had unanimously resolved to support the peace process. This itself is a significant achievement that cannot be undermined.

The Naga People's Front has declared in its election manifesto that the State Government will pave way for any solution that is honourable and acceptable to the people. This Commitment has removed all hurdles and obstacles and the ground has been prepared for realization of an honourable solution. It was on the basis of this commitment in the manifesto that the Democratic Alliance of Nagaland was voted to power with the popular mandate of the people for three consecutive terms.

In this connection, we urge upon the Government of India to expedite the peace talks and give an offer of solution to the Naga people so that an honourable solution can be reached and permanent peace can be achieved which will pave way for accelerated development to take place.

In 2003, the then Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has stated in Kohima, the Capital of Nagaland: "India recognises and understands the unique history of the Nagas." This issue must be approached as a national issue. A peaceful, democratic and just solution will not only strengthen the foundations of Indian democracy but it will also bring to an end, the more than seven decades of violent conflict in a crucial region of the country that is of strategic importance in multi-dimensional manner. This issue is of utmost national importance and the peace process and negotiations must be approached to be resolved in a time bound manner.