

PROGRAM

NORTHEAST INDIA & ITS TRANSNATIONAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

17TH-18TH JAN

2008

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India

NORTHEAST INDIA & ITS TRANSNATIONAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

17TH-18TH JANUARY 2008



Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India



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Introduction

It is often said that 99% of Northeast India's borders are with foreign countries: China (the Tibet region), Burma [Myanmar], Bangladesh and Bhutan. There are many aspects of Northeast Indian life that would make sense if considered from a transnational perspective, yet the current organization of academic knowledge seems ill equipped to address the intellectual challenges of such an approach. In order to contextualise the cultural, social and political dynamics of the region, our view needs to extend beyond political boundaries.

This interdisciplinary conference will provide a forum for scholars and policy makers, as well as visual artists and others involved in the material and visual representation of this region. Participants include those who are currently, or have previously been actively involved in research in this region.



schedule

DAY 1: January 17th

9:30-10:30: Inauguration by Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State for Commerce, Government of India

VENUE **Senate Hall**

>> TEA/COFFEE 10:30-11:00

Parallel Sessions (Seminar rooms of HSS, EC and Maths. Dept.) 11:00-13:00

HSS-Humanities & Social Sciences Department, EC-Electronics & Communication Engineering Department and Maths.-Mathematics Department.

panel 1 11:30-13:00

Frontiers: Territoriality & Spatial Constructions

1. Crossing the Hills: A History of Roads in the Hill Tracts between Assam and Burma

Lipokmar Dzuwichu, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

2. Run, Deserter, Run: Mobility, Capital and Production of the Primitive in British Assam

Bodhisattva Kar, Centre for the Study of Social Sciences, Kolkata

3. Revisiting the Eurasian Ecumene: From the Circumference to the Center
Siddiq Wahid, Islamic University of Science and Technology, Kashmir

CHAIR

Willem van Schendel, University of Amsterdam

DISCUSSANT

Adnan Naseemullah, University of California, Berkeley

VENUE

HSS Seminar Room

panel 2 11:30-13:00

Negotiating across borders: literature, aesthetics & performance

1. How Many Miles Must a Man Walk Down? Learning to Live with the Gun:
Readings from No Man's Land

Rakhee Kalita, Cotton College, Guwahati

2. Border/Art: Aesthetics in the Age of the Genome

Pramod Nayar, University of Hyderabad

3. Imperial Frontier to National Borders: Narration, History and Identity in
Ghosh's The Glass Palace

Abhigyan Prasad and Rohini Mokashi-Punekar, Department of Humanities
and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

CHAIR

Nandana Dutta, Gauhati University

DISCUSSANT

Zilkia Janer, Hofstra University, New York

VENUE

EC Seminar Room

panel 3 11:30-13:00

Negotiating identities transnationally

1. T(h)ai visions of India's trans-national neighbourhood

Nicholas Farrelly, Balliol College, University of Oxford

2. Double isolation or transnational hotspots along porous
borders?Burmese transnational activists from Northeast India to North
Thailand

Kerstin Duell, National University of Singapore

3. Trans-national Dimensions of Naga Christianity 1876-2007

Mark Woodward, Arizona State University

CHAIR

Sandhya Goswami, Gauhati University

DISCUSSANT

Liza Das, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

VENUE

Maths Seminar Room

>> **LUNCH 13:15-14:30**

Parallel Sessions 14:45-16:45

panel 4 14:45-16:45

The Nagas And The Politics Of Representation

1. Warp and Weft of Naga Nationalism

Vibha Joshi, University of Oxford

2. How to represent the Naga in Europe?

Alban von Stockhausen and Marion Wettstein, Ethnographic Museum of Zurich University, Switzerland

3. Missionaries, Colonialism and the Writing of History in the Naga Hills

John Thomas, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

CHAIR

A.C. Bhagabati, Former Vice Chancellor, Arunachal University

DISCUSSANT

Aküm Longchari, The Morung Express, Dimapur

VENUE

HSS Seminar Room

panel 5 14:45-16:45

Whose Frontier? Contested Notions of Space in Colonial Northeast India

1. Practices of Spatial Control: Northeastern Frontier of the British Indian Empire

Yengkhom Jilangamba, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

2. Exploring Brahmaputra, Exploring Routes: Understanding the Eastern Frontier of Colonial India

Arupjyoti Saikia, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

3. Connected Histories, Disconnected Borders: Colonial Goalpara and the Northeast Borderland

Sanghamitra Misra, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

CHAIR

Sanjib Baruah, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati.

DISCUSSANT

Bodhisattva Kar, Centre for the Study of Social Sciences, Kolkata

VENUE

EC Seminar Room

panel 6 14:45-16:45

Religious Change in Northeast India

1. The Flow of Life Forces: Garo Notions of Illness and Healing

Erik de Maaker, Leiden University

2. 'Looking Beyond the Margin: Re-defining the Boundaries of Belonging in Pre-colonized Assam'

Archana Barua, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

3. Religious transformations and the formation of new identities with respect to North-East

Prabhu Venkataraman, IIT, Guwahati

CHAIR

Krishna Barua, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati.

DISCUSSANT

Mandy Sadan, University of Oxford and Chiang Mai University

VENUE

Maths Seminar Room

DAY 2: January 18th

Parallel Sessions 9:30 - 11:45

panel 7 9:30-11:45

Northeast India in a New Asia

1. India's Look East Policy: For Growth or for Insurgents
Sushil Khanna, Indian Institute of Management Calcutta
2. Cross-Border Economic Relationships between Northeast India and Bangladesh: A Study of the Determinants
Gautam Dutta, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi
3. Linking Northeast with Southeast Asia: Examining the Security Concerns
Bibhu Routray, Institute for Conflict Management, New Delhi
4. Re-defining the new role for Northeast India
Ramananda Wangkheirakpam, North East Peoples Alliance on Trade Finance and Development

CHAIR

Soundarjya Borbora, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

DISCUSSANT

Paul Staniland, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston

VENUE

HSS Seminar Room

panel 8 9:30-11:45

Culture, Identity and The Politics of Difference

1. Multiple views of Otherness: Situating the difference between Valley and Highland
Ashild Kolas, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway
2. Language and the cultural history of central Arunachal Pradesh
Mark Post, Research Centre for Linguistic Typology, La Trobe University, Australia
3. Myths, Performance and Discursive Constitution of 'Valley' and 'Hills' Identities in Manipur
Gurumayum Amarjit Sharma, Manipur Research Forum, Delhi,

4. Colonial interventions and implications of border trades by the tribes of NEFA

Sarit Chaudhuri, Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh

CHAIR

Archana Barua, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

DISCUSSANT

Robbins Burling, University of Michigan, USA

VENUE

EC Seminar Room

panel 9 9:30-11:45

Minority Peoples and The Politics of Belonging

1. Living as Encroachers: Displaced Bodo inhabitants in Balipara Forest, Assam-Arunachal Pradesh Border

Makiko Kimura, Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, Japan

2. Land, Location and Belonging: Locating Ethnic Conflicts in Karbi Anglong District

Sanjay Barbora, Panos Institute South Asia, Guwahati.

3. 'Identity as Being: The Tai Phakes of Assam'

Krishna Barua, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati.

4. Indigenous People & Environment: 'Tribal' Culture & The State In Bangladesh

Farid Uddin Ahmed, University of Chittagong

CHAIR

Madhurjya P. Bezbarua, Gauhati University

DISCUSSANT

Bipasha Baruah, California State University

VENUE

Maths Seminar Room

>> LUNCH 11:45-13:15

panel 10 13:30-15:45

Living in a Borderland: The View from Below

1. Narrations on outlawed trade in Jia Nodi
Malini Sur, Amsterdam School for Social Science Research
2. Population Movement in the Fluid, Fragile and Contentious Borderland between Bangladesh and India
Rita Afsar, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Dhaka
3. A Look into the Making and Unmaking of the Indo-Myanmar Border: A Line or a Land?
Dulali Nag, Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management (IISWBM), Kolkata
4. 'Bangladesh-Arakan: Two Visions of the Same Border Space'
Marion Sabrie, La Sorbonne, Paris

CHAIR

Rohini Mokashi-Punekar, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati.

DISCUSSANT

Willem van Schendel, University of Amsterdam

VENUE

HSS Seminar Room

panel 11 13:30-15:45

Armed Conflicts in Northeast India: Laws, Weapons & Discourse

1. Armed Conflict, Small Arms Proliferation and Women's Response to Violence in India's Northeast
Binalakshmi Nepram Mentschel, Oxfam, South Asia
2. Human Rights in 'disturbed areas'
Anjuman Ara Begum, Gauhati University
3. Contested Territorial and Border Discourses: Case Studies of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim and the Dima Halam Daogah
Namrata Goswami, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi

4. Truth, Integrity and Social Responsibility of Media: Going Beyond Blood-dripping Stories on Northeast India
George Plathottam, St. Anthony's College, Shillong,

CHAIR

Monirul Hussain, Gauhati University

DISCUSSANT

Ananya Vajpeyi, University of Massachusetts, Boston

VENUE

EC Seminar Room

panel 12 13:30-15:45

Between South and Southeast Asia

1. Competing or Compatible? Reading the Tea Leaves of India-China Subregional Visions

Nimmi Kurien, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi

2. North East in India's Look East Policy

Baladas Ghoshal, Jamia Millia Islamia

3. Street Food Vending and Social Security: A Look Across Southeast Asia

Mini Bhattacharya, Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University

4. 'Looking East : From India to Continental Southeast Asian Corridors'

Guy Lubeigt, National Scientific Research Centre (CNRS) and Sorbonne University, Paris

CHAIR

Mrinal Kanti Dutta, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati.

DISCUSSANT

Sanjoy Hazarika, Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research (C-NES).

VENUE

Maths Seminar Room

>> TEA BREAK 15:45-16:15 P.M.

ABRN Business Meeting 16:15-17:15

>> DINNER 19:30-21:30

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biographies

Rita Afsar

Rita Afsar has been researching in the areas of migration and development for the last three decades. She covered different aspects and forms of migration in her researches and worked in a number of developing countries in Asia and Africa and developed countries as well. Both her Masters and PhD theses are based on empirical researches on migration. She has a strong track record of quality publications in refereed journals and in the form of book and book articles from reputed publishing houses. Currently she is working as a Senior Research Fellow and Head, Human Resources Development Research Division at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Dhaka. She is associated with a wide range of professional bodies in different capacities and involved in research networks including South Asian Swedish Network (SASNET) and Migration Research Networks (MRN), Australia

Farid Uddin Ahamed

Farid Uddin Ahamed is Professor and the Chair of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chittagong, Bangladesh. His doctoral work at UCL-London is on the current predicament of the ethnic minorities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). He has a forthcoming book on indigenous identity and environment in the CHT. He has a number of publications and research projects on fields such as Anthropology and Development, Minority issues, Anthropology of forest-dwelling peoples, Anthropology of Marginality, Anthropology of Public Action and Non-governmentality, Social forestry, Public Health and Bio-Medical Anthropology, and Issues of Ethnicity and Citizenship within the Nation-state.

Sanjay Barbora

Sanjay Barbora has a PhD in sociology from North Eastern Hill University, Shillong. He is currently the regional manager of Panos South Asia's "Media and Conflict" thematic concern and has written extensively on human rights, federalism and land and conflict issues pertaining to Northeast India. Barbora is based in Guwahati and is currently working on a comparative study of the impact of post-empire migration in Central and South Asia for the National Centre for Competence and Research (NCCR), North-South."

Archana Barua

Archana Barua teaches philosophy at Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati. A philosophy teacher of about 27 – years standing, Dr. Barua has published widely in philosophical journals and has authored two books. Her current area of interest is phenomenology, ethical issues of science and technology, philosophy of religion and continental philosophy. Archana Barua has published a number of poems and short stories in different journals.

Krishna Barua

Krishna Barua is Associate Professor in the Dept.of Humanities & Social Sciences in Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati. Her Ph.D on Patrick White(1986) was one of the pioneering works on Commonwealth Literature. She has published extensively on Australian Studies both in India and abroad. Her area of study includes Comparative Literature, Cultural Studies and Translation.

Bipasha Baruah

Bipasha Baruah is Assistant Professor of Geography and Associate Director of the Yadanandan Centre for India Studies at California State University, Long Beach. Dr. Baruah earned her doctorate in 2005 from York University, Toronto. She conducted her doctoral research in collaboration with the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in Ahmedabad, India. Her research interests revolve around women and economic empowerment, non-governmental organizations, and informal sector economies and livelihoods. Dr. Baruah has served as a gender specialist on the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Eastern Caribbean Economic Management Program and as a consultant on gender and environmental issues to Foreign Affairs Canada.

Sanjib Baruah

Sanjib Baruah is Visiting Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gauhati. He holds concurrent professorial appointments at Bard College, New York and the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. He is the author of *Postfrontier Blues: Towards a New Policy Framework for Northeast India* (East-West Center, Washington, 2007), *Durable Disorder: Understanding the Politics of Northeast India* (Oxford University Press, 2005) and *India against Itself: Assam and the Politics of Nationality* (University of Pennsylvania Press & Oxford University Press, 1999). His Op-ed articles appear in newspapers including the Telegraph, Times of India, Indian Express and Hindustan Times.

Anjuman Ara Begum

Anjuman Ara Begum studied B.Sc in Chemistry and LL.M with specialization in Human Rights and Constitutional law. She is currently working at North East Network, a leading women's rights' organization based in Assam, as a Legal Associate. Her areas of interests are human rights, issues related to criminal justice and armed conflict situations for which she has been involved in comprehensive research. She is also working with gender budgeting as part of her advocacy efforts and has researched on budgeting for north eastern states. She is also pursuing her Ph.D in Gauhati University on Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958.

Madhurjya Prasad Bezbaruah

Madhurjya Prasad Bezbaruah is Professor of Economics in Gauhati University. He has a Masters degree from the Delhi School of Economics and a Ph.D. from Gauhati University. His publications include Technological Transformation of Agriculture (1994) and Agricultural Growth and Regional Economic Development (2002). Among major research projects that he has completed are: (a) Problems and Prospects of Growth of Indo-Myanmar Cross Border Trade and its Socio-economic Consequences for the North-East, (b). Perspective Plan for Rural Development of Assam and (c) Towards a Strategy for Economic Development of Karbi Anglong. He was associated with preparation of the Assam Human Development Report and was a Member of the RBI Committee on Financial Sector Plan for NE Region

Annada Charan Bhagabati

Annada Charan Bhagabati, an anthropologist, was trained at the Universities of Gauhati, Calcutta and Auckland. He did his doctoral work on the Maoris of northern New Zealand at the University of Auckland. Dr. Bhababati was Professor and Head of the Department of Anthropology at Dibrugarh and Gauhati Universities. He was also the founder Professor and Director of what is now the Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development. He has also served as Vice Chancellor of Arunachal University. He has a large number of publications to his credit. His areas of research interest include social change, ethnicity and identity and tribal transformation process in Northeast India. Dr. Bhagabati is currently Honorary Coordinator and Head of Division, North Eastern Regional Centre of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi.

Mini Bhattacharyya(Thakur)

Mini Bhattacharyya(Thakur) did her postgraduate studies in Anthropology at Delhi University and completed her Doctoral work on “Street food vending in Urban Guwahati: An Anthropological Appraisal” at Gauhati University. Her research interests include informal sector activities, gender, economy and the anthropology of food and culture of Northeast India. Presently, she is engaged in teaching and research and holds the post of Reader in Anthropology at Gauhati University, Assam

Saundarjya Borbora

Saundarjya Borbora is the Head of the Department, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati and an Associate Professor in Economics. He has been at the IIT since 1998. Prior to that, he worked under the Colombo Plan in Bhutan for three years. He has published a number of papers/ chapters in national and international journals and books and has attended conferences and seminars in India and abroad. His areas of interest include development economics and technology and development. He is a member of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, Indian Society of Labour Economics and the Indian Economic Association. He is the Secretary of the North Eastern Economic Association.

Robbins Burling

Robbins Burling is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and Linguistics at the University of Michigan. He visited northeast India for the first time in 1954, where he did his doctoral field work, a study of the kinship system of the Garos. He spent 1959-60 in Burma as a Fullbright lecturer at the University of Rangoon, and he was a Lecturer at NEHU in Shillong, also under the Fullbright program, in 1996-97. Starting in the 1980's he made several research trips to Bangladesh where he conducted both linguistic and anthropological research among the Garos of that country. He is the author of several books and many articles on the culture and language of the Garos, and on comparative Tibeto-Burman linguistics. He has also written extensively on the evolution of the human capacity for language.

Sarit Chaudhuri

Sarit Chaudhuri is Reader in Anthropology at Rajiv Gandhi University and has worked among the tribes of North East India for the last 17 years. He has published six books

and a good number of papers in relation to the tribal life of India as well as NEI. He has worked as a core member of an international, collaborative project between SOAS, University of London, the British Museum and CCRD titled "Tribal Transitions: Cultural Change in Arunachal Pradesh" and held a 2 year post-doctoral fellowship at SOAS, University of London. His prime areas of interest are in the field of tribal art, religion, change, and the oral histories of the frontier tribes.

Liza Das

Liza Das is Associate Professor at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Guwahati. She teaches English and Cultural Studies. She is the author of *Gender, Culture and Writing* (2005) and editor of two texts by the American Baptist missionary E. Elizabeth Vickland. She has also co-edited *Natural selection and Literature: A Companion* (2005) with Dr Uttara Debi.

Kerstin Duell

Kerstin Duell received a PhD scholarship from the National University of Singapore in 2004 and a grant from the Asia Research Institute for a study on Burma. She applies theories of social movements and transnational activism to the Burmese case. Other research interests include Engaged Buddhism and HIV/AIDS issues. She holds an MA in Southeast Asian Studies from SOAS and a BA in Southeast Asian Studies and Hispanic Studies from Free University & Humboldt University in Berlin. Her photojournalistic work on HIV/AIDS, migration and development has been published in Asia and Europe and in exhibitions sponsored by the Heinrich-Boell-Foundation and Canon. Since 2006, Kerstin has been fully sponsored by Olympus Singapore.

Gautam Dutta

Gautam Dutta is a mechanical engineer with a Masters degree in Business Management. He has completed a doctoral degree at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and presently works as Associate Professor at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade. Prior to that, he served as Head, Centre for Industrial Projects and Consultancy of the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship, Guwahati, Assam and Professor and Head, Department of Management Studies, Sikkim Manipal University. He has about 24 years of experience in post graduate teaching in management, training, research and project consultancy on SME enterprise development and trade promotion, rural

development. He is actively involved in cross border trade development projects with neighboring countries of northeast India. He was invited as speaker on inter regional trade between northeast India and Bangladesh on several occasions in Bangladesh. He also acted as core group member of the Northeast Indian delegation to Myanmar for cross country trade development between India and Myanmar. He has coordinated several seminars/ workshops and trainings for entrepreneurship development in the northeastern region. He received a UN fellowship and attended a two month programme on sustainable regional development in Nagoya, Japan, organized by the United Nations Center for Regional Development, Japan.

Mrinal Kanti Dutta

Mrinal Kanti Dutta is Assistant Professor in Economics in the Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences in IIT Guwahati. He did his doctoral work at Gauhati University on the "Problems and Prospects of Utilisation of Irrigation Potential in Agriculture of Assam." He has published a number of research papers and articles in various journals and books. He has participated in a number of professional conferences in India and abroad. His areas of teaching interest are Microeconomics, Mathematical Economics & Econometrics. His research interests are in the areas of Agricultural Economics and Environmental Economics. Prior to joining IIT Guwahati, he taught at Dibrugarh University, Assam.

Nandana Dutta

Nandana Dutta is Professor in the Department of English, Gauhati University. Her areas of interest include American Studies, Women's Studies and Postcolonial Studies. She has published in the areas of literary studies, theory, postcolonial theory and American literature. She has recently completed a manuscript titled "Location, Migration, Hybridity: Questions of Identity in Assam" for Sage Publications.

Lipokmar Dzuwichu

Lipokmar Dzuwichu was born in Kohima, Nagaland, and was educated in Kohima College, Kohima, University of Hyderabad and Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Presently, he is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. His research interests include nineteenth and early twentieth century history of the South

and Southeast Asian Borderlands, particularly the Indian Northeast; history of development and technology; states and “Illicit” practices; and labor history.

Nicholas Farrelly

Nicholas Farrelly is a Rhodes Scholar at Balliol College, Oxford, where he is writing a doctoral dissertation on the China-India-Burma borderlands. He was previously a tutor in the Centre for Asian Societies and Histories at the Australian National University. Nicholas has lived, researched and worked extensively throughout Southeast Asia. He has written on various Tai-speaking peoples of this region and, in particular, the Shan who live along the Thailand – Burma border. In 2007, he won the Sir Peter Holmes Memorial Award from the London-based Royal Society for Asian Affairs and has produced more than a dozen recent articles and reviews on regional topics. Nicholas is also the co-founder of New Mandala, a website on Southeast Asian affairs hosted by the ANU’s Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies.

Baladas Ghoshal

Baladas Ghoshal, currently Visiting Professor, Academy of Third World Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, is a doyen of Southeast Asian studies in India, having taught in Jadavpur, Jawaharlal Nehru universities in India with stints of teaching in Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and in the United States. He had also worked with the United Nations in Jakarta as a Consultant to the United Nations Support Facility for Indonesian Recovery. Professor Ghoshal can read, write and speak Bahasa Indonesia and Malay, and is a member of the international advisory committee of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Malaysia.

Namrata Goswami

Namrata Goswami is an Associate Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. She is currently working on the project “Strengthening Indian Federalism is the Key to Resolving Separatist Movements in the North East”. Dr. Goswami completed her doctorate from the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in 2005. Her other research projects include “Myanmar’s Instability and its Implications for North East and the Look East Policy”, and “Naxalite Violence in India: Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution”. Dr. Goswami has a number of publications to her credit, the most recent of which is “The Naga

Narrative of Conflict: Envisioning a Resolution Roadmap”, Strategic Analysis, 31\2, March, 2007 and “Left Wing Extremism\Naxalism: Purpose and Strategy”, Asian Strategic Review 2006- 2007, Academic Foundation, New Delhi, 2007.

Sandhya Goswami

Sandhya Goswami is Professor and chairperson, Department of Political Science, Gauhati University, Assam. Her research interests include: Democracy, Election Studies and social Movement. She has authored Language Politics in Assam, and co-authored North-East India Development, Communalism and Insurgency besides publishing several articles in reputed Journals in areas She is a member of Lokniti Programme of Comparative Democracy under Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi .She has recently participated in the First Annual Convention of the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia as a member of Lokniti Program me on 5-6,November 2007 ,organized by Regional Centre for Strategic Studies,Colombo and made a presentation on Non Traditional Security Challenge Scenario of Northeast India. She is a co-ordinator for Assam in National Election Studies since 1996 and has been associated with collaborative projects like the State of Democracy in South Asia, World Value Survey and Political Parties in South Asia.

Sanjoy Hazarika

Sanjoy Hazarika is Managing Trustee, Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research (C-NES). Editor, writer and Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, he has written extensively on the region and makes documentary films on the North-east and neighboring countries. He is a former correspondent of The New York Times, former Consulting Editor, the Statesman, and has held fellowships at Harvard, University of Kentucky and Tufts. He is member, Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, and of various expert committees of Planning Commission; his independent columns on the North-east are widely read and he is a frequent discussant on radio and television. His books include Bhopal, the lesson of a tragedy; Strangers of the Mist and Rites of Passage. One of his major initiatives is the development of boats for health services on the islands of the Brahmaputra..

Monirul Hussain

Monirul Hussain is Professor, Department of Political Science, Gauhati University. He did his doctoral research at the School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and post doctoral research at the University of Oxford. His books include *The Assam Movement: Class, Ideology and Identity* (Manak 1993), *Interrogating Development: State, Displacement and Popular Resistance in North East India* (Sage 2007), *Human Security in India: Health, Shelter and Marginalized Groups* (University Press 2008). His research papers have been published in many reputed journals published from India and abroad. He was a recipient of Commonwealth Fellowship and South Asia Senior Fellowship (SSRC- New York).

Zilkia Janer

Zilkia Janer is Associate Professor in the Department of Romance Languages and Literature at Hofstra University, New York. She did her undergraduate work at the University of Puerto Rico and her doctoral work at Duke University. She is the author of *Puerto Rican Nation-Building Literature: Impossible Romance* (2005) and *Latino Food Culture* (2008). Her published articles include "Latin America-r Xahityot Jadukori Bastob-bador Protisruti aru Byorthota"[The Promise and Failure of Magical Realism in Latin American Literature] in *Ajir Asom* (Puja Issue, 2003, Guwahati, Assam), "The Failed Narratives of North-East India: Sujata Miri's The Broken Circle" in *Sukalpa Bhattacharjee and Rajesh Dev eds. Ethno-Narratives: Identity and Experience in North East India*, New Delhi: Anshah Publishing, 2006; and "The Geopolitics of Culinary Knowledge" in *Seminar* October 2006, No. 566: New Delhi.

Yengkhom Jilangamba

Yengkhom Jilangamba is a Ph. D. student in the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. He is also an ICSSR Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Studies. His work looks at the ideas of frontier and territoriality, production of identity through colonial ethnographic knowledge with special reference to what became the north-eastern frontier of the British Indian Empire

Vibha Joshi

Vibha Joshi holds a doctorate in Social Anthropology from the University of Oxford. Her doctoral thesis was entitled 'Christian and non-Christian Angami Naga with special reference to traditional healing practices'. She is presently engaged in post-doctoral research funded by the British Academy and the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research on 'Naga textiles as diasporic objects in the field and in museums during and since colonialism', which combines the study of textiles in museum collections with ethnographic fieldwork. She is guest curator for an international exhibition 'Naga of Eastern Himalayas' at Museer Culturen, Basel Switzerland (May-October 2008). She is the author of *The Land of the Nagas* (2004, Mapin & Grantha Publishing) and has published articles on various themes concerning the Naga especially Naga textiles, Naga Christianity and Angami healing traditions.

Rakhee Kalita

Rakhee Kalita teaches English Literature at Cotton College, Guwahati, Assam. She has worked on T.S.Eliot's American genealogy and his poetry for her PhD and has several publications to her credit. Apart from taking an interest in postcolonial transactions in literature and publishing on Amitav Ghosh, her current area of work is north east India and conflict in the region. Her most recent publication is "Writing Terror: Men Of Rebellion and Contemporary Assamese Literature" in *Beyond Counterinsurgency: Breaking the Impasse in Northeast India* (ed) Sanjib Baruah , Oxford University Press, India (forthcoming).

Bodhisattva Kar

Bodhisattva Kar is a Fellow in History at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. He has recently submitted his doctoral dissertation, "Framing Assam: Plantation Capital, Metropolitan Knowledge, and a Regime of Identities, 1790s – 1930s", to the Center for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Currently he is working on a project tentatively titled "Joint Stocks and Racial Stocks: Corporations and Identities in Northeastern Frontier of British India".

Sushil Khanna

Sushil Khanna is Professor of Economics and Strategic Management, Indian Institute of Management Calcutta. He is the author of numerous articles in Business and Economics

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Makiko Kimura was educated at Keio University, Tokyo, Japan (M.A. in Sociology, 1999) and at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India (Ph. D., Sociology, 2005). After finishing her Ph.D., she conducted post-doctoral research as a Research Fellow (PD) of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (affiliated to University of Tokyo and Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi). She is currently a Research Associate at the International Peace Research Institute, Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo, Japan. Her main area of interest is in research of ethnic issues including movements and conflicts in north-east India. During her Ph.D. and post-doctoral research, she conducted extensive fieldwork in Assam on the issues of ethnic movements and conflicts, land issues and indigenous rights movements. Currently she is investigating the impact of globalization and development on ethnic relations and issues in the northeast.

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Åshild Kolås is a senior researcher at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), and leads PRIO's Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Programme. She holds a doctoral degree in Social Anthropology from the University of Oslo. Her research has focused mainly on the linkages between religion, politics and ethnic identity in Tibet. She has conducted long-term fieldwork in Himachal Pradesh and in Tibetan areas of the People's Republic of China. Her PhD fieldwork was conducted in Southwest China's Yunnan Province, where she studied ethnic tourism and cultural change. Dr. Kolås is the author of 'On the Margins of Tibet. Cultural Survival on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier' (University of Washington Press, 2005 – co-authored with Monika P. Thowsen) and 'Tourism and Tibetan Culture in Transition. A Place Called Shangrila' (Routledge, 2008).

Nimmi Kurian

Nimmi Kurian is an Associate Professor at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. Kurian's work has focused on exploring major debates in India and China's foreign policies, the evolving discourse on redefining security, state-society relations and issues relating to sub-regional cooperation. Some of the recent themes she has worked on include India's Look-East policy, post-Mao policy shifts in China's regional development; particularly the political thrust given to integrating southwestern China with the extended regional economy and issues of social exclusion in India and China. Her most recent publication is *Troubled Transitions: The Politics of Social Harmony in China*, CPR Issue Brief No. 1, 2007.

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Aküm Longchari is a political activist and an educationist. He completed his graduation from St. Stephens College and LLB from Delhi University and did his Masters in Conflict Transformation at the Eastern Mennonite University, US. He is the Managing Director of an English daily newspaper, *The Morung Express*. He is also pursuing his doctoral studies on Self-determination as a resource of Conflict Transformation. He is also the co-founder of a non-profit foundation, *Morung for Indigenous Affairs and Just Peace*, which is involved in publication and media, study and research, humanitarian service, art and creative work, training and workshops.

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Guy Lubeigt, born in 1940 in Paris, is a geographer who graduated from the Sorbonne University and the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations. He obtained his Ph.D in Tropical Geography in 1975: *Le Palmier à Sucre en Birmanie Centrale*. (Sugar Palm Tree in Central Burma : Culture and Exploitation). In 2001, he received his Doctorat d'Etat in Asian Studies at the Sorbonne University for: *Birmanie: un pays modelé par le Bouddhisme. Essai de Géographie Religieuse et Politique*. (Burma : a country modelled by Buddhism : Religious and Political Geography). Senior Field Researcher in the National Scientific Research Centre (CNRS), Professor of History and Geography, he is also member of the Doctoral School of Geography of Sorbonne University. Former Representative of the laboratory PRODIG (Pôle de Recherche pour l'Organisation et la Diffusion de l'Information Géographique), he is a visiting Professor at the South East Asian Asian Studies Centre of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. Retired, he is also a research associate of the Research Institute on Contemporary Southeast Asia (IRASEC) in Bangkok. A specialist in

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Erik de Maaker

Erik de Maaker is an anthropologist teaching at Leiden University in the Netherlands. He obtained his PhD in 2006 (Leiden University) for which he did extensive fieldwork among the upland Garo of the Indian state of Meghalaya. Present research in the same region deals with the transformation of religious beliefs and ritual practices, and their dissemination among distinct communities. Erik de Maaker is also an associated researcher at the Faculty of Religious Studies of the Radboud University Nijmegen, where he is engaged in research on contemporary death rites in the Netherlands.

Sanghamitra Misra

Sanghamitra Misra is a Lecturer at the Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Jamia Millia Islamia. She completed her PhD, "Spaces, Borders, Histories: Identity Construction in Colonial Goalpara", which traced the process of formation and fragmentation of a regional identity in colonial Goalpara in western Assam, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. She previously studied at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Areas of research include: politics of speech, language and economy, making of borderland identities in northeastern India, histories of migration and marketing practices. Her recent publications include 'Changing Frontiers and Spaces: The Colonial State in Nineteenth Century Goalpara', *Studies in History*, August, Vol. 22, 2005 and 'Redrawing frontiers: language, resistance and the imagining of a Goalparia people', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 43:2, 2006. Her forthcoming publications: 'Law, Migration and New Subjectivities: Reconstructing the Colonial Project in an Eastern Borderland', (*Indian Economic and Social History Review*, December, 2007) and *Between Borders: The Politics of Space and Identity in Colonial Assam* (Routledge, 2008).

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Rohini Mokashi-Punekar is Associate Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati. Her research interests include Postcolonial Studies, Cultural Studies and Translation. She is on the panel of reviewers for The Book Review, New Delhi. Her recent publications include a volume of translations of the 14th century Dalit poet Chokhamela, *On the Threshold: Songs of Chokhamela* (Altamira Press) and *Untouchable Saints: An Indian Phenomenon* (Manohar) which she co-edited with Eleanor Zelliot (Carleton College, Minnesota) besides several papers in journals and in edited volumes. Her book on Vikram Seth (Foundation) is forthcoming

Dulali Nag

Dulali Nag is a Reader at the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management (IISWBM), Kolkata. Dr. Nag has completed a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from Michigan State University and a Masters in Economics from the University of Calcutta. It is her interest in both economics and social anthropology that got her interested in the question of trading across borders, where it is difficult to isolate an economic, i.e. rational, action from a social, i.e. non-rational/structural, action. Her theoretical interest thus lies in exploring the twilight zone of interaction between the rational and the structural to contribute to the classic sociological question of understanding “change” in society. In this case, the empirical support to this theoretical quest will be provided by firsthand data collected from the border town Moreh in Manipur where Dr. Nag is at the moment engaged in doing her field research on trading across the border.

Adnan Naseemullah

Adnan Naseemullah is a PhD Candidate in political science at the University of California, Berkeley and a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi. He is currently in India on a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Fellowship, studying the variations within India’s industrial cultures. He has recently completed five months of research in Pakistan, and has presented papers on informal finance among South Asian workers in the Middle East and the decline of coherence among working classes. He is currently writing on the concept of the frontier and its relationship to resource extraction through research on the American West and India’s North West Frontier in the 19th Century.

Pramod K. Nayar

Pramod K. Nayar teaches at the Dept. of English, University of Hyderabad, India. His most recent publications include *English Writing and India, 1600-1920: Colonizing Aesthetics* (Routledge), *The Trial of Bahadur Shah Zafar* (Orient Longman), two books on the 1857 'Mutiny' (Penguin) and *Reading Culture: Theory, Praxis, Politics* (Sage). Forthcoming works include a book on postcolonial literature, an introduction to cultural studies, *Cybercultures: An Introduction* and an edited collection, *The New Media and Cybercultures Reader*.

Binalakshmi Nepram Mentschel

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George Plathottam

George Plathottam is a member of the international society called Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB), has a Graduate Degree (English Major), a Master's Degrees in Theology with specialisation in Social Communications, Sociology and in Journalism and Communications. He is currently pursuing a PhD on Journalism and Mass Communication with the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong. He is also currently director of Dept. of Mass Media, St. Anthony's College, Shillong. He is a visiting lecturer of Media, Journalism and Communications at several institutions - Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, Oriens Theological College, Shillong, National Institute of Social Communications, Research and Training (NISCORT), Delhi. He has conducted numerous courses and workshops on com-

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Mark Post

Mark Post is currently a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology, in the Institute for Advanced Studies of La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. He specializes in mainland South-East Asian language typology and evolution, with a particular focus on the Tani languages of central Arunachal Pradesh. He has written a comprehensive descriptive grammar and dictionary of the Lare dialect of Galo (Tani; West Siang, Arunachal Pradesh), and is currently engaged in a study of comparative Galo dialectology and grammatical reconstruction. Mark Post is Secretary of the North East Indian Linguistic Society, based at Gauhati University

Abhigyan Prasad

Abhigyan Prasad received his postgraduate degree in English from Gauhati University. He is presently working as a Lecturer in English at B. Borooah College, Guwahati. He is currently engaged in doctoral research on the fiction of Amitav Ghosh in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati. The proposed title of the dissertation is: Collapsing Boundaries: Narrative Strategies in the Fiction of Amitav Ghosh. He has contributed research papers to journals and has prepared study material for the Post-Graduate Correspondence School under Gauhati University.

Bibhu Prasad Routray

Bibhu Prasad Routray is Research Fellow at the New Delhi based Institute for Conflict Management (www.satp.org). He was also the Director of the Institute's Database and Documentation Centre on Conflict & Development (DADC) in India's Northeast at Guwahati in Assam between August 2001 and February 2005. He has researched on terrorism, sectarian and ethnic conflicts in South Asia. He received his doctoral degree from the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in 2001. He has written extensively in various journals, print media and on the internet on terrorism, internal security and democracy

Marion Sabrié

Marion Sabrié completed her Master degree in Geography in Paris- La Sorbonne. Her Masters thesis was on: "Sittwe, the regional capital of Arakan State, between the Buddhist and

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Mandy Sadan

Mandy Sadan is currently British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow (Pitt Rivers Museum) and Junior Research Fellow (Wolfson College) in the University of Oxford. During 2007-8 she is also Visiting Research Fellow at the Regional Centre for Social Sciences and Sustainable Development, Chiang Mai University, Thailand. She completed her PhD on colonial and postcolonial contexts of Kachin ethnic category formation in Burma at SOAS in 2005. She has worked on a number of archive and documentation projects in Burma and the UK and has research interests in issues of ethnicity, nationalism, political, cultural and economic subject formation, religious change, transnationalism and material, visual and oral culture. She is co-editor with Dr. François Robinne of *Social Dynamics in the Highlands of Southeast Asia: Reconsidering 'Political Systems of Highland Burma'* by Edmund Leach (Leiden: Brill, 2007) and is currently preparing a monograph on colonial and postcolonial ethnic category formation in Burma.

Arupjyoti Saikia

Arupjyoti Saikia is Assistant Professor in History, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, India. His research interests are in the social and environmental history of 19th and 20th century Assam. He was a visiting fellow in the Centre for Inter-disciplinary Studies in Environment and Development, Bangalore in 2007. In 2006 he was a visiting fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He studied at Jawaharlal Nehru University and the University of Delhi for his pre-doctoral and doctoral programme. His doctoral work, entitled *Agrarian Society, Economy and Peasant Unrest: Assam 1945-52* is forthcoming as a book. His first book entitled *Jungles, Reserves, Wildlife: A History of Forests in Assam* examines environmental and social consequences of the colonial forest regime in Assam. He also writes in Assamese and is completing a book in Assamese exploring the social history of a late 19th century peasant uprising

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Willem van Schendel

Willem van Schendel is Professor of Modern Asian History at the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. He also heads the Asia Department of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam. His recent books include *The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State and Nation in South Asia* (2005) and *Bangladesh: A History* (forthcoming). For other publications, please see <https://home.medewerker.uva.nl/h.w.vanschendel/>

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Gurumayum Amarjit Sharma is a resident of Imphal, Manipur. He had his school education in Manipur and higher education in Delhi University, Kurukshetra University and Jawaharlal Nehru University. He did M.Phil. and Ph.D. at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. He has been working on religious nationalism and politics of cultural representation in Manipur. He is also presently associated with the Manipur Research Forum, Delhi as an Associate Editor

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Paul Staniland is a Ph.D candidate in the Department of Political Science and Security Studies Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He studies civil war and international security, with a focus on the organization of insurgent groups. He has published in *Civil Wars*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Security Studies*, the *Washington Quarterly*, and with the RAND Corporation."

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Alban von Stockhausen was born in Germany and studied social and cultural anthropology, comparative study of religions and art history of East Asia at Zürich University, Switzerland. He is currently working on his PhD on the relation between ritual, landscape and the ancestors among the Dumi Rai in Eastern Nepal. At the Ethnographic Museum of Zürich University he established the use of multimedia for anthropological research, teaching and presentation and contributed to the preparation of several exhibition and publication projects. As a team-member of the SNF (Swiss National Science Foundation)-funded project "Material Culture, Oral Traditions and Identity among the Naga of Northeast India",

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Malini Sur

Malini Sur is a doctoral scholar at the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research, University of Amsterdam. As a part of the 'Illegal but Licit' research collective in Amsterdam, she uses archival templates and ethnographic fieldwork for understanding present day

interactions between citizens and foreigners in India. Her thesis re-conceptualises flows of unsanctioned goods and migrants from Bangladesh to Assam. Sur's research interests include partition studies, labour migration and human security. She has lived and worked in Bangladesh and India. Her last appointment was with the South Asia Program of Social Science Research Council (New York).

Thant Myint-U

Thant Myint-U was educated at Harvard and Trinity College, Cambridge and completed his PhD in history at Cambridge in 1996. In 1994 he was elected a Fellow of Trinity

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Ananya Vajpeyi

Ananya Vajpeyi teaches South Asian History at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. She was educated at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Oxford and the University of Chicago, and has taught most recently at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University in New York (2006-07). She was named a Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (2005-08). Her monograph on violence in India has just appeared from WISCOMP, New Delhi (Oct 2007). She has contributed a chapter to a volume on the conflict in the Northeast, edited by Sanjib Baruah and forthcoming from Oxford University Press in 2008.

Prabhu Venkataraman

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Ramananda Wangkheirakpam

Ramananda Wangkheirakpam is one of the Coordinators of the North East Peoples Alliance on Trade Finance and Development which critically engages with the globalization process in the North East Region of India. He has authored 'The Globalization Train – A Preliminary Assessment of the Trans Asian Railway' & co-authored 'International Financial Intrusion in India's North East' which examines the role of International Finance in North East. He also has contributed several articles on development process in the North East.

Siddiq Wahid

Siddiq Wahid is the Vice Chancellor of Islamic University of Science and Technology in Kashmir. Prior to this assignment he was the Maharaja Gulab Singh Chair Professor at the University of Jammu and prior to that taught at Harvard University in the Department of Inner Asian and Altaic Studies. Prof. Wahid has published widely for anthologies on literature, politics and history, including a book on Ladakh. And he has lectured widely in Europe, the United States, Australia and India in his field of study and the Jammu and Kashmir problem. His current academic interests are divided between The Kesar Project and the creation of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. He is a director of the J&K Muslim Waqf Board, member of the Governing Board (Senate) of the National Institute of Technology at Srinagar, the Board of Directors of Panos Institute India. He is a member of Pugwash Conferences on Science & World Affairs, a founding member of the India Forum and a member of several other academic and professional organizations. He is also deeply involved as an activist in the process to resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir problem.

Marion Wettstein

Marion Wettstein was born in Switzerland and studied social and cultural anthropology, musical anthropology and media science at the University of Zürich, Switzerland. Her PhD-project analyses social change mirrored in the textile traditions of the Ao Naga. At the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zürich she worked as assistant of Prof. Michael Oppitz and contributed to several exhibition and publication projects. As a team-member of the SNF (Swiss National Science Foundation)-funded project "Material Culture, Oral Traditions and Identity among the Naga of Northeast India", lead by Prof. Michael Oppitz, she is responsible for the Naga objects collection and engages in questions of material culture, especially concerned with the material self-representation of the Naga.

Mark Woodward

Mark Woodward is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Arizona State University in the United States. He received his Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology at the University of Illinois in 1985. He has conducted ethnographic field work in Indonesia, Singapore and Burma. He has published extensively on Islam and Buddhism in

Southeast Asia and on the indigenous religions of tribal societies of Upper Burma and North East India, particularly the Naga. His current research concerns Baptist Christianity in India and Burma.

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THE NORTHERN MOST POINT
OF THAILAND

panels

abstracts



Frontiers: Territoriality and Spatial Constructions

Crossing the Hills: A History of Roads in the Hill Tracts between Assam and Burma

Lipokmar Dzuwichu, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

ABSTRACT

This paper will examine the historical importance of “borderland” routes, the way they were laid out, built and monitored, and the changing role of hill communities in this colonial enterprise. It argues that road building provided a crucial site upon which plots of empire building could unfold along the hill tracts between Assam and Burma. This was a space which had to be constituted through the politics of access. Access routes came to replace what is often referred to as the ‘tyranny of distance’ with a new ‘tyranny of proximity’ which extended the reach of the state in a myriad ways, from colonial armies dispatched along routes to crush dissent, to mobilizing corvee labour to lay new roads. The expanding state-making projects in the hill tracts could also put new pressures on the colonial state to encourage certain flows of movement and check those considered undesirable. Road building was then closely woven into a complex network of colonial practices such as military surveillance, interdiction and enforcement. Yet, well into the early 20th century varied actors and commodities that were often deemed “illicit” by the colonial state continued to travel across the hill tracts. Looking at the continuities and ruptures in movements and communications might then allow an understanding of historical context and interconnections which extends beyond the region.

Run, Deserter, Run: Mobility, Capital and Production of the Primitive in British Assam

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ABSTRACT

The paper addresses a crucial aspect of imperial endeavors to ‘people’ Assam with ‘useful settlers’. Rather than flogging the dead horse of the indenture system, it concentrates on the other and more protracted scheme of settlement targeted at the local ‘savages’ which the sanctioned histories routinely overlook. Describing

how the question of territorial rights of the elite hill lineages was calculatedly overwritten with a preprogrammed question of slavery and wage labor, it analyzes the various considerations, discriminations and contradictions involved in the process of settlement. Through these and other related histories, it tries to recognize the emergence of a new discursive regime where the sense of collective belongingness had invariably to express itself through the thicket of bordered, compacted and sedentary territorialities. In trying to move beyond the tired opposition between fluid precolonial and fixed colonial spaces, it wishes to identify the specific modes of rupture, reproduction and disarticulation of the spatial geometry of capitalism by seizing on fragments of Singpho, Khamti, and Dafla histories.

Revisiting the Eurasian Ecumene: From the Circumference to the Center
Siddiq Wahid, Vice Chancellor, Islamic University of Science and
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ABSTRACT

Some time at the end of the 15th century or so, Europe experienced an “epistemological mutation” which resulted in it becoming the military and political center of world power. It is this event that dominates the world political scenario today. The legacy of this event has manifested itself in a process best described as a world order that has steadily promoted homogeneity and hegemony and, indeed, increased the pace and intensity of this twin phenomenon. Prior to this legacy, the Eurasian landmass was defined by spheres of influence that created an ecumenism, primarily around the frontiers or ‘borderlands’, which was based on economic, cultural and political interdependence and cooperation. This came about largely because of the legacy of the Tibetan and Mongol empires and their interaction with the outer Eurasian empires of Russia, China, India and Iran between the 7th and the 13th centuries. Elements of this relationship continued to exist until much later in the hinterlands, even into the 18th century, but they had largely collapsed much earlier. The hypothesis of this paper is that if we review the history of the last mentioned relationships between the circumference and center of the Eurasian landmass, we will find that they could well serve as a model for the 21st century. These were a series of ecumenic relationships in which diversity and plurality were not only tolerated, but were the very fuel that is needed for

panel 2

Negotiating/across Borders: Literature, Aesthetics and Performance

“How many miles must a man walk down..? Learning to live with the gun”. Readings from No man’s Land

Rakhee Kalita

ABSTRACT

The map of contemporary Assamese literature is dotted by a small but conspicuous mass of insistent voices that represent the confusion emerging out of this strife-torn region. Following the lingering climate of conflict in Assam and its neighbourhood, and in the wake of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN)’s beleaguering attempts to garner ‘independence’ from the Indian state a native narrative of rebellion and protest is currently available, providing a window on this much discussed issue of insurgency and instability in northeast India. The present paper seeks to call attention to aspects that have been easily missed in conflict narratives pouring from everywhere and takes a particularly close look at sensitive human relationships along the borders submerged by stories of general outrage at the culture of violence and terror. I choose to use two accounts spawned by this long reign of militancy to emphasise the growing awareness of ambivalent and complex issues involving cross border transactions among people living in sensitive zones where insurgent activity is rampant. Anuraag Mahanta’s *Owlingor Jui* and Rongbong Terang’s *Jaak Heruwa Pakhi*, both very recent works in Assamese, which while offering fictional accounts of ultras’ lives in the wilderness also address the painful and traumatic experiences of living in borderlands. As the political debate on combating militancy gathers heat in this part of the country, works such as the two I take up in this paper offer a scrutiny of unchartered attendant issues with refreshing honesty. These are voices that are hardly heard in the regimented discourse of counter insurgency available in national and international media resources and prompt the reader into negotiating aspects of inter-state and transnational interventions necessary to alleviate the current impasse.

Border/Art: Aesthetics in the Age of the Genome

Pramod Nayar, University of Hyderabad, India

ABSTRACT

'Border/Art' embodies a transnational aesthetics and politics. This paper examines an entirely new border that is explored, interrogated and invaded: that of biological form. Focusing on art forms identified as 'genomic art', the paper builds on my earlier work on a whole new aesthetic – what I have identified elsewhere as 'the new monstrous' (Nayar, 'The New Monstrous: Digital Bodies, Genomic Arts and Aesthetics', *Nebula* 4.2, 2007) that is demanded by the work of Alexis Rockman, Eduardo Kac, Brian Crockett and others. If we treat biological bodies as sovereign territories – 'nationalities' – then contemporary art forms dwell upon invasion, permeability, porosity and blurring of 'national' boundaries. The 'new monstrous' is the consequence of chimeric figures embodying the aesthetic of what I call the 'mannerist grotesque'. The monstrous is revelatory, and thrives on artificial forms of entanglement and deformity. The artists call attention to the constructed nature of racial borders – especially classificatory regimes that divide biological species into animal and human, and sub-species within them – when they focus on forms that borrow from every species. The essay maps the contours of the mannerist grotesque that I believe is a productive way of looking at the new aesthetics of the borders of the human/animal/plant life forms.

Imperial Frontier to National Borders: Narration, History and Identity in Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*

Abhigyan Prasad and Rohini Mokashi-Punekar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

ABSTRACT

Diasporic communities, itinerant individuals and the shifting landscape of frontiers and borders are indicators of the forced dislocation and displacement that define colonialism. *The Glass Palace* is an historical epic about such upheavals that have shaped the many national histories of Southeast Asia. Ghosh brings to the forefront the violent disruptions caused by British colonial power and the anti-colonial liberation movements, both of which determine the configurations of power structures of the present. The novel enables the perception of the region as a transnational space, where cultural exchanges and contiguous histories blur the distinctions of international borders. Ghosh's narrative weaves a tapestry of the dismantling of the Burmese kingdom, the Indian freedom struggle and the Second World War, and contemporary post-colonial Southeast Asia in a grand spatial and temporal sweep that revisits little-known historical sites. The

present paper will focus on the narrative aesthetic shaped by Ghosh that attempts to depict a layered understanding of the meanings of nation and identity.

panel 3

Negotiating Identities Transnationally

T(h)ai visions of India's trans-national neighbourhood
Nicholas Farrelly, Balliol College, University of Oxford

ABSTRACT

Over the past three decades, Thai scholars have devoted considerable attention to the Thai peoples who live outside the borders of the Kingdom of Thailand. Their predominantly Thai-language studies have described a range of Tai groups in Vietnam, southern China, Laos, Burma and northeast India. The ambiguous cultural and political claims of many Thai language writers have led me to deploy the composite term "T(h)ai" to designate their special perspective. Through their efforts, accounts of T(h)ai languages, customs, religious beliefs and economic systems have proliferated. The Thai academic outputs—which are part of what I call the "Tai studies project"—are generally concerned with the relationship between the modern Thai nation-state and the Tai groups "spread" throughout the trans-national neighbourhood. Based on my examination of Thai-language academic output, this paper shows how Tai studies project researchers largely limit themselves to conceptions of ethnicity and tradition that resonate with a Thai audience. In particular, the paper argues that Thai language accounts of northeast India rarely explore the problematic political and social conditions faced by many of the groups that Thai scholars claim as part of the "T(h)ai siblinghood". Using Yasmin Saikia's (2004) study of the Tai-Ahom identity movement as a starting point, I propose some explanations for the development of these Thai visions of northeast India's transnational neighbourhood.

Double isolation or transnational hotspots along porous borders? Burmese transnational activists from Northeast India to North Thailand
Kerstin Duell, National University of Singapore

ABSTRACT

Since 1988, the initially jungle-based and student-dominated resistance to the Burmese military dictatorship has evolved into a sophisticated transnational pro-democracy movement headquartered in Thailand. After Thailand, India is the second neighbouring country where socio-political circumstances allowed Burmese activists to set up social movement organisations (SMOs), and where a large number of refugees are currently living. Yet, the impact of transnational advocacy networks (TANs) on the Burmese pro-democracy movement differs substantially in both settings. Before the backdrop of India's geostrategic, economic and energy interests in Burma, it is argued that domestic policy and security priorities (specifically in the Northeast of India) may hamper the activists' ability to tap into TANs and the vast opportunities they could offer.

Within this context, recent protests in Burma and the ensuing global solidarity actions constituted a prime political opportunity for Burmese SMOs to reach out to local policy-makers, the media and civil society in their respective host countries, as well as to link up with various TANs. Yet, India's Look East Policy engendered New Delhi's official response quite different from that of Bangkok. Particularly in Northeast India, military, infrastructural and developmental hurdles obstruct activists' access to TANs and hence international donors. By comparing two capitals and two border areas located in the very different socio-political contexts of South and Southeast Asia, it will be explained why one branch of the movement is embedded within a transnational network while the other branch remains in a pocket of isolation.

Trans-national Dimensions of Naga Christianity 1876-2007

Mark Woodward, Department of Religious Studies, Arizona State University

ABSTRACT

This paper examines cultural, religious, political and economic factors that contributed to the conversion of many Naga communities to a particular form of Christianity – American Baptist. It points to conclusions: first is that conversion to Christianity has contributed to the formation of a Naga identity that transcends tribal distinction; second is that conversion has led to the development of trans-national networks linking Nagas with fellow Baptists in Burma and the United States; third is that while conversion to Christianity maintains the distinction between Naga culture and those of the Hindus and Muslims of the plains, it establishes what might be called “civilizational parity.”

This paper is based on analysis of missionary and Naga texts and ethnographic inter-

The Nagas and the Politics of Representation

Warp and Weft of Naga Nationalism

Vibha Joshi, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford

ABSTRACT

In October 2004, various Naga organisations in Nagaland objected to the use of a Naga cloth to adorn the idol of the Hindu goddess Durga in Kolkata as being inappropriate. The diorama committee was obliged as a result of the protest to change the attire of Durga in favour of a more appropriate form, namely a sari. Draping a Hindu goddess in an indigenously significant Naga textile was seen as an affront to Naga religious beliefs and a form of desecration. Interestingly, it was Naga Christianity as well as their indigenous animistic beliefs that were regarded as having been violated, for neither is seen as compatible with Hinduism. The criticism was made that Naga symbolism can only be used to represent Naga culture. The paper will discuss the role of Naga textiles in the past and their continuing importance with regard to the contemporary socio-cultural and political issues of Naga identity. Naga nationalism draws on indigenous animism but also on distinctive Naga expressions of Christianity, in contrast to the otherwise dominant religion of Hinduism in India and Buddhism in Myanmar. This has given rise to interesting juxtapositions with regard to design and symbolism in Naga textiles. At a practical and secular level Naga textiles may be used for the manufacture of furnishing items. But at a level concerning questions of hallowed and ancestral representation, their use in ways that are not sanctioned by guardians of Naga cultural values is regarded as symbolic and ritual desecration. The paper will address these issues using contemporary and earlier ethnography with examples also of old textiles from museum collections.

How to represent the Naga in Europe

Alban von Stockhausen and Marion Wettstein, Ethnographic Museum of Zurich University, Switzerland

ABSTRACT

Central Europe will feature a series of exhibitions about the Naga during the next few years. This is partly due to the large Naga object collections in European museums mostly assembled during colonial times, but also due to a growing interest in the entire region of Northeast India. Even though the Naga can be seen as one of the best documented ethnic groups, especially in European museums, only small parts of the collections have ever been on display. The contextual research about these collections and their cultural embedding had largely stopped by the 1950's with the end of colonial rule in India and the introduction of travel restrictions for both European as well as other researchers. As a result, the Naga culture represented in European museum collections is one of days long gone by. Hence, the Ethnographic Museum of Zürich University launched a three year project, which – amongst other subjects – has the aim of assessing the forms and means of adequate representations of the Naga in an exhibition doing justice to both the 'old' culture as well as the developments of the last fifty years. Many recent publications about the Naga have been conceptualized as photo-books, some of them transporting a rather exotic representation of the Naga, which tends to ignore today's situation. This raised a specific expectation among museum visitors, which has to be taken into account. As a topic of cultural and social anthropology the question of 'representing the Naga' – or other ethnic groups of Northeast India and its neighbourhood – will accompany our team for further research beyond the exhibition. The aim of this paper is to present and discuss how the Zürich Exhibition, opening in May 2008, will be conceptualized, and how topics of social and religious change are embedded in the exhibition layout and a publication accompanying the event.

Missionaries, Colonialism and the Writing of History in the Naga Hills

John Thomas, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

ABSTRACT

Through their evangelizing missions, the American Baptist missionaries popularized among the Nagas a particular understanding of history. This understanding of history was drawn from evangelical theology, which measured human progress according to how much a person or a collective made a break from their 'sinful' past and was born again into or baptized into a new future that was rooted in an acceptance of Christ as his or her personal saviour. Therefore, it strictly followed a telos that moved from 'darkness' to 'light', from 'sin' to 'redemption', from 'savage' to 'civilization', from 'head hunters' to 'soul hunters' and from 'ignorance' to 'enlightenment'. It portrayed the pre-Christian

past of the Nagas as 'savage', 'barbaric' and 'degenerate' and romanticized the 'civilizing' potential of the Christian present. It also idealized the 'benevolence' of the missionary and the 'civilization' he represented. In both academic and popular writings among the Nagas, this understanding of history has hardly been critically examined and its relation with colonialism has hardly been explored. It is the objective of this paper, therefore, to examine critically this understanding of history and trace its close association with the project of colonialism.

panel 5

Whose Frontier? Contested Notions of Space in Colonial Northeast India

Practices of Spatial Control: Northeastern Frontier of the British Indian Empire
Yengkhom Jilangamba,

ABSTRACT

The first treaty of alliance signed between the representatives of the East India Company in Sylhet, Mr. Verelst, and the Manipuri king Jai Singh in 1762 with the aim of fighting against the Burmese as a common enemy, puts into focus how the history of the 'north-east' got enmeshed with the larger connections of colonialism and empire-building. The subsequent first Anglo-Burmese war (1824 - 26) commences a new era in the history of many kingdoms and principalities in the area. As colonialism expanded and consolidated, the kingdom of Manipur became a crucial ally for political and economic interests of the British, especially in controlling the 'hill tribes'. The continued threat from the kingdom of Ava increased the importance of Manipur. This political and strategic alliance would be critical in understanding the division of hills and plains dwellers in ethnographic classifications. Manipur, being outside the direct administration of the British, is important in understanding how colonialism creates, and practices the politics of frontier. A critical analysis into the ways in which colonialism operated in the area would help us in clarifying the multiple meanings of frontier that were employed during colonialism and also the ways in which practices of controlling the frontier were deployed for territorial conquest, subjection of the population and enhancement of the economic enterprise of the British

Exploring Brahmaputra, Exploring Routes: Understanding the Eastern Frontier of Colonial India

ABSTRACT

Ever since the late 18th century when the East India Company began exploring the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, wonders kept unraveling. More exploration took place in the subsequent decades whose nature varied. This rewarded the Company with multiple results. Soon the state became confident of its ability to explore such unknown terrains. This paper explores how these 19th century forays into Eastern India, the river Brahmaputra in particular, redefined the British colonial state's notion of frontier and natural resources. The paper examines the mechanism through which the colonial state investigated the river system in Eastern India. In the late 18th century while Rennel meticulously began the exploration of the routes of Brahmaputra and Ganges together, maps for future possibilities was also given shape. In the second half of the 19th century the confident British engineers came up with meticulous plan for exploring various land and river routes in India's north-eastern border, of which the Brahmaputra became the central point. The primary interest of these engineers was to understand the hydrology and river system of the Brahmaputra. Moreover, these endeavors were motivated by an urge to find out a more suitable trade and strategic route to South-East Asia as well as China. These trade projects, which could have involved lots of engineering wonders, never finally took off. But at the same time some other individuals, mostly administrators, kept their eyes open towards more anthropological wonders. At same time, the Assamese and other local people continued to draw their sense of neighbourhood in and around the Brahmaputra, which came to be reinforced though their world of orality.

Connected Histories, Disconnected Borders: Colonial Goalpara and the North-east Borderland

Sanghamitra Misra, Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

ABSTRACT

The paper looks at contestations between local and colonial notions of space and authority in the borderland area of Goalpara, a historically liminal and fluid space located between the politically more compact colonial provinces of Assam and Bengal, and sharing a cultural and historical memory with these regions, as well as with the northern polities of Bhutan and Tibet during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

It contends that the introduction of the tropes of colonial modernity (the construction of rigid political borders, sedentarisation, markets erases of cultural underpinnings) effectively transformed the culture of the region from a borderland area defined by its notions of ambiguous territoriality, multiple sovereignties and by a sacred topography that bound the local polities of Tibet, Assam, Bhutan, Bijni and Sidli in various relationships of patrimony, into a politically and economically unified territory by the late nineteenth century, well integrated with the trading networks of eastern India. The focus is on the hilly Eastern Duar region and the Bhutan polity bordering it and the southern plains bordering the Garo hills, and on the reduction of complex social relationships and networks between settled and peripatetic communities, including the Koches, Kacharis Rabhas, Bodos and the Garos, into a sharp dichotomous one in dominant discourses. The paper also records the resistance to, and circumvention of, these processes in the persistence of a multiplicity of overlapping identities and histories across new borders, including representations of a 'Goalparia' identity that was underscored powerfully in the formulation of Rajbansi as the language of the 'pranto' or the frontier by the local elite. The broader concern remains the rewriting of a pre-colonial connected history of the region into a confined history of a peripheral, marginal space under colonialism, later reinscribed into the history of the nation.

panel 6

Religious Change in Northeast India

The Flow of Life Forces: Garo Notions of Illness and Healing
Erik de Maaker, Dept. of Anthropology, Leiden University

ABSTRACT

In Northeast India, ethnic and religious identities play an important role in processes of differentiation between as well as within communities. Among the Garo of Meghalaya, in popular perception, there exists a rather sharp divide between the local animist tradition and Christianity. Since the second half of the 20th century, Christianity is the religion of the grand majority of Garos. It is considered to have provided Garos with access to formal education and allopathic healthcare, which have been essential to a more broadly perceived modernizing process. Garo Christianity continues to transform as new 'breakaway' Protestant churches that involve more compelling forms of worship continue to attract an increasing number of followers. Whereas there can be little doubt

that the adoption of Christianity has changed peoples' religious outlook, it has remained unclear what these changes entail, and how present day Christian perspectives might relate to animist beliefs.

In this paper I will analyze Garo religious practices, focusing on beliefs and rituals performed in relation to illnesses and healing. Garos perceive many illnesses in terms of the loss of life forces. Beliefs as to how such loss of life forces are defined, and which measures may be effective in restoring them, vary with the religious and social environment of the patient and his or her relatives. Important causes of illness are acts of witchcraft, that is, the willful depletion of a victim by someone who has evil intentions. The paper analyses animist and Christian perceptions of life forces, the various causes of loss, and the variety of measures that can be taken to restore them.

'Looking Beyond the Margin: Re-defining the Boundaries of Belonging in Pre-colonized Assam'

Archana Barua, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

ABSTRACT

In one of his recent articles noted scholar Sanjib Baruah takes help of the margin metaphor in visualizing the possible impact of the formation of a 'transnational region' on the ethnic scenario of the Northeast. "The formation of a transnational region," Baruah argues, "is likely to compensate for the marginalisation of ethnic communities within nation states; by way of conferring on them 'transnational recognition'" (Baruah 2004). Although Baruah has made a proper assessment of the situation in terms of the large scale enthusiasm of the people about the prospect of re-articulating one's cultural identity in keeping with the changing times, one may still wonder if Marginality may offer a powerfully appropriate metaphor in understanding the predicament of the ethnic communities of North East in general and of Assam in particular. At a time when the low castes and the other under privileged sections of the society were on the verge of being marginalized in the existing caste system introduced by an equally rigid feudal system, a new age was being inaugurated in Assam by the Vaishnavite saint Mahapurush San-karadeva with his bold and innovative ideas that more than the high caste Brahmins it is only those so called Mlechas or depressed classes who had a better right to an honorable place in the worship of God. Across these fluid and messy margins meaningful dialogue was made between two diverse communities who sought to re-discover and, if needed, to re-define their cultural roots in terms of similarities between their cultures, "similarities in what might be called their 'cores' and their 'peripheries'" (Miri, 1994). Have

they succeeded in re-discovering the cultural and spiritual roots that should motivate them to redefine the boundaries of their sense of belonging together? This is what this article seeks to explore.

Religious transformations and the formation of new identities with respect to North-East

Prabhu Venkataraman, IIT, Guwahati

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at exploring the process of transformations effected through the influence of religion, thereby creating new religious identities. "Identity can be defined as the position of a specific individual in a specific world." When there is a change in identity, here religion, it comes up with a change in worldview. The transformation thus could be reflected in both their conceptual domain with a changed worldview and also in social domain with changed practices and rituals. This paper focuses on the change process and the effectiveness of the change process. How smooth or fractious the change process could be? Is there a relationship between the quality of change process and the value for change? If so, how they are related? I try to understand these issues with respect to religious transformations and the dynamics of change with references from north-east.

panel 7

Northeast India in a New Asia

India's Look East Policy: For Growth or for Insurgents

Sushil Khanna, Indian Institute of Management Calcutta

ABSTRACT

India launched a renewed initiative to strengthen its ties with the east Asian economies almost a decade ago. This is often portrayed as an effort to end the isolation of the north eastern parts of India and provide the benefit the global integration to the most isolated border region, through promoting trade and economic ties with the countries bordering the region. However, the impetus to look towards the East and to change radically the frosty relationship with its immediate neighbours came not from an urge to develop a region seething with frustration and insurgency, but from the alarm within the Indian

establishment to the growing economic and commercial ties between China and its Asian neighbours. China has strengthened these ties by providing large economic and development assistance to the countries on its southern plan and has invested heavily in cross border infrastructure. What is more, China has invested heavily in the development infrastructure within its own border regions like Yunnan, Guangxi and Guizhou. In contrast, India has spent considerable energy in signing bilateral treaties and discussing the prospect of free trade with its neighbours. It has also provided small assistance to Myanmar and Bangladesh to encourage them to deny shelter to dissatisfied ethnic groups and insurgents. The investment in developing the trade infrastructure has been overshadowed by "border roads" for troop movement. Unlike China, India looks east through the eyes of its generals and intelligence agencies. The north east still remains as cut off from its neighbours as it was a decade ago. Little wonder that the look east has had no impact on the economic development of the region.

Cross-Border Economic Relationships between Northeast India and Bangladesh: A Study of the Determinants

Gautam Dutta

ABSTRACT

To explain the internationalization activities of the entrepreneurs of land locked northeastern region and their efforts to go beyond the national border for economic opportunities and develop successful cross country economic relationship with the entrepreneurs of Bangladesh, there is a genuine need to understand the entrepreneurs/enterprise centric factor that helps in the progression of cross border relationship development and continuance. This paper details the various entrepreneur/enterprise centric factors starting with contact, attraction, (the choice for the partner), interaction (the negotiation about the conditions), transaction (the realization of the agreement/contract) and relationship (success of such relationship) using the INTERFACE model (acronym for International Formation of Autonomous Cooperation between Enterprises). A crucial point here is that the actor specific entrepreneur/enterprise centric factors do not operate in seclusion. The potentiality of economic interweaving across the border can better be explained and understood in combination i.e. actor specific entrepreneur/enterprise centric factors and situation or location specific regulation/trades practices centric factors together. In short, the affiliation formation process between the cross border entrepreneurs along with favorable regulation/trade practices synergies the growth of economic relationship formation between two sides of the border of the neighboring

countries. This paper argues that for any effort towards achieving the economic benefits arising out of unique geographical position of the northeastern region of India, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the cross border trade relationship developmental process between the cross border entrepreneurs. A comprehensible knowledge in this respect is also crucial for the policy makers of both the countries to assess the situation in a better way and make or adjust policy prescriptions, in accordance with the need, that enhances cross border economic relationship directed towards realization of full potential. The paper analyses the stage wise economic relationship development process and provides insights to the determinants that helps or hinder relationship formation between the entrepreneurs across the two neighboring countries in the backdrop of the regulation/ trade practice centric factors that play a crucial role in the process of formation of cross border economic relationships.

Linking Northeast with Southeast Asia: Examining the Security Concerns
Bibhu Routray, Institute for Conflict Management, New Delhi

ABSTRACT

'Security' concerns play a spoiler to the prescriptions that the neighbouring South-east Asia can be the panacea to Northeast India's developmental woes. Fear that the insurgents would exploit the open borders and the trans-national highways, overriding the resultant economic gains, continue to dictate official policies. However, the existing development paradigm of the Union Government for the Northeast - the strategy of pumping in huge developmental funds into the region with the hope that money can 'buy off' the existing problems, starting from underdevelopment to insurgencies- has, so far, failed to deliver the desired results. Breakdown or dysfunction of structures of governance in many states have meant that only a small portion of the available funds actually gets spent and, in most cases, a part of such utilised funds ends up with the insurgents. Worse still, borders with countries including Myanmar have remained unfenced and, more importantly, unmanaged. This scenario of imposed isolation, thus, continues to reinforce northeast's image as a region that merely depends upon New Delhi's aid without generating any resource on its own. A closer examination of the much-talked about 'security concerns', however, reveals that in a globalized world, the opening up of the borders can have only a marginal force-multiplying impact on the ability of the insurgents. On the contrary, gains of development for the northeast, in all likelihood, will repudiate the very reason behind the existence of many such insurgencies.

Re-defining the new role for Northeast India

Ramananda Wangkheirakpam,

ABSTRACT

While the region now known as the North East of India is not the end of South Asia nor the beginning of East Asia nor god given territories with unique histories, the path of the region and its peoples has been for many decades been decided largely by forces beyond itself. In these, several events and processes have been shaped which now almost looks like intractable strengthening the 'landlocked' theory. In the present context, the 'new' effort to unwrap this 'landlocked' region is not for itself but largely for an 'Indian' economy and globalization processes with its uncritical growth and markets. The new and the old water, road and rail routes, the new resource management strategies, processes to transform existing institutions, neo-territorialization are largely meant for globalization and neo-colonial demands. This neo-liberal 'solution' can create another 'trap' further marginalizing the region and the people, which might lead to a more problematic future. This paper will look at India's Look East Policy and the role of International financial Institutions. The paper will also look at some projects undertaken as part of the unwrapping as well as comparative look at how Mekong region (GMS) has fared in sub-regionalizing contiguous borderlands. While the paper argues that there are political bravery required in unlocking the region but not as a necessity of the agent(s) that holds that lock. And the way out, the paper seeks, by proposing an understanding of the region's (and the sub-region) myriad social, economic and political diversities, and its place in the world. Protecting, renewing and strengthening these systems will not only help create a buffer zone between the two highly destructive economies but also that points to a less destructive world.

panel 8

Culture, Identity and the Politics of Difference

Multiple views of Otherness: Situating the difference between Valley and Highland

Ashild Kolas, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO)

ABSTRACT

In many parts of the world one can trace a very long history of peaceful coexistence and mutual exchange between valley and highland peoples. This was also the case with the Tibetan farmers (rongpa) and pastoralists (drogpa), who would regularly barter grain against animal products. The difference between drogpa and rongpa has been represented as a difference between 'wild' and 'tame'. In the present paper I compare the relationship between Tibetan highland pastoralists and valley farmers with that of the hills' shifting cultivators and valleys' wet rice farmers of India's Northeast. I suggest that in Tibet the relationship between valley and highland was characterized mainly by incorporation and mutual benefit, represented by a discourse of equality in difference, whereas in the Northeast similar relationships between valley and hill were multifaceted, fluctuating between various types of exchange (tribute, barter, etc.) and expressions of animosity, based on much more tenuous power relations. In Tibet the difficult conditions for farming and lack of cultivable land did not allow for much population growth in the farming communities, whereas mountain pasturage was abundant and could support sizeable populations of herders. In the Northeast, on the other hand, sedentary wet rice cultivation could support much denser populations than shifting cultivation on the hillsides, where the need for long fallow periods made land use much less intensive. The present paper suggests that the imagined frontiers between valley and hill, sedentary and tribal, are linked closely to power relations and competition over resources.

Language and the cultural history of central Arunachal Pradesh

Mark Post, Research Centre for Linguistic Typology, La Trobe University

ABSTRACT

Central Arunachal Pradesh is primarily inhabited by Tani (Tibeto-Burman) language speakers. For how long has this been the case? How did Tani language speakers arrive in their area, and where did they (or their languages) come from? In this paper, I will examine a variety of types of linguistic evidence, mainly from modern Tani languages such as Apatani, Galo and Mising, which bear directly or indirectly on these questions. Topics to be discussed will include substrate influence (linguistic evidence for the assimilation of non-Tani-speaking populations into earlier Tani-speaking populations), language contact (leaving linguistic traces in terms of borrowed words and grammatical constructions) and the role of speaker interaction with the environment in shaping the grammar and lexicon of Tani languages. I will close by considering some of the ways in which future collaborations between linguists, anthropologists and local communities

can, in principle, develop complex, interacting hypotheses concerning the origins and migration patterns of cultures and speech communities in North East India.

Myths, Performance and Discursive Constitution of 'Valley' and 'Hills' Identities in Manipur

Gurumayum Amarjit Sharma, Manipur Research Forum, Delhi

ABSTRACT

In Manipur, valley has been the seat of power since fifteenth century. The democratic transformations, since the 1940s, however, have not been able to bridge the political-cultural gap between the valley dwellers and hills tribes of Manipur. The failure of the post-colonial state to reduce the gap has led the plain-dweller Meiteis to redefine the 'valley' and 'hills' as the constitutive parts of the so-called Manipuri civilization. This has been done through the revival of 'mythico-geographical' narratives and the festive practices that strengthen the cultural and geographical affinities between the two. Yet, the Nagas define valley as space for the sanskritised people and hills as the space of non-Hindus, and of different cultural and political trajectories. The dominant discourses of valley and hill identities, however, ignore heterogeneous cultural traditions and their concepts of cultural and geographical space, thereby supplanting other concepts of community within (and between) 'valley' and 'hills'. Both the Meiteis' discourse on unity between the hills and valley, and the Naga's discourse on separate territorial identity have the tendencies either to 'forcibly define' a local sense of community (which may be either religious or ethnic) as part of larger concepts of 'Manipuri nation' or 'Nagalim', or create religious or ethnic 'other'. These tendencies ignore political and cultural dynamics of communities that situate themselves between (or outside) these cultural and territorial frontiers. Hence, the present paper argues that there are communities between 'hills' and 'valley'. They occupy 'foothills' areas, and on many occasions they identify with both the Meiteis and bigger hills tribes. The politics and culture among few (smaller) tribes in the foothill areas transcend the valley-hills dichotomy.

Colonial interventions and implications of border trades by the tribes of NEFA
Sarit Chaudhuri, AITS, Rajiv Gandhi University

ABSTRACT

Arunachal Pradesh, the erstwhile North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), is today the homeland of 26 tribes with more than 100 sub-tribes. The economic situation of the tribes

has changed considerably in the postcolonial phase due to the intervention of the state and as part of larger process of transformation. However, during the nineteenth century, with the annexation of Assam by the colonial force, NEFA also gradually came in contact with colonialism. From colonial documents it is evident that the then tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh maintained steady networks with the communities of Tibet, China, Burma etc., and they maintained a good number of trade routes even with the plains of Assam, through which they used to obtain some of their food stuffs, weapons, clothes, beads and other elements of their material culture by bartering or by selling many of their own hill products. These trade routes, specially with Tibet and China, were of huge significance for the British rulers as they wanted to reach their products through these trade routes, which they thought were much more beneficial than the ways they were using to extend their commercial products into those areas. So, this was an important agenda which led to colonial interventions into the then-NEFA, carrying out extensive surveys as well as expeditions into these areas, but also initiating certain policies to have control over the trading systems, especially in the plains of Assam, like in Saudia, which became one of the major trading centers for the people of hills and plains. However, with the emergence of the market and monetary economy, along with the consolidation of political boundaries of nation-states in the postcolonial era, traditional trading mechanisms between the people of Arunachal and the people located across the international borders came to a halt for obvious reasons. Even the trade between the hills and plains of Arunachal and Assam lost contextual significance. The present paper seeks to underscore the nature of such trading practices and the various routes which people traditionally used. It will also address the nature of colonial response and what kind of impact it had on the tribal people of NEFA in relation the ongoing border trades during the colonial history of this frontier region.

panel 9

Minority Peoples and the Politics of Belonging

Living as Encroachers: Displaced Bodo inhabitants in Balipara Forest, Assam-Arunachal Pradesh Border

Makiko Kimura, Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, Japan

ABSTRACT

This is a case-study on small self-styled villages in Balipara Reserved Forest, where the

major portion of the forest has been “encroached” by the Bodo people who had been displaced from Lower Assam. Based on fieldwork in one of the villages, the author found that many of the people in the forests had once been in Karbi-Anglong or Assam-Nagaland border areas, but later shifted to this area due to conflict or lack of land. During negotiation of the second Bodo Accord, the Balipara Reserved Forest had been claimed by the Bodo Liberation Tigers for inclusion under the jurisdiction of the Bodo Autonomous District Council, although the area does not belong to traditional Bodo territories. The demand was turned down since the area falls within reserved forest, but the displaced Bodo people in the area supported it. Based on fieldwork in the area, this study tries to throw light upon the idea of territoriality and the autonomous council system in relation to the issues of conflict and displacement. By doing so, the study also tries to take a look at cross-border issues among the northeastern states, and also among communities which claim territory and autonomy.

Land, Location & Belonging: Locating Ethnic Conflicts in Karbi Anglong District
Sanjay Barbora, Panos Institute South Asia

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the politics surrounding the inflow and out-migration of indigenous groups like the Bodo, Dimasa and Kuki in the autonomous district of Karbi Anglong in Assam. It seeks to trace the local trajectories of movement of peoples from other regions into the district. In doing so, it looks at the fictive and real basis for resource-based conflicts among the various ethnic groups in the district. Against such a backdrop, I wish to develop an ethnographic rendition of location and belonging in a space that is quickly being transformed into an area where law and governance are influenced by colonial history and buttressed by a modern discourse of rights.

‘Identity as Being: The Tai Phakes of Assam’

Krishna Barua, IIT, Guwahati

ABSTRACT

The Ahoms that ruled undivided Assam for more than 600 years had entered the state from Thailand. In the latter half of the 18th century The Tai Phakes, immediate descendants of the Ahom race, residing in Namphake village in the district of Dibrugarh have kept alive within themselves their ethno-cultural identity, customs and traditions. My paper will address the role of identity as being against identity as becoming in the

Tai Phakes and show how their point of difference becomes a space of cooperation instead of confrontation within the adjoining communities. The paper will trace the cultural realism of the Namphake village and how it has been able to retain its customs and way of life. The Phakials, as they are popularly known, have now dwindled to 150 odd families. They are bilingual, speaking Phakial among themselves and Assamese in other places. They also have a sound knowledge of Pali language and practise Buddhism. Phakial women still wear a distinctive colourful ankle-long skirt ('chin') and a blouse ('hang wat') and a girdle ('chai chin') woven at home. The Phakials have retained a fine tradition of keeping records of family history and arbitrating disputes, and traditional ways of herbal cures and practices. The paper will locate the two kinds of identity, identity as being and identity as becoming and show how the Phakials and the neighbouring communities recognize difference and is committed to resolving its antagonisms.

Indigenous People And Environment: 'Tribal' Culture And The State In Bangladesh

Farid Uddin Ahmed, University of Chittagong

ABSTRACT

The political, cultural and economic conditions which prevail among the 'tribal' or indigenous minority peoples of the upland and interior regions of Asia are the sort that have often been referred to as another form of imperialism or internal colonialism. The intent of such language is to point out that the relationship of developing states to indigenous ethnic minorities and inhabitants of politically marginal regions is analogous to, and sometimes a continuation of, that of European rulers to their former subjects. However, the relationship between the indigenous 'tribal' peoples and post-colonial nation states is more complex and subject to considerable variation. This paper investigates the current predicament of the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh, a population with significant cultural differentiation from the mainstream Bengali population. Dealing with the issues of their survival in the hilly region and their quest for identity, the paper explores how their ethnicity and environment are intertwined. This is examined in the context of state policies towards non-Bengali indigenous ethnic minorities in the CHT. It identifies sources of diversity at the micro level and the forces that create conditions for 'unity in diversity' at the macro level. One is the assertion of 'self-image' on the basis of cultural polarity within the confines of a multi-ethnic locality. The other is the assertion of 'collective image' as unifying forces stemming from the notion of shared

deprivation and marginalisation generated by conditions of the state and state institutions. The paper is divided into two parts. Part one deals with the historical development in CHT and the main theoretical issues concerning the relationships between ethnicity, social movement and indigenous land rights. The second part examines broader issues, events and processes concerning indigenous mobilisation around the traditional land use system, jhum, and the politics of khas land, based on ethnographic case materials. The analysis promotes a deeper understanding of the multi-ethnic nature of the Bangladeshi State and provides a more balanced assessment of the relationship between ethnicity, indigenous people, development and the state. This challenges the political use of environmentalism and anthropological knowledge in international, national and regional disputes over the control and use of natural resources. In doing so, it highlights the social and political implications of resource use and tenure for the construction of indigenous collective identity in the CHT, Bangladesh.

panel 10

Living in a Borderland: The View from Below

Narrations on outlawed trade in Jia Nodi

Malini Sur, Amsterdam School for Social Science Research

ABSTRACT

In Jia Nodi (fictitious name), there is daily trading in cattle, hides, jute seeds, beetle nuts, salt and marijuana. In recent years, circulation of film posters, music and cinema discs have found new consumers in villages and towns alike. Jia Nodi is located within two hostile nation states, India and Bangladesh - stretching from the hills of what is today Meghalaya, dipping into Assam, meandering through rivers and streams and ending in a district which falls under present day Bangladesh. The international border that truncates Jia Nodi into two distinct and hostile geo-political entities outlaws cross-border trading in this region as smuggling. The vibrant regional economy of Jia Nodi, which is sustained by numerous trade and kinship networks that criss-cross the border, I would like to argue, topple several state-led notions of understanding social and economic practices. It provokes interesting questions about relationships between the nation and peripheral geographies and how territorial outbursts and surveillance induces new understandings on the circulation of goods in borderlands. The central argument of my paper seeks to question what is conventionally regarded by states as subversive

practices (following Donnan and Wilson, 1994, 2002; Heyman and Smart (1999); Van Schendel, 2006), and is confined to the arena of criminality, in this case, cross border smuggling. My paper will present an alternative narration to 'illegal' transnational trade networks in the borderland, exposing the fluidity with which goods circulate in marginal and contentious geographies, which interpolates with statecraft that regulates flows of goods.

Population Movement in the Fluid, Fragile and Contentious Borderland between Bangladesh and India

Rita Afsar, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies

ABSTRACT

Bangladesh inherited disputed border relations with India as a legacy of the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. Cross-border migration between Bangladesh and India did not stop after 1947 and 1971, but rather continued in different forms, intensity and magnitude, often on a continuous basis and also seasonally, and may be sporadically fuelled by some major upheavals, be they communal, environmental or else caused by displacement as a result of massive construction. However, it is difficult to distinguish different forms migration and to conduct thorough research due largely to political reasons. Notwithstanding historic fallacies rooted in the religious basis of drawing the border, which was impossible to achieve, the two countries are heavily motivated politically. The Indian government brands all sorts of cross-border migration as illegal and the Bangladeshi government refuses to acknowledge illegal movements by Bangladeshi nationals across the border. Drawing from available secondary materials predominantly emanating from India, which are largely based on educated guesswork and which are often politically biased, the paper examines critically some problems associated with the process of migration and its outcome in the context of a fluid, fragile and contentious border, and issues related to migration management. It also documents how economies and the lives of millions on both sides of the borderland depend on such migration, trade and smuggling. It argues that, so far, no barbed wire and draconian legal measures could stop cross-border population movements. Given the economic bottom-line, political sensitivity, cultural and socio-religious complications, the Sylhet border should be opened up for trade links and communication channels with Bangladesh and Indian North-Eastern states. This may provide Bangladesh with an opportunity to make-up for the unfavorable trade balance with India, and help India to facilitate development in that part of the country which may in turn help reduce the separatist movements.

A Look into the Making and Unmaking of the Indo-Myanmar Border: A Line or a Land?

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ABSTRACT

The "Look East Policy" has been conceptualized with reference to a 'border' that, in the discourse of the Indian State, is indelibly "real". But this "reality" is a constructed one. It is constructed on the one hand with the deployment of army and the paramilitary forces to guard it against unauthorized movements across it, on the other with the setting up of Border Check Posts at crucial trading points to promote cross-border trade and development. This dual move of the State is to produce the border as a "reality" by registering all cases, authorized or unauthorized, of people and goods moving across it. A constructive move, as we well understand, can only be understood as a counter-point to a deconstructive one. The movements of people and goods are the deconstructive acts that either legitimize the state's construction by abiding by its rules and regulations, or challenge it by defying them. In this paper, I plan to look more closely into these acts of construction and deconstruction of the "border" to explore how social identities are consolidated, renewed and reinvented in the process. For the Look East Policy to be successful to any degree, it has to write these continually-on-the-move social relations into its formulation of rules and regulations so that it finds more "citizens" on its side rather than "insurgents". The point is that, the "nation-state" idea has to be rethought to soften the ideological stress on the "nation" to arrive at a relatively more successful "statehood" in the sense of an administrative apparatus.

'Bangladesh-Arakan: Two Visions of the Same Border Space'

Marion Sabrie, La Sorbonne, Paris

ABSTRACT

The Union of Myanmar shares a border with five countries: Bangladesh, India, China, Laos and Thailand. Its border with Bangladesh is the shortest: only 200 kilometers. Arakan or Rakhine which became a state by the Constitution of 1974 is one of the seven states which compose the Union of Myanmar with seven other divisions. By "border-space", we mean the territory from Cox's Bazar to Sittwe and on a larger scale, from

Chittagong to the entire Arakan State. It is not a real geographical border (between two geographical entities), but more about an ethnocultural cesure: there are two nations with two major ethnic groups (Bangladeshi and Arakanese) with two religions (Islam and Buddhism). There are also two economies with two different visions of territorial development. The border between them is an axis which separates developments which are not antagonist but are at different achievement levels. While Arakan appears as a “forgotten place” in Myanmar, Chittagong is one of the first economical places in Bangladesh. The issue on the border relationship between those two territories remains a languishing problem in spite of political attempts to develop the communication nets and the territories. Building a border with a bilateral future is a necessary condition for the Arakanese development. One of the major problems remains the non-resolution of the illegal migrations’ issue and the refugees’ one and the governments’ politics. However this borderspace appears economically hopeful.

panel 11

Armed Conflict in Northeast India’s Law, Weapons and Discourse

Armed Conflict, Small Arms Proliferation and Women’s Response to Violence in India’s Northeast

Binalakshmi Nepram Mentschel, Oxfam, South Asia

ABSTRACT

India’s Northeast is a region at the edge of the Indian subcontinent, sandwiched between Bhutan, China, Myanmar (Burma) and Bangladesh. More than 220 ethnic groups live here, all of them with an age-old history, their own culture, custom, religion and language. Rebellion started in this region during the British rule and it emerged strongly as they left India. Today experts count more than 70 armed rebel groups all over the Northeast region that is inhabited by just 3.6 percent of India’s one billion people.

The weapons that fuel these conflicts are mainly small arms. Their proliferation from within India and many of the countries surrounding it has laid siege in many parts of Northeast India. For the past 50 years people suffer under oppression and violation of human rights due to small arms misuse by state as well as non-state actors. Over 13 routes are identified through which illegal weapons come into the region.

This paper will look into the types, makes and sources of the small arms flooding the trouble-torn North East region for the last five decades. Besides the routes of smuggled

small arms, I will also identify the various drug routes into the region. The presentation will also illustrate the role that women and their efforts at micro-disarmament and peace-building in the Northeast. The paper presentation will be followed by a short documentary film made by the speaker herself that contains many photos, images and sketches painstakingly collected over five years.

Human Rights in 'disturbed areas'

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ABSTRACT

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA), a law applicable in "disturbed areas", including large parts of the Northeast region of India as well as in Jammu and Kashmir, is in force for decades. The Act violates non-derogable provisions of international human rights law and has facilitated the perpetration of grave human rights violations including extrajudicial executions by granting extensive powers to the armed forces in areas where it is in force. The Act has also enabled impunity for alleged perpetrators. Extra judicial executions violates the most fundamental human rights like Right to life, Equal Protection of Law, Right to remedies and state accountability and principles of criminal justice. The right to life is 'Non-derogable' even in exceptional circumstances such as internal political instability or any other public emergency. It is the obligation of state to guarantee effective protection through judicial or other means to individuals and groups who are in danger of extra-legal, arbitrary or summary executions. This paper will attempt at exploring how AFSPA as practiced, is facilitating extra judicial executions in north east India and thus violating the international standard of human rights guaranteed by the constitution as well as other international treaties legally binding for India. By granting excessive powers to the armed forces operating in 'disturbed areas' and also enabling impunity for alleged perpetrators for a protracted period of time, the government of India is likely to end up in a state sponsored genocide and crimes against humanity in due time.

Contested Territorial and Border Discourses: Case Studies of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim and the Dima Haram Daogah

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ABSTRACT

India's north eastern landscape reflects one of the most significantly vigorous territorial

narratives of contested spheres, which has resulted in multiple violent ethnic insurgencies. It is indeed safe to presume that most of these insurgencies, most influential being the National Socialist Council of Nagalim led by Thuingaleng Muivah and Isak Chisi Swu (NSCN-IM) have rationalized their militant movements based on subjective historical and social memories of closed territoriality and borders. This territorial and closed ethnic border mapping discourse is, however, not entirely correct. Despite a strict territorial demarcation of village land in pre-colonial times by the tribal village authorities led by a gaon-burah (village headman), there are numerous instances of plains-hills healthy interaction beyond borders for social, economic and political purposes. The British colonial administration did designate tribal hilly areas as “excluded” for politico-administrative convenience but with the dawn of Indian independence in 1947, the pre-colonial hills-plains interaction was sufficiently re-vitalized. Given this backdrop, the paper will argue that movements like the NSCN (IM) and the Dima Haram Daogah (DHD), both factions included, are deliberately creating a charged atmosphere of ethnic differences based on a limited historical memory of territorial differences and closed borders mostly informed by the not too distant colonial past. These constructed insurgent narratives are indeed vitiating tranquil ethnic historical concord informed by common living and interactions between tribes and plainsmen. Also, the constructed territorial and border discourses are contested by other tribes inhabiting the geographical maps drawn by both insurgent groups for establishing a common Naga and Dimasa homeland respectively.

Truth, Integrity and Social Responsibility of Media: Going Beyond Blood-dripping Stories on Northeast India

George Plathottam, St. Anthony's College, Shillong, Meghalaya

ABSTRACT

Truth, it is said, is the major casualty in war. But truth today is being sacrificed almost daily in the many media altars of the world. In a highly competitive and fast paced media world, accuracy becomes a major causality. But audiences place great trust in the media and they expect to receive credible information. Northeast India, sometimes referred to as the “paradise in peril” is a minefield for journalists. Ethnic diversity and militancy offer media much fodder. There is no dearth of conflict to report. If national media consider the Northeast to be too far from New Delhi and other major cities, the regional media lack depth, seriousness and quality. Knowing well the mindset of media and policy makers, militant groups often feel the best way to get coverage and attention is to indulge in violent acts. The media in the region abound in what Edwin Newman has

called 'flagrant examples of cheap scare journalism'. People living outside these regions have a totally distorted, 'mediated' picture of the region and its people. In spite of it all, the media continues to enjoy great credibility. But the media should act responsibly and not belie the trust the people place on them. The media's fondness for blood-dripping stories leaves little space for social and development issues. Over dependence on official versions affect variety, accuracy and balance. There is a need to address ethical issues like lack of fairness and balance, disregard for privacy, existence of bias, and glorification of the sensational and trivial. In the new media environment, watching the so-called watchdog has become essential to ensure that we have a healthy media. In the 'Global Village' in which we live today, not only are events around the world easily accessible but the audience cannot be taken for granted. People have become more and more critical consumers of the media. The present paper attempts to propose how the media, while not ignoring reports on violence, conflict and bloodshed, should go beyond to tell stories that connect communities, foster unity and promote development and peace. Citizens as well as media professionals must strive for a media that is more truthful, dispassionate, objective and responsible.

panel 12

Between South and Southeast Asia

Competing or Compatible? Reading the Tea Leaves of India-China Subregional Visions

Nimmi Kurien, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi

ABSTRACT

The shifting border discourse in India and China is powered by their vision to integrate their peripheries with the extended neighbourhood. For both India and China, starting a subregional discourse holds considerable emancipatory potential by focusing on issues that have a direct bearing on the people living on the frontiers. It also opens the space for direct stakeholder participation and institutional mechanisms of cooperation by addressing issues of governance, livelihood and resource-sharing among others. These find no place within politico-military frames of decision making, which can at best only offer suboptimal solutions for issues that are de-territorialised in nature. The paper argues that as India and China make moves to redefine their land borders as bridges that are effective bearers of their influence across the region, the critical question that needs

to be asked is whether their sub-regional visions will coincide or not. For any meaningful sub-regional cooperation between them, a dialogue towards a mutually acceptable conception of peace in the sub-region would be a necessary first step. Scholarship needs to explore the prospects for a common analytic framework within which issues such as water, ecosystem and biodiversity can be addressed. Debating new questions such as these would help offer creative ways of thinking out of the 'security' box so that a different set of issues can be placed on the agenda. Unpacking the idea of cooperation can thus create the climate for recasting ageing security agendas.

"North East in India's Look East Policy."

Baladas Ghoshal, Academy of Third World Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia

ABSTRACT

The main hypothesis in my paper is that the Northeastern part of India is our bridge with Southeast Asia and main plank in our Look East Policy. For one, our integration with Southeast the region will be more through people to people contacts or civil society interactions, which we have not explored to the fullest potentials. Our cultural influence is more in terms of rituals and Brahminic form of the concept of 'Devaraja' or a Divine King, which were used by ruling class to legitimize their rule and to create an aura of the kingdom, and therefore was restricted to the elites. At a mass level the culture is very different and this is where one might find greater similarities of cultures between India's northeast and the cultures of people from Southeast Asia. For another, connectivity between India's northeast and Southeast Asia through Burma will not only promote trade and commerce and as a consequence economic development of the northeast leading to an induction of the region into the mainstream of India's development process, but will also free them from the sense of periphery, leading further to their integration with the Indian nation. The dividend is viewing citizenship and nationhood beyond borders as part of extended neighbourhood and greater integration with Southeast Asia, a major goal of India's Look East Policy.

'Street Food Vending and Social Security: A Look Across Southeast Asia,'

Mini Bhattacharya, Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University

ABSTRACT

Street vending and hawking, like in many parts of South East Asia, is an age old activity practised by different communities of Assam and its neighbouring states. It is not only

a source of livelihood but forms an integral part of their tradition and history. Today vending and hawking particularly of street food and other items have proliferated forming an important dimension in the urban space of NE India, posing new concern for policy makers. The term “street foods” describes a wide range of ready-to-eat foods and beverages sold and sometimes prepared in public places, notably streets. For many years the urban street food vending was dismissed as insignificant economic activity by the development economist who predicted that such activities would eventually disappear as development proceeded. The sector of street food vendors is valuable because vending supports the livelihoods of millions of the urban poor and provides food and nutrition cheaply to a significant section of population. Though the importance of street food vending has long been established, adequate social security or insurance blankets have not been designed because it continues to be considered as part of the informal sector, a sector which in India comprise 93 percent of its workforce and 65 percent of the employed workforce in many developing Asian countries. It is an irony that they still continue to be ignored and perhaps the most regulated and the least protected by law. This paper will discuss the problems of street vending in Guwahati- the capital city of Assam, their social security and livelihood and compare it with the best practices of some South East Asian countries in order to understand how effectively the street vendors can be included in the urban planning and development process in the northeastern part of India.

‘Looking East : From India to Continental Southeast Asian Corridors’

Guy Lubeigt, National Scientific Research Centre (CNRS) and Sorbonne University, Paris

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