



GLOBAL COUNTER TERRORISM COUNCIL

Presents

WEBINAR REPORT

VIRTUAL MODE

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GCTC MANTHAN | NATIONAL WEBINAR
DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 7, 2023 | TIME: 2:00PM IST

75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

MANIPUR DIALOGUE

TOWARDS PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN MANIPUR

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PLATFORM: Google Meet

On

DIALOGUE ON MANIPUR: LEARNING LESSONS FROM THE CRISIS

Date: 07 JULY 2023

Timing: 2:00PM-6:30PM

THEME: TOWARDS PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN MANIPUR

Compiled by:

Maibam Warish(Senior Research Coordinator), & Dr.Paromita Datta(Honorary Consultant)

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GLOBAL COUNTER TERRORISM COUNCIL

About Us

The Global Counter-Terrorism Council is a registered non-profit international think tank initiated by public-spirited individuals to initiate a discourse on issues of India's national interest and matters of global conscience, mainly oriented towards counter-terrorism. The aim is to anticipate, formulate and execute security strategies for sustainable human development. Its members belong to different faculties and backgrounds. They include parliamentarians, senior bureaucrats, technocrats, distinguished diplomats, officers from the armed forces and paramilitary services, academicians, leading researchers, media analysts, professionals, corporate heads and human rights groups. The members regularly deliberate on the root causes of global terrorism, international conflicts, threats, and present effective solutions to the problems faced by society and the government as a whole.

GCTC has been regularly organising conferences and seminars to deliberate upon contemporary global issues. Some of our recent initiatives and conferences include; 'International Counter-terrorism Conferences 2022', 'International Water Security and Climate Change Conference 2021', 'International Cyber and Information Security Conference 2021', 'Secure India Conference 2022', 'National Youth Conference 2023', were conducted with immense success and valuable acknowledgements from around the world, 'Defence and Security Conference 2021', 'Strategic Infrastructure and Border Development Conference 2021', 'Energy Security Conference 2020', 'Anti-Money Laundering and Counter- Terrorism Finance conference 2021', 'Defence Modernisation in India: Prospects and Challenges post Covid-2020', and 'Kargil Vijay Diwas 2022'. These conferences provide a platform for experts to debate, and reflect upon issues and subjects of national interests.

Taking into consideration the present crisis in the state of Manipur, GCTC had organized a half a day webinar on 7th July 2023 from 2:00 pm till 7:00 on google meet. The webinar was graced by academicians, former governor, army officer's and police personnels, human rights activists, media and many more.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Global Counter Terrorism Council declares that the report titled ‘Dialogue on Manipur: Lessons learning from the Crisis’ is an original work of our organization and it is authentic with no duplication. The theme of the webinar was “Towards peace and reconciliation in Manipur”, and was held virtually on 7 July 2023.

GCTC would like to thank and express hearty gratitude to Prof. Sanjoy Hazarika (independent writer and author, Founder Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research) ,), and the entire organizing committee for their mentorship and guidance throughout this conference. They facilitated our vision and gave us a pathway to follow, with regards to developing the event outline. We would also like to thank Mr. Aditya Tikoo, Founder-Convener, GCTC and Mr. Vijay Tikoo, Trustee, GCTC for their continuous support in the organizing the webinar. They assisted the team in every way possible and we could not have been organized a successful event without their support.

GCTC appreciates all the eminent speakers who participated in the conference for their cooperation and insights. The knowledge, substantive information and data shared by the prominent speakers provided the participants with a better understanding of the crisis in an uncertain global order.

Finally, GCTC would like to express its gratitude to our senior research coordinator-Mr Maibam Warish, and Dr.Paromitta Datta- Hon. Consultant, who had been working behind the scenes with their full dedication and sincere efforts, to make the event a grand success.

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CONCEPT NOTE AND PROGRAM AGENDA

Manipur, with a civilizational history of more than 2000 years and coexistence among various tribes, communities and religions in the hill and valley regions, has experienced its worst internal ethnic violence in the past months. The violence erupted in various districts of Manipur, both in the hill and valley regions.

The unrest followed the Solidarity March organized by the All-Tribal Students Union Manipur (ATSUM) in protest against the Manipur High Court's decision urging the state government to send a recommendation to the Union Government to grant Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to the Meitei Community in Manipur. Following large scale rioting, mob attacks, arson, and reports of severe violence, an indefinite curfew was imposed in the Meitei and Kuki dominated districts of Manipur, both in the hills and the valley, internet services have been completely shut down.

The Centre has deployed over 40,000 personnel from the security forces including the army, among the largest deployments since the peak of insurgency in both hills and valley in the 1990s and 2000s. Yet, the violence continues as do novel protests including mass involvement of women activists who have blocked movement of the SF and in one case forced the freeing of several terrorists wanted for the ambush on an army convoy that killed 20 soldiers. Numerous houses, villages, and properties have been burnt to ashes. Over 100 people have been killed, thousands of people have been reported wounded, and over 60,000 have been internally displaced from both communities and live in poor conditions in some 350 relief camps. Additionally, nearly 10,000 persons have taken refuge outside the state.

The recent conflicts unfolding in Manipur have raised concerns about societal cohesion, stability, and political integration. The introduction of the 6th and 7th Manipur (Hills Areas) District Councils Amendment Bills, 2022, by the Manipur Minister of Tribal Affairs, and the Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) Amendment Bill, 2021, backed by ATSUM under the recommendation of the Hills Area Committee (HAC), aimed to achieve greater financial and administrative autonomy in the hill region. However, these bills were claimed to be blocked from being introduced in the Manipur legislative Assembly. Additionally, there is a quest for reforms of the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act of 1960 from the majority community. This in turn is considered by the hill's tribal community as a threat to ownership of tribal ancestral lands. Moreover, the emergence of ideological difference and rise of ultra-nationalist feeling among the communities has been widely discussed in public domain among the various civil society leaders, academia in media platform over the years. There has been a growth in perception of "selective targeting" by Kuki tribes following a crackdown on poppy cultivation in the Kuki-dominated hills areas, the state government's call for the eviction of villages from reserve forest areas and general criticism of Kukis as illegal immigrants and drug dealers. There have also been open animosity and distrust among members of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh-led government with divisions between Meitei and Kuki members as well as MLAs. Dharnas,

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Protests, rallies and counter-rallies have taken place over the years and the ongoing crisis serves as a stark reminder of the complex issues in the Manipuri society.

This webinar aims to shed light on the crisis in Manipur and delve into its broader implications. Its objective is to examine the underlying causes, analyse the dynamics at play, and investigate the rise of extremist ideologies and radicalization. Through insightful discussions, multidisciplinary perspectives, and collective efforts, we strive to chart a path towards fostering social cohesion, inclusivity, tolerance, and resilience in the face of disintegration. Additionally, this webinar will serve as a platform to explore possible ways to achieve long-lasting peace among the communities. We encourage participants to exchange ideas, share experiences, identify policy implications for governments, propose innovative approaches, and discuss the importance of collaboration and cooperation at various levels. By doing so, we hope to contribute meaningfully to the quest for better understanding and sustainable peace.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Global Counter Terrorism Council; a leading international think tank initiated by public-spirited individuals to address issues of national and global concern in the domain of both traditional and non-traditional security, was organized a webinar title *‘Dialogue Manipur: Learning Lessons from the Crisis’* virtually on *7th of July 2023*. The theme of the webinar was *‘Towards Peace and Reconciliation in Manipur’*.

The webinar witnessed engaging discussions from leading experts on the most pressing issues of the ongoing conflicts. Speakers have examined the underlying causes, analyzed the dynamics at play, and investigate the rise of extremist ideologies and radicalization in the state. Through insightful discussions, multidisciplinary perspectives, and collective efforts, we strive to chart a path towards fostering social cohesion, inclusivity, tolerance, and resilience in the face of disintegration. Additionally, this webinar has explored possible ways to achieve long-lasting peace among the communities. Through this dialogue prominent speakers and experts not only presented and exchanged meaningful ideas and experiences, but also, identify policy implications for governments, propose innovative approaches, and discussing the importance of collaboration and cooperation at various levels.

The webinar was commenced by anchors (**Maibam Warish-Senior Research Coordinator**, and **Dr.Paromita Datta- Hon. Consultant**), and the opening remark was delivered by **General JJ Singh (Former Governor of Arunachal Pradesh & Former Chief of the Army Staff)**. General Singh stressed the point that as Indians we need to be more actively engaged and involved with the north eastern region. This will in the long run help build confidence and better integration with the rest of the nation, and help to mitigate other security challenges emerging across the border.

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The key speakers of the event included **Lt Gen Zameer Uddin Shah** (*Former VC-Aligarh Muslim University, and Former GCO-III Corps(Spear Corps) & Deputy Chief of Army Staff(Personnel & System), Indian Army*), **Lt Gen(Dr) Shokin Chauhan**(*Former Director General of Assam Rifles, and Former Chairman of Ceasefire Monitoring Group*), **Lt Gen (Dr) Konsam Himalay Singh** (*Former GCO XVI Corps, Indian Army, & Former Chairman of Manipur Public Service Commission*), **Lt Gen K J Singh** (*Former GOC-in-C, Western Army Command*),

Prof. Amarjeet Singh,(*Honorary Director-Centre for North East Study Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi*), **Prof. Sanjoy Hazarika**(*independent writer and founder of Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research*), **Prof. Thongkolala Haokip**, (*Assistant Professor, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, JNU*), **Mr.Akham Bonbirdhwaja Singh**, IFS(Retd), (*Former Conservator of Forest, Government of Manipur*), **Prof. Kham Khan Suan Hausing** (*Head-Department of Political Science School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad*), **Mr. Pradip Phanjoubam** (*Editor –Imphal Review of Arts and Politics*), **Dr. Nemthiangai Guite**(*Associate Professor, Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, School of Social Science, JNU, New Delhi*), **Dr. Chinkhalun Guite**(*Assistant Professor, Department of Physics, St. Sephen's College, Delhi University*), **Mr. Babloo Loitongbam**(*Executive Director-Human Rights Alert, Imphal, India*), **Col.(Dr) Shailendra Singh**(*Security and Strategic Analyst*), **Mr.Harjit Snadhu**, IPS(Retd), *Chief Investigation United National World Food Program and Former Coordinator-UNSC Panel of Experts & IG(Ops), Manipur*, **Maj.(Dr) Mohammed Ali Shah**(*Former ADC to GOC III Corps(Spare Corps), and many more.*

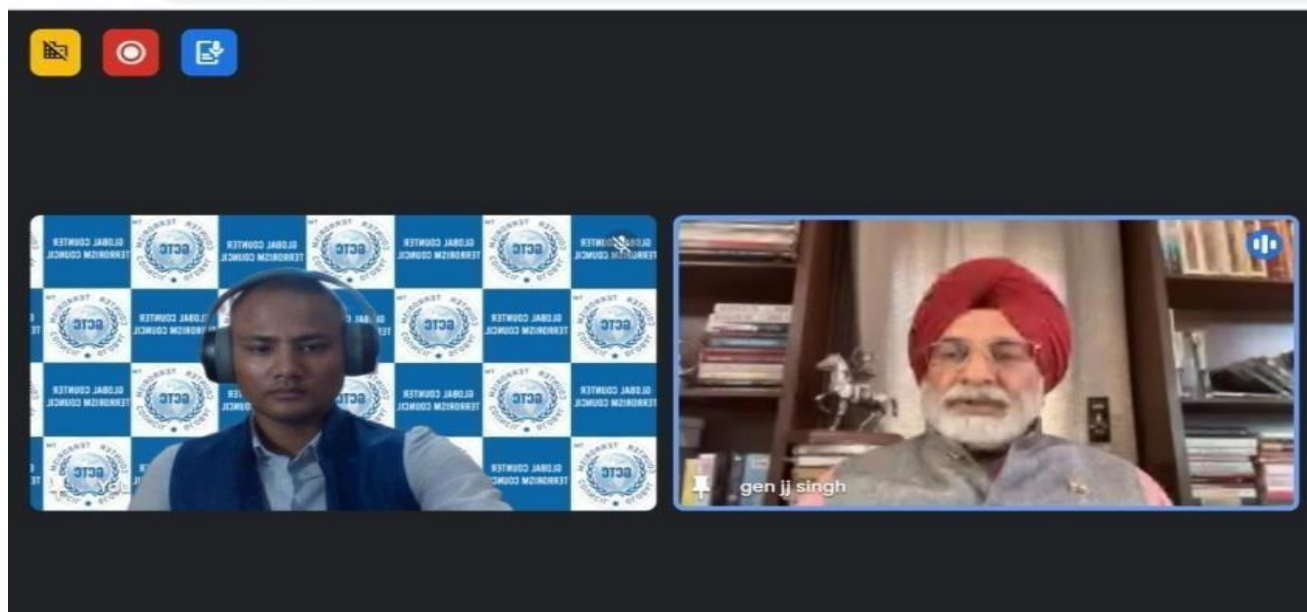
The webinar also heard from prominent dignitaries such as **Amb.Shashank**, IFS(Retd) (*Former Foreign Secretary, GoI*), **Lt Gen Deependra Singh Hooda**,(*former General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Indian army's Northern Command*), **Lt Gen Arun Sahni**,(*Former GOC-in-C, South Western Command & DG-IT, AHQ*), **Lt Gen Vinod Bhatia**(*Former Director General Military Operations (DGMO) Indian Army and Director, Centre For Joint Warfare Studies, National Board of Advisors Kalinga Institute of Indo- Pacific Studies*),**Shri Mahendra Kumawat**, **IPS(Retd)**(*former Director General of the Border Security Force (BSF), the border patrol agency of the Government of India*) and others. .

Lt Gen.(Dr) Rakesh Sharma, *Executive Council Member-GCTC, and Former GOC-Fire & Fury Corps, Indian Army.* delivered the closing remarks.

SESSION PROCEEDINGS

Opening Session

General JJ SINGH, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC (Retd) Patron-GCTC, Former Governor – Arunachal Pradesh & Former Chief of the Army Staff, Indian Army.



General JJ Singh, highlighted that Manipur was originally an ancient Hindu Kingdom and is considered as one of the gems in India. Historically speaking, Meiteis and the tribal communities have had a peaceful co-existence for centuries. Manipur as a state has geo- strategic importance because of its location bordering Myanmar. During the Naga insurgency in 1960's, Manipur had remained largely peaceful. With nearly 1400 km long trans-national highway connecting India – Myanmar – Thailand, providing greater connectivity between India and Southeast Asia. Therefore, it assumes greater importance to have peace and tranquility in the region. With the completion of this trilateral highway, Manipur will emerge as the gate way to India thereby increasing the trade and commerce potential along with tourism by many folds. The State should avoid the alienation between the people from hills and valley. Lt Gen Singh also rightly pointed out the covert role played by neighboring countries in harboring the elements that have been playing an active in trying to destabilize the region.

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Session 1: Understanding Historical Background, and challenges to Social Cohesion

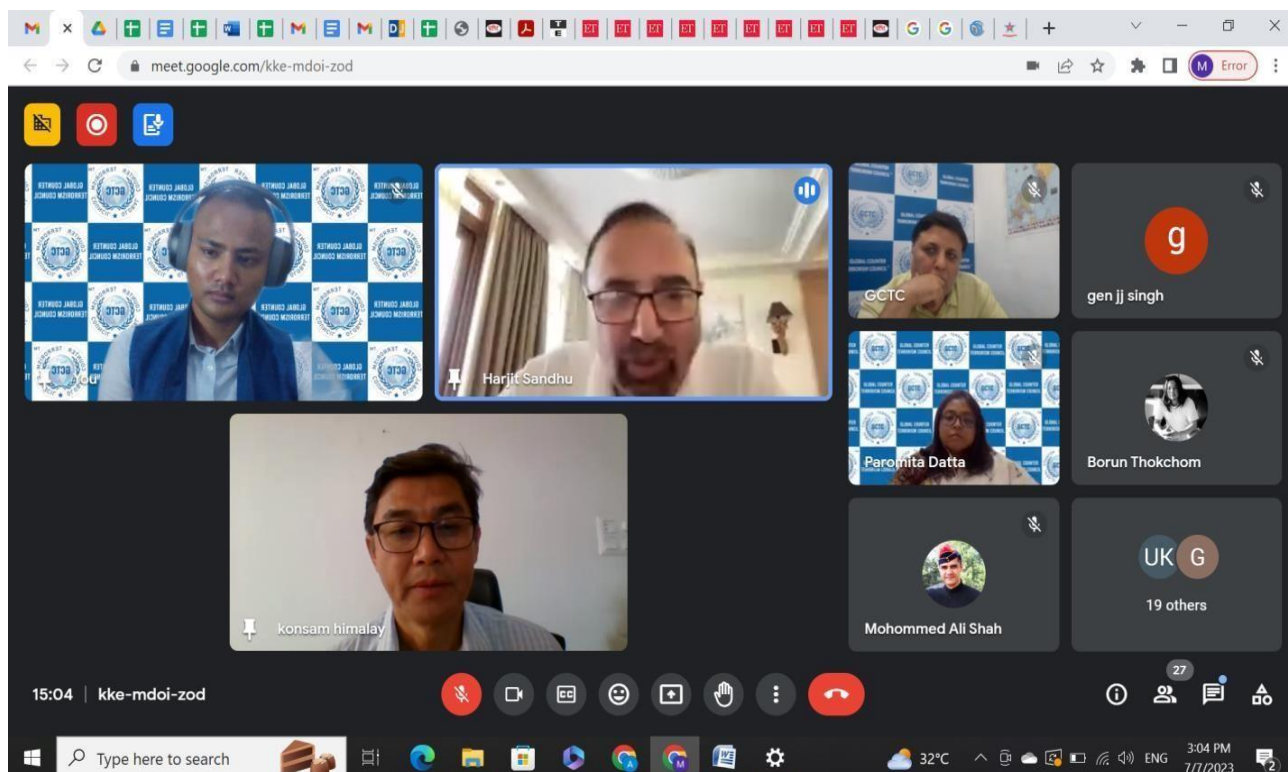
- Examining the historical, cultural, and political context of Manipur
- Identifying the underlying factors contributing societal fragmentation
- Investigating the role of ethnic tensions, identity politics that triggers the ongoing conflicts
- Challenges face by governments, institutions, and civil society in fostering social cohesion

The session was chaired by Shri Harjit Sandhu, IPS(Retd), Chief of Investigation, United National World Food Programme, & Former Coordinator-UNSC Panel of Experts & IG(Ops), Manipur, and the prominent speakers of the session were **Lt Gen Zameer Uddin Shah, PVSM, SM,VSM(Retd),** Former VC-AMU, and Former GOC III Corps(Spear Corps) & Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Personnel & systems), Indian Army, **Mr. Babloo Loitongbam,** Executive Director, Human Rights Alert, Imphal, India and Shri **R.S. Kumawat IPS (Retd.)** Former Chairman, Suspension of Operation Group-Nagaland.

Lt Gen Zameer Uddin Shah, In his opening remarks highlighted the contribution made by Manipur towards national unity, through sports. Talking about the Northeast, the most important aspect is tribal affiliations. Unless a person has a clear understanding about tribes, what are their interests, who are their allies and adversaries, one can never comprehend the essence, complexities, and nuances of tribal culture. Also, it is important to note that in Manipur only 10% of the land is arable rest is all hills and forests, thereby reducing the scope for cultivation. The present conflict in India negates the ethos and values of our nation and Constitution. Lt Gen Shah also underlined the important role played by China and Myanmar in smuggling of arms and drugs across the Indian border and how this has contributed towards the already existing fissures in the society.

Babloo Loitongbam: A human rights activist, Nr. Loitongbam enumerated how the state of Manipur as we know today came into being. How the state in the present contemporary period, divided into many ethnic communities was not like this in the earlier era. How introduction of Hindu religion created division within the once inclusive society and fragmented it. This was further accentuated with the advent of colonial rulers in India.

R.S. Kumawat IPS (Retd.), in his speech Mr. Kumawat rightly pointed out that we are more concerned about what is happening in other parts of the world rather than being worried about the crisis in Manipur. Rest of the Indian must put their mic and bring suggestive solutions to calm down the conflicts, and Mr. Kumawat compared the crisis in Manipur as like a ulcer in any part of a body which hurts the whole body-the conflict impacts the security of the whole India. He suggested that those in power needed to come together and resolve these issues as top priority. Tribal affiliations are very important. Unless a person has a clear understanding about tribes, what are their interests, who are their allies and adversaries, one can never comprehend the essence, complexities, and nuances of tribal culture.. The present conflict in India negates the ethos and values of our nation and Constitution. Lt Gen Shah also underlined the important role played by China and Myanmar in smuggling of arms and drugs across the Indian border and how this has contributed towards the already existing fissures in the society.



Session 2: Revisiting constitutional amendments of Tribal Land rights, Reserve Forest and conditionality to schedule tribe status.

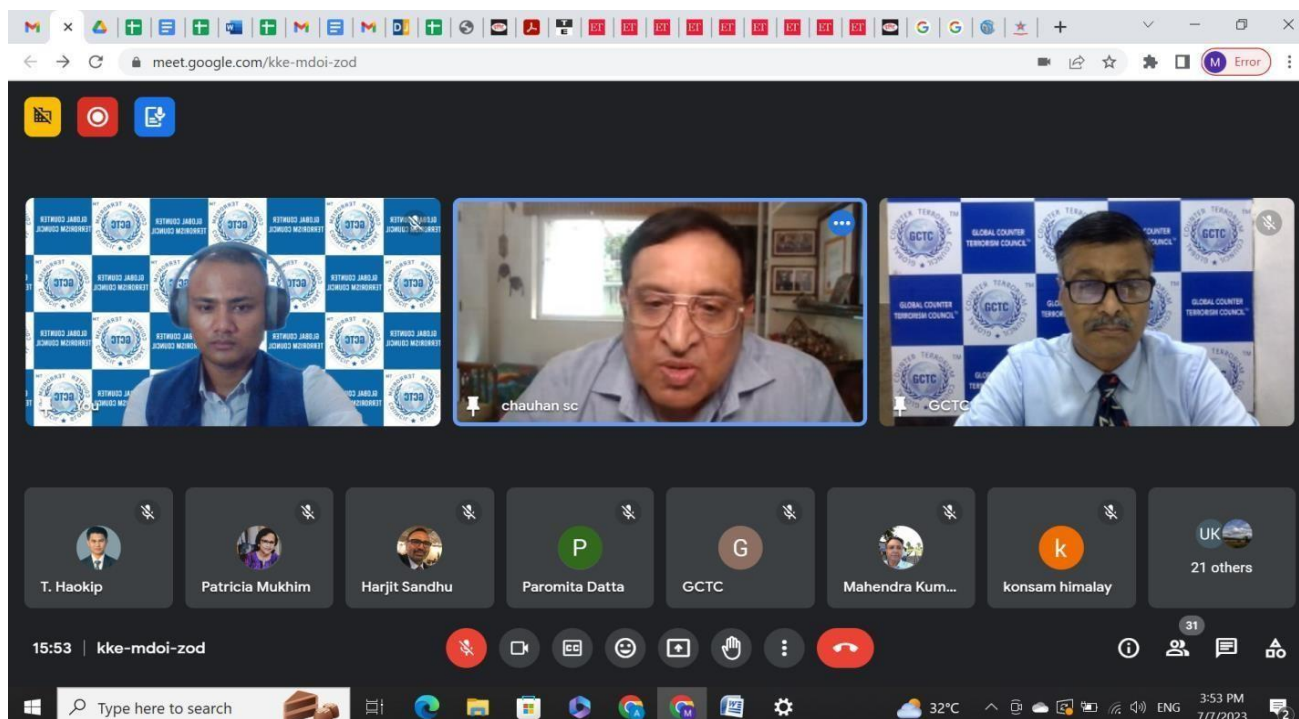
The session was chaired by Col (Dr) Shailendra Singh, Retd, Security & Strategic Analyst, and the prominent speakers were Lt Gen (Dr) Shokin Chauhan, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM (Retd), Executive Council Member-GCTC, Former Chairman, Ceasefire Monitoring Group & Former Director General, Assam Rifles, Mr. Akham Bonbirdhwaja Singh, IFS(Retd), Former Conservator of Forests, Government of Manipur, Former Consultant, Community Forest International, and Dr. Thongkhohal Haokip, Assistant Professor, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, JNU.

The session chair Col (Dr) Shailendra Singh (Retd.) Security and Strategic Analyst in his address pointed out to the fact that any kind of amendment regarding the land rights in Manipur will have implications not only for the entire north-east region but also for the tribal areas but also for the other tribal expanses in the country. Therefore, it is prudent to understand whether these amendments are required or not.

Lt Gen Shokin Chauhan in his speech explained how important land is for the tribal community. It is not just about livelihood and sustenance but tribal have close spiritual connection with the land. Their cultural identity and existence as a community is closely interlinked with the land that they have been living on for many generations. Therefore, any kind of change regarding the rights and laws must be made after due consultations with all the stakeholders. It is imperative for the government to consider the significance of land for tribal communities.

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Dr. Haokip talked about how the hills in the Manipur have not witnessed development and growth like the valley. Any kind of legislation which affects the tribal should be passed after thorough deliberation and must consider the views of the people. He further stated that the 2015 bill related to land and forests is one of the trigger points of the present crisis in the state. The MLR and NLR bill of 2015 were extended to the hill areas of Manipur. These bills were a response to the agitation by the Joint Committee on the interline permit system. Manipur saw 619 days of agitation as a result. These bills were termed as anti-tribal and against the people from margins. It did not promote the interests of the hill people; rather it was done at the behest of the dominant community.

Mr. Akham Bonbirdhwaja Singh's address highlighted the current crisis in Manipur and its connection to forest land. He provides a historical overview, stating that forest reservation processes began in Manipur in 1932, with 2/3 of the forest designated as Reserve Forest during the pre-independence period. After independence, this decreased to 1/3, and the last reservation notification was issued in 1965-66, followed by a panel notification in 1979-80. Protected forest areas were designated between 1965 and 1979, with no subsequent notifications. Reserve Forest covers 4.4% of the Forest land, while protected and unclassed forests account for 18% and 45%, respectively. Mr. Singh also highlighted the controversy surrounding the eviction of targeted communities from the reserve forest land by the Manipur Forest Department. The affected communities include Meitei (143 houses), Meitei-Pangal (137 houses), Kuki (59 houses), Naga (38 houses), and Nepali (36 houses). He concludes by stating that Manipur joined the Union of India, adopting the Indian Forest Act. As a result, legal avenues and democratic processes are available for addressing grievances and open to judicial review.

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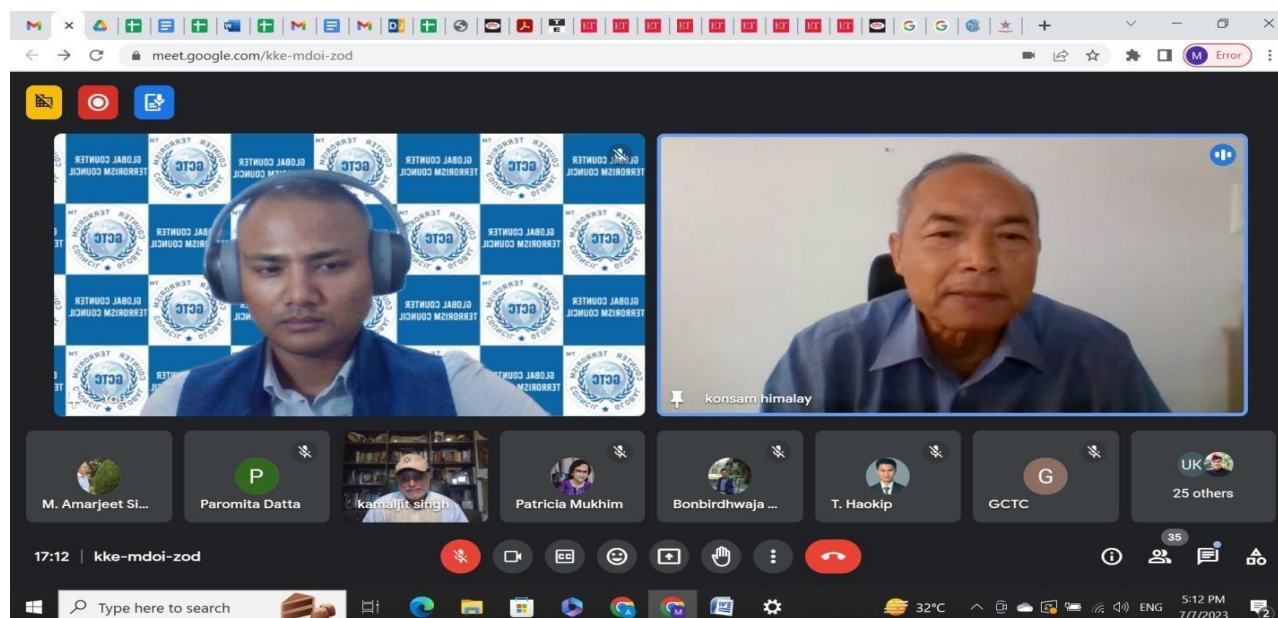
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Session 3: Conflicts, perspective on national security impacts and repercussion on regional Security.

The session was chaired by **Lt Gen KJ Singh**, PVSM, AVSM & Bar (Retd), Executive Council Member-GCTC & Former GoC-in-C. Western Army Command, Indian Army, and the esteemed speakers were **Prof Amarjeet Singh**, Honorary Director, Centre for North East Study Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia. New Delhi, **Lt Gen (Dr) Konsam Himalay Singh**, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, YSM (Retd), Advisor-GCTC, former Chairman, Manipur Public Service Commission, & Former GOC XVI Corps, and **Dr. Chinkhalun Guite**, Assistant Professor, Department of Physics, St. Stephen's College, Delhi University.

In his address, **Lt Gen KJ Singh** mentioned that the natural landscape, idea of economic prosperity and development of the state has been destroyed by the current conflicts. The existence of various arms groups from different communities and tribes acts as a deadlock to tackle the security issues of the state as well as the regional security. He also pointed out that the potential groups or actors who can act as an interlocutor for conflicts resolution in the state, by taking an saying that "Conflict resolution in India has handle by certain category of people, however in recent past it has given to intelligence operatives". " are they giving positive responses, do we need smart interlocutors, or do we need trustworthy in looking?"

Prof. Amarjeet Singh, has analyzed the present conflicts situation from the lands perspective as the people of Manipur are very much desire to bring peace and development in the state. He pointed out in a suggestive manner that the functions of the Autonomous District Council (ADC), which administered the hills districts of Manipur has to be re-examined, and re-evaluated, and its role has to be enhance especially in terms of peace process, which is in dire of needed at this point of time. He continued by saying that the council has to be involved with different stakeholders from the valley and allows limited land ownership rights. Prof. Singh, has highlighted that the underdeveloped nature and the lack of modern border management mechanism at the international border with Myanmar, and the existence of unauthorized cross border migration, emerge as an disruptive point of division in the Manipuri society. Those challenges may be the initial pints to initiate an identity politics in the state.



Lt Gen (Dr) Konsam Himalay Singh, in his address stressed out some historical background of NE regional security and how since 1826 onwards, the British policies regarding the regional security of the NE was primarily based on Russia's role and how it's probe into the Tibet and possible expansion into the northeast territory. After the end of the colonial rule, the regional structures have remained the same with new players like China and Pakistan. f. Since its Independence, China have had supported various insurgent groups in terms of weapons, materials, physically, and financial.

Lt Gen Singh also pointed out that that there are close to 65-70 insurgents' groups operating in the region fighting for various agenda such as identity, sovereignty, autonomy etc, however, not much has changed in terms of security strategies and mechanism which in turn has emerged as a challenge for the armed forces stationed in the region. At present, the Centre was holdint talks with more than 25 kuki insurgent groups to chalk out a road map for the future. The current political scenario in Myanmar involving multiple actors, it is possible that some in Manipur have found alignments with groups across the border related to identity and its negative impact on India geopolitically.

Lt Gen Singh also highlighted that the development of China Myanmar Economic Corridor, and the connectivity plan of Oil Pipeline from the Bay of Bengal to the Yunnan region of China after payoff made towards certain groups in Myanmar including Arakan Liberation Army. In such a situation it becomes all the more prudent for the , Indian military establishment to take this crisis seriously as the geopolitical game has just started to unfold in the region, with large number of arms in circulation amongst the communities posing a serious threat to the security of the nation. Lt Gen Singh in his address . suggested that there has to be a proper and efficient infrastructure or security architecture to combat the threat that has materialize in the region with serious implications for the entire country. He concluded, by emphasizing on the role played by

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both China Roles and ISI in the ongoing crisis and how detrimental it could be for Indian Military and security analysts to overlook it.

Dr. Chinkhalun Guite, pointed out that the security of any minority community must travel from the higher authority in a hierarchical manner. He highlighted that to find out the factors responsible for any violence or crisis, it is imperative for the authorities to make the people understand the situation and how their security measures applied by the state will benefit them. He also commented that the security of certain communities need to be protected through constitutional framework.

Lt Gen Kamal Jeet Singh, wrapped up the session on a positive note highlighting the contribution of Manipuri sportsman and sportswomen, the beauty and diversity of the Manipuri society, How important it is for the academicians, civil society leaders, and officials from various public institutions to come together and find a middle ground to bridge the existing gaps and bring together a fragmented society in such a manner that communities learn to be accommodative of each other.

Session 4: Future Perspectives; Building Bridges, and pathways to reconciliation.

- Exploring strategies to promote dialogue, initiatives, and understanding for reconciliation
- Discussing the role of education, media, and cultural integration in fostering unity
- Discussing the importance of collaboration and cooperation at various level; civil society, community engagements, and regional political leaders.

This session was chaired by **Major (Dr) Mohammed Ali Shah**, Former ADC to GOC III Corps (Speare Corps), and the prominent speakers were **Prof. Sanjoy Hazarika of C-NEs**, **Prof. Kham Khan Suan Hausing**, Head- Department of Political Science School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad, **Dr Nemthianngai Guite**, Associate Professor, Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and **Mr. Pradip Phanjoubam**, Editor-Imphal Review of Arts and Politics, Manipur.

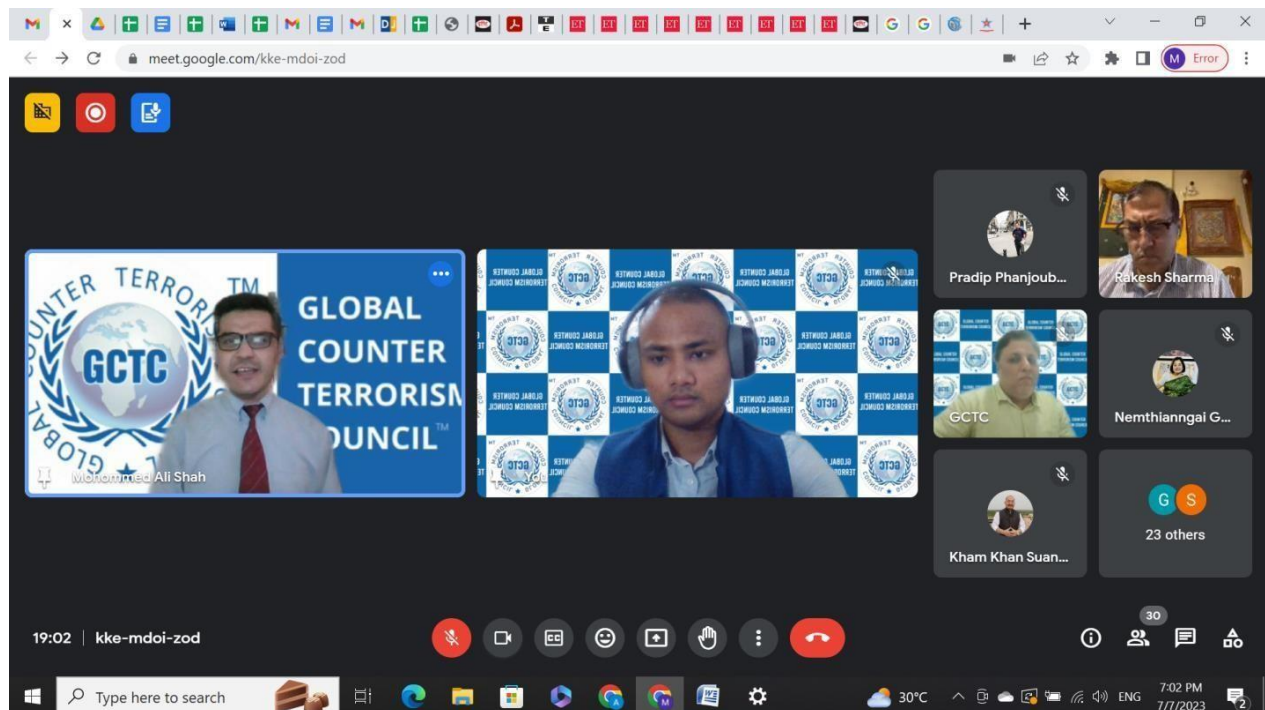
Major (Dr) Mohammed Ali Shah, chair for the session shared his experiences in Manipur when he was posted there for counter insurgency operation in the 1990s. Major Shah also underlined the significance of the peace accord signed between the Naga and Kuki after catastrophic violent conflicts in early 1990s.

Prof. Sanjoy Hazarika, in his address explained the situation in Manipur by pointing out that the climate of conflict changes every few hours in a negative way. The multifaceted complex nature of the conflicts creates a challenging situation for the whole region, and particularly for Manipur. The need of the hour is to focus on the prospect of the conflict and conveying possible measures to tackle the situation. Prof. Hazarika analyzed the positions of the Indian Government

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on Myanmar based on the joint statements post PM Modi's visit to USA on 30th of June 2023 the Government of India expressed deep concerns in the deteriorating situation in Myanmar, called for the release of detainees, establishment of constructive dialogue and peaceful transition towards a federal democratic government in Myanmar. However, the present government in Myanmar is highly reactive thereby putting the regional security at greater risk. The current state of conditions in Myanmar has the capacity to substantially impact on India's national security dynamics. Prof Hazarika further states that one cannot change ones' neighbor but the question is what enables all the people and stake holders to come together.

Prof. Hazarika concluded by saying that India Act East policy lies in scatter now, conflict cannot sustain economy, move infrastructure development, support, and revive business in Manipur. At present the chance for meaningful dialogue is not very high due to distrust and misgivings amongst the communities. Therefore, any prospect for a constructive discussion and deliberation should involve all the stakeholders.



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Prof. Kham Khan Suan Hausing, began his address by stating that ‘ before we explore the strategies to build bridges and measures for reconciliation, we have to have the audacity to point out the source of the conflicts’. He pointed out at the complicity of the state given the structural nature of violence. Prof. Hausing, further mentioned that the complexities of the present conflict, and the narrative that has emerged from it involving both the communities seems to have fulfilled certain political agenda for public consumption. The role of state is central in the present conflict, and the intellectuals, academic community, policy makers or practitioners, should be mindful that how conflict can become a source of benefits in terms of electoral gains. He further mentioned that we have to accept the principle of equality, acceptance of both side of the decks as fellow citizens who are entitled to equal rights under the constitution, and should be given the same platform to express their grievances in an institutional system as equal citizens of the country. Prof. Hausing mentioned how it is important to confront the existing structural injustice in the system and that the development disparities between the hills and valley in terms of government employment opportunity, economy, business and political representation in the administration, have contributed majorly as one of the factors in the ongoing madness in the society. Professor Hausing concluded by highlighting India's foundational democratic political system, multi-level institutions, and the existing structural inequalities that perpetuate the tyranny of the majority. He emphasized the need for a mindful approach when envisioning the future of Manipur, considering the interests and aspirations of all communities within the territory under constitutional legitimacy. He suggested that these aspirations could be accommodated through a future structure, crafting a system that fosters cooperation rather than antagonism, and adopting a federal democratic framework that enables the voices, grievances, and hopes of all people to be institutionally accommodated.

Dr Nemthiangai Guite's analysis highlighted how the abundance of natural resources in the region and particularly the central government's development initiatives through the Look East Policy/Act East Policies have contributed in the present conflict. The discovery of abundant natural resources and biodiversity in the region has fostered a strong sense of ownership among diverse ethnic communities. While the government initiatives aim to promote economic growth, concerns regarding exploitation of the resources and the ecological sustainability of the region persists largely. Balancing development with community interests and adopting sustainable resource management practices are essential for addressing conflicts and ensuring equitable utilization of natural resources and the ecological sustainability of the region persists largely. Balancing development with community interests and adopting sustainable management practices are essential for addressing conflicts and ensuring equitable utilization of natural resources. Dr. Guite argued that the challenges of constructing a common history of Manipur arises from the fact that the region is home to diverse tribes and communities with shared ancestral origins, language, culture, family connections, and daily interactions across the border. However, these communities are divided by international borders. Each community has its own historical narratives, making it difficult to

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establish a consensus on the history of Manipur. In the year 2022 to verify the accounts written in the history books, the government appointed a 15-member committee.

Dr. Guite concluded by emphasizing the importance of implementing effective mechanisms for conflict resolution in Manipur. She suggested that the Manipur Legislative Assembly should serve as a common platform for all communities to share their issues, engage in debates, and seek resolutions for their grievances. However, due to the diverse demands and support from the armed groups these communities have not been able to find much common ground which would lead to effective resolving of the present crisis. Dr. Guite also pointed to the role of ethno-nationalism, religious fanaticism, and alliances with various right-wing ideologies and how they make the task of resolving the crisis even more challenging.

Mr. Pradip Phanjoubam talked about how the current conflict in Manipur stems from a mindset of insecurity among ethnic tribes, driven by perceived structural injustice, inequality, and socio-economic disparities. To address these issues, he emphasizes the need for constructive dialogue and an accommodative approach. It is crucial to analyze the factors that contribute to the feelings of insecurity among various communities in a small state like Manipur. By engaging in open and inclusive discussions, the path towards resolution and fostering a sense of security can be pursued. Mr. Phanjoubam concluded by analyzing the perception of development disparities between the hills and valley regions of Manipur, and appeal that it has to be based on government-recorded data rather than subjective perceptions. He highlights the issue of expanding villages into reserve forest land, noting that this is not a hoax but a genuine concern. Discouraging mobile population and controlling influx to prevent electoral imbalances in the state are also important considerations. Furthermore, Mr. Phanjoubam emphasizes the importance of moderation in customary laws, as they vary among different communities. He suggests finding a constructive and mutually equitable platform that can establish an equilibrium, and middle path as a way forward to serve as a significant mechanism for achieving long-lasting and sustainable peace in the state.

Closing Remarks by **Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma** PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), Executive Council Member-GCTC & Former GOC-Fire & Fury Corps, Indian Army

Lt Gen Rakesh Sharma, highlighted the role of Myanmar, societal fissure in Manipur and the role it plays in the current cycle of violence. He explained that people do tend to find avenues and methods to come together and find answers. With the present ongoing crisis in Manipur, it is important for the people to understand the importance of this and reach a certain level of compromise so that an amicable solution can be achieved between the various stake holders.

Agenda of the webinar

Timing	Program
2:00 PM-2:12 PM	Registration of Speakers & Delegates
2:15 PM-2:17 PM	Welcome by the Anchor: Maibam Warish & Dr. Paromita Datta
2:16 PM-2:17 PM	National Anthem
2:17 PM-2:33 PM	Opening Remark: General JJ SINGH, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC(Retd); Patron-GCTC, Former Chief of the Indian Army, and Former Governor of Arunachal Pradesh.
2:33 PM-3:20 PM	<p>Session 1: Understanding Historical Background, and challenges to Social Cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Examining the historical, cultural, and political context of Manipur ● Identifying the underlying factors contributing societal fragmentation ● Investigating the role of ethnic tensions, identity politics that triggers the ongoing conflicts ● Challenges face by governments, institutions, and civil society in fostering social cohesion <p>Session Chair: Shri Harjit Sandhu, IPS(Retd), Chief of Investigation, UN World Food Program & Former Coordinator-UNSC Panel of Experts & IG(Ops), Manipur.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lt Gen Zameer Uddin Shah, PVSM, SM, VSM(Retd), Former VC –Aligarh Muslim University, Former GOC III Corps(Spear Corps) & Deputy Chief of Army Staff(Personnel & Systems), Indian Army. 2. Mr. Babloo Loitongbam, Executive Director, Human Rights Alert, Imphal, India 3. R.S. Kumawat IPS (Retd.) Former Chairman, Suspension of Operation Group-Nagaland.
3:20 PM-4:10 PM	<p>Session 2: Revisiting constitutional amendments of Tribal Land rights, Reserve Forest, and conditionality to schedule tribe status</p> <p>Session Chair: Col(Dr). Shailendra Singh, Retd, Security & Strategic Analyst</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lt Gen Shokin Chauhan, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM(Retd), Former Chairman, Ceasefire Monitoring Group & Former DG-Assam Rifles, Executive Member-GCTC. 2. Mr. Akham Bonbirdhwaja Singh, IFS(Retd), Former Conservator of Forest, Govt. of Manipur, Former Consultant, Community Forestry International. 3. Prof. Thongkhohal Haokip, Assistant Professor, Centre for the Study of Law & Governance, JNU

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4:10 PM-5:10 PM	<p>Session 3: conflicts; perspective on national security impacts and repercussion on regionalSecurity.</p> <p>Session Chair: Lt Gen KJ Singh, PVSM, AVSM & Bar(Retd), Executive Council Member-GCTC, FormerGoC-in-C. Western Command, Indian Army, Former Advisor to CM of Haryana.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lt Gen(Dr) Konsam Himalay Singh, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, YSM (Ret), Advisor-GCTC, FormerChaiman-Manipur Public Service Commission, and Former GOC XVI Corps, Indian Army. 2. Prof. Amarjeet Singh, Honoraray Director, Centre for North East Study Centre, Jamia MilliaIslamia, New Delhi. 3. Dr. Chinkhalun Guite, Assistant Professor, Department of Physics, St.Stephen's Collge, Delhi University
5:10 PM-6:00 PM	<p>Session 4: Future Perspectives; Building Bridges, and pathways to reconciliation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring strategies to promote dialogue, initiatives, and understanding for reconciliation • Discussing the role of education, media, and cultural integration in fostering unity • Discussing the importance of collaboration and cooperation at various level; civil society,community engagements, and regional political leaders. <p>Session Chair: Maj(Dr). Mohammed Ali Shah, Former ADC to GOC III Corps(Speare Corps).Indian Army</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prof. Sanjoy Hazarika, Executve Member-GCTC, Director, Commonwealth Human RightsInitiative, New Delhi 2. Dr. Kham Khan Suan Hausing; Head Department of Political Science, School of SocialSciences, University of Hyderabad. 3. Dr Nemthianngai Guite; Associate Professor, Centre of Social Medicine and CommunityHealth, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. <p>Mr. Pradip Phanjoubam, Editor-Imphal Review of Arts and Politics</p>
6:00 PM-6:10 PM	<p>Closing Remarks: Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), ExecutiveCouncil Member-GCTC, and Former GOC-Fire & Fury Corps, Indian Army.</p>
6:10 PM-6:15 PM	<p>Vote of thanks: Dr. Paromita Datta, Honorary Consultant-GCTC</p>