

**Department of Political Science, North-Eastern Hill University
Shillong, 793022**

Call for Papers

International Seminar on

**NORTHEAST INDIA AND ITS INTERNATIONAL
NEIGHBORS: NEW DIRECTIONS**

Date: 27-28, 2018

Venue: NEHU Campus, Shillong

Concept Paper

The Northeast of India, comprising of eight states, has borders with five neighbouring countries - Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Nepal. All northeastern states share border with one or two countries. Of late, the region has gained attention with the increasing awareness of the geopolitical implications of sharing International boundaries. The extremely porous nature of the border gives rise to a number of issues and challenges.

India has more or less settle boundaries with Nepal and Bhutan. Demarcation of India's international border with Myanmar and China continues to be a contentious issue. The conclusion of the land boundary agreement between India and Bangladesh created a positive environment in which the two countries can take forward an ambitious agenda of rail and road connectivity, inland waterways, coastal shipping and energy cooperation, etc. India and China have disputed border and a war in 1962 after which the security dynamics in the region became an overriding concern. The Sino-Indian territorial and boundary dispute holds the potential to flare up into a border conflict placing the overall security balance in the region at risk.

Northeast India has been battling with cross border insurgencies. Due to the shared ethnic and cultural linkages, these insurgencies have managed to obtain sustenance from across the border, especially in the border with Myanmar, Bhutan and Bangladesh. Large-scale illegal migration, refugee flows, and illegal trafficking of goods and persons have created security concerns in the region. The massive exodus of Rohingya Muslims have resulted in two major non-traditional security issues namely the boat refugees and arms smuggling. Compounded by the increasing severity of transnational challenges such as drug trafficking and the spread of diseases, smuggling, border trade, the composition and role of border communities became crucial concern.

Since the prospects of trans-national cooperation are possible with the cooperation of the communities that inhabit the borderland a better appreciation of the Border States, border areas and the people is critical to the understanding of the entire process. Similarly, connectivity both by land and sea is a major consideration and few would differ on the merits of promoting riverine linkages and water transport between NEER and Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

As a result of India's neighborhood policy, India's foreign policy has acquired a new dimension. The profundity of this change is underlined by the larger mind space that the International neighbors of India's Northeast now occupy when it comes to economics, technology, security, strategy or even culture. Simultaneously, questions are also being raised about India's neighborhood policy after the majority of its neighbors participated in China's Belt and Road Summit. Is it time then to change the narrative especially in the context of Northeast India, a highly literate region that can provide a sizable pool of human resources, and blessed with abundant resources utilize the border states to nurture beneficial relations with neighboring countries? In this the role that India's Northeast can play as full stakeholders is vital so that engagement with its International neighbors can fulfill the vision of shared growth and prosperity.

Given this context, Department of Political Science, North-Eastern Hill University will be organizing a two-day / three-day national / International seminar as part of its UGC-SAP on 27-28 March 2018. The seminar aims at bringing together scholars in the field for an intensive discussion on the following: 1. Border and Sovereignty: In what ways do sovereign states reach out to their borderlands and their neighboring countries? 2. Politics of gateway: what are the manifestations of border politics? 3. Border community: How does flow of goods and people affect the ecology of border towns and the livelihoods of border communities? 4. India's neighborhood policy: How can Northeast Indian states act as the space to bring about a better network of interconnections, develop cross border linkages, bilateral ties/ etc., with its International neighbors?

Sub-themes:

1. Historical, cultural and ethnic linkages
2. Border disputes
3. Cross border insurgency
4. Transnational interconnection of people, ideas and goods.
5. Migration/ refugees/questions of citizenship
6. Border trade-informal and formal.
7. Role of Border communities.
8. Connectivity concerns
9. Traditional and non -traditional security issues.
10. Bilateral relations.

Invitation for Abstracts

The Department of Political Science calls for abstracts (200 words) of original research papers from scholars and academicians on the above themes from India and abroad by 1 February 2018, 1700 hours, IST). The accepted abstracts will be notified by 9 February 2018. The last date of Submission of working paper (3000 words) is 10 March 2018. **Abstracts can be submitted to the Email: <sappolsc2018@yahoo.com>**

Registration

The participants whose abstracts have been accepted will need to complete registration by 10 March 2018. Registration fees for participants from India and abroad is 2000 INR (With accommodation) and for local participants is 1000 INR (Without accommodation). Registration charges cover the cost of conference kit, food expenses and accommodation for three days. No TA/ DA will be given to paper presenters. The method of payment of Registration fee will be intimated later.

All the international participants are requested to make their own budgetary arrangements for international travel. Free transportation will be arranged for all the international participants between Guwahati (Borjhar Airport) and Shillong during their arrival and departure. Such facility will be provided subject to the confirmation of their travel plans (flight number, date of arrival and date of departure) well in advance of a week days of their travel.

Important Dates:

- Conference on 27-28 March 2018.
- Last date for submission of Abstracts (200 words): 1-February 2018.
- Notification of Abstract Acceptance: 9-February 2018.
- Last date of submission of working Paper (3000 words): 10- March 2018.
- Conference Registration: 10 March 2018. Those willing to register after the last date of registration will have to pay additional Rs 200/-.

Dr. Munmun Majumdar
Seminar Coordinator