



Introducing

# MOIRANG

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The Land

Of

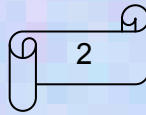
Love

&

Legends

Explore the History, Culture, and People of this wonderful place on Earth





# Welcome

Moirang was a prosperous ancient kingdom which flourished during the prehistoric era in the South-East Asia. As of today, Moirang is a tourist city located in the north east of India, 45 km from Imphal, Manipur. It is the valley of enchantment for the tourists across the globe.

Moirang was a culturally rich kingdom and was considered 'a land of legends'. Among the famous nine incarnation folk stories of Moirang, the romantic story of Khamba-Thoibi is still prominently remembered till today by people in Manipur and surrounding places. The city is also famous for the majestic ancient temple of the Meitie deity, 'Ebuthou Thangjing'. The culture of ancient Moirang contributes towards the bulk of Manipuri literature and folklore. With its rich cultural heritage, Moirang still stands grandeur.

During World War II, Moirang was the headquarters of Azad Hind Fauj. Colonel Malik of the Indian National Army (INA) hoisted the Tricolour for the first time on Indian soil on April 14, 1944, at Moirang. A memorial complex for INA with the statue of Subash Chandra Bose is erected at Moirang for remembrance. The museum here displays some wartime relics and photographs too.

Moirang is situated beside the beautiful fresh water lake 'Loktak Lake', which is rich in flora & marine lives, and is considered to be one of the prominent locations for bio-tourism worldwide. It is the home to the endangered deer 'Sangai' (which is protected under World Wildlife Fund and lives only on the floating thick layers of water planktons 'Phumdi' in Loktak Lake) at the renowned wide-life sanctuary 'Keibul Lamjao National Park' located in Moirang.

The Tourist resorts in Moirang like Sendra Tourist Home, Phubala Tourist Home, and the ancient women only market 'Moirang Aawun Keithel' are some of the wonderful places for sight-seeing in Moirang.

Understanding the history, culture and people of Moirang will bring out a wonderful eternal feeling and excitement about an ancient kingdom already lost in the past with the change of time.

As a gift welcoming the arrival of a NEW YEAR 2009, I will like to present 'Moirang' to you. Explore this amazing place on Earth.



Shanjoy Mairembam  
B.Engg, CIT (Coimbatore, India)  
MBA, Warwick Business School (Coventry, UK)

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## Star Attraction – Keibul Lamjao National Park

The Keibul Lamjao National Park is situated on an island on the fringes of the Loktak Lake, and is 10 kms east from Moirang Keithel (which is the city centre of Moirang). It is a unique floating wildlife reserve and the only home of the endangered brow - antlered deer, 'Sangai' (scientifically known as 'Cervus eldi eldi'). It is also fondly called Manipur's dancing deer because of its delicate gait as it negotiates its way along the floating wetlands. Other species of deer seen here include the hog deer, sambar and muntjac, etc.



The unique feature of Keibul Lamjao National Park is the "phumdi", which is the floating mass of entangled vegetation formed by accumulation of organic debris and biomass with soil particles. It extends

upto two third to three fourth of the total park area. It stretches over an area of about 40 sq km, surrounded by marshes, hillocks, and the lake itself. A number of streams too crisscross Keibul Lamjao, which, combined with extensive marshes, make the park a typical wetland. The Loktak Lake, which is really what the park is all about, is covered almost completely by 'phumdi'. Other wild grasses, including a variety of wild rice, form the bulk of the vegetation, which supports an astoundingly large and diverse fauna.



## Star Attraction – Indian National Army (INA) Memorial Complex

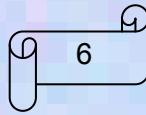
Situated in the heart of Moirang, the complex was dedicated to the memory of the heroic sacrifices of the unknown Indian National Army (INA) soldiers who under the supreme command of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose laid down their lives fighting the British Army at Moirang in 1944 during the Indian war of independence. The INA War Museum located inside the complex preserved wartime relics, photographs and other memorabilia associated with this war.



During World War II, Moirang was the headquarter of Azad Hind Fauj (or INA). Colonel Malik of the Indian National Army (INA) hoisted the Tricolour Indian flag for the first time on Indian soil on April 14, 1944, in Moirang. The very place where the flag hoisted was the 'Moirang Kangla' and the flag was hoisted here as a mark of liberated area. It was also the coronation place and seat of judgment of ancient Moirang and also closely connected with the past history of civilization and culture of Moirang Kingdom.

In commemoration of Moirang's association with Indian independence struggle, a life-sized bronze statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra was installed in front of the main auditorium of the INA Complex. The first stature was unveiled by Shri V.V. Giri, the then President of India on October 21, 1972. But, on October 21<sup>st</sup> 1993, Lt. Gen. V.K. Nayar re-unveiled the new statue of Subhas Chandra Bose.





## Star Attraction – Loktak Lake and Its Tourist Resorts

Loktak Lake, the largest freshwater lake in the eastern region of India, resembles a miniature inland sea. This lake is located in the north-eastern side of Moirang city. From the tourist bungalow set atop Sendra Island, visitors

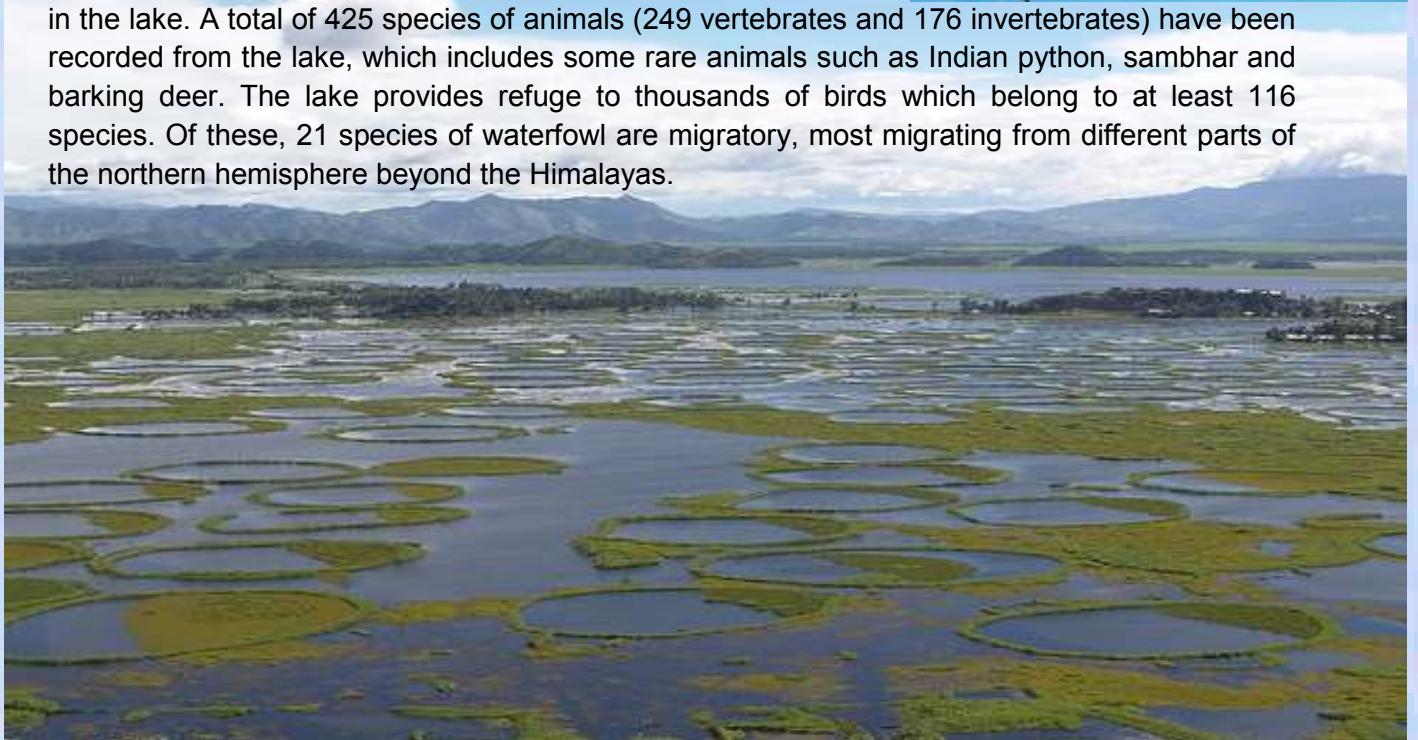


get a bird's-eye view of life on the lake - small islands of floating weed, shimmering blue waters, labyrinthine boat routes, fascinating water plants, the fisherman and their families who live in neat huts on its shores and who make full use of their watery environment. They cast their nets on it, rear fish farms in it using nets as floating walls, harvest it for the water chestnut known as 'Heikak', and even build their houses on the islands of floating

weed that dart around the lake.

The lake covers an area of 10 miles in length and five miles in breadth. The lake yields about 1,500 tonnes of fish per year. The lake plays an important role in the ecological and economic security of the region. The lake is rich in biodiversity and was designated as a Wetland of International Importance under Ramsar Convention in 1990. The aquatic macrophytes comprising 233 species belonging to emergent, submergent, free - floating and rooted floating leaf types have been reported

in the lake. A total of 425 species of animals (249 vertebrates and 176 invertebrates) have been recorded from the lake, which includes some rare animals such as Indian python, sambhar and barking deer. The lake provides refuge to thousands of birds which belong to at least 116 species. Of these, 21 species of waterfowl are migratory, most migrating from different parts of the northern hemisphere beyond the Himalayas.



## Star Attraction – Ebuthou Thangjing Temple and Its Lai Haraoba

Moirang is believed to be a land affectionately cared by the almighty, and in ancient history, it's known as 'Kege Moirang' because of its relationship with Lord Thangjing. The temple of 'Ebuthou Thangjing' (whose literal meaning is 'Great Grandfather Thangjing') is located 0.5 km south of Moirang Keithel. This deity is considered as one among the creators of the universe according to Meitie mythology. Moirang is still known as the land protected and blessed by 'Ebuthou Thangjing'.



Till today, people of Moirang still

remember the ancient tradition of worshipping the deity for good luck and prosperity. Though various celebrations and festivals of 'Ebuthou Thangjing' is carried throughout the year, the temple is opened continuously everyday for one full month for 'Lai Haraoba' (i.e. 'rejoicing of Gods and Goddess'), which is usually in the month of May every year (i.e.



'Shajibuk tha' in Meitie calendar) since time immemorial. The 'Ebuthou Thangjing Lai Haraoba' is the biggest festival of its kind in Manipur since most of the other deities (in Meitie mythology) join the celebration as a gesture of due respect and honour of superiority. During the festival, both men and women in hundreds in their gorgeous traditional costumes, sing and dance in honour of Ebuthou Thangjing. People from all over Manipur visit the temple to get blessing from the deity during this festival. The historic paintings on the walls of the temple and ancient artefacts in the temple's museum are another attraction for tourists.



## Moirang Kangla and Ancient Moirang Kingdom

According to the ancient 'Moirang Kangleirol' (i.e. Moirang historic tales), the 'kingdom of Moirang' was a prosperous and powerful kingdom; because of the blessing of the deity 'Ebuthou Thangjing'. Generations of kings of Moirang ruled the kingdom at



'Moirang Kangla' (which is the sacred place for the King of Moirang) till the moment the kingdom was completely destroyed by the ancient Imphal Kingdom (which is currently the capital of Manipur). Moirang was considered as the land of legends, since the kingdom had many legendry kings and brave souls in every era.

Even today, the structure of dignitaries in the court of ancient Moirang King is maintained and reinstated by few selected intellectuals (known as 'Maichou') of Moirang, during the celebration of 'Ebuthou Thangjing Lai Haraoba' with the specific titles used in the ancient king's court.





## The Nine Incarnation Folk Tales

According to the ancient 'Moirang Kangleirol' (i.e. Moirang historic tales), the almighty used to introduce two souls (one of a male and the other of a female) in Moirang in every era. The deity 'Ebuthou Thangjing' used to play a romantic



story yet tragedy using the two souls in the kingdom of Moirang. The number of folk tales related to the incarnation of the two souls is so far totally nine. Each of the incarnation stories is filled with characters of brave legends, beautiful princesses, and mythological souls. Thereby, Moirang is still remembered as the 'Land of Love'.

Among the nine incarnation folk tales, the story of 'Khamba and Thoibi' is very famous till today. The beauty and intelligence of 'princess Thoibi' is still considered as the ultimate standard of being a woman. The brave soul 'Khamba' is still remembered for his heroic and gentle attitudes. Various traditional dances are attributed in the memory of the two loving souls in Moirang.



## Moirang Aawun Keithel and Moirang City

The main market in Moirang is known as 'Moirang Keithel' (which means 'Moirang Market' literally). It is also known as 'Moirang Aawun Keithel' (i.e. 'Aawun' literally means 'Wedding Gift'), because it was the wedding gift to Princess Thoibi when she got married to Khamba. It is a 'woman only selling market' where married women / mothers only sell various items for livelihood. This is the uniqueness of the market and such system is followed since ancient eras.



As of today, there are various sections in the main market – fish market (where the fishes are caught from the Loktak Lake), jewellery market, vegetable market, etc. There is also the newly constructed 'Khamnu Keithel' besides the 'Aawun Keithel' (i.e. 'Khamnu' was the elder sister of Khamba in 'Moirang Kangleirol').

In addition to these 'women only selling market areas', there are also modern buildings and shopping centres as well around the two markets – 'Aawun Keithel and 'Khamnu Keitel'. Tourists can shop handicraft items and traditional embroidered shawls here. They can also buy fresh fishes and 'Heikak' (i.e. sweet water chestnut) from the market. The INA complex and the Moirang Kangla are also in the main city nearby the main market areas.



## Cultural and Traditional Sports

In ancient Moirang, traditional sports were means of imparting training to the youths of Moirang as soldiers of the then kings. Some of the ancient sports which are still famous at present are Mukna (i.e. modern 'Wrestling'), Mukna Kangjei (i.e. modern 'Wrestling along with Hockey'), Kang Sanaba (i.e. traditional 'Disc Throw'), Sagol Kangjei (i.e. modern horse 'Polo'), Yubi Lakpi (i.e. traditional 'Coconut fetching' or modern 'Rugby'), Hiyang Tanaba (i.e. modern 'Rowing'), Thang-Ta (i.e. traditional 'Sword-Spear' or modern 'Martial Art'), Eroiba (i.e. modern 'Swimming'), etc. Youths of Moirang are athletic in body shape and they love sports.



## Cultural Dances and Musical Instruments

Moirang is a culturally rich city and the entire folk tales of Moirang is uniquely named as 'Moirang Kangleirol' (i.e. literally meaning 'Generation stories of Moirang'). There are various traditional dances attributed to



different eras of ancient Moirang Kingdom. The uniqueness of these dances is in the style of dancing being 'slow and rhythmic movement of hand, eyes and body' expressing passion, love and a meaning.

Some of the cultural dances of Moirang are Khamba-Thoibi Jagoi (i.e. the dance presented by 'princess Thoibi' and 'Khamba' in front of deity 'Ebuthou Thangjing'), Maibi Jagoi (i.e. the dance of women priests), Phamnaiba Jagoi (i.e. the dance of the dignitaries in the court of the then Moirang king), etc.

Some of the traditional musical instruments used so far are Penna (i.e. modern 'Violin'), Pung (i.e. modern 'drum'), etc. People in Moirang also make various handicrafts and embroidered items.



## People and Their Cuisines

People of Moirang are of Meitie community and their facial look is of Mongoloid/South-East Asian type. People speak 'Meiteilon/Manipuri' as language and uses 'Meitei-Mayek' as the script. They neither have the concept of a religion and nor follow one; but they are worshippers of their forefathers for good luck and prosperity. They have a strong passion and belief on family values. A family normally comprises mainly of grandmother, grandfather, mother, father, and children. Every family values both male and female child equally.



Traditionally, food was eaten on the floor with banana leaf for plates. But, at present apart from cultural events, people use modern utensils/plates for having food at home.



Some of the local delicacies are Kangsoi (i.e. a vegetable stew with dry fishes), Kabok (i.e. puffed or roasted rice and molasses dessert) and Iromba (i.e. chutney made by fermented dry-fish 'Ngari', bamboo shoots and vegetables). Rice is the main staple food



of the people in Moirang. Fish is also a popular food item for every family (because of the proximity to Loktak Lake). Generally, people are mostly vegetarians.

Morning usually starts early as the Sun normally rises early around 5am and night too starts early as the Sun normally sets in around 5pm. So, the normal lunch timing is around 7am-8am and the normal dinner timing is around 6pm-7.30pm. For the breakfast, people normally take 'red tea' around 5.30am-6.30am. People generally have lunch at home and set out for daily responsibilities or other respective jobs. There are lots of traditional cuisines specific to each season of the year, and among them, the most popular names are Yongchak Iromba, Singju, Ooti, Hangam Thongba, etc. Lunch/dinner parties are the main events in most of the cultural festivals and celebrations throughout the year (i.e. people just love eating traditional cuisines).

## Dressing Ethics and Cultural Festivals

People wear diverse range and styles of dress according to the cultural festivals and events. Generally, gents wear 'Khudei' (i.e. a type of traditional dressing pant) at home and modern pants/suits at outdoor. During cultural events, gents use to wear 'Pheijom-Pumyat' (i.e. another type of traditional pant and suit). For ladies, it's normally 'Phanek' (i.e. traditional skirt like drape for ladies) and 'Enaphi' (i.e. traditional shawl). There are many high quality and beautiful embroidered dresses (Phanek/Enaphi) for ladies specific to the event. These dresses enhance the beauty of the ladies and among them, 'Moirang Phi' (i.e. the dress style worn by the then 'Princess Thoibi' may be mentioned.



Though 'Ebuthou Thangjing Lai Haraoba' is the biggest festival in Moirang, there are also other popular festivals celebrated all round the year; namely 'Ningol Chakouba' (i.e. inviting married/unmarried ladies to parent's/brother's home on the particular day of a year and sharing love & care along with gifts), 'Shajibu Cheirouba' (i.e. the Meitie new year day), 'Yaoshang' (i.e. the five days event for remembering the creation of universe and ancient Meitie evolutionary folktales), 'Thabal Chongba' (i.e. cultural yet modern dance of gents and ladies by holding hands to the tune of traditional drum and music in circle), etc. So, celebration of joy and happiness via various festivals never ends throughout the year in Moirang.



## Flora and Bio-Tourism

The Loktak Lake is ecologically rich in flora and fauna. The hills and forests around Moirang possess diverse medicinal herbs and plants as well. The govt of Manipur has set up various institutes of research and development on fisheries, botanical, zoological and other bio-tourism potential aspects in and around Moirang. There are still lots of



scientifically unknown plants and animals available in the lake and nearby forests. So, in some way the Loktak Lake can be considered as a heaven for biologists.

Some of the traditional fishes are Ngakra, Ngamu, Ngaprum, Shareng, etc. There are also various types of species in fishes which are used for ornamental purposes.



Among the medicinal plants used normally by people, Nongmangkha, Leipungkhanga, Tulashi, etc may be mentioned; and some of the beautiful flowers available in and around Loktak Lake and Moirang are Thambal (i.e.

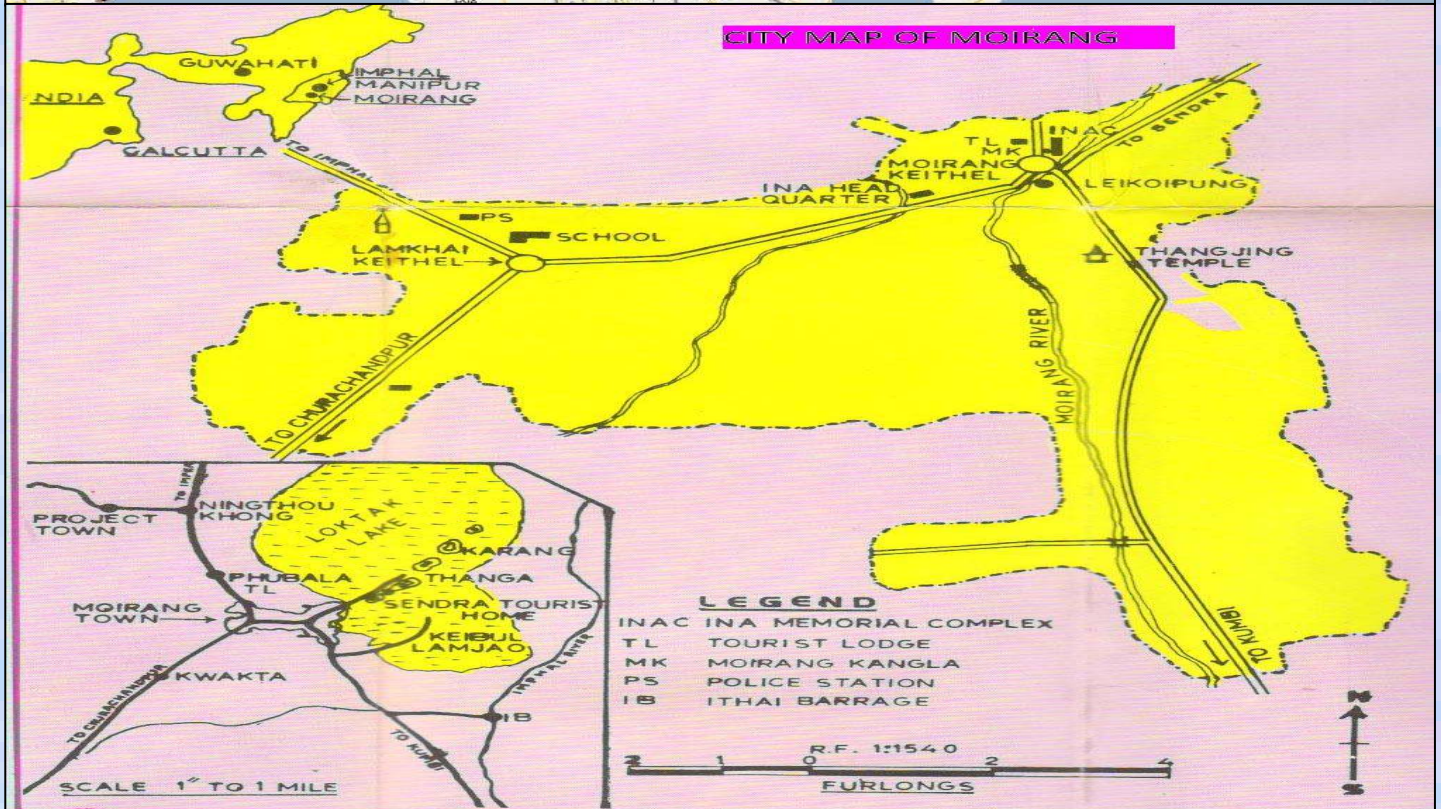


Lotus), Tharo (i.e. water lily), Khongum-malei, Kundo, Leihow, etc. The landscape and sceneries around the Loktak Lake and Moirang are indeed exotic and heart touching. Most tourists visiting Manipur see Moirang and always get amazed to find such a beautiful place unexpectedly after crossing the ranges of hills surrounding Manipur.



# Maps – How To Locate Moirang

Maps – How To Locate Moirang





## Travel Information

**GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION:** Moirang is located at 24°30'N 93°46'E. It has an average elevation of 766 metres (2513 feet). GMT time in Moirang: +5.5 hours. It is 45 km south of Imphal, the capital of Indian state of Manipur.

### How to reach Moirang via Imphal:

**Air:** Imphal is well connected by air with all major cities of India via Kolkata, Delhi, Guwahati, and Silchar. Air is the best way to reach Manipur and then travel by tourist taxi/bus to Moirang.

**Rail:** Dimapur (Nagaland -- neighbouring Indian state), 215 kms from Imphal, is the nearest railhead. Another railhead is Jiribam, a small town 225 kms from Imphal.

**Road:** Imphal is connected by road with Guwahati (Assam- neighbouring Indian state) through National Highway No. 39 and Silchar (Assam) through National Highway No. 53.

### Entry Formalities:

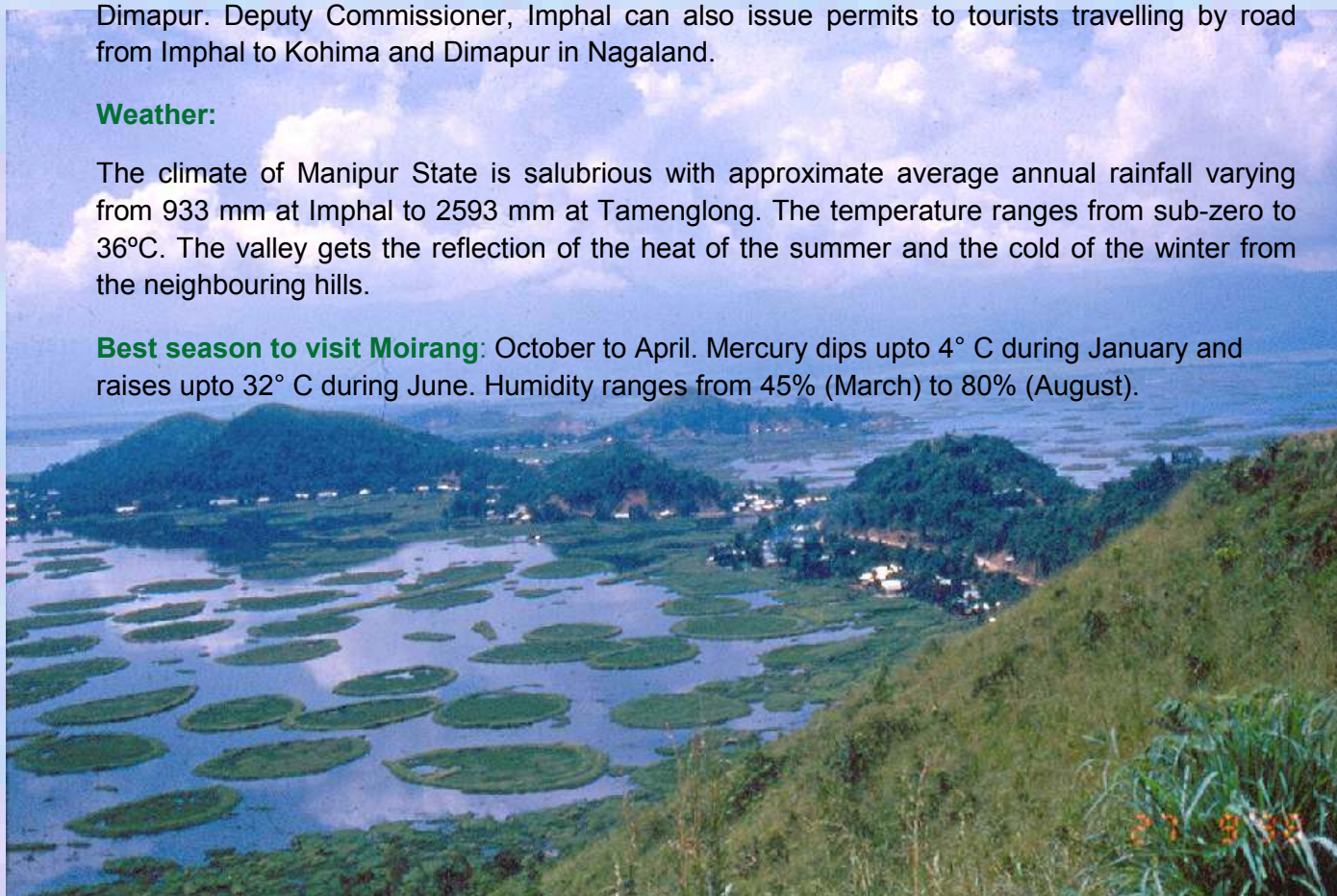
**Foreign Tourists:** All foreign tourists visiting Manipur require Restricted Area permit (RAP) issued by Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi. The permits are also issued by Indian Missions abroad, Foreign Regional Registration office (FRRO) in Mumbai, Kolkata, Immigration office in Chennai and the Home Commissioner, Govt. of Manipur, Imphal.

**Domestic Tourists:** Indian tourists visiting Manipur via Dimapur/Kohima require Inner Line Permit to pass through Nagaland. These permits are issued by the Liaison officers of the Govt. of Nagaland at New Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati / Shillong and the Sub-Divisional Office (Civil) Dimapur. Deputy Commissioner, Imphal can also issue permits to tourists travelling by road from Imphal to Kohima and Dimapur in Nagaland.

### Weather:

The climate of Manipur State is salubrious with approximate average annual rainfall varying from 933 mm at Imphal to 2593 mm at Tamenglong. The temperature ranges from sub-zero to 36°C. The valley gets the reflection of the heat of the summer and the cold of the winter from the neighbouring hills.

**Best season to visit Moirang:** October to April. Mercury dips upto 4° C during January and raises upto 32° C during June. Humidity ranges from 45% (March) to 80% (August).





For Further Information, please contact:

Shanjoy Mairembam

137 Charter Avenue, Canley, Coventry, CV4 8EP, UK

Mobile: (0044) 7772383734

Telephone: (0044) 247473988

E-mail: shan\_mairembam@yahoo.co.in