

# 'NAGAS WITHOUT BORDERS' SPREADS MESSAGE OF UNITY

Relevant for: Security Related Matters | Topic: Security challenges and their management in Border Areas

Colour and pomp: A Tangkhul Naga folk dance during the programme. Rahul Karmakar

The visits of Nokpai Chonglymn and Chhangpoh S.V. to India for education, healthcare or for procuring essentials have been “too routine to remember”.

But the two Naga leaders, separated from each other by “four days’ journey” in Myanmar’s Sagaing Division, are unlikely to forget a special Sunday – April 24 – that brought them together and hundreds of other tribespeople for an event titled ‘Nagas Without Borders’ organised by the Zingtun Tangkhul Katamnao Long (ZTKL), a Tangkhul Naga students’ body, on its 75th anniversary at Talui in Ukhrul district.

About 105 km northeast of State capital Imphal, Talui is an iconic Naga village dominated by the Tangkhuls. It is the birthplace of Mazachang Raikhan, a railway officer who founded the ZTKL in 1947.

“We harbour the hope that we will be together one day, that the artificial borders cannot keep us separated. We, the Nagas living in Myanmar, are still in darkness, underdeveloped and living in sheer hopelessness. Nagas living within the Indian administrative areas are more privileged,” Mr Chonglymn, the president of the Eastern Naga Students’ Association (ENSA), told an emotional gathering at the Talui football ground.

Mr. Chonglymn and his associates travelled miles mostly on dirt tracks to reach Talui. Many others, including members of cultural troupes, could not cross over to India due to security reasons although India and Myanmar have a free movement agreement for border residents.

Rego Shonse, the adviser to ENSA from Chamcock village across the border, said the military coup in Myanmar in February 2021 has compounded the problems of the Nagas there.

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