

**MANIPUR AT A GLANCE**

Area	:	22,327 sq.km
Population	:	27,21,756 (Census 2011)
Capital	:	Imphal
State Language	:	Manipuri
State Emblem	:	Kangla Sha
State Animal	:	Sangai (Cervus eldi eldi)
State Bird	:	Nongyeen (Syrmaticus humiae humiae)
State Flower	:	Siroi Lily (Lilium mackliniae sealy)
State Game	:	Sagol Kangjei (Manipuri Polo)
State Fish	:	Pengba (Osteobrama belangeri)
State Tree	:	Uningthou (Phoebe hainesenia)
Districts	:	(1) Bishnupur (2) Chandel (3) Churachandpur (4) Imphal East (5) Imphal West (6) Jiribam (7) Kakching (8) Kamjong (9) Kangpokpi (10) Noney (11) Pherzawl (12) Senapati (13) Tamenglong (14) Tengnoupal (15) Thoubal & (16) Ukhrul
Altitude	:	790 mtrs. above MSL (Imphal)
Latitude	:	23. 50 <sup>0</sup> N to 25.42 <sup>0</sup> N
Longitude	:	92.58 <sup>0</sup> E to 94.45 <sup>0</sup> E
Annual Average Rainfall	:	1145.5 mm
Rainy Season	:	June to September
Literacy Rate	:	79.85%, M : 86.5%, F : 73.2% (Census 2011)
Scheduled Tribes	:	34 (Recognised by Government)
Assembly Constituencies	:	60 : (General-40, ST-19 & SC-1)
Parliamentary Constituencies	:	2 : Inner Manipur & 1 : Outer Manipur

## INTRODUCTION

Manipur is located in the North-East corner India between 23. 50<sup>0</sup> & 25.42<sup>0</sup> North latitude and 92.58<sup>0</sup> & 94.45<sup>0</sup> longitude. The State shares an international border with Myanmar and is of much strategic importance in the Nation's Look East Policy. It is deemed to become the Gateway to South-East Asia and an important new tourism destination in the near future. The people of Manipur include Meiteis, Nagas, Kuki-Chin-Mizo, Gorkhas, Muslims and other colorful communities which have lived in complete harmony over the centuries.

### HOW TO GET TO MANIPUR:

Manipur can be reached through both Airways & Roadways. Railways will be functional from 2016.

### AIR COMMUNICATION:

Imphal International Airport is the second largest airport in the region. Imphal is connected to Aizawl, Guwahati, Kolkata and New Delhi by Air India, Jet Airways, Air Asia and Indigo.

### ROADS:

Private owned and managed deluxe coaches run daily from Imphal to Guwahati and Dimapur and back along the 3 National Highways viz., (1) N.H.-2 via Nagaland (2) N.H.-37 via Silchar and (3) N.H. 202 crisscrossing the State and connecting all the districts.

### CULTURE & TRADITIONS

In brief, Manipur is a mosaic of ancient traditions and rich cultural pattern. In the field of art and culture, the State is best represented by its classical and folk dance forms. Raas Leelas depicts the Leelas (sports) of Lord Krishna as a child with Gopies (Milkmaids) of Brindavan, and express their yearning for communion with the Lord. A spring festival, the "Lai-Haraoba" held in April-May is symbolized by a traditional stylized and ritualistic dance performed for peace and prosperity. The Tribal folk dances are an expression of nature, creativity and aestheticism of the tribal way of life. Lui-Ngai-Ni (Seed sowing festival of Nagas of Manipur) and KUT (the largest festival of Kuki-Chin-Mizo communities) are annual events and State Holidays.

### FLORA & FAUNA

Hills comprise 67% of the total geographical area of Manipur and they are covered by different types of forests. The State is thus blessed with amazing varieties of fauna and flora. There are about 500 varieties of orchids which grow in Manipur of which 472 have been identified. "Siroy Lily", the only terrestrial lily, is found on the hill-tops of Siroy hill in Ukhrul district of Manipur.

## HANDLOOM AND HANDICRAFTS

The beautiful handloom and handicrafts items of Manipur are the rare souvenirs for tourists. There are more than 33 different communities in the State having their peculiar exquisite designs of traditional and indigenous handloom fabrics. Manipur pottery is crafted without a potter's wheel. Beautiful pieces of art made of cane and bamboo form an important part of handicrafts.

## INDIGENOUS GAMES

### Sagol Kangjei (Manipuri Polo)

The indigenous Sagol Kangjei has been adapted and adopted by international enthusiasts of the game as Polo and it is now played worldwide. Today, the world has accepted that the game of polo originated from Manipur. The Manipuri polo is played with seven players on each side who mount and ride ponies. Each player is equipped with a polo-stick made of cane having a narrow angled wooden head fixed at the lower end. The ball, 14 inches in circumference, is made of bamboo root. The mounted players gallop after the ball and attempt to hit it straight into the goal. Extremely masculine, the game is now played in two styles – the pana or original Manipuri style and the international style i.e. Polo. The ponies are fully equipped with various guards for protecting their eyes, forehead and flanks.



The Britishers came into contact with the game of Sagol Kangjei in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from Manipur and after clever refinement, the game was renamed Polo and introduced to other parts of the globe.

### Yubi Lakpi (Manipuri Rugby)

“Yubi” in Manipuri means coconut and “Lakpi” means snatching. The game was played traditionally on the lush green turf of the Palace ground or at the Bijoy Govinda Temple ground. Each side has 7 players in a field that is about 45 x 18 metres in dimension, one side of which forms the central portion of the goal line. The coconut serves the purpose of a ball.



### Kang

The game is normally played on the well-polished earthen floor of a big out-house. Fixed targets are hit with ‘Kang’ which is a flat and oblong material made of either ivory or lac. Normally each team has 7 male partners. The game is also played in mixed-double contests conducted strictly during the period between “Cheiraoba” (Manipuri New Year's day) and the Rath Yatra festival. Meiteis religiously adhere to its time-frame as popular belief holds that if the game is played beyond the given time limits, evil spirits invade the mind of the players and the spectators.



### Thang-Ta & Sarit Saraat

These are forms of Manipuri Martial Arts, the tradition of which has been passed down over the centuries. They are energy-consuming and skill-demanding arts of fighting. The indigenous martial art-forms were meant to hone one's martial skills during peacetimes in the olden days when every Manipuri was a warrior required to serve his country during the times of war. A martial-artist has to undergo strenuous practice sessions. Only the brave and the athletic can excel.



### FESTIVALS CELEBRATED IN MANIPUR

Some of the important festivals are:

#### Gaan-Ngai

Celebrated for five consecutive days in the month of Wakching (December/January), Gaan-Ngai is an important festival of the Kabui Nagas. The festival opens with a religious ceremony on the first day and the rest of the days are associated with common feasts, dances and presentation of gifts.



#### Ramjan Id (Idul-Fitr)

Ramjan Id is the most popular festival of the Manipuri Muslims. Ramjan is the ninth month of the Hijri year. Since the time of Prophet Mohammed, during this month, the Muslims practice self-denial by avoiding food, drink and cigarettes from pre-dawn till sun-set. The month is spent in offering prayers. After a month, on the second day of Shawwal, when the new moon is visible, they break the fast. This day is called Idul-Fitr. On this occasion, they go to the mosques to pray, take delicious dishes, exchange greetings and call on friends and relatives.

#### Lui-Ngai-Ni

It is a collective festival of the Nagas observed on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of February every year. This is a seed-sowing festival after which tribes belonging to the Naga group begin their cultivation. Social-gathering, songs dances and rejoicing highlight the festivity.



#### Yaoshang (Dol Jatra)

Yaoshang is the premier festival of Manipur and celebrated for five days commencing from the full-moon day of Phalgun (February/March). The Thabal Chongba, a kind of Manipuri folk dance in which boys and girls hold hands and dance away their blues in the evening is an inseparable part of the festival. Young and old folks collect donation from house to house for their enjoyment.



### Cheiraoba

It is celebrated during the Manipuri month of Sajibu (March/April). On the day of the festival, people clean and decorate their houses and prepare special festive dishes which are first offered to various deities. As a part of the ritual, people climb the nearest hill-top in the belief that it will enable them to rise to greater heights in the worldly life.



### Ratha Jatra

The festival is celebrated for about 10 days in the month of Ingen (June/July). Lord Jagannath leaves his temple in a Rath locally known as Kang pulled by pilgrims who vie with one another for this honour.



### Ningol Chakkouba

It is a remarkable social festival of the Meiteis. Married women are invited to the parental homes along with their children and enjoy sumptuous meals. It is a form of family-reunion, serving as a means to revive familial ties and affections. It is observed on the second day of the new moon in the Manipuri month of Hiyangei (October/November).



### Kut

It is an autumnal festival of the tribes belonging to the Chin-Kuki-Mizo ethnic group of Manipur. It is a happy occasion for villagers to make merry after a hard year's labour in the fields. It also is a thanksgiving fest in honour of the giver of an abundant harvest. The modern Kut is observed on the 1<sup>st</sup> November every year.



### Christmas

Christmas is the greatest festival for all Christians. The solemn occasion is observed on 25<sup>th</sup> December every year. Prayer sessions, singing carols and sermons mark the festival as the Christians of the State join the world wide celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

## TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

### Kangla

Kangla was the ancient capital of Manipur. According to Cheitharol Kumbaba, the Royal Chronicle of Manipur, Kangla was the Royal Palace since the reign of Nongda lairen Pakhangba who ascended the throne in 33 AD upto the reign of Maharaj Kulachandra in 1891. Kangla is situated at the heart of Imphal on the western bank of Imphal River and it is considered to be the holiest place for the Manipuris.



### Shree Shree Govindajee Temple

This temple, adjacent to the palace of the former rulers of Manipur, is a sacred centre for Vaisnavites. It is a simple and beautiful structure with twin gold domes, a paved courtyard and a large congregation hall. The presiding deity, Radha Govinda is flanked by idols of Balaram and Krishna on one side and Jaganath, Balabhadra and Subhadra on the other.



### Khwairamband Bazar(Ima Market)

This is a large crowded market at the heart of Imphal city. Vegetables, fish, household utensils and implements and fruit are sold on one side and colourful handloom shawls, phaneks, khudeis, bed sheets, etc. on the other. The market is exclusive in the sense that all the stalls are managed by women.



### Saheed Minar

The imposing Minar of Bir Tikendrajit park standing tall in the eastern side of the Imphal Pologround of the State's Capital commemorates the indomitable spirit of Manipuri martyrs who sacrificed their lives while fighting against the British in 1891.



### Manipur State Museum

This museum, located near the Imphal Pologround, has a fairly good display of the State's heritage and a collection of portraits of Manipur's former rulers. Items of special interests are costumes, arms and weapons, relics and historical documents.



### War Cemetery

The British and the Indian Army Cemeteries commemorate those who died in the Second World War. The British War cemetery is located a little off from the National Highway 2 opposite the DM College campus, while the India War Cemetery is located at Hatta. The cemeteries are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.



### Manipur Zoological Garden

Located about 6 Kms from Imphal towards the west, a half-a-mile from the Imphal-Kangchup Road, the Zoological Garden at Iroishemba houses the graceful brow-antlered deer (Sangai), one of the rarest species in the world, and other species of animals and birds.



### Khonghampat Orchidarium

This orchid yard of the Forest Department on NH No. 2, about 7 Kms from Imphal towards the north is another place of floral interest. A large varieties of orchids including several rare species are reared there. Peak season is April-May.



### Loukoipat

It is a favourite tourist spot in Bishnupur District lying at the outskirts of the District Headquarters. Loukoipat is an Eco-Park with a small but beautiful lake surrounded on all sides by green foliage-rich hillocks.



### Moirang

Moirang is located 45 Kms away from Imphal city on Tiddim Road. The ancient temple of the pre-Hindu deity, Lord Thangjing stands there. It was from the village of Moirang that the graceful Khamba-Thoibi dance originated. It was also at Moirang that the flag of the Indian National Army was first hoisted on Indian soil on April 14, 1944. There is an INA Museum exhibiting letters, photographs, badges of ranks and other articles associated with INA.



### Loktak Lake

It is the largest fresh water lake in the North-East. Sendra is a hillock of an island of Loktak Lake, 48 Kms away from Imphal City on Tiddim Road.



### Keibul Lamjao National Park

The park is located in the south western part of the Loktak Lake. This is the last natural habitat of the brow-antlered deer (Sangai) of Manipur. Keibul Lamjao national Park is the only floating park in the world.



### Khongjom

It is situated on the Indo-Myanmar Road, 36 Kms away from Imphal. It is a place of utmost historical importance for the State. Khongjom was the venue where Major General Paona Brajabashi and other brave Manipuri warriors proved their worth in battle against the mighty force of the invading British Army in 1891. Khongjom is regarded with awe as a symbol of patriotism and valour. A war memorial constructed on the top of this venerable hill adds to the historical ambience of the site. Khongjom Day is observed as a State Function every year on April 23.



### Churachandpur

It is the second biggest town of the State spreading out on both sides of the Tiddim Road, 60 Kms away from Imphal. It is an enchanting place for site seeing and holidaying.



### Moreh

The international border town is located on the Indo-Myanmar Road 110 Kms south east of Imphal. Moreh is 5 Kms away from Tamu, its Myanmarese counterpart. The opening of the Border trade turned Moreh into an important commercial hub in the North-East. The trial run of the Imphal-Mandalay Bus Service was flagged off by Chief Minister, Manipur on December 9, 2015.



### Ukhrul

The district headquarters of Ukhrul district is situated 83 Kms away from Imphal in the east. Ukhrul is famous for a peculiar type of terrestrial Lily, the Siroy Lily (*Lilium macklinae sealy*) which grows on the Siroy Hill. Khangkhui Lime Caves are interesting places for excursion.



### Tamenglong

It is the district headquarters of Tamenglong District situated 156 Kms from Imphal. The Tharon Caves, Buning Meadow, Zeilad Lake and Barak waterfalls are interesting tourist spots in Tamenglong District.



### Mao

Mao is an old hill station of Manipur bordering Nagaland. It is located midway between Dimapur and Imphal on the National Highway 2. The cultural mosaic of Manipur is not complete without the colourful Moa-Naga dance. Dzuko Valley with its pristine beauty adores the valley between May and July with a rare lily known as Dzuko Lily.

