

Historical Background

Changlang District covered with picturesque hills lies in the south-eastern corner of Arunachal Pradesh, northeast India. It has an area of 4,662 sq. Km and a population of 1,48,226 persons as per 2011 Census. According to legend the name Changlang owes its origin to the local word CHANGLANGKAN which means a hilltop where people discovered the poisonous herb, which is used for poisoning fish in the river.

Changlang District has reached the stage in its present set up through a gradual development of Administration. Prior to 14th November 1987, it was a part of Tirap District. Under the Arunachal Pradesh Reorganization of Districts Amendment Bill, 1987, the Government of Arunachal Pradesh, formally declared the area as a new District on 14th November 1987 and became 10th district of Arunachal Pradesh.

The legacy of Second World War, the historic Stilwell Road (Ledo Road), which was constructed during the Second World War by the Allied Soldiers from Ledo in Assam, India to Kunming, China via hills and valleys of impenetrable forests of north Burma (Myanmar) which section of this road is also passed through Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh and remnant of Second World War Cemetery one can see at Jairampur – Nampong road.

Location and Boundary

The District lies between the Latitudes 26°40'N and 27°40'N, and Longitudes 95°11'E and 97°11'E .It is bounded by Tinsukia District of Assam and Lohit District of Arunachal Pradesh in the north, by Tirap District in the west and by Myanmar in the south-east.

Topography

Except Miao, Diyun, Bordumsa and Kharsang circles and a few narrow strips of flat land in some parts of Changlang, Jairampur, Vijoynagar, Nampong and Namtok circles, the whole district is hilly area. The hills ranging from 200 to 4500 metre in height generally slopes down towards northwest. The highest peak in the district is Daphabum (4500 metre) above sea level.

Population (as per 2011 Population Census)

Changlang district is having 362 Villages, 3 Statutory Towns and 17 Administrative Circles with a total population of 1,48,226 persons out of which 76,948 Males and 71,278 Females as per 2011 census. The sex ratio indicates 926 Females per 1000 Males. The literate population is recorded as 59.80 percent of the total population. The decadal growth rate of the population during 2001-2011 is recorded 18.18 % for the district.

During 1981 census population of the area was 62,211 persons. The figure has gone up to 95,530 persons during 1991 census and in 2001 census, it is 1,25,334 persons. This reveals an increase of 33,319 persons (53.56 percent) in 1981-1991 and 29,804 (31.20 percent) during 1991-2001. This is really an abnormal growth. The District is not predominantly inhabited by the Arunachal Pradesh scheduled Tribe population. Although during the fifties and sixties the indigenous tribal formed the majority, the ratio of tribal population to the total population has declined after seventies. The proportion of Arunachal Pradesh tribal

population in 1981 and 1991 were 36.02 percent and 35.60 percent respectively of the total population. It is generally accepted that the abnormal growth of population in the district has been caused not by natural growth but due to sharp increase in non-tribal population by immigration from Bangladesh, Nepal and Tibet. There has been influx of vast number of Chakma and Hajong refugees from Bangladesh, which remained a continuous influx till today. Other reasons for high growth rate are migration of labour forces from other neighbouring states and establishment of Government offices, institutions and industries in the District.

The district Headquarter, Changlang and Sub-Divisional Headquarter Jairampur and Miao are declared as urban and whereas, rest of the area of the district are still considered as rural.

People

Changlang district is home land of fascinating and interesting tribes such as Tangsa, Singpho and Tutsa, and also found Nocte, Lisu (Yobin), Deori and few Adibasi tribes. The Tangsa tribe is comprise of a number of Sub-Tribes, namely Lungchang, Muklom, Tikhak, Jugli, Mossang, Ronrang, Kimsing, Mungrey, Lungphi, Pongthai, Havi, Sangkeng, Logri, Sangwal, Langching, Hacheng, Yangkuk and Thamphang. They occupy the southeastern hills of the district along Indo-Myanmar border and Namchik basin.

The Singphos occupy the plain foothills area of northern part of the district under Miao, Bordumsa and Diyun circles. The Tutsas live in the western part of the district under Changlang and Khimiyong circles. Other tribes and dwellers in district are Nocte, Deori, Adibasi of Bordumsa & Diyun, Lisu (Yobin) & Nepali of Vijoyagar, and Chakma, Hajong and Tibetan came as refugees.

Arts, Culture and Tradition

As far religion is concerned, each tribe has its own traditional religious belief and practices. The Tangsas and Tutsas belief in existence of a supreme being called 'Rangfrah'. Besides they also believe in a number of deities and spirits. However recently many of them have came under the influence of Christianity and Buddhism. The Singphos are Buddhist by religion but they have not given up their own traditional beliefs of their ancestors as they had adopted th Buddhism as their religion.

The housing pattern of all the tribes and Sub-Tribes are similar. Platform (Machang) types of houses are generally preferred. The floor of the houses are elevated about four to five feet high from the ground. The houses are of single room system with two fire places (Chullas). They cook and sleep in the same room. However, in modern days some people construct house keeping separate provision for fire places and living rooms.

The Tangsas and Singphos have democratic form of social life. They do not have kingship system. All village disputes are settled by the Panchayat i.e. Gaon Buras.

The main occupation of the indigenous people of the district is agriculture and allied activities. They also rear domestic animals like Cattle, Pig, Goats and Poultry birds.

The most of the indigenous population lives in the villages. They are living through farming and allied activities such as government jobs, agricultural labourer, government contract works, casual workers under government departments, trade in local products etc. There is no direct interference in preservation of traditional customs. But with the spread of education and socio-economic development, aged old traditional customs and economic pattern of the inhabitants are changing gradually. Today, one can see many tribal youths particularly educated group instead of working in agricultural have switched over to business deals, contract works, government jobs and others, which offer them good income. However, majority of the population are living hand to mouth particularly in the interior areas where road communication and other developments have not yet reached.

Major Festivals

Moh-Mol:

Moh-Mol is basically agricultural related festival of Tangsas, which signifies end of an agricultural activity or beginning of crop season. Since life and activity of tribal people revolve around agriculture, they adhere to utmost important to this festival. It is a gala of pomp and show of traditional colourful costumes, ornaments, art and crafts that enriched the pride of Tangsa's cultural heritage of the past. It therefore inspires younger generation every year to inherit, protect, preserve and continue it to the later generations further.

While some community of Tangsas observe it for beginning of agriculture activity in the field, some do it for sowing of paddy, and some other for welcoming new crop into home. That is why celebration is performed with religious fervor and devotion. People chant mantras for good harvest of their crops, prosperity of their live stocks and wealth, and disease free live of their family or village community to enjoy food and drinks year after year. So, the offerings, sacrifices, food, drinks, folk-songs and dances accompanied by rhythmic music of drum beats and gong reverberations highlight the festival.

As time of particular agriculture activity differ from village to village, time of their festival also vary accordingly. It is observed generally between April and July, but village community in the council as per their convenience decides exact date.

As Tangsas have no definite date to mark the New Year, the Moh-Mol festival is considered to be the end and beginning of the calendar. People of all ages, on this occasion, sing and dance with their best presentation in colorful attire. In a sense, they do it in order to shake off the shackles of old painful memories and fatigues, and to recharge their energy and enthusiasm, preparing to face reality of life in waiting.

This is also a wonderful occasion for people to exchange goodies, love and affection with their near and dear ones, especially, relatives who visit from distant villages or places. Boggled down by daily chores of their households, people usually look for "Moh/Mol" occasion to see those distant relatives.

“Moh/Mol” is also a forum for development of new friends and acquaintances. Many strangers come into contact on this day, and it may become a permanent relationship. Especially, it is common among young boys and girls who may knot their relation to grow into life time partner.

Some communities of Tangsa, on Moh-Mol eve or during, bid ritual farewell to departed soul of the family, if any member expired during the year. They believe deceased soul dwells in the family who needs farewell by offering foods and drinks for his/her peaceful rest in the ancestor realm.

Then there are prayer “ROM-ROM” to Goddess of Crops “Tungaja Chamja” for blessing of bumper harvest, Goddess of Prosperity for gain of wealth and “NONG” for longevity of the Nong Culture. All walks of people, irrespective of sex and age, lay down their hearts in enjoying food, drinks, songs, dances and music that filled the air of the ground with maddening effect.

However, with the passage of time, dedication, spirit and traditional costumes are seen continuously undergoing mark changes. The sensitive youths are, therefore, seriously concern over this fading and ever degenerating trend of traditional culture and colours of the society. They feel that it is high time for the society especially the youths to dedicate and mobilize resources for protection, preservation and propagation of tradition and culture for the future generations.

Pongtu Kuh:

Pongtu Kuh is an oldest agricultural festival celebrated by Tutsas on the eve of rainy season. The literary meaning of Pongtu is “Pong” means wind, “Tu” means retreating, “khu” means festival. The festival is celebrated after the harvesting of millet to welcome the New Year and to drive the old. Pongtu is observed to offer prayer to the supreme god Rangkathok for bumper harvest and prosperity and seek security of the crops from occurrence of natural calamities and other destructions like pests etc. The agricultural based Pongtu is celebrated in the month of April every year with pomp and gaiety. The festival is marked by several events like practicing of Rom-Hom a traditional chicken sacrifice for producing fire through rubbing a bamboo stick in hay in order to forecast whether the year would prove prosperous for them or not. It is believed that the sacrifice is given to the deity of the house and is practiced by only a section of the Tutsa tribe. Colourful Tutsa dance displayed by folks of energetic and beautiful youths are the major attraction of the festival.

Shapawng Yang Manu Poi:

Culturally rich Singpho festival, Shapawng Yang Manou Poi is celebrated in the month of February every year. The Singpho youths in their traditional wardrobe display colourful dances with their usual tradition of drinking and eating. The prayers are offered to the almighty for peace and prosperity of the people and area during the festival.

Flora and Fauna

From vegetation point of view, the area is very rich in flora. Most of the plants are of tropical and sub-tropical wet evergreen and semi-ever green variety in the lower reaches, mixed deciduous forest in the middle and temperate forest in the hills. But most of the wooded area of easily accessible is not virgin forest due to frequent destruction of forests for shifting cultivation by the local people. The valuable timber species available are Hollock (*Terminalia myriocarpa*), Hollong (*Dipterocarpus macrocarpus*), Mekai (*Shorea assamica*), Jutuli, Dhuna, *Michelia Champaka*, Oak, *Betula* and so on. One of the rarest and endangered Orchids, Blue Vanda found in Namdapha.

Wild life of Changlang District is rich and varied. Among the important animals Tiger, Clouded Leopard, Elephant, Gaur, Sambar, Malayan Sambar, Hog Deer, Wild Bore, Lesser Panda, Slow Loris etc. The Hoolock Gibbon, the only ape in India is now found in the Namdapha National Park. Besides, there are a large number of arboreal animals, mainly 5 species of monkey and 6 species of squirrels including the giant flying squirrel.

There are a great variety of birds. The most common bird is the great Indian Hornbill. Other interesting birds are Kaleej pheasant, Fragon, forest Eagle, Monal pheasant, Peacock, Bulbul, Wood Pecker, Dove, Pigeon etc. White winged wood duck, a rare and endangered species is also occasionally seen in the Namdapha forests. During winter, migratory birds such as ducks, gees, teals, swallows, wagtails, finches and others also visits the rivers, streams and pools.

NAMDAPHA, a National Park and Tiger Reserve and, a true wilderness and enchanting beauty of lush green vegetation, impenetrable pristine and virgin forests covered an area of 1985.23 square kilometres having diverse flora and fauna lies in the international border between India and Myanmar(Burma) within Changlang District in the state of Arunachal Pradesh in the northeast India.

Namdapha National Park is located at a few km away from Miao amidst misty blue hills along the turbulent Noa-Dihing river lies in the sprawling tropical rain forest. It was declared as Tiger Reserve by the Government in 1983.

Climate

The climatic conditions in this District vary from place to place due to mountainous nature of terrain. The altitudes also varies from 200 meters to 4500 meters over the peaks from sea level. Places like Miao, Kharsang, Jairampur, Bordumsa and Diyun, which are located in lower elevations and in the valleys, experience hot and humid climate in summer during June-August. In the hill areas the climate is moderate and pleasant. December to February months are cold. January is the coldest month when the average maximum and minimum temperature is about 22.0 degree Celsius and 13.0 degree Celsius respectively. August is the hottest month during which temperature may occasionally exceed 30.2 degree Celsius. The average maximum temperature is about 26.96 degree Celsius and minimum 18.63 degree Celsius.

Rainfall

Rainfall is also very much influenced by the terrain. There is sharp difference in the quantity of rainfall at different places. The annual rainfall ranges from 3800 mm to 4866 mm. The major rainfall is received during June to October.

River Systems

The major Rivers are Noa-Dehing, Namchik and Tirap. Other Rivers are Namphuk, Dapha, Namphai, Rima, Tissu, Tarit, Tara, Tikeng, and Tiging. Most of the rivers after winding through the hills and valleys come down to the plains and join Buri-Dihing River. The Noa-Dihing River, which originates from Patkai Range flows east to west through the entire northeastern and northern stretch of the District. The Tirap rises from a high peak between Laju and Wakka and flows Southwest to Northeast passing through the Changlang town ultimately meet Buri-Dihing near Lekhapani in Assam. These rivers become turbulent during the monsoon and cause a great damage to agriculture fields in the area but at the same time increases the fertility of the soil by depositing silt along their courses.

Places of Tourist Interest:

Changlang district has wide range of latitudinal variation ranging from 200 metre to 4500 metre from sea level sprawling over lush evergreen forests overhauling beautiful hills and rivulets over the Patkai Mountain range in the Myanmar border of northeast corner of India. There are some places, which are situated in beautiful locations. These places are very attractive for seasonal visitors. Seasonal visitors are an important factor in economic well being source of income for the local people. While tourists enjoy their visit, the local people can have the chance of getting a good price for their products and their services.

Miao

This beautiful and small town is headquarter of Miao sub-division and situated at bank of River Noa-Dehing surrounded by picturesque scenic beauty. The interesting things to see are Mini zoo, museum, Bishop House, Tibetan refugee settlement where colourful woolen carpets of various designs are produced, oil drilling at Kharsang and Manabum.

Tibetan Tibetan Refugee settlement camp, Miao

Choephelling Tibetan Refugee settlement camp located at a distance of four kilometers from Miao Township under Changlang district, is one of the oldest settlements for Tibetan refugees. The camp boasts of producing superior quality carpets, a larger portion of which goes to the global market. The raw materials mainly cotton yarn (Rs.150/Kg) and wool (Rs. 200/Kg), procured from Panipat in Haryana and some quantum from New Zealand, are exotically weaved to international standard and sold at Rs. 190 per square feet in the global market.

There are 26 high skilled women weavers and six male counterparts in the carpet industry, which on an average earns around Rs. 20 lakh annually as informed by the settlement officer of the camp.

The camp is inhabited by 500 families with 2800 members, is one of the 45 settlements in India, of the 75 all over the world. A beautiful Buddhist monastery in the mid of camp is one of the major attraction for the tourist.

Namdapha National Park

Namdapha, a National Park and Tiger Reserve, a true wilderness and enchanting beauty of lush green vegetation, impenetrable pristine and virgin forests covered an area of 1985.23 square kilometres having diverse flora and fauna lies in the international border between India and Myanmar (Burma) within Changlang District in the state of Arunachal Pradesh in the northeast India. Namdapha National Park is located at a few kilometre away from Miao amidst misty blue hills along the turbulent Noa-Dihing river lies in the sprawling tropical rain forest. It was declared as Tiger Reserve by the Government in 1983.

The beautiful forests possess great biodiversity of Flora and Fauna. A details study of its species and genetic variation has not yet been thoroughly done. Namdapha is Botanist's dream and it may take as long as 50 years to complete a comprehensive survey of its botanical resources. There are more than 150 timber species. The Pinus merkusi and Abies delavayi are not found elsewhere in India. One of the rarest and endangered orchids, the Blue Vanda found here. The most famous local medicinal plant Mishimi Teeta (Copti teeta), which is used by the local tribal for all kinds of diseases is available here but its export has been banned.

The diverse vegetation and habitats of Namdapha grooms diverse species of animals and birds. It is only park in the World to have the four Feline species of big cat namely the Tiger (Panthera Tigris), Leopard (Panthera Pardus), Snow Leopard (Panthera Uncia) and Clouded Leopard (Neofelis Nebulosa) and numbers of Lesser cats. A number of primate species are seen in the park, such as Assamese macaque, pig-tailed macaque, stump-tailed macaque and number of the distinctive Hoolock Gibbons (Hylobates Hoolock), highly endangered and only 'ape' species found in India dwells in this impenetrable virgin forest. Of the many other important animals are the elephants, black bear, Indian Bison, several species of deers, reptiles and a variety of arboreal animals.

Among the bird species, most notable are the White winged Wood Ducks, a rare and endangered species, the great Indian hornbills, jungle fowls and pheasants flop their noisy way through the jungle, and which harbours other colourful bird and animal species. The inaccessibility of greater part of the park has helped to keep the forests in their pristine and virgin state in its natural form. Moreover, the park possesses great bio diversity of flora and fauna. The lush green under growths are thick and intertwined like cobwebs of canes, bamboos, wild bananas and variety of vegetations The grandeur of the wet tropical rain forest is breeding ground for varieties of animals and birds which is remarkable and worth seeing.

Some of the location of interests in park that have been identified are:

Deban:

A beautiful forest camp on the bank of the river Noa-Dihing. It is located within the boundary of Namdapha National Park. One can enjoy the scenic beauty of overlooking Noa-Dihing river. The Forest Inspection Bungalow located at Deban itself surrounded by evergreen forest overlooking the river Noa-Dihing is worth-staying. It is also ideal for trekking, hiking and angling on the river Noa-Dihing.

Firbase:

Located on the Noa-Dehing River bank 25 Km from the Deban Forest lodge. This is a popular camping site full of nature's splendours. The track leading to the idyllic spot is enveloped by luxuriant forest and it is not uncommon to come across birds and wild animals on the way. For camping at Firbase, equipments and guide provided by the forest department is a unique experience.

Hornbill:

Just 9 Km from Deban, this is as the name suggests is a homing ground for hornbills. Here flocks of these birds can be frequently spotted flying from one grove to another.

Haldibari:

This picturesque camping spot, just 5 Km away from Deban, lies across the Noa-Dehing river can be reached by boat. An overnight stay here is enjoyable experience in jungle camping.

Bulbulia:

This is an enchanting camping site overlooking a large aquifer and derives its name from its several natural springs. You need to be extremely lucky for an opportunity to stay here overnight and experience close encounters with wild animals frequenting the water holes in the dark.

Camera Point:

This camping site, as the name suggests offers a vantage point for a breath-taking view of Namdapha and its lush green landscape.

Motijheel:

There are a pair of large forest-encased aquifers in this spot providing grazing pasture for a number of herbivorous. The 5 Km track from Gibbonsland to this enchanting site is a veritable feast for bird watchers.

Gandhigram:

It is situated in the southeast periphery of Namdapha. This is the remotest and the last village in India wedged China and Myanmar and is the home land of Lisu (Yobin) tribe. The village is at a distance of about 120 Km from Deban. A weeklong trek through lush jungles is more enjoyable for those having a craving for adventure.

Vijonagar

Vijonagar, comprises of sixteen villages having a population of about 4500 people near Indo-Myanmar border which is located in Changlang District and is Air maintained due to non existence of road networks. Fifty five percent of the population belong to retired Assam Rifle personnel and 45 percent is of Civilians comprising of mainly Lisu (Yobin) tribe. The settlement of the Assam Rifle personnel began from 1960 onwards. Prior to 1960, this place was little known to outside World.

The villages have a number of Primary Schools. There is Arunachal Pradesh Government run Secondary School up to Ten standard. There are no roads in the area. There was a motorable road existing in the area from Miao up to Deban Camping ground, but due to deterioration, it is no longer used. The telecommunication facilities are not available, and only Radio Net communications are available in the Assam Rifles Camp. Detachment of Government Agencies like SIB and Arunachal Pradesh Police exist in the area. Assam Rifles camp have medical facilities, but no Doctors are available. The villagers are not covered under water supply scheme and draw raw water for their consumption. Power Department has installed Generator set for Power supply, but due to non availability of Funds for procuring Diesel, the Generator is not functional.

The villagers depend on Wet land and Jhoom Cultivation for their livelihood, and are dependent on rainfall. The Day to day requirement of Groceries is met by a few Shops; and which bring the Stores from Dibrugarh by Air or from Miao on foot. It takes six days to travel on foot from Vijonagar to Miao. Civil and Military Helicopters (AN 32) fly from Dibrugarh to Vijonagar Aircraft Landing Ground. These flights are irregular and have limited haulage capacity, in that they can take up to one ton load with eighteen persons on board. There are two such Sorties for Civilians and three numbers for Assam Rifle personnel.

Jairampur

It is headquarter of Jairampur sub-division. The famous historic 'Stilwell Road' passing through this small town from Ledo, Assam, India to Kunming, Yunnan Province, China via Burma. The World War II cemetery of about 1,000 graves of Allied Soldiers is located 6 Km away from Jairampur at the Nampong road.

Stilwell Road (Ledo Road)

Historic Stilwell's Road was constructed by the Allied Soldiers lead by America during the Second World War. It started from Ledo, in Assam, India, one of the railheads of the Bengal-Assam railway in the valley of the Upper Bramaputra, to the Burma Road, which connected to Kunming, China. It passed through Lekhapani, Nmamong and the Pangsau pass on the India-Burma (now Myanmar) border. It wound up the passes of the 9000 foot high Patkai Range and emerged at Shindwiyang and reached Mitkyina. It crosses the broad bowl of the Upper Chindwin, threads the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys, and goes down to Bhamo,

eventually connecting to the Burma Road. Much of this road has been reclaimed by the natural landscape, due to lack of maintenance, but portions of it have been and/or are being restored.

Originally named the "Ledo Road", it was constructed under the direct supervision of American General Joseph Stilwell (1883-1946), and was renamed after him in early 1945 at the suggestion of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Gen. Stilwell was the Chief of Staff to Allied forces in the China-Burma-India (CBI) theatre for the defence of Burma (Myanmar) from Japanese forces. Stilwell technically served under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in China and such parts of Indo-China (now Vietnam) and Siam (now Thailand) as might become accessible to the troops, and in 1943 fell under Admiral Lord Mountbatten who was appointed Supreme Allied Commander of South-East Asia forces. At that time, Stilwell was also appointed Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia forces. However, Gen. Stilwell, as a result of his multiple positions within complex command structures, was able to often break the chain of command, and communicated directly with the US Joint Chiefs of Staff on operational matters.

Gen. Stilwell had participated in the First World War, and mastered the Chinese language during his extended stays in The Phillipines and in China after the war. Known popularly as "Vinegar Joe", he was known to his troops as "Uncle Joe."

This project was initially proposed by the British after they prospected the Patkai Range for a road from Assam into northern Burma (Myanmar). It was finally initiated in 1942 after the Japanese had fully captured Burma (Myanmar). With the lines of communication from India to Allied Forces in Burma, and the land route for supplies to the Chinese forces fighting the Japanese in China, both cut, the strategic situation had become critical. The topography of the Indo-Burma border consisted of very difficult terrain, with thick, inaccessible, and Malaria and Dysentery infested forests. The only remaining route for supplies into China was by air, flying a roundabout route over the Himalayas, "the Hump", to avoid Japanese fighters based at north Burma. Both the required altitude and the distance impacted fuel usage, severely reducing the quantity of supplies that could be delivered to China, causing the need to restore a land route to become paramount.

In the spring of 1942, Japanese forces overran Burma, cutting off the last significant land routes that supplied the struggling armies of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in China.

The United States and its allies extremely needed to keep China in the war because its forces preoccupied hundreds of thousands of Japanese troops. Holding that valuable Chinese turf permitted the Allies to attack Axis powers in the European theater, at the same time building a necessary launch site for an Allied attack on Japan's home islands. However, that grand strategy could only work if China and allied troops could be routinely supplied.

Flying the Hump: In April 1942, Allied pilots started flying the "Hump," and continued missions until 1945, when the Burma Road was reopened. The dangerous 530-mile long passage over the Himalayan Mountains took its toll. Nearly 1,000 men and 600 Air Transport Command (ATC) planes were lost over the hump by the end of China-Burma-India Theater (CBI) operations. In addition, China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) lost 38 planes and

88 airmen. Still now debris of crashed Air Transport planes remnants have been time to time found in and around Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, north Myanmar (Burma) and Southeast China of the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater

General Stilwell's Operations Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Frank D. Merrill, recommended building a road from Ledo, Assam, India to Burma, connecting the old Burma Road to provide a land supply route into Burma for support of the Allied soldiers who were fighting the Japanese forces in North Burma and China.

Lieutenant Colonel Frank D. Merrill Commanding officer of "the experienced jungle troops, for a dangerous and hazardous Mission – somewhere" lead his specially trained 5307 Composite Unit (Provisional) called "Merrill's Marauders" to the Ledo Road and started marching on foot from Margherita, near Ledo, India on February 7, 1944 passing through Pangsau Pass (Hell Pass), Shindbuiyang, Jambu-Bam, and then Myitkyina most of the times fighting and struggling against rains, mud, swamps, Malaria, Dysentery, Typhoid and strategically positioned enemies at different locations on their way. Merrill's Marauders seized Myitkyina air-strip on May 17, 1944 despite strong resistance from Japanese forces. Then after some days later, they captured Myitkyina town itself, which was stronghold of Japanese forces based in north Burma and the two months campaign ended on August 3, 1944 with Merrill's Marauders 127 deaths and 291 wounded besides, other casualties. Myitkyina was one of the main missions of Stilwell.

In December 1942, the road construction begun by constructing Warehouses, Hospitals, Barracks and base roads at Ledo, Assam, India side by side fighting with the Japanese forces. On December 16, 1942, Americans began building the double-track, all-weather Ledo road. Subsequently, the Americans had brought heavy road construction machineries to these wild hills like Bulldozers, Cranes, Power-shovels, Caterpillars, Steam-rollers, in massive procession from the United State production-lines 12,000 miles away, across two Oceans and past three Continents.

General Stilwell had organized a 'Service of Supply' (SOS) under the command of Major General Raymond A. Wheeler, a high profile US Army Engineer and assigned him to look after the construction of the Ledo road. Major General Wheeler in turn, assigned responsibility of base commander for the road construction to Colonel John C. Arrowsmith. Later, he was replaced by Colonel Lewis A. Pick, an expert US Army engineer, as road construction was slowed down under Arrowsmith during the monsoon season of 1943. He had employed some of the finest mechanical roadmakers from Americans, British, Indian, Chinese and West Africans to fight against the wild jungles, tangles of swamp and forest, deep valleys and high cliffs and test of heavy rains and floods across the Indo-Burma mountain Range.

On December 27, 1943, three days ahead of schedule, the road reached Shindbuiyang Finished grading and graveling remained to be done, but the 117 miles from Ledo to Shindbuiyang were open before January 1, 1944, as General Stilwell wished. Colonel Pick's celebration for the engineers omitted none of the available essentials. As he congratulated

them for opening 54 miles of trace in 57 days, a convoy came rolling into Shindbwiyang with candy, doughnuts, and 9,600 cans of beer.

In late 1944, barely two years after Stilwell accepted responsibility for building the Ledo Road (Stilwell Road), it connect to the Burma Road though some sections of the road beyond Myitkyina at Hukawng Valley were under repairing due to heavy monsoon water, and it become a highway stretching from Assam, India to Kunming, China 1,079 miles length. On January 12, 1945, the first convoy of 113 vehicles was led by General Pick from Ledo and was reached Kunming, China on February 4, 1945 and celebrated the achievement. The road construction was estimated to cost 137,000,000 dollars.

Two 4-inch fuel pipe lines were laid side by side and followed along the Ledo road from Tinsukia, Assam, India to relieve the road and air traffics of carrying fuel from Assam, India to China. They were fed by gasoline pumped from Calcutta to a station near their starting point.

On May 20, 1945, newly promoted Major General Lewis A. Pick formally announced the completion of the Ledo road, a task he called toughest job ever given to US Army Engineers in Wartime. The road was renamed the Stilwell Road in honour of General Joseph W. Stilwell at the suggestion of Chiang Kai-shek, it was known to the Engineers who built it as "Pick's Pike."

In the course of time, the Stilwell Road had virtually disappeared due to the road lies in the lands of three different nations that are China, Burma and India and due to non maintenance by the respective nations. However, 61 km of the road lies in India, 1,033 km in Burma (Myanmar) and 632 km in China. In India out of 61 km, 30 km lies in Assam and 31 km in Arunachal Pradesh. The border between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh has 14 km of the road section previously which was in deplorable condition, now it is repaired and the construction of international trade route is underway to link Myanmar at Pangsau Pass. In India side, the road is being repaired and renovated up to Nampong under this scheme and extension of the renovation work up to Pangsau Pass, Indo-Myanmar border is underway. The section of road which lies within Arunachal Pradesh has been maintained by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh and the road section which lies within the area of Assam out of 14 km has been in maintained by the Government of Assam respectively.

Indian government has proposed this road for reopening as International Highway for trade route to link Myanmar (Burma), China and other Southeast Asian countries in its Act East Policy. The reopening of this road as trade route will increase the interaction between the people of neighboring countries and maintain good relationship among the member countries. It will also boost trades and attracts inland and foreign tourists as the road itself is historically famous and significant due to Second World War, which in turn will boost Socio-economic development of this most backward border area and will benefited to the local people. The northeast India is geographically isolated and the economical development is lacking behind other parts of India due to several factors even though the region is endowed with natural resources. There is already approved trade routes with Myanmar from Nagaland and Manipur and to Bangladesh from Assam and Tripura which is one of the

significant means of foreign trade and regional co-operation towards economic development of the region.

Everyone in this area is looking forward for implementation of the Act East Policy project within the stipulated time and hoping the area be established as a major international trade center.

Table showing location-wise distance from Ledo, Assam, India to Kunming, Yunnan, China within the Ledo Road (Stilwell Road):

STILWELL ROAD (LEDO ROAD)		
	Distance from Ledo, Assam, India	
	in Km	in Mile
Ledo	0	0
Pangsau Pass	61	38
Tagap Hill	127	79
Shindbwiyang	165	103
Jambu-Bum	287	178
Warazup	304	189
Myitkyina	403	250
Bhamo	595	372
Namkham	707	439
Mong-Yu (Ledo-Burma Roads junction)	749	465
Wanting*	811	507
Lungling*	896	560

Paoshan*	1,043	652
Yungpin*	1,208	755
Yunnanyi*	1,402	876
Tsuyung*	1,543	959
Kunming*	1,726	1,079
LENGTH OF ROAD LIES WITHIN		
INDIA	61	38
MYANMAR (BURMA)	1,033	646
CHINA	632	395

* *Lies on the Burma Road.*

World War II Cemetery, Jairampur

The recently unearthed large Burial-ground with about 1,000 graves of allied soldiers believed to be mostly of Chinese, Kachins, Indian, Britishers and Americans soldiers who died in Second World War is located at Stilwell Road (Ledo Road) in the Jairampur-Nampong road, Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh, India. The hidden cemetery covered with thick jungles midst of the bank of Namchik River and on the Stilwell Road (Ledo Road), 6 km from Jairampur town, 39 km from Ledo and 24 Km before reaching Pangsau Pass (Hell Pass), India – Burma (Myanmar) border. The Army has cleared the area and found about 1,000 graves within an area of about three acre. The boundary was enclosed by concrete posts with entrance on three sides. The graves are arranged in five Lines and several rows. A large grave, possibly a mass burial, is in the centre. The bricks were from Ledo AR&T Co's brick fields, and others marked as B&C-119 and IR.NIC9 were being used.

The most of the graves in the Cemetery are damaged due to wild Elephants, wear and tear in the course of time and tempered due to miscreants.

Perhaps, this cemetery might have constructed during the construction of the Stilwell Road (Ledo Road) from Ledo, India to Kunming, China via Burma connecting the Burma Road beyond Bhamo by allied forces starting from December 1942 to May 1945 in China-Burma-India (CBI) theatre of military operation against the Japanese forces in North Burma.

During the construction of road and fighting against the Japanese forces, numbers of allied soldiers were reported to have died due to malaria, dysentery, land slides, enemy fires and other causes. The Patkai range of Indo-Burma border and Shindbuiyang range in north Burma were one of the most difficult terrains in the World where the road construction was carried out by the allied forces led by General Joseph W. Stilwell while fighting against the Japanese forces who had taken over the whole Burma in their hand in 1942. The cemetery was believed to be used for disposal of dead soldiers from site of war front and calamities out of road construction in India and Burma fronts. While trekking and fighting down the Ledo Road to Myitkyina, Burma, the stronghold of Japanese forces, large number of allied soldiers were reported to have died due to Diseases, calamities and missed in action while fighting. The casualties at war fronts in Burma were reported to have been evacuated by C-47's Ambulance planes and treated at the various base Hospitals at Ledo road and at Ledo, Assam, India and most of the dead soldiers might have disposed off at this cemetery. It is also reported that most of the casualties were treated at the 20th General Hospital, the 14th Evacuation Hospital, or the 111th Station Hospital in the Ledo area. In course of time, those Hospitals have also completely vanished.

The Excerpt of inscription extracted from the Epitaph of comparatively larger grave inscribed in Chinese language, shown in right hand side photo is belongs to Late Major Hsiao Chu Ching, Company Commander 2nd Company, 2nd Battalion of 10th Regiment, Independent Engineers of Chinese Army stationed in India. He was born in July 1913 at Wei Country of Hapeh province, and died in December 1943. 'All officers and men of the Second Company – January 5, 1944.'

Namong

Namong is a quaint small town situated in the picturesque scenic valley. All along the way from Jirampur to Nampong one can enjoy the nature's ride and the sight of beautiful terraced tea gardens. The close proximity of the town is Burma border make it very crucial & important. Three days Border Trading markets are open as Bazar days in a month on 10th, 20th and 30th of the month at Nampong for selling and buying of goods for both Indian and Myanmar nationals. During these three days, people are allowed to cross international border at Pangsau Pass with due permission from the concern authority. The Government has declared Nampong as international trading hub. 20 Km from Nampong one can see World War II Observatory post at Wintong.

The historic Stilwell Road (Ledo Road) passing through the Nampong and goes down to Burma from here. It is threshold of the Indo-Burma (Myanmar) border. The Pangsau Pass, the Indo-Burma (Myanmar) border is just 12 Km away from Nampong where the famous the Lake of no Return can be viewed from the Pass. Nampong and Pangsau Pass were considered to be "Hell gate" or "Hell Pass" due to difficult terrains in the Indo-Burma Patkai mountain Range. Crossing these places toward Burma were considered to be dangerous and hazardous as Hell during the World War II.

Lake of no return

The famous lake called The Lake of no return in Myanmar side which can be viewed from Pangsau pass is 12 Km away from Nampong. During World War II, large numbers of Aircrafts were reported to have perished into this lake. Perhaps, the lake served the Allied Pilots for soft landing into the lake water during return mission when the Aircrafts got hit by enemy or out of mechanical snags in the Aircraft.

The Pilots had chosen this lake for emergency landing in case of imminent Air crash and therefore, many aircraft were reported to have perished in to the lake.

Manmao

The place is worth visiting for enjoying high mountains and rich tradition & culture of the Tangsa community. The place is ideally located in a rural landscape for nature lovers.

Changlang

It is the headquarter of the district. It is well known for two premier institutes namely, State Institute of Education (SIE) and District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) where in-service training is provided to the teachers. The visitors can also see typical Tangsa and Tutsa houses and villages, and can interact with the local people. One can also enjoy fishing in the Tirap River passing through the heart of the town. Visitors can also visit to district museum, district library and district crafts centre where locally made hand-loom and handicrafts are showcased it it.

Ranglum: Here one can find crashed Aircraft Debris of world war-II which renew the memory of the War and natural salt-water spring. You can also have a view of Myanmar Territory and Patkai hill. Suitable for trekking. The best time to visit the area is in the month of November-February.

Kengkho Village: A beautiful village situated at the bank of Tirap River. It is an appropriate place for visitors to experience the uniqueness of the village.

Jongpho-Hate: A village under Yatdam circle is very well known for its holy and religious importance. The very existence of a 'Shiva Linga' in the entrance of the village from time immemorial is an astonishing asset. The naturally formed holy idol, which the local peoples called 'Tangjong' or 'Tangyong' is a unique sculpture of stone portraying both male and female organs. It is the real essence of holiness and existence of the heavenly abode in the Patkai ranges of eastern Himalayas, where it is believed that the Hindu God Lord Shiva once reigned.

The villagers share several stories about the spiritual power of Tangjong. They say that it protects them from any occurrence of epidemic or natural disasters. It is also believed that in the olden days when the head hunting was prevalent in the area, the Tangjong used to warn the villagers from the outside attack.

However, the area of the site is not yet developed but one can visit the place in a day, as the road connectivity is up to Sumlam village, which is 8 Km from Changlang and from Sumlam, it is just one-hour foot-march.

Thamlom Village: The God too harvest in pristine land of indigenous culture by revealing his power in various forms and styles. The goddess of rain locally called 'Tsalrong Long' is one such hitherto unknown manifestation of god's power in the form of a stone. It is located in Thamlom, a tiny village under Khimiyang circle in Changlang district.

As per the villagers beliefs, mysterious phenomenon of it is, when the stone is disturbed it causes continuous torrential rain for days together with dark thick cloud descending upon earth, and bright and sunny weather restores when a person performs rituals and worships it as per the tradition. But the person who performed the ritual has to observe rigid penance of dieting, and he has to be co-operated by the village community the following one day by strictly observing necessary taboos, such as, refraining from potting of water, outing to jungle, cutting of grass leaf etc.

As per the villagers story, a lady named Nurap Ngemu discovered the stone while weeding millet crops in her field. The stone, looked coiled up chronically appeared very attractive. She took it to her home. But on arriving, she found dark cloud veiled the entire village and soon unusual downpour followed. An idea and apprehension hit her imagination that the stone she brought might be the cause of such horrible rain; she threw it out of the village.

The other day when she got to her work, she was surprised finding the same stone at the same spot where it was found. So, she needed no time to understand it was not an ordinary one. Since then her brother Kamkang took up worshipping it. After his death, family tradition has been continued by his descendents till today. The God really manifests himself in disguise, but people blinded by materialistic modernity and scientific prejudices, fail to identify and understand his manifestations.

This type of hidden spots could convert into vital tourist's attractions at the behest of government sponsorship.