**URGENT: Desist construction of Imphal Town Ring Road with Financial Loan by Asian Development Bank (ADB) without the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of all Affected Communities**

**Type of Event:** Construction of Imphal Ring Road in Manipur without Indigenous peoples Consent

**Perpetrator:** Public Works Department, Government of Manipur and Asian Development Bank

**Date of Event:** Continued Violations since September 2014

**Source of Information:** Centre for Research and Advocacy, Manipur

(Forum for Indigenous Peoples & Action, Manipur)

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**Event Description:**

1. That the Government of Manipur aggressively pursued construction of the Imphal Town Ring Road with the financial support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Ring Road is part of the major road projects in Manipur pursued under the North East State Roads Investment Program (NESRIP), funded by Asian Development Bank through its South Asia sub regional economic cooperation (SASEC) Regional Road Connectivity project.
2. That the Project Director of the North East State Road Investment Program (NESRIP), Public Works Department, Government of Manipur, without the consultation and consent of affected peoples, wrote to the Deputy Commissioner of Imphal West and East District on 5 May 2014 to commence acquisition of land required for the Imphal Town Ring road project.
3. The proposed Imphal Ring road, which will be 40 Km long and width of 30 metres, is planned to be constructed within a period of five years before the year 2020 at the estimated cost of around Rs. 240 Crores Indian Rupees. Media reported that field survey for the ring road plan has been already completed and the Detailed Project Report is under preparation.
4. The Public Works Department, Government of Manipur issued tender notice on 10 September 2014 inviting Consultants to take up Feasibility Study and preparation of Detailed Project Report for construction of "Greater Imphal Ring Road” with assistance of ADB. The Inter Continental Technocraft is being considered as a consultant for the proposed ring road. Following the initiation of works for construction of a Ring Road around Imphal Town, a team of experts from the EGIS International, France led by Transport specialist Eyan Jennings inspected the condition of roads and crossings in Imphal town on 6 November 2014.
5. Representatives of Mr. MK Mohanty, Resettlement Specialist, appoint as consultant by ADB for the project commenced socio economic surveys in Kongba, Langthabal, Langol and other areas without clearly informing communities intents and details of their surveys, which residents of Kongba, Langthabal and Langol objected to.

**POSSIBLE IMPACTS OF IMPHAL RING ROAD**

1. The Imphal Town Ring Road project will acquire residential areas in Kongba Nandeibam Leikai, Langthabal area, Langol area in Imphal West and East District. An initial assessment indicates that project will affect more than 500 acres of prime agricultural land in Kongba, Bashikhong, Langthabal, Langol, Lamphel etc in Imphal West and East Districts. The total number of families to be affected by the project is yet to be fully ascertained.
2. However initial surveys and available maps indicates that nearly 400 families will be directly affected in Langthabal, Kongba, Bashikhong etc in Imphal West and East Districts and will lose their homestead land and adjoining structures. Around 500 families will also be affected in the villages of Tharon, Thangmeiband Sinam and Yumnam Leikai, Tarung, Laimanai, Neikanglong, grace colony, Meitei Langol, Ramgailong, Vaiphei Enclave etc, inhabited by various indigenous communities, such as the Vaiphei, Paite, Meitei, Rongmei, Kom etc.
3. The project will affect the sacred Langthabal and Langol Hills, associated with the history and folklores of Meitei people. Many families eking out their livelihood through agriculture, fishing from Lamphelpat wetlands will lose their survival.
4. The Ring Road will also contribute in destroying a portion of the Langol Reserve Forest Area by acquiring a portion of it and the adjoining Chingmeirong Hills.
5. The ADB financed Imphal Ring Road plan has failed to consult and take the consent of the affected indigenous communities and to conduct a clear impact assessment of communities who will lose their farmland and other livelihood support. Affected communities are worried that surveyors intrude their villages without consulting and informing them on the project.
6. Though the project has already been under process, there have been no efforts on the part of the Government of Manipur and the Asian Development Bank and their consultants to reach out to affected communities and to inform details of the project and the possible implications on their rights and survival. Neither the government of Manipur and ADB also reveal the safeguard policies of Asian Development Policies and the villagers.
7. There has been no effort to conduct a detailed socio, economic, health and environmental impact assessment due to the proposed Imphal Town Ring Road. There is no clear option assessment with consultation with affected communities. Community grounds, water bodies of Langthabal Maning Leikai and Mantri Leikai and other innumerable trees and vegetations will be affected by widening of roads.
8. The proposed project will contribute enormously in undermining the food sovereignty of Manipur by conscripting a huge tract of prime agriculture land for widening the road from Kongba to Langthabal to Bashikhong area in outskirt of Imphal Town etc and several other places. Many are still ignorant of impacts as the project authorities failed to reach out communities to inform intended impacts.
9. The affected people of Kongba Nandeibam Leikai, while objecting the project said the communities’ had already sacrificed their land previously for road construction along the Kongba River banks. And to additional acquire 30 metres at a stretch will completely deprive their livelihood means, exhaust their habitation space and undermine their identity.
10. The direct implication of increased ADB loans in Manipur and the potential of increasing the debt of Manipur and its people to Asian Development Bank have never been discussed. There is already a process to withdraw the financial arrangement of central support of 90% to only 10% in recent years, which means 90% of Manipur had to borrow and seek external aid to meet its development requirements. With Manipur listed as one of the most corrupted state with limited resources, the increasing investment will only lead to imposition of more tax from its people, which will be an additional financial burden on its people. Larger communities are also worried that the private construction firms may construct toll roads in the Ring Road, which will seriously hinder free access of communities in the proposed road.

**Community objections**

1. The proposed widening of roads and serious potential impacts had already angered affected communities in series areas in outskirt of Imphal Town. Several affected communities already publicly expressed objections to the road widening plan given its alarming multi faceted scale of impacts. The Kongba Makha Nandeibam Leikai development committee in a meeting on the proposed eviction plan held a meeting on 21 September strongly opposed the project as the project implementation and subsequent land acquisition process failed to take their consent. They resolved to stop the project until there is further discussion with the communities with regard to rehabilitation, resettlement and alternative management plan.
2. Further affected communities in Langthabal Mantri Leikai also wrote to the Chief Minister of Manipur on 4 November, opposing and requesting to reconsider the project alignments. The meeting also decided unanimously to stop all process of forced land acquisition in their locality without their consent. Residents of Langthabal Kunja also opposed the Ring Road Plan after community meetings and published their objections in the local media. The residents of Langol foothills also held community meetings on 11 November and objected the Ring road plan. Despite community objections, there has been no effort on the part of the project authorities to consult and discuss alternatives with affected communities.

**Human Rights Implications:**

1. The proposed project clearly failed to take the free, prior and informed consent of affected indigenous communities of Langthabal, Kongba, Bashikhong, Wangkhei, Ayangpalli etc, as required under the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007 and even under ADB’s own safeguard policies. There is no room to suggest alternatives by affected communities on account of absence of consultation from the project authorities, which is a clear violation of all democratic norms of development decision making.
2. The area demarcated for acquisition in Kongba Nandeibam Leikai and Langthabal Kunja lies along the flood plains of Kongba River and the Nambul River. The destruction of sacred Langthabal Hills will constitute a desecration of cultural sanctity of the Meitei People.
3. Many communities who eke out their livelihood through farming, fishing and small scale economic activity will lose their livelihood and constitute a clear violation of right to life, as guaranteed both by the Article 21 of Constitution of India, Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Any forced displacement will be a violation of Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
4. The impact of displacement will consequently followed by the loss of economic activities with no ways and means of settlement and basic services. It will create social turmoil to those evicted families as there is mechanism for rehabilitation and resettlement so far.

**BACKGROUND OF INVESTMENT BY ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK:**

The Asian Development Bank has been aggressively financing infrastructure projects, primarily road and railway project in Manipur to link South Asia with South East Asia, especially in the aftermath of formulation of India’s Look East Policy since 1990’s. The ADB’s loan for transportation and other sectors, including, power, urban, tourism, agribusiness, governance etc rapidly pursued in Manipur is under the South Asia Sub Economic Cooperation (SASEC). The project proponents emphasized that developing changes especially in view of the Look East Policy of India and developing commerce and trade relationship in the South East Asia region shall further lead to increase in the volume of traffic and deepening problem and hence the need for Imphal ring road.

There has been strong push for the privatization and corporatization in these sectors and for full scale implementation of the financing rules and governance framework outlined by the World Trade Organization. A significant trend of the involvement of International Financial Institutions in the North East is the strong emphasis on the intensification of trade and private sector participation. The principles and guidelines of World Trade Organization and other global financial institutions for privatization and free trade are used as parameters for introducing development in the region. The strategy is to enable IFIs to facilitate private investments by provision of direct financial assistance to private sector investors. The ADB’s private sector development strategy empowers it to promote private capital investment in the region, provide and guarantee loans to the private sector and to mitigate private sector risks.

The involvement of private consultant firms and private developers necessary does not mean development and efficient service. The French Government support Imphal Sewerage Project has been condemned widely for its delay and environmental impacts. The project still remains incomplete and already claimed several lives in accidents due to the multiple holes left uncovered and unattended. The Manipur Sericulture Project financed by the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) is also laden with failure and wide corruption aside from other controversies.

**DEMANDS:** The Centre for Research and Advocacy Manipur would like to propose the following key demands and measures for your kind, necessary and urgent initiatives and intervention to cease causing inconvenience and harassment on indigenous peoples affected.

* The ADB financed Imphal Town Ring Road should not be constructed without the free, prior and informed consent of all affected communities
* The Government of Manipur and the Asian Development Bank should provide all the necessary and related information on its Ring road plan, including the Detailed Project Report, Environmental and Social Impact assessment, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Plan.
* The project authorities should consider and accept the alternatives suggested by all the affected communities.
* There no be no forceful acquisition of agriculture land, residential areas, wetlands, forest and hills of Manipur for the ring road project.
* The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007 should guide all development decision concerning Imphal Ring road plan and other projects financed by ADB in Manipur.

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**MEDIA REPORTAGE ON IMPHAL RING ROAD PLAN WITH LOAN FROM ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK**

**Govt plans to come up with ring road with ADB aid**

The Sangai Express, 4 February 2014

http://www.thesangaiexpress.com/page/items/35418/govt-plans-to-come-up-with-ring-road-with-adb-aid

IMPHAL, Feb 3: With the primary objective of easing traffic congestion in Imphal city and keep away heavy vehicles from the city’s core zone, a high-level meeting presided by Chief Minister O Ibobi today decided to construct a 40 Km long ring road with loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The breadth of the road will be 30 metres. The meeting held in the Chief Minister’s office chamber was attended by Ministers and high-ranking officers. The meeting also decided to hire Inter Continental Technocraft as consultant for the proposed ring road.

Construction work of the ring road would start in November or December this year. The ring road which is expected to be fully constructed within a period of five years would connect Imphal East DC office, Imphal West DC office, JNIMS, RIMS, New Secretariat and High Court complex. Field survey for the ring road has been already completed but a detailed project report is yet to be prepared. The meeting also discussed about construction of three guest houses for VIPs at the plot earlier occupied by the High Court. A power point presentation was also given at the meeting about the three proposed guest houses which would be constructed by three consultants.

## Sites for the proposed ADB-funded ring road inspected

The Hueiyen Lanpao, 12 December 2014

<http://www.hueiyenlanpao.com/headlines/item/15745-sites-for-the-proposed-adb-funded-ring-road-inspected>

**HNS/Imphal, Dec 11:** Works Minister Dr Kh Ratankumar and officials of Public Works Department (PWD) today inspected the sites for construction of a ring road in greater Imphal area. The 38-kilometre-long ring road aims to mitigate traffic woes in Imphal City. It would be implemented under the funding of Asian Development Bank (ADB).

During the inspection, Minister Ratankumar was accompanied by Principal Secretary (Works) Ram Muivah, Additional Chief Engineer of PWD Ch Tiken and Project Director of Northeastern States' Road Investment Programme.  MLAs Th Bishwajit, Karam Shyam, RK Anand, Kh Joykishan and Dr Ng Bijoy also joined the inspection in their respective constituencies.

The team inspected the road from Nambul Mapal to Ningthemcha Karong, Konjeng Leikai, Airport Road, FCI Road, Lukram Leirak, Takyel Industrial Road, Naoremthong, Laishram Leirak, DC Office Road, ICAR Road, Thangmeiband Tarung Khul, New Assembly Road, Lilashing Khongnangkhong, Mantripukhri, Khurai Chaithabi  Leirak, Lamlong, Ayanpalli Road, Khongman Mangjil and Canchipur.

Talking to media persons, Works Minister Ratankumar said that ADB has already funded the construction of road passing through Thoubal, Bishnupur and Tupul. The ring road in greater Imphal area is the next project to be funded by ADB. The project would help to mitigate traffic woes in Imphal City, he noted. The Works Department is in the process of preparing a detailed project report (DPR) and it would be finalized with the Chief Minister soon. The tender for the project would be floated by June next year. The target for completion of this ring road project has been fixed within five years, he stated. The estimated cost of the project would be around Rs. 240 crores. However, the actual cost would be known after the finalization of DPR, Ratankumar added.

**EGIS Intl Experts undertake feasibility study on city roads and junctions**
The **Hueiyen Lanpao, 7 November 2014**

<http://www.e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=3..071114.nov14>

**Imphal, November 06 2014:** Following the initiation of works for construction of a Ring Road around Imphal city and other road development works in Manipur under the North Eastern State Road Investment programme with funds from Asian Development Bank (ADB), a team of experts from the EGIS International, France has today inspected the condition of various roads and crossings in Imphal city where the public commuters are facing lots of inconveniences including traffic congestions.

The expert team led by Transport specialist Eyan Jennings comprised road safety expert Vector Wonila, traffic expert Mathew Sarda and financial expert Nicholas Chrisot. The visiting team studied the condition of traffic islands at Kangla gate, Khuyathong, Chignlrirong, Lamlong Bazar, Keishampat junction, Singjamei Crossing and others.

The inspection visit was also participated by Y Joykumar, project director of North Eastern State Road Investment programme, PWD Manipur. The visiting team reportedly called on Chief Town Planner of Manipur and the Additional SP of Traffic police Victoria.

It is worthy of mention here that plans for construction of national and state highways under the South Asia Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) are afoot, in addition to the initiation of works for construction of a ring road in Imphal.

Plan for an international highway under ADB to connect foreign countries through Manipur state are also underway.

The expert team is slated to visit the traffic junctions at Raj Bhavan gate, Kwakeithel, Tera Bazar and BT road tomorrow for the pre-feasibility study of the roads and junctions.