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Petition for Protection of Non-Nagas in Dimapur

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A petition filed before the Supreme Court has sought a direction to the Centre and the Nagaland government to take appropriate steps for the protection of life and liberty, properties and other fundamental rights of non-Nagas living in Dimapur following the imposition of the Inner Line Permit (ILP).

The plea has challenged certain sections of the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873** which gives unbridled power to a State to prescribe ILP.

- **The act empowers a State government to prescribe 'Inner Line'** to prohibit citizens of India or any class of such citizens going beyond the prescribed line without a pass.
- The colonial-era regulation was passed by the then British government to prohibit Indian citizens to move in select districts to create monopoly in business.
- However, it continues to be used in India, officially to protect tribal cultures in north-eastern India.

Inner Line Permit

- ILP is an official travel document issued by the Government of India **to grant inward travel of an Indian citizen into a protected area** for a limited period. Visitors are not allowed to purchase property in these regions.
- Restrictions are imposed on the entry of outsiders **to maintain the original identity of indigenous people of Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh**. The entry of outsiders are not allowed without ILP.
- The document is issued under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873 and the conditions and restrictions vary from state to state.

Background

- Recently, the State Cabinet had taken a decision to extend the operation of the 1873 Regulation in Dimapur.

- Therefore, many non-Nagas who have landed properties with commercial shops, godowns, etc. and who are staying in as tenants, and many locals who earn their income by means of collecting rent from tenants would be adversely affected
- Many non-nagas have been regarded as outsiders by the government of Nagaland, which is racial discrimination.