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Merger of Manipur and Tripura with India

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The outlawed insurgent groups, Alliance for Socialist Unity, Kangleipak (ASUK) and National Liberation Front of Twipra (NLFT) in Tripura and Manipur, have called for a total shutdown in the two north-eastern states on 15th October, 2019 arguing that **the two states were merged with the Indian Union “under duress”**.

NLFT was banned in 1997 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and then under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).

Merger of Manipur with India

- Before 15th August 1947, peaceful negotiations had brought almost all states whose territories were contiguous to the new boundaries of India, into the Indian Union.
- The rulers of most of the states signed a document called the **‘Instrument of Accession’** which meant that their state agreed to become a part of the Union of India.
- A few days before Independence, **the Maharaja of Manipur, Bodhachandra Singh**, signed the **Instrument of Accession** with the Indian government on the assurance that the **internal autonomy of Manipur would be maintained**.
- Under the pressure of public opinion, the Maharaja held elections in Manipur in June 1948 and the state became a constitutional monarchy. Thus **Manipur was the first part of India to hold an election based on universal adult franchise**.
- In the Legislative Assembly of Manipur there were sharp differences over the question of merger of Manipur with India. The Government of India succeeded in pressuring the Maharaja into signing a **Merger Agreement in September 1949**, without consulting the popularly elected Legislative Assembly of Manipur.

Merger of Tripura with India

- Tripura was princely state till the merger with Indian union on 15th November, 1949.

- The **last king Bir Bikram** who was on the throne, immediately before India's independence, died on 17th May, 1947.
- After his demise, his minor son Kirri Bikram Mannikya took the throne of Tripura kingdom, but he could not rule as he was minor.
- So his widow **queen Kanchan Prabha** took the charge of regency of Tripura and took over the administrative charges.
- She was **instrumental for Merger of Tripura kingdom in Indian Union.**

Arguments of the Outlawed Groups

- Merger agreements were signed under duress by two incompetent authorities of the two kingdoms.
 - Manipur king was reduced to a 'mere figurehead' of the kingdom after installation of an elected legislature and government.
 - Tripura's queen regent had 'questionable legitimacy' after the unilateral dissolution of the council of regency.
- These two states' merger was done out of '**pure miscalculation**' and '**unrealistic comprehension**' that the then Dominion of India would become a loose confederation of states and provinces like it existed under British colonial India.

Source: TH