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## The Focus

# Militarized Borderlands in Asia

## Pages 21-35

Even as borders are increasingly being bridged today through international cooperation, many border peoples across the world live precarious existences in military battle zones. Bringing together essays by anthropologists, historians, and ethnomusicologists, this Focus section refocuses the readers' gaze on militarized borderlands in Asia. The articles portray the far-reaching impacts of militarization on those who live in the immediate proximity of the border, as well as on those who move away. All the articles share a concern for the travails of the people living in militarized borders, and their attempts to cope or overcome, in symbolic, material, and imagined forms.

**Pages 24-25** Alexander Horstmann and Tomas Cole provide a gripping narrative of the plight of the Karen people, straddling the Thai-Burmese border, one of Asia's most battle-weary border regions. Trapped between rival militias and state militaries, Karen civilians wage a perpetual fight for survival, often in a no-win situation.

**Pages 26-27** Ankur Datta's article traces how the border figures in the imaginations of Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits in the India-Pakistan border region of Kashmir. Coming at a time when debates are current regarding the proposed resettlement of Kashmiri Pandit migrants in areas they had been forced to flee, Datta's piece is timely.

**Pages 28-29** Malini Sur's article underscores the violence of the border by drawing attention to a doomed crossing at the India-Bangladesh border – the shooting of a young girl by border security forces. Possessing neither legal nor financial wherewithal to pass through securitized checkpoints, many people negotiate the border under the threat of death.

**Pages 30-31** Duncan McDui Ra's article reveals a different kind of border effect by connecting the surge in private schools in Manipur (northeast India) with the popular desire to flee a militarized borderland. Since a mainstream education holds the promise of geographical mobility, it fuels the demand for private schools in troubled peripheries.

**Pages 32-33** Swargajyoti Gohain and Kerstin Grothmann focus on military renaming of places in a disputed India-China border. Renaming of places, although often accompanied by physical settlement of military troops, is in itself a powerful symbolic force and political act, for it changes the local culturescape, and integrates ambiguous state-spaces into the national space.

**Pages 34-35** The Focus ends with Masaya Shishikura's article on the blending of diverse musical cultures in the militarized island of Ogasawara in Japan. Occupied and militarily settled by different political powers, Ogasawara nevertheless resists the epitaph of a remote and marginal border through its rich cross-border musical practices.

