



REVISED EDITION

# STRANGERS OF THE MIST

Tales of War &  
Peace from India's  
Northeast

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SANJOY HAZARIKA

*If the North-East is not to be lost, this book should ... be  
compulsory reading for every thinking Indian.*

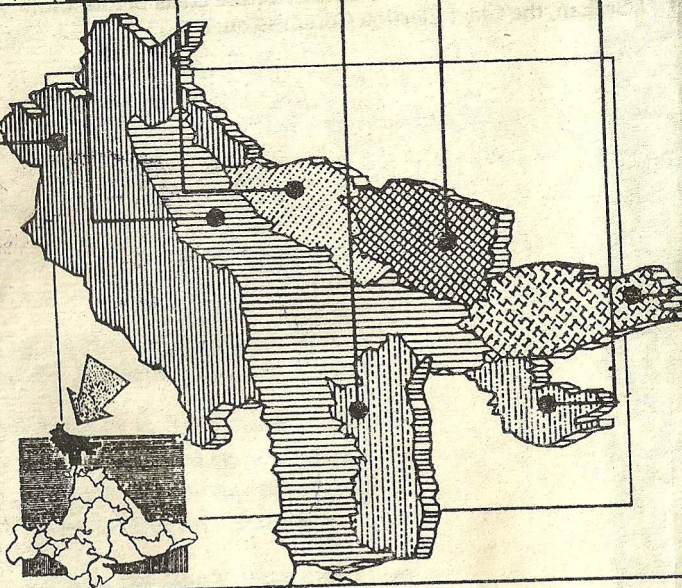
THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

PENGUIN BOOKS  
STRANGERS OF THE MIST

Sanjoy Hazarika was born in Shillong (then capital of Assam) in 1954. He went to school at St Edmund's College there and later studied journalism and printing at London. He began his career with *Himmat Weekly* and later worked for the *Hindustan Times* and the *Associated Press* before joining the *New York Times* for which he has reported extensively out of the South Asia bureau since 1981. He published his first book, *Assam: A Crisis of Identity* in 1980. He was the recipient of a New York Times Publishers Award for his reporting on the Bhopal gas tragedy in 1984. His second book, *Bhopal: The Lessons of a Tragedy* (Penguin India) which was listed by the *Observer*, London, as among the ten best science books released in 1988. In 1993-94, he was awarded a fellowship to study the changes in US environmental law after the Bhopal disaster at the Joan Shorenstein Barone Center of Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University.

Sanjoy Hazarika lives in New Delhi with his wife and daughter. He is co-authoring two volumes of a study of the crisis before India with T.N. Seshan, the Chief Election Commissioner.

# Major Militant Groups in India's Northeast



The following major militant groups have been active in the Northeast

## Arunachal Pradesh

- United Liberation Volunteers of Arunachal Pradesh (ULVA).
- United People's Volunteers of Arunachal Pradesh (UPVA).
- United Liberation Movement of Arunachal Pradesh (ULMA).

## Assam

- United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA).
- Bodo Security Force. (BSF)

## Nagaland

- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak/Muiviah), (NSCN I/M).
- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang)-NSCN(K).
- Naga National Council (Adinno)/Naga Federal Govt.(NFG).
- Naga National Council (Khodao)-NNC(K).

## Meghalaya

- Achik Liberation Matgrik Army (ALMA).

## Manipur

- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN I/M)
- People's Liberation Army (PLA)/Revolutionary People's Front (RPF).
- United National Liberation Front (UNLF).
- Peoples Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK)

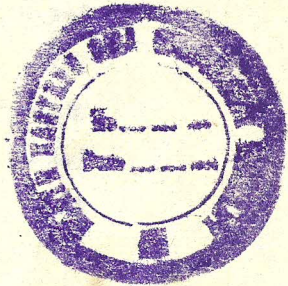
## Tripura

- All Tripura Tribal Force (ATTF).
- Tripura National Volunteer Force (TNVF)

Sanjoy Hazarika

# Strangers of the Mist

*Tales of War and Peace from India's Northeast*



PENGUIN BOOKS

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*For my father and mother*

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This book would have been completed earlier but for events that disrupted millions of lives across India, including those of journalists: the demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, by a Hindu mob on 6 December 1992 and the communal riots that followed across the country. In January 1993, the selective massacres of Muslims at Bombay and the devastating revenge bomb blasts there two months later led to extensive travelling and reporting for the *New York Times*. In addition, there was 'normal reporting': the Punjab, environmental, economic and political issues such as the billion dollar scam in the Bombay stock market, corruption charges and infighting that brought Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao's government almost to its knees.

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This book is dedicated to him and to my mother, Maya Hazarika, who has always been supportive.

Without them *Strangers of the Mist* could not have been written.

New Delhi  
22 February 1994

Sanjoy Hazarika

**A powerful and well-researched account of India's  
troubled Northeast**

'*Strangers of the Mist* ... (is) a sincere and warm understanding of the problem of North East. We tend to neglect the people and that region. It actually shows how we are losing our people to violence and drugs.'

—*The Pioneer*

'Sanjoy Hazarika discusses with a wealth of circumstantial detail problems of not only this part of India but also Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. Most important, he ventures to suggest solutions. His style is simple, free from verbiage making this book perhaps the best written so far on the north-east.'

—*The Statesman*

'*Strangers of the Mist* is an epic story, one of neglect, apathy, subversiveness and change and the social inequilibrium that came with these.'

—*The Telegraph*

'What makes Sanjoy Hazarika's documented and heart-felt study stand out is its journalistic liveliness ...'

—*The Hindustan Times*

'...What sets (Hazarika's) work apart is his deep understanding of the region and its people and his obvious empathy with their concerns, hopes and aspirations.'

—*The Sentinel*

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