

# Thingkho *Le* Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



## Zalenbung RELIEF CENTRE

Zalenbung Village, Lungchong Meiphai Sub Division, Ukhrul District

Managed by Kuki Students' Organisation Ukhrul District

**Total Inmates Registered: 133\***

■ Male: **67**

■ Female: **66**

### VILLAGES COVERED

Mongneljang  
Urangpat  
Gwaltabi Kuki  
L. Chajang  
Phaipijang

\*As on 19th October, 2023



## KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 16.10.2023



**146**  
DEATHS



**200+**  
VILLAGES BURNT



**7000+**  
HOUSES BURNT



**360**  
CHURCHES &  
SYNAGOGUES BURNT



**41,425**  
DISPLACED  
PERSONS

Thingkho Le Malcha (charred wood tied with chilli): A war symbol; a pre-arranged secret code agreed upon by the Kukis to inform the people about the commencement of war and on receiving this, one has to remain alert and be ready for the battle.

# KUKI INPI MANIPUR DENOUNCES N. BIREN SINGH'S ATTEMPT TO SWINDLE TRIBAL WELFARE FUND FROM UNION TRIBAL MINISTRY

The Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM) has said that the numerous plans and policies; and the actions and inactions of the Meitei-led Manipur State Government continued to uncover the complete prejudice of the State Government; and the subsequent oppression of the minority Kuki-Zo community and the tribals of Manipur as a whole.

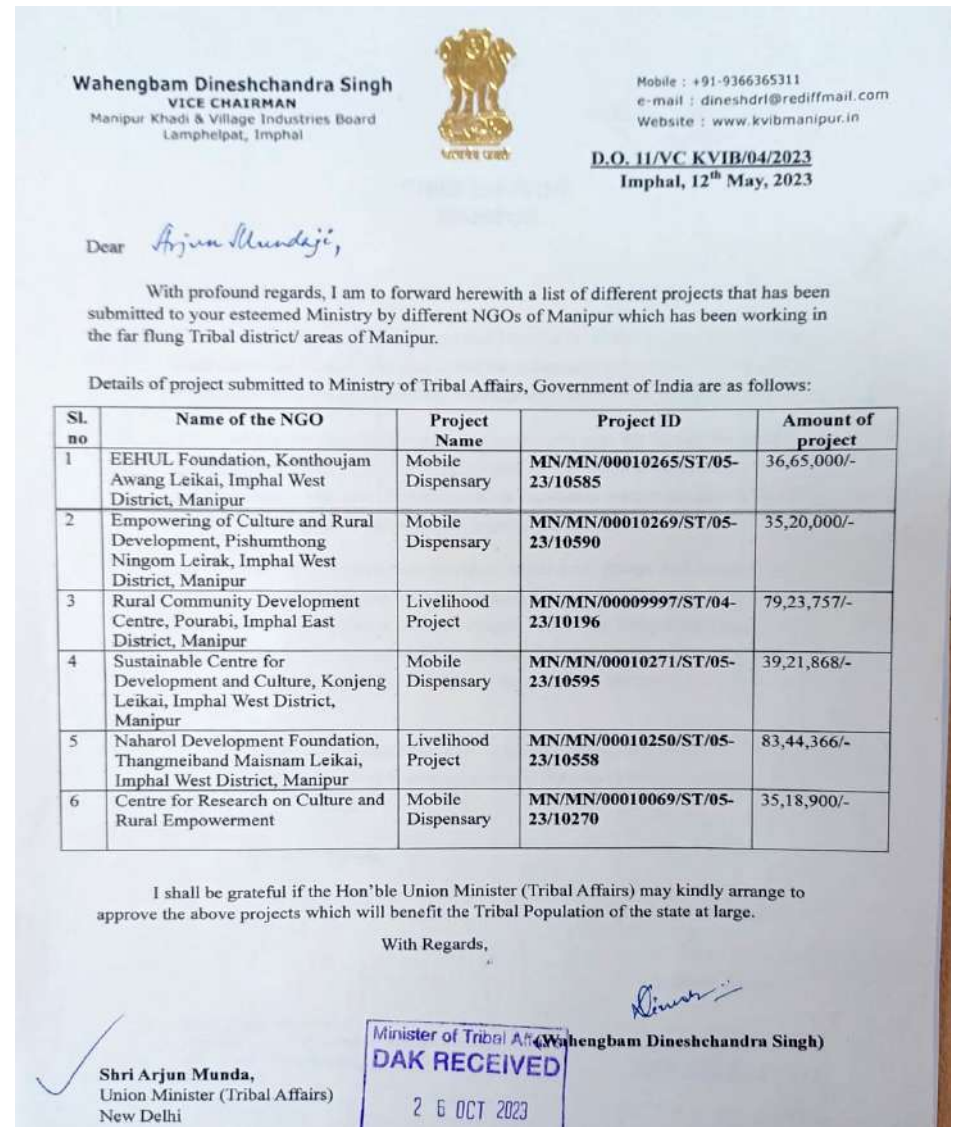
In its press release issued on Sunday, Janghaolun Haokip, Information and Publicity Secretary, KIM, said the Chief Minister of Manipur had recently forwarded a recommendation letter no. D.O.No.2/6/2023- CM, Imphal, October 23, 2023 to Arjun Munda, Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Govt. of India, for the consideration of various projects for the welfare of the Tribals in Manipur. Therewith, the Chief Minister of Manipur have also enclosed details of the project submitted to Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.

To the utter shock of the Kuki-Zo community, the list of the NGOs recommended to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, does not include a single hill-based NGO. The six recommended NGOs with a total project amount of 3,08,93,891.00 rupees are purely Meitei-based NGOs based in Imphal East and Imphal West Districts in the valley, he said.

Moreover, to believe in people to assume that these Meitei NGOs will truly work for the welfare of the tribals especially in the midst of the ongoing communal conflict in the region is a mockery to the conscience of the people, KIM stated.

Haokip said: "The claim that these NGOs have been working in the far flung tribals district/areas of Manipur to benefit the Tribal Population of the state is as well groundless. The recommendation of the Chief Minister of Manipur, therefore, is an irrefutable proof of the use and misuse of the State Government -its agencies and machineries -by the Meitei State leadership for the exclusive welfare of the Majority Meitei Community while discriminating and alienating the Kuki-Zo community, besides the ruthless attempt for persecution and annihilation of the Kuki-Zo people."

"In fact, the Manipur State Government has once again established itself as a government of the majority Meiteis alone, while it continues to oppress the Kuki-Zo community and the tribals of Manipur at large,



categorically disregarding the Constitutional values of equality and justice for all and the principles of human rights and social justice altogether."

The Kuki apex body also said it is true that the tribals of Manipur, especially in the face of this conflict, are facing intolerable hardships and are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. However, the valley-based NGOs can only further corrupt the livelihood opportunities for the tribals and prolong their suffering amidst the unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

The Kuki Inpi Manipur, therefore, sincerely appealed to the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India, to sensibly look into the matter so that the gross violation of Human Rights, the total rejection of humanitarian values, and the disregard for Constitutional principles continuously perpetrated by the Meitei-led Manipur State Government do not have a place in the vision of Modern India.

## THE WRONGFUL ARREST OF MR. SEIPU: A STAGE-MANAGED BY THE ASSAM RIFLES

The Kuki Students' Organisation General Headquarters has stated that the arrest of Mr. Lamtinsei Singson @Seipu was staged by the Assam Rifles and that he is wrongly implicated to salvage the bad reputation of the Assam Rifles.

Calling out the Assam Rifles for wrongly framing an innocent individual by charging him for an offence he has not committed, the KSO-GHQ pointed out that Mr. Seipu S/o Mr. Letkhosei of Chiengkongpang, Churachandpur, was picked by the 39 Assam Rifles stationed at Tactical Headquarter Kadamtal Company, Jiribam on 14th October 2023 after the AR invited him for a cup of tea and later on, his Bolero vehicle was seized by the said AR. Before the seizure of his vehicle, the womenfolk in the area scanned his vehicle wherein only his personal diary, Christian's Bible and water bottles were found in the vehicle.

However, in a surprising turn of events, Mr. Seipu who was summoned for a discussion over a cup of tea, was later handed over to the Police with 10 capsules of Brown sugar, alleging him of involving in an illegal drug trade. The wrongful arrest of Mr. Seipu is a staged managed drama to tarnish his image in general and the Kuki community in particular. In simple words he has been

charged maliciously. No body should be punished for an offence he/she does not commit, KSO said.

The disreputable act of the Assam Rifles in implicating an innocent individual by leveling charge against him for an offence he did not commit is highly condemnable. The AR seems to have acted to propitiate the majority Meitei by wrongly implicating an innocent Kuki to salvage their bad reputation, KSO-GHQ alleged.

The Kuki students' body urged that the Company Commander of the said AR Post should stop acting at the behest of the state government and the Meitei CSOs for fulfilling their unfounded claims to brand the Kuki-Zo people as a narco-terrorists.

The Commander of the 39 AR and the Superintendent of Police of Jiribam Police should execute strict investigation against the Commander of Kadamtal Company as to how drugs was used against the innocent individual for establishing false accusation. The Commander of the said Company should be booked under relevant NDPS Act, failing which the KSO-GHQ will be compelled to file a case to the Human Rights Commission, KSO warned.

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## KUKI CSOs IN ASSAM CALL ON CM HIMANTA BISWA SARMA

In an effort to expedite the political dialogue between the government and Kuki SoO groups in Assam, the Kuki Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have called on the Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma at Circuit House, Halflong, on October 28.

The Kuki CSOs included the Kuki Inpi Assam (KIA), Kuki Women's Association (KWA) and Kuki Students' Organisation (KSO) while the SoO groups included the KRA, KLA/KLO and UKDA.

During the meeting, Kuki CSOs submitted a memorandum to the chief minister for speeding up the political demands of the Kukis while the SoO groups also submitted their representation to the CM separately.

Sources from the Kuki CSOs claimed that Chief Minister Sarma is keen on solving the political problems of the Kukis in Assam and has assured to expedite the talks between the state government and Kuki SoO groups.

Samuel Changsan, EM, NCHAC, Debolal Gorlosa, CEM, NCHAC and Mrs. Nandita Gorlosa, MLA, Cabinet



Minister were also present during the meeting.

The Assam Chief Minister was on a visit to Dima Hasao district in regards to the upcoming MAC (Member of Autonomous Constituency) election, wherein he addressed a public gathering at District Sports Association (DSA), Play ground in Halflong. In his speech, CM assured to solve the political problem of indigenous Kukis in Assam.

## BOMB CULTURE IN “UNDISTURBED VALLEY” OF IMPHAL

Even as the State administration had extended lifting of AFSPA in Imphal Valley, citing improvement of law and order situation, the so called “undisturbed police jurisdictional areas” of Imphal often witnessed any sort of criminal activities from the banned Meitei terrorist organisations or from the local armed militia groups.

Gun culture, bomb threats, monetary demands, extortions, intimidation, life-threatening and destruction of properties towards dissenters, etc., have become the daily bread of Imphal valley dwellers.

In a latest incident of Manipur, a powerful bomb was planted at the residence of Zilla Parishad Chairman, Adhyaksha Phurishabam Jiten. The explosive device, identified as a .36 high explosive hand grenade, was discovered cleverly concealed in a flowerpot within the courtyard of Jiten’s house in Sekmaiing Mayai Leikai, located under the jurisdiction of the Hiyanglam police station.

The placement of the explosive device at the residence of the district council’s head raises concerns about the safety and security of local government officials in Manipur.

Upon receiving the report, a specialized team from the Manipur police disposal squad promptly arrived on the scene to dispose of the grenade. This operation took place at approximately 8 a.m. on the day of the incident, ensuring the safety of those living in the vicinity.

In response to this alarming act of violence, the local community organized a sit-in protest under the banner of “Stop money demand, we want peace.” This peaceful demonstration was held at the Communal Hall in Sekmaiing, a town situated in the southern part of Manipur.

The protesters aimed to send a powerful message to the perpetrators and to demand a peaceful environment for their community. During the protest, a prominent figure named Meira Paibi, identified as Memba Devi, voiced her concerns and called for clarification from those responsible for planting the bomb. She emphasized that such a malicious act, particularly in a densely populated area, reflects a severe lack of courage and morality. The community’s stance against violence and its commitment to peace were evident during this demonstration, as they collectively rejected any form of intimidation and threats.

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## MNF POLL MANIFESTO PROMISES UNIFICATION OF ZO PEOPLE UNDER ONE ADMINISTRATION

The poll manifesto of ruling Mizo National Front (MNF) in Mizoram has promised to unite the Zofa or people belonging to Zo community under one administration, if it forms a government for the second straight term.

The manifesto promised that Zofas or Zohnahthlaks, scattered in various countries, will be united under one government with “higher authority” in accordance with the UN’s 2007 Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous People. A copy of the 10-page manifesto was shared on social media by Mizoram CM and MNF President Zoramthanga. The promise was referred to unification of the greater Zo communities such as the Mizos of Mizoram, Kukis in Manipur, Chins in Myanmar and Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. He, however, refused to elaborate how a regional party would unite people living in other countries. “Protection and welfare of the Zo people is MNF’s biggest priority. That’s the reason, our government has provided shelters to over 30,000 Chin refugees who fled military ruled Myanmar and some from Bangladesh. We have also provided shelters to over 12,000 Kukis who were displaced due to violence in Manipur,” he said.

The promise comes at a time when Kukis in violence-hit



Manipur are demanding a “separate administration” for them in the state. Zoramthanga also openly extended his support to the demand even as the Centre rejected the same and asked the Mizoram to prevent influx of refugees from Myanmar. MNF is an ally of the NDA but BJP is not part of the Mizoram government. The MNF defeated 10-year-old Congress government in 2018 elections. The MNF has made “unification of the Zofas” as the biggest poll plank for Assembly elections scheduled on November 7.

## REVISITING THE KHAMENLOK INCIDENT: ONE OF THE INJURED MEITEIS SUCCUMBED TO HIS INJURY

Though three odd months have passed after the bloody battle of Khamenlok, the wounds and scars of the incident began to re-surfaced every now and then with many survivors of the bloody incident live in peril.

A sad and devastating story is the passing of Laimayum Prem@Khundrakpa, one of the survivors of the Khamenlok incident, at Raj Medicity today. He was under medical treatment since that bloody incident took place where many attackers perished. They met their fate while attacking the Kuki villages.

Khamenlok – a strategic location along the Kangpokpi – Imphal East border, which both Meiteis and Kukis knew it. Once it's taken, all the other towns including Saikul and then Kangpokpi are to be exposed. That is why many Meiteis led by Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun were trying to take over this village, which they couldn't succeed so far till now. Many had endured a horrifying ordeal during the attack.

Huge crowd led by radicalised armed Meiteis ventured into the area to launched attack against the Kukis on that fateful night. Indeed, the highest of casualties in the violence till date had been reported in Khamenlok area

under Saikul Sub-Division, Kangpokpi district. Inputs from the ground claimed that around 100 – 150 radicalized Meiteis' armed militias were said to have been neutralized by the Village volunteers within the 3-day attacks on the said tribal villages by radicalized armed Meiteis.

In Aigejang, a Kuki village, 11 bodies which were recovered were of Meitei men who were not residents of the village. According to police, they were "local volunteers".

It is significant that Khamenlok had been one of the main battlegrounds for the Kuki village volunteers and the non-tribal Meiteis. Security sources also pointed out that there had been a massive influx of Meitei men from nearby areas to "defend" the Meitei-dominated parts of the border area.

In retaliation, days after the attack, the Meiteis started burning down of Kuki villages within the Khamenlok area. Denouncing the attack and burning down of 10 villages in Khamenlok area from June 12 to 14, large numbers of people including villagers of Khamenlok area staged a sit-in-protest at Saikul sub-divisional headquarters in Kangpokpi district on June 20.

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## CONG TO PASS BILL GUARANTEEING PROTECTION OF LAND, FORESTS, TRIBAL PEOPLE'S RIGHTS IN MIZORAM: JAIRAM RAMESH

The Congress on Saturday said if it forms the government in Mizoram, it would pass a new bill in the very first session of the new Assembly guaranteeing the protection of the land and forests of the northeastern state, besides the rights of its tribal people.

The opposition party also claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was to address an election rally in Mizoram on October 30 but now, there are reports that he has cancelled his visit.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh wondered whether this could be "because questions would be raised that he had not found time to visit the deeply-troubled neighbouring state" (Manipur, which is witnessing ethnic clashes for months now).



## ALMOST SIX MONTHS AFTER CLASHES BEGAN, ONLY 25% OF LOOTED ARMS FOUND



Almost six months after violence broke out in Manipur, the state government has been able to recover only about a quarter of the arms and less than 5 per cent of the ammunition stolen during the peak of violence in May, The Indian Express has learned.

Of the approximately 5,600 arms looted, roughly 1,500 have been recovered, and out of approximately 6.5 lakh rounds of ammunition that went missing, about 20,000 have come back to the police so far, according to sources. This is despite Chief Minister Biren Singh repeatedly threatening action against those found with illegal weapons.

In fact, the state government had in September too submitted a status report on the recovery of arms and ammunition stolen from the police and state armouries in the wake of ethnic clashes between the Meitei and Kuki communities since early May.

Almost 80% of the looted arms were from police and state armouries located in three districts — Imphal East, Churachandpur and Bishnupur.

Between these three districts, Imphal East leads with over 3,500 stolen arms (out of the total of roughly 5,600) and almost 4 lakh looted ammunition (out of roughly 6.5 lakh). The campuses of the 7th battalions of Manipur Rifles, the 8th India Reserve Battalion (both in Khabeisoi village) and the Manipur Police Training College (in Pangei

village) are located in the Imphal East district.

Approximately 1,000 arms (out of 5,600) were stolen from armouries in Bishnupur and Churachandpur districts.

Given that the majority of the looted weapons are from Imphal East, predictably most of the arms recovered to date, are also from the district of Imphal East (over 650). According to sources, the arms and ammunition loot happened mostly in May when the violence peaked. “With the exception of a few stray incidents, there was no looting after May,” said a source.

Since the incidents of looting, the state government has deputed personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to guard all armouries. “In armouries situated in critical and tense areas where it wasn’t possible to depute CRPF personnel, the weapons have been moved out completely,” the source said.

In Manipur, clashes first erupted on May 3 in the area at the border of Churachandpur and Bishnupur districts following a protest called by the All Tribal Students’ Union of Manipur after a Manipur High Court order directed the state government to submit a recommendation to the Union government for the grant of Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to the Meitei community.

Source: [The Indian Express](#)



**NEWS ANALYSIS**

**Mohan Bhagwat's Comments on Manipur Violence Show Northeast Remains a Puzzle That RSS Can't Solve**

Much as it matches the stand taken by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) governments at the Centre and in Manipur, it, nevertheless, comes off as a strident attempt at narrative correction by the top Hindutva leader – perhaps to garb the right-wing outfit's own powerlessness in the Northeast.

Soon after the ongoing violence broke out in Manipur on May 3, the narrative in both local and national media was set. It broke out during a tribal solidarity march carried out in all hill districts of the state against the Manipur high court's order to the state government that it should recommend the inclusion of the Meitei community in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list.

In quick succession, we saw the line shifting to 'narco-terrorism', allegedly by "illegal" Kukis. It was particularly vented not just by the Meitei-faction of the BJP in the state but also the Sangh parivar across the country. Peddling of drugs within the state, and from outside the international border, has been a matter of concern not just in Manipur but in some other northeastern states too. However, in a state where the incumbent chief minister was once accused by a police officer in an affidavit in the high court for asking her to "go slow" on a drug kingpin (from the Kuki community), it was only a matter of time before that narrative lost steam.

Lo and behold, it did. None other than the chief

minister, N. Biren Singh, began telling select local and national media outlets that 'external forces' infiltrating Manipur through the open border with strife-torn Myanmar piloted the violence that left hundreds dead and injured and displaced at least 70,000 people belonging to both Kuki and Meitei communities.

The same narrative was mouthed by Bhagwat at his annual Vijayadashami address to the cadres at the RSS headquarters in Nagpur. The Hindutva ideologue said:

*"Why, and by whom, was an attempt made to give a communal tinge to this mutual conflict between the Manipuri Meitei and Kuki communities, who were apprehensive about the future of their existence? Who has a vested interest in trying to drag and besmirch an organisation like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, which has been engaged in serving everyone without any bias for years, into this unfortunate incident without any reason? Which foreign powers may be interested in taking advantage of such unrest and instability in Manipur, located between Nagabhoomi and Mizoram in this border area? Does the geopolitics of Southeast Asia also have a role in these events?"*

His utterance came across as an attempt to separate

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the RSS from the Manipur violence, perhaps because local rightwing outfits with alleged links to it – like the Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun – were widely alleged to have a hand in the attack on the Kukis in the valley areas.

More importantly, Bhagwat's words miss a peculiar element within societies across the Northeast, which organisations like the RSS, hinged on religious hegemony, find hard to crack.

Across large parts of the country, caste and religion can play a determining role in huddling a society under one umbrella. In the northeastern belt, what cements a group of people as one is the strong sense of community. Pluck out from recent history any bloody strife that rocked the region and you will find that fear of one community losing its power to another is at its root. Not religion or caste. It is this strong sense of community that gives agency to any grouping of people across the region, whether it is a majority or minority.

This factor was seen playing out in the Kuki-Meitei clashes too. Kukis may be a minority in Manipur but are certainly not voiceless; not cowering against a community which is in greater numbers in their state and also has in Biren Singh, a chief minister perceived as batting only for his Meitei community. The agency required to put up a fight was drawn from the neighbouring Mizos, their kindred tribe. Mizoram chief minister Zoramthanga soon acted as the equivalent of Biren Singh for the Kukis of Manipur.

It is this sense of community that also kicks up a peculiarity during a riot or violent situation in the Northeast. While Church and Hindutva leaders were going all out in the media, counting the number of churches and temples burnt respectively during the Manipur violence, on the ground, Meitei Christians were accusing the Kuki Christians of setting fire to their churches. Clearly, then, religion appears to have played a subservient role to the sense of community. If those accusations were true, Meitei Christians were lumped in by the Kukis with the Meities who are Vaishnavites and followers of Sanamahism. Ditto the case with some recent attacks against the Meitei Pangals or Muslims in the Kwakta area that borders

the Kuki-dominated Churachandpur.

A small section within the Kukis is Bnei Menashe, or Jewish. Wilson Hangshing, an MLA and co-founder of the Kuki People's Alliance, who has been an important voice in the national media for the Kukis during the Manipur clash, belongs to that community. But religious identity was never a factor when it came to joining hands with the rest of the Kukis, who are mostly Christian. It is also this sense of community and kinship that pivots the Mizoram government's refusal of orders from New Delhi to push back the Chin refugees into Myanmar.

In the run-up to the 1983 Nellie riots of Assam too, the sense of community played out. Multiple instances of violence were noted where villagers attacked villagers from other communities. E. Rammohan, who was an Assam police officer then, notes in his book *Simply Khaki: A Policeman Remembers* that a group of Assamese Muslims attacked Muslims of East Bengal origin in the state's Darrang district. Clearly, then too, community was the pivot.

In the all-so-common insider-outsider conflicts that break out across the Northeast, religion more often than not takes a backseat when posed against the idea of community. Take the Chakmas of Arunachal Pradesh. They may be Buddhist, like a section of people in the state, but it is never a concession when it comes to counting who comes under the umbrella of Arunachalee as a whole. The BJP-RSS have a strong base in both the Chakma and Arunachalee communities, but have not been able to bring them under one umbrella even after years of work.

In recent times, when the National Register of Citizens (NRC) was being updated in Assam under the BJP, religious polarisation of the society was seen to be at its peak. That the state has a considerable population of Muslims of Bengali origin has helped matters for both Hindu and Islamic forces to blow their trumpets. However, by the time the Union government brought in the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the old equations came to the fore. Firm lines of division were drawn not as per religion but community. Much

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as the BJP-RSS and chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma kept prodding the Assamese community to 'identify the enemy', the Bangladeshi Hindus found no acceptance. The religious card was thrown by the wayside when Guwahati saw a large crowd of anti-CAA protesters hitting the roads, mouthing the 17th century Sufi saint Azan Fakir's Jikir, 'Hindu or Muslim, we are the children of the same god...'

The violence in Manipur has uncanny similarities with the 'Assam problem' of the 1980s – the bogey of 'illegal immigrants'. Even then, there is a variation. In Assam, a sub-nationalist movement led by the majority Assamese community began tilting towards religion

(read Hindu) in later decades (until the anti-CAA movement against accepting Hindu Bangladeshis in Assam broke that continuity). In Manipur though, it began as a religious assertion with the involvement of groups like Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun but is now gradually leaning towards an assertion of Meitei sub-nationalism.

In other words, a sense of community overrides that of religion. For outfits structured around religious hegemony, Manipur may prove a puzzle hard to solve.

First published by [The Wire](#)

## THE SOCIAL MEDIA BUZZ



**Dr. Lamtinthang Haokip** ✓  
@DrLamtinthangHk

Socio-economic inequalities & polarisation, ethnopolitical renaissance, authoritarian or majoritarian, ideological combat, civil identity crisis, etc are among others to deal with in an ethnic conflict like [#Manipur](#). Since the fire has been put out and unless these underlying startup conditions are dealt with, the fire is certain to reoccur, sooner or later.

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**Only the dead have seen  
the end of the war.**

- George Santayana



**OPINION**

## CALL OUT ANTI-KUKI XENOPHOBIA: GENERIC CALLS FOR JUSTICE IN MANIPUR WON'T DO

**KAVITA KRISHNAN**

Soon after the video of mob sexual violence against three Kuki women in Manipur went viral, one of the men seen in the video, Huirem Herodas, was arrested. Soon after his arrest, the Meira Paibis (senior women of the Meitei community) of his village gathered and set his house on fire.

When the Meira Paibis mete out such vigilante violence, is it an act of feminist solidarity with Kuki women?

A Meira Paibi leader said of the decision to burn the house, “Be it Meitei or other communities, as a woman, outraging a woman’s dignity is not acceptable. We cannot allow such a person to be in our society. It’s a shame to the entire Meitei community.”

Solidarity needs to start with a sense of empathy: for the sexual violence and loss of loved ones suffered by the Kuki women, one of whom lost her father and her brother, who were neighbours and friends to the other two women.

Solidarity needs to start by thinking about the extent to which hateful radicalisation got a grip on one’s own community, that made such violence possible.

It needs to reflect on what collective action is needed to begin to undo such hate and radicalisation in one’s own community, family, and friends. The Meira Paibis performed a collective action full of moral certitude and righteous defence of the honour of their community, in

burning down a house of Herodas. But Herodas too was part of a collective, which committed violent atrocities with a sense of moral certitude that it was righteously defending the interests of the same community.

The shameful scenes of a Meitei mob stripping and parading Kuki women, seen by the whole world, blew the claims by the State and Central governments that there was no mob violence against unarmed civilians in the state, and that those killed were just the bad guys: “illegal immigrants”, “militants”, and “narco-terrorists” from Myanmar. The members of that mob were undeniably bad guys, and their victims were equally undeniably unarmed women and men, not terrorists.

An immoral act committed in the name of one’s community is an occasion to call all moral certitudes of the community and the narratives of its political representatives into question. It’s an occasion to pause in the ongoing conflict and ask, “Wait, are we the baddies”? Instead, what the Meira Paibis are doing is to declare, in effect – “See, we’re the good guys, we punish the bad apples, and that’s that.”

### **The Method in Mob Madness**

In the atrocity seen on the video, separate mobs of Meitei boys and men stripped, assaulted and raped the three women, saying all along that they were avenging Meitei women and children raped and killed by Kuki men. They

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also said that there were Meitei men in the mob who tried to prevent the rest from assaulting the women; and who later came to the women and gave them their clothing to wear.

In another incident, a young Kuki woman who narrowly escaped with her life was abducted from the street by men in an SUV. Next, she says, young and older women wearing the traditional dress of Meitei women thrashed her and then handed her over to men of their community asking the latter to “kill her.” As the assault continued, she heard a man making a phone call to members of the Arambai Tenggol, a Meitei-chauvinist armed group, and saying “We have captured one tribal.” She could escape with the help of a passing stranger: a Muslim auto driver.

In yet another instance, two young Kuki women were dragged by a mob from a girls’ hostel associated with a nursing institute. They say that two women from the mob entered the hostel demanding to see identity cards because they were “looking for Kuki girls”, and not Naga or Meitei girls. In spite of the efforts of the senior member of the nursing staff, a Meitei woman, to intervene, the students were handed over by the two women to “radical mobs belonging to the Meitei community.” They recall the women inciting the men, “Why are you still keeping them alive? Rape them, cut their bodies into pieces and burn them alive.” The mob “chanted anti-tribal slogans”, and one of the women recalls being called an “illegal immigrant from another country.”

There is a pattern here: the mobs comprise Meiteis who are on a witch-hunt for Kukis, “tribals” to kill and rape. They call Kukis “illegal immigrants,” and claim to be avenging rapes committed by Kukis. The mobs include Meitei women who facilitate and participate in the assault and incite the mob to rape and kill.

Meanwhile, there are Meitei women who have tried to protect Kuki victims from the mobs, and men uneasy with atrocities towards women.

### **A New Political Dynamic**

There are attempts to understand the ongoing carnage in Manipur in terms of concerns and issues of contention between Meiteis and Kukis. The cross-border drug trade, linked to poppy cultivation by Kukis in the Manipur hills; tensions over land, resources and ST status; anxieties caused by immigrants and refugees fleeing the military

dictatorship in Myanmar; aspirations among Kukis for autonomy; and other issues.

There is no doubt that such concerns are at play in the Manipur situation. These are genuinely felt by concerned communities, and should not be dismissed as mere prejudices. In the North East, contentions over land, political identity, territorial claims, and so on have been sharp, and have often resulted in violent clashes between communities. Armed groups claiming to represent these issues have often targeted civilians of the “other” communities, committing massacres, and sexual violence, and forcing entire populations to flee regions under their control. It can appear, therefore, that what is happening in Manipur right now is similar to previous episodes of violence in the state and the region, even if of a far worse scale and intensity.

But there is something new and dangerous in the current crisis, which draws on elements from past conflicts and prejudices but is also a product of the current political climate nationally. When the citizenship of every member of a community is treated with suspicion; when immigrants and refugees are described as “illegal” (a word ascribing to them a sinister conspiratorial purpose); when the name of the community is tied up in an almost hyphenated fashion with the term “terrorist” or “militant”, the matter crosses the line of a sincerely felt concern or debate over into the territory of xenophobia. The sharpest and most bloody political or social disputes can be resolved eventually – but not if one party in the dispute is denied recognition as fellow citizens and human beings.

To identify “drug lords from Myanmar”, “poppy cultivation”, “narco-terrorism”, “Kuki militancy”, “separatist politics”, and so on as the causes and contexts of the violence in Manipur, is to perpetuate xenophobic anti-Kuki dog whistles and thus be part of the problem. This is because these concerns are not the cause of the violence. The cause is the fact that these concerns are being weaponised by a xenophobic politics that has come to dominate the Meitei community, and moreover, that is in power in Manipur and Delhi. And it is the centrality of this politics that distinguishes the current Manipur crisis from previous conflicts and clashes in the North East.

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### **Xenophobic Politics Powered By The ‘Double Engine’**

The mobs mentioned in victim testimonies that have emerged have clearly been radicalised to see Kukis, tribals through a xenophobic lens, so that they appear outside society/nation/humanity, making violence against them thinkable. Such radicalisation can happen only through sustained, organised propaganda which trains the majority community to use dehumanising language for the minority.

It is easy to recognise in the language of the Meitei mobs, the political language of Chief Minister Biren Singh. Early in July, Biren Singh indicated he would be resigning as chief minister. But thousands of Meitei women, said to be led by Meira Paibis (senior Meitei women) gathered in a show of support for him and “tore up his resignation letter.” Soon after, he taunted Kuki Twitter users, implying in a series of tweets they were not Indian but from Myanmar, and therefore had no right to homeland in India.

He was speaking straight from a xenophobic, script, which accuses the Kuki community of being “illegal immigrants”, “Myanmarese”, “narco-terrorists”, “militants” and so on. There can be debates and arguments about what the state’s policies should be towards immigrants or refugees from Myanmar, drug trade, militancy, or demands for a separate administration. But it is clear that the Chief Minister is using language to target the entire Kuki community as violent drug traders who do not belong in Manipur and India. That is xenophobia 101. And it is this same xenophobic language that is spoken by the mobs that attack Kukis.

The older dynamic of conflicts and even prejudices between communities has been overlaid by the xenophobic and majoritarian narrative getting an unprecedented impetus from the “double engine” BJP governments at state and centre. All over the country, Home Minister Amit Shah has repeatedly referred to “illegal immigrants” as “termites” infecting and weakening the nation’s body politic, promising that the BJP would identify and eradicate such a pestilence. Shah used such dehumanising fascist language to imply that all Muslims in India, and especially in the border states, are actually “Bangladeshi” and it is their illicit votes that allow the Congress party to win elections. In Manipur, the CM, the BJP and Meitei chauvinist armed groups which clearly have the government’s indulgence and maybe patronage, apply the same template to speak of the Kuki community.

The violence in Manipur is not one-sided; Kukis too have been the aggressors towards Meiteis. Neither are Meiteis as a community the “perfect villains”; nor are Kukis the “perfect victims”. What must not be denied though, is that the xenophobic politics of Meitei chauvinism that is at the root of the current crisis.

To restate: the sexual violence seen in a single video is part of a larger pattern of violence targeting the Kuki community: violence that is a direct product of the xenophobic politics of the ruling BJP and its “double-engine” governments in Manipur and Delhi. Every submission by state and central governments to the supreme court has offered the same xenophobic rationalisation for the violence.

Justice for these instances of sexual violence lies in recognising that the acts are not those of “bad apples” in an otherwise moral society. The anti-Kuki mobs in Manipur today are organised, not spontaneous; exactly as the anti-Muslim mobs in Gujarat in 2002 were organised and not formed in a spontaneous reaction to the burning train at Godhra.

Protest demonstrations, however well meaning, that make generic demands for “justice and peace for Manipur”, allow the oppressor room to hide. Meitei chauvinist rallies say they want “peace” - but theirs is a xenophobic definition of peace, for “illegal immigrants” and “narco terrorists” (ie Kukis) must be evicted from the country.

Justice is a precondition for peace. Justice for the victims of these mobs lies in holding every institution down the entire chain of command – the prime minister, the home minister, the chief minister, the state government, police officers and personnel – responsible for their acts of omission and commission that allowed such mobs to spread hate, and commit arson, rape and murder with impunity over months.

Source: [The Quint](#)

*(Kavita Krishnan is a women’s rights activist, known for her advocacy in problems of violence, especially in the Nirbhaya rape case of 2012. This is an opinion piece and the views expressed above are the author’s own.)*

## AGNIVEER RECRUITMENT RALLY

Indian Army has scheduled phase-2 Agniveer recruitment rally for Manipur from November 28 to December 8 at various locations in the state.

In a release, PRO (Defence) informed that Indian Army commenced the process for phase-2 of Agniveer recruitment since June 2023, in several parts of the country.

In the phase-2 of recruitment process, Army Recruiting Office, Rangapahar will conduct recruitment rallies for shortlisted candidates of Manipur at Brigadier Thomas ground, Kangpokpi from November 28 to November 30; Koirengei Old Airfield, Imphal East from December 3 to December 4; and at Peace Ground, Churachandpur from December 7 to December 8.

Shortlisted candidates will be tested on 1.6 km run and some basic physical fitness tests in addition to physical measurements during the screening at the rally site, the release continued.



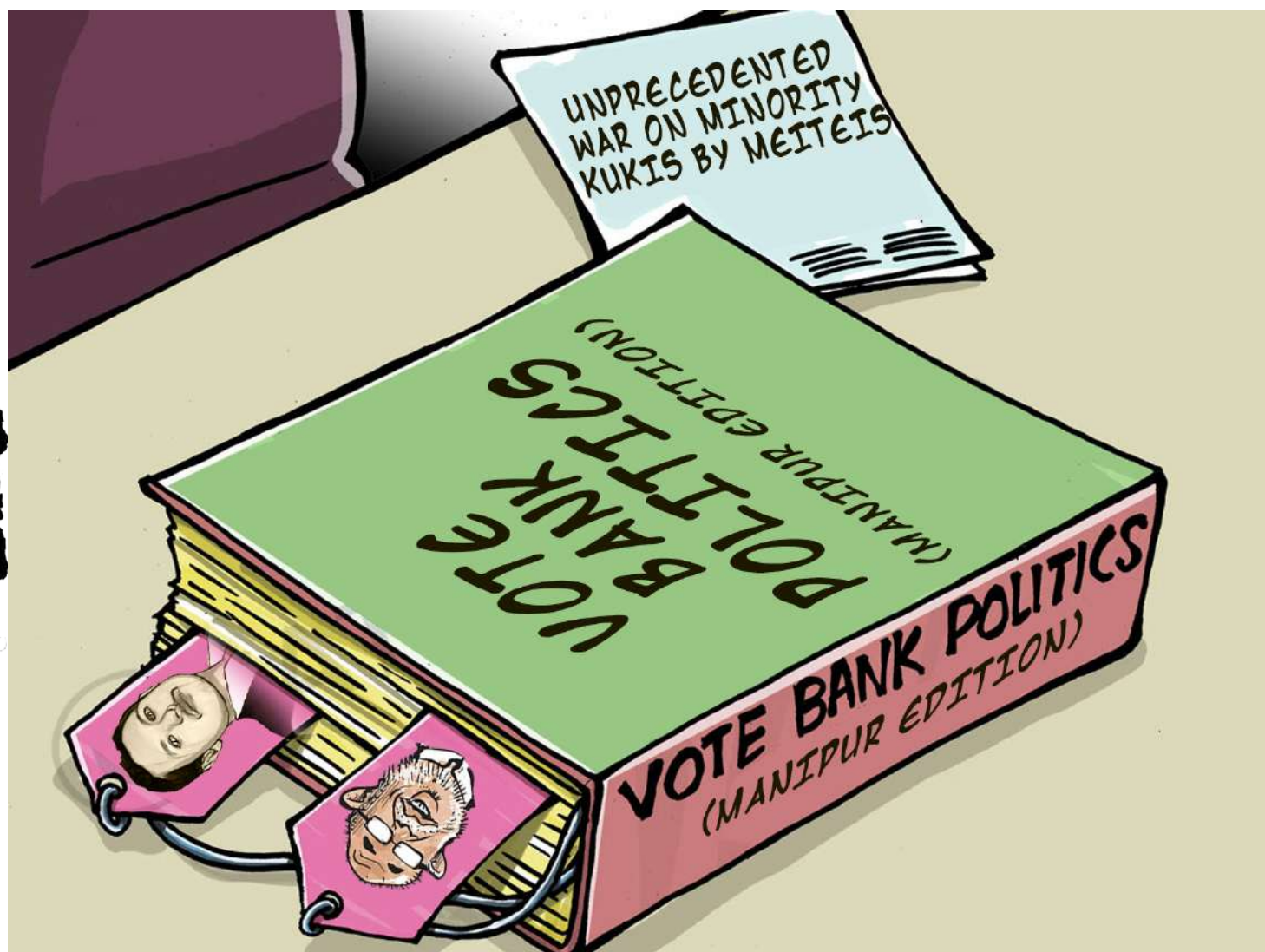
As part of the new recruitment system, Phase-I involved an online Common Entrance Exam (CEE).

The result of candidates who passed in the online Common Entrance Exam has been uploaded on 'Join Indian Army' website.

The Indian Army has also intimated shortlisted and not shortlisted candidates through mail on their registered email IDs already.

The shortlisted candidates can download their admit cards for phase - II using their login credentials.

Indian Army advised the shortlisted candidates who are yet not received their admit cards to approach Army Recruiting Office, Rangapahar using email ID - swarkokila@nic.in and mobile number - 8974958673 to obtain the same, it added.



# Hello

Two seasons have passed  
So many tears we've cried,  
So many heartaches we've bore,  
The path we did not choose.

This world of ours, forever moving,  
And lately you and I  
Seem to be drifting too,  
Our griefs have seem to fade,  
Are we mere ironies now?

Recall, how we weren't prepared for  
The ways we were ruthlessly slayed.  
"Forget us not" cries from the morgues,  
A memo from the graves.

Though the days before May,  
Were better than Today,  
Let's stay woke and cope,  
With a glimmer of Hope.

*~Angie Dounzel*