

Thingkho *Le* Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



AWAITING JUSTICE



SOITINKAM VAIPHEI (56 YEARS)

S/O LALMINLIAN VAIPHEI

ADDRESS: B. PHAINOM, KPI

DATE OF DEATH: 4TH MAY, 2023

PLACE OF DEATH: KHONGSAI VENG, IMPHAL

CAUSE OF DEATH: BEATEN TO DEATH



KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 01.05.2024



185
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.

VOTES TO BE COUNTED ACROSS 24 CENTRES, THREE-LAYER SECURITY IN PLACE

Preparations for counting of votes for General Elections to the 18th Lok Sabha in respect of two Parliamentary Constituencies of Manipur on the 4th of June, 2024 are in full swing.

All necessary arrangements as prescribed by the Election Commission are well in place. A three-layer security cordon will be enforced at all counting centres on counting day and entry of unauthorised persons will be restricted.

However, authorised media persons with valid Passes and counting agents will be allowed access to the counting centres.

Counting of votes will be taken up at 24 (Twenty-four) Counting centres in 11 (Eleven) District Headquarters of Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Chandel, Ukhrul, Senapati, Kangpokpi, Tamenglong, Churachandpur and Jiribam in a total of 50 (fifty) counting halls.

5 (five) Counting halls have been earmarked for counting Postal Ballots and ETPBS at the headquarters of the two Returning Officers of 1-Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency and 2-Outer Manipur (ST) Parliamentary Constituency and the remaining 45 (forty-five) halls will be used for counting of EVMs and VVPATs.

Meanwhile, 25 (twenty-five) Counting Observers have been appointed by the Election Commission of India and will be arriving before the date fixed for counting. One ECIL engineer for each counting hall has been assigned where EVM counting will be done.



Counting will commence at 8:00 am at the counting halls.

Authorized counting agents of candidates are informed to reach the counting centres well in time to participate in the opening of strong rooms as notified by the respective Returning Officer/Assistant Returning Officer.

Training of the Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers, Counting Officials including the Micro Observers has been completed. The counting process in the counting halls will be under CCTV/videography coverage. Each round of counting will be updated through ENCORE application and will be available for public access through Voter Turnout Mobile Application and results.eci.gov.in.

Source: [India Today NE](#)

DESPITE BRISK CAMPAIGN, PM MODI GIVES STRIFE-HIT MANIPUR A MISS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who held a total of 206 public outreach programmes, including rallies and roadshows, since the announcement of the LS poll schedule on March 16, did not visit the strife-torn Manipur even once. Also, he did not hold any political rally in Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim.

The PM addressed rallies during campaigning for the first phase of elections in Nalbari (Assam) and Agartala (Tripura) on April 17. Both Assam and Tripura are BJP-ruled states. Modi, however, took part in a roadshow in Itanagar, Arunachal, on March 9, days before the announcement of the poll.

In the North-East, besides Assam and Tripura, the BJP has its government in Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. Of the total 25 Lok Sabha seats in the eight Northeastern states, polling was held on April 19 for 15 seats — five in Assam, two each in Manipur, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh and one seat each in Nagaland, Sikkim, Mizoram and Tripura.



Apart from the four states of the Northeast where the BJP is in power, the party is a component of the ruling coalitions in Nagaland and Meghalaya. Barring Assam, the BJP and its allies did not have any seat-sharing arrangement in the 2019 elections, yet the NDA bagged 19 of the 25 seats. In the ongoing elections, they are contesting as alliance partners.

Source: [Tribune India](#)

TODAY IN HISTORY/EVENTS RECALLED: JUNE 01, 2023

A RECAP OF THE HORRIFIC INCIDENTS ON JUNE 01, 2023 AS A RESULT OF PRE-PLANNED STATE-SPONSORED ETHNIC CLEANSING POGROM AGAINST KUKI-ZO

1. Meitei radical groups have launched attack on KUKI Zo villages in the Island Sub division of Kangpokpi district. Approximately 40 houses were burned down in N Mollen Kuki Village, and additional 50 houses were set on fire in Natjang KUKI Zo village.

2. The ongoing violence in Kangvai Area, marked by gunfire, poses a significant threat to the safety and security of the local population.



DESPITE FALLING RIVER WATER LEVEL, SITUATION REMAINS CRITICAL IN ASSAM, MANIPUR: CWC

Despite a falling trend in water levels, the situation remains critical in multiple districts of Assam and Manipur as the rivers flow above danger level, according to the Central Water Commission data.

In Manipur, the Barak River at Chotabekra in Imphal East district is flowing at 28.27 meters, which is 2.07 meters above its danger level of 26.2 meters. Although the water level shows a falling trend, the severe situation persists, posing a significant risk to the surrounding areas.

In Assam, the Kushiya River at Karimganj in Karimganj district is flowing at 16.25 meters, 1.31 meters above its danger level of 14.94 meters. The river is currently on a falling trend, but the water level remains critically high, according to the data.

Similarly, the Katakhal River at Matijuri in Hailakandi district is at 20.82 meters, 0.55 meters above its danger level of 20.27 meters. The steady trend indicates that the river is maintaining its high level, exacerbating the flood risk in the area.

In Cachar district, the Barak River is being monitored at multiple points.

At Annapurna Ghat, the river is flowing at 21.27 meters, 1.44 meters above its danger level of 19.83 meters, with a falling trend. At Fulertal, it is at 25.08 meters, 1.20 meters above its danger level of 23.88 meters, also showing a falling trend.

At Badarpur Ghat in Karimganj district, the Barak River is at 18.01 meters, 1.16 meters above its danger level of 16.85 meters, with a falling trend. Despite the decrease in water levels, the severe situation continues.



The flood situation continues to be grim at many places in the northeast with a few lakh people affected following incessant rainfall in the aftermath of Cyclone Remal, officials said.

At least six people died in the flood, rain and storms in Assam since May 28, they said.

The Haflong-Silchar Road has been completely cut off after a stretch was washed away near Harangajao while the Haflong-Harangajao route has been blocked by multiple landslides.

Train services, cancelled or short-terminated due to landslides along the Haflong-Badarpur rail route are yet to be restored, the officials said.

The southwest monsoon has entered Assam and other parts of the northeast region ahead of its scheduled time due to the effect of Cyclone Remal, according to the Indian Meteorological Department.

Source: [Deccan Herald](#)

‘ALL EYES ON RAFAH’ BUT ‘NO EYES ON MANIPUR’? NETIZENS RAP SELECTIVE OUTRAGE— ALL ABOUT THE NEW SOCIAL MEDIA TREND

Internet was flooded with ‘All eyes on Rafah’ posts after Israel attacked Rafah, a southern city in war-torn Gaza, last week. Several Hollywood and Bollywood celebrities and eminent personalities joined the social media trend to criticise the Benjamin Netanyahu-led Israeli government for its actions. However, another trend, “But no eyes on Manipur”, is now gaining popularity among Indian social media users to highlight the massive outcry of Indian celebrities on the international issue in contrast to their deafening silence on Manipur violence.

The phrase has been used to signify how people are vocal about international issues and human rights violations on foreign lands but prefer to stay mum on internal cases of violence like the Manipur conflict.

What is ‘But no eyes on Manipur’?

Several social media users are using hashtags related to ‘But no eyes on Manipur’, or sharing the template on their social media accounts to draw attention towards the massive ethnic clashes in Manipur last year.

About Manipur conflict

Nearly a year ago, the long-standing tensions between the Meitei and Kuki communities in Manipur transcended into massive violence across the state. The ethnic violence in Manipur took nearly 52 lives in three days in May last year. Sadly, the violence didn’t stop there and continued for months. The death toll increased to 226 in a year. However, violence in Manipur continued to remain the least-talked-about topic, even after a video of a Kuki woman paraded naked by a group of men went viral in July.

The incident drew severe backlash and even comments from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It also led to the intervention of the Supreme Court in the matter. On July 20, an SC bench led by Chief Justice of India DY



Chandrachud instructed the government to act on the matter.

In the last one year, more than 1,500 people have been injured, and around 60,000 people have been displaced from Manipur. Moreover, nearly 13,247 structures have been destroyed, according to the Indian Express.

What led to the beginning of ‘All eyes on’ trend? The ‘all eyes on’ trend began after Israel pounded Rafah, home to most of the refugees who sought shelter from Israel attacks in the rest of Gaza. According to Iran’s Embassy in India, ‘All eyes on Rafah’ is a term used for the “ongoing genocide in Rafah, Gaza, with over 1.4 million Palestinians seeking shelter”.

Soon after Israel’s attack on Rafah on Sunday, May 26, social media hashtags like “#AllEyesOnRafah” and “#RafahOnFire” began trending on X, Instagram, and Facebook. The attack killed around 45 civilians and injured hundreds of people.

THE BUZZ SOCIAL MEDIA



Tribal Army
@TribalArmy

All Eyes on Kuki-Zo Martyrs.
#AllEyeOnManipur



12:58 pm · 01 Jun 24 · 10.6K Views



Sushant Singh
@SushantSin

Follow

The states Modi didn't visit during the election campaign of 206 rallies and roadshows: MANIPUR of course. But also Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

And if I am not mistaken, he also gave a miss to Ladakh and Kashmir.

Despite brisk campaign, PM gives strife-hit Manipur a miss

ANIMESH SINGH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 31

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9:22 am · 01 Jun 24 · 3,431 Views



A man with outward courage dares to die;
a man with inner courage dares to live.

— Lao Tzu





OPINION

Everything Seems to be Fair in War: The Misconceptions that Destroyed the Fabric of Manipur as a Political Entity

T. Anthony Shongthu

As a young boy who grew up mostly in Imphal, I have high regards for the Meiteis for various reasons particularly when it comes to respect for elders. Compared to the tribals whom they often considered as “unclean” and were not even allowed to enter their house in olden days, they are far ahead in civility. In fact the Meiteis had the name “Hao” to mean the hill people. Oftentimes, the word “Thu” was added to make it “Haothu” which is extremely derogatory [Hao-Hill People; Thu-Women Private Part]. In a slightly less vulgar term, “Haomacha” [Hao-Hill People; Macha-Children] is also often used but carries the same derogatory tone.

Similarly, the Meiteis in the heart of the Valley call the Meiteis who are living in the outskirts (rural areas) as “Lawai”/“Louwai”, literally meaning those who rented lands (fields) from landowners for cultivation [Lou-field, Wai-rent]. Even within the rural areas, there is a division based on the distance from Imphal. Those who are nearer to Imphal consider Meiteis living deep inside the rural areas or hills as people living beyond the hills, meaning they are far more “Lawai” than them. This implies the existence of upper lower class within the “Lawai” communities as well.

The worst case was the “Lois” many of whom have been recognised as “Scheduled Caste” (SC). These Loi

communities such as those from Sekmai, Phayeng, Andro, Sugnu, Kakching, etc. speak Meitei-Lon (Manipuri) but with a slight accent. For the Royal families within the Meitei community, the Lois were outcaste for allegedly committing serious crimes against the state. They were treated as lowly as those from the hills. However, the reality was that, these communities were historically the original settlers of Imphal valley who refused to be subjects of the Maharaja. Since they were adamant on being subjected to the authority of the Kings, they were considered unclean, and were barred from entering the mainstream society. Anyway, if they had accepted the authority of the Kings and their pseudo-priestly class from Bengal and Assam, who were mostly later migrants into what they fondly called Kangleipak, they would have been engaged as manual labourers, manual scavengers, and slaves. Either way, their status would have been the same as that of the lowest caste in the Hinduised Meitei society.

Therefore, the Lois preferred to be free as unclean than being enslaved for generations. This attitude of the Lois, whom the mainstream Meiteis considered as unclean and outcaste, have few

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things in common with the hill people. First, they love to be free as much as the hill people does. Second, they eat all shorts of meat including beef, pork, dogs, etc. like the tribals. The Meiteis eat only fish, egg, and milk, and consider themselves as vegetarian. Third, these Loi communities have closed relationship with the neighbouring hill people. Whereas the Meiteis worship Hindu Gods along with Sanamahi, a household deity, the Lois are followers of animism as much as the tribals before they were converted to Christianity. Moreover, since they worshipped in the hills and forests, most of which are owned by the tribals, the lives of the two communities were intricately related.

During tribal festivals, these Lois who are living mostly in the peripheral areas of Imphal, would come to join them in the celebrations. Similarly, the Meitei festivals such as Cheiraoba and Yaoshang are often frequented by the hill people living nearby. Every elderly man in the hills has “Mangais” or “Matao” (something like a friend but usually much deeper in meaning than the usual friendship) in the valley. Whenever the hill people go down to the Valley, they will stop by at their Mangai’s place, have food and water, and then continue their journey. There was no amang-aseng (clean and unclean) between them though they can’t even lay foot on the doorstep of a Meitei house in Imphal.

Even during my college and university days some two decades ago, my Loi (SC) friends would often tell us that, “We (SC and ST) are the same. We belong to the Meitei community but we are very different from the general Meiteis.” When the general Meiteis had strong reservations being in the midst of the tribals, there was no such hesitation from the “Lois” and “Lawais”. However, since they usually speak in the same tone as the general Meiteis, we were not aware of what they truly meant. In fact, it was not easy for young students like me to differentiate between the Lois from the Meiteis since they are more or less the same in almost every aspect. They used the unique tone they have only when they speak among the Lois themselves. This was

mainly to avoid being identified as a lowly caste ‘Loi’.

Such discrimination based on one’s place of settlement has gradually changed since Manipur chose to be a state under the newly formed Indian democratic nation-state system. Many scholars and activists, particularly those who claimed themselves to be the champions of extreme right-wing Meitei Sanamahi revivalism often argued that such discrimination began only with the coming of Vaishnavite Hinduism in the 17th-18th centuries. Keeping aside the arguments for and against of how it began, it is an established fact that the discrimination had been practiced for centuries and hence the psyche of the Meiteis have already been highly infected with the disease.

When the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), the first major revolutionary group in the Valley, was formed in the 1960s, its main objective was to establish an independent Manipur state. To make it appear more inclusive, a Kuki and a Naga (Kabui) were inducted into the cabinet. It is interesting to note that though UNLF was formed mainly by the higher royal caste, such as the Rajkumars, the inclusion of tribals in its first cabinet showed that the Meitei society has begun to see social change. The formation of Revolutionary People’s Front/ People’s Liberation Army (RPF/PLA), a factional group of UNLF, was another Valley Based Insurgent Group (VBIG) who refused to identify itself with the Meiteis alone, at least theoretically.

It may be noted here that the Tangkhuls, the largest Naga tribe in Manipur, and the Naga tribes of Senapati, did not find a place in the first cabinet of UNLF simply because the Naga tribes in the Northern and Northeastern hills of Manipur have already joined the Naga National Council (NNC) led by AZ Phizo in the 1950s. Moreover, the Tangkhuls

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have been at the forefront of Naga movement at least since the 1960s, and till about a decade ago, the claim that the Tangkhuls and Meiteis are blood brothers has always been refuted. It is only in the recent times that the same people who have been fiercely opposing the Meiteis' narrative are happily endorsing the same. In fact, the Meitei Chief Minister Mr. N. Biren Singh had formally declared that the Tangkhuls and Meiteis are blood brothers! A few days later, Tangkhul bodies refuted the claim, but the damage was already done. Whether one likes it or not, it will be difficult to undo a formal declaration made by a head of state.

Politics is such a dirty game that your fierce enemy today can be your ally tomorrow. It is also ironic that the Meiteis who migrated to the present state of Manipur from different directions at different points in time are now happy to claim a particular tribe as their own brother. It might be true that some sections of the Meiteis and some clans of the Tangkhuls share the same ethnic origin story, but to generalize such oral history to the whole Meitei or Tangkhul community was simply a fool's act at its best.

In a similar case, the Maos and Angamis are considered to be among the closest Naga tribes, but their relationship has been wounded too deep to be healed in a short while. It will take decades to reconcile the two. And what is interesting is, the Mao Nagas who have been at the forefront of Naga National movement even before the Tangkhuls jump in to hijack in their favour are having a bonhomie with the Meiteis in the last one decade. The only Naga tribe whose options are never two ways are the Kabuis since many of them settled in the valley.

Coming back to our discussion, the post-colonial period have seen a sea-change not only in Manipur but around the world. The improvement in transport and communication system, education, and science and technology have brought a huge leap forward. Distance, which was the main criteria to judge a person/

community in Manipur, have become obsolete. Especially in the age of internet and smartphone, distinction based on one's place of residence no longer holds water. Now, the younger generation started claiming on social media platforms that being "Lawai" is not defined by distance, but the heart [character] of the person. To them, a person may be born and brought up in Imphal but s/he can still be "Lawai" if s/he is uncivilized and mannerless. Though this sounds convincing, it was never the case in the past.

Despite all these historical wrongs done in the past, I considered the Meiteis to be a civilized community as far as my experience with some of them is concerned. They were caring, sympathetic and concerned for the hill people. This genuine feeling of respect changed a little after I encountered some of the intellectuals. But my conscience kept telling me that even though there are intellectuals and educated elites who are hell bent on discriminating the tribals, the Meitei society as whole are much more civilized and respectful than those few opportunists indoctrinated by feeling of hatred towards the hill people.

But, since the 3rd of May 2023, the day the state-sponsored ethnic cleansing pogrom began, I started to feel that not all the Meiteis are good at heart. Maybe they didn't show to the world but deep inside they might have been slowly accumulating the feeling of hatred towards us.

During the initial days of the conflict, the so-called "Lawai Machas" and "Lois" (outcaste) communities, who have been traditionally in good terms with the hill people nearby, have assured the neighbouring Kuki villages that they will not allow attacks on them. On many occasions, they were able to persuade the marauding Meitei mob led by Arambai Tenggol cadres and Manipur Police

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Commando personnel from attacking them. But as the ethnic turmoil continued, these communities could no longer protect their age-old neighbours with whom they shared both good and bad times.

In the end, the Arambai Tenggol and other radicalised groups overpowered them, mostly out of fear for their life, to join hands with the general Meiteis in attacking, destroying Kuki villages and murdering innocent civilians. In retaliation, when the Kukis did the same on a few occasions, it was the same community who bore the brunt of most of the attacks from the hills. Though everything was planned and designed in Imphal, the victims were mostly from the peripheral areas who have been culturally and economically closer to each other than their own people.

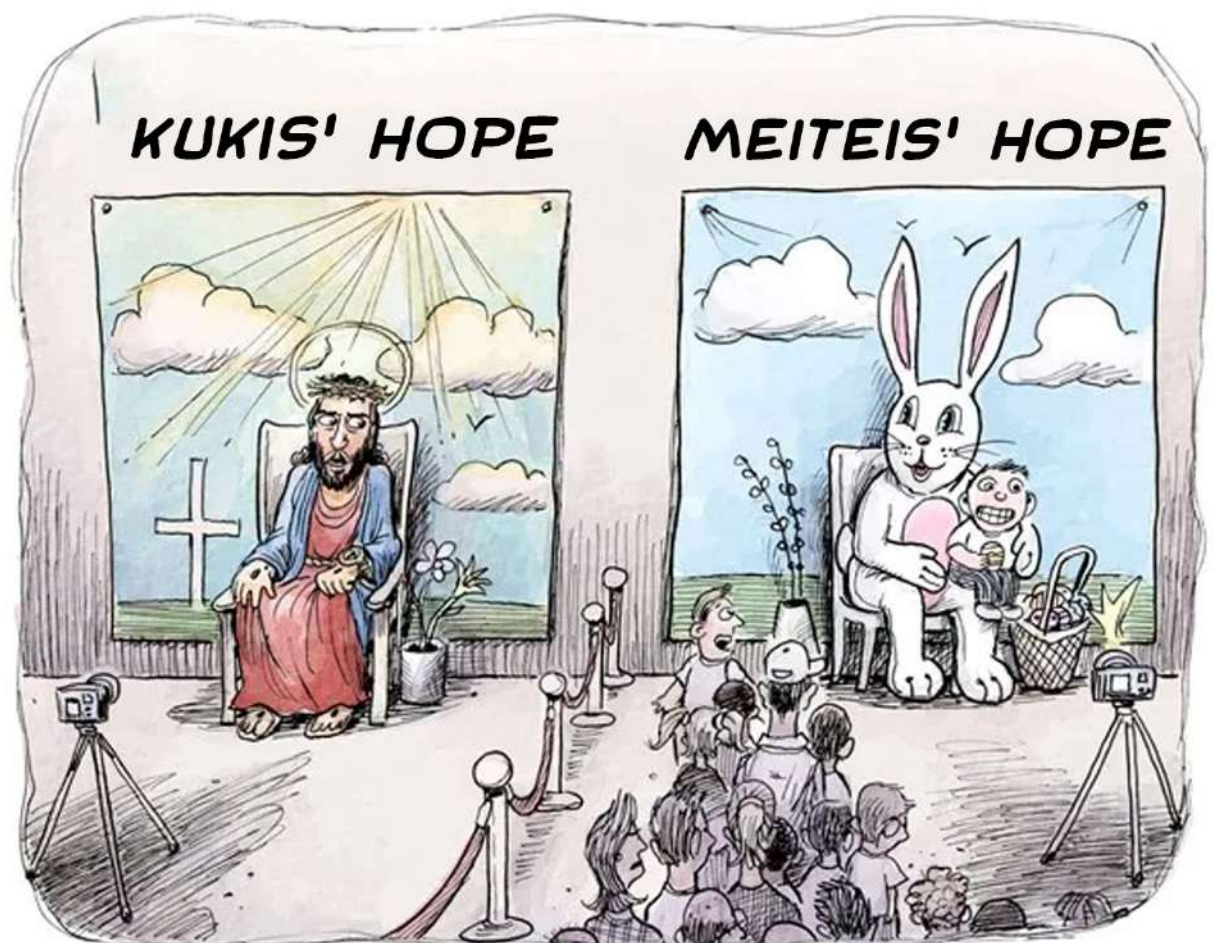
Now that social media posts and comments are filled

with anti-Kuki rhetoric, I can only wonder how a community who have been with them through thick and thin, particularly whenever the demand for greater Nagalim or integration of all Naga inhabited areas with Nagaland, became the most hated community overnight. I also began to question myself whether my intuition was right in believing the Meiteis to be a civilized community.

However, I am still hopeful that not all the Meiteis are evil. I am also convinced that unless the most educated class were the architects of the present ethnic violence, thousands of Meitei mob wouldn't be able to change their hearts overnight, and the more than fifteen lakhs Meitei populace would never turn their anger against a particular community simply for being weak and disunited at that moment.



THE POLARITY OF HOPES





TO WHOM SHALL WE TELL OUR SAD STORIES?

- Hillsman J. Tearsworth

Police handed over our women to be raped!
State forces led the way to burn our villages!
The government seized our lands for the forest,
The world is silent over our annihilation!

We so wished the mountains had ears!
We so wished we could whisper to the grasses!
The eagles in the air watched our mourning!
The land refused to swallow our dead.

Sons and fathers fight on the frontline;
Daughters and mothers cared for the dying,
Children cry in pangs of hunger!
No one is at home to hear their cries!

Rivers are too busy to sing their own songs,
Winds heedlessly blow over the beautiful meadows,
The sun hides behind the dark clouds,
Even the silver moon betrays us against her will.

We are as lonely as a man without love,
No one is there to hold our hands in grief,
To whom shall we tell our sad stories?
Who will protect us from the shadow of death?

