

Thingkho *Le* Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



AWAITING JUSTICE



LALDINTHANGA @ LALJEM (35 YEARS)

S/O ZAMTINMANG

ADDRESS: HAOKHONGCHING, SADAR HILLS

DATE OF DEATH: 4TH MAY, 2023

PLACE OF DEATH: IMPHAL

CAUSE OF DEATH: BURNT ALIVE



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.

REMEMBRANCE DAY ECHOES CALL TO EXPEDITE LONG-PENDING POLITICAL SOLUTION FOR KUKI-ZO

The Kuki community across Sadar Hills commemorated “Remembrance Day” on June 3 in Sadar Hills Kangpokpi District to mark the May 3 incident of the alleged mass genocide pogrom against the Kuki community.

Unlike previous commemorations, Remembrance Day was observed at Martyrs’ Cemetery Phaijang, Sadar Hills by leaders of the Committee on Tribal Unity Sadar Hills Kangpokpi District and a few other prominent Kuki civil body leaders, while the rest commemorated the day in their respective villages, churches, and areas.

A 12-hour total shutdown was imposed across the entire Sadar Hills Kangpokpi District by the Committee on Tribal Unity Sadar Hills Kangpokpi District, halting vehicular movement along National Highway 2 from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. All government and private institutions, including educational institutions and business establishments in the district remained closed for the day.

At 6:00 PM, a candlelight vigil was held at Martyrs’ Cemetery Phaijang under the aegis of the Committee on Tribal Unity Sadar Hills Kangpokpi District, where a mass prayer for the Kuki martyrs and their bereaved families was also conducted.

Speaking on the sidelines of the solemn event, CoTU’s Media Cell Coordinator, Ng. Lun Kipgen, said that the Committee is once again constrained to observe ‘Remembrance Day’ today, to mark the May 3rd incident of the mass genocide program against the Kuki community by the radicalized majoritarian Meitei-led state administration.

He recalled that the Kuki populace in the entire region commemorated the completion of one year since the infamous May 3rd incident last month, which served



as a stark reminder to the nation and the world of the willful disrobing of the basic rights and dignity of the minority Tribals in the country for political exigencies.

“This tantamount to the desecration of the Constitution of India, by the biased administration in the State of Manipur”, he asserted.

He then stated that with the mandate of the Kuki community, the Committee urged the Central Government to immediately expedite the long-pending political solution for the Kuki, wherein the Suspension of Operation Groups are negotiating with the Government of India, aiming for long-term peace and stability in the entire northeastern region of the country.

COUNTDOWN BEGINS: LOK SABHA ELECTION VOTE COUNTING AND MANIPUR PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY

The stage is set for the vote counting in the 18th Lok Sabha Election, which unfolded over seven phases across 543 parliamentary constituencies nationwide. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has announced that counting will kick off at 8 am tomorrow, June 4.

In Manipur, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) has confirmed that all arrangements are in place for the vote counting, also beginning at 8 am. The Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) has set up a Digibox at its office to display real-time counting results, ensuring transparency and immediate updates for the public and media.

For the two parliamentary constituencies (PCs) in Manipur, elections were held in the first and second phases. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) didn't nominate a candidate in the Outer Manipur constituency, instead endorsing the Naga People's Front (NPF) candidate Timothy Zimik. In the Inner Manipur constituency, the BJP fielded the incumbent Education Minister, Th. Basanta Kumar. The Indian National Congress (INC) put forth candidates in both constituencies: Dr. Bimol Akoijam for Inner Manipur and Alfred K. Arthur for Outer Manipur. In total, six candidates are contesting in the Inner Manipur PC, while four candidates are vying for the Outer Manipur PC.

The electoral process commenced on April 19 with the first phase encompassing 102 parliamentary constituencies, with a voter turnout of 66.14%. The second phase occurred on April 26 across 88 constituencies, recording a turnout of 66.71%. The third phase, on May 7 in 93 constituencies, saw a turnout of 65.68%. The fourth phase was conducted on May 13



across 96 constituencies, with a turnout of 69.16%. The fifth, sixth, and seventh phases unfolded on May 20, May 25, and June 1, respectively.

A total of 8,360 candidates are competing for seats in this significant election. The counting process will be closely monitored, with heightened security measures in place to ensure the integrity and smooth operation of the proceedings. The results will shape the political landscape of the nation, holding implications for both national and state-level governance.

The public, along with political parties and candidates, eagerly anticipate the outcome, marking the culmination of a significant electoral process in the world's largest democracy.

TALKS WILL CONTINUE WITH NEW GOVERNMENT: KNO SPOKESPERSON, DR SEILEN HAOKIP

Dr. Seilen Haokip, the Spokesperson of Kuki National Organization (KNO), one of the conglomerates of Kuki UG groups under suspension of operations agreement with the government of India, said that the Kuki insurgent groups will continue political dialogue with the centre government despite the fervent opposition from the Manipur state government. He also enumerates that the KNO is in political dialogue with government of India for constitutional settlement for Union Territories under Article 239A.

In a discussion with 'The Pipy Show,' Dr. Seilen said they are just demanding their constitutional rights, elaborating that the KNO is not a secessionist group. He said: "The KNO and UPF entered into SoO with the Union government in 2005 without the involvement of state government. However, in 2008, the agreement was made Tripartite with the involvement of state government. During these years, there were forces who are behind our talks who do not want our engagement in political dialogue and they have succeeded for eight years. After the coming of BJP government at the centre in 2014 and after two years in 2016, our first political dialogue with the government of India could be held and the Centre has appointed Interlocutor to spearhead the talks.

"In the first place, the talk was for the formation of Territorial Council under Article 371C. However, as the majority Meitei community does not want to live anymore with us, the SoO groups too want total separation from Manipur and here we made our demands into a more appropriate one in the form of Union Territory and the demands have been submitted on 1st September, 2023." says Dr. Seilen.

Regarding the growing public demands for abrogation of SoO, Dr. Haokip said SoO is a hard earned platform



Suspension Of Operations Act Explained By Dr. Seilen Haokip|Union Territory Demand

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fought for long years. "Why would we lose this opportunity for settlement of our political problems? Our present sufferings are due to political malaise, so why should we lose our hard earned political platform?" he said.

He further said that SoO is in political dialogue with the Government of India for Constitutional settlement for Union Territories under Article 239A.

Following 4 June 2024, a new Government will be formed at the Centre. The political dialogue will be resumed by the new Government. It is pertinent that SoO remains compliant to ground rules and not give the state government any excuse to jeopardize the ongoing dialogue for our political settlement, he added.

"In this regard, it is of extreme importance that constituents of KNO do not engage in monetary demands or any other issues that the state government will take advantage against our political demand for Union Territory."

IMPHAL VALLEY BECOMES SAFE HEAVEN FOR MEITEI SEPARATISTS; THREE MEMBERS OF PROSCRIBED KCP APUNBA (CITY MEITEI) ARRESTED

Taking advantage of the absence of AFSPA and in the wake of the state-sponsored ethnic cleansing pogrom against the Kukis, which was long orchestrated by the incumbent regime under the narcissist N. Biren Singh, the proscribed Meitei militants have reinvented themselves their separatists' agenda against the Union of India, thereby fearlessly carrying out criminal activities in and around Imphal valley areas.

The militants in conformity with their ulterior design of secessionism have been conducting mass recruitment amid the complete breakdown of law and order in the Meiteis' Kangleipak. In cohort with the radical armed groups such as the Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun, they have ruled over the Meitei populace as per their whims and fancies.

Rampant extortions, gun culture, threats and intimidation, kidnappings, etc, all sorts of crimes have been occurring in Imphal valley every now and then. The law enforcing agency has been kept without any power, considering the large scale looting of arms and ammunition of the Police by the Meitei militant groups.

However, with the help of central security forces, some operational success could be visible sometimes.

On Monday, acting on reliable information, a combined team of Thoubal CDOs and the 33 Assam Rifles, led by OC/CDO under the supervision of Additional SP (Ops), Thoubal, successfully arrested three members of the proscribed outfit KCP Apunba (City Meitei) from the Waithou area of Thoubal district.

The arrested individuals are: Louriyam Suresh Singh (28) of Kameng Khunjao, Imphal East District, currently



residing in Khurai Thongam Leikai near Popular High School, Imphal East District; Lairenlakpam Dineshchandra Singh (30) of Thoubal Wangkhem Mamang Leikai, Thoubal District; and Konsam Anao Singh (26) of Mayang Imphal Thana Mamang Leikai, Imphal West District.

The authorities recovered three pistols, three magazines, 16 rounds of ammunition, four mobile phones, and a Mahindra Bolero car without registration from their possession. A case has been registered under relevant sections at Lilong Police Station.

In order to contain the secessionist agenda of the Meitei extremists, the Government of India must take into account the importance of re-imposition of AFSPA in the Meiteis' valley of Imphal.

THIRTEEN-MONTH OF STATE-SPONSORED ETHNIC POGROM: GOI MUST FORMALISE SEPARATE ADMINISTRATION FOR KUKIS

TODAY marks the 13th Months of 'total separation' between the majority Meitei and Kukis amid the existence of clear demarcation of territorial boundary in the form of buffer zones or the Line of Control.

From the 3rd of May, 2023, the Kukis were driven out of the Meiteis' ancestral land of Kangleipak, Imphal, after being exterminated, raped and murdered, hunted and butchered, mutilated, beheaded, burnt alive, etc. Their houses, Churches and properties burnt to ashes, looted and their locality have been already illegally occupied. The state-sponsored ethnic cleansing pogrom against the Kukis is still going on under the narcissistic leadership of N. Biren Singh. Tension of violence still high amid uneasy calm.

However, it is unfortunate that the Government of India still remains a mute spectator to the legitimate demand of "Total Separate Administration" for the Kukis. The plight of the Kukis under the majoritarian regime remains unattended.

The minority Kuki tribals have been given step-motherly treatment by the Central Government even after 13 months of the ethnic pogrom, who are demanding justice for the 285+ Martyrs, 200+ Villages burnt, 7000+ Households burnt, 360+ Churches & Synagogues burnt, and more than 50,000 innocent civilians internally displaced.

This 13-month long of State-sponsored ethnic cleansing pogrom implores the necessity of being granted the Kukis' Constitutional Rights for separate administrative set up.



At this juncture, it is to remind every right-thinking Citizen around the Globe that the Human Rights violations inflicted upon the minority Kuki community in Manipur are no less significant than those in other countries across the globe.

It is legitimate to reiterate that the demand of the Kukis for Separate Administration within the ambit of the Union of India still stands in order to ensure "justice" for the loss and tragedies of the minority Kuki Tribals Manipur. The Centre must acknowledge de-facto separation of the Kukis from the Meiteis and subsequently grant the demand for a permanent political solution for the Kukis so that the Meiteis' and Kukis could co-exist as good neighbours.

**FEATURED ARTICLE****How Long-Decayed Insurgent Groups are Growing Across Northeast as Manipur Conflict Drags On****PRAVEEN SWAMI**

Late one lovely London autumn afternoon at a five-star hotel in the Soho Entertainment District, a man in a black cape and a fur collar proclaimed the independence of his homeland. Though the cloak looked a bit like one of those vampire costumes you can rent on Amazon, the country in question was not Transylvania.

Narengbam Samarjit, who had appointed himself the external affairs minister of the government-in-exile of Manipur, announced he would be speaking to Queen Elizabeth II and was willing to have a dialogue with the President of India about his country's freedom. 'Our history is going to be destroyed, our culture is going to be extinct,' he said.

The press conference, perhaps, unsurprisingly was covered in a bit more detail in the Pakistani press than in India. Like so many of these stories do, it hasn't ended well. Samarjit is now being prosecuted for running an alleged ponzi scheme and by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on secessionism charges. He's out on bail but a long court trial lies ahead, not freedom.

Thank you for watching this episode of ThePrint Explorer where each week we take a close-up look at issues involving India's domestic and international security. This week, those two collide.

Last week, the NIA filed charges against five men from Manipur in a Guwahati court, accusing what it called the China-Myanmar module of the Isak-Muivah faction of

the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) of supporting cadres of two banned Manipuri insurgent groups, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Kangleipak Kanba Lup (KKL).

According to the NIA, the NSCN-IM has been helping the PLA organise arms training camps for ethnic Meiteis. The camps that have been so much in the news, as ethnic cleansing has wound down grimly in the state.

Even though India has taken its eyes off the conflict there, things have been happening and as you know Manipur has been through what is pretty much a partition, cutting apart its two largest communities, the mainly Hindu Meiteis and the mainly adivasi Kukis, a lot of whom are Christian but not all. Both continue to arm themselves and to fight. Why is the prosecution by the NIA so important though?

Well, first remember that the NSCN-IM now charged with abetting terrorism in Manipur is a signatory to the much-talked about framework agreement of 2015 which Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoped would end the Naga insurgency once and for all. The framework agreements have been slowly unravelling, partly because the NSCN-IM says it doesn't give them the kind of autonomy

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initially promised, and partly because Naga insurgents are making too much money to give it all up.

But the news is also important for three other reasons. First, remember the Manipur government has been saying for a long time that Kuki insurgents are being supported from across the border.

Now the central government is saying, however, that Meitei insurgents are also getting cross-border support from the NSCN-IM which has bases not only across Nagaland but also in Myanmar.

Second, for quite some time we've heard people argue that Meiteis being Hindu have a sense of affinity with India. But here we're seeing that they're associated with anti-India insurgents and we're going to discover that the anti-India secessionist frame of thinking is, in fact, quite old and entrenched. We are used to seeing insurgencies in black and white terms — who is pro-India, who is anti-India.

But in India I keep reminding friends — insurgents are often on two sides at the same time and sometimes on three, four, and five sides. That's because identity and ethnicity are very, very complicated things; not black and white one side or the other.

The ethnic stage

To understand the context of what's happening in Manipur we need to go back to the colonial era. Traders from the plains called 'Mayang' by local people began business in Imphal in the 19th century in an area called the British reserve area. The British treated these traders from the plains as foreigners, and some restrictions were placed on their operations. To stay in Manipur for more than a week for example, they had to pay a tax of Rs 5 a year and get official permission.

Following the integration of Manipur into the Union of India in 1949, both the Socialist Party and the Congress called for an end to these restrictions. After all, the argument went perfectly logically: Indians from other states couldn't be called foreigners in their own country.

Himmat Singh, the chief commissioner of Manipur, said in October 1950 that I quote, 'the people of both

the hills and plains should treat themselves as people of India'. Even though national integrations are a fantastic principle, practice was problematic. Traders from outside the state for example came to dominate the rice trade and that meant hardship for local residents, both in terms of prices and because they lost control of what had been a small-scale local activity.

The traders from outside moreover were well-integrated with the key bureaucratic officers who were not Manipuri, and local backlash soon began to develop. The Indian government wasn't blind to the problem; it put restrictions for example on exporting rice out of Manipur.

Traders weren't the only issue. Like in other remote parts of India, Manipur saw little industrialisation and in the first years after Independence, it became pretty clear that these milk and honey dreams weren't going to work out. For many Manipuris, all of this discontent was tied to a broader question of identity.

In the 18th century, the Manipuri monarchy had tried to reconstruct society around the idiom of Sanskritised Hinduism. Many of the names of Meitei clans were to change to Hindu names. Ningthouja was changed to the Hindu name, the Shandilya gotra. Likewise Angom was changed to Koshika; the Imphal river was changed to Vidya Nadi; the Iril to the Ira Nadi.

Lots of traditional festivals were given wider pan-Hindu connotations. For example, an archery festival was converted into a kirtan of Lord Ram. For the monarchs, these cultural changes made sense because they were trying to distinguish themselves sharply from the culture in Myanmar, which had been the traditional adversary of the Manipuri kings.

But after Independence, there was a backlash against this process of Hinduisation with some seeing it as a tool to integrate them with the peoples of the plains like the Assamese and, more

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importantly, the Bengalis.

So from the 1930s, you have a number of revivalist movements trying to distance Manipuri identity from pan-Indian or plains identity, and Bisheshwar Singh — we'll see the founder leader of the PLA — said that the adoption of Hinduism was the only reason for the extinction of the separate and distinctive cultural identity of the people of Manipur. He was one of those participants in those early cultural separatist movements.

The Meitei State Committee

From 1967 several former communists formed themselves into the Meitei State Committee, the first of these political separatist movements. There were close ties between the Naga insurgents and the Meitei radicals. Today's ties between the NSCN-IM and Meitei insurgents were forged by 1967 when the Meitei State Committee formed.

According to intelligence veterans, some Meitei youth from Chandrakhong and Ukhongshang villages were already serving with Naga insurgents and they were sent by the Naga leadership to open communication with these new Meitei radicals.

The earliest discussions involved W. Tomba Singh, who was a close associate of Hijam Irabot. Irabot had led an armed movement in 1948-1951 and was a leader of the Communist Party. Tomba Singh believed that it was important that there was a political movement involving both the hills and valley people and only through unity could they succeed.

Therefore, he held meetings in 1966 with the Naga leadership and finally secured some arms and ammunition. The early operations of the Meitei State Community basically consisted of low-grade sabotage. They tried to blow up a bridge for example in 1968, and they were completely smashed by police operations by 1972.

The United National Liberation Front

Hence, the Meitei State Committee didn't amount to much in military terms but what wasn't smashed was the idea of Meitei nationalism and of armed struggle,

and those were to become quite important in the years to come.

Indramani Singh and a young Yangmaso Shaiza had begun their careers demanding the removal of foreigners from Manipur; you'll recall that movement in the 1950s. There's some haziness around exactly when they decided to form an armed resistance group but the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) was formed in 1964 by Kalalung Kamei and Thankhopao Singsit.

The organisation dedicated itself to creating 'a distinctive national identity and to create a free and wholesome human existence for the people of Manipur.' What did this mean?

A lot of the literature of the UNLF or UNLF talks about the decadence of Manipuri society, the meaningless existence of the people, particularly the youth, floating in a vacuum. It argues that this is part of a plot created by the Indian state to erode and destroy the Manipuri nation.

Early in its existence, UNLF leaders are said to have met Laldenga, the leader of the powerful insurgency in Mizoram, and gone to train with the Mizo insurgents. To UNLF leaders early on, it seemed that foreign powers would be important just as they had been for other insurgencies in the Northeast. Through a Cambodian student who studied in Delhi in the meantime, they tried to contact the Chinese embassy and got nowhere.

Then Oinam Sudhir Kumar Singh, another leader in the organisation, was tasked with getting help from East Pakistan from the Pakistani government. The Pakistan government was for a variety of reasons unwilling to bite though and they got no support.

Following a split in the party, Sudhir Kumar Singh set up a separate organisation called the Revolutionary Government of Manipur. It is said that before the establishment of his organisation, he tried to bring several other smaller organisations under his umbrella and set up a united government

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of all the Southeast Asian hill people into a federal republic.

UNLF members, meanwhile, focused on building a party organisation. Every member of the organisation contributed 10 paisa weekly to the party funds and also engaged in a certain amount of criminal activity.

Thus on the 15th of May 1969, volunteers of the revolutionary movement robbed Rs 10,000 from two employees of the Imphal College. This money was meant for distribution, ironically to students from low-income families. On the 18th of February 1969, there was looting from the Imphal post office — Rs 5,160 — and a first information report record was stolen. The shop of someone called Murli Agarwal was looted.

The Revolutionary Government of Manipur was finally founded at Sylhet in what was then East Pakistan in 1968. The first batch of seven members left Imphal for Pakistan in 1969. All college students who had participated in those Imphal robberies, 200 cadres are said to have followed them. Pakistani authorities were a bit fearful because tensions with India were already starting to build up; this might become a pretext for some kind of border conflict and all the first volunteers who arrived were kept in Maulavi Bazar jail.

The arrested Manipuri youth were pushed back to India by the East Pakistan Rifles, and Sudhir Kumar Singh himself was also locked up. But when Sudhir Kumar kept trying despite these reverses, he went to Dhaka, the capital of East Pakistan then, where he successfully met high-ranking military officers of the Pakistan Army and eventually some numbers of youth began to be given arms training at the Barlekha Commando Training Center in Sylhet.

This training went on for two years, which was until the 1971 war broke out. Pakistan was crushed. East Pakistan became Bangladesh. The would-be Manipuri revolutionaries, separatists fled back to India, but several were killed in encounters with the army, others were arrested and that was the end of this phase of the Meitei separatist movement.

The People's Liberation Army

Like I said though, impulses aren't stamped out by defeats. The PLA was founded many years after the Bangladesh conflict in 1978 at Nongpok Sekmai. This time instead of nationalism, it founded its existence on the principles of Marxism.

This was a departure from what we'd seen earlier. At the same time, the main political objective at the organisation was to establish a distinctive, separate Northeastern identity. The PLA, therefore, aspired to work together with other insurgent groups in the region. In a speech given on the 25th of September 1979, Bisheswar Singh said that the aim of his organisation was to carry out two important objectives.

The first was to organise a revolutionary front at a group level and the second, of course, to fight within Manipur itself. Eventually, the PLA hoped to stage a Nanchang Uprising.

He hoped that this would be the second PLA uprising, which presumably would lead to or be part of some kind of all India communist uprising. In 1976, Bisheswar Singh left Manipur for Lhasa along with 15 cadres of his organisation. The Chinese turned out to be willing to train these cadres, but not to provide material support. Instead, they wanted them to organise a firm political base for a revolutionary uprising before starting an armed struggle.

The PLA really wanted to avoid an ethnic nationalist trap and saw armed struggle as a means of becoming full participants in a wider northeast insurgent struggle. In 1978, there are records of them shooting an officer of the Manipur Rifles, snatching his pistol. There were other attacks that July — police personnel were also shot dead, and two spies of the Manipur Rifles were killed at Wangjing. The Sten gun and some ammunition was snatched away.

The PLA also ruthlessly acted against its enemies.

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O. Sudhirkumar Singh was assassinated by the PLA in 1979 by Surjaboro, one of those Lhasa-trained PLA operatives.

Among the most famous actions these Lhasa-trained PLA insurgents were able to carry out was the rescue in July 1978 of Thongam Kabichandra Singh who had been held in jail. In 1979, when he was brought to a session court in Imphal, an attack squad succeeded in rescuing him, killing a policeman and four others.

The impression the PLA made in the minds of people was that this was a serious determined group, far more serious and successful than its predecessors. In July 1981 though, Bisheshwar Singh was arrested and the PLA began to fall apart, disintegrating into armed actions, looting, extortion rather than being an organised, disciplined Marxist force.

In 2001, large groups of Meiteis marched on the legislative assembly building and burnt it down. That is to my knowledge, the only time a legislative assembly building has been destroyed in any mass action of this kind. And to understand how things reach this peak, you have to see that Manipur had remained mired in this kind of low-grade insurgency from the time from the killing of Bisheshwar Singh on. PLA militants had ambushed and killed Vandana Malik, an IPS officer, in 1989.

It tied itself up with the Revolutionary People's Front which sought secession and established a government in exile in Bangladesh's Sylhet district. From these bases, it was able to operate very effectively, get its cadres out of harm's way in the Indian Army operations. It was able to flit across the border and back again and also tie up at the peak.

The PLA is said to have had several hundred operatives training along with other Meitei insurgency groups like People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) and Kangleipak Communist Party. Among a part of its big draw as earlier nationalist organisations would have been, was its campaign for total prohibition of alcohol and dramatic action like the gunning down of alleged rapists and campaign against drug peddlers in Imphal — all of which were seen as vices corrupting

the Manipuri society.

Another of the key sort of elements of these Meitei insurgent groups was the suppression of the Bengali script, which they believed was an assault on the Meitei script. And the most important of all the actions was the revival of the Sanamahi religion, the pre-Sanskritised Hinduism of Manipur, which was meant to consolidate the identity of Manipur state.

The problem with this armed assertion of Meitei identity was that other groups also began arming themselves. For example, more than 90 people, including women and children, were feared to have been killed in clashes between the Meitei and the Pangals or the Manipuri Muslims in Thoubal and Imphal districts. That led to the Pangals establishing links in Bangladesh and with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence to secure weapons of their own.

Meanwhile, there were clashes in NSCN-IM strongholds in Ukhrul, Senapati, Tamenglong and Chandel districts. Eventually, there were clashes between Kukis in the hill districts of Manipur and between the Nagas, which again led to a problem of ethnic cleansing and warfare in 1992.

These bitter clashes left hundreds dead, 2,000 houses were burnt and hundreds of villages were affected. And of course, the Kuki community also militarised in the wake of these clashes and began siding with the Indian state against the NSCN-IM and their Meitei allies. Thus, the entire state's polity came to be polarised on ethnic lines.

In addition to Meiteis, Kuki and Naga rebel groups, several other tribes like the Paite, the Vaipheis and the Hmars also launched their own insurgent groups in addition to the Pangals. These internecine conflicts drove a deterioration of violence in all of Manipur to a point where virtually every tribe was militarised and set up against the other.

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Where do we now stand? What we are witnessing is a meltdown of the fragile steps towards peace that have been taken over the last 10 years. One of the assumptions of the framework agreement between the NSCN-IM and the Government of India was that a degree of autonomy would be traded in return for bringing armed groups on board into the political process.

Now, many of these armed groups had already been locked in ceasefire deals, which meant they had renounced violence. Now, they were to be brought into the political process and somehow eventually brought into government.

The problem is that the terms on which peacemaking is possible aren't agreed on by all the other actors. For example, the peace deal between the NSCN-IM and the Government of India had been resisted by the NSCN-Khaplang. That is the faction of the NSCN which has the most influence in Manipur, rather than in Nagaland itself. And the Government of India isn't willing to extend or create a separate Naga state or a Naga sub-federal unit out of Manipur for fear of an ethnic backlash from the Meiteis.

In 2016, if you recall following the killing of 18 soldiers in an ambush, India had struck across the Myanmar border in an effort to punish the NSCN-Khaplang even though that operation was much hyped.

Sadly, experts like Bibhu Prasad Routray have written that the strike didn't actually succeed in inflicting a lot of damage on the NSCN-Khaplang's military potential. The leader of the group, Niki Sumi, had apparently retreated deeper into Myanmar long before the raids and though further raids were carried out in 2016 targeting both the PLA and the NSCN-Khaplang, they proved pretty ineffectual.

What's the takeaway we need to learn from all this? The first is that time isn't infinite. One of the assumptions of the entire peace process and peacemaking in the Northeast was that Myanmar and its military would be allies and partners in peacemaking, that they would bring enough pressure on armed groups on the other side of the border to make sure that they had an

incentive to join the peace process and to lay down arms.

What we've seen over recent months though is that a variety of insurgents have become increasingly more successful in Myanmar, uniting to take on the military junta now ruling the country. Town after town has been lost by the Myanmar military, and that inevitably means more and more territories are falling under insurgent control. The insurgents fighting an existential war will seek to enrich themselves by the drug trade and will also inevitably seek the support of groups like the NSCN to strengthen their own ranks or in return for money.

The second takeaway is that the time for talks isn't infinite either. In these particular cases, we saw that India thought it had leisure to talk, to arrive at some political agreement, but the entire game has been changed by the ongoing ethnic savagery in Manipur, which has led Meitei groups to arm themselves and to revive their links with the PLA.

And the final takeaway is that when political problems aren't fixed politically like the ethnic crisis in Myanmar, the entire cauldron of resentments can explode, leading to complete anarchy and crisis.

The insurgencies of the Northeast we sometimes imagine are things of fairly recent vintage, but Indians need to acknowledge that there are deep political grievances legitimate or otherwise that underpins them. Those grievances are linked to questions of identity, to questions of the economy, and to questions of the relationship between local regional power and central power in New Delhi.

Often, they span centuries and implicate also the uneven nature of development in the hills of the Northeast and the plains of India. Addressing all these issues in a democratic manner is necessary to build peace in the Northeast. And as we've been shown so brutally and horribly in recent months, the time to do it isn't infinite.

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Chhotubhai Vasava
@Chhotu_Vasava



397 days of State Sponsored Ethnic Cleansing against the #Kukis_Zo Tribals . 41000+ displaced,185+ lives lost,360+ Churches& synagogues destroyed.

Tribals demand Justice & total separation from Meitei Aggressors!

#UnionTerritory4KukiZo

#AllEyesOnManipur



Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India and 9 others

2:24 pm · 03 Jun 24 · 2,230 Views



Rebecca Thiek
@rebeccahmar_

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“A year after ethnic violence erupted in Manipur, a charge sheet filed by the National Investigating Agency (NIA) at a Guwahati court on May 14 alleged that the NSCN (IM) has been helping the cadre of banned Meitei insurgent outfits Kanglei Yaol Kanba Lup (KYKL) and the People’s Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA) enter the country “in order to exploit the current ethnic unrest in Manipur” and “with intent to carry out violent terror attacks targeting the rival Kuki-Zo community with prohibited arms and ammunition”.”

@jeegujja

MANIPUR | ONE YEAR LATER — LEDE

Eyes wide shut: How the state turns away from Manipur’s realities

Published : May 30, 2024 11:00 IST - 16 MINS READ

GREESHMA KUTHAR

9:12 am · 03 Jun 24 · 560 Views



A man with outward courage dares to die; People never lie so much as after a hunt, during a war or before an election.

- Otto von Bismarck





AMIDST THE CHAOS CHILDHOOD IS LOST

- *Valentina Mangte*

Out of the midst, a child's cry is heard,
With a gun in his hand and a step forward,
Avenging his losses was all in his head,
He was a kid all this time until the dreadful news spread.

The pain of losing someone, never felt like this before,
I miss the time when the simplest things they adored.
Their senses are unclear, and the vision's blurred,
Now, Playing with mud in a paddy field they call it absurd.

Guileless Childhood spent beneath the tree,
Under the big blue sky, they perceived the feeling of free.
Oh! how i missed their innocent laughter,
Their faded whispering and their loud chatter.

Where did the innocent go?
The jolly smiles, where did it go?
When did the Childhood get painted in red!?
Silently, every night Drop of terrified tears they shed.

Words of hatred coming out of their mouth,
Innocence? Innocence is just a word now.
Haltingly, the purest hearts turned gray,
Ever since the day of 3rd may.