

Thingkho *Le* Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



AWAITING JUSTICE



ALBERT NGAMGOUMANG HAOKIP (28 YEARS)

S/O NGAMKHOJANG HAOKIP

ADDRESS: CHEHJANG, SUGNU, CHANDEL DISTRICT

DATE OF DEATH: 9TH JUNE, 2023

PLACE OF DEATH: THINGKANGPHAI, SUGNU, CHANDEL DISTRICT

CAUSE OF DEATH: SHOT BY MEITEI MILITANTS AT THINGKANGPHAI, SUGNU



KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 22.07.2024



191
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 DENIES ALLEGATIONS OF DRONE BOMBINGS AND CRITICIZES MEDIA REPORTS

The Kuki Inpi has issued a formal rebuttal to recent allegations claiming that Kuki-Zo Village Volunteers were involved in using drones to drop bombs during the recent violence in Manipur. The organization stresses that such accusations are baseless and urges the media and public to rely on verified evidence before disseminating information.

In a statement released today, the Kuki Inpi vehemently denied reports suggesting that their volunteers used drones for bombings, emphasizing that such technology is beyond their capabilities and contradicts their principles. According to the Kuki Inpi, their drones are strictly used for surveillance and information gathering, adhering to international laws and regulations.

The Inpi also criticized a report by Khongthang News, which alleged that Minister Letpao Haokip masterminded the drone bombing incident in Koutruk. They argue that these claims are unfounded and part of a potential conspiracy to endanger the minister. The recent announcement of a reward of Rs. 1,00,000 by the Bharat Hindu Mahasena Delhi for information on the incident was described as highly irresponsible, with the potential to incite further violence and unrest in the region.

Furthermore, the Kuki Inpi highlighted that it is the Meitei Militants who have the capability to weaponize drones, not the Kuki-Zo Village Volunteers. They pointed out that the VBIGs and Arambai Tenggols, who have been documented using military-grade drones, were responsible for previous attacks on Kuki-Zo civilians. They cited specific incidents in December 2023 and recent attacks in the Leimakhong area as evidence of the misuse of drones by these groups.

The Kuki Inpi called on all parties involved to promote peace and constructive dialogue, urging responsible behavior from media outlets and organizations.



PRESS RELEASE
Lamka, 4th September, 2024


04/KIM/PR/2022-73: The Kuki Inpi seeks to formally address and issue a rebuttal of the recent allegations and statements made by various individuals and organizations regarding the recent violence in Manipur where drones were being used to drop bombs. It is essential that any accusations or insinuations are backed by evidence and thorough investigation before being disseminated to the public by the media.

The allegation that the Kukis use drones to drop bombs is completely false and unfounded. It is important to clarify that utilizing drones to drop bombs is beyond the technological capabilities of the Kuki-Zo Village Volunteers and goes against our values and principles. The Kuki village volunteers strictly use camera drones for surveillance purposes only, to monitor and gather information. We adhere to international laws and regulations when it comes to the use of drones, and any claims suggesting otherwise are simply not true. It is crucial to verify information and refrain from spreading baseless accusations that can damage our reputation and cause unnecessary panic.

Furthermore, Khongthang News, a valley-based media outlet, has reported that Minister Letpao Haokip, is the alleged mastermind behind the drone bombing incident at Koutruk. This accusation is too far-fetched. Such wild allegations can be part of a conspiracy to put the life of the minister in danger as is evident in the reward of Rs. 1,00,000/- announced by the Bharat Hindu Mahasena Delhi. This reward announced by the organisation is highly irresponsible, as it has the potential to incite further violence and unrest. It is imperative that organizations refrain from actions that can destabilize the region and instead promote peace and constructive dialogue.

It is important to note that it is the Meitei Militants who possess the technological capabilities and prowess to weaponize drones, not the Kuki-Zo Village Volunteers. With the whole state machinery behind their back it is the VBIGs and the Arambai Tenggols who have been showing off their weaponised drones and used them to target innocent Kuki-Zo civilians of G. Songgel village in December 2023 in which a house was severely damaged and one Mangboi Baite was seriously injured. The same weaponised drones by the VBIGs and Arambai Tenggol were deployed to attack Kuki-Zo civilians in the Leimakhong area, resulting in unintended consequences in Koutruk. This is evident from the statement of Arambai Tenggol chief Kourounganba who categorically stated in his page that they have to blame the Kukis now as the bomb has exploded at Koutruk. Military grade drones have been in the possession of Arambai Tenggol as it has been brought to light through viral images depicting environmental activist Licypriya presenting these high-tech military grade drones to the leaders of Arambai Tenggol.

Therefore, the Kuki Inpi unequivocally states that the Kuki-Zo Village Volunteers use camera drones solely for surveillance purposes only and have no intention to weaponize them. Concerning the accusation levelled at Minister Letpao Haokip, Kuki Inpi would like to state that if any untoward incident happened to the life of the minister because of this concocted story, Khongthang News and Bharat Hindu Mahasena Delhi will be solely responsible.


(KAIKHOHAUH GANGTE)
General Secretary
Kuki Inpi Manipur



They also warned that if any harm were to come to Minister Haokip due to these false allegations, Khongthang News and Bharat Hindu Mahasena Delhi would bear full responsibility.

It may be mentioned that these allegations of drone-attacks by the Kukis have come about after a leaked audiotape in which chief minister N. Biren Singh had confessed to authorising state forces to use mortars on the Kukis.

MINISTER LETPAO HAOKIP, TENGNOUNPAL KUKI CSOs RESPOND TO BASELESS ALLEGATIONS AND THREATS

Minister Letpao Haokip has issued a strong denial and clarification regarding recent allegations from the Bharat Hindu Mahasena, Delhi, which have alleged his involvement in the drone-bombing incident at Koutruk, Imphal West district. The organization has also reportedly offered a reward of Rs 1 lakh for information leading to his arrest and has demanded his surrender within 10 days, according to a press release covered by Khongthang News.

In his statement, Haokip expressed disbelief at the attempts to link him to the incident, especially given that the case is under investigation by security forces and other agencies. He underscored his belief that violence is not a solution to the ongoing conflict and emphasized the need for a reasoned and impartial approach to achieve lasting peace in the region.

Haokip, who has been directly affected by the recent violence, noted that elected representatives, including himself, have faced severe personal threats and attacks. He highlighted that he, along with his colleagues, has endured considerable hardship over the past 14 months and remains committed to non-violence.

The Minister criticized the Bharat Hindu Mahasena for introducing a religious dimension to the conflict, which he stated is not supported by either the Kuki-Zo or Meitei communities. He called for scrutiny of the organization's motives and origins.

Haokip also questioned the credibility of the media outlets that have disseminated the organization's press release, accusing them of spreading misinformation. He indicated that he might seek legal action against those who have made and propagated these unfounded allegations.



Meanwhile, the joint Kuki-Zo Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) of Tengenoupal District have issued a strong condemnation against the Bharat Hindu Mahasena, Delhi, for accusing Shri Letpao Haokip, MLA for 42-Tengenoupal AC and Minister of Tribal Affairs & Hills, Horticulture & Soil Conservation, in connection with a recent drone-bombing incident at Koutruk, Imphal West.

In a joint statement, the Hill Tribal Council Moreh, Kuki Inpi Tengenoupal, Kuki Chiefs' Association, Kuki Students Organization, and Kuki Women Union & Human Rights denounced the accusations as unfounded and misleading. They criticized the Bharat Hindu Mahasena for dragging Minister Haokip into the controversy and for making allegations without substantial evidence.

The groups cited a Facebook post by Mr. Korounganba Khuman, the supreme commander of the Arambai Tenggol, as crucial evidence undermining the accusations. In the post, Khuman reportedly acknowledged that the drone involved in the bombing was actually Arambai Tenggol's and was misfired, suggesting that the attack should not be attributed to the Kuki-Zo community. The

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post, translated as “the drone bomb that I reported earlier is not true, it was actually our Arambai Tenggol’s drone that was misfired,” was seen by the CSOs as a clear admission of Arambai Tenggol’s involvement in the incident.

The bombing, which resulted in the death of a woman and injuries to several others, occurred during an ambush by Meitei militants on Kuki-Zo civilians traveling between Lamka (Churachandpur) and Kangpokpi District Sadar Hills. The CSOs assert that the accusations

made by the Bharat Hindu Mahasena are baseless and influenced by Meitei narco-terrorists seeking to sow discord.

The CSOs warned that they would pursue legal action against those perpetuating these false allegations if they are not retracted. They emphasized the need for responsible reporting and urged all parties to focus on constructive dialogue and peace building in the region.

COMMITTEE ON TRIBAL UNITY CRITICIZES MEDIA COVERAGE OF KOUTRUK INCIDENT

The Committee on Tribal Unity has expressed strong disapproval of recent media portrayals of the incident at Koutruk and the subsequent developments. The Committee is particularly critical of Mr. Arnab Goswami, a prominent news anchor, for his “one-sided” coverage, which they claim inaccurately represents the Kuki-Zo insurgent groups as being involved with foreign nations including the USA, China, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. The Committee labeled this depiction as “highly irresponsible” and “regrettable” given the sensitive nature of the situation.

In a statement issued today, the Committee conveyed their sympathy for the innocent bystanders affected by the September 1, 2024, incident at Koutruk. They emphasized the dire conditions faced by the Kuki-Zo community, which has been suffering from severe shortages of food, essential supplies, and medical resources since May. The Committee argues that under such conditions, the idea that the Kuki-Zo community could procure advanced weaponry is “foolhardy.”

Additionally, the Committee expressed frustration with the state government’s selective focus on incidents like Koutruk, contrasting this with the broader violence

involving Meitei militants and VBIGs, which has seen the use of drones, bombs, and sophisticated weapons. They suggested that this selective attention might be a strategy to overshadow a leaked audio recording implicating Chief Minister N. Biren Singh in alleged mass violence against the Kuki-Zo community.

The Committee has called on mainstream media, particularly Mr. Goswami, to ensure balanced and fair reporting. They urged news outlets to verify information from multiple sources and avoid biased narratives that could exacerbate existing tensions.



FIRST DRONE BOMB ATTACK IN MANIPUR WAS CARRIED OUT BY MEITEI MILITANTS ON DECEMBER 16, 2023

On December 16, 2023, a drone attack in the Kuki-Zo community's G. Songgel Village has highlighted significant concerns about the Manipur state government's response and the impartiality of ongoing investigations into ethnic violence.

In a statement issued today, the Sangaikot Sub-Division Chief Association stated that at approximately 11:40 a.m. December 16, 2023, Meitei militants, reportedly affiliated with the People Liberation Army (PLA) and Arambai Tenggol (AT), deployed high-tech drones to drop a two-inch mortar bomb. The explosion caused severe damage to two residential houses near a local tea hotel and injured a pedestrian from Patjang village.

The local village chiefs promptly reported the incident to the Sangaikot Police Station in Churachandpur, providing the tail of the bomb for expert analysis. Despite widespread local and social media coverage, including extensive reporting on platforms like WhatsApp number investigation by the Home Department of Manipur has been reported to date. National media outlets have also remained silent on the attack.

The lack of investigation raises questions, particularly given recent incidents involving drone bomb attacks in Meitei-dominated areas such as Koutruk and Senjam Chirang, which have prompted serious consideration by the Home Department. Critics argue that the focus on Meitei areas, while neglecting the G. Songgel Village attack, suggests potential political bias or hidden agendas within the state's governance.

Further complicating the situation is the reported return of Meitei Valley-based insurgent groups, known to have connections with Myanmar's military junta. These groups, allegedly involved in clashes against the People's Defense Forces (PDF) in Myanmar, may have brought foreign-made weapons into Manipur, intensifying the ethnic conflict.

The Kuki-Zo community perceives the drone attack as a possible ploy by these insurgent groups and their



Physical evidence of multiple Mortar shell base plate rigged with wires adapted for drone transport which the Meiteis Air-dropped at different kuki villages

allies to create chaos and distract from allegations against Manipur's Chief Minister, Shri N. Biren Singh. Singh is accused of being directly involved in the ongoing ethnic violence against the Kuki-Zo community.

In response to these concerns, the Director General of Police, Manipur, has established a High-Level Committee, led by Ashushto Kumar Sinha, IPS, under Order No. IC/11(168)/2014-PHQ dated September 2, 2024. However, there are calls for an independent investigation by external agencies such as the CBI or NIA to ensure transparency and prevent potential manipulation by state officials.

The Kuki-Zo community and other stakeholders have urged that the investigation remain free of state influence to uncover the truth behind the drone attacks and other related incidents. If not addressed with impartiality, the ongoing inquiry risks exacerbating existing tensions and complicating the path to resolution.

MODI MISERABLY FAILED IN PROTECTING PEOPLE OF MANIPUR: KHARGE

In a fresh attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the situation in Manipur, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday said the PM has miserably “failed” in protecting the people of the north eastern state.

Referring to the Manipur situation, the Congress chief in a post on X wrote, “Narendra Modi ji it has been 16 months since Manipur has been engulfed in violence, but your ‘double engine’ government has done nothing to mitigate it.”

No measure has been taken which instills confidence among the people of all the communities to ensure peace and normalcy, he alleged.

The Congress president also posed a volley of questions to the PM over the matter.

“Why has the Manipur CM made to brazen it out and has not been sacked by you? Is he not culpable in virtually paralysing the state machinery, and making obnoxious statements, now recorded in public domain? A resignation drama was enacted to shamelessly dodge that bullet,” he said.

Kharge, who is also the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha said, “Modi ji, why have you been so remorseless? Why have you not bothered to set foot in the state? It is because of your ego that people of all communities are suffering. Your government’s rank incompetency and shamelessness has not been able to start even a fundamental peace process.”

“Bombing through drone attacks have just taken place in Imphal West district and the Union Home Minister (Amit Shah) seems to be asleep at the wheel. Even your own BJP leaders and their houses are being attacked.



Was the (Manipur) Governor removed because she raised her voice against the deplorable conditions of the relief camps?,” he said.

Mentioning about relief camps, the Congress chief said, “At least 235 people have been killed. Countless injured. 67,000 people have been displaced and thousands including women and children continue to languish in relief camps with deplorable conditions. Apart from internal turmoil, now a National Security threat also looms large at the borders of Manipur.”

“Prime Minister Modi ji, you have miserably failed in protecting the people of Manipur. Manipur turmoil is another stark addition to the long list of your betrayals to the people of India,” added Kharge.

It may be mentioned that the PM has been facing criticism from the Opposition parties for not visiting the northeastern state. They have been accusing the BJP-led governments in the State as well as the Centre that it has failed to resolve the issue.

Source: [The Statesman](#)

FACT CHECK: REPUBLIC TV SHARES OLD, UNRELATED IMAGE LINKING TO MANIPUR VIOLENCE

On 3 September, Editor-in-chief of Republic TV Arnab Goswami hosted a debate talking about a drone attack in Manipur and alleged foreign involvement in the same.

What did Goswami say?: Using multiple images, Goswami said, “Ladies and gentlemen, look at these pictures. This picture is of the ITLF drone squad. They issued a press release against me today. This was recovered in the month of October 2023. A drone was seized by the Manipur police and from the memory card, this footage was recovered. This establishes that they are running a drone squad. This was submitted to the court by some parties during the hearing on Manipur violence...”

The problem with the claim: The second image used in the debate bulletin had no connection to India, let alone Manipur.

It could be traced back to 2007 and showed eight Qassam launchers.

These Qassam launchers are artillery rockets developed by the military arm of Hamas.

How did we find that out?: Using Google Lens, we conducted a reverse image search and found the same image published on Wikimedia Commons.

As per the details available, the image was captured on 6 July 2007.

Its description said, “Eight Qassam launchers, seven equipped with operating systems and one armed and ready to launch.”

Comparing visuals: Team WebQoof further compared the visual available on Republic TV to the one uploaded

REPUBLIC TV IMAGE



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Palestinian militants fire first rockets into Israel

Militants in the Gaza Strip fired five rockets into Israel on Sunday, in the first attack since the Israeli government declared a unilateral ceasefire in its Gaza offensive, the army said.

Issued on: 18/01/2009 - 08:17 Modified: 18/01/2009 - 09:11



on Wikimedia Commons and found both of them are the same.

News reports carrying the same image: A report published in France24 had used the same image while talking about “Palestinian militants” firing rockets into Israel.

We found more media reports that carried the same image, which established the fact that the image had been used as a representational one over the years.

Conclusion: It is clear that the image is old and is unrelated to Manipur or India. (Source: [The Quint](#))



FEATURED ARTICLE

**Who are Manipur’s ‘Narco Terrorists’?
The Right Question Is: Who Isn’t?**

Vishal Arora

In the ongoing ethnic violence in Manipur, the label “narco-terrorists” has been used in what seems to be a tacit attempt to justify brutal attacks on ordinary Kuki-Zo tribal people, who are solely blamed for the state’s drug problems. This label also seems designed to hinder empathy for the tribal victims, both within the state and potentially beyond. However, at least five facts about the drug trade in this northeastern state create a different narrative—a narrative that neither any of the ethnic communities nor the ruling political party leaders would be comfortable with.

Let’s first examine the nature of the conflict.

Manipur is home to three main ethnic communities: the majority Meitei people, who reside in the Imphal Valley, and the Kuki-Zo and Naga tribes, who inhabit the surrounding hills. Another group, the Pangals, which translates to “Muslims” in the Manipuri language, also lives in the valley. Though known as “Meitei” Pangals, they maintain good relationships with both the largely Christian Kuki-Zo tribals and the majority-Hindu Meitei community, the two ethnic groups that have been at war with each other since May 3, 2023.

At least 67,000 people have been displaced, and 191 Kuki-Zo deaths have been reported over the last 16 months. Although the Meitei community has also

suffered greatly, Meitei groups have not disclosed the number of their fatalities and casualties.

The violence in Manipur was preceded by an April 2023 directive from the Manipur High Court, which appeared to suggest granting tribal status to the Meitei community, which, despite being the majority community, inhabits only a minority of the state’s land area. The tribal status would allow the Meiteis to purchase land in the resource-rich hills, traditionally inhabited by the Kuki-Zo tribes, sparking fears among the Kuki-Zo of losing their ancestral lands.

About five years before the high court order, which was perceived as influenced by political considerations, Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh declared a “War on Drugs.” The campaign was perceived as an attack on the Kuki-Zo people, as the focus has erroneously and mischievously been on poppy cultivation by the tribal community, to apparently portray them as “the villains” and “illegal immigrants”—referring to people from the tribal community who are citizens of neighbouring Myanmar and fleeing a bloody armed conflict between the military junta and local ethnic and pro-democracy militias.

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This brings us to the first of the five facts that create a narrative starkly different from the claims and focus of the Manipur state government in its war on drugs.

(1) Economic necessity, rather than greed, drives poppy farming.

Those who have read Amitav Ghosh's well-researched novel, "Sea of Poppies," might experience déjà vu when reflecting on the poppy farmers of Manipur. Ghosh uses numerous metaphors and vivid imagery to depict the plight and low status of these farmers within the drug trade. He portrays various characters, including farmers forced into growing opium instead of food crops in East India, as powerless and marginalised within their own societies, serving the interests of the mighty British colonial rule in the country.

A study published in the Economic & Political Weekly (EPW) suggests something similar. It says poor infrastructure, government corruption and poverty have driven many in Manipur's remote villages to poppy cultivation as a means of survival and employment.

Anyone familiar with Manipur would know that the dusty districts of Churachandpur and Kangpokpi lack industry, and the roads are consistently in poor condition—facts that serve as empirical evidence supporting the findings of the study.

Poppy plants produce opium from their sap, which is then processed to synthesise heroin.

The study points out that opium production offers additional income to villagers, especially during the off-farming season. It explains that individuals can earn 300 rupees to 400 rupees daily during the harvest season—a significant amount in rural areas.

A village chief is quoted in the study as saying that the government's failure to provide bare minimum employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) has made poppy cultivation a necessary alternative for employment,

engaging even women and children.

"Some of the other drivers of poppy cultivation are the need for cash to pay for children's education, housing, and health care," adds the study. "A number of farmers cited the declining productivity in jhum fields, stating that the income generated was insufficient to feed even an average family throughout the year."

Further, poppy cultivators typically earn only a fraction of the final retail price of processed narcotics like heroin.

According to a farmer interviewed by Newsreel Asia, an average field can yield between 500 grams and 1 kilogram of poppy sap, which sells for about 80,000 rupees per kilogram. Poppy is typically grown and harvested once a year. The poppy planting season usually begins in October, and the harvest occurs in February or March when the flowers have matured and the seed pods are ripe. Annually, a farming family can earn a gross income of about 80,000 rupees, which translates to monthly gross earnings of only about 6,600 rupees.

The study also notes that "many farmers who are dependent upon opium for earning their livelihood are not even aware of the fact that it is illegal."

Poppy farmers, who are rooted in their farms, are the easiest targets in the crackdown on the drug trade. If provided with a viable alternative, they are most likely to abstain from growing poppy in their fields. This brings us to the second of the five facts.

(2) Poppy cultivation isn't behind high rates of drug addiction among local youth.

The study published in EPW, as cited above, noted that throughout the survey, it was observed that "none of the farmers cultivated poppy for domestic consumption."

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It appears to be part of propaganda that the rising drug addiction in Manipur is due to local poppy cultivation.

In a study on drug use in the northeastern states of India, the UNODC noted that in Manipur, injecting heroin, in lieu of smoking, became popular among local youths in the early 1980s, as they had developed an increased tolerance to smoking. As a result, Manipur experienced high rates of “People Living with HIV” (PLHIV) and AIDS cases. This indicates that the menace of drug addiction in the state had begun by the early 1980s at the latest, a period during which poppy was not widely cultivated locally.

It wasn't until the early 2000s that the Kuki-Zo people in Manipur began growing poppy, according to People's Archive of Rural India. The proliferation of this cultivation escalated a few years later.

Further, sources in the security establishment told Newsreel Asia that Manipur doesn't have many processing units in Manipur to meet the demands for local consumption. Therefore, it is most likely that poppy sap is transported out of Manipur by the buyers.

If the drug trade in Manipur cannot be solely attributed to poppy cultivators, then who are the key players involved at higher levels of the drug trafficking network? This brings us to the third of the five facts.

(3) The most significant aspect of the drug trade in Manipur is not poppy cultivation but involves transit, which implicates all communities.

The drug trade in Manipur has historical roots, as the state is located near the infamous “Golden Triangle”—where the borders of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos meet—a region historically known for being one of the world's most prolific opium-producing areas. Manipur shares a nearly 400-kilometre international border with Myanmar in Southeast Asia.

As other Southeast Asian nations such as Singapore,

Malaysia and Indonesia took stringent action against drug trafficking, Manipur became an alternative route during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

According to a 2023 report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Myanmar is one of the world's largest producers of opium, with an estimated production of 1,080 metric tons – which could theoretically provide around 36 billion doses, assuming each dose is about 30 milligrams.

It's not surprising, therefore, that the drug economy in Manipur – cultivation, production, transit and local consumption – is estimated at about 700 billion rupees per year (\$8.37 billion), according to Lieutenant General Konsam Himalay Singh, who retired in 2017, as per The Reporters' Collective.

Let's now examine how significant the local consumption and poppy cultivation are within this drug economy.

Let's say a drug addict in Manipur spends about 200 rupees a day; the annual expenditure of that addict would be 73,000 rupees. If there are 150,000 addicts – as claimed by the Manipur Chief Minister on Sept. 1, as per The Sentinel – then their total annual spending would be about 11 billion rupees.

Now, let's examine the value of poppy cultivated in Manipur over the past five years.

Although the majority of the poppy fields have been destroyed in recent months, as sources in the security establishment told Newsreel Asia, we can estimate the worth based on previous cultivation levels.

Of the 15,497 acres of land where poppy cultivation was identified over the past five years, 13,122 acres were in Kuki-Zo-dominated areas, 2,340 acres in

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Naga-dominated areas, and 35 acres in other regions, according to Manipur's Narcotics and Affairs of Border, as reported by NDTV.

If we estimate that one acre can produce about 5 kilograms of raw opium per year, and the price per kilogram is 80,000 rupees, then the annual worth of poppy cultivated on 15,497 acres would be around 6.2 billion rupees.

If we combine the local consumption (11 billion rupees) and local production (6.2 billion rupees), the total amounts to 17.2 billion rupees—a fraction (2.5%) of the 700-billion-rupee drug economy. This indicates that a significant portion of the drug trade involves the transit of drugs from Myanmar through Manipur, with drugs in its various stages both leaving and entering the country, as also indicated in a 2020 study by Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime.

To illustrate the scale of the drug trade, narcotics worth more than 16 billion rupees were seized by the Assam Rifles alone between July 2022 and July 2023 in Manipur, The Economic Times reported.

Now that we know that the drug trade is not just about poppy cultivation, let's look at the involvement of individuals and groups from various communities of Manipur.

The arrest data with local law enforcement shows that since 2017, at least 2,518 arrests had been made in drug-related cases – which included 1,083 Pangals, 873 Kuki-Zo individuals, 381 Meiteis and 181 others, according to The Economic Times.

Further, K. Meghachandra, former superintendent of Narcotics and Border Affairs, who now serves as the police superintendent of Bishnupur district, told The Reporter's Collective in June 2023 that Kuki-Zo individuals are primarily involved in poppy cultivation, Pangal individuals process the poppy, and Meitei individuals are mainly engaged as transporters of these drugs. However, this phenomenon does not reflect the intrinsic cultures or values of these communities;

rather, it is a consequence of their geographic, social and economic circumstances.

It's common sense that it's easier for security personnel to crack down on processing units and poppy cultivation, both of which are geographically traceable, than on transportation, which can utilise numerous routes to avoid interception. Thus, while the numbers of arrests cited above do indicate the involvement of individuals from the Pangal, Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities, they may not accurately reflect their actual levels of involvement in the drug trade.

In the drug trade, the most profit typically accrues to those higher up in the trafficking networks—drug cartels and high-level traffickers, and wholesalers and mid-level distributors—who are often far removed from the initial production stages.

Considering the overall marginalisation of the Pangals in Manipur, anyone familiar with the state would suggest that individuals from this community could not be positioned higher up in the trafficking networks.

In a tweet in February 2023, the Special Cell of Delhi Police stated that they had arrested two “key supplier of [Itocha] International Narco Drug Cartel,” identifying them as Ranbir Singh, also known as Tinku, and Loyangamba Itocha, which is a Meitei name. The police recovered 50 kilograms of opium, worth more than 100 million rupees in the international market, being brought from Manipur.

Just as an example, the name of another significant player – from the Kuki-Zo community – is mentioned in the fifth fact.

Therefore, while a crackdown on poppy cultivation is a noble pursuit, making it the prime focus seems to be nothing less than political targeting under

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the guise of the war on drugs. This brings us to the fourth of the five facts.

(4) Insurgent groups across various factions are also involved in the drug trade.

Manipur has several insurgent groups, which can be categorised into two main types: the valley-based insurgent groups (VBIGs), which are predominantly Meitei groups seeking the independence of Manipur from India, and the Kuki-Zo insurgent groups, which are fighting for a separate state within India. Most of the Kuki-Zo groups have entered into a tripartite peace agreement with the central and state governments, known as the Suspension of Operations (SoO).

According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, VBIGs allegedly involved in the drug trade to fund their activities include Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL), People's Liberation Army of Manipur (PLA), and United National Liberation Front (UNLF).

Similarly, non-SoO and SoO Kuki-Zo groups have also been accused of involvement in the drug trade.

For instance, in October 2023, NDTV reported that Lemtinsei Singson, a commander of the United Tribal Liberation Army (UTLA), which is part of the Kuki National Organisation (KNO), was arrested in Manipur for alleged drug trafficking.

However, there are also recent reports of Kuki-Zo and Meitei armed insurgent groups cracking down on the drug trade.

For example, 25 Kuki-Zo insurgent groups released a statement in July 2024, pledging to take a "united stand" to eliminate the cultivation of opium, drug trafficking and drug abuse, as reported by Deccan Herald.

Similarly, some VBIGs have intercepted narcotics in transit and have extra-judicially punished Meitei individuals accused of involvement in the drug trade,

according to reports in local media.

Sources in the security establishment explained that the actions of these groups against the drug trade are motivated by the contentious nature of the war on drugs in the state, which has led to counter-allegations from both the Kuki-Zo and the Meiteis. Both communities hold expectations from the central government regarding the larger conflict over land and identity. However, it remains uncertain whether this initiative will be sustained in the future.

The involvement of insurgent groups in the drug trade is far less surprising than the fifth fact, which creates an uncomfortable narrative for the state government—the main entity responsible for curbing the drug trade.

(5) High-level state politicians have been implicated in the drug trade.

In August 2021, Congress party leader Jairam Ramesh made an accusation against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Manipur of diverting its quota of urea to the state's hill districts, where poppy is allegedly grown for opium production, according to The New Indian Express.

Urea helps poppy plants to grow faster and healthier, leading to more robust plants.

In a tweet, titled "BJP's Vikas in Manipur," Ramesh wrote: "Manipur is getting TWICE the supply of urea it needs and yet farmers complain of shortage! Why? Because urea is diverted to hill areas in Manipur, where poppy is being grown for opium in large areas in last 4 yrs. The State Govt is fully complicit in this."

The allegation came four years after a team of police officials raided the residence of the then BJP member and alleged drug lord from the Kuki-Zo

Contd.

Contd.

community, Lhukhosei Zou, in Chandel district.

In 2022, Thounaojam Brinda, who was serving as the Additional Superintendent of Police in the Narcotics and Affairs of Border Bureau, filed a revealing affidavit to the Manipur High Court. In it, she accused the Chief Minister, Mr. Singh, of pressuring her to drop the case against Zou, former head of the Autonomous District Council.

Brinda claimed in the affidavit that Asnikumar Moirangthem, the state BJP vice president, visited her three times on the day Zou was arrested, requesting her to drop the case, according to The News Minute. She added that Asnikumar called her even while the raid operation was underway.

“Asnikumar told me that the arrested Autonomous District Council (ADC) member was Chief Minister’s wife Olice’s right-hand man in Chandel and that Olice was furious about the arrest,” read the affidavit.

Zou, although he was expelled from the BJP, was subsequently acquitted.

Locally called Lady Singham, Brinda resigned in protest, and returned her gallantry award, as reported by Hindustan Times.

“In recognition for this case as part of the Hon’ble Chief Minister’s ‘War against Drugs,’ I was conferred the

Chief Minister’s Police Medal for Gallantry on the occasion of Patriots’ Day, 13th August, 2018,” Brinda, now a politician with the Janata Dal (United), wrote in a letter to the chief minister, who also holds the home portfolio. “... I feel morally inclined that I have not conducted my duty as ‘per the wishes’ of the Criminal Justice Delivery System of the land. Hence, for the reasons cited above, I do not consider myself deserving of the honour bestowed upon me by your good self. I, therefore, return the same to the state Home Department so that it may be given to a more deserving and loyal police officer.”

In August 2023, Brinda told The News Minute, “When Biren Singh interfered in the arrest and conviction of Zou, it sent a clear message that he wanted the situation to continue in the same manner as before. This hardened my resolve to leave the service.” Brinda’s statement perhaps sums up the nature of the war on drugs in Manipur.

Based on these five facts, it appears that no single community in Manipur is in a moral position to point fingers at the others. What’s needed is not a blame game or targeting of one community, but professionalism in state agencies and a reputation for sincerity and public service—qualities that seem to be lacking in Manipur.

Published by: [Newsreel Asia](#)



**The patriot’s blood is the seed of
Freedom’s tree.**

- Thomas Campbell

THE BUZZ SOCIAL MEDIA



Supriya Shrinate
@SupriyaShrinate

Congress President @kharge ji calls out PM Modi on his colossal failure in Manipur

“Modi ji, you have miserably failed in protecting the people of Manipur.

Manipur turmoil is another stark addition to the long list of your betrayals to the people of India.”



Mallikarjun Kharge @kharge · 10h

.@narendramodi ji

It has been 16 months since Manipur has been engulfed in violence, but your 'double engine' government has done NOTHING to mitigate it. ...

12:45 · 04 Sept 24 · 10.5K Views



Paolienlal Haokip
@paolienlal

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Chief of Meitei Leepun threatened wiping out of Kukis on national TV, the AT Chief brandishes sophisticated weapons and seeks 15 days without CF intervention to “finish” Kukis. Have they been banned? My colleague IMO must’ve been made to say these under duress. @PMOIndia



India Today NE
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Manipur MLA demands ban on top tribal body over alleged terror activities, seeks probe #Manipur #MLA #tribal



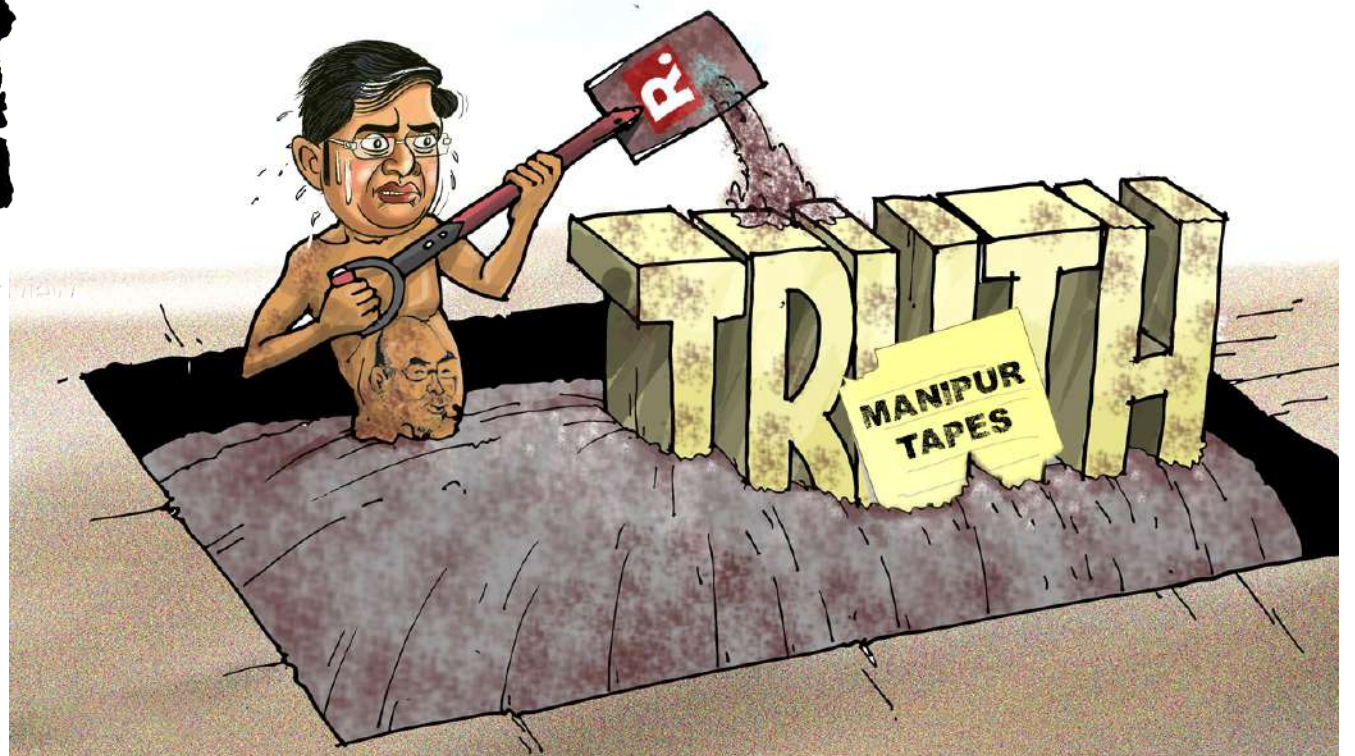
Manipur MLA demands ban on top tribal body over alleged...

From indiatodayne.in

14:43 · 04 Sept 24 · 3,685 Views



REPUBLIC's BURIAL OF TRUTH AND MANIPUR TAPES





THE LORD IS OUR BANNER!

Inspirations from Bible

Mighty warrior, the Lord is with you! - Judges 6:12

I am giving you strength to rescue your people

from your enemy! - Judges 6:14

I am going to help you to defeat your enemy easily! - Judges 6:16

So, be strong and courageous because you will lead your people!

-Joshua 1:6

*Don't ever be afraid or discouraged! I am the Lord your God, and I will
be there to help you wherever you go! - Joshua 1:9*

*For I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand
before you. - Joshua 10:8*

*For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you
against your enemies to give you victory. - Deuteronomy 20:4*

*Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the LORD your God
will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you*

nor abandon you! - Deuteronomy 31:6

*Some may trust in chariots and some in horses, but you must trust in
the name of the Lord your God! - Psalm 20:7*

*Remember that the horse is prepared for the day of battle, but the
victory belongs to the LORD. - Proverbs 21:31*

*For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to pros-
per you and not to harm you, plans to give you a*

hope and a future! - Jeremiah 29:11

*Look, I am giving you this land. Go and take it. It is the land that I, the
LORD, promised to give to your ancestors! - Deuteronomy 1:8*

*But always remember to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways,
and to keep His commands; then you will live and increase,*

and the LORD your God will bless you in this land! - Deuteronomy 30:16

For Warriors of the Hillsmen!

Compiled by : Hillsman J. Tearsworth