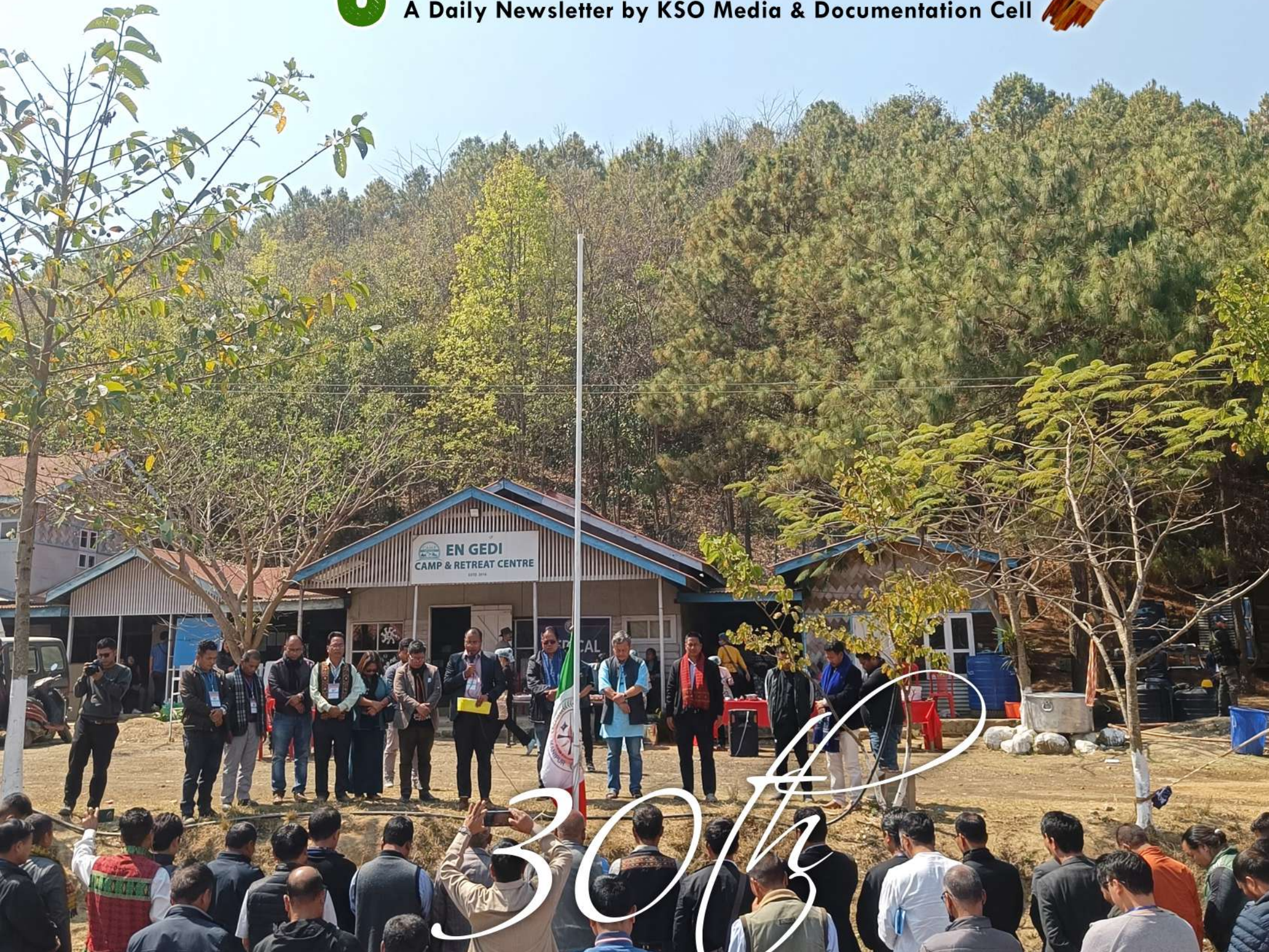


Thingkho Le Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



KUKI INPI GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2024

March 6-10, 2024 | En-Gedi, Geljang, Lamka

“KISEM TUP TAUTE”



KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 01.03.2024



166
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.

30TH ASSEMBLY OF KUKI INPI CONCLUDED SUCCESSFULLY AT GELJANG, VARIOUS RESOLUTIONS AND DECLARATION ADOPTED

As the situation of the State-sponsored ethnic cleansing pogrom on the minority Kuki community still tense even after ten months of bloodshed, the Kuki Inpi, apex body of the Kukis, had successfully held a General Assembly at Geljang, Lamka, from the 6th of March, 2024 to 10th of March, 2024.

The Assembly witnessed attendance from prominent Kuki people from all walks of life, candidly sharing their ideas and feedback for the betterment of the Kuki community. Various resolutions and a declaration were passed by the General Assembly in furtherance of the theme “Kisem tup taute” (Let’s set our house in order); the Declaration was publicly announced, and Resolutions were informed to the gathering within the four walls of the Assembly Hall.

The Assembly adopted a Declaration on several major points including an expression of highest respect and gratitude for the Kuki-Zo (Kuki-Zomi-Hmar-Mizo) Volunteers for safeguarding the Kukis’ ancestral land and lives of the people. It declared that the people should be ever ready to defend their land and its people from the attacks by the Meiteis.

In their efforts to achieve a Separate Administration, the Assembly made it clear that necessary coordinations shall be made with all well wishers. “We shall protect our identity and land at all cost. We shall restructure our system of administration,” the Assembly declared.

The Kuki Inpi General Assembly also declared that the Kukis should preserve the Public Property, the Public Land, and the Public Goods, as God has entrusted.

An observer reported that this General Assembly was a milestone for Kuki Inpi as many major resolutions were proposed and adopted by the assembly. Due to



The 30th Kuki Inpi Assembly, 2024

Theme: “Kisem tup taute”

ASSEMBLY DECLARATION

Geljang, the 10th March, 2024

1. **Kuki-Zo** chate huhna dinga Gam le Nam ngailu’a kipedoh **Kuki-Zo Village Volunteer JANA leh KIPANA** sangtah a kiphong’e. A deh in Front-line Volunteer ho kipehdoh nahi **Kuki-Zo** Nam miten a itih chan’a kihetpeh jing ding ahi. Maban a jong Nam mite lungmong leh lhamong a akho-sah jingthei nadingun jochan a pan ahinlah diu ahi.
2. **Kuki-Zo** chate chung a **Meilhei** ten **Gal** a eibol khum tah jeh uvin; tua pat ichen na muncheh uva nungchon lou’a **Kivenna hihen, Gal-mano** ding hijong leh kimansa ihi diu ahi.
3. **Kuki-Zo** chate lungtup **GAMTUM, ATUM’A KIVAIHOMNA** muthei nading’a pankhampi thei jouse toh lam jotkhom jingpeh ding ahi.
4. **Kuki-Zo** chate gam le nam huhbit nading leh suhtupna dinga mijousen pan ilah soh keidiu; **Kuki-Zo** chate Kivaihom-Kivaipoh nahi kitup tah’a chepi jing ding ahi.
5. Public Property; Public Land, Luidung, Thing le Go, Mol le Lhang, Ju le Va, Sa le Nga ho Pathen in asem banga umсах a venbit ding suhset louding ahi.
6. Galpi neite ihitaovin eima sunga koiman kithato kimat-to abol louhel ding ahi.
7. **Kuki-Zo** chaten ihou-u **Hatchungnung Pathen** tahsan na akon ikiheimang louhel diu, ama a ikingai uva ikison diu ahi.

“PATHEN IN KUKI-ZO CHATE UMPI JING TAHEN”


(DR. PAOLENTHANG KHONGSAI)
Assembly Chairman




(DR. MANGCHA HAOKIP)
Assembly Secretary

the need to maintain restraint in this age of social media and fake news, the Assembly chose not to share the resolutions adopted on social media.

FOREST FIRE DESTROYS HOMES IN KWATHA KHUNOU VILLAGE, MEITEI AND KUKI LEADERS CLARIFY MISINFORMATION

A devastating forest fire engulfed Kwatha Khunou village in Tengnoupal district on March 10, resulting in the destruction of two houses. While initial social media reactions attempted to blame Kukis for the incident, local leaders and villagers have since clarified the true cause of the fire.

Contrary to rumors, the fire was a result of the dry and windy season, which has led to frequent forest fires in the region. Locals reported hearing sounds of burning and witnessed three individuals fleeing the scene, prompting immediate efforts to extinguish the fire and prevent further damage.

Jamlet Mate, chief of Molphoi village, affirmed these accounts and provided a statement to the Tengnoupal Police Department, detailing the sequence of events.

He clarified that yesterday at around at 2230 hrs, sound of burning was heard from nearby village. Then he along with some villagers went to Kwatha Khunou village to douse the fire. Also, some of the villagers saw three personnel running away from Kwatha Khunou village. Then, they doused the fire and also informed the villagers of Kwatha about the burning houses. His statement was recorded by Tengnoupal Police Department at his village around 1430 hrs on 11/03/2024.

Takhelambam Sanjoy Singh, a resident of Kwatha Khullen village, corroborated Mate's statement and emphasized that only one house and a small hut were affected, with essential infrastructure remaining intact.

Stating that the village chief of Molphoi village informed him about at around 2300 hrs on 10/03/2024 regarding burning of houses in Kwatha Khonou and had helped them to douse the fire, Sanjoy said.

"Then, I thanked the village chief for informing me about the incident. I also visited the Kwatha Khonou on 11/03/2024 at around 1400 hrs along with state and central security forces. I checked that only one house

Statement of village chief of Molphoi village, Jamlet Mate

On 10/03/2024, Around at 2230 hrs, sound of burning was heard from nearby village. Then I along with some villagers went to Kwatha Khonou village to douse the fire. Also, some of the villagers saw three personnel running away from Kwatha Khunou village. Then, we doused the fire and also informed the villagers of Kwatha about burning of houses. My statement was recorded by Tengnoupal Police Department at my village around 1430 hrs on 11/03/2024.

Statement of Takhelambam Sanjoy Singh, Kwatha Khullen

Village chief of Molphoi village informed me about at around 2300 hrs on 10/03/2024 regarding burning of houses in Kwatha Khonou and help them to douse the fire. Then, I thanked the village chief for informing him about the incident. I also visited the Kwatha Khonou on 11/03/2024 at around 1400 hrs along with state and central security forces. I checked that only one house and one small hut is burnt. PHC, Community hall, school and other houses are intact.

and one small hut was burnt. PHC, Community hall, school and other houses are intact," he added.

However, to the dismay of many, Imphal based media houses in their usual reporting style reported that Kuki militants had burnt down Meitei villages in Tengnoupal district. The report itself was negated by a village chief and a Meitei villager from Kwatha Khullen

Despite these clarifications, Imphal-based media outlets irresponsibly reported the incident as an act of Kuki militants targeting Meitei villages. This misinformation has been debunked by local leaders and villagers, highlighting the biased and unethical reporting practices of certain media houses.

The incident underscores the need for accurate and impartial reporting, particularly in regions affected by ethnic tensions. By perpetuating false narratives, media outlets risk exacerbating violence and deepening divisions within communities.

MEITEI MILITANTS' ATTEMPT TO ATTACK KUKI AREAS FOILED BY CENTRAL FORCES IN JIRIBAM

In the bid to continue to annihilate the Kuki community by the majority Meiteis in connivance with the Meitei State government led by communal Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, the Meitei militants tried to intrude the Kuki areas of Jiribam on Monday with full military gear.

Around 50 suspected members of the valley based militant outfit- United National Liberation Front (UNLF, Pambei faction) moved towards a Kuki village of Mongbung in Jiribam tonight at around 8:00 PM, carrying sophisticated weapons and with full military gear. The advancing Meitei militants were intercepted and halted at Lalpani bazaar, around 1 km away from Mongbung village, by Assam Rifles and were forced to return.

As per sources, there had been several incidents of UNLF (P) cadres openly roaming around Jiribam areas and carrying out provocative firing towards the Kuki inhabited areas of Jiribam after the group had peace talks with the Government of India with the help of the Manipur government.

Notably, three months after the Union government and the Manipur government signed a peace agreement with one of the factions of the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), the oldest valley-based armed insurgent group, officials said the terms of the pact — which include monitoring of the armed cadres — are not available to the central security agencies.

A senior government official had told The Hindu newspaper that there has been a sharp rise in cases of extortion in the valley areas of the state “in the name of UNLF”.

Neither has a camp been designated for holding the armed cadres nor has the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) or the State Police been nominated to monitor the movement of the cadres, a second government



official said. The total number of cadres and the monthly stipend to be allocated to the cadres is also not known.

“The military wing of the UNLF has been roaming around in vehicles brandishing weapons. Their involvement in looting of a police armoury has also been found. Post the signing of the peace pact, the cadres were observed indulging in violence against security forces,” the official said.

In the wake of the state-sponsored ethnic cleansing pogrom, the Meitei government led by communal Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has been using the Meitei militants and his private militia groups of Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun to annihilate the Kukis from their ancestral land. Even after ten months of the pogrom, the Meiteis still continue their aggression of the Kukis, and peace and normalcy still remain a far cry.

BIREN'S LATEST STATEMENT ON ONGOING VIOLENCE SHOWS HE STILL HAS NO VISION TO BRING PEACE IN THE STATE

Manipur chief minister Nongthombam Biren's recent statement on May 3 violence speaks of his indifferent attitude towards a particular community showing that he still has no vision to bring peace in Manipur.

Even after 10 months since the ethnic violence started by the majority Meiteis against the Kuki communities began, the Meitei chief minister seems to have no plans or vision of subsiding the ongoing violence.

The chief minister as usual still stood with his allegations or one sided opinion blaming the Kuki communities for the violence in Manipur. He as a Meitei still fails to accept the bitter truth.

As per media reports, the ex-BSF footballer said that no one had thought that a rally against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status would lead to violent attacks.

As per the report, the chief minister in his speech at Lamlai in Imphal East district said the tribal rally began around 9.30 pm and within an hour, a forest office was torched at Churachandpur at 10.30. A driver was also assaulted followed by attacks on the homes of others, he said.

"However, no such violence was reported in Naga-inhabited areas of Tamenglong, Ukhrul and Senapati. We need to understand who wants to break Manipur," Biren said.

It is worth mentioning that the tribal rally was peaceful and it concluded peacefully until the Meitei radical group the Arambai Tenggol came and burnt the Anglo-Kuki war centenary gate at Leisang.

Upon receiving the news that the Meiteis had burnt the Anglo-Kuki War centenary gate, the rally goers who were already dispersed marched towards the gate to confront the Meiteis and to protect the gate.

After learning that the gate had been burnt, the Kuki populace started protesting using different means in various parts of the district which resulted in different



incidents in the district and other parts of the State as well.

There were no consequences of the rally in the Naga inhabited districts since the Meiteis as usual did not dare to meddle in the Naga inhabited areas. Had the Meiteis responded with the same enthusiasm in any Naga areas as they did to the Kuki inhabited districts, the response would have been more severe.

The chief minister or other Meitei leaders have completely failed to accept their mistakes till date. Instead of looking for a solution to the conflict, some of them have been using the conflict as a means to campaign for the upcoming MP election in the state.

The chief minister, if he as a leader or a human being really yearning to bring peace in the state could have preached for peace or chalk out means to bring peace.

Instead he has become one of the instigators for continuation of the violence in the state with no signs of him preaching about peace in the state.

The chief minister's failure to comment on bringing peace in the state is also a glaring example of how he including the Meitei MLAs, ministers have been controlled by the radical groups like the Arambai Tenggol, Meitei Leepun and valley based UG groups who have personally benefited from the ongoing crisis in the State.

JUDGES COMMITTEE RAISES CONCERNS ABOUT ARMED PROTESTS BY WEAPONISED OUTFITS, SUPREME COURT SEEKS UNION'S VIEW

Senior Advocate Ms. Makhija, representing the Court-appointed Committee led by Justice Gita Mittal, today brought urgent concerns before the Supreme Court regarding recent spurt of violence in Manipur. The Committee, formed in August 2023 to address humanitarian issues arising from ethnic violence, sought specific directions from the court to restrain protesting organizations from inciting violence against State Administration.

Ms Makhija highlighted an alarming situation, asserting that the state administration is being held at ransom by factions causing disruptions in relief activities. She emphasized the urgency, revealing that essential relief work had ceased, especially after the District Collector's office was burnt down.

"The state administration is being held at ransom by these factions my lords.... there have been some worrying public notices...It is necessary to bring to your lordship notice because all neces

"The state administration is being held at ransom by these factions my lords.... there have been some worrying public notices...It is necessary to bring to your lordship notice because all necessary relief activities have now been stopped, especially with the (District Collector) DC's office being burnt down where all the materials for relief were being housed"

Referring to the Committee's 28th Report, Makhija conveyed the judges' committee's prayer for an independent inquiry into incidents on January 24, February 15 and 27.

Ms. Makhija informed the bench that the government has been interacting and a magisterial inquiry has also been set up with regard the above concerns. However, she stressed that the Committee seeks the indulgence of the Apex Court over instances the armed protests.

"Because of both the factions, and because of the inciting material...now its just not a protest, it has



become an armed protest, where the offices of the DC are held to ransom the residence of the DC who was taking some action, who was in his office from May 3 2023, his residence has been completely burnt down lordship...the highways are stopped."

Weaponization of Protest Organizations - Makhija Urges Court's Invention

Highlighting the perilous situation on the ground, Makhija underscored that the protesting organizations are widely weaponized. She presented a list of organizations involved in the protests, urging the court to consider restraining them from inciting violence.

"The suggestion is (of the committee) this that if your lordships mandate that none of these organisations which we have listed incite, we are not saying that they are not free to protest etc,... the problem is existing because the entire outfits are weaponised"

The Attorney General (AG) Mr. R Venkataramani, responded that incidents from February 15 and 27 had been handed over to the CBI. The Chief Justice clarified that maintaining law and order was beyond the court's jurisdiction, emphasizing that directions to control activities lay within the jurisdiction of the government .

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The Committee sought directions to all organisations to desist from any action, or provocations which may do violence in the state.

The CJI expressed, “These are not matters where this court can give directions, it is ultimately a matter for policing and law and order by the government.., we cannot issue directions to civil society / private organisations. That’s for the government to control the activities.”

In response to the highlighted incidents, the CJI instructed the AG to take instructions on the same. Additionally, it was directed that a copy of the Committee’s report, headed by Justice Gita Mittal, be provided to the Attorney General for further evaluation.

On The Clarifications Sought By The Special Judge Conducting Criminal Trials

A communication dated Feb 28, 2024, from the Gauhati High Court was brought to the forefront, citing a letter from the special judge connected to the August 25, 2023, order.

As per the order dated 25 August 2023 the Chief Justice of Guwahati High Court was to nominate one or more judicial officers in Assam to conduct proceedings in connection with cases related to Manipur Ethnic Violence.

The special judge sought clarification on two critical aspects: firstly, whether the trial should be conducted in

Assam, and secondly, the modalities to be applied if the accused was a juvenile at the time of the offence. These inquiries were prompted by the Apex Court’s order for the investigation of cases related to Manipur violence.

The CJI directed that responses must be filed by Manipur, as well as the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), outlining the progress of investigations. The court emphasized the need for a status report indicating chargesheets filed and the current stage of investigations in other related cases.

The CJI expressed the court’s intention to gain an overall view of the matter, including the status of investigations and ground realities.

“ We want to have overall view of the matter, what is the status of investigation? what is happening on ground ?”

The possibility of conducting the trial in Assam was discussed, contingent on a comprehensive understanding of the situation. “Let’s have an idea ...then we will take call on whether the trial should take place in Assam”

Case Details : *Dinganglung Gangmei vs Mutum Churamani Meetei & Ors | 2023 LiveLaw (SC) 626 | 2023 INSC 698*

Source: [Live Law](#)



Peace is not absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.

– Ronald Reagan

ABDUCTION OF INDIAN ARMY OFFICER UNDERSCORES THE NEED FOR AFSPA IN VALLEY AREAS

A Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) of the Indian Army who was kidnapped from his home in Manipur's Thoubal district on March 8 was rescued after over nine hours, once more highlighting the deteriorating law and order situation in the state of Manipur.

As per officials, some people barged into JCO Konsam Kheda Singh's house at Charangpat Mamang Leikai at around 9 am and kidnapped him. The unidentified assailants put Kheda Singh inside a vehicle and fled from the spot. He was later rescued by security forces at around 6.30 pm. After he was rescued, the JCO was taken to the Waikhong Police Station in Thoubal district.

According to the officials, initial reports suggest Kheda Singh's kidnappers wished to extort money from him as his family had received such threats in the past.

Soon after he was kidnapped, a search operation was launched to rescue JCO Kheda Singh and all vehicles on National Highway 102 were checked.

The Army officer was on leave from duty when he was kidnapped from his home.

This came just days after a Manipur Police officer was kidnapped from his home on February 27. Around 200 gunmen stormed his home in Imphal West district and kidnapped the Additional Superintendent of Police, Moirangthem Amit Singh.

Amit Singh's kidnapping was allegedly carried out by an armed group identified as the Meitei vigilante group Arambai Tenggol. These cases are among the incidents of unrest that have been reported in Manipur, which has witnessed ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki communities since May 3 last year.

This once again highlights the need for re-imposition of AFSPA in valley areas under the jurisdiction of 19



Police Stations. The lawlessness in valley areas has always been on the headlines of newsstands. There have been several instances of extortion, threat, intimidation, kidnapping and reprimandation perpetrated by radical groups or valley based insurgent groups (VBIGs). They have unleashed a reign of terror – terrorizing innocent civilians with fear of speaking against their atrocities.

Many Kuki Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and legislators have been demanding the re-imposition of AFSPA in the valley district which was withdrawn from the Imphal Municipality area in 2004. In April 2022, AFSPA was removed from 15 police station areas in six districts, and from April 1, 2023, the disturbed area notification was withdrawn from four other police stations. So far, the 19 police station limits in the seven valley districts of Manipur have been removed from the ambit of the 'disturbed area' notification under AFSPA.

However, the present crisis has witnessed more problems within the Imphal valley than in the hills. Owing to the suspension of agreement between Kuki UGs and the government, crime related activities in the hills have been relatively lesser, thereby making the demand for imposition of AFSPA in valley areas more legitimate and reasonable.

AASU ALONG WITH 30 ORGANISATIONS TO BURN COPIES OF CAA ACROSS THE STATE

The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and 30 indigenous organisations on Monday said it will burn copies of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) across the state.

It also announced of a series of protest programmes, while also taking forward its legal battle against the Act, AASU chief advisor Samujjal Bhattacharjya told media.

"We will continue with our non-violent, peaceful, democratic movement against the CAA. Alongside, we will also continue our legal fight," he said.

Bhattacharjya asserted that the indigenous people of Assam and North East will never accept CAA.

"On Tuesday, copies of the CAA will be burnt by the North East Student Organisation (NESO) in all the state capitals of the region.

"AASU and 30 organisations will also take out torchlight processions in Assam, and launch a satyagraha from the next day," he said.

Pointing out that the Sixth Scheduled areas and states with provisions for Inner Line Permit (ILP) in the North East have been exempted from CAA, Bhattacharjya said, "Our question is, something which is bad for some parts of NE, how can it be good for the other parts. In Assam too, in eight districts it will not be enforced." He also claimed that the CAA goes against the Assam Accord, which sets March 25, 1971, as the deadline for identification of illegal migrants in this northeastern state.



The AASU had been at the forefront of protesting against the CAA since the bill proposing the legislation was brought by the central government, and has already filed a petition in the Supreme Court against the Act.

Meanwhile, students have started protesting against the CAA in different parts of the state, including in front of Cotton University in Guwahati.

With the CAA rules being issued, the Narendra Modi-led central government will start granting Indian nationality to persecuted non-Muslim migrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan who came to India till December 31, 2014. These include Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians.

The CAA was passed in December 2019 but had not come into effect as rules were not notified till now.

FOUR CANDIDATES SEEK NPF TICKET FOR OUTER MANIPUR LOK SABHA SEAT

In view of the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections, the Naga People's Front (NPF) has found itself in a position of deliberation regarding the Outer Manipur parliamentary seat.

Nagaland MLA and NPF secretary general, Achumbemo Kikon informed that the party's Central Office recently received applications from four individuals, including sitting MP, vying for the NPF ticket for the Outer Manipur seat.

To ensure a thorough and impartial selection process, Kikon said that the party has established a Search Committee tasked with identifying the rightful candidate to contest the Lok Sabha polls.

As the Search Committee's report and recommendations are pending, the NPF Working Committee has opted to reconvene on Monday, March 18, at the NPF Central

Office in Kohima.

The decision was arrived at during a meeting of the Working Committee (WC) held at the Central Office in Kohima.

During the meeting, the party also resolved to uphold the spirit of an Opposition-less Government currently leading the affairs in Nagaland to facilitate an early, honorable, acceptable, and inclusive resolution to the long-standing Indo-Naga political issue.

The Working Committee also resolved to extend support to the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) candidate and former NPF MLA Dr. Chumben Murry to contest the lone Lok Sabha seat in Nagaland.

THE BUZZ SOCIAL MEDIA



Nehr_who?
@Nher_who

Follow

BJP's new election video claims that Modi stopped the Russia-Ukraine war allowing the student's rescue

Imagine a Govt which couldn't stop Riots in Manipur in their own country, claims to stop the Russian-Ukraine war

Height of propaganda

5:52 pm · 10 Mar 24 · 60K Views



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Will PM @narendramodi break his silence and do something about #ManipurViolence and its #Kuki_Zo women, Tribal & peoples

#ModiDisasterForIndia
#LokSabhaElection2024



All India Trinamool Congress and 8 others

11:48 am · 11 Mar 24 · 32.4K Views

**FEATURED ANALYSIS**

SoO Abrogation May Not be Enough to Douse Manipur Fire: Here's Why

Ninglun Hanghal

Amid the ongoing crisis in Manipur, the demand for abrogating the suspension of operations, commonly known as the SoO, between the government and the Kuki-Zo rebel groups has been growing from the Meitei civil society in the Imphal valley.

The demand has become even louder since the violence erupted in May 2023. Meiteis have demanded the government stop its SoO pact with the groups. Arambai Tengol, one of the key players in the ongoing crisis, has also listed ending the SoO pact as one of its main demands to the government.

Considering this, the Manipur state assembly on February 29 “unanimously resolved” to press upon the Center to abrogate the Tripartite Agreement for Suspension of Operations with the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People’s Front (UPF). The tripartite agreement between the rebel groups, the centre, and the state government was signed in 2008, while political dialogue was initiated later in 2016.

This SOO agreement is being renewed, or rather extended, periodically.

The state assembly resolution was taken after the 50 legislators deliberated upon the “excesses and atrocities” allegedly committed by the Kuki-Zo underground groups. It may be noted here that the 10 Kuki-Zo MLAs could not attend the state assembly due

to the prevailing situation. They are unable to be present physically as all the Kuki-Zo communities, including the MLAs, have fled Imphal due to the violence. One of the MLAs, V. Valte, representing the Churachandpur assembly constituency, was attacked and severely injured, leaving him paralyzed.

In response to the assembly resolution in their absence, the 10 Kuki-Zo MLAs vehemently condemned the decision, citing prejudice and bias against the people they represented.

Expressing their dissent and disapproval of the resolution, which they deemed one-sided and reflective of a myopic view, the Kuki-Zo legislators asserted that the 2008 Tripartite Agreement has significantly reduced violence in Manipur, particularly in the hill tribal districts, and that a robust mechanism, the Joint Monitoring Group (JMG), is overseeing adherence to the agreement’s ground rules.

Questioning the basis of the state assembly’s resolution, the 10 Kuki-Zo MLAs asked if the assembly was informed of any report or observations by the Joint Monitoring Group.

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The Kuki-Zo MLAs maintained that assembly resolutions are driven by animosity and hatred towards their community rather than factual assessments of the situation.

It may be recalled that in early 2023, Biren and his cabinet announced that the state government decided to withdraw from being a party to the Tripartite SoO agreement with KNO and the UPF because the rebel group leadership and cadres were involved in the drug trade and the business of poppy cultivation.

Now that Manipur is undergoing a crisis with violent conflict between the Meiteis and the Kuki-Zo, the Biren Singh-led Manipur government decided that the SoO agreement must be abrogated to “bring normalcy and peace to Manipur.”

Whether the state government’s withdrawal in 2023 is being accepted or approved is unknown—at least in public. It also remains to be seen if the recently concluded state assembly’s resolution to abrogate the SoO agreement is being considered by the central government.

Ever since it came to power in 2014 in Delhi and 2017 in Manipur, the BJP-led government has made attempts to bring the rebel groups to a negotiating table and has promised to take the dialogue to a logical conclusion. The present government in many ways, expressed their desire to end insurgency and bring the rebel groups into mainstream society. Or so it seems.

Back in 2017, in the run-up to the state election, the then union home minister Rajnath Singh stated in his public address in Lamka (Churachandpur district) that the BJP government in the centre is committed to solving the political problems of the Kuki-Zo people. Seeking the public to vote for his party, the BJP senior leader said that if the BJP came to power, the party would expedite the process of political dialogue at the earliest.

It’s been more than six years now, and the “dialogue” process is still going on.

Moreover, in the last state election in 2022, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said in his election pitch, “Give us five more years, we will talk with the armed groups,” and that “if voted to power, the BJP government will ensure that the Kuki-Zo youths no longer hold their guns and are part of mainstream society.” Emphasizing peace and development in the hilly areas of Manipur, Shah stated that laptops, corporate door keys, and bike keys would replace guns shortly.

Reportedly, the Kuki-Zo insurgent groups, who are now in political dialogue and are coming overground, have “supported and voted for the BJP” in the parliamentary and state elections.

Those under the SoO groups had also exercised their franchise in parliamentary and state elections.

Cadres of the KNO and UPF have been taking part in the electoral process, starting with the 2014 general election and subsequently the state elections. An estimated 2,000 cadres have been spread over 14 designated camps since the peace process began. Separate balloting for the cadres was arranged in the designated camps.

However, since the 2008 ceasefire was signed and political dialogue was initiated only in 2016 after eight long years, the talks did not progress much over the years. Until today, there has been no major development, at least in the public domain.

Looking back, before violence erupted last year, the past years have been relatively calm, with no reports of insurgent activities in the state. Moreover, AFSPA has been lifted in valley districts inhabited by Meiteis. Even though militant activities have come down considerably in hilly areas too, AFSPA has not been lifted in those parts of the state.

Unfortunately, the violence that erupted in May last year has been attributed to the involvement of these insurgent groups, the KNO

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and UPF, who are in the process of political talks.

As it stands, the extension of the SoO agreement is yet to be signed. Until the time of writing this article, which is more than a week after the expiry of the SoO pact, which is February 29, there have been no reports of its extension or renewal.

It is believed that the central government is “buying” its own time with the “resolution to abrogate the agreement” coming from the Biren Singh-led state government, which is party to the tripartite agreement.

It is unlikely that the central government will agree to the state government’s resolution. But then, on the other hand, considering that Biren Singh has a free hand in the state, given the turn of events during the year, it may not come as a surprise if the central government re-thinks and succumbs to Biren’s demand, which according to some observers would be to the diktat of the Arambai Tengol.

In case the centre is considering washing its hands off, the question is: what could be the aftermath?

Surely there will be reactions; in which direction it may turn out is something that one cannot fathom at the moment.

One thing can be said: the relative calm in recent years or the unfortunate disturbance that turned the state into an abyss cannot be attributed to certain rebel groups alone.

Knee-jerk reactions at this juncture are not the ideal alternative and not a solution to restore normalcy. Such actions and omissions will rather add more salt to the wounds that have already infected so deeply.

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CHIEF OF MONKEYS AND HIS CHEERLEADERS



CARRY HOME THE DEATH WARRIOR

- Hillsman J. Tearsworth

[Written in memory of Pu Jangkholun Haokip]

Shot down by an enemy sniper,
Not yet dead nor fully alive,
Not wise to waste a second,
They rushed him to Aizawl, worse off already.
As hope faded; doctors gave up!
To Silchar, they rushed him again,
There, he breathed his last at noon,
On the Ninth of March, Twenty Twenty-four.

Our hearts beat as one;
We all stood together for him.
But, in a nearby corner, I saw his boy,
Weeping bitterly, hiding himself from the crowds.
I could see his knees shaking and weak,
He could no longer stand still.
I held him up, and whispered to him -
"Be strong, your father wouldn't like it any other way..."

As our conscience didn't allow us,
To let him carry his dead father all alone,
On the long, dark journey towards Aizawl,
We, the ten good souls, decided to follow him.
The journey will be remembered forever!
Inside the car, though we were all tired,
When we saw his boy at peace,
We all breathed a sigh of relief!

At daybreak, we finally reached Aizawl,
Welcomed by a huge crowd of folks.
They had awaited us all through the night.
From there, some good men took us further.
Before they took off, I whispered to his son -
"Be brave, your father was a brave man,
You lost a father, we lost a brave warrior."
We all waved goodbye through tears.