

Thingkho Le Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



G. Songlung RELIEF CENTRE

G. Songlung Community Hall, Sadar Hills
(Camp Code: KPI-4-02)

Managed by
District Administration &
Kuki CSOs Sadar Hills

Total Inmates Registered: 556



KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 13.02.2024



162
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.

RECENT ARMORY LOOTING SPURS CALLS FOR AFSPA RE-IMPLEMENTATION IN IMPHAL VALLEY

One shot dead, while two others were injured after Meitei radicals looted a security establishment and decamped with dozens of weapon and live ammunition from the Fifth Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) post in Chingarel Tezpur. The incident happened at around 11 pm on Tuesday.

The deceased was identified as 24-year-old Okram Sanaton, a resident of Pangei Okram Leikai in Imphal East, who received bullet injuries in the attack and later succumbed to his injuries. The other two injured were shifted to a hospital for treatment.

A huge cache of arms and ammunition was reportedly looted from the spot, following the incident.

According to police sources, six AK-47 Rifles, four Carbines, .303 Rifles, and two LMG along with huge cache of ammunition were believed to be looted.

The recent theft of government armories has necessitated the reintroduction of the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) in the Imphal valley. Despite the presence of various central security forces, the looting of government armories proceeded without any obstruction. The central security forces present were unable to intervene, as they lacked the necessary authority. Only through the implementation of AFSPA can the army effectively fulfill their duties. Recognizing that the army lacks the ability to prevent their illegal activities, Meitei radicals exploit the absence of AFSPA in the valley.

Meanwhile, Arambai Tenggol - the Meitei armed militia, who were, in the past year, involved in numerous incidents of arms loot from government armouries, yesterday, issued a clarification, stating that they are in no shape or form related to the reported looting. "The work was done by some unknown miscreants who want to malign the image of Arambai Tenggol. The Arambai Tenggol never resorted to such unlawful action" it stated.

However, the clarification from Arambai Tenggol seems to be a whitewash as their planned looting did not go according to plan. Sources from the ground revealed that it was the handiwork of the



Kuki Inpi
@Kuki_Inpi

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In Manipur, the state arms are not looted. They are deliberately handed over to Meitei Militants to facilitate attack on Kuki villages. The conflict in Manipur is a war of the state against ethnic minorities and the silence of the central government will imply cooperation with the Manipur state. Creation of a Separate Administrative unit for the Kukis under the Union of India will be the only sincere approach for the central government to end the conflict in the region. [@PTI_News](#)

Last edited 6:43 pm · 14 Feb 24

Arambai Tenggol, viral voice-notes on social media platforms reaffirmed their involvement.

Vehemently reacting to the development, the Kuki Inpi Manipur said, "In Manipur, the state arms are not looted, they are deliberately handed over to Meitei Militants to facilitate attack on Kuki villages. The conflict in Manipur is a war of the state government against an ethnic minority and the silence of the Central Government implies their cooperation to the state of Manipur. Creation of a Separate Administrative unit for the Kukis under the Union of India will be the only sincere approach for the Central Government to end the conflict in the region."

This incident is not an isolated occurrence, as weapon looting from police stations and security forces stations has become commonplace since the outbreak of conflict last May.

Reports of arms looted by the mob first came from the valley districts, prompting the N. Biren Singh government to urge the people to return the looted weapons. Provisions were made at various locations across Imphal to facilitate the return of the looted arms. However, only a fraction of it has been recovered by state police so far.

MEITEI MILITANTS RAMP UP ATTACKS ON TRIBAL SETTLEMENTS IN MANIPUR, SABOTAGE PUBLIC UTILITIES: ITLF

In recent days, Manipur has witnessed a surge in violence as Meitei militants continue to launch daily attacks on tribal settlements along the buffer zones between Imphal East and Kangpokpi districts. These assaults have resulted in casualties from both Kuki-Zo tribals and Meiteis, exacerbating tension in the region.

The most recent incident occurred yesterday in Kangpokpi's Saikul sub-division, where Meitei militants staged a multipronged attack that tragically claimed the life of one Demkhogin Khongsai, a Kuki village volunteer. Additionally, the militants sabotaged power lines supplying electricity to Saikul, plunging the area into darkness. This follows the earlier acts of sabotage, targeting power lines serving Lamka (Churachandpur) and Pherzawl districts, further disrupting essential services.

Condemnation of these attacks has been swift, with the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) strongly denouncing the violence and the repeated sabotage of public utilities by Meitei radicals. The ITLF warns that such actions will only escalate the conflict and lead to further loss of life.

In another unsurprising event, Meitei militants raided the 5th Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) headquarters in Imphal East, looting approximately 200 arms and 20,000 rounds of ammunition without any resistance from the police personnel stationed at the camp. This brazen attack echoes similar incidents from last year, where large quantities of weapons and ammunition were unlawfully obtained by Meitei mobs from state forces stations within the valley.

Meanwhile in a similar incident at a different location, Meitei militants attempted to loot weapons from the Manipur Police Training College (MPTC) Pangei, but were repelled by central security forces stationed in the vicinity. Tragically, one Border



Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)
Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

File No: ITLF-PR-202479

Wednesday, 14 February 2024

PRESS CONDEMNATION

For almost a week now, Meitei militants have attacked tribal settlements daily near the buffer zones that separate Imphal East and Kangpokpi districts in Manipur, resulting in deaths and injuries among both Kuki-Zo tribals and Meiteis.

Yesterday's multipronged attack on different areas of Kangpokpi's Saikul sub-division resulted in the death of a tribal village volunteer, Demkhogin Khongsai. Meitei militants also sabotaged power lines supplying electricity to Saikul, resulting in a complete blackout in the region. At the beginning of the month, Meitei miscreants also destroyed the lone power line supplying electricity to Lamka (Churachandpur) and Pherzawl districts.

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) strongly condemns the attacks and the repeated sabotage of public utilities by Meitei radicals, which is bound to further escalate the conflict and result in the loss of more precious lives.

Last night, Meiteis in Imphal also stormed the 5th IRB headquarters in Imphal East and looted around 200 arms and 20,000 ammunition. What's more shocking is that the mob faced no resistance from police personnel who were manning the camp. The incident is reminiscent of what happened last year when thousands of guns and lakhs of ammunition from state armories were handed over to mobs in the valley.

A mob also tried to loot weapons last night from the Manipur Police Training Centre (MPTC), but they were repelled by central security forces. One BSF jawan died in the crossfire while four Meiteis were injured.

Any semblance of government control has vanished in Manipur, and violence, including in the capital, is growing day by day. How long will the central government tolerate the Meitei community's total disregard for the rule of law?

Ginza Vualzong
14/02/2024

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Media & Publicity,
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————— To authenticate ITLF's press releases, please refer to our website <https://itlfmediacell.com> —————

Security Force (BSF) jawan lost his life during the confrontation, while four Meiteis sustained injuries.

With the situation deteriorating rapidly in Manipur and violence spreading to the capital, questions are being raised about the efficacy of government control and the Central Government's response to the escalating crisis.

HEAVY GUNFIGHT REPORTED IN SUGNU AREA

An intense gunfight have been reported in Sugnu area on Wednesday morning. Kuki village volunteers and Meitei armed radicals alongwith their militants exchange heavy gunfire in the peripheral areas.

It is to be noted here that Sugnu is the confluence of four districts – Kakching, Chandel, Bishnupur and Churachandpur. No injuries have been reported so far, but sporadic firing continues, according to police sources.

“Several armed individuals fired shots towards Sugnu, prompting a response from the village volunteers,” police said.

Additional security personnel have been dispatched in the area to prevent the situation from becoming more tense.

Last May, Sugnu witnessed severe violence, with all Kuki-Zo houses and villages in and around Sugnu proper set ablaze and the death of five people, forcing hundreds of villagers to seek refuge in relief camps.



Wednesday’s incident came a day after a 25-year-old village volunteer was killed and two others were injured in a gunfight between the two warring communities at Pukhao -Shantipur in Imphal East district.

An army personnel also suffered gunshot injury in a separate incident in the district when a team of security personnel was on its way to control a violent situation.

BUDGET SESSION OF MANIPUR ASSEMBLY TO BEGIN ON FEB 28

The budget session of the Manipur assembly will begin on February 28 and will continue till March 5, an official said on Wednesday.

The budget will be presented on the first day of the session, the Assembly Secretary, K Meghajit Singh, said in a statement after a Business Advisory Committee meeting.

On February 28, the session will begin with the governor’s address followed by obituary references, presentation of the Business Advisory Committee report, supplementary demands for grants 2023-24 and presentation of budget estimates for 2024, the statement said.

The next day, the businesses will include discussion and voting on supplementary demands for grants 2023-24 and introduction of Manipur Appropriation Bills.



Introduction of government bills, if any, including consideration and passing of Manipur Appropriation Bills and Private Members Business, will be on March 1, the statement said.

Presentation of Committee reports and Consideration and passing of government bills, if any, will be on March 4.

The session will conclude on March 5.

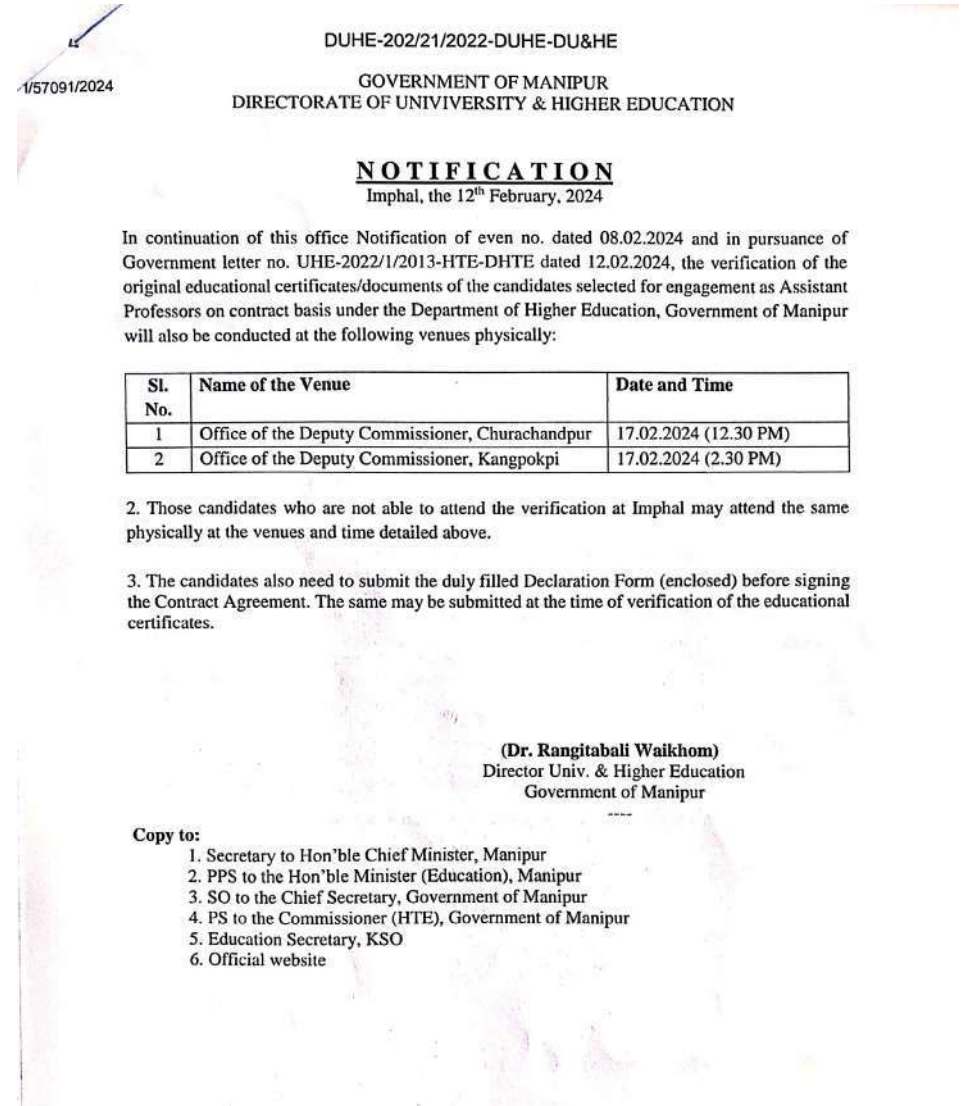
FOLLOWING KSO-GHQ'S APPEAL, ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS IN PLACE FOR DOCUMENT VERIFICATION OF ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

Following an order notice from the Director of University and Higher Education, successful candidates for the Assistant Professor (contract) positions under the Department of Education, Government of Manipur (GoM), are required to undergo document verification processes in Imphal West. However, considering the heightened tensions resulting from the ongoing ethnic conflict, candidates affiliated with the Kuki community have appealed for alternative arrangements in Kangpokpi and Churachandpur districts.

The Kuki Students' Organisation General Headquarters, in response to the candidates' requests, has urged the concerned authorities to explore alternative arrangements for the purpose of document verification outside of Imphal. In a memorandum addressed to the relevant authorities, the KSO GHQ acknowledged the efforts of the Education Department, GoM, in facilitating the verification process but emphasized logistical challenges and security concerns in Imphal.

Highlighting the potential burden on candidates and the need for a streamlined verification process, the KSO GHQ urged the Director to intervene and consider conducting verifications in Churachandpur and Kangpokpi districts. This, they argued, would ensure timely completion of the verification process without causing undue inconvenience to the candidates.

Additionally, the Education Secretary, GHQ, has urged the respective District Commissioners to expedite



the verification process and forward the same to higher authorities for necessary action. The request for alternative arrangements comes amidst the backdrop of the ongoing ethnic conflict, underscoring the need for sensitive and practical solutions to ensure the smooth conduct of administrative procedures.

“

God gives nothing to those who keep their arms crossed.

- African Proverb

KNA-B CLARIFIES REGARDING DISINFORMATION ON TWO DEAD BODIES THAT WENT VIRAL

Denying the allegations made by social media users that two Tangkhul civilians were killed by Kuki militants at Phaikoh under Kamjong district, the Kuki National Army (B) has clarified that the allegations are false and incorrect.

In a statement issued on February 14, KNA (B) stated that the screenshot of a Facebook post by one Rain Shimrah got viral on WhatsApp groups wherein allegations that two Tangkhul innocent civilians were killed by Kuki militants at Phaikoh village was made is false and an incorrect information, having potential to create unnecessary tension between the two communities. Stating that multiple voice messages of misinformation got viral on the same incident, the Kuki National Army, Burma {KNA(B)} is compelled to clarify that the two deceased were killed inside Aungzeyya military camp during a military operation carried out on the 10th February, 2024 by Military Region-1 under the Ministry of Defence, National Unity Government of Myanmar.

Both the deceased are Myanmar nationals. While one of them is a member of Shanni Nationalities Army (SNA), identified to be hailing from Tanan Village under Myethit township, Tamu district, the other is a member of Pyu Saw Htee(PST), a civil militia group raised by the current Myanmar military council's army to counter the Peoples Democratic Front(PDF), the democratic army fighting for restoring democracy in Myanmar, KNA(B) clarifies.

KNA(B) further clarified that the two deceased who were killed in a military operation carried out by Military Region-1 under the MoS, NUG of Myanmar has nothing to do with ethnicity and or nationality.

KNA(B) further stated that the clarification was made to prevent and avoid unnecessary tensions between different communities in Manipur and also requested social media users to maintain restraint from posting and sending voice messages of unverified news items.

Using social media platforms, the Meiteis in their usual self, shared the post made by Rain Shimrah before any confirmation and some of them tried their level best to preach Biren Singh's assertion of brotherhood between Tangkhul and Meitei Communities.



OFFICE OF THE
KUKI NATIONAL ORGANISATION
GOVERNMENT OF KUKI STATE

ကူကီးအမျိုးသားအစည်းအရုံး / ကူကီးအမျိုးသားတပ်မတော် (မြန်မာပြည်)

GENERAL HEADQUARTER

Ref No:KS/GHQ 04/24

E-mail : knaburma@gmail.com

DATE: 14 February 2024

CLARIFICATION ON DISINFORMATION OF TWO DEAD BODIES

It is regretted to learn from the screenshot of Facebook post by one Rain Shimrah today which got viral in whatsapp groups that two Tangkhul innocent civilians were killed by Kuki militants at Phaikoh which is false and incorrect information, having potential to create unnecessary tension between the communities. Besides, multiple voice messages of disinformation got viral on the same.

The Kuki National Army, Burma(KNAB) is therefore compelled to14 clarify that the two deceased were killed inside Aungzeyya military camp during military operation carried out on 10th February, 2024 by Military Region-1 under the Ministry of Defence, National Unity Government of Myanmar.

Both the deceased persons are Myanmar nationals. While one of them is a member of Shanni Nationalities Army(SNA), identified as from Tanan Village under Myothit township, Tamu district, the other one is a member of Pyu Saw Htee(PST), a civil militia group raised by the current Myanmar military council's army to counter the Peoples' Democratic Front(PDF), the democratic army fighting for restoring democracy in Myanmar.

It is also clarified that the two deceased persons killed in military operation carried out by Military Region-1 under the MoS, NUG of Myanmar has nothing to do with ethnic nationalities. We are making this clarification so as to prevent unnecessary tensions between different communities in Manipur. At the same time, social media users are requested to maintain restraint from posting and sending voice messages of unverified news.

(Francis Kuki)
Info. Publicity
KNA/KNO Burma

Taking advantage of such unverified news item to promote their idea of employing the Nagas into their act of war, almost all Meitei Facebook users who came across the facebook post commented and did their best to instigate the Nagas into acting against the Kukis. Some users went farther to question if the Nagas are afraid of the Kukis while one took the opportunity to say "Kukis are the common enemy of Nagas and Meiteis".

Such desperate act on the part of Meitei social media users is uncalled for in this trying times by taking every available opportunity to pitch the Manipur Nagas against the Kukis by making use of unverified and misleading news items. Social media users must refrain from amplifying such misleading information and be vigilant of the dirty politics of brotherhood played by the Meiteis.



KUKI STUDENTS' ORGANIZATION KERALA HOSTS SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMME WITH NIRMALAGIRI COLLEGE



The Kuki Students' Organisation Kerala, in partnership with Nirmalagiri College, organized a Cultural Exchange Programme on February 14 at Nirmalagiri College, Kuthuparamba, Kerala. The aim of the program was to foster mutual understanding between the local community (Keralites) and the Kuki people, showcasing their respective cultures.

From the initial planning stage, which involved careful coordination between the college staff and KSO executives, to the successful execution of the program, the organizers played a crucial role. Kuki students, having obtained approval from their respective colleges, arrived at the venue on February 13.

The cultural exchange commenced on February 14 with a warm welcome for the students, followed by a meeting with officials from Kannur University in the evening. During this meeting, the students shared their experiences and provided feedback

on their stay in Kerala since their arrival.

The event featured cultural performances from both communities, with Kuki students presenting two traditional dances, the 'Lamkol,' and singing 'Thingkho Leh Malcha', accompanied by explanations of their cultural significance. The program concluded successfully with a vote of thanks, including the presentation of mementos to the event organizers by KSO Kerala and Kannur University representatives.

The event provided a platform for cultural exchange, enriching the perspectives of both the local community and the Kuki students. Additionally, it served as a source of comfort for the Kuki students, offering a sense of familiarity and encouragement to continue their life journey. Overall, the event was a resounding success.



FEATURED ARTICLE

Arambai's Political Sway Is Not Only in Imphal But Far Beyond It. Yet the State Turns a Blind Eye

John Simte and Angshuman Choudhury

Speaking at an exclusive event at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) on February 5, Union home minister Amit Shah claimed that the ruling government had ended “border, ethnic and religious disputes” in the Northeast. The timing of his claim is jarring.

Less than a fortnight earlier, the capital of Manipur, which has been embroiled in an intense ethnic conflict between the Meitei and Kuki-Zomi communities since May, witnessed what can only be called a hostile takeover of the state machinery by a militia. On January 24, Arambai Tenggol, a Meitei ethnic militia, accused of attacks against Manipur’s Kuki-Zomi population, summoned 39 Meitei lawmakers in Imphal and administered an “oath” to, among others, protect “Manipur’s territorial integrity”. They were made to sign a six-point charter of demands, which was then sent to the Union government with an implementation deadline of 15 days.

The “ceremony” was held at the iconic Kangla Fort, the traditional seat of the erstwhile Meitei kingdom. According to media reports, the Arambai cadres not only forced the state police to keep out, but also roughed up some of the lawmakers present. Among those reportedly beaten up were two Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which rules the state. One of them was Paonam Brojen Singh, a Meitei Christian, who is seen to be a political opponent of the chief minister and whose

Imphal property was vandalised by an Arambai-led mob in early May. Manipur’s Congress chief, K. Meghachandra, was also reportedly assaulted.

In short, the whole ceremony, conducted under duress, was nothing short of an insurrection – a direct challenge to the state’s constitutional authority to enforce law and order.

A parallel state emerges

Few in the national commentariat have understood the real gravity or political and constitutional ramifications of what happened in Imphal on January 24.

A multi-layered security ‘bandobast’, with personnel drawn from the nearly 60,000 central and state security forces operating under the Unified Command in Manipur, including the Assam Rifles and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), were to be stationed outside all the entrances to the fort to stop the Arambai cadres from entering. However, according to a report in The Print, the security cover was withdrawn at the last moment. No one knows who gave the orders.

Photos captured by Scroll’s Arunabh Saikia show Arambai cadres in camouflage manning the fort’s

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main gate, along with open-top Gypsy cars, adorned with the Salai Taret flag, which once represented the seven Meitei clans of the Meitei kingdom, parked outside the complex.

Looking at the pictures, an uninitiated observer might think the Arambai was an official paramilitary force. They would probably not know that its members have been accused of murder, rape, extortion and collection of ‘protection money’, and forcing Meitei Christians to denounce their religion at gun point.

The event didn’t end at Kangla Fort. It spilled out onto the streets of Imphal. Videos circulating on social media show the Arambai’s influential “Commander-in-Chief”, Korunungba Khuman, dressed in pastel green camouflage, getting off a vehicle with a “Police” sticker pasted on its windshield and proudly marching to the famous “Ima Keithel” or “Mother’s Market” along with his lieutenants, as a rapturous crowd raising the Salai Taret flag cheered them on.

The stage-managed histrionics of it all shouldn’t be underestimated. The “oath” ceremony and Arambai’s triumphant parade afterwards marked the emergence of a new social contract in Manipur – one that allows an extrajudicial entity to claim the state’s constitutional legitimacy and monopoly over violence. Even “Hobbesian anarchy” doesn’t fully describe this dissolution of state power in Manipur.

Notably, the Arambai administered the oath in the name of Sanamahi, a Meitei deity, lending the whole event a ethno-religious flavour. The demands included the removal of “Kuki illegal immigrants” from the Scheduled Tribe (ST) list and conducting an Assam-like exercise to create a National Register of Citizens (NRC) for Manipur with 1951 as the base year. Both flow from the mischaracterisation by the Meitei political elite and civil society of the Hills-based tribal community as “illegal immigrants” and “interlopers” from Myanmar.

A challenge to state authority

If summoning elected constitutional functionaries and forcing them to abandon their sworn oath of office to

uphold the Indian constitution, while coercing them to take an ethno-political pledge, isn’t an affront to India’s national security and political integrity, then what is?

Perhaps, what is even more striking is that the Government of India is directly and morally implicated in this extra-constitutional event as a Union minister – Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, the Minister of State for External Affairs – was also amongst the functionaries who took the oath.

Even by the logic of India’s anti-terror law, Arambai’s actions from May 3 onwards (and, specifically the January 24 event) amount to “terrorist act(s)” and a threat to national security. Their actions fall squarely within the four corners of what is punishable under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), 1967. They were undertaken, among others, with the “intent to strike terror in the people” and to “... compel the State Government or the Government of India” to fulfil their demands.

However, Arambai is yet to face the music from the state. Let alone legal action, the Manipur police has not detained a single member of the armed group for the “oath-taking” ceremony and the alleged violence against elected lawmakers. Neither has the state government, led by the BJP chief minister, N. Biren Singh, condemned it.

A Robinhood militia

Over the last few months, Imphal and New Delhi have watched from the wings as Arambai, which had relatively lesser influence in Manipur before May, steadily grew in scope and size while chipping away at the state’s authority by looting arms from police armouries, attacking central forces, and brandishing weapons in public spaces.

The rise of militias is a complex phenomenon, especially in the context of an active multi-ethnic

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conflict. So, there may be many reasons why the Arambai managed to break through the glass wall of public opinion and become somewhat of a “Robinhood militia”.

But, a clear factor behind its ascendance is the creation of a critical political vacuum in Meitei society since the conflict began in May. It is likely that large sections of the population no longer trust the Singh government to protect their interests. Arambai emerged as a more viable and compelling alternative, not least because of its resolute military action at the frontlines. Despite growing evidence of their role in perpetuating violence against the Kuki-Zomis, an editor of the People’s Chronicle, an Imphal-based publication, had called the militia’s role and influence in Manipur since May as being akin to a “WhatsApp group”.

The Meitei public now sees the Arambai as a unifying political force, rather than just their rightful military representative. For them, the “oath-taking” ceremony was the group’s attempt to discipline Meitei lawmakers across the political spectrum and compel them to uphold core concerns of the community.

In fact, the Kangla Fort event, with all its spectacular symbolism and political iconography, has thickened the air of myth and enigma around Arambai Tenggol, a name that evocatively refers to the dart-wielding calvary force of the ancient Meitei kingdom of Kangleipak.

Broad appeal

Interestingly, the Arambai seems to have become even more popular than the established (and proscribed) Meitei armed groups, such as the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), People’s Liberation Army (PLA), and Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (KYKL). It seems to have been more successful than these older insurgent groups in drawing the disenchanting and disgruntled Meitei youth into a programme of patriotism and direct action. In fact, even in terms of actual armed action on the ground, the Arambai appear to have overshadowed the presence of the older groups, resulting in a potential turf war between them.

What’s more worrying perhaps is that the Arambai’s

soaring influence among the Meiteis, including their public figures, will further discourage the Biren Singh government from acting against it. By moving against the group, Biren Singh could alienate his core constituencies and thus, make himself less politically valuable to the BJP’s high command. This creates a fatal deadlock, which allows the Arambai to not just persist, but also grow even bigger and stronger.

In the recent past, prominent Meitei personalities, such as Bollywood actress Lin Laishram, and Licypriya Kangujam, a 12-year-old climate activist, have publicly expressed their support for the Arambai on social media. Licypriya had even mobilised funds for the purchase of thermal imaging drones for the militia to use in their fight against what she called “illegal Kuki Narco Terrorist”. Using social service acts, such as distributing aid in Meitei relief camps, the Arambai has been able to command wide appeal in Meitei society.

Collusion with state

Various reports in mainstream and social media have indicated that the Arambai enjoys high-profile patronage from the Meitei ruling elite. Even before the conflict began in May, it had the attention of senior political figures. Pictures from August 2022 show the militia’s leader, Khuman, sitting with the chief minister and Leishemba Sanajaoba, the titular king of Manipur and Rajya Sabha MP. A Facebook video from September that year shows cadres taking some kind of oath at Sanajaoba’s residence.

Members of the Kuki-Zomi community have also accused the state police of providing cover to Arambai cadres during violent attacks against their villages. Kuki-Zomi organisations have accused the police of handing over arms to Arambai members, many of whom have openly flaunted them in public. This marks a sinister blurring of lines between state and non-state armed actors.

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But, why has this happened? One reason could be that the Manipur government was keen on delegating the mandate of law enforcement to other actors. But, there may be other factors in an ethnically loaded context. Writing for the Journal of Conflict Resolution, Sabine C. Carey, Michael P. Colaresi and Neil J. Mitchell argue that “governments perceive ties to militias as a mechanism to evade accountability and muddy the flow of information about who is responsible for violence.”

One is reminded of the Arab Janjaweed militia in Sudan, which, supported by the government, wreaked havoc in the Darfur region two decades ago. It showed the world the catastrophic consequences of a government giving carte blanche (and access to small arms) to an ethnic militia. The example of Libya after 2011 also comes to mind. The vacuum that the killing of Muammar al-Qaddafi by NATO-linked forces left was quickly filled up by various militias, which then went on to claim state authority.

But, one doesn't have to go that far. Right next to Manipur, the Myanmar military has been using a violent militia known as Pyu Saw Htee (PSH) to fight its dirty war against pro-democracy groups.

Arambai's growing political shadow

One of the demands that Arambai had made in its “resolution” during the Kangla event was fencing the India-Myanmar border. It had given New Delhi 15 days to fulfil the demand. On February 3, Singh travelled to New Delhi to meet Shah and revealed that the government was “set to take some important decisions in the interests of the people of Manipur.”

Three days later, and 12 days after Arambai made its demands, Shah announced that the Modi government would fence the entire border. Two days later, he announced that the home ministry has suspended the Free Movement Regime (FMR) that allows visa-free travel along the 16-kilometre band on both sides of the border.

One wonders if these big-ticket decisions are directly

linked to Arambai's demands (and deadline). If so, it is a deeply worrying sign of New Delhi giving in to an anarchic power in Manipur. It is also a sign of Arambai's political sway in not just Imphal, but far beyond it, in the national capital.

In fact, two days before the Kangla event, an official central delegation composed of the interlocutor for the Kuki-Zomi insurgent groups, [organised under the United People's Front (UPF) and the Kuki National Organization (KNO)], A.K. Mishra, and two senior officials from the Intelligence Bureau (IB) were rushed to Imphal to hold a series of meetings with the Arambai. It is likely that they wanted to reach a compromise to prevent a coup d'etat in Manipur. Clearly, New Delhi, too, can't dismiss, let alone challenge, the militia's influence in Imphal. In turn, Arambai is able to cement its credibility.

Merely two days after the Kangla Fort event, the state government hosted Republic Day at the same location. In his speech, Singh paid homage to the members of the Constituent Assembly and urged the people to “respect the Constitution of India and one another [...]” The absurd irony isn't lost on anyone, one hopes.

Whether Arambai Tenggol and the political forces behind its meteoric rise are ultimately prosecuted or not is a different matter. The fact remains that on January 24, the death knell of the Indian Constitution rang loud with a deafening shrillness from Imphal's Kangla Fort. The Modi government now has three choices – to shut the din, to shut its own ears, or to jive along with it. It is entirely up to the prime minister and home minister to take their pick.

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SOCIAL MEDIA
THE BUZZ



Vishwajeet Singh
@VishuAdv

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Meiteis started believing their own lies casually peddled to them by their failed lying CM and Maharaja over the years. Now they're pipedreaming they'll be able to conduct NRC beyond their Pukhri. Failed government will keep on failing coz of its evil intent. @indira_laisram



Indii @indira_laisram · 1d

While the idea of blocking illegal immigrants may sound unsettling to some, the reality is: #Manipur, despite its small size, is home to hundreds of illegal immigrants and refugees who have made Indian territory their permanent residence, posing a significant threat to national...

5:40 pm · 13 Feb 24 · 7,516 Views



Indian Christian Community
@ChristianIndia_

For the 4th time, the terrorist group who have been engaging in attacking the Christian community in Manipur since May 2023 has looted Govt. armories in Imphal. We urge the Govt. of India to respond immediately.

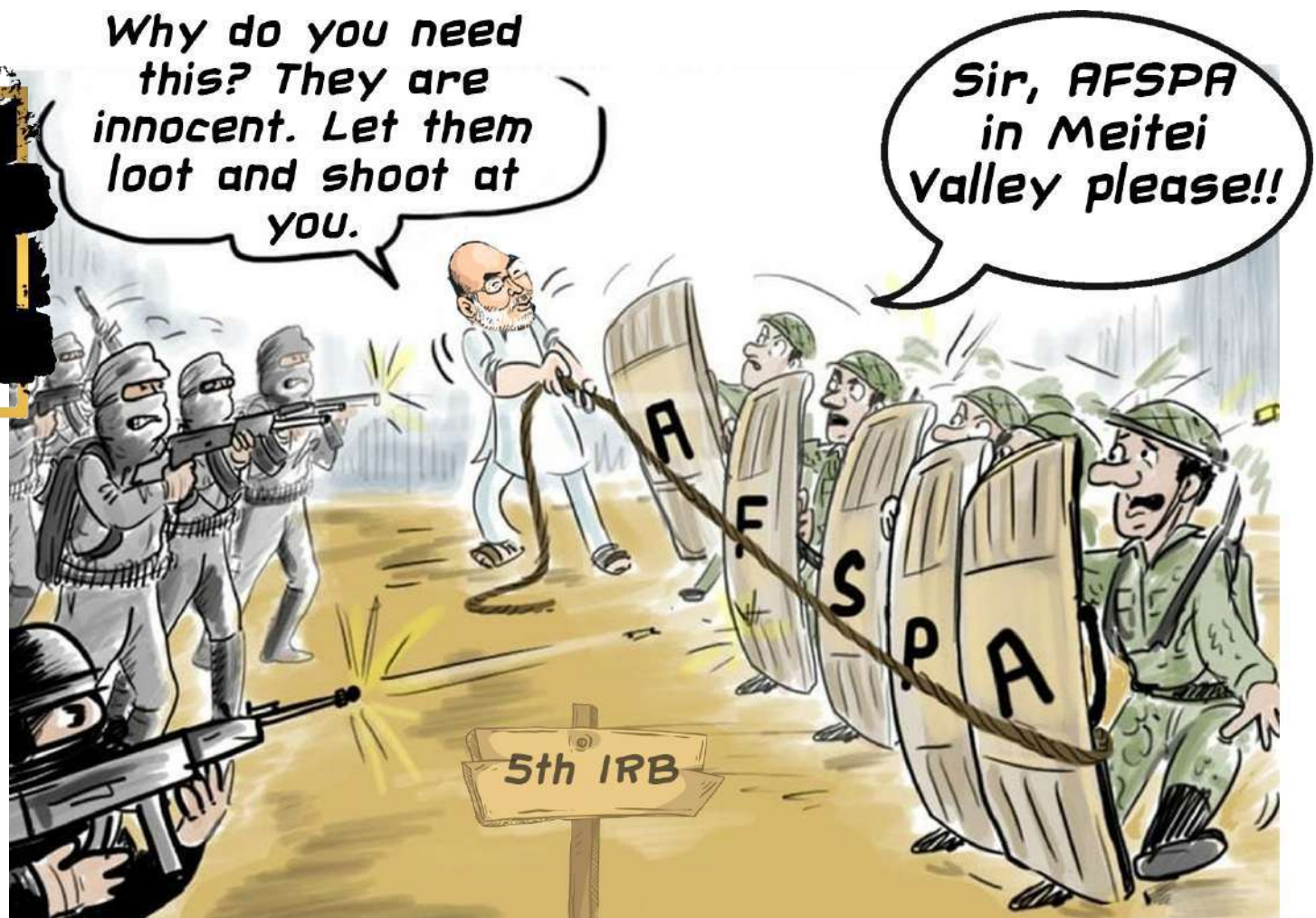
#ManipurViolence
@PMOIndia @HMOIndia @DefProdnIndia
@UNHumanRights



6:02 pm · 14 Feb 24 · 1,060 Views

Post MORTEM

THE SHIELD THAT COVERS MILITANTS VERSUS THE DENIED SHIELD





OH 'TAHCHAPA' VILLAGE VOLUNTEER

In the heart of the village, where spirits roam,
Stands TAHCHAPA, a beacon, a guiding home,
With hands of kindness and eyes that gleam,
He weaves through the village, like a flowing stream.

In the silent paths, where whispers hide,
TAHCHAPA walks with humility, side by side,
His presence a comfort, a solace deep,
In every corner of the village, stories abound.

With laughter shared and burden light,
He walks with grace, through day and night,
His wisdom deep, his heart shining,
TAHCHAPA'S spirit, a gentle, steady flow.

Through fields of green and skies of blue,
He nurtures the village, both old and new,
In his footsteps, hope takes journey,
Guiding the village towards the light.

Oh, TAHCHAPA, Village Volunteer great,
In your embrace, the village's dreams align,
With every act, with every prayer,
You're the soul of the village, ever just.

-Thongminthang Lhungdim

