

Thingkho Le Maleha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



Thingkangphai JB School RELIEF CENTRE

JB School, Thingkangphai, Lamka

Managed by
Kuki Khanglai Lawmpi
General Headquarters(KKL-GHQ)

Total Inmates Registered: 86*

■ Male: 41	■ Female: 45
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*As on 12th August, 2023



KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 10.01.2024



158
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.

Manipur Police Commando: A Source of Trouble for the People of Moreh Town

KUKI-ZO WOMEN PROTEST AGAINST MEITEI MILITIAS' BID TO SEIZE GOVERNMENT OFFICE COMPLEX, ONE WOMAN SUSTAINS BULLET INJURY, KUKI-ZO WOMEN WARNS OF INTENSE STIRS

Tension ran high in border town Moreh this afternoon when the security forces allegedly arrested two Kuki-Zo top body leaders.

Following the arrest of two Kuki Inpi Tengnoupal District leaders, the Kuki-Zo women in Moreh protested against the arrest and demanded the unconditional and immediate release of the two leaders.

A 27-year-old girl Nemneihing Simte, d/o Thangmang Simte of Moreh Mission Veng reportedly got a bullet injury on her knee which was allegedly shot by the security forces.

Earlier, in the morning at around 9:00 am, the Kuki-Zo womenfolks were protesting against the presence of armed militants and the Tengnoupal District Police led by its SP Rahul Gupta's attempt to occupy the Additional Deputy Commissioner's office complex located at Chikim Veng.

Later, the Assam Rifles, BSF and RAF personnel went to the spot and talked with the protesting women where the Kuki Inpi Tengnoupal leaders explained to the security forces about the ground reality and the unwavering demand of the public to remove the state's police commandos, the Arambai Tenggol, and the Meitei Leepun who allegedly disrupted peace and normalcy in the district.

The Kuki Inpi Tengnoupal representatives told the security officers to understand the sentiment of the people and cancel the plan of stationing the radical armed militants who are allegedly camouflaged in state police uniforms.

The Kuki top body also conveyed the public sentiment to the security officials that the public of Moreh



welcomed the neutral security forces but would not allow the Meitei police and Meitei people to occupy or station in the Tengnoupal district unless the Kuki-Zo political solution is in place.

The Kuki Inpi Tengnoupal while strongly condemning Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh's alleged tendency to create problems in Moreh, stated that the sooner the Meitei state forces are withdrawn or removed from Tengnoupal district, especially in Moreh town, the quicker peace and normalcy will prevail.

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Meanwhile, the Kuki Women Union Sadar Hills vehemently condemned the arrest of two Kuki Inpi Tengnoupal District leaders while conveying its deep concern and dismay over the reprehensible act of firing a bullet at a woman by Manipur police commando.

The Kuki-Zo women's top body stated that such acts of violence and intimidation not only violate the fundamental rights of individuals but also pose a threat to the peace and harmony of our community.

While calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the unlawfully arrested KIT leaders, the Kuki-Zo women's body demanded a thorough

inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the bullet shot against the woman.

It also emphasized the importance of upholding the rule of law and ensuring the safety and security of every individual within our community while conveying the commitment of the Kuki-Zo women in advocating for justice, human rights, and the well-being of the Kuki community.

The Kuki-Zo women's top body also cautioned that if the arrested leaders are not released at the earliest, the Kuki-Zo women will not remain silent and call for intense agitation.

NO MILITANTS FROM CHURACHANDPUR COMING TO JIRIBAM, TAMENGLONG AND NONEY; KUKI INPI JIRI TAMENGLONG NONEY CLARIFIES

The Kuki Innpi Jiri Tamenglong Noney(JTN) has issued a clarification in connection with viral message on social media platform(WhatsApp) regarding the presence of 200 militants from Churachandpur in Jiribam, Tamenglong and surrounding areas.

Clarifying that there are no such people coming from Churachandpur and that the viral message is unfounded, the Kuki Inpi stated in a release issued on monday that there is no reason to be apprehensive.

The release stated that the Kuki Inpi JTN always stands for peaceful coexistence in Jiribam and surrounding areas and will be opposed to such activities even in future.

Kuki Inpi JTN also advised social media users that such unfounded messages should not be created even if it is meant for jokes because of the volatile situation we have in our state.



OFFICE OF THE KUKI INPI
JIRIBAM, TAMENGLONG & NONEY DISTRICTS, MANIPUR
(Apex Body of Kuki Tribes)
HEAD OFFICE : PHAITOL VILLAGE TOUSEM SUBDIVISION, TAMENGLONG DISTRICT
MANIPUR, PIN – 795115
Contact no. : 7005039212/8837288900/7635971596

Ref. No.

Dated 15/01/2024

Press Statement

The Kuki Innpi Jiri Tamenglong Noney had learned that a whatsapp message had gone viral regarding presence of 200 militants from churachandpur in Jiribam , Tamenglong and surrounding areas leading to apprehension of common people.

The Kuki Innpi JTN, hereby, clarify that there is no such people coming from Churachandpur and the viral message is unfounded and as such there is no reason to be apprehensive to it.

The Kuki Innpi JTN always stand for peaceful coexistence in Jiribam and surrounding areas and will be oppose to such activities even in future.

Moreover, it is adviced to the social media users that such unfounded messages should not be created even if it is meant for jokes because of the volatile situation we had in our state.

Sd/-
Information & Publicity
KUKI INPI JTN.



KUKI-ZO MLAS ADVOCATE FOR REINSTATEMENT OF SUSPENDED OFFICERS AND CBSE AFFILIATION RESTORATION IN MEMO TO UHM AMIT SHAH

Ten Kuki-Zo MLAs have urged the Union Home Amit Shah to issue directions to the state government for revoking the suspension orders against the three suspended Kuki-Zo officers. The Kuki-Zo MLAs submitted a memorandum to Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday for re-instatement of suspended Kuki-Zomi officers in public interest.

In the memorandum, the MLAs also urged the Union Home Minister to initiate necessary steps to restore the CBSE affiliations granted in favour of 26 schools in Churachandpur and Kangpokpi districts.

The government of Manipur initiated departmental proceedings against three Kuki-Zo officials serving in the Department of Education (S), Govt. of Manipur order vide No. AS-101/S/2023- EDN(S)EDN(S) dated 12th November, 2024 namely Jangkhohao Haokip, ZEO, Churachandpur, Lhingtenng, ZEO, Kangpokpi and L. Taithul, D.I of Schools, Samulamlan Block of ZEO, Churachandpur and placed them under suspension.

The three suspended officials, being the competent authorities had issued 'No Objection Certificates' in favour of 26 schools of Churachandpur and Kangpokpi districts for obtaining affiliations under CBSE following the outbreak of ethnic violence in Manipur in the best interest of the student community as there have been many instances of gross negligence and injustice to many deserving schools and students under the Board of Secondary Education Manipur.

The Central Board of Secondary Education, after finding that the proposals were in order and genuine, granted CBSE affiliation in respect of 26 schools of Churachandpur and Kangpokpi districts in December 2023. Surprisingly, these 26 schools were de-affiliated a few days after they were given affiliation in December 2023. It is learnt that the three officials were suspended by the State Govt. for issuing the NOCs for getting CBSE affiliation by the 26 schools.

The memorandum stated that the suspended officers were doing their legitimate duty keeping in mind the best interests of the affected schools and students, who could not pursue their studies for the past over eight months.

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO THE HONORABLE MINISTER, MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, NEW DELHI BY THE KUKI-ZOMI-HMAR MLAS

To,

Shri Amit Shah,
Hon'ble Union Home Minister,
Ministry of Home Affairs,
Govt. of India,
North Block, New Delhi - 110001
hm@mha.gov.in
14th January, 2024

Subject: Re-Instatement of suspended Kuki-Zomi officers in public interest.

Dear Sir,

We, the Kuki-Zomi-Hmar MLAs of Manipur Legislative Assembly would like to bring to your kind notice the following for favour of kind urgent intervention.

The Govt. of Manipur initiated Departmental Proceedings against three Kuki-Zomi officials serving in the Department of Education (S), Govt. of Manipur order vide No. AS-101/S/2023-EDN(S)EDN(S) dated 12th November, 2024 namely Shri Jangkhohao Haokip, ZEO, Churachandpur, Smt. Lhingtenng, ZEO, Kangpokpi and Shri L. Taithul, D.I of Schools, Samulamlan Block of ZEO, Churachandpur and placed them under suspension.

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In this connection, we would like to make it clear that the suspended officers were doing their legitimate duty keeping in mind the best interests of the affected schools & students, who could not pursue their studies for the past over 8 months. Moreover, there have been glaring cases of discrimination and injustice meted out to deserving students in recent months. The blatant downgrading/tampering of marks of many bright students of Rayburn college, Churachandpur by Manipur University recently is a case in point. Further, the suspended officers have merely been discharging their official duties at the behest of the Kuki-Zomi-Hmar MLAs in utmost interest of the affected schools and the affected students under extraordinary circumstances that our people are painfully subjected to even till today.

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Moreover, there have been glaring cases of discrimination and injustice meted out to deserving students in recent months. The blatant downgrading/tampering of marks of many bright students of Rayburn College, Churachandpur by the Manipur University recently is a case in point.

Further, the suspended officers have merely been discharging their official duties at the behest of the Kuki-Zo MLAs in utmost interest of the affected schools and the affected students under extraordinary circumstances that our people are painfully subjected to even till today.

JSB LAMKA LOCK ZEO OFFICES FOLLOWING SUSPENSION OF OFFICIALS AND DISAFFILIATION OF 26 CBSE SCHOOLS

Disappointed with the suspension of three ZEO officials and the disaffiliation of 26 schools under CBSE in Kangpokpi and Churachandpur district, the Joint Students Body Lamka closed down the gates of Zonal Education Offices in Churachandpur and Pherzawl district on Monday.

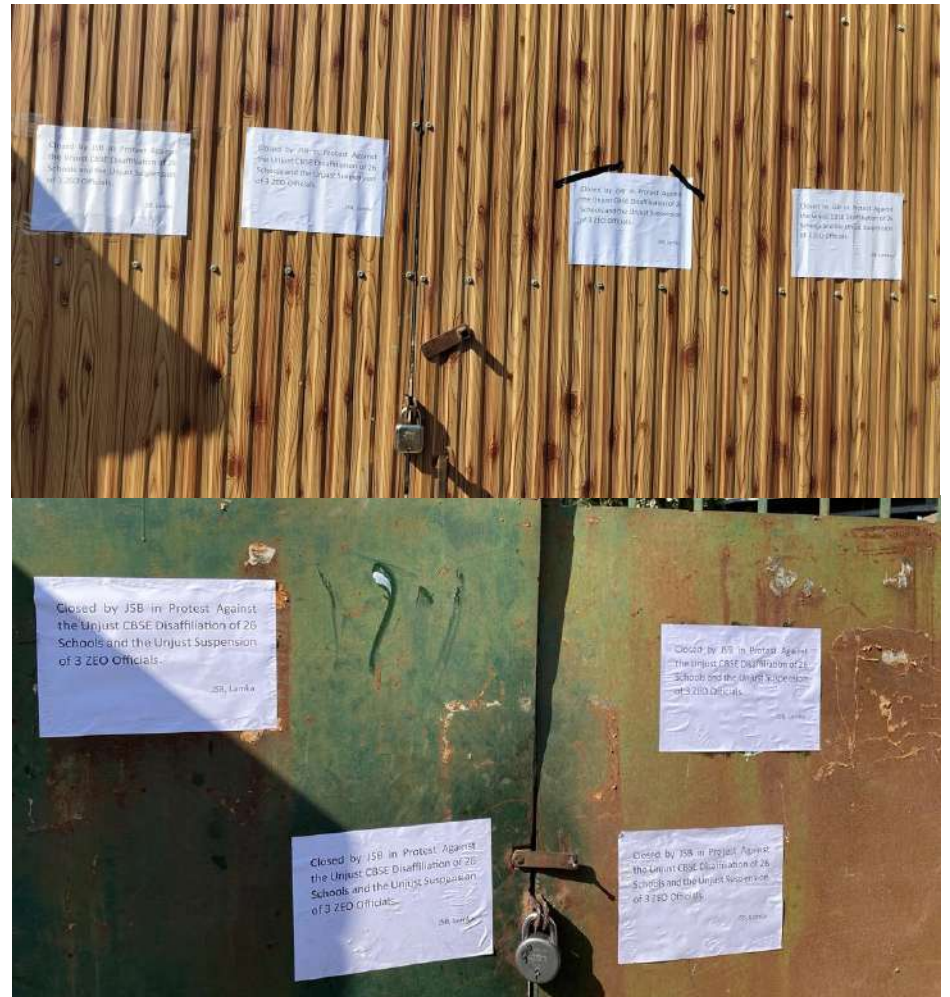
Members and volunteers of JSB Lamka went to the ZEO office and locked the gate on Monday noon.

Briefing the media after locking the gate of ZEO Churachandpur, Joint Students Body Lamka Spokesperson Samuel Taithul said that the offices had been closed down as a follow up to the 48 hour ultimatum served by JSB to the concerned authorities.

Samuel said that the step initiated was a sign of protest at the unjust suspension of three ZEO officers belonging to the Kuki-Zo community. Besides, this process had been necessitated by the disaffiliation of 26 schools under the Central Board of Secondary Education in Kangpokpi and Churachandpur districts, he added.

Samuel also demanded the central government to reverse the decision to suspend three ZEO officials and the disaffiliation of the schools.

It may be mentioned that the JSB Lamka on January 12 had appealed to the CBSE Chairman for



reversal of the decision to disaffiliate 26 schools in Churachandpur and Kangpokpi district.

In the letter, JSB Lamka had also vowed that all action and measures would be taken to reverse the unjust disaffiliation.

“ We cannot enter into alliances until we are acquainted with the designs of our neighbors. — Sun Tzu ”

SADAR HILLS WELCOMES BHARAT JODO NYAY YATRA WITH WARM HEARTS AND JOY



The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra received a warm welcome when it reached Kangpokpi district this morning at 8:00 am at Gamgiphai, the peripheral area of Kangpokpi and Imphal West.

Thousands of Kuki-Zo people welcomed the senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and his team with joyful hearts and excitement, displaying the Kuki-Zo famous traditional “Salulap Dance”.

The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra supporters in Kangpokpi district also blessed the senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with the slogan, “Pu Rahul Gandhi, Damsot hen”, which means, “Hon’ble Rahul Gandhi, Long Live”.

The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra which was kicked off under the theme, “Saho Mat, Daro Mat”, which means, “Tolerate No More, Fear No More” from Khongjom in Thoubal district reached Kangpokpi after halting a night at Sekmai.

Kangpokpi district is among the 110 districts in 15 states, which will be covered by the Yatra travelling 6700 plus Kilometres in a span of 66 days.

During the 25 Kms. journey in a Volvo bus, before reaching Kangpokpi district headquarters, members of the Kuki Women Organization for Human Rights (KWOHR), who traveled along with the senior Congress leader apprised him of the current situation, grievances and hardships, and the various human rights violation faced by the Kuki-Zo people and also highlighted the prevailing situation of Moreh.

A member of KWOHR told the media at Kangpokpi that they had told Rahul Gandhi that unless the state forces, especially the Meitei commandos are withdrawn/removed from the border town, there will be no peace in Moreh.

The Kuki-Zo people in all the villages along the National Highway-2 were seen coming out on the roadside forming a human chain to greet Rahul Gandhi on his way to the Kangpokpi District Headquarters.

Apart from several other Congress leaders, the INC candidate in the last MLA election in Manipur from Saitu AC, Dr. Lamtinhang Haokip, and Saikul AC MLA Kim Haokip also accompanied Rahul Gandhi in the yatra.

At Kangpokpi District Headquarters, the Kuki Inpi Sadar Hills met the senior Congress leader, Rahul Gandhi, who led the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra and submitted a memorandum.

In the memorandum, Thangminlen Kipgen, President of Kuki Inpi Sadar Hills said, “I write to bring to your attention the deeply concerning situation of the ongoing ethnic violence between the minority Kuki-Zo and the majority Meitei communities in Manipur.”

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He stated that disturbingly, the violence that erupted on May 3 is believed to be under the influence of the N. Biren-led BJP government.

He also stated that the Kuki-Zo community was currently facing a severe crisis, exacerbated by the inability to access hospitals and colleges in Imphal, and in light of this, the community urgently requested his intervention in facilitating the establishment of a hospital and a secular college at Kangpokpi District through NGOs or private entities for the affected Kuki-Zo people as they had lost all faith in the governance system which had failed them.

He further stated that this step is critical in providing immediate relief and addressing the healthcare and educational needs of the affected population.

Strongly condemning the Manipur government's proposal to locate designated camps for UNLF surrendered cadres in tribal areas considering it a direct provocation of tribal sentiment, Thangminlen Kipgen stated that such a move not only jeopardizes the security of tribal populations but also raises serious humanitarian concerns.

He also stated that the recent efforts by the Manipur government to de-enlist tribes under the Kuki community as scheduled tribes is deeply distressing.

Pointing out that the Kuki community has a distinguished history of fighting alongside Indians during the freedom movement against the British, Kipgen stated that any attempt to revoke their scheduled tribe status undermined their historical contributions and rights.

The top Kuki body also sought urgent intervention from Rahul Gandhi to address such critical issues, promote peace, and safeguard the rights of the affected communities in Manipur.

The Kuki Students Organization Sadar Hills, or the KSO-SH also submitted a memorandum to Rahul Gandhi appraising him of various timely needs and grievances of the Kuki-Zo people.

Firstly, to provide safe custody towards the Kuki-Zo's long educational goal, the KSO Sadar Hills appealed to the senior Congress leader to initiate the construction of universities in Kuki-Zo-dominated areas at the earliest stating that due to the current crisis in the state, the Kuki-Zo people have been deprived of educational opportunities with special reference to the establishment of proper universities in the Kuki-Zo jurisdiction.

Secondly, it also urged to spearhead the way for schools of the Kuki-Zo-dominated areas for affiliation to the Central Board of Education (CBSE) at the earliest for the younger generation to feel educational safety since the Kuki-Zo people cannot access affiliation in the school administration of the state.

Thirdly, KSO Sadar Hills urged Rahul Gandhi to renovate or construct proper road connectivity for the Kuki-Zo people, towns, and villages of the Kuki-Zo inhabited areas stating that with the present situation of the state, road connectivity amongst the towns and villages of the Kuki-Zo areas are deplorable which lead to improper connectivity and correspondences.

Fourthly, it also urged Rahul Gandhi's perusal, incursion, and redressal in solving the unemployment status for the Kuki-Zo people who allegedly are deprived of all sections of the government setups and departments stating that at this present war-like crisis, the employment status and the silence of the present government make the youths miserable and to take into consideration the current state of employment of the educated youths with special reference to the Kuki-Zo people.

Fifthly, in connection with healthcare, the Kuki Students Organisation appealed to the senior Congress leader for the construction of CHC/PHC in all Kuki-Zo inhabited areas for timely coverage of healthcare facilities.

ALLEGED MOLESTATION IN IMPHAL VALLEY COURTROOM: MEITEI MAN ACCUSED OF ASSAULTING LADY ADVOCATE

In a disturbing incident that unfolded in the Imphal Valley, a Meitei man was accused of molesting a Meitei lady advocate inside a courtroom on January 11 by forcibly grabbing her breast. Media reports indicate that the victim, a woman advocate, filed a complaint against the accused, Kangjam Birjit, 33, son of K Shyam Singh from Uripok Takhellambam Leikai, Imphal West.

According to the filed complaint, the incident occurred at approximately 2:30 in the afternoon on January 11 while the advocate was present in the courtroom for a case appearance before the Civil Judge Junior Division, Imphal West-1, at Lamphelpat. The lady advocate, sitting with her colleagues in the last bench, recounted that the accused, who was already inside the courtroom, emerged from the staff room in the company of LC Prosecution. He loudly declared his intention to assault the lady advocate, and abruptly approached her, forcefully grabbing her breast.



Following the complaint, the accused, Kangjam Birjit, has been remanded to a 15-day judicial custody in connection with the case of molesting a woman advocate inside the courtroom, as reported.”

THE BUZZ SOCIAL MEDIA

Aboriginal_Kuki @AboriginalKuki

Moreh

Last week, the GOC Spear Corps conducted a comprehensive assessment in Moreh, Manipur, fostering a peaceful dialogue with stakeholders and CSOs.

-Regrettably, today, the state communal police commando once again disrupted Moreh, misusing their authority by firing at the civilian, resulting in the injury of a Kuki woman. She is now under care at the BSF camp.

Urgently appealing to the central government to investigate and swiftly withdraw all the Meitei Police Commando, the champions of fake encounters and official extortion. The resilient people of Moreh refuse to remain silent any longer.

Congress @INCIndia

Together, we stand against injustice, demanding a fair & equitable society for all.

#BharatJodoNyayYatra

Nyay Ka Haq Milne Tak



1:49 PM · Jan 15, 2024 · 21.9K Views





KUKI STUDENTS' ORGANISATION

CHURACHANDPUR DISTRICT

Motto: Learn, Unite & Serve

Regd. No. 2991 of 1979

Administrative Office:
KIC Complex, Tuibong
PO. Churachandpur- 795128
Manipur, INDIA
e-mail: ksoccpur@gmail.com

HENGLEP BLOCK SANGAIKOT BLOCK SINGAT BLOCK THANLON BLOCK SAMULAMLAN BLOCK LEIMATA BLOCK SONGPI BLOCK

Ref. No. KSO/CCP/PR/2023-: 60

Date.....

NOTICE

The 15th January, 2024

On January 11, 2024, the **Kuki Student's Organisation Churachandpur** conducted a Public Consultation to address the concerns of students, parents, and guardians. Following this, the organization held a separate Consultation with School Owners today, presenting the challenges faced by students and parents to the Principals and School representatives. The perspectives, agreements, and challenges voiced by school owners were also considered. Subsequently, as a significant stakeholder in the educational sector, the KSO Churachandpur adopted the following resolutions in the best interest of the general public.

Therefore, the Kuki Student's Organisation appeals to the School Principals to fully adhere to the following:-

1. There should be no hike in the Admission Fee and Tuition Fee. The fee for 2023 should be maintained.
2. No extra-curricular activities should be conducted during this academic year.
3. Considering the situation and economic impact of the Meitei War, the school should refrain from selling unnecessary uniforms. Implementing a single uniform for all students is recommended.
4. Schools are requested to consider full concessions (100%) for bonafide IDPs, based on the financial condition of their parents.
5. The bonafide wards/children of volunteers guarding Kuki-Zo land should receive education free of cost in all educational institutions.
6. No School should make a new textbook compulsory for students unless there are changes in the syllabus. (Applicable to higher classes, who maintain books well)
7. Study camps should only be made compulsory if and when the majority of parents in the school agree.
8. All private schools are requested to establish a parents association.

Issued in Public Interest by:-

Department of Education
KSO Churachandpur



THE RELENTLESS onslaught to grab tribal lands in the hill areas of Manipur with students union joining the chorus for inclusion of Meitei community in the list of Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the announcement by the Scheduled Tribe Demand Committee Manipur (STDCM) that it will renew its campaign from January 2024 will embroil the state in more problems than never before. The desire by the Meitei community to become ST is understood by the current STs of Manipur as an attempt to overcome constitutional safeguards given to tribal lands and make them eligible to buy tribal lands in the “Hill Areas” of Manipur. It is clear that ST status demand is not about jobs or seats in government and its institutions but about grabbing tribal lands in the hill areas by the Meitei community who dominates the government and all its machineries. The ministry of tribal affairs, government of India (GoI) in their letter dated 29.5.2013 has already requested the State government of Manipur to send specific recommendation along with a recent socio-economic survey and ethnographic study. This advise is ignored by the STDCM. Instead they are pursuing a policy of majoritarianism to prove that the majority population wants ST status for Meitei community through “missed call campaign” and own self-assertion of being a tribe even to this day. They have conveniently forgotten the 5 criteria recommended by the Lokur Committee for identification which are - primitive traits, distinct culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with

the community at large, and backwardness. By any stretch of imagination Meitei community do not fulfil any of these criteria except distinct culture, yet all Meitei organisations are saying they fulfil all the criteria? What such assertions is doing is only pushing the tribes away to conclude that they do not have a place in Manipur. That, they are better off without being part of Manipur. The senseless push will unwittingly lead to the disintegration of the state of Manipur.

The strategy of the Meitei Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) led by STDCM to pressurise the state government to send a proposal to the GoI recommending for inclusion of Meitei community in the list of ST based only on purported ethnographic study carried out by Meitei scholars which may show that they were a tribe ‘once upon a time’ without any concrete scientific evidence of fulfilling any criteria laid down by the Lokur Committee is likely to trigger a tribal versus non-tribal conflict. Manipur is already in turmoil with the current Meitei- Kuki-Zo ethnic conflict. The non-recovery of more than 3,000 guns in the hands of radical elements is starting to have its adverse effects. Gun totting radical youths allegedly

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disguised as policemen and commandos are engaged in extortion. On New Year's Day a deadly incident erupted causing deaths and injuries in the heart of Muslim area. Allegations are being hurled that the security personnel are becoming mere spectators while lawlessness and extortion is happening. The state government is being questioned about its priorities of dealing with minor violations while life threatening crimes are allowed to be conducted in the presence of law enforcing machinery.

In this developing context, it is disconcerting to observe that the STDCM and other Meitei frontal organisations are bent on pushing their demands based on emotional factors pushing the state towards the precipice. They can be accused of being irresponsible by totally ignoring the requisite processes that needs to be followed for inclusion of the Meitei community in the list of ST. One assertion after another are being made that the Meitei scholars, who would obviously be biased and partial, have carried out ethnographic studies from various historical writings to establish that they are tribal people and the Meitei community fulfil all the criteria of the Lokur Committee. The vagueness of the contention here is the 'period in history and present day' - whether the Meiteis were a tribal community in the past and is still a tribal community at the present day. It could be true that Meiteis were once a tribe before the coming of Shantidas Gosain in the early 18th Century. The Hindu priest converted the Maharaj of Kangleipak and he in turn imposed Hinduism on his subjects. He influenced the changing of name of the Maharaj to 'Garib Niwaz' and also the kingdom from 'Kangleipak' to 'Manipur' linking the kingdom to stories in the Mahabharata epic. Three centuries of the practising Hinduism has changed the culture of the Meitei community to a great extent that they can be termed as an advanced society. The pertinent question now is whether the Meitei community, if it is established that the Meiteis were a tribal people three hundred years back or even during the caste census of 1931 Census, are still possessing tribal traits TODAY warranting their classification as a 'tribe'. This can be established by a NEW ethnographic study conducted

by an independent third party appointed by the state or central government and not on the assertions made by Meitei scholars who would obviously be biased. Another crucial question thereafter is to establish that the Meitei community is backward TODAY through a socio-economic survey conducted by the state government in line with the criteria laid down by the Lokur Committee. When all the above processes are available, it is at this stage that the matter would be considered and specific recommendations made to give the 'Scheduled Tribe' status. For acceptability of the study and survey it is crucial that they are conducted in a transparent and credible manner by an independent third party involving all stakeholders.

Regardless of the facts that -

- (a) firstly, it has to be established that the Meitei community were tribal people during the time when the first caste census of India was conducted in Census 1931; and if so
- (b) secondly, an independent ethnographic study of the Meitei community would need to be carried out to establish whether they still currently possess tribal traits; and
- (c) thirdly, a socio-economic survey of the Meitei community would need to be conducted on the lines of the criteria laid down by the Lokur Committee to establish whether they are still backward - the STDCM leading the campaign, based on emotive consideration and not on scientific approaches as already advised by the GoI, will only provoke the tribes further to ask for separation from being part of Manipur in order to safeguard their lands.

In the given situation, it would not be wrong for the tribes of Manipur to consider freeing themselves from the shackles of Meitei-centric Manipur administration to escape being trapped in the state of Manipur and succumb to the guiles and trickery of the dominant Meitei community of

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losing their tribal lands to the ST Meiteis (if they get the ST status) in the hill areas of Manipur.

What is being impressed through this article is an appeal to the frontal Meitei ST demand organisations to pressurise the state government to carry out all the requisite processes through a transparent, credible and scientific approach through an independent third party involving all stakeholders. The demand for ST status needs to be processed in a transparent, credible and scientific approach for firstly establishing the Meitei community were tribal people in the past, secondly that they still possess tribal traits today, and are currently living in backwardness conditions. Basing the demand on majoritarianism, subterfuge, manipulation and emotive considerations without scientific justification is likely to push the tribes of Manipur living in the hill areas of Manipur to seek escape from a situation where they will be trapped in a state government dominated by the Meitei community and would become vulnerable to losing their tribal lands in the hill areas to the new entrant in the ST list i.e. to the Meitei community. No self respecting tribe will take such assault on their tribal lands lying down. There is bound to be stiff resistance by the tribes of Manipur if matters are dealt without scientific consideration and without involving all stakeholders.

Manipur is in the midst of communal conflict on ethnic lines for eight months with the Meitei people unable to venture into the hill areas and the Kuki-Zo people unable to enter the Imphal valley. Administration is in shambles as only Naga/Muslim/outside government employees can travel across the state but Meitei and Kuki-Zo officials are confined in their own areas. How the state government plans to implement various government programmes, schemes and projects in the state in the ongoing conflict needs to be seen. It baffles every right thinking citizens how the state government will conduct its business mainly implementation of schemes and programmes, enforcement of law and order, governance, ensuing parliamentary elections etc in the year 2024 when the state already has separate

areas controlled by different warring communities.

The geo-political environment in the areas adjoining Manipur is very fragile and sensitive with armed Naga and Kuki-Zo militants operating in the hill areas and the Meitei militants in the valley. A wrong step by the state government has the potential of triggering a larger conflict which has to be avoided at all cost. Further, the fact that Manipur share international borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh and other brethren states of Nagaland and Mizoram should not be lost while assessing the potential backlash of a mis-step by the state government. A redeeming factor so far is the change in the policy of Manipur government in dealing with Myanmar refugees by setting up temporary shelters, keeping them confined in a few villages and maintaining biometric data. The changed policy of the state government would enable the smooth return of the Myanmar refugees back to their homeland when normalcy returns in their country.

It is disconcerting to note the reticence and silence of both state and central governments in furnishing their comments to the Manipur high court in the review petition case linked to the ST demand by Meitei community which has now been reserved for judgment and orders. It is a mystery why at least the ministry of tribal affairs/Gol, which is seen as a neutral party, has not stated or reiterated the facts urging the state government to carry out a recent ethnographic study and socio-economic survey on the Meitei ST demand and send the proposal to Gol with specific recommendations. Such assertion in court would have made the STDCM and other Meitei organisations to see sense and soften down their emotive demand. Not doing so lends credence to the suspicion that the Gol is working in tandem with the Meitei dominated

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state government in support of the ST status demand by the Meitei community. Hence, red flags are raised for the tribes of Manipur to be ALERT and watch the ST demand situation closely.

This article may be considered as words of counsel to all stakeholders through the print media to tread the scientific path and carry out the requisite exercises afresh in a credible, transparent and scientific manner through an independent third party involving all stakeholders. Approaches other than the scientific path will provoke the tribes to seek a future outside the political entity of present Manipur. Be forewarned not to blame the tribes of fissiparous activities when it is the legitimate reaction to the fear of losing their tribal lands that may push them to break away from Manipur state. The logic here is - if you are not part of the same state, land laws of another state cannot be

applied to a different state. So the best safeguard for the tribes would be to seek a separate UT or a State so that they are not part of Manipur state thereby freeing themselves from the shackles of dominance, exploitation and neglect from the dominant Meitei community and government thereby safeguarding their land from alienation.

This scenario likely to be triggered by the relentless unscientific demand of the Meitei community for ST status, can be avoided if the matter is processed in a transparent, credible and scientific manner.

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**THE MANIPUR
WAR ON DRUG
99999.0**





A NEW MANIPUR

~Thanggoulen Doungel



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Which once was a land of jewels
Now lies in the hands of thief
Which once was a land of marvels
Echoes now with cries of grief

Once a colourful canvas of diversity
Is now blotted black with atrocities
Manipur, a land with beautiful history
Is lost amidst concocted stories.

Those in power with their greed and lies
Has bludgeoned this land into fragments
The depravity of those called "civilised"
has beget a new "Manipur" of laments.

A Manipur; worn, torn and in shred
A land where even justice fear to tread.
Where hopes just hangs by a thread
Where women's are raped and paraded

A Manipur; invisible to our fellow citizen
Muted by the apathy of the government
A Manipur; rule by those gone insane
A masterpiece of a Crime Minister Biren.

Behold the new Manipur of Hate
Where peace is spelled "PIECE".
Welcome to the valley of death
Where ignorance is indeed bliss.