

Thingkho *Le* Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



AWAITING JUSTICE



DONNGAIHCHING HANGZO (60 YEARS)

SISTER OF PAUKHANMANG

ADDRESS: LAMPHEL, IMPHAL WEST

DATE OF DEATH: 6TH JULY, 2023

PLACE OF DEATH: LAMPHEL, IMPHAL WEST

CAUSE OF DEATH: TORTURED & SHOT BY MEITEI MILITANTS



KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 11.09.2024



199
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.

“JUSTICE FOR MY FATHER,” DEMANDS SON OF FORMER SOLDIER AT HIS FATHER’S BURIAL

Limkholal Mate, a former havaladar of the mechanized infantry in the Assam Regiment, was laid to rest today at the Kuki-Zo Martyrs’ Cemetery in Phaijang, Kangpokpi district. His burial took place amid a sombre atmosphere of mourning and tributes from the community.

Mate, who hailed from Motbung Saron Veng in Sadar Hills, belonged to the Kuki-Zo community. On September 7, he was abducted by suspected armed members of the Meitei group, Arambai Tenggol, after purchasing medicine for his ailing wife and hardware supplies. The following morning, his lifeless body was discovered in a field in Sekmai, Imphal West, brutally beaten and lying in a pool of blood.

The tragic incident has left the community in shock, with demands for justice intensifying as Mate’s family and fellow community members paid their last respects.

His service to the nation and the circumstances of his death have drawn widespread condemnation. The Kuki-Zo people mourn not only a former soldier but also a dedicated husband and community member whose life was cut short in an act of violence.

The burial program was organized by the Committee on Tribal Unity, Sadar Hills, under the theme, “You Sacrifice Your Today for Our Tomorrow.”

Rev. Lamsat Lhouvum led the solemn burial ceremony, as hundreds from the Kuki-Zo community, along with Mate’s family, friends, and loved ones, gathered to mourn and pay their respects to the former soldier.

Kuki-Zo volunteers paid tribute with a ceremonial salute during the condolence service, honouring Mate’s commitment and sacrifice.

Thangminlun Mate, the son of a former Indian soldier who aspires to follow in his father’s footsteps in the



Indian Army, expressed, “Despite all the hardships, I find comfort and feel better knowing my father received the honourable burial he truly deserved.”

In a heart-wrenching moment, the BA student stood by his father’s grave, overwhelmed with emotion and thanked his father for being a towering inspiration in his life and expressed deep pride in having such a remarkable man as his father.

“My father was a devoted soldier who served with honour and dedication. It is heartbreaking to see his life end in such a brutal manner. I urge the government to ensure that justice is served and that those responsible for his death are held accountable,” said Thangminlun Mate.

He then conveyed his heartfelt thanks to his community for their immense support and solidarity throughout this challenging time.

Thangminlun Mate also called on the nation to acknowledge and honour his father’s profound contributions and sacrifices for the country.

MEITEI MILITANTS CONTINUE ATTACKS ON KUKI VILLAGES OF MONGBUNG-SEJANG IN JIRIBAM FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE DAYS

The Meitei militants along with Arambai Tenggol and Police Commandos continued to launch a fresh attack at Mongbung - Sejang villages in Jiribam district on Wednesday.

The militants fired several rounds using sophisticated weapons around 2:30 p.m. this afternoon prompting retaliation from Kuki village volunteers who were guarding their ancestral lands. The exchange of gunfire lasted for about an hour.

After a gap of about five-six hours, the combined team of UNLF (P), Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Police Commandos resumed their aggressive attack by firing sophisticated weapons including powerful bombs towards the Kuki villages at around 7:30 PM. The ensuing exchange of gunfire continues in intervals till the filing of this report.

However, there was no report of injury of any Kuki Village Volunteer in the exchange of fire. Unconfirmed sources said that some Meitei militants sustained bullet injuries during the exchange of gunfire.

These latest attacks on Mongbung and Sejang Kuki villages are the 12-14th attacks launched by the Meiteis

since the eruption of violence between the two warring communities a few months back in Jiribam.

Since yesterday, the Meitei militants have been continuously targeting the Kuki villages, forcing the central security forces to rush to the spot to bring the situation under control.

Ironically, the central security forces, while monitoring the situation, selectively and biasedly carried out operations only in Kuki villages of Mongbung and Sejang. The security personnel had also destroyed bunkers used by the Kuki-Zo volunteers yesterday. Shortly after the bunkers were destroyed, the Meiteis began indiscriminate attacks on the Kuki villages.

Sources on the ground stated that in the last couple of days, the Kuki villagers had seen multiple drones flying over Mongbung village, surveiling the positions of the Village Volunteers. Escalating violence in Jiribam district has become a serious concern for vulnerable areas of the Kuki-Zo community.



When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty.

- Thomas Jefferson

KSO DELHI & NCR WRIT PETITION IN SUPREME COURT ENABLES TRANSFER OF 16 BDS STUDENTS DISPLACED BY MANIPUR VIOLENCE

In a significant ruling, the Supreme Court has ordered the transfer of sixteen Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) students from Manipur to other institutions due to ongoing ethnic violence in the region. The decision follows a writ petition filed by the Kuki Students' Organization Delhi & NCR, vide order No. (I.A. No. 79426 of 2024 in W.P. (C) No. 165/2024 with M.A. No. 762 of 2024). The students were directed to approach the institutions for admission. On September 18, 2024, they successfully started their admission process at Regional Dental College, Guwahati, and Government Dental College, Dibrugarh, in Assam without any hurdles. The 16 BDS students were from JNIMS and RIMS in Imphal.

The court's ruling was facilitated by a communication from Ms. Aishwarya Bhati, Additional Solicitor General, who presented details from the Dental Council of India regarding the transfer modalities. She assured the court that any further challenges faced by the students would be addressed promptly within two weeks.

In addition to the BDS students, the situation has also affected twenty-five students from Manipur University,



who are seeking transfers to other Central Universities. The Supreme Court has allowed their counsel to submit a note to a committee chaired by Justice Gita Mittal to address their grievances.

The court has directed the committee to evaluate each student's situation and provide necessary assistance, emphasizing the need for a timely resolution within two weeks. The court expressed hope that these measures would effectively alleviate the students' difficulties amid the ongoing crisis in Manipur.

INDIGENOUS TRIBES ADVOCACY COMMITTEE CONDEMNS ATTACKS ON KUKI-ZO TRIBES BY UNLF TERRORISTS

The Indigenous Tribes Advocacy Committee (ITAC) has issued a strong condemnation of the recent attacks by the proscribed United National Liberation Front (UNLF) against the Kuki-Zo tribes in the Jiribam area, particularly targeting Mongbung and Sejang villages.

On September 18, 2024, Mongbung village was subjected to heavy gunfire from UNLF militants starting at 12:30 PM. The ITAC has characterized these assaults, which involve the use of modern weapons against innocent civilians, as egregious violations of human rights.

In light of these ongoing attacks, ITAC urged authorities to take immediate action to halt the violence perpetrated by UNLF terrorists against the tribal communities in Jiribam and Pherzawl Districts. Additionally, the committee is calling on Central security forces to prevent the continued encroachment of UNLF militants into tribal areas, emphasizing the urgent need for protection of vulnerable populations.

NO EVIDENCE ON GROUND OF GOVT'S TALKS WITH KUKI, MEITEI GROUPS: MANIPUR CONGRESS

The Manipur unit of the Congress on Wednesday claimed that there was no evidence on the ground of the government's talks with both Kuki and Meitei groups to resolve the ethnic conflict in the state.

On the completion of 100 days of the third Modi government, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had on Tuesday said that the government was holding talks with both Meitei and Kuki communities to ensure lasting peace and has begun fencing the country's border with Myanmar to check infiltration, which was the root cause for the trouble.

Responding to Shah's statement, Manipur Congress working president Kh Devbrata Singh told reporters, "Shah has claimed that the government is holding talks with both Meitei and Kuki groups to resolve the crisis in the state. But there is no evidence of such talks on the ground. There is a lack of transparency in his statement." "The Centre needs to provide details of the groups involved in the dialogue as there are numerous groups in the (Imphal) Valley. Talks with one group alone will not be sufficient. It is hard to believe that dialogue is happening as nothing can be seen on the ground level. We demand to know which groups are involved in the talks," he said.

On the recent statement of Chief Minister N Biren Singh about the involvement of "foreign hands" in the conflict, the senior Congress leader said that such a claim, however, was not made in Shah's statement.

"The CM had recently said that the arrest of a militant of KNA (B) outfit showed the involvement of foreign hands in the conflict. However, there was no such claim in Shah's statement. We think the claim would have been more credible had the Centre said that foreign players were involved in the crisis," he said.

The Congress leader also demanded a clarification from the state government about a purported official

document, allegedly signed by secretary to the CM, N Geoffrey and addressed to the DGP stating that 900 trained Kuki militants have moved to the hills adjoining Imphal Valley and were planning to carry out coordinated attacks on Meitei villages around September 28.

"The official document circulating on social media has created panic in the fringe areas of Imphal Valley and there have been reports of construction of bunkers to protect life and properties. We demand a clarification from the chief minister and the secretary to the CM about it," he said.

More than 200 people have been killed and hundreds rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kukis since May last year.

On Tuesday, Shah said that barring three days of violence last week, the overall situation in Manipur has been calm and the government has been working to restore peace in the restive northeastern state.

"We are talking to the Kuki and Meitei groups. We have prepared a roadmap and will take all possible steps (to ensure peace)," he had said.

Shah said that in the first 100 days of the Modi 3.0 government, work on fencing the India-Myanmar border, which is the root cause of the problem, has begun.

The Union home minister said that the government has already scrapped the India-Myanmar Free Movement Regime (FMR), which allowed people residing close to the border between the two countries to venture up to 16 km into each other's territory without any documents. (The Print/PTI)

FENCING ALONG INDO-MYANMAR BORDER PAUSED IN KUKI DOMINATED AREAS: REPORTS

The Indian government has decided to temporarily halt fencing work along the Indo-Myanmar border in Kuki dominated areas of Manipur, despite recent statements by Union Home Minister Amit Shah calling for expedited fencing.

According to a report by 'The Indian Express,' a meeting with senior Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) officials concluded that fencing in the Kuki-populated hill regions will be delayed, while work in other border areas will continue as scheduled. A senior official confirmed that the government will now prioritize fencing in regions with Naga populations.

Kuki-Zo groups have opposed the border fencing, claiming it disrupts the 'Free Movement Regime' (FMR), which allows residents within 16 kilometers of the border on either side to cross without a visa and stay for up to two weeks.

A senior official stated, "The decision was made in response to concerns from the Kuki community in border areas. While their concerns have been acknowledged, fencing in these regions will be postponed." The initial plan to speed up fencing in Kuki-dominated regions was reassessed due to this opposition.

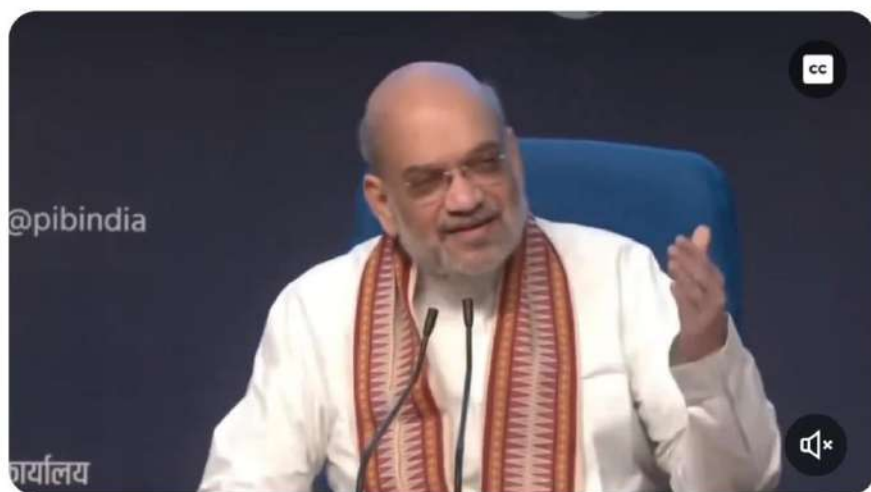


Nilanjan Das
@NilanjanDasAITC



A non-Godi journalist finally asks Hon'ble HM "When will @narendramodi visit #Manipur? CM @NBirenSingh hasn't resigned as yet"

Silencing journalists with a simple "Don't argue" is a remarkable trait, @AmitShah - we're all in awe of your democratic values!



From Veena Jain

12:53 · 18 Sept 24 · 6,111 Views



Ravinder Kapur.
@RavinderKapur2



BREAKING NEWS — #Manipur
She is @LicypriyaK a self styled Climate Activists , but she specialises in supplying sophisticated Drones to #MeiteiMilitant who use drones to bomb the kuki community and their houses/ villages .

#MeiteiMilitant
#ManipurVoilence
#kuki



7:19 · 18 Sept 24 · 2,381 Views

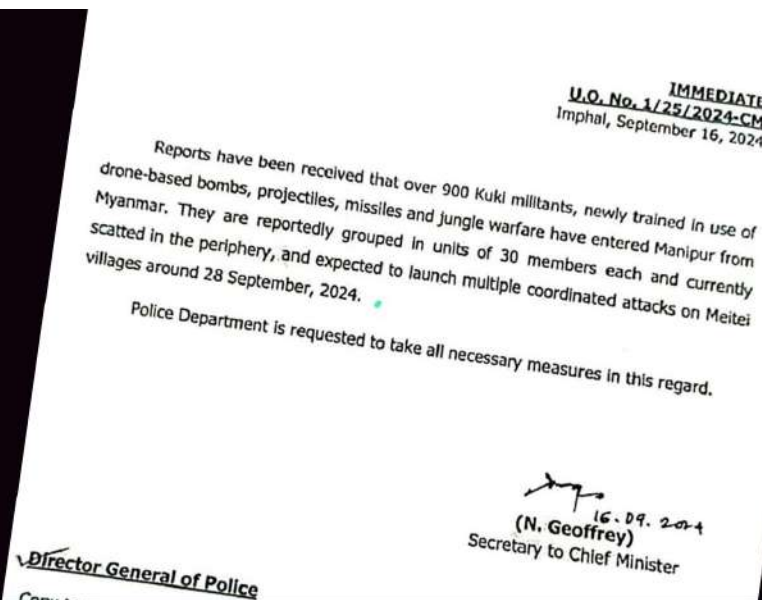
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NEWS ANALYSIS

The Devil Lies in the Details: Unwanted Directions from the Meitei Secretary to Meitei Chief Minister



The recent directive from the Chief Minister’s Office has once again proven that the Meitei government will stoop even to the nadir level to publicly display its discriminatory attitude towards the Kukis. Vide UO No. 1/25/2024-CM dated 16th September 2024, the Secretary to the Chief Minister, Meitei N Geoffrey had issued a directive that “Reports have been received that over 900 Kuki militants, newly trained in use of drone-based bombs, projectiles, missiles and jungle warfare have entered Manipur from Myanmar. They are reportedly grouped in units of 30 members each and currently scatted (sic) in the periphery, and expected to launch multiple coordinated attacks on Meitei villages around 28 September, 2024. Police Department is requested to take all necessary measures in this regard.”

Very surprisingly, even the CM, through his chamcha Meitei N Geoffrey, dared not even issue an official directive and had to resort to issuance of UO (Unofficial Note) for something which is supposed to be very important information and instruction. This shows that even the CM Secretariat does not take its instructions seriously and had tried to play safe - if its instructions are followed blindly by the Police and Security Forces its instructions will be deemed successful; if the instructions are under criticism, it plans to rebut stating that it was only an Unofficial Note.



Paolienlal Haokip
@paolienlal

DGP should be briefing CM if such intelligence inputs exist. Now Secretary to CM is briefing DGP. No peace in sight as long as war-mongering CM is in charge. @PMOIndia

The UO cited “Reports”. Whose report? It is most likely that the so-called report could be the reports submitted to the Meitei Chief Minister by the Meitei militants or the Arambai Tenggol. Many Kukis have alleged that the Meitei CM directly talks to the Meitei militants and the Arambai Tenggol and seeks their guidance on how to terrorise the Kukis. If the so-called “reports” were the reports of the Indian intelligence community, then the DGP of Manipur Police would have already been aware of the issue and would have already briefed the Meitei Chief Minister. It is in this context, one Kuki MLA tweeted “DGP should be briefing CM if such intelligence inputs exist. Now Secretary to CM is briefing DGP.”

This issued Unofficial Note is a very dangerous precedent as it means that any XYZ civil servant close to the Meitei Chief Minister can direct the Police and the Chief Secretary to take action by citing any “report”.

**FEATURED ARTICLE**

How Conflict is Bleeding Manipur Dry

Mitali Mukherjee

A fundamental difference between venom and poison is how toxins enter the victim's body. As a venom evolution expert describes it, "If you bite it and you die it's poison, but if it bites you and you die, that's venom." The telltale sign of venom is that it is introduced via a wound.

In much the same way, Manipur is a State that is now seeped in venom. Ethnic conflict was the wound and that has been allowed to fester in so many damaging ways that it is now difficult to point to where the toxin is not present.

In 2023, a year documented as the worst year of Internet shutdowns ever recorded, India stood head and shoulders above all other countries with a record 116 shutdowns. It was not a one-off: it is the sixth consecutive year that India tops the list. Of those 116 shutdowns, it will come as no surprise that the maximum number of Internet blockades was seen in Manipur. The State's longest shutdown lasted a bewildering 212 days.

Internet shutdowns are intentional disruptions, gating or completely blocking access to the Internet within a location. In our interconnected world, it impacts how

we work, study or even access medical attention. And crucially, how we document conflict and crisis. As protests have risen in the last few days, the government has reached to this all too familiar tool: Internet operations were banned for five days in September, citing a law and order threat.

How do you measure the cost of violent conflict? Economic damage is certainly one. One estimate is that the cost of India's Internet shutdowns in 2023 was \$585.4 million. With 47 of those 116 shutdowns occurring in Manipur, it is fairly clear which State bore, and continues to bear, the brunt of the financial damage.

Sadly that is only one layer of the economic devastation wreaked on Manipur by wilful misgovernance. In July 2024, rural Manipur experienced the highest retail inflation in India, surging up to 10 per cent. Much of this is down to a crushing and continuous increase in essential food prices that is not unfortunately an anomaly. Manipur has experienced higher inflation rates every month since violence broke out in the State in May last year. Through 2023, the State's villages

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saw Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation rates jump to 12.32 per cent in May, 12.98 per cent in June and a still elevated 12.06 per cent in July. For a State where over 70 per cent of its population lives in rural areas, inflation is bleeding every family dry, no matter what their ethnic identity may be.

What about the economic cost to businesses? What do months of unending violence mean for an agriculture-based economy like Manipur? So much of its small-scale industry, from bamboo to handloom to handicraft is people-intensive. In the last nine months, movement of labour has been hit, production and sales quite naturally have been dealt a blow, and then there is the familiar problem of layoffs. A wholly different cottage industry seems to have sprung up, as combing operations yield sniper rifles, pistols, guns, short- and long-range mortars, grenades, and long-range rocket bombs. All in a State that, as far as we know, still has a bona fide Chief Minister, a group of ministers, a governor and the might and muscle of a Unified Command overseen by the Home Ministry.

One would be hard-pressed to understand why the State, and Central leadership, have chosen to let this venom spread. It is akin to running the risk of losing a vital organ. As the Central government's own Invest India website describes it, Manipur, India's 'Gateway to the East' through Moreh town is the only feasible land route for trade between India and Myanmar and other Southeast Asian countries. What has traditionally been the entry point for all connectivity to Southeast Asia, whether it is the Trilateral Highway or the Trans Asian Railway, is now living under the reality of rocket attacks and drones flying over villages. The 'gateway' State is now choked and villages have turned to darkness in order to keep themselves and their children safe as drones fly overhead through the night.

The venom is spreading to other parts of the body. In FY24, GST collections for the State contracted by a quarter (24 per cent) to Rs.1,095 crore, even as India's overall GST run saw a healthy double-digit percentage

rise. More damning numbers: Manipur's tourism sector has not been spared either. Data from the State's Tourism Department logged 1,61,420 tourists in 2022-23. By the following year, the number had shrunk to just under 37,000 visitors. Conflict is clearly not a flattering look for any State.

Now it has a rather different set of grim numbers that are rising. By May this year, 12 months into the conflict, the death toll stood at 226. As fresh violence erupts, 11 deaths have been recorded since the start of September. There are no numbers yet that fully estimate the cost of arson, a figure that stood in the thousands last year. The year 2024 has seen houses, primary health centres, schools and military vehicles torched.

Feeling of powerlessness

There could be two possible reasons for this studied, stubborn disregard of a State in crisis. Either the State and Central governments do not know how to resolve an exigency that has now spiralled out of control, despite throwing the inevitable tools of Internet shutdowns, Unified Command and a purported Suspension of Operations agreement at the problem. So much so that the State government now seems to have turned on its own overlord, the Centre, to protest its feeling of powerlessness.

Or, the current government sees a tactical advantage in allowing things to burn the way they are. Students have taken to the roads to protest, suspicions run high, fear rules the street and there is a firmly entrenched sense of hate and division. Perhaps the ruling establishment will turn to its most recent experiment of flipping States into Union Territories, as it did in Kashmir.

Manipur is neither India's largest State nor the

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richest. Indeed at last measure, it was the third-poorest State in India, with a per capita income of just Rs.7,630 per month. Mark that up against a State such as Telangana for example, where the figure stands at Rs.25,727 per month and the root of the crisis is crystal clear. Much of what has come to pass is the State's failure to provide economic progress and equity. The anger and discord are by-products of deep-rooted systems of discrimination and exclusion among communities in Manipur.

Whichever way this emerges, there is a greater lesson here. What was once hailed as more of the infamous 'Chanakya' strategy where the BJP led NDA consolidated its position in 2019 with a combined tally of 19 across the 25 Lok Sabha seats of the eight Northeastern States, its position has now been reduced to 15 with losses in the recent general election most acutely visible in Manipur.

People from the Northeast are realising that the Prime Minister may don the headgear and beat the drums, but the last 12 months of unabated violence, death and displacement have proved that the tyranny of distance remains too far for a single visit, or for care.

Published by: [Frontline](#)

Mitali Mukherjee is Director of the Journalist Programmes at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford. She is a political economy journalist with more than two decades of experience in TV, print and digital journalism. Mitali has co-founded two start-ups that focussed on civil society and financial literacy and her key areas of interest are gender and climate change.



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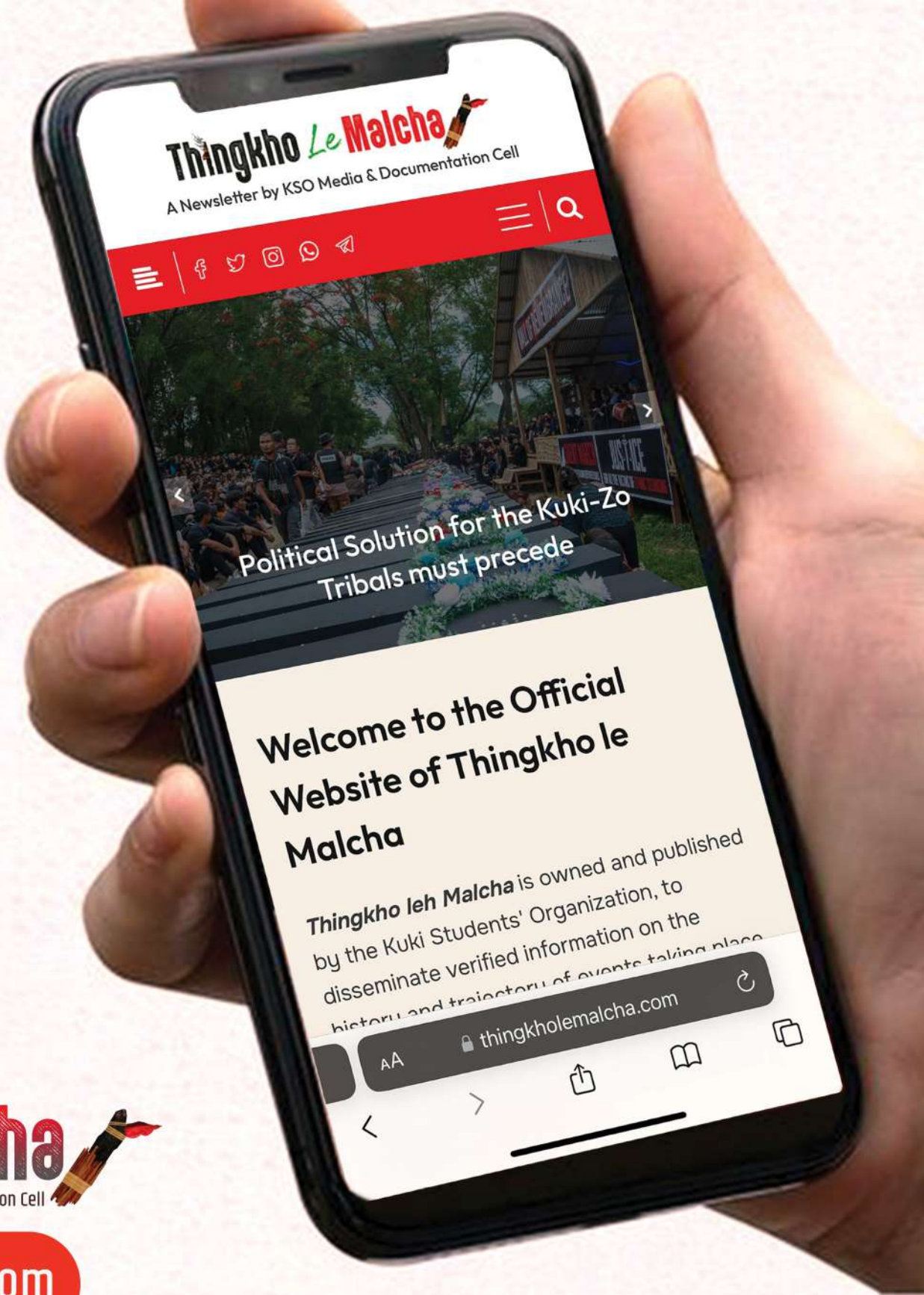
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POETRY



HAOKIP VENG

~Alvina Touthang

In our little Haokip Veng,
We grew together like brothers and sisters,
Watched, ate, played, slept, cried, and laughed—
Tutions ended, we ran out like wild bulls,
Where trees aligned, we played elastic and line cross.
Amidst our fun, we argued and fought,
Pulled each other's hair and sobbed for a while,
But soon returned to our old selves,
Rekindling the joy with every smile.

Sundays came, we went to Sunday school,
With stories and photos, and a junk food feast,
Oftentimes, we got naughty, broke the rules,
We'd sneak out at night, hearts pounding with thrill,
Watching football matches, chasing fleeting highs.
Though the endings weren't always merry,
With irises turned red from parental wrath,
After some dramatic scolding, we'd learn our path.

As we grew, our teenage lives diverged,
Choosing our streams, down different roads,
Some stayed, some moved on,
Fighting our battles, chasing our dreams,
As December approached, Haokip Veng warmed,
With Christmas lights and decorations aglow,
Choir songs echoed by the bonfire's embrace,
And warm tea shared as we whispered low.

Mornings began with folks gathering at Nu Lam's hotel,
Sipping warm tea and savoring fresh puris.
We'd gather to eat, watch the World Cup, and share,
But everything changed on that fateful day: May 4, 2023
A place once filled with laughter, now burnt to despair.
The roads no longer witness children at play,
No Church bells ring at 7 in the morn,
The ground must long for the joy we once knew,
If only it could speak, it would share its mourn.

We're sorry we couldn't protect you, dear land,
Yet thankful for the memories we made hand in hand.
Now scattered across the vastness of India,
Randomly crying through phone calls we share,
Amid the impossibility, I cling to hope,
That one day we'll decorate the Church with care,
Gather around the fire, and share sweet tales once again,
Reviving the spirit of Haokip Veng's refrain.

