

Thingkho Le Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



T. Gamnom RELIEF CENTRE

T. Gamnom Community Hall
Lhungtin Sub-Division, Sadar Hills

Managed by
District Administration &
Kuki CSOs, Sadar Hills

Total Inmates Registered: 148



KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 13.03.2024



167
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.

SC ADMITS WRIT PETITION FILED BY KSO DELHI OVER TRANSFER OF DISPLACED 38 KUKI ENGINEERING STUDENTS TO SAFER INSTITUTES

A three-judge bench of the Supreme Court comprising the Chief Justice of India, Justice Chandrachud, has admitted a writ petition filed by the Kuki Students' Organisation, Delhi, praying to issue a direction to the Council of National Institutes of Technology (NITs) to promptly formulate a scheme to accommodate the displaced 38 scheduled tribe engineering students in the 30 NITs across the country within a specified timeframe.

The student body also suggested to the Supreme Court of India a direction to be issued to appoint a dedicated Nodal officer, referring to the Supreme Court order dated 04.12.2023 in MUEWS v. Union of India (WP 1307/2023), to oversee the smooth transfer of students, eliminating the requirement for the submission of marksheets and tuition fees until alternative measures for accessing records and compensations are provided by the respondent authorities.

The KSO Delhi prayed that a direction be issued to the Government to establish and enforce scholarship schemes and stipend policies to support the educational endeavors of the affected students due to the ethnic conflict in Manipur.

Representing the affected students in the Supreme Court, the KSO Delhi said, "No action has been taken by the government despite numerous representations submitted to the concerned authorities including the Ministry of Education, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes and the three-member committee chaired by Justice (Retd) Gita Mittal appointed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, vide order dated 07.08.2023."

The 38 Scheduled Tribe Engineering students of the NIT Manipur, who are currently displaced were compelled to leave their place of study and encounter difficulties in pursuing their education at their current institution. This is primarily due to its valley location, which imposes limitations on their mobility as members of the Kuki Zo tribe. Seventeen of the displaced students currently in Manipur are either accommodated in camps or remote areas for safety reasons.

Consequently, their access to the internet is limited, rendering online classes an unfeasible option for them.

Twenty-one of the students, who are internally displaced and currently residing outside Manipur, lack the resources to procure laptops, internet packages, or other necessary equipment for seamless and uninterrupted online classes.

Moreover, the NIT Manipur Ordinance on Code and Conduct necessitates practical classes and hands-on learning as integral components. The technical courses include sessional subjects each semester, such as Laboratory, Design, Drawing, Studio, and Workshop sessions. Online education is not viable for these practical aspects, the writ petition said.

The 38 displaced students have diligently worked to secure admission into the esteemed NIT, Manipur after obtaining admission through JEE-Mains for premier Engg institutes viz. IITs, NITs, IITs. However, the unfortunate incidents of mob violence have deprived them of their educational opportunities and jeopardized their future prospects.

KSOD states, "There is an urgent need for them to transfer to any other National Institute of Technology across the country, excluding Imphal, to safeguard their hard-earned admission into this prestigious university."

As the displaced students lack access to their marksheets, and other necessary documents required for a smooth transfer, primarily due to the unfortunate ethnic mob violence, the writ petition suggested that it was imperative for the Government of India to take responsibility to provide them with the necessary means to sustain their lives, safe accommodation and other facilities, including supporting their prospects of continuing their education.

"The Respondents should establish and implement scholarship schemes and stipend policies to facilitate their educational pursuits," the petition added.

Next hearing will be held after Holi festival vacation.

REPORT: N. BIREN SINGH UNDER PRESSURE TO CONTEST LOK SABHA ELECTION

As rightly predicted by *Thingkho le Malcha* on March 14, 2024 (Issue No. 179), Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh is said to be under mounting pressure from the BJP central leadership to contest the forthcoming 18th Lok Sabha election.

An Imphal-based newspaper reported on March 19, 2024, that though Mr. Biren preferred a younger candidate, the central leadership is adamant about fielding him for the Inner Manipur parliamentary seat (*Thingkho le Malcha* had hinted the same on March 18, 2024).

According to the said news, Mr. Biren had reportedly proposed Sagolband AC MLA R.K. Imo, or Rajya Sabha MP Leishemba Sanajaoba, for consideration.

This report comes in the wake of mounting pressure from the Kuki-Zo community to remove Mr. Biren as the head of government. It is worth noting that the United Naga Council (UNC), the apex body of the Nagas of Manipur, had also declared on February 2, 2024, that the state government headed by Mr. Biren no longer represents the whole state of Manipur as all the Meitei legislators (37 MLAs and 2 MPs) took an oath of allegiance to the Arambai Tenggol on January 24, 2024.

The UNC statement stated: "The Meitei legislators, who have submitted to the Arambai Tenggol in the 24th January, 2024 Kangla capitulation cannot claim anymore to be the Government of the entire State of Manipur and has limited its powers, functions and relevance to the valley and the Meitei community only."

It may also be remembered that the apex Naga body had declared its severance of ties with the "communal government" of Manipur back in 2010. In



a memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, in September 2010, the UNC had stated that, "the Nagas will sever all political ties with the communal government of Manipur (GoM)."

Since both the Kukis and Nagas no longer accept Biren's ministry as the legitimate government of the entire state, the Centre must be considering replacing him with a more acceptable leader at the helm. Moreover, Biren would be a strong contender for the Inner Manipur constituency as the Congress is likely to put up JNU academic Dr. A. Bimol Akoijam, whose popularity is increasing among both radicals and liberals in the Meitei society as he regularly vacillates from sometimes being a mouthpiece and defender of Meitei radical actions to sometimes being a critic of the state government's (and Biren's) failure in the ongoing violence that has been gripping the state since May 3rd 2023.

NOT POSSIBLE TO HOLD CS EXAM IN STATE THIS YEAR: MANIPUR GOVT TELLS DELHI HC

The Manipur government informed the Delhi High Court on Tuesday that given the prevailing security situation, it is not possible to hold the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2024 (UPSC CSE 2024) in the State.

A letter written by Manipur Chief Secretary was handed over to the High Court today when the Court was hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) petition demanding that alternative and adequate arrangements should be made for tribal candidates from the hill districts of Manipur to enable them to take the exams.

The letter stated that given the situation in the State and to maintain the UPSC exam's sanctity, it will not be appropriate to provide centres in state of Manipur.

It added that students from Manipur who are taking the examination may be considered for allotment at nearest centres outside the State, as was done last year.

A division bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora examined the letter.

Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma appeared for the Central government and said that the Chief Secretary's letter is a tell-tale and even the functionaries of the State government and police officials in Manipur are not safe.

Considering the situation, the High Court asked the counsel appearing for the UPSC to obtain instructions in the matter.

The case will be heard next on March 22.

The plea was filed by Zomi Students Federation stating that no exam centres are located in the hill districts of Manipur the only centre is in Imphal.

The plea contended that given the ethnic conflict in the State, the Kuki tribal candidates from the hill districts cannot travel to Imphal and appear for the CSE exam.



“Owing to such situation, the candidates are forced to opt for other nearest centers in other states such as Aizawl which is more than 300-450 kilometers away through inhospitable roads from the hill districts and requires the candidates to incur huge expenditure for travel, boarding and lodging. Moreover, the difficult terrain and the severe lack of public transport facilities are dissuading factors for candidates. As most candidates in these regions are from a poor economic background, they do not have the means to stay in hotels/private accommodations,” the petition said.

It added that because of these difficulties, many students from tribal regions would not be able to take the UPSC examinations.

The petition was filed through advocate Nizamuddin Pasha.

It is to be noted that the KSO-GHQ also wrote to the UPSC for setting up of exam centres in Churachandpur and Kangpokpi in the interest of “inclusivity and fairness”, as it was no longer possible for the Kuki students to go to Imphal, and that it was not fair for the students of these districts to travel to other states for appearing in the said exams.

MEITEI ARMED MISCREANTS LOOT RATION MEANT FOR HILL DISTRICTS AT IMPHAL FCI GODOWN

Unsatisfied with the looting of arms and ammunition from the valley area Police Stations, the Meitei armed goons now loot rice ration meant for the hill districts from the godown of Food Corporation of India (FCI) located at Sangairprou, Imphal on Tuesday.

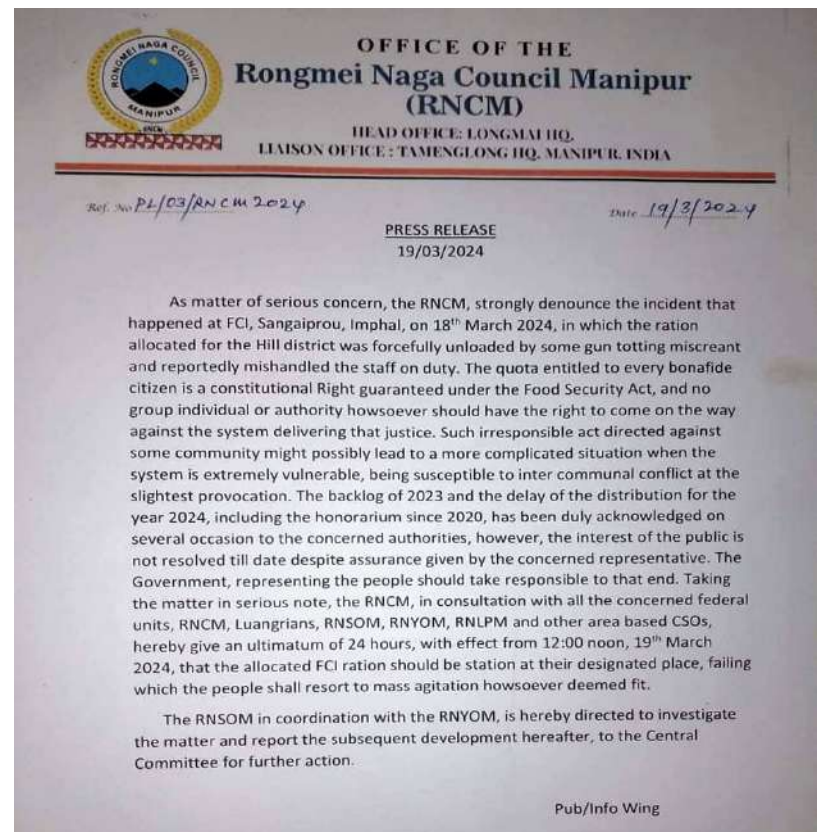
A Facebook social media page under the name 'Ruangmei' today shared a video clip of the ration being unloaded from a vehicle at noon today. The video caption says, "Right now there is a problem at FCI godown. A few armed Meiteis came and said that no food grain should be transported to Tamenglong district and other hill districts. The food grains which were already loaded in the vehicles are unloaded again."

Denouncing the incident, the Rongmei Naga Council Manipur (RNCM) today issued a press release stating that the ration allocated for the hill district was forcefully unloaded by some gun-toting miscreants who reportedly mishandled the staff on duty. It stated that the quota entitled to every bonafide citizen was a legal right guaranteed under the Food Security Act, and no group, individual or authority whatsoever should have the right to come in the way of the system of delivering justice.

"Such irresponsible act directed against some communities might possibly lead to a more complicated situation when the system is extremely vulnerable, being susceptible to inter-communal conflict at the slightest provocation," said the statement.

RNCM also asserted that the backlog of 2023 and the delay of the distribution for the year 2024, including the honorarium since 2020, had been duly acknowledged on several occasions to the concerned authorities. However, the interest of the public was not resolved till date despite assurance given by the concerned people's representatives who should take responsibility for that end.

The RNCM, in consultation with all the concerned federal units, RNCM, Luangrians, Rongmei Naga Students' Organisation Manipur (RNSOM), Rongmei Naga Youth Organisation Manipur (RNYOM), RNLPM and other hill area-based CSOs, has given an ultimatum of 24 hours, with effect from 12:00 noon, 19th March 2024, that the



allocated FCI ration should be stationed at the designated place; failing which, the Naga body warned, the people should resort to mass agitation howsoever deemed fit necessary.

The RNCM also directed RNSOM to coordinate with Rongmei Naga Youth Manipur to investigate the matter and report the subsequent development thereafter, to the Central Committee for further action.

Soon after the video was watched and shared by many Facebook users, there were exchanges of bad comments in the comment section. Many Meiteis tried to justify the incident with the highway tax collections by Naga groups.

Some Meitei who could not even differentiate the Kuki and Nagas commented that the ration was not meant for Kukiland but for Manipur.

Hours after the video went viral, the Meiteis probably resorted to mass reporting of the Facebook page and as a result of it, the page has received a warning from the Facebook team.

GUNSHOTS BY UNKNOWN MISCREANTS DISRUPT PUBLIC CONSULTATION ATTENDED BY INC CANDIDATE ALFRED ARTHUR IN KAMJONG DISTRICT

Unknown armed miscreants fired gunshots and disrupted the public meeting attended by Indian National Congress' intending candidate for 2024 Lok Sabha Elections, Alfred Kangam Arthur, today at Teinem village under Chingai Assembly Constituency under Kamjong district.

As per sources, a group of young, like-minded groups organised a consultation/ discourse to discuss the future of the youths under the current situation wherein Alfred was also invited. However, the interaction had to be shortened due to the gunshots.

As seen in the video uploaded on social media, the programme was halted and participants had to kneel down in their respective seats during the gunshots.

Condemning the incident, President of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee, Keisham Meghachandra, said the CEO Manipur is responsible for the law and order after the ECI announced the notification for holding the elections. "Today incident is the second incident in two days wherein a public gathering attended by Arthur has been disturbed or attacked," he said.

With the prevailing situation in Manipur and the recent attack on the intending INC candidate, the MPCC



president raised a question whether the state would be able to conduct the free and fair LS election.

Stating that the public might not be in a position to exercise their voting rights in the polling days, Meghachandra asked whether the elections could be held after the state government maintained the law and order in the State.

The MPCC president opined that postponing the election would be far better, and suggested that the state government should take up necessary measures to prevent any unwanted incidents in the future.



The self-righteous scream judgments against others to hide the noise of skeletons dancing in their own closets.

– John Mark Green

BIREN'S TYRANNY SHIFTS FOCUS: TARGETS OWN PEOPLE AMID SOCIAL MEDIA CRACKDOWN

Manipur's chief minister and a radical and vocal Meitei-centric head of state, the infamous N. Biren Singh demonstrates a severe intolerance towards critics, whether online or offline. He avidly engages with social media, notably Facebook, where he occasionally appears amiable to his followers. However, his demeanor towards Kukis is egregiously communal in the past, resulting in numerous instances of intolerance and arbitrary arrests by the police.

Previously, Kukis bore the brunt of Biren's social media crackdown, with numerous young Kuki users being incarcerated for their outspoken criticism of Chief Minister N. Biren. The chief minister exhibited severe bias against the Kukis, where even minor jests resulted in Kukis being detained or imprisoned. Conversely, he ignored communal remarks from other communities. He singled out the Kukis, labeling them as illegal immigrants, foreigners, and drug dealers, derogatorily referring to them as "Junglee".

Now that he can no longer target and arrest the Kukis for social media activities, he now directs his oppressive tactics towards his own community.

Recently, the cybercrime police in Manipur's Imphal West district arrested a 52-year-old man for his derogatory comments against the Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh.

He has been remanded into a five-day judicial custody for further investigation after being produced before the Chief Judicial Magistrate on Monday, the police said on Tuesday.

Based on a complaint from various quarters and also an uploaded post of a short video on social media against the prevailing ethnic violence, the Cybercrime police, taking a suo motu case, arrested Moirangthem

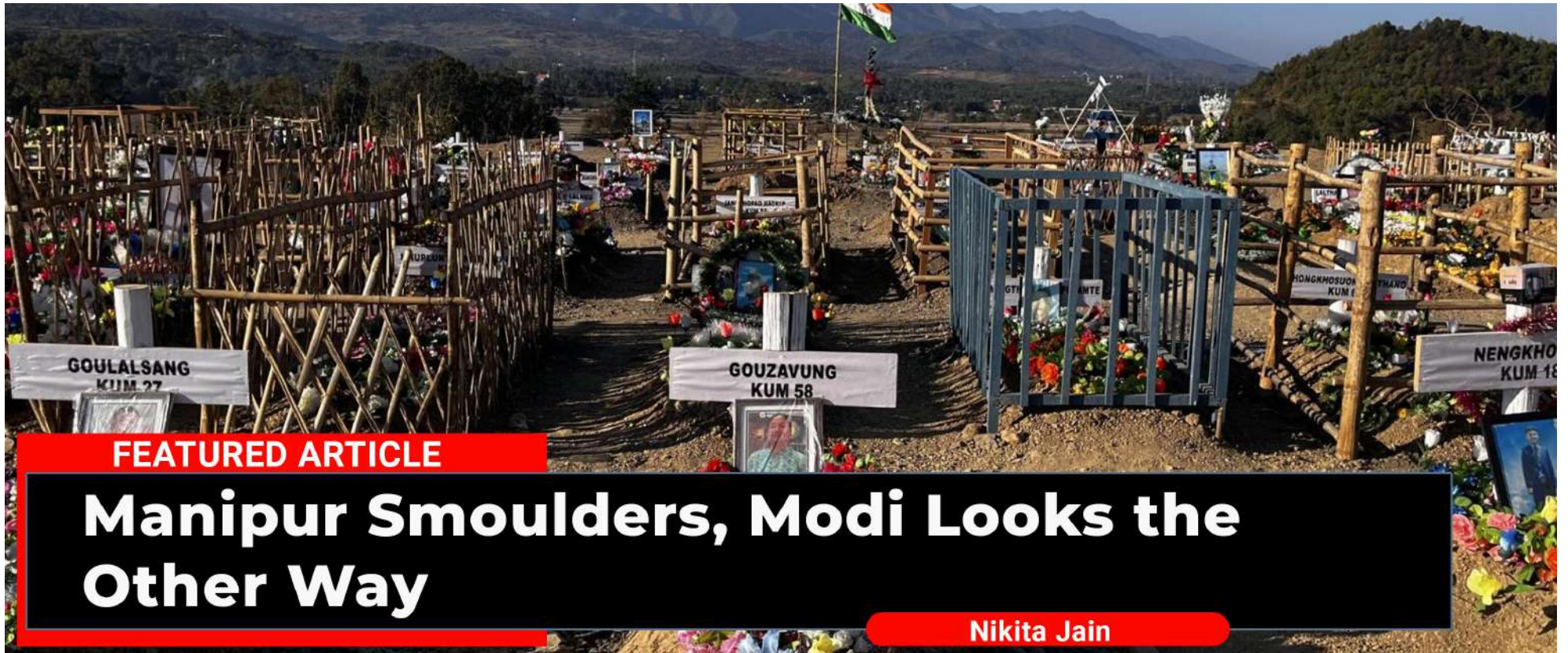


Tondonsana 52, a resident of Heirok Part 2 in Thoubal district, the police said.

In a short video uploaded on social media that widely circulated in the state, M. Tondonsana is seen replying to another person who is posing several questions relating to the chief minister and the law and order situation on the ongoing ethnic violence in the state.

Responding to a question, Tondonsana said that the situation in the state of Manipur would only be improved when Chief Minister N. Biren Singh is removed. Interestingly, the arrest came a few days after the Manipur chief minister made a short statement.

In a function held before the announcement of the Model Code of Conduct, the chief minister strongly emphasized the need to take proper precautions while speaking on TV or other platforms so that such speeches don't provoke and offend other communities.



FEATURED ARTICLE

Manipur Smoulders, Modi Looks the Other Way

Nikita Jain

Sisters Lhing and Nemzahat Nemnei were in an ambulance with their family, en route to a hospital in India's northeastern state of Manipur, when they were attacked by an angry mob.

The vehicle was carrying the body of the sisters' deceased uncle as the mob pelted it with stones, broke its windows and beat the driver to death.

'My mother was hit on the head with a stone and was injured,' said Lhing, whose family belongs to the Kuki tribe – a mainly Christian group living in the hill region of Manipur. 'I was pulled out of the ambulance and the mob started beating me. Amid the chaos we were begging them to leave us as the dead body of our uncle was still inside the ambulance.'

Nemzahat managed to escape and hide in a public washroom while her husband was dragged away by the mob. 'He was beaten to death,' she said quietly, recounting the terrible events from a camp for displaced persons near the town of Churachandpur.

Nemzahat hid in the dirty washroom all night and in the morning walked on foot to the relief camp. Her sister, aunt and mother were rescued and taken to a different relief camp set up by the Indian army. A few days later, the sisters re-connected over the phone.

Nemzahat's husband is one of more than 200 people who have been killed since the eruption of ethnic

violence in Manipur last May between the Kuki-Zo and the majority Meitei community. Now Nemzahat and her family are among the more than 65,000 displaced people who have lost loved ones, homes and businesses as hope wanes for a peaceful solution.

THE ROOTS OF THE VIOLENCE

On 3 May 2023, news spread that a rally held by the All Tribal Students Union of Manipur had turned violent. The Students Union opposed the High Court of Manipur's recommendation to grant the protected 'Scheduled Tribe' (ST) status to the Meiteis – a predominantly Hindu community, though there are some Muslims and Christians – that makes up 51 per cent of the state's population.

The Meiteis mostly reside in the Imphal Valley region – the capital of Manipur – and hold most positions of power within the government, police and civil service. Meiteis are not allowed to purchase land in Manipur's hill districts which ring the Imphal Valley. This is where the Kukis live alongside other tribal communities, collectively known as Kuki-Zo. The Kuki-Zo make up 14 per cent of Manipur's population and have held ST status for years.

In the months leading up to the High Court decision, the Manipur state government began cracking

Contd.



Contd.

down on an influx of migrants and refugees fleeing violence in neighbouring Myanmar. The government and valley-based civil society organizations then **tried to portray** the Kuki-Zo tribes as 'illegal immigrants' or 'not Indigenous', putting their claims to their traditional land under scrutiny in an attempt to confer ST status upon the Meiteis.

The Kuki-Zo leaders fear that granting Meiteis ST status would allow them to encroach on the forest lands in the hills where the Kuki-Zo have lived for centuries.

STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

Before the violence erupted Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities lived peacefully, albeit warily, alongside each other.

'Before, I was the only Kuki-Zo living amid the Meitei community and never faced any trouble. We lived together and, despite differences, we were like family,' said Mangboy Mate.

Mate ran a construction business in Imphal with a Meitei partner before the conflict began. 'I had a business but it is all gone because it was burnt by a mob,' he said.

Mate says he used to take government contracts for various construction jobs. Now, those opportunities have all but dried up.

'My payments are still stuck. There is no response from the government and I do not expect the money to reach me even if payment is released. I am surviving on the few savings I had, which are disappearing day by day,' he said.

Manipur, once a major tourism hot spot, saw the number of annual visitors drop from 160,000 to just under 20,000 from April to November last year. The state's exports of handwoven textiles, medicinal plants and food products decreased by over 80 per cent as a result of the ongoing violence, according to the North East Federation on International Trade.

Thirty-five year old Nemzahat is among those bearing the brunt of the economic losses in Manipur. A



housewife and mother of six, her husband worked as a labourer and was the sole earner of the family before he was killed. With no formal education or financial support, and now living in a camp, she is struggling to make ends meet.

'I am trying to find small labour jobs here and there, but it is difficult,' she said.

With no place to call home and no way of going back to their villages, people like Nemzahat and Mate are stuck in overcrowded and unsanitary relief camps where they face an uncertain future.

RESENTMENT IN THE RELIEF CAMPS

In the town of Churachandpur, known locally as Lamka, the relief camps are mostly converted community halls, schools and under-construction buildings that are now housing thousands of people. Women are forced to bathe in the open due to a lack of washrooms and people are being exposed to the elements.

The mass displacement of people across Manipur has fuelled resentment on both sides of the conflict. Among the 65,000 people displaced are 24,000 Meiteis, some of whom blame the Kuki-Zo for the violence.

'We saw the pictures of how the Meitei houses were demolished by the Kuki, leaving nothing but rubble. Now, these people have nowhere to go,'

Contd.

Contd.

said Priya Laishram, a Meitei resident in Imphal.

Meanwhile, most Kuki-Zo blame the sitting chief minister N. Biren Singh, who is a Meitei, for being complicit in the crimes by pushing an anti-tribal agenda.

The Kuki-Zo community has alleged discrimination on the basis of ethnicity from the hardline Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which rules both at both the state and national level.

Khamsangh Lian, general secretary of Khangthah Zuun Pawl (KZP), a student body in Churachandpur said that the state government has helped to enable attacks on the Kuki-Zo community by stoking hate and spreading fear.

‘We do not expect anything from the Biren Singh government who allowed the violence to take place,’ he said. ‘His government spread the propaganda that we are illegal immigrants and poppy cultivators. We want peace but in Imphal power has come to those who carry arms and ammunition and threaten our existence – all with the support of the current government.’

SEPARATION AS SOLUTION?

Amid the escalating violence, some are calling for a separate administration for the Kuki-Zo.

‘The situation is not getting any better, so we need a separate administration,’ said Mang Haokip, one of the leaders of the Kuki Student Organization in Churachandpur. ‘We are demographically divided, now we just need it on paper. This is our land, our home and we are also as much Indians as everybody else.’

Meanwhile, buffer zones have been established between the hills and the valley. As a result, the Kuki-Zo have been cut off from trade, businesses, hospitals, education and the only airport, which is located in the valley. Over 40,000 Indian armed forces personnel are now present in the state, but firing continues along the periphery of the valley. Radical Meitei mobs have looted more than 4,300 weapons from police armouries.

Despite the escalating violence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tried to portray a sense of normalcy in



Manipur, mainly by ignoring the situation. He was forced to break his silence in July when a graphic video showing two Kuki women being stripped naked and groped by a mob of men went viral and sparked outrage across India.

‘I want to assure my countrymen that no culprit will be spared. What happened to the daughters of Manipur can never be forgiven,’ Modi said in an address, while failing to acknowledge the ongoing conflict.

National elections are on the horizon and it suits the central government to play down the continuing crisis in Manipur and look the other way. Amid government silence and inaction, activists say that dialogue between both sides is the only way to achieve a peaceful solution.

‘Till the time the opposite community does not empathize with the other, any solution is far-fetched,’ said an Imphal-based Meitei activist, who requested anonymity due to security concerns. ‘I think it is important to make the sufferings of both sides the basis of one’s activism – only then is some kind of peace-building and reconciliation possible. Unfortunately, we are now turning a complete blind eye to the other side’s suffering.’

Published by [New Internationalist](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA
THE BUZZ



Akshit
@CaptainGzb

Modi - "Every women and daughter is Shakti for me".

Why didn't he meet the women wrestlers ? Why didn't he visit Manipur rape victims ?

Are they not "Shakti" for him ? 🤔



3:10 pm · 18 Mar 24 · 119K Views



Sivakumar Palaniappan (Le...
@sivaspeaks2

Follow

I am from Coimbatore and have never seen such a wonderful Prime Minister who is so kind enough to pay homage to people who were killed 26 years ago in our city.

But what about Manipur killings that's happening right under his nose....? Not a word spoken.

Narendra Modi @narendramodi · 1d

The 1998 Coimbatore terror bombings can never be forgotten. Today while in the city, paid homage to those we lost in those bombings.



6:53 am · 19 Mar 24 · 250K Views

Post MORTEM

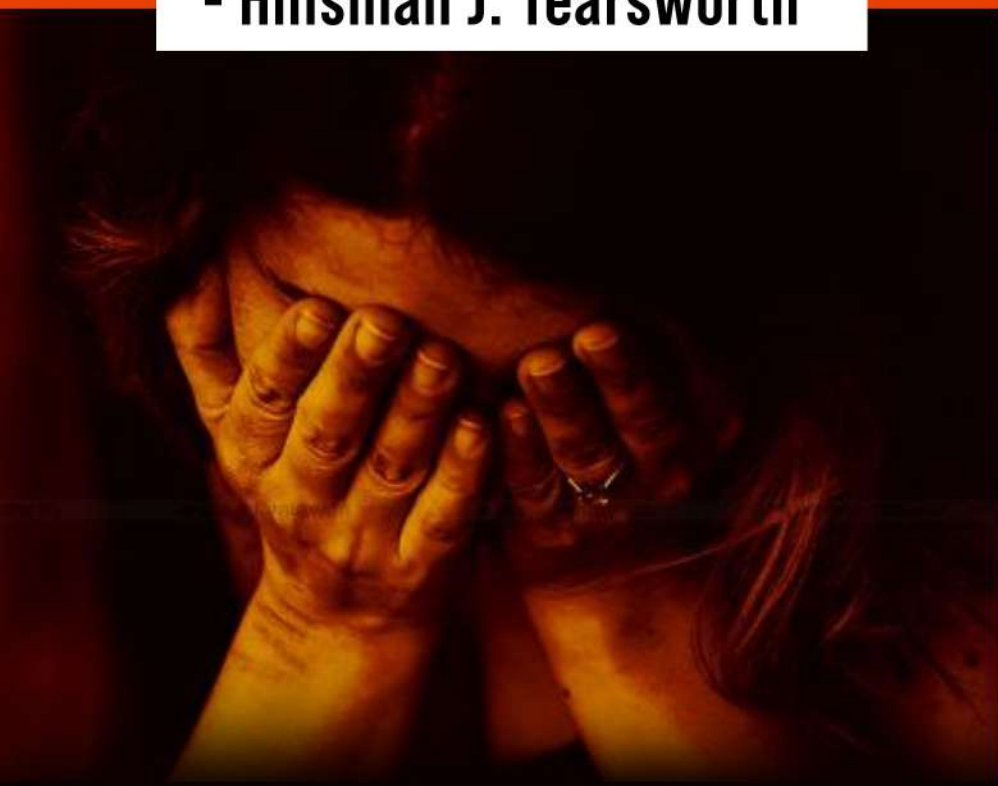
THE BENEFICIARIES OF MANIPUR VIOLENCE





I saw tears in their eyes

- Hillsman J. Tearsworth



*When I saw with my own eyes,
And heard with my own ears,
How my people were treated
With the highest level of contempt,
I am in tears - restless and helpless.
I prayed and prayed, day and night,
For, at least, God will see our afflictions.*

*When I saw with my own eyes,
And heard with my own ears,
How my people can't unite,
Even after facing such horrific situations,
I am in tears - restless and helpless.
I prayed and prayed, day and night,
For, at least, God will give us unifying minds.*

*When I saw with my own eyes,
And heard with my own ears,
How my people are leaderless,
Even after going through such tough times,
I am in tears - restless and helpless.
I prayed and prayed, day and night,
For, at least, God will give us a strong leader.*

*My people, let's not just pray and hope,
Nor must we just watch and do nothing.
What do you see? For I saw tears in their eyes.
If we help one another and feel each other's pain,
Only then will God help us unify ourselves.
He will give us a good leader like Moses.
Behold, there's nothing impossible with God!*