

Thingkho *Le* Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



AWAITING JUSTICE



THANGKHOLET KIPGEN (23 YEARS)

S/O PAOKHOHAO KIPGEN

ADDRESS: HENGJOL, CHANDEL

DATE OF DEATH: 1ST JUNE, 2023

PLACE OF DEATH: HENGJOL, CHANDEL

CAUSE OF DEATH: BURNT ALIVE BY MEITEI RADICAL GROUPS & MILITANTS



KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 22.07.2024



191
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.

'LET'S HOPE DELHI WAKES UP': POLITICAL PARTIES, BODIES REACT TO THE WIRE'S 'MANIPUR TAPES' REPORTS

The Wire's three-part 'Manipur Tapes' series on an audio file provided to the Commission of Inquiry set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs to inquire into the Manipur violence has garnered reactions from several politicians, political parties and bodies.

The file, claimed to be a recording of chief minister N. Biren Singh, if correct, would be evidence of official complicity in the ongoing civil war that has been raging in Manipur since May 3, 2023.

Congress MP Jairam Ramesh called the reports shocking. "This needs to be thoroughly and properly investigated," he wrote.

Rashtriya Janata Dal MP Manoj Jha wrote multiple posts on X.

"Thanks [Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty] for uncovering the 'cover-up'...Let us hope 'Delhi' finally wakes up to acknowledge...," Jha wrote.

He also quoted operative parts from the reports in a post:

"Biren ji!
"Haan sir!
"Arre! Tum bomb marta hai?" [laughter in the background]

And another:

"Hoi! See, photos are photos, hands could be seen placed here and there. But it is not necessarily the fact."

Aam Aadmi Party leader Sanjay Singh has also consistently posted on the piece, adding the audio clips to his posts.

"Listen to how Manipur CM is inciting people against a community," he wrote, with a link to an audio tape.

"I raised the issue of Manipur violence in the House and I was suspended for 11 months," he wrote, in another

post mentioning the 30-second video clip recorded on May 4, featuring two Kuki-Zo women being paraded naked and being groped by a sizeable mob of men belonging to the Meitei community in Kangpokpi district.

Singh called the purported 'bomb' exchange an "explosive" revelation.

The Trinamool Congress has posted through its official handle that the alleged revelation is a "crime committed by CM Biren Singh."

"Audio tapes reveal that [BJP]-led State Administration in strife-torn Manipur:

- Authorised the use of mortar bombs
- Shielded looters of arms
- Facilitated politically-motivated arrests
- Deepened the divide between Meitei and Kuki communities

"This isn't just a failure – it's a CRIME committed by CM [Biren Singh] and HM [Amit Shah] who kept him in power!

Manipur's Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Paolienlal Haokip has posted on X, saying:

"With the release of the Manipur tapes, it became clear now that the violence in Manipur since May 3, 2023 was not an ethnic conflict, but state sponsored ethnic persecution aka ethnic cleansing with the head government in charge."

In a statement, the Kuki Students' Organisation said that it "is deeply shocked and outraged by the continued inaction of the Government of India (GoI) regarding the leaked audio recording" of Biren's.

Source: [The Wire](#)

KUKI-ZO ACROSS TWILANG IN KANGPOKPI PROTEST AGAINST REMOVAL OF ASSAM RIFLES

In a powerful demonstration of solidarity, hundreds of Kuki-Zo women from across the Twilang region braving the rain staged a massive protest today against the removal of the 22 Assam Rifles (AR) post at Banglabung Gelnal village.

The protest, organized under the aegis of the Kuki Inpi Twilang Lhang, highlighted the community's deep concerns over the withdrawal of the security presence in the area. Women from various villages united to voice their fears about the potential security risks posed by the removal of the Assam Rifles post.

Throughout the protest, participants chanted slogans demanding the reinstatement of the post. The protestors later marched towards the 22 AR Banglabung Post and submitted a memorandum to the Post Commander to be handed over to the Commanding Officer, emphasizing the community's apprehensions and called on the authorities to reconsider the decision, stressing the importance of maintaining security and stability in the region.

In the representation, the Kuki Inpi Twilang Lhang representing the Kuki-Zo from the region, urged the continued presence of the Assam Rifles in the hills of Manipur, highlighting the crucial role the Assam Rifles have played since the outbreak of communal violence in the state, facilitating the safe evacuation of over 60,000 Kuki-Zo civilians from the Imphal valley, as well as tens of thousands of Meitei civilians from Kuki-Zo-dominated areas.

The community stressed that the impartiality demonstrated by the Assam Rifles has been vital in maintaining peace and stability, ensuring that their actions remain non-partisan and non-



communal. Concerns have been raised regarding recent demands by Meitei civil society organizations, led by COCOMI, for the removal of the Assam Rifles and their replacement by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

The memorandum argues that acceding to such demands would be an irresponsible and illogical move, potentially leading to unnecessary tension and unwanted repercussions. The Kuki-Zo community expressed fear that if the Assam Rifles were to be replaced, it would erode trust in the state and central government and could reignite violence in the region.

The memorandum concluded with an earnest plea for the retention of the Assam Rifles in all Kuki-Zo areas, assuring full cooperation and support to ensure continued peace and security in the region.

KSO Twilang Lhang President, Enock Kipgen also spoke on the sideline of the event.

JUSTICE GITA MITTAL PANEL CONSIDERING STUDENTS' PLEAS FOR TRANSFER TO NIT OUTSIDE MANIPUR, SC TOLD

A panel of three former women high court judges headed by Justice Gita Mittal is considering the pleas of several National Institute of Technology (NIT), Manipur students seeking transfer to institutes outside the ethnic violence-hit state, the Supreme Court was told on Tuesday. A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said the State was obliged to accommodate the students. Senior advocate Vibha Dutta Makhija, appearing for the panel, told the bench that Justice (retd) Mittal was coordinating with various authorities in connection with the transfer request of several students of NIT, Manipur.

"We are in the process of examining the genuinity of claims for transfer by the students," the senior lawyer said, adding that in a few cases there may be some statutory requirements to be fulfilled. She urged the court that the plea may be listed after two weeks. The bench agreed to the request. "Justice Gita Mittal Committee has been in discussion with the authorities at the requisite level. We will list it on August 27," the CJI said.

The bench also took note of the submission of another lawyer who said that an application has been filed for setting up a committee to oversee the education of displaced students. "Justice Gita Mittal Committee has been flooded (with requests of transfer)," the lawyer said, adding there were many similar requests by the students of the Manipur university. "Let Justice Mittal decide, she has seen the issues and has been able to handle them well," the bench said, adding it will consider issuing directions if the existing panel finds the work "unmanageable".

Options for displaced students

On August 5, the top court extended by six months the tenure of the Justice Mittal committee which was set up to oversee relief and rehabilitation of the victims of ethnic violence in Manipur. The top court on August 9 directed the committee headed by Justice Mittal to look at the individual grievances raised by some displaced



students from Manipur University who are seeking permanent transfer to other central universities. In November 2023, the bench had heard the plea of 284 students of Manipur University who had sought relocation in the wake of widespread violence.

The bench had provided them three options (a) attend classes at Manipur University online (b) attend classes at Assam University, Silchar or (c) attend North East Hill University, Shillong." On August 7 last year, the bench had ordered the setting up of the committee of three former women high court judges to oversee relief and rehabilitation of the victims and compensation to them besides asking former Maharashtra police chief Dattatray Padsalgikar to monitor the probe in criminal cases.

The committee was authorised to submit its reports directly to the top court which is monitoring the cases related to ethnic conflict. The panel, headed by former Jammu and Kashmir High Court Chief Justice Mittal, includes Justices (retd) Shalini P Joshi, a former judge of the Bombay High Court, and Asha Menon, an ex-judge of the Delhi High Court. More than 200 people have been killed, several hundred injured and thousands displaced since ethnic violence first broke out in the state on May 3, 2023 when a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts to protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe status. (Career 360)

THADOU TRIBE COUNCIL DENOUNCES FORMATION OF CONTROVERSIAL THADOU COMMUNITY INTERNATIONAL, CLARIFIES MISLEADING CLAIMS

The Thadou Tribe Council (TTC) GHQ has issued a strong rebuttal to recent claims made by a newly formed group, Thadou Community International (TCI). According to the TTC's statement, the group's formation and claims about the Thadou community are both misleading and unauthorized.

The TTC's press release addresses several key points in response to TCI's media release dated August 4, 2024. The TTC asserts that Mrs. Chongboi, who is a central figure in TCI, is not recognized as a Thadou under traditional customs. Chongboi, married to a foreigner, has forfeited her Thadou identity according to community laws, thus undermining her authority to speak on behalf of the Thadou community.

One Mr. Kapchungchung Tado, another figure in TCI, is not recognized as a Thadou by blood. The TTC notes that there is no clan or genealogical connection to the name "Tado" within Thadou society.

The TTC also points out that the term "Tado" has no meaningful connection to the Thadou people, referencing an unrelated online store and a historical kingdom in Africa.

The apex Thadou body underscores that the Thadou tribe is officially recognized by the Government of India and the Manipur state as a Scheduled Tribe (ST) since 1956, with their language formally recognized as Thadou-Kuki in 1987. This recognition is supported by legal and historical documentation. In Myanmar, the Thadou people are recognized under ISO 639-3 with the language code "tcz," reinforcing their established identity.

Refuting TCI's claim that the Council was formed in 1992, the apex Thadou body clarified that TTC was established in 1970, with Pu. Paokhosei Kipgen as its first president.



The TTC addresses accusations against Pu. YT Haokip, the current president, clarifying that the change from Thadou Tribe Council (TTC) to Thadou Inpi (TI) was misused by vested interests. A recent consultative meeting reaffirmed Haokip's role and the council's legitimacy. It also dismisses claims made by individuals in various countries as baseless. The statement criticizes these claims as attempts to exploit the Thadou identity for personal gain and to collaborate with political figures who have negatively impacted the Kuki-Zo people. While condemning those who, under the guise of Thadou representation, have sought financial gain and political favor at the expense of the Thadou people and the broader Kuki-Zo community, the apex body warned unauthorized individuals associated with TCI to cease their activities or face appropriate actions.

The TTC's statement aims to clarify the true status and governance of the Thadou community, urging the public to disregard the claims made by the TCI and recognize the established leadership and identity of the Thadou people.

THE BUZZ SOCIAL MEDIA



All India Trinamool Congress
@AITCofficial

Follow

HM @AmitShah & @BJP4India backed a CM who trivialised the plight of women.

Audio recordings reveals CM @NBirenSingh:

✗ Made light of the crime against women who were paraded naked on the streets

✗ Played down the fact that members of the mob could clearly be seen groping them

It was their APATHY that fueled this nightmare!

m.thewire.in/article/govern...

16:29 · 20 Aug 24 · 6,434 Views



Indian Youth Congress
@IYC

The young bunch of Kuki Community from Manipur put up a wonderful performance at the Talkatora Stadium today.

It was a delight to see on display the vibrant culture and traditions of Manipur, at our grand event 'Hum Mein Hain Rajiv' on Shri Rajiv Gandhi Ji's 80th birth anniversary.



16:58 · 20 Aug 24 · 5,127 Views

TODAY IN HISTORY/EVENTS RECALLED: AUGUST 20, 2023

A RECAP OF THE HORRIFIC INCIDENTS ON AUGUST 20, 2023 AS A RESULT OF PRE-PLANNED STATE-SPONSORED ETHNIC CLEANSING POGROM AGAINST KUKI-ZO

Meitei mob Burned down several houses in Langol, Imphal West.

indiscriminately fired upon the village volunteers until they faced a determined retaliation from the community's defenders.

Meitei militants launched an attack on Saichang in Sugnu at approximately 5:10 PM. During the attack, they



The revolution is not an idea that belongs to us, it is an idea that belongs to the future.

— Victor Hugo





ANALYSIS

Manipur Government - Shooting The Messenger

Thomzel Kh. Doungel

The audio clip, which prima facie, proved beyond doubt that the plan for the ongoing ethnic cleansing pogrom against the Kuki-Zo people originated from N Biren Singh, established his irrefutable complicity in the crime. Indeed, the state's version of reality is now faced with concrete evidence. The maxim, 'walls have ears' couldn't be truer in this era of media convergence and words once spoken cannot be recalled. Yet, Mr N Biren Singh made a last ditch attempt to dismiss what he had spoken by terming it as 'doctored.' Earlier this month, social media was buzzed with short excerpts/ clips of the audio recording along with a press release of the Kuki Students' Organisation (KSO) where some transcripts of the recording were shared. Subsequently, a DIPR statement denied and dismissed the recording as "doctored" and the state government registered an FIR No. 34(8) 2024 CCPS dated 07- 08-2024 with Cyber Crime PS.

This time, a reputed news portal The Wire broke that the recording which the Manipur government claims is 'doctored' – has now been placed before the Judicial Commission investigating the violence in the state. When this is supposed to be seen as a hard fact, N Biren Singh steered it to the other way round.

Yet again, the State Government's spins doctor (DIPR) swiftly came out with another statement saying that the government is viewing such 'acts of spreading

misinformation/ disinformation through such doctored clips as anti - national activities' without any attempt to answer the fact that the present unrest is the doings of Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh and that he is responsible for the mayhem.

Nothing could be more disgusting and shameful on the part of N Biren Singh and his spin doctors to issue warning that 'anybody without exception shall be prosecuted under relevant provisions of laws of the land, if found involved in spreading such unfounded and baseless contents through any media or posting and sharing of such contents, which will escalate law and order issues in the State and derail the efforts put so far toward bring normalcy and peace in the State.'

Instead of issuing plain denial statement and stern warning and drastic steps against the 'spreader of the message,' the DIPR should have tried to provide evidence that the audio is being doctored. The way things turn out exposes the stark reality that is N Biren Singh.

The Manipur CM is seen seeking so strenuously to

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control how the people think – and what not to think – particularly about the present crisis. He thinks and imposes his thinking on peoples' mind that he is always right and infallible. Those who criticise or contest his narratives even with hard evidences (such as the said audio clip) are labelled as 'trouble makers' 'inciting/fomenting communal violence/passion' 'anathema to peace' 'acting at the behest of external powers,' and whatnots. Biren Singh is swift to invoke FIR against any persons who are critical of him and his policies. All these were quite evident since May 3, 2023 and much before when he started building up Meitei public sentiments against the Kuki-Zo people. Is there any other despotic traits left still in Biren Singh? The answer is not far to seek.

As is his wont, Biren Singh activated the state machineries to brush aside hard evidences that prove his complicity in the pogrom against the Kuki-Zo people such as the audio clip in question. How long his designs to control public views and thinking in this regard is going to work is only a matter of time. Indeed, it is hard to defend the truth when it pricks.

The Wire report is more than confident about the source of the clip as it mentions clearly thus:

The Wire was informed by the purported maker/s of the 48-minute recording that it was done in person at a meeting where the chief minister unmistakably indicated his partisan complicity in the ongoing violence. The sources, claiming anonymity on account of the threat to personal safety, told The Wire that this material has also been submitted to the Commission – along with an affidavit attesting to its authenticity from the person/s who made the recording at the chief minister's official residence –and that protection and anonymity has been sought from the Commission as well.

Again, it clearly mentions that:

While The Wire is unable to independently establish that the person heard speaking on the recording about

*the violence in Manipur is indeed Biren Singh, we have confirmed the date, subject and contents of this meeting with some of the participants, none of whom was willing to be identified because of fears for their safety. **Some persons claiming to have been participants at the meeting assert that the voice is indeed of chief minister Biren Singh and that he did say all the things in the recording in their presence.***

The Wire has also sent several questions to the chief minister in this regard which he is still to respond.

The above facts need to be answered by N Biren Singh and his 'praise and worship team' need to provide answers to those queries instead of constantly making mockery of the DIPR office after every fact about the complicity of N Biren Singh in the ethnic cleansing campaign against the Kuki-Zo emerges. Intimidating people who shared the facts is akin to shooting the messenger.

Mere denial and threats (of prosecution), and of course dismissal of the fact as concocted or doctored cannot be accepted by any sane individual. The audio is enough ground to ascertain the intent of N Biren Singh and his radical followers, who have long planned a 'final solution' of the Kuki-Zos. No other testimonials, than the viral audio is required to ascertain the genesis and overall schemes of the violence besieging Manipur now.

As the stark reality has unfolded, the Government of India cannot shy away from taking action rather it should act immediately. The Government of India should also understand the genuine fear and consternation of the Kuki-Zo people who explicitly expressed their fright to live together again with the Meiteis and their dreadfulness go back to the valley of death. It should accept now that separation is the only solution. Is New Delhi listening?

Published by: [The Hills Journal](#)



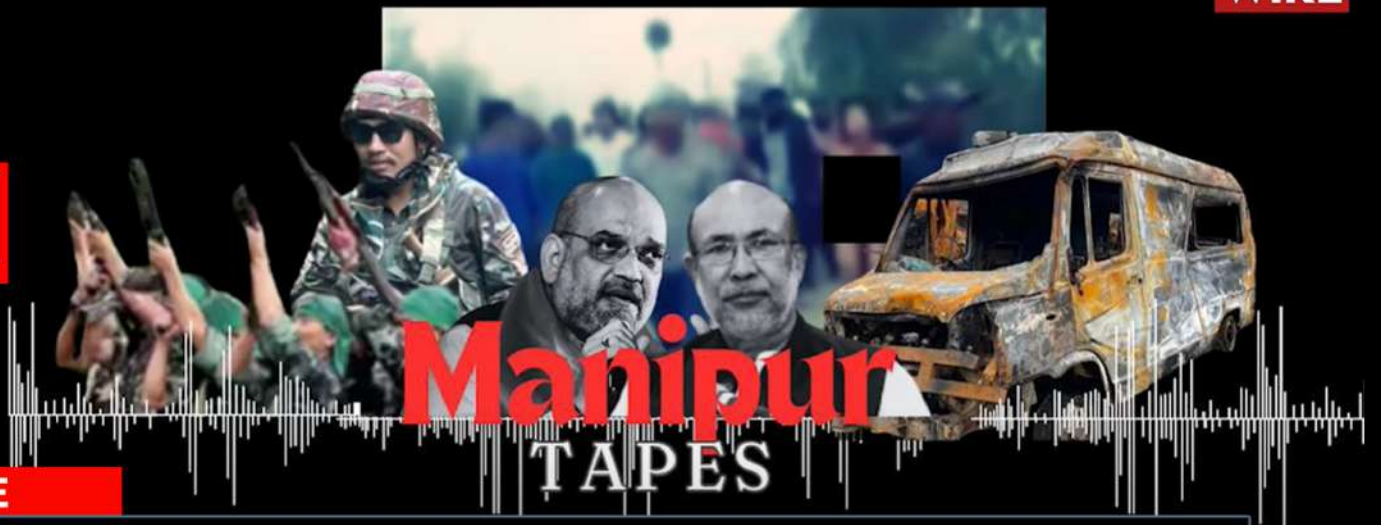
Biren's Leaked Audio

PART TWO

FEATURED ARTICLE

'Where's the Proof They Were Raped?', Biren Allegedly Says of Kuki Women Paraded Naked, 'Reward Those Arrested for Saving Them'

Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty



An audio recording of a meeting – said by a well-placed source to have been addressed by N. Biren Singh at his official residence in Imphal late last year – features a voice claimed to be that of the Manipur chief minister doubting the complaint filed by two Kuki-Zo women paraded naked by a mob in Kangpokpi district in May 2023 that they were molested and raped.

When a video of the two women emerged in July 2023, outrage against the horrific act swept through the country. Several Meitei civil society groups also spoke out against it, including the powerful women's body, Meira Paibi, whose members attacked the houses of the men who featured in the video including the main accused and demanded the government give them a 'befitting punishment'.

In the audio recording, however, the voice said to be of the chief minister can be heard making light of the crime against the two survivors and berating Meitei civil society groups for not coming out and "asserting boldly, with pride" that "it is we, the Meiteis who saved them from the mob". "How badly we were shamed!... We should have taken credit for saving them, clothing them and sending them home," the recording captures the speaker as saying.

The Wire can confirm that the 48-minute recording has been formally submitted to the Commission of Inquiry currently probing the ethnic violence in Manipur

along with an affidavit attesting to its authenticity from the person/s who say they recorded the chief minister at his official residence.

While The Wire is unable to independently establish that the person who is heard speaking on the recording is indeed Biren Singh, we have confirmed the date, subject and contents of this meeting with some of the participants, none of whom was willing to be identified because of fears for their safety. Some persons claiming to have been participants at the meeting assert that the voice is indeed that of chief minister Biren Singh and that he did say all the things in the recording in their presence.

Some of these persons were also able to confirm to The Wire that the full audio clip has been submitted to the Commission of Inquiry headed by Justice (Retd) Ajai Lamba, a former chief justice of the Gauhati high court. The Commission was set up by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs in June last year to probe the violence which has so far claimed the lives of over 220 people.

On its part, the Manipur government has said the audio in question is "doctored" and that the recording has been "falsely" claimed to be that of the chief minister.

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Given the compelling public interest involved in the contents of this recording, The Wire is placing key excerpts in the public domain.

In the recording, the voice claimed to be that of Biren Singh can be heard suggesting that the Meitei civil society groups which had identified some of the men accused of involvement in that crime should have told the “NIA” (National Investigation Agency) to “reward” the men who were part of the mob for “saving” those women, “clothing them” and sending them home, while their brother and uncle had not been spared by the same mob.

Viral video sent shock waves

On July 19, 2023, just months after bloody ethnic strife erupted between the Meitei and Kuki communities in the state, a 30-second video clip recorded on May 4 emerged, featuring two Kuki-Zo women being paraded naked and being groped by a sizeable mob of men belonging to the Meitei community in Kangpokpi district.

In their testimony to the media, the survivors said that after they were led away by the mob, they were sexually assaulted and raped.

Fingers were immediately pointed at chief minister Biren Singh as he is also the state’s home minister. Demands for his resignation came from the opposition for having failed to maintain law and order in the state and ensure the safety of women. The Indigenous Tribal Leaders’ Forum, the apex body that raised the voice of the Kukis during the conflict, sought President’s Rule in Manipur.

What is said in the recording?

The audio clip in Meiteilon said by our source to be recorded at the chief minister’s official residence just months after the video of that horrific incident had gone viral and claimed to be in the CM’s voice – also suggests an attempt to play down the fact that members of the mob could clearly be seen groping the two women as they led them away:

**“Hoi! See, photos are photos, hands could be seen placed here and there.
But it is not necessarily the fact.”**

By dismissing what was visible to the naked eye and doubting the veracity of the survivors’ testimony that they had been raped, were the men accused of such a grave crime being given a clean chit of sorts and in fact being commended?

From the audio comes across the view of the speaker (said to be the chief minister), that the Meitei civil society groups, instead of condemning the men from the community, should have aggressively and publicly stated that “it is we (Meiteis) who saved them”, “clothed them” and “sent them home”.

This is an English translation of the relevant portion of the audio clip:

“...Then, [there is the] case of the two women paraded naked...how badly we were shamed! Why didn’t even one group come out and assert? It was a bit difficult for me to speak out then... even though I have started speaking it out now. But why didn’t any group come out and assert boldly that it is we who saved their lives? They should have asserted boldly, with pride, that it is we who had saved them.

“Hoi! We could have asked where is the proof, how can you say that they were raped? The brother and the uncle were killed by a mob of a lakh...Ah! By 10-20 thousand people...we should have said it is we, the Meiteis, who had saved them from the mob. We should have said that, it was unsatisfactory. We should have taken the credit of saving them, clothing them and sending them home.

“When Meiteis were shamed worldwide with this incident, I told them that something should be done about this through the press, about

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the children... [The Wire adds: This appears to be a reference to the murder of two Meitei teenagers who went missing in July. A photo of their dead bodies emerged and went viral in September 2023].

“Hoi! See, photos are photos, hands could be seen placed here and there. But it is not necessarily the fact. The real fact is that we saved them from the mob, by us, by the youth. We saved them from the mob and sent them home. We did not take credit for that, we passed it by.

“Assh! We are so foolish, I thought...Now too, I told those people, those, who are handing them over to the NIA, to tell that those people arrested should instead be rewarded. Rewarded for saving them...”

Assertions made in audio clip match CM’s statements, actions

As a matter of record, the words attributed to Biren Singh by our source through the audio tape match what the CM has said or done in the public domain about the case. For instance, the chief minister had begun publicly stating that the Meitei community must be given credit for saving the two Kuki women from the mob. That position taken by him was picked up by at least one website to claim that the Kuki (Christian) women were saved by Meitei (Hindu) men”.

Some Meira Paibi leaders also began taking a similar line later on local news channels.

In the recording, the voice – which some of those present in the meeting have said is Biren Singh’s – can also be heard saying that he had strategised “something” that was to be done “through the press about the children” to counter Meiteis being “shamed worldwide”.

This appears to be a reference to the disappearance of two Meitei teenagers from Bishnupur district on July 6, 2023. Two photos of the teenagers surfaced in the third week of September 2023, and the media noted that this was soon after mobile internet services were temporarily restored. One shows them sitting

in a forested area apparently in the custody of armed men and the other is of their lifeless bodies, allegedly shot by Kuki militants.

Soon after the photos emerged on social media, the distraught father of one of the missing children urged the state government to find their bodies. In September 2023, the chief minister’s office said that the case had been forwarded to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). To date, the bodies of the two teenagers have not been found.

Viral video pushed ‘double engine’ on the defensive

Till the video clip of the sexual assault went viral, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had evaded the opposition’s demand to even have a discussion on the fast deteriorating Manipur situation in parliament. Even while responding to the demand for Biren Singh’s resignation after the video had come out, Union home minister Amit Shah had told the Lok Sabha that the chief minister was “cooperating” with the Centre. Shah accused the Congress of “playing politics” on Manipur.

However, that video clip of the sexual assault did compel Prime Minister Narendra Modi to break his Sphinx-like silence on Manipur. In a brief statement in front of parliament house on the opening day of the monsoon session, Modi condemned the sexual assault on the two Kuki women, but not without mentioning the need to also protect women in two other states, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, then under Congress rule.

Modi tried to paper over the horrific act carried out in a state ruled by his own party by saying, “I appeal to all chief ministers — whether Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh or Manipur — that they strengthen all law enforcement for the protection of women. In any corner of this country, under any party’s government in any state, law and order is prioritised, and so is the honour and safety of women.”

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On July 21, 2023, the Supreme Court called the video clip “deeply disturbing” and took suo-motu cognisance of it. The apex court has since been hearing the case.

In tandem, on July 29, 2023, the Union home ministry handed over the matter to the CBI.

Contrary to Shah’s claim in parliament of Singh “cooperating” with the Union government, the chargesheet filed by the CBI in the case at the special court in Guwahati on April 30, 2024 said that the Biren Singh government had till then, not granted sanction to prosecute the accused under section 153A (promoting enmity among different groups on the grounds of race). The chargesheet also revealed that the CBI had not made any more arrests after six people who were part of the mob were taken into custody by the Manipur Police in July 2023 — that is soon after the news had hit world headlines, and the chief minister was under immense pressure to be seen as acting on the matter.

Poll twist

Significantly, in the run-up to the recent Lok Sabha elections, the chief minister was seen giving a fresh twist to the sexual assault case by claiming that the opposition Congress had a “hand” in making that video clip “viral”. He claimed it was to “insult” Prime Minister Modi.

Biren Singh made that claim at a Yuva Sammelan in Imphal on April 7. By accusing the Congress of colluding with the Kukis, Singh seemed to have hoped the BJP would retain at least the Meitei-dominated Inner Manipur seat in those elections.

“To bring the issue under control, Union home minister Amit Shah himself visited and stayed in Manipur. However, the video was made viral on social media right before the start of [the] parliamentary session just to insult Prime Minister Narendra Modi and (the) BJP government with incomplete narratives,” he said. He also claimed, “Any small issue was instigated to escalate it into violence.”

The Inner Manipur seat, however, went to the Congress.

Police inaction mentioned in CBI chargesheet

Notably, both Singh and Shah have, so far, remained silent on the role some state police personnel played in exposing the two survivor-women to the fury of the mob, leading to their sexual assault.

Just days after the chief minister had made the claim of ‘Congress complicity’ in making the video clip viral, the CBI recorded in its chargesheet that Manipur Police personnel, instead of protecting the Kuki women – one of whom was the wife of a Kargil war veteran – took them towards “900-1000- persons” and left them there. It mentioned that they did it after the driver of the police vehicle refused to help them initially, claiming that he didn’t have the keys of the car.

Status of the case in Supreme Court

It’s been over a year now that the case has been pending in the Supreme Court.

Colin Gonsalves, who has been representing a number of other cases related to the victims of Manipur’s ethnic violence, told The Wire, “As many as four reports were submitted by the state director general of police (DGP) to the apex court; it has been several months now but the victims’ lawyers have not been given access to those reports. Additionally, the court had asked the state government to construct the 4,500 houses and 3,500 churches that were burnt and give possession to the victim community. But till today, the work has not started.”

He also added, “We had very high hopes when the Supreme Court took suo motu cognisance of the Manipur violence but there is no hope at all now.”

Gonsalves underlined the fact that the Manipur cases have not been heard by the apex court for the past six months.

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Questions to the chief minister

In the light of the new revelations, The Wire has sent the following questions to the chief minister:

A) Do you doubt the allegations of rape made by the two Kuki women who were paraded naked by a mob?

B) Do you believe parading naked in public a woman and groping her by a set of men is not equal to rape/gangrape or sexual assault?

C) Do you think there may not be any sexual intent in parading the women naked in public by the mob?

D) Did you ask any Meitei civil society group to tell the 'National Investigation Agency' that those who were arrested for the crime should instead be rewarded?

E) Did you ask any Meitei civil society group to say 'with pride' that it was the 'Meitei' (those who were in

the mob) who saved those women, clothed them and sent them home while their uncle and brother were not spared by the same mob?

F) Did you ask anyone to push through the Press the horrific case of two Meitei children killed during the ethnic conflict allegedly by Kuki militants as a counter to the community being shamed worldwide due to the viral video clip of the two Kuki women?

The story will be updated when we receive a response.

-END OF PART TWO-

Published by: [The Wire](#)



SUPPRESSION OF DIPR AFTER THE EXPLOSION





UNHEEDED SCARS & Broken Justice

~ Shila Aimol

On May the fourth, a day of dread,
Two souls were torn from light and led,
By mobs with cruelty in their wake,
Their dignity a prize to take.

In shadows deep, they walked in shame,
Their bodies bare, their hearts aflame,
A massacre in daylight's grace,
Their screams a haunting, hollow trace.

The nation's heart was stained with grief,
Leaders spoke, but none found relief,
Their words a veil, their promises thin,
While justice faltered deep within.

The scars they bear, unhealed, unbound,
The truth in whispers, lost, unfound,
For leaders swayed by their own might,
Downplayed the horror, shunned the light.

Narcissists who shield their own,
Rewarded those who caused the moan,
The pain remains, the cries unsung,
A story left, forever young.

In every shadow, in every tear,
The silence screams, the truth is clear,
For justice waits where hope is thin,
And scars persist where lies begin.