TUESDAY | FEBRUARY 27, 2024





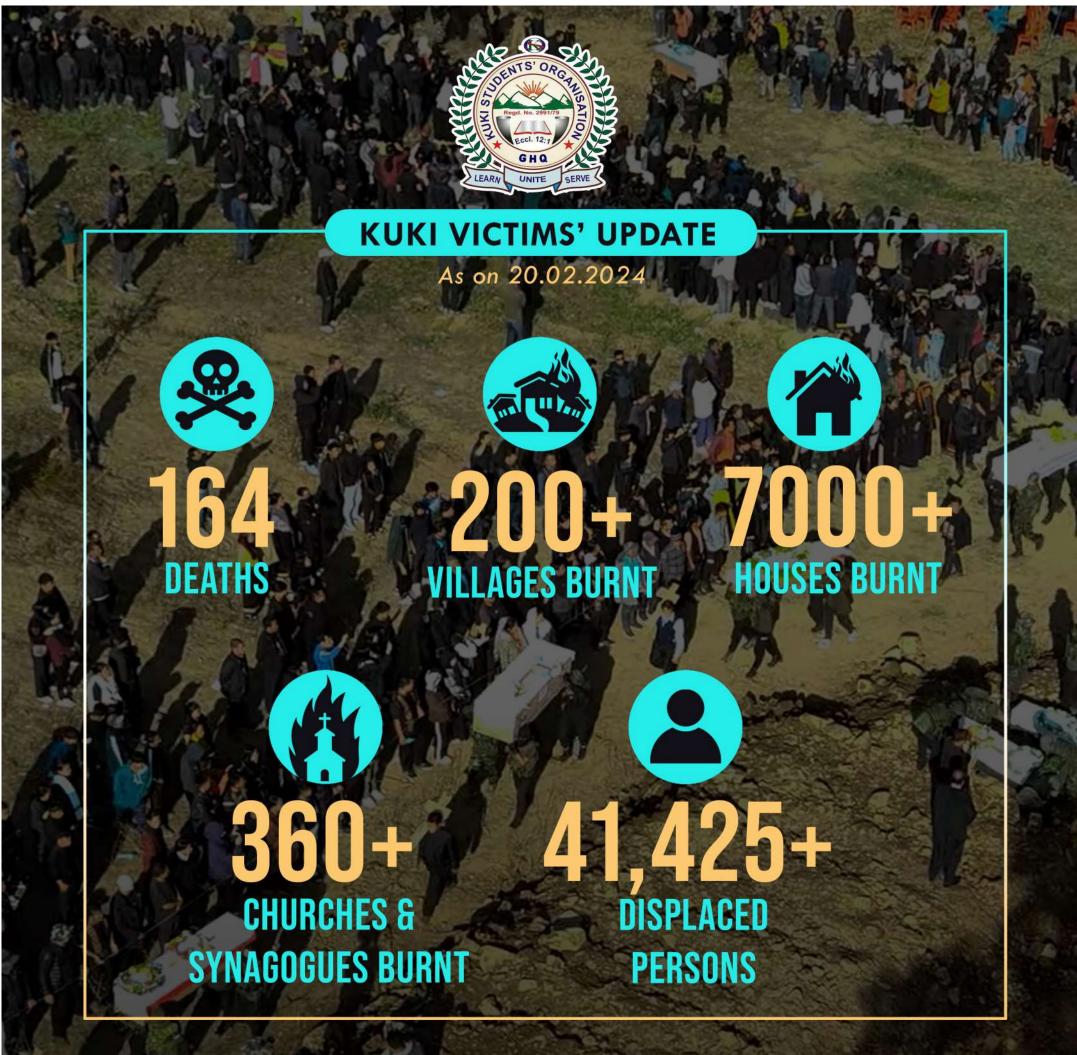
Leilon Phaikot RELIEF CENTRE

Leilon Phaikot Community & School Hall, Sadar Hills

Managed by
District Administration &
Kuki CSOs, Sadar Hills

Total Inmates Registered: 416





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.



ITLF SEEKS INTERVENTION OVER INTERNET BAN AND RELIEF RATION STOPPAGE IN MANIPUR

In a fervent appeal to the Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah, the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) has raised serious concerns regarding the prolonged suspension of internet services and the withholding of relief rations in Manipur's Churachandpur district.

The ITLF, represented by Chairman Pagin Haokip and Secretary Muan Tombing, addressed a letter to Shri Amit Shah, highlighting the unjust and discriminatory nature of these actions taken by the state government.

The suspension of internet services, which was initially declared as a temporary measure following a public protest, has been extended twice by the state government despite the absence of any reported incidents of violence or unrest in the district. The ITLF has criticized this decision as biased, suggesting that it disproportionately affects tribal-inhabited areas while ignoring similar or more severe incidents in the state capital, Imphal.

Furthermore, the ITLF emphasized the critical importance of digital access in today's world and its impact on various aspects of life, including education, healthcare, and employment. They urged the central government to intervene and lift the internet ban in Churachandpur immediately, citing it as a matter of fundamental rights and fairness. Not a single incident of violence has been reported in the district since the night of the protest, all commercial activities have resumed and all private and government offices are functioning. But despite all these, the state government has extended the ban twice, the latest of which will last till March 2, 2024.

This is a blatant form of discrimination where the Meitei-controlled government is conveniently using one incident to collectively punish an entire district for an indefinite period.

Compared to the increasing scenes of lawlessness in the state capital Imphal, and one cannot but feel that the internet ban in tribal areas is an openly biased decision. In the past two weeks alone, various incidents show



Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF)

Conglomerate of Recognised Tribes in Lamka, Outer Manipur

File No: ITLF-MM-202442

Monday, 26 February 2024

To

Shri Amit Shah, Union Home Minister, Government of India, New Delhi.

Subject: Request for intervention on internet ban and stoppage of ration to relief centres in Churachandpur

Hon'ble Minister,

We would like to apprise you of the unjust and prolonged suspension of internet services in Churachandpur district in Manipur as the prevailing situation does not justify denying the people a commodity which the Supreme Court describes as a fundamental right under Article 19 of the Constitution.

A "temporary" five-day suspension order was first given by the state government on Feb 16, 2024, following a public protest the previous night over the suspension of a tribal policeman which led to arson and the death of two protesters, who were shot by security personnel.

Not a single incident of violence has been reported in the district since the night of the protest, all commercial activities have resumed and all private and government offices are functioning. But despite all these, the state government has extended the ban twice, the latest of which will last till March 2, 2024. This is a blatant form of discrimination where the Meitei-controlled government is conveniently using one incident to collectively punish an entire district for an indefinite period.

Compare this to the increasing scenes of lawlessness in the state capital Imphal, and one cannot but feel that the internet ban in tribal areas is an openly biased decision.

In the past two weeks alone, various incidents show the breakdown of law and order in Imphal, but none resulted in an internet ban or even an official reaction from the government.

On February 13, 2024, a mob stormed the 5th IRB camp in Imphal East and looted around 200 weapons and 20,000 ammunition. What's more shocking is that the mob faced no resistance from police personnel who were manning the camp. A mob also tried to loot weapons the same night from the Manipur Police Training Centre.

On Feb 23, 2024, a bomb blast took place inside DM University, the premier learning centre in the state, resulting in the death of one student and another being admitted to hospital. The same night, a series of arson attacks were carried out in different parts of the capital. Macha Leimai School in Imphal East district was torched, and several offices of civil society organisations, including the United Committee Manipur (UCM), the Coalition Against Drugs and Alcohol (CADA), and the Mapi Council, were also set on fire.

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Additionally, the ITLF brought to light the alarming situation regarding relief ration distribution in the district. Relief materials, including rice and dal, intended for thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in over 100 relief camps, have been withheld by the Deputy Commissioner since the night of

protest on February 15, 2024. This withholding of essential supplies puts more than 17,000 IDPs at risk of starvation, according to the ITLF.

The Deputy Commissioner has refused to release rations for the past two weeks, putting more than 17,000 IDPs at the risk of starvation. This is another form of discrimination, whereby the DC is punishing people who have already lost their homes by threatening to starve them. In their letter to the Union Home Minister, the ITLF urged urgent intervention from the central government to ensure the resumption of relief ration supplies to the affected relief centers without further delay.

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum emphasized that these actions by the state government not only violate the fundamental rights of tribal communities but also perpetuate discrimination and marginalization. They called upon the central government to uphold principles of fairness, justice, and humanitarianism in addressing these pressing issues in Manipur's Churachandpur district.





MANIPUR: ADDITIONAL SP(Ops) M AMIT SINGH ABDUCTED.

A shootout between @manipur_police & Meitei Terrorists 2day at Imphal.

Mr. Meitei CM Biren,

- Will you suspend the Internet?
- Will you setup judicial enquiry?
- Will you warn them?





9:22 pm · 27 Feb 24 · 663 Views





10:13 pm · 27 Feb 24 · **543** Views







COTU URGES UNION HOME MINISTER TO BRING A SEMBLANCE OF JUSTICE FOR MEN IN UNIFORM, AFSPA IN MANIPUR'S VALLEY

The Committee on Tribal Unity, or the CoTU, Sadar Hills Kangpokpi District submitted a memorandum to the Union Home Minister Amit Shah to rescind the Government of Manipur order about the recent transfer and posting of police personnel on the grounds of impracticality and impossibility and to re-imposed AFSPA in the 19 Police Stations of the Imphal valley.

The memorandum was submitted to the Union Home Minister through Deputy Commissioner Kangpokpi.

CoTU stated in the memorandum that the recent transfer and posting, attachment or detachment of police officers/personnel on February 14, concerning 108 Kuki-Zo police personnel at this critical juncture with heightened polarization on ethnic lines is devoid of logic and uncalled for.

Several high-ranking Kuki-Zo civil & police officers (IAS/IPS) are unable to perform their duties since the state could not ensure their safety. Therefore, it is highly impractical and unattainable for these 108 Police personnel to travel back to Imphal for duty, it stated.

Drawing the immediate attention of the Union Home Minister to look into the security aspect of the present sectarian conflict which has now entered 10 (ten) months, the Committee started that the misplaced priorities by the current dispensation in the state of Manipur to recover those 5000 numbers of assault rifles and 6 lacs numbers of ammunition looted from state police armouries in the first week of the conflict is more of a concern than the preconceived notion of foreign involvement.

This indifferent attitude of the concerned authority towards civilians openly flaunting arms on the streets has emboldened the armed militias to summon the 37 non-tribal elected representatives from the valley



districts including the inner and nominated MPs of the state to succumb to their diktats and forced them to take an oath of allegiance to their mandate; which is an overt display to undermine the very foundation of the democratic principle of the country and desecration of the Constitution of India, it stated.

Therefore, imposition of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in all the 19 Police Stations in the valley districts is a prerequisite to recovering the looted arms and thwarting the secessionist Meitei militants from disintegrating the country, it further stated.

CoTU seeks the intervention of the Union Home Minister to bring a semblance of justice for men in uniform, to prioritize recovering the arms looted from various state police armouries so that the public in the valley be deterred from such attempts and to demilitarise them.



ARMED ARAMBAI TENGGOL GROUP ATTACKS IMPHAL WEST POLICE OFFICER'S RESIDENCE AMIDST SPECULATIONS OVER ARREST OF COMMANDER ROBIN MANGANG

In an alarming development in the Imphal valley, where the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) is not in effect, armed members of the Arambai Tenggol group attacked the residence of the Additional SP (Operations) of Imphal West this evening.

The incident, which took place in Wangkhei Thangjam Leikai in Imphal East, is believed to be linked to the reported arrest of Robin Mangang, the self-styled Commander-in-Chief of the Arambai Tenggol Sekmai Unit, by the Manipur Police Officer. However, the official confirmation of Robin Mangang's arrest is still pending.

MPS Moirangthem Amit Singh, recently promoted to the JAG (non-functional) level from MPS Grade-I on July 27, 2023, sustained injuries during the attack, which also resulted in harm to two civilians and severe damage to vehicles parked at the MPS officer's residence.

The absence of AFSPA in the 19 police stations within the valley has led to a surge in lawlessness in Imphal, with anti-social activities perpetrated by armed militants posing a significant threat to security.

Robin Mangang Khwairakpam, known for his involvement in the Manipur ethnic conflict, has recently drawn attention after being summoned by the Sekmai Police Station regarding a social media post. In response, Robin expressed frustration on Facebook, criticizing the state police and mentioning his desire to acquire rifles. Despite facing rejection in the last assembly election and making derogatory remarks against the Kukis, Robin continues to assert his relevance by portraying himself as the Commander of the Arambai Tenggol



Sekmai Unit. However, his claims and bravado are often viewed as comical by the Kukis, who see him more as an entertainer than a serious threat.

During a discussion on ISTV Discussion Hour, Robin allegedly claimed that he could eliminate the Kukis within a week if Central Forces refrained from intervening in the conflict, urging them to comply with his demand. However, the reality on the ground contradicts his assertions, as the presence of Central Security Forces has helped prevent further casualties. Despite his profession as a Navy Merchant, Robin discusses war tactics from the comfort of his room without firsthand experience on the battlefield.



TLM IMPACT: CHURACHANDPUR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION TO RESUME DISTRIBUTION OF RELIEF MATERIALS FROM TOMMORROW

The District Administration, Churachandpur today announced that 500 bags of rice and others essential items will be released tomorrow i.e 28th February 2024 as a stop gap arrangement on a liability basis. Normal relief operation will also resume in due course, it added.

It may be mentioned that **Thingkho Le Malcha (TLM)** had yesterday reported about the non-distribution of relief materials for 10 days.

According to several philanthropic organizations managing relief centers in the district, the most recent distribution of relief materials for IDPs occurred on February 12. With more than 10 days having elapsed since the last distribution, these organizations have encountered difficulties due to the lack of relief material disbursal.

In a release issued by the District Information Officer Churachandpur, the district administration, post 3rd May 2023 incident, is working tirelessly, day and night, almost without any break, looking after the welfare of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) who have come to the district for shelter and taking refuge from different parts of the State. Currently the District operates more than 100 (One Hundred) Relief centers with more than 16,000 (Sixteen Thousand) camps inmates.

On the night of 15th February 2024, miscreants forcibly made its way to the Mini-Secretariat Complex and set ablaze DC offices and other rooms which were central to the normal operation of the relief works in the district. Properties worth crores of rupees were burnt, damaged, or vandalized. Thereafter, routine relief operation was affected as all important documents and infrastructure needed for it were completely gutted down.

The District Administration is currently in tedious process of reconstruction of documents and files, needed for the resumption of its normal operation, the release said, adding that the District has reached such troubling pass due to the actions of certain individuals with vested interest. However, keeping in view the welfare and needs of the camps inmates and also to ensure that their concerns are looked into and taken care of, 500 bags of rice and others essential items will be released tomorrow i.e 28th February 2024 as a stop gap arrangement on a liability basis. Normal relief operation will also resume in due course, it added. The District Administration is also concerned about diversion of items meant for the camps inmates and is making constant strides to prevent such leakages. As correct and accurate data are handmaid for good decision making, the District Administration has constituted committees under the chairmanship of respective SDOs to ascertain the accurate inmates/IDPs figures in each relief camps as relief camps undergo constant rejig due to shifting, relocation and amalgamation.

The District Administration has reiterated its unwavering commitment for the welfare of the IDPs and will not be intimidated by any individuals or organizations in the process and will continue to maintain utmost professionalism and dedication in its approach towards the IDPs and their welfare. The District Administration appeals to all right-thinking citizens and discernable observers of the District to extent their support and cooperation in its endeavor to ensure welfare of the IDPs.





8 NAGA INTENDING CANDIDATES FOR LOK SABHA POLLS ATTEND UNC'S CONSULTATIVE MEETING

The United Naga Council (UNC) on Tuesday held a successful consultative meeting with intending Naga candidates for the ensuing 18th Lok Sabha elections 2024 at its head office in Senapati district.

According to a reliable source, at least eight candidates from different Naga tribes attended the UNC meeting.

The candidates were officially accompanied by their respective tribe president in response to the Naga apex body's directive.

As per the UNC note, it stated that "Given the present time and situation, it is of paramount importance that a Naga represents our people in the Lok Sabha and so the consultative is being convened for securing the same."

Meanwhile, among the eight intending candidates who turned up for the meeting, four of them, including the sitting Outer Manipur MP Dr Lorho S Pfoze, are in the fray for the Naga People's Front (NPF) ticket. The other three candidates are K Timothy Zimik, a former Income Tax Principal Chief Commissioner, Kho John, former UNC president and Samuel Risom, former MLA and Central Working President, NPF.

"For the Naga people, the present issues are very complicated and it needs a lot of efforts to be put in. I have already started the work and I want to go to the finish point," said MP Dr Lorho.



MP Lorho further pledged to continue to do his best for the good of the tribal people and the state in general and for the Naga people in particular.

Another three candidates for the Parliamentary election namely Lanjaigai Kamson, president, ST Morcha BJP Manipur, Dr Alyson Abonmai, social activist and vice-president of Manipur BJP youth wing Saveio Khole are said to be fraying for the BJP ticket.

Meanwhile, social worker K Dharmasing also participated the meeting as an intending candidate. However, his affiliated political party is yet to be known.

Despite being officially informed, another two more intending candidates namely Dr Adim Pamei, a BJP Party worker and former Congress MLA Alfred Khanngam S Arthur did not turn up for the UNC meeting, sources reported.

Source: **Ukhrul Times**



He who has never learned to obey cannot be a good commander.

- Aristotle





IMAGES FROM BRAZIL SHARED TO BLAME KUKIS FOR DEFORESTATION IN MANIPUR

Claim: Images circulating on social media purport to show a barren land and a lush green forest in Manipur, with blame directed at the Kuki community for the deforestation.

Truth Uncovered: These images are actually from Brazil and have no connection to Manipur or the Kuki community.

They depict the transformation of a barren landscape into a vibrant forest in the Minas Gerais region, accomplished by the efforts of photojournalist Sebastião Ribeiro Salgado and his wife Lélia.

Our Investigation: By conducting a reverse image search, we traced the images to a report by the British tabloid Metro dated May 4, 2019.

This report featured the same images, attributing them to Salgado's reforestation project.

Additionally, a Forbes article from January 25, 2008, documented Instituto Terra's Reforestation Project, highlighting the progress made over eight years.

Further validation came from a June 2019 report by the Daily Mail, which detailed Salgado and his wife's initiative to restore the tropical forest devastated by deforestation.

Conclusion: The images falsely attributed to Manipur are actually from Brazil, showcasing a successful reforestation effort.

This misinformation only serves to exacerbate tensions between communities in Manipur, particularly during a period of ethnic violence.

It is crucial to verify the authenticity of images and information before attributing blame or perpetuating hostility.

Source; **NE Now**







6:37 AM · Feb 26, 2024 · 48 Views

Couple create new rainforest by planting 2,000,000 trees over 20 years















Before and after shots of the now thriving rainforest in the Minas Gerais region (Picture: Ins













That afternoon in May last year, when we visited the refugee camps set up in Zokawthar, a village right across the international boundary line (in this case, a river) separating India from Myanmar, the sun had been beating down hard after weeks of torrential rain. The camps were rife with diseases and clean water shortage issues that forced many refugees to move to the Champhai district headquarters for medical treatment, and those who could afford more moved to Aizawl or even out of Mizoram for a more dignified life.

As I entered one of these makeshift houses protected only by tinned roofs and blue tarpaulin sheets, looking for my friend, I ran into a young woman who responded to my calls in English. Lalringsangi, 25, had escaped her village in Falam (Chin state) when the military junta invaded the year before, along with her sons (six and nine months old), husband, mother, and brother. But before she got married and had a family, Lalringsangi worked for several years as a domestic help in Singapore, where she picked up the foreign language. She wanted to get a refugee card that could help her and her family apply for asylum abroad.

Like other refugees in the camp, their family was getting by on donations received from civil society, aid groups, and the government, in addition to wages earned by her brother (who was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder) and her husband, both working as lumberjacks. Although her time abroad wasn't something Lalringsangi fondly remembered, it now offered a better prospect than being a refugee in a place that could offer charity, some security, but not a fighting chance at a bright future.

This is the typical story of many migrants or refugees fleeing dire circumstances of instability or conflict in their homeland. India's northeast, particularly Manipur and Mizoram, has seen waves of refugees from Myanmar - with which it shares a 1,643-km stretch of border - since the 1988 uprising against the military junta. As reported since March 2021, the bulk of refugees found shelter in a receptive Mizoram, where dominant tribal communities share close ethnic ties with the Chin tribes, much like the Kuki-Zo tribes in Manipur.

In Manipur, the politically dominant Hindu Meiteis in the valley do not have any particular ethnic affectation, even though Myanmar has a sizeable Meitei population. But more importantly, the BJP-led coalition government in Manipur does not care for refugees (unless they are Hindus) in line with the larger absence of a refugee policy. With refugees being turned away and detained in Manipur, the few that made it were only temporarily sheltered by their ethnic kin before they landed up in Mizoram or New Delhi, in the hope of getting a UNHCR refugee card.











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Despite this reality, the narrative painted by vested political parties or nationalist gangs is to sound the alarm on an "invasion" by migrants out to displace the native communities from their own land. An armed inter-ethnic conflict continues to play out in Manipur that has killed more than a hundred and displaced thousands of people who can't imagine returning. A majority of the victims are tribals.

Since violence broke out on May 3, the questions I have been fielding are from those wondering if Kukis - the ethnic community that I belong to - are illegal immigrants, poppy cultivators and/or terrorists. As someone who has reported from East to West on communities that are systemically harassed and labelled suspicious by the powers that be, the deep prejudice and nasty accusations have hit home. The roles are reversed in the northeast, where the 'indigenous' identity (the definition of which is far from settled) becomes a weapon to label disempowered folks in the margins here as 'colonial settlers', even though they are not even remotely from the Anglo-Saxon European stock.

Even the peace marches carried out by the Meitei community in Manipur or abroad end with calls for settling the issue by implementing the National Register of Citizens (NRC), an exercise carried out in Assam to ostensibly detect illegal immigrants that only left 19 lakh applicants in limbo, yet killed many by suicide. I have seen people in Assam lose precious years of their life in a detention centre on flimsy grounds of being declared an "illegal Bangladeshi" or dying on their way to prove their links to an ancestor.

In Manipur, where villages have turned into rubble and thousands of ancestral homes reduced to ashes, it befuddles me how anyone could imagine producing documents or proving family links in the midst of anarchy. It befuddles me more what sort of peace can be achieved by disenfranchising communities, instead of demanding justice for the dead.

Any exercise in state surveillance will be riddled with racial or ethnic biases. Although an Assamese scholar once theorised to me that this was particularly an issue for "transnational" communities, it's actually the minority underserved communities that always come in the fray. When the NRC was being updated in Assam, the draft lists had even excluded ethnic Ahoms, apart from disproportionately excluding Bengal-origin Muslims and Hindus. Yet the records of foreigners' tribunals consistently showed the systemic exclusion of Bengali Muslims more than any other ethnic community. It has declared people like retired army men illegal foreigners after 30 years of service because of spelling errors in documents, a regular occurrence in India.

For a region that has seen little sync and unity with "mainland" India, the idea of the NRC soon caught fire in the rest of the northeast. Ironically enough, the demand for securing borders along multiple nationalisms in a region filled with contiguous ethnic identities found more resonance with a Hindu nationalist government in the centre than the past status quo-ist yet secular-branded government.

In a politically motivated exercise that was 'too little, too late', the Manipur cabinet formed a subcommittee to survey 'illegal immigrants' in March, which is alleged to be one of the main reasons for the current clashes. Per documents recently reviewed by NDTV, over 2,000 illegal immigrants from Myanmar were found in just four districts by the committee that also had Letpao Haokip, a minister from the Kuki tribe who had conversed with the immigrants in the dialect. However, the document, alleged to be an 'initial report summary' submitted after the violence, titled 'Role of illegal Myanmari immigrants in the recent violence in Manipur' (sic), runs contrary to the subcommittee reports from visits to Churachandpur and Chandel districts.

Besides the reported figures of illegal settlements cited in the NDTV report, the subcommittee reports make no mention of "objections raised by illegal immigrants" to their proposal for shelter homes nor any discussions on poppy cultivation. This was

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confirmed to me by a subcommittee member who did not wish to be named.

However, the same member would not confirm or deny the undated and unsigned 'summary' report that concluded, "the recent violence in Manipur was fuelled by influential illegal poppy cultivators and drug lords from Myanmar settling in Manipur" (sic).

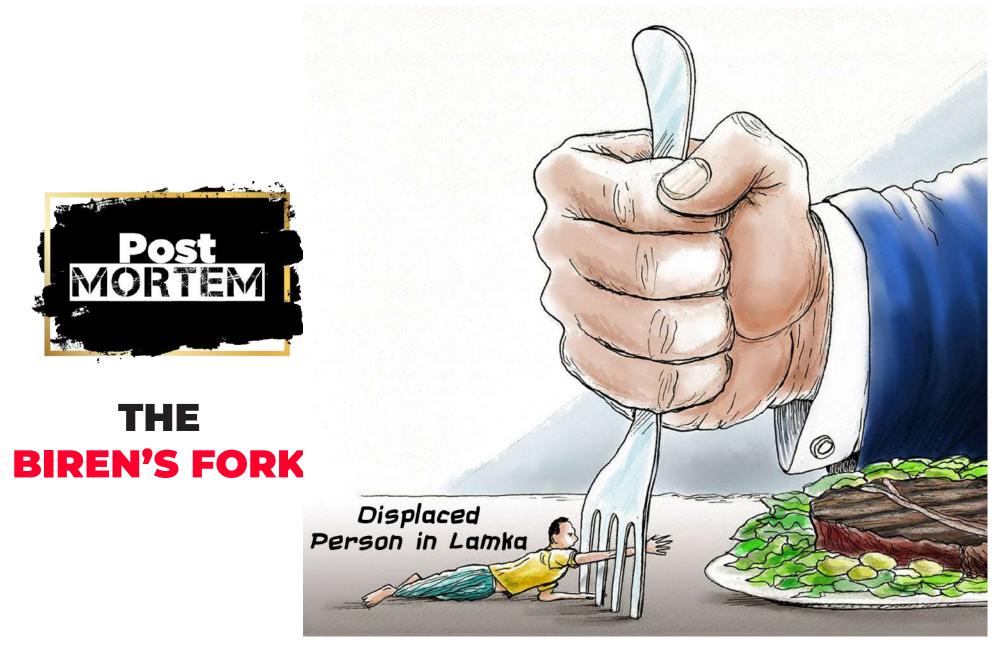
But this isn't about singling out the Meiteis, amongst whom the consensus for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status or an NRC was built after they suffered retaliatory killings and displacement in the clashes. Even if the narrative of an invasion can be believed, it is at the instance of Chief Minister N Biren Singh that Manipur did not admit refugees from Myanmar on humanitarian grounds. Valley-based civil society groups were, in fact, not opposed to offering them shelter with temporary

IDs, fearful of a situation where the influx rate remained unknown, and the entire community came under suspicion.

But this is what inevitably happened, and the violence that ensued suited a government that thrives in chaos and suspicion. And the indigenous communities - who were once seeking self-determination - are falling for it hook, line, and sinker.

First published by **NDTV**

(Makepeace Sitlhou is an award-winning journalist who has reported from India's Northeast. She was a Humphrey fellow (Fulbright) at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism, Arizona State University.)









HUNDRED WINTERS from now

- Hillsman J. Tearsworth

When I closed my eyes and entered the gates of imagination, Reels of thought processes began to play in my mind - scene by scene, Like Pharaoh's dream, it's crystal clear.

It took me to a hundred winters from now,
Where our great-grandchildren are tortured and
Treated inhumanely by the valley's people.
They are humiliated on their way to school,
In public places - parks, malls, and restaurants.

They are too ashamed of being who they are.
In tears, they talk to one another "Had our forebears been more united, wise, and brave,
And won the war before the hundred winters fall,
We wouldn't be in this pathetic life, in our own land."

I watch and watch all that happens,
As it's unbearable, I shout to The valley men who scorn our progeny,
Then, suddenly I awake from my deep sleep,
With full anger, still clenching my fists.

For many, this is just a dream, indifferent to them,
But for me, this is a vision of after-effects,
If we lose this fight, how will we be treated?
Imagine, even now, if they call us - sons of slaves,
How will they treat and call us after a hundred winters?!

My people, let's set aside all our egos and differences, Be focused, and use our utmost logic and ingenuity, For this is the time to unite and fight the war With all our might in order to win it. Otherwise, our children will face all humiliations.

Today, let's well learn from history that
No divided nation has ever won a war,
Let's again reconcile and forgive one another,
So that our children will not live in disgrace,
But with pride in a hundred winters from now.