

Thingkho Le Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



Kotlen RELIEF CENTRE

Kotlen Community Hall, Sadar Hills

Managed by
District Administration &
Kuki CSOs, Sadar Hills

Total Inmates Registered: 942



KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 28.02.2024



165
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.

LAWLESSNESS UNDER BIREN SINGH: MEITEI POLICE COMMANDOS LAY DOWN ARMS IN PROTEST AGAINST MEITEI MILITANTS' ACTION

In a clear case of complete breakdown of law and order under the incompetent leadership of narcissist N. Biren Singh, the Manipur Police commando personnel on Wednesday laid down their arms in protest against the abduction of Additional Superintendent of Police, Imphal West, Amit Kumar Moirangthem and demanded they be allowed to retaliate when attacked.

The police commandos of all the five Meitei dominated valley districts put down their weapon asking for action against the Meitei radical group, Arambai Tenggol and no hindrance from political executives when the forces act against the outfit, officials said.

They are protesting against Tuesday's incident during which a group of Meira Paibis (women's volunteer group) and cadres of Arambai Tenggol, a Meitei armed outfit patronaged by Biren Singh and Leisemba Sanajaoba MP, kidnapped the police officer and beat up other personnel guarding him.

On February 27, the residence of Addl SP, IW, Moirangthem Amit, MPS, S/o Dr. Kulla Singh, located at Wangkhei Tokpam Leikai under Porompat Police Station, Imphal East was attacked by the armed Meitei goons numbering about 200 coming in vehicles. The armed miscreants vandalized the household properties at the residence including four vehicles in the premises.

In the midst of the incident, the Addl SP and one of his escorts were abducted by the Meitei militants. The duo were, however, rescued later by the security forces from Kwakeithel Konjeng Leikai area and admitted to Raj Medicity for medical treatment. A case has been registered in this regard and investigation has started.

In the resulting firing incident, two individuals namely Rabinash Moirangthem, 24 yrs s/o M. Ranjan of Kwakeithel Akham Leikai and Kangujam Bhimsen, 20 yrs c/o K. Abosana of Khongman Bashikhong also sustained injuries on their persons and were admitted to JNIMS Hospital, Porompat.

The Army had to be called in as fresh tension mounted



in Imphal valley on Tuesday and four columns of the Assam Rifles were deployed after the senior police officer was abducted.

Senior police officials were talking to their personnel assuring them that strict actions would be taken against the perpetrators.

"You can't keep snakes in your backyard and expect them to only bite your neighbour. This was stated by the then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Pakistan in 2011 but today it holds good for Manipur where a section of the community was welcoming the return of these terror and radical groups", a senior security official said.

Mention may be made that the self-styled leader of Arambai Tenggol, Robin Kwairakpam of Sekmai was summoned by the Police for his criminal activities a few months ago. The militant's house was raided few days ago by the same police but failed to arrest the culprit.

The latest attack on the Additional SP Moirangthem Amit was a result of the police arrest warrant of the Arambai Tenggol leader, Robin Kwairakpam, who deliberately evaded from the law enforcing agency.

5TH SESSION OF MANIPUR ASSEMBLY BEGINS WITHOUT KUKI MLAS' PRESENCE; GOV HIGHLIGHTS PROGRESS AMIDST CHALLENGES

The 5th Session of Manipur Legislative Assembly began on Wednesday amidst the complete breakdown of law and order in the wake of Manipur mayhem which nears the completion of one year.

Analogous to the previous sessions, the ten Kuki MLAs could not participate in the Assembly Session as the escalating tension between the majority Meiteis and Kuki community is yet to subside and the violence still continues even after ten months of bloodshed under the incompetent leadership of N. Biren Singh and his political cohorts.

Today, the Governor of Manipur, Anusuiya Uikey, delivered a comprehensive address during the 5th session of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly, outlining the developments and challenges faced by the state over the past year.

A controversy arose as the opening paragraph of the Governor's address in Manipuri language, as the word "chaokhatpa" ("development" in English) was misinterpreted as "chaokhataba" ("uncivilised" in English) and it went viral on social media.

In this regard, the Speaker on the floor of the House has clarified that it was a slip of tongue as the Governor was unfamiliar with Manipuri language.

In her opening remarks, Governor Anusuiya focused on the Government's dedicated efforts to address complex issues related to law and order following the violence that erupted on May 3 of last year.

Tragically, according to the Government's data, 219 lives were lost during the unrest, prompting the Government to extend Rs 10 lakh ex-gratia to affected families, along with proper verification and assistance in performing last rites. However, contrary to the Government's statement, most of the families of the tribal martyrs in the violence do not receive any form of ex-gratia. As per the ITLF updated data, 165 Kuki-Zo tribals have lost their precious lives in the state-sponsored ethnic cleansing pogrom.

To maintain law and order, substantial reinforcements were deployed, with 198 companies of Central Armed



Police Force and 140 army columns supporting state security forces, Uikey mentioned.

Anusuiya also reportedly informed that 1,87,143 persons were detained under preventive measures, released after legal formalities, and approximately 10,000 FIRs were registered. Notably, 29 cases were handed over to the CBI and one to the NIA for impartial investigations.

Governor Uikey emphasized the protection of religious sites and properties of displaced persons, ensuring coordinated security coverage at vulnerable locations.

She further highlighted that the ongoing efforts aimed at resettling displaced individuals, coupled with initiatives for the welfare of both the hills and valley populations.

Addressing the economic impact, Anusuiya lamented the difficult fiscal year of 2023-2024, with an estimated loss of around Rs 800 crores due to unrest, significantly affecting the state's budgeted resources.

Despite the challenges, the Governor highlighted various developmental projects across sectors like healthcare, tribal and SC/OBC welfare, education, food security, power, agriculture, natural resources, and water management.

In her concluding remarks, Governor Anusuiya appealed to the people of Manipur for support and cooperation, urging them to contribute to the restoration of peace and harmony for the state to progress on the path of prosperity.

10 NAGA MLAS DEMANDS NEW TRIBAL AFFAIRS MINISTER IN CHARGE AMIDST CRISIS

After almost 10 months into the violence in Manipur, 10 Nagas MLAs have collectively raised their voices demanding a new Tribal Affairs Minister in Charge.

The 10 Naga MLAS wrote to the chief minister of Manipur to appoint a new Tribal Affairs Minister and Hills in charge. The MLAs include SS Olish, Leishiyo Keishing, Ram Muivah, Khashim Vashum, J. Kumuo Sha, Losii Dikho, H. Kayisii, Awangbow Newmai, Janghemlung Panmei and Dinganglung Gangmei.

The demand by the 10 MLAs comes days after the the Tangkhul Naga Aze Longphang (Southern Tangkhul Naga Union Manipur) has suggested to the state government to take necessary steps by inducting another MLA stationed in Imphal as Tribal Affairs Minister so that people residing in hills can get government schemes, scholarships for students and others from the department of Tribal Affairs.

The Tangkhul body also urged the Naga legislators and CSOs to initiate talks with Meitei legislators as they held talks with 10 Kuki-Zo MLAs to help bring back normalcy in Manipur.

While addressing the media on Sunday at its office located at Tangkhul Avenue, Imphal East opposite ISBT, Chairman of the Naga body, Shomi Angkang said that Naga MLAs have initiated a talk with Kuki-Zo MLAs recently at Guwahati.

Lauding the step as a good initiative by the Naga legislators, Shomi said that similar talks should also be continued with the Meitei legislators as people from all the sections of Manipur are suffering.

Shomi said the Tribal Affairs and Hills department has been a major department for the people residing in the hill districts of Manipur. However, due to the crisis, the

To
The Hon'ble Chief Minister
Manipur

Sir,

As you are aware of the difficulties faced by the innocent citizens of Manipur due to unrest happening in our state. In this hour of crisis we would like to appeal you to kindly look into the matter of the functioning of Tribal Affairs and Hills Department which has been rendered defunct due to absence of the Hon'ble Minister of Tribal Affairs and Hills, Government of Manipur for the last 10(ten) months. It is pertinent to point out that this Department is becoming more crucial in this hour of crisis to look after the needs and development of tribals and hills areas of the state to bring over-all peace and progress in the state.

Therefore, we would like to request you to appoint new Tribal Affairs and Hills Minister in-charge to look after the affairs of tribals and hills efficiently and effectively.

Yours Sincerely,

1. (S. Olish)
41-Chandel A/C
3. (Ram Muivah)
44-Ukhrul A/C

5. (J. Kumuo Sha)
47-Karong A/C

7. (N. Kayisii)
49-Tadubi A/C

9. (Janghemlung Panmei)
53-Tamenglong A/C

2. (Leishiyo Keishing)
43-Phungyar A/C
4. (Khashim Vashum)
45-Chingai A/C

6. (Losii Dikho)
48-Mao A/C

8. (Awangbow Newmai)
52-Tamel A/C

10. (Dinganglung Gangmei)
54-Nungba A/C

Tribal Affairs Minister has not been able to work as usual.

For the last two years, Minister of Tribal Affairs has been defunct and hence, the people residing in the hill districts have not been able to get any government developmental schemes, he added.

He also urged the state government to expedite the

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process for Autonomous District Council (ADC) election along with Lok Sabha election 2024 at the earliest.

Regarding the pending border fencing work, the Naga body demanded to complete the pending work for undisputed areas and to solve the issues for disputed areas which are from new border pillar number 90 to 129.

Secretary of the Naga body, Shimrei Phang Ningshen said that, after considering the welfare of the people residing in hill districts, CM Biren should take necessary steps by inducting a new Tribal Affairs Minister.

The press briefing by the tangkhul body showing its concern over the present issue in Manipur, although late, is laudable. However, demanding a new Tribal Affairs Minister amidst the crisis is questionable since everyone is very well aware of the fact that the incumbent Tribal Affairs Minister, MLA Letpao Haokip, a Kuki by

ethnicity, has been compelled to leave his office in Imphal owing to the ethnic cleansing pogrom.

Since the Tribal Affairs Minister office is defunct or non functional, not only the nagas but the kukis could not get any developmental schemes from the Tribal Affairs department.

Knowingly demanding a new Tribal Affairs Minister amidst the protest could be a plan of the Nagas to steal the ministerial post of the Kuki MLA Letpao and introducing a Naga MLA as the Tribal Affairs Minister by taking advantage of the present situation.

Presumably, the demand of the Southern Tangkhul Naga Union for a new Tribal Affairs Minister must have come with pressure from some Naga MLAs who wanted to grab the opportunity.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA BUZZ



Gaurav Gogoi @GauravGogoiAsm

This is the result of PM Modi's decision to not intervene in a sensitive and border state of the Northeast. Powerful interests in Delhi only look at Manipur as a source of wealth from illegal trade and smuggling.



Vijaita Singh @vijaita · 14h · 📍

Around 200 armed miscreants stormed the house of a police officer in Imphal East last night. ASP Moirangthem Amit and his escort were abducted by armed miscreants, house vandalised. Additional forces were rushed, in the ensuing police action two persons were i...

7:43 am · 28 Feb 24 · 9,596 Views



Mahua Moitra Fans @MahuaMoitraFans

Follow

Modi left #Manipur of its own.

- Zero Accountability
- Zero Responsibility
- No Plan to bring peace in state.
- Completely surrendered

The Hindu @the_hindu · 8h

JUST IN | #Manipur Police commandos lay down arms in protest against attack and abduction of a police officer on Tuesday. Around 200 armed miscreants had stormed the house of a police officer in Imphal East. ASP Moirangthem Amit and his escort were abducted, @vija...



1:53 pm · 28 Feb 24 · 1,342 Views

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MANIPUR GOVT. SUCCUMBS TO MEITEI WOMEN'S DIKTATS; BAIL GRANTED TO 6 ACCUSED IN ARMS LOOT AT 5TH IRB

Looting of government armories is a serious crime. This act not only constitutes theft but also poses significant risks to public safety and national security. Perpetrators of such crimes can face severe legal consequences, including lengthy imprisonment, fines, and other penalties, due to the potential danger posed by the stolen weapons. Therefore, law enforcement agencies take stringent measures to prevent and prosecute such offenses to maintain public safety and protect national security.

However, to the surprised of many neutral observers, the six persons arrested by Manipur Police on February 14 in connection with looting of arms at the 5th Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) camp at Chingarel Tejpur in Imphal East District on the night of February 13 were released on bail with PR bond of Rs. 30,000 each on Wednesday.

The six accused are:

1. Mayengbam Binod Singh, aged about 31 years, S/o M. Ibochaoba Singh of Waiton Makha Leikai, PS Heingang, Imphal East District, Manipur
2. Leitanthem Naoba Meitei, aged about 37 years, S/o late L. Binoy Meitei of Waitom mayai Leikai, PS Heingang, Imphal East District, Manipur.
3. R.K. Sanjoy, aged about 37 years, S/o R.K. Sanahal of Khurai Chingangbam Leikai, PS Porompat, Imphal East District, Manipur.
4. Rajkumar Rody Singh, aged about 36 years, S/o late R.K. Thambalsana Singh of Khurai Chingangbam Leikai, PS Porompat, Imphal East District, Manipur.
5. Wangmayum Sanathoi, aged about 21 years, S/o W. Noor Hussain of KR Lane, New Checkon, PS Porompat, Imphal East District, Manipur.
6. Sunir Phundreimayum, aged about 19 years, S/o



Md. Sagir Ahamad of Lilong Mayai Leikai, A/P KR Lane, New Checkon, PS Porompat, Imphal East District, Manipur.

They were produced before the Court of Special Judge NIA, Imphal East at the Chierap Court Complex in Uripok via video conference.

It may be noted here that a mass sit-in-protest was staged at Khurai Lamlong Bazar in Imphal East district on February 25 demanding unconditional release of the six individuals arrested by the police in connection with the recent arms looting case.

A mob on the night of February 13 stormed the post of 5th IRB at Chingarel in Imphal East and allegedly looted around 15 different types of arms with ammunition. On the following day, the police arrested the six persons allegedly involved in the case. They were lodged in a jail after a local court remanded them to judicial custody till February 28.

It may be recalled that intense mob violence broke out at the Chierap Court Complex on February 20 demanding unconditional release of the 6 arrested persons. In the incident, 6 people including one

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advocate and one media person sustained injuries during a scuffle with security personnel. Lawyers in Manipur on February 21 staged a sit-in-protest against “chaos” created inside the Court complex in Imphal.

Granting bail to the accused individuals involved in the armory looting case at the 5th IRB reflects a concerning leniency in the judicial process and raised questions about the commitment to upholding law and order in Manipur. This decision undermines the severity of the crime and sends a message of impunity, potentially emboldening criminals to engage in similar activities in the future.

The act of looting government armories is a serious offense that poses a significant threat to public safety and security. It not only endangers the lives of law

enforcement personnel but also puts the entire community at risk by placing deadly weapons in the hands of criminals and insurgents.

Granting bail to the accused without thorough consideration of the potential risks and implications demonstrates a lack of accountability and disregard for the gravity of the crime. It fails to address the underlying issues of lawlessness plaguing the Imphal valley and may further erode public trust in the judicial system.

Moreover, the decision to release the accused individuals could undermine ongoing investigations and hamper efforts to hold them accountable for their actions.

MIZORAM ASSEMBLY ADOPTS OFFICIAL RESOLUTION OPPOSING BID TO FENCE INDO-MYANMAR BORDER

The Mizoram assembly on Wednesday adopted an official resolution, opposing the plan to fence the Indo-Myanmar border and scrap the Free Movement Regime (FMR) with Myanmar.

The resolution moved by Home Minister K. Sapdanga also urged the Centre not to construct a fence along the international border and scrap the FMR.

It urged the Narendra Modi government to instead

take steps to ensure that the Zo ethnic people, who have been divided and scattered in different countries due to the British’s divide-and-rule policy, are unified under one administrative unit.

After a prolonged discussion involving at least 9 members, including chief minister Lalduhoma and opposition leader Lalchandama Ralte of Mizo National Front (MNF), the assembly unanimously adopted the resolution.



**People sleep peaceably in their beds at night
only because rough men stand ready to do
violence on their behalf.**

– George Orwell

MONTHS AFTER PEACE PACT WITH UNITED NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT, MANIPUR SEES RISE IN EXTORTION CASES

Three months after the Union government and the Manipur government signed a peace agreement with one faction of the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), the oldest valley-based armed insurgent group, officials said the terms of the pact — which include monitoring of the armed cadres — are not available to the central security agencies.

A senior government official told The Hindu that there has been a sharp rise in extortion cases in the valley areas of the State “in the name of UNLF”.

Neither has a camp been designated for holding the armed cadres nor has the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) or the State Police been nominated to monitor the movement of the cadres, a second government official said. The total number of cadres and the monthly stipend to be allocated to the cadres is also not known.

After a peace pact with an insurgent group is signed, camps are earmarked for the cadres and their weapons and ammunitions are accounted for, through regular checks conducted by the nominated security force.

In 2008, after the Manipur government, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and 24 Kuki insurgent groups formalised a Suspension of Operations (SoO) pact, the Assam Rifles was designated as the monitoring agency. The pact, extended annually, is set to expire on February 28.

After the ethnic violence erupted in the State between the Kuki tribal community and the Meiteis on May 3, 2023, Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh claimed that SoO groups had violated ground rules and instigated the violence. Various Meitei civil societies have demanded to the MHA for non-extension of the pact.

The UNLF, formed in 1964, is one of the eight “Meitei extremist organisations” which were declared unlawful by the MHA under the Anti-Terror Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.



The MHA said the outfit has been “operating both within and outside the Indian territory”.

“Presently, two temporary camps have been identified for the UNLF cadres, which can hold around 400 cadres each. In the absence of a permanent base, many are living in their homes or in the other civilian areas. They also have their weapons with them”, said the first government official quoted above.

Another official said that since no security agency has been given the mandate to check the usage of arms and ammunition, it was impossible to keep a check on their movement.

The official said the armed cadres had occupied a temporary camp at Nongsum in Imphal East, which borders the Kuki-Zo areas in Kangpokpi. Apprehending an escalation of violence, the Assam Rifles had asked them to vacate the premises and the order was met with stiff resistance from locals who said they needed the cadres to defend their villages.

Since last year, buffer zones, between the valley where the Meiteis live and the hills where the

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Kukis reside, have been created to stop any kind of clash or arson. The buffer zones are manned by the CAPF personnel

“The military wing of the UNLF has been roaming around in vehicles brandishing weapons. Their involvement in looting of a police armoury has also been found. Post the signing of the peace pact, the cadres were observed indulging in violence against security forces”, the official said.

On November 29, Union Home Minister Amit Shah posted on X that the UNLF had agreed to

“renounce violence and join the mainstream”.

He shared photos of the cadres of the insurgent group surrendering their weapons in an open field.

Though the MHA did not share the details of the militants who surrendered, The Hindu had learnt that as many as 65 cadres of one of the factions of UNLF, led by K. Pambei have joined the peace pact. The 65 cadres are said to have entered Manipur during the ongoing ethnic violence.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

KUKI STUDENTS' ORGANISATION SEEKS MIZORAM GOVERNOR'S HELP FOR DISPLACED STUDENTS' TRANSFER

In a bid to address the plight of displaced professional students from Manipur, the Kuki Students' Organisation, General Headquarters (KSO-GHQ) Education Secretary recently met with the Governor of Mizoram, Hari Babu Kambhampati. The meeting aimed to seek assistance in facilitating the transfer of displaced students from institutions like NIT, JNIMS and RIMS to other educational establishments.

During the meeting, the Education Secretary highlighted the challenges faced by the displaced students due to the upheavals they experienced, emphasizing the disruptions to their educational pursuits. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the KSO-GHQ appealed to the Governor to intervene and expedite the transfer process for these affected students.

Governor Kambhampati, displaying a keen interest in addressing the issue, advised the Education Secretary to submit separate representation letters for medical and engineering students. These letters will be forwarded to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Government of India for further action.

Accompanying the Education Secretary was Letkhogin Mate, Joint Secretary of the Kuki Welfare Committee,



Aizawl, underscoring the collective effort to advocate for the displaced students' cause.

Furthermore, the Education Secretary urged the displaced medical students to submit a complete list of affected individuals before March 3, indicating the initiation of a second phase of representation to be undertaken by the Governor.

As a gesture of appreciation and gratitude, a traditional Kuki shawl was presented to Governor Kambhampati, symbolizing the unity and solidarity of the Kuki community in their efforts to support the displaced students and address their educational needs.



OPINION

What Now for the Meitei Christians In Imphal?

Letginmang Singnit

According to the 2011 Census, Christianity in Manipur rose from 34.11% in 1991 to 41.29% in 2011. The majority of these Christian groups belong to the tribal groups. The non-tribal Christians in the state are mainly Meiteis numbering between 1,00,000 - 3,00,000 lakh.

“About 249 churches belonging to the Meitei Christians have been destroyed. All these destructions took place with precision within 36 hours of the start of violence”, as stated by Archbishop Dominic Lumon of Imphal a few weeks after the conflict started on May 3, 2023.

The ongoing conflict between the two communities in Manipur cannot entirely be called a religious conflict. However, religion cannot be downplayed in this conflict since the above statistics tell us that there are attacks meted out to the churches and residences of the Meitei Christians in and around Imphal by their own ethnic group who are largely Hindus, who at the same time have been organizing themselves strongly to revive the Meitei Indigenous faith “Sanamahism” at least for the past two years.

Way back in 2022, it was reported that the BJP leadership applied pressure on Meitei Christian leaders to convert to Sanamahism. At least two public personalities said they were summoned to meet the chief minister after videos of them speaking about their faith went viral. One of them alleged that in a meeting where Meitei Leepun chief Pramot Singh was present, they were indirectly pressured to abandon their Christian faith.

An MLA who belongs to the BJP said that the chief minister had pressured Paonam Brojen Singh, a Meitei Christian politician and BJP MLA, to convert to Sanamahism through his aides. “Both Sanajaoba and Leishanthem Susindro Meitei [another BJP MLA] were also present,” they said. Another pastor alleged that MLA Mayanglambam Rameshwar Singh, who belongs to the National People’s Party, offered him money to convert in 2022. (Source: New Lines)

To look back again, Rev. Takhellambam Ramananda, a Meitei Christian pastor, in his speech in a Gospel Outreach program at Sagang Bazar organized by Sagang Baptist Church on March 26 2023, mentioned a tradition of the Kom community. A short video clip of his speech targeted only at Kom Christians went viral. However, the remark made by him was received by the Meitei community to be highly impious and disrespectful against “Sanamahism”, thereby demanding an apology for his alleged affronting comment. His house was attacked by the radicalized Meitei group called ‘Arambai Tenggol’. He was demanded to make a public apology the same day and was threatened that he would be responsible for any untoward incident if he didn’t apologize.

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Reacting to the same story, on one side, the Manipur titular king and Rajya Sabha MP Leishemba Sanajaoba on his Facebook post wrote, “If he does not apologize, I swear in the name of Ebudhou Pakhangba (Supreme God of Meitei) that I would skin him alive. I do not care whether I remain an MP or not”. His Facebook post on April 1, 2023 is still undeleted to this day.

Again, the Meitei pastor was publicly warned and called out in the open by his own community and by various socio-cultural groups like the Kanglei Salai Apunba Lup, the Maichou Ningshing Lup, Lairembi Shintha Lup, World Meitei Organization – WMO, to name a few. He was receiving threats and abuses from all ends. Fighting all alone and without an option left, for the safety of him and his family, he tendered a public apology on April 10, 2023. “I consider myself guilty of all these acts and tender my sincere apology and beg forgiveness of all those who have been hurt by my words”, he said.

Going back to 3rd May and since, in Imphal, especially during the initial days of the present conflict, churches and houses of the Meitei Christians were not spared but were rather under constant attacks. They were intimidated and terrorized by their villagers and volunteers of the radicalized Meitei groups like the Arambai Tenggol, the Meitei Leepun and so on.

A Meitei Christian missionary who filed a police complaint on May 16 alleged that he was assaulted, threatened at gunpoint to give up Christianity and told he would be killed if he continued to preach or practice his faith. “They [the mob] told me that by the time they return, I should demarcate a space within my house for Sanamahi deity, failing which they would kill me”, he said. In his complaint, he stated that “some unknown people numbering about 60” had damaged and burned his property. (Source: New Lines)

On May 28, 2023, a mob numbering between 3,000 and 4,000 attacked the residence of Paonam Brojen Singh, a Meitei Christian and BJP MLA, in Wangjing Wangkhei, Thoubal, and the Wangjing Baptist Church that he had built. (Source: New Lines)

On December 21, 2023, in Awang Leikinhabhi village of

Imphal West, Premkumar Chingsubam, a pastor, found his house, which he had decorated for Christmas with a tree and artificial snowman, vandalized when he returned from dinner at his relative’s place. The village committee called a meeting the next day where members of the mob, who, the pastor’s nephew alleged, belonged to Arambai Tenggol, also showed up. They acknowledged their role in the attack but did not give a reason for it, the pastor said. Instead, they opened fire, disbanding the meeting before they attacked the pastor, leaving him hospitalized with a bruised forehead and fractured ribs and hip bone. Photos of him later circulated on social media. (Source: New Lines)

Many Meitei Christians in Imphal who have been attacked during this conflict when asked about their stories were frantic to voice out. Reports are that some of the pastors are directed not to rebuild the vandalized or charred churches. In some cases, these people are forced to sign conversion oaths. Many of them were stopped to conduct religious meetings and church activities. Some pastors even fled from Imphal to ensure their safety.

Taking a glance at the occurrences mentioned, it is mortifying and inglorious that these things are still given a chance to surface in the 21st Century. It won’t be wrong to say that many such stories still remains to be told and heard. It is quite understandable, to some extent, though still unacceptable, that these Meitei groups are looting, vandalizing, burgling and burning down houses and churches that belong to the Kukis because of the intensity and magnitude of the conflict. But, it must have been appalling and shocking for the Meitei Christians to have witnessed their own people demolishing and burning their churches; threats and intimidation coming from their own kith and kin. However, in reality, it wasn’t a surprise to some because of the episodes that happened even before the conflict started.

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The word "Persecution" would not be accepted by many, but when we analyze and note the things that unfolded before and during this conflict, the word "Persecution" is not even too big a word to be used. Here, we do not mean that all the Meiteis are against their fellow Meitei Christians but some of their people deserved to be called "persecutors"! The mocking and blasphemous actions aimed at the Kuki Christians must have been felt by the Meitei Christians as well.

In some way or other, it is believed that the lives of these Meitei Christians were protected by their non-Christian Meitei friends and family from the radicalized and extremist Meitei groups. Yes, the breath of these Meitei Christians was not stopped, but the constant threats and warnings dispensed to them are disturbing and traumatizing for their mental and psychological health, to date. And it would have been laudable if their houses and churches were left

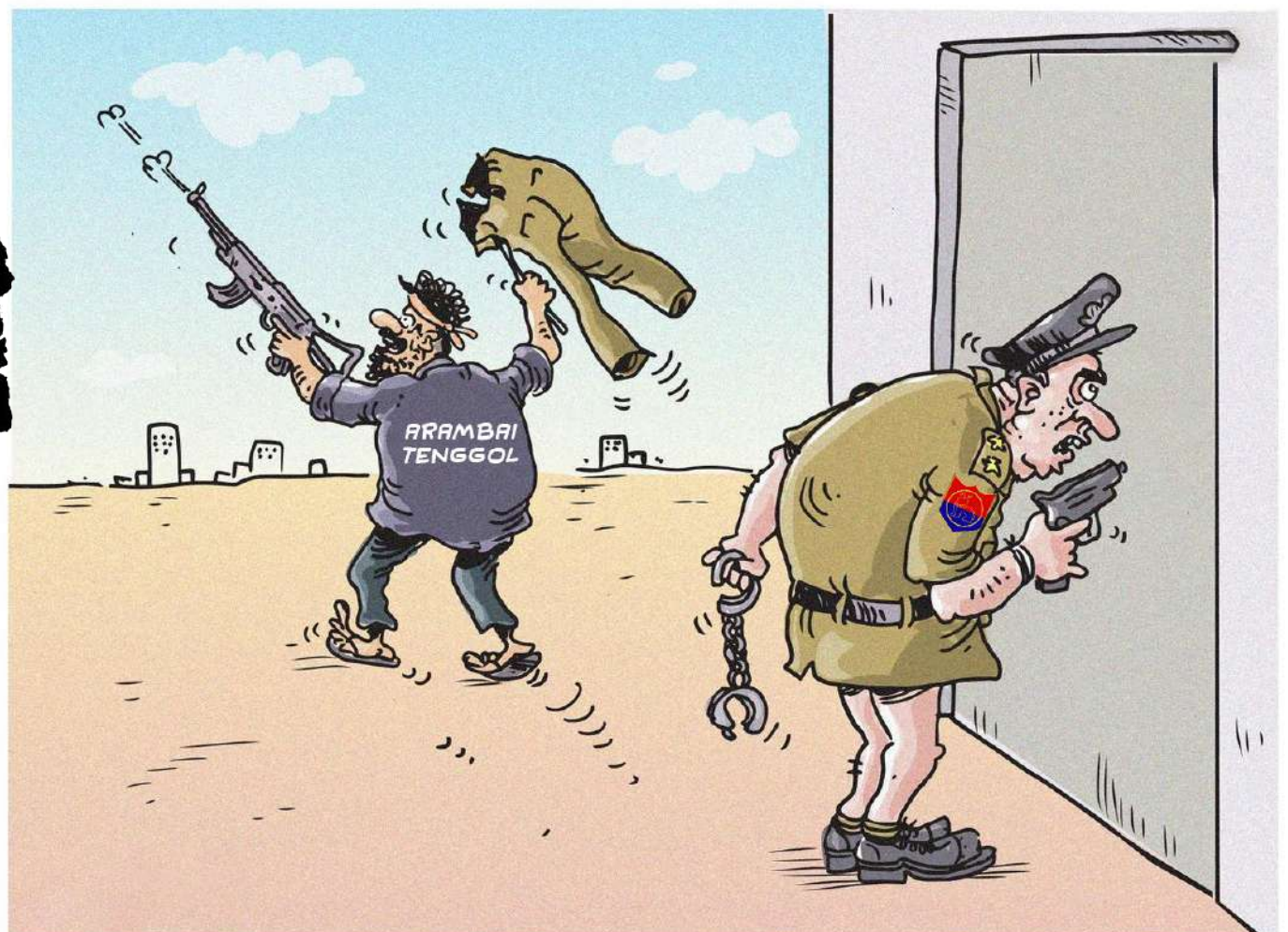
untouched. Therefore, it won't be too wrong to say that the non-Christian Meiteis, as a whole, have failed to safeguard their fellow Meitei Christians.

Having said all this, out of all the negative things that happened, one positive element can be deduced. It was when the early Christians were persecuted at the hands of their fellow Jews, and the Romans, that Christianity rose and spread to the nations far and beyond the great Roman Empire. Also, Christians are taught to be glad and rejoice when people insult them, persecute them and falsely say all kinds of evils against them. Now, the onus is on the Meitei Christians whether they stand firm on their faith or wither away from their belief.

(The writer can be contacted at gidosingsit@gmail.com)



THE STRIPPED POLICE OFFICER





The Abode *Above*

Home grew cold;
Laughter of friends fade away.
Waiting for its return in tenfold;
Mayhap tis stolen on the way!

Oh Angel of death!
Take me to the afterlife.
Where peace may reside, deep breath
Will I take, away from strife.

The afterlife, to all is well-aquainted;
Unknown of tears or fight or sin.
Happiness for youth and aged;
Earth's bitter trials disregarded therein.

- *Jangneiching Khongsai*