

Thingkho Le Malecha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



AWAITING JUSTICE



NENKIM HAOKIP (60 YEARS)

W/O MANGLUN HAOKIP

ADDRESS: BOLKOT, LAMKA

DATE OF INCIDENT: 5TH NOVEMBER, 2023

PLACE OF DEATH: KANGCHUP, SADAR HILLS

CAUSE OF DEATH: ABDUCTED & KILLED BY MEITEI MOB



KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 21.10. 2024



203
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.

NATIONAL SEMINAR IN NEW DELHI HIGHLIGHTS FORGOTTEN ROLE OF KUKI TRIBES IN INDIA'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE

On the 29th of October 2024, at the India International Centre, a brave episode in the anti-colonial struggle in India was commemorated – the Anglo-Kuki War of 1917-19. The commemoration was organized by the Kuki Research Forum – Delhi Chapter.

The saga of the Anglo-Kuki War is rarely discussed in the mainstream. It has effectively been forgotten by the mainstream consciousness of the mainland. Hence, the title of this national seminar was “Kuki Tribes’ Forgotten Role in India’s Freedom Struggle: The Anglo-Kuki War (1917-1919),” said a press note issued by the Forum.

Prof Pauthang Haokip delivered the welcome address. The address answered the crucial question of the day: Why did the Kukis resist the British Empire? The answer was simple.

The empire threatened the destruction of the Kuki culture. How any community perceives territoriality is based on their socio-cultural and religious worldviews. For the Kukis, the destruction of their forests would amount to the destruction of their culture. That they were also forcibly recruited to the labour corps without any safety assurances pushed them to their limits.

Once the welcome address expounded a framework for the rest of the event, the first session reflected upon the current status quo in Manipur and alternative sources for historical reconstruction and contemporary cognition of Manipur.

Dr David Vumlallian Zou addressed the topic “Reflections on What is Happening in Manipur and Alternative Sources.” Drawing on Gautam Bahaduria’s article on the Anglo-Kuki War, published in 1975, he explored the war’s ramifications on the Kukis’ political organisations.



As per Dr Zou, a major reason for the war was the Kukis’ refusal to send labour corps. Drawing on this historical background, he critiqued the history of violence in Manipur, considering it to be the failure of liberal democracy in protecting the citizens of the state.

Attributing it to the tendency to value certain rights over more fundamental human rights, he criticised Civil Society Organisations for holding the government accountable. Dr Zou linked this trend with a global rise in nativist movements – such as Brexit in the United Kingdom, & Make America Great Again (MAGA) in the United States of America – which aimed to revive a ‘better’ past. Manipur’s violence, as per Dr Zou, was a local manifestation of such a global trend. Dr Zou dismantled the notion of a mythical golden age by drawing the Periclean ideals of democracy, the anti-democratic ideals of Hesoid, and Karl Popper’s juxtaposition between an open and a closed society.

Dr Zou elucidated the dichotomous model of ownership in Manipur, with private ownership on one hand, and state ownership on the other.

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Land and forest resources were held in a common pool, especially in the Manipur Hills where customary practices of ownership prevail. The Kukis have a system of hereditary chieftainship while the Naga clans are an eldership in nature. The Hill Area Committee has failed to formally recognise the customary practices of the hill tribes. He drew upon the works of the American Political Scientist Elinor Ostrom to discuss the challenges inherent in common pool ownership.

Dr Lalsanglen Haokip further contextualised the ambiguities in the history of the state's forest department and legislation by speaking on the "History of Forests in Manipur". He argued that the idea of "Scientific Forestry" was a German one in Colonial India, that sought to generate revenue by clearing forests, while the idea of "Wilderness" is an American idea, that sought to generate revenue by keeping forests untouched and open to visitors. In contrast to both these extremes, the Meiteis wished to preserve forests for building fishing boats and brining. They called forests "Umang" and worshipped local forest deities called "Umang Lai". The hill tribes – Khuttu/Ujok/Gam-maang – had a reserved forest within the village boundaries to accommodate new settlers and prevent forest fires.

After tracing the history of forest laws, Dr Haokip pointed out that the laws are largely colonial in origin and nature. He concluded with the question: Why should indigenous tribes have to bear the brunt of colonial laws? Isn't it the responsibility of the government to change such colonial-era laws?

The second session was on the topic "Media and Manipur Violence". Prof Aparajita De explored the relationship between digital media and identity formation & conflicts. She argued that social media was a double-edged sword. While social media has democratized access to the public domain, creating a new effective public, the internet has strengthened nationalism. The conflict of emotions online impacts offline movements.

Yet, online activism has limits since it involves echo chambers with no space for dialogue. She observed that there are 2 perspectives on the Anglo-Kuki War. While there was resistance to the forceful recruitment of the labour corps, labour corps were sent to the war. Depending on our point of focus, our assessment of the War may differ.

Saptarshi Basak incisively analysed the problematic representation of the truth by national media. Misreporting and apathy went hand in hand to cloud the national perception of Manipur's violence. In some cases, the lack of sensitivity led to reporters forcing victims to meet them and respond to their questions to get 'sensational' news. He accused the national media houses of failing in their duties to make people aware of the 'protracted civil war' in Manipur. Despite the power of media to make people care about incidents and issues, over 18 months of Manipur's violence were barely covered by the national media. It was only when the two Kuki Women were paraded and when Biren Singh was on the verge of resigning as chief minister that the Media paid any heed to Manipur. The speaker candidly concluded that the "Media is not on your side".

The proceedings of the session were concluded with an address delivered by Pu LS Kipgen, Kuki Inpi Delhi. Referring to the illustrious anti-colonial legacy of the Kukis, from the Anglo-Kuki War to their role in the Indian National Army, he encouraged young Kuki scholars to continue raising their lives, reminding them of their illustrious legacy, and their current responsibilities, asking them to ponder over whether the Kukis are truly free today — a truly profound question with a lot of food for thought.

18 MONTHS OF INJUSTICE: CoTU OBSERVES REMEMBRANCE DAY, URGES GOI TO UNBOLT THE GATES OF JUSTICE

On the solemn occasion of the 18th Remembrance Day observance, the Kuki-Zo community called on the Central Government to unbolt the gates of justice after seventeen long months of enduring what they consider to be profound injustice.

Expressing deep disappointment over what it describes as the Central Government's deliberate delay in delivering justice to the Kuki-Zo community, Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU) General Secretary Lamminlun Singsit stated, "We seek justice in the form of a Union Territory with a Legislature—nothing less and nothing more—as a step towards self-determination and lasting peace."

"Justice lies in granting a Union Territory with Legislature, and it is the only path for lasting peace, as justice precedes peace," asserted Singsit.

"The justice we seek is the culmination of a prolonged struggle against oppression," Singsit emphasized, pointing to issues such as discriminatory employment practices, resource misallocation, diversion of funds, and constitutional breaches, compounded by land seizures and oppressive policies under what he calls the current "majoritarian Meetei government."

Painting a vivid picture of the Kuki-Zo community that feels relegated to second-class citizenship in Manipur, Singsit asserted that the Kuki-Zo people, despite their equal status as Indian citizens, face persistent discrimination from the majority community. He argued that this situation mirrors the historical conflict between former West and East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, underscoring the urgency for fair governance and justice.

"On this somber occasion, as we reflect on a history of deep-rooted injustices inflicted both in the valleys and hills, where countless innocent lives have been lost in pursuit of justice, the Kuki-Zo people stand in shock and deep dismay over the Central Government's deliberate delay in addressing our rightful demand



for Separate Administration—a Union Territory with Legislature," he said.

"It is the Central Government's responsibility to protect and uplift the vulnerable Kuki-Zo minority from the cycle of false narratives and policies crafted by the current state administration," Singsit maintained, urging the Union Government to prioritize justice over political expediency to resolve the ongoing conflict.

As the Kuki-Zo community commemorated the 18th Remembrance Day on November 3, Singsit remarked, "We mourn not only the past but also the ongoing realities of subjugation and discrimination under the current regime."

The commemoration of the 18th Remembrance Day at Martyrs' Cemetery in Phaijang, Sadar Hills, Kangpokpi District, was marked by mourning, a gun salute, floral tributes, condolences, and prayers.

Prominent Kuki-Zo leaders and various civil society organizations, along with CoTU executives and department leaders, attended the solemn observance.

While business establishments remained closed for the day in respect for the observance, unlike previous years, vehicular movement along the National Highway was not disrupted.

MEITEI RADICAL GROUP – ARAMBAI TENGGOL MEMBER ARRESTED OVER ALLEGED ASSAULT ON TWO NAGA MEN

Manipur police have arrested a member of the Meitei radical group Arambai Tenggol for his alleged involvement in the recent assault of two Naga tribals.

In a post on X, the police said Khullem Sanjeep alias Bhim (30), son of the late Kh Tomba of Naoremthong DC road, was arrested for his involvement in the assault case. The accused was remanded in police custody.

V Hrangao Blesson Poumai and Dalou Poumai were assaulted while they were returning after purchasing livestock in the Thoubal area of Imphal Valley.

Later, three Naga organisations -- Naga People's Organization, Senapati District Students' Association and Senapati District Women's Association -- had set a 48-hour deadline before the state government demanding justice for the duo.

"...Blesson and Dalou were forcefully detained by the members of Arambai Tenggol, dragged into their unit 18 camp, and subjected to severe physical assault, resulting in multiple injuries," the Naga



organisations alleged in a joint statement.

"Arambai Tenggol claims to be a revivalist organization, aimed at re-establishing the native Sanamahi religion among the Meiteis. However, this incident, among others, raises serious concerns regarding their true intentions and actions, which have increasingly resulted in public harassment and violence," the statement further stated.

The organisations had warned that in the event of failure, they would "pursue further action to safeguard our community." (TNIE)



Optimism is a revolutionary act.

— Cameron Crowe

Commemorating the 107th Anglo-Kuki War, 1917-1919, New Delhi

FEATURED ARTICLE

Kuki Tribes' Forgotten Role in India's Freedom Struggle: A brief Statement

Once regarded as an insular geography beyond the reach of modernity, the Global Wars came to underpin an unprecedented colonial control and administrative expansion at the imperial North East Frontier of India. While the First World War witnessed massive recruitment for labour corps, pervasive militarization, and brutal military campaigns, the Second World War entailed how disruptive the colonial experience was for local societies such as the Kukis.

The Anglo-Kuki War 1917-1919

107 years ago, when other parts of India were busy mobilizing resources; combatants, non-combatants, labourers, funds and materials for the Great War, the Kukis of the Northeast frontier of India declared 'war against the King-Emperor'. At the dawn of the twentieth century when the First World War broke out, the British Government of India initiated the recruitment of Labour Corps for France. Subsequently, when orders were sent to the Kuki chiefs to participate in the labour corps, the principal Kuki chiefs opposed such orders. Their opposition to labour recruitment later turned into an armed resistance and the Kukis rose in open revolt against the British in March 1917. While the Anglo-Kuki War of 1917-1919 was a war fought against the British expansionist imperialism,

the policy of labour recruitment decided the timing of the outbreak of the rebellion. Whereas the opposition started in March 1917, an active warfare and counterinsurgency operations went on for more than one year (December 1917 to May 1919), suspending two agriculture seasons and ending with the systematic destruction of villages, properties and all sources of livelihood. It was the 'largest series of operations' in the eastern frontier of India, eclipsed only by the Second World War in the region in 1944.

The introduction of the colonial administrative system prior to 1917 in the hill areas was perceived by the Kuki people as offensive, as they felt that the new administrative system had seriously undermined their identity, freedom and existence. Thus, the policy of the British Raj seeking to control the Kuki people by imposing land revenue, house-tax and forced labour fundamentally contradicted the principles and customs of the Kukis. With the imposition of such laws, the Kukis feared that the British would exploit their traditional village authority and economy completely within a short time. Then came the policy of labour recruitment.

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Contd.**Official account of the Anglo-Kuki War**

The 'war against the King-Emperor' and 'the war against Her Majesty, the Queen' was recorded by various British administrators, military officials and others and was referred under different names. Robert Ried termed it the 'Kuki Rebellion', the 'most serious incident in the history of Manipur and its relations with its Hill subjects' (Reid 1983 [1942]: 77), Colonel W.L. Shakespear (1929) referred to it as the 'Anglo-Kuki Uprising, 1917-1919', the 'Revolt of the Thadou-Kukis' (Ray 1990), the 'Kuki Uprising 1917-1919', (Bhadra 1975), 'Kuki Anti- British Resistance' (Bezbaruah 2010), etc. Recent scholarships referred to it as the 'Kuki Rising', 'Kuki War of Independence', 'The Anglo-Kuki War', 'The Zou Gal', and locally known as Saap Gal.

An extract from the proceeding of the Chief Commissioner of Assam by A.W. Botham, 27 September 1920 stated that:

The Kuki rising of 1917-1919 ... is the most formidable with which Assam has been faced for a least a generation... In all, the rebel villages held... covering over some 6,000 square miles of rugged hills surrounding the Manipur Valley and extending to the Somra Tract and the Thaugdud State in Burma.

Colonel L.W. Shakespear, the official historian of the Assam Rifles, and who had been leading the soldiers during the Kuki rising from the beginning till the end of the war, wrote in his book The History of the Assam Rifles:

The rebellion in the Chin Hills and amongst the Kuki tribes of Manipur obliged the cessation of the war drafts to the Army, as it was not long before every available man of the Assam Rifles was required to suppress the rising in co-operation with the Burma Military Police force. It took a year and a half of continuous active service in mountainous country on the part of 2400 of the Assam Rifles and 3000 of the Burma Military Police before order was finally restored. (Shakespear 1929:197)

He further recorded that the Kuki rising was 'the largest series of military operations conducted on this side of India since the old expeditionary days.'

Sir Robert Reid, another official historian, in his book History of the Frontier Areas, recorded that:

That most serious incident in the history of Manipur and its relations with its Hill subjects was the Kuki Rebellion. Commencing in the closing days of 1917, it cost 28 lakhs of rupees to quell, and in the course of it many lives were lost. (Reid 1942:79)

J.H. Hutton, the then D.C. of Naga Hills and a political officer of Kuki operations, who was well versed with Kuki life and lore, also wrote:

The operations against the rebellious Thado of the Manipur State in 1918 and 1919 led to a very much better acquaintance with him, and from then onwards the more I have seen of the Thado, the more I have respected him and the better I have liked him. (Hutton 1983)

Facts and figures

According to British official account, 7650 transport coolies were deployed and the number of casualties on the British troops included 60 dead, including one British officer, 142 wounded including three British officers and 97 deaths due to diseases. Casualties incurred on the transport coolies included 7 killed by Kukis, while 396 died of diseases.

The official estimate of casualties on the Kuki side includes 120 men who were killed in action. As many as 126 Kuki villages were burnt down by British troops, and the total number of villages mercilessly punished and coerced to surrender includes 140 villages. The destruction of properties includes food grains, granaries, livestock, including 576 mithuns. (Reid, History of Frontier Areas)

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Contd.**17 October and its significance**

On 14 October 1917, the Political Agent of Manipur took 50 rifles from Imphal and headed to Mombi (Lonpi) via Kakching-Sugnu road to arrest its chief, Ngulkhup. After reaching the village, lathis were sent out to inform Ngulkhup to give himself up. When the chief refused, Captain Heggins, before his party returned, burnt down all the houses and

properties of Mombi on the morning of 17 October. The burning of Mombi displeased the Kukis in general, and the Mombi Kukis in particular, that the course of their relationship with the government changed. After the burning of Mombi, the villagers went back to their charred village and rebuilt. The chief, Ngulkhup declared his country 'closed' to Sahibs and Sarkaris and issued an order to hillmen that no one should go to the plains. The Mombi incident spread like wild fire and reached the Chassad chief, Pache. This was followed by war councils held in different parts of the Kuki hills. Amongst the war councils held in different parts, the Chassad war council was the most prominent and significant one. The resolution was solemnized with Kuki customary war rite called Sathin-Salung-neh (feasting on the liver and heart of animal). Such a war rite could be termed as the highest form of vow that symbolizes true commitment and supreme sacrifice against the enemy. The day has been now observed as the Anglo-Kuki War Day.

The Second World War and the Kuki participation

It has been generally accepted by scholars that the Second World War was a turning point in the making of modern South Asia with the subsequent advent of nation-states in post-colonial times. While some fits 'in the grand narrative of British decolonization and Indian Freedom Struggle', others still remain obscured from the 'autobiography of the Independent Indian nation state'.

The Second World War came at a time of struggle for India's independence and the Indian National Army

(INA) became prominent with an aim to liberate India. With INA and the Japanese Imperial Army fighting alongside, the idea of liberation from the colonial yoke gained momentum and the voice of liberation echoed the hills. Thus, the Second World War transformed the North East Frontier from an unknown periphery to centre of international politics.

The participation of local societies such as the Kukis was a recognition of the rising tide against anti-colonial nationalism. Even though many hill tribes had always been keen to aid the British, as the war progressed, communities such as the Kukis were receptive to the idea of self-determination. This prompted them to be enlisted as guides and later as regular army of the INA in increasing numbers. For instance, the Kukis participated as 'men of war' alongside the Japanese Army in a desperate way out to 'shake off their bondage under the Raj' as the war offered new possibilities of freedom and independence from the British Raj.

Available data suggest that the number of Kuki INA soldiers killed by Allied forces was 24, the number of men arrested inside Burma and later deported to Calcutta jail was 15, and altogether, 586 were arrested and imprisoned in India. The number of Kukis who 'went underground' was estimated as 5,377 which brings to a total of at least 6,000 Kukis who have actively participated and helped the Japanese Imperial Army and the Indian National Army. The war years of 1942-45 was also marked by severe crop failure and people resorted to wild roots and other forest produce for themselves and for the starving soldiers. It was in this condition that the Kukis were able to guide the weary Japanese and INA soldiers and provide them food and shelter.



Sushant Singh
@SushantSin



Aha, understood. Only after that will he and Modi have some time to spare for the state of Manipur.

■ Accuses JMM govt of devouring funds for poor, tribals: Minister

Naxalism to be wiped out from nation by March '26, says Shah

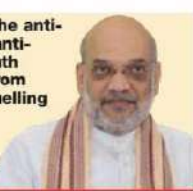
Ranchi, Nov. 3: Attacking the Hemant Soren-led JMM coalition for "fuelling Naxalism," Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday asserted that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Union government will eliminate the menace from the face of the country by March 2026.

Mr Shah expressed confidence that the NDA would form the government in Jharkhand, claiming it would win at least 52 out of 81 Assembly seats based on the calculations from the recently-held Lok Sabha elections.

"It is time to oust the anti-Dalit, anti-tribal, anti-poor, and anti-youth Hemant government from Jharkhand, which is fuelling Naxalism for petty political gains," he

It is time to oust the anti-Dalit, anti-tribal, anti-poor, and anti-youth Hemant government from Jharkhand, which is fuelling Naxalism for petty political gains.

— Amit Shah,
Union home minister



said while addressing a rally in Simaria, Chatra district.

"We uprooted the menace from Jharkhand during the last five years, and now the Prime Minister Modi-led Centre will wipe out Naxalism from India by March 2026."

Accusing the Soren government of devouring funds meant for poor and tribals, he said the BJP once voted to power will

put all corrupt Jharkhand leaders behind the bars.

The Union home minister also accused the Soren-led government of "patronising Bangladeshi infiltrators for vote bank politics" and asserted that if the BJP was voted to power in the state, it will enact stringent legislation to prevent transfer of tribal land to illegal immigrants.

"Bangladeshi infiltration is causing a sharp decline in tribal population in Jharkhand, especially in Santhal Parganas and Kolhan regions... the JMM-Congress-RJD alliance is encouraging it for petty political gains," he alleged.

"NDA will win 52 seats out of 81 in Jharkhand given people cast 47 per cent votes to the alliance in Jharkhand during the recent Lok Sabha elections," Shah said.

He said the people of Jharkhand gave nine out of 14 parliamentary seats to the NDA, with a total of 80 lakh votes cast in favour of the alliance.

Polls to the 81-member Assembly in the state are will take place in two phases on November 13 and 20, with vote counting on November 23. — PTI

8:01 · 04 Nov 24 · 2,464 Views



Sushma Sharma
@SushmaSh22

In #Manipur's Langol and Hebron Veng Phaippijang areas, the destruction of #Kuki homes in #Imphal continues in clear defiance of the Supreme Court's orders, while local authorities remain unresponsive. Immediate intervention is urgently needed as Kuki properties are still being razed.

#GISELLE #HariHaraVeeraMallu

#DaouOffroad #하이브불매

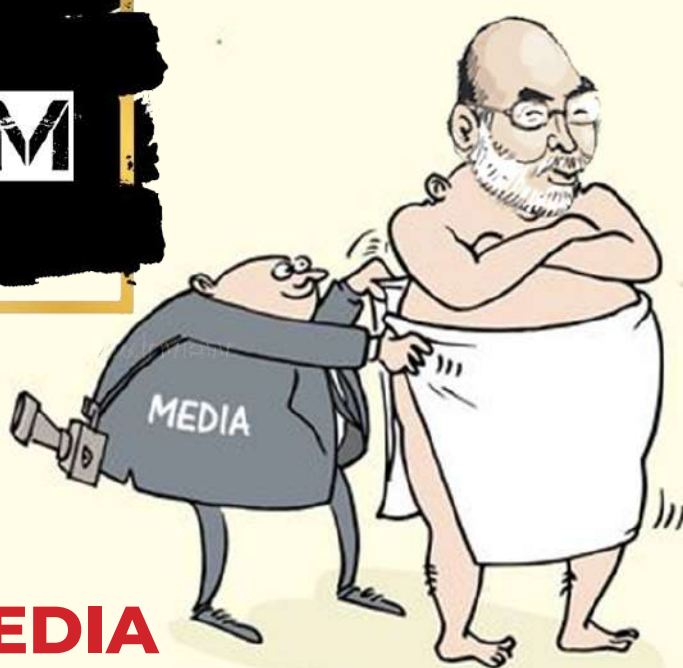
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2:46 · 04 Nov 24 · 2,308 Views

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EARTHING THE NEW

The leaves fell as the new ones arrived,
The thoughts of yesterday buried under the earthly pile.
Gently replacing the soil for the new seeds to grow,
told our hearts the new ones would have a vivid glow.

Holding a pen with words unspoken,
Watching the papers as the pen tore them,
The ink splashed the entire way,
Words were craved by the drowning pain.
Begin a new chapter while the stain remained.

Time being,
pain is suppressed so deep that the stain is unseen.
Yet the thoughts are alive within our memories.
Despite the pain, despite the cry,
Will write our chapters with pages new,
Unearthing the lame ones while unwinding the hues,
Waiting for the season of sprouts, rising like few.

~ Valentina Mangte