

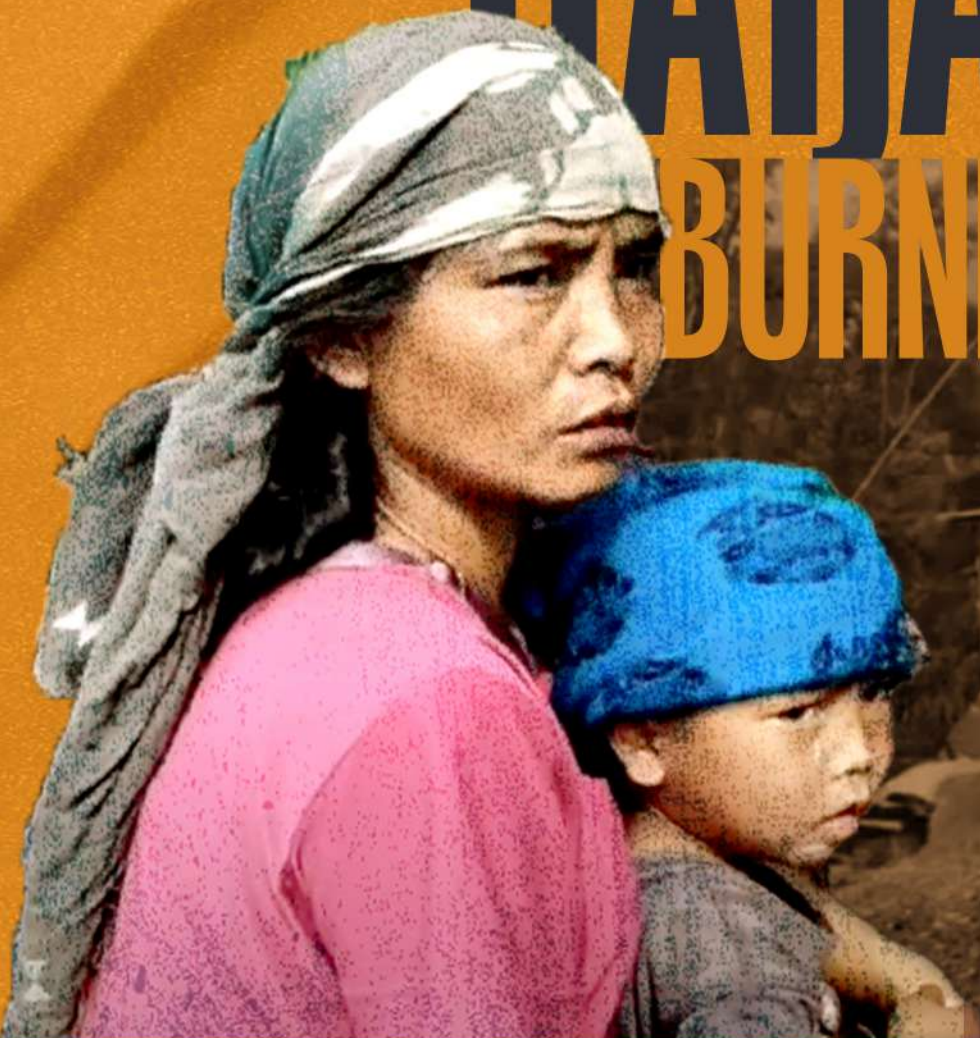
Thingkho Le Malcha

A Weekly Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell

GAMPAL HAIYANG BURNING

A CRY FOR JUSTICE

In Kamjong, Manipur, Kuki villages Gampal and Haiyang lie in ruins after armed assailants torched homes and a church. Three days later, no arrests have been made, and the NSCN-IM denies INVOLVEMENT



PAHALGAM BLEEDS, MANIPUR BURNS: A NATION'S UNEQUAL EMPATHY

A deadly militant attack in Kashmir's Pahalgam triggered national outrage, contrasting sharply with the muted response to the ongoing ethnic violence in Manipur, which has claimed hundreds of lives and displaced thousands.



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KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 09. 03. 2025



226
DEATHS

* Lalgouthang Singsit



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.

KUKI BODIES CONDEMN ARSON IN GAMPAL AND HAIJANG, PLACE DEMANDS ON CENTRE AMID LEADERSHIP SILENCE AND ONGOING ATROCITIES



Lamka, April 24: The Kuki Inpi Manipur and the Kuki Students' Organisation General Headquarters have submitted a set of demands to the Centre, calling for the immediate rebuilding and restoration of Gampal and Haijang villages. They also emphasized the need for proper rehabilitation of affected families and fair compensation for the losses incurred.

Strongly and unequivocally condemning the recent acts of arson and violence committed in the villages of Gampal and Haijang under Sahamphung Sub-Division, Kamjong District, the two Kuki organisations issued a joint statement outlining their concerns and demands.

Their demands include the deployment of adequate and neutral security forces to ensure the safety and protection of villagers and to prevent further violence.

The two bodies also demanded the provision of essential supplies—including food, medical aid, and shelter—for all those displaced or affected. They urged the government to act with urgency, impartiality, and integrity in addressing the humanitarian crisis.

They further stated that such heinous attacks have terrorized innocent Kuki civilians and have once again endangered the already fragile peace and stability in the region.

"The perpetrators of these cowardly acts have inflicted severe trauma, destroyed homes and property, and disrupted the lives of many who are already bearing the brunt of ongoing ethnic tensions," the statement added.

The organisations stated that these acts are yet another horrifying chapter in the systematic targeting of the Kuki-Zo people, who continue to face violence, displacement, and discrimination.

"It is deeply alarming that such acts of terror persist under the watch of the Government of India, which has repeatedly failed to uphold its constitutional duty to maintain law and order—particularly during a crisis that demands urgent, sensitive, and just intervention," the statement read.

The Kuki Inpi Manipur and the Kuki Students' Organisation General Headquarters questioned the central government's continued failure to address persistent violence, protect vulnerable communities, and uphold justice in a region long plagued by ethnic conflict.

They claimed that the absence of timely and effective intervention only reinforces perceptions

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of bias and negligence in the handling of the Kuki-Zo people's plight.

The two organisations urged the government to act with immediacy, impartiality, and integrity, asserting that the people of Gampal, Haijang, and the wider Kuki-Zo community deserve not only protection, but also justice and peace.

The Kuki-Zo community, the statement added, views such acts of terror with grave concern, as they risk fostering misunderstandings between communities in an otherwise peaceful area.

Meanwhile, the Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU) also issued a scathing statement denouncing the arson and violence, which it says were carried out by miscreants from surrounding Tangkhul areas. The attack, CoTU argued, is part of a wider pattern of violence that has left the region deeply fractured.

In a strongly worded condemnation, CoTU decried "two years of unrelenting atrocities and religious persecution" against the Kuki-Zo tribal community—primarily by the dominant Meitei community. It warned that other communities must not exploit the crisis to push their own political agendas.

"It is deeply concerning that elements from neighboring districts are now echoing the Meitei-majoritarian ethno-centric narrative, targeting the Kuki-Zo community with violence and impunity," the statement read.

CoTU also slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's perceived indifference to the ongoing turmoil in Manipur, contrasting his prompt reaction to a terror attack in Jammu & Kashmir with his silence on Manipur. "The Prime Minister aborted his Saudi visit to respond to an attack in Pahalgam, yet remains deaf to the cries of hundreds of grieving families in Manipur," it stated.

Blaming Chief Minister N. Biren Singh's administration for enabling the violence, CoTU alleged that more than 280 lives have been lost, over 300 churches and synagogues burned, and 300 Kuki-Zo localities destroyed. It accused the state government of orchestrating the looting of 6,000 weapons and over 600,000 rounds of ammunition from government armories.

Even under President's Rule, CoTU noted, constitutional authorities failed to act. "With central oversight in place, the Governor still could not protect the villagers of Gampal and Haijang, who were forced to flee as their homes were engulfed in flames."

Reaffirming its long-standing demand, CoTU emphasized that a Separate Administration is the only constitutional safeguard for the Kuki-Zo people. "In the face of systemic negligence, targeted violence, and state-backed tyranny, our call for a separate administration is not just political—it is existential," the statement concluded.

Meanwhile, a coalition of Kuki tribal organizations from the eastern region also issued a joint press communique, describing the incident as a calculated and cowardly act of terror against peaceful communities.

The Eastern Kuki Chiefs' Association (EKCA), Kuki Students' Organisation (KSO) Kamjong, Kuki Women Union (KWU) Kamjong, and South Eastern Kuki Youth Organisation (SEKYO) expressed unified outrage, highlighting that the attackers were armed with sophisticated weapons.

"On April 23, armed assailants stormed the peaceful villages of Gampal and Haijang, setting homes ablaze and spreading terror. This was not just an attack on property—it was a gross violation of human rights and a direct strike at the heart of communal peace," the communique stated.

The organizations demanded immediate and impartial investigation and swift prosecution of those responsible. "We urge the security agencies to act decisively and ensure no further attacks on Kuki villages in Kamjong District," said Lalboi Haokip, President of KSO Kamjong.

Jangpao Haokip, Vice President of EKCA, added, "Those who remained silent spectators to this crime must now come forward and explain why two peaceful villages were reduced to ashes. We stand in unwavering solidarity with the victims."

KUKI-ZO COMMUNITY TO OBSERVE MAY 3 AS “SEPARATION DAY”

Lamka, April 22: As May 3 marks the anniversary of the onset of the unresolved and ongoing conflict in Manipur that began in 2023, Kuki-Zo and valley-based civil society bodies have announced plans to observe the day under different themes.

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders’ Forum (ITLF), on April 22, announced that it will observe Separation Day on May 3, 2025, to mark two years of complete separation from the Meitei community in Manipur.

On the other hand, the valley-based civil society organization Federation of Civil Society Organisations (FOCS) has declared that May 3 will be observed as “a day of remembrance and reflection for the people of Manipur”, under the theme “Bridging Divides for Shared Future.”

A release issued by ITLF on April 22 stated that the solemn occasion will be held at the Wall of Remembrance in Tuibuong, Churachandpur—described as “a site that stands as a symbol of collective grief, resilience, and unity.”

ITLF stated that the event will serve as a day of reflection and remembrance for the victims of the ethnic conflict that has deeply affected the Kuki-Zo communities.

The program will include a series of events such as prayers and exhortations for the victims and their families, a keynote address, organizational reports, and speeches by various tribal leaders, it added.

A significant moment of the event will be the “Jangnadopna” ceremony—a traditional condolence ritual to honor those who lost their lives during the conflict, the release stated.

According to the release, there will be no shutdown on the day. However, traffic movement will be restricted in and around the Wall of Remembrance to ensure the sanctity and smooth conduct of the event, ITLF added.

ITLF has appealed to all sections of society—including tribal organizations, student bodies, philanthropic organizations, media persons, and the general public—to come forward and take part in this day of collective remembrance and unity.

“The event is an opportunity to stand together in support of our cause and to renew our enduring spirit,” stated the release.

“

**Those who can make you believe
absurdities can make you commit
atrocities.**

— Voltaire

KUKI STUDENTS' ORGANISATION HOSTS NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON IDENTITY, RESISTANCE, AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS IN DELHI



New Delhi April 27: The Kuki Students' Organisation, Delhi & NCR, successfully organised a two-day national conference on April 25–26, 2025, at the H.K.S. Surjeet Bhavan Auditorium, New Delhi. The conference, themed “Rethinking Our Identity: Past and Present,” aimed to critically examine issues surrounding identity, history, and the contemporary challenges faced by the Kuki-Zo community.

The first day began with an inaugural function led by Rev. Tongminthang Haokip, Pastor of KWSD, who conducted the dedication prayer. In his presidential address, Paojakhup Guite reflected on the purpose of the conference, clarifying that the intention was not merely to debate nomenclature but to address the misinformation propagated by the Meitei community regarding Kuki identity. He highlighted the role of media in shaping narratives and stressed the need for educating the younger generation, particularly those living in metropolitan cities, to stay rooted in their heritage.

Chief Guest W.L. Hangsing emphasized the importance of maintaining resistance and patience amidst ongoing political struggles, warning against divisions that could be exploited by outsiders. Other Guests of Honour included Juliana DOUNGEL, Gigin Baite, and Lunjalen Khongsai, who all lauded the relentless efforts of the Kuki Students' Organisation during these challenging

times. Although Aisha Ghosh, former President of JNUSU, was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances, her support was acknowledged. In his remarks, Lunjalen Khongsai stressed that while cultural and political identities may evolve, the fundamental principles of truth and justice in *Khankho Nunkho* remain unshaken. The inaugural session concluded with a vote of thanks by Lamtinthang Dimngel and a closing prayer by Moy Khongsai.

Following the formal session, the audience enjoyed vibrant music and cultural displays, showcasing the rich traditions and heritage of the Kuki-Zo people. The enthusiastic performances infused energy into the event and reflected the community's enduring spirit and resilience.

The plenary session of the first day, themed “Ancestry, Language, and Identity: A Multidimensional Approach,” featured a keynote address by Dr. Thongkhohal Haokip. Prof. Jangkhongam DOUNGEL discussed the common ancestry and shared bonds among the Zo (Chin-Kuki-Mizo) ethnic group, emphasizing their inseparable ties despite colonial divisions. Prof. Pauthang Haokip highlighted that most

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ethnic groups in the region, including Nagas and Meiteis, belong to the Tibeto-Burman language family, advocating for a scientific understanding of these relationships. Dr. Lianboi Vaiphei explored global indigenous narratives and their relevance to Manipur, while Prof. Jangkhokai Guite reexamined historical myths and documentation regarding the Kukis.

The second day featured three technical sessions, each delving into different dimensions of the Kuki-Zo experience. The first technical session, under the theme “Sustainability, Faith, Human Rights, and Crisis Management from Conflict Zones,” included presentations by Rev. Dr. Paul Paolen Haokip, Advocate Vishwajit Singh, and Dr. Hatchingthem Haokip, who discussed Christian faith amidst conflict, legal challenges faced by the community, and resilience among women survivors, respectively.

The second session focused on “The Politics of Identity and Autonomy: Nationalism, Land Disputes, and State Influence.” Dr. Thongkholal Haokip addressed myths surrounding demographic changes in Manipur. Dr. Thomas Haokam Vaiphei analyzed the consolidation of Kuki identity through populism, while Mr. Paominlien Haokip discussed land politics as a tool of power and propaganda.

The third session, themed “Margins in Crisis: Narratives of Oppression and Resilience Among Manipur’s Indigenous Communities,” highlighted issues related to health, education, and social survival. Speakers included Dr. Nem Thian Ngai Guite on public health crises, C. Thangminlal DOUNGEL on educational oppression, Ngahneithem Haokip on literary resilience, and S. Seigoulen Haokip on youth aspirations in conflict zones.

The conference concluded with a plenary session titled “Contours of Identity, Knowledge, and Resistance: Rethinking the Chin-Kuki-Mizo Experience.” Prof. Jangkhongam DOUNGEL spoke on political transitions within the Zo ethnic group, Dr. Lalsanglen Haokip examined colonial knowledge systems and their influence on Manipur’s conflicts, and Prof. Jangkhomang Guite explored post-colonial identity formation.

The event culminated in a closing ceremony graced by dignitaries such as Shri Faggan Singh Kulaste, MP, Lok Sabha; Christopher DOUNGEL, DGP (Prisons); Benjamin Mate, Chairperson of KOHUR; and Marlyn Haokip, Convenor of KZWFD—marking a significant step forward in fostering community dialogue, unity, and cultural pride.

MEITEI MILITANT LEADER FROM MANIPUR HELD IN RI BHOI

Shillong, April 22: Police arrested finance secretary of Kangleipak Communist party (KCP) – People’s War Group (PWG) on Monday night.

According to SP Vivekanand Singh Rathore, based on source information that the Finance Secretary of Kangleipak Communist party (KCP) – People’s War Group (PWG) which is a banned terrorist organization of Manipur is hiding in a rented house located at Nongthymmai, 15th Mile, Byrnihat and is involved in subversive activities like extortion, etc in Meghalaya as well as other neighbouring states, a counter-insurgency operation was conducted by a team of Ri-Bhoi District Police and Khundongbam Herojit Meitei was arrested on April 21 at 8.30 pm.

From his possession, two mobile phones and other

incriminating materials were seized.

During interrogation, he admitted that he is a member of KCP(PWG) group and has been collecting money on behalf of the organization.

“He is also suspected to be involved in criminal conspiracy with some Myanmar and Nepal based militant organizations. He was arrested last year in Manipur for possession of illegal firearm and also in Dimapur in 2018 in a drug trafficking case. A case has been registered at Nongpoh PS, and investigation is going on. Meghalaya Police is keeping watch on all anti-social and anti-national elements and strict action is being taken as per law”, the SP said.

IN THE WAKE OF TERROR, KUKI-ZO COMMUNITY MOURNS PAHALGAM VICTIMS, PAYS TRIBUTE, AND PLEDGES TO KEEP THEIR LIGHT BURNING



Kangpokpi April 27: A wave of grief and defiance swept through Kangpokpi District tonight as hundreds from the Kuki-Zo community gathered to mourn the victims of the terror attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir.

Marching solemnly from Nute Kailhang to Brig. M. Thomas Ground along National Highway 2, the crowd carried candles — and a powerful message of unity and resistance. Mothers wept for children they had never met; children lifted candles for names they had never heard. Yet every step spoke of a shared loss, deeply familiar to a community no stranger to suffering.

At a candlelight vigil, their voices rose with a simple but searing promise: “We Mourn Together. We Rise Together. We Carry Their Light.”

Beyond mourning, tonight marked a quiet vow: a refusal to forget, a demand for justice, and an unyielding belief that even in the shadow of terror, their light will endure.

One of the solidarity marchers, Akki Kipgen, said the candlelight vigil and march were not just acts of mourning, but **our way** of standing up and sending a message to the world that whether it’s in Kashmir or here in Manipur, we feel that pain as our own.

“We didn’t just bring candles tonight,” Akki said. “We brought a promise — that we will not let their blood be

forgotten, and that even in the face of violence, we will never bow down.”

She added that every candle lit during the vigil was more than just a symbol — it was a cry. “A cry that says we are still here, we are still fighting, and we are still carrying their light.”

Lamenting the growing silence around suffering, Akki said, “Their pain is our pain. Their families are our families. If we allow the pain of one corner to be silenced, one day the entire nation will be crying.”

“That’s why we’re here — to stand together, to demand justice for every life lost in Pahalgam, and to say with one voice that we will not let this cruelty go unanswered,” she declared.

Another solidarity marcher, Hegou, expressed profound sorrow for the suffering of the families of the Pahalgam victims.

“As citizens of India, we, the Kuki-Zo community, feel the deep anguish of those who have lost their loved ones,” he said, his voice thick with emotion.

He continued, “We are here today not just to

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mourn, but to share in their grief. We want them to know that their pain is not theirs alone — it is shared by all of us. We are hurting with them, and that is why we stand together, in unshakable solidarity, to show our unwavering support for the victims' families."

The Kuki-Zo community's demand for justice rang loud and clear, with Hegou emphasizing the urgent need for the Indian government to act decisively against terrorism.

"The horrors of this attack echo far beyond Jammu and Kashmir — they are felt across India and around the world," Hegou continued. "This pain knows no borders. We appeal to the central government to take immediate, uncompromising action against terrorism in our nation. This is not just an attack on one region — it is an attack on all of us. It is an assault on our peace, on our democracy, on the very fabric of our unity. We demand that terrorism be confronted with the full force of our resolve."

In a powerful display of unity, the community reaffirmed its commitment to standing against violence, hatred, and division, pledging to support the government's efforts in bringing justice to the victims and ensuring the safety of all citizens.

Recalling that the world has witnessed the horrors of terrorism in many forms — from the tragic 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers, which housed the World Trade Center, a symbol of global economic power, to the audacious assault on the Indian Parliament, the heart of the world's largest democracy — the Committee on Tribal Unity declared that nothing is more shocking than the recent massacre in Baisaran Valley, Pahalgam, Anantnag district, where 28 unarmed tourists were brutally killed by armed militias, funded and fueled by a neighboring nation.

This attack, the Committee considered, serves as a stark reminder of the malicious forces at work, seeking to sow fear, hatred, and chaos to disrupt the fragile world order in which India stands as a beacon of hope and peace.

In response, the Kuki-Zo community has issued a strong condemnation of the terrorist assault, calling

it a "barbaric act" of violence. The Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU), which represents the Kuki-Zo community, rejected any ideology that glorifies terrorism, violence, or religious intolerance, regardless of its origin.

"The Kuki-Zo community firmly rejects ideologies that promote violence and hatred," said the CoTU in a statement. "Such ideologies have no place in the world, especially in a democratic nation like India. We stand united in rejecting terrorism in all its forms."

The CoTU also expressed heartfelt solidarity with the families of the victims of the Baisaran Valley massacre, noting that their loss resonates deeply with the community. The Kuki-Zo people have experienced their own painful history of terrorism and violence in the past, making their empathy and support for the victims all the more poignant.

"We understand the pain of losing loved ones to terrorism," the statement continued. "We, too, have felt the deep sorrow of losing fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters to such senseless acts of violence in our own region."

In light of this tragic incident, the Committee on Tribal Unity called on all citizens to rise above divisions and hatred. They emphasized that terrorism, no matter where it occurs, must have no place in India. The CoTU urged fellow citizens, especially in the northeastern states like Manipur, to come together and stand firm against terrorism and extremism.

"We must unite in the face of this threat. This is a fight for the future of our country, for peace, and for justice," the statement concluded.

The attack on Baisaran Valley is a chilling reminder of the ongoing threat of terrorism in various parts of the world. As India mourns the victims and strengthens its resolve against extremism, the call for justice and unity remains louder than ever.

LAMKA HOSTS NERIST ENTRANCE EXAM FOR THE FIRST TIME FOLLOWING KSO CHURACHANDPUR INITIATIVE

Imphal, April 27: In a significant milestone for higher education access in Manipur, the North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST) entrance examination was conducted for the first time at Churachandpur Government College (Autonomous) on April 26.

The exam, specifically the NEE-II Forestry paper, saw participation from 70 students. The examination was overseen by Centre Superintendent Associate Professor Pauchungnung Vaiphei, along with two representatives from the NERIST head office and three additional invigilators.

Leaders from the Kuki Students' Organisation (KSO) Churachandpur and officials from the local education department also visited the examination venue to ensure smooth conduct of the exam and to show support for the students.

According to the KSO Education Department, the establishment of the examination centre in



Churachandpur was made possible through the organization's initiative, supported by the district administration. This move came in response to the ongoing violence in Manipur, which previously restricted NERIST exam centres only to the state capital, Imphal.

The KSO Churachandpur Education Department has urged aspiring students in the district to take full advantage of this new local centre and actively participate in future entrance examinations.



The Proud Indian
@DynastyDounge

We strongly condemn the Pahalgam terrorist attack. We have been suffering from secessionist terrorism for a long time. We know how painful it is to lose someone close to you. Unlike some communities in a 650 sq km area of Manipur, who mock and celebrate such incidents.

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9:27 PM · Apr 26, 2025 · 281 Views



Pengpalep (KUKI PARIVAR)
@KimHaokip

#Manipur:

Meiteis in full support of Pakistan. If you consider this being a patriotic Indian n still support meiteis against Kuki , maybe you need to dig deeper than what you are being fed by meitei medias. Then only, the truth will set you free from the lies you know now.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

State Apathy and Failure of Authorities in the Arson of Two Kuki Villages in Kamjong District

Ethnic unrest has resurfaced in Manipur's Kamjong district, as two Kuki villages — Gampal and Haijang — were reduced to ashes in an arson attack by unidentified armed miscreants on April 23. According to initial reports, 16 houses were torched in Gampal and 12 in Haijang, both located in the Sahamphung Sub-Division. Fortunately, no casualties were reported, as most villagers were away in the fields at the time of the attack.

The incident echoes the tragic events of March 2020, when Chassad village, another Kuki settlement in the same district, was similarly ransacked and burnt down following escalating tensions with residents of the neighbouring Sampui village, largely inhabited by Tangkhul Nagas. Historical disputes over ancestral land and forest territory continue to fuel deep-rooted animosity between the communities

In response to the April 23 attack, Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) was invoked by the Kamjong District Magistrate, restricting movement and public activities in the affected areas to prevent further escalation.

Condemnation from Kuki organisations was swift and forceful. The Committee on Tribal Unity

(COTU) criticised the Centre's silence, saying:

"The Prime Minister aborted his Saudi visit to respond to an attack in Jammu & Kashmir, yet remains deaf to the cries of hundreds of grieving families in Manipur."

In a joint statement, Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), Kuki Students' Organisation (KSO-GHQ), Kuki Chiefs' Association (KCA-M), and several women's rights groups decried the violence as a "systematic targeting of the Kuki-Zo people," and condemned the government's continued inaction amid ongoing displacement and destruction.

They demanded immediate reconstruction of Gampal and Haijang, along with fair compensation, deployment of neutral security forces to ensure safety in the region and essential humanitarian aid for displaced families, including food, medical supplies, and shelter.

Meanwhile, the NSCN (IM) — a powerful Naga insurgent group — denied any involvement in the attacks, condemning the "wild speculation"

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and calling for a thorough investigation.

“The conspiracy surrounding the incident shall be exposed sooner or later,” stated the NSCN (IM) in a press release on April 24.

The attack comes just weeks after Union Minister of State for Defence, Sanjay Seth, visited Kamjong district headquarters on April 9, highlighting the area’s strategic importance and efforts to enhance border infrastructure. However, the fresh violence reveals a stark contrast between development goals and on-ground realities, where ethnic divisions remain dangerously unresolved.

The recent burning of Gampal and Haijang, two Kuki villages in Manipur’s Kamjong district, is not an isolated event but the latest in a series of attacks on the minority Kukis that reveal a disturbing pattern — a consistent failure by the state machinery to protect its citizens and uphold justice, even under President’s Rule. The inability of the authorities to identify, apprehend, or prosecute the perpetrators of repeated violence against the Kuki community paints a grim picture of law enforcement paralysis and systemic negligence.

The events of April 23, 2025, mirror the tragic Chassad arson of March 2020, where over 150 homes were destroyed and families displaced. Despite extensive destruction and open allegations by victims against suspected Tangkhul Naga perpetrators, no meaningful investigation or arrest followed then — nor now. In both cases: No culprits have been identified, no arrests have been made and no concrete action has followed public condemnation. This raises a critical question: Is the state unwilling, or simply incapable of intervening when it comes to ethnically charged violence? President’s Rule was imposed in Manipur amid worsening law and order in the wake of ongoing ethnic clashes. This shift places direct responsibility on the central government and its appointed Governor to restore normalcy and enforce the Constitution. However,

this framework has proved to be ineffective, as seen in the unchecked attack on Gampal and Haijang despite existing tensions. Lack of anticipatory security deployment in known flashpoint areas, absence of swift investigation mechanisms, even when the accused are alleged to belong to identifiable groups. In effect, central oversight has failed to protect the vulnerable, undermining the very rationale for President’s Rule. The absence of accountability has emboldened perpetrators. From Chassad to Haijang, looting, arson, and destruction of evidence — such as the alleged torching of land records — have all occurred without resistance from police or paramilitary forces.

As reported by residents, Security forces like the Assam Rifles were present but failed to intervene. Looted goods, including trucks loaded with household items, were allowed to pass unchallenged. Such passivity indicates either tacit complicity or a deliberate abdication of duty, both equally dangerous in a democracy.

The Kuki community’s statements reflect a growing mistrust of the state apparatus. COTU and KIM’s strong-worded rebukes targeted not just attackers but also the Prime Minister and Governor. The lack of judicial or administrative redress has created a vacuum of justice, replaced by fear, trauma, and further displacement. The violence in Kamjong is not just a local law and order failure — it is a systemic failure of governance under President’s Rule, reflecting the Centre’s inability or unwillingness to address ethnic violence with the urgency it demands. Until perpetrators are identified, prosecuted, and victims are meaningfully rehabilitated, peace will remain fragile, and justice a distant dream for the Kuki-Zo people.



FEATURED ARTICLE

Nothing Changes but Change Itself; Manipur Needs to Reinvent Itself

Ngaranmi Shimray

The saying “nothing changes but change itself” means that while everything else is constantly transforming, change itself remains constant as the driving force of all things. This idea, often attributed to Heraclitus, suggests that continuous change is the only permanent aspect of existence.

Look around the world and see how things have changed and is always changing. Empires have disintegrated in India and States have replaced them. Pseudo democracy with autocratic tendency is on the rise around the world. From radios and telegrams we are now in the digital age with computers and smart phones. We thought that nothing can be smaller than micro chips, but there are now nano chips smaller than a rice grain. Batteries made of rare earth materials last for decades. In a few decades, earthlings could become space travellers seeding planets and moons across the universe and galaxies. President Donald Trump changed the geopolitics of the world to multipolar and India could become one of them. Laloo Yadav swore that Jharkhand would be created over his dead body! Jharkhand was bifurcated 25 years back from Bihar and Laloo Yadav is still alive! No one foresaw that J&K will be downgraded to a UT! There is no permanent boundaries anymore and the changing geopolitical conditions will

keep on evolving changing the political landscape over time. The geopolitical situation in Manipur is changing too. The instability in Bangladesh and Myanmar has made the troubled north eastern states ripe for fomenting trouble and China is, by far, not the friendliest nation.

Population has grown; more rapidly in the “hill areas” and fewer in the valley. Why? Primarily on account of backwardness, poverty and poor implementation of family planning programmes due to indifference of the State government to the welfare of “hill areas”, while the valley flushed with funds prospered at the expense of the “hill areas”. The dominant community controls the State government and deprived the “hill areas” of an effective and efficient local self-government by not recommending districts councils under Article 244 and having elected district councils under State Act for only half its lifetime in 50 years. The proper and effective functioning of the Hill Areas Committee (HAC) constituted under Article 371-C of the Constitution for ensuring that “hill areas” get a

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fair share of development funds and proper governance was obstructed. Had these two instruments for the “hill areas”, given in 1972 when Manipur became a State, been allowed to function properly better development and governance would have taken place in “hill areas”. Securing fair share of funds by the HAC would have ensured proper implementation of developmental schemes, and family planning programmes in “hill areas”.

Manipur State has always been dominated by the Meitei community as they represent the majority population with more than 50% of the State’s population, have 40 MLAs against 20 for “hill areas”, are an advanced community dominating all walks of life. In short, they control the government and all its machineries. They denied the HAC their say of deliberating over State Plan budget for “hill areas” as provided in the Presidential Order dated 20th June 1972 issued under Article 371-C by bypassing it and gave a much smaller share of development funds since 1972. Requisite numbers of posts of teachers, health workers and various other government functionaries created for “hill areas” were largely diverted and utilised in valley districts on various excuses neglecting the “hill areas”. On account of their political clout and financial power, individuals of dominant community secure all governmental contracts for various works in “hill areas” and placated the tribal contractors with petty sub-contracting works. As a result, governance and implementation of works and schemes in the “hill areas” have been suffering since 1972 and most assets exist only in paper or are of inferior quality.

Manipur is now at a stage where the dominant community has started suspecting that the balance of power may be shifting and slipping out of their hands. They blame it on illegal migrants which may partly be

true, but not entirely correct. For more than five decades, the “hill areas” have been denied their fair share of developmental funds keeping it backward which resulted in rapid tribal population growth. The tribes were tricked into thinking that a large number of jobs have been created for “hill areas”, but were diverted and utilised in the valley leading to neglect of education and health care in the “hill areas”. Basic services like water supply and power supply exist only in records. Road connectivity is mainly fair weather road category. Under such situation, the hegemonic mindset of the dominant community has remained unchanged inviting trouble. The aggressive demands of Meitei community targeting tribal lands in “hill areas” has created the impression that they are still thinking of carrying on their hegemonic agenda of suppressing, oppressing, exploiting and subjugating the tribes. Such agenda has achieved nothing but sown the seeds in the minds of tribal people of breaking away from Manipur.

Education and internet have opened up the minds of the tribes and they are fully aware of their backwardness, potential for future and their constitutional rights. Manipulated data of high flow of funds for “hill areas” and condescending utterance of “hills and valley are one” will no longer convince them that the dominant community has a change of heart. They know the intentions of the dominant community when they ask for ST status, extension of MLR&LR Act, amendment of Article 371-C, redrawing of district boundaries for administrative convenience all of which are aimed at usurping tribal lands in “hill areas”. Rubbing salt to injury, they have been denying Sixth Schedule under Article 244 for the “hill areas” and are now opposing the direction of Supreme Court

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to carry out the constitutional delimitation exercise based on Census 2001 which is likely to benefit the “hill areas” by three assembly seats. However, the dominant community should know that perpetuating suppression, oppression, exploitation and subjugation of the tribes will no longer be acceptable to the tribes. There are options available to the tribes and one of them is to ask for separate administration.

The Kuki-Zo tribes have learnt their lessons the hard way in the ongoing ethnic conflict with the Meitei community and want to separate from Manipur. The Nagas of Manipur are ambivalent about their future in Manipur and do not know what the “Framework Agreement” has in store for them, but they are also realising that they stand to lose their tribal lands in “hill areas” if they continue to be part of Manipur. The Nagas know that, in the event a separate administration is given to the Kuki-Zo tribes, their power equation vis a vis Meitei community will become weaker and they will be isolated and bullied by the Meitei community. And both the tribal groups fear they will lose their tribal lands in “hill areas” to the Meitei community if they remain to be part of Manipur and know that it is better if they separate from Manipur. However, considering the emerging situation, both Naga and Kuki groups may start realising that it would be more advantageous for them to stay in Manipur and counter the designs of the Meitei community as a united tribal group. Ironically five decades of maladministration and deprivation of benefits to the “hill areas” resulted to rapid population growth which may upset the political power equation in the State. To remove illegal migrants from Manipur, NRC (National Register of Citizens) should be implemented, but it may become a very long drawn out affair and only serve to delay and complicate the next Census exercise slated for year after 2026. The die is cast and the next Census could exacerbate the chasm that exists

between the dominant community and the tribes.

There is however another path - it's called coexistence. This path requires the dominant community to assuage the fear of the tribes that they will stop targeting tribal lands in “hill areas” by giving up their attempts to become ST, to amend Article 371-C, to extend MLR&LR Act to “hill areas”, and to redraw district boundaries on pretext of administrative convenience. On top of these, the dominant community has to facilitate grant of Article 244 along with legislative powers over land in “hill areas” and laws relating to tribal traditions and culture. In return the tribes can allow themselves to be persuaded to make land laws in “hill areas” to facilitate settlements in conclaves and economic activities in hill slopes for all citizens. Such land use laws for “hill areas” would need to be formulated by the autonomous district/territorial councils under the guidance of HAC and passed by the council themselves. It's a recipe for power sharing and land sharing.

Things are more or less clear. The path forward is a forked road - one that leads to separation and the other coexistence. The first road will enable them to get rid of the tribes and enable them to develop their beloved “Sanaleibak Manipur” into a Singapore type of State without any baggage. The next road is narrow and difficult entailing several compromises and adjustments by all stakeholders including forgiveness and burying the hatchet. The dominant Meitei community is in the driver's seat and it is for them to steer the State on road they decide to take. God bless the driver!

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THE WHEEL OF TIME

A new soul awaken, as spring blossom
Yet, depart as Autumn arrives
Got company to rise in times
Yet, falls apart in comes of time.

In infancy, life flows as river's stream
Unaware of the world, yet bound to its dream
Adolescence brings freedom, like birds in flight
With hopes and believes of major dependent

Adulthood roars like a lion's might
Responsibilities abound, with expectations in sight
The pressure to provide, to nurture and to guide
A delicate balance, where failure's fears reside

In old age, we stand as history's testament
Holding up the legacy, our life's intent
As we bid farewell, to our time below
A wave of memories, as our story's told.

~ Seineo KUKI