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of "39"

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the
narrative of
CONFLICT

- Rianna Lingjel Irom, Editor-in-Chief, XII

"MANIPUR HAS LONG LIVED WITH CYCLES OF VIOLENCE, INSURGENCY, AND COERCION."

To speak of Manipur today is to speak of a surge in violence, but the conflict itself is neither new nor is it sudden.

In fact, it has been unfolding for years, often framed as a clash between the Meitei community and the Kuki-Zo tribes. Yet, reducing it to an "ethnic conflict" risks obscuring more than it reveals. Manipur has long lived with cycles of violence, insurgency, and coercion. Stories of extortion, of civilians caught between armed groups and state forces, are not distant memories but lived realities. For a time, this unrest appeared to recede.

Since 2023, however, it has returned with renewed intensity, and with no clear end in sight. While the trigger is often traced to a High Court order considering Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for Meiteis, later stayed and withdrawn, the deeper causes lie elsewhere. The demand for ST status itself is complex.

Historically, Meiteis did not identify as a tribe, yet sections of the community have increasingly endorsed the classification, linking it to the protection of indigenous identity. For many tribal groups, however, this demand signals a threat: the fear of land alienation and the erosion of constitutional safeguards. This fear, while powerful, is not entirely grounded in present realities. Meiteis have traditionally settled in valley regions near water bodies, and there is little to suggest a sweeping migration into the hills even if legal barriers shift. Moreover, disparities in development, between hills and valleys, between districts within the same state, are not unique to Manipur.

Across the Northeast, urban centres consistently outpace rural regions in infrastructure and opportunity. Inequality not ethnicity alone, shapes

these tensions. Even within states where there is a tribal majority like Nagaland and Mizoram, divisions persist. Marginalisation exists within marginalised groups, revealing that identity alone does not guarantee equity. This broader regional context complicates the idea that Manipur's crisis is purely communal. At the same time, concerns about political imbalance are not unfounded. A Meitei-majority government, combined with historical grievances and colonial-era divisions between hills and valleys, sustains distrust. These layered tensions have been only been amplified, not created, by recent events.

What, then, sustains the conflict? A significant but underemphasised factor is the nexus of narco-trafficking. Poppy cultivation in the hills,

despite being illegal, remains a primary means of survival for many farmers facing lack of infrastructure and economic desperation. In such conditions, illicit economies thrive. Armed groups, coercion, as well as cross-border influences further entrench this system, making violence both a tool and a symptom. None of this absolves the role of narrative. Framing the crisis purely as ethnic deepens divisions and even prolongs hostility. Communities that once coexisted are now increasingly segregated, shaped by fear, anger, and loss. These emotions are not abstract. They are formed in nights punctuated by displacement, in gunfire, in curfews, and in the quiet normalisation of instability.

The response of the state has done little to rebuild trust. Allegations of excessive force,

unanswered questions around security failures, and the use of measures like tear gas against protestors have only widened the gap between the administration and the people.

When institutions appear either distant or indifferent, resentment festers. Meanwhile, the underlying issues remain largely unaddressed. In the hills, infrastructure is still lacking. Economic disparity persists along with the drug trade. Borders remain porous. For many, even the absence of violence for a night is a privilege. Manipur today is not simply in conflict is carrying the weight of unresolved histories, structural inequalities, and competing insecurities. To treat it as merely an ethnic clash is to misdiagnose the problem. And a misdiagnosed problem rarely finds a cure.

Qualia are the private textures of perception, not simply what we experience but how those experiences feel to us as individuals. The warmth of sunlight, the ache carried by a lyric, or the strange familiarity of grief in music all belong to the realm of qualia. To me, qualia is where imagination and emotion merge so completely that even unreal things begin to feel true. My understanding of it exists within '39 by Queen.

On the surface, the song is a science-fiction ballad about astronauts who leave Earth in search of new worlds, only to return and discover

THE QUALIA of "39"

-Kainath Nasser, XI

that while only a year has passed for them, generations have gone by at home. Yet emotionally, the song feels like standing at the edge of time, looking back at a love that still exists but can never again be reached. The opening line, "In

the year of '39, assembled here the volunteers," captures a quiet courage shaped by uncertainty. To me, it reflects the pain of leaving behind familiarity in pursuit of something greater. The line "Ne'er looked back, never feared, never cried" feels less like heroism and more like emotional restraint, the

kind of strength born from necessity rather than fearlessness. When the chorus pleads, “Don’t you hear my call, though you’re many years away,” the distance feels both physical and emotional. It becomes a longing for connection across time itself, a hope that love might survive even when presence cannot. The song reaches its emotional peak when the travellers return to a world grown “old and grey.”

Most haunting is the line, “Your mother’s eyes, from your eyes, cry to me.” It suggests that grief has outlived the person who first carried it, surviving through generations. The child becomes a living reminder of a past the narrator can no longer return to. My qualia lives within this paradox: the ache of loss

“Perhaps that is the power of qualia, the ability of emotion to make even imagined experiences feel real.”

existing alongside the warmth of love. ‘39 feels like nostalgia for a life I never lived, making me mourn memories I never had.

the people of the desert

- Prayaash Khakolia, Academics Captains, XII

Ever notice how some communities are just everywhere? Well, that’s basically the deal with the Marwaris. They are not just any random group; they are the original Indian migrants, and their story is quite fascinating.

The name, funnily enough, is very literal; a Marwari is a person who came from Marwar, a dry desert region of Rajasthan. The Marwari people are part of an ethnolinguistic group, mostly belonging to the traditional banking and trading communities (like the Oswals, Maheswaris, etc.). Life in the Thar Desert was rough, with constant droughts and other things.

This basically turned them into financial ninjas who had to be resourceful and be great at business. So why did the Marwaris leave? Two reasons – to escape the drought back home, and most importantly, because they were excellent bankers and traders and therefore had to be

in places where they could grow their network. Following the money and the trade routes, the Marwaris started their epic road trip centuries ago. They left the desert for the big port cities like Calcutta and Bombay, becoming the economic backbone of British India. They funded projects or become the middlemen who brokered these projects and deals. It’s a complete history by itself of how they went from dealing with desert kings to financing colonial empires! It is remarkable that even though the Marwaris travelled to practically every corner of the world to do business, their core culture still seems to remain frozen in time. Most of them continue to be close-knit family units, with a strong commitment towards vegetarianism, and are very traditional.

This desert survival mode shows especially in their food! Since water and fresh vegetables were a luxury back in Marwar, their cuisine is

a masterclass in making food last. They use lots of grains, lentils, and pure ghee to cook and preserve things. This is why they have amazing dry snacks that are perfect for travel - like the legendary Bhujia. If you've ever been

to a Marwari home, you know this snack is an essential food group. It perfectly sums up their story: a resilient, long-lasting taste of home, no matter where they are.

catch me if you can!

- Viraj Kumar Gupta, X

As Margaretha watched from her train window, nostalgia and grief consumed her, she was penniless with her abusive marriage finally over, and her poor son, dead. As she approached France, she decided she would try to find an honourable job and earn enough money to reunite with her only family, her daughter, Non.

Unfortunately for her, she had neither any proper education nor any experience, which was probably the reason for her failed attempts at jobs like being a circus horse rider or even a German tutor. Eventually, she made her way to dance after the suggestion of her circus owner.

She pretended to be an exotic Hindu dancer and Javanese princess and began performing dances in private salons to build a reputation; that was until she met Guimet, a millionaire industrialist who was impressed by her exotic looks. He invited her to perform at the Musée Guimet after which she became an overnight sensation. Believing that her current name "Lady MacLeod" was not authentic enough for the name of a "Hindu temple dancer" and thus he made her a suggestion: "What do you say about the name Mata Hari?". And so began Mata Hari's era of renown as an exotic dancer. Her charade

worked and she found herself in high demand.

However, years passed and trends changed. When the First World War began, Mata Hari was over thirty years old and no longer attracted the crowds that she needed to maintain her lifestyle. She then eventually returned back to her native country. It was the year 1916 in Amsterdam, when her life took a complete turn.

As she walked along the quiet country road, she was approached by a German consul who offered her money in exchange for gathering information. Her heart was pounding, and she felt a pang of guilt in her heart, could she really betray France? The country in which she had lived for over a decade? However, her financial desperation made her shake hands with the German consul. She became Agent H21. With a heavy heart which was filled with bad intentions, she returned to France, to her old pre-war way of life.

As a former-dancer, nobody would have ever suspected her. She eventually fell in love with a young Russian officer, another of her countless lovers. As fate had it, the officer got injured on the war front and was sent to a military area in another town. Desperate to see him, Mata Hari sought a laissez-passer, French for "let pass" from a French captain who also happened to be a counter-espionage officer. He proposed she work for France and the unfortunate and confused former-dancer became a double-agent working for both France and Germany. Unfortunately for her, the Germans soon realized that the French were too using her and that she was no use to them, they decided to turn her in. They deliberately mentioned "Agent H21" in messages they knew would be intercepted by French counter-espionage, intending for French intelligence to discover that Mata Hari was a double agent.

The plan worked and Mata Hari was imprisoned, sentenced to execution. Eventually

the unfortunate day of October 15, 1917 came by. The dancer, refusing to be blindfolded, placed herself against the post, and rope, not even tied was slipped around her waist. She was not scared, she was ready. She blew a kiss to the firing squad and the commanding officer raised

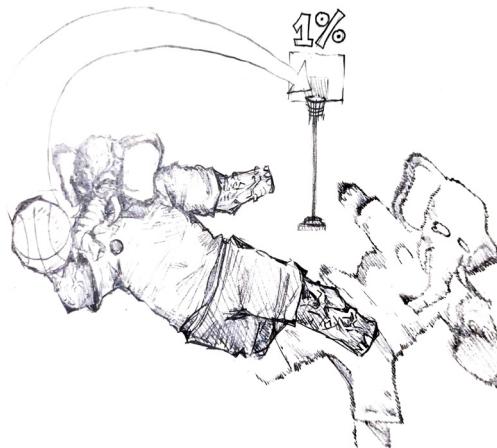
his gun: a sharp noise, followed by the thud of bullets. And the dancer? Her lifeless body, soaking red with blood, fell to the ground. A woman who always managed, a woman who carried courage till the end, a dancer, a mother, a double-agent. For she, was Mata Hari, the eye of the day.

Campus Caricature

DUNKIN'*

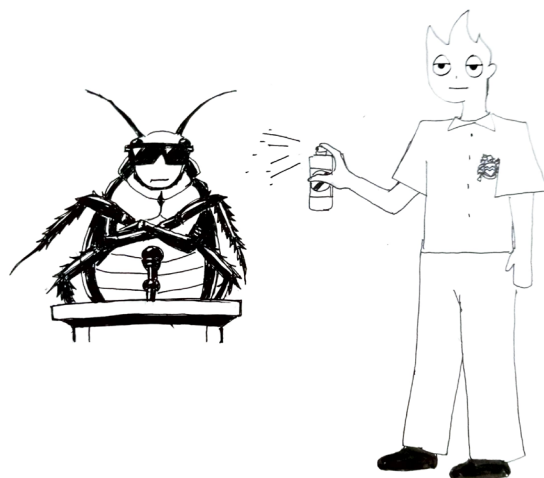
**In rference to the Interhouse Basketball Competition*

Illustrated by Austin Nameirakpam, VIII



THE OUTPOST

India this week proved satire is best served with a takedown notice, as the 'Cockroach Janata Party' vanished soon after demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Meanwhile, the DGCA revived Covid-era airport drills for passengers arriving from Ebola hotspots, because nothing says "welcome to India" like thermal screening. The Supreme Court scolded the NTA over the NEET-UG paper leak, remarking it "hasn't learnt its lesson" and promising strict oversight of evaluations. In Delhi, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met PM Modi, while EAM Jaishankar, borrowing from the Trumpian playlist, reaffirmed India's new favourite anthem: "India First.



Illustrated by Ngeovine Sha, IX

CAMPUS NEWS

INTERHOUSE BASKETBALL

The results of the Interhouse Basketball Competition 2026 are as follows:

1. **Bhoroli-Lohit** - 18 Points
2. **Subansiri-Namdang** - 16 points
3. **Jinari-Manas** - 8 points
4. **Kopili-Dhansiri** - 6 points

The Most Valuable Player (MVP) title was awarded to:

Lower School - Cello Jankham (Girls') and Darsheel Kalita (Boys')

Upper School - Nonika Meitram (Girls') and Jigdrel Lepcha (Boys')



INTERHOUSE MURAL AND SCULPTURE COMPETITION

The Upper School Inter-House Art Competition was successfully conducted on the 10th of May 2026, featuring two events: Mural Painting and Sculpture. The competition showcased the exceptional creativity, innovation, artistic skill, and teamwork of students from each house. The results are as follows:

1. **Kopili-Dhansiri**
2. **Subansiri-Namdang**
3. **Bhoroli-Lohit & Jinari-Manas**

69TH SQUASH NATIONAL SCHOOL GAMES



Organised by the School Games Federation of India (SGFI), the 69th Squash School Games were held at Delhi from April 16 to April 22, 2026. Ten students represented The Assam Valley School across Under-14 and Under-17 categories in both boys' and girls' divisions, of which two AVS teams advanced to the quarterfinals — Sanbi Day and Aaradhya Eon Baruah in the Under-14 Girls' Team and Adrika Dey in the IPSC Under-17 Girls' Team.

NCC

The NCC Unit was formally raised at The Assam Valley School, marking the beginning of a new chapter in leadership, discipline, service, and nation-building. Brig. Prashanth Chauhan, SM, Group Commander, Tezpur, graced the occasion, inspected the Guard of

Honour and Mounted Guard, and addressed the gathering on the vital role of NCC in shaping responsible citizens and future leaders. The Headmaster, Dr. Amit Jugran, highlighted the significance of NCC in fostering character, patriotism, and a spirit of service among students.



Ripple #271

- Aahil Faraj, IX

He flipped through his childhood photo album,

smiling at the memories. Then he noticed the background of every single picture had the same strange man looming.

He took out his phone and took a quick selfie.

The photograph showed him in his room, with the man standing next to him.

And he thought he had been alone all this while.

Tongue Of Slip!!

1. "You don't write to need." - Rianna Lingjel Irom, Editor-in-Chief, XII (*That's a bit controversial coming from you.*)

2. "More crookeded." - Austin Nameirakpam, VIII (*Much like your English.*)

3. "Arms of coat." - Tanushree Ghimiray, XI (*What's next? English of Class?*)

4. "New klids on the block." - Sneha Ngangom, Deputy Editor, XII (*You're about to scare them away.*)

5. "I'm Tongue of Slip." - Aahil Faraj, IX (*Your confidence is certainly baffling.*)

Keep It Reel!

Grandeur

- Tanushree Ghimiray, XI



Editor-in-Chief: Rianna Lingjel Irom

Deputy Editor: Sneha Ngangom

Associate Editor: N. Chingkheinganbi

Correspondents: Aahil Faraj and Tanushree Ghimiray

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Illustrators: Sneha, Austin, Baibhav

Mistress-in-Charge: Ms. Sarmistha Paul Sarkar

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E-mail: ave@assamvalleyschool.com

Telephone: 09678074320/08812009627 Website: www.assamvalleyschool.com

Patron: Dr. Amit Jugran, The Headmaster of The Assam Valley School



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