

National & International News

### Indian girl found dead in US, step-mother charged

**PTI**  
**New York, Aug 21:** A nine-year-old Indian girl has been found dead under mysterious circumstances in her house here with police charging her step-mother for the murder.  
 Ashdeep Kaur had moved to Queens here from India just three months ago and lived in an apartment with her father Sukhjinder Singh and her stepmother Arjun Sandhi Pardas that was shared with another couple.  
 Ashdeep was found dead in the bathtub of her home in Queens with bruises on her body. Pardas, 55 has been charged with murder for allegedly strangling Ashdeep on Friday, the New York Post quoted sources as saying.  
 The housemate had seen Ashdeep going in the bathroom with Pardas, who later came out alone and left the building.  
 She allegedly said that Ashdeep was taking a bath.  
 When Ashdeep did not come out, the housemate checked and discovered her lifeless body in the bathtub that had no water.  
 Pardas was nowhere to be found when Ashdeep's body was discovered. Police found her several hours later at another location in Queens and took her for questioning.  
 Ashdeep's relatives said the young girl had been previously allegedly abused by Pardas, who had been entrusted with her care while Singh worked in a local restaurant.  
 "She always told me she does not like to be with her stepmother. Sometimes she got beatings from her," Ashdeep's uncle Manjinder Singh said in the report.  
 "Sometimes she grabbed her, threw her on the bed. I'm not thinking she's going to kill her."  
 Mandima Singh, a cousin of Kaur's father, said of the girl in a report in New York Daily News, "There was no water, but she was in the tub." The little one said she (the stepmom) sometimes beat her.  
 Ashdeep's mother, who lives in India, was devastated by the news, relatives said. She and the girl's father are divorced.

### Encounter in Delhi between criminals and police, 2 cops injured, 5 arrested

**New Delhi, Aug. 21:** Two cops were reportedly injured in an encounter between Delhi Police and criminals. The police had received a tip off that two criminals were going to rob someone near Sector 24 of Rohini area in Delhi.  
 Following the tip off, the police laid a trap to nab the duo. The police intercepted their vehicle near Begumpur check post.

When the police tried to arrest the accused, they opened fire on the police in retaliation. While the two criminals suffered bullet injuries, two policemen sustained injuries in the gunbattle.  
 Sources said while one of the policemen was shot, the other suffered minor abrasions following the incident.  
 All five criminals involved in the shootout has been arrested.

### Infiltration bid foiled in Kashmir, three militants killed

**Srinagar, Aug. 21:** Army on Sunday foiled an infiltration bid along the Line of Control in Tangdhar sector of Kashmir, killing three militants who were involved in an attack on a BSF post in the area two days ago.  
 "Army foiled an infiltration bid in Tangdhar sector of Kupwara district. Three terrorists have been killed in the operation," an army official said.  
 He said the slain militants were involved in the attack on a BSF post in Tangdhar sector on August 19 in which three jawans of the force were injured.  
 "Three weapons and other war-like stores have been recovered from the scene of the gunbattle," the official said adding the combing operation was still in progress.

**Government of Manipur**  
**Directorate of AYUSH, Lamphelat**  
**NOTIFICATION**  
**Imphal, the 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2016**

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## MARRIAGE- It's Rules and Practices in Meitei Society

This rule is especially based on blood relationship. Those who neglected the rules were banished and ex-communicated. Intermarriage between two different clans is also forbidden e.g. Khuman and Luwang do not intermarry as both of them are descended from a common ancestor

**Shairuk Tinnaba**  
 Shairuk tinnaba is another patrilineal marriage rule. It may be divided into two a) Shairuk Achouba ( big relation ) b) Shairuk Macha (small relation ). The shairuk Achouba is applied to the royal family and the Shairuk macha to be common people.

**Pen-tinnaba**  
 Along with the patrilineal form of Kinship, Meitei also followed the rule of matrilineal consanguineal Kinship. Such kinship relation traced from the matrimonial side is known as Pen-tinnaba. Pen-tinnaba literally means the progenies of the same grandmother but of different grand fathers. Thus people belonging to two-different clans who are the offsprings of the same mother but of different fathers are prohibited to intermarry as they are uterine brothers and sisters.

**Mungnaba**  
 Mungnaba is another proscriptive marriage rule. It is also, a custom that prohibits intermarriage between the offsprings of two sisters who were married to two persons, each belonging to two different saeigs and clan. Thus the offsprings of two sisters though belonging to different clans are forbidden to intermarry. In the same way though in a lesser degree, intermarriage between the offsprings of the daughters of to brother who were married to men belonging to different clan are also forbidden.

The forbidden degrees of the two consanguineous instances during pre-Hindu days are not exactly known. But according to Sambandhi Nirnay enacted in the year 1790 A.D. during the reign of Rajashree Beigyachandra incorporating the earlier customs, the forbidden degrees were five and three years respectively. It is also believed that a man may not marry a girl who has the same name as his mother. The "Piba" the man who is socially head of the clan is not permitted to marry a woman who is a *tuman* (widow or divorcee). But intermarriage within the same clan is permissible if they belong to different origin. Thus a member of the *Nongchup haram* ( People who migrated from the west) may marry with the *Nongpok haram* ( people who migrated from the east) even though they may belong to the same group or clan.

In Meitei society child marriage was totally unknown. Widow remarriage was allowed. The Royal Edict of King *Naophlangba* who reigned in the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. commands that - "Widows should get married and no widow should remain single" ( MS Masil). But the widow could not marry her deceased husband's brother and relatives. No practical ceremony is performed for widow remarriage.

Courtship or Koiba, the act of wooing had been in vogue among the Meitei's since ancient days. In the traditional system of courtship the young man usually accompanied by one or two of his friends appeared in the house of the girl a little after sunset. When they were seated, the girl presented a long tobacco - pipe made by banana leaf if she loves the suitor, but if she did not love a short tobacco pipe was offered. Courtship or Koiba may lead either to their engagement or to their elopement in case the marriage negotiation was unsuccessful. This customary form has now been replaced by various modern made of courtship.

The forms of marriage prevailed in Meitei society are the following: i) Marriage by engagement ii) Marriage by elopement iii) Marriage by capture iv) Keinya Katpa v) Loukhatpa vi) Court marriage ( few in number if necessary). Marriage by engagement:- This marriage by engagement is the purest and highest form of marriage and is the basis of regular Meitei marriage. This form is invariably performed with usual preliminaries and other accompanying rites. Marriage by elopement:- This is the love type of union between a desiring woman and a desiring man which may be consummated without prior nuptial rites. In former times elopement were done at night. If the girl consents to elope with her lover, the latter goes to her house at night. When her guardians were asleep she stealthily came out of her house to elope with her lover. In this case if the girls parents accepted the negotiation wedding ceremony can be performed at their house otherwise ceremony will be solemnised at grooms residence *Keinya Katpa* a simple form of marriage may shorten the marriage ceremony in few cases after eloping.

Marriage by capture:- In early days when internecine warfare among the various tribes in and outside Manipur was the order of those days, marriage of women captured in war usually by the captors was one of the normal modes of obtaining a wife, details of which were abundantly found in the chronicles and other literary accounts of Manipur. These women were married forcibly against their will. It is indeed marriage by rape where the woman out of fear or helplessness may ultimately agree to be the wife of her captor or abductor.  
 Keinya Katpa : It is a simple form of marriage ceremony in which the father or the parent of the girl wishes to give their daughter after elopement. What were done in this ceremony were the exchange of garlands by the bride and the bridegroom and the recitation of some hymns by the priest. It is a very less expensive form of marriage. The articles which were brought by the groom's family were offered to the deities (Sanamah, Leimarel, Lam Lai ancestral gods).  
 Loukhatpa: Loukhatpa is a very simple form of recognition ceremony of the unsolemnised union of the husband & the wife. A couple might become husband and wife without performing either Luhongba or keinya katpa. When the parents of the girl wish to recognised the union, the Loukhatpa Ceremony was performed. Failing this Loukhatpa function the bride is excommunicated by her parents and some orthodox in laws refused to take food cooked by her. She is also forbidden to enter the house of her parents.  
 The preliminaries to be observed before the marriage ceremony are given below:  
 i) Hainaba or Haina Singnaba (GO between )



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 The preliminaries to be observed before the marriage ceremony are given below:  
 i) Hainaba or Haina Singnaba (GO between )

ii) Yathang thanaba ( formal order for the marriage)

iii) Wairoipout Puba (final decision for the marriage)

iv) Heijing Kharai Puba (impending marriage known to all)

Hainaba of Haina-Singnaba ( go between): It is the initial approach of the parents of the boy to the girls' family. A mission headed by the mother of the boy usually accompanied, by two other female friends or relatives go to the house of the girl with fruits and articles of food. If the latter regards the union as unsuitable then negotiation stop forthwith and if the response is favourable a date was fixed for the next stage in which the men folk of the boy's family go to the girl's house to finalise the negotiation.  
 Yathang Thaba: After the initial negotiation is completed a formal agreement is to be reached between the two parties. This is called *Yathang Thanaba* in which elderly man including the father of the boy go to the house of the girl. This stage of negotiation among the males shows their agreement to the union by prostrating themselves before each other.

Waroipout Puba: The third step in the preparation of marriage is waroipout Puba. At this stage the contract is sealed by the groom's family approaching the girl's house with their relatives. In this ceremony the family of bridegroom goes to the house of the bride accompanied by a limited member of close relatives, friends and neighbours with sweetmeats, betel nuts and leaves and various kind of fruits.  
 Heijing Kharai Puba (Heijingpot): This function is the last and most important of all the preliminary stages of marriage. Many kinds of gifts of fruits, sweets, items for God and clothes for the girl will be presented. Among the fruits two particular fruits Heikru (ambalica) and Heining ( Spondias mangi fera ) must necessary be included unlike other preliminaries, Heijing Kharai Puba has a deeper social and religious significance. As in the previous case the articles were offered to their ancestral God Viz ancestor of the clan and sub clan, Sanamah (family God) etc. The articles were distributed and consumed. After this ceremony, it is presumed that the girl no longer belongs to her parents but to the family of the boy. All this implies that the girl formally becomes the wife of the boy even before the performance of the final wedding ceremony. Such a tradition also exists among the Hindus. Betrothed girls were also regarded as married, even though they did not necessarily live with their husband. In most cases even a girl betrothed verbally was regarded as a widow if her

betrothed died ( Hindu world, walker Page 601 Vol-II)

Wedding Ceremony:- When all the preliminaries were over, the date of the marriage is fixed on an auspicious day. The day before the wedding the groom himself is formally invited to the wedding. This is done by a younger brother or other suitable male relative of the bride. The groom is garlanded and offered betel nut and leaf. While all the preliminaries of marriage with or without rites have been performed in pre Meitei traditional form, the wedding ceremony as it is now performed is an admixture of both Hindu and non Hindu elements. After their conversion into Hinduism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Meitei marriage has been performed in basic Hindu pattern while at the same time retaining most of their pre Hindu elements. Wedding ceremony is usually accompanied by Kirtans at which suitable religious lyrics are sung. But in pre Hindu days the wedding ceremony was not accompanied by Sankirtan as in done now.

In each Meitei house the *Tulsi or Tairen* Plant is grown over a raised rostrum. All ceremonies including the wedding are conducted around this plant. The bride circumambulates the groom seven times and on completion of each round she throws flowers over the head of the groom. But on the seventh round she places two garland of flowers over the neck of the groom. The groom then removed one of the garland and places the same over the neck of the bride. The main item of the ceremony was to solemnise the tie by *sacramental ritual* either by the kindling of fire or installation of water pot. *Kujaba Puba* (tying of brides' palm with that of the groom) is an important item before going round the groom. Along with it, Omen was also sought through *Chirik Nunghshang* (basket containing rice, salt coin, Ginger, tobacco and cotton seed) and *Ngamu thaba* (setting free of the fish in the water) At the end of the ceremony sweets are distributed to the guest with Dakshina ( about Rs. 2 or Rs. 5 or Rs. 10) Bridal dress is different according to the faith of the family. If, Hindu Meitei, she should wear the *Potloi* (round embroidery skirt) and (non Hindu, Phaneik Mayek Naiba (garment with stripe) but for bride grooms's dress white dhoti, Kurta and turban is the same. The ceremony came to be close with families exchanged betel nuts and bowed down to each other. When the bride reaches the gate of the bridegroom's house she is received by the mother-in-law and another lady of the family who conduct her into the house in embrace covering the backside of her with their own *innaphis* (sheets). This custom has been in vogue among the traditional Meiteis is evident from old texts like Panthoibi Khongul ( M. Chandra Singh P.41 Panthoibi khongul)

On the morning and evening of the fifth day of the marriage Phirik Kaiba or Chirik Nunghshak Kaiba (opening of the basket which were brought on the day of the marriage kept in both families) is performed. This predicted the omens of the newly married couple. The marriage ceremony is ended by a grand feast known as *Mapam Chakouba* on the sixth day of the ceremony. The quantity of the giving of dowry is not compulsory. It depends upon the family status. There is no hard and first rule to deal with divorce.

Conclusion: After the adoption of Hinduism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, many changes were brought on the traditional Meitei Society. The prohibited degrees of marriages like Yekthoknaba , Shairuk tinnaba, Pentinnaba and Mungnaba existed from very early times till date. Many preliminaries of marriage as stated above are pure Meitei traditional forms. But the actual wedding ceremony as it is now performed is an admixture of both Hindu and traditional elements.