

Exhibit

“The Shillong Times”



SHILLONG, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2011

## Decision on four-lane project in January: HDR

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The State Government will take the final call on construction of four-lane in January.

This was stated by PWD Minister HDR Lyngdoh

when members of different NGOs under the banner Joint Action Committee (JAC) along with land owners met him here on Friday.

Talking to newsmen after the meeting, the JAC chairman Donkumar Sumer

said, "The minister has assured us that the Government will announce its decision in the second or third week of January."

It may be mentioned that the fact-finding team submitted (Contd on P-10)

SHILLONG, MONDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2011

## Lawmusiang turns into garbage dump

From Our Correspondent

**JOWAI:** lawmusiang, the main and biggest market in Jaintia Hills district located in the district head-quarter Jowai, is in the news for all the wrong reasons.

Be it bad road condition, poor foot-path or the absence of them or lack of cleanliness, lawmusiang has begun to turn an eyesore to the people of the district.

On Sunday, this Scribe paid a visit to the market place only to witness huge quantity of illegally dumped waste lying near one of the shops opposite to the DC's Office.

Incidentally, the waste was dumped directly below a signboard hung up on an electric pole by the Jowai Municipal Board (JMB) which read *War*



Heaps of garbage dumped at lawmusiang market in Jowai on Sunday. (ST)

*Bret Nait Hangne* (Don't throw rubbish here).

Sunday church goers were seen crossing the area with their noses protected to escape the foul smell emanating from the waste.

"It seems like nobody cares about

cleanliness here and no one respects prohibition," a man, who happened to pass by the area, lamented.

The illegal accumulation of garbage is attributed to the traders doing business at lawmusiang, who, despite being aware of the health hazards, continue to flout hygiene norms by candidly dumping wastes in the market place.

People in the knowhow of things lamented that waste was being openly dumped in the market place since there is no waste dumping site at lawmusiang. Local traders collect and dump all kinds of waste around the market place without bothering to check whether the waste was being cleared by the JMB or sweepers appointed by the JHADC.

(Contd on P-10)

## \* Irked villagers join hands to improve road condition

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: Irked over the adamant attitude of the representatives with regards to the improvement of the condition of a 30km road which was left unattended for the last 30 years now, the villagers of Ngunraw, Kensimphlang and Rangjadong, West Khasi Hills joined hands to re-construct the road on Thursday.

Talking to media persons, the Myntri (village heads) said the backwardness of these villages is due to unfulfilled promises of the representatives of that area, local MLA MM Danggo and Nongkrem MDC Mansturdy Nongrem who makes promises during elections only.

Myntri of Ngunraw

Blosswell Lyangkhoi said the condition of the road from Rangthong till Ngunraw is so pathetic that it is impossible for vehicles to ply especially during summers. "Whenever we report the matter to the MLA and MDC, all they say is they will see what they can do or no scheme is available to get the job done", added Lyangkhoi.

The road was half constructed by the Public Works Department in the year 1975 and till date, no step has been taken to complete the work.

"The PWD department doesn't even care to take a look at this road and this has caused inconvenience to the villagers especially during times of emergencies and there has been cases where a person died half-

way just because of the road condition", a teacher of the government school, E Shalin said.

Meanwhile, the KSU Mawkyrwat Circle has demanded the government to take note of the matter.

### Suicide attempt

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: One Amit Marak (19), son of T Marak tried to kill himself at his residence at CID Quarter, Bishnupur on Friday.

According to the police, Amit tried to slit his wrist with a broken glass at his house on Friday and was caught in the act by his mother. However, the reason behind his action is still unknown. He was immediately admitted in Shillong Civil Hospital.

### BSNL strike deferred

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: The Joint Action Committee (JAC) of BSNL NE-1 Circle convenor Gopal Das has informed that the nationwide strike scheduled for October 10 has been deferred to November.

In a statement issued on Saturday, Das informed that the decision to defer the strike was taken during a meeting of the JAC leaders in New Delhi on October 4 last.

In the background of the strike notice given by the JAC, he said that the BSNL management invited leaders of JAC for discussions on October 3. The BSNL management assured some financial benefits which the Government has to refund to the BSNL since long time back and sought some more time for final settlement, JAC convenor added.

## \* 'Assam type houses can address quake threats'

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: Last month's devastating earthquake, which shook Sikkim and the whole of North East and north India, has raised many questions amongst the people of the State over construction of concrete houses and buildings.

In the past 30 years, Shillong has transformed from being a small hill station to a bustling township, and eventually to becoming a crowded city.

It was seen that Assam type houses that once bore the identity of the city have gradually disappeared only to be replaced by concrete buildings thereby increasing the risk.

It may be noted that the State lies in Seismic zone five, which is the highest risk zone.

"Modern technology has come a long way in making this possible," a local resident said, referring to the array of concrete buildings that have come all over the

city. He also added that the transformation is highly dangerous to the people of the city and the North East.

Meanwhile, a recent notification issued by the State Government for implementation of the Meghalaya Building Bye Laws 2011, wherein, the limit of a building's height was raised from 42ft to 65ft for residential apartments and upto 90ft for commercial buildings has drawn severe flak from various quarters.

(Contd on P-10)

# Complete ban on plastic bags from today; action against violators

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** In what may be termed as a positive step towards protection of the environment, the State Government has decided to make Meghalaya a plastic-free State, with a complete ban on plastic carry bags from Sunday.

Urban Affairs Minister Ampareen Lyngdoh, while making the announcement on Saturday, has warned of stringent action against anyone who violates the ban.

The move to ban plastic carry bags come in line with the Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011.

"We are going to enforce the rule stringently from Sunday and any law-breaker will be dealt with stringently,"

Ampareen announced.

The Urban Affairs Minister was of the opinion that people should participate in the exercise by not accepting plastic bags from shopkeepers.

"Our officers will be in the market from Sunday keeping a watch on people to ensure that the ban is adhered to," Ampareen stated on Saturday.

With the implementation of the Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011, under which it is 'mandatory' for customers to pay for each plastic bag they obtain from the shopkeepers, the State Government has decided to

strictly follow the prescribed norm of banning use of plastic materials which have thickness not below the permissible 40 microns.

The State Government, had, earlier directed all the municipal stalls and private shopkeepers to stop use of plastic bags with effect from January 1, 2006.

However, shopkeepers in the city did not pay any heed to the directives and the ban failed to produce the

sired result.

This time, however, the government seems determined to impose a complete ban with punitive action against violators.



## 'Illegal charcoal being supplied to ferro alloy industries'

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The State Government has admitted to the fact that there was rampant illegal supply of locally produce charcoal to ferro alloy industries operating in the State despite a ban.

Admitting this, Forest and Environment Minister Prestone Tynsong said, "Officials of the department on several occasions have seized trucks loaded with charcoal meant for delivery to the ferro alloy industries at Bymihat. (Contd on P-10)"

# 'Total fertility rate in Meghalaya alarming'

## Adolescence sexual health awareness important

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: With Meghalaya being one of the few states with an alarming increase in the total fertility rate (TFR), the state health department has shifted its focus to the adolescents by setting up adolescence friendly health centres in government hospitals and some CHCs and PHCs in the state.

Informing this, a medical lecturer from the health department, Dr J Lyngwa said the government is trying to extend this service to all the

CHCs and PHCs in the state while mentioning that in Shillong, the same is located in Ganesh Das Hospital and Shillong Civil Hospital.

As per data, it was mentioned that in Meghalaya about 73,000 babies are born every year which is recorded to be the highest in the north east. Meanwhile, in states like Tripura, the number stands at 43,000 a year.

Dr Lyngwa was addressing a one-day campaign on adolescence reproductive sexual health awareness organised by the Meghalaya

State Council for Child Welfare (MSCCW) at Kamala Nehru Secondary School near St Edmund's College here on Friday.

"The government is taking this problem very seriously following the current TFR status of Meghalaya and this service will provide some kind of assistance like counseling and the like", she said adding that the people should avail these services provided to them.

Stressing on the harmful effects of pre-marital sex, Dr Lyngwa said teenage pregnancy not only endangers

the baby inside the mother's womb but also the mother whose body is still at a growing stage.

"In such circumstances, the mother usually suffers from malnutrition and anemia and in the baby inside her also becomes unhealthy resulting in growth retarded babies", the medical lecturer stated.

Pointing out that teenage pregnancies are very common in Meghalaya, Dr Lyngwa said that the effects of pre-marital intercourse should be discussed frankly and openly (Contd on P-10)

# \*Lack of proper planning hampers growth in N-E'

**By Our Reporter**

**SHILLONG:** In Meghalaya many important decisions relating to the development and upliftment of the State are 'politically-decided' which indicates that most of those decisions does not cater to the needs of the common man, retired NEHU professor L. Marbaniang observed.

"There is no proper planning by the experts in the field to analyse a particular decision which is helpful to the common man," he said adding that a proper methodology is required to feel the pulse of the common man.

Prof Marbaniang was addressing a gathering on the occasion of National Statistic Day organized by

the Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation in collaboration with the State Directorate of Economics and Statistics at the Don Bosco Youth Centre here on Friday.

The National Statistics Day coincides with the birth anniversary of Prof PC Mahalanobis, widely regarded as the 'Father of Indian Statistics'.

Highlighting the lack of statistical analysis in Meghalaya, Prof Marbaniang said unless a correct projection of the statistical data is made, policy-makers won't be able to know the needs and problems of the people.

He further stated that political masters need to be well-educated and well-aware of the basic needs of the people and at the same

time initiate strong policies which cater right down to the grassroots level.

Providing a holistic picture of the performance of the country, he said that the operations conducted in the country only centered around three things - Military, Census and Election.

Speaking about the development of the North East region, Prof Marbaniang said "At a macro level, development in the region is very satisfactory but at the micro level we see many loopholes. The North East is still lagging behind in many aspects."

Later, reacting to queries on the upcoming 2013 polls in the State from a Statistical point of view, Prof Marbaniang said "It is difficult to predict (Contd on P-10)

## AIDS awareness programme

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The Meghalaya Youth Foundation in collaboration with the Meghalaya State Network for Positive People (MSNP+) organised an Awareness Campaign on "Career Counselling, Substance Misuse & Stigma and Discrimination on HIV/AIDS" at Good Shepherd Higher Secondary School, Jongksha on Friday last. Over 300 students of Good Shepherd Higher Secondary School, Jongksha and members of various youth organisations from the area attended the programme. It may be mentioned that the career counselling is being sponsored by the Meghalaya Cooperative Apex Bank, Shillong.

After the end of the Awareness Campaign, a tree plantation Programme was also held at the school premises where more than 60 tree saplings were planted.

## Banned plastic types still a common sight in city

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** Following reports of gross violation of the ban imposed on use of plastic carry bags being reported from certain localities of the city, the Urban Affairs Department has reiterated that stringent legal action will be taken against the violators.

The State Government has decided to make Meghalaya a plastic-free State, with a complete ban on plastic carry bags from Sunday last.

But however, there were clear violations of the order on Monday as many people were



People are still using plastic carry bags despite the ban. (ST)

seen violating the orders of the State Government.

Meanwhile, Urban Affairs Minister Ampareen Lyngdoh has stated that the ban, which came into effect on January 1, 2006, could not be implemented properly in the past owing to certain loopholes in the methods adopted last time.

However, this time the ban would be imposed strictly and any violation would be dealt with firmly, she reiterated, while adding, "Once I start my inspection I will ensure that legal actions are taken against violators."

(Contd on P-10)

## FKJGP lifts ban on entry into Mawsynram cave

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The FKJGP has removed the restrictions on entry into Mawjymbuin Cave in Mawsynram following a meeting convened by Chief Executive Member of KHADC, Pynshingaijang N Syiem on Monday.

The decision was taken at a hearing convened by the CEM in his office chamber here on Monday which was attended by the acting Syiem of Hima Mawsynram Amos Malngiang, Rangbah Shnong of Mawsynram Artowell Kharchandy and members of the FKJGP East Khasi Hills and Mawsynram Circle.

The FKJGP Mawsynram circle had recently imposed a ban on religious rituals in

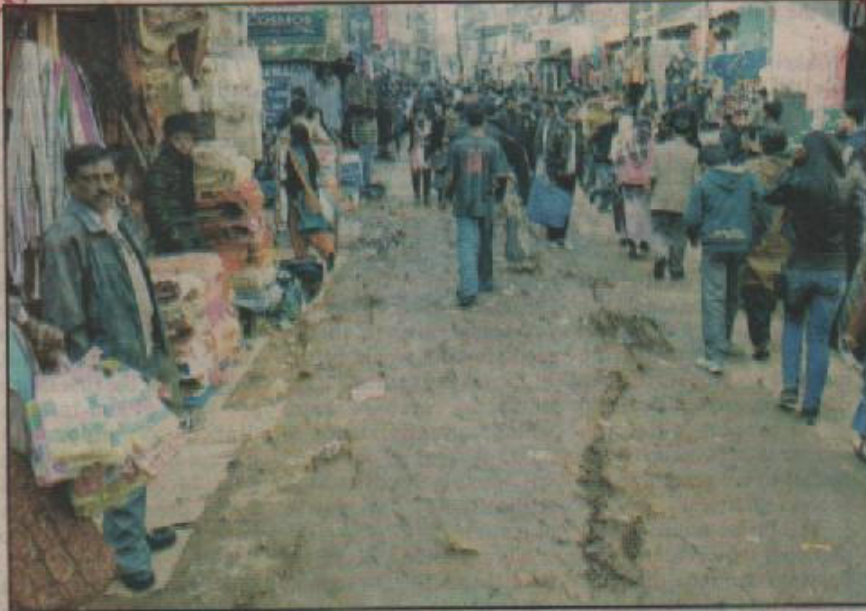
the cave. They were alleging that the acting Syiem of Hima Mawsynram had issued an NOC allowing religious ceremonies at the Mawjymbuin cave.

Talking to reporters after the hearing, the CEM said he had decided to hand over the matter to the concerned Dorbar Shnong since it was the responsibility of the Dorbar Shnong to take care of the tourist spot.

The KHADC has also decided to given full authority to the Dorbar Shnong to decide on whether they wanted to allow religious ceremonies at the cave.

Meanwhile, the FKJGP claimed that the Rangbah Shnong of Mawsynram has assured them that he would not allow any religious activity inside the cave.

SHILLONG, MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2012



People face difficulty in walking through the Police Bazar thoroughfare due to the ongoing underground construction work as part of the beautification project being implemented by the Urban Affairs department. (ST)

## Traffic dept realizes Rs 42.38 lakh in 2011

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The Traffic department has collected a total amount of Rs 42.38 lakh through imposition of fines on traffic violators and compounding of vehicles during the period from January to December 2011, including Rs 4.17 lakh collected in December last alone.

Following strict orders from the Director General of Police, the Traffic department here fined over 80 traffic violators and compounded over Rs one lakh in just 15 days in December last.

Police officials said that the DGP's office had given the instructions before Christmas to all superintendents of police (SPs) that traffic violators shouldn't be shown leniency and the traffic department acted likewise.

"We have fined over 80 traffic violators and realized a fine of over one lakh rupees in just 15 days in December. Many vehicles were



# Separate Directorate of Environment by year-end

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The separate Directorate of Environment is expected to be set up before the end of the year, said a senior government official on Saturday.

"We are still on the job. It would take some more time before the separate Directorate of Environment is finally created," the official said.

The official, however, assured that the project would be complete much

before the end of the year.

"The process is taking a long since it is a huge exercise as the new directorate would include the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board (MPSCB), part of PHE along with the Forest and Environment department," he said.

"Other departments having a stake in environment policy regulation will be brought under environment department which will look after the factors affecting the environment in the

State," the official stated adding that all the government and non-government projects will need to get clearance from the Environment Directorate before being executed.

The Directorate will also work in close relation with Mining and Geology, Industries and Forest department.

The Cabinet had given a nod for the creation of a separate Directorate of Environment in June last year to ensure proper protection of environment.



A 74-wheeled trailer truck belonging to ABC India Limited is parked at Barik Point in the city after it was prevented from plying through the city by the traffic police. The traffic branch held back the trailer truck to avoid any traffic congestion since the vehicle was moving at a snail's pace. Incidentally, the traffic police clarified that the trailer truck had the necessary permission to ply through the State. (ST)

SHILLONG, TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2012

## DoNER on climate 5cm change

**SHILLONG:** The Union Ministry of Development of North East Region (DoNER) has initiated the Climate Change Adaptation North Easter Region (CCANER) Project in partnership with the German Development Cooperation and the State Governments of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Sikkim to strengthen the rural livelihood resilience and also to adaptability to the impacts of climate variability and change.

The German Development Cooperation would focus on capacity development of the people, institutions, and organizations of these three North East States, an official source said recently.

The Meghalaya Government has finalized in March this year the Draft State Climate Change Action Plan (SAPCC) to understand the importance of

climate issues and its impact on inclusive growth, the official sources said, adding that the Draft Plan was the outputs of various inter and intra working groups constituted by the Government and in consultation with regional and national experts.

The SAPCC has identified nine mission in line with the seven missions of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (CAPCC) of the Government of India.

"The nine missions identified by the State of Meghalaya are Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Forestry, Sustainable (Integrated) Water Management, Energy which includes Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, Skill Development to improve the institutional, legal, regulatory, Government framework to address climate change.(NNN)

# Court slams Govt for 'vacillation'

**By Our Reporter**

**SHILLONG:** In a major embarrassment for the State Government which is yet to approve the much awaited mining policy in the state, the Division bench of the Gauhati High Court has imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on the State Government for failing to put in place a Mining Policy despite the Supreme Court directive dating a few years.

The PIL filed by four people was brought before the division bench of the Gauhati High Court on Monday and the court expressed its dissatisfaction with the tardy progress of the State Government on the policy.

The lawyer for the plaintiffs, Dipankar Bora said on

It may be mentioned that the State Cabinet earlier this month deferred the finalisation of the much-awaited policy saying that certain legal aspects need to be incorporated in it.

Although an exhaustive presentation was made in the Cabinet regarding the mining policy but the State Cabinet felt that there was a need to incorporate certain regulations and legal point of views in the proposed mining policy.

The PIL filed against the State Government sought for a mining policy that would regulate the entire mining practices in Meghalaya.

According to Bora, the Court had also issued directives to the State Government to frame the rules and

"As far as I know this is the highest penalty which has been imposed on any State by the court," Bora added.

The final draft of the policy was scheduled to be submitted to the State Government in July last year but due to opposition from coal and limestone miners of the State under the umbrella of the Joint Forum on Mining Policy (Coal and Limestone), the submission had been delayed.

Sources had however hinted that with the State Assembly elections due in February next year the government wants to go slow on this issue since any decision at this juncture might antagonize the mine owners who are also the major funding agents for political par-

## Poor water quality of Mawlai water reservoir

# Poor maintenance by PHE unearthed

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: The PHE department is in the eye of the storm once again for lack of maintenance of the Umschlang water reservoir at Mawlai from where drinking water is supplied to the residents of the area.

In an inspection conducted by the Mawlai Town Dorbar and other organisations here on Tuesday, it was found that the water collected in one of the reservoir at Mawlai Motsyar has turned into sludge due to lack of maintenance.

The inspection was carried out following complaints about the quality of



Sludge accumulated inside the reservoir of the PHE at Mawlai Motsyar which supplies drinking water to the people of Mawlai. (ST)

drinking water being supplied to the residents of

Mawlai.

Earlier in November last year, the Hynniewtrep National Youth Front (HNYF) and a group of journalists had conducted an inspection of the Umschlang water reservoir and found that the water source was polluted as waste was being directly discharged into the source.

Talking to reporters here on Tuesday, president of Mawjai town Dorbar, SD Khongwir, said, 'The water collected at the reservoir is not fit for drinking at all.'

'Most of the residents in Mawlai use the water supplied by the PHE for drinking and (Contd on P-10)

Association extorting money from trucks

# NGO-politico-ultras nexus comes to fore

From Our Correspondent

**NONGSTOIN:** Some top political leaders of the State are alleged to be working in tandem with certain sections of Garo Hills based militant groups. Local NGOs, whose mission have been towards socio-economic upliftment of the local indigenous people are also closely working with the ultras.

This socio-political-militant nexus has come to light through the nefarious activities of a prominent Garo Hills based NGO called Achik Development Association (ADA) a highly placed source revealed.

Sources have revealed that some prominent political

NH-62 or through Williamnagar via Rongjeng town to Assam.

Sources have revealed that several members of the NGO are involved in the said high profile extortion episode. Among them are Sanjoy Sangam, president, Walsrang Sangma, secretary and Sek Sangma, treasurer. All of them are residing at Rongjeng Reserve, East Garo Hills. Some of the anti-social elements who participated in the said extortion drive included Limbu Areng alias Rowell, area commander of Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) and Phizo R Marak, a GNLA supporter, who was recently arrested by Shallang police, sources said.

tract. The schedule timing of collection starts at 5 pm and runs all through the night until 7 am the next morning. The Rongjeng Village Defense Party (VDP) is involved in a similar extortion spree, collecting Rs 10 from each truck that passes through the area. On top of that, the Garo Students' Union (GSU) is also said to have been involved in such collection.

Speaking to media persons on Wednesday, R Muthu, SP, West Khasi Hills district said that the Achik Development Association (ADA) is no less than a 'dacoity group' which was formed for the benefit of the members themselves to extort money from trucks.

SHILLONG, TUESDAY, JULY 3, 2012

## Safeguarding environment on wheels

By Aafaque Hussain

**SHILLONG:** In a noble venture, partners of Pla Iew Club have launched a unique vehicle that disseminates information about environmental degradation in the State to the people.

The unique vehicle, designed by members of the club along with students from RITI Academy of Visual Arts, has been able to attract attention of the people towards the deteriorating environment condition in the State.

Speaking about this initiative, Nicholas Kharnami, president of the club, said that whenever this vehicle

passes through a locality, people's attention is automatically diverted to the environmental scenario of the State.

"With this vehicle you now don't have to go to Jaintia Hills to see the state of environmental degradation," he told *The Shillong Times*.

The vehicle is, however, yet to venture into rural areas of the State due to lack of sponsors. "We are negotiating with some of our patrons to sponsor the vehicle," he said.

Issues like illegal coal mining, deforestation and related environmental issues have been depicted in the vehicle.

The vehicle has two segments -

*Symphony of Destruction* - where activities which are hampering the environment have been depicted and the other segment - *There is still hope* - urges people to safeguard the environment.

Reacting to a query about people's response, he said, "We had recently taken the vehicle to Dawki and Guwahati and there were many people who came and interacted with us on environment related issues."

The club also has plans to carry out tours in different schools in East Khasi Hills and other districts so that students can be motivated to safeguard the environment.

## Traffic jam claims another woman

From Our Correspondent

**JOWAI:** Traffic jam along the National highway NH-44 in Jaintia Hills district has claimed another woman's life. The victim - Phrai Bang (45) of Tuber Shobshrieh village, who was pregnant, died on her way to hospital on Monday night. According to the village secretary T. Shylla, relatives took the woman in a vehicle at 8pm and they got stuck up at Hynntawmer (near the weighbridge of the Transport Department) from 8.30 pm to 1.30am due to heavy traffic jam. The woman died at round 12.30am, he added.

SHILLONG, MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2012

## 'Need to 'reserve' forests owned by traditional bodies'

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** While expressing concern on the effect of global warming and climate change on the environment, KHADC CEM Pynghngain N Syiem has emphasised on the need to convert certain stretch of forest areas owned by the various traditional bodies into reserve forests.

"The forest cover across the State has drastically reduced over the past years due to various human activities which in turn have an adverse impact on the environment. We have to

take serious steps to protect the forest areas before it is too late," Syiem said while speaking at a function to unveil the foundation stone of a KHADC-sponsored project for preservation of the Wahumkhrah River on Saturday.

He observed that the best possible way to address the problem of environment degradation is to convert certain stretch of forest areas under the various Hima, Raid and even those belonging to various clans into 'reserve forests'.

"There is an urgency to convert the various forest

areas into 'reserve forests' at the earliest considering the rampant felling of trees taking place in these forests which has posed a serious threat on the catchment areas which are the source of drinking water," Syiem said.

The KHADC CEM's statement seems pertinent considering that Syiem of Myllem, Latho Manik Syiem, in 2011 had decided to allot plots of land at 'Law Syiem' (Forest under the Hima) to all the Myntris (Officials) under the Hima of Myllem.

(Contd on P-10)

## Nongmynsong Housing complex: List awaits approval

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The State Government has forwarded the list of 64 beneficiaries to be accommodated in the housing complex located at Nongmynsong to the Central Government for approval.

Informing this here on Tuesday, Urban Affairs Minister Ampareen Lyngdoh said the Housing complex, consisting of 600 units in 35 blocks, has been constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 30.44 crore.

The construction of the other units is going on at a rapid pace, she said.

Earlier, a date was fixed for its inauguration but due some unavoidable circumstances the inauguration was postponed.

According to Lyngdoh, she will review the construction of the road leading to complex on January 3 following which the inauguration date would be fixed.

The much-delayed Housing Project, which was initiated way back in September 2008, was taken up by the State Government under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).

It is learnt that the water and electricity connections are yet to be provided in the building.

"We want to have a holistic approach as it will serve no purpose if people are given buildings without water and electricity," Lyngdoh said.

Then Union minister of state for housing and urban poverty alleviation, Kumari Selja laid the foundation of the project on December 20, 2007.



### Guv's concern

By Our Reporter

3em

**SHILLONG:** Expressing concern over the perennial traffic congestion in Shillong and on its outskirts, Governor RS Mooshahary has said that the situation is getting worse with each passing day. Addressing a programme organized to mark the inauguration of a Toyota dealership here on Monday, Mooshahary said the traffic snarls will be a major challenge in future as hundreds of vehicles are hitting the roads on an average every day.

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** Chief Adviser to the government of Meghalaya and local MLA DD Lapang has stressed on mental and physical cleanliness besides the overall cleanliness of the locality saying "It takes a great deal to clean our own thoughts than cleaning our community."

Highlighting this point at the one-day training programme on cleanliness at Nongpoh, Ri Bhoi on Saturday, Lapang said sometimes people concentrate on their outlook appearance and care less about their inward nature. The programme was also attended by chairman of Nongpoh Town Committee CB Syiemand others. Later, the

## PLIGHT OF PWD ROADS: READERS' RESPONSE



(L) A JCV which fell into a gorge is being lifted onto the road resulting in damage to the road which had been recently repaired. (R) The large holes visible on the Guwahati-Shillong highway which had been recently repaired by the State PWD. (Photos contributed)



SHILLONG, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2011



Despite the ban on plying of coal laden trucks during the day time hundreds of trucks are entering the city everyday. (ST)

SHILLONG, THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2012

## Meghalaya fined Rs 50,000 for delay in implementation of State Mining policy

# Court slams Govt for 'vacillation'

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** In a major embarrassment for the State Government which is yet to approve the much awaited mining policy in the state, the Division bench of the Gauhati High Court has imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on the State Government for failing to put in place a Mining Policy despite the Supreme Court directive dating a few years.

The PIL filed by four people was brought before the division bench of the Gauhati High Court on Monday and the court expressed its dissatisfaction with the tardy progress of the State Government on the policy.

The lawyer for the plaintiffs, Dipankar Bora said on Wednesday that the Additional Advocate General of Meghalaya BP Tody could not satisfy the court on the steps taken by the Meghalaya Government to put together the Minerals and Mining policy.

It may be mentioned that the State Cabinet earlier this month deferred the finalisation of the much-awaited policy saying that certain legal aspects need to be incorporated in it.

Although an exhaustive presentation was made in the Cabinet regarding the mining policy but the State Cabinet felt that there was a need to incorporate certain regulations and legal point of views in the proposed mining policy.

The PIL filed against the State Government sought for a mining policy that would regulate the entire mining practices in Meghalaya.

According to Bora, the Court had also issued directives to the State Government to frame the rules and regulations for mining policy in the State.

It is learnt that the Department has already incorporated the views and suggestions of the concerned stakeholders in the final draft of the Mining Policy.

"As far as I know this is the highest penalty which has been imposed on any State by the court," Bora added.

The final draft of the policy was scheduled to be submitted to the State Government in July last year but due to opposition from coal and limestone miners of the State under the umbrella of the Joint Forum on Mining Policy (Coal and Limestone), the submission had been delayed.

Sources had however hinted that with the State Assembly elections due in February next year the government wants to go slow on this issue since any decision at this juncture might antagonize the mine owners who are also the major funding agents for political parties across the board.

Meanwhile Mining and Geology Minister BM Lanong when contacted said he was not aware of the Court ruling and was hearing it for the first time from this scribe.

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According to Lyngdoh, she will review the construction of the road leading to complex on January 3 following which the inauguration date would be fixed.

The much-delayed Housing Project, which was initiated way back in September 2008, was taken up by the State Government under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).

It is learnt that the water and electricity connections are yet to be provided in the building.

"We want to have a holistic approach as it will serve no purpose if people are given buildings without water and electricity," Lyngdoh said.

Then Union minister of state for housing and urban poverty alleviation, Kumari Selja laid the foundation of the project on December 20, 2007.

SHILLONG, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2011

## Guv's concern

By Our Reporter

3cm  
SHILLONG: Expressing concern over the perennial traffic congestion in Shillong and on its outskirts, Governor RS Mooshahary has said that the situation is getting worse with each passing day. Addressing a programme organized to mark the inauguration of a Toyota dealership here on Monday, Mooshahary said the traffic snarls will be a major challenge in future as hundreds of vehicles are hitting the roads on an average every day.

SHILLONG, MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2012

## 'Need to 'reserve' forests owned by traditional bodies'

4cm  
By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: While expressing concern on the effect of global warming and climate change on the environment, KHADC CEM Pynghngain N Syiem has emphasised on the need to convert certain stretch of forest areas owned by the various traditional bodies into reserve forests.

"The forest cover across the State has drastically reduced over the past years due to various human activities which in turn have an adverse impact on the environment. We have to

take serious steps to protect the forest areas before it is too late," Syiem said while speaking at a function to unveil the foundation stone of a KHADC-sponsored project for preservation of the Wahumkrah River on Saturday.

He observed that the best possible way to address the problem of environment degradation is to convert certain stretch of forest areas under the various Hima, Raid and even those belonging to various clans into 'reserve forests'. "There is an urgency to convert the various forest

areas into 'reserve forests' at the earliest considering the rampant felling of trees taking place in these forests which has posed a serious threat on the catchment areas which are the source of drinking water," Syiem said.

The KHADC CEM's statement seems pertinent considering that Syiem of Myllicem, Latho Manik Syiem, in 2011 had decided to allot plots of land at 'Law Syiem' (Forest under the Hima) to all the Myntris (Officials) under the Hima of Myllicem.

(Contd on P-10)

SHILLONG, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2011

## Decision on four-lane project in January: HDR

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: The State Government will take the final call on construction of four-lane in January.

This was stated by PWD Minister HDR Lyngdoh

when members of different NGOs under the banner Joint Action Committee (JAC) along with land owners met him here on Friday.

Talking to newsmen after the meeting, the JAC chairman Donkumar Sumer

said, "The minister has assured us that the Government will announce its decision in the second or third week of January."

It may be mentioned that the fact-finding team submitted (Contd on P-10)

SHILLONG, SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2012

## Separate Directorate of Environment by year-end

**By Our Reporter**

**SHILLONG:** The separate Directorate of Environment is expected to be set up before the end of the year, said a senior government official on Saturday.

"We are still on the job. It would take some more time before the separate Directorate of Environment is finally created," the official said.

The official, however, assured that the project would be complete much

before the end of the year.

"The process is taking a long since it is a huge exercise as the new directorate would include the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board (MPSCB), part of PHE along with the Forest and Environment department," he said.

"Other departments having a stake in environment policy regulation will be brought under environment department which will look after the factors affecting the environment in the

State," the official stated adding that all the government and non-government projects will need to get clearance from the Environment Directorate before being executed.

The Directorate will also work in close relation with Mining and Geology, Industries and Forest department.

The Cabinet had given a nod for the creation of a separate Directorate of Environment in June last year to ensure proper protection of environment.

## BRIEFCASE

### Traffic jam claims another woman

From Our Correspondent

**JOWAI:** Traffic jam along the National highway NH-44 in Jaintia Hills district has claimed another woman's life. The victim – Phrai Bang (45) of Tuber Shohshrieh village, who was pregnant, died on her way to hospital on Monday night. According to the village secretary T. Shylla, relatives took the woman in a vehicle at 8pm and they got stuck up at Hynniawmer (near the weighbridge of the Transport Department) from 8.30 pm to 1.30am due to heavy traffic jam. The woman died at round 12.30am, he added. A similar incident took place on December 30 last year when a woman from Tuberknai shnong died on the way to hospital after giving birth to a girl child.

SHILLONG, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2011

## Training prog on cleanliness

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** Chief Adviser to the government of Meghalaya and local MLA DD Lapang has stressed on mental and physical cleanliness besides the overall cleanliness of the locality saying "It takes a great deal to clean our own thoughts than cleaning our community."

Highlighting this point at the one-day training programme on cleanliness at Nongpoh, Ri Bhoi on Saturday, Lapang said sometimes people concentrate on their outlook appearance and care less about their inward nature. The programme was also attended by chairman of Nongpoh Town Committee CB Syiemand others. Later, the locals moved out to take part in the cleaning drive all along the National Highway 40 stretch and allround Nongpoh locality. *Scm*

# 'Total fertility rate in Meghalaya alarming'

## Adolescence sexual health awareness important

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: With Meghalaya being one of the few states with an alarming increase in the total fertility rate (TFR), the state health department has shifted its focus to the adolescents by setting up adolescence friendly health centres in government hospitals and some CHCs and PHCs in the state.

Informing this, a medical lecturer from the health department, Dr J Lyngwa said the government is trying to extend this service to all the

CHCs and PHCs in the state while mentioning that in Shillong, the same is located in Ganesh Das Hospital and Shillong Civil Hospital.

As per data, it was mentioned that in Meghalaya about 73,000 babies are born every year which is recorded to be the highest in the north east. Meanwhile, in states like Tripura, the number stands at 43,000 a year.

Dr Lyngwa was addressing a one-day campaign on adolescence reproductive sexual health awareness organised by the Meghalaya

State Council for Child Welfare (MSCCW) at Kamala Nehru Secondary School near St Edmund's College here on Friday.

"The government is taking this problem very seriously following the current TFR status of Meghalaya and this service will provide some kind of assistance like counseling and the like", she said adding that the people should avail these services provided to them.

Stressing on the harmful effects of pre-marital sex, Dr Lyngwa said teenage pregnancy not only endangers

the baby inside the mother's womb but also the mother whose body is still at a growing stage.

"In such circumstances, the mother usually suffers from malnutrition and anemia and in the baby inside her also becomes unhealthy resulting in growth retarded babies", the medical lecturer stated.

Pointing out that teenage pregnancies are very common in Meghalaya, Dr Lyngwa said that the effects of pre-marital intercourse should be discussed frankly and openly (Contd on P-10)

# Lawmusiang turns into garbage dump

From Our Correspondent

JOWAI: lawmusiang, the main and biggest market in Jaintia Hills district located in the district head-quarter Jowai, is in the news for all the wrong reasons.

Be it bad road condition, poor foot-path or the absence of them or lack of cleanliness, lawmusiang has begun to turn an eyesore to the people of the district.

On Sunday, this Scribe paid a visit to the market place only to witness huge quantity of illegally dumped waste lying near one of the shops opposite to the DC's Office.

Incidentally, the waste was dumped directly below a signboard hung up on an electric pole by the Jowai Municipal Board (JMB) which read *Wat*



Heaps of garbage dumped at lawmusiang market in Jowai on Sunday. (ST)

Bret Nui Hangne (Don't throw rubbish here).

Sunday church goers were seen crossing the area with their noses protected to escape the foul smell emanating from the waste.

"It seems like nobody cares about

cleanliness here and no one respects prohibition," a man, who happened to pass by the area, lamented.

The illegal accumulation of garbage is attributed to the traders doing business at lawmusiang, who, despite being aware of the health hazards, continue to flout hygiene norms by candidly dumping wastes in the market place.

People in the knowhow of things lamented that waste was being openly dumped in the market place since there is no waste dumping site at lawmusiang. Local traders collect and dump all kinds of waste around the market place without bothering to check whether the waste was being cleared by the JMB or sweepers appointed by the JHADC.

(Contd on P-10)

## \* Irked villagers join hands to improve road condition

**By Our Reporter**

**SHILLONG:** Irked over the adamant attitude of the representatives with regards to the improvement of the condition of a 30km road which was left unattended for the last 30 years now, the villagers of Ngunraw, Kensimphlang and Rangjadong, West Khasi Hills joined hands to re-construct the road on Thursday.

Talking to media persons, the Myntris (village heads) said the backwardness of these villages is due to unfulfilled promises of the representatives of that area, local MLA MM Danggo and Nongkrem MDC Mansturdy Nongrem who makes promises during elections only.

Myntri of Ngunraw

Blosswell Lyngkhol said the condition of the road from Rangthong till Ngunraw is so pathetic that it is impossible for vehicles to ply especially during summers. "Whenever we report the matter to the MLA and MDC, all they say is they will see what they can do or no scheme is available to get the job done", added Lyngkhol.

The road was half constructed by the Public Works Department in the year 1975 and till date, no step has been taken to complete the work.

"The PWD department doesn't even care to take a look at this road and this has caused inconvenience to the villagers especially during times of emergencies and there has been cases where a person died half-

way just because of the road condition", a teacher of the government school, E Shalin said.

Meanwhile, the KSU Mawkyrwat Circle has demanded the government to take note of the matter.

### Suicide attempt

**By Our Reporter**

**SHILLONG:** One Amit Marak (19), son of T Marak tried to kill himself at his residence at CID Quarter, Bishanapur on Friday.

According to the police, Amit tried to slit his wrist with a broken glass at his house on Friday and was caught in the act by his mother. However, the reason behind his action is still unknown. He was immediately admitted in Shillong Civil Hospital.

## BSNL strike deferred

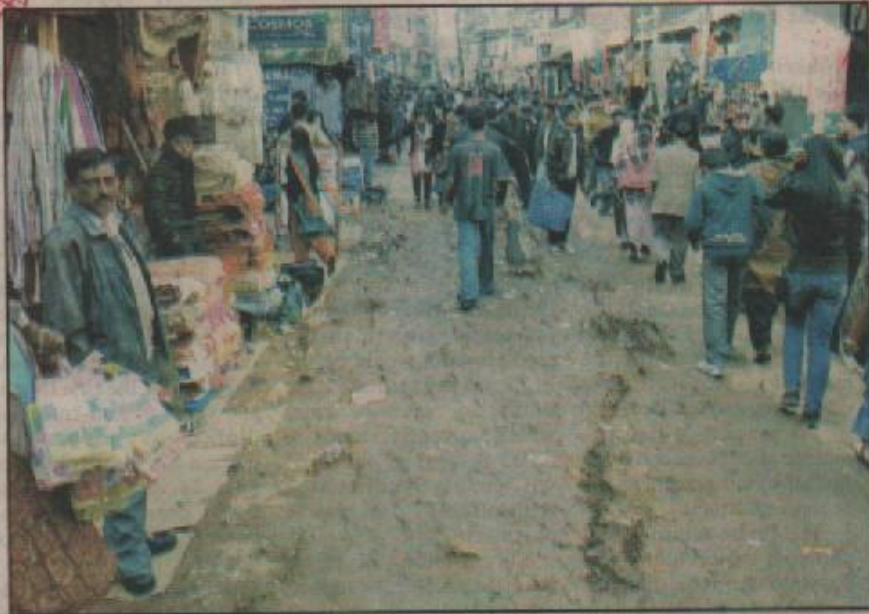
**By Our Reporter**

**SHILLONG:** The Joint Action Committee (JAC) of BSNL NE-1 Circle convenor Gopal Das has informed that the nationwide strike scheduled for October 10 has been deferred to November.

In a statement issued on Saturday, Das informed that the decision to defer the strike was taken during a meeting of the JAC leaders in New Delhi on October 4 last.

In the background of the strike notice given by the JAC, he said that the BSNL management invited leaders of JAC for discussions on October 3. The BSNL management assured some financial benefits which the Government has to refund to the BSNL since long time back and sought some more time for final settlement, JAC convenor added.





People face difficulty in walking through the Police Bazar thoroughfare due to the ongoing underground construction work as part of the beautification project being implemented by the Urban Affairs department. (ST)

## Traffic dept realizes Rs 42.38 lakh in 2011

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: The Traffic department has collected a total amount of Rs 42.38 lakh through imposition of fines on traffic violators and compounding of vehicles during the period from January to December 2011, including Rs 4.17 lakh collected in December last alone.

Following strict orders from the Director General of Police, the Traffic department here fined over 80 traffic violators and compounded over Rs one lakh in just 15 days in December last.

Police officials said that the DGP's office had given the instructions before Christmas to all superintendents of police (SPs) that traffic violators shouldn't be shown leniency and the traffic department acted likewise.

"We have fined over 80 traffic violators and realized a fine of over one lakh rupees in just 15 days in December. Many vehicles were also  
(Contd on P-10)



A 74-wheeled trailer truck belonging to ABC India Limited is parked at Barik Point in the city after it was prevented from plying through the city by the traffic police. The traffic branch held back the trailer truck to avoid any traffic congestion since the vehicle was moving at a snail's pace. Incidentally, the traffic police clarified that the trailer truck had the necessary permission to ply through the State. (ST)

**Claims of Garo Hills based Achik Development Association extorting money from trucks**

# NGO-politico-ultras nexus comes to fore

**From Our Correspondent**

**NONGSTOIN:** Some top political leaders of the State are alleged to be working in tandem with certain sections of Garo Hills based militant groups. Local NGOs, whose mission have been towards socio-economic upliftment of the local indigenous people are also closely working with the ultras.

This socio-political-militant nexus has come to light through the nefarious activities of a prominent Garo Hills based NGO called Achik Development Association (ADA) a highly placed source revealed.

Sources have revealed that some prominent political leaders of the State have asked the NGO - Achik Development Association - to collect a sum of Rs 100 from each truck plying through

NH-62 or through Williamnagar via Rongjeng town to Assam.

Sources have revealed that several members of the NGO are involved in the said high profile extortion episode. Among them are Sanjoy Sangam, president, Walsrang Sangma, secretary and Sek Sangma, treasurer. All of them are residing at Rongjeng Reserve, East Garo Hills. Some of the anti-social elements who participated in the said extortion drive included Limbu Areng alias Rowell, area commander of Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) and Phizo R Marak, a GNLA supporter, who was recently arrested by Shallang police, sources said.

The sources also revealed that the extortion drive is carried out near the office of Rongjeng police station in East Garo Hills dis-

trict. The schedule timing of collection starts at 5 pm and runs all through the night until 7 am the next morning. The Rongjeng Village Defense Party (VDP) is involved in a similar extortion spree, collecting Rs 10 from each truck that passes through the area. On top of that, the Garo Students' Union (GSU) is also said to have been involved in such collection.

Speaking to media persons on Wednesday, R Muthu, SP, West Khasi Hills district said that the Achik Development Association (ADA) is no less than a 'dacoity group' which was formed for the benefit of the members themselves to extort money from trucks. These members are mainly active in East Garo Hills district and three of its members have already been arrested by (Contd on P-10)

## Banned plastic types still a common sight in city

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: Following reports of gross violation of the ban imposed on use of plastic carry bags being reported from certain localities of the city, the Urban Affairs Department has reiterated that stringent legal action will be taken against the violators.

The State Government has decided to make Meghalaya a plastic-free State, with a complete ban on plastic carry bags from Sunday last.

But however, there were clear violations of the order on Monday as many people were



People are still using plastic carry bags despite the ban. (ST)

seen violating the orders of the State Government.

Meanwhile, Urban Affairs Minister Ampareen Lyngdoh has stated that the ban, which came into effect on January 1, 2006, could not be implemented properly in the past owing to certain loopholes in the methods adopted last time.

However, this time the ban would be imposed strictly and any violation would be dealt with firmly, she reiterated, while adding, "Once I start my inspection I will ensure that legal actions are taken against violators."

(Contd on P-10)

## FKJGP lifts ban on entry into Mawsynram cave

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: The FKJGP has removed the restrictions on entry into Mawjymbuin Cave in Mawsynram following a meeting convened by Chief Executive Member of KHADC, Pynshingainlang N Syiem on Monday.

The decision was taken at a hearing convened by the CEM in his office chamber here on Monday which was attended by the acting Syiem of Hima Mawsynram Amos Malngiang, Rangbah Shnong of Mawsynram Artowell Kharchandy and members of the FKJGP East Khasi Hills and Mawsynram Circle.

The FKJGP Mawsynram circle had recently imposed a ban on religious rituals in

the cave. They were alleging that the acting Syiem of Hima Mawsynram had issued an NOC allowing religious ceremonies at the Mawjymbuin cave.

Talking to reporters after the hearing, the CEM said he had decided to hand over the matter to the concerned Dorbar Shnong since it was the responsibility of the Dorbar Shnong to take care of the tourist spot.

The KHADC has also decided to given full authority to the Dorbar Shnong to decide on whether they wanted to allow religious ceremonies at the cave.

Meanwhile, the FKJGP claimed that the Rangbah Shnong of Mawsynram has assured them that he would not allow any religious activity inside the cave.

## Safeguarding environment on wheels

By Aafaque Hussain

SHILLONG: In a noble venture, partners of Pla Iew Club have launched a unique vehicle that disseminates information about environmental degradation in the State to the people.

The unique vehicle, designed by members of the club along with students from RITI Academy of Visual Arts, has been able to attract attention of the people towards the deteriorating environment condition in the State.

Speaking about this initiative, Nicholas Kharnami, president of the club, said that whenever this vehicle

passes through a locality, people's attention is automatically diverted to the environmental scenario of the State.

"With this vehicle you now don't have to go to Jaintia Hills to see the state of environmental degradation," he told *The Shillong Times*.

The vehicle is, however, yet to venture into rural areas of the State due to lack of sponsors. "We are negotiating with some of our patrons to sponsor the vehicle," he said.

Issues like illegal coal mining, deforestation and related environmental issues have been depicted in the vehicle.

The vehicle has two segments -

*Symphony of Destruction* - where activities which are hampering the environment have been depicted and the other segment - *There is still hope* - urges people to safeguard the environment.

Reacting to a query about people's response, he said, "We had recently taken the vehicle to Dawki and Guwahati and there were many people who came and interacted with us on environment related issues."

The club also has plans to carry out tours in different schools in East Khasi Hills and other districts so that students can be motivated to safeguard the environment.

# Lack of proper planning hampers growth in N-E'

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** In Meghalaya many important decisions relating to the development and upliftment of the State are 'politically-decided' which indicates that most of those decisions does not cater to the needs of the common man, retired NEHU professor L. Marbaniang observed.

"There is no proper planning by the experts in the field to analyse a particular decision which is helpful to the common man," he said adding that a proper methodology is required to feel the pulse of the common man.

Prof Marbaniang was addressing a gathering on the occasion of National Statistic Day organized by

the Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation in collaboration with the State Directorate of Economics and Statistics at the Don Bosco Youth Centre here on Friday.

The National Statistics Day coincides with the birth anniversary of Prof PC Mahalanobis, widely regarded as the 'Father of Indian Statistics'.

Highlighting the lack of statistical analysis in Meghalaya, Prof Marbaniang said unless a correct projection of the statistical data is made, policy-makers won't be able to know the needs and problems of the people.

He further stated that political masters need to be well-educated and well-aware of the basic needs of the people and at the same

time initiate strong policies which cater right down to the grassroots level.

Providing a holistic picture of the performance of the country, he said that the operations conducted in the country only centered around three things - Military, Census and Election.

Speaking about the development of the North East region, Prof Marbaniang said "At a macro level, development in the region is very satisfactory but at the micro level we see many loopholes. The North East is still lagging behind in many aspects."

Later, reacting to queries on the upcoming 2013 polls in the State from a Statistical point of view, Prof Marbaniang said "It is difficult to predict (Contd on P-10)

SHILLONG, TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2012

## DoNER on climate 5cm change

**SHILLONG:** The Union Ministry of Development of North East Region (DoNER) has initiated the Climate Change Adaptation North Easter Region (CCANER) Project in partnership with the German Development Cooperation and the State Governments of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Sikkim to strengthen the rural livelihood resilience and also to adaptability to the impacts of climate variability and change.

The German Development Cooperation would focus on capacity development of the people, institutions, and organizations of these three North East States, an official source said recently.

The Meghalaya Government has finalized in March this year the Draft State Climate Change Action Plan (SAPCC) to understand the importance of

climate issues and its impact on inclusive growth, the official sources said, adding that the Draft Plan was the outputs of various inter and intra working groups constituted by the Government and in consultation with regional and national experts.

The SAPCC has identified nine mission in line with the seven missions of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (CAPCC) of the Government of India.

"The nine missions identified by the State of Meghalaya are Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Forestry, Sustainable (Integrated) Water Management, Energy which includes Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, Skill Development to improve the institutional, legal, regulatory, Government framework to address climate change.(NNN)

SHILLONG, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2011

# Complete ban on plastic bags from today; action against violators

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** In what may be termed as a positive step towards protection of the environment, the State Government has decided to make Meghalaya a plastic-free State, with a complete ban on plastic carry bags from Sunday.

Urban Affairs Minister Ampareen Lyngdoh, while making the announcement on Saturday, has warned of stringent action against anyone who violates the ban.

The move to ban plastic carry bags come in line with the Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011.

"We are going to enforce the rule stringently from Sunday and any law-breaker will be dealt with stringently,"

Ampareen announced.

The Urban Affairs Minister was of the opinion that people should participate in the exercise by not accepting plastic bags from shopkeepers.

"Our officers will be in the market from Sunday keeping a watch on people to ensure that the ban is adhered to," Ampareen stated on Saturday.

With the implementation of the Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011, under which it is 'mandatory' for customers to pay for each plastic bag they obtain from the shopkeepers, the State Government has decided to

strictly follow the prescribed norm of banning use of plastic materials which have thickness not below the permissible 40 microns.

The State Government, had, earlier directed all the municipal stalls and private shopkeepers to stop use of plastic bags with effect from January 1, 2006.

However, shopkeepers in the city did not pay any heed to the directives and the ban failed to produce the de-

sired result.

This time, however, the government seems determined to impose a complete ban with punitive action against violators.



SHILLONG, MONDAY, JULY 2, 2012

## AIDS awareness programme

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The Meghalaya Youth Foundation in collaboration with the Meghalaya State Network for Positive People (MSNP+) organised an Awareness Campaign on "Career Counselling, Substance Misuse & Stigma and Discrimination on HIV/AIDS" at Good Shepherd Higher Secondary School, Jongksha on Friday last. Over 300 students of Good Shepherd Higher Secondary School, Jongksha and members of various youth organisations from the area attended the programme. It may be mentioned that the career counselling is being sponsored by the Meghalaya Cooperative Apex Bank, Shillong.

After the end of the Awareness Campaign, a tree plantation Programme was also held at the school premises where more than 60 tree saplings were planted.

SHILLONG, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2011

## 'Illegal charcoal being supplied to ferro alloy industries'

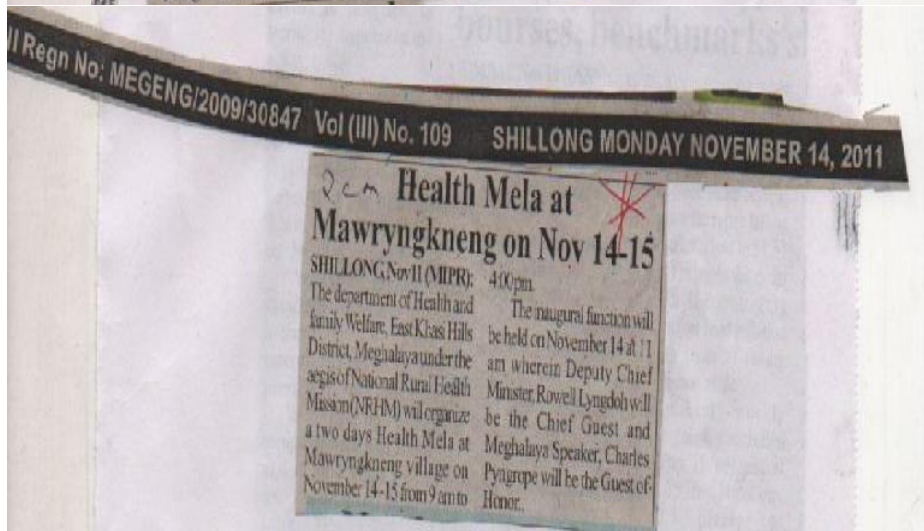
By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The State Government has admitted to the fact that there was rampant illegal supply of locally produce charcoal to ferro alloy industries operating in the State despite a ban.

Admitting this, Forest and Environment Minister Prestone Tynsong said, "Officials of the department on several occasions have seized trucks loaded with charcoal meant for delivery to the ferro alloy industries at Byrnihat. (Contd on P-10)"



“The Meghalaya Times”



## Awareness campaign on NRDWP launched at Jarain

**Our Bureau**  
JOWAI, Nov 12: The villagers of Jarain village under Amlarem Sub Division, Jaintia Hills District were on Thursday enlightened about the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) in an awareness programmes conducted by the Field Publicity Office, DFP, Jowai.

Government departments which participated in the programme included the Public Health Engineer (PHE) Jowai and Subdivisional Public Relation Office, Amlarem.

FPO, DFP, Jowai J. L. Kyanjing informed the

gathering that a two-month long Special Publicity Campaign on NRDWP has been launched all over the country including Meghalaya by the Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP) under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting to sensitize the people in the rural areas on issues relating to drinking water. The campaign will commence from November to December.

During the campaign, awareness programmes for the general populace, quiz competitions for the students, distribution of publicity materials including collecting of informations through questionnaires to

gauge the awareness level of the rural population about the implementation of the Rural Drinking Programme in the rural areas will be organized by DFP in collaboration with PHE which is the nodal agency for NRDWP.

The campaign launched will cover Amlarem Subdivision of Jaintia Hills District. Similar programmes are also being conducted in other districts of Meghalaya.

Sub Divisional Officer (C), N.A. K. Syiem, began his inaugural speech by expressing his appreciation for the organizer's efforts and initiatives in conducting a very vital programme for the

rural population. He highlighted the importance of having safe drinking water which is essential to human existence. He emphasized the need for the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) to be implemented seriously wherein an all out effort should be made to become a model sanitary village.

Syiem also urged the people to do away with open defecation which leads to contamination of clean drinking water. This in turn leads to the rise of various kinds of diseases. He also lamented the fact that the implementation of the TSC in Amlarem Subdivision is not satisfactory.

In this regard, he urged the people to take the necessary steps to achieve greater implementation of the TSC.

The SDO(C), Amlarem inaugurated the 2-month long campaign at Jarain Village Amwi Secondary School. The highlights of the programme besides interactive sessions include quiz competition on 'Rural Drinking Water' wherein the competition was conducted by SDFRO, Amlarem, M. Swer, as the Quiz Master.

SDO, PHE, Jowai, R. Kyanjing, informed the people that the NRDWP is a flagship scheme of the Central  
*Continued to Page 3*

NEWS BRIEF

Painting comp on water conservation held

SHILLONG, Nov 17 (PIB): The Ministry of Water Resources is conducting a nationwide painting competition in order to create awareness on water conservation.

The painting competition is open for students of 4th, 5th and 6th standards in three stages, namely, School, State and National Level. The theme of the painting competition is "Conserve Water for the Future".

In this connection, on the occasion of Children's Day, Central Ground Water Board, State Unit Office, Ministry of Water Resources, Government of India, Shillong, organized State Level Painting Competition on the theme "Conserve Water for Future" at Anton Hall, Shillong.

Minister for Water Resources, A I Hek, was the Chief Guest for the programme.

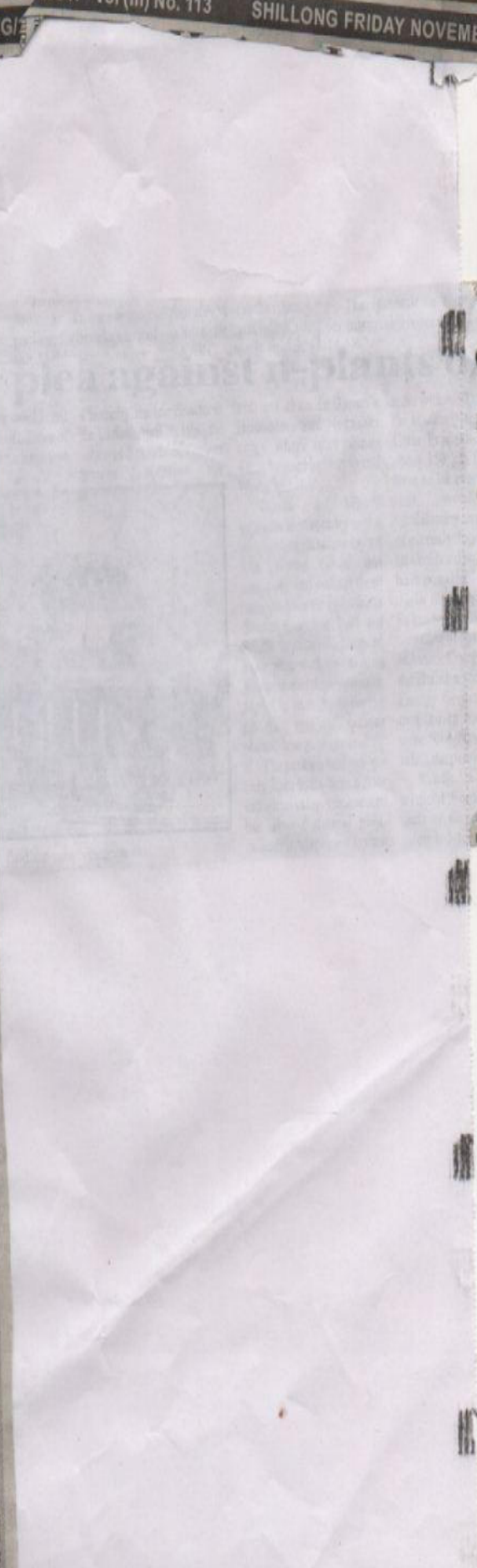
About 50 students, who were shortlisted from School Level competition held earlier throughout the Meghalaya state, took part in this Painting Competition.

A very distinguished jury assessed these painting and selected first, second and third prizes.

The Jury also selected 10 paintings for awarding 'consolation prize'. Hek distributed these prizes to the winners.

Vivian J. Kyndiah, student of 4th Standard, B.K.Bajoria School, Shillong, bagged the first prize, while Joseffeen K. Rvntong, class VI, Eden Academy Secondary School, Umring and Debunam Modal, class VI, All Saints' D.H.S.School, Shillong, bagged the second and third prize respectively.

The above three winners have also qualified from Meghalaya for the National Level competition to be held at New Delhi during



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# Public rally on plastic ban



Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (I), TTC Marak on Saturday kicked - off the Anti - plastic public rally at Motphran. President of the PP Club Nicholas Jonathan Kharnami (second from right) holding the plaw iew banner at the public rally.

## Traffic management in collapsing mode



Despite restriction, coal laden truck plying in city during day

## Horrendous traffic jams along NH-44

**Staff Reporter**

**SHILLONG, Dec 30:** While the traffic snarls in city seem to have dropped suddenly after the implementation of new timings for entry of truck, Shillong suburbs are now feeling the burden of the government's move.

On Friday, vehicles on

NH-44 lay stranded for hours. A family going to a marriage was left stranded for more than three hours at Mihmyntdu, in between Lad Thalaboh and 8 mile. When the vehicle failed to bulge even an inch after several hours, the family returned back to Shillong, which took another three hours.

The family could not reach the marriage venue and had to carry back home the gifts.

In another horrendous traffic jam witnessed on Thursday, a pregnant died on way from Jowai suburbs to a hospital in Jowai. The patient was stuck in the traffic jam.

## NGOs demands better quality transformers for uninterrupted power supply

Staff Reporter

SHILLONG, June 28: Concerned over the pathetic and irregular power supply, a delegation of the Khasi Students' Union - South West Khasi Hills Unit (KSU-SWKHU) Thursday met Meghalaya Power Minister AT Mondal demanding the state government to install adequate and quality transformers to provide uninterrupted power supply to villages falling under East Khasi hills and West Khasi hills district.

"We demand the government to address this power failure problem in the

area by installing adequate transformers to 10 villages falling under the Mawkyrwat in West Khasi hills and Mawsynram in East Khasi hills district", KSU-SWKHU general secretary Peter K. Nair told reporters here after the meeting.

Out of 10, seven villages fall under Mawkyrwat Sub-Divisional Office of the Meghalaya Electricity Corporation Limited (MeECL) including Jaishiar, Phlang Mawprah, Ngandilang, Nongsynrieh, Mawkolphet, Hiland and Tynnai village. While the other 3 including Nongin-Kulang-Langkynma

areas, Mawdon and Umyilun village under Mawsynram Sub-Divisional Office of MeECL.

"These villages and areas have no transformer till date since the transformer are damaged due to the quality of the material which requires constant repair and led to regular power failure for the last two-three months", Nair said.

On the other hand, the KSU - SWKHU also demanded for setting up of the Sub-Divisional Office of the MeECL in Ranikor in West Khasi hills district.

Continued to Page 3

## Drive against illicit liquor conducted, 49 arrested

SHILLONG, Sept 26 (MIPR): The Deputy Commissioner (Excise), East Khasi Hills District has conducted drive against illicit liquor in restaurants and

stalls both in the city and its outskirts in the month of August this year in which about 49 cases of liquor were seized.

Around 103,550 litres of v

d liquor and 10,455 litres (MLP) were seized.

In this connection, 49 persons were arrested under the Excise Act and are undergoing investigation.

## Bringing disability certificates at door steps for PWDs

Continued from Page 01

been completed and in a short while the draft BPL list will be out in the form of the details of each and every enumerated household indicating the responses which is open to claims and objections adding that the BPL list will give an accurate figure of the BPL in each district and shall also generate figures of disabled and old persons.

Stressing on the disabled, the Deputy Commissioner said that several surveys have been done but none has been

found to be authoritative.

"With this outreach awareness programme, the issuance of disability certificate in the district will promote citizen centric services right at the doorsteps of the vulnerable sections of the society" Bakshi asserted adding "this disability certificate will also be required for applying to government jobs under the disability quota which is 3 percent as of now and for enabling the beneficiary to get concessions under various schemes".

Meanwhile, Bakshi also said that the National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation also assists the disabled to get finance for self employment for which the details are available in the nearest Meghalaya Cooperative Apex Bank.

Around 300 persons attended the camp with a total of 139 disability certificates being issued and the next assessment camp will be held at Zikzak block in Chapai No.1 Upper Primary Govt. Aided School on September 27 at 10AM.

### Dendrite to be banned in West Garo Hills: DC

Staff Reporter

SHILLONG, June 26: Sale of dendrite in West Garo Hills district to be completely banned, exhorted the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of the district while addressing a gathering at the 'International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking' at Para Circuit house organized by the District Social Welfare Officer in collaboration with CDPO, Urban ICDS Project on Tuesday.

In an attempt to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse,

United Nations has declared June 26 as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

DC, West Garo Hills district Pravin Bakshi said, "Sale of dendrite would be banned in the entire district. Dendrite is a common substance abused by youth. Drug abuse and human trafficking is a global issue."

"A hefty fine would be imposed against the violators who go against the ban," Bakshi said.

He therefore urged the students of the area to desist from such practices.

He also assured that the administration will provide full support in restricting the growth of the menace.

In her opening speech, N Ch Moumin expressed her concern that drug abuse in Garo Hills region of the state is alarming particularly with the children who are below the age of 10 and lamented that most drug abusers are school dropouts.

She also informed that around seven million people all over the world are dying due to various forms of substance abuse.

### Meghalaya looking to tap its huge green energy potential

SHILLONG, June 25 (PTI): Taking cue from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, power-deficit Meghalaya is going all out to tap green energy to bridge the widening demand-supply gap in the state.

A preliminary investigation conducted by the Meghalaya Non-Conventional and Rural Energy Development Agency (MREDA) indicated that the state could generate about 3155 MW of electricity through non-conventional sources of energy such as biomass, solar and wind energy.

A GIS mapping, conducted by the Chennai-based Centre for Wind Energy Technology (C-WET), an autonomous institution of the Government of India, said the state is capable of tapping between 40-90 MW of power from wind energy alone, MREDA director John Rodborne informed.

The government agency in collaboration with CWET is presently conducting a feasibility study in the entire state to install windmills in at least seven selected sites across the state.

Three Wind Turbine Test Stations have been installed in the southern slope of Meghalaya and four more will be added by year end, he said.

These stations have been installed in Ladymba in Jaintia Hills district, Laitdiengsai in East Khasi Hills district and Mawizawai in West Khasi Hills district respectively.

The other four will be set up in Skhentlang in Jaintia Hills district, Laitkynsew and Mawkynrew in East Khasi Hills district and Phoojant in West Khasi Hills district, the official said.

The preliminary information received from the installed centres indicated that wind blowing up the cliffs in the southern slopes of the state could be essentially tapped for a most throughout the year. The reason behind the idea of having wind-power project is because it is one of the most environment friendly means to generate electricity, Rodborne said.

The time taken to set up a wind-power project is also shorter as compared to the time taken to set up a conventional thermal power plant.

Officials said the

preferred wind speed for optimum power generation is around 12 m/sec (40-50 km per hour), above which the turbines have to be switched off to avoid damage.

The average height of the wind turbine is 200 meters while the blades could have span of about 80 meters.

The testing stations installed at the mountain edge, Rodborne said, would actually give a rough idea on how much amount of power will be generated if a power windmill is installed.

Continued to Page 3

## Only 4% schools in Shillong give importance to Environmental Education

**Shillong**  
SHILLONG, June 24: While Environmental Education (EE) is supposed to be an important subject to help students understand the basic utility of how natural environments function and, particularly, how human beings manage their behavior and systems in order to live sustainably.

But the importance given to 'vital' subject is starkly in contrast to what most would like to believe, especially with the gains for protecting nature and reducing the global warming doing the hype.

In Shillong city, dubbed as 'education hub' of North India, sadly only 4 percent schools are giving this subject

the required importance. However, the silver lining is the fact that 70 percent of the students considered the topic as 'Good' but there were some who confessed that they did not understand anything, while none found the topic 'very good'.

### Environmental Education compromised to complete syllabus in city schools

This was revealed in a survey undertaken by the North Eastern Educational and Development Society (NEEDS) along with the BSW students of Women's college.

NEEDS conducted an assessment programme of schools of Shillong, Meghalaya to check on their implementation of the subject, Environmental Education (EE). The aim was to

check the school's regularity and observance of key occasions such as World Environment Day, World Water Day among others and to generate a renewed interest on environment awareness, preservation and conservation.

Almost all the school in the

city of Shillong was earmarked for the survey. A total of 53 schools (Upper Primary & Secondary Education) in Shillong were taken into consideration. Respondents included principals, teachers and the students.

The survey revealed that 36 percent of the schools had EVS once a week, 52 percent had it twice a week, 8 percent thrice a

week while a mere 4 percent had it five times a week.

Although the NCERT and NCF 2005 stressed on the importance of EE yet in the name of completion of syllabus Environmental Education is not given much priority as understood from the

respondents.

Regarding student's response, 70 percent of the students interviewed considered the topic 'Good', 28 percent considered it 'OK', 2 percent of the students admitted they did not understand anything while none of them considered it very good.

If only 53 schools did show such results, one can imagine the

statistics of the millions of school across the globe', the report stated.

This survey also questioned the proportionality of teaching methods versus the level of interest generated in a student. As found out, the suggestions of NCERT were not taken into consideration in most schools. This however may change with the implementation of the ICT at schools program which integrates Information Technology and teaching. Subsequently although about 46 out of the 53 schools stated that they do adopt practical lessons, only 49 percent of them use charts, 4 percent use Smart Class (ICT) and a small 2 percent used LCD or OHP projectors.

*Continued to Page 03*

## Program on Adolescent Reproduction Sexual Health Awareness Campaign held

**Staff Reporter**  
SHILLONG, Aug 13: The Meghalaya State Council for Child Welfare organized an awareness programme on "Adolescent Reproduction Sexual Health Awareness Campaign" recently at Kamala Nehru School,

Shillong, observing its high requirement in this fast growing consciousness of pre-teenager of this era.

Medical Lecturer and Demonstrator Health Department, Government of Meghalaya, Dr J Lyngwa in an eye opener lecture

immensely highlighted the importance of this issue on youngsters of today.

Other speakers include Father Celia, L Jyrwa and A Thangkiew.

The meeting was chaired by Theilin Phanbuh while the vote of thanks was offered by KB Warjri.



## A glowing hope to bring Wah Umkhrach's glory back

Staff Reporter

SHILLONG, Feb 10: A conglomeration of NGOs, Governmental organizations, Citizen associations held a meeting in order to discuss the plight of the degradation of Wah Umkhrach at the State Central Library on Friday.

At the meeting held to tackle the issues concerning the cleanliness and deteriorating condition of Wah Umkhrach and various NGOs, Government Organizations, citizen associations and concerned citizens participated and discussed issues concerning the river and possible solutions to bring its glory back to life.

A core committee was also formed to look into the matter as Wah Umkhrach's deteriorating condition has been a prime concern in the state as it only reflects the condition of similar rivers across Meghalaya.

The Core committee comprises of different organizations like FKJGP, KSC, I Care, People's Learning

Center, Meghalaya Woman's Alliance, The District Council, Youth for Change, former minister R G Lyngdoh, Seng Kynthel, Sanjog Rangbha Shrong, Sanjog Ki Samla Shrong (Youth Association) and Deputy Commissioner of East Khasi Hills, Sanjay Goyal.

The committee has decided to meet later in this month to discuss the possible way ahead to restore the lost beauty of Wah Umkhrach.

Speaking at the function, Director, People's Learning Center, Farida Wairi mentioned how she used to walk besides Wah Umkhrach when she was small and how it is sad to see the state of the river. However, she mentioned that with the active awareness among people and quick efforts may help in rescuing the river back to its original form.

Member of Pla Iew Club, Nicolas J Khamami presented an informative presentation on Wah Umkhrach. It may be mentioned here that Nicolas was also a member of the group

who did the walk the talk campaign in Wah Umkhrach where they walked the whole source of Wah Umkhrach to check the dumping in the river.

The issue of Waste management and the way the state can adopt various waste management tools available was also discussed along with entrepreneurship and employment opportunities which could be generated through waste management.

Restoration of the river flowing through Singapore and Seoul in South Korea were also briefly discussed as prime examples of restoration of rivers which were once used as a dumping ground by the society of these two cities.

The Wah Umkhrach which wears a horrid look now thanks to the ongoing to the dumping, diversion of drainage pipes into the river is the case of the issue in a river which is the base of memories of many Shillongites who have swam after playing cricket in Polo, drank after playing football in Happy

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# Coal mining in Laitryngew: a threat inevitable *scm*

Staff Reporter

SHILLONG, Jan 09: With Meghalaya Mining Policy still not in place and all attention focused towards cement companies apparently in the midst of forest, one has forgotten about the genesis of coal in Meghalaya - Sohra.

Due to the continued restriction free age-old mining in the area, the situation is such that the Laitryngew plateau, holding the world famous tourism spot Cherrapunjee along with the entire Sohra, could collapse anytime, if the Syiem of Sohra and other miners are to be believed.



Although the small scale mining in Laitryngew or Rai Hole mining has been a conventional occupation of the people of the place and Sohra alike since time immemorial, the very mining has now put the lives of the residents of the area in an unprecedented danger.

Giving an account of this grave issue, Grey Busom - a coal mine worker and local resident, states, "We can even hear the sound of the hammer on steel chisels coming from beneath the ground during the dead hours of the night. It is not a surprise to us, it has been a daily happening. You see there are uncountable coal mines that run through one end of the village and come out the other end..."

Many coal mines scattered around the hill

sides can be seen while traveling across the countryside beyond the hill station which is only about eight kilometers from Sohra.

Agreeing to the lingering threat over Laitryngew due to coal mining, Syiem of Sohra, Freeman Sing Syiem, told Meghalaya Times that the village was indeed in a very precarious position. He said, "Yes, the village is on the verge of collapsing down, holes have penetrated the entire base of the plateau. Though there is a solid rock plate just beneath the village that can hold it together if that catastrophe should happen, even then the harsh possibility of the people's only choice is to abandon the place."

There is indeed a solid rock plate just beneath the village

that forms a protective plate that has held the whole place together all these years.

Busom opined, "We are in no immediate threat for the time being for if our village would really crumble down, the Mawsiang would go down with just a minimal depth along with the village still intact. But we can't be sure."

Whether the village has done anything to curb the growing threat, this is what the Syiem of Sohra has to say. "The village authorities have not passed any law or act that prohibits the mining process in the inhabited areas. What can they do? It is too late for any act on their part to mend the situation. So the ongoing mining in the area goes without any restriction or dogma."

Since the quality of the

coal obtained from Laitryngew is of good bituminous quality, it has been on a heavy demand by the Mawmliuh Cherra Cements Limited (MCCL), black-smithies and of course by households as most of them still light coal in their living rooms.

But nature cannot seem to withstand the prolonged coal rush forever. It is suspected that the entire Laitryngew plateau seems to have hung on a rather fragile foundation rendered porous by hundreds of underground tunnels of Rai Hole mines.

Similar suspicions are being raised on the fate of Jaintia Hills, which is currently serving as the Mecca of mining, ranging from coal to minerals to cement.

## 'Disease free body' through Yoga stressed on World Health Day

Staff Reporter

SHILLONG, Apr 08: A journey filled with celebration, silence, knowledge, meditation and service. On the occasion of World Health Day on Saturday last, the Art of Living organized "Yogathon" an initiative to create awareness about yoga and create interest in its practice for a healthier living.

Along with rest of the country, "YOGATHAN" was organized in Shillong at Malki ground where around 500 participants from all walks of life participated. Altogether 15 premier institutions across the state participated in the event.

This "entry-free event" was conducted where not only youths but also the elder people showed their

enthusiasm to challenge and participate.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Binzo M. Lanong stressed on the need to have "disease free body".

He said, "Yoga has the power to decrease mortality rate which benefit the people."

"Unless you know the art nothing is perfect be it anything. We need to know the art, everything is depending on how you take care of society around you," Lanong said.

He further asserted, "Life will not be complete without Yoga only, doctor cannot take care of ourselves by doing meditation".

Health is not merely an

absence of disease, health is the dynamic expression of life. Practice of yoga harmonises the body, the breath and the mind.

A disease-free body, a stress-free mind, quiver-free breath, inhibition-free intellect, trauma-free memory and sorrow-free soul are the birth right of every human being- says HH Sri Ravi Shankar Founder of Art of Living, the fastest growing volunteer based NGO with a Presence in over 151 countries worldwide.

While the benefits of yoga are well known to the World, its practice is what creates a difference in the minds and bodies of people.

The yogathon is a challenge held on the



occasion of World Health Day. This challenge helped to drive the youth to participate in a competition of "yogasana".

The event held all over India and has seen the widespread participation

from youth across the Country. The youth who completes 54 sets of yogasanas were given "gold certificate" and all others who participated in the event gets a part of yoga certificate from the organization.

## Community should ensure clean environment: T Dkhar

Jowai, Oct 04 (MIPR): The Jowai Municipal Board in collaboration with Tympong Club, Sein Raj Jowai, Jowai Traders Association, Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council (JHADC) and the District Administration organised a cleaning drive in Jowai and Jawmusiang on Tuesday commemorating Gandhi Jayanti which was observed on October 2, Sunday. The drive was attended by Deputy Commissioner, Jaintia Hills District, Jowai, T.Dkhar.

The Cleaning drive was enthusiastically participated by all including Schools Students and teachers, NGOs, Public, the Police Department, PHE Department, the stall owners and private stalls and others.

Speaking on the occasion T.Dkhar appreciated the initiative taken by the Municipal Board, Tympong Club, Sein Raj, Jowai Traders Association, JHADC in organizing the cleaning drive in order to make the Market and Jowai town neat and clean and also to maintain awareness among the people about the importance of

cleanliness. Informing the people about the hazards of living in an unhygienic environment, Dkhar urged the people to cultivate the habit of healthy living. He also said that cleaning the market Jawmusiang is not an individual task, it has to be taken by the whole Community.

He appealed to the buyers and sellers not to entertain the used of plastic, this not only affects the environment but also the river Mihmyntu which is the main source of the Jowai towns drinking water.

The others speakers included President Sein Raj, O.R. Challam, and Superintendent of Police, Jaintia Hills, O.Passi who stressed on the need of keeping the Market (Jawmusiang) clean and also appealed all to co-operate not only in the cleaning drive but continue in days to come and years to keep Jowai town neat and clean.

The Programme was chaired by E. Khyriem and vote of thanks by President, Jaintia Traders Association, R.Khyriem.

## Safer in Log House for seismic V zone

Joe Thangshiew

SHILLONG, Oct 02: In the past 30 years Shillong which was popularly known as the Scotland of the East has transformed from a small hill station to a township, and eventually to a crowded city.

Ubiquitous Assam type houses that once bore the identity of this region have gradually disappeared only to be replaced by concrete buildings, thanks to the modern technologies thereby increasing the risk of damage in case of an earthquake as the State falls under seismic V zone.

Experts say that the most plausible alternative is to go back to wooden houses because for one, they are safer and healthier to live in and the color of the wood brings a sense of warmth and serenity, also making them look even more beautiful.

Seizing the opportunity in hand, Maharaja Environment Technologies, an ISO 9001-2008 certified construction company has set up a joint venture with a manufacturer of pine and arch wood in Russia to offer the best solutions to those who would like to construct wooden houses.



The company says that the gaseous substances emitted from the prime quality logs destroy dangerous bacteria and viruses, ionize and disinfect the air in house, enlarge its biological activity, lessen the pollution of air, prevent rheumatic ailments and respiratory infections.

It also said that wooden log house is eco-friendly and the most convenient and most comfortable building construction for human living because the building material often keeps optimal humidity and oxygen balance.

The pre-fabricated houses are made of modern log building construction techniques to provide bright and contemporary houses and are totally made of wood with neither any metal nor

cement used.

The wood is chemically treated making the wooden house fireproof, waterproof, termite proof, and will last for not less than 80 years.

For a region like North East, which is prone to frequent tremors, these log houses are ideal for safety.

North East Distributor Andrew Ropmay said the company offers suggestions for projects based on several types of wooden villa planning. "A design will be made according to the needs of a customer like the number of rooms, draft planning and specification before the construction work begins,"

adding, "Turn-key projects, for wooden houses of unique design from small villas of 500 sq ft up to huge 3 or even 4 storied buildings with rest

facilities, swimming pools, saunas and everything on individual needs is also negotiable."

The project is already starting to kick off in Shillong with prominent citizen and architect Prabat Sawian taking much interest in bringing back the old with a touch of modernity, as he has exhibited in his Ri-Kynjai project.

"The proposal was presented to me about a month ago and I thought they look pretty alright in a context and for that purpose they could come to a good commercial use," opined Prabat Sawian.

Prabat's suggestion is that if the method is used here they should have a local look. "As far as earthquake is concerned, any material

structure would be safer in seismic zone to a limited height, if it is well done and secured. The kind of design will suit the region but they will have to adapt to a style which is localized in its kind of architecture and not be just blind technique," Sawian said.

Sawian, who is planning to use the material for his new venture, further stated that if it is cost friendly then it will reduce the destruction of forests. "But the hindrance is in overcoming the psychological barrier of having to bring logs from Siberia," he highlighted.

In conclusion, one can say that the log buildings are indeed a new way of design that can turn Shillong back to 30 years or more ago, and will be a sight to admire.

## Water filters to 200 BPL families distributed

3cm



The water filters were handed over to the BPL families by Minister of Water Resources and local MLA, A.L. Hek.

The water filter distribution is part of Rotary Club Orchid City Shillong's "Safe Drinking Water Direct To Home" Project aimed at creating awareness about importance of safe and clean drinking water.

**Our Bureau** Pynthorbah locality were on SHILLONG, Apr 01: Free Saturday and Sunday water filters to more than distributed by the Rotary two hundred BPL families at Club Orchid City Shillong.

## Plastic: the necessary evil

**Surajit Ghosh** ✱  
SHILLONG, Sept 30: As per the Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011 notified by the central Government to each every state of the country, come to effect on October 2 in Shillong city, whole sellers and dealers are already on their toes to refrain from indulging in plastic bags trade.

According to Urban Affairs Minister's claim of following suit of West Bengal government on penalty being levied on anybody selling plastic bags less than 40 microns in thickness, and without having name, registration number of the manufacturer and thickness, date of manufacture printed on the on it and in case of multilayered packaging the name and registration number is liable for imprisonment of up to 5 years and a fine of Rs 1 lakh.

With such high assumed penalty, traders in pine city are making all attempts to replace their stack of plastic bags with paper bags.

The implementation of this rule should mark a

possible overhaul in the way how plastic waste is dispersed, recycled and managed.

Proper implementation of the guidelines should provide an effective remedy to the clogged streams like River Umkrah and River Umshyrji and drastically reduce air pollution and even health hazards.

In the past, city has seen a number of preventive measures by local bodies or NGOs aimed to counter the menace posed by plastic but in due course of time the vigilant authorities lose track. And like bad habits refusing to go away the plastic problem again rears its ugly head. Definitely The Plastic Waste Management And Handling Rules, 2011 may be a directive of the state but how effectively it will curb the problem remains to be seen.

So, if one thinks that this measure is the penultimate solution and will be the final nail to the coffin for the plastic problem the answer might be a prompt 'No'.

It is very interesting to notice how conveniently the subject of the usefulness of

plastic is skipped while crusading the cause for environmental awareness. Undeniably, plastic as a whole is one of the greatest inventions of 20th century. For the ardent environmental activist the statement is almost criminal but if one comes to think of it plastic in its many avatars did make lives easy and comfortable.

With the dwindling number of forest cover in the country plastic was the most viable option to replace paper bags in the market. The reason to replace paper by plastic might be more to do with economic viability but nevertheless unknowingly tones and tones of paper was saved.

Until recently when the pressure on environment became apparent and the insidious repercussion due to gross mis-management of plastic; people realized that plastic can be a lethal contributor to the surroundings.

But it is not the inanimate human creation that does the damage, instead the sheer willful - ignorance of money minting traders and carelessness on the part of the

people in general is the cause for this domino effect on the environment. It might come as a surprise for an average Indian to know what extraordinary and fanatical length people in Europe go for environmental cleanliness. Definitely these protocols cannot be followed here but at least cues from their model of waste management, recycling and so on so forth can be taken.

How indispensable plastic or plastic products are can be arrived at by simply examining the number of products used every day; which show dependence on plastic to incomprehensible length. Cutting short the jills that has come accompanying plastic is of course the needful initiative that is absolutely the need of the hour.

The numerous directives contained in the Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011 is a welcome gesture by the government to prevent the toxic dissipation into surroundings resulting into further degradation of the environment.

Steps like using compostable plastic, proper

recycling and using plastic bag up to a certain permissible thickness should help to restore the environment to its pristine condition, slowly but surely. However, fact it is, that plastic has made in-roads in peoples' lives in more than one way of bags, sachets or pouch.

Dismissing plastic as an old-fangled invention by anyone would only prove one's obliviousness to this great invention.

have the producers. Opium trade has reached hitherto unknown dimensions with the entry of brokers and peddlers. Most of the youth and even many government employees have smoked away their health and wealth. Today the situation has worsened with students of schools and colleges falling into the deadly trap and becoming addicts.

Poppy plants are cultivated in small fields in the bright sunny plains and valleys. It is a beautiful rare sight when the flowers are in full bloom over the blue lit mountains; the flower is very beautiful and ranges in colour from white to purple with shades of red and orange being the most common. However, the beauty of this plant belies its danger as it can rob you of your health and wealth. This illicit cultivation of opium which is widespread also portends ill for the people at the receiving end. A person addicted to opium will go to any lengths to procure it. He will commit theft, robbery or murder to acquire money to buy opium or related drugs.

#### EFFECTS AND ADDICTIVE NATURE

Opium comes from the poppy plant known botanically as *Papaver somniferum*. This plant is a dicotyledon (its seeds contain two seed leaves), belonging to the family Papaveraceae. This family is actually a cousin of the family Cruciferae to which the familiar cabbage belongs. The word *papaver* is a Greek word meaning 'poppy'. *Somniferum* is a Latin word meaning 'I bring sleep'. Since opium induces sleep, its name is quite apt.

Opium and its various constituents exert effects upon the body ranging from analgesia, or insensitivity to pain, narcosis, or depressed physiological activity leading to stupor. Opium users describe experiencing a feeling of calm and wellbeing. Opium addicts in otherwise good physical and mental health whose drug needs are met are thought to experience no debilitating physiological effects from their addiction, although there is some evidence that the immune function is compromised. However, their preoccupation with the drug and its acquisition can lead to malnutrition and general poor self-care and an increased risk of disease.

#### ON THE INDIVIDUAL

As the sun sets over the blue hills, people of all ages especially those residing in the remotest villages of these districts assemble with their dear and near ones at their home to prepare for an opium session with friends at their house or in their friend's home. Assicts say that it gives rise to a feeling of wellbeing. In small doses, say of about 50 mg, it gives rise to pleasant sensations; however, in large doses it induces sleep. Still larger doses, say about 2

*A man with his home made pipe for smoking opium.*



gm, are liable to kill a person. The innocent tribal people along with friends unaware of the ill effect of this substance spend long hours of the evenings in an ecstatic state drawing from their favorite opium.

Most of the innocent tribal villagers are aware that opium





# scouration

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rivers. In the case of all the mentioned rivers, the pollution of the water in the rivers has been consistent but the Lukha case is peculiar in the sense that it is a regular annual affair. In the case of the other dead rivers of the district, the death occurred once and for all but that is not the case of Lukha.

Both coal and limestone mining have continued their onslaught on the river bodies, but the case of the river Lukha is unique in the sense that the river not only flows through the coal and limestone mining areas, but is also passes through the Narpuh area where many cement plants are located. More importantly, the Lukha also flows around the Narpuh reserve forest, the last remaining forest area in the district. The government needs to act immediately by commissioning an independent body to investigate the cause of the strange phenomena in the river Lukha. The big question is, can the proposed Mining Policy of the state save the rivers of Jaintia Hills? The policy, (if at all is legislated in the next seating of the house) will be four decades late because mining in the area started since the late seventies. It will also be too little too late for Jaintia hills. By the time the mining policy is adopted, the rivers will be polluted beyond redemption and forests in the district will be denuded and even the caves which are our natural heritage will be things of the past.

*H.H. Mohrmen*



*Though the permissible load per truck is 9 tons, exporters choose to ignore this order of the Supreme Court of India.*

passes through the port right under the nose of the police and the customs officials.

This scribe questioned the policeman and the custom officials who check and give the go ahead for the truck to proceed towards Bangladesh; as to why the trucks were allowed entry in spite of the fact that the trucks carried coal weighing more than the 9 tons limit specified by the Court order. The answer the policeman and the custom official gave was that their duty is to check whether the trucks have all papers in order or not and not to weigh the trucks. This writer then visited the office of the Inland Custom Station of the Indian Custom Office in Dawki and met Mr. B. Nongbri, Custom Officer who is

in charge because the Superintendent Mr. M.K. Brahma is out of station. Replying to the question about the trucks violating the Court order, Mr. Nongbri clarified that the duty of the custom office is to facilitate trade through the port and also to ensure that contraband is not illegally smuggled into India.

When asked if he is aware of the Supreme Court order which prohibited trucks carrying loads of more than 9 tons, the custom officer nodded his head and answered in the affirmative but added that it is the duty of the District Administration to see that the trucks are not overloaded beyond the permissible limit.

The trucks transporting minerals from this port particularly coal, not

only violate the Court order but the trade has also brought a huge loss to the country in the form of foreign exchange. The custom officer Mr. B. Nongbri also said that India is selling coal to Bangladesh at the rate of 50 US\$ per ton and the average number of truck passing through the Tamabil port is 450 trucks per day. The point to be noted here is that only 9 tons of coal per truck is legally exported to Bangladesh with proper documents and now the question 'What happens to the amount of coal which does not appear in paper?' arises. The truck driver Leaderwell Dkhar disclosed that the real weigh his truck carries is 16 tons and only 9 tons appeared in the export document. What happened to the excess 7 tons which did not appear in paper? Where has this coal disappeared? If one is to use a simple calculation to estimate the loss in foreign exchange from this illegal act, it will accrue to the tune of 157500 US\$ (one hundred fifty seven and five hundred dollars) per

**The papers from the Meghalaya Directorate of Mineral Resources including the receipt from the weighbridge shows that the truck carries a shipment of 9 tons only**



The northeast is slowly becoming the drug addict's paradise; seen here are two images of which we should all be alarmed of: Alcoholism and drug abuse become a social problem everyday as more and more younger people get 'hooked' into this every day.

*Left - (Alcohol addiction photograph - Edvi)*

*Below - (Drug Photograph - Arunam Zhankeyev)*



which come by way of regulating free enterprise and preventing fair competition. Economics is essentially the science that studies supply and demand. We are told ad nauseam that when the demand exceeds supply, there is always the danger of inflation. For many, however, inflation is simply the rising cost of living; for the poor it means dipping further down the poverty index; not the Montek Singh Ahluwalia poverty benchmark of Rs. 32 a day, but real, stark poverty as experienced by nearly 70% of India's poor living in sub-human conditions without even a roof over their heads.

Rent seeking in many ways is economic nonsense because there is no public asset creation in this type of economy. Only when assets are created, can the economy revolve seamlessly to generate more wealth. In a rent seeking economy, the state resources are expended to enrich a few people who control political power. Since no new wealth is created in this process, rent-seeking reduces the sum of social wealth as well. Economists consider political lobbying as the prime activity in a rent-seeking economy. Hence when a government wants roads to be made, bridges and building to be constructed and water to be supplied to citizens, it pretends to call for tenders. But underhand deals have already been struck with contractors who pay money to win the bid/contract. Invariably fair competition is eliminated and what we have are sub-standard roads and water supply systems that go kaput after two years.

The ultimate losers in a rental economy are the public who depend on public services which are supposed to be provided by the government of the day. This is a great social loss. Economists like Gordon Tullock and Anne Krueger distinguish profit seeking from rent-seeking. Profit seeking is a natural corollary of all economic activities and helps add to wealth and asset creation but rent-seeking is debilitating because it goes against the very grain of good business practice in economics. It is the use of state power to distribute wealth between different groups of individuals who are close to the power centres. It results in money finding its way into the wrong hands and very often transactions happening only on paper. For instance, there are many roads and bridges which have been constructed on paper in this region. But when a physical inspection is carried out, those roads and bridges are non-existent.

The reason why we have audits and accounting systems is to ensure that rent-seeking does not become overwhelmingly predominant and turn our states into the category of failed states. But these systems have their limitations. They are not punitive in nature. Year after year, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), points out to blatant acts of corruption that are intrinsically

linked to the rental economy. The legislature is supposed to use these findings and to probe further into the irregularities so that the government is held accountable. Unfortunately the opposition parties in every state have today become just governments-in-waiting so they do not have the moral stamina to hold the executive responsible. This only seeks to reinforce rent-seeking and the destruction of the public economy.

In the North East rent-seeking has resulted in stalling of people-friendly policies such as the Mining Policy in Meghalaya, a sound Environmental Policy vis-à-vis power generation in Assam; a Policy on Water Resources in the entire North East; the building bye-laws etc. All these policies are stalled to provide undue advantages to the business lobby which pays politicians to sing their tune. Most of the economic regulations or tariffs are often pushed by vested interests in collaboration with government agencies particularly when the government agency must rely on the firms for knowledge about the market. Rent-seeking gives bureaucrats the opportunity to solicit bribes while applying their discretionary authority for awarding contracts or other benefits to clients. Officials of the taxation department often exempt legitimate taxes for some remuneration. So even while the exchequer loses, the individuals in the system gain personal wealth and clout. Mancur Olson studied the consequences of rent seeking in his book, "The Rise and Decline of Nations". He says, as a country becomes increasingly dominated by organized interest groups, it loses economic vitality and falls into decline. Olson argued that countries that have seen the collapse of a political regime and the interest groups that have entrenched themselves around it can radically improve productivity and increase national income when another regime comes in because they start with a clean slate in the aftermath of the collapse. An example of this is Japan after World War Two. But new coalitions form over time, once again shackling society in order to redistribute wealth and income to themselves.

Rent-seeking stunts economic growth. It hinders productivity and innovation which actually drives economic growth. But are the seven states listening? Are they accountable for the thousand of crores pumped into the region vide the various Five Year Plans? Why are people lethargic at seeking accountability? A rent-seeking economy has a definite shelf life. What happens when that false-bottomed economy collapse completely?

*(The author is Editor, The Shillong Times and Member, National Security Advisory Board)*

# DARWIN

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columnist, he was summoned to the Laitumkrah police station on an FIR filed by some supporters of Mining Minister BM Lanong. The five complainants, all belonging to the United Democratic Party (UDP) a coalition partner in the MUA Government (and the party Lanong was elected from) said that their MLA and senior party leader has been publicly defamed on account of the article. They asked the police to file "appropriate cases under relevant sections of the Press Council Act. Now the FIR is bad in law in that it has no legs to stand on. A defamation case can only be filed by an aggrieved party, not by anyone else on his/her behalf. And why would the police take on the task of writing to the Press Council of India on behalf of the complainants? The FIR should not have been registered in the first place since the complaint was non-cognisable. At best it is a civil suit under the IPC but only if filed by the person who claims to have been defamed.

Mohrmen was detained at the police station for over two hours and asked to sign a bail bond failing which he was

told he would be arrested. When senior media persons contacted senior police officials and briefed them on this case they realised they had blundered and released Mohrmen after taking a statement from him. But this is just a flavour of the kind of pressures that journalists in Meghalaya are working in. Last year I was summoned by the Privileges Committee on several occasions on grounds that were not tenable and did not amount to the breach of privileges of the MLAs. They included a letter to the editor written by a former IAS officer who is currently an activist. The general tendency of politicians here has been to gag public opinion because they can't accept the truth of their actions being exposed.

In the case of Mohrmen the complainants even got a copy of the 'Cabinet Memo' showing the date when the Mining Policy was discussed in the cabinet and later shelved. They wanted to prove to the world that the Mining Minister had indeed brought the matter to cabinet. But they never informed anyone how they got hold of documents that are actually

within the realm of "official documents" which still fall under the purview of the Official Secrets Act. If at all anyone was to get a copy of the Cabinet Memo they would have had to apply it through RTI. Evidently this means that an important document of the government had leaked out and that someone from the cabinet had breached that privilege. The Meghalaya Right to Information Movement (MRTIM) jumped into the issue and condemned the attempt to suppress press freedom and filed an RTI on how the 'cabinet memo' got into the hands of rank outsiders.

The case has now entered an interesting phase. It shows how powerful the mining lobby is and how political parties and their supporters dance to the tune of this lobby. We are yet to hear the last on this case. But the Shillong Press Club has remained united in the need to uphold press freedom at all costs and not to allow this freedom to be trampled upon by the enemies of democracy.

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