

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH NEW DELHI
(Original Jurisdiction)
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 94 OF 2026**

IN THE MATTER OF: -

News Item Titled 18 Killed in Blast at Illegal
Coal Mine in Meghalaya Appearing in The Hindu

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Filed By:

FILED ON: 14.05.2026



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BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL

PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 94 OF 2026

IN THE MATTER OF: -

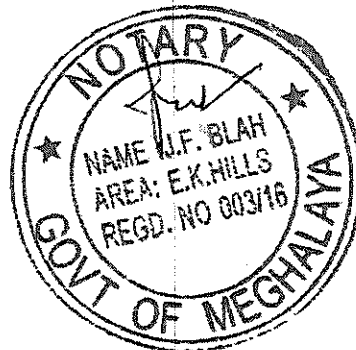
NEWS ITEM TITLED 18 KILLED IN BLAST AT ILLEGAL
COAL MINE IN MEGHALAYA APPEARING IN THE HINDU

REPLY AFFIDAVIT ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT NO. 1

STATE OF MEGHALAYA

I, Batlang Samuel Sohliya, IAS, the Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya, Mining and Geology Department, having office at Secretariat Building, Secretariat Hills, Shillong, Meghalaya – 793001, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as under:

1. That I am presently posted as the Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya, Mining and Geology Department and as such I am aware of the facts, circumstances and records pertaining to the instant case in my official capacity. I am competent and authorized to swear the present affidavit on behalf of Respondent No.1 – Chief Secretary, Government of Meghalaya.



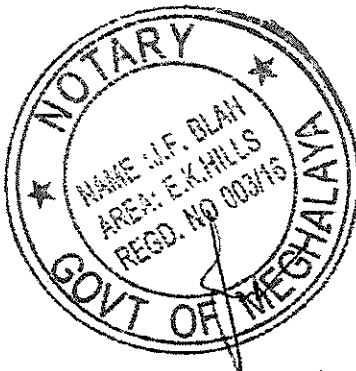
Secretary
to the Govt. of Meghalaya
Mining & Geology Department

Instrument No. 51
Date: 12/5/26

2. That it is most respectfully submitted that this Hon'ble Tribunal, vide its orders dated 06.02.2026 took *suo-moto* cognizance of a news-report published in the Hindu newspaper regarding the unfortunate incident of death of persons in dynamite blast in an illegal coal mine and had directed the State of Meghalaya to file a reply affidavit to the notice issued by this Hon'ble Tribunal.
3. It is further most respectfully submitted that simultaneously the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya has also taken *suo-moto* cognizance of the same incident in the pending case being PIL No.2 of 2022 titled as *In Re: (Sou Motu): Illegal Mining of coal in the State of Meghalaya Vs. State of Meghalaya & Ors.*, vide order dated 05.02.2026.

"13. This Court this evening itself, has come to learn from various electronic media reports, that there has been a mining tragedy again in Thangkso East Jaintia Hills, wherein, it is reported that there has been explosion in three illegal coal mines which has resulted in the loss of life and injuries to several persons. This Court is constrained to take judicial notice of these reports. It is not understood as to how illegal coal mining is continuing in this area inspite of the reported loss of life of one person in an incident that occurred on 14-01-2026.

14. It is therefore directed that the Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills to take immediate action to identify and cause arrest of the mine owners, operators and to seize all incriminating materials. Immediate assistance and medical aid to the affected/injured

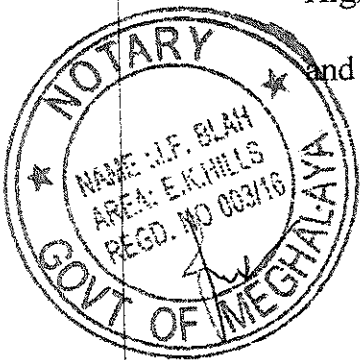


persons should be extended to the extent possible. It is further directed that the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills, shall appear in person on 09-02-2026 at 10.30 AM before this Court, with the details of the action taken and to furnish reasons as to why the situation has been allowed to continue. In the event there is no compliance, further orders will follow.

15. A copy of this order shall be communicated today itself to the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills by the Registry through email and hard copy. A copy of this order to also be furnished to the learned Advocate General by today itself.

A copy of the order passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya in PIL No.2 of 2022 dated 05.02.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-1.

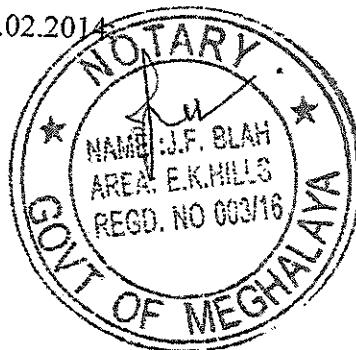
4. That the case was then listed before the Hon'ble High Court on 09.02.2026, when the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police of the East Jaintia Hills District were present in court and filed a status report dated 09.02.2026 regarding action taken for rescue and medical attention to victims, recovery of dead bodies and the police action of arrests and investigation. A copy of the order passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya dated 09.02.2026 and a copy of the report filed by the State of Meghalaya before the Hon'ble High Court in PIL No.2 of 2022 on 09.02.2026 are annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-2 and ANNEXURE-3 respectively.



Secretary
to the Govt. of Meghalaya
Mining & Geology Department

5. The State Government has also constituted a "Judicial Enquiry Commission" headed by Hon'ble Justice (Retd.) R.S. Chauhan, former Chief Justice of High Court of Uttarakhand and High Court of Telangana, under the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1952 vide notification dated 14.02.2026 and expanded the scope further vide addendum dated 03.03.2026 with following reference:

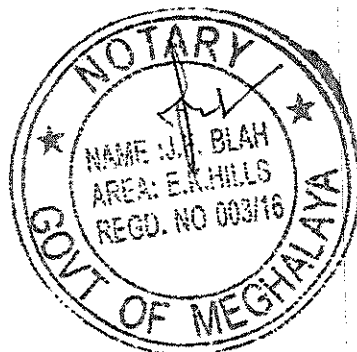
- (i) To inquire into the circumstances leading to the incident dated 05.02.2026 in the coal mine(s) located at Mynsgat-Thangkso Village, Khliehriat, East Jaintia Hills District Meghalaya;
- (ii) To submit a comprehensive fact-finding report on the acts and/or omissions of the persons and/or authorities concerned, including any failure to prevent the occurrence of the incident on 05.02.2026;
- (iii) To examine the root causes of illegal coal mining in the State of Meghalaya, including but not limited to the working conditions of the labourers and miners whose livelihoods depend on coal mining;
- (iv) To recommend remedial measures, including administrative and institutional reforms, to be adopted by the Government of Meghalaya to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in future;
- (v) To suggest appropriate measures, including financial package(s) or rehabilitation scheme(s) for persons whose livelihood depended on coal mining prior to it was banned by Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in Original Application No. 73/2014 vide order dated 17.02.2014.



- (vi) To suggest as to whether the Government of Meghalaya ought to approach Her Excellency the President of India for any relaxation / modification / exception in application of the provisions of the Mines and Mineral Development Act, 1957 or any other applicable law passed by the Parliament under para 12(A)(b) of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution in view of the traditional practices of mining prevalent in the State of Meghalaya. And
- (vii) To examine the nexus between the demand for and supply of illegally mined coal in the State of Meghalaya and the role of such persons, or authority, non-state groups including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and to recommend measures for strengthening institutional mechanisms, fixing accountability and preventing recurrence.”

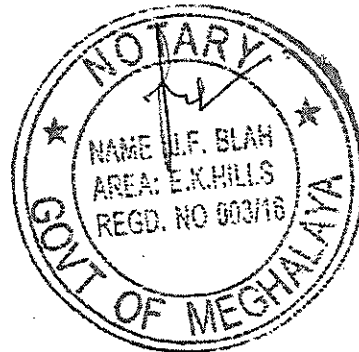
A copy of notification constituting Judicial Enquiry Commission bearing No. POL.18/2026/7 dated 14.02.2026 with addendum dated 03.03.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-4.

6. That the State Government has also constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) including high-ranked police officers from outside the district as well to investigate the incident vide Memo No. MG/Court-427/2026/8-A dated 12.02.2026. Vide addendum dated 27.02.2026 the Inspector General of Police (L&O), Meghalaya was made chairman of the SIT. A copy of the notification issued by the Government of Meghalaya constituting SIT dated 12.02.2026 with



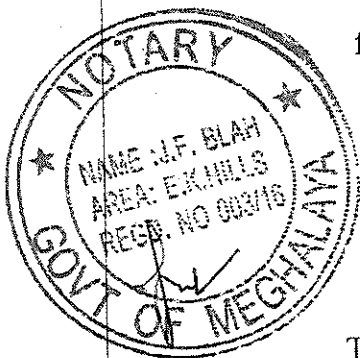
addendum dated 27.02.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE-5.**

7. That both these developments along with an exhaustive action taken report covering all aspects of the matter including action taken against concerned officers as well and transfer of Superintendent of Police of the concerned District as well were placed before the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya by way of a detailed action taken report filed by the State of Meghalaya in PIL No.2 of 2022 on 19.02.2026. A copy of the report filed by the State of Meghalaya before Hon'ble High Court in PIL No.2 of 2022 dated 19.02.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE-6.**
8. That the Hon'ble High court noted the filing of an action taken report and directed presence of both the incumbent and previous Superintendents of Police of the District on next date and listed the case for further hearing on 24.02.2026. A copy of the order passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya in PIL No.2 of 2022 dated 19.02.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE-7.**
9. That during the course of hearing dated 24.02.2026, the Hon'ble High Court noted that broadly following action has been initiated by the State:



- a. Interim financial relief/compensation, wherein it is stated Rs. 24,00,000/- has since been disbursed to the next of kin of 8 deceased persons.
- b. Judicial Enquiry Commission to conduct an enquiry into the circumstances leading to the incident dated 05.02.2026, and submission of fact-finding report and a Special Investigation Team to conduct a comprehensive investigation leading to the incident and to identify violations of court's orders or NGT directions etc.
- c. FIRs registered, arrest of persons, recovery/seizure of illegal coal, recovery of explosives, wherein it is reported 77 FIRs have been registered and 14 persons have been arrested including 3 mine owners, seizure of 16,260.5 MT illegal coal and explosives (74 detonators, 25.5 Kg of Gelatine sticks)
- d. Seizure of allied equipment and dismantling of cranes etc.
- e. Action against erring officers; suspension of 2 officers in charge of concerned Police Outpost and transfer of Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills.
- f. Mobilization of 5 Enforcement Team on a daily basis in East Jaintia Hills District comprising a Magistrate, Police personnel and officials from DMR, the registration of FIRs at Khliehriat Police Station and the utilization of drones through which FIRs have also been registered.

The Hon'ble High Court also directed that the reference of Judicial Enquiry Commission should also include fixing of accountability and liability of such persons, or authority on whom

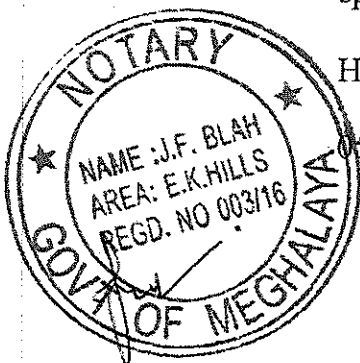


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responsibility can be fixed to enable action to be taken against them in accordance with law and investigation and enquiry into the nexus between the supply and demand of illegal coal, inasmuch as, no illegal extraction would occur if the same was not fuelled by demand which makes this dangerous activity highly profitable. Hon'ble High Court also ordered that SIT be headed by a more senior officer than the Dy. Inspector General of Police.

The Hon'ble High Court also observed that it will also examine the manner of the transport of illegally extracted coal and the role of transport officials, Police, non-State players, such as NGOs, which is part of the whole chain in the facilitation of illegal mining operations. A copy of the order passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya in PIL No.2 of 2022 dated 24.02.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-8.

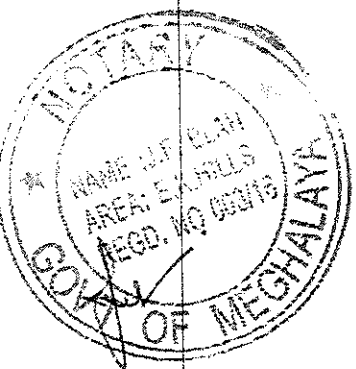
10. That during the course of hearing dated 05.03.2026, the Hon'ble High Court has been pleased to register a Miscellaneous Case bearing M.C. (PIL) No.4 of 2026 in the pending PIL No.2 of 2022 to specifically deal with this incident. A copy of order passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya in PIL No.2 of 2022 dated 05.03.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-9.



11. That the Hon'ble High Court then proceeded to pass a separate order in M.C. (PIL) No.4 of 2026 on the same date, i.e. 05.03.2026 observing that in compliance with previous orders, the reference of the Judicial Enquiry Commission has been expanded, and the SIT is not headed by the Inspector General of Police (Law & Order). Hon'ble Court further noted transfer and action against some officials of the Mining and Geology Department of the State as well and directed the State Government to place further action taken report on the issues of disbursement of compensation, investigation by SIT and progress of investigation of connected FIRs. A copy of A copy of order passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya in M.C. (PIL) No.4 of 2026 dated 05.03.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE-10**.

12. That in compliance with the directions passed by the Hon'ble High Court, a further status report was filed by the State Government dated 15.04.2026 which was noted by the Hon'ble High Court in its order dated 15.04.2026 and the case was listed for 27.04.2026 for consideration of the action taken report. A copy of the order passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya dated 15.04.2026 along with a copy of action report filed by the State Government before the Hon'ble High Court M.C. (PIL) No.4 of 2026 dated 15.04.2026 are

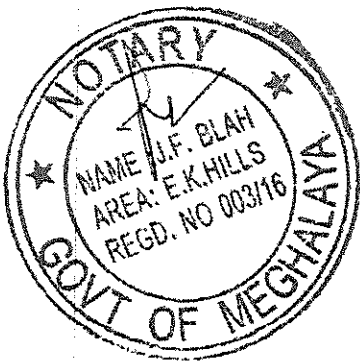
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annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-11 and ANNEXURE R-12 respectively.

13. That during the course of hearing dated 27.04.2026 the Hon'ble High Court noted that in respect of several FIRs arrests have already been made and in some cases even charge-sheets have been filed. It has also been noted that the Special Investigation Team headed by the Inspector General of Police (L&O) has also been filed along with the action taken report by the State and directed that the SIT will also look into the complicity of State officers/officials in the incident and complete the investigation more proactively. The Hon'ble Court has then directed that an action taken report be filed and listed the matter for further consideration on 01.06.2026. A copy of the report of the SIT filed on 24.04.2026 along with order passed by the Hon'ble High Court in M.C. (PIL) No.4 of 2026 dated 27.04.2026 are annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-13 and ANNEXURE R-14 respectively.
14. That some of the action taken by the State Government, as placed before the Hon'ble High Court by way of various status reports, are summarised hereinbelow:


- a. On the recommendation of the SIT, One Hundred Fifty-Nine (159) Police Officers and personnels along with Dy.

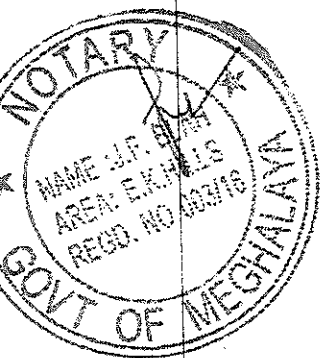


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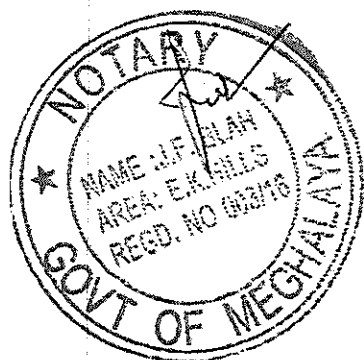
Superintendent of Police and Superintendent of Police have been transferred to ensure fair investigation and two officers concerned have been suspended and notice for departmental enquiry has been issued to them.

- b. The State Government has transferred the Divisional Mining Officer, Jowai, West Jaintia Hills District and posted as Divisional Mining Officer, Williamnagar, East Garo Hills District. Furthermore, Mining Officer, Directorate of Mineral Resources, Shillong, presently holding additional charge as In-charge Divisional Mining Officer, Williamnagar, East Garo Hills District is transferred and posted as In-charge Divisional Mining Officer, Jowai, West Jaintia Hills District on 03.03.2026.
- c. The charge-sheet has been filed in the case of Thangkso mine blast, and all identified accused have been arrested. The identification of unidentified accused is in progress.
- d. Interim compensation to 13 deceased has been paid till now and for the rest of them several of whom are not Indian citizens, efforts to contact their relatives through Indian embassies are in process
- e. That it is most respectfully submitted that as part of the enforcement drive undertaken in the district, a significant number of cases have been registered relating to illegal mining, transportation and associated offences
- i. 9 No. of FIRs registered related to illegal extraction of coal.


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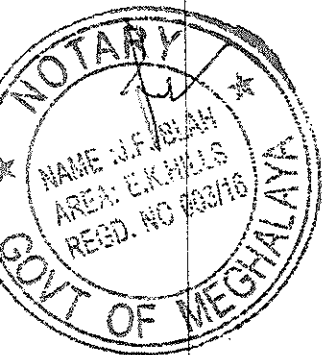
- ii. 19 No. of FIRs registered related to illegal transportation of coal.
 - iii. 4 No. of FIR registered related to theft of seized coal.
 - iv. 2 No. of FIRs registered related to seizures of explosives suspected to be used for illegal mining of coal.
 - v. 4 No. of Mobile Patrolling Teams deployed.
 - vi. 4 No. of Foot Patrolling Teams deployed.
 - vii. 5 No. of flying squads deployed.
 - viii. 4 No. of NGT Check Points set-up.
 - ix. 92 No. of drone surveys conducted.
 - x. 5 No. of Executive Magistrate reported for operation.
 - xi. 5 No. of mining department officers reported for operation.
 - xii. 10 No. of machinery dismantled.
 - xiii. 37 No. of Explosive Magazine inspected in the district.
 - xiv. 34 No. of Notice issued u/s 35(3) BNSS/41 (A) CrPC.
 - xv. Quantity of coal seized: 18,892.966 (assessed coal)
 - xvi. 55 No. of vehicles seized.
 - xvii. Quantity of Explosive Materials Seized: 25.5 Kgs of Gelatin
 - xviii. 74 Nos. of Detonators seized
- f. Continuous enforcement measures are being undertaken to disrupt the supply chain involved in the transportation of illegally mined coal. Naka checking, raids, seizure operations, and routine patrolling are being conducted on a daily basis at strategic locations including highways, feeder roads, and other vulnerable routes suspected to be used for illegal transportation. Coal-laden trucks found transporting coal without valid authorization are being seized and persons involved in illegal mining and transportation are being



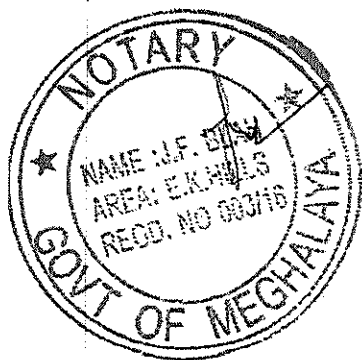
apprehended. Close coordination is also being maintained with the Police Department, the Mining Department, and Transport authorities to strengthen enforcement and ensure effective monitoring.

- g. Vulnerable areas prone to illegal coal mining activities have been identified based on field intelligence, past enforcement records, and inputs from local authorities. Surveillance and monitoring of such areas are being carried out on a continuous basis. Drone-based monitoring is also being utilized, particularly in remote and difficult terrain, to detect and assess suspected illegal mining activities. Such monitoring is being primarily undertaken by the Office of the Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District, in coordination with other concerned departments.
- h. The Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills District propounded a detailed monitoring mechanism vide letter No. EJHD/Judl.4/ Vol-XV/ 2025/245, dated 20.03.2026, wherein following decisions have been taken for prevention of all illegal mining activities in the district:
- i. Executive Magistrates deputed Police Station wise, who are to coordinate with respective Officer in Charge/In-charge, official of The Mining Department to conduct surprise checks/ inspections on vulnerable pockets to detect any instance of illegal mining activity and take action as per the MMDR Act- (Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue Branch), East Jaintia Hills District, Khliehriat shall supervise the overall enforcement drive in coordination with deputed Executive Magistrates, Police and representatives from DMR).

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- ii. Executive Magistrates to submit monthly reports of joint inspection, any FIRs/ complaints received in the respective Police Station- (Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills District, Khliehriat shall compile and forward the consolidated report to the Mining Department).
 - iii. Drone-based monitoring to be undertaken in hard-to-reach/inaccessible areas and reports of the same to be attached with monthly inspection reports- (Divisional Mining Officer, Jowai shall be overall in charge for regular Drone Surveys along with Police and submit a report to the office of the undersigned).
 - iv. A monthly review meeting with all Executive Magistrates, Superintendent of Police, Officer In charge/ In-charges will be conducted to review and monitor the situation, inspection reports, and for forward transmission to the Mining Department- (Deputy Commissioner, Khliehriat and Superintendent of Police, Khliehriat will monitor the adherence of the above measures).
-
- i. The Police Headquarters has shifted 2 (two) more drones to East Jaintia Hills District, the said district being more vulnerable and also being the district with the most production to tackle illegal mining in far-flung areas.
 - j. Superintendent of Police directed that the Executive Magistrates, Officer In-charge/ In-charges gather actionable inputs from the ground and coordinate with the headman, especially in vulnerable pockets to detect any incident of illegal mining- which the Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District shall monitor and The Addl. Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District,

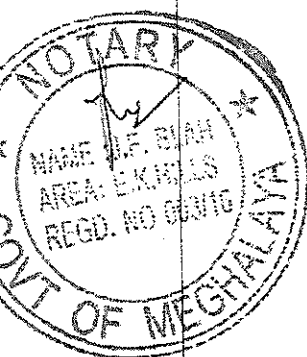


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has been designated as the Nodal Officer for conducting drone surveillance within the jurisdiction of East Jaintia Hills District

- k. The State Government, through the Home (Political) Department, has approved the proposal submitted by the Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District, for the deployment of 30 (thirty) Home Guards Volunteers.
 - l. Simultaneously, the one-man Committee of Hon'ble Justice (Retd). B.P. Katakey, constituted by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya in PIL No.2 of 2022 is also monitoring the factual position on grounds insofar as action taken by the State Government is concerned and is submitting periodic reports before the Hon'ble High Court on all issues pertaining to coal mining, transportation, storage and allied activities in the State.
15. That it is most respectfully submitted that in addition to the above, the Oversight Committee constituted by this Hon'ble Tribunal vide order dated 15.02.2021 passed in O.A. No.110(THC) /2012 as custodian of all funds collected as Meghalaya Environment Protection and Restoration Fund (MEPRF) under orders of this Hon'ble Tribunal is also overseeing and continuously evaluating the implementation of the activities such as closure of abandoned mines, reclamation of affected area, alternative livelihoods and other programmes as per action plan approved by this Hon'ble Tribunal in O.A. No.110(THC) /2012. The above aspect is also being continuously monitored by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya in

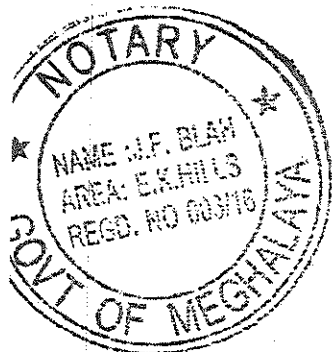

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Mining & Geology Department



PIL No.2 of 2022 with the assistance of the committee of Hon'ble Justice (Retd). B.P. Katakey.

- 16. That it is most respectfully submitted that the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya has also taken suo-moto cognizance and is actively seized of the identical issue arising out of the same incident which is the subject matter of the present *suo-moto* proceedings before this Hon'ble Tribunal. Although this Hon'ble Tribunal has the jurisdiction to register and examine the issues involved in the present case, it would result in multiplicity of proceedings on the same issue before a constitutional court and a statutory tribunal.
- 17. That it is thus most humbly submitted that various orders passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya in the Suo-Moto proceedings in the incident which is subject matter of present application, along with all the action taken by the State Government is being placed on record of this Hon'ble Tribunal for kind consideration and passing of appropriate orders as may be deemed fit and proper.

It is prayed accordingly.




Identified by
Koseff
(Smt. K.S. Mangkiew)
Advocate - Shillong

NOTARY
East Khasi Hills District
Government of Meghalaya

17/5/26

DEPONENT WHO VERIFIED

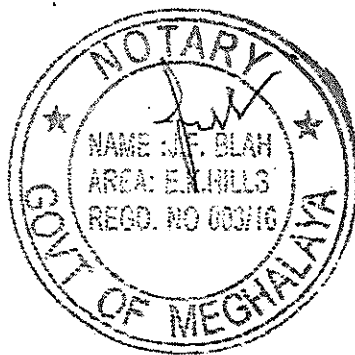

DEPONENT
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Mining & Geology Department

VERIFICATION:

Verified at Shillong on this 12th day of May 2026 that the contents of the above affidavit are true and correct to the best of knowledge and belief of the deponent based on official records of the State Government and nothing is false and nothing material is concealed therefrom.



DEPONENT
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Mining & Geology Department



132

ANNEXURE 1

Serial No. 01
Regular List

HIGH COURT OF MEGHALAYA
AT SHILLONG

PIL No. 2 of 2022

Date of Order: 05.02.2026

In Re: (Sou Motu): Illegal Mining of Vs. State of Meghalaya & Ors.
coal in the State of Meghalaya

Coram:

Hon'ble Mr. Justice H. S. Thangkhiew, Judge
Hon'ble Mr. Justice W. Diengdoh, Judge

Appearance:

For the Petitioner(s) :

For the Respondent(s) : Mr. A. Kumar, AG
Ms. R. Colney, GA (For R 1)
Mr. A.M. Dutta, Adv.
vice Mr. M.Z. Ahmed, Sr. Adv. (For R 2)

Per. H.S. Thangkhiew, Judge:

1. A Status Report on behalf of the State respondents to the Thirty Fourth Interim Report of Hon'ble Mr. Justice B.P. Katakey Committee (Retd.), has been filed.
2. A salient feature of the Status Report is with regard to the initiation of process of auction of re-assessed/re-verified coal by Coal India Limited, and the variation in figures in this respect has been attributed to the

fact that the same has arisen on account of reliance on 2(two) separate auction reference dates, and not on account of any physical shortage. A letter of Directorate of Mineral Resources dated 09.01.2025, has been annexed to substantiate this fact.

3. With regard to the illegal mining site at Kremlangshait Forest, Lumbangla, East Jaintia Hills, the action taken has been detailed in the Report such as the dismantling of machinery, destruction of makeshift camps, barricading the mining site etc. and the seizure Memo has been annexed. Further, the Report has elaborated on the steps taken on the directions of the Committee, and pursuant to a meeting held on 11.12.2025, and a copy of the Minutes dated 11.12.2025, has been annexed in the Status Report, which amongst others, had directed for the deputation of Executive Magistrates Police Station wise, who are to coordinate with respective Officer-in-Charge, officials of Mining Department to conduct surprise checks/inspections on vulnerable pockets to detect any instance of illegal mining activity. Further directions are for the submission of a monthly reports, to undertake Drone base monitoring in hard and inaccessible areas, and the same to be attached with the said monthly report. It has also been stated that directions have been issued for monthly review meetings with all the concerned officials; for gathering actionable inputs from ground and to coordinate with local headmen for detection of illegal mining.

4. It has also been reported that in compliance with the recommendations of the Committee, steps are being taken for identification of vulnerable areas and preventive measures that are to be taken. The process of reaching out to coal dumps found during aerial survey by M/s Garuda, in South West Khasi Hills, has also been conducted, and it is reported that coal was found only in 1(one) location of around 5.6 MT, as compared to 6.38 MT, said to be detected, and that in the remaining 27 (twenty-seven) locations, no coal was found.
5. With regard to East Jaintia Hills, it is reported that physical verification in respect of 1572 dumps as reported by M/s Garuda, have been undertaken. It is reported that though the quantity of coal as per M/s Garuda is 1,80,299.48 MT, the quantity detected as per physical verification is 1,43,939 MT, and the discrepancy is sought to be attributed to mis-detection or mis-interpretation of digital data. A letter addressed to the Deputy Commissioner by the Divisional Mining Officer dated 09.01.2026, containing a summary of Physical Cross Verification on missing coal has been submitted, to this effect. The said letter also indicates the filing of FIRs on missing coal of various quantities.
6. As far as West Khasi Hills in concerned, it is reported that physical verification has been completed and the process of shifting of seized coal to the designated depots would soon commence.

7. In South West Khasi Hills, it is reported that the District Administration has sought permission for shifting of 3,039.92 MT of seized coal from Rajaju and Diengngan Villages to the demarcated CIL designated depots, and that investigation into the missing coal is being actively pursued. It is also reported in the inspection report that 17(seventeen) illegal coke chimneys have been demolished in West Khasi Hills and 11(eleven) in East Jaintia Hills. The learned AG has however prayed that he may be allowed to obtain specific information as to whether there is any other illegal coke plant that is yet to be demolished.

8. On the other matters, it is reported that recovery proceedings have been pursued against defaulting coke oven plants and industrial units, resulting in recovery of Rs. 1,50,18,857/-, and that enforcement action has been taken in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee. The Report also touches upon the mobilization of funds deposited with the Central Pollution Control Board for formulation of livelihood schemes, and the process for recovery of demurrage charges to be paid to the successful bidders. A Draft Report for mine closure and restoration of mining affected areas for pilot site in East Jaintia Hills and South Garo Hills, it is reported has been submitted for technical review by the Directorate of Mineral Resources. A perusal of the Report, it is seen that at Page-18 (Annexure-1) thereof, a summary of completion of coal transportation from pithead to depot with the

quantity sold and the quantity left to be auctioned, as also seized coal put up for auction in 1(one) depot, has been furnished.

9. This Court in spite of the steps taken, however, directs the State respondents to furnish a detailed report by obtaining the details from the CIL and from the District Administration with regard to the quantity of coal left to be auctioned which are lying in the depots, the quantity already sold/auctioned, the quantity of seized coal to be put up for auction, and as to whether the seized coal is in any way being stocked together with the re-assessed/re-inventoried and re-verified coal that has been transported to the CIL designated depots.

10. The Thirty Fifth Interim Report has also been filed by the Committee on 17.01.2026, and it has flagged the issue that East Jaintia Hills is the most affected District in the State of Meghalaya in terms of coal mining activities, which have been held to be illegal by the NGT and by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, as well as the largescale continuance of illegal mining activities, which has been reported from time to time in the said District. The Interim Report also notes the incident of an accident, whereby persons have lost their lives while engaged in illegal coal mining, such as the incident that occurred on 14.01.2026 in Thangkso under Khliehriat Police Station, wherein PS Case No. 11/2026, has been registered.

11. As the recommendations of the Thirty Fifth Interim Report is exhaustive, especially with regard to the pro-active steps to be taken to contain the continuance of the present state of affairs, especially illegal mining, which this Court finds distressing, the State respondents shall therefore file a detailed status report to the Thirty Fifth Interim Report with 4(four) weeks.

12. It is further directed that a remuneration of a sum of Rs. 3 Lakhs including other amounts for secretarial expenses, be paid to the Hon'ble Mr. Justice B.P. Katakey (Retd.).

13. This Court this evening itself, has come to learn from various electronic media reports, that there has been a mining tragedy again in Thangkso East Jaintia Hills, wherein, it is reported that there has been explosion in three illegal coal mines which has resulted in the loss of life and injuries to several persons. This Court is constrained to take judicial notice of these reports. It is not understood as to how illegal coal mining is continuing in this area inspite of the reported loss of life of one person in an incident that occurred on 14-01-2026.

14. It is therefore directed that the Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills to take immediate action to identify and cause arrest of the mine owners, operators and to seize all incriminating materials. Immediate assistance and medical aid to the

affected/injured persons should be extended to the extent possible. It is further directed that the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills, shall appear in person on 09-02-2026 at 10.30 AM before this Court, with the details of the action taken and to furnish reasons as to why the situation has been allowed to continue. In the event there is no compliance, further orders will follow.

15. A copy of this order shall be communicated today itself to the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills by the Registry through email and hard copy. A copy of this order to also be furnished to the learned Advocate General by today itself.

16. List this matter on 09.02.2026.

(W. Diengdoh)
Judge

(H.S. Thangkhiew)
Judge

Meghalaya
05.02.2026
"V. Lyndem PS"

ANNEXURE 2

Serial No. 02
Regular List

HIGH COURT OF MEGHALAYA
AT SHILLONG

PIL No. 2 of 2022

Date of Order: 09.02.2026

In Re: (Sou Motu): Illegal Mining of Vs. State of Meghalaya & Ors.
coal in the State of Meghalaya

Coram:

Hon'ble Mr. Justice H. S. Thangkhiew, Judge
Hon'ble Mr. Justice W. Diengdoh, Judge

Appearance:

For the Petitioner(s) :

For the Respondent(s) : Mr. A. Kumar, AG
Ms. R. Colney, GA (For R 1)

Per. H.S. Thangkhiew, Judge:

1. As directed by the order dated 05.02.2026, Shri Manish Kumar, Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills District and Shri Vikash Kumar, Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District are present in Court today.

2. A Status Report with regard to the steps taken after the blast at Thangsko has been placed before this Court, and what has been highlighted is the shortage of personnel, apart from the steps taken of registering a case

and arrest of 2(two) persons. This Court at this stage will not pass any detailed orders but directs for a detailed report to be filed within 10(ten) days as to the further steps taken in the entire District with regard to the illegal mining sites, seizure of illegal mining equipment and arrest of persons involved in the illegal Rat-hole mining, especially at Mynsngat-Thangsko. Further orders will be passed with regard to the award of further compensation, after the report is received. In the detailed report, the investigation carried out with regard to the earlier incident that occurred on 14.01.2026 at Thangsko, resulting in the death of a labourer from Assam, should also be included.

3. A Thirty Sixth Interim Report has also been filed by Hon'ble Mr. Justice B.P. Katakey Committee, who has visited the accident site at Mynsngat-Thangsko along with photographs and information received relating to casualties in the incident. Photographs have also been annexed to show that there has been rampant mining in adjoining areas, such as Mopala and Sakhain Villages, as well as in the other nearby areas, it appears with impunity to the orders of the Court and the Rule of Law.

4. The Report is distressing and reflects the dereliction in the discharge of duties by the authorities concerned. This Court makes it clear that accountability will be fixed, and if necessary further orders will be passed for institution of a proper investigation and inquiry, by an independent or central agency.

5. A copy of the Thirty Sixth Interim Report of Hon'ble Mr. Justice B.P. Katakey Committee be given to the learned Advocate General.
6. The personal appearance of the Deputy Commissioner is dispensed with for the time being, the Superintendent of Police to remain present on the next date.
7. List this matter on 19.02.2026.

(W. Diengdoh)
Judge

(H.S. Thangkhiew)
Judge

Meghalaya
09.02.2026
"V. Lyndem PS"

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REPORT SUBMITTED ON 09/02/26

(1)

ANNEXURE 3

**GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE,
EAST JAINTIA HILLS DISTRICT, KHLIEHRIAT, MEGHALAYA**

Letter No. DSB/KLT/X-47/2026/244 Dated Khliehriat, the 9th February 2026

Subject : **PIL No. 2of 2022 -Inre Suo Motu Illegal mining of coal in the
State of Meghalaya Vs State of Meghalaya and Ors.**

Reference: **Letter No. GA/MHC/C-(49)18/627 Date 6th February 2026.**

Sir,

With reference to the subject above and letter under reference , I am furnishing herewith the detailed report as under:

On 05th February 2026 at approximately 08:00 AM, the In-charge of Umpleng police outpost UBSI Onixon Nongtdu received information that an explosion has occurred in an illegal coal mine situated at Mynsgat under Thangsko area under the jurisdiction of Umpleng police outpost, East Jaintia Hills District.

Further, it was reported that because of the explosion several miners are suspected to be trapped inside the mines, in addition it was also suspected that several miners have sustained serious injuries. On receipt of information officers and personnel from Umpleng police outpost proceeded to the place of occurrence. Upon verification it was confirmed that an explosion has occurred inside an illegal coal mine, and several persons were suspected to be trapped.

Subsequently, rescue and disaster response operations were initiated and during the course of the rescue operation, total of 18 (eighteen) dead bodies were recovered from the site of explosion and 1 (one) injured person was rescued and immediately shifted to Sutnga Community Health centre (CHC), and referred to a higher medical centre for further treatment on 5th February 2026.

In connection with the incident, Suo-motu case was registered vide Khliehriat PS case no. 14/2026 U/S 105/118(2)/3(5) BNS r/w sec 21/21(1) MMDR Act r/w sec 3 Explosive Substances Act and investigation has commenced. 2 (two) accused persons Shri Shamehi War (42 yrs) s/o (L) wiseman Syrti r/o Wailing Sutnga, East Jaintia Hills District and Shri Forme Chyrmang (36 yrs) s/o (L) Kom Dkhar r/o Jalaphet Pyrdung, East Jaintia Hills District were arrested and produced before the Hon'ble Court with a prayer to remand the accused persons to 7 days of police custody and accordingly, the accused person have been remanded to 3 (three) days Police Custody.

The arrested accused persons were thoroughly examined, and their statements were recorded u/s 181 BNSS. They stated that they owned the illegal coal mines at Mynsyngat, Thangsko area where the explosion occurred and they conduct the mining operations through their sordars/supervisors.

Both the arrested accused persons led the police team to the location where the illegal coal mines were situated adjacent to each other. Another coal mine was also identified at the site and on investigation it was found that the illegal coal mine belongs to Shri. Ernest Swer s/o Shri. W. Bareh r/o Khliehriat, East Jaintia Hills District. Investigating Officer recovered and seized 11 non-electric detonators

(2)

and approx. 1 meter of cordex wire and Shock wave tubes (already blasted) on the leading of the accused persons.

Several injured persons were rescued and shifted to various hospitals with a request to the medical officers to provide medical assistance and recording of dying declaration. The medical officer at NEIGHRIMS on 07th February 2026 recorded the statement of 9 (nine) persons who were admitted to the Hospital for treatment. A total of 27 (twenty Seven) dead bodies have been recovered and 20 (twenty) dead bodies has been identified and after post mortem the dead bodies have been handed over to the relatives, currently 7 (seven) dead bodies remain unidentified and efforts are being made to identify the same, accordingly WT messages has been sent to all ICs and OCs of Northeast States in this regard.

Further, the investigation is underway, and active all-out efforts are being made to apprehend the suspects Shri. Ernest Swer, Shri. Prakash Dkhar, Shri. Lakshman Nepali, Shri Ransing Syiemlieh@Mithun who are currently evading arrest and additional efforts are being made to identify all the Sordars of the illegal coal mines, the prayer shall also be made to the Honorable Court for the issuance of NBWA and proclamation and attachment of the accused person evading arrest.

The Search and Rescue teams are actively making efforts to rescue more persons with the help of NDRF, SDRF and all available resources at the disposal of the district administration. **(Gist of the steps taken after the reporting of the incident has been annexed as "Annexure - A")**

It is to be informed that the total geographical area of Thagsko area is approx. 400 SQ kms and it is completely uninhabited and forest area. The area can only be accessed by 4*4 vehicles and it takes around 3 hours to reach the place of occurrence. The land possession of this area is not owned by any individual, but this is an Elaka land under the control of the Dolo of Sutnga Elaka. There is no designated traditional headman of the area. These underlying conditions make collection of local intelligence, dissemination of information about illegal coal mining extremely difficult.

It is pertinent to highlight that the sanctioned strength of the district executive force is 249 including all ranks. Currently there is vacancy of 33 including Deputy Superintendent of police, inspectors, sub-inspectors, constables. **(Rank wise details has been annexed as "Annexure-B")**. Umpleng police outpost has the sanctioned strength of 32 including officers and personnel. However, only 12 is the current actual strength of this outpost. **(Thana-wise details of the personnel posted has been annexed as "Annexure -C")**

The list of the LMV vehicles deployed in various Police Stations, outposts, police patrol post, Border outpost, Traffic cell has been included in **"Annexure - D"**. It is to be informed that district has the shortage of the 4*4 vehicles, and this is a major handicap along with the shortage of manpower in conducting enforcement exercise, patrolling duty in inaccessible areas.

The geographical spread of Thagsko area has boundary with Karbi Anglong district of Assam in north, West Jaintia Hills district in west and cachar district of Assam in East direction. The clandestine extraction of illegal coal and its transportation happen through the jungle routes and due to lack of personnel and suitable vehicles, enforcement in that area is difficult. The geographical boundary

of Thangsko area, lack of habitation, absence of traditional headman and inaccessible terrain is vast challenge in terms of policing and enforcement work by the District task force.

It is to inform that one IED blast had occurred in the district in Shymplong on 15th December 2025 and its responsibility was claimed by HNLC, the banned organization under UAPA and one Special Investigation Team was constituted under the supervision of the Superintendent of Police. This case was investigated meticulously and 2(two) accused persons, who were responsible for the blast, were arrested on 20th December 2025. The district police force had to work hard to thwart any nefarious design to attack public or private property to terrorize or scare people in Meghalaya in general and East Jaintia Hills district in particular. The district police had received various inputs and source information about possible IED blasts in strategic places in the district and Meghalaya in the month of December 2025 and January 2026. As the district has 54 kilometers of International Boundary with Bangladesh, the DEF was engaged in handling this security scenario and focus had shifted towards the southern part of the district. The vigilant teams of the DEF were able to thwart various threats. District police arrested two HNLC cadres on 22nd January 2026 who had orders to conduct IED explosion in various places in the district and state. Their arrest led to the stopping of two more blasts which they had planned to conduct in strategic areas of the state. Due to the recent political turmoil in Bangladesh, these challenges were a national security threat and as the district is having its strategic location, it was focused in handling these challenges.

Also, the district executive force is engaged in detection and recovery of drugs, management of traffic along highway and investigation and prevention of crime and is currently over-stretched due to lack of officers and personnel.

Two number of drones has been provided to the district for enforcement related to illegal extraction and transportation of illegal coal. However, the limitations in terms of flying time, distance coverage, proximity required with the handler etc. possess a significant challenge. Considering these scenario, Meghalaya Basin Development Agency (MBDA)'s specialized services may be used to map illegal mining operations and may be shared with District task force for necessary action within strict time frame.

The steps taken by the district task force in last two months (December 2025-February 2026) has been highlighted in "**Annexure -E**". Additional steps taken after the illegal mine blast has been highlighted in "**Annexure -F**". Also, the plan of action that will be taken by the District task force has been annexed in "**Annexure - G**".

Submitted for favor of kind information and necessary action.


Superintendent of Police,
East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat

To,
The learned Advocate General,

(4)

Meghalaya, Shillong.**Copy for favor of kind information and necessary action, if any, to:**

1. The Assistant Inspector General of Police, (A), Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information of The Director General of Police, Meghalaya, Shillong.
2. The Inspector General of Police (L&O), Meghalaya, Shillong.
3. The Dy. Inspector General of Police, (ER), Meghalaya, Shillong.
4. The Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills District, Khliehriat.
5. The Assistant Inspector General of Police, (L&O), Meghalaya, Shillong.
6. Office copy.

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ANNEXURE 4

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
HOME (POLITICAL) DEPARTMENT
Email id: political.dept-meg@gov.in / Ph. 0364 2223359

ORDERS BY THE GOVERNOR

Dated Shillong, the 14th February, 2026

NO.POL.18/2026/7

NOTIFICATION

1. Whereas reports have been received regarding the incident which occurred on the 5th February, 2026 at a coal mine at Mynsngat-Thangsko Village, Khliehriat, East Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya.
2. And whereas, having regard to the aforesaid facts and the larger issues arising out of illegal coal mining and the consequent loss of human life, the State Government considers it necessary to institute an inquiry under the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1952 (60 of 1952);
3. Now therefore, in exercise of the power conferred by Section 3 of the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1952 (60 of 1952), the Governor is pleased to appoint a Commission of Inquiry headed by **Justice (Retd.) R.S. Chauhan** who would be the Chairman of the Commission and consisting of members, Shri. H. Nongpluh, IPS (Retd.) and Shri. P.S. Dkhar, IAS (Retd.), to inquire into the incident at Mynsngat-Thangsko Village, Khliehriat, East Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya under the below-mentioned terms of reference:
 - a) To inquire into the circumstances leading to the incident dated 05.02.2026 in the coal mine(s) located at Mynsngat-Thangsko Village, Khliehriat, East Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya;
 - b) To submit a comprehensive fact-finding report on the acts and/or omissions of the persons and/or authorities concerned, including any failure to prevent the occurrence of the incident on 05.02.2026;
 - c) To examine the root causes of illegal coal mining in the State of Meghalaya, including but not limited to the working conditions of labourers and miners whose livelihoods depend on coal mining;
 - d) To recommend remedial measures, including administrative and institutional reforms, to be adopted by the Government of Meghalaya to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in the future;

- e) To suggest appropriate measures, including financial package(s) or rehabilitation scheme(s), for persons whose livelihood depended on coal mining prior to it was banned by Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in Original Application No. 73/2014 vide order dated 17.02.2014; and
- f) To suggest as to whether the Government of Meghalaya ought to approach Her Excellency the President of India for any relaxation / modification / exception in application of the provisions of the Mines and Mineral Development Act, 1957 or any other applicable law passed by the Parliament under Para 12(A)(b) of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution in view of the traditional practices of mining prevalent in the State of Meghalaya.
4. The Commission may submit its report embodying the findings and its recommendations thereon to the State Government within a period of 6 (Six) months from the date of this notification.
 5. The Commission shall formulate its own procedure, and may give to all concerned such notice of Inquiry and all the procedures formulated by it as it may consider necessary and proper.
 6. The place for conduct of the proceedings shall be Shillong unless otherwise directed by the Commission.
 7. Having regard to the nature of the enquiry to be made and other circumstances of the case, it is also directed the Provisions of Sub-Sections (2), (3), (4) and (5) of Section 5 of the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1952 be made applicable to the Commission.
 8. The Commission may be assisted by such officials, experts or bodies as it may require in connection with the Inquiry. All the powers provided to the Commission under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952 (60 of 1952) shall be available to the Commission.
 9. Expenditure incurred with respect to this Commission of Inquiry will be borne by the Mining & Geology Department, Government of Meghalaya.

By Orders of the Governor,

Sd/-

(Dr. Shakil P. Ahammed, IAS)
Chief Secretary
Government of Meghalaya

Memo NO.POL.18/2026/7-A


Dated Shillong, the 14th February, 2026

Copy to:-

- 1) The P.S. to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Meghalaya for kind information of the Hon'ble Chief Minister.
- 2) The P.S. to the Hon'ble Speaker, Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, for kind information of the Hon'ble Speaker.
- 3) The P.S. to the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge Law Department, for kind information of the Hon'ble Minister.
- 4) The P.A. to the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition, Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, for kind information of the Leader of the Opposition.
- 5) Justice R.S. Chauhan (Retd.), Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry for kind information and necessary action.
- 6) The P.S. to the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Meghalaya, for kind information of the Chief Secretary.
- 7) The Director General of Police, Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information.
- 8) The P.S. to the Commissioner of Divisions, Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information of the Commissioner.
- 9) The P.S. to the Principal Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Home (Political) Department, for kind information of the Principal Secretary.
- 10) The P.A. to the Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Home (Political) Department, for kind information of the Commissioner & Secretary.
- 11) The P.S. to the Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Mining & Geology Department, for kind information of the Commissioner & Secretary.
- 12) The P.A. to the Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Law Department, for kind information of the Commissioner & Secretary.
- 13) The Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills District, Khliehriat for kind information.
- 14) The Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District, Khliehriat for kind information.
- 15) Shri. H. Nongpluh, IPS (Retd.), Member to the Commission of Inquiry for kind information and necessary action.
- 16) Shri. P.S. Dkhar, IAS (Retd.), Member to the Commission of Inquiry for kind information and necessary action.

- 17) The Director, Printing and Stationery, Meghalaya for favour of publication of the Notification in the Extra Ordinary Gazette of Meghalaya, bearing today's date. 100 printed copies of the Notification may be supplied to this Department.

By Order Etc.,


Deputy Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya
Home(Political) Department

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
HOME (POLITICAL) DEPARTMENT

Email id: political.dept-meg@gov.in / Ph. 0364 2223359

ORDERS BY THE GOVERNOR

ADDENDUM

Dated Shillong, the 03rd March, 2026

NO.POL.18/2026/19 :-

Whereas a notification bearing no. POL.18/2026/7 dated 14.02.2026 was issued by the orders of the Hon'ble Governor appointing a Commission of Inquiry headed by Justice (Retd.) R.S. Chauhan and consisting of members Shri. H. Nongpluh, IPS (Retd.) and Shri. P.S. Dkhar, IAS (Retd.), to inquire into the incident at a coal mine in Mynsngat-Thangsko Village, Khliehriat, East Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya.

Whereas, this addendum is being issued to supplement the notification bearing no. POL.18/2026/7 dated 14.02.2026 by adding further terms of reference for the examination and inquiry of the already constituted Commission of Inquiry.

Whereas, this addendum shall be read in conjunction with the notification bearing no. POL.18/2026/7 dated 14.02.2026 and all the contents of notification dated 14.02.2026 shall remain unchanged save and except as supplemented by instant addendum.

Now therefore, in addition to the terms of reference a) to f) provided in the notification dated 14.02.2026, the following term of reference is also added for the examination and report of the Commission of Inquiry:-

g) To examine the nexus between the demand for and supply of illegally mined coal in the State of Meghalaya and the role of such persons, or authority, non-state groups including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and to recommend measures for strengthening institutional mechanisms, fixing accountability and preventing recurrence.

By Orders of the Governor,

Sd/-
(Dr. Shakil P. Ahammed, IAS)
Chief Secretary
Government of Meghalaya

Memo NO.POL.18/2026/19-A

Dated Shillong, the 03rd March, 2026

Copy to:-

- 1) The P.S. to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Meghalaya for kind information of the Hon'ble Chief Minister.
- 2) The P.S. to the Hon'ble Speaker, Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, for kind information of the Hon'ble Speaker.
- 3) The P.S. to the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge Law Department, for kind information of the Hon'ble Minister.
- 4) The P.A. to the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition, Meghalaya Legislative Assembly, for kind information of the Leader of the Opposition.
- 5) Justice R.S. Chauhan (Retd.), Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry for kind information and necessary action.
- 6) The P.S. to the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Meghalaya, for kind information of the Chief Secretary.
- 7) The Director General of Police, Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information.
- 8) The P.S. to the Commissioner of Divisions, Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information of the Commissioner.
- 9) The P.S. to the Principal Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Home (Political) Department, for kind information of the Principal Secretary.
- 10) The P.A. to the Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Home (Political) Department, for kind information of the Commissioner & Secretary.
- 11) The P.S. to the Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Mining & Geology Department, for kind information of the Commissioner & Secretary.
- 12) The P.A. to the Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Law Department, for kind information of the Commissioner & Secretary.
- 13) The Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills District, Khliehriat for kind information.
- 14) The Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District, Khliehriat for kind information.
- 15) Shri. H. Nongpluh, IPS (Retd.), Member to the Commission of Inquiry for kind information and necessary action.
- 16) Shri. P.S. Dkhar, IAS (Retd.), Member to the Commission of Inquiry for kind information and necessary action.
- 17) The P.S. to the Ld. Advocate General, High Court of Meghalaya, for kind information of the Ld. Advocate General.
- 18) The Under Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Mining & Geology Department, for kind information with reference to your Letter No. MG.19/2022/Pt-VI/378 dated 25/02/2026.
- 19) The Director, Printing and Stationery, Meghalaya for favour of publication of the Notification in the Extra Ordinary Gazette of Meghalaya, bearing today's date. 100 printed copies of the Notification may be supplied to this Department.

By Order Etc.,

Deputy Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya
Home(Political) Department

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE
MEGHALAYA - :::- SHILLONG

ANNEXURE

ORDER

In view of the recent coal mine accident that occurred at Thangsko, East Jaintia Hills District, Khliehriat and in order to ensure a fair, impartial and expeditious investigation into the circumstances leading to the incident, the Hon'ble Director General of Police, Meghalaya, Shillong is pleased to constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) with immediate effect.

The SIT shall consist of the following officers:

1. Shri Vivekanand S. Rathore, IPS, Dy. Inspector General of Police (ER), Meghalaya, Shillong.
2. Shri Vikash Kumar, IPS, Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat.
3. Shri B. Diengngan, MPS, Addl. Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat.
4. Shri P. S. Marwein, MPS, Dy. Superintendent of Police, Eastern West Khasi Hills, Mairang.
5. Shri Basant K. Mishra, MPS, Dy. Superintendent of Police, CCW, CID, Shillong.
6. Shri Raksan Momin, MPS, on Probation
7. UBI Mathias Marak of East Jaintia Hills, DEF
8. UBSI Sher Khan Buam of East Jaintia Hills, DEF
9. UBSI Edward Kharpran of East Jaintia Hills, DEF

Term of Reference:

1. To ascertain the cause and circumstances leading to the incident.
2. To conduct a comprehensive investigation into the mining accident at Thangsko, East Jaintia Hills.
3. To identify violations of Hon'ble Court's Order / NGT directions relating to illegal mining activities.
4. To ensure that the investigation is carried out in a time-bound manner so as to bring the case to its logical conclusion and ensure delivery of justice in accordance with law.

Sd/-
(Smti I. Nongrang, IPS)
Director General of Police
Meghalaya, Shillong.

Memo No. MG/Court-427/2026/B-A

Dated Shillong, the 12th February, 2026.

Copy to:

1. The P.S to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya for kind information.
2. The P.A to the Director General of Police, Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information.
3. The Inspector General of Police (L&O), Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information.
4. The Commissioner & Secretary, Home (Police) Department, Govt. of Meghalaya for kind information.
5. The Dy. Inspector General of Police (WR) / (ER), Meghalaya, Tura/Shillong for kind information.
6. The Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills District for kind information.
7. Concerned officers for kind information and necessary action.


Asst. Inspector General of Police (L&O),
Meghalaya, Shillong

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE
MEGHALAYA <<>> SHILLONG

ORDER

In partial modification of Memo No. MG/Court-427/2026/8-A, Dt. 12/02/2026, Shri Pankaj Kr. Rasgania, IPS, Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat, is hereby nominated as a member of the SIT in place of Shri Vikash Kumar, IPS, Superintendent of Police (ANTF), Meghalaya, Shillong.

Sd/-

Director General of Police,
Meghalaya, Shillong

Dated Shillong the 18th February, 2026

Memo No. MG/Court-427/2026/16-A

Copy to:-

1. The P.S. to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya for kind information.
2. The P.A. to the Director General of Police, Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information of the Director General of Police, Meghalaya.
3. The Inspector General of Police (L.&O), Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information.
4. The Commissioner & Secretary, Home (Police) Department, Government of Meghalaya for kind information.
5. The Dy. Inspector General of Police (WR) / (ER), Meghalaya, Tura/Shillong for kind information.
6. Shri Vikash Kumar, IPS, Superintendent of Police (ANTF), Meghalaya, Shillong for kind information and necessary action.
7. Shri Pankaj Kr. Rasgania, IPS, Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat for kind information and necessary action.
8. The Dy. Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills District for kind information.

Inspector General of Police (L.&O),
Meghalaya, Shillong

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GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE
MEGHALAYA *** SHILLONG**

ORDER

In partial modification to this office Order vide Memo No. MG/Court-427/2026/8-A dated 12.02.2026 and in compliance with the directions of Order dated 24.02.2026 passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Meghalaya, in PIL No. 2 of 2022 titled "In:Re (Suo Motu) Illegal Mining of coal in the State of Meghalaya Vrs State of Meghalaya & Ors", Shri. D.N.R. Marak, IPS, Inspector General of Police (Law & Order), Meghalaya, Shillong is hereby nominated to head the duly constituted Special Investigation Team (SIT).

Further, it is directed that officials nominated vide Order Memo No. MG/Court-427/2026/8-A dated 12.02.2026 and MG/Court-427/2026/16-A dated 18.02.2026 shall continue to function as members of the SIT.

This order will come into immediate effect.

Sd-


Director General of Police
Meghalaya, Shillong.

Dated Shillong the 27th Feb', 2026.

Memo No. MG/Court-427/2026/35-A

Copy to:-

1. The P.S to the Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Shillong for favour of kind information.
2. The P.A. to the Director General of Police, Meghalaya, Shillong for favour of kind information.
3. The Inspector General of Police (L&O), Meghalaya, Shillong for favour of kind information and necessary action.
4. The Commissioner & Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya, Home (Police) Department for favour of kind information.
5. The Dy. Inspector General of Police (ER), Meghalaya, Shillong for favour of kind information and necessary action.
6. The Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills District for favour of kind information.
7. The Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat for favour of kind information and necessary action.


Asst. Inspector General of Police (L&O),
Meghalaya, Shillong.

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ANNEXURE-6

BEFORE THE HON'BLE HIGH COURT OF MEGHALAYA


PIL NO. 2 OF 2022

IN THE MATTER OF:

IN RE SUO MOTO ILLEGAL MINING OF COAL IN THE
STATE OF MEGHALAYA

STATUS REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
STATE OF MEGHALAYA IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE
ORDER DATED 09.02.2026

FILED THROUGH:


(MISS R. COLNEY)

Government Advocate, Shillong

DATED, SHILLONG
19th DAY OF FEBRUARY 2026

STATUS REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE STATE
GOVERNMENT IN COMPLIANCE WITH ORDER
DATED 09.02.2026

1. That the instant status report is being filed in compliance with the directions passed by this Hon'ble Court vide order dated 09.02.2026 whereby this Hon'ble Court has directed the State Government to submit a detailed status report qua further steps taken taken in the entire District with regard to the illegal mining sites, seizure of illegal mining equipment and arrest of persons involved in the illegal Rat-hole mining, especially at Mynsngat-Thangsko.
2. This Hon'ble Court has further referred to the 36th interim report of the Hon'ble Mr. Justice (Retd.) B.P. Katakey Committee (hereinafter the Committee) which pertains to the above incident and has sought report on action taken on observations made by the Committee in said report.

INCIDENT AT MYNSNGAT-THANGSKO VILLAGE IN
EAST JAINTIA HILLS DISTRICT

3. That the unfortunate incident took place on 05.02.2026 at Mynsngat-Thangsko village in East Jaintia Hills District where a reported dynamite blast and consequent fire has resulted in 34 deaths and injuries to 5 persons, as updated till date. After receiving the report of the incident, immediate rescue operations were conducted by the teams of District

Administration, Directorate of Mineral Resources, NDRF and SDRF etc.

4. That as per the information available with the District Administration, 15 of the deceased are citizens of Nepal, 13 of the deceased area residents of Assam, 4 of deceased are from Meghalaya and remaining 2 deceased persons are still unidentified and efforts are being made for their identification.

A copy of the list of deceased persons is annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-A.

INTERIM FINANCIAL RELIEF / COMPENSATION

5. That insofar as interim financial relief to the family/kin of deceased and injured are concerned, the State Government has announced ex-gratia payment of Rs. 3 lakh for each deceased person. Apart from the above, the Central Government has also declared ex-gratia relief of Rs. 2 lakh for each deceased person and Rs. 50,000/- for each person injured from the Prime Minister's National Disaster Relief Fund.
6. That till date a total of Rs. 24,00,000/- (Twenty-Four Lakhs) has been disbursed to the next of kin of 8 (Eight) deceased persons. It is also clarified that 15 deceased are citizens of Nepal and 13 are from residents of Assam.

In the process of disbursing ex-gratia relief to the remaining families and next of kin, is faced with the hurdle of proper identification and documentation of the next of the kin of the deceased. However, daily communication channels are being maintained with the families for getting the requisite details. Therefore, immediate relief to the families of the deceased and injured has already been provided and treatment of the injured persons is also being taken care of by the State Government.

JUDICIAL INQUIRY COMMISSION

7. That subsequently, the State Government has taken a two-pronged action to not only determine the cause of the incident but also to lay down the roadmap to avoid any such future incidents. First by constituting a judicial enquiry commission headed by Hon'ble Justice (Retd.) R.S. Chauhan, former Chief Justice of High Court of Uttarakhand and High Court of Telangana, under the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1952 and the other by constituting a Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by Dy. Inspector General of Police (ER) to conduct investigation in the incident.
8. That the Government of Meghalaya issued a notification bearing No. POL.18/2026/7 dated 14.02.2026 constituting the judicial enquiry commission under Section 3 of the Commission of

Inquiry Act, 1952 to submit its report within six months, with following constitution:

- a) Hon'ble Justice (Retd.) R.S. Chauhan, former Chief Justice of High Court of Uttarakhand and High Court of Telangana and former judge of High Court of Telangana, High Court of Karnataka and High Court of Rajasthan - **Chairman**
- b) Shri H. Nongpluh, IPS (Retd.), former Information Commissioner, Meghalaya - **Member**
- c) Shri P.S. Dkhar, IAS (Retd.), Assam Meghalaya Cadre - **Member**

9. That the reference of the Ld. Commission is as under:

- a) To inquire into the circumstances leading to the incident dated 05.02.2026 in the coal mine(s) located at Mynsngat-Thangkso Village, Khliehriat, East Jaintia Hills District Meghalaya;
- b) To submit a comprehensive fact-finding report on the acts and/or omissions of the persons and/or authorities concerned, including any failure to prevent the occurrence of the incident on 05.02.2026;
- c) To examine the root causes of illegal coal mining in the State of Meghalaya, including but not limited to the working conditions of the labourers

and miners whose livelihoods depend on coal mining;

- d) To recommend remedial measures, including administrative and institutional reforms, to be adopted by the Government of Meghalaya to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in future;
- e) To suggest appropriate measures, including financial package(s) or rehabilitation scheme(s) for persons whose livelihood depended on coal mining prior to it was banned by Hon'ble National Green Tribunal in Original Application No. 73/2014 vide order dated 17.02.2014; and
- f) To suggest as to whether the Government of Meghalaya ought to approach Her Excellency the President of India for any relaxation / modification / exception in application of the provisions of the Mines and Mineral Development Act, 1957 or any other applicable law passed by the Parliament under para 12(A)(b) of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution in view of the traditional practices of mining prevalent in the State of Meghalaya."

A copy of the notification issued by the Government of Meghalaya bearing No. POL.18/2026/7 dated 14.02.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-B.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION TEAM

10. That simultaneously, the Government of Meghalaya, office of Director General of Police, constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) vide order dated 12.02.2026 with following constitution:
- a) Shri. Vivekanand S. Rathore, IPS, Dy. Inspector General of Police (ER), Meghalaya
 - b) Shri Pankaj Rasgania, IPS, Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat.
 - c) Shri B. Diengngan, MPS, Addl. Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat.
 - d) Shri P. S. Marwein, MPS, Dy. Superintendent of Police, Eastern West Khasi Hills, Mairang.
 - e) Shri Basant Kr. Mishra, MPS, Dy. Superintendent of Police, CCW, CID, Shillong.
 - f) Shri Raksan Momin, MPS on Probation.
 - g) UBI Mathias Marak of East Jaintia Hills, DEF
 - h) UBSI Sherkhan Buam of East Jaintia Hills, DEF
 - i) UBSI Edward Kharpan of East Jaintia Hills, DEF
11. That the SIT has been constituted with following reference:
- a) To ascertain the cause and circumstances leading to the incident.

- b) To conduct a comprehensive investigation into the mining incident at Thangsko, East Jaintia Hills.
- c) To identify violations of Hon'ble Court's order/ NGT directions relation to illegal mining activities.
- d) To ensure that the investigation is carried out in a time-bound manner so as to bring the case to its logical conclusion and ensure delivery of justice in accordance with law."

A copy of order issued by the Office of Director General of Police, bearing Memo No. MG/Court-427/2026/8-A Meghalaya dated 12.02.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-C.

12. That therefore, apart from the above immediate action as to conducting of rescue operations, immediate financial assistance, treatment for injured, the State Government has constituted an SIT for thorough and fair investigation into the incident and a judicial inquiry for addressing not only the incident but suggesting long-term solutions to the long standing problem of the State.

FIRs AND ARREST OF PERSONS IN CONNECTION WITH INCIDENT

13. That in connection with the mine explosion incident at Mynsngat Thangsko area, various FIRs have been

registered and till date 14 persons have been arrested in connection. It is relevant to state that all three mine owners of the three mines involved in the blast have been arrested. All arrested individuals have been remanded to judicial custody as per due legal process. The police are in the process of completing the investigation and filing a charge-sheet on the main incident. The details of the 14 persons arrested are as follows:

FIR NO	PERSONS ARRESTED
Khliehriat PS Case No. 11(1)2026 u/s 106(1)/223/303(1)/305(e) BNS R/W Sec 21(1) MMDR Act, Umthe	1. Abansan Syrti (33 yrs S/o: Jodioo Syrti R/o: Moopala village, EJH, Date of Arrest - 11.02.2026
Khliehriat PS Case No. 14(2)2026 u/s 105/118(2)/3(5) BNS R/W Sec 21/21(1) MMDR Act R/W Sec 3 ES Act, Mynsnga, Thangsko	1. Forme Chyrmang (42 yrs), S/o: (L). Kom Dkhar, R/o: Jalaphet Pyrdung village, EJH Date of Arrest - 06.02.2026 2. Shameki War (42 yrs) S/o: (l) Wiseman Syrti R/o: Sutnga Wailong village, EJH Date of Arrest - 06.02.2026 3. Tensing Suchiang (43 yrs) S/o: (L) Rai Bhadur R/o:

Joint Secretary
to the Govt of Meghalaya
Mining & Geology Department

	<p>Umlawang village, EJH, Date of Arrest - 10.02.2026</p> <p>4. Process Dkhar @ Prakash (36 yrs) S/o: Smt. Thrina Dkhar R/o: Sutnga, Pohshnong village, EJH, Date of Arrest - 11.02.2026</p> <p>5. Yoomiki Syih (29 yrs) S/o: Smt. Tilda Syih R/o: Khliehriat East village, EJH, Date of Arrest - 14.02.2026</p> <p>6. Ernest Swer (31 yrs) S/o: Smt. Genis Swer R/o: Khliehriat West village, EJH, Date of Arrest - 15.02.2026</p> <p>7. Rangsing Syiemlieh @ Mithun (39 yrs) S/o: Smt. Dina Syiehlieh R/o: Khliehriat East village, EJH T/o: Marngar village, WKH, Date of Arrest - 15.02.2026</p>
<p>Khliehriat PS Case No. 18/2026 u/s 4/5/6 ES Act,</p>	<p>1. Narayan Majumdar (57 yrs) S/o: Jogeswer Majumdar T/o: Umpleng Market, EJH P/o: Kailasar East Govindapur, District -</p>

	<p>Unakoti, North Tripura, Date of Arrest - 07.02.2026</p> <p>2. Salim Uddin Choudhury (38 yrs) C/o: Chamir Uddin Choudhury R/o: Chonpur, PO-Chonpur, Dist-Chachar, Assam, Date of Arrest - 07.02.2026</p> <p>3. Safrul Islam Choudhury (39 yrs) C/o: Bilal Uddin Choudhury R/o: Niz-Jalalpur Pt-I, PO-Jalalpur, Dist-Cachar, Assam, Date of Arrest - 07.02.2026</p>
Lumshnong PS Case No. 6(2)2026 u/s 223/303(2)/318(4)/ 61(2) BNS R/W Sec 21 MMDR Act, Damcherra, Kuliang	<p>1. Rishwa Sutnga (33 yrs) S/o: (I) Kranti Sutnga R/o: Tongseng village (Narpuh), EJH, Date of Arrest - 13.02.2026</p> <p>2. Skhemborlang Kshiar (40 yrs) S/o: Rishot Pyrtuh R/o: Namdong village, WJH T/o: Kairang village, EJH, Date of Arrest - 13.02.2026</p>
Lumshnong Ps Case No. 10(02)2026 u/s 223/	<p>1. Nurul Islam (29 Yrs), S/O. Shri. Abdul Kayum, R/O.</p>

303(2)/318(4)/61 (2) BNS R/W SEC 21(1) MMDR Act, Damcherra, Kuliang	Tarapur, Cachar, Assam, Date of Arrest - 17.02.2026
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RECOVERY/SEIZURE OF ILLEGAL COAL

14. That it is submitted that the police has also left no stone unturned and intensified the crackdown on illegal mining and as many as 77 FIRs have been registered after the incident at different Police Stations. It is submitted that 16,260.5 MT of illegal coal has been seized in above FIRs.

RECOVERY OF EXPLOSIVES AND FIRs

15. That it is submitted that the police are also vigorously pursuing all leads including source of the Gelatine Sticks and detonators. In pursuance of the investigation 2 FIRs have also been registered under the provisions of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 among others. Furthermore, 74 detonators and 25.5 kg of Gelatine have been seized.

- a) FIR No. Khliehriat PS Case No. 18/2026 dated 07.02.2026 under Section 4/5/6 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.
- b) FIR No. FIR No. Khliehriat PS Case No. 48/2026 dated 08.02.2026 under 223 / 61(2) / 303(2) of BNS read with Section 21 / 21(1) of MMDR Act

and also added Section 4/5/6 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.

**SEIZURE OF ALLIED EQUIPMENT AND
DISMANTLING OF CRANES:**

16. That part of enforcement measures against illegal mining infrastructure, Rs. 12 lakh was immediately sanctioned and released and accordingly, dismantling operations were carried out on the site whereby 6 cranes were dismantled at Mynsngat-Thangsko area and 4 others along Nongjri-Thangsko road on 14.02.2026 as observed by the Committee appointed by this Hon'ble Court. These actions were undertaken to prevent further illegal mining operations and transportation of coal.

A copy of report of Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills bearing No. EJHD/Genl-89/DRC/2026/39 dated 17.02.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-D.

17. That it is submitted that the District Administration has taken steps to dismantle the illegal cranes found in the entire district so that there is no scope left for illegal mining of the coal.

ACTION AGAINST ERRING OFFICERS:

18. That taking cognizance of the incident, the Police Department has already suspended the two officers in

charge of the concerned outpost. Show Cause Notice has been issued to them. Further, the State Government has also transferred the then Superintendent of Police of East Jaintia Hills District.

EARLIER INCIDENT REPORTED ON 14.01.2026

19. That on 15.01.2026, the In-Charge of Umpleng Police Outpost reported that on 14.01.2026 an information was received from Sutnga Community Health Centre (CHC) regarding a seriously injured individual. The injured person was admitted at 12:20 PM and was pronounced dead at 12:30 PM on the same day. The deceased is identified as (L) Mosaïd Ali (48 years) Son of Riyasad Ali and a resident of Jamuna Moudanga, Nagaon, Hojai District, Assam. Inquest conducted at Sutnga Community Health Centre and Post-mortem examination was carried out at Khliehriat Civil Hospital by Dr. W. Bamon, SDM&HO. Subsequently on completion of all related formalities, the body was later handed over to the relatives.
20. That it is submitted that a Suo Moto FIR bearing Khliehriat PS Case No. 11(01)2026, dated 14.01.2026, under sections 106(1) / 223 / 303(1) / 305(F) of BNS was registered and S.I. J. Dkhar of Khliehriat Police Station was deputed to conduct an inquiry and locate the place of occurrence.
21. That the investigation revealed that the deceased was suspected of being engaged in illegal coal mining at a

site located in Umthe area under Sutnga Elaka. It was suspected that the fatal injuries resulted from an accident involving a crane used for mining activities. As per Post Mortem Report the cause of death was Blunt Thoracic Trauma due to Blunt Force. That it is most respectfully submitted that in that case the charge-sheet has already been filed on 16.02.2026 along with the Post Mortem reports confirming the death by crush / blunt force injury and no blasting has been found.

A copy of the Post Mortem report of deceased labourer in aforesaid incident on 15.02.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-E.

22. That on 15.01.2026, Smt. E. A. Sangma, MCS, Executive Magistrate, accompanied by In-Charge, Umpleng Outpost, SI S. Sympli and SI J. Dkhar (Investigating Officer) proceeded to Umthe area and guided by local witnesses, a suspected coal mine quarry approximately 180 feet deep was located. No coal was found in the immediate vicinity. Videography and photography of proceedings were conducted in the presence of the Magistrate and witnesses. After completion of all legal formalities, the suspected coal mine was closed, the huts were demolished and the equipment were dismantled.

ACTIONS TAKEN ON THE OBSERVATIONS MADE BY
THE HON'BLE J. (RETD.) KATAKEY COMMITTEE

23. That the Committee constituted by this Hon'ble Court also made a visit to the place of incident and submitted an independent report, being 36th interim report, highlighting certain lapses and problems and suggesting immediate measures to be undertaken by the State Government, which have been complied with by the District Administration with assistance of the Directorate of Mineral Resources and Police authorities and the action taken is summarised as under:

Steps Taken Against Illegal Mining.

24. With effect from 05.02.2026, intensive enforcement operations have been undertaken to curb illegal mining activities in East Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya. Five enforcement teams have been mobilized on a daily basis. Each team comprises a Magistrate, Police personnel, Officials from the Directorate of Mineral Resources (DMR). These teams have been conducting regular inspections, raids, and seizures of illegally mined coal and allied equipment.
25. That till 15.02.2026, in Khliehriat Police Station there are 57 FIRs registered in connection with illegal mining and related offences, which includes the 2 FIRs registered on 05.02.2026 in the instant incident, and

approximately 15,762 MT of illegal coal has been seized till date in respect of these FIRs.

Constitution of Special Task Force.

26. A Special Task Force (STF) was constituted on 10th February 2026 to strengthen monitoring and enforcement. A high-level meeting was convened with officials from Mining Department, Transport Department, Civil Administration, Police Department and Other concerned departments which is employing following measures:

- a) Use of drones for surveillance.
- b) Shifting seized coal to designated depots for auction.
- c) Strict monitoring to prevent resumption of illegal mining.
- d) Strengthening inter departmental coordination.

A copy of report of Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills bearing No. EJHD/Genl.83/ICMT/ 2026/26 dated 16.02.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as ANNEXURE-F.

27. That it is submitted that from 05.02.2026 till 18.02.2026 the drones have been utilized multiple times and based on the surveillance conducted 20 FIRs have been

registered. Further more than 60 FIRs have been registered on complaints received under MMDR Act.

A copy of the report of drone surveys and cases registered from 05.02.2026 till 18.02.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE-G.**

28. That it is submitted that 4 Checkpoints / Naka have been erected at Kongong, Shi Kila, Lumshnong, Umkiang for strict monitoring and enforcement.
29. That the Chief Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya has issued directions to all the Deputy Commissioners vide letter No.MG.60/2014/Pt-III/101 dated 13.02.2026 for taking strict action against illegal mining and illegal transportation of coal in your district in accordance with provisions of MMDR Act, 1957 and not to allow any vehicle without a valid Mineral Transport Challan (MTC) to pass through. Similar directions have also been issued by the Mining and Geology Department as well vide letter No. No.MG.60/2014/Pt-111/100 dated 13.02.2026.

Copies of letters of Chief Secretary and Mining & Geology Department addressed to Deputy Commissioners of all Districts, both dated 13.02.2026 are annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE-H** and **ANNEXURE-I** respectively.

30. The State Government is committed toward ensuring that illegal coal mining and illegal transportation does not go unchecked. The State Government has taken steps to ensure that scientific mining is also taken up with 3 (three) approvals already obtained for scientific mining, and 20 (twenty) more being forwarded to the Government of India, which are at advanced stage of receiving clearances. The Judicial Commission of Inquiry, as per the Terms of Reference, will undertake not only an investigation of the incident that occurred on 5th February 2026 but will examine the root cause of illegal mining and suggest measures.


31. That it is most respectfully reiterated that the State Government is making all endeavours to implement the orders passed by this Hon'ble Court which are being monitored by the Committee. In light of the above, it is most humbly submitted that the present report may kindly be accepted on record and appropriate orders may kindly be passed.

It is prayed accordingly.

Submitted by:

Dated: 19.02.2026

Shillong


Joint Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya
Mining and Geology Department

Joint Secretary
to the Govt of Meghalaya
Mining & Geology Department

ANNEXURE-7

Serial No. 01
Regular List

HIGH COURT OF MEGHALAYA
AT SHILLONG

PIL No. 2 of 2022

Date of Order: 19.02.2026

In Re: (Sou Motu): Illegal Mining of Vs. State of Meghalaya & Ors.
coal in the State of Meghalaya

Coram:

Hon'ble Mr. Justice H. S. Thangkhiew, Judge
Hon'ble Mr. Justice W. Diengdoh, Judge

Appearance:

For the Petitioner(s) :

For the Respondent(s) : Mr. A. Kumar, AG
Ms. R. Colney, GA (For R 1)

Per. H.S. Thangkhiew, Judge:

In compliance with the order of this Court dated 09.02.2026, a Status Report on behalf of the State respondents, has been submitted just now when the matter is taken up, and the same is placed before the Court. A cursory glance shows that the Report is exhaustive and requires a minute examination by this Court, before any further necessary and effective orders are passed, thereon.

Mr. Pankaj Rasgania, who has taken over charge as the Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District, is present before this Court today.

Accordingly, list this matter on 24.02.2026, for further orders.

It is further directed that the Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District along with Mr. Vikash Kumar, the former Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District to remain present, on the next date of hearing.

(W. Diengdoh)
Judge

(H.S. Thangkhiew)
Judge

Meghalaya
19.02.2026
"V. Lyndem PS"

Serial No. 01
Regular List

ANNEXURE-8

HIGH COURT OF MEGHALAYA
AT SHILLONG

PIL No. 2 of 2022

Date of Order: 24.02.2026

In Re: (Sou Motu): Illegal Mining of Vs. State of Meghalaya & Ors.
coal in the State of Meghalaya

Coram:

Hon'ble Mr. Justice H. S. Thangkhiew, Judge
Hon'ble Mr. Justice W. Diengdoh, Judge

Appearance:

For the Petitioner(s) :

For the Respondent(s) : Mr. A. Kumar, AG
Ms. R. Colney, GA (For R 1)
Dr. N. Mozika, DSGI with
Ms. C. Jala, Adv.

Per. H.S. Thangkhiew, Judge:

1. This matter is being taken up today for passing of further orders in connection with the incident at Mynsngat-Thangsko, wherein 34(Thirty-four) workers lost their lives and 5(Five) were grievously injured. The Status Report filed by the State respondents on 19.02.2026 in compliance to the order dated 09.02.2026, has been examined by this Court.

2. By way of the Status Report, the State respondents have shown the steps or measures that have been taken by them to address the situation and to afford relief to the affected families of the deceased, the injured, apart from other actions taken with regard to the process for investigation and enquiry, amongst others. Briefly put they have been categorized under the following heads: -

- i) Interim financial relief/compensation, wherein it is stated Rs. 2,40,000/- has since been disbursed to the next of kin of 8 deceased persons.
- ii) Judicial Enquiry Commission to conduct an enquiry into the circumstances leading to the incident dated 05.02.2026, and submission of fact-finding report and a Special Investigation Team to conduct a comprehensive investigation leading to the incident and to identify violation of Court's orders or NGT directions etc.,
- iii) FIRs registered, arrest of persons, recovery/seizure of illegal coal, recovery of explosives, wherein it is reported 77 FIRs have been registered and 14 persons have been arrested including 3 mine owners, seizure of 16,260.5 MT illegal coal and explosives (74 detonators, 25.5 Kg of Gelatine sticks)
- iv) Seizure of allied equipment and dismantling of cranes etc.,
- v) Action against erring officers; suspension of 2 officers in charge of concerned Police Outpost and transfer of Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills.

Apart from the above, the Report also contains the steps taken on the earlier incident reported on 14.01.2026 and action taken on the

observation made by the Hon'ble Justice B.P. Katakey (Retd.) Committee in its Thirty-Sixth Report, wherein it has been stated that 5 Enforcement Team have been mobilized on a daily basis in East Jaintia Hills District comprising of a Magistrate, Police personnel and officials from DMR, the registration of FIRs at Khliehriat Police Station and the utilization of Drones through which FIRs have also been registered.

3. This Court while examining the Status Report finds that the measures taken for compensation and other actions with regard to investigation and enquiry are not adequate to address the situation effectively. It is of absolute necessity for the State respondents at this stage, to show credibility and to instill confidence in the minds of the public, that an incident that has shaken the collective consciousness of the citizens, is dealt with in a deserving manner to demonstrate that the Rule of Law prevails.

Firstly, with regard to the grant of interim compensation, it is noted that only the next of kin of 8(Eight) deceased persons have been given interim relief, whereas with regard to 15(Fifteen) deceased persons, who are residents of Nepal and 13(Thirteen) from Assam, no information has been provided as to what steps have been taken to disburse the same. The learned Advocate General on this aspect has expressed difficulties due to the authorities' inability to identify and secure the next of kin to whom the compensation could be paid. This Court fails to understand as to how this should be an

impediment. Steps in this regard can be taken immediately through the Nepalese Embassy with regard to the deceased persons from Nepal to intimate and identify their legal heirs to whom the compensation can be disbursed after due verification. Similarly, immediate steps should be taken for the compensation to be released to the heirs of the deceased persons from Assam.

Insofar as the constitution of the Judicial Enquiry Commission, the Terms of Reference that have been listed, though appearing to be exhaustive, calling for the submission of a comprehensive fact finding report on the acts and or omissions of the persons and/or authorities concerned, there is however, no mention as to the accountability and liability of such persons, or authority on whom responsibility can be fixed to enable action to be taken against them in accordance with law.

Another crucial aspect that has not been considered is the necessity of investigation and enquiry into the nexus between the supply and demand of illegal coal, inasmuch as, no illegal extraction would occur if the same was not fueled by demand which makes this dangerous activity highly profitable. This point is of extreme relevance as considerable investment is required for mining and extracting coal even in the manner that is being practiced. As such, it is necessary that the State respondents include this in the Terms of Reference for due enquiry.

4. The constitution of a Special Investigation Team and its constituents thereof, has also been examined and its Terms of Reference include the conduct of a comprehensive investigation into the mining accident at Thangsko to identify violations of this Court's order as well as orders of the NGT relating to illegal mining activities and for investigation to be carried out in a time bound manner. The learned Advocate General on the concern expressed as to the SIT being headed only by a Deputy Inspector General has assured the Court that a more senior official shall be tasked to head the Team. It is expected that the investigation and action taken thereon, is to be incisive and effective, which will discourage any future illegal mining activity.
5. The Status Report also contains as noted earlier, the FIRs registered, arrest of persons, recovery/seizure of illegal coal, explosives, equipment etc., apart from action taken against erring officers. This Court, however is of the firm view that sustained efforts need to be continued to not only check illegal mining but also in the process, action be taken against persons, officials in the District, as well as officials of the Directorate of Mining and other Police officials under whose watch the Thangsko incident happened. Added to this, what is deemed necessary by this Court is also the examination of the manner of the transport of illegally extracted coal and the role of transport officials, Police, non-State players, such as NGOs, which is part of the whole chain in the facilitation of illegal mining operations.

6. As the learned Advocate General has undertaken to apprise the Court on further steps that will or have been taken, post this matter on 05.03.2026, for further orders.

7. Mr. Pankaj Rasgania, Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District and Mr. Vikash Kumar, the former Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District to remain present, on the next date of hearing.

(W. Diengdoh)
Judge

(H.S. Thangkhiew)
Judge

Meghalaya
24.02.2026
"V. Lyndem PS"

Serial No. 01
Regular List

ANNEXURE-9

HIGH COURT OF MEGHALAYA
AT SHILLONG

PIL No. 2 of 2022

Date of Order: 05.03.2026

In Re: (Sou Motu): Illegal Mining of Vs. State of Meghalaya & Ors.
coal in the State of Meghalaya

Coram:

Hon'ble Mr. Justice H. S. Thangkhiew, Judge
Hon'ble Mr. Justice W. Diengdoh, Judge

Appearance:

For the Petitioner(s) :

For the Respondent(s) : Mr. A. Kumar, AG with
Dr. N. Mozika, DSGI
Ms. R. Colney, GA
Ms. C. Jala, Adv.

Per. H.S. Thangkhiew, Judge:

1. In view of the order dated 05.03.2025, passed in MC (PIL) No. 4 of 2026, list this matter on 13.04.2026 together with MC (PIL) No. 4 of 2026, for further orders.

2. It is made clear that the State respondents are to further furnish information with regard to the other aspects, which have been under consideration by this Court in the Thirty Fifth Interim Report of the Justice B.P. Katakey (Retd.) Committee.
3. List accordingly.

(W. Diengdoh)
Judge

(H.S. Thangkhiew)
Judge

Meghalaya
05.03.2026
"V. Lyndem PS"

ANNEXURE-10

Serial No. 01
Regular List

HIGH COURT OF MEGHALAYA
AT SHILLONG

MC (PIL) No. 4 of 2026 in
PIL No. 2 of 2022

Date of Order: 05.03.2026

In Re: (Sou Motu): Illegal Mining of Vs. State of Meghalaya & Ors.
coal in the State of Meghalaya

Coram:

Hon'ble Mr. Justice H. S. Thangkhiew, Judge
Hon'ble Mr. Justice W. Diengdoh, Judge

Appearance:

For the Petitioner(s) :

For the Respondent(s) : Mr. A. Kumar, AG with
Dr. N. Mozika, DSGI
Ms. R. Colney, GA
Ms. C. Jala, Adv.

Per. H.S. Thangkhiew, Judge:

1. At the outset, this Court notes that the instant proceedings as also the last two dates concern only the incident that occurred at Thangsko, East Jaintia Hills District, as such it is deemed necessary that these proceedings be registered as MC (PIL) No. 4 of 2026 in PIL No. 2 of 2022.

2. In compliance of the order of this Court dated 24.02.2026, a Status Report on behalf of the State respondents has been filed today itself.

3. The learned Advocate General with Dr. N. Mozika, learned DSGI, has taken this Court through the Status Report, and has firstly submitted that with regard to the compensation to be disbursed to the next of kin of the deceased victims from Nepal, steps have been taken by the State administration as well as through the Ministry of External Affairs, to ascertain and verify the next of kin. Similarly, he submits with regard to the victims from Assam, intimation has been given to the respective Deputy Commissioners, for their assistance in the identification process. With regard to the victims from the vicinity, it is submitted that the compensation has been duly accorded.

4. The learned AG has also submitted that as per the observations of this Court, the terms of reference of the Commission of Inquiry has been expanded to include additional reference, which is reproduced hereinbelow:-

“g) To examine the nexus between the demand for and supply of illegal mined coal in the State of Meghalaya and the role of such persons, or authority, non-state groups including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and to recommend measures for strengthening institutional mechanisms, fixing accountability and preventing recurrence.”

5. Added to this, is the order whereby Shri D.N.R. Marak, IPS, Inspector General of Police, (Law & Order) has been nominated to head the Special Investigating Team (SIT). The attention of this Court has also been drawn to the steps which have been taken by the State respondents which includes the transfer of certain officials in the Mining Department.
6. With regard to the cases registered, charge-sheeted pending investigation on the illegal extraction, transportation of coal and also explosives etc., the learned Advocate General prays that 4(four) weeks' time may be allowed to enable the State respondents to come up with tangible materials with regard to (i) Disbursal of compensation (ii) Progress of Special Investigating Team (SIT) and (iii) Progress of Investigations in the respective cases, which have been given in the summary appended to the Status Report.
7. With regard to the incident that has been reported in Today's paper in connection with the capsizing/accident of a coal-laden truck, the Superintendent of Police, who is present in Court today has produced copies of a delivery challan and also a consignment note, which shows that the coal in question was being transported to a cement plant in Lumshnong, from Assam, and not illegal coal as reported.
8. Accordingly, list this matter on 13.04.2026, for status report.

9. The personal appearance of Mr. Pankaj Rasgania, Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District and Mr. Vikash Kumar, the former Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District, shall stand dispensed with, on the next date.

(W. Diengdoh)
Judge

(H.S. Thangkhiew)
Judge

Meghalaya
05.03.2026
"V. Lyndem PS"

Serial No. 01
Regular List

ANNEXURE-11

HIGH COURT OF MEGHALAYA
AT SHILLONG

MC (PIL) No. 4 of 2026 in
PIL No. 2 of 2022

Date of Order: 15.04.2026

In Re: (Sou Motu): Illegal Mining of Vs. State of Meghalaya & Ors.
coal in the State of Meghalaya

Coram:

Hon'ble Mr. Justice H. S. Thangkhiew, Judge
Hon'ble Mr. Justice W. Diengdoh, Judge

Appearance:

For the Petitioner(s) :
For the Respondent(s) : Mr. A. Kumar, AG with
Ms. R. Colney, GA
Ms. M. Myrchiang, Adv.
vice Dr. N. Mozika, DSGI

Per. H.S. Thangkhiew, Judge:

Pursuant to the order dated 05.03.2026, a Status Report has been filed.
Mr. A. Kumar, learned Advocate General has submitted that the SIT
Report has also been received, and the same will be placed on record before
the next date.

List this matter on 27.04.2026, together with PIL No. 2 of 2022.

(W. Diengdoh)
Judge
Meghalaya
15.04.2026
"V. Lyndem PS"

(H.S. Thangkhiew)
Judge

ANNEXURE-12

MC(PIL) NO. 4 OF 2026

IN PIL NO. 2 OF 2022

**INRE SUO MOTU ILLEGAL MINING OF COAL
IN THE STATE OF MEGHALAYA**

VS.

STATE OF MEGHALAYA

**A STATUS REPORT ON BEHALF OF
THE RESPONDENT - STATE OF MEGHALAYA**

FILED THROUGH:

(R. COLNEY)
GOVT. ADVOCATE, SHILLONG
FOR THE STATE RESPONDENTS

DATED AT SHILLONG
ON 15TH DAY OF APRIL, 2026

**STATUS REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT
IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE ORDER DATED 05.03.2026
PASSED IN MC(PIL) NO. 4 OF 2026 IN PIL NO. 2 OF 2022
BY THIS HON'BLE COURT:**

1. That it is submitted in the instant report is being filed in compliance with the directions passed by this Hon'ble Court vide order dated 05.03.2026.
2. That it is submitted that insofar as disbursal of compensation is concerned, consequent to the hearing dated 05.03.2026 compensation has further been disbursed to 4 more next of kin of the deceased.

A copy of the letter dated 14.04.2026 along with all annexures by Deputy Commissioner, East Jaintia Hills District is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE-A/1**.

3. That it is submitted that the State is taking all necessary steps qua the incident dated 05.02.2026 that occurred at Thangsko, East Jaintia Hills District. The investigation in multitude of FIRs which were registered consequent to the incident is progressing at fast pace and in multiple matters chargesheets have been filed upon completion of investigation.

A copy of the Action Taken Report dated 10.04.2026 along with two Annexures is

annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE-A/2.**

4. That it is submitted that during the interregnum from the last listing of the present matter, the investigation has been completed and chargesheet has been filed in the cases enumerated hereinbelow. (It is submitted that for ease of reference Serial No. each case is also reflected in brackets.)
 - 4.1. Chargesheet filed on 28.03.2026 in Khliehriat PS Case No. 15/2026 u/s 223/303(2)/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/W Sec 21 MMDR Act. (Serial No. 6)
 - 4.2. Chargesheet filed on 26.03.2026 in Khliehriat PS Case No. 16/2026 u/s 223/303(2)/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/w Sec 21 MMDR Act. (Serial No. 7)
 - 4.3. Chargesheet filed on 20.03.2026 in Khliehriat PS Case No. 22(2)2026 u/s 223/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/w Sec 21 MMDR Act. (Serial No. 12)
 - 4.4. Chargesheet filed on 25.03.2026 in Khliehriat PS Case No. 40(02) 2026 u/s 223/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/W Sec 21 MMDR Act. (Serial No. 30)
 - 4.5. Chargesheet filed on 23.03.2026 in Khliehriat PS Case No. 72(02)2026 U/S 223/303(2)/61(2) BNS R/W Sec. 21 MMDR Act. (Serial No. 52)

- 4.6. Chargesheet filed on 21.03.2026 in Khliehriat PS Case No. 99(02)2026 u/s 223/61(2) (b)/3(5) BNS R/w section 21(1) MMDR Act (Serial No. 93)
- 4.7. Chargesheet filed on 21.03.2026 in Khliehriat PS Case No. 105(3)2026 U/s 223/61(2) BNS R/w sec 21 (1) MMDR Act (Serial No. 99)
- 4.8. Lumshnong PS Case No. 12(02)2026 U/S 223/303(2)/318(4)61(2) BNS R/w sec 21 (1) MMDR Act (Serial No. 101)
- 4.9. That it is submitted that in connection with the blast incident a suo-moto FIR was registered vide Khliehriat PS Case No. 14/2026 under relevant provisions of BNS, MMDR Act and Explosive Substances Act. During the course of investigation, several accused persons were identified and arrested, including individuals directly involved in illegal mining activities and handling of explosives. Their statements have been recorded and investigation carried out in accordance with law. That it is submitted that upon completion of investigation, a chargesheet has been filed in the said case on 18.02.2026
5. That it is submitted that in multitude of matters the owners of the mines have been identified and statements recorded or arrests have been made:
- 5.1. Khliehriat PS Case No. 03(01)2026 U/s 106(1)/287/288/125 BNS (Serial No. 1)



- 5.2. Khliehriat PS Case No.11(1)2026 U/s 106(1)/223/ 303(1)/305(e)
BNS R/w see 21(1) MMDR Act (Serial No. 4)
- 5.3. Khliehriat PS Case No. 14(02)2026 U/s 105/118(2)/3(5) BNS R/w
sec 21/21 (1) MMDR Act R/w sec 3 Explosive substance Act.
(Serial No. 5)
- 5.4. Khliehriat PS Case No. 22(2)2026 u/s 223/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/w
Sec 21 MMDR Act. (Serial No. 12)
- 5.5. Khliehriat PS Case No. 23(2)2026 u/s 223/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/w
See 21 MMDR Act. (Serial No. 13)
- 5.6. Khliehriat PS Case No. 24(2)2026 u/s 223/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/w
See 21 MMDR Act. (Serial No. 14)
- 5.7. Khliehriat PS Case No. 26(2)2026 u/s 223/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/w
See 21 MMDR Act. (Serial No. 16)
- 5.8. Khliehriat PS Case No. 40(02) 2026 u/s 223/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/W
Sec 21 MMDR Act (Serial No. 30)
- 5.9. Khliehriat PS Case No. 43(02)2026 u/s 223/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/W
See 21 MMDR Act. (Serial No. 33)
- 5.10. Khliehriat PS Case No. 44(02)2026 u/s 223/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/W
Sec 21 MMDR Act (Serial No. 34)
- 5.11. Khliehriat PS Case No. 45(02) 2026 u/s 223/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/W
Sec 21 MMDR Act (Serial No. 35)
- 5.12. Khliehriat PS Case No. 46(02) 2026 u/s 223/61(2)/3(5) BNS R/W
Sec 21 MMDR Act (Serial No. 36)

- 5.13. Khliehriat PS Case No. 71(02)2026 U/S 223/303(2)/61(2) BNS R/W Sec. 21 MMDR Act. (Serial No. 61)
- 5.14. Saipung PS Case No. 03(02) 2026 u/s 223/303(2)/61(2) BNS R/W Sec 21(1) MMDR Act (Serial No. 95)
6. That it is submitted that in many instances wherein coal owner are not identified the concerned headmen have been identified and chargesheeted.
7. That it is further submitted that in cases where ownership could not be immediately established, notices have been issued to landowners, and further investigation is underway.
8. That it is most respectfully submitted that investigation is being carried out in all registered cases to identify the persons involved in illegal mining activities.
9. That it is submitted that in several cases, accused persons including mine owners, operators and intermediaries have been identified and arrested.
10. That it is submitted that further actions have been also taken related to illegal mining and transportation of coal, including cases involving explosives registered:



- 10.1. That it is most respectfully submitted that the District Task Force comprising Executive Magistrates, Police Department and Mining Department has undertaken extensive enforcement measures to curb illegal mining activities.
- 10.2. That it is submitted that coordinated raids were conducted by teams consisting of Executive Magistrates, police personnel and officials from the Mining Department in various vulnerable locations.
- 10.3. That it is submitted that during such operations, on-site inspections were carried out and illegal mining activities were detected, resulting in registration of a substantial no. of cases.
- 10.4. That it is further submitted that orders were issued by the Deputy Commissioner for dismantling of machinery used in illegal mining activities, and such machinery has been dismantled in accordance with law.
- 10.5. That it is submitted that inspections of explosive magazines were carried out in the presence of Executive Magistrates and police personnel to ensure compliance with safety regulations.
- 10.6. That it is also submitted that special naka checking points have been established in the district to prevent illegal transportation of coal, resulting in detection of multiple cases.
11. That it is most respectfully submitted that as part of the enforcement drive undertaken in the district, a significant number


of cases have been registered relating to illegal mining, transportation and associated offences.

- 11.1. 89 No. of FIRs registered related to illegal extraction of coal.
- 11.2. 19 No. of FIRs registered related to illegal transportation of coal.
- 11.3. 4 No. of FIR registered related to theft of seized coal.
- 11.4. 2 No. of FIRs registered related to seizures of explosives suspected to be used for illegal mining of coal.
- 11.5. 4 No. of Mobile Patrolling Teams deployed.
- 11.6. 4 No. of Foot Patrolling Teams deployed.
- 11.7. 5 No. of flying squads deployed.
- 11.8. 4 No. of NGT Check Points set-up.
- 11.9. 92 No. of drone surveys conducted.
- 11.10. 5 No. of Executive Magistrate reported for operation.
- 11.11. 5 No. of mining department officers reported for operation.
- 11.12. 10 No. of machinery dismantled.
- 11.13. 37 No. of Explosive Magazine inspected in the district.
- 11.14. 34 No. of Notice issued u/s 35(3) BNSS/41 (A) CrPC.
- 11.15. Quantity of coal seized: 18,892.966 (assessed coal)
- 11.16. 55 No. of vehicles seized.
- 11.17. Quantity of Explosive Materials Seized: 25.5 Kgs of Gelatin
- 11.18. 74 Nos. of Detonators seized

12. That it is most respectfully submitted that the State Government is sincerely making endeavors to implement the orders passed by this Hon'ble Court.
13. That it is humbly prayed that the report may kindly be accepted and taken on record and appropriate orders may kindly be passed.

It is prayed accordingly.

Submitted by:


Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya
Mining and Geology Department
to the Secretary
Mining & Geology Department

Dated: 15.04.2026

At Shillong

ANNEXURE-13

MC (PIL) NO. 4 OF 2026

PIL NO. 2 OF 2022

**INRE SUO MOTU ILLEGAL MINING OF COAL
IN THE STATE OF MEGHALAYA
VS.
STATE OF MEGHALAYA**

**A STATUS REPORT ON THE
SPECIAL INVESTIGATION TEAM (S.I.T.)
ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS -
STATE OF MEGHALAYA**

FILED THROUGH:

(R. COLNEY)
GOVT. ADVOCATE, SHILLONG
FOR THE STATE RESPONDENTS

DATED: SHILLONG
ON ____ DAY OF APRIL, 2026

**STATUS REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT
IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE ORDER DATED 05.03.2026
PASSED BY THIS HON'BLE COURT QUA THE SPECIAL
INVESTIGATION TEAM**

1. That it is submitted in the instant report is being filed in compliance with the directions passed by this Hon'ble Court vide order dated 05.03.2026.

2. That it is submitted that immediately after the incident that took place on 05.02.2026 at Mynsngat-Thangsko village in East Jaintia Hills, the Government of Meghalaya, office of Director General of Police, constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) vide Order dated 12.02.2026 and again vide Order dated 27.02.2026 with following constitution:
 - i. Shri. D.N.R. Marak, IPS, Inspector General of Police (Law & Order), Meghalaya
 - ii. Shri Pankaj Rasgania, IPS, Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat.
 - iii. Shri B. Diengngan, MPS, Addl. Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills, Khliehriat.
 - iv. Shri P. S. Marwein, MPS, Dy. Superintendent of Police, Eastern West Khasi Hills, Mairang.
 - v. Shri Basant Kr. Mishra, MPS, Dy. Superintendent of Police, CCW, CID, Shillong.

- vi. Shri Raksan Momin, MPS on Probation.
- vii. UBI Mathias Marak of East Jaintia Hills, DEF
- viii. UBSI Sher Khan Buam of East Jaintia Hills, DEF
- ix. UBSI Edward Kharpan of East Jaintia Hills, DEF

3. That it is submitted that the SIT has been constituted with following reference:

- i. To ascertain the cause and circumstances leading to the incident.
- ii. To conduct a comprehensive investigation into the mining incident at Thangsko, East Jaintia Hills.
- iii. To identify violations of Hon'ble Court's order/ NGT directions relation to illegal mining activities.
- iv. To ensure that the investigation is carried out in a time-bound manner so as to bring the case to its logical conclusion and ensure delivery of justice in accordance with law.

4. That it is submitted that the SIT is taking systematic and time-bound decisive actions in the matter.

5. That it is submitted that the SIT has recommended the transfer and redeployment of officers and personnel posted in the district, ranging from the rank of Additional Superintendent of Police and below, with a view to ensure

impartiality, operation efficiency and elimination of any potential conflict of interest in the ongoing investigation.

6. That on 24.03.2026, Additional Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills District, Hliehriat is transferred as Deputy Commandant, 5th MLP Bn, Samanda, East Garo Hills District vice Shri Donkumar Moksha MPS has been transferred.

A copy of the Order dated 24.03.2026 of transfer is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE A/1**.

7. That furthermore, vide order dated 07.04.2026, **One Hundred Fifty-Nine (159) Police Officers** and personnel have been transferred with immediate effect.

A copy of the order dated 07.04.2026 is annexed herewith and marked as **ANNEXURE A/2**.

8. That on 25.03.2026 the SIT has conducted a detailed review of cases registered under the jurisdiction of the Superintendent of Police, East Jaintia Hills.

9. That it is submitted that the focus of the review was on the status of investigation, any evidentiary gaps, any legal compliance and further identification of the cases which require priority attention or special supervision.

10. That it is submitted that in order to streamline the investigation SIT has undertaken special steps and to ensure accountability, specific directions have been issued by SIT to Investigating Officers, including specification of timelines for completion of key investigative steps.
11. That is submitted that on 09.04.2026, another meeting of members of SIT was conducted along with the Investigating Officers, whereby:
 - 11.1. The progress of investigation was assessed;
 - 11.2. Certain operational challenges were identified;
 - 11.3. Focus of SIT was on reinforcing the investigative priorities and
 - 11.4. Steps to be taken to ensure coordinated action among all stakeholders involved in the investigation.
12. That it is submitted that the SIT is taking all necessary steps qua the incident dated 05.02.2026 that occurred at Thangsko, East Jaintia Hills District.
13. That it is submitted that the investigation in multitude of FIRs which were registered consequent to the incident is progressing at fast pace and in multiple matters chargesheets have been filed upon completion of investigation.

14. That it is submitted that the report detailing the progress of investigation in all the cases has already been placed before this Hon'ble court by a separate affidavit dated 15.04.2026 filed in MC (PIL) 4 of 2026 in PIL 2 of 2026. It is humbly prayed that the same may also be referred to in addition to instant affidavit and the same is not annexed and submissions are not repeated herein for the sake of brevity.
15. That it is most respectfully submitted that the State Government is sincerely making endeavors to implement the orders passed by this Hon'ble Court.
16. That it is humbly prayed that the report may kindly be accepted and taken on record and appropriate orders may kindly be passed.

It is prayed accordingly.



Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya,
Mining and Geology Department
Mining & Geology Department

Dated Shillong,

The 24th day of April 2026

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Serial No. 02
Regular List

ANNEXURE-14

HIGH COURT OF MEGHALAYA
AT SHILLONG

MC (PIL) No. 4 of 2026 in
PIL No. 2 of 2022

Date of Order: 27.04.2026

In Re: (Sou Motu): Illegal Mining of Vs. State of Meghalaya & Ors.
coal in the State of Meghalaya

Coram:

Hon'ble Mr. Justice H. S. Thangkhiew, Judge
Hon'ble Mr. Justice W. Diengdoh, Judge

Appearance:

For the Petitioner(s) :

For the Respondent(s) :

Mr. A. Kumar, AG with
Ms. R. Colney, GA
Dr. N. Mozika, DSGI with
Ms. M. Myrchiang, Adv.

Per. H.S. Thangkhiew, Judge:

1. A Status Report dated 15.04.2026, has been filed in compliance to the order dated 05.03.2026, passed by this Court in the instant Misc. Case. The steps taken with regard to the investigations and chargesheets that has been filed in a number of cases, have been given in detail, as also the registration of Suo Motu FIR's under the Explosive Substances Act. It is



stated in the Report that 7(seven) persons have been identified and arrested, including persons directly involved in illegal mining activities, and handling of explosives. It is also reported that in a multitude of matters, the owners of the mines have been identified and statements have been recorded, and in instances where coal owners are not identified, the concerned headmen have been identified and charge sheeted.

2. With regard to the payment of compensation, it is reported that out of 31(thirty-one) victims, 14(fourteen) persons have been afforded compensation, but it is also noted that the same relates only to the residents of Assam and Meghalaya, whereas many victims are also from Nepal. Though it is stated that steps have been taken through official channels to identify the heirs of the deceased, it is felt necessary by this Court that the matter should be taken up more expeditiously, inasmuch as, the persons who received the bodies, would naturally be the heirs, or the heirs known to them.

3. Though the investigation is ongoing, it is expected that in terms of the orders of this Court and the findings of the Justice B.P. Katakey (Retd.) Committee, that further action be taken, which is more decisive, especially to identify track down the persons/officials who are directly or indirectly involved in facilitating illegal mining and its transportation, and appropriate action be taken.



4. A Status Report of the Special Investigation Team (SIT), has also been filed, and the same apart from the stating the terms of reference has little to offer, except that some transfers have been effected, which however, does not disclose whether the same has been done in the normal course, or due to any complicit action on the part of the transferred officers or persons. This Court expects that the SIT, which has been specially constituted to look into these matters, apart from reviewing or relying on the progress of the cases currently under investigation, take more pro-active steps as per the stated mandate and the terms of the reference. Though the learned Advocate General has offered that the stages of investigation be given in a sealed cover, however this Court does not feel it is necessary at this point of time, but only a brief report on the next date would suffice.

5. Accordingly, list this matter on 01.06.2026, for further orders.

(W. Diengdoh)
Judge

(H.S. Thangkhiew)
Judge

Meghalaya
27.04.2026
"V. Lyndem PS"

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL, PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI
ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 94 OF 2026

IN THE MATTER OF:

...Applicant

Versus

...Respondents

State of Meghalaya & Ors.

VAKALATNAMA

I, Batlang Samuel Sohliya, IAS, the Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya, Mining and Geology Department, having office at Secretariat Shillong, Meghalaya, representing the Respondent No. 1 and 4 herein, do hereby appoint and retain:

AVIJIT MANI TRIPATHI (UP-01066/2009)

Phone No. 9958537705, email: avijitmani@gmail.com

having office at B-17 4th Floor, Jangpura Extension, New Delhi – 110014

hereinafter called Advocate to be my/our Advocates for **RESPONDENT NO. 1 and 4** in the above noted case and further authorize him:

To act appear and plead in the above noted case in this Court or in any other Court in which the same be tried/ heard and also in the Appellate Courts.

To sign, file verify and present pleadings, replications, Appeals, cross-objections, or petitions for execution or review revision restoration withdrawal, compromise applications or other petitions replies, objections or affidavits or other documents as may be deemed necessary of proper for the prosecution of said case in all its stage. To file and take back documents.

To withdraw or compromise the said case or submit to arbitration any differences or disputes that may arise touching or in any manner relating to the said case.

To deposit draw and receive money cheques and grant receipts thereof and to do all other acts and things which may be necessary to be done for the progress and in the course to prosecutions of the said case.

To appoint instruct any other Legal practitioner authorizing him to exercise the power and authorities hereby conferred upon the Advocate whenever he may think fit to do so and sign the power of attorney on my/our behalf.

And I/We the undersigned do hereby agree to ratify and confirm act as if done by the Advocate or their substitutes in the matter as my/our own acts, as if done by me/us to intents and purposes.

And I/We undertake that I/We or my/our duly authorized agents would appear in Court all hearings will confirm the Advocates for appearance when case is called.

And I/We the undersigned do hereby agree not to hold the Advocate of their substitute responsible to the result of the said case, consequences for his absence from the court when the said case is, called up for the hearing or any negligence of the said Advocates or his substitute.

And I/We the undersigned do hereby agree that in the event of the whole or any part to the fee agreed by me/us the Advocates remaining unpaid they will be entitled to retain the file/documents etc. and will also not be bound to appear and conduct the case till the fee/balance fee is paid.

And I/We the undersigned do hereby agree that I/We shall not claim any compensation, nor the Advocate/s shall be liable for any compensation if he/she fails to appear in the court or fails to conduct or withdraws from the case due to non-payment of fee as per settlement or for reason of any request/call given by Bar Association/s or Council/s.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I/We do hereunto set my/our hand to these presents the contents of which have been understood by me this 13th of May 2026

Accepted subject to the terms of fees.

Advocate

Avijit Mani

Client

[Signature]

Secretary
to the Govt. of Meghalaya
Mining & Geology Department

