

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL,  
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

Original Application No. 110(THC)/2012

Threat to life arising of coal mining  
in South Garo Hills District, Meghalaya .... Applicant

-Versus-

State of Meghalaya and ors. .... Respondents

IN THE MATTER OF:

A Rejoinder by the  
Applicant to the reply filed  
on behalf of government of  
Meghalaya.

-AND-

IN THE MATTER OF :-

Shri Pawan Sharma,

....Applicant

Versus

State of Meghalaya and ors.

....Respondents

1. That under the heading "Preliminary Objection" the State Respondents could not say anything except making vague allegations of

*"Politically Motivate, malafied and frivolous" and stating that "the petitioner aims at maligning Ministers of the Government" and the alleged "criminal background of the petitioner" as well as non-specific instance of non-compliance of the orders passed by the HON'BLE NGT,* there is nothing which hits at the root of the points raised in the petition and as such the same needs no consideration and the petition requires to be proceeded with in accordance with law.

2. That the reply is evasive as it does not specifically say as to which of the directions contained in the order dated 17.01.2020 has been complied with. Otherwise also, had it been complied as claimed ,the rat hole mining and consequent illegal transport of coal would have been stopped, but the print as well as the electronic media are full of the news of hundreds of illegally extracted coal laden trucks passing through the National Highway with impunity causing traffic jam everywhere , although the State Government is tight lipped and shy of admitting the continuance of rat hole mining and the transportation of illegal extracted coal in complete violation of the ban as imposed by this Hon'ble Tribunal.

In this connection the deponent begs to bring on record the following instances of violation of ban as reported in print media :-

**(i) The Shillong Times dated 12.03.2020**

*East Jaintia Hills Police seized 23 coal laden trucks illegally transporting coal which include 12 (twelve) trucks on 10.03.2020 at Kuliang; 9 (nine) trucks on 11.03.2020 at Sonapur Umkiang and*

accordingly several cases were registered by the Police at Lumshnong Police Station.

**(ii) The Shillong Times dated 19.03.2020**

Illegal coal transportation on March 16 around 4.30 p.m Police detected two containers transport vehicles, transporting coal in violation of N.G.T. order at Lumshnong East Khasi Hills . However , driver of the truck managed to escape.

On March 15, around 3 a.m. Police detected one truck transporting coal in violation of N.G.T. order at Mukhep, Lad Longkaluh East Khasi Hills

**(iii) The Shillong Times dated 29.03.2020**

Despite curfew and lockdown illegal transportation of coal continues. According to Police on March, 26 around 1.30 p.m. 10 ten coal laden trucks were detected and seized from Umbir Village in Ri-Bhoi District for violation of N.G.T. order.

On 24.03.2020 around 7.30 p.m. Police detected 2 (two) trucks while transporting coal in violation of the N.G.T. ORDER OF Umkiang check gate, East Jaintia Hills.

**(iv) The Shillong Times dated 07.04.2020**

Despite the curfew and lockdown in the State, illegal transportation of coal trucks in violation of the N.G.T. orders, continues in the State.

Only recently 5 (five) coal laden trucks at Nongsning and Mynkre Village from East Jaintia Hills District were seized. At Mynkre Village,

however the members of the Village Defence Party VDP were ones to seize 4 (four) trucks for flouting the lockdown and N.G.T. order.

(v) **The Shillong Times dated 10.04.2020**

Illegal coal transportation on April, 3 around 7.30 p.m. Police seized 3 (three) coal laden trucks at Mawlien Mawkhoon village in Ri-Bhoi District.

(vi) **The Shillong Times dated 13.04.2020**

In violation of the N.G.T. Order as well as lockdown imposed in the State along with the rest of the Nation, Police on April, 7 around 2.05 A.M. detected one stationary coal laden dumper truck MH-12-TRDK-2796 without driver at Rymbai Road, East Jaintia Hills.

(vii) **The Shillong Times dated 14.04.2020**

Shri S. Marwein, E.A.C. Khliehriat lodged a complaint that on April, 11 around 11.30 A.M. while conducting mine raids along with the Police at Moopynien, Khliehriat East, 6 to 8 labourers were seen mining in 2 (two) coal mines, however they managed to escaped. 2 (two) mining equipments were seized from the spot.

(viii) **The Shillong Times dated 09.05.2020**

Coal truck seized - A.Nongdhar, Mines and Royalty Inspector, D.M.R. Umkiang, East Jaitia Hills lodged a complaint that on May, 6 around 4 A.M. 1 (one) truck was detected at Umkiang check gate while illegally transporting coal in violation of the N.G.T. order.

(ix) **The Shillong Times dated 21.05.2020**

Workers unload freshly mined coal at Moolang village in East Jaintia Hills on Wednesday. Earlier on May 13 the Police seized 22 trucks carrying

coal illegally which were parked at Ratacherra and Malidor in East Jaintia Hills.

(x) **The Shillong Times Dated 26.05.2020**

Despite the ongoing lockdown and restrictions there seems to be no end to illegal coal mining in the State. The Ri-Bhoi District Police in the last one week have detected as many as 4 (four) trucks laden with unauthorized coals.

(xi) **The Shillong Times Dated 16.07.2020**

On July 11, around 5 p.m., the Police detected and seized 1 (one) truck while illegally transporting coal under Shillong Police Station in West Garo Hills.

(xii) **The Shillong Times Dated 06.10.2020**

On 1<sup>st</sup> October around 9.30 A.M. Police detected transporting coal in violation of N.G.T. order at Sohiong petrol pump East Khasi Hills.

(xiii) **The Shillong Times Dated 07.10.2020**

According to media report in Assam , 150 trucks entered Assam on the night of October 5 and only 2 were detained in Beltolla in Guwahati, while on the morning of October 6 as many as 650 trucks entered Assam. There is no way anyone can check the veracity of the numbers quoted but it is an incontrovertible fact that is being clandestinely sold in Assam.....Shri Lakhmen Rymbui was entrusted with the Home Portfolio in controversial circumstances when his predecessor James Sangma's name figured in smuggling of coal – a lucrative trade for the coal rich State. Informed sources claimed that the State Police are like a caged parrot unable to function freely i.e. **they sometimes intercept coal laden lorries as an eyewash**.....It may be mentioned that the issue

*pertaining to the illegal transportation of coal even forced a group of Cabinet Ministers to take it up with the Chief Minister, Conrad Sangma. Although the Home Portfolio got shifted from one minister to another, not much change seems to have occurred and the coal seems to be finding their way out of the State, inspite of the N.G.T. ban.*

**(xiv) The Shillong Times Dated 08.10.2020**

*While the M.D.A. Government continues to be on denial mode on the allegation of syndicated supply of coal to Assam led to James Sangma being stripped from his portfolio earlier this year.*

**(xv) The Shillong Times Dated 10.10.2020**

*The clamour for action against coal racketeering in the State is apparently getting louder. For its part, the N.P.P. led M.D.A. Government seems to be getting concerned with unremitting allegations over illegal transportation of coal from several quarters.*

*Soon after B.J.P., an ally in the M.D.A., demanded arrest of Power Minister James Sangma over the matter, civil society groups in the State are now demanding a C.B.I. inquiry into the alleged coal syndicate.*

**(xvi) The Shillong Times Dated 12.10.2020**

*Meghalaya B.J.P. which has been demanding arrest of Power Minister James Sangma for his alleged involvement in illegal transportation of coal has asserted that they would approach the Prime Minister's Office, P.M.O., on the matter.*

**(xvii) The Shillong Times Dated 13.10.2020**

*Sangma further said that the Government was serious about dealing with the illegal transportation of coal and hence the Government has also prepared selling up of integrated check gates which will have live C.C.T.V. cameras along with other technological solutions to check all the trucks.*

***(All the above newspaper cuttings are enclosed herewith and marked as Annexure I to Annexure XVII(respectively)***

3. That the allegation that the Applicant is having a criminal background is false, mischievous and the product of vicious mind as the case mentioned in the reply was a false case filed by vested interests to tarnish the image of the Applicant and as such it has failed to stand the test of Judicial Scrutiny as no witness came forward to substantiate the aforesaid false and motivated allegations and the case resulted into honourable acquittal of the Applicant.

4. That the Applicant has set up a case for the failure of the State to comply with the direction of this Hon'ble Tribunal. In para 3 of the application, the Applicant has specifically mentioned about the 19 directions of this Hon'ble Tribunal which has not been complied with.

For instance no steps have been taken :-

a) *For electronic recording of movement of coal including by way of G.P.S and R.F.I.D. Tags and having Central Server for the purpose.*

b) *Monitoring of sourcing of illegally mined coal by Cement Manufacturing / Thermal Power Plant for enforcement of Mining Law including punitive and remedial action for sourcing of illegally mined materials as found by the Committee.*

c) *Building of Board's home in Khliehriat and Sutnga area in East Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya for preparation of Geological Report and Feasibility Report for scientific coal mining.*

d) *Compiling information about locations of dumps of coal.*

e) *Finalizing mode and manner of handling of coal and its disposal including e-auction;*

f) *Transfer of coal to Coal India Limited;*

g) *Adopting Satellite Surveillance systems;*

5. That had the aforementioned directions of this Hon'ble Tribunal been complied with the illegal extractions of coal by way of rat-hole mining and transportation would have stopped but as would transpire from the above media reporting that thousands of illegally mined coal laden trucks would not have been moving out of Meghalaya.

6. That it took almost 9(nine) months for the Chief Minister of the State to declare that it was serious about the dealing with the illegal transportation of coal and hence, the government is proposing to setup integrated check gates which will have live CCTV cameras along with other technical solutions to check all the trucks as published in The Shillong Times dated 13.10.2020 (Annexure XVII) and that to mere lip service to cover up the inaction in complying with the Hon'ble Tribunal's direction.

7. That as stated in the above media report i.e. the Shillong Times dated 07.10.2020 (Annexure - XVII) the police as an eyewash has been detecting merely one or two trucks while leaving hundreds of trucks to pass through unchecked, which speaks volume of the conspiracy of the coal syndicate causing immense loss to the public exchequer.

That the statements made in paragraph 1,3-7 are true to the best of my belief and those made in paragraph 2 are true to my information being derived from the record which I believe to be true.

Dated, Shillong  
The 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2020

#### Verification

Verified at Shillong on this the 14<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2020 that the contents of the above rejoinder is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief based on records. That nothing is false and nothing material is concealed herein.



To,

Hon'ble Chairperson,  
The National Green Tribunal,  
Faridkot House,  
Coperrnicus Marg,  
New Delhi-110001

**Reference: Original Application No. 110(THC)/2012**

**Threat to life arising of coal mining in South Garo Hills District, Meghalaya  
-Versus-  
State of Meghalaya**

Sir,

Please find here with a copy of the rejoinder by the applicant to the reply submitted by the government of Meghalaya.

Thanking You,

Yours Sincerely,

Dated, Shillong  
The 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2020

A.S.Siddiqui,  
Advocate for the Applicant  
Shri Pawan Sharma.  
Email: [asamad2210@gmail.com](mailto:asamad2210@gmail.com)

12<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2020

## Police seize 23 coal trucks

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: East Jaintia Hills district police seized as many as 23 coal trucks since the last two days.

The trucks seized include twelve on March 10 at Kuliang, nine on March 11 at Lumshnong, and two at Sonapur-Umkhang for illegally transporting coal.

Police said four different cases under relevant provisions of law have been registered at Lumshnong police station.

two of his friends were also injured while six others had managed to escape. All of

Elvis Kharkongor, said that the deceased's mother, R Kharshandi, had told them at

family, particularly for his young siblings.

(Contd on P-7)

## Suspected city coronavirus case tests negative

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: The patient, who was admitted at the North East Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (NEIGRIHMS) recently with suspected coronavirus symptoms, has tested negative.

Informing this here on Wednesday, Health and Family Welfare Minister AI Hek said that the report has come in and it is negative and there is no case of coronavirus in the state.

Asking people not to panic, the minister, however, urged that advisories issued by the department be followed.

"The department is taking care to ensure that people are protected," he said.

Sources in NEIGRIHMS also confirmed that the patient, who was admitted in the hospital with respiratory tract infection, is not affected with the virus and is recovering.

A coronavirus scare had hit the city on Monday morning after the case sheet of the patient went viral on social media.

Samples were sent to ICMR lab in Kolkata.

Reacting to a query about the shortage of masks and hand sanitisers in the city, Hek said that the department was trying to arrange these.

### DC appeals

The East Khasi Hills district Deputy Commissioner on Wednesday appealed to users of social media and other public platforms to re-

frain from posting and sharing any rumour or false information which could create panic and anxiety among the public.

The DC said people may contact East Khasi Hills District Surveillance Unit COVID-19 Control Room on +917085281316 for any information/report.

### Helpline numbers

The Director of Health Services (MCH & FW) has informed that call centres have been set up to facilitate correspondence with the public for immediate information with regard to any clarifications.

The Control Room Helpline Numbers, Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme are: State Surveillance Unit 9366090748; (Contd on P-7)

## ST POLL

Question: Do you think the Congress MLAs should support the MDA candidate for Rajya Sabha seat?

(Poll closes at Midnight)

Question: Do you think a concerted drive is needed to end superstition prevailing in society?

Yes 84% No 16%

# Vigilance probe ordered into coal racket

**Direction to CID to submit preliminary report within 3 months**

**By Our Reporter**

**SHILLONG:** Instead of CBI, the state government has ordered a CID inquiry into the coal racket in the state.

The order was issued by Chief Secretary MS Rao in the capacity of Vigilance Commissioner on Monday.

According to the order, the CID will have to probe the acts and omissions of the persons involved from April, 2014 to December, 2019 which has resulted in huge loss of revenue to the state government.

The CID has been directed to give a preliminary report within 3 months.

Earlier, the Lokayukta had ordered a CBI probe into the matter but the state government challenged it in the High Court of Meghalaya.

Curiously, the order of chief secretary did not refer to the direction of Lokayukta but mentioned about CAG reports and NGT orders regarding the matter.

The order said that the NGT had on April 17, 2014 banned illegal coal mining

which was upheld by the Supreme Court on July 3, 2019.

The chief secretary said the government has been receiving a number of complaints in respect of illegal coal mining and its transportation.

### Over-declaration of coal

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) in its report for year ending March 31, 2018 had mentioned about audit covering 2013-14 to 2017-18 and recorded illegal mining and transportation of coal causing loss to public exchequer.

It has been observed in the CAG report that over-declaration was made by the coal miners who kept on mining to meet the quantity at the time of assessment.

Suspicion has also been raised of collusion with some government officials who have assessed coal in excess of what was actually available.

It was also observed in the report that the Mineral Transport Challans issued during the ban period to the transporters indicated more quantity (Contd on P-7)

## State govt asks MHA to postpone Census exercise

**From Our Special Correspondent**

**NEW DELHI:** The state government has reportedly urged the Centre to halt the upcoming Census 2021 exercise that is scheduled to begin from next month in view of the dreaded coronavirus crises.

Meghalaya may not be able to deploy its manpower on two fronts — countering coronavirus and managing Census, the state said during a video conference with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), according to sources.

The Home Ministry has directed the states to stop all "inessential" travel through international borders and increase quarantine facilities in far-flung areas with the help of stakeholders.

The MHA was reviewing the level of preparedness in all states bordering Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, including all the eight Northeastern states.

Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla held a video conference with chief secretaries and additional chief secretaries of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhnad, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Secretary, Border Management, and DG of BSF, SSB and Assam Rifles. (Contd on P-7)

## M'la to p

### Be serious

**By Our Reporter**

**SHILLONG:** Meghalaya continues to remain on alert even as no case of coronavirus has been reported in the state.

Chief Secretary MS Rao on Wednesday issued a series of directions to ensure that the state is free from the spread of virus.

Though the education institutions, parks, town spots, cinema halls and other public places were closed, worry for the government is market places.

The government has an immediate plan to issue instructions to close down the markets as it involves livelihood. However, there is a general instruction to the people to avoid crowded places. Both the government and private institutions have already adopted measures like distribution of hand sanitisers, to ensure personal hygiene of the employees.

Earlier on Wednesday Chief Minister Conrad Sangma held a video conference with Deputy Commissioners and Medical Officers of all districts to take stock of the preparedness in containing COVID-19. In the meeting, the chief

## Vigilance probe ordered...

(Contd from P-1) than what was assessed which also promoted illegal mining and transportation of coal during the ban period.

According to the order, during audit, it was observed by the CAG that the district administration had noticed three cases of illegal mining and 847 cases of transportation of illegal extracted coal involving 24750 MT of coal after NGT prohibition.

Out of 847 cases, 716 cases belonged to East Jaintia Hills and Ri Bhoi districts. In addition to these, police had also reported two cases of illegal coal mining in Laskain (September 2017) and Khloo Kyrning (April 2018) in West Jaintia Hills. Audit noticed cases of illegal coal mining in the reserve forest areas in Garo Hills as reported by the Assistant Mines Royalty Inspector, Williamnagar, to the District Administration and Forest Department (June 2016). The Mining Department and District Administration officials, during an inspection in Dipogre and Damal Asim area in West Garo Hills (April 2018), also reported on illegal mining operation at these two locations.

The order said during the field audit in Rymbai road/village, Lad Sutnga area and Dkhih village in East Jaintia Hills district (August 28, 2018) the audit team noticed huge coal stocks lying on the road side and coal mining appeared to be freshly carried out. Labour camps, cranes, generators and diesel along with dumpers were also seen at these sites.

### Assam team detects 1373 coal trucks

Moreover, on receiving complaints about overloaded coal trucks coming from Meghalaya, the Deputy Commissioner, Cachar District, Assam constituted an inspection team (January 18, 2018).

During the period from January 22, 2018 to March 21, 2018 (59 days), the inspection team detected 1373 overloaded coal trucks exiting from Meghalaya with total load of 35.60 thousand MT, with average excess load of 17 MT per truck (total excess load-23.25 thousand MT). The team collected penalty of Rs.383 crore for overloading.

The Assam Commissioner of Transport had also written to the Director, Directorate of Mineral Resources on March 13, 2018 pointing out that coal trucks are not having proper challans issued by Meghalaya Tax Department and Mines and Minerals authorities indicating that on account of acts and omissions of the concerned authorities, illegal transport of coal had taken place during the check period.

The chief secretary said it appears from the CAG report that about 48.62 thousand MT excess coal was transported from Meghalaya to Assam during 2017-18. Since the excess load was not detected and reported at Meghalaya check-gates, it could not be accounted against the inventory of the coal owners as per NGT order.

### Rs 5.64 cr revenue loss

As a result, it led to revenue loss of at least Rs 5.64 crore in the form of royalty and Meghalaya Environment Protection and Restoration Fund (MEPRF). Also, the inadequate functioning of check-gates allowed illegal extraction/transportation of at least 48.62 thousand MT of coal valued at Rs 23.58 crore in one year.

Besides, the orders passed by NGT on April 17, 2014 and January 4, 2019 imposing a fine of Rs 100 crore on Meghalaya and the recent order on January 17 also indicate that illegal mining and transportation of coal have been going on in the state.

The chief secretary said it has become imperative to act on the reports of the CAG and NGT pointing out illegal coal mining, illegal transportation of coal and evasion of taxes/loss of revenue of government.

## State govt asks MHA...

(Contd from P-1) as well as DGPs and Additional DGI the states also attended the video conferencing.

The Home Secretary urged all the officials to ensure that round-the-clock deployment of doctors, with adequate testing kits and other medical supplies, be done so that 100 per cent screening is done without fail.

As a precautionary measure, the government has already sealed the international border with Bangladesh Myanmar besides imposing restrictions on the movement of transport and people.

Bhalla urged all the officials to ensure round-the-clock deployment of doctors, with requisite testing kits and other medical supplies so that 100 per cent screening is done without fail.

Some border states highlighted difficulties they are facing in screening people due to "intense" passenger movement on the India-Nepal border.

The states also requested the Centre, particularly Ministry of Civil Aviation, to provide them with quick dates about passengers arriving from abroad and proceeding towards the states. According to sources, the states told the Centre that foreign passengers landing in metro cities are often reaching states via regular transport without any intimation to the states about the same.

West Bengal sought further restriction of passenger traffic along the Bangladesh border and sanitisation of major airports and railway stations in the country.

Manipur requested suspension of Inner Line Permit to stop the movement of outsiders.

Almost all states asked for more assistance from paramilitary forces deployed in the border states.

Arunachal Pradesh requested the Centre to ensure screening and safety of defence forces too.

## Hoax message on Norwegian..

(Contd from P-1)

### Tests negative at NEIGRIHMS

Meanwhile, 4-5 people were screened at NEIGRIHMS but the tests have been confirmed to be negative.

Officials from NEIGRIHMS said that the institute started screening people for coronavirus and patients with symptoms related to COVID-19 have been segregated from the OPD itself.

### Confusion over price of local sanitiser

Meanwhile, confusion arose over the pricing of a locally produced sanitiser 'Special Hygiene' that was being sold at the departmental store in NEIGRIHMS at Rs 50 and Rs 150, respectively. The price was found to be handwritten on the bottles.

When contacted, the Medical Superintendent of NEIGRIHMS said he would look into the matter.

However, manufacturer of the sanitiser, K Mawth clarified that she runs a small production unit and since there was a sudden surge in demand there was difficulty in printing the labels and the price had to be handwritten.

She also maintained that the price of the sanitiser produced is not inflated since other brands were being sold in the market for Rs 250-300.

## M'laya remains on alert...

(Contd from P-1) and the logistics and setting up of control rooms at the district and state level. The meeting stressed on the need to disseminate awareness on hygiene, respiratory etiquette and social distancing.

Health and Family Welfare Minister A L Hek, Home Minister Lahkmen Rymbui and Food and Civil Supply Minister James K Sangma were also present.

# The Shillong Times

19th March, 2020

13

motor vehicle Act, 1988, pointed out that vehicles meant for transporting livestock should have special licence issued by the Regional Transport Officer (RTO) and those who do not have it should not be allowed to ply on the roads.

Sangma also claimed that around 30-40 heads of cattle are transported on a single truck which stresses the animals and violates other rules. According to him, the cattle are ill-treated which is punishable under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

Meanwhile, a video of what is being claimed as police escorting, a post involving one such truck was uploaded in Facebook on Tuesday. In the video, a police Gypsy is seen staying back while allowing the truck to pass. After the truck passes, the vehicle starts to move and one of the policemen can be heard shouting in Garo dialect saying "Why are you taking the video?"

According to the FB post, the video was taken around 9:05 am on Tuesday in the vicinity of the Panda reserve. The post further claimed that the smuggled cattle were being taken through Rongara which shares a border with Bangladesh.

in the plain-belt area of West Garo Hills sought by current Rajabala Congress MLA Azad Zaman does not hold any ground. The MLA this week submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Conrad Sangma seeking the creation of a new district under Rajpur (Wadagokgre) in West Garo Hills.

"The Rajabala Constituency is a minority populated area and they don't own or possess the ownership of land of their own. If these people do not possess their own land then it is impractical to demand for the crea-

Assam and demographically is not even sufficient for a C&RD block or a sub-division.

"Rajabala is part of the GHADC and the entire region belongs to the Garo community, and as such the demand for the creation of a new district goes against the sentiments of the Garo community and other sub-tribes," stated AHAM.

According to the NGO, a similar demand had been made during the previous government led by Mukul Sangma, which was also not considered.

## GH teachers challenge validity of eligibility test

By Our Reporter

from their existing service.

**SHILLONG:** The temporary teachers from Garo Hills have petitioned the High Court challenging the validity of the MTET exam stating that it is not mandatory for the existing teachers, a statement issued here informed.

The teachers, in the writ petition, said that they were appointed on temporary basis for 59 days and since then had been continuing in service for the past 2 to 10 years.

While maintaining that they were qualified in all aspects as per the requirement in NCTE notification (advertisement for MTET) dated July 29, 2011, the petitioners submitted that there were no terms and conditions as well as clarity in the MTET advertisement as to whether it was mandatory for the existing teachers to appear in the exam and if those who fail to clear the said exam will be removed

from their existing service. After the declaration of the MTET result on February 25, the government issued an "impugned" order directing all the Sub-Divisional Schools Education Officers to issue only One Time Extension for the period of 59 days.

The petitioners also raked the incident of question leak which happened prior to the MTET exam.

"The teachers also state that prior to the MTET examination there was question leaked for three days and in this regard an FIR was also lodged at the Tura Police Station and some who were involved in the case were also arrested," the statement read.

It is stated that government has set up SIT (Special Investigation Team) to look into the matter but even after a year from the incident, the team has not submitted its final report to the government, the statement informed.



Officials of CAU, KVK, Chokpot, along with farmers from various villages during the three-day training programme on Quality Seed Production of agricultural crops and distribution of knapsack sprayer in South Garo Hills.

## Crime update

### Assault

Binut Khongthah (30) lodged a complaint that on March 15, around 11.15 pm, five persons — Aristotle Khonglam (22), Jestanwell Diengdoh (20), Pyulangbjang Khonglanoh (20), Robinson Khongsar (22) and Pariah Khongjee (21), all from Nohwet village — assaulted the complainant with stick at Dong Riamkdait, Nohwet, East Khasi Hills. In the incident, the complainant sustained grievous injuries on his head.

### Illegal coal transportation

On March 16, around 4.30 pm, police detected two container transport vehicles (UP-21-CN-7966 and UP-21-CN-5245) driven by Md Harsuen and Sewaj Khan, and one truck (AS-01-KC-9786), transporting coal in violation of NGT order at Lumshnong (EJH). However, driver of the truck managed to escape.

On March 15, around 3 am, police detected one truck (AS-25-EC-1175) transporting coal in violation of NGT order at Mukhep Lad longkalub (EIH). However, on seeing the police, the occupants of the truck fled away.

29<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2020

## Despite curfew, coal transport continues

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** Despite curfew and lockdown, there is no end to the illegal transportation of coal.

According to police, on March 26 around 1.30 pm, ten coal laden trucks were detected and seized from 'Er-Pynngad' picnic spot at Umbril village in Ri Bhoi for violation of NGT order.

The trucks had all Meghalaya number plates.

On March 24 around 7.30 pm, police detected two trucks (NL-01A-2107 and AS-11DC-3870), while transporting coal in violation of NGT order at Umkrang check gate, East Jaintia Hills.

However, the truckers managed to escape. During enquiry, it transpired that one Nazim Uddin was involved in the illegal transportation of coal.

(Contd on P-9)

## ST POLL

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA

PRESS RELEASE

27<sup>th</sup> MARCH (1900 HRS)

1. Hon'ble PM has announced a 21-day lockdown w.e.f 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. Curfew promulgated in the whole State of Meghalaya is now extended to 6:00 am of 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2020.
2. Online delivery systems have been set up for home delivery of commodities. All information and links relating to this is available on web link, <https://meghamart.com/>.
3. Fair price shops and other grocery shops are being opened in a manner. Deputy Commissioners are issuing specific instructions in this regard.
4. All citizens are now required to continue to stay indoors in accordance with curfew orders.
5. In case of all COVID-19 related emergencies, call 108.
6. In case of any other emergency, please call the Deputy Commissioner's Office Control Room.

Sl. No.	Districts	Control Room No.
1.	West Garo Hills	6009926806 / 8258991324
2.	East Garo Hills	9485113132
3.	North Garo Hills	9485113132

people to have to this for an speeding up could start...

## 300 beds to be ready ...

(Contd from P-1) He has given direction to the administration to ensure that essential commodities are made available to the public. "People should not panic and maintain social distancing. The government is making efforts to put in place all logistics and supply of essential commodities," the CM added.

## Despite curfew, coal ...

(Contd from P-1) Earlier, on March 20 around 4.30 am, 5/6 coal laden trucks approached a police check point under Khliehriat police station.

However, when signaled to stop for checking, the trucks accelerated and drove towards Mynkreb village, in a rush and negligent manner, endangering the life of the police personnel on duty. After enquiry, police detected three trucks (ML-10B-9796, MLAS-01-FC-0018 & AS-01-CC-0955) along with two drivers, Abdul Barbhuiya and Jakir Hussain at an open space of Jud Cement Plant, and another two trucks (NL-01-AA-8424 & AS-01-LC-6734) at an internal road of Amrit Cement Plant, East Jaintia Hills.

## Groups distribute free ...

(Contd from P-3) In addition, there are some individuals like Michael Kharsyntiew, who is making sure that food reaches the homeless and the poor.

The Shillong Marwari community is also making sure that essential items reach the poor while the owner of Delhi Mistan Bhandar, Kailash Verma is also giving out snacks for anybody who comes to him for help.

The Shillong Bengali Association has also joined in making sure that apart from meals, tea and snacks are served to police personnel of Shillong city who are on the streets every day.

## 'Anxious' urges Cl 'save Ben

By Our Rep

**SHILLONG:** Amra Bangal gairisation has written to C Sangma about the safety of Bholagan, Ichhamati and

In its letter dated March said it was "anxious" about the four localities because of inhuman torture by KJ and other groups.

"It is reported that in t nal activities, some police the letter said.

The organisation urge Bengalees from all types

The group has also v Chief Minister Mamatu even when the entire w demic, the Bengalis are parts of Meghalaya. "I

7<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2020

day

**SHILLONG:** The state BJP on Monday observed its 40<sup>th</sup> foundation day at the party headquarters here in the city in a simple manner. It was on April 6, 1980, when the party was formed under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and LK Advani. Due to the ongoing lockdown, very few members and party officials participated in the programme while BJP state president, Ernest Mawrie, hoisted the party flag and paid floral tributes to the veteran leaders of the party.

## Stay-home plea on Shab-e-Barat

**SHILLONG:** The Shillong Muslim Union has decided not to hold Ibadat in the Masjid and Ziyarat in Kabristan in the wake of the guidelines issued by the government amid the COVID-19 pandemic. "I would once again appeal to the members of the community and all stakeholders to refrain from coming out from their homes and observe the holy occasion in their individual homes on the occasion of Shab-e-Barat on April 9, considering that this day is a very significant and auspicious for the Muslim community," a statement from the union said.

## Market opens at Samasi village

**JOWAI:** The East Jaintia Hills district administration on Monday opened a market at Samasi village in the presence of headman, village VDPs and also Police personnel to ensure that social distancing norms were followed properly amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. "The same practice will be initiated and continued in the near future while India is still fighting against the spread of virus," the EJH SP, Vivekanand Singh Rathore, said.

## WJH Police helps poor

**JOWAI:** Police personnel from Jowai Sardar Police Station visited 13 poor families of Sohmynting village and provided them with essential commodities. The team, led by the officer in-charge, distributed various essential commodities to the poor families, who are the worst-affected due to the ongoing lockdown. Earlier, Phramer Traffic Cell had also taken a similar step by distributing essential commodities to poor families of Phramer and

haved with the complainant and his staff, when she was advised to undergo compul-

## Coal trucks continue flouting curfew orders

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** Despite the curfew and lockdown in the state, illegal transportation of coal trucks, violating also the NGT order, continues in the state.

Only recently, five coal-laden trucks at Nongsning and Mynkre village from East Jaintia Hills district were seized.

At Nongsning village, Police detected one truck and arrested two persons (the driver and co-driver) in this regard.

At Mynkre village, however, members of the Village Defence Party (VDP) were the ones to seize four trucks for flouting the lockdown and the NGT order. In this connection, four persons were apprehended who, according to Police, hailed from Cachar district of Assam.

ments in a restricted area at HQ, Eastern Air Command (Unit), Air Force, 7th Mile, Upper Shillong.

Security

## HYC slams

From Our Correspondent

**NONGSTON:** The Hyniewtrep Youth Council (HYC), West Khasi Hills (WKH) District Unit, on Monday slammed the state government for being unable to fix the rate of food and essential commodities in the market, which has gotten the public in dilemma over the timely increase of prices, causing problems to the

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## 1917iTEAMS

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** 1917iTEAMS has scaled its IVR call capacity from 8 to 30, manned by 12 additional call and dispatch personnel and also added an additional Agri Response Vehicles (ARVs) to its original fleet of 18 vehicles.

On the other hand, NaRi, the home delivery network of the Shillong Milk Union has also scaled up by adding 24 mo-

## Church prepares for distribution in

10th APRIL, 2020

Sec. 144 CrPc by ...

## Illegal coal transportation

On April 3, around 7.30 pm, police seized three coal-laden trucks ML-06-7627, AS-25C-4167 and ML-06A-0237 at Mawlein Mawkhan village in Ri Bhoi.

## Fake govt order

BC Momin, Inspector, Excise Department, lodged a complaint that on March 29, a fake government order dated March 29 for home delivery of IMFL in Tura area was found circulated through WhatsApp.

## Shop without license

On April 5, around 11 am, police arrested one Banwar Lal Mangal from Happy Valley, Shillong, for opening a drug store without a valid license, therefore, violating the order under section 144 CrPc issued by District Magistrate, East Khasi Hills.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered 21 days of lockdown, resorted to spending time in the forests hunting innocent creatures.

Speaking to *The Shillong Times*, some elderly people, who wished not to be named, informed that there was mass and indiscriminate killing of fish at Rilang River from Rangthong area downstream, wherein people use poisonous chemical as well fish net and even explosives.

They also informed that many villagers from both sides of the river spend four to five days in the Rilang riv-

er during lockdown for the villagers added.

The villages that are located near the Rilang river include Rangthong, Rangdong, Mawliah, Mawli, Kensim Phlang and Ngu raw village on one side while Mapiem, Mawjarai Phlangmawpra, Mawpha saw, Mawmluh and other villages on the other.

"The lockdown has become an enemy of fishes, many rivers and streams South West Khasi Hills, the district administration does not do anything in the regard, the population of the Khasi (chocolate mahs

# Emergence of 'wet market' trend

From Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Even after so much hue and cry from all over the world, the wildlife market of China, the main suspected source of the dreaded COVID-19, is back in business raising fears of revival of the virus from the epicentre itself.

Commonly known as wet market, these are a series of stalls that sell fishes, chicken, mutton, beef, pork and also a variety of wild animals and birds. Emergence of COVID-19 put a spotlight on the regime's poorly regulat-

ed wild animal trade - driven by relentless demand for exotic delicacies and ingredients for traditional medicine some real and some hoax. China's markets, where wild animals are often poached and crammed together, have been described as a breeding ground for disease and an incubator for a multitude of viruses to evolve and jump the species barrier to humans, one report said. But for many locals, wet markets are part of the local culture in this part of Asia including parts of North East India as people believe that meat and pro-

duce sold there is fresher and cheaper than in modern retail outlets, where the same is preserved for long before sale. These traditional markets are also a lifeline for millions of small farmers, vendors and small businesses in the vast country.

Reports have indicated that germs of COVID-19 originated from wildlife like bats, pangolins and snakes - all popular dishes in China and many Northeastern states like Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. With the end of winter season, the tradition of hunting has

come to an end and so all the bush meat (eaten in North East).

Only this month in Meghalaya, three persons were arrested for eating a wild leopard cat. There were also reports of killing of other wild animals like pangolin in the region earlier.

Wildlife poaching and killing do take place in the North East and animals well and their parts have been supplied to Chinese markets for decades. Rampant killing of wildlife continues in the region too as China remains the major consumer.

# Animals come out of wild during lockdown

From CK Nayak

NEW DELHI: Wild animals and birds all over the world are coming out to human locality that too in capitals and even metropolis during the total lockdown period because of the COVID-19, but a pair of pandas started something which they hardly do and never in public. Mating!

In their enclosure, with no visitors and not much else to do, a pair of pandas in Hong Kong zoo finally

ing since coronavirus-caused lockdowns shut off the flow of guests to the zoo.

In Noida adjacent to New Delhi, a nilgai, the largest of antelopes, was found strolling in aimlessly across a once very busy mall. In Dehradun Sambar, deer were spotted walking on the streets, while, an endangered Indian civet was seen crossing the road in Kerala's Kozhikode.

Olive Ridley Turtles came ashore a beach in Odisha

through a marketplace in Karnataka. Peacocks have started dancing on the streets in Mumbai, and a leopard reached close to an Air Force base near Patna while a bear made it to the MTNL office in Gangtok.

Not only in our country, from the US to France, Italy to Japan, Poland to England, have animals truly come out of the wild. In neighbouring Nepal a Rhino chased a man on the streets as if to force isolation during the pandemic.

once in a year with long gestation period of six to eleven months. Since Ying Yiu and Le Le's arrival in Hong Kong in 2007 and attempt at natural mating since 201 they unfortunately have yet to succeed until this year upon years of trial and learning. The park officials released photos of the pair embracing in an enclosure uncharacteristically from prying eyes and clicking camera phones. They are elated since the species hardly mate and never do in public unlike other animals.

13<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2020

## its in on study of plasma therapy

COVID-19 e guide- l institu- provide eatment tical tri- chich are tutional- at, the emmend option als. a letter ations and in-

frastucture available to participate in a clinical trial to study the safety and efficacy of convalescent plasma in COVID-19 patients, subsequent to necessary approvals and clearances. "Institutions which are interested to collaborate with ICMR on undertaking this trial intervention may express their interest by providing the details," the ICMR said. In convalescent plasma therapy, antibodies from the

blood of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 are used to treat severely infected patients. The study is aimed at assessing the efficacy of convalescent plasma to limit complications in COVID-19 patients and to evaluate the safety of treatment with anti-SARS-CoV-2 plasma in infected patients. Earlier, the ICMR had given its nod to the Kerala government to commence convalescent plasma therapy. (PTI)

## Crime update

### Coal truck detected

In violation of the NGT order as well as the lockdown imposed in the state along with the rest of the nation, police, on April 7, around 2.05 am, detected one stationary coal-laden dumper truck (MH-12TRDK-2796) without driver at Rymbai Road, East Jaintia Hills.

### Lockdown violation

On April 7, around 7.30 am, police detected one motorcycle ridden by Binash Marak while transporting rubber tapping materials at Mendipathar in North Garo Hills in violation of the order issued by the district magistrate.

### Bike stolen

Arjun Kumar Ray lodged a complaint that on April 2, miscreants stole his motorcycle (ML-05S-0387) which was parked at Lawmali, Shillong.

## Prominent city engineer passes away

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** Saurindra Mohan Datta of Lumdiengsoh, Shillong, passed away at the age of 94 due to cardiac arrest at a local hospital here on Thursday and his body was cremated.

Born on July 17, 1927 in Kamrup District of undivided Assam to Late Raisaheb Kamini Mohan Datta, Extra Additional Commissioner, Government of Assam and Late Hemanta Kumari Datta. Late Datta began his school education in Guwahati and completed his Bachelor of Electrical Engineering from Jadavpur University, Calcutta in 1951.

He was a singer, cricketer and an excellent athlete.

He had served as an engineer for ten years in Digboi and Dulaijan with the Assam Oil Company (formerly Burma Oil Company).

Later, he joined the Shillong Hydro Electric Company, the first power generation company in Shillong.

plary integrity, dedication and industry, the city saw the expansion of household electrification during the sixties and seventies. After his retirement in 1984, many a Dorbar Shnong headman would come to pay tribute and respect to him for his service.

He was an avid gardener even in his nineties and till his last days, he grew a delectable selection of flowering plants in his home at Lumdiengsoh.

He was available anytime for the needy and helpless in society which reflected his philanthropic proclivity and responsible citizenship.

He is survived by his wife Reba Datta, son Shyamal Datta, daughter Mondakini-Basu, son-in-law Apurba Basu, grandson Kaustav Basu and grand-daughters Averi Iy Basu and Awareness Paksang.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the accompanying lockdown, there will be a small ritual on April 21



Mananda, secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Shillong, along with volunteers distribute relief in the city on Sunday. Continuing its minimum number of indigent members of the society with lockdown rationisation provided 5 kg rice, 5 kg potatoes and masks to as many as 150 families from Rynjah area.



# The Shillong Times

18

14th APRIL, 2020

nurses are facing problems

## News Capsule

### Food distributed

The Adventurers, Khalid Khan, Ooma Tewari, Tarang, Amanda J. Jywa, Susukti Pariat, Suresh Singh, Kailash Varma and Rotary Club of Shillong distributed knychol to over 200 needy people and face masks to 100 persons.

### Prohibition

The District Magistrate of South West Garo Hills has prohibited mobile video recording and taking pictures inside and within the premises of hospitals, CHCs and PHCs by unauthorised personnel.

Dadenggre, BDO, C&RD Selsella and CI, Phulbari along with reinforcement rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. Later, the crowd dispersed from the place. Matter is under investigation.

### Illegal coal mining

S Marwein, EAC, Khliehriat lodged a complaint that on April 11, around 11.30 am, while conducting mine raids along with police at Moopyniat, Khliehriat East, 6-8 labourers were seen mining in two coal mines. However, they managed to escape. Two mining equipments were seized from the PO.

### Lockdown violation

On April 10, police detected one pick-up vehicle (ML-08-3573) driven by Mendrack N Marak, possessing permit for delivery of food for ADB workers, while transporting cement in violation of prohibitory orders imposed by the district administration.

### Timber trucks seized

On April 10, police detained two trucks (ML-05C-68/2 and ML-10-3172) while transporting timber in violation of lockdown order at Phlangraich village (WKH). In this connection, Phrangki Lyngkhor, Slungabor Nongphud, Teibelskneit Mawlich, Dnik Maytydiup and Pakson Kharbari have been arrested.

public and the gullible people through fake scheme and fraudulent acts.

Cautioning the people not to reveal their bank details like account number, pin, passwords etc. at any cost, the District Police Chief has said that fraudsters are making attempts to trap the innocent people by revealing their bank details while making online payments.

### Reminder of curfew extension

Meanwhile, West Garo Hills DC, Ran Singh in separate communication has reminded the people of the modification made to the timing of the curfew in the district. Since Monday is formed near the curfew which was to end at 10 a.m. of April 11, has been extended to 12 pm of the same day.

9th May, 2020

19

...also claimed that the supply of food and other essential commodities is stable and every household is happy as the PDS is also working well and there is no shortage even in the open market.

## District chiefs...

(Contd from P-3) self-employed persons, shops for repair of trucks outside TMB area, mobile recharge, computer shops outside Tura bazar area, stand-alone vehicle repair shops as identified by TMB and home delivery of books have been allowed.

East Jaintia Hills DC further said that shopkeepers are not allowed to sell beyond fixed MRP price.

All shops and costumers are requested to provide dustbins, to maintain hygiene and cleanliness, to maintain social distancing at least 1 meter from one another and spitting in public places is strictly prohibited, the DC added.

distribution to the beneficiaries under PM-GKAY scheme despite prevailing pandemic, a statement said on Friday.

The PMGKAY covers 21.46 lakh beneficiaries in Meghalaya, 6.68 lakh in Mizo-

...the scheme is yet to 66,092 metric tonnes date, valuing about rice allotted to the PMGKAY is 79,448 ing to Rs 310 crore.

## Crime Update

### Suspected murder

On May 7, one Bringson Lyngdoh (25) was found lying with head injuries on the roadside at Mawdwar village under Umroi PIC, Ri Bhoi. He was shifted to CHC Bhoirymbong, where the attending medical officer declared him brought dead. The deceased is suspected to have been murdered by unknown miscreant(s).

### Coal truck seized

A Nongdhar, Mines Royalty inspector, DMR Umkiang, EIH, lodged a complaint that on May 6 around 4 am, one truck (NL-01AD-8938) driven by Ashish Uddin Talukdar was detected at Umkiang check gate (EIH) while illegally transporting coal in violation of NGT order.



Regional Director, ICCR, Shillong, N Munchi Singh, pays floral of Rabindranath Tagore on his 159th birth anniversary at Biri Bilibong. Normally, it is celebrated with attendance of large gatherings which were not witnessed this year due to coronavirus. However, an online poetry recitation was conducted on the occ...

# The Shillong Times

21 May 20

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SHILLONG THURSDAY, MAY 21

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Workers unload freshly mined coal at Modang village in East Jaintia Hills on Wednesday. Earlier on May 15, police seized 22 trucks carrying coal illegally, a delayed report said here. The coal-laden trucks were parked at Ratacherra and Mahdor in East Jaintia Hills District. The trucks had registration numbers of Assam, Nagaland and Meghalaya. (Photo contributed)

## CM assures to

## Flight option to bring back

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Annexure  
26/ May/20 Annexure X

# The Shillong Times

21

## High Court for status quo on unlifted coal

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The High Court of Meghalaya has asked the government to maintain status quo regarding the quantity of coal which is yet to be lifted.

Hearing a petition on May 22, the court said the coal which is already lifted and in transit should be allowed to be transported subject to lockdown condition.

The authorities have been asked to keep the details of the trucks which will be transporting coal following the court order and submit the same on the next date of hearing on June 4.

### NGT order violation

Despite the ongoing lockdown and restrictions, there seems to be no end to illegal coal mining in the state.

The Ri Bhoi district police in the last one week have detected as many as four trucks laden with unauthorised coal.

"We seized three trucks recently and one truck was seized on Sunday," Ri Bhoi SP, Chemphang Syrti said, adding that cases have been registered.

He also said police will keep strict vigil in Umroi and Umiam to check illegal coal transportation.

Earlier, Chief Minister, Conrad Sangma had denied that there is any illegal mining of coal in the state.

## KHADC aid

# COVID-19: India now

**NEW DELHI:** India has entered the list of 10 countries worst hit by the novel coronavirus after record spike in the number of cases for four consecutive days, pushing the tally of infections to over 1.38 lakh, surpassing Iran, according to the John Hopkins University data.

The country registered 154 deaths and a record jump of 6,977 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the nationwide tally to 1,38,845 and death toll to 4,021 on Monday with some experts attributing the spike in cases to the lockdown relaxations,

including partial resumption of rail services and road transport along with the return of the migrant workers, while others say the rise in cases is due to enhanced testing capacity in the country.

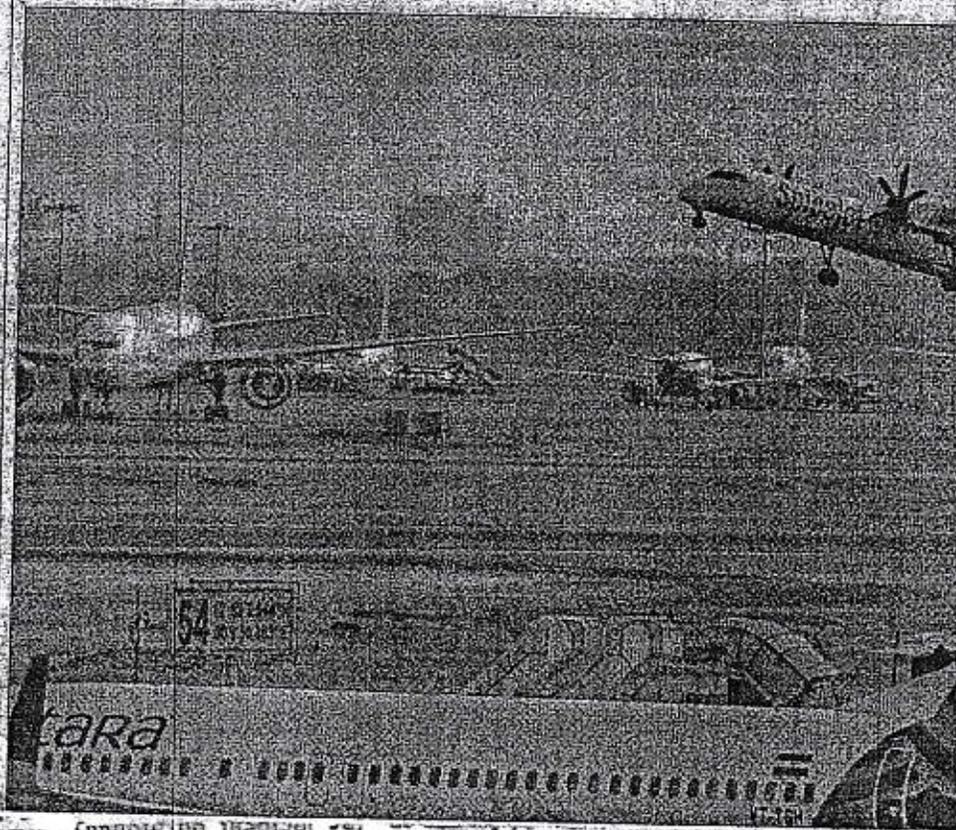
Domestic passenger flights also resumed operations on Monday after a gap of two months. India is the tenth most affected nation by the pandemic after US, Russia, UK, Spain, Italy, Brazil, Germany, Turkey and France, as per the JHU data.

The country has recorded 6,088, 6,654, 6,767 and 6,977 on May 22, 23, 24

and 25 respectively.

Also, the number of RT-PCR tests for detection of COVID-19 in the country crossed the 30-lakh mark on Monday. Commenting on the partial resumption of rail and road transport services, Dr Chandrakant S Pandav, former president of Indian Public Health Association and Indian Association of Preventive and social medicine said these relaxations will create an enabling environment for the coronavirus infection to flourish.

"Now, the government will have to ensure strong surveillance and monitoring



The incident on Monday were really scared, said one

## City schools shine in CBSE exams

By Our Reporter

Class XI Arts, Commerce and Science this year will be done online.

**BK Bajoria**

**SHILLONG:** The students of BSF Senior Secondary School and BK Bajoria School have come off with flying colours in this year's CBSE board exams, both in Class X and XII.

Meanwhile, BK Bajoria School obtained cent per cent result in the All India Secondary School Examination (AISSE) declared by the CBSE on Wednesday.

While Class X students from BSF School achieved a feat of cent per cent result with no compartment and no essential repeat, Class-XII students made their mark with 100 per cent result in Arts and Commerce while the Science department came close with 99.4 per cent.

Ritom Roy topped the school result, securing an aggregate of 95 per cent. Second position was shared by Anshu Mishra, Nikita Sharma and Pranav Sharma, each securing an aggregate of 94.2 per cent, while at the third position, with an aggregate of 94 per cent, were Devendra Joshi and Diya Rajput, a statement said. Altogether 70 students had appeared for the AISSE 2020, out of which, 61 students passed with first division including 49 distinctions in English, 36 in Hindi, 27 in Maths, 16 in Science and 38 in Social Studies.

Inspector General, BSF, Kuldeep Saini, Meg. Ft. Head Quarters, Shillong, Chairman of BSF Senior Secondary School, Principal Abha Sharma, the teachers and the non-teaching staff have extend their greeting and congratulated the students and their parents.

In view of the pandemic, the online admission to



ait outside the Shillong Civil Hospital on Wednesday. Testing for COVID-19 from various localities to the hospital. people, two in each car, in the city. (ST)

## Harassment in Ibari OC

The residents said that on July 3, the inquiry was conducted by the OC, during which it was discerned that nobody had been harassed.

The residents have also demanded action against the scribe of an Assam-based newspaper for alleging that Meghalaya Police tortured the people of South Salmara in Soleartek.

## er for a month

has created a lot of problems of Kensimphlang," KSU pres- mphlang Unit, said.

The Union has also requested Executive Engineer that it is MPDCL to provide electricity an area under Kensimphlang

gation also met the executive awkyrwat Division, and SDO Sub-Division of the PHE de- nking water facilities for Ken- llage including Mawlar.

ers told us that the department conducted survey to extend

## Illegal coal transport on

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** Police have detected three trucks over the last one week allegedly illegally transporting coal in West Khasi Hills and East Jaintia Hills districts.

On July 11, around 5 pm, police detected and seized one truck (ML-04B-2789) driven by Dapborlin Purweih (35 yrs), while illegally transporting coal at Umror village under Shallang PS in West Khasi Hills.

Earlier, on July 9, around 4.35 am, police received information from I/c DMR Check Gate, Umkiang, East Jaintia Hills that two suspected coal-laden trucks had evaded checking fled.

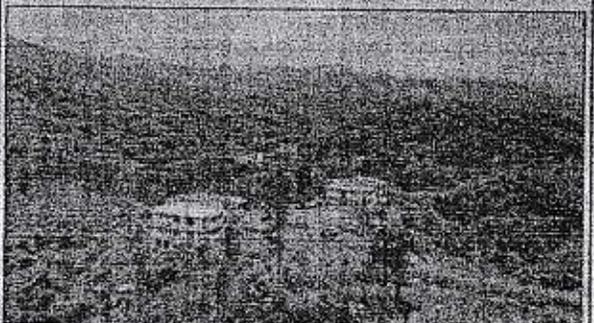
Following this, police along with DMR staff carried out 'naka' checking at Ar-Kilo area near Umkiang (EJH) and detected the two trucks (AS-10AC-3673 & AS-10HC-4701), illegally transporting coal in violation of NGT order. Enquiry found Vicky Sumer (31), Saharul Alam (22), Ahad Hussain (21), Jasim Uddin and Islam Uddin to be involved in the case.

## Meghalaya Nuggets

### Body found afloat Umiam

**SHILLONG:** The East Khasi Hills Superintendent of Police, on Monday, informed that the body of an unknown female was seen floating at Umiam river. The body, which was found in a highly-decomposed state at Mawdun vil- lage, East Khasi Hills, was shifted to Civil Hospital, Shillong, for conducting post-mortem examination. It was then kept at the Civil Hospital Morgue Room for identi- fication.

### MLA inspects model college



**NONGPOH:** Jirang MLA, Sosthenes Sobtan, on Wednesday inspected the construction progress of Model Degree College, Patharkhmah, hoping that with

the upscale Sadashivanagara locality in the city.

As the day progressed, the restless supporters started a flash protest across the key junctions in the city causing traffic jams and throwing social distancing norms to the wind.

Hearing rumours that Shivakumar and his brother and Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha MP D.K. Suresh could be taken into custody, drama ensued with his supporters trying to "gherao" the CBI sleuths' vehicles and lay siege on the CBI headquarters in Hebbal. (IANS)

## Crime update

### Coal-laden trucks detected

On October 1 around 9:30 am, Police detected two trucks (AS-01-KC-17774 and AS-01-KC-1674) driven by Samlang Mawlong (25) and Protesius Mawlong (36) respectively, transporting coal in violation of NGT order at Sohiong Petrol Pump, Len Mawtap, Sohiong, East Khasi Hills.

### Theft

Farid Mukhim lodged a complaint that on October 1 around 9 pm, unknown miscreants broke into the residence of his employees at Laikor, Nongdaneng, Shillong, and stole Rs 1,500 in cash, mobile phone, truck battery, construction materials, etc.

**SHILLONG:** Member of Rajya Sabha, Rakesh Sinha, has stressed on the need to reduce differences and bolster diversification of ideas.

Speaking at an online launch event of his official website on Monday, the MP said leadership is multi-faceted, adding that a successful leadership can never be effective by going solo.

He said in every society there is a hierarchy of thought leadership and it is on the part of the top intellectuals to moralise the debate.

The launch programme was attended by Editor of *Organiser Magazine*, Praful Ketkar, Editor of *The Shillong Times*, Patricia Mukhim, and senior journalist, Alok Mehta.

During the online event, which was also attended by distinguished individuals from different sections of the society, discussion on 'Democracy and Social Media' was held.

Ketkar said that through this website, MPs will be able to bring their viewpoints in front of the society.

Mukhim, during the programme, highlighted the role of social media in overcoming the ignorance about the people and geography of North East.

Highlighting the need for newspaper owners to look into an alternate mode of revenue generation so that they do not have to depend on corporate advertisement for their survival, she said this will lead to greater freedom for journalists to work on any story.

## Rahul a 'VIP kisan', sits on sofa on tractor: Smriti

**GANDHINAGAR:** Union Minister Smriti Irani on Monday ridiculed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi as a "VIP kisan" after photographs showed him sitting on a cushioned seat on a tractor during his party's protest rally in Punjab against the Centre's new farm laws.

Gandhi is holding a series of tractor rallies named 'Kheti Bachao Yatra' across the Congress-ruled north-eastern state to protest against the three farm laws being seen as major reforms in the agriculture sector.

"He is someone who uses a sofa to sit on a tractor. A VIP kisan like him can never support a system which is meant to free small and marginal farmers from the clutches of middlemen," Irani, who had defeated Gandhi in Amethi in the

2019 Lok Sabha polls, said here.

Speaking to reporters at the Gujarat BJP headquarters, the Union textiles and women and child development minister hit out at Gandhi over his comment that the Congress, if voted to power, would scrap the contentious legislations.

"His dream of coming to power will never be fulfilled," she said, adding "it is not in his nature to respect parliamentary traditions" as he had torn an ordinance (to protect convicted lawmakers) brought in by the Congress-led UPA government, referring to a 2013 incident. "You cannot expect him to respect our Parliament," Irani asserted.

She said the new laws give farmers the right to sell their produce to anyone, anywhere at the price he

deems fit, but the Congress got rattled as its politics is about keeping cultivators dependent on middlemen. Irani claimed people are unable to understand why the Congress was against laws that would ensure farmers get fair and quick payment for their produce.

President Ram Nath Kovind has given his assent to the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill; Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill; and Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, which were passed by Parliament last month.

The Centre claims these laws will boost growth in the agriculture sector, but critics say the reforms would lead to the exploitation of farmers. (PTI)

## PMLA case likely against website in Hathras incident

**NEW DELHI:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is examining an FIR registered by the Hathras police against website for criminal conspiracy to incite communal violence in Uttar Pradesh following the recent brutal murder of a Dalit girl.

Top sources told IAN that the ED may file a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against the website 'JusticeforHathras' created on the platform catrd.co as preliminary investigation has indicated funding of violent protests from a dubious organisation.

Sources said an FIR has been filed and others who are scheduled offences under the PMLA and all money collected by committing this crime is liable to be confiscated. The action will be followed with arrests and prosecution which entails a jail term of 7 years. (IAN)

# The Shillong Times

7<sup>th</sup> October, 2020

## Coal mafia continue to thrive despite NGT ban

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The issue pertaining to illegal transportation of coal continues to haunt the ruling MDA Government as there are credible reports that trucks carrying illegal coal have been plying with impunity and seldom get intercepted by the police.

According to media reports in Assam, 150 trucks entered Assam on the night of October 5 and only two were detained in Beltola in Guwahati, while on the morning of October 6, as many as 650 trucks entered Assam. There is no way anyone can check the veracity of the numbers quoted but it is an incontrovertible fact that coal is being clandestinely sold in Assam.

A source close to the ruling MDA Government said here on Tuesday that earlier there were several allegations of illegal transportation of coal in the state and the incumbent Home Minister Lahkmen Rymbui was trying to streamline the functioning of the department. Rymbui was entrusted with the Home portfolio in controversial circumstance when his predecessor James Sangma's name figured in smuggling of coal - a lucrative trade for the coal-rich state.

It may be mentioned that CBI is currently carrying out investigation in Barak valley about an organised racket in selling Meghalaya coal to Bangladesh via Karimganj in Assam.

Informed sources claim that the state police is like a caged parrot unable to function freely. That it sometime intercepts coal-laden lorries is an eyewash. To show that they are active, the state police recently detected two trucks driven by Samlang Mawlong (25) and Protesius Mawlong (36) respectively, transporting coal in violation of NGT order at Sohiong Petrol Pump, Len Mawtap, Sohiong, East Khasi Hills.

Admitting that things are in a mess in the government, the source said that an illegality which was taking place for years together cannot be eliminated overnight.

So vicious are the racketeers, about two years ago when the CSWO President, Agnes Kharshing and her associate went for physical

check of mining area, was brutally assaulted by coal mafia in East Jaintia Hills. The organisation has once again petitioned Meghalaya DGP along with the photographs alleging that coal trucks are stationed all along Mawryngkneng and the Shillong Bypass facing towards Jowai to avoid detection.

It may be mentioned that the issue pertaining to the illegal transportation of coal even forced a group of Cabinet Ministers to take it up with the Chief Minister, Conrad Sangma. Although the Home portfolio got shifted from one minister to another, not much change seems to have occurred and the coal seems to be finding their way out of the state, in spite of the NGT ban.

## trapped crore

Labour department's Chief Minister Relief for providing financial assistance to close to 2 lakh people in the state who suffered wage loss during the pandemic and subsequent lockdown.

(Contd on P-10)

## BJP hits back at Rymbui for turning down CBI probe

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** In a riposte to district council affairs minister Lahkmen Rymbui turning down a CBI probe into the alleged misuse of funds in GHADC, the state BJP on Tuesday said the state has no authority to allow or oppose an investigation by

### GHADC funds misuse charges

state has no control over tribal affairs.

"The state government has a limited role in the Sixth Schedule areas as the land does not belong to the state

RTIs after RTIs to track down implementation of BJP-sponsored central schemes in the state and that has moved most of the leaders to adopt unlawful steps," he alleged.

Marak further alleged that people involved in corruption were so powerful that they would hire goons

## Home Min seeks report from DGP on illegal coal trade

Our Bureau

**SHILLONG/GUWAHATI:** Home Minister Lakhmen Rymbui seems to have been kept unawares about the important violation of NGT on transportation of coal. A day after Assam police had intercepted coal-laden lorries and arrested the operators, a somewhat surprised Rymbui said that he had sought for a report from the DGP, and only after that would take action for stopping coal transportation. Two lorries were detained and five persons arrested in connection with illegal transportation, Assam police sources in Guwahati confirmed on Wednesday. Basisi police station in-charge, Partha Prasad Gogoi informed *The Shillong Times* that the ar-

### Assam cops arrest 5, seize two coal-laden trucks

rests were made on Tuesday and that the five were being interrogated.

Those arrested include Sudipta Pal (34) who hails from Baksa district in lower Assam and four others: Myntoimi Kyndait (27) of Khliehriat; Dehum Tariang (27) of Raliang; Heime Suting (20) of Umlang and Salches Phawa (19) of Lad Rymbui.

Two among the four are drivers of the trucks while two are handymen.

The coal-laden trucks, bearing registration number ML11 4188 and ML04 C 5395, were seized for failure to produce legal documents.

According to reports in a section of the media in Guwahati, 150 trucks had en-

tered Assam on Monday night while as many as 650 trucks had entered the state on Tuesday night.

A case under Sections 120(B)/379/406/420 of the IPC has been registered in connection with the incident.

Asked whether the arrested persons have revealed any details or informed at whose behest the activity was carried out, Gogoi said, "So far they have not revealed anything but we are investigating the case."

As the issue pertaining to illegal transportation of coal continues to resurface time and again, the ruling MDA Government has come under questioning

with credible reports of trucks transporting illegal coal without being intercepted by police.

While Rymbui has been trying to streamline the functioning of the department, nothing has changed much with the black diamond being illegally ferried out of the state in violation of the ban imposed by the National Green Tribunal on such transportation.

Rymbui was entrusted with the Home portfolio in controversial circumstances when his predecessor James Sangma's name figured in smuggling of coal — a lucrative trade for the coal-rich state.

Meanwhile, the CBI is currently carrying out an in-

vestigation in Barak Valley about an organised racket selling Meghalaya coal to Bangladesh via Karimganj in Assam.

"All along I have said that whatever allegations are there it is the duty of the government to ensure that no illegality takes place," the Home minister said while reacting to continuous allegations about illegal coal transportation thriving in the state.

The minister said that so far he has not got a report which has been sought by him.

While the MDA Government continues to be on denial mode on the allegations, the allegation of syndicated supply of coal to Assam led to James Sangma being stripped of the Home portfolio earlier this year.

(Contd on P-10)

### Prefabricated entry point to be ready by Dec 15

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The state government on Wednesday asserted that the prefabricated entry point being constructed at Umling in Ri Bhoi district will be made operational on or before December 15.

Informing this, Deputy Chief Minister, Prestone Tynsong said that the entry

## 'Govt bound by guidelines to test people at border'

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** Meghalaya Government has asserted that they are bound by the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to

conduct antigen tests at the entry gate as that antigen tests have to be in place to shorten the process of detection of cases, we are bound to follow the guidelines," Tynsong said on Wednesday, a day after NEIGRIHMS Director, Dr P Bhattacharya termed the tests at the entry gate as "wastage of resources"

of reports that private hospitals in the state were referring all COVID-19 cases to NEIGRIHMS which is overloaded with patients.

Tynsong said that if required, the government would hold a review meeting with the private hospitals to make sure that they

### 128 new cases

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** 128 new COVID-19 cases were reported in the state on Wednesday.

72 cases were detected in East Khasi Hills, 33 in Ri Bhoi, 11 in West Garo Hills, 4 in East Garo Hills, 3 in South Garo Hills, 2 each in West Jaintia Hills and East Jaintia Hills and 1 in North Garo Hills.

88 people also recovered on the day. The state now has 2411 active cases while

## Clamour for action against coal racketeers gets louder

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The clamour for putting an end to illegal coal racketeering in the state is apparently getting louder.

For its part, the NPP-led MDA government seems to be getting cornered with unremitting allegations over illegal transportation of coal from several quarters.

Soon after BJP, an ally in the MDA demanded arrest of power minister James Sangma over the matter, civil society groups in the state are now demanding a CBI inquiry into the alleged illegal coal syndicate.

The United Democratic Party, an important constituent of the MDA

**NGO wants CBI probe; UDP leaves it to govt to handle situation**



Coal-laden trucks seized in East Jaintia Hills. (File)

coalition, meanwhile, has left it to the government to deal with the allegations.

UDP president, Metbah Lyngdoh said, "It is the role of the government. They have to take a call on how

to manage the allegations or charges."

Asked if the UDP also wants a CBI probe, Lyngdoh said, "Let the chief minister take a call on this... What is right, what is wrong, whom

to arrest and whom not to."

On the other hand, Civil Society Women's Organisation (CSWO) president, Agnes Kharshing who has been spearheading the movement against illegal coal mining and transportation of coal, demanded that the matter should be handed over to the CBI for the reality to come out "as there has been a lot of government's revenue leakage."

"They are hiding a lot of information and I am telling you they are still digging and rat-hole mines are still working. So we need an independent inquiry and the matter should be handed over to the CBI," she said.

(Contd on P-10)

## Assembly committee asks govt to subsidise COVID-19 test rates

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** The Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Committee on Women's Empowerment has asked the state government to subsidise the "high" rate of COVID-19 tests.

Stating that the test rates in Meghalaya are exceptionally high compared to those across the country, the committee chairperson, Ampareen Lyngdoh said that the common people would stand to suffer if the government does not bring down the price

of tests.

Lyngdoh also noted that there was marked difference in the rates charged in private hospitals, adding that patients who go to private hospitals for COVID treatment were forced to bear 60 to 70 per cent of the treatment cost despite being covered by the Megha Health Insurance Scheme (MHIS).

"This matter needs to be reviewed with all private hospitals," Lyngdoh said.

Speaking to media persons after holding a meeting with the MHIS chief

executive officer here on Friday, Lyngdoh also expressed her disappointment with the "sub-optimal coverage by MHIS" so far.

In East Khasi Hills, 53.97 per cent of the population has been covered under MHIS as of now while in North Garo Hills only 47.35 per cent of the population has been covered. In Ri Bhoi, 49.46 per cent of the population has been covered under the health insurance scheme.

The committee was informed that the government (Contd on P-10)

## High conviction rate in crime against women in Meghalaya

From Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Meghalaya has a good conviction rate when it comes to crime against women, but it cannot be any indicator of speedy disposal of justice or low crime rates, considering the small size of the hill state and its matrilineal society.

According to the latest National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB) data, Meghalaya has a conviction rate of 57.3 per cent. In the North East region, Mizoram leads with 88.3 per cent conviction rate while Manipur has 58.0 per cent.

The figures have gained more prominence in wake of the Hathras murder case in Uttar Pradesh (UP).

The Union Territory of Puducherry has a 100 per cent conviction rate and has witnessed nine convictions, according to the latest data.

UP has 55.2 per cent conviction rate when it comes to crime against women.

The NCRB 2019 data defines the conviction rate as the ratio of the number of convictions carried out by courts in the state and the number of cases where trials were concluded.

NCRB provides a breakdown of conviction in cases from previous years and in 2019 separately before arriving at the total.

The breakdown is also

## Illegal transportation of coal

# BJP ready to knock on PMO doors

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: Meghalaya BJP, which has been demanding arrest of Power Minister, James Sangma for his alleged involvement in illegal transportation of coal, has asserted that they would approach the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on the matter.

The statement came from BJP Spokesperson, Bernard Marak a day after Opposition Leader, Mukul Sangma asked the party to approach the PMO if they were serious about exposing the alleged scam in the state.

"We first want a copy of the report which Home Minister Lakhmen Rymbui has sought from the Meghalaya DGP before making our move," Marak said.

According to Marak, the party wanted to know the names of all those who were involved in illegal transportation of coal.

"We will take up the matter with national leaders and various ministries including PMO," he added.

The BJP leader from Garo Hills also slammed former chief minister, Mukul Sangma saying that the Op-

port about things and apprising the central leadership of the huge scam in the state was their first priority.

Marak also said that instead of advising BJP, Mukul Sangma should work as a sincere Opposition leader and work towards uprooting corruption in the state.

"It was the duty of the Opposition to highlight these issues but since the Opposition is weak, the BJP had to take the onus on itself to raise the issue which concerns the future of the state and its people.

On Saturday, Mukul Sangma, while reacting to the alleged involvement of the Power Minister in the coal racket which was unearthed in Assam recently, had said that his party was looking forward to an independent inquiry followed by necessary legal action.

"They have bitten more than what they can chew," he had said, referring to the allegations that the government was allowing a free hand to the illegal transportation of coal.

He had also advised the BJP to stop demanding the arrest of the Power minister



Volunteers

## Live bu like

From Our Correspondent

NONGSTOIN: A day after sons were arrested for burying one Boris Marng Nongdisong village in N Hills, police on Sunday arrested more while also seeking to exhume the body.

The arrested persons - nus Marngar (32), Exstar (52) Bezansio Marng

## Conrad defends James, denies coal illegalities

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** In his first reaction to reports of racketeering in coal, Chief Minister, Conrad Sangma was on denial mode and boldly defended his older sibling, Power Minister James Sangma.

When asked about the media reports naming James Sangma for his alleged involvement in the illegal transportation of coal, he said it is easy to make allegations even as he added that it is wrong for media houses and some individuals to directly jump into a conclusion about illegal transportation of

coal as soon as they see movement of trucks on the highways.

Dismissing outright the charges made by coalition ally BJP, he said, "These allegations are baseless and no such activities are allowed."

He also termed the move of BJP or any party which is demanding CBI probe as "very irresponsible".

He felt that whenever people see a coal truck on the highway, "they presume and jump into conclusion" that it is illegal transportation of coal. "Movement of coal trucks takes place with paper and proper documents," he claimed.

Reiterating that the state government has taken strong measures in this regard, he added that the deputy commissioners, SPs and Mining and Geology department had been directed to ensure that illegal movement of coal was not allowed.

Sangma further said that the government was serious about dealing with the illegal transportation of coal and hence the government has also proposed setting up of integrated check gates which will have live CCTV cameras along with other technological solutions to check all the trucks.

When asked if the gov-

ernment is open to the idea of a CBI probe into the allegation to clear the doubt, here too the chief minister deflected it by saying it was easy for everyone to demand a CBI probe but the government has to act in a "practical and responsible manner".

"If there are some genuine and valid reasons obviously but CBI is not an agency which we just call and ask them to come. There has to be proper systematic way to approach and if there are any issues, we will definitely look into it but I don't there are any allegations with base right now," he said.

## Justifies COVID expenses of Rs 399 cr

at Conrad Sangma's COVID-19 expenditure

March next year. "We have tried our best but this not a fight of the government alone," he said while justifying the move saying that MDA is the only government which gave financial assistance to labourers.

When asked how the total expenditure jumped from Rs 200 crore to Rs 400 crore, he said that he had spoken only about the amount which has been cleared by the govern-

## 88 new cases, death toll climbs to 64

By Our Reporter

**SHILLONG:** Meghalaya on Monday recorded one more death and 88 new COVID-19 cases, taking the active tally to 2434.

The number of recoveries has gone up to 5273 after 131 people recovered on the day. 50 new cases were reported in East Khasi Hills, 26 in West Jaintia Hills, 10 in West Garo Hills and 1 each in Ri Bhoi and East Jaintia Hills.

The death toll increased

### COVID UPDATE

NEW CASES ON OCTOBER 12 '20

Confirmed Cases	7771
Active Cases	2434
Recovered	5273
Deceased	64
E Khasi Hills	1699
Ri Bhoi	325
W Garo Hills	178
W Jaintia Hills	91
S Garo Hills	35