

June 5, 2004

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### CM INAUGURATES 13<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ENVIRONMENT

**Shillong, June 5, 2004:** The 13th National Symposium on Environment scheduled for three days from 5th to 7th June 2004 organized by the North Eastern Hills University (NEHU) and sponsored by the Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences, Department of Atomic Energy was today inaugurated by the Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr D D Lapang at the Seminar hall of NEHU, Umshing. The inaugural function was presided over by Dr Anil Kakodkar, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Lapang said that a seminar of this kind reflects the unquenchable thirst to broaden one's horizon and a desire to awaken others to the problems and possibilities that exists in the world around us. He felt that the seminar is very appropriate as it relates to the crucial issue that affects the existence of life on earth. "Environment" means everything that sustains life on Earth and disturbances to any of the elements that constitute the "Environment", be it air, water, soil etc, creates an imbalance, the result of which is catastrophic, he added. "We were warned of the consequence of the pernicious ways of man, but most choose to turn a deaf ear and as a result, today, the world is slowly but surely suffering the consequences", he lamented.

Dr.Lapang also asserted that environmental disturbances have become a global phenomenon, adding that the human race as a whole generates over 350 million metric tons of hazardous waste each year through industries and consumption; "We are destroying the rain forest and its eco-systems and polluting nature, the soil beneath is suffering from industrial misuse and chemicals, while the ozone above is withering away, exposing life to dangerous rays from outer space. No one looking at the figures would dispute that an environmental crisis is in our hands" he opined.

He further said that development associated with the way of living in today's production and consumption society is now causing enormous environmental and public health problems but developmental activities to achieve the goal of a clean and healthy environment has to continue in harmony with the Natural Law.

Dr Lapang said that there is a need for a different approach and a shift in awareness from partial analytic solutions to holistic ones based on Natural Laws. Sustainable development cannot be achieved by intellectually balancing all the relevant factors in order to try to bring minimum disturbance to the environment. Instead, it requires a widespread recognition of the need to use natural resources wisely and the technology to meet the basic needs of all, thereby extending to everyone the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life.

While welcoming the participants, from across the country, to Meghalaya, Dr Lapang is confident that the symposium would consider all aspects of environmental protection and better development without affecting the eco-system.

Earlier, Prof. D T Khathing, Convener of the 13th.National Symposium on Environment delivered the welcome address while Shri. H S Kushwaha, Director Health Safety & Environment Group, Babha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai enlightened the gathering about the symposium.

## **SEMINAR ON URBAN INFORMAL SECTOR AND ITS RELATED ISSUES INAUGURATED BY CM**

**Shillong, June 5, 2004:** Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr D D Lapang today inaugurated a One day Seminar on Urban Informal Sector, Urban Poverty Alleviation and its related issues of North East India organized by the North East India Council for Social Science Research (NEICSSR) and assisted by the Meghalaya Urban Development Agency & Public Health Engineering Department, Meghalaya at Raitong Building conference hall on June 5, 2004 which coincides with the World Environment Day.

In his inaugural address, Dr Lapang congratulated the North East India Council of Social Science Research for taking the initiative in organising the seminar, which focuses on the intrinsic relationship between man and his environment. He said that in this age of rapid urbanization numerous challenges has to be faced to maintain a balance between the need for development and the necessity to preserve the environment. He lauded the NEICSSR for having the foresight to instigate discourse on the very crucial subject of Urban Informal Sector, Urban Poverty Alleviation and its related issues of North East India.

Dr Lapang said that all urban cities are characterized by both the formal and informal sector. The urban informal sector is an integral and inseparable part of the urban fabric, which reflects the needs, and aspirations of the urban poor and their success in elking a living out of the complex urban economy. This particular sector makes substantial and more pronounced contribution to the overall urban economy, which goes a long way towards functioning and means of the entire urban system.

The cluster of office buildings, commercial complex, industrial and residential areas are developed as a part of the planned environment occupying a dominant presence as urban formal sector while the informal sector is seem more as a confused mass of unauthorized and largely illegally constructed establishments in shack like structures in the midst of low income settlements such as slums and squatter colonies. Like the informal industrial establishments, most of the informal residential settlements and the hawking establishments are illegal. Though the formal and informal urban components are clearly identified in the urban fabric as separate entities, in reality they are complementary to each other and exist as an inseparable features.

He felt that there is a need to recognize the existence of the informal sector as an integral part of the urban environment and to bring it under the planning framework and to draw the policies and schemes to promote and regulate the informal sector or it may only grow into an unplanned, unauthorized and illegal manner.

He informed that the Government of India and the State Government is implementing a number of Urban Poverty Alleviation Programme with and effort to bring informal sector as a part of the overall planning framework of the city.

He observed that migration of people from rural hinterlands to urban areas in search of better employment has continued unabated. The number of hawkers in the street, housemaids, cobblers and barbers are increasing day by day. This has happened because creation of job opportunities have not kept pace with the requirement on one hand and an increasing demand of services on the other. He pointed out that the work to regulate the informal sector is tremendous and proactive and corroborative roles are required to be played by NGOs, financial institutions and State Agencies.

Wishing the seminar all success, Dr Lapang hope that the deliberations would discuss on the issue

thoroughly and yield fruitful results.

The inaugural function was presided over by Prof. K Alam, President NEICSSR. Earlier, Prof. B J Deb delivered the welcome address while Dr Saifunnesa proposed the vote of thanks.

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### **WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY CELEBRATED**

**Shillong, June 5, 2004:** To observe World Environment Day, the Shillong College Academic Society in collaboration with the Forest Department and the State Council for Science Technology & Environment (SCSTE), today organised various competitions for school children at the college premises. 350 students from 40 schools in the city participated in the science and environment based competitions. The Meghalaya Minister for Urban Affairs, Mr. Friday Lyngdoh inaugurated the competition as the Chief Guest.

In his inaugural address, Mr. Lyngdoh reminded everyone how in the past decades, the scenic beauty and clean surrounding of Shillong used to attract visitors which was a pride for the people of the state. He lamented that as days go by and with people getting more educated and civilised, environmental degradation is increasing which is a threat to everyone. However, he expressed hope that people in the last few years have begun to understand the importance and concept of environmental consciousness. He also lauded the organisers of the competition saying that such events would create environmental awareness especially among the young minds, in whose hands the future depends both for mankind and nature.

Dr. Mrs. M.P.R. Lyngdoh, Principal Shillong College, speaking on the occasion said that cleanliness, nature loving and nature preservation have always been the tradition of the people of the state and all should maintain that tradition, she added.

### **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME INAUGURATED**

**Shillong, June 5, 2004:** Together with the rest of the world, the three localities of Laitumkhrach namely, Nongrim Hills, Nongshiliang and Lumiawlot celebrated the World Environment day at central Nongrim hills, Shillong by releasing a 'Truck' for carrying and dumping the waste materials from the localities to the Anderson Treatment plant at Mawiong for conversion into organic fertilizer which is known as solid waste management programme. It may be mentioned that the 'Truck' was sponsored by the department of Urban Affairs Government of Meghalaya and was released today by the Urban Affairs Minister, Mr Friday Lyngdoh. The function was presided over by the Meghalaya Home Minister, Mr R G Lyngdoh, who is also the local MLA of the area.

Speaking in the occasion as the chief guest, Mr Lyngdoh appreciated the effort of the headmen of these localities for initiating the cleaning drive in their localities with an aim to make the whole of Shillong a clean city, but at the same time he added that unless there is cooperation from all the people the objective of making the city clean and preservation of the environment in general would be a distant dream. He called upon the people to cooperate with the dorbar and the solid waste management programme by throwing the waste materials at the proper place and to have the sense of responsibility and to develop the culture of keeping the locality clean.

Mr. R.G. Lyngdoh, in his address said that the long desired and cherished dream of the people have been fulfill and hope that with the participation and cooperation of all the people the cleaning drive of the dorbar will continue. Mr Lyngdoh also stressed that utilisation of plastics should be minimized to a large extent and not to dispose off plastics in a haphazard way as it is a non bio-degradable substance which pollute and destroy the environment.

Amongst others who spoke on the occasion includes Mr K. Kharsyntiew, Mr K. Khonglah, Mr R. Dkhar and Mr C. Cajee from Anderson Treatment plan who informed that the removal of the garbage is free of cost .