

State Government meets NGOs on uranium mining issue 'Need to delink construction of two-lane road from Uranium mining issue'



Meghalaya will not allow Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL) to take up any preliminary activities or pre-mining developmental activities in the uranium deposit areas in South West Khasi Hills district unless it can convince the people of the State on the safety aspects or how it can insulate the people from the ramifications of uranium mining.

This was the stand taken at a meeting between the State Government and various NGOs opposing the uranium mining, including the representatives of some villages in South West Khasi Hills at the conference room of the State Secretariat, Shillong on July 22.

It may be mentioned that various organizations have opposed the construction

of Nongstoin-Pambriew-Wahkaji-Mawthabab road under SARDP-NE on the ground that government's intention of constructing the road was to facilitate uranium mining in the area. During the meeting leaders of various NGOs including NESO, KSU, JACSO, JAC, etc and the village representatives of Mawthabab-Wahkaji areas shared their concerns and views on the issue. Some of the village representatives welcomed the construction of roads, but at the same time said they were opposed to uranium mining.

Chairing the meeting, Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma said that the Government has worked hard to get the road projects sanctioned under Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North East (SARDP-NE) and that it should not be linked to issue of uranium mining.

(Contd. in Pg. 2)

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT HOLDS 1ST CONVOCATION



Altogether 90 graduates were conferred Bachelor and Master degrees in four different programmes of study at the 1st Annual Convocation of the University of Technology and Management (UTM) held at U Soso Tham Auditorium in the city on July 22.

The Convocation Ceremony was attended by Meghalaya Governor, V. Shamuganathan who is also the Visitor of the University as Chief Guest, and Dr. Ampareen Lyngdoh, Minister in-charge Urban Affairs etc as Guest of Honour.

Delivering his Convocation address, the Governor stated that convocation day is a momentous occasion where the mind and heart of a graduate is filled with thrill and joy." On this emotionally charged occasion, I urge you to remember with respect the sacrifices of your teachers, parents and loved ones" he said.

Advocating the fact how physical well being and intellectual soundness is pivotal to successful living, the Governor advised the graduating students to keep themselves physically fit and mentally sound. "Do not be vague or cynical. Blast all impossibility. Create a positive mind in yourselves" he further said.

Stating that employment does not necessarily mark a person's true success, the Governor urged upon the graduates to live for a purpose." Master yourself. Do not waste the knowledge that you have acquired. Focus, concentrate, persevere, be truthful and be honest. Do not go astray and get distracted by unworthy things because the mind is like a monkey that wanders and jumps from one place

to another" he said, while also calling upon the graduates to give themselves into serving the country which is currently facing a multitude of problems like corruption, dowry related issues, rising maternal and infant mortality rates, unemployment from among a myriad of other problems plaguing the country.

Dr. Ampareen Lyngdoh meanwhile expressed her appreciation to the University for its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in the recent past and took the occasion to appeal to the UTM fraternity to partake in the efforts of the government at tackling two of the main issues afflicting Shillong city in particular and the state of Meghalaya as a whole, namely urban waste management and provision of safe potable drinking water. She also stated that the government is looking forward for an opportunity to interface with the university on these two important issues.

Others who spoke at the programme include UTM Chancellor Professor Utpal Ghosh, Vice-Chancellor Dr. S.J Chopra and Pro -Vice Chancellor Dr Mukesh Saxena.

It may be reminded that the University of Technology and Management was established under the "University of Technology and Management Act 2010" of the government of Meghalaya and offers professional and technical programmes in areas like journalism and mass communication, hospitality, digital marketing, technology, travel and tourism and others.



CM visits bamboo chipping unit at Nongchram

On July 23, Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma visited the Meghalaya Bamboo Chip Ltd (MBCL), a bamboo chipping unit at Nongchram in East Garo Hills, which has been abandoned for years after being declared a sick unit, to explore the possibilities of utilizing the infrastructure for various activities of the bamboo growing farmers of the region.

The step is being taken in view of the State Government's initiative of Green Economy under which bamboo and agar plantation programmes have been started across the State since last year.

On his arrival at the unit premises, the Chief Minister was received by the Deputy Commissioner in charge of East Garo Hills, P.M.Sangma and officials of MIDC and Commerce & Industries department, including the General Manager in charge MDCL, R. Kharbuli, who briefed him about the problems and position of the unit.

It may be mentioned that MBCL was incorporated in September 1979 with an authorized share capital of Rs. 10 lakh and a term loan of Rs. 9 lakh availed

from MIDC, the holding company to set up a 100 ton per day bamboo chipping plant at on a land measuring 25 acre donated by Nokma of Nongchram village. The objective was to meet the demand for bamboo chips at paper factories like Ashok Paper Mills, Titaghar Paper Mills and Bengal Paper Mills in Assam and to uplift the economically backward people of the area, by utilizing the surplus electricity that was available then.

However as the years went by, the location of the factory proved to be a drawback for various reasons, including its remoteness, insurgency problems, floods that inundated the factory and power supply that became erratic over the years. Despite efforts to revive the unit through upgradation and diversification, the company ran at a huge loss. Having no alternative, it was decided that the company be liquidated and VRS be granted to its 15 employees.

During his visit, the Chief Minister also interacted with the villagers of the area and directed the official concerned to plan a scheme for utilizing the unit for training the local farmers, among.

CM inspects Samgong Horti Hub at Williamnagar



Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma inspected the Horti Hub at Samgong in Williamnagar and also interacted with the Horticulture officers and farmers of the district during his visit on the evening of July 23.

Accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner in-charge, P.M.Sangma, the Chief Minister during his inspection had a discussion with the District Horticulture Officer, B.G.Momin, Manager of the Horti Hub, Tasri M. Momin and other officers on the status of the Horti-Hub, the returns generated from the sale of flowers and the need for diversification of their species, among others. He said he would look into the possibilities of exporting the flowers from the Hub for which he stressed the need to aggregate with local farmers to upscale their production.

The Chief Minister also discussed other developmental issues in the area with the officers and farmers during his visit.

State Government meets NGOs on uranium mining issue

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He said that the people should not interpret the construction of proposed two-lane road projects as facilitating uranium mining in the state since the Government would not take any decision on the matter unless a consensus was reached with all the stakeholders and people of the State are fully convinced about it.

"The road projects should not be linked to uranium mining in the state as its objective is to upgrade national highways in the State, to connect the state capital of the northeastern states with the East-West corridor, to connect district headquarters with national highways and upgrade the state highways into double lane" he said and appealed to the NGOs not to oppose the road projects and miss out the opportunities for development.

Sharing the concern of the people on the effects of uranium mining, the Chief Minister, however, said that there were scientific solutions to the challenges. But he urged upon the representatives not to misinterpret that UCIL would take up uranium mining if the road was constructed saying there are laws to protect the land and the people. He also urged upon them not to take premature decisions and said that the State Government would continue with this kind of engagements and discussions with all the stakeholders until a consensus was arrived at on the issue.

Forest & Environment Minister, Prestone Tynsong suggested that a Committee, constituted in 2009 to deal with the issue, be revived. He recalled that the Committee previously headed by Mr. Bindo Lanong had not made any submissions on the matter.

Earlier, Chief Secretary K.S. Kropha highlighted the background of the uranium mining issue, while Principal Secretary, Political Department, P.K. Srivastava closed the meeting with a vote of thanks.

CABINET OKAYS NEW RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE BY DSCS



The State Cabinet in its meeting on July 21 has approved three proposals, including the proposal by the Personnel Department for Amendment of the relevant paragraphs of the Office Memorandum relating to the composition, functions, etc of the District Selection Committees (DSCs) for different districts in the State and the procedure for direct recruitment to various categories of posts which come under the purview of the DSCs.

Briefing the Media persons after the meeting, Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma informed that the department had come up with the proposal since there was a need for prompt declaration of results after interviews conducted by the DSCs for filling up the vacancies. He said that on many occasions it has been seen that there was undue delay in the whole process of conducting recruitment by the DSCs and the declaration of results because of the certain guidelines pertaining to the written exams. This amendment seeks to do away with components like lengthy essays, précis writings and ensure that there is objective type of questions so that the whole evaluation of the papers can be fast tracked and

results can be declared without delay, he said.

Therefore the Cabinet has approved the proposed amendment and henceforth, the interviews under the respective DSCs would have a total of 300 marks, including 70 marks for General English in objective format, 130 for Aptitude, 30 for General Knowledge and 30 marks for interview.

The Cabinet also has approved the proposal by the State PHE department for regularization of its 16 employees to give effect to the Agreement signed by the Department and Hima of Mawphlang in 1978 for implementation of Greater Shillong Water Supply Scheme.

Informing this, the Chief Minister said explained that there was a need for quite a substantial amount of land from the Hima for the Water Supply Scheme and to ensure that this land was made available to the department without any compensation and without payment of any taxes, the agreement was signed and was duly registered with the Sub-Registrar of East Khasi Hills, Shillong. Based on this agreement

a number of posts in the grade III and grade IV level of the department were filled up to absorb the local people under the jurisdiction of the Hima Mawphlang, but whose services were not regularized till date, he added. The matter was examined by the department after representations were submitted by the Hima Mawphlang and the affected people and came up with the proposal to regularize the services of those appointed, which was accordingly approved by the Cabinet.

The Draft Meghalaya Water Resources Engineering Services Rules, 2016 was also brought for the consideration of the Cabinet because so far the Department had not framed the rules for the officers of the department. Deputy Chief Minister Rowell Lyngdoh informed the media persons that earlier, the department was following the rules of Agriculture department under Irrigation branch. Now the department has framed its own rules for promotion and recruitment in three stages – first, a senior officer in the rank of Superintending Engineer, secondly the Executive Engineer and thirdly for the SDOs level, he said.

LAYING OF FOUNDATION STONE OF NONGTLUH SECONDARY SCHOOL BUILDING

Local MLA and Chief Adviser to the Government of Meghalaya, Dr. D. D. Lapang laid a foundation stone for construction of Nongtluh Secondary School, Diwon funded under Asian Development Bank (ADB) at an amount of Rs. 2,24,35,000/- at Diwon village, Ri Bhoi District on July 21.

The programme was also attended by Shri R.R. Kynsai Makdoh, Ex CEM, Shri D. Hynniewta, ADC, Shri R. Kharbihkhiew, BDO, Umling C& RD Block, Shri M.C. Decca, Joint Director, Education, Shri G. Khongsdir, DSEO, W.K. Blah, Principal, Alpha English Higher Secondary School, officials from various departments, headman, village elders, students, teachers and parents.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Lapang informed that in Ri Bhoi District four schools has been selected by the ADB, namely; Nongtluh Secondary School, Diwon, Alpha Higher Secondary School, Nongpoh, Nehru Memorial Secondary School, Umsning and Mynken Higher Secondary School, Bhoirymbong. He also said that construction of school building would immensely benefit the students of the village and the area as a whole.

On the same day, Dr. D. D. Lapang also inaugurated the new building of Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sevak Kendra for VEC of Diwon which was constructed under MGNREGS of 2013-14 at an amount of Rs 10 lakhs.



World Population Day 2016



A fortnight long observation of World Population Day 2016 on the theme 'Take Responsibility, Make Plans' culminated on July 25 with the State Level Advocacy Meeting on World Population Day 2016 held at U Soso Tham Auditorium, Shillong. The day was graced by the presence of the Parliamentary Secretary i/c Agriculture, Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Government of Meghalaya, Dr. Celestine Lyngdoh as the Chief Guest. Also present were Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Mr. K W Marbaniang, Dr. W Kharkrang, Director of Health Services (MCH&FW), Director of Health Services (MI), Director of Health Services (R) and other senior officers and staff of Health and Family Welfare Department. The programme was organised by the National Health Mission, Meghalaya in collaboration with Directorate of Health Services (MCH & FW), Government of Meghalaya.

World Population day is an annual event, observed on July 11 every year, which seeks to raise awareness of global population issues. The event, established by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989, was inspired by the public interest in Five Billion Day on July 11, 1987 approximately the date on which the world's population touched five billion. The focus of the celebration is population stabilisation through protection and youth empowerment, to offer them knowledge about family planning and to ensure easy access to reproductive health services.

Dr. Lyngdoh, in his speech, said that the United Nations and Government of India are spending huge amount of money to educate and empower people especially the youth on the importance of family planning through knowledge and comprehensive health reproduction system. Dr. Lyngdoh informed that out of approximately 7.2 billion citizens across the globe, close to 1 billion are

sleeping hungry as food security has been compromised with the increase in population.

With a population growth of 27% in the State as per the 2011 Census, it demands a strong mechanism to sensitize the people on the adverse effects of population explosion in relation to food security, employment, health issues, human rights and others, said Dr. Lyngdoh. Lamenting the fact that use of OCP and family planning methods is still considered a taboo in some parts of the State, Dr. Lyngdoh said that it is high time the department chalk out a friendly and positive approach on how to deal with population explosion. The department needs to make concerted efforts to reach to the targeted population particularly the youth and people of child bearing age through several interventions launched by the Central and State Government, he said. There has been a projection that that by 2030, India will become the most populous country in the world surpassing China, said Dr. Lyngdoh. It is a huge challenge but not possible if we adopt a proactive approach in our effort to control population, he said. Therefore, it is a shared responsibility of each citizen to ensure that schemes and programmes relating to family planning introduced by the government are being implemented in right earnest.

On the occasion, awards were distributed by the Chief Guest to Myliem C & RD Block and East Khasi Hills for being the Best Performing Block and Best Performing District respectively for their success in encouraging people to adopt family planning methods. The Chief Guest also released a documentary film entitled "Role of ASHA in the Health Care of the Community & About National Health Mission Entitlements".

The 2nd State Shooting Championship 2016 commences



With the aim to promote Shooting sports in Meghalaya, the Shooting Association of Meghalaya (SAM) held the 2nd State Shooting Championship 2016 on the 26th and 27th July 2016 at the Assam Regimental Centre, Shillong.

The Championship was inaugurated on 26 July by the Commissioner and Secretary, Sports and Youth Affairs, Meghalaya, Shri F R Kharkongor, in the presence of the President of SAM Shri. John F Kharshiing and the Director of Social Welfare, Government of Meghalaya and Vice President of SAM Shri. H M Shangpliang. Besides the participants, also present was the Joint Secretary of the Meghalaya State Olympic Association, Shri Chiranjib Choudhuri, officials of the National Rifle Association of India and officials and members of the Shooting Association of Meghalaya.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri. F R Kharkongor congratulated the Shooting Association of Meghalaya for organising the competition of a sport which has brought much glory to the Nation, through the likes of Olympics Gold Medallist Abhinav Singh Bindra, Silver Medallist, Lieutenant-Colonel Rajyavardhan Singh Rathor, Gagan Narang and many more. Reminding the gathering that the Government of Meghalaya together with the Meghalaya

State Olympic Association had recently submitted the bid document to host the National Games in 2022, he said that the State was hopeful of winning the bid and also winning medals in different events with shooting being one of them.

Stating that the Government is already preparing athletes by way of imparting training in disciplines like karate, boxing, badminton etc, he added that shooting can also be adopted so as to help medal winners emerge. Adding that hills people were good marksmen, he said that the Championship was a good platform to hone talents and bring out the talent pool to groom elite athletes who will win medals for the State in 2022.

It may be mentioned that the shooting championship is being conducted for the two age groups of (Junior girls & boys) and 21 yrs and above (Women & Men). Altogether 68 participants have registered for the Championship comprising of shooters from the Assam Regimental Centre, National Cadet Corp, Meghalaya Home Guards, SAM as well as public participants. Winners of the Championship will represent the State at the North East Zonal Shooting Championship at Dimapur, Nagaland to be held from August 29 to September 3, 2016.

S.K OIL PRICE REVISED

The Deputy Commissioner (Supply), West Jaintia District has informed that the price of S.K Oil price has been revised and fixed with immediate effect.

Wholesale Price from Jowai and Thadlaskein Depot will be at Rs.15.90 per litre and wholesale price from Shangpung outlet will be at Rs. 18.05 per litre. The Retail Price in retail centres from Jowai and Thadlaskein S.K Oil Depot will be at Rs. 17.85 per litre. While the retail price in retail centres from Shangpung S.K oil outlet is at Rs. 20.20 per litre.

Online Application for Pre-Matric and Post Matric Scholarships

The Dy Director, Higher & Technical Education (T), Meghalaya, Shillong has informed that the last date for submission of Online Application for Pre Matric Scholarship for Class I-X and Post Matric Scholarship for Class XI-XII for Minority Communities students both Fresh and Renewal scholarship is 31 August 2016.

Prohibitory Order

The District Magistrate, East Khasi Hills, Shillong has informed that as per the instruction issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India (Arms Section) New Delhi, all Arms License holders within East Khasi Hills District are directed not to carry their arms to a fair, religious procession and other public assemblage or open display of arms and ammunition in public places. Failure to comply with the directive will be dealt with seriously.