



Newly Inaugurated Rctrv at Khvndcuod. Shillong

INSIDE :

- ✿ STRAWBERRY : THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME
- ✿ 56th REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION
- ✿ MEGHALAYA TURNS 33
- ✿ NEWSREEL
- ✿ MUSEUMS - WINDOWS TO THE PAST
- ✿ ECO - PARK
- ✿ SPRING OF HOPE APARTMENTS BECOME A REALITY
- ✿ MEGHALAYA BAGS 2ND PRIZE AT THE NORTHEAST TRADE EXPO 2005
- ✿ 6th INTERNATIONAL SHILLONG TRADE FAIR
- ✿ OKKAPARA SONGGITCHAM - KEEPING ALIVE THE PRISTINE CULTURE OF THE GAROS
- ✿ DARE TO DREAM
- ✿ MEGHALAYA BAGS SILVER AWARD AT THE IITF



Editor's Note

This is the fifth issue of the Meghalaya Chronicle which is being published with a view to showcase the happenings in and outside the State of Meghalaya, achievements of **various departments and success stories of selected youth under the feature *Personality Profile***,

In this issue, the highlights are on the Republic Day 2005 being celebrated all over the State, the facets of the Meghalaya Day Celebrations, a write-up on the now famous **strawberry fruit, an article on the museums in Shillong. besides various other events.**

The Directorate of Information & Public Relations (DIPR) participates in various fairs and exhibitions and this year, in tandem with the Department of Industries, took part in the North East Trade Expo at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, between 11th to 14th March, 2005, bagging the second prize for the *Best Display and Decoration*, a special commendation for the Most Commercial Promising Product for the Sponge Gourd or Sohprew. The Directorate of Information & Public Relations also fielded a tableau at the

Republic Day ceremony held at Rajpath, New Delhi on the 26th January, 2005.

This year's tableau depicted the colourful Behdienkhlam dance of the Jaintias. D.I.P.R. was also awarded the first prize at the 6th International Shillong Trade Fair held between the 16th and 27th March, 2005.

The Directorate of Information & Public Relations has brought out numerous publications in the past and amongst them, the monographs are highly popular and a delight to read. The past volumes have been - *land and People, Flora and Fauna, Places of Interest, The Cultural Pride of Meghalaya - Dances and Festivals, Dwellers of the High Hills - The Khasis of Meghalaya, The Pristine Culture & Society of the Garos of Meghalaya*. The latest monograph is entitled *The Enchanting life & Culture of the Jaintias of Meghalaya* which is currently under print. More are on the anvil.

In collaboration with the Children's Film Society of India, the Directorate of Information & Public Relations also hosted the Children's Film Festival between the 5th and 8th April 2005 at the cinema halls at Shillong, Jowai, Lad Rymbai and Byrnihat. This Directorate is also actively implementing the Special Interactive Programme (SIP) whereby **various departments in the remote areas can sensitize the people about** different schemes and projects by way of seminars, workshops, group discussions, display and distribution of posters and pamphlets, cultural programs etc.

The Directorate of Information & Public Relations is also undertaking an **ambitious modernisation programme for upgrading its technical equipments, vehicles, computers and exhibits.**

We hope this issue of *Meghalaya Chronicle* will be informative, interesting and impressive. Ideas for improvements are welcome, especially articles, write ups, success stories and good quality photographs.

Till next time, happy reading.



(Aldous Mawlong)

Director, Information and Public Relations
Meghalaya, Shillong.



Strawberry

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Strawberry (*Fragaria* × *ananassa*), a member of the rose family, is one of the few fruits with an almost universal appeal. Deep red, heart shaped and luscious, the glossy red berries attract even the most jaded of eyes.

In India the commercial cultivation of strawberries is relatively recent and even though no official records have been found that detail the introduction of strawberries into the country, it would seem that the British settlers introduced the *Chandler* variety of strawberry into India. However the disadvantage of this variety was that even though the fruits were sweet, they were soft and could not tolerate handling.

In Meghalaya interest in the fruit was kindled with the introduction of the *Chandler* variety as well as the discovery that a wild strawberry known locally as *Sohshan* grew in the hills of the East and West Khasi Hills with sweet but small fruits. However the small size and difficulty with which an appreciable quantity of the fruit could be harvested, precluded any attempts to commercialize the crop and interest in the fruit dwindled. It was only in the last couple of years that interest in the fruit was rekindled through a group of enterprising farmers in Ri Bhoi District, who made the effort to procure improved Israeli varieties of the fruit from friends in other states and started growing and multiplying it in their home gardens. Discovering that there existed a good local market for their produce, the farmers started to increase the area under the crop but were limited by the lack of technical know how, inferior varieties and non availability of inputs.

Strawberries and the Technology Mission:

In 2001 the Government of India, through the Ministry of Agriculture launched the Technology Mission

for the Integrated Development of Horticulture in the North Eastern States with a view to establish a convergence and synergy amongst various ongoing governmental programmes in the field of horticulture development so as to achieve horizontal and vertical integration of these programmes to ensure adequate, appropriate, timely and concurrent attention to all the links in the production, post harvest management and consumption chain, maximize economic, ecological and social benefits from the existing investments and infrastructure created for horticulture development. In short to provide the missing links in ongoing horticulture development projects by integrating the existing schemes of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Government of India and by focusing the existing pattern of assistance provided through the scheme on horticulture.

Against this backdrop and with the advent and implementation of the Technology Mission (TM), in Meghalaya in 2001, major positive changes began taking place in the horticulture sector in the state. Investments made in this sector began to slowly but surely revitalize the horticulture scenario and farmers as well as development personnel were infused with a renewed sense of purpose and zeal. Taking advantage of the scheme, the agro climatic conditions prevailing in the district and observing the potential of strawberry as a commercial crop and a prospective source of revenue for the state as well as the farmers of the district, the office of the District Horticulture Officer, Ri Bhoi District, started limited field trials of the fruit, in its departmental farm located at Dewlieh, Umsning in Ri Bhoi District during the month of November 2003 with a University of Florida release called Sweet Charlie with the express objective of providing a *Low Volume*



Hi value Short Duration crop that could serve as an economically viable alternative to the traditional crops of the state. The trial was conducted in an area of 497.9 sq.m and with a plant population of 1500 plants. Initial results of the trial with this variety under mulching showed it to be highly promising in terms of yield, quality and size of the fruit as well as suitability to the local agro climatic conditions with a yield of 1500 kgs from the trial area. The size was exceptional as well as the sweetness of the fruit. In fact it has been acknowledged by growers from other parts of India that the fruit may be one of the best in the country in terms of size and quality.

Observing the results and seeing the encouraging response of the local market to this crop, it was decided to go in for cultivation on a larger scale as well as explore the markets outside the region. Accordingly samples of the fruit were sent to various destinations like Guwahati, Kolkatta and were also showcased at the North East Expo 2004 held in Delhi in the month of March where Meghalaya bagged the award for the “*Most Commercially Promising Product Range*”, a fact that is no less an endorsement of the tremendous potential of Meghalaya in today’s market, but is also an acknowledgement of the potential of strawberries. Results of the test marketing also indicated that Meghalaya strawberries were able to command a higher price in the market than varieties from other states. This result coupled with the fact that Meghalaya has the potential to produce strawberries even during off-season, has prompted the Department to consider the possibilities of large-scale commercial cultivation of the fruit. Accordingly, the office of the District Horticulture Officer, Ri Bhoi District, Nongpoh, through the Directorate of Horticulture, Department of Agriculture, Meghalaya, formulated a project on the cultivation of strawberries in Ri Bhoi District of the state, in a holistic C2C mission mode project approach (wherein emphasis is laid on the total integration of all aspects of horticulture production right from pre planting, planting, plant management, disease and pest management, post harvest management, transportation, storage, processing and marketing)

with a budget of Rupees 169.41 lakhs and covering an area of 2 hectares under the aegis of the Technology Mission for the Integrated Development of Horticulture in the North Eastern Region.

The Project Report was placed before the State Level Steering Committee in the month of May 2004 and after obtaining the approval of the Steering Committee, was forwarded to the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, which approved the project. The first release of funds was received in the month of August 2004 after which the project was started.

In view of the above concept, provision was made in the project for the creation of a 1-hectare Holistic Center of Excellence for strawberries in the Dewlieh Horticulture Farm, Umsning, as a model and

History of Strawberry

Throughout history, strawberries have been cultivated, nurtured and relished by the royal families of Europe, most notably King Charles V, who adorned his Parisian gardens at the Louvre with 1200 strawberry plants in 1368. However it was King Louis XIV and one of his gardeners, Jean de la Quintinie, who took up serious cultivation of this captivating fruit at the Palace of Versailles. King Louis XIV’s gardener made the first detailed account in 1667 of how to develop larger berries, how to prepare the soil and how to manage the plant.

Present day commercial strawberries owe their existence to a chance crossing between two varieties, *Fragaria virginiana* and *Fragaria chiloensis*, when a French naval engineer named Amedee FranAois Frezier brought some plants from Chile in 1712 while on a mapping expedition and grew them in Brittany. The plants grew well but did not produce berries until someone later planted a Virginia strawberry brought from North America in the 1600’s next to them. A whole new variety developed from this crossing and horticulturists named the new offspring *Fragaria x ananassa* which over a course of time had given rise to all the cultivated varieties throughout the world.

1-hectare under cluster area expansion in the farmers' fields, both for which the work is already in progress. The model center that has been set up will not only be a one-stop solution and cater to all the needs of strawberry growers in the district but serve as a catalytic demonstration of improved methods of cultivation, management, marketing and processing of the crop and also act as a repository of all possible technological information related to the fruit such that farmers need not look anywhere else for assistance. Further-more the Center will also initiate the implementation of a PPP (public, private participation) model for post harvest management and processing of the fruit such that farmers are able to avail of the services of both the public as well as the private sector. Through practical and real world based demonstration, transfer of technology and knowledge will take place in the Center such that a mindset change is effected amongst the growers and impart to them the confidence required to successfully grow the crop and improve their quality of life. Initially the Center will act as a source of inputs for the farmers so that they need not look elsewhere for their cropping needs and as area expansion takes place in and around the model

center on a cluster basis, it is anticipated that the technology will also spread so that the entire production system can be ultimately handled by the farmers themselves.

Work on the project started in earnest with the first release of funds in August 2004 and continued till the time of final planting of the plants in December 2004 both for the farm as well as the beneficiaries of the project. However work on the creation of infrastructure facilities within the Center of Excellence is still continuing and is expected to be completed soon.

With such an approach, apart from the obvious financial and monetary benefits that would accrue not only to the farmers of the district but also to the revenue of the state, by its cultivation, strawberry will be the crop that will act as the catalyst for the development of commercial horticulture in Meghalaya. With the support of the Technology Mission, the demand that the fruit currently enjoys in the market and the technology transfer and skills that the cultivation will bring, it can safely be said that the future of commercial horticulture for Meghalaya in general and Ri Bhoi in particular, lies in the shape of a small, lusciously red, heart-shaped strawberry fruit.

District Horticulture Officer, Ri-Bhoi Disitric Nongpoh



Strawberry Festival held on February 14, 2005 at the All Saint's Hall, Shillong



56th REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION

Together with the rest of the Nation, the 56th Republic Day was celebrated in a befitting manner throughout the State on January 26, 2005. In the state capital, Shillong, the Meghalaya Governor, Mr. M. M. Jacob unfurled the National Flag and took the salute of the 12 marching contingents, in a well attended ceremony held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Sports Complex, Polo.

Extending warm greetings and wishes to the people of the State, Mr. M. M. Jacob while speaking on the occasion said that during the last 33 years, Meghalaya has been moving ahead with the rest of the country along the path of progress and prosperity. Congratulating the people of the State for showing maturity and wisdom in maintaining peace and communal harmony, he reiterated that, *"in order to achieve the level of economic growth and prosperity out of development activities undertaken or seek to take up, peace is very essential"*. Therefore, he called upon the people of Meghalaya to work in unity and make the State a land of peace and prosperity.

While reflecting on the recent Tsunami disaster, which claimed the lives of lakhs of people and rendered thousands homeless, Mr. Jacob appealed to the people to extend their helping hands to the cause of relief and rehabilitation of the affected.

As part of the celebration, tableaux were presented by different government departments, armed forces and the NCC. Out of the 12 Tableaux presented, the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) showcasing the blacksmiths of Myllem, one of the successful initiatives undertaken under the SGSY scheme, bagged the first prize. The second prize went to the Gorkha Training Centre for showing the transformation of a simple "Kancha" into a soldier and the third prize was awarded to the National Cadet Corps.

The marching contingents included the Assam Regiment, the Eastern Air Command, CRPF, BSF, 1st and 4th MLP Battalion, NCC, Bharat Scouts and Guides and the District Executive Force.

The other highlights of the day were free cinema show for children below 14 years of age in local cinema halls and distribution of gifts and food items to hospital patients, disabled persons, orphans etc.

At Tura, West Garo Hills District

The Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. D.D. Lapang hoisted the National flag and took the Rashtriya salute in the function held at the Chandmari playground, Tura. The ceremonial function witnessed an impressive march past by 6 contingents including the 2nd MLP Battalion, Tura District Executive Force (DEF), NCC Cadets, Scouts and Guides. Tableaux were also presented by different Departments on the day. On the occasion, local MLA and Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Billykid Sangma handed over a sum of Rs. 75,000/-, which is the proceeds from a concert by a local band Rough Roads towards the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for the recent Tsunami hit victims. As part of the day long celebrations, sports and a cultural show were also organised. Meanwhile, the Rotary Club of Tura also distributed food items to hospital patients and inmates of the Leprosy Colony, Tura.

At Nongstoin, West Khasi Hills District

Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister, Dr. Donkumar Roy unfurled the Tricolour and took the Rashtriya salute of the ceremonial parade taken part by contingents consisting of police personnel and school children from JNV Nongstoin at St. Peter's playground at Pyndengrei. In his address, Dr.

Donkumar Roy laid stress on mental development and attitude building, which he said is the only means to develop our country in a better way. He also pointed out that peace and tranquility is vital component for progress of any area. Therefore, he urged the people to co-operate with the government in every field.

At Williamnagar, East Garo Hills

A large number of people from all walks of life witnessed the celebration at Rongrenggiri Government Higher Secondary School playground where Meghalaya Minister for GAD, Mr. H.D.R. Lyngdoh unfurled the National flag and took the Rashtriya salute. Besides the marching contingents, games and sports were also organised for children. Food items were also distributed to hospitals patients, jail inmates and destitutes.



At Nongpoh, Ri Bhoi District

The Meghalaya Minister for Urban Affairs, Mr. Friday Lyngdoh hoisted the National Flag and took the salute of the impressive marching contingents in a function held at the NSCA Mini Stadium, Pahamsyiem. Amidst a large crowd, tableaux of 16 Government Departments were presented on the occasion. The 1st prize for tableau presentation went to the Soil Conservation Department while the 2nd and 3rd prize were bagged Sericulture and Weaving Department and Education Department respectively. The best trophy in the march past went to JNV School, Niangbari. Other highlights of the day were band display by 4/9 Gorkha Rifles, a Rock Concert featuring Split Image, Revel Souls and performances by the Officers' Club.

At Jowai, Jaintia Hills District

Meghalaya Minister for Social Welfare, Mr. M.N. Mukhim hoisted the National flag and took the salute at the impressive parade of the Police, Home Guards and students contingents from different schools of Jowai town. The function, held at the Jrisaleiñ playground, Jowai, also saw cultural show presentation, flying of hot air balloons and tableaux presentation of various Government Departments.

At Baghmara, South Garo Hills District

Meghalaya Minister for PWD, Mr. Brening A. Sangma unfurled the National flag and took the salute of the 7 marching contingents which included the South Garo Hills DEF, 3rd MLP Battalion, JNV Scouts and Guides and Baghmara Scouts and Guides. On the occasion, Mr. Sangma gave away the Silver and Copper Medals of the Government of India to Mr. J.D. Sangma, ADC, District Census Officer, Mr. M.K. Marak, BDO, Baghmara and Charge Officer, Dr. P.C. Sangma, Supervisor and enumerators Mr. P. Sangma, Mr. A. Marak, Mr. B.G. Momin and Mr. S. Sangma in recognition of their outstanding contribution in the Census Operations 2001. To entertain the gathering, cultural programme, sports for children and free cinema shows by the DPRO Baghmara were organised. The celebration culminated with a get together of all District officers, staff and people from all walks of life gathered at the Government Higher Secondary School playground.

At Resubelpara Civil Sub Division

Minister for Mining and Geology, Mrs. D. C. Marak unfurled the National Flag to the tune of the National Anthem and took the salute at an impressive March Past by the parade contingent at the Govt. Upper Primary School playground. The other programmes organised to mark the occasion included a cultural show, fruits and eggs distribution at the CHC, games and sports for children and a football match.

At Mawkyrat Civil Sub- Division

The minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Mr. Paul Lyngdoh hoisted the National flag and took the Rashtriya salute of the parade contingents at Maharam Secondary School Playground. As part of the celebration sports for

children and women was held. The minister gave away the prizes to the participants in various disciplines.

At Ampati Civil Sub Division

Minister for Health, Mr. Sayeedullah Nongrum unfurled the Tricolour before the impressive crowd and took the Rashtriya salute. The highlights of the day were a musical concert by a popular band of Garo Hills "Rip Rap", cultural programme, distribution of sweets and sports events for children.

At Khliehriat Civil Sub-Division

The Minister of State incharge Border Area Development, Mr. Nehlang Lyngdoh took the Rashtriya salute of the marching contingents consisting of Police personnel and school students. As part of the celebration, tableaux were presented by the DIPR, PHE, Soil Conservation and C & RD Saipung Block. A sports marathon was also organised to mark this momentous occasion.

At Mairang Civil Sub-Division

Meghalaya Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. B. Nongsiej unfurled the Tricolour and took the Rashtriya salute of the marching contingent at Madan Tirot. A sports marathon was held on the day to mark the occasion. The prizes of the winners were given away by the Chief Guest.

At Dadengiri Civil Sub Division

Meghalaya Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Francis Pondit R. Sangma unfurled the Tricolour and addressed the gathering at Dadengiri Playground. An impressive March Past, cultural programmes and sports were the highlight of the celebration.

At Amlarem Civil Sub Division

Chairman of Meghalaya Resource and Employment Generation Council, Mr. S. Mulieh unfurled the Tricolour and took the salute of the parade at Amlarem L. P. School Playground. Other highlights included sports and games and cultural items.

At Sohra Civil Sub Division

Meghalaya Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Boldness .L. Nongum unfurled the national flag to the tune of the National Anthem and took the Rashtriya salute at Pynshad Khurai playground. The day's highlights included cultural programmes, distribution of sweets to the children, distribution of food packages to the patients of NRM Hospital and St. John's Orphanage Home and sports and games.

At Mawshynrut Administrative Unit

Meghalaya Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Lambor Malngiang hoisted the Tricolour and took the Rashtriya salute to the National Anthem at Riango Sports Complex playground. The other highlights of the day included sports and games.

At Rongram Development Block West Garo Hills

Mrs. M. T. Sangma, Block Development Officer hoisted the National Flag. A race for the Nokmas and Laskars of the Block and sports for children was held on the day.



Meghalaya turns 33

After 16 long years of a hard fought struggle, the long cherished aspirations of the hills people of Meghalaya bore fruit, when the then late Prime Minister of Smti. Indira Gandhi inaugurated the full-fledged state of Meghalaya on January 21, 1972 at Polo Grounds, Shillong. Since that auspicious moment, Meghalayans have been celebrating this day as Meghalaya Day.

To commemorate this historical moment, the 33rd Meghalaya Day was observed with pomp and grandeur in the State. In the State capital Shillong, the celebration was marked with a four day extravaganza, which highlighted a number of events showcasing the myriad attributes encompassing the uniqueness that is Meghalaya.

Inaugurated by the Governor of Meghalaya, Shri. M. M. Jacob, in the presence of the Meghalaya Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Shri. J. D. Rymbai, dignitaries and the general public, the highlight of the function was the presentation of the Meghalaya Day Awards 2005. This year the Awards were given only for two categories - literature and social services. The Award presented by the Governor carried a cash prize of Rs. 50,000 and a citation. The U Tirot Sing Award for literary works was presented to Prof. I.M. Simon while the Pa Togan N. Sangma Award was presented to Ms. Theilin Phanbuh. The Meghalaya Day Excellence Awards, which carried a cash prize of Rs. 10,000 and a citation, were presented to fifteen State Government employees. The Meghalaya Governor Police Awards were also announced on the occasion.

An *Ethnic Fashion Show*, displaying designs by upcoming designers Duncan Kharmon, Angeline Niangty and Josna Kurbah was held on January 22. The show was organized by the Directorate of Information & Public Relations and hosted by the Fashion Society Shillong. Songs rendered by Revel Souls, Nicholas Dunn, Na La Rympei (Voices) and a karate demonstration by the members of the All Meghalaya Karate Do Association added flavour to the show.

Music and tradition has always been part and parcel of the life of the people inhabiting picturesque Meghalaya and for the first time ever, traditional musicians got together with popular rock groups like the Mermaids and the Soulmates in an evening of harmony titled, "*Ka Miet Ki Sur Nylla*" at the State Central Library Shillong on January 23rd.

Organized by the Meghalaya Tourism Department, the traditional musical evening brought some of the best in the music scene under one roof.

The evening was not all about music and songs, as traditional dances like the Shad Pastieh and Shad Pliang, put together by a troupe from Nartiang, Jaiñtia Hills was presented by the HTCWO. For the musicians representing different groups from as far as Mawsynram, Jaiñtia Hills and Garo Hills the event was a perfect platform to showcase their talents. The highlight of the evening was the much talked about "*Indigenous Musical Orchestra*" put together by the Pynter Group of Pynursla and a Flute Recitation session with Shantineketan returned Benedict Hynñiewta.

In conjunction with the celebration, a State level exhibition, a photo and a painting competition were also held. The State level exhibition was participated by Central and State Government Departments as well as NGOs and entrepreneurs. The Photo Competition was organized by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations, on the theme "*Rural Life In Meghalaya*" and "*Faces*", while the Painting Competition, organized by the Directorate of Arts and Culture, was held on the theme "*Showcasing the Cultural Heritage of Meghalaya*" "*Landmarks of Meghalaya*" and "*Flora and Fauna*".

Elsewhere in the State, Meghalaya Day was celebrated with great fanfare in Garo Hills as well as in the sub-divisions of Ampati and Dadenggre. State Government offices in the District were illuminated as part of the grand occasion. At the Statehood day celebration at the District Auditorium, Tura, three prominent citizens of Tura, I.K. Sangma, Lindrid D. Shira and J.S. Lao were honoured with the Meghalaya Day Awards by the District Administration for their outstanding contribution to the society. They were presented with the cash of Rs. 10,000 each along with a citation and a memento. Another unique feature of the 33rd Meghalaya Day celebration at Tura was the colourful street painting near the Children's Home Hawakhana, rendered by professional artists from Bangladesh, Ms. Rokshana Akther Banu and Ms. Boksai Chisim who worked through the night to complete the art work.

News Reel



Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. D.D. Lapang, inaugurating the Centre of Excellence for Strawberry and Roses at Dewlieh, Ri Bhoi District on April 27, 2005



Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister, Dr. Mukul Sangma speaking as the Chief Guest at the closing function of the 'Education for All week' celebration at the State Central Library Auditorium, Shillong on April 29, 2005



Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. D.D. Lapang, releasing the 'Handbook of Meghalaya Police Circulars' at the inaugural function of the Conference of SPs and Commandants held at the Conference Hall of the DGP's Office, Shillong.



Meghalaya Governor, Mr. M.M. Jacob, inaugurating the two-day Seminar on 'Industrial Scenario in the North Eastern States' at the Khasi Jaijinta Presbyterian Assembly, Shillong on March 4, 2005. The Seminar was organised by the Shillong Commerce College and sponsored by the North Eastern Council, Shillong.



The Netherlands Ambassador, Mr. Eric F. Ch. Niehe accompanied by Ms. Josephine Frantzen, Second Secretary (Political) called upon the Meghalaya Chief Secretary, Mr. P.J. Bazeley in his office chamber on March 3, 2005, to discuss on issues of mutual concern with special reference to the co-operative sector and capacity building.



The Governor of Meghalaya, Mr. M.M. Jacob releasing a book entitled 'Tribal Communities and Social Change' edited by Prof. P.M. Chacko of the Department of Sociology of the North Eastern Hill University, at the Raj Bhavan on March 16, 2005.

News Reel



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9, 2005

Government of Meghalaya, Rev. Mr. W.M.S. Pariat, addressing the Annual Conference of the Meghalan Civil Services Association at Pine Wood Hotel, Shillong on 9, 2005.



Meghalaya Minister for Agriculture etc., Mr. H.D.R. Lyngdoh speaking at the inaugural function of the Upper Shillong Micro Watershed Project at Mawklot on March 1, 2005



Additional Chief Secretary, Meghalaya, Shri. S.K. Tiwari, IAS, laying a floral tribute at the statue of the Father of the Nation on Martyr's Day, on January 30, 2005.



Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. D.D. Lapang unveiling the foundation stone of the Bamboo Mat Processing Centre at Nongtluh village in Ri Bhoi District on March 19, 2005.



Meghalaya Minister for GAD, Mr. H.D.R. Lyngdoh inaugurating the "Spring of Hope Apartments" at Vellore on December 4, 2004 in the presence of Vellore MLA, Mr. G. Gnanasikharan and Meghalaya Chief Secretary, Mr. P. J. Bazeley.



Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. D.D. Lapang receiving cash amounting to Rs. 85,000/- from Meghalaya IAS Officers Association at his Office Chamber.

News Reel

Glimpses of Meghalaya Day Celebration



News Reel



The Meghalaya Chief Secretary, Mr. P.J. Bazeley receiving the Bio Diversity Flame from Mr. P. Marak, DFO, Forest Department, Tura, (Which was flagged off at Tura on February 9, 2005) as part of the Centenary Celebration of the Kaziranga National Park at the State Central Library Auditorium, Shillong on February 11, 2005.



P.T. Sawkmie, Co-Chairman, State Resource Mobilisation Commission, unveiling the foundation stone of Augmentation of Nongkholew Water Supply Scheme at Nongkalew village in the presence of Senior PHE officials and Durbar elders on March 2, 2005.



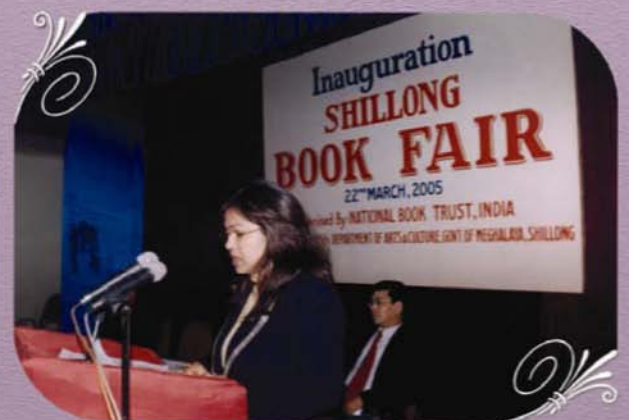
The Deputy Commissioner, East Khasi Hills District, Mr. D.P. Wahlang, distributing the relief of Rs. 1,00,000/- to the next of kin of Tsunami victims in his office chamber on February 18, 2005.



The Meghalaya Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Lambor Malnglang, giving away a degree to one of the successful students of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Shillong Regional Centre at Sunny Lodge, Nongshilliang, Nongthymmai, Shillong on March 5, 2005.



Commissioner and Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya, Agriculture, etc., Mr. K.N. Kumar, handing over the land documents for the establishment of college of Post Graduate studies in Agriculture at Umiarn to Dr. S.N. Purie, Vice Chancellor Central Agriculture University on February 7, 2005 in his office chamber.



Meghalaya Minister for Arts and Culture, Mrs. D.C. Marak addressing the gathering at the inaugural function of the Shillong Book Fair held at the State Central Library Auditorium, Shillong on March 22, 2005.

MUSEUMS

Windows To The Past



WILLIAMSON SANGMA MUSEUM

Like many cultures across the globe, the hills people of Meghalaya have a history steeped in rich cultural and traditional roots. In an effort to preserve, protect and conserve the kaleidoscopic legacy of the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos, the State Museum was established in 1975. Located in the heart of the city, the Williamson Sangma Museum is the only Museum, which signifies the national identity and cultural heritage of the State of Meghalaya. The Museum which was named after the first Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Captain Williamson Sangma was established as a small gallery in the Legislative Assembly building and then shifted to the premises of State Central Library in 1976. The first block of the Museum building was constructed in 1984-85, while block two was constructed in 1992-93.

Keeping up with the changing tides of time, initiatives were taken to further modernize and develop the existing Museum. The endeavour began to bear fruit when representatives of Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata came forward to financially assist this bid in the year 2001-2002. In addition to improving the presentation of the exhibits, two new galleries, the Painting Gallery and the Musical Gallery were introduced. This modernization scheme was given a fillip in the year 2003, when the Indian Museum pledged further financial assistance to the Museum. Under this project, the entrance and reception area of the Museum were developed. New galleries depicting economic or agricultural activities, flora of Meghalaya, cane and bamboo work, rural market scenes, war and weaponry, basketry, handicrafts and traditional sports were also introduced. Other added attractions were the Art and Craft Gallery and the Ethnographic Gallery. With a collection of more than 2500 exhibits, the Williamson Sangma depicts the life and culture of the

people of the State and showcases the rich cultural heritage of the Khasis, the Jaintias and the Garos in all its glory.

The Museum was formally inaugurated by the Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. D D Lapang on December 16, 2004 - Courtesy : Julius L.R. Marak, Museologist.

DON BOSCO CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURES (DBCIC)

An imposing structure, dominating the Shillong skyline is the Don Bosco Centre For Indigenous Cultures (DBCIC), reputed to be the largest anthropological museum in Asia. Dedicated to the preservation and presentation of tribal artifacts, promotion of study, research and publication on indigenous/tribal people and on issues concerning with cultures, DBCIC boasts of ten breathtaking galleries, showcasing the cultural artifacts belonging to the people of the North East, arranged thematically. Known as the "*Paradise of Anthropologists*" the DBCIC is run by the Catholic Missionaries.



Upon stepping through the arch entrance of the Centre, one is treated to an imposing display in the *Introductory Gallery* showcasing the geographical



position of North East India, the cultural profile of the different indigenous tribes, their physiognomy and the flora and fauna of the area.

The *Pre-Historic Gallery* depicts the bio-cultural evolution of man through the different stages, which is the mirror of the pre-historic past of humankind. *The Land and Peoples Gallery* by means of large black and white and coloured photographs introduces the visitors the tropical richness of the region. From among the various occupations, fishing, hunting and gathering are highlighted in the fourth gallery. The display of instruments used for hunting is another attraction, the baskets used for gathering the fruits of people's agricultural labour too are of many kinds.

In the *Agricultural Gallery* one will find the three types of the cultivation of the tribal people of the North Eastern States-the wet cultivation, the jhum cultivation and terrace cultivation and also the different agricultural implements of varying size and shape for cultivation. The sixth gallery or the *Basketry Gallery* has a two-module gallery furnished with three types of houses with a courtyard, each depicting the traditional system of making baskets.

The tribal people are found singing and dancing in the *Musical Gallery*. There are bamboo and string instruments used by the different types of musicians of the North Eastern State. In the past decades the tribes of the North Eastern India lived in isolation, cut off from one another. Raids and fights

for survival were not uncommon. Each tribe developed its own weapons both for defence as well as for offence, the *Weapons Gallery* displays these traditional weapons used by the different tribes.



The *Traditional Technology Gallery* depicts the economic life of the people of the North East who depended primarily on traditional technology for their very existence. The industries shown in this gallery are pottery, wine making, basketry, blacksmithy, goldsmithy, weaving, wood carving and leather works. Adjacent to this gallery is the *Housing Gallery and Art Gallery* which showcases the different types of houses and arts of the different North Eastern States including Sikkim.

Through the *Media and Culture Gallery*, the DBCIC aims at showcasing the unique cultures of the north east through visual presentation. The gallery also traces the history of the life and work of Christ and Churches in the world with special reference to the North East.

Staying true to its roots, research, documentation, publication, discourse through seminars etc are also encouraged in the Centre.

With one gallery topping the other, one loses sense of space and time while wandering through the Museum. Having witnessed first hand the breathtaking beauty of the Museum, it is safe to say that a visit to Shillong is incomplete without a visit to the Don Bosco Centre For Indigenous Cultures.

Courtesy : DBCIC



*Culture is to know the best that has been said
and thought in the world.*

Matthew Arnold

ECO PARK

A FILLIP TO TOURISM IN THE STATE

The splendour of Sohra is legendary. Its scenic beauty, majestic waterfalls and labyrinth cave system makes Sohra one of the most visited tourist destination in the State. In an effort to give a further fillip to the tourism sector in the region and at the same time spread the message on the importance of environmental protection and reservation, an Ecological Development Park has been set up at Mawsmat, Nongthymmai Elaka.

Developed under the Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) 2002-2003, through the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), East Khasi Hills as the Nodal Agency, the first phase of the project was implemented on April 2002. With the cooperation of a number of Government Departments, such as Forest, PWD, Soil and Water Conservation, the first stage of infrastructural work such as fencing of 5 hectares of Sacred Grove, development of approach road, construction of water harvesting structures and check dams were carried out. A tree planting programme was also held in 2003 and 2004 involving the local people and students from Mawsmat, Kut Madan, Laitiam and Sohra. The services of NGO's like the Kyntiew Shaphrang Social Organisation (KSSO) were sought for provision of trekking facilities from the Park to the village of Laitiam.

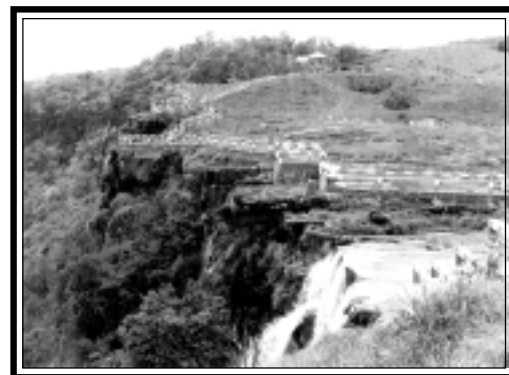
With the completion of the first phase, plans are ahead to develop the

second and third phase of the project, which will include construction of restaurants, rest houses, developing floriculture activities in the area and also provision of ropeway facilities.

The Eco-Park which was inaugurated on December 18, 2004 is spread over an area of 14 hectares and has 5 hectares of Sacred Grove, three water harvesting structures, afforestation space, shopping centre with 5 shops, children play space, picnic huts waterfalls, viewpoints, monoliths, trekking routes etc.

With positive public responses to the Park, it is hoped that the direct and ancillary employment generated through the Park will a long way in uplifting the social and economic conditions of the local residents.

Courtesy : DRDA



SPRING OF HOPE APARTMENTS BECOMES A REALITY



December 4, 2004 saw the realization of the hopes and aspiration of many Meghalayans when the Meghalaya Minister for General Administration Department, Mr H D R Lyngdoh, inaugurated the Vellore Meghalaya House named "Spring of Hope Apartments" situated in Rangapuram village under Satuvachari Panchayat about 5 Kms from Christian Medical College, Vellore, Tamil Nadu. The Minister was accompanied by Meghalaya Chief Secretary, Mr P.J. Bazeley and the OSD, GAD, Mr. Aldous Mawlong.

The idea for the Meghalaya House, Vellore catapulted from the every increasing demand for shelter and hospitality by Meghalayans visiting Vellore for a number of reasons, the foremost being medical treatment. The process of setting the State House in Vellore began in the

year 2000 when the Tamil Nadu Housing Board (TNHB), Vellore Unit offered flats comprising of ten High Income Group houses to the



Government of Meghalaya. The flats were then procured following the Cabinet's approval.

In the year 2003, a team consisting of the Meghalaya Minister for General Administration Department, Mr. H.D.R. Lyngdoh, the then Meghalaya Minister, PWD Mr. Boldness Nongum, accompanied by the Deputy Secretary, General Administration Department, Government of Meghalaya, SDO, PWD (B), Kolkata, officials of the Revenue Department of the Vellore Collectorate and the TNHB inspected the apartments. Following the inspection, necessary infrastructural works were carried out.

Observing that the number of medical cases referred by the Health Department of the State to the Christian Medical College, Vellore has increased considerably, it was felt that the commissioning of the Apartments, each of which is equipped with four rooms with a provision for a kitchen and an attached bathroom, will go a long way in providing clean and economical accommodation for the patients and their attendants.

With the aim of providing the best facilities possible to the people, the State House is also provided with a Tata Sumo vehicle, which will play a vital role in easing the transportation problems and additional services such as aid in booking of train tickets and flight tickets will also be made available besides other facilities.



MEGHALAYA BAGS 2ND PRIZE

AT THE NORTHEAST TRADE EXPO 2005

With the aim of showcasing Meghalaya's potential to the rest of the country and the world alike, the Government of Meghalaya took part in the Northeast Trade Expo 2005, held at the Pragati Maidan, New Delhi from March 7-14, 2005. Organized on the theme "Exotic Weaves of the Northeast", by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, Government of India in collaboration with the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), the Trade Fair saw the active participation of all the seven states of the Northeast.

On display at the Fair were exquisite traditional handicraft, accessories, masks, scrolls and icons, elegant handloom and weaves, designer bamboo and cane ware, aromatic herbs and spices, organic food, horticultural products and delicious cuisine.

The State of Meghalaya saw representation from the Industries Department, Tourism Department,

M I D C ,
Information
and Public
Relations,
Agriculture
a n d
Horticulture
Department,
Sericulture
a n d

Weaving, Meghalaya Khadi and Villages Industries Board, Meghalaya Apex Handloom and Handicrafts Co-op Production Ltd and private entrepreneurs.

At the end of the 8 day long extravaganza, Meghalaya was awarded the 2nd prize for *Best Display and Decoration* and a special commendation was also awarded for the *Most Commercially Promising Product* range for the "Sponge Gourd" or "Sohprew".



6th INTERNATIONAL SHILLONG TRADE FAIR

Since it was first held, the International Shillong Trade Fair has become a much anticipated event. With participation growing every year, this year the 6th International Shillong Trade Fair, organized by the Industries and Trade Fair Association of Assam and supported by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Government of Meghalaya, was held from March 16 to March 27 at the Fire Brigade Ground, Shillong.



Inaugurated by the Meghalaya Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Mr. Paul Lyngdoh, in the presence of local MLA,

Mr. R.G. Lyngdoh, the Fair saw the participation of foreign countries like Turkey, Vietnam, Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Thailand. Also showcasing their prowess were a number of local entrepreneurs. An array of products ranging from marble goods, crystals, furniture, garments, leather items, carpets, to jewellery, set on display enticed shoppers from all walks of life. A stall was also set up by the DIPR wherein colorful monographs depicting the people, places of interest, dances and festivals of Meghalaya, flora and fauna and places of interest were on sale. Other Government departments participating in the Fair were the Agriculture Department, Census and Tourism Department. At the end of the two week fair, prizes were distributed to different stalls in different categories.

While enjoyed for its entertainment value, the Fair is also an occasion where the talents of local entrepreneurs are exposed for everyone to see and celebrate. In this way, the Fair is a platform for exchanging of ideas and fostering of trade relations with neighboring States and countries.

Okkapara Songgitcham

KEEPING ALIVE THE PRISTINE CULTURE OF THE GAROS



In an exemplary action that other villages may emulate, Okkapara Songgitcham under Gambegre Development Block of West Garo Hills has kept alive the pristine culture and tradition of the Garos, that are fast disappearing with the advent of modernization. Locally known as Okkabara and nestled on the low hill slopes, it is a typical sleepy little Garo hamlet complete with a traditional Nokpante or a bachelors' dormitory, a bo·rang or a tree-house and a village court right in the centre of the village.

The replacement of a new roof (nokking pina) over this more than 35 year old Nokpante took place with great traditional fervour and merry-making, along with several other traditional Garo rituals. To mark this nokking pina and tilta songa (a two-pronged post on which a criminal, after being tried in the village court, is tied to and whipped with a thorny cactus-like plant) ceremony and also to encourage the villagers to keep their traditions alive, the Block Development Officer, Gambegre Block, Mr. W.D. Sangma and Border Area Development Officer, West Garo Hills, Ms. Gurne R. Marak jointly organized the day-long programme wherein many traditional practices of the Garos were enacted by the villagers themselves in front of a large number of visitors, both local and foreign, and media persons.

The organizers will also be bringing out a documentary from the city's programme with an aim to expose and promote the age-old culture and traditions of the Garos to the outside world, for which a Film Director of UNDP, Ms. Marie Ange Sylvain, was especially invited to attend the ceremony. She was accompanied by BBC Coordinator from Bangladesh Ms. Noksai Chisim and Ms. Tuhin, a Pastor also from Bangladesh.

Before the Nokking-pina ceremony, the Nokma or the village chieftain sacrificed a cow in front of the newly erected Tilta. This cow is later cut into pieces,

cooked and enjoyed by the entire village. The bachelors of the village begin removing the old thatch from the roof to be replaced by the new one, while the women-folk assist them in carrying the sheaves of bamboo-leaves or wa·jak. As per the Garo traditional law, girls are strictly prohibited from entering a Nokpante and if at all they have to get in, they may do so only from the rear door and not through the main entrance. If any girl is found violating this law they have to pay a heavy fine.

Mentionable, this Nokpante in Okkapara Songgitcham is the only remaining structure of the kind to be found in this part of Garo Hills. One of the village elders informed that this house had stood in this village as far as he could remember.

The nokking-pina ceremony was followed by other rituals and Wangala dance accompanied by merry-making and feasting. In the course of the day-long programme, the villagers of Okkapara Songgitcham in their full traditional attire enacted the journey of their ancestors from Tibet to Garo Hills led by their leader Jappa - Jallimpa. They also enacted the traditional Garo marriage called do·sia and do·bik nia besides other ceremonies related with marriage. To wind up the day-long programme, the organizers also held a concert in which singers of local repute kept the children and youth of the village on their toes for most part of the evening.

Although this is the first humble attempt made by the Gambegre BDO and BADO to encourage and promote traditional Garo practices, the programme proved to be a successful one. They hope to make such programme an annual affair after revamping the old traditional houses of Okkapara Songgitcham.

Dare to Dream

Saddled with big dreams and a never say die attitude, Mandrilla Marbaniang left the safety and security of her parents home in Shillong for the hustle and bustle of Kolkata, to pursue her desire to travel the skies. Belonging to a middle class Khasi family, Mandrilla's journey began in the year 2001, following her graduation from Raid Laban College at Shillong. Filled with a burning desire to make a name for herself but with little idea on how to achieve her goal, she took her first step towards financial independence by becoming a school teacher. She then went on to learn computers and in order to pay for the course she took to tutoring. Not quite satisfied with the direction she was taking, Mandrilla took her first serious step in pursuit of her dream by taking a Basic Cabin Crew Training course from the Franklin Management Consultant. Although Mandrilla graduated with flying colours, she was unable to take advantage of the course as she was usually intimidated a day or two before the relating interviews, which were conducted either in Kolkata and Delhi. Frustrated yet not beaten in spirit, Mandrilla took the decision to move to Kolkata. Armed with her parents' blessings, Mandrilla braced herself to meet the challenges of living alone in a new city. Once there, her day would begin with scanning



newspapers for job vacancies and applying to various call centres and companies. A breakthrough came when she was offered a part time job at the Convergence Contact Centre.

Having worked there for a month, her life took another turn when she was offered a job at the Oberoi Airport Services at Kolkata. Working 12 hours a day, often during late night shifts, Mandrilla kept to her work diligently, while at the same time kept track of vacancies in the Airlines. Following 11 months of harrowing work, her dedication finally paid off when she was selected for Air Sahara. That according to Mandrilla was one of the "proudest moments" of her life. Today Mandrilla is a proud member of the cabin crew for Air Sahara. Attributing her success to God's grace in her life and her parents' unrelenting support, Mandrilla feels that her journey has just begun and she has miles to go before she sleeps.

Through dint of hardwork, courage and self belief, Mandrilla was able to achieve what most youngsters living in small towns like Shillong only dream of achieving. If every young person takes a leaf from Mandrilla's book and dare, not only to dream but also pursue that dream, perhaps they can all find the solution to the problem of unemployment facing the State today.



The best preparation for good work tommorow is to do good work today.

Elbert Hubbard



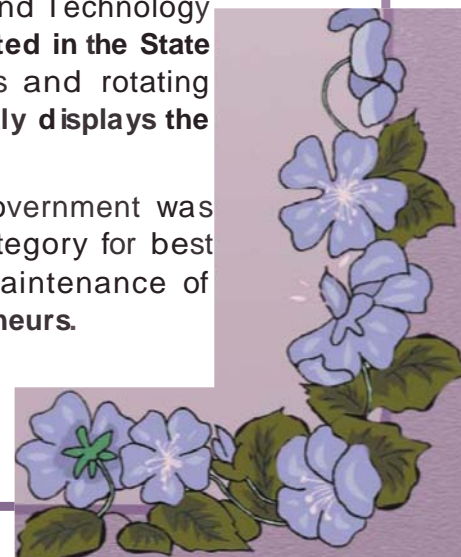
MEGHALAYA BAGS

Silver Award AT THE IITF

The annual Indio International Trade Fair "IITF" is a much-anticipated event. Since it first began in the year 1979, the fair has taken a mammoth **scale and size, with participation from within the country and abroad growing each year. With exhibits from across the globe, the Fair has become the perfect platform for India to showcase her potential to the world and vice versa.**

Like the years before Meghalaya too participated in the IITF 2004 held at the Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. Besides the Department of **Information and Public Relations, Tourism, Sericulture and Weaving, Agriculture, Mineral Resources, Forest, Industries, Science and Technology, MECOFED**, altogether fifteen entrepreneurs from different parts of the State participated in the Fair. Products on sale were **processed fruit products, handloom and handloom materials, honey, turmeric, cowleot, dry flowers, broomsticks, tea, cashew nut and decorative items.** This year, highlight of LT. related activities with Internet connection and presentation on the State through N.I.C, Meghalaya State Centre has been provided in the Meghalaya Pavilion at the Indio International Trade Fair (IITF) - 2004 held at the Pragati Maidan, New Delhi was declared open by the Resident Commissioner Government of Meghalaya, New Delhi, Mr S. Mendiratta, in the presence of the Commissioner and Secretary, Trade, Mr P.K. Sivastava, Secretary, **Industries, Mr P. Jain, the Director of Information & Public Relations, Mr. A. Mawlong and the Director of Tourism, Mr H.M. Shangpliang** among others. The front facade of the Pavilion located in Hall NO.16 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi depicted the various facets of **Agriculture and Information Technology**, which is the prescribed theme for the Fair this year, and tourist spots of the State. In the display section, land and its **scenic splendour, people, their living life style and cultural pattern, forest, mineral products, horticultural and cash crops, Science and Technology activities and Information Technology infrastructures created in the State** have been showcased through backlit vinyl scrollers and rotating translide. **The diorama created in the Pavilion prominently displays the indigenous fruit of Meghalaya, Sohiong.**

In recognition of the creative display, the State Government was presented a Silver Award in the North Eastern States category for best display, decoration of the Pavilion and also for the maintenance of **discipline by the officers, staff and participating entrepreneurs.**





The Meghalaya Tableau
at the Republic Day
Parade held in New Delhi
on January 26, 2005