

CM visits factories in Byrnihat

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: Chief Minister Conrad Sangma visited Byrnihat, the industrial hub in Ri-Bhoi, to ensure that factories here adhere to necessary compliance.

The chief minister visited Megha Cashew, NEZone Pipes, Kingfisher Bottling plant, UB Group, Savam American Strong beer, CMJ Breweries to check whether they are following environmental guidelines and other compliance, which is required to operate.

Wife moves court over custodial death probe

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: The wife of school teacher Hillary Momin, who allegedly died after police assault, has filed a writ petition in the High Court requesting punishment of the accused and compensation by the Police Department.

The counsel for the petitioner informed that the Chief Justice took up the case on Friday and directed the Police Department to file their show-cause and also the report of the investigation in the next hearing.

Hillary was arrested on August 3 by Songsak police. He was allegedly beaten up and was released the next morning. He died on August 11. His wife, Licitisitha D. Shira, and her brother Japan D Shira had lodged an FIR but there was no progress in investigation. Even after approaching the deputy commissioner of East Garo Hills, there was no positive response.

Pre-Christmas celebrations at St Anthony's

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: A pre-Christmas-cum-Charity programme was organised by the St. Anthony's School Past Pupil Association (SASPPA), at St Anthony's School here on Saturday.

Various activities for children, live music featuring local talents, food stalls and others were carried out on the day.

Established in 2013, the association has been actively involved in sharing the joy of Christmas with the lesser privileged children of the society. With a desire to spread Christmas smiles, this is the third time SASPPA is organising the event. The association is looking forward to the support and encouragement of all the past pupils of the school.

Another pre-Christmas musical evening was also organised by Ieng Rasong Sports Social & Cultural Club at Savio Hall, Laitumkhray on Thursday.

OBITUARY

Reformation Mukhim, senior co-operative officer and a resident of Nongmynsong Umkdait Block IV passed away on Saturday. His funeral will be held at the Presbyterian Church cemetery, Nongmynsong at 1 pm on Monday.

Need for cultivating medicinal plants as cash crop: Expert

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: There is a need to cultivate medicinal plants as cash crops in Meghalaya to increase production, said an expert on the third anniversary of North Eastern Institute of Ayurveda and Homeopathy (NEIAH) on Saturday.

NEIAH director Pradip Kumar Goswami said ginger and turmeric are in high demand in the international market both in the pharmaceutical and spices industries.

Stressing the need for preserving various indigenous medicinal plants in the face of inevitable climate change, Goswami said, "If these are taken up both in the private and public sectors, it will be an influential sector for economic development.

A good number of medicinal plants can be grown here. But it should be made in a systematic effort."

Dimchrang Festival concludes

AMPATI: The Dimchrang Festival, 2018 - a rendezvous with culture - organised by the South West Garo Hills district administration in collaboration with Ampati Arts & Cultural Society concluded here with a rock concert on Thursday.

Earlier on Wednesday, a grand carnival comprising tableaux and floats by various government departments, cultural clubs and educational institutions paraded around Ampati to herald the beginning of the two-day festivity.

The festival also hosted the Horticulture Mela for farmers organised by District Horticulture Office, District-level Industrial Exhibition organised by DCIC Ampati and the VECs' Conference and award ceremony for innovative VECs in the implementation of MGNREGA.

NEIAH director said there is need for preserving various indigenous medicinal plants in the face of inevitable climate change and added that if cultivation of these plants is taken up both in private and public sectors, it will help in economic development.

The expert termed the initiative of the state Directorate of Ayush as "a new dawn of development" and hoped that other states in the region follow suit. "Starting the Ayush is a good sign for the state," he said.

Set up in 2016, the institute has a major chunk of the 300-odd students from the North East. "It is a great boost to the students of North East. Otherwise the students would have gone to private colleges in South India. We also give sub-

sidised education. Students are retained in the North East," Goswami said. According to him, students have several career options like primary healthcare service, cultivation of medicinal plants as entrepreneurship, starting small-scale pharmaceutical industry or going for medical tourism.

"They ultimately create employment opportunity for the people of the region. Cultivation of medicinal plants, their proper utilisation and use as pharmaceu-

tical industry give an economic boost to the whole of north east region," Goswami said.

Stating that NEIAH is an institute functioning at a preliminary stage, he said the infrastructure of the institute needs to be developed to give a fillip to medical education, research and entrepreneurship.

The aim of NEIAH is to preserve the knowledge of traditional healers and employing youths in this area will yield results.

"It is high time we preserve the traditional knowledge whether they are practiced through certain herbs or certain skill. The rural masses are dependent on traditional healers," he said.

He added traditional healing knowledge or knowledge of the herbs has been existed should be collected, documented and preserve and validated.

(Contd on P-10)

Last-minute rush for the festive season



With only two days left for Christmas, people came out in hordes on Saturday for shopping that created traffic snarl in the city. (ST)

MTDC clarifies on allegations of nepotism, corruption

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: The Meghalaya Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) has clarified on various allegations levelled against it, including those of nepotism and corruption.

In a statement, MTDC said as far as monetary benefits are concerned, the 5th Pay Commission was implemented.

For contractual and daily wage employees, the 155th board meeting decided to provide various benefits to those who are "between 0-5 years of service".

There is 10 per cent increase in consolidated pay or daily wage, 20 per cent increase in the consolidated pay or daily wage for those who are more than 5 to 10 years of service, 30 per cent increase in consolidated pay or daily wage for those em-

ployees who are more than 10 years in service, the statement said.

A petition by MTDC employees had alleged that there was no increase in the wages of contract workers.

On service rules, MTDC said the same have been drafted by a retired government servant of the rank of secretary who had been working with the Personnel Department. The service rules are in the final stages of approval by the board.

It said the incumbent had joined service in 1988 as assistant engineer till 2010 and the promotion to executive engineer was made in 2010 by the board. Subsequently, he was sent on deputation to the government and was placed back to the corporation in 2014,"

it stated.

After a span of seven years, the incumbent has been promoted to superintendent engineer (SE) by the Board considering all factors of work volume and span of service. Further, the MTDC said the other employee of the Corporation who has joined later has been promoted to general manager level in a shorter span than the SE.

The employees in their petition had demanded inquiry into the promotion of the executive engineer to SE. MTDC also said the units of transport, Ward's Lake and water sports have shown great improvements under the supervision of the SE as the units require technical knowhow for operations since items involved are vehicles, out boat motors etc.

The units of transport

yield an amount of Rs 69.60 lakh in 2017-18 and Rs 43.28 lakhs in 2016-17, Ward's Lake Boating is Rs 56.15 lakh in 2017-18 and Rs 51.32 lakhs in 2016-17, the yield in water sports is Rs 144.48 lakhs in 2017-18 and Rs 116.87 lakh in 2016-17.

Again, MTDC said there were two retaining walls in the State Convention Center area built by MGCC which had collapsed in different years. The retaining wall at State Convention Centre for the amount of Rs 47 lakh was sanctioned by the state government on estimates based on the PWD schedule of rates for the reconstruction of the collapsed retaining wall and also for extension and development of existing parking area of the state convention center to cater to outdoor facilities during weddings.

(Contd on P-10)

EMRI workers begin stir

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: The EMRI Workers' Union started its black flag and black ribbon agitation on Friday to press for their demands.

Black flags were put up on ambulances as a sign of protest by the staff of 108.

On Thursday morning, the EMRI Workers' Union served a 24-hour ultimatum to the EMRI management to resolve the problems faced by it.

The union bemoaned the lack of staff and demanded of the management to recruit at least 3 paramedics and 3 pilots. Currently, there are 204 field staff spread across the state.

However, to ensure no inconvenience is caused to the general public, the Union said the services will continue while also going ahead with their agitation.



Winter camp for students concludes

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: A six-day winter camp organised by Agastya International Foundation, Shillong, and supported by Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) at Ribong PN Chaudhuri Higher Secondary School here concluded on Saturday.

The camp, which started on December 17, had sessions on puppet-making and story-telling, low cost model-making, painting competition and balloon bursting games, craft work (low cost craft), quiz competition and rangoli competition.

On the concluding day, certificates of appreciation were given to the students.

Agastya International Foundation, Shillong is planning to organise some more similar programmes with orphanage students for free as well, so that they learn new and interesting things.

Agastya International Foundation is a charitable education trust whose head office is at Bangalore. It runs the world's largest hands-on learning science education programme for economically disadvantaged children and government teachers which is accessible to rural government schools and is supported HPCL and Director of School Education and Literacy (DSEL), Shillong.

Poor women get saris at Bharat Sevashram

From Our Reporter

SHILLONG: Nearly 50 under-privileged women received saris at Bharat Sevashram Sangha (BSS), a philanthropic organisation, on Jail Road on Saturday. The distribution ceremony was followed by a Purnima (full moon) Puja and Shanti Yagna. Meanwhile, the five-day yoga camp organised by BSS also concluded on Saturday with around hundred participants receiving yoga education from Prof. Nipendranath Purkayast and Pratima Choudhury who were the main instructors.

Similar yoga classes will be imparted again next year. Apart from this, regular yoga classes will be held at the ashram premises every Sunday starting from January next year.

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INSTRUCTIONS:

The following documents are to be attached along with the Application Form:

- i) Self attested Photocopy of all relevant Documents/ Certificates.
- ii) One Passport size photograph.
- iii) One self-addressed envelope.

Sd/- (R. R. Marak)
Director (Administration)
Meghalaya Board of School Education, Tura.

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1. Name of the Course : Civil Services Hindi Course
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9. Home State :
10. Degree Examination Passed :
(Along with the name of University, and Subjects) (Attach Documents)
11. Year of Appearance on Civil Service :
Examination of UPSC
12. Postal Address with Pin Code :
(Write in CAPITAL LETTERS ONLY)
13. Contact No :
14. Mobile No. :
15. E-Mail :

I undertake that I have read the instructions carefully and fully abide by them
Dated: _____
(Signature of the Applicant)
(Name in Capital Letters)

Application may be addressed to:-

Bureau Head
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Central Hindi Directorate
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Note:

1. Admission will be given on First-cum-First basis and there is no fee for this course.
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3. Application received after the closing date will not be entertained in any circumstances and no communications will be entertained in this regards

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ICAR-NBAIR conducts workshop for Umiam farmers

From Our Special Correspondent

GUWAHATI: A daylong workshop for farmers to attest the utility of a 'paper microscope' in advocating management practices against microscopic pests in organic farming, was held at Mysain village in Umiam recently.

The paper microscope, called Foldscope, is affordable and used to observe minute things and designed to be extremely portable, durable and designed to give optical quality similar to conventional research microscopes.

The workshop, conducted by ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resource, Bengaluru in association with ICAR Research Complex for North East Hill Region, was a part of the Northeast twinning programme, a statement issued here on Saturday, said.

Around 35 tribal farmers, who generally practice organic farming of field and horticultural crops on their smallholdings, participated in the workshop. The programme started with field observation on pest incidence and their sample collection.

In the workshop,



Farmers pose for photo after the workshop at Mysain village in Umiam recently.

Krishnappa R, scientist (plant physiology), ICAR, described the special features and its unique appli-

cations in organic agriculture such as observation on microscopic pests, disease spores, rhizosporic microbes and crop floral structures. The role of foldscope for stage-specific observation and management of microscopic pests, especially during early stages of pest as well as crop growth (seedling) was also highlighted. Later, the farmers were exposed to handle the paper microscope with special emphasis on its utility in observation of harmful and beneficial microscopic pests such as aphids, thrips, trichograma and mites. Techniques such as

mounting of slides, visualisation under the foldscope, capturing images on smartphones and forwarding them to the experts besides laboratory tests were demonstrated by research fellows.

Field visits were arranged for in situ localisation of microscopic pests, their sampling and handling for observation under foldscope after conclusion of the workshop, which was the first of its kind.

The department of biotechnology, Union ministry of science and technology offered financial support for the programme.