

# *Chitmang Hills Anti-Mining Forum*

Secretariat: President GSU South Garo Hills Unit, Simsang Bridge Junction, Bolsalgre, Baghmara, South Garo Hills district, Meghalaya

Phone: 094367-14635, 0943625603, 09436742958

---

PRESS RELEASE

22 December 2008

## **Chitmang Gongrot Mining Halted**

The Chitmang Hills Anti Mining Forum welcomes positive action by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of the South Garo Hills District that has brought to a halt attempt by the *Nokma* and *Mahari* of Chitmang Gongrot Aking to illegally mine coal from the *Aking*. Responding to popular sentiment including petitions from local community members whose lives and livelihoods would have been adversely affected by the mining, the DC of South Garo Hills issued a notice to the Nokma of Gongrot Aking to halt the mining and associated road construction.

The Forum also compliments the political establishment for supporting the anti mining stand. Of particular note has been the constructive stand of the local MLA of Baghmara Shri Sato R. Marak and Meghalaya's most prominent politician Shri PA Sangma. We look forward to such exemplary leadership from our politicians that would safeguard the unique natural heritage of the Garos.

The Forum welcomes and acknowledges swift action by the state bureaucracy particularly the Commissioner Garo Hills Division, Shri Peter W. Ingty, the State PCCF Shri VK Nautiyal and the Chief Secretary Shri Ranjan Chaterjee, who specially visited Gongrot village to assess the situation and reinforce the anti mining stance.

The anti mining stance of the Forum has been strengthened by communication from the Garo Hills District Council stating that no permission has been granted for any mining in Gongrot. This, combined with other legal issues such as the mining site being a forest area, the clearances necessary from the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority and the State Pollution Control Board has made it amply clear that the mining attempt in Gongrot is illegal. The willingness of the executive to enforce the law of the land is a welcome departure from the unfortunate precedent in our state where the only wealth we have, our natural and cultural heritage, has been allowed to be raped by unscientific and uncontrolled mining.

While the immediate crisis has been averted, the Forum condemns continued attempts by select members of the *Mahari* of Gongrot Aking to undertake mining. The Forum also cautions financiers and instigators of the Gongrot operation, including politicians, to not take advantage of the simplicity of the villagers of Gongrot. We will never allow the only legacy that we can leave our children, our natural and cultural heritage, to be pillaged. We will take all steps necessary to ensure this.

For more details, contact:

1. Tengsak G. Momin  
General Secretary, Garo Students Union  
9436340839, [gsu\\_cec@yahoo.com](mailto:gsu_cec@yahoo.com)
2. Ginseng Sangma  
Secretary, Chitmang Hills Anti Mining Forum  
9436742958; [ginsadawa@gmail.com](mailto:ginsadawa@gmail.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

*The Chitmang Hills Anti Mining Forum is a conglomeration of organizations and citizens against unplanned and unscientific mining. The forum comprises of Garo Students Union, Youth Development and Vigilance Committee, Southern Youth and Cultural Organization, Atong Cultural Organization, Samrakshan Trust, Siju Youth Socio Cultural Organisation, Achik Tourism Society and Achik Youth and Cultural Organisation*