

PRESS RELEASE



Tourism Department Addresses Concerns Over Laban Ropeway Project

Shillong, October 16: Director of Tourism Smti. B. L. Pakyntein, MCS, on Friday addressed the concerns raised by the Joint Action Committee (JAC) over the proposed ropeway project at Laban, stating that the department had met the JAC to clarify issues surrounding the project ahead of its planned protest on Saturday.

Pakyntein said the meeting was held on Thursday under the chairmanship of Commissioner and Secretary Smti. R. M. Kurbah, IAS, and attended by officials from various departments. The meeting aimed to address the concerns raised by the JAC and provide clarity on the project's implementation.

During the meeting, the Commissioner and Secretary, along with the project's environmental specialist, made a presentation outlining the measures undertaken and the permissions obtained from the concerned authorities.



According to Pakyntein, the department had obtained the necessary permissions, including a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Dorbar Shnong, and had entered into a lease agreement before proceeding with the project.

On concerns regarding the conduct of a public hearing, she said the department had written to all seven Rangbah Shnongs, requesting them to mobilise residents to participate in the hearing, in keeping with the established practice of engaging communities through their traditional village authorities.

She further explained that the tender process was initiated after the NOC was obtained from the Dorbar Shnong. The selected contractor was required to secure the necessary licences, including a trading licence from the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC).

Pakyntein acknowledged that the trading licence remained pending following objections raised by the JAC, while maintaining that the department had undertaken the necessary consultations and obtained the required clearances.

Refuting allegations that the project had been pursued without adequate public information, she said the department had been sharing information about the initiative and maintained that it was incorrect to suggest that the project had been undertaken secretly. She described the proposed ropeway as an iconic project for the State.



On the legal front, Pakyntein said the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) concerning the project had been disposed of by the Meghalaya High Court. She also referred to the environmental clearance obtained for the project.

She reiterated that the Tourism Department remained open to engaging with the concerned groups to address their concerns and clarify any outstanding issues relating to the proposed ropeway project.