



PRESS RELEASE



Chief Minister calls on Coal Minister in New Delhi takes up concern of coal families

New Delhi, 07 July, 2026: Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Shri. Conrad K. Sangma called on the Hon'ble Union Minister of Coal and Mines, Shri. G. Kishan Reddy, in New Delhi today and urged the Government of India to delegate to the State, under Section 26 of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, the powers to grant previous approval and to approve mining plans for coal.



The step, the Chief Minister said, would allow thousands of small tribal coal-holders to obtain lawful mineral concessions and the necessary approvals within the State itself. The Chief Minister was accompanied by Smti. Santa Mary Shylla, MLA of Sutnga Saipung in East Jaintia Hills.

Explaining Meghalaya's distinct position, the Chief Minister pointed out that Meghalaya is a Sixth Schedule State where the land, and the minerals beneath it, belong to the individual, the clan or the community, and not to the State. This position was affirmed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in 2019, which held that the tribal owns both the land and the minerals, while requiring compliance with the MMDR Act to work them.



He added that the State's coal seams are thin and scattered, so coal is held in small family and clan parcels rather than in the large blocks found elsewhere in the country, and the national model therefore does not fit Meghalaya's ground reality.

The Chief Minister noted that since the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal restrained rat-hole mining in 2014, a large number of families whose livelihood depended on small-scale coal mining have been left without work, and the State has lost substantial revenue from royalty, cess and taxes.

He observed that the minimum concession area of 100 hectares, fixed in the 2021 Standard Operating Procedure on the advice of the Ministry, has in practice excluded most genuine holders, since such large continuous areas rarely exist in the State and are almost never held by a single owner. It is also neither practical nor affordable, he said, for a small holder to travel repeatedly to Delhi and to the Indian Bureau of Mines office in Kolkata to obtain approvals for a modest deposit.

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Recalling that the Ministry of Coal had, in principle, agreed to Meghalaya's request for relief as far back as 2015, the Chief Minister requested that the Central Government now complete the step by issuing notifications under Section 26 delegating these powers to the State, together with the connected powers under the Mineral Concession Rules, 1960 and the Mineral Conservation and Development Rules, 2017. A formal representation and a detailed note setting out the position and the precise powers sought were submitted to the Union Minister.

At the close of the meeting, the Union Minister suggested that a committee be constituted to examine the matter. The Chief Minister welcomed the suggestion, and a committee is expected to be constituted shortly for the purpose.



Thanking the Union Minister for his time and consideration, the Chief Minister expressed the hope that this step would open the way for thousands of families in the State to earn a lawful and dignified livelihood from their own mineral resources, under proper regulation and the close oversight of the State.