

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE
MEGHALAYA:::SHILLONG

No. C.13/2019/204

Dated Shillong, the 27th September 2021

PRESS RELEASE

The Office of the Director General of Police, Meghalaya has taken note of false, fabricated, scurrilous and totally unverified allegations being published in prominent newspapers in relation to the Police Action dated 13.08.2021 which are being peddled as 'news'. In order to set the record straight, the Office of the Director General of Police has considered it necessary to bring on record the true and correct facts in relation to the aforesaid incident so as to dispel the false narrative being generated by irresponsible reporting of such unverified information and to assure the general public of transparent and fair investigation into the matter.

On **27.09.2021**, the **Shillong Times**, published a news article titled 'New twist in Cheristerfield case' purportedly reproducing the contents of some letter addressed to one of the interested parties in the above incident, stating therein "two senior IPS officers- Jagpal Singh Dhanoa and Shailendra Bamaniya had **gone to kill Thangkhiew without any evidence on the order of DGP R. Chandranathan and IGP (Law and Order) Mukesh Kumar Singh.**" The article further stated that "... The former cops also recalled that there are **many pending cases against the present DGP** when he was posted in Assam. They also mentioned that the IGP (Law and Order) was responsible for the **alleged murder** of Fullmoon Dhar...."

Firstly, the above statements were published without any verification of facts and without seeking the response of the Department, especially in a matter having implications on public faith and trust in the actions taken by the Police. A simple verification of these facts would establish that the police action dated 13.08.2021 was undertaken for the immediate arrest of (L) Cheristerfield Thangkhiew which was necessitated in view of incontrovertible evidence of his involvement in the IED explosion at Khliehriat Police reserve on 14.07.2021 and also credible information received between 10th to 12th August 2021, regarding his involvement in conspiracy for conducting another IED explosion on 13.08.2021 in heavily populated areas in Shillong which, if not prevented, would have led to huge loss of life and destruction of public property. Role of (L) Cheristerfield Thangkhiew had also been unearthed in the extortion demands received by MDCs and prominent businessmen, the evidence available pointed to *modus operandi* of (L) Cheristerfield Thangkhiew of undertaking extortion demands and using money received for financing IED explosions at the behest of HNLC under the cover of being a 'retired' HNLC operative.

Secondly, the police action was aimed at the swift arrest of (L) Cheristerfield Thangkhiew so as to interrogate him as to the planned location of the next IED explosion. In these circumstances, neither was it possible, necessary or advisable for the Police to serve a notice upon (L) Cheristerfield Thangkhiew. In-fact it was necessary to undertake the operation for his arrest in covert manner so as to not provide any opportunity to (L) Cheristerfield Thangkhiew to destroy evidence and/or abscond. The decision for his arrest was taken at the highest level in consultation with all senior officers of the Department and after evaluation of all options and was considered necessary to prevent large scale loss of life in further IED explosions.

Thirdly, terming the death of (L) Cheristerfield Thangkhiew as *killing on the orders* of the Police is a gross misstatement and a complete falsehood. The death was caused due to non-cooperation of (L) Cheristerfield Thangkhiew with the police team and clear attempt on his part to assault and cause fatal injury to a member of the police team, and the resultant firing of single shot by police personnel, purely in self-defense. The successful arrest of (L) Cheristerfield Thangkhiew would have aided the effort of the Police in bringing the active cadres of the HNLC overground and therefore arrest was the sole objective of the police action dated 13.08.2021.

Fourthly, by publishing unverified allegation made by some persons, the newspapers have also attempted to bring disrepute and tarnish the reputation of the police force and in particular of officers who are not native to Meghalaya.

Finally, the above publication is also illegal and in violation of Press Council Norms of Journalistic Conduct, (2010 Edition), Guideline No. 10 of which requires Newspapers to *eschew* suggestive guilt and to not project or promote the case of any one party in the case of any controversy or dispute. The manner in which leading newspapers are publishing unverified facts and conspiracy theories, promoting ill-will and animosity in the public against bonafide actions of the Police force taken to protect the lives of innocent public is an abuse of press freedom. Such publication is malicious and tantamount to inflammatory publication against the Police force and neither constitutes fair comment nor falls within the corners of journalistic freedom.

The Police is dutybound to cause inquiry into the events of 13.08.2021 as per the law laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court and has also joined the proceedings before the Hon'ble Commission constituted under the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1952 and shall take all such measures as may be directed by the competent courts of law.

The above clarifications are being issued solely to bring on record the correct facts and to maintain the sanctity of pending proceedings before the competent courts of law and also before the Commission of Inquiry. The same may also be considered as exercise of 'right of reply' in terms of Guideline No. 14 of the Press Council of India, Norms of Journalistic Conduct, (2010 Edition).

Sd/-

Asstt. Inspector General of Police (A)
Meghalaya, Shillong.

Memo No. C.13/2019/204-A

Dated Shillong, the 27th September 2021

Copy to:

1. The Director, DIPR, Meghalaya, Shillong, for favour of kind information and for wide publicity please.
2. The President, Shillong Press Club, Meghalaya, Shillong for information.
3. All the Editors, Print/Electronic Media, Meghalaya, for information and with a request to kindly publish/broadcast the Press Release.

Asstt. Inspector General of Police (A)
Meghalaya, Shillong.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized circular mark, is written over the typed name. To the right of the signature, the date '27/9/21' is written in black ink.