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Natures Exotic Gift
The Caves of Meghalaya



Frazer Simpson



Expedition Camp

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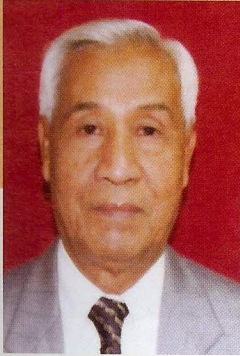
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Foreword

Meghalaya is richly endowed with the gifts of nature. While its dazzling vistas and rich traditions continue to draw visitors from far and wide, today the State also figures in the world map for the enigmatic embellishments of its amazing cave systems.

Slowly gaining popularity as one of the best caving regions of the world, the caves found in Meghalaya holds a number of distinctive records. Until recently, nothing much was known about the caves of Meghalaya. However, with the sustained intervention of the Meghalaya Adventurers Association (MAA) the hidden mysteries of our subterranean were unraveled for the world to marvel.

In view of the kindling interest in caving in the State, it was felt that the publication of this monograph entitled *Caves of Meghalaya* will further draw attention to the cave systems that are found in Meghalaya and at the same time enthuse people to take ride on nature's endowment.

I hope that the readers going through this monograph will find it a pleasant and insightful reading experience.

Shillong
6th September, 2006

A handwritten signature in purple ink, dated 6/9/06.

(J.D. RYMBAI)
Chief Minister Meghalaya





Message

Hundreds and thousands of feet below the earth's crust, far from human view, lies meandering passages, waterways, spectacular sights in the form of stalagmites and stalactites, and rumbling waterfalls. Those who have explored the innermost depths of Meghalaya marvelled at the sights which greet them while exploring the caves that are abundantly found in different parts of the State.

Therefore, in an attempt to present a holistic picture of the State, following a series of books on different facets of the land and people that is Meghalaya, this time around this department has made an attempt to illustrate the richness of the State, in so far as caves are concerned.

The pictorial monograph on the *Caves of Meghalaya* has been carefully designed to incorporate as much information as possible to quench people's growing interest on caving and it is hoped that this endeavour will be found useful by the readers.

Shillong
11th September, 2006.

(E.D. MARAK)
Minister

Information & Public Relations
MEGHALAYA

Introduction

Meghalaya is reputed to be one of the store houses of ancient and historic caves. These magnificent manifestations, standing through the wrath of natural evolutions for centuries together on earth, have long been the subject of intrigue and awe. As on date, more than one thousand caves have been discovered in the State, most of which boasts of a range of distinctions but unfortunately most of us are totally oblivious of this wealth that we possess. Therefore, in an effort to shed more light on the labyrinth caves systems located in this beautiful State, the latest monograph of this department on the *Caves of Meghalaya* depicts these subterranean structures in all their glory.

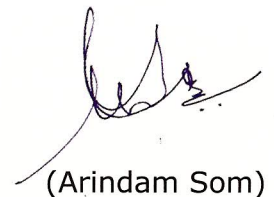
By attempting to profile this vast inherited natural wealth of Meghalaya, we hope that our readers will be presently surprised to discover that among others, the State boasts of housing the world's longest cave, the "*Krem Lait Prah-Um-Im*", with more than 22 Km of its length mapped, at Nongkhlieh II aka, Jaintia Hills District and the country's longest sandstone cave, ka "*Krem: Mawkynthiang*", ranging more than 3 kms in length, located at Lum lawpaw at Nongnah, West Khasi Hills District. The presence of these caves in our State has placed Meghalaya as one of the greatest caving regions in the world.

Caves with their individual inherent moulds can provide' enormous scientific resources, which can throw much light on the nature of events through centuries. Another interesting area of study would be of the different creatures inhabiting the caves, i.e "Cave Life" and the varied phases of evolution they have gone through to adapt themselves to the inner precincts of these awe inspiring formations of natural phenomenon. May be in the near future we can bring to our readers details of this interesting aspect as well.

I must convey that this publication with its detailed information may have been difficult without the contributions and support of Mr. Brian Dermot Kharpran Daly, the founder member, and General Secretary of the Meghalaya Adventurers Association (MAA), an organisation established in the year 1990. The MAA, which took up exploration of caves only from the year 1992, is the only such organisation in India, which is actively pursuing this area of work. During the last 14 years the contribution of this organisation in this field is no doubt commendable.

I hope this edition of our publication will not only make interesting reading but also provide further information on the land mass of our State. We will consider this publication an achievement if we can attract and inspire people from other parts and the country and the world, who harbour interest on the subject, to visit Meghalaya.

Shillong
12th September, 2006



(Arindam Som)



Publisher's Note

The "Caves of Meghalaya", is the eight edition in a series of pictorial monographs. This edition focuses exclusively on the intricate cave system of Meghalaya. After much planning and preparation, it is my immense pleasure that this edition is finally ready for publication.

In the recent past, the caves of Meghalaya have figured prominently in the media, arousing much interest from various quarters to discover more about the rich natural wealth buried thousands of feet below the ground. Therefore to satisfy this curiosity, the present monograph is designed to give our readers a detailed account about the caves accompanied with breathtaking photographs. Laced with interesting facts, I hope that this effort will be a great boon to cave enthusiasts and the public at large.

For breathtaking life to this monograph, we are grateful to the writer, editors, publisher and all the staff who had worked in tandem and shared their expertise to enable to us to bring out this valuable publication.

Shillong
12th September, 2006



(P.S. Dkhar, MCS)
Director

Information and Public Relations, Meghalaya



