

## NEWS WRAP

AGD

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF India (Maoist) has carved out a corridor connecting several 'liberated' or 'guerilla' zones. They have gained a contiguous passage from Khamman in Andhra Pradesh to Jharkhand, via south Chattisgarh's Bijapur district and the Orissa-Chattisgarh border. The rebels have taken over several areas in Orissa's Naupada and Bolangir. The guerillas' forested bastion, Abujhmad is in south Chattisgarh. The Maoists have expanded into a number of districts in Bihar and West Bengal. There are no tribal leaders yet, and the composition of the top leadership is dominated by upper caste Telegu-speaking men from Andhra Pradesh. Five army training battalions have been positioned in Naryanpur, on the edge of Abujhmad; along with helicopter gunship air support. Five of the 12 politbureau members of the CPI (Maoist) and a large number of central committee members are in jail. The Maoists have deferred the target of establishing "people's rule" from 2050 to 2080.

### LIMESTONE MINING IN MEGHALAYA

Limestone mining has been going on for centuries in Meghalaya. Even though the activity is intertwined with the culture and unique land holding in Meghalaya, there are always threats to the area's fragile ecosystem from mining. Recently the Supreme Court permitted Lafarge of France to resume limestone mining in Meghalaya, for feeding its \$225 million cement plant in Bangladesh. Project Lafarge Surma Cement (LSC) is located at Chatak, Sunamganj, across the border. Limestone from Meghalaya to Lafarge factory in Bangladesh, is transported by a 17 km conveyer belt. The plant in Bangladesh depends fully on limestone from Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills. The plant holds nearly 10% share of Bangladesh's cement market. The apex court upheld the revised environmental clearances given to Lafarge, by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests.

### CAMBODIA TRIALS

A UN backed tribunal in Phnom Penh has lasted five years and cost more than \$100 million. The 'crimes' of the Khmer Rouge were committed over a quarter of a century ago, and efforts are on to lay the past to rest. By a separate version of history, the Khmer Rouge were national liberators, guarding against Vietnamese incursions, and opposing extensive US bombing during the Vietnam War. In the last week of June 2011, the trial of four surviving leaders of the Khmer Rouge commenced on charges of genocide, war crimes and crime against humanity committed more than three decades ago. The trial of Khieu Samphan, the former head of state; Nuon Chea, Khmer Rouge's ideologue; Ieng Thirith, the minister for social affairs; and Ieng Sary, the former foreign minister, is confined to the years of Khmer Rouge rule, with minimal reference to historical context. Demands by the defence lawyers to broaden the testimony indicates vigorous legal wrangling, which could drag the case over several years. Telegrams of the 1970s, in evidence, point to a clear system of communication running back and forth, from the bottom to the top.

Top Khmer Rouge leader, Pol Pot died in 1998, before he could be brought to trial. Other possible *defendants*, including Son Sen and senior military leader, Ta Mok have also died. The Khmer Rouge regime was toppled in January 1979. Its leaders and fighters retreated into the jungles and carried out a long and debilitating guerilla war. Kaing Guek Ear, alias Duch, the director of the Tuol Sleng prison was convicted in July 2010, and given a reduced sentence of nineteen years in prison. The four current defendants will be the only members of the Khmer Rouge, answering for deaths by execution, torture, saturation and overwork, that was an outcome of the movement's attempt to create a radical communist system. The indictment stretches 700 pages, and lawyers are representing 3850 victims.

### MAOIST MUSICALS

The Chinese government is promoting a "red culture" revival as part of the 90th anniversary celebrations of the Chinese Communist Party. The campaign for a return to Mao-era red culture has spread quickly across China, from its roots in the booming western metropolis of Chongqing. Communist classics are being sung, and a Maoist musical, staged by the Red Song Association, founded by Zhang Shusen, a well connected corporate lawyer and local politician, is travelling across towns and cities. Red songs and Maoist classic musical numbers like "The East is Red" and "Without the Communist Party there would be no new China" evoke simple ideology and unalloyed patriotism of that period. The revolutionary songs praise the Communist Party and the Party members. □□□