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PART IV
GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
DISTRICT COUNCIL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
ORDERS BY THE GOVERNOR

NOTIFICATION

The 1st March, 2007.

No.DC/L/VII/3/2007/603 : In pursuance of paragraph 11 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, the following Bill of the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council is hereby published for general information:-

**THE KHASI HILLS AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT (APPOINTMENT AND SUCCESSION
OF THE SIRDAR AND HEADMEN OF SAITSOHPEN SIRDARSHIP) ACT, 2007.**

(Passed by the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council on the 1ST March 2007)

(Received the assent of the Governor on 30th May, 2007)

(Published in the Meghalaya Gazette on 1st June, 2007)

AN

ACT

to make provision for the Appointment and Succession of the Sirdar and Headmen of Saitsohpen Sirdarship

Preamble:- Whereas under clause (g) of sub-paragraph (1) of paragraph 3 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India, the District Council of an Autonomous District is empowered to make laws with respect to the appointment or succession of Chiefs or Headmen.

And whereas it is expedient to make such provisions for the appointment and succession of the Sirdar and Headmen of Saitsohpen Sirdarship;

Now, therefore, the District Council of the Khasi Hills Autonomous District, in exercise of powers conferred on it as aforesaid and all other powers enabling it in that behalf, hereby enacted in the Fifty Eight Year of the Republic of India as follows:-

1. Short title, Extent and Commencement:-

- (i) This Act may be called the Khasi Hills Autonomous District ((Appointment and Succession of the Sirdar and Headmen of Saitsohpen Sirdarship) Act 2007.
- (ii) It applies to the whole of Saitsohpen Sirdarship.
- (iii) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions:- In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the meaning hereby respectively assigned to them as follows:-

- (a) **“Adult”** means a person who is not less than eighteen years of age;
- (b) **“District Council”** means the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council constituted under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

- (c) **“Durbar Hima”** or **“Durbar Pyllun”** means the general Durbar of the Saitsohpen Sirdarship to be convened, wherever necessary on the advice of the Executive Durbar, by the Sirdar or any person acting as such provided that the Durbar Hima shall compulsorily be convened by the Sirdar at least once in every year with prior intimation to the Executive Committee.
- (d) **“Electors”** means the indigenous Khasi male adults of the Durbar Pyllun of the Saitsohpen Elaka eligible to elect the Sirdar of the Saitsohpen Sirdarship;
- (e) **“Executive Committee”** means the Executive Committee of the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council;
- (f) **“Executive Durbar”** means the Committee consisting of the Sirdar and such electors appointed as members by the Durbar Hima and approved by the Executive Committee to run the day-to-day administration of the Saitsohpen Sirdarship, and it shall be presided over by the Sirdar and in his absence by any member elected by the members present in the meeting;
- (g) **“Headman”** means and includes a Matabor or a Village under the jurisdiction of the Saitsohpen Sirdarship;
- (h) **“Returning Officer”** means any officer as may be appointed by the Executive Committee as such.
- (i) **“Sirdar”** means the Customary Chief and the administrative head of the Saitsohpen Sirdarship who is appointed as such under the provisions of this Act.

3. Election for the appointment of the Sirdar: –

- (1) When a vacancy occurs in the office of the Sirdar, the Returning Officer shall cause the Electoral Roll to be prepared of all eligible voters, call for the nomination of candidates, hold election, declare the result thereof and or do things necessary for the purpose of the election.
- (2) The Returning Officer may, in case of doubt or uncertainty, refer the proceeding to the Executive Committee who shall decide and direct the Returning Officer accordingly.

4. Appointment of the Sirdar:- On the basis of the result referred to in Section 3 of this Act, the Executive Committee shall recommended the appointment of the elected Sirdar to the next Session of the District Council and after approval of the Council, shall forthwith issue appointment order under such terms and conditions as the Executive Committee may provide in consistence with the provisions of this Act.

5. Dispute regarding the Election:- If within thirty days of the declaration of the result by the Returning Officer, any dispute arises regarding any matter relating to or connected with the Election of the Sirdar, the party or parties concerned shall refer the dispute by a petition, to the Tribunal constituted by the Council for the purpose and the Tribunal shall dispose of the matter as early as possible and shall not ordinarily exceed six months from the date of receipt of the case records and to submit its reports and findings to the Executive Committee for decision.

Provided that the period of six months may be extended on receipt of a written application for the Tribunal for certain reasonable grounds.

Such petition shall be filed to the Secretary to the Executive Committee in duplicate accompanied by a fee to be prescribed by the Executive Committee.

6. Qualification for the office of Sirdar:- A person shall qualify to be elected as a Sirdar if he;

- (a) is a resident of Saitsohpen Sirdarship and he bears a good moral character;
- (b) is not less than 18 years of age;
- (c) is included in the Voter’s List of Saitsohpen Sirdarship;
- (d) is not an employee of any Government Department or District Council, and
- (e) is not a member of another Elaka.

Sample Only (Not for Use)

7. **Term of office:-** There shall be only one Sirdar to be elected from the whole of Saitsohpen Sirdarship and his term of office shall be for five years from the date of his appointment provided that he may be removed from office or suspended by the Executive Committee if:-

- (a) he violates any of the terms and conditions of his appointment
Or
- (b) he violates any of the laws, regulations, rules and the resolutions passed by the Council,
Or
- (c) he refuses to carry out the orders and instructions issued by the Executive Committee,
Or
- (d) he is found to be mentally unfit to carry out his functions,
Or
- (e) he is found incapable of carrying on the administration to the satisfaction of the Executive Committee due to ill health, old age or habitual drunkenness.
Or
- (f) he violates any customary rights and practices prevailing in the Elaka and duly recognized by the Executive Committee,
Or
- (g) he has been convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude,
Or
- (h) he is found to have oppressed the people of the Elaka and they have just cause for dissatisfaction with his misrule,
Or
- (i) he has lost the confidence of the majority of his electors or the people of the Elaka,
Or
- (j) he is undischarged insolvent
Or
- (k) he does not reside within the Elaka
Or
- (l) he is found to have been conducting himself in a manner derogatory to his office or prejudicial to the interest of the Elaka or part thereof,
Or
- (m) has been conducting himself in a manner which may undermine the authority of the Executive Committee or the District Council,
Or
- (n) he fails to convene the annual Durbar Hima or Durbar Pyllun.

Provided further that (i) every such case shall be placed before the Council in its next Session and (ii) the Sirdar shall not be removed from office or punished with suspension unless he is given an opportunity of being heard.

Provided also that the requirements of the second proviso shall not apply;

- (i) in the case where the order of removal or punishment or suspension is awarded on account of his being convicted of an offence involving moral turpitude,
Or
- (ii) in the case of order of suspension pending inquiry
Or
- (iii) in the case where the order of removal or punishment or suspension is awarded on account of the decision/resolution of the Durbar Pyllun which is the supreme power of the Elaka, is taken into account/consideration as it is the customary Law of the Elaka, and placed the same before the Executive Committee.

8. **Appointment of Acting Sirdar:-**

(1) If at any time the office of the Sirdar becomes vacant as a result of death, resignation, retirement due to old age, removal or suspension, the Executive Committee, on the advice of the Executive Durbar of the Elaka Saitsohpen may by order in writing appoint any elector to act as an Acting Sirdar who shall exercise all the powers and functions of the Sirdar.

(2) An Acting Sirdar will remain in office until appointment of a new Sirdar which shall ordinarily not exceed more than 6 months or until further order of the Executive Committee whichever is earlier.

(3) Whenever there is a change of incumbent on account of sub-section (1) above, there shall be a proper taking and handing over charge of the office properties duly recorded in writing between the predecessor and the successor incumbents in the presence of witnesses.

Any deliberate or willful violation of this provision shall be treated to be an act of criminal breach of trust and the incumbent is liable to be proceeded with accordingly.

9. Election and Confirmation of Matabor:-(1) Any vacancy in the post of Matabor shall be reported to the Sirdar who shall direct the Secretary of the Dong/village concerned to summon a meeting of all the male adults of that village on such date and time as may be fixed by him for the election of a new Matabor, and such meeting shall be presided over by the Sirdar or by any person authorized by him who shall forthwith declare the nomination /or result of the election and the Sirdar shall issue appointment letter to the person concerned under such terms and conditions as the Executive Durbar may provide which shall be intimated to the Executive Committee immediately.

(2) The Executive Durbar shall have the power to determine the necessary qualifications and other matters connected with the office of Matabor.

(3) An appeal against any order passed by the Sirdar and his Durbar shall lie to the Executive Committee whose decision shall be final. Such appeal shall be filed within thirty days from the date the orders is communicated or known to the party or parties concerned accompanied by a petition fee to be prescribed by the Executive Committee.

10. Power of the Executive Durbar to make rules – The Executive Durbar shall have the power to make rules for the day-to-day administration of the Sirdar in accordance with the customary practices and the provisions of this Act and such rules shall be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval.

11. Taking part in Politics and Elections:-(1) The Sirdar, or Acting Sirdar or any Matabor shall not be a member or be otherwise associated with any political party or any organization which takes part in politics, nor shall they take part in, subscribe in aid or assist in any other manner, any political movement or activity.

(2) If any question arises whether any movement or activity falls within the scope of this Act, the decision of the Executive Committee shall be final.

(3) The Sirdar, or Acting Sirdar or any Matabor shall not canvas or otherwise interfere or use his influence in connection with or take part in an election to any Legislature, Council or Local authority:

Provided that (i) the Sirdar or Acting Sirdar or any Matabor qualified to vote at such election may exercise his right to vote, but where he does so, he shall give no indication of the manner in which he proposes to vote or has voted;

(ii) the Sirdar or Acting Sirdar or any Matabor shall not be deemed to have contravened the provisions of this Act by reason only that he assists in the conduct of an election in due performance of a duty imposed on him or under any law for the time being in force; and

(iii) the display by the Sirdar, or Acting Sirdar or any Matabor on his person or vehicle any electoral symbol shall amount to using his influence in connection with an election within the meaning of this sub-section.

12. Demonstrations and Strikes- The Sirdar, or Acting Sirdar or any Matabor shall not participate in any demonstration or resort to any form of strike in connection with any matter pertaining to his condition of service.

13. Connection with press, radio, television, etc.-(1) The Sirdar, or Acting Sirdar or any Matabor shall not except with the previous sanction of the Executive Committee own wholly or in part, or conduct or participate in the editing or managing of any newspaper or other media.

(2) The Sirdar, or Acting Sirdar or any Matabor shall not except in accordance with any general or special orders of the Executive Committee or in the performance in good faith of the duties assigned to them, communicate directly or indirectly any official documents or information to any other person or to the press to whom they are not authorize to communicate such documents or information.

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14. **Criticism of the Executive Committee-** (1) The Sirdar, or Acting Sirdar or any Matabor shall not in any manner make radio or television broadcast, or publish any document, or make any statement or public utterances, or any communication to the press (i) which has the effect of an adverse criticism of the Central or the State Government or the Executive Committee or (ii) which is likely to embarrass the relation between the Central Government and the District Council or the Central Government and any State Government or the State Government and the District council.

(2) Subject to the provisions of sub-section (1) above, nothing in this section shall apply to any statements made or views expressed to the Executive Committee in confidence by the Sirdar, or Acting Sirdar or any Matabor in their official capacity or the due performance of their duties.

15. **Protection of action taking in good faith-** No suit, prosecution or other legal proceedings shall lie against any officer or person for executing any order made by the Executive Committee or in respect of anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done by the authorised officer or person under this Act or the rules or orders made thereunder.

16. **Annulment-** The provisions contained in the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills Autonomous District (Appointment and Succession of Chiefs & Headmen) Act, 1959 as amended, shall on and from the commencement of this Act, no longer be operative as far as the Saitsohpen Sirdarship is concerned.

STATEMENT OF OBJECT AND REASONS

It is considered expedient to safeguard and preserve the customary practices within the Saitsohpen Sirdarship in matters relating to appointment and succession of its Sirdar and Headmen.

Hence this Act.

Certified that the above Act was passed by the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council on the 1st March, 2007.

M. PYRBOT

Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council,
Shillong

No. _____

I assent to this Act.

Dated: Shillong
The 30th May, 2007

B. L. JOSHI,
GOVERNOR OF MEGHALAYA