

PRESS RELEASE



Meghalaya Assembly Delegation Discovers Graves of Three More Garo World War I Labourers in Malta

Shillong, Friday, September 25: A delegation of legislators and officials from Meghalaya, led by Hon'ble Assembly Speaker Shri Thomas A. Sangma, visited the Pieta Military Cemetery in Malta and discovered the graves of three additional Garo men who served with the 69th Garo Labour Company during the First World War.



The delegation paid homage to four men from Garo Hills who are buried at the Commonwealth-maintained military cemetery in Pieta. Until the visit, the grave of Khew Marak, who died on June 15, 1918, was understood to be the only known grave of a Garo member of the 69th Garo Labour Company at the cemetery.



During the visit, the delegation identified the graves of three other Garo men — Ading Marak, who died on June 10, 1918; Sangjim Sangma, who died on June 19, 1918; and Join Marak, who also died on June 10, 1918.



The discovery provides an important link between Meghalaya's history and the wider story of India's contribution to the Allied war effort during the First World War. Men from Garo Hills were recruited into the 69th Garo Labour Company, which supported Allied operations by undertaking essential tasks such as road construction and the transportation of supplies.

Paying tribute to the fallen, Speaker Thomas A. Sangma said the visit was deeply significant for Meghalaya as it brought to light the resting places of Garo men whose contribution and sacrifice had remained largely unknown.

The delegation included Hon'ble Deputy Speaker Shri Limison D. Sangma, Deputy Chief Whip Shri Ronnie V. Lyngdoh, and Chairman of the Meghalaya Tourism Development Corporation Shri Marthon J. Sangma.

Also accompanying the delegation were Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Secretary Shri Malthus S. Sangma and Deputy Secretary Shri Raja Kharpuri.

The visit to Malta formed part of the delegation's post-conference study tour following its participation in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Conference in Cape Town, South Africa.

The visit to the Pieta Military Cemetery was facilitated by the High Commission of India in Malta, enabling the Meghalaya delegation to pay respects at the graves and document the presence of the Garo soldiers and labourers who served overseas during the First World War.

The discovery of the three additional graves marks a significant moment in preserving and recognising the wartime history of Garo Hills and Meghalaya, while reaffirming the enduring connection between the State's history and the global events of the early 20th century.