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Chief Administrator-cum-Cabinet Secretary calls on Governor



Gangtok, November 2: Mr VB Pathak, Chief Administrator-cum-Cabinet Secretary called on Governor Mr Dushyant Kumar Gautam at Lok Bhavan, today.

During the courtesy meeting, detailed discussions on various issues concerning the development of the State, public welfare schemes and initiatives, tourism, agriculture, strengthening of infrastructure and administrative affairs were made.

The Chief Administrator, briefed the Governor on important issues of the State and the ongoing initiatives taken up by the State Government.

Vice-Chancellor of Sikkim Manipal University pays visit to Governor

Gangtok, November 2: Dr Muralidhar V Pai, the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of Sikkim Manipal University (SMU) Gangtok, paid a courtesy call on Governor Mr Dushyant Kumar Gautam at Lok Bhavan, today.

The Vice Chancellor was accompanied by Dr Karma Sonam Sherpa, Registrar and Dr Sandeep Kashyap, Laison Officer.

During the meeting, they held a detailed discussion on various matter related to the University. The Governor congratulated Dr Muralidhar V Pai and wished him luck for his new assignment.

DC and Sr SP Gangtok call on Governor

Gangtok, November 2: Mr Rohan Agawane DC Gangtok and Dr Tshering N Gyasto Senior Superintendent of Police called on Governor Mr Dushyant Kumar Gautam at Lok Bhavan, today.

The Governor engaged with officers and reviewed the administrative functioning of their respective departments. He also reviewed disaster and calamities preparedness at the district level and the challenges that arise during the monsoon season. He commended the concerted efforts of the civil and police administration's commitment to the holistic development of district through various initiatives and lauded the collective spirit in maintaining peace, harmony and law and order in the district.

DC apprised the Governor about the administrative affairs of the district and various developmental activities being undertaken by the administration.

Similarly, Senior Superintendent of Police briefed the Governor on the law and order situation and the overall security scenario in the district.

Chief Minister highlights Northeast's Tourism potential at 14th International Tourism Mart 2026

Tawang, October 29: Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang addressed the inaugural session of the 14th International Tourism Mart (ITM) 2026 at Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, highlighting the immense tourism potential of the Northeastern region emphasising the need for sustainable tourism, improved connectivity, cultural preservation and inclusive economic growth.



During his address, the Chief Minister expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi, Union Minister for Tourism and Culture Mr Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Mr Pema Khandu and Governments of India and Arunachal Pradesh for the invitation and warm hospitality.

Describing Tawang as a land of profound cultural and spiritual significance, Chief Minister highlighted the deep-rooted bonds between Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. He noted that the shared Himalayan heritage, ancient monasteries, rich biodiversity and traditions of hospitality reflect the distinctive identity of the Northeastern region.

The Chief Minister underscored the vast tourism potential of the eight Northeastern States and called for a collective approach to promoting sustainable and responsible tourism. He stressed on the importance of strengthening infrastructure and connectivity, preserving cultural heritage and creating meaningful livelihood opportunities for the region's youth.

Highlighting Sikkim's initiatives in tourism development, he spoke about the Mega Homestay Scheme, promotion of

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Union Minister for FAH&D visits Mangan District

Mangan, November 2: Mr Rajiv Ranjan Singh Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying visited Mangan District and interacted with farmers, cooperative societies and other stakeholders to discuss development opportunities in fisheries, animal husbandry and allied sectors, today.

Upon his arrival, the Union Minister was welcomed by Mr Pema Wangchen Namkarpa ADC Mangan.

The Minister subsequently commenced his visit at Tingda Government Primary School, where he was welcomed by Mr TT Bhutia MLA Kabi Lungchok, Mr Kado Lepcha Adhyaksha and Ms Sonam Kipa Bhutia Upadhyaksha.

Also present were Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Secretary Department of Fisheries, Government of India, Joint Secretary Department of Fisheries, Government of India, Secretary, Department of Fisheries, PD-cum-Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, SP Mangan,



CE, Deputy Director, Fisheries Department, Assistant Directors along with officials from line departments.

At Ramthang PHSC and

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Pearls of Wisdom

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."

-Maya Angelou

Meeting on progress of AWP 2026-27

Gyalshing, October 31: A review meeting on the progress of Annual Work Plan (AWP) 2026-27 under Sikkim INSPIRES programme was held at DAC Gyalshing, today.

The meeting chaired by Mr Tenzing D Denzongpa, DC Gyalshing also the Chairman of Sikkim INSPIRES was attended by Ms Kunzang Ongmu, DE, Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, members of the Sikkim INSPIRES team and Assistant Programme Managers (APMs).

The meeting reviewed the overall progress of AWP of Sikkim INSPIRES programme across the district. The APMs presented detailed updates on the progress of their respective activities. Various action points were discussed to ensure the timely execution of activities and strengthen coordination among the departments and other stakeholders.

DC directed the concerned APMs to work efficiently and effectively. He urged the line departments to expedite their work and emphasised the importance of cooperation and coordination among departments. He also stressed that while members have responsibilities within their respective departments, priority must also be given to Sikkim INSPIRES programme.

The meeting also reviewed the various activities undertaken under the programme across the district. The identification of suitable sites for the construction of SHG Marts and other physical infrastructure was also discussed in detail.

Mr Bhawesh Khyalia, SDM Gyalshing, urged the participants to thoroughly study the district plan and familiarise themselves with all aspects of the Sikkim INSPIRES programme. He emphasised the need for effective teamwork, proper understanding of the programme and coordination among team members to ensure its successful implementation. Gyalshing being the farthest district should not be an excuse for the lack of progress, he stated.

District-level NCORD, NMBA and DLCC meetings held

Pakyong, October 30: The monthly district-level meeting of Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) and Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), along with the first meeting of District Level Consultative Committee under National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), was jointly chaired by Ms Pari Bishnoi, DC Pakyong and Mr Pulkit, Additional District Collector, Pakyong at the conference hall of DAC Pakyong, today.

During the meeting, discussions were held on the framework of reducing the drug menace, with particular emphasis on supply and demand reduction. The deliberations highlighted the need for a coordinated approach towards addressing substance abuse, recognising its close association with mental health concerns.

DC reviewed the measures being undertaken by various departments to curb the supply of narcotic substances in the district. Department-wise updates were sought on enforcement activities, cases registered, intelligence gathering mechanisms, identification of vulnerable areas and other preventive measures. The meeting also highlighted the need to strengthen information-sharing mechanisms and address concerns surrounding the reporting of substance abuse cases, particularly the apprehensions faced by individuals and families in seeking assistance.

The need for establishing accessible reporting mechanisms, was also discussed. Emphasis was laid on strengthening community-based policing. The meeting further deliberated on mental health support, rehabilitation and the need for a structured approach towards the functioning of de-addiction and rehabilitation facilities, in accordance with prescribed guidelines. The importance of ensuring meaningful engagement of recovering individuals through skill-based training and livelihood-oriented activities was also emphasised, with the objective of promoting self-reliance and facilitating their social and economic reintegration.

The meeting also explored ways to strengthen awareness and sensitisation activities under NMBA, including innovative outreach strategies and community-based initiatives that could encourage wider participation.

The concerned departments shared updates on awareness and sensitisation drives, monitoring activities, civic action programmes and vigilance measures undertaken under the Abhiyan. The need to adopt diverse and innovative communication strategies to ensure greater outreach was highlighted, with particular emphasis on engaging young people through digital platforms and social media, including short-form video content and other popular online formats.

The discussion also explored constructive avenues for engaging young people through recreational, creative and community-based activities, providing them with positive opportunities to channel their energy and interests. Another key proposal discussed was the identification of a male government employee in each ward under the proposed 'Bharosa' initiative, who could serve as a designated point of contact and counsellor for men requiring support and guidance.

Addressing the meeting, the Chair emphasised the need for serious and collective intervention, with every department taking ownership of its respective responsibilities.The Chair stressed the importance of adopting a comprehensive and sustained approach towards prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration, highlighting the need for coordinated efforts to address the drug menace at various levels.

DC directed the concerned official to compile a list of skill-based training programmes share the same with rehabilitation centres, enabling recovering individuals to indicate their areas of interest and avail suitable training opportunities. DC also stressed the need to identify suitable male employees at the ward level to serve as counsellors under the proposed 'Bharosa' initiative.

The meeting was followed by the first District Level Consultative Committee meeting under the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), which focused on strengthening the implementation of tobacco control measures across the district.

During the discussion, Chief Medical Officer, Pakyong, highlighted the need to address tobacco consumption as an important entry point to substance use, stressing the importance of early intervention, awareness and preventive measures among young people.

The Health Department presented an overview of activities undertaken in the district under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act and the Tobacco Free Youth Campaign, including awareness and sensitisation programmes, enforcement drives and monitoring activities.

The Committee deliberated on strengthening interdepartmental coordination and involving representatives from various departments and non-governmental organisations to make awareness initiatives more effective. The need to encourage the functioning of Tobacco Monitoring Clubs and strengthen community-level monitoring mechanisms was also discussed.

The chair emphasised the importance of sustained enforcement and directed the concerned departments to submit updates and reports on the enforcement measures undertaken to ensure effective monitoring and implementation of tobacco control provisions.

Following the meeting, Tobacco Free Youth Campaign 4.0 pledge, was administered reaffirming the collective commitment towards creating a tobacco-free society.

The meeting was attended by SDM Pakyong, CMO Pakyong, SDPO/DSP Pakyong, Deputy RTO, Assistant Commandant, SSB and others.

Balihang Tongnam concludes

Gyalshing, November 1: The three-day celebration of 'Balihang Tongnam', a major cultural festival of the Limboo community, concluded at Yuksom, today.

Celebrated annually by Limboo community, the festival was organised by Balihang Tongnam Celebration Committee, 2026 with the objective of preserving and promoting the community's rich cultural identity, traditions and heritage. The event also aimed to promote cultural tourism by showcasing the distinctive customs and traditions of the Limboo community along with those of other diverse communities of the State.

Mr Bhim Hang Limboo Minister for Buildings and Housing Department, attended the concluding day as the chief guest along with Mr Birendra Tamling, Advisor to the Chief Minister (Press) as the guest of honour.

Executives and members of various Limboo organisations, representatives of various other communities, Zilla and Gram Panchayat members, and local dignitaries were also present.

Upon arrival, the chief guest, accompanied by the dignitaries, offered prayers at the Mangheem and sought blessings from Peli-Phangsham and Tumyehang, the revered priests and spiritual leaders of the Limboo community.

The concluding day witnessed a series of cultural performances representing different communities of Sikkim, including Bhutia, Lepcha, Nepali, Rai and Limboo, reflecting the state's diverse cultural traditions.

The Minister spoke briefly about the significance of Balihang Tongnam and congratulated the celebration committee for organising the event on a grand scale. Highlighting various developmental initiatives of the State Government, he stated that under the leadership of Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang, equal support, assistance and opportunities have been extended to all communities in Sikkim to preserve, promote and develop their respective cultures and traditions. He added that showcasing diverse cultural programmes and traditions would contribute towards promoting cultural tourism in the State. He said that every possible support and assistance had been extended to the community to preserve and strengthen its cultural identity. He further emphasised the importance of communal harmony and unity in diversity, stating that these values remained integral to Sikkim.

Earlier, Mr Ds Limboo, Zilla Adhyaksha Gyalshing and patron of the celebration committee, highlighted the significance of the festival in promoting cultural tourism in the region. He stated that the unique cultures and traditions of the Limboo community, along with those of other communities, serve as important attractions for cultural tourism. He added that showcasing diverse cultural programmes and traditions would contribute towards promoting tourism in the State.

The chief guest and other dignitaries also visited traditional exhibition stalls showcasing Limboo ethnic attire, cultural artefacts, traditional products and other aspects of the community's heritage.

The three-day festival featured range of traditional cultural performances, including Dhan Naach, Tam-Aokay, Hakparay Khyali, Poo-Haa-Samlo and Tumyehang Samlo. Traditional performances featuring Laringak-Namligay and several other cultural presentations added to the festive atmosphere.

On the occasion, the celebration committee felicitated several social contributors, achievers, representatives of various organisations and individuals for their contributions to society. Achievers from the Yuksom-Tashiding constituency and other fields were also recognised for their accomplishments.

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Chief Minister...

offbeat destinations, the development of world-class tourism infrastructure aimed at enhancing the State's tourism appeal and generating employment opportunities for local communities.

He also reiterated the need to strengthen National Highway 10 as an all-weather highway, emphasising its critical importance to Sikkim's connectivity, economic growth and the overall development of the State.

Referring to the development initiatives undertaken under the leadership of Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi, the Chief Minister said the Northeast has received renewed attention in areas such as infrastructure, connectivity, tourism and inclusive development. He highlighted Prime Minister's vision of 'Ashta Lakshmi' as an inspiration for the Northeastern States to work together towards positioning the region as a leading global tourism destination.

Chief Minister emphasised that stronger cooperation among the Northeastern States, sustained support from the Government of India and active participation of local communities would be instrumental in showcasing the region's natural beauty, cultural richness and warm hospitality to the world.

He also expressed his appreciation to Chief Minister Mr Pema Khandu and the Government of Arunachal Pradesh for hosting the prestigious tourism event and extended his best wishes for the grand success of the 14th International Tourism Mart 2026.

The three-day event is being organised under the guidance of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and hosted by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

Kursong Kurmit Trail flagged off

Mangan, November 1: As part of the week-long Sikkim Adventure Tourism Fest 2026, organised by Tourism and Civil Aviation Department from November 1-7 at Linkhim Tar, Namthang, the 'Heart of Sikkim- Kursong Kurmit Trail' was flagged off at Lum Government Primary School, Lower Dzongu, today.

The flag-off ceremony was attended by Mr Pintso Namgyal Lepcha Minister for Forest and Environment Department as the chief guest, marking an important milestone in the promotion of adventure tourism and the exploration of Dzongu's distinctive natural and cultural heritage.

The ceremony was attended by Upadhyaksha Mangan District, Ward Panchayat, Joint Director (Tourism), Deputy Director, Assistant Director, along with the School In-charge, teachers, students of Lum Government Primary School and officials from various line departments.

The Minister highlighted the long journey behind conceptualisation and development of the Kursong Kurmit Trail. He recalled the planning, preparatory processes and reconnaissance undertaken prior to its establishment, expressing satisfaction that the long-pending initiative had finally materialised.

He conveyed his gratitude to Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang, for his support and acknowledged the contribution and cooperation of the local community in bringing the project to fruition. He further highlighted that the trail has been officially notified and approved, making it a significant addition to Sikkim's adventure tourism landscape.

Notably, the Kursong Kurmit Trail is a circular trekking route, offering trekkers an opportunity to experience the natural surroundings and unique landscape of Dzongu.

The Minister also informed that the Sikkim Adventure Tourism Fest 2026 is being celebrated across the State from November 1 to 7, with flag-off programmes being organised in different districts to showcase Sikkim's diverse adventure tourism potential. The Kursong Kurmit Trail in Dzongu represents Mangan district's participation under the theme 'Heart of Sikkim'.

Extending his best wishes to the participants, he expressed hope for a safe, memorable and successful trekking experience, while encouraging responsible exploration of the region's natural environment.

A technical overview of the trail was also presented by Mr Tshering Dorjee Lachungpa, proprietor of Khangri Tours and Travels. Congratulating the stakeholders on the completion of the long-awaited initiative, he highlighted its potential to strengthen eco-tourism, create opportunities for local livelihood generation and enhance the visibility of community-based tourism in Dzongu.

He emphasised that the trail could contribute to the local economy in the long run by creating opportunities for local guides, homestays, transport operators, small businesses and other tourism-related services, while encouraging visitors to appreciate the region's ecological and cultural significance.

Health Tips

*** Eat a healthy diet:** Eat a combination of different foods, including fruit, vegetables,legumes, nuts and whole grains. Adults should eat at least five portions (400g) of fruit and vegetables per day. By eating healthy, you will reduce your risk of malnutrition and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer.

*** Cosume less salt and sugar:** Reduce your salt intake to 5g per day, equivalent to about one teaspoon. On the other hand, consuming excessive amounts of sugars increases the risk of tooth decay and unhealthy weight gain.

*** Reduce intake of harmful fats:** Fats consumed should be less than 30% of your total energy intake. This will help prevent unhealthy weight gain and NCDs. There are different types of fats, but unsaturated fats are preferable over saturated fats and trans-fats.

*** Avoid harmful use of alcohol:**There is no safe level for drinking alcohol. Consuming alcohol can lead to health problems such as mental and behavioural disorders.

*** Don't smoke:** Smoking tobacco causes NCDs such as lung disease, heart disease and stroke.

*** Be active:**Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. This includes exercise and activities undertaken while working, playing, carrying out household chores, travelling, and engaging in recreational pursuits.

*** Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing:** Diseases such as influenza, pneumonia and tuberculosis are transmitted through the air. When an infected person coughs or sneezes, infectious agents may be passed on to others through airborne droplets. When you feel a cough or sneeze coming on, make sure you have covered your mouth with a face mask or use a tissue then dispose it carefully.

Nasha Mukt Yuva for Viksit Bharat programme organised

Namchi, October 31: 'Nasha Mukt Yuva for Viksit Bharat' programme was organised jointly by Sports Training Centre STC, SAI Namchi, and MY Bharat Kendra Namchi at PM SHRI Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Namchi, today.

The programme was organised with the objective of raising awareness among young people about the harmful effects of substance abuse and promoting a healthy, disciplined and substance-free lifestyle.

Mrs Tshering Ongmu Bhutia, Additional Director, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, attended the programme as the chief guest, while Ms Bandana Rai, Principal PM SHRI Government Girls Senior Secondary School Namchi and Mr Rupen Pradhan, In-charge SAI Namchi attended as special guests. Present amongst others were teaching faculties and staff of PM SHRI Government Girls Senior Secondary School Namchi, members of MY Bharat Kendra Namchi, staff of STC SAI Namchi, along with students of PM SHRI Government Girls Senior Secondary School Namchi and SAI.

Mrs Tshering Ongmu Bhutia underscored the importance of the Nasha Mukt Bharat initiative and emphasised the need to build an addiction-free society to ensure the holistic development of youth and the larger community. She highlighted the benefits of sports and physical activities in nurturing the body, mind and soul, while encouraging participants to embrace sports as a positive and healthy way of life. She further urged the gathering, particularly the youth, to refrain from all forms of addiction and make responsible choices for a healthier and better future.

At the outset, the Nasha Mukt pledge was administered to all participants, reaffirming their commitment towards leading a healthy and addiction-free life

As part of the programme, a 5-kilometre run was organised, with 45 participants taking part. The run was flagged off by chief guest encouraged participants to embrace physical fitness and an active lifestyle.

This was followed by a Zumba session conducted by Ms Dawa Lhamu Choki Bhutia, Instructor of Bliss Zumba Namchi, and a Yoga session led by Mr Nar Bahadur Thapa, Executive Member of Patanjali Yog Samiti, Namchi. The sessions highlighted the importance of physical activity, mental well-being and holistic health.

The programme also featured an PM SHRI Government Girls Senior Secondary intra-school girls' volleyball match and a friendly volleyball match between SAI Namchi and staff of PM SHRI Government Girls Senior Secondary, to showcase their sporting abilities, teamwork, sportsmanship and camaraderie.

SAMETI observes PM-KISAN Utsav Diwas and inauguration of Khet Bachao Abhiyan

Gangtok, October 30: State Agriculture Management and Extension Training Institute (SAMETI), Agriculture Department, in coordination with Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), East conducted a programme for the PM-KISAN Utsav Diwas and inauguration of the 'Khet Bachao Abhiyan' at the Conference Hall at SAMETI, Lingding, today.

PM Kisan Utsav Diwas marks the release of the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana instalments while honouring India's agricultural community. In a live telecast, Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi released the 24th nationwide instalment of PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana from Banaskantha, Gujarat.

Under the scheme, a total of ₹4.47 lakh crore has been transferred nationwide to eligible farmers across 23 instalments so far. The 24th instalment worth over ₹18,690 crore will be disbursed to 9.34 crore beneficiary farmers.

In addition, the afternoon session included the inauguration of the 'Khet Bachao Abhiyan' (Save the Farm Campaign), a nationwide Ministry of Agriculture initiative, aimed at protecting soil health, promoting natural farming, and curbing the over-use of chemical fertilisers.

Mr Puran Kumar Gurung Minister for Agriculture and Horticulture Department attended the event as the chief guest.

In his address, the Minister highlighted Sikkim's exemplary role as an organic state despite its small population. He outlined Government financial support, subsidies, seeds and equipment available to aid farmers, stressing that officials must manage these resources transparently to reach local cultivators directly.

He expressed concern over produce pricing and youth migration away from traditional farming, urging younger generations to adopt agriculture and integrate modern practices. He also called on departmental staff to coordinate closely with district and panchayat levels to address ground-level grievances efficiently. Concluding his speech, the Minister urged all stakeholders to leverage state and central schemes, modernise farming techniques, and collaborate to preserve Sikkim's agricultural heritage while building a sustainable economic future.

Mr Pradeep Kumar Additional Chief Secretary for Agriculture and Horticulture Departments, spoke about agricultural surveys and initiatives in Sikkim. He addressed local concerns regarding agricultural profitability, acknowledging that some residents feel farming is no longer financially viable. He drew comparisons with agricultural practices in other regions, such as Israel, emphasising that even in regions facing water scarcity, advanced techniques enable successful farming. He encouraged agricultural officials to shift traditional mindsets and focus on increasing farmers' incomes as the primary measure of agricultural success.

Mr Rajandra P Thapa, Secretary for Agriculture Department, highlighted the ongoing distribution of the 23rd instalment of the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme in Sikkim. He emphasised that this direct financial support scheme brings pride to farmers, as the funds are provided directly through the Prime Minister's office. He noted that over 36,323 farmers in Sikkim benefit from this programme, which serves as a valuable resource for purchasing seeds, fertilisers, and supporting their families' educational needs. He encouraged officials and farmers to utilise government resources transparently and collaborate to overcome agricultural challenges, ensuring long-term prosperity and food security across the State.

Mr TT Bhutia, Secretary for Horticulture Department stated that Sikkim's agricultural and horticultural sectors have unique potential, particularly as an organic state, setting an example for sustainable farming nationwide. He noted that it was possible for Sikkim to become an organic state as there was no such practice of using chemical pesticides and fertilisers. He urged all stakeholders to fully embrace organic and natural farming techniques, modernise traditional practices where appropriate, and work collaboratively to enhance productivity and secure long-term economic stability for farming communities across Sikkim.

It may be noted that during the national-level Mahila Kisan Diwas, held in New Delhi on 15 October, special recognition was conferred upon female progressive farmers and extension workers for their exemplary role in the field of agriculture. Progressive woman farmer and FPO President, Ms Sarita Mangar and Director for SAMETI, Additional Director for the Agriculture Department, and State Nodal Officer for PM KISAN and 'Khet Bachao Abhiyan', Ms Rachna Gurung received special recognition at a national level.

Earlier, Ms Rachna Gurung Director for SAMETI in her welcome address highlighted the progress of the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme in Sikkim. She noted that approximately 36,323 beneficiaries in the state have received financial instalments directly through the programme, totalling over 97.92 crore rupees. She also detailed the rollout of the 'Khet Bachao Abhiyan', explaining its objectives to promote sustainable farming, improve soil health, and reduce chemical fertiliser and pesticide usage. She noted that the Ministry issued directives to conduct the programme simultaneously across all states, districts, and block levels.

Furthermore, she emphasised the importance of grassroot awareness campaigns, farmer registration processes and inter-departmental collaboration to ensure that agricultural welfare schemes reach local cultivators effectively.

2nd International Conference on computational mathematics and applications inaugurated

Gangtok, October 29: 2nd International Conference on Computational Mathematics and Applications (ICCMA 2026) was inaugurated at a local hotel in Gangtok, bringing together academicians, researchers, scholars and experts from India and abroad to deliberate on emerging developments in computational mathematics and its applications.

The two-day international conference held from October 29-30, was jointly organised by National Institute of Technology (NIT) Sikkim, NIT Silchar and NIT Nagaland.

Mr Raju Basnet Minister for Education Department attended the inaugural session as the chief guest along with Professor Ivana Budinská of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia, Professor RK Sharma of Delhi Technological University, and Director, NIT Patna, Professor Pradip Kumar Jain, as the guests of honour.

Also present were Prof Mahesh Chandra Govil, Chief Patron and Director, NIT Sikkim and Dr Kedar Nath Das Conference Chair.

The Minister congratulated three NITs for bringing together researchers from across India and abroad and emphasised the importance of academic collaboration in advancing scientific knowledge.

He highlighted the foundational role of mathematics in modern science and technology while delving into its growing relevance in areas such as artificial intelligence, medical applications, engineering and weather forecasting.

Reflecting on India's longstanding contribution to mathematics, he spoke about the country's rich mathematical heritage, including the development of zero, the decimal system and early mathematical concepts that have contributed significantly to modern computation. He stated that India's influence through mathematical ideas had travelled across regions through scholarly and cultural exchanges.

Speaking on the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence, he said that computational mathematics and data-driven tools could also contribute to addressing challenges specific to Sikkim, including the prediction of landslides and other weather and environment-related risks.

Emphasising the importance of research and scientific temperament among young people, the Minister said that the Government of Sikkim remains committed to quality education and nurturing scientific aptitude among the youth in line with the vision of the National Education Policy 2020.

He encouraged students to make the most of their interaction with eminent academicians and researchers attending the conference, and urged senior academicians to mentor the next generation of researchers and strengthen institutional collaborations.

He assured that the State Government would continue to support academic and research initiatives that expand knowledge, opportunities and exposure for students in Sikkim.

Prof Ivana Budinská of Slovak Academy of Sciences highlighted the value of international academic collaboration and encouraged researchers from India and Slovakia to explore greater cooperation and create synergies through the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

Referring to the rapid advancement of AI, she said that while the growing influence of AI has opened significant possibilities, it has also raised concerns regarding the understanding and control of increasingly powerful AI models. She added that mathematics could play an important role in helping explain the functioning of such models and in supporting the development of reliable and responsible AI systems.

Prof RK Sharma from Delhi Technological University spoke about the complementary relationship between theoretical and computational mathematics. He added that while computational methods can help explore and estimate solutions to complex problems, mathematical theory and proof remain essential for establishing their validity.

He further delved into the broad applications of mathematics across disciplines, while highlighting the importance of conferences as platforms for bringing together researchers, exchanging ideas, discussing new discoveries and fostering continued academic collaboration.

Prof Pradip Kumar Jain, NIT Patna stated that mathematics and computation form the foundation of scientific discovery and technological advancement, with applications ranging from artificial intelligence and machine learning to climate modelling, optimisation and complex engineering systems.

He stressed that the rapid growth of AI, data science and high-performance computing must be accompanied by mathematical rigour, scientific reasoning and careful validation to ensure reliable outcomes.

In his remarks, Director, NIT Sikkim, Prof Mahesh Chandra Govil, highlighted the increasing importance of mathematical modelling, numerical methods, scientific computing and data-driven techniques in addressing complex contemporary challenges.

He stressed the need for computational results to be accurate, stable and reliable, and called for greater interdisciplinary research involving mathematics, engineering, computer science and other fields.

He further added that the joint organisation of the conference by NIT Sikkim, NIT Silchar and NIT Nagaland would provide opportunities for sustained research partnerships, joint academic initiatives and greater collaboration among faculty and students. He encouraged young researchers to remain curious, question assumptions and connect their research with real-world needs.

On the occasion, the Book of Abstracts of ICCMA 2026 was released.

The two-day conference featured academic and technical sessions focusing on contemporary areas of computational mathematics and its applications, providing opportunities for researchers, faculty and students to engage in discussions and share their work.

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Union Minister...

Wellness Centre, the Minister visited an exhibition showcasing Siri bulls, Siri cows and various local products, highlighting the region's indigenous livestock and agricultural potential. He suggested the establishment of a dedicated Siri Cattle Keeper Centre to facilitate the genetic improvement and preservation of the indigenous Siri cattle breed. He further proposed that improved cattle be distributed among farmers to enhance livestock productivity, strengthen the local dairy sector and generate better livelihood opportunities.

Thereafter, the Minister visited the Live Fish Vending Centre established under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) at Mangshila, where fish feed was distributed to local fish farmers. During his interaction with members of the Fish Farmers' Cooperative Society and other stakeholders, he addressed their queries and highlighted key opportunities for the growth of the fisheries sector.

Responding to the queries, Union Minister stated that the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) would continue during the 2026–2031 period. He further stated that support would be extended to 15 cooperative societies under PMMSY. He informed that an organic cluster had been identified in Soreng for carp farming and encouraged stakeholders to work towards achieving a fish production target of 2,000 metric tonnes. He also highlighted the potential of ornamental fish farming, particularly its value in the international export market, and encouraged farmers to explore this avenue for income generation and diversification of fisheries activities.

Sikkim Arts and Literature Festival 2026 concludes

Gangtok, October 30: The final day of the second edition of the three-day Sikkim Arts and Literature Festival 2026 concluded with a series of engaging conversations, literary discussions, poetry and musical performances at Ridge Park and White Memorial Hall, bringing the curtains down on the festival.

The post-lunch sessions at Ridge Park commenced with a conversation titled 'Enter Prompt: The Great Game of AI', featuring author, Mr Saikat Majumdar and Ms Barsali Bhattacharyya, in conversation with Mr Sanjoy K Roy. The session explored the growing influence of artificial intelligence, its implications for creativity and storytelling, and the evolving relationship between technology and human expression.

This was followed by a discussion titled 'A Borderland State of Mind', featuring journalist and author, Mr Akhilesh Upadhyay, author, Mr Pema Wangchuk Dorjee and Mr Satyadeep S. Chhetri, in conversation with journalist and author, Ms Anuradha Sharma. The session explored the idea of borderlands, their cultural and social identities, and the experiences and narratives shaped by life along geographical and cultural boundaries.

The next session, titled 'Conversations for the Mind', brought together Mr Sachin Chitambaran and Ms Sonam Ongmu Lasopa in conversation with Ms Puneeta Roy. The discussion explored ideas and perspectives surrounding the human mind, offering a platform for reflection and meaningful exchange.

Another session, titled 'The Making of a Champion', featured international archer Ms Sandhya Gurung and Mr Sukanta Das, in conversation with Mr Bijoy Gurung. The discussion highlighted the journey of athletes, the importance of discipline, perseverance and dedication, and the experiences that contribute to shaping sporting champions.

The literary proceedings at Ridge Park culminated with 'Kavita Concert: Beats of Poetry', featuring Nepali poet Mr Nawaraj Parajuli, introduced by poet Mr Prabin Khaling. The performance seamlessly blended poetry and rhythm, creating an engaging celebration of literary expression. Simultaneously, at White Memorial Hall, a series of book launches featured works by Mr Guru T Ladakhi, Ms Charmi Chheda, Ms Shubhra Saxena and Ms Maria Denjongpa, providing a platform to celebrate literary contributions and introduce new works to readers.

This was followed by a conversation titled 'A Woman's World', featuring Ms Barsali Bhattacharyya, Ms Mona Chentri, Ms Neha Sinha and Ms Shubhra Saxena, in conversation with Ms Rosy Chamling. The session explored women's experiences, perspectives and representation through literature and storytelling.

The final session at White Memorial Hall, titled 'The Poetic Imagination', brought together poets Mr Devansh Sampang Rana, Mr Tashi Chophel and Mr Subi Taba, in conversation with Mr Avinam Manger. The discussion explored poetry as a medium of creative expression, imagination and reflection, highlighting the diverse voices and literary traditions of the region.

The festival concluded with a closing programme featuring a performance by Ms Niyzang Palmu. The celebrations ended with 'Sound of Souls x Gauransh: Neeraj Arya's Kabir Café-In Concert', bringing the three-day festival of literature, music, art and ideas to a fitting close.

As part of the festival, workshops were organised on October 29 and 30, offering participants opportunities to engage in creative learning and artistic expression. These included 'The Studio: Illustrations Workshop' by Mr Ujan Dutta; 'In the Moment: Exploring Buddhist/ Himalayan Theater and Performance Techniques' by Ms Charmi Chheda; 'The Language of Wind and Rhythm: Exploring the Foundations of Melody and Percussion' by Mr Kartikeya Vashist and Mr Makrand Sanon; and 'The Craft of Prose: A Two-Session Writing Workshop' by Mr Chetan Raj Shrestha.

Other workshops included 'Design Your Book' and 'A Postcard to Sikkim', both interactive creative art workshops conducted by Mind Matters; 'Finding Me: A Search for Identity, A Search for Self – An Expressive Arts Workshop' by Ms Puneeta Roy; and 'Rhythms of the Thar: A Rajasthani Music Workshop' by Magda Khan and Group. The workshops catered to participants across different age groups and interests, encouraging creativity, artistic exploration and engagement with diverse cultural traditions.

The three-day festival brought together writers, poets, artists, musicians, thinkers and cultural practitioners from Sikkim, the Himalayan region and across the country, providing a platform for meaningful conversations, creative exchange and the celebration of diverse literary and artistic traditions.

Lok Bhavan Sikkim celebrates State Formation Day of Eight States and Five Union Territories

Gangtok, November 1: As part of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative, Lok Bhavan Sikkim celebrated the State Formation Day of eight States and five Union Territories at Ashirwad Hall, Lok Bhavan, today.

The States included Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Tamil Nadu, while the Union Territories were Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Delhi, Lakshadweep and Puducherry.

The programme was graced by Mr Jitendra Singh Raje, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Lok Bhavan. Officials from various Central Government institutions, students from Universities across the State and members of the communities representing participating States and Union Territories residing in Sikkim attended the celebration. Dr Swati Sachdeva, Professor of Social Sciences, Sikkim University was also present.

Addressing the gathering, Commissioner-cum-Secretary extended greetings to the people representing the participating States and Union Territories. He highlighted the significance of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative, envisioned by Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi in strengthening national integration and fostering greater cultural understanding among citizens. He stated that the initiative promotes unity, mutual respect and cultural exchange among India's diverse communities.

He further noted that every State and Union Territory has its own distinct identity and strengths and that this diversity forms the foundation of India's collective resilience. He also acknowledged the contributions of people from the participating States and Union Territories towards the development of Sikkim and appreciated them for their vibrant cultural presentations, which reflected the spirit of unity in diversity.

The programme also featured the screening of a message from the Governor of Kerala, Mr Om Prakash Mathur.

On the occasion, students from Kerala, Ms Sreelakshmi MS and Ms Nava Asley R from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands shared their perspectives on the significance of the celebration.

Two-Day State-Level School Games 2026 conclude

Gangtok, October 30: The two-day State-Level School Games 2026 concluded at Khelgaon, Reshithang Sports Complex, Ranka, today.

Organised by the Sports and Youth Affairs Department, the event provided a platform for school students to showcase their sporting abilities and encouraged greater participation in sports at the grassroots level.

Arjuna Awardee Mr Jaslal Pradhan attended the closing ceremony as the chief guest. The occasion was also attended by Secretary, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Ms Yangchen D Tamang, Principal Chief Engineer, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Ms Milan Kumari Pradhan, Directors, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Mr Rajiv Roka and Dr R B Biswakarma, and Dronacharya Awardee Ms Sandhya Gurung. Officers and officials of the Department, teachers, dignitaries and students.

The competitions were held in athletics, kho kho, boxing, karate, archery and taekwondo. The final events were followed by the medal ceremony, where the winners were felicitated for their performances.

In the district-wise overall standings, Gangtok secured first place, followed by Namchi in second place and Pakyong in third place. Gyalshing, Soreng and Mangan secured fourth, fifth and sixth places, respectively.

The event highlighted the sporting talent of students across the state and provided them with an opportunity to gain competitive experience while promoting discipline, teamwork and sportsmanship.

On October 29, State-Level School Games 2026 commenced at Reshithang Sports Complex, with 722 athletes representing their respective districts.

Mr Raju Basnet Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Department attended the inaugural programme as the chief guest, while Mr Bikram Pradhan Advisor, Sports and Youth Affairs Department was present as the guest of honour.

He emphasised on the importance of introducing children to sports at a young age, noting that the formative years played a crucial role in developing the skills required to compete at state, national and international levels. He encouraged the young athletes to remain committed to their chosen disciplines and pursue their goals with dedication and perseverance.

He stressed that discipline, physical fitness, proper nutrition, quality coaching and sustained motivation were essential for sporting success. He also encouraged students to make effective use of the sports infrastructure available across the state and acknowledged the support extended by the Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang and various sports associations in promoting sports and nurturing young talent.

Referring to India's aspirations in international sports, he urged the participants to work towards higher levels of achievement and make the most of the opportunities available to them. He noted that determination and consistent effort could help young athletes progress from grassroot competitions to national and international platforms. He also congratulated the all-girls pipe band contingent of Chief Minister's Model School, Assam Lingzey, on securing second place in a recent competition. He encouraged the athletes to continue striving for excellence and wished them success in their future sporting endeavours.

The inaugural programme featured an all-girls pipe band display by Chief Minister's Model School, Assam Lingzey, followed by the oath-taking ceremony and the lighting of the School Games torch.

The Games feature seven sporting disciplines, namely athletics, kho kho, kabaddi, boxing, karate, archery and taekwondo. The competitions provide young athletes with an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities, gain valuable competitive experience and develop a spirit of teamwork and fair play.

Ms Yangchen D Tamang Secretary, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, said the initiative provided students with opportunities to discover their potential, build confidence and develop discipline, teamwork and sportsmanship.

Presenting the School Games 2026 report, the Secretary stated that block-level competitions had been conducted across all blocks from September 6 to 13, with 3,974 students from more than 270 schools participating. The district-level competitions were held from September 21 to 26, culminating in the state-level championships at Reshithang Sports Complex, where 722 athletes are participating.

She further said that the programme had expanded this year, with selected athletes set to receive opportunities to represent Sikkim at the National School Games organised under the aegis of the School Games Federation of India.

KEEP SIKKIM
CLEAN AND GREEN

Gnathang Valley Vibrant Village Marathon held

Pakyong, November 1: As part of Sikkim Adventure Tourism Fest 2026, the Gnathang Valley Vibrant Village Marathon, themed 'Run Through Nature, Run Through Himalayas', was held at Gnathang Valley, today.

Organised by the Tourism Department in collaboration with Sportive, the marathon aimed to promote adventure tourism and encourage sporting spirit, while providing participants an opportunity to test their endurance amidst the himalayan landscape and challenging high-altitude terrain of Gnathang Valley.

The marathon featured three race categories, namely 21 km, 10 km and 5 km, with the starting and finishing point at Gnathang Village Playground with participants from various parts of the country.

The race followed a loop course of 10.5 kilometres towards Kupup, comprising uphill and downhill stretches. Starting at an elevation of approximately 3,778 metres, the route reached a maximum elevation of 4,097 metres, with an elevation gain of around 480 metres.

Participants in the 21 km category covered the 10.5 KM route twice, while those in the 10 km and 5 km categories covered 5 km and 2.5 km stretches respectively, along the designated route.

To ensure the well-being of participants, hydration and refreshment points were set up at 2.5 km, 5 km, 7 km, 9 km and 10.5 km along the route, with necessary refreshments and support provided by the 63rd Battalion of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). Medical assistance was also made available throughout the course, with a medical unit stationed at the venue and basic medical facilities arranged at designated points.

The marathon concluded with a prize distribution ceremony, felicitating the winners and participants across various respective categories.

The event was attended by officials from the Tourism Department, representatives of various organisations and participants.

Sikkim Adventure Tourism Fest 2026 begins with flag-off of bungee jumping team

Namchi, November 1: The Sikkim Adventure Tourism Fest 2026 commenced with the flag-off of a seven-member bungee jumping team from Sikkim to undergo exposure and training in bungee jumping in Nepal, an initiative of the Tourism and Civil Aviation Department aimed at enhancing local expertise and building capacity in adventure tourism, today.

This marks the beginning of the week-long festival aimed at promoting adventure tourism and exploring new opportunities in the sector.

The team was flagged off by Mr Sanjeet Kharel, MLA-cum-Advisor who extended his best wishes to the members.

While addressing the gathering , MLA-cum-Advisor, Mr Sanjeet Kharel, expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister and the Tourism and Civil Aviation Department for organising Sikkim's first-ever Adventure Tourism Fest at Namthang-Rateypani, describing it as a proud milestone for the region and the State.

He highlighted the developmental initiatives undertaken in the area, including road improvement and outlined future tourism plans in the region.

Emphasising the region's immense potential for adventure tourism, he noted that activities such as rafting, zorbing, parasailing, motor cross racing and jungle adventures were creating new opportunities for local youth and the wider community, with support from various Government departments.

The chief guest along with the dignitaries also visited various stalls set up at the venue and flagged off an array of activities such as Giant Volleyball and Motocross racing.

The chief guest was accompanied by Mr Sudesh Kumar Subba MLA-cum-Advisor, Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Mr Lukendra Rasaily Chairman STDC, Mr Raj Yadav Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Mr Neeraj Pradhan Principal Chief Engineer-cum-Secretary, T&CA and other officers and officials of Tourism and Civil Aviation Department.

The Sikkim Adventure Tourism Fest 2026 is being organised from November 1-7 at Linkhim Tar, Namthang in Namchi district, with a range of adventure tourism activities and demonstrations lined up during the week.

The week long event features activities such as Hot Air Balloon, River Rafting, Paragliding, Parasailing, Zorbing, Horse riding, ATV riding. Visitors will also have the opportunity to explore jungle-based activities and savour local delicacies at the food stalls.

Adding to the excitement, the festival promises an action-packed experience, thrilling challenges and opportunities to explore the natural beauty of Sikkim.

From high-speed racing to exhilarating aerial and water-based activities, the event brings together adventure enthusiasts and visitors for an unforgettable celebration of adventure, nature and outdoor experiences.

Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh visits Orchidarium

Gangtok, November 3: Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of lndia, Mr Rajiv Ranjan Singh visited the Ridge Park Orchidarium, today.

He was accompanied by Mr Puran Kumar Gurung Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Departments, Dr Abhilaksh Likhi Secretary for Department of Fisheries, GoI, Mr Naresh Pal Gangawar Secretary for Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, GoI, Ms Varsha Joshi Additional Secretary for Cattle & Dairy Development, GoI, Ms Roshni Rai Secretary for Department of Fisheries, GoS and other dignitaries from the Department of Fisheries, GoI, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, GoI and senior officials of the Department of Fisheries, GoS.

The Orchidarium at the Swarna Jayanti Maitreya Manjari Complex serves as a testament to Sikkim's floral diversity and environmental stewardship. By preserving indigenous orchid species, the facility underscores the state's dedication to habitat conservation and responsible tourism practices.

During the visit, the Union Minister was taken on a guided tour of the Orchidarium, where he was briefed on its distinctive features and the diverse collection of orchids.The tour also highlighted the diverse uses of orchids and traditional methods of their safe transportation. Before concluding the visit, the Union Minister recorded his impressions in the visitor's book.

Union Minister reviews on implementation of Central Government schemes under Poorvottar SETU

Mangan, November 2: Following his visit to various locations in Mangan District, Mr Rajiv Ranjan Singh Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Panchayati Raj, Government of India, arrived at DAC Mangan to review the implementation of Central Government schemes under Poorvottar SETU.

In his address, the Union Minister emphasised the effective implementation of Central Government schemes and the need for coordinated efforts to ensure that their benefits reach the intended beneficiaries. He also informed that Soreng District has been identified as an organic cluster for fisheries, highlighting the importance of promoting sustainable practices in the sector.

Earlier, the Union Minister inspected exhibition stalls showcasing fish, ornamental fish, fish products, dairy and animal husbandry products, along with locally grown organic vegetables, reflecting the district's diverse agricultural and allied sector activities.

As part of the programme, Kisan Credit Cards (KCCs) were distributed to three fish farmers, while cheques were distributed to five beneficiaries under the Mukhya Mantri Matsya Uthpadhan Yojana (MMMUY).

Mr Sandeep Kumar, SDM Mangan, provided an overview of the district profile and the Vibrant Village Programme (VVP), highlighting developmental initiatives and the progress made in the district.

This was followed by presentations by the Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department, Government of Sikkim, on animal husbandry and veterinary services in the State, and the Secretary, Fisheries Department, Government of Sikkim, who outlined the key initiatives and ongoing interventions in the fisheries sector. A documentary on the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) in Sikkim was also screened.

Presentations were subsequently made on the activities, achievements and ongoing initiatives of the Health Department, Education Department, Roads and Bridges Department, Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and Women and Child Development Department in Mangan District.

The programme also witnessed several important digital launches, including the North Dairy Milk Union under White Revolution-II at Mangan and the Siri Cattle Conservation Programme aimed at conserving and promoting the indigenous Siri cattle breed. The virtual foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Siri Bull Mother Farm at Chujachen in Pakyong District was also held to strengthen indigenous breed conservation and genetic improvement.

Additionally, the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Organic Fish Farming in Sikkim was digitally launched. The virtual inauguration of 12 beneficiary-oriented projects across Pakyong, Gyalshing, Soreng and Mangan districts, supported under PMMSY, was also held.

An interactive session was subsequently held between the Union Minister and local farmers, providing them with an opportunity to share their experiences, raise concerns and discuss issues related to the agriculture and allied sectors.

The meeting was attended by Mr Puran Kumar Gurung Minister for Fisheries, Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Departments and Mr Samdup Lepcha Minister for Social Welfare, Women, Child, Senior Citizen and Divyangjan Welfare Departments.

Also present were MLA-cum-Advisor, Zilla Adhyaksha, Zilla Upadhyaksha, Secretary, Department of Fisheries, SP Mangan, senior officials from the Government of India and the State Government, including Heads of Departments, and other officials of the DAC.

Sikkim Adventure Tourism Fest 2026 introduces first-ever relay adventure package

Gangtok, November 2: The first-ever Relay Adventure Package of the Sikkim Adventure Tourism Fest 2026 commenced from Gangtok bringing together a unique combination of aerial, road and river-based adventure experiences.

The sortie carrying 20 participants from different parts of the country was flagged off from Gangtok Helipad by Mr Gyurmie Yousal, Principal CEO, Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation (STDC), in the presence of Mr Vijay Thapa General Manager, STDC.

Prior to the departure, Mr Tejpal Pradhan, Assistant General Manager (Operations), Helicopter Division, STDC, briefed on key safety precautions and wished them a safe and enjoyable flight and a memorable journey.

The adventure package offers a series of experiences as part of a single relay journey, showcasing the diverse adventure offerings of Sikkim. The participants will fly from Gangtok to Pakyong, from where the entourage will proceed by jeep safari to Thumki Dara for paragliding to Rorathang.

Thereafter, the journey will continue by road to Rangpo, followed by river rafting along the Teesta through its challenging rapids and waves en route to Linkhimtar, Namthang, where they will join the other adventure activities lined up as part of the festival.

Blending the thrill of the skies, the excitement of rugged trails and the rush of river rapids, the relay promises an exhilarating journey that pushes the boundaries of conventional adventure tourism. The first-of-its-kind initiative seeks to showcase Sikkim's diverse terrain and adventure tourism potential by connecting multiple adventure disciplines, from flying and paragliding to road and river-based experiences, within one continuous journey.

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas observed

Gangtok, October 31: Rashtriya Ekta Diwas 2026, commemorating the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Iron Man of India, was observed at Chintan Bhawan, today.

The programme was attended by Mr Mingma Norbu Sherpa, Speaker Sikkim Legislative Assembly, as the chief guest who was welcomed by Mr R Telang Chief Secretary and Mr Akshay Sachdeva Director General of Police (DGP). The chief guest subsequently inspected the Guard of Honour presented by Sikkim Police Personnel.

The chief guest administered the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas Pledge, reaffirming the collective commitment to upholding the unity, integrity and security of the nation.

In his address, Speaker highlighted the monumental contribution of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the integration of approximately 562 princely states following Independence, which laid a strong foundation for India's political unity and territorial integrity. He noted that Patel's legacy continues to inspire generations to rise above caste, religion and cultural differences. Referring to the 182-metre Statue of Unity in Gujarat, he described it as a fitting tribute to Patel's extraordinary contribution to the nation.

Sharing his experience of visiting the Statue of Unity, the Speaker reflected on the importance of humility and accountability in public life. He also highlighted the contributions of Patel's elder brother, Vithalbhai Jhaverbhai Patel, who became the first elected Indian President of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1925. Recalling Vithalbhai Patel's firm stand in safeguarding the dignity and independence of the Chair during British rule, he underscored the sacrifices made by both brothers in the service of the nation.

Emphasising the importance of unity in diversity, Speaker referred to initiatives under the leadership of Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang to promote traditional attire and cultural heritage. He highlighted the State Government's initiative encouraging people to wear traditional attire on Thursdays, as well as the practice in the Legislative Assembly of encouraging MLAs to wear their respective traditional dresses.

Expressing concern over the gradual decline in the use of indigenous languages among younger generations, the Speaker stressed that language, culture and traditional attire are vital elements of community identity. He also called upon everyone to move beyond ceremonial tributes and draw practical lessons from the lives of great leaders by embracing unity, dedication and public service in their everyday lives.

Mr Bhawani Ghimirey, Officer on Special Duty (OSD), Culture Department, highlighted the life, contributions and enduring legacy of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He underscored the values of decisive leadership, discipline and national service embodied by the Iron Man of India.

Highlighting Sikkim's rich cultural heritage, he noted that the traditions and identities of the Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali communities form an integral part of the State's distinct identity. He emphasised that preserving cultural heritage, while upholding national unity is essential to nation-building, adding that collective responsibility, goodwill and mutual respect remain vital to building a united and prosperous India.

The programme featured a patriotic duet by artistes of Culture Department followed by a group patriotic song. A special film screening on Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was made by Information and Public Relations (IPR) Department, highlighting his remarkable contribution to India's unification and his enduring legacy.

Among those present were Mr Arun Kumar Upreti Minister for Rural Development and Cooperation Departments, Mr Bhoj Raj Rai Minister for Urban Development and Food and Civil Supplies Departments, Ms Pamin Lepcha MLA-cum-Advisor, Zilla Adhyaksha Gangtok, Advisors to the Chief Minister, Deputy Mayor GMC, Press Secretary to the Chief Minister, Additional Political Secretary Gangtok, Heads of Departments and officers and officials of the State Government.



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