



# SIKKIM HERALD

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## Governor inaugurates 15<sup>th</sup> Sikkim SARAS Trade Fair



**Namchi, January 14:** Governor Mr Om Prakash Mathur inaugurated the 15<sup>th</sup> Sikkim SARAS (Sale of Articles of Rural Artisans Society) Trade Fair at Jorethang, in the presence of Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang, today.

The SARAS Trade Fair is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, organised under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM). The fair aims to provide rural artisans and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) with a direct marketing platform to

showcase and sell their products, thereby strengthening rural livelihoods.

The trade fair has witnessed the participation of 116 exhibitors, including 24 participants from various States across the country, along with departmental stalls, reflecting the diverse craftsmanship and entrepreneurial spirit of rural India.

The inaugural ceremony had the presence of Deputy Speaker SLA, Ministers, MLAs, MP Lok Sabha along with Advisors, Chairpersons and senior officials of the State Government.

## Motorcycle rally flagged off with road safety pledge



**Namchi, January 14:** As part of the ongoing Maghey Sankranti Mela 2026, a road safety awareness programme was organised to promote safe and responsible use of roads among the general public.

On the occasion, Governor Mr Om Prakash Mathur, administered the road safety pledge and jointly flagged off a motorcycle rally along with Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang.

The initiative highlighted the importance of responsible

driving practices and the protection of pedestrians aiming to sensitise citizens towards strict adherence to traffic rules and to foster a culture of road safety, ensuring the well-being of all road users.

The programme was attended by the Deputy Speaker SLA, Cabinet Ministers, MLAs, Advisors, Chairpersons, senior officers of the Government of Sikkim and motorcycle riders from Sikkim and neighbouring States.

## 71<sup>st</sup> Maghey Sankranti Mela 2026 inaugurated

**Namchi, January 14:** The 71<sup>st</sup> Maghey Sankranti Mela 2026 was inaugurated at Jorethang with traditional and festive splendour, marking the commencement of one of the region's oldest and most cherished celebrations, today.

Governor Mr Om Prakash Mathur, officially declared the Mela open in the presence of the Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by the Deputy Speaker SLA, Cabinet Ministers, MLAs, Political Secretary and Press Secretary to Chief Minister, Advisors, Chairpersons, Members of NJNP, Heads of Departments, District Collectors, Superintendents of Police, Additional District Collectors, Additional Political Secretary, Officers on Special Duty, Heads of Offices, other dignitaries, and public.

Ms Anandita Rai of Little Angels Academy, Jorethang, was



also present as a special guest. An orange belt holder in Karate-Do, she has earned distinction by securing nine gold, one silver, and one bronze medal at the national level.

Addressing the gathering, Governor stated that the Maghey Sankranti Mela celebrated at

Jorethang is not merely a festival, but a living symbol of timeless culture, tradition, and social unity. He remarked that the Mela represents the eternal bond between nature's seasonal transitions, the Sun's northward

*Contd. on page 5*

## Governor inaugurates various infrastructures in Jorethang

**Namchi, January 14:** Governor Mr Om Prakash Mathur inaugurated the newly established Multi-Purpose Indoor Gymnasium at Jorethang, in the presence of Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang, today.

The ceremony was attended by Mr Raju Basnet Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Mr Madan Cintury MLA, Dr Indra Hang Subba MP Lok Sabha, Advisors, Chairman, Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Department, OSDs, DCs Namchi, Soreng and Gyalshing, ADC Namchi, SDM Jorethang, officers and dignitaries.

The Multi-Purpose Indoor Gymnasium has been constructed under the aegis of the Khelo India Initiative of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, with support from the Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Government of Sikkim. The modern facility is equipped with indoor badminton courts, a multi-purpose gymnasium and other supporting amenities, aimed at promoting sports, fitness and youth development in the region.

Similarly, Governor inaugurated the newly established Dialysis Unit at the Community Health Centre (CHC), Jorethang, in



the presence of Chief Minister.

The Dialysis Unit has been equipped with seven dialysis beds, each fitted with modern dialysis machines. Initially, the unit will operate in a single shift, with provisions to extend services to two shifts based on patient load and emerging requirements. The unit will function under the

supervision of Dr Abhishek Gautam from Sir Thutob Namgyal Memorial (STNM) Hospital, with support from medicine specialists of STNM Hospital.

On the occasion, the Governor also flagged off ambulances from CHC Jorethang

*Contd. on page 7*

### Pearls of Wisdom

*"For every minute you are angry you lose sixty seconds of happiness."*

*- Ralph Waldo Emerson*

### 8<sup>th</sup> Kokfekwa Tongnam concludes

**Gyalshing, January 15:** The concluding day of the 8<sup>th</sup> Kokfekwa Tongnam Celebration 2026, the annual Limboo New Year festival, was celebrated today with traditional fervour at Lingchom, Gyalshing District.

The two-day festival reflected the rich cultural heritage, indigenous traditions and time-honoured customs of the Limboo community. The event was jointly organised by the Limboo community of Lingchom, Tikjeck and Langang.

The concluding day of the celebration was attended by Mr Bhim Hang Limboo Minister for Buildings and Housing Department, along with Mr Sudesh Kumar Subba MLA (Maneybong–Dentam)-cum-Advisor and Dr Indra Hang Subba MP Lok Sabha.

The day began with a cultural parade paying tribute to Padma Shri BB Muringla, which was flagged off by the chief guest along with the guests of honour and other dignitaries, and later received at Lingchom. The parade marked one of the key highlights of the celebration. Thereafter, the dignitaries visited Kokfekwa Valley, where they interacted with participants and inspected stalls showcasing indigenous food items, handicrafts and traditional artefacts.

During the programme, ceremonial prayers at the Mangheem were offered, followed by traditional Kokfekwa Tongnam prayers performed by Phedangba (traditional priests), invoking peace, prosperity and harmony. Colourful cultural performances, including welcome dances by Lingchom and Tikjeck groups, Lasori song, Hakpare, Khyali and Tamrangey dances, added vibrancy to the occasion.

Minister highlighted the importance of safeguarding indigenous culture, language and

traditions and commended the community for preserving its rich cultural legacy through such celebrations. He called upon the younger generation to remain rooted in their traditions while progressing through education and development.

The Minister further highlighted that under the visionary leadership of the Chief Minister every community in the State had been safeguarded and supported. Recalling the recent Chasok Tongnam celebration at Saramsa Garden, he mentioned the Chief Minister's assurance regarding reservation of the LT seat. He stated that community development had been a key focus of the State Government, which had revived and restored traditions and customs of all communities through such cultural initiatives.

The vision and significance of Kokfekwa Tongnam were highlighted by Mr Suban Limboo, General Secretary (Organising Committee), who emphasised the importance of preserving Limboo traditions, culture and indigenous identity.

Mr SP Mangyung, OSD, Culture Department, deliberated on the life and legacy of Padma Shri late BB Muringla, describing him as one of the most prominent cultural figures of the region. He highlighted late Muringla's invaluable contributions towards the promotion, preservation and strengthening of Limboo culture, for which, he received several national-level recognitions, making him an enduring source of inspiration for society.

During the programme, the annual Kokfekwa Tongnam Calendar was released by Mr Suhang Subba. A book titled 'TA-JENJI SAPPON', a conversational book in the Limboo language authored and published by Mr KB Limboo, was

also released on the occasion.

Several traditional practices that were gradually declining due to modernisation were authentically recreated and showcased to raise awareness and ensure their continuity. These included live demonstrations of the traditional maize grinder (Jato), paddy straw mat weaving (Gundri), preparation of traditional distilled alcohol (Raksi) and making of sitting mats (Pira) from natural fibres (Khoshyala). Once integral to rural life, these practices are increasingly being replaced by modern alternatives.

Among those present were Mr Birendra Tamling Advisor (Press and Media) to the Chief Minister, Ms Anita Rai Up-Adhyaksha (GDZP) Gyalshing, Mr SM Subba Advisor (Commerce and Industries), Mr NB Limboo, Advisor (State Medicinal Plant Board) Mr Narayan Khatiwada, Chairman RDD, Mr JB Subba, Chairman SABBCO, Mr BM Subba Chairman Roads and Bridges, Mr Tenzing D Denzongpa District Collector Gyalshing, Mr Madhusudan Sharma APS to CM along with OSDs, Heads of Departments of various line departments and public.

The evening session featured traditional performances such as Palam and Khyali, followed by Yarak (Dhan Nach) performed with the distinctive Kay/Chyabrun. The celebration culminated with folk narration and Kay Pokma Mundhum by Mr Den Hang Limboo, cultural performances by Mr Chandra Hang Limboo, Mr Aita Hang Limboo and Namoti from Yuksom, and musical performances by Manish and the Hooligans (Pakyong) and Sound of Soul (Darjeeling), bringing the two-day festival to a vibrant close.

### Flying Festival and Paragliding Accuracy Championship 2026 flagged off

**Pakyong, January 16:** Three-day Flying Festival & Paragliding Accuracy Championship 2026 was flagged off by Mr Bishnu Kumar Khatiwada Advisor to CM and Mr Sonam Norgay Lachungpa, Chairman, Tourism and Civil Aviation Department in the presence of Mr Prabhakar Golay Chief Patron, Jan Kalyan Prakosta at Thumki Dara and Amba Dara, Pakyong, today.

The inaugural ceremony was also attended by Mr Karma Tashi Bhutia Chairman, Sikkim Housing and Development Board, Mr DB Chettri OSD to CM, Mr Santosh Pradhan OSD Sikkim State Lottery Directorate, Mr Bum Tshering Yonzon OSD IT Department, Mr Urgan Lepcha CA to CM along with officials from various departments and public.

The event is being

organised by the Rhenock Tourism Development Society, in collaboration with the Tourism and Civil Aviation Department under the initiative of Chief Minister with the objective of promoting Rhenock as an emerging adventure and community-based tourism destination.

The Paragliding Accuracy Championship scheduled from January 16 to January 18, has attracted the participation of 62 paragliders from across the country and neighbouring regions, including Nepal, Mizoram, Assam, Meghalaya, Borderland Territorial Council, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Sikkim, Ladakh, Goa and Arunachal Pradesh.

The championship is being conducted with proper technical equipment, including radio

communication systems, navigation devices and adequate safety measures, such as rescue teams and ambulance facilities, ensuring the highest safety standards.

Flights are taking off from two designated locations, Amba and Thumki Dara and is being judged using a 20-centimetre electronic target device, with a minimum of four rounds and a maximum of twelve rounds, depending on weather conditions.

The event is being officiated by the judges from Nepal, Mizoram, Assam, Darjeeling and Sikkim and the winners will be awarded under individual and team categories, with consolation prizes for all female participants, encouraging greater participation of women in adventure sports.

### Community Sanitary Complex-cum-Betel Shop inaugurated

**Gyalshing, January 16:** Mr Sudesh Kumar Subba Area MLA-cum-Advisor Tourism and Civil Aviation, today inaugurated a Community Sanitary Complex-cum-Betel Shop constructed near Dentam Bazar under Gyalshing District, marking a significant step towards strengthening sanitation infrastructure and promoting hygiene practices at the community level. The project has been executed through convergence with the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission Fund and with support from PPHF under the HRDP–HDFC Parivartan CSR Initiative.

The inauguration programme was attended by Mr Madhusudan Sharma APS to CM, Mr Surat Gurung Director-cum-ADC (Development), Mr NK Karki SDM Dentam, Mr Dinesh Gurung Zilla Panchayat Member, Mr Rajiv Kumar Project Manager, PPHF, Gram Panchayat President and Members, along with officials from RDD and TIC Dentam, local representatives and public.

The construction of the facility commenced on August 5, 2025 was completed on November 24, 2025. The project was sanctioned at a total cost of ₹6.00 lakh, implemented through a convergence model comprising ₹2.10 lakh under SBM (G), ₹0.90 lakh from the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission and ₹3.00 lakh contributed by PPHF towards construction.

Additional support in the

### DC Gyalshing chairs review meeting of NCORD Committee and Substance Abuse among children

**Gyalshing, January 16:** Monthly Review Meeting of the Narco Coordination (NCORD) Committee and Substance Abuse among Children for Gyalshing District was convened today at the Conference Hall of the District Administrative Centre (DAC), Gyalshing.

The meeting was chaired by DC-cum-Chairperson of the NCORD Committee Mr Tenzing D Denzongpa.

DC emphasised the need to inculcate a shared resolve and enhance collective efforts to effectively tackle the growing challenge of substance abuse in the district.

Stressing the importance of a coordinated and preventive approach, he directed all concerned departments to strengthen surveillance mechanisms, intensify awareness programmes, and ensure timely reporting of substance abuse trends. Departments were instructed to adopt proactive and collaborative strategies to address narcotics-related challenges in a comprehensive manner.

During the meeting, Heads of Offices and representatives from various departments apprised about the initiatives undertaken so far and shared suggestions aimed at curbing drug trafficking and substance abuse. The Committee unanimously reaffirmed its commitment to a zero-tolerance

form of sanitary pad vending machines, sanitary pad destroyer machines, sanitary items and branding has also been provided under the HRDP–HDFC Parivartan CSR Initiative.

Informing the gathering, Director-cum-ADC (Development) highlighted the importance of convergence in achieving sustainable community infrastructure and provided details of the project execution, funding pattern and operational framework. He informed that the facility has been created with a clear mechanism for regular operation and maintenance, with responsibility vested with the concerned Gram Panchayat and local stakeholders to ensure cleanliness, functionality and long-term sustainability.

He further emphasized that community participation and ownership would play a key role in maintaining the facility and maximizing its utility, particularly for market users and women.

After the programme, Area MLA along with the concerned officials inspected the Dentam Bazar market area, where various developmental initiatives were carried out. During the inspection, several suggestions and necessary additions were discussed to further enhance the overall aesthetics, functionality and cleanliness of the market area.

policy against drug abuse and trafficking in the district.

Deliberations were also held on ongoing awareness campaigns, enforcement drives, uprooting of cannabis plants, and community-level outreach initiatives. Additionally, concerns regarding safety during high-altitude treks were discussed. Directions were issued for mandatory health check-ups, proper acclimatisation protocols, and strict compliance by tour and trek operators to ensure the safety of trekkers.

The meeting concluded with directives to all departments to further intensify coordinated efforts towards creating a drug-free, safe, and healthy environment in Gyalshing District.

The meeting was attended by Mr Pulkit SDM (Hq), Mr Sonam Wangdi Bhutia Additional Superintendent of Police, Mr Rajesh Thapa Joint Director Education, Mr Karma Bhutia Deputy Director Agriculture, Commandant SSB (36<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Yangtey), Block Development Officers of Gyalshing, Yuksom and Dentam, Assistant Director, SIB Gyalshing Dean, Sancha Man Limboo Government Degree College, ADDO (AH&VS), and officers and officials from various line departments.

**Save Water & Stay Green**

**Government of Sikkim  
Urban Development Department  
Gangtok, Sikkim**

Memo No: 02/GOS/UDD/EC/PCE/496/2026

Dated:17/01/2026

**NOTICE INVITING RE-TENDER**

On behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Chief Engineer, Urban Development Department, Government of Sikkim invites percentage rate tenders from qualified Class 1A Contractors enlisted with the State Public Works department of Sikkim for the work listed under -

Sl.	Name of work	Bid value (₹)	Bid security 2.5% of the Bid value (₹)	Cost of Tender /Bid form (₹)	Completion Period
1.	Construction of Parking Plaza & Beautification of Namthang Bazaar Phase 1 under Namchi District.	16,75,39,694.00	41,88,492.00	3,00,000.00	36 months

**Time Schedule**

SL. No.	Activities	Dates
1.	Sales of Tender documents (After receiving application with bank receipt) from Tenders	19/02/2026 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
2.	Issue of Tender form	20/02/2026 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
3.	Submission of Tender	21/02/2026 From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
4.	Opening of Tender	21/02/2026 From 2:00 pm onwards
5.	Address	Office of the Chief Engineer, Urban Development Department, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok.

**CONDITION OF CONTRACT**

1. The tender / Bidding documents may be obtained from the office of the C E Urban Development Department, Government of Sikkim during the period specified above on production of non-refundable fee as indicated. Bank Receipt (BR) paid to the State Bank of Sikkim under the Head 0045.800.03- Other Miscellaneous Receipt (Urban Development). The intending bidders are advised to read the bid document as uploaded in the website indicated below, to understand their eligibility before obtaining BR from the SBS. They can also read the document in the Office of the undersigned before obtaining the BR.

2. Tenderers shall submit TENDER and refundable EMD/FD in the form of TDR duly deposited into the State Bank of Sikkim in favour of Chief Account Officer, UDD.

3. In the event of any date indicated above being declared a Holiday, the next working day shall become operative for the respective purpose mentioned herein

4. Tender documents can be purchased from the Office of the Chief Engineer UDD, Gangtok, Govt. of Sikkim, during period specified above.

5. The bid value is exclusive of GST & Labour Cess.

6. All prerequisite clearances from relevant departments/ Organisations, as mandated by the government notifications and office orders have to be submitted by the interested bidders before the closure of the prescribed event.

7. Also interested bidder may visit on the website: - udd.Sikkim.gov.in

**Additional Chief Engineer (NSG)  
Urban Dev. Department  
Govt. of Sikkim, Gangtok  
(11)**

**Health and Family Welfare Department  
STNM Hospital, Sochakgang  
Government of Sikkim**

Ref. No. 04/ STORE /STNMH/2026

Dated: 20/01/2026

**NOTICE INVITING QUOTATION**

The sealed quotations are invited from the Local registered and reputed firms within the radius of 500mtrs of STNM Hospital, Sochakgang Operating 24X7 for the supply of medicines and allied items for STNM Hospital, Sochakgang, under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (P.M.J.AY) for the year 2026-2027.

**Terms & Condition:**

- Valid Trade and Drug License issued by authorized government agency.
- Medical Shop should be opened for 24X7.
- Medical Shop Signboard displayed for easy identification.
- The Tender detail and other documents can be obtained from the office of Sr. Accounts Officer, STNM Hospital, Sochakgang, on any working days from 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026 to 7<sup>th</sup> February 2026 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM on production of Bank Challan of ₹5,000/- duly signed by Sr. Accounts Officer, STNM Hospital, Sochakgang, credited under head 0210-01-800 other receipts.
- The firm shall deposit TDR of ₹1,50,000/- (One Lakh Fifty Thousand) in favor of Sr. AO, STNM Hospital, Sochakgang, for the supply of drugs and consumables from SBS along with the sealed quotation. The department will not liable to pay the interest on the said amount.
- The duly filled Tender Document should reach the office of Medical Superintendent, STNM Hospital, Sochakgang, within 12.00 pm of 7<sup>th</sup> March 2026. The Tender received after 12.00 pm of 7<sup>th</sup> March 2026 will not be entertained
- The sealed quotation will be opened on the same day at 2.00 pm in the office of Medical Superintendent, STNM Hospital, Sochakgang.
- The details of Terms and condition will be indicated in the tender form.
- The department committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender without assigning any reasons thereof.
- For further information visit the office of the undersigned.

**PCC Cum Medical Superintendent  
STNM Hospital, Sochakgang  
(13, III)**

**Public Health Engineering Department  
Government of Sikkim  
Nirman Bhawan, Gangtok  
Expression of Interest**

Expression of Interest No: 07/DPR-NJNP/SEW/PHED/2025-26

Date 16-01-2026.

Expression of Interest is invited from reputed firms registered under Government of Sikkim/either individually or as consortium of companies)/Joint Ventures, for DETAILED SURVEY INVESTIGATION, DESIGNING AND PREPARATION OF DETAILED PROJECT REPORT FOR SETTING UP OF NAYA-BAZAAR JORETHANG NAGAR PANCHAYAT SEWERAGE SYSTEM IN NAYA-BAZAAR JORETHANG TOWN AND ITS SURROUNDING AREAS, NAMCHI DISTRICT, SIKKIM.

For details and subsequent communication please visit website:- [www.sikkimtender.gov.in](http://www.sikkimtender.gov.in) from 16/01/2026

**Chief Engineer  
PHE Department  
Government of Sikkim  
(09, II)**

**Government of Sikkim  
Buildings & Housing Department  
Gangtok**

Memo No:199/SD/HQ-V/Bldgs/P/19

Dated: 17/01/2026

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

For and on behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, the Superintending Engineer, Buildings and Housing Department invites percentage rate Tender in single cover system from Class II-B Contractors enlisted with Sikkim Public Works Department for participating in the e-tender within the jurisdiction of territorial constituency of 27-Gangtok for the work "Construction of Office and Residential Complex for SIB Town Unit near Old Post Office, Gangtok District" amounting to ₹3,69,74,932.00. For further details, kindly visit the website.

[www.sikkimtender.gov.in](http://www.sikkimtender.gov.in)

**sd/-  
Superintending Engineer  
Buildings & Housing Deptt.  
(10, II)**

**Health and Family Welfare Department  
STNM Hospital, Sochakgang  
Government of Sikkim**

Ref. No. 03/ STORE /STNMH/2026

Dated: 20/01/2026

**NOTICE INVITING QUOTATION**

The sealed quotations are invited from the Local registered and reputed firms within the radius of 500mtrs of STNM Hospital, Sochakgang Operating 24X7 for the supply of medicines and allied items for STNM Hospital, Sochakgang, under Emergency purchase for the year 2026-2027.

**Terms & Condition:**

- Valid Trade and Drug License issued by authorized government agency.
- Medical Shop should be opened for 24X7.
- Medical Shop Signboard displayed for easy identification.
- The Tender detail and other documents can be obtained from the office of Sr. Accounts Officer, STNM Hospital, Sochakgang, on any working days from 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026 to 7<sup>th</sup> February 2026 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM on production of Bank Challan of ₹5,000/-duly signed by Sr. Accounts Officer, STNM Hospital, Sochakgang, credited under head 0210-01-800 other receipts.
- The firm shall deposit TDR of ₹1,00,000/- (One Lakh) in favor of Sr. AO, STNM Hospital, Sochakgang, for the supply of drugs and consumables from SBS along with the sealed quotation. The department will not liable to pay the interest on the said amount.
- The duly filled Tender Document should reach the office of Medical Superintendent, STNM Hospital, Sochakgang, within 12.00 pm of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026. The Tender received after 12.00 pm of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2026 will not be entertained.
- The sealed quotation will be opened on the same day at 2.00 pm in the office of Medical Superintendent, STNM Hospital, Sochakgang.
- The details of Terms and condition will be indicated in the tender form.
- The department committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender without assigning any reasons thereof.
- For further information visit the office of the undersigned.

**PCC Cum Medical Superintendent  
STNM Hospital, Sochakgang  
(12, III)**

**READ AND ADVERTISE  
IN  
SIKKIM HERALD**

## Vice Chairperson NITI Aayog visits AIC-SMUTBI

**Pakyong, January 15:** Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, Mr Suman K Bery, accompanied by Member, NITI Aayog, Prof Dr Ramesh Chand, and State Advisor, Sikkim, and Programme Director, NITI Aayog, Major General K Narayanan, visited the Atal Incubation Centre, Sikkim Manipal University Technology Business Incubation (AIC-SMUTBI), located at the campus of Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology (SMIT), Majhitar, as part of his official programme in the State today.

The visit began with a tour of AIC-SMUTBI, during which the Vice Chairman was briefed on the functioning of the incubation centre, start-ups, and support mechanisms extended to them. He interacted with officials of the centre and reviewed facilities available for incubation and acceleration of start-ups.

Following the tour, Mr Suman K Bery interacted with entrepreneurs and start-up innovators who showcased their innovations at dedicated stalls.

Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, stated that this was his first visit to an Atal Incubation Centre and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to witness the innovation ecosystem at the grassroots level. He remarked that such visits provide valuable insights into how national policies translate into local entrepreneurial development.

Referring to the Prime Minister's vision, Mr Suman K Bery emphasised the importance of nurturing scientific temper and innovation from the school level through initiatives such as Atal Tinkering Labs. He further highlighted the need to prepare youth to become job creators by fostering entrepreneurship, adaptability, and continuous learning in a rapidly evolving technological era.

He expressed satisfaction at witnessing the outcomes of this vision in Sikkim, particularly in a region with a strong educational tradition. He appreciated the dedication of young entrepreneurs who had chosen to leave secure

careers to pursue their passion for innovation and enterprise. He also commended Sikkim Manipal University for establishing and supporting the incubation ecosystem, along with the contribution of corporate social responsibility initiatives and public sector support.

He stated that such platforms play a vital role in enabling small enterprises to grow into sustainable and scalable ventures, which is crucial for India's aspiration to emerge as one of the leading economic powers of the world.

Board of Director- AIC SMUTBI, Prof (Dr) Savitha G Kinni, highlighted that the North-Eastern region offers immense opportunities across diverse sectors such as sustainable agriculture, organic farming, wellness, healthcare access, and digital connectivity.

She informed that the Atal Incubation Centre, established with the support of NITI Aayog under the Atal Innovation Mission, has supported start-ups, achieved measurable outcomes, including significant revenue generation and substantial employment creation, with expectations of further growth beyond current targets. She added that several start-ups have gained national and international exposure, attracting interest from institutional investors and global platforms.

Further, she stated that the incubation centre's initiatives align with the Government of India's vision of Digital India and Atmanirbhar Bharat by promoting technology-driven, self-reliant, and locally rooted entrepreneurship.

She also briefed on the first and second cohort of Digi-Startup Acceleration Program for North East (SAPNE), the number of startups from the NE region, underscoring the impact and effectiveness of the programme.

Furthermore, she called for continued collaboration among the Government, industry, investors, and ecosystem partners to transform the North East into a

vibrant and self-sustaining innovation hub.

At the outset, CEO, AIC-SMUTBI, Dr Tej Chingtham briefed the participants on the objectives and functioning of the incubation centre, highlighting the impact of its program. He also outlined the aims of Digi-SAPNE, which seeks to empower local innovators by providing resources and mentorship, strengthen the start-up ecosystem, and support entrepreneurship-led development in the North-Eastern region.

During the programme, Accelerating Entrepreneurs for Growth Impacting Social Enterprises-North East (AEGIS NE) was launched, aimed at strengthening the social enterprise ecosystem across the North-Eastern region.

The programme is supported by Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) as a strategic CSR-backed initiative to enable inclusive, grassroots entrepreneurship.

Also, grants under the Genesis EIR Cohort 1.0 were distributed to Both Intelligence Pvt. Ltd., JusticeNext Pvt. Ltd., and Quadx4ge Pvt. Ltd. Grants under Genesis EIR Cohort 2.0 were distributed to Inquisitech LLP, Suvastra, Ask Darj, and TriPhase Aerial Solution.

It may be noted that, AIC-SMUTBI is the first Atal Incubation Centre in North-East India, supported by Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, and the Government of India. The incubator nurtures and incubates early-stage entrepreneurial ventures based on technology and innovation by providing infrastructure, mentorship, and seed grants to promising young entrepreneurs to pursue their dreams of starting their own ventures.

The event had the presence of Manager, SMIT; State Nodal Officer; Consultant, Atal Innovation Mission; PS to Vice Chairman NITI Aayog; team members from NITI Aayog; faculty members and staff from SMIT, and startup founders from all over North East.

## Workshop on Frontier State Development

**Gangtok, January 14:** A workshop on Frontier State Development, Focus on North East was organised by Government of Sikkim in collaboration with NITI Aayog at a local hotel in Gangtok, today.

The workshop aimed to identify strategies for the holistic development of frontier areas by integrating health, livelihoods, connectivity, and security. It also sought to strengthen organic agriculture and green economy linkages among the North-Eastern states, build a regional innovation network under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) to promote inclusive entrepreneurship, and create a platform for inter-state collaboration by showcasing successful models from Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Assam, and Tripura. Additionally, the workshop focused on developing a policy roadmap and a framework for regional cooperation to advance frontier region development.

Mr Suman K Bery, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, outlined the objectives of NITI Aayog and reflected on the challenges and opportunities of the North Eastern region in the context of Viksit Bharat. He appreciated the state's cleanliness and the prevailing sense of calm. He elaborated on Sikkim's potential to position itself across various platforms on the global stage and described the state as a central catalyst in guiding other states towards the vision of Viksit Bharat. He emphasised the importance of aspiring to institutionalise quality and highlighted the need to bridge the gap between performance and aspiration.

Dr Mahendra P Lama, Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of Sikkim, stated that the North East Region Vision 2047 formed a component of Viksit Bharat 2047. While speaking on the determinants and components of the new growth pole, he referred to the following aspects: border as opportunity, the 4x4 connectivity matrix, reverse integration, and the need for a new development model.

He stated that the North East Region should emerge as a new growth pole of India and Eastern South Asia, covering Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, and the North East Region. He referred to this framework as the NER Growth Quadrangle (NERGQ) and said it would play a role in India's Act East Policy, Neighbourhood First Policy, Viksit Bharat, and Aatmanirbhar Bharat 2047. In this regard, he outlined some important goals. These included developing the region as an Eastern South Asia power pool, promoting socio-economic growth through cross-border trade and investments, and positioning the region as a green destination for nature- and biodiversity-based products. He also proposed the North East Economic Corridor to strengthen logistics and infrastructure and highlighted the region's strengths in society, economy, natural resources, national security and its role as a gateway to South-East Asia.

Other goals included developing the region as a centre for climate studies through multidisciplinary institutions, promoting medical, adventure and war relic tourism, and strengthening soft power by leveraging youth potential in sports, music, food, design and entertainment. He further stated that peace and stability in the North East Region could deliver a peace dividend by 2047, ensuring human, national and environmental security and serving as a model for other conflict-affected regions.

Prof Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog, elaborated on the objective behind holding the workshop in Sikkim. He highlighted that NITI Aayog promotes competitive federalism, encouraging states to adopt best practices from one another. He noted Sikkim's performance in rising economic growth and stressed that its achievements should serve as a model to be shared with other North Eastern states and the rest of the country. He acknowledged the collective efforts of the State Government, bureaucracy, and all stakeholders in driving these accomplishments, including the state's leading position in per capita income.

He mentioned that this significant growth in per capita income has been achieved over the past four years. He further stated that Sikkim is already aligned with the Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 and has been demonstrating inclusive growth through sustained improvements in per capita income, balanced regional development, and people-centric governance, reflecting the spirit of Sabka Vikas.

Mr R Telang, Chief Secretary stated that the workshop served as a platform for discussions on innovation and nation-building. He highlighted the role of community participation in development. He referred to the contribution of Self-Help Groups and the participation of women in markets, governance, and industries. He stated that the people of the North Eastern states remained rooted in culture, heritage, nature, tourism, and creative sectors.

He also spoke on sustainable agriculture, handloom, and handicrafts, and underlined the need for youth participation in the growth of modern industries.

He emphasised the importance of green and resilient practices for the North Eastern states and described them as a foundation for development under the leadership of Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi. He further referred to initiatives such as the Vibrant Village Programme, Viksit Bharat 2047, and cross-border economic activities. He said these initiatives aimed to integrate border regions into national growth processes through infrastructure, trade, and people-to-people linkages.

Also present at the workshop were Mr CP Sharma Vice Chairman, Institute for Transforming Sikkim, General K Narayanan, State Advisor Sikkim, Programme Director NITI Aayog Major officials and delegates from North East States, officials from Planning and Development Department Government of Sikkim and other dignitaries.

## Press Release from Women Child, Senior Citizen and Divyangjan Welfare Department

**Gangtok, January 14:** A State Orientation Training on Adoption Regulations, 2022 was held at the Conference Hall of the Women, Child, Senior Citizen and Divyangjan Welfare Department in the presence of the Principal Director, WCSC&DWD.

The training was organised by the State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA), Mission Vatsalya, WCSC&DWD, Government of Sikkim, in collaboration with the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA). Resource Person, Mrs Abhisarika Rai, represented CARA.

The trainees included all stakeholders such as officials from the District Child Protection

Unit, Child Welfare Committee, members from the District Magistrate's Office, Birth Certificate Issuing Authority, members from the Specialised Adoption Agency, and Child Care Institutions.

The training commenced with a welcome address by the Programme Manager, SARA, Mrs Laxaana Subedi. Mrs Rai then took over the session, highlighting the aims and objectives of CARA, legislations pertaining to adoption, key amendments in the Adoption Regulations, 2022, and the adoption network in India. The roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in ensuring a smooth adoption process, along

with procedures for in-country and inter-country adoptions, were also discussed.

The Programme Manager informed that SARA was established in 2015 in Sikkim, and since its inception, there have been 108 in-country adoptions, 3 inter-country adoptions, and 1 adoption of a special needs child. The training was followed by an open house discussion, during which participants raised their concerns, queries, issues, and challenges, and shared their experiences. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Mrs Nim Chuti Sherpa, PO, SARA.

## Second session of Frontier State Development workshop

**Gangtok, January 14:** Second session of the Workshop on Frontier State Development, organised by the Government of Sikkim and NITI Aayog, was held at a local hotel in Gangtok, today.

The sessions focused on sector-wise approaches to frontier area development, organic agriculture, and the innovation ecosystem in the North East. They addressed policy frameworks, community participation, agriculture systems, enterprise development, infrastructure, connectivity, and livelihood systems in border and remote regions.

The first technical session, titled 'Holistic Frontier Area Development', was chaired and moderated by Major General K Narayanan Programme Director, NITI Aayog.

In the presentation, Ms Khushbu Gurung, Joint Secretary, Planning and Development Department, Government of Sikkim, spoke on ongoing projects under the Vibrant Village Programme-I in the State and provided updates on the Yumthang Hot Springs project, the Eco-Tourism Project, and other initiatives under implementation.

The next presentation in the first session was delivered by Colonel Lalit Khandpal, who spoke on initiatives such as Ranboomi Darshan, which includes entry of visitors to border areas such as Sikkim Prerna Sthal, Doklam viewpoint, and Cho La Pass, and referred to the role of community participation and youth engagement in these initiatives. He also highlighted rainwater harvesting, solar energy, and hydroponics. He further referred to the outcomes of military-civil fusion initiatives and supercar rally drives to border areas, aimed at promoting outreach, tourism, and engagement with frontier regions.

Similarly, Mr T Wati Aier Director, DUDA, Government of Nagaland, spoke on community-led development and referred to the provision of basic infrastructure, connectivity, livelihood programmes, sports activities, cross-border trade, market linkages, and cold storage facilities.

Dr RK Radhesana Devi Director (Planning) Government of Manipur, spoke on community-led connectivity and resilience, referring to physical, digital, service, institutional, and ecological connectivity, along with disaster-prone zones, ecological concerns, and weather-related disruptions.

Mr Atul Tayeng Director,

Rural Department, Government of Arunachal Pradesh in his presentation spoke on integrated livelihood development and stated that 455 villages had been covered under the Vibrant Village Programme. He pointed out that all-weather road connectivity, communication networks, and market linkages remained limited and stressed the need to strengthen livelihood security, upgrade traditional practices, and focus on capacity building.

The second technical session focused on scaling and advancing organic agriculture. The session was chaired and moderated by Mr Pradeep Kumar Principal Secretary, Agriculture and Horticulture Departments, Government of Sikkim.

Mr J D Bhutia, Secretary, Agriculture Department, Government of Sikkim, outlined Sikkim's organic journey and referred to its progress. He presented an overview of the department, along with its vision and mission, and discussed farming practices in Sikkim.

Mr Sandeep Saha Regional Head (NER and Ladakh), APEDA, Government of India, highlighted export and certification linkages and provided an overview of APEDA.

In his presentation, Mr B Rammineonga, Additional Director, Agriculture Department, Mizoram, spoke on strategies for transitioning to organic agriculture. He referred to challenges and opportunities related to scaling up organic farming practices in the State.

Ms D Barishisha Mukhim, Deputy Director, Horticulture and COO (MEGNOLIA), Meghalaya, spoke on integrating FPOs for green growth. She referred to strategies for scaling organic agriculture and to the need for export-oriented infrastructure.

Similarly, Mr Renzino Lepcha, Chief Operating Officer, Mevedir, Sikkim, spoke on organic value chain initiatives implemented by Mevedir. He referred to measures taken to strengthen market linkages and product development, and to issues related to scaling operations, certification, and market access.

The third technical session focused on the innovation ecosystem in the North East. The session was chaired and moderated by Mr Gopal K Chettri Joint Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department, Government of Sikkim.

In his presentation, Dr Chingtham CEO AIC, SMIT,

devotion.

Speaking on the spirit of Sikkim, the Governor observed that the Maghey Sankranti Mela stands as a fine example of harmony, brotherhood, and unity in diversity, bringing together people of different castes, languages, religions, and cultures on a common platform to share their traditions, art, music, and cuisine.

The Governor congratulated the Chief Minister for his continuous efforts in promoting

Sikkim, focused on opportunities and on innovation as a connected system involving institutions, entrepreneurs, markets, and policy support. He said the North Eastern states formed a base for biodiversity-linked sustainability. He added that modern agricultural entrepreneurship had become necessary for the region.

He said several gaps needed to be addressed to support progress and development. He pointed out that market access remained a major challenge and said that connectivity required focused intervention. He suggested that younger generations should be involved in modern and future-oriented innovation.

In his presentation, Mr Diptanil Chakraborty representative from Acuvea Healthcare Pvt Ltd, Tripura, spoke on leadership that supports long-term and responsible healthcare delivery in the region. He said healthcare delivery remained a challenge because of terrain-related constraints. He stated that innovation must lead to measurable outcomes. He added that transformation in healthcare delivery systems was necessary.

Mr Ratan Ghimirey Representative from Encamp Adventure Pvt Ltd, Assam, in his presentation, spoke on the innovation ecosystem. He referred to climate challenges and to the need for fair opportunities for sustainable livelihoods within communities. He also referred to Sikkim's eco-tourism initiatives and their role in development.

In her presentation, Ms Srijana Shreshta Agapi, Sikkim, spoke on Agapi as a model for mountain development, with a focus on women-centred livelihoods. She referred to low-impact production, responsible consumption, and approaches for development in mountain regions.

The technical session was followed by a discussion during which, participants raised queries and shared suggestions.

The workshop was attended by Mr C P Sharma Vice Chairman, Institute of Transforming Sikkim (ITS), State Advisor Sikkim, Major General K Narayanan Programme Director, NITI Aayog, representatives from NITI Aayog, Government of India, officials from North Eastern States, Government of Sikkim and members from APEDA, representatives from Mevedir Sikkim, delegates from North Eastern States, and entrepreneurs.

and preserving the State's rich historical and cultural heritage. On the occasion of the 71<sup>st</sup> Maghey Sankranti Mela, he also extended his warm greetings to all communities of Sikkim who have been celebrating this festival with joy and devotion for centuries.

Concluding his address, the Governor lauded the Maghey Sankranti Mela Committee for maintaining a fine balance between tradition and modernity while fulfilling its responsibility of preserving, promoting, and

## Press Release from SIMFED

**Gangtok:** Sikkim State Cooperative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd. (SIMFED) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bharatiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL) at Sahakari Bhawan, Tadong, Gangtok, with the objective of strengthening cooperative-led seed production and improving access to quality agricultural inputs for farmers in Sikkim.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Ms Jabi Thapa, Secretary-cum-Principal Registrar of Cooperation Department, Government of Sikkim. Senior officers of the Cooperation Department, Government of Sikkim, officials of SIMFED, representatives of BBSSL, and member stakeholders were also present during the programme.

As per the agreement, SIMFED will function as the nodal cooperative agency in the State for coordination with BBSSL in matters relating to seed production, procurement, and distribution. The collaboration is aimed at ensuring the availability of certified, high-quality seeds at affordable prices, addressing existing shortages in seed supply, and strengthening the overall seed distribution system through the cooperative network.

Through this partnership, SIMFED will work closely with primary agricultural cooperative societies and other cooperative institutions to facilitate organised seed production and structured distribution mechanisms. The initiative is expected to improve timely access to quality planting material for farmers across

developing the State's cultural heritage.

He expressed his appreciation to the organising committee and all contributors for the successful conduct of the Mela and conveyed his blessings, wishing that Maghey Sankranti bring happiness, peace, health, prosperity, and renewed energy to all.

The day also witnessed the release of the book 'Smarika: Maghey Sankranti Mela 2025', which documents the events and activities of the previous year's celebration and serves as a valuable archival record of the festival.

During the programme, certificates of merit and awards were presented by the Chief Minister to the position holders of the painting competition organised by the Motor Vehicles Division, Jorethang, under the Transport Department, Government of Sikkim. The competition held under the theme 'Sadak Suraksha, Jeevan Raksha', aimed to promote road safety awareness and responsible road behaviour through creative expression.

Certificates of merit were also awarded to position holders in various disciplines including cooking, cloud computing, beauty,

different agro-climatic regions of Sikkim, thereby contributing to enhanced crop productivity and farm incomes.

A key focus of the MoU is farmer participation and capacity building. By involving farmers and grassroot cooperatives directly in seed production activities, the programme seeks to promote farmer entrepreneurship, create additional livelihood opportunities, and encourage the scientific conservation and development of indigenous and locally adapted crop varieties suited to local conditions.

The agreement reflects the principle of cooperation among cooperatives, wherein national and state-level cooperative institutions work together to achieve shared developmental objectives. It is aligned with the Ministry of Cooperation's vision of 'Sahakar se Samridhhi', translating cooperative values into practical benefits for farmers through improved access to quality inputs, transparent systems, and equitable distribution of economic gains.

The signing of this MoU marks an important step in strengthening cooperative-based agricultural infrastructure in Sikkim. By institutionalising seed production and distribution through the cooperative framework, the initiative is expected to support sustainable agricultural growth, improve farm productivity, and contribute to the development of a resilient and self-reliant rural economy in the State.

and healthcare under the India Skills Competition 2025. The winners selected at the State level, will represent Sikkim at the regional-level competition.

In the sporting events held as part of the celebrations, the first quarter-final match of the 11<sup>th</sup> All India Chief Minister's Gold Cup Football Tournament was played between Red Panda FC (Sikkim) and Church Boys Nepal. Red Panda FC emerged victorious with a 2-0 scoreline, and Mr Kwane Junior of the winning team was adjudged Man of the Match.

Similarly, the final match of the State-Level Inter-Constituency Football Tournament was contested between Salghari-Zoom and Poklok-Kamrang constituencies. Team Poklok-Kamrang clinched the tournament title. The Man of the Tournament award was conferred upon Mr Dilli Ram Sanyasi of Salghari-Zoom, while Mr Raj Kumar Sanyasi of the same constituency was awarded the highest scorer title. The best goalkeeper award went to Mr Wilson Lepcha of Poklok-Kamrang, and the fair play Constituency title was awarded to Namcheybong.

*Contd. from front page*

### 71<sup>st</sup> Maghey...

journey, and human life.

Recalling his experiences from previous years, the Governor described his participation in the evening aarti at the sacred confluence of the Rangeet and Rammam rivers as a divine and unforgettable experience. He further noted that the celebrations reflect a beautiful confluence of collective enthusiasm and spiritual

## Press briefing at Creative Hub 2.0 by IPRD

**Namchi, January 19:** Information and Public Relations Department organised a press briefing today at Creative Hub 2.0, Jorethang Green Park. The press briefing was convened to apprise the media about wide range of activities and events planned for the nine-day mega celebration.

The briefing was held in the presence of Mr Madan Cintury MLA Zoom-Salghari and Chief Patron of the Maghey Sankranti Mela. Also present were Mr Yougan Tamang Press Secretary to the Chief Minister, Ms Annapurna Alley Secretary Information and Public Relations Department, Mr Sunil Mothey Director Information and Public Relations Department, Mr Yogen Syangden SDM Jorethang, Mr Nitesh Rohit CEO and Artistic Director of NR Group.

MLA expressed his sincere appreciation to the IPR Department for its outstanding creativity and innovative presentation. He stated that this year's design and concept were distinctly different from previous years and has been developed to meet international standards. Highlighting the key attractions of the mela, he spoke about initiatives such as Ama Suvidha Ghar, Bangey Bazar, Teens Street, Sandhya Aarati, and the installation of 16 themed stalls. He

further highlighted the growing opportunities created by organising the mela along the banks of the Rangit and Rammam rivers.

The MLA emphasised that the Jorethang Maghey Sankranti Mela is being conducted round the clock (24/7) and has recorded zero untoward incidents so far. He thanked all participating departments, organisers and stakeholders for their dedicated efforts in ensuring the smooth and successful conduct of the event.

He further stated that visitors from various states and countries have highly appreciated the Maghey Mela, adding that its success reflects the visionary leadership of the Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang.

Ms Annapurna Alley, briefed about the concept and objectives of Creative Hub 2.0 and the creative opportunities being developed for the people. She highlighted that the initiative focuses on reconnecting people, especially children, with Mother Earth through mud-based activities and traditional games. The concept reflects the vision of the Chief Minister and provides a platform for participants to relive childhood memories and experience a sense of nostalgia.

She further emphasised that Creative Hub 2.0 provides a

valuable platform for local entrepreneurs to showcase their creativity and talent. She also highlighted that the IPR Department was recently conferred the prestigious SKOCH Award for E-Governance in New Delhi for the Creative Hub initiative, which was first launched during the Maghey Mela 2025.

Mr Nitesh Rohit, highlighted the visionary leadership of the Chief Minister in promoting creativity at an international level by blending traditional and contemporary ideas. He informed the media about the introduction of Virtual Reality (VR) at Creative Hub 2.0 for the first time. The initiative, in collaboration with Chauruvi Design Lab (CDL), features a VR presentation of Hanuman Chalisa, along with short games and informative videos for children.

Mr Sunil Mothey, stated that Creative Hub 2.0 has been a significant success so far. He added that the press briefing would help generate greater public awareness and encourage more people to visit the hub and benefit from the creative platforms on offer.

Earlier, Ms Deepti Pradhan District Information Officer (DIO) Namchi, briefed on the overall objectives of the programme, highlighting its key features and activities.

## SOSA Kurtot Harvesting Festival celebrated at Lum

**Mangan, January 19:** SOSA Kurtot Harvesting Festival commenced at Lum, Lower Dzongu, bringing together local community to observe the traditional harvest celebrations from January 17-19.

The programme organised by the SOSA Kurtot Celebration Committee (SKCC) featured customary practices and cultural activities associated with the harvesting season. The inaugural day had the presence of Mr Pintso Namgyal Lepcha, Minister for Forest and Environment Department along with Mr Tenzing Loden Lepcha DIG and Mr LB Chettri SP Mangan.

Minister stated that no new road cutting would be undertaken and that priority would be given to the reconstruction and improvement of existing rough roads. He also highlighted the educational facilities provided by the State Government for the benefit and development of the youth. Encouraging young people to work towards their goals, he referred to competitive examinations such as the SPSC and shared examples of individuals who achieved success through effort. He further advised the youth not to rely only on government jobs but to also consider entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities.

DIG shared his personal life journey and experiences, motivating the youth to stay focused, work hard and remain committed to their goals despite challenges. An interactive session

followed, during which he spoke about the rising cases of suicide in Sikkim, highlighting the importance of mental health awareness, open communication and collective support. He also addressed the issue of cybercrime, cautioning the people to stay alert against online fraud and misuse of digital platforms and encouraged responsible and informed use of technology.

Further, Mr Namgyal Lepcha, Under Secretary, Social Welfare Department, spoke about the provisions and legal safeguards available to SC and ST communities, particularly in matters related to land disputes.

He also spoke about Government schemes, including initiatives under the 2024-2025 plan, hospital construction works, the PMG Scheme under the Buddhist Development Plan supporting monasteries with shedra, and educational programmes of the Tribal Affairs Division such as Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS). He stressed the need for scholarships and requested parents to complete online scholarship applications within the stipulated time, adding that awareness programmes are conducted in schools to inform students about these schemes.

Later, in the programme, farmers were felicitated for their progressive farming practices and recognised as the best farmers from their respective wards and GPUs. The event further featured traditional sports, adding to the festive spirit, followed by vibrant

cultural performances that showcased the rich heritage and traditions of the region.

Also present were Mr Gideon Lepcha SDM Dzongu-cum-Chief Patron SOSA, Zilla Panchayats, Panchayat Presidents from Dzongu Constituency, officials from different departments and locals.

Similarly, on the concluding day, Prince of Sikkim, Palden Gyurmed Namgyal, attended the programme as the chief guest, accompanied by Princess Hope Leezum Namgyal Tobden.

Prince Palden Gyurmed Namgyal remarked on the importance of the occasion, stating that such festivals are vital for the preservation of culture and serve as a source of inspiration for the younger generation. Emphasising the cultural significance of the region, he observed that while Mayal Yang represents the body, Dzongu symbolises the heart, noting that the area has successfully safeguarded the rich Lepcha heritage. He further briefed the gathering about the documentary 'The Oath', informing that the film has been completed and its trailer has already been unveiled.

The programme further featured traditional sports events, followed by cultural performances that highlighted the vibrant traditions of the region.

Among others present were Mr Ugen Tshering Lepcha OSD (Land & Revenue) and Mr Tashi Thendup Lepcha OSD (Food and Civil Supply).

## Government of Sikkim conferred Emerging Leader Award

**New Delhi, January 16:** On the occasion of National Startup Day 2026, marking 10 years of the Startup India movement (2016-2026), the Government of Sikkim was conferred the prestigious 'Emerging Leader' Award, making it the first time the State has received a national-level recognition under the Startup India framework. The award acknowledges Sikkim's growing leadership and steadfast commitment towards fostering a vibrant startup and innovation ecosystem.

The award ceremony was held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, and was attended by Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi and Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Mr Piyush Goyal.

The award was received on behalf of the Government of Sikkim by Ms Karma D Youtso Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department, along with Ms Choden Gyatso Special Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department, who represented the State at the national-level event.

In addition to the State honour, Certificates of Commendation were also conferred in recognition of individual contributions towards strengthening the startup and MSME ecosystem in Sikkim. The certificates were awarded to Ms Karma D Youtso Secretary, Ms Choden Gyatso Special and Mr Ravi Kumar, Director, MSME, Commerce and Industries Department.

'Emerging Leader' category recognises states that have demonstrated significant progress in enabling startups through forward-looking policies, robust institutional support, entrepreneurship promotion, and innovation-driven initiatives. Sikkim's recognition in the first national startup award highlights the State's sustained efforts in nurturing local entrepreneurs, supporting early-stage ventures,

and creating an enabling environment for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Speaking on the occasion, officials from the Department of Commerce and Industries reaffirmed the State Government's commitment to further strengthening the startup ecosystem in Sikkim through targeted policy interventions, incubation support, improved access to finance, and enhanced collaboration with academic institutions and industry partners.

A key pillar of the State's entrepreneurship drive is the 'One Family One Entrepreneur' initiative, which aims to foster self-reliance by supporting one entrepreneur in every family. The initiative offers subsidies and interest subventions for MSMEs across sectors such as innovation and technology, service sectors, manufacturing, food processing, tourism, and allied activities, etc. thereby creating a vibrant economic ecosystem and empowering youth and women towards self-sufficiency.

In addition, under the ongoing Sikkim INSPIRES Programme, supported by the World Bank, the Department of Commerce and Industries is actively developing a robust entrepreneurship ecosystem in the State. As part of this initiative, an Innovation Hub at the State level and four Incubation Centres across districts are being established. Further, District Industries Centres are being upgraded and their staff capacitated to play a catalytic role in promoting startups and accelerating the State's economic growth.

This recognition, coinciding with the decade-long milestone of Startup India (2016-2026), marks an important moment for Sikkim and reinforces the State's emergence as a hub for innovation-led and inclusive development in the Northeastern region of India.

## Folk Tales Narration programme organised at Creative Hub 2.0

**Namchi, January 20:** Folk Tales Narration programme was organised at the Creative Hub 2.0, Green Park, Jorethang, highlighting the rich oral heritage of the Scheduled Caste and Bhutia communities.

Representing the Bhutia Kayrab Yargay Tshokpo (BKYT), Mr Kinchok Zangpoo Bhutia addressed the gathering and spoke on the cultural and historical significance of Gunsang Tenpo folk songs and traditional narratives, underlining their enduring relevance in preserving community identity.

Mr Shekhar Sewa, Chairperson of Sikkim Scheduled Caste Welfare Board briefed the audience on Nawmati Baja, elaborating on its importance in traditional ceremonies and its role in strengthening social and cultural bonds within the community.

Mr S B Mangmoo, Advisor to Information and Public Relations Department felicitated the representatives with khadas and flower bouquets in appreciation of their contributions.

**KEEP SIKKIM  
CLEAN  
AND GREEN**

## Grand Finale of State-level Golden Competitions

**Namchi, January 20:** The Grand Finale of the State-level Golden Competitions; Golden Feet of Sikkim, Golden Beat of Sikkim, and Golden Voice of Sikkim held in conjunction with the 71<sup>st</sup> Maghey Sankranti Mela 2026, concluded at Jorethang Playground, today.

Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang attended the programme accompanied by Cabinet Ministers, MLAs, Political Advisor to Chief Minister, Press Secretary to Chief Minister, Advisors, Chairpersons, Heads of Departments, and other dignitaries.

The competitions witnessed enthusiastic participation from dancers, bands, and individual singers from across the state, offering a vibrant platform for young talents to showcase their creativity, skill, and passion.

In the Golden Feet of Sikkim dance competition, Dynamic Flickers Dance Academy emerged as the winner, followed by Tapashree Gagan Dance Academy in second place, while Demazong Tribe Dance Academy secured the third position.

Similarly, in the Golden Beat of Sikkim band competition, Mana clinched the first position, Roll Heads stood second, and Akhanda achieved the third position.

Meanwhile, in the Golden Voice of Sikkim singing competition, Mr Subash Darjee was declared the winner, Ms Sumi Hangma Subba secured the second position, while Ms Sushila Bala Rai was awarded the third position.

The programme concluded with the distribution of prizes and certificates by the Chief Guest, marking a memorable conclusion to the grand finale of the Golden Competitions.

Reiterating the State Government's focus on sports development, the Chief Minister assured continued support through the provision of improved sports infrastructure and facilities for sportspersons across Sikkim. He also reaffirmed the continuation of key welfare initiatives including the Chief Minister Medical Assistance Scheme (CMMAS), Chief Minister Scholarship Scheme

(CMSS), and schemes aimed at the upliftment of entrepreneurship, youth and women.

Emphasising on the need to preserve Sikkim's diverse traditions and cultures, he urged the people to safeguard local culture and tradition, so that they remain alive for future generations. He appealed to citizens to frequently wear traditional attire, stating that this would inspire the younger generation and help pass on cultural values.

The Chief Minister further stated that events like Maghey Sankranti Mela celebrations not only promote unity and culture but also provide economic benefits to locals. He assured that such initiatives would continue to receive priority support from the government. He also acknowledged other major cultural initiatives, like Kalakar Bharosa Sammelan, to honour and support local talents. Encouraging the contestants, the Chief Minister motivated them to remain confident and persistent, advising those who may not secure positions this year to return stronger in the coming editions. He assured that winners would be selected fairly by the judges.

He also informed the gathering that the Sikkim Police had been honoured with the prestigious President's Colour Award for which he congratulated and appreciated the entire police force for their achievement and service. It is to be mentioned here that the President's Colour Award is the highest honour bestowed upon a military or police unit in India, recognising exceptional service to the nation.

During the course of the programme, the Chief Minister was felicitated by the Golden Competition Organising Committee and Association of 21 Communities of Sikkim for his unwavering support to the committee and his dedicated efforts towards promoting performing arts in the State.

Further, a total of 5 beneficiaries, including individuals along with religious and educational institutions, were also provided with assistance through

cheques through the Chief Minister's Discretionary Grant Scheme. Likewise, a total of 11 individuals, from different regions and constituencies of the state, were also provided assistance through cheques for their various entrepreneurial venture through Chief Minister's Self-Employment Assistance Scheme. The cheques were handed over to the beneficiaries by the Chief Minister during the course of the day's programme.

Accordingly, under the aegis Mero Rukh Mero Santati (MRMS), a flagship programme of the State Government, Ms Drishti Tamang, resident of Jorethang, was also handed over a passbook under Sikkim Sishu Samridhi Yojana by the Chief Minister. The account holds a deposited amount of ₹10,800 under her name.

Similarly, the CM handed over tokens of appreciation to a total of 26 teachers of the Chief Minister's Coaching Programme for the 2024-25 in Namchi, in recognition of their dedication to guiding students, enhancing the quality of education, and contributing to successful academic results.

An Economic Analysis Report of Maghey Sankranti Mela 2026, was also narrated by the General Secretary of the Maghey Mela Organising Committee, Mr Bishal Mukhia and later a copy of the report was submitted to the Chief Minister. It can be mentioned here that the report presented to the Chief Minister holds economic records of the Maghey Sankranti Mela till the date of January 19, 2026 and a full report shall be made available after the final day of the festival.

Likewise, 11<sup>th</sup> All India Chief Minister's Gold Cup Football Tournament Trophy was also unveiled during the occasion. The tournament is scheduled to culminate with its final match on 22<sup>nd</sup> January.

and Family Welfare Department, along with other dignitaries.

Likewise, on the occasion of Maghey Sankranti Mela, Governor accompanied by Chief Minister inaugurated the newly completed Sub-Divisional Administrative Centre in Jorethang.

The building has been developed as a modern administrative facility, comprising a basement, ground floor and multiple upper floors. It is equipped with essential office infrastructure and public service amenities designed to ensure efficient and citizen-friendly service delivery. The facility includes administrative offices, official chambers, conference halls, record rooms, open office spaces, adequate parking facilities and other supporting infrastructure.

The Sub-Divisional Magistrate's Office housed in the

new complex will also accommodate the offices of the Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO), Commercial Taxes Division, Fisheries Department, along with several other departmental offices, thereby strengthening administrative coordination and accessibility for the public.

Also present were Mr Bhim Hang Limboo Minister for Buildings and Housing Department, Mr Madan Cintury Area MLA, Ms Nikita Rai Vice President NJNP, Mr Akshay Sachdeva Director General of Police Sikkim, Mr Asha Gurung Secretary-cum-PCE Buildings and Housing Department, DC Namchi, DIG Namchi Range, Additional District Collectors Namchi, SDM Jorethang along with Officers of various line departments.

## CM inaugurates 1<sup>st</sup> Rhenock Sikkim Paragliding Accuracy Championship 2026

**Pakyong, January 18:** Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang, inaugurated the 1<sup>st</sup> Rhenock Sikkim Paragliding Accuracy Championship 2026, at Thumki Dara and Amba Dara, Pakyong, today.

The inauguration had the presence of Mr Raju Basnet Minister for Education Department; Mr Puran Gurung Minister for Agriculture Department; Mrs Pamin Lepcha MLA-cum- Advisor for Women, Child, Senior Citizen and Divyangjan Welfare Department; and Mr LB Das MLA-cum-Advisor for Information Technology (IT) and Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department, and Mr Bishnu Kumar Khatiwada Advisor to CM.

Also present were Zilla Upadhyaksha Pakyong; Chairman and Chairperson from various departments, Head of Departments; DC Pakyong; Senior SP Pakyong along with CA to Chief Minister and officials from various line departments and public.

During the inauguration ceremony, the Chief Minister performed Silyanas Puja at the take off locations, to seek blessings for the success and

safety of the festival, followed by the chanting of Swasti Bhajan. Further, he unveiled the foundation stone plaques at the sites, stating the government's focus on tourism infrastructure and development in rural and scenic areas.

Marking the highlight of the event, Chief Minister officially flagged off the participants for the paragliding adventure, encouraging the spirit of adventure sports and eco-tourism in the region.

Additionally, Chief Minister engaged in conversation with the officials and supervisor on the technical aspects of the adventure sport, while enquiring on its feasibility, safety standards and potential for sustainable business and employment opportunities in the region.

The event is being organised by the Rhenock Tourism Development Society, in collaboration with the Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, under the initiative of the Chief Minister which aims to promote Rhenock as an emerging destination for adventure and community-based tourism, while generating livelihood opportunities for the local community and fostering sustainable tourism practices.

## CM attends Swarna Jayanti Mahotsav and inauguration of Shree Krishna Pranami Prarthna Bhawan

**Kalimpong, January 16:** The Swarna Jayanti Mahotsav, 51 Path Parayan, and the inauguration of the Shree Krishna Pranami Prarthna Bhawan were held with great devotion and spiritual fervour at Lower Lolay, Kalimpong, today.

The programme was attended by Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang, alongside the august presence of Guruji Shri 108 Mohan Priyacharya Maharaj, MP Darjeeling, Mr Raju Bista and Advisor to the Chief Minister, Rohit Raj

Maharaj, along with other dignitaries and devotees. Prayers were offered for the peace, prosperity, and well-being of Sikkim and its people.

The sacred gathering reflected faith, unity, and spiritual harmony, reinforcing a shared commitment to dharma, service, and devotion. Devotees expressed hope that the blessings of Shree Krishna and the guidance of revered saints would continue to uplift Sikkim and the entire region.

## Press Release from Commerce and Industries Department

**Namchi, January 14:** Commerce and Industries Department, showcased various unique products of Sikkim entrepreneurs at Maghey Mela held at Jorethang from 14-22 January 2026, the stalls were formally inaugurated by Governor Mr Om Prakash Mathur, in the presence of Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from local entrepreneurs, with over 40 MSMEs showcasing their products under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Scheme of the Ministry of MSME, Government of India.

The stalls feature a wide range of locally produced goods, highlighting the entrepreneurial talent, innovation, and craftsmanship of Sikkim's MSME sector.

The initiative aims to provide market access, enhance visibility, and create new business opportunities for micro, small and medium enterprises, while also promoting local products among the visitors of the Maghey Mela.

The Commerce and Industries Department reiterated its commitment to strengthening the MSME ecosystem in the State through policy support, capacity building, and market linkage initiatives under the RAMP scheme.

The participation of MSMEs at Maghey Mela 2026 reflects the Government of Sikkim's continued efforts towards inclusive economic growth, entrepreneurship development, and sustainable livelihoods.

*Contd. from front page*

## Governor inaugurates...

to the District Hospital, Namchi. The ambulances have been provided by ALKEM Pharmaceuticals under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, further strengthening emergency healthcare services in the region.

Also present were Ministers, MLAs, MP Lok Sabha, Chairman AYUSH, Secretary Health and Family Welfare Department, Officers on Special Duty from the Health and Family Welfare Department and AYUSH, DC Namchi, Additional District Collectors Namchi, Chief Medical Officer Namchi, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Jorethang, Medical Officer-in-Charge CHC Jorethang, officers from IEC and the Health

## Chief Minister inaugurates auditorium-cum-10-room school building in Jorethang



**Namchi, January 20:** Prior to attending the 71<sup>st</sup> edition of the Maghey Sankranti Mela, Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang, inaugurated the auditorium-cum-10-room school building of PM SHRI Government Senior Secondary School, Jorethang.

He was accompanied by Mr Raju Basnet, Mr Bhoj Raj Rai Ministers, Mr Madan Cintury MLA and Chief Patron, Mr L N Sharma MLA along with Advisors, Chairpersons, Secretary Education Department, PCE-cum-Secretary Education Department, District Collector Namchi, Senior Superintendent of Police Namchi, Heads of Offices, and other officials from various line departments, Principal PM SHRI

Government Senior Secondary School, Jorethang, members of the School Management Committee, teaching and non-teaching staff and students.

The newly inaugurated auditorium-cum-10-room school building is equipped with modern facilities designed to support academic, cultural, and co-curricular activities. The auditorium with a seating capacity of 300 persons, is fitted with a Public Address (PA) system and fully functional air-conditioning units. The infrastructure further comprises eight classrooms, two laboratories dedicated to Chemistry and Biology practical sessions, green rooms, and

adequate sanitation facilities.

Ms Nisha Rai Principal, stated that the new facility would play a pivotal role in enhancing the academic environment and reinforcing the overall institutional framework of the school. She also highlighted the commendable progress of students in academics, sports at the national level, and various co-curricular activities.

Mr Chetraj Mishra, PCE-cum-Secretary, Education Department, presented the technical details of the project. As a gesture of appreciation, the School Management Committee presented tokens of gratitude to the Chief Minister and Minister for Education Department.

## CM meets NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson to review Sikkim's development trajectory

**Gangtok, January 15:** Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang, met the Vice Chairperson of NITI Aayog Mr Suman K Berry at his official residence to review the state's developmental progress, key achievements, and future priorities.

At the outset, the Vice Chairperson lauded Sikkim's remarkable progress, particularly its phenomenal rise from 4<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> position in per capita income at the national level. He expressed keen interest in understanding the inspiration and policy framework behind this achievement. In response, the Chief Minister attributed the success to the State Government's unwavering commitment to people-centric governance, with a sustained focus on health, education, and environmental sustainability through initiatives such as 'Mero Rukh Mero Santati', supplemented by the Sishu Samridhi Yojana. He noted that these programmes have played a significant role in achieving a notable 2.9 per cent increase in forest cover, reinforcing Sikkim's standing as a progressive state while maintaining its core strength as an environmentally responsible one.

While discussing challenges, the Chief Minister pointed out that tourism, being the backbone of Sikkim's economy, is significantly affected by inadequate and vulnerable connectivity with the rest of the country, particularly in terms of road infrastructure. He also mentioned that this issue was recently raised in a meeting with

the Managing Director of NHIDCL, where the need to expedite an alternative highway with a new alignment opposite the existing NH-10 was strongly emphasised to support long-term development.

Another major challenge highlighted was Sikkim's continued commitment to remaining a 100 per cent organic state. The Chief Minister explained that organic farming is a low-volume, high-priced production model, making it essential for farmers to receive premium prices for their produce. To sustain organic agriculture, he stressed on the need for substantial investment in branding, marketing, and cold-chain infrastructure, enabling Sikkim's organic products to reach major metropolitan markets.

The Chief Minister also sought the Vice Chairperson's support and guidance in addressing urban overcrowding, drawing upon the importance of satellite town development and rapid urban mobility. He emphasised that alternative modes of transport, including cable cars and monorail systems, are the need of the hour to ensure sustainable urban expansion.

Highlighting opportunities for economic growth under the vision of Viksit Bharat and Viksit Sikkim, the Chief Minister stressed importance of strengthening border trade management and border tourism, as Sikkim shares international borders on three sides. With the proposed resumption of the Nathula trade from April 2026, he requested for

his support to expand the currently limited list of tradable commodities to ensure meaningful and substantial trade volumes. Similarly, he called for revitalising cross-border trade with Nepal through the Chewabhanjyang corridor, which could open new economic avenues, particularly in the health and education sectors.

The Chief Minister also highlighted key concerns related to employment-generating sectors, particularly the pharmaceutical industry, and requested the Vice Chairperson to provide support for the extension of subsidies for pharmaceutical companies beyond 2027. He also acknowledged the consistent and wholehearted support extended by the Government of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi, stating that such cooperation has been instrumental in accelerating Sikkim's overall growth and development.

The Chief Minister expressed his sincere appreciation and gratitude for the kind visit of the Chairperson and lauded his creative initiatives aimed at the overall development of the State.

The meeting was attended by Prof. Ramesh Chand Member, NITI Aayog, Dr Darpajit Sengupta State Advisor (Sikkim), NITI Aayog; Mr VB Pathak Chief Administrator-cum-Cabinet Secretary, Mr R Telang Chief Secretary, Mr MT Sherpa Secretary (Planning), Mr SD Dhakal Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister and Mr Karma Namgyal Secretary Chief Minister's Office.

## CM attends Flying Festival and Championship events at Rorathang

**Pakyong, January 18:** Following the inauguration of the 1<sup>st</sup> Rhenock Sikkim Paragliding Accuracy Championship 2026, Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang attended the Flying Festival and Championship events at Rorathang, Titribotey Taza, Rhenock, organised by the Rhenock Tourism Development Society (RTDS) in collaboration with the Tourism and Civil Aviation Department.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister described the event as a historic milestone for the region and highlighted the growing potential of paragliding tourism in Sikkim. He appreciated the efforts of RTDS and stated that the organisation was formed with a clear vision of promoting development and tourism in the area. He extended his best wishes to RTDS for the successful achievement of its objectives.

Speaking on the importance of sports, the Chief Minister stated that sports is not merely a form of recreation but a vital tool for building discipline, leadership, physical fitness and national pride. He informed that the State Government has been consistently working towards strengthening sports infrastructure, identifying young talent, supporting sportspersons and preparing them for higher levels of competition. He added that the development of playgrounds, multipurpose stadiums and training centres from rural to urban areas remains a key priority.

Encouraging the youth, the Chief Minister urged them to take up entrepreneurship not merely as an option but as a meaningful pathway towards self-reliance and economic growth. He stated that while the Government creates opportunities, it is the responsibility of the youth to utilise them effectively through dedication, hard work and commitment, which would ultimately contribute towards making Sikkim self-reliant. He also spoke about the Sabbatical Leave Scheme for State Government employees, which allows leave for personal growth, education, or entrepreneurship, with 50 percent of basic pay for a period of up to three years.

He said that the initiative enables young minds to explore new ideas and opportunities.

Highlighting employment initiatives, he spoke about the 'One Family, One Entrepreneur' (OFOE) initiative and the Chief Minister's Self Employment Scheme (CMSSES), which provide financial assistance and institutional support to unemployed youth, including educated individuals and trained beneficiaries from livelihood schools, enabling them to

establish enterprises in various sectors. He expressed satisfaction over the success stories of many young entrepreneurs supported through Government assistance and emphasised the need to further strengthen work culture.

On tourism development, the Chief Minister encouraged local communities to come forward with innovative ideas such as homestays and eco-based tourism. He stressed the importance of preserving the natural authenticity of the area, stating that a strong connection with nature and culture would significantly attract tourists.

Earlier, the President of RTDS, Mr Binod Subba, addressed the gathering and briefed on the vision of the Rhenock Tourism Development Society, which focuses on promoting tourism-led development in the area. He informed that the initiative was conceptualised after conducting detailed surveys, following which paragliding was identified as a key tourism activity. He also placed various demands before the Government pertaining to infrastructure and overall development of the region.

Paragliding Technical Head, Mr Arjun Rai, briefed the gathering on the technical and developmental aspects of paragliding activities. He presented technical reports and highlighted the history and progress of paragliding in Sikkim, including several successful paragliding operations in the State.

During the programme, Sikkim Garib Awaz Yojana (SGAY) allotments were distributed to 21 beneficiaries. A camera was formally handed over to Mr Milan Rai as per his application submitted during the Janta Bhet Ghat programme. Chief Minister's Discretionary Grant (CMDG) cheques were also distributed to the beneficiaries. Also, the land donors were felicitated for their valuable contribution.

The event concluded with the distribution of trophies and certificates to the winners of the Paragliding Accuracy Championship 2026.

The events had the presence of Mr Raju Basnet Minister for Education Department; Mr Puran Gurung Minister for Agriculture Department; Ms Pamin Lepcha MLA-cum-Advisor for Women, Child, Senior Citizen and Divyangjan Welfare Department; and Mr LB Das MLA-cum-Advisor for Information Technology (IT) and Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department and Mr Bishnu Kumar Khatiwada Advisor to CM.

Also present were Zilla Upadhyaksha Pakyong; Chairman and Chairperson from various Departments, Head of Departments; along with CA to Chief Minister, OSDs and officials from various line departments and public.