



SIKKIM HERALD

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Chief Minister calls on Vice President of India



New Delhi, January 10: Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang called on Vice President Mr CP Radhakrishnan, in New Delhi, today.

During the call on, the Chief Minister conveyed New Year greetings on behalf of the people of Sikkim and extended his best

wishes for the Vice President's good health and continued well-being.

The interaction was marked by cordial exchanges, during which Chief Minister also extended an invitation to the Vice President to visit Sikkim in the near future.

Chief Minister meets Governor of Arunachal Pradesh



Gangtok, January 12: Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang met Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lieutenant General Mr Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd) at Lok Bhavan, Gangtok, today.

The Chief Minister expressed that the meeting with the Governor, a distinguished leader and veteran was cordial and enriching.

It may be mentioned that the Governor arrived in Sikkim on a three-day official visit from January 11-13, 2026.

Upon his arrival at Burtuk Helipad, he was received by Joint Secretary, Home (Protocol), ADC Gangtok, Additional SP Gangtok, APO Protocol, APO Home

Department-cum-Liaison Officer to the Governor along with officials from the Black Cat Division. Thereafter, he was escorted to Lok Bhavan, Gangtok.

During his visit, the Governor participated in the Raising Day celebrations of Headquarters 17 Mountain Division, interacted with senior Army officials and attended a series of official engagements in Gangtok.

The Governor was accompanied by Mr Pawan Kumar Saini Commissioner to the Governor, Major Satyam Pant ADC to the Governor and other senior officers and security personnel.

Chief Minister reviews progress of NHIDCL road projects in Sikkim

Gangtok, January 13: A review meeting to discuss issues related to projects undertaken by the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) in Sikkim was held under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang at Mintokgang, today.

The meeting reviewed the status of NHIDCL projects across the State, including completed works, ongoing projects, and Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) under preparation, while also taking up district-specific concerns for deliberation. Matters relating to Pakyong District were discussed, particularly issues raised by the District Collector regarding the section near the Welcome Gate, where two options; execution of work with uninterrupted traffic flow or execution after acquisition of additional land were examined.



Issues pertaining to Gyalshing District were reviewed with a focus on addressing administrative and implementation challenges affecting NHIDCL projects. The meeting reaffirmed the State Government's commitment to

strengthening road infrastructure while ensuring minimal inconvenience to the public through coordinated efforts.

Executive Director (P) Mr

Contd. on page 4

Chief Minister attends pre-budget meeting

New Delhi, January 10: Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang attended the pre-budget meeting chaired by the Union Finance Minister, Ms Nirmala Sitharaman, in the presence of the Union Minister of State for Finance, Mr Pankaj Chaudhary, along with Chief Ministers and Finance Ministers from various States.

During the deliberations, the Chief Minister presented Sikkim's perspective as a small border State with distinct geographical and strategic challenges. He highlighted the State's key development priorities and fiscal sensitivities, underlining the need for sustained support for capital investment, stability in devolution, and greater flexibility for smaller States.

The Chief Minister also raised important issues relating to connectivity, infrastructure resilience, employment-generating sectors, and the smooth transition of welfare programmes. Emphasis was laid on the strategic importance of strengthening border infrastructure, with particular focus on continued assistance for critical road networks and improved logistical connectivity.

The interaction was described as constructive and



forward-looking, with assurances that the concerns raised would be given due consideration. Reaffirming Sikkim's commitment to inclusive growth and sustainable development, the Chief Minister reiterated the State's resolve to contribute meaningfully to the

national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, as well as senior officers of the Central and State Governments, were also present during the meeting.

Pearls of Wisdom

"Everything you can imagine is real."

- Pablo Picasso

Chalum Dambroo Orange Festival 2026 in Dzongu concludes

Mangan, January 11: 6th edition of the Chalum Dambroo Orange Festival 2026 was celebrated with vibrant cultural fervour at Gnon Sangdong, Hee-Gyathang GPU, Dzongu, showcasing a harmonious blend of agriculture, tradition, and community participation.

The concluding day of the festival was attended by Minister for Agriculture Department Mr Puran Kumar Gurung joined by Mr Sonam Norgay Lachungpa Chairperson, Tourism and Civil Aviation Department.

Also present were Ms Ongkit Lepcha Chairperson, Horticulture Department, along with other Chairpersons, Upadhyaksha Mangan, ADC (Development) Mangan, Officers on Special Duty (OSDs), Departmental officials and guests.

The programme commenced with a traditional reception of the dignitaries, followed by visit to the exhibition stalls. A welcome address was delivered by President (NGO) Mr Ugen Palzor Lepcha, who outlined the core objectives of the festival strengthening community participation, preserving Lepcha traditions and creating meaningful market linkages for farmers, artisans and young entrepreneurs.

Minister Mr Puran Kumar Gurung highlighted the vital role of orange cultivation and agriculture-based livelihoods in strengthening Sikkim’s rural economy. He emphasised that festivals like Chalum Dambroo provide an effective platform to promote local produce, encourage organic farming practices, empower farmers and artisans and foster sustainable, community-based tourism. Reaffirming the State Government’s commitment, he spoke about various welfare

schemes and initiatives aimed at supporting farmers and urged the youth to actively participate in agriculture and allied sectors as a sustainable livelihood option.

On the occasion, farm inputs provided by the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments were distributed to beneficiaries by the Minister, reaffirming the Government’s continued support to the farming community.

The programme comprised of traditional dances reflecting the cultural diversity of Sikkim; display and sale of Sikkim Mandarin oranges, organic agricultural produce, and initiatives promoting eco-tourism, awareness programmes which included engaging conversations on consent, boundaries, and wellbeing, supported by Durex-The Birds and The Bees Talk, the festival’s Health Partner.

Winners were declared in various exhibition and competition categories, including the Sikkim Mandarin Competition, Organic Produce Exhibitions organised by the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments, and recognition of Young Budding Entrepreneurs.

Adding vibrancy and excitement to the celebrations, the festival featured a range of traditional games and competitions, such as the chalum eating competition, pomelo passing for women, pumpkin smashing for men, hair-braiding competition for couples, and a traditional buckwheat pancake-making contest, drawing enthusiastic participation from the community.

The two-day festival concluded with the evening musical concert featuring the popular Lepcha Folk Fusion Band ‘Mutanchi Souls’.

Bi-monthly inspection of major hydro power projects conducted in Soreng District

Soreng, January 12: Bi-monthly inspection of major hydro power projects under Soreng District was carried out by a district-level inspection team led by SDM (Hq) Mr Prem Kumar Subba, Soreng District. The inspection was undertaken to review the progress of ongoing works and to assess safety, environmental, and operational compliance at key hydro power project sites.

During the inspection, the team visited the NHPC Reshi Dam site, including the main power generation unit, and also the Right Bank Dam site area of DANS Energy Limited. The team reviewed the status of ongoing construction and maintenance works, adherence to safety protocols, fire preparedness measures, and

compliance with environmental safeguards.

The officers concerned were directed to ensure strict adherence to prescribed guidelines and to maintain inter-departmental coordination for the timely and safe execution of the projects. The inspection emphasised the importance of regular monitoring to ensure the sustainable and efficient functioning of hydro power projects in the district.

The inspection team included Ms Sakchum Lepcha SDM Soreng, Mr Dirga Nath Sharma, SDM (Mangalbaria), Ms Peggyla Bhuti DFO (T), Ms Ponu Hangma Subba DE (Power Department) and Mr Bishnu Sharma Fire In-charge, Soreng District.

READ AND ADVERTISE
IN
SIKKIM HERALD

Government of Sikkim

Sikkim State Teachers' Recruitment Board

Upper Syari, Gangtok, Sikkim

Ref. No: 01/SSTRB/EXAM/2026

Date: 09/01/2026

NOTICE

1. Applications are invited from eligible local candidates for filling up of 88 (eighty-eight) post(s) of Probationary Primary Teacher (PRT). This is in reference to letter no:761/ADM/EDN dated: 13/12/2025 and 798/Adm/Edn dated: 09/01/2026.
- (i) The total vacant post(s) of Probationary Primary Teacher is 229 where-in 141 post (s) have already been advertised vide notice no: 679/SSTRB/ADM dated: 11/05/2023 & notice no:736/SSTRB/ADM dated: 02/11/2023 and not yet fulfilled.
- (ii) Applicants who have already submitted their forms along with Bank Receipt (BR) in response to the aforementioned previously advertised notice are required to fill up the fresh forms, **however they need not submit the BR again.**
- (iii) The above-mentioned advertisement for total 229 vacant post (s) **(88+141=229)** is in line with Sikkim Adhoc Teachers Regularization Policy vide Notification No.27/ADM/EDN dated: 09/11/2021 read with notification no:213/ADM/EDN dated: 12/3/2024.
2. Eligibility Criteria:

Name of the post.	Qualifications	
	Academic	Professional
Probationary Primary Teacher	Senior Secondary (Class XII or its equivalent) from recognized Board with 50% marks & above.	Two years Diploma in Elementary Education recognized by NCTE with CTET/STET.

3. Age limit: Should not have exceeded 40 years as on 31.01.2026 in terms of notification no. M (3)/(55) /GEN/DOP/Pt. III dated:03.07.2019
4. Candidates fulfilling the above criteria can apply in the prescribed form available at the office of SSTRB, Upper Syari along with the Bank Receipt of ₹200/- under the Revenue Head 0202-102-03-Edn. The issue and submission of application form starts from **13th January 2026 to 31st January 2026** during office hours.
5. Candidates are required to submit the attested self-attested (as applicable) copies of the following documents at the office of SSTRB:
- i) Mark sheet and Pass Certificate of Class X and XII issued by recognized Board.
 - ii) NCTE recognized D.El.Ed certificate.
 - iii) STET /CTET qualified certificate.
 - iv) Sikkim subject/ certificate of identification
 - v) Valid marital status certificate from Competent Authority.
 - vi) Bank receipt
 - vii) Two Pass port Size Photographs
 - viii) Valid local employment Card (self-attested).
 - ix) Proof of date of birth.

6. Syllabus:
The Scheme of syllabus shall comprise of two assessment components, as detailed below:

A. OMR based written Examination:

Sl.no	Paper / Selection	Subject
1	I-A I-B	General English General Knowledge
2	II-A	Content & Teaching Methodology a. Mathematics b. Science c. Social Science

B. Classroom Demonstration:

- Lesson Plan should be ICT integrated with appropriate teaching aids in both hard and soft copy on any topic from I to V for PRTs.
- NOTE:** The above-mentioned scheme of examination is applied to all the applicants including those who have already submitted their forms with regard to the previously advertised notice.
7. Admit Card shall be issued in due course of time. No TA and DA shall be paid for attending the Interview.
8. Date and venue of the Interview shall be intimated in due course of time.
- NOTE:** Incomplete application shall be rejected summarily. If found on verification that candidate does not fulfil the prescribed criteria, the candidature for the post will be cancelled by the Board without specifying any further reason.

Sd/-

Secretary

Sikkim State Teachers' Recruitment Board

(05)

Government of Sikkim

Urban Development Department

Gangtok, Sikkim

No: 06/UDD/2025

Dated:11/12/2025

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information to the general public that the Office of Town Planning Cell and Trade License Section under the Urban Development Department has been shifted to the 3rd Floor of Children Park, Gangtok.

Therefore, all official correspondence, public services and matters related to the Town Planning and Trade License Section shall henceforth be carried out from the new designated office address as mentioned above.

BY ORDER

Sd/ -

Commissioner-Cum-Secretary

Urban Development Department

(06)

Photography training programme launched

Pakyong, January 13: Commerce and Industries Department, in collaboration with Topaz Print and Publication launched a two-month training programme on Basic Photography for Pakyong District under Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Scheme of Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India at the Conference Hall of Namcheybong GPK, today.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Mr Mandeep Rai Zilla Panchayat, Ms Sakila Rai Panchayat President alongside Mr Jigme W Bhutia Joint Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department-cum-General Manager, District Industries Centre (DIC), Pakyong District.

Panchayat President Ms Sakila Rai encouraged the participants to take the training with utmost seriousness and make maximum use of the opportunity, highlighting that such skill-based training programmes play a crucial role in empowering youth in income generation and helping them open avenues for new livelihood opportunities.

Additionally, Mr Jigme W Bhutia Joint Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department-cum-General Manager emphasised that the training programme marks the first-ever photography training initiative conducted in Pakyong District under the RAMP scheme. He stated that the training aims to provide a distinct skill-development platform for the younger generation, enabling them to convert their hobby into a profession.

Further, he informed that upon completion of course through various Government schemes, the department can help the participants enhance their skills, generate employment and become self-reliant.

Highlighting various entrepreneurship development initiatives, Mr Jikmee Lepcha Inspector, DIC Pakyong informed that RAMP scheme focuses on capacity building while creating awareness about Central Government schemes. He added that the scheme facilitates access to subsidised loans, marketing support and participation in exhibitions through departmental assistance.

The two-month Basic Photography aims to empower unemployed youth and foster self-reliance to achieve the Chief Minister's vision of 'One Family, One Entrepreneur' and will be facilitated by Master Trainers Mr Harsh Chandak and Mr Rupesh Pariyar.

The training programme shall equip participants with essential photography skills and knowledge to enhance their employability and entrepreneurial opportunities.

As part of the training, participants will also be taken on excursions to gain practical exposure, while the best-performing candidates will be provided opportunities to pursue advanced-level courses for further skill enhancement.

Also present were officials from Commerce and Industries Department, representatives from Topaz Print and Publication and participants.

Press Release from Programme Management Unit
Sikkim INSPIRES

Mumbai, January 9: A two-day project coordination meeting for the study titled 'Rapid Assessment of Fertility Trends, Determinants and Preparedness of the State Health System in Sikkim to Address Low Total Fertility Rate (TFR): A Mixed-Methods Study' was held on January 6-7, 2026 at Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute for Research in Reproductive and Child Health (ICMR-NIRRH), Mumbai.

The study is funded by ICMR-NIRRH and being undertaken with technical engagement from ICMR-NIRRH and International Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) in collaboration with the Government of Sikkim and partner institutions.

The study seeks to examine fertility trends and their determinants in Sikkim and assess preparedness of the State health system to address infertility and related reproductive health needs. The findings are expected to support evidence-based policy formulation and programme design in the context of Sikkim's demographic transition.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Geetanjali Sachdeva Director, ICMR-NIRRH. Dr Anushree Patil Scientist-F and Head, Clinical Research Division, ICMR-NIRRH, and Principal Investigator, along with teams from ICMR-NIRRH and IIHMR, participated in the deliberations.

The Government of Sikkim was represented by Ms Rohini Pradhan, Additional Secretary-cum-Programme Director, Sikkim INSPIRES, Planning and Development Department and Co-Principal Investigator, along with Dr. Suresh Madan Rasaily, Additional Medical Superintendent, STNM Hospital; Dr Nancy Lhasungpa, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Nar Bahadur Bhandari Government College, Gangtok, Ms Roshnila Gurung, Assistant Director, Sikkim INSPIRES, Planning and Development Department and Ms Paden Sherpa, Project Research Scientist. Project technical support staff also participated through virtual mode.

During the meeting, Project Coordination Mechanisms, timelines and responsibilities were finalised. Study sites and data collection tools were agreed upon. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between ICMR-NIRRH (Mumbai), IIHMR (Delhi), ICMR-RMRCNE, and the Government of Sikkim to formalise institutional collaboration.

The next phase of the project will involve commencement of field activities as per the approved timeline, implementation of monitoring arrangements and periodic technical reviews. Interim findings will be shared with stakeholders to inform policy and programme responses.

Indian Council of Agriculture Research-
Research Complex for NEH Region Sikkim Center,
Tadong, Gangtok - 737102, Sikkim

Email: jdsikkim.icar@gmail.com, ashok.kumar1375@icar.org.in

F.No. ICARNEH/SKC/ST/32/IOFS/2025/1542
(Computer No:406538)

Date: 13.01.2026

GeM BIDDING NOTICE

GeM bidding is invited for procurement of (1) **32 mm HDPE Pipe 4000 m** and (2) **25 mm HDPE Pipe 5000 m**, ICAR RC NEHR, Sikkim Centre, Tadong, Gangtok-737102, vide GeM Bid No: (1) **GEM/2026/B/7086506** Date: **08.01.2026** and (2) **GEM/2026/B/7086620** Date:**08.01.2026** for ICAR Research Complex for North Eastern Region, Sikkim Centre, Tadong-737102, Gangtok from reputed firms/agency. Interested bidders may visit GeM portal Govt. of India. The details are given below: -

Bid No:	(1) GEM/2026/B/7086506 Date:08.01.2026 (2) GEM/2026/B/7086620 Date:08.01.2026
Bid End Date/Time	(1)19-01-2026 10:00:00 (2) 19-01-2026 11:00:00
Bid Opening Date/Time	(1)19-01-2026 10:30:00 (2) 19-01-2026 11:30:00
Bid offer Validity (From End Date)	30 (Days)

(Amit Kumar)
Scientist SS (Agronomy) & Asstt. Admn Officer (I/c)
(07)

Education Department flags off
Exposure Trip for College Students

Gangtok, January 13:Higher Education Department organised a one-week exposure trip for students of Sikkim Government College from January 13 to 21 to Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. The trip was flagged off from SNT Bus Stand, Gangtok by Dr Sandeep Tambe Principal Secretary, Education Department and Mr Rewaj Chettri Officer on Special Duty (OSD) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to the Chief Minister.

A total of 87 college students and four faculty members are participating in the exposure trip.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Sandeep Tambe Principal Secretary, Education Department encouraged the students to reap maximum benefits from the educational exposure trip and extended his best wishes to the participants.

Also present during flag off ceremony were Mr Gyaltsen Sherpa Additional Director Education Department, Mr Tshering Namgyal Deputy Director, Education Department; Ms Supriya Sharma Under Secretary Education Department; along with Assistant Directors and other officials of the Education Department.

Press Release from SRLM- RDD

Thiruthala Palakkad, January 12: Sikkim SRLM has once again won the 1st Prize for Best Food Stall at the 13th Kudumbashree SARAS Fair, inaugurated by Chief Minister of Kerala Mr Pinarayi Vijayan at Chalissery, Thiruthala, Palakkad District, Kerala, today.

The fair concluded on January 11, 2026. The event was organised by Kudumbashree in collaboration with NRLM, aiming to promote women entrepreneurs and self-help groups. A five-member team from Daramdin Block Development Society represented Sikkim SRLM and participated in the live food court.

Press Release from ATI Gangtok

Gangtok, January 10: A specialised three-day training on 'Conduct Rules and Disciplinary Proceedings' was held at Administrative Training Institute (ATI), Gangtok from January 7-9, 2026 for Joint Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries of various departments under the State Government.

Mr CL Sharma Deputy Secretary-cum-Faculty Member, ATI, Gangtok, served as the resource person for the training. Joint Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries who often serve as the Inquiring Authority or Presenting Officers during departmental enquiries were trained to deal cases of violation of conduct rules and departmental proceedings thereafter.

During the inaugural session, Mr Mahesh Sharma, Director, ATI urged the participants to make the most out of these three-day training courses and ensure that every departmental proceeding is carried out as specified procedures.

A mock enquiry was also conducted with role play by the participants on the concluding day.

Education Department
Government of Sikkim

Tashiling Secretariat, Gangtok, Sikkim-737101

No.66/ IT/EDN

Dated 09/01/2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

The Education Department, Government of Sikkim, invites proposals from eligible, experienced, and reputed firms/companies/agencies for Supply, Installation, Commissioning, and Operation & Maintenance (O&M) of 2 nos of high end servers for a period of 3 years.

Interested firms may download Tender Document/Request For Proposal (RFP) from the official website of the Department www.education.sikkim.gov.in. The last date for submission of proposals/bids is 22/01/2026, 3.00 pm. No proposals /bids shall be accepted after the due date and time. Query if any can be sent to the undersigned at ty.bhutia01@sikkim.gov.in

Joint Director (IT)
Education Department
Government of Sikkim
(08)

Before the Oath Commissioner, Sikkim, at
Gangtok
AFFIDAVIT

I, **Mamta Dhakal Sharma**, daughter of Yogendra Mohan Dhakal, residing at Central Pendam, Karmithang Pakyong District, have changed my name and shall henceforth be known as **Mamta Sharma** as declared before the Oath Commissioner, Gangtok District, Sikkim, vide affidavit no. **A 371269** dated 12.11.2025. **Mamta Dhakal Sharma** and **Mamta Sharma** both are same and one identical person.

VERIFICATION

DEPONENT

That the statements made herein above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and nothing material has been concealed there from. And I signed and verified this Affidavit on this the 12th day of November, 2025 at Gangtok, Sikkim.

Identified by:

Bikash Sharma
Resident of Upper Sichey, Gangtok.

DEPONENT

Mamta Sharma

Information and Public Relations Department releases poster for Creative Hub 2.0

Namchi, January 13: As one of the key event of Maghey Sankranti Mela 2026, Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Sikkim is set to host Creative Hub 2.0, a flagship initiative of the department. Accordingly, poster launch for the Creative Hub 2.0 was held at Green Park, Jorethang.

The launch event was graced by Mr Madan Cintury MLA-cum-Chief Patron, Ms Bina Rai Advisor Food and Civil Supplies Department, Mr Yougan Tamang Press Secretary to Chief Minister, Ms Annapurna Alley

Secretary IPR Department, Mr Sunil Mothey and Mr Bishal Mukhia Directors IPR Department and SIRD&PR and Mr Dhiraj Subedi DC Soreng, Mr Yogen Syangden SDM Jorethang, Mr Dilip Dong MEO Jorethang and Officers and staff of IPR Department.

Building on the remarkable success of its previous edition and inspired by the momentum of Sikkim's 50 Years of Statehood Celebrations, Creative Hub 2.0 is set to be a larger and more impactful platform. Encouraged by the strong response and

enthusiastic participation seen earlier, this new edition promises a wider range of exciting, engaging, and innovative activities and attractions, offering a richer experience for visitors of all ages.

It may be mentioned that the 'Creative Hub', a flagship initiative under the Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Sikkim was conferred the Silver SKOCH Award for E-Governance at the 105th SKOCH Summit held at Silver Oak, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi on January 10, 2026.

Black Cat Division commemorates 65th Raising Day

Gangtok, January 11: Black Cat Division commemorated its 65th Raising Day (1960–2026) with a special programme held at Sagat Singh Auditorium, today.

Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Lieutenant General Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik, PVSM, UYSM, YSM (Retd), attended the programme accompanied by General Officer Commanding (GOC) Black Cat Division Major General Mahipal Singh Rathore, SM, VSM and other Serving as well as veterans associated with the Division.

Widely known as the Sentinels of Sikkim, the Black Cat Division marked the milestone with a celebration that seamlessly blended time-honoured military tradition with the rich cultural heritage of the State.

Senior Army officers, Commanders and invited dignitaries were present on the occasion, reflecting the strong

bond of Civil–Military cooperation and mutual respect that the Division has fostered over decades of service in the region.

A major highlight of the evening was a series of vibrant cultural performances showcasing Sikkim's diverse communities. Traditional Bhutia, Lepcha and Nepali dances were presented, along with the iconic Yak Dance, drawing enthusiastic applause from the audience. The programme was further enriched by an enthralling performance by the Lepcha folk band Sofiyum, whose soulful music added a distinctive cultural resonance to the celebrations. Adding a deeply traditional and spiritual dimension to the evening, monks from the Palace Monastery performed sacred ritualistic dances, lending a solemn yet uplifting atmosphere to the programme.

In recognition of their contributions, Mr Bhawani

Ghimirey, OSD, Culture Department and Ms Yangzum Lepcha of Culture Department, were also felicitated for facilitating the cultural performances. Artists were also honoured namely, Ms Binita Lagun for Maruni Dance, Mr Jigme Bhutia for Bhutia Dance, Ms Yanchen Lepcha for Lepcha Dance, Mr Tempo Bhutia for the Yak Dance and Mr Mikmar Lepcha of the Lepcha folk band Sofiyum. The programme also acknowledged the spiritual and cultural inspiration drawn from Tulku Loday of the Palace Monastery.

The Raising Day celebration not only paid tribute to six and a half decades of dedicated service rendered by the Black Cat Division in the country's most geo-strategic important location, but also celebrated Sikkim's living traditions, reinforcing the enduring bond between the Indian Army and the people of the region.

Press Release from Tourism and Civil Aviation Department

Siliguri, January 11: Tourism and Civil Aviation Department is pleased to announce that the State of Sikkim has been conferred the prestigious 'Most Tourist Friendly State of India' Award at the 9th edition of the Bengal Travel Mart (BTM) 2026, held from January 9-11, 2026 at a local hotel in Siliguri, today.

The Bengal Travel Mart 2026 is one of the most significant tourism trade events in Eastern India, providing a dynamic platform for tourism stakeholders, policymakers, buyers, sellers, and media from across India and abroad.

The Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Government of Sikkim, was the Partner State, highlighting Sikkim's growing prominence as a responsible and sustainable tourism destination.

The award was formally received by Dr Purna Chamling, Additional Secretary, Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, accompanied by Mr Durga Prasad Sharma, Deputy Director, TIC, Siliguri, Ms Vijeta Chettri Assistant Director, Tourism and Civil Aviation

Department. Officers and staff of the Department actively participated throughout the event, representing the State and engaging with national and international tourism stakeholders.

This recognition reflects the consistent efforts of the Government of Sikkim in implementing best practices in tourism development, visitor management, sustainability, and community-based tourism. The award is also a testament to the State's commitment to good governance, eco-friendly policies, hospitality standards, and inclusive growth in the tourism sector.

The 9th edition of the Bengal Travel Mart witnessed wide-ranging participation from national and international tourism organisations. The Nepal Tourism Board and the Department of Tourism, Government of Bhutan, participated as International Country Partners. Prominent international associations such as NATTA (Nepal Association of Tour & Travel Agents) and HRAB (Hotel & Restaurant

Association of Bhutan) were also part of the event.

The event recorded participation from over 160 domestic and international exhibitors, including major hotel chains such as ITC Fortune, Udaan, The Fern, Summit Yashshree, Mount Hotels, and several others. A structured B2B meet between buyers and sellers facilitated meaningful business interactions and future collaborations.

The presence of international, national, and local media houses, along with buyers from across the country and abroad, ensured wide visibility for the event and for Sikkim's tourism achievements.

The Government of Sikkim remains committed to strengthening its position as a leading tourist-friendly destination, promoting sustainable tourism practices, and enhancing visitor experiences while preserving the State's rich cultural and natural heritage under the able guidance of Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang.

Creative Hub initiative of IPR Department conferred with Silver SKOCH Award for E-Governance

New Delhi, January 10: The Creative Hub, a flagship initiative under the Information and Public Relations Department was conferred the Silver SKOCH Award for E-Governance at the 105th SKOCH Summit held at Silver Oak, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

Ms Annapurna Alley Secretary, Information and Public Relations Department received the award on behalf of the department. She was accompanied by Mr Sunil Mothey, Director, Information and Public Relations Department and Mr Karma Lama, Data Analyst. The award was handed over by Mr Sameer Kochhar, Chairman, SKOCH Group.

Ms Annapurna Alley thanked the SKOCH Group for bestowing this honour on the department and expressed her gratitude to Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang, who is also the Minister-in-Charge of the department, for his guidance and unwavering support towards envisioning and implementing innovative initiatives under his able leadership.

The Creative Hub, launched by the Information and Public Relations Department at

Maghey Mela 2025, is an innovative initiative that brings together creative organisations, entrepreneurs and stakeholders of the creative community, traditional heritage and culture of Sikkim along with modern technology and innovation. The initiative reflects the department's efforts to create a vibrant platform for creative exchange, collaboration and contemporary communication practices.

Similarly, the District Administrative Centre (DAC), Gangtok was conferred the SKOCH District Governance Silver Award for its Amin Management System (AMS). Mr Tushar Nikhare District Collector, Gangtok received the award on behalf of the district administration.

The SKOCH Group is a leading Indian think tank that recognises and promotes good governance and innovative public initiatives across the country. The SKOCH Awards acknowledge institutions and projects that demonstrate effective use of technology, improved service delivery and positive impact on citizens.

Press Release from Skill Development Department

New Delhi, January 12: Mrs Tashi Cho Cho Secretary, Skill Development Department, along with Dr IBS Yadav Joint COO, DDUGKY and Ms Pem Lhamu Bhutia Assistant Director participated in the first General Body Meeting of the National Council of Vocational Education and Training (NCVT) held at Kaushal Bhawan, New Delhi, today.

The meeting was chaired by Mr Jayant Chaudhary Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Chairperson, NCVT. The meeting marked an important milestone in strengthening the national framework for skill education, training, assessment, and certification.

The State Council of Vocational Training (SCVT) has been empanelled by NCVT as an Awarding Body (AB) with Dual Recognition, enabling it to undertake both assessment and certification functions, and thereby enhancing the State's capacity to deliver quality, standardised, and nationally

recognised vocational qualifications aligned with the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF).

Highlighting the State's initiatives in integrating traditional skills with formal skill education, the Secretary informed the Council that SCVT has introduced an NSQF-aligned course on Lepcha Hat making. Emphasising the cultural, economic, and livelihood potential of traditional handicrafts, she underscored the importance of formalising indigenous skills through nationally recognised certification systems. The Secretary further stated that the State plans to introduce additional NSQF-aligned courses in areas such as thangka painting, cardamom cultivation, and other traditional skills.

The participation of the State delegation in the NCVT General Body Meeting reflects the State's continued commitment to strengthening vocational education and promoting skill development aligned with national standards and local aspirations.

Contd. from front page

Chief Minister...

Ashok Saha, General Manager (Land Acquisition) Col Rajesh Kumar, General Manager (PMU,

Ranipool) Mr Apan Bhowmik, General Manager (PMU, Rhenock) Col AK Siddiqui and General Manager (NHIDCL, Gyalshing) Mr SBS Madhukar and senior State Government officials were also present during the meeting.