



# SIKKIM HERALD

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## Chief Minister flags off new emergency response fleet



**Gangtok, March 2:** Boosting the State's emergency response capabilities, Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang flagged off a fleet of 14 Mini Water Tenders and nine Quick Response Bikes from Chintan Bhawan, today.

The newly inducted vehicles are aimed in strengthening preparedness and enhancing the speed, precision and efficiency of responses to fire incidents and other unforeseen emergencies. Designed for agility and rapid deployment, the Mini Water Tenders and Quick Response Bikes will enable emergency personnel to reach affected areas swiftly, particularly in congested and hard-to-access

locations.

The Chief Minister stated that this augmentation of infrastructure will play a crucial role in ensuring timely intervention, thereby minimising damages and safeguarding lives. This initiative reflects the Government's continued focus on modernising emergency services and improving resilience across the State, he added.

Such progressive measures, the Chief Minister noted, reaffirm the administration's unwavering commitment to public safety and to building a more robust, responsive, and people-centric emergency management system.

## DGPs/IGPs Conference follow-up meeting held

**Gangtok, March 2:** Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang attended the DGPs/IGPs Conference-Follow-up and Policy Deliberation Meeting organised by the Sikkim Police, wherein he interacted with senior Police Officers at Chintan Bhawan, today.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister stated that public trust, compassion and integrity form the true strength of the Police force, rather than the use of force alone. He highlighted Sikkim's long-standing tradition of unity, mutual respect and social harmony and stressed that policing in the State must continue to reflect these values.

He called upon the Police to remain firm and uncompromising against criminals, while maintaining a humane, courteous, and empathetic approach towards citizens. Describing the Police uniform as a symbol of identity,

pride, discipline and duty, he lauded the Sikkim Police for maintaining law and order with professionalism and earning recognition both within and outside the State.

While reiterating the Government's belief in inclusive and humane values, the Chief Minister made it clear that elements disturbing peace and social harmony would be dealt with strictly in accordance with the law. He also underlined the complementary role of the Police and prosecution, describing them as two inseparable pillars of the justice delivery system.

The Chief Minister reaffirmed the Government of Sikkim's full support to the Police force and its continued commitment in strengthening policing institutions for the safety, security and well-being of the people.

## Launch of National HPV Vaccination Campaign against Cervical Cancer

**Gangtok, February 28:** Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang virtually attended the launch of National Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Campaign at Samman Bhawan, today. The national launch was led by Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi from Ajmer in Rajasthan.

The campaign has been initiated under National Health Mission of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, with the objective of preventing cervical cancer among adolescent girls through timely vaccination.

In his address, the Prime Minister described the HPV vaccination drive as a major step towards strengthening preventive healthcare and securing the well-being of young girls. He also inaugurated and laid foundation stones for development projects worth approximately ₹17,000 crore in Rajasthan and distributed appointment letters to more than 21,000 youth. Emphasising infrastructure and renewable energy initiatives, he noted that



improved connectivity and schemes, such as the Pradhan Mantri-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana is contributing in economic growth and financial savings for households.

Addressing the gathering at Samman Bhawan, Chief Minister highlighted the importance of the HPV as a crucial preventive

measure, particularly for girls aged 14 years. He observed that cervical cancer remains one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths among women and stressed that early vaccination is essential for effective prevention. He informed that the vaccine would be

*Contd. on page 6*

## Chief Minister graces 31<sup>st</sup> Foundation Day Celebration of ASKCBKS

**Pakyong, February 26:** Chief Minister, Mr Prem Singh Tamang graced the 31<sup>st</sup> Foundation Day Celebration of Akhil Sikkim Khas Chettri Bahun Kalyan Sangh (ASKCBKS) in the presence of Mr Raju Bista MP Lok Sabha Darjeeling at Rangpo, today.

The celebration also had the presence of Speaker and Deputy Speaker SLA, Cabinet Ministers, MLAs, Advisors, Chairpersons, Mayor and Deputy Mayor Gangtok Municipal Corporation, Zilla Panchayats, HoDs, dignitaries from various line departments, representatives from various organisations, Police personnel and public.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister congratulated the attendees and expressed pride at witnessing the Khas community rise to greater heights. He expressed the idea behind celebrating the event in different districts each year to promote unity among the Khas community and the people at large.

Highlighting that Khas community is one of the largest in the state, he emphasised the need to further strengthen the



community and collectively work towards upliftment of the State.

He stated that State Government has entrusted

members of the community with various positions, reflecting their

*Contd. on page 11*

### Pearls of Wisdom

*"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."*  
- Albert Einstein

### **Thamche Monastery Lachung holds three-day ritual to mark annual Bhumchu festival**

**Mangan, March 3:** The sacred festival of Bhumchu was observed with devotion and enthusiastic community participation at Thamche Monastery in Lachung.

The three-day community puja/ritual to mark the sacred occasion culminated today, with devotees thronging the monastery to receive the holy 'Bhumchu'.

The three-day ritual was organised under the guidance of Mr Sonam Tshering Lachungpa and Mr Chungtuk Tshering Lachungpa Pions of Lachung Dzumsa and village elders.

### **HPV Vaccination drive commence as Districts join in nationwide launching of programme**

**Mangan, February 28:** Mangan District joined the nationwide launch of National Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Campaign against cervical cancer at Mangan District Hospital, marking a significant step towards strengthening preventive healthcare and safeguarding women's health in the region, today.

The programme aimed at preventing cervical cancer and promoting women's health, and the initiative was undertaken under the leadership of Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi.

Dr Anita Bhutia Director-cum-CMO and Dr Tshering Zomba Lachenpa DRCHO gave a detailed explanation, highlighting the importance of HPV vaccination drive. They emphasised that the vaccine plays a crucial role in preventing cervical cancer among adolescent girls and encouraged parents and guardians to actively support the initiative for the long term health and well being of their children.

They also clarified the eligibility criteria, benefits of early immunisation and the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine, addressing queries from attendees to ensure awareness and confidence within the community. A total of 16 beneficiaries received the HPV vaccination during the programme.

Also Present were Dr Tshering Choden Tenzing MD Medicine, Mr Rinchen Namgyal Bhutia District Health Educator, LHVs, Health Coordinator RBSK/ RSKS, students from PM SHRI Mangan Senior Secondary School and Mangan Girls Senior Secondary School, along with teachers and others.

Similarly, **in Namchi**, the vaccination was conducted at the District Hospital Namchi in presence of Medical Specialists, Paediatricians and other healthcare professionals.

At the onset of the programme, the welcome address was delivered by Ms Bijay Laxmi Rai CNO underscored the importance of HPV Vaccination programme in strengthening preventive healthcare services for adolescent girls.

This was followed by a comprehensive overview of the HPV Vaccination Programme by Dr B K Chauhan DRCHO who elaborated on the objectives.

Subsequently, the formal inauguration of the district-level launch was carried out by Mr G P Sharma CEO in the

presence of Dr Junita Yonzon CMO, Medical Specialists and other healthcare professionals, emphasising the significance of inter-departmental coordination and community participation in ensuring the implementation of the programme and encouraged parents and guardians to extend full cooperation to the vaccination drive. A total of 10 identified beneficiaries received the HPV vaccine at District Hospital Namchi, today.

The campaign will also be carried out over a period of three months, during which eligible girls will be administered the vaccine at designated health facilities. Thereafter, the vaccination will continue on routine immunisation days to ensure comprehensive coverage of all eligible beneficiaries across the district.

E-Vaccination Certificates were distributed to the beneficiaries.

Likewise, **in Gyalshing**, District level launching of HPV Vaccination against Cervical Cancer was held at District Hospital Gyalshing. It was inaugurated by Mr Tenzing D Denzongpa DC Gyalshing. The programme was organised by Health and Family Welfare Department.

The event had the presence of CMO Gyalshing, Gynaecologist, Paediatrician, Medicine Specialist, staff of District Hospital Gyalshing and beneficiaries along with their parents.

A brief overview of the HPV vaccination programme was delivered by the District Immunization Officer. A total of 7 eligible beneficiaries received the HPV vaccine during the session and Certificates were handed over to the beneficiaries.

**In Pakyong**, the district-level launch of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination drive was held at Pakyong Primary Health Centre (PHC).

During the programme, Dr Madan Mani Dhakal Chief Medical Officer Pakyong District, provided detailed information on the HPV vaccine and explained its role in preventing cervical cancer, the targeted age group for vaccination and the possible side effects. He further stated that the vaccination is voluntary and that informed consent from parents or guardians is obtained prior to administration.

During the district-level

launch, 14 eligible beneficiaries from various schools received the HPV vaccine at Pakyong PHC under the supervision of health officials and medical staff.

In addition, vaccination certificates were issued to the beneficiaries following administration of the HPV vaccine.

As part of the programme, a live telecast of the Prime Minister's address from Ajmer was screened.

The programme was conducted in the presence of the Joint Director, Education Department, Medical Officer and Community Health Officer (CHO), Pakyong PHC, Paediatrician and Anaesthesiologist from District Hospital Singtam, medical staff; and guardians.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination drive for girls aged 14 was launched at the district level in Soreng by Mr Dhiraj Subedi DC Soreng. Present during the launch programme were Dr Smriti Rai Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Soreng, Mr Tenzing Dorjee CEO (Education), Dr Patrika Rai along with medical officials and staff of Soreng CHC.

Following the launch, the district level programme was held at Soreng Primary Health Centre (PHC) under the supervision of Dr Meenakshi Dahal Paediatrician (Jorethang).

Addressing the students, Mr Dhiraj Subedi DC Soreng highlighted the prevalence of cancer among women and emphasised that cervical cancer is preventable. He congratulated the students for being the first beneficiaries of the HPV vaccine in 2026 and encouraged them to stay informed about the vaccine. Additionally, he spoke about upcoming improvements in the healthcare system in the district and the State.

Dr Patrika Rai DRCHO briefed on the HPV vaccination drive, informing that the vaccination drive is being conducted at Primary Health Centres (PHCs) under the supervision of specialists. In addition, she informed that the vaccination drive will continue in a routine manner similar to other immunisation programmes.

Also, students who received the vaccine were presented with certificates of vaccination during the programme.

### **District level Conference for first phase of Census 2027 at Soreng**

**Soreng, February 27:** Mr Karma R Bonpo Director, Directorate of Census Operations, Sikkim chaired the District-level Conference for first Phase of Census 2027 at DAC Soreng, today.

Mr Karma R Bonpo Director directed all concerned to coordinate closely with the District Administration under DC Soreng for the smooth conduct of Census activities. He emphasised the objective of sensitising leadership at all levels regarding Census 2027 and elaborated on the framework and systematic process of the Census.

He also highlighted the history and importance of the Census, stressing the need for accuracy and reliability of Census data. He spoke on the historical perspective of Census Operations and underscored the significance of comprehensive data collection. Further, he elaborated on house listing blocks, infrastructure survey, differentiation between Census villages in forest blocks and revenue blocks, preparation of charge registers and the appointment of Enumerators for effective implementation.

DC Soreng briefed on the importance of the Census and urged all officers, especially BDOs under Soreng District, to carry out their roles with utmost seriousness and dedication. He also outlined the roles and responsibilities of the officers in ensuring successful execution of Census operations.

Mr Tejram Meher Assistant Director (DCO) presented a detailed PowerPoint presentation covering the methods, processes, roles and key responsibilities under

### **State Coordinators (Sikkim) from NITI Aayog visit Chumbung Block**

**Soreng, February 26:** Ms JE Jaya Devi and Ms Shivani Srivastava State Coordinators (Sikkim) from NITI Aayog for Aspirational District and Block Programmes under Sampoornata Abhiyan 2.0 visited Chumbung Block under the Aspirational Block Programme to review ongoing developmental initiatives and assess progress on key indicators.

They visited Health and Wellness Centre (HWC), Sub-Health Centre, Chumbung, Government Secondary School, Chumbung, construction of Food Processing Unit and Noodles Unit at Chumbung, Rural Mart at Chakung and Lyang Farm House Homestay at Chakung.

At the Health and Wellness Centre, Dr Smriti Rai CMO Soreng briefed the Coordinators in detail about the functioning of HWC, service delivery and key health indicators. The Coordinators interacted with the health staff and enquired about challenges and issues faced at the facility.

Similarly, Mr Prabin Mukhia In-charge of Government

Census 2027. He highlighted the session objectives and described the Census as a landmark national endeavour in digital innovation.

He elaborated on Phase-I Mission, including house listing and housing Census, followed by population enumeration. He informed that Census Operations are conducted under clear legal provisions of the Census Act, 1948 and the Census Rules, 1990.

The presentation also covered the appointment of Census Officers, Census schedules and questionnaires, structured chain of command, supervision and legal powers, training and monitoring mechanisms and core operational functions. Special emphasis was laid on training management, equipping and motivating field teams, training logistics, house listing block management, monitoring of fieldwork, management of self-enumeration, local-level communication strategy and budget and financial norms.

The conference concluded with an interactive session, reaffirming the District Administration's commitment to conduct Census 2027 in a systematic, transparent, and efficient manner.

The conference was attended by Mr DR Bista ADC Soreng, Mr Prem K Subba SDM (Hq), Ms Sakchum Lepcha SDM Soreng, Mr DN Sharma SDM Mangalbaria, Mr Bishnu Sharma CAO(LRDMD), Mr Tejram Meher Assistant Director (DCO), Mr Rohitash Bhardwaj Stastical Investigator, BDOs under Soreng District, ACFs under Soreng District, Ms Marigold Lucksom Bazar Officer and Mr Amir Bhandari AD (IT).

Secondary School, Chumbung presented an overview of the school's academic status, infrastructure and performance indicators.

Coordinators also reviewed progress of livelihood and infrastructure initiatives including the Food Processing and Noodles Units, Rural Mart at Chakung and Rong Lyang Farm House Homestay, highlighting the focus on strengthening local entrepreneurship and rural economy under the Aspirational Block framework.

Also present were Panchayats, SDM Soreng, CMO Soreng, DRCHO, BDO (Chumbung), CDPO, AE Chumbung BAC along with representatives from the Health and Family Welfare Department, Bhavishya Bharat, Piramal Foundation.

The visit aimed at strengthening coordination among departments and accelerating outcome-based development under the Aspirational Block Programme in Soreng District.

**Government of Sikkim  
Sikkim State Teachers Recruitment Board  
Upper Syari, Gangtok, Sikkim**

Ref. No: 15/SSTRB/EXAM /2026

Date: 25/02/2026

**NOTICE**

In continuation to Notice No. 01/SSTRB/EXAM/2026 dated: 09/01/2026, 04/SSTRB/EXAM/2026 dated: 22/01/2026 & 08/SSTRB/EXAM/2026 dated:07/02/2026 of Sikkim Teachers' Recruitment Board, on the basis of the qualifying marks obtained in written Examination held on 22.02.2026 for the post of Probationary Primary Teacher, it is hereby declared that the following **roll numbers in ascending order** (not in merit order) of the qualified candidates from the Written Examination to appear for the Classroom Demonstration as recommended by the Board:

Roll nos. in ascending order										
002	057	108	161	230	297	355	424	484	548	600
003	060	109	164	234	298	362	428	491	549	601
004	061	110	166	237	299	365	431	492	550	603
008	063	111	167	238	300	370	432	494	551	604
010	065	113	168	241	302	372	433	496	555	605
011	066	114	173	242	303	375	435	497	557	607
013	068	115	174	243	304	376	437	499	559	616
014	069	117	175	248	306	377	439	501	560	617
015	070	120	178	250	307	380	440	504	561	618
016	071	121	179	252	314	382	443	505	562	619
017	072	124	185	254	315	383	444	506	564	620
018	073	127	187	256	318	384	445	507	565	622
021	074	128	188	257	319	385	446	509	567	623
023	077	129	189	258	320	390	447	511	568	625
026	078	130	192	260	324	391	448	512	569	628
027	080	133	194	262	328	392	450	514	570	
029	081	134	200	264	329	394	451	519	574	
031	086	135	202	266	330	395	454	523	576	
032	088	139	206	268	331	397	458	524	578	
033	089	141	207	270	333	399	460	525	579	
036	090	143	212	273	336	402	461	528	581	
038	091	144	214	275	339	408	463	529	586	
039	092	147	216	278	340	409	465	530	587	
041	093	149	219	281	341	410	467	532	589	
047	094	150	220	282	343	413	468	537	590	
049	097	153	222	286	350	414	469	540	592	
051	098	155	223	289	351	416	474	543	593	
052	100	157	224	293	352	418	476	544	594	
054	103	158	226	294	353	422	481	545	598	
055	105	159	227	296	354	423	483	546	599	

Further, the notice is also uploaded in official website of Education Department viz. sikkim.education.gov.in.

**Sd/-  
Secretary  
Sikkim State Teachers' Recruitment Board  
(27, A)**

**Government of Sikkim  
Sikkim State Teachers Recruitment Board  
Upper Syari, Gangtok, Sikkim**

Ref. No: 18/SSTRB/EXAM /2026

Date: 25/02/2026

**NOTICE**

This is for information of all the shortlisted qualified candidates from the Written Examination for the post of Probationary Primary Teachers as declared vide Notice No: 15/SSTRB/EXAM/2026 dated: 25/02/2026 that the Classroom Demonstration is scheduled w.e.f. 05/03/2026 to 13.03.2026 at **SSTRB, Upper Syari**.

Roll nos. in ascending order								Date & Time Of Classroom Demonstration
022	011	017	027	036	049	057	066	<b>05.03.2026 (09.30 AM)</b>
003	013	018	029	038	051	060	068	
004	014	021	031	039	052	061	069	
008	015	023	032	041	054	063	070	
010	016	026	033	047	055	065	071	
072	080	090	097	108	114	124	133	<b>06.03.2026 (09.30 AM)</b>
073	081	091	098	109	115	127	134	
074	086	092	100	110	117	128	135	
077	088	093	103	111	120	129	139	
078	089	094	105	113	121	130	141	
143	153	161	173	185	194	212	222	<b>07.03.2026 (09.30 AM)</b>
144	155	164	174	187	200	214	223	
147	157	166	175	188	202	216	224	
149	158	167	178	189	206	219	226	
150	159	168	179	192	207	220	227	
230	242	254	262	273	286	297	303	<b>09.03.2026 (09.30 AM)</b>
234	243	256	264	275	289	298	304	
037	248	257	266	278	293	299	306	
238	250	258	268	281	294	300	307	
241	252	260	270	282	296	302	314	

Contd.on page 4

**Before the Sub Divisional Magistrate East  
Sikkim at Gangtok  
AFFIDAVIT**

WHEREAS, I, **Smt. Devi Maya Kami**, wife of Late Narey Kami, aged about 42 years, by faith Hindu, by occupation Housewife, resident of Sang Rabdang, P/O Sang & P/S Singtam, East Sikkim, do hereby solemnly affirm on oath as follows:

1. That the correct and actual name of my husband is Late **NAREY KAMI**, which is lying recorded in all of his official documents, including in his Certificate of Identification bearing Sl. No. 27007/DCE, Dated-9.11.1989 issued by the Office of District Collector, East District, Gangtok.

2. That in the Death Certificate of my husband bearing Registration No. 01/08, Dated- 5.1.2008 issued by the Chief Registrar of Births & Deaths, Department of Health Care, Human Services and Family Welfare Department, Government of Sikkim, my said husband's name has been recorded as "**NAREY LOHAR**".

3. That "**KAMI**" is our Caste/Community and "**LOHAR**" is our Sub-Caste/Title, as such, the person by name "**NAREY KAMI**" and "**NAREY LOHAR**" is one and the same person i.e. my husband.

4. That by virtue of this affidavit, I declare that "**KAMI**" is our Caste/Community and "**LOHAR**" is our Sub Caste Title and further declare that the person by name "**NAREY KAMI**" and "**NAREY LOHAR**" is one and the same person i.e. my husband.

I the above-named deponent herein, do hereby verify and state that the statements made in paragraphs 1-4 are true to the best of my knowledge and belief, I have signed this affidavit on this the 14<sup>th</sup> day of February 2024 at Gangtok, East Sikkim.

Identified by: (Renuka Lohar)

Deponent  
(Smt.Devi Maya Kami)

**Government of Sikkim  
Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom  
Gangtok**

NO. 373/GOS/D.H.H.

Date:24/02/2026

**ADMISSION NOTICE**

Applications are invited in the prescribed forms from the local boys and girls for admission to the following courses being conducted by the Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Government of Sikkim for the year **2026-2027**.

Candidates should be above 15 years of age as on **31.03.2026** and should have at least educational qualification of class VIII from the recognized school or institution.

**The courses are as follows:-**

- |                                    |          |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. HANDLOOM WEAVING.               | -2 years |
| 2. CARPET WEAVING.                 | -2 years |
| 3. MULTICRAFTS.                    | -2 years |
| 4. WOOD CARVING.                   | -3 years |
| 5. CANE & BAMBOO.                  | -2 years |
| 6. MASK MAKING.                    | -3 years |
| 7. THANKA PAINTING.                | -4 years |
| 8. Traditional SOFT TOYS MAKING.   | -1 year  |
| 9. BLANKET WEAVING.                | -2 years |
| 10. Traditional Lepcha Hat making. | -4 years |

Interested candidates may contact the office of Joint Directors of following Districts:-

- (1) Gangtok - Joint Director (Training).
- (2) Soreng - Joint Director (Soreng).
- (3) Geyzing - Joint Director (Chakung).
- (4) Namchi - Joint Director (Namchi).
- (5) Mangan- Joint Director(Mangan).

Prescribed forms can be obtained from the office of the aforesaid officers w.e.f **2<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026** during office hour on production of Bank Receipt of ₹200/-deposited under the Head "**0851-102-01-GICI**".

All the applications should be accompanied by attested copies of certificate of Identification/Domicile/ Residential Certificate, Birth certificate/School Leaving Certificate along with two(2) latest passport size photographs and be submitted to this office by **26<sup>th</sup>March 2026** positively.

List of the selected candidates will be displayed on the Notice Board of Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Gangtok and respective District offices on **30.03.2026**.

Selected candidates will be given a stipend of **₹7000/- p.m for the first year and ₹8000/-p.m** from the second year onwards. The training session starts from **01.04.2026**.

**Director  
Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom,  
Government of Sikkim  
(26,II)**

**READ & ADVERTISE  
IN  
SIKKIM HERALD**

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315	328	336	350	355	375	383	392	<b>10.03.2026</b> <b>(09.30 AM)</b>
318	329	339	351	362	376	384	394	
319	330	340	352	365	377	385	395	
320	331	341	353	370	380	390	397	
324	333	343	354	372	382	391	399	

402	414	424	435	444	450	461	469	<b>11.03.2026</b> <b>(09.30 AM)</b>
408	416	428	437	445	451	463	474	
409	418	431	439	446	454	465	476	
410	422	432	440	447	458	467	481	
413	423	433	443	448	460	468	483	

484	497	506	514	528	540	548	557	<b>12.03.2026</b> <b>(09.30 AM)</b>
491	499	507	519	529	543	549	559	
492	501	509	523	530	544	550	560	
494	504	511	524	532	545	551	561	
496	505	512	525	537	546	555	562	

564	570	581	592	600	607	620	<b>13.03.2026</b> <b>(09.30 AM)</b>
565	574	586	593	601	616	622	
567	576	587	594	603	617	623	
568	578	589	598	604	618	625	
569	579	590	599	605	619	628	

The candidates are required to bring the following documents

- Original Admit Card.
- Original COI of the concerned candidates.
- Educational and Professional Certificates in original.
- Lesson Plan in both hard and soft copy.

Candidates are advised to visit the Department's website viz. [sikkim.education.gov.in](http://sikkim.education.gov.in) for further details. Candidates should reach the venue sharp at 9.30 A.M. in the morning.

Sd/-  
Secretary  
Sikkim State Teachers' Recruitment Board  
(27,B)

## Press Release from DAC Gangtok

**Gangtok, March 1:** Eighth and final workshop of Project PAILA (Program for Aspiring Innovators and Local Achievers) was conducted under the theme 'Team Building, Leadership, Growth & Scaling' at District Administrative Centre (DAC), Gangtok, as part of the ongoing efforts to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in the district, today.

Project PAILA is a joint initiative of DAC, Gangtok, under the banner of Sikkim INSPIRES, in collaboration with the CSR Department of Sun Pharma and is being implemented by Stars of Hope. It continues to nurture entrepreneurship, innovation, and self-reliance by providing aspiring entrepreneurs with a structured platform to transform their ideas into sustainable and impactful ventures through mentorship, interactive workshops, and hands-on learning experiences.

The session aimed to equip participants with strategic leadership capabilities and the practical tools required to present investor-ready business proposals. Additionally, a special session on DPR (Detailed Project Report) preparation was held to help participants understand how to effectively design and present project proposals.

Mr Pravesh Chettri, Founder of Travel Gangtok Tourism, shared his entrepreneurial journey and insights into building and scaling a successful tourism enterprise. He highlighted the importance of strong team dynamics, visionary leadership, resilience, and customer-centric growth

strategies in sustaining long-term business success. His interaction encouraged participants to think beyond survival and focus on scalable and impactful ventures.

The technical session on leadership, financial structuring, and sustainable growth strategies was delivered by Mr Anupam Upadhaya, Chartered Accountant (CA). He provided practical guidance on financial discipline, strategic scaling, compliance frameworks, and structured expansion models suitable for startups and emerging enterprises.

The DPR preparedness focused technical session was conducted by Mr Bikash Thapa, founder, Stars of HOPE for crafting an effective presentation for the pitching session and spoke about the essential components of a strong DPR.

The workshop had the presence of Mr Abhijeet Patil, SDM Gangtok (Hq), he addressed the participants and elaborated on the broader vision of this initiative by the District Administration. He also highlighted the proactive role of bridging departments with entrepreneurs and the public, facilitating convergence of schemes, and ensuring that aspiring innovators receive institutional guidance and support. He further explained the purpose behind conducting the eight structured workshops under Project PAILA to systematically build the capacities of participants from ideation and market validation to financial planning, compliance, operations, marketing, leadership, and final pitching readiness. He

encouraged all participants to present their ideas during the upcoming pitching session. With the successful completion of the eighth and final workshop, participants are now fully prepared to present their business ideas before the designated panel. Advertisement, banners, and a promotional video announcing a pitching session under Sikkim INSPIRES will soon be displayed across Gangtok District and its Blocks, inviting applications from aspiring entrepreneurs. The dates for the pitching session have been set from March 16-20, 2026.

Multiple winners will be selected and will receive limited seed funding, subject to the availability of funds under Sikkim INSPIRES, for their startups. The judging panel will comprise of local entrepreneurs who have been part of the project as mentors and speakers associated with the workshops under Project PAILA. The pitching session will be open to all, with preference given to regular workshop attendees. Participants will be required to prepare a brief presentation of their business idea and register through the links and information provided in the official advertisement. The initiative reflects a broader commitment to building for the future, with a long-term vision of fostering sustainable entrepreneurship and economic self-reliance in the district.

For further details, the participants can contact via whatsapp: +91 7864899235 (DAC Gangtok)

## Press Release from Commerce and Industries Department

**Bengaluru, March 1:** Commerce and Industries Department concluded Sikkim Utsav 2026 at Orion Mall, Bengaluru held from February 27 to March 1, 2026. The three-day exhibition provided a significant platform for 94 entrepreneurs from Sikkim to showcase the State's diverse and distinctive products to large-scale buyers, consumers and dealers in Bengaluru.

The event was organised under Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Scheme of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India, in collaboration with Sikkim INSPIRES, Government of India.

The closing ceremony was attended by Ms Karma D Youtso Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department; Mr M Ravi Kumar Director MSME; Mr TT Bhutia, Director DHH; Ms Champa Sharma Joint Secretary MSME; Mr Rigzen Wangchuk Bhutia, Under Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department along with other senior officers of the Department.

The dignitaries commended the participating entrepreneurs for their active engagement and professional presentation of their products.

The entrepreneurs were highly encouraged and motivated by the response received over the three-day exhibition, including notable sales, promising business enquiries and meaningful networking opportunities with prospective buyers and collaborators.

The dignitaries reiterated the State Government's continued commitment in strengthening Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), enhancing their competitiveness and ensuring sustained market access across the country.

## Joint inspection conducted to assess earthquake damage at Nandok

**Gangtok, February 28:** Mr Tenzing Lamtha Area MLA Shyari Constituency led a joint inspection at Nandok to assess the damage caused by recent earthquake tremors. The inspection team comprised of Joint Director, District Disaster Management Authority, Gangtok District, Zilla Panchayat, committee members of Nandok Monastery and locals.

During the visit to the historic Nandok Monastery, officials were informed that the structure had developed cracks following the 2011 earthquake. Repeated tremors over the past few days have further aggravated to extensive structural damage. As a precautionary measure, religious artifacts have been safely relocated to a temporary shed, and

During the event, participation certificates were handed over to the entrepreneurs by Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department in recognition of their contribution and active involvement in making the event a success.

Over the course of the exhibition, visitors witnessed an impressive display of products reflecting Sikkim's rich natural resources, traditional craftsmanship, agro-based enterprises and emerging industries.

The event was further enriched by traditional cultural programmes of Sikkim featuring folk dances and songs, which captivated audiences and offered a vibrant glimpse into the State's rich cultural heritage alongside its entrepreneurial strengths.

The entrepreneurs expressed sincere appreciation to the Government of Sikkim and Commerce and Industries Department for providing them with the opportunity to exhibit their products in a major metropolitan centre such as Bengaluru. They emphasised that the exposure and market interactions gained through the event would significantly contribute to expanding their business prospects and strengthening brand visibility.

The successful culmination of Sikkim Utsav 2026 reaffirms the Department's sustained efforts to promote industrial growth, empower local enterprises, and create sustainable marketing avenues for the State's unique products.

The State Government remains steadfast in its mission to enhance the State's presence in the national marketplace while fostering inclusive and sustainable economic development.

bamboo supports have been installed to stabilise vulnerable portions of the structure.

The management committee was advised to restrict entry until necessary restoration works or a permanent solution is undertaken.

MLA assured that all possible support would be extended from the State Government, along with his personal assistance, to expedite restoration of the old monastery.

The team also visited residential areas in and around Nandok, where several houses were found to have developed cracks. Minor landslides were reported in certain locations, attributed to the recent earthquake tremors.

**KEEP SIKKIM  
CLEAN & GREEN**

## National Level Training Workshop on Survey and Documentation of Ayurvedic Medicinal Plants

**Gangtok, February 27:** A two day National Level Training Workshop on Survey and Documentation of Ayurvedic Medicinal Plants was organised by Regional Ayurveda Research Institute, Gangtok in collaboration with GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment at G B Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, Pangthang, today.

The programme had the presence of Mr Arjun Kumar Ghatani Advisor, AYUSH as the chief guest.

Mr Arjun Kumar Ghatani Advisor, AYUSH discussed about the rich flora of the State, wherein he highlighted the deep-rooted ayurvedic tradition associated with medicinal plants and emphasised the role of nature in maintaining health and ecological balance. He stressed that proper documentation ensures the transmission of traditional knowledge to future generations.

He further outlined the efforts of the State Government in strengthening healthcare development. Emphasising the need for conservation of medicinal plants, he encouraged participants to exchange ideas and make effective use of the workshop as a platform to promote and strengthen Ayurveda.

Cdr Dr Gurdaman L Sharma Vice Chancellor, SRM University, Sikkim highlighted the significance of the workshop and emphasised

that such academic engagements not only strengthen knowledge but also foster collaboration and innovation among institutions and researchers.

Referring to the vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047, he encouraged youth to actively contribute their knowledge, skills and dedication towards achieving the goal. He also underlined the importance of systematic documentation of survey findings, stressing that proper recording and preservation of knowledge are essential for future reference, policy planning and sustainable development.

Prof Vd Rabinarayan Acharya Director General, CCRAS, New Delhi, elaborated on ayurveda and its historical development as a system of medicine. He emphasised the need for collaboration with various institutions to foster a deeper understanding of the discipline. He also highlighted the significance of medicinal plants found in the Himalayan region, noting their superior quality and their valuable contribution to scientific advancement.

Dr Rajesh Joshi Regional Head, GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, Sikkim outlined its objectives and framework. He elaborated on the mandate of the institute and its establishment, highlighting its role in advancing environmental

research. He emphasised that research should focus on developing evidence-based solutions for the proper utilisation of resources and stressed the importance of analysing data through strategic and systematic methods.

The second session of the workshop featured a technical presentation.

Prof A Damodaran visiting Professor, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, delivered a session on Application of Digital Distributed Network Technologies in the Conservation of Medicinal Plants.

Dr Rajib Gogoi, Scientist-F & Head; Sikkim Himalayan Regional Centre, Botanical Survey of India, Sikkim, presented on Medicinal Plants-An overview in context to Sikkim Region.

Dr Shiddamallayya N, Research Officer (Botany) & Nodal Officer, Medicinal Plant Research, CCRAS, HQ, New Delhi presented insights on Medico- Ethno Botanical Survey, Documentation and Validation of Local Health Practices.

Dr Lokesh Deb, Scientist-EBRIC-Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development, Sikkim, detailed on Ethnopharmacological Survey and Documentation of Traditional Health Care Knowledge- Strategy and Challenges.

## KNP conducts rescue operations and high-altitude sickness management training

**Gyalshing, February 27:** Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP), Gyalshing Division, under Forest and Environment Department, organised a training programme on rescue operations and high-altitude mountain sickness management for tourism stakeholders at Yuksom, today.

The training programme was conducted under the guidance of Mr Tshering Thendup Bhutia Minister-cum- Area MLA, with the objective of enhancing tourist safety, strengthening emergency preparedness and promoting sustainable adventure tourism in the State, particularly in KNP region.

The programme aimed to equip tourism stakeholders particularly trekking guides, trekkers' hut chowkidars, trekking cooks, support staff and others engaged in the trekking and tourism sector with essential skills in first aid, emergency medical response and rescue operations.

The training was conducted under the supervision of Ms Bhumika Rai DFO KNP and coordinated by Mr Tenzing W Bhutia Range Officer KNP.

Ms Bhumika Rai DFO KNP, stated that the initiative forms part of preventive measures to minimise casualties along trekking routes, particularly Dzongri-Goechala trail. She further added that ensuring visitor safety during trekking,

adventure tourism and mountaineering activities remains a top priority and that such training programmes will be conducted regularly, especially along the Dzongri-Goechala trekking route. She also noted that the training covered multidisciplinary subjects and that the park administration continues to initiate and implement various measures to enhance safety for visiting tourists and trekkers.

During the programme, participants received live demonstrations and practical exposure in the operation of Gamow Bag, use of Portable Altitude Chambers (PAC), oxygen cylinder handling, CPR and BLS techniques, improvised stretcher preparation and emergency evacuation procedures.

Medical Officers and Specialists from Gyalshing District Hospital imparted hands-on training on handling medical emergencies and high-altitude illnesses. The medical team comprised of Dr Judith Namcho Nephrology Specialist, Dr Sabin Rai Respiratory Medicine Specialist, Dr Phurba Tenzing Sherpa Medical Officer and Dr Biswas Basnett MO/IC Yuksom.

Additionally, Senior Instructor Mr Aditya Gurung and a team of experts from Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling, conducted specialised

sessions on rescue operations and the use of technical equipment.

As part of enhanced safety initiatives, all major trekking huts and campsites under KNP including Tshoka, Dzongri, and Thangshing have been equipped with oxygen cylinders and first-aid kits to prevent emergencies and avert future casualties.

The programme witnessed active participation from members of the tourism sector, trekking and tour guides, trekking cooks, support staff, KNP employees, and caretakers (chowkidars) of trekkers' huts and campsites along the Dzongri-Goechala trekking trail. Participants received first-hand practical training in rescue operations, high-altitude sickness management, and first aid.

Mr Karzang Bhutia President, Yuksam Tourism Development Committee (YTDC), and Vice-President of Yuksam-Dubdi GPU, Ms Passang Doma Bhutia, Assistant Director, Tourism & Civil Aviation Department and local tourism stakeholders, representatives from KCC and EDC, members of tourist guide associations, himalrakshaks, and representatives from various local NGOs were also present on the occasion.

In addition, awareness on H5N1 influenza and its preventive measures was also conducted during the programme.

## IMC team visit Mangan District to assess 2025 monsoon damages

**Mangan, February 27:** Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority (SSDMA), under the Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department coordinated the visit of an Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) to Mangan District for an on-site assessment of damages caused by 2025 monsoon.

The SSDMA team was led by Mr Rajiv Roka Director, SSDMA and assisted by Mr Keshav Koirala Deputy Director, SSDMA. They were accompanied by Mr Sandeep Kumar SDM Mangan, Ms Monika Rai SDM Kabi, Mr Arun Chettri SDM Chungthang, Mr Karma Dorjee Bhutia Joint Director-cum-DPO Mangan, along with officers from various line departments, who provided detailed sector-wise briefings during the field inspections.

The objective of the IMCT visit was to assess the extent of damage to infrastructure and public utilities across multiple sectors affected during the 2025 monsoon.

The inspection covering Phensang (Water Resources), Phodong (Health), Mangshilla (Education), Mangan (Urban Development / Roads and Bridges), Pakshep (Power / Rural Development / Roads), Kazor (Rural Development), Singhik,

Naga (Power/Rural Development), Toong (Power / Rural Development), Chungthang (Urban Development / Public Health Engineering) and Tarum (Power) and the newly constructed Tarum Bridges, concluded at Gangtok.

The Inter-Ministerial Central Team comprised of Mr Gaya Prasad, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Mr Pradeep Kumar, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi, Dr Sashivardhan Reddy, Scientist (DMSG), National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), ISRO, Department of Space, Hyderabad, Mr Dheeraj, Superintending Engineer, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Regional Office, Guwahati, Mr Jintu Das, Joint Director, Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Department of Jute Development, Kolkata, Dr KR Rajeshwari, Joint Director, Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure (FCD) and Mr Nitin Kumar Verma, Executive Engineer, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Central Water Commission, Gangtok

The visit marks a significant step towards a comprehensive assessment and coordinated action for the restoration and strengthening of critical infrastructure in North Sikkim in the aftermath of the 2025 monsoon damages.

## District Authorities inspect Commercial Units at Deorali Bazaar

**Gangtok, February 27:** Mr Sisum Wangchuk Bhutia, Additional District Magistrate, Gangtok, along with Mr Mingyur Tempo Nadik DPO, Gangtok, and officers from various line departments, conducted a joint inspection at Deorali Bazaar, today.

The inspection was led to ensure that the general public is provided with safe food, regulated trade practices and a secure environment, along with the protection of workers' rights and compliance with statutory provisions.

The inspection covered various commercial units, including a petrol pump, restaurants and fast food outlets. The establishments were inspected for compliance with the provisions of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003, governing the advertisement, trade, production, supply and distribution of tobacco products under the Act. The inspection particularly focused on the prohibition of advertisement of tobacco products, display of statutory health warnings, restrictions on sale to minors, prohibition of sale within 100 yards of educational institutions and regulation of public smoking in notified public places, as mandated under the Act.

The establishments were also examined for compliance with relevant provisions of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009 and the

Packaged Commodities Rules, 2011. The inspection included verification of the accuracy and stamping of weighing and measuring instruments, proper display of quantity and price, declaration of net weight, date of manufacture and maximum retail price on packaged commodities, and adherence to standards to prevent unfair trade practices. Compliance with food safety regulations prescribed by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India was also verified. Trade licence, food licence and fire safety certificate were examined to ensure that all documents were valid and updated in accordance with prescribed norms.

During the inspection, the officers interacted with managers and business owners regarding staff strength, salary structure, working hours, provision of holidays, insurance coverage and fire safety measures. The establishments were advised to strictly adhere to labour laws, fire safety norms and other statutory requirements, and to maintain all necessary documents in updated condition.

The inspection team included Assistant Labour Commissioner, Gangtok, Deputy Commissioner, Excise Department, Senior Bazaar Inspector, GMC along with Police personnel and officials from various line departments.

## First Sikkim river rafting certified guides completed under Sikkim INSPIRES

**Namchi, February 27:** The closing ceremony of a fortnight long Advance River Rafting and Search and Rescue Course - Level III & IV was organised at Sikkim, Namchi District, today.

The course was organised under the aegis of Adventure Skilling Training Programme by the Indian Himalayan Centre for Adventure Eco-Tourism (IHCAE), Chemchey, under the aegis of the Tourism and Civil Aviation Department (TCAD) as part of the Sikkim INSPIRES initiative.

Mr Sonam Norgay Lachungpa Chairperson TCAD presented his gratitude to Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang for prioritising tourism in the State and his relentless effort in the development of the sector.

He further stated that Sikkim has great potential in the sector of adventure tourism as the State is blessed with various natural resources that will elevate the sector to greater heights and for this various awareness campaigns should be held for mass awareness. Talking further about awareness campaigns, he also stated that the youths should also be aware about various State Government schemes that has been implemented to help anyone seeking entrepreneurial avenues as a mode to sustain their livelihood.

The Chairperson also urged all the trainee river rafting guides to hone their skills and use it as a tool to benefit themselves and the society in the coming days.

He stated that the trainee batch have now emerged as Certified Rafting Guides in the State and further advised the trainees to work positively for the society and the State and set an example to the younger generations and help them also adopt the idea of opting avenue to sustain their livelihoods.

Ms Rohini Pradhan Mission Director congratulated Mr Kazi Sherpa and team for successfully conducting the training programme. She encouraged the

trainees to take advantage of the skills acquired, emphasising the importance of building trained manpower and actively seeking employment opportunities. She highlighted that the training was delivered by well-qualified experts from abroad and assured that the State Government is committed to linking such initiatives with employment and placement opportunities.

She further stated that necessary guidelines would be framed and financial support would be extended to help trainees start their professional journey. She also encouraged women to participate equally in such programmes. Trainees were invited to visit the office to share feedback, suggestions, or grievances for further intervention and improvement. She expressed hope that the programme would transform into a job-oriented initiative and wished all the trainees the very best for their future endeavours.

Mr Kazi Sherpa IHCAE Principal elaborated on the various types of rivers in Sikkim and the importance of hydrological understanding in benefiting local communities. He stressed the need for a well-structured marketing strategy to promote adventure and eco-tourism initiatives and announced that a summer adventure course training programme will be organised in the forthcoming season by the department.

Accordingly, the expert trainers, mentioned that the batch trainees of the course showcased exemplary dedication, motivation and drive in the process of acquiring skills through the training. The trainers also showcased short audio-visual presentation of the fifteen-day long training process that the trainees underwent. Further, the officers, officials and dignitaries present were also briefed about rafting and kayaking and were also given hands-on practical training during the programme.

During the programme, Course Completion Certificates were distributed to the trainees, alongwith accidental health insurance for a period of one year to empower their profession.

Similarly, the trainees shared their experiences during the training and expressed their gratitude to the State Government for providing the platform and valuable learning opportunity.

Certificates of Appreciation were also presented to the trainers by the chief guest, namely, Mr David Perrin of Nantahala Outdoor Centre(USA), Ms Edie Hall of Wilderness Medicine(USA), Mr Tim Williams of Taraloka Foundation (USA) and Mr Galek Gyatso Bhutia local stakeholder from Gangtok.

It maybe mentioned that the training was aimed to enhance participants' skills in advanced rafting, swift-water rescue, safety protocols, and emergency response. It was conducted under qualified Instructors, ensuring strict adherence to safety and operational standards.

The course had been conducted from February 13-27, along with the commercially viable rafting stretch from Sikkim to the Dans Energy Dam on the Ranget River and Bardang to Mamring on Teesta River.

Present during the occasion were Mr Sonam Norgay Lachungpa Tourism and Civil Aviation Department Chairperson, Ms Rohini Pradhan Sikkim INSPIRES Mission Director, Mr Subash Ghimirey ADC Namchi, Mr Tenzing Gelay Additional Director (Adventure), Mr Kazi Sherpa IHCAE Principal/Joint Director, Ms Lamin Theeng DTO (Namchi), Mr Manoj Chettri Deputy Director (Adventure), Mr Swabhaw Gurung Deputy Programme Director (Sikkim INSPIRES), Mr Suraj Rai DPO (Namchi), along with the officials of TCAD, instructors, staff of DTO Namchi and a total of 17 participants including 16 male and 1 female from various parts of the State.

## Press Release from Directorate of Prosecution Home Department

**Gangtok, February 28:** A training programme on New Criminal Law (NCL), Case Preparation, Court Room Skills and Witness Management for Assistant Public Prosecutors Sikkim was conducted at Police Conference Hall, PHQ, Gangtok, today.

The training organised by Directorate of Prosecution under Home Department, Government of Sikkim had the presence of Ms Jyoti Subba Director Prosecution, Mr Jigme P Bhutia Senior Administrative Officer, Mr Girmey Bhutia Assistant Director Prosecution, Namchi/Soreng and Mr Deven Rai Assistant Director Prosecution, Pakyong/Soreng.

The objective of training programme was to strengthen the

professional capabilities and enhance quality of Prosecution in Sikkim.

The programme commenced with a welcome address and introductory session by Mr Jigme P Bhutia Senior Administrative Officer, Directorate of Prosecution.

The training session was conducted by Nimkit Lepcha Resource Persons Additional Public Prosecutor, Gangtok who covered the wide range of topic from Court Room Skills to Witness Management.

Mr Tarden Lepcha Public Prosecutor Namchi gave insights about New Criminal Laws (NCL).

Mr Yadav Sharma Public Prosecutor Gangtok spoke on topic from Criminal Miscellaneous Cases

(Revision, Appeals) and Chief Examination.

Director Prosecution, Sikkim emphasised the role of Prosecutors in enhancing conviction rate and to strengthen the professional capabilities and quality of Prosecution followed by distribution of Law Book titled 'Universal Criminal Manual' containing Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (46 of 2023), Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (45 of 2023) Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, 2023 (47 of 2023) by Directorate of Prosecution, Home Department keeping into account the major steps undertaken by the State Government in implementation of newly enacted criminal laws.

## Pakyong District Administration launches P.U.L.S.E.

**Pakyong, February 25:** District Administration Pakyong announces the launch of P.U.L.S.E. – Pakyong Unified Launch Support for Entrepreneurs, under the banner of Sikkim INSPIRES: Deploy. Empower. Enable. This district-level initiative aims to identify and support entrepreneurial ideas and enterprises across Pakyong in line with the State's vision of sustainable and inclusive economic development.

P.U.L.S.E. will provide seed funding and mentorship support to aspiring entrepreneurs and existing business owners. The programme invites proposals that demonstrate innovation, financial viability, scalability, and potential for employment generation and local value creation. The initiative seeks to strengthen entrepreneurship and promote self-reliance within the district.

Applicants must submit

### Press release from SRLM RDD

**Gangtok, February 25:** Sikkim State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM) under the Rural Development Department, Government of Sikkim inaugurated the Aggregation and Sales Outlet for products made by Self Help Groups (SHGs) at Lal Bazaar, Gangtok, today.

The outlet was inaugurated by Mr Arun Kumar Upreti Minister for Rural Development and Cooperation Departments in the presence of Mr Anil Raj Rai, Secretary, Rural Development Department, Chairpersons SHGs and OSD, along with CEO/SRLM.

Ms Tshering Laden Lachungpa, Special Secretary-cum-PD Mngnerga, Ms Koshi Kapil Special Secretary-cum-MD SBMG, Ms Neelam Rai Chief Engineer and other Senior Officials of Rural Development Department including the staff of State Management Unit SMMU SRLM.

The primary objective of the newly inaugurated outlet is to provide a dedicated platform for the display and sale of products

detailed proposals outlining their business idea or existing operations, market potential, revenue model, financial requirements, implementation plan, and long-term goals. Existing enterprises are also required to provide information on current performance, growth plans, and expansion proposals.

All submissions will be evaluated by a district-level committee based on feasibility, sustainability, innovation, and alignment with the objectives of Sikkim INSPIRES.

Applications are open from February 23-March 10, 2026. Proposals may be submitted by scanning the official QR code or through offline submission at the District Administrative Centre (DAC), Pakyong.

For further information, applicants may contact the District Administration Pakyong at +91 9609009175.

manufactured by Self Help Groups across Sikkim. The centre will serve as a centralized marketing facility to promote SHG products and strengthen their access to wider markets.

This outlet will significantly ease the marketing process for SHG members. Under this system, SHG members can deliver their products to the centre, and once the products are sold, they will receive the payment directly. This initiative provides a structured, reliable marketing channel, exclusively facilitated by Sikkim SRLM, to support rural entrepreneurs.

The establishment of this aggregation and sales outlet marks a major step towards empowering SHGs by ensuring better market linkage, enhanced income opportunities, and sustainable livelihood support.

Sikkim SRLM further plans to introduce more accessible and innovative marketing channels in the future to strengthen the marketing ecosystem for SHG products across the state.

*Contd. from front page*

### Launch of...

administered free of cost at designated Government health facilities across the State.

The Chief Minister further stated that Sikkim has consistently prioritised health sector, with sustained efforts to strengthen primary healthcare services, expand immunisation coverage, upgrade district hospitals and improve access to specialised treatment. He added that the State Government remains committed to enhancing preventive and promotive healthcare initiatives, ensuring that essential medical services reach even the remotest areas. He urged parents, teachers and healthcare workers to actively support the campaign and create widespread awareness about the importance of timely vaccination.

As part of the launch event at Samman Bhawan, nine students from Modern Senior Secondary

School and PM SHRI Senior Secondary School, Deorali, were administered the vaccine by medical practitioners. Each dose comprises 0.5 mL of Gardasil 9, which provides protection against nine types of Human Papillomavirus (HPV), and is administered through injection.

The HPV vaccine protects against infections caused by the human papillomavirus, a common virus transmitted through intimate contact. It significantly reduces the risk of cervical cancer and also offers protection against other HPV-related cancers, including anal, oropharyngeal, penile, vulvar and vaginal cancers, as well as genital warts. The programme aims to cover approximately 1.15 crore girls aged 14 years annually across all States and Union Territories.

Also present were Minister for Health and Family Welfare Department, Cabinet Secretary, Chief Secretary, Principal Secretary, Education Department, Secretaries and others.

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## Swachhata Ambassadors onboarded under SBM (U) by UD Department

**Gangtok, February 27:** Urban Development Department organised the onboarding programme of Swachhata Ambassadors under Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) at a local hotel, today.

Mr Bhoj Raj Rai Minister for Urban Development Department attended the programme as the chief guest and Mr Delay Namgyal Barfungpa MLA-cum-Advisor, attended as guest of honour.

In his address, Minister emphasised the importance of citizen participation in maintaining cleanliness and sustaining the gains of Swachh Bharat Mission in urban Sikkim.

He expressed appreciation to the Swachhata Ambassadors and urged them to work actively for the State. He stated that the State Government remained committed to public welfare and called upon citizens to support waste management efforts and work towards the goal of a zero-waste Himalayan State.

The Minister mentioned that Sikkim had inherited a clean and green environment from earlier generations and stressed the responsibility to preserve and pass it on. He further stated that the Urban Development Department and Gangtok Municipal Corporation are working in coordination on waste management and called for public cooperation.

He urged continued public sensitisation and the development of a zero-waste mindset.

Mr Delay Namgyal Barfungpa MLA-cum-Advisor, stated that the Swachh Bharat Mission has brought visible improvement in sanitation and waste awareness across urban areas and called for sustained

community participation to strengthen its outcomes.

He urged households to practise waste segregation at source and appealed for respect and support for sanitation workers who maintained public hygiene. He also emphasised the need to sensitise students on the environmental impact of packaged food and plastic waste.

Referring to preventive measures, he highlighted the importance of cleaning drains before the monsoon. He concluded by urging collective effort towards the vision of Sunaulo, Samridhha ani Samartha Sikkim.

Mr Jitendra Singh Raje, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Urban Development Department, stated that the vision of the Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi, placed cleanliness at the centre of national development. He emphasised coordinated institutional action and public participation for sustainable sanitation. He stated that collaboration with Swachhata Ambassadors would strengthen outreach under the Swachhata Abhiyan and noted that while Sikkim had made progress, greater citizen involvement was required to achieve the goal of a zero-waste Himalayan State.

Earlier, Mr GL Meena Joint Secretary, SBM (U), Urban Development Department, outlined the objective of engaging Swachhata Ambassadors to strengthen public participation in sanitation and waste management initiatives.

Mr Jigme Wangchuk Bhutia, Mission Director, SBM (U), Urban Development Department, presented an overview of the current waste management scenario in urban Sikkim and

outlined the roles and responsibilities of the Swachhata Ambassadors in promoting source segregation, waste reduction and citizen awareness.

He spoke on the existing landfill facilities at Martam and Shipchu and emphasised the need to make segregation of household waste a regular practice at source.

The presentation also covered ongoing initiatives under SBM (U), including community outreach and legacy waste management measures and highlighted key challenges such as low levels of segregation, plastic waste and increasing urban pressures.

He further outlined the expected role of Swachhata Ambassadors in spreading the message of 3R (Refuse, Reduce and Reuse), encouraging responsible waste practices, participating in local awareness activities, promoting zero-waste approaches and leading by example in their communities.

Swachhata Ambassadors were felicitated during the programme.

The Swachhata Ambassadors include; Dirty Angels Motorcycle Club, Gangtok, Ms Phurba Tamang, marathon runner, Mr Sandeep Gurung, fashion designer and social entrepreneur, Ms Peden Ongmu Namgyal, model, Ms Shyama Shree Sherpa, actor, Mr Sayta Pradhan, sustainability practitioner, Mr Sonam Tashi Gyaltzen, founder and Ms Tribeny Rai, filmmaker.

Present on the occasion were Ms Yogeeta Rai Principal Chief Architect-cum-Secretary, Urban Development Department, OSD Urban Development Department, MEOs and officers of the Urban Development Department.

## SSDMA holds Press Conference on recent earthquake

**Gangtok, February 27:** Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority (SSDMA) held a press conference at its Conference Hall to brief the media on recent seismic activity in the State.

Mr Rinzing Chewang Bhutia State Relief Commissioner, Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department briefed on earthquake occurrences since February 9. He was accompanied by Mr Prabhakar Rai Director, SSDMA,

State Relief Commissioner informed that 57 earthquakes were recorded in the Sikkim-Nepal-Bhutan-Tibet region since February 9, of which, 41 originated in Sikkim. He stated that seismic activity is common in the Himalayan belt and noted that the strongest tremor recorded in the State during this period measured 4.6 magnitude in Gyalshing on February 26. While minor tremors have been felt across the State, he clarified that such occurrences are generally not a cause for major concern.

Highlighting safety measures, he emphasised the importance of remaining calm and following the 'Drop, Cover and Hold' protocol during tremors. He

advised that individuals indoors should stay inside, take shelter under sturdy furniture, protect their head, and hold on until the shaking stops. After tremors cease, people should move to open spaces away from buildings, trees and electric poles. He also advised shutting off gas and electricity connections, if feasible, and cautioned against the spread of unverified rumours.

Stressing preparedness, Secretary urged families to identify safe zones and escape routes in advance. He noted that falling objects pose significant risks and recommended securing loose fittings and avoiding placement of heavy objects overhead.

On institutional preparedness, he informed that since February 9, schools have been sensitised on earthquake safety in coordination with the Education Department. Mock drills are being conducted regularly, Disaster Management Clubs are being formed in schools under a teacher Nodal Officer, and school safety handbooks have been distributed.

Regarding village-level preparedness, he stated that SSDMA and District Disaster

Management Authorities (DDMAs) continue to conduct awareness programmes. Village disaster management plans and committees have been established, and the public was urged to coordinate with Panchayats to revive or strengthen dormant plans where necessary.

He further encouraged citizens to download the SACHET mobile application, an initiative of the Government of India, for real-time updates on earthquakes and other hazards.

Addressing seasonal risks, he highlighted the growing threat of forest fires and urged public vigilance, including proper disposal of cigarettes and caution while handling campfires. He advised reporting fire incidents immediately to the Forest Department or Police and stated that District Operation Centres are functional round-the-clock across all districts.

He also called for pre-monsoon preparedness, urging citizens to keep drains clear to prevent waterlogging and localised flooding.

The press conference concluded with an interactive session with the media.

## Creative Writing workshop voices unleashed concludes

**Pakyong, February 25:** Three-day International Workshop on Creative Writing titled "Voices Unleashed" concluded today at the Sikkim Government College, Rhenock. The workshop was organised in collaboration with the Department of English and the Department of Nepali of the College.

The workshop aimed to promote literary creativity, foster critical thinking, and encourage academic exchange among students.

During the valedictory address Dr Shobha Sharma Basistha, Principal SGCR, who commended the organisers and resource persons for conducting an enriching workshop. She encouraged students to recognise their creative potential and to express themselves with confidence and commitment.

Emphasising that creativity exists in everyone, she urged participants to nurture their talents and strive for meaningful outcomes from such initiatives. She expressed hope that in future workshops, more students would actively present their own poems and stories, making the programme truly reflective of their growth and learning.

The technical sessions featured speakers from diverse creative fields.

Mr Needrup Zangpo, an author from Bhutan, conducted a technical session where he shared insights into storytelling, literary imagination, and the evolving landscape of contemporary writing.

In his session titled 'Retelling Mad Yogi Stories Using Creative Nonfiction Techniques', he spoke about his book, Drukpa Kunley's Sacred Tales of a Mad Monk, published by HarperCollins. The book retells the life and legends of the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century Tibetan yogi, Drukpa Kunley, blending biography, autobiography, and oral traditions with contemporary narrative techniques.

He explained that creative nonfiction presents factual narratives in engaging ways through non-linear narration, vivid

description, and structured storytelling while remaining faithful to historical sources. He also shared his writing journey, highlighting extensive research, engagement with oral histories, and sustained dedication in bringing historical narratives to modern readers.

The session concluded with an interactive exchange, where participants engaged with the author on his writing style, research process, and approach to creative nonfiction.

This was followed by a session by Ms Tribeny Rai, an internationally reputed filmmaker from Sikkim. She spoke on visual storytelling and the relationship between literature and cinema, highlighting how strong writing forms the foundation of impactful films.

Sharing her journey, she reflected on her early interest in literature and how it eventually led her to filmmaking. She also spoke about her 2025 Nepali language drama film, 'Shape of Momo', explaining that the story was drawn from personal experiences and the lives of women around her. She further emphasised that writing for films differs from other forms of writing, as it requires visual thinking, structure, and precise storytelling techniques.

Additionally, Mr Anmol Gurung, singer and filmmaker, also addressed the participants, sharing his experiences in artistic expression and the importance of authenticity in creative work.

The programme featured a poetry performance by Mr Nawaraj Parajuli, an internationally acclaimed poet from Nepal, whose recitation deeply resonated with the audience and highlighted the expressive depth of poetry.

The programme also included the presentation of the workshop report by Ms Pransha Subba Asst Professor, Department of Education and presentation of the feedback report by Ms Jwala Sharma Asst Professor, Department of Computer Science,.

The event was also attended by Administrative Officer, Vice Principal, and faculty members, SGCR.



## Awareness Programme on State and Central Government MSME Schemes

**Pakyong, February 27:** A one-day awareness programme on State and Central Government Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) schemes under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Programme was held at Assam Lingzey GPK Hall, today.

The programme was organised by the District Industries Centre, Pakyong under the Commerce and Industries Department, Government of Sikkim in collaboration with the Sikkim Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (SEED) Cell.

The objective of the programme was to generate awareness regarding various State and Central Government MSME schemes being implemented by the department for the benefit of existing and aspiring entrepreneurs.

During the programme, Mr Hari Rizal Officer on Special Duty to MLA Namcheybong, attended the programme as the chief guest. In his address, he encouraged participants to make effective use of the various Government schemes presented during the programme and emphasised the importance of timely registration and proper documentation. He urged aspiring entrepreneurs to take initiative and explore business opportunities rather than waiting for employment avenues.

Highlighting the potential of local talent and resources, he stressed that entrepreneurship requires determination, confidence, and a clear vision. He further stated that with the right mindset and dedication, individuals can establish sustainable enterprises and contribute to economic development.

He urged the participants to remain proactive, seek guidance whenever required and avail themselves of the support extended by the concerned departments to strengthen their business ventures.

Mr Jigme W Bhutia General Manager DIC Pakyong, highlighted the role of the District Industries Centre in promoting entrepreneurship and facilitating industrial development within the district. He stated that the DIC functions as a nodal agency for the implementation of MSME-related schemes and provides necessary guidance and support to entrepreneurs. This includes assistance in enterprise registration, project formulation, availing of subsidies, credit facilitation and capacity building initiatives.

He further emphasised that the Centre is committed to creating an enabling environment for small and micro enterprises, thereby contributing to sustainable economic growth and employment generation in the district.

Delivering the keynote address, Mr Tashi Ongdup Lepcha, the State Organising Secretary of the Sikkim Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (SEED) Cell, outlined the initiatives of the Cell aimed at promoting entrepreneurship across the State.

He elaborated on the working mechanisms of the Cell and highlighted various initiatives undertaken to support entrepreneurs. Emphasising the importance of cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset, he encouraged the younger generation to explore business opportunities and stated that the Cell provides necessary guidance and facilitation support to aspiring entrepreneurs.

Referring to the motto of the SEED Cell, 'One Family, One Entrepreneur,' under the vision of the Chief Minister of Sikkim, he stressed the need to encourage at least one entrepreneurial initiative in every household to enhance self-reliance and income generation. He also spoke on various State and Central Government MSME schemes aimed at promoting new enterprises and strengthening existing units, and urged participants to avail themselves of these schemes for their advancement and to become 'Udyami' by utilising the benefits provided.

The programme also featured a series of technical presentations covering various schemes and digital platforms.

Mr Jikmee Lepcha Inspector, DIC Pakyong, delivered a detailed presentation on the implementation of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) under RAMP and the UNNATI (Uttar Poorva Transformative Industrialization Scheme), 2024. He provided an overview of the programme and outlined its objectives aimed at strengthening the MSME ecosystem.

He informed participants about the approved SIP interventions for Sikkim and the list of trades identified under the Capacity Building component, along with key support measures under RAMP.

He also briefed the gathering on the PM Vishwakarma Scheme, which provides holistic end-to-end support to artisans and craftspeople. The objectives of the scheme, its benefits, eligibility criteria and required documentation were explained in detail.

Further, he informed that UNNATI is a Central Sector Scheme aimed at promoting industrial development and employment generation in the North Eastern Region, thereby contributing to socio-economic growth. He outlined the eligible sectors, key components of the scheme, categorisation of districts

into two zones and explained the registration process along with the necessary documentation. He also highlighted that the UNNATI registration period has been extended for a further six months until September 2026.

A brief presentation on the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) and the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal was delivered by Ms Hemlata Subba Inspector, DIC Pakyong. She outlined the objectives, onboarding process, and required documentation for ONDC, and explained the purpose and registration procedure of the GeM portal for government procurement.

She also touched upon the process of onboarding products on e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart, including product listing, pricing, logistics, and compliance requirements.

Additionally, Mr Dilip Ruchal DIC Pakyong staff, delivered an overview of the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP). He briefed the participants that PMEGP is a Central Sector credit-linked subsidy scheme administered by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME) aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through the establishment of micro enterprises in both rural and urban areas.

He elaborated on the objectives of the scheme, eligibility criteria, categories of ineligible activities under PMEGP, the benefits available to beneficiaries, and the application procedure. He further detailed the range of eligible activities covered under the scheme, including service, manufacturing and animal husbandry sectors, while also clarifying the types of activities that do not qualify under the programme.

Following the sessions, Ms Prerna Pradhan DIC Pakyong staff, delivered a presentation on Udyam and FSSAI registration. She highlighted the significance of Udyam registration for MSMEs in accessing various government benefits and subsidies.

The session also detailed the procedure for obtaining FSSAI registration for food-based enterprises, including the different licensing categories and compliance requirements to be adhered to by business operators.

The programme also had an interactive session, during which participants raised queries and sought clarifications regarding the various schemes presented.

Also present at the programme were Zilla Panchayat, Panchayat President and members from Assam Lingzey GPU.

## IPR Department organises workshop on substance abuse awareness

**Gangtok, February 27:** Freedom Facility and Resource Information and Public Relations (IPR) Department organised a workshop on Nasha Mukta Abhiyan at its Conference Hall in Gangtok today.

Ms Annapurna Alley Secretary, IPR Department, in her address, underscored the importance of collective responsibility in addressing substance abuse. She stated that the initiative provides an opportunity for society to extend support to individuals struggling with addiction.

Emphasising the role of families and friends, she urged all stakeholders to make concerted efforts to assist affected individuals in overcoming substance dependency and choosing a life of freedom and dignity.

Mr KC Nima, Founder

## BRO briefs MoS for Defence on infrastructural development in State

**Gangtok, February 26:** Union Minister of State for Defence, Government of India, Mr Sanjay Seth, who is on a day visit to the state, today was briefed on the infrastructural development being carried out in the State by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) at Project Swastik Headquarters, Burtuk.

MoS was briefed on under construction roads in the state, including the West Sikkim highway from Namchi via Sada-Noong to Zeema, a 250 km stretch. He was also informed about NH 310A from Mangan-Chungthang-Lachung-Yumthang-Donkya La-Kerang and NH 310AG from Chungthang-Chaten-Zeema-Thangu-Moguthang-Naku-Nakula. Both highways together cover 241 km and are expected to be completed by 2030-31.

These roads will be built under National Highway Double Lane (NHDL) specifications, technical standards used by the Border Roads Organisation and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways for road construction and improvement, especially in border and hilly areas. The projects will use modern road construction methods for slope stabilisation, including soil nailing, shotcreting, rock bolts and rockfall

## MoS for Defence visits Singhik SS and Health & Wellness Centre Singhik

**Mangan, February 26:** Union Minister of State for Defence, Government of India, Mr Sanjay Seth visited Singhik Secondary School, where he was briefed about the activities and achievements of the school by Mr Sonam Dorjee Bhutia School Headmaster. The MoS also interacted with the faculty and students.

The MoS lauded the school administration and the teachers for maintaining high standards and overall cleanliness and environment-friendly initiatives.

The MoS also visited the Health and Wellness Centre at Singhik.

Freedom Facility and Resource Person, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share his experiences on substance abuse.

He highlighted that what often begins as curiosity or peer pressure can gradually lead to dependency, adversely affecting an individual's health, family, career, and future.

He further appealed to society not to reject individuals attempting recovery, but to accept and support them by fostering a positive and enabling environment.

Such encouragement, he added, would help recovering individuals reconnect with their families, rebuild their lives, and reintegrate into society as responsible citizens.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Ms Anita Subba Special Secretary, IPR Department.

barriers. Adequate retaining and gabion walls will be constructed for erosion control, along with the use of geotextiles and geomats.

A proper drainage system is being planned along the entire highway to help prevent landslides. Cut-and-cover tunnels would be provided where required. The main priority of these projects is to ensure all-weather connectivity, as the state is prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes and landslides, and to prevent disruption of communication lines. BRO is also planning comprehensive slope stabilisation projects, especially on roads vulnerable to natural calamities.

River training works are also being undertaken, including the construction of retaining walls along riverbanks, jacketing of abutments and desilting of critical bridges to prevent damage during heavy flow.

Also present during the briefing were Mr Jitendra Nath Mahato Additional Private Secretary to the Union Minister of State for Defence, Government of India, Mr Nikesh Kumar MTS to the Union Minister of State for Defence, Government of India, and senior officers of BRO and paramilitary forces.

He took stock of the facility and interacted with the MPHWS, MLHP, ANMs and other technical staff.

It may be mentioned that the Health and Wellness Centre is recognised with National Quality Assurance Standard (NQAS) certification for its performance on various parameters.

Mr Samdup Lepcha, Minister for Social Welfare Department, Mr Anant Jain DC Mangan, Mr LB Chettri SP Mangan, Mr Pema Wangchen Namkarpa ADM, Mr Sandeep Kumar SDM Mangan and other officers of the district.

## 6<sup>th</sup> State-Level NCORD Meeting held

**Gangtok, February 27:** Mr R Telang Chief Secretary chaired 6<sup>th</sup> State-level Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) meeting held at the Conference Hall of the Tashiling Secretariat, today.

Mr Tenzing T Kaleon Secretary Home Department, briefed on inner workings of NCORD and stated that the committee serves as a critical platform for departmental convergence, highlighting that the primary objectives are the reduction of both supply and demand, alongside the strengthening of inter-departmental coordination.

The meeting progressed through extensive discussions on Action Taken Report (ATR) of the 5<sup>th</sup> NCORD meeting, which was presented by Ms Bhumika Pradhan Additional Director Home Department.

The Chief Secretary held detailed deliberations on every point with the respective line departments, adding new action points for officials to follow.

The Chief Secretary emphasised the need to strengthen both forward and backward linkages in enforcement efforts to ensure effective tracing of sources and complete eradication of the

drug menace. He stressed that the issue must be treated with the utmost urgency, describing the mission as a war on drugs. He urged officials not to handle such cases as routine theft or minor criminal matters, noting with concern that youth are increasingly being drawn into substance abuse.

Calling for enhanced surveillance, he underscored the importance of targeted monitoring and improved coordination with national agencies such as the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED). He further recommended the use of rapid testing kits as a proactive deterrent measure.

The Chief Secretary also highlighted the need for proactive involvement of the Social Welfare Department through its Nasha Mukta Programme and suggested that the Health Department organise awareness and de-addiction camps to address the issue comprehensively. He called upon all District Collectors and Superintendents of Police to submit data-driven Action Taken Reports to ensure accountability and informed decision-making.

Emphasising the importance of improving the overall quality of

investigations, he noted that the issue holds significant social importance for Sikkim and requires sustained hard work, seriousness and collective commitment to eliminate the menace. While appreciating the efforts of all departments and officials involved, he urged them to intensify their work and further strengthen ongoing initiatives.

He directed all District Collectors to create a specialised District Level Roadmap.

A brief presentation was made by Mr Tenzing Loden Lepcha, DIGP Gangtok Police Range and CID, wherein, highlighting the work being undertaken by the Police Department. He also briefed the attendees on the Action Taken Report of the 9<sup>th</sup> Apex NCORD meeting, which was chaired by Union Home Minister Mr Amit Shah on January 9, 2026.

Mr PR Mishra, AD NCB, shared the current standing and findings of NCB with regard to Sikkim.

The District Heads were further invited to present their views and recommendations were suggested by them to make the battle against substance abuse more localised and relevant.

## Union Minister of State for Defence chairs review meeting of Mangan District

**Mangan, January 26:** Mr Sanjay Seth, Union Minister of State (MoS) for Defence, Government of India, chaired a district-level review meeting at the ITBP Camp, Pegong, in Mangan District, today.

Upon his arrival, the MoS was accorded a ceremonial Guard of Honour by Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Pegong.

The programme commenced with a welcome address and a comprehensive district overview presented by Mr Anant Jain DC Mangan.

This was followed by detailed presentations from key departments, including 758 BRTF (Swastik) on major district roads, Roads and Bridges Department, PMGSY and Jal Jeevan Mission under the Rural Development Department, Health and Family Welfare Department, Education, Agriculture, WCSC and Divyangjan Welfare Department, Water Resources, Skill Development, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, Rural Development Department, and Financial Inclusion initiatives by the Lead Bank.

Mr Samdup Lepcha, Minister-cum-Area MLA highlighted the district's key developmental priorities and appreciated the detailed departmental presentations and extended his best wishes for their continued efforts. He stressed the importance of engaging local machinery and workforce in road construction projects and raised concerns regarding villages reportedly left out under Vibrant Village Programme (VVP). He also informed on welfare initiatives of the State Government under guidance of the Chief Minister.

Mr Sanjay Seth MoS, lauded the progress of ongoing projects in the district and made a special mention of Sikkim Garib Awas Yojana (SGAY) stating that it was an exemplary initiative of the State Government.

He stated that Sikkim has earned a unique brand in the country for its development models and natural beauty.

The MoS urged the district officials to embrace innovative ways to enhance service delivery and emphasised timely execution,

improved inter-departmental coordination and focused efforts to strengthen infrastructure and essential services in the border district. He underscored the importance of empowering Self-Help Groups (SHGs), noting that strengthening community-based groups remains a key challenge and opportunity for social and economic development. He further stressed the need to generate local employment opportunities to curb migration, promote youth engagement through sports and enhance tourism potential in the district. He expressed appreciation for the collective efforts being made towards the overall development of Mangan District.

The meeting was attended by Minister-cum-MLA Lachen-Mangan Constituency, DC Mangan, Superintendent of Police, ADC, SDMs Mangan and Chungthang, Commandant 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion ITBP, senior officers of 86 RCC (GREF), Border Roads Organisation (BRO), Indian Army officials and Heads of Offices under Mangan District.

## Coordination-cum-preparatory meeting held

**Gyalshing, March 2:** A coordination-cum-preparatory meeting in connection with the upcoming foundation stone laying ceremony of Ugyan Whoshel Pema Choling Gumpa at Upper Martam was held at Sadhbhav Mandap (Community Hall), today.

The meeting was chaired by Mr LN Sharma Area MLA-cum-Advisor and was accompanied by Mr YK Mishra Chairman, Sikkim Milk Union and Mr Tenzing D Denzongpa DC Gyalshing. Officials from various line departments, Zilla and Gram

Panchayat Members, Members of the Monastery Committee and other concerned representatives were present.

MLA informed that Chief Minister will attend the foundation stone laying ceremony of the monastery on March 11, 2026. He further stated that Kyabje Dzungin Garab Rinpoche will bless the ceremony with his presence. Emphasising coordinated efforts, he stated that with the collective approach of all departments and stakeholders, the programme can be organised successfully in the

best possible manner.

The MLA announced formation of Celebration Committee and declared the names of its members. He entrusted the responsibility of conducting the puja rituals and coordinating matters related to Rinpoche to the Working Monastery Committee. All concerned departments were apprised of their respective roles and responsibilities to ensure smooth execution of the programme. He added that unity and teamwork would create a conducive working environment,

## Minister of State for Defence inaugurates Taram Chu Steel Bridge

**Mangan, February 26:** Mr Sanjay Seth Minister of State (MoS) for Defence, Government of India inaugurated the newly constructed Taram Chu Steel Bridge, marking the restoration of crucial connectivity along the Chungthang-Lachen Road in Mangan District, today.

The inauguration ceremony was held in the presence of Mr Samdup Lepcha Minister for Social Welfare Department-cum-MLA Lachen-Mangan Constituency along with Chairpersons, Pipons, DC Mangan, SP Mangan, senior officers of 86 RCC (GREF), Border Roads Organisation (BRO), Army officials and public.

The programme commenced with unveiling of the commemorative plaque and inauguration of the bridge. A technical report was presented by Brig Amit Sakhre highlighting its structural features and strategic importance.

In his address, Mr Sanjay Seth Minister of State lauded the relentless efforts of Border Roads Organisation and GREF personnel for completing the bridge within a short timeframe despite challenging terrain and adverse weather conditions. He expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang and the State Government for their continuous support and coordination throughout the restoration process.

The Minister noted that the bridge would not only restore normalcy for the people of Lachen and surrounding areas, but also strengthen strategic mobility in the region. He appreciated the District Administration for extending full cooperation to BRO during the execution of the project.

Reiterating the commitment of the Central Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi, he assured continued support to fulfil the developmental aspirations of the State.

In his address, Mr Samdup Lepcha Minister-cum-Area MLA expressed heartfelt gratitude to the MoS for visiting Mangan District. He highlighted the immense hardships faced by the people following the Glacial Lake

Outburst Flood (GLOF) of October 2023 and subsequent natural calamities, which severely disrupted connectivity and daily life.

He extended sincere appreciation to the GREF and BRO personnel for their tireless and dedicated service under extreme conditions. He also acknowledged the patience and cooperation of public during the restoration period.

The Minister further requested that due consideration be given to public sentiment, while finalising the proposed road alignment project above Chungthang. He assured continued coordination between the State Government, executing agencies and public for sustainable and sensitive infrastructure development.

It may be recalled that unprecedented heavy rainfall, flash floods, Cyclone Remal (June 2024) and devastating cloudbursts in May-June, 2025 caused extensive damage to infrastructure in Mangan District, washing away several critical bridges including the earlier structure over Taram Chu. The destruction severely impacted connectivity to Lachen, disrupting tourism, essential supplies and strategic movement.

The newly constructed 400-foot-long Bailey Suspension Steel Bridge over Taram Chu and the restoration of 28-kilometre Chungthang-Lachen axis represent a major milestone in post-disaster recovery efforts.

Engineered to withstand high-altitude conditions, seismic sensitivity and extreme discharge levels typical of the region, the bridge is designed as a resilient and durable structure.

The restoration re-establishes a vital lifeline between Chungthang and Lachen, ensuring smooth movement of civilians and tourists, reliable supply of essential commodities, enhanced disaster response capability and strengthened national security logistics.

Following the inauguration programme, the Minister of State proceeded to Chungthang for a scheduled review meeting with the district administration.

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accelerate implementation and ensure timely completion of all assigned tasks with optimal results.

DC directed all departments to undertake their designated responsibilities with utmost seriousness and adhere strictly to timelines.

Earlier, Mr Dorjee P Bhutia, Assistant Engineer, Culture Department, presented an overview of the project and informed that the project has been sanctioned in the current financial year of which, the tendering

process has been completed and work has commenced.

Following the meeting, a site visit was conducted, during which necessary arrangements and preparatory measures were discussed to ensure systematic planning and smooth execution of the forthcoming foundation stone laying ceremony.

The meeting concluded with a collective resolve to work in close coordination to make the event a successful one.

## FSSAI CEO calls for nationwide crackdown on High-Risk Food Commodities at 49<sup>th</sup> CAC meeting

**Gangtok, March 2:** Mr Rajit Punhani Chief Executive Officer Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) urged States and Union Territories to significantly strengthen on-ground enforcement mechanisms, with a sharp focus on high-risk food categories, during the 49<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Central Advisory Committee (CAC) held in Gangtok, Sikkim, today.

Mr Rajit Punhani CEO emphasised the need for risk-based inspections and sustained surveillance drives in high-risk commodities, such as milk and milk products, edible oils, spices and honey. He called for strict and visible action against non-compliant Food Business Operators (FBOs), directing States/UTs to undertake special enforcement drives and regularly share updates on actions taken. He underlined that consistent enforcement and proactive public disclosure of outcomes are critical to deterring violations and reinforcing consumer confidence.

The CEO further stressed the importance of strengthening

the food safety workforce at the State/UT level. He encouraged States/UTs to expedite recruitment to fill vacant posts of Food Safety Officers and other key technical personnel to ensure effective implementation of the Food Safety and Standards Act. Adequate manpower, he noted, is essential for sustaining enforcement intensity and improving inspection coverage across districts.

Reiterating the importance of an effective consumer grievance redressal mechanism, CEO directed States/UTs to ensure time-bound resolution of food safety complaints and conduct periodic high-level reviews. He emphasised that prompt response to consumer concerns, coupled with transparent communication of enforcement actions, would enhance accountability and public trust.

The meeting also deliberated on strengthening centralised surveillance systems, leveraging data-driven decision-making and improving coordination between FSSAI and

State authorities to generate credible national-level insights on food safety trends. Discussions were held on streamlining licensing and registration processes to facilitate ease of compliance, while maintaining robust regulatory oversight.

Mr US Dhyani, Executive Director, FSSAI, Dr Satyen Kumar Panda, Executive Director (CS) and Advisor, FSSAI and Mr Tshewang Gyachho Health Secretary-cum-Commissioner Food Safety were also present on the occasion. Approximately 110 officials participated in the meeting, including Commissioners of Food Safety (CFS), representatives from States and UTs, senior FSSAI officers and stakeholders from the food industry, agriculture sector, laboratories and research institutions.

The 49<sup>th</sup> CAC meeting reaffirmed the collective resolve of FSSAI and State/UT authorities to build a stronger, enforcement-led, and consumer-centric food safety ecosystem to ensure the availability of safe and wholesome food across the country.

## National Level Training Workshop on Survey and Documentation of Ayurvedic Medicinal Plants

**Gangtok, February 28:** Two-day National Level Training Workshop on Survey and Documentation of Ayurvedic Medicinal Plants, organised by Regional Ayurveda Research Institute, Gangtok in collaboration with GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment concluded at GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, Pangthang, today.

The programme began with a guided visit to various laboratories. The visit was supervised by Dr Sandeep Rawat Scientist-D GBPNIIHE, SRC Sikkim, Research Officer Botany, RARI Sikkim, Dr Jagdish Chandra Arya Research Officer Ayurveda, RARI Sikkim, Dr Lijima C and Dr Mayank Joshi from the GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment.

At the Analytical Laboratory, participants were briefed on soil nutrient analysis and fertility assessment and its importance in supporting agricultural practices. Experts also demonstrated spring water testing procedures, identifying potential health risks and explaining scientific methods adopted for revival and restoration of springs.

During the visit to the

Dendrochronology Laboratory, participants were introduced to the study of tree rings for assessing tree health, pollution levels and climatic variations through growth pattern analysis.

At the Tissue Culture Laboratory, deliberations focused on habitat degradation, plant-based livelihoods and conservation strategies. Experts elaborated on lab-to-field cultivation techniques, highlighting the propagation of rare and endangered medicinal plant species under controlled conditions followed by acclimatisation in natural environments to ensure sustainable survival.

The technical session featured three expert presentations namely Dr Animesh Sen Assistant Research Officer Botany, CCRAS-CARI, Kolkata on Field to Figures-Documentation Strategies and Quantitative Analysis of Ethnomedicinal Practices.

Dr Sanatan Barthwal Scientist-G, Plant Physiology Discipline, Division of Genetics and Tree Improvement, Forest Research Institute, Dehradun spoke on Hydroponic Cultivation of Medicinal Plants.

Dr Raman Nautiyal Former Scientist, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education and Founder, EV Research and Coordinator, Bio-statistics Institute of Green Economy, Dehradun delivered a session on Planning Sample Survey for Assessing Economic Value, Availability and Demand-Supply of Medicinal Plants.

Earlier, Dr Sandeep Rawat Scientist-D GBPNIIHE, SRC Sikkim, and his team conducted a field visit within the premises, acquainting scholars with ongoing research initiatives and conservation efforts related to biodiversity and medicinal plants.

The programme was attended by Dr Prashant T Ilankar Director, Geological Survey of India, Head, Spices Board Research Station, Indian Cardamom Research Institute, Dr John Joe Verghese, Regional Head, GBPNIIHE Sikkim, Dr Rajesh Joshi, Assistant Director In-charge, CCRAS-RARI Sikkim along with research scholars, practitioners, students and other dignitaries.

The workshop concluded with an interactive session.

## State Food Testing Laboratory inaugurated

**Pakyong, March 3:** State Food Testing Laboratory, established by the Health and Family Welfare Department under Food and Drug Administration, in collaboration with Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) was inaugurated by Mr GT Dhungel Minister for Health and Family Welfare, AYUSH Department in the presence of Mr TT Bhutia MLA-cum-Advisor for Health and Family Welfare Department and Dr Satyen Kumar Panda Executive Director (CS) and Advisor for RCD and QA, FSSAI, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India at Chuwatar, Singtam, today.

The facility marks a major step forward in strengthening the State's food safety system with advanced scientific testing and analysis of food samples, while ensuring compliance with safety standards to safeguard public health.

Addressing the gathering, Mr GT Dhungel Minister for Health and Family Welfare, AYUSH Department expressed his appreciation for the collaborative efforts of the departments in establishing advanced food safety facilities in the State. He highlighted that the high-end equipment has been procured from Singapore to ensure optimum performance in quality testing, further stating that only dedicated and trained officials should be deputed in the sector, as it demands commitment and technical expertise.

Further, Minister highlighted various growing opportunities in the State due to its organic status, while urging the officials to utilise the newly installed equipment with caution and precision to uphold the standards of food safety measures and quality control.

Additionally, Dr Satyen Kumar Panda Executive Director (CS) and Advisor for RCD and QA, FSSAI, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India stated that the laboratory is equipped with modern testing facilities and will ensure timely and accurate analysis of food products, while facilitating the issuance of FSSAI certifications recognised globally.

He outlined various future plans of action and stressed that the facility would also serve as a centre for the neighbouring states, further assuring assistance to

enhance the food safety and quality in the State.

Mr Tshewang Gyachho Secretary-cum-Food Safety Commissioner gave an overview of the newly established facility, which has been supported by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). He also informed that the 49<sup>th</sup> Central Advisory Committee Meeting on Food Safety was convened in the state, marking an important step in strengthening collaborative efforts in the food regulation and public health domain. He highlighted that the laboratory comprises a State Food Testing Laboratory, Drug Testing Laboratory and a Microbiology Laboratory, all equipped with advanced and high-precision equipment provided with the support of FSSAI.

Further, he stated that the facility has equipment such as High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) systems for quantitative analysis of food and drug samples, Gas Chromatography (GC) systems for detecting volatile compounds and pesticide residues, an Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer (AAS) for heavy metal analysis; Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) Spectroscopy for compound identification and Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS) for trace element detection at ultra-low concentrations, to enhance the accuracy and reliability of testing services available within the State. He added that it also comprises a Biosafety Level 2 (BSL-2) laboratory, first in the state, that enables safe handling and analysis of pathogenic microorganisms associated with food and water-borne diseases.

Further, he emphasised that the establishment of the laboratory shall strengthen State's preparedness in microbiological testing, ensuring food safety and drug quality control.

Prior to it, the dignitaries paid a visit to the microbiology laboratory, while checking the equipment and enquiring on the technicalities of the machines.

Also present were Chairman Health and Family Welfare Department; Advisor for AYUSH; Director, FSSAI, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India; along with dignitaries and officials.

## Awareness-cum-training programme on IPM and NPSS conducted

**Pakyong, March 2:** An awareness-cum-training programme on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices and National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS), was held at Rurban Complex, Pakyong, today.

Organised by State Biocontrol Laboratory, Integrated Pest Management Branch, Department of Agriculture, aims to empower farmers with eco-friendly, sustainable and technologically driven pest control techniques.

Mr Tshering Chopel Bhutia Additional Director, Horticulture and Agriculture Departments

appreciated the work undertaken by the State Biocontrol Laboratory and IPM Branch and emphasised that a similar programme should be taken directly to farmers in the field in future, further urging the staff and officials to use the NPSS mobile application responsibly.

Dr Roshna Gazmer Deputy Director, State Biocontrol Laboratory, Agriculture Department, gave a presentation on IPM, followed by a brief information on management training on various pest and diseases on maize crop and insights on pests such as

armyworm, stem borer, cutworm, aphids and white larvae damage maize leaves, stems, young plants and roots.

She recommended strategies such as crop rotation, spraying neem solution, manually removing pests and using pheromone traps, further stressing that chemical pesticides should be used only under the guidance of agricultural technicians.

Additionally, Dr Arunabha Chakraborty Deputy Director, Central Integrated Pest Management Centre (CIPMC), Tadong, informed on IPM

initiatives in other Indian states and in Sikkim. He highlighted that Sikkim, being a biological state, faces significant challenges for IPM and technical approaches are essential.

He elaborated on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are being used to make farming more scientific and sustainable, helping farmers monitor crop diseases, pests, nutrient deficiencies, weather forecasts, irrigation planning and yield prediction.

Furthermore, Dr Roman Lepcha Assistant Director,

CIPMC, provided details on the NPSS mobile application, which allows farmers to upload photos of pests or crop diseases for immediate identification and management recommendations and its effective use.

The programme was attended by Deputy Director, Agriculture Department along with officials and staff from the State Biocontrol Laboratory, IPM, Agriculture and Horticulture Departments, field Inspectors, local assistants, field workers and farmers.

## Bhumchu Festival 2026 celebrated

**Gyalshing, March 3:** Tashiding Monastery opened its doors for devotees coming to the auspicious occasion of Bhumchu from various places.

Mr Sonam Lama Minister for Ecclesiastical Department attended the sacred Bhumchu festival held.

He was accompanied by Mr Tshering T Bhutia Minister Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Mr Tenzing D Denzongpa DC Gyalshing, Mr Tshering Sherpa SP Gyalshing; Mr CS Subba SDM Yuksom, BDO

Chongrang; BDO Yuksom; Zilla Members; Deputy Commandant 72<sup>nd</sup> Battalion SSB; Medical officers of 72<sup>nd</sup> Battalion SSB, Panchayat representatives; and officials from various departments.

The sacred Bhumchu Festival, deeply rooted in Sikkimese Buddhist tradition, attracts a large number of devotees and visitors from across the State and neighbouring regions. The holy Bhumchu ceremony symbolises peace, prosperity, and well-being and is regarded as one of the most auspicious and

spiritually significant festivals of Sikkim.

Devotees from across the state and neighbouring countries gathered around the sacred Tashiding monastery to participate in the holy Bhumchu festival. Bhumchu, a pious Buddhist festival is held annually at Drakar Tashiding Monastery in the Gyalshing District of Sikkim.

The distribution of holy water (Bhumchu) and the audience of the holy Bumpa (Vase) commenced from 01:40 am onwards.

## Labour Secretary attends 5<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference

**New Delhi, February 28:** A team of Labour Department headed by Mr Bhim Thatal Secretary Labour Department attended 5<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference with States and Union Territories on Labour Codes and Other Aspects at EPFO Head Office, Kidwai Nagar in New Delhi on February 27-28, 2026.

The conference was organised by the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), Government of India, which was chaired by Dr Mansukh Mandaviya Union Minister for Labour and Employment in the first day and by Ms Vandana Gurnani Union Secretary, MoLE the next day.

During the conference, the newly implemented four Labour Codes subsuming all earlier

enforced 29 labour laws and state rules were discussed in detail.

Mr Bhim Thatal Secretary mentioned that Sikkim has some special provisions under the Article 371F of the Constitution and therefore, the state is examining the applicability and implementation of these four Labour Codes. A high level committee is also constituted to study these Codes in lines with the special provisions under the Article 371F and old laws of Sikkim.

He also raised issue of delay in starting the construction of 100 bedded hospital under the Employee's State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) for which land has been identified at Mamring in Namchi District and already transferred to the Corporation. He

further stressed upon establishment of sub regional office of the ESIC in Sikkim.

The delegates of Sikkim were also invited by the Ministry of Labour and Employment at Shram Shakti Bhawan, where a separate meeting on applicability of amendments or any other legal procedure to address the issues related with Sikkim were widely discussed with the Central Government officers.

The team also had the participation of Mr Shiromani Neopaney Additional Labour Commissioner, Mr Navin Sharma, Ms Rajni Rai and Ms Knawang C Phalungtharpa Assistant Labour Commissioners.

people of the State.

Highlighting on the deep rooted cultural and traditional similarities shared between the neighbouring regions, he emphasised the need for unity and collective efforts to ensure inclusive development.

In addition, he stated that the Khas community has established its identity globally for its rich cultural legacy and heritage, further stating that both states are actively working toward safeguarding the identity of left-out communities. He also stressed the importance of creating awareness among the younger generation on the cultural values and traditions of the Khas community.

MP Darjeeling Mr Raju Bista was felicitated by the organising committee, honouring his contribution in various field.

Additionally, Mr Arun Kumar Upreti Minister for Rural Development Department congratulated and acknowledged the contribution of members in organising and sustaining the observance of the Foundation Day celebration. He stated that the occasion marks a historic day of unity, bringing together various sections of the community on a common platform.

He also emphasised on the importance of preserving culture, traditions and language of the community and underscored the need to pass these on to the younger generation.

Highlighting the strength of collective unity, he stated that with unity, Sikkim would remain strong and resilient, and reiterated the vision of Sunaulo, Samriddha ani Samartha Sikkim. He further

affirmed that efforts to secure Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for the 12 left-out communities of Sikkim is progressing in a positive direction.

Prior to it, Mr Narayan Khatiwara President of the organising committee and Chairman RDD acknowledged the declaration of February 26 as Khas Diwas and its recognition as a Government holiday. He also referred to various measures undertaken by the State Government for the welfare and development of the Khas community. He highlighted the historical significance of 26 February, in which ASKCBKS was registered.

He stated that the observance of the day serves as a common platform for the Khas community to come together and preserve its cultural identity, and noted that the large participation of members contributed to the successful conduct of the programme.

Providing a brief overview of the history of the Khas community, Dr Tek Bahadur Chettri highlighted on the origin and evolution of the community and its presence in the State, while reflecting on the historical roots of the Khas community.

He stressed on the cultural heritage, tradition and festivals of the community, further emphasising the need to preserve the cultural values for future generations.

One of key highlights of the day was the presentation of Sikkim Gaurav Samman 2026 to Padma Shri Ms Keepu Tshering Lepcha Founder, Human Development Foundation Sikkim in recognition

## DC Mangan chairs coordination meeting to review preparedness for H5N1 Avian Influenza

**Mangan, March 5:** A coordination meeting to discuss preventive measures and preparedness for H5N1 Avian Influenza or Bird Flu was held in the office of District Magistrate Mangan, today.

The meeting was convened following the detection of the virus in carcass of an owl found near Gaikhana Ward under Kabi Block. Officials informed that the case is currently limited to wild birds and no infection has been reported in domestic poultry or livestock in the district so far.

The meeting deliberated on measures for prevention, control and surveillance, including the identification of possible containment zones in accordance with prescribed protocols. Concerned departments were directed to closely monitor the situation.

During the meeting, Mr Anant Jain DM Mangan emphasised the need for public to immediately inform local authorities in the event of unusual bird deaths and advised to avoid handling bird carcasses or approaching birds found on the ground, as infected birds may lose the ability to fly.

Dr Dechen O Kaleon Additional Director, Animal

Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department informed that no cases have been detected in domestic species.

Dr Anita Bhutia Chief Medical Officer, District Hospital Mangan mentioned that a few instances of individuals experiencing flu after consuming poultry meat have been reported from some locations and samples have been sent for testing. However, these could also be due to common bacterial or viral infections, as no human cases of the virus have been confirmed.

Officials were also advised to sensitise public in potentially affected areas to avoid consumption or purchase of poultry meat during social gatherings such as weddings and to encourage individuals experiencing flu-like symptoms to visit the nearest healthcare centre.

The DM highlighted that there is no cause for panic at present, while urging all concerned to remain vigilant and prepared to respond promptly if and when required.

The meeting also had the presence and participation of SDM Mangan, DFO Territorial, Additional SP, Joint Director-cum-DPO and other officials.

## IPR Deptt convenes preliminary meeting for First Sikkim International Film Festival 2026

**Gangtok, March 2:** A preliminary meeting regarding the first Sikkim International Film Festival (SIFF) 2026, tentatively scheduled to be held from March 19-22, 2026, was convened at the Office of the Secretary, Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD), today.

The meeting was chaired by Mrs Annapurna Alley Secretary IPRD and attended by Mr Yougan Tamang Press Secretary to CM, Mr Sanjay Dilpali Rai Chairperson, Culture Development Board, Mr Sunil Mothay Director IPRD, Ms Tribeny Rai filmmaker, representative from the Tourism and Civil Aviation Department and officers and staff of IPR Department.

At the outset, the Secretary briefed about the proposed four-day Sikkim International Film Festival to be held in Gangtok in March 2026. She highlighted that SIFF 2026 aims to promote Sikkim as a hub for film shooting, tourism, culture, and the creative economy. The festival also seeks to enhance

national and international collaboration with the Sikkim film sector and encourage local filmmakers and audiovisual creators through SIFF and WAVES Bazaar, she added.

The meeting discussed the constitution of the core team responsible for implementation and deliberated on key planning aspects, including regional film screenings, film competition themes, budget framework and funding through sponsors and CSR, brand strategy encompassing the festival's tagline and theme, and national and local media management.

Further, the meeting deliberated on the approval of logos and overall strategy by the core committee, formation of preview and sub-committees involving departmental and nodal departments, and finalisation of the launch timeline for promotional activities such as posters, teasers, and competition announcements, along with other strategic initiatives.

of her contribution to human development and social service in Sikkim.

Following that, a series of felicitation ceremony for the Khas Gaurav Sammaan was also carried out to honour their contribution for community service in various field.

Adding to the celebration, a

series of cultural performances including Khas Nritya, Talwar Nritya, Maruni Nritya and Khajjadi Nritya were presented, showcasing the culture and heritage of the Khas community.

Followed by unveiling of Khas poster, release of Khas calendar and a book and song launch ceremony.

*Contd. from front page*

### Chief Minister...

contribution across diverse fields.

He further underscored key initiatives undertaken by the State Government to support education and spoke about various opportunities namely, NB Bhandari Fellowship and APATAN Fellowship Programmes and also urged uniform coordination and work for the progress of Sikkim.

Further, he briefed on the initiatives undertaken towards securing Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for the 12 Left-Out communities of Sikkim and articulated on the State Government endeavour in preserving the language, culture and traditions of different community and highlighted programmes implemented for the welfare of the Khas community.

The Chief Minister announced that the newly constructed Sikkim Medical College will be named Savitri Devi Medical College, as a testament to honour her contribution in the field of social service.

At the onset, the Chief Minister inspected the venue of Khas Bhawan where he observed displays depicting Masta Sthan, Jhakri Jhaki, Sansari Puja, Devta Than and Guru Puja.

Speaking during the event Mr Raju Bista MP Lok Sabha Darjeeling congratulated the attendees on the occasion of the 31<sup>st</sup> Foundation Day celebration of ASKCBKS and commended the Chief Minister of Sikkim for his efforts toward the holistic development and welfare of the

## Chief Minister interacts with young cricketers

**Pakyong, March 1:** Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang spent time with the young players of the Sikkim Cricket Association at the Mining Cricket Ground, today.

During his visit, the Chief Minister prepared and shared a meal with the players and engaged in discussions with them, calling the interaction a memorable experience. He appreciated the cricketers for their commitment to

the sport, disciplined attitude and determination to progress.

Emphasising the need to encourage talent at the grassroots level, he noted that the dedication displayed by the players indicates positive prospects for sports in the State. He also reaffirmed the State Government's commitment to supporting young athletes and strengthening the sports culture across Sikkim.

## SCA hosts Exhibition Match

**Pakyong, March 1:** On the concluding day of the Inter-Department Cricket Tournament organised by Sikkim Cricket Association (SICA), an exhibition match was held at Sikkim Cricket Ground, Rangpo, between Chief Minister XI and Chief Secretary XI, today.

The Chief Minister XI was led by the Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang and also Chief Patron of SICA, while the Chief Secretary XI was captained by Mr R Telang Chief Secretary. The

match was organised to promote participation among officers and officials from various departments.

The Chief Minister XI batted first and scored 116 runs in 25 overs. The Chief Secretary XI chased the target and won the match by three wickets.

The exhibition match was followed by the final of the 1<sup>st</sup> Inter-Department Cricket Tournament between the Rural Development Department and the Commerce and Industries Department.

## Chief Secretary chairs 5<sup>th</sup> State Cooperative Development Committee meeting

**Gangtok, March 5:** Fifth meeting of the State Cooperative Development Committee was convened at the Conference Hall of Tashiling Secretariat under the chairmanship of Mr R Telang Chief Secretary, today. The Committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary to coordinate and promote the development of cooperative societies in the State, with a focus in strengthening the cooperative movement as an effective means for rural development.

Ms Jabi Thapa Principal Registrar-cum-Secretary, Cooperation Department delivered a comprehensive presentation on the status and progress of the cooperative sector in the State. She informed that there are presently 3,745 cooperative societies registered in the State, of which 1,418 are functional, 2,082 are non-functional and 245 are under the process of closure, with a total membership of 87,792.

Principal Registrar-cum-Secretary further reviewed the Centrally Sponsored Schemes being implemented under the Ministry of Cooperation. These include the computerisation of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), computerisation of the Office of Registrar of Cooperative Societies and the development of National Cooperative Database. She also highlighted initiatives undertaken for the establishment of new PACS, dairy and fisheries cooperative societies in Gram Panchayat Units where such societies are yet to be established.

She also elaborated on efforts to transform PACS into vibrant economic entities by facilitating convergence with

various Government schemes and services. Progress in cooperative banking in the State was also highlighted, including developments related to the Sikkim State Cooperative Bank (SISCO) and Citizen Urban Cooperative Bank.

Under the theme Cooperation among Cooperatives, she highlighted initiatives such as opening of accounts in cooperative banks, strengthening linkages with allied services and promoting membership of State Cooperative Societies in national-level cooperative institutions. She also briefed the Committee on initiatives related to the White Revolution 2.0.

She further informed the Committee about the formulation of Sikkim State Cooperative Policy 2026 and various measures undertaken by the department for strengthening and revitalising cooperative societies across the State.

She also reviewed the progress of the Cooperative Farming initiative introduced following the directions of Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang during the International Year of Cooperatives programme. She concluded her presentation with an overview of the dividends distributed by cooperative societies for the financial year 2024-25.

The meeting was also attended by Dr S Anbalagan Secretary, Agriculture Department; Dr Sharman Rai Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department; Mr Rajendra Sharma Secretary (Revenue), Finance Department and other senior officials from the concerned line departments.

## Press Release from SM Developers

**Gangtok, March 1:** In a decisive move to deepen Sikkim's premium hospitality infrastructure and position Gangtok as a high-value tourism, wedding and Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) destination, Chief Minister Mr Prem Singh Tamang laid the foundation stone for Hyatt Regency Gangtok, a landmark 150-room five-star hotel coming up in the heart of the capital city, during a formal ceremony held at Chintan Bhawan, today.

Chief Minister said, "This foundation stone is a symbol of trust, partnership, and the bright future, we are building together in our beautiful Himalayan state, Sikkim. At the onset, I warmly congratulate the SM Group and Poddar Group for their visionary initiative and for placing their confidence in Sikkim". He also extended his sincere appreciation to the leadership of Hyatt for choosing Gangtok as a destination for their prestigious global brand.

He added, "Tourism is a vital pillar of our economy and a lifeline for thousands of families. The flow of visitors to our state consistently exceeds more than double our population, reflecting Sikkim's growing implication as a preferred destination. I am confident that the Hyatt Regency will reflect the spirit of Sikkim, showcasing local art, promoting local cuisine, sourcing local produce and supporting local talent".

Located in the Mintokgang area within the Suryavilas mixed-use development, the hotel site is strategically positioned just 2 km from MG Marg, within close proximity to major tourist landmarks including Enchey Monastery and the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology and along SH-310, the key arterial road leading to Nathu La Pass, ensuring seamless accessibility for both leisure and business travellers.

With Gangtok recording over 17 lakh tourist arrivals in 2025, including more than 71,000 foreign visitors, the State has witnessed consistent year-on-year growth driven by improved connectivity and reopening of key tourist circuits. Sikkim currently has the capacity to host approximately



42,000-45,000 tourists per day, and the addition of 150 luxury rooms in the city centre is expected to attract higher-spending domestic and international travellers.

The 150-room hotel will be developed within a larger 3.27-acre master planned site and is designed to address the existing demand-supply gap in the luxury segment, particularly within the city centre where premium inventory remains limited.

The project will be developed by Gyalsing Hotels Private Limited, an SPV under SM Hotels and Resorts Pvt Ltd, the hospitality arm of SM Developers. While speaking on the project, Mr. Vikas Agarwal, MD and CEO, SM Developers, said, "This development marks a significant milestone for Sikkim's hospitality landscape. Designed by SCSY Studio, Singapore to global standards, the hotel will offer experiential luxury, premium culinary offerings, and modern event infrastructure. We are confident it will emerge as the preferred destination for discerning travellers, corporate delegations, and international visitors exploring the Eastern Himalayas."

The hotel will feature a 180-cover all-day dining restaurant with alfresco seating, a specialty restaurant, bar and lounge, Regency Club, a temperature-controlled outdoor swimming pool, a 3,000 sq. ft. spa, gymnasium,

family activity zones, and approximately 13,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting and event spaces, positioning it as a key anchor for MICE tourism in the Eastern Himalayas. The integrated development will also include a licensed casino facility, further strengthening Gangtok's positioning in high-value tourism and regulated entertainment hospitality.

With large-format event infrastructure integrated into the project, the hotel is also expected to support festival tourism, conventions, destination weddings, cultural showcases, and corporate summits, thereby enabling Gangtok to evolve into a year-round events destination aligned with national initiatives such as Swadesh Darshan 2.0.

The project is expected to generate substantial direct and indirect employment, strengthen local supply chains across agriculture and services, and catalyse allied sectors including transport, handicrafts, and cultural tourism.

With this development, the State Government reinforces its strategy of attracting responsible private investment into high-quality infrastructure, strengthening Gangtok's global positioning and ensuring tourism-led growth that is sustainable, inclusive and future-ready.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Inter-Department Cricket Tournament concludes

**Pakyong, March 3:** Final match of the 1<sup>st</sup> Inter-Department Cricket Tournament organised by Sikkim Cricket Association (SICA) was played between Commerce and Industries Department and Rural Development Department at the Sikkim Cricket Ground, Rangpo, today. The match, which was originally scheduled to be played on March 1, had to be postponed due to rain.

The Rural Development Department clinched the victory by 7 wickets, emerging as the champions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of the Inter-Department Cricket Tournament.

Mr Sanjeet Kharel MLA Namthang Rateypani, attended the tournament as the chief guest

in the presence of Mr Arun Upreti Minister for Rural Development Department.

Mr Binod Chettri from Rural Development Department was named Player of the Match for his outstanding performance.

Likewise, the Player of the Tournament award was presented to Mr Pempa Tamang from Commerce and Industries Department.

Mr Pranil Pradhan of Rural Development Department secured the highest wicket-taker award, while Mr Pempa Tamang from Commerce and Industries Department finished as the highest scorer of the tournament.

The event concluded with a prize distribution ceremony,

wherein the winners and runners-up were honoured for their performance.

The winning team of the tournament was awarded a cash prize of ₹10 lakh, while the runners-up received a cash prize of ₹5 lakh, sponsored by the State Bank of Sikkim (SBS).

The Inter-Department Cricket Tournament witnessed the participation of 28 government departments and public sector undertakings (PSUs), with the objective of fostering teamwork and sportsmanship among Government employees while further promoting a strong sporting culture in the State.