

Press Release from Commerce & Industries Department, Government of Sikkim

Commerce & Industries Department, Government of Sikkim, Congratulates Agapi Sikkim on Winning the Visionary Women's Award at BEAUTY&YOU India Awards 2026.

Gangtok, 15 October 2026: Agapi, a Sikkim-based startup founded in 2019 by Ms. Rinzing Choden and with Ms. Varsha Shrestha as co-founder, has been recognised with the Visionary Women's Award at the BEAUTY&YOU India Awards 2026, presented by The Estée Lauder Companies in association with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India, under the Startup India initiative.

As part of the BEAUTY&YOU India Awards 2026, winners across five categories will share a total prize pool of up to US\$500,000, in addition to strategic mentorship from leaders at The Estée Lauder Companies and access to the Startup India ecosystem.

The award marks another significant milestone in Agapi's entrepreneurial journey. The venture is also the first startup from Sikkim to secure Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), highlighting the growing potential of homegrown enterprises from the State to attract investment and establish a presence in wider markets.

Agapi Sikkim's journey reflects the determination, vision and entrepreneurial spirit of its founders. Their achievement is an inspiration for aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly women seeking to transform their ideas into sustainable businesses. It also highlights the opportunities emerging for Sikkim-based startups to gain national recognition and connect with investors, markets and industry leaders.

Agapi has participated in the Commerce & Industries Department's enterprise development initiatives, including Sikkim Utsav, which provides local entrepreneurs with opportunities to showcase their products, engage with buyers and explore new market linkages. The founders have also participated in capacity-building and training programmes under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Scheme, aimed at strengthening enterprise capabilities and developing business readiness.

The Department continues to strengthen Sikkim's entrepreneurial ecosystem through targeted interventions in capacity building, market access, enterprise development and investment promotion. Initiatives under Sikkim INSPIRES along with buyer-seller meets, packaging and branding support, e-commerce market linkages and other State programmes, are helping local enterprises enhance their competitiveness and explore opportunities for growth and expansion.

The Department views Agapi Sikkim's achievement as an encouraging example of how entrepreneurial determination, combined with institutional support and market opportunities, can help homegrown enterprises reach new milestones. The success of its founders reinforces the importance of nurturing women-led enterprises and creating an enabling environment for startups to grow, attract investment and generate economic opportunities within the State.

Agapi is a Sikkim-based, women-led sustainable skincare and lifestyle brand that combines indigenous Himalayan knowledge with natural ingredients and responsible production practices. The company offers a range of handcrafted skincare products, including soaps, facial cleansers, creams, body oils and other personal-care products, drawing on locally sourced Himalayan botanicals such as Guras (rhododendron), mugwort and other natural ingredients. The Commerce & Industries Department, Government of Sikkim, extends its heartfelt congratulations to Ms. Rinzing Choden and Ms. Varsha Shrestha and wishes Agapi Sikkim continued success in its journey of innovation, growth and expansion.