

Press Release from the Office of Block Development Officer, Passingdang, Dzongu

Clean Tholung Campaign-2026 Flagged Off in Dzongu

DZONGU, 26 AUGUST 2026: In a landmark community-led conservation initiative, the Clean Tholung Campaign-2026, the first-ever joint massive plastic and solid waste cleanliness drive at the sacred Tholung pilgrimage trail, was flagged off today from Bay Village under Sakyong Pentong GPU, Dzongu.

The campaign, being undertaken under the initiative of the Block Administrative Centre (BAC), Passingdang, Dzongu, seeks to restore and preserve the sanctity of the historic Tholung landscape and pave the way towards making the entire pilgrimage corridor free from plastic and other non-biodegradable waste.

The campaign was flagged off under the leadership of Hon'ble Minister-cum-Area MLA, Shri Pintso Namgyal Lepcha, with the participation of the Tholung Gumpa Management Committee, Gram Panchayat Units of Dzongu Block, Forest Department, Dzongu, Executive Members of the C&D Employees Association, Mangan District, schools, State Bank of Sikkim, Dzongu Branch, and community members.

Tholung Gumpa, an ancient and revered monastery, holds immense spiritual, cultural and historical significance, preserving the rich Buddhist traditions, heritage and invaluable artefacts of the region. The site attracts a large number of pilgrims every year during Pang Lhabsol, besides witnessing the periodic Khamsel Ceremony, which draws devotees and visitors from different places.

However, its remote and high-altitude location, approximately 13 kilometres from the last motorable road at Bay Village has made the transportation and disposal of accumulated waste particularly challenging. Over the years, considerable quantities of legacy and non-biodegradable waste have accumulated along the pilgrimage route.

The three-day campaign, commencing on 26 August and culminating on 28 August 2026 on the auspicious occasion of Pang Lhabsol, will involve the intensive collection, segregation and manual transportation of accumulated waste from the Tholung trail down to the Plastic Waste Management Unit (PWMU) at BAC, Passingdang, where the collected material will be appropriately processed and managed.

The campaign will cover the approximately 16-kilometre trekking corridor from Bay Village to Thegung, beyond Tholung Monastery. As part of the initiative, IEC signage boards carrying strong messages on cleanliness, responsible pilgrimage and plastic-free practices will also be installed at resting sheds and prominent locations along the entire trail.

More than a cleanliness drive, the Clean Tholung Campaign-2026 is envisioned as the beginning of a sustained movement to protect the sacred landscape of Tholung. It seeks to inspire every pilgrim and visitor to reduce waste, avoid single-use plastics and carry back whatever waste they bring into the sacred land.

The campaign sends a clear message: the responsibility of preserving Tholung does not end with cleaning it, it begins with ensuring that it remains clean for generations to come.

With collective participation and community ownership, Dzongu takes a decisive step towards protecting its sacred heritage, fragile mountain ecosystem and cultural legacy