

Press Release from Forest & Environment Department

Khangchendzonga National Park Recognized Among the Best Managed Protected Areas in the World by IUCN

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has conferred a special recognition upon Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP), Sikkim, declaring it as one of the Best Managed Protected Areas in the World. The IUCN has rated Khangchendzonga National Park as “Good” in its 2025 global review of natural World Heritage Sites — making it India’s only site in the country to secure this grade.

The IUCN World Heritage Outlook, launched in 2014, provides a global assessment of all natural and mixed World Heritage Sites and evaluates their conservation prospects over time. These assessments, conducted by independent experts using referenced evidence, summarize the current state and trends of each site’s values, the threats they face, and the effectiveness of their protection and management. The outcomes are published in the World Heritage Outlook Report. This prestigious international honour highlights India’s and Government of Sikkim’s unwavering commitment to biodiversity conservation, sustainable ecosystem management, and community-led environmental protection.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister for Forest & Environment, Shri. Pintso Namgyal Lepcha stated:

“This recognition is a matter of great pride for the state. It reaffirms Sikkim’s holistic approach towards conservation, where nature and culture coexist in harmony. The efforts of the forest officials and staffs is commendable.”

Located in the Eastern Himalayas, Khangchendzonga National Park spans an area of approximately 1,784 sq. km and encompasses Mount Khangchendzonga (8,586 m)—the world’s third-highest peak. The Park is globally renowned for its rich biodiversity, pristine glaciers, alpine meadows, and sacred landscapes, representing a unique blend of natural and cultural heritage.

In 2016, the Park was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site under the Mixed Heritage Category—the first of its kind in India—recognizing both its ecological significance and spiritual heritage.

The latest IUCN recognition reflects the Park’s exemplary management effectiveness, community participation, and eco-friendly tourism practices, all of which have ensured the continued protection of its unique Himalayan ecosystem.