

Press Release from Sikkim State Cooperative Union (SICUN)

Pakyong, November 26: The Sikkim State Cooperative Union (SICUN), in collaboration with the Gangtok District Cooperation Department and the Head Office, Cooperation Department, Sahakar Bhawan organised the State-level culmination programme of the 72nd All India Cooperative Week Celebration 2025 at the SICUN Auditorium, Assam Lingzey, today.

The programme was held under the national theme “Cooperatives as Vehicles for Atmanirbhar Bharat” and in alignment with the International Year of Cooperatives 2025 theme “Cooperatives Build a Better World.” It also coincided with two important national occasions – Constitution Day (Samvidhan Diwas) and National Milk Day, adding special significance to the event.

The function was graced by Shri Jacob Khaling, Political Secretary to the Hon’ble Chief Minister, Cabinet Rank, Government of Sikkim as the Chief Guest.

Among the dignitaries present were: Shri Em Prasad Sharma, Hon’ble Advisor, Excise Department cum Former MLA, Namcheybung; Shri Ashok Pradhan, Hon’ble Advisor, DACS; Shri Purna Hang Subba, Advisor, Hon’ble Sikkim Milk Union; Ms. Pabitra Bhandari, Hon’ble Chairperson, OBC Commission; Respected Shri Shadeo Sharma, Chairman, All Sikkim Contractors Association;

Hon’ble Shri Yougen Tamang, Press Secretary to HCM; Hon’ble Shri Yam Kumar Sharma, Chairman, Sikkim Milk Union; Smt. Bidya Biswakarma, Hon’ble Chairperson, Cooperation Department; Shri B. B. Chettri, Hon’ble Chairman, Panchayati Raj; Shri Stephen Karki, OSD, Cooperation Department; Shri Hari Rijal, OSD to Hon’ble MLA, Namcheybung; Shri Bimal Neopany, OSD, Skill Development; Shri P. P. Sharma, Vice Chairman, Dhri Phadung Bhutia, CEO, SICUN along with the Board Members of SICUN.

The programme also witnessed the gracious presence of Zilla Panchayat Members, Gram Panchayat Presidents and Members of Namcheybung Constituency, senior officers from the Cooperation Department, heads of apex cooperative bodies including Sikkim Milk Union and SIMFED, Deans and Faculty from various universities and colleges, representatives of cooperative societies, staff of SICUN and members of the Press and Media.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Jacob Khaling, Hon’ble Political Secretary to HCM Chief Guest of the programme, lauded SICUN and the Cooperation Department for successfully organising the 72nd All India Cooperative Week across all six districts of Sikkim and for actively involving youth, women, farmers and cooperative leaders.

He encouraged young students and cooperative members to adopt innovative, transparent and people centric cooperative models that can compete at regional, national and global levels.

In his address, Dr. Mangal Jit Rai, Chairman, SICUN, presented an overview of the week-long cooperative celebrations held from 14th to 20th November 2025 across all six districts of Sikkim, under day-wise sub-themes focusing on digitalisation, cooperative education, rural development, national cooperative policy, empowerment of youth and women and expansion of cooperatives into emerging sectors.

He highlighted that the celebrations were organised as follows:

Namchi (14 November): “Promoting Digitalisation to Enhance Operational Efficiency, Accountability, and Transparency” in collaboration with CRC Sikkim, where assistive devices were distributed to Divyangjan and senior citizens, reflecting inclusive cooperative development.

Soreng (15 November): “Tribhuvan Sahakar University Research and Training Transforming Cooperative Education” where E-Certificates of Full Computerisation were awarded to ten MPCS.

Gyalshing (16 November): “Strengthening Rural Development through Cooperatives” focusing on dairy development, where Sikkim Milk Union showcased its growth from 2,100 litres to 70,000 litres of daily milk collection through 540 dairy societies.

Mangan (17 November): “National Cooperative Policy Ecosystem: Structured Roadmap for India’s Cooperatives” organised with DACS, highlighting local product marketing, border livelihoods and the Vibrant Village Programme.

Gangtok (18 November): “Empowering Youth, Women and Weaker Sections through Cooperative Entrepreneurship” emphasising cooperative digitalisation, women’s leadership, and diversification into new activities.

Pakyong (19 November): “Expanding Cooperatives in Emerging Areas such as Tourism, Health, Green Energy, Platform Coops, Kitchen Coops and Other Conceivable Areas” where it was noted that Pakyong became the first district in Sikkim to declare all its cooperatives as E-PACS.

Dr. Rai noted that from Namchi to Soreng, Gyalshing to Mangan, Gangtok to Pakyong, the cooperative message has “resonated across hills and valleys uniting farmers, dairy producers, artisans, youth, women and entrepreneurs under one collective vision of a self-reliant, inclusive, and prosperous Sikkim.”

Further, he highlighted the importance of cooperatives as instruments of socio-economic transformation aligned with the vision of the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Sikkim “Sunaulo Sikkim, Samriddha Sikkim ani Samarth Sikkim.”

The programme also marked National Milk Day, commemorating the birth anniversary of Dr. Verghese Kurien, Father of the White Revolution in India. Dr. Rai recalled his association with the dairy cooperative sector, having served as the fifth successor to Dr. Kurien at the National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India (NCDFI) from 2017 to 2024 and underscored the transformative role of dairy cooperatives in strengthening rural livelihoods.

As part of the observance of Constitution Day (Samvidhan Diwas), the Preamble of the Constitution of India was read out under the theme “Hamara Samvidhan- Hamara Swabhiman” by Ms. Rajina Chhetri, Incharge, Public Relations & Digital Communications Division, SICUN. As part of the programme, special messages from the Hon’ble Governor, the Hon’ble Chief Minister and the Hon’ble Minister for Rural Development and Cooperation Department were read out by Smt. Indira Sharma, Executive Officer, SICUN; Shri Pemba Tshering Lepcha, Additional Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Head Office, Cooperation Department and Ms. Thinlay Pemu Lamtha, Sikkim State Cooperative Union (SICUN), respectively.

Shri K. P. Sharma, Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCS), highlighted the evolution of the cooperative movement from its global origin in 1844 to India’s growth under the Cooperative Societies Act of 1904. He noted that India now has one of the largest cooperative networks in the world and commended Sikkim’s strong and inclusive cooperative system supported by proactive state policies.

A key highlight of the day was an Inter-Institution Speech Competition on the theme: “Transforming Sikkim’s Cooperatives: Assessment, Evaluation & a Five-Year Plan for Accelerated Growth.”

Participants from eleven leading institutions took part:

Carmel Teacher’s Training Institute; College of Agricultural Engineering and Post-Harvest Technology (CAEPHT), Ranipool; DIET, Gangtok; Harkamaya College of Education; ICFAI University; Medhavi Skills University; Shri Ramaswamy Memorial (SRM) University; Sikkim Government College, Burtuk; Sikkim Manipal University; Sikkim National Law University and Sikkim University.

The distinguished panel of judges comprised Ms. Shikha, Ex-General Manager, NABARD, New Delhi and Ms. Kesang Yanki Bhutia, Additional RCS, Cooperation Department, Pakyong.

The Guest Judge for today’s Speech Competition, Ms. Shikha, Ex-General Manager, NABARD, New Delhi shared her remarks and words of encouragement, commending the participants for their analytical insights and innovative ideas towards transforming Sikkim’s cooperative movement.

In the competition, Ms. Deesha Ghosh from Sikkim Manipal University secured the first Position and received a cash prize of ₹10,000 with a memento and certificate; Mr. Bhupendra Adhikari from Sikkim University secured the second Position and received ₹7,000 with a memento and certificate and Ms. Tshamta Shivakoti from ICFAI University secured the third Position and received ₹5,000 with a memento and certificate.

All other participants were presented with mementos and certificates of participation in recognition of their commendable efforts.

The programme featured cultural performances including Bhutia Dance, Nepali Dance and a Contemporary Dance, showcasing the rich cultural heritage and unity of Sikkim.

During the ceremony, the Chief Guest distributed: Membership Certificates to 3 newly enrolled cooperatives, Certificates and Bee Boxes to 15 Khamdong MPCS members who completed bee-keeping training and Mementos to Heads of Cooperation Departments from Namchi, Soreng, Gyalshing, Mangan, Gangtok & Pakyong as well as to apex cooperative bodies SIMFED, Sikkim Milk Union and DACS in recognition of their contributions to the cooperative movement.

The event was efficiently hosted by Mr. Nirmal Mangar and concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Shri P. P. Sharma, Vice Chairman, SICUN, followed by the National Anthem.