

Press Release From Women, Child, Senior Citizens & Divyangjan Welfare Department, Gangtok District

Gangtok, 02 Dec: The Women, Child, Senior Citizen & Divyangjan Welfare Department, Gangtok District, in coordination with the Sikkim Government Retired Employees Welfare Association, celebrated the International Day of Older Persons at GMC Hall, Deorali. The event witnessed an enthusiastic and jubilant gathering of senior citizens from various constituencies across Gangtok District.

The programme was graced by the presence of several distinguished guests, including:

- 1) Mr. Gayden Chopel Bhutia, Commissioner, GMC – Chief Guest
- 2) Mr. Tulshi Pradhan, Secretary General, Sikkim Govt. Retired Employees Welfare Association--Guest Of Honour.
- 3) Shri Chiran Rizal, Joint Commissioner –Special Guest
- 4) Mr. Bindhya Shilal, OS – Special Guest

The programme commenced with a warm welcome speech by Ms. Manikala Gurung, Social Welfare Officer, Gangtok District. In her address, she highlighted the theme and intention of the celebration, emphasizing the active, meaningful, and transformative role that older citizens play in building resilient, compassionate, and equitable societies.

She also briefly highlighted the provisions of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, which ensures:

- a) The legal right of senior citizens to claim maintenance from their children or relatives,
- b) Protection of life and property of senior citizens, and
- c) Establishment of old-age homes and support services to uphold dignity and security in old age.

A key highlight of the event was the felicitation of six retired citizens from various Government of Sikkim departments in recognition of their selfless dedication, commitment, and valuable contribution to society. The awardees were:

- 1) Ms. Sonam Doma Bhutia, Kazi Road, Gangtok
- 2) Ms. Susan Bhutia, Development Area
- 3) Mrs. Sarda Gurung, Pani House, Deorali, Gangtok
- 4) Shri Chitra Nath Khanal
- 5) Mr. Pradeep Tamang, Singtam
- 6) Mr. Dhan Bahadur Pradhan, Khamdong, Singtam

The felicitation certificates were presented by the Commissioner, Secretary General Sikkim Govt Retired Employees Welfare Association and Joint Commissioner of GMC.

The event also featured a symbolic cake-cutting ceremony, representing the lifelong service, wisdom, and dedication of senior citizens whose values and contributions continue to strengthen the cultural and social fabric of the community.

In his remarks, Mr. Gayden Chopel Bhutia, Commissioner, GMC, highlighted the priority given by the Government towards the welfare and well-being of older citizens. He mentioned several initiatives, such as:

Creation of wellness parks,

Dedicated recreational spaces, and

Upcoming welfare projects all aimed at enhancing the quality of life and dignity of the elderly population.

Mr. Tulshi Pradhan, Secretary General of the Sikkim Govt. Retired Employees Welfare Association, praised the senior citizens who were felicitated during the event. He stated that the awardees have demonstrated remarkable bravery, dedication, and selfless service throughout their lives.

He further added that they stand as true role models for the younger generation, and that society must continue to learn from their values, discipline, and commitment to public service.

The event reached a lively peak when the entire audience erupted with joy, music, and dance. The hall was filled with energy as senior citizens, officials, and guests celebrated together, reflecting the spirit of unity, happiness, and active ageing. The vibrant participation highlighted the enthusiasm and youthful spirit of the elderly community.

As a heartfelt gesture, gifts were presented to all older citizens in attendance as a token of love, respect, and appreciation, symbolizing the community's gratitude for their contributions and their enduring role in shaping society.

The programme overall was anchored by Ms Nevika Sharma SWI and concluded with vote of thanks from Mr Nigma Tamang SWI.