

PRESS RELEASE FROM TOURISM & CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM.

Gyalshing, 23.06. 2026: Sikkim Marks a Milestone with First-Ever Polaris Adventure Expedition, Showcasing the State's ATV Adventure Tourism Potential.

In a landmark achievement for adventure tourism, Smile Panda Tours & Treks, in collaboration with the Tourism & Civil Aviation Department, Government of Sikkim, successfully concluded the first-ever Polaris Adventure Expedition in Sikkim from 8th to 13th June 2026.

The pioneering expedition traversed an impressive 754-kilometre adventure route across some of Sikkim's most breathtaking and remote destinations, including Phadamchen, Zuluk, Gnathang Valley, Kupup, Tsomgo Lake, Kabi, Lachung, Yumesamdong, Zero Point, Sanglaphu Cho, Lum Village, Dzongu and Gangtok.

As part of the expedition, the team visited Lum Village in Dzongu, accompanied by Shri Tshering Lepcha and the team from Lum Village, to explore and experience its rich cultural heritage, pristine natural environment and scenic beauty. The visit further highlighted the immense potential of community-based tourism and sustainable rural tourism initiatives in the region.

The expedition team extends its heartfelt gratitude to Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Prem Singh Tamang (Golay) for his visionary leadership and unwavering support towards promoting adventure tourism and sustainable development in the State. The team also expresses sincere appreciation to Hon'ble Minister for Tourism & Civil Aviation Shri Tshering T. Bhutia and Advisor, Tourism & Civil Aviation Department, Shri Sudesh Kumar Subba, for their encouragement and support in making this pioneering initiative a reality.

The expedition brought together participants from the Entrepreneurs' Organization, who experienced not only thrilling off-road adventures but also Sikkim's rich cultural heritage, warm hospitality, organic farming practices, traditional cuisine, vibrant cultural performances and inspiring community-led tourism initiatives.

The expedition was ceremonially flagged off at Rangpo by Ms. Sushma Pradhan, Deputy Director, Tourism & Civil Aviation Department, in the presence of officials from the Sikkim Police and the Tourism & Civil Aviation Department.

The expedition team was led by Shri Pujan Gurung, Senior IA, Dentam TIC, and Shri Nikhil Gurung, Tourism Officer, Dentam TIC, Department of Tourism & Civil Aviation. They were accompanied by Shri Chayan Kumar Dutta and representatives from Smile Panda Tours & Treks, renowned agri-entrepreneur and Millet Ambassador of Sikkim, Shri Tshering Lepcha, popularly known as the "Millet Man of Sikkim," along with local Gram Panchayat members from Lum Village. The team shared valuable insights into sustainable agriculture, local livelihoods and community-driven development models.

The successful completion of this landmark expedition further reinforces Sikkim's growing reputation as a premier destination for high-value, sustainable and responsible adventure tourism. The expedition also demonstrated the immense potential of all-terrain vehicle (ATV) expeditions in showcasing the State's diverse landscapes, rich cultural heritage and unique experiential tourism offerings to discerning travellers from across the world.

This pioneering initiative marks another significant step towards positioning Sikkim as one of India's leading adventure tourism destinations and a model for sustainable tourism development in the Himalayan region.