

Press Conference Held Regarding Sikkim's Historic Breakthrough Wins at Regional Shooting Championship Gangtok, September 7 (IPR): The Sikkim Rifle Association hosted a felicitation ceremony and press conference at the office of the Chairman, State Sports Development Board (SSDB), White Hall Complex, this afternoon. The press conference was convened to highlight the historic achievements of 11 state shooters at the 13th North East Zonal Shooting Championship, held in Assam in August 2026.

Chairman of the State Sports Development Board, Mr Rinzing Wangyal Chopel, congratulated the Sikkim Rifle Association on their remarkable performance at the 13th North East Zonal Shooting Championship in Assam. He highlighted that out of the 11 shooters fielded by the state, Mr Laxuman Adhikari, a teacher by profession, made history by winning Sikkim's first-ever bronze medal in the competition.

Adding to the team's achievements, two female athletes, Ms Tshering Yangden Bhutia, an engineer by profession, and Ms Anu Chhetri, a teacher, secured qualification to compete for Sikkim at the upcoming 69th National Shooting Championship in Delhi and Bhopal.

The Chairman commended the President of the Sikkim Rifle Association, Mr Sanjay Budhathoki, for his leadership in guiding the team to national-level success and regional recognition within just one year of its operations in the field of sports in Sikkim.

He noted that these accomplishments directly support Chief Minister's vision of turning Sikkim into a prominent sports hub while fostering a drug-free state through youth participation in athletics. Reaffirming the full backing of both the State Sports Development Board and the Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Mr Chopel assured continued support for local athletes aiming for national excellence.

Founder and President of the Sikkim Rifle Association, Mr Sanjay Budhathoki, highlighted the state shooting team's performance at the 13th North East Zonal Shooting Championship. He stated that an 11-member squad, accompanied by the association president, head coach, and team manager, represented Sikkim in pistol and rifle events following their first practice session at a world-class range.

Mr Budhathoki expressed gratitude to the Sports & Youth Affairs Department, the Labour Department, various local associations, and the state government led by the Chief Minister for their continuous support. He emphasised that shooting instills focus, discipline, and mental well-being, making it a valuable pursuit for youth and individuals of all ages. Mr Budhathoki stated that looking ahead, the Sikkim Rifle Association aims to develop local certified juries and coaches, expand training equipment, and establish a dedicated gym facility. He also encouraged parents to support their children in pursuing shooting, reaffirming the association's commitment to preparing athletes for upcoming national games and the 2036 Olympic Games.

Earlier, Sikkim Rifle Association President, Mr Sanjay Budhathoki felicitated the dignitaries with khadas in appreciation of their presence. In turn, the dignitaries felicitated the winners and participants of the shooting competition.

The Felicitation Ceremony and press conference was also graced by Chairman of the Sikkim Labour Welfare Board, Mr Prem Raj Gurung. Also in attendance were Director S&YAD, Mr Rajiv Roka; Assistant Director S&YAD, Mr Bhanu B Chapagai; General Secretary for Akhil Sikkim Chettri-Bahun Kalyan Sangh, Mr Diwakar Basnett; Panchayat of Raley Ward, Mr Pushpa Lal Gautam; and representatives of Sikkim Teachers Association.

Team Manager of the Sikkim Rifle Association, Mr Sumit Sharma, delivered the welcome address and provided an overview of the championship achievements and the press conference.