

Gangtok, October 6: (IPR) Bharatiya Nepali Sikhhar Sammelan 2017, a two-day national conference on Indian Nepali/Gorkha national identity, organised by Sikkim University, commenced from today here at Chintan Bhawan. The inaugural session of the conference was graced by Chief Minister of Sikkim Mr Pawan Chamling as the chief guest.

The conference brings together noted Indian Nepalis/Gorkhas who have made a distinct mark in various fields such as sports, music, literature, arts etc. By recognizing and honouring the outstanding feat achieved by these individuals, the national conference seeks to encourage and inspire the younger generation, mostly college and university students, to achieve success in their respective fields. It seeks to provide the youth an opportunity to be inspired by these successful individuals and follow their footsteps instead of being depressed and resorting to drugs and alcohol and other self-destructive paths.

The conference commenced with welcome address and introduction to the theme of the conference by Prof. T.B. Subba, Vice Chancellor, Sikkim University.

Addressing the audience comprising mostly of noted Indian Nepali achievers, faculty and officers of Sikkim University and students, Chief Minister Mr Pawan Chamling lauded the efforts of Sikkim University in organizing the National Conference and stated that Seminars such as this one should be held regularly in Gorkha-dominated regions across the country. He spoke extensively about the unparalleled contribution of Indian Nepalis/Gorkhas during the freedom struggle and at various stages of nation building. He urged the audience to take pride in our identity as citizens of this great country. He expressed hope that the conference would deliberate on the issues of identity and other pertinent issues that the Indian Nepalis/Gorkhas are grappling with.

Addressing the intellectuals and achievers in various fields, the Chief Minister maintained that they have a huge responsibility to guide and lead the way to uplift the community, especially the youth, and inspire and motivate them along the way. There is a need for creating opinion making bodies which debate and deliberate regularly to change peoples' mindsets and foster positive transformations. He stressed on the need for emotional integration of all the Indian Nepalis/Gorkhas living in various parts of the country.

On the other hand, he urged the students in the audience to adapt and adopt to the changing times where knowledge and skill is more important than mere certificate-based education. He called for a shift in the limited mindset of job-oriented education and to realize the immense potential in sectors like agriculture and tourism. Further, he stated that the image of Gorkhas or Nepalis as brave soldiers or war-men have to be shed and we should now be embracing the knowledge world as per the demand of the world economy. He urged the youth to work towards being producers of goods and knowledge instead of being mere consumers.

The Chief Minister in his address stated that we should stop being defensive in our attitudes while trying to prove our identities as Indian Citizens who speak the Nepali language. Over the years, Indian Nepalis/Gorkhas have made unmatched contribution to nation building, and we are known for our loyalty, he stated. He also urged the audience to protect and encourage the use of Nepali language and remembered the contribution of the individuals who struggled to provide constitutional safeguard to the Nepali language.

After his address, Chief Minister Shri Pawan Chamling was felicitated by the Vice Chancellor of Sikkim University, Prof. T.B. Subba.

Subsequently, the Chief Minister felicitated all the Indian Nepali Achievers who were invited by the organizing committee of the University to participate in the two-day National Conference.

The noted individuals felicitated on the occasion were Mr Amar Subba, Mr Anil Pradhan, Mrs Bindya Subba, Mr C.K. Shrestha, Mr Dhruva Pradhan, Dr. Eklabya Sharma, Dr. H.P. Chhetri, Mr Jaslal Pradhan, Mr Jitu Rai, Mr Joel Rai, Mrs Jyoti Thapa Mani, Mr Keshav Pradhan, Mrs Madhu Gurung, Mr Megh Nidhi Dahal, Prof. Mohan P. Dahal, Mr Nishant Singh, Mr Pema Lama, Mr Pemba Tamang, Mr Prajwal Parajuly, Mr P.D. Rai, Mr Puran Andrew Gurung, Mr R.S. Basnet, Dr. Rajendra Bhandari, Mr Ranjit Gazmer, Ms Roshni Rai, Padmashri Sanu Lama, Lt. Gen. Shakti Gurung, Dr. Savita Singh Nepali, Prof. Shrawan Kumar Acharya, Dr. Siddhiraj Sharma, Ms Sushmita Rai, Mr Trilok Dewan, Mr Trilok Subba, Ms Trishala Gurung and Prof. T.B. Subba.

These eminent individuals will participate in deliberations over the two days on topics namely Sports & Youth, Academic & Medical Professions, Politics Bureaucracy & Industry, Literature & Identity, Music & Art, and Media & Identity.



