

Gangtok, March 10: (IPR) The General Budget for the State of Sikkim for the financial year 2018-19 was passed by the House today, the concluding day of the five-day Budget Session 2018 of the Seventh Session of Ninth Assembly of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly. The General Budget to the tune of Rs. **Rs. 7051.09 Crore** was tabled in the House by the Chief Minister, also the Minister-In-Charge for Finance Revenue & Expenditure Department Government of Sikkim, on the 6th of March 2018.

Chief Minister, also the Minister-In-Charge for Finance Revenue & Expenditure Department, introduced the Sikkim Appropriation Bill, Bill No 3 of 2018 for Annual General Budget 2018-19. Hence, it was voted and passed by the House.

The Appropriation Bill, Bill No. 3 of 2018 was introduced by the Chief Minister, also the Minister-In-Charge for Finance Revenue & Expenditure Department, was also passed by the House.

During the Financial Business, Minister for Food Security & Agriculture Development, Horticulture and Cash Crops Development, Water Resources and River Development and Animal Husbandry, Livestock, Fisheries and Veterinary Services Departments Shri Somnath Poudyal presented the Demands of the Departments under his charge which was followed by discussion and voting. While replying to queries made by the Members of the House, Shri R.N Chamling, Miss Chandra Maya Subba, Smt Tilu Gurung and Shri Ugen Nedup Bhutia on various issues, the Minister- in – Charge Shri Somnath Poudyal said that the ban on non-organic produces will not only empower the farmers of Sikkim in a big way, but will also set an example to other states to emulate organic path to livelihood. The Minister outlined the Organic Policy of the Government and sought cooperation from all quarters to make the Mission successful.

The Demands for Grants placed by Minister Shri Somnath Poudyal was passed by the House.

Similarly, the Minister-in-Charge, Water Security and Public Health Engineering and Social Justice, Empowerment and Welfare Departments Smt Tulshi Devi Rai presented the Demands for Grants under her charge. Replying to the questions put forth by the Members of the House, Shri Timonthy W. Basnett and Shri R.N.Chamling, Minister informed the House about the One Stop Crises Center at Lumsey which is for the betterment and welfare of the Women and Children. She

also said that the Department has already issued helpline number for aggrieved women and the Old Age Home at Namchi has been established. Further she highlighted upon the Scholarship schemes for the ST/SC and OBC.

The Demands for Grants under her charge was passed by the House.

Likewise, Minister-in-charge for Home, Finance, Revenue and Expenditure, Development and Planning Economic Reforms and North Eastern Council Affairs, Land Revenue and Disaster Management, administrative Reforms, Training, Public Grievances, Career Options and Employment Skill Development and Chief Minister's Self Employment Schemes, Ecclesiastical affairs and Other Departments Shri Pawan Chamling presented the Demands for Grants under his Charge.

While replying to queries made by the Members of the house, Shri R.N Chamling and Shri Sonam Lama, Minister-in-Charge and also the Leader of the House said that State Police Service has been given allowances, recognition, power and perks at par with officers of the State Civil Services. Hence, to bring about equality and uniformity in these two services, and in linewith equal pay for equal work, the Government has decided to extend the minimum qualifying period for the State Police Service from five years to six years.

He also welcomed the suggestions put forth by the Member of the House and explained about the government's initiatives and schemes under CM Start up Schemes, enhancement of ad-hoc teacher's salary, regularization of Monastic and Sanskrit teachers, Home Guard, etc.

The Demands for Grants under the Charge of the Chief Minister was passed by the House.

Shri Pawan Chamling, Hon'ble Chief Minister, also the Minister-In-Charge for Finance, Revenue and Expenditure Department Government of Sikkim, presented the 5th State Finance Commission Report Sikkim for the award period 2020-25 and Explanatory Memorandum as to the Action Taken on the Recommendations made by the Fifth State Finance Commission in its report submitted to the State Government.

Shri Pawan Chamling, Hon'ble Chief Minister, also the Minister-In-Charge for Finance, Revenue and Expenditure Department Government of Sikkim, presented the Comptroller of Auditor General (CAG) Reports such as:

(i) Finance Accounts (Vol I & II), Accounts at a Glance and Appropriation Accounts of the Government of Sikkim for the Financial Year 2016-17.

(ii) Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on State for the year ended March, 2017, Government of Sikkim (Report No. 2 of 2017).

The Chief Minister, also the Minister-In-Charge for Finance, Revenue & Expenditure Department, Government of Sikkim, also presented the following Reports:

(i) The Review of Compliance of the Government of Sikkim to the State Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act – 2010 for the Year 2015-16.

(ii) Half Yearly Review Report: 2017-18, Review of the Trends in Receipt and Expenditure in relation to Budget 2017-18.

(iii) Medium Term Fiscal Plan for Sikkim 2018-19 to 2020-21.

Shri Pawan Chamling, Hon'ble Chief Minister, also the Minister-In-Charge for Finance, Revenue and Expenditure Department Government of Sikkim, presented the Separate Audit Report such as:

Separate Audit Report on the Accounts of Sikkim Electricity Regulatory Commission, Gangtok for the year ended 31st March 2016, and

Annual Consolidated Audit and Review Report on the Accounts of Panchayati Raj Institutions for the year ended 31st March, 2017.

Shri Bek Bahadur Rai, Hon'ble Chairman, Public Accounts Committee SLA for the financial year 2017-18 presented the following Reports of the Assembly Committees:

110th Report on Appropriation Accounts 2011-12, Government of Sikkim.

111th Report on Action Taken Report on recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee by the Sikkim Mining Corporation as contained in its 107th Report, and

112th Report on Separate Audit Reports of Accounts of Sikkim State Legal Services Authority Legal Aid Fund for the Year Ended 31st March 2007- 2017.

Likewise, Shri Ugen Nedup Bhutia Chairman, Government Assurances Committee SLA for the financial year 2017-18 presented the following Reports:

- (i) 19th Report of the Government Assurances Committee on further Action taken by the State Government on Recommendation of the Committee contained in its 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th Report, and
- (ii) 20th Report of the Government Assurances Committee on implementation of assurances by the State Government Departments pertaining to the Budget Session held from 16th March 19th March, 2017.

During the session all the concerned Ministers of the Government Departments placed the White Papers/Achievement Reports on the Table of the House.

Speaker Shri K.N.Rai announced the name of the elected and nominated Assembly Committees for the Financial Year 2018-2019. As follows:

Committee on Public Accounts- Shri Bek Bahadur Rai as Chairman, and Shri D.R. Thapa and Shri Sonam Lama as Members

Committee on Estimates- Ms Chandra Maya Subba as Chairman, and Shri R.N. Chamling and Shri Kunga Nima Lepcha as Members

Likewise, the Speaker nominated the following Committees:

Committee on Government Assurances-

Shri Bikram Pradhan as Chairman, and Shri Ugen Nedup Bhutia and Shri Gopal Baraily as Members

Committee on Rules-

Shri Timothy W. Basnet, Shri Phintso Chopel Lepcha and Shri Shyam Pradhan as Members. The Speaker is the Ex-Officio Chairman of the Committee.

Committee on Library-

Shri D.N. Sherpa, and Shri Sonam Dadul Bhutia as Members. The Deputy Speaker is the Ex-Officio Chairman of the Committee

Committee on House-

Smt Tilu Gurung as Chairperson and Shri Hemendra Adhikari and Shri Pintso Chopel Lepcha as Members

Committee on Privilege-

Dr Mechung Bhutia as Chairman and Shri Gopal Baraily and Shri D.N. Sherpa as Members

Likewise, Speaker Shri K.N.Rai nominated Shri Ugen Nedup Bhutia, Shri Shyam Pradhan and Shri K.S. Lepcha as Panel of Chairmen for the Financial Year 2018-19.

Shri K.N. Rai, Hon'ble Speaker Sikkim Legislative Assembly presented the Annual Report of the Commissions and the Government

Gangtok, March 10: (IPR) Chief Minister, also the Leader of the House, in his valedictory remarks stated that this year's budget is youth-centric, farmer-centric and directed towards the welfare of the people living in the rural areas, the poor and the marginalized. He added that the budget is Government employee-centric, and focused towards the overall development of the general population in the form of numerous welfare schemes. He stressed that this year's budget has been designed to achieve sustainable development wherein long term developmental projects have been envisaged for the benefit of coming generations.

The Chief Minister in his address indicated the progressive increase in the Budget over the last 23 years and the consistent effort in making the economy of the State self-reliant. He mentioned that the Government under his leadership has repaid loans to the tune of over four thousand crore and recorded a 270% increase in the State's own revenue. He stated that the State has seen a substantial increase in the salaries, pension and allowances of Government employees over the years. He reported that the daily wages of temporary workers alone works out to about 117 Crore.

The Leader of the House highlighted the key focus areas of this year's Budget. He informed the House that a bulk of the Budget is set aside for the second phase of up-gradation of existing roads throughout the State. Emphasizing that the highest priority will be laid on roads, the Chief Minister added that qualitative roads will

ensure socio-economic development and access to opportunities. He stated that in the last 23 years, the State Government has created roads extending to 5,200 km across the length and breadth of Sikkim. He further shared the vision of the Government to make the roads of Sikkim into the best roads of Hill States.

Speaking on the sustainable practices under the aegis of the Government, the Chief Minister stressed that the environment-friendly initiatives and Organic agriculture are not mere actions but are notable examples set by the State for the rest of the world to emulate. Sustainable Development is our message to the world, he added.

The Chief Minister in his address stated that Sikkim's progress and unflinching development is better understood and realized when compared with other States of the Country. He informed that Sikkim is only the fourth most progressive and developing State in the Country after Goa, Delhi and Chandigarh, and the most developed State in the entire North-East.

The Chief Minister also made some announcements and issued directives on the floor of the House:

1. Government has started Chief Minister's Startup Scheme. He urged the Members of the House to motivate the youth into availing the opportunities arising from this ambitious scheme
2. Kisan Pension Scheme has been started for the benefit of farmers
3. Old Age Home for East District will be constructed near One-Stop Crisis Centre at Lumsey Tadong. Work for Old Age Home in other three districts to be expedited
4. By 30th June, 2018, all the major works allotted under the Budget 2018-19 under various Government Departments should be implemented. If not, funds will be cut from these Departments and allotted to other progressive and performing Departments
5. Minimum Price Support will be provided to farmers
6. All Kutcha Houses will be converted to Pukka Houses
7. State University, Buddhist University and National Law University will be operational
8. Referring to a report that farming cannot be carried out underneath high power electricity lines, the Chief Minister directed the concerned Secretaries to carry out a thorough enquiry and submit the report at the earliest

9. In order to limit the use of Palzor Stadium only for sporting activities, a suitable land to be identified in the vicinity of Gangtok to accommodate at least one lakh people for any public function
10. Street Lights along Namnang- Deorali Road to be installed immediately
11. People should take ownership of public amenities, footpaths and railings. They should exercise social policing and social fencing to safeguard public properties
12. Lower Court will be started in Rangpo and Jorethang
13. One outstanding entrepreneur will be given an award of Rupees One Crore every year
14. All Government Sign Boards will henceforth be written in all the local languages of Sikkim, along with English and Nepali
15. Salaries of Ad-hoc employees, panchayats, counselors and Nagar panchayats to be revised
16. Ex-Gratia to taxi drivers who die while on duty enhanced from 2 lakh to 5 lakh
17. Home Guards who have rendered more than 15 years of service will be regularized
18. Salaries of ASHA and Anganwadi Workers to be enhanced
19. Regularization of MR Workers who have worked for more than five years (on merit basis)
20. Pay Commission to be implemented in the State from 1st April, 2018
21. Parks and Gardens to be built till BAC level
22. Smriti Vans to be revived by Panchayats at GPU level
23. Open Theatre, eco-smart city and gym hall and play ground to be built at Panchayat level
24. Futsal arenas (five-a-side football) to be created at each sub-division
25. Bowling Alleys to be created in each District
26. Hi-Speed Internet and Cyber facilities to be created in each District
27. Each District will have food street and fashion street
28. Handicraft and Flower counters will be installed in each district and sub-divisions
29. Market places will be made noise-pollution free

30. Public Toilets to be constructed in every market place
31. Qualitative transport system in each district
32. Delivery systems to be upgraded
33. Culture and heritage to be preserved
34. Science and Technology Parks will be built in each District
35. There will be tunneling of road and creation of underground bazaars
36. Study Centres to be created for Sherpas, Bhujel, Scheduled Castes and Tamangs
37. GPU level libraries to be created
38. Jungle Therapy to be started under Sikkim Tourism
39. Residential Certificate Holders' sons will be granted Trade License, and in case of death, his wife will be entitled for RC
40. State Medical College and Nursing College to start in Sikkim
41. Free e-learning to be introduced till BAC level
42. Sports activities to be enhanced in Sikkim and required infrastructure created
43. Free Coaching for All India Services entrance examinations will resume
44. Livelihood schools to resume in places where they have been closed down. MLAs to start a livelihood school each in their constituency
45. All the environment-friendly decisions made by the Government will be protected and given continuity
46. From now onwards, there will be complete ban on plucking fruits, flowers, other edibles and plants from reserved forest areas
47. To curb the menace of wild animals invading private cultivated agricultural lands, the farm owner can hit the animal with a stone or any object with an intention to scare the animal, but if the animal dies in the process, the person/farmer will NOT be liable for any legal action and it will be taken as an accidental incident. The animals include monkey, bear, wild boar, porcupine, rat, fox, wild cat, cheetah, and leopard. Forest department was directed to immediately come out with a Notification to this effect
48. Wildlife hunting, however, will not be permitted

The Chief Minister also apprised the House the successful landing of the 72-seater Spice Jet Airline today at Pakyong Airport. This he said is the beginning of Aviation in Sikkim.

Concluding his address, the Leader of the House thanked the Speaker for the smooth conduct of the Assembly Session. He thanked the Deputy Speaker, Ministers, MLAs, Chief Secretary and Director General of Police, Principal Secretaries and Secretaries, Secretary and officers of the Assembly Secretariat, Officers of various Departments, members of the press and media and everybody involved for their presence and participation.

Speaker, Sikkim Legislative Assembly, Shri K.N. Rai, in his valedictory address thanked the Governor of Sikkim Shri Shriniwas Patil for his address on the opening day of the Session. He thanked the Leader of the House for his presence and participation and valuable guidance and suggestions throughout the Budget Session. He thanked the Leader of the House for having responded to all the questions and suggestions placed before the House by the Members, and also for his valedictory address. The Speaker thanked the Chief Minister for laying the General Budget for 2018-19 in the floor of the House for its discussion voting and consideration. The Speaker also thanked the Ministers for placing the Separate Demands for Grants under their Charge and also for indulging in fruitful discussions during the Session. He urged the Members to use the Budget passed in the House diligently for the welfare of the Sikkimese people. He thanked the Members of the House for their active participation in all the discussions and for asking pertinent questions for the benefit of people of Sikkim. He also thanked the Chief Secretary, DGP, officers of the State Government and the members of press and media for their contribution during the Session.

The Speaker also stated that the Chief Minister would break the record of being the longest serving Chief Minister in the Country in the month of April, 2018. He congratulated the Chief Minister for the unique feat.

After delivering the Vote of Thanks, the Speaker adjourned the House Sine-Die.