

Gangtok, May16: (IPR) Sikkim celebrated its 43rd year of statehood at a function held at Chintan Bhawan, today.

The Governor of Sikkim Shri Shrinivas Patil and Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Pawan Chamling presided over the celebrations along with the Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly Shri K.N Rai, Cabinet Ministers and Chief Secretary Shri A.K. Shrivastava.

Cabinet Ministers, MLA's , Chairpersons, Functionaries of the Panchayati Raj and the Municipal Corporations were in the list of distinguished attendees at the function. Heads of the various departments of the Government of Sikkim, officials and staff, school children and the general public were also present at the State Day function.

The function started with the ceremonial lighting of lamps by the eminent guests and the welcome address which was delivered by the Chief Secretary, Shri A.K. Shrivastava who pointed out that the State Day celebration this year is of special significance as the Chief Minister of Sikkim has engraved his name in the chronology of the country by setting the record of being the longest serving Chief Minister in the nation.

The Hon'ble Governor, in his address, congratulated the Chief Minister Shri Pawan Chamling for the landmark record of being the longest serving Chief Minister in the country. He extended heartiest felicitations and greetings on the occasion and vocalized his tributes to the democratic leaders of the past and the people of the state for their sagacity in supporting a government that has always been pro-poor and pro-people. He traced the comprehensive journey of Sikkim since 1975 and remarked with pride that the state has phenomenally developed into one of the top notch states in the country by providing opportunities to the people and ensuring their success in every field of development. He stated that the fruit of progress that the state is reaping today is a culmination of the sheer grit and hard work of the state government and the unflinching faith of the people in the government. He added that today, the entire nation looks at Sikkim as a replica of innovation and progress that is cutting across all sectors. He expressed that the long anticipated air connectivity at Pakyong would see the light of the day soon, followed by railway connectivity at Rangpo. He also congratulated the recipients of the various awards and recognition and wished for them to inspire and lead the state to greatness with their hard work. In conclusion, the Hon'ble Governor called upon all to strive for the protection of the state's natural resources and expanding the communal harmony and brotherhood , and thereby, cherish and cultivate an equitable Sikkim.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister in his address, conveyed his warm regards to the people of the State on the auspicious occasion of the 43rd State Day. He retrospected on the decision taken by the veterans which changed the destiny of the state and the people forever. He enlightened on the brave and patient journey of Sikkim towards achieving statehood and added that the level of patriotism towards the nation that is exhibited by the state is noteworthy. He stated that, since coming to power in 1994, the prime

objective of the present government has been only towards framing plans and policies that stimulate empowerment of the weaker sections of the society. He highlighted that the Sikkim Model of Success is finding reverberance all over the country and hence, collective efforts must be made to sustain and further the impressive developmental saga of Sikkim. The Hon'ble Chief Minister elaborated on the various sectors that the state has trail-blazed in, like organic farming, rural empowerment, environmental consciousness, education, health care and cleanliness amongst others. He pronounced that the state is making every effort towards empowering the youth through the CM Start Up Scheme and other capacity building programs and urged them to take advantage of such opportunities and rise above petty issues of caste and class divisions. With utmost pride, the Hon'ble Chief Minister stated that the long awaited dream of the Sikkimese people for air connectivity at Pakyong would soon be realized and conjoined that rail connectivity right upto Rangpo would add a whole new dimension to the rapid growth of the state while ensuring comfort and facilities to the people.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister made some crucial announcements at the function:

- 1) Annual Grant of ₹ 12 lakhs to A-Grade football, archery, badminton boxing clubs and other sports clubs.
- 2) 5% reservation in State government jobs to local sports personalities of national and international repute.
- 3) Sikkim Water Security Mission and Sikkim Food Mission to be launched for sufficiency of food and water.
- 4) Sikkim to be a self sufficient agricultural state within the next five years.
- 5) All the four districts will be connected through underground tunnels.
- 6) Arrears of the government employees to be duly released in a phased process.
- 7) The planting festival undertaken in the month of June/July will see bigger-than-before dedicated plantation drives all over the state.

He congratulated the recipients of the LD Kazi Award for Democratic Movement, the Sikkim Sewa Samman , Krishi Samman and the other awardees, and expressed his deepest gratitude to the people for their extensive support and faith in the endeavors of the state government.

As has been the continued tradition, the commemoration of the State Day saw the presentation of various awards and recognitions:

- 1) L D KAZI AWARD FOR DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT-** containing a citation, a shawl and ₹ 1 lakh
- SHRI HARKA BAHADUR LIMBOO
 - LATE TRILOCHAN DAHAL.

2) SIKKIM SEWA SAMMAN- containing a citation, a memento, a shawl and cheque of ₹ 1 lakh

- Smt Buddha Maya Subba, w/o Shri JB Subba, Social Worker
- Shri PR Bhutia, Retd. Joint Director, Pelling
- Shri Ganesh Pradhan , Ram Gauri Sangralaya, Rhenock
- Shri Pawan Awasthy, Managing Director, SIMFED/GFPF
- Shri Nar Bahadur Pradhan, Poultry Farmer, Melli.

3) SIKKIM KRISHI SAMMAN - comprising of a shawl, a memento and ₹ 25,000 to 68 progressive and innovative farmers from all over the state.

4) LETTER OF APPRECIATION- was presented to 16 individuals ranging from a commercial airline captain, budding entrepreneurs in the field of start-ups, hospitality and the tourism sector.

5) CASH AWARD of ₹ 30,000 TO SHRI BAG BIR PRADHAN OF DUNG DUNG, KHAMDONG, FOR BEING THE LONGEST SERVING PANCHAYAT IN THE STATE.

6) CASH AWARDS ranging from ₹ 1 - ₹ 2 lakhs TO PERSONS WHO GOT INTO OFFICERS RANK IN GOVERNMENT OF INDIA SERVICE

- Pema Dorjee Bhutia
- Rohan Basnet
- Sonam Wangdi Bhutia
- Raja Gyalchen Lachungpa
- Puja Subba
- Henuka Rai
- Sangki Lama Tamang.

7) LATE KASHIRAJ PRADHAN LIFETIME JOURNALISM AWARD -Containing a Citation, a memento, shawl and a cheque of ₹ 5 Lakhs :

- **Yugpurush** Shri C D Rai
- Smt Santosh Nirash
- **Priyadarshi** Shri Samiran Chettri
- Shri Amalendu Kundu.

The function also saw the release of souvenirs, books and publications:

1) *Release of Souvenir on Sikkim State Civilian Award 2018*

2) *Release of book titled, "PAWAN CHAMLING- Globally Recognized Leader" by Information & Public Relations Department*

3) *Release of publication "WETLAND ATLAS OF SIKKIM" by the Science & Technology Department.*

Earlier, the Hon'ble Governor and the Hon'ble Chief Minister garlanded the statue of L.D Kazi at the premises before proceeding to the main venue .

Renditions of patriotic songs by the students from West Point SSS and Bojoghari SSS added to the allegiance of the occasion.

The Vote of Thanks proposed by Secretary, Cultural Affairs & Heritage Department , Yashoda Bhandari brought the curtains down on the 43rd State Day celebration.

