

Gangtok, June 27: (IPR) Hon'ble Mr **Justice** Satish Kumar Agnihotri, Chief Justice, High Court of Sikkim and Chairman, Sikkim Judicial Academy, inaugurated the newly constructed academic complex of Sikkim Judicial Academy (Phase-I) at Sokeythang near Gangtok today.

It was learnt that the foundation stone of Sikkim Judicial Academy was laid by former Chief Justice of India, Late. Hon'ble Justice, Altamas Kabir on May 14, 2012.

The function was graced by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Sikkim Mr Pawan Chamling as the Chief Guest and had the august presence of Hon'ble Mrs Justice Meenakshi M.Rai, Judge, High Court of Sikkim and Hon'ble Mr Justice Bhaskar Raj Pradhan, Judge, High Court of Sikkim and Judge-in-Charge, Sikkim Judicial Academy, and Hon'ble Minister, Law, Legislative & Parliamentary Affairs, Mr R.B. Subba as Guest of Honor.

Also present during the function were Former Judges of High Court of Sikkim, Hon'ble Mr. Justice A.P Subba and Hon'ble Mr. Justice, S.P Wangdi, Members of Sikkim Legislative Assembly, Mr. Timothy W. Basnet and Mr. D.R Thapa, Heads of various Departments, Government of Sikkim, Director SJA Mrs Samita Sharma, along with host of dignitaries from the legal fraternity, and senior officers of the State Government.

The principal aim of the Sikkim Judicial Academy (SJA) like State Judicial Academies elsewhere in the country is to impart training to the Judicial Officers of the State so that they achieve excellence in their work and become capable of rendering quality justice. However, considering the peculiar circumstances prevailing in Sikkim, the object of setting up the Academy was to impart training not only to the Judicial Officers but also to the Civil Servants, Police Officers, Public Prosecutors, and members of the Bar, particularly, its novice members and other stakeholders of the State. The benefits of the Academy would also be extended to final year law students of the Government College and Universities in Sikkim, who are keen on joining the Bar or Judicial Service upon their graduation.

Addressing the inaugural function, Hon'ble Chief Justice, High Court of Sikkim, Mr Justice Satish Kumar Agnihotri said that this is a historic landmark in Sikkim's Judicial history and that it was a momentous occasion. The SJA now must necessarily be a centre of learning and excellence, he stated. He further stated that the magnificent structure alone cannot provide learning or excellence although it would definitely provide the required atmosphere. Congratulating the people of Sikkim, the Hon'ble Chief Justice wished that the SJA labours hard to provide stakeholders of the judicial process excellence in justice delivery.

Hon'ble Chief Justice further said that the Sikkim Judiciary Academy is not only for judicial officers but also for legal freshers, advocates, senior advocates, who also need proper training and updation in the legal development for assisting and cooperating with the administration of justice. He expressed happiness that the long felt need for a State Judicial Academy has finally been fulfilled with the coming up of this magnificent facility that can effectively provide continuous legal education to the members of judicial fraternity. He added that everybody associated with the Academy should ensure in providing best possible facilities,

trainings and resources to the members of the judiciary and members of the profession in a uniform manner. The Chief Justice mentioned that in the last few years, significant strides have been made in providing continuous legal education especially to judicial officers with the establishment of National Judicial Academy at Bhopal.

The Chief Justice further said that Judiciary is the guardian of rights of men and it protects these rights from all possibilities of individual and public encroachments. If there is no adequate provision for the administration of justice, the liberty of the people is jeopardized for there is dearth of means which should accept and decide rights, punish crimes and protect innocent from injury and observation, he stated.

Hon'ble Chief Justice further stated that today the judiciary, judicial officers and advocates have had to face new challenges. It is in these changing circumstances that Institute such as the Sikkim Judicial Academy will aid the learning process, he added. "These learning processes need to be supported by institutional mechanism that provides vital support and knowledge, resources to the members of the judiciary and members of judicial fraternity. The importance of ensuring the learning methodologies and curriculum of this institution are always kept effectively and evolve according to changing of social scenario and circumstances. We must always remember that stagnation and lack of innovation sounds the alarm on any Institution" Hon'ble Chief Justice added.

The Hon'ble Chief Justice recorded his appreciation for the role of the State Government under the leadership of the Chief Minister for successfully completing the Sikkim Judicial Academy.

Addressing the function, Hon'ble Chief Minister Mr. Pawan Chamling said that he was delighted to be present on this momentous occasion and to see the Sikkim Judicial Academy inaugurated. He stated that the establishment of Sikkim Judicial Academy is an important milestone in our journey of establishing equitable society. He expressed hope that the judicial officers and lawyers of Sikkim will benefit immensely from this institute in times to come. He added that the modern time is full of complexity of law and wide variety of litigations, and judicial officers and lawyers are facing new challenges. Thus, to tackle and overcome these challenges, specialized judicial education and training have become an absolute necessity. Training and imparting legal knowledge will surely enhance proficiency of lawyers and legal professionals and strengthen judiciary in the state, stated the Chief Minister.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister further mentioned that judiciary plays a crucial role in the development of the society, and maintaining rule of law is the most important attribute of judiciary in a democracy. "The subordinate judiciary is the foundation of judicial system in our Country. The society looks forward to Judicial Officers, who are knowledgeable, proficient in law, honest, dedicated and lovers of humanity. The establishment of Sikkim Judicial Academy will surely be helpful in achieving this objective," he stated.

"I hope Sikkim Judicial Academy will fulfill its duties and obligation of imparting quality training to judicial officers, young lawyers and the students of law in the state. We must work together in the larger interest of our nation. I am certain that one day, this institute will be one of the best institutes in the country in imparting judicial knowledge and training" concluded the Chief Minister.

The Principal Chief Engineer-cum-Secretary, Buildings & Housing Department, Mr R.B. Thapa while submitting the Technical Report informed that the Academy Complex (Phase-I) comprises an administrative block, academic block, auditorium block and approach road with car park and central courtyard. The Administrative block is a G+2 storied RCC framed building built up in an area of 4800sft has office of Director, Registrar along with general administrative accounts section. The Academic block is also a G+2 storied RCC framed building with a total built area of 21,195 sft has library, lecture theaters, computer lab, conference hall and 8 pax lift. The Auditorium block is a RCC framed structure with a total built up area of 5300 sft and has a sitting capacity for 280 persons. This block has Judges Lounge, recreation room and dining hall.

He informed that in 2012-13, State Government acquired 2.92 acre of land for the construction of Judicial Academy. The department decided to take up construction work in phase wise and now phase-I construction works completed at a cost of Rs. 15 Crore, which has four components (administrative block, academic block, auditorium block and approach road with car park and central courtyard) as against nine.

During the function, esteemed dignitaries on the dais also launched Sikkim Judicial Academy, High Court of Sikkim, Souvenir-2018.

Earlier the function began with welcome address by Director, Sikkim Judicial Academy, Mrs Samita Sharma.

The function also saw the rendition of a patriotic song by choir members of the Sikkim Bar Association.

Curtains were drawn on this historic occasion with the vote of thanks proposed by Mr K. W. Bhutia, Registrar, High Court of Sikkim.

