

**Hon'ble Speaker Sir,
Esteemed Members of the Legislative Assembly,
and dear citizens of Sikkim,**

I bring warmest Basanta Ritu greetings to the Hon'ble Speaker Sir, Hon'ble Deputy Speaker Madam, Hon'ble Members of the Sikkim State Assembly, the people of Sikkim and the officials of the Government of Sikkim. This is the most Saundarya-mai and Madhurya-mai season in the six major seasons of our beautiful Himalayan State Sikkim.

It is with a profound sense of responsibility and unwavering commitment that I present the 7th consecutive annual budget of our government since we took over the governance of Sikkim in 2019. This fiscal year 2025-2026 has three historic significances for the people of Sikkim.

Firstly, this year we attain the 50th year of our statehood and smoothly enter into the golden jubilee period in the annals of political history of Sikkim and post independent India. Secondly, in this historic fiscal year, we endeavour to enter into a "Zero Poverty" and "100 percent Literacy" regime in Sikkim thereby signalling the beginning of a new development era in the history of Sikkim.

And finally, this year, while we fondly remember the long period of governance under various kingships and the invaluable contributions made by countless Sikkimese ancestors—including Governors, Chief Ministers, Ministers, MLAs, officials and individuals—in shaping the future of

modern-day Sikkim, we also wholeheartedly celebrate the ushering in of multi-party democracy and our statehood within the constitutional framework and governance system of India.

We pay our homage and tribute to all who built the State of Sikkim and India brick by brick thereby taking it to the height it has attained today. We pray and pay our highest respect and gratitude to all our mountain deities for showering on us the blessings that have been beset with peace, tranquillity, harmony, prosperity and stability. We carry within us the immense sense of achievements and highest degree of satisfaction and happiness.

Let us recall that since May 16, 1975, Sikkim embarked on an inspiring journey, progressing remarkably—embracing democracy and development while steadfastly preserving our rich and diverse cultural heritage and environmental and natural endowments. Over these transformative five decades, Sikkim has evolved from a small Himalayan kingdom into a model modern state, recognized nationally and globally for its exemplary strides in peace and tranquillity, sustainable development, robust economic growth and comprehensive social welfare initiatives.

The 16th of May, 1975, was a turning point in Sikkim's history, significant from five crucial perspectives:

1. Integration with India
2. Realisation and fulfilment of Democratic Aspirations
3. Remarkable Developmental Transformation
4. Strategic and National Security Contribution and

5. Global recognition for its unique mountain identity conserved through peace, tranquillity and traditional approaches.

To commemorate this milestone our government has planned a year-long celebration, and we are honoured to announce that the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modiji has accepted our invitation to be the Chief Guest at the main event. I personally met the Hon'ble Prime Minister to extend this invitation, and he has kindly consented to grace the occasion with his presence.

During this historic event, the Hon'ble Prime Minister shall inaugurate several key projects, including the:

- 500 bedded Namchi District Hospital – a state-of-the-art healthcare facility aimed at providing world-class medical services.
- Swarna Jayanthi Maitreya Manjri - a landmark tribute to Sikkim's fifty golden years of statehood, embodying the philosophy of Mitra Labh.
- Atal Bihari Vajpayee Statue – a tribute to the visionary leader who played a crucial role in India's development.
- Passenger Ropeway at Sangachoeling - which will connect Pelling to Sangachoeling Monastery boosting tourism and economic activities in the area.

Additionally, our government has also requested the Hon'ble Prime Minister to lay the foundation stones for several transformative projects such as the:

- Golden Jubilee Convention Centre at Namli – a world-class infrastructure project designed to host national and international events.
- Bhaleydhunga Skywalk – a pioneering tourism initiative to boost eco-tourism and adventure tourism in Sikkim, a first of its kind in India.
- Nathula Border Tourism Development Project – an ambitious project to transform Nathula into a world-class global tourist destination.
- Singhshore Bridge – a vital project to boost tourism and economic activity in the region.
- Golden Jubilee Integrated Cultural and Sports Village – a complex that shall provide state of the art facilities to our aspiring sportspersons.
- Working Women’s Hostel at Tadong- which will provide working women a dignified place and further empower them.

Hon’ble Speaker Sir,

Sikkim today is the most integrated state of India. It is more so given our political history and merger with the Republic of India. Our diverse and deepening integration is highlighted by:

- i) The highest per capita income in the country
- ii) Relatively much higher growth rate
- iii) National security and national interest protection and promotion by the state.
- iv) Most peaceful state in the country

- v) Proven custodian of natural resources, biodiversity and cultural ecology.
- vi) And core centre of dealing with climate change impact, adaptation and mitigation in the entire Eastern Himalayan region.

Almost all the evaluation reports produced by the Government of India and other agencies put Sikkim as one of the most progressive and variedly performing states in India. Our State leads in many development indicators and are being widely deliberated upon in both national and global forum.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Our Budget for the fiscal year 2025-26 embodies our steadfast commitment to accelerating the growth trajectory. Through strategic investments in critical sectors such as infrastructure, education, healthcare, connectivity, environmental sustainability, tourism and social welfare, we aim to build on our successes and diligently address the challenges ahead. Despite constraints posed by our unique geography, vulnerabilities to climate change and uncertainties in the global economic landscape, our resolve to achieve inclusive, equitable and sustainable development remains unwavering.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Education remains a top priority for our government. With a steadfast commitment to providing quality education, we have been making consistent strides to ensure every child in Sikkim has access to the best

learning opportunities. We are focused on implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in its true spirit, ensuring that Sikkim remains at the forefront of educational transformation.

We recognize the importance of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in shaping a child's future. Sikkim is the first state to introduce the kindergarten system in all government schools, aligning with the NEP 2020. Wherever possible, Anganwadi centers have been co-located in government primary schools to provide seamless early education. This year, we will ensure that all primary teachers undergo ECCE training to enhance their capacity in nurturing young minds.

Our efforts in Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) have positioned Sikkim at the top of the FLN Index among Northeast states. To strengthen this further, we are implementing the **NIPUN** initiative across all schools, ensuring comprehensive teacher training. Additionally, this year, all primary teachers will undergo Special Numeracy Programme (SNP) training, equipping them with innovative pedagogical tools to enhance numeracy skills.

Since 2023, we have introduced the Vidya Pravesh module, a three-month play-based school readiness program, to help young learners transition smoothly into the school system. Innovative pedagogy such as Jodogyan for foundational mathematics and Jollyphonics for phonetics training is being used to make learning engaging and effective.

To enrich primary education, we have introduced new textbooks for Classes I–V in English, EVS and Mathematics, incorporating sustainable development, local contexts and child-friendly elements. These textbooks have received commendation from the Ministry of Education, Government of India, and have been recommended as model textbooks for other states.

At the secondary and senior secondary levels, our government is working towards achieving saturation in vocational education, ensuring that every school is equipped with skill-based learning. Going forward, we will diversify our vocational subjects to provide students with a broader range of career opportunities.

We are also committed to fostering a scientific temperament among students for which separate STEM laboratories will be set up in schools, allowing students to gain hands-on experience in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Additionally, 4410 tablets have been distributed across 147 schools to support digital learning. In this financial year, we will expand this initiative, ensuring that more students benefit from digital education.

Our government is committed to inclusive education, ensuring that Divyangjan (differently-abled students) receive the necessary support and facilities. More rural schools will also be given the opportunity to participate in state-level programs, ensuring equitable access to education.

Under the Bahini Scheme, more than 20,000 girls from Class 8 to graduation level receive free sanitary napkins in government run schools and colleges. This initiative has significantly improved attendance, retention rates and transition rates of girl students and we will continue this year as well.

Additionally, the Student Exposure Trip Initiative has been instrumental in broadening perspectives and enhancing the outlook of our students. Every year, 312 school students are sent for an exposure tour. Among them, 91 top-performing Class 11 students are taken outside the state, while 211 top-performing Class 9 students participate in an exposure tour within the state. Meanwhile, 120 college students are sent for exposure tours outside the state.

Our government also organizes educational exposure tours for award-winning teachers both within India and abroad. State and Commendation Awardee teachers visit various states across the country, while National Awardee teachers receive international exposure. Since the scheme was launched in 2022, around 35 teachers, along with their spouses, have participated in these tours annually.

Improving school infrastructure remains a key priority. This year, 105 school buildings will be developed. Selected schools will be transformed into “Green Schools”, incorporating rainwater harvesting, solar panels, biodegradable tablets and water purifiers, making them environmentally sustainable learning spaces.

Our IT infrastructure has also been strengthened with the Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK), a data-driven system established in Gangtok in 2022. This initiative leverages big data, AI and machine learning to track key education metrics such as student enrolment, learning progress, attendance and school support needs. This year, we will enhance VSK by integrating advanced educational technology for real-time monitoring and decision-making.

Sikkim is steadily becoming a preferred destination for higher education. In the past six years, we have established eight new universities. Additionally, the establishment of five more universities is in progress. To uphold global educational standards, we are in the process of establishing up the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose University of Excellence at Chakhung, Soreng District. The Khangchendzonga State University at Temi Tarku is also at an advanced stage of completion.

Since 2022, our government has secured 80 MBBS quota seats annually at Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences. Out of these, 50 seats are fully funded by our government, and the remaining 30 are reserved paid seats. All 80 seats are exclusively for Sikkimese students. So far, 150 students have benefited from the free MBBS program and 90 students have availed the reserved paid seats. Our government continues to provide an annual grant of ₹ 4.5 crore to Sikkim Manipal University, and this initiative will continue this year and beyond.

The Chief Minister's Model School at Assam Lingzey has begun student enrolment through an open competitive

examination under the Chief Minister's Merit Scholarship Scheme from 2025. We have granted sufficient autonomy and a separate Director has been appointed to ensure its smooth functioning.

In addition to these, our government has several initiatives to enhance education in Sikkim:

- The Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PMSHRI) scheme is being implemented in 43 schools in two phases, transforming them into exemplar institutions showcasing NEP interventions.
- School Rationalization has merged 52 primary schools with low enrolment, ensuring better resource management and enhanced learning experiences.
- The Chief Minister's Mentorship Program under the Learning Enhancement Programme has benefited 5,850 students, providing free coaching and standardized assessments to enhance Class X performance in CBSE exams.
- The Chief Minister's Education Assistance Scheme, launched in 2024-25, provides financial support to students from low-income families for higher and technical education within India and abroad. A total of 638 students have benefited under this in the last year alone.
- Our government has launched the APATAN Fellowship Scheme to provide financial assistance to exceptional local scholars with a strong academic record, enabling them to pursue Ph.D. courses in

Nepali, Bhutia, Lepcha, Limboo and Hindi languages/literature. The scheme offers financial assistance of ₹ 1,00,000 for scholars pursuing Ph.D. courses in any Central or State University within Sikkim, ₹ 2,00,000 for those studying in any Central or State University outside Sikkim but within India, and ₹ 3,00,000 for those pursuing Ph.D. courses abroad in reputed universities.

- Probationary teacher regularization is ongoing with 947 teachers already regularized among other achievements.

Our key indicators show remarkable progress—Sikkim’s literacy rate stands at 90.8%, with male literacy at 93% and female literacy at 88%. Under the New India Literacy Program (NILP), we aim to achieve full literacy by 2027, covering foundational literacy, numeracy, digital and financial literacy and continuing education.

More girls than boys are enrolled in schools, and the teacher-pupil ratio stands at an impressive 1:9. This is a testament to the success of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao initiative, and we will continue our commitment to educational excellence in the coming years.

With these initiatives, Sikkim is poised to become a model state for education in India. Together, we will continue to transform the education sector, ensuring a brighter future for our children and our state.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Our government has always prioritized the health and well-being of the people of Sikkim, ensuring that every citizen has access to quality healthcare services. Through our proactive policies, we have set new benchmarks in delivering comprehensive and inclusive healthcare services.

The STNM Hospital has witnessed remarkable advancements, including the initiation of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission with the implementation of the C-DAC Hospital Management Information System, featuring "Scan and Skip the Queue" functionality for efficient patient flow management. We have re-implemented structured visiting hours for better patient-family coordination and initiated the Jan Aushadi Initiative, ensuring affordable medicines. Further, admission and discharge processes have been streamlined, and a centralized OPD registration system has been established to significantly reduce waiting times. Super Specialty OPDs have also been reorganized alongside other departments, facilitating better patient access and inter-departmental collaboration.

Infrastructure and facility enhancements at STNM Hospital have included the expansion of Gynaecology Wards, significantly increasing bed capacity to accommodate more patients. Importantly, STNM Hospital was incorporated into the Consortium of the National Viral Genomic Testing Facility in May 2023, enhancing our diagnostic capabilities.

Key medical milestones include the hospital's first-ever Gynaecologic Oncology procedure conducted in the state owing to the efforts of our government. The Department of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery has successfully performed complex procedures and has completed 100 laser surgeries for varicose veins as of March 2024. Our Neurosurgery Department has also achieved significant progress by performing advanced Dural Arteriovenous Fistula treatments using endovascular embolization.

Additionally, our collaborative efforts between the Departments of Urology and Cardiology resulted in successful angioembolisation procedures. The Department of Orthopaedics has achieved milestones including semi-hip replacements (hemiarthroplasty) and the state's first Total Knee Replacement surgery at STNM. Our Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department has further enhanced reproductive health services by introducing hysteroscopy for infertility treatments.

Our government also established new Super Specialty Departments, including Neurosurgery, Nephrology and Cardiothoracic Surgery, alongside existing departments such as Cardiology, Gastroenterology, Urology, Paediatric Surgery and Plastic Surgery. These services have been extended to district hospitals through regular monthly visits by super specialists.

A major milestone was the establishment of the Viral Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (VRDL) at STNM Hospital, inaugurated on May 21, 2020. The

laboratory, accredited by ICMR, performs vital diagnostics for COVID-19 and Influenza viruses free of charge. The STNM Hospital was also included as a new INSACOG Genome Sequencing Laboratory (IGSL) on May 24, 2023, significantly boosting our capacity to identify SARS-CoV-2 variants.

Another landmark achievement is the establishment of the first Tertiary Cancer Care Centre under the Department of Radiation Oncology, providing essential cancer treatment locally and reducing the necessity for travel outside the state.

We have also set up a Paramedical Training Center at Kyongsa, Gyalshing, for Multi-Purpose Health Workers, aiming to improve public health services through skilled personnel.

Dialysis centres were established at District Hospital Namchi in October 2019 and at District Hospital Gyalshing in August 2020. A new dialysis center with five dialysis machines has been completed and is now functional at District Hospital Mangan. Additionally, peritoneal dialysis services were initiated at STNM Hospital in September 2021 as a pilot project during the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of patients currently undergoing dialysis is 244 at STNM Hospital, 53 at Namchi Hospital, 35 at Gyalshing Hospital and 20 at Mangan Hospital, bringing the total to 352. A total of 24,988 sessions were conducted during the last year.

Advanced cardiac care has been significantly boosted with the installation of Electrophysiology Study and

Radiofrequency Ablation (EPS + RFA) and Intra-Vascular Ultrasound (IVUS) systems in May 2022, previously unavailable in North Bengal and Sikkim. These facilities assist in diagnosing and treating complex heart conditions.

Moreover, under the Mukhya Mantri Swasthya Suvidha Yojana (MMSSY) we provide financial assistance to patients referred by the Medical Board. The scheme benefits the general public possessing a Certificate of Identification/ Sikkim Subject, as well as temporary government employees of Sikkim (Adhoc/Contractual) and regular government employees under probation who are not eligible for medical reimbursement under the Medical Reimbursement Rules, 1981. Financial assistance of up to ₹ 3 lakhs is provided to BPL patients, up to ₹ 2 lakhs for APL patients, and up to ₹ 2.5 lakhs for temporary government employees referred for treatment outside Sikkim.

Additionally, the Chief Minister Medical Assistance Scheme (CMMAS) introduced in October 2022 provides significant financial support for critical illness treatments outside Sikkim and critical in-patient treatments within the state. 1605 patients were granted financial assistance under this scheme in the last financial year alone.

Our Vatsalya Scheme, initiated on April 7, 2022, supports couples with financial aid of up to ₹ 3 lakhs for infertility treatments with ₹ 1.5 lakhs allocated for the first attempt and an additional ₹ 1.5 lakhs for the second attempt. The scheme covers all general public, including temporary government employees (MR/Adhoc/contractual/

probationary), through the Chief Minister's Medical Assistance Cell. The norms of the scheme were amended in January, 2025. According to the revised provisions:

- Families with a differently-abled child who are unable to conceive again will be covered under the scheme, provided they submit a certificate issued by the competent authority.
- Individuals who have remarried and are unable to conceive again, even if they have a child from a previous marriage, will also be eligible for financial assistance.

The number of beneficiaries who have availed the scheme is as follows:

- In 2022, 103 government employees and 56 general public benefited, totalling 159 beneficiaries.
- In 2023, 45 government employees and 90 general public received assistance, totalling 135 beneficiaries.
- In 2024, 96 government employees and 75 general public availed the scheme, bringing the total to 171 beneficiaries.

The Mobile Village Clinics, launched by our government on October 10, 2022, have carried out 1,305 camps, served 40,451 patients and conducted 15,863 tests so far. Moreover, the Mobile Laboratory Services Vehicle, introduced in Mangan and Gyalshing, addresses healthcare access gaps in remote and underserved areas with advanced diagnostic capabilities.

Our future healthcare vision includes the inauguration of the 500-bedded Namchi District Hospital, coinciding with Sikkim's Golden Jubilee, to reduce patient load on STNM Hospital. We also plan to introduce kidney transplant facilities, expand dialysis services statewide and continue enhancing super-specialty departments at STNM Hospital.

Finally, the upcoming State Medical College at Sochakgang, Sichey, with an annual intake of 100 students, is slated to be operational by 2026, ensuring long-term strengthening of our healthcare infrastructure.

Our commitment has been internationally recognized with the Sub-National Certification bronze medal and the Best Performing State award in the TB Index category for states below 50 lakh population, received consecutively for three years. Together, these initiatives and achievements demonstrate our unwavering commitment to enhancing healthcare services, ensuring accessible, affordable and high-quality medical care for every citizen of Sikkim.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Sikkim has marked significant milestones in its commitment to environmental conservation and sustainability with several innovative and impactful initiatives:

On World Wetland Day, February 2, 2025, Sikkim proudly celebrated the recognition of its dedicated conservation efforts as the sacred Khachoedpalri Lake was officially designated as a **Ramsar Site**, becoming Sikkim's

first Wetland of International Importance. The Ramsar Convention, an international treaty established in 1971 under the auspices of UNESCO, recognizes wetlands that significantly contribute to ecological health and biodiversity. Khachodpalri Lake's new status places it among globally recognized ecosystems vital for biodiversity conservation, ecological balance and community sustenance. This international acknowledgment promises enhanced conservation efforts, improved management practices and increased eco-tourism opportunities, bringing economic benefits to local communities while safeguarding environmental integrity.

Our government's flagship initiative, "**Mero Rukh Mero Santati**," a visionary project received the distinguished SKOCH Award 2024. Known for its rigorous, independent, outcome-based assessment, SKOCH recognized this initiative as an innovative policy fostering Himalayan harmony and promoting a carbon-neutral future.

"Mero Rukh Mero Santati" uniquely strengthens emotional bonds between communities and nature, underscoring the importance of leaving a cleaner, greener planet for future generations. The initiative mandates the planting of 108 trees to celebrate the birth of each child, cultivating lasting connections between parents, children, and nature. Launched in 2023, the initiative has gained extensive national and international acclaim, with 4,945 registrations completed to date.

Complementing this effort, in 2024, our government launched the “Sikkim Sishu Samriddhi Yojana”, providing a fixed deposit of ₹ 10,800 for children whose parents successfully plant 108 trees under “Mero Rukh Mero Santati.”

Enhancing public engagement in wildlife conservation, Sikkim introduced the “My Child from the Wild” program, allowing individuals or groups to adopt animals in partnership with park management. This initiative encourages conservation through sponsorship, raising public awareness about wildlife conservation issues, enhancing animal care facilities, and providing benefits such as free park entry and participation in exclusive zoo activities.

To further enrich Sikkim’s green governance practices, the “Mero Bato Mero Bot” initiative was launched, a collaborative beautification effort between the Forest and Roads Departments. With active participation from road workers, this initiative aims to transform roadsides into vibrant green corridors.

Over the past five years, our government has implemented several citizen-centric measures, including issuing online marking orders, streamlining registrations for “Mero Rukh Mero Santati,” and adopting a comprehensive Citizen Charter to enhance service delivery.

Collectively, these groundbreaking initiatives underline our proactive approach toward achieving environmental sustainability, biodiversity conservation and ecological harmony, laying a robust foundation for future generations.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Sikkim, nestled in the heart of the eastern Himalayas, is home to 320 glacial lakes, many of which are expanding due to rapid glacial retreat driven by accelerated climate change. Forty of these lakes have been classified as high-risk by the NDMA, posing serious threats to our people, infrastructure and livelihoods. Our government remains fully committed to addressing this critical challenge through scientific research, technological innovation and community-based resilience strategies.

The South Lhonak disaster of October 2023 was a stark reminder of the fragile nature of our mountain ecosystems and the urgent necessity for proactive intervention. In order to prevent any such eventualities in future and to address the threat of Glacial Lake Outburst Flood, a High-Level Steering Committee and a Multi-Disciplinary Task Force has been constituted.

GLOF (Glacial Lake Outburst Flood) risk mitigation involves multidisciplinary collaboration, bringing together glaciologists, remote sensing experts, ecologists, geographers, geologists, structural engineers, hydropower specialists and disaster management professionals. To effectively address these challenges, our government has adopted a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach, uniting departments such as Science and Technology, Land Revenue and Disaster Management, Mines and Geology and Forests for a thorough hazard assessment of high-risk glacial lakes.

The Department of Science and Technology has been designated as the nodal agency and we have strengthened this department by deploying skilled engineers tasked with developing robust structural mitigation proposals. Numerous field studies—including bathymetric surveys, Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT), hydrology studies, slope stability assessments and topographical surveys—have been conducted. Based on these scientific findings, targeted mitigation plans are being developed to reduce risks posed by identified high-risk lakes and watersheds.

Our vision is clear: to transform Sikkim into a national model for glacial hazard resilience. Through scientific collaboration, sound policies, and unwavering political commitment, we are dedicated to safeguarding our environment, communities and future generations.

Large cardamom, the pride of Sikkim and the backbone of our rural economy, has sustained thousands of farming households for generations. However, over the past few decades, climate change-induced diseases, soil degradation, and genetic vulnerability have led to a sharp decline in productivity. The once-thriving crop that lasted 30 years now struggles to survive for just 5-6 years, severely impacting farmer livelihoods.

Recognizing the urgency of this situation, our government through the Science & Technology Department has launched the “**Mero Alaichi, Mero Dhan**” initiative—a bold and science-driven mission to restore the glory of large cardamom farming in Sikkim. The Department of

Science and Technology is leading this initiative with support from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India.

The *Mero Alaichi, Mero Dhan* initiative will help tackle the climate-change-induced diseases plaguing large cardamom. It will increase productivity and farmer incomes and ensure that large cardamom farming remains sustainable and resilient for future generations and thereby help Sikkim and the country reclaim our global status.

We have collaborated with leading research institutions to analyse root causes, undertake a baseline survey, develop diagnostic kits, provide biocontrol solutions for fungal diseases, and even work on RNA vaccines for viral diseases. To improve genetic resilience, research in genome sequencing, conventional plant breeding, mutation breeding and speed breeding is underway.

Six premier international and national institutes namely the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), the Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Development (IBSD), the National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR), the National Agri-food and Bio-manufacturing Institute (NABI), the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), and the Tata Institute for Genetics and Society (TIGS), have already initiated this cutting-edge research to revive large cardamom in Sikkim.

Pathogenic studies on the large cardamom leaf blight fungal disease are underway jointly at the national

laboratory at NIPGR. A consortium of pathogenic fungi has been isolated as disease causing namely - *Phyllostictacapitalensis*, *Colletotricumfructicola* and *Colletotricumgloeosporioides*. Testing of biocontrol microbes against these pathogenic fungi is underway and showing promising results.

Necessary resources have been provided to make this a success and I urge all stakeholders—scientists, policy makers and farmers—to come together in this historic effort. Let us work collectively to revive, protect and strengthen Sikkim’s most treasured crop.

Hon’ble Speaker Sir,

Tourists visiting Sikkim are captivated by its breathtaking beauty and unparalleled tranquillity from the moment they arrive. Their faces light up with smiles and excitement, reflecting the pure joy of discovering this serene paradise. As they depart, they carry with them cherished memories filled with nostalgia, longing eagerly to return. It is, therefore, our collective responsibility to preserve and enhance the natural beauty and peaceful ambience of Sikkim, ensuring that its charm remains intact and ever more inviting for future visitors.

We are also well aware that the tourism sector, one of the most transformative sectors within Sikkim’s economy, contributes significantly to our GDP and directly or indirectly supporting approximately 18% of our population. Recognizing its immense potential, our government remains committed to developing and

promoting sustainable tourism that preserves our natural landscapes, cultural heritage and traditions while simultaneously boosting local economies and livelihoods.

Our strategic focus encompasses diverse tourism experiences, ranging from conventional leisure tourism to eco-tourism, adventure tourism, cultural and religious tourism, health and wellness retreats, village homestays, and MICE tourism. To facilitate these varied experiences, we are undertaking major infrastructural enhancements, including:

- The State-of-the-Art Golden Jubilee Convention Centre in Gangtok, designed to host significant national and international conferences, exhibitions, and corporate events, positioning Sikkim prominently on global business and tourism circuits.
- Eco-friendly ropeways, such as the ropeway connecting Dhapper to Bhaleydhunga in South Sikkim, offering visitors unparalleled scenic vistas and the thrilling experience of a 240-meter Skywalk at Bhaleydhunga. Additionally, a passenger ropeway from Pelling Helipad to the historic Sangachoeling Monastery will provide spectacular views of the Kanchendzonga mountain range, enhancing religious pilgrimage and adventure tourism.
- Innovative attractions such as the Singshore Bridge Glass-Bottom Skywalk in Gyalshing District, supported under the PM-DeVINE initiative, promise to attract thrill-seekers and international tourists alike.

- Strengthening religious and pilgrimage tourism by upgrading facilities to accommodate the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

We are also in the process of developing the Border Experience at Nathula along with the Swarna Jayanthi Maitreya Manjari at Gangtok to further enhance the tourism experience and boost the sector.

To streamline tourism management, an advanced software system is being implemented to track tourist inflow, assess the state's carrying capacity, and monitor foreign tourists visiting Sikkim. This will help us develop a data-driven approach to tourism planning, ensuring that the state's resources and infrastructure are utilized efficiently while maintaining environmental sustainability. Our government remains steadfast in its commitment to making Sikkim a leading sustainable tourism destination while ensuring that the benefits of tourism reach local communities. With these initiatives, we are creating a responsible, eco-friendly and culturally enriched tourism experience, positioning Sikkim as a model state for sustainable and inclusive tourism development.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Sports and games are essential to holistic human development. They serve not only as a source of entertainment and physical exercise but also as powerful instruments for instilling discipline, fostering a spirit of healthy competition, and strengthening community bonds. Athletic accomplishments at the national and international

levels have long inspired pride and aspiration in our youth, encouraging them to strive for excellence and take up sporting activities with dedication and enthusiasm.

In today's world, where modern sports have become increasingly competitive, the role of advanced infrastructure, cutting-edge equipment and scientific support has become pivotal. The international sporting landscape has been transformed by the integration of technology, specialized coaching, and sports science. Recognizing this growing need for state-of-the-art resources and support systems, our government is determined to ensure that our athletes are not left behind but are fully equipped to meet these evolving demands.

We firmly believe in the potential of sports to shape character, build confidence, and empower individuals. We are committed to supporting athletes and stakeholders across multiple disciplines, helping them realize their full potential and showcase their talent at both national and global platforms. The aim is to tap into the energy of our young population, develop their personalities, and guide them towards meaningful, goal-oriented pursuits that contribute to the larger process of nation-building.

Keeping these objectives in mind, our government is resolved to transform the state into a premier Sports Hub—one that not only meets national benchmarks but aspires to attain global standards of excellence. As part of this ambitious vision, we plan to develop a **Golden Jubilee Integrated Cultural and Sports Village** that will be

equipped with world-class infrastructure, modern amenities, training institute, and top-tier coaching facilities across various sporting disciplines. The complex will also include residential facilities for coaches, hostels for trainees, and a dedicated centre for sports medicine and physiotherapy, ensuring a comprehensive and holistic environment for athletic growth and development. We have set aside funds in this budget to begin the project this year

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

It is a matter of great pride for me to highlight that Sikkim has made remarkable strides in development from 2019 to 2024, achieving an 85% increase in GDP, reaching ₹ 52,555 crore, and a 64% rise in per capita income to ₹ 7,07,181. Budgetary expenditure has more than doubled, and capital investment has surged by 269%, reflecting our commitment to strategic growth, financial management, and effective resource utilization.

Recognized as the 4th Best State in Poverty Alleviation, with only 2.6% of the population below the poverty line, Sikkim has also excelled in sustainable development, as seen in the latest NITI Aayog assessment. Sikkim has made notable progress in reducing inequalities, ensuring clean water and sanitation, environmental sustainability, and industrial growth, boasting the highest manufacturing sector value addition in the country at 35.7%.

To sustain and accelerate this progress, our government has established the **Institute for Transforming Sikkim (ITS)**, a dedicated policy think tank

that will provide data-driven recommendations for governance, planning and economic growth. The ITS will strengthen collaboration with NITI Aayog, oversee policy reforms, and guide Sikkim's development toward **Viksit Bharat 2047**.

The institute will be headed by the Chief Minister as Chairman, supported by a Vice Chairman and seven members, with administrative assistance provided by the Planning & Development Department.

The ITS will focus on identifying key growth sectors, ensuring effective planning, monitoring, development and implementation of Centrally Sponsored, Externally Aided, and state-earmarked schemes, as well as accelerating progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. It will enhance evidence-based decision-making, ensure optimal resource utilization and establish Constituency Development Committees (CDCs) in all Assembly Constituencies for grassroots planning and development. Additionally, ITS will act as a knowledge hub, training youth and professionals in policymaking, planning, and implementation. With this institution in place, Sikkim is poised to become a model for sustainable development, economic resilience, and innovation, ensuring inclusive and transformative growth for years to come.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Rural Development is at the cornerstone of our government's policies. We have been successfully implementing the flagship GOI schemes that foster development of the rural areas in the state.

We have effectively implemented MGNREGA, ensuring employment security and economic empowerment for rural households. By creating durable livelihood assets and dignifying labor, the scheme has strengthened purchasing power and bargaining capacity in villages, making it a vital lifeline for rural Sikkim. During the first quarter of FY 2024-25, over 30 lakh person-days of employment were generated, benefiting 58,915 rural households and 67,354 individual workers, with 55% of total employment availed by women. This high participation rate reflects Sikkim's leadership in women's economic inclusion.

Our government remains committed to ensuring housing for every poor Sikkimese by providing dignified and secure living spaces. To achieve this, we launched the Sikkim Garib Aawas Yojana (SGAY), ensuring that every economically weaker household has access to a pucca house with modern amenities. Each SGAY house spans 767 sq. ft., comprising two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen with a dining area, and a toilet, ensuring a comfortable and dignified living standard for beneficiaries. The construction cost per house, as per the SPWD Schedule of Rates – 2020, is ₹ 21,51,159.

Under Phase I, 3,050 houses were successfully constructed, followed by 1,000 houses sanctioned in 2021-22. In 2022-23, an additional 10,000 houses were sanctioned, and in 2023-24, 4,000 more houses were approved. This large-scale intervention is a testament to our government's unwavering commitment to housing

security for all. These initiatives reflect our government's people-first approach, ensuring that every citizen has access to safe, dignified and permanent housing, reinforcing our vision of an inclusive and resilient Sikkim.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to cleanliness and sanitation, ensuring that Sikkim continues to be recognized as a Clean and Green Destination. Prioritizing sanitation not only safeguards public health and environmental sustainability but also enhances Sikkim's reputation as a premier tourism destination.

Sikkim has achieved the distinction of being India's first ODF Plus Model State, a milestone that reflects our collective commitment to hygiene and sustainable waste management. In a first-of-its-kind initiative, our government introduced the Cleanest Gram Panchayat Awards, with a total cash prize of ₹ 10 lakh to incentivize rural communities in maintaining Sampoorna Swachhata. The Cleanest Gram Panchayat Awards 2024 were conferred on Arithang Chongrang GPU, Budang Kamarey GPU, and Samlik Marchak on October 2, 2024, marking Swachh Bharat Diwas.

Further, under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen), we have intensified efforts for scientific faecal sludge management in alignment with National Green Tribunal guidelines and environmental protection norms. To facilitate onsite treatment of faecal sludge in rural areas, two Mobile Treatment Units (MTUs) were launched on November 19, 2024, during the State Launch of Swachhata

Hi Seva, 2024. An additional five MTUs have been approved by the Cabinet, and orders are being placed for their procurement.

During FY 2024-25, significant progress has been made under Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen, with the construction of 2,860 Individual Household Latrines (IHHL), 44 Community Sanitary Complexes (CSC), 8 Plastic Waste Management Units (PWMU), and 148 Individual Soak Pits for Grey Water Management. Additionally, 310 individual compost pits, 49 community compost pits, and 20 segregation sheds have been developed, along with nine Resource Recovery Vehicles (RRV) for waste collection and disposal.

With the extension of Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) 2.0 till FY 2025-26, our government is fully committed to expanding sanitation infrastructure, with a special focus on Grey Water Management at both household and community levels. Advanced treatment systems like soak pits and reed bed filtration units will be implemented at drain endpoints, ensuring that only treated wastewater is released into jhoras and rivers.

As we move forward, our government remains dedicated to realizing the vision of holistic sanitation, ensuring every rural household and community in Sikkim benefits from a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable environment.

Our government also remains committed to strengthening grassroots democracy and empowering local governance through financial devolution and capacity-

building initiatives for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Under the 15th Finance Commission, Gram Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats received ₹ 42.00 crore in 2020-21, ₹ 31.00 crore in 2021-22, ₹ 33.00 crore in 2022-23, ₹ 35.00 crore in 2023-24, and ₹ 32.37 crore in 2024-25, with funds devolved in an 85:15 ratio as recommended.

Additionally, under the Fifth State Finance Commission, our government has consistently enhanced fiscal support to PRIs. Gram Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats received ₹ 13.67 crore and ₹ 7.36 crore in 2020-21, ₹ 17.40 crore and ₹ 9.54 crore in 2021-22, ₹ 21.55 crore and ₹ 12.40 crore in 2022-23, ₹ 25.86 crore and ₹ 14.88 crore in 2023-24, and ₹ 27.16 crore and ₹ 15.62 crore in 2024-25, respectively.

To further strengthen rural governance, our government successfully undertook the reorganization of the State's Panchayati Raj framework, adding 14 new Gram Panchayat Units (GPUs) to the existing 185, bringing the total to 199 GPUs. Similarly, 11 Territorial Constituencies were added to the existing 113, increasing the total to 124 Territorial Constituencies.

Recognizing the need for effective leadership and governance, our government has conducted Foundation Training for newly elected Panchayat Representatives, ensuring the smooth and effective implementation of Panchayati Raj and flagship Central and State schemes at the village level. A major milestone in our commitment to Panchayati Raj was the inauguration of the State Panchayat Resource Centre at Deorali, Gangtok, on November 15, 2024.

Infrastructure development has been a key focus area, with the completion of Gram Panchayat Bhawans under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) Grant Fund, including Kabi Rongpa GPU and Rabong Barfung GPU, which are now fully functional. Additionally, eight new GP Bhawans are under construction, further strengthening local governance facilities. The establishment of nine Panchayat Learning Centres and 18 Common Service Centres under the RGSA Plan for 2024-25 has significantly enhanced access to e-governance and capacity-building programs for Panchayats.

Our government has also emphasized knowledge exchange and skill enhancement through exposure visits for elected representatives, government officers and field functionaries to various states across India, enabling them to learn from best practices. Additionally, intra-state exposure visits for PRIs, including Assistant Directors, Panchayat Development Assistants and Panchayat Accounts Assistants, are being conducted to foster collaboration and practical learning.

We remain unwavering in our mission to empower Panchayati Raj Institutions, ensuring that Gram Panchayats and Zilla Panchayats continue to serve as the backbone of rural development, governance, and progress. Through financial support, capacity-building programs, infrastructure development, and knowledge-sharing initiatives, we are committed to realizing the vision of self-sufficient, empowered, and progressive rural communities in Sikkim.

Our government has prioritized rural road connectivity as a critical component of rural development, ensuring all-weather road access to remote villages under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). Since 2019, we have made tremendous progress, achieving a total road length of 781.95 km, which includes 56 bridges, with a financial investment of ₹ 763.23 crore.

Currently, under PMGSY Phase III, we are actively working on the upgradation of 45 roads, covering a total length of 285 km, ensuring that more villages benefit from reliable and improved road infrastructure. Additionally, we have secured approval for 20 new long-span bridges at a cost of ₹ 100.61 crore, further strengthening connectivity across difficult terrains.

These achievements reflect our unwavering commitment to enhancing rural infrastructure, improving access to markets, healthcare, and education, and ultimately boosting economic growth in rural Sikkim. With continued efforts, we aim to make safe, reliable, and all-weather connectivity a reality for every rural household in the state.

We remain committed to providing clean and safe drinking water to every rural household, in line with the Government of India's Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). Under this initiative, the ongoing National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) has been restructured and subsumed to achieve Har Ghar Nal Se Jal (HGNSJ) by 2024.

As of now, 91.68% of rural households in Sikkim—120,910 out of 131,880 households—have been provided

with Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs), with only 8.32% (10,970 households) remaining to be covered.

Since the inception of the Jal Jeevan Mission, our government has made significant strides in expanding rural water supply infrastructure. By March 31, 2019, Sikkim had already achieved 70,345 FHTCs, and since then, the mission has continued at a steady pace. Despite challenges, the pace of implementation has resulted in the provision of 50,673 additional FHTCs between 2020-2025, bringing clean drinking water closer to our rural communities.

Under the Har Ghar Jal initiative, Sikkim has made substantial progress in ensuring universal drinking water access at the block, panchayat, village, and habitation levels. While the state comprises six districts, 34 blocks, 199 panchayats, 400 villages, and 2,259 habitations, the mission has already achieved coverage in three blocks, 53 panchayats, 123 villages and 1,817 habitations.

To ensure comprehensive water supply coverage, our government has sanctioned multiple water schemes across all six districts, with a total project cost of ₹ 968.50 crore. Significant milestones have been achieved, with the Mangan district completing 230 schemes worth ₹ 57.61 crore, while projects in Gyalshing, Soreng, and Gangtok are near completion. Meanwhile, works in Namchi and Pakyong are progressing rapidly, ensuring timely fulfillment of the state's universal drinking water goal.

Moreover, to ensure uninterrupted access to clean drinking water in rural areas, our government has launched the 'Nal Jal Mitra' initiative, where Barefoot Engineers are being trained by the State Institute of Capacity Building. This initiative will significantly enhance technical skills and water management expertise among rural water supply facilitators.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Sikkim's power sector continues to make exceptional strides toward achieving energy security and sustainability. Known for its natural resources, especially hydroelectric power, Sikkim has become a leading player in renewable energy production. The state's vast hydroelectric potential has enabled remarkable progress in clean energy generation, aligning with both national and global goals to reduce carbon emissions. By harnessing our abundant water resources, we generate thousands of megawatts of hydropower, which not only meets our state's energy needs but also contributes significantly to the national grid.

In addition to hydroelectric power, our government is committed to expanding the use of clean and renewable energy. We are actively integrating solar and wind power into our energy mix. Sikkim has already begun developing a comprehensive renewable energy roadmap, including wind farms and solar plants, to ensure long-term energy sustainability.

Improving energy distribution infrastructure is also a key priority. To this end, our government has implemented essential reforms, including upgrading aging power lines

and reinforcing resilience against natural disasters. When the devastating floods of October 2023 tested our infrastructure, our rapid restoration of power lines and services demonstrated our commitment to ensuring uninterrupted energy access for all citizens. We have also made significant strides with smart grids and smart metering systems, enhancing energy efficiency and improving power resource management.

Sikkim's power landscape was severely impacted by the October 2023 floods, which destroyed the Teesta III project and its adjoining dam, resulting in a loss of nearly 1,800 MW of power capacity.

To strengthen the power sector, the Sikkim Power Sector Development Project (SPSDP) is a transformative initiative has been undertaken by our government to provide 24x7 quality and reliable power to all households, industries, and commercial establishments in the state. With a total project outlay of ₹ 1607.78 crores, this initiative is being implemented with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to create a climate-resilient and renewable-ready power system that will support Sikkim's transition to sustainable energy.

To finance this ambitious project, our government has successfully secured ₹ 1283.63 crores, covering 80% of the project cost, through ADB assistance via the Government of India, while the remaining ₹ 324.15 crores are being funded from the State's exchequer. As Sikkim is a Special Category State, 90% of the loan proceeds will be provided as a grant, minimizing the financial burden on

the state. The implementation period for SPSDP is from 2024 to 2029, with clear targets set for completion by December 31, 2029. The project aims to reduce technical and commercial losses from the existing 29.88% to 17%, cut down power outages by 50% from the current 432 hours per year, eliminate the gap between the average cost of supply and revenue recovery (currently ₹ 1.86/kWh), and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 1,94,185 tons annually through improved efficiency and the use of renewable and hydroelectric power.

A major component of this project focuses on modernizing and strengthening Sikkim's power distribution network. This includes the installation of 1,350 km of climate-resilient 11kV distribution lines, the augmentation of 460 distribution transformers, and the upgrading of 26 substations with SCADA systems to enhance monitoring and operational efficiency. Additionally, the replacement of 1,325 km of aged overhead low-tension lines with new and safer infrastructure will significantly improve power reliability. To further support rural and remote communities, 15,000 energy-efficient public streetlights will be installed, and awareness programs will be conducted for 800 community members, including at least 400 women and girls, to educate them on electricity use, conservation, and safety.

The project also focuses on institutional strengthening and service delivery improvements by developing a financial sustainability plan for the State Power Department. A distribution master plan, incorporating

geographic information system (GIS) mapping, will help in more effective grid management. A real-time monitoring control center will be established to optimize power distribution, while a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy will be implemented to ensure greater participation of women in the power sector. As part of this effort, 500 staff, including 200 women, will receive specialized training in power sector operations and GESI integration.

In addition to improving power infrastructure, the project aims to promote energy-based livelihoods and empower communities through renewable energy adoption. Our government is committed to powering 24 Public Health Centres with solar energy and equipping them with energy-efficient electrical systems. Additionally, renewable energy systems will be installed in 1,100 women-led businesses, including self-help groups, producer groups, and individual enterprises. To support this, 440 women entrepreneurs will be trained in the use, maintenance and business management of renewable energy equipment, ensuring long-term sustainability and economic empowerment.

In addition to this, through the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), launched by the Ministry of Power, Government of India, we are taking decisive steps to modernize power infrastructure, reduce losses and improve efficiency. This is not just about infrastructure; it is about empowering our people, industries and economy with an uninterrupted and efficient power supply.

Through this scheme, we are addressing the long-standing challenges in power distribution with a clear vision. Our goal is to bring down Aggregate Technical & Commercial (AT&C) losses to 12-15% and eliminate the ACS-ARR gap by 2025-26. With this, Sikkim will move towards a self-sustaining and financially viable power sector, ensuring that our citizens receive the benefits of better service delivery and stable tariffs.

A significant step in this transformation is the implementation of smart prepaid metering under the Advanced Metering Infrastructure Service Provider (AMISP) initiative, with an investment of ₹ 238.17 crore. These prepaid smart meters will revolutionize the way power is consumed—eliminating billing discrepancies, preventing power theft, improving revenue collection, and enabling consumers to monitor and manage their usage in real-time. We have already completed 12% of the metering work, and I assure this House that we will move forward swiftly to complete this critical intervention.

Another major initiative under RDSS is the loss reduction program, with a total outlay of ₹ 360.38 crore. This is a game-changer for Sikkim's power sector, focusing on modernization of distribution networks, reduction of technical losses, and decongestion of existing grids. The creation of new 11 kV downstream feeders and the addition of new substations and distribution transformers will significantly enhance voltage stability, reduce breakdowns, and ensure seamless electricity supply to the people of Sikkim.

Equally important is our effort to extend power supply to border areas and defence installations, ensuring that even the remotest corners of Sikkim are fully electrified. We have sanctioned ₹ 238.13 crore for this crucial work, with progress currently at 10%. This initiative is not just about infrastructure—it is about strengthening national security, supporting border communities, and ensuring that no village in Sikkim is left behind.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir, these are not just figures and statistics—this is real progress, real transformation. With every step we take, we are bringing Sikkim closer to a future where power supply is no longer a challenge but a strength. As we modernize our power sector, we are also making it financially sustainable by reducing technical and commercial losses, improving billing efficiency, and ensuring that every unit of electricity is accounted for.

Once RDSS is fully implemented, Sikkim will have a robust, reliable, and future-ready power distribution system—one that will fuel economic growth, improve the quality of life for our citizens, and create new opportunities for businesses and industries. This government will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that Sikkim's power sector is among the best in the country.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Our government is dedicated to transforming Sikkim into a vibrant hub of industrial growth and entrepreneurial innovation. With this ambitious vision, we have implemented several significant initiatives to ensure that businesses and entrepreneurs flourish seamlessly in our state.

Recognizing the importance of simplifying regulatory processes, we have fully digitalized the issuance of Industrial Licenses through the National Single Window System (NSWS) Portal. This digital initiative has substantially reduced compliance burdens, facilitating quicker and easier establishment and expansion of businesses.

To extend support to every corner of our state, District Industries Centers have been established in all districts. These centers play a crucial role in promoting entrepreneurship and facilitating the effective implementation of various central and state schemes, serving as essential support systems for both aspiring and existing entrepreneurs.

In a landmark step, our government has now prepared the Sikkim Industrial and Investment Policy -2024. This has been done full after 22 years of the last Industrial Policy of 2003. The new Industrial policy aims to achieve a major shift from the earlier policies of rapid and versatile economic development to more selective, balanced and green development of the State. The development of new industries is to be carefully planned so that there are minimal negative consequences on the environment, human security and downstream and neighbouring geographies.

Addressing the evolving needs of our youth, the Sikkim Start-up Policy 2025 has been crafted specifically to nurture innovative start-ups by providing necessary funding, mentorship, and regulatory support. Through the

Skilled Youth Start-up Scheme (SYSS), we have successfully empowered over 4,500 entrepreneurs, particularly in crucial MSME sectors such as tourism, food processing and organic agriculture. This initiative has generated numerous job opportunities and significantly boosted local economies.

Our unwavering support for the MSME sector is further reflected in the Sikkim MSME Policy 2022, which offers substantial financial assistance, including vital subsidies for transport and insurance. To further support MSMEs, we are establishing Flatted Factory Complexes in all districts, providing entrepreneurs with affordable, accessible workspaces designed to enhance productivity and growth.

Our proactive participation in major investor summits across the country has significantly enhanced Sikkim's visibility, attracting promising investments in critical sectors such as food processing, hydropower, and technology. These strategic initiatives underscore our steadfast commitment to fostering a robust industrial landscape, generating employment, and driving economic prosperity for all citizens of Sikkim.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Our government is deeply committed to women empowerment and ensuring robust social security in Sikkim. Recognizing the critical role women play in our society, we have launched the transformative Sikkim Aama Sashaktikaran Yojana, providing single mothers with substantial financial support annually to support their families and ensure a dignified life.

We firmly believe in women's active participation in governance and the economy. Therefore, we have instituted a progressive policy guaranteeing 50% reservation for women in Panchayat bodies and contractual employment, empowering them to lead and influence community decisions actively.

Understanding the importance of women's health and reducing the environmental impact of traditional fuel use, we initiated the Sikkim Aama Sahyog Yojana, offering four free LPG refills annually. This initiative significantly lowers dependency on firewood, contributing to better health outcomes and a cleaner environment.

To further encourage economic independence, our Entrepreneurship Support for Women scheme provides comprehensive financial assistance and dedicated training for women-led startups and enterprises. This initiative empowers women entrepreneurs, fostering innovation and inclusive economic growth across our state.

Through these targeted efforts, our government remains steadfast in its mission to uplift women, enhance their quality of life, and ensure their active role in Sikkim's prosperous future.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

A strong and efficient bureaucracy is the backbone of good governance, and our government has taken historic steps to modernize and strengthen the administrative framework. Through comprehensive reforms, strategic recruitment, cadre restructuring, and employee welfare

measures, we have ensured a more dynamic, responsive, and service-oriented governance system.

Since 2019, we have prioritized merit-based recruitment to reinforce key government departments, ensuring that essential services remain efficient and effective. Through transparent and fair selection processes, we have successfully inducted professionals across critical sectors such as administration, finance, law enforcement, healthcare, and education. The appointment of Under Secretaries, Accounts Officers, Deputy Superintendents of Police, State Health Service professionals, Assistant Architects, IT specialists, Geologists, and faculty for the Sikkim Government College of Nursing has significantly bolstered governance capabilities. Additionally, recognizing the importance of providing financial security to the families of deceased government employees, we have granted 333 compassionate appointments. To address immediate manpower needs and maintain smooth service delivery across various departments, over 26,000 temporary appointments have been made, ensuring that public services continue to function without disruption.

Cadre restructuring has been a key priority, aimed at making government services more agile and effective in meeting emerging challenges. Regular reviews and amendments have strengthened critical services such as the Civil Service, Cooperation Service, Architect Service, Forest Service, Finance Service, Agriculture & Veterinary Services, IT & Statistical Services, Stenographer & Excise Services, and General Service, among others. Additionally, two new

cadres—the Disaster Management Cadre and the Printing & Stationery Cadre—have been introduced to enhance efficiency in these specialized fields. These reforms are designed to streamline administration, create structured career growth opportunities for officers and ensure a governance system that is equipped to handle the evolving needs of the people.

Employee welfare has remained at the heart of our governance reforms. Recognizing the crucial role of government employees in delivering public services, we have introduced progressive policies to enhance their well-being and work-life balance. Maternity leave was extended to 365 days, while paternity leave of one month has been granted to all government employees, including temporary staff. This leave has recently been amended to can also be availed as 6 months maternity leave and 6 months of Child Care Leave. To encourage population growth, advance increments have been introduced for employees upon the birth of their second and third children, effective from January 2023. Furthermore, we have implemented a sabbatical leave scheme, empowering employees to pursue personal and professional development opportunities without compromising their service tenure.

Understanding the growing demand for experienced medical professionals, we have taken a significant step in strengthening our healthcare system by increasing the retirement age for doctors under the Sikkim State Health Service from 58 to 62 years. This decision ensures that the

state continues to benefit from the expertise and experience of senior medical professionals in both general and specialized fields.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Development and progress hold no meaning if the well-being of our citizens, our greatest asset, is not safeguarded. Today, Sikkim faces an unprecedented demographic challenge with the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) plummeting by 129% over the past two decades—from 2.75 in 1998-99 to a critically low 1.1 in 2019-21, far below the replacement level of 2.1. This alarming decline poses a serious threat to the state's socio-economic stability and demands immediate and comprehensive intervention.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, our government has taken proactive steps at various administrative and institutional levels to address the socio-economic, medical, and psychological factors contributing to this crisis. A formal appeal was made to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in March 2023, seeking central support which was approved and granted.

To ensure a structured and coordinated approach, an Inter-Departmental Working Group (IDWG) was constituted on June 16, 2023, reinforcing our whole-of-government approach. An Expert Group Meeting was, bringing together national and state-level stakeholders to identify research priorities and outline an actionable strategy to combat declining fertility.

We are now implementing a range of targeted interventions, guided by expert recommendations. A midterm evaluation of the *Vatsalaya Scheme* is being conducted by Sikkim University to assess its impact and propose enhancements. In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), an extensive Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign has been launched to raise awareness about fertility issues and reproductive health.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is being finalized with AIIMS, New Delhi, and the Army Hospital (Research and Referral), New Delhi, to establish an Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Centre equipped with IVF and IUI facilities. Meanwhile, the National Institute of Research on Reproductive and Child Health (NIRRCH), a key ICMR institute, is conducting a detailed study to identify the specific factors affecting fertility rates in Sikkim and recommend targeted interventions.

Further strengthening healthcare infrastructure, a dedicated Reproductive Medicine Unit has been established at STNM Hospital, Gangtok, through a notification issued on October 17, 2024. This was followed by the operationalization of a Level 1 Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Unit at STNM Hospital on March 8, 2025, marking a major milestone in our efforts to provide accessible reproductive health services to the people of Sikkim.

Under *Sikkim INSPIRES* (Integrated Service Provision & Innovation for Reviving Economics), our

government has also taken the responsibility of ensuring holistic well-being while driving socio-economic progress across multiple sectors.

Through this programme, we have collaborated with the Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy, Pune, to formulate a State Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Strategy. The first draft of this critical document has been prepared after extensive multi-stakeholder consultations. This strategy, based on evidence and tailored to Sikkim's unique mental health landscape, will guide the state in implementing effective interventions to tackle mental health challenges holistically.

Apart from this, each district will develop its own Integrated Economic Inclusion Action Plan (IEIAP), known as the Samridha District Plan. These plans will identify unique economic opportunities within each district and create structured, time-bound strategies to develop local industries and employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth. Given that Sikkim INSPIRES follows a Programme for Results model, implementation and investments will be monitored by the State Government, the World Bank, and an Independent Verification Agency to ensure efficiency and transparency.

Recognizing the need for global workforce integration, our government is working towards establishing a streamlined system for securing overseas employment, particularly in the healthcare sector. As part of this effort, 13 nurses from Sikkim have already been employed in Germany's healthcare industry with competitive remuneration. Moving forward, the Niyukti

Kendra under the Skill Development Department will be further strengthened to facilitate high-quality employment opportunities for our workforce, particularly women and youth.

Additionally, under the Sikkim INSPIRES programme, strong emphasis on eco-tourism, community tourism and village tourism is given. In the first phase of the program, four major eco-tourism sites have been identified for development:

- Dzungri – Goechala Trek and Thalung – Kussong Lake Trek in Mangan District
- Pangolakha Trek in Pakyong District
- Barsey Uttarey Trek in Soreng District

These eco-tourism initiatives will be integrated with economic development plans for nearby communities to ensure maximum benefits for local populations. Additionally, efforts are being made to introduce an online permit and site management system, allowing tourists to make informed travel decisions while helping the government regulate footfall in ecologically sensitive areas.

As we transition towards paperless governance, IT infrastructure plays a vital role in ensuring efficiency. Our government, through the Department of Information Technology, is spearheading the development of a State Data Policy to enable seamless data exchange and improved internet connectivity across the state. A comprehensive assessment of Sikkim's digital infrastructure is underway to design targeted interventions that eliminate connectivity barriers and enhance digital governance.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

With the enactment of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, 2023, India has ushered in a historic transformation of its criminal justice system. These new laws, which replaced the Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, came into effect on 1st July 2024, marking a new era of justice, efficiency, and modernization in law enforcement.

These progressive laws prioritize access to justice, timely case disposal, victim-centric approaches, and gender neutrality while effectively tackling cybercrime, organized crime and offenses against women and children. The Government of Sikkim, in its commitment to the rule of law, has taken proactive and decisive steps to ensure a smooth and effective transition to these new legal frameworks, strengthening law enforcement, judicial efficiency and forensic capabilities across the state.

To ensure widespread awareness and understanding of these landmark changes, we launched massive awareness programs on 1st July 2024, engaging all stakeholders, including police officers, women's groups, students, senior citizens, Self-Help Groups, Anganwadi workers, and members of Panchayati Raj Institutions. This initiative has empowered our citizens with knowledge of their rights and responsibilities under the new legal framework.

Capacity-building has been a top priority, and I am proud to say that we have successfully trained 100% of our police officers, public prosecutors, judicial officers, forensic experts, and prison personnel. This was achieved in collaboration with Sikkim Judicial Academy, Police Training Centre, CDTI Kolkata, NEPA, MHA (BPR&D), and the i-GOT Karmayogi platform. With a well-trained workforce, we are ensuring effective implementation of these laws at every level.

To enhance digital readiness, we have equipped 18 out of 28 police stations with digital infrastructure and are actively working towards satellite internet connectivity for police stations in remote areas that face connectivity challenges due to geographical constraints. Additionally, mobile phones have been provided to officers above the rank of SHO, and computers have been installed in various police stations, strengthening efficiency and accountability in law enforcement.

We have also modernized our prison system by installing video conferencing facilities at State Central Prison, Rongyek and District Prison, Namchi, enabling seamless judicial proceedings. Moreover, designated spaces have been established in prisons and the State Forensic Science Laboratory for remote witness examination, as per the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023.

Recognizing the crucial role of forensic science in strengthening evidence-based investigations, we have established the State Forensic Science Laboratory at

Saramsa, Ranipool. To ensure swift forensic examination of crime scenes, we have deployed two mobile forensic vans and designated forensic experts, including the Director, Scientific Officer, and Junior Scientific Officer, to meet the requirements under Section 329 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023.

In line with the provisions of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, we have also established the Directorate of Prosecution under the Home Department, and the appointments of the Director and Assistant Director are underway. This will strengthen the legal framework for prosecution, ensuring fair and swift trials.

The Witness Protection Scheme, 2024, has been framed and notified to protect witnesses from intimidation and threats, ensuring that justice is not hindered by fear.

Additionally, we have notified the Video Conferencing Rules, streamlined judicial procedures and enhanced accessibility to legal proceedings.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Our government is dedicated to upholding the rule of law, safeguarding justice, and strengthening law enforcement. These reforms will enhance security, peace, and harmony while ensuring swift and fair justice to every citizen of Sikkim. With modern infrastructure, digital integration, and a well-equipped judicial system, we are paving the way for a just and progressive society.

Under our government, we will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that these historic legal reforms translate into real change on the ground. Together, we are building a stronger, safer, and more just Sikkim.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

I am pleased to inform this august House about a landmark reform in the financial management system of our state—the successful implementation of the SNA-SPARSH module by the State Finance Department. This transformative initiative, effective March 12, 2025, marks a pivotal step in modernizing our treasury operations and optimizing public fund management.

The SNA-SPARSH module has been implemented in compliance with the directives of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India. This reform establishes a 'Just-in-Time' treasury management system that ensures seamless interoperability between Sikkim's State Integrated Financial Management System (SIFMS), PRANALI, the Reserve Bank of India's e-Kuber platform, and the Public Financial Management System (PFMS).

What makes this achievement even more commendable is that it was accomplished entirely through internal expertise, without any additional capital expenditure. A dedicated team of financial domain experts and technical specialists within the Finance Department completed the development and integration within an exceptionally short timeline of two and a half months—a testament to our state's growing capacity for in-house innovation and digital governance.

The implementation of SNA-SPARSH brings significant improvements in fiscal efficiency. It allows implementing agencies to draw funds on demand, thereby eliminating the outdated practice of holding large, unutilized balances in extra-budgetary accounts. This not only ensures optimal liquidity management but also reduces transactional delays, enabling quicker and more effective deployment of public funds.

This House may recall that in the past, delays and inefficiencies in fund flow mechanisms often led to unutilized funds sitting idle in various accounts, causing fiscal distortions and hampering timely project execution. With the introduction of SNA-SPARSH, we have now established a system that enhances financial discipline, improves transparency, and accelerates the pace of development in Sikkim.

This reform reaffirms our government's commitment to good governance, fiscal prudence, and technological advancement. It is a step towards a more responsive, efficient, and transparent financial ecosystem that will ultimately benefit the people of Sikkim.

I take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to the Finance Department team for their hard work, technical expertise, and commitment in ensuring the smooth and timely implementation of this reform. I also express gratitude to the Reserve Bank of India and the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, for their guidance and support in this endeavor. With these words, I commend the successful implementation of

SNA-SPARSH to this esteemed House and seek the continued support of all stakeholders in realizing its full potential for the benefit of our state.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

The issue of providing reserved seats for the Limboo and Tamang communities in the State Legislative Assembly of Sikkim has been consistently raised by our government since the formation of our government in 2019. Although the Limboo and Tamang communities were notified as Scheduled Tribes in the year 2003, seat reservations for these two communities in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly are yet to be implemented.

Article 371(F), sub-clause (f), of the Constitution provides that Parliament may, for the purpose of protecting the rights and interests of the different sections of the population of Sikkim, make provisions regarding the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim. In keeping with this constitutional mandate, our government has been vigorously pursuing the matter with the Central Government.

I have submitted several memorandums to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modiji and the Union Minister of Home Affairs Shri Amit Shahji and Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Shri Jual Oramji, and I have reiterated this demand during every official interaction with them.

Our government has also made numerous representations to the Government of India, seeking an

early resolution of this long-standing demand. I have personally met with the Hon'ble Prime Minister to emphasize the urgency and importance of securing reserved seats for the Limboo and Tamang communities in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Our government is also actively engaging with the Government of India to secure the return of His Holiness the 17th Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, the Supreme Head of the Karma Kagyu Sect—one of the four sects of the Nalanda tradition of Vajrayana Buddhism. The goal is to bring His Holiness back to India and subsequently to Sikkim.

In support of this, we are constructing a special monastery at Phodong, North Sikkim, to serve as His Holiness' residence. We are also working relentlessly with the Government of India to facilitate His Holiness' revered visit to Sikkim.

The people of Sikkim, along with devotees worldwide, are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to have an audience with and receive the physical darshan of His Holiness. We look forward to his early visit to Sikkim, fulfilling the deep desire of the people.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

In the judgment dated 13th January, 2023, passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 59 of 2013, *Association of Old Settlers of Sikkim vs. Union of India and another*, along with Writ Petition (Civil)

No. 1283 of 2021, *Rapden Lepcha and others vs. Union of India and another*, Hon'ble Supreme Court, in paragraph 10(a), made certain remarks perceived as adverse towards the Sikkimese of Nepali origin. However, our government promptly filed a review petition before the Hon'ble Supreme Court seeking correction of the said remarks. After hearing the submissions of the Government of Sikkim and the Government of India, the Hon'ble Supreme Court, vide its Order dated 8th February, 2023, was pleased to make the necessary correction and deleted the portion containing the adverse remarks against the Nepali community.

After the judgment of Supreme Court, our government requested to the Ministry of Home Affairs to support our case in the Supreme Court and similarly, we could obtain the support, consequently, the Government of India also filed a review petition in the same matter before the Supreme Court.

In the meanwhile, our government also passed a resolution in the State Assembly regarding the deletion of the observation made by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Our Government is deeply committed to ensure a durable and final solution to some of the pending issues that impinge upon the aspirations of the people of Sikkim. The case for according the Scheduled Tribe Status in the constitution of India for the 12 left out communities of Sikkim is one of them. Though this public interest issue has been pending for more than two decades, the

settlement has remained far-fetched. One of the key reasons which has been raised by the concerned authorities in the Government of India has been the inadequacy of scientific and clinching justifications by these communities to be accorded the ST status.

Besides passing a unanimous resolution in the State Legislative Assembly, we have made purposeful representations to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the Union Home Minister, and the Union Tribal Affairs Minister. Representatives from all 12 communities have been actively participating in this effort.

In order to provide more concrete and substantive inputs, our government has now constituted a State High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. B V Sharma, Director, Anthropological Survey of India, Ministry of Culture, GOI to prepare ethnographic reports of all the 12 communities. This Committee has some of the best-known experts, professional and experienced officials drawn from various institutions of India and from within Sikkim also and is doing rigorous exercise along with the representatives of all the 12 communities to prepare comprehensive reports for the consideration of the Government of India. My office and the Department of Social Welfare are closely monitoring this very crucial exercise. I gather that the Committee will submit the final report within next couple of weeks.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

I now present the fiscal position of our State, highlighting our economic growth, revenue performance, and prudent fiscal management.

It is encouraging to note that Sikkim is growing at a faster rate than the national average, with our per capita GSDP growth ranking among the highest in the country. The manufacturing sector, dominated by the pharmaceutical industry, contributes over ₹ 15,000 crore to the GSDP, making it one of the most profitable sectors in the State. However, as taxation is destination-based, revenue potential is restricted to medicines consumed. From a livelihood perspective, tourism and related sectors play a crucial role in Sikkim's economy, making it a preferred travel destination.

Sikkim is often accused of having an excess workforce in public administration. However, as a sensitive border state sharing international boundaries with China, Bhutan and Nepal, maintaining local peace is of paramount importance, making additional workforce in public administration a necessary risk aversion. Less than 15% of the workforce is employed in public administration, which, given the topography and sparse population of Sikkim, is not excessive.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

Budgetary expenditure is estimated to exceed ₹ 16,000 crore in FY 2025–26, compared to ₹ 6,940 crore in 2018–19. Notably, capital expenditure is also expected to

rise from ₹ 720.61 crore in 2019–20 to over ₹ 5,000 crore in 2025–26. This achievement is the result of enhanced State Own Revenues, prudent financial management, and the successful mobilization of funds through externally aided projects, the Ministry of DoNER, and the Ministry of Finance, Government of India. Our ability to leverage additional funding through timely project completion has further strengthened capital investments.

Sikkim has significantly benefited from the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment. Over the past five years, Sikkim has received ₹ 3,683 crore under this scheme—₹ 200 crore in 2020-21, ₹ 300 crore in 2021-22, ₹ 551 crore in 2022-23, ₹ 798 crore in 2023-24, and ₹ 1,834 crore in 2024-25. These long-term special assistance funds were secured after our government achieved various reforms prescribed in the guidelines of the Union Government, including urban reforms, land-related reforms in rural and urban areas, implementation of SNA-SPARSH, and enhancing capital expenditure by over 10% compared to previous financial years.

The major priority capital projects funded under the Special Assistance scheme are detailed below, including those that have been completed, are nearing completion, or have recently been initiated:

- i) Construction of 1000 bedded Multi-Speciality Hospital Socheygang Phase I &II,
- ii) New Secretariat at Tashiling(Block A & Block B),
- iii) Ropeway at Bhaleydungga, Yangyang

- iv) Passenger Ropeway from Pelling to Sangachoeling,
- v) Baichung Stadium, Namchi
- vi) Wellness Park, Gangtok
- vii) Modernization and Strengthening of the Power Transmission and Distribution Network in Sikkim
- viii) Conceptualization, Design, Drawing and Construction of 500 bedded District Hospital at Namchi
- ix) Construction of Yangthang Degree College Phase II, Gyalsing
- x) Government Medical College, Sochakgang, Sichey
- xi) Tarundeep Rai Archery Complex at Kitchudumra, South Sikkim
- xii) Swarna Jayanti Maitreya Manjari, Gangtok
- xiii) Housing for Police Personnel at Tadong
- xiv) Establishment of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Centre of Excellence at Chakung
- xv) Khanchendzonga State University at Tarku
- xvi) Mini Secretariat at Lumsey
- xvii) Eco-Tourism Pilgrimage Complex at Dodak
- xviii) Border Experience at Nathula
- xix) Skywalk at Bhaleydung, Yangyang
- xx) District Administrative Centre Soreng and Pakyong, etc.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

I will now summarise the key sectors of our government in terms of budget allocation.

A significant portion of the budget, about 13 percent, is allocated to the education sector, underscoring the government's commitment to enhancing educational infrastructure and creating opportunities for quality education. Several initiatives like Yoga and Mental Health for School Children, the Chief Minister Merit Scholarship Scheme, Educational Tours for school and college students, and exposure trips for awardee teachers are some of the notable schemes being implemented.

In addition, a scheme to encourage meritorious students—the Chief Minister's Education Assistance Scheme—was introduced in last year's budget and will continue in the current year. Allocation is also made for the repair, face-lifting, and boundary fencing of various schools. A provision has also been kept for providing a 30-seater bus to Gurukul School, Bermiok, under the Gyalsing Bermiok Constituency.

The Land Revenue Department receives 9 percent of the budget, with a notable focus on flash flood mitigation activities to safeguard the affected areas from further natural disasters and to rebuild public infrastructure damaged due to the flash floods of the 3rd and 4th of October, 2023. A provision has been kept for land compensation for the rehabilitation of GLOF-affected people at Naga, Mangan District.

Rural development is allocated 8 percent, aiming to improve the quality of life in rural areas and promote sustainable development through improved rural connectivity, water supply and sanitation, rural roads, etc. Provisions have been kept for the Shraavan Kumar Award for appreciating the best son and daughter in each GPU, Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Yojana, Sikkim Aama Sahayog Yojana, the Award for Cleanest GPU, dedicated water supply to Mangalbaria Block from Sapley Source at Upper Resikhola, Sribadam under Soreng District, construction of various Gram Prasasan Kendras (GPKs), and construction of the BDO Office at Kopchey, Namchi Singithang under Namchi District.

The health sector receives 6 percent, ensuring better healthcare facilities and services for the populace. The state's healthcare institutions aim to build an enviable record, making Sikkim the prime destination for medical tourism in North Eastern India. Our government has focused on further expanding and enhancing the quality of healthcare infrastructure. Sufficient funds have been provided for new hospital equipment, upgradation of specialty wards, maintenance of STNM Hospital, medicines and consumables, and for implementation of schemes like Mukhya Mantri Swasthya Suvidha Yojana and the Chief Minister's Medical Assistance Scheme. Provision has also been made for the installation of a Positive Pressure Kidney Transplant ICU at STNM Hospital, Sochaygang, CCTV, X-ray machines, boundary fencing of the hospital

premises, purchase of 30 computers and printers, and management software development. A new PHSC will be constructed at Melli, for which an allocation of ₹ 10.00 crore has been provided.

Power Sector and road infrastructure each receive 4 percent, highlighting the importance of reliable electricity and well-maintained roads for overall development. Upgradation of various roads to tourist destinations will be taken up, namely the Indira By-Pass Road, Rumtek–Rey–Ranka–Sichey Road (including resurfacing, carpeting, drainage, and protective works), Nayabazar–Legship Road, SH19 from GomKhola to Akar Bridge in Jorethang, construction of a steel composite bridge (80m span) over GomKhola, a new road from Upper Mangzing to Bandey (Yangyang), a tunnel from Chirbirey to Jorethang in Namchi District, and the road from Chumbong to Zoom Fatak via Khuttidara under Soreng District, along with other priority roads.

Tourism, a vital sector for economic growth, is allocated 3 percent, aiming to develop tourism destinations and attract more visitors. Considerable investment is proposed, among other projects, for the conversion of Singshore Bridge into a Glass Skywalk in West Sikkim, support facilities for the Ropeway to Baleydung in South Sikkim, Dodak Eco-Tourism Pilgrimage Complex, Herbal Medicine and Spiritual Healing Tourism Complex at Nandugoan, development of Rabindranath Tagore Park and Cultural Centre at Megi Dara, Rinchenpong, Asta Chirenjivi Dham at Nagi, Namthang, construction of the

Tara Devi Statue with tourism amenities at Silnon Monastery Complex, Upper Chongrang, Yuksum Tashiding Constituency, construction of Eco-Tourism Heritage Centre at Hee Patal under Gyalsing District, and the organization of the Cho-dzo Lake Tourist Festival at Ravangla.

Social Welfare and Women and Child Development receive 5 percent, with specific provisions for Aama schemes designed to uplift women and children through various initiatives, such as the Social Security Pension including the Chief Minister Disability Pension and the construction of a working women's hostel at Tadong.

Our government is making relentless efforts to promote sports in the state. Substantial investment in state-of-the-art sports infrastructure—such as the Tarundeep Rai Archery Academy, Reshithang Khel Gaon, playgrounds in rural areas, Jas Lal Boxing Academy at Khamdong, integrated cultural and sports facilities, rural sports facilities at Jorethang, alternative playgrounds at Jorethang and Boomtar under Namchi District, and the development of a Cricket Academy and construction of a cricket ground at Amba under Pakyong District—is being made by our Government to foster a thriving culture of nurturing talented athletes and to position our state as a formidable force on the national sporting arena.

Under the Forest Department, our government has introduced the “Sishu Samridhi Yojana,” a pioneering scheme aimed at fostering environmental stewardship and supporting families. Under this initiative, each newborn child will be eligible for financial assistance of ₹ 10,800,

provided that the family plants 108 trees. The scheme reflects a dual focus on environmental sustainability and social welfare. By linking financial aid to tree plantation, our government encourages families to actively participate in environmental conservation efforts, promoting a greener and healthier future. By fostering a culture of environmental consciousness and providing tangible support to families, the “Sishu Samridhi Yojana” aims to create a sustainable and prosperous future for the coming generations.

Hon’ble Speaker Sir,

With your permission, I present the Budget for the financial year **2025-26** before this august House. This budget reflects our government’s continued commitment to fiscal prudence, sustainable development, and the welfare of our people. It is designed to strengthen our economy, foster inclusive growth, and ensure that the benefits of development reach every citizen of Sikkim.

For the financial year 2025-26, we have made a gross expenditure provision of ₹ 16647 crore. After accounting for recoveries amounting to ₹ 451 crore, the net outgo stands at ₹ 16196 crore.

Receipts Overview

To meet this expenditure, we have ensured a prudent mix of our own revenue generation, devolution from the Centre, and borrowings. The key sources of receipts are:

A	Receipts	₹ in crore
1	Tax Revenue	2076
2	Non Tax Revenue	1007
3	State's Share of Central Taxes	5519
4	Grant-in-aid from Central Government	2600
5	Gross borrowings	2651
6	Recoveries of Loans and Advances	1
7	Financial Assistance under the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment	1037
8	Assistance to State for flashflood mitigation	600
9	EAP Grant	593
10	Net Public Accounts	112
	Total Receipts	16196

This brings our total receipts to ₹ 16196 crore, ensuring that our financial resources are effectively utilized for the state's development.

Expenditure Profile

The allocations in this budget are designed to address the core priorities of governance, infrastructure, and social welfare. The expenditure is categorized as follows:

B	Expenditure	₹ in crore
11	Revenue Expenditure	11028
12	Capital Expenditure	5168
Total Net Expenditure		16196

Additionally, we have made an allocation of ₹ 2896 crore under Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), ensuring that we maximize central funding for developmental projects in Sikkim.

Vision for the Future

Hon'ble Speaker Sir, this budget is a reflection of our government's resolve to strengthen the state's economy while ensuring financial discipline. Our priorities remain the empowerment of our youth, the upliftment of our farmers, investment in infrastructure, and the overall welfare of our people.

Through judicious planning and effective governance, we will continue to foster economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability. By maintaining peace and harmony in the state, we can propel Sikkim toward becoming a model of progress and innovation.

With these commitments, I place before the House the Annual Financial Statement, Explanatory Memorandum to the Annual Budget, Estimates of Receipts, and Demands for Grants for the fiscal year 2025-26 for its kind consideration and approval.

Thank you.

Jai Hind!

Jai Sikkim!