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Republic Day Messages of Governor and Chief Minister of Sikkim

Several developments in recent times have taught us the need to cultivate positive thinking and to work in unison. Let us pledge to move together with earnestness on a path of development and progress. Let peace, harmony and development continue to be Sikkim's distinctive features- Governor



*Balmiki Prasad Singh
Governor of Sikkim*

My dear fellow citizens,

On this auspicious day of our Republic Day, I extend my warm greetings and good wishes to the people of Sikkim and to fellow countrymen.

Let us today remember, with gratefulness, our freedom fighters who gave up their lives for the cause of securing independence so that we could live as free citizens.

I extend my deep respects to the great visionaries who gave us the Constitution on this day in 1950 in which the principles of justice, equality and liberty are enshrined. These principles lay the foundation for the unity and integrity of our country.

India today is making rapid progress on all fronts in terms of the democratic ethos enshrined in our Constitution. For the Constitution has guided the nation in its march towards progress and prosperity.

I convey my warm greetings to the gallant soldiers and members of the armed forces and the para-military forces who guard our borders. These brave men serve the nation in the most harsh and hostile conditions. I would like to place on record a deep sense of gratitude to the member of our security forces who made the supreme sacrifice to maintain security and integrity of the nation.

In Sikkim, democracy has taken deep roots and the atmosphere is conducive for the overall wellbeing of the Sikkimese people. We have shouldered our responsibility in the most responsible manner and have consciously endeavoured to contribute towards national security and prosperity. The State enjoys unparalleled peace, progress and prosperity. As the State

marches towards modernity, we continue to put emphasis on preservation of our rich culture and heritage.

We are happy that the forest cover has increased in the State. The concern for conservation of our eco-system, however, needs to be in focus all the time. Our economic development including tourism infrastructure and hydel power plants must not hurt our environment.

Our policy has been to move on a path of sustainable economic development and self-reliance by harnessing the natural resources. The priority is on development of human resources, enhancement of economic activities and rebuilding the State in the post 18th September earthquake.

Dear citizens,

The challenges of the 21st century need to be met by building a knowledge-based society. Towards this, we are focused on providing quality education to our children and a wide spectrum of skill based training to our youth.

We are deeply conscious of the fact that all parents do not have the financial means to provide quality education to their children. Towards this, the Chief Minister's Meritorious Scholarship Programme- launched in 2010- is providing free education to the promising students at class V level in reputed schools within and outside the State. 150 students have benefitted so far. This year, 200 more students will be selected. This programme is, in fact, aimed at benefitting the children of the rural areas.

The establishment of four universities including one Central University in the State has added a new dimension to the State's higher education system. Sikkim provides quality college and university education in arts, science, commerce, medicine, technology and management. We are also encouraging our students to study outside the State and abroad. We have made available attractive education loan facilities in this behalf.

The task ahead before us is to create a highly skilled workforce which is not dependent on government jobs and looks to enter the ever extending private sector in the country and abroad. Keeping this in mind, we have established the State Institute of Capacity Building. We have also set-up

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Sikkim today stands tall as one of the most progressive States in the Country with the correct mix of traditional and modernity with the range of development strategy that is one of the best in the Country- Chief Minister

On the auspicious occasion of the 63rd Republic Day of the Nation, I extend my warm greetings and good wishes to the people of Sikkim and to my fellow countrymen. The guiding principles of the founding fathers who drafted the Constitution has stood the tests of time providing us sustained guidance in the sacred task of running the government of the people. On this day in the year 1950, the people of India adopted the Constitution that would govern the Country based on democratic, socialist and secular principles.

While we pay our deep respect and reverence to all wise men of the not very many years ago, I reiterate my pledge to uphold the sanctity of the Constitution both in letter and spirit and forever respect public mandate as the ultimate power as enshrined in the Constitution.

Respected fellow citizens

We are aware that when Sikkim was integrated into the larger federal structure of the Country, we the people entered into the protective fold of the Indian Constitution. From a limited space, we moved out to larger horizon both in terms of productive thinking and a more comprehensive development road map. I am proud to state that after 36 years of following the democratic principles in the State, we have achieved many milestone after milestone in the development process. Sikkim today stands tall as one of the most progressive States in the Country with the correct mix of traditional and modernity with the range of development strategy that is one of the best in the Country. On this solemn occasion, I congratulate my fellow Sikkimese for the progress and prosperity achieved and evident today.

Nevertheless, we still need to remember that the period between 1975 to early 1990s was fraught with political duplicity threatening to tear apart fledgling democracy taking deeper roots in the Sikkimese society. Thanks to the formation of Sikkim Democratic Front party and the growing sagacity of Sikkimese people, which quickly took serious responsibility, against anti-national hurdles, to salvage democracy and ensure the democratic rights of the Sikkimese people for all time to come. It has been an arduous journey to bring about emotional integration of our people with the Country.

Today, as we observe the Republic Day, we acknowledge the countrywide



*Pawan Chamling
Chief Minister of Sikkim*

appreciation showered upon us as the model state, with the most progressive and peaceful State and with full thrust of our people to achieve higher and higher milestones.

Fellow citizens

The impressive development scenario in Sikkim today is multi-faceted based on equity and fair play, greater access and affordability. Traditional bottlenecks including inadequate connectivity, socio-economic disparity, lack of infrastructure for various high end activities and institute building are being taken care of. Today, we have more achievements in all spheres of development. Important elements in the social sector like education, health, poverty eradication, human resource development, agriculture and horticulture, animal care, women empowerment and child protection etc. have been adequately addressed. Infrastructure development and expansion including construction of airport, Railway line, National Highway and State Highway have been effectively conceived and many of the works are in advance stages of completion.

Activities aimed at generating local employment and additional revenue generation have been firmly put in place. The emphasis has been on promotion of eco-tourism, development of horticulture, floriculture, harnessing of water resource and to be an organic State by the year 2015. People worldwide are becoming health conscious and are ready to pay any price to stay healthy and fit. Under the scenario, our approach at organic concept is well appreciated at the Planning Commission and also abroad.

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Several developments...

one livelihood school in each assembly constituency. These schools impart short duration training programmes in skills such as beautician training, hospitality, electronic repairs, foreign languages, wood carving among others.

The Health Sector is intrinsic to human resource development. The existing health infrastructure facilities are being upgraded and steps involving preventive and curative measures with adequate diagnostics for timely detection of ailments are being undertaken.

Presently a 1000 bedded multi-specialty hospital is under construction in Gangtok. Once completed, this will provide quality medical treatment facility within the State at an affordable cost.

Free healthcare facility as well as insurance is being provided to the people. Recently, the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Annual & Total Check-up for Healthy Sikkim (CATCH) programme has been launched to provide free compulsory health check-up for all citizens.

The empowerment of women is of crucial importance for building an inclusive and just polity. The Constitution of India has facilitated the process of political empowerment by providing reservation of at least one third of seats in the Panchayats and the municipal bodies for women. As a result, a large number of women in the country and also in the State are members of Panchayat and municipal bodies. We, in Sikkim, have moved a step forward. In the next election to Panchayats and municipal bodies, we shall have 50 % reservations for women.

Another area of importance is the education of the girl child. Sikkim is slowly moving towards universal literacy. 2011 census has shown that our literacy rate is above 82 %. This is a commendable achievement when compared to the 1981 census which was 21.75%. The other positive trend that is discernible from the census data is the rise in female literacy figures. Female literacy rate increased from 60.41% in 2001 to 76.43% in 2011. We have to take care of every girl child in our education programming to achieve universal literacy.

Our young boys and girls are the most important safeguards of our future. The quality of education we provide to them and the values we pass down shall determine the course our State takes in the years to come.

Dear citizens,

Agriculture continues to be the most important economic activity in the State. The need to accelerate productivity in land scarce State has been before us. We have, therefore,

embarked upon programmes that would increase crop intensity and encourage cultivation of short duration crops. Similarly, horticulture is being given top priority. Production of high value crops like popcorn, sweet corn, pulses, mustard besides cardamom and ginger – the traditional strength of Sikkim's agriculture is being given special emphasis.

We also aim to increase the productivity of different crops like cereals, pulses and oilseeds. Sikkim's rich biodiversity enables the farmers to produce large varieties of vegetables and flowers. We have launched "Mission 2015" with a target to make Sikkim an Organic State. This is a farmer-oriented strategy as organic farming would provide them higher dividends for their produce.

For securing inclusive development, the State Government has been allocating 70% of its plan outlay for rural development. Besides the national flagship programmes, numerous poverty alleviation schemes are being vigorously implemented. These are aimed to control urban-rural disparity and migration from rural to urban centres.

Under the rural housing scheme, the State Government is facilitating construction of new houses as well as upgrading the existing ones.

We are actuated by a strong desire to make Sikkim financially self-sustaining. In achieving this, the hydel power sector is expected to play a crucial role. Industrial units and tourism would gradually emerge as strengths of our economy.

Tourism is a key sector in Sikkim and provides employment- both directly and indirectly- to thousands of people. In the last few years, the number of domestic and international tourists visiting the State has been steadily increasing.

Our policy is to encourage village tourism that includes home stays and trekking to picturesque places in the vicinity. We are evolving a policy to cover our villages in order to spread economic benefits by way of village tourism, home stays and concept like ekant vas deep into the forest.

We have also created tourism infrastructure at various places in the State- the Kanchendzonga Tourist Villa cum Socio Cultural Amusement Park at Ranka, the statue of Guru Padmasambhava at Samdruptse, the upcoming Buddha Park at Ravangla, the Siddeshwar Dham Complex at Solophok, Namchi. These centres provide boost to tourism and also generate employment for the local people.

The climate of investment in the State needs to be optimised in order that people can set-up industries and other infrastructure facilities. We have

to work with the belief that every major investment would strengthen and expand the base of our economy.

Dear citizens,

The 18th September earthquake had an impact on every person in the State. 60 people lost their precious lives and more than seven hundred people were injured. In total, 61533 houses including monasteries, schools and colleges, private houses and government buildings as well as the State Secretariat were damaged. Roads and water pipelines too sustained extensive damages.

I would like to convey my special gratitude to brave jawans and officers of the security and police forces who provided urgent and valuable assistance in relief and rescue operations.

People showed exemplary patience and courage in this natural calamity. There was no report of theft or stampede for food and relief materials. Young boys and girls came forward in remote areas of north Sikkim to lend their hands in running of temporary shelters as well as relief camps. This was an inspirational sight.

Due to energetic efforts of all concerned agencies, power and water supply and other public utility services could be restored in record time. Repair of several school structures were carried out with great urgency. Fortunately, the classes were resumed after a few weeks of disruption.

On 29th September, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, visited Sikkim. After taking stock of the situation, the Prime Minister announced a grant of Rs. 1000 crore as earthquake relief package to the State.

The earthquake has brought before the Government agencies as well as to the people of the State new realities. It is quite evident that we need earthquake proof houses, better built roads, nature resistant water pipelines and earthquake resistant workplaces. Our existing urban building laws and the construction manual need close scrutiny.

I am glad that a large number of youth has come forward to become civil contractors and tour operators in Sikkim. In the post-earthquake era of reconstruction, the role of these persons has assumed special significance. Our educational institutions and capacity building institute should cater to the requirements of these persons as well as of our engineers by making them available fresh ideas and training programmes so that we can build roads and houses of world standards. Similarly, our tourism facilities including logistic support system need to be upgraded to achieve global standards.

Dear citizens,

I am happy that the 18th September earthquake has not

marred the optimism of our people. Although the State's economic activities were temporarily impaired, we are resolved to reinstate Sikkim back on the path of progress.

The peace-loving people of Sikkim are both a source of motivation as well as an important ally in the development of the State. We seek their cooperation as stakeholders in the effective

execution of the schemes and policies of the government. Several developments in recent times have taught us the need to cultivate positive thinking and to work in unison. Let us pledge to move together with earnestness on a path of development and progress. Let peace, harmony and development continue to be Sikkim's distinctive features.

JAI HIND

Sikkim's Raj Bhawan

Sikkim's Raj Bhawan a publication of IPR Department is now available at City News, JAINCO and other leading book stores of Gangtok.

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Sikkim today...

While writing to invite the Sikkimese experiment, the General Consul of Argentina in India wrote,

"I read about your state will become a fully organic state and I would like to congratulate you for this fantastic achievement!!" -

This way, we are trying to discover our own strength for social betterment which ultimately also will impact thought processes worldwide.

My government has consistently endeavored to provide the best of public services to the people with particular emphasis on development of the weaker section of population and woman. The policy formulation allocating over 70 percent of plan budget for rural development has been testimony to our pro-poor stand. Strengthening of social safety net with provision for increased allocation of resources for a wide range of welfare measures has provided great relief to our elderly citizens and to the differently abled citizens.

Under the decentralized regime as provided under the 73rd & 74th amendments of our Constitution, our grass root level functionaries are well placed and well versed in democratic functioning. Decentralization in the planning process has been fully achieved. Policy formulation and development priorities processed at the village level are representatives of people's hopes and aspirations. While taking up these schemes, we have been able to appropriately address concerns and needs felt at the grass root.

As part of our long-term goal, 29 Block Administrative Centers have been established and are operational. The BACs have proved to be a great boon for the villagers as the administration has been brought to their doorsteps relieving them of great hardships underdone earlier.

The Kutcha House free campaign has been taken up in all seriousness to transform few kutcha dwellings in State into pucca houses. This program is new and the first of its kind in the entire country. Through this program, we seek to provide

lasting shelter to all our people.

Successive plan and programmes initiated by Government have enabled the State to remain among the fastest developing States in the Country. Sikkim today occupies top position in terms of key indicators of growth and development such as, per capita income, literacy rate, infant mortality rate, life expectancy and other socio-economic indices.

There is total absence of gender discrimination and violence. Strict legal framework has been put in place for controlling the misuse of drugs and prohibiting persons from selling/serving liquor to children less than 18 years of age in hotels and restaurants. At the same time, my Government is committed to the rapid socio-economic development of weaker sections like SC/ST/OBC & MBCs.

In order to update ourselves on the ground realities and to see the shortcomings at the village level, the entire machinery of my Government undertook a 42-day village-to-village tour of various parts of the State. This tour was unique and first of its kind in the State and probably in the Country. The demands placed by the public are being processed and sanctioned in two phases to be started immediately and completed within the next 3 years. The concerned departments have been alerted and have been directed to prioritize on-the-spot sanctions granted during the tour for speedy implementation. Based on the huge responsibility bestowed upon us in our Constitution, I urge all Government functionaries to walk the extra miles and accomplish this task without any delay. We have to live up to the expectation of the people and prove worthy of their support and acceptance.

While we traversed across the villages meeting cross section of people, we interacted widely and freely with all section of people. This facilitated a more intimate interaction at the very personal level leading to some important announcements and initiatives. This has been done to provide more assistance duly recognizing the contribution of people, many of them working

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Sikkim today...

silently to uplift our society. Some of the important initiatives in the social sector announced and approved by my Government during the 42-day tour of the State are as follows:-

➤ Old age pension has been increased from ₹ 400 to 600 for the persons in the age group 60-79 years and eligibility criteria reduced to 60 year of age;

➤ For persons above 80 years old, we have approved OAP at the rate of ₹ 1000/-per month

➤ Honorarium being paid to Anganwadi workers and helpers has been increased to ₹ 5200/- and ₹ 3000/- respectively.

➤ The disability criteria for availing disability pension has been reduced to 40%.

➤ One time maternity allowance of ₹ 3700 to lactating mothers at the time of delivery and ₹300 per month in the name of first new born child for a period of 6 years as Nutrition Allowance.

➤ BPL family with more than 5 members entitled to receive 50 kg free rice. Distribution of free 35 kgs rice to continue for other BPL family with less than 4 members.

Further, the State Government has assigned specific tasks to all departments to be completed within 100 days and the progress made by the Departments is being monitored closely.

I cannot but recall the devastating earthquake of 18th Sept, 2011, which caused loss of precious lives and damage to properties and infrastructure. 60 persons lost their lives and more than 600 were injured. The prompt response of my Government provided help, assistance and comfort to our people. To a great extent, road, communication, power and water supply and other services could be restored. I have toured all parts of the State to oversee proper relief and rehabilitation works and assuage the sufferings of our people.

The State Government has made Detailed Project Reports for restoration works amounting to ₹ 6890.50 crores and they have been submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs Government of India for release of the same. **The state government has so far received communication for release of first instalment of ₹ 200 crores (from the Prime Minister special Relief Package for Sikkim amounting to ₹ 1000crores announced during his visit to Sikkim) and another ₹ 150.38 crores from the NDRF for instant calamity to the State Government.**

Based on our detailed assessment of loss of properties, we are going to rebuild more than 7000 rural houses in all the four districts. **This is in addition to**

proposals to reconstruct State Secretariat building and 13 departmental headquarters, retrofit/reconstruct Police Headquarter building, reconstruction of damaged school buildings, rehabilitation of damaged roads and bridges and water supply etc. We are starting reconstruction works very early and hope to finish all the works at the earliest.

I place on record, the gratitude of the people of the State for the visits of the central leaders and the Prime Minister for their helping hand at the hours of our crises and need. I am also thankful to many of my fellow Chief Ministers from across the country, voluntary organizations and individuals for their support and help.

We are an eco-friendly State with its harmonious blend of different group of communities living together, rich in natural resources, scenic beauty and an oasis of peace and tranquility.

The development saga of Sikkim during the last eighteen years has been remarkable both for short term and long term implication. While we have tried to focus on the immediate needs of people to providing basic minimum needs, we have at the same time devised long term development programs. The Sikkimese people take pride for being the citizens of this great Nation. And we are consistently moving ahead to prove that under the democratic dispensation, largely guided by our Constitution, it is possible to dream big and aspire to become the maker of our own destiny.

Over the decades, we have initiated many developmental measures to provide for a more congenial environment of growth and uplift the condition of the poor and the vulnerable. Aiming to ensure concrete roof over their heads and a decent meals, we tried to cover as many poor households as possible. We are aware that many of our people were living a very hard life in villages, toiling in their farmland with limited yields. We tried to give them the comfort of home and ensuring regular supply of food grains. Because we believe that every person living under the democratic country guided by the Constitution is supposed to live happier and healthy life, with their growth unhampered by needs and wants. This we have accomplished through hard work and our consistency.

My fellow Sikkimese will remember that after we formed government for the fourth term, we tried to upgrade our development strategies and spelt out ambitious Mission Statements with time bound commitment. Flexibility is inherent in our own constitution and form part of larger ideals. That as time

unfolds with new challenges and fresh circumstances, we need to adopt new measures and introduce fresh intervention. Today, I have a commitment to make every household concrete under the Kutcha House free Sikkim campaign. The target has been to cover over 6000 households within 2013.

While many parts of the Country are continuously struggling against development deficit, Sikkim is a happy exception. In addition to benchmarking of high development regime, we have also completed some very rare and major projects to further promote Sikkim as the major destination with their inbuilt spin off benefit accruing to large sections of Sikkimese people. The consecration ceremony of our recently developed Siddheswar dham was solemnized recently on November 8, 2011 and has been opened for devotees and general public. We already have the world highest statue of Guru Rimpoche installed at Samdruptse and Buddha Park is being developed at Ravangla. With these and many more projects including the chen regiz statue and construction of skywalk atop Bhalehdhunga, Sikkim is inching towards creation of pilgrimage centres of rare dimension providing long-term economic prosperity to the Sikkimese people.

At the national level though, we are passing through a difficult phase, facing economic winter owing to different factors chiefly being euro-zone crisis, food inflation and slow down in overall growth of economy. The projected 9% growth of the Country's economy has not happened and hovering much below that mark. However, as it stands, India has always bounced back to attain high economic growth based on its rich resources and pool of world class human capital.

The British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson once said 'A week is a long time in politics'. My fellow Sikkimese, although we conduct ourselves under certain political arrangement, I am not for short-term political gain. Since the time the Sikkimese people voted us to run their government, I have tried to see beyond political rivalry and complicity but more firmly glued to the idea of securing greatest happiness for all my fellow citizens for all time to come.

Truly empowered by the law of the land and blessed by the power of the people, I once again commit myself to the great task of State and Nation building. Let us rededicate ourselves to the cause of continued peace and harmony. Let us renew and resolve to contribute our mite to the speedy development of Sikkim and the Country, as always.

****JAI HIND****

Origin of Republic Day

India gained independence on August 15, 1947. But till January 26, 1950, it did not have the proper law of the land for ruling the country. On this particular date in 1950 the constitution of India came into force and India became true nation state with true sovereign and republic sense.

Our constitution was formed by the Indian Constituent Assembly. The Indian Constituent Assembly met on December 9, 1946. The Assembly appointed a number of committees to report on the various aspects of the proposed constitution.

The Constituent Assembly had appointed Dr. B.R.Ambedkar as the Chairman to draft the Constitution. The committee finalized the draft with 395 Articles and eight Schedules and was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949. The Indian Republic officially came into being on January 26, 1950.

January 26 was not some random date picked out of the calendar. It was on this date in 1927, that the Indian National Congress, then fighting its non-violent war for freedom, voted for complete independence as against 'dominion status'. It was the date when members of the INC took the pledge to work towards a 'sovereign democratic republic' of India.

The Indian Constitution, the longest in the world, now consist of 397 articles and 12 schedules which provides for a single citizenship for the whole of India. It gives the right to vote to all the citizens of 18 years and above, unless they are disqualified. Fundamental rights are guaranteed to the citizens, equality of religion and so on. The Supreme Court, consisting of the Chief Justice of India and other judges, are the guardian of the Constitution. It stands at the apex of a single integrated judicial system for the whole country. This is where the fundamental rights of the citizens are protected.

PROGRAMME FOR REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION, 2012.

Venue	:	Palzor Stadium, Gangtok
09.45 am	-	Parade forms up
09.55 a.m.	-	Arrival of Hon'ble Chief Minister He is received by the Chief Secretary and DGP General Salute
10.00 a.m.	-	Arrival of H.E. the Governor He is received by the Chief Secretary and DGP ➤ Unfurling of National Flag followed by National Salute and playing of National Anthem ➤ H.E. the Governor reviews the Parade ➤ March Past
10.40 am	-	Presentation of Medals/Awards/Appreciation letter Felicitation of World War II Veterans of Sikkim.
		Release of books by H.E. the Governor
	a)	Empowerment and Prosperity through Bio-Diversity Conservation in Sikkim-Forest Environment Wild Life Management Department.
	b)	Sikkim towards Organic State by 2015-Food Security & Agriculture Development Department and Horticulture & Cash Crop Development Department.
	c)	Inventory and GIS Mapping of Landslides in North, East, West & South Sikkim-Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department.
	d)	Multi Hazard Risks Vulnerability Assessment of Gangtok Municipal Corporation – Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department.
	e)	Multi Hazard Risks Vulnerability Assessment of Gangtok Municipal Corporation-Land Revenue and Disaster Management Department.
		Launching of Website:
		Website of Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority. http://ssdma.org -Land Revenue & Disaster Management Department.
		Address by H.E. the Governor
	➤	Three cheers for Rashtrapati and parade peels off
	➤	Visit to Army equipment display
	➤	Band display by Sikkim Police and Army
	➤	Dance by students of Central School
	➤	Martial Arts Demonstration.
	➤	Cultural Programmme
	➤	National Anthem
	➤	H.E. the Governor departs.

