

**Hon'ble Speaker Sir and Hon'ble fellow Members of this
August House**

I rise to present the Budget for 2013-14. But before I spell out the details of the future projections, I would like to congratulate the people of Sikkim for the last fiscal well invested and well spent to secure greater happiness and well being of all the people of Sikkim. Cutting across sectors, we improved upon our past performance both in terms of statistics and the actual impact felt in the life of the Sikkimese people.

During the last one year, we introduced some very new imaginative welfare schemes to provide additional relief and support to the targeted sections of the population. Against the dampened growth scenario elsewhere, we were able to register an impressive overall growth rate of 22.8 percent during the 11th Five Year Plan period including excellent social indicators. In fact, the Planning Commission Members including the Deputy Chairman who were so appreciative of this achievement being the highest in the Country, profusely applauded us for reaching this growth rate which had been checked again and again by them to be sure. We have been appreciated also for integrating and dovetailing of certain state programs with central flagship programs to achieve composite result while providing rural housing and such other welfare measures.

This itself is a tribute to the people and the official machinery of the State. Here I am tempted to quote the Planning Commission (State

Plan Division) note for Annual Plan 2013-14 for Sikkim, **“The GSDP of Sikkim was targeted to grow at a compounded rate of 6.7 percent during the 11th Plan. However, it has registered a growth rate of 22.8 percent at 2004-2005 prices as per CSO. The impressive growth of Sikkim is attributed to commissioning of power projects, strengthening of small scale industries- primarily pharmaceutical industry attracted by cheap power, accessibility to market and increasing financial services (banking and insurance) during the Eleventh Plan period”.**

I take this opportunity which I consider it as a privilege to recall in the august House of the recent visit of our President, respected Shri Pranab Mukherjee ji, who dedicated the Sidheswar Dham to the entire Country and also laid the foundation stone of the new Sikkim Central University. The Hon’ble President who had visited the State in the 1970s was taken aback by the extent of development that has visited the State ever since. He visited the MG Marg and was effusive about its splendour and beauty. The blessing of our Hon’ble President will always be a source of our strength and guidance.

Little before the Hon’ble President’s visit, His Holiness the Dalai Lama blessed us with his divine presence while consecrating the Tathagata Tsal at Ravangla on 25th March 2013 and also inaugurating the Buddha Park. Here again, His Holiness so kindly remembered all his visits to Sikkim in the past and put it down in writing the efforts made by us in promoting this secularism of spirituality and the respect of Buddhism along with all other religions

as this is the very basis of Buddhism which extends to love and peace amongst all sentient beings including all kinds of lives. The visit of His Holiness will also go down as another instance of the blessings that the people of Sikkim have earned for all of us.

Again, the Second International Flori show which was organized at the Saramsa Garden in the third week of February 2013 onwards was another occasion of revelry, displaying our beautiful orchids and flowers. It was slated to be inaugurated by Shri Sushilkumar Shinde ji, our Hon'ble Union Home Minister which was not destined to be, due to weather condition. We were reminded by the Hon'ble Union Home Minister of our landmark initiatives like State Green Mission, Ten Minutes to Earth, Organic Mission which have carved Sikkim's status in the entire country as well as in the international floral map when he spoke to me in telephone from Bagdogra. Surely we would expect the Hon'ble Union Home Minister to come to Sikkim on another occasion.

A little earlier, in December 2012, IBN7 Media House made us proud when we were adjudged the best small state in the entire country in all round performance apart from three specific categories of **Citizens' Security, Environment, Water & Sanitation**. And now recently on 21st April 2013, Dr Manmohan Singh, the Hon'ble Prime Minister awarded the Rural Management and Development Department of the State Government the Nation's Highest Award for excellence in rural management and development in the challenging physical environment of the Sikkim Himalayas. And on this day, 21st

April we re-dedicated and re-committed ourselves to the cause of the people of State for more extraordinary and innovative work for further excellence. It may be pointed out that already 16 national awards have been conferred for rural management and development in the State so far.

During the last nineteen years, we have seen four Panchayat elections held so far with the last having been held on 3rd November 2012 when our people exercised their constitutional right to elect their village level representatives as well as for the Zilla Panchayat. As expected, the Sikkim Democratic Front party secured 96 percent of the seats. I congratulate my brothers and sisters, Members of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly, to the Chief Secretary, the Director General of Police, and all other officials and workers for the support and assistance provided to the State Government for overall development of the State. It is because of you that Sikkim has emerged as a model state and a torchbearer in key sectors in the entire country.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

The core sectors of education and health have received our topmost attention. Presently we invest over 20 percent of total annual outlay for the education sector. And recently, we have decided to earmark additional 10 percent of the annual outlay to sponsor our educated Sikkimese for coaching in reputed institutes in IAS and allied services, banking, defence services etc. This adds up another 10

percent to make it over 30 percent allocation in education sector alone. The result has been evident as our literacy rate of 56 percent in 1993-94 has increased to over 82 percent now. It is worthwhile to note that the male-female student ratio has considerably improved in the State over the years. The ratio of 100 girls to 100 boys during 2001-02 has improved to 108 girls per 100 boys during 2008-09.

To improve the prospects of higher education in the State a Central University has already been established in State. To accommodate all the students aspiring for higher education colleges at Namchi, Rhenock, Gyalshing and a new campus at Burtuk, East Sikkim have been established. Because of these efforts of the State Government, the Gross Enrolment Ratio at Higher Education level has increased to 24.8% against the national average of 15%, securing 8th position and 2nd position at national and North East Levels respectively. The teacher-pupil ratio which was 1:18 in the year 2005-06 has now further improved to 1:14 in 2011, which is indicative of the progress we have made in this sector.

In order to improve the quality of education and emphasize competitiveness among children, the State Government introduced Chief Minister's Winter Coaching for students appearing in Class X and Class XII Board examination.

Under health sector, citizens have access to free health facilities. We stress on preventive measures. Sikkim was the first state in the

country to provide for free Hepatitis B vaccination for infant population. Under the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Annual and Total Check-up for Healthy Sikkim (CATCH) program, we undertake health check-up for each citizen annually at designated centres across the State. Launched on 26th August 2010, we have covered over 90 percent of our population under this program to compile the health profile of our citizens.

The multi-specialty 575-bedded Hospital is under construction in Gangtok. I am happy to note that the overall life expectancy of the Sikkimese people have increased by over 3 years during the last eighteen years. In all health indices, we have achieved impressive improvement be it IMR rate, TB cure rate, institutional delivery etc. We have introduced Mukhya Mantri Antodaya Upachar Bima Yojana for BPL families and host of other health services including Mukhya Mantri Antyodaya Pustahaar Yojana, Mukhya Mantri Jeevan Raksha Kosh, Mukhya Mantri Netra Jyoti Yojana and Mukhya Mantri Sravan Shakti Samriddhi Yojana. Health programs including Deworming and IFA supplementation, calcium Supplementation, MMR vaccine for children are being regularly administered in the State.

As part of policy decision to harness our natural resources, hydel power generation has been given massive impetus duly opening up the sector for private-public participation. You are aware that we are developing a number of hydel projects in the State.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

I am happy to announce that we are commissioning the 99 MW Chuzachen Hydro Electric Power Project in the next few months which is slated to fetch us about Rs. 50 crores annually. This is, in addition to the already commissioned 510 MW Teesta Stage V and 60 MW Rangit Hydro-power project. We believe that this is a good beginning and there are lot to follow. We are watching its progress along with other upcoming projects which are likely to be commissioned as scheduled. Once commissioned, the 1200 MW Teesta Stage III project will be the largest power projects to be commissioned in the Country under the PPP mode.

Our initial target was to commission all the allotted hydel projects by the end of 2015 earning annual revenue of over Rs. 1500 crores. Owing to natural calamity and other unavoidable circumstances, we have re-assessed the annual turnover from sale of power at Rs. 900 crores by the end of the 12th Five Year Plan. Concerns relating to T&D loss and AT & C losses will need to be addressed duly strengthening the existing system and laying of additional high capacity transmission line.

In Sikkim, Tourism is one of the largest service industries. We can see that we are moving on the right directions with our people taking deep interest in setting up village tourism, homestay tourism together with pilgrimage tourism. It is very much fore-seeable now

that soon we should be going right on top in promoting tourism as the main livelihood option for the people of Sikkim.

Various projects have been initiated during the 11th Plan period which have been carried over to the 12th Plan period. We have recently opened Buddha Park for public darshan. Construction of various tourist attractions are being taken up, this include Statue of Chen regiz, stairway to heaven project, skywalk project and ropeways in different places.

During the 12th Five Year Plan, the State Government has envisaged to further increase tourist footfall and also augment the carrying capacity of the State. In order to achieve this, the State Government will need to lay greater emphasis on promoting responsible tourism, aggressive publicity, creation of requisite tourism infrastructure and capacity building of all the stake holders.

Annual contribution forthcoming from the agriculture sector to the GSDP growth need to be further boosted. In fact, over the decades, the percentage is falling which need to be looked into critically as more than 60 percent of our population consisting of small and marginal farmers depend on agriculture and animal husbandry for their livelihood.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

Land being a premium in the State, organic farming would greatly supplement the economy of the state with production of high

value produce. The State has registered 2 percent increase in the productivity of land. Till date, 11228 ha area is organically certified. Around 39000 ha area is under conversion process for organic certification. Over 700 numbers of rural compost are being constructed in rural areas.

Under Soil Reclamation program, a total of 7000 hectare has been reclaimed and a total of 48 projects in agriculture & allied sector has been taken up and completed under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)

The State being blessed with congenial climate provides ample opportunities for horticulture production and its diversifications. This sector has vast potential and has evolved as one of the main drivers of rural economy. Horticulture covers a range of produces of Sikkim including mandarin orange, pear, tropical and sub-tropical fruits like papaya, banana and litchi. Vegetables includes different types of beans, pea, leaf mustard, radish, squash, cabbage, cauliflower, tomato and gourds; root and tuber crops like potato, tapioca, sweet-potato and yams; spice consists of large cardamom, ginger, turmeric and cherry pepper; flowers includes cymbidium orchids, rose, liliun, gladioli, anthurium, lily, carnation and gerbera. Sikkim is also treasure house of medicinal and aromatic plants which are now cultivated on larger scale for commercial purpose. With the setting up of number of pharma units in Sikkim, commercial cultivation of medicinal plants and herbs is very promising.

It is due to the concerted efforts of the government that has resulted in the over 3.5 per cent increase in forest cover between 1995 and 2011. Sikkim ranks highest in Forest Protection Index among all states in India. Sikkim stands on top in Environment Sustainability Index on two categories, i.e. **Reducing Pressure on environment** and **State Responses to maintain environment**. Many of the environmental measures including imposition of blanket bans and prohibition on grazing, felling of trees, killing of wildlife etc. are the first of their kinds in the country and the world. We have created a large number of sanctuaries, green parks, herbal garden, biodiversity parks, butterfly parks and etc.

Defined under the larger Mission statements, the State Government has successfully tried to protect and enlarge the different species of flora and fauna found in the Sikkim Himalayas. Campaign under Smriti Ban, Green Mission and Ten Minutes to Earth launched during the last one and half decade, has started bearing fruit in the State.

As a landlocked State, Sikkim is heavily dependent on its road infrastructure for practically all purposes. The State Government has made remarkable progress in the connectivity sector during the past 19 years.

As of today, re-surfacing/re-carpeting of 383.00 Kms of road has been completed which is 65% of the targeted length. Surfacing works for remaining roads is under progress. Rehabilitation/retrofitting of

nine (9) bridges have been completed and sixteen (16) bridges are under progress.

My Government has also taken initiatives for Two Lane Connectivity to District Head Quarters. The District Head Quarters at Namchi shall be connected with Double Lane Road from Singtam via Tarku-Damthang and from Melli Bazar via Manpur and Jorethang. The District Head Quarter at Gyalshing shall be connected with Double Lane Road from Singtam via Ravangla and Legship and from Melli via Jorethang and Legship. The work of double-laning of Melli-Manpur-Namchi and Manpur-Jorethang-Namchi have already been sanctioned under SARDP-NE by the Government of India. In fact, the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Dr C.P. Joshi who was to arrive on April 20 recently for laying the foundation stones could not visit due to sudden engagement in Delhi and has postponed his visit. We have been told that more roads for double-laning and construction of two more roads are in active consideration of the Government of India for sanction.

During my 42 days tour, 47 numbers of road had been sanctioned with a total estimated cost of Rs. 114.18 crores in the 1st phase, out of which five roads have been completed and the rest are under rapid progress.

Construction of Greenfield Airport at Pakyong shall be completed for usual traffic by next year and we have requested the central government to treat our railway project as national project for

speedy completion upto Rangpo town in the first phase and later to be extended upto Nathula.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

In the true spirit of the concept of welfare state, the State Government has introduced large number of welfare schemes to enable people live a life of dignity and respect. Due care is given to extend adequate assistance to the vulnerable and marginalized section of the society. Monthly old age pension of upto Rs. 1000/-, Samajik Sewa Bhatta, Disability Pension, Widow Remarriage grant, subsistence allowance etc. are being provided to the people. Re-naming of schools and state roads after great achievers has provided due recognition to our heroes and also great encouragement to posterity. In fact, this has to be seen in the context of past practices where such initiative was not forthcoming from the then government.

Our strategy has been consistently based on integrated approach to our development measures through intra-sectoral synergy and appropriate service delivery at different levels. We propose to focus on knowledge management duly channelizing youth powers to constructive activities, provide effective and accountable governance, harnessing of the State's natural resources for sustainable livelihoods, expanding and strengthening of infrastructure base and capacity building of different stakeholders. In addition to augmenting investments, we propose to undertake policy and institutional reforms to create an enabling environment for rapid growth.

Before I begin to present annual budget for the next financial year, I would use this privilege to spell out some of the new schemes with particular emphasis on youth management, promoting innovation among students and empowering our farming community through policy infusion and make the next fiscal, all the more productive, progressive and promising.

State Organic Mission & price support: The State Government has successfully overcome the initial uncertainty with regard to the concept of organic farming. Conversion and certification of land and market linkages for our organic produce is progressing well. We have already received due recognition from national and international community for our innovative work. To further promote organic farming and fulfil our organic mission, I am pleased to earmark a sum of Rs. 6 crores which shall be complemented through other sources including dovetailing of National Horticulture Technology Mission towards meeting the objective.

In order that our farming community are encouraged further, certain component of resources shall be earmarked as minimum price support. Therefore, I am pleased to allocate a cumulative sum of Rs. 75 lakhs for sustaining farming practices under agriculture and horticulture sector.

Distribution of Cymbidium Orchids: The State Government is moving ahead with an ambitious program to transform Sikkim into

floriculture state. Much progress has been made over the decade to promote floriculture as a commercially viable vocation. In order to further promote floriculture, I am pleased to earmark a sum of Rs. 3.40 crores for distribution of cymbidium orchids during the next fiscal.

Induction of cows/goats: In the area of animal husbandry, Sikkim has a potential to at least fulfil the domestic demand and also extend business upto the neighbouring districts of West Bengal. In milk production and poultry, we have made much headway. To further consolidate the gain, the State Government is aiming to attain self sufficiency in production of meat and milk locally. Therefore, I am pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 1.5 crores for distribution of milching cows and goats to the targeted beneficiaries in the State during this fiscal.

Construction of Head Office & Training Institute: Cooperative movement in Sikkim has already gained much momentum. This has been made possible through appropriate policy intervention by the State Government and ensuring larger involvement of the people at the grassroot level. In order to further promote cooperative movement, I am pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 3 crores for construction of Head Office and Training Institute at Assam Lingzey in the next fiscal.

Janata Mela: From time to time, the Sikkim Democratic Front Government has evolved certain innovative schemes to uplift the living condition of our people. Through some very imaginative programs, we have been able to reach out to the doorsteps of the people, through an intimate appraisal of their needs and requirements at the very local level. Although housing is covered under larger state programs, we need to take into account the process of wear and tear over the years making rural households unfit for habitation. Therefore, in this budget I have proposed distribution of GCI sheets and House Upgradation grant for the poor households. Distribution of LPG connection to the BPL households has been adversely affected by erratic supply and at times due to lack of easy accessibility to particular village or hamlets. Therefore, I have also proposed distribution of Electric Chullah to poor households so that difficulty in LPG refilling does not affect daily activities among the poor people. Therefore, in order to further consolidate our achievement in the field of rural upliftment, I am pleased to allocate a cumulative sum of Rs. 40 crores for distribution of above items by holding special meet under the popular banner of Janata Mela.

Sikkim Business Summit: Through a long process of meetings and Seminars within the State, across cities in the Country and outside the Country, the State Government has been able to attract large number of reputed business houses in Sikkim. Today, we have the presence of reputed entrepreneurs engaged in different business ranging from agro-based industries to pharma to hydro-power projects. As part of promotion of business activities under the private-

public partnership, we have one of the best examples in the Country. In order that we further promote Sikkim as an important business destination, we propose to hold Sikkim Business Summit with world wide participation with the best names in the industry. For the proposed meet in coming May, I am pleased to earmark a sum of Rs. 25 lakhs.

Border Security Project: With the advent of technology age, miscreant and anti-social elements are inventing improved mode of operation. Security apparatus in the border towns of Melli and Rangpo needed to be further modernized for early detection and action to determine all nefarious activities well in advance. Therefore, I would propose installation of appropriate technological tools at the border gate and its vicinity. For this, I am pleased to propose a sum of Rs. 20 lakhs during 2013-14.

Tourism project: Tourism and eco-tourism has emerged as one of the main economic instruments of the people of Sikkim. In addition to the beautiful setting of Sikkim Himalayas, we have vigorously promoted all arms of tourism including pilgrimage tourism, village tourism, homestays and etc, thereby earn good revenue for the State. In order to further strengthen the concept of tourism in Sikkim, the State Government has proposed installation of Namchi Samdruptse Ropeway, expansion of Buddhist circuit to integrate Sarnath and Buddhgaya and strengthen pilgrimage and culture centre at Ravangla.

Food subsidy: In terms of food security, the State Government has decided to further subsidize distribution of free rice to BPL category of people from Rs. 3 per kilo to Rs 1 and from Rs 4 per kilo to Rs. 2 per kilo under the Mukhya Mantri Khadya Suraksha Abhiyan. The basic objective for providing further subsidy is to relieve the burden on our poor BPL families as we do not want them to go hungry.

Laptops for school children: By common consensus, we can conclude that modern day education is made all the more accessible and easy through various technological inductions. We have observed that children belonging to well-to-do families can afford to use technological tools whereas children from weaker section of population can not afford to have one. Therefore, to help us realize our dream of quality education, the State Government has proposed to provide laptops free of cost to school children above Class XI, XII and college going students based on their requirement. For this, I am pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 20 crores during this financial year.

Development of Sports complex: Sporting activities in Sikkim has remained our priority wherein many of our sporting youths have earned name and fame for the State in different categories of sports. Creation of sporting

infrastructure has been quite steady in Sikkim and with development of Paljor Stadium as the world class complex, we have come of age in sports sector. To further consolidate our achievements, I am pleased

to allocate a sum of Rs. 3 crores, Rs. 2 crores and Rs. 1 crore respectively for development of Bhaichung Stadium at Namchi, for upgradation of Kyongsa Playground, West Sikkim and for construction of Play Ground at Mangan.

Development of cultural heritage centres: Sikkim is an ancient land where culture and tradition of different community of people intermingle to form a rich tapestry of socio-cultural tradition. Celebrating the rich cultural legacies of different communities, we have constructed number of cultural bhawans and installed large number of statues to honour our past. In the same process, today I would allocate a sum of Rs. 4 crores, 1 crore, 50 lakhs respectively for construction of statue of Mahatma Sirijunga Thekyonsi, Stairway to Heaven and construction of Multi-purpose community centre at Bal Bir Bau Ground, Pani House. Similarly, I am also pleased to earmark a sum of Rs. 25 lakhs each for construction of Village Community Centre at 6th mile Tadong, statute of Punu Mun Solong and Prayer Tower.

Creation of public spaces under UDHD: You are aware that through creation of a range of urban infrastructure, we are not only creating enough public recreational space but at the same time promoting urban tourism vigorously over the years. Development and upgradation of MG Marg has been widely hailed as the unique development model across the Country. In addition to beautification, expansion and upgradation of the identified bazaars and urban habitation across the State, we are also creating parking spaces, kisan

bazaars and other public spaces through micro schemes conceived at the local level. The idea is to locate or re-locate facilities at the appropriate locations across towns. The construction of Green Lung Park at Jorethang at the heart of town is also going to be unique location in the State.

Samaj Kalyan Bhawan: With the unfolding of new age with fresh generation of people and new emerging values, people on the whole have lost that social connect. In order to generate enough concern for the family, society and the state, we propose to construct Samaj Kalyan Bhawan in the State. For this purpose, I am pleased to allocate a sum of Rs. 1 crore in this budget.

Data Acquisition System: Sikkim is at the threshold of entering into a new category of States that are seen as good models to be emulated due to high growth rate and good governance. However, on many occasions, our arguments and success stories lost most of their sheen due to lack of corresponding data. In order to be able to spur further growth in all areas of human development, the case for holistic acquisition of data, research and dissemination is being felt.

Hence, I am setting aside a sum of Rs. 1 crore to achieve this purpose which will be used to fund the most modern and using cutting edge technology to acquire data from across the State.

Launching of Missions: Three new Missions namely, Sikkim Human Resource Development Mission 2013, Sikkim Youth

Empowerment and Self-reliant Mission 2013 and Sikkim Gram Swaraj Abhiyan would be launched from this year.

Through these Missions, we aim to further empower and enable the youth of Sikkim, through high quality holistic education, to realize their full potential and understand their roles and responsibilities in making meaningful contribution to the development of a prosperous and happy Sikkim. And as the name signifies, we would aim to achieve larger goal of transforming our villages as self-sustained units in the State under the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan. This will be monitor by the Chief Minister's Office on a monthly basis with a Mission Director for each Mission.

Having said that I would like to state that we have devised a number of other Missions in the past which need to be revamped and reviewed to make them vibrant for bringing more relief to our people. I would like to urge upon the Departments and all the officials to do so.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

I shall now dwell on the budgetary profile for the current financial year. Our size of the Annual Plan has been fixed at Rs. 2060 crores by the Planning commission of India. The total outlay includes the following components:

- Rs. 420 crore - Prime Minister's Relief Package (earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation).
- Rs. 312 crore - Borrowings as fixed by FRBM Act, 2010.
- Rs. 366.27 crore - Additional Central Assistance (ACA).
- Rs. 108 crore - Special Plan Assistance (SPA).
- Rs. 200 crore - Special Central Assistance (SCA),
- Rs. 145 crore - Externally aided project.

In this budget, I have proposed total amount of Rs. 5516.43 crore comprising of Rs. 2234.13 crores under Plan which includes allocations under the dispensation of North Eastern Council, Non-Lapsable Pool of Central Resources and Centrally Sponsored Schemes and a provision of Rs. 2964.13 crores under Non-Plan account and also includes the provisions made as recoveries which are adjustable as reduction in expenditure, subsequently.

I have projected the gross revenue of Rs. 4995.95 crores and expenditure to the tune of Rs. 5516.43 crores for the fiscal year 2013-14. The contribution from tax revenue sources to the gross revenue receipts is of the order of Rs. 425.68 crores and in the case of Non-Tax revenue the amount is projected at Rs. 1054.52 crores. I shall now present the highlights of the Budget for the year 2013-14 with a summarized account of the receipts and disbursements incorporated in the budget:-

A. RECEIPTS.	AMOUNT (Rs. in crore)
1. State's Revenue	
i) Tax Revenue	: 425.68
ii) Non-Tax Revenue	: 1054.52
2. Grants-in-Aid	: 2684.20
3. State's Share of Shareable Taxes	: 831.55
4. Loans from Other Institutions	: 373.46
5. Loans from Central Government	: 14.50
6. Recoveries of Loans and Advances	: 0.78
7. Public Accounts	: 5481.20
TOTAL	: 10865.89
B. EXPENDITURE.	
1. State's Annual Plan	: 2060.00
2. Expenditure out of incentive grant	: 150.00
3. Centrally Sponsored Schemes	: 318.18
4. Non-Plan Expenditure	: 2835.41
5. Spillover provision of previous year	: 21.93
6. Public Accounts	: 5480.40
TOTAL:	: 10865.92
C. Deficit	: 0.03
Opening Balance	: (+) 69.44
Closing Balance	: (+) 69.41

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

The Sikkim Democratic Front government is going to complete 20 years of glorious existence in Sikkim. On this occasion, I am happy to record that Sikkim in the last nineteen years has emerged as a leading state in socio-economic development in the country. This fact is corroborated by the conferment of more than fifty eighty awards to the State by various prestigious national and international agencies and government of India in various fields.

Like other States in the North-Eastern region, Sikkim faces constraints in accelerating growth and improving the living conditions of the people at a rapid pace, primarily because of its landlocked nature, hilly terrain, lack of access to the markets and poor connectivity. Nonetheless, we have crossed many development hurdles and establish Sikkim as one of the fastest growing States in the Country.

In terms of fiscal consolidation, we are treading difficult path owing to fiscal scenario at the national level. Furthermore, the implementation of Pay Commission recommendation has impacted the finances of all the States including that of Sikkim. The salary burden was Rs. 493 crores in 2007-08 which has increased to Rs. 1,600 crores in 2013-14. Similarly, the pension burden has increased from Rs. 50.20 crores to Rs. 283.57 crores. This has to be appreciated by the people of Sikkim and all of us should be cautious enough and pragmatic while designing development road map for the future.

For the obvious reasons, Budget 2013 is significant because it is the last to be tabled before parliamentary elections and assembly elections due next year at the national level and also at the state level. It is against the backdrop of slowing global economy, fiscal deficits, inflation and the widespread chase to make our economy sustainable and going. Through various measures and based on scientific and pragmatic consideration, the State Government is trying to realign with emerging development dynamics and reposition Sikkim on a firm ground. In all these efforts of ours, I would solicit unconditional support from my fellow Sikkimese so that we are collectively responsible to make our State more progressive and prosperous.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

Indeed, this is the call of the hour, the need of the day. Politics and politicking has its place in a democratic system. People are watching political drama unfold one after the other. The often repeated cliché of the old wine in new bottle is almost always played out in Sikkim's politics. This is likely to happen once again now.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

Some say, temperature is apparently getting feverish.

- For sure, in the days to come, people shall be treated to political hyperbole of the unprecedented nature and high promises that may or may not be tenable.

- For sure, people shall be treated to high drama bazee, where the so-called leaders old and the not-so-old will promise you the sun and the moon.
- For sure, once again the so-called disgruntled leaders suddenly come out of hibernation will quote Gandhi, as the devils would have quoted the scriptures.
- For sure, once again, leaders will resurface to apply worst means whatever or however so that temptation so often nurtured could be grabbed at that instant moment
- For sure, once again, all the leaders past and present shall work out quick formula to construct alliance that breaks or mends every now and then

I am reminded of the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill who once said, “You will never reach your destination if you stop and throw stones at every dog that barks”.

Hon’ble Speaker Sir

Taking full recourse to the constitutional provision and having full faith in the power of the people, I for sure, will never ever be distracted by maddening noise to lose my path dedicated to the service of my people, my State and my Country. With providence by my side and with supreme faith on the wisdom of the people, I remain ever the humble first servant of the Sikkimese people- for now, today and for all time to come.

Hon'ble Speaker Sir

With this, I commend this Budget to the House and seek the co-operation and support of one and all to lead Sikkim on the path of progress, where not just a few but all will prosper, grow, flourish and bear the fruit of good governance as always and as usual.

Thank you

Jai Hind