

## **MLA visits flood hit Namcheybong, assistance to be provided early**

**Gangtok, August 5:** On the fateful night of 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2009 dreadfully the Takchamchu River gave away its hold and over flooded water in it spread to entire areas dismantling the only link between 14<sup>th</sup> mile and Gangtok. Following this episode the prime affected areas after 14<sup>th</sup> mile, Setipool where cardamom, ginger, orange and other plantation was engulfed away by the raging flood. This flood even did not spare the bridge of Takchamchu river. Rai goan, Pastaydanga, Kabray goan, Assam Lingzey, Gowcharan are the major hit upon region.

Member of legislative Assembly (MLA) Namcheybong constituency Beg Bahadur Rai on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009 visited the area demolished by the flood. He informed that immediate help and assistance will be provided in the hour earliest. Entire sufferer will be compensated by the government. He also enquired about the ignition of flood of the people. BB Rai Along with SDM, JE, DE and Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) party youths visited of affected areas and assured of instant help to the victims.

Upon this incident the people of the area informed that prior to this incident the state government was informed about constructing wall in this river for people safety, but till now no any concern was implemented from the government side.

## **HGTI congratulates MP Rajya Sabha abd GOS**

**Gangtok, August 5:** The Himalchuli Group of Tourism Industries (HGTI) convened a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009 to deliberate upon some of the relevant burning issue in Sikkim Tourism sector.

While deliberating on the meeting, Chairman HGTI SK Bardewa took upon some resolutions for discussion and consequent memorandum to the Government.

The meeting expressed heartfelt gratitude and congratulation to MP Rajya Sabha OT Lepcha for so minutely and successfully understanding the problems of tourism in Sikkim thereby raising his voice for immediate redressal of acute grievances for future acceleration on the tourism sector. The meeting resolved so request the Government of Sikkim (GOS) to follow up the resolution of MP in the Rajya Sabha for future result oriented actions without further delay.

The meeting also resolved the GOS to express deep thanks for gearing up village home stay tourism plan all over Sikkim and especially in South and West. The meeting resolved that HGTI would not only support the home stay scheme but extend all possible help like free counseling on home stay plan to the entrepreneurs and marketing strategy

guide to sustain their home stay tourism plan. This help and guidance would be extended by CEO, HGTI, and Mr. Satish Bardewa free of cost and would be aimed at making the Home stay tourism sector in Sikkim to integrate corroborate and bring out common marketing strategy plan for successful economic regeneration thereby solving unemployment problems. S.K. Bardewa declared that he would prepare their website also free of cost. The meeting also deliberated upon the factual report on tourism by CAG Government of India and requested the Govt. and Governor to see it in positive manner. S.K. Bardewa informed the meeting that tourism Department is a technical one and would require technically trained manpower to augment, understand the development strategy of the department on whom depends the entire economic acceleration and growth of Sikkim which Mr. Bardewa insisted HGIT had been reminding the Government, time and again. Bardewa suggested that the Sikkim tourism personnels selection, training and appointment should be tourism cadre based so that only technically qualified people who really grasp the tourism trade sector, run its real management and give the desired objective output.

Mrs. Shrijana Singh, the marketing manager raised questions during her deliberations to the GOS to kindly ensure that the real benefit of economic acceleration and growth should first go to the original Sikkimese people. She raised an example in the meeting and questioned as to how a vehicle is being given road permit to ply straight from NJP to Chungthang?

She questioned the legitimacy of these type of tour and transport operators and also questioned the tourism oriented NGOs whether they are serious enough to see that benefit of tourism industry percolates to the rural home stay sector and heritage tourism sector. She seriously questioned the intention of the NGOs whether they are satisfied in counting the number of visiting tourists only but don't realize as to who is suffering and who is paying the license fee and other taxes.

Bardewa further said in the meeting that unless and until there is some immediate imposition of directives in tourism sector, the Sikkim Tourism Year 2010 may not be successful inspite of the best motivation by the GOS and the Chief Minister himself. Hence the HGIT resolved that GOS may seriously take up the matter and recruit all technical manpower even from NGOs for proper successful output and coordination for Sikkim Tourism Year 2010, to try and prevent negative impact & being late in safeguarding Sikkims image through united effort.

## **Dahal counters Opp allegations, asks them to do homework first**

**Gangtok, 6<sup>th</sup> August:** Press Advisor to the Chief Minister, Bhim Dahal has come out strongly against allegations of the Opposition parties that the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) government has raised prices of essential commodities and been unfair towards government employees in regard to their salary hike.

Speaking to media persons this morning, Mr.Dahal dismissed the allegations as baseless and countered that it was a manifestation of desperate and rejected opposition clique to find issues where none existed.

If the Opposition parties had been following the budget session, they would have known that the State government has set aside Rs.823 crores to cover for the expected pay hike, he pointed out.

On the Opposition allegations of the State Government having failed to respond to runaway inflation, he challenged that there has been no rise in prices for essential commodities such as rice and daal, and added that the Opposition parties should also know that the Chief Minister has also declared that people belonging to the BPL families will be provided with 4 Kgs of free pulses starting this year along with free health check-ups and insurance cover.

The State Government was responsive to its social commitments; Mr.Dahal claimed and added that the SDF Government has also directed that children at ICDS centres be provided with a glass of milk products like Kheer every week throughout the State.

“The Opposition should first do its homework and they would be serving the people and the State better if they did not waste everyone’s time by raising baseless issues. They should also realize that the sugar price is controlled by the Centre, which has announced that the production has gone down. Despite this, in Sikkim, the price of even sugar has been maintained and the government is strictly monitoring against black marketing,” Mr. Dahal said.

While further speaking on the rise of vegetables within the state, he clarified that even the prices of the vegetables was controlled by markets outside the state since every product was being transported into the State from outside.

“Like the Chief Minister has been saying throughout we should become producers and service the local market with our own produce instead of depending on supplies from outside. We are consumers and consumerism in Sikkim is being dictated by markets like Siliguri. If the vegetable market becomes local then prices can be controlled locally. Thus the government in the next six to seven months wants to develop this local market,” he added.