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## BUDGET SESSION OF SIKKIM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMENCES

Information &amp; Public Relations Department

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Gangtok, March 23: (IPR) The Second Session of Tenth Assembly (Budget Session 2020-21) of Sikkim Legislative Assembly commenced from today.

Hon'ble Speaker of Sikkim Legislative Assembly, Shri L.B. Das welcomed the Hon'ble Governor Shri Ganga Prasad and all the Members of the House to the Budget Session.

Hon'ble Governor of Sikkim in his address to the House said that the proposed Budget for financial year 2020-21 for the State of Sikkim would encompass all the priority sectors of development and will be in line with the inclusive development model of the Union Government. He stressed on the need to focus on consolidation of existing schemes and programmes, before starting new initiatives, and emphasized on the need to strengthen the revenue generation model of the State. The Hon'ble Governor touched upon some of the priority sectors of the State Government such as Health, Education, and Agriculture.

The Hon'ble Governor concluded his address with an appeal to utilize the budget for the overall development of the people of Sikkim. He said that the budget should address the aspirations of all section of the population.

Hon'ble Speaker thanked the Hon'ble Governor for his address to the House. Thereafter, the Hon'ble Speaker made an announcement in the House. He announced that with the due consent from Hon'ble Members, the time period of this Budget Session is to be reduced to two days only on account of outbreak of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). He said that many countries in the world have suspended, reduced, postponed or cancelled their legislative sessions following this global pandemic. Some of the countries have even issued Stay-at-Home orders to their citizens for weeks. Delhi is learnt to have reduced its budget session to one day i.e today only. Chhattisgarh Assembly has adjourned its session. The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India via video message to the nation has urged the citizens to isolate oneself from social gatherings. He has stressed on the importance of following self-imposed norms of Social Distancing. Requesting citizens to patiently abide by the norm, to isolate oneself and come out of the house only if imperative, while trying to work from home and avoid unnecessary travel. The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt of India also has issued Advisory on social distancing in view of spread of this virus. The World Health Organization has also issued Advisory for tackling this contagion.

The Hon'ble Speaker added that we should have adjourned the Session sine die but it is a known fact that the government cannot function without passing the budget, as it is mandatory as per the Constitution of India. We would also not be able to fight and resolve this epidemic without passing the Appropriation Bill, as the whole system we work under would cripple, he added.

Further, the Hon'ble Speaker informed that as a precautionary measure, the Sikkim Legislative Assembly Secretariat has restricted visitors thereby not issuing gallery passes to unessential visitors in line with directives issued by Lok Sabha. There would be no lunch breaks and tea breaks too, to use the available time for necessary business of the House to its optimum.

The Hon'ble Speaker then asked the Hon'ble Members for their consent on the matter, to which a majority of the Hon'ble Members responded, and therefore the Hon'ble Speaker invoked his residuary powers under Rule 334 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly to curtail the time period for all businesses to two days. The Hon'ble Speaker announced that the time period for debates and discussions would be reduced, and all starred questions would be converted to unstarred questions.

Thereafter, Hon'ble Chief Minister, also the Leader of the House, Shri P.S. Tamang moved the motion of thanks on Hon'ble Governor's address. The Motion of Thanks was seconded by Hon'ble Minister Shri Kunga Nima Lepcha.

The discussion and voting on the Hon'ble Governor's address would be taken up tomorrow, the 24th of March, 2020.

During the Financial Business, the Hon'ble Chief Minister, also the Minister-in-Charge of Finance Department, Government of Sikkim, presented the Second Supplementary Demands for Grants relating to the Financial Year 2019-20.

The Second batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2019-20 includes 9 (nine) grants, with gross additional expenditure of Rs. 21600 lakh comprising of Rs. 700 lakh on Revenue Account and Rs. 20900 lakh on Capital Account. Of this, the proposals involving net cash outgo aggregates to Rs. 21600 lakh, funded from the one time additional dispensation to the State by Government of India.

Thereafter, the Hon'ble Chief Minister, also the Minister-in-Charge of Finance Department, Government of Sikkim, presented the Annual General Budget for the financial year 2020-21, comprising of the Estimates of Receipts, Annual Financial Statement, Demands for Grants and Explanatory Memorandum to the Annual Budget 2020-21.

Explaining the budgetary profile for the financial year 2020-21, the Hon'ble Chief Minister informed that the proposed Annual General Budget for the State of Sikkim will amount to Rs. 9100 Crores (Rupees Nine Thousand One Hundred Crores), comprising of Rs. 7343.60 as Revenue Expenditure, and Rs. 1756.40 as Capital Expenditure.

The discussion and voting on the General budget will be taken up tomorrow, the 24th of March, 2020.

While presenting the Annual General Budget for the Financial Year 2020-21, the Hon'ble Chief Minister called for fulfilling the State's goals based on sustainable development policies for the benefit of the people of Sikkim. He called for furthering peace and tranquillity to ensure that the State grows to become an example of innovation and progress. He termed the budget a 'full-fledged budget', as the last budget presented was midway the financial year 2019-20 because of the due completion of the electoral process and formation of a new Government led by Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party in May 2019.

Earlier, during the Legislative Business, the following Bills were placed in the House by the concerned Minister-in-Charge:

1. The Sikkim Protection of Interests of Depositors (In Financial Establishments) Amendment Bill, Bill No.2 of 2020 was introduced by Shri P.S. Tamang, Hon'ble Chief Minister who is also the Minister-in-Charge of Finance Department.

The state Government has deemed it necessary to amend Sections 2, 3, 14, 17 and 18 of the Sikkim Protection of Interests of Depositors (In Financial Establishments) Act, 9003 for,

- a. Making the definitions more specific and clearer, leaving no room for ambiguity. Defining entity which was earlier left out;
- b. Creating a mechanism on information sharing with regard to the reports of the financial establishments with the regulators of the Country and the State;
- c. Re-appointing the Competent Authority and appointing the Co-competent Authority and financial empowering them with suo-motto powers to deal with the defaulting establishment for recovery of dues to the depositors,
- d. Appointing the Co-administrator to manage the attached properties of the defaulting financial establishment. This amendment aims to strengthen the Sikkim Protection of Interests of Depositors (In Financial Establishments) Act, 2009 making it all the more effective and well-structured.

2. Similarly, the Sikkim Legislative Assembly Members (Removal of Disqualifications) Amendment Bill, Bill No.1 of 2020 was introduced by Shri Kunga Nima Lepcha, Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge of Law and Parliamentary Affairs Department. Whereas, certain offices were not included in the earlier amendment of Sikkim Legislative Assembly Members (Removal of Disqualifications) Act, 1978 so as not to disqualify the holders for being chosen. It had therefore, become expedient under the circumstances to have promulgated an Ordinance namely, Sikkim Legislative Assembly Members (Removal of Disqualifications) Amendment Ordinance. 2020 by the Governor of Sikkim on 13/1/2020. This Bill now seeks to replace the said (Ordinance by an Act of the Legislature as required under Article 213 (2) (a) of the Constitution of India. Therefore, the Bill has been framed with the above objects in view.

3) Similarly, the Sikkim Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (Amendment) Bill, Bill No.5 of 2020 was introduced by Shri P.S. Tamang Hon'ble Chief Minister also the Minister-In- Charge of Finance Department. The State Government felt it expedient to amend the Sikkim Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2010 in view of the decision of Government of India to allow additional borrowing to the State as a onetime dispensation in the current year 2019-20 to offset fiscal hardship due to shortfall in actual receipt of Share of Central Taxes. With this object in view, the Bill has been framed.

4) Likewise, the Sikkim Panchayat (Amendment) Bill, Bill No. 7 of 2020 was introduced by Shri Sonam Lama, Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge of Rural Development Department. Whereas, the State Government has deemed it expedient to amend sections 18, 29, 66 and 129 of the Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1993. And whereas, section 129 was omitted by the Sikkim Panchayat (Amendment) Act, 1997 vide Act No 5 of 1997 dated 13th May 1997, which the State Government has deemed expedient to restore. And whereas, section 129 of the said Act provides that "no person shall contest the election to any Panchayat with the support, direct or indirect, of any political party". With these objectives in view, the Bill has been framed.

5) Likewise, the Sikkim Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, Bill No. 6 of 2020 was introduced by Shri P.S. Tamang Hon'ble Chief Minister also the Minister-in-Charge of Finance Department. It has been proposed for amendment by way of bringing the Sikkim Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2020 for amending certain provisions of the Act; thereby making the functioning of the said Act more effective, meaningful and ensuring easier compliance by the taxpayer. This amendment Bill is additionally intended to streamline functioning of the provision of the Act based on the recommendation of Goods & Services Tax (GST) Council and the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

6) Likewise, the Sikkim State University (Amendment) Bill, Bill No. 8 of 2020 was introduced by Minister Shri. Kunga Nima Lepcha, also the Minister-in-Charge of Education Department. Whereas the State Government has deemed it expedient to grant an autonomous status to Sikkim State University in order to allow the University to function in a smooth manner. And in order to allow Sikkim State University to function as an autonomous Institute of Higher Education, the State Government deems it necessary to insert section 6A and to make the changes in clause (6) and (27), insertion of Sub-clause 8 in clause 8 of the Schedule of the Sikkim State University Act 2003, thereby allowing the University to function independently. With this object in view, the Bill has been framed.

7) . Lastly, the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University (Amendment) Bill, Bill No. 9 of 2020 was also introduced by Minister Shri. Kunga Nima Lepcha also the Minister-in-Charge Education Department. Whereas initially under the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University Act, 2008, the Governance and management of the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University was under the "Sponsor" the Thirumuruga Kirupananda Variyar Thavathiru Sundara Swamigal Medical Education and Charitable Trust Salem, Tamil Nadu. By virtue of amendment carried out in the year 2018 in the main Act, the words "Thirumuruga Kirupananda Variyar Thavathiru Sundara Swamigal Medical Educational and Charitable Trust Salem, Tamil Nadu" has been replaced by the words "Jeen Universal Foundation, Delhi". This has resulted shifting of Governance and Management of the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University to Jeen Universal Foundation, New Delhi, a new Sponsor in the terms of Section 48 of the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University, Act 2008. Now, therefore the State Government has declared it expedient to change the name of the Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University as Sikkim Professional University, in view of transfer of Governance and Management as requested by the new Sponsor, Jeen Universal Foundation, Delhi. With this object in view, the Bill has been framed.

Thereafter, Hon'ble MLA Shri Aditya Golay, also the Chairman of Public Accounts Committee for the financial year 2019-20, presented the following Reports of the Public Accounts Committee on the floor of the House:

- i. 116th Report on Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31st March, 2012.
- ii. 117th Report on Action Taken on the Recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee by the State Government Departments as contained in its 108th Report.
- iii. 118th Report on Action Taken on the Separate Audit Report on the Accounts of State Trading Corporation of Sikkim contained in its 105th Report for the year ended 31st March, 2009-2011.

The Assembly then took up the Election and Nomination of Assembly Committees for the Financial Year 2020-21.

1. Committee on Public Accounts – Hon'ble MLAs Shri Aditya Golay, Shri Tashi Thendup Bhutia and Shri

Y.T Lepcha were elected as Members of the Committee on Public Accounts. The Hon'ble Speaker nominated Hon'ble MLA Shri Aditya Golay as the Chairman of the Committee.

2. Committee on Estimates – Hon'ble MLAs Shri Tashi Thendup Bhutia, Shri Aditya Golay and Smt Farwanti Tamang were elected as Members of the Committee on Estimates. The Hon'ble Speaker nominated Hon'ble MLA Shri Tashi Thendup Bhutia as the Chairman of the Committee.

Likewise, the Hon'ble Speaker made the following nominations for various Committees for Financial Year 2020-21:

1. Committee on Government Assurances – Hon'ble MLAs Shri Sonam Tshering Venchungpa, Shri Bishnu Kumar Sharma, and Smt Sunita Gajmer were nominated as Members of the Committee.

Hon'ble MLA Shri Sonam Tshering Venchungpa was nominated as the Chairman of the Committee.

2. Committee on Rules – Hon'ble MLAs Shri Sonam Tshering Venchungpa and Shri Pintso Namgyal Lepcha were nominated as Members of the Committee.

The Hon'ble Speaker is the Ex-officio Chairman of the Committee on Rules.

3. Committee on Library – Hon'ble MLAs Shri Sonam Tshering Venchungpa and Shri Em Prasad Sharma were nominated as Members of the Committee.

Hon'ble Deputy Speaker of Sikkim Legislative Assembly is the Ex-officio Chairman of the Committee on Library.

4. Committee on House – Hon'ble MLAs Shri G.T. Dhungel, Shri Em Prasad Sharma and Smt Raj Kumari Thapa were nominated as Members of the Committee. Hon'ble MLA Shri G.T. Dhungel was nominated as the Chairman of the Committee.

5. Committee on Privilege – Hon'ble MLAs Shri Bishnu Kumar Sharma, Shri Tashi Thendup Bhutia and Shri Pintso Namgyal Lepcha were nominated as Members of the Committee. Hon'ble MLA Shri Bishnu Kumar Sharma was nominated as the Chairman of the Committee.

The Hon'ble Speaker then nominated Hon'ble MLAs Shri Sonam Tshering Venchungpa, Shri G.T. Dhungel and Shri Aditya Golay as the Panel of Chairmen for the financial year 2020-21.

The House was then adjourned till tomorrow, the 24th of March, 2020.

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