



## PRESS RELEASE



### Meghalaya Villages Shines on World Tourism Day 2024

#### with Awards for Umden and Mawphlang

**New Delhi, September 27, 2024:** Meghalaya's exemplary contribution to sustainable tourism took centre stage today at the World Tourism Day 2024 celebrations held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, graced the event as the Chief Guest, along with Union Ministers from various key sectors of the government.



Umden and Mawphlang, two villages from Meghalaya, were declared winners in the prestigious National Best Tourism Village Competition, organized by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Umden was awarded in the Craft category for its indigenous silk-weaving heritage, while Mawphlang was honoured in the Heritage category for its conservation of sacred groves and cultural significance. Representatives from both villages were present to accept their awards, reflecting Meghalaya's growing leadership in rural and sustainable tourism.

**Lauding this remarkable achievement, Hon'ble Tourism Minister of Meghalaya, Shri Paul Lyngdoh** said, *“It is a proud moment for the people of Meghalaya. After Kongthong’s recognition last year, this honour adds another feather to our cap. This achievement have ensured that more people now know about the exquisite Eri silk of Umden and the ancient sacred forests of Mawphlang. These awards are a testament to our efforts in building sustainable tourism, and fostering community development”*



Umden, located in the Ri-Bhoi district, is widely known for its production of Eri silk, also referred to as ‘Ahimsa silk’. The village has successfully integrated its traditional weaving practices into the larger sustainable tourism narrative, attracting visitors who are keen to learn about this ancient craft. The award in the Craft category recognizes the community’s effort in preserving local craftsmanship while promoting tourism as a means of livelihood and cultural exchange.

Mawphlang, in the East Khasi Hills, won the Best Village Award in 'Heritage' category. This is a testament of the villagers' conservation of their sacred groves. These ancient forests hold immense cultural and spiritual value for the Khasi people and are a focal point for ecotourism in the region. The village's commitment to protecting these sacred spaces while opening them up for sustainable tourism is an inspiring model for heritage conservation and community engagement.



**Representatives from both villages who received the awards include Shri Craig Alan Lyngdoh, Chief of Hima Mawphlang; Shri Lamphrang Blah, Myntri Hima Mawphlang; Shri Tambor Lyngdoh, President of Mawphlang Sustainable Tourism Society; Smt. Tander Tmung, Weaver at Eri Silk Village, Umden; Shri Bishar Tmung, Headman of Durbar Shnong Diwon, Umden; and Smt. Blandina Rympeit, Weaver at Integrated Village Co-operative Society Ltd.**

The celebration of World Tourism Day 2024 also saw the Ministry of Tourism showcase several key initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism. Among these were the Paryatan Mitra initiative, industry partnerships with hospitality chains, and the Incredible India Content Hub. **The Vice President and other dignitaries, including Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Tourism and Culture, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister of Railways, and Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, Union Minister of Civil Aviation, emphasized the importance of tourism as a tool for peacebuilding and socio-economic development.**

The recognition of Umden and Mawphlang comes on the heels of Kongthong village's Bronze Medal at last year's Best Tourism Village competition, further cementing Meghalaya's reputation as a pioneering state in rural and heritage tourism. With these back-to-back achievements, Meghalaya is emerging as a preferred destination for travellers seeking sustainable tourism experiences.