GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA

PRESS RELEASE

1000 Drums Wangala Festival

Enters Guinness World Records on Golden Jubilee

Tura, November 14: The Golden Jubilee celebration of the 100 Drums Wangala Festival reached a historic milestone on Saturday as the Hundred Drums Wangala Festival Committee, India, achieved a place in the Guinness World Records for the Largest Wangala Dance, with performers coming together in a spectacular display of Garo cultural heritage at Wangala A·dam, Chibragre, near Tura.

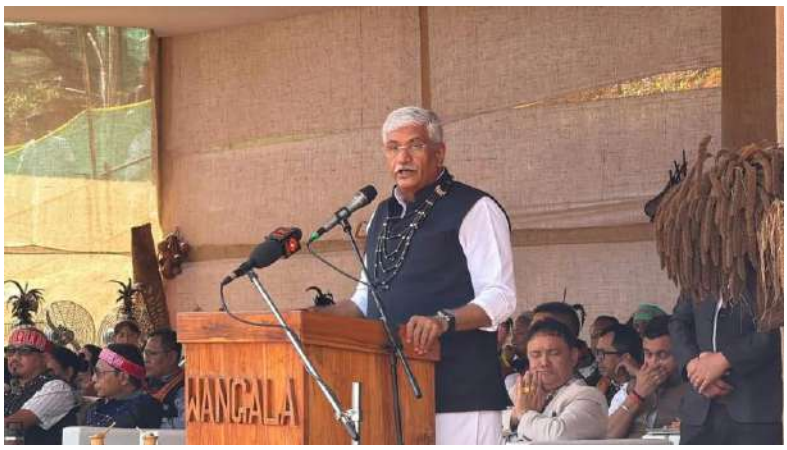




The fourth day of the Golden Jubilee celebrations was graced by Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Tourism and Culture, Government of India, as the Chief Guest. Deputy Chief Minister Shri Sniawbhalang Dhar, Minister of Power Shri T. D. Shira, and Leader of Opposition Dr. Mukul M. Sangma attended as Guests of Honour, along with Chief Minister Shri Conrad K. Sangma and other dignitaries.



Addressing the gathering, Union Minister Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat extended congratulations on behalf of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the people of India on the completion of 50 years of the festival. He described the Golden Jubilee as a testament to the Garo community's deep-rooted commitment to its heritage, collective unity and cultural pride.



Highlighting the deeper significance of Wangala, the Union Minister said the festival represented gratitude towards nature and Mother Earth for a bountiful harvest, reflecting the community's traditional understanding of harmony and coexistence with the natural world. He observed that indigenous traditions such as Wangala carried valuable lessons at a time when the world was confronting climate change and environmental degradation.

Paying tribute to the pioneers who established the festival, Shri Shekhawat acknowledged the contributions of generations of elders, artists, organisers and community members who had sustained the tradition over the decades. He emphasised that India's cultural strength lay in its diversity and that folk music, traditional dances, languages and indigenous practices formed an essential part of the country's living cultural heritage.

The Union Minister also highlighted the immense potential of Wangala and the Garo Hills as destinations for cultural tourism. He said festivals such as Wangala could create opportunities for local youth in tourism, hospitality, handicrafts, entrepreneurship and cultural storytelling. He expressed the Central Government's willingness to extend support to the Meghalaya Government in promoting the region as a cultural tourism destination.

Referring to the historic participation of 1,000 traditional Dama players, Shri Shekhawat described the performance as an extraordinary expression of unity, discipline and collective cultural commitment. He said the initiative had the potential to bring the Garo community's cultural identity to national and international platforms, adding that the Wangala Festival could emerge as the next major cultural attraction of Northeast India, comparable to the Hornbill Festival of Nagaland. He also noted that the Guinness World Records process would be subject to the prescribed verification procedures and official confirmation.

Chief Minister Shri Conrad K. Sangma, in his address, expressed gratitude to the Union Minister, organisers, performers and everyone who contributed to making the historic Golden Jubilee celebration a success. Recalling the festival's journey, he said Wangala began in 1976 with just few drums before gradually expanding to 100 drums. He highlighted that the late P. A. Sangma had envisioned that the festival's 50th anniversary would be celebrated with 1,000 drums, a dream that had finally become a reality.

The Chief Minister further highlighted the significance of Wangala as a unifying cultural identity for the Garo community, whose people are spread across regions from Tripura to Bangladesh and beyond. He stated that despite geographical and political boundaries, their shared heritage continued to bind them together. He also remarked that, for the first time in Meghalaya's history, the Governor would be staying in the state for 20 days.

Deputy Chief Minister Shri Sniawbhalang Dhar congratulated the Garo community for preserving and promoting Wangala with pride over the past five decades. He reaffirmed the State Government's commitment to extending continued support towards protecting and promoting the festival and the cultural heritage of the indigenous community.

Leader of Opposition Dr. Mukul M. Sangma described the Golden Jubilee as a particularly significant occasion, noting that the celebration had gone beyond the traditional 100 drums to an extraordinary gathering of 1,000 drums. He paid tribute to the forefathers, elders and visionaries who initiated the festival, many of whom were no longer alive to witness the historic milestone. He added that the presence of the Union Minister reflected national recognition of Garo culture, emphasising that the occasion was not merely a cultural gathering but a celebration of the preservation and protection of the community's identity.

The day's celebrations featured several major programmes, including the Rhythm of Thousand Drums, a dance competition involving ten contingents of the Hundred Drums Wangala Festival, and a special Wangala performance organised for the Guinness World Records attempt.











Following the performance, the achievement of the Largest Wangala Dance was announced in recognition of the collective participation of the contingents and performers of the 1000 Drums Wangala Festival 2026. The historic accomplishment was credited to the Hundred Drums Wangala Festival Committee, India, with participants from across the contingents contributing to the record-setting performance.

The dance competition also witnessed enthusiastic participation from the ten contingents, with Chidaogre emerging as the winner, receiving a trophy and a cash prize of ₹2 lakh. Gondenggre secured the first runners-up position and received a trophy along with ₹1.5 lakh, while Sadolbra finished as the second runners-up, taking home a trophy and ₹1 lakh. The organising committee also awarded consolation prizes to all participating contingents in recognition of their contribution.











The fourth day of the Golden Jubilee celebration thus marked a defining moment in the history of Wangala, transforming a festival that began with just 20 drums in 1976 into a historic gathering of 1,000 performers. Beyond the record achievement, the occasion stood as a tribute to the generations who safeguarded Garo traditions and reaffirmed the community's enduring cultural identity for generations to come.