



## PRESS RELEASE



### Shillong Hosts First International Film Festival, Honours Film Personalities

**Shillong, March 25:** The 1<sup>st</sup> Shillong International Film Festival commenced at the State Convention Centre, organised by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), marking a significant step towards promoting filmmaking and creative expression in Meghalaya. The festival witnessed the participation of filmmakers, officials, students, and aspiring artists, particularly youth eager to explore opportunities in the film industry.

The opening ceremony was attended by Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, IPR Minister Lahkmen Rymbui, Chief Secretary Shakil P Ahammed, Commissioner and Secretary of IPR Vijay Kumar Mantri, Lokayukta Chairperson C.P. Marak, Director of DIPR B.S. Sohliya, and other dignitaries.



Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Conrad Sangma described the launch as a proud milestone for the state, noting that the festival in 2026 fulfilled a long-standing vision. He said the initiative aims to provide a much-needed platform and ecosystem for talented youth, enabling them to showcase their creative abilities.

Highlighting Meghalaya's rich cultural heritage, Sangma said storytelling and tradition are deeply embedded in the identity of its people. He emphasised that the film industry holds vast potential for employment generation—not only for actors and filmmakers but also in technical and allied sectors involved in production.

He further stated that the festival forms part of a broader strategy to build a sustainable creative ecosystem in the state. With nearly half of Meghalaya's population below the age of 20, he stressed the need for continuous innovation and expansion of opportunities to meet the aspirations of the younger generation.

Referring to key government initiatives, Sangma mentioned the launch of a state-run OTT platform to support local creators, financial assistance for filmmakers, and the Meghalaya Grassroots Music Programme (MGMP), which has enabled thousands of artists to earn livelihoods through performances. He also revealed that the government has approved a proposal for a film city and is planning to establish a film institute to provide technical training and professional support.

He underscored that the government's approach is holistic and stakeholder-driven, aimed at long-term growth rather than isolated schemes. According to him, the festival represents a step towards positioning Meghalaya as a leading hub for filmmaking and creative industries in the Northeast.

Sangma also urged stakeholders to work collectively and share ideas to strengthen the festival in the years ahead, expressing hope that it would evolve into a major international attraction.



Echoing similar views, IPR Minister Lakhmen Rymbui said the festival serves as an important platform to promote storytelling and filmmaking. He noted that while the industry had faced a slowdown in the past, it has seen a revival over the past decade with growing participation from young and creative individuals.

Rymbui pointed out that filmmaking in Meghalaya dates back to 1981 and acknowledged the contributions of noted filmmakers such as Pradip Kurbah and Dominic Sangma in advancing the industry. He encouraged youth to take full advantage of the festival, which includes workshops on filmmaking and screenplay writing, as well as a short film competition.

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The festival is expected to emerge as an important platform for cultural exchange, skill development, and the promotion of Meghalaya's stories on the global stage.



On the occasion, the department felicitated several prominent film personalities, including Biana Momin, Sheba Diengdoh, Phelima Sumer, (Late) Hamlet Bareh Ngapkynta, (Late) Rana Kharkongor, Pradip Kurbah, Simi Khongtiang, Cores Marwein, Lansius Syiemlieh, Kamki Diengdoh, Elizer Bareh, Kiki Garod, Section Syiemlieh, K Mark Swer, Roots Renewed, Tyrel R Lyngdoh, Arun Bhattarai, Mankap Nokwoham, Arnab Gayan, Hilarius Kharbihkhiew and Kenny Lyngdoh for their contributions to the film industry.

On the opening day, the film *Ha Lyngkha Bneng*, directed by Pradip Kurbah, was screened for the audience.