



PRESS RELEASE



ULLAS Festival 2026 held in Tura, focus on lifelong learning and literacy

Tura, April 15: The ULLAS Festival 2026 was successfully held today at the SMELC Building, Dakopgre, Tura, bringing together neo-learners, educators, and officials in a vibrant celebration of literacy and inclusive education.

ULLAS (Understanding Lifelong Learning for All in Society) is a flagship initiative aimed at promoting adult education and lifelong learning. The programme focuses on empowering individuals aged 15 years and above who missed formal schooling, providing them with opportunities to acquire basic literacy, critical life skills, and continuing education.

The programme was graced by several dignitaries including the Chief Guest Marcuise N. Marak, Hon'ble Minister, Government of Meghalaya; Guest of Honour Vibhor Aggarwal, IAS, Deputy Commissioner, West Garo Hills, Banteilang J. Kharshandi, MCS, Director of School Education & Literacy, along with other officials, educators, and stakeholders from across the Garo Hills region.

In his speech, the Chief Guest Marcuise N. Marak described ULLAS as a highly encouraging initiative and a reminder that learning is a lifelong process, not limited to children but open to



people of all age groups. He stated that the programme aims to provide opportunities to individuals above 15 years of age who were unable to attend school or were deprived of education, especially those who cannot read or write. He urged everyone to take full advantage of the initiative.

Highlighting broader goals, he noted that India is striving to become a fully literate nation, while Meghalaya is working with equal commitment to achieve full literacy

by 2030 under the leadership of Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma. He informed that the State Government has significantly increased the education budget to ₹3,347 crore this year—one of the highest allocations among departments—demonstrating its strong commitment to the sector. He further stated that Meghalaya's current literacy rate stands at 94.2%, and once it reaches 95%, the state will be considered fully literate, a goal the government and the Education Department are actively working to achieve.

The event featured a series of cultural performances, including folk dances and songs by neo-learners from various districts of Garo Hills, showcasing the rich cultural traditions of the region.



A total of five neo-learners from each district of Garo Hills were felicitated during the programme, while two of the oldest neo-learners, both above 50 years of age, were also specially honoured, highlighting the inclusive and inspiring spirit of the ULLAS initiative.



The programme also included a testimony from a selected learner and the launch of awareness reels and videos on ULLAS, aimed at promoting literacy initiatives.