



## PRESS RELEASE



### **Chief Minister Attends Silver Jubilee Celebration of Montfort Teacher Training College for Special Education**

**Tura, April 21, 2026:** Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma today attended the Silver Jubilee celebration of the Montfort Teacher Training College for Special Education at the Montfort Centre for Education, Danakgre, Tura, marking 25 years of dedicated service in advancing inclusive and special education in the North East.



The programme was also attended by Bishop Andrew R. Marak, along with Rev. Bro. Dr. Maria Soosai, Guest of Honour, and Rev. Bro. Dr. V. K. George, Special Guest.





The programme commenced with the arrival of dignitaries, followed by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp. Cultural presentations, including a prayer dance, a thematic dance, a Garo cultural dance, and a special Wangala dance performed by trainees, highlighted the rich cultural heritage of the region and added vibrancy to the celebration.



Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister recalled the historic significance of the institution and said, “I made it a point to come here today, especially because it was 25 years ago that late



P. A. Sangma inaugurated the building of the Montfort Teacher Training College for Special Education.” He noted that at the time of its establishment, there was not a single training institute for special education in the entire North East, adding that Montfort was the first of its kind in the region.

Highlighting the institution’s pioneering role, he stated, “Twenty-five years ago, the decision to start this institute must have been extremely challenging, because nobody had done it before. At the same time, it must have been very exciting, because you were the first to do it.” He further observed that while several such institutions have now come up across the North East, Montfort continues to remain one of the oldest and among the leading centres for special education.

Emphasizing the need for a shift in societal attitudes, the Chief Minister said, “The biggest change required in society—whether in the state, the country, or the world—is a change in mindset. It is one of the simplest changes, but also one of the most powerful.” He remarked that while many once viewed special education as a challenge or burden, institutions like Montfort chose to see it as an opportunity to serve and make a difference.

Underscoring the importance of dignity and equality, he stated, “We should never let a person’s physical condition, their challenges, or their economic background affect the way we treat them.”

The Chief Minister also spoke about the Government’s MOTHERS programme, explaining that it is an acronym representing Meghalaya Outcome Transformation in Health, Education, Rural Development, and Social Welfare. He noted that the initiative integrates key sectors with a focus on the role of mothers in driving grassroots transformation. “These departments are all interconnected, and the mother is at the centre of the transformation that we want to bring about,” he said.

Drawing parallels with the work of faith-based institutions, he added that such a holistic approach has long been practiced by organizations like the Catholic Church. “You may not call it the MOTHERS programme, but in essence, the work has always been similar,” he remarked, while acknowledging the contributions of the Church and associated institutions in serving communities.

Calling for greater collaboration, the Chief Minister said, “While we may be in different positions and systems, we are ultimately working for the same people and the same cause. Our methods may differ, but our destination is the same.” He stressed the importance of partnership, mutual understanding, and collective effort in achieving shared goals for societal development. Speeches were also delivered by Rev. Bro. Dr. Maria Soosai and Rev. Bro. Dr. V. K. George, who acknowledged the institution’s significant contribution to inclusive education and teacher training over the past 25 years.



Tracing its origins, the Montfort Centre for Education (MCE) was established through the pioneering efforts of Bro. John Baptist, who arrived in Tura in 1985 with a vision to provide services for children with disabilities in the region, in collaboration with Sr. Rosairo Lopez.

With the support and guidance of Rt. Rev. George Mamalassery, then Bishop of Tura, the Centre gradually evolved into a comprehensive institution dedicated to inclusive education.

The formal school began functioning in 1995, followed by the introduction of integrated education in 1996, wherein children with disabilities studied alongside their peers. Over the years, the Centre expanded its services despite initial challenges, including the need for trained educators in special education.

A major milestone was achieved in 1999 with the establishment of the Montfort Teacher Training College for Special Education, inaugurated by the late P. A. Sangma, to address the growing demand for trained special educators. The institution has since played a pivotal role in capacity building across the North East.

As of 2024, the College has trained over 600 special education teachers from across the region, with its courses recognized by the Rehabilitation Council of India. The Centre today stands as a model of inclusive education, integrating children with visual, hearing, intellectual, and other disabilities into mainstream schooling.

Currently, over 200 children with disabilities are integrated into the mainstream school alongside more than 1,000 students, while dedicated special schools cater to specific needs, including institutions for the visually impaired, hearing impaired, and intellectually impaired. The Centre also provides residential facilities, with a majority of hostel residents being children with special needs.

The institution's contributions have been widely recognized, including the National Award for Best Inclusive Educational Practices conferred by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2018, as well as the Meghalaya Day Award in 2020.

The programme also featured a presentation of mementoes to distinguished individuals in recognition of their contributions. A message highlighting the importance of inclusive education was shared, underscoring the need for collective responsibility in ensuring equal opportunities for all children.



The event concluded with a vote of thanks, followed by the National Anthem performed in Indian Sign Language (ISL), reflecting the spirit of inclusivity upheld by the institution.