

## PRESS RELEASE



### **East Khasi Hills Crowned Overall Champions at State Level Inter-School Athletics Meet 2026**

**Shillong, May 22:** The State Level Inter-School Athletics Meet 2026, organised by the Directorate of Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Meghalaya, in collaboration with the Meghalaya Athletics Association at the SAI STC Shillong, NEHU Campus, concluded successfully with East Khasi Hills district emerging as the overall champion.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Wailadmiki Shylla congratulated the organisers, athletes and officials for the successful conduct of the meet and praised the young participants for their determination and sportsmanship.



Addressing the students and athletes, the minister said that every participant should feel proud for reaching the state-level competition, adding that they had already proved themselves as fighters and aspiring athletes determined to bring laurels to their families, schools, districts and the state. He reminded the participants that while winning medals may be temporary, discipline, character and sportsmanship would remain with them throughout their lives.

The minister expressed satisfaction at the growing participation and improved performances from districts beyond East Khasi Hills, which had traditionally dominated the competition. He noted that despite infrastructural challenges in the past, the government has significantly expanded sports facilities across Meghalaya under the leadership of Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma.

Shylla informed that artificial athletic tracks have already been developed in Shillong and Wahiajer, while similar projects are underway in Tura, Mawkyrwat, Baghmara and other districts. He said the government's aim is to ensure that every district has proper sports infrastructure to help young athletes train and showcase their talents.

Highlighting the government's increased investment in sports, the minister stated that the annual budget of the Sports Department, which stood at nearly ₹40 crore seven years ago, has now increased to ₹844 crore. According to him, this has enabled the government to improve facilities, accommodation, sports gear and youth programmes across the state.

He further said Meghalaya is the only state where youth engagement programmes begin at the block level before progressing to district, state, national and even international levels. Stressing the importance of investing in youth, Shylla said the government is committed to nurturing sporting talent from an early stage.

Referring to Meghalaya's recent sporting achievements, Shylla said the state's performance at the Khelo India Tribal Games had improved significantly, with Meghalaya moving from 29<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> position. He expressed confidence that the state could compete among the top three in the coming years.

The minister also announced that the Meghalaya Outstanding Sportsperson Direct Appointment Policy has been introduced to encourage athletes. Under the policy, medal winners in events such as the National Games, South Asian Games, Asian Games, Olympics and Paralympics will be eligible for direct government appointments without appearing for examinations.

He urged the athletes to continue working hard and prepare for the 39<sup>th</sup> National Games, which Meghalaya will host next year, expressing hope that many young athletes from the state would participate and bring glory to Meghalaya.

In the overall team standings, East Khasi Hills district emerged as the champions. East Khasi Hills also won the Best Boys Team title, while North Garo Hills finished runners-up. In the girls' category, East Khasi Hills secured the Best Girls Team title, with West Jaintia Hills finishing as runners-up.



Among the individual award winners, Ewandame Mark Syiemlieh of East Khasi Hills was adjudged Best Athlete in the Under-14 Boys category for high jump, while Lamsaka Dkhar of East Jaintia Hills won the Under-14 Girls category for long jump. Highbornson Muksor of East Jaintia Hills emerged as the Best Athlete in the Under-16 Boys category, while Amandy Rumnong of East Khasi Hills secured the Under-16 Girls title. In the Under-18 category, Cherim Ch Sangma of North Garo Hills was declared Best Athlete in the boys', while Tusame N Marak of East Khasi Hills won the girls' title.



The closing ceremony concluded with Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Wailadmiki Shylla, along with officials of the Sports Department, felicitating the winners and formally declaring the State Level Inter-School Athletics Meet 2026 closed in the presence of Working President of MSOA John F. Kharshiing, Director of Sports and Youth Affairs D.D. Shira, MCS, Assistant Director of Sports and Youth Affairs P.B. War Nongbri, district sports officers and other officials.

