



PRESS RELEASE



Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma lays foundation stone for Mini Stadium at Damas in North Garo Hills; vehicles distributed under MOVCDNER flagged off Damas, North Garo Hills | May 18, 2026: Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma today laid the foundation stone for a mini stadium in Damas, marking an important step towards strengthening sports infrastructure and creating better opportunities for youth in the district. The programme, organised by the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs, was held at Sacred Heart Secondary School, Damas, North Garo Hills.



Also present at the programme were Timothy D. Shira, Minister of Tourism, Fisheries and Agriculture; Marthon D. Sangma, Chairman, Meghalaya Tourism Development Corporation and MLA of 38-Mendipathar Constituency (ST); Rupert M. Momin, MLA of 37-Kharkutta Constituency (ST); officials from the Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Agriculture Department, district administration, local leaders, students, and members of the public.

In his address to the gathering, the Chief Minister said that the long-pending demand of the youth of Damas for a dedicated sports facility has now been fulfilled with the sanction of ₹3.44 crore under the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs for the construction of the mini stadium. He stated, “With the laying of this foundation stone, the Government is officially committing ₹3.44 crore to build the brand-new Mini Stadium at Damas. This is a solemn promise kept to our community.”



He said the project will transform the existing ground into a proper sporting arena with a covered gallery, open seating galleries, and improved playground facilities, adding that, “This long-awaited Mini Stadium will serve as a dedicated, multi-purpose facility for our youth, schools, and community events.”

The Chief Minister added that the stadium will enable local athletes to access wider competitive platforms, stating that it will “break geographic barriers and enable our athletes to participate in district, inter-district, and inter-state competitions,” thereby giving them the exposure they deserve.

He further stated that the Government is working towards a long-term vision of building 510 sports infrastructure projects by 2028, with the aim of producing athletes capable of representing the country at the 2032 Olympics, noting that “No district, no block, no locality is left behind.”

Highlighting investments in the Garo Hills region, he said over ₹400 crore has been committed across 53 projects, while in North Garo Hills, nine projects worth ₹33.81 crore have been taken up since 2018 across stadiums, basketball courts, and indoor facilities.

The Chief Minister stressed equitable development and emphasised the importance of giving due focus to districts and district headquarters. He informed that an additional ₹5 crore will be sanctioned for the Resubelpara Stadium, taking the total project cost to ₹8.50 crore.

Speaking on local sporting talent, he mentioned Henry A. Sangma, an athlete from Babukhona, North Garo Hills, who won a bronze medal in the North East Olympic Games, and Cherim Ch Sangma from Bajengdoba, North Garo Hills, who began training in 2023 and progressed through the STAR Programme to the Advanced Athletics Programme.

He said, “Likewise, many youth of the State are naturally endowed with sports talent and skills but lack opportunities like training, infrastructure, and avenues to hone their talents and skills.” He reiterated that it is the policy of the Government to be youth-centric, aimed at building a nation and society of responsible, qualified, and productive citizens, and urged parents to support their children in pursuing sporting interests and careers.

He also highlighted other initiatives of the Government for sports development, including scholarships for sportspersons, jobs for medal winners, and support to sports associations for conducting training and tournaments. He further urged North Garo Hills to be fully prepared for the upcoming National Games.

In conclusion, he said, “The infrastructure is being constructed, the scientific scouting systems are actively running, the funding is fully deployed, and the framework has been built for you. Now it is your turn to step onto this field, dare to dream big, and claim your place on the global stage.”

In his address, Timothy D. Shira, Minister of Tourism, Fisheries and Agriculture, Government of Meghalaya, said that the programme reflects a strong commitment of the Government towards the youth. He stated that the Government is continuously creating an empowering ecosystem for youth and sports, adding that the mini stadium will enable young people to nurture their skills and talents and bring glory to the district and the State.



He spoke on various initiatives and interventions of the Government aimed at creating livelihood opportunities and promoting entrepreneurship for enhanced income generation. He urged the youth to work hard and diligently and take pride in whatever they do, whether in studies, sports, or farming. He also emphasized the need to encourage traditional skills, stating that there is a need for more blacksmiths and masons, and urged youth to take advantage of various government programmes.

He further advised farmers to upgrade their knowledge and farming practices, adopt multi-cropping systems, and address issues such as bud rot and other plant diseases through scientific methods and training provided by the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments. He also thanked the Chief Minister for his continued support for North Garo Hills.

Meanwhile, as part of the programme, Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER) vehicles for the 2024–25 and 2025–26 batches were flagged off. The vehicles also included power tillers under the State Plan Scheme (Farm Mechanization) 2025–26. The vehicles, provided with 75 percent subsidy support, aim to strengthen transportation and market linkages for farmers and producer groups, thereby supporting the organic agriculture value chain in the region.



Earlier, the programme commenced with felicitation and a welcome address by Dr. Abhishek Saini, IAS, Deputy Commissioner, North Garo Hills District. This was followed by a welcome song presented by students of Sacred Heart Secondary School, Damas.



A speech was delivered by Victor Kharbuki, District Agriculture and Horticulture Officer of North Garo Hills District, highlighting departmental initiatives for agriculture and horticulture development in the region.



Students of Damas Higher Secondary School presented a cultural dance performance, and certificates were distributed to sportspersons in recognition of their achievements and contributions to sports in the district.



The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Tennystar R. Marak, MCS, Additional Deputy Commissioner, North Garo Hills District.