

Press Release - Sikkim

NEC Secretariat welcomes New Secretary



Shri Satinder Kumar Bhalla, a senior officer of the Indian Telecommunication Service (ITS), 1992 batch, has been appointed as the new Secretary of the North Eastern Council (NEC), effective April 1, 2025.

With over 30 years of rich experience in telecommunications and public administration, Shri Bhalla has held several key positions in the Department of Telecommunications and other central government bodies, including the Ministry of Home Affairs. His career has encompassed strategic planning, policy development, project execution, and regulatory oversight—playing a pivotal role in advancing India's telecom sector.

As he takes charge as Secretary of the NEC, Shri Bhalla aims to enhance the Council's mandate as the central agency for the economic and social progress of the North Eastern Region. His leadership is expected to drive renewed emphasis on regional connectivity, infrastructure development, and inclusive growth.

Projects Sanctioned

The project titled "CCTV Surveillance of Towns and Tourist Places in Sikkim" was approved on March 7, 2024, with an estimated cost of

₹14.85 crore. The primary objective of the project is to enhance public safety, strengthen smart governance, and promote secure and responsible tourism in the state. The implementation of CCTV surveillance will serve multiple purposes, including, inter alia, crime deterrence and investigation through real-time monitoring and recorded footage, enhanced safety for tourists, along with valuable data to support planning and improvement of tourist facilities, and immediate alerts during natural calamities within surveillance zones.

The road infrastructure project “Widening and up gradation of single lane road from Sangkhola to Zingla under Gangtok district in Sikkim” was sanctioned by the North Eastern Council to the State of Sikkim for an estimated cost of Rs. 63.19 crore. This project is likely to be completed by January, 2027. After completion, it will significantly enhance connectivity and infrastructure for 8 villages, directly benefiting a population of 5,871 people.

Project Completed

The project "*Construction of 50.00 M Span Steel Bridge over River Kalej Khola on Rangsang-Khola Dovan*" which was approved on January 17, 2020 for an amount of Rs. 8.03 crore has been successfully completed on April 19, 2025. This project has significantly improved transportation and regional connectivity in West Sikkim.



North East Students' Programme for Awareness, Reach, and Knowledge on Space (NE-SPARKS)

This idea was conceptualized by the Hon'ble Home Minister. This pioneering initiative aims to spark curiosity and raise awareness about space science and technology by organizing a visit for 800 bright science students—100 from each of the eight North Eastern states—to Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Bengaluru. So far, 100 students have visited the center. Over the coming months, up to November 2025,

additional student batches from each state will participate, culminating in a landmark initiative to engage the North East's most promising students in the fields of space science.

This is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), the North Eastern Council (NEC), ISRO, North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC), and the respective State Governments of the North Eastern States. The total sanctioned budget is ₹3.83 crore, funded in a 60:40 ratio—₹2.3 crore from NEC and ₹1.53 crore collectively from the State Governments (₹19.18 lakh per state).



Group photo of students with Dr. V. Narayanan, Secretary, Department of Space/Chairman, ISRO, taken during their visit to ISRO, Bengaluru from April 21 to 24, 2025.

North Eastern Region Agri-Commodity e-Connect (NERACE) portal

This was launched on 12 July 2024 by Shri Jyotiraditya M Scindia, Hon'ble Union Minister of DoNER. NERACE is expected to significantly enhance the Agro-horti landscape of our region by leveraging technology to connect producers, buyers, and service providers. It facilitates seamless transactions and fostering mutual growth, empowering our farmers by addressing the most vertical aspect of market linkage and supply chain management.

The month of April 2025 witnessed robust Agri-trade activity across the North-Eastern states of India, with a total transaction value of ₹49 Lakhs and cumulative trade volume of 188 MT. This reflects the growing momentum of inter-state agricultural marketing and the strengthening of farmer-to-buyer digital trade linkages in the region.

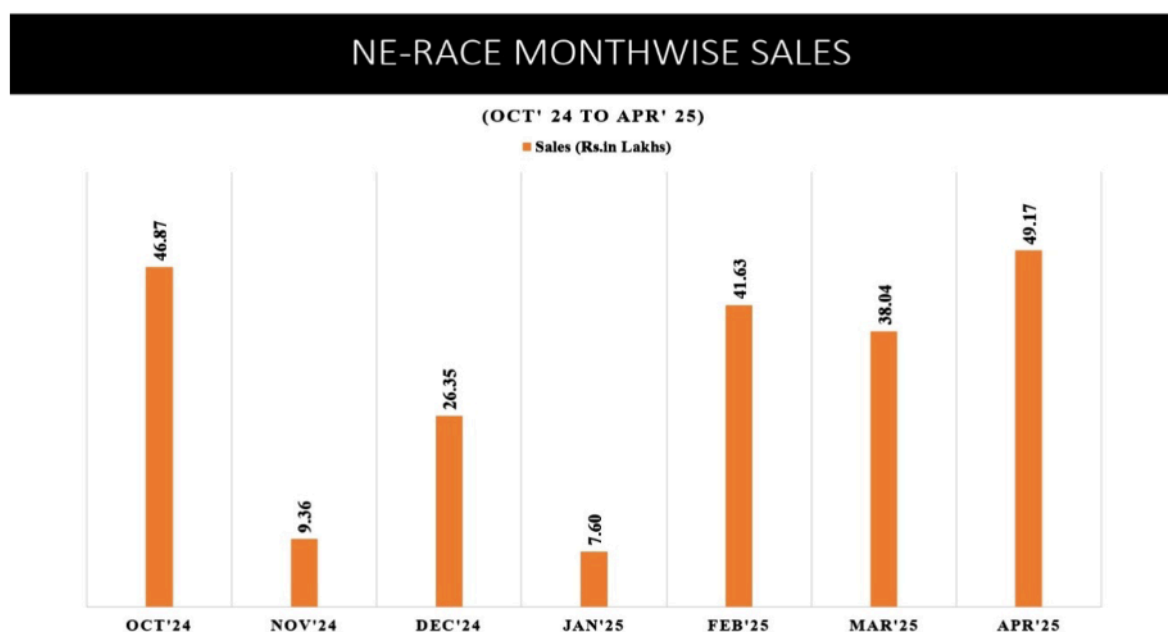
Key highlights of the April, 2025 sales data include:

- Ginger remained the most traded commodity, with varieties like Local and Nadia contributing significantly. Over 184.5 MT of ginger

were sold, amounting to ₹47.57 lakhs and Sikkim emerged as the major supplier.

- King Chilli, a premium product from Nagaland and Assam, fetched the highest price per kg (up to ₹3,000), with small yet high-value trades totaling ₹53 Thousands.
- Other traded commodities included Turmeric, Maize Paddy, Black Rice, and Birds Eye Chilli, sourced from states like Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Assam, and Manipur.
- Assam emerged as a major buyer state, while Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Sikkim served as key seller states.

The NERACE Month-Wise sales (Rs. in Lakhs) from October, 2024 to April, 2025.



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North Eastern Council Secretariat, Nongrim Hills,
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