

DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS & YOUTH AFFAIRS GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA

North East Zone Inter-State Badminton Championship 2026

returns to Meghalaya after 10 years, sets stage for National Games 2027

Shillong, September 16, 2026: The Meghalaya State Badminton Association (MSBA), under the aegis of the Badminton Association of India (BAI), officially inaugurated the North East Zone Inter-State Badminton Championship 2026, today at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Sports Complex, Shillong. Returning to Meghalaya for the first time since 2016, the tournament serves as the official qualifying ground for the team events of the highly anticipated National Games 2027, in Meghalaya.

The championship which will take place from 16th September to 19th September 2026 brought together over 250 top-tier shuttlers representing all eight Northeastern states: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim. With each state contingent fielding meticulously selected players, the courts in Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium saw intense competition across categories on the opening day.



In his keynote address, Shri Wailadmiki Shylla, Hon'ble Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Meghalaya said that the return of this important championship to Shillong after



ten long years arrives at a highly opportune moment, as Meghalaya prepares to host the 39th National Games next year. Emphasizing the value of the exposure, he stated, "We do understand that champion is created from this kind of platform," reinforcing that youth need these opportunities and platforms to compete against other States. He highlighted that athletes in Meghalaya are

fortunate to benefit from the leadership of Shri Conrad K. Sangma, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya, who has prioritized sports in unprecedented ways.

He added that the State witnessed a surge in the Sports budget from a mere ₹40 crore eight to nine years ago to a staggering ₹844 crore. The objective of this funding is to provide better infrastructure, platforms, and opportunities for the youth, alongside a hike in prize money that now awards ₹2 lakh to National Games gold medallists. Furthermore, Shri Shylla underscored the transformative Meghalaya Outstanding Direct Appointment Policy, which guarantees direct government jobs to State athletes who secure medals at major events. This policy also allows athletes a grace period of up to ten years to pursue higher education or advance their sporting careers before taking up their appointed posts. Turning to National Games preparations, he confirmed that a dedicated stipend will be provided to the final selected team to support their ongoing training. He concluded by announcing a directive under the Meghalaya Health Insurance Scheme (MHIS) to establish special provisions, ensuring athletes receive medical care and support for sports-related injuries throughout their journey.

The tournament was officially declared open by the Hon'ble Minister, followed by an oath-taking ceremony led by the captain of the Meghalaya Badminton Contingent.

Ace shuttler Ashmita Chaliha, the first Indian ever to win the Korea Masters Title, who is representing Assam in the tournament, commended the sports momentum as she returned to



compete in Shillong at the North East Inter-State Badminton Championship after nearly a decade. Expressing optimism regarding the host State's venue readiness and infrastructure build-up for the upcoming National Games next year, Chaliha highlighted the rise of grassroots talent across the region. She observed that while young shuttlers are emerging through structured training, grooming and high-level match exposure will be

essential to bridge the gap with elite circuits. Offering a message to Meghalaya's athletes, she urged them to play without the burden of expectations, advising, "Enjoy what you play, give your absolute best on the court without taking the pressure of winning or losing, and the results will naturally follow."





Fresh off his career-defining Men's Singles title victory at the Cameroon International 2026 and a former U-17 national champion Mizoram's H. Lalthazuala, expressed firm conviction in Team Mizoram's title prospects. Looking ahead to next year's National Games in Meghalaya, the international champion commended the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya, for his proactive support of athletes, expressing immense enthusiasm to compete on the grand stage. Beyond the competition, the successful hosting of the championship underscores a larger milestone for Meghalaya. As the State prepares to host the 39th National Games next year, hosting a premier regional event of this scale functions as a practical demonstration of Shillong's operational readiness. The seamless execution of the tournament highlights the State's growing capacity to facilitate large-scale sports events and anchor national-level athletic infrastructure.



The dignitaries in attendance were Shri Wailadmiki Shylla, Hon'ble Minister, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Government of Meghalaya; Shri Omar Rashid, Convener of the Tournament Committee, Badminton Association of India (BAI); Shri Alertson Nongbri, Director, Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Meghalaya; Shri P. B. War Nongbri, Deputy Director, Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Meghalaya; Shri K. Passah, Assistant Director, Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs, Government of Meghalaya; Dr. C. O. Rangad, Senior Vice President of the Meghalaya State Badminton Association (MSBA); Shri Rajesh Kamal, General Secretary, Meghalaya Badminton Association; Shri Gautam Mahanta, Treasurer, Assam Badminton Association and other officials from allied departments.

Sd/-

Director

Department of Sports and Youth Affairs

Government of Meghalaya