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PM Modi in Sikkim — ₹4,000 Crore Projects, 50th Statehood Anniversary, Sowa Rigpa Hospital

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PM Modi in Sikkim — ₹4,000 Crore Projects, 50th Statehood Anniversary, Sowa Rigpa Hospital

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WHY IN NEWS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited **Sikkim on April 27-28, 2026** for the state's **50th Year of Statehood celebrations** at Paljor Stadium, Gangtok. He inaugurated, launched, and laid the foundation stone of projects worth over **₹4,000 crore** spanning healthcare, education, infrastructure, connectivity, tourism, and agriculture. The visit is particularly significant given Sikkim's strategic location bordering China, Bhutan, Nepal, and West Bengal — and the state's unique constitutional position under **Article 371F**.

SIKKIM'S STATEHOOD — A BRIEF HISTORY

YEAR	EVENT
Pre-1975	Sikkim was an independent protectorate under the Treaty of Tumlong (1861) and Gangtok Treaty (1973); India was responsible for defence, external affairs, communications
1973–74	Political unrest; Chogyal (monarch) Palden Thondup Namgyal's authority weakened
April 26, 1975	Indian Parliament passed the 36th Constitutional Amendment Act — Sikkim merged into India as the 22nd State
May 16, 1975	Sikkim officially became India's 22nd state
Article 371F	Special provisions for Sikkim — protects rights of old settlers, existing land laws, and limits Parliament's power over certain local laws
2026	50th anniversary of statehood (1976–2026 inclusive; merger was April 1975)

KEY PROJECTS INAUGURATED/LAID

Healthcare

PROJECT	LOCATION	DETAILS
Integrated Sowa Rigpa Hospital	NIT Deorali, Gangtok	India's first integrated Sowa Rigpa hospital – traditional Tibetan Buddhist medicine system; 30-bedded
Ayurveda Hospital	Yangang, Namchi district	100-bedded; serves southern Sikkim
Helen Lepcha Medical College	Socheygang, Gangtok district	New medical college

Education

PROJECT	LOCATION	DETAILS
Sikkim University Permanent Campus	Yangang, Namchi district	Long-pending – Sikkim University (established 2007) was operating from temporary premises
Administrative Block – NSCB University of Excellence	Chakung	New University of Excellence
Dentam Professional College	Dentam, Gyalshing district	Professional education in remote western Sikkim
IT in 160 Schools	State-wide	IT-enabled educational infrastructure for 160 government schools

Infrastructure & Connectivity

PROJECT	DETAILS
Two Teesta Arch Bridges	Hinged double-lane steel arch bridges at Sirwani and Lower Samdong – connecting Namchi and Gangtok districts across Teesta River

Tourism

PROJECT	DETAILS
Orchidarium	World-class Orchid Experience Centre in Gangtok — Sikkim is India's orchid capital with 532 orchid species

WHAT IS SOWA RIGPA?

Sowa Rigpa (literally “science of healing” in Tibetan) is the traditional **Tibetan Buddhist medical system**, practiced in Sikkim, Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Himalayan communities. Key facts:

- **Origin:** Rooted in ancient Tibetan texts, particularly *Gyushi* (Four Medical Tantras)
- **Principles:** Based on three humours — rLung (wind), mKhris (bile), Bad-kan (phlegm) — analogous to Ayurveda's Vata, Pitta, Kapha
- **Government recognition:** Included under **AYUSH** (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy) — **Ministry of AYUSH** established in 2014
- **Research body:** National Research Institute of Sowa Rigpa, Leh
- **UNESCO:** Under consideration for Intangible Cultural Heritage status
- **Practice regions:** Ladakh, Sikkim, Arunachal, Himachal (Spiti valley), Darjeeling

SIKKIM'S CONSTITUTIONAL UNIQUENESS — ARTICLE 371F

Article 371F provides special protections for Sikkim:

- 1 **Land rights** — Parliament cannot modify laws governing Sikkim residents' rights over land without the Sikkim Assembly's concurrence
- 2 **Citizenship rights** — Protects rights of “old settlers” (those present before 1975)
- 3 **Income tax exemption** — Sikkim residents (Sikkimese) were exempt from income tax on their income; the Supreme Court in 2023 upheld this exemption
- 4 **Marriage laws** — Special laws on inter-community marriage

No other state has Article 371F's comprehensive protection of pre-merger laws.

UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS1 — Indian History	Sikkim merger 1975; 36th Constitutional Amendment; Chogyal
GS2 — Polity	Article 371F; special constitutional provisions; Sikkim statehood
GS2 — Governance	AYUSH; Sowa Rigpa; traditional medicine system recognition
GS1 — Art & Culture	Sowa Rigpa; traditional Tibetan medicine; Orchidarium; Sikkim biodiversity

Mains Keywords: Sikkim statehood 50th anniversary, Article 371F, 36th Constitutional Amendment, Sowa Rigpa, AYUSH, Sikkim University, Teesta bridges, PM Modi Sikkim visit

Facts Corner

ITEM	FACT
Sikkim merger year	April 26, 1975 (36th Constitutional Amendment)
Sikkim 22nd state	May 16, 1975 officially
50th statehood year	2025-26
Modi visit duration	April 27-28, 2026
Projects value	₹4,000+ crore
Sowa Rigpa hospital	Integrated; 30-bedded; at NIT Deorali
Sowa Rigpa under	Ministry of AYUSH
Sikkim University	Established 2007 (Central University); permanent campus at Yangang
Orchid species in Sikkim	532 (highest orchid diversity in India)
Article 371F	Special provisions for Sikkim in Constitution

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