

**Chief Minister lays base for State Zoo**

**Shillong, 1st Oct 19:** Chief Minister, Conrad K Sangma, today unveiled the Foundation Stone for State Zoo at Umtrew, Ri Bhoi while attending the Valedictory Function of Wildlife Week 2019. Also present during the occasion was Minister, Forest & Environment Department, Lakhmen Rymbui.



Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister, Conrad K Sangma said that as citizens we have the responsibility to keep balance while moving forward with changing times. “Change is imperative and while keeping up with the changing world there should be a balance between economy and ecology,” he said. He added that Meghalaya is a State richly blessed with diversity in flora and fauna and that it is the duty of everyone to protect and conserve this Biodiversity. “This Zoo will be a place where the people especially the children will get a chance to see the wildlife of the State while learning to take care and respect these animals,” said the Chief Minister. He added that the Zoo should not only be a place of entertainment but a centre of learning, respecting, protecting, rescue and conservation of wildlife. “It’s sad to see that people still go for hunting and I hope this zoo will change the mindset of the people that the forests also belong to the animals who are a part of the Biodiversity,” he added.

Earlier, during his address Minister, Forests & Environment, Lakhmen Rymbui informed that the land of 72 hectares for the State Zoo was acquired in 2001 and the Central Zoo Authority has given its approval for the State Zoo which will have eight enclosures. He was hopeful that the Zoo will be completed by January, 2022.



The Chief Minister and the dignitaries also distributed prizes to the winners of different competitions that were held as a part of the Wildlife Week. People who have contributed towards conservation and protection of wildlife were also felicitated during the occasion.