

## Cherry Blossom Festival 2018

The 3<sup>rd</sup> India International Cherry Blossom Festival was held from 14<sup>th</sup> November to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at Shillong. The four day Festival had attracted many visitors to witness the celebration of nature.

One of the items that was incorporated in this year's Festival was the Dialogue with States. The Dialogue between the Hon'ble Chief Minister and Parliamentarians with His Excellency, Ambassador of Japan to India and the delegates from the Japanese Embassy, New Delhi was held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 in the Conference/Theatre Hall, State Convention Centre, Shillong.

The session for the dialogue was held after the inaugural function of the Festival. The issues which were discussed in this programme included Japan as a promoter of important sectors of the state of Meghalaya such as Agriculture, Forestry, Arts & Culture, Infra-structures and allied sectors including Japanese culture, higher studies in Japan and other areas.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Shri Conrad K. Sangma, Hon'ble MP, Lok Sabha, Shri Vincent Pala, and His Excellency, Mr. Kenji Hiramatsu, Ambassador of Japan to India shared their views in the programme. The representatives from Japanese Embassy, New Delhi and from Meghalaya which included Departments of Forest, Agriculture, Arts & Culture, Industries, Sports and PWD (Roads) who were participating in the dialogue delivered their presentations concerning their sectors.

This Dialogue has the potential to bring long lasting changes and further cementing the close ties between India and Japan.

The festival had been the highlight of attention not only in Shillong but over the north east and the entire country with the focus on the autumn flowering of the Cherry tree. It had also brought about a rich mosaic of dance, music and food from Meghalaya and all over the North East. The audience enjoyed the Cutie Kids competition, the colours of North East, the Beauty Pageant, Dog show by Meghalaya Police, Martial Arts display, traditional Archery competition, variety of Stalls for exhibition cum sale, Japanese Films, Japanese Judokan and Japanese Cosplay. The Festival highlighted the Sakura connection between Meghalaya and Japan.

The tone was set by presence of the Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Conrad K. Sangma and His Excellency, Mr. Kenji Hiramatsu, Ambassador of Japan to India at the inaugural session of the Festival on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

The four day programmes of the festival had left an indelible mark in the minds of the people.



**Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri. Conrad K. Sangma in his speech at the inaugural function of the 3<sup>rd</sup> India International Cherry Blossom Festival 2018 held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 5<sup>th</sup> Ground, Polo**