

mountains

CONNECT

March 2026

IMI NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

This winter witnessed marked decline in snow and precipitation in the Indian Himalayan Region, which poses serious challenge to agriculture/horticulture and drinking water availability in the coming summer.

Climate change is not only real but a constant threat to livelihoods for millions in the Himalaya. Governments and all other stakeholders have to move towards actionable strategies through adaptation and innovation without losing time. Water use efficiency in all sectors including tourism and domestic consumption needs immediate attention and affordable solutions.

Investment from private sector in this area needs to be explored. On the long term, social forestry can be an effective shield and productive economic activity, where, cooperatives or corporates can be engaged.

The Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) has been in dialogue with Systemiq to develop a climate-sensitive strategy that simultaneously creates economic opportunities for local communities. Our first stakeholder meeting was organized on 20 February 2026 at Himachal Bhawan, where eminent participants deliberated on mobilizing green investments and promoting nature-based solutions in the IHR by identifying and innovating development investment programmes.

The new year calls for renewed commitment to sustainable development, climate resilience and community-centered approaches across the Himalaya. Strengthening traditional knowledge systems, promoting climate-smart agriculture, encouraging responsible tourism and engaging youth in conservation and green livelihoods are essential priorities. Protecting the fragile Himalayan ecosystem is not merely an environmental concern—it is a national and global imperative.

Let us move forward with renewed energy and shared purpose to safeguard the Indian Himalayan Region for future generations. I look forward to your continued support and collaboration in the year ahead.

Wishing you all a successful and inspiring year 2026.

With warm regards,
R. Negi



First Stakeholder Consultation on a Resilient Himalayan Future

IMI and Systemiq, with support from The Rockefeller Foundation, launched the initiative "Himalayan Resilience and Sustainable Development" to mobilize green investments and nature-based solutions in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) through innovative development investment programmes.

The project kick-off and first stakeholder consultation was held on 20 February 2026 at Himachal Bhawan, New Delhi. It brought together senior representatives from government, research institutions, mountain networks, the private sector, and civil society. The dialogue marked the first step toward a comprehensive analysis and a coordinated investment strategy for the IHR, contributing to India's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

The session introduced the initiative's objectives and partners, fostered a shared understanding of key regional challenges, and initiated discussions on priority thematic programmes to address emerging gaps and opportunities.



Report on **Macro Level Stocktake Assessment on solid waste management and promoting a circular economy in the State of Uttarakhand** has been released. The study was conducted with the support of ICIMOD along with SDFU. For the Full Report please [read here](#)

NMHS updates



NMHS Sikkim: "Farmer's meeting for establishment of Dzongu Indigenous Grains Cooperative was organised at BAC, Passingdang, Dzongu on 01.12.2025.

The meeting was graced by team of Cooperative department: Mr. Robin Sewa, Additional Registrar, Mr. Indramani Adhikari, Joint Registrar, Mr. R H Subba, Joint Registrar, Mangan, Mr. Pema Wangchuk, Assistant Registrar, Mangan, Mr. Palden Lepcha, Pentong Panchayat and farmers from Lingthem, Sangdong and Pentong villages.

The meeting engaged in a fruitful conversation of collaboration with Integrated Mountain Initiative and Farmers involved and the creation of a Cooperative at Dzongu.

The discussions led to a consensus for collaboration between farmers and the Department, which was further endorsed during the Gram Sabha meeting in Mantam in the presence of elected representatives and line departments. The meeting concluded with a shared agreement to move forward collaboratively to strengthen traditional farming systems and improve farmer livelihoods in the region.



"DZOMAAL IN DZONGU"

First publication from the NMHS project

Article by Ms. Auni Gurung, Junior Project Fellow, Sikkim

For more details: <file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/April-June-2025.pdf>

Gauchar Mela, Chamoli

Dates: 15 November to 20 November 2025

Gauchar Mela is a prominent cultural fair held annually in Gauchar, Chamoli district, showcasing the region's traditional heritage, local crafts, folk performances, and community participation.



NMHS, Himachal Pradesh

Dr Mast Ram Negi, SRF, NMHS project had a meeting with farmers of Losar panchayat regarding establishment of community seed bank and producer company.

IMI updates

6th Nov 2025: IMI members, Mr P.D. Rai and Ms. Bineta Shah at Asian Biodynamic Conference 2025, Pokhara, Nepal

Aiming to discover new perspectives on biodynamic agriculture in Asia, this conference place special emphasis on holistic approaches and integrated studies.

Panel Discussion:

Himalayan Representatives: Sonam Tashi (Royal University of Bhutan), Nima Lama (Tsum Nubri Rural Municipality, Nepal), PD Rai (Sikkim, India), Kesang Tshomo (National Organic Program, Bhutan). Moderated by Bineta Shah (SARG, India)



IMI member, Dr. G.S. Rawat participated at in "Regional Cooperation - Landscape restoration and management"

Partner's corner



Collaborative forums are the pillars of cooperation and collectivism and HP Sustainable Development Forum has been proactive in mobilising key NGOs of Palampur on environmental issues but with solutions which were shared with the esteemed MLA Mr Asish Butail who has been extremely responsive. Participation by the Municipal Corporation meant that actions suggested will be implemented with urgency.

Youth Outreach Program by ECOSS,



A Youth Outreach Programme was organized in hybrid mode, comprising twelve sessions conducted between 27 November 2025 till 9 January 2026. The focus areas were • Self-discovery and personal development

• Mental health and emotional well-being, Career awareness and skill mapping, Leadership, communication, and time management and Environmental awareness and cultural preservation



The Zero Waste Feature Marathon 2026 is a 24-hour hybrid broadcast celebrating International Zero Waste Month (IZWM). The program featured member stories, expert discussions, youth and community leadership, regional takeovers, and visions for a Zero Waste future across various regions. [Read more](#)

Reclaiming Local Food Systems as part of International Zero Waste Month 2026.

Public awareness program conducted at Roing, Amyaa, Dirang, NE Waste Collective - Arunachal Pradesh; Gorkhey Haat, DLRPrerna, - Darjeeling and Lal Bazaar, Gangtok, Zero Waste Himalaya on the occasion of International Zero Waste Month. The event highlighted local food and traditional packaging as a solution to the waste crisis and saw collaborative effort by entrepreneurs and Swachh Bharat Missions, District Administration, Education, CSOs & FBOs.



International Mountain Day

8th RS Tolia Forum for the session "Dialogue: Uttarakhand at 25 - Looking Back, Looking Forward." On 11 December 2025, RST Forum was organized at Doon Library & Research Centre, Dehradun.



"Climate Resilience of Himalayan Ecosystem"

On the occasion of International Mountain Day, an interactive session was organised by Sustainable Development Forum of Himachal Pradesh (SDFHP). The event marked a promising beginning in bringing together like-minded NGOs on a common platform to collectively work towards the shared objectives of creating a plastic-free environment, ensuring scientific management and disposal of inorganic waste, and fostering a strong sense of ownership among all stakeholders.

The Forum expresses its sincere gratitude to Shri H. R. Bairwa, IAS, Deputy Commissioner, Kangra, for sharing valuable insights on environmental challenges and elaborating on the complementary roles of government and civil society in addressing these issues.





The book **“Uttarakhand @ 25: Looking Back and Looking Forward”** was formally launched by the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, marking a significant milestone in the State’s journey since its formation. Ms. Binita Shah, along with other members of SDFU, also participated in the event.



The India Today Republic Day special edition (Feb 2 2026) featured **Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS)** as a standout environmental champion for their impactful work in Himalayan sustainability and community empowerment.

Founded in Gangtok, Sikkim, ECOSS has gained recognition for pioneering community-led ecotourism and conservation models that empower villagers to steward their natural resources while improving livelihoods. The India Today profile highlights how the organisation partners with local communities to reverse environmental degradation through sustainable tourism, water-management innovations and conservation practices that also support economic resilience.

The Himalayan and the Might Five S

Article by Dr. Rajan Kotru, GC, IMI

Evoking mystique, the multi-faceted significance of the Himalayas can hardly be overstated as it defines the geological and geographical timelines, climate characteristics, biodiversity assets, human habitats and inspirational vis-a-vis spiritual contours of the globe and especially the Indian Sub-continent. [Read here](#)

Mountain Matters

‘Green bonus’ for Himalayan states, ecological value evaluation changes: Ex-bureaucrats’ proposal amid disasters.

Former bureaucrats under the banner of Constitutional Conduct Group highlighted that Himachal Pradesh's forest wealth is valued at Rs 9.95 lakh crore. [Read here](#)

Sikkim Shaken by Multiple Earthquakes, Latest at 4.3 on Richter Scale. [Read here](#)

Dr. Jigmet Yangchan



1. IMI Association:

Dr. Jigmet Yangchan is a prominent agricultural scientist and environmentalist from Ladakh, currently an associate with the Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) and Professor-cum-Chief Scientist at the University of Ladakh. Her work integrates soil and water engineering research with community development and policy advocacy, focusing on Ladakh’s critical water and soil challenges.

2. Current Affiliation:

Key Contributions and Career Highlights:

- Introduced vermicompost in Ladakh and reclaimed 10 ha of cold desert for farming.
- Awarded Best Extension Scientist (NAAS–Dhanuka, 2025).
- Led the Indus Clean Drive, mobilizing ~10,000 people and enabling a policy-backed cleanup removing 75+ tonnes of waste.
- Speaker at SMDS 2025; active member of the Global Permaculture Association.

3. Challenges:

Critical Challenges in Ladakh/Himalayas: Water scarcity from rising tourism and unregulated borewells; climate fragility due to receding glaciers and reduced snowfall; and social shifts as agricultural land is converted to tourism, threatening long-term food and water security.

4. Future Initiatives: Partnering with IMI

To secure Ladakh’s ecosystem, the upcoming collaboration with IMI will focus on:

- Spring Restoration: Technical revitalization of drying water sources
- FPO Strengthening: Creating global market linkages for high-altitude organic Produce.
- Future Leaders: Skill development programs in Natural Farming/ permaculture for Ladakhi youth.

Our survival depends on our glaciers. To protect them, we must protect our soil and our traditions." Dr Jigmet Yangchan

In the Himalayas, hardy buckwheat is a reliable alternative to failing crops

The crop is suited to poor soils, high altitudes, and short growing seasons. Its flowers also support bee-keeping, offering an extra income source. [Read here](#)

The Supreme Court on Monday voiced concern over the growing risk of natural disasters in the Himalayan region, following recent landslides and monsoon-related devastation across Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir. [Read here](#)