



PRESS RELEASE



Advisor to the Health Department Dr. Mehtab Sangma takes stock of Meghalaya's health scenario; Highlights Strengthening Rural Healthcare, Focus on Nutrition, Adolescents, and Specialist Care

Shillong, March 26, 2026: A comprehensive review of the Health & Family Welfare Department was convened by Dr. Mehtab Chandee A. Sangma, Advisor to the Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Meghalaya today, at the Main Conference Hall, Meghalaya Secretariat.



The meeting was facilitated by Shri Sampath Kumar, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Health & Family Welfare Department in the presence of Dr. Joram Beda, IAS, Commissioner & Secretary; Mr. Richard Yanthan, IAS, Joint Secretary; Dr. J.S. Momin, Director of Health Services (MI); Dr. Neela E. Kharsahnoh, Director of Health Services (MCH&FW); Dr. Lumrilyne Myllemumlong, Director of Health Services (ME&R); Mr. Paul V. Lyngdoh, Chief Engineer, Health Engineering Wing; Dr. K. Lucia Iawbor, Project Director, MACS, along with officials from Nursing, MHSSP, MHIS, MMDSL, GIL-SCEP, SHSRC and other key stakeholders.

An overview of the department's progress and priorities was presented by Shri Sampath Kumar, IAS, including key interventions under Mission 1000 Days, strengthening of rural health infrastructure, and the launch of the Chief Minister's Headman Fellowship. The presentation also highlighted that Meghalaya continues to face a high burden of stunting at 46%, necessitating urgent and coordinated action. The Meghalaya AIDS Control Society (MACS) presented updates on HIV, emphasizing the need for sustained focus and early intervention given the high-risk nature of the disease.

Dr. Sangma underscored the critical need for strengthening human resources and ensuring availability of specialists across PHCs and CHCs, particularly as nearly 80% of Meghalaya's population resides in rural areas. She noted that patients often travel from rural areas to CHCs due to the absence of specialists, calling for innovative solutions and improved deployment strategies.



She emphasized the importance of creating supportive working environments for doctors, including better infrastructure, flexibility, and consideration of personal and family needs, to improve retention and performance.

She also highlighted the importance of Meghalaya Programme for Adolescents Wellbeing, Empowerment and Resilience (MPOWER) in addressing the needs of adolescents and youth, stressing that with a large young population, timely interventions are crucial for long-term health outcomes.



Addressing Meghalaya's high stunting levels, she identified key root causes such as poor nutrition, lack of dietary diversity, and inadequate exclusive breastfeeding practices. She stressed the importance of improving maternal nutrition and child feeding practices.

She also called for in depth analysis of infant deaths, noting that early treatment of conditions such as upper respiratory infections (URIs) can prevent progression to pneumonia, a leading cause of infant mortality. Concerns were raised regarding anaemia among mothers and children, with a strong emphasis on early detection and intervention.

She also drew attention to the high incidence of teenage pregnancy in the state, linking it to school dropouts and broader social challenges, including POCSO-related cases. She stressed the need for awareness, access to contraception, and targeted interventions for adolescents.

The meeting highlighted the need to address HIV with urgency, recognizing its long-term health implications. Strengthening public health systems, including the role of trained ASHAs, improved malaria response, and community-level interventions, was also discussed.

Dr. Sangma appreciated the Meghalaya Health Insurance Scheme (MHIS), particularly for rural populations, and emphasized the need to further expand awareness and coverage.



Other key initiatives discussed included: Upgradation of Community Health Centres (CHCs) into First Referral Units (FRUs); Expansion of Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) facilities to reduce infant mortality; Investments in health infrastructure, including solarisation of facilities and Strengthening supply chains through Meghalayan Medical Drugs and Services Limited (MMDSL),

Dr. Sangma appreciated the efforts of the Health Department and its partner institutions in advancing healthcare delivery across the state. She conveyed her full support and willingness to extend assistance to the department, particularly for improving outcomes for women, children, and vulnerable populations. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to improving service delivery, strengthening systems, and ensuring last-mile access to quality healthcare across Meghalaya.