

PRESS RELEASE



Intense Awareness Drive and Rally held in East Jaintia Hills District

Khliehriat, May 11, 2026: The office of the District Medical & Health Officer (DM&HO), East Jaintia Hills District together with the office of the National Programme for Control of Blindness & Visual Impaired, National Health Mission, Shillong in collaboration with the Association of Community Ophthalmologists of India (ACOIN) Drishti Ratha Yatra today organized an intense awareness drive and rally which is an Eye Awareness Campaign (a Tableau decorated with Banners & Posters on National Programme for Control of Blindness prepared by Government of India) at K.B. Memorial Higher Secondary School, Wapung Skur, East Jaintia Hills District.



The programme began with a rally which commenced from Pamra-Paithlu PHC to KB Memorial Higher Secondary School, Wapung Skur, East Jaintia Hills District with the participation of students and health officials to spread the message on the importance of vision. The programme was attended by the National General Secretary, Association of Community Ophthalmologist, Dr. Swapan K. Samant in the presence of District Medical & Health Officer (DM&HO), East Jaintia Hills District, Dr D. Shylla, Sub-Divisional Medical & Health Officer (SDM&HO), East Jaintia Hills District, Dr W. Bamon, Principal of K.B Memorial Secondary School, Wapung Skur, East Jaintia Hills District, Dr. Heipor Uni Bang, other health officials, students and teachers.

In his address, National General Secretary, Association of Community Ophthalmologist, Dr. Swapan K. Samanta informed that the Association of Community Ophthalmologists of India was established 25 years ago and presently comprises a brigade of nearly 1700 ophthalmologists across the country working towards advocacy and promotion of community eye healthcare in the Indian subcontinent. He stated that the yatra is travelling across different parts of India with the objective of promoting positive eye healthcare and creating awareness among communities regarding the eye care facilities available in their respective localities.

He said that despite the availability of adequate opportunities and support from both government and non-government institutions for eye healthcare services in India, many people are still unable to benefit from such facilities due to ignorance, apathy and lack of proper communication. He pointed out that preventable blindness continues to exist in many villages, while several children suffering from blindness are deprived of proper education and support services.

Dr. Samanta further stated that the aim of the journey is to break the barrier of ignorance and create awareness among people so that they can avail the eye healthcare services and opportunities available in their vicinity.

Speaking about Meghalaya, Dr. Samanta observed that although several districts do not have sufficient ophthalmologists and eye care services are mostly managed by ophthalmic assistants, the state nevertheless has a strong healthcare support system with good hospitals, a regional institute in Shillong, several NGO-run hospitals and blind schools.

He stressed the need for greater public awareness so that people can fully utilise these facilities and services. He also said that the awareness yatra forms part of the organisation's All India Programme inspired by the teachings of Swami Vivekananda, encouraging people to arise, become aware of the opportunities around them and strive to attain better healthcare and well-being.

Furthermore, he sensitized the students on the 12 messages and exercises of the yatra for the students to practice in their day to day lives for the betterment and protection of their vision and overall eye health.

During the awareness programme, students were also given an opportunity to speak on the 12 messages of the Yatra, with medals awarded to students who expressed the messages in the best manner.



Earlier in the day, a ‘Vision Check Up of the School Children’ was also conducted at K.B Memorial Secondary School, East Jaintia Hills District by Ophthalmic Assistants of East Jaintia Hills District.



Later, a similar awareness programme was also conducted for the community members of Wapung Skur at the Community Hall of Wapung Skur Village, East Jaintia Hills District with the aim to educate the people on the importance of eye health.