

## PRESS RELEASE



### District Nutrition workshop begins in Meghalaya as Human Development Council (HDC) prepares for pivotal decisions

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The Government of Meghalaya, in partnership with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), initiated a two-day District Nutrition Leadership Workshop today at Courtyard by Marriott, Shillong. The event brings together senior officials, Deputy Commissioners, and key stakeholders from across the state to build a shared understanding of nutrition challenges and chart the path for a healthier Meghalaya.

Day 1 spotlighted the state's growing commitment to address undernutrition through data-driven strategies and community-led interventions.



In his keynote address, Development Commissioner & Principal Secretary, Government of Meghalaya, Dr. Sampath Kumar, IAS, emphasized the urgency of addressing high stunting rates, **currently at 46.5%**, and the importance of cultural and structural shifts to tackle deep-rooted issues like early pregnancy, poor maternal nutrition, and low awareness.



*“Meghalaya’s challenges are unique—social, geographical, and generational. But our solutions must be equally layered. Strengthening community institutions, linking services across sectors, and empowering adolescent girls and mothers is the way forward,”* said Dr. Sampath Kumar.

International experts from IFPRI, including Dr. Purnima Menon and Ms. Rasmi Avula, shared global best practices and evidence-based interventions, while district teams engaged in hands-on exercises using NFHS and HMIS data to analyse local malnutrition trends and gaps in coverage of health and nutrition interventions.



*“Almost half of all child deaths are from poor nutrition. Malnutrition remains the **highest-ranking risk factor for death and disability in India**,” It leads to **delayed development, reduced productivity, and chronic diseases**. Why should the government invest? Because the return on investment is human capital and long-term prosperity.”* said Dr. Purnima Menon Senior Director of Food and Nutrition Policy, IFPRI

Ongoing State interventions such as the Rescue Mission to address maternal & infant deaths and Chief Minister’s Safe Motherhood Scheme (CM-SMS) were presented as powerful tools already being implemented across the state, focusing on early antenatal care, nutrition rehabilitation, and frontline worker training.





This workshop builds on a series of state-level engagements aimed at improving nutritional outcomes on a mission mode. In August 2024, Meghalaya launched the District Nutrition Challenge, assigning district-specific targets to reduce stunting and anaemia. The Challenge was initiated during a two-day Human Development Leadership Programme (HDLP) Workshop, under the newly constituted Human Development Council chaired by the Chief Minister last year. This District Nutrition Leadership Workshop and HDC meeting thus marks the next major step in translating this vision into action.



Tomorrow, on Day 2, the workshop will culminate in a high-level convening of the Human Development Council (HDC), to be chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri Conrad K. Sangma. Deputy Commissioners from all districts will present district-specific nutrition action plans, grounded in data and field realities, to the Council for discussion and finalisation.

This pivotal session is expected to shape major policy decisions and determine the next wave of state-wide nutrition investments. The Council will also review the progress of flagship initiatives under the Meghalaya Early Childhood Development (ECD) Mission, and the Human Development Leadership Programme (HDLP).

The two-day workshop (12–13 June) brings together Deputy Commissioners, Block Development Officers, and key sectoral functionaries from across all districts and allied departments, with the aim of building shared strategies to address Meghalaya's nutrition challenges through convergent, district-led planning.