



## PRESS RELEASE



### Conference on Drug Abuse held in Tura Stakeholders call for coordinated action

**Tura, April 23, 2026:** A one-day conference on drugs and substance abuse in West Garo Hills district was successfully conducted at the SMELC Hall, Dakopgre, Tura, bringing together government departments, civil society organisations, and community representatives to address the growing menace of addiction in the region.



The programme was organised by the Meghalaya State Commission for Protection of Child Rights in collaboration with the District Social Welfare Office and the District Child Protection Unit, West Garo Hills. The primary objective of the conference was to ensure better coordination among various line departments in combating drug and substance abuse in the district.



In her opening remarks, Agatha K. Sangma highlighted the increasing concern over the easy availability of intoxicating substances, including drugs and tobacco, among children. She pointed out that Meghalaya's proximity to the "Golden Triangle" has made it vulnerable to the transit of illegal substances to neighbouring states and countries, further aggravating the issue. Emphasising child protection, she stressed the urgent need for awareness, prevention, and stronger institutional response to safeguard young people from addiction.

The Chief Guest, Francis Kharshiing, underscored the importance of collective responsibility in tackling the problem. He stated that drug use in the State could be significantly reduced—and even eliminated within five years—if all stakeholders, including government departments and the public, actively participate in the mission. He emphasised that collaboration and proactive engagement are key to effectively addressing drug and substance abuse.



The conference featured a series of technical sessions focusing on the current scenario of substance abuse in West Garo Hills, personal perspectives from recovering users, and ongoing initiatives aimed at reducing addiction and rehabilitating affected individuals. A panel discussion and brainstorming session on the way forward also formed part of the programme, with participants deliberating on strategies to strengthen prevention and intervention efforts.



The programme witnessed active participation from officers of various line departments, members of NGOs working in related fields, and representatives of Local Development Committees, reflecting a collective commitment to address the issue.

The conference concluded with a call for sustained coordination, community involvement, and intensified efforts to combat drug and substance abuse and protect the youth of the district.