

(IPR) World Blood Donor Day (WBDD) was celebrated today to thank voluntary non-remunerated blood donors for their life saving gift of blood and encourage more people all over the state to donate blood voluntarily.

The programme was organized by Sikkim State Blood Transfusion Council (SSBTC) in collaboration with Sikkim State AIDS Control Society (SSACS) at European Commission Hall, STNM Hospital Complex .

Minister for Health Care, Human Services and Family Welfare Department Mr. Arjun Kumar Ghatani graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and Dr. A.D. Subba Advisor Health Department was present as the Guest of Honour.

During the programme, regular Blood Donors Mr. Yogesh Bhandari (36 times), Miss Deepa Sharma (15 times) and Mr Thupden Namgyal Bhutia (11 times) were honoured and felicitated for their selfless service as a regular blood donor. Three organizations namely Sai Mobile Blood Bank, Rotary Club of Gangtok and Rotary Club of SRM University were also felicitated for their contribution in blood donation drive.

Health Minister Mr. Arjun Kumar Ghatani marked the day as the most noble occasion to realize the precious gift of life. He congratulated felicitated blood donors and organizations and further appealed to experience ultimate joy of blood donation in life. He also came out with his experience of donating blood 17 times and enlightened the participants on the benefits of blood donation. He informed that the ongoing construction of Blood Bank at Singtam District Hospital is also on the verge of completion.

Applauding the key role of voluntary blood donors in Sikkim he informed that a total of 6187 Units of blood were collected in the year 2016-17 out of which 4961 units (almost 80%) was donated voluntarily. No patient should suffer due to shortage of blood in the state, he added.

Health Minister Mr. Ghatani also suggested to chalk out a plan to avail blood for the referred patients outside the state. He also advised concerned officials to organize creative writings/essay competition on blood donation among students to generate massive awareness.

Dr. A. D. Subba also shared his own experience of joy and happiness after having donated blood 25 times. He underlined the role of State Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Bureau to disseminate information on activities of Health Department. He also stressed upon emergency need of blood during accidental, Surgical and physiological case.

Director General-cum-Secretary Health Department Dr. Kumar Bhandari threw light on the importance and advantages of blood donation and said that blood is an essential commodity. It must come from humans and unless we donate, there is no alternate source and hence it cannot be replaced, he stated. "Even one unit of blood can save many lives using various components of blood to number of patients of different illnesses. The blood that we have donated in the state is safe, full proof and not infected," he stated. He also advised to collect names and addresses of donors of close proximity having rare blood group.

The Secretary also informed that two Blood Collection and Transportation Vans

have been provided to the Blood Banks at STNM and Namchi District Hospital. He also motivated participants to convert first time donor to all time donor. Dr. Uttam Pradhan, Project Director SSACS-cum-Director Health Services enlightened the gathering on the importance of the day. He also stressed upon need of advance storage of blood in the hospital so that any emergency requirement can be addressed. Dr. CM Sharma HoD Blood Bank gave an overview of Sikkim State Blood Transfusion Council.

The programme was attended by NGOs like Rotary club, Sant Nirankari Mission, FBOs, Red Ribbon Clubs, Interact Clubs and other organizations.

During the programme Blood donors Mr. Yogesh Bhandari and Mr Sanjok Subba representative from Sai Mobile Blood Bank shared their experiences and motivated the gathering towards blood donation and to feel eternal satisfaction of blood donation.

Later, Minister Health, Advisor and other dignitaries visited Urban Family Welfare Centre in the hospital complex and voluntary blood donation camp organized at Titanic Park.