



YOUTH RED CROSS

Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla

DETAILED EVENT REPORT

A National Youth Festival & Conclave

SWASTHYA

MANTHAN

2026

“Harnessing Youth Leadership for a Healthier Tomorrow”

Dates

September 12-13, 2026

Venue

Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Youth Red Cross of Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla successfully conducted SWASTHYA MANTHAN 2026. The event was conducted as a part of the objectives and directives issued by UGC and NACO. The event was a two-day, national-level youth festival and conclave that brought together student teams, young leaders, healthcare advocates, policymakers, and institutional representatives from across India for a shared mission: ‘advancing HIV/AIDS awareness, reducing stigma and discrimination, and promoting voluntary blood donation’. The initiative had placed youth at the forefront of health advocacy, encouraging informed conversations, social responsibility, and collective action.

The initiative successfully blended performing arts, media, policy, innovation, and enterprise with meaningful academic and institutional discourse and provided a dynamic platform for creativity, competition, and collaboration. Through diverse events, keynote sessions, panel discussions, and interactions with healthcare experts and policymakers, Swasthya Manthan, 2026 had aimed to transform awareness into action, foster leadership and humanitarian values, and build a stronger, more informed youth movement for public health and social change.

Day 1 i.e., September 12, 2026, had unfolded with five concurrent creative advocacy competitions and a cultural evening. The five competitions held were The Quiz, Oratory/Declamation, Short-Film Making, Policy Drafting, and Social Start Up Pitch.

Day 2 i.e., September 13, 2026, turned towards intellectual discourse through two panel discussions titled “Code, Clause, and Cure” and “Breaking the Silence”. These resulted in a meaningful discussion addressing various issues and highlighted potential solutions with respect to issues regarding modern healthcare, privacy, and stigmatization.

The event concluded with the Valedictory Ceremony attended by the Hon’ble Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Shri Kavinder Gupta who addressed the culmination of the conference and provided the participating delegates with valuable guidance and encouragement as they carried forward the ideas and discussions of the conference.

Day 1 – Creative Advocacy

Day 1 commenced from 9:30 A.M. after the participating institutions had arrived on campus for registration and kit distribution. The Inaugural ceremony commenced from 12:00 A.M. and was attended by the Chief Guest, Hon'ble Minister of Parliament from Shimla Constituency, Shri Suresh Kumar Kashyap. As an experienced parliamentarian, his willingness to continually engage with the aspirations of young people made him a valuable dignitary to grace the inaugural ceremony of this humanitarian youth-led initiative. The various participants were additionally addressed by Hon'ble Vince Chancellor, Prof. (Dr.) Priti Saxena, who officially endorsed the commencement of this event.



The Competitions

Following the inauguration ceremony, the five competitions commenced from 2.P.M. onwards and wrapped up by 5:00 P.M. The competitions witnessed enthusiastic and expert participation from the various participating delegates and resulted in a fruitful discourse on HIV/AIDS awareness and destigmatisation.



The Quiz

The quiz tested the participants' knowledge on the theme ***“Blood, Stigma and Health Awareness and the Red Cross Movement”***. Participants competed with their knowledge with regards to law and policy surrounding HIV & AIDS, voluntary blood donations, and the Red Cross Movement through three rounds. The competition was coordinated by Mr. Yugal Bhatt.



The Oratory Competition

The oratory competition was an inter-team public speaking event centred on the theme ***“From Law to Campus: Why does HIV & AIDS Prevention Control Policy Fail at the Point of Implementation Among Youth?”***. Each participant delivered a 5-minute speech on the prescribed topic before a panel of judges. The competition encouraged critical engagement with HIV/AIDS law and policy, particularly the gap between the legislative intent and ground-level implementation among young people. Participants were evaluated on legal knowledge, analytical depth, structure, oratory skills, and persuasiveness. The competition was adjudged by Dr. Bharat Barowalia and Dr. Shaifali Dixit.



Short Film Making

The Short Film & Multimedia Making Competition provided a creative platform for delegates to utilize cinematic and digital storytelling to spark public dialogue, challenge societal taboos, and communicate critical health narratives. It was centred around the theme ***“Beyond the Diagnosis: Stigma, Human Stories, and Compassion in HIV/AIDS & Public Health”***. The competition was adjudged by Dr. Narinder Pal.

Social Start Up Pitch

The Social Startup Pitch & Business Plan Pitch competition was centred around the theme ***“Harnessing Youth Leadership for a Healthier Tomorrow”***. It provided a high-impact entrepreneurial platform for delegates to pitch innovative, scalable, and sustainable business models designed to solve pressing public health, healthcare accessibility, and community well-being challenges. The Competition was adjudged by Dr. Praveen Kumar and Dr. Esha Sharma.



Policy Drafting Competition

The Policy Drafting competition was centred on the theme ***“Bridging the Gap: A Comprehensive Policy Framework for Equitable HIV/AIDS Prevention, Healthcare Access, and Stigma Reduction Among Youth in India”***. It offered the students an opportunity to engage with pressing public health challenges through the lens of law, governance, and public policy-making. Participants designed original, evidence-based, and practically implementable policy framework focused on “HIV/AIDS prevention, access to healthcare, and the reduction of stigma among young people in India”. The competition had aimed to build the skills of policy research, legal analysis, stakeholder engagement, policy design, and implementation planning in participants while encouraging youth to take an active role in shaping public health advocacy. The competition was adjudged by Dr. Mritunjay Kumar and Dr. Santosh Kumar.

Cultural Session

Day 1 concluded with an informal cultural evening. It helped in providing delegated with a relaxed, celebratory space after a day of competitive events. The evening helped in fostering camaraderie and cultural exchange among student teams from across the country and complemented the day's health-advocacy theme with an atmosphere of shared festivity.

Various exchanges took place, including open-mic sessions, music, dances, performing arts acts, and the iconic Nati dance from Himachal Pradesh.

Day 2

Day 2 i.e., September 13, 2026, transitioned from creative competitions to intellectual deliberation, enabling structured interaction between youth delegates, esteemed speakers, policymakers and institutional leaders.



Panel 1 – Code, Clause, Cure

The first panel began from 11:15 A.M. and continued till 12:15 P.M. at the Moot Court Hall. The panel was graced by two notable dignitaries. Advocate Ankitesh Ojha, a senior associate at Cyril Amarchand and Mangaldas, and a leading disputes resolution lawyer, commenced the panel discussion. He provided an extremely thoughtful and objective insight highlighting that

navigating the legal frontiers of modern healthcare goes beyond just traditional law-making. It requires the active participation and awareness from the citizens and the people who are subject to the law itself. He brilliantly led the discussion by highlighting the issue of misleading advertisements and their irreversible damage in healthcare as opposed to other consumerist services.

The discussion was astutely added to by Dr. Sachin Sharma, Associate Professor of Law, Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla. He highlighted the continuing concern of using Artificial Intelligence as a decision-maker in healthcare sectors. He highlighted how over-reliance on technology like Artificial Intelligence can significantly impact our individuality. He further highlighted the problematic issue of data privacy through the lens of Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

Each participating panellist contributed to the fruitful discussion regarding the gap between code, that is technology, clause, that is the black letters of law, and cure, that is the eventual conclusion sought after.



Panel 2 – Breaking the Silence

The subsequent and second panel titled “Breaking the Silence” commenced from 12:15 P.M. till 1:15 P.M in the Committee Room. This panel was focused on the role of higher education institutions in health advocacy and stigma removal. The panel was once again graced by two

distinguished dignitaries namely, Dr. Amit Sachdeva, Assistant Professor, Indira Gandhi Medical College, Shimla, and Dr. Praveen Kumar, Assistant Professor, Himachal Pradesh National Law University, Shimla.

The panel session commenced with the opening remarks given by Dr. Amit Sachdeva. He expertly pointed out the importance of drawing the line it comes to the boundaries of when to break the silence. He addressed various ground level issues which are prevalent when it comes to stigmatization throughout India through his experiences as a public health specialist. Another valuable insight provided by him were the issues which kept arising with regards to self-diagnosis as opposed to the standards of prescribed medication set in developed countries which contribute to lack of awareness.

Dr. Praveen Kumar expertly took on from Dr. Amit Sachdeva and immediately pointed out the difference between awareness and sensitization. He put forward that mere knowledge cannot result in successful destigmatization and that the movement has to be more youth-oriented. He proposed that awareness can only occur through institutional participation and integration into the academic curriculums. He further pointed out the statistical fallacies where the lack of clarity in the what the denominator should be, has led to an ambiguous interpretation of statistics even as the methodologies continue to become more scientific.

The participating student delegates engaged in a discursive panel discussion with the two guest panellists and discussed various issues regarding presence and outreach capacity of doctors, accessibility to the right information regarding healthcare, and myths regarding HIV and tuberculosis.

Valedictory Ceremony

The event formally concluded with the Valedictory Ceremony. The best contingent award was awarded to Asian Law College who had won 4 of the 5 creative advocacy competitions held on September 12, 2026.

The Chief Guest for the ceremony was the Hon'ble Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Shri Kavinder Gupta. As a distinguished public representative and the constitutional head of the state of Himachal Pradesh, his presence for the award ceremony was deeply meaningful to the young delegates. He addressed the young delegates and provided them valuable guidance and encouragement to carry forward the ideas and discussions of the youth conclave. The event was concluded with his address.

