OCTOBER 2026
MONTHLY REPORT

WVS

DARJEELING GOODWILL ANIMAL SHELTER
DGAS
Estd:1993

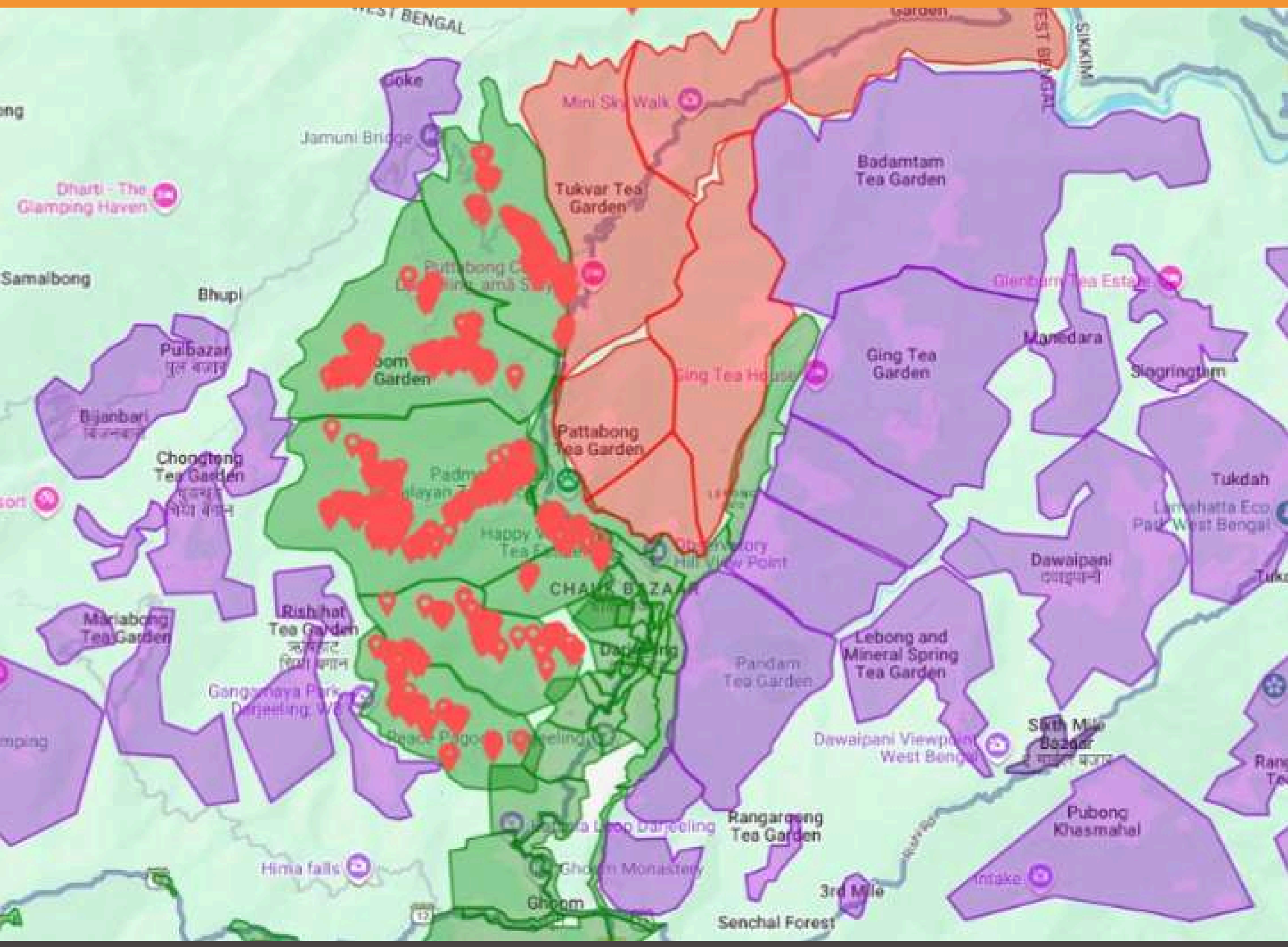
MISSION RABIES

HIGHLIGHTS

	GTA
ARV ADMINISTERED	853
RABIES HOTLINE CALLS	86
INDIVIDUALS EDUCATED	556
IBCM CASES	3
SUSPECTED RABID ANIMALS	0
CARCASSES TESTED FOR LFA	27
LFA POSITIVE	0
BRAIN SAMPLES COLLECTED FOR DFA	36
DFA TEST CONDUCTED	38
DFA POSITIVE	4
X-RAY	10

GTA

Beyond Municipal Boundaries: Building Darjeeling's Buffer Ring



Following the completion of vaccination within Darjeeling Municipality, the Rabies Response Team extended its efforts into surrounding tea gardens and peripheral settlements. Between 26 September and 24 October, 853 dogs were vaccinated across eight locations through 23 recorded vaccination sessions. Despite steep terrain, forest paths and remote settlements, the team continued reaching dogs beyond the town's municipal limits, strengthening the vision of a protective buffer against rabies.

GTA

Beyond Municipal Boundaries: Building Darjeeling's Buffer Ring

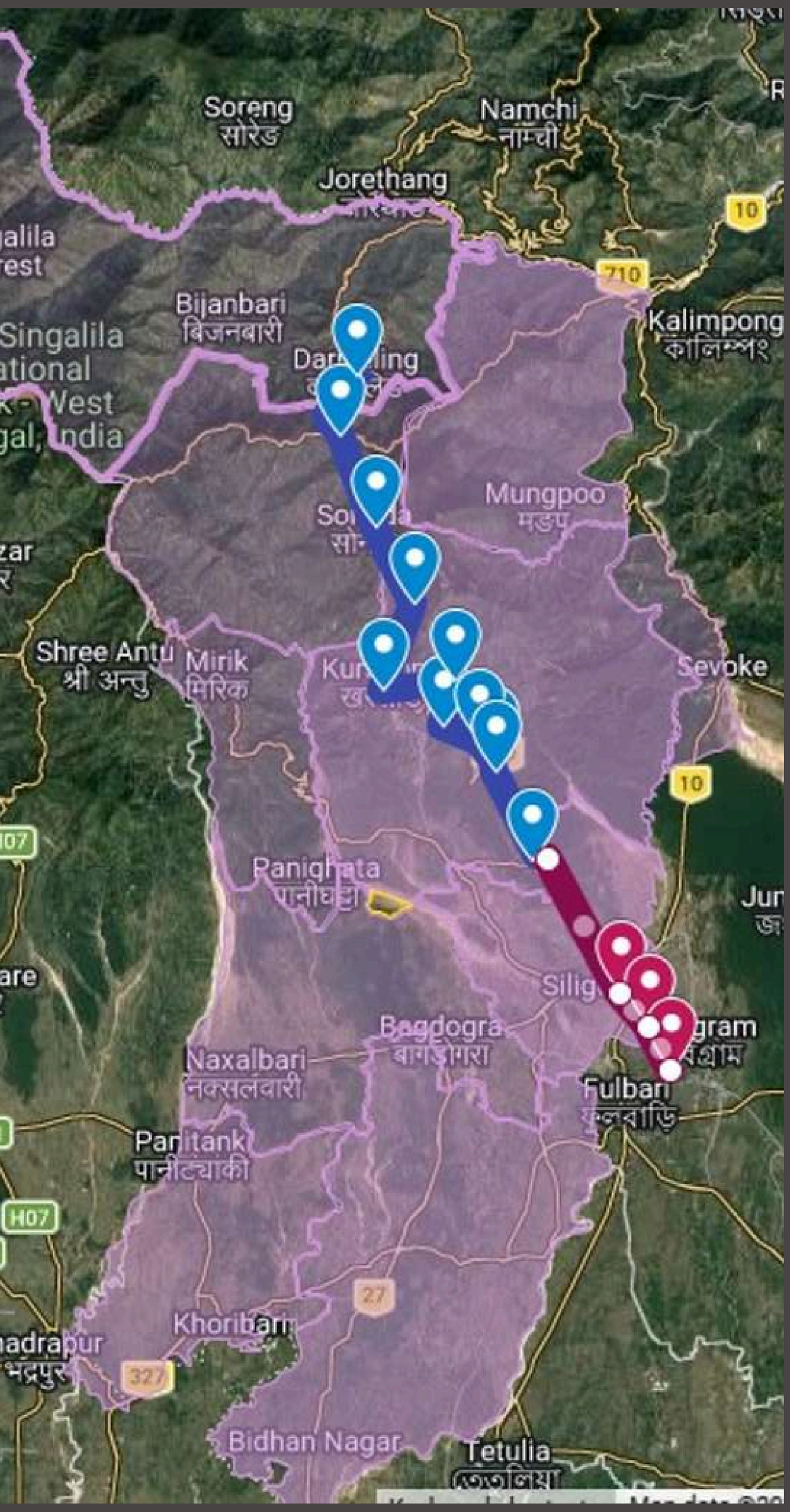
GTA

Beyond Municipal Boundaries: Building Darjeeling's Buffer Ring



GTA

Protecting the Himalayan Railway: Rabies Vaccination Across 11 Stations



As part of the “Rabies Free Pahad” initiative, 11 major railway stations along the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) circuit and their adjoining areas were covered through dog vaccination efforts. This milestone strengthens rabies prevention across the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) region, extending protection along one of the hills’ most iconic railway routes.

GTA

Protecting the Himalayan Railway: Rabies Vaccination Across 11 Stations





GTA

When the Rain Washes Away the Marks: The Challenge of Verifying Vaccination Coverage

Post-vaccination surveys across the final wards highlighted the challenges of verifying vaccination coverage in Darjeeling's difficult terrain and geographically dispersed areas, where covering the entire area in a single day is not feasible. Frequent rainfall further complicated verification, as bio-marking often washed off within a short time and, at times, did not remain visible until the following day.

Despite these challenges, random sampling indicated vaccination coverage exceeding 70%. The findings highlight the need for reliable marking methods suited to local weather conditions, alongside continued monitoring to identify unmarked dogs and address potential vaccination gaps.



GTA

From Hotline to Action: Making Every Call Count

This month we answered 86 calls received through the rabies hotline number. Alongside responding to community concerns, the team continued strengthening its Integrated Bite Case Management (IBCM) documentation through a newly developed Tally Board, designed to track calls, cases, vaccination activities, awareness sessions, diagnostic tests and sample collection. This initiative makes operational workloads more visible and supports better planning, monitoring and coordination.

IBCM Contents sheet

		Date:			
1	MR-DGAS 2026 DAILY UPDATES	25/10/26	*Phone Calls*	*Rabies Case*	*Case investigation*
	Attendance, Rabies Cases, IBCM Data Sheet Bite Cases , Phone Calls, Consultation, ARV Stock Register, Staff PrEP	Sunday:	0	0	0
		October:	71	0	3
		2026:	698	8	29
2	WVS EDITION ARV Team vaccination data		*Darjeeling District*	*Kalimpong District*	*Total*
	GTA yearly data, Darjeeling Region Vaccination, Kalimpong region Vaccination, Mirik Region Vaccination, Kurseong Region VAccination, KAS Vaccination Sheet, DAS VAccination Sheet, Extra Vacciantion Done	Sunday:	0	0	0
		October:	707	0	707
		2026:	9935	3154	13089
3	2026 Educational awareness programme updating sheet		*Community*	*Schools*	*Colleges*
	2026 Education School, 2026 Education Community, 2025 Education School, 2025 Education Community, 2024 Education School, 2024 Education Community	Sunday:	0	0	
		October:	272	52	
		2026:	9621	3117	
4	2026 Rabies Sample collection GTA Region Data Sheet		*Darjeeling District Brain Sample Collection*	*Kalimpong District Brain Sample Collection*	
	Darjeeling District, Kalimpong District	Sunday:	0	0	
		October:	11	8	
		2026:	85	77	
5	Feeders and Contact 2026				
	Darjeeling, Mirik, Kalimpong, Kurseong				
6	Vaccination Pre and Post Survey data				
	Darjeeling, Mirik, Kalimpong, Kurseong				
7	Darjeeling School List.xlsx				
8	Map: 2026 Surveillance IBCM DOG BITE CASES				
9	Map: 2026 Rabies Education map				
10	Map: 2026 Rabies Cases WVS edition				

GTA

Strengthening Rabies Surveillance Through Brain Sample Collection

During October 2026, 14 brain samples were collected at Darjeeling and Kalimpong Animal Shelters as part of ongoing rabies surveillance across the GTA region. None of the samples tested positive for rabies. Continued sample collection, LFA testing and systematic documentation strengthen disease surveillance and support evidence-based rabies prevention and control.



GTA

Strengthening Rabies Surveillance Through Brain Sample Collection

Mirik RSO visited Bungkulung HWC and met with CHO Ms. Tshering Tamang to discuss local dog-bite cases. An interactive rabies awareness session was also conducted for ASHA workers, focusing on rabies prevention and dog-bite safety.



GTA

Building Partnerships Before Taking Awareness to the Community

On 3 October, the team met with the manager of Barnesbeg Tea Estate to discuss organising rabies awareness sessions for tea garden workers. The discussion covered rabies prevention, responsible interaction with animals and timely medical intervention following dog bites. The manager expressed strong support and agreed to facilitate the necessary arrangements, creating an opportunity to bring targeted rabies education directly to the tea garden workforce.



GTA

Taking Rabies Awareness to the Heart of the Community

On 29 September, a community awareness session in Shree Dwarika, Darjeeling, focused on rabies transmission, prevention and animal-bite management. Participants received guidance on immediate first aid, safe practices around dogs and the importance of seeking timely medical care and post-exposure vaccination. Active community participation highlighted the value of localised awareness initiatives in improving public understanding and encouraging safer practices.



GTA

Curiosity into Knowledge: Rabies Awareness at Camellia School

On 6 October, an interactive rabies awareness session at Camellia School encouraged students to explore rabies prevention, safe behaviour around dogs and appropriate action following animal bites. Students participated enthusiastically, asking questions about dog behaviour and rabies while discussing common myths and misconceptions. The session helped strengthen their understanding of responsible animal interaction and the importance of timely action after a bite.



GTA

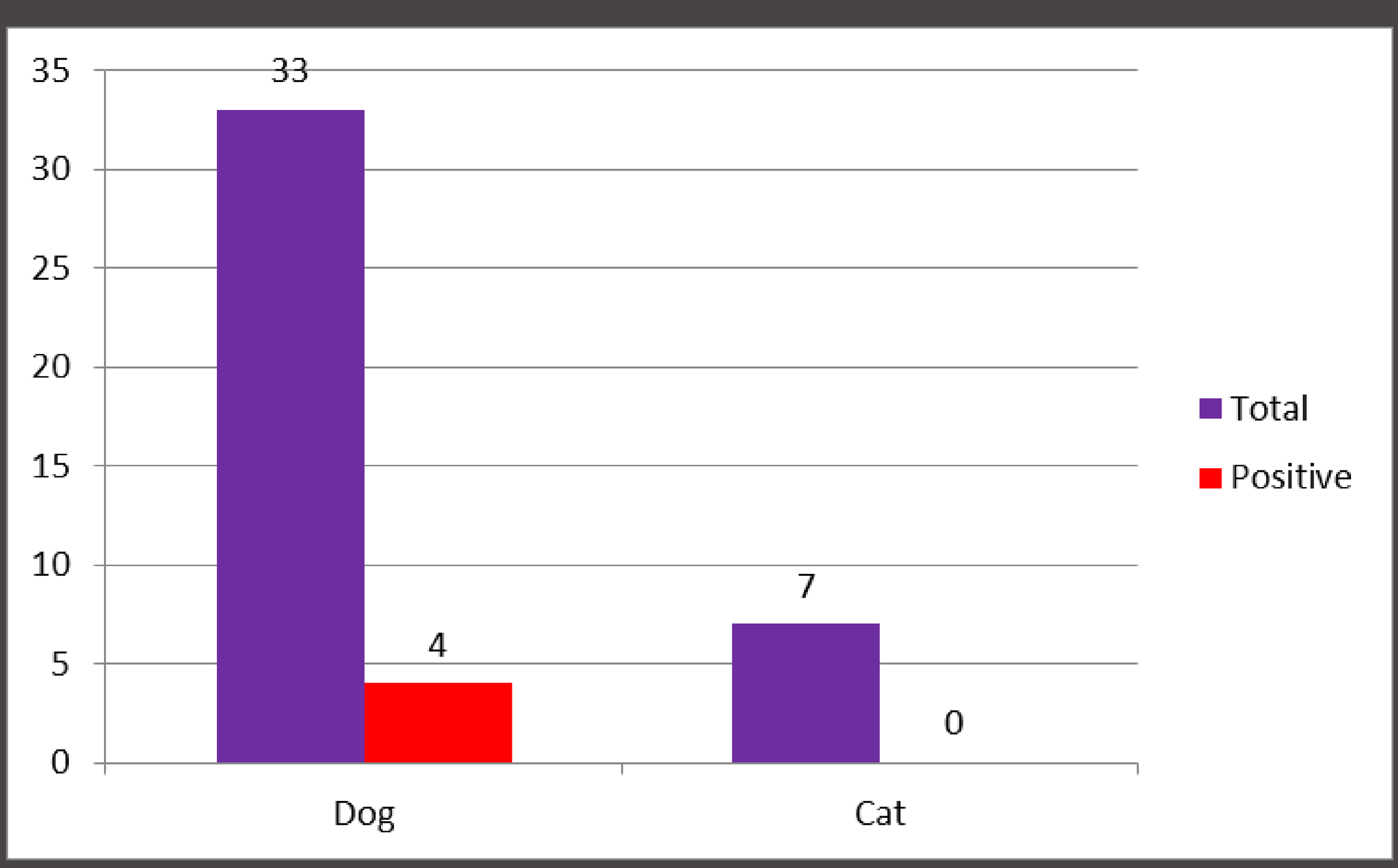
Inspiring Future Rabies Warriors: Awareness Session for Zoology Students

Conducted an educational awareness session for 22 Zoology students from North Point College at Darjeeling Animal Shelter, focusing on rabies prevention and control among future life science professionals. The session received positive feedback, with discussions also exploring opportunities for future educational collaborations with Darjeeling Goodwill Animal Shelter to strengthen continued engagement and rabies awareness.



AS ANIMAL RABIES DIAGNOSIS LABORATRY (ARDL)

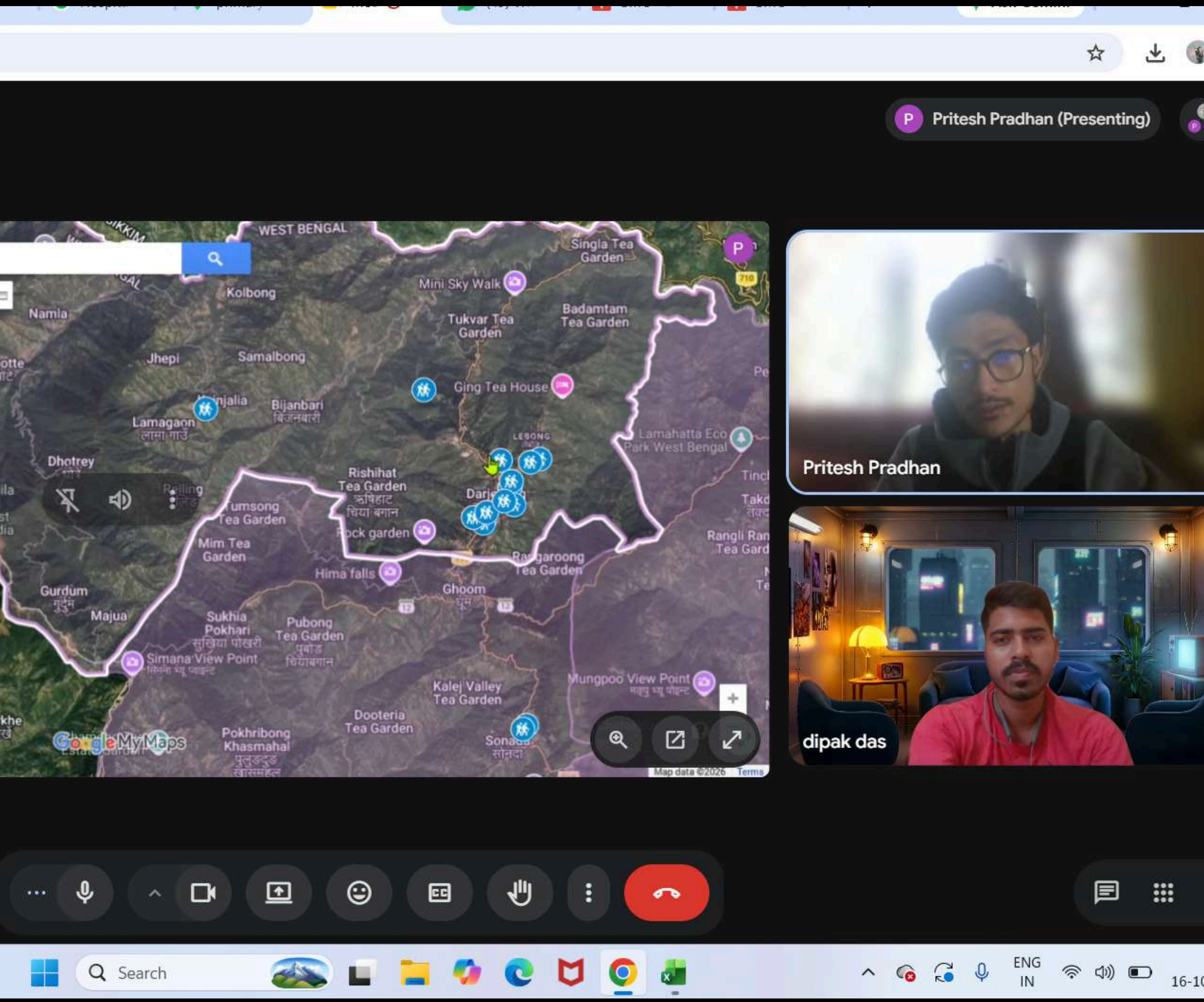
In October 2026, a total of 40 brain samples were tested, of which 4 (10%) were positive for rabies and 36 were negative. West Bengal accounted for 38 samples, including all 4 positive cases, while both samples from Assam tested negative. Species-wise, 33 samples were from dogs, with 4 positive (12.12%), while all 7 cat samples tested negative. Gender-wise, 24 samples were from male animals, with 2 positive, and 16 were from female animals, also with 2 positive.



GTA

Sharing Knowledge, Strengthening Field Capacity

Pritesh Pradhan, Rabies Hotline Manager, DGAS-MR Project, provided guidance and practical training to the Bhubaneswar-MR Project Manager on using Google My Maps to map UPHC and UCHC locations. The session covered geographical visualisation of health facilities and its application in supporting field planning, coordination and targeted rabies awareness activities.



GTA

Learning Beyond Borders: DGAS-MR at the Cambodia Campaign

Ashwin, Project Manager, DGAS-MR, participated in the Phnom Penh Mass Dog Vaccination Campaign in Cambodia from 16–24 October 2026, representing DGAS-MR as an international Team Leader for Team Pythons. He coordinated field operations alongside international and Cambodian team leaders, overseeing 10 vaccination teams. The experience provided valuable exposure to international campaign management, cross-cultural teamwork and digital tools such as VaxApp and Launchpad, with learnings that can help strengthen future rabies control activities in the Darjeeling region.



GTA

Learning Beyond Borders: DGAS-MR at the Cambodia Campaign

Leadership Beyond Project Boundaries



As the DGAS-MR Project Lead for the GTA region, West Bengal, Dr. Shivani Pradhan was requested by Mission Rabies to take on a key role in managing and leading the Shimla Mass Dog Vaccination Campaign 2026. This opportunity reflected the confidence placed in the progress, field implementation and operational approach of the DGAS-MR project.

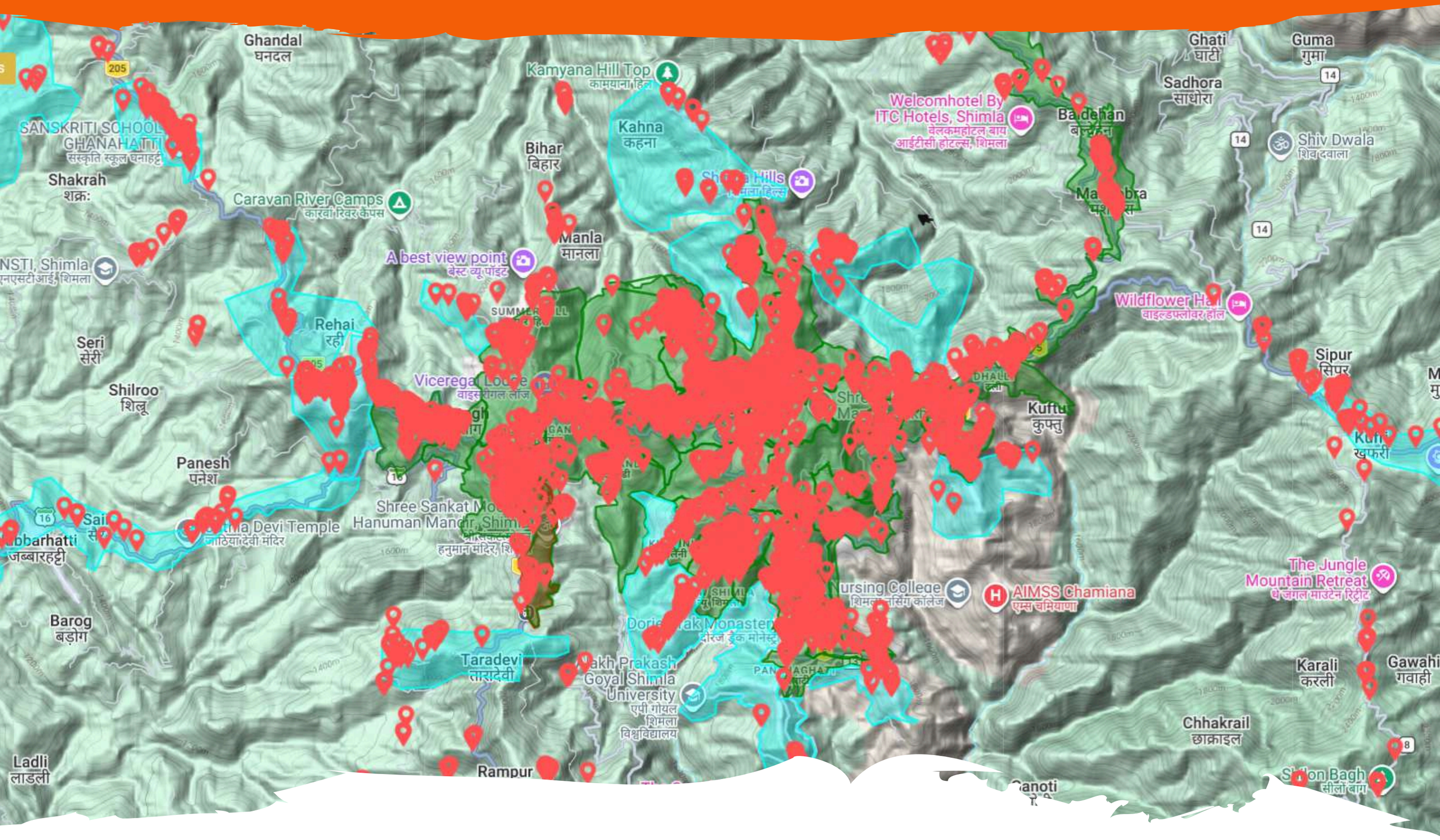
The responsibility involved supporting campaign planning, coordinating teams, overseeing field implementation and maintaining operational standards throughout the 10-day campaign. Working alongside other members of the Mission Rabies team, local partners and government stakeholders, the experience provided an opportunity to contribute to a larger campaign while sharing the practical knowledge and field experience gained through our work in the GTA region.

Leadership Beyond Project Boundaries

For DGAS, this was also a meaningful milestone. Seeing the technical expertise, operational experience and field practices developed through the DGAS-MR project contribute to dog-mediated rabies control efforts beyond our region is a matter of collective pride. Being entrusted with such responsibilities in other parts of the country reflects the growing value of our team's work and reinforces the importance of sharing knowledge and strengthening collaborative efforts towards a rabies-free India.



A Collective Effort Towards a Rabies-Free Future



With the campaign underway, the focus shifted to coordinated field operations across Shimla and its surrounding areas. Each day began early, with preparations starting at 6 a.m. and all nine teams heading out by 7:30 a.m.

The campaign was led and coordinated by the Mission Rabies leadership team- Dr. Mihir Mazagaonkar, Praveen Ohal, Dr. Shivani Pradhan, Narender Dhaka and Viral Shah; working closely with Dr. Anil Sharma, Shimla Lead, and the local teams to ensure effective planning, coordination and field implementation.

Across Shimla's steep streets and narrow lanes, six teams primarily relied on hand-catching, while three teams used nets where necessary to ensure safe and humane handling.

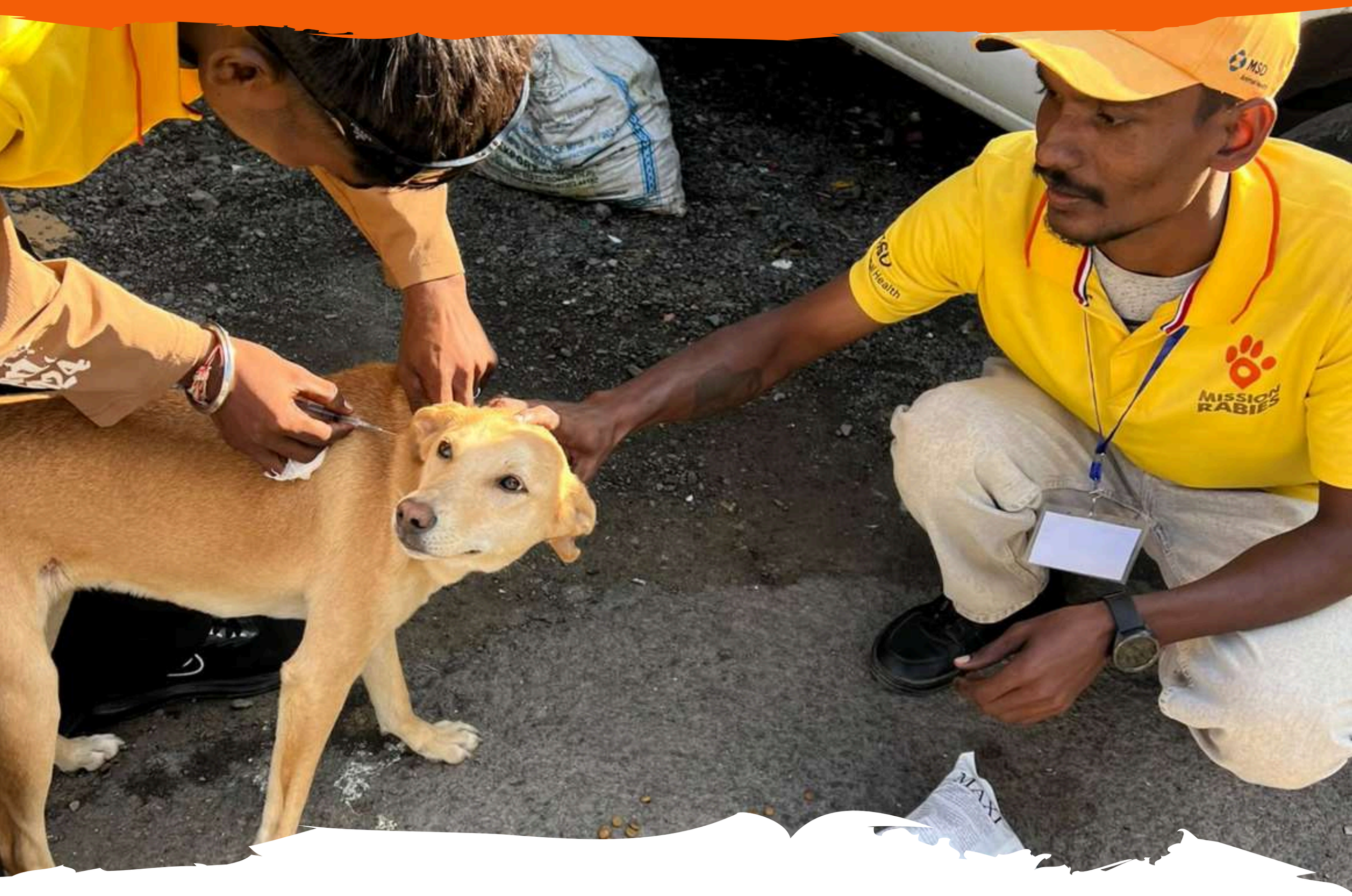
A Collective Effort Towards a Rabies-Free Future



Over the ten-day campaign, 4,421 dogs were vaccinated- 3,072 within Shimla Municipal Corporation, 1,000 in the surrounding buffer areas and 349 in Solan. An impressive 91% of the dogs were hand-caught, reflecting the teams' commitment to patient and humane handling.

But the story was never just about the numbers...

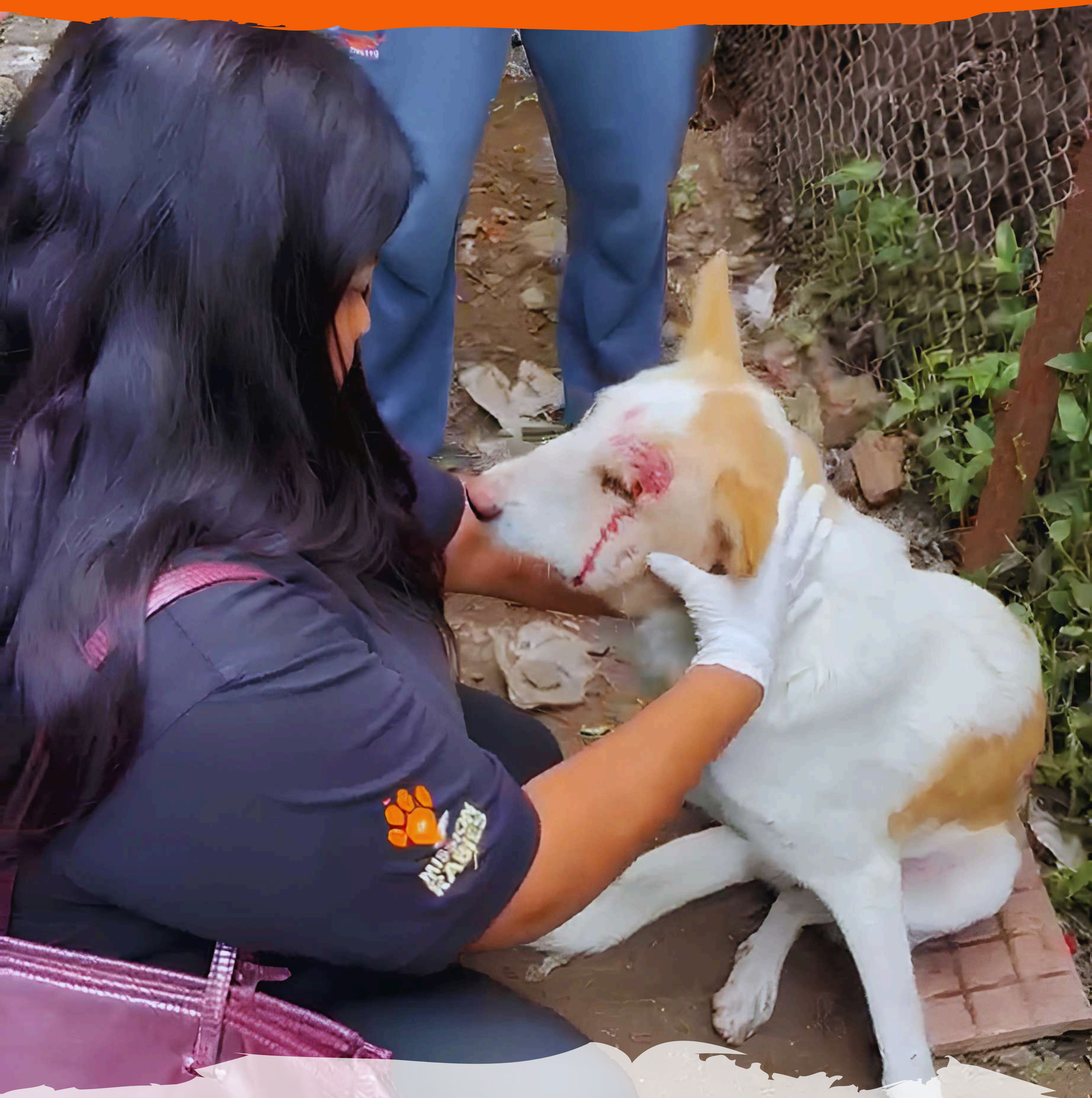
More Than Vaccination: Learning in the Field



The campaign brought together Mission Rabies teams, partner organisations, veterinary professionals, volunteers and students from different regions and projects. Working together provided an opportunity to share experiences, exchange knowledge and strengthen practical field skills.

Throughout the campaign, emphasis remained on humane dog handling, safe vaccination, field hygiene, accurate mapping and systematic area coverage. The guiding principle was simple: success is not just about how many dogs are vaccinated, but how responsibly and thoroughly the work is carried out.

More Than Vaccination: Learning in the Field



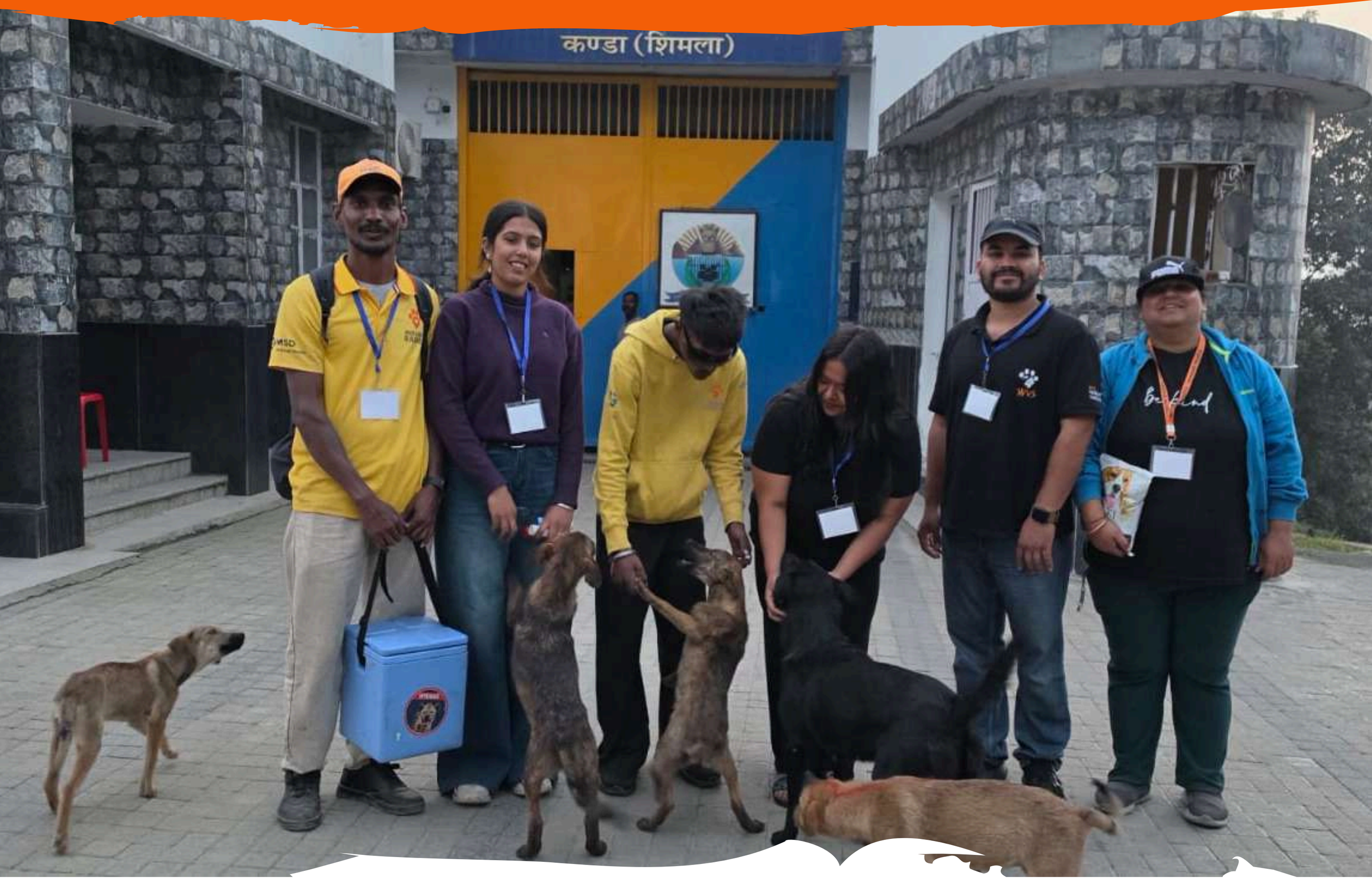
Regular supervision and daily debriefings helped maintain coordination and consistency, while a little friendly competition kept team spirits high. Beyond vaccination, teams also extended care to animals encountered during fieldwork whenever needed.

The Community Was Part of the Mission



Community dog feeders and local volunteers played an important role in supporting field teams by helping locate dogs, navigate neighbourhoods and facilitate safe handling. Rabies educators complemented these efforts through awareness activities and distribution of educational leaflets.

The Community Was Part of the Mission



An interesting observation was the difference in community dynamics between Shimla and the GTA region of Darjeeling. While Darjeeling has a relatively visible network of community feeders and animal welfare supporters who regularly engage with street dogs, Shimla appeared to have a larger transient and working population, with many residents occupied with their daily livelihoods and less time or opportunity to interact with community dogs. This made the involvement of local volunteers and feeders particularly important in facilitating field activities.

The Community Was Part of the Mission



At the closing ceremony, community dog feeders from participating wards were recognised for their contribution. The experience reinforced an important lesson: lasting progress in rabies prevention depends not only on vaccination campaigns, but also on building stronger community participation and local ownership.

A Collective Effort, A Lasting Lesson



The opening ceremony was graced by Shri Mukesh Agnihotri, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister; Shri Surinder Chauhan, Mayor; Shri Sachin Kanwal, Commissioner, Shimla Municipal Corporation; Dr. Anjali Chauhan, CHO; and Dr. Pooja Kanwar, VPHO, Shimla.

The closing ceremony was graced by Dr. Munshi Ram Kapoor, Director; Dr. Neeraj Mohan, Joint Director; and Dr. Sandeep Mishra, Deputy Director, Animal Husbandry, Himachal Pradesh, alongside Dr. Anjali Chauhan and Dr. Pooja Kanwar. Community dog feeders were also recognised for their valuable contribution.

Beyond the numbers, the ten-day campaign strengthened partnerships, encouraged shared learning and reinforced the importance of humane, coordinated field operations.

4,421 dogs vaccinated. Countless acts of compassion. One step further towards a rabies-free future.

A Collective Effort, A Lasting Lesson





Taking Rabies Prevention to the Public Through Doordarshan



On 12 October 2026, the closing day of the Shimla Mass Dog Vaccination Campaign, Dr. Shivani Pradhan, Veterinary Epidemiologist and DGAS-MR Project Lead for the GTA region, was interviewed by Doordarshan News, Shimla. The interaction provided an opportunity to highlight Mission Rabies' three key pillars-vaccination, education and awareness, and surveillance, while sharing practical insights and lessons gained through the field implementation of the DGAS-MR project.

The discussion also explored the One Health approach, the importance of collaboration between government departments, NGOs, veterinary professionals and communities, and how field-based experience can contribute to strengthening sustainable rabies prevention programmes. It was an opportunity to share learnings beyond the GTA region and reinforce the importance of collective action towards a rabies-free India.