HYDERABAD: One-sixth of India’s adult male population smokes tobacco while nearly a third consumes alcohol, suggest latest findings from the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN).

The city-based national-level institute kick-started its centenary year on Tuesday with release of a report on urban health. During Tuesday’s Foundation Day gathering, the institute felicitated its former directors, including some of the first scientists to have joined it.

Eminent nutrition scientist C. Gopalan, also one of the institutes’s former directors, who delivered a video message, urged young scientists at the institute to collaborate with scientists from other fields to improve health and nutrition at grass-root level.

He also added that such collaboration can help face challenges arising from larger problems like global warming.

Delivering the ‘Foundation Day’ lecture, Chief Executive Officer of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) Pawan Agarwal said his organisation is focused on improving nutrition in the country through food laws.

“That apart, we are also keen on improving safety and hygiene standards. Towards this end, FSSAI plans to launch a ‘Safe Food’ campaign,” he said while crediting NIN for providing the science behind the laws that FSSAI seeks to enforce. The report on nutritional status of the country’s urban population was released on the occasion. Among other findings, report pointed out that nearly a fifth of India’s urban men and women, based on data from 16 states, are diabetic.
It also showed that 31% men and 26% of the women surveyed have hypertension.

NIN Director-in-Charge T. Longvah and other scientists from the institute as well representatives from Indian Council of Medical Research participated in the event. The premier research institute has planned a series of seminars, workshops and other events, starting with an international workshop in November, to mark the year-long celebrations.