

Press Release from Chief Medical Officer, Pakyong District.

Pakyong, 12th December : An Awareness Session on “Tobacco Free Youth Campaign 3.0” and COTPA 2003 was held at PM Shri Government Senior Secondary School, Dikling, Pakyong District.

The Health and Family Welfare Department, Pakyong District, conducted an awareness session today at PM Shri Government Senior Secondary School, Dikling, on 12th December, focusing on the Tobacco Free Youth Campaign (TFYC) 3.0 and the provisions of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) 2003. The program was led by Dr. Madan Mani Dhakal, Chief Medical Officer, Pakyong District, and Dr. Digcha Shree Rai, Program Coordinator, National Tobacco Control Program (NTCP).

The session included students from the Primary to Senior sections, with the objective of educating them on the harmful effects of tobacco use, strengthening awareness about national anti-tobacco initiatives, and enhancing their understanding of tobacco-control laws.

During the first phase, Dr. Rai highlighted the severe health risks associated with tobacco consumption, including the dangers of smokeless tobacco, which can lead to oral cancer, gum disease, and other serious oral health problems. She further emphasized the goals of Tobacco Free Youth Campaign 3.0, a 60-day national initiative launched in October 2025 by the Ministries of Health and Education. The campaign aims to reduce tobacco use among youth through stronger law enforcement, promotion of tobacco-free educational institutions, establishment of 100-yard tobacco-free zones around schools, increased community involvement, and support for youth-led anti-tobacco efforts.

Dr. Rai also discussed key provisions of COTPA 2003, explaining the legal framework for tobacco control, common violations, and associated penalties. She stressed the importance of community-wide compliance to protect young people from tobacco exposure.

Addressing the students, Dr. Madan Mani Dhakal spoke about the impact of peer pressure during adolescence and early adulthood. He illustrated this with a simple example: in a group of four friends where one smokes and three do not, the smoker is more likely to quit due to the positive influence of the majority. He further elaborated on the harmful effects of tobacco and the numerous diseases associated with its use.

The program concluded with students taking a pledge for the Tobacco Free Youth Campaign 3.0, initiated by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Pakyong, affirming their commitment to making Pakyong District a tobacco-free zone.

The active participation of students, teachers, and especially the principal, Mr. Deepak Sharma of PM Shri Government Senior Secondary School, Dikling, reaffirmed the district's dedication to fostering a healthy, tobacco-free environment. Principal Sharma stated that Dikling Senior Secondary School has formally declared itself a “Tobacco-Free Zone,” with a signboard installed on the school premises to reflect this status. He further mentioned that monthly inspections are conducted, and strict disciplinary measures are in place—any student found in possession of tobacco or tobacco-related products will face immediate rustication.