

Press Release from the Office of Chief Medical Officer, Pakyong District

Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan Awareness Programme Held at Yakten GPU Hall, Pakyong
Pakyong, January 06: An awareness programme on alcohol and drug abuse was successfully conducted at Yakten GPU Hall, Pakyong, under the aegis of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, organised by the Excise Department Government of Sikkim, Pakyong District.

The programme focused on drug abuse prevention, harmful effects of tobacco, provisions of the Tobacco Control Law (COTPA 2003), and the importance of mental health and yoga.

The programme was led by Chief Medical Officer, Pakyong District, Dr Madan Mani Dhakal, along with Dr Digcha Shree Rai, Programme Coordinator, National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), Pakyong District, and Mrs Chandrakala Sapkota, Mental Health Counsellor, Pakyong PHC

Addressing the gathering, Dr Madan Mani Dhakal emphasised the close connection between mental and physical well-being, stating that tobacco use at a young age often acts as a gateway drug, leading to addiction and exposure to other harmful substances. He highlighted that behavioural foundations are shaped at home and in schools, making early intervention crucial. Dr Dhakal also stressed the role of yoga as a holistic approach to mental health and spoke about the Pakyong Yoga Club, an initiative of the Pakyong PHC. He further informed the public that Pakyong PHC provides confidential counselling services, medical treatment, and holistic support for individuals seeking recovery.

Dr Digcha Shree Rai spoke in detail on the harmful effects of tobacco and the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, explaining its key provisions and violations. She highlighted the most commonly abused substances in Sikkim and warned that substance abuse at a young age significantly increases the risk of depression, personality disorders, suicidal thoughts, and suicide attempts. She also explained the reasons people turn to drugs, described the initial effects of illegal substances, and motivated the audience with the message, “What you’re not changing, you’re choosing.”

The programme was chaired by Mr Rakham Singh Rai, Joint Commissioner, in the presence of Mr Pradeep Gurung, Deputy Commissioner, Mr Mahindra Poudyal, Assistant Commissioner, and Mr Andrew Syangpo Tamang from The Samaritan Rehabilitation Centre, Chalamthang, Pakyong District.

The awareness session witnessed active participation from community members and reinforced the district administration’s commitment towards building a drug-free, healthy, and mentally resilient society.