



PRESS RELEASE



WNTD'26 Campaign Launched Under Theme “Tobacco! Business of DEATH”

Shillong, May 11: The World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) 2026 campaign was launched in Meghalaya under the theme “Tobacco! Business of DEATH”, aligned with the global theme, “Unmasking the appeal, countering nicotine and tobacco addiction.” The campaign aims to strengthen awareness against tobacco use and mobilize educational institutions to actively promote a tobacco-free society.

World No Tobacco Day is observed globally every year on May 31. Over the past four years, more than 9,000 schools and nearly 6 lakh students across Meghalaya have participated in rallies, signature campaigns, and awareness activities highlighting the harmful effects of tobacco.

This year, the WNTD'26 campaign, launched on April 6, 2026, will be carried out in schools and colleges across the state during April and May.



Speaking at the launch programme, Dr. Nabaneeta D. Mawrie, State Nodal Officer, National Tobacco Control Programme, Department of Health, stated that tobacco addiction continues to pose a serious public health concern in Meghalaya.

“Tobacco is not just a habit, it is a carefully designed trap that targets our youth and communities. With nearly half of adults aged 15 and above in Meghalaya using tobacco, and close to 8,000 lives lost annually due to tobacco related illnesses, the urgency to act has never been greater,” she said.

Dr. Mawrie further noted that the campaign serves as a strong call to action for educational institutions to lead awareness initiatives through rallies, signature drives, and community outreach activities. She also highlighted the progress achieved under the Tobacco Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI) initiative implemented in collaboration with Sambandh Health Foundation.

She said the campaign seeks to expose the harmful tactics used by the tobacco industry, encourage students to make informed and healthy choices, and transform awareness into meaningful community action.

From the Department of Education, Smt. Jennyfer J. Synrem said that the overwhelming participation witnessed during WNTD’25 reflected the growing awareness among students and educational institutions across the state.

“Last year, over 9,000 schools and nearly 6 lakh students rallied together for WNTD’25. In 2026, we are not just continuing a campaign; we are building a movement. Schools are not only centres of learning but catalysts of change, and together we can create a future where every child grows up in a tobacco-free environment,” she stated.

Deputy Commissioner of South West Garo Hills, Smt. Anendya Raajsshre, IAS, also called for collective efforts to ensure meaningful behavioural change through sustained awareness campaigns.

“True change happens when awareness turns into action. Initiatives like WNTD and ToFEI are not just campaigns, they are commitments to protect lives. Let us work together to bring positive change and build a healthier, tobacco-free future for all,” she said.



The campaign is expected to witness active participation from schools, colleges, government departments, civil society organisations, and community groups across Meghalaya in the lead-up to World No Tobacco Day on May 31.