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 - [submenu-img](#) [Yoga asanas for neck pain relief](#)
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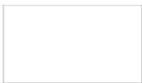
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Bangalore

BBMP not cool with smoking in public

Palike set to intensify drive against smoking in public places and sternly implement COTPA which prohibits sale of tobacco products near schools.





Y Maheswara Reddy | BANGALORE

The Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is set to intensify its drive against sale of tobacco products within a 100-metre radius of educational institutions and smoking of cigarettes in public places from November 9.

The civic body filed 87 cases under Section 4 and 68 cases under Section 6 of Control of Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, and collected `22,100 as penalty between January and June 2012. "We have formed separate teams under the leadership of health officers at eight BBMP zones. These teams have been booking cases against those who sell tobacco products in the vicinity of schools and those who smoke cigarettes in public places," said Dr Devaki Umesh, chief health officer, BBMP.

Section (4) of COTPA prohibits smoking in all public places. 'Public place' is defined as any place to which the public has access and includes auditoriums, hospital buildings, railway waiting rooms, amusement centres, public offices, court buildings, educational institutions, libraries, coffee houses, canteens, banks, clubs and open spaces surrounding hotels and restaurants, etc. "

Yelahanka zone, with 37 cases, leads the list of eight zones where Section 6 of COTPA is violated while south zone is in the second place with 20 cases. No case has been reported from Raja Rajeshwarinagar, Bommanahalli and Bangalore west zones," said a BBMP health officer.

As per Section (6) of COTPA, no tobacco product can be sold to and by any person under the age of 18 years. The seller is mandated to ensure that the person who is buying the tobacco product is not a minor. A display board must be put up at the point of sale, declaring that sale of tobacco products to minors is prohibited.

Sale of tobacco products is prohibited within a radius of 100 metres of educational institutions. The distance of 100 metres shall be measured radially starting from the outer limit of the boundary wall. A display board must be put up outside the educational institution, declaring the same.

Umesh said the implementation COTPA will be given more importance from November 9 since most of the health department employees are occupied with ensuring segregation of garbage. "Talks are on to avail the help of the police. It is not that the police are not involved in conducting raids on violators of COTPA. We want more policemen to join us in our effort to implement COTPA effectively," the chief health officer said.

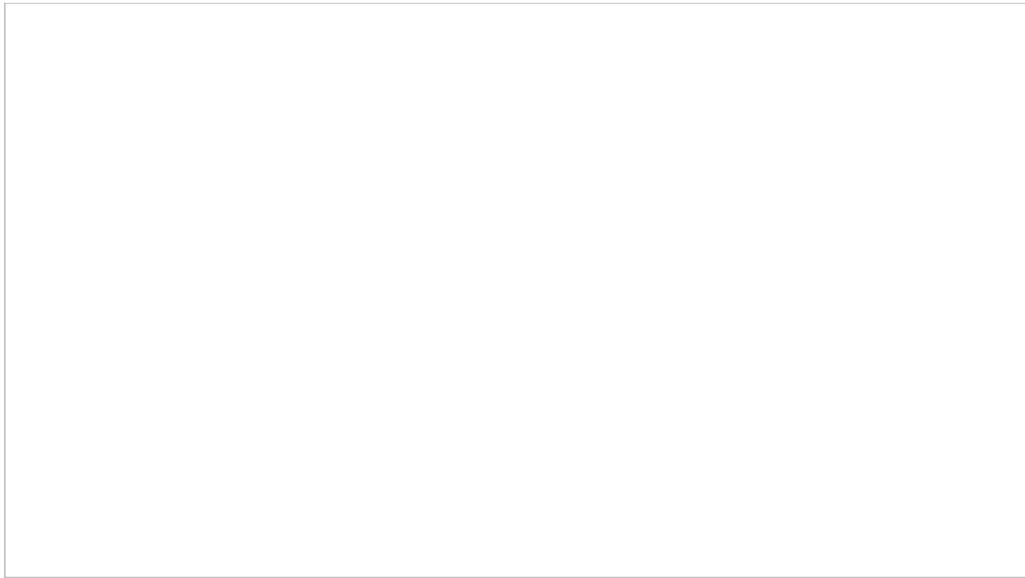
The BBMP plans to issue receipt books to police stations for collecting penalty from the violators of COTPA. "They have to remit the amount to the BBMP once in a week," said the health officer.

However, many people want the health department officials to take measures to prevent smoking of cigarettes and selling of tobacco products in the premises of BBMP's head office. "What is the use of conducting raids as per their convenience and in select places. The BBMP has failed in implementing COTPA at its ward offices. Let the BBMP set its eyes on its employees and elected representatives who indulge in smoking at the BBMP head office premises," said a BBMP employee on the condition of anonymity. Will the health department of BBMP prove its mettle? We have to wait and watch.

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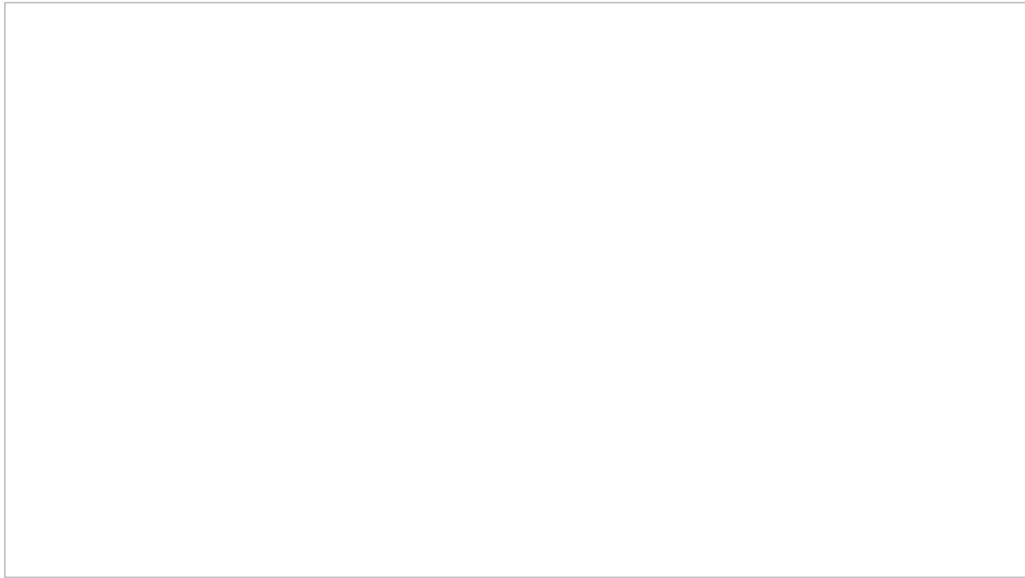
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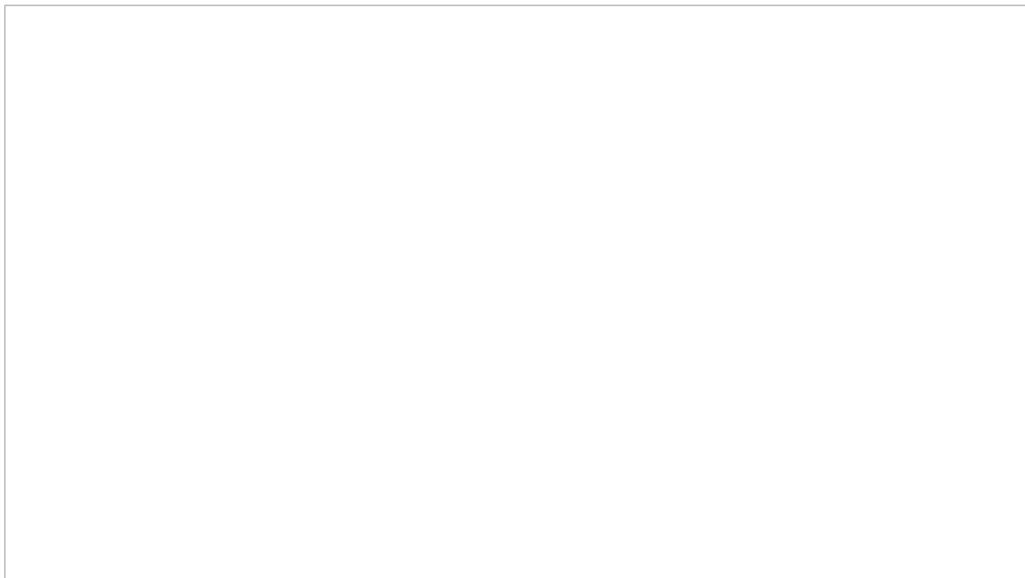
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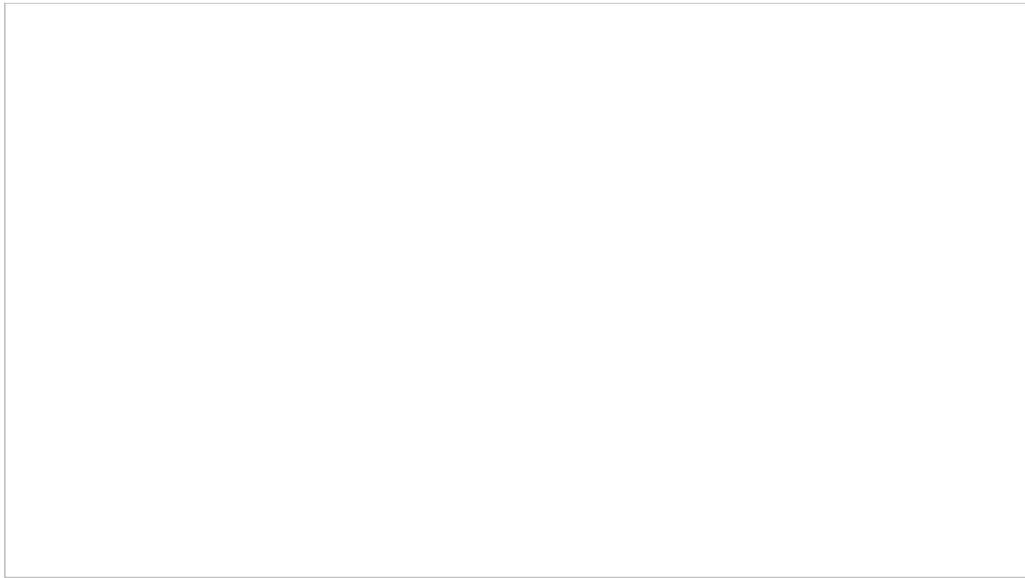
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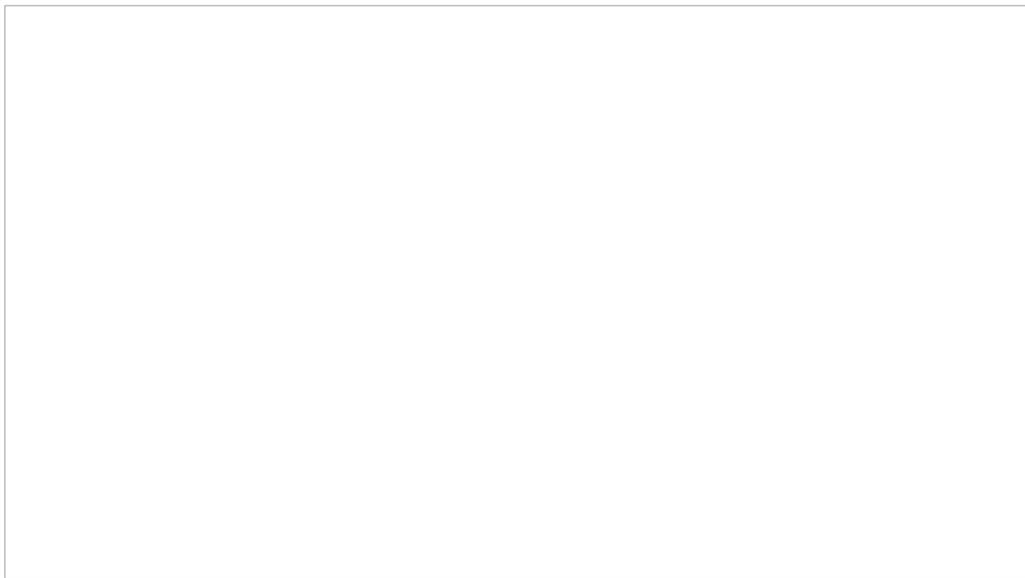
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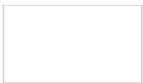
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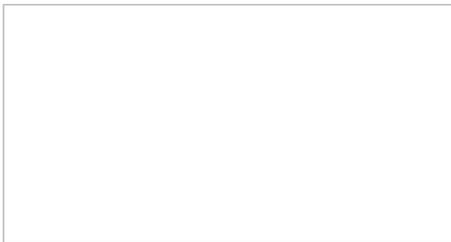
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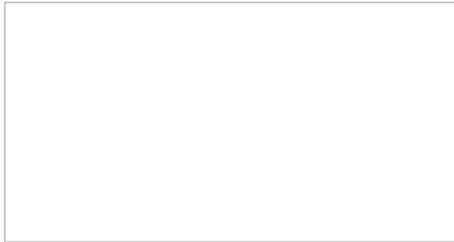
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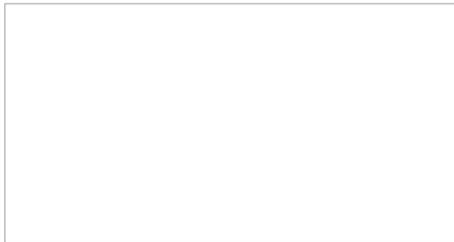
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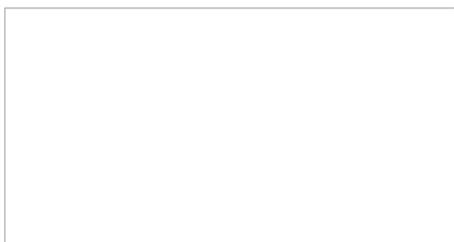
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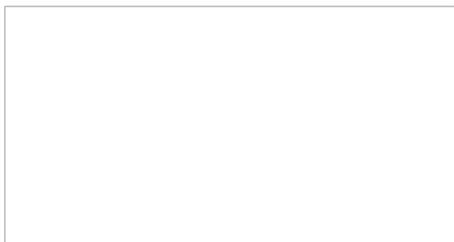
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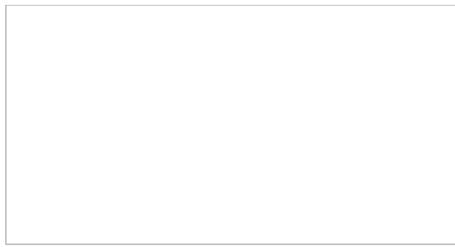
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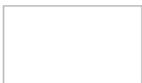
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