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Bangalore: Soon, you will be paying a fortune for those cancer sticks



[dna Correspondent](#)

Updated: Jan 17, 2014, 02:15 PM IST

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Smokers, gutkha connoisseurs, be ready to cough up more for your addiction, as the state government has upped the ante in the battle against tobacco usage.

In order to prevent peoples' lives going up in smoke, Madan Gopal, principal secretary, department of health and family welfare, said his department had written to the finance department to increase tax on tobacco and tobacco-related products from 17 % tax to a backbreaking 50%, which means that prices of tobacco products are likely to go through the roof.

Currently, Karnataka has 0% tax on beedis and 17% on cigarettes. The World Bank recommends taxing tobacco products in the range of 65% to 80%. Compared to neighbouring states, Karnataka has the lowest tax on tobacco products. Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu levy tax of 20% on cigarettes, while in Maharashtra the figure is 25% .

Reacting to the news, city-based anti-tobacco crusader, Dr Upendra Bhojani, research scholar, Institute of Public Health, said: "Consumption of tobacco will definitely go down once taxes are increased on tobacco products. The taxes collected can inturn be used to finance healthcare in the state."

According to a World Health Organization study, increasing the price of tobacco through higher taxes is the most effective way to encourage tobacco users to quit and prevent children from taking up smoking.

The study says that a 10% increase in taxes on beedi would reduce the consumption by 9.2% in rural India and 8.5% in urban India. The WHO has also recommended a uniform taxation on all tobacco products to prevent users from switching from one product to another.

Recently, former law minister Suresh Kumar had also spoken in favour of higher taxes on tobacco products. Kumar said he had spoken to the finance minister and chief minister Siddaramaiah to increase the tax on tobacco products from 17% to 65% in the upcoming budget.

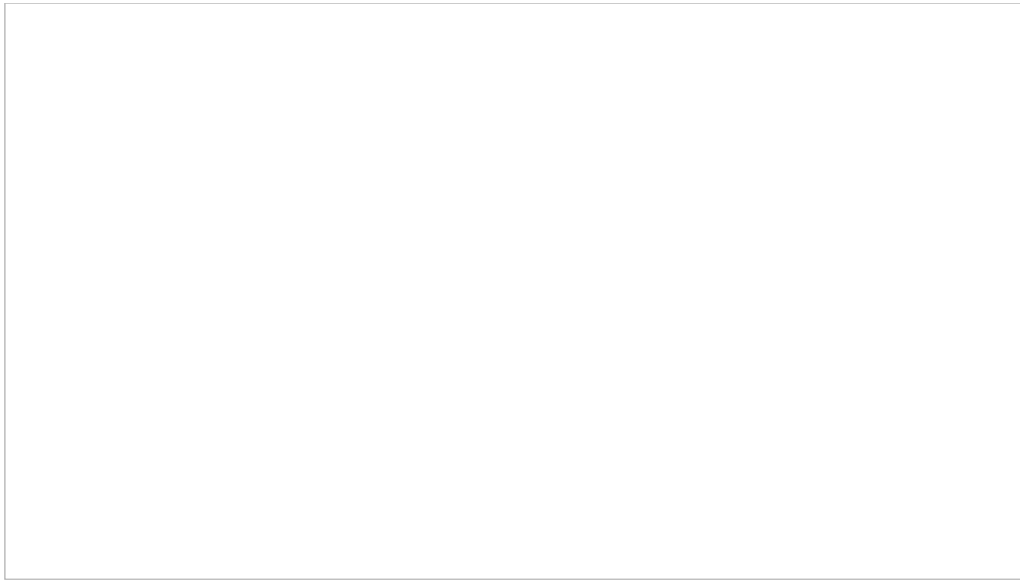
He also wanted Karnataka to emulate the example of states such as Rajasthan which levies 65% VAT on tobacco products.

Tobacco kills ten lakh people every year in India. This is more than the mortality rate of HIV, Malaria and TB put together.

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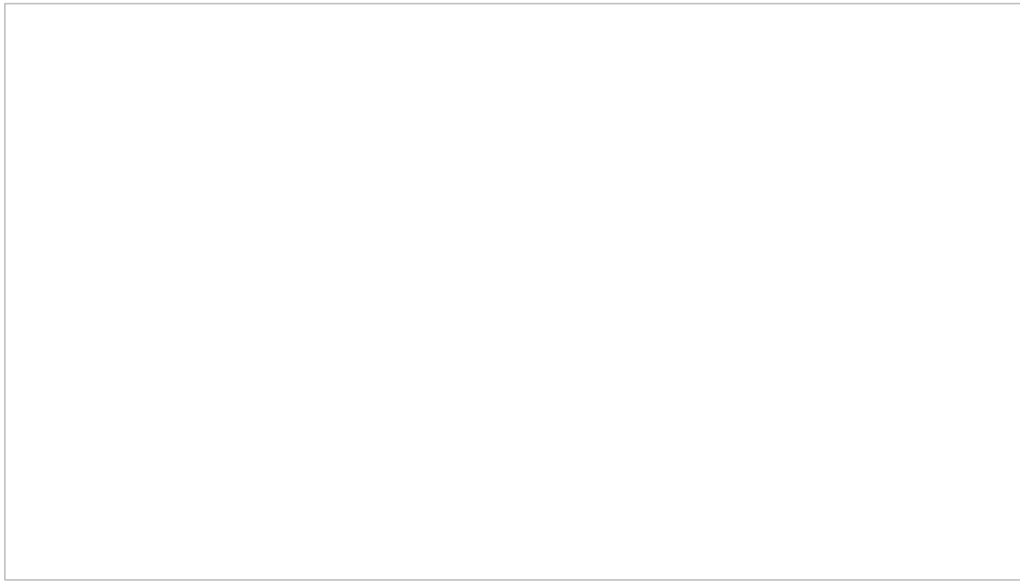
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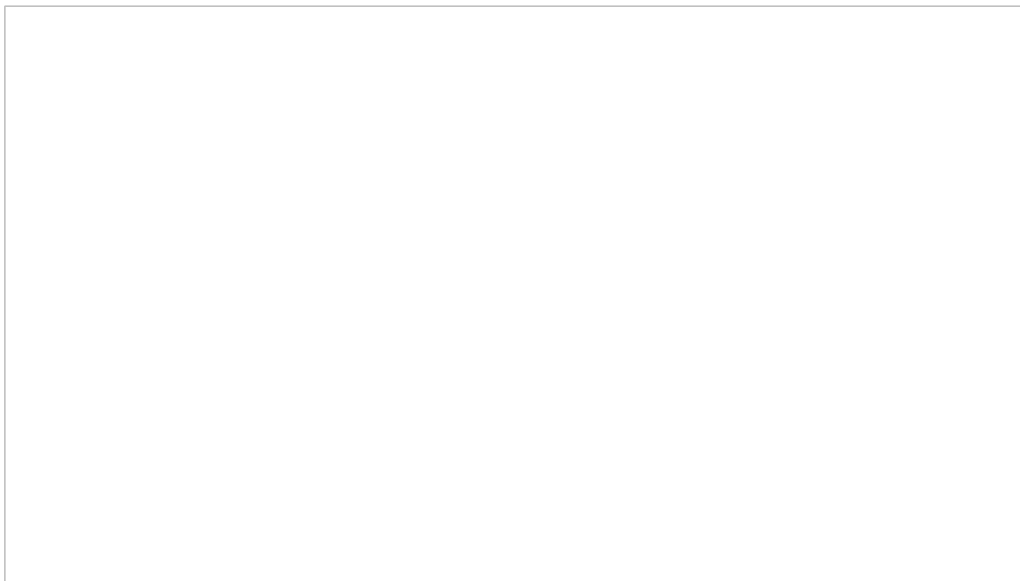
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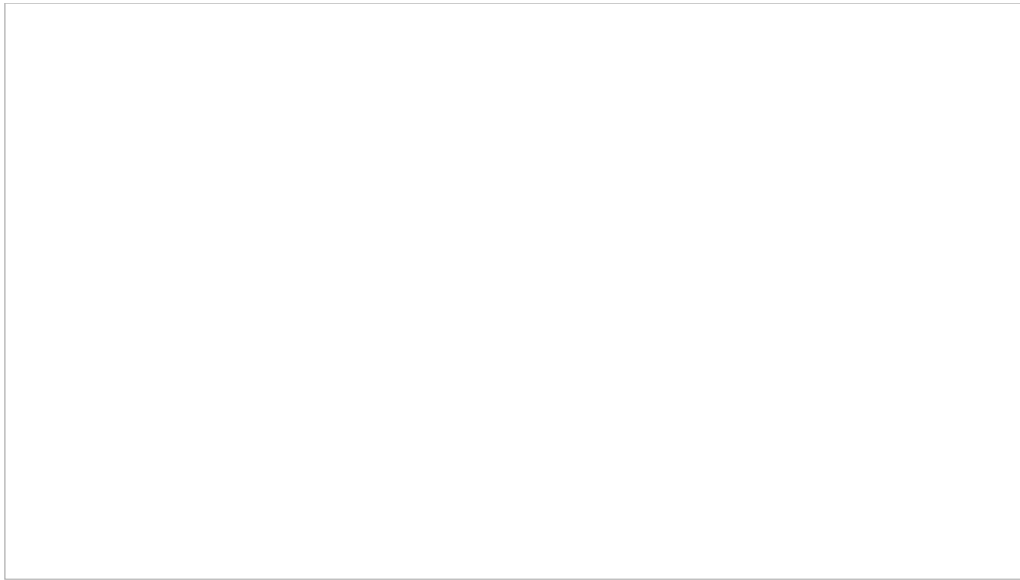
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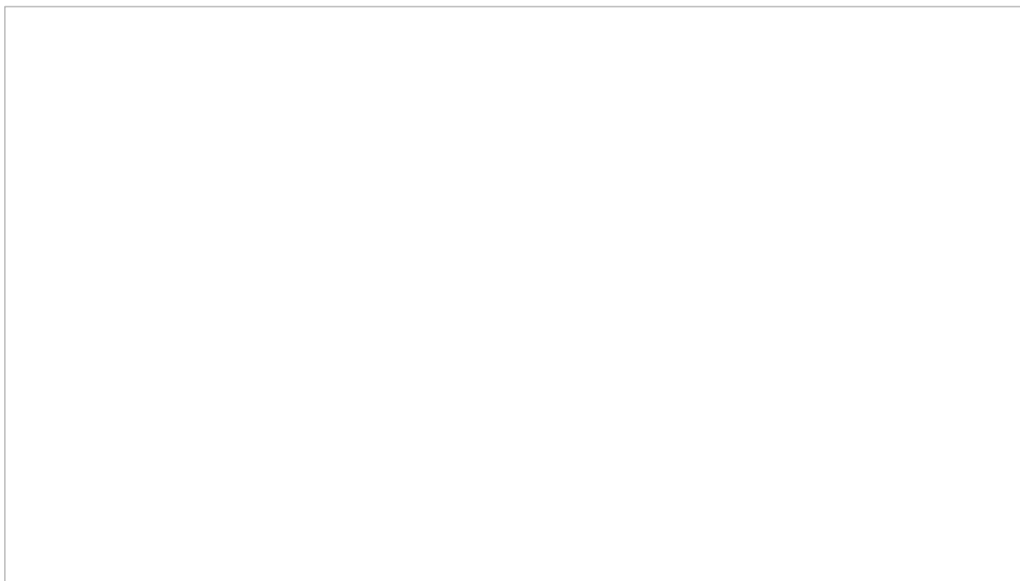
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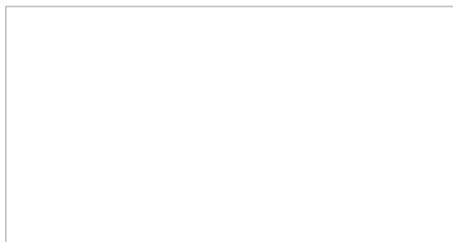
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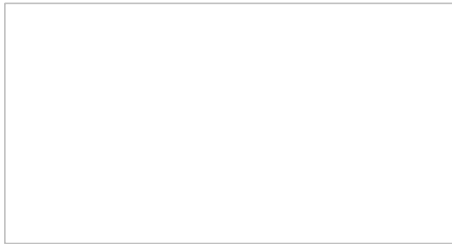
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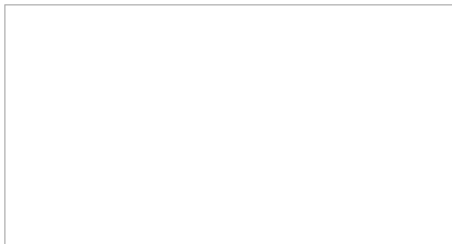
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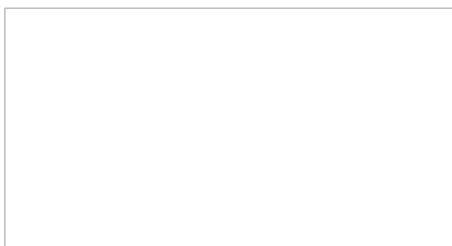
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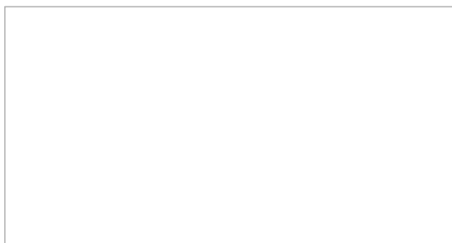
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