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THIS STORY IS FROM APRIL 29, 2013

If you smoke, get ready to move out of this district

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KOCHI: If you are a chain smoker who regularly puffs away in public places, Ernakulam is not the district to be in. Both the city and rural police have together charged 1,689 persons for [smoking](#) in public places and levied a fine of Rs 5.1 lakh between October and December in 2012. Compared to Ernakulam, only 12 persons in Thiruvananthapuram and 101 persons in Kozhikode were booked under section 4 of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act (Copta) 2003, which prohibits smoking in public places. As per the stats provided by the police, Ernakulam, predictably, has fared better than other districts in levying fines from people caught for smoking in public places.

Police have booked 1,224 persons in Ernakulam under section 6(a) of Copta, which prohibits sale of tobacco products to minors, during the period. Of these, 1,218 persons were booked in December 2012 alone and fined Rs 2.25 lakh. The shadow police teams have done well in nabbing offenders under various sections of Copta, a senior police official said, adding that strict directions have been issued to keep track of rackets that bring tobacco products into the city and supply them in and around schools and colleges in the district. Police have also booked 15 persons under section 6(b) of Copta which prohibits sale of tobacco products in an area within a radius of 100 yards of any educational institution. As per the stats, no fines were collected in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Palakkad, Malappuram, Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta under this section during the said period. It was in 2003 that the Union government enacted Copta to discourage the consumption of cigarettes and other tobacco products and protect nonsmokers from various smoking-related hazards.

Smokinâ blues Both the city and rural police have together charged 1,689 persons for smoking in public places and levied a fine of 5.1 lakh between October and December in 2012. Compared to Ernakulam, only 12 persons in Thiruvananthapuram and 101 persons in Kozhikode were booked under section 4 of Copta. Police have booked 1,224 persons in Ernakulam under section 6(a) of Copta, which prohibits sale of tobacco products to minors, during the period. Police have also booked 15 persons under section 6(b) of Copta which prohibits sale of tobacco products in an area within a radius of 100 yards of any educational institution. Strict directions have been issued to keep track of rackets that bring tobacco products into the city and supply them in and around schools and colleges in the district. It was in 2003 that the Union government enacted Copta to discourage the consumption of cigarettes and other tobacco products and protect non-smokers from various smoking-related hazards.

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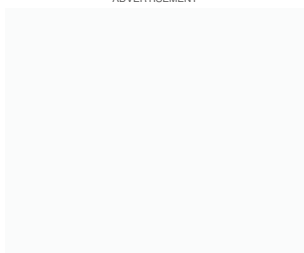
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