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Despite the government ban on manufacture and sale of gutkha, it still continues to be sold secretly at many places in Surat, though at thrice the original price.





Despite the government ban on manufacture and sale of gutkha, it still continues to be sold secretly at many places in Surat, though at thrice the original price. But, despite conducting raids across the city regularly, authorities of civic health department have been unable to curb the illegal sale of gutkha.

In the past one week, health department of Surat Municipal Corporation raided more than two dozen places, but the officials were unsuccessful in tracking the guilty. Despite repeated raids at the same place, not a single sachet of gutkha was seized. This has naturally raised questions on the working of the department.

Hemant Desai, deputy municipal commissioner (health & hospitals), confirmed that no gutkha has been seized in past one week. However, he claimed that department is keeping strict vigil to curb its sale.

“It is possible that pan shops and gutkha sellers have stopped stocking gutkha post the ban. We are conducting surprise checks at places which could possibly be selling gutkha,” Desai added.

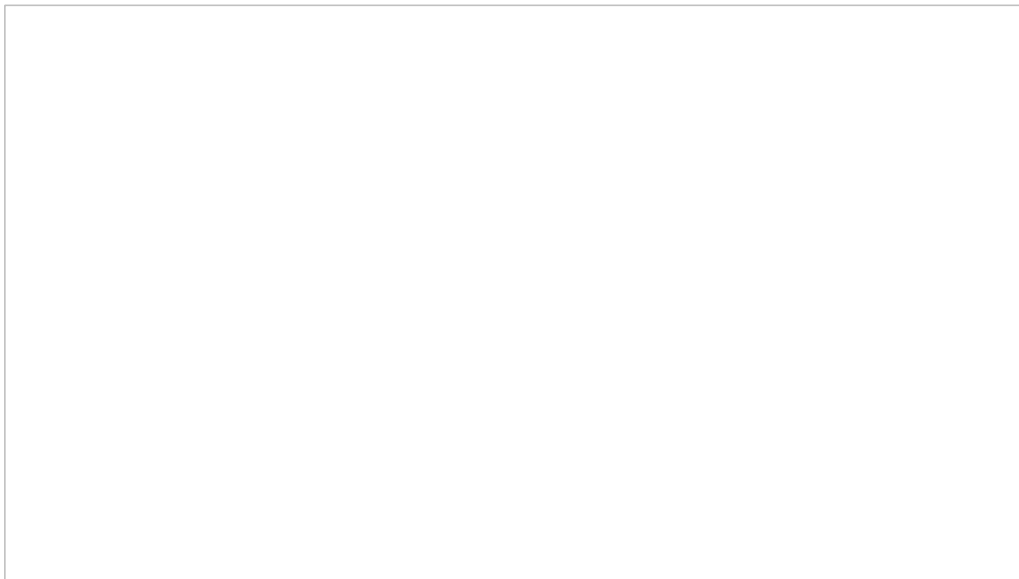
Till now, gutkha worth only Rs1 lakh has been seized by the department, which too was made in the initial days of the ban.

But there is no dearth in demand of gutkha. “I consume four-five pouches of gutkha daily. Despite the ban, I get it easily from my fixed pan shop. Only rates have gone up. The supply continues like earlier,” said Hemant Chavda, a local artisan.

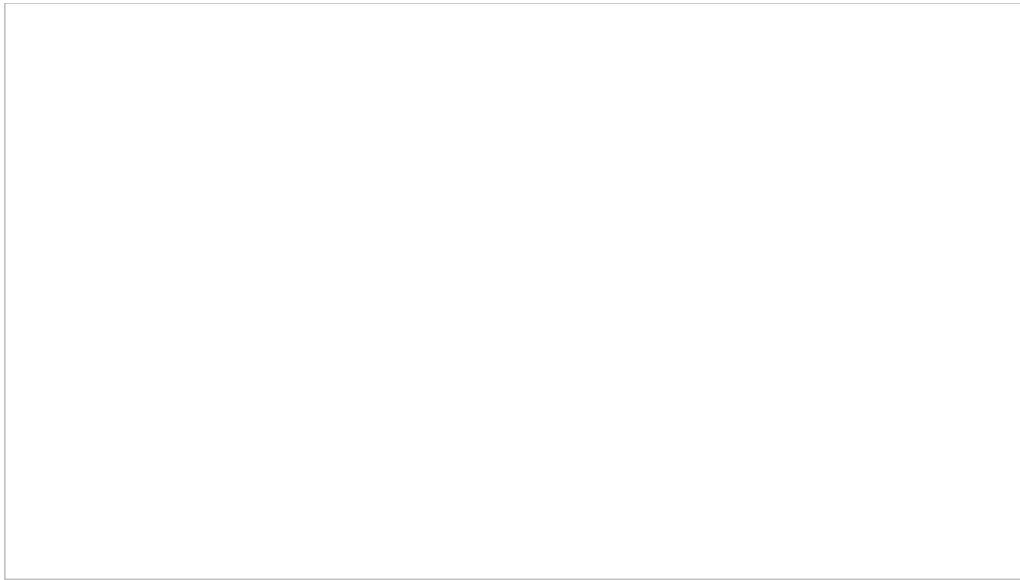
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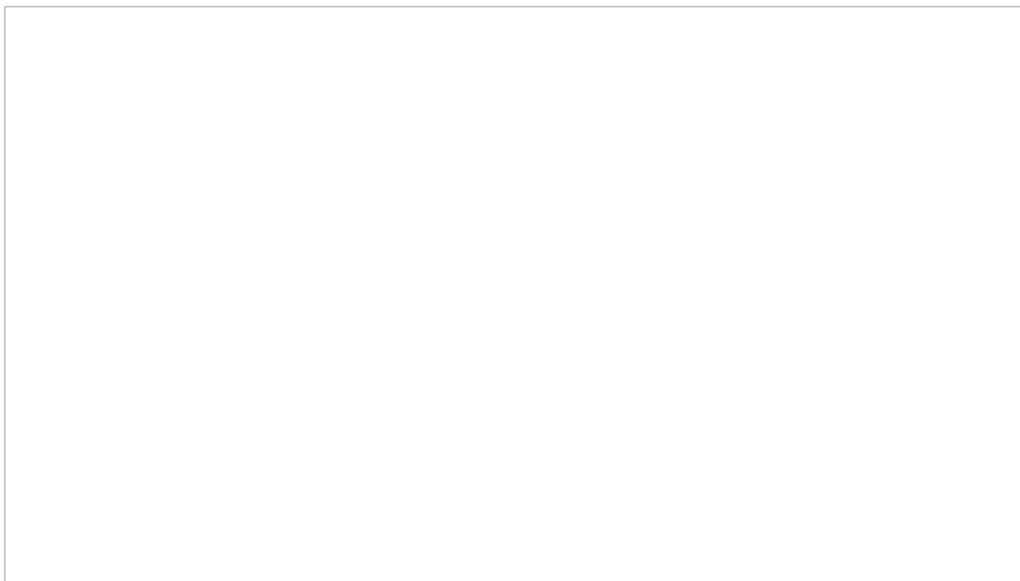


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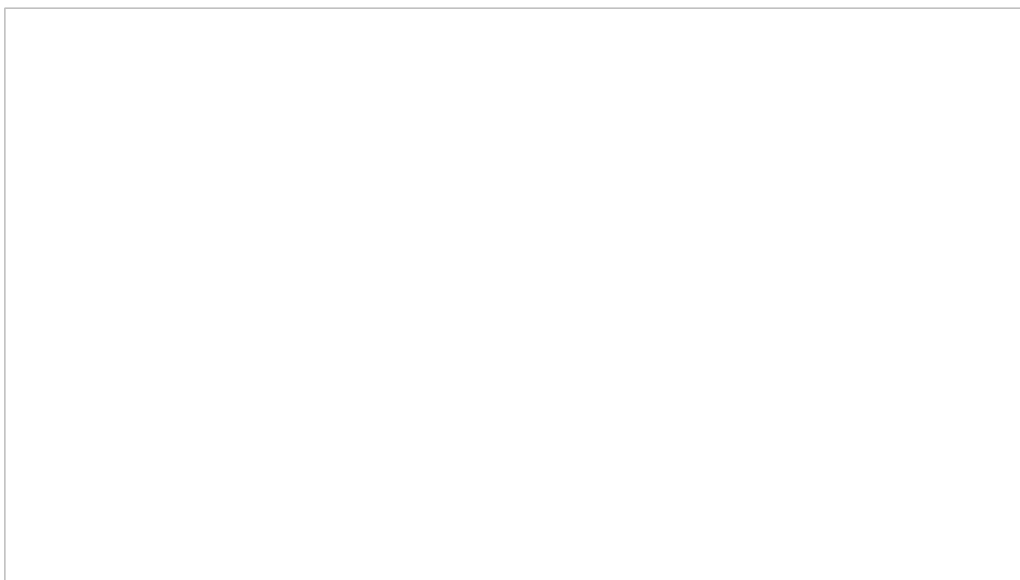
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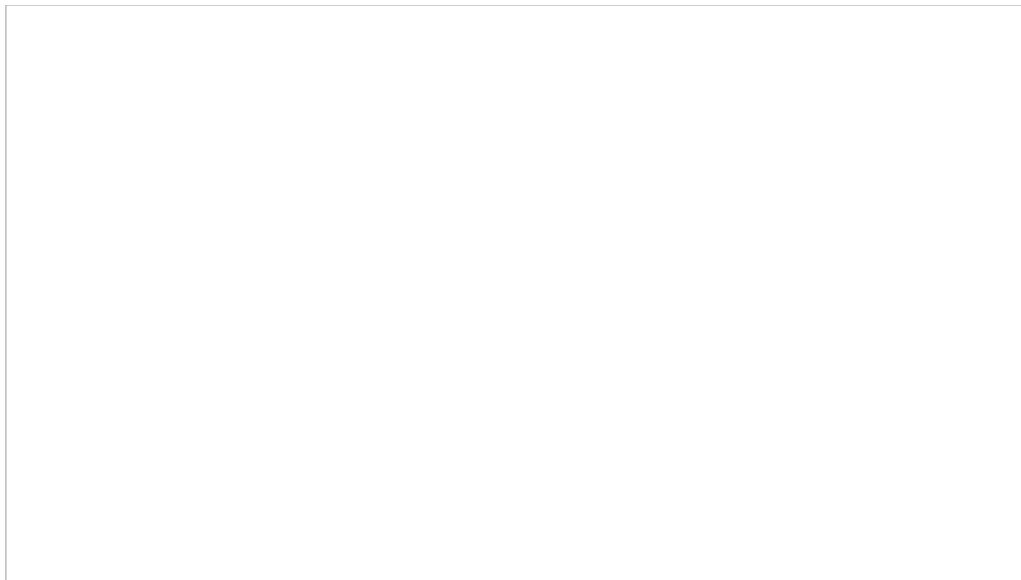
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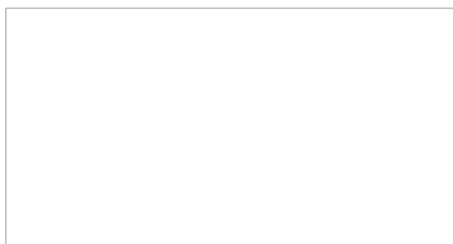
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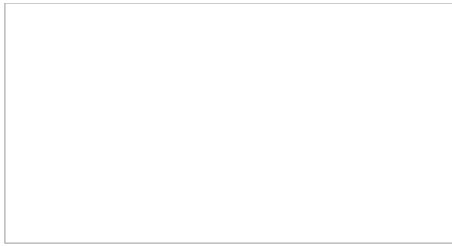
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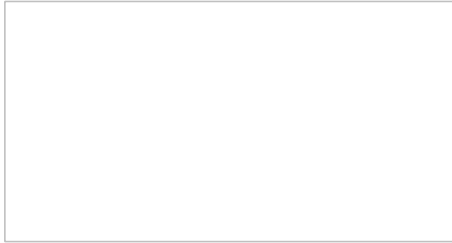
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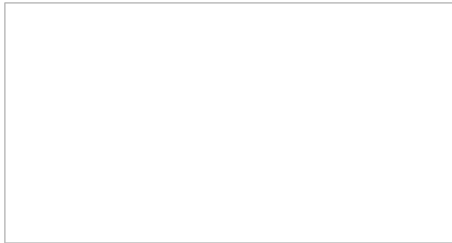
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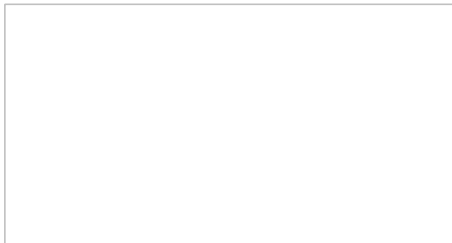
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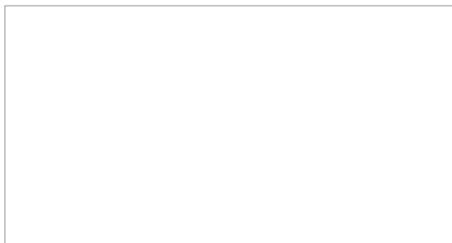
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