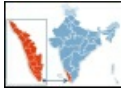


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Kerala CM puts foot down on tobacco industry

SME Times News Bureau | 13 Dec, 2012

Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy Thursday informed the state assembly that, barring the tobacco industry, his government has taken steps to support the coir, handloom, cashew and other traditional sectors of industry.

"Barring the beedi (tobacco) sector, my government has done a lot for all other traditional industries. Since we have taken an anti-smoking stand, the employment in that sector is dwindling," said Chandy in response to an adjournment motion moved by the Left opposition.

Ever since Chandy assumed office, he has maintained a strong stance against tobacco and went on to the extent of banning gutka (a tobacco-laced chewing mix) in the state a few months back.

Earlier this month, Chandy wrote to the prime minister for a nationwide ban on tobacco.

The tobacco industry in the state, especially the Kerala Dinesh Beedi, a flag ship company promoted by the CPI-M has been going through rough times and has branched out to other areas like food processing, IT and textiles-making.

Chandy, however, pointed out that despite the government taking a tough stand against the industry, it was ensuring that the pension arrears of Dinesh Beedi employees were cleared before this year-end.

The sale of tobacco has dropped from Rs.1.30 crore annually to a few thousands only in the state over the last one decade.



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