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Smoking in public places: Govt collects Rs 10 lakh in fines

DHNS

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The Karnataka government has collected Rs 10.79 lakh as penalty from people smoking in public places, according to Commissioner for Health and Family Welfare V B Patil.

The State began its effort to ban smoking and use of tobacco in public places in 2004, but the total ban came into force in 2008.

Briefing reporters, he said the amount has been collected in 10,336 cases since 2008. "So far, we have collected Rs 10,79,797 as penalty. In addition 1,052 cases are yet to be settled as violators have contested the levy." He further said there will be jathas and other programmes to create awareness regarding ill-effects of tobacco.

Bloomberg Institute, the education division of Bloomberg LP, has selected Karnataka to create awareness against the use of tobacco and has granted Rs 1.2 crore. He said departments of Horticulture and Agriculture had been asked to discourage farmers from growing tobacco, and instead, look at alternative crops.

Implementation of ban

Questioned regarding strict implementation of ban on sale of tobacco products within a radius of 100 metres near educational institutions, he said that following a meeting of officials from various departments, district-wise nodal officials have been appointed to monitor the implementation of tobacco ban.

He also said the State is working on facilitating registration of complaints on the police control room's phone number 100 from where the complaint can be transferred to jurisdictional police station.

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