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## Gutka ban not satisfactory, admits minister

Banjot Kaur Bhatia / TNN / Jan 20, 2013, 02:15 IST

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PATNA: Health minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey has expressed dissatisfaction with the implementation of the ban on gutka in the state. Speaking at a function here on Saturday, the minister said he would look into the suggestion of chairing the highest body of tobacco control, State Tobacco Control Co-ordination Committee (STCCC). Without mincing words, the minister said, "A lot needs to be done to effectively enforce the ban that was imposed in May last year. A high-power committee will be formed to suggest measures for effective ban within six months." The minister added he would chair the next STCCC meet and ensure coordination between home, education, transport and other departments to implement the tobacco control law, COTPA. On being quizzed about the forensic test report that the food safety commissioner-cum-executive director of health society [Sanjay Kumar](#) had sought from the designated food safety officers in July last year about the tobacco content in the leading paan masala brands, the minister could only say that it has come 'partially'. He said he was in favour of over 60% tax on tobacco products, instead of the current 20%.

The minister added he will soon convene a workshop of MLAs and MLCs to sensitize them on the ill-effects of tobacco and make both the Houses tobacco-free. He said he would see to it that all government departments take the lead in this regard. Choubey launched the state chapter of Voice of Tobacco Victims (VoTV). The organization, founded by noted oncologist Dr Pankaj Chaturvedi, serves as a platform for the cancer victims to share their heart-rending stories with people to make them aware about the physical, mental and financial trauma that tobacco could cause to one. The organization, through its patients advocates tobacco control policies. Dr A A Hai has been made president of the state chapter of the organization.

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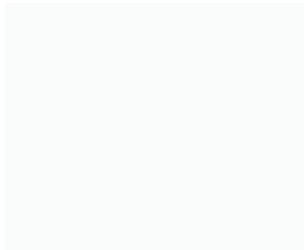
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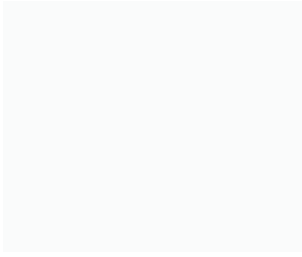
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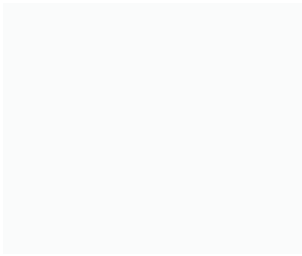
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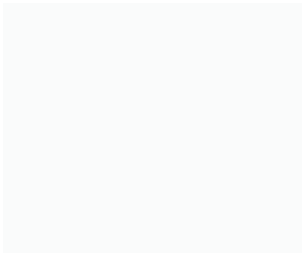
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