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Smoke and gamble away to glory

Ban on sale of cigarette and tobacco product is not in force in Vidhana Soudha premises.



[Y Maheswara Reddy](#)



Were the sale of cigarettes on the Vidhana Soudha premises to be any indication, the Karnataka government has certainly become oblivious about its responsibility to implement the ban on smoking and sale of tobacco products at public places effectively.

There is no dearth of the supply of cigarettes for smokers among the employees of Vidhana Soudha despite a ban on such activities. Ironically, no such activity has yet been recorded by the closed-circuit television cameras installed three months ago at various locations in the Assembly premises. There are more than 100 policemen guarding the building, but none of them seem to be too keen in implementing the ban on smoking or selling tobacco products in public places.

“What other things can we expect from the government if it fails even to simply implement a statutory ban on smoking and sale of tobacco products? What right do the police or other authorities assigned to implement the ban can have, if sale of tobacco products too is allowed inside the premises?” wondered aloud an employee of the Vidhana Soudha.

One can buy cigarettes of one’s choice by paying a trifle extra to a few people working at the parking lot and vendors selling tea, coffee and biscuits. As per the National Tobacco Control Act, if someone is caught smoking in a public place, he/she is liable to pay a penalty of Rs200. However, no one is bothered either to prevent the sale of tobacco products or smoking in Vidhana Soudha premises, especially at the vehicle parking lot on the northern side. “I know that I should not sell cigarettes here. I promise that I will stop (selling cigarettes) from today,” said Nagaraj, who works in the parking lot.

That’s not all. A group of some 10 employees of the Vidhana Soudha were seen by this correspondent playing cards in a government vehicle (KA01 GA-111). When asked, one of them said they had no better way to while away their time. “We are playing cards to spend time,” said the driver of the vehicle.

According to police sources, a raid was conducted on gambling activities in the Vidhana Soudha premises a few months ago. When contacted, Lokeswara, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Vidhana Soudha, promised to take action to prevent smoking and the sale of tobacco products. “I will direct my subordinate officers to look into the matter,” he asserted.

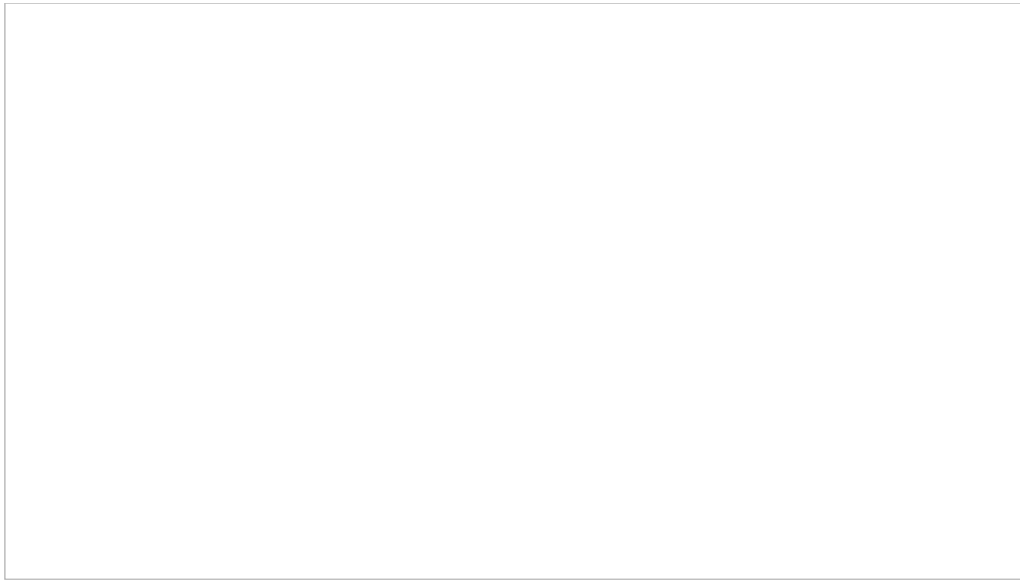
Meanwhile, Dr T Devaki Umesh, Chief Medical Officer, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) said she has not yet visited Vidhana Soudha premises to see whether the ban on smoking and sale of tobacco products is being implemented effectively. “No one is allowed smoking or selling tobacco products on Vidhana Soudha premises. I will visit the area tomorrow and take action against the violators.”

According to Dr Devaki, the BBMP collected Rs 1.80 lakh as penalty for selling tobacco products and smoking at public places.

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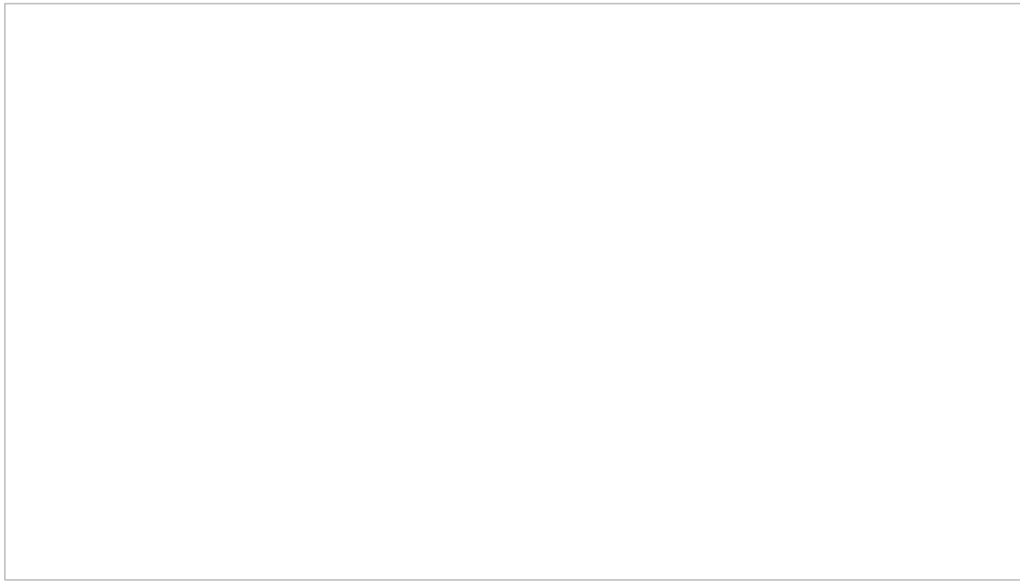
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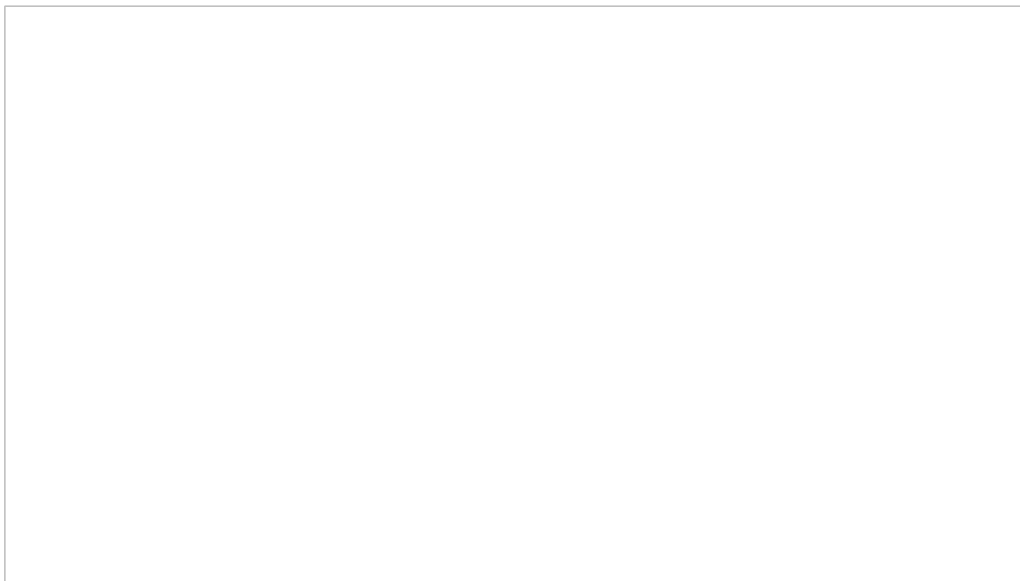
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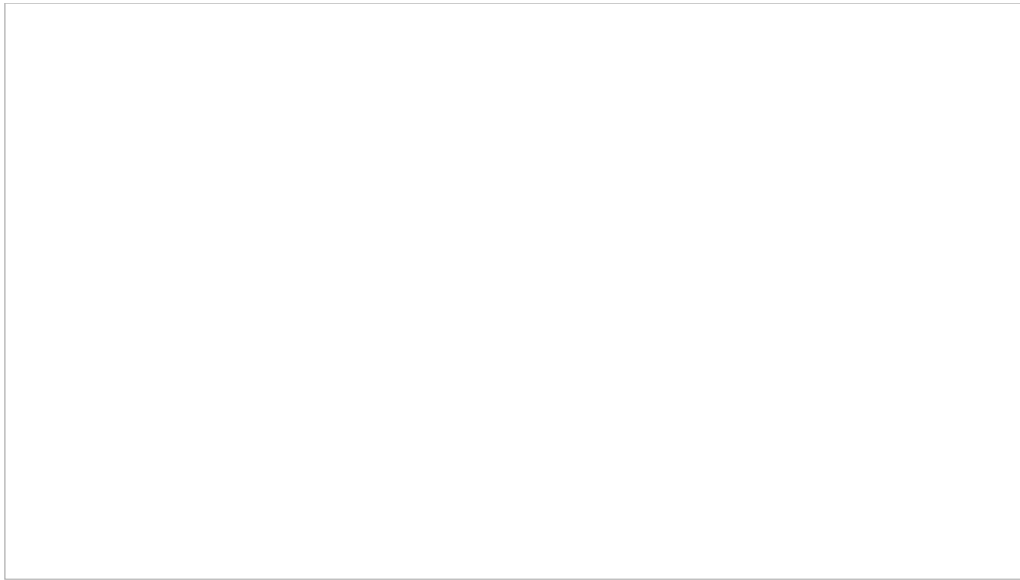
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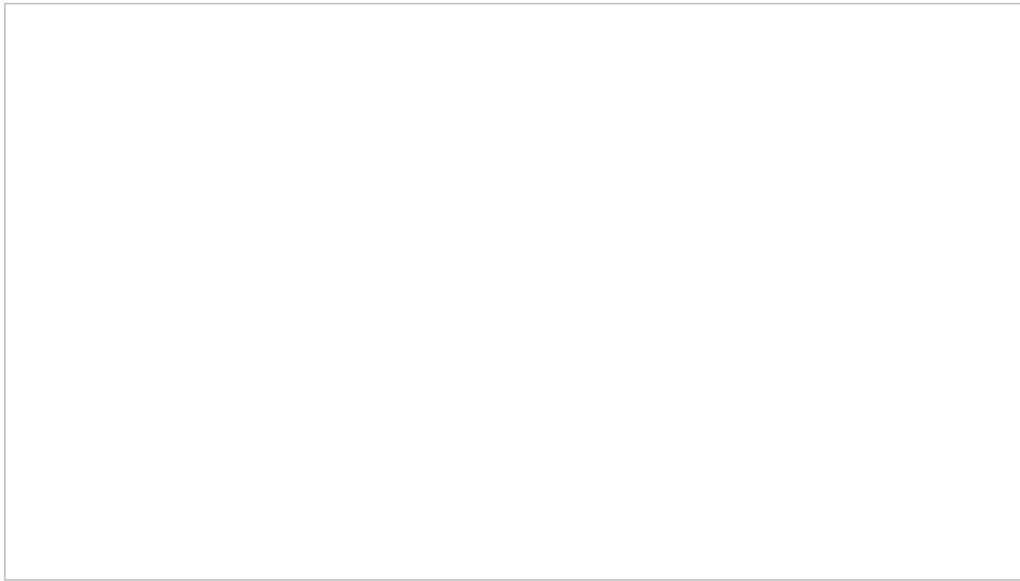
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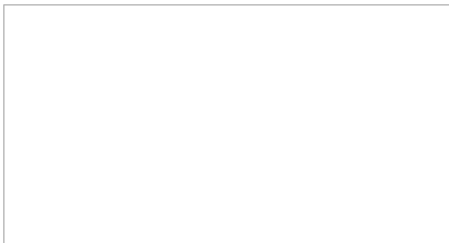
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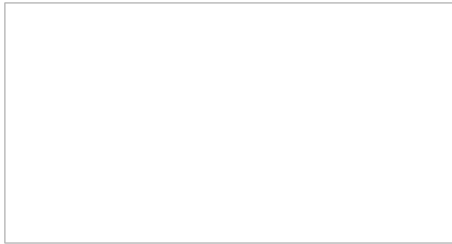
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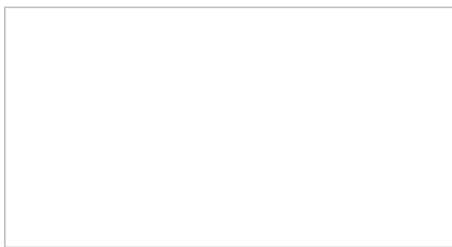
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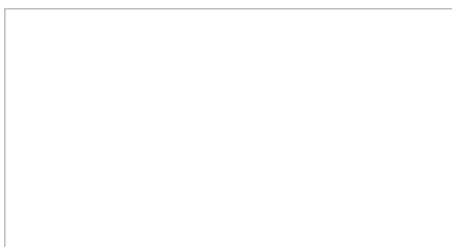
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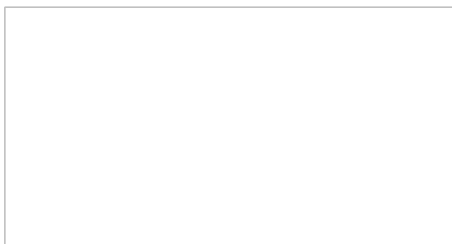
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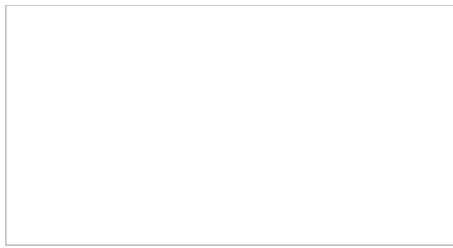
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