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Cabinet defers decision on banning smokeless tobacco

DHNS

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The State Cabinet on Wednesday deferred taking any decision on a proposal to ban smokeless tobacco and loose cigarettes as it would affect a large number of tobacco farmers in the State.

Briefing reporters on the Cabinet meeting, Law Minister T B Jayachandra said the Supreme Court was scheduled to conduct a hearing in this regard in mid-December.

“Hence, the Cabinet decided not take any decision till the apex court delivers its judgement, he added.

Farmers in Hunsur and Periyapatna grow export-quality tobacco. High-class cigarettes are manufactured using tobacco grown in the State. It is difficult to stop the flow of tobacco from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh even if Karnataka bans it. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the government to protect the interest of State farmers. So, the Cabinet decided not to take any hasty decision in this regard, he said.

“It is projected as if the State government is voluntarily banning smokeless tobacco and loose cigarettes. States that have already imposed the ban do not grow tobacco. The Karnataka government will take stand based on the Supreme Court decision,” he said.

Amendment

The Cabinet also decided to amend the Indian Succession Act to enable the passage of property rights to the wife in case her husband dies during a legal battle. “These amendments will ensure that property rights go to the wife, who is the successor, if the husband dies at the time of the legal dispute. Currently, there is no such provision. This is being done as per the recommendation of the Karnataka Law Commission,” the minister stated.

Besides, the Cabinet decided to cut down refundable amount in cases of out-of-the court settlement of disputes. Only 25 per cent of the deposited amount will be refunded. Currently, 50 per cent of the amount is refunded for settlement cases, he added.

Jayachandra said the Cabinet had fixed ex gratia payment to be made to those who give away their lands for laying electricity transmission lines. It will be 50 per cent of the property guidance value in rural areas and 75 per cent in urban areas. For installation of towers, 100 per cent of the guidance value will be given as ex gratia to landlosers in both urban and rural areas. This is over and above the compensation given for land acquisition, he said.

Subsidy to onion growers

The Cabinet has decided to give compensation to onion farmers who suffered crop losses due to heavy rains recently in north Karnataka in the form of input subsidy. Rs 9,000 per hectare will be given as input subsidy. Onion crop in about 40,000 hectares has been damaged in many parts of the State.

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