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## **KIAL hikes parking fee, snuffs out smoking**

Vandana Kamath / Updated: Apr 3, 2014, 02:00 IST

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*For cars, it's 90 for 4 hours; all smoking lounges shut*

If you are heading to Kempegowda International Airport (KIAL), then be prepared to shell out more for parking. Parking rates for four-wheelers at KIAL have been revised with effect from April 1 by Rs 20. Four-wheeler owners will have to shell out Rs 90 as parking charges for up to four hours. Thereafter, they will have to pay Rs 45 for each additional hour. The rates have been increased by Rs 20, as earlier it was Rs 70 for up to four hours.

According to KIAL authorities, the rates have been re-structured to accommodate the April 1, 2013, withdrawal of exemption of service tax (12.36 per cent) on parking charges, as well as inflation and increase in overheads. Authorities claim it is still the most affordable airport in India for parking. They note that it's one of the few metro airports which provide up to 4 hours of parking at the same rate. The revised rates have been displayed outside the airport premises.

### **SMOKING LOUNGES SHUT**

Here is some bad news for smokers. If you are thinking of getting that last puff in before boarding your flight, you might as well forget it since smoking has been prohibited inside the airport premises. When questioned, airport authorities admitted that the smoking lounges have been closed temporarily, and efforts are on to open them as soon as possible. There is a board outside that says smoking lounges inside the terminal are not serviceable.

This could further increase incidents of public smoking around the airport area. An amount of Rs 9,070 was collected as penalty from smokers during two days of inspection conducted on March 21 and 22 by a team headed by rural district health and family welfare officer Sunil Chandra.

Airport authorities said that KIA has the obligation to provide a healthy and smoke-free environment. "Recently, there were some concerns raised by the State Anti-Tobacco Cell, and as a responsible corporate we have taken precautionary measures to temporarily close the smoking lounges. We are in advanced stages of discussion. The facilities will be revived only after all concerns have been addressed," an official said.

Speaking to *Bangalore Mirror*, a KIAL police official said, "We are conducting a drive against smoking in the airport premises since the past month. Till now more than 40 cases have been booked. Many women passengers had complained of being disturbed by the presence of smokers. Airport staff and airline crew members too smoke outside. If more cases are booked in the coming days, I will be writing a letter to the airport authorities. They can install a smoking lounge outside the airport terminal."

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