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Modi ministers among gutkha consumers

Minister Ranjit Gilitwala only one to admit his addiction, promises to give it up before ban comes into force.

Reported By:  | Edited By: dna Correspondent | Source: DNA | Updated: Aug 18, 2012, 01:09 PM IST



A few ministers in the Narendra Modi cabinet are among those who will be affected (though positively) by the ban on gutkha that will come in force from September 11.

An estimated six to eight state ministers are believed to consume gutkha but Ranjit Gilitwala, minister of state for planning and cottage industries, was the only one who accepted that he eats gutkha.

“Yes, I do eat gutkha,” Gilitwala said, when contacted by DNA. He, however, added that he has decided to give it up in view of the ban announced by the chief minister.

“The ban is a very good decision. We hope that many more people will give up gutkha addiction,” the minister said further.

Most of the other ministers believed to be gutkha addicts, however, denied that they ate the tobacco product while a couple of them claimed they had never even tasted it. A few other ministers said that they used to consume gutkha in the past but had given up the habit now. One minister said that he eats ‘mava’ and not gutkha.

Once the ban comes into force, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) will be one of the agencies that will help in enforcing it. However, it seems that AMC officials themselves are having a hard time giving up the addiction.

When asked, a senior AMC official claimed that he does not eat gutkha but consumes pan masala, while another official said he had stopped eating gutkha a couple of years back.

The chief minister had announced the ban on gutkha and pan masala (containing tobacco and nicotine) during his speech at Junagadh on August 15. He said that the ban was to save youths of Gujarat from cancer. The ban will cover production, distribution, stocking and sale of these products.



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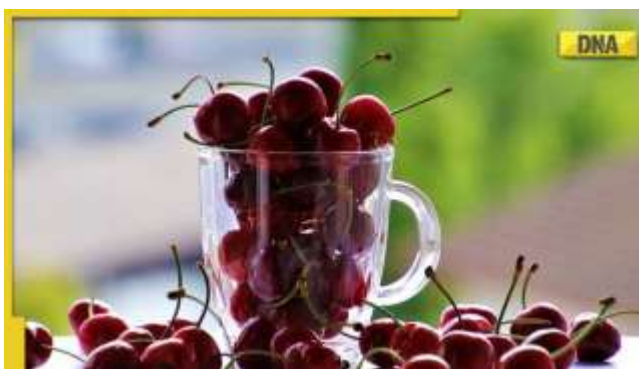
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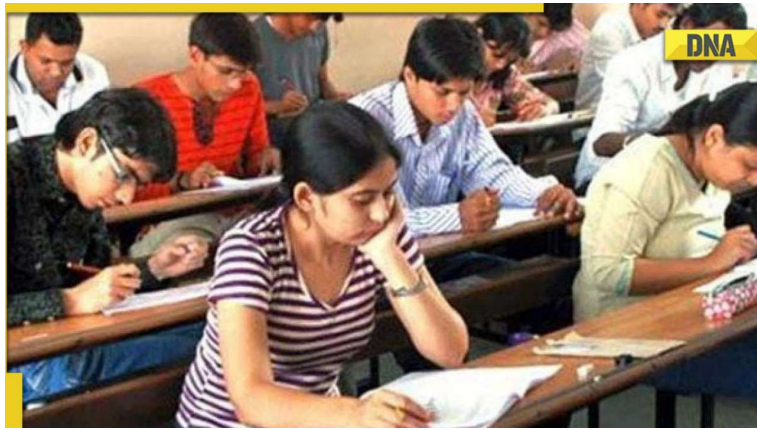
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