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**Thiruvananthapuram:** The Kerala Police have collected around Rs.1.5 million as fine after stepping up vigil in the past five months against those smoking in public places, according to information available on the website of the state police.

"A total 9,885 people were fined across 20 police districts, netting Rs.15.75 lakh (Rs. 1.57 million). For the sake of administrative convenience, 14 districts in the state have been grouped under 20 police districts," Kerala police website said.

The fines were collected from October 1 last year to February 28 this year.

The ban on smoking in public places was found to be most strictly enforced in Ernakulam rural where 3,793 people were fined.

Kannur district came in second with 3,172 people penalised for smoking in public places.

With no case reported in October, police consistently stepped up their vigil in Kannur and collected Rs.6.34 lakh between November and February.

The fines collected in Idukki district also showed an upward trend. From six cases of violations in the district in October, the number rose to 65 cases in February.

Sale of tobacco products to minors has also invited police action with 1,248 people fined and Rs 2.26 lakh collected from violators from across the state, according to the website.

Smoking is prohibited in public places in India under Section 4 of the provisions of the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act (COTPA) 2003.

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