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Retailers Make Most Of Ban, Sell Gutkha On The Sly

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# Retailers make most of ban, sell gutkha on the sly

TNN / Updated: Apr 3, 2012, 05:07 IST



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BHOPAL: Addiction costs more and those who consume tobacco-mixed gutkha are learning it the hard way. Gutkha buyers were found buying the substance at more than double the price from retailers as the ban on tobacco-mixed gutkha entered its second day in the city on Monday. Taking advantage of a short supply in the market following the state government ban on the sale of tobacco-mixed gutkha small-time shopkeepers were found selling pouches at exorbitant prices stealthy manner.

"Earlier I paid Rs 5 for three sachets, I get just one for the same price," said a bus conductor, chewing his preferred brand of the banned gutkha. "A small sachet of gutkha, which costs between Rs 1 to Rs 2 in the market earlier are being sold for Rs 2 to Rs 7, depending on the brand," said a shopkeeper at Hamidia road.

Cautious about raid by Food and Drug Administration ([FDA](#)) inspectors, shopkeepers are stocking the banned product in nearby shops to avoid action in case of a raid. In larger markets like New Market and Bittan market the ban was more effective. In order to curb the distribution, FDA inspectors raided five godown in old Bhopal, including Jumerati, Shahjehanabad and Janakpuri area. In the raids conducted throughout the day in the city, a large number of paan kiosks were checked for the banned product throughout the day. "We even disguised as customers in some cases enquiring for the banned product," said FDA inspector RS Dhakker

FDA INSPECTOR BS BHARRAI.

The FDA has yet to impose the stipulated penalty of up to Rs 25,000 on anyone selling tobacco-mixed gutkha in the state. "But we don't have stocks. The wholesaler asks us to lift the stock with prices he quotes and we have to sell accordingly," the shop-owner said. The wholesalers here withheld stocks of gutka into the market after ban was announced. When there was a demand-supply mismatch, they released the stock jacking up the price.

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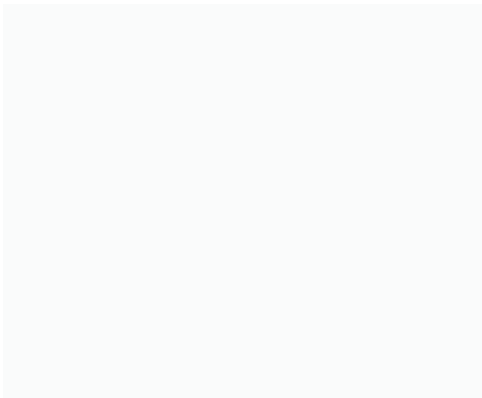
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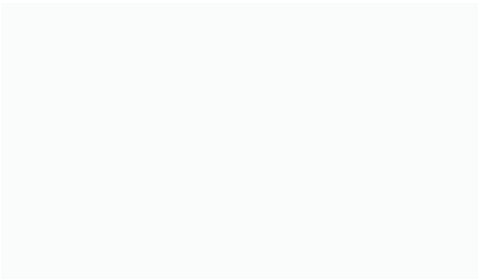
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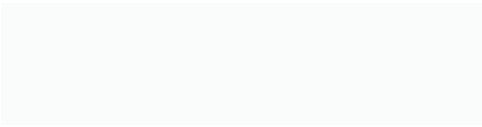
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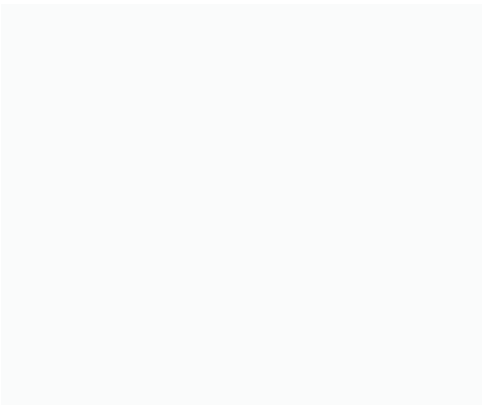
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