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KARNATAKA

Centre permits sale of tobacco grown without permit

March 26, 2015 12:00 am | Updated 05:51 am IST - MYSURU:

LAIQH A. KHAN

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The Union government has given permission for sale of tobacco cultivated without authorisation in the State.

In a statement here, Mysuru MP Pratap Simha said he had taken up the matter with Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman, who has issued orders permitting sale of tobacco cultivated without authorisation, at the auction platforms in the State. ADVERTISEMENT

President of VFC Tobacco Growers' Federation of Karnataka Javare Gowda told *The Hindu* that the government had, however, imposed a penalty of 7.5 per cent of the sale proceeds in addition to Rs. 2 for every kg of tobacco cultivated without authorisation by the licence-holders. Each licensed tobacco grower can sell only a maximum of 270 kg.

The penalty imposed on tobacco grown without authorisation by those who do not possess tobacco cultivation licence is steeper. "Such growers have to pay a penalty of 15 per cent of the sale proceeds in addition to Rs. 2 for every kg," Mr. Gowda said.

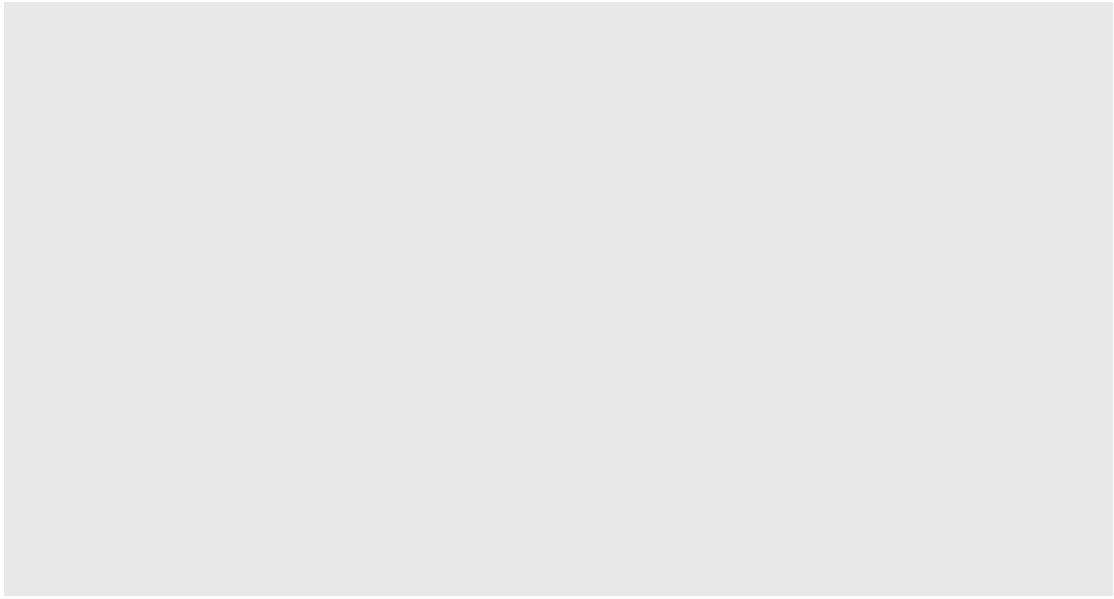
Earlier this year, the Tobacco Board had fixed a ceiling of 104 million kg. "The quantum of tobacco cultivated without authorisation can be assessed only after the auction season concludes," Mr. Gowda said.

41,000 licensed growers


Tobacco is cultivated on 1 lakh hectares of land in Karnataka, mostly in rain-fed areas of Mysuru district. A total of 41,000 growers possess tobacco cultivation licence in the State. There are about 55,000 barns in the State and tobacco growers are given permission to grow up to 1,830 kg for every barn. "Anything grown in excess is considered unauthorised tobacco," he said.

Meanwhile, the tobacco auction season, which began on September 12, 2014, is set to stretch till April. "So far, about 80 million kg of tobacco has been transacted at the auction platforms. Normally, tobacco auction season should conclude in four months, but this year is set to stretch up to seven months," Mr Gowda said, attributing it to poor response from traders.

Tobacco auction season, which began on September 12, 2014, is likely to stretch till April



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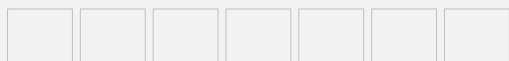
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