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High Court to hear PIL on banning tobacco products

New Delhi: Aug 20 , 2012 DH News Service 1:02 IST



8 states have done away with gutkha, Delhi govt is yet to take any action

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) to ban tobacco products in the city will come up for hearing before Delhi High Court on Wednesday. The PIL has been filed by Doctors For You, a registered society, in the wake of a spurt of oral and lung cancer in the city.

Under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, the central government passed a regulation in 2011 empowering a State's Food Safety Commissioner to ban tobacco products. According to the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011, gutkha and other forms of chewing tobacco products such as zarda, pan masala, gul and bajjar which are toxic and addictive, should be banned from being sold in the state.

Eight states have already banned gutkha and associate products. These are Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Haryana, Bihar, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Goa.

"The Delhi government has not taken any action despite the Central government regulation. Oral cancer is on a rise. If law can prevent it, then why not? We all know prevention is better than cure," said Varun Kumar Chopra, advocate who represents the petitioner in the case.

According to a World Health Organisation's Regional Office for South-East Asia's study on tobacco habits in India states, about 25 per cent of the population consumes tobacco in some form in Delhi.

A statement by Doctors For You said, "Despite clear evidence of tight regulations and actions taken by other states of India, the enforcing agencies of Delhi have failed to take any appropriate action against the manufacturers, importers and distributors of tobacco products."


"These products pose a grave threat to the health of innocent consumers who are unaware about the real nature of its contents," the statement said.


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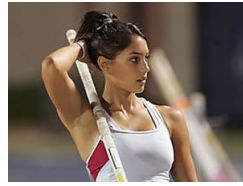
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