

Students join anti-tobacco campaign

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DC|BENGALURU

July 10 : It's being promoted as the greatest tobacco talk show on earth, worrying anti-tobacco activists who see the meeting of the Global Tobacco Networking Forum (GTNF) to be held later this year in the city as a threat to all the work they have put in to discourage people from smoking.

The GTNF is an annual event organised by Tobacco Reporter, a publication from the US. It was first held in Brazil and then in Thailand. Speakers from



the tobacco industry discuss various issues related to the industry during the Summit. Afraid of its impact on the people of Bengaluru, the Institute of Public Health (IPH) has begun a signature campaign to stop the forum from meeting in

the city. Although the event is scheduled for between October 4 and 8, the IPH has started early in its campaign as it wants to be able to collect around one lakh signatures and submit a memorandum to the governor against the forum. The first to support the campaign have been the students of the St John's Medical College. Students of Bangalore Medical College (BMC) too have signed the protest memo. "We are starting with students of medical and dental colleges because they best understand the impact of tobacco on health," explains Dr.

Upendra Bhojani, a public health researcher with IPH, which is currently holding talks with several other colleges across the state to let their students join its campaign. The IPH is concerned that when the harmful effects of tobacco have already been proved, a meeting of this nature may end up promoting tobacco sales.

"The use of tobacco is already very high in the country. According to a national family health survey 57.6 per cent of men and 10.9 per cent of women in the country use tobacco", says Dr Bhojan.