

'Do students still buy cigarettes?'

HC Wants Report On Implementation Of Anti-Smoking Act

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: The high court on Wednesday directed the DIG, police commissioner and SPs of all districts to file an action taken report within six weeks on implementation of Cigarettes and other tobacco products (prohibition on advertising and regulating trade, commerce, production, supply and distribution) Act, 2003. The Act prohibits sale of cigarettes to persons below 18 years of age and within 100 yards of any educational institution.

"A recent study by the Institute for Social and Economic Change has revealed that the Act is not implemented in letter and spirit here. On the last occasion, the court had sought for an ATR, but authorities are yet to file as yet. The *beeda* shops are everywhere, including near a famous women's college in Bangalore," Joyna Kothari, counsel for the petitioner-organization, told the court.

"Of the 19 PU colleges surveyed in the city, 18 had vendors or a shop selling cigarettes and other tobacco items within 100 yards. Apart from this, 59.2% of students (below 18) said they bought these items from vendors/stalls; 15.1% said



they had tasted/experienced them at least once; 30% said they have seen their teachers smoking; 50% said they have noticed non-teaching staff like drivers and others smoke," petitioner-organization Cancer Patients Aid Association said in its PIL.

"It was also noticed that 90.12% used tobacco products through smoking; 32.1% by chewing and 28.4% by other applications. Only 34.4% said they knew about the regulations and 50.5% pleaded ignorance about the same or any central policy. Because of this, students below 18 years are falling prey to tobacco addiction much against the intent of the law."

NIGHT BAN IN BANDIPUR TO CONTINUE

A division Bench on Wednesday refused either to modify or vacate the July 27 interim order which banned movement of vehicles at night in Bandipur National Park area through which inter-state highways — Gundlupet-Sulthan Batheri (Kerala) Gundlupet — and Ooty (Tamil Nadu) national highway pass through.

"Keeping the larger interest of safety of wild animals in mind, we are not inclined," a division Bench headed by the chief justice observed before turning down the plea.

The court has directed all parties concerned to file in eight weeks statements

containing authenticated regulatory measures being followed and practised in wildlife sanctuaries around the world. The next hearing is scheduled for the first week of January.

Advocate general Ashok Haranahalli had sought permission for slow movement of vehicles in a convoy consisting of forest officials at least twice every night. He also cited the representation given by an all-party delegation to the state government seeking vacating of the stay order. Counsel for Kerala and TN trade bodies told the court that the states' economy had been badly affected because of the ban.

PARK ROW: BBMP GETS TWO WEEKS

A division Bench has given two weeks to BBMP commissioner Bharat Lal Meena to find a workable solution regarding civic amenity sites next to Lakshman Rau Park in Okalipuram area.

The BBMP commissioner, who appeared before the court for the second day, said he inspected the site in question on Tuesday and found out the park was intact. But in place of CA sites meant for a maternity hospital, children's welfare centre and ward offices, there were 33 private structures.

"We will interact with the Slum Clearance Board and others and find a practicable and workable solution," Meena told the court. "Courts cannot become administrators. It is not in the constitutional scheme," the division Bench said.