

# Smokers continue to puff away in public places

Though the government has formally announced the ban on smoking, there are not enough authorities to execute it

DNA Correspondent

A walk through the stalls near Thane station housing a number of cigarette vendors will make every non-smoker realise that lakhs of rupees spent by the Central government on advertising the ban on smoking has gone down the drain. In spite of the ban on smoking in public places from October 2 onwards, residents continue to puff without any fear of law.

Dr Prakash Gupta, Director of Healis-Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health, a research organisation said it is too early to decide on the success of the ban. As far as individual reports are concerned, many smokers have resolved to quit smoking or at least restrain from smoking in public places.

"We have not conducted any survey but we have received response from individuals who have noticed that there has been a fall in smoking after it was banned in the public places. In few months, one would be able to see results of the ban," he said.

He further said that though the ban is in place, it will be a success only when non-smokers protest against smoking in public places.

"Non-smokers should have the guts to object to a person smoking in public places. He should be strong enough to remind the smoker of the ban.

Fear of law has to be instilled in people's minds," Gupta said.

The lack of fear of action is the main reason for failure of the ban so far. "Police or civic authorities need not take any additional step towards implementing the ban. All they need to do is keep an eye on

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people violating the law while patrolling," he said.

Even residents feel that the lack of action on the part of authorities is the reason why the ban is yet to be implemented successfully.

"Smoking in public places reduced on the first few days when the ban was implemented but people no longer care due to lack of fear. The government has not appointed

## Official quote

Police officials said they are on the look-out for people smoking during patrols

any authority to take responsibility for the same, which is why implementation of ban is taking longer," said Deepa Bhat, a city resident.

Police officials said they are on the look-out for people smoking during patrols.

"We have not arrested any individual for smoking in Kharghar so far. We check every cigarette vendor's stall during patrol. No body dares to smoke before police officials now," said Balasaheb Golande, Senior PI of Kharghar police station. Meanwhile, police officials deny having received any guidelines from senior officials regarding the same.