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Indian Food Safety Authority for stricter implementation of ban on smokeless tobacco

LUCKNOW: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has urged the states to effectively implement the ban on manufacture, sale and distribution of smokeless tobacco namely gutka and pan masala (with tobacco and nicotine).

The authority wrote to food safety commissioners / food safety authorities across all states on October 9. It read that Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on sales) Regulations, 2.3.4, prohibits the use of tobacco and nicotine as ingredients in any food products and bans sale of all food products where tobacco is present as ingredient such as gutka and pan masala (with tobacco and nicotine). Therefore, it called for an effective implementation from the states.

Anti-tobacco activist Dr Pankaj Chaturvedi said that there implementation was the strength of the law. "Tobacco use is the foremost preventable cause of death and disease globally as well as in India. The consequent burden of mortality and morbidity due to consumption of smokeless tobacco is very high in India. Tobacco causes almost 12 lakhs death in a year in India. Available evidence suggests that India shares the maximum burden of oral cancer in the World. The situation will not change the available set of laws is implemented."

To note, the recently released Global Adult Tobacco Survey revealed that: 29.6% of men, 12.8% of women and 21.4% of all adults currently use smokeless
tobacco. However due to initiative taken by the Government like ban on certain forms of smokeless tobacco products, such as gutka, pan masala (with tobacco & nicotine), the number of tobacco users has reduced by about 81 lakh.