

## Ban on tobacco products will encourage smuggling: Rajasthan health minister

TNN | May 31, 2018

JAIPUR: Rajasthan health minister Kalicharan Saraf said on Thursday imposing ban on tobacco products in the state is not feasible. However, health department officials revealed that it is estimated that 136 persons are dying daily in the state due to tobacco computation.

Saraf, on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day said, "If we impose a ban on tobacco products, there are chances of it being smuggled from neighbouring states. Ban will encourage smuggling. If ban has to be imposed, it should be imposed nationally."

Saraf said that only one state banning tobacco products will not be able to serve the purpose.

While addressing a gathering of anti-tobacco crusaders at Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj Sansthan, Saraf said that he was regular user of tobacco products. "When a doctor told me if I continue consuming tobacco, there are chances of cancer. I quit consuming tobacco 20 years ago. Now, I do not consume tobacco anymore," he said.

He said that they have constituted a committee to find out if e-cigarettes contain harmful chemicals to health. "We have given the committee time of 30 days to present its report. Only after that, we will be in a position to take action against it," he said.

However, Saraf pointed out that the number of tobacco users in the state has declined over the past few years. Now, only 24.7% of the people in the state are using tobacco products, earlier, the percentage was as high as 32.3.

Besides, national health mission (NHM) mission director (state) Navin Jain raised the issue of celebrity involved in surrogate advertising of tobacco products. He pointed out that they are icon of the youths, they should encourage youths not to consume tobacco.

According to medical oncologists, lung cancer is the most common among all types of cancers. "Eighty per cent of lung cancer cases are reported due to tobacco use," said Dr Hemant Malhotra, senior professor, Department of Medicine and Head, Division of Medical Oncology, SMS Medical College Hospital, Jaipur.

Dr Pawan Singhal, professor (ENT surgery) SMS Hospital, said, "Even smokeless tobacco causes similar ill effects in direct or indirect forms. Apart from causing direct damage to the vessels of our body, it causes significantly increased mortality after the heart attack, in people consuming smokeless tobacco."

