

COVID-19: Prohibit use, spitting of smokeless tobacco in public places, Health Ministry tells states

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The Union Health Ministry has asked all states to prohibit the use and spitting of smokeless tobacco in public places to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus.

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In view of the increasing danger of the coronavirus pandemic, the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) has also appealed to people to refrain from consuming smokeless tobacco products and spitting in public places.

The letter stated that state and Union Territory governments have necessary authority under the Epidemic Diseases Act, the Disaster Management Act and under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code 1860 and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPc) to deal with COVID-19.

“In this background, it is requested that necessary preventive measures may be taken under the appropriate law to prohibit the use and spitting of chewing smokeless tobacco products in public,” the letter stated.

Few states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Haryana, Nagaland and Assam have already issued orders on the ban of use of smokeless tobacco products and spitting in public places during the COVID-19 epidemic.

The death toll due to the novel coronavirus rose to 239 and the number of cases climbed to 7,447 in the country on Saturday, according to the Union Health Ministry. However, a PTI tally of figures reported by various states as on Friday showed at least 7,510 cases and 251 deaths.

There has been a lag in the Union Health Ministry figures, compared to the number of cases announced by different states, which officials attribute to procedural delays in assigning the cases to individual states.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/covid-19-prohibit-use-spitting-of-smokeless-tobacco-in-public-places-health-ministry-tells-states/article31315342.ece>