

Karnataka to ban sale of lotteries, country-made liquor

The Karnataka government Friday decided to ban the sale of country-made liquor and abolish lotteries in all forms in the next fiscal, Deputy Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa said here.

Presenting the budget for 2007-08 in the legislative assembly, Yediyurappa, who also holds the finance portfolio in the Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S)-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) coalition government, said despite protests against such a move, the government had decided to go ahead with the ban on sale of arrack in the state from July.

'Though the state government stands to lose over 40 percent of the total excise revenue by banning the sale of 'arrack' (country-made liquor), we propose to stop it for preventing its ill-effects on society, especially on the socially and economically backward and weaker sections,' Yediyurappa told the 224-member lower house.

For the current fiscal, the excise revenue is estimated to be about Rs.44 billion, including Rs.19 billion from the sale of arrack, accounting for 43.5 percent of the total excise collection.

'Currently, arrack is being sold through 15,248 licensed shops across the state. From July 1, all these arrack shops will be closed.

The finance minister has also proposed to abolish all kinds of lotteries online through paper and on the Internet from April 1 and declare the state as a 'lottery free zone.'

Those who stand to lose their means of livelihood because of abolition of lotteries will be given job preference under the new job scheme with training in skill development,' the minister noted.

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