

Court issues notice to government on chewing tobacco

The Delhi High Court has issued notices to the government and two major tobacco manufacturers for using 'magnesium carbonate' in chewing tobacco, which causes mouth cancer to many Indians.

A division bench of Justice T.S. Thakur and Justice S.N. Agrawal asked the government and the tobacco manufacturers - Dharampal Satyapal Ltd of Noida in Uttar Pradesh, and M.M. Enterprises of Sonapat in Haryana to file their replies to the allegations in the petition.

Adjourning the matter till March 23, the court asked the government to verify whether the ingredient was banned for consumption in India or not.

Filing a public interest litigation (PIL), Vinod Jain, a paper merchant, has appealed to the court to ask the government to ban the use of the carcinogenic product in food materials.

'The union minister of state for health said in the Rajya Sabha that magnesium carbonate has been banned in India due to its carcinogenic effect on the health of people under the Food and Adulteration Act, 1955. It is a criminal offence to use the substance in any food article,' said the petition filed by Jain.

Magnesium carbonate are used in popular brands of chewing tobacco, said the petition.

But despite being aware of the ill effects of the products, the government and health ministry had been permitting the companies to use the product in chewing tobacco, said Jain.

Thousands of people reportedly die every year consuming chewing tobacco with the banned substance.

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