

## **Hookah bars to be banned, Maharashtra govt introduces bill**

Three months after the Kamala Mills fire, the state has introduced a bill to ban hookah. The government proposed to amend the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 (COTPA)'s application in Maharashtra.

The bill proposes a minimum imprisonment of one year extending up to three years if anyone is found running hookah parlours. The fine will be a minimum of Rs 50,000 and maximum Rs 1 lakh, it states.

“No person shall, either on his own or on behalf of any other person, open or run any hookah bar in any place including the eating house,” state the Bill. The proposed law allows any police officer of the rank of assistant inspector or above “to seize any material or article used as a subject or means of hookah bar”.

After COTPA is amended, an eating-house will have to be defined as per the Maharashtra Police Act. This means a place where public are admitted, and where any kind of food or drink is supplied for consumption on the premises by any person owning or having an interest in or managing such place, and includes a refreshment room, boarding house, coffee house or a shop where any kind of food or drink is supplied to the public for consumption in or near such shop but does not include “a place of public entertainment”.