



KARNATAKA

Renewal of lapsed tobacco licences sought



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Pratap Simha, MP, speaks to Tobacco Board Chairman on the issue

Mysuru MP Pratap Simha has urged Tobacco Board Chairman Y. Raghunadha Babu to renew the lapsed tobacco licences and permit the shifting of barns.

Mr. Simha said he had met the Tobacco Board Chairman and had a detailed discussion on the issue while expressing confidence that the permission for renewal of licences that had lapsed more than four years ago as well as shifting of barns will be granted soon.

The MP said he had also thanked Mr. Babu for reducing the penalty on unauthorised tobacco from 10 per cent to 5 per cent of the proceeds during the ensuing auction season.

Sources in the Tobacco Board in Mysuru said they were yet to receive any instructions on renewal of lapsed tobacco licenses or shifting of barns.

Though the Board renews licences till the third year after it has lapsed, registration of licences will not be permitted if the licensee comes after the fourth year. "There is normally three years' time for the licensee to renew the licence if it lapses. We will renew if they come in the fourth year. But, if they don't come in the fourth year, there will be no more registration for them", said an official.

The main reasons for the licensee not to renew their license is their debts including bank loans and their inability to further invest money in the barn and grow tobacco again. "Every year, there will be around 10 to 15 such farmers in each platform, who will not be able to renew their licences. The accumulated numbers may be more than 150 now", the official said.

Several tobacco farmers, who are not interested in cultivating tobacco, dismantle their barns and sell their licences. Thousands of licences have been shifted so far. Most of these are the tobacco farmers, who give up tobacco cultivation, and shift to alternative crops. However, inter-state shifting of barns is not allowed as it would affect the interests of local farmers.

President of Federation of VFC Tobacco Growers Federation of Karnataka Javare Gowda said the Board normally permits shifting of barns and also renewal of licences till the third year after it has lapsed.

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