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## Loose liquor flows freely at Russel Market

Shops allowed to sell only bottled liquor, sell pegs and pouches of spirit as well

RATUL SUR

Bangalore, Oct 24—Illegal sale of loose liquor is a common sight in Russel Market. According to Karnataka Excise Act, 1944 licensed shops can sell only bottled liquor. Yet from the early hours of the day till late at night when the shops close, the sale of loose liquor continues.

Loose liquor is being sold mainly in plastic glasses and in pouches, the cost being determined according to quality and quantity. Whisky is sold at Rs. 11 per peg while rum is sold at Rs. 14, depending on the quality. They also sell gin at Rs. 18 per peg.

**"The customers are addicted to alcohol, though they can barely afford it," said V.M. Thirurangan, a liquor shop owner at Russel Market.**

Mohammad Abbas, a resident of this area and a regular customer



Loose liquor being sold openly.

Google images

said that it is the high price of the bottled liquor that compels him to purchase loose liquor. He said, "I earn only Rs. 100 per day and it is impossible for me to afford a full

bottle. I need it badly." V.M. Thirurangan, the shop owner explained that his customers are mostly from the lower strata of society and lead a very strenuous

life. He said that they are addicted to alcohol, though they can barely afford it. "People used to come here and ask for alcohol with credit. They never cleared the

credit. I was compelled to start this system." Krishnamurthy, another liquor store owner, agreed.

But other shopkeepers in the area are against this practice.

Prabhu, a garment shop owner said that customers of the liquor shop often drink alcohol in front of his shop and create a nuisance.

"This is an offence under Sec.13 (f) of Karnataka Excise Act, 1944", said the Deputy Commissioner of State Excise, L.N.Mohankumar. He said that any shop found guilty of such an offence, is booked and a case registered against them. A penalty is also imposed, that ranges from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 50,000. He added that there is no provision for purchase of loose liquor. He said that in the last excise year, seven cases had been booked from the Shivajinagar area. If a shop gets caught in a second offence, its license may be cancelled, he added.

Only registered pubs and restaurants in the city are allowed to sell loose liquor, during a stipulated time.

## K.R. Market still hitting the jackpot

Ban on lotteries since September 28, but tickets continue to sell at K.R. market

SUPRIYA KHANDEKAR

Bangalore, Oct 24—Stalls in K.R. Market are selling banned lottery tickets although all types of lottery tickets, other than the Karnataka State Lottery, have been banned in the state, as of September 28, 2007.

The State had issued a notification on March 27 of this year under the provisions of the Lottery (Regulation) Act on the ban of lotteries. With this, the sale of all lotteries - paper, internet and online, had been banned.

The Karnataka High Court had passed a judgement in favour of a state government notification on May 8, 2007 banning lotteries in Karnataka. The judgement came after the state government had filed an application urging the court to vacate its earlier stay following petitions from Arunachal Pradesh and the All India Federation of Gaming and Allied Industries, who

had challenged the notification, that made it a 'lottery-free' state.

Lucky Lottery Center is one of the stalls selling lottery tickets. Its owner, Rehman, said that he does not care about the ban and will still sell tickets. He did not even know that the ban had been implemented.

**Rehman, owner of Lucky Lottery Center, in K.R. Market, is determined to continue the sale of lottery tickets, in spite of the ban, because his customers want it.**

He said that he only knew that such a ban had been proposed. But he is determined to continue the sale of the lottery tickets, because his customers want it.

Abdul, another lottery ticket seller in K.R. Market, said that he does not know about any ban on selling tickets. He said that he is scared of the police because they beat the hawkers for selling tickets and tell them not to sell. But he still sells tickets to earn his livelihood.

"I like playing lottery. I can win more and more. A ban cannot stop me from playing," said Azam Ali, a regular lottery ticket customer at Lucky Lottery Center. He said that he does not mind playing the Karnataka State lottery, but purchasing tickets from K.R. Market is more convenient for him, and the Karnataka State Lottery is not available here. He added that the urge of earning more and more always brings him back to these shops.

Azizulla Baig, Director of the Small Savings and Lottery Department, refused to comment.

## KSPCB website uninformative

DIELLE D'SOUZA

Bangalore, Oct 24—The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) website has not updated pages in its air control section in more than three years. The first date for which information is available on these pages is August 19, 2004. The website is supposed to record and provide the public with information about air quality, regularly.

Lokeshwari, Scientific Officer at Central Laboratory, KSPCB said that the monitoring of air quality is done 24/7 at the six stations in Bangalore. After initially saying the website was updated daily, she mentioned that it was updated twice a week.

Regarding this matter, she said that updating was done district-wise and the Central Laboratory

only handles the six stations that come under it: Amco batteries; Victoria Hospital, City Market; Yeshwantpura Police Station; Graphite India Limited; K.H.B Industrial Area; Yelahanka and Peenya Industrial Estate, Peenya. But on the website, information for Amco batteries Station, Victoria Hospital, Yeshwantpura Police

station and Peenya Industrial Estate was updated only seven days ago, while K.H.B Industrial Area and Graphite India station was updated 5 days ago.

Laxmikant, the Assistant Environmental Officer, KSPCB said, "Once a month or quarterly they should update but I am not sure." Mr. Balagangadhar, the Chief Scientific Officer was out of station and unavailable for comment.

