

# Ban on smoking in public

THE Federal Government in 2009 introduced significant legislations in terms of banning smoking in public areas and restricting promotional activities of cigarette manufacturers.

The banning of smoking in public places includes places such as hospitals, dispensaries, educational institutions, flights, trains, buses, offices, conferences, restaurants, clubs, gyms, airports, train stations, bus stops etc.

The Federal Government was the first to implement this ban by declaring the Parliament and other high profile offices in the federal capital smoke-free to send out the message that these measures should be taken seriously for the interest of non-smokers and the public.

Many smokers, including myself, have also welcomed these measures and lauded the approach of the Federal Government.

A leading cigarette manufacturer, whose main office is based in Islamabad has made its entire office smoke-free and removed the designated smoking areas, which were banned due to this legislation.

However, another leading manufacturer, an affiliate of a foreign cigarette manufacturing giant and manufacturer of some of the World's famous brands whose offices are spread all over the country including a 4 storey head office in Karachi has not even considered this legislation worthy of any significance.

It has continued to operate its designated smoking rooms in all its offices including the main office.

Even though, it would have been the easiest to implement this ban on its premises sadly, no heed was paid to the legislation banning smoking in public places.

If a company is not even serious about implementing the relevant legislation at its own premises, how can one expect it to comply with other restrictive laws on the cigarette industry such as ban on underage selling, marketing and selling restrictions, product regulations, fiscal, labour and competition laws?

DR. MUJAHID ALAM  
Lahore