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Naswar more injurious to health than smoking

The use of naswar causes lung, stomach and mouth cancers

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PESHAWAR

The famous maxim, 'a head without ecstasy is a donkey's head', is nowhere truer than in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) where the use of *naswar* (a tobacco derivative that is chewed to get high) is so common that those not habitual to it are considered to be boors.

According to official statistics more than 70 per cent of the people in K-P are in the habit of chewing *naswar*. According to the Pakistan Tobacco Board, there is a huge market for *naswar* in the province estimated at around Rs6 billion annually.

Famous for quality *naswar*, Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu, also export the product to Punjab and Sindh. There is a huge demand for *naswar* in Karachi, which has a large population of migrants from K-P.

Habib Gul, who has been

Over 70 per cent of the people in K-P use naswar

selling *naswar* in Peshawar's Dabgari Garden, said 20 years in the business had earned his product a brand name among *naswar* users.

"We use fine ingredients and the best quality tobacco, although it is quite expensive but still we want to produce quality products to have an edge over our competitors,"

Gul said.

Naswar is popular among all age groups from 12 year olds to septuagenarians. Women

are also among *naswar* addicts but it is more popular among the younger lot who emulate their elders.

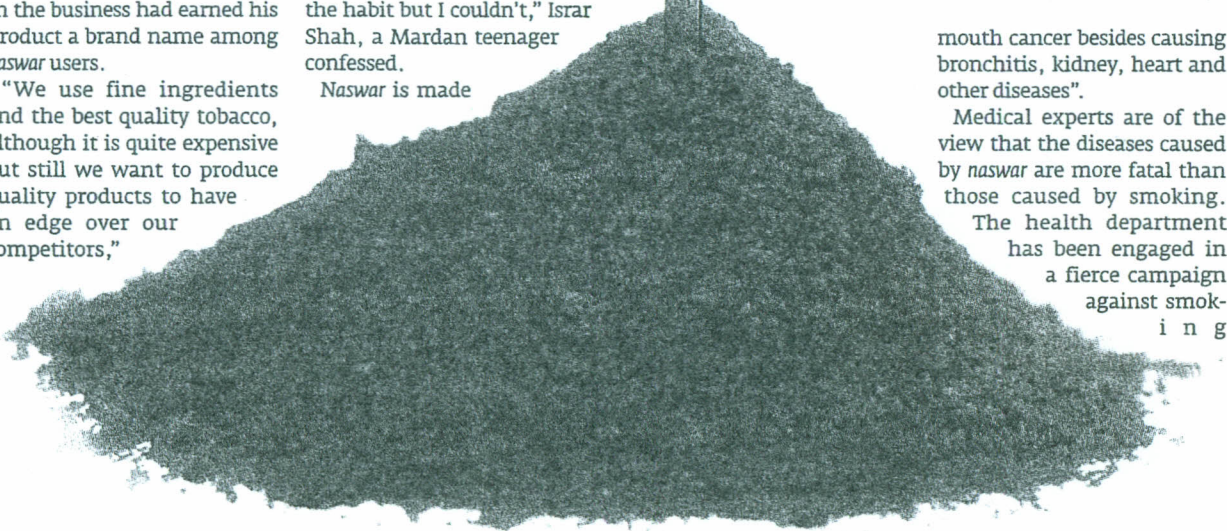
"I tried it only for fun initially but later I got addicted to it. I tried to get rid of the habit but I couldn't," Israr Shah, a Mardan teenager confessed.

Naswar is made

from

fresh tobacco leaves, calcium oxide and wood ash. Senior medical practitioner and a

100% guaranteed
ecstasy



chest specialist, Prof (Dr) Mukhtar Zaman Afridi said, "the use of *naswar* causes lung, stomach and

"We use fine ingredients and best quality tobacco to have an edge over our competitors

A seller of naswar **Habib Gul**

mouth cancer besides causing bronchitis, kidney, heart and other diseases".

Medical experts are of the view that the diseases caused by *naswar* are more fatal than those caused by smoking.

The health department has been engaged in a fierce campaign against smoking

through the print and electronic media but has failed to run a similar campaign against the use of *naswar*.