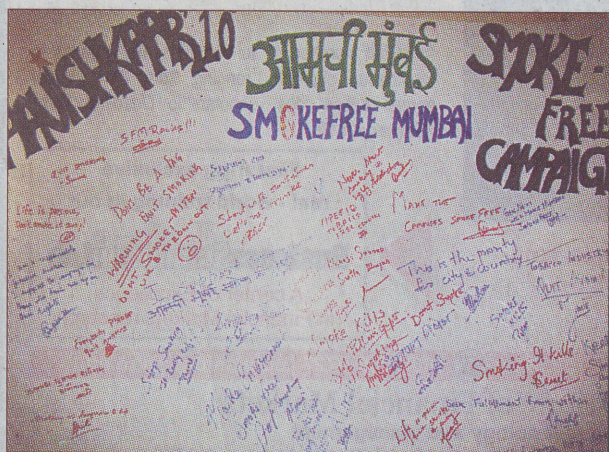


Non-smokers to cough up a protest for campaign



■ A signature campaign started by doctors and students as part of Seth GS Medical College's fest Aavishkar against smoking.

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MUMBAI: The next time you are enjoying a smoke near your office building, don't be surprised if someone around you starts coughing noisily and, perhaps, deliberately too.

A group of NGOs have started a new campaign — 'Khaasi Sunao, Sutta Bhujhao' (Cough aloud, stub out cigarette) — to encourage non-smokers to get proactive about their right to breathe clean air.

"We want non-smokers to register their protest by coughing aloud and also educate smokers about the law that bans smoking in public places," said

Dr Surendra Shastri from Tata Memorial Hospital, which is actively involved with the NGOs who run the 'Smokefree Mumbai' campaign.

He added that teaser advertisements regarding the 'Khaasi...' campaign would be up on BEST buses and billboards soon.

The NGOs have tied up with Seth GS Medical College (attached to KEM Hospital) to reach out to youth and doctors.

On the first day of the medical college's fest Aavishkar, doctors and students started a signature campaign to garner support for their demand to increase the fine for violation of the smoking ban from Rs 200 to Rs 500.

"We hope to collect a lakh sig-

natures in the next two months. We will send the petition to health minister, Suresh Shetty," said Dr Ravikant Singh, a resident doctor at KEM.

He added they would approach other city colleges to get more students involved.

Dr Shastri said they hoped that KEM doctors would start educating patients about the ill effects of tobacco use along with providing treatment. "Research on smoking cessation has shown that doctors' advice is more effective as an intervention than counselling or medication to help people quit smoking," he said, adding that they hoped to collaborate with more medical and dental colleges in the future.