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Make larger pictorial warnings on tobacco : Modi to Health Ministry

SUNDAY, 05 APRIL 2015

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New Delhi: With the BJP-led NDA government receiving flak from all quarters, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday step down his foot and asked the Health Ministry to increase the size of pictorial warnings on tobacco product packets to 60 percent.

PM's statement comes amidst controversy over comments by BJP MPs, including those in a parliamentary panel, on the use of tobacco refusing to die down.

Earlier, the central government's had postponed the implementation of pictorial warnings that asked for more space on tobacco packaging from April 1.

A huge controversy had broken out after, BJP MP Dilip Gandhi, who heads a parliamentary panel on subordinate legislation, sparked a huge row after saying that there was no Indian study to confirm that use of tobacco led to cancer.

Another BJP's Lok Sabha member from Allahabad Shyama Charan Gupta had echoed Gandhi's statement claiming that there was no evidence to show that tobacco causes cancer.

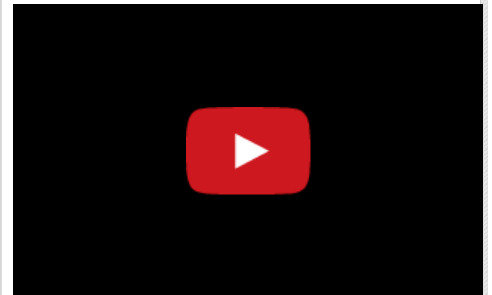
He also alleged that there was a global conspiracy to kill India's beedi industry.

Union Health Minister JP Nadda had dissociated the party and the government from Sarmah's statement and said, "We are very clear that the party (BJP) and the health ministry do not subscribe to his (Gupta) views. We dissociate with his statement."

PMK's A Ramadoss on Friday termed the tobacco lobby as one of the most powerful. He alleged it 'instigated' employees to speak against such proposed rules, claiming that "it would hurt the employees in tobacco growing and beedi manufacturing firms."



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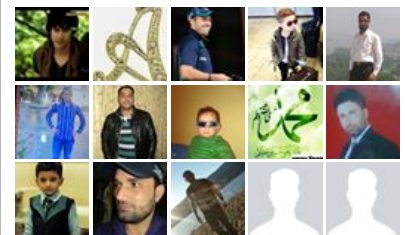
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