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Title: Need to ensure plain packing of tobacco products.

SHRI BAIJAYANT JAY PANDA (KENDRAPARA): Over the years, India has emerged as the 2nd largest consumer of tobacco products. At present, it is home to over 200 million smokers, and one-third of its population consumes some form of tobacco and it is responsible for over one million deaths in the country. The country also bears the significant economic burden of tobacco consumption with total economic costs attributable to tobacco use for persons aged 35-69 being Rs. 1,04,500 crore that accounts for 1.16 per cent of India's GDP.

According to research, standardization of cigarette packaging with removal of brand logos and imagery has shown to reduce their appeal, especially among youth. WHO's Convention on Tobacco Control recommends norms for packaging and labeling of tobacco products. India has ratified to this convention and hence, should stipulate for plain packaging of tobacco products.

Although the Government has increased the mandatory warnings to cover at least 85 per cent of the surface of cigarette packets, it is critical that this rule is strictly enforced and defaulters are duly penalized. It is important that this preventive measure of using plain packing for tobacco products is implemented to educate the citizenry about ill effects of tobacco and curb its high consumption.