FDA’s measure to address nicotine addiction

Why in news?

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The ‘U.S. Food and Drug Administration’-FDA has proposed to reduce the amount of nicotine in cigarettes to non-addictive levels.

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What is nicotine?

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- Nicotine is an extremely addictive substance that is present in cigarettes.
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- It does not directly cause cancers and other diseases.
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- But by keeping smokers addicted for the long term it exposes them to nearly 7,000 harmful chemicals every time they smoke.
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What is the significance of the proposal?

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- This is a new dimension towards addressing addiction & reducing cancer.
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- It may reduce the likelihood of new users (those in the 15-24 age group) getting addicted to cigarettes.
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- It increases the chances of habitual smokers being able to quit.
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What are the other popular smoking control measures?

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- E-cigarettes are considered an alternative to help smokers quit the habit.
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- A significant increase in the quitting rate among smokers has been seen with e-cigarette use.
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- FDA has made selling e-cigarettes to children illegal to effectively address the growing concern about children smoking them.
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- But the current FDA's proposal doesn't seek to regulate nicotine in e-cigarettes.
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What is the scenario in India?

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- India has followed most of the measures mentioned in the 'WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control guidelines.
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- Unlike the U.S, India had banned tobacco advertisements long ago.
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- It introduced pictorial warnings covering 85% of the front and back of packages of tobacco products.
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- It has also prohibited the use of positive descriptions like mild, flavoured on labels.
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- The number of tobacco users reduced by more than eight million between 2010 and 2016.
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- Legal prohibition of the sale of e-cigarettes to minors has not been done yet.
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What lies ahead?

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- There is the possibility that tobacco companies will aggressively target developing countries.

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- It is important for the Indian government to remain resolute in not losing the gains made in the last few years.
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Source: The Hindu

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