# Pictorial Warning on Tobacco Products

## Why in news?

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The Supreme Court has stayed an earlier order of the Karnataka High Court which struck down the central Rules on tobacco packaging.

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## What do the rules specify?

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- In 2014, the Ministry of Health notified amendments to The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Rules, 2008.
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- It was mandated that the specified health warning shall cover at least 85% of the principal display area of the package.
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- Of this, **60%** shall cover **pictorial** health warning and **25%** shall cover **textual** health warning.
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- This shall be positioned on the top edge of the package and in the same direction as the information on the principal display area.
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## How was the implementation?

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- The Rules were to come into effect from April 1, 2015.
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- However, there were cries of outrage from the tobacco industry.
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- Subsequently, the Lok Sabha Committee on Subordinate Legislation (CoSL) examined the government’s 2014 notification.
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- After debates and delays, the rules finally came into effect from April 1,

2016, with the government stipulated 85% warning itself.
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- Resultantly, India now has some of the world's most stringent rules on pictorial warnings on tobacco packets.
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## How effective was pictorial warning?

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- Health advocates have long argued for prominently displayed pictures of the impacts of tobacco consumption.
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- These, sometimes grotesque depictions of tumours, are more effective than smaller pictures or written warnings.
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- The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2016-17, released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare adds validity to this.
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- The study has found that the warnings play a role in motivating more than half the number of smokers who quit.
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- It highlighted that around 60% of cigarette smokers and around 5o% of bidi smokers had thought of quitting.
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- Another 46% of smokeless tobacco users had also thought of quitting because of the warnings on smokeless tobacco products.
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- The new rules have effectively controlled tobacco and saved around 80 lakh lives in India.
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## What is the recent petition?

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- A study on the economic burden of tobacco-related diseases in India said that the estimated total cost attributable to tobacco use was around Rs 1 lack crore in 2011.
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- This is 12% more than the combined state and central government expenditure on healthcare in that year, and 1.16% of India's GDP.

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- **HC** - However, the tobacco industry approached the Karnataka High Court.
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- It argued that no correlation had been established between tobacco and the diseases depicted on the packs.
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- It said the industry’s right to conduct business was being unfairly affected because of the warnings.
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- Accepting the contention, the court ruled that India should go back to the 40% warnings that existed before the notification of the 85% Rules.
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- **SC** - However the Supreme Court has stayed the Karnataka High Court's order.
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- It held that health of a citizen has primacy and he/she should be aware of that which can deteriorate the condition of health.
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### Source: Indian Express

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## Quick Fact

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## GATS

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- Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) was conducted by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences.
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- It was in association with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and the World Health Organisation.
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- It is a national representative survey helping countries fulfil the obligations under WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.
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