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**New pictorial warning on tobacco products from Dec 1**

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# New pictorial warning on tobacco products from Dec 1

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The new pictorial health warning for tobacco products, which was scheduled for implementation starting June 1, has been deferred by six months. It will now come into effect from December 1 this year, the Government has decided leading to allegations that the move was under pressure from the strong tobacco lobby.

The new warnings portraying a gory picture of a cancer-affected mouth was to be implemented from June 1.

The Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) alleged, "This deferment is definitely due to the tremendous pressure from the tobacco industry."

Through a Gazette Corrigendum, the Union Health Ministry on Monday said, "They (rules relating to the rotation of pictorial health warning as provided under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Packaging and Labeling (Amendment) Rules, 2010) shall come in to force on the 1st December of 2010."

"The tobacco industry claims that it is too cost-intensive for the Drums that

**'It was to be implemented from June 1 but the delay occurred due to pressure from the tobacco lobby'**

are used for packaging the cigarette packets (just an excuse) since the notification was made on March 5th 2010 and gave them ample time. Besides this excuse is contrary to the fact that the Tobacco Industry keeps



**ng causes mouth cancer,** changing packaging of cigarettes every couple of months...using some new marketing attraction," the organization working against use of tobacco products said. The VHAI also said that the current picture warnings

showing a scorpion on tobacco product labels are the most ineffective and it is mandatory to rotate the pictures every 12 months as per the law. The VHAI had conducted tests on the efficacy of such warning.

Rotation of pictorial warning on a periodic basis is a "Best Practice" being implemented in other countries like Australia, Belgium, Chile, Hong Kong as well. Brazil changes the pictures every five months.

In fact, the new pictorial warning was finalized after a field testing conducted by VHAI and Healis in eight

states in the country on request of the Government of India, wherein 98% respondents chose the picture of the cancer ridden mouth (which is to replace the current picture/son tobacco).

The deferment comes even as the government had replied in response to a starred question in the parliament on pack warnings that the implementation was to be from June 1, 2010, the VHAI said, added, "Why the sudden change? Has the Minister once again played into the hands of the powerful Tobacco industry and others with vested interests?"