

Ramadoss sets deadline for tobacco manufacturers



State home minister Jayant Patil and Union Health Minister

Anbumani Ramadoss at the 14th World Conference on tobacco. *Ganesh Shirsekar*

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AFTER much delay in the implementation of pictorial warnings on cigarette packs, Union Health Minister Dr Anbumani Ramadoss, on Sunday, finally announced May 31st as the deadline for all manufacturers to display the warnings.

Dr Ramadoss announced this at the inaugural function of the 14th World Conference on Tobacco or Health' at the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) where over 2,500 delegates— anti smoking advocates— from across the world attended.

"The decision to this effect was taken at a meeting of Group of Ministers (GoM) chaired by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, and hopefully this time it will sail through," said Dr Ramadoss.

The conference that was inaugurated by Maharashtra Governor SC Jamir and World Health Organization's Deputy Director General Anarfi Asamoah Baah, is organised by

the Salaam Bombay Foundation, Healis-Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health and Action Council against Tobacco—India in association with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and the WHO.

India is the second country among the developing world to host such a huge event. "It is our privilege to host this conference, as apart from India only one country from the developing world hosted this conference several years ago. India has the largest burden of both tobacco manufacturers and consumers. When most of the developed countries banned advertising of tobacco products, these manufactures trained their guns towards India, especially the young population," said Dr Ramadoss.

Dr Margerate Chan addressed the delegates about the tobacco menace and WHO'S MPOWER package. India along with 150 other countries ratified WHO's— Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) — the global tobacco treaty.