

E-cigarette ban will increase smuggling: TII

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NEW DELHI: Ban of electronic cigarettes in India will increase smuggling of such products, which have no assurance of source and quality standard, according to Tobacco Institute of India (TII).

TII, which represents leading cigarette manufacturers such as ITC, Godfrey Phillips and VST, also said prohibition of e-cigarettes would put India at "an enormous structural disadvantage versus countries that have espoused a balanced regulatory policy approach on the category".



An e-cigarette is a battery-operated device that uses liquid nicotine, propylene glycol, water, glycerin and flavour to give the user the sense of smoking a real cigarette.

The ENDS (Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems), commonly known as electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes have witnessed increasing consumer acceptance in India as is globally, it said in a statement.

"A ban on legal business in ENDS will pose a serious threat of illicit trade and large scale smuggling of these products in the country with no assurance of source and quality standard," TII said.

Prohibition would benefit illegal trade operators and promote foreign products owned by overseas entities in the absence of any domestic competition to challenge the illegal trade in these products, it added.

TII further said if a ban were to be imposed on ENDS, the domestic industry would stop all research and innovation in this area.

It would put India at a disadvantage against countries which would have not prohibited ENDS, it added.

"Therefore, all latent and emerging consumer demand for the product in the country would be met through the illicit route," TII claimed.

Citing WHO data, TII said the global market for ENDS in 2015 was around USD 10 billion and as per Euromonitor International, it is projected to cross USD 60 billion by 2030.

The health ministry is considering a ban on ENDS, of which e-cigarette is a prototype, after a technical committee evaluated recent research that said e-cigarettes were potentially lethal.

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