

## India should align tobacco production pattern with global demand: TII



The Hans India

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Tobacco Institute of India presenting progressive farmer awards to a tobacco farmer from Andhra Pradesh in Ongole on Friday

### HIGHLIGHTS

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Ongole (Prakasam District): Tobacco Institute of India Director Sharad Tandon observed that though India produces about 13% of the world's tobacco, its value share of exports is just 5%. If India aligns its production pattern with global demand, it will raise its share of export earnings substantially, he opined.

The Tobacco Institute of India presented its 22nd edition of TII Tobacco Farmers' Awards to 15 progressive farmers from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, including lifetime award to one farmer, best farmer awards to seven and recognition awards to seven farmers, honouring their exemplary performance, enhanced productivity levels, at a programme in Ongole on Friday.

TII director Sharad Tandon, Ongole MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy, Kandukuru MLA Mangunta Mahidhar Reddy, Tobacco Board vice-chairman Basavaraju, members Mareddy Subbareddy, Varaprasad and Dinesh and others also participated in the programme. Speaking on the occasion, Sharad Tandon explained that the Tobacco Institute of India instituted the awards in 1999, with a view to honour and encourage the cigarette leaf tobacco farming community.

He said that India is the world's second-largest tobacco producer and a leading exporter, with exports of leaf tobacco and tobacco products generating annual foreign exchange earnings of around Rs 6,500 crore. India exports around 50 per cent of its total FCV production. Although tobacco is grown on a small share of the country's farmland, the tobacco industry in India contributes around Rs 12 lakh crore to the economy, according to an ASSOCHAM study, he added.

Tandon said that India has become fourth largest illicit cigarette market in the world, resulting in an estimated annual revenue loss of more than Rs 15,000 crore to the government, as illegal cigarettes now represent about one-third of the Indian legal cigarette market. He said that they do not reduce demand for tobacco, but merely shift it from the legal tax-paid and regulation-compliant products to cheaper, tax-evaded regulation non-compliant illegal products.

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