

# India mulls plain packaging of cigarettes

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India is considering plain packaging of cigarettes in line with new Australian laws that ban all logos and brand descriptions, a top health official in New Delhi said on Wednesday.

Tobacco products in Australia will be sold in drab, uniform packaging with graphic health warnings from December in a ground-breaking move that has attracted worldwide interest.

"It is a good idea and can be pursued," Amal Pushp, director of [tobacco control](#) at the health ministry, told AFP. "We are watching the developments in Australia with interest."

His comments came after Australian and Indian health experts presented a report by the University of Melbourne that found 275 million Indians use tobacco, leading to nearly one million deaths a year.

India's health ministry welcomed the report and said that plain packaging as adopted by Australia could be taken up.

The [World Health Organization](#) has called on other countries to pass similar laws.

In plain packaging, graphic warnings are retained but all colour, imagery and corporate logos are taken off to reduce the appeal of smoking, especially among youngsters.

Manufacturers are allowed to print only the brand name on the pack in a

limited font size.

"The [tobacco industry](#) uses attractive packaging and aggressive marketing to lure people," K. Srinath Reddy, president of independent research group the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), told AFP.

"India must initiate legislation on plain packaging, which would have tremendous public health impact."

In 2009, India began printing graphic health warnings on cigarette packets and other [tobacco products](#).

One image attracted widespread publicity as it used an apparent picture of England footballer John Terry with a superimposed set of blackened lungs.

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