



Sir Dominic Asquith KCMG
British High Commissioner to India
British High Commission New Delhi
Shantipath, Chanakyapuri
New Delhi -110021,

Date -7-12-19

Dear Sir,

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ACTION AGAINST BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO P.L.C., LONDON AND
IMPERIAL TOBACCO LTD, BRISTOL (UK) AS THERE CIGARETTE BRANDS ARE BEING SMUGGLED INTO
INDIA UNABATED**

We (Shram) are a self-help group with a large number of doctors and professionals, working in the field of health and education since many years tirelessly building awareness campaigns against tobacco and alcohol. Objectives of Shram dictate us that we assist Govt in arriving at judicious decisions on all policy matters relating to the health of citizens. It is under this capacity we are writing you this letter.

It has been a matter of deep satisfaction that India has been at the forefront of tobacco control movement in the world. One of the many tobacco-control measures in India which had been appreciated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) has been the regulation which stipulates health warning along with gory images which covers 85% of both the sides of a cigarette packet. We believe that such a measure is a strong deterrent for youngsters and non-smokers to take up smoking. We along with other like-minded NGOs in India have therefore welcomed this regulation by the Govt. of India and have worked towards its enforcement in spite of the resistance we have faced from the tobacco industry.

We are however very alarmed to note that smuggled cigarettes brands like Benson & Hedges, Dunhill, Rothmans, 555, Gold Flake etc. manufactured by British American Tobacco P.L.C., London and West manufactured by Imperial Tobacco Ltd, Bristol (UK) which do not bear the mandatory 85% Front & Back Indian pictorial health warnings are freely available across India. We believe that cigarette smuggling into India of brands belonging to British American Tobacco P.L.C., London and Imperial Tobacco Ltd, Bristol (UK) is going on unabated with company officials turning a blind eye to this menace. In our market surveys we have found that more and more youngsters are taking up smoking by purchasing these well-known and attractive cigarette packets without the pictorial health warnings. The popularity of smuggled cigarettes amongst youth is further helped as these cigarettes, owing to evasion of all taxes, are available at a very cheap price. The availability of cheap smuggled brands without the health warnings manufactured by the British American Tobacco P.L.C., London and Imperial Tobacco Ltd,



Bristol (UK) greatly undermines the tobacco control effort of Govt. of India as well as the numerous NGOs involved in anti-tobacco movement in India.

Sir, we would like to inform you that as per Cigarette and other Tobacco Products (prohibition of advertisement and regulation of trade and commerce, production, supply and distribution) Act, 2003, of Govt. of India the trade and commerce **including import of cigarette packages without the mandatory Indian warnings occupying 85% of the front and back part is prohibited** and anyone who violates these laws face imprisonment up to two years besides monetary fines.

We would request you to take up the matter with British American Tobacco p.l.c., London and Imperial Tobacco Ltd, Bristol (UK) so that these companies stop turning blind eye to cigarette smugglers and takes effective steps to ensure that their smuggled cigarette brands are not available in India.

We seek your support to fight this menace and these steps will go long way in realizing anti tobacco objectives set by WHO

Yours sincerely,



Dr Mukul Bajpai

Associate Prof

Founding Member Shram

cc.

- Mr Jack Bowles
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Note -This letter has been drafted and edited by our editorial team and has approval of members of
Shram