



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## Merchants of Death

Sir, — This refers to your edit, "Merchants of Deaths" (October 30), and the article, "Boomerang Effect of Light Weapons" (October 31). The alarming figure of over two million deaths worldwide, caused by light weapon proliferation in 1991 is dwarfed by the three million deaths caused globally by tobacco proliferation every year. The bigger merchants of death, therefore, are the manufacturers and traders of tobacco working hand in glove with the government.

The government policy of allowing proliferation of tobacco trade kills one million people per year in India alone from maladies like cancer and heart attack. This fact is well known in health circles but well guarded from the policymakers of the country by the tobacco industry. The tobacco industry has even got the government to classify tobacco as a food product and enjoys consequent subsidies. The government allows it to be sold to children and teenagers, at an age when it is easiest to get addicted. It is time we stop tobacco proliferation.

Dr. JAYANT S. VAIDYA

National Organisations  
for Tobacco Eradication.

Bombay.