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Judul : Activists demand bigger, scarier warnings on cigarette packs
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A huge cigarette pack replica showing the picture of a baby in critical condition was installed on Jl. Jend. Sudirman in Central Jakarta during a car free day event on Sunday. Near the top of the box, there was a clear sign reading "show the bigger truth". The cigarette box replica had been installed by a group of around 200 young people who think cigarette companies have not been frank enough about the dangers of cigarette smoke to consumers in pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs. The young campaigners demanded that the government require cigarette companies to put larger and more chilling pictures on cigarette packs. "Who will quit smoking simply because they see the picture of a man smoking a cigarette?" 23-year-old campaign participant Raymas told The Jakarta Post. He was referring to a common pictorial health warning that shows a man smoking a cigarette with skulls showing through the smoke. The picture intends to tell people that smoking can lead to poor health and cause poverty. Regulations to put pictorial warnings on cigarette boxes have been in force since 2014 under a 2009 law. But the warnings were considered ineffective in discouraging smoking, as the pictures were deemed insufficiently scary and too small, said Hasna Pradityas, 25, an activist with the Smoke Free Agents group that organized Sunday's campaign to raise awareness among the people of Greater Jakarta. "Many of our youths continue to smoke despite the warnings," she said. While the pictorial warnings had been effective in educating smokers about the dangers of smoking, they should look scarier and be larger to have a significant impact on smokers behavior; an impact that could eventually make smokers quit the habit. A study by the Indonesian Association of Public Health revealed in 2014 that 83.9 percent of smokers surveyed said they realized the dangers of smoking after seeing the pictorial warnings on cigarette boxes. However, the study suggested that more graphic warnings produced a stronger effect. Pictures of organs affected by lung cancer, throat cancer or mouth cancer are among those with the most powerful effect. The lung cancer picture, for example, convinced 89.5 percent of respondents of the need to stop smoking. The same picture prevented 90.2 percent of teenage respondents from picking up smoking and convinced 91.5 percent of ex-smokers to stay away from cigarettes. But the government could still increase the effect of the pictures by, for example, increasing their size or making them more shocking. Existing regulations require Indonesian cigarette companies to allocate 40 percent of the space on a cigarette pack for a pictorial warning, which is small compared to rules that apply in neighboring countries. Thailand requires 85 percent of the space on a cigarette box to be allocated for the pictorial warning. In Brunei it is 75 percent, in Malaysia and Cambodia 55 percent. Meanwhile, Singapore, the Philippines and Vietnam all demand companies allocate 50 percent. "Therefore, the government should increase the size of the pictorial warnings and the content should be scarier," Hasna said.