

Delhi to shut down all units dealing in single-use plastic items from Jul 1

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The Union government is banning single-use plastic from July 1st, 2022. Manufacturing, importing, stocking, distribution, sale and use of single-use plastic, including polystyrene and expanded polystyrene commodities will be banned effectively from July 1, 2022 across the country.

The Delhi Environment Department will also run a campaign starting July 1 to ensure compliance with the ban on 19 identified single-use plastic in the national capital, and will close down all manufacturers, suppliers, stockists, dealers, and sellers found violating the orders.

The 19 identified SUP items include earbuds, plastic sticks for balloons, flags, candy sticks, ice-cream sticks, polystyrene (thermocool), plates, cups, glasses, forks, spoons, knives, straws, trays, wrapping or packaging films around sweets boxes, invitation cards, cigarette packets, plastic or PVC banners less than 100 micron, and stirrers.

A senior government official said, "The department has issued strict directions to manufacturers, stockists, suppliers and distributors of single-use plastic items to ensure zero inventory of the 19 SUP items. Within the first week of July, those who do not maintain a zero inventory will be shut down."

The official said to ensure strict enforcement, the department plans regular inspections to ascertain compliance by manufacturers, brand owners, suppliers, and stockists registered with the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC).

The official further said authorities are inspecting and identifying industrial and redevelopment areas to shut down units manufacturing SUP items illegally.

The DPCC has also asked the Sriram Institute of Industrial Research to conduct a survey to identify littering hotspots and quantify plastic waste generation in the national capital to phase out of 19 SUP items. The survey will cover all 11 districts in Delhi and will have to be completed within four months.

The institute has been tasked with surveying all renowned, major commercial establishments, malls, market places, shopping centres, cinema houses, restaurants, tourist locations, places of worship, colleges, schools, office complexes, hospitals, and other institutions.

It will have to prepare an inventory of stockists, retailers, sellers, street vendors, vegetable and fruit markets and importers dealing in bulk in SUP items and conduct district-wise mapping of generation, collection, and processing of plastic waste, and identify producers engaged in their production in the informal sector.

Meanwhile, the manufacturers of small packaged fruit juices and dairy products want the government to extend the implementation date of the ban till proper infrastructure for producing paper straws locally is developed, saying importing such straws is not economically viable.

Making Corporate India Comply

Parle Agro CEO Schauna Chauhan said there is no infrastructure at present in India to be able to produce the quantum of straws required for the industry. We have started importing paper straws to ensure the new rules are met by its deadline. However, importing is not a sustainable option."

Seeking a six-month extension to help straw manufacturers in India build adequate capacity to manufacture and supply biodegradable straws to beverage companies, Chauhan said, "We have already begun work on developing many local MSMEs to be able to cater to our volume of biodegradable straws."

Expressing similar sentiments, Dabur India executive director-operations Shahrukh Khan said, "While some state regulators have permitted use of biodegradable plastic straws and paper straws, the infrastructure for producing these straws at scale is non-existent in India today. So, we would urge the government to extend the implementation date of the ban till proper infrastructure for producing paper straws locally is developed."