

Delhi- 14 plastic bag, packaging material mfg units get closure notice

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14 units manufacturing plastic bags and packaging material that are less than the permitted thickness were on Monday issued closure notice by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC).

An 'environmental compensation' amounting to ₹1.22 crore was also imposed on the defaulting units in Narela and Bawana industrial areas that were making plastic bags which were less than 75 microns and packaging material that was less than 50 microns in thickness in violation of the Plastic Waste Management (PWM) Rules.

The Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited was also directed to disconnect the power supply to them.

In addition, the DPCC also imposed a fine of ₹1.3 lakh on 26 units engaging in the sale and use of the banned single-use plastic items in markets.

Teams of urban local bodies, revenue department and the DPCC have inspected 5,023 units since the countrywide ban on 19 single-use plastic (SUP) items came into force on July 1, as per an action taken report. Of them, 2,484 were found violating the ban or PWM rules

The report stated that a total of 462 challans amounting to ₹2.59 crore have been issued so far.

The banned items are: 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 of less than 100 microns and stirrers.

Plastic carry bags of thickness less than 75 microns are also prohibited under the Plastic Waste Management Rules and their thickness will have to be increased to 120 microns from December 31.

Plastic wrapping material less than 50 microns in thickness and plastic sachets used for selling and storing tobacco, pan masala and gutkha are also prohibited.

Notably, Delhi generates 1,060 tonnes of plastic waste per day. SUP is estimated to be 5.6 per cent (or 56 kg per metric tonnes) of the total solid waste in the capital.

The pollution control body has set up a control room to monitor the implementation of the ban on 19 identified single-use plastic items, which will receive all complaints related to the violation of the SUP ban and direct enforcement teams to take action against them.

Grievances regarding the infractions can also be lodged at the control room through the Green Delhi application of the Delhi government or the "SUP-CPCB" application of the Central Pollution Control Board.

When the ban on the SUP items came into effect on July 1, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai had said that his government would be lenient towards those violating the ban for the initial 10 days and focus on creating awareness against the use of such commodities and promoting their alternatives.

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He stated that authorities would issue warning notices to units found violating the ban on the 19 SUP items till July 10 and punitive action would be taken thereafter against repeat offenders.

Rai has also warned that infractions will invite a fine of up to ₹1 lakh or a jail term of up to five years or both under the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

To ensure the enforcement of the ban, the revenue department and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee have constituted 33 and 15 teams, respectively.

While the DPCC has to ensure compliance with the ban in conforming areas, the MCD and other local bodies are responsible for its implementation in the informal sector.

According to Rai, the urban local bodies like MCD will act against the defaulting units according to their bylaws, while the revenue department will take action under the Environment Protection Act.

A three-day fair was also organised at the Thyagraj Stadium in the national capital to promote alternatives to SUP items.

To spread awareness about the ban on SUP items, the Delhi government will impart training to the members of eco-clubs in the capital. There are around 2,000 eco-clubs in Delhi.

In collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, the training programme will be held on July 19.