

No more plastic bags in Maharashtra from March 18



The Maharashtra Cabinet has approved the state's environment department's proposal to ban the usage of plastic carry bags and certain other non-disposable plastic items across the state from March 18 ? the event of Gudi Padwa.

In a bid to stop the extensively serious plastic pollution, the Maharashtra state government decided to impose a ban on certain plastic items from the Marathi New Year, 'Gudhi Padwa', on March 18. The proposal of banning usage of plastic carry bags and some other plastic items was made by the Environment Ministry of Maharashtra; and in a significant decision, the Maharashtra cabinet approved the proposal. Till date, Maratha government had already banned plastic carry bags thinner than 50 microns and smaller than 8x12 inches, but absolute ban of these bags will be implemented soon. The government cited environmental and public health concerns for taking the significant step which would be strictly enforced in a time-bound manner.

As per official statement, plastic carry bags, thermocol and plastic plates, cups, forks, bowls and spoons are likely to be banned in Maharashtra. The ban can also include items such as flex boards, non-woven polypropylene bags, banners, flags, decorative door hangings, plastic sheets and all types of plastic wrappers. However, the plastic ban will be made in two phases to swiftly get rid of plastic waste. A short-term and a long-term policy have been drafted to tackle the plastic menace. The highlight of the ban is that both manufacturers and users will be penalized. The punishment is a fine ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 25,000 and a jail term of three months.

The decision will be enforced in urban and rural areas and all municipal corporations, municipal councils, district collectors and chief executive officers of the zilla parishads have been sensitised to ensure proper implementation of the rule. Necessary changes will be made with amendments to the Solid Waste Management Act 2016 and the Plastic Carry Bags (Manufacture and Usage) Rules 2006. The plastic ban will help in curbing problems that have risen recently ? like plastic bags clogging water pipes, non-recyclable waste and a major threat for marine life and the environment.