

Himachal Pradesh is set to impose a total ban on the use of plastic bags from Oct 2 2009, as per state Environment Minister J.P.Nadda(Newsreport extract IANS)

“From **Oct 2**, there would a complete ban on the production, storage, use, sale and distribution of all types of polythene bags made of non-biodegradable materials. But the ban will not include those bags used for packing food items like milk and cereals,” The government is also planning to include all plastic materials like disposable plates, cups and glasses in the ambit of the ban, The ban on use of coloured polythene bags manufactured from recycled plastic was initially imposed Jan 1, 1999. Later in 2004, the ban was imposed under Section 7(h) of the State Non-Biodegradable Garbage (Control) Rules on the use of small polythene bags having thickness less than 70 microns and size less than 18”x12”. Now there is total ban on the use of polythene bags of all types and sizes. Before the partial implementation of the ban in 2004, polythene pollution was a major problem in the state. As per environment minister during the monsoon, the rainwater brought along heaps of polythene bags and other non-biodegradable material that choked most of the municipal drains. Under the Himachal Pradesh Non-Biodegradable Garbage (Control) Act of 1995, any violator would face a fine up to Rs.25000. The minimum fine has been fixed at Rs.500.

The government is now exploring the option of promoting paper and jute bags in the state. Special sensitisation drives would be launched in the state to educate the common man about the ecological hazards and about which type of carry bags are environment-friendly. The tourists would be provided jute bags at various entry points in the state,” he said. The state would soon have its environmental master plan to tackle critical areas of environmental degradation. The master plan will include a baseline study of the environmental vulnerabilities and details of measures to tackle problems mainly related to urban solid waste, industrial pollution and ecological degradation caused by hydropower projects,