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# Shun plastic as penalty to remain at ₹5,000 for now

FINE ROW State wants steep penalty; BMC wants it to be from ₹200 to ₹1,000

*PROPOSAL TO REDUCE THE FINE IS TABLED BEFORE THE LAW COMMITTEE OF THE CIVIC BODY. IT WILL BE THEN SENT TO BMC'S STANDING COMMITTEE*

MUMBAI: Last week, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had proposed to bring down the fine on the usage of banned plastic items to ₹200 from the existing ₹5,000.

However, on Tuesday officials from the state government said they are unsure if the civic body is authorised to reduce the fine, and thus, it is unlikely that citizens would be relieved from shelling out a higher fine when the ban is implemented from June 23.

The proposal to reduce the fine is tabled before the law committee of the civic body. It will be then forwarded to the standing committee of the BMC. After getting a nod from the standing committee, the general body will take a final call on the proposal.

Anil Diggikar, principal secretary of the state environment department said, "I am unsure if the BMC can take a call on reducing the fine amount for offenders."

Civic officials confirmed that offenders caught violating the ban will be charged ₹5,000 until the proposal to reduce the fine is finally approved by general body, which is no time soon. They said that the fine amount is impractical because of which they have proposed to reduce the penalty amount.

Nidhi Choudhari, deputy municipal commissioner of BMC, said, "Since every citizen will be fined for carrying the banned plastic, it is necessary that the fine amount is made reasonable. We have asked the law committee to reduce the fine amount to ensure that the ban is properly implemented."

According to the BMC proposal, the fine amount ranges between ₹200 and ₹1000 for first time offenders.

The civic body wants to vary the fine from citizens, milk and fruit vendors, general stores and malls and hotels. While it has been proposed that citizens should be fined ₹ 200, the fine amount for malls and hotels could be ₹1000.

The state had issued a notification on March 23 this year, imposing a ban on purchase, sale, distribution and storage of single use disposal plastic. An extension of three months was given to implement the ban.

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20 Jun 2018 | Mumbai | *Badri Chatterjee badri.chatterjee@hindustantimes.com*

# MPCB closes 19 plastic bag units

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*The extension of ban was for the common man carrying plastic and not on manufacturing. But our concerns arise out of misinterpretation of notification by authorities. AKHILESH BHARGAVA, All India Plastics Manufacturing Association*

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MUMBAI: With Maharashtra's ban on various plastic products coming into effect from this weekend, state environment agency has started punitive action against manufacturers of plastic bags.

The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) said it has forced 19 large-scale plastic bag manufacturing units to shut in the past two weeks.

The units were located in Pune and in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region – Kalyan, Ambarnath, Thane and Dombivli. The units have been fined ₹5,000 each as a preliminary offence for continuing to manufacture plastic bags.

MPCB has also seized five trucks carrying 50 tonnes of plastic from Daman. "Directions have been issued by state environment department and MPCB to plastic bag manufacturers in the state to stop production. Our teams have been deployed across major cities to inspect such units. Once the ban comes into effect, units violating state's notification will be pulled up and closure notices will be issued," said P Anbalagan, member secretary, MPCB.

"Based on Bombay HC orders, the storage of plastic bags is allowed for the next three months. The manufacturing units or private companies have to ensure plastic is recycled but manufacturing or transportation of these banned products is strictly prohibited."

On March 23, the state promulgated a notification confirming the ban under the Maharashtra Plastic and Thermocol Products (Manufacture, Usage, Sale, Transport, Handling and Storage) Notification, 2018.

Anbalagan added that MPCB will tie up with other state government departments, municipal bodies, and police personnel to ensure strict implementation of the ban.

"We have been told CCTV cameras have been installed at several locations by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to spot the use of plastic bags and other banned products. We will discuss similar strategies with other municipal corporations in the state," said Anbalagan.

A meeting is slated later this week with the state environment minister as to how MPCB will plan penalties from this weekend for first-time offenders.

"Environment minister has called a meeting with all implementing agencies on Friday where instructions will be given on how to enforce the notification," said Anbalagan.

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