

PLASTIC BAN

Thermocol decorations set to be allowed till end of Ganesh festival

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WITH TWO days to go for the implementation of the ban on single-use plastic items across Maharashtra, the state environment department (SED) is likely to allow the use of the thermocol decorations till the end of the 10-day Ganesh festival in September. The department is also likely to permit plastic packaging by retail-

ers. At Wednesday's meeting of an expert committee set up to advise the department on the challenges in implementing the plastic ban, various issues raised by manufacturers of plastic bags and thermocol decorative items were discussed.

"Our initial demand was to allow the use of thermocol products for decoration till December. But now, we have asked the government to allow us to sell the existing stock of thermocol decorative

items till the Ganesh festival ends," said Kiran Unhavane of the Thermocol Fabricator Traders and Decorators Association. He added that they are hopeful of getting the relaxation from the government.

"We have heard their grievances and it will be put forth before the Empowered Committee headed by environment minister who will take a final call on it," said an official. The expert committee seemed inclined to allow the relaxation, said sources.

Department officials said discussions were also held about the confusion over the use of the plastic for packaging at the manufacturing and at retail levels. "We will issue a clarification about this to clear doubts," said an official. Sources said packaging is likely to be categorised as industrial and retail. While there was no proposed ban on industrial packaging, retail-level packaging may also be allowed, with certain riders.

