

TN to go plastic-free from 2019: CM

Palaniswami said the ban followed recommendations of an experts group formed by J Jayalalithaa

CHENNAI: Vowing to create a 'plastic free Tamil Nadu' to protect the environment, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on World Environment Day announced that the State government would ban the production, storage, sale and use of plastics from January 1, 2019.

There will be no exemption based on thickness of the plastic material, he said and declared that plastic papers, covers, plates, bottles, cups, water packets, straw, plastic bags and ropes would be banned. Their production, sale, storage and use would be banned under the Environment (Protection) Act 1986, the Chief Minister added.

Making a statement under Rule 110 in the Assembly, Palaniswami said the government would not enforce the ban immediately as it wants to give the public and traders time to get ac-

PLASTIC PREDICAMENT

■ Ban applies for plastic papers, covers, plates, bottles, cups, water packets, straws, plastic bags and ropes



■ Government use of banana and lotus leaves, bark of Arecanut

■ Exemption for plastic covers used for milk, curd, oil and medicines

■ Production, storage, sale and use banned

■ No exemption based on thickness

■ Time till the end of this year for people and traders to move to plastic free environment

■ Other states like Nagaland, Maharashtra and Jharkhand also announced on Tuesday that they are set to become plastic-free, while Uttarakhand is set to ban the use of polythene from July 31

customed to the use of biodegradable cloth bags and paper covers.

He however said that plastic covers used for milk, curd, oil and medicines would be exempted from the ban and the use of

banana, Arecanut bark and lotus leaves instead of plastic would be encouraged. Coming out with this announcement on World Environment Day, Palaniswami said the ban followed the recom-

mendations of an experts group formed by former Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa.

The experts panel had recommended a ban on use and throw

of biologically non-degradable items like plastic papers, plates and cups, he said. The accumulation of plastic waste di-

verts the course of water bodies besides leading to stagnation. It also impacts the flow

of sewage water, besides affecting the ground water table and polluting

water.

He also said the stagnation of rain water because of plastic leads to mosquito breeding causing diseases like malaria and dengue. They choke the storm water drains leading to floods

Edappadi K Palaniswami, Chief Minister

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and affecting soil fertility. Plastic also leads to air pollution when they are burnt and causes death of cattle and wild animals which consume them. The non-biodegradable property of plastic makes it impossible to eliminate them and it causes great harm to human health and lives, the Chief Minister stated.

Recalling the rain water harvest scheme that was implemented successfully with people's cooperation and participation, he said the scheme helped raise ground water table. "The scheme for plastic-free Tamil Nadu should be presented to the next generation in a similar manner, Palaniswami added

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VIT University V-P GV Selvam (right) receives the award from CM Edappadi K Palaniswami

State government honours VIT University for eco-initiatives

VELLORE: The Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) University recently bagged the State government's green award for 2017 for its contribution towards increasing the green cover, rejuvenating the Palar river and conserving natural resources. VIT vice-president GV Selvam received the award from Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, in the presence of Forest Minister Dindigul C Srinivasan and Chief Secretary Girija Vaidyanathan, a university release stated. VIT launched a Green cover project in 2008, aimed at restoring water bodies, increasing green cover and creating traffic islands in Vellore. To alleviate the impact of summer heat, the university planted saplings in and around Vellore while the Palar cleanup project envisages a dirt and plastic free river.