

# Plastic ban will be a boon for farmers, says minister

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Coimbatore: The ban on single-use plastics will not only reduce pollution and ease solid waste management, it will also benefit farmers, minister for environment KC Karuppannan said here on Saturday.

Farmers will benefit from the ban as most of the alternatives to plastic products like sugarcane plates and areca nut plates are produced from agricultural products, he said while speaking at the inaugural of the regional workshop to implement successful ban on single-use plastics in the city.

Explaining about the struggles farmers undergo, the minister said that the ban, in a way will encourage the farmers to continue their work in farms without having to look for employment in other sectors.

Acknowledging that about 20% of plastic manufacturers will be affected by the ban, Karuppannan said the state government was willing to provide all support, including financial assistance to the manufacturers, who want to make biodegradable products.

"The state government has given permission to use 80% of plastic products. Milk packets,

oil packets and packets of branded grocery items are not banned. To manage the waste generated by such products, the government is planning to set up kiosks that will issue money upon depositing the empty packets," he said.

Meanwhile, speaking about the pollution level in the state, the minister said that both

air and water pollution has come down in the recent times and Tamil Nadu is one of the least polluted states. "To monitor air pollution level, monitoring systems were installed in the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) offices in all the districts. We are planning to install such monitors at more places at a cost of



**ALTERNATIVES GALORE:** A workshop to implement successful ban on single-use plastics was held in the city on Saturday



₹24crore."

"The government will conduct workshops like these at six places including Trichy and Salem to educate government officials, who in turn will work along with the public to implement the ban from January 1. ₹54lakh has been sanctioned for this," Karuppannan added.

The city corporation has passed bylaws to penalize those who violate the plastic ban. The violators will have to pay upto ₹10,000.

## Bio-compostable bags also banned in Nilgiris

How feasible is it to identify the source of a single-use carry bag that was purchased from a nearby district? If you thought that was impossible, the Nilgiris district administration has tracked down a dealer, who had sold a bio-compostable bag.

Even though the government has only banned single-use plastic items from January 1, the Nilgiris administration has banned all sorts of single-use items, including paper plates.

"As the city corporation's logo was imprinted on all the products sold from Pasumai Angadi, it was easy for the authorities to trace us. The buyer also confessed to have bought it from us," said Kavitha Karthik, co-ordinator of the green shop in Coimbatore. "The incident took place about three months ago. Even after that we have received several enquiries from several parts of the Nilgiris. But we did not sell even a single bio-compostable bag to them."

The Coimbatore corpora-



**NOT GREEN ENOUGH**

tion had introduced bio-compostable bags that would melt in hot water about a year ago. The bags, made of starches of corn, tapioca and other vegetables, would decompose completely within 90 days and was certified by the government.

The Nilgiris administration has banned all the single-use items as it is finding it difficult to manage solid wastes in the district, a popular tourist destination, said an official. "We implemented the ban four months ago. The entire district used to be filled with single-use items, especially plastics left by tourists, after weekends. It was a tedious task to clear them. So, we decided to ban all types of single-use items," he told TOI.

## Green warriors see red as residents on

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