

## Plastic ban: Govt tightens the noose on industries

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WITH just 20 days to go for the plastic ban, the State government seems to be tightening screws to bring more items under the ban, leaving industry baffled and confused on what items are banned and which are exempted.

Being flooded with representations from various plastic manufacturing associations, the Environment and Forests department issued a letter on December 8 addressed to South India Non Woven Manufacturers Association, clarifying common pertinent questions.

The details in the letter, a copy of which is available with the Express, reveal that the Government's approach towards the ban was more stringent than what it initially looked like. The Tamil Nadu Plastics Manufacturers Association (TAPMA) on Monday said there is a clear discrimination in the way the government is attacking retail trade. "What we understand at this juncture, the ban will hit common man, besides bringing the plastic industry to a standstill. Initially, we thought food grade plastic used in packaging is exempted, but that is not the case now."

To a query, Syed Muzammil Abbas, Special Secretary (Forests), said only those items which are covered under 1(b) (b) of Government Order dated June 25, are exempted. Under the said clause, no industry or person shall manufacture, store, supply, transport, sale or distribute 'use and throwaway plastics' provided the plastic



CM flags off campaign for plastic ban

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Monday flagged off the campaign to spread awareness on the 'Plastic Free Tamil Nadu Policy' under which one-time-use plastic will be banned from January 2019. It will inform people of the plastic ban, and enlighten them about alternate options. The State has roped in popular film actors to serve as brand ambassadors. ENS

bags which constitute or form an integral part of packaging in which goods are sealed prior to use at manufacturing/processing units.

"What it means is, a hot chips trader cannot pack snacks in plastic pouches, but the same pouches are permitted for use at a processing unit. Nilgris supermarket chain, which buys rice and package cannot use plastic bags. This defies logic," B Swaminathan, Chairman of environment committee of TAPMA, told Express.

Though the State initially listed 14 items to be banned, there is still lot of ambiguity in items permitted. "The question of deciding what items are covered under the term 'exempted' can be decided only by the government. As such the GO contains the list of exempted items in clearly perceptible terms," the letter reads.

TAPMA president Virendra Kumar Bhayani questioned how the industry could deal with such an 'ambiguous' ban. "Livelihood of lakhs of people is at stake and the government has not conducted any consultation before issuing the GO."



The PM 2.5 level recorded at Alandur on Monday. Nitrogen dioxide level was at 35 µg/m<sup>3</sup> against prescribed standard of 80.00 µg/m<sup>3</sup>