

No need to panic, not all plastic items face ban, assures Minister

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THE imminent ban on plastic is not something to be feared as the government is all set to help the transition and not all the plastic will go out of existence, said Environment Minister K C Karuppannan here on Friday. He was addressing hotel, restaurant and marriage hall association members and other stakeholders in a zonal meeting under the theme of 'Plastic-Free Tamil Nadu'.

He said except for certain plastics which are sure to cause harm to the environment and affect the health of animals and humans, many plastics will remain as they are. He said, "There are also proposals to allow cups made of plastic and mache or luggage where the ratio of plastic is very low. For those producing and consuming plastic that are sure to be banned, the government will surely help so the establishments can safely shift to alternatives via schemes and guidance."

He also spoke about job opportunities the ban will create as demand for eco-friendly goods, recycling and upcycling will rise. Karuppannan said banana and betel nut farming will be bettered to cater to banana leaves and nut plates demand.

The zonal meeting saw representatives from Thanjavur, Thiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Perambalur and Ariyalur in attendance. The respective District Collectors presented steps taken for creating awareness and the possible challenges to making the shift. Thanjavur District Collector Shanmuga Sundram said even if plastic was harmful, the benefits it offers like transparency and enablement of easy



Students taking plastic awareness pledge the meeting in Tiruchy on Friday | M K ASHOK KUMAR

visual testing before buying consumables are to be considered. He said the government should invest in producing suitable alternatives to match some if not all properties of plastic.

Resource persons were also present in the conference. KAP Vishwanathan Hospital Dean G Anitha spoke on the harmful health effects of plastic use. G Venkatasubramaian, an inventor and patent consultant, spoke about the use of plastic in making roads. NIT Tiruchy Professor K Muthukumar spoke about the various types of plastic waste and the corresponding harm they can cause.

Apart from the conference, there were also stalls set up by Khadi Kraft and various other organisations who presented alternatives to plastic to attendees and the general public.