

PLASTIC BAN

'Check posts to be set up in border areas'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

AN expert committee was constituted to study the "compostable properties" of plastic-coated paper cups and the committee reported that they had non-biodegradable components.

"Most paper cups are designed for single use. Very little recycled paper is used to make paper cups because of contamination concerns. Since most paper cups are coated with plastic, it is difficult to separate plastic in the recycling process," the committee concluded. However after weighing the pros and cons, the government has decided to exempt the product although an official announcement will be made after the approval of the steering committee.

The government also ruled out possibility of granting additional time to implement the ban. A coordinator for Chennai region and Commissioner of Food Safety and Drug Administration P Amudha said the ban will be enforced strictly and border check posts will be set up to contain the influx of banned products. Fisheries Minister D Jayakumar told reporters that the government was working on an action plan to provide easy access to bank loans for entrepreneurs interested in production of eco-friendly alternatives.

Plastic-free TN: This restaurant shows the way

BINITA JAISWAL @ Chennai

THE hotel industry may be concerned about challenges it may face in view of the ban on single-use plastics from January 1.

But, for Ka Organic restaurant at Besant Nagar, the ban is a good news indeed.

The pure vegetarian restaurant, which was set up in 2015, has been promoting eco-friendly concept since its inception. The restaurant serves organic South Indian cuisines on plates made of leaves to its customers.

For takeaways, it uses stainless steel tiffin boxes and aluminum boxes. The restaurant charges a minimum amount for the steel boxes which is refundable once the customer returns them.

Solid food products are packed in good quality aluminium foil boxes while to avoid spillage of liquid food items, the restaurant uses steel tiffin boxes. One of the promoters of the restaurant, Anita Rajgopalas said, "The idea behind starting the restaurant was to provide an option to the people, where they can get completely organic, nutritious and eco-friendly food. Our restaurant runs on the concept of 'farm to table'

and we serve food prepared from fresh farm produce that is procured from farmers directly. We cannot waste the nutritional value of the organic food by packing it in plastic. So we introduced the system of delivering food in steel boxes. "We are happy with the plastic ban as now more people will avoid using the harmful plastics," she said. "Charges for the delivery containers depend on the quantity of food ordered. We charge a minimum of ₹10 for the steel container used for packing sambar for one person," she said.

The journey, however, was not that easy. Anita said that initially they faced hiccups as many people were not interested in ordering food from the restaurant as they did not use plastic for packing. "Things have changed in the last three years. Now, we have created a pool of loyal customers who prefer our restaurant because of our eco-friendly ways. We are making good profits. Looking at the success, founder of the restaurant V P Raj plans to start a few more branches in the city" said Anita, a nutritionist by profession. The restaurant has one branch at T Nagar named Green Cafe.



'PAPER' CUPS MAY ESCAPE PLASTIC BAN

BY KRISHNA CHAITANYA @ Chennai

THE government seems to be making peace with the manufacturing sector ahead of its ambitious ban on single-use plastics that will kick in on January 1. It is now thinking about reducing the number of items that will be banned. Plastic-coated paper cups are likely to be exempted with certain conditions.

Express had earlier reported that the State-owned TNPL, which is one of the largest manufacturers of paper cup stock, had expressed concerns over the impending ban. Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniappan held a discussion with Environment Minister KC Karuppanan and senior officials on Wednesday in this regard.

Speaking after the meeting, Karuppanan said that the government was considering an exemption for plastic-coated paper cups, provided manufacturers agree to keep the quantity of plastic used to a bare minimum.

"Currently, plastic constitutes for 6 percentage of every such cup. We want that to be brought down further to 4 per cent," he said. The government also ruled out the possibility of granting additional time for manufacturers and traders to implement the ban.

