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Sheila Govt. firm on plastic bag ban

Staff Reporter

Challans issued against 10 shop owners in Rajouri Garden

To intensify drive to 'clean-out' plastic bags

Action against manufacturers soon

NEW DELHI: Days after Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh spoke against the ban on plastic bags, the Delhi Government has taken a strong stand supporting the ban and has decided to intensify its drive to 'clean-out' plastic bags from the city.

A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting chaired by Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit and attended by officials of the Delhi Government and civic agencies on Saturday.

"The change over to jute, cloth and recycled paper bags has to happen and we have given ample time to the people to get used to the idea. It is now time that we get serious and we have decided to intensify the campaign against the use of plastic in the city. We have also decided to put pressure on plastic bag manufacturing units to adhere to norms and also look at recycling plastic. Departments have been asked to involve educational institutions in creating awareness against plastic bags," said Ms. Dikshit.

She added that instructions have also been issued to Environment Department and civic agencies to intensify their drive to enforce the ban on plastic bags.

"We are aware of the fact that there are several small illegal plastic bag manufacturing units operating in the city that don't adhere to the norms. We will be taking action against these industries. The idea is not to take away anybody's source of income but to tell them that the ban is for the

larger good in the long run and they need to be part of this makeover. My Government is determined to enforce the ban," she added.

Meanwhile, nearly six months after the ban on the use of plastic was brought in, the Delhi Government on Friday imposed challans for the first time for violating the ban. The challans were issued against 10 shop owners in a few malls in Rajouri Garden of West Delhi. If proved guilty, the violators can face fine of up to Rs. 1 lakh or five years imprisonment as per notification issued by the Delhi Government in January following a High Court order.

A senior official with the Delhi Pollution Control Board said: "We have challaned 10 people on Friday for violating the ban and hope that the message reaches everyone that we are serious about enforcing the ban."

The Delhi Government had banned the use of plastic bags in all markets, hotels, restaurants besides other commercial establishments in January this year.

The gazette notification allows the use of plastic bags of 40 microns thickness or more. However, the Government had said that even this would be discouraged.