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## **Govt. warns of strict action against plastic ban violators**

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NEW DELHI: Unable to strictly enforce the ban on use of plastic in the Capital and weed it out of markets and shopping malls, the State Environment Department has warned that strict action will be taken against violators.

As per the January 7 directive of Delhi's Lieutenant-Governor, use of plastic is forbidden in five-star and four-star hotels, hospitals with 100 or more beds (except for use of plastic bags as prescribed under the Bio-Medical Waste Management and Handling Rules, 1998), all restaurants and eating places with a seating capacity for more than 50 people, all fruit and vegetable outlets of Mother Dairy, shopping malls and small and large retail outlets. At places other than these, only bio-degradable plastic is to be used.

"It has been brought to our notice that plastic bags are still used in main markets, local shopping centres and in major or branded outlets/chain of stores," says M. Dwarakanath of the Environment Department.

Violation, he adds, is happening on the pretext that the bags are more than 40 micros or that they are bio-degradable.

"This is in total disregard of the Delhi Government's notification which clearly states that this is a violation. Hence we would like to clarify to all dispensers/users of plastic bags that no plastic

bags can be used in main markets and local shopping centres and in major or branded outlets/chain of stores,” notes the warning issued by the Department.

The Department in its notice said only jute, cloth or recycled paper bags are to be used. Also, in other than the notified places, only bio-degradable/compostable bags complying with IS:BIS:17088 are to be used.

Vinod Jain of Tapas, a non-government organisation which has been heading the campaign against use of plastic in the Capital, said: “We had welcomed the move and later warned the Environment Department of the blatant violation of the notification. We need to have in place strict measures to ensure that the compliance rate is kept high to actually benefit from the ban. Rules need to be implemented well to bear fruit. Getting aggressive about enforcing the ban is also required in our preparations for hosting the Commonwealth Games next year.”