

# Panel rejects BMC proposal to reduce fine

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THE BMC'S proposal to reduce the penalty for the violation of plastic ban was rejected by the civic law committee on Wednesday. The committee has referred the proposal back to the administration.

Section 9 of the Maharashtra Non-Biodegradable Garbage (Control) Act 2006 says offenders will be fined up to Rs 5,000 for the first time. If the person commits the offence second time, he/she will pay a penalty of Rs 10,000 and

may face up to three months' jail and a fine of Rs 25,000 for every subsequent offence. However, a proposal tabled by the BMC earlier this week had stated that those caught using plastic bags will be fined Rs 200 to Rs 1,000 for the first time and will have to shell out Rs 500 to Rs 2,000 if caught the second time.

As per the proposal, which was rejected on Wednesday, while the minimum fine amount fixed for hawkers, vendors and citizens was Rs 200 to Rs 10,000, for grocery stores, milk, fruit and coffee sellers, the amount was be-

tween Rs 500 to Rs 1,000 and Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 for hotels and malls. Law Committee Chairman and Shiv Sena corporator Suvarna Karanje said, "BMC has no authority to reduce the fine fixed by the government and stipulated by the 2006 Act. Hence, the committee decided to refer the proposal back to the administration." "It is important to fix the fine between Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 and so on and it should not become convenient for people to get away by paying Rs 200 and continue using plastic bags," said standing committee chairman and Sena Corporator

Yashwant Jadhav.

Nidhi Choudhari, Deputy Municipal Commissioner (Special) said, "The law committee was of the opinion that to make the ban a success, hawkers and residents will have to pay a penalty of Rs 5,000. We had earlier decided on a fine of Rs 200 to Rs 1,000 to first-time offenders and more if they were found to have repeated the offence. However, the proposal has been referred back. Now, we will fix a uniform fine amount of Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 to all, including hawkers and residents."

