


BMC turns heat on restaurants for plastic packaging

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HOTELIER FINED

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The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has pointed its gun towards city hoteliers for their rampant use of plastic bags every day, and has issued a strict warning against the usage of plastic bags of less than 50 microns to pack food items.

While the Association of Hotels and Restaurants (AHAR) has requested that hoteliers be excluded from the strict plastic ban, the civic administration feels that they should look for alternative arrangements.

Recently, civic officials fined a hotelier for using plastic bags made of plastic below 50 microns. Hoteliers were unaware that they could be targeted for using thin plastic, as the ban was only on plastic bags with handles, and not on pouches.

“We have been using plastic pouches for years and have never faced any problem. How can they ban something when it’s not disallowed by the rules?” said an office bearer of AHAR.

AHAR has written to the BMC stating that it will be very difficult for the hoteliers to pack sambhar, chutneys or sauce if the use of plastic pouches is banned. Although other food items could be packed in paper bags, these liquid-based food items will be difficult to handle.

However, BMC is determined to reduce plastic waste in the city as much as possible. “Flimsy plastic bags cannot be reused and make waste management a tedious process. These plastic bags or pouches go into the garbage after one use,” said Rajendra Bhosale, deputy municipal commissioner (special), who is executing the plastic ban in the city.

He added that as per the new plastic waste (management and handling) rule, 2011, any plastic below 50 microns should not be used, and thus no food stuff can be packed in plastic bags by hoteliers.

“We will be requesting AHAR members and appealing to all hoteliers to refrain from using thin plastic bags to pack food items,” he added.

The civic body has asked hoteliers and restaurant owners to provide plastic containers for the items, but hoteliers find it economically unwise to use such containers to pack small quantities of, for example, sauce or chutney.

The BMC has formed a surveillance squad of officials from the solid waste management team, and the licence department has been activated to make surprise visits to all such places where plastic bags of less than 50 microns could be used.

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