

India's capital widens ban on plastic bags

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An Indian ragpicker searches for plastic waste through smoke coming from burning waste at a garbage dump site in New Delhi in 2007. The Delhi government imposed a blanket ban on the use of all plastic bags on Friday in an attempt to tackle the city's mounting rubbish problems, an official said.

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Thin plastic bags—measuring less than 40 microns thick—were banned in India's capital in 2009, but the new rules will cover all [plastic](#)

[packaging](#) for items such as magazines and greeting cards as well as garbage bags.

"From today, the government has banned all use, sale and manufacture of plastic bags in the city. No exceptions will be made," a senior official in the Delhi chief minister's office told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"Plastic is an environmental disaster. These bags clog the city's drains, they are non-biodegradable. It might take time, but we have to ensure that this ruling is enforced throughout Delhi," he added.

Those caught violating the new rules will face a unspecified fine.

The 2009 [ban](#) on plastic bags is rarely enforced, with vegetable and fruit sellers, small shops and takeaway restaurants still freely using cheap, thin bags to package their products.

According to the Delhi government's website, the city, which is home to 17 million people, generates 574 metric tonnes (1.2 million pounds) of plastic waste each day.

Earlier this month, a leading plastic manufacturers' association took the government to court over the new ban in a case that is being heard by the Delhi High Court.

The All India Plastic Industries Association (AIPIA) said the order would jeopardise the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people involved in the manufacture and sale of [plastic bags](#).

The ban on items such as plastic garbage bags is also likely to stir resistance with few alternatives available on the market.

Shopping bags made from jute, a vegetable fibre used to make coarse-

textured fabric, have become popular since the 2009 ban but are not widely available for sale.

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