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'Lok Sabha - Bill

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## Lok Sabha discusses Bill on e-cigarette ban

27-11-2019  
Members point out govt's haste

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Tuesday took up for discussion a Bill that proposes a ban on e-cigarettes, prescribes a maximum punishment of three years in jail and a fine of up to ₹5 lakh for violations.

The Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Bill, 2019, has been brought in to replace an Ordinance issued on September 18.

The Bill, moved by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, makes manufacturing, production, import/export, distribution, transport, sale, storage or advertisements of e-cigarettes and similar devices a cognisable offence.

First-time violators can be sentenced for up to one-year imprisonment and fine up to ₹1 lakh. Subsequent offences would attract up to three years' jail term or a

maximum fine of ₹5 lakh, or both. Storage will also be punishable with up to six months jail or a fine of up to ₹50,000, or both.

The Bill empowers enforcement officials to carry out searches and seize the banned products.

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said he had no fundamental objection to the contents, but was against the taking of the ordinance route.

He asked what the urgency was in bringing the ordinance when 16 States had already banned them. He said one million people had died due to consumption of tobacco products and that the government should discuss both the issues thoroughly.

Feroze Varun Gandhi (BJP) supported the Bill and suggested an increase in the tax on tobacco items.

MAG:BG