

# TOPIC – CABINET APPROVES BAN ON E-CIGARETTES

- **SYLLABUS**

**PRELIMS:** Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS)

**MAINS:** Hazards of ENDS

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## CABINET APPROVES BAN ON E-CIGARETTES

### CONTEXT

- The Union Cabinet approved a ban on e-cigarettes, citing the need to take early action to protect public health.

### PROHIBITION OF E-CIGARETTES ORDINANCE, 2019

- Upon promulgation of the ordinance, any production, manufacturing, import, export, transport, sale (including online sale), distribution or advertisement (including online advertisement) of e-cigarettes shall be a cognizable offence.
- It is punishable with imprisonment of up to one year, or fine up to ₹1 lakh, or both for the first offence; and imprisonment of up to three years and fine up to ₹5 lakh for a subsequent offence.
- Storage of electronic-cigarettes shall also be punishable with imprisonment of up to 6 months or a fine of up to ₹50,000 or both.
- The sub-inspector has been designated as the authorised officer to take action under the ordinance.
- The Central or State governments may also designate any other equivalent officer(s) as authorised officer for enforcement of the provisions of the ordinance.

### WHAT ARE E-CIGARETTES?

- E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices that heat a solution of nicotine and different flavours to create aerosol, which is then inhaled.
- These devices belong to a category of vapour-based nicotine products called ENDS.
- E-cigarettes and other ENDS products may look like their traditional counterparts (regular cigarettes or cigars), but they also come in other shapes and sizes and can resemble daily use products, including pens and USB drives.
- Several companies selling ENDS in India have positioned these products as a safer, less harmful alternative to traditional cigarettes or as devices that could help users quit smoking.

### WHY GOVT. BAN?

- The Health Ministry and Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation, India's drug regulatory authority, had attempted in the past to ban the import and sale of these products citing public health concerns.
- Before the ordinance was announced, the government had been facing hurdles in the form of court cases against the move, as ENDS were not declared as 'drugs' in the country's drug regulations.
- These products have neither been assessed for safety in the national population, nor been approved under provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. Yet, they have been widely available to consumers.
- Though some smokers have claimed to have cut down smoking while using ENDS, the total nicotine consumption seemed to remain "unchanged", according to the government

### WHO WILL GAIN?

- The government feels its decision will help "protect the population, especially youth and children, from the risk of addiction through e-cigarettes".
- It says enforcement of the ordinance will complement its efforts to reduce tobacco use and, therefore, help in reducing the economic and disease burden associated with it.
- Apart from this, traditional tobacco firms, too, could potentially gain from the ban.

### Up in smoke

Wednesday's move follows an advisory by the government in 2018 to all States to consider banning e-cigarettes

- e-cigarettes are brought from China and other countries and are not manufactured in India. They are also available online

- WHO too urged member countries to take appropriate steps. It does not endorse e-cigarettes as cessation aids

- 16 States & one Union Territory have already banned them. The Indian Council of Medical Research, in a recent paper, had recommended a complete ban on them



- They are marketed as being safer than conventional cigarettes but this is false. Available literature suggests that they may act as gateway products to induce non-smokers to nicotine use