

8. Centre to bring ordinance to ban e-cigarettes in country

Prelims: Governance- Policies, Science & Technology

Mains: GS-II- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector or Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Why in News?

- ▶▶ The Union Cabinet is likely to approve an ordinance prohibiting the manufacture and sale of e-cigarettes in the country.

Highlights:

- ▶▶ The law would make production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution or advertisements of e-cigarettes a cognizable offence.
- ▶▶ As per the draft bill, the offence will be punishable with jail up to one year or fine up to Rs. 1 lakh or both for first-time offenders, and jail of up to three years and fine up to 5 lakh for repeat offenders.
- ▶▶ Storage of e-cigarettes shall also be punishable with imprisonment up to six months or fine up to 50,000 or both.
- ▶▶ Experts from various fields have welcomed the move and urged the government to pass the ordinance in the larger interest of public health.
- ▶▶ E-Cigarettes are banned in about 30 countries.
- ▶▶ While anti-tobacco health experts are calling it a move in the right direction, the tobacco industry and its allies state that if enforced, this would be a draconian law hitting at the livelihood of many.

What are e-cigarettes?

- ▶▶ An electronic cigarette (or e-cig) is a battery-powered vaporizer that mimics tobacco smoking.
- ▶▶ It works by heating up a nicotine liquid.
- ▶▶ Nicotine juice comes in various flavors and nicotine levels.
- ▶▶ e-liquid is composed of five ingredients: vegetable glycerin (a material used in all types of food and personal care products, like toothpaste) and propylene glycol (a solvent most commonly used in fog machines.) propylene glycol is the ingredient that produces thicker clouds of vapor.

- ▶▶ Electronic cigarettes, do not burn or use tobacco leaves but instead vaporise a solution the user then inhales.

Concerns:

- ▶▶ India has the second largest number of tobacco users (268 million) in the world – of these at least 12 lakh die every year from tobacco-related diseases.
- ▶▶ Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) solutions and emissions contain other chemicals, some of them considered to be toxicants.
- ▶▶ ENDS contain nicotine solution which is highly addictive.
- ▶▶ The flavouring agents and vaporizers used in e-cigarettes are also harmful for health.
- ▶▶ Use of e-cigarettes has documented adverse effects on humans like DNA damage, carcinogenesis, cellular, molecular and immunological toxicity.
- ▶▶ It can cause respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological disorders.
- ▶▶ They are also known to have adverse effects on pregnancy and foetal development.
- ▶▶ Lack of knowledge about negative effects of nicotine and easy accessibility of these products make the youth prone to addiction.

