

India's government approves ban on e-cigarettes

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A roadside tobacco shop vendor displays an e cigarette in New Delhi, India, Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2019. India's government on Wednesday decided to ban e-cigarettes, expressing concern at the alarming rate at which vaping is becoming popular among the country's youth and causing breathing illnesses. (AP Photo/Manish Swarup)

India's government on Wednesday decided to ban e-cigarettes, expressing concern at the alarming rate at which vaping is becoming popular among the country's youth and causing breathing illnesses.

The ban was approved by the Cabinet. The government is expected to issue an ordinance soon prohibiting the manufacturing, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertising related to e-cigarettes.

"Its use has increased exponentially and has acquired epidemic proportions in developed countries, especially among youth and children," a government statement said.

The first offense will be punishable by up to one year in prison or a fine of up to 100,000 rupees (\$1,390), or both. For a subsequent offense, the punishment will be imprisonment of up to three years and a fine of up to 500,000 rupees (\$6,945).

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that e-cigarettes were promoted as a way to get people out of their smoking habits but reports have shown that many are becoming addicted to them.

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