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Cabinet okays ban on 7 hazardous chemicals

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a ban on seven chemicals that are hazardous to health and environment and listed under Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and environment from POPs which are identified chemical substances that persist in the environment, bio-accumulate in living organisms, adversely affect human health and have the property of long-range environmental transport.

"India is sending out a positive message to the world that we are active in this area and we do not tolerate health and environmental hazard", said Union environment minister, Prakash Javadekar, while briefing on the Cabinet's decision.

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Exposure to POPs can lead to cancer, damage to central & peripheral nervous systems, diseases of the immune system, reproductive disorders and interference with normal infant and child development. The POPs are listed in various Annexes to the Stockholm Convention after thorough scientific research, deliberations and negotiations among member countries.

Besides approving the ban, the Cabinet further delegated its powers to ratify

chemicals under the Stockholm Convention to Union ministries of external affairs (MEA) and environment in respect of POPs that are already regulated under the domestic regulations.

The seven banned chemicals are Chlordecone; Hexabromobiphenyl; Hexabromodiphenyl ether and Heptabromodiphenyl ether; Tetrabromodiphenyl ether and Pentabromodiphenyl ether; Pentachlorobenzene, Hexabromocyclododecane and Hexachlorobutadiene. India had ratified the Stockholm Convention on January 13, 2006 as per Article 25(4), which enabled it to keep itself in a default "opt-out" position so that amendments in various Annexes of the convention cannot be enforced on it unless an instrument of ratification/ acceptance/ approval or accession is explicitly deposited with UN depositary.