

**SC for nationwide ban on furnace oil, pet coke**

The Supreme Court on Friday requested all States and Union Territories to move forward towards a nationwide ban on the use of pet coke and furnace oil to power up industries, in a bid to fight pollution.

The Environment Bench of the Supreme Court had already ordered a ban on the industrial use of pet coke and furnace oil in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan on October 24.

This ban specifically came after an Environment Pollution Control Authority Report recommended the ban on sale, distribution and use of furnace oil and pet coke in the National Capital Region (NCR). Their use is already prohibited in Delhi.

**‘Not confined to NCR’**

“We may note that the pollution caused by pet coke and furnace oil is not a problem confined only to NCR but appears to be a problem faced by almost all the States and Union Territories in the country,” the Bench of Justices Madan B. Lokur and Deepak Gupta observed in their written order.

Pursuant to the Supreme Court ban, both the Environment Ministry and the Central Pollution Control Board, on November 15, brought into “immediate effect a prohibition on the use of pet coke and furnace oil by any industry, operation or processes within the States of U.P., Haryana and Rajasthan until further orders”.

However, senior advocate and amicus curiae Harish Salve submitted that such a prohibition would only partly solve the pollution problem in these States. He said the actual source of these pollutants should be stopped. For this, the very sale of pet coke and furnace oil for use as fuel should come to an end in U.P., Haryana and Rajasthan.

Additional Solicitor General A.N.S. Nadkarni, for the Centre, was asked by the court to get instructions from the Centre and respond within a week on the suggestions by Mr. Salve.

On October 24, the apex court also imposed a fine of Rs. 2 lakh on the Ministry of Environment for not fixing any emission standards for industries using pet coke and furnace oil in the NCR.

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