

India Bans Electronic Cigarettes

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India has banned the sale of electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes. The ban is the latest and possibly biggest move against vaping.

Vapes are electronic devices that heat liquid into a cloud of **vapor** that users breathe in. Most users vape with a liquid that includes the drug nicotine, several other chemicals and **flavoring**.

The ban cuts off a huge market for e-cigarette makers such as Juul Labs and Philip Morris International. Both companies planned to expand in India.

India's health ministry said the products are "**novel**," attractive and come in many flavors, but said their use has increased very quickly "in developed countries, especially among youth and children."

The ban comes at a time when public officials in other countries are raising questions about the safety of vaping.

Last week, United States government announced plans to remove flavored e-cigarettes from stores. Federal officials warned that sweet flavors were leading millions of children into nicotine **addiction**.

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar made the announcement during an appearance with President Donald Trump. A few state governments are also taking action. The state of Michigan banned the sale of flavored e-cigarettes on Wednesday.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services said the ban was effective immediately. It gave dealers including online sellers two weeks to obey the measure. On Tuesday, New York officially became the first state to ban e-cigarettes when officials approved a series of emergency rules.

India reportedly has 106 million adult smokers. That number is second only to China in the world.

Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the ban Wednesday at a news conference. She showed different kinds of products to the media, including a Juul vaping device that looks like a USB flash drive.

Juul had plans to launch its e-cigarette in India and has hired several top-level officials in recent months. Reuters had reported that Philip Morris also plans to launch its smoking device in India.

The Indian ban will be imposed through an executive order.

The order calls for a jail term of up to one year and a fine of about \$1,400 for people who break the law for the first time. A repeat violation could mean a jail term of up to three years and a fine of up to \$7000, the government said.

The ban would apply to the manufacture, importation, sale, advertisement for or distribution of e-cigarettes.

Such executive orders are usually given as an emergency measure when India's parliament is not meeting. The ban could end if it is not approved when lawmakers return to parliament. The next parliamentary term will likely be held in November.

I'm Jonathan Evans.

Aditya Kalra and Aftab Ahmed reported this story for the Reuters news service. Jonathan Evans adapted it for Learning English. Mario Ritter Jr. was the editor.

Words in This Story

addiction – *n.* a strong and harmful need to regularly have something such as a drug or do something such as gamble

flavoring – *n.* a substance that is added to a food or drink to give it a desired taste

novel – *adj.* new and different from what has been known before

vapor – *n.* a substance that is in the form of a gas or that consists of very small drops or particles mixed with the air

