

12/01/03
Observer

Good bye to *sili sili* bags from next month

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The time has come to say good bye to shopping bags popularly known as '*sili sili*' bags, as the government plans to ban them from next month.

Environment and Natural Resources Minister Rukman Senanayake told the '*Sunday Observer*' that a cabinet paper to ban and to restrict use of polythene, will be submitted before the end of this month.

"Polythene is a menace and

we need to introduce new legislation to arrest the hazard. Some of the environmental problems are mainly due to the excessive use of polythene", he said.

According to the Minister, polythene, which has the thickness below 20 micron will be banned under the first phase. "'*Sili sili*' bags, lunch sheets and other polythene varieties below 20 microns will come under this category and legislature to control other varieties which pollute the environment

will also be introduced shortly", he added. A committee comprising of officials of the Ministry, Central Environmental Authority and the polythene manufacturers has formed to submit recommendations to reduce and ban certain category of polythene. Minister also said that under this move it will be illegal to use polythene for decoration purpose from next month.

There are over 168 polythene manufacturing factories, island-wide.