

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 540
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.12.2023

Measures to deal with environmental issues related to plastic

540. DR. SUMER SINGH SOLANKI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether plastic has become the most pivotal environmental issue today;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the measures being taken by Government to deal with this crucial issue?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) to (c): Unmanaged and littered plastic waste has adverse impacts on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Considering the adverse effect of littered single use plastic items on terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems, the Ministry notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, on 12th August 2021, prohibiting identified single use plastic items, which have low utility and high littering potential, from 1st July 2022.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has also notified the Guidelines on the Extended Producer Responsibility for plastic packaging vide Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022, on 16th February, 2022. The Guidelines stipulate mandatory targets on EPR, recycling of plastic packaging waste, reuse of rigid plastic packaging and use of recycled plastic content. As per centralized online EPR portal for plastic packaging, the EPR obligation for the FY 2022-23 is around 3 million tonnes. Already, EPR certificates of around 3.3 million tonnes have been transferred from registered PWPs.

The implementation of ban on identified single use plastic items and guidelines on the Extended Producer Responsibility for plastic packaging will help in reduction in pollution caused by littered and unmanaged plastic waste. Further, under Swachh Bharat Mission additional central assistance is provided to States and Union Territories for solid waste management including plastic waste management in urban and rural areas.

In order to strengthen implementation of Plastic Waste Management Rules and to implement ban on identified single use plastic items, all thirty-six States/UTs have constituted the Special Task Force for elimination of identified single use plastic items and effective plastic waste management. A National Level Taskforce has also been constituted by the Ministry for taking

coordinated efforts to eliminate identified single use plastic items and effective implementation of Plastic Waste Management Rules.

Directions have been issued under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to E-commerce companies, leading single use plastic sellers/users, and plastic raw material manufacturers with respect to phasing out of identified single use plastic items. Separately, Customs authorities have been asked to stop the import of banned SUP items. For effective monitoring of ban on identified single use plastic items and plastic waste management in the country, the following online platforms are in operation (a) National Dashboard for monitoring of implementation of comprehensive action plan, (b) CPCB Monitoring Module for Compliance on Elimination of Single Use Plastic, and (c) CPCB Grievance Redressal App.

Regular enforcement drives have been undertaken by CPCB, SPCBs/PCCs and local authorities to implement ban on identified single use plastic items and on plastic carry bags having thickness less than one hundred twenty microns. Actions have been taken on the deviations, which include seizure of banned single use plastic items and levy of penalty.

In order to provide assistance to MSME enterprises transitioning away from single use plastic items to eco-alternatives, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has made provisions in their ongoing schemes. In keeping with the development of eco-alternatives, Bureau of Indian Standard has notified Indian Standard IS 18267 for Food Serving Utensil Made from Agri By-Products. Further, the Union Government through various central ministries and government agencies has been involved in generating public awareness on plastic waste management and elimination of single-use plastics.

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