

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1382
TO BE ANSWERED ON 30.07.2026

Plastic pollution

1382. DR. DHARMASTHALA VEERENDRA HEGGADE:

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

- (a) the estimated quantity of plastic used annually for food packaging and bottled drinking water in the country and the extent of plastic pollution including microplastic contamination arising therefrom;
- (b) whether Government has prohibited identified single use plastic items, which have low utility and high littering potential, in order to reduce pollution caused by littered and unmanaged plastic waste, which includes microplastics; and
- (c) whether any time-bound plan exists to systematically replace plastic packaging with sustainable alternatives and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (c): The Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016 provide the statutory framework for plastic waste management in an environmentally sound manner throughout the country. In order to reduce pollution caused by littered and unmanaged plastic waste, which includes microplastics, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021 on 12th August 2021, prohibiting manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of the following identified single use plastic items which have low utility and high littering potential, with effect from the 1st July, 2022:

- (i) ear buds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, plastic flags, candy sticks, ice-cream sticks, polystyrene [Thermocol] for decoration;
- (ii) plates, cups, glasses, cutlery such as forks, spoons, knives, straw, trays, wrapping or packing films around sweet boxes, invitation cards, and cigarette packets, plastic or PVC banners less than 100 micron, stirrers.

The notification also prohibits manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of plastic carry bags having thickness less than one hundred and twenty microns with effect from the 31st December, 2022. Non-woven plastic carry bags of less than 60 gram per sqm (GSM) are also prohibited from 30th September 2021.

The ban on identified single use plastic items has triggered development of innovative eco-alternatives. Central Government, State Governments and local authorities have taken steps on moving towards eco-friendly alternatives. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) have prepared a “Compendium of Manufacturers / Sellers of Eco-alternatives to Banned Single Use Plastic Items”, which was launched on World Environment Day, 2025. The compendium provides details of nearly 1000 units spread across the country and is available on the website of CPCB for wider dissemination and use. In keeping with the development of eco- alternatives, Bureau of Indian Standards had earlier notified Indian Standard IS 18267 for Food Serving Utensils Made from Agri By-Products. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has also notified the Ecomark Rules on 26th September 2024. The objective of these rules is to encourage the demand for environment-friendly products, promote lower energy consumption, resource efficiency and circular economy.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has also notified the Guidelines on the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) 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. The EPR guidelines on plastic packaging promote moving towards sustainable plastic packaging.

As per details available on the centralized online EPR portal on plastic packaging, the total registered Producers, Importers and Brand owners (PIBOs) are 65241. The year-wise EPR target for plastic packaging, which includes plastic packaging for food packaging and bottled drinking water, is given in table below:

Financial Years (FYs)	EPR Target (Lac T)
2022-23	27.22
2023-24	61.52
2024-25	78.64
