

# Awareness Mascot 'Prakriti'

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**In news**—The Union Environment Minister has launched Awareness Mascot 'Prakriti' & Green Initiatives for Effective Plastic Waste Management recently.

## **About Awareness Mascot & Green initiatives-**

The mascot aims to spread greater awareness among masses about small changes that can be sustainably adopted in our lifestyle for a better environment. During the event, following green initiatives for plastic waste management were launched:

- **National Dashboard on Elimination of Single Use Plastic and Plastic Waste Management (MoEFCC)** to bring all stakeholders including Central Ministries/ Departments, State/UT Governments at one place and track the progress made for elimination of single use plastic (SUP) and effective management of plastic waste.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Portal for Plastic Packaging (CPCB)** for improving accountability, traceability, transparency and facilitating ease of reporting compliance to EPR Obligations by Producers, Importers and Brand-owners.
- **Mobile App for Single Use Plastics Grievance Redressal (CPCB)** to empower citizens to check sale/usage/manufacturing of SUP in their area and tackle the plastic menace.
- **Monitoring module for SUP (CPCB), for local bodies, SPCBs/PCCs and CPCB**, to inventorize details of SUP production/ sale & usage in commercial establishments at district level, and on-ground enforcement of ban on SUP.
- **Industrial production of Graphene from Waste Plastic (G B Pant NIHE & NRDC)** to promote more industries to come forward to upcycle plastic waste.

- The event also saw felicitation of the winners of the India Plastic Challenge–Hackathon 2021.
- Three Start-ups/entrepreneurs category and four teams of students from Higher Education Institutions were awarded cash prizes of Rs. 5 Lakhs and Rs. 1 Lakh respectively for their innovative ideas and digital solutions for plastic waste mitigation and elimination of Single-Use Plastics.

## **Plastics can be divided into two major categories:**

### **Thermoset or thermosetting plastics-**

- Once cooled and hardened, these plastics retain their shapes and cannot return to their original form. They are hard and durable.
- Thermosets can be used for auto parts, aircraft parts and tyres. Examples include polyurethanes, polyesters, epoxy resins and phenolic resins.

### **Thermoplastics-**

- Less rigid than thermosets, thermoplastics can soften upon heating and return to their original form.
- They are easily moulded and extruded into films, fibres and packaging.
- Examples include polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

### **Plastic pollution-**

- Plastic has become one of the most pressing environmental issues that we are facing today.
- India is generating about 3.5 million tonnes of plastic waste annually and the per capita plastic waste generation has almost doubled over the last five years.

## 90% OF PLASTIC WASTE NOT BEING RECYCLED AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

Photo: Nikhil Chhabra

**13,342** tonnes of waste generated in India per day (3.6 million tonnes per annum)

**690** tonnes is Delhi's daily share alone

**90%** of this plastic not being recycled

**500-1000** years it takes for plastic to degrade

**WHERE THE PLASTIC LANDS UP AFTER WE THROW IT AWAY**

**Landfill sites** Where instead of decomposing, the plastic often catches fire due to high methane generation

**Residue garbage dumps** Where it is consumed by animals

**Waterbodies and waterways** Around 90% of the plastic being generated is making its way into oceans through rivers

**Clogged drains** Plastic bags in the soil and at landfill sites lead to toxic metals, such as lead and cadmium, leaching into groundwater

**WHAT IS THE SOLUTION**

- Use less made of cloth or other environment-friendly material; opt for sturdy glass or aluminium bottles
- Segregate waste
- Introduce stricter waste management policy to phase effective recycling

**NOW OTHER COUNTRIES DO IT**

**India** There was a dramatic decrease in the use of plastic bags after customers were forced to pay for bags

**Rwanda** A total ban on manufacturing, sale, use and import of all plastic bags with heavy fines and even jail time for offenders

**New York City** Styrofoam banned as it is impossible to recycle

**China** A ban on plastic tableware to reduce its environmental impact



- Plastic pollution adversely affects our ecosystems and is also linked to air pollution.
- Lead and Cadmium pigments, commonly used in most of the plastics as additives are hazardous in nature and are known to leach out.
- To tackle the challenge of plastic pollution, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced **India's pledge to phase out single-use plastics by 2022.**

**Further**

**<https://journalsofindia.com/plastic-pollution/>**

**reading:**