

Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021

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In news- Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, has notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021. In the **4th United Nations Environment Assembly held in 2019**, India had piloted a resolution on addressing single-use plastic products pollution.

About the new rules-

- These rules **prohibit identified single use plastic items which have low utility** and high littering potential by 2022.
- The manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of following single-use plastic, including polystyrene and expanded polystyrene, **commodities shall be prohibited with effect from the 1st July, 2022.**
- **These include:**
 1. Earbuds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, plastic flags, candy sticks, ice-cream sticks, polystyrene [Thermocol] for decoration.
 2. Plates, cups, glasses, cutlery such as forks, spoons, knives, straw, trays, wrapping or packaging films around sweet boxes, invitation cards, and cigarette packets, plastic or PVC banners less than 100 micron, stirrers.
- In order **to stop littering due to light weight plastic carry bags, with effect from 30th September, 2021, the thickness of plastic carry bags has been increased from 50 microns to 75 microns and to 120 microns** with effect from the 31st December, 2022.
- Currently the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, prohibits manufacture, import, stocking, distribution,

sale and use of carry bags and plastic sheets less than 50 microns in thickness in the country.

- **The plastic packaging waste**, which is not covered under the phase out of identified single use plastic items, shall be collected and managed in an environmentally sustainable way through the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) of the Producer, importer and Brand owner.
- For effective implementation of **EPR, the Guidelines for the same being brought out have been given legal force** through Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021.
- The Central Pollution Control Board, along with state pollution bodies, will monitor the ban, identify violations, and impose penalties already prescribed under the Environmental Protection Act.

The following steps have also been taken to strengthen implementation of Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016:

- States/UTs have been requested to constitute a **Special Task Force for elimination of single use plastics** and effective implementation of Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- **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, 2016.
- Directions under Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, have been issued to all States/Union Territories inter alia for setting up for **institutional mechanism** for strengthening enforcement of Plastic Waste Management (PWM) Rules, 2016.
- A two month long **Awareness Campaign of Single Use Plastic 2021**.
- **The India Plastic Challenge – Hackathon 2021**, has been organized for students of Higher Educational Institutions and startups recognized under Startup India

Initiative.