

Single use plastic ban

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Why in news?

As part of the year-long celebrations to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the government had launched massive campaigns against single-use plastic.

What is single-use plastic?

- Single-use plastics are **disposable plastics meant for use-and-throw**.
- These comprise polythene bags, plastic drinking bottles, plastic bottle caps, food wrappers, plastic sachets, plastic wrappers, straws, stirrers and Styrofoam cups or plates.
- It is harmful to the environment as it is **non-biodegradable**.
- Single-use plastics slowly and gradually break down into smaller pieces of plastic known as **micro plastics**.
- It can take **thousands of years for plastic bags to decompose**, thus contaminating soil and water in the process.
- The noxious chemicals used to produce plastic get transmitted to animal tissue, and finally **enter the human food chain**.
- Fish consume thousands of tons of plastic in a year, ultimately transferring it up the food chain to marine mammals.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme was redefined in **Plastic Waste Management (PWM) Rules, 2016**, wherein producers, importers and brand owners are asked to take primary responsibility for collection of used multi-layered plastic sachets or pouches or packaging.