

**Plastic Free Zones**

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

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Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Mahesh Sharma has said that India was the global host for “World Environment Day – WED 2018” celebrated on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2018.

In a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha here today, Dr. Sharma said that during this celebration, the Ministry launched pan-India plastic clean-up drive in public areas, national reserves, forests, beaches, rivers etc. Further, letters were written to the State Governments asking them to make protected areas as “Plastic Free Zones”. “To combat plastic pollution, 21 States/Union Territories in the country has also notified more stringent norms and imposed ban on plastic carry bags and other items in their respective States/UTs”, the Minister said.

Dr. Sharma stated that as per the provisions of the Rules, the generators of waste have been mandated to take steps to minimize generation of plastic waste, not to litter, ensure segregated storage of waste at source and handover segregated waste to the local bodies or authorised agencies. The Rules also mandate the responsibilities of local bodies, gram panchayats, waste generators, retailers and street vendors to manage plastic waste. It is also mandated that the producers, importers and brand owners to work out modalities for waste collection system based on the principle of Extended Producer Responsibility.

The Minister added that further, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has written letters to the offices comes under its administrative control, Regional Offices of the Ministry, offices of Central Government and its departments, major PSUs, corporates, institutes etc to prohibit single-use plastic products including water bottles, take away coffee cups, lunch wrapped in disposable plastic packaging, plastic bags, disposable food containers, plates and containers made of polystyrene foam, plastic straws etc. in their offices. The school were reached through Eco-Clubs operating in the respective states to create awareness about ill effect of “single use plastic” and imbibe the “Green Good Deeds” practices.

Dr. Sharma said that letters were also issued to Chief Secretaries of all the States/Union Territories to communicate with temple, mosques, gurudwaras and churches in their states on ill effect of “single use plastic” and to encourage staff and visitors to prohibit Single-use plastic products.

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