Maharashtra’s Plastic Ban Plan

Why in news?

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Maharashtra government's has decided to ban the manufacture, use, sale, distribution and storage of plastic materials.

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What is the decision of Maharashtra on plastics?

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- As a large, highly industrialised state, Maharashtra is the 25th Indian state to impose a ban on plastics.
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- Maharashtra is responsible for generating the largest quantity of plastic waste 460,000 tonnes per annum.
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- To address this issue the state has implemented ban on manufacture, use, sale, distribution and storage of plastic materials.
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- The government offered a three-month "grace period" to eliminate existing stocks and find alternatives.
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- It now intends to impose drastic penalties, including large fines and potential jail terms for violations.
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- However, there is much confusion amongst the general populace and user-industries, as to which categories are permissible and which are banned.
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What are the issues with managing toxic wastes in India?

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- Though India has a low per capita consumption, it is still a major contributor to global toxicity due to poor waste management practices and the sheer size

of the population.
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- Apart from choking India's landmass, contaminating drinking water, killing animals, plastics flowing down India's rivers are estimated to contribute as much as 60 per cent of global ocean contamination.
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- Industry will see up to 300,000 job losses and adverse impacts along the whole value chain due to policy measures to manage toxic wastes.
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- The compliance record of plastic ban in most Indian states is very poor and the bans exist only in name.
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What measures needs to be taken?

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- Eco-friendly alternatives such as jute and recyclable categories of plastics replace toxic "thin" plastics, new employment opportunities will surely be created.
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- Carry bag production using cloth can create more jobs than machines using plastic pellets.
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- Any policy that aims to reduce plastic use must be well designed to induce behavioural changes at several levels from usage to disposal.
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- Countries in the European Union use taxation policies, imposing heavy taxes on certain categories of plastic while offering incentives to make and use eco-friendly substitutes Indian can also try such models.
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- After all educating consumers about the need for the proper disposal of all sorts of wastes, including plastics, is the only way for a ban be sustainably executed.
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Source: Business Standard

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