Plastic Waste Management

Why in news?

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- Maharashtra has recently enforced ban on several consumer articles made of plastic.
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- It becomes imperative for the whole country to take lessons to act upon plastic pollution seriously.
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What is the significance?

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- India hosted the recent World Environment Day.
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- Indian PM made a pledge that India would do away with all single-use plastics by 2022.
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- But the goal is not yet backed by an action plan.
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What are the concerns?

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- The state governments and local bodies are largely out of sync in the effort.
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- Governments lack proper systemic **data** on volumes of waste, and even less on what it recycles.
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- **Segregation at source** has not taken off, as there is little awareness, official support or infrastructure.
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- Even bulk generators such as shopping malls, hotels and offices do not abide by the law.
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- India’s **plastic waste** is estimated officially to be around 26,000 tonnes a day.
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- To global concern, this is being dumped in the **oceans**.
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- **Guidelines** forrecycling different types of plastics were issued two decades ago by the Bureau of Indian Standards.
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- The Centre and the States have failed to implement the existing regulations.
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- A ban is not even necessary if regulations on plastic waste management and municipal solid waste had been taken up.
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What is the way forward?

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- Priority, should be given to stop the generation of mixed waste, which prevents recovery of plastics.
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- There has to be an effort on a war footing to segregate waste at source.
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- The Urban Development Secretary in each State should be mandated to produce a monthly report.
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- It should have details on how much plastic waste is collected, the types of chemicals involved, and disposal methods.
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- Such compulsory disclosure norms will maintain public pressure on the authorities.
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- Companies covered by extended producer responsibility provisions must be required to take back their waste.
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- Besides, incentives to reduce the use of plastic carry bags, single-use cups, plates and cutlery must be in place.
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- Retailers must be required to switch to paper bags.
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- Potentially, carry bag production using cloth can create more jobs than machines using plastic pellets.
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Source: The Hindu

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