Plastic Waste Management Rules 2018

Why in news?

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The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules 2018.

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What is the amendment about?

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- In 2016, Union government implemented the Plastic Waste Management Rules and Solid Waste Management Rules.
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- But the rules faced various challenges.
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- Based on representations received from various stakeholders, MoEF&CC had constituted a committee to resolve such issues.
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- The amendments are based on recommendations submitted to the Ministry.
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What are the highlights?

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- The phasing out of Multi-layered Plastic (MLP) is now applicable only to MLP that are “non-recyclable or non-energy recoverable or have no alternate use”.
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- MLP is most widely used in food packing Industries.
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- The amended Rules prescribe a central registration system for the

registration of the producer/importer/brand owner.
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- The system will be evolved by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
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- National registry has been prescribed for producers with presence in more than two states.
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- A state-level registration has been prescribed for smaller producers/brand owners operating within one or two states.
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- Any mechanism for the registration should be automated.
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- It should take into account ease of doing business for producers, recyclers and manufacturers.
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What are the shortfalls?

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- **Dilution** - Many significant provisions of the earlier plastic waste management policy, 2016 have been discarded or diluted now.
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- The Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules 2018 has omitted the explicit pricing of carry bags mentioned in 2016 rule.
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- **MLP** - Multi-layered plastics are supposed to be phased out.
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- But these have been given a fresh lease of life by easing the norms concerned.
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- Only MLP that are “non-recyclable or non-energy recoverable or have no alternate use” are to be phased out.
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- This leaves hardly any category of multi-layered plastics to be phased out.
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- Any product can be claimed to have some alternate use to escape the bar.
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- **Producers** - The new norms seem to have been crafted with an eye on ease of doing business.
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- This seems to be happening at the cost of the environment and public health due to plastic use.

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- “Extended producer responsibility” bound plastic producers, importers and brand owners.
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- They are required to ensure environmentally sound management of their products till the end of their useful life.
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- The new policy is soft on “extended producer responsibility”.
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What are the concerns with plastic toxicity in India?

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- India is reckoned to generate over 25,000 tonnes of plastic waste every day.
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- The residues can stain the environment and natural resources for hundreds of years.
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- Plastic toxicity is known for its enduring adverse effects on territorial and aquatic life.
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- In food, it can alter human hormones to cause major life-threatening diseases.
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- Plastic materials, especially bags and bottles strewn on roads, have been noticed to cause flooding by blocking drains.
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- They also kill stray cattle by choking.
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What is the way forward?

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- Plastics are not totally dispensable as their use seems desirable in certain situations.
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- In fields like agriculture and automobiles, packaging, information technology and biomedical industries, they are relevant.
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- But their non-degradability and emission of toxic gases on combustion and

incineration are growing concerns.
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- It is thus imperative to manage plastic debris appropriately.
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- It would be advisable to reassess the new set of rules and switch back to the 2016 plastic waste management norms.
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Source: PIB, Business Standard

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