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WHAT WILL YOU GIVE UP TO SAVE EARTH?



Straws & stirrers



Plastic cutlery



Balloons



Disposable cups, plates



Plastic bottles



Plastic carry bags



Styrofoam containers



Tetrapacks



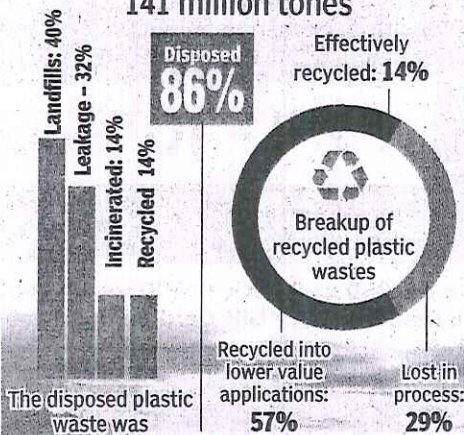
Sachets



Branded snack packets

47% of the plastic waste generated globally in 2015 was plastic packaging - half of that appearing to come from China

Global flow of plastic packaging waste in 2015
Total packaging waste generated in 2015:
141 million tones



■ 1 to 5 trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide each year. Five trillion is almost 10 million plastic bags a minute. If tied together, they would go around the world seven times every hour and cover an area twice the size of France

■ Plastic bags and Styrofoam containers can take up 1,000 years to decompose



Marine litter:

- By 2050, an estimated 99% of seabirds will have ingested plastics
- Marine litter harms over 600 marine species
- 15% of species affected by ingestion and entanglement of marine litter are endangered

Common single-use plastics on the beaches

- Cigarette butts
- Plastic beverage bottles
- Plastic bottle caps
- Food wrappers
- Plastic grocery bags
- Plastic lids
- Straws and stirrers
- Take-away containers

Action points

Consumers must make environment-friendly choices

- School education (incorporated in curriculums)
- Awareness campaigns
- Public pressure to drive public and private sector decision-making

Courtesy: UN Environment report titled Single-Use Plastics - A Roadmap for Sustainability

Shun or recycle plastics for cleaner tomorrow

■ TUBA RAQSHAN

CHENNAI: The government and its agencies have faced the public wrath for their incompetence and callousness in dealing with the city's mountains of plastic waste. However, with the Tamil Nadu government announcing a ban on disposable plastic, here are 10 common single-use plastic items that you can refuse (or at least, recycle), for a cleaner tomorrow.

Cigarette butts top the list of trash dotting the world's beaches, followed by plastic bottles (and caps), packaging wrappers, grocery bags, straws and takeaway containers, according to a report by UN Environment. While the state government has called for a ban, how can the citizen help fight the problem of plastics? Environmental activists and recycling experts list out the single-use plastics from our daily lives,

which we should refuse (at least one item) - to lower the quantum of plastic pollution.

Siddharth Hande, founder and CEO of Kabiwalla Connect, a social enterprise connecting households to the informal recyclers in their neighbourhood through tech intervention, lists out the top offenders. "Plastic carry bags (especially the cheaper quality ones) should be definitely banned as well as straws, plastic cutleries, cups and plates. Anything that is sold in Tetra Pak packaging should be avoided as much as possible. Packaged food wrappers are also difficult to recycle," he said.

Siddharth added that recycling, though cost and energy intensive, is a better alternative to the environmental cost of plastic lying in the land or sea. "While banning single-use plastic, the industry should be pushed to make better quality plastic bags, which can be easier recycled. It is best to reduce consumption by refusing, failing which recycling is the next best step," he added.

Arun Krishnamurthy, the founder of Environmentalist Foundation of India (EFI), which conducts regular clean-ups across the city's waterbodies and beaches, has been motivating the volunteers to give up one plastic item from their lives. "Plastic straw, spoons, forks, plates, cups, bottles, sachets, carry bags - all these pollute the environment and are highly toxic. If every person gives up one plastic item, it would make an impact. Another unsuspecting item is the balloon, which especially pollutes the city beaches," he added.

Activist and lawyer Harshad Barde's list, in addition to the above items, includes a startling item - plastic pens, which are often thrown after a single use. The UN Environment's report pointed out that if current consumption patterns and waste management practices don't improve, by 2050 there will be about 12 billion tons of plastic litter in landfills and natural environment.