

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

India Inc pledges to 'Beat Plastic Pollution'

Plastic now threatens to become a menace to humanity: Prime Minister

OUR BUREAU

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Reiterating his government's commitment to the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said: "Our national mission on cleanliness and sanitation — Swachh Bharat Abhiyan — has a special focus on "plastic waste management."

Addressing the Plenary Session of the World Environment Day 2018 celebrations, Modi said that plastic now threatens to become a menace to humanity.

"Plastic pollution is already having a deadly impact on our marine ecosystem. Scientists and fishermen alike have pointed to signs of trouble. These include declining fish catches, warming ocean temperatures, and vanishing habitats," he said adding that "plastic pollution is now entering into our food chain. In fact, micro plastics

have now even entered basic food like salt, bottled water and tap water." He said that the per capita plastic consumption in India is much lower than in many parts of the world.

"As global host of World Environment Day 2018, I reiterate our commitment to sustainable development. Let us all join together to beat plastic pollution and make this planet a better place to live," he added.

India Inc's commitment

As if taking a cue, in response to United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) theme for this year's World Environment Day and the Indian government's focus on "Beating Plastic Pollution", India Inc has pledged to reduce usage of plastics. Companies across sectors including PepsiCo India, ITC, Nestle India, Maruti Suzuki India, and Hyundai India expressed their commitments.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi releasing postage stamps on Environment at the Plenary Session of the World Environment Day, in New Delhi on Tuesday SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY

PepsiCo India has decided to pilot first-ever plant based and 100 per cent compostable packaging for Lay's and Kurkure products. It also said that it will explore ways to scale up recovery and recycling, equivalent to 100 per cent of its post-consumer plastic waste in the next few years. Ahmed El Sheikh, President & CEO, PepsiCo India,

said: "In line with reducing the impact of our packaging on the environment, we are committed to working with partners to leverage new technologies and developing sustainable, environmentally friendly packaging solutions." The company plans to launch this pilot in the fourth quarter of 2018. Diversified Indian conglomerate, ITC

Ltd has said it is committed to deploying superior solutions so that 100 per cent of its product packaging will be reusable, recyclable or compostable within the next decade.

In a statement, Sanjiv Puri, Managing Director of ITC Ltd, said, "The problem of solid waste management is one of epic proportions and requires each organ of the society and more so, enterprises that are large economic organs of the society, to make a meaningful contribution. We in ITC are extremely committed through our initiative of Well being out of Waste (WOW), which focusses on providing an end-to-end sustainable and a scalable solution spanning the entire value chain right from awareness, segregation, collection and promotion, reuse or recycle of solid waste."

Reckitt Benckiser (India) also said that it is committed to making 100 per cent of plastic packaging recyclable or reusable by 2025.

Food major Nestle India said

that it is committed to find improved solutions to reduce, recycle and recover for a healthier environment. Sanjay Khajuria, Senior Vice-President - Corporate Affairs, Nestle India, added that the company has collaborated with various stakeholders — NGOs, academia, State governments and waste aggregators. "We have reduced our packaging materials significantly over the last few years through packaging optimisation and will continue to work in this direction," he said.

The Cement Manufacturers Association (CMA) has pledged to minimise single-use plastic by the sector to address the twin concerns of environment friendly waste management and conservation of conventional fuels.

Shailendra Chouksey, President, CMA, said: "The cement industry is committed to building a sustainable India through mitigating emissions, facilitating resource conservation and efficiency and progressively reducing use of plastics."