



Ministry plugs loophole that allowed plastic waste import

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PET bottles imported for processing in SEZs had increased substantially

- The government has plugged a loophole that allowed the import of plastic waste into India for processing.
- Solid plastic waste has been prohibited from import into the country including in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and by Export Oriented Units (EOU), the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) Environment Ministry said in an order made public.
- The change in law was part of the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Amendment Rules, 2019.
- The influx of PET bottles has quadrupled from 2017 to 2018, the Delhi-based environmentalist organisation, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Smriti Manch (PDUSM) had pointed out.
- India consumes about 13 million tonnes of plastic and recycles only about 4 million tonnes.
- To incentivise domestic plastic recycling units, the government had banned the import of plastic waste, particularly PET bottles, in 2015.
- In 2016, an amendment allowed such imports as long as they were carried out by agencies situated in SEZs.
- Lack of an efficient waste collection and segregation system is the root cause for much of the plastic not making to recycling centres.

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