

## WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

NEWS: World Environment Day is celebrated every year on June 5, is a global initiative to raise awareness and drive action for environmental protection.

### WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

#### World Environment Day

- **1972 Stockholm Conference:**  
The first **United Nations Conference on the Human Environment** was held in **Stockholm, Sweden**, with the theme "**Only One Earth**".  
It marked the beginning of the **global environmental movement**.
- **Stockholm Declaration & Action Plan:**  
The conference resulted in the adoption of the **Stockholm Declaration**, outlining **26 principles** concerning the environment and development, and an **Action Plan** to implement them.
- **Establishment of UNEP and World Environment Day:**  
In **1973**, following the Stockholm conference, the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** designated **5th June** as **World Environment Day**, aimed at raising awareness and encouraging global action on environmental issues.



#### World Environment Day 2025 – Key Facts

- **Host Country: Republic of Korea** will host World Environment Day 2025.
- **Theme: #BeatPlasticPollution** – Focuses on the urgent need to address the growing plastic waste crisis and its devastating consequences on ecosystems, human health, and economies.

#### Plastic Pollution – Global Perspective

- **Annual Leakage:**  
Every year, **19–23 million tonnes** of plastic waste leak into aquatic ecosystems such as rivers, lakes, and oceans.

- **Daily Dumping Scale:**  
The amount of plastic waste dumped each day into water bodies is **equivalent to 2,000 garbage trucks**.
- **Economic Costs:**  
Plastic pollution imposes an estimated **\$300–600 billion** annual cost on the global economy, including health, tourism, fisheries, and ecosystem services.
- **Historical Waste Accumulation:**  
Since 1950, over **7 billion tonnes** of plastic waste have been generated globally.
- **Microplastic Infiltration:**  
Microplastics are now found across **soil, drinking water, food chains**, and even inside human bodies, posing serious health risks.

### **Plastic Pollution – India’s Scenario**

- **Annual Waste Generation:**  
India generates approximately **3.5 million metric tonnes** of plastic waste every year.
- **Environmental Impact:**  
A significant portion of this plastic ends up **clogging drains, contaminating soil and water**, and harming terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity.
- **Projected Trends:**  
If unchecked, **plastic pollution in India is expected to triple by 2060**, worsening climate, water, and food security crises.

### **Impact of Plastic Pollution on SDGs**

- **SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation:**  
Plastic waste severely contaminates freshwater sources, affecting **water quality, aquatic species, and human health**.
- **SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production:**  
Encourages reduction in **plastic use, promotion of recycling**, and development of **sustainable alternatives** to plastic products.
- **SDG 13 – Climate Action:**  
Plastic production is **fossil fuel-intensive** and contributes to **greenhouse gas emissions**, exacerbating climate change.
- **SDG 14 – Life Below Water:**  
Plastics make up **85% of marine litter**, harming **coral reefs, fish, and other marine organisms**.
- **SDG 15 – Life on Land:**  
Plastic debris impacts **soil quality, agricultural productivity, and terrestrial wildlife**, especially grazing animals.

### **Other Environmental Challenges in India**

- **Carbon Emissions:**  
From **2015 to 2024**, global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions rose by **~10%**.

India's own emissions increased from **2.33 billion to 3.12 billion metric tonnes**, mainly from fossil fuel combustion.

- **Biodiversity Loss:**  
India's **mega-diverse ecosystems** face degradation due to **deforestation, wetland loss, monoculture farming, and habitat fragmentation**.
- **Urban Pollution and Waste:**  
India produces **62 million tonnes of solid waste annually**, but only **20% is scientifically processed**, contributing to air, land, and water pollution.  
Cities like **Delhi consistently top global pollution rankings**.

### Global Commitments and India's Role

- **Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions (2019):**  
India supports these UN treaties that regulate **hazardous chemicals and waste**, and has consistently opposed **e-waste dumping** in developing nations.
- **G20 Osaka Blue Ocean Vision (2019):**  
India joined this initiative with other G20 countries to **eliminate plastic pollution in oceans by 2050**, focusing on **microplastics, marine litter, and plastic waste management**.
- **High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People (2021):**  
India joined the coalition during the **One Planet Summit in Paris**, committing to **protect at least 30% of land and oceans globally by 2030**.

### India's Policy Measures to Tackle Plastic Pollution

- **Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2021:**  
Enacted under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**, these rules:
  - **Ban single-use plastic items** like straws and cutlery.
  - **Regulate plastic carry bags** by thickness and usage norms.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):**  
Mandates that **manufacturers and importers** of plastic products must **collect and manage** the waste they generate.  
The **EPR Portal** tracks compliance and enforces accountability.
- **Plastic Parks and CSIR Technology:**  
Dedicated **industrial zones** (Plastic Parks) enable businesses to **recycle plastic waste** and convert it into **fuels or reusable materials** using **CSIR-developed technology**.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission:**  
The flagship **sanitation and waste management programme** promotes **segregation, collection, and disposal** of plastic waste in **rural and urban India**.

### Solutions for a Plastic-Free Future

- **Refuse:** Say no to **single-use plastics**, such as disposable cutlery, plastic bags, and packaging.
- **Reduce:** Limit plastic usage by **choosing reusable items**, reducing overpackaged products, and **minimizing household waste**.

- **Recycle:** Sort and dispose of plastics correctly to enable **recycling and reuse**.
- **Rethink Consumption:** Adopt **sustainable alternatives**, support **eco-conscious brands**, and advocate for **green innovations** in daily life.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/world-environment-day-2025-in-pictures/article69660024.ece>