



Darwaza Band for open defecation

MDWS launches a fresh national campaign led by Amitabh Bachchan

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The centre today launched an aggressive new campaign titled 'Darwaza Band' to promote toilet use and freedom from open defecation across the country's villages. The campaign produced by the MDWS under Swachh Bharat Mission was launched in the presence of iconic actor, Shri Amitabh Bachchan, Union Minister for Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri Devendra Fadnavis, Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Parameswaran Iyer, and other Centre and State dignitaries in Mumbai. The event was widely attended by officials from all the State Districts and selected Gram Panchayat Members.

The Union Minister and the State Chief Minister also reviewed the working of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) programme in Maharashtra ahead of the event. Champion functionaries from the State of Maharashtra were awarded during the event. An exhibition displaying various toilet technologies was also put up.

The 'Darwaza Band' campaign has been supported by the World Bank and is being rolled out countrywide immediately after the launch. It is designed to encourage behaviour change in men who have toilets but are not using them. A part of the campaign also features actor, Ms Anushka Sharma, who will be seen encouraging women to stand up for this issue in their villages and assume a leadership role.

Shri Narendra Tomar said that achievement of 64% ODF status is a tribute to the Prime Minister's commitment. He also congratulated Maharashtra on its significant achievement of 80% ODF. He further said that all attempts are being made to make this into a true Jan Andolan. He said the goal for India should be to become a showcase country for cleanliness by 2019. He thanked Shri Amitabh Bachchan for his constant support.

Shri Devendra Fadnavis thanked MDWS for choosing Maharashtra to launch the Darwaza Band Campaign. He thanked Sri Bachchan for taking on the mandate of raising awareness about Swachta and endorsing the new campaign. He emphasised that Maharashtra is committed to become ODF by March 2018. Speaking at the event Shri Bachchan gave a brief background to the development of the campaign and mentioned that the campaign talks about a safe space for people to defecate. He also congratulated the State Champions and assured the audience of his support to the cause of Swachta. He assured the audience of his constant support of the Swachh Bharat Mission as and when needed.

Shri Bachchan has been a major supporter and ambassador for the Swachh Bharat Mission and is already associated with its ongoing campaigns.

Behaviour change has been the focus of Swachh Bharat Mission, which is being pursued through a countrywide comprehensive IEC (Information-Education-Communication) programme. Communication campaigns have been taken up both, at the central and State levels, for promoting sustained use of toilets and for sustaining the Open Defecation Free status achieved.

Shri Iyer announced that the number of people defecating in the open has reduced from 55 crores in May 2014 to 35 crores in May 2017. He highlighted that the program is not just a toilet construction program but focuses on behaviour change promoting sustainable usage, at both community and village levels. In his presentation Shri Iyer showcased visual examples of some behaviour change communication being done at the grassroots.

Introducing the campaign, he said that it focuses on the need to shift people's paradigm from 'open' to 'closed' especially for men.

The Amitabh Bachchan series of ads encourages behaviour change in men who have toilets but are not using them. The Anushka Sharma series of ads is a clarion call for women who are more affected by this problem to stand up for this issue in their village and influence a positive change. These have been developed by Lowe Lintas, Mumbai under a World Bank Project.

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