



Environment Minister Launches “Harit Diwali, Swasth Diwali” Campaign; urges children to celebrate Pollution-Free Diwali this Year

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Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, launched the “Harit Diwali, Swasth Diwali” campaign, here today. Addressing a gathering of about 800 children from schools of Delhi and NCR, the Minister impressed upon the children the importance of their contribution towards reducing pollution by not bursting harmful fire crackers during Diwali. Congratulating the teachers and students, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that it is heartening to see that children have taken on the leadership role in combating air and noise pollution caused by burning of fire crackers during Diwali celebrations. The Minister added that whenever children take up any task, they do not spare any effort in ensuring its success. He urged the children to also learn about the chemicals present in the fire crackers and the impact of these chemicals on various parts of the human body. Dr. Harsh Vardhan impressed upon the children to celebrate this year’s Diwali by not buying fire crackers and instead buy a gift, food items, or sweets for the poor and underprivileged children living in their locality.

Later, Dr. Harsh Vardhan also administered a Pledge for a Green and Healthy Diwali to the gathering of students. The Pledge will be widely circulated to the schools/colleges and other educational institutions and the school administration will be requested to administer the said Pledge during their school assembly up to Diwali. Students presented ‘Nukkad Natak’ (street plays) and also sang “Prakriti Vandana” on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary, MoEF&CC, Shri Ajay Narayan Jha expressed the hope that the message of celebrating “Harit & Swasth Diwali” will be taken across the country. Shri Jha asked the children to buy earthen lamps and other such environment-friendly products.

As a part of the campaign, the Environment Ministry will undertake various activities to create awareness among various stakeholders and encourage people to participate in combating air pollution.

Diwali is an integral part of our rich tradition and a festival that embodies joy and happiness. In recent times, the pattern of celebration has changed somewhat and has got associated with excessive bursting of crackers, which contributes significantly to air and noise pollution. As a result, there has been a significant impact on the environment and health of the people.

As has been the experience in the past few years, airborne pollution has been rising above safe limits during winter in many cities. The excessive burning of crackers during Diwali aggravates the problem. The pollution levels in Delhi last year, especially post Diwali, reached such levels that the government had to declare an emergency situation, which had socio-economic consequences like closing down of schools, construction sites and power stations.

In October this year, India will be hosting FIFA U-17 World Cup. It is an important occasion and a matter for pride for India. It is important for us to ensure that there is no inconvenience caused in the conduct of the event and our national image is protected and enhanced.

Some of the activities to promote Green Diwali among school children include stickers/logo distribution, poster competition, advertisement on public transport systems, public appeal using Radio/FM, involving industry associations and other stakeholders. As a part of the social media campaign, an online competition will be conducted, where any individual/organisation can make a video/audio clip on the theme ‘Pollution Free Diwali’. The best of these clips will be used officially to promote the theme across the country.

Additional Secretaries, MoEF&CC, Shri Anil Kumar Jain and Shri A.K Mehta, besides senior officers and officials of Environment Ministry were among those present in the gathering.

Links to photographs:

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