

We would be using eco-friendly crackers this Deepawali

By : Editor Published On : 5 Oct, 2019 11:51 PM IST



INVC NEWS

New Delhi,

In a bid to resolve the crisis of air pollution, the Government today launched green firecrackers. Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan today announced in a Press Conference in New Delhi, that Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) labs have been successful in developing various environment-friendly fireworks such as sound emitting crackers, flowerpots, pencils, chakkar and sparklers. He further pointed out that these fireworks, based on

new formulations developed by CSIR, have been manufactured and are available in the Indian market for consumers and sellers.

He further informed that due to the ban that had been imposed as per the orders of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, there was a threat of imminent closure of the entire fireworks industry. However, Science has once again come to the rescue of the common man and millions of jobs have been saved due to the interventions made by our scientists.

Dr Harsh Vardhan said, "I am very happy that on one hand we would be using eco-friendly crackers this Deepawali, and, on the other hand our traditional festival celebrations with lights and fire crackers shall remain intact. Millions of homes which are dependent on sale and manufacture of fireworks will also rejoice this festival, thanks to our scientists!"

Dr. Harsh Vardhan also highlighted that the emissions testing facilities for the new fire crackers have been set up at CSIR-NEERI as well as their approved National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration (NABL) facilities whose list is available at CSIR NEERI website. Further, a Raw Materials Compositional Analysis (RACE) facility has been launched in Sivakasi to facilitate manufacturers for testing their raw materials and chemicals. About 530 emissions testing certificates have been issued to fireworks manufactures for new and improved formulations meeting the stipulated guidelines of green crackers.

The Minister also lauded the efforts made by CSIR in developing these green crackers and informed that nearly 165 fireworks manufactures have been roped in and around 65 more manufacturers are in the process of coming on board.

To develop reduced emission/green fireworks, eight labs participated, CSIR-NEERI, CEERI, IITR, IICT, NCL, CECRI, NBRI and CMERI, with CSIR NEERI coordinating the entire exercise. Firstly, for immediate improvement CSIR-NEERI developed improvements in conventional formulations based on Barium Nitrate to meet the stipulated norms of green crackers. The implementation of these formulations is subject to approval of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. CSIR-NEERI has also developed new formulations for reduced emission light and sound emitting crackers with 30% reduction in particulate matter.

Dr Harsh Vardhan also mentioned that CSIR-NEERI along with Petroleum and Explosives Safety

Organisation (PESO), Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEFCC) have also evolved a clear definition of green crackers with a view to educate the regulators and the public on ways and means to demarcate green crackers from conventional crackers. Apart from defining green crackers, baseline values for benchmarking green crackers and assessing Barium levels in conventional crackers and green crackers, have been laid down for legal and policy interventions.

During the press conference, Dr Harsh Vardhan launched the green crackers manufactured by licensee-manufacturers. He also informed that a green logo as well as a Quick Response (QR) coding system has been developed for differentiation of green crackers from conventional crackers. QR codes is a novel feature incorporated on the fire crackers to avoid manufacture and sale of counterfeit products. This will also help the consumers to track the cracker using smart phones and other devices. Dr Harsh Vardhan also indicated that the cost of the green crackers is almost same as that of regular crackers.

Dr Harsh Vardhan further informed that a helpline has been created for any queries related to emission certificates, QR Codes and formulations. The helpline is available at: +918617770964 and +919049598046, or, email at: director@neeri.res.in.

It is noteworthy to mention that Dr Harsh Vardhan had, in 2018, exhorted the Indian scientific community to initiate R&D on environment-friendly fireworks. This was done to address not only the environmental concerns arising from use of existing fireworks but also protect the livelihoods of millions of people engaged in manufacture and sale of fireworks across the country.

The DG of CSIR, DrShekhar C Mande; Director, NEERI, DrRakesh Kumar and Dr. SadhanaRayalu, NEERI were amongst those present at the Press Conference.

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