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FSSAI ropes in Virat Kohli to eliminate the usage of single-use plastic

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NEW DELHI: Aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for action to eliminate single-use plastic in coming years, develop environmental friendly substitutes and also an efficient plastic collection and disposal system in the food and beverages (F&B) sector, the apex food regulatory authority Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is developing a concrete action plan in partnership with stakeholders. Apart from developing this incremental and agile plan, FSSAI has recently initiated some regulatory measures to enable F&B industry to reduce its plastic footprint. These include:



- * Hotels can use paper-sealed glass bottles for captive use without BIS certification in place of plastic bottles. An order has been recently issued on this.
- * Use of bamboo as an alternative to plastics such as straws, plates, bowls, cutlery etc.
- * Removing the restriction on use of returnable bottles for packaging of artificially sweetened beverages.
- * Permitting the use of liquid nitrogen dosing in PET bottles during the packaging of drinking water.

The food authority has started a consumer awareness campaign "Eat Right India for Sustainable Living" as a call to action for plastic waste management and reduction of plastic footprint in the F&B industry.

To kick-start the movement, the Indian Cricket Captain, Shri Virat Kohli had reached out to millions of fans through his social media accounts (Twitter, Instagram and Facebook) and invited them to a collection drive organised on Thursday. He asked them to bring empty F&B plastic packaging, plastic bottles, aluminium cans and tetra pack cartons for recycling in a move towards sustainable living. Thousands of people joined hands during the activation at MGF mall, Gurgaon where Shri Kohli himself segregated F&B plastic packaging waste and motivated people to follow his foot-steps.

This campaign comes a day after, the Prime Minister launched 'Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) 2019', which has a special focus on 'plastic waste awareness and management.'

FSSAI is further asking state/UT food safety departments to conduct similar awareness and collection drives at public places and malls at their State capitals and major cities in accordance with the timelines of SHS 2019. It has also urged the State Level Advisory Committees to organise state level discussions around the same and devise activities for sustaining the agenda.

At the event, Virat Kohli, captain of Indian cricket team urged his fans to not just talk about the problem but to also start acting on it. He said, "Don't get inspired by (my) hairstyle or clothes, get inspired to do good for the society. Join hands to achieve a plastic waste free India by participating in this campaign."

Speaking on the occasion, FSSAI CEO, Pawan Agarwal said, "Shri Virat Kohli is not only India's ace cricketer but a wonderful human being with a sensitive heart, who cares for the society. He thanked him for his support to the cause of 'healthy India' through safe food, healthy and sustainable diets. He hoped that endorsement of celebrities like Virat Kohli will help to make India completely free of plastic soon and FSSAI is committed to work with various stakeholders from the food and beverages sector to bring about this change."