

## Zero-pollution green firecrackers next Diwali?



Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan urged scientists to develop zero-pollution firecrackers that are environment friendly and don't emit any hazardous gases and chemicals ? in order to stop further damage to the fragile atmosphere.

Toxicity levels rise to unbelievable extents during Diwali season, thanks to the smoke released when majority of India's population bursts firecrackers for almost five days in a row. Tons and tons of smoke filled with hazardous chemicals result in toxic air and hence worsen air pollution. When the quantum of toxic pollutants spikes fourfold, only days away, the Supreme Court on October 9 banned the sale of firecrackers in Delhi-NCR till November 1. Diwali falls on October 19. Flagging off a 'Run for Clean Air' campaign, Harsh Vardhan told a gathering of students that the ill-effects of pollution cause maximum problems to children.

Vardhan also pledged to promote clean air with an oath - "Let us together pledge for a New India... Let us together pledge towards a Clean India... Let us together pledge towards a casteism-free India". Here's the most noteworthy point Vardhan said ? that scientists have been asked to develop zero-pollution, green firecrackers which do not release any kind of harmful chemicals and smoke. If such firecrackers will be developed, they will significantly reduce the amount of smoke released each year ? but they will surely be costlier, and economic factor has always been a setback for common people.

Yet, as responsible citizens of this world ? yes, not just India but the whole world ? we all must join hands to fight the problem of pollution; but before joining hands, we must change how we behave as individuals. I mean don't we see it! The eye burns, the smoky air, the hazy atmosphere ? not in a good way, rather it is a nightmare. You can know how polluted your surroundings are, just do this - if you just roam around in the city in any open-air vehicle or take a walk for an hour or so, after that you'll be able to smell smoke in your clothes! Literally! So imagine the amount of smoke you inhaled ? those are harmful toxic gases, by the way. So still don't think it is high time to at least control pollution from getting any worse?