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Developing concrete action plan to eliminate single-use plastic: FSSAI

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New Delhi, Sep 12 () Food regulator FSSAI on Thursday said it has taken a number of steps to cut plastic consumption, including permitting hotels to use paper-sealed glass bottles for captive use instead of packaged drinking water.

"Aligned with the prime minister'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, FSSAI is developing a concrete action plan in partnership with all the stakeholders," the regulator said in a statement.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said it has recently initiated some regulatory measures to enable the F&B industry to reduce its plastic footprint.

Listing out these measures, it said "hotels can use paper-sealed glass bottles for captive use without BIS certification in place of plastic bottles."

It has also allowed use of bamboo as an alternative to plastics straws, plates, bowls and cutlery.

FSSAI has removed the restriction on use of returnable bottles for packaging of artificially sweetened beverages and permitted the use of liquid nitrogen dosing in PET bottles during packaging of drinking water.

The 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, Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli had reached out to millions of fans through his social media accounts and invited them to a collection drive organised on Thursday.

Kohli 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 event at MGF Mall, Gurgaon, where Kohli himself segregated F&B plastic packaging waste and motivated people to follow his foot-steps.

At the event, Kohli urged his fans to not just talk about the problem but also start acting on it.

"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," he said.

FSSAI CEO Pawan Agarwal said, "Virat Kohli is not only India's ace cricketer but a wonderful human being with a sensitive heart, who cares for the society."

He also thanked Kohli for his support to the cause of 'Healthy India' through safe food, healthy and sustainable diets.

Agarwal hoped that endorsement by celebrities like Virat Kohli will help to make India completely free of plastic soon.