

Top firms pledge to cut plastics use in biz on World Environment Day (Eds: Adds additional information from ITC, CMA)



New Delhi, Jun 5 Major companies across sectors, including ITC, RB, PepsiCo, Nestle and Hyundai, have pledged to reduce usage of plastics in their businesses and enhance recycling on the World Environment Day.

Homegrown FMCG major ITC said over the next decade it would deploy solutions so that 100 per cent of its product packaging will be reusable and recyclable besides scaling up its solid waste management programmes.

Similarly, another FMCG firm RB also committed to make 100 per cent of its plastic packaging to be recyclable or reusable by 2025.

Food and beverages major PepsiCo India also pledged that it would explore ways to scale up recovery and recycling, equivalent to 100 per cent of its post-consumer plastic waste in the next few years. The company will also pilot first-ever plant-based, 100 per cent compostable packaging for Lay's and Kurkure snacks products in India.

"The problem of solid waste management is one of epic proportions and requires each organ of the society and more so, enterprises that are large economic organs of the society, to make a meaningful contribution," ITC Ltd Managing Director Sanjiv Puri said in a statement.

The company said already over 99 per cent of waste generated in its operations is recycled and its solid waste management initiatives extend to 10 states across the country, covering cities, towns, villages and temples at present.

Cement Manufacturers Association (CMA), the apex body of cement producers' in India, also pledged to minimise single-use plastic by the sector.

CMA President Shailendra Chouksey said the cement industry is confident of using all plastic waste that can be made available by local bodies within a radius of 200-250 kms from any integrated cement plant.

"We will have the potential to consume 12 million tonnes of plastic waste in our kilns annually by 2025, resulting in conservation of conventional fuels such as coal to the extent of 10 per cent," he said.

RB said it is "committed to removing or reducing plastic packaging...And investing in research into alternative materials" and it has been propagating responsible use of plastic for packaging through "the 4R approach -- reduce, reuse, replace, and recycle".

PepsiCo India President and CEO Ahmed ElSheikh said the company has been working to reduce the impact of its packaging on the environment.

"We are committed to working with partners to leverage new technologies and developing sustainable, environmentally friendly packaging solutions," he said.

ElSheikh further said, "...India will be among the first countries to pilot this new, sustainable packaging solution developed by PepsiCo. We plan to launch this pilot in the fourth quarter of 2018."

Nestle India also said it will continue with its efforts to reduce, recycle and recover towards protecting the environment.

In 2017, the company said it reduced packaging material weight by approximately 1,532 tonnes by ensuring eco designing of packaging in a sustainable way.

"We have initiated projects on waste management by engaging with relevant stakeholders," Nestle said, adding it also supported initiatives to recycle or recover energy from used plastic.

Auto major Hyundai Motor India also announced plans to reduce the usage of plastics across all its offices, dealers and service networks.

Commenting on the initiatives, HMIL Director - Sales and Marketing Rakesh Srivastava said: "This year's theme is 'Beating Plastic Pollution', for which we are exploring green alternatives to reduce the usage of plastics across all our offices, dealers and service networks".

Hyundai said its initiatives will focus on reducing the usage of plastics at its manufacturing plant in Sriperumbudur near Chennai and across all its 493 Hyundai dealerships and 1,309 service workshops.

The company, along with its vendor partners, will also opt for alternate packaging material for spare parts and usage of water-borne paints.

Similarly, as part of the World Environment Day initiative, Volkswagen asked its customers to book appointments for water-less car wash, a special service initiative from the brand to assist in water conservation and get saplings for plantation.