

Smokeless firecrackers

Eco-friendly Diwali in sight?



Each year, as Diwali rolls around, a thick smog from burning firecrackers hangs in the air in large parts of India. But firecracker sellers in Jaipur are trying to change that: they have introduced a new range of smokeless firecrackers made with less smoke-emitting chemicals in a bid to reduce pollution levels.

"These smoke-free crackers are made by reducing the quantity of chemical content, responsible for emitting smoke. Also, we have increased the quantity of the chemicals that emanate various colours and light," said Zahir Ahmad, a firecracker shop owner. "We have used herbs in the manufacturing of these crackers, so that smoke is less when they are burned."

Firecrackers have traditionally been an important part of Diwali, with millions of rupees worth of crackers burnt on that day across the country. But as environmental awareness builds up, the market for environment-friendly firecrackers is also growing.

Smokeless firecrackers are more expensive than regular crackers, with some items selling for up to 5,000 rupees. But customers aren't complaining. "These firecrackers are environment-friendly, by using them we can reduce pollution levels. Also, it benefits those who are suffering from pollution-related diseases," said Sanjeev, a customer. "Also, I have heard these smokeless crackers look beautiful when they are burned." (Reuters Life 14 October 2009).