



B'lore readies for Earth Hour



Govt establishments, corporates and malls are planning to observe the event with fervour

Deepthi MR • BANGALORE

Earth Hour is here again. The event, to be observed from 8.30 pm to 9.30 pm on March 31, aims to encourage businesses and households to turn off their non-essential lights for one hour to create awareness about the need to take action on climate change.

While government establishments, corporates and malls are planning to observe Earth Hour with fervour in the city, mixed participation is expected from Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) as the exam season is yet to be over.

Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) officials will send requests to RWAs, malls and commercial establishments, requesting them to turn off lights. They have also requested assistant executive engineers to contact residents of their jurisdiction and explain the importance of Earth Hour.

"Lights will be off at Vidhana Soudha, Vikasa Soudha

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—Uday Garudachar, MD, Garuda Mall

and offices of the BDA, the BBMP and PWD," said L Ravi, general manager, corporate communications, BESCOM.

Corporate houses share the enthusiasm. "HSBC has been celebrating the Earth Hour in India since 2009. This is an occasion to encourage our community, employees, customers, suppliers and partners to take responsibility towards a green future. Climate change and depletion of non-renewable resources are a clear challenge to society; it is vital for us to make an effort towards conservation. Small steps like these can have a huge impact on our eco system," said Aloka Majumdar, senior vice president, corporate sustainability, HSBC.

Some malls are expected to

follow suit. "As we are a fairly large mall with over 250 stores and a footfall of over 35,000 people, we cannot turn off lights. However, we have organised a flash mob at 7 pm in association with Srishti College of Arts and requested our stores to turn off non-essential lights and keep other lights dim," said Jonathan Yach, CEO, Mantri Square.

There are others who believe more action is required to create awareness on climate change. "This is a shopping mall and if we cut power for an entire hour it will create security issues. Though we are not planning to cut power for an hour, we will do something tomorrow," said Uday Garudachar, MD, Garuda Mall.

"Each household switching off lights will act as a droplet in an ocean of collective human activity. Switching off lights for one hour and forgetting altogether about energy conservation will not help. We need to do something more to make it sustainable," he said. Mani Murthy, Malleswaram RWA member said: "Usually, kids in our building go to homes and ask residents to switch off lights for an hour. But with exams season not yet over, this hasn't happened yet. But people may pitch in at the last minute; that is what usually happens."

Earth Hour, organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and held on the last Saturday of March annually, was first observed in 2007, when 2.2 million residents of Sydney participated by turning off all non-essential lights. Following Sydney's lead, cities around the world observed the event in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011.