

UGC directs universities to ban plastic on campuses

In the run-up to World Environment Day celebrations on June 5, to be hosted by India, the environment ministry has joined hands with students to beat plastic pollution

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THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS Commission (UGC) has directed all varsities and higher educational institutions to ban use of plastic cups, lunch packets, straws, bottles and bags on their campuses. The directive

by the commission comes after the Union environment ministry issued an advisory, saying India is the global host of this year's World Environment Day celebrations, the largest UN-led celebration on environment, and the theme for this edition is 'Beat Plastic Pollution'.

"Ban takeaway coffee cups,

lunch wrapped in disposable plastic packaging, plastic bags, disposable food service cups, plates, containers made in polystyrene foam and plastic straws. Restrict single-use plastic water bottles and encourage use of refillable bottles instead," the UGC said in a communication to all vice-chancellors.

The commission has also asked varsities to conduct networking activities on mass awareness on disposal of plastic and cleanliness drives under the Swachh Bharat Mission in municipalities. "Hosting this prestigious event is a step towards our commitment to undertake global leadership on addressing all forms of pollu-

tion, reducing emissions and investing in sustainable development efforts. "This is an opportunity for collective efforts to reduce the use of plastic and the HRD ministry has desired that the students be encouraged to refuse, reduce, and reuse plastic products in their daily use," the letter said.

In the run-up to the World Environment Day celebrations on June 5, the environment ministry has also asked schools to stop the use of plastics in their premises and constituted 19 teams to undertake cleaning of 24 beaches and an equal number of polluted riverfronts and lakes across the country.