

 **Rajiv Gandhi Akshay Urja Diwas celebrated**

Rajiv Gandhi Akshay Urja Divas, commemorating the birth anniversary of the former Prime Minister who had the vision for providing electricity to all rural and remote areas of the country, was celebrated today with Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Union Minister for New & Renewable Energy participating at the National level function at Jaipur in Rajasthan. The day is celebrated to carry forward the message that Power for all can not be achieved without using the full potential of new and renewable energies because while there is shortage of fossil fuel such as coal, oil and natural gas and most of our crude oil is imported, the renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, biomass, small hydro are available in most parts of the country throughout the year. These renewable energy sources are also non-polluting and infinite in quantity.

The National level function at Jaipur began with Rajiv Gandhi Akshay Urja Run, which were flagged off by Dr. Farooq Abdullah and the chief minister of Rajasthan Shri Ashok Gehlot. A large number of athletes, students and citizens participated in the Run in different categories. With every leap forward they carried with them the message of the sustainable development with Renewable energy. The winners of the half marathon and other categories were awarded at the main function at Birla Auditorium. The half marathon of 21 kilometer was won by Sandeep Kumar, who bagged the cash prize of Rs.51 thousand. The sixteen kilometer Run for women was won by Kavita Rout, who was also awarded the cash prize of Rs. 51 thousand.

Addressing the gathering at the main function, Dr. Abdullah said that Rajiv Gandhi's Dream of taking India forward into 21st century will be carried forward. Stressing the need for the use of energy through natural sources for sustainable development, he listed out various initiatives and activities undertaken by his ministries. He informed that the Center is considering to set up a solar power project of about Three Thousand to Five Thousand Mega Watt in coordination with the Rajasthan Government. Function was presided over by Shri Ashok Gahlot. Both the dignitaries administered the Akshay Urja Pledge to the gathering. In his address, the Chief Minister also recalled the contribution of Rajiv Gandhi in scientific and technological advancement of the country. Function was also attended by minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, Shri Mahadev Singh Khandela, Shri Jitender Singh, Energy Minister Government of Rajasthan. Secretary, New and Renewable Energy Ministry, Government of India, Shri Deepak Gupta and Chief Secretary of Government of Rajasthan, Smt. Kaushal Singh were also present.

The gathering witnessed a Laser show highlighting the use of renewable energy. An exhibition of renewable energy devices and power plants was also organized on this occasion.

The day is being celebrated throughout the country simultaneously with the financial support of Rs.1.5 lakh for each district, from Ministry of New & Renewable Energy. The programmes primarily consist of awareness campaigns through multi-media namely print, electronic and outdoor approach; Mobile Exhibition Vans in most of the States; Renewable Energy Quiz in Hindi, English and regional languages with large participation of school children; Radio Sponsored Programmes for various renewable energy technologies in Hindi, English and regional languages through DAVP and broadcast in main/local channels of All India Radio.