

Jairam likely to rope in Shah Rukh, Vidya for sanitation campaign

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NEW DELHI: Shah Rukh Khan and Vidya Balan are coming together, not to promote a commercial venture but to act as brand ambassadors to fight open defecation, propagate sanitation and appeal to the people across the country to get clean.

Union Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh, who also holds the portfolio of drinking water and sanitation, has broached the idea with the actors, and their response has been positive.

Mr. Ramesh has said he will pursue the idea of roping in Shah Rukh Khan and Vidya Balan for a massive communication programme for the success of the total sanitation campaign to make the people use toilets.

Greater visibility

The latest Census report points out that more people in India use mobile phones than toilets; about 50 per cent of the population still defecate in the open.

India accounts for 60 per cent of the world population



Vidya Balan

that practises open defecation.

The aim, Mr. Ramesh says, is to give greater visibility to the sanitation programme. The budgetary outlay for the programme during the current fiscal has been increased to Rs.14,000 crore.

The Ministry has already brought in Sachin Tendulkar, and now Mr. Ramesh intends to cash in on the fan following of Shah Rukh Khan and Vidya Balan, who is said to be topping the popularity charts.