



PRESS RELEASE

Children demand their right to breathe clean air in Patna

CEED driven initiative to create awareness against rising air pollution

Patna, November 14 2017: On the occasion of Children's Day, hundreds of students from Patna Muslim High School in Patna, demanded their right to clean air. These students demanded measures to address the rising air pollution in the city and also urged the citizens to take immediate action by supporting them in the fight against worsening air quality. The activity started as part of a citizen initiative against air pollution, dubbed as '**Patna for Healthy Air**'. The initiative is being driven by the think-tank, Centre for Environment and Energy Development (CEED), with an aim to create public awareness about the depleting air quality in the city and to mobilize support for collective action for clean air.

It is important to note that the present air quality in Patna has reached dangerous levels, with the AQI falling into the range of 410–492; the most prominent pollutant being PM_{2.5}. For the past few days, Patna has been witnessing a thick layer of haze, which is an unusual occurrence during the initial days of the winter season. This is nothing but smog (smoke+fog) laden with fine particulate matters PM_{2.5} and other obnoxious gases. Patnaites are forced to breathe toxic air, which might cause irreparable damage to their lungs and aggravate existing respiratory diseases like asthma, bronchitis and heart ailments. This toxic air is far more dangerous to vulnerable groups, including children below 14 years of age, elderly people over 60 years and patients with chronic heart and lung problems. Of them, children are the most susceptible to the harmful effects of air pollution due to higher intake of breathable air and also because they generally spend more time outdoors than the other age groups. According to a study published in a medical journal– The Lancet, pollution claimed as many as 2.5 million lives in India in 2015, a figure that records to be the highest in the world.

Highlighting the gravity of the situation, Ankita Jyoti, Senior Programme Officer at CEED said, “The time for rhetoric is over, since the writing is clearly on the wall. Air pollution has hit dangerous levels, resulting in serious public health implications. We can no longer be passive bystanders to the present deteriorating air quality situation. We need to act with a clear long term action plan to address this catastrophe, which is threatening our right to breathe.”

“Bihar can perhaps learn from Delhi and formulate a comprehensive action plan for clean air, which will not limit itself only to the city of Patna, but will be applicable all over the state. We must also work on building scope for a regional collaboration with neighbouring states like Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand to make our air liveable and breathable once again.” concluded Ms. Jyoti.

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