



PRESS RELEASE

CEED Releases Report on Ambient Air Quality for Five Cities in UP Agra recorded to be the most polluted city in UP this monsoon

Lucknow, 26th October, 2016: Centre for Environment and Energy Development (CEED) released data from the 24 hour monitoring of ambient air quality of late monsoon months (August- September), in five cities across Uttar Pradesh. The study showed that the particulate matter levels in Agra was in the 'Worst' category across the five cities. Succeeding Agra, Allahabad was observed to be the second most polluted city with a mean concentration of 93.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, followed by Lucknow, Varanasi and Kanpur. The report reveals that these cities of Uttar Pradesh had more number of unhealthy short-term particulate pollution days than healthy air quality days. This condition of poor air quality suggests severe risks pertaining to health such as lung cancer, asthma attacks, cardiovascular damage, developmental and reproductive detriment, and also premature death.

While addressing at the press conference, Surabhi Shikha, Head - Programmes (CEED), enumerated that given the scale of air pollution and the impact it has, we expect the Government to address the issue with greater diligence and responsibility. In order to curb the menace of air pollution, one of the major steps is to provide more comprehensive data on air quality in public domain that empowers people to take action to safeguard their health. The government must not only take corrective measures, but also be proactive at issuing red alerts during poor air quality days. Ms. Shikha further asserted that it is absolutely imperative to chalk out a well defined policy and programme to give state a healthy environment to breathe in.

The details of the report was presented by Ankita Jyoti, Programme Manager (CEED), who expatiated on the findings of the study further. Ms. Jyoti highlighted that as per the study, the average particulate matter levels of ambient air were 2-3 times above the safety limits prescribed by the World Health Organisation. According to Indian safety ceiling, the above mentioned value is likely to cause respiratory ailments to people with prolonged exposure to the air, and may severely impact the health of patients with lung and cardiac diseases. During the period of evaluation of AQI in the five cities, the number of days under the 'Good' category was astoundingly low. While Allahabad just witnessed one such day, the 'Good' AQI was seen for 3 days in Agra, 7 days in Lucknow, 8 days in Varanasi and 15 days in Kanpur.

The particulate matters emanating from automobiles, refuse burning, industries, coal-fired power plants and diesel emissions have contributed to the extraordinarily high numbers of days with unhealthy particulate matter. “Everyone has the right to breathe healthy air and with the onset of winter, the problem of air pollution is likely to get severe. There is an urgent need to set a deadline for meeting the NAQS with clean action plan”, Ms. Jyoti added further.

With this report, CEED demands to develop an efficient clean air action plan for the state. An action plan for each urban centre must be developed to provide healthy breathable air to its citizens. To achieve such a feat, CEED suggests to formulate a policy that includes a provision to adopt emergency measures where vulnerable communities receive constant alerts and updates about the area’s air quality. The policy must also aim at efficient transport system, delinking diesel, reducing industrial emission with special focus on clean bricks manufacturing methods, strict banning of open waste burning, encouraging clean cooking methods, and controlling dust pollution by increasing the green cover.

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