



## PRESS RELEASE

# Delhi's air still unbreathable, confirms CEED's report PM2.5 level 16 times higher than safety level during last winter season

**Delhi, 17th March, 2017:** Centre for Environment and Energy Development (CEED) released a bulletin on 'Ambient Air Quality for Delhi' for the winter months that depicted alarming situation of air quality in our national capital. Not a single day in the four-month long winter season was noted under the 'Good' air quality category, while a whopping 89% of the total days were either under the 'Poor' and 'Very Poor' air quality category. 6% of days are also observed with 'Severe' air quality. This poses serious threat to the living standards and public well-being of our national capital, Delhi (1). 981  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  is the maximum average concentration of particulate matter (PM2.5) observed at the monitoring station of Delhi Technological University (DTU), located near Bawana industrial area on November 5th, 2016, during high pollution smog-days in Delhi. This is 16 times higher than the prescribed limits of National Air Quality Standard of 60  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  for 24 hour average concentration of particulate matter (PM2.5).

Expressing concern over the rising trend in the pollution levels of Delhi, Dimpy Suneja, Programme Officer of CEED said that "the air quality of the city is unbreathable and is choking its residents, especially the vulnerables causing massive public health disaster. It is a crisis looming at our faces and we cannot turn a blind eye to it. While keeping the urgency of the situation in mind, the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) approved by Honourable Supreme Court of India should immediately be ratified by the Government of NCT of Delhi, so that its implementation can start on ground."

The findings are based on data from 10 real-time air quality monitoring stations in Delhi, set up by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), during the last winter season between the months of November-2016 and February-2017. The report is not just an assessment of the existing levels of air pollution in Delhi, but is also a reflection of the levels of human exposure to air pollution.

Further, the study also revealed that the monthly mean values demonstrated a general downward trend from November to February. The average concentration of particulate matter in the month of November was calculated to be 282.7  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  (the highest), while the monthly mean concentration during the rest of the winter season (December, January and February) was 224.57  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , 172.7  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  and 140.74  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  respectively.

The highest daily average concentration of PM2.5 in the month of November was 558  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  on 7th November 2016, while in December, it was 300  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  recorded on 24th of the month. In January and February, the highest daily average concentration of PM2.5 was recorded on 1st January (225  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) and 28th February (215  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) respectively.

Elaborating the findings of the report further, Mr. Suneja said that "The fact that the air quality in Delhi has plunged to dangerous levels, poses a major threat to public health and safety. Every year millions of people face untimely death due to the increasingly polluted quality of air they breathe. This emergency situation demands emergency action. Hence the Graded Response Action Plan

(GRAP) approved by Honourable Supreme Court of India should immediately be ratified by the Government of NCT of Delhi, so that its implementation can start on ground.”

He further added that “The most important step should be towards the improvement of public health and in order to ensure it, we need to enhance public information methods so that the masses are well-informed through easily accessible health advisories for each ward of the city. For more lasting and enduring impacts on air quality, we need to step up short and medium term measures to reduce pollution from vehicles, power plants, industries, waste burning and construction in a time-bound manner. Also, the government should take steps to improve the public transport system, followed by which, the parking fees can be increased 4-5 times during high pollution days. We must also step up inter-state coordination to address the smoke plumes from the farm fires in Punjab and Haryana.”

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**Note to Editor:**

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