

PRESS NOTE

Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA)

On the current situation on air quality in NCR and actions taken and foreseen

New Delhi, October 31, 2018

According to the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, the coming days could see a sharp deterioration in air quality in Delhi-NCR. This is because there is a western disturbance system in the north of India which is bringing moisture, and a cyclonic system on the eastern side which is suppressing winds. Besides this, there is increased burning of paddy straw in Punjab and Haryana, as is evident in images released by the NASA in US; the direction of the wind is now from the northwest. All this, combined with Delhi-NCR's own pollution sources, could lead to a spike in pollution in the coming 10 days.

However, there are also indications that the weather system may improve. Today -- October 31, 2018 -- there has been a slight improvement as the wind speed has picked up at night. As a result, there is a slight reduction in levels of PM10 and PM2.5, which is being monitored across NCR.

Currently, Delhi-NCR is in the **Very Poor** category of air quality.

But as the situation could deteriorate for the reasons given above, the EPCA has issued some directions on the advice of the Task Force led by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). These directions are pre-emptive in some cases and go beyond what is stipulated in the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). But these have been taken, keeping in mind the forecast and the need for emergency actions to combat pollution drastically.

It is important also to keep in mind that GRAP is only an emergency action plan and is not a substitute for long term actions that need to be taken to combat toxic and deadly air pollution, which is injurious and hazardous for our health, particularly for the health of children and the more vulnerable.

The actions directed as of date are as follows:

- 1. All construction activities involving excavation and civil construction (excluding internal finishing/work where no construction material is used) will be stopped in Delhi and other NCR districts from November 1-10, 2018.**
- 2. All stone crushers and hot mix plants generating dust pollution will stop functioning in Delhi and other NCR districts from November 1-10, 2018.**
- 3. All industries using coal and biomass as fuel will stop functioning in Delhi and other NCR districts from November 4-10, 2018. Industries that use natural gas as fuel can continue to operate. The order does not apply to power plants in NCR (except Badarpur) and waste to energy plants.**
- 4. All diesel generator (DG) sets in Delhi have been stopped as of October 15, 2018.**

5. **The Badarpur Power Plant in Delhi has been closed as of October 15, 2018.**
6. **Brick kilns in NCR will be closed down from November 1-10, 2018 (The EPCA is issuing a letter to this effect to the states of Haryana, Rajasthan and UP today).**
7. **The industrial area of Mundka will remain closed from November 1-10 so that all the debris of plastic, rubber and other waste is removed by North Delhi Municipal Corporation, based on the EPCA's inspection and directions.**

In addition, all state governments have set up teams to patrol and impose fines on violators for garbage burning; industrial air pollution; dust mismanagement and visibly polluting vehicles. The chief secretaries have convened meetings and directed action for enforcement.

How the residents of Delhi-NCR can join the efforts to clean our air

The Hon'ble Supreme Court has directed the CPCB to set up social media accounts to receive complaints on violations. This will allow citizens to participate in this massive effort to clean our air. Accordingly, the CPCB has opened the following accounts:

Facebook Pagehttps://www.facebook.com/Central-Pollution-Control-Board-315289479059625/?modal=admin_todo_tour

Twitter handle[https://twitter.com/CPCB OFFICIAL](https://twitter.com/CPCB_OFFICIAL)

The EPCA will continue to monitor the situation very closely and see what further steps are required to be taken. It will direct these steps in consultation with the CPCB Task Force and state governments, including steps on reduction/ban on use of private vehicles and restraints on trucks entering Delhi.

However, what is required is the participation and involvement of all of us in combating the pollution crisis, which we know is a grave health crisis. We are appealing to all citizens of NCR to join in the battle against air pollution and to do the following:

- **Reduce our use of private vehicles** in this period, by taking public transport or other means. As per the latest report of the Union government, vehicles contribute some 40 per cent of the pollution in Delhi city.
- Ensure that we **do not use private diesel vehicles** in this period, as this will add to the pollution burden.
- Ensure that we **do not burn garbage** and we report all instances of garbage burning and other pollution carefully and responsibly on the CPCB Facebook/Twitter accounts. It is essential that we control local sources of pollution at this time so that the crisis is managed.

The EPCA believes all governments -- Central as well as in the states -- are aware of the pollution crisis and are taking actions. However, we need to take more drastic steps to combat this national crisis. The Comprehensive Action Plan on Air Pollution (CAP) has been prepared under the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and has been notified by the Central government under the Environment Protection Act. It is imperative we step up implementation of the long-term actions listed in this Plan, including the augmentation of intra-city and inter-city public

transport, so that there is effective and viable ways for all of us to reduce our use of private vehicles.

For any further details, please connect to AnkushTewani of EPCA at 011-43102414.