

'Graded plan reason why air better this year'

TNN | Dec 3, 2017, 12.50 AM IST



NEW DELHI : The meteorological conditions have been much worse this year as compared to the 'peak' period last year, said Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), with measures like Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) and other efforts on the ground helping control the pollution. CPCB officials said Delhi actually witnessed a better November with lesser pollution this year despite both temperatures and mixing height — the height at which particulate matter disperses — being much worse as compared to the peak period last year.

CPCB data shows that in the peak period this year between November 7 and November 12, Delhi's average temperature varied between 21.6 to 23.6 degrees Celsius as compared to 2016 when it was between 22.9 to 26.1 degrees Celsius. This in turn also affected the mixing height which was much lower this year as compared to last year — therefore trapping particulate matter closer to the ground and reducing wind speed. The mixing height was between 336 to 479 metres this year as compared last year when it ranged between 146 to 618 metres.

MAKING SENSE OF NOVEMBER RELIEF

WHY AIR WAS BETTER THIS YEAR		WORST WEEK IN 2016 VS 2017		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ CPCB says despite meteorological conditions being worse in 2017, pollution was lower than 2016 due to measures adopted under Graded Response Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Delhi saw a cleaner November this year with fewer number of "severe" days ▶ CPCB says consistent efforts on ground can improve the situation 	Parameters	2016 (Oct 30 - Nov 7)	2017 (Nov 7 - Nov 12)
		PM 2.5 (µg/m ³)	197 - 709	357 - 611
		Mixing height (m)	146 - 618	336 - 479
		Wind speed (m/s)	1.0 - 3.0	1.0 - 1.3
		Temperature (Celsius)	22.9 - 26.1	21.6 - 23.6
		Relative humidity	47.8 - 63.3	60.2 - 75.8

Dipankar Saha, head of CPCB's air laboratory, said that this in turn also affected the wind speed which varied between 1 to 1.3 m/s this year. Last year, during the peak period between October 30 to November 7 when Delhi witnessed 'severe' pollution levels, wind speed was between 1 to 3 m/s.

"The mixing height was much lower this year and the wind speed was very calm. This makes it difficult for particulate matter to disperse easily and it stays close to the ground. Pollution levels, however, have been controlled this year much better than last year, largely owing to preventive measures like GRAP and all agencies being more aware and active on the ground," Saha told TOI.

CPCB data during the same period also showed higher relative humidity this year which reached as high as 75% as compared to last year when it ranged between 47.8% and 63.3%.