

Till mechanism is set up, CPCB entrusted with operationalising, monitoring GRAP: Air quality panel



New Delhi, Nov 9 (PTI) The Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas on Tuesday tasked the Central Pollution Control Board with operationalising and monitoring GRAP measures till a mechanism is setup by the newly-constituted panel.

At a meeting, the commission also decided that in view of deteriorating air quality in the NCR region, there is a need to invoke the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), which has already been notified by the central government.

"Till a mechanism is set up by the commission, as an interim measure, the CPCB is entrusted with the task of operationalising and monitoring the GRAP measures until further orders," the panel wrote to the apex pollution watchdog and chief secretaries of Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

The GRAP, which is a set of anti-pollution measures followed in Delhi and its vicinity towns according to the severity of the situation, came into force on October 15.

It was notified by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 2017 for implementation through the Supreme Court-mandated Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority.

The measures under GRAP include increasing bus and metro services, hiking parking fees and stopping use of diesel generator sets when the air quality turns poor.

When the situation turns "severe", GRAP recommends closure of brick kilns, stone crushers and hot mix plants, sprinkling of water, frequent mechanised cleaning of roads and maximising power generation from natural gas.

The measures to be followed in the "emergency" situation include stopping entry of trucks in Delhi, ban on construction activities and introduction of the odd-even car rationing scheme.

Delhi recorded a 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) of 476, which falls in the "severe" category.

Its neighbouring cities Faridabad (448), Ghaziabad (444), Noida (455), Greater Noida (436), and Gurgaon (427) also recorded "severe" air quality.

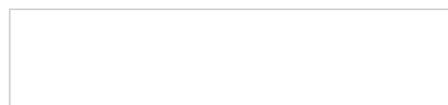
This is the sixth "severe" air day on the trot in Delhi. The city witnessed seven "severe" air days in November last year.

According to GRAP, air quality is considered in "severe plus" or "emergency" category if PM2.5 and PM10 levels persist above 300 µg/m³ and 500 µg/m³ for more than 48 hours.

GRAP recommends measures such as ban on construction activities, entry of trucks and car rationing scheme in such a scenario. PTI
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