

Noida air as poisonous as Delhi's in Dec

Both Vehicular, Particulate Pollution Very High, Study Shows

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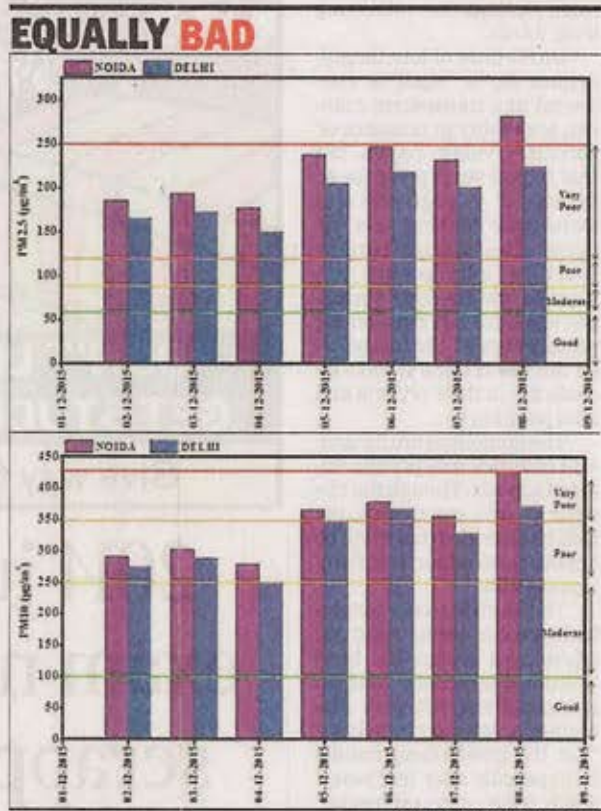
Noida: Noida needs measures to counter pollution as urgently as Delhi, with its air quality consistently as bad or worse than the capital so far this month.

The System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), the ministry of earth sciences' weather quality monitoring organisation, has released the data for December 1-9 on PM 2.5 and PM 10, which shows the two cities have very poor air quality and there is immediate need to address the environmental problem for public safety.

The safe standard of PM 2.5 is 60 micrograms per cubic metre (PGM3) and 100 PGM3 for PM 10. SAFAR categorises air quality as good, moderate, poor and very poor, according to the quantity of pollutant particles in the city's air.

The weeklong data of weather quality reveals Delhi and Noida have fared 'very poorly' on all days on the PM 2.5 and PM 10 fronts.

Gufran Beig, project director of SAFAR, said the team monitored the weather quality for one week. "Noida and Delhi have both recorded around 250 PGM3 in the past one week at PM 10. On Wednesday, Noida recorded 400 in PM 10 which is



Source: SAFAR@MoES-IITM-IMD

not safe," he said. Such pollutant particles in the air will cause health problems and there was need to check it, he added.

Noida has around 1.63 lakh private cars and 11,594 commer-

cial taxis. The enforcement of the odd-even rule in Delhi has sent many commuters in a tizzy. Residents foresee problems as the city has poor transport infrastructure and also lacks last-mile connectivity. The

Metro in Noida is always crowded with an average footfall at the Noida Wave City Center station at 35,166.

Though the new rule will not be applicable in Noida and Ghaziabad, residents wonder where they will park their vehicles if they want to enter Delhi on even- or odd-number dates depending on their car numbers. "There is no parking place at the Noida-Delhi border. This will lead to chaos," said Mohit Verma, a commuter.

The ministry of earth science started the project, SAFAR, for weather monitoring of Delhi-Noida region in 2010 at the time of Commonwealth Games. There is a weather station in Noida which constantly keeps tabs on the weather updates. Beig said Noida is a gateway to Delhi and the weather quality of one city is linked to the other.

"If the air quality of one city deteriorates, it will affect the neighbouring city. There is need for awareness among people to make the environment safe and clean," he said.

The officials said the sophisticated technology enables prediction of the level of pollutants in the city based on which preventive action can be taken to protect human health. SAFAR monitors air quality and weather parameters around the clock.

Green drives can't mask laxity on pollution curbs

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Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government may have created a world record in planting the highest number of trees at one place in one day, but the state's environment department, and the Pollution Control Board, is ill-equipped to keep air pollution in check in various parts of the state.

A preliminary look at the ambient air quality of most major cities in the state has not only worsened over the years, but the state's data-keeping has plunged southwards, with it. Sample this: Ambient air quality data for UP is not available after the month of October; this year. In this last report made public by the UP Pollution Control Board, air quality has dropped considerably across almost all districts of UP.

Take Ghaziabad, for instance, which has remained in the vulnerable category since 2014, when the year average of particulate matter with a diameter less than 10 micrometres (PM10) in the Sahibabad Industrial Area was pegged 257.1 microgram per cubic meter (mg/cm). This year



No Air Quality Index for UP yet

the presence of PM10 in the industrial area has slipped to 275 mg/cm.

The Bulandshahr road area of Ghaziabad faced similar deterioration of ambient air quality. Here, PM10 went up from 235.8 mg/cm in 2014, to 256 mg/cm in October 2015. Noida, too, falls in the vulnerable air quality category; the presence of PM10 in the residential area of regional office of Noida was 127.4 mg/cm in 2014, against 143.5 mg/cm in October 2015.

But here's the clincher: While most developed countries have a colour-coded air quality index that allows people to assess the quality of air

they breathe, and to take precautions accordingly, Uttar Pradesh does not have an air quality index, as yet. India's AQI, announced by the NDA government in April this year, is based on recommendations made by IIT-Kanpur. It mandates monitoring of pollutants on an 8-hourly and 24-hourly basis. The state machinery has only made available average monthly reports of vulnerable cities. Also, UP's ENVIS Centre, the agency that records the "Status of Environment and Related Issues" in Uttar Pradesh, and is managed by the directorate of environment in UP, also monitors ambient air quality in the NCR region. The government-run Envis Centre last updated an air quality monitoring report for NCR on January 11, 2015.

While environment department officials remain tight-lipped about the poor quality of data keeping - the department also has parallel records that are at odds with each other - sources in the government told TOI there hasn't been any concerted effort, yet, to control air pollution. Efforts, they say, however, are on.