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leader ahead of polls. P8



Hubli-Dharwad facing high levels of pollution

Fifty cities in South India have high particulate pollution

BANGALORE: The twin cities of Hubli-Dharwad have 'critical levels' of air pollution according to a study report of the Central Pollution Control Board.

"An analysis of air quality data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) indicates that about 47 per cent of the cities monitored in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala exceed the ambient air quality standards for PM10 (particulate matter 10).

Three cities (Tuticorin, Vijaywada and Hubli-Dharwad) have critical levels of PM10, 14 (including Bangalore, Nalagonda, Kurnool, Salem and Guntur) have high levels and about 17 cities (including Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram) have moderately high levels," the report says.

The details were divulged at a workshop jointly organised by Karnataka Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) and Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, in Bangalore on Friday.

'Bangalore critical'

According to the report, Bangalore is one of the 14 cities in the country categorised with high particulate pollution and the City may slip into 'critical' category if immediate steps are not taken. The report notes that as many as 50 cities in South India were under high particulate pollution category.

Vaman Acharya, the chairperson of KSPCB, said there was an immediate need to check massive vehicular population in Bangalore, which has been affecting the air quality in the City. He said the air pollution was on the rise despite the technology introduced in vehicles to ensure minimum pollutants.

Acharya said increase in dust and smoke emitted during burning of garbage were adding to the air pollution in the City and children were falling victims to asthma and other communicable diseases.

Asthma cases on rise

H Paramesh, Director, Lakeside Medical Centre and Hospital said that such cases of asthmatic attacks, especially among children, has been on the rise since 1979.

"We were earlier a pensioner's paradise. Today, the City is more noted for its wheezing and asthmatic symptoms and it has become a hell for pensioners," he said.

According to the statistics compiled by Paramesh, there has been an increase of close to 20 per cent in asthma and wheezing problems in the City and of these, children were facing the major problem.

"Between the age of 2 and 17 years, eight per cent of children are facing problems of snoring and another 1.05 per cent from Obstructive Sleep Apnea Syndrome," he said.

Paramesh, a paediatrician and a pulmonologist, said the risk of premature delivery of babies has gone up by about 30 per cent. "Each day, a person inhales close to 10 lakh particles of carbon dioxide. As a result, people have to pay with their heart, lungs and body," he said.

C G Anand, chief mechanical engineer of Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation said that BMTC accounts for 1.6 per cent of the vehicles plying on City roads and carries 42 per cent of the Bangalore's population.

He revealed that the Corporation, with 6,000 buses, has plans to go for alternative fuels.