



Press release

TERI suggests stringent measures to manage air pollution induced health crisis

New Delhi, 7 November 2017: The air pollution levels in Delhi and surrounding regions are touching the emergency level of $300 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for PM_{2.5}, yet again as we approach the winters. There has been a gradual increase in these levels during the last 35 days (as illustrated in the figure below). Presently, daily concentrations are three to five times higher than the prescribed 24-hourly standard. Huge quantities of pollutant emissions are being released in the Delhi-NCR and upwind regions from various sources. In addition, low wind speeds and inversion conditions are leading to severe pollutant concentrations, which have extremely adverse health outcomes, such as increased respiratory disorders and cardio-vascular problems. In response to similar situation last year, TERI had submitted an Emergency Action Plan for immediate control of pollution levels. Later MoEFCC also notified the implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan, which specified the actions to be taken during severe emergency levels of pollutants in the city.

We suggest stringent enforcement of the plan with specific emphasis on the following measures during emergency conditions:

- 1) Restricted entry for trucks other than those complying with BS-IV regulations (except for essential commodities).
- 2) Extensive cleaning of roads using mechanized and manual mechanism.
- 3) Shutdown schools to reduce exposure to children.
- 4) Stop construction and solid/liquid fuel based industrial activities in NCR. Implement control measures to arrest dust pollution from construction sites
- 5) Introduce odd-even scheme without any exemptions to two-wheelers, taxis and women.
- 6) Suggest work from home for government and private offices
- 7) Ensure strict enforcement of the ban on DG sets at least in the large commercial establishments in Delhi and NCR

Ms Akshima Tejas Ghate, Associate Director, Transport and Urban Governance, TERI said: "The alarming levels of pollution that Delhi has reached today calls for an action on war-footing scale. We will have to treat the situation as hazardous and put in place



emergency response measures that can insulate the citizens from high levels of exposure. Beijing had witnessed similar levels last December and declared a red alert, which called for closure of schools, reduced vehicular activity, and advisory to stay indoors and wear masks among other things. Delhi-NCR will have to urgently enforce such tough measures in the larger public interest.”

Mr Sumit Sharma, Associate Director, Earth Science and Climate Change, TERI: “To avoid reaching emergency situations at a first place, we need scientifically developed medium term air quality management plans to control emissions from different sectors which contribute to air pollution in Delhi-NCR. However, being in emergency situations now on a yearly basis, we need specific emergency response measures to cut down certain activities and take adaptive measures to reduce exposure to the residents.”

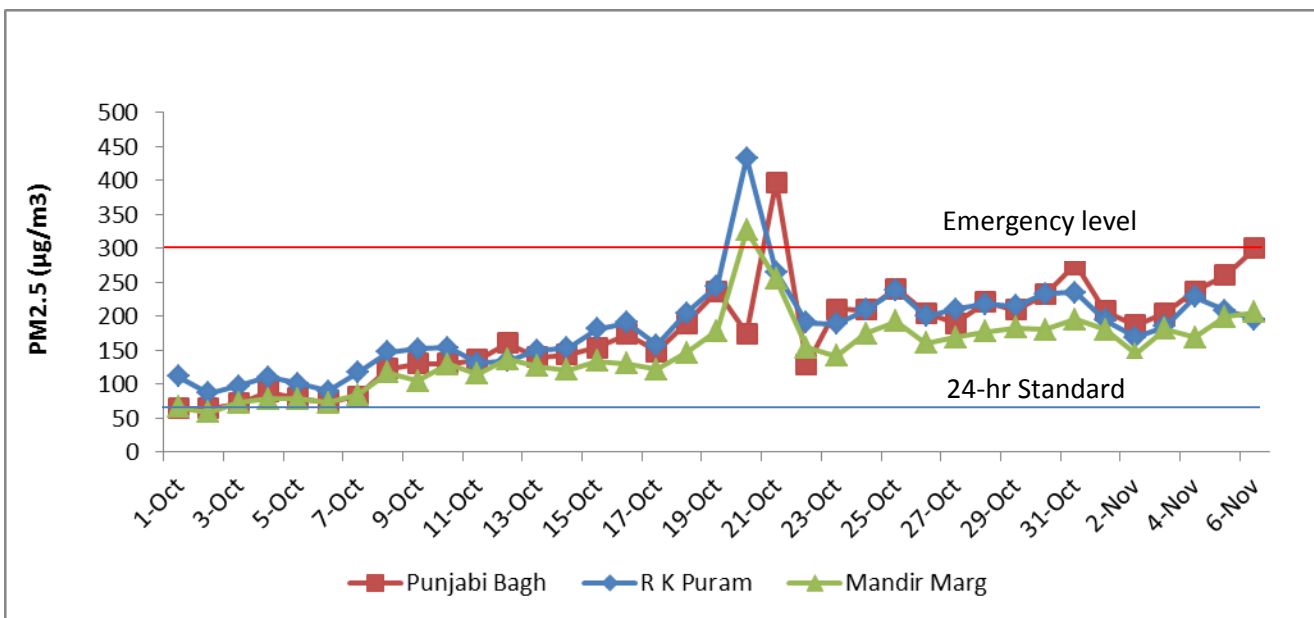


Figure: Concentration of PM 2.5 at three locations in Delhi since October 1, 2017. Note the spike in concentrations at Diwali and the steady increase over this period leading to Emergency Levels today

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