

In 2017, Lucknow had good air quality only on 17 days

Lucknow enveloped in thick winter fog. file photo Subir Roy

The national capital may hog the limelight when it comes to deteriorating air quality, but if you are a resident of Lucknow you have much reason to be concerned.

In 2017, the Uttar Pradesh capital had “good” air quality only on 17 days, which was less than 5% of the total days.

As per data analysed by environment NGO Centre for Environment and Energy Development, Lucknow, the second most populous city in north India was “perpetually under dangerous levels” of air pollution throughout 2017.

An overwhelming 76% of the days last year witnessed “bad” air quality while only 19% were “satisfactory”.

“In the winter months (November and December) of 2017, Lucknow’s air was not less than toxic smoke and was found under ‘Very Poor’ to ‘Severe+’ category for 61 consecutive days,” said CEED.

The report by CEED highlighted the Lalbagh area, which is in the heart of Lucknow and close to the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, as the most polluted place among the three locations where continuous air quality monitoring stations are installed.

The annual mean PM2.5 concentration in Lalbagh was 130 ug/m³, followed by Talkatora (129 ug/m³) and Central School (104 ug/m³) Hazratganj, the posh business and social hub of Lucknow, was concluded to be the most polluted among the seven locations as per the manual monitoring station’s 11-month average data.

“Our analysis found that Lucknow’s air quality was worst on November 13, although according to the CPCB’s daily Air Quality Bulletin, November 14 was the most polluted,” said Ankita Jyoti, senior programme officer of CEED. “The PM2.5 value was calculated as 446ug/m³ on 13th November, which is seven times higher than the national safety limits.”

12 times more

The annual average concentration of PM2.5 in Lucknow was 121 ug/m³, which was three and 12 times more than the national standard and WHO safety limits respectively, the report said.

Ramapati Kumar, CEO of CEED, urged the State government to chalk out an affirmative ‘Clean Air Action Plan’ with a time-bound implementation strategy to prevent perennial air pollution episodes.

“It is also essential for the city to have a source apportionment study in order to understand the emission profile of each of the polluting sectors,” he said.

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