

Pollution dipped in 2017, says Environment Ministry

Responding to the air pollution data released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Wednesday, the government claimed that various measures have led to pollution levels actually falling in 2017.

At 143 microgrammes per cubic metre, Delhi's PM (2.5) levels in 2016 — as reported by the WHO — made it the sixth most polluted city in the world. The government, citing Central Pollution Control Board data, said it was 134 microgrammes per cubic metre in 2016 and 125 microgrammes per cubic metre in 2017. "The government has made serious efforts to deal with air pollution. Data for the year 2017 for PM 2.5 shows improvement over 2016 and so far in 2018, it shows a further improvement, as compared to 2017," said a statement from the Environment Ministry.

The CPCB data, based on Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS), also noted that PM (10) figures were 289 microgrammes per cubic metre in the year 2016 and 268 microgrammes per cubic metre in the year 2017. "Therefore, even PM 10 levels have come down in the year 2017 against 2016," the statement added.

The WHO had cited numbers from the CPCB, along with other peer-reviewed sources, to assess pollution levels in Delhi in 2016. WHO's global urban air pollution database measured the levels of fine particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) from more than 4,300 cities in 108 countries, according to which ambient air pollution alone caused some 4.2 million deaths in 2016, while household air pollution from cooking with polluting fuels and technologies caused an estimated 3.8 million deaths in the same period. Kanpur and Varanasi led the list of the world's most polluted cities, with Faridabad, Gaya, Patna, Lucknow, Agra, Muzaffarpur, Srinagar, Gurugram, Jaipur, Patiala and Jodhpur also figuring in the 20 most-polluted cities in the world.

(With PTI inputs)

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