

Mayor Sanyukta Bhatia calls for proactive action from all agencies towards air pollution management

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Lucknow, 1 October 2020: All agencies responsible need to play a proactive role in implementing Lucknow's clean air action plan to improve the air quality in the city, highlighted Ms Sanyukta Bhatia, Mayor, Lucknow, at the discussion 'How robust is Lucknow's clean air plan?' organised by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and the Centre for Environment and Energy Development (CEED).

Ms Bhatia congratulated CEEW and CEED for bringing together concerned citizens on a common platform to deliberate on air pollution. "As the responsibilities to implement Lucknow's clean air plan fall under multiple agencies, it is important for all departments to work together to ensure that we improve the city's air quality significantly and sustain it. Citizens can also play a huge role by being active monitors, educating themselves and by making lifestyle changes that could serve the cause of clean air," the Mayor said.

Under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), 122 non-attainment cities in India, including 15 in Uttar Pradesh (UP), are required to prepare city-specific clean air plans as a primary mitigation measure for reducing particulate concentration by 20 to 30 per cent by 2024. According to a new independent CEEW-Urban Emissions study that assesses the 102 publicly available clean air plans, Lucknow's plan currently lists 56 measures across 17 different agencies. About 50 per cent of actions fall under multiple agencies and this could fragment the accountability.

Speaking at the discussion, Tanushree Ganguly, Programme Associate at CEEW, said, "There was an improvement in Lucknow's air quality during the lockdown with PM2.5 concentrations touching as low as 35 ug/m³. However, on several days in September, the PM2.5 concentration in the city has exceeded the 60 ug/m³ mark. With the economy bouncing back, vehicles back on the street and winter approaching, Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) and Lucknow Nagar Nigam should be wary of rising pollution levels in the city."

Ankita Jyoti, Senior Program Officer, CEED, said the critical question that remains unanswered is the timely implementation of the plans. "In the last year, it has been observed that there is a lack of proper and sustained enforcement of the measures mentioned in the plan. We request the government and enforcement agencies to expedite the implementation of the plan and ensure greater transparency regarding its progress," she said.

Speaking at the discussion, Priyanka Singh, Consultant, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), said, "UP is working on all the action plans with micro-level planning. UPPCB is also working to improve real-time monitoring. We'll improve transparency about the progress made in implementing the

actions. We are also adopting an approach in which location-specific issues in Lucknow are taken into consideration while actions are implemented.”

The CEEW-Urban Emissions study also found that among the 15 city clean air plans in UP, the state pollution control board is in charge of only 20 per cent of the mitigation activities, while 44 per cent comes under the ambit of municipal corporations and urban local bodies (ULBs) and 18 per cent under the department of transport. The analysis also highlights that the clean air plans for cities in UP do not contain legally binding emission reduction targets.

According to the analysis, none of UP’s approved city-specific clean air plans has a budget outlined for the execution of the proposed air pollution mitigation activities. In FY 2019-20, five UP cities, including Agra, Lucknow, Kanpur, Varanasi, and Allahabad received INR 10 crore each for air pollution management. As per the Fifteenth Finance Commission recommendations, seven cities in UP, including Allahabad, Agra, Lucknow, Kanpur, Meerut, Ghaziabad and Varanasi will receive grants for AQI improvements in FY 2020-21.

Only three city action plans, including Kanpur, Lucknow, and Varanasi, contain crucial information on emission from different polluting sources. However, none of the plans contain information on relative contribution from the polluting sources. Estimates by Urban Emissions indicate that domestic heating (~20 per cent), vehicular exhaust (~15 per cent) and dust (~15 per cent) are the primary contributors to PM2.5 in Lucknow

Methodology of the study

The CEEW-Urban Emissions study established the key components of a clean air plan based on an extensive review of global literature. It assessed the 102 Indian clean air plans for the presence or absence of elements such as a legal framework, source information, responsibility delineation, and the cost-effectiveness of proposed solutions. Further, descriptive statistics were used to explain and compare the plans across states and analyse the state-level variations in approaches towards clean air planning.

About CEEW

The Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) is one of Asia’s leading not-for-profit policy research institutions. The Council uses data, integrated analysis, and strategic outreach to explain – and change – the use, reuse, and misuse of resources. It prides itself on the independence of its high-quality research, develops partnerships with public and private institutions, and engages with wider public. In 2020, CEEW once again featured extensively across nine categories in the ‘2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report’. The Council has also been consistently ranked among the world’s top climate change think tanks. Follow us on Twitter @CEEWIndia for the latest updates.

About CEED

Centre for Environment and Energy Development (CEED), an environment and energy expert group, is involved in creating sustainable solutions to maintain a healthy, rich and diverse environment.



CEED primarily works towards clean energy, clean air, clean water and zero waste solutions by creating an enabling environment and policy framework to scale up investments in low carbon development, climate mitigation and adaptation. CEED engages with government industries, leaders, think tanks, stakeholders and the public to create environmentally responsible and socially just solutions.

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