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Air pollution on normal days proves a growing concern Swathi Vadlamudi HYDERABAD, November 08, 2018 22:32 IST

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'Deepavali day's pollution has come down from last year'

This Deepavali, the city has good news in terms of cracker-related pollution levels, though embedded in ominous tidings about the pollution levels in general.

When compared with the Deepavali last year, pollution has come down both in terms of particulate matter and decibel levels.

But the bad news is in the average pollution levels registered on a normal day, that have not only increased when compared to the previous year, but have touched or exceeded the standard average limits prescribed for particulate matter.

As per the report released by the Telangana State Pollution Control Board, the particulate matter of a size less than 2.5 microns (PM2.5) in air has registered a growth of more than 10% on a normal day.

Against 53 micrograms of PM2.5 per cubic metre registered in 2017, the city's air now has 59 micrograms of the same. This almost touches the 60 micrograms standard of 24 hours' average prescribed by the Central Pollution Control Board.

Particulate matter of the size less than 10 microns (PM10) has recorded a jump of almost 20%. From 87 micrograms per cubic metre of air in 2017, it has now increased to 104 micrograms, which is more than the limit of 100 micrograms for 24 hours' average.

PM2.5 refers to the pollutant particles so thin that they may enter the lungs and cause respiratory issues, while PM10 refers to the particles that can reach up to bronchi. The Deepavali day's pollution, however, has come down from the last year.

Against 112 micrograms in 2017, the levels of PM2.5 have plummeted to 95 micrograms, while the PM10 levels have slipped to 140 micrograms from the last year's 158 micrograms.

When compared with a normal day, there was 61% increase in the concentration of PM2.5 and 34% in that of PM10 on the festival day this year, the TSPCB informed.

While the situation is looking up in comparison with the last four years, the TSPCB, however, cautions that the hourly data available at six of its Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations is nothing to cheer about.

For example, the PM2.5 levels have reached 622 micrograms at its Sanath Nagar station between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m. and 549 micrograms during the previous hour on the festival day.

The PM10 peaked at 605 micrograms at its ICRISAT station between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. The PM2.5 constituted 68% of PM10 during the festival, against its normal of 57%, the TSPCB informed. Increased noise levels

Noise levels have increased marginally in residential and sensitive areas, while in the industrial and commercial areas, they have come down.

The night time averages of noise levels have decreased in comparison to the previous years in all areas except in sensitive areas, the report mentioned.

The gaseous parameters are within the limits though the concentrations have moderately increased.