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Not just Diwali, Hyderabad is always breathing polluted air

Diwali or no Diwali, air pollution levels in Hyderabad remain always high, says data recorded by six Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring (CAAQM) stations of the city.

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HYDERABAD: Diwali or no Diwali, air pollution levels in Hyderabad remain always high, says data recorded by six Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring (CAAQM) stations of the city. Installed in the city, they update concentrations of various air pollutants in real-time and also display them on the website of National Air Quality Index. In fact, the air pollution levels in the city on a normal day are often recorded higher than on the Diwali day.

Take for example the air quality around Hyderabad zoo where on Diwali day (Wednesday), Air Quality Index went up to 121, placing it in the 'Moderate' air quality that causes "Breathing discomfort to the people with lungs, asthma and heart diseases."

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On the same day the maximum concentration levels of Particulate Matter(PM) were, 175(micrograms per meter cube) for PM2.5 and 158 for PM10, whereas the value recorded over a 24-hour period for concentrations of PM2.5 and PM10 were 64.97 and 110 respectively, that is above Central Pollution Control Board's maximum levels of 60 and 100.

A reading of the past data reveals it's a regular in Hyderabad. On some days the values are even higher than Diwali day. For example, across the month of October the 24-hour PM2.5 concentration was above the Diwali levels on as many as 20 days, going up to 80 on October 24. Similarly, PM10 concentration was recorded above the Diwali day on 22 days, going up to even 157 on October 28. The maximum concentrations on a normal October day was also much higher (187 & 160).

Same is the case in other locations, including the University of Hyderabad and ICRISAT, Patancheru which have a lot of open space, greenery and are located far from the city. While this may mean that the amount of fire crackers burnt by Hyderabadis on Diwali was not very high, it also indicates a need for serious efforts by the government for curbing air pollution levels in the city before situation gets out of hand like in New Delhi.

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