

Action plan to curb air pollution on the cards

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NAGPUR: A two-day workshop on air quality in ten cities of Maharashtra got underway at Neeri auditorium on Wednesday with thrust on defining priorities, removing obstacles and finding solutions to the problems that have become a cause of worry.

The workshop has been organized by CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI), Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) and IIT-Bombay. Virendra Sethi, MPCB Chair professor, IIT-Bombay, Rakesh Kumar, director, CSIR-NEERI and VM Motghare, joint director (APC), MPCB, addressed the stakeholders in the inaugural session.

Sethi said that the workshop will help in preparing an action plan for air pollution control in Amravati, Aurangabad, Nashik, Nagpur, Chandrapur, Pune, Solapur, Kolhapur, Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. He assured that the action plan derived from the workshop can further be taken to other cities. He stated that the workshop will discuss air quality and air pollution control. Implementation of the action plan in each city will take just a year.

Motghare said that an assurance has been given to the higher authorities to develop and implement short and long term action plan for improving air quality of 10 cities in Maharashtra. He said that PM2.5 will also be taken into consideration while developing the action plan. He expressed concern over bakeries causing air pollution in Mumbai. Thermal power plants are also a major cause of air pollution, he added. Motghare said that Maharashtra is the first state to formulate guidelines for ready mix concrete plants (RMC).

Rakesh Kumar hoped that air quality in these cities will certainly improve after implementing the action plan. The data before and after implementation will reveal the facts, he added.

Stakeholders from these 10 cities are participating in the workshop. They include regulatory authorities, research/academia, municipal corporations, local colleges and institutes.