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Maharashtra starts industry rating to check emissions

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By Vishal Gulati

NEW DELHI: In a first in India, industries in [Maharashtra](#) will be on regular monitoring of particulate matter and other air pollutants and they will get government rating based on their emission levels.

For this, the Maharashtra [Pollution](#) Control Board (MPCB) on Monday released a first-of-its-kind five-star rating system that aims to identify and share information on pollution with the public and the respective industry. June 5 is [World Environment Day](#).

Researchers from the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (JPAL), the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago, Yale University and the Evidence for Policy Design at Harvard University have worked closely with the MPCB to develop the project that aims to use technology to minimise the health and environmental hazards.

Similar programmes have been launched in the US, Canada, [China](#), Ghana, the Philippines and Ukraine.

"Each industry is rated based on the concentration of fine particulate pollution coming from their smoke stacks," Anant Sudarshan, India Director of the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC-India), told IANS.

He said those with the lowest levels of pollution would receive five stars while those with the highest concentrations would get only one star.

Maharashtra is a perfect fit for the programme as it is the most industrialised state in the country with over 75,000 industries. Of these, 12,500 are identified as having high pollution potential.

The star-rating programme, which deals specifically with industrial air pollution emissions, has begun as a pilot among some of these industries with the intention to expand if found successful, Sudarshan said.

Half of the MPCB data has been stored in a database while the rest is either in hard or soft copies distributed across its regional offices, he said.

The MPCB's website says it collected 19,738 stack and ambient air samples collected between September 2012 and June 2014.

"Currently, we are only focusing on the launch in Maharashtra and want to ensure that the programme is set up for success in one state. We would certainly encourage other state pollution control boards to implement such a programme," he said.

The modified versions could also be implemented in some heavily industrialised cities, he said.

Regarding the type of support the three universities were extending to the MPCB, Sudarshan said: "The role of our research team is to work with the MPCB on the question of how to take the data and create a ranking system and at the same time how to use the data as a basis to understand the exact impact of the programme."



The Maharashtra star-rating programme is the first initiative in India that makes available data from approximately 20,000 industrial stack samples over multiple years.

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[Michael Greenstone](#), one of the principal investigators on the project, said the MPCB's programme was path-breaking by providing the public with critical information and rigorously testing its impact on pollution emissions.

"We are excited to partner with MPCB, a global leader, to measure the benefits of this programme for the people of Maharashtra," said Greenstone, the EPIC Director.

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