

PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)
Earth System Science Organization (ESSO)
Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune
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SAFAR Ahmedabad DEDICATED TO THE NATION

Press Release: Launch of System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research - Air Information and Response (SAFAR-AIR)

Ahmedabad; 12 May 2017: Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Hon'ble Union Minister of Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, *Govt. of India*, inaugurated the "System of Air Quality & Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) for the twin cities of Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar" on 12th May' 2017, the first of its kind system for Ahmedabad. *Ministry has distinction to provide science based products and services to the country related to forecast for general weather, monsoon as well as specific services like air quality forecast related to, Human Health, agriculture, aviation, sports, adventure, etc.* In that series, SAFAR is a seamless early warning system enriching local people with advance information on air quality, related health advisory, weather, useful and harmful radiations, extreme event and environmental awareness to deal with their adverse impacts and hence protect citizens by early preparedness and interventions. At the time, when India is embarking on the major campaign "Swatchh Bharat", the Ministry's vision to clean the air by scientific brain drain is a very timely proposition, especially because it is conceived, developed and commissioned by our own country's scientists from the ministry. The technology based knowledge products, benefitting health & policy makers under SAFAR has a vision to transform India to 'new India' in the filed of air quality where best mitigation options go in sync with economic development.

The path from generating raw data to information products to decisions that generates social and economic benefits is complex and needs scientific understanding and their linkages with socioeconomic aspects at each step. This process involves round the clock measurements of various air quality indicators and weather parameters, analyzing the same with scientific knowledge, improving forecasting capabilities with basic scientific research. Thereafter converting science to useful application understandable by a common person. SAFAR translates science to information and disseminates the information in very simple and user friendly format so as maximum stakeholders including government agencies, educational institutes, common public can understand and use the same.

This launch has marked a beginning of the services of "SAFAR", developed for the Ahmedabad METROPOLITAN REGION (SAFAR-Ahmedabad).

Following are the deliverable services:

1. **AIR QUALITY:** Color-coded Air Quality Index for Current & up to 3-days forecast with health advisories and precautionary statement.
2. **HARMFUL RADIATION:** Severity of UV radiation (UVI) with associated skin advisories.
3. **WEATHER:** Current & advance weather forecast along with heat wave information.
4. **EXTREME EVENTS:** Alert for extreme pollution and weather events.
5. **EMISSION SCENARIO:** Accounts of sources of air pollution for mitigation strategies.

The highlights of the inaugural function are:

- (1) Release of booklet for common citizen to know about SAFAR services.
- (2) Launch of **Mobile App for Ahmedabad Air Quality: "SAFAR-Air"**.
- (3) Launch of **Unified Dynamic SAFAR Web Portal**.
- (4) SAFAR-Ahmedabad to be dedicated to the nation.
- (5) SAFAR based **"AIR"** (Air Information and Response) Health Plan led by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and other stakeholders.

System products developed under the project are likely to result in numerous social and economic benefits, including cost savings in different sectors like health, agriculture, aviation, infrastructure, disaster management skill, tourism and many others which directly or indirectly get affected by air quality and weather. System is now getting ready to be used by decision makers to implement appropriate immediate, short term and long term mitigation strategies and to develop new sustainable policies. City emission maps generated by SAFAR for Ahmedabad can help to manage the protected areas in the city, defining areas for tree plantation, so as it will give maximum benefit at required locations and improves benefits of the schemes. System products helps to improve disaster management skills in the city and lower the costs related to extreme weather and pollution events like flood, strong wind, extreme air pollution events, etc. This will help society to safeguard in advance. Infrastructure development in India involves lot of dust generation that will get worst depending on weather conditions. System product will help to strategically manage and plan the developmental project in such a way that operational cost involved in the project can be minimized.

To take benefit of SAFAR product, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in conjunction with IITM, IIPGH, NRDC has decided to launch a plan "AIR" (Air Information and Response Plan) linking health professional, implementers and society. SAFAR-AIR can extend services to health professionals to better understand the influence of AQ and weather conditions on health; to anticipate when, where and who may be at greatest risk of negative impacts. This enables targeting of interventions, resulting in more cases treated, reduced disease burdens, and cost savings made in health service delivery. System products help to reduce first hand impact of deteriorated air quality on human health and effect of harmful solar radiation on skin by intervention, reducing the cost involved in health damage. This is likely to improve productivity of the region by helping large number of population to prevent themselves from adverse effect of pollution and thereby contributing to National development in making "New India" with sustainable growth.

For more details on SAFAR-AIR, please contact: Dr Gufran Beig, Project Director-SAFAR, IITM, Pune at beig@tropmet.res.in

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