

Digital helpdesk, drones for monitoring: Pollution control panel plans to leverage tech

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FILING COMPLAINTS with the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) may soon become as easy as chatting on WhatsApp. The DPCC plans to implement online inspection modules for officers, a digital helpdesk to assist citizens, and drone surveillance to monitor industrial areas and drains. Within three months, the organisation is expected to launch an app or software that will analyse real-time pollution data from various state-recognised laboratories.

The decisions were taken during the 74th board meeting on February 13, where the DPCC reviewed necessary actions. The board members noted that using technology for pollution monitoring will be a prominent priority. In addition, there were important discussions about the labs available to the DPCC for environmental sampling.

In a previous meeting, it was

decided to include the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) and government college laboratories and recognise them as state labs to expand the lab network. Currently, the DPCC operates a lab in the ISBT building, where wastewater, water, air, and noise parameters are analysed.

"Public notice is being issued for obtaining the willingness of colleges and DJB for their laboratory facility," stated the minutes of the meeting (MoM), adding that emphasis was laid on timelines. However, the DPCC's only laboratory has not yet received accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL). Additionally, the lab has not been recognised under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

In the previous meeting, the board was informed that the DPCC is following the protocol of testing samples as per standard methods and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) protocol. The board directed that the accreditation of the labs,

both NABL and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF, be completed in a time-bound manner.

According to officials, the administration is hiring an expert consultant to help get the lab recognised. As a result, the board has determined that the hiring process must be completed within a month. In the meantime, NABL and MoEF labs were included for sampling.

The DPCC is facing challenges with tight timelines in various matters. For example, in August 2024, the Supreme Court issued a directive stating that all vacant positions must be filled by April 30, 2025.

This decision was made in response to ongoing concerns about staffing shortages that could impact pollution control efforts in Delhi.

To meet the April 30 deadline, the DPCC is accelerating its recruitment efforts by using the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), hiring from CPCB waitlists, and bringing in contracted staff.