

GURGAON FIRST

• OUR CITY • OUR VOICE

Towards a Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Gurgaon

E-mail: teamgurgaonfirst@gmail.com

Mobility

Footbridge for Pedestrian Safety

Gurgaon's first pedestrian footbridge on the Old Delhi-Gurgaon Road has been inaugurated, addressing the pressing need for safe pedestrian crossings in high-traffic zones. Equipped with modern amenities such as antiskid surfaces, ramps for differently-abled individuals, and energy-efficient LED lighting for night use, this footbridge marks a significant step towards safer urban mobility. The initiative comes in response to growing accidents involving pedestrians, particularly during peak traffic hours. This footbridge is part of a broader initiative by the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) to enhance pedestrian safety across the city. Additional footbridges are planned at locations including Sheetla Mata Temple, Sector 14 Market, Raheja Mall, and CD Chowk. A citywide network of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure will help reduce accidents and promote walking.

Delays in MG Road Revamp Project

Meanwhile, the long-awaited revamp of MG Road, originally planned for completion in December 2023, has been delayed yet again. The ₹11.3 crore project includes enhancements such as wider pedestrian pathways, dedicated cycle tracks, green belts, and modernized bus stops. Despite its potential to significantly improve the commute experience, construction has been marred by contractor issues, funding bottlenecks, and pollution-related bans on construction activities. Currently, only 75% of the project is complete, with a revised deadline set for March 2025. Residents have voiced concerns about prolonged disruptions, traffic jams, and increased dust pollution.

Metro Expansion Progress Update

The Gurugram Metro Expansion Project has achieved significant milestones, with land acquisition completed for all 27 stations along its 28.5-kilometer stretch. This new metro line will connect key areas from HUDA City Centre to Cyber City, featuring state-of-the-art elevated stations and an underground interchange at Hero Honda Chowk. Designed to integrate with the Delhi-Gurgaon-Dharuhera Rapid Rail Corridor, the project aims to ease traffic congestion and improve regional connectivity. With an anticipated daily ridership of over 540,000 by 2026, the metro is expected to significantly boost public transport usage while reducing vehicular emissions.

EV Charging Infrastructure Expansion by EVFY

As part of its ambitious goal to establish 100 EV charging stations in Gurgaon, EVFY has inaugurated its first facility in Sector 73. This fast-charging station features advanced technology, including ultra-fast (150 kW) and hyper-fast (350 kW) chargers, capable of charging EVs in under 30 minutes. The company plans to roll out additional stations across high-demand areas like Dwarka Expressway, the airport region, and New Gurgaon. With the rapid growth of electric vehicle adoption in India, this initiative aligns with national sustainability goals and encourages greener mobility options in urban areas. EVFY is a cleantech startup specializing in electric mobility and green solutions, aiming to assist businesses in transitioning to sustainable practices. It currently has operations in the US.

Environment

AQI Levels Reach Hazardous Thresholds; Schools closed

In November 2024, Gurugram's Air Quality Index (AQI) remained elevated, with particulate matter (PM2.5) levels continuing to exceed safe limits for extended periods. This sustained pollution spike was driven by a combination of factors, including the seasonal stubble burning in neighboring states, the ongoing construction activities in the city, and high vehicle emissions, exacerbated by unfavorable weather conditions. Schools in Gurugram were also closed temporarily from November 19 to November 24 due to the alarming rise in air pollution levels. The city's Air Quality Index (AQI) frequently entered the 'Very Poor' category, with 24-hour average AQI levels reaching 304 on November 24, 2024. In December 2024, Gurugram experienced some improvement in air quality. However, the average AQI for December 2024 was reported at 244, which still placed it in the 'Very Poor' category. The AQI levels have reignited debates over long-term solutions to address pollution, such as stricter industrial emission standards, improved waste management, and enhanced public transportation systems.

Bandhwari Landfill Blaze Causes Toxic Fumes

The Bandhwari landfill has once again become a hotspot of environmental concern after a recent fire released hazardous smoke, raising air pollution levels in nearby areas. In October 2024, the landfill experienced multiple fires. On October 12, a massive blaze resulted in dense smoke enveloping areas near the Gurgaon-Faridabad road and upscale residential colonies off Golf Course Road (GCR) and Southern Peripheral Road (SPR). This fire persisted for nearly 48 hours. Another fire occurred on October 22, lasting approximately seven hours and causing thick smoke in the same regions. The fires at the landfill are primarily due to the combustion of methane gas produced by decomposing organic waste. These fires not only contribute to air pollution but also pose risks such as slope instability and the release of harmful emissions. Residents living near the landfill have reported respiratory issues and other health concerns. Environmental activists have called for immediate interventions, including better segregation practices, and stricter monitoring of landfill operations.

Challenges in Maintaining Green Belts

Gurgaon-based companies are failing to comply with green belt maintenance requirements. These green spaces are critical for mitigating urban heat, reducing pollution, and enhancing the city's aesthetics. The challenges in maintaining green belts in Gurugram have been highlighted in various reports and initiatives by local authorities. One significant development is the collaboration between the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) and private companies to maintain green belts in the city's new sectors. Authorities have warned of penalties for non-compliance and are introducing incentive-based programs to encourage corporates to prioritise green initiatives. Collaboration with Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and NGOs is also being explored to ensure accountability and sustainable maintenance.

Eco Restoration in Aravalli Nagar Van

The eco-restoration project at Aravalli Nagar Van, launched in September 2024, is a collaborative effort between Bry-Air and the NGO I Am Gurgaon, aiming to rehabilitate degraded landscapes and promote biodiversity in the region. Key components include the restoration of seasonal wetlands to enhance groundwater recharge and the creation of forest trails for recreational and educational purposes. The project aims to tackle urban flooding by channeling storm water into forested areas, reducing soil erosion and improving water management. Educational programs have been integrated to involve local schools and communities, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility.

Millet Procurement Supports Sustainable Farming

As part of its sustainability initiatives, the Haryana government procured 17,877 metric tonnes of millet from farmers in Gurugram district. This move promotes crop diversification and supports climate-resilient farming

practices. Millet, a nutrient-rich and water-efficient crop, has gained prominence under India's Year of Millets initiative. Farmers welcomed the timely payments and fair pricing, which have encouraged the adoption of sustainable agricultural methods. The government plans to expand such programs to other districts in Haryana.

Tackling Sewage Overflow in Gurgaon

In response to increasing complaints of sewage overflow, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) has launched a citywide initiative to modernise drainage systems. Dedicated teams have been deployed to inspect problem areas and implement immediate fixes. Long-term plans include integrating smart monitoring systems to prevent recurring issues. The MCG has also introduced a grievance redressal app, enabling residents to report overflow problems directly.

Artificial Rain: A Novel Pollution Control Experiment in Gurugram

Meanwhile, a housing complex in Gurugram used artificial rain technology as what it calls a unique solution to combat rising pollution. This method involves spraying fine water droplets into the air, which bind to particulate matter like PM2.5 and PM10, causing them to settle and providing immediate, localized relief. Experts have highlighted the need for sustainable, long-term measures such as clean energy adoption, emission reductions, and improved waste management to address pollution comprehensively.

Garbage Crisis in the Aravalis: A Threat to Water Resources

The Aravali Hills, a vital natural water reservoir for Gurugram and Faridabad, face a severe environmental crisis due to unchecked garbage dumping. Toxic leachate from improperly disposed waste is contaminating underground water reserves, endangering biodiversity, and depleting water sources for millions. To address this, stronger enforcement against illegal dumping, dedicated recycling facilities, and public awareness campaigns are essential to protect the region's ecological and water security.

Illegal Dyeing Units Polluting Najafgarh Drain

Illegal dyeing units in Gurgaon have been discharging untreated effluents into the Najafgarh drain, causing severe contamination of water sources. Despite multiple relocation orders, these units continue to operate clandestinely. The Haryana Pollution Control Board has announced stricter inspections and penalties to curb this illegal activity and protect aquatic ecosystems and public health.

Governance

Governance Reforms by New Municipal Commissioner

The newly appointed Municipal Commissioner of Gurgaon has prioritized sanitation, efficient waste management, and community engagement in his reform agenda. Initiatives include deploying modern waste collection systems, establishing a real-time grievance redressal platform, and conducting citizen awareness drives to foster collaboration between the administration and residents.

Energy

Smart Grid Project: Gurugram's Energy Overhaul Still Pending

The Smart Grid Project in Gurugram, initiated to modernise the city's power infrastructure, has faced significant delays over the past eight years. Originally envisioned to enhance real-time electricity monitoring, reduce transmission losses, and improve energy efficiency, the project has encountered several challenges. The project has been hindered by bureaucratic delays, including opposition from residents regarding the laying of underground cables. Challenges in planning and executing work by private contractors, coupled with seasonal weather conditions, have contributed to the project's slow advancement. Despite these setbacks, there is ongoing discussion about expanding the Smart Grid project to areas like Manesar and Badshahpur, which are home to numerous industrial units.