IMA calls for immediate cancellation of Airtel Delhi Half Marathon

New Delhi, 03 November 2017: Indian Medical Association (IMA) has called for the immediate cancellation of the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon to be held at 7.00 a.m. on Sunday, November 19, 2017 in view of the alarmingly high levels of air pollution in the capital.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) in Delhi has constantly ranged from ‘very unhealthy’ to ‘hazardous’ levels since the last few days with AQI crossing the 300 ‘danger’ mark at many places.

In a joint statement, Padma Shri Awardee Dr. KK Aggarwal, National President IMA & President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr. RN Tandon Honorary Secretary General IMA, said, “Delhi has been experiencing high air pollution levels these past days. The air quality is particularly poor in the early morning when pollution is extremely high. This is also the time when the proposed Half Marathon is scheduled to start. Air pollution not only affects the performance of the runner, the dangerously high pollution levels may have disastrous health consequences, even for the healthy participants, including the volunteers involved in the organization of the event.

“There is scientific evidence to show that poor air quality can aggravate asthma or other existing lung disease such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). High PM2.5 levels can increase BP and can also increase the risk of acute cardiovascular events such as heart attack, stroke. Also, patients of heart disease are at a risk of sudden cardiac death. Hence, we demand that the event be cancelled immediately and postponed to a later date when air pollution levels are better. IMA will be writing to Hon’ble Delhi Chief Minister, Chief Justice Delhi High Court and the Chairperson, National Green Tribunal in this regard.”

Dr Aggarwal further added, “The organizers of such events while deciding the dates of the event should take into consideration the air quality at the time of the marathon so that no runner suffers any adverse health effects on account of exposure to hazardous levels of air pollution.

There have been instances from around the world, from USA, Malaysia, Singapore (1-5) when marathons and other sports events have been cancelled due to poor air quality. If the AQI is above 100, it is prudent for race administrators to warn participants and volunteers, particularly those with lung conditions, about the potential risk.”
About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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