

## Press Release

India Clean Air Summit #ICAS2024

Bengaluru, 29 August 2024

# Gogoi calls for a rethink of the National Clean Air Programme at the India Clean Air Summit 2024

Speaking at the inaugural session of the India Clean Air Summit (ICAS) 2024 organised by the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP) on 28 August in Bengaluru, Shri Gaurav Gogoi, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, called for a time-bound plan to reduce emissions from industries while ensuring that they are not seen as ‘villains’ but as ‘champions of low-cost, high-quality energy transition’.



*Shri Gaurav Gogoi at the India Clean Air Summit 2024*

‘We are trying to find that convergence. Include local industry in your debates and conversations. This process and platform is important. We need to plan a transition roadmap that helps industries transition to lower emissions with a hard stop over a timeframe of two, three, or four years – not a knee-jerk policy but a planned transition,’ he added.

He also said that the government needs to take a relook at its National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) launched in 2019 to tackle rising air pollution in the country. ‘It has not been a great experience for us as parliamentarians. There are severe limitations, and it is time to rethink the programme—either through an NCAP 2.0 or a better design of laws and schemes’, he added, emphasising an airshed approach to tackling air

pollution. 'We can't have the NCAP view of looking only at cities. You have to look at the entire region as well', he pointed out. He also added that the focus of NCAP should expand from particulate matter to other pollutants such as sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide.

At the launch event of ICAS 2024, Dr Jai Asundi, Executive Director of CSTEP, highlighted the importance of collective action against the social problem of air pollution to steer the participatory future for air quality management.



*Dr Jai Asundi at the India Clean Air Summit 2024*

Shri Gaurav Gogoi was the Chief Guest at the event. He has been a Member of the Lok Sabha since 2014 and is the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party in the Lok Sabha. He is the co-convenor of the Parliamentarians Group for Clean Air (PGCA).

Describing the PGCA as a 'bipartisan group', he described how the initiative started around 2017, with a group of 7-10 parliamentarians, and has now risen to around 40-50 members from different academic and political backgrounds over the last 2 years. He remarked that it was heartening to see the members taking the discussions on air quality back to their constituencies where such initiatives matter, trying to inculcate a sense of passion for clean air among people to create momentum and visibility around the issue.

'Clean air is not a Delhi issue; clean air is not a Punjab or Haryana issue. Clean air is an all-India issue, and it affects north-south-east-west', he added. He noted that more and more citizens across the country are now recognising the severity of this issue.

On creating awareness on the topic, he said 'Politicians are trying to create a vote bank of young voters who are passionate about environment, climate, and clean air and who are able to showcase themselves as a political branding on the issues. That is the kind of branding we want other MPs to adopt as well.'

Talking about his Private Member's bill on air pollution, amending the Air Act, he said 'Largely the aim of the Private Member's bill was to kind of take an example from the US playbook of putting health right at the middle and centre of the air pollution legislation because air pollution is not just an environmental issue, but it is also a health issue. And that's the message that we consistently try to reinforce in as many MP group meetings that we have'.

'While the focus has now evolved from Pollution Control Boards (PCBs) to PCBs and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), it now needs to also shift to industries as well because there is so much work that needs to be done there', he added. He also remarked on how these issues impact brick kiln workers and small establishments dependent on diesel generator (DG) sets, adding how an arbitrary ruling such as the shutting down of DG sets can adversely affect such people. 'There needs to be a layered approach for industry when it comes to clean air. You will have to do a lot of handholding for the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) or groups who are in the informal sector. At the same time, you have to have some kind of incentives for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as to why they should adopt something that is an additional cost to them and you have to do a lot of signalling with respect to big polluters, big businesses. This is where the governments at the centre or state will need to make some hard decisions,' he explained.

Smt Aparajita Sarangi, BJP Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, who was scheduled to be part of the session was not able to make it due to changes in her schedule.

## Media Contact

For more details and interviews, please write to us at [cpe@cstep.in](mailto:cpe@cstep.in) or call Pratah Jain (9910837663), Communication Manager (Media), CSTEP.

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**About CSTEP:** [CSTEP](#) is a not-for-profit research organisation with a mission to enrich policymaking with innovative approaches using science and technology for a sustainable, secure, and inclusive society. Our interdisciplinary research encompasses diverse fields such as energy, urban development, climate, and air pollution.

**About CAMS-NET:** The [Clean Air Monitoring and Solutions Network](#) (CAMS-Net) is a National Science Foundation-funded project aimed at creating an international 'network of networks' that will facilitate the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and data in order to improve the usage and application of low-cost sensor air quality data. Based at Columbia University, in collaboration with Carnegie Mellon University and Washington University at St Louis, CAMS-NET offers a unique platform for South-South-North collaboration on an equal footing.

**About ICAS:** Since its inception in 2019, the [India Clean Air Summit](#) (ICAS) has emerged as a platform for the community working on improving air quality in India, including government, academia, civil society organisations, and citizens, to collaborate and discuss important issues around air pollution.