

**Minister for Environment Ramachandra Reddy's call to make Vizag pollution-free**

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**Visakhapatnam:** Minister for Energy, Forests, Environment, Science and Technology, Mines and Geology Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy has instructed the Pollution Control Board (PCB) officials to inspect the industrial units causing high air pollution present in Visakhapatnam district at frequent intervals.

Speaking at a review meeting held with the officials concerned here on Saturday at the Collectorate, the minister, accompanied by Civil Supplies Minister Karumuri Venkata Nageswara Rao, noted there were about 374 industrial units that emit high air pollution.

The minister laid emphasis on frequent monitoring of such industries. "At present, the air pollution is 81 percent which should be brought down to 60 percent by next year. The state government is committed to providing a pollution-free environment in the city and 24/7 electricity, he stressed.

About 2.63 lakh farmers have been given electricity connection for borewells and in the next six months smart meters will be installed for every borewell, Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy mentioned.

So far, the minister said, 31.60 lakh women have been issued pattas in Jagananna Colonies in the state and 16 lakh houses were sanctioned. "The completed houses in the colonies will get current meters for which the expenditure will be borne by the state government," he added. Speaking on the occasion, Civil Supplies Minister Karumuri Venkata Nageswara Rao said every grain produced by the farmers will be procured. "The seeds are being procured through Rythu Bharosa Kendrams (RBK) to safeguard the farmers' interests. RBKs will play an active role between rice millers and the farmers," he stated.

Earlier, the Forest Minister had a review meeting with the officials of the PCB, Forest, Electricity and Mines departments, taking stock of their performance. Presentations were given by the respective officials. Bheemunipatnam MLA M Srinivasa Rao, Special Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar, Chairman of PCB AK Parida, District Collector A Mallikarjuna, among others, were present.

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