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2 Indian sites on pollution Top 10

Two of India's big money-minting sites — Vapi in Gujarat and Sukinda in Orissa — are among the world's top 10 most polluted areas, according to a report prepared by a US environmental group.

The Blacksmith Institute's report, released in New York on Saturday, said that pollution poses a serious health threat to over 26.7 lakh people living in the two areas. It has caused several deaths.

Sunita Narain of the Centre for Science and Environment, whose finding on chemical industry hub Vapi has been quoted in the report, said, "It's a wakeup call. It is criminal to allow such pollution unabated." The report said the Gujarat and Orissa governments have not done much.

In Vapi, the Central Pollution Control Board has categorised Damanganga river as critically polluted and Kolak river as highly polluted, adding that both are unfit to support biological life. Mercury content in water has been found to be 96 times higher than the World Health Organisation standards.

In Sukinda, which has one of the world's largest open cast chromite mine, the drinking water has hexavalent chromium levels double the national and international standards. The Orissa State Pollution Control Board has conceded that the only source of water for the population of 26 lakh, the Brahmani river, is highly contaminated.

Sukinda and Vapi are new in the list. Tamil Nadu's Ranipet is out of top 10 but is still there in the list of top 30 along with Maharashtra's Mahad Industrial Estate.

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