

## 'Not everything is lost yet but residents must be willing to act'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Gurgaon:** Invariably, environmental assessment studies conducted in Gurgaon end on a dispiriting and sullen note. Beside the spectacular growth curve and scale of development recorded here, the city has always scored an "F" when it comes to any of the environmental categories. Water, air, and now noise pollution levels are on a rise and are reaching alarming levels. The tree cover throughout is diminishing, giving way to more concrete.

And energy conservation, in this prominent industrial and commercial centre of the region, remains only a matter of appearances. So is all lost? Is there any way to reverse this?

According to environmental activists, speaking to TOI on the occasion of Earth Day on Sunday, there is still hope, but only if residents are willing to act. "We need action. Not by corpo-

rates and the administration and the government. The residents need to act, which they aren't doing," said Charu Jain, director and founder of Advit Foundation, an organization which has worked in the field of conservation and manages the Rajiv Gandhi Renewable Energy Park in Sector 29.

### EARTH DAY

Water availability in Gurgaon is scarce, and the new NCR water channel set up by the irrigation department will still take time before it begins supply. Experts say that if the city's occupancy increases by 20%, the water crisis will be exacerbated. "People need to start harvesting rain water. And secondly, the administration needs to implement sewerage and waste disposal systems. Only then will things here get better," added Jain.

Water pollution, and groundwater

depletion are also pressing concerns, which can be sorted out only with proper planning. "The lack of planning is the real problem," said Sanjay Kaushik of the city based NGO, Uthaan. He said that the city administration is not taking any concrete steps to address the environmental issues facing us.

Lack of awareness is another factor that needs addressing. Ravi Kalra of the Earth Saviours Foundation will be interacting with a group of corporates this week on the subject of sustainability. "Negligence is there precisely because of lack of awareness. This is as true for the government as it is for the rest of us," he said. One way out of the environmental mess would be if the corporate community chips in. "The corporate sector has a lot to lose, and that's why they should be on the forefront. If more of them did that seriously, things would have been better," added Kalra.