

Can't breathe easy, worst is yet to come

Pollution To Rise Over 2 Days



LET DELHI BREATHE

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The news is not good on the air pollution front. Particulate matter 2.5 levels are expected to rise even further over the next couple of days touching 214 micrograms per cubic metre over a 24-hour average against permissible levels of 60.

The Institute of Indian Tropical Meteorology said that a sudden change in wind conditions, which had become calm, led PM2.5 levels to start rising. "From an average of 161 mg per cum on Sunday, we expect it to rise to about 214 mg per cum on Monday. This situation will prevail for at least

FOUL AIR

two days," said Dr Gufran Beig, project director of System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) under the ministry of earth sciences.

While these are average figures, one has to keep in mind that peak levels recorded across the city may be multiple times higher than the 24-hour average.

Dr RK Jenamani director in-charge of IGI Met, said that moisture levels also increased in the atmosphere due to the wind, which has a slight easterly influence. Humidity levels on Sunday touched a high of 95%.

"The minimum temperature has also touched 10-11 degrees Celsius and a fresh spell of fog is starting to build up.

While these conditions are favourable for formation of dense fog, we are not expecting anything severe till at least the middle of the week due to certain unfavourable factors. Satellite pictures are not showing appearance of any significant, well-recognized fog layer anywhere close to Delhi. Secondly, the wind has to weaken further at higher altitudes of up to 800m to allow for formation of a deep layer of fog," said Jenamani.

On Sunday, Delhi recorded a high of 26.2 degrees Celsius, two degrees above normal and a minimum temperature of 10.5 degrees Celsius, one degree above normal.

Beig said that till Sunday, the PM 2.5 levels in Delhi had been relatively better than what was observed in 2014. But with Monday's rise, that situation at least would change. "Both the maximum and minimum temperatures have been higher than usual in the first week of December. Once the temperature goes down, winds become calm and there is a higher possibility of pollution build up. While PM2.5 levels have been extremely poor, last year it was worse. Now, that situation is set to change," said Beig.

The Met department has predicted a partly cloudy sky for Monday with possibility of shallow to moderate fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures will be around 26 degrees Celsius and 11 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Govt clears the air on car days

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Come January 1, if your car's registration number ends in an odd digit, you will be able to drive in Delhi only on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. And if it's even, you can get behind the wheel only on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

All vehicles are likely to be allowed to ply on Sunday.

The Delhi government has given out more details on its proposal for an odd-even rationing of cars in the state to check the rising pollution levels.

Speaking to TOI, Delhi home minister Satyendar Jain, who also holds the health portfolio, said that traffic police will be informed soon about the details. "If the government has decided something, they have to follow it," he said.

Jain also said that the odd-even formula will apply to everyone, including ministers and babus. "Only emergency vehicles, such as ambulance, fire tenders, police van and public transport,

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will be exempted from the policy decision," he said.

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had on Saturday said that odd-even rationing of cars was an emergency measure and it would discontinue it if people faced major problems.

The proposal has led to a raging debate on the social media over the pros and cons of the plan. On Sunday, the state home minister also started a twitter hashtag - #SaveDelhi - to seek suggestions on various ways to curb pollution in the capital, which received hundreds of responses. "We have received thousands of responses, both on twitter

and through mail. Raising tax on a second car in a family, streamlining the issuance of registration numbers to ensure one cannot choose one of his or her choice and installing boards showing pollution in different parts of the city are some of them," said Jain.

Somnath Bharti, AAP MLA from Malviya Nagar, has suggested redeployment of officers within the Delhi government to offices closest to their residences as an anti-pollution measure.

"One popular sideeffect of #OddEvenFormula of @ArvindKejriwal govt is many revisiting their math basics to know about odd and even," Bharti tweeted.

"It's a good decision. We are also suggesting defining a timeline for removing old vehicles. Vehicles should be controlled in absolute terms," said Dr Sanjay Kulshrestha, an Agra-based doctor who had filed a petition before the National Green Tribunal, saying that pollution was resulting in congenital defects in newborns.

ODD PUZZLE FOR ODD-EVEN POLICY

The AAP government's welcome decision to allow private vehicles with even and odd numbers on alternate days on road from January 1 could run into an odd situation, if results of a poll running on timesofindia.com reflect the ground reality. The poll shows many more two-vehicle families have both vehicles with odd numbered registration than with even numbered ones.

TOI POLL IF YOUR FAMILY OWNS TWO CARS OR TWO-WHEELERS, ARE BOTH:

EVEN NUMBERED	ODD NUMBERED	ONE ODD, ONE EVEN
17% (5,739)	42% (13,661)	41% (13,458)

Total respondents: 32,858 at 11pm



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DEC 2

AT DELHI'S AIR QUALITY BELONGING WOULD HAVE SHUT DOWN FACTORIES...

MOST POLLUTED SPOT

Delhi: 175

LEAST POLLUTED SPOT

Delhi: 15

DEC 3

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DELHI'S MOST POLLUTED

DEC 4

DELHI'S WINTER CURSE IS BACK

DELHI'S WINTER CURSE IS BACK

DEC 6

Picnickers at India Gate mask pollution sorrow

Nitisha.Kashyap @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: It seemed like a regular Sunday picnic at India Gate with children drawing and sketching, men and women sharing jokes and having animated discussions, but a closer look showed that all of them were wearing masks. With pollution levels remaining at a dangerous level, these people had come to spread awareness with the event 'Picnic in Mask'.

"I don't want to live in a city where I will always have to wear a mask due to the degrading air quality," said Iris Strill, a French designer who had come for the picnic.

Started as a Facebook page — Smug in Smog — lawyer Pooja Dodd was shocked at people's response when it was first posted. "While mostly expats replied to it, Delhiites chose not to comment," said Dodd. Born and brought up in Delhi, she went abroad for three years only to return



“We are yet to realise the danger. I am suffering from cough because of air pollution and have kept small plants at home to purify the air”

RUCHIKA RANA | Entrepreneur

and find that the air quality has drastically worsened. She is now thinking of leaving the country she loves so much.

To avoid pollution, Dodd has bought a mask worth Rs 2,000 and an air purifier for Rs 26,000. "I cannot buy a mask every 40 days. Even the air pur-

rifier was a huge investment and I had to think twice before buying it," she said, adding that she has started getting problems — from teary eyes to pimples — as a result of pollution. "I don't want a tea bag but fresh air for my eyes," said Saskia Chitrak, another expat. "The government is responsible for implementing the law, but if people are not serious nothing can be done," she added.

Charudutt Chitrak, a photographer, believes that vehicles with odd-even numberplates plying on road would benefit people with two cars. "The rich will start buying more cars to deal with the situation," he said. Saskia added that while the experiment is good, it may not be successful due to lack of safety and security of women and a good public transport system.

The expats also suggested carpooling, but even that is a prerogative that can only be taken up by Delhiites. No rule from the government can help, Saskia opined.