Farm fires can push Delhi's AQI by over 104 points

Kushagra.Dixit

New Delhi: A study on burning of rice harvest remnants in Punjab and Haryana found that high fire counts can push up AQI in Delhi by more than 104 index points on a given day. Environment organisation Climate Trends' study, "Analysing Satellite Data on Fire Incidents in Punjab and Haryana and Its Impact on Delhi's Air Health," released on Tuesday, assessed farm fires between Sept and Dec from 2019 to 2023

The baseline AQI during the stubble burning season, Sept-Dec, was considered by the study to be 233 or 'poor'. On days without farm fires, the city AQI averages 175, which is at the 'moderate' level, though such days constitute just 5% of the four-

Priyangi.Agarwal

@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The city's Air

Quality Index (AQI) spiked to

327 on Tuesday, deteriorating

from 310 a day earlier, both in

the 'very poor' category. No re-

lief is expected from the haze

and toxic pollution for the

next few days as pollution is

predicted to remain in the red

category. Tuesday was the fo-

ulest day since Feb 14, when

remained in the 'very poor'

range for the second consecu-

tive day, Anand Vihar excee-

ded the city average, recor-

ding 417 in the 'severe' catego-

ry at 4pm to become the most

polluted locality in the capi-

tal, according to Central Pol-

likely to change to north-wes-

terly on Wednesday, thus

bringing pollutants from the

farm fire states to Delhi, the

share of stubble burning in

PM2.5 is predicted to rise

from 3.5% on Tuesday to 11.2%

on Wednesday and 15.1% on

Thursday, according to the Decision Support System.

prevailing in the city during

the nighttime for the past few days. However, as wind direc-

tion was variable on Tuesday

and wind speed was light du-

ring the daytime, it caused

trapping of pollutants and

caused a haze in the city," ex-

plained Mahesh Palawat, vi-

ce-chairman, Skymet Meteo-

rology. He added that wind di-

rection was expected to

change to north-westerly

from Wednesday and increa-

se the likelihood of transfer

of smoke from stubble bur-

ning sites to Delhi from the

Data shows that paddy

neighbouring states.

"Calm winds have been

Since the wind direction is

lution Control Board data.

Though the overall AQI

AQI was 341.

month period. For 72% of the days when the fire count is below average, average AQI is around 229, or 'poor'. When the farm fires increase to beyond average, which is on around 21% of the days, AQI surges to 337 in the 'very poor' category, indicating a 104 AQI points effect.

The study also stated that while the number of farm fires has significantly dropped in both Punjab and Haryana in recent years, Delhi still sees high pollution during the peak stubble burning season due to its winter meteorology. For Haryana, the study notes that the fire counts dropped from 14,122 in 2019 to 7,959 in 2023, while the trend in Punjab has slid from 95,048 fires in 2020 to 52,722 in 2023.

"The reduction in fires across Punjab and Haryana is a mixed trend. Reductions in some districts of Punjab are

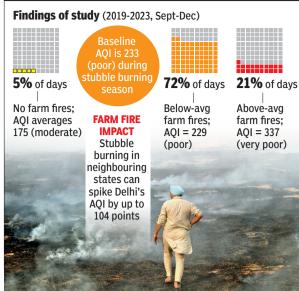
Air Worsens, Anand Vihar

Leads Assault On Lungs...

City's Foulest Day Since Feb 14, No Relief Likely Anytime Soon

WHAT ARE YOU SMOKING?

NEED FOR CROSS-BORDER EFFORT



rvana, there is an increase in fire counts in some districts. However, the cumulative count is lower," pointed out Aarti Khosla, director, Climate Trends. "Delhi, in the meanwhile, continues to struggle with poor air quality. While each stakeholder, from farmer to govt to scientist, is doing its best, the gap lies in communication. We need to understand the challenges faced by farmers and act accordingly. Practices like mulching, in-situ crop residue management and organic farming should be considered."

The study suggests a collaboration among Delhi, Punjab and Haryana to mitigate the effects of stubble burning on the capital's air quality. "There is increasing awareness and farmers are engaging in stubble management through

LET DELHI BREATHE an integrated approach of

using short-duration paddy varieties, employing appropriate farm machinery to incorporate straw in the soil, mulching and for the preparation of feed blocks, application of microbial decomposers, and options like supplying harvest residue to power plants," noted RN Padaria, joint director, extension, Indian Agriculture Research Institute. "Persuasive communication, custom-hired machinery and appropriate technological options have boosted manage-

microbial decompod options like supplyvest residue to power noted RN Padaria, jotor, extension, Indian ture Research Instituture Resear

lar pollution from neighbouring BJP-led states was adding to the city's pollution. "One major component of

cessary measures, vehicu-

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi's environ-

ment minister Gopal Rai wrote

letters to the transport mini-

sters of Uttar Pradesh, Harvana

and Rajasthan on Tuesday, ur-

ging them to ensure that they

use only electric or CNG buses

for transportation to Delhi in-

While addressing a

stead of diesel buses.

this air pollution is vehicular emissions largely attributed to the significant number of diesel buses entering the city from Uttar Pradesh...The large influx of such buses significantly contributes to the degradation of air quality in Delhi, posing serious health risks to the residents. Delhi is already grappling with poor air quality, and

this additional burden from interstate traffic is aggravating the situation," Rai stated in a letter addressed to the transport

Use electric or CNG buses

for transport to Delhi, Rai

urges neighbouring states

minister of Uttar Pradesh.

"I kindly request your esteemed office to consider restricting the entry of diesel buses from Uttar Pradesh entering Delhi or implementing stricter regulations to control their emission

norms," he added.
Similar letters were written to respective ministers in Haryana and Rajasthan. No such letter to Punjab was, however, shared by Delhi govt.

Rai further stated that 6,200 MCD workers would be deployed to enas adsure that water sprinkling was

carried out properly.

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said that the city had already become a "mini-gas chamber" this year because Delhi govt "failed" to implement anti-pollution measures. Rai keeps blaming Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan for political reasons, while Delhi's weather and pollution are determined by winds from Punjab and Hima-

Punjab slaps 874 FIRs on farmers, Haryana suspends 24 officials over crop fires

TIMES NEWS NETWOR

Chandigarh: Punjab said it had registered 874 FIRs and lodged 471 daily dairy reports (DDRs) against farmers for stubble-burning while Haryana on Tuesday suspended 24 officials for failing to stop farm fires in their districts.

With the Supreme Court making it clear that top officials will be held responsible for stubble-burning incidents, both states have now been showing "action" on the menace.

Punjab said its departments have slapped penalties totalling Rs 10.55 lakh in 397 cases and registering red entries in revenue records of 394 farmers.

Haryana on Tuesday booked a farmer in Rohtak for setting fire to the paddy crop residue. The state govt said introduced strict penalties for farmers caught burning crop residue, including a two-year ban on selling their produce on the govt portal. An interdepartmental team has also been set up to monitor the situation at the village level. The 24 suspended officials were from Panipat, Jind, Kaithal, Fatehabad, Hisar, Kurukshetra, Ambala and Sonipat districts.

la and Sonipat districts. In Punjab, special DGP

(law and order) Arpit Shukla on Monday said legal action was being initiated against those found burning their paddy crop stubble. In compliance with the directions issued by Supreme Court and the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to bring down stubble burning cases to zero, Punjab DGP Gaurav Yaday had appointed Shukla as the nodal officer to monitor action. Yadav has also been holding meetings with all senior officers, range officers, commissioners of police, SSPs and station house officers (SHOs) to

Shukla said police teams along with civil administration have been making efforts on the ground level to curb the menace. Deputy commissioners, SSPs, SDMs and DSPs have been conducting joint tours at villages identified as stubble burning hotspots and holding public awareness meetings with farmer unions at district and sub-divisional level, he added. A total of 522 joint tours were made by DCs, SSPs and 981 joint tours by SDMs and DSPs in the last few days, during which they held 2,504 public awareness meetings, while 2,457 meetings were organised with the farmer unions.

review the cases.

HC has reservations over plan to transplant 70 trees from AIIMS for building new block

New Delhi: Delhi High Court on Tuesday expressed its reservations over a proposal to transplant over 70 trees from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) campus for the construction of a new block. Citing the rising pollution levels, Justice Jasmeet Singh asked AIIMS authorities to file the structural plan of its upcoming critical care centre, which requires the removal of 75 trees, along with their plan for the proposed transplantation.

An AIIMS official and an architect appeared before the court on Tuesday to submit that five trees with more than 2m girth will be transplanted within the campus, while the remaining will be sent to Jaunapur. "Trees definitely help in reducing the level of pollution severity. If you transplant 75 trees in Jaunapur, it will not help people here... You do it on the AIIMS campus," Justice Singh said.

AIIMS authorities then stated that they would try to transplant around 40% of the trees on the campus. TNN

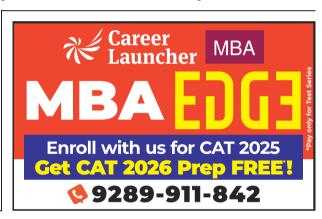


Photo: Anindya Chattopadhyay Calm winds at night Air quality is likely causing accumulation to remain 'very poor' till Oct 25 of pollutants DMRC has added 40 trips from Tuesday as part of GRAP's stage-II measure Top 10 polluted stations in Delhi at 4 pm 0 50 100 Anand Vihar 1 417 Ashok Vihar 2 349 Bawana 3 368 **Estimated contribution of** Burari crossing 4 359 stubble burning in Delhi's PM2.5 Jahangirpuri 5 377 15.13% Mundka 6 388 11.17% Puniabi Bagh 7 363 Rohini 8 3.19% 3.51% Sonia Vihar 9 356 Vivek Vihar 10 350

Data shows that paddy remnant burning is rising, with Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, UP and Madhya Pradesh reporting, respectively, 71, 10, 17, 36 and 98 farm fires on Tuesday. Between Sept 15 and Oct 22, Punjab had a fire count of 1,581 against 1,794 in the same period last year. In the same period, Haryana saw 665 fires compared with 714 in 2023

remnant burning is rising, with Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, UP and Madhya Pradesh reporting, respectively, 71, 10, 17, 36 and 98 farm fires on Tuesday. Between Sept15 and Oct 22, Punjab had a fire count of 1,581 against 1,794 in the same period last year. In the same period, Haryana saw 665 fires compared with 714 in 2023

The air quality is predicted to remain 'very poor' till Friday. "The outlook for the six days from Friday onwards is air quality in the 'very poor' or 'poor' categories. Meteorological conditions are unfavourable for effective dispersion of pollutants as calm winds prevail during the night," said the Air Quality

Early Warning System for

Delhi, which is the forecasting body under the Union ministry of earth sciences.

With steep II of Creded

With stage II of Graded Response Action Plan implemented, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation added 40 additional trips from Tuesday to meet increased demand of commuters.

Meanwhile, the maximum temperature at Safdarjung, the city's base weather station, on Tuesday was 34 degrees Celsius, one above normal. The minimum was 20.4 degrees Celsius, two notches above normal. However, the Ridge in north Delhi saw the mercury plummeting to 16.9 degrees Celsius, three degrees below normal.

...Oct not over yet, PM2.5 levels are already at year-ago period average

Priyangi.Agarwal

New Delhi: An analysis of PM2.5 levels in just 20 days of Oct reveals that several air monitoring stations in Delhi have almost reached the average levels recorded in Oct last year. Some stations, like Vivek Vihar and Alipur, have recorded higher PM2.5 levels this Oct so far compared with the month last year. 2023 had

the worst Oct in the past three years since 2020.

The Centre for Science and Environment, which analysed the Central Pollution Control Board's real-time air quality data for the month, said that the average PM2.5 concentration in Oct 2023 was 104 micrograms per cubic metre. This was much higher than the daily national ambient air quality standard of 60 micrograms per

cubic metre and WHO's daily safe guideline of 15 micro-

grams per cubic metre.

While the average PM2.5 level at Anand Vihar in Oct last year was 141 micrograms per cubic metre, this had already reached 135 micrograms per cubic metre by Oct 20 this year. Seven air stations — Anand Vihar, Wazirpur, Bawana, Jahangirpuri, Vivek Vihar, Burari Crossing, and Alipur — have logged PM2.5

levels higher in the 20 days of Oct this year than in Oct 2023. In fact, three stations recorded worse pollution till Oct 20 this year than in the entire month in 2023.

CSE's analysis shows that the average PM2.5 concentration at Vivek Vihar in Oct 2023 was 90 micrograms per cubic metre, which rose to 112 micrograms per cubic metre this Oct. Alipur so far has seen a mean PM2.5 level of 104 micrograms per cubic metre compared with 95 last Oct.

"With nine days still remaining until Diwali, there is a strong possibility that these levels will continue to rise and potentially exceed the Oct 2023 average," said CSE.

In Oct last year, Bawana was the most polluted area in the city with an average PM2.5 concentration of 151 micrograms per cubic metre, followed by New Moto Bagh at 145.

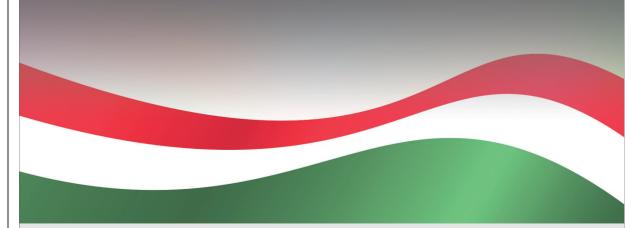
The month last year had five 'very poor' days, and of these, four were in the last week of the month. However, Delhi has already seen two such days on Monday and Tuesday, with the air quality expected to remain 'very poor' for the next few days.

"In Oct last year, the capital recorded a rainfall of 5.4mm on Oct 17. Rain helps wash out the pollutants and gives temporary relief from rising pollution," said a weather official. "However, the weather has remained dry this Oct, with not a single day of rain activity. Rain is unlikely in the next seven days too."



congratulations and best wishes to the Hungarian leadership and citizens on this **Hungary Republic Day**

We are proud to be associated with the country since 2021 and look forward to our continued partnership to serve you locally



UFlex Limited

India's largest multinational flexible packaging and solutions company

Packaging Films | Chemicals | Aseptic Packaging | Flexible Packaging | Holography | Engineering | Printing Cylinders

India | UAE | Mexico | Egypt | Poland | USA | CIS Country | Hungary | Nigeria

www.uflexltd.com | www.flexfilm.com

