

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Expert tips to deal with choking air pollution

TNN | Feb 3, 2016, 12.00 AM IST



Experts share tips to help choking air pollution

The city has been enveloped in a heavy layer of smog caused by a fire last week at the Deonar dumping ground. It released hazardous gases into the air, raising the pollution levels to a dangerous point and is causing breathing difficulties. The Municipal Corporation (BMC) shut down 74 schools for two days as the smoke engulfed the area and those commuting to work felt its effects, too. And the situation is not likely to abate any time soon, say officials.

'Very poor' conditions

On Monday though the pollution level in Mumbai fell, the city's Air Quality Index (AQI) was still said to be in the 'very poor' category and worse than that of Delhi. A report quotes the System for Air Quality Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) saying the AQI for Mumbai in the

morning recently was 308; it reduced only marginally by evening, to 304. Among among the most polluted areas in the suburbs were Chembur (363), which is close to Deonar and Andheri (355). According to the Regional Meteorological Department, it will be a few days before things improve. Says Shubhangi Bhute, director MET dept., Mumbai, "The air quality level is very poor in the city. PM (particulate matter) 2.5 is quite high at 329 (for Navi Mumbai) and for Deonar it is 366. This is quite alarming. The existing winter conditions, with prevailing northerly winds and pollution, is adding to the situation and it will take a while for this to settle."

Doctors give out warnings

The deadly haze is adding to breathing discomfort and is worse for those with prevalent asthma and lung conditions. Says Dr Prashant Chhajed, "The cases of those suffering from bronchitis, allergic rhinitis, runny nose and watery eyes has increased in the last few days. This pollution level rise can be dangerous for breathing and individuals having asthma must continue with regular medication, especially at this time. Anyone with symptoms of chest tightness, cough and breathlessness must seek medical attention immediately," he cautions. High levels of pollutants can raise carbon monoxide levels in the blood, which escalates illnesses. Adds Dr Hasmukh Ravat, senior interventional cardiologist, "For a city like Mumbai where we already have too much construction and vehicular pollution, any addition to this makes things worse, with kids and senior citizens having a greater chance of getting respiratory infection at this time. The hazardous smoke can lead to a spike in blood pressure, which in turn can lead to pressure on the heart. There has been a case of a person who got a heart attack owing to the smoke, and he had to immediately have angioplasty," he warns.

Resembles a gas chamber

Meanwhile as per reports, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has expressed concern over the incident, saying if proper preventive measures were not taken, our cities could resemble gas chambers. "The situation could be similar to what was done by Hitler (whose regime built the infamous gas chambers for killing the people)," he said.