

# Delhi- Air quality dips in NCR: Children suffer from respiratory problems

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- **Delhi Pollution: The AQI in Noida was at 406 (Severe category), in Gurugram at 346, and near Delhi airport at 350, respectively.**

The air quality in the Delhi-NCR continued to remain in the "poor" or "severe" category on Wednesday. As per the latest data by SAFAR, Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at 354 "very poor" category on Wednesday.

The AQI in Noida was at 406 (Severe category), in Gurugram at 346, and near Delhi airport at 350, respectively.

An AQI above 400 is considered "severe" and can affect healthy people and seriously impact those with existing illnesses.

The poor air quality in the national capital and NCR region is affecting children badly and almost eight out of ten children in the hospital are coming up with respiratory problems, says an expert.

According to Dr Anamika Dubey, Senior Consultant Pediatrics, Rainbow Children's Hospital, "In this season, many children come to the OPD, I think 8 out of 10 patients are coming with complaints of cold, cough and increasingly breathing issues, cough increases more at night and distress. Moreover, small children are not able to express themselves they are not able to say that they are having a problem but it's giving them a lot of problems."

Yesterday, Delhi's AQI was at 424--the worst after December 26 last year when it was 459.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the concentration of lung-damaging fine particles known as PM2.5 was above 450 micrograms per cubic metre, around eight times the safe limit of 60 micrograms per cubic metre, in many areas.

PM 2.5 level from 61 to 120 is considered "moderate to poor", 121 to 250 is "very poor", 251 to 350 is "severe" and more than 350 is "severe plus".

According to an analysis by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), people in the capital breathe the worst air between November 1 and November 15 when stubble burning peaks.

The city records an average PM2.5 concentration of 285 micrograms per cubic metre from November 1 to November 15.

Low wind speed and low temperatures at night are allowing the accumulation of pollutants, said Mahesh Palawat, vice president (meteorology and climate change), Skymet Weather.

However, the transport-level wind direction and speed are favourable for the transport of smoke from stubble burning.

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The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) reported 1,842 farm fires in Punjab on Tuesday and 2,131 on Monday - the highest so far this season.

The agrarian state has recorded a total of 17,846 farm fires since September 15, when stubble burning usually begins. Of this, 102,229 were recorded in the last eight days.

With pollution levels worsening, the Centre's air quality panel had on Saturday directed authorities to impose a ban on construction and demolition activities in Delhi-NCR, except in essential projects, and other curbs under stage three of the Graded Response Action plan (GRAP).