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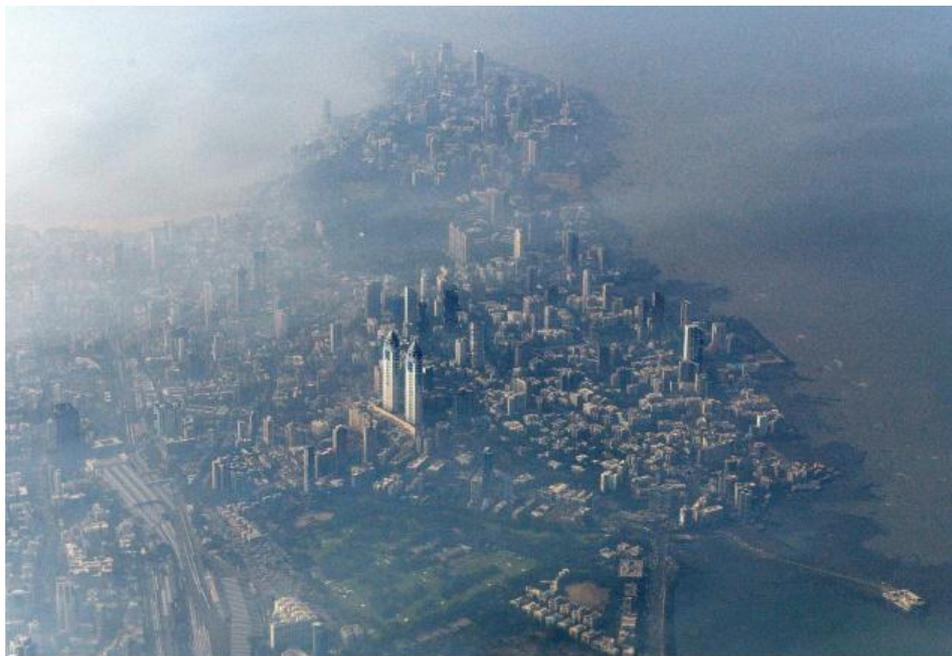
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Warning: Mumbai air injurious to your health



• [Rahi Gaikwad](#)



The Hindu

An aerial view shows the thick cover of toxic smoke over south and central Mumbai— Photo: Prashant Nakwe

Deonar fire pushes city pollution levels closer to that of Delhi's

The city has seen a steady worsening of its air quality over the last few days, after the start of the fire at the Deonar dumping ground. Pollution levels remained at 'very poor' level with Friday being the worst. Moreover, against the expectations of experts of seeing an improvement, pollution levels are likely to remain the same.

"We were thinking the air quality will improve fast, and recover from the effect of the smog," Dr Gufran Beig, scientist and project director at System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR), Pune, told *The Hindu*. "Yesterday it was slightly better, but still remained in the 'very poor' category. Winds have stopped since yesterday, so the dispersion of the particulate matter has not been as fast as what we hoped for."

According to SAFAR's forecast for Monday and the next three days, the air quality index (AQI) for PM_{2.5} (fine particulate matter which is the lead pollutant) is likely to be in the 'very poor' category and for PM₁₀ it is likely to be moderate.

Worst affected

The smog has specifically affected the air around Deonar, which is close to Chembur, where the pollution levels inched towards 'severe' on Friday. Dr Beig said, "This area, which has seen the effect of the dumping ground fire, almost reached 'severe' levels on Friday and it remained that high for about 24 hours. What has happened in Chembur is the spike in the bigger particles as indicated by PM₁₀. Usually, the PM₁₀ levels are moderate, but in Chembur, over the last few days, they have been as high as PM_{2.5}."

The Deonar situation pushed Mumbai near Delhi's infamous pollution levels last week, making the two cities joint pollution capitals of India. Pune, on the other hand, recently included in the smart city list, has been enjoying pleasant weather with 'moderate' pollution levels.

On Sunday, pollution levels in Chembur were higher than some parts of Delhi. The AQI for PM_{2.5} in Chembur was 362, whereas in Delhi's Pitampura, Airport and Lodhi Road areas it was 355, 314 and 326 respectively.

Local hospitals in the Navi Mumbai area have also started seeing patients with aggravated respiratory problems.

Health complaints rise

Vashi-based pulmonologist Dr Prashant Chhajed has seen an increase of about 25 per cent in the number of patients coming to the OPD. “Patients who are suffering from bronchitis, asthma and allergic rhinitis have come back with aggravated symptoms such as increased cough, breathlessness, runny nose and burning of the eyes. This is because the particulate matter is not rising up. It is important for these patients to not skip their medicine and not delay seeing a doctor. They should also avoid morning walks as the temperature is cooler,” Dr Chhajed said.

The BMC-run Shatabdi Hospital in Govandi, near Chembur, has also been seeing patients with similar complaints for the past two days, said chief medical officer Dr Rajashree Jadhav. “We spoke to some patients who complained of having difficulty in breathing, but their condition was not serious,” Dr Jadhav said, “We did not classify them specifically as those affected by the smog. We should have the data by Monday.”
