

- [Dawn.COM](#)
- [Dawn Urdu](#)
- [Today's Paper](#)
- [DawnNews TV](#)
- [CityFM89](#)
- [Herald](#)
- [Aurora](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Dawn Relief](#)

• Wednesday 8th November 2017 9:26 am

DAWN

Text view

Print

Tweet

Like

Smog disrupts rail, air traffic in twin cities

Smog and persistent dry weather is also affecting the health of citizens

By Aamir Yasin

RAWALPINDI: Although the smog in Rawalpindi and Islamabad is milder when compared to the plains of Punjab, it has disrupted rail and air traffic because causing health concerns in the garrison city.

Dr Mohammad Hanif, the director of the Meteorological Department's National Forecasting Centre in Islamabad, said the twin cities covered in smog, made up of 80pc fog and 20pc pollutants.

Dr Hanif said the smog had been caused by air pollution and had caused health issues. However, he added that after the light rainfall predicted in the Potohar region at the end of next week, the smog "will end next week".

Even though the dry weather will likely persist next month, he said the light rain would wash out the smog in the Potohar region.

The smog will instead turn into fog, which will not cause health problems, he said.

Dr Hanif added that the smog in the plains of Punjab would end when temperature falls below 18°C. “Gradually, the temperature is decreasing so the smog will end.”

He said urban areas in Punjab were more affected by smog than rural areas. “The main reason is smoke emitting from factories and other sources...which polluted the air,” he said.

The smog has also disrupted travel, with more than six flights arriving late from Lahore and Multan, and others being delayed.

An official at Benazir Bhutto International Airport (BBIA) said: “The flight schedule was disturbed due to smog in the plains of Punjab, but flight operations for Karachi and other parts of the country are per the schedule.”

Meanwhile, trains from Lahore and Multan arrived two to three hours late. A passenger coming from Lahore, Asif Ahmed, said their journey began at 7am, reached Gujranwala at 10:15am due to the smog and reached the Rawalpindi Railway Station at 2pm.

“The distance from Lahore to Gujranwala is not more than an hour, and the schedule [arrival] time of the train in Rawalpindi was noon,” he said.

A Railways official said train drivers had been asked to move slowly on the track from Lahore to Lala Musa as visibility was only a few metres. “This is the main reason for the train delays,” he said.

Health concerns have also arisen due to the smog, as many residents of the Potohar region already suffer from pollen allergies, asthma and upper respiratory tract infections such as the cough and cold.

Over 617 people suffering from cough, cold and eye infections are reported at Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH), Holy Family Hospital (HFH) and District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital every day.

The Punjab health department has issued guidelines for hospitals to inform patients about measures to prevent illnesses related to the dry spell and the smog.

Mohammad Sajjad, who lives on Khanna Road, said the dust and smog that got in his eyes in the morning when he rode his motorcycle had forced him to contact doctors at BBH, who told him to wear a mask and sunglasses to protect his eyes, nose and mouth from air pollution.

At HFH, Ali Raza told *Dawn* he has been on antibiotics for five days but has not yet gotten a respite from his cough and cold. “The doctors advised taking liquids and wearing a mask to avoid dust in the air, and they said good rainfall would wash the virus out of the air,” he said.

He said his family had also fallen ill from the same virus.

which he blamed on the dry weather.

Young Doctors Association Punjab Chairman Dr Haider Akhter, who also practices at BBH, told *Dawn* he and other doctors were seeing a large number of people.

“Medicine is not perfect, as rain will reduce viral symptoms,” he said. Dr Akhter said rainfall would settle polluted air particles.

He added that people should take extra care with children and the elderly.

They should also wear masks when going out at night or in the evenings, drink plenty of water, reduce outdoor activities, keep doors and windows closed, wear glasses and wash their hands, face, nose and mouth frequently.

More from this page

1. [Red Zone sealed ahead of rally](#)
2. [12 buildings sealed for lack of parking space](#)
3. [Traffic jams in Pindi due to demonstration](#)
4. [‘518,000 people affected by TB every year’](#)

[\[TOP\]](#)

Smog disrupts rail, air traffic in twin cities

Smog and persistent dry weather is also affecting the health of citizens

By Aamir Yasin

RAWALPINDI: Although the smog in Rawalpindi and Islamabad is milder when compared to the plains of Punjab, it has disrupted rail and air traffic because causing health concerns in the garrison city.

Dr Mohammad Hanif, the director of the Meteorological Department's National Forecasting Centre in Islamabad, said the twin cities covered in smog, made up of 80pc fog and 20pc pollutants.

Dr Hanif said the smog had been caused by air pollution and had caused health issues. However, he added that after the light rainfall predicted in the Potohar region at the end of next week, the smog "will end next week".

Even though the dry weather will likely persist next month, he said the light rain would wash out the smog in the Potohar region.

The smog will instead turn into fog, which will not cause health problems, he said.

Dr Hanif added that the smog in the plains of Punjab would end when temperature falls below 18°C. "Gradually, the temperature is decreasing so the smog will end."

He said urban areas in Punjab were more affected by smog than rural areas. "The main reason is smoke emitting from factories and other sources...which polluted the air," he said.

The smog has also disrupted travel, with more than six flights arriving late from Lahore and Multan, and others being delayed.

An official at Benazir Bhutto International Airport (BBIA) said: "The flight schedule was disturbed due to

smog in the plains of Punjab, but flight operations for Karachi and other parts of the country are per the schedule.”

Meanwhile, trains from Lahore and Multan arrived two to three hours late. A passenger coming from Lahore, Asif Ahmed, said their journey began at 7am, reached Gujranwala at 10:15am due to the smog and reached the Rawalpindi Railway Station at 2pm.

“The distance from Lahore to Gujranwala is not more than an hour, and the schedule [arrival] time of the train in Rawalpindi was noon,” he said.

A Railways official said train drivers had been asked to move slowly on the track from Lahore to Lala Musa as visibility was only a few metres. “This is the main reason for the train delays,” he said.

Health concerns have also arisen due to the smog, as many residents of the Potohar region already suffer from pollen allergies, asthma and upper respiratory tract infections such as the cough and cold.

Over 617 people suffering from cough, cold and eye infections are reported at Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH), Holy Family Hospital (HFH) and District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital every day.

The Punjab health department has issued guidelines for hospitals to inform patients about measures to prevent illnesses related to the dry spell and the smog.

Mohammad Sajjad, who lives on Khanna Road, said the dust and smog that got in his eyes in the morning when he rode his motorcycle had forced him to contact doctors at BBH, who told him to wear a mask and sunglasses to protect his eyes, nose and mouth from air pollution.

At HFH, Ali Raza told *Dawn* he has been on antibiotics for five days but has not yet gotten a respite from his cough and cold. “The doctors advised taking liquids and wearing a mask to avoid dust in the air, and they said good rainfall would wash the virus out of the air,” he said.

He said his family had also fallen ill from the same virus, which he blamed on the dry weather.

Young Doctors Association Punjab Chairman Dr Haider Akhter, who also practices at BBH, told *Dawn* he and other doctors were seeing a large number of people.

“Medicine is not perfect, as rain will reduce viral symptoms,” he said. Dr Akhter said rainfall would settle polluted air particles.

He added that people should take extra care with children and the elderly.

They should also wear masks when going out at night or in the evenings, drink plenty of water, reduce outdoor activities, keep doors and windows closed, wear glasses and wash their hands, face, nose and mouth frequently.

More from this page

1. [Red Zone sealed ahead of rally](#)
2. [12 buildings sealed for lack of parking space](#)
3. [Traffic jams in Pindi due to demonstration](#)
4. ['518,000 people affected by TB every year'](#)