

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR	SUNRISE	ZUHR	ASR	MAGRIB	ISHA
5:06	6:30	11:47	3:27	5:04	6:28

Smog-related accidents leave two dead, dozens injured

LAHORE: Smog has taken the lives of at least two people while injuring dozens of others in the last 24 hours in the Kasur. Traffic around the city has been severely affected due to smog, especially around the motorway. Apart from that, flight schedule of international and domestic flights at the Allama Iqbal International Airport has also been affected with a lot of flights getting delayed; flights to Karachi, Muscat and Doha have been cancelled. According to the Pakistan Metrological Department (MET), a rain system has entered Pakistan and Punjab might receive its first rainfall of the season from Tuesday. On the other hand, Quetta, Chaman, Noshki and other adjoining areas of Baluchistan have already had their first winter rainfall. MET has predicted rain in Karachi, parts of Punjab, Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, FATA, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. According to the environmental experts, this rainfall might clear the smog, cities are facing all around Punjab. Section 144 has been imposed in the province, banning the burning of crops, tyres, and garbage until further notice by the Punjab Government. Smog in Lahore had crossed all the international benchmarks early this week as the level of PM 2.5, which is termed the most dangerous pollutant in the air across the world, remained between 450ug/m3 and 500ug/m3 against the notified standards of 35ug/m3 per day. As per World Health Organization standards, the daily average level of PM 2.5 should not be more than 10ug/m3 and aggregated annual mean 25ug/m3 in a day whereas as per a gazette notification of the Punjab government, the daily limit of PM2.5 is 15ug/m3 and aggregated annual mean 35ug/m3 per day. STAFF REPORT

Int'l Health Conference begins at UVAS

LAHORE: The three-day international conference, titled "One Health Conference" began at University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) on Monday. The conference was organised by the College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS).

LHC REPRIMANDS PUNJAB GOVT OVER LACK OF SMOG-CURTAILING EFFORTS

LAHORE

STAFF REPORT

THE Lahore High Court (LHC) has expressed deep reservations regarding the lack of effort by the Punjab government to curtail the current situation of smog and has reproached the non-availability of data related to air quality whilst hearing a petition that seeks measures to control the ongoing situation of smog.

Chief Justice Mansoor Ali Shah reprimanded the relevant departments on learning that the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recently installed air quality monitoring stations suggest that the authorities have been reporting the Air Quality Index (AQI) of Lahore inaccurately.

It was revealed during the petition hearing that the persistent spell of smog has converted Lahore into a "gas chamber" akin to New Delhi and Beijing. For several years, experts have been raising

concerns about the amount of pollutants in the metropolis' air, but the major regulatory body EPA has lacked both instruments and initiative to monitor and address the issue. During the hearing, the LHC directed the provincial government to take pertinent actions and in the next hearing come up with the accurate data of air quality in the province.

The provincial government has imposed Section 144 in the province till December 16 to bar farmers from burning leftover crops waste, which believed to be one of the prime contributors to the smog problem in Punjab. Expressing extreme displeasure over the poor performance of the provincial environment department to curb smog, the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday directed it to submit data showing level of air quality and smog on next hearing.

Chief Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, who headed the bench, irked when he was informed that data about air quality and smog was not available to the department concerned. Life expectancy

was reducing owing to pollution, but the government was fast asleep, observed the chief justice, adding that people faced emergency-like situation, while the government didn't seem to be taking emergency measures to cope with the situation. He said according to social media Pakistan has exceeded limit for air pollution, but the government didn't have data to know level of pollution and smog. The bench was hearing a petition seeking measures to control smog that has been persisting in parts of Punjab, disrupting air and road traffic, causing fatal traffic accidents and throat and eye illnesses.

During previous hearing, the petitioner's counsel had apprised the court that a large number of citizens faced health issues due to heavy smog caused by air pollution. However, the government made no practical measures to guide the citizens and clear smog, he said. The secretary environment explained that smog is caused by burning of crops in Indian Punjab as

the provincial government has taken punitive action against industrial units causing pollution and burning of slid waste and crops in the province.

The provincial government has imposed 'Section 144' in the province till December 16 to bar farmers from burning leftover crops waste, which believed to be one of the prime contributors to the smog problem in Punjab. Punjab has been badly struck with foggy weather condition in recent years in beginning days of winter in the region. The prevalent smog episode is similar to the one that struck the province last year, noted chief meteorologist Mohammad Riaz.

The smog is caused by a lack of rain and immense pollution. Smoke from vehicles, factories and burning of the remains of crops could be one of the major factors behind the dense smog in the province, Riaz said. Analysts are of the opinion that a spell of heavy rains or strong winds could clear the hazy conditions in the province.



LAHORE: A view of dense smog in the provincial capital. A rain system has entered Pakistan that is expected to dampen the adverse effects of smog. ONLINE

LHC adjourns contempt plea against Maryam Nawaz

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday adjourned a petition seeking initiation of contempt proceedings against Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif, for criticising the superior court judges.

A bench of the court put off the petition until Tuesday due to the absence of the petitioner's lawyer.

Advocate Azhar Siddique petitioned the high court, submitting that Maryam Nawaz has been criticising superior court judges after the disqualification of her father in the Panama Papers case.

He submitted that the daughter of the former prime minister was making derogatory remarks against the judiciary and other state institutions, besides holding judges up to ridicule in her statements, which is a criminal offence. STAFF REPORT