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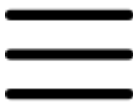
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Smog towers, 'odd-even' rule no solution to pollution: IISER-Mohali expert

'Negligible impact until contamination source is curtailed'

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Updated At:  Nov 25, 2023 09:28 AM (IST)

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Farm fires should not be looked at as a mere six-week problem and forgotten for the rest of the year, says the expert. File photo



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Tribune News Service

Mohit Khanna

Patiala, November 24

As air pollution levels in the state and Delhi continue to worsen, an expert from the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Mohali, said farm fires should not be looked at as a mere six-week problem and forgotten for the rest of the year.

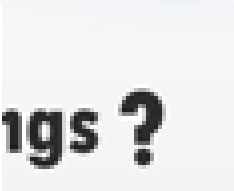
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191 new farm fires, Bathinda most polluted

- As many as 191 farm fires were reported in the state on Friday. Moga and Fazilka again topped the state, with 54 and 34 new incidents. The total count has now reached 36,514 this year
- Bathinda continues to remain the most polluted city, with an AQI of 380. The other polluted cities include Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana & Patiala, which saw an AQI of 263, 256, 217 & 164, respectively

Vinayak Sinha, an atmospheric chemist at IISER, said installing smog towers and introducing odd-even rule (vehicle rationalisation) to plug the number of vehicles on the road would have negligible impact until the source of pollution was not curtailed.

A report, titled 'Why is Delhi’s air pollution so bad right now?' was published in Nature, a multidisciplinary science journal, a few days ago.

Sinha said crop burning emits black carbon — a pollutant that contributes to haze formation and affects health. The presence of black carbon varies from an average of 20 to 70 per cent in air on severe days in Delhi during the autumn season.

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The post-monsoon season, from October to December, contributes to pollution in Delhi.

“Every year, it is the same story. The temperature falls and the troposphere shrinks. That causes the pollutants to be concentrated. You have a smaller container now into which your air emissions are being stored. The farm fires compound the problem,” Sinha said.

Sinha suggested that the governments need to make clean air a priority. Improving public transport and waste collection and ensuring that people have access to clean fuel for cooking and heating would be the first steps in this direction.

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“We can’t be looking at for just six weeks each year,” he added.

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