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Hyderabad: Particulates, sunlight make a toxic cocktail
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HYDERABAD: Real-time air quality monitoring data in the city has indicated bad quality air from 12 noon to 2 pm when the particulate matter and ozone 3 (ground) levels are very high.

The monitoring unit at Sanathnagar and Zoo Park showed very high levels on Saturday afternoon, which is one of the days when the monitoring units state that the air quality is usually good. The ground ozone and other gases react with the afternoon sun resulting in decreased oxygen levels causing difficulty in breathing.

Those in direct exposure, or travelling in open air vehicles like two-wheelers, buses and autorickshaws are easily affected.

A senior official of the monitoring unit said, "On Saturdays, vehicular pollution is less. But this phenomenon was studied due to the approaching festive season. The bad mix of air could be due to that reason. Also, there has been a major cloud cover in these areas since morning which is not allowing the air to disperse."

The quality of air since the last week of October has been exceeding the prescribed limit. The particulate matter is ranging from 69 ug/m³ to 75 ug/m³ in different areas of the city. With the deteriorating quality, those who are suffering from respiratory disorders, heart and lung conditions have been advised by doctors to not venture out from November 6 to November 8.

Dr Lakshmana Babu, a senior pulmonologist said, "We usually see bad air quality in the last week of November and during certain days in December. But this year, there has been an early onset of winter and the quality of air has been compromised much before the arrival of the winter season."

"We are already seeing asthmatic patients with severe episodes and hence as a precautionary measure are advising them not to venture out or travel long distances during the days of the festival," he added.