

WINTER FOG – A SEVER THREAT TO SOUTH ASIA



Over the past decades, South Asian countries have undergone rapid urbanization and industrialization which dramatically increase emissions of air pollutants. Increasing levels of air pollutant concentrations, in the urban atmosphere has created serious impacts on environmental and human health such as increasing trend in fog frequencies during winter in the last few decades. This has resulted in large economical losses and has caused substantial difficulties in the daily lives of people in the sub region.

The Indo-Gangetic Plains covering northern India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh is subjected to dense haze/fog during winter months severely impacting on air, rail and vehicular traffic. This part has more than 500 million inhabitants and stretches from the north-west to the north-east. In Bangladesh, India and Nepal the temperatures has plummeted and clouds of fog and smoke hang in the sky blocking sunlight for several days. In some cities at the Nepal-India bordering areas, smog blankets can be seen from early evening. When such blankets of smog block sunlight, sending temperatures down, people make fire from wood, cow-dung cake and hay to warm themselves and that creates more air pollution which leads to denser smog.

Winter fog is a natural meteorological phenomenon caused by water droplets suspended in the air, and is a common occurrence in this region during winter, burning of fossil fuels, biomass, as well as diesel transportation, factories, power plants, and dust caused the problem and the cold winter weather is aggravating it. In the last decades, dense fog has been seen to stay for many days without a break, and this is establishing itself as a new phenomenon.

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