

DL-HC-POLLUTION

As the killer 'pea soup fog' continued to engulf the city, the Delhi High Court on Thursday issued a slew of directions to improve air quality, including watering roads to minimise dust.

Calling it an "emergency situation", a Bench of Justices S. Ravindra Bhat and Sanjeev Sachdeva asked the government to consider the option of "cloud seeding" to induce rainfall artificially, as an immediate step to bring down dust and particulate matter in the atmosphere.

It directed the Delhi government to seriously consider a ban on further construction in the city to the extent possible and implement the odd-even vehicle usage scheme as short term measure.

"What we are facing today has already been faced by London. They call it a pea soup fog. It is a killer. Stubble burning is the visible villain in it, but there are other elephants in the room," the Bench said.

It said the fog here was a "deadly mixture of vehicular pollution, construction, road dust and stubble burning."

Directions were also issued to the Traffic Police to ensure there is no vehicular congestion on roads and to provide masks to the personnel on duty.

The Bench also ordered the Union Environment Secretary to hold in the next three days a meeting of Chief Secretaries of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to work out a joint short-term plan to bring down air pollution.

END

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