

Ombudsman directs action to control air pollution

Islamabad

On the directives of Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi, the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Islamabad District Administration have finalised and submitted Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to control vehicular emissions and reduce environmental pollution in the federal capital, said a Press release issued here on Friday.

According to the report submitted to the Ombudsman, vehicular smoke and carbon emissions are the primary causes of air pollution and pose serious risks to human health, including

heart disease.

To address this issue, the EPA and district administration have prepared a comprehensive action plan divided into two phases: a short-term plan of 18 months and a long-term plan of five years.

Under the SOPs, priority will be given to the inspection of smoke-emitting and diesel vehicles.

Special focus will also be placed on public transport, old vehicles, trucks, and tractors that contribute significantly to pollution.

The long-term plan includes proposals to promote the use of electric vehicles to make Islamabad a pollution-free city.

The report further stated that the EPA had introduced National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) in 2008-09 for the inspection and clearance of vehicles, in collaboration with the Islamabad Police and the Capital Territory Administration.

During 2024-25, a total of 215 vehicles were fined, and 32 vehicles were sealed for serious violations of environmental standards.

It is pertinent to mention that the Federal Ombudsman had recently taken notice of public complaints regarding long queues of vehicles at D-Chowk for environmental clearance.

He summoned officials of

the EPA and the District Administration and appointed the Registrar of the Federal Ombudsman, Muhammad Saqib Khan, as the Investigation Officer.

Following the intervention, the issue of long queues was resolved.

The Federal Ombudsman further directed both institutions to ensure better coordination and prepare clear SOPs for vehicle inspection so that the public is not inconvenienced in the future.

In compliance with these directions, the EPA and the Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad have now submitted the finalized action plan and SOPs to the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat. - APP