Atmospheric Aerosol’s Response to the Slowdown in Human Activities Due to COVID-19

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Pawan Gupta (pawan.gupta@nasa.gov), USRA/STI/MSFC
& Robert Levy, GSFC
Hypothesis

The sources of atmospheric aerosols are both anthropogenic and natural. Globally, as a result of COVID-19, anthropogenic activities have been either on halt or limited. Therefore, we expect to see change in atmospheric loading of aerosols at different spatial and temporal scales.

In this analysis, we use satellite observations of aerosols to understand these changes.

Cautions:

- Although anthropogenic activities have been limited but smoke from biomass burning and dust transport continue to affect many part of the world and can easily offset the shutdown effects.
- Meteorological conditions (i.e. rain, temp., RH, wind) also play a critical role and may affects aerosol loading, which may increase/decrease or offset the shutdown effects.

Data, Method

- We use MODIS-Terra & Aqua aerosol optical depth (AOD) at 550 nm retrieval at 10km² resolution. The data were processed for the entire record of MODIS mission.
- AOD differences between previous years (and climatology) & 2020 for the same region and period have been calculated to understand the impact of slowdown on atmospheric aerosol loading.
Each panel shows Average AOD values for March 31 to April 5\textsuperscript{th} from MODIS-Terra for 2016 to 2020, the Climatology, and the Difference (2020-AVG) for Indian region. There was heavy rain fall in the northern India from March 26-28, therefore data for that period not used here. The decline in AOD values 2020 compared to the last year and long-term climatology is apparent in the analysis. The reasons for increase in AODs in central/southern part is open biomass burning.
The timeseries shows daily change in AOD from January 1 to April 10. Each color represents a different year and the dotted line shows long-term climatology. At the time of this analysis, 2020 data were only available until April 5th. The data are averaged for [24.0°N, 73.0°E, 30.0°N, 85.0°E]. Also, daily values are smoothed using a 7-day moving average.

The decline in AOD values week by week is apparent in the analysis. The reasons for the increase in AODs in the central part are due to open biomass burning. Most of the decline happened in the Indo-Gangetic Plain where population density is highest in the region. A passing dust storm and increased fires in Nepal during the week of April 9 elevated the AOD values.
Backup slides for other regions
Each panel shows Average AOD values from MODIS-Aqua from 2004 to 2020, the Climatology, and the Difference (2020-AVG) for China Wuhan region. The decline in AOD values in 2020 compared to the last year and long-term climatology is apparent in the analysis. The increase in AODs in southern part of the region is due to smoke transport from south east Asia.
Each panel shows Average AOD values from MODIS-Terra from 2016 to 2020, the Climatology, and the Difference (2020-AVG) for China. The decline in AOD values in 2020 compared to the last year and long-term climatology is apparent in the analysis. The increase in AODs in southern part of the region is due to smoke transport from south east Asia.
Next is Italy

Each panel shows Average AOD values from MODIS-Aqua from 2004 to 2020, the Climatology, and the Difference (2020-AVG) for Italy region. The decline in AOD values 2020 compared to the last year and long-term climatology is apparent in the analysis. The reasons for increase in AODs in northern part is not very clear, may be there was a dust storm.
Spain in March

Each panel shows Average AOD values from MODIS-Terra from 2016 to 2020, the Climatology, and the Difference (2020-AVG) for Spain. The 2020 values are much higher and most likely affected by long-range dust transport.
Each panel shows Average AOD values from MODIS-Terra from 2016 to 2020, the Climatology, and the Difference (2020-AVG) for North America.
Tokyo-Japan
Sydney - Australia
Delhi - India
Ground Air Quality Data - Delhi

PM2.5 concentrations in μg/m³

hourly averages of data from all public continuous monitoring stations, sourced via openaq.org

Source

https://science.thewire.in/environment/lockdown-air-pollution-north-india-pm25-pm10-nox-ozone/