

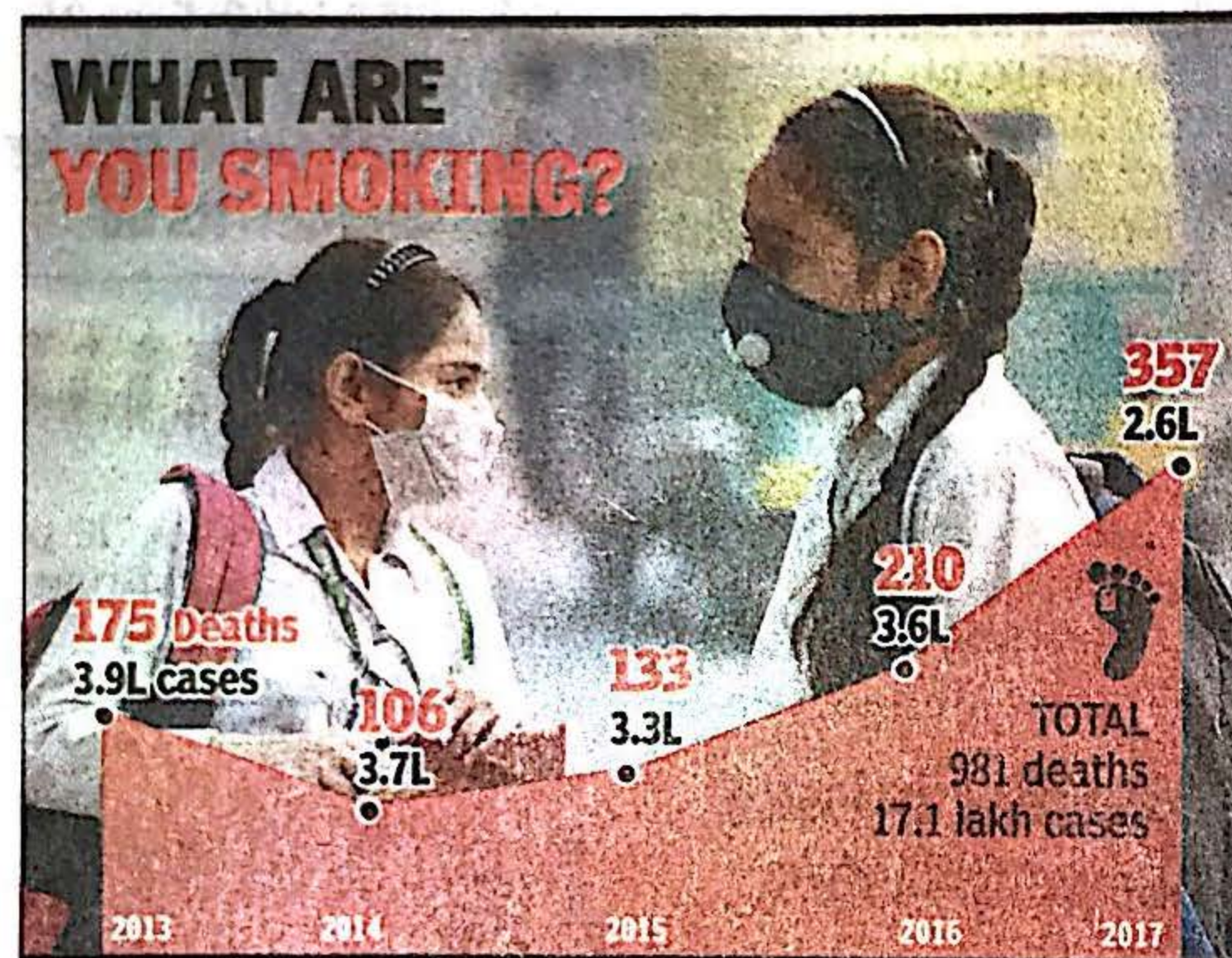
17 lakh respiratory infections, 981 deaths in 5 years in capital

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New Delhi: The capital witnessed 981 deaths due to Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) from 2013 to 2017. Over 17 lakh others were diagnosed with ARI, stated a standing committee report tabled in the parliament on Tuesday.

The report said the polluted air in Delhi-NCR is a significant risk factor for a number of pollution-related diseases and health conditions, including respiratory infections, and recommended immediate corrective and preventive strategic steps in consultation to mitigate the air pollution.

The committee, which held three meetings with the authorities concerned and analysed the whole gamut of air pollution in Delhi-NCR in the past nine months, said that it was surprised to note that



the health ministry was not taken on board in the high-level task force on air pollution which is, in a way, indicative of ignorance as well as denial about negative impact of air pollution on human health. "The committee recommends that considering the severe

health hazards of air pollution, ministry of environment, forest and climate change should take immediate corrective and preventive strategic steps in consultation with the health ministry," the committee advised.

It has asked the health min-

istry to aggressively start an awareness campaign to educate people about the adverse health effects of air pollution, and the ways and means to minimise its adverse impacts.

In 2016, the World Health Organisation (WHO) put Delhi amongst the 20 most polluted cities in the world in terms of PM2.5 levels.

An epidemiological study conducted in 2008 on effects of air pollution on human health (adults) in Delhi, referred to by the parliamentary committee in its report, shows citizens of the city were more susceptible to respiratory symptoms compared with those living in rural areas.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had said last year there is growing body of scientific research that shows that air pollution can permanently damage a child's brain.