

# Air pollution kills 30K in Capital every year

**SHOCKING** CSE study says air quality in capital was bad throughout November, puts focus on revamping city's transport system and reducing use of solid fuels



CHOKING DELHI

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**NEW DELHI:** Air pollution is responsible for 10,000-30,000 deaths in Delhi annually and is the fifth largest cause of death in the country, states the 'Body Burden 2015' report released by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) on Tuesday. Outdoor air pollution kills 6,20,000 people and indoor air pollution kills 1.5 million people in India annually.

The report states that 53% of days in November were in the very poor air quality range and 47% were in the severe range, as per the National Air Quality Index.

"The way forward would be to reduce the source of air pollution. Currently 60% of people in Delhi uses public transport, cycles or walks. It is important to revamp our transportation system and add to these numbers," said Sunita Narain, director general of CSE.

The report says the use of solid fuels needs to be avoided in order to reduce indoor air pollution. As of 2010, 700 million Indians use solid fuels to light chullahs, which release smoke equivalent to 400 cigarettes every hour.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are a major killer with 98,16,000 succumbing to a lifestyle disease in 2014. Non-communicable diseases account for 40% of all hospital stays and 35% of recorded out-patient visits.

The report says lack of clean drinking water facilities, climate change, degradation of forests, and use of fertilisers have taken a toll on the health of Indians.

In India, 37.7 million people are affected by water-borne diseases annually and around 1.5 million children succumb to diarrhoea alone. In fact, on an average, every child below the age of 6 has 1.71 episodes of diarrhoea in rural India and 1.09 episodes in urban India.

Climate change is another major problem leading to an increase in vector-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria. The report says the potential period of the spread of malaria has increased to 10-12 months, which is up from 4-6 months a year

## STATE OF HEALTH

Some old and new health threats



■ Pollution is a major cause for concern in Delhi.

HT PHOTO

### DELHI POLLUTION

**10,000 - 30,000** deaths annually

In November, air quality was very poor on 53% days, and severe on 47% days

### AIR POLLUTION

Outdoor pollution:

**20,000** premature deaths annually (all-India)

Household pollution:

**1.15 mn** premature deaths

### WATER-BORNE

**37.7mn**

water-borne diseases annually (all-India)

**1.5 mn**

kids die due to diarrhoea

**1.04 mn**

hepatitis cases in 2013, 512 patients died

### PESTICIDES

**13.1 mn**

will die of cancer by 2030; 20 times current toll (all-India)

**1.25 mn**

new cases of cancer annually; **6,80,000 die**

SOURCE: BODY BURDEN 2015: STATE OF INDIA'S HEALTH, CSE

## On most days, quality of air exceeded safe limits in Delhi

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**NEW DELHI:** Several Indian cities, including Delhi, have far exceeded the prescribed limits of air pollutants as per Indian standards, a report released by Greenpeace India said. Delhi is the worst in terms of pollution in summers as well as in winters.

The report analyses data of the pollution levels in 17 Indian cities provided by the National Air Quality Index (NAQI).

According to the report, as many as 15 of the 17 Indian cities with NAQI stations showed levels of air pollution that far exceed prescribed Indian standards. The high pollution figures recorded for well over 50% of the days that data was recorded between April and November indicate the continuing severity of air pollution, it said.

"As the political capital—and indeed, the most polluted of all cities—the bad air in Delhi gets the most attention. But scratch below the murky surface and you will find concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub>

### HIGH ON POLLUTION

Pollution levels were above normal standards on most days in five cities, finds survey

City	% of days that exceeded standards (April to November 2015)	Days analysed
Delhi	95	236
Lucknow	88	232
Kanpur	84	220
Chennai	81	233
Varanasi	79	218

(Percentage of pollution days, all pollutants)

in several other cities—Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Muzzafarpur and Faridabad, among others—that would justify the triggering of a 'red alert.' Even the government's own, largely inadequate NAQI data reveals that 23 of the 32 stations across India have PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels that exceed the national standard," said Sunil Dahiya,

campaigner, Greenpeace India.

"The pollution levels in a few Indian cities have the embarrassing distinction of having exceeded the toxic levels of Beijing and other Chinese cities, demonstrating levels at least 10 times higher than the WHO standards, making air pollution truly a national emergency," he said