

# City is like a gas chamber: High court

## Govts Told To Act Immediately



### LET DELHI BREATHE

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Alarmed at the current air pollution levels in the city, the Delhi high court on Thursday termed it like living "in a gas chamber" and demanded an immediate action plan from the Centre and the state government to combat deteriorating air quality.

Zeroing in on emissions by vehicles and construction-related particulates as key pollutants in the capital, a bench of Justices B D Ahmed

and the state government must ensure that no construction takes place without taking care of minimal generation of pollutants.

The high court also took a serious view of extreme air pollution being caused by unrestrained burning of trash and leaves in the city and the adjoining areas. It asked the Delhi government to ask all subdivisional magistrates to get cracking against the offenders. The government must widely publicise that such practices are prohibited, it added.

Turning to a status report by traffic police identifying 14 choke points leading to congestion and idling vehicles, the court said more personnel could be deployed, besides putting up plastic bollards, to segregate carriageways and regulate flow of traffic.

The judges also told the traffic police to book those violating yellow lines and don't adhere to lane driving. "Publicise (that) there would be strict action and fines for violations," it said while hearing a suo motu case on increasing air pollution in Delhi. In certain areas, the traffic police can install automatic synchronised traffic light changing system to discipline flow of vehicles, it added.

The bench further expressed concern over the plight of traffic constables manning lanes, saying the force must provide proper protective gear, including masks, to its personnel.

With regard to the poor air quality on the Delhi high court premises, the bench directed the registry to ensure that air purifiers are put up within two weeks in each courtroom as well as public access areas.



**The high court has given the Centre and the Delhi government till December 21 to enlist the steps being taken to tackle air pollution in the capital**

and Sanjeev Sachdeva ordered a clampdown on both, asking the government agencies to take steps.

"The level of PM2.5 has crossed level of 60, still the government hasn't done anything!" the court said, dismissing the plans filed by the environment ministry and the Delhi government as "non-comprehensive".

The governments have been given time till December 21 to enlist the steps. Referring to dust particles floating due to construction activities, the court said the civic agencies