

One-day deadline to act on dust pollution

NGT Tells Delhi, UP & Haryana To Follow Construction Rules

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New Delhi: Elaborating on its order to curtail air pollution due to dust, National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Friday issued directions to the governments of Delhi, Haryana and UP to stop any construction in NCR, which violates its rules or 2010 guidelines of the MOEF. It issued a deadline of Saturday for taking action, saying that the governments and departments concerned would be held liable if constructions continued in violation of the rules.

The tribunal also asked six court commissioners to inspect various sites to check on compliance with its order.

Meanwhile, the commissioners were told to submit a report on their inspection of various entry points into Delhi. In a drive that started on Thursday following NGT's order, traffic police impounded



File photo

MESSY BUSINESS: A PWD work site in Greater Kailash-I, New Delhi

363 vehicles between midnight and Friday morning.

On Friday, the Delhi government pleaded with NGT to allow essential services such as fire trucks, ambulances and vehicles carrying food items into the city, saying that six months would be needed to replace the existing fleet of diesel vehicles. NGT said the government could file an application in this regard and as long as its intent to follow the orders was

clear, the court would not penalize it unnecessarily.

The tribunal will now take up the issue of air pollution in phases. On Friday, it focused mainly on dust-related pollution. In the next hearing it will take up matters related to pollution caused by open burning of waste.

NGT's order effectively makes the 2010 MoEF guidelines on construction compulsory to follow. Occupancy cer-

tificated will only be issued if this order is complied with. Delhi has been told specifically to increase its tree cover.

"Most of what NGT has been saying during the hearings is part of the MoEF guidelines. By virtue of being guidelines, it was not necessary that they be followed. The order makes that compulsory. In fact, the court specified that its order overrides any permission or clearances that a project has been granted. If there are violations, the construction has to stop," said a source.

The city, which has a single facility for processing its construction and demolition waste, has been told to immediately increase its capacity. "Delhi is producing around 4,000 MT of C&D waste each day and only 10% of this is being processed. The government needs to expand its capacity to process C&D waste," said Swatanter Kumar, NGT chairperson.

Centre to challenge ban on 10-year-old diesel vehicles

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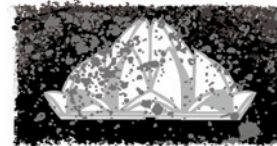
New Delhi: The Centre is set to challenge the NGT order banning 10-year-old diesel vehicles in Delhi. Sources said government agencies would move the Supreme Court pointing out the decision was anti-consumer and it was not a practical solution to check the problem of emissions.

Consultations have started within the government to prepare a strong case to challenge the ban. First of all, as per existing motor vehicle laws, age of a vehicle is not the criteria for banning it from plying. Secondly, vehicles registered with state transport departments can ply till these comply with the norms set for fitness and emission.

Unlike other countries, In-

dia does not have an "end of life" policy for vehicles, which is based on the age of a vehicle.

"We have to consider whether our people have the paying capacity to buy new vehicles every 10-15 years. The



road transport secretary Vijay Chhibber said on the sidelines of a state transport commissioners' conference in Delhi.

Earlier, he urged state governments to set up modern fitness testing centres to avoid facing a situation like that of Delhi. The road transport ministry had taken a similar stand of setting up fitness tests and compliance of emission norms as the criteria for vehicles that can be allowed ply or phasing them out. It had filed an affidavit on this in the SC after NGT had ordered banning the plying of all 15-year-old vehicles on Delhi roads.

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Your search to find someone to blame for Delhi's pollution stops at YOU

POLLUTION TERROR
AIR QUALITY INDEX PM2.5

Delhi	198	Moderate
Tomorrow	190	Moderate
Pune	102	Moderate
Tomorrow	99	Good

Source: SAFAR@MoES-IITM-IMD (10 stations)

Hyderabad	56	Good
Kolkata	86	Good
Mumbai	65	Good

US Embassy data calculated as per Indian standards by SAFAR@MoES-IITM-IMD
Based on 1 Station Data Per City at 4pm