

NGT fumes, govt hides behind fig leaf

15 July 2015

Centre Skirts Air Pollution Issue By Blaming It On Burning Of Dry Leaves

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New Delhi: The Centre claims vehicles are not the worst polluters but it's not saying what's behind Delhi's terrible air quality either. The Union transport ministry continued to skirt the issue before the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Tuesday, with additional solicitor general (ASG) Pinky Anand submitting that dry leaves that are burnt in the "green city" could be composted instead of deal with poor air quality.

As soon as the Centre tried to push the blame onto dust and leaves, the NGT bench said, "Find out if you want to say anything that has not been said," showing its exasperation with the way the government has been avoiding a clampdown on vehicles.

Since October, the government has stubbornly refused to accept all the evidence linking vehicle emissions to harmful health effects. Questioning an IIT Delhi report cited by the Centre, the bench said, "According to the IIT report, 17% or 18% of the pollution is due to traffic, please define the rest of the 83%."

When Anand replied IIT Kanpur and Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) are still analyzing the contribution of different activities to air pollution, and their report won't be available before September, the bench said, what good is the IIT report "without analyzing the con-

AND THE BATTLE CONTINUES

WHAT THE CENTRE AND STATES WERE TO RESPOND TO

- Age of all vehicles to be allowed to run in Delhi with reference to sources of energy/fuel
- Cap on number of vehicles to be registered in NCR
- Incentives for people who pool cars



- Benefits for new owners of vehicles prohibited to run in NCR
- Concessions for people for scrapping their vehicles
- Deploying public transport vehicles on priority at places with high commercial activities



- Rationalization of parking charges to encourage people to use parking zones
- Hiking registration cost and imposing other charges, like that for congestion, particularly on families with more than one vehicle
- Controlling emissions from big power projects such as Indraprastha, Badarpur and Rajghat

THE CASE SO FAR

NOV 26, 2014 | NGT imposes a ban on more than 15-year-old diesel and petrol vehicles in NCR with 13 other stringent measures in various sectors



APR 14, 2015 | NGT stays the ban on diesel vehicles for two weeks

APR 21 | SC backs NGT order, saying the 'tribunal is trying to do something which is good for people. Let us... not discourage them.'

APR 27 | Centre files an

APR 7, 2015
The tribunal bans more than 10-year-old diesel vehicles

application in NGT appealing for a stay and for making fitness the criterion for the phase-out

MAY 1 | NGT extends the stay on ban. Centre and state fail to submit suggestions

JUL 13 | Centre fails to submit its views; continues to claim vehicles are not the worst polluter

KEY ISSUES

NGT HAS ASKED CENTRE TO DELIBERATE ON THESE ISSUES

> 50% of the cars registered in 2014 were diesel cars

> Studies carried out in China and Brazil show old vehicles cause pollution



> Staggering office/college timings to ease congestion



> Cap on number of vehicles to be registered

> BS IV compliance for diesel vehicles

> Hike in cess on diesel vehicles

tribution of all kinds of diesel vehicles, especially heavy vehicles?"

Earlier, NGT had criticized another IIT Delhi report prepared for the ministry that claimed traffic did not affect air quality as levels of PM2.5 (fine, respirable pollution particles) in RK Puram remained high even on Sundays and holidays, without stating the reasons for the high levels. "We have three studies that say vehicles are responsible but IIT wakes up one morning and says otherwise," NGT said on Tuesday.

Government agencies have not responded to the nine

issues NGT had raised earlier. Among other things, it had sought views on the on-road life of vehicles and directed that computerized check posts be set up at the nine en-



LET DELHI BREATHE

try points to Delhi. "I don't think even a single such post has been raised...Haryana hasn't responded still on the status of bypasses to Delhi."

As a way to reduce traffic

congestion and the resultant air pollution, NGT suggested staggering office timings. "Delhi is mostly government offices. Why can't you arrange the timings in a way so that buses are not crowded, there is less congestion on roads?" It asked the Centre to discuss the idea with all stakeholders. "You can also take the universities along. If a child can go to school at 7am, why can't a graduate?"

But the lack of responsiveness from the authorities irked the bench. "It has still rung bells. This matter (air pollution) has been pending for a year, let's have at

least one thing done, let some people say okay, we will do it," it said.

To NGT's query on how many builders have been chattered for causing pollution, only East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) submitted that 66 have been chattered, of which six paid up Rs 50,000 each in fines.

The bench has now fixed the matter for day-to-day hearing starting Monday and asked all the authorities, including the Centre, and the governments of Delhi, Haryana and UP to file status reports on compliance with its orders.

'Most new cars run on diesel'

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New Delhi: The National Green Tribunal on Tuesday gave the Centre a note pointing out it may be overlooking important aspects of air pollution, particularly related to diesel vehicles.

Quoting from a 2012 report by the ministry of petroleum and natural gas it said only 4% of the cars sold in 2000 ran on diesel whereas now the number is 60%.

Not only is the number of diesel engines growing but also they tend to be bigger than petrol engines. "Whereas close to 87% of the new petrol cars sold in 2010-11 had engine size less than 1,400cc, more than 40% of diesel cars had engines that are more than 1,500cc."

The note also states that sales of utility vehicles and multipurpose vehicles—which are largely diesel-powered—have grown by 40.4% and 60.7%, respectively.

In its note, NGT has asked the government to suggest a cap on the number of passenger cars that can be registered every year, or freeze it at last year's level.

It also wants all diesel vehicles to comply with BS-IV emission norms even if it lifts the ban on those that are more than 10 years old. For this, it

STOP polluting this city, it is the only one we have!



POLLUTION FRIGHT

AIR QUALITY INDEX PM2.5

Delhi	82	Good
Tomorrow	102	Moderate
Pune	54	Good
Tomorrow	58	Good
Source: SAFAR@MoES-IITM-IMD (10 stations)		
Hyderabad	87	Good
Chennai	56	Good
Kolkata	58	Good
Mumbai	42	Good

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

has suggested that the Delhi government and municipal corporations consider fitting old vehicles with catalytic converters, diesel oxidation filters, diesel particulate filters, etc. It also wants a "substantial" hike in the cess on diesel from the current 25 paise per litre.