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https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/210518/hyderabadshunning-old-diesel-buses-a-must-for-reducing-pollution.html Hyderabad: Shunning old diesel buses a must for reducing pollution DECCAN CHRONICLE. | INDULEKHA ARAKKAL Published May 21, 2018, 2:14 am IST Updated May 21, 2018, 2:14 am IST

Hyderabad: A recent WHO Health Statistics report stated that India is the second most polluted country in the southeast Asian region after Nepal, with an annual average of 68 microgram particulate matter (PM) per square metre while the safe standard set by the WHO is under 10 micrograms.

The alarming rate of pollution in Delhi is especially mentioned as a grave example needing immediate action on air pollution.

Dr Babu Rao, former chief scientist at Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, said, "Controlling the number of vehicles, keeping a check on old diesel buses and having red flag days when the pollution levels are high is a must."

He said high levels of PM 2.5 is harmful for people of all ages, and many medical studies are linking it to not only lung problems but also the brain and heart.

Pollution experts say that particulate matter increases in residential areas due to vehicular pollution and burning of waste. The decrease in green spaces and increase of concrete even in private homes are also playing a factor in decreasing air quality, an expert said.

Environmentalist Dr W.J. Prasanna Kumar said, "Burning green waste along with other waste to keep warm on cold nights leads to smog. The burning of any biowaste releases high levels of carbon monoxide and particulate matter that hangs in the air."

Hyderabad has recorded the highest particulate matter at 117, which is 17 per cent higher than the daily standard and almost twice as high as the annual standard.

Mr P. Veeranna, chief scientist officer at the TS Pollution Control Board, said, "We are trying to maintain our annual average which has been decreasing consistently for the past two years."

The WHO report also looked into communicable diseases for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals target of ending epidemics like AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and India topped the list of countries in southeast Asia region due to lack of hygiene. The report stated that 16.8 people out of 100 are at a risk in India of contracting malaria.