

# METRO LIFE



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Donald Trump is coming to India on February 24, and our national spin masters, you can be sure, are busy figuring out the best way to brand the two-day visit. 'Howdy Modi,' as we all know, was a big hit because 'howdy' rhymes euphonically with 'Modi.' What can you rhyme with Trump? Dump, jump, lump and slump aren't flattering, even if they go well when paired with Trump. Another worry. American presidents visiting India are invariably called upon to mouth a couple of lines from Bollywood. Obama, you may remember, tried to quote from DDLJ and forgot mid-way what his Hindi tutors had taught him. Given that Trump is visiting Ahmedabad, let's hope he won't drawl and mumble his way through his Indian-language lines. "I just love Indiar, and I'm enjoying all the wonderrrrrful dhoka here," would be a disaster. Mr President, there's a world of difference between 'dhoka' and 'dhokla'. Dhokla is a veg breakfast item famous in Gujarat, and that's what you will be fed. On the other hand, dhoka means cheating and scamming. So. Speak clearly. And when Indian officials speak of 'the war,' remember it's 'deewar,' which means 'wall'. They're just talking about that pretty brick structure hiding our slums from your view.

**Happy V-Day?**

Looks like a question for singles from stand-up Kajol Srinivasan (@L.LOLrakshak) on the year's mushiest day: 'How do you plan to celebrate Valentine's Day?' Someone asked her if the spelling mistake was deliberate. Her reply: 'Freudian sleep.'

# No relief from increasing pollution

**City doctors say that pollution-related health hazards such as wheezing, coughing, lung infection and dust allergy are on the rise**

**NINA C GEORGE**  
TEAM METROLIFE

The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) has confirmed that pollution levels across Bengaluru are touching alarming levels. Ongoing road works, unregulated construction and disappearing green cover have aggravated the problem, experts say.

Doctors in the city point out that the cases of pollution-related health hazards, such as wheezing, coughing, lung infection, dust allergy and insomnia are also on the rise.

Unplanned developmental activities are the root cause of the problem, asserts Dr T V Ramachandra of the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science. He blames the governmental agencies for it, saying they don't assess the carrying capacity of infrastructure (road, drains, drinking water, etc) when permitting large establishments to come up in the locality. This, he says, has led to congestion and increased pollution levels. "The city's landscape is saturated with paved surfaces to an extent of 81 per

cent. Cities with poor public transport are contributing to the overall pollution levels. For instance, vehicles are responsible for 54 per cent of the pollution in Hyderabad; in Bengaluru, it is 43 per cent. While a majority of pollutants come from two-wheelers, 40 per cent is from single drive cars," Ramachandra tells *Metrolife*.

He also observes that inappropriate building architecture, such as buildings with a glass facade, contribute to higher electricity consumption and higher radiation, leading to local heat islands.

"The city is next to Delhi (and Mumbai) as far as emissions are concerned," he adds.

Dr Sanjiv Lewin, chief of medical services, St John's Medical College Hospital, confirms that cases of pollution-related disorders have increased. These include bronchitis, lung and skin cancer and chronic diseases such as cancer, blood clot in the brain (or brain tumour) and malfunctioning of kidneys. He points out that by reducing air pollution levels, cities can reduce the burden of stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, and both chronic and acute respiratory



Ongoing road work, unregulated construction and disappearing green cover have contributed to rising pollution levels in the city. (Above) A dug up and dusty road at Seshadripuram. DH PHOTOS BY JANARDHAN B K

diseases, including asthma.

"The lower the levels of air pollution, the better the cardiovascular and respiratory health of the population will be," says Dr Sanjeev.

He strongly believes that better government policies and investments supporting cleaner transport, energy-efficient homes and stringent municipal waste management measures, would reduce key sources of outdoor air pollution.

"According to a WHO report, there were about 4.2 million premature deaths worldwide per year in 2016. This mortality is due to exposure to small particulate matter of 2.5 microns or

less in diameter (PM2.5), which cause cardiovascular and respiratory disease, and cancer," adds Dr Sanjeev.

A senior scientific officer with the KSPCB says increasing vehicular population and growing industries are the major contributors to pollution. He informs that particulate matter below 10 micrograms and below 2.5 micrograms does not easily disappear and contributes to breathing problems.

"In urban areas, small particles of carbon remain suspended in the air. They don't settle easily unless there is some precipitation. Completing the pending road work and using dust-sucker machines could help reduce the levels of pollution," says the officer.

Pollution can also affect mental health, points out Dr Sugami Ramesh, senior consultant, Clinical Psychology, Apollo Hospitals. "Epidemiological

evidence shows an emerging association between certain air pollutants and a range of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, psychosis, dementia, childhood cognitive development and suicidal tendencies," she says.

She feels it is imperative to maintain good physical health. "It is important to stick to healthy food habits, exercise regularly and get enough sleep. These habits will help one cope better with stress and also control the onset of lung conditions like bronchitis, skin irritations like dermatitis, stress disorders of the mind and gastrointestinal disorders," she says.



The ongoing road work at Vyalikaval.

**BRING IN STRINGENT MEASURES**

Dr T V Ramachandra's suggestions to improve the quality of life in the city.

- Decongest the city on a priority basis and stop senseless urbanisation with all industries and major institutions in the city.
- Remove the nexus of consultants-contractors-engineers mafia.
- Enhance transparency in the administration.
- Focus on black spots such as solid waste dumps, burning of litter, illegal industrial waste/effluent disposal without any environmental safeguards.
- Penalise polluters, irrespective of status, hierarchy and humanitarian grounds.
- Implement polluter pays principle and implement environmental legislation in true spirit.

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