

Air pollution threatening quality of life in Asia: U.N.

About 6,00,000 Asians die prematurely each year due to air pollution

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CHENNAI: Air pollution remains a threat to health and quality of life in most Asian cities, according to a report supported by the United Nations Environment Programme. This report is based on an international collaborative study carried out by the Stockholm Environment Institute, University of York, U.K., the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia), the Korea Environment Institute and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

The study looked at air quality and management in 22 Asian cities and the findings were released as part of the first governmental meet-

ing on urban air quality held at Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

The major finding of this report is that the concentration of the fine particulate matter PM10 is serious in Beijing, Dhaka, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, Kathmandu, Kolkata, New Delhi, and Shanghai. However, the report finds that cities like Shanghai, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei and Tokyo have excellent capacity to manage air qual-

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ity. It looks that there is some hope to contain and improve air quality in these cities.

However, cities like Ho Chi Minh City, Jakarta, Manila and Mumbai are found to have only moderate capability and face the challenge of addressing transport-related emissions. According to the report, Dhaka, Hanoi, Surabaya and Kathmandu have only limited capability to manage air quality.

Urban air quality has be-

come a major concern in the recent past. According to the World Health Organisation estimates, about 6,00,000 Asians die prematurely each year due to air pollution. The report finds that air quality in most cities exceeds international guidelines for the protection of human health for certain pollutants.

The report observes that the gains achieved through reduced vehicle emissions are offset by the rise in volume of vehicles. Rapid urbanisation, increasing motorisation and energy consumption are listed as some of the challenges that Asian cities face. Air quality management systems are not adequate in terms of completeness, it says.

Four held in professor murder case

K. Balchand

PATNA: Four persons were arrested on Saturday in connection with the murder of history professor Papiya Ghosh at her residence here a fortnight ago.

Deputy General of Police Ashish Ranjan Sinha said the hunt was on for the fifth accomplice in the case.

The professor's elderly maid was also murdered.

Mr. Sinha said the crime was the 'handiwork of petty criminals' and no big gang was behind it.

He, however, was unable to explain how four young persons drawn from different regions came together to carry out the crime without someone planning the entire operation.