

92% IN ASIA EXPOSED TO HARMFUL AIR

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Pollution - Air, Water, Soil & E-waste

A tourist wearing an anti-pollution mask in the Capital. File photo: Sushil Kumar Verma Sushil Kumar Verma

Around 92% of the population in the Asia Pacific region are exposed to levels of air pollution that pose a significant risk to their health, according to UN Environment. Some of the Asian countries have taken steps to limit its effects.

As public anger rises over toxic air, authorities have turned to spraying water, which is thought to stick to pollutants and carry them to the ground. But tools such as water cannons have been criticised as having little effect and being a “band-aid” solution that distracts from root causes.

While New Delhi — the world’s most polluted major city -- tried in 2017 to use helicopters to sprinkle water over the city, but the choppers were not able to fly due to low visibility caused by smog.

Bangkok tried a raft of measures to combat a murky haze that blanketed the city in January, including spraying overpasses with water, cloud seeding.

Cloud-seeding is used to stimulate rain by injecting chemicals into clouds using rockets, cannons or aircraft, but the technique is not always successful.

An attempt by South Korea to create artificial rain in January failed.

The northern Chinese city of Xi’an is experimenting with a giant air purifier the size of an industrial smokestack which can reduce PM2.5 concentration by 15 per cent within 10 square kilometres, according to researchers.

Hong Kong opened a tunnel equipped with air purification system.

The government says it will be able to remove at least 80 per cent of harmful particulates and nitrogen dioxide using large fans which suck exhaust into air purification plants in three ventilation buildings along the tunnel.

New Delhi had announced a plan to install huge air purifiers at traffic intersections and mount air filters on the roofs of buses that trap pollutants as they move, according to Hindustan Times.

During particularly bad spates of air pollution, which tend to come during the winter, many residents in smoggy Chinese cities escape to cleaner places, such as resorts in the south of the country, for a temporary break and return after it has cleared.

Ctrip, China’s largest online travel agent, estimated in 2016 that every year, over a million residents of smoggy cities such as Beijing and Shanghai leave the country to escape the smog.

Popular destinations for these so-called “smog refugees” include places such as Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. Some even travel to Antarctica on “lung-cleansing trips,” according to Ctrip.

Although experts say residents in smoggy cities are unlikely to see health effects from breathing

bottled air, that hasn't stopped entrepreneurs from selling them canisters of the stuff from New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and Switzerland.

For about USD 22, consumers can order an 8 litre can of Banff Air from the popular tourist spot in Canada, or pay USD 125 for a jar of air from the British countryside.

In China, "anti-smog" teas are promoted by vendors as a way to clean the lungs, while Mongolian residents drink "oxygen cocktails" - made by spraying oxygen into glasses of juice using machines or cans of air.

Advertisements boast that "drinking just one oxygen cocktail is equal to a three-hour-walk in a lush forest", despite no scientific evidence they protect from pollution.

Please enter a valid email address.

Project Kannamma provides access to sanitary napkins made by Irula tribeswomen, to over 300 students from across Government Schools in and around Chennai

Already a user? [Sign In](#)

To know more about Ad free news reading experience and subscription [Click Here](#)

or Please remove the Ad Blocker

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

Cracki