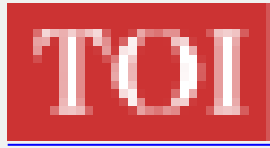


DELHI LOST 6% OF ITS GDP TO BAD AIR IN 6 MONTHS: STUDY

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



(This story originally appeared in [TOI](#) on Jul 11, 2020)

NEW DELHI: Of the 28 [metropolitan cities](#) around the world, Delhi has borne the highest economic cost - 5.8% of the GDP due to air pollution in the first six months of the year despite the lockdown, a new online analysis by IQAir AirVisual and Greenpeace Southeast Asia has found.

The study estimated that Delhi lost around 24,000 lives in the first half of 2020 due to high PM2.5 and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) levels, while the economic cost was around Rs 26,230 crore (US\$3.5 billion). It analysed 28 major metropolitan cities and found that air pollution impacted 1-5.8% of the city's GDP, depending on the varying levels of pollution.

These costs included absences at workplaces due to sick leave, number of people suffering from asthma and asthma-related trips to hospital, years of life lost and years lived with the disability and preterm births. "Despite cleaner air because of the lockdown, pollution continues to be a serious public health crisis and a threat to our economy," said Avinash Chanchal, climate campaigner, Greenpeace India. Chanchal added that as the governments looked towards rebuilding economies, it was more important than ever that investments were directed toward green, just and sustainable sectors. "Rather than providing a last lifeline to the fossil fuel industry, we must invest in more economically viable solutions like [renewable energy](#) and clean-powered public transport systems, which also help the less privileged," he said.

In Mumbai, air pollution from PM2.5 and NO2 was responsible for the loss of an estimated 14,000 lives and a cost of Rs 15,750 crore (US\$2.1 billion) since January 1. These figures were expected to grow further in winter. The study was built on a similar tool developed by Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), which pegged Delhi on top of the list of metros that were most impacted by air pollution, followed by Beijing, Mumbai, Shanghai, Jakarta, Guangzhou, Bangkok, Moscow, [Hong Kong](#) and Seoul. The other causes for consideration included prevalence of risk factors for chronic diseases and level of healthcare services available.

"In Delhi, non-communicable diseases and lower respiratory infections have been intensified by PM2.5 and NO2, resulting in deaths, years of life lost and years spent living with the disability. Lower respiratory infections in children have resulted in deaths and years of life lost. Over 4,000 new cases of asthma in children have been attributed to high levels of NO2," said the CREA analysis. Subsequently, the number of children suffering from asthma increased by 16,000. Exposure to PM2.5 led to over 15,000 asthma-related emergency room visits for children. The costs of children's lives lost due to PM2.5 reach \$310 million, said CREA.

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