

Topic: Car Rationing

The Aam Aadmi Party government in Delhi has announced a slew of measures to address the very poor air quality and pollution in the nation's capital. It is, in principle, a largely welcome move that could push the needle for anti-pollution measures to be adopted by other Indian cities as well. These are possibly the most significant steps taken after the introduction of Compressed Natural Gas-powered vehicles in the city that are widely accepted as having helped reduce pollution. The benefits of this emphasis by the government on regulations to address the city's alarming air pollution levels will depend on the manner of implementation as well as other concomitant actions.

But the proposal that has predictably received the most attention is the one on regulating private vehicle use by means of **license plate restrictions**. These curbs, that are to be implemented temporarily from **January 1, 2016**, will allow private four-wheelers and two-wheelers access to Delhi's roads only on alternate dates based on even/odd license plate numbers. Cities such as **Bogota, Beijing, Mexico City and Paris** have implemented such restrictions in the past, amongst other reforms to decongest vehicle traffic and to reduce air pollution through expanding public transport and zoning certain areas as "low emissions only".

License plate restrictions by themselves are somewhat problematic: all private vehicles are treated equally, irrespective of their purpose and the fuel they use. To mitigate this, the Delhi government has relaxed the restrictions in the case of emergency use. Other exceptions such as car-pooling by multiple commuters should have also been considered. The larger point is that, without a concomitant expansion and improvement in public transport, the introduction of license plate restrictions could only have a limiting effect. The decision, taken in a meeting presided over by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, will not apply to CNG-driven buses, taxis and auto-rickshaws but also will cover vehicles entering Delhi from other states too. As per **The Chief Secretary K Sharma**, Government will carry out a massive plantation drive along all arterial roads across the city to curb spread of dust and ensure vacuum cleaning of roads by the Public Works Department from **April 1, 2016**.

The government was also mulling to allow movement of trucks only after 11 PM as they slow down overall vehicular movement which was pointed out to be a major contributing factor to pollution from vehicular emission. The city government has also decided to make it mandatory for vehicles to have Euro VI standards for vehicular emission from 2017, two years before the Centre's scheduled introduction of the same. The Government will also shut down one of the biggest power plants in Delhi, the South Delhi Badarpur power plant. It is also one of the coal-based plants of the NTPC. A web-based App will also be launched which can be used to report about polluting vehicles in the capital. However, Delhi Police is said to be upset with the move. National Green Tribunal orders trucks entering Delhi to pay pollution tax. According to the Central Pollution Control Board, the air quality of Delhi is said to be "very poor" with an air quality index of 331. When air quality index ranges between 301 and 400, the air is said to cause respiratory illness on prolonged exposure. Earlier measures apparently have not dented the increasing air pollution in Delhi, leading to major health issues. In October, the National Green Tribunal announced an "Environment Tax" or "Green Tax" on commercial vehicles entering the city.

Topic  
Introduction

### **AAP government's 10 points to curb pollution problem in Delhi**

1. Private vehicles bearing **odd and even** registration numbers to ply on alternate days from **January 1** in the national capital.
2. Shut down **the Badarpur** Thermal power station.
3. Ask National Green Tribunal to close the **Dadri power plant** in Uttar Pradesh.
4. **Massive plantation** drive along all arterial roads across the city to curb spread of dust.
5. Ensure **vacuum cleaning** of roads by the Public Works Department from April 1.
6. To allow movement of trucks only after **11PM** in the NCR region.
7. To make mandatory for vehicles to have **Euro VI** standards for vehicular emission from 2017.
8. All private vehicles even having registration numbers issued by neighbouring states will have to follow the **odd-even number** formula.
9. **Emergency** services and public transport will not be under the ambit of the restriction.
10. The government will also launch a **web-based** app which will report about polluting vehicles in the capital.

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