

Ban on Old Transport Vehicles

The government of New Delhi's decision in September not to allow commercial transport vehicles over 12 years old on the road from 1 January 2001 will affect 125,000 vehicles in the Indian capital. The ban also includes private-use two-wheelers (motorcycles, mopeds and scooters) that are 15 years or older.

A spokesman for the Government said that the ban had to be imposed to contain growing air pollution, described by him as "grim". New Delhi has an estimated three million vehicles – more than the combined number for India's three other metropolitan areas of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. Of the 1.6 million two-wheelers in the city, over 100,000 are more than 15 years old. In addition, more than 25,000 light and heavy commercial vehicles older than 12 years will also be banned. The government spokesman announced that the government plans to ask the Supreme Court to impose a ban on the registration of similarly old vehicles in the districts around the Indian

capital. It has also imposed a ban on the replacement of gas engines with diesel ones in older vehicles.

The Cabinet also decided that the Transport Department will now register only those vehicles, both gas and diesel, that comply with Euro-II norms or emission standards at the time of registration. Euro-II norms, which came into effect in the European Union in 1996, call for carbon monoxide emission limits of 2.2 grams per kilometre (g/km), hydrocarbons + nitrogen oxide limits of 0.5 g/km, and particulate matter, zero. Diesel levels are 1 g/km for CO, 0.7 g/km for HC+NO_x and 0.1 g/km for particulate matter.

The aim is to set a life span for vehicles and to encourage manufacturers to adopt new and updated technology. The life of a bus has been fixed at eight years, and after 1 January 2001, only buses running on compressed natural gas will be registered. (MJ)

