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Market Watch

# Kolhapur Road Transport Authority bans diesel-run autos to curb air pollution in city

BY NIKHIL DESHMUKH, TNN | UPDATED: JUN 06, 2014, 12.05 PM IST

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KOLHAPUR: In a bid to bring down pollution in the urban areas, the [Kolhapur Road](#)

[Transport Authority](#) has decided to ban autorickshaws running on diesel in the jurisdictions of Kolhapur Municipal Corporation and Ichalkaranji Municipal Council. Only autorickshaws running on petrol and LPG will be allowed to ply on the roads.

While the environmentalists and nature lovers have welcomed the decision, the autorickshaw unions have sought explanation from the authorities.

Speaking to TOI, Laxman Darade, Kolhapur's regional transport officer, said, "The state government has decided to offer licences to 1,000 new

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autorickshaws in the city. Banning diesel-run autorickshaws is part of the decision. I have asked the autorickshaw unions to come to me in the next eight days with their objections and demands."

There are more than 9,000 autorickshaws plying on city roads, of which only 50% have secured licences, he said. Over 100 autorickshaws running on diesel enter the city daily.

Dilip Desai, a city-based social activist, said, "The decision is undoubtedly good as diesel causes more than pollution than petrol. I expect the state government and implementing agencies to first provide facilities to the autorickshaw drivers such as more number of stops and sufficient LPG supply as the demand will go up. The diesel-run autorickshaws will not enter the city but will continue to operate outside the municipal limits. In such a situation, there should be proper arrangement of autorickshaw stops for boarding and alighting."

The three-seater diesel-run autorickshaws generally operate from Mudshingi, Peth Vadgaon and Gandhinagar villages, which are located outside the municipal limits. Every day, hundreds of such autorickshaws travel to the heart of the city. With this decision, such autorickshaws will be prohibited from entering the city but can drop the passengers at Tawade Hotel area on the border of the civic limits.

Sameer Shaikh, who operates a diesel-run autorickshaw, said, "I will raise objection over the decision. If the diesel engine is causing more pollution, then why it is being produced or manufactured? The government should ask the vehicle manufacturing companies to manufacture diesel engines with lowest emission."

Baba Indulkar, president of Common Man Three Tyre Vehicles Association, said, "There are only 3-4 fuel stations in the city where LPG is available. Most of the stations are on the outskirts. LPG refilling facility should be introduced at more stations, which will benefit the autorickshaws. We welcome the road transport authority's decision."

Experts said there are many autorickshaw operators in the city who have not registered their LPG kits with the regional transport office as they have undergone an audit on the engine's efficiency after every three years.

According to National Ambient Air Quality Standards, the concentration of suspended particulate matter (SPM) in the air should not exceed 150 micro grams per cubic metre (ug/m3). Similarly, the concentration of respirable suspended particulate matter (RSPM) should not exceed 80 ug/m3.

However, data from the pollution monitoring units at Dabholkar Corner and Mahadwar Road revealed that the SPM and RSPM levels have reached 415 ug/m<sup>3</sup> and 132 ug/m<sup>3</sup> respectively in the last six months.

Increasing concentration of particulate matter in the air has significant impact on environment and local biodiversity.

Vehicles are the major source behind high RSPM levels. Around 26,000 new vehicles are added to the city every year.

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