

NGT's diesel vehicle ban may extend to more cities like Kolkata, Mumbai, Bengaluru

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) is set to consider, on Monday, whether to impose a ban on the sale of large diesel-powered vehicles in 11 more cities.

By [Sharmistha Mukherjee](#), ET Bureau | Updated: May 30, 2016, 04.10 PM IST



The 11 cities are likely to include metros such as Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad, said a person in the know. The industry says a wide ban on large diesel vehicles will make the investment made by several auto makers useless and also lead to production and job losses
NEW DELHI: The [National Green Tribunal](#) (NGT) is set to consider, on Monday, whether to impose a ban on the sale of large diesel-powered vehicles in 11 more cities, worrying auto makers who say such a move will be unscientific and uncalled for.

The 11 cities are likely to include metros such as [Mumbai](#), [Kolkata](#), [Bengaluru](#), Chennai and Hyderabad,

said a person in the know. The industry says a wide ban on large diesel vehicles will make the investment made by several auto makers useless and also lead to production and job losses.

The Supreme Court has since December 2015 banned in the [National Capital Region](#) comprising Delhi and its surrounding areas, registration of new vehicles with 2-litre or larger diesel engines. The NGT last week imposed a similar ban in some cities of Kerala and also barred diesel vehicles that are older than 10 years. The state high court on Friday stayed the NGT order on new vehicles, but didn't interfere with that covering old ones.

Overall, industry experts say, about 4 lakh diesel vehicles with 2-litre or larger engines are sold in the country annually. The ban in the NCR has already resulted in a production loss of 11,000 vehicles, affecting 5,500 jobs, including at dealerships, according to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM). Had the ban been countrywide, it would have led to a loss of 47,000 jobs, it estimates.

The local units of Toyota and Mercedes-Benz, and Mahindra & Mahindra are expected to be hit the most if the ban is extended to more areas, as several of their popular vehicles come under the banned category.

ADVERTISEMENT

“The directions passed in regard to NCT (National Capital Territory) would safely be applied to all these cities,” the green tribunal said on May 24, while conceding that there were three major sources of pollution — burning of waste and other materials, dust emission and vehicular pollution. But, before making any decision, the tribunal said, it wanted the Central Pollution Control Board to place “complete and comprehensive” data before it on population density, car density, pollution area and pollution level of major cities across the country.

The NGT hearing is scheduled around 11 am on Monday, unless it is postponed due to any last-minute developments.

An earlier report by the pollution control board in response to an NGT order dated January 6, identified some key cities where the ambient air quality didn't meet prescribed standards. The list had 15 cities — Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Patna, Lucknow, Allahabad, Kanpur, Varanasi, Pune, Chennai, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Amritsar, said the person aware of the matter. “Of these, air pollution data for 11 cities will be considered in the hearing (on Monday).”

Extending the ban countrywide would basically stop production of all large diesel vehicles, said Vishnu Mathur, director general of SIAM. “The polluter-pay principle applies in event of violations. Vehicle manufacturers and oil refineries have been investing to upgrade to higher emission norms and address pollution concerns,” he said. “Banning vehicles that meet laid down norms is against the fundamental right of companies doing business in the country,” Mathur added.

Shekar Viswanathan, vice-chairman of Toyota Kirloskar Motors, said the Kerala order was passed without conducting any study or hearing vehicle manufacturers. "Every fuel has pollutants. Auto makers do not produce diesel vehicles to pollute or avail of subsidies," he said.