

Experts chart out solutions for city's falling air quality

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Construction of 571 new buildings and major alteration and repair works in 331 buildings of Mumbai contributes to 1752 tonnes and 966 tonnes of particulate matter (PM) emissions respectively every year. Shocking, right?

Several such startling facts and figures from an ongoing study being conducted by National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) and IIT-Mumbai for Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) along with other relevant statistics on air pollution were discussed as part of a round table conference, organ-

ised by NGO Mumbai First and NEERI on Monday, which saw several city-based experts discussing and debating growing concerns over deteriorating Air Quality Index (AQI) of the city and suggest solutions.

"Construction work, vehicular emissions and informal garbage disposal and burning are three major sectors contributing to the deteriorating air quality of Mumbai, which directly impacts health. This roundtable conference was an attempt to bring out these issues in public domain and come up with long and short-term solutions," said Dr Rakesh Kumar, Director NEERI adding that PM pollution from construction going on all across



The conference was organised by NGO Mumbai First and NEERI

was a major concern for Mumbai, which needed urgent attention.

Experts also highlighted that while the situation of Mumbai might not get as worse

as Delhi when it comes to air pollution, thanks to the sea breeze, the city has no scope of getting complacent and should look at tackling various contributors.

A detailed discussion was held on the rising numbers of two and four wheelers and shrinking road space for BEST buses by transport experts Dhawal Ashar, Ashok Datar and Sudhir Badami who underlined the fact that the city had failed to upgrade its public transportation, which led to rising vehicular emissions.

"We will soon be putting out all the solutions that were discussed by eminent experts for all the three sectors in form of a proper white paper and this will be presented to the authorities including BMC and the state government. A discussion will be initiated to ensure implementation," said Dr Neville Mehta, CEO of Mumbai First.