

The Quit Delhi Movement?

The capital may still be the No 1 destination for migrants but its toxic air is making some professionals pack their bags

Soman Joshi & Himanshi Dhawan | TNN

Mayur Sharma, foodie, TV anchor and one half of Rocky and Mayur, spent his life in Delhi — until last November. As Delhi was besieged by its worst smog in 17 years, he and his wife pulled their two young children out of school and moved to Goa for three months. When they came back, they decided it was time to relocate for good.

"It was not easy to uproot ourselves. I was leaving a house I'd stayed in

since 1976, which I shared with my parents. I had to move away from my closest friends, including Rocky who lives nearby," says Mayur. "It was a hard but obvious decision because it comes down to this: if a few years later, my child is sick or dying, all this won't matter."

Though they'd been part of two city groups campaigning for cleaner air, the disillusionment over government apathy had been growing. "We realised that nothing was going to change," he says. "If you live in Delhi, you're dying with each breath."

Mayur isn't alone in seeking cleaner

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—Mayur Sharma
TV ANCHOR | MOVED TO GOA



air. Two years ago, when the New York Times correspondent Gardner Harris wrote that he was leaving Delhi because of its dangerous air pollution and its effect on his son's health, many dismissed it as an expert's tirade. Now, a growing number of entrepreneurs and professionals are migrating from Delhi to escape the pollution. These include families with children, the elderly and people with respiratory problems — groups which are the worst hit by hazardous air quality.

Mayur is fortunate enough to have a family home in Goa, but others too are making the tough call to relocate. "In Delhi, you earn more money but you also spend more on rent and transport so it all boils down to priorities," says Delhi-born artist Deepika Bhatnagar. "You have to choose whether you want to make a lot of money or have a good, healthy life."

Deepika and her husband decided to move after their son was born in 2016. She and her entrepreneur husband spent two years scouring for an alternative, and zeroed in on Goa where she moved this July. Her husband plans to join her in a few months.

It wasn't easy convincing the rest of their family and friends, who remain in the city. "The thing about air pollution is that you don't see it so you don't think it is there, but the truth is that Delhi air is making us sick," she says.

For others, it is a question of survival. After spending seven years in Delhi, lawyer Alok Kumar returned to his hometown Bengaluru last October after he found his bronchitis worsening every year. Despite using inhalers, steroids, face masks and air purifiers, Alok continued to feel breathless and get crushing migraines. "Sometimes, I spent days in bed because it was such an effort to breathe," Kumar says. "Bengaluru doesn't have pristine air but since moving, my problems have decreased."

This week, as Delhi was hit by another air-pollution episode, many weighed their options. Industry body ASSOCHAM cautioned the central and state governments that poor air quality could drive away top executives and talented individuals. Spurred by a discussion among his friends on where they could move from Delhi, Medhama founder Nikhil Pathwa, started a crowdsourced list of cities that people could consider, ranked on criteria like education, air quality and work opportunities.

Designer Swati Jain is among those who have decided to move after doctors advised her 86-year-old mother Sharda, who suffers from interstitial lung disease, to leave Delhi. After watching her

mother turn from a lively person to one who walks with her shoulders hunched, and needs steroids, nebulizers, and oxygen support to sleep at night, Swati has decided that the deci-



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WANT TO MOVE? HOW OTHERS COMPARE

QUALITY OF LIFE PURCHASING POWER SAFETY HEALTHCARE COST OF LIVING PROPERTY PRICE TO INCOME RATIO POLLUTION CLIMATE

City	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mangaluru	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pune	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1
Hyderabad	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2
Bengaluru	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3
Coimbatore	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4
Gurugram	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5
Ahmedabad	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6
Chennai	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Delhi	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Kolkata	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mumbai	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Numbers, Quality of Life Index March 2017

LESSONS FROM THREE CITIES

LONDON

- Great Smog of London in 1952 claimed about 4,000 lives
- Clean Air Act, 1956 restricted burning of coal in urban areas, encouraged homes to shift to electricity and gas for heating
- New toxicity charge (or T-charge) of £10 introduced in Oct for cars bought before 2006, in addition to long-standing £11.50 congestion charge, to enter central London between 7am and 6pm
- New plan to ban petrol and diesel cars from 2040

LOS ANGELES

- In the 1970s, LA air hit unhealthy levels
- Federal Clean Air Act, 1970, introduced strict emission limits. It is estimated to have prevented 160,000 premature deaths
- Recently passed Clean Air Action Plan to clamp down on diesel exhaust, smog-forming chemicals, and emissions from trucks, ships

HOLLYWOOD

MEXICO CITY

- In 1992, UN named Mexico City the most polluted city on the planet
- Old cars, fuel with lead banned, public transport expanded
- Refineries and factories relocated
- Follows odd-even formula, when pollution rises, car use limited to once a week
- Bicycle network integrated with bus and metro system to encourage cyclists

India's textile market to touch \$ 250b in 2 years: Study

NEW DELHI, 11 NOVEMBER

India's textiles sector is likely to touch \$250 billion in the next two years from the current level of \$150 billion, according to a study.

The joint study by Assocham and Resurgent pointed out that the textile sector in India accounts for 10 per cent of the country's manufacturing production, 5 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product, and 13 per cent of exports earnings. The study observed that textile and apparel sector is the second largest employment provider in the country and employed nearly 51 million people directly and 68 million people indirectly in 2015-16. However, it said that demonetisation and the transition to GST have hit smaller players hard.

"The number of workers affected due to closure of cotton and man-made fibre textile units (bigger units that comprise the non-SSI segment of the industry) during 2016-17 was 4,356 on account of the closure of 18 units, according to textile ministry data on non-SSI units," said the study.

"During the previous two years, the numbers were 7,938 workers affected by the closure of 27 units in 2015-16 and 5,384 workers affected from the closure of 21 units in 2014-15, taking the cumulative figure to over 17,600 workers impacted by the closure of 67 units in the last three years" the study said. It found that the rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has further hit small and medium players in textile hubs such as Surat, Bhiwadi and Ichalkaranji.

PTI

उद्योग जगत ने जीएसटी घटाने का स्वागत किया

एजेसी ■ नई दिल्ली

उद्योग एवं व्यापार जगत ने विभिन्न प्रकार की वस्तुओं पर माल एवं सेवा कर (जीएसटी) की दरें घटाए जाने के फैसले का स्वागत किया है और उम्मीद जाहिर कि है इससे उपभोक्ताओं और उद्योग धंधा करने वालों को राहत मिलेगी, बाजार में मांग बढ़ेगी और कर व्यवस्था के सरल होने से इकाइयां इसको अपनाने के लिए प्रोत्साहित होंगी। उद्योग मंडल एसोसिएशन के महासचिव डी एस रावत ने कहा, एकमुश्त कर योजना के तहत कारोबार की सीमा को उन्ना करने से छोटे व्यवसायियों को बड़ी राहत होगी। उन्होंने कहा कि आज के परिवर्तनों के परिणाम अगले एक-दो महीनों में देखने को मिलेंगे। असंगठित क्षेत्र के खुदश व्यापारियों के संगठन कंफेडरेशन ऑफ इंडिया ट्रेडर्स एसोसिएशन (कैट) ने एक बयान में कहा कि उपभोक्ताओं और कारोबारियों को दी गई राहत पासा पलटने वाली है, इससे कर प्रणाली आसान होगी और इकाइयां इसको अपनाने को प्रोत्साहित होंगी। वहीं, सीमेंट उद्योग से जुड़े संगठन ने जीएसटी परिषद द्वारा इस उद्योग को 28 प्रतिशत की उच्चतम दर के स्लैब में बनाए रखने पर निराशा जाहिर की है। सीमेंट मैनुफ़ैक्चर्स एसोसिएशन के अध्यक्ष शैलेंद्र चौकसी ने कहा कि सीमेंट को विलासिता वस्तुओं पर



रियायतों से सरकारी राजस्व को सालाना 20,000 करोड़ का नुकसान हो सकता है।

लगने वाले कर के दायरे में रखना दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है। संगठन का कहना है कि सीमेंट स्वच्छ भारत और सबके लिए मकान तथा बुनियादी ढांचा के निर्माण जैसी विभिन्न प्रकार की सरकारी योजनाओं के लिए महत्वपूर्ण सामग्री है। एंजेल ब्रोकिंग के फंड मैनेजर मयुरेश जोशी ने गुवाहटी में आज संपन्न हुई जीएसटी परिषद के निर्णय को मोटे तौर पर उम्मीद के अनुरूप बताया। उन्होंने कहा कि रियायतों से सरकारी राजस्व को सालाना 20,000 करोड़ का नुकसान हो सकता है, लेकिन सरकार को यह भी उम्मीद है कि बेहतर अनुपालन से इसकी भरपाई हो जाएगी।