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### **Urban air pollution 'affects children's behaviour'**

Reported by: From Rafiqul Islam, UNB Staff Writer

Reported on: September 27th, 2013 06:00:19 am

New Delhi, Sept 27 (UNB) – Air pollution in urban areas affects the behaviour of children apart from causing a number of severe diseases like lung cancer, says an expert here on Thursday.

"It's well known that air pollution causes a number of diseases. As a result of air pollution, children's behaviour is also badly affected," Dr Manas Ranjan Ray, a senior scientific officer of Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute in Kolkata, told the inaugural session of a two-day conference.

The Centre for Science and Environment, an environmental organisation based in Delhi, organised the conference titled 'Stepping Together: Conclave of Changemakers for Clean Air and Sustainable Mobility'.

Chaired by CSE director general Sunita Narian, the inaugural session of the conference was addressed, among others, by senior scientist and in-charge Airlab Central Pollution Control Board in India Dr Saha, secretary of the Department of Environment (the government of NTC of Delhi) Sanjib Kumar, scientific officer of Karnataka State Pollution Control Board B Nagappa and CSE executive director (research and policy advocacy) Anumita Roy Chowdhury.

About the adverse impact of air pollution, Dr Manas Ranjan said although about 15-20 years are needed to develop cancer in human body, the people who living in urban areas are more vulnerable than rural areas to cancer as they take breath from polluted air in cities.

The depression rate among people is also high in cities, he said adding that air pollution is also contributing as a factor to the hypertension and diabetes. "DNA and chromosome damaged due to air pollution."

Dr Saha stressed the need for integrating all stakeholders, issues and bodies of a city to ensure air quality in urban areas.

"Rapid motorisation, the face of growth today, is also hurtling cities towards energy guzzling and heat trapping gases," said CSE director general Sunita Narain.

About the state of Indian cities, Anumita Roychowdhury said smaller cities of India are experiencing a more rapid shift to personal vehicles, as they have not invested adequately in public transport.

Roy Chowdhury said, "We need measures to change urban design to make cities safe, more walkable, and public transport friendly."

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