

DELHI

CNG made a difference to Delhi's air quality, says Sonia Gandhi



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Cong. president lauds CSE's efforts to protect environment

Expressing concern over the deteriorating air quality in the national capital, Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday said the introduction of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) in public transport by the then Congress government in Delhi made a visible difference.

Speaking at the presentation of the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development, which was given to the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), Ms. Gandhi recalled how Indira Gandhi had contributed to safeguarding India's natural heritage and

environment even in the midst of the 1971 India-Pakistan war.

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“We, who live in this Capital, notorious now as the world’s most polluted city, can recall the difference in air quality when compressed natural gas was introduced in public vehicles. This transformation was made possible by the persuasive expertise of the CSE and the Congress government of the day,” the Congress chief said.

She lauded the efforts of the CSE in its fight to protect the environment.

“Since its establishment, CSE has become virtually India’s conscience in the fight to preserve, protect and improve our natural environment. Over the years it has striven to raise awareness on the problem long before it became a major crisis we face today,” she said.

Making her acceptance speech, Sunita Narain, director general of the CSE, pointed out how Indira Gandhi had moved to protect the environment by enacting various legislations with regard to water, air and land use.

Ms. Narain also dwelt on how climate change and weather patterns were now directly impacting India’s economy.

“The weird weather events that are hitting the world should make us sit up; in India the monsoon is changing – I say again and again, the true Finance Minister of India was not or is not Mr. Mukerjee, Doctor Saab or Nirmala ji – it is the monsoon. Today, we are seeing extreme rain events like never before; we go from flood to drought; the intensity and frequency of cyclones has increased; the poor who did not contribute to the emissions in the atmosphere are the victims. And remember, this is just the beginning,” Ms. Narain said.

The dignitaries who attended the event included former President Pranab Mukherjee, former Vice-President Hamid Ansari and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh among others.

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