

Business Standard

92 per cent of world population without clean air: Scientist

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A whopping 92 per cent of world's population are unable to breath clean air because of air pollution which has been identified as the cause of 7 million deaths every year across the globe, eminent environmental scientist Prof Uma Charan Mohanty said.

"Pollution is on the rise due to anthropogenic reasons but at the same time mankind needs energy and development, said to be the contributory factors for pollution. Air pollution is reducing our lifespan by 2 to 3 years," said Prof Mohanty, Emeritus Professor at IIT, Bhubaneswar.

Around 1.2 million people died in India every year due to air pollution which was identified as the third biggest cause of death in the country, Prof Mohanty said while addressing a rogramme organised on the occasion of World Environment Day here on Wednesday.

'Air Pollution' happens to be the theme for this year's World Environment Day.

Meanwhile, the air quality in as many as 102 cities in India was extremely poor. Six of these urban centres -- Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Balasore, Rourkela, Angul and Talcher, were located in Odisha.

Vehicular traffic and industry contributed to 40 per cent and 25 per cent of air pollution respectively while it was also responsible for climate change and extreme weather events, he said.

The major anthropogenic reasons for air pollution were growth in vehicular emission, energy generation and industrial growth.

Prof Mohanty said air pollution was also adversely contributing to climate change and triggering extreme weather events like cyclones of extreme intensity and heat waves while rainfall was getting erratic. "Adaptation to climate change is important and our dependence should shift towards clean energy sources like solar, wind and hydro power," he said adding "if we can tap 30 per cent of available solar energy, we will not require any other source."

Ajit Padhi, Director (Operations), NASSCOM, who was the chief guest on the occasion, said Bhutan had embarked on a campaign to make the Himalayan kingdom pollution free.

"Bhutan's Carbon Zero campaign is praiseworthy," he said while emphasising on methods to reduce energy consumption.

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