

## **Karnataka Forest department in the process of mapping all trees in Bengaluru, says Principal Secretary**

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With air pollution posing a major challenge across India, Karnataka's Principal Secretary (forest, ecology and environment) Vijay Mohan Raj Thursday said that the forest department of Karnataka is in the process of mapping all the trees in Bengaluru and linking it with an app that will inform the users about a carbon neutral neighbourhood where people can take a walk.

"We are looking for CSR support for the project. It is important for all the government departments and the public to work together to tackle the crisis of air pollution," he said.

Vijay Mohan Raj was addressing the third day of the India Clean Air Summit 2022 (ICAS 2022) event in Bengaluru organised by the Centre for Air Pollution Studies (CAPS) at the Centre for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP) – a policy-research think tank.

"For a very long time we have been talking about taking long-time measures but we have crossed the tipping point. We do not feel guilty upon seeing a bad air quality index at the [Delhi](#) airport. Now I would really look upon technology to really take it upon itself. Who would have thought that three years ago, today we would have electric vehicles all around and we would be proposing to all the buildings to have charging points?" Raj said.

Dr Basha Khan, director (Lung Transplant), Narayana Healthcare, Bengaluru, said that air pollution equally impacts urban and rural populations. He said that air pollution is an undeclared pandemic.

"I would divide the Indian population in urban, semi-urban and rural categories and although on paper it looks like the ruling class is unaffected due to air pollution, the picture is completely different," the doctor said.

Explaining that the rural areas have more indoor pollution when compared to urban areas, Dr Khan said that all industries have shifted to semi-urban areas and rural areas.

"Air cannot be segregated between areas. Every year we are losing around 1.9 million people due to air pollution. It not only brings health consequences on health but also hits the economy as around 1.8 per cent of the GDP is lost. I don't want anyone to reach the stage of a lung transplant," he said.

Dr Rahul Patil, cardiologist, Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research, Bengaluru, said that owing to the rising number of heart attack cases among those under 40 years of age the hospital had launched the project on 'Premature Coronary Artery Disease – Heart Attack in the Young' (PCAD) in 2017 in association with the Centre for Human Genetics and St. John's Research Institute in Bengaluru.

Dr Rahul Patil said that over the past five years, the hospital has had more than 5,000 patients, all aged under 40 years, with cases of heart attack. "But when we studied the risk factors, we found many alarming facts – 29 to 30 per cent of them did not have any risk factors like diabetes, smoking habit, cholesterol or traditional risk factors. So that is what made me get into the research aspect of it," Dr Patil elaborated. It was found that most of the patients were cab drivers and this made us more inclined towards air pollution, he said.

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