




INDIA
GAS CHAMBER
DELHI
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Delhi, golfers at Delhi Golf Club; one of them is wearing a pollution mask. Delhi's richer residents often seek refuge in this green oasis in the heart of the city.

- ▶ New Delhi, the world's most polluted city: living there is the equivalent of smoking two packets of cigarettes a day
- ▶ It has been estimated that each year in Delhi 30 thousand people die prematurely as a result of air pollution
- ▶ The causes are a mix of various harmful emissions and numerous fires
- ▶ Masks and purifiers are used to combat the phenomenon but these aren't enough
- ▶ The politicians do little beyond advising people to eat a lot of oranges and gargle water to cleanse their throats



Delhi, smoke from a smoke machine during a concert in Central Park in Rajiv Chowk. Flares, smoke bombs and fireworks, especially during the Diwali festival at the end of October, add to the atmospheric pollution in Delhi.



Delhi, the enormous rubbish dump in Ghazipur, to the east of the city centre, around which live thousands of people. The rubbish dump adds to the city's pollution problem, its smell travels for miles around and it constantly emits methane gas. Furthermore, during the summer unprovoked fires frequently break out.



Delhi, at his home, businessman Jai Dhar Gupta teaches his 11-year-old son Agastya how to put on the high quality anti-pollution mask produced by his company Nirvana Being. On the left is an air purifier; Jai says, "it's essential to have one in every room".



Narela (Delhi), the wedding of Rohit and Priyanka in an area that borders Haryana, the state accused of lighting the most fires in order to burn agricultural detritus: the smoke from these fires is one of the main causes of winter air pollution in Delhi.

**The Indian capital is the world's most polluted city.
And the consequences are disastrous**

New Delhi is the world's most polluted city. A "gas chamber" of 25 million people, where, especially in the winter, smoke and smog create a toxic mantle from which it's impossible to escape. The statistics are astonishing: while the WHO recommends that atmospheric particular matter should not exceed an average of $25 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ of PM_{2.5} each day, in Delhi the average is $250 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and on some days this can rise to 400 or $600 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, and even to $800 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Breathing Delhi's air is equivalent to smoking two packets of cigarettes a day, and the consequences are devastating: it is estimated that every day in the Indian capital 30 thousand people die prematurely because of the city's pollution.

How are Delhi's residents trying to combat this emergency? With masks (but these have to be of the requisite quality), with purifiers (very expensive), with plants that emit oxygen also at night (but these aren't enough), even a Pure Air bar has opened where customers can breathe pure oxygen for 15 minutes at a cost of 400 rupees (around 5 euros). The problem is mainly a question of socio-economic class: the poor, who live more or less on the street and don't use masks, are the most vulnerable. The political response has been largely to downplay the problem: for example, those who complain of a burning sensation in their throats are just advised to eat a lot of oranges and gargle with warm water.



Delhi, men fish in the foam of the Yamuna River, between the Amrapali Yamuna bridge and the Kalindi Kunj bridge. A tributary of the Ganges, the Yamuna is one of the world's most polluted rivers. Every day the city of Delhi dumps hundreds of millions of litres of sewage into its waters.



Delhi, 21-year-old Daljeet Kaur (centre) with her mother Kulwant and another customer at the Pure Air Bar (in the Citywalk shopping centre), where it's possible to breath pure oxygen for 15 minutes at a cost of 300 rupees.



Delhi, the polluted air can be seen around the modern buildings in an area in the east of the city.



Delhi, Dhariyash Rathod assembles an air purifier for the company Smart Air. 33-year-old Dhariyash is the CEO of Smart Air India, a company that has offices in China: their purifiers range in price from 8 thousand to 40 thousand rupees.



Delhi, a boy on horseback waits in traffic on Africa Avenue.



Delhi, an art student paints a scene inspired by the city's pollution during a lesson in Central Park in Rajiv Chowk.



Delhi, a man wears a mask to jog along Rajpath in the polluted morning air.

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45

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Delhi, an advertisement for air purifiers. For those who can afford them, domestic purifiers are essential.



Delhi, SKK Ayurveda & Panchakarma, a patient undergoes a detox treatment to cleanse his respiratory system: this is just one of the ways by which Delhi residents try to combat the high levels of pollution.



Delhi, in a slum along the railway line in the Mayapuri neighbourhood, inhabitants light fires to keep warm. In the absence of gas, hundreds of thousands of people in Delhi light fires every day for cooking and heating purposes, and the smoke contributes to the city's pollution.



Delhi, the interior designer Mrignaina Kumar in the sitting room of her home, surrounded by plants. Certain types of plants are often used in the homes of Delhi residents in order to try and mitigate the air pollution.



Delhi, the temple of Akshardham is barely visible through the smoke from fires.



Delhi, thoracic surgeon Arvind Kumar attends to a patient in his surgery at the Sri Ganga Ram Hospital, where he manages the Respiratory Department. "Pollution" the doctor explains "has become a public emergency; breathing this air has mortal consequences".



Delhi, in an attempt to combat pollution, a lorry sprays water on the roads to try to keep the polluting particles on the ground.



Delhi, women gaze curiously through the window of the Pure Air Bar (in the Citywalk shopping centre), where it's possible to breath pure oxygen for 15 minutes at a cost of 300 rupees.



Delhi, police protect the entrance to the area of Anaj Mandi – a narrow and overcrowded area of the city – where a fire has just caused the deaths of 43 people. Due to the lack of electricity and gas, in the poorer neighbourhoods fires are often lit for cooking and heating purposes.



Delhi, the Sunrise Garden Centre in the Madanpur area. Certain types of plants are often used in the homes of Delhi residents in order to try and mitigate the air pollution.



Narela (Delhi), the wedding of Rohit and Priyanka in an area on the border of Haryana, the state accused of lighting the most fires to burn agricultural detritus: the smoke from these fires is one of the major sources of winter air pollution in Delhi.



Delhi, three people warm themselves around a fire. In winter especially, the smoke from fires that millions of people light to cook and stay warm (burning wood but also tyres, refuse, etc.) further worsen the atmospheric pollution in Delhi.



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