



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Prioritise Public Transport to curb Patna's air pollution crisis: CEED Vehicular emission is one of the main sources of air pollution in Patna**

**Patna, 17 January 2018:** The Centre for Environment and Energy Development (CEED) organised a roundtable on **'Roadmap for improving Public Transport in Patna'** in the city today. The objective of the roundtable was to identify key barriers and explore plausible solutions to develop a clean and sustainable public transport system in Patna, which will help alleviate the city's rising air pollution crisis. The discussion also revolved around exploring possible financial, technological and regulatory support for the much-needed improvement in Patna's transport sector. Dr Ashok Ghosh, Chairman, Bihar State Pollution Control Board (BSPCB) was the Chief Guest of the consultation. The discussion was well attended by a panel of experts from different sectors including government officials, NGOs, transport experts, lawyers, professors, PUC audit centre officials, among others.

Dr Ashok Ghosh, Chairman, BSPCB during his keynote address said, "Today the biggest challenge for Patna is the intractable problem of automobile dependence. Over the years Patna has witnessed a steep rise in the total number of vehicles, particularly those by private owners. It is disturbing to know that the transport sector alone amounts to 20% of the particulate matter emission of which a major share is of private vehicles. To cap the emission from this sector, Patna needs an aggressive roadmap to increase the ridership of public transport and sustainable mobility. As the chairman of the Bihar State Pollution Control Board, I shall take all corrective measures to manage air pollution. However, what is more important is the participation of citizens in the battle against air pollution," he added.

The roundtable discussion also focused on the various factors responsible for the exponential growth of private vehicles in Patna and the shoddy state of public transport in the city. The experts at the roundtable believe that in Patna people opt for private vehicles since they offer quicker and more convenient mobility options in the absence of an efficient public transport system. The need for an integrated public transport came up as a major recommendation during the roundtable. However, it was also emphasised that the integrated public transport shouldn't be 'one-fits-for-all' kind and shouldn't be modelled around mega cities

like Delhi and Mumbai, and ought to be customised as per the needs of these cities.

Mr Ravi Gadepalli, transport sector expert, Bengaluru pointed out public transport improvement strategies for Bihar, with an emphasis on Patna. He said, “It is the need of the hour to reduce our dependence on motorised trips in urban areas, to bring down emissions from Heavy Duty Vehicles (HDVs) for long-distance freight movement. It is also important that we develop a five-year roadmap to increase public transport ridership by three times and create the enabling regulatory and financial mechanisms towards this vision.”

Ms Ankita Jyoti, Senior Programme Officer, CEED said that “The government should frame policies to push commuters to use public transport or even non-motorized modes of transport to free up road space from congestion and clean the air. It is also important to add public transport with substantial technical and service level upgrades accompanied by policies to restrict the growth in cars and motorised two-wheelers.” She further added, “It is surprising to see that despite its large population, Patna does not have a dedicated bus service system.”

CEED urges the government to focus on a safe, accessible and integrated public transport system to reduce vehicular pollution in the city. However, each individual also needs to realise that a brake on the excessive reliance on private vehicles will definitely help reduce the rising pollution in Patna.

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