

## SC stays NGT order to phase out public transport vehicles below BS-IV

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A bench of Justices S K Kaul and Abhay S Oka issued notice to the parties in the case and sought their replies on the appeal filed by the West Bengal government.

The NGT in its order had said the state government must ensure that public transport vehicles with BS-IV engines and below are phased out in six months so that only BS-VI vehicles ply in the state, including Kolkata and Howrah, thereafter.

"It is her (counsel for the West Bengal government) say that in terms of the directions of this court in order dated October 24, 2018, no motor vehicle conforming to the emission standard Bharat Stage-IV was to be sold or registered in the country with effect from April 1, 2020.

"Thus, registrations were carried out till that date as permitted, and therefore the 15-year period has to be counted from the date of registration. Otherwise, it will amount to making the vehicles unusable in less than 15 years. Issue notice. In the meantime, the operation of the aforesaid direction is stayed," the bench said.

The eastern bench of the NGT had noted that a huge number of private and commercial vehicles older than 15 years was plying in Kolkata and Howrah, which was adding to the air pollution.

The tribunal in its order had said while phasing out the old vehicles, a move towards use of cleaner and greener technology with the introduction of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses and electric buses may be expedited.

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