A Clean-up Act

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What is the issue?

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The Supreme Court's direction to transport authorities to stop registering vehicles that do not meet Bharat Stage-IV emission standards from April 1 sends out the welcome message that short-term economic considerations cannot supersede public health concerns.

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What is the impact on automobile companies?

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- Some automobile companies, notably those manufacturing two-wheelers and commercial vehicles, have suffered a blow as they must now deal with unsold inventories of the obsolete models.
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- The 2017 deadline for a nationwide shift to BS-IV had been repeatedly emphasised in various forums, and reiterated by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas in its review of the Auto Fuel Policy nearly two years ago.
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- Significantly, some automobile manufacturers themselves called for a decisive shift in favour of the higher emission standard, since they had invested in upgraded technologies over time.
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What the research says?

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- Research reported three years ago estimated that **30% to 50% of total on-**

road emissions came from vehicles older than 10 years, or about 17% of the fleet.
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- The requirement for manufacturers to adjust to the new reality should serve as a reminder that they, and the fuel companies, must prepare for the next big deadline: **an upgrade to the BS-VI standard by April 1, 2020, leapfrogging BS-V.**
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Way ahead:

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- The Centre has to ensure that the objective of the Supreme Court's order is met, and the **'one fuel, one country' goal** for BS-IV is fulfilled.
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- This is crucial to ensure that the catalytic converters of newer vehicles are not affected by lower-grade fuels.
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- Liquidating obsolete inventory does pose a challenge for manufacturers, but this can be met through exports, technology upgrades or reuse of dismantled parts. The imperative is to shift to a clean fuel pathway.
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\n**Source: The Hindu**

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