Skipping BS III

Why in news?

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The Supreme Court in its recent judgement ordered a freeze on the registration and sale of BS-III fuel compliant vehicles by any manufacturer or dealer on and from April 1.

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What are Bharat stage (BS) norms?

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- Bharat stage emission standards' are emission standards instituted by the Government of India to regulate the output of air pollutants from internal combustion engine equipment, including motor vehicles.
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- The standards, based on European regulations were first introduced in 2000.
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- The standards and the timeline for implementation are set by the Central Pollution Control Board under the Ministry of Environment & Forests and climate change.
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- It is the work of minister of petroleum and natural gas to make the fuel compatible for various Bharat stages.
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- The higher the number gets, the stricter the Bharat Stage emission norms get.
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- This also means eventually it becomes and costlier for automakers to meet them.
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- All new vehicles manufactured after the implementation of the norms have to be compliant with the regulations.
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What is the present scenario of BS?

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- Since October 2010, Bharat Stage (BS) III norms have been enforced across the country.
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- In 13 major cities, Bharat Stage IV emission norms have been in place since April 2010.
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- In 2016, the Indian government announced that the country would skip the BS-V norms altogether and adopt BS-VI norms by 2020.
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- The phasing out of 2-stroke engine for two wheelers, the cessation of production of Maruti 800 & introduction of electronic controls have been due to the regulations related to vehicular emissions.
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- The apex court in its recent judgement said that the right to health is more important than the commercial interests of a few auto companies.
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- Last year it cracked down on diesel vehicles in the national capital region, disallowing registration of cars of over 2000-cc engine capacity.
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What are the problems in the implementation?

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- It takes years for automakers to develop a new kind of an engine.
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- Even after the research and development is over, the task of setting up full scale production is much bigger.
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- All of this comes at a cost which eventually makes the vehicle more expensive for the end customer of the product.
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- This can be a cause of concern for automakers given the price sensitivity of the Indian market.
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- There is a huge stock of vehicles left to be sold into the market that are BS-III compliant and the latest SC decision might make them redundant.
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- The companies are holding stock of around 8.24 lakh such vehicles.
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- But SC said manufacturers were then allowed to sell their inventory after the deadline.
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- There is also the requirement of cleaner fuel to run these vehicles that comply with a stricter emission regulation.
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- It is not feasible to make internal combustion engines pollute less while using poor quality of fuel.
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- This will require a huge amount of investments to make the oil refineries capable of producing a better quality of fuel to make that fuel available across the country.
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- The Centre has spent around Rs 18,000 to 20,000 crore for producing cleaner fuel.
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- But it is also to be noted that the increase in private cost is offset by savings in health costs for the public, as there is lesser amount of disease causing particulate matter and pollution in the air.
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Source: The Hindu, Business Standard

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