Skipping BS III - Part II

Click here for Skipping BS Norms Part I

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What is the issue?

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- The Supreme Court’s verdict banned the sale of vehicles meeting Bharat Stage-III (BS-III) emission norms from April 1.
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- The industry had been asking for an extension of the deadline.
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- It said that the entire industry was stuck with more than 800,000 vehicles, mostly two-wheelers and three-wheelers.
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- But the SC rejected the plea stating that the health of the people is more important than the commercial interests of the manufacturers.
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Why extension should not be allowed?

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- **Established guidelines -** The road map for the upgrade from BS-III to BS-IV was clearly laid out.
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- For new models, the new norms were supposed to come into effect from April 1, 2016.
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- For the existing models, the industry was given 12 months to transit to BS-IV norms.
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- This was done because companies needed to make investments in plant and machinery.
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- The Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) had been working with the manufacturers since October last year to help manage the transition.
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- Yet, close to the deadline, the industry was seeking an extension, claiming huge inventory.
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- **Precedence -** If allowed, it would have undermined policy credibility and adherence.
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- Such a transition is neither the first one nor the last.
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- An extension now would lay down a wrong precedent for the future when India intends to adopt BS-V and BS-VI norms.
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- Also the transition to BS-IV is not a new development.
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- 13 Metro cities adopted this norm way back in April 2010.
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- **Discriminatory -** The extension would penalise those manufacturers that followed the rules.
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- e.g Bajaj Auto had upgraded its factories to produce BS-IV vehicles. It argued that companies such as itself were being priced out of the market because of the extra cost, and price, of such enhancement.
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- Manufacturers are unwilling to make investments in safety and environment protection, claiming that India is a highly price-sensitive market and any such upgrade bumps up the price.
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- But this can hardly be an excuse to compromise on safety and emissions although it reflects poorly on Indian consumers' priorities as well.
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- The Supreme Court judgment should make automobile manufacturers wary of asking for an extension when the emission norms are upgraded next.
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Source: Business Standard

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