

Prince William homes in on Centrepoin's 50th birthday

BY RUSSELL MYERS Royal Editor
 PRINCE William joked with youngsters yesterday as he marked the 50th anniversary of a homelessness charity. The Duke of Cambridge, who is patron of Centrepoin, was officially opening a seven-bedroom house for apprentices in South London. Afterwards he chatted to five of the residents in private. Resident Antonio Sibson, 20, from Leeds, told William how it **PATRON** Duke of Cambridge



"means the world to me having a place". When pink-haired Muniira Ali told the prince she loved her job in a marketing firm because she is creative, he joked: "I can tell by your hair."
 Prince William praised employers for giving the apprenticeships. He said: "Now they have somewhere to live and somewhere to work."
 The Duchess of Cambridge's fashion guru, Amanda Wakeley, was yesterday mugged by moped jobs in Chelsea, West London.

THE CLIMATE ISSUE
DAILY Mirror
 IS EVERYBODY'S ISSUE



HARRY JUDD
 McFly bassist Dougie Poynter has just released a book called Plastic Sucks. He's been championing that for years and helping us to be a more eco-friendly band.

NIGHTMARE OF WORLD'S MOST POLLUTED CITY

Welcome to the airpocalypse

Life and breath in the toxic, smog-ridden Indian sprawl they call the 'gas chamber'

EXCLUSIVE FROM TOM PARRY IN GURUGRAM, INDIA
 PICTURES BY MUSTAFA QURAISHI

In a noxious smog so thick it blots out skyscrapers, begging children dart between air-conditioned cars jamming up the gridlocked highway.
 By the main road into Gurugram, the world's most polluted place, the air is so gritty that these children are getting respiratory diseases normally suffered by elderly smokers.

This is one of the busiest bottlenecks in the Indian capital Delhi, which the city's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called a "gas chamber" last week as he declared a public health emergency.

The pall of toxic diesel fumes hanging over millions of people has been stirred into a deadly cocktail with smoke from burning crops, dust from unfinished construction sites, factory emissions and gas from sprawling landfill.

Delhi has 13 coal-fired power stations within a 200-mile radius of the city.

During what has become an annual two-month pollution season at this time of year because of local climatic conditions, it's like a lid has been put on the atmosphere.

I can taste the brown-grey cloud of man-made poison at the back of my throat, and my eyes sting. Over my two-day visit to Delhi this week, the official air quality index level has been well over 600, which is categorised as "hazardous" - 10 times higher than the internationally recommended safe limit. London, by contrast, was less than 20 on the same days.

The weekend before, parts of Delhi was measured at 1,200, the highest reading since records began. Schools were closed, children issued with face masks, planes diverted from landing and factories ordered to stop production.

"This is as close to an apocalypse as you can think about," Delhi lawyer and pollution campaigner Saurabh Bhasin tells me. "It's a public health disaster."

"Millions are suffering, and thousands must have died from heart attacks and respiratory conditions accentuated by

SORRY STATE
 Mirror man Tom Parry in Gurugram

GRIDLOCKED
 Tom stands on congested road



been poorly too. The number of private cars needs to decrease. We need better public transport."

Last year, Gurugram - 20 miles outside central Delhi - topped the world pollution league table. India was the third most polluted country.

At electrical stores in Delhi's Khan Market, air purifiers are selling out. Locals say it is impossible to sleep without a filter in your home. At the Taj Mahal, industrial air purifiers have

been fitted to help tourists breathe. Several firms based in Gurugram's Cyber City offices say the appalling air quality is forcing staff to move out.

Employees are calling in sick in increasing numbers, and claim to be spending much of their pay on trying to combat the effects of pollution.

After Delhi recorded the world's worst ever day of pollution, the local authority began restricting drivers to using their car on alternate days,



ILLNESS
 Aruna & Prem and Gyanandi

based on licence plate numbers. By this week, the scheme was suspended. For many of the 46 million people living in the slums and streets of this massive urban sprawl, there is nowhere to escape the fumes. Being permanently exposed to pollution levels as bad as they have been in recent weeks is the equivalent of smoking 50 cigarettes a day, doctors

say. "It makes me ill with fevers and colds. Something has to be done," says mum Gulshan Begum, with her daughter Zoya, six, when we meet at a towering landfill site in Ghaziabad, on the eastern side of Delhi.

Mr Bhasin, who lived in Britain before returning to his native India in 2011, says: "Like climate change, this problem is too big for individuals to change. It has to be led by the government. But the government just passes the buck. There are people dying here and they do not give two hoots."

"The majority of people here cannot get away from the pollution. On the banks of Delhi's Yamuna River, fisherman Yameen Khan, 42, epitomises the problem. He casts his line for catfish, explaining that they are the only fish able to survive the frothy chemical effluent foam that coats the surface like a layer of snow. It's a sad indictment of this crisis."

1,200
 Record pollution reading in Delhi this month - 20 times maximum safe level

11m
 Estimated number of cars on Delhi's roads in 2018

46m
 Number of people who live in and around the Indian capital

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CHARLES IN CHARGE Battery-powered ride



Prince plugs E-rickshaw

PRINCE Charles hitched a lift in an eco-friendly electric rickshaw yesterday as he visited India to learn about its battle with pollution. Charles began the two-day trip by hearing about efforts to combat the poisonous smog that shrouds capital New Delhi most autumns. He was then taken for a spin in

the battery powered three-wheeler after visiting India's equivalent of the Met Office. The vehicle was driven by student Maria, who is part of a training programme run by a sustainable transport group. The 24-year-old said: "I was very happy to drive the prince and I

wasn't nervous, it was great." The British High Commission in India said Charles' 10th official trip to the country will "focus on shared challenges such as climate change". The prince will next travel to New Zealand with wife Camilla and the Solomon Islands to raise awareness of the climate emergency.