

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2141
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.12.2025

Lung diseases due to air pollution

2141. DR. LAXMIKANT BAJPAYEE:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that studies and medical tests have confirmed that due to prolonged hazardous AQI levels in Delhi/NCR, masses are developing lung fibrosis, an irreversible reduction in lung capacity;
- (b) whether lung elasticity of citizens of Delhi/ NCR has drastically reduced to almost 50 percent as compared to lung elasticity of citizens living in cities having good AQI levels; and
- (c) whether Government proposes any solution to save millions of residents of Delhi / NCR from growing deadly diseases like pulmonary fibrosis, COPD, emphysema, reduced lung function and continuously declining lung elasticity?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (c): Air pollution is one of the triggering factors for respiratory ailments and associated diseases. There is no conclusive data which establishes a direct correlation between higher AQI levels and lung diseases.

Further, to address air pollution in Delhi-NCR, Government has established the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) under the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021 for better coordination, research, identification and resolution of problems of air pollution in Delhi- NCR and adjoining areas. CAQM has been provided powers under the Act to take measures and issue directions to the various agencies in the National Capital Region for protecting and improving air quality.

CAQM has been addressing the issue of air pollution in Delhi-NCR in a collective, collaborative and participative mode involving all the major stakeholders. CAQM has so far issued 95 Statutory Directions to specifically guide and direct various actions towards abatement of air pollution in the region. A monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of these directions has been put in place.

CAQM has come up with much stringent emission norms for various polluting activities in NCR, as compared to the national standards. These directions are rigorously monitored for implementation through periodic progress reviews, issuing subsequent orders and directions from time to time.

CAQM has prepared Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) which provides set of emergency response actions, depending on severity of air pollution levels, to be implemented by identified agencies for minimizing air pollution, a situation that generally persists in the Delhi-NCR during the peak winter months.

Based on the dynamic model and weather forecast provided by IMD (Indian Meteorological Department) / IITM (Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology) on a day-to-day basis, actions under Stages I, II, III and IV of the GRAP are invoked in advance in anticipation of the AQI of Delhi reaching to the projected levels of that stage based on the overall meteorological conditions and anthropogenic activities.

CAQM has recently conducted comprehensive review of the contours of the existing GRAP and made the actions more stringent under the various stages of the GRAP. The revised GRAP schedule was issued by CAQM, vide Order dated 21.11.2025, and placed at **Annexure I**.

The Government has regularly reviewed and monitored the actions taken to address air pollution including stubble burning related issues in Delhi-NCR and adjoining areas. Some of the recent key meetings are as below:

- i. Regular review meetings have been held on 08.08.2025, 16.09.2025, 10.10.2025, 11.11.2025 and 03.12.2025 under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, on the issues relating to air pollution control in Delhi-NCR, to deliberate upon the undertaking of air pollution abatement measures and strategies for further strengthening air quality management across the region;
- ii. Minister level Inter-Ministerial meeting was held on 07.10.2025 under the Co-chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare on the issues of management of Crop Residue Burning.

In the review meeting, it was agreed that Govt. of NCT Delhi to utilise the funds in expeditious manner to implement air pollution mitigation measures along with other important measures such as awarding work for evacuation of construction dust and drainage silt, organising 'Sewa Saptah' at all ward of Municipal Corporation of GNCTD and NCR States, implementation of FASTag and ANPR cameras at all tolls points for restriction of the entry of banned commercial vehicles, prepare integrated waste collection and management plan, identification and repair of stretches with potholes, end-to-end pavement of roads, feeder centres for Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste processing facility, steps to improve the offtake of recycled from C&D waste monitoring of large construction sites, mechanised road sweeping for roads with 20-60 ft as well as roads <20 ft wide, decongestion of 62 identified traffic congestion points in Delhi, increasing the green cover along Yamuna flood plains, time bound action plan for plantation of 1 crore trees under 'Ek Ped Maa ke Naam', installation of Online Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems (OCEMS) and Air Pollution Control Devices (APCD) in all air polluting industries in a time bound manner.

Further, Government of India has taken several steps to address air pollution issues across the country. These include:

- i. Dedicated training modules have been developed in area of Air Pollution for Programme Managers, Medical Officers & Nurses, Nodal Officers Sentinel sites, Frontline workers like ASHA, vulnerable groups like women & Children, Occupationally exposed groups like Traffic Police, Municipal worker
- ii. IEC materials have been developed targeting Air Pollution related illnesses in both English, Hindi and also regional languages. NPCCHH has also developed customized IEC materials targeting various vulnerable groups such as School Children, Women, Occupational vulnerable groups like Municipality workers, etc.
- iii. Early warning system/Alerts for Air Pollution as well as Air Quality forecasts are disseminated from Indian Meteorological Department to States and Indian Cities to prepare the Health sector as well as Community including vulnerable population.
- iv. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) aims to safeguard the health of women & children by providing them with a clean cooking fuel Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG).
- v. Swachh Bharat Mission to clean up streets, roads and infrastructure of India's cities, smaller towns, and rural areas. Swachh Hawa is an integral component of Swachh Bharat.

**Details of amendments made to Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) by CAQM on
21.11.2025**

The Commission has issued the following amendments in the schedule of GRAP:

A. The following measures currently under GRAP Stage II to be taken under GRAP Stage I:

- (1) Ensure uninterrupted power supply to discourage use of alternate power Generating sets/ equipment (DG sets etc.)
- (2) Synchronize traffic movements and deploy adequate personnel at intersections / traffic congestion points for smooth flow of traffic.
- (3) Alert in newspapers / TV / radio to advise people about air pollution levels and Do's and Don'ts for minimizing polluting activities
- (4) Augment public transport services through CNG/ electric buses and metro services by inducting additional fleet and increasing the frequency of service. Introduce differential rates to encourage off – peak travel.

B. The following measures currently under GRAP Stage III to be taken under GRAP Stage II:

- (1) (i) GNCTD and NCR State Governments to stagger timings for public offices and municipal bodies in the National Capital Territory of Delhi and the districts of Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar.
(ii) State Governments may take a decision to stagger timings for public offices and municipal bodies in other areas of NCR.
- (2) Central Government may take a decision on staggering of timings of Central Government offices in Delhi – NCR.

C. The following measures currently under GRAP Stage IV to be taken under GRAP Stage III:

- (1) NCR State Governments / GNCTD to take a decision on allowing public, municipal and private offices to work on 50% strength and the rest to work from home.
- (2) Central Government may take appropriate decision on permitting work from home for employees in central government offices.