

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 50**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.01.2026

**Air pollution as a health crisis**

50. SHRI PRAMOD TIWARI:

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

- (a) whether despite the launch of National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), pollution levels continue to rise;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including deaths caused by chronic obstructive pulmonary disease annually;
- (c) whether air pollution has become a health crisis;
- (d) if so, whether Government proposes to revise NCAP and update the National Ambient Air Quality Standards to tackle this growing catastrophe; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (e): National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) was launched in January 2019 as a long-term, national-level strategy to improve air quality in a phased and time-bound manner across 130 non-attainment and million plus cities in 24 States and Union territories. The focused actions by 130 cities under NCAP have shown positive results with 103 cities showing reduction in PM10 concentration in 2024-25 with respect to 2017-18, out of which 64 cities have shown reduction in PM10 levels by more than 20% and 25 of these cities have achieved a reduction of more than 40%. A total of 22 Cities have met National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and have PM10 Concentrations less than 60  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

There is no conclusive data available in the country to establish direct correlation of deaths exclusively due to air pollution.

The Government is continuously reviewing and monitoring the implementation framework of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) with a view to further strengthening it. National Clean Air Programme has been revised in the FY 2025-26 and Air Quality Challenge Method (AQMC) was introduced for undertaking reform measures by urban local bodies. The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) were notified in 2009 for 12 air pollutants.

To clearly communicate air quality status, the Air Quality Index (AQI) was developed, presenting pollution levels and their likely health impacts through simple color-coded categories. Based on AQI levels, the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) is implemented as an emergency mechanism, enforcing temporary measures to control severe air pollution episodes.

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