

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UN-STARRED QUESTION NO. 460
ANSWERED ON 05.02.2024

Air Quality

460. SHRI RAJA AMARESHWARA NAIK:
SHRI KHAGEN MURMU:
SHRI MANNE SRINIVAS REDDY:
SHRI KANUMURU RAGHU RAMA KRISHNA RAJU

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

- (a) whether the air quality of Delhi and other cities deteriorated sharply despite bringing into force stringent antipollution measures i.e GRAP-IV including a restriction on construction and demolition activities with immediate effect, if so, the details thereof during the last five years and current year; and
- (b) the corrective steps being taken/results yielded along with funds sanctioned/spent till date, State-wise?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a):

During, post-monsoon and winter months, lower temperature, lower mixing heights, inversion conditions and calm winds lead to trapping of the pollutants in the atmosphere resulting in high pollution in the region. Therefore, deterioration of 'Air Quality Index' is observed in Delhi NCR region, generally, during winter months.

The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) is not a regular feature but only an emergency measure and provides a specific set of actions depending on air pollution levels, which are to be implemented by identified agencies for combating the adverse air quality, particularly during the winter periods where owing to ineffective dispersion and adverse climatic/meteorological condition, higher levels of AQI are generally encountered. Stricter

regulations and restrictions imposed during the periods under GRAP help in averting further deterioration of Air Quality.

Amongst various other restrictions, construction and demolition activities are also restricted/ prohibited, due to their high dust potential, only during stage III & IV of the GRAP (i.e when air quality reaches to “Severe (AQI>400)” and “Severe+ (AQI>450)” category) in the entire NCR, including all dust generating/ air pollution causing activities.

Such restrictions are imposed primarily from the view point of adverse health impact and concerns of all stakeholders.

Year 2023 witnessed the best daily average AQI in Delhi barring the Covid affected very low activity year 2020 as tabulated below:

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Daily Avg. AQI	225	215	185	209	209	204

(b):

The Government has taken several steps for the management of air quality in the country. The National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) was launched in 2019 as a long-term, time-bound national-level strategy to reduce air pollution levels across the country by engaging all stakeholders. The Programme envisages to achieve a reduction upto 40% or achievement of National Ambient Air Quality Standards in Particulate Matter 10 (PM10) concentrations by 2025-26.

NCAP focuses on preparation and implementation of national level action plan, state level action plans & city level action plans of the targeted 131 cities. The action plan includes various activities such as construction and demolition waste management facilities, non-motorised transport infrastructure, green buffers, laying of pavements, mechanical street sweepers, composting units etc.

The national level plan includes the action plans of different Ministries/ Departments of Government of India. This includes convergence of schemes/ programmes of different Ministries/ Departments, received action plans from 7 line Ministries. The State Action Plans have been prepared by 23 States/UTs and the City Level Action Plans have been prepared in 131 cities. Further, Annual Action Plans are prepared by cities for taking measures for improvement of air quality.

Under NCAP, 24 States/UTs were provided an amount of ₹ 9934.40 crore for implementation of State Action Plans to take measures to improve air quality to achieve reduction in PM10 levels up to 40% or achievement of National Standards by 2025-26.

The State-wise Fund Released and Utilization Details under the National Clean Air Programme and 15th Finance Commission for FY 19-20 to 23-24 (Till January 30, 2024) is given at Annexure-I.

Air quality performance has been assessed for this year. 90 cities have shown the improvement in air quality and 15 cities met National Ambient Air Quality Standards in terms of PM10 concentrations in FY 2022-23. Further, 26 cities have achieved reduction of more than 30% and 37 cities have shown reductions in the range of 10-30% as compared to baseline of 2017-18.

The details of corrective steps taken are placed at Annexure-II.

Annexure – I

S. No.	State	Fund Sanctioned/released (₹ in Cr)	Fund Utilization as per PRANA (₹ in Cr)
1	Tamilnadu	502.43	475.87
2	Gujrat	808.00	734.15
3	West Bengal	816.76	695.92
4	Telangana	463.54	390.60
5	Himachal Pradesh	15.91	13.38
6	Madhya Pradesh	630.51	526.26
7	Rajasthan	544.66	406.44
8	Chandigarh	32.81	24.34
9	Uttar Pradesh	1846.35	1182.66
10	Odisha	74.60	46.90
11	Bihar	326.74	182.10
12	Punjab	261.69	138.35
13	Jharkhand	279.44	147.42
14	Maharashtra	1754.40	882.48
15	Meghalaya	6.15	2.88
16	Chhattisgarh	248.39	96.26
17	Assam	54.10	20.67
18	Jammu & Kashmir	108.24	40.38
19	Delhi	42.69	10.77
20	Uttrakhand	68.28	17.12
21	Haryana	73.53	15.99
22	Andhra Pradesh	361.10	77.63
23	Nagaland	16.40	2.11
24	Karnataka	597.53	12.34
Total		9934.23	6143.02

Steps taken by the Government to improve air quality

I. Vehicular Emissions:

- i. Leapfrogging from BS-IV to BS-VI norms for fuel and vehicles since April, 2018 in NCT of Delhi and from 1st April, 2020 for rest of the country.
- ii. Network of metro rails for public transport are enhanced and more cities are covered.
- iii. Development of Expressways and Highways are also reducing the fuel consumption and pollution.
- iv. Eastern Peripheral Expressway & Western Peripheral Expressway has been operationalized to divert non destined traffic from Delhi.
- v. Ban on all diesel vehicles older than 10 years and all petrol vehicles older than 15 years, in Delhi and NCR. (Hon'ble SC order dated 29.10.2018).
- vi. Environment protection charges (EPC) have been imposed on diesel vehicles with engine capacity of 2000cc and above in Delhi NCR.
- vii. Introduction of cleaner/alternate fuels like CNG, LPG, ethanol blending in petrol.
- viii. Permit requirement for electric vehicles has been exempted.
- ix. Promotion of public transport and improvements in roads and building of more bridges to ease congestion on roads.
 - x. RFID (radio-frequency identity) system implemented by South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) for collection of toll and Environment Compensation Charges from commercial vehicles entering Delhi.
- xii. Introduction of BS VI compliant vehicles across the country since April, 2020.
- xiii. Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) has been launched as an initiative to set up Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) production plants and make CBG available in the market for use in automotive fuels.
- xiv. Subsidy on e-vehicles under Faster Adoption and Manufacture of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (FAME -II India) scheme of Ministry of Heavy Industries is provided.
- xv. Installation of Vapour Recovery System (VRS) in new and existing petrol pumps.
- xvi. Selling gasoline >100kl per month in million plus cities and those selling >300kl per month in cities with population between 1 lakh to 1 million.

II. Industrial Emissions:

- i. Notification regarding SO₂ and NO_x emission standards have been issued for Thermal Power Plants
- ii. Ban on use of pet coke and furnace oil as fuel in NCR States since October 24, 2017 and ban on use of imported pet coke in the country since July 26, 2018, with exception for use in permitted processes (processes in cement plants, lime kilns and calcium carbide manufacturing units).
- iii. Shifting of industrial units to PNG.
- iv. Installation of online continuous emission monitoring devices in highly polluting industries.

- v. Brick kilns shifting to zig-zag technology or vertical shaft or use Piped Natural Gas as fuel in brick making to reduce pollution.
- vi. System and Procedure for Emission Compliance Testing of Retro-fit Emission
- vii. Control Devices (RECD) for Diesel Power Generating Set Engines up to Gross Mechanical Power 800 kW developed.
- viii. Development of low carbon strategies across sectors such as phasing out older coal-based power plants, compliance of standards, City Gas Distribution (CGD) network, emphasis on improved power reliability in urban areas, etc.
- ix. Developing an eco-system for processing biomass/agriculture residue as fuel in industrial applications in Delhi-NCR.
- x. Uniform and affordable PNG pricing policy for aggravating use PNG as fuel in industrial applications in Delhi-NCR.

III. Air Pollution due to dust and burning of waste:

- i. Notification of eight waste management rules covering solid waste, plastic waste, e-waste, waste tires, bio-medical waste, C&D waste, hazardous waste and battery waste.
- ii. Setting up infrastructure such as waste processing plants.
- iii. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for plastic and e-waste management has been mandated on producers.
- iv. Ban on burning of biomass/garbage.
- v. Bio-mining of three dumpsites at Bhalswa, Okhla and Ghazipur is being carried out.
- vi. Under Central Sector Scheme on 'Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for in-situ management of Crop Residue in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi', agricultural machines and equipment for in-situ crop residue management are promoted with 50% subsidy to the individual farmers and 80% subsidy for establishment of Custom Hiring Centers.
- vii. The Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) on 17.09.2021 directed the coal-based Thermal Power plants situated up to a radius of 300 Km of Delhi to co-fire biomass-based Pellets, Torrefied Pellets/Briquettes (with focus on paddy straw) with Coal (up to 5-10%).
- viii. Guidelines prepared for providing one-time financial assistance for establishment of paddy straw based palletization and torrefaction plants, under which individuals/entrepreneurs / companies, interested in setting up palletization and torrefaction plants, using only paddy straw generated in the NCT of Delhi, States of Punjab & Haryana, and NCR districts of Rajasthan & Uttar Pradesh can submit an application for obtaining a one-time grant on capital investment.
- ix. Guidelines issued for supporting Municipal Corporations of the states of Punjab, Haryana, NCT of Delhi and NCR districts of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, for establishing paddy straw based briquetting plants, for use of paddy straw-based briquettes for cremation purpose only.
- x. Daily monitoring of Active Fire Events (AFE) is done during stubble burning period and reports are shared with Commission on Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining areas for suitable action.
