

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 369
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25.07.2024

Strategies to reduce air pollution

369. SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that according to the World Air Quality Report, India ranks among the top three countries with highest PM2.5 levels, with Delhi as the capital with the poorest air quality;
- (b) whether the report also states that the country is home to 42 cities among the top 50 with the worst air quality; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the strategies along with the timeline adopted by Government to reduce the level of air pollution?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c): The report “World Air Quality Report 2023 – Region & City PM2.5 ranking” used most of the data from low-cost sensors (LCS) which are not used by countries for regulatory purposes. Further, the method of measurement and instruments used differ from country to country. The data from a variety of monitors and data sources may have a degree of error /uncertainty. Therefore, ranking of countries/cities for pollution levels may not be appropriate.

MoEF&CC conducts Swachh Vayu Sarvekshan - ranking of 131 cities covered under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) among three groups categorised based on population. Delhi ranked ‘9’ in the group of 47 cities having population more than 10 lakh for taking air quality improvement measures under NCAP.

Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) launched NCAP in January 2019, which is a long-term, time-bound national level strategy for prevention, control and abatement of air pollution. Under NCAP, it has been envisaged to achieve targets of 20 to 30% reduction in Particulate Matter (PM) concentrations by 2024 in 131 cities of 24 States/UTs with respect to base year 2017. Subsequently, the target has been revised to achieve up to 40% reduction or achieve National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) in terms of PM concentrations by 2025-26. Cities are provided with funds to support implementation of City Action Plans for taking measures to improve air quality. All 131 cities/ULBs have prepared the City Action Plans under NCAP.

Under NCAP, an amount of Rs. 19,614.44 crores have been earmarked to 131 cities during the period FY 2019-20 till FY 2025-26 out of which 49 Million Plus Cities/Urban Agglomerations are funded under XVth Finance Commission air quality grant and remaining 82 cities are funded by MoEF&CC under Control of Pollution Scheme. So far, an amount of Rs. 11,211.13 crores were released to 131 cities to implement City Action Plans in their respective cities.

95 cities out of 131 cities have shown improvement in air quality in terms of annual PM10 concentrations in FY 2023-24 with respect to the baseline of FY 2017-18. 18 cities have met NAAQS for PM10 (60 µg/m³) in FY 2023-24.

Further, steps taken by Government to improve the air quality are enclosed as **Annexure-I**.

National Clean Air Programme:

- National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) has been launched by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in January 2019 with an aim to improve air quality in 131 cities (non-attainment cities and Million Plus Cities) in 24 States by engaging all stakeholders.
- NCAP envisages reduction by 20-30% in PM concentration over baseline in year 2017 by 2024. Target has been revised to achieve reduction in PM10 level up to 40% or achievement of national standards ($60 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) by 2025-26.
- City Action Plans (CAPs) have been prepared by all 131 cities and being implemented by Urban Local Bodies.
- The city specific clean air action plans target city specific air polluting sources like Soil & Road Dust, Vehicles, Domestic Fuel, MSW Burning, Construction Material and Industries.
- Performance based financial support is provided to these 131 cities for implementation of activities of City Action Plan.
- Further, funding for implementation of CAPs is mobilised through convergence of resources from various schemes of Central Government such as Swachh Bharat Mission SBM (Urban), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Smart City Mission, Sustainable Alternative towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT), Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME-II), Nagar Van Yojna, etc. and resources from State/UT Governments and its agencies such as Municipal Corporation, Urban Development authorities and Industrial development authorities etc.
- Public Grievance Redressal Portal (PGRP)/helpline have been developed by all 131 cities to address public complaints of air pollution in timely manner.
- Emergency Response System (ERS/ GRAP) have been developed by all 131 cities for taking action in air emergencies
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- 95 cities out of 131 cities have shown improvement in air quality in terms of annual PM10 concentrations in FY 2023-24 with respect to the baseline of FY 2017-18. 18 cities have met National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM10 ($60 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) in FY 2023-24.

Other steps

- Notification of Ambient Air Quality Standards.
- Revision of emission standards for industrial sectors from time to time.
- Setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality.
- Introduction of cleaner/alternate fuels like gases fuel (CNG, LPG, etc.).
- Promotion of ethanol blending.
- Launching of National Air Quality Index.
- Leapfrogging from BS-IV to BS-VI fuel standards.
- Introduction of BS VI compliant vehicles across the country since April, 2020.
- Notification of Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules.

- Installation of on-line continuous (24x7) monitoring devices by major industries.
- Notification of Graded Response Action Plan for Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR).
- Constitution of Commission on Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) etc.
- Installation of Vapour Recovery System (VRS) in new and existing petrol pumps 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.
- For strengthening monitoring mechanism and effective compliance through self-regulatory mechanism, CPCB directed all 17 categories of highly polluting industries to install Online Continuous Emission Monitoring System (OCEMS).
- Shifting of all operational brick kilns to zig-zag technology.
