

NCAP Tracker Analysis Report

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Why in news?

- An analysis of Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) air quality data by the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) tracker has been released.
 - The NCAP tracker is a joint project of the Carbon Copy portal and Maharashtra-based Respirer Living Sciences.

- This analysis has been released to mark four years of the launch of the NCAP.

What is National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)?

- NCAP was launched in 2019 by the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to improve air quality through a city-specific action plan.
- It outlines a long-term, time-bound, national level strategy to tackle the air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner.
- These strategies were to be formulated for all such cities which do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

What are the aims of NCAP?

- Initially, NCAP aimed to achieve a 20% – 30% reduction in the concentration of particulate matters (PM10 and PM2.5) by 2024, using 2017 as the baseline year for comparison.
 - PM10 – coarse PM of diameter 10 micrometres or less; PM2.5 -fine particulate matter of diameter 2.5 micrometres or less.
 - The country's current **annual safe limits for PM2.5 and PM10** are 40 ug/m3 (micrograms/per cubic metre) and 60 ug/m3.
- However, in September 2022, the Centre set a new target of a 40% reduction in particulate matter concentration in cities covered under the NCAP by 2026.
- To meet these targets, around Rs 6,897.06 crores have been released to the cities under the programme and by the finance commission.

How is this programme being implemented?

- In accordance with the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) will execute this nationwide program.
- 131 non-attainment cities have been identified across the country for the implementation of the programme.
- City-specific action plans have been developed, which include measures to strengthen the monitoring network, reduce vehicular or industrial emissions, raise public awareness, etc.
- The implementation of city-specific action plans is regularly monitored by Central and State Committees, namely the Steering Committee, Monitoring Committee and Implementation Committee.
- State Pollution Control Boards monitor city air quality and publish their findings on a regular basis.

News Summary: Delhi remained most polluted city in 2022

- As per the NCAP Tracker based on annual PM_{2.5} levels measured by the CPCB, Delhi has earned the dubious tag of being India's most polluted city in 2022.
- Delhi saw an annual average of PM 2.5 concentration 99.7 micrograms per cubic metre (ug/m³) of air, much above the CPCB standard of 40 ug/m³ of air.

What are the key highlights of the NCAP Tracker analysis report?

Image caption: Key highlights of the NCAP Tracker analysis

- Some of the top polluted non-attainment cities in 2019 have **marginally improved** their PM 2.5 and PM 10 levels but continue to breach CPCB's standards.
- Most of the least polluted non-attainment cities in 2019 on the other hand, have actually seen an **increase in both PM 2.5 and PM 10** since then.
- Top 10 most polluted list of 2022 are from the Indo-Gangetic Plain.
 - The **top ten most polluted cities in 2022 for PM 2.5** were Delhi, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Patna, Muzzafarpur, Noida, Meerut, Gobindgarh, Gaya and Jodhpur.
 - The **top ten most polluted cities in 2022 based on PM 10** were Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Delhi, Noida, Patna, Meerut, Muzzafarpur, Durgapur, Jodhpur and Aurangabad.
- The position of the **cleanest city in India in 2022** was jointly held by Srinagar in Kashmir and Kohima in Nagaland.
- Among the least polluted non-attainment cities this year, nine of the 10 cities have breached the CPCB annual permissible limit of 60 ug/m³ for PM 10.
 - This indicates the air to breathe isn't safe even in the cleanest cities.

What are the suggestions given by the report?

- Real and long-term solutions lie in an airshed approach for better air pollution management in the entire region.
 - The World Bank defines an airshed as a common geographic area where pollutants get trapped, creating similar air quality for everyone.
 - Uttar Pradesh is the first state in the country to adopt the Airshed Approach.
- There is need to check pollution at source to obtain maximum benefits from mitigation efforts.
- Also, much work is needed to reduce the finer sources of pollutants.

Q1) What is National Air Quality Index (AQI)?

It was launched in October 2014 to disseminate information on air quality in an easily understandable form for the general public. The measurement of air quality is based on eight pollutants, namely, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, NO₂, SO₂, CO,

O₃, NH₃, and Pb.

Q2) What is Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)?

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) is a statutory organisation, constituted in September, 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. Further, CPCB was entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

Source: [Delhi remained most polluted city in 2022: NCAP tracker](#) | [PIB](#) | [Central Pollution Control Board](#) | [The Hindu](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/ncap-tracker-analysis-report/>

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