

Graded Response Action Plan - Delhi

What is the issue?

- Some stricter measures to fight air pollution will come into force in Delhi's neighbourhood starting October 15 2019, as part of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP).
- In this backdrop, here is an overview of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP).

What are the recent pollution control measures?











- In 2018, the ban on using diesel generator sets was implemented only in Delhi. In the current year (2019), it is being extended to a few NCR towns.
- Notably, many areas here see regular power cuts.
- Rural areas are, however, being left out of this stringent measure because of unreliable power supply.
- The measures that are coming into force will be incremental.
- As pollution rises, and it is expected to rise as winter approaches, more measures will come into play depending on the air quality.
- All these measures are part of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) that has been in effect for 2 years in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR).

What is GRAP?

- The GRAP was formulated in 2016 and approved by the Supreme Court in the same year.
- It was notified in 2017 by the Centre, and draws its authority from this notification.
- It was planned after several meetings of EPCA (Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority) with state government officials and experts.
- GRAP institutionalised the measures to be taken when air quality deteriorates.
- It aims to roll out progressively tougher actions as pollution levels rise, without waiting for an emergency to impose strict measures.

How does GRAP work?

- The plan is incremental in nature.
- So, it does not include action by various state governments to be taken throughout the year to tackle emissions.
- Rather, when the air quality shifts from poor to very poor, the measures listed have to be followed.
- If air quality reaches the severe stage, GRAP talks about shutting down schools and implementing the odd-even road-space rationing scheme.
- The plan requires action and coordination among 13 different agencies in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan (NCR areas).
- At the top is the *EPCA*, mandated by the Supreme Court.
- Before the imposition of any measure, EPCA holds a meeting with representatives from all NCR states.
- A call is taken on which actions have to be made applicable in which town.

HOW THE GOVT WILL WORK TO CURB BAD AIR	
Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) will be put in place from today and will be in force until February-end, 2018. People would be made aware about this through mass media	
CATEGORY	ACTION PLAN
 Moderate to Poor PM2.5—61-120 µg/m3 PM10—101-350 µg/m3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stop garbage burning, impose heavy fines ▶ Enforce pollution regulations in all industries ▶ Do periodic mechanised road sweeping ▶ Stop plying of visibly polluting vehicles ▶ Enforce SC order on diversion, ban on crackers ▶ Ensure fly ash ponds are watered every alternate day from Mar - May ▶ Use apps to inform people and register complaints 
 Very Poor PM2.5—121-250µg/m3 PM10—351-430 µg/m3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stop use of diesel gensets ▶ Enhance parking fee by 3-4 times ▶ Increase bus and Metro services ▶ Stop use of coal/firewood in hotels and restaurants ▶ RWAs to provide electric heaters to security staff to stop bonfires ▶ Issue media alerts and advisories  
 Severe PM2.5—250 µg/m3 PM10—430µg/m3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Close hot mix plants, stone crushers ▶ Shut down Badarpur power plant and maximise generation from natural gas-based plants ▶ Intensify public transport ▶ Mechanised cleaning of road and sprinkling of water 
 Emergency PM2.5—300µg/m3 PM10—500 µg/m3 <i>(persist for 48 hours or more)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stop entry of trucks except those carrying essential commodities ▶ Stop construction ▶ Introduce odd-even scheme without exemptions ▶ Task Force to decide on additional steps  

How effective has GRAP been?

- GRAP has been successful in doing two things that had not been done before
 - i. creating a step-by-step plan for the entire Delhi-NCR region
 - ii. getting on board several agencies: all pollution control boards, industrial area authorities, municipal corporations, regional officials of

IMD and others

- The biggest success of GRAP has been in fixing accountability and deadlines.
- For each action to be taken under a particular air quality category, executing agencies are clearly marked.
- In a territory like Delhi, where a multiplicity of authorities has been a long-standing impediment to effective governance, this step made a crucial difference.
- Clear demarcation of responsibilities has made easier the coordination among as many as 13 agencies from 4 states.
- Three major policy decisions that can be credited to EPCA and GRAP are-
 1. the closure of the thermal power plant at Badarpur
 2. bringing BS-VI fuel to Delhi before the deadline set initially
 3. the ban on Pet coke as a fuel in Delhi NCR

What are the shortfalls?

- A major concern with the EPCA and the GRAP has been the focus on Delhi.
- Delhi has always been the first one to have stringent measures enforced.
- Other states have managed to delay several measures, citing lack of resources.
- For GRAP as well as EPCA, the next challenge is to extend the measures to other states effectively.

Source: Indian Express

Quick Fact

EPCA

- The EPCA, headed by retired IAS officer Bhure Lal and including members from the Centre for Science and Environment, was constituted in 1998 by the Supreme Court.
- The initial mandate of the body was to ensure the shift of Delhi's bus and auto fleet to CNG.
- The body continues to monitor pollution and assists the Supreme Court in several pollution-related matters.