

## GRAP

### Why in news?

Starting October 15, some stricter measures to fight air pollution will come into force in Delhi and its neighbouring National Capital Region (NCR) towns.

### What are the stricter measures?

- These measures are part of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP).
- **Diesel generator** sets can no longer be used in Delhi and the NCR towns of Noida, Ghaziabad, Greater Noida, Faridabad, and Gurgaon.
- The only exception is DG sets used for emergency and essential services.
- Pollution control authorities will begin **night patrolling** to check for dust and industrial emissions, as well as the burning of waste.
- **Mechanised sweeping** and frequent **sprinkling of water on roads** (to make the dust settle) have been directed.
- These steps will be incremental.
- When levels of pollution rise, more measures will come into force, depending on the air quality.

### What is GRAP?

- The plan was formulated after several meetings that the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) held with state government representatives and experts.
- The result was a plan that institutionalised measures to be taken when air quality deteriorates.
- The plan was approved by the Supreme Court in 2016.
- GRAP was notified in 2017 by the Centre and draws its authority from this notification.
- The action plan has been in effect for three years in Delhi and NCR.
- Experts have credited the actions under the GRAP for the improvement in Delhi's air over the past few years.

### How will the GRAP be used?

- GRAP works only as an **emergency measure**.
- As such, the plan does not include action by various state governments to be taken throughout the year to tackle industrial, vehicular and combustion

emissions.

- When the air quality moves from 'Poor' to 'Very Poor', the measures listed under both sections have to be followed.
- If air quality reaches the 'Severe+' stage, the response includes extreme measures such as shutting down schools and implementing the odd-even road-space rationing scheme.

### What are the achievements?

- GRAP has been successful in doing two things, they are
  1. Creating a step-by-step plan for the entire Delhi-NCR region, and
  2. Getting on board several agencies.
- These agencies include all pollution control boards, industrial area authorities, municipal corporations, regional officials of the India Meteorological Department, and others.
- The plan requires action and coordination among 13 different agencies in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan (NCR areas).
- At the head of the table is the EPCA, mandated by the Supreme Court.
- Before the imposition of any measures, EPCA holds a meeting with representatives from all NCR states.
- A call would be taken on which actions have to be made applicable in which town.

### Has GRAP helped?

- 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.
- Also, coordination among as many as 13 agencies from four states is simplified because of the clear demarcation of responsibilities.
- Three major policy decisions that can be credited to EPCA and GRAP are
  1. Closure of the thermal power plant at Badarpur,
  2. Bringing BS-VI fuel to Delhi before the deadline set initially, and
  3. Ban on Pet coke as a fuel in Delhi-NCR.

### What measures have been taken in other states?

- One criticism of the EPCA as well as GRAP has been the focus on Delhi.
- While other states have managed to delay several measures, citing **lack of resources**, Delhi has always been the first to have stringent measures enforced.
- In 2014, a study by the World Health Organisation found that Delhi was the most polluted city in the world.

- This made panic spread in the Centre and the state government.
- The release of a study on sources of air pollution the following year also gave experts, NGOs, and scientists, an idea on why Delhi was so polluted.
- All of these things, state government officials say, have made Delhi the obvious pilot project.
- For GRAP as well as EPCA, the next challenge is to extend the measures to other states effectively.

**Source: The Indian Express**

### **Quick Fact**

### **EPCA**

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

