

Odd Even Scheme in Delhi

Why in news?

The Delhi government has announced the return of the odd-even road assigning scheme for a week beginning after Diwali, as the air pollution in Delhi is already in severe and severe plus category.

What is odd even scheme?

- **Origin**- The scheme was instituted in US in 1979 when unstable conditions in Iraq and Iran led to a worldwide increase in oil prices.
- **Delhi** used the scheme for the 1st time in **2016**.
- **About** - The scheme restricts the vehicles on the road based on their license plate numbers.
- Private vehicles with registration numbers ending with an odd digit will be allowed on roads on odd dates and those with an even digit on even dates.
- **GRAP** - The scheme is a part of **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)**, a set of measures drafted by the Centre's Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to tackle air pollution.
- GRAP has 4 stages depending on the severity of air quality and the odd-even scheme is invoked under Stage IV, the highest level of pollution alert.

DELHI'S ODD EVEN SCHEME

NOT EXEMPTED

Private petrol, diesel and CNG vehicles; vehicles of Delhi CM, ministers and bureaucrats

EXEMPTED

➤ Two-wheelers and commercial vehicles



➤ Cars driven by women— women co-passengers and children up to 12 years allowed in them

➤ Driven/occupied by differently-abled people

➤ Cars carrying students in school uniform

➤ Cars used for medical emergencies

➤ Vehicles of President, vice-president, PM, governors, CJI, Speaker, Union ministers, Opposition leaders in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, other



CMS, SC judges, UPSC chairman, CEC & election commissioners, CAG, deputy chairman of RS, deputy speaker of LS, Delhi LG, Delhi high court chief justice and judges, lokayukta, NGT

➤ Emergency vehicles like ambulance, fire brigade, and hearse

➤ Enforcement vehicles like police, transport department, paramilitary forces and Delhi govt- authorised vehicle

➤ Those with defence ministry numberplates or with a pilot/escort; those of SPG protectees

➤ Embassy vehicles bearing CD numbers

➤ Delhi & Chandigarh EC vehicles

Countries that used Odd-Even scheme to curb Pollution

- **China**- It was imposed in 2008 Olympic Games and in 2015 where restrictions were imposed on factory production and car use, forcing around 5 million cars to ply on alternate days for around 2 weeks.
- **France**- It is imposed during periods of high air pollution.
- **Mexico**- In 1989, citywide bans was implemented, with one day per one week based on odd even number plates.

Why the Delhi government is implementing the scheme now?

It will be the 4th time the vehicle-rationing scheme will be implemented in Delhi in the last 7 years.

- **Air pollution** - The scheme is the response to the annual spike in air pollution that the capital and its neighbourhood sees every year around this time.

- Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data show the average ***Air Quality Index (AQI)*** over the past few days has been consistently above 450 (hazardous category).
- **Smog**- Delhi is situated in a *shallow atmospheric 'bowl'*, in which pollutants are trapped easily.
- When combined with falling temperatures and slow wind speeds, pollutants in the air are not dissipated, and tend to hang low over the surface.
- **Stubble burning**- Across Punjab and Haryana, farmers prepare their fields for the rabi crop by setting fire to the stubble that is left in the fields which acts as a force multiplier.
- **Vehicular emission** -Vehicles also emit other pollutants such as NO₂.
 - The Centre for Science and Environment estimates that levels of NO₂ this year are up by as much as 60% compared to the same time last year.
- **Health impact**- Long-term exposure to pollution is associated with increased risk of hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, chronic lung diseases, cancers, lower immunity, and depression.

To know about poor air quality in Mumbai, click [here](#)

What are the benefits and concerns of the odd-even scheme?

Benefits	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road congestion- The scheme reduces the number of cars on road by half, thus reducing the road traffic. • Pollution levels- It can lower the emission of <i>harmful pollutants</i> such as PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, NO_x, CO, etc., • Public transport- It encourages people to use public transit system like carpool, cycle, or walk, which can have positive effects on their health and well-being. • Fuel efficiency- It increases the average speed of cars, which can improve fuel efficiency. • Citizen culture- It raises public awareness about the severity of air pollution and its impacts on human health, and motivates people to take action to protect the environment. • Car Pooling- It saw an altogether different rate of enthusiasm in order to generate business for private companies which had a positive result on the scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other pollutants- Delhi has many industries that release harmful pollutants, hence traffic rationing proves insufficient. • Public transport- People who rely on their own vehicles to avoid the dismal public transport system of Delhi were forced to face hardships. • Promotion of buying more vehicles- Rich families own more than 1 car and use their car with an odd registration number on the odd days and the car with even registration number on even days. • Traffic policy machinery - It will be overburdened to implement the scheme as traffic police has neither sufficient personnel nor resources even for blatant disregard of the normal traffic rules. • Exorbitant tariffs - The monopoly of the auto rickshaw drivers and cab owners enable them to charge exorbitant tariffs from the passengers.

What lies ahead?

- The need of the hour is to suggest other measures such as phasing out old vehicles, promoting electric vehicles, using air purifiers in schools as odd even scheme is not a long term solution.

- An efficient public transport system, cleaner cars and reducing the other sources of pollution would go a long way in reducing air pollution.

References

1. [Indian Express- Delhi odd-even scheme explained](#)
2. [Indian Express- Odd-even scheme impact on vehicular pollution](#)

