

Pollution control measures

What is the issue?

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- Despite various pollution control measures by the government, air quality is still in the 'very poor' or 'severe category'.

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- A multidimensional approach to addressing the menace of deteriorating air quality is vital.

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What are the policy shortfalls?

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- **Dirty fuels** - Currently, crude oil, petrol, diesel, jet fuel or aviation turbine fuel (ATF) and natural gas are not included in the GST.

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- The sale and supply of these continue to attract earlier taxes like excise duty and VAT.

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- So, while industries that use furnace oil-type fuel (dirty and toxic) are given the benefit of input tax credit, those on natural gas (clean) are left out under GST.

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- Such policy anomalies dissuade industries from being environmentally conscious.

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- **Pet Coke** - US has banned the use of this dirtiest fuel due to domestic pollution concerns, and China has stopped importing this fuel.

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- On the other hand, India continues to import pet coke from the US and allows it under the Open General Licence (OGL).

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- While the SC recently banned Pet Coke's use in the Delhi NCR, industries are trying hard to circumvent the orders.
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- **Automobiles** - Automobiles are the biggest contributor to pollution, and significantly, diesel emissions are cancer causing.
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- Currently, per vehicle emission is being reduced by improving engine efficiency, fuel quality and vehicle systems maintenance.
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- However, a lot more vehicles are being added on roads, rendering the above measure meaningless.
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- **Besides** these, the lack of regulations on construction procedures, garbage burning, crop burning, etc leads increasingly to deteriorating air quality.
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What are the possible solutions?

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- Industrial, trade, tax and emission policies should be designed to promote environment friendly practices.
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- Efforts to ramp up public transport on massive scale are essential.
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- Policies for promoting cycling and improving last-mile connectivity can also help in this regard.
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- Farmers should be facilitated with alternative use for crop residue to address the concerns with crop burning.
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- Waste segregation according to their recyclability and appropriate processing can reduce the risk of garbage fires in mounting garbage dumps.
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Quick Facts

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Pet Coke

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- Petroleum coke or petcoke is a carbonaceous solid delivered from oil refinery coker units or other cracking processes.

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- It is a key input material for cement producers and a highly polluting fuel.

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- It is sometimes a source of fine dust, which can get through the air passage and lodge in the lungs, causing serious health problems; though not proven to be carcinogenic(cancer causing).

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Open General Licence (OGL)

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- An Open General Licence (OGL) is a type of export licence issued by the government to domestic suppliers.

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- These licences are issued with minimal restrictions.

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Source: Business Standard

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