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CAQM Report on Causes of Air Pollution in Delhi-NCR

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In News: The **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)** released an expert report (Jan 2026) on causes of air pollution in **Delhi-NCR**, prepared pursuant to **Supreme Court directions in *M.C. Mehta vs Union of India***.

Key Findings

1. Secondary Particulate Matter (Largest Contributor)

- Contributes **27%** of winter PM pollution.
- Formed in the atmosphere via chemical reactions of **SO₂, NO_x, NH₃, VOCs**.
- Examples: **Ammonium nitrate** and **ammonium sulphate aerosols**.

2. Other Major Winter Sources

- **Transport:** 23% (largest primary source)
- **Biomass burning:** 20%
- **Dust:** 15% (road dust, soil, construction & demolition)
- **Industry (incl. TPPs):** 9%

3. PM Trends

- **PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀:** Gradual decline and stable trend since **2016**.
- Still **far above National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)**.

4. Transboundary Pollution: Nearly **two-thirds of Delhi's PM_{2.5}** originates **outside Delhi** (regional sources).

5. Seasonality

- Winter peaks due to **meteorological factors**:
- Low wind speed
- Shallow **planetary boundary layer**
- Atmospheric stagnation
- Not due to sudden emission spikes alone.

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