



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Centre aims at 40% reduction in particulate matter by 2026

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What's in News?

The Centre has set a **new target of a 40% reduction in particulate matter concentration** in cities covered under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) by 2026, updating the earlier goal of 20 to 30% reduction **by 2024**.

National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):

- The National Clean Air Programme is a pollution control initiative that was **launched by the Ministry of Environment in 2019** with the intention to cut the concentration of coarse (particulate matter of diameter 10 micrometer or less, or PM10) and fine particles (particulate matter of diameter 2.5 micrometer or less, or PM2.5) by at least 20% in the next five years, with 2017 as the base year for comparison.
- In accordance with the **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) will execute this nationwide program.**
- Under NCAP, **131 non-attainment cities** (earlier 102, to which more added later) have been identified across the country, as they did not meet the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for the 2011-15 under the National Air Quality Monitoring Program (NAQMP)
- Under NCAP, city-specific action plans have been prepared which include measures for strengthening the air quality monitoring network, reducing vehicular and industrial emissions, increasing public awareness, etc.
- **State Pollution Control Boards monitor** city air quality and publish their findings on a regular basis.
- For effective monitoring, some **Smart Cities have established Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs)** that are also linked to **Air Quality Monitors (AQMs)**.

News Highlights:

- According to the Union Environment Ministry, 95 of the 131 non-attainment cities covered under the NCAP have witnessed an "overall improvement" in PM10 levels in 2021 as compared to 2017 levels
- Twenty cities, including Chennai, Madurai and Nashik, have met the national standards for annual average PM10 concentration (60 microgram per cubic metre).
- The acceptable annual standard for PM2.5 is 40 micrograms per cubic metre.
- PM2.5 are fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller, and pose the greatest risk to health.
- The 132 cities covered under the NCAP did not meet the prescribed national ambient air quality standards for five consecutive years (2011-2015).
- The idea behind the revised target is to ultimately achieve acceptable limits of both PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations.

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Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthy Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**