



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 PM_{2.5}) 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 PM_{2.5} is 40 micrograms per cubic metre.
- PM_{2.5} 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 PM_{2.5} concentrations.

BY 2024, POLLUTION CUT BY 30%

NATIONAL CLEAN AIR PROGRAMME (NCAP)

Cities to be covered: 102

GOAL: To meet annual average ambient air quality standards

MID-TERM (5 YEARS) TARGET:

Reducing air pollution by 20-30% by 2024, taking 2017 as base year

HOW: Through city-specific air pollution abatement action plan

BUILD CAPACITY BY SETTING UP:

- 1 National emission inventory
- 2 Air Information Centre for data analysis
- 3 Source apportionment studies
- 4 Guidelines for indoor air pollution
- 5 Rural monitoring stations

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AGENCIES: World Bank, German development agency (GIZ), AFD (French funding agency), Swiss Development Corporation, Bloomberg Philanthropies