

INDIA'S MOST POLLUTED: 30% HAVE NO CLEAN UP PLAN

Relevant for: Environment & Disaster Management | Topic: Environmental Pollution - Air, Water, Soil & E-waste

Not breathing free: Air pollution is affecting the respiratory health of people in 102 cities in India.

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A good number of India's most polluted cities are not too keen to clean up their act, according to a list maintained by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Of the 102 cities singled out by the Centre for their alarming pollution levels, only 73 have submitted a plan of remedial action to the CPCB. Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Nagpur and Jaipur are among the prominent cities that are yet to submit their plans.

These so called 'non-attainment cities' were among those marked out by the CPCB and asked – as part of the National Clean Air Campaign (NCAP) – to implement 42 measures aimed at mitigating air pollution. These included steps such as implementing control and mitigation measures related to vehicular emissions, re-suspension of road dust and other fugitive emissions, bio-mass, municipal solid waste burning, industrial pollution, and construction and demolition activities.

The directives to take remedial measures were initially issued to Delhi NCR, and subsequently to the State Pollution Control Boards for implementation in other 'non-attainment' cities. The non-attainment cities are those that have fallen short of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for over five years. Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan had said in April that the aim of pollution mitigation measures was to cut overall pollution in these cities by 35% in the next three years.

The NCAP also envisions setting up 1,000 manual air-quality-monitoring stations (a 45% increase from the present number) and 268 automatic stations (from 84 now). "Some cities submitted plans but didn't fill out particulars, such as timelines, and so they had to be returned," said Prashant Gargava, Member Secretary, CPCB, adding, "Only 30 of these cities are ready to roll out their plans on the ground."

In May, the World Health Organisation said that Delhi and Varanasi were among 14 Indian cities that figured in a global list of the 20 most polluted cities in terms of PM2.5 levels.

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