

Parliament Question:- National Clean Air Programme

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National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) launched by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in January 2019 aims to improve air quality in 130 cities (non-attainment cities and Million Plus Cities) in 24 States/UTs. NCAP is multi-sectoral initiative involving the coordinated efforts of the Central and State Governments, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), and other stakeholders. It emphasizes source-specific mitigation measures through city, state, and national-level clean air action plans.

The programme leverages the mobilization of resources through various Central Government schemes—such as Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), AMRUT, Smart City Mission, SATAT, and Nagar Van Yojana—including resources from State Governments, UT Administrations, Municipal Corporations, and Urban Development Authorities to implement City Action Plans (CAPs). Performance based incentive grant is provided under NCAP to cities for funding the critical gap.

Out of 130 cities, 48 Million-Plus Cities/ Urban Agglomerations are funded under XVth Finance Commission Million-Plus City Challenge Fund as an air quality performance grant, and remaining 82 cities are funded under Control of Pollution Scheme of MoEFCC. Performance linked grant of Rs. 13,036.52 crore has been provided to 130 cities as critical gap funding to implement air quality improvement measures. An amount of Rs. 9209.44 crore (71%) has been utilized by 130 cities so far to implement air quality improvement measures. Out of the total released amount of Rs. 13,036.52 crore, the amount of Rs.1825.39 crore has been released during the period April -July, 2025 (till 18th July) for which action plans have been prepared by the cities.

MoEFCC has revised the guidelines for release and utilization of funds vide letter dated 25th August, 2022 and 14th May, 2025 for 82 cities funded under Control of Pollution Scheme. CPCB and SPCBs have been mandated to release the funds to cities in accordance with the guidelines and instructions issued by MoEFCC.

In case of 48 Million-Plus Population cities, funds are released inline with DoE operational guidelines ‘Operational Guidelines for implementation of the recommendations on Urban Local body grants [Ambient Air Quality component] of Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV-FC)’ issued on 10.08.2021.

Committees at National Level (Apex, Steering, Monitoring and Implementation), State level (Steering and Monitoring) and City level Monitoring and Implementation Committee have been constituted to coordinate, monitor, evaluate the progress and provide guidance for implementation of city action plans including utilization of funds.

MoEFCC has revised the guidelines vide letter dated 14th May, 2025, and has communicated that funds provided to 82 cities is to be utilized in 5 key activities including road improvement works for dust control such as end-to-end pavement of roads, mechanical road sweeping, greening of traffic corridors, improvement of traffic junctions for decongestion, etc.

Annual Action plans prepared by cities are reviewed by Central Pollution Control Board to verify that the activities taken up by cities are inline with the guidelines.

“PRANA” – Portal for Regulation of Air-pollution in Non-Attainment cities, has been developed as a portal for monitoring implementation of National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) to track physical as well as financial progress of cities under NCAP.

MoEFCC, vide letters dated 9.6.2025, has written to Chief Secretaries of 24 States/UTs to review the implementation of programme in respective States in regard to improvement of air quality as well as utilisation of funds provided under NCAP.

As per MoEFCC notification dated 11.07.2025, coal and lignite-based thermal power plants are required to meet the emission standards for Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) as per the prescribed timelines. Enforcement and monitoring of compliance to the emission norms is carried out by Central Pollution Control Board and State Pollution Control Boards. Under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), State level Steering and Monitoring Committees monitor the implementation of action plans pertaining industrial pollution, which includes pollution from thermal power plants.

This information was provided by UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE, SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH, in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today.

VM/GS

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