

Parliament Question: - Air Pollution

Posted On: 24 JUL 2025 5:11PM by PIB Delhi

A report titled “World Air Quality Report 2024” by a Swiss-based technology company IQAir was published on March, 2024. The report includes Country/region ranking for 2024 based on the average PM2.5 concentration.

As per report, 38% of data sources are from government agencies and rest 62% data is from other agencies. The data used for analysis includes data generated through low cost sensors (LCS), which is not used for regulatory purposes. The data from a variety of monitors and data sources (low-cost sensors) may have a degree of error/uncertainty. Further, the population weighted averages used for country ranking in the report is calculated based on urban - centric data generated from monitoring stations.

In view of the above limitations and uncertainties in the data, ranking of cities and countries may not portray true picture and could be misleading.

There is no conclusive data available to establish a direct correlation of death exclusively by air pollution. Air pollution is one of the many factors affecting respiratory ailments and associated diseases. Health is impacted by a number of factors which include food habits, occupational habits, socio-economic status, medical history, immunity, heredity etc. of the individuals apart from the environment.

Environmental Compensation (EC) funds are collected in compliance with the directives issued by the Hon’ble National Green Tribunal (NGT).

As of now, a total of Rs. 620.6 Crores has been accrued in the NGT EC account, including bank interest of Rs. 99.51 Crores. Out of this Rs. 80.82 Crores has been utilized, while Rs. 138.38 Crores has been committed towards 24 sanctioned projects and ongoing activities. The remaining balance is Rs. 401.4 Crores and out of this Rs. 284.18 Crores is held in sub judice accounts i.e. Rs. 184.18 Crores maintained in 23 Specific-Purpose Accounts and Rs. 100 Crores in Fixed Deposit (FD) as per Hon’ble NGT direction. Presently Rs. 117.22 Crores is available for utilization. The utilization of NGT EC funds has been stopped after the Hon’ble NGT order dated 21.01.2025 in the matter of OA No. 638/2023.

The Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in the matter of 13029 of 1985, M.C. Mehta Vs UOI issued directions and imposed 1% Environmental Protection Charge (EPC) on diesel vehicles with engine capacity of 2000 cc and above which will be registered in Delhi-NCR as given in Hon’ble Supreme Court Order dated 12 Aug 2016.

Total Rs. 527.91 Crore has accrued in the EPC fund account as on 18.06.2025, out of which Rs. 173 crores have been disbursed as on 04.07.2025, and Rs. 222.83 Crores is allocated for sanctioned projects and activities. Out of the remaining funds of Rs. 132.08 Crores, Rs. 54 Crores have been earmarked as performance grants for FY 2025-26 under CPCB guidelines for providing gap funding support to 19 no. of NCR cities, leaving Rs. 78.08 crores balance available for utilization.

Government has launched National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in 2019 as a national level strategy to reduce air pollution levels across the country. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has identified 130 million plus/non-attainment cities (cities exceeding National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), consecutively for five years). City Specific Clean Air Action Plans have been prepared and rolled out for implementation in all these 130 non-attainment/million plus cities to improve the air quality.

These city specific clean air action plans target city specific air polluting sources like Soil & Road Dust, Vehicles, Domestic Fuel, MSW Burning, Construction Material and Industries with short-term priority action as well as those to be implemented in a medium to longer time frame along with the concerned agencies.

Source Apportionment (SA) studies conducted in cities under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) reveal that dust from road and construction & demolition activities are major sources of PM10 with almost 40-50% contribution in most of the cities. Accordingly, cities have prioritized road improvement works, traffic decongestion, junction improvements, and greening of open spaces under the city action plans of NCAP.

The program adopts comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach to combat air pollution. It targets major pollution sources such as industries, vehicular emissions, open burning of waste, road dust, Construction & Demolition (C&D) activities.

Actions towards control of industrial pollution are primarily implemented by industries and monitoring & enforcement of industrial emission norms are carried out by the State Pollution Control Boards through Consent mechanism under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. To address vehicular pollution, Govt. has notified BS-VI emission norms for fuels in leapfrogging from BS-IV. Further, Central Govt. has launched schemes such as PM E-DRIVE and PM- eBus Sewa to promote electric mobility.

In order to control the biomass burning in the agriculture fields, CPCB has framed guidelines for providing one-time financial assistance for setting up of paddy straw based pelletisation and Torrefaction plants which may help in addressing the supply chain issues and the issue of open burning of paddy straw in agriculture fields in Northern Region. Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) has also issued directions for co-firing of 5-10% biomass with coal in thermal power plants located within 300 kms of Delhi, and, in captive power plants of industrial units located in NCR.

Further, performance based grants are being released to urban local bodies of 130 non-attainment cities/Million Plus Cities under NCAP through Central Sector Scheme 'Control of Pollution' and 15th Finance Commission (XVFC) air quality grants for implementation of the activities of approved city action plans.

Under NCAP, a total of Rs. 13036.52 Crores have been released to 130 million plus & non-attainment cities from FY 2019-20 to till date (20.07.2025) for implementing various activities to control air pollution out of which Rs. 9209.44 Crores have been utilized by Urban Local Bodies.

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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