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International Day of Clean Air For Blue Skies

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Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** has organised a webinar on the occasion of the **first-ever International Day of Clean Air For Blue Skies**.

- In **December 2019**, the **United Nations General Assembly** adopted a resolution to observe this day on **7th September every year, starting from 2020**.
- **The Day aims to** demonstrate the close link of air quality to other environmental/developmental challenges and raise public awareness related to air quality at all levels.

Key Points

- **Indian Government's Efforts:**

- It is committed to **reducing the air pollution level in 122 most polluted cities.**
- In 2014, the **Air Quality Index** (AQI) was launched which currently tracks the levels of pollution on **eight parameters.**
 - These **parameters are ground-level ozone, Particulate Matter (PM) 10, PM 2.5,** carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, ammonia and lead.
 - **Ground-level ozone and airborne particles are the two pollutants that pose the greatest threat** to human health in India.
- The Prime Minister in his Independence day speech also **highlighted the issue of air pollution** and put across the **goal of holistic improvement in air quality in 100 cities** by drawing up **micro-plans to target hotspots.**
- A brochure on **Integrated Measures to Combat Air Pollution** under the **National Clean Air Programme** (NCAP) has been launched in the webinar.

In **January 2019, NCAP was launched** to tackle the problem of air pollution in a comprehensive manner with a **target to achieve 20 to 30% reduction in PM 10 and PM 2.5 concentrations by 2024** keeping 2017 as the base year.
- India has migrated to **BS-VI standards, quality petrol and diesel,** which is an important initiative to fight against pollution.
 - The **Bharat Stage (BS) are emission standards** instituted by the Government of India to regulate the output of air pollutants from motor vehicles.
 - The **Environment Ministry is responsible for deciding** the fuel standard in the country. The **Central Pollution Control Board** (CPCB) **implements** these standards.

- **Suggestions for Improvement:**

- States must work with **city-specific plans,** as every city has a different source of pollution.

A city is not equally polluted in all areas so the **most effective way to reduce air pollution in cities is to identify the hotspots and then disburse funds** for solutions in these identified areas.
- Use of **electric vehicles** must be encouraged and the **public transport should be modernised.**
- Augmenting **waste management infrastructure,** paving roads to make **them dust free** and **imposing stringent norms on industry** and ensuring that they switch to cleaner fuels.
- **People's participation** is a must to clean the air. **Car-pooling and use of public transport** must be promoted.

Source: PIB