International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies

For Prelims: National Clean Air Programme, PM 10, PM 2.5, UNEP.

For Mains: International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, its Significance.

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&C) organized **3rd International Day of Clean Air for blue skies as 'Swachh Vayu Diwas ("Swachh Vayu Neel Gagan")** 'today to raise awareness and facilitate actions to improve **air quality under** National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

- 20 cities selected out of 131 for its **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** have attained the **National Ambient Air Quality Standards** (60 microgram per cubic meter) in 2021-22, compared to their 2017 levels.

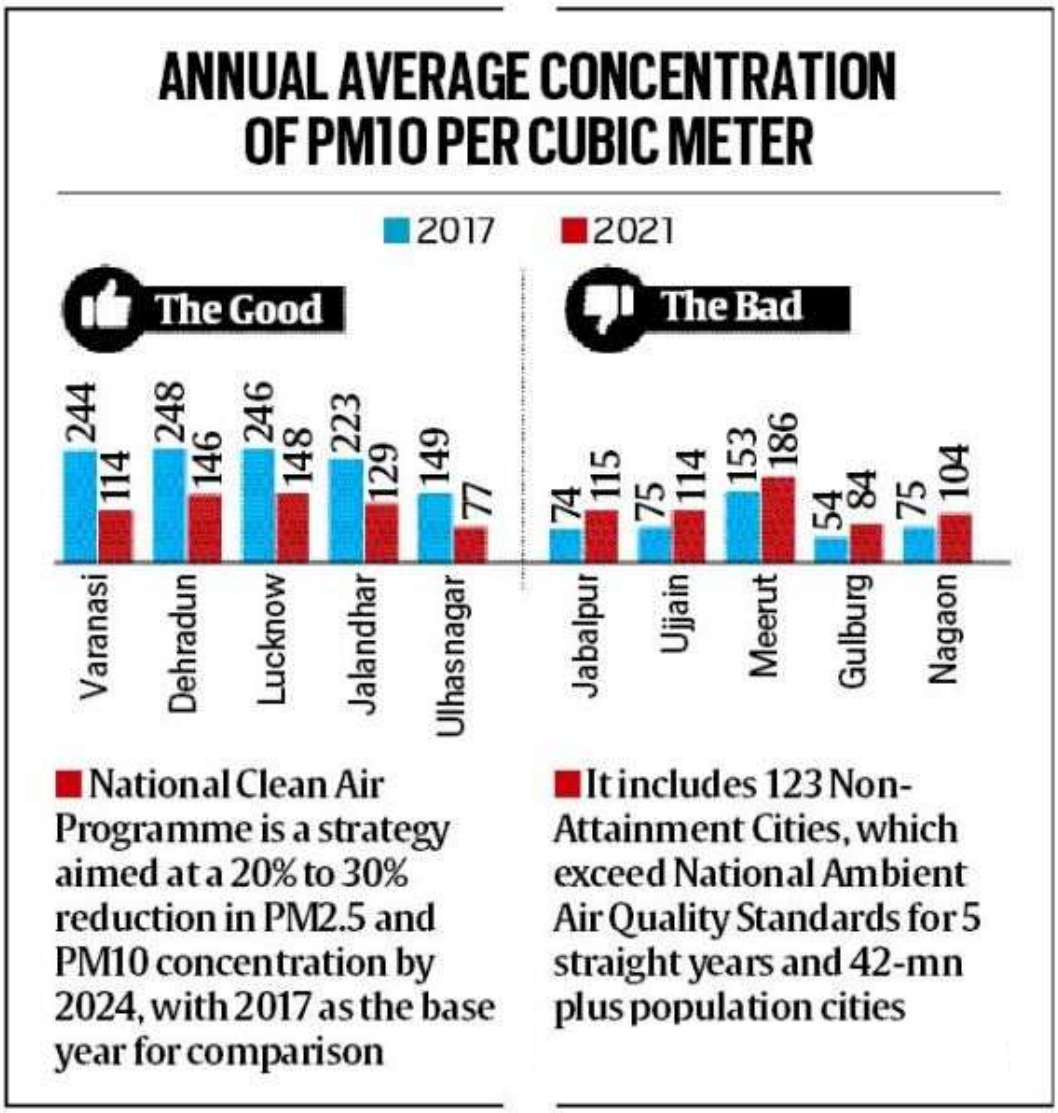
What are the Key Points?

- **Theme:**
  - The theme is "The Air We Share".
  - It highlights the **need for immediate and strategic international and regional cooperation for more efficient implementation** of mitigation policies and actions to tackle air pollution.
- **About:**
  - During its **74th session, the United Nations General Assembly** adopted a resolution to hold an **International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies on 19th December, 2019.**
  - The resolution also encouraged the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** to facilitate the day's observance in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders.
  - In the lead-up to the passing of the resolution, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition collaborated with UNEP and the Republic of Korea to advocate for the day.
- **Significance:**
  - The United Nations commemorates the International Day of Clear Air for Blue Skies by hosting summits with member states.
  - Attendees put forth **their perspectives and discuss the data on the impacts of air pollution** and air quality around the globe.

What are the Findings of NCAP?

- **Ninety-five** of these **131 cities have shown air quality improvement,**
  - Varanasi recorded the most marked improvement — of 53% — in air quality levels.
  - Varanasi **had an annual average concentration of PM10 of 244 in 2017**, which dropped to 144 in 2021.
- **PM10** for all metropolitan cities, **Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Hyderabad**, have **shown significant improvement** in air quality in 2021-22 compared to 2017.

    - Other major cities to have shown an improvement include Noida, Chandigarh, Navi Mumbai, Pune, Guwahati, etc.
- But **27 cities** have shown **a deterioration in air quality over the same period.**
    - Among them is **Korba — the district in Chhattisgarh** houses 10 thermal coal power plants.
- **Among states**, Madhya Pradesh **has been the poorest performer,** as six of seven cities from the state selected by the Centre for NCAP have shown a **deterioration in air quality.**
    - These are Bhopal, Dewas, Indore, Jabalpur, Sagar, Ujjain and Gwalior.
- **Howrah and Durgapur in West Bengal**, Aurangabad and Thane in Maharashtra, Gaya in Bihar, Rajkot and Vadodara in Gujarat, Bhubaneswar (Odisha), Patiala (Punjab) and Jammu, among others, have also shown a worsening of air quality.



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements: (2017)

1. Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) to Reduce Short Lived Climate Pollutants is a unique initiative of G20 group of countries.
2. The CCAC focuses on methane, black carbon and hydrofluorocarbons.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The Climate and Clean Air Coalition is a voluntary partnership of governments, intergovernmental organizations, businesses, scientific institutions and civil society organizations committed to improving air quality and protecting the climate through actions to reduce short-lived climate pollutants. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- The Coalition's initial focus is on methane, black carbon, and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).
- **The governments of Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Mexico, Sweden and the United States, along with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, came together to initiate the first effort to treat these pollutants as a collective challenge. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- India is not a partner country, but The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) has been a partner NGO since 2015. **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Source: IE

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