

Ban on use of coal in Delhi-NCR

June 10, 2022

In news– According to the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), use of coal as a fuel will be banned across the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) with effect from January 1, 2023.

Key updates-

- As the concerns of air pollution are uniform across the NCR, it has been decided by the CAQM to **phase out use of coal as a fuel from entire NCR in industrial, domestic and miscellaneous applications** (barring the use of low sulphur coal only in thermal power plants), towards aiming for an overall improved air quality in the region.
- For regions where infrastructure for and supply of **piped natural gas (PNG)** is already available, the ban on the use of coal will come into force from October 1, 2022.
- **Around 1.7 million tonnes of coal is used annually in industries in the NCR**, according to CAQM.
- In a directive issued in February this year, the CAQM had noted that a **majority of industries in the NCR are still not operating on PNG or “cleaner fuels”, despite availability of natural gas infrastructure** and supply.
- Such industries in the NCR were then directed to completely switch over to PNG or biomass fuels by September 30 this year, or face closure.
- **Industries in Delhi are permitted to run only on PNG or electricity.**
- With air quality having deteriorated last winter, the commission had also restricted the timing of operation of industries not running on PNG to eight hours a day for five days a week.

Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)-

- The Commission has been **set up for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas** for better co-ordination, research, identification and resolution of problems surrounding the air quality index and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- The **Commission brings together the Centre, states, and other stakeholders on one collaborative platform.**
- It will have a **full-time chairperson “who is or has been Secretary to the Government of India or Chief Secretary to the Government of a state”.**
- The chairperson will hold the post for three years or until s/he attains the age of 70 years.
- The Commission will also **have five ex officio members who are either Chief Secretaries,** or Secretaries in charge of the department dealing with environment protection in the States of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh
- **It has three full-time independent technical members and three representatives of NGOs** with experience in combating air pollution.
- It will have members from Niti Aayog and several Ministries.

Functions of the Commission include:

- Co-ordinating actions taken under the Ordinance by concerned state governments (Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh).
- Planning and executing plans to prevent and control air pollution in the NCR.
- Providing a framework for identification of air pollutants.
- Conducting research and development through networking with technical institutions.
- Training and creating a special workforce to deal with

issues related to air pollution.

- Preparing various action plans such as increasing plantation and addressing stubble burning.