

Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA)

May 7, 2020

What is EPCA?

- The EPCA was constituted with the objective of protecting and improving the quality of the environment and preventing and **controlling the environmental pollution in the National Capital Region**, under the **provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**. The EPCA is also mandated to **enforce Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** in the city as per the pollution levels.
- The reason why EPCA is an authority, and not just an advisory committee, is because it has powers similar to those enjoyed by the Centre. Specifically, **it can issue directions in writing to any person, officer or authority**, including for – but not limited to – stoppage of electricity, water and other services. If its directions are not followed, **it has powers to file criminal complaints (under section 19 of the Act) before courts**.
- The EPCA has been **empowered to take Suo motu action** as well as on the basis of complaints made by any individual, representative body or organisation functioning in the environmental issues sector. One of the EPCA's important powers is the **redressal of grievances through complaints**.
- Given that the EPCA has been empowered to initiate prosecution, the presence of officials from so many departments and municipal corporations is a cause for concern. This is because most violations of environmental law in India happen thanks to the

connivance of enforcement agencies, including municipal bodies.

- EPCA was **reconstituted with 20 members** after the expiry of its last tenure in 2018. Members include DG of TERI; CEO of Centre for Energy, Environment and Water; former professor of surgery, AIIMS.