

NATIONAL

84 cities submit plans for improving air quality



Jacob Koshy

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Centre plans for period review ahead of Environment Day

Eighty-four out of the 102 cities that have been tasked with reducing toxic particulate matter levels by 20%-30% by 2024 have submitted proposals, C.K. Mishra, Secretary, Union Environment Ministry, said at a press conference.

“We haven’t set any annual targets for the cities but are looking at a periodic review,” Mr. Mishra said at a function to announce the government’s plans to celebrate World Environment Day on June 5. One hundred and two cities, considered India’s most polluted, have been tasked with reducing PM (particulate matter) 10 and PM 2.5 levels by 2024, as part of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). This was made public in January this year.

NCAP targets

The States in which the cities are located are expected to produce plans that include increasing the number of monitoring stations, providing technology support, conducting source apportionment

The NCAP requires cities to implement specific measures such as “ensuring roads are pothole-free to improve traffic flow and thereby reduce dust” (within 60 days) or “ensuring strict action against unauthorised brick kilns” (within 30 days). It doesn’t specify an exact date for when these obligations kick in.

In April, the Ministry constituted a committee to implement the NCAP, chaired by the Secretary, Union Environment Ministry, and has among its members the Joint Secretary (Thermal), Ministry of Power; Director-General, The Energy Resources Institute (TERI), the Delhi-based think-tank; and Professor Sachidananda Tripathi, Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur (IIT-K).

‘Let the air in’

As part of its public-outreach campaign, the Ministry has collaborated with the Bhamla Foundation, as well as artistes from Bollywood, to develop a theme song *Hawa aane de* (“Let the air in”). The song is a “call to action for all to come together to combat air pollution...”, a Ministry release noted.