

CPCB: Enforce full pollution action plan

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NEW DELHI: The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has recently directed the implementation of the entire “Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) for Air Pollution Control in Delhi and NCR” under section 5 of the environment protection act.

This plan mandates among many action points that Badarpur thermal power plant be closed permanently by mid-2018 , the 600 ha fly ash pond at Badarpur be restored, strict enforcement of air pollution control measures at all industries including those located in the unauthorised colonies in the capital.

The union environment ministry had notified parts of the comprehensive action plan in March but left out important action points because there was no agreement on timelines for implementation.

The interventions that were left out include tightening pollution under control (PUC) norms, on-board diagnostic systems in vehicles, enforcement of air pollution control norms in all industries including those located in unauthorised areas and permanent closure of Badarpur plant among others.

The action plan drafted by the SC mandated environment pollution control authority (EPCA) and CPCB last year following an SC order, states that the Badarpur power plant will be shut down permanently by mid-year just after commissioning of Tughlakabad sub-station or move towards cleaner natural gas. The plan also mandates that Delhi get 10,000 buses (as per SC’s

1998 and 2016 orders) by December 2018 and introduce flexi or staggered traffic timings by mid-year to minimise peak movement of vehicles. Metro will also have to augment its services—it has submitted a proposal for 602 new coaches which is being examined by Delhi government. The plan states that law will be enforced against visibly polluting vehicles which includes imposing penalty.

As far as relatively long term plans are concerned there will be expansion of the CNG programme across NCR by ensuring conversion of bus and auto fleets.

On permanently shutting down Badarpur plant, a senior official from the plant said: “The plant has been proposed to be shut down by July but we have no communication from the environment ministry or CPCB yet. We have heard of some decision but there are transmission constraints. The Tughlakabad sub station has not yet been commissioned. We are only running based on requirement.”

According to the IIT Kanpur’s 2015 source apportionment study, industrial stack emissions including power plants are responsible for 11% of PM 2.5 emissions in winter. Notifying the comprehensive action plan now is likely to give Delhi an edge in preparing for winter pollution experts said. “It’s a legally binding document so governments will have to implement it. Our experience of graded response action plan (GRAP) helped us reduce number of severe days. Now we need systemic action also. If elements of CAP are implemented soon for example the notification on approved fuels in Delhi, it will definitely help in winter. CAP will help reduce levels gradually,” said Anumita Roy Chowdhury, executive director, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).

Highlights of comprehensive action plan that has been notified in June 2018 under section 3 and 5 of the environment protection act:

Monitoring

- Undertake satellite based monitoring for tracking agriculture waste burning and enforcing policies to stop them
- Research studies including air pollution inventory, source apportionment, health impact studies, exposure impacts and other relevant studies: Govt. to support research works / scientific studies by academic / research institutions. Expertise will be sought from various institutions to develop protocols for assessment of the research proposals
- Vehicular emissions:
 - Tighten PUC norms for post2000 vehicles. Upgrade in-use emissions testing for diesel vehicles.
 - Enforcement of law against visibly polluting vehicles: impose penalty, launch extensive awareness drive against polluting vehicles.