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DELHI

## Centre notifies green action plan for Delhi



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### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: JANUARY 17, 2017 01:34 IST

UPDATED: JANUARY 17, 2017 01:34 IST

### Odd-even scheme, halt on construction activities among desperate measures planned to control pollution

Concerned over the deteriorating air quality in Delhi and the National Capital Region, the Environment Ministry has amended laws and formally tasked a Supreme Court-appointed panel with implementing a graded action plan for pollution control.

The comprehensive plan, prepared by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), focussing on Delhi was submitted to the Supreme Court on December 2. The court had accepted the plan and asked the Centre to notify it.

Once the plan is notified, emergency measures like odd-even car rationing scheme and ban on construction activities will be automatically enforced in the city if level of PM<sub>2.5</sub> breaches 300 micrograms per cubic metre and PM<sub>10</sub> levels stay above 500 micrograms per cubic metre for two consecutive days.

“In pursuance of sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986), the Central government hereby assigns the task of implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan to the EPCA (Environment Pollution Control Authority)..." states the gazette notification, dated January 12.

### Ban on diesel gensets

The plan also recommends that during 'very poor' air quality, diesel generators must be banned and parking fee increased by three to four times.

The plan lists a number of other measures such as closing brick kilns, hot mix plants, stone crushers and intensifying public transport services besides increasing the frequency of mechanised cleaning and sprinkling of water on roads.

### NGOs welcome move

Sunita Narain, the Director General of Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) and also a member of EPCA, termed it a "very big step" in pollution management and said there was no need to balk at the level of action the plan lays out.

“The effort has to be that we do not reach a level of pollution emergency. The first effort of the graded action plan is to prevent emergency. But if there is one, we must not balk at the level of action that has to be taken. Beijing or Paris do take tough action in case of emergency. We will have to work out the mechanism.”

The challenge, said Ms. Narain, is that it has to be done across NCR and that will make a difference as cities like Gurugram are equally polluted.

Greenpeace India welcomed the move saying it is a “logical and necessary step” and it was high time that this “national health emergency is taken up as a serious issue”.

“High level of air pollution in Delhi and NCR has been a matter of serious concern and requires urgent measures to address the issue, particularly with reference to episodic rises in pollution levels,” Greenpeace India said in a statement. *(with inputs from PTI)*

Printable version | Jan 17, 2017 4:57:41 PM |

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