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Graded Response Action Plan

Why in Newspapers?

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has recently said that to deal with the deteriorating 'Air Quality Index' (AQI) in the region, a 'Graded Response Action Plan' (GRAP) will be implemented in Delhi-NCR with immediate effect.

Quick Issue?

- The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) is a set of emergency measures to be implemented to control air pollution based on air quality.
- The Graded Response Action Plan was approved by the Supreme Court in the year 2016.
- GRAP is prepared by the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority. GRAPs only serve as an emergency measure.
- Graded response action plans are incremental in nature, and follow the listed measures when the air quality goes from 'poor' to 'very poor'.

Other Key Facts?

Measures to be implemented this year

- For the first time, the 'Graded Response Action Plan' (GRAP) specifies that state governments in NCR can ban BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel four wheelers, under Stage-3 (severe category).
- Restrictions on certain construction activities in the revised GRAP will also be set in the 'severe category' phase instead of "severe+" as earlier.
- Construction activities on linear public projects like highways, roads, flyovers, pipelines and power transmission will be banned under the 'severe+' category this year.
- Also under the 'severe+' category, state governments may consider additional emergency measures, such as closure of schools, plying of vehicles on an odd-even basis, etc.
- Guidelines for the public: The revised GRAP also includes a set of measures for the public under various categories of pollution levels.

Historical Background?

- The 'Graded Response Action Plan' is based on a plan submitted by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in November 2016. GRAP was first notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in January 2017.
- The first phase of the 'Graded Response Action Plan' is activated when the 'Air Quality Index' (AQI) is in the 'poor' category (201 to 300). For example, on October 5, the AQI in Delhi was 211.
- Phase II, III and IV of GRAP activated three days before the AQI reaches the 'Extremely poor' category (301 to 400), the 'Severe' category (401 to 450) and the 'Severe+' category (above 450).



- **Data Source:** For this, Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) relies on air quality and meteorological forecasts by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- **Implementing Agency:** From 2021 onwards, the 'Graded Response Action Plan' is being implemented by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM).
- In the event of any conflict between the State Governments and the directions issued by the CAQM, the orders and directions of the CAQM shall prevail.
- The measures under various categories of the scheme will be implemented by the Pollution Control Boards of NCR states and concerned departments and agencies including traffic police, transport department and road-ownership and construction agencies.
- **Pre-emptive measures:** In the 2017 edition of GRAP, these measures were introduced after pollution concentrations reached a certain level.
- The measures to be taken this year are pre-emptive and will be based on forecasts in an effort to prevent worsening of the AQI position.
- **Wider Pollutant Range:** The older version of GRAP was applied based on the concentrations of PM5 and PM10 only.
- This year, GRAP is being implemented on an AQI basis, taking into account other pollutants such as ozone, sulphur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen.

Likely Question Asked In Preliminary Exam

Que. Under the new form of the Graded Response Action Plan, the adverse air quality in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Delhi has been classified under how many different stages?

(a) Three

(b) Two

(c) Four

(d) Five

Answer – (c) Four

INDORE



Cheetah Task Force Constituted

Why in Newspapers?

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has constituted a Cheetah Task Force. Its objective is to monitor the resettlement of cheetahs in the Kuno National Park and other suitable designated areas of Madhya Pradesh.

Quick Issue?

- Recently, 5 female and 3 male cheetahs from Namibia were brought to the Kuno National Park.

Historical Background?

- Review, progress and monitor the health status of cheetahs.
- Monitoring cheetahs' hunting skills and adaptation to the environment.
- Establish regular contact with cheetah friends and local communities to raise awareness.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) will facilitate the functioning of the Cheetah Task Force. It will also provide all necessary assistance.
- NTCA is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. It has been constituted under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) will facilitate the functioning of the Cheetah Task Force and provide all necessary assistance. The task force has been constituted for a period of two years.
- This task force may appoint a sub-committee which will regularly visit the areas in which these cheetahs have been released at the time fixed by them.
- The release of cheetahs from Namibia to the Kuno National Park is part of a prototype or model designed to conserve native cheetah habitats and their biodiversity.
- This will help in preventing degradation and rapid loss of biodiversity.
- Rehabilitation here by bringing back an apex predator would restore the historical evolutionary balance that would have wide-ranging effects at different levels of the ecosystem.
- Resettlement of the cheetah will enable not only to save its prey base, some of which are on the verge of extinction, but also to save other endangered species of grasslands and open forest ecosystems. Some of these are on the verge of extinction.

Other Key Facts?

Importance of Cheetah Rehabilitation

- This will help in preventing the degradation and rapid loss of biodiversity.
- Bringing back an apex predator would restore historical evolutionary balance. As a result of this, different levels of the ecosystem can have a wide range of impacts.
- By resettling the cheetah, we will be able to save its prey base (of which some species are on the verge of extinction). At the same time, other endangered species of grasslands and open forest ecosystems will also be able to be saved.



- Rehabilitation of cheetah is expected to have a huge impact towards their conservation. The cheetah is one such creature that surpasses even the Indian antelope and gazelle in terms of speed.
- Rehabilitation in India under 'Project Cheetah'. It is worth mentioning that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on September 17 released the extinct wild cheetahs from India in Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.
- These cheetahs brought from Namibia are being rehabilitated in India under 'Project Cheetah'.
- It is the world's first inter-continental large wild carnivore translocation project of large carnivore wild animals from one continent to another.
- The cheetah was declared extinct in India in 1952. The cheetahs that have been released are from Namibia and have been brought to India under a memorandum of understanding signed earlier this year.

Likely Question Asked In Preliminary Exam

Que. Recently which ministry has constituted the Cheetah Task Force?

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| (a) Ministry of Child Development | (b) Ministry of Petroleum |
| (c) Ministry of Environment | (d) None of these |

Answer - (c) Ministry of Environment

