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Date: 3 October 2023

WINTER ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS AIR POLLUTION IN DELHI-NCR

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs", and the topic details "Winter Action Plan to Address Air Pollution in Delhi-NCR". This topic has relevance in the "Environment and Ecology" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

What are the reasons behind Delhi Pollution?

What is Winter Action Plan to Address Air Pollution in Delhi-NCR?

For Mains:

GS3: Environment and Ecology

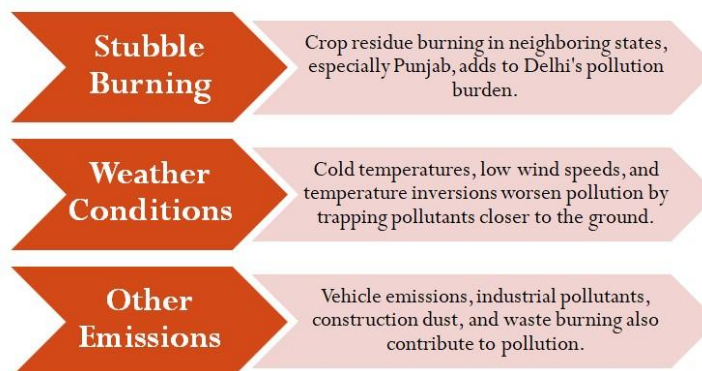
Why in the news?

Chief Minister of UT of Delhi recently announced the winter action plan to address air pollution in Delhi. This plan aims to combat the persistently high pollution levels in the national capital during winter.

Need For Winter Action Plan:

- **Worsening Air Quality:** Delhi experiences severe air pollution during winters, primarily due to stubble burning, industrial emissions, vehicular pollution, and unfavourable weather conditions that lead to the trapping of pollutants.
- **Health Concerns:** The high levels of air pollution in Delhi have detrimental effects on public health, leading to various respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. It is crucial to take immediate action to safeguard the well-being of the people.

Factors Contributing to Pollution in Delhi NCR



Previous Measures and Actions:

- **Dust Pollution Control:** Strictly enforcing dust pollution norms at construction sites to minimise particulate matter emissions.
- **Anti-smog Guns:** Deployment of anti-smog guns to suppress dust and particulate matter in the air.
- **Mechanised Sweeping:** Mechanized sweeping of roads to reduce the accumulation of dust and pollutants.
- **Pollution Under Control (PUC) Certificates:** Checking and enforcing PUC certificates for vehicles to minimise vehicular emissions.
- **Air Pollution Hotspots:** Focused action and monitoring at 13 air pollution hotspots in Delhi to target high pollution areas, such as Anand Vihar and Jahangirpuri.

The 15-Point Action Plan:

1. Over 10 million trees are to be planted, including 5.2 million by the Delhi government.
2. Implementation monitoring of garbage burning ban with 611 teams.
3. Awareness campaigns promoting the “Red light on, Gaadi off” initiative.
4. Prohibition of fireworks.
5. Implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP).
6. Identification of 13 pollution hotspots.
7. Deployment of 82 mechanical road-sweeping machines to control dust.
8. Establishment of a green war room for surveillance purposes.
9. Introduction of the Green Delhi app for citizens to report pollution-causing activities.
10. Application of PUSA bio-decomposer on 5,000 hectares of farmland to prevent stubble burning.
11. Deployment of 530 water sprinklers to minimise dust pollution.
12. Formation of 385 teams to conduct pollution certificate checks and prevent the operation of vehicles that exceed the allowed age.
13. Publicising alternate routes for 90 identified high-traffic roads.
14. Creation of war rooms and establishment of 13 special teams to address pollution hotspots.
15. Deployment of 298 smog guns on Delhi roads during the winter season.

Other Measures:

- **Delhi Electric Vehicles (EV) Policy:** The Chief Minister Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi launched the Delhi EV policy in 2020 to make Delhi pollution-free and establish it as the EV capital of India.
- **Bio-decomposers:** The Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa, has developed bio-decomposers, a microbial liquid spray. When sprayed onto paddy stubble, it breaks it down, allowing easy absorption into the soil. This helps farmers avoid burning the stubble.
- **Ban on Firecrackers:** To reduce the spread of harmful particulate matter, the government has imposed a complete ban on the sale, storage, production, and bursting of firecrackers for the third consecutive year.
- **Closure of Badarpur Power Plant:** The old and polluting Badarpur coal-fired power plant in the southeastern outskirts of Delhi has been permanently shut down by the Delhi government to reduce pollution.
- **Automatic Emission Measurement Stations:** The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has mandated that highly polluting industrial plants install automatic emission measurement stations. These stations will provide real-time data to the CPCB to better enforce pollution rules.

Sources:

Delhi CM unveils 15-point winter pollution plan | Delhi News – The Indian Express

Q1. How many of the following are factors contributing to winter pollution in Delhi-NCR:

1. Emissions from vehicles
2. Stubble Burning

3. High wind speeds
4. Construction dust

Select the correct codes from the codes given below:

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All Four

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has formulated a microbial liquid spray called bio-decomposers to prevent stubble burning.
2. Deploying anti-smog guns aids in the suppression of dust and particulate matter present in the air.
3. The CAQM has mandated that highly polluting industrial plants install automatic emission measurement stations.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (a)

Q3. Discuss the causes and consequences of winter pollution in Delhi. Analyse the measures taken by the government and suggest additional strategies to mitigate the issue.

Gaurav Nikumbh

AGAMAS

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Agamas". This topic has relevance in the Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About Agamas?

For Mains:

GS 2: Governance

About Reforms in the Agamanic System?

Challenges to reforms?

Why in the news?

The Supreme Court has ordered the status quo on the appointment of archakas (priests) in Agamic temples in Tamil Nadu.

About Reforms in the Agamanic System:

The Srirangam Koil Miras Kainkaryaparagal Matrum Athanai Sarntha Koilgalin Miraskain-karyaparargalin Nalasangam, an association of archakas, has raised concerns and legal challenges against reforms introduced by the Tamil Nadu government. These reforms are perceived as an attempt to alter the hereditary system of appointing archakas (temple priests) in Agama temples. This article explores the key details of this issue and the significance of Agamas in Hindu practices.

Challenges to Reforms:

- **Petition for Quashing Government Orders:** The petitioners seek the quashing of the state government's orders and letters that enable individuals trained in Agama Sastra, regardless of their caste and gender, to assume priesthood.
- **Allegations of Unlawful Appointments:** The petitioners argue that the state government is unlawfully trying to appoint non-believers as archakas, which they view as a violation of religious rights protected under the Constitution.
- **Importance of Agama Knowledge:** The petitioners contend that the knowledge of Agamas, which hold significant religious practices, cannot be acquired through the government's one-year certificate course. Instead, it requires years of rigorous training under learned Gurus.

Historical Background:

- **1971 Amendment:** The DMK government amended the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious & Charitable Endowment (HR & CE) Act in 1971 to abolish the hereditary appointment of priests and allow individuals from all castes to become priests.
- **2006 Declaration:** In 2006, the government declared that all qualified individuals were eligible to be priests.
- **Supreme Court Intervention:** In 2015, the Supreme Court overturned the 2006 declaration, emphasizing the importance of adhering to Agama Sastras while ensuring that constitutional rights were not violated.
- **Madras High Court Ruling:** In 2009, the Madras High Court ruled in favor of a woman priest facing opposition from male priests, highlighting the need to eliminate gender bias from temples in accordance with constitutional mandates.
- **Guruvayoor Devaswom Case:** The Supreme Court upheld the appointment of non-believers to temple trust boards in 2004.
- **N Adithayan Case:** In 2002, the Supreme Court ruled that no custom pre-existing the Constitution could exclude non-Brahmins from performing puja in temples if they were trained and qualified.

Significance of Agamas:

- **Description of Agamas:** Agamas are a collection of Tantric literature and scriptures of Hindu schools, covering cosmology, philosophy, meditation, yoga, mantras, temple construction, deity worship, and ways to attain desires. They are in Tamil and Sanskrit.
- **Main Branches:** Agamas are categorized into three main branches: Shaiva, Vaishnava, and Shakta.
- **Origin and Chronology:** The origin and chronology of Agamas are unclear, with some being Vedic and others non-Vedic.

The challenges to reforms in appointing temple priests in Tamil Nadu highlight the complex interplay between tradition, religious rights, and constitutional mandates. The Agamas play a central role in temple practices and are subject to interpretation in the context of evolving societal norms and legal considerations.

Source:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-culture/in-sc-case-on-agama-the-contested-history-of-temple-priesthood-8962227/>

Q.1 With reference to the Agamas in Hindu practices, consider the following statements:

1. Agamas were written exclusively in Tamil language.
2. The three main branches of Agama texts are Shaiva, Vaishnava, and Shakta.
3. The government in Tamil Nadu has allowed individuals from all castes to become temple priests.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only

- (c) 1, 2, and 3
- (d) 1 and 3 only

ANSWER: B

Q.2 Agama are related to which of the following religion:

- (a) Jainism
- (b) Buddhism
- (c) Hinduism
- (d) Sikhism

ANSWER: C

Q.3 Discuss the tensions between the principles of equality and non-interference in religious matters in the context of the appointment of temple priests in Tamil Nadu. How can a balance be struck between ensuring equality and respecting religious autonomy?

Rishabh

