

Delhi Air Pollution: GRAP Stages and Their Restrictions

Delhi is grappling with “severe-plus” air quality, with AQI values exceeding 480. The poor air quality has made it challenging for residents to breathe, especially during the early hours of the day. In response, the Delhi government has implemented **GRAP Stage IV**, the strictest level under the **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)**.

What is GRAP?

The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) is an emergency mechanism introduced by the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change in January 2017 to combat escalating air pollution in the National Capital Region (NCR). It categorizes air quality into four stages:

- **Stage I: Poor** (AQI 201–300)
- **Stage II: Very Poor** (AQI 301–400)
- **Stage III: Severe** (AQI 401–450)
- **Stage IV: Severe Plus** (AQI > 450)

The system was developed based on recommendations by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and is enforced by the **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)** under the CAQM Act, 2021.

GRAP Stage IV: Key Restrictions

Under Stage IV, Delhi has introduced the following measures to mitigate pollution:

1. **Ban on Non-Essential Trucks**
 - Entry of non-essential diesel-powered trucks into Delhi is prohibited. Exceptions are made for vehicles carrying essential goods or providing critical services.
2. **Restrictions on Diesel Vehicles**
 - Medium and heavy goods vehicles (BS-IV or below) registered in Delhi are banned, except those transporting essential items.
 - Only LNG, CNG, electric, and BS-VI diesel vehicles are allowed.
3. **Closure of Educational Institutions**
 - Physical classes for students below Class 10 are suspended, except for essential exams for Classes 10 and 12.
4. **Remote Work Policies**
 - The Delhi and NCR state governments may allow 50% of employees in public and private offices to work from home.

5. Construction Activities

- Non-essential construction and demolition (C&D) activities are restricted.

6. Emergency Measures

- State governments may consider additional steps like closing colleges, non-essential commercial establishments, and implementing odd-even vehicle rules.

GRAP Stage III: Restrictions

Under Stage III, the focus is on curbing pollution sources:

- **Ban on Non-Essential Vehicles:** Prohibition of BS-III gasoline and BS-IV diesel vehicles in NCR.
- **Suspension of Construction:** All non-essential mining and construction activities are paused.
- **Enhanced Metro Services:** Additional 60 metro trips are introduced weekly.
- **Dust Control Measures:** Increased mechanical road sweeping and water spraying in pollution hotspots.
- **Advisory for Schools:** Closure of schools for students up to Class 5.

Steps under GRAP Stages I and II

- **Water Sprinkling:** Regular spraying of water and dust suppressants on roads to minimize dust pollution.
- **Traffic Management:** Coordination of traffic flow and increased parking fees to reduce private vehicle usage.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Educating the public on reducing polluting behaviors.
- **Diesel Generator Restrictions:** Limited use of diesel generators except for essential purposes.
- **Public Transport Encouragement:** Promoting the use of public transportation and carpooling.
- **Avoiding Polluting Activities:**
 - Avoiding biomass and waste burning outdoors.
 - Halting construction activities that generate dust during peak pollution months (October-January).

Delhi Air Pollution in Numbers

According to the **Center's Decision Support System for Air Quality Management**, vehicles accounted for **15.8%** of Delhi's air pollution on Sunday. The government continues to enforce GRAP restrictions to improve air quality and protect public health.

Conclusion

The implementation of GRAP Stage IV underscores the urgency of addressing Delhi's air

pollution crisis. While these measures are temporary, they highlight the need for long-term solutions to combat rising pollution levels. Residents are advised to follow the guidelines and take precautions to safeguard their health.

MCQ 1. Consider the following statements regarding the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP):

1. GRAP was introduced by the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change in 2016.
2. GRAP is applicable only to Delhi and does not cover other parts of the National Capital Region (NCR).
3. The implementation of GRAP is overseen by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM).

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 only
- d) 1 and 3 only

Answer: d) 1 and 3 only

2. With reference to the Air Quality Index (AQI), which of the following ranges corresponds to “Severe Plus” under GRAP?

- a) AQI 301–400
- b) AQI 401–450
- c) AQI 450–500
- d) AQI > 450

Answer: d) AQI > 450

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