Factors behind Delhi’s Pollution

Why in news?

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Various initiatives in the National Capital Region (NCR) to restrain the stubbornly high pollution has failed.

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What are the factors of pollution in Delhi?

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- Delhi-based The Energy and Resources Institute (Teri) has released its findings on Delhi pollution.
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- According to the reports about 30 per cent of the NCR’s pollution is caused by industrial units, 28 per cent by transport vehicles and 18 per cent by the dust produced from construction sites, road sweeping and rock crushing.
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- Though crop residue flaming can account for 30 per cent or more of the pollution during the peak paddy-harvesting season.
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- The overall contribution of smoke from outside Delhi during most part of the year has been reckoned by the Teri study at merely 4 per cent.
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- The inflaming of garbage and brick kilns located in and around Delhi further inflate the atmosphere’s smoke content, which, in association with humidity, dust and other hanging pollutants, leads to the formation of health-injurious smog.
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How industries contribute to Delhi’s pollution?

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- A lot of blame is ascribed to the burning of paddy stubble in the surrounding states even though it only adds to the locally generated pollution and that, too, for a short period of around a month (mid-October to mid-November).
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- But pollution remains high, and escalates to dangerous levels, even at other times of the year.
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- It is found that consistent polluters are the industries, transport vehicles, construction activity, fossil fuel-based power plants and generator sets, brick kilns and the torching of local waste, unfortunately not much is being done on these fronts.
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- About a dozen other thermal plants continue to function within the 300-km radius of the NCR.
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- The emission levels of most of these do not conform to the standards notified by the environment ministry in December 2015.
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- These emissions are relatively hazardous as they contain highly toxic sulphates, nitrates, mercury and secondary particulate matter.
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What measures were taken by the government in this regard?

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- An elaborate plan has been formulated to control the NCR’s pollution through short- and long-term actions.
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- It includes a well-crafted Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) to deal with emergencies.
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- Nearly 52,000 polluting industrial units, which have been asked to shut down, continue to operate in the residential and other non-conforming areas.
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What are the issues with the measures taken?

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- Polluting activities such as construction, non-mechanized road sweeping, waste burning, use of diesel generators, etc. are continuing despite the GRAP being in force.
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- Implementation of GRAP plan is tardy due to the multiplicity of laws, authorities and agencies dealing with this issue.
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- Most of these bodies such as the pollution control boards are just paper tigers and none of them is directly accountable for poor results.
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- The initiatives taken by the government are largely misdirected and the relatively minor contributors to this menace have received the bulk of the attention even as some of the main culprits remain unaddressed.
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Source: Business Standard

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