



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Commission for Air Quality Management-2024

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Why in news?

Following **multiple raps by the Supreme Court** for inadequately addressing stubble burning, the **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), based in New Delhi** has **doubled the fines** applicable to farmers caught indulging in it.

About the CAQM:

Establishment:

- The CAQM is a statutory body formed under the **Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021**.

Mandate:

- The CAQM's primary mandate is to coordinate efforts to **monitor, regulate, and resolve issues** related to **air quality** in the **National Capital Region (NCR)** and adjoining areas, which includes the states of **Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh**.
- It aims to ensure better coordination between various agencies, conduct **research**, and **identify solutions** to **air pollution** problems, especially those related to **particulate matter (PM 2.5)** and other pollutants.

Responsibilities:

- **Prevention and control of air pollution:** This includes taking action to mitigate sources of pollution such as stubble burning, vehicular emissions, industrial activities, and construction dust.
- The Commission coordinates with local and state governments to ensure that air quality standards are maintained.

Powers:

- **Restricting harmful activities:** The CAQM has the power to restrict activities that negatively impact air quality, such as **stubble burning** and industrial emissions.
- **Research and investigation:** It is empowered to conduct research and investigations related to environmental pollution and its impact on air quality.
- **Issuing binding directions:** The Commission can issue directions, including inspections, and regulations that are **binding** on the concerned authorities and individuals. Non-compliance with its orders is subject to penalties.

Key Areas of Action:

- Directs agencies to **control pollution sources**.

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- Issues guidelines to reduce air pollution.
- Coordinates air quality monitoring and management across the NCR and adjoining states.
- Takes **action against violations** related to air quality standards.
- **Accountability**: The CAQM is **directly accountable to Parliament**, ensuring that its actions are in line with national priorities for air quality management.

Composition of CAQM:

1. Chairperson:

- The CAQM is chaired by a senior **government official**, either a **Secretary** or **Chief Secretary** of the rank.
- The chairperson's term lasts for **three years** or until they reach the age of **70**.

1. Members:

- **Five ex-officio members**: These are **Chief Secretaries** or **Secretaries** from the states of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, who deal with **environmental protection**.
- **Three full-time technical members**: Experts in air quality, environmental science, and technology.
- **Three members from non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**: Representatives from environmental NGOs to ensure diverse perspectives.
- **Technical members from**:
 - **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)**.
 - **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.
 - **NITI Aayog**: India's premier think tank for national planning and development.

Key Functions and Powers:

- **Restricting activities affecting air quality**: The CAQM can impose restrictions on activities such as stubble burning, industrial operations, and construction activities that contribute to air pollution.
- **Conducting research and preparing guidelines**: It can issue scientific guidelines and prepare standards to help manage air pollution. This includes determining acceptable emission levels for industries and vehicles.
- **Binding directions**: The CAQM has the authority to issue **mandatory directions** that must be followed by governments and authorities in the NCR and adjoining areas. These directions include measures for pollution control, environmental regulations, and enforcement actions.

Importance of CAQM:

- The formation of the **CAQM** was a response to the increasing levels of air pollution in Delhi and surrounding regions, which often deteriorate during the winter months due to factors like **stubble burning** in neighboring states.
- The Commission plays a **crucial role** in shaping air quality management policy in the NCR and has the power to issue legally enforceable guidelines and actions to improve air quality.