



Varied Progress in Clean Air Target

Why in News?

Recently, the **Climate Trends and Respirer Living Sciences** have conducted a study, revealing that the majority of cities are far from the clean air targets of India's [National Clean Air Programme \(NCAP\)](#).

Key Points

- Among **49 cities** with consistent **PM2.5 data over five years**, **only 27 cities showed a decline in PM2.5 levels**, while merely four cities met or surpassed the targeted decline as per NCAP Goals.
 - The amount of PM2.5 in the air is a key indicator of air quality.
 - **PM stands for particulate matter, and the 2.5 refers to the size of the matter.**
- While some cities like **Varanasi, Agra**, and Jodhpur exhibited **significant reductions in PM2.5 levels**, others, including Delhi, reported marginal declines (only 5.9%) or even increased pollution loads.
 - **Varanasi showed the most substantial reduction with a 72% average decrease in PM2.5 levels** and a 69% reduction in PM10 levels from 2019 to 2023.

National Clean Air Programme

- It was **launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in January 2019**.
- It is the **first-ever effort** in the country **to frame a national framework for air quality management with a time-bound reduction target**.
- The **NCAP's goal is to reduce average Particulate Matter (PM) concentrations by 40% by 2026 in 131 cities**. Initially aimed for a 20-40% reduction by 2024, the target was **later extended to 2026**.