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**INDIA TOPPED AIR POLLUTION DEATH TOLL IN 2019, SAYS REPORT**

* A recent report published on pollution and health in journal, **The Lancet Planetary Health**reported **8% (16.7 lakh)** of all deaths in 2019 in India owing to air pollution.
* The Study also Identifies Outdoor Air Pollution as the ‘Largest Existential Threat to Human and Planetary Health’ with global deaths attributable to air pollution increasing by more than half in 21st

**Global overview of report**

* Total fatalities: **Pollution**caused an estimated **90 lakh (9 million) deaths in 2019** (equivalent to one in six deaths worldwide). This number has remained unchanged since the 2015 analysis by Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health.
* Air pollution: **Air pollution** (both household and ambient) remains responsible for the greatest number of deaths at **67 million worldwide**, including 1.7 million from hazardous chemical pollutants.
* Concerning increase: The number of deaths attributed to ambient air pollution has increased by about 55%, to 4.5 million from 2.9 million, since the year 2000.
* Water pollution: Water pollution was responsible for 1.36 million premature deaths.
* Lead: Lead contributed 9 lakh premature deaths, followed by toxic occupational hazards at 870,000 deaths.
* Source of lead: The source of lead pollution include leaded petrol, unsound recycling of lead-acid batteries and e-waste without pollution controls, spices that are contaminated with lead, pottery glazed with lead salts and lead in paint and other consumer products.

**Pollution in India**

* Mortality: The study reported that air pollution killed 1.67 million Indians in 2019, accounting for 18% of all fatalities.
* Geographical Spread: The air pollution is most severe in the **Indo-Gangetic Plain.**
* State wise data: Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal and Rajasthan account for over 50% deaths attributed to air pollution in India according to the report. These states were among the top five with the highest mortality attributed to air pollution in 2017 as well, according to study.
* **Uttar Pradesh** has the largest burden of both ambient, household air pollution.
* Causes: Burning of biomass in households was the single largest cause of air pollution deaths in India, followed by coal combustion and crop burning.

**Institutional measures to tackle Air pollution in India**

* India has developed a **National Clean Air Programme**, and in 2019 launched a Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region.
* India’s national strategy aims to reduce particulate matter emissions by as much as 30% from 2017 levels by 2024.
* India had also set a target of 175 GW renewable power installed capacity by the end of 2022 and 450 GW by 2030.
* The **National Electric Mobility Mission Plan**, the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and EV (**FAME**) plan, the **vehicle scrappage policy**, and charging infrastructure projects, among others, have all been implemented by the Indian government to promote cleaner automobiles to reduce pollution.
* Glasgow CoP26 Summit: India announced that it will reach **carbon neutrality by 2070** as part of a **five-point action plan** that included reducing emissions to 50% by 2030.
* One Sun One World One Grid Group (OSOWOG) Launched: It is a Green Grids Initiative to help achieve the pace and scale of reforms to infrastructure and market structures needed to underpin the global energy transition.
* India also underlined five commitments towards climate action at COP26.
  + Taking India’s non-fossil fuel energy capacity to **500 gigawatt (GW)** by 2030.
  + Fulfilling**50% of India’s energy requirements**through renewable energy by 2030.
  + Bringing down the **carbon intensity** of India’s economy by more than 45% by 2030.
  + Cut down its **net projected carbon emission** by 1 billion tons from now until 2030.
  + Achieve the target of **net zero carbon emission** by 2070.
* The report has called on governments, businesses and other entities to abandon fossil fuels and adopt clean energy sources.

**GOVT IN PROCESS OF INTEGRATING E-SHRAM PORTAL WITH ONE NATION ONE RATION CARD SCHEME**

* Recently, the Union Minister for Labour & Employment said that the e-Shram portal is being integrated with the One Nation One Ration Card scheme.

**e-Shram Portal:**

* In August 2021, the Union Ministry of Labour & Employment launched a national database to register **unorganised workers**, called the **e-Shram portal**.
* The portal came into being after the Supreme Court directed the Government to complete the registration process of unorganised workers.
* The government aims to register **38 crore unorganised workers**, such as construction labourers, migrant workforce, street vendors and domestic workers, among others.
  + The target group for the registration process is those aged between 16 and 59.
* A worker can register on the portal using his/her **Aadhaar card number** and **bank account details**, apart from filling other necessary details like date of birth, home town, mobile number and social category.
* The registrations can be done through Common Service Centres (CSC), Self, or through State Seva Kendras.

**Benefits:**

* Each registered worker will be issued an identity card, which can be used across the country to avail any benefits announced by the Government.
* The data on the portal will be used for optimum realization of the workers’ employability and extend the benefits of the social security schemes to them.
* The Union Government has already announced linking accidental insurance with registration on the e-Shram portal.
  + If a registered worker meets with an accident, he/she will be eligible for Rs 2 lakh on death or permanent disability and Rs 1 lakh on partial disability.

**WHAT IS THE ONE ‘ONE NATION, ONE RATION CARD’ SYSTEM?**

* The Union Government had launched the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme on a pilot basis in four states in 2019. As of Feb 2022, it has become operational in 35 states and union territories. It is now covering 96.8% of the population included in the National Food Security Act.
* **Objective**: To ensure all beneficiaries, especially migrants get ration (wheat, rice and other food grains) across the nation from any Public Distribution System (PDS) shop of their own choice.
* It was also launched with the purpose that no poor person should be deprived of getting subsidised food grains under the **food security scheme** when they shift from one place to another.
* It aims to reduce instances of corruption by middlemen and fraudulence in ration cards to avail benefits from different states.
* **Implementing Agency**: Department for the nation-wide portability of ration cards under National Food Security Act (NFSA)

**Who is eligible for the scheme:**

* Any citizen, who is declared under Below Poverty Line (BPL) category is eligible to get the benefit of this scheme across the country.

**Need for such scheme:**

* Under the previous system, a ration cardholder can buy food grains only from the PDS in the locality where he or she lives.