The Times of India
Title : 42-point action plan to clear air in a year
Author :
Location :
New Delhi:
Article Date : 12/31/2015

Centre To Act Against Officials At States' Behest

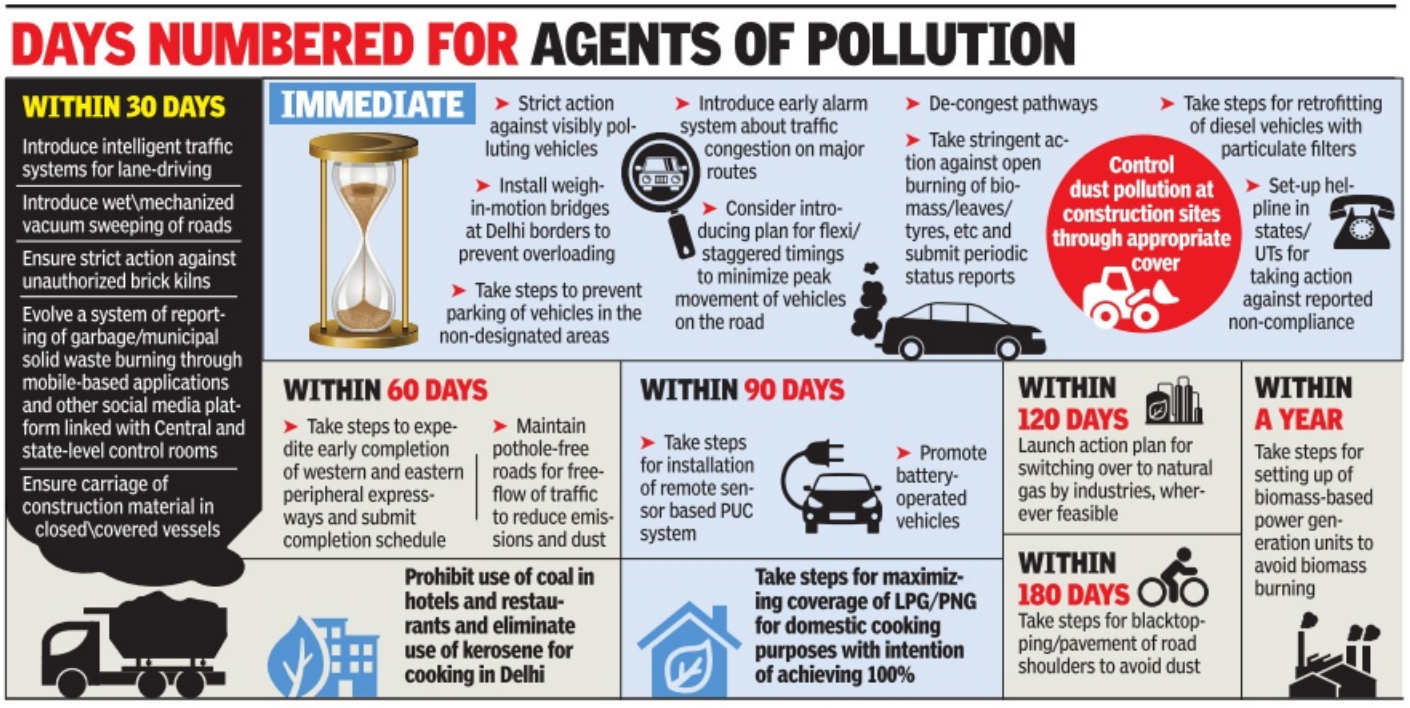
Amid reports of alarming level of air pollution in the capital, the Centre on Wednesday issued a 42-point action plan to handle the situation and directed Delhi and three neighbouring states--Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan--to implement them in right earnest.

While some of these points are supposed to be implemented immediately , the others will be taken care of in a staggered manner ranging from 30 days to one year. The directions were issued under Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981 that empowers the Centre to take action against erring officials after getting a non-compliance note from the states.

The states will have to get the local authorities to implement these measures by January 15, 2016. Subsequently , they will communicate the status of the implementation to the Centre before January 31. It will be supplemented with ambient air quality monitoring data being maintained by them.

“There has to be immediate action against visibly polluting vehicles. Directions include carrying out checks of the overloaded transport vehicles as it causes pollution, installing weighing machines immediately at entry points, ensuring no parking in non-designated areas, stringent ac ion against bio-mass burning and immediate stoppage of unauthorized brick kilns among others,“ said Union environment minister Pra kash Javadekar.

The action points also include decongestion of pathways, taking steps for retrofitting of die sel vehicles with particulate filters, allowing on y those diesel sets which meet prescribed stan dards, introduction of early alarm system for commuters related to traffic congestion on ma or routes, formulation of action plan for crea ion of green buffers along traffic corridors and ensure proper collection of horticulture waste.



The Times of India
Title : Storm Frank batters UK; damage cost £3bn
Author :
Location :
London:
Article Date : 12/31/2015

Thousands Left Without Power, Many Evacuated
Torrential rain and gale force winds battered northern Britain on Wednesday , cutting power to thousands of homes and forcing some to evacuate flooded streets in the third major storm in a month.

The environment agency said Britain had faced an extraordinary period of severe weather and flooding in December, with consultants PwC warning that the latest deluge from storm Frank could take total losses above £3 billion ($4.5 billion). Further heavy rain was predicted throughout Wednesday as the latest storm swept across northern England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

A helicopter was used to deposit sandbags, even as the threat of more rain loomed large over Cumbria and Yorkshire on New Year's eve.Around 6,700 properties were flooded in northern England last week as river levels reached all time highs. With three severe flood warnings still in place, danger to life cannot be ruled out.

In northern Ireland and the Republic, roads were flooded, flights were delayed and thousands went without power, while in Scotland, local media reports said people were being evacuated from their homes in the north east town of Ballater by dingy .

PwC on Wednesday raised its estimate of insured losses from two earlier storms -Desmond and Eva - to between 900 million pounds and 1.2 billion pounds from an earlier range of 700 million to 1 billion pounds. “The storms this time have generated a far greater proportion of non-insured losses compared to the total economic damage,“ said Mohammad Khan, general insurance leader at PwC.

“Many of the smaller and family-run businesses that have been impacted by Eva and Desmond will not have commercial insurance in place due to the impact of the recession and lower business volumes in recent years,“ Khan said.

Armed with torchlights, biker gangs patrol flood-ravaged villages to ward off looters

As night falls in the flood-ravaged villages of Yorkshire in northern England, armed only with torchlights and donning reflective vests over their biker gear, around 30 hefty men and women in black and bandanas begin their patrol against looters.Thousands of people have been forced to evacuate their homes in northern England, leaving their belongings vulnerable to thieves. “The police are stretched dramatically at the moment, they can't do anything. We came down to have a nose around and try and let people know there was a presence on the street,“ said Lloyd Spencer, chairman of the Drifters motorcycle club, who runs the Northern pub in nearby Bradford. On how they deal with anyone caught trying to steal, he said, “We haven't had to use any physical force. We're not vigilantes, we're not going to beat anybody up, it's just looking after other people.“

Reuters

THAT SINKING FEELING: Cars submerged in floodwaters in Scotland

THE HINDU

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Ashtamudi, a lake in distress

- Ignatius Pereira

The lake is a Ramsar site

Even as there is no dearth of official warnings of strong action against encroachers, encroachments of massive scale continue unabated along the Ashtamudi Lake in Kerala's Kollam district.

The encroachers often feel that it is their right to encroach upon the lake, listed as a Ramsar site.

Of late, it is the estuarine islands of the lake that are expanding in size due to encroachments. Large portions of the lake adjoining the islands are encircled with a foundation and then reclaimed. During the holidays on December 24 and 25, several boat loads of sand and debris were dumped on the encircled encroachments.

Ashtamudi Lake enthusiast V.K. Madhusoodanan said that as a result of the encroachments, the lake, has shrunk to less than 34 sq. km. "If this is the manner in which a Ramsar site is protected, then in my opinion the time has dawned to strip the Ashtamudi Lake of its Ramsar tag," he said.

This is happening to a wetland which perhaps has the largest number of environment activists fighting to protect it, he said.

Massive encroachments continue unabated along Ashtamudi lake

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Floods in US state leave 13 dead, hundreds evacuated

Reuters | Dec 31, 2015, 06.37 AM IST

Rain-swollen rivers across Missouri were still rising on Wednes still rising on Wednesday, as widespread floods forced the evacuation of hundreds of people, closing part of a major interstate highway.

At least 13 people have died in Missouri since the weekend, as incessant downpour from a massive winter storm system triggered the worst flooding in two decades, governor Jay Nixon said. "It's very clear that Missouri is in the midst of a very historic and dangerous flooding event," Nixon said.

At the confluence of Mis sissippi and Missouri, about 20 miles north of St. Louis, residents of West Alton and Arnold were told to evacuate.

Flooding in the middle portion of the Mississippi and its tributaries may reach the highest levels in recorded history, forecasting site AccuWeather said. The national weather service forecasts the Mississippi at the Chester, Illinois, river gauge about 60 miles south of St. Louis would crest at 49.7 feet on Friday -matching the 1993 record.

The US coast guard closed a five-mile stretch of the Mississippi near St.Louis to all vessels due to hazardous conditions. The floodwaters have forced the closure of roadways and highways, including a portion of Interstate 44, a major highway that runs from west Texas to St. Louis.

Sewage has been flowing into the fast-rising Meramec river near St. Louis since Monday , when floodwater disabled a sewer treatment plant.In Illinois, some inmates were moved out of the Menard Correctional Center and sandbags and drinking water were prepared in anticipation of flooding in lower level cell blocks, Illinois officials said in a statement.

Wet New Year eve as Britons battle storms

ST. 3

LONDON: The iconic Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol was closed for only the second time in its 151-year history as a succession of storms named Desmond, Eva and Frank lashed parts of the United Kingdom, dampening spirits and plans for the New Year.

December witnessed unprecedented rains, mainly in north and northwest England and Scotland. Officials cut short holidays to deal with the situation that attracted much flak from residents for the lack of flood defences in several areas.

The latest storm, Frank, from Tuesday sparked several "severe" flood warnings in England and Wales, while areas battered by previous storms continued to grapple with new lashings as residents prepared to clean up earlier damage.

Over 5,000 homes in Scotland and Northern Ireland were left without electricity, while soldiers were deployed to evacuate homes after a bridge collapsed in Tadcaster, north Yorkshire. The news media provided blanket coverage of the floods and impact of the storms.

There were reports of flooded homes being looted in York, where police said it was "extremely disappointing" that thieves had broken into homes. North Yorkshire Police's Mark Grange said: "It is impossible to comprehend why anyone would want to bring further suffering to those who are already in a very vulnerable situation." **HTC**

राजस्थान का जल संसाधन विभाग सम्मानित

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राज्य में जल संसाधनों के अधिकतम व कुशल उपयोग के लिए केन्द्रीय सिंचाई एवं शक्ति बोर्ड (सीबीआईपी) ने राजस्थान के जल संसाधन विभाग को सीबीआईपी अवार्ड से सम्मानित किया है। केन्द्रीय जल संसाधन मंत्री उमा भारती ने नई दिल्ली के स्कॉप ऑडिटोरियम में आयोजित एक समारोह में राज्य के जल संसाधन विभाग सचिव अजिताभ शर्मा और मुख्य अभियंता विनोद शाह को यह सम्मान प्रदान किया गया। समारोह में राज्य के जलसंसाधन मंत्री राम प्रताप भी मौजूद थे।

कहीं घी घणा, कहीं मुट्ठी चणा

- सफाई व मरम्मत में बरती अनियमितता का उठा रहे खमियाजा
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बीसलपुर बांध परियोजना अधिकारियों की ओर से नहरों की सफाई व मरम्मत के दौरान बरती गई अनियमितताओं से मुख्य नहरों के टेल तक पर्याप्त मात्रा में सिंचाई का पानी नहीं पहुंच रहा है। इससे जैकमाबाद, बोरड़ा, खरेड़ा, मोडियाला आदि क्षेत्रों में हजारों रुपए खर्च कर बोई गई फसलें सूखने के कगार पर हैं।

दूसरी ओर कई स्थानों पर आए दिन छलकती नहरों के पानी से खेत लबालब हो रहे हैं। इससे फसलें गलने के कगार पर हैं। सफाई नहीं कराने का ही परिणाम है कि राजमहल वितरिका में फंसे कचरे के चलते बुधवार सुबह वितरिका एक बार फिर ओवरफ्लो होकर छलक पड़ी। इससे आसपास के लगभग आधा दर्जन खेतों की 30 बीघा भूमि में पानी भर गया। उल्लेखनीय है कि बांध परियोजना की अनदेखी के कारण राजमहल वितरिका एक पखवाड़े में तीसरी बार ओवरफ्लो हुई है। इसके अलावा इसके दर्जनभर जगह से क्षतिग्रस्त होने से रिसाव के कारण रोजाना लाखों लीटर पानी व्यर्थ बहने के साथ ही खेतों में भर जाता है। खेतों में भरते पानी से हजारों रुपए खर्च कर बोई गई सरसों, गेहूं आदि की फसलें गलने के कगार पर है। पानी भरने की सूचना परियोजना अधिकारियों को देने के बाद भी कोई कार्रवाई नहीं की जा रही। इससे किसानों में नाराजगी है। वे अपने खर्चे पर इंजन पम्प सेट लगाकर दिनभर खेतों से पानी बाहर निकालने में जुटे रहे।

राजमहल वितरिका में ओवरफ्लो होने से खेतों में भरे पानी को इंजन लगाकर निकालने की कवायद करते किसान।