Dust Storm and Delhi pollution

Why in news?

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SAFAR report shows that multiday dust storm from west Asia is the reason for Delhi smog.

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Click here to know more about Delhi smog.

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What are the findings of the recent report?

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- System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) under the Ministry of Earth Sciences published a 'Scientific Assessment of Delhi Winter Air Quality Crisis'.
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- It listed events behind the smog that had smothered Delhi and its neighbourhood.
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- The report blamed a multiday dust storm from west asia much more than the burning of stubble for Delhi's air quality crisis during November 6-16
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- The pollution contribution of Gulf dust storm on peak daywas around 40% and from stubble burning was 25%".
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How the dust storm affected Delhi?

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- It began as a giant swirl over Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in the last week of October, then propelled eastward by a set of peculiar atmospheric conditions, covering all towns and cities in its path by a choking, blinding

haze.
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- In the Middle Eastthe storm triggered over 4,000 cases of suffocation across Iraq’s governorates, forced Iraq’s civil aviation authority to shut down flights.
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- A high-pressure centre developed above the Gulf of Oman and the strong anticyclonic flow at 5,500 metres transported atmospheric dust into the direction of Delhi.
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- A high-pressure zone over Delhi and its neighbourhood and the absence of strong winds kept pollutants trapped close to the surface.
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What are the reasons behind recent storm?

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- Occurrences of dust and dust storms (sand storms) had enormously increased as compared with those occurring during the last centuryin Iraq.
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- It cited climate change as the main reason which led to drastic changes in annual rainfall and temperature besides other reasons such as drought, mismanagement of water, and abandonment of agricultural lands.
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- The other reason for the dust in Iran is apparently massive dam-building exercises that Tehran has undertaken, along with the diversion of water resources for agriculture.
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Source: Indian Express

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