Global Burden of Disease report

Why in news?

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Global Burden of Disease report was recently published by The Lancet Planetary Health journal.

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What does the report say?

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- India, which accounts for 18% of the global population, recorded <u>26% of the global premature deaths</u> and disease burden due to air pollution.
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- One in every eight deaths in India (2017) could be attributed to air pollution, which now contributes to more disease burden than smoking.
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- The states which recorded the highest exposure to particulate matter PM 2.5 were Delhi, Haryana and Punjab.
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- The disease burden associated with air pollution in India includes ischaemic heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer.
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- The average life expectancy in India would have been <u>1.7 years higher</u> if the air pollution levels were less than the minimal level causing health loss.
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- Also, no state in India had an average exposure norm of less than 10 micrograms per cubic metre for PM 2.5 as recommended by WHO.
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- The recommended limit set by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards of India is <u>higher than WHO limit</u> at 40 micrograms per cubic metre.
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- Even then, 77% of India's population was exposed to mean PM 2.5 more than the recommended limit.
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What are the measures needed?

- <u>Stubble-burning</u> and the <u>use of solid fuels</u> in households serve as the two major sources of pollution.
- **Agricultural field** - The Centre should work with Punjab and Haryana to ensure that the machinery already distributed to farmers and cooperatives to handle agricultural waste is in place and working.
- A mechanism for rapid collection of farm residues and new approaches to recovering value from biomass has to be instituted.
- **Pollution – rural** - The potential of domestic biogas units, solar cookers and improved biomass cook stoves has to be explored, since they impose no additional expenditure on rural and less affluent households.
- **Pollution – urban** - Fuels may be relatively cleaner today and vehicles better engineered to cut emissions, but traffic densities in cities have led to a rise in pollution.
- Thus, real-time measurement of pollution using ground-level monitoring stations for PM2.5 should be explored.
- **Global experience** - According to the WHO database of air pollution, 14 of the 15 cities with the worst air pollution in the world are in India.
- India should learn from the experience in controlling high pollution levels in the cities of Mexico City and Beijing.
- **Focus** - High pollution levels do not necessarily translate into a high disease burden.
- For example, Delhi has high ambient air pollution level but the number of deaths are comparatively lower.
- Hence, the country need to pay greater attention to the people living in the worst-affected States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Jharkhand.
- These are the regions with low social development, which still relies on solid fuels for cooking and engaging in stubble-burning and hence need more

attention.
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Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express

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