India completes phase-out of ozone depleting chemical HCFC-141b

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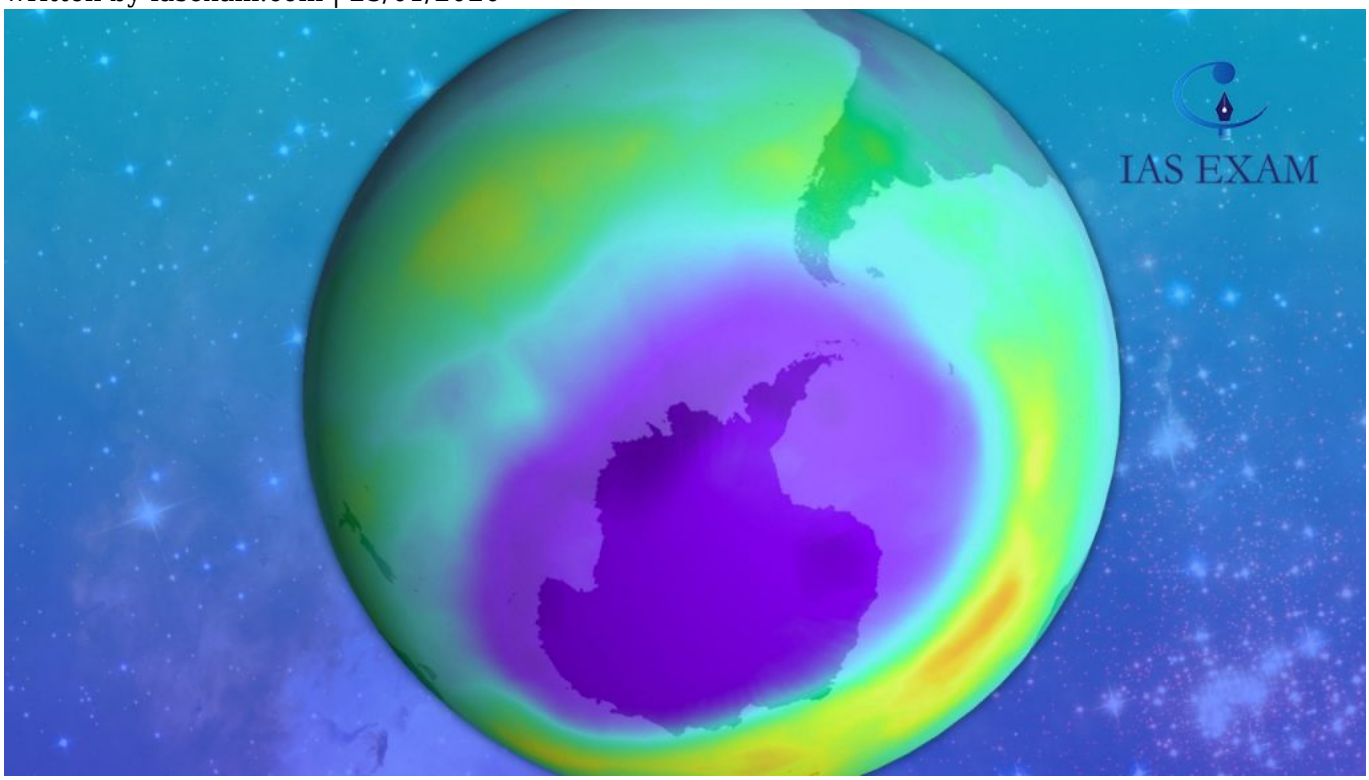

India has successfully completed the phasing out of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141b, used by foam manufacturing companies and one of the most potent ozone-depleting chemicals, the Union Environment Ministry said recently. Ozone occurs naturally in small amounts in the upper atmosphere of the earth. It protects life on earth from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

As per the statement released by the Environment Ministry, HCFC-141b is not produced in the country and all the domestic requirements are met through imports. With the notification (of December 31, 2019) prohibiting the import of HCFC-141b (from January 1 this year), the country has completely phased out the important ozone depleting chemical.

Simultaneously, the use of HCFC-141b by foam manufacturing industry has also been closed as on January 1 under the Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation and Control) Amendment Rules, 2014. HCFC-141b is used mainly as a blowing agent in the production of rigid polyurethane (PU) foams.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) on December 31 brought out a notification through which the issuance of import license for HCFC-141b has been prohibited from January 1 this year. The phase out of HCFC-141b from the country has twin environmental benefits – one is assisting the healing of the stratospheric ozone layer and the second is climate change mitigation due to transition of foam manufacturing enterprises

at large scale to low global warming potential alternative technologies, said the statement.

Most of the companies that are manufacturing foam in India are micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and belong to informal sector.

About HCFC

Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFCs) are a large group of compounds, whose structure is very close to that of Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), but including one or more hydrogen atoms. Under normal conditions, HCFCs are gases or liquids which evaporate easily. They are generally fairly stable and unreactive. They are mainly used in refrigeration and air conditioning equipment. Despite their potential to replace CFCs, Hydrochlorofluorocarbon have relatively little impact on atmospheric chlorine loading.