

Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development is contemplating to initiate a new programme under which it is proposed to sanction new projects covering 5 million ha/year from 2020-21 to 2023-24. It is also proposed to complete 577 ongoing projects which have life span upto 2021-22 subject to approval of the Government for continuation of the existing scheme beyond March, 2020.

Helping farmers in reducing stubble burning

46. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR GUPTA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana is a major cause of air pollution in north India;

(b) whether it is also a fact that farmers have little choice in getting their fields ready for the next crop as other options like machines are a financial burden on the farmers; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken to help farmers in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO): (a) to (c) Stubble burning in states like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and biomass burning in Delhi during the months of October and November, is one of the contributors to the poor air quality in North India specifically in Delhi and NCR, amongst other factors like industrial emissions, vehicular emissions, road and soil dust, construction and demolition activities and adverse meteorological conditions etc. As per, SAFAR portal (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research by Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune) the stubble burning was estimated to have contributed between 2% to 46% for PM_{2.5} levels in Delhi during October- November 2019 and the contribution was more than 30% only for 3 days during the said period.

In order to control stubble burning, a new Central Sector Scheme on 'Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for *in-situ* Management of Crop Residue in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi' is being administered by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, with allocation of Central funds to the tune of ₹ 1178.47 crore.

Under this Scheme, machines and equipment for *in-situ* crop residue management such as Super Straw Management System (SMS) for Combine Harvesters, Happy Seeders, Hydraulically Reversible MB Plough, Paddy Straw Chopper, Mulcher, Rotary Slasher, Zero Till Seed Drill and Rotavators etc. are provided with 50% subsidy to the individual farmers and 80% subsidy for establishment of "Custom Hiring Centers". The State Governments during 2018-19 have supplied around 56,290 machines on subsidy for *in-situ* management of crop residue with similar targets during 2019-20.

Effectiveness of Air Purifiers and Masks

47. SHRI R.K. SINHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has conducted any study on efficacy and effectiveness of masks and air purifiers as to whether they really work, as during the peak air pollution, the sales of masks and air purifiers is witnessed all over and a majority of our citizens cannot afford purchasing air purifiers and even masks; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, whether Government has any plans to conduct such a study?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO): (a) and (b) 54 Wind Augmentation and Purification Units (WAYUs) have been installed as pilot project for assessing the control of pollution at 5 major traffic intersection in Delhi. The efficiency for filtering PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} has been observed to be between 28- 49% and between 9 - 25% respectively. However, Government has not conducted any specific study relating to the efficacy of the masks and indoor air purifiers.

Notification on ban on use of RO system

48. SHRI S. MUTHUKARUPPAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has issued any notification regarding prohibition on the use of Reverse Osmosis (RO) systems, which result in wastage of almost eighty per cent of water;