

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 525
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.12.2023

Steps taken to reduce stubble burning

525. SMT. PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by Government to reduce stubble burning alongwith the results thereof during the last five years;
- (b) whether Government has any timeline to completely get rid of stubble burning, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government is aware of the fact that Air Quality Index (AQI) of Delhi-NCR still worsen though there is a significant decrease in stubble burning incidents, if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps taken by Government in the last five years to incentivize farmers to use stubbles for other purposes rather than burning and the subsequent results thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) to (b):

For abatement and control of air pollution in Delhi / NCR, the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas was constituted in 2021. The Commission, since its inception, has taken several targeted steps to mitigate air pollution in Delhi-NCR including emphasizing the issue of stubble burning.

The Commission through statutory Directions dated 10.06.2021 had provided a framework for control/elimination of crop residue burning and directed to draw up the state-specific action plans based on the major contours of the Framework.

The Governments of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Government of NCT of Delhi accordingly formulated state-specific action plans for the prevention and control of paddy stubble burning during the paddy harvest season in 2021 and 2022 respectively. Based on field experience and learnings during 2021 and 2022, the respective action plans of Punjab, Haryana and NCR UP have been further revised and updated for the ensuing paddy harvest season of 2023 including measures for *in-situ* & *ex-situ* management of stubble.

Further, 33 scientists of CPCB were deployed from 10.11.2023 onwards as flying squads for intensifying monitoring and enforcement actions towards the prevention of paddy

stubble burning incidents in 22 districts of Punjab and 11 districts of Haryana. The flying squads are coordinating with the State Government/ nodal officers/ officers from respective Pollution Control Boards towards prevention and control of stubble burning in their respective districts and sending their daily reports to the Commission.

Owing to concerted efforts by all stakeholders and constant monitoring and reviews by the Central Govt., a total of 39186 cases of paddy stubble burning have been reported in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and NCR districts of UP and Rajasthan for the period between 15th September – 30th November, 2023 as against 53792 incidences for the corresponding period in 2022 i.e. an overall reduction of about 27%.

Paddy Residue Burning events (Upto 30th November, 2023)

Punjab			Haryana			Total (including Delhi and NCR Districts of UP and Rajasthan)		
2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
71304	49922	36663 (-27% over 2022)	6987	3661	2303 (-37% over 2022)	78550	53792	39186 (-27% over 2022)

(c):

Incidences of paddy stubble burning in the northern states of Punjab, Haryana, NCR districts of UP and other areas in NCR is one of the major contributory factors in the deterioration of air quality in the NCR, particularly during the period between October and November when the climatic and meteorological conditions are also generally unfavorable towards dispersion of air pollutants.

While a substantial reduction was recorded in the paddy farm fires during 2023, the resultant benefit in AQI was not evident this year owing to much adverse meteorological factors like very low/calm wind speed near Delhi, very low mixing height and very low ventilation coefficient etc.

Besides, air pollution in Delhi-NCR is a collective result of multiple factors including high level of anthropogenic activities in the high-density populated areas in NCR, arising from various sectors.

(d):

MoA&FW in 2018 launched scheme for providing subsidy for purchase of crop residue management machinery and establishment of custom hiring centres (CHCs) in NCT of Delhi and the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. During 2018-2022, total fund released to Delhi and other States under the said Scheme is Rs. 2440.07 crores using which, over 2 lakh crop residue machineries have been delivered to individual farmers and CHCs, and over 39,000 CHCs have been established.

CPCB has framed guidelines for providing one time financial assistance for setting up of paddy straw based pelletization and Torrefaction plants which may help in addressing the supply chain issues and the issue of open burning of paddy straw in agriculture fields in

Northern Region. A maximum amount of Rs. 28 lakhs or 40% of the capital cost considered for plant and machinery of a 1 TPH plant, whichever is lower, shall be given as onetime financial support by CPCB, subject to a maximum total financial support of Rs. 1.4 crore per proposal. A corpus of Rs. 50 crores has been earmarked for utilisation through the guidelines. A total of 10 plants have been approved so far.

An addendum to the above said CPCB Guidelines was also issued under which one-time financial assistance is provided to Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils and Zilla Parishads of the states of Punjab, Haryana, NCT of Delhi and NCR districts of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, for establishing paddy straw based briquetting plants for use of briquettes for cremation purpose only.
