

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *62
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.12.2018

Air pollution due to stubble burning in National Capital Region

*62. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that during this winter season, air pollution has reached an alarming level in National Capital Territory (NCR) of Delhi;
- (b) whether it is also a fact that it is partly because of stubble burning by farmers;
- (c) if so, whether a meeting of concerned officers from the neighbouring States was called to address the issue;
- (d) the amount provided to various States, including Punjab, for providing farmers with alternatives to stubble burning; and
- (e) details of the other measures taken, including provision of incinerators to the farmers in the concerned States?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(DR. HARSH VARDHAN)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 62 due for reply on 17.12.2018 regarding 'Air pollution due to stubble burning in National Capital Region' by Shrimati Ambika Soni, Hon'ble Member of Rajya Sabha

- (a) & (b) Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring System (CAAQMS) data has indicated some improvement in air quality of Delhi in 2018 (Jan– Dec 11, 2018) compared to 2017 (Jan – Dec 11, 2017), such as increase in number of 'Good' to 'Moderate' days to 158 from 151 in 2017, and reduction in number of 'Poor' to 'Severe' days from 194 in 2017 to 187 in 2018. However, incidents of episodic high pollution events post Diwali (November 8- November 9) have been noted this year due to stubble bursting in neighbouring States and bursting of firecrackers.

Stubble burning in Northern States contributes to air pollution in Delhi and NCR in winter season as per the report of Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology(IITM),Pune, Ministry of Earth Sciences. System of Air Quality & Weather Forecasting & Research (SAFAR)-has analysed the contribution of stubble burning in the total PM2.5 for the kharif season of this year. This estimated % share of stubble burning in PM2.5 reached to a high of 36% on 26th October, 2018 and 33% on 5th November, 2018.

- (c) Meetings with Environment Ministers and concerned officers from the neighbouring States were held under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) on 27.09.18 and 01.11.18. Secretary, MoEF&CC has also held regular meetings with the concerned officers of the neighbouring States to address this issue.
- (d) & (e) To stop burning of crop residue that leads to higher level of air pollution in Delhi and NCR especially during adverse meteorological conditions in early winter in North India, the Central Government has introduced 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' for the period from 2018-19 and 2019-20 with an outlay of Rs. 1151.80 crore. This year's allocation of Central funds is Rs. 591.65 crore. During 2018-19, the funds amounting to Rs. 269.38 crores, Rs. 137.84, Rs. 148.60 crores and Rs. 28.51 crores have been released to State Governments of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Central Agencies respectively.

Also, Ministry of Power has brought out the policy for Biomass Utilization for Power Generation through Co-firing in Pulverised Coal Fired Boilers in November, 2017. As per the policy, all fluidized bed and pulverized coal units (coal based thermal power plants) except those having ball and tube mill, of power generating utilities, public or private, located in India, shall endeavour to use 5-10% blend of biomass pellets made, primarily, of agri residue along with coal after assessing the technical feasibility, viz. safety aspects etc. In line with the policy, Central Electricity Authority has issued an Advisory to all concerned State Governments, power plant utilities, power equipment manufacturers and other stake holders to promote use of biomass pellets.

Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities under 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' have been conducted involving demonstrations, training, farmers' awareness camps, distribution of pamphlets, display of hoardings and banners, radio talks, discussion on T.V. and advertisement in print and electronic media.
