

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1119
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.12.2022

Air pollution in Delhi

1119. SHRI RAJMANI PATEL:
DR. ANIL AGARWAL:
SHRI VIVEK K. TANKHA:

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

- (a) Whether Delhi's Air Quality Index for the month of October-November, this year has turned hazardous and millions of people have died because of air pollution in Delhi;
- (b) Whether the main cause of pollution is massive spike in stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana States;
- (c) If so, steps Government has taken to stop stubble burning; and
- (d) Whether Government has any plan to curb environmental pollution in Delhi and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a)
The analysis of Air Quality Index (AQI) of Delhi for the month of October – November 2022 reveals that most of the days fall in poor and very poor category. There 2 Good days in October. The prevailing air quality during these months may be attributed to meteorological conditions and contribution from local and regional emission sources which might have pushed the air quality in poor category. The Air Quality Index of Delhi during October - November 2022 is given as **Annexure - I**.

There are several studies conducted by different organizations, using different methodologies, on the impact of pollution on human health. There is no conclusive data available in the country to establish direct correlation of death/disease exclusively due to pollution.

(b) & (c)
The main causes of pollution in Delhi-NCR include Stubble Burning (especially in North-western states), Open MSW burning, Road dust, Industrial pollution, Thermal power plants, Vehicular pollution and dust from Construction and Demolition activities. During post-monsoon and winter months, the lower temperature, lower mixing heights, inversion conditions and stagnant winds lead to trapping of the pollutants resulting in high pollution in the region.

The steps taken to control stubble burning activities *inter alia* include:

- (i) In-situ Crop Residue Management- Supported by CRM Scheme of Ministry of Agriculture for the activities – CRM machines procurement, setting up of Custom Hiring Centers, high yield and short duration paddy varieties, staggering of harvesting schedule, extensive use of bio-decomposer by IARI
- (ii) Ex-situ Crop Residue Management- Alternative usage of paddy straw viz. Biomass Power Projects, Co-firing in Thermal Power Plants, Feed stock for 2G Ethanol plants, Feed stock in Compressed Biogas plant, fuel in industrial boilers, WTE plants, packaging materials etc.
- (iii) Prohibition of stubble / crop residue burning
- (iv) Effective monitoring / enforcement
- (v) Schemes to reduce the generation of paddy straw
- (vi) IEC activities for the plan of action
- (vii) Standard protocol for recording and monitoring of fire counts.

Owing to concerted efforts by all stakeholders and constant monitoring and reviews by the Central Government, reduction in paddy stubble burning cases have been reported for the period between 15th September – 30th November, 2022 compared to the cases in the corresponding period in 2021.

(d)

A comprehensive policy has been finalized to curb pollution in Delhi and National Capital Region. The Policy contains sector wise long term action plan to prevent, control and abate air pollution in the NCR including industries, vehicles/ transport, construction and demolition, dust from roads and open areas, municipal solid waste burning, crop residue burning etc. The targeted action plan also deals with thermal power plants, clean fuels & electric mobility, public transportation, road traffic management, diesel generators, bursting of fire crackers and abating air pollution through greening and plantation etc.

Apart from that city specific action plans have been prepared under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) based on the inputs of state governments and rolled out for implementation in these 131 non-attainment/million plus cities to improve the air quality which also includes Delhi. The action plan for Delhi is available on the website of CPCB, on the link <https://cpcb.nic.in/Actionplan/Delhi.pdf>.

Annexure I**Air Quality Index (Number of days) of Delhi during
October to November 2022**

Month in 2022	Number of days in different categories of AQI					
	Good (0–50)	Satisfactory (51–100)	Moderate (101–200)	Poor (201– 300)	Very Poor (301–400)	Severe (>401)
October	2	4	8	10	7	
November				12	15	3