

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2605
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.03.2023

Efforts to make Delhi pollution-free

2605. SMT. RANJEET RANJAN:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that Delhi is one of the most polluted capitals in the world, if so, the latest efforts being made by Government to make Delhi pollution-free;
- (b) whether any task force has been constituted in this regard with the help of various agencies of Delhi, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken by Government to present an alternate arrangement for stubble burning in the neighbouring States of Delhi?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c)

Out of the 131 cities (including 123 non-attainment cities exceeding National Ambient Air Quality Standards) in the country, 95 cities including Delhi have shown decrease in Particulate Matter 10 (PM10) concentration in FY 2021-22 with respect to base year FY 2017-18. Air quality index of Delhi indicates improvement in air quality in 2022 compared to 2016, as number days in Good, Satisfactory, Moderate category have increased and Poor to Severe days decreased in the year 2022 as compared to year 2016. Air Quality Index of Delhi 2016-2022 is given as **Annexure-I**, according to days status.

With a view to further abate and control air pollution in Delhi /NCR, the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) devised a comprehensive policy for abatement of pollution in NCR in July 2022, stipulating sector specific action points and quantify targets along with timelines along with implementation by various agencies in NCR States including the State of Punjab with respect to abatement of air pollution owing to crop residue burning. The policy framework details sector-wise interventions, quantified targets and timelines for various sectors. The Commission has constituted the statutory sub-committee of the Commission on Safeguarding and Enforcement represented by very senior level functionaries of the Delhi and other NCR State Govts. under Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021

The steps being taken by Government for proper management of stubble burning in the neighbouring States of Delhi is given as **Annexure-II**.

Annexure- I

Air Quality Index of Delhi
(2016-2022)

Category	Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	No. of Days	354	365	365	366	365	365								
Good (0-50)		0	2	0	2	5	1	3	108	152	159	182	227	197	163
Satisfactory (51-100)		25	45	53	59	95	72	65							
Moderate (101-200)		83	105	106	121	127	12	95							
Poor (201-300)		120	115	114	103	75	80	130	246	213	206	183	139	168	202
Very Poor (301-400)		101	89	72	56	49	64	66							
Severe (>401)		25	9	20	24	15	24	6							

Initiatives for alternative arrangement for stubble burning in the neighbouring States of Delhi

- I. Constitution of Commission for Air Quality Improvement in National Capital Region and Adjoining Area (CAQM) through an Act passed by the Parliament of India on 13.08.2021, for the purpose of improving the Air Quality in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas.
- II. Interaction with concerned agencies/organisation and Ministries at Central and State level to assess the preparedness of policy makers, enforcement agencies and regulatory bodies in order to tackle the problem of Air Pollution in Delhi NCR initiated interaction. Some of the initiatives taken in these meetings including options to promote use of paddy straw as alternate resource as fuel and fodder are as below:
 - i. Joint ministerial meeting with Central Ministries like Agricultural & Farmer Welfare, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Power, Railways to explore the possibilities of policy interventions and strengthening of existing schemes.
 - ii. Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change held meetings with Chief Ministers, Environment Ministers and Chief Secretaries of NCR States including Punjab, followed by meeting of Commission with Chief Secretaries, State departments and Local Administrations.
 - iii. To encourage use of Stubble as supplementary bio-mass fuel in thermal power plants (TPPs) in NCR. Subsequently, preparedness was reviewed for all TPPs (within 300 Km of NCT) by Minister of Power. NTPC floated tender buying contract for Stubble based bio-mass pellets to be used as supplementary fuel. This will help in environmentally sound Stubble management with added income to farmers and discourage Stubble burning, resulting in lesser contribution to emission load in coming years.
 - iv. Operationalization of a Centralised Control room in Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer Welfare to co-ordinate with State and Central agencies to prevent stubble burning.
 - v. Increase coverage area for in-situ Stubble management using proven PUSA technology for bio-decomposing (Government and NGOs).
 - vi. Task Force constituted for collection of Stubble in Punjab and Haryana and supply as fodder to fodder deficient region of Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- III. Review meetings on management of air quality in Delhi NCR held on 20-May-22, 22-June-22, 22-Jul-2022, 23-Aug-22, 22-Sep-22, 30-Sep-22 and 23-Jan-23 with the following agenda including alternative use of parali:
 - (i) Limiting the use of DG Sets, uninterrupted power supply in the region
 - (ii) Revision / updating of action plan for prevention and control of Paddy Stubble Burning in 2022 and up scaling Ex-Situ Management of paddy straw
 - (iii) Extended use of Pusa Bio-Decomposer for In-Situ Crop Residue Management
 - (iv) Management of dust from roads, central verges, sidewalks and open area along the right of ways
 - (v) To encourage use of Stubble as supplementary bio-mass fuel in thermal power plants (TPPs) in NCR
 - (vi) Utilization of Parali for production of Bio-fuel and ethanol to be used in Boilers and development of market mechanism for the purpose
 - (vii) Shifting of industries of NCR to CNG / Cleaner fuel etc.

- IV. Minister level Inter-Ministerial Meeting held on 03.10.2022 on the management of crop residue burning under the co-chairmanship HMoP, HMEF&CC, HMoA&FW
- V. Meeting of Hon'ble Ministers of Environment of the States of NCR, Punjab and NCT Delhi held under the Chairmanship of HMEF&CC on 11.10.2022 to review Air Quality Management in the NCR region under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble MEF&CC.
- VI. Minister level Inter-Ministerial Meeting on the management of crop residue burning was held on 19.10.2022 on the management of crop residue burning under the co-chairmanship HMoA&FW, HMEF&CC, HMoFAH&D.
- VII. The Commission has developed a framework and action plan for effective prevention and control of Stubble Burning. The framework / action Plan includes:
- (i) In-situ crop Residue Management by CRM machines procurement/deployment, setting up of Custom Hiring Centers, use of short duration paddy varieties, staggering of harvesting schedule, use of bio-decomposer etc.
 - (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 implementation of the plan of action
 - (vii) Standard protocol for recording and monitoring of fire counts.
- VIII. CPCB framed guidelines for promoting setting up of paddy straw based pelletization and Torrefaction plants to help in addressing the supply chain issues. Scheme will address the issue of open burning of paddy straw in agriculture fields in Northern Region. A corpus of Rs. 50 crores have been sanctioned from EPC funds. Assuming complete utilization of the corpus, over 1 million metric tonnes of paddy straw based pellets are expected to be generated every year.
