

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 299
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19.03.2026

Afforestation initiatives in Haryana

*299. SMT. REKHA SHARMA:

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

- (a) the afforestation initiatives undertaken in Haryana under the National Afforestation Programme;
- (b) the increase in green cover recorded; and
- (c) the steps taken to combat air pollution in NCR districts of the State?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (C) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 299 DUE FOR REPLY ON 19.03.2026 REGARDING AFFORESTATION INITIATIVES IN HARYANA BY SMT. REKHA SHARMA, HON'BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

- (a) The National Afforestation Programme (NAP) was implemented by the Ministry from the year 2000 to 2018 on a pan-India basis for afforestation in identified degraded forest areas with people's participation and decentralized forest governance. The National Mission for a Green India commonly referred to as the Green India Mission (GIM), was launched in 2015-16 with the objective of protecting, restoring and enhancing India's forest and tree cover. The National Afforestation Programme (NAP) was subsequently merged with the Green India Mission (GIM) and financial allocation for both programmes provided under a single budgetary head.

Afforestation and tree plantation activities in Haryana are undertaken through plantations on forest and non-forest lands including panchayat lands, institutional lands and private farmlands through agro-forestry and farm-forestry initiatives implemented by the State Forest Department. These include distribution of seedlings to farmers, institutions and village panchayats and plantations on wastelands and degraded lands. State Forest Development Agencies, with participation of local communities through Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs), undertake activities such as assisted natural regeneration, artificial plantation and soil and moisture conservation.

- (b) The Forest Survey of India (FSI) carries out biennial assessments of forest and tree resources of the country based on interpretation of remote sensing satellite data and field-based National Forest Inventory (NFI), and the results are published in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR). As per ISFR assessments, the Forest and Tree Cover in Haryana increased from 2,868 sq km in 2013 to 3,307.28 sq km in 2023, reflecting a net increase of 439.28 sq km during this period.

- (c) To address air pollution in Delhi-NCR, Government has established the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) under the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021 for better coordination, research, identification and resolution of problems of air pollution in Delhi- NCR and adjoining areas. CAQM has been provided powers under the Act to take measures and issue directions to the various agencies in the National Capital Region for protecting and improving air quality.

CAQM has issued 98 Statutory Directions and 17 Advisories to concerned stakeholders for control of air pollution in Delhi-NCR inter-alia include prescribing stringent emission norms various polluting activities, mandated thermal power plants located within 300 km of Delhi and coal based Captive Thermal Power Plants in the Delhi-NCR for co-firing of biomass pellets (up to 5 to 10%), mandating use of paddy straw-based bio-mass pellets / briquettes in all brick kilns located in the districts beyond NCR in Punjab and Haryana. A monitoring mechanism has been put in place, and these directions are rigorously monitored for implementation through periodic progress reviews, issuing subsequent orders and directions from time to time.

Details of measures taken by the Government to control air pollution in Delhi-NCR including the measures taken are enclosed at **Annexure I**.

Measures relating to stubble burning indicate about 90% reduction in fire incidences in Punjab and Haryana during the 2025 paddy season compared to 2022; the average AQI of Delhi was 201 in 2025 as against 225 in 2018.

Further, urban greening initiatives such as the Nagar Van Yojana (NVY) support the development of urban forests to enhance green cover and biodiversity in cities and towns. The Aravalli Green Wall initiative also focuses on ecological restoration and enhancement of green cover in parts of the Aravalli landscape, including areas falling in NCR districts of Haryana.

Details of measures taken by the Government to control air pollution in Delhi-NCR

- i. All the industries in NCR have been shifted to approved fuels. Out of 240 industrial areas in Delhi-NCR, 224 industrial areas have been provided with PNG connectivity, 6 are provided through cascade system. Directions have been issued for mandating stringent emission norms for industries in NCR.
- ii. Regular inspection of industries has been carried out for the enforcement of emission norms and actions were taken against the violators.
- iii. To tackle emissions from industrial sector in Delhi-NCR, CPCB has issued directions to DPCC/NCR SPCBs for Online Continuous Emission Monitoring System (OCEMS) installation in remaining air polluting Red categories (Medium & Large), common facilities and 17 category industries on 01.10.2025 and in Textile, food processing and metal industries on 09.10.2025, Progress of installation of Online Continuous Monitoring System (OCEMS) in air polluting industries in Delhi-NCR was closely monitored.
- iv. 70 Dust Control and Management Cells have been set up by road owning agencies across Delhi-NCR, with regular reviews by the CAQM. States and GNCTD have augmented infrastructure for dust control, including mechanized road sweeping machines, water sprinklers and anti-smog guns.
- v. To address air pollution from construction and demolition activities, construction projects having built up area above 500 square meters have been mandated to register on SPCB/DPCC portals, with provisions for video fencing, remote access, standardized checklists, fortnightly self-audits and installation of PM_{2.5}/PM₁₀ monitors.
- vi. Leap frogging from BS IV to BS VI fuel and vehicle standards w.e.f 1st April 2018 for Delhi and w.e.f 1st April 2020 for rest of the country.
- vii. 5340 CNG/e-buses have been deployed for public transport in Delhi including 3535 e-buses. 2800 E-Buses and 1100 E-trucks have been allocated for Delhi under PM E-DRIVE scheme of Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI).
- viii. A total of 450 electric buses have been sanctioned for participating cities (Faridabad, Gurugram, Rohtak, Panipat, Karnal & Alwar) of NCR region under PM-eBus Sewa of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). The total of ₹35.77 crore Central Assistance approved to NCR region for establishing Behind-the-meter (BTM) power and civil depot infrastructure under the scheme. Further, amount of Rs. 66,718.47 Crore has been released for Metro Rail/RRTS projects in Delhi and NCR region since FY 2014-15.
- ix. To fast-track cleaner mobility, Direction No. 94 dated 03.06.2025, as amended on 23.12.2025 issued by CAQM mandated that Motor Vehicle Aggregators, Delivery Service Providers and E-Commerce Entities shall not induct any conventional ICE vehicles running purely on diesel or petrol into their existing fleets of four-wheeler LCVs, four-wheeler LGVs (N1 category up to 3.5 tonnes) and two-wheelers from 01.01.2026 onwards. However, induction of BS-VI emission standard two-wheelers has been permitted in existing fleets up to 31.12.2026.
- x. An Expert Committee was constituted for the promotion of e-mobility in Delhi and NCR, with a specific focus on addressing vehicular pollution from buses.

- xi. Directions were issued by CAQM to shift public transport buses coming from neighbouring States to BS-VI diesel/CNG/EV. From 01.11.2026, only CNG/EV/BS-VI diesel buses, including tourist buses, have been permitted to enter Delhi.
- xii. Entry of Commercial goods vehicles with non BS-VI Low Goods, Medium Goods and High Goods Vehicles into Delhi has been prohibited from 01.11.2025, with limited, time-bound relaxation for BS-IV vehicles up to 31.10.2026.
- xiii. To promote Cleaner mobility, aggregators and delivery services have been mandated to induct only CNG or electric three-wheelers and discontinuation of new diesel/petrol vehicles in specified categories from 01.01.2026.
- xiv. Special drives were carried out, particularly during the GRAP period from October to January, against visibly polluting, over-loaded vehicles and vehicles without valid PUC certificates.
- xv. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) provided financial support of Rs.26.84 lakhs to establish 27 Pelletization and Torrefaction plants to utilize Rs.5.16 lakhs tons of paddy straw per annum.
- xvi. States of Delhi-NCR have been directed to prepare comprehensive district- wise action plan for greening of urban areas including identification of forest areas, Protected Areas, Zoos, Community forests, revenue forests, Nagar Vans/Namo Parks, Identification and mapping of degraded forest lands.
- xvii. Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) is an emergency response action plan, which calls for a set of emergent preventive/restrictive actions depending on the air quality of Delhi. It is an effective implementation mechanism and control on the adverse air quality scenario that generally persists in the entire NCR during the peak winter months. The GRAP is classified under four different stages of adverse air quality in Delhi, reflected through the Air Quality Index (AQI).
 - Stage I - 'Poor' (AQI 201-300);
 - Stage II - 'Very Poor' (AQI 301-400);
 - Stage III - 'Severe' (AQI 401-450);
 - Stage IV - 'Severe+' (AQI >450).
- xviii. CAQM has recently conducted a comprehensive review of the existing GRAP and made the actions more stringent under the various stages of the GRAP. The revised GRAP schedule was issued by CAQM, vide Order dated 21.11.2025.
- xix. Based on the dynamic model and weather/ meteorological forecast by IMD / IITM on a day-to-day basis, actions under Stages I, II, III and IV of the GRAP have been invoked in advance of the AQI of Delhi reaching to the projected levels of that stage.
- xx. Entry of commercial goods vehicles conforming to BS-III and below emission standards was restricted in Delhi with effect from 01.11.2025.
- xxi. Under Stage III of GRAP, strict restrictions were imposed on the plying of BS- III petrol and BS-IV diesel LMVs (four-wheelers) in Delhi and in the districts of Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar. Additionally, BS- IV and below diesel-operated LCVs registered outside Delhi were not permitted to enter Delhi, except those carrying essential commodities or providing essential services, and similar restrictions were

imposed on Delhi- registered diesel-operated MGVs of BS-IV standards or below.

- xxii. Under Stage IV of GRAP, further curbs were enforced, including restriction on the entry of truck traffic into Delhi, except for trucks carrying essential commodities or providing essential services. However, LNG, CNG, electric and BS-VI diesel trucks were allowed to enter. Restrictions were also placed on the plying of Delhi-registered diesel-operated BS-IV and below Heavy Goods Vehicles in Delhi, with exemptions only for vehicles carrying essential commodities or providing essential services.
- xxiii. A “GRAP Monitoring Control Room” has been operational for effective monitoring of actions by agencies concerned for control of air pollution in Delhi-NCR. The data received on GRAP implementation from NCR States is analysed on a regular basis to understand issues on ground and assess overall responsiveness of States on such important issues.
- xxiv. A roadmap was issued by the CAQM to guide cities, urban local bodies and implementing agencies in Delhi-NCR for formulation of Annual Action Plans. Accordingly, the NCR States and concerned implementing agencies have prepared their respective Annual Action Plan 2026, outlining specific and time-bound interventions to implement air pollution mitigation actions.
- xxv. Critical gap funding of Rs.715 crore has been provided to 6 cities of Delhi- NCR (Alwar, Noida, Delhi, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Meerut) under National Clean Air Program (NCAP) and Rs. 63.25 crore provided to 19 other cities which are part of Delhi-NCR to implement air quality improvement measures.
- xxvi. To facilitate the offtake of building material made from processed C&D waste amongst Govt. Agencies and private construction companies at uniform rates, the Commission has shared the District Schedule of Rates (DSR)/ Schedule of Rates (SOR) with Govt. of NCT of Delhi/ NCR States received from CPWD to include the rate of waste recycled products in SOR for use by ULBs/concerned agencies.
- xxvii. The Government has regularly reviewed and monitored the actions taken to address air pollution including stubble burning related issues in Delhi-NCR and adjoining areas. Some of the recent key meetings are as below:
 - i. Regular review meetings have been held on 08.08.2025, 16.09.2025, 07.10.2025 (jointly with Hon’ble Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoAFW)), 10.10.2025, 11.11.2025, 26.11.2025, 03.12.2025, 15.12.2025, 16.12.2025, 17.12.2025, 19.12.2025, 06.01.2026, 12.01.2026, 20.01.2026 and 02.02.2026 under the chairmanship of the Hon’ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, on the issues relating to air pollution control in Delhi-NCR, to deliberate upon the undertaking of air pollution abatement measures and strategies for further strengthening air quality management across the region. Special meeting has been convened with the Hon’ble Chief Minister and senior officials of Govt. of NCT of Delhi, to expedite pollution control measures under mission mode.
 - ii. Minister level Inter-Ministerial meeting was held on 07.10.2025 under the Co-chairmanship of Hon’ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Hon’ble Minister for Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare on the issues of management of Crop Residue Burning.
