

PARLIAMENT QUESTION: Major steps taken by Government to discourage and mitigate crop residue burning

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Crop residue burning has been identified as one of the significant factors in North India, particularly in Delhi NCR region, which aggravates the air quality index in the region during winter season after harvest of the preceding crop for sowing the next crop.

The major steps taken by the Government to discourage and mitigate the practice of crop residue burning include the following:

- i. The active fire events due to crop residue burning are monitored using satellite remote sensing, following the "Standard Protocol for Estimation of Crop Residue Burning Fire Events using Satellite Data by Consortium for Research on Agroecosystem Monitoring and Modeling from Space (CREAMS) Laboratory, Division of Agricultural Physics, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) – Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi.
- ii. Farmers are facilitated with alternative measures like in-situ crop residue management, ex-situ utilization of paddy straw in various applications. The in-situ crop residue management includes in-situ mulching / incorporation of the paddy residue in the field itself through efficient and affordable mechanized means / crop residue management machinery. To support the efforts of the Governments of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi to address air pollution caused due to paddy stubble burning and to subsidize machinery required for management of crop residue, a Central Sector Scheme on Crop Residue Management (CRM) has been implemented by Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare w.e.f. 2018-19.

Under this scheme, 50% financial assistance is provided to the farmers for purchase of crop residue management machinery and 80% financial assistance is provided to Rural Entrepreneurs (Rural youth and farmer as an entrepreneur), Cooperative Societies of Farmers (Agriculture/Horticulture/Makhana etc.), Day-NRLM Cluster Level Federations and Self Help Groups (SHGs), Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Panchayats for establishment of Custom Hiring Centres of crop residue management machines. Financial support of 65% up to a maximum of Rs. 1.50 Crore is also provided to paddy supply chain projects on the capital cost of machinery and equipment like higher HP Tractors, Cutters, Tedder, Medium to large Balers, Rakers, Loaders, Grabbers & Telehandlers. Financial assistance to the States and ICAR is also provided for undertaking Information, Education and Communication activities for mass awareness of farmers on crop residue management.

During the period from 2018-19 to 2025-26 (as on 10.03.2026), Rs. 4237.47 crores have been released. The States have distributed more than 3.53 lakh machines to the individual farmers and established more than 43535 CHCs in the States.

- iii. The Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) has been constituted under the CAQM Act, 2021 in accordance with the notification dated 23.04.2021 towards better coordination, research, identification and resolution of problems surrounding the air quality index in NCR and adjoining areas and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. A comprehensive policy detailing sector-wise actions/interventions and quantified targets and staggered timelines (short-term, medium-term and long-term) was formulated by CAQM and issued in July, 2022, to various stakeholders including Central Government Ministries/Departments, NCR State Governments, GNCTD and Government of Punjab for necessary action and implementation. The targeted action plans with staggered timeline have been stipulated across various contributing sectors including crop residue burning.
- iv. CAQM through Direction 90 dated 09.05.2025 directed to Plan for rent-free availability of CRM machines for small / marginal farmers.
- v. CAQM, vide Direction No. 92 dated 03.06.2025, directed the State Governments of Punjab and Haryana to mandate use of paddy straw-based bio-mass pellets / briquettes in all brick kilns located in the districts beyond NCR, as one of the means towards elimination of the practice of open paddy stubble burning.
- vi. CAQM has issued Direction No. 95 on 01.10.2025 authorizing the Deputy Commissioners / District Collectors / District Magistrates in the States of Punjab, Haryana, NCR areas of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and in the NCT of Delhi to file a complaint before jurisdictional judicial magistrate, in case of inaction in respect of officials, including nodal officers and supervisory officers at various levels and Station House Officers, responsible for effective enforcement towards ensuring elimination of paddy stubble burning in their respective jurisdiction.
- vii. CAQM has issued directions to all the Coal based Thermal Power Plants located within 300 Kms radius of Delhi to co-fire biomass based pellets, torrefied pellets/ briquettes (upto 5-10%) with coal to promote use of biomass.
- viii. The MoEFCC through notification dated 11.07.2023, as amended, notified Environment (Utilisation of Crop Residue by Thermal Power Plants) Rules, 2023 mandating minimum five per cent blend of pellets or briquettes made of crop residue along with coal by the Thermal Power Plants in the NCR and Adjoining Areas, failing which said Rules stipulates certain amount of Environmental Compensation against the Thermal Power Plants, as per unit of electricity generated.
- ix. CAQM has issued directions to State Governments of Punjab and Haryana to mandate use of paddy straw-based biomass pellets / briquettes in all brick kilns located in the districts beyond NCR, as one of the means towards elimination of the practice of open paddy stubble burning.
- x. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has framed Guidelines for grant of one-time financial support under Environment Protection Charge funds for establishment of pelletization and Torrefaction plants to promote utilization of paddy straw.
- xi. 31 Flying Squads from CPCB have been deployed from 01.10.2025 to 30.11.2025 in identified hotspot districts in Punjab and Haryana to closely monitor the actions and coordinate with the concerned authorities / officers at the district level, officers of the Pollution Control Boards/CAQM cell. These teams provide daily updates, photographic evidence, and compliance status.

In addition to the above mentioned measures/action, 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.

With coordinated efforts, the States of Punjab and Haryana have collectively recorded more than 90% reduction in fire incidences during paddy harvesting season in the year 2025 in comparison to the same period in the year 2022.

This information was provided by UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE, SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH, in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha today.

VM/GS/SK

(Lok Sabha US Q3733)

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