



BASAI News Updates

Oct. 20, 2022

Amid forecast of 'very poor' air, use of diesel gensets banned as curbs upped

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NEW DELHI: With forecasts showing that Delhi's air quality may touch the 'very poor' category by October 22, a subcommittee of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Wednesday said that measures under Stage 2 of the Graded Response Action Plan (Grap) were being introduced across the National Capital Region (NCR) with immediate effect.

Stage 2 of the Grap, a plan that aims to curb the annual pollution spike in the NCR, lists 12 measures, including a ban on diesel generator sets across NCR (barring those for emergency and essential services) and a ban on the use of coal and firewood, including in tandors. Other measures include asking agencies to enhance parking fees across NCR to discourage the use of private transport, as well as the need for agencies to carry out the augmentation of public transport (CNG/electric buses and metro) by either procuring additional fleet or increasing the frequency of services.

The CAQM subcommittee convened an emergency meeting on Wednesday after forecasts by the Early Warning System (EWS) under the Union ministry of earth sciences showed that the air quality index (AQI) in Delhi will may touch the 'very poor' level by October 22 and could remain in this category for the subsequent six days.

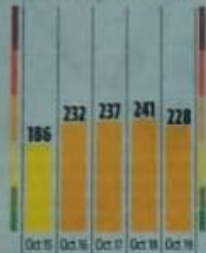
The worry is that the air quality may worsen on Diwali (October 24), when people may violate the firecracker ban in Delhi to celebrate the festival. To be sure, so-called green crackers are allowed in Gurugram, Noida and Ghaziabad in any case.

"In the meeting, it was noted that there is a forecast for deteriorating of air quality in Delhi and the AQI may move into the 'very poor' category from October 22, which is likely to be the result of calm wind conditions. Also, Diwali on October 24 is expected to worsen the situation further. Therefore, in an effort to prevent further deterioration in AQI, the subcommittee has decided that all actions envisaged under Stage II of the Grap's

POLLUTION TRACKER

AQI over five days

Good 0-50 Satisfactory 51-100
 Moderate 101-200 Poor 201-300
 Very Poor 301-450 Severe 451-500



594 Number of farm fires
1% Contribution to pollution

"Very Poor" category need to be implemented in right earnest by all the agencies concerned and with immediate effect," the CAQM said in an order.

Delhi's air quality actually showed an improvement on Wednesday, recording an AQI of 228, according to the Central Pollution Control Board's daily national bulletin. In comparison, it was 241 on Tuesday and 237 on Monday.

VK Soni, scientist at IMD and part of the CAQM subcommittee, said calm winds were already starting to influence air quality at night. "By October 22, winds will become calm and lead to pollutants accumulating. Added emissions from sources like vehicles and firecrackers may further worsen the AQI by Diwali, but at the same time the wind direction will ensure stubble burning does not impact," he said.

Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director, research and advocacy at the Centre for Science and Environment, said it was important that pre-emptive action was being taken this year. "However, like all measures and plans, it will depend on enforcement on the ground and how effectively teams are able to ensure compliance," she said.



Punjab has reported nearly three-fold jump in farm fire incidents in the last nine days, with 2,625 cases so far this season.

AT CENTRAL MEET, AGRICULTURE MIN SAYS FEWER FARM FIRES TILL OCT 15

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav, Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar, and Union minister for animal husbandry Parshottam Rupala co-chaired an interministerial meeting to review the implementation of measures to curb paddy stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana on Wednesday.

Officials from the agriculture ministry said that, till October 15, stubble fires were fewer compared to last year — understandable, given rains in early September — but that now their number has now started growing rapidly, especially in Punjab.

Till October 15, Punjab recorded a total of 1,444 fires. In three days, this number has gone up to 2,625.

Tomar said paddy stubble management in Haryana has been significantly better than in Punjab thus far this year. Around nine out of 22 districts in Punjab and 4 out of 22 district in Haryana are major contributors of stubble burning in these states.

Officials from the power ministry said the ministry has mandated 5% blending of biomass pellets with the coal for use in Thermal Power Plants. The co-firing also helps to prevent CO2 emissions.

Punjab saw 71,304 farm fires in 2021 during the harvest season.

"We are doing our best to stop stubble fires. Punjab seeks larger support from the Centre apart from the subsidised machines for the in-situ management of residue," said Punjab agriculture minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal.

The meeting was also attended by senior officers of the ministry of agriculture and farmers welfare, ministry of environment forest and climate change, Commission for Air Quality Management, chief secretaries and officers from Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, and officials from National Thermal Power Corporation.

Flouting cracker ban can land you in prison, warns minister

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai on Wednesday said the state government was prepared to enforce the ban on firecrackers across the Capital this Diwali, adding that teams have been set up to keep a tab on violators.

He warned that purchasing and bursting of firecrackers in the Capital is punishable with a ₹200 fine and six months of jail time, while those involved in manufacturing, storing and selling firecrackers in the city could be fined up to ₹5,000 and be jailed for three years.

"The Delhi Police has formed 210 teams. All the teams will be headed by an officer of the ACP (assistant commissioner of police) rank. The revenue department, meanwhile, has formed 165 teams and there are 33 teams under the

Delhi Pollution Control Com-

mittee (DPCC). All those who violate the ban by selling, manufacturing or storing it (firecrackers) will have to pay a fine of ₹5,000 and be imprisoned for three years as per Section 9(b) of the Explosive Act. Similarly, those who purchase and burn the crackers illegally, they will be prosecuted

under Section 258 of IPC, which stipulates a fine of ₹200 and imprisonment for six months," Rai said.

The minister also urged residents of the national capital to strictly comply with the ban on crackers and to celebrate Diwali by lighting diyas, or earthen lamps, instead of bursting firecrackers.





Punjab Land of Unlimited Opportunities

Hasda Vasda Punjab



7 Months VS 70 Years

Bhagwant Mann
Chief Minister, Punjab

GANNA KISANO KA RAKHA MAAN

₹492 CRORE
FIRST TIME EVER,
ALL DUES PAID

PRICE OF SUGARCANE
INCREASED TO
₹20 PER QUINTAL

GOOD GOVERNANCE, GOOD INTENTIONS

Department of Information & Public Relations, Punjab



Biological Agri Solutions Association of India

75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

SINCE 1930

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Who is "we," you may wonder. Not just the Himalaya Wellness Company. It's the growing community of 4,00,000+ medical practitioners who have been a part of this collaborative endeavor. Having the medical fraternity as partners recommending our products to patients bears testimony to our adherence to quality and extensive R&D. The recognition and support from the Ministry of AYUSH has also helped us bring the goodness of Ayurveda to more people.

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Here's wishing you all a **Happy Ayurveda Day!**

Har Din Har Ghar Ayurveda



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Lured by better price, farmers sell paddy in Haryana mandis

SAMEER SINGH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

BATHINDA, OCTOBER 19

In a bid to get better prices for the produce, farmers from Punjab, especially from Bathinda, Mansa and Sangrur, have started carrying paddy to mandis in Haryana now. The development has upset arhtiyas, labourers and rice millers since it's causing them "substantial" losses.

Moreover, the state government is losing out on revenue collected in the form of market fee paid by farmers during the paddy procurement.

The minimum support price (MSP) for paddy this year is Rs 2,060 per quintal. While the basmati-1509 variety has been fetching Rs 2,500-3,000 per quintal in the local market, farmers are selling it to private players for Rs 3,600 per quintal. Similarly, a new premium variety and basmati-1121 variety are being sold for Rs 3,800-4,000 per quintal in Punjab. However, these varieties are fetching Rs 4,500 per quintal at mandis of Fatehabaad, Ratia, Tbhana and Panchkula in Haryana.

One variety of parmal is even fetching Rs 4,500-4,700 per quintal in Haryana.

Sources said other paddy

Arhtiyas, labourers & millers face 'losses'



PUSA-1509 and PB-1121 are fetching ₹4,500 in Haryana, FILE

GROWERS FREE TO SELL CROP ANYWHERE

“There is a revenue loss to the state, but as per the law farmers cannot be restricted. They are free to sell their produce anywhere in the country if the state government allows,” Rajnish Gool, DISTRICT MANDI OFFICER, BATHINDA

varieties were being procured by government agencies in Punjab, but basmati and parmal varieties were fetching higher price in Haryana.

The sources said apart from the better price for their produce, farmers also had the liberty to sell the paddy even with high moisture content in Haryana. Unlike the mandis of Punjab where paddy is procured within the permissible

moisture content limit of 17 per cent, farmers are easily selling their produce with over 20 to 22 per cent moisture in markets of Haryana.

From some areas of Mansa district, almost 70 per cent of paddy has made its way to Haryana till now.

Munish Babbi Danewalia, president of Arhtiya Association of Mansa, has written to Prime Minister Narendra

Modi on the issue.

Danewalia said, “Unlike Punjab, there is no purchase limit on rice millers in Haryana so farmers find it convenient to sell their produce and get payment in a hassle-free manner there. Moreover, private purchasers in Haryana are also buying paddy which is slightly above the government-fixed moisture content limit.”

Makhan Goyal, president of Rice Millers' Association, said, “Both parmal and basmati varieties from Punjab are being sold in Haryana and if it continues, then almost 15 per cent of the produce will move out of the state, causing substantial revenue loss to the government.”

Members of the District Rice Millers' Association and District Arhtiya Association Mansa have written to Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann regarding the issue and demanded his immediate intervention to resolve it.

AAP legislators Budh Ram and Gurpreet Singh Banawali exhorted farmers not to sell their produce in Haryana as it was causing a financial loss to the state. They ensured the traders that they would take up the issue with CM and try to resolve it.

Paddy purchase in Palwal down by 37.6%

BIJENDRA AHLAWAT
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

PALWAL, OCTOBER 19

Paddy arrival and procurement has been tardy in the district, courtesy recent inclement weather. So far, 3.66 lakh quintals of paddy has been procured this season against 5.87 lakh quintals bought in the corresponding period last year.

The overall procurement is likely to be around 25 per cent lower this year, according to officials concerned.

According to official figures compiled on Tuesday evening, the procurement of parmal variety has been only 22.5 per cent of the total purchase of 3.66 lakh quintals of the paddy crop in the district so far.

While a little over of 2.83 lakh quintals of paddy (Basmati varieties) have been purchased by millers and private companies at a cost ranging between Rs 2,500 and Rs 3,200 per quintal, the government agencies have procured as many as 82,674 quintals of parmal from the mandis in Palwal, Hodal, Hassanpur and Hathin to date, as per the official figures.

With 81,574 quintals bought so far, the Hodal mandi leads

Area growers upset, blame inclement weather for loss to crop



Farmers manage the paddy varieties at the Hodal grain market of Palwal district, TRIBUNE PHOTO

ALL ARRANGEMENTS IN PLACE

“The paddy procurement at Hodal has been resumed. All arrangements for the procurement are in place in all mandis,” Hitesh Kumar Meena, MDIC, IEC

in the parmal purchase. The procurement at Palwal and Hassanpur has just been 580 and 520 quintals, respectively, so far. The purchase of parmal at the Palwal mandi was 1,600 quintals in the corresponding period last year.

Kishan Singh, a farmer of Hodal subdivision, said a recent scam in the mandi had

led to a halt in the procurement since October 12 as not a single quintal had been procured since then, upsetting the growers.

“As the purchase of all paddy varieties in the corresponding period of 2021 in the district was around 5.87 lakh quintals, it is only 3.66 lakh quintals, which is a

downfall of 37 per cent,” said an official on the condition of anonymity.

Blaming inclement weather, he said the overall procurement this season was expected to be up to 25 per cent lower in view of the loss suffered by the crop. “The weather has also affected the procurement of bajra, which has been bought only by private companies at rates much lower than the MSP of Rs 2,250 per quintal, in view of the tough official conditions,” says Gaurav Tewatia, a farmer from Nayagaon village.

In K'shetra, stubble-burning fine raised 4 times

NITISH SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KURUKSHETRA, OCTOBER 19
To deter farmers from burning paddy stubble, the district administration has now decided to impose four times penalty on the farmers who burn the residue despite continuous awareness programmes and persuasion efforts by the authorities concerned.

So far, the environmental compensation of Rs 2,500 per case of farm fire is imposed on the farmer with landholding up to 2 acres, Rs 5,000 per stubble burning incident for land between 2 and 5 acres and Rs 15,000 for burning on farmers with landholding above 5 acres.

Sources said 135 active fire locations were reported in the district till October 19. While the Haryana Space Applications Centre



FILE PHOTO

CURRENT PENALTY	AQI IN POOR CATEGORY
₹2,500 with land up to 2 acres	■ The district's air quality index (AQI) recorded an average particulate matter at 235 on Wednesday, putting it in the poor category
₹5,000 with land between 2 & 5 acres	■ The AQI in the range of 0-50 is considered good, 51-100 satisfactory, 101-200 moderate, 201-300 poor, 301-400 very poor and 401-500 severe.
₹15,000 with land above 5 acres	

(HARSAC) had reported a total of 96 active fire locations, 39 locations were

reported by other sources. Of the total, stubble burning was confirmed on 90

locations during inspections. While just 25 cases were reported till October

11, the numbers increased to 90 by October 19.

The Agriculture Department has recovered over Rs 2.12 lakh from 89 farmers in the district who set the paddy stubble ablaze.

Deputy Commissioner Kurukshetra Shantanu Sharma said, "Despite continuous efforts being made by the government and the Agriculture Department appealing to the farmers to not burn paddy stubble, cases of farm fires are coming to light. It has been decided to impose four times penalty on the farmers who are setting the paddy stubble ablaze. The nambardars have been directed to keep a watch on the farmers who set the paddy stubble ablaze and inform the administration so that action could be initiated against them. Action will be initiated against the nambardars as well if they failed to report the incidents to the administration."

"A fall in the number of farm fires is being observed this year, but there is a lot to be done. The government has been providing cash incentives of Rs 1,000 per acre to farmers for not burning the stubble and they should take benefits of the schemes," he added.

The smoke emanating from the fields and the burning of the garbage also lead to respiratory problems.

Dr Gaurav Chawla, MD Chest Physician at LNJP Hospital Kurukshetra, said "People with asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) should take extra precaution, and use masks as the smoke emanating from fields and dust can cause them trouble."

UP paddy finds way to Haryana, arhtiyas fume

PARVEEN ARORA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KARNAL, OCTOBER 19

In spite of strict checking on the Haryana-Uttar Pradesh border by the district administration, paddy from the neighbouring state continues to arrive at grain markets in Karnal, Gharaunda, Kunjpura, Indri, Taraori, Nissing and others.

Karnal SDM Anubhav Mehta said a paddy-laden Canter from UP was confiscated on Tuesday from Karnal grain market. The gate pass was issued to the Canter in the name of a local farmer.



TRADERS BUY CHEAP, SELL AT SUPPORT PRICE

■ Traders buy paddy from UP at ₹1,500-1,700/ quintal & sell it on an MSP of ₹2,040

■ Officials of Haryana State Agricultural Marketing Board 'hand in glove' with traders

The driver admitted he brought paddy from UP at

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Centre: State not taking adequate steps on farm fires

VIRBA SHARMA
NEW DELHI, October 19
Claiming that the stubble-burning incidents had started increasing rapidly, especially in Punjab, the Centre today accused the state government of not taking adequate steps to prevent these. The state had been provided with sufficient financial assistance, farm machinery and funds under the crop residue management (CRM) scheme yet there has not been sufficient progress in implementation of the action plan, according to an official statement issued following an inter-ministerial meeting with states on the CRM scheme. The Punjab Chief Minister was asked to control "the increasing rate of farm fires in Punjab and ensure a 50 per cent reduction in comparison to last year," according to the statement.

Speaking at the meeting, Development Minister Ram Prasad Bishnoi said the Punjab Government has not been taking adequate steps to control stubble burning. He said that the Centre will continue to take steps to assist the ground situation, therefore, central LAs officers concerned must visit the respective districts for monitoring the situation. He said by the government has appointed 28 senior IAS officers in 23 districts.

HRV SITUATION BETTER
■ If effective steps are taken in Arunachal and Jammu and Kashmir, half the job will be done because these two districts are facing maximum problems. The status of paddy straw management in Haryana is significantly better.

■ The PM bio-decomposer, a microbial solution which turns stubble into manure in 15-20 days, was being sprayed in a lesser area in Punjab and the application made to be promoted. A total of 28 districts in Punjab and three in Haryana are major contributors of stubble burning, he said. Speaking at the meeting, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Bhatia called for fixing the accountability in the affected districts by respective states. Meanwhile, Chief Secretary Anil Kumar Jais in Punjab said that the state will continue to take steps to assist the ground situation, therefore, central LAs officers concerned must visit the respective districts for monitoring the situation. He said by the government has appointed 28 senior IAS officers in 23 districts.