

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh cautions that air pollution related stubble burning cases have risen by 160% in Rajasthan and 20% in Punjab in October, 2022 compared to October, 2021

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IMD data suggests, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh witnessed decline of farm fires incidents by 30% and 38% respectively during the same period

Punjab registers over 13,396 fire counts in first five days of November, compared to 16,004 fires in entire October 2022, thus plunging the air quality into severe category

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Expressing serious concern over Delhi's air quality remaining in the 'severe' category for the fifth day in a row, forcing closure of primary schools, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences, Dr Jitendra Singh cautioned that air pollution related stubble burning cases have risen by 160% in Rajasthan and 20% in Punjab. This, he said, implies that the governments in the two States are not doing enough to check stubble burning and are, on the contrary, increasingly contributing to the deteriorating air quality in Delhi NCR.

The Minister, who is also Incharge of India Meteorological Department (IMD), Ministry of Earth Sciences, said that on the other hand, States like Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have recorded progressive decline in the incidents of stubble fire burning. He said, such inferences indicate that either the

governments in Rajasthan and Punjab are not serious about air quality or they have not properly utilized the funds which were provided by the Narendra Modi government to purchase machines for stubble management.

Table 1. Fire counts in Punjab, Haryana, UP and Rajasthan during October 2021 and 2022.

F a r m Fires			
	October 2021	October 2022	
Punjab	13269	16004	Rise 20%
Haryana	2914	1995	Decline 30%
UP	1060	768	Decline 38%
Rajasthan	124	318	Rise 160%

Dr Jitendra Singh pointed out that since 2018-19, on the instructions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Centre has provided Rs.3,138 crore to States for stubble management, out of which nearly 1,500 Crore was provided to Punjab alone. He said, it is for the people to judge as to why, while many States have done an appreciable job in stubble management and are gradually moving in positive directions, the States of Punjab and Rajasthan continue to show further deterioration raising several questions regarding their intent, sincerity and prosperity.



Referring to findings by India Meteorological Department and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology under the aegis of Ministry of Earth Sciences, Dr Jitendra Singh said, there was 160% and 20% rise in cases of stubble burning in Rajasthan and Punjab respectively in October, 2022 compared to October, 2021.

Farm Fires in Punjab rose from 13269 to 16004 from October 2021 to October 2022 recording a rise of 20%, while in Rajasthan, it rose from 124 to 318 from October 2021 to October 2022 recording a rise of 160%.

The Minister also raised alarm that Delhi recorded 7 “Very Poor” Air Quality Days in October this year compared to nil such cases in October, 2021.

Dr Jitendra Singh also pointed out that Haryana and Uttar Pradesh witnessed decline of farm fires incidents by 30% and 38% respectively during the same period. Haryana witnessed 1995 fire counts in October 2022 as compared to 2914 in October 2021. Similarly, UP registered 768 fire counts this October, compared to 1060 cases in October, 2021.

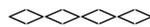
In the first five days of the current month of November ending last evening, the number of fire counts was much higher in Punjab than Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. For example, yesterday i.e. on 5 November, the number of fire counts in Punjab was 2817 and in Rajasthan 91 respectively compared to 90 in Haryana and 24 in Uttar Pradesh respectively. The highest fire count on any single day was recorded on 2nd November, when Punjab topped with 3,634 farm fire incidents and the number in Rajasthan recorded up to 63.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, the abnormal rise in cases of stubble burning in Punjab in the first five days of November is solely responsible for plunging the air quality in severe category. He said, Punjab registered 13,396 fire counts from 1st to 5th November, 2022, while it was 16,004 for the entire month of October, 2022.

Table 2.

Fire Counts in November				
Date	Punjab	Haryana	UP	Rajasthan
05/11/2022	2817	90	24	91
04/11/2022	2437	63	61	34
03/11/2022	2666	128	40	54
02/11/2022	3634	166	25	63
01/11/2022	1842	88	09	27

India Meteorological Department and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology under the aegis of Ministry of Earth Sciences has operationalized Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS). The contribution of Stubble fire in pollution level of PM2.5 is estimated by AQEWS. The contributed is estimated at 9.7% on 1st November, 7.4% on 2nd November, 32% on 3rd November and 17.8% on 4th November.



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