

## Crop residue-coal mix to nix stubble burning

The government has directed the state-run power producer NTPC to mix crop residue pellets with coal for power generation in its thermal power plants in a bid to curb crop burning in Punjab and Haryana, one of the reasons behind the pollution crisis in Delhi and its neighbourhood.

Power Minister R.K. Singh said this step would earn farmers Rs. 5,500 per tonne of crop residue. The statement comes a day after the Ministry of Petroleum brought forward the deadline for the rollout of the cleaner BS-VI grade fuel in Delhi to reduce emissions.

### Curbing pollution

"The Ministry has directed the NTPC to mix straw/crop residue pellets with coal, up to 10%, for power generation in all of its thermal power plants," Mr. Singh told reporters on the sidelines of a function organised by the Power Ministry. "This step would reduce crop residue burning in agriculture dominated States like Punjab, Haryana, etc. and hence reduce air pollution that is currently being experienced."

"This step would give the farmers a monetary return of Rs. 5,500 per tonne of crop residue and hence create a market for it," the Minister added. "The infrastructure for sourcing the crop residue from farmers is being set up and the NTPC would soon be issuing tenders in this regard."

Mr. Singh said his Ministry was in talks with State governments to make it mandatory to source 10% of their fuel from straw or crop residue for all power plants in their respective jurisdictions.

### Portal launched

The Minister on Thursday launched the portal for the Saubhagya Scheme, which seeks to implement last-mile connectivity to electrify rural households.

"Achieving electrification of four crore households is a big challenge, but nevertheless the government is committed to achieving this target by December 2018, with the cooperation of all States," Mr. Singh said during the event. "This would, in turn, bring about a huge improvement in the quality of life of the citizens."

The online Saubhagya portal (<http://saubhagya.gov.in>) is meant to enable every State to enter the current status of progress of electrification.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com