

NGT seeks report from Punjab gov. on steps taken by it to tackle stubble burning

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Friday asked the Centre and the Punjab government as to what it had done to tackle the issue of stubble burning.

Further, the tribunal directed the Punjab government to draw up a list of power plants and other industries that can use the crop residue as a source of power.

The green panel also issued notice to the NTPC which had projected that it will take the residue as a source of power and sought reply on the same.

On October 11, the NGT had asked the Punjab government to present before the Tribunal, the 21 farmers who had benefited from the schemes rolled out by the government.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Swatanter Kumar asked the 12 farmers who were present in court on Friday, whether they had genuinely received government help to tackle the crop residue.

Responding to queries from the Bench, the farmers stated that the Punjab government had provided them with adequate machineries and even collected the crop residue and put it in panchayat lands.

During the hearing, I.G. Kapila, who was appearing for the farmers said that the problem lay with the implantation of the policies.

Other districts

Pulling up the Punjab government for not providing enough incentives in other districts as well, the Bench asked, "Why don't you create a structure that the big farmers can benefit from and then help the small farmers?"

"We expect no individual body, government, panchayat and other associations to directly or indirectly burn the residue", said the Bench.

While passing the directions, the Bench also said, "Corporate Social Responsibility [CSR] of both public and private sector are equally enforceable where it will serve the general cause of environment and prevent pollution of air."

The NGT directed the State government to furnish a "complete and detailed mechanism ensuring happy seeders and bailers to farmers depending on their financial capacity."

The panel further stated that the machinery should be provided either free of cost or at a minimal cost which would not have grave financial implications on the farmers.

END