

DIP IN AIR QUALITY PROMPTS DELHI CM TO SEEK ACTION

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Pollution - Air, Water, Soil & E-waste

Annual problem:The AQI in the capital stopped two notches short of the “very poor” category on Sunday.File Photo

As Delhi’s air quality deteriorates with several areas recording “very poor” air quality, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal appealed to the Governments of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to understand their responsibilities towards reducing stubble burning and controlling pollution.

The average AQI in the capital based on the readings of 31 weather stations stopped two notches short of the “very poor” category on Sunday at 298. Other parts of the NCR such as Gurugram, Faridabad and Ghaziabad entered the “very poor” category with AQI readings of 332, 312 and 310, respectively.

“For the past one month, I have been tweeting data of air quality in Delhi. Pollution has increased in the last 3-4 days and it is due to stubble burning in neighbouring States. Farmers in neighbouring States are compelled to burn stubble as their Governments are doing nothing to provide an alternative,” Mr. Kejriwal said.

He added that the Delhi Government was doing its bit to curb vehicular and dust pollution and pollution from stubble burning by spraying bio-decomposer but could not do much to stop the air quality from deteriorating as neighbouring States were yet to act on stubble burning.

Adverse impact

Environment Minister Gopal Rai said that in the past three days, incidents of stubble burning had increased rapidly in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana which had an adverse impact on Delhi’s air quality that was in the “moderate” category on Wednesday.

“The Central Government has given about Rs. 250 crore to Punjab for the management of stubble, with which, bio-decomposer can be sprayed free of cost on 50 lakh acres of land but the State Government has not started providing the solution to farmers and no plan has been made to start the use of bio-decomposer outside Delhi,” Mr. Rai said.

He added that the pollution was increasing with the same speed with which incidents of stubble burning had increased in neighbouring States and that the air quality had taken longer to deteriorate this year as the rainy season had lasted longer delaying the harvest season.

Measures adopted

About the measures within Delhi to curb air pollution, Mr. Rai said “Red Light On, Gaadi Off campaign” would start in the city from October 18 across Delhi to curb vehicular pollution and several long-term measures such as tree transplantation policy and an electric vehicle policy and ensuring factories used PNG had been introduced.

“The Chief Minister has been tweeting the level of pollution in Delhi every day for the last several days. If you look at that chart and the incidents of stubble burning, it will be clear how the stubble leads to a dangerous situation in Delhi’s pollution level,” Mr. Rai said.

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