

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

Original Application No. 632/2023

In re: News item appearing in Hindu dated 06.10.2023 **“Pollution takes a front seat as stubble fires spike in Punjab”**

Date of hearing: 29.11.2023

**CORAM: HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE PRAKASH SHRIVASTAVA, CHAIRPERSON
HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE SUDHIR AGARWAL, JUDICIAL MEMBER
HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE ARUN KUMAR TYAGI, JUDICIAL MEMBER
HON’BLE DR. A. SENTHIL VEL, EXPERT MEMBER**

Respondent: Ms. Richa Kapoor, Adv. for Punjab PCB
Dr. Abhishek Atrey, Adv. for Commission for Air Quality
Management for NCR & Adjoining Areas
Mr. Jitendra Bharti, Adv. for MoEF & CC
Ms. Suman Arora, Adv. for CPCB

ORDER

1. This original application registered on *suo motu* exercise of power relating to the issue of stubble burning and consequential aggravation in the air pollution. The Tribunal from 20.10.2023 had regularly monitored the farm fire incidents in the State of Punjab & Haryana and had issued the direction to regulate and control the same.

2. As per the report produced by the Commission for Air Quality Management there were 36,632 farm fire incident in Punjab, 2285 in Haryana and 39129 in the entire area of NCR region including Punjab and Haryana between the period from 15.09.2023 to 28.11.2023.

3. District-wise cumulative number of paddy residue burning events during 15th September to 16th November, 2023 were found to be

maximum of 476 in fatehabad district of Haryana and 5352 events in Sangrur district of Punjab.

4. It has not been disputed that the issue of paddy residue burning arises mainly between the period 15th September to 30th November. As per the report now the incidents of paddy residue burning in Punjab and Haryana have reduced. On 28.11.2023, 18 incidents of paddy residue burning were noticed in Punjab and no incident was noted in Haryana.

5. Serious problem of residue burning arises every year, therefore, for the next year i.e. 2024 a comprehensive plan and remedial action needs to start at this stage itself. During the course of arguments various suggestions have come up like sensitizing the cultivators, preparation of data base of farm owners and their mobile number, preparation of a catalog of suggestions and examination of feasibility and consideration of implementation of the suggestions by an expert committee and also involving farmers union, scientists and engineers in that process, restricting the use of harvesters and exploring the methods for cutting paddy from the bottom/roots.

6. To prevent such issue and mitigate the situation next year i.e. 2024, we direct the State of Punjab and Haryana, to prepare a time bound action plan disclosing phase-wise proposed action from 01.01.2024 to 01.09.2024 which may include various preventive steps for the next year as also the accountable authorities for implementation of the same. Counsel for the Punjab has submitted that such an action plan will be prepared and submitted before the Tribunal within six weeks.

7. List this matter on 19th January, 2024.

Prakash Shrivastava, CP

Sudhir Agarwal, JM

Arun Kumar Tyagi, JM

Dr. A. Senthil Vel, EM

November 29, 2023
Original Application No. 632/2023
HB