

Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas

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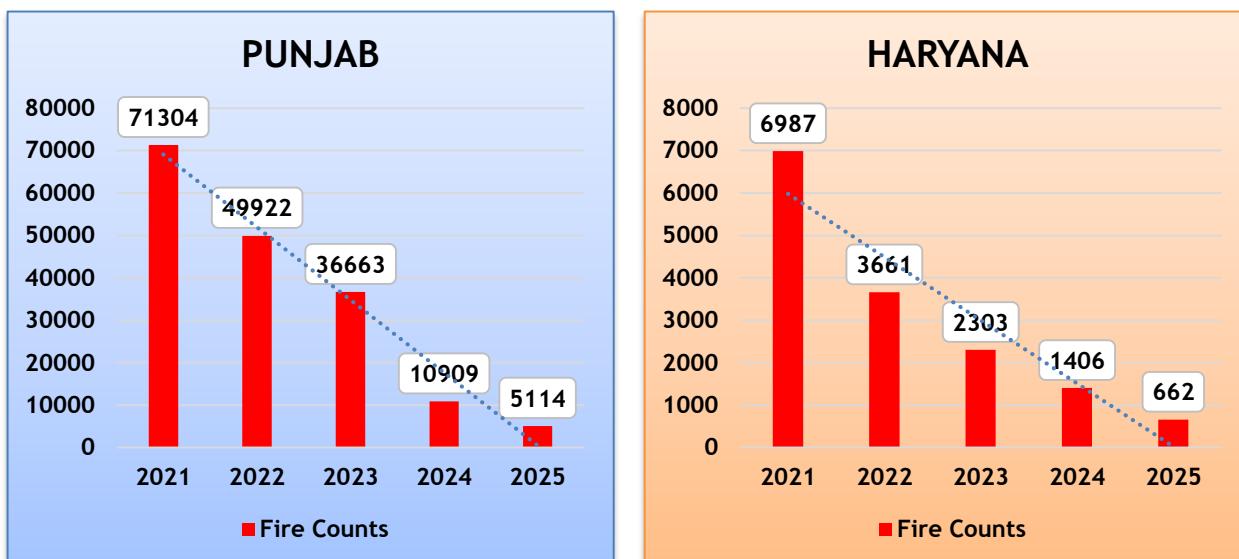
PRESS RELEASE

Paddy Harvesting Season 2025 concludes with significant reduction in farm fire incidents across Punjab and Haryana

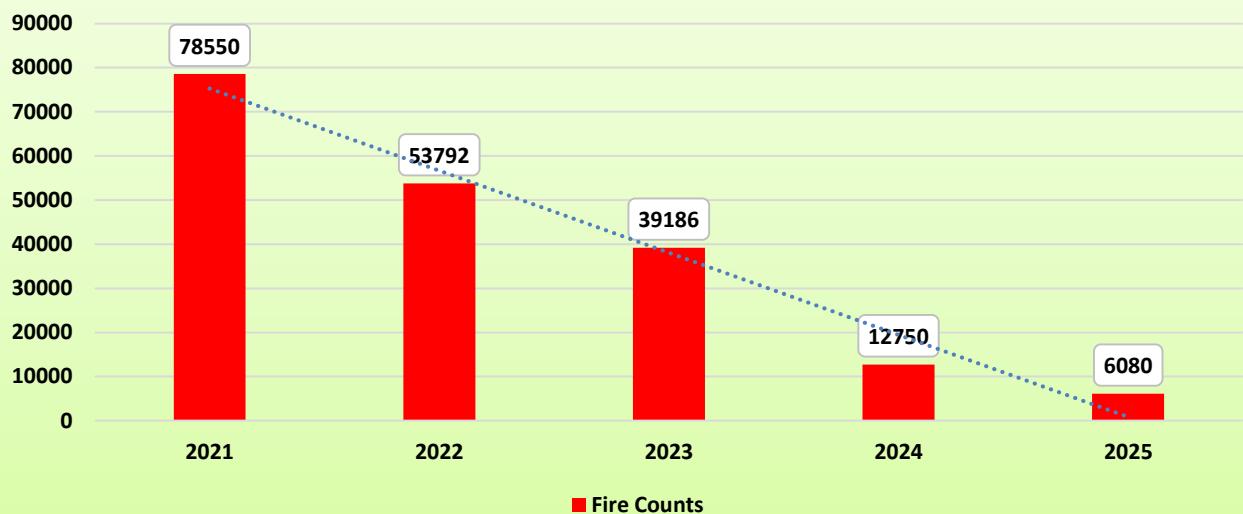
NEW DELHI:

As the paddy harvesting season 2025 comes to an end, the period of official recording, monitoring and assessment of paddy stubble burning events carried out annually from 15th September to 30th November as per the standard protocol developed by ISRO also concludes. This season has witnessed decline in farm fire incidents across Punjab and Haryana, marking a steady reduction recorded in recent years under the Commission's coordinated framework to curb paddy stubble burning incidents in the region.

Over the last few years, farm fire incidences have consistently declined with the lowest number of fire counts recording during the paddy harvesting season of 2025. Punjab recorded 5,114 fire counts this season, reflecting a reduction of 53% over 2024, 86% over 2023, 90% over 2022, and 93% over 2021. Likewise, Haryana maintained its performance as well, logging 662 farm fire incidents this year, registering a 53% reduction from 2024, 71% reduction from 2023, 81% from 2022 and 91% from 2021. These numbers represent the most significant decline achieved since CAQM began monitoring State-specific crop residue management measures as per their Action Plans.



Cumulative Paddy Farm Fire Counts [Punjab, Haryana, UP (NCR), Rajasthan (NCR) and NCT of Delhi]



This decline in Punjab and Haryana has been driven by the implementation of State and District-specific Action Plans, large-scale deployment of crop residue management machinery, strict enforcement measures, and the strengthened *ex-situ* utilisation of paddy straw including biomass-based energy generation, use in industrial boilers, production of Bio-ethanol, mandating use of paddy straw pellets/briquettes for co-firing in TPPs and brick kilns and also packaging and various other commercial applications. Persistent coordination between the State Agriculture Departments, District administrations, and the Commission ensured timely corrective action, wherever significant fire events were reported. Ground-level inspection and enforcement by flying squads, Parali Protection Force, field officers and continuous monitoring by teams deployed across hotspot Districts and focused IEC campaigns and awareness programs for farmers, also played a crucial role. Further, a dedicated CAQM Cell has been established in Chandigarh, mandated to focus on round-the-year monitoring of paddy stubble management and related pollution activities.

While meteorological conditions also influence air quality scenario in Delhi-NCR, the substantial reduction in farm fires this season has considerably limited the potential episodic deterioration driven by stubble-burning contributions.

With consistent and strengthened implementation and targeting of complete elimination of paddy straw burning in Punjab, Haryana, and NCR States, sustained improvement in the overall air quality of the region is expected during the coming years.
