



Daily Current Affairs

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Stubble burning

Why in news?

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has said that government is making every effort to stop stubble burning by farmers.

About stubble burning:

Stubble burning is the deliberate setting fire of the straw stubble that remains after wheat and other grains have been harvested.

Stubble burning in India:

- Stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana, in northwest India has been cited as a major cause of air pollution in Delhi.
- From late September through October of each year, farmers mainly from Punjab and Haryana burn an estimated 35 million tons of crop waste from their wheat fields after harvesting, as a low-cost straw-disposal practice to reduce the turnaround time between harvesting and sowing for the second (winter) crop.
- Smoke from this burning produces a cloud of particulates visible in images from space, and has produced a "toxic cloud" in New Delhi, resulting in declarations of an air-pollution emergency.

Effects:

The burning of stubble, contrasted with alternatives such as ploughing the stubble back into the ground has a number of consequences and effects on the environment.

- Quickly clears the field and is cheap.
- Kills weeds, including those resistant to herbicide.
- Kills slugs and other pests.
- Can reduce nitrogen tie-up.

However, it has a number of harmful effects on the environment:

- Loss of nutrients.
- Pollution from smoke.
- Damage to electrical and electronic equipment from floating threads of conducting waste.
- Risk of fires spreading out of control.

There is a perception that stubble burning contributes to atmospheric CO₂. However carbon dioxide releases are only slightly greater than those from natural decomposition.

National Mission on Government e-Market (GeM) portal

Why in news?

Recently Minister of State of Commerce and Industry has given information about The National Mission on GeM (NMG).

About National Mission on Government e-Market (GeM) portal:

objective of the Mission was to accelerate the adoption and use of Procurement by Major Central Ministries, States and UTs and their agencies (including CPSUs/PSUs, Local Bodies) on the GeM platform.

The **objectives** of the NMG were to:

- Promote inclusiveness by catapulting various categories of sellers and service providers
- Highlight and communicate 'value add' by way of transparency and efficiency in public procurement, including corruption free governance.

- Achieve cashless, contactless and paperless transaction, in line with Digital India objectives.
- Increase overall efficiency leading to significant cost saving on government expenditure in Procurement.
- Maximizing ease in availability of all types of products and services bought by Government buyers.

Importance of GeM:

- GeM has brought transparency, efficiency, and inclusiveness in public procurement.
 - It has reduced the time of procurements, reduced the process and enabled ease of doing business for both buyers and vendors.
 - There is huge savings in the cost of procurement, ranging from a minimum of 10% to 45% in different categories. The average saving based on the MRP/Listed price is about 28%.
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Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is a nationwide plan in India to provide good all-weather road connectivity to unconnected villages.
- Of 178,000 (1.7 lakh) habitations with a population of above 500 in the plains and above 250 in the hilly areas planned to be connected by all-weather roads, 82% were already connected by December 2017 and work-in-progress on the remaining 47,000 habitations was on-track for completion by March 2019.
- This Centrally Sponsored Scheme was introduced in 2000 by the then-prime minister of India Atal Behari Vajpayee.
- The Assam Tribune has reported that the scheme has started to change the lifestyle of many villagers as it has resulted in new roads and upgrade of certain inter-village routes in Manipur.
- The PMGSY is under the authority of the Ministry of Rural Development and was begun on 25 December 2000.
- It is fully funded by the central government. During November 2015, following the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission, the Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on Rationalization of Centrally Sponsored Schemes, it was announced that the project will be funded

by both the central government (60%) and states (40%).

Aim:

The aim was to provide roads to all villages

- with a population of 1000 persons and above by 2003
 - with a population of 500 persons and above by 2007
 - in hill states, tribal and desert area villages with a population of 500 persons and above by 2003.
 - in hill states, tribal and desert area villages with a population of 250 persons and above by 2007.
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