

Vision: Clean Skies for Punjab

Air quality in Punjab continues to be a cause for concern even after the introduction of several policy measures to curb air pollution at the state level. One of the focal points of policy debates across the state, especially during the winter months, has been stubble burning and management. Despite the ban on stubble burning by the National Green Tribunal in 2015, and state-level initiatives, it continues unabated in Punjab. Satellite data shows that there were 76,000 instances of stubble burning in Punjab from 1 September 2021 to 18 November 2021, which is 2.4% higher than the previous year.

The Centre for Air Pollution Studies (CAPS) at the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP) has been actively involved in finding solutions to air quality issues across India. CAPS is currently conducting a long-term study in Punjab to devise sectoral strategies to reduce air pollution in the state. To expedite the development of sustainable solutions, CAPS is organising a conference on **9 December 2021 at Radisson Chandigarh Zirakpur (Platinum Hall 2), Patiala Road, Zirakpur, Punjab - 140603**, to bring together stakeholders from government, industry, civil society, and academia to discuss the effectiveness of current policy measures in Punjab to reduce air pollution and agree upon a clear air vision for the future.

The objective is to understand the state perspective on stubble burning and other connected issues, identify practical challenges in policy implementation, and build the technological capacity of state departments. The conference will get underway with a brief session on CAPS's study and other activities in Punjab. This will be followed by a panel discussion by experts on the steps needed to improve air quality in Punjab. The final segment for the day includes hands-on training sessions to understand the usage of low-cost sensors, develop basic knowledge on some of the technical aspects of air pollution, and build the capacity of media houses to comprehend the health impacts of air pollution and communicate them more effectively.

