Madhya Pradesh tops the country in crop-residue burning, overtaking Punjab (15 Sept–15 Oct 2026)

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News

As per satellite monitoring data of CREAMS at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI, New Delhi), 793 crop-residue burning events were recorded in the 7 monitored States between 15 Sept and 15 Oct 2026 (724 in the same period of 2025). Madhya Pradesh topped the country with 350 (138 in 2025), followed by Punjab 185, Uttar Pradesh 134, Rajasthan 99, Uttarakhand 16, Haryana 8 and Delhi 1. One reason is MP farmers shifting from soybean and black gram to paddy. On 13 Oct, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan told Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to identify affected districts and villages. (MP also topped during the April 2026 wheat-harvest season, with Vidisha district the worst.)

Key facts

Data	CREAMS – IARI, New Delhi; satellite monitoring (kharif season 15 Sept – 30 Nov)
Total	793 (2025: 724) – 7 States, 15 Sept–15 Oct
Madhya Pradesh	350 (2025: 138) – first
Other States	Punjab 185; UP 134; Rajasthan 99; Uttarakhand 16; Haryana 8; Delhi 1
Cause (MP)	Shift from soybean and black gram to paddy; short harvest–sowing window

Machines	Over 3.54 lakh crop residue management (CRM) machines supplied

Background

- Causes: in the paddy–wheat cycle the gap between paddy harvest and wheat sowing is short; combine harvesters leave tall stubble; the Punjab Preservation of Subsoil Water Act, 2009, delayed paddy transplanting and squeezed the window further.
- Science: burning releases PM2.5, PM10, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and methane, and destroys soil nitrogen, organic matter and microbes. PM2.5 are fine particles 2.5 micrometres or smaller that go deep into the lungs.
- Solutions: 'Pusa Decomposer' – a fungus-based microbial solution developed by IARI that rots straw in the field. 'Happy Seeder' – a tractor-mounted machine that sows wheat without removing the straw.
- Law and administration: the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) was formed by an ordinance in 2020, replacing EPCA; the CAQM in NCR and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021 now gives it statutory backing. The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) has 4 stages based on Delhi-NCR air quality and is enforced by the CAQM.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu is not among the 7 States monitored by CREAMS; large-scale residue burning like north India's is not reported here. Tamil Nadu's paddy seasons are Kuruvai, Samba and Thaladi; the Cauvery delta (Thanjavur) is the 'rice bowl of Tamil Nadu'. The Tamil Nadu Rice Research Institute is at Aduthurai (Thanjavur district).

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