

Firecracker Ban in NCR

Why in news?

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Supreme Court recently reinstated the 2016 temporary ban on the sale of fireworks in Delhi-NCR

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What are the criticisms against the judgment?

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- **Judicial overreach** - SC's judgment was driven primarily by concerns around air quality.

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- But it is to be noted that matters concerning policy and its implementation are best left to the legislature & executive.

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- The courts should ideally be stepping in only when there is neglect.

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- As the governments are already working to stop polluting practices, SC's intervention is seen as a problematic overstep.

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- **Previous experience** - The 2015 verdict that banned stubble burning in Punjab has proven ineffective.

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- The governments concerned still stumble to implement the same due to their inability to get farmers on board.

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- Only alternative approaches like making stubble itself a remunerative commodity have contributed to reduced burning, not the ban.

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- **Rationality** - Much bigger factors like vehicular pollution, industries and unpaved roads factors contribute more to the disastrous air quality of Delhi.

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- So the focus on fireworks alone seems disproportionate.

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What could be fallouts of the ban?

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- An outright ban may alienate people who are in the mood for a good celebration.

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- Coming just 10 days before the festival, it will be tough to impose the ban on an industry that has already produced stocks.

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- This might drive sales in black markets at inflated prices.

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- The ban will also harm the livelihoods of numerous people involved in the fire-cracker supply chain.

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What could be the way forward?

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- Instead of ban, there should be a persuasive approach to give up the practise.

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- Holistic solutuions that backed by sustained policy initiatives are needed to address multi-dimensional issues like pollution.

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- Innovative ideas bagged by vigourous campaigns are needed to help people shift to eco-friendly ways.

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SC's previous views on cracker ban

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- **2015 Verdict** - A case seeking ban crackers throughout India was filed.

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- It highlighted the health hazards & environmental impact of crackers.

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- But SC categorically refused to ban people from bursting firecrackers.

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- The court felt that it might be "dangerous" to infringe into the common man's right to enjoy his religious festivities.

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- Nevertheless, it ordered for time stipulations (10pm – 6am).

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- **2016 verdict** - The 2016 case sought a cracker ban specific to Delhi NCR.

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- The court imposed a ban in the wake of increased particulate matter concentration in the lower atmosphere above Delhi.

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Source: Indian Express, The Hindu

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