

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 386
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28.11.2024

Forest fires in the Western Ghats region

386. SHRI G.C. CHANDRASHEKHAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken any steps to address the increasing forest fires in the Western Ghats region of Karnataka, and how it is ensuring the protection of biodiversity in the area; and
- (b) The measures Government has undertaken to combat the effects of climate change on agriculture in Karnataka, which has faced severe droughts and floods in recent years?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has put in place the National Action Plan on Forest Fire-2018 which provides comprehensive measures for preventing forest fires, improving resilience of the forests against fire hazards whilst supporting the aims of conservation of biodiversity, wildlife and forest wealth.

As per the report received from the Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, there has been a decline in forest fire incidences in the last forest fire season compared to the previous forest fire season, based on the forest fire detections captured using satellite borne SNPP-VIIRS sensor, falling over the boundary of the Western Ghats region of Karnataka (given in the table below).

Forest Fire Season (1 st Nov- 30 th June)	No. of SNPP-VIIRS detections
Year: 2023-2024	613
Year: 2022-2023	3,305

Further, the Ministry assists the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations in the prevention and control of forest fires by (i) providing financial assistance under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)-Forest Fire Prevention and Management for

prevention, preparedness and suppression of forest fires besides undertaking measures for restoration of forest fire affected area, (ii) providing SMS based forest fire alerts during the forest fire season (1st Nov- 30th June), to the State Forest Departments backed by a satellite-based 'Forest Fire Monitoring and Alert system' for timely detection and monitoring of forest fires, besides other technical assistance/advisories.

The National Action Plan on Forest Fire-2018 also provides for control of invasive weeds such as *Lantana sp.* as they contribute significantly to the forest fire danger and pose a threat to native biodiversity. As per the report received from the State Forest Department, Government of Karnataka various activities such as monitoring invasive species and their eradication, rejuvenation of existing water bodies, providing cultural operation to existing wildlings of important species, implementing artificial and natural regeneration models, community awareness, etc., are carried out for the protection of biodiversity in the area.

(b) The Government has undertaken initiatives to deal with climate change through the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), which is one of the Missions within the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). The mission aims to evolve and implement strategies to make Indian agriculture more resilient to the changing climate.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India has launched a flagship network project namely National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA). The project aims to study the impact of climate change on agriculture including crops, livestock, horticulture, and fisheries, and to develop and promote climate resilient technologies in agriculture, which will address vulnerable areas of the country. The outputs of the project help the districts and regions prone to extreme weather conditions like droughts, floods, frost, heat waves, etc., to cope with such extremes.

Besides, the State Government also prepares a State Action Plan on climate change to address the risks and impacts of climate change across various sectors including agriculture.
