

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2730
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.03.2020

Prevention of Forest Fire

2730. SHRI T.R. BAALU:

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

- (a) whether the Government has formulated any action plan keeping in view the forest fires which affected 93,273 hectares across the country in 2019 and caused damage of Rs. 1,176 crore every year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the details of the reasons for not spending nearly 24 per cent of the fund out of Rs. 50 crore earmarked for forest fire prevention in India during the last two financial years and remedial measures taken/to be taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO)

- (a) & (b) The number of incidents of forest fire in the country varies from year to year depending on various natural and anthropogenic reasons. Most of forest fires in the country are ground fires in which ground vegetation, etc. get burnt. As reported by States/UTs the economic loss due to forest fires is given in the Annexure I.

National Action Plan on Forest Fire was prepared by the Ministry after several rounds of consultation with all the States, Union Territories and other stakeholders in 2018 to minimize forest fires by informing, enabling and empowering forest fringe communities and incentivizing them to work in tandem with the Forest Departments reducing the vulnerability of forests across the diverse forest ecosystems in the country against fire hazards, enhancing the capabilities of forest personnel and institutions in fighting fires, and speeding up recovery after a fire event.

The Ministry is the Nodal Ministry for disaster management caused by forest fire in the country. For the supervision and review of forest fire management, a Central Monitoring Committee has also been constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary and has representations of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests of all States and Union Territories. Nodal Officer for forest fire prevention and control has also been appointed in all the States.

Forest Survey of India has been made responsible to keep constant vigil on forestfire across the country and send forest fire alerts on registered mobile numbers in the States. Till date around 1, 01, 550 users have been registered to receive firealerts from Forest Survey of India.

Since the forests are managed by the States and Union Territories, responsibility of forest fire prevention and management lies primarily with the respective State Government/UT Administration. Ministry supports the efforts of States and UTs in prevention and control of forest fire by providing financial assistance for various forest fire prevention and management measures under the Centrally Sponsored Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme. States and UTs prepare Annual Plan of Operations for prevention and management of forest fire under this central sponsored scheme and funds are released as per the Guidelines of the scheme.

In addition, Compensatory Afforestation Fund Rules 2018 provide for utilization of net present value component of the fund for capacity building and providing appropriate firefighting equipments to forest fire fighting squads and activities for forest fire management in the States.

- (c) Details of funds released under the Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme for last two and current financial years are given in Annexure II. During 2017-18 and 2018-19, the expenditure is 76.93 % and 93.14% respectively.

The erstwhile Intensification of Forest Management Scheme (IFMS) has been revised and replaced by Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme w.e.f. 2017-18. Approval of the scheme was communicated vide letter dated 20th November 2017. Thereafter proposals were received from various States and UTs and funds were sanctioned. Therefore, nearly 23% of the fund could not be spent in 2017-18. The expenditure in 2019-20 till 04.03.2020 is 99.58%.

Details of estimated loss

(i) Some States have reported estimated losses due to forest fires as per table given below:

S. No.	States	2019
		Estimated Loss (in Rs. lakhs)
1	Assam	1.67
2	Gujarat	5.52
3	Himachal Pradesh	122.10
4	Kerala	1.45
5	Maharashtra	54.51
6	Meghalaya	Not Assessed
7	Nagaland	0.00
8	Punjab	1.09
9	Rajasthan	12.07
10	Uttar Pradesh	0.21
11	Uttarakhand	55.72
12	West Bengal	5.32

(ii) States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, J&K, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura and 7 UTs viz. Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Delhi, Daman & Diu, Lakshdweep and Puducherry have reported that most of the fires are ground fires in which only dried leaves etc got burnt and there is no considerable damage.

(iii) Manipur and Odisha have reported that losses due to forest fires are not assessed.

Annexure II

Annexure referred to in reply of part (e) of the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2730 due for answer on 06.03.2020 regarding 'Prevention on Forest Fire'

Year	Budget (Rs. in Lakh)	Expenditure incurred	
		(Rs. in Lakh)	In percentage (%)
2017-18	4525.00	3481.40	76.93%
2018-19	5000.00	4657.42	93.15%
2019-20 (As on 04.03.2020)	4700.00	4680.32	99.58%