

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1724
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.03.2025

Frequent Forest Fire

1724. Prof. Sougata Ray:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that approximately 38,100 hectares of tree cover has been lost due to forest fires between 2001 and 2023 in the country;
- (b) if so, the details of forest cover lost due to fire during the last five years, State-wise;
- (c) the details of the steps taken by the Government to avoid forest fire in future;
- (d) whether there is any role of encroachment in frequent forest fire; and
- (e) if so, the details of steps taken by the Government to control such incidents in future?

ANSWER

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

(a) and (b) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has not conducted any specific study to estimate the loss of tree cover due to forest fires between 2001 and 2023.

(c) to (e) The Ministry has put in place a National Action Plan on Forest Fire-2018, which provides comprehensive measures to prevent forest fires and to improve the resilience of the forests against fire hazards. The State Governments/UT Administrations also prepare State Action Plans, in tandem with the National Action Plan to undertake State/UT-specific measures towards forest fire prevention and management.

To prevent forest fires, the Ministry through the Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun provides Pre-Fire Alerts (one-week advance), Large Forest Fire Alerts and Near Real Time Forest Fire Alerts to the registered subscribers and State Forest department officials to combat forest fires.

The Ministry in coordination with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have trained three battalions of the NDRF, comprising a total of 150 personnel to tackle Large Forest Fires. These battalions are deployed as per the requirements to control forest fires.

The Ministry also supports the efforts of the States/ UTs in the prevention and control of forest fires by providing financial assistance under the Centrally Sponsored Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme as well as through CAMPA funds.

Most of the forest fires in the country are attributed to anthropogenic reasons, in addition to other natural causal factors. However, the risk of forest fire is accentuated by persistent hotter and drier weather and heat wave conditions.

The prevention of forest fire and encroachment is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Government/UT Administration. To prevent the encroachment, appropriate legal provisions are there in the Indian Forest Act 1927, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and the Local Forest Acts/Rules.

This Ministry issues advisories to State Governments/UT Administrations to remove encroachments on forest lands as per the provisions of the law and to ensure that further encroachments do not occur. Further, in order to prevent encroachments, various measures are taken by the State Forest Departments, which include survey and demarcation of forest areas, fixing of pillars along forest boundary and regular patrolling by the field staff. The State Forest Departments also use a range of modern technologies such as Geographical Information System, Remote sensing and Global Positioning System to check encroachments in the forest areas. The Joint Forest Management committees have also been established at village levels involving local communities for protection, conservation and management of forests.
