

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.61
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.12.2025

Increase in Forest Fire Incidents

61. ADV GOWAAL KAGADA PADAVI:
SHRI SUKHDEO BHAGAT:
SHRI MANOJ KUMAR:

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the sharp increase in forest-fire incidents across the country, including over 8,091 cases between January and September, 2025 a 56 per cent rise as compared to 2024 in Maharashtra;
- (b) the steps being taken by the Government to strengthen fire-early warning systems, satellite data and rapid-response capacity under the schemes, viz. National Forest Fire Monitoring and Green India Mission across the country including Maharashtra and Bihar;
- (c) whether any special central assistance or scheme variation has been approved for high-fire-risk zones within Maharashtra and Bihar and the amount released so far;
- (d) the plans to coordinate with the State Forest Department and other agencies to curb human-caused fires such as those from forest-produce collection or grazing;
- (e) whether the 'Environment Audit Rules, 2025' will apply to forest-fire prevention programmes and how compliance will be ensured;
- (f) the time by which there will be reduction in major forest-fire incidents in Maharashtra and Bihar and the metrics to monitor progress; and
- (g) the details of new preventive and mitigation strategies including early warning systems, community involvement, funding have been adopted by the Government to prevent forest fire along with the time line to make them operational nation wide?

ANSWER

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

(a) Forest fires are a recurring challenge in India, arising from a combination of natural factors such as high temperatures, prolonged dry spells, and lightning, and human-induced causes including shifting cultivation, deliberate burning for fodder, accidental ignitions etc. These risks are amplified by accumulated dry fuel loads, erratic rainfall, and rising temperatures, particularly in dry deciduous and hill forests. Effective prevention and management require robust early-warning systems, community participation, adequate fire-preparedness measures, and coordinated efforts by Central and State Governments. However, forest protection including fire prevention and its management is primarily the responsibility of concerned State Governments /UT Administration.

The Forest fire incidences in the country are detected by the Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun using satellite-mounted sensors. As per the data received from the FSI, Dehradun,

the total forest fire incidences detected in the forest fire season across the country from November 2023 to June 2024, was 2,03,544 forest fires and from November 2024 to June 2025, was 2,38,309. In Maharashtra, satellite-based monitoring using SNPP-VIIRS detected 16,008 forest fires during the fire season from November 2023 to June 2024 while 25,759 were detected from November 2024 to June 2025.

(b) to (c) 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 provides financial assistance to the States and Union Territories under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme – Forest Fire Prevention and Management to deal with forest fires. During the financial year 2023–24, an amount of ₹147.06 lakh was released to Maharashtra and ₹142.85 lakh to Bihar. In 2024–25, Maharashtra received ₹427.21 lakh, while no funds were released to Bihar. In the current financial year 2025–26 (till date), ₹150.00 lakh has been released to Maharashtra, and no releases have been made to Bihar. During the financial year 2024-25, an amount of Rs. 146.16 lakhs was revalidated to the State of Bihar for utilization during the same financial year. However, the Utilization Certificate (UC), Progress Report etc. have not been provided by the State of Bihar resulting in non release of funds to Bihar in financial year 2024-25 and 2025-26 (till date).

(d) The important steps taken by the Government to prevent forest fires include the putting in place the National Action Plan on Forest Fire–2018, which provides comprehensive measures to prevent forest fires and enhance the resilience of forests against fire hazards, and the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations prepare State Action Plans in tandem with the National Action Plan to undertake State/UT-specific measures for forest fire prevention and management. The Ministry, through the Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, provides Pre-Fire Alerts (one week in advance), Large Forest Fire Alerts, and Near Real-Time Forest Fire Alerts to registered subscribers and State Forest Department officials to effectively deal with forest fires. The Ministry, in coordination with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), has trained three teams consisting of 150 personnel to tackle Large Forest Fires, and these teams are deployed as per requirements to control fire incidents. The Ministry also provides financial assistance through the Centrally Sponsored Scheme—Forest Fire Prevention and Management (CSS-FFPM), which aims to reduce forest fire frequency, improve response mechanisms, protect biodiversity and local communities, and restore affected forest areas. Financial assistance under the scheme is provided for activities which *inter alia* include creating and maintaining forest fire lines, engaging forest fire watchers, building water storage structures, strengthening forest infrastructure, procuring fire-fighting equipment, conducting soil and moisture conservation in high-risk areas, raising awareness, and incentivizing communities for forest fire protection.

(e) Environment Audit Rules, 2025 provide for engagement of Registered Environment Auditors, accredited by the Environment Audit Designated Agency, under relevant environmental laws, rules, regulations, notifications, or directions of the Government, requiring compliance verification, auditing and additional functions as prescribed by the Central Government from time to time. Including the audit of forest-fire prevention programmes within their scope, and consequent regular audits can facilitate early detection of violations or non-compliance, thereby helping to prevent fire incidences.

(f) Indicating a specific timeframe for the reduction of major forest-fire incidents across the country including in Maharashtra and Bihar is hampered primarily due to the fact that forest-fire occurrence depends on highly variable climatic conditions, seasonal rainfall, temperature

extremes, and human activities, all of which are dynamic. The trajectory of reduction is contingent upon sustained implementation of State Action Plans, active community participation, and favourable climatic conditions. Progress is monitored through year-on-year reduction in forest-fire alerts detected through SNPP-VIIRS by FSI, the extent of area affected by fires, and the response time between detection and first action by field staff. Additional indicators include the creation and maintenance of fire lines, water storage structures, and deployment of fire watchers under FFPM assistance; the number of community trainings, JFMC/EDC/Van Panchayat engagements, and awareness programmes conducted; compliance and performance audits undertaken by Registered Environment Auditors; deployment and utilisation of specialised fire-fighting teams trained with NDMA/NDRF; and the incidence of large forest fires as captured by FSI's Large Fire Alert system. Continuous assessment using the above metrics/indicators, coupled with strengthened and sustained implementation by the State Governments, may support the achievement of a declining trend in forest-fire incidents in Maharashtra, Bihar, and other States in the forthcoming fire seasons.

(g) The Government has adopted several preventive and mitigation strategies to address forest fires, including improved early-warning systems, strengthened community participation, and enhanced financial and institutional support. The Forest Survey of India (FSI) has operationalised scientific Forest Fire Risk Zonation mapping and provides nationwide Pre-Fire Alerts, Near Real-Time Alerts, and Large Forest Fire Alerts across all States and UTs. The National Action Plan on Forest Fire (2018) emphasises community-based management, and States/UTs conduct regular training and awareness programmes for JFMCs, EDCs, Van Panchayats, and forest-fringe communities, supported by advisories issued by the Ministry. In coordination with NDMA and NDRF, three specialised teams comprising 150 trained personnel have been established to assist States in managing large forest fires. Financial assistance under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme – Forest Fire Prevention and Management supports fire line creation, water storage structures, deployment of fire watchers, procurement of equipment, and community training. Further, the Ministry of Home Affairs, through NDMA, is implementing the Mitigation Scheme for Forest Fire Risk Management in 144 fire-prone districts across 19 States. The Ministry has also finalised Standard Operating Procedures through ICFRE for prevention, mitigation, and response, and circulated them to all States/UTs for implementation. FSI's risk zonation enables prioritised resource allocation, and the Ministry additionally promotes climate-resilient forest biomass utilisation strategies. Advisories are issued regularly to strengthen community engagement and generate awareness among forest-fringe communities for forest fire prevention.
