

**REPLY TO POSTPONED CALLING ATTENTION TABLED BY SHRI  
SHRI. ULHAS TUENKAR, HON'BLE MLA**

**SUB:- RECENT FOREST FIRES BREAKING OUT IN VARIOUS  
FORESTS OF GOA**

**“Fear and anxiety in the minds of people of Goa regarding, the recent forest fires breaking out in various forests of Goa from Canacona to Sattari and Mhadei wildlife sanctuary. There are mountainous forest areas which are un-accessible to fire fighters, where fire trucks cannot reach to douse forest fires. It becomes very difficult for fire fighters to control fires in such un-accessible forest areas as a result fire spread out in uncontrolled way and this results in delays in putting out the fire. Government may provide the steps it intends to take in setting up any plans /solution in this regards which will enable fire fighters to reach out those fire affected forest areas which are beyond access of roads where fire trucks cannot reach, to combat forest fires. The Steps of the Government to remedy the Situation.”**

**REPLY BY THE HON'BLE CHIEF MINISTER DR. PRAMOD SAWANT**

The Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services have attended 3751 forest fires from 01.01.2020 to 15.03.2023 and extinguished the fires with the help of existing fire fighting vehicles and manpower. Wherever, the Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services faces shortage of the requisite equipments for dousing fire in the unapproachable areas, assistance is being sought from the Indian Navy.

It is also planned to utilize services of Aapda Mitras and other volunteer groups from the adjoining villages.

**Forest Department**

Unlike past years, this year, there has been a higher reporting of forest fires in Goa from March first week onwards, which is a new phenomenon with respect to the State of Goa. This year around, it is informed that extreme weather condition has been recorded and there has been no or scanty rains since mid-October, and above average temperatures and very low humidity is being seen. The Forest Department, along with the participation of communities, District Authorities including Fire Services have doused 77 number of fires since March, 2023 till date.

The handling of forest fires is an integral part of forest management and a specialised activity that requires a different set of pre-requisites which would necessarily be different from handling fires in habitations. Therefore, following steps are being taken to further strengthen the response to forest fires in Goa by the Forest Department to combat similar surges, specially to inaccessible areas, if any, in coming times:



1. **Comprehensive Plan Preparation:** The existing State Action Plan on Forest Fires is being revamped and a Comprehensive Action Plan for management of Forest Fires in Goa is under consideration and will include all aspects to handle forest fires more efficiently and effectively so that there is no threat to life and property.

Infrastructure is being strengthened. Specially customized mini-water tankers (4x4) with higher mobility in tougher terrains is being explored that are most suited for reaching inaccessible areas inside the deep forests and shall be developed in consultation with fire services department. The increased requirement of fire-fighting equipments and protective gears like blowers and rakes, fire-tolerant over-alls/aprons, boots, eye-gears etc. is being assessed afresh and shall be provided to the frontline staff for better management.

2. **Intensive Forest Fire prevention measures:** Emphasis is being laid on intensive preparatory works in pre-fire season like control burning, fire line making, etc., particularly along the periphery of the forest boundaries, so that there is no spillage of fires from the public areas into the forests.

3. **Digital Support from FSI:** Pre-fire alerts based on danger rating system, developed by FSI, Dehradun are being obtained to put the entire machinery on high alert and to be in preparedness and address the fuel load on ground and take necessary steps to avoid forest fires.

4. **Training of frontline staff:** Exhaustive training shall be carried out in the coming year to equip the staff with necessary sets of skills to combat such situations. Physical fitness and mental strength shall be the prime asset to handle such situation.

5. **Aerial Support:** In case of the areas which are absolutely beyond the reach of the forest machinery, and it is not humanely possible to access the far-flung areas, aerial support, as was requisitioned this time around, shall be taken on case-to-case basis following the laid down SOP of the Ministry of Defence, GoI.

In light of above, there should not be any fear or anxiety in the minds of people of Goa.

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