

DR SAVITA, Forest Research Institute director

# 'Nobody is to blame for Uttarakhand's forest fires'

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**DEHRADUN:** With 3,466 hectares of green cover gutted in the forest fire raging in Uttarakhand, the Dehradun-based Forest Research Institute (FRI) has plans to team up with the National Disaster Mitigation Authority (NDMA) to combat the calamity in coming years. Concerned over the severity of climate, Dr Savita, director of the institute, talks to HT about the fire and how it can be prevented or controlled in future.

**What is the cause of the unprecedented forest fire?**

Generally, the state receives at least two showers in April and the actual season of forest fire starts in May. But this year, there has been no precipitation and severe dryness, due to which forest fires broke out this month.

**Officials have blamed villagers and the timber mafia for starting the forest fire. Nobody is to be blamed for the fire. Villagers believe that after burning the**

grassland, they get a quality crop the next season. As foresters, we reject the myth. I cannot comment on the involvement of the timber mafia.



**Oak forests, which are supposed to have the most moisture, too have reported fire.**

Uttarakhand did not receive sufficient rainfall during the winter. The surface of

the earth is parched and there's no surprise that even Oak forests are burning.

**How has FRI decided to support this natural calamity?**

I have talked to the NDMA authorities on starting workshops on combating fire. Talks are in the nascent stage and we are still preparing the draft.

**What precautions should be taken before the fire season?**

Fire lines should be cleared properly. Under operation 'control burning', we should ensure the clearing of dry leaves and twigs.

The Himanchal Times 11/5/16 - 12/1

# FRI staff given tips on fire fighting

DEHRADUN,  
MAY 3 (HTNS)

**C**ISF officer NP Singh and his team working under ONGC, Dehradun, organised a joint programme on Fire Safety drill in the convocation hall of FRI for institute staff here today.

Fire Inspector NP Singh briefed about the fire to the officers and staff of Forest Research Institute, what are the things responsible for fire, how to control the fire, classification of fire and types of extinguishers used for the control of fire. He also briefed them that under the classification of fire there were different categories and the material covered. A- Class includes wood, paper and rubber, B-Class includes alcohol, petrol and other fuels, C-Class, different type of flammable gases whereas in D-Class includes the combus-



tible metals like magnesium and sodium. He also briefed about the different types of extinguisher and equipment used to control the fire. A live demonstration

was also given by using different types of extinguishers to the staff. On the occasion, Director, FRI, Dr Savita also briefed about the fire and a case of fire

recently occurred in the Bamboosetum of FRI and how it was controlled. She also told the officers and staff about the Dos and Don'ts for safety of house.

The Times of India 6/5/16 - FRI

# FRI to study damage caused by fire-prone chir pines to forests

## Report To Be Submitted To Supreme Court For Permission To Fell Trees

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### DAMAGE CONTROL?

Dehradun: The Forest Research Institute (FRI) is set to study chir pine trees which are found in abundance in both Garhwal and Kumaun divisions and have been blamed for easy spread of forest fires in the state. FRI scientists will prepare a report on the damage caused to the state forests due to chir pines. The report

**“As and when the soil is conducive to germination of new plants, we can sow trees of miscellaneous varieties, especially those with broad leaves to stop chir pines from taking over the forests**

**OMVEER SINGH**  
Head, silviculture section | FRI

will then be sent to the Union ministry of environment & forests (MoEF). Once the report receives approval by the ministry the plan is to submit it before the Supreme Court to seek permission to fell chir trees.

The scientists have also suggested planting miscellaneous varieties of trees in the burnt forests to curb spread of

chir pines. Omveer Singh, head of the silviculture section at FRI, said, “As and when the soil is conducive for germination of new plants, we can sow trees of miscellaneous varieties, especially those with broad leaves to stop chir pines from taking over the forests.”

According to some estimates, there are approximately three crore tonnes of pine leaves lying collected in the forests of the state which have not been cleared in the past

**According to some estimates, there are approximately three crore tonnes of pine leaves lying collected in the forests of the state which have not been cleared in the past four years**

four years. These dried needles, filled with resin, are highly combustible. “The villagers

have been permitted to use the leaves for various purposes,” a forest official said.

The chir pine trees, which do not require much water to survive, have taken over 17% of the total forest area in the state as broad-leaved trees such as oak have disappeared due to excessive felling by locals.

“No grass or plants can grow under chir. It is also not edible for wildlife,” said S K Chandola, former principal

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chief conservator of forests. He said that expensive resin is extracted from the chir which is why many villages are found settled in the area where the trees grow, usually at a height of 1,500 to 2,000 ft.

Chandola added that pine monoculture is bad for good health of forests. Instead, mixed vegetation which includes grass, shrubs, broad-leaved trees such as oak, rododendrum, kafal, and timla should be grown in the forests.