

# Forest Department Undertakes Steps for Controlled Burning

In order to mitigate the incidence of forest fires in the region during the forest-fire season, the State forest department has started undertaking controlled burning. The department staff is setting fire to pine needles and dry foliage while making fire-lines as part of the prevention measures. The officers of the forest department here aver that this exercise will help in mitigating and preventing fires in the jungles of this region in the coming summer months.

It is pertinent to mention here that in this winter season, fires in the forests in areas around New Tehri and the smoke billowing out from these have become among the major issues of discussion among the local public. The locals report that in the past couple of days, fire burning during the night in a line between Badshahithaul and New Tehri have been eliciting much discussion and concern among the local residents. However, the fire is being lit up by the forest department itself in a controlled manner.

It is pertinent to mention here that every year during the forest fire season which starts from a fortnight into the month of February, results in a considerable loss and damage to various components of the forest wealth and wildlife. As part of measures aimed at reducing the scope for forest fires in coming months, the department has gathered the considerably inflammable dry pine needles and other flora at one place. As this area has a considerable presence of pine tree forests, these continue to be one of the major causes for forest fires during the fire season every year.

Talking to *The Pioneer*, the forest department ranger of this area, NL Dobhal said that the dry pine needles and other flora are being gathered and burned in a controlled manner by the forest department. The pine needles and other flora presenting potential for forest fire are being collected and burned in presence of the department officials.

Considering the winter season currently on, such controlled fires being set up by the department result in little serious damage to the forest wealth, he added. It should be mentioned here that for carrying out the controlled fires, the department has collected the pine needles and other bush material scattered around has been placed at a breadth of 20 metres on main roads and five metres on bridle paths.