

(c) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to increase more vigilance at Myanmar border to check illegal activities/smuggling?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI NITYANAND RAI) : (a) to (c) Government has adopted a multi-pronged approach to contain smuggling/illegal activities which inter-alia includes multi-tiered deployment of security forces, conduct of intensive patrolling, sharing of intelligence, joint operations, liaison with police, intelligence agencies and local government agencies and use of improved equipments and surveillance devices. As a result of heightened vigil, 451.676 kgs of gold worth ₹ 142.83 crore was seized along Indo-Myanmar Border during 2018-19.

Conference on capacity building of SDRF

3570. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether conference on capacity building of State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) was recently held in New Delhi;

(b) if so, the details of deliberation at the conference;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government felt the need to respond effectively to growing threat of forest fires;

(d) whether the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) are well equipped to handle forest fires effectively; and

(e) if so, the State-wise details thereof and if not, whether Government would consider providing all logistic support to SDRF to tackle increasing cases of forest fires more effectively?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI NITYANAND RAI) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Annual Conference on Capacity Building of State Disaster Response Forces (SDRFs) with participants from Civil Defence, Home Guards and Fire Services was held on 29th and 30th June, 2019 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. During the conference following issues were discussed:

(i) Road Map of Disaster Management in Next Five Years;

(ii) Operational challenges in Disasters;

(iii) Challenges in Activation of Resources and Manpower in Pre and Post Disaster Situations;

- (iv) Synergy among all emergency stake holders of Disaster Management
- (v) Composite Disasters:- Involving and Other Emergencies;
- (vi) Information Sharing and Technology in Disaster Management.

(c) to (e) As forests are managed by the State Forest Departments, the responsibility of forest fire prevention and management rests primarily with respective State Governments, Also, the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) is constituted by the State Government, it is again the responsibility of the State Government to equip their SDRF personnel to handle any sort of disaster including forest fire. The Central Government provides logistics and financial support to the State Governments in its endeavor. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has informed that the Forest Department of State Governments has deployed forest fire protection squads at vulnerable locations to effectively deal with the forest fire. These squad members have been provided with firefighting equipment to deal with forest fire.

Further, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in collaboration with the World Bank has conducted a study on Situation Analysis of Forest Fire and released a study report titled "Strengthening Forest Fire Management in India" which contains various recommendations regarding forest fire prevention, detection, suppression, post-fire management, engaging with communities, coordination with other agencies etc. Inputs from study were used by the Ministry in preparation of National Action Plan on Forest Fire which was issued in April 2018. The objective of this plan is to minimize forest fires by informing, enabling and empowering Forest Fringe communities and incentivizing them to work in tandem with the Forest Departments. This also intends to substantially reduce the vulnerability of forests across the diverse forest ecosystems in the country against fire hazards, enhance the capabilities of forest personnel and institutions in fighting fires, and speed up recovery after a fire event.

Safeguarding country's secular and harmonious character

3571. SHRI BINOY VISWAM : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the fact that India is fast losing its image of being a secular and tolerant Nation for people of all faith; and
- (b) what efforts have been made by Government to resist communal forces and safeguard country's secular and harmonious character?