

Railways to monitor forest fires in ghats

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MANGALURU: The South Western Railway (SWR) is on high alert and is closely monitoring forest fires on the Western Ghats. A special team to monitor and douse such fires between Subrahmanya and Siribagilu of the Mangaluru- Bengaluru route has been formed. On Saturday, a Mangaluru- Vijayapura train was stopped at Subrahmanya Road railway station due to a forest fire.

A source from SWR said efforts are being taken to ensure regular train services are not hit due to forest fires. Water is sprayed on a special BFR wagon whenever a case is reported. To date, from the last three days, six incidents have been reported. For train movement, clearance has to be obtained for at least 10 meters from the centre of the track. Whenever a

fire is reported near the railway track, all trains are stopped, the source said

Meanwhile, SWR has also deputed patrolmen and watchmen in the section, who otherwise are deputed only during the monsoon, as the region is prone to landslides.

At present, at all sensitive spots, stationary watchmen have been deputed. “Whenever they see a fire near the track, a message is sent to the station master and at the same time the BFR wagon proceeds with a 10,000-litre water tank to the spot to douse the fire. Only after the track is declared fit by officials, is the train movement allowed on the route,” the source said.

Deputy conservator of forest (DCF), Mangaluru division Dinesh Kumar YK inspected the forest areas near Siribagilu and Yedekumeri on Wednesday. In recent days, with the rising temperatures, forest department staff in the field are engaged in a

continuous process of dousing several forest fires. According to the India Meteorological Department, Meteorological Centre, Bengaluru, Panambur and Honnavar recorded the highest maximum temperature of 39.6°C in the state on Saturday.