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Climate change set to impact Goa's forest, tree cover by 2030

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PANAJI: By 2030, 671sqkm of the state's forest and tree cover is set to emerge as a climate hotspot, which is an area expected to be adversely impacted by climate change, the Forest Survey of India (FSI) has said in its latest assessment for 2021 released on Thursday. By 2050, the entire 2,237sqkm of forest and tree cover of Goa, like for most states, is likely to face 'high' severity of climate change, according to the report.

'High severity' means that the green cover in Goa is expected to see a rise in temperatures between the range of 1.5 and 2.1 degree Celsius. Besides this, the climate hotspot will also see a change in rainfall pattern due to either an increase or decrease to the extent of 20-26%, the FSI report indicates.

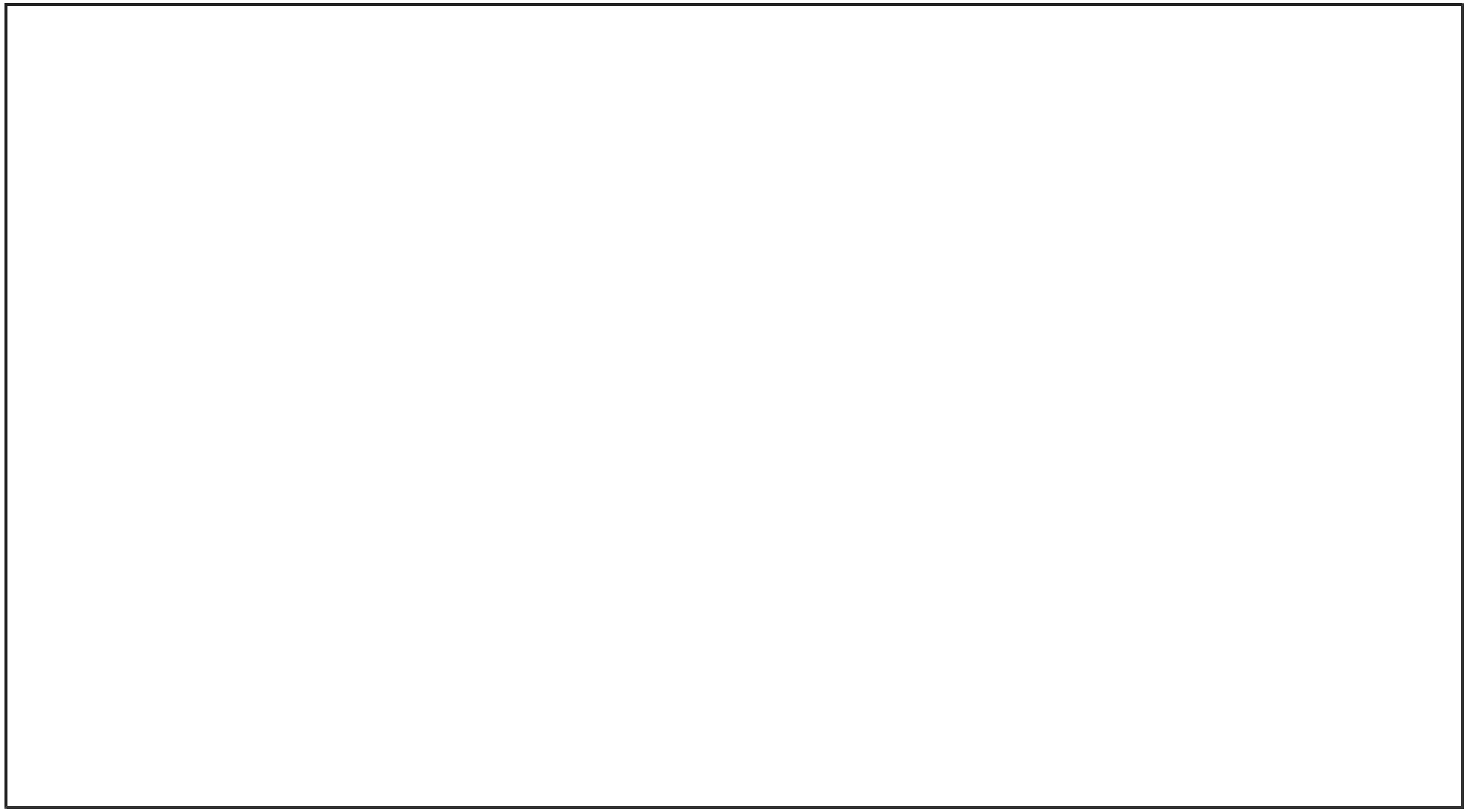
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"A climate hotspot refers to an area which is likely to face severe impacts of climate change," states the report.

The results were thrown up by a collaborative study undertaken by FSI for the entire country in collaboration with Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani, Goa campus. The study mapped the climate hotspots in the green cover of the country.



"Enhanced understanding about climate hotspots areas due to adverse climatic impacts in the forests of India would help in planning and strategising mitigation of climate change impacts and devising appropriate adaptation measures," states the FSI

report.

The 2021 assessment also shows that the area under bamboo cover in Goa has reduced drastically by 130sqkm in 2021, as compared to FSI's last assessment carried out in 2019.

Besides this, 45 fires during the fire season from November 2019 to June 2020 and 47 fires during the season from November 2020 to June 2021 were recorded in Goa by FSI. These nearly 100 fires in Goa, included large, continuous and repeated fires, as per the report. This is despite the fact that none of the forest areas in Goa, as per FSI, fall under fire-prone categories, possibly indicating mischief as a cause of the forest fires.

The FSI assessment shows, however, that Goa's total forest cover of 1,271sqkm has gone up by 7sqkm. Goa's forest cover now amounts to 34.3% of the state's total geographical area. The increase in forest cover by 7sqkm was mainly due to increase in open forest areas recorded in Goa, according to the report.