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Cloud seeding not viable solution: State

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Nainital: The state government on Tuesday informed the Uttarakhand high court (HC) that there are many practical difficulties in using artificial rains through cloud seeding to douse the forest fires. The response comes after the court took cognisance of wildfires devastating several hundred hectares of forest land in the hill state, and asked the state to consider possibilities of artificial rain to douse the flames. The affidavit submitted by the Head of Forest Force (HOFF), Rajiv Bhartari, revealed that the department had sent a letter to the Centre in mid-April seeking guidelines/instructions on possibility of using cloud seeding but the DG, forest and special secretary, Government of India in its response "concluded that even though the cloud seeding and artificial rains could be a theoretical solution for mitigating forest fire over NW India, there are many practical difficulties for the same". The Centre added that there is "need to choose other viable options for mitigating forest fires which are practised elsewhere". Cloud seeding is a technology that creates artificial rainfall by spraying particles of salts on clouds. These salt particles draw the moisture within the clouds towards them and leads to formation of raindrops that precipitate.

The department also informed the court that it has conducted trials using gel like substances to prevent forest fires.

The trials, affidavit said, were conducted in April in Lachhiwala forest range but its results are still awaited. "If this method (gel fluid method) is proved to be effective in controlling forest fires it can also be applied in future incidents/cases of forest fires," it can also be applied in future incidents/cases of forest fires," read the affidavit. The forest department has also said that it has written to the state government and taken several other steps to fill up over 65% vacancies for the post of forest guards, 82% vacancies for the post of assistant conservator of forests and the vacancies for the post of conservators as well.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/cloud-seeding-not-viable-solution-state/articleshowprint/82749048.cms>