

“SAMANAM AGNI - SARANAM AGNI”.



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In keeping with India’s tradition of paying solemn homage to the martyrs who laid down their lives while fighting fires, The National Fire Service Martyr’s Day is being observed on 14th April alongwith the Fire Prevention Week (14th April to 20th April’2020) and will also be used as an occasion for spreading awareness about Fire Safety among the general public. This year’s theme is;

“SAMANAM AGNI - SARANAM AGNI ”

“शमनम् अग्नि - शरणम् अग्नि”

The objective is to recall the progress of humanity from the days when Fire was recognized as one of the Five Cardinal Elements of Nature ie. Earth, Air, Fire, Water & Ether. Fire was initially feared and later understood as beneficial in regulated conditions.

Fire Brigades the World over exist primarily to fight fires once they occur, and also to guide the society on the ways and means to avoid or control fire.

Indian Culture raised Fire (Agni) to the status of a God. The shock and awe that followed a dazzling Lightning during the run up to a Rainy Season, or as the Rains retreat, was linked to the Forest Fires or the burning down of giant trees in open spaces. Later, chance discovery of half-burnt meat, roots and fruits led to the realization that Fire can help in making food tastier and better to digest, through controlled use. Efforts to salvage some fire from the Forest Fires and keeping alive through steady feeding of small twigs and oil bearing seeds followed the realization that cooking was possible. This phase was where man was holding the Fire in awe and surrendering to it, in supplication “**Saranam Agni**”.

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Later systematic study of the behaviour of Fire helped to understand that water does deter the spread of Fire. Experience suggests that spread of Fire is also dependent upon presence of air, and the knowledge that denial of access to air resulted in extinguishing of the Fire, helped in the management of controlled fire, as used in Yajna and individual kitchens. Ensuring perpetual controlled fire became a necessity as cooking became an essential part of human progress. The custodians of the limited fire source, who had the knowledge of how to enlarge fires and minimize them as per need of the time, came to be respected and were revered.

The use of Fire to induce Rain Fall was one of the earliest scientific achievements of human society. Thus the practice of Yajnas came to be part of Administrative duties of Kings/rulers. The control of such created fires later led to the emergence of Kilns which prepared bricks for building homes and vessels for carrying water and cooking and smaller clay objects like plates and tumblers for food. The next logical step was creation of farm implements like ploughshare, using Iron and steel, created from molten metal found cooled down as ingots after large fires in Forests. Rivalries for possessing fertile soil and standing crops led to the creation of Swords and knives and later projectiles like arrows and Tools like Bows to convert energy of tension into speed of arrows.

This phase of development of benign use of Fire for cooking and implement making and later the development of weapons, is what we refer to as **“Samanam Agni”**.

The discovery that Chemicals naturally occurring are stores of energy and could be used to bring about hitherto unknown combinations of primary metals and other substances led to the development of Chemical Engineering and the human progress got an exponential boost. This development came with its own associated fire risk. Coal as a Invisible Reserve of energy led to the development of Steam engines, Ships with large capacity, Locomotive engine and trains and Textile industry. The Risk of Fire Hazard increased more or less proportionately. Large scale expansion of industry led to parallel expansion in trade and both demanded the creation of skilled teams of Fire Fighters. From then onwards, the Fire and Emergency Service personnel became an essential part of civilized society.

The Bombay docks explosion which occurred on 14th April 1944 in the Victoria Dock of Bombay (now Mumbai) when the SS Fort Stikine Vessel, carrying a mixed cargo of cotton bales, gold and ammunition including around 1400 tons of explosives caught fire and was destroyed in two giant blasts, scattering debris, sinking surrounding ships and setting fire to the area, killing around **800 to 1300 people**. Some 80,000 people were rendered homeless and 71 firemen lost their lives in the aftermath.

We re-dedicate ourselves to our mission “**We Serve to Save**”. We also avail of this opportunity to pay our Homage to valiant Martyrs of Fire & Emergency Services in the Country who made the supreme sacrifice in the process of saving others lives and property.

In the line of duty, the Department in the year 2019-20 handled various Fire and Emergency cases which included serious Chemicals Gas Leakages, Liquefied Gas Leakages, Dry Grass Fires, Electrical Fires, Flood Rescue, Animal Rescue, Chemical Spillage, Road Accidents & Urban Fires. During the year 2019-20, the Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services have collectively attended **2953 Fire calls** and **5659 Emergency Calls**, during which **324 human lives** and **587 Animal lives** were saved. Property worth **Rs. 51.15 crores** was saved/Salvaged due to timely action of the Fire Personnel.

In view of improved usage of technology for data storing & analyzing the department has moved to digitizing of data with the help of Automation Expert Spreadsheet Excellence for all Fire Stations. This has helped in comparing data for pro- active actions in the future.

As ever we look forward to achieve optimum efficiency with the help of well informed citizens extending all possible help to the department in its endeavour to serve the State.

