



Lackadaisical Approach: Uttarakhand Forest Fires

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court** sought an explanation from the Uttarakhand government on why **central funds** were not utilized for dousing fires.

Key Points

- The SC summoned the **Uttarakhand chief secretary** to appear before it on 17th May over the **'lackadaisical' approach** shown by the Uttarakhand government in tackling fires.
- The top court directed that no state shall deploy forest officials or forest department vehicles for poll duty.
- The chief secretary has also been asked to explain large vacancies in the forest department, lack of fire fighting equipment, and deployment of forest officials despite specific exemption granted by the **Election Commission**.
- The bench headed by **Justice BR Gavai** and also comprising **Justices SVN Bhatti** and **Sandeep Mehta**, observed that though multiple action plans are prepared, no steps are taken for their implementation.
 - **1,300 hectares of land** were affected due to the forest fires.
- Uttarakhand chief minister **Pushkar Singh Dhami** had launched the **Pirul Lao-Paise Pao Mission**.
 - Under this campaign, to prevent forest fires, the **Pirul** (leaves from the Pine Tree) lying in the forest will be collected by the local villagers and youth, weighed, and then stored at the designated **Pirul Collection Centre**.

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