



Rise in Forest Fires in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

According to the report by [the Forest Survey of India \(FSI\)](#), Uttarakhand has recorded a **74% rise** in [forest fires](#).

Key Points

- **Satellite Observations and Fire Counts:**
 - In **Uttarakhand**, satellite data recorded a significant rise in fire incidents, with **21,033 fire counts from November 2023 to June 2024**, compared to 5,351 during the same period in 2022-2023.
 - A total of 1,808.9 sq km of forest area was impacted by fires during the season.
 - **Andhra Pradesh** reported the highest fire-affected area (5,286.76 sq km) followed by **Maharashtra** (4,095.04 sq km) and **Telangana** (3,983.28 sq km), **Himachal Pradesh** (783.11 sq km).
- **Top Affected States:**
 - **Chhattisgarh:** 18,950 incidents.
 - **Andhra Pradesh:** 18,174 incidents.
 - **Maharashtra:** 16,008 incidents.
 - **Madhya Pradesh:** 15,878 incidents.
 - **Telangana:** 13,479 incidents.
- **High-Risk Areas:**
 - **Uttarakhand**, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir were declared as "**very high risk**" zones.
- **Nationwide Risk:**
 - Approximately 11.34% of India's forest cover and scrub area lies in extremely to **very highly fire-prone zones**, with vulnerable patches in **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand**.
- **Fire Susceptibility:**
 - Climatic conditions like **extreme heat and availability of fuel wood** contribute significantly to forest fire susceptibility.
 - Fires often **spread rapidly** to other forest areas **due to the presence of combustible material**.
 - This data highlights the growing severity of forest fires in India, with **substantial ecological and environmental implications**.

Forest Survey of India

- **Established:** Established on **1st June 1981**, succeeding the **Pre Investment Survey of Forest Resources (PISFR)** initiated in **1965**.
 - In **1976**, the [National Commission on Agriculture \(NCA\)](#) recommended establishing a **National Forest Survey Organization**, leading to the creation of **FSI**.
 - PISFR was initiated in **1965** by the Government of India with the sponsorship of [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#) and [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#).
- **Parent Organization:** [Ministry of Environment and Forests](#), Government of India.

- **Primary Objective:** To **assess and monitor the forest resources** of India regularly.
 - In addition, it is also engaged in providing the services of **training, research and extension**.
- **Functioning:** FSI has headquarters at **Dehradun** and has pan India presence with four regional offices at **Shimla, Kolkata, Nagpur and Bangalore**.
 - The Eastern zone has a sub centre at **Burnihat (Meghalaya)**.

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