Forest Fire

GS-1 Geography

With rising mercury levels, Uttarakhand’s forest fire season has now reached its peak.

There are two primary causes of wildfires, viz. Human and Natural.

Human Causes

- 90% of all wildfires are caused by humans.
- Human acts of carelessness such as leaving campfires unattended and negligent discarding of cigarette butts result in wildfire disasters every year.
- Accidents, deliberate acts of arson, burning of debris, and fireworks are the other substantial causes of wildfires.

Natural Causes

- **Lightning**: A fairly good number of wildfires are triggered by lightning.
- **Volcanic Eruption**: Hot magma in the earth’s crust is usually expelled out as lava during a volcanic eruption. The hot lava then flows into nearby fields or lands to start wildfires.
- **Temperature**: High atmospheric temperatures and dryness offer favourable conditions for a fire to start.
- **Climate Change** is causing a gradually increasing surface air temperature, which can propagate forest fires.
- **Weather Components**: Warmer temperatures and lower humidity cause vapour pressure deficit to increase which can dry fuels rapidly and allow fires to grow very fast

Forest Fire Prevention and Management in India

- Forests are a subject in the concurrent list (brought under this list through 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976) of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
- **National Action Plan on Forest Fires (NAPFF-2018)** of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
  - MoEFCC also provides forest fire prevention and management measures under the Centrally Sponsored Forest Fire Prevention and Management (FPM) scheme.
  - The FPM replaced the Intensification of Forest Management Scheme (IFMS) in 2017. By revamping the IFMS, the FPM has increased the amount dedicated for forest fire work.
  - Funds allocated under the FPM are according to a center-state cost-sharing formula, with a 90:10 ratio of central to state funding in the Northeast and Western Himalayan regions and a 60:40 ratio for all other states.
  - It also provides the states the flexibility to direct a portion of the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) and Mission for Green India (GIM) funding toward forest fire work.