A Case Study of Forest Fire in Tamilnadu

Why in news?

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A massive forest fire has happened at Kurangani forest on the Western Ghats in Theni district of Tamil Nadu.

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What are the causalities of the recent forest fire?

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- The Kurangani fire turned into a disaster as 36 trekkers were stuck on the mountains.
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- With their regular trekking route cut off by the fire, many panicked and lost their direction.
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- While a number of trekkers were injured in falls, as many as 16 persons lost their lives.
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- In the immediate aftermath of fire, there is a temporary loss of food and shelter, causing displacement of territorial birds and mammals, upsetting the ecological balance.
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What are the reasons of forest fire?

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- Forest fires may be caused by different factors like natural causes, including lightning, but 99% of the fires in the forests are man-made.
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- **Encroachers -**Attempts to encroach upon forest lands, renewal of pastures

or regain agricultural land at the expense of forests.
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- Fire caused by poachers and timber smugglers to destroy evidence of illegal activities or merely fire by miscreants or burning of waste in illegal dumps.
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- **Act of Locals -** It is also suspected that the locals might set fire in order that there may be growth of fresh grass for their cattle, or to shift cultivation patterns on the hills.
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- **Careless deed -**A smouldering fire, not stamped out properly, leftover by travellers, campers and picnickers.
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- It can even might be of a spark that has escaped from a deliberate one on agricultural lands or from controlled burning elsewhere.
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What actions needs to be taken to respond to forest fire?

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- While fires rage in forests every summer and are controlled from spreading too far by forest officials running a fire line and shearing the land of any vegetation for a significant area.
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- Better monitoring of reserve forest areas and keeping a close watch on fire-prone spots have been recommended.
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- State government need to appoint temporary fire watchers for this purpose at the same time government need to take measures to fill the vacancies in the forest departments.
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- Forest department should have a special unit of disaster management and rescue team to respond such incidents in near future.
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- Thus minimisation of loss of life has to be prioritised by the respective governmentsas the forests fires have the tendency to change wildlife and human habitats.
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Source: The Hindu

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