

## **India's Forests Fires**

## Why in News?

Recently, the data showed that in the past 5 fire seasons, over 11 lakh fires incidents reported in India.

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Mentioned that <u>4 states</u> have reported over <u>1 lakh forest fire incidents</u> each in the <u>last five forest fire seasons</u>.
- 4 States Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra.
- They accounted for 4,73,834 forest fires, which constitutes approximately 43% of the total forest fire incidents in India.

India has reported a staggering 11,09,588 forest fires. Each year from November to June, forests across the country ignites, threatening ecosystems, wildlife and livelihoods.

- India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021 Over 36% of the country's forest cover is estimated to be vulnerable to frequent forest fires.
  - **2.81%** Extremely fire-prone.
  - 7.85% Very highly fire-prone category.
- ISFR 2023 Around 275 million rural people in India depend on forests for their livelihood security.
- Communities residing near forested areas rely heavily on forests for Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs).
- **Major Factors** Collection of <u>tendu leaves and mahua flowers</u> contributing to forest fires.
- *Shifting cultivation practices* adopted by local farmers, where an estimated 4.35 million hectares (mha) of forest area is affected by fires.
- **Reasons for fires** Unsustainable exploitation of forest resources and coupled with increasing human activities threat to the balance of forest ecosystems.
- Impacts It leads to loss of:
  - Human lives
  - Depletion of biodiversity
  - Habitat destruction
  - Reduced agricultural productivity
  - Landscape degradation
  - Disruptions to local livelihoods.

## Reference

The Hindu Business Line India's Forests Ablaze

