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1. From Forest Rights Act to frequent Bandipur forest fires

❑ **Why Bandipur fire is a matter of concern?**

❑ **How susceptible is Bandipur for forest fires?**

❑ **What are the possible impacts of these fires of forests?**

GS paper 3 (Conservation)

In this video, you can find detailed answers for all the above questions.

The above article has been retrieved from:

R. Krishna Kumar Mohit M Rao. (2019, March , 9). Why are fires frequent at the Bandipur reserve?. The Hindu. Retrieved from https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/why-are-fires-frequent-at-the-bandipur-reserve/article26419280.ece

What is the context about?

❑ A five-day fire that raged through the Bandipur Tiger Reserve has reportedly burnt more than 15,400 acres of forests.

❑ Between February 21 and 25, the reserve saw 127 fire counts in various ranges of the 912 sq km forest. The largest of the fires was contained only on Monday.

❑ While Karnataka Forest Department officials scrambled to put out the blaze, an Indian Air Force helicopter sprayed over 19,000 litres of water in seven sorties.

Why Bandipur fire is a matter of concern?

❑ While fires are not uncommon at Bandipur, what has surprised officials is their intensity and frequency.

❑ The worry now is the long-term damage to the ecosystem, which is a part of the Nilgiri Biosphere that hosts the world's largest tiger population, at more than 575 (2014 census).

❑ Over 400 fire watchers were placed, but questions have arisen whether the precautions were enough, especially since Bandipur has had frequent fires.

How susceptible is Bandipur for forest fires?

❑ Bandipur is a dry deciduous forest in the rain shadow region of the Western Ghats, and is no stranger to fires. Periods of drought invariably lead to fires.

❑ A study has shown that between 1974 and 2014, 67% of the Nilgiri Biosphere had seen some form of forest fire, with Bandipur having reported the most incidents.

❑ The 2018 monsoon was particularly strong, but the year-end northeast monsoon has failed.

❑ If the monsoon led to dense growth, the blistering heat since September has turned vegetation brittle and dry, with vast swathes becoming tinderboxes.

❑ As with most forest fires, it is assumed that Bandipur's ignition was man-made as miscreants set fire in multiple locations.

❑ Compounding matters is the ubiquity of lantana camara, an invasive weed species native to South America, that has spread through nearly two-thirds of the forest area.

What are the possible impacts of these fires of forests?

❑ The trees in this landscape were closer to those in a savanna than in rainforests 100 km away. Trees have dramatically thicker barks, implying that they had evolved to be fire-resistant.

❑ When fires are relatively frequent, adult tree mortality in these systems is very low.

❑ Many saplings sprout shortly after the fire from underground reserves, and the system returns to its original state in a few years.

❑ Conversely, when fires are suppressed — including by curbing the tribal practices of controlled fire burning — a greater biomass builds up that can lead to high intensity fires which affect the ecosystem negatively.