

**April 2024**  
**Uttarakhand Disaster & Accident Analysis Initiative (UDAAI)**  
**Monthly Reports**

**Social Development for Communities (SDC) Foundation**  
**Dehradun, Uttarakhand**  
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**About UDAAI Monthly Reports**

Uttarakhand Disaster & Accident Analysis Initiative (UDAAI) is a monthly initiative by Dehradun-based environmental action and advocacy group, Social Development for Communities (SDC) Foundation. The goal of the UDAAI reports is to document disasters and accidents in Uttarakhand, leading to human and ecological casualties. UDAAI is based on media reports in respectable publications in English and Hindi newspapers, as well as news portals. UDAAI neither attempts nor claims to document all disasters and all accidents in Uttarakhand; its focus instead is to document major casualties and non-casualty events on a regular basis.

We strongly believe that with the perils of inclement climate and unabated disasters, the ecologically fragile and earthquake-prone state of Uttarakhand needs to take many more steps to increase its disaster preparedness. We therefore see UDAAI as a document that highlights attention towards the urgent need of a holistic disaster management and accident minimization policy framework in Uttarakhand.

It is our earnest hope that UDAAI will spur political leadership, policy makers, bureaucracy, research and academic institutions, businesses, civil society organisations, media and the citizenry at large to initiate inclusive, regular and action-oriented conversations on the subjects of resilience, mitigation and adaptation in Uttarakhand. With mainstreaming and a greater focus on the issue, there is likely to be an improvement in the process of planning of climate actions and disaster management in Uttarakhand.

**April 10: Eight killed after vehicle falls into 150 metre gorge**

In Betalghat area of Nainital district, eight people including seven Nepalese workers were killed and two injured as their vehicle fell into a 150 metre gorge on the night of Monday, April 8, 2024. The injured were rushed to community health centre Betalghat by SDRF and were referred to a different health centre from there.

Station Officer Betalghat police station Aneesh Ahmed said, “We rushed to the spot as soon as we received the information and launched a rescue operation with the help of villagers from the nearby area and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF). It took two hours for the team to reach the spot as it was dark and the gorge was deep.”

He said the accident happened due to the driver losing control of the vehicle, and further added, "The Nepalese workers were working under a contractor for the Jal Jeevan mission in Unchakot village under Betalghat police station.

# 8 killed after vehicle falls into 150m gorge

**HT Correspondent**

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**RUDRAPUR:** Eight people including seven Nepalese workers were killed and two injured after their vehicle fell into a 150-metre gorge in Betalghat area of Nainital district on Monday night, the police said on Tuesday.

Station officer Betalghat police station Aneesh Ahmed said, "We rushed to the spot as soon as we received the information and launched a rescue operation with the help of villagers from nearby area and the state disaster response force (SDRF). It took two hours for the team to reach the spot as there it was dark and the gorge was deep."

He further said that the spot is around 60 km from Nainital district headquarters.

"The Nepalese workers were working under a contractor for Jal Jeevan mission in Unchakot village under Betalghat police station. To return home in Nepal from Tanakpur of Champawat district via Ramnagar, the nine Nepalese labourers had booked a pick-up vehicle (UK04-CC-0495) on Monday. At around 10.30 pm, the driver



**SDRF team along with local police conducted search and rescue operation in Nainital's Betalghat area on Monday night.** HT

identified as Rajendra Kumar (38), a resident of Baskot village in Nainital, lost control of the vehicle and it fell into a 150-metre gorge," he said.

He further said that the deceased have been identified as Vish Ram (50), Dheeraj (45), Anant Ram Chaudhary (40), Vinod Chaudhary (38), Uday Ram Chaudhary (55), Tilak Ram Chaudhary (45) and Gopal (60). "Seven Nepalese citizens and the driver had died on the spot. Two Nepalese - Shanti Chaudhary and Chhotu Chaudhary - were injured in the accident."

He said the injured were rushed to community health centre Betalghat by SDRF and from there they were referred to a different health centre.

Reacting to the incident, chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said, "Very sad to have received news about the death of eight people in a road accident in Nainital district. I pray to God to grant peace to the souls of the departed and strength to the bereaved family members to bear this loss. I pray to God for the speedy recovery of the injured."

HINDUSTAN TIMES  
APRIL 10, 2024

## April 14: Jungle fires rage even more this year

The incident of forest fires has increased even more compared to last year. Last year in 2023, 156 incidents were recorded until April 12, and which had impacted 214 hectare forest area. This year until April 12, 245 such incidents have taken place, and which have impacted 256 hectares of forests. Forest officials say the increase is due to burning of stubble and increased atmospheric temperature. They say that fire is reaching from civil areas into protected forest areas.

Another reason for these fires is the collection of wild honey from hives in the jungles. Villagers from nearby areas enter the jungle and create fires to drive the honeybees away with smoke. The fires that they leave behind then spread over the rest of the forest.

Incident of forest fires from 1 November to 12 April

Year	Fires	Affected hectare area
2022	446	593.19
2023	156	214.2
2024	245	256.57

# इस बार ज्यादा भड़क रही जंगल की आग

प्रदेश में इस बार ज्यादा भड़क रही जंगल की आग, पिछले साल की तुलना में 89 अधिक मामले आए सामने

**अमर उजाला ब्यूरो**

**पिछले 24 घंटे में 25 जगह धधके जंगल**

उत्तराखंड में पिछले 24 घंटे में जंगल में आग की 25 घटनाएं सामने आई हैं। वन विभाग की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, गढ़वाल में 16 और कुमाऊं में सात जगह आग की घटनाएं हुईं, जबकि दो घटनाएं अन्य क्षेत्रों की हैं। जिससे 25 हेक्टेयर से अधिक वन क्षेत्र प्रभावित हुआ है। रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक, गढ़वाल मंडल में बदरीनाथ वन प्रभाग क्षेत्र में सबसे अधिक 14 घटनाएं हुई हैं। वहीं, राजाजी टाइगर रिजर्व में आग की दो घटनाएं दर्ज की गई हैं।

**एक नवंबर 2023 से 12 अप्रैल 2024 तक वनाग्नि के मामले**

वर्ष	घटनाएं	प्रभावित क्षेत्र हेक्टेयर में
2022	446	593.19
2023	156	214.2
2024	245	256.57

जंगलों की आग बुझाने के लिए सूचना मिलते ही विभाग की टीम को मौके पर भेजा जा रहा है।

**धधक रहे वन उठ रही लपटें**

कर्णप्रयाग के नजदीक नंदप्रयाग रेंज के जंगलों से उठतीं लपटें। - संवाद

## रातभर जलते रहे कर्णप्रयाग क्षेत्र के जंगल

कर्णप्रयाग/देवप्रयाग। कर्णप्रयाग तहसील मुख्यालय के सामने के जंगल रात भर जलते रहे लेकिन वन विभाग की ओर से इसे बुझाने के प्रयास नहीं किए गए। ऊर्जा निगम कार्यालय के पास जंगल में लगी आग रात को उमा माहेश्वर आश्रम के ऊपरी जंगलों से होते हुए आईटीआई के पास तक पहुंच गई। इससे कई हेक्टेयर वन संपदा नष्ट हो गई। नंदप्रयाग रेंज के रेंजर बीएस परमार ने बताया कि शराती तत्व जंगलों में आग लगा रहे हैं। पहचान कर कार्रवाई की जाएगी। आग बुझाने में वन कर्मियों की टीम लगी है। इधर, देवप्रयाग में दशरथ पर्वत से सटे जंगल शुकवार रात से आग में धधक रहे हैं, जिससे लाखों की वन संपदा जल गई। संवाद

ANAY UJALA  
APRIL 14, 2024

## April 24: Hundreds of glacial lakes expanding in Himalayas, reveals Isro analysis

A little over one in every four glacial lakes larger than 10 hectares in area (100,000 sq mtrs) in the Himalayas have increased in size since 1984, increasing the risk of a glacial lake outburst flood, or GLOF, a phenomenon that has become common on account of the climate crisis.

Long-term satellite imagery covering the Himalayas has revealed that of the 2,431 glacial lakes larger than 10 hectares in area identified in 2016/2017, 676 glacial lakes have expanded notably since 1984. And 130 of the 676 are within India, with 65, seven, and 58 lakes located in the Indus, Ganga, and Brahmaputra river basins respectively, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said.

Expanding glacial lakes pose significant risks, such as GLOFs, which can have devastating consequences for communities downstream. GLOFs occur when glacial lakes release large volumes of meltwater due to the failure of natural dams, such as those made of moraine and ice, resulting in sudden and severe flooding downstream. These dam failures can be triggered by various factors, including avalanches of ice or rock, extreme weather events, and other environmental factors.

“The Himalayan mountains, often referred to as the Third Pole because of their extensive glaciers and snow cover, are highly sensitive to changes in the global climate, both in terms of their physical characteristics and their societal impacts. Research conducted worldwide has shown that glaciers across the globe have been experiencing unprecedented rates of retreat and thinning since the onset of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century. This retreat leads to the formation of new lakes and the enlargement of existing ones in the Himalayan region,” Isro said.

**Hundreds of glacial lakes expanding in Himalayas, reveals Isro analysis**

**Jayashree Nandi**  
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**NEW DELHI:** A little over one in every four glacial lakes larger than 10 hectares in area (100,000 sq m) in the Himalayas have increased in size since 1984, increasing the risk of a glacial lake outburst flood or GLOF, a phenomenon that's become common on account of the climate crisis.

Long-term satellite imagery covering the Himalayas has revealed that of the 2,431 glacial lakes larger than 10 hectares in area identified in 2016-17, 676 glacial lakes have expanded notably since 1984. And 130 of the 676 are within India, with 65, seven, and 58 lakes located in the Indus, Ganga, and Brahmaputra River basins respectively, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said on Monday.

Around 601 lakes (89% of 676) have at least doubled in size; 170 have grown between 1.5 to 2 times; and 65 lakes at 1.5 times since 1984. Elevation-based analysis revealed that 314 lakes are located in the 4,000 to 5,000 m range and 296 lakes are above 5,000 m elevation.

Long-term changes in the Gepang Gath glacial lake (Indus River Basin) at an elevation of 4,068 m in Himachal Pradesh, shows a 178% increase in size from 36.49 to 101.30 hectares between 1989 and 2022. The rate of increase is about 1.96 hectares per year. Isro has flagged. This is a major risk that should be managed effectively, scientists said.

“Scientists including our team have already highlighted that Gepang Gath lake has expanded at a major scale and can potentially affect the Manali Leh highway and population downstream. We have already recommended that state governments take precautionary action,” said Anil V. Kulkarni, glaciologist and distinguished Visiting Scientist, Divecha Center for Climate Change, Centre for Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences at Indian Institute of Science. He added that the government should also focus on lakes beyond India's borders. “We need to negotiate and discuss these lakes with neighbouring countries,” he said.

Kulkarni referred to the Lhonak lake GLOF in Sikkim as a case in point. Last year IISc presented an assessment of current and future GLOF hazard for Gepang Gath Lake, factoring in the prospect of rock and/or ice avalanches cascading into the lake.

Expanding glacial lakes pose significant risks, such as Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), which can have devastating consequences for communities downstream.

GLOFs occur when glacial lakes release large volumes of meltwater due to the failure of natural dams, such as those made of moraine or ice, resulting in sudden and severe flooding downstream. These dam failures can be triggered by various factors, including avalanches of ice or rock, extreme weather events, and other environmental factors.

On October 4-5, 2023 HT reported heavy monsoon rainfall and a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) that caused severe flooding downstream in Sikkim that washed away part of the Teesta 3 dam, damaged parts of Teesta 5, wrecked bridges and drowned roads. It was not immediately clear as to what may have triggered the GLOF on Lhonak lake in north-west Sikkim, although the risk had loomed large for at least a decade.

On October 13 last year, HT reported that the risk of another glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) downstream of South Lhonak lake in Sikkim was real. According to glaciologists at the Divecha Centre for Climate Change, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), a large chunk of ice may have fallen from the glacier into the lake creating waves that toppled the moraine dam leading to a GLOF and causing severe flash floods downstream on October 4 that killed around 91 with many still missing.

“The Himalayan Mountains, often referred to as the Third Pole because of their extensive glaciers and snow cover, are highly sensitive to changes in the global climate, both in terms of their physical characteristics and their societal impacts. Research conducted worldwide has consistently shown that glaciers across the globe have been experiencing unprecedented rates of retreat and thinning since the onset of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century. This retreat leads to the formation of new lakes and the enlargement of existing ones in the Himalayan region,” Isro said on Monday.

“As the climate warms, glaciers shrink in size and a lake may be formed, often at the side of the glacier (glacier-dammed lake) or at the front of the glacier, between the glacier and a moraine ridge (moraine-dammed glacier) or another type. As the climate continues to warm, these lakes may grow in size. There is a lot of evidence that there are more lakes than previously. This implies strongly there will be more GLOFs and GLOFs will be bigger (and more damaging).” Miriam Jackson, glaciologist and programme coordinator, cryosphere at Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development said last October.

HINDUSTAN TIMES  
APRIL 24, 2024

## **April 29: Forest fires increase threefold in Uttarakhand**

Apart from forest fires, there are fires taking place in areas close to populated areas as well. Compared to last year, forest fires have tripled this year. This fact has been validated by the data given by NASA-Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite.

Climate Trends, an NGO that works on several facets of the environment, analysed the data by NASA and said that last year, 1850 fires took place in Uttarakhand between March and April. This number has gone to 6295 in the same period this year.

The organisation's Research Lead Dr Palak Baliyan said that based on the March and April data for 2023 and 2024, the areas most impacted by forest fires in Uttarakhand are the districts of Nainital, Champawat, Almora, Pauri, and Pithoragarh. Except Haridwar, the incidents of fires in March and April have increased as compared to the same period in 2023.

### **District-wise data of forest fires for March-April**

District	2023	2024
Almora	299	909
Bageshwar	75	224
Chamoli	99	293
Champawat	120	1025
Dehradun	48	62
Pauri	378	742
Haridwar	42	25
Nainital	207	1524
Pithoragarh	213	615
Rudraprayag	31	117
Tehri	115	380
US Nagar	183	290
Uttarkashi	40	89

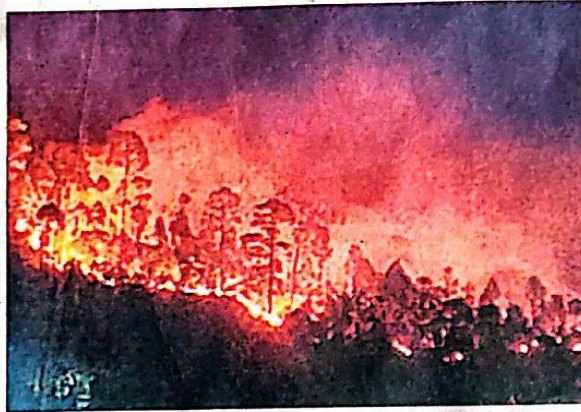
आग की घटनाओं को लेकर नासा की सेटेलाइट इमेज में हुआ खुलासा

# उत्तराखंड में तीन गुना बढ़ी आग की घटनाएं

## ■ शैलेन्द्र सेनवाल

देहरादून। उत्तराखंड में बड़े पैमाने पर जंगल जल रहे हैं। इस साल वनाग्नि के अलावा आबादी वाले क्षेत्रों में भी अग्निकांड के मामले काफी बढ़े हैं। कुल मिलाकर पूरे राज्य में पिछले साल के मुकाबले तीन गुना से अधिक अग्निकांड के मामले दर्ज किए गए हैं। नासा-विजिबल इन्फ्रारेड इमेजिंग रेडियोमीटर सुइट (वीआईआईआरएस) के डेटा से इस बात की पुष्टि हुई है।

पर्यावरण के विविध पहलुओं पर पूरे भारत में काम कर रही संस्था क्लाइमेट ट्रेंड्स ने नासा से प्राप्त डेटा का विश्लेषण कर बताया कि उत्तराखंड में पिछले वर्ष मार्च और अप्रैल में आग लगने की 1850 घटनाएं दर्ज हुईं, वहीं इस साल इसी अवधि में यह बढ़कर 6295 तक पहुंच गई। संस्था की रिसर्च लीड डॉ. पलक बालियान ने बताया है कि पिछले दो वर्ष (2023-2024) में दो माह (मार्च-अप्रैल) का उत्तराखंड अग्नि गणना डेटा बताता है कि आग लगने की घटनाओं में सर्वाधिक प्रभावित जिला नैनीताल, चंपावत, अल्मोड़ा, पौड़ी और पिथौरागढ़ हैं। हरिद्वार को छोड़कर राज्य के सभी जिलों में मार्च-अप्रैल महीने में 2023 की तुलना में 2024 में आग की घटनाएं बढ़ी हैं। खासकर पिछले साल अप्रैल माह में आग की घटनाएं जहां 1046 थीं, वह इस साल अप्रैल में बढ़कर 5710 तक यानि लगभग पांच गुना हो चुकी हैं।



चंपावत के पाटी के जीलामेल के जंगल रविवार रात में आग से घघकते रहे। • हिन्दुस्तान

## मार्च-अप्रैल का जिलेवार अग्निकांड का आंकड़ा

जिला	2023	2024
अल्मोड़ा	299	909
बागेश्वर	75	224
चमोली	99	293
चम्पावत	120	1025
देहरादून	48	62
पौड़ी	378	742
हरिद्वार	42	25
नैनीताल	207	1524
पिथौरागढ़	213	615
रुद्रप्रयाग	31	117
टिहरी	115	380
यूपएस नगर	183	290
उत्तरकाशी	40	89

## नैनीताल में छाई नीली धुंध

हल्द्वानी। कुमाऊं में जंगल जलने का सिलसिला जारी है। रविवार को भी अल्मोड़ा, बागेश्वर, चंपावत और नैनीताल में वनाग्नि की घटनाएं सामने आईं। उधर, जंगल जलने से नैनीताल को हवा खराब होने लगी है। यहां हल्के नीचे रंग की धुंध छा गई है। वायु गुणवत्ता सूचकांक 80 तक पहुंच गया है। > ब्योरा P07

## पौड़ी जिले में आग लगाने के आरोप में सात गिरफ्तार

पौड़ी/श्रीनगर। मुख्यमंत्री पुष्कर धामी की जंगलों में आग की बढ़ती घटनाओं पर सख्ती के बाद महकमा सतर्क हो गया है। रविवार को पौड़ी जिले में अलग-अलग मामलों में सात लोगों को जंगल में आग लगाने के आरोप में गिरफ्तार किया गया है। वहीं, टिहरी जिले के कीर्तिनगर में जंगल में आग लगाने के मामले में पांच अज्ञात लोगों पर मुकदमा दर्ज किया गया है। > ब्योरा P07

01 | 06

हजार 848  
घटनाएं पिछले वर्ष  
मार्च-अप्रैल में हुईं

हजार 295  
घटनाएं हुईं इस  
वर्ष मार्च-अप्रैल में

प्रतिकूल परिस्थितियां जैसे आर्द्रता का स्तर, लंबे समय तक शुष्क दौर, उच्च तापमान, हवा की दिशा, वर्षा का समय और मानवीय गतिविधियां अग्नि दुर्घटनाओं की वजह बन रही हैं। पिछले कुछ वर्षों में बदलती जलवायु परिस्थितियों ने चुनौतियां बढ़ा दी हैं। तकनीकी माध्यमों की सहायता से विगत कुछ सालों में जंगल की आग को तुरंत और सटीक रूप से पहचानने में मदद की है, इसलिए भी अधिक घटनाएं दर्ज हुई हैं।

- कपिल कुमार जोशी, अपर प्रधान मुख्य वन संरक्षक (पर्यावरण) उत्तराखंड

HINDUSTAN  
APRIL 29, 2024

## April 30: Surge in wildfire alerts – 925 in April last year to 7K this month

Uttarakhand saw a substantial increase in forest fire alarms this April, with the Forest Survey of India (FSI) reporting 7,000 alerts, compared to 925 in the same period last year. The state experienced a concerning escalation last week alone, with 3,581 alerts recorded between April 22 and 28. Along with Uttarakhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, and Jharkhand also grappled with heightened risk of wildfires.

“The presence of dry biomass on the forest floors and exceptional dry spell in winters and normal rains of spring have left forest beds conducive to fires,” said Vishal Singh, director of Centre for Ecology Development and Research (CEDAR). “The average duration of the fires must be noted to gauge its impact,” he added.

TIMES OF INDIA  
APRIL 30, 2024

### Surge in wildfire alerts — 925 in April last yr to 7k this mnth

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**Dehradun:** Uttarakhand saw a substantial increase in forest fire alarms this April, with the Forest Survey of India (FSI) reporting 7,000 alerts, compared to 925 in the same period last year. The state experienced a concerning escalation last week alone, with 3,581 alerts recorded between April 22 and 28. Along with Uttarakhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, and Jharkhand also grappled with heightened risk of wildfires.

“The presence of dry biomass on the forest floors and exceptional dry spells in winters and normal rains of spring have left forest beds conducive to fires,” said Vishal Singh, director of Doon-

**TIMES VIEW:** Forests are an invaluable source of food and livelihood. They play a critical role in maintaining ecological balance. Preventive measures should be taken to reduce the numbers of forest fires. It is important for govt to be pro-active on the issue

based non-profit, Centre for Ecology Development and Research (CEDAR). “The average duration of the fires must be noted to gauge its impact,” he added.

Meanwhile, FSI data revealed concerning increases in fire alerts across Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand compared to the previous year. “Odisha recorded 9,510 fire alerts in April last year while this year, it recorded 12,061 such alerts,” the FSI findings highlighted. Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand similarly experienced significant upticks in fire alerts.

Notably, these alerts are generated using data from MODIS and SNPP VIIRS satellite sensors, part of a collaboration between Nasa, Isro, and FSI. Meanwhile, reacting to the FSI data, Nishant Verma, state nodal officer (forest fire and disaster management cell) of Uttarakhand forest de-

#### FIRE ALARM SPIKE



- **Uttarakhand** | 7,000 fire alerts this April, drastic increase from 925 last year
- 3,581 alerts in the last week alone. Dry biomass on forest floors fuels fires
- **Odisha** | 9,510 fire alerts last year; this year, 12,061 reported
- Dry spells in winter and normal spring rains contribute to conducive forest conditions
- Heightened risks demand increased vigilance and proactive measures
- State machinery must ramp up firefighting capabilities to address escalating threats

“ FSI’s data comes with a disclaimer that these alerts are subject to ground truthing by state forest departments. On ground, the state recorded around 600 fire incidents in April. The incidents are more than what were recorded during this time last year due to dry forest floors

**Nishant Verma** | STATE NODAL OFFICER

partment, said, “FSI’s data comes with a disclaimer that these alerts are subject to ground truthing by state forest departments. On ground, the state recorded around 600 fire incidents in April. The incidents are more than what were recorded during this time last year due to dry forest floors arising out of a prolonged dry spell this year.”

## April 30: 47 new fires raze 78ha forest land across state

Uttarakhand continued to face the ongoing forest fire challenge as it reported 47 new incidents in the state on Monday, April 29 scorching around 78 hectares of forest land. Most of these infernos engulfed the Kumaon region, with 30 incidents that ravaged an area of 51 hectares. Garhwal also reported 16 incidents, affecting 25 ha, while one incident scorched 1.5 ha of protected forests.

Amidst the chaos, four individuals sustained injuries in their efforts. The grim tally of destruction since November last year stands at 653 fire incidents, gutting 814 ha of forest cover and inflicting losses worth Rs 16.8 lakh to the state exchequer.

In Nainital, the battle against the flames received reinforcement as 30 National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) members joined forces with the district administration. Meanwhile, the Army, having deployed personnel in Almora and Nainital, recalled them as the situation improved, a defence spokesperson said.

A massive fire engulfed 22 shanties in the Khurbura Mohalla area in Dehradun on Monday, April 29. Police said that 15 families, trapped in the vicinity due to thick smoke and flames, were evacuated before any untoward incident could happen. An investigation is underway to investigate the cause of the fire.

TIMES OF INDIA  
APRIL 30, 2024

# 47 new fires raze 78ha forest land

### Nainital Blaze Contained, Area Now Safe For Tourists: Govt

**Shivani Azad & Sonali Mishra | TNN**

Dehradun/Nainital: Uttarakhand continued to face the ongoing forest fire challenge on Monday as it reported 47 new incidents in the state, scorching around 78 hectares of forest land. Most of these infernos engulfed the Kumaon region, with 30 incidents that ravaged an area of 51 hectares. Garhwal also reported 16 incidents, affecting 25ha while one incident scorched 1.5ha of protected forests.

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Union minister of state for defence and tourism Ajay Bhatt said on Monday that all tourist destinations, including Nainital, are completely secure. His statement came after his visit to the forests adjacent to the Bhowali range, where he confirmed the govt's successful containment of the forest fire within 36 hours.

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The prolonged dry spell has heightened concerns of extended forest fires, as highlighted by the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS) of ISRO. The agency reported that forest fires in Uttarakhand have intensified over the years due to climate change, exacerbated by a lack of rainfall and increased temperatures during March.

Meanwhile, CM Pushkar Singh Dhami held a meeting with the administration, issuing directives to combat the fires. He commended the collective efforts of the forest department, NDRF,

### UTTARAKHAND FORESTS ABLAZE

**New fires** Uttarakhand faced onslaught of 47 fresh forest fires, leaving behind a trail of destruction across approximately 78 hectares of forested land.

**Nainital Safe** Authorities manage to contain forest fires that had threatened Nainital, a popular tourist destination.

**Kumaon Worst-hit** Region bears brunt of catastrophe, witnessing 30 new fire outbreaks razing 51 hectares of woodland.

**Garhwal Suffers** 16 instances of new forest fires, leading to scorching of around 25 hectares of forest area.

**4 injured** Efforts of firefighters come at a cost, with four sustaining injuries in their battle against the infernos.

**Monetary Loss** The economic toll of these wildfires amounts to ₹16.8 lakh.



**More Join Forces** Reinforcements arrive in form of 30 NDRF members bolstering firefighting efforts.

**Culprits** 11 individuals charged under Indian Forest Act for involvement in causing forest fires.

**Grim 6 months** Since Nov 1, state recorded 653 forest fire incidents, resulting in destruction of 814 hectares of forest cover.

**A firefighter attempts to control the fire caught in the forest in Nainital**

Since March 2023, we've registered 227 cases against miscreants for intentionally causing fires in forests, with 31 cases against identified persons. Legal action has been initiated in 39 cases.

—Nishant Verma, Uttarakhand forest department's nodal officer for forest fires and disaster management

### 'Forest fires on rise due to climate change'

Continued from P1

The previous year had seen a surplus of pre-monsoon showers, with April experiencing 63% more rainfall than average. Similarly, in 2022, the state faced 80% rain deficit in April. However, both 2020 and 2021 witnessed surplus rains during April.

The prolonged dry spell has heightened concerns of extended forest fires, as highlighted by the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS) of ISRO. The agency reported that forest fires in Uttarakhand have intensified over the years due to climate change, exacerbated by a lack of rainfall and increased temperatures during March.

and the Army, particularly their aerial helicopter interventions, which contributed to bringing the situation under control.

Nishant Verma, state forest

### FIRE BREAKS OUT IN DOON SLUM



**BLAZE RAGE:** A massive fire engulfed 22 shanties in the Kurbura Mohalla area in Dehradun on Monday. Police said that 15 families, trapped in the vicinity due to thick smoke and flames, were evacuated before any untoward incident could happen. An investigation is underway to determine the cause of the fire.

department's nodal officer for forest fires and disaster management, said, "Since March 2023, we've registered 227 cases against miscreants for intentionally causing fires in forests, with 31 cases against identified persons. Legal action has been initiated in 39 cases."

(With inputs by Kalyan Das)



## **About Social Development for Communities (SDC) Foundation**

SDC Foundation is a Dehradun-based environmental action and advocacy group engaged in communication, citizen engagement and capacity building in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand. The foundation works in partnership with institutions of Government of India, Government of Uttarakhand and other stakeholders such as research & academic institutions, community groups, civil society, media partners, NGOs, businesses & trade bodies, schools & colleges in the state.

Climate and environment conservation, waste management, sustainable urbanisation and a basket of sustainable development issues are key focus areas of the foundation.

### **Anoop Nautiyal**

Founder

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