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Scheme for Expansion and Modernization of Fire Services in the States

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Why is in news? Ministry of Home Affairs, launches "Scheme for Expansion and Modernization of Fire Services in the States" with a total outlay of Rs.5,000 Crore

The Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation had announced the scheme while chairing a meeting with Ministers of Disaster Management of the States/Union Territories in New Delhi on **13th June, 2023**.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has launched a "Scheme for Expansion and Modernization of Fire Services in the States" from the earmarked allocation of **Preparedness and Capacity Building Funding Window** under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for strengthening fire services in the States with a total outlay of Rs. 5,000 crore.

Under able guidance of Prime Minister, several key initiatives are being taken **to ensure 'zero death' and minimum loss of property during disasters by strengthening disaster risk reduction system** in India to make it disaster resilient.

The Scheme finds its **origin from the recommendation of the Fifteenth Finance Commission** which allows an **allocation of 12.5 percent of each of the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)** [10% of the total corpus of the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) and the State Disaster Risk Management Fund (SDRMF)] for the Funding Window of Preparedness and Capacity Building.

Objective of the scheme is to **expand and modernize Fire Services** in the States with a view that activities for strengthening of fire services at the State-level through preparedness and capacity-building component of the NDRF will be ensured.

For seeking funds for the projects/proposals under the Scheme, the **concerned State Governments shall have to contribute 25%** (except for the North-Eastern and Himalayan (NEH) States which shall contribute 10%) of total cost of such projects / proposals from their budgetary resources.

Out of the total NDRF corpus, an amount of Rs. 5,000 Crore was earmarked for priority "**Expanding and Modernization of Fire Services**".

The amount of Rs. 500 crores, out of the total outlay, has been kept for incentivizing the States on the **basis of their legal and infrastructure-based reforms**.

National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF):

National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) was renamed as National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) with the enactment of the Disaster Management Act in 2005.

It is defined in **Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005** (DM Act).

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It is **placed in the “Public Account”** of Government of India **under “reserve funds not bearing interest”**.

Public Accounts: It was constituted under **Article 266 (2) of the Constitution**. It accounts for flows for those transactions where the government is merely acting as a banker eg. provident funds, small savings etc.

Role:

It is **managed by the Central Government** for meeting the expenses for emergency response, relief and rehabilitation due to any threatening disaster situation or disaster.

It supplements the SDRF in case of a disaster of severe nature, provided adequate funds are not available in the SDRF.

SDRF is the primary fund available with the State governments for responses to notified disasters to meet expenditure for providing immediate relief.

Financed through the **levy of a cess on certain items**, chargeable to excise and customs duty, and **approved annually through the Finance Bill**.