



Hundreds Turn Up To Save Trees In Uttarakhand | Uttarakhand | 12 Mar 2024

Why in News?

Recently, hundreds of men, women and children gathered at the holy **Jageshwar Dham in Almora district of Uttarakhand** to tie **raksha sutra** (thread for protection) around the region's famous Himalayan [cedar trees](#) (**Cedrus Deodara**).

Key Points

- Some of the **trees are over 500 years** old and they surround one of the largest clusters of 125 temples within one complex in the world, situated at 1,870 metres above sea level.
- The raksha sutra was tied around more than 1,000 trees that were to be axed for a road widening project under the State government's '**Manas Khand Mandir Mala Mission**' that aims to improve connectivity to about 50 temples in Uttarakhand.
 - It is similar to the famous [Chipko movement of the 1970s](#) to protect Uttarakhand's forests from the increasing destruction due to rapid [industrialisation](#).
- This is not the first time that the State government had drawn criticism for its allegedly reckless cutting of trees to aid development in Jageshwar.
 - The **Uttarakhand High Court in September 2018 had banned all construction activities around the temple site** until the government framed building bylaws.
 - The HC, taking [suo motu cognisance](#) of the "unplanned and unauthorised" construction around the Jageshwar temple complex, also ordered to stop the construction of the Aartola-Jageshwar road.

Cedar Trees

- Cedrus deodara, commonly known as the deodar cedar, is a **species of coniferous tree** native to the **western Himalayas**. It is **highly valued for its timber** and is widely cultivated for its ornamental beauty.
- These trees are adapted to cold climates and are often **found at higher elevations**.
- They are well-suited to **temperate and subalpine climates**.
- Deodar Cedars are often used in landscaping and as ornamental trees in parks and gardens due to their attractive, pyramid-shaped growth and aromatic wood.
- They provide habitat and food for various wildlife, including birds and small mammals.



Manaskhand Mandir Mala Mission

- Under the Manaskhand Mandir Mission the government will develop better roads along with **better transportation facilities on the routes of the temples.**
- Development of **hotels and homestay facilities** along the routes of the temples keeping in mind the volume of pilgrims visiting these mandir in the next 25 years.
- Under the **first phase** of the Manaskhand Mandir Mala Mission ,**16 identified temples in the Kumaon division will be developed.**
- Under the Manaskhand Temple Mala Mission following temples has been identified:
 - Jageshwar Mahadev Temple in Almora
 - Chitai Golu Temple
 - Suryadev Temple Katarmal,
 - Kasar Devi Temple
 - Nanda Devi Temple
 - Patal Bhuvaneshwar Temple in Pithoragarh
 - Haat Kalika Temple
 - Bagnath Temple in Bageshwar
 - Baijnath Temple
 - Patal Rudreshwar in Champawat
 - Maa Purnagiri Temple
 - Maa Barahi Devi Temple
 - Baleshwar Temple
 - Naina Devi Temple in Nainital
 - Kainchi dham Temple and Chaiti Dham Temple in Udham Singh Nagar

Chipko Movement

- It was a **non-violent agitation** which originated in Uttar Pradesh's **Chamoli district** (now Uttarakhand) in **1973.**

- The name of the movement '**chipko**' comes from the word '**embrace**', as the **villagers hugged the trees** and encircled them to prevent being hacked.
- It is best remembered for the **collective mobilisation of women** for the cause of preserving forests, which also brought about a change in attitude regarding their own status in society.
- Its biggest victory was **making people aware of their rights to forests**, and **how grassroots activism can influence policy-making** regarding ecology and shared natural resources.
- It led to a **ban on commercial felling of trees above 30 degrees slope** and above 1,000 msl (mean sea level) **in 1981**.

Haryana CM Announces Development Projects for Nuh | Haryana | 12 Mar 2024

Why in News?

Recently, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar announced development **projects worth approximately Rs 700 crore for Nuh** district.

Key Points

- The chief minister also said that all gurukuls and madrasas "**opting for modern education**" would receive **financial assistance** upon registration with the Haryana School Education Board.
 - Gurukuls and madrasas opting for modern education through the Haryana School Education Board will receive Rs 2 lakh per year for 50-80 children, Rs 3 lakh for 81-100 children, Rs 5 lakh for 101-200 children, and Rs 7 lakh per year for above 200 enrolments.
- This was announced during a state-level function organised in honour of **Shaheed Raja Hasan Khan Mewati in Nuh**.
 - He also unveiled a 15-foot-tall statue of Shaheed Raja Hasan Khan at Government College Nagina on his martyrdom day.
- The chief minister virtually handed out job offers to 1,504 local youth for teaching positions under the [Haryana Kaushal Rojgar Nigam \(HKRN\)](#).
- He also announced the formation of a five-member committee named after Shaheed Hasan Khan Mewati, chaired by former MLA and state **Waqf Board** Chairman Zakir Hussain, to oversee development projects.

Raja Hasan Khan Mewati

- He was a **Muslim Khanzada Rajput** ruler of Mewat.
- The son of previous ruler **Raja Alawal Khan**, his dynasty had ruled Mewat State for nearly 200 years.
- He was a **descendant of Raja Nahar Khan Mewati**, who was the Wali of Mewat in the 14th century.

Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam Limited

- It has been incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013 on **13th October, 2021**.
- It has been set up with the objective of providing contractual manpower to all Government entities in Haryana in a transparent, robust and equitable manner.
- It will act as the **authorized agency for providing contractual manpower** in Haryana.
- Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam, in the process of providing contractual manpower, will focus on:
 - Uplifting socio-economically disadvantaged candidates

- Facilitating timely payment of salary and benefits to deployed manpower
- Ensuring adherence to the State Reservation policy

Central Waqf Council

- It is an Indian **statutory body** established by the Government of India under the **Waqf Act, a subsection of the Waqf Act, 1995**.
- It was established for the purpose of **advising it on matters** pertaining to the **working of the State Waqf Boards and proper administration of the Waqfs** in the country.
- **Waqf** is a **permanent dedication of movable or immovable properties** for religious, pious or charitable purposes as **recognized by Muslim Law**, given by philanthropists.

Haryana Proposes Fresh Delineation of Eco-Sensitive Zone | Haryana | 12 Mar 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the Haryana government has proposed that an area of **1,000 metres around the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary** on the Haryana side be delineated as an **Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ)**.

Key Points

- The proposal was sent in **January 2024** to the **Union ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEFCC)** for issuing a final notification delineating the eco-sensitive zone on the Haryana side.
- The Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, spread over 25.98 square km (about 6420 acres), is under the **administrative control of union territory of Chandigarh** and **shares its boundaries with Haryana and Punjab**.
 - The protected area, being rich with diverse flora and fauna, contains a variety of topographical features and was **declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1988 by the Chandigarh administration**.
- As per the draft proposal sent to the MoEFCC:
 - The total area of the proposed eco-sensitive zone will be 2,460 hectares (about 6,078 acres).
 - 10 villages - Prempura, Sukhomajri, Damala, Lohgarh, Manakpur Thakardas, Surajpur, Chandimandir Kotla, Darra Kharauni, Rampur and Saketri/Mahadevpur fall within the proposed ESZ.
 - The state government has proposed to divide the ESZ into four zones:
 - The extent of **zone 1** will be 100 meters from the boundary of Sukhna wildlife sanctuary.
 - **Zone 2** will be 100 metres to 300 metres from the boundary of the protected area.
 - **Zone 3** will comprise of area falling in 300-700 metres from the boundary of the protected area.
 - The rest of the area that is 700 to 1,000 metres from the boundary in the protected area shall be in **zone 4**.
 - All activities other than the activities prescribed for conservation and protection of its habitat are prohibited.
 - Eco-sensitive zones act as shock absorbers and insulate the protected area from the likely adverse impact of the activities in the adjacent areas.
- In the revised draft the state government has also incorporated the suggestions of **Wildlife**

[Institute of India](#) that the eco-sensitive zone be extended till the reserve forest boundary.

Eco Sensitive Zones

- The **National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016)** of the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** stipulated that state governments should declare land falling **within 10 km of the boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries** as eco-fragile zones or **Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs)** under the **Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986**.
- While the **10-km rule is implemented as a general principle**, the extent of its application can vary. **Areas beyond 10 km can also be notified by the Union government as ESZs**, if they hold larger ecologically important “sensitive corridors”.

Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is located in **Chandigarh**.
- It forms the part of **Sukhna Lake catchment area falling in Shivalik hills**.
- **Fauna:** Sambar deer, Barking deer, and wild boar, as well as several species of birds, reptiles, and amphibians.
- **Flora:** The sanctuary is characterized by a mix of forests, grasslands, and wetlands, with the Sukhna Lake forming an important part of the ecosystem.





Madhya Pradesh HC Orders ASI Survey of Bhojshala Complex | Madhya Pradesh | 12 Mar 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the Madhya Pradesh High Court directed the [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) to conduct a scientific survey of the **Bhojshala Temple-Kamal Maula Mosque complex** situated in the **Dhar district**.

Key Points

- The site is an ASI-protected, 11th Century CE monument. Under an agreement with the ASI, puja is performed in the temple by Hindus every Tuesday and Namaz offered every Friday.
- The court has ruled or decided that **there is a necessity to clarify or reveal the true essence and identity of the entire monument** under the maintenance of the Central government.
- The court concluded that it is the **constitutional as well as statutory obligation** of the **ASI to hold the scientific survey of the site** at the earliest **under Section 16 the Monument Act, 1958.**
 - The court asked the ASI to **photograph and videograph the survey** as well as unlock and open the locked/sealed rooms, halls of the whole complex and prepare a complete inventory of each and every artifact, idol, deity, or any structure found in the said locked, sealed halls, and rooms, and submit the same along with the respective photographs.
- This archaeological site at Dhar also bears **ancient inscriptions** that attracted the early attention of **colonial Indologists, historians and administrators.**
- **John Malcolm** mentioned Dhar in 1822, along with building projects such as the dams planned and completed by King Bhoja.
- Earlier in September 2023, the guards reportedly found an idol of **Goddess Vagdevi.** However, the administration had denied the claim of the idols 'appearing' and removed it.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- ASI, under the **Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organization for the **archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.**
- It administers more than **3650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites** and remains of national importance.
- Its activities include carrying out **surveys of antiquarian remains**, exploration and **excavation of archaeological sites**, conservation and maintenance of protected monuments etc.
- It was **founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham**- the first Director-General of ASI. Alexander Cunningham is also known as the "Father of Indian Archaeology".

Bhojshala Complex

- The Bhojshala literally translates from Sanskrit as the '**Hall of King Bhoja**' is an historic temple located in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh.
- King Bhoja hailed from the **Paramara dynasty** of central India, and was renowned as a patron of education and the arts, to whom major Sanskrit works on poetics, yoga and architecture are attributed.
- The 11th-century Bhojshala is an ASI-protected monument. Hindus believe it is a temple of Goddess Vagdevi (Saraswati) but the Muslim side disputes it claiming that it is Kamal Maula Mosque.

Note

The **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958** provides for the **preservation of ancient and historical monuments, archaeological sites** and remains of national importance.

**Nitin Gadkari Lays Foundation for Highway Projects | Jharkhand |
12 Mar 2024**

Why in News?

Recently, Union transport and highway minister Nitin Gadkari virtually laid the **foundation stones of highway projects worth Rs 2,500 crore.**

Key Points

- These projects include the construction of the **four-laning of Tupudana to Kundi Bartoli section (including Khunti bypass)** and the widening and **upgradation of the Bero to Khunti section.**
- These projects will **save time and fuel**, which will **reduce pollution**. Modern and high-quality roads will ensure **easy and safe transportation.**
- Economic activities will be encouraged and new opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship will be created.

Uttar Pradesh on Alert After CAA Implemented Across Country | Uttar Pradesh | 12 Mar 2024

Why in News?

An alert was issued in Uttar Pradesh after the announcement of [Citizenship Amendment Act \(CAA\), 2019](#) implementation.

Key Points

- The DGP headquarters has ordered officers to remain on alert while **additional forces** have been deployed in **sensitive areas.**
 - To **monitor social media** to control content that can instigate the public.
 - The police across the state have been instructed to **patrol concerned areas** on foot.
 - **CCTV and drone cameras** will be deployed to monitor the situation in the state.
- The development came after the Union Home Ministry officially notified the rules for the implementation of the CAA.

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019

- The CAA provides citizenship on the basis of religion to six undocumented non-Muslim communities (**Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians**) from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who entered India on or before 31st December, 2014.
- It exempts the members of the six communities from any criminal case under the **Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1920.**
 - The two Acts specify punishment for entering the country illegally and staying here on expired visas and permits.