



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**.

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