



Gartang Gali

Why in News?

Gartang Gali in Uttarakhand was used as a **Silk Road trade route between India and Tibet.**

Key Points

- It is located in the **Nelong Valley in Uttarkashi district**, Uttarakhand. It also stands out as a unique tourist attraction.
- Situated in the remote corners of Uttarakhand, Gartang Gali offers a secluded retreat **away from the bustling tourist circuits.**
 - It's **off-the-beaten-path location** appeals to travellers seeking authentic experiences and tranquility amidst nature.
 - The village is inhabited by the **Bhotiya tribe**, an indigenous community known for their resilience, traditional way of life, and cultural heritage.
- Gartang Gali historically served as a crucial trade route **connecting the Indian subcontinent with Tibet and Central Asia.**
- Traders traversed through this mountain pass, facilitating the **exchange of goods, ideas, and cultural influences between different regions.**
- The Gartang Gali cliff-side hanging-stairway, also known as the **Gartang Gali bridge**, spans 500 metres along a vertical ridge at 11,000 feet in the Nelong river valley.
 - It was **constructed in traditional native style**, initially by **Pathan traders from Peshawar**, serving as a Silk Road trade route between Tibet and India.
 - Following the **1962 Sino-Indian War**, access was **restricted by the Indian military**, causing the bridge to fall into disrepair.
 - After India **reopened the area for tourism in 2015**, efforts were made to restore the wooden stairway using traditional methods.
 - After 59 years, the **bridge was reopened to the public in August 2021.**

The Silk Road

- It was a network of ancient commercial routes that **connected East and West from China to the Mediterranean Sea** and served as a major conduit for cultural exchange.
- The flourishing traffic in Chinese silk that took place across its length beginning in the **Han era (207 BCE - 220 CE)** gave rise to the term "Silk Road". Around 114 BCE, the Han dynasty extended the trade routes through Central Asia, primarily as a result of the travels and missions of **Zhang Qian, a Chinese imperial envoy.**
- As a result of trade along the Silk Road, **long-distance political and economic ties between the civilizations of China, the Indian subcontinent, Persia, Europe, the Horn of Africa, and Arabia were established.**
- Although **silk was undoubtedly the main export from China**, the Silk Routes also saw the **exchange of several other items**, as well as **syncretic ideas, numerous technology, religions, and diseases.** The Silk Road was used by the civilizations along its network to conduct cultural exchange alongside commercial trade.

Bhotiya tribe

- The Bhotia or Bhotiya are an occupational **caste of shepherds**.
- The Bhotiyas of Uttarakhand are scattered over the **seven main river valleys** in the **three border districts of Pithoragarh, Chamoli and Uttarkashi**.
- The **seven major Bhotiya groups in Uttarakhand** are the Johari, Darmiya, Chaudansi, Byansi, Marchha (Mana Valley), Tolchha (Niti Valley) and Jadh.

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