CM Dhami Inspected Dehradun-Mussoorie Trek | Uttarakhand | 06 Jan 2025

Why in News?

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami recently inspected the **historic Dehradun-Mussoorie trek**, emphasizing the **need to enhance amenities and safety measures** for trekkers and tourists.

Key Points

- During his trek along the **Shahanshahi Ashram to Jhadipani route**, CM Dhami highlighted the importance of **preserving the natural beauty of Uttarakhand's trekking trails** while improving facilities.
- The Chief Minister directed the **[Mussoorie Dehradun Development Authority (MDDA)](#)** to oversee these improvements, ensuring that the trekking paths remain attractive and well-maintained.
- Emphasis was placed on the **importance of installing better signage and railings to effectively guide trekkers**.
    - Assurance was given that similar upgrades would be implemented on other trekking routes across the state **to improve visitors' experiences and showcase the region's rich cultural heritage** and natural beauty.

Mussoorie Dehradun Development Authority (MDDA)

- The MDDA was established in **1984** to **manage the city's urban planning and development** under the **UP Urban Planning and Development Act of 1973.**
- **MDDA** is focused on **keeping pace with the fast-growing population** and providing necessary infrastructure to accommodate this growth.
- The focus areas include **developing quality infrastructure**, addressing housing needs of the **underprivileged**, and **planning Dehradun and Mussoorie** in a structured and sustainable manner.
- **To make the city meet modern urban standards, it undertakes the following:**
    - Implementation of the Master Plan
    - Acquisition of land to implement the various schemes
    - Enforcement of plans and development schemes
    - Adaptation of measures for protection of the natural environment in the development area

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Rampant Construction Threatens Uttarakhand's Foothill Ecosystem | Uttarakhand | 06 Jan 2025

Why in News?

The rapid expansion of real estate in Dehradun is raising significant concerns about **ecological degradation** and **biodiversity loss**.

- Rajpur and Mussoorie Road have reported **large residential projects** encroaching on both **private and public lands,** leading to the **clearing of green cover and posing risks to public safety**.

Key Points

- Construction Activities are **clearing forest land** and **private plots**, including areas with **natural drains** **leading to the Rispana river**.
- Ravines are being filled with mud, which is washed away during rainfall, and that the removal of native trees disrupts local biodiversity and development is exceeding the area's carrying capacity.
- The unchecked construction activities have led to the **loss of water sources and streams** in the Rajpur ridge area, with natural vegetation being replaced by urban development.
  - This situation underscores the urgent need for **sustainable urban planning** to balance development with environmental preservation.
- Unchecked construction in higher areas often results in **debris slides** and **landslides** in low-lying regions, endangering residents and the environment.
- To address these challenges, experts emphasize the importance of enforcing **building regulations, conducting Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA),** and promoting responsible construction practices.
  - Public awareness and community involvement are also crucial in advocating for sustainable development that preserves the ecological integrity of Uttarakhand's foothill regions.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

- The EIA is a structured method used to analyze and understand the potential environmental effects that could occur from upcoming projects or activities.
  - It helps in evaluating and predicting how these projects might impact the natural surroundings before they are put into action.
- The concept of EIA emerged in the **1960s** and **1970s** as a response to growing concerns about the environmental impacts of large-scale development projects.
- On 27[th]January 1994, the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India issued the first EIA notification.
  - The **United Nations Conference on the Human Environment** in Stockholm in **1972** was a significant milestone, emphasizing the need for environmental assessment in decision-making.
  - Other notable agreements include the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** and the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, which highlight the importance of considering environmental impacts in various sectors.

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

EIA is a study conducted in the early stages of development project planning to predict and address potential environmental impacts

What are the Objectives of Environment Impact Assessment?

- To Promote Environment-Friendly and Long-Term Growth
- To Render Detail on the Environmental Impact
- To Predict & Evaluate The Ecological, Economic & Social Effects of Growth Related Activities
- Identification of Legitimate Options and Mitigation Measures.

- **Statutory Status:** Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 (Made EIA mandatory)
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)
- **Project Categorisation:** EIA Notification of 2006 categorised the developmental projects in:

- **Category A Project:** Needed prior Environmental Clearance (EC) from MoEF&CC
- **Category B Project:** Needed prior EC from State/UT Govt.
  - **Category B1 projects** (Mandatorily requires EIA)
  - **Category B2 projects** (Do not require EIA)

There are 39 categories of projects that require an EC process and are subject to EIA

EIA Process as per EIA Notification, 2006

Step	Objective	Carried Out By
Screening	Need of EIA	State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) (Category B)
Scoping	Identifies important issues for EIA	Standard Term of Reference (ToR) prepared by MoEF&CC with EAC/SEAC for Category B Projects"
Public Consultation	Addresses concerns of affected people	State Pollution Control Board (SPCB)/ UT Pollution Control Board (UTPCB)
Project Appraisal	Scrutiny of Final EIA Report/ Environmental Management Plan (EMP)	EAC for category A Projects and SEAC for category B1 Projects
Decision Making	Granting EC	Category A: MoEf&CC; Category B: State EIA Authority (SEIAA)
Monitoring (Post EC)	Compliance of general and specific conditions	SPCB / UTPCB and Regional Offices

Government Initiatives For EC

- **PARIVESH (Proactive and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous, and Environmental Single Window Hub):** Single Window System for EC
  - Developed by MoEF&CC and National Information Centre (NIC)

- **Environmental Information System (ENVIS):** Collect, Collate, Storing, Retrieving and Disseminating Information Related to the Environment Sector
- **Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Notification 2020:** Published by MoEF&CC to replace existing EIA Notification, 2006

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