



# Renaming of Joshimath & Kosiyakutoli

## Why in News?

Recently, the Centre **approved the Uttarakhand government's proposal for renaming** the [Joshimath](#) tehsil in Chamoli district to Jyotirmath, and the Kosiyakutoli tehsil in Nainital district to **Pargana Shri Kainchi Dham tehsil**.

- This step will enhance the religious and cultural significance of these areas, in a state that is already a major destination for religious tourism.

## Key Points

- Joshimath was in the news in 2023 **after massive cracks developed in many of the town's roads** and hundreds of buildings due to land subsidence.
  - On the other hand, the **Kosiyakutoli tehsil is well-known for Neem Karoli Baba's Kainchi Dham Ashram**.
- Jyotirmath (also known as Jyotir Peeth) is one of the four cardinal mathas (monasteries) that 8<sup>th</sup>-century philosopher [Adi Shankaracharya](#) **is believed to have established across India** to promote the Advaita Vedanta philosophy.
  - The Jyotirmath was **established for the preservation and dissemination of spiritual knowledge and practices**.
- Jyotirmath was the hill town's ancient name. Over time, the local population began referring to the area as "Joshimath". This **change was likely gradual and organic, influenced by regional languages**, local dialects and the ease of pronunciation. The transition reflects a linguistic and cultural evolution rather than a specific historical event.
- In recent years, **some residents have demanded a change in the name to honour the town's historical and religious importance**.
  - Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama announced the change during a programme organised in Chamoli in 2023.
- While Joshimath represents a subtle change from an older name, **the case of Kosiyakutoli is about changing a lesser-known name that lacks wider recognition**.
  - Renaming it to Pargana Shri Kainchi Dham **aligns its identity with Neem Karoli Baba's Kainchi Dham Ashram**, which is a major site here that attracts devotees from across the world.
- In the name "Kosiyakutoli", "**Kosi**" **refers to the river of the same name which flows through the Nainital district** and is important for the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand. Along with adding to the scenic beauty, it matters to the local ecology and economy.
  - The term "kutoli" is derived from the local language, **referring to a village or settlement**. In the Kumaoni language, naming a place after a prominent geographical feature **like a river is common practice and the names often have meanings connected** to the landscape, local history, or cultural attributes

