



Rajaji National Park

Why in News

Recently, a clash took place between Van Gujjars and the Uttarakhand forest officials in the Rajaji National Park.

Key Points

- **Location: Haridwar (Uttarakhand)**, along the foothills of the Shivalik range, spans 820 square kilometres.
- **Background:** Three sanctuaries in the Uttarakhand i.e. Rajaji, Motichur and Chila were amalgamated into a large protected area and named Rajaji National Park in the year 1983 **after the famous freedom fighter C. Rajgopalachari; popularly known as “Rajaji”**.
- **Features:**
 - This area is the **North Western Limit of habitat of [Asian elephants](#)**.
 - Forest types include sal forests, riverine forests, broad-leaved mixed forests, scrubland and grassy.
 - It possesses as many as 23 species of mammals and 315 bird species such as elephants, tigers, leopards, deers and ghorals, etc.
 - It was declared a **[Tiger Reserve](#)** in 2015.
 - It is **home to the Van Gujjars in the winters**.
- **Van Gujjars:**
 - It is one of the few **forest-dwelling nomadic** communities in the country.
 - Usually, they migrate to the **bugyals (grasslands)** located in the upper Himalayas with their buffaloes and return only at the end of monsoons to their makeshift huts, deras, in the foothills. They inhabit the foothills of Himalayan states like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand.
 - They traditionally practice **buffalo husbandry**; a family owns up to 25 heads of buffaloes. They rely on buffaloes for milk, which gets them a good price in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh markets.
- **Other Protected Areas in Uttarakhand:**
 - Jim Corbett National Park (first National Park of India).
 - Valley of Flowers National Park and Nanda Devi National Park which together are a **[UNESCO World Heritage Site](#)**.
 - Govind Pashu Vihar National Park and Sanctuary.
 - **[Gangotri National Park](#)**.
 - Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary.

[Source: DTE](#)

