

Uttarakhand to have 'Harela Van' in every forest range

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Dehradun/Nainital: Harela festival, the annual green festival of the hills, commenced in Uttarakhand on Sunday. The plantation ceremony was held at Maharana Pratap Sports College in Raipur in the presence of chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, MP from Tehri Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah and forest minister Subodh Uniyal.

The theme for this year's Harela is -- water conservation and spring rejuvenation -- wherein eight lakh saplings will be planted by the department, along with the villagers. Saplings will also be distributed to gram panchayats and forest panchayats.

The theme has been decided in sync with the state's goal of becoming water-sufficient, as scientific analysis indicates that at the present rate, the state might turn water-deficit in the next three decades.

"Uttarakhand will require 1,900 MLD water by 2052, while currently we have only 1,400 MLD water available. Thus, the focus should remain on intensive water conservation. We have revived several amrit sarovars by conducting multiple water conservation activities. It has helped the state to be positioned at number three in spring rejuvenation works," said Dhami.

Meanwhile, forest minister Subodh Uniyal urged all residents of Uttarakhand to "click a selfie with your plant so that it could be shared with the future generation with a message to conserve the forests," he said. Unlike previous years, this year the forest department has decided to develop its own 'Harela Vans' across all the forest ranges, with a larger goal of conservation of environment. At the plantation ceremony, Uttarakhand's head of forest force (HoFF) Anup Malik said, "The Harela Vans would be developed in the next four to five years. These forests would be developed at one particular site in each range so that it could help multiply the state's efforts of conserving water and rejuvenating springs," said Malik.

Meanwhile in Nainital, DFO Chandrashekhar Joshi said that the department has already selected about 150 hectares of land in 32 places in eight ranges of Nainital division to establish the Harela Vans -- Monara range, Khurpatal range, Naina range, Nagarpalika range, Bhowali range, Kosi range, northern and southern Gaula range, Badhon range.