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Uttarakhand: 26,000 ha forest area identified for tasar silk development

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DEHRADUN: Uttarakhand Space Application Centre (USAC), under a comprehensive project in collaboration with North East Space Application Centre (NESAC), has identified over 25,000 hectares (ha) of oak forest areas in three districts -- Chamoli, Pauri Garhwal and Bageshwar -- which are suitable for tasar silk production in the state. As part of the project which was funded by the Central Silk Board (CSB), USAC identified forest land with the help of remote sensing and geographical information system (GIS) mapping.

The project report comprising the forest data was revealed by USAC officials in presence of the officials of National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), NESAC and department of sericulture (DoS), Uttarakhand, in Dehradun on Monday.

Providing details, director of USAC, MPS Bisht said, "The state's forests comprise about 20% oak trees. Three districts have been identified on CSB's directions which already have oak trees suitable for the rearing of Tasar silk, a type of non-Mulberry silk."

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Bisht added that USAC in association with NESAC, was tasked with identifying the land on which the oak forests were spread in these three places with details of the altitude at which the trees were present so as to match the requirements of tasar sericulture. "Based on the information collected using high resolution satellite data and ground survey, 26,621 ha of oak forests were found in the three districts. Chamoli has a maximum of 15,896 ha, of which 8,535 ha was highly suitable for Tasar silkworm rearing. Bageshwar has 10,317 ha and Pauri 1,408 ha," Bisht further said. Lauding the project report, AK Yadav, director of DoS, said, "Uttarakhand is the only state in India, which has conducive agro-climatic conditions to produce all five varieties of silk."