

**In more ways than one, Corbett National Park is a testament to the well-known adage of historians — the past lives in the present. In and around the forests of Uttarakhand, guesthouses, general stores, gift shops, even saloons, carry Corbett's name.**

In 1936, India's first national park was named after Malcolm Hailey, the then governor of the United Provinces.

After Independence, it was renamed Ramganga, after the river that flows through the park. In 1956, the protected area was rechristened once again, after Jim Corbett, the hunter-turned-naturalist, whose name had, by then, become part of the forest's lore — a rare instance of a public place being named for an Englishman after Independence.

Now Union Minister of State for Environment, Ashwini Kumar Choubey, has proposed that the park do away with its association with the Englishman. Last week, Choubey reportedly noted in the visitor's book that he preferred the name "Ramganga National Park". The Uttarakhand government has reportedly opposed Choubey's proposal, but the minister's remarks have drawn justifiable outrage, and stoked fears of a replay of the BJP government's name-changing spree in the realm of conservation.

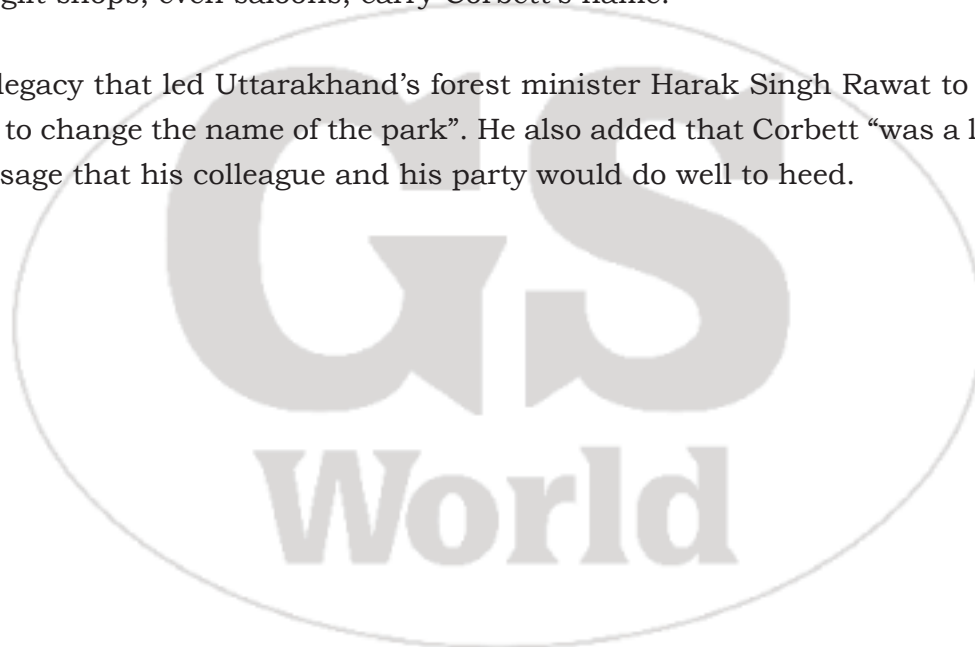
Names of public places, cities and streets, no doubt, have close links with the dominant political ideology of an era. But acts of rechristening are most often driven by a simplistic and, at times chauvinistic, reading of the past, one that is insensitive to the layered histories and identities of places. Born in Nainital to English parents, Corbett volunteered for the British Army in both the World Wars.

But his writings show him as steeped in the ecosystem of Kumaon and Garhwal. They are suffused with empathy for both the people and nature. Writing about his childhood friend, Kunwar Singh, Corbett recalls, for instance, that “We had a name for every outstanding tree, for every water hole, game track, and nullah”.

The naturalist also struck a friendship with freedom fighter and UP’s first chief minister, Govind Ballabh Pant. It was on Pant’s insistence that the celebrated protected area came to be named after Corbett. In 1973, the park became the launchpad of Project Tiger — India’s first tiger protection programme.

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It’s this legacy that led Uttarakhand’s forest minister Harak Singh Rawat to say that it would be “impractical to change the name of the park”. He also added that Corbett “was a legend, a national pride” — a message that his colleague and his party would do well to heed.



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## GS World Team Input

### **\*IN THE NEWS\***

#### **Corbett National Park : -**

- ➔ It is located in Nainital district of Uttarakhand. The Project Tiger was launched in 1973 in Corbett National Park (first National Park of India), which is part of Corbett Tiger Reserve.
- ➔ The national park was established in 1936 as Hailey National Park to protect the endangered Bengal tiger.
- ➔ It is named after Jim Corbett who played a key role in its establishment.
- ➔ The core area forms the Corbett National Park while the buffer contains reserve forests as well as the Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary.
- ➔ The entire area of the reserve is mountainous and falls in the Shivalik and Outer Himalaya geological provinces.
- ➔ Ramganga, Sonanadi, Mandal, Palain and Kosi are the major rivers flowing through the Reserve.
- ➔ According to the botanical survey of India, Corbett has 600 species of plants - trees, shrubs, ferns, grass, climbers, herbs and bamboos. Sal, Khair and Sissoo are the most visible trees found in Corbett.
- ➔ Apart from tigers, Corbett also has leopards. Other mammals such as jungle cats, barking deer, spotted deer, sambar deer, sloth etc. are also found there.

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## Expected Questions (Prelims Exams)

**Q. Which of the following river (s) flows/flow through 'Corbett National Park'?**

1. Ramganga
2. Sonanadi
3. Mandal

**Code-**

- (a) 1 and 2 only      (b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only      (d) All of the above

## Expected Questions (Mains Exams)

**Q. Discuss the efforts made in the direction of wildlife conservation in India, evaluate them critically.**

**(250 Words)**

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**Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC main examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.**