CURRENT AFFAIRS — 05 NOVEMBER 2026

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR UTTARAKHAND PCS

Thursday, 05 November 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Uttarakhand + National • UKPSC Prelims & Mains digest

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Kedartal** trek (Uttarkashi): **4 dead, 4 missing** after avalanche; **SDRF + NIM** lead rescue.
- **Char Dham Yatra 2026** crosses **63 lakh** pilgrims — above the **2023** peak of ~**56 lakh**.
- **Kedarnath** portals close for winter on **Bhai Dooj** (**11 Nov**).
- CM sanctions **₹22.15 cr** for **26 works** in **7 districts**; Dehradun gets **₹8.96 cr**.
- Uttarakhand marks its **26th Foundation Day** on **9 Nov** (state formed **9 Nov 2000**).
- Agnipath: **75%** Agniveers get **2-year extension** ('Second Tour of Duty').
- SC refers **Javed v. State of Haryana (2003)** on two-child norm to a **larger bench**; TFR now **1.9**.
- Cabinet clears **VISTAR** (**₹4,371.10 cr**, MoSPI) incl. **8th Economic Census**.
- **92 GWh** grid storage (**60 GWh** pumped-hydro + **30 GWh** BESS) with **₹14,500 cr** VGF.
- **₹2,814 cr** capex support for **lithium & nickel** processing (**30%** capital subsidy).

SECTION A — UTTARAKHAND SPECIAL state schemes • disaster & ecology • culture • state economy

Kedartal Avalanche: 4 Bodies Recovered, 4 Still Missing in Uttarkashi

UTTARAKHAND | UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Geography & Disaster Management — Uttarakhand)

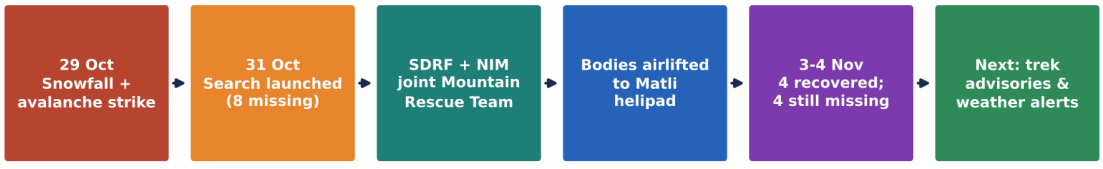
Syllabus Linkage	Uttarakhand geography (glaciers, high-altitude treks); disaster management — **avalanches**, SDRF, mountain rescue; Prelims: **Gangotri glacier**, **Kedartal**, **NIM Uttarkashi**.
Context	Heavy snowfall and an avalanche struck a trekking group on the **Kedartal** route in the **Gangotri glacier** region on **29 October**. A joint **SDRF–NIM** Mountain Rescue Team has recovered **4 bodies** (on **3–4 Nov**); **4** remain missing. Separately, a vehicle plunged into the river near **Gangnani** on the **Gangotri NH**, killing **4**.
Key Facts	■ Group of **8**: **5** trekkers from **West Bengal**, **2** women from **Uttar Pradesh**, **1** local guide; search began **31 Oct**. ■ Bodies airlifted to **Matli helipad** (Uttarkashi) for post-mortem. ■ **Kedartal** (~**4,750 m**) is a glacial lake below **Thalay Sagar** peak, fed by the **Kedar Ganga**, a tributary of the **Bhagirathi**. ■ **NIM (Nehru Institute of Mountaineering)**, Uttarkashi, was set up in **1965**. ■ Gangnani accident: **SDRF**, water police and divers deployed; DM-led inquiry ordered.
Way Fwd	Mandatory **weather-linked trek permits**, GPS tracking of groups, early-warning for **post-monsoon snow events** and more **high-altitude SDRF** posts.
Concept	**Avalanche** = rapid flow of snow down a slope, triggered by fresh snow load, wind slabs or warming. Uttarakhand's **SDRF** was raised in **2013** after the **Kedarnath disaster**; the **Disaster Management Act, 2005** provides the NDMA–SDMA–DDMA framework.

Char Dham Yatra 2026 Crosses Record 63 Lakh Pilgrims

UTTARAKHAND | UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (History & Culture; Economy — Uttarakhand)

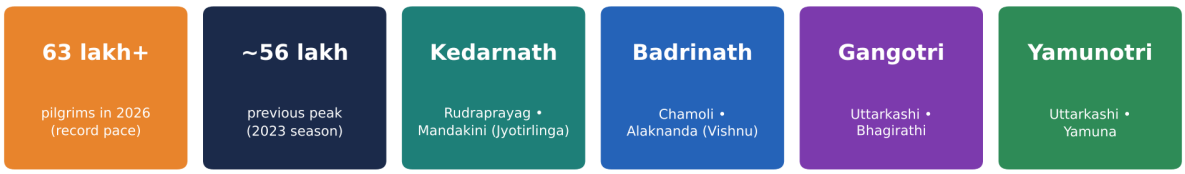
Syllabus Linkage	Uttarakhand culture & pilgrimage; tourism economy; crowd/carrying-capacity management; Prelims: location of the **four Dhams**, rivers, districts.
Context	CM **Pushkar Singh Dhami** said on **5 Nov** that over **63 lakh** devotees have visited the Char Dham shrines this season, putting the yatra on course for a **new record**. The season now winds down as portals close for winter.
Key Facts	■ Previous peak: ~**56 lakh** pilgrims in the **2023** season. ■ **Kedarnath** (Rudraprayag, **Mandakini**) closes on **Bhai Dooj** — **11 Nov 2026**; winter seat **Omkareshwar Temple, Ukhimath**. ■ **Badrinath** (Chamoli, **Alaknanda**): winter seat **Pandukeshwar / Jyotirmath**. ■ **Gangotri** (winter seat **Mukhba**) and **Yamunotri** (winter seat **Kharsali**) — both in **Uttarkashi**. ■ Shrines are managed by the **Badrinath–Kedarnath Temple Committee (BKTC)**.
Way Fwd	Promote **winter Char Dham (Sheetkaal Yatra)** to spread footfall, enforce **carrying-capacity** limits and boost homestays to retain tourism income in hill villages.
Concept	**Carrying capacity** = maximum visitors a site can sustain without ecological or infrastructural damage. Pilgrimage tourism is a key pillar of Uttarakhand's **tertiary-sector-led** economy and a tool against **palayan** (out-migration).

Kedartal Avalanche: High-Altitude Rescue Chain (Uttarkashi)



Key agencies: SDRF • Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (Uttarkashi) • District Disaster Management Authority • Water police / divers (Gangnani)

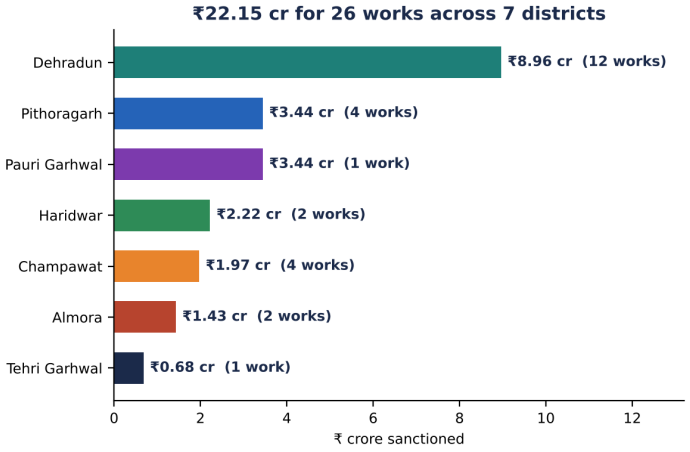
Char Dham Yatra 2026 — Fact Tiles



CM Sanctions ₹22.15 Crore for 26 Works Across 7 Districts

UTTARAKHAND **UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Economy & Governance — Uttarakhand)**

Syllabus Linkage	State development administration; rural infrastructure; human-wildlife conflict; fairs & temples of Kumaon-Garhwal; Prelims: **Nauling fair**, **Jageshwar**, district facts.
Context	On **4 Nov**, CM **Dhami** approved **₹22.15 crore** for **26** works — roads, drains, drinking water, street-lights, **anti-wild-boar fencing** and development of **temples and fair grounds** — across **Dehradun, Pithoragarh, Almora, Champawat, Tehri, Haridwar** and **Pauri**.
Key Facts	■ **Dehradun**: **12** works, ~**₹8.96 cr** (mostly **Mussoorie** constituency). ■ **Pithoragarh**: **₹79.49 lakh** for the **Nauling fair** site at Ghatghor Gadi (**Dharchula**). ■ **Almora**: **₹97.08 lakh** for **Siddheshwar Temple** near **Danya** (Jageshwar); **₹45.63 lakh** anti-wild-boar fencing at **Takula**. ■ **Haridwar**: **100 hand pumps** (Jhabrera + Laksar); **Pauri**: **₹3.44 cr** street-lights in **Kotdwar**. ■ **Champawat**: Dudhadhari Bhagwati fair site, Thanta — **₹97.10 lakh**.
Way Fwd	Tie such sanctions to **outcome monitoring** and village-level planning (**GPDP**); scale **crop-protection fencing** that also curbs farm abandonment in hills.
Concept	**Human-wildlife conflict** (wild boar, monkeys, leopards) is a major cause of **barren farmland** and **palayan** in hill districts. The **Jageshwar** group (Almora) has **100+** stone temples of the **Katyuri** era.

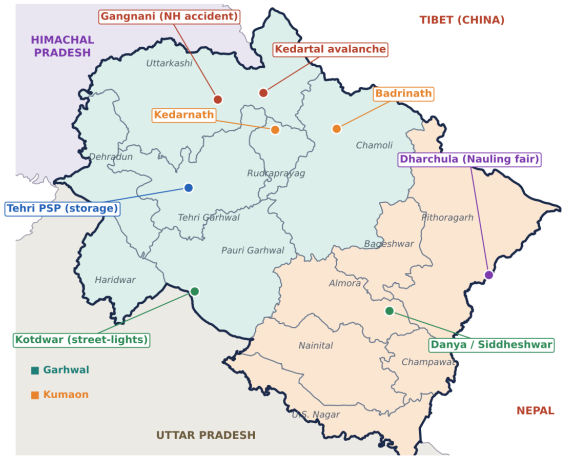


Uttarakhand Turns 26: Foundation Day on 9 November

UTTARAKHAND **UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (History & Polity — Uttarakhand)**

Syllabus Linkage	Uttarakhand statehood movement; state polity & administration; Prelims: formation date, Act, capitals, divisions, first office-holders.
Context	The state prepares to mark its **26th Foundation Day** on **9 November 2026**, a year after the **Silver Jubilee (Rajat Jayanti)** celebrations of 2025. Today's map plots the locations in the day's Uttarakhand stories.
Key Facts	■ Formed on **9 Nov 2000** as the **27th state** under the **Uttar Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2000**; named **Uttaranchal**, renamed **Uttarakhand** on **1 Jan 2007**. ■ **13 districts** in **2 divisions** — **Garhwal (7)** and **Kumaon (6)**. ■ **Dehradun**: winter capital; **Gairsain (Bhararisain)**: declared **summer capital** in **2020**. ■ **70** Assembly seats, **5** Lok Sabha, **3** Rajya Sabha seats; High Court at **Nainital**. ■ First CM: **Nityanand Swami**; first Governor: **Surjit Singh Barnala**.
Way Fwd	Use the milestone to review **hill-plain disparity**, **palayan** and a **Himalayan development model** built on GEP and disaster resilience.
Concept	**Statehood movement**: key milestones — **Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (1979)**, **Khatima & Mussoorie firings (1–2 Sept 1994)**, **Rampur Tiraha** incident (**2 Oct 1994**). New states are created by Parliament under **Article 3**.

Uttarakhand: Today's News Locations



Schematic map - not to scale; locations indicative

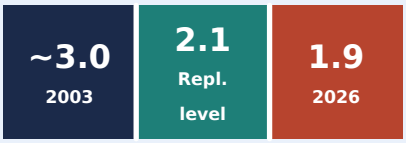
SECTION B — DATA POINT OF THE DAY

1.9
TFR

India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) — cited by the Supreme Court on 4 Nov

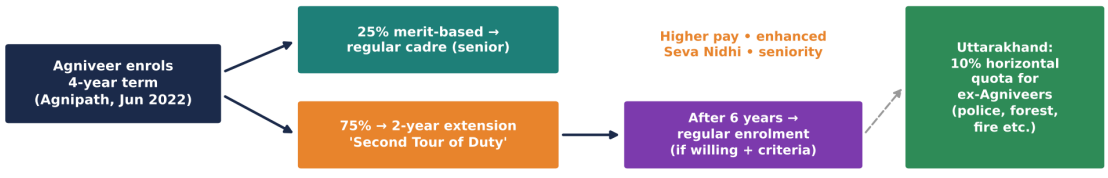
Below the **replacement level of 2.1**, down from ~**3.0** when **Javed (2003)** upheld the two-child norm — the core reason the Court called such laws outdated.

Static link: TFR is measured by the **Sample Registration System (SRS)** and **NFHS**; NFHS-5 (2019-21) put India at **2.0**.



SECTION C — NATIONAL & WORLD defence • IR • polity • economy • environment

Agnipath 2.0: the '4 + 2' Pathway (announced 4 Nov 2026)



Agnipath Revamp: 2-Year Extension for 75% Agniveers; Uttarakhand Quota in Focus

DEFENCE **UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity & Governance; Internal Security)**

Syllabus Linkage	Defence reforms; government schemes for youth; Uttarakhand's **military tradition** and ex-servicemen welfare; Prelims: Agnipath features, state horizontal reservation.
Context	On **4 Nov**, after Cabinet approval, CDS **Gen N.S. Raja Subramani** announced that the **75%** Agniveers who earlier exited after **4 years** will get a **2-year extension**, after which they may be enrolled as regulars. About **18,300** Agniveers were due to exit by **31 Dec**.
Key Facts	■ Rajnath Singh termed it the **'Second Tour of Duty'** — higher pay, enhanced **Seva Nidhi**, seniority benefits. ■ The **25%** retained on merit at 4 years stay **senior** to extension-route entrants. ■ **Agnipath** launched **June 2022**; entry age ~**17.5–21** years; **3 lakh+** currently serving. ■ Uttarakhand gives **10% horizontal reservation** to ex-Agniveers in uniformed posts (police, forest guard, fire etc.) under the **2025** rules. ■ Uttarakhand is called **'Sainya Dham'** — home to **Garhwal Rifles** (Lansdowne) and **Kumaon Regiment** (Ranikhet).
Way Fwd	Re-align state quotas and skilling cells with the new **4+2 model**; ensure transparent **merit criteria** for absorption.
Concept	**Horizontal reservation** cuts across vertical (SC/ST/OBC/EWS) categories — e.g., for women, ex-servicemen, PwD (**Indra Sawhney, 1992**). **CDS** is the Principal Military Adviser to the Defence Minister and heads the **Department of Military Affairs**.

SC: Two-Child Norm Laws Have Lost Relevance; Javed Ruling Sent to Larger Bench

POLITY **UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity & Governance)**

Syllabus Linkage	Fundamental Rights (**Art. 14, 21**); Panchayati Raj (**73rd Amendment**); population policy; Prelims: **Javed v. State of Haryana (2003)**, TFR.
Context	A bench of Justices **P.S. Narasimha** and **Alok Aradhe** said laws penalising people with more than two children have **lost relevance** as fertility falls, set aside a Maharashtra sarpanch's disqualification and referred **Javed (2003)** to a **larger bench**.
Key Facts	■ Provision examined: **Sec. 14(1)(j-1), Maharashtra Village Panchayats Act, 1959**. ■ **Javed (2003)**, a **3-judge bench**, upheld the norm under the **Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994** — it remains precedent until the larger bench rules. ■ **TFR**: ~**3.0** in 2003 vs **1.9** now; replacement level ≈ **2.1**. ■ Court flagged **reproductive autonomy** under **Article 21**. ■ Uttarakhand also applies a two-child condition for panchayat polls via its **2019** amendment to the **Uttarakhand Panchayati Raj Act, 2016**.
Way Fwd	States should review disqualification rules in light of **below-replacement fertility** and shift to **incentive-based** population and gender policies.
Concept	**Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** = average children a woman would bear in her lifetime; **2.1** is the replacement level. A **larger bench** reference is needed because a smaller bench cannot overrule a coequal or larger bench's precedent.

India–Nepal Step Up Engagement Ahead of PM Balen Shah's Maiden Visit

IR **UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (International Relations; Geography — Uttarakhand border)**

Syllabus Linkage	India's neighbourhood policy; Uttarakhand's international borders; Prelims: **Mahakali (Kali)** river, **Pancheshwar**, **Lipulekh**, border districts.
Context	India and Nepal are stepping up engagement ahead of Nepal PM **Balendra (Balen) Shah**'s first bilateral visit to India, proposed for late **November**. The agenda includes rail links, hydropower and border connectivity — several touching **Uttarakhand**.
Key Facts	■ Agenda items: **Raxaul-Kathmandu** rail, **750 MW West Seti + 450 MW Seti River-6** hydro (with **NHPC**), and a **motorable bridge over the Mahakali**. ■ A **Kathmandu–Dehradun** air link is also under discussion. ■ Uttarakhand–Nepal border runs along the **Kali/Mahakali** river through **Pithoragarh, Champawat** and **Udham Singh Nagar**. ■ **Mahakali Treaty (1996)** covers the **Pancheshwar** multipurpose project and the **Sarda/Tanakpur** barrages. ■ Open border under the **India–Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950**.
Way Fwd	Fast-track **Pancheshwar DPR** and cross-border bridges; deepen **Dharchula–Darchula** people-to-people and trade links.
Concept	**Neighbourhood First** policy; the **Kalapani–Lipulekh–Limpiyadhura** area (Pithoragarh) is part of India per its official map — Nepal's 2020 map claim is not recognised by India. **Lipulekh Pass** is a route for the **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra**.

Cabinet Approves ₹4,371 Crore VISTAR Scheme to Overhaul Statistical System

ECONOMY **UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Economy of India & Uttarakhand)**

Syllabus Linkage	Indian economy — data, national income, surveys; state & district GDP; Prelims: **MoSPI**, **Economic Census**, PLFS/HCES/ASUSE.
Context	The Union Cabinet on **4 Nov** approved **VISTAR — Viksit Bharat Initiative for Statistical Transformation, Analytics & Research**, a **Central Sector Scheme** of **₹4,371.10 crore** for **FY 2026-27 to 2030-31**, to build an AI-ready, real-time statistical system.
Key Facts	■ Implementing ministry: **MoSPI**; vision **Viksit Bharat 2047**. ■ **59 surveys** planned in the **16th Finance Commission** cycle vs **43** earlier. ■ New indicators: **Headline Index of Services Production** and **Index of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises**. ■ **SSS 2.0** helps States with **district-level estimates**, State/District GDP and State-level **IIP**. ■ Includes the **8th Economic Census** — non-farm establishments down to **Gram Panchayat / Ward**.
Way Fwd	Uttarakhand's Directorate of Economics & Statistics can use **SSS 2.0** for credible **district GDP** — vital for hill-plain gap analysis and **GEP** accounting.
Concept	**Central Sector Scheme** = 100% funded and implemented by the Centre (vs **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, cost-shared with States). The **Economic Census** counts all establishments engaged in economic activity (excluding crop production & plantation).

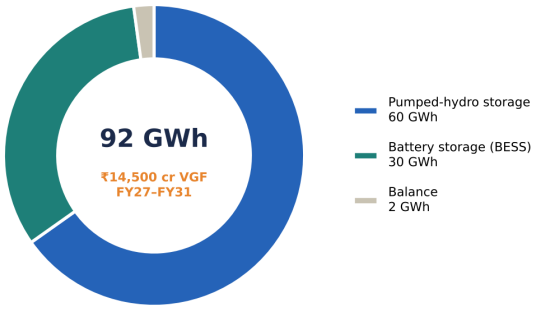


92 GWh Grid-Scale Energy Storage Plan Cleared with ₹14,500 Crore VGF

ENVIRONMENT **UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Science-Tech & Environment; Energy — Uttarakhand)**

Syllabus Linkage	Energy security, renewables integration; hydropower in Uttarakhand; Prelims: **VGF**, **BESS**, **pumped storage**, **Tehri PSP**.
Context	The Cabinet on **4 Nov** approved **₹14,500 crore** of **viability gap funding (VGF)** to add **92 GWh** of grid-scale storage during **FY27–FY31**, to be implemented with States — key for absorbing variable solar and wind power.
Key Facts	■ Mix: **60 GWh pumped-hydro storage** + **30 GWh battery energy storage (BESS)**. ■ Same day: **₹2,814 crore** scheme for **lithium & nickel** processing (see next item). ■ Uttarakhand hosts the **1,000 MW Tehri Pumped Storage Plant** (THDC) on the **Bhagirathi**. ■ Storage enables round-the-clock RE towards **500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030**. ■ Implemented as **VGF** — capital support that makes otherwise unviable projects bankable.
Way Fwd	Uttarakhand can bid for **off-river (closed-loop) pumped storage** with low ecological footprint, avoiding fragile valleys and **eco-sensitive zones**.
Concept	**Pumped storage**: water is pumped to an upper reservoir when power is cheap/surplus and released through turbines at peak demand — a 'water battery'. **GWh** measures stored energy; **GW** measures power capacity.

Grid-Scale Energy Storage Scheme



₹2,814 Crore Capex Support for Lithium and Nickel Processing

ECONOMY **UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Economy; Science-Tech)**

Syllabus Linkage	Industrial policy, critical minerals, supply-chain resilience; Prelims: **National Critical Mineral Mission**, lithium/nickel uses.
Context	The Cabinet cleared a **₹2,814-crore** capital-expenditure support scheme for **FY27–FY31** to set up domestic plants that refine **lithium and nickel** ores into high-purity compounds for batteries and electronics, cutting import dependence.
Key Facts	■ **30% capital subsidy**; **2 lithium + 2 nickel** plants selected on **least-cost** bidding. ■ Minimum capacity: **30,000 tpa** (lithium), **50,000 tpa** (nickel); **cobalt** as a nickel by-product. ■ Caps: **₹500 cr** (lithium) and **₹900 cr** (nickel) per beneficiary; **3 milestone tranches**. ■ Processing parks planned in **Gujarat, Maharashtra (lithium), Odisha (nickel)** and **Andhra Pradesh**. ■ Builds on the **National Critical Mineral Mission** (**₹34,300 cr**, 2025).
Way Fwd	Secure ore through overseas assets (**KABIL**) and recycling; pair with strict **environmental safeguards** for refining effluents.
Concept	**Critical minerals** are those essential for the economy with **supply-risk** — India has identified **30** (2023). **Lithium** is vital for Li-ion batteries; India's first lithium inferred resource was reported at **Reasi (J&K)** in 2023.

SECTION D — PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

1. **Fast-track special courts**: Cabinet extended **850** FTSCs for rape & **POCSO** cases till **2031**.	**2.** **India–Canada** held the **inaugural Defence Dialogue** (virtual, **3 Nov**) — focus: defence industry, R&D, military-technical cooperation.
3. **Kedarnath** — one of the **12 Jyotirlingas**; temple at **~3,583 m** in Rudraprayag district.	**4.** **Tehri Dam** (Bhagirathi) — India's tallest dam (**~260.5 m**), operated by **THDC India Ltd**.
5. **Nauling Devta fair** site at Ghatghor Gadi (**Dharchula**, Pithoragarh) gets **₹79.49 lakh**.	**6.** **VISTAR**'s **8th Economic Census** will provide the baseline for a **National Statistical Business Register**.

SECTION E — PRACTICE CORNER UKPSC-pattern MCQs • Mains question

Q1. With reference to the Char Dham shrines of Uttarakhand, consider the following pairs (Shrine — Winter seat):
1. Kedarnath — Ukhimath
2. Gangotri — Mukhba
3. Yamunotri — Pandukeshwar
How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

(A) Only one **(B)** Only two **(C)** All three **(D)** None

Answer: (B) — Kedarnath's winter seat is **Omkareshwar Temple, Ukhimath** and Gangotri's is **Mukhba**. Yamunotri's winter seat is **Kharsali**; **Pandukeshwar** is linked to **Badrinath**. Hence only two pairs are correct.

Q2. Consider the following statements regarding the VISTAR scheme approved on 4 November 2026:
1. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented by NITI Aayog.
2. It includes the 8th Economic Census covering non-farm establishments.
3. It supports States in preparing district-level GDP estimates.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(A) 1 and 2 only **(B)** 2 and 3 only **(C)** 1 and 3 only **(D)** 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (B) — VISTAR is a **Central Sector Scheme** of **MoSPI** (₹4,371.10 cr), not a CSS of NITI Aayog — statement 1 is wrong. It includes the **8th Economic Census** and **SSS 2.0** for **district GDP** — statements 2 and 3 are correct.

MAINS PRACTICE: Post-monsoon avalanches and record pilgrim footfall in 2026 highlight the twin challenge of risk and carrying capacity in the Uttarakhand Himalaya. Discuss the measures needed to make high-altitude tourism and trekking safe and sustainable. (200 words)

Hint: Intro: **Kedartal** tragedy + **63 lakh** Char Dham footfall. Body: weather-linked **permits & GPS tracking**, **SDRF/NIM** high-altitude capacity, avalanche early warning, **carrying-capacity** caps, winter yatra & homestays to spread load, local guide certification. Conclude with a **Himalayan resilience** model linked to **GEP**.

ONE-LINE REVISION: Kedartal avalanche (Uttarkashi) • Char Dham 63 lakh+ • ₹22.15 cr for 26 works • UK Day 9 Nov 2000 • Agniveer 4+2 • TFR 1.9 vs 2.1 • VISTAR ₹4,371 cr • 92 GWh storage • ₹2,814 cr Li-Ni.

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