CURRENT AFFAIRS — 17 November 2026

Tuesday, 17 November 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Uttarakhand + National • UKPSC Prelims & Mains digest

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR UTTARAKHAND PCS

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Badrinath** portals closed 16 Nov, 9:37 PM — **Char Dham Yatra 2026** ends at a record **~65 lakh** pilgrims.
- **Kedarnath** (closed 11 Nov, Bhai Dooj) drew **19.2 lakh+**; winter seat **Omkareshwar, Ukhimath**.
- **13 killed, 39 injured** in three crashes in **Tehri Garhwal & Rudraprayag** (16 Nov).
- **Rajaji TR** reopened Chilla, Motichur, Ranipur zones on **15 Nov**; **5 more tigers** from Corbett in Jan.
- Uttarakhand has **~1,700 MBBS seats**; **Rudrapur GMC** to lift govt seats from **675 to 775**.
- CM Dhami: govt to be industry's **'partner, not regulator'** — 56th EEPC Northern Region awards, Dehradun.
- **PLFS Oct 2026**: unemployment **4.9%** (8-month low); **female LFPR 35%**.
- **23rd ASEAN-India Summit** & **21st EAS** in **Manila**; 2026 = **ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation**.
- **COP31 (Antalya)** draft: 'immediate transition away from fossil fuels'; adaptation finance to **$120 bn**.
- **Cyclone Akvan** to cross **Andhra Pradesh–Yanam** coast around noon, **20 Nov**.

SECTION A • UTTARAKHAND SPECIAL — Culture, Disaster, Ecology, Health & State Economy

Char Dham Yatra 2026 ends: Badrinath shuts for winter after record season

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

Syllabus Linkage	Uttarakhand culture, pilgrimage & tourism economy; Prelims: **winter seats**, river–shrine pairs, Panch Badri/Panch Kedar.
Context	The portals of **Badrinath Dham (Chamoli)** closed at **9:37 PM on 16 Nov 2026** after five-day **Panch Puja** rituals, formally ending the **Char Dham Yatra 2026**, which drew a record **~65 lakh** pilgrims.
Key Facts	■ **Badrinath alone: ~23 lakh** pilgrims — called a 'new milestone' by CM **Pushkar Singh Dhami**. ■ **Kedarnath** closed on **Bhai Dooj (11 Nov)**; **19.2 lakh+** devotees; doli moved to **Omkareshwar Temple, Ukhimath**. ■ Worship continues for **6 months** at winter seats: Badrinath — **Pandukeshwar/Jyotirmath**; Gangotri — **Mukhba**; Yamunotri — **Kharsali**. ■ Portals reopen in **April–May**; dates fixed on **Basant Panchami** (Badrinath) and **Mahashivratri** (Kedarnath).
Way Fwd	Promote **winter Char Dham yatra** to the seats to spread footfall; enforce **carrying-capacity** caps, registration and waste rules in fragile valleys.
Concept	**Badrinath** (Vishnu) lies on the **Alaknanda**; **Kedarnath** (one of **12 Jyotirlingas**) on the **Mandakini**; Gangotri — **Bhagirathi**; Yamunotri — **Yamuna**. Shrines managed by **BKTC** (Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee).

Hill highways turn deadly: 13 killed in Tehri, Rudraprayag crashes

SOCIETY UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Disaster Management & Governance — Uttarakhand)

Syllabus Linkage	Disaster management, road safety & hill-area governance; Prelims: **MV Act 2019**, golden hour, cashless treatment scheme.
Context	Three accidents late on **16 Nov 2026** killed **13** and injured **39**. A bus from **Rishikesh to Srinagar** with **34 passengers** fell into a ravine at **Gular** on the **Rishikesh–Badrinath National Highway**.
Key Facts	■ **Gular (Tehri Garhwal)** bus crash: **8 dead, 26 injured**; injured shifted to Rishikesh. ■ **Ukhimath (Rudraprayag)**: SUV returning from a wedding fell into a gorge — **4 dead, 6 injured**. ■ **Doggi Patti, Banskatal (Tehri)**: **1 dead, 7 injured**. ■ CM **Dhami** ordered treatment and assistance for the injured and condoled the deaths.
Way Fwd	Black-spot audits with **crash barriers**, strict **fitness and overloading** checks, and an SDRF-linked **golden-hour** trauma network on pilgrim routes.
Concept	**Golden hour** = first 60 minutes after injury. **Cashless Treatment of Road Accident Victims Scheme, 2025**: up to **₹1.5 lakh** for **7 days**. **Good Samaritan** protection under **Sec 134A, MV Act** (2019 amendment).

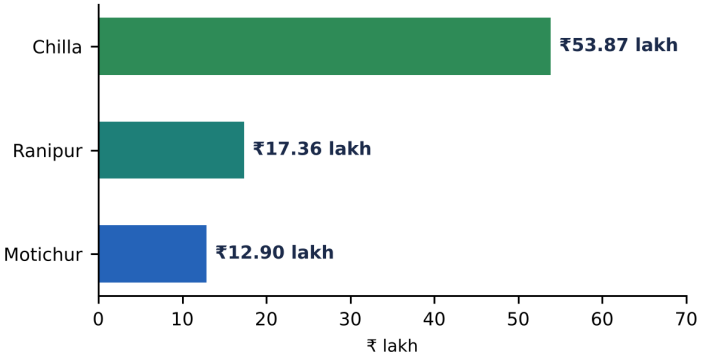


Rajaji reopens safaris; phase-2 tiger shift from Corbett due in January

ENVIRONMENT UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Environment & Ecology — Uttarakhand)

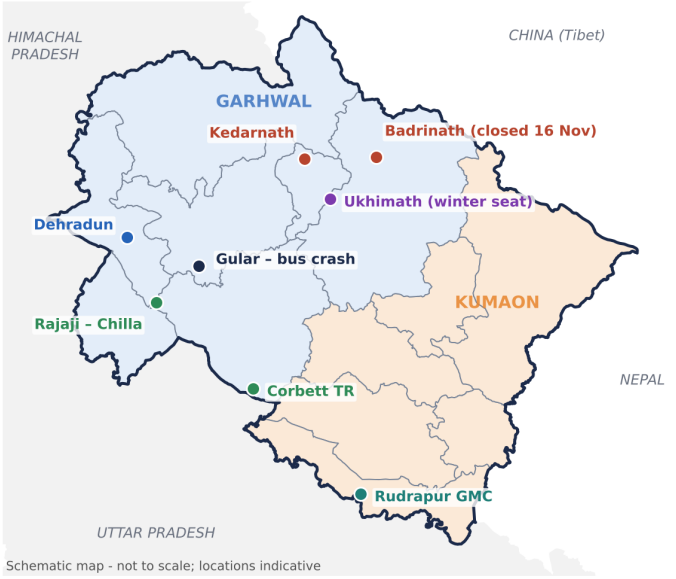
Syllabus Linkage	Protected areas of Uttarakhand, wildlife conservation, eco-tourism; Prelims: **ranges, rivers, NTCA**.
Context	**Rajaji Tiger Reserve** reopened its **Chilla, Motichur and Ranipur** tourism zones on **15 Nov 2026** after a **five-month** monsoon closure, as the reserve prepares to receive **5 more tigers** from **Corbett**.
Key Facts	■ **Chilla** (36 km track) logged **20,245** visitors last season (**1,106 foreign**), revenue **₹53.87 lakh**. ■ **Phase 2**: **3 tigresses + 2 tigers** to the **western part**, first fortnight of **January**; **NTCA** nod in **June 2026**. ■ **Phase 1 (2020-25)** moved **5 tigers**; plan framed **2016**, NTCA-approved **2018**. ■ Reserve has **~55 tigers**, nearly all **east of the Ganga**; the west is tiger-poor.
Way Fwd	Secure **Chilla–Motichur corridor** across the Ganga, track translocated animals by radio-collar, and share eco-tourism revenue with fringe villages.
Concept	**Rajaji NP (1983)** merged Rajaji, Motichur & Chilla sanctuaries; named after **C. Rajagopalachari**; **Tiger Reserve in 2015**; spans **Haridwar, Dehradun, Pauri**. **Corbett** = India's first NP (**1936**, Hailey NP); **Project Tiger** launched there in **1973**.

Rajaji TR: safari revenue by zone, last season



Chilla: 20,245 visitors (1,106 foreign) • reopened 15 Nov 2026

Uttarakhand: today's news locations



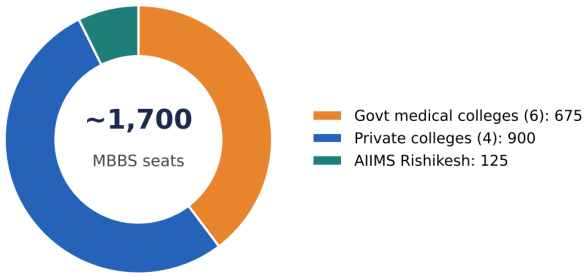
Schematic map - not to scale; locations indicative

Medical education push: ~1,700 MBBS seats, Rudrapur GMC ready

HEALTH UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Social Justice & Governance — Uttarakhand)

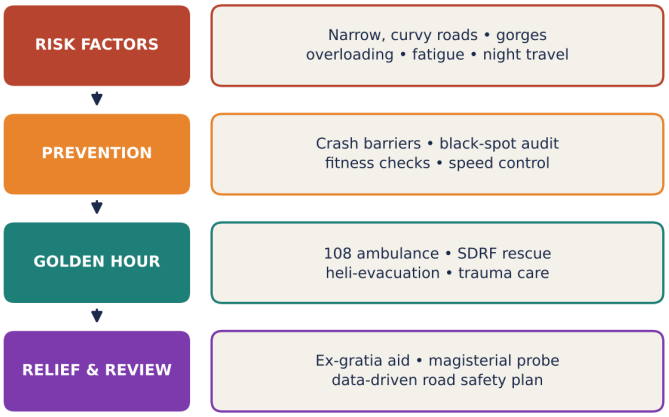
Syllabus Linkage	Health infrastructure & human resources in hill states; Prelims: **state health schemes**, college locations.
Context	The state government (**15 Nov 2026**) outlined its medical-education expansion: **six government medical colleges** now run **675 MBBS seats**, and a completed **Rudrapur** college awaits permission for **100 seats**.
Key Facts	■ Govt colleges: **Dehradun, Haldwani, Srinagar, Almora, Pithoragarh, Haridwar** (last three under Dhami). ■ Total **~1,700 MBBS** seats: govt **675**, private (4) **900**, **AIIMS Rishikesh 125**. ■ **3 new govt nursing colleges** (+321 seats) since 2021; total nursing seats **11,495**. ■ Supplementary budget: **₹225 crore** for health schemes — **₹100 cr Atal Ayushman**, **₹125 cr Golden Card**.
Way Fwd	Pair seats with **bonded rural service** and hill allowances so doctors stay in remote PHCs; fill faculty gaps via visiting-faculty and telemedicine.
Concept	**Atal Ayushman Uttarakhand Yojana (2018)**: universal health cover up to **₹5 lakh** per family. **National Medical Commission** set up under the **NMC Act, 2019** (replaced MCI).

Uttarakhand MBBS seats by provider



Rudrapur GMC (+100 seats, awaiting nod) → govt seats 775

Hill Road Safety: Risk → Response chain



'Partner, not regulator': CM's industry pitch at export awards

ECONOMY UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Geography & Economy — Uttarakhand)

Syllabus Linkage	Industrial development of Uttarakhand, connectivity projects; Prelims: **GIS 2023 MoUs**, rail & road corridors.
Context	At the **56th Northern Region Export Excellence Awards** of **EEPC India** in **Dehradun (16 Nov)**, CM **Dhami** said the state will act as a **'partner to industries'** rather than merely a regulator.
Key Facts	■ Hill terrain once deterred investors; govt aims to turn **geographical challenges into opportunities**. ■ **Global Investors Summit (Dec 2023)**: MoUs worth **₹3.56 lakh crore**; **₹1 lakh crore+** grounded. ■ Connectivity: **Delhi–Dehradun Economic Corridor** (~2–2.5 hr), **Rishikesh–Karnaprayag rail**, **Char Dham all-weather road**. ■ Exports linked to **'Made in India'** and **Viksit Bharat @2047**.
Way Fwd	Spread industry beyond the **plains (Haridwar, Udham Singh Nagar)** to hill clusters — food processing, AYUSH, IT — to check **palayan**.
Concept	**EEPC India** (est. **1955**) is the export-promotion council for engineering goods under the **Ministry of Commerce**. **Rishikesh–Karnaprayag line**: **~125 km**, mostly in tunnels, incl. India's longest rail tunnel (~14.6 km).

Welfare follow-up: frontline honorarium hike from 1 December

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

Syllabus Linkage	State welfare schemes, women's SHGs, statehood movement; Prelims: **Uttarakhand Gaurav Samman**, folk icons.
Context	The **13 announcements** made by the CM at **Chamoli** in the state's **26th foundation-day** week move to rollout, with the **honorarium hike** for frontline workers effective **1 Dec 2026**.
Key Facts	■ Hike for **Anganwadi workers & helpers, ASHAs, Bhojan Matas**; early raise promised for **guest teachers**. ■ **Lakhpati Didis** to get business-expansion funds in **two instalments**; **two digital libraries per district**. ■ Extra aid for **plastic surgery** of **wildlife-attack** victims; **Apuni Sarkar** portal to be simplified. ■ **Posthumous Uttarakhand Gaurav Samman**: folk singers **Gopal Babu Goswami** and **Chandra Singh Rahi**.
Way Fwd	Notify revised honorarium rates promptly and link Lakhpati Didi support to **market access** and value chains for hill produce.
Concept	**Uttarakhand** became India's **27th state** on **9 Nov 2000** (as Uttaranchal; renamed **2007**). **Lakhpati Didi** = SHG member with annual household income of **₹1 lakh+** (DAY-NRLM).

SECTION B • DATA POINT OF THE DAY

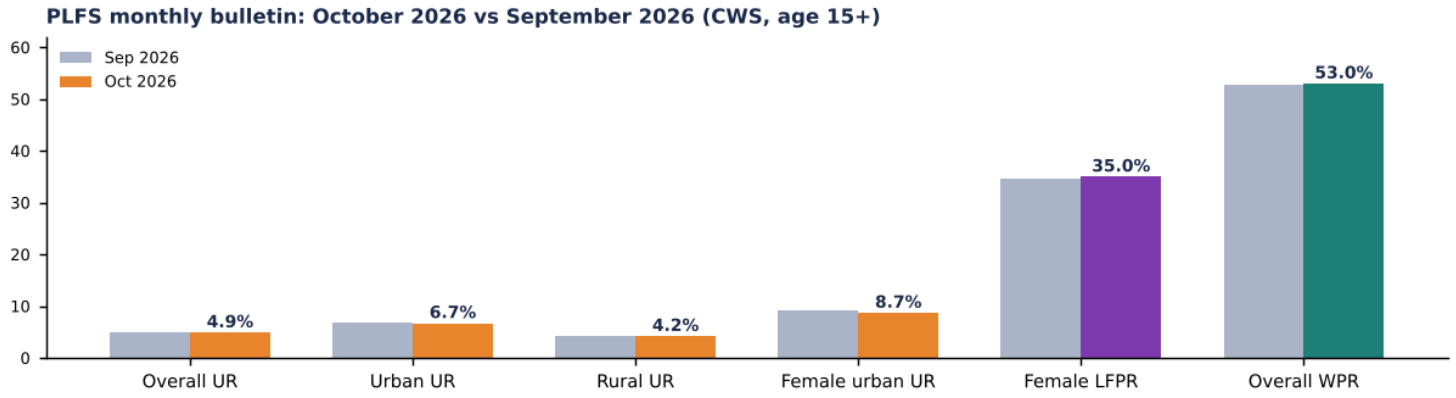
4.9%

Unemployment rate Oct 2026

India's unemployment rate, October 2026 (PLFS monthly, age 15+, CWS)

Lowest in **8 months** (Sep: **5.0%**). Urban UR **6.7%**, rural **4.2%**; **female LFPR 35.0%**, overall **WPR 53.0%**; female urban UR fell to **8.7%** (from 9.2%). Source: **MoSPI** PLFS monthly bulletin.

Why it matters: Female urban joblessness and low female LFPR are key Mains themes; Uttarakhand's hill districts face similar **youth out-migration (palayan)** pressures.



SECTION C • NATIONAL & WORLD — IR, Environment, Health, Sci-Tech & Economy

23rd ASEAN-India Summit, Manila: 'Development and prosperity interconnected'

IR UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity, Governance & International Relations)

Syllabus Linkage	India and its neighbourhood, regional groupings; Prelims: **Act East**, EAS membership, ASEAN chair.
Context	PM **Narendra Modi** addressed the **23rd ASEAN-India Summit** in **Manila (17 Nov 2026)**, reaffirming **ASEAN unity and centrality**, before the **21st East Asia Summit**. The **Philippines** chairs ASEAN in 2026.
Key Facts	■ Linked **ASEAN Community Vision 2045** with **Viksit Bharat 2047**. ■ Since 2014: **100+** people-to-people initiatives, **~250 Quick Impact Projects**, **10,000+** scholarships. ■ **2026 = ASEAN-India Year of Maritime Cooperation**; **2027** marks **35 years** of dialogue ties. ■ Summit reviews **Plan of Action 2026–30** under the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2022)**.
Way Fwd	Conclude the **AITIGA review**, deepen maritime domain awareness and finish the **India–Myanmar–Thailand trilateral highway** to the Northeast.
Concept	**Look East (1991)** became **Act East (2014)**. India became ASEAN's **sectoral (1992)**, full **dialogue (1996)** and **summit-level (2002)** partner. **EAS** (est. **2005**) has **18** members.

COP31 draft at Antalya seeks 'immediate transition away from fossil fuels'

ENVIRONMENT UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Science-Tech & Environment)

Syllabus Linkage	Climate change, global environmental negotiations; Prelims: **UNFCCC COPs**, NCQG, adaptation finance.
Context	The first draft decision at **COP31** in **Antalya, Türkiye** (released 16 Nov) calls for **accelerated action** to phase out fossil fuels. Negotiations president **Chris Bowen** (Australia) called it 'the first draft'.
Key Facts	■ Seeks an '**immediate transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems**' — just, orderly, equitable. ■ Urges phase-out of **inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies**. ■ Calls to **triple adaptation finance** to at least **$120 bn** (from ~$40 bn) with a developed-country **roadmap**. ■ Needs consensus of **~200 countries**; coal-reliant nations resist a full coal exit.
Way Fwd	India should press **CBDR-RC**, predictable **adaptation finance** for Himalayan states and technology transfer for a just energy transition.
Concept	**COP28 (Dubai)** Global Stocktake first called for '**transitioning away from fossil fuels**'. **COP29 (Baku)** set the **NCQG**: **$300 bn/yr by 2035**. **CBDR-RC** = Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities.

Cyclone Akvan to hit Andhra–Yanam coast on 20 Nov

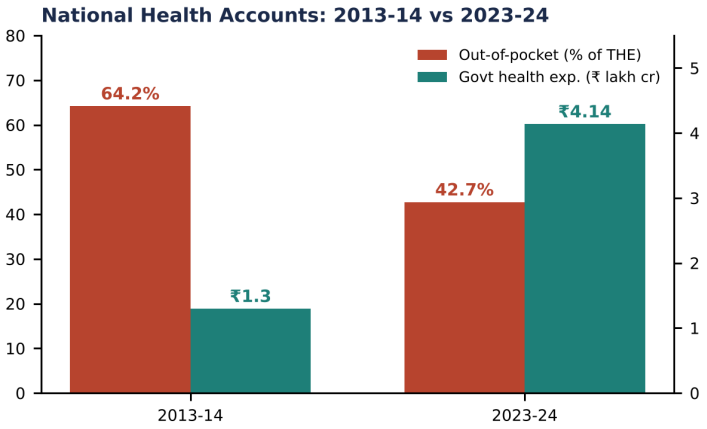
ENVIRONMENT UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Geography & Disaster Management)

Syllabus Linkage	Physical geography — cyclones; disaster management; Prelims: **IMD categories**, naming, Yanam.
Context	**IMD** says **Cyclonic Storm Akvan** over the central & west-central **Bay of Bengal** (610 km east of Chennai on 17 Nov) will intensify and cross the **Andhra Pradesh–Yanam** coast around **noon, 20 Nov**.
Key Facts	■ To become **Severe CS** (night of 17 Nov) and **Very Severe CS** by evening of **19 Nov**. ■ **Extremely heavy rain (>21 cm)** in north coastal AP on **19–20 Nov**. ■ **Orange alert** in **5 AP districts** incl. Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Kakinada. ■ **Odisha** began evacuating people from vulnerable areas.
Way Fwd	Pre-emptive evacuation, **cyclone shelters**, and impact-based forecasts as under the **Odisha 'zero-casualty'** model.
Concept	IMD scale: **CS 63–88 km/h**, **SCS 89–117**, **VSCS 118–166**. North Indian Ocean names come from the **WMO/ESCAP Panel (13 countries)**. **Yanam** is a **Puducherry** enclave within Andhra Pradesh.

National Health Accounts 2023-24: out-of-pocket share falls to 42.7%

REPORT UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Social Justice & Governance)

Syllabus Linkage	Health sector, public expenditure; Prelims: **OOPE, GHE, THE**, NHP 2017 targets.
Context	The **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** released **NHA estimates for 2023-24** on **15 Nov 2026**, showing a sharp rise in public spending and a fall in household burden.
Key Facts	■ **GHE ₹4.14 lakh crore** (vs ₹1.30 lakh cr in 2013-14) = **1.43% of GDP**. ■ **OOPE**: **64.2% → 42.7%** of THE (2013-14 → 2023-24). ■ **THE ₹9,52,122 crore** = **3.29% of GDP**; per capita **₹6,801**. ■ Share of GHE: **States ~68%**, **Union ~32%**.
Way Fwd	Raise public health spending toward the **2.5% of GDP** goal, prioritising primary care and drugs that drive OOPE.
Concept	NHA estimates are prepared by **NHSRC** (NHA Technical Secretariat) using the **WHO System of Health Accounts 2011**. **National Health Policy 2017** targeted public health spend of **2.5% of GDP by 2025**.



India signs Pax Silica 'San Francisco Declaration' on tech security

SCI-TECH UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Science-Tech & International Relations)

Syllabus Linkage	Emerging tech, semiconductors, economic security; Prelims: **Pax Silica members**, India Semiconductor Mission.
Context	India joined **nine** other countries in signing the **San Francisco Declaration on the Secure Foundations of Enduring Prosperity** at the US-led **Pax Silica Founders Retreat**; the delegation was led by **MeitY Secretary S. Krishnan**.
Key Facts	■ Signatories: **USA, India, Australia, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Qatar, Singapore, UAE, UK**. ■ Treats **economic security as national security** for the **AI era**. ■ Targets **economic coercion**, supply-chain disruption, tech theft and hostile acquisitions. ■ India had joined **Pax Silica** at the **AI Impact Summit, New Delhi (Feb 2026)**.
Way Fwd	Use the pact to attract **fabs, critical minerals and AI compute** while preserving **strategic autonomy** and data sovereignty.
Concept	**India Semiconductor Mission (2021)**: **₹76,000 crore** outlay. **IndiaAI Mission (2024)**: **₹10,372 crore**. 'Pax Silica' plays on **silicon** — chips as the base of AI power.

India tops resilience ranking; global outlook sees 7.2% growth in 2027

ECONOMY UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Geography & Economy — India)

Syllabus Linkage	Indian economy — growth, macro stability; Prelims: **report-publisher** pairs, IMF WEO.
Context	An **ASSOCHAM** report, '**India's Economic Edge in the Top Ten Economies**', ranks India the **most resilient** of the 10 largest economies for **2026–30**, while **Goldman Sachs' Global Economic Outlook 2027** projects India at **7.2%** in CY27.
Key Facts	■ India **71/100**; **China 66**; **Japan & Russia 60** each (10 IMF-based indicators). ■ India **1st** in real GDP & per-capita growth; **8th** in overall fiscal balance. ■ Goldman: India **7.2% (CY27)** vs **7.9% (CY26)**; world **2.8%**. ■ Global **AI investment** seen at **$1.8 trillion** in CY27.
Way Fwd	Sustain growth through **fiscal consolidation**, export diversification and labour-intensive manufacturing.
Concept	**IMF World Economic Outlook** is released in **April and October**. **ASSOCHAM** (est. **1920**) is an apex industry chamber. **Resilience** = ability to absorb shocks and recover growth.

SECTION D • PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

1. **Uttarakhand Gaurav Samman 2026**: 15 honoured; **Narendra Singh Negi** & **Hemant Pandey** got Lifetime Achievement awards.

2. **Uttarakhand Foundation Day**: **62 projects worth ₹1,475.31 crore** launched, incl. **₹31.63 cr Cyber Excellence Centre**, Dehradun.

3. **ISSF World Championship (Doha)**: India **3rd** with **13 medals** (2G, 7S, 4B) and **3 LA28 quotas**; China topped.

4. **Jay Shah** reappointed unopposed as **ICC Chairman** for a second two-year term (Board meet, **Bali**).

5. **8th Khelo India Youth Games**: **Telangana**, **11–22 Dec 2026**; mascot **'Neelamani'**; softball debuts.

6. **IMNEX-26**: 8th **India–Myanmar** naval exercise concluded at **Visakhapatnam**.

SECTION E • PRACTICE CORNER — UKPSC Pattern

Q1. Consider the following pairs (Char Dham shrine — winter seat):
1. Kedarnath — Omkareshwar Temple, Ukhimath
2. Badrinath — Mukhba
3. Yamunotri — Kharsali
Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

(a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) — Kedarnath's winter seat is **Omkareshwar, Ukhimath** and Yamunotri's is **Kharsali**. **Mukhba** is the winter seat of **Gangotri**; Badrinath's winter worship is at **Pandukeshwar/Jyotirmath**.

Q2. With reference to the National Health Accounts estimates for 2023-24, consider the following statements:
1. Out-of-pocket expenditure fell below half of Total Health Expenditure.
2. The Union Government contributed a larger share of Government Health Expenditure than the States.
3. Total Health Expenditure was about 3.29% of GDP.
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: (c) — OOPE fell to **42.7%** of THE and THE was **3.29% of GDP**. Statement 2 is wrong: **States ~68%**, Union only **~32%** of GHE.

MAINS PRACTICE: A record ~65 lakh pilgrims visited the Char Dham in 2026. Discuss the economic benefits and ecological risks of mass pilgrimage in the Garhwal Himalaya and suggest a carrying-capacity-based management framework for Uttarakhand. (250 words)

Hint: Benefits: **livelihoods, homestays, reverse palayan**. Risks: **landslides, waste, Joshimath-type subsidence, crowd crushes**. Way out: **carrying-capacity caps**, mandatory registration, **winter yatra** to seats, EIA for roads/ropeways, **SDRF** & early warning.

ONE-LINE REVISION: Badrinath shut 16 Nov (9:37 PM) — Char Dham ~65 lakh record • 13 dead in Tehri/Rudraprayag crashes • Rajaji reopens, 5 Corbett tigers in Jan • UR 4.9% • ASEAN-India @ Manila • COP31: exit fossil fuels • Cyclone Akvan → AP coast 20 Nov

Compiled & simplified by the StudyForGS.com Research Team
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