CURRENT AFFAIRS — 18 November 2026

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR UTTARAKHAND PCS

Wednesday, 18 November 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Uttarakhand + National • UKPSC Prelims & Mains digest

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Char Dham 2026: record **65.65 lakh** pilgrims; Badrinath portals closed **16 Nov, 9:37 pm**.
- **Gangotri** crossed **10 lakh** visitors for the first time since statehood.
- Census 2027: UK self-enumeration **16–30 Nov**; house-to-house **1 Dec–4 Jan**.
- Tehri: Haridwar–Joshimath bus fell ~**100 m** near **Gular**; **9 dead, 25 injured**.
- UK road deaths **1 Jan–17 Nov 2026: 364**; **Tehri (75)** highest.
- **Baini-Bhuli Yojana**: DBT aid to **5 lakh+** women; 1st instalment **Dec 2026**.
- **₹78.18 crore** sanctioned for 5 districts incl. **Kumbh 2027** works in Haridwar.
- **Rajaji TR** to get **5 tigers** (3F+2M) from **Corbett** in Jan 2027.
- 21st **EAS (Manila)**: India proposes **Seafarers' Safety Initiative**, Cyber Crime Conference.
- Horticulture 2025-26 (3rd AE): record **386.91 MT**, up **4.36%**.

SECTION A | UTTARAKHAND SPECIAL

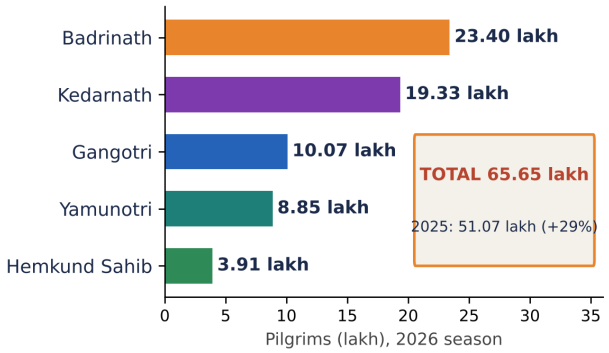
State schemes • policy • disaster & ecology • state economy

Char Dham Yatra 2026 ends with record 65.65 lakh pilgrims

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

Syllabus Linkage	Uttarakhand geography (river sources, shrines), **pilgrimage tourism economy**, crowd & disaster management. Prelims: dham–river–district–winter seat matching.
Context	The portals of **Badrinath** closed at **9:37 pm on 16 Nov 2026**, ending the season. Official tallies show **65.65 lakh** pilgrims at the four dhams and **Hemkund Sahib** — the highest ever — against **51.07 lakh** in 2025.
Key Facts	● **Badrinath ~23.4 lakh**, **Kedarnath 19.33 lakh**, **Gangotri 10.07 lakh**, **Yamunotri 8.85 lakh**, **Hemkund Sahib 3.91 lakh**. ● **Gangotri** crossed **10 lakh** for the first time since the state's creation (**9 Nov 2000**). ● Pilgrim deaths rose to **297** (2025: **182**); **288** were health-related, **142** at Kedarnath. ● Winter seats: **Narasimha Temple, Jyotirmath** (Badri Vishal), **Omkareshwar, Ukhimath** (Kedarnath), **Mukhba** (Gangotri), **Kharsali** (Yamunotri).
Way Fwd	Shift from record-chasing to **carrying-capacity** caps, mandatory **health screening** for high-altitude treks, and push the **winter yatra** (~**1 lakh** expected) to spread footfall.
Concept	**Yamunotri & Gangotri** — Uttarkashi (Yamuna, **Bhagirathi**); **Kedarnath** — Rudraprayag (**Mandakini**; a Jyotirlinga); **Badrinath** — Chamoli (**Alaknanda**, between **Nar-Narayan** peaks). Hemkund Sahib lies near the **Valley of Flowers** (Chamoli).

Char Dham + Hemkund Sahib footfall, 2026



Census 2027 Phase II opens in Uttarakhand with online self-enumeration

UTTARAKHAND | UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity & Governance)

Syllabus Linkage	Polity — **Census (Union List, Entry 69)**, Census Act 1948; Uttarakhand demography (2011 data), migration ('palayan') data for planning.
Context	Self-enumeration for **Population Enumeration (Phase II)** is open in the state's **non-snow-bound areas** till **30 Nov 2026**; the CM urged residents to complete it, saying census data shapes the state's development plans.
Key Facts	● Portal **se.census.gov.in**: **40 questions**, **16 languages**; a **Self-Enumeration ID** is shared with the enumerator. ● House-to-house count **1 Dec 2026–4 Jan 2027**; revisional round **5–9 Jan**; reference date **00:00 hrs, 5 Jan 2027**. ● Same schedule for **UP, Punjab, Goa**; other States/UTs: reference date **1 Mar 2027**. ● India's **first digital census**, with **caste enumeration** for all communities; outlay **₹11,718.24 crore**.
Way Fwd	Ensure coverage of **migrant households**, remote villages and seasonal workers so that 'palayan' and **delimitation**-relevant data for the hills is accurate.
Concept	Census is conducted by the **Registrar General & Census Commissioner (MHA)**. Uttarakhand (2011): population **1.01 crore**, sex ratio **963**, literacy **78.8%**. Next census data will also drive **delimitation** after the freeze (Art. 82).

Uttarakhand: today's news locations



Census 2027 Phase II in Uttarakhand (non-snow-bound areas) | Other States/UTs: ref. date 1 Mar 2027

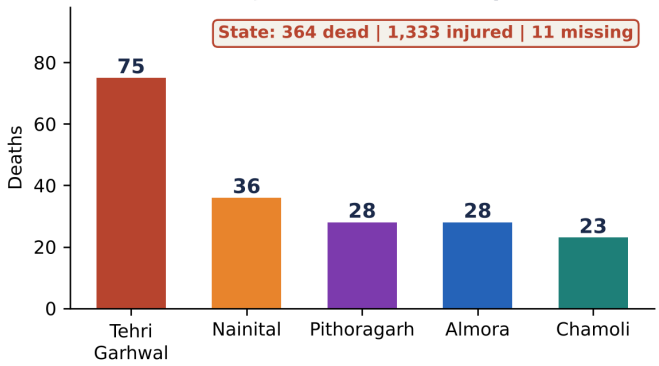


Tehri bus tragedy: 9 dead; state logs 364 road deaths in 2026

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

Syllabus Linkage	Disaster management & **road safety in hill states**; governance (SDRF, State EOC); Motor Vehicles Act. Prelims: NH routes, district facts.
Context	Early on **17 Nov**, a **Haridwar–Joshimath** bus with **34** passengers broke through a railing near the **Gular** bridge (Tehri Garhwal) on the **Rishikesh–Badrinath highway** and fell about **100 m**. A jeep crash on the **Kandara road (Rudraprayag)** the same night also claimed lives.
Key Facts	● **9 dead, 25 injured** (treated at **AIIMS Rishikesh**); a **30-member SDRF** team, police and fire service led rescue. ● State EOC data, **1 Jan–17 Nov 2026 (321 days)**: **364 deaths**, **1,333 injured**, **11 missing** — over one death a day. ● District-wise deaths: **Tehri 75**, **Nainital 36**, **Pithoragarh 28**, **Almora 28**, **Chamoli 23**. ● Govt cites **crash barriers**, vehicle **fitness checks**, overloading/overspeeding drives and **night-travel curbs** on some routes.
Way Fwd	**Black-spot audit** of hill highways, **driver-fatigue rules** for pre-dawn runs, stronger parapets on bridges, and trauma care within the **golden hour**.
Concept	**Uttarakhand SDRF** was raised after the **2013 Kedarnath disaster** under the **DM Act, 2005**. **Stockholm Declaration (2020)**: halve road deaths by **2030**; **Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019** added Good Samaritan protection.

Road deaths, 1 Jan–17 Nov 2026 (top districts)

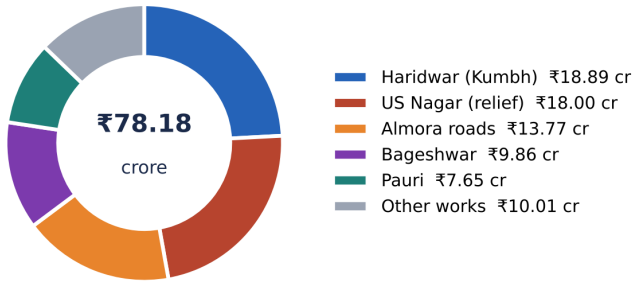


₹78.18 crore for five districts; Haridwar gears up for Kumbh 2027

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

Syllabus Linkage	State infrastructure & finance, **Kumbh Mela** (culture/UNESCO), disaster relief norms; district-wise geography.
Context	The CM approved **₹78.18 crore** for roads, drinking water, disaster relief and **Kumbh Mela 2027** works across **Almora, Pauri, Bageshwar, Haridwar** and **Udham Singh Nagar**.
Key Facts	● **Haridwar (Kumbh) ₹18.89 cr**: divider Shiv Murti–Arya Nagar **₹7.35 cr**, musical fountain **₹4.43 cr**, **Bhimgoda** beautification **₹3.43 cr**, water **₹3.68 cr**. ● **Udham Singh Nagar ₹18 cr** for disaster relief & ex-gratia. ● Roads: **Almora ₹13.77 cr** (Marchula–Syalde–Devalghat etc.), **Bageshwar ₹9.86 cr** (Rikhari–Bachham, Kapkot), **Pauri ₹7.65 cr**.
Way Fwd	Time-bound completion before Kumbh with **crowd-flow modelling**, sanitation and river-safety plans; quality audit of hill roads.
Concept	**Kumbh Mela** is on UNESCO's **Intangible Cultural Heritage** list (**2017**). Haridwar hosts Kumbh when **Jupiter is in Aquarius** and the **Sun in Aries**; the last Haridwar Kumbh was in **2021**. **Bhimgoda barrage** diverts Ganga into the **Upper Ganga Canal**.

Sanction split (₹ crore)



'Baini-Bhuli Yojana': DBT support for over 5 lakh women

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

Syllabus Linkage	State welfare schemes, **women empowerment**, DBT/JAM; Garhwali–Kumaoni cultural vocabulary in scheme names.
Context	Announced by CM **Pushkar Singh Dhami** at a **Matrushakti Sammelan** in **Pipalkoti (Chamoli)**, the scheme will give incentive money to women, mainly in **rural hill areas**. 'Baini-Bhuli' means **elder and younger sisters** in the local dialect.
Key Facts	● Beneficiaries: **over 5 lakh women**; money in **two instalments** directly to bank accounts (**DBT**). ● **First instalment** expected in **December 2026**; per-head amount and eligibility await official guidelines. ● Likely focus groups: **SHG** members, **Lakhpati Didis** and self-employed women.
Way Fwd	Link transfers to **livelihood outcomes** (SHG enterprises, market access) and publish clear criteria to avoid exclusion errors.
Concept	**Lakhpati Didi**: SHG woman earning **≥ ₹1 lakh/year** (DAY-NRLM). Uttarakhand gives **30% horizontal reservation** to domicile women in state jobs (**2022 Act**). **DBT** rests on the **JAM trinity** (Jan Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile).

Rajaji Tiger Reserve to receive 5 more tigers from Corbett

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

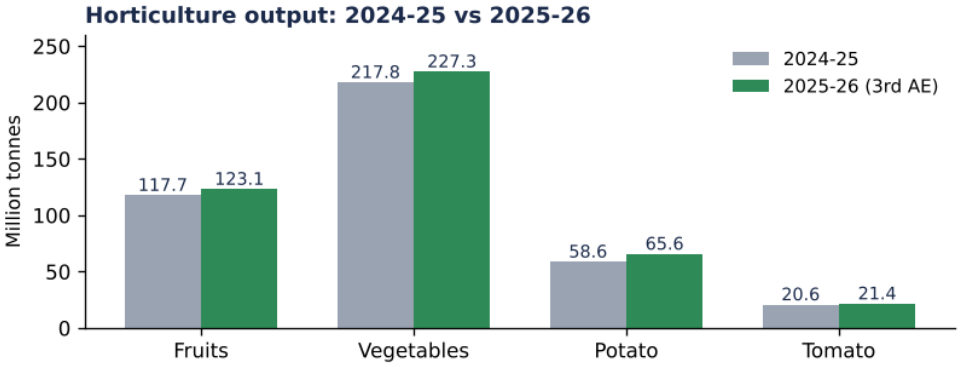
Syllabus Linkage	Protected areas of Uttarakhand, **tiger reintroduction**, wildlife corridors; NTCA & Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
Context	In the **second phase** of relocation, **3 tigresses and 2 tigers** will be shifted from **Corbett** to Rajaji's **western part** in the first half of **January 2027**; **NTCA** cleared it in June.
Key Facts	● Phase I (**2020–2025**) moved **5 tigers** west; cubs born in 2024 did not survive; two tigresses untraced. ● Rajaji has ~**55 tigers**, all in the **eastern part** — roads and the **Chilla canal** block westward movement. ● Staff trained in **camera trapping** and monitoring; jungle safari reopened on **15 Nov** after a 5-month monsoon closure.
Way Fwd	Restore the **Chilla–Motichur corridor** with underpasses and prey augmentation so the western population becomes self-sustaining.
Concept	**Rajaji NP (1983)** merged **Rajaji, Motichur and Chilla** sanctuaries; Tiger Reserve in **2015**. **Corbett** — India's first NP (**Hailey NP, 1936**); **Project Tiger** launched here in **1973**. **NTCA** is statutory (**WPA amendment 2006**).

SECTION B | DATA POINT OF THE DAY Economy — Agriculture & Horticulture

India's horticulture production, 2025-26 (Third Advance Estimates)

386.91 million tonnes (+4.36%)

Record output vs **370.74 MT** in 2024-25: **fruits 123.07 MT** (+4.60%), **vegetables 227.27 MT** (+4.35%), **potato 65.57 MT** (+11.95%), **tomato 21.41 MT**, **onion 28.90 MT**. Released by Union Agriculture Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan**. Uttarakhand link: hill horticulture (**apple, citrus, kiwi, off-season vegetables**) is a key lever against **palayan**.



386.91 MT
Total 2025-26 (record)

+4.36%
Growth over 370.74 MT

+11.95%
Potato — fastest rise

SECTION C | NATIONAL & WORLD IR • environment • health • science-tech

PM at 21st East Asia Summit, Manila: four new proposals

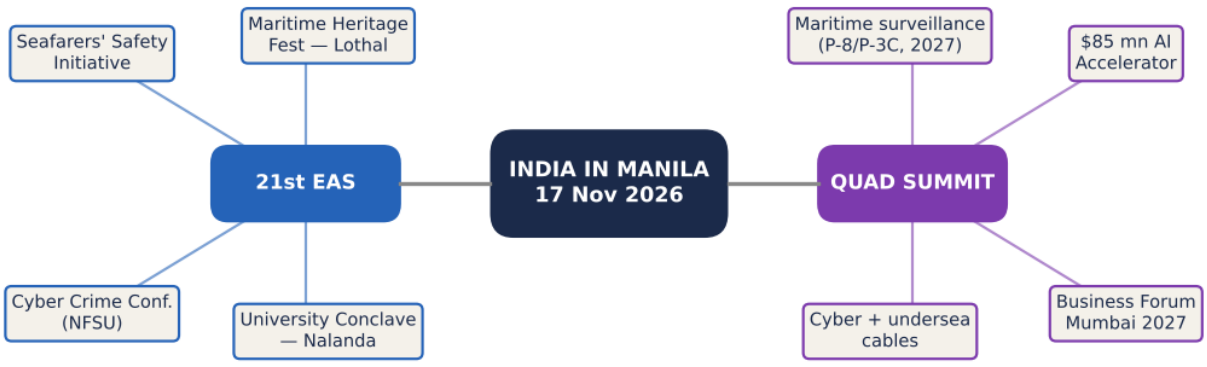
IR UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity, Governance & IR)

Syllabus Linkage	India's **Act East Policy**, ASEAN-led forums, maritime security; Prelims: EAS membership, Harappan sites.
Context	Addressing the **21st EAS** on **17 Nov 2026** hosted by Philippine President **Ferdinand Marcos Jr.**, the PM called for a **free, open, inclusive, rules-based Indo-Pacific** and protection of ships and seafarers.
Key Facts	● **Seafarers' Safety Initiative** — joint training and emergency response. ● **EAS Cyber Crime Conference** at the **National Forensic Science University**. ● **EAS Maritime Heritage Festival** at **Lothal**; **EAS University Conclave** at **Nalanda**. ● Flagged impact of conflicts on **food, fuel and fertiliser security**; backed peaceful resolution in **Ukraine & West Asia**.
Way Fwd	Convert proposals into funded **EAS work-streams**; leverage soft power (Nalanda, Lothal) alongside **IPOI** maritime pillars.
Concept	**EAS** began in **2005 (Kuala Lumpur)**; India is a **founding member**; it groups ASEAN with 8 partners incl. the **US and Russia** (joined 2011). **Lothal** (Gujarat) — Harappan site with the world's earliest known **dockyard**.

Quad Leaders' Summit in Manila backs $85 million AI Accelerator

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

Syllabus Linkage	Regional groupings involving India, **Indo-Pacific** security, critical & emerging tech.
Context	Leaders of **India, US, Japan and Australia** — **Modi, Trump, Takaichi, Albanese** — met in Manila on **17 Nov** and announced security, business and AI plans.
Key Facts	● **$85 million Quad AI Accelerator** for trusted AI access and deployment in the Indo-Pacific. ● Inaugural **Quad Business Leaders' Forum** in **Mumbai, early 2027**. ● **Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration**: **P-8 & P-3C** aircraft exercise in **2027**. ● Concern over **economic coercion** and arbitrary **export restrictions**; progress on **undersea cable** resilience.
Way Fwd	Use the Mumbai forum to anchor **critical-minerals and semiconductor** supply chains in India.
Concept	**Quad** traces to the **2004 tsunami** core group; first met **2007**, revived **2017**; first leaders' summit (virtual) **March 2021**. **IPMDA** (2022) tracks dark shipping.



Cyclone Akvan to hit Andhra–Odisha coast as a severe storm

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

Syllabus Linkage	Physical geography — **tropical cyclones**, naming, IMD classification; disaster preparedness.
Context	A **severe cyclonic storm** over the **Bay of Bengal**, Akvan has slowed but may become **very severe**; IMD now sees landfall between **Narsapur (AP)** and **Puri (Odisha)** around **19–20 Nov**.
Key Facts	● Winds **100–110 km/h**, gusting **120 km/h**; moving north at **~7 km/h**. ● Name contributed by **Iran** — from Persian epic **Shahnameh** (demon Akvan). ● Third storm in under a month after **Arnab** and **Murasu**, which hit crops over **4.5 lakh ha** in AP.
Way Fwd	Pre-emptive **evacuation**, fishing bans and crop-insurance claims support — replicating Odisha's **'zero-casualty'** approach.
Concept	**RSMC New Delhi (IMD)** names North Indian Ocean cyclones for **13 countries** (WMO/ESCAP panel; list of **169 names**, 2020). IMD scale: **CS 62–88**, **SCS 89–117**, **VSCS 118–166 km/h**.

Voyager 1 becomes first craft one light-day from Earth

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

Syllabus Linkage	Space science — **heliosphere**, deep-space missions, astronomical units of distance.
Context	NASA's **Voyager 1**, launched in **1977**, has reached about **one light-day** (~**25.9 billion km**) from Earth this month — the farthest human-made object.
Key Facts	● A radio signal now takes about **24 hours** one way. ● Entered **interstellar space** (crossed heliopause) in **August 2012**. ● Powered by **RTGs** (plutonium-238); carries the **Golden Record**.
Way Fwd	Lessons for India's deep-space plans: **long-life power** and a stronger **deep-space network**.
Concept	**1 light-day ≈ 173 AU**; **1 AU ≈ 149.6 million km** (Earth–Sun). The **heliopause** marks where solar wind meets interstellar medium.

President hails ~80% fall in malaria at ICMR-NIMR Golden Jubilee

HEALTH UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Social Justice — Health)

Syllabus Linkage	Communicable disease control, **vector-borne diseases**, health institutions; climate–health linkages.
Context	President **Droupadi Murmu** opened the year-long **Golden Jubilee** of the **ICMR–National Institute of Malaria Research** in New Delhi on **17 Nov**; India saw nearly **80% decline** in malaria cases and deaths between **2015 and 2025**.
Key Facts	● India exited WHO's **'High Burden to High Impact'** group in **2024**. ● Emerging threats: **climate change**, unplanned **urbanisation**, **insecticide resistance**. ● Flagged **dengue** as a growing challenge linked to warming and shifting monsoons.
Way Fwd	Sustain **surveillance** in forest-fringe and tribal belts and tackle urban breeding to meet the **2030** goal.
Concept	**National Framework for Malaria Elimination (2016–2030)**: elimination by **2030**. Malaria is caused by **Plasmodium** (P. falciparum, P. vivax), spread by female **Anopheles**.

SECTION D | PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

1. UKSSSC Advt. 84	**1,694** posts (police, PAC/IRB, fireman, forest guard, **Special Tiger Guard**); apply **25 Nov–25 Dec 2026**; exam likely **4 Apr 2027**.
2. Badrinath winter worship	Badri Vishal at **Narasimha Temple, Jyotirmath**; **Uddhav & Kuber** at **Pandukeshwar**.
3. JAIMEX 2026	India–Japan naval exercise, **13–14 Nov**, south of **Honshu**: **INS Sahyadri** with **JS Ise**.
4. Green FDI	**Amazon** to invest **$7 billion** in Indian renewables by **2030**.
5. Arogya Rath (Uttarakhand)	CM flagged off **2 mobile medical vans** (doctor, paramedics, pharmacist) for remote villages of **Almora & Pithoragarh** under a **CSR** partnership.
6. Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas	Observed on **15 Nov** (birth anniversary of **Birsa Munda**); also **Jharkhand** foundation day.

SECTION E | PRACTICE CORNER UKPSC-pattern Prelims & Mains

Prelims MCQs (UKPSC pattern)

Q1. Consider the following pairs (Dham — Winter seat): 1. Kedarnath — Omkareshwar Temple, Ukhimath; 2. Gangotri — Kharsali; 3. Badrinath — Narasimha Temple, Jyotirmath. How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

(a) Only one **(b)** Only two **(c)** All three **(d)** None

Answer: (b) — Pairs 1 and 3 are correct. Gangotri's winter seat is **Mukhba**; **Kharsali** is the winter seat of **Yamunotri**.

Q2. With reference to naming of tropical cyclones over the North Indian Ocean, consider: 1. Names are assigned by RSMC New Delhi (IMD). 2. The current list has 169 names from 13 member countries. 3. The name 'Akvan' was contributed by India. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) — 'Akvan' was contributed by **Iran** (from the **Shahnameh**). Statements 1 and 2 are correct.

Mains Practice Question

Q. Record footfall in the Char Dham Yatra 2026 came with a sharp rise in pilgrim deaths and hill-road accidents. Discuss the case for a carrying-capacity-based pilgrimage management policy for Uttarakhand. (150 words)

Hint: Intro with **65.65 lakh** pilgrims vs **297** deaths and **364** road deaths. Body: ecological fragility (Joshimath, 2013), health screening, slot-based registration, road safety (black spots, night curbs), winter yatra & lesser-known circuits, local livelihoods. Conclude with **sustainable tourism** + **GEP** linkage.

ONE-LINE REVISION: Char Dham 2026 = **65.65 lakh** (record) | Gangotri **10 lakh+** first time | Census self-enumeration **16–30 Nov** | Tehri crash **9 dead**; 2026 road deaths **364** | Horticulture **386.91 MT** | EAS **Manila**: Seafarers' Safety Initiative.

Compiled & simplified by the StudyForGS.com Research Team
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