CURRENT AFFAIRS — 20 OCTOBER 2026

Tuesday, 20 October 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

- **Dr Dhal Singh Bisen** took oath as Uttarakhand's **9th Governor** on **19 Oct** at **Lok Bhavan, Dehradun**.
- Bisen succeeds **Lt Gen (Retd) Gurmit Singh**; appointed by the President on **12 Oct 2026**.
- Char Dham Yatra 2026 crossed a record **56.89 lakh** pilgrims (till 7 Oct), beating **56.13 lakh (2023)**.
- **Gangotri** closes on **10 Nov**, **Yamunotri** on **11 Nov (Bhai Dooj)**; **Tungnath** on **6 Nov**.
- Assembly session at **Bhararisain (Gairsain), Chamoli** from **27 Oct 2026**.
- Logo, website and theme song of **Haridwar Kumbh 2027** unveiled by CM Dhami.
- **India–New Zealand FTA** in force from **20 Oct 2026**: **100%** Indian tariff lines duty-free in NZ.
- SC: **Internet access is a fundamental right of children** (Arts **19(1)(a)** & **21**).
- India now has **103 Ramsar sites**; **Sukhna (Chandigarh)** and **Sauj Jheel (UP)** added.
- CPI inflation (base **2024=100**) rose to **5.54%** in Sep 2026; Uttarakhand **5.47%**.

SECTION A — UTTARAKHAND SPECIAL: Governance, Pilgrimage, Ecology, Tourism & Health

Dr Dhal Singh Bisen sworn in as Uttarakhand's 9th Governor

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

Syllabus Linkage	Indian Polity — State Executive (**Arts 153–162**); Uttarakhand GK: list of Governors, Lok Bhavan.
Context	Former Balaghat MP **Dr Dhal Singh Bisen** took oath as Governor at **Lok Bhavan, Dehradun** on **19 October 2026**, a week after **President Droupadi Murmu** appointed him (**12 Oct**). He replaces **Lt Gen (Retd) Gurmit Singh**, who held office from **Sept 2021**.
Key Facts	• Bisen (b. **1952**) was a **4-term MLA** in Madhya Pradesh and **Lok Sabha MP, Balaghat (2019–24)**. • He chaired the **4th State Finance Commission of MP (2011–13)**. • Uttarakhand's **1st Governor: Surjit Singh Barnala (2000)**; first woman: **Margaret Alva (2009)**. • Raj Bhavans are now styled **'Lok Bhavan'**.
Way Fwd	Smooth Governor–government coordination is vital for timely **assent to Bills (Art. 200)** and university governance.
Concept	**Art. 155**: appointed by President by warrant; **Art. 156**: holds office during President's pleasure (normally **5 yrs**); **Art. 157**: citizen, **35+ yrs**; **Art. 159**: oath by **Chief Justice of the High Court**.

Haridwar: 17 elephants under watch, 6 to get radio collars ahead of Kumbh

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

Syllabus Linkage	Human–wildlife conflict, elephant corridors, protected areas of Uttarakhand (**Rajaji, Corbett**).
Context	The forest department is tracking **17 elephants** that move near settlements in the **Haridwar** region; **6 herd-leading elephants** will be fitted with **radio collars** with support from conservation partners, so that real-time alerts can reduce conflict before the **2027 Kumbh**.
Key Facts	• Uttarakhand's elephant count: **2,026 (2020 census)**, up from **1,839 (2017)**. • Elephants mainly in the **Terai–Shivalik** belt, incl. the **Rajaji–Corbett corridor**. • A collared **herd leader** acts as a **proxy for the whole herd**. • Proposal for collaring was sent to **MoEFCC** for approval.
Way Fwd	Secure corridors, early-warning SMS to villages, and elephant-proof solar fencing near Kumbh zones.
Concept	Asian elephant: **Schedule I (WPA 1972)**, **Endangered (IUCN)**; **National Heritage Animal (2010)**. **Shivalik Elephant Reserve (2002)** is Uttarakhand's elephant reserve; **Project Elephant** began in **1992**.

Assembly to meet at Bhararisain (Gairsain) from 27 Oct; Kumbh 2027 logo unveiled

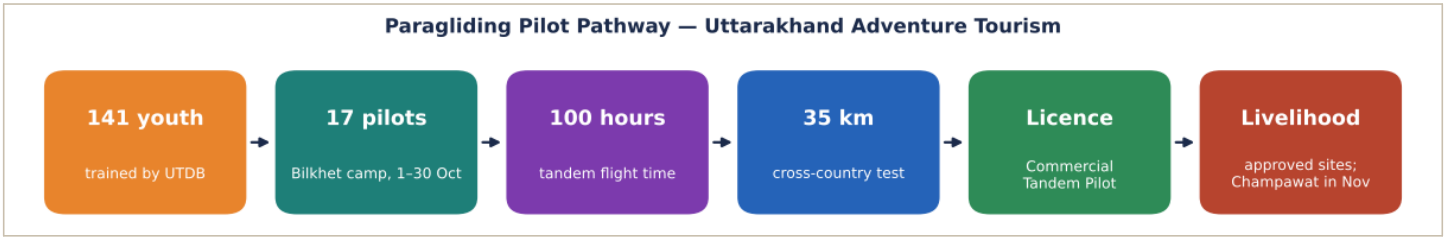
UTTARAKHAND | **UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity & Culture — Uttarakhand)**

Syllabus Linkage	State Legislature (**Art. 174** — summoning); Gairsain summer capital; fairs & festivals of Uttarakhand.
Context	The Governor has summoned the **third session of 2026** of the **Fifth Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly** at **Vidhan Sabha Bhavan, Bhararisain (Chamoli)** from **27 October, 11 am**. Separately, CM **Pushkar Singh Dhami** released the **logo, website and theme song** of the **Haridwar Kumbh Mela 2027**.
Key Facts	• **Gairsain** was declared the **summer capital** in **March 2020**; Dehradun remains the (interim) capital. • Kumbh logo shows **Maa Ganga, Har Ki Pauri**, Dhanush bridge, **Mansa Devi & Chandi Devi** hills. • Haridwar Kumbh is held every **12 years**; **Ardh Kumbh** every **6 years**. • Kumbh Mela is on UNESCO's **Intangible Cultural Heritage** list (**2017**).
Way Fwd	Regular sittings at Gairsain and a crowd-safety plan (carrying capacity, AI cameras) for Kumbh 2027.
Concept	**Art. 174**: Governor summons the House; gap between two sessions must not exceed **six months**. **Prorogation** ends a session; **dissolution** ends the Assembly.

Adventure tourism: 141 youth trained as paragliding pilots

UTTARAKHAND | **UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Economy — Uttarakhand Tourism & Employment)**

Syllabus Linkage	Tourism policy, self-employment, reverse migration (**palayan**) in hill districts.
Context	The **Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB)** has trained **141 youth** in paragliding. **17** of them are flying a practice campaign at **Bilkhet (Pauri Garhwal)** from **1–30 October**, which shifts to **Champawat** in **November**.
Key Facts	• Target: **100 hours** of flight time with practical **tandem** training. • Final test: a **35 km cross-country flight**. • Qualifiers get a **Commercial Tandem Pilot Licence**. • Operations allowed only at sites cleared by a **technical committee**.
Way Fwd	Strict safety SOPs, insurance cover and weather alerts; link pilots with **homestays** for village-based tourism.
Concept	Well-known paragliding sites: **Bir-Billing (HP)**; in Uttarakhand **Pithoragarh, Bhimtal, Mukteshwar, Naukuchiatal**. Skill-based tourism supports the state's anti-**palayan** goal.



Char Dham Yatra: record 56.89 lakh pilgrims, winter closure calendar set

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

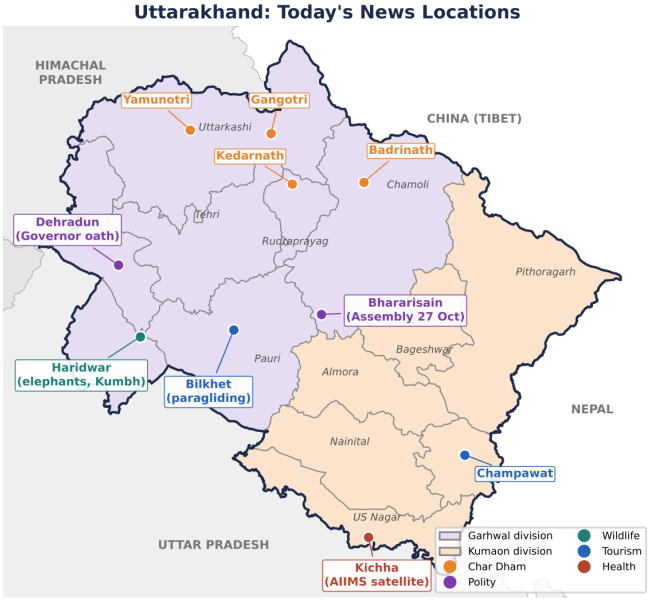
Syllabus Linkage	Religious tourism, pilgrimage management, winter seats of deities; Panch Kedar.
Context	Yatra 2026 crossed **56.89 lakh** pilgrims by **7 October**, beating the **2023** record of **56.13 lakh**. With **Vijayadashami (20 Oct)** the shrines move to their winter calendar: the Badrinath closing date is fixed on Vijayadashami by tradition.
Key Facts	• Shrine-wise: **Badrinath 19.14 lakh**, **Kedarnath 16.79 lakh**, **Gangotri 9.10 lakh**, **Yamunotri 8.10 lakh**. • Closures: **Gangotri 10 Nov**, **Yamunotri 11 Nov (Bhai Dooj)**, **Tungnath 6 Nov**, **Madhyamaheshwar 16 Nov**. • Winter seats: Kedarnath → **Ukhimath (Omkareshwar)**; Gangotri → **Mukhba**; Yamunotri → **Kharsali**. • Tungnath doli goes to **Makku Math**; Badrinath to **Pandukeshwar/Jyotirmath**.
Way Fwd	Promote the **winter Char Dham (sheetkaal yatra)** circuit to spread footfall and income across seasons.
Concept	**Panch Kedar**: Kedarnath, **Madhyamaheshwar (2nd)**, **Tungnath (3rd, highest Shiva temple)**, Rudranath, Kalpeshwar. Yamunotri & Gangotri lie in **Uttarkashi**; Kedarnath in **Rudraprayag**; Badrinath in **Chamoli**.

Medical Education University, Selaqui: ₹20.55 crore projects; super-speciality hospital proposed

UTTARAKHAND UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Social Justice — Health, Uttarakhand)

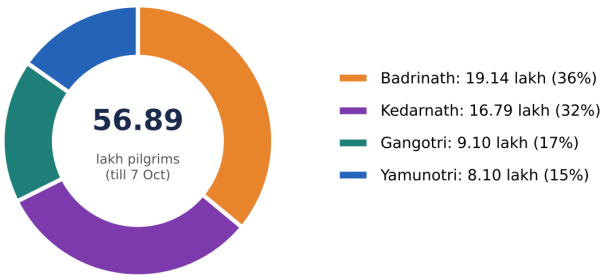
Syllabus Linkage	Health infrastructure, medical education, state welfare schemes.
Context	CM Dhami inaugurated and laid foundation stones of **five projects (₹20.55 crore)** at the **Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Uttarakhand Medical Education University, Selaqui (Dehradun)**. A **super-speciality hospital** on campus has been proposed to the **Union Health Ministry**.
Key Facts	• Foundation: **admin block, amphitheatre, Nakshatra Vatika (₹20.21 cr)**; inaugurated: **gate & dental hospital (₹34 lakh)**. • State has **5 govt medical colleges**, **2 under construction**, **9 nursing colleges**, **3 nursing schools**. • **₹351 crore AIIMS satellite centre** coming up at **Kichha (Udham Singh Nagar)**; cancer institute at **Haldwani**.
Way Fwd	Post specialists in hill districts via incentives and expand **tele-medicine** to cut referral load on plains.
Concept	**AIIMS Rishikesh** is the state's apex institute (**PMSSY**). Health is a **State List** subject (**Entry 6, List II**); medical education falls in the **Concurrent List (Entry 25)**.

Uttarakhand: Today's News Locations



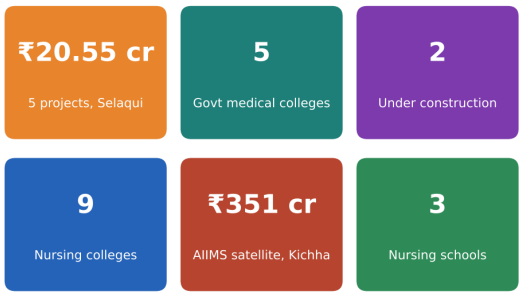
Schematic map - not to scale; locations indicative

Char Dham 2026: shrine-wise share



Share among the four dhams; record beats 56.13 lakh of 2023

Uttarakhand Medical Infrastructure

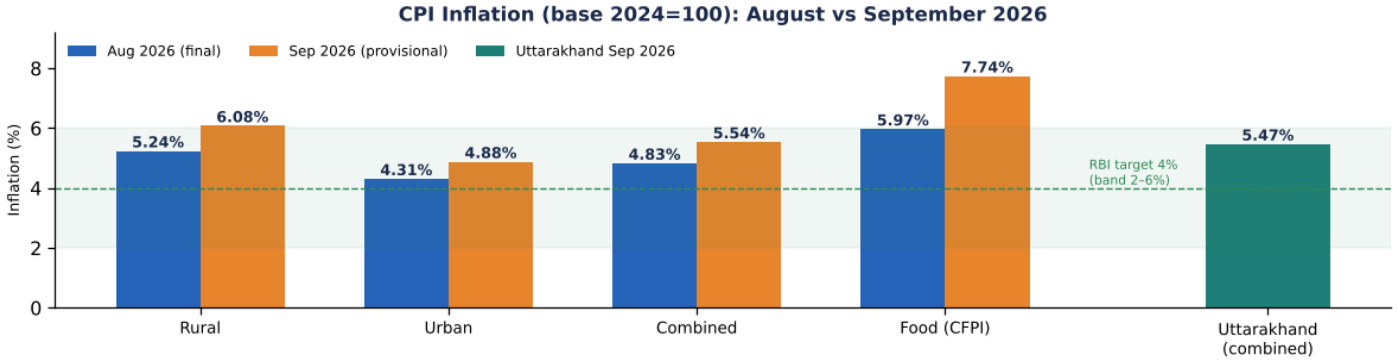


SECTION B — DATA POINT OF THE DAY

5.54%
All-India CPI Sep 2026

CPI inflation, September 2026 (base 2024=100)

All-India headline inflation rose from **4.83% (Aug)** to **5.54% (Sep)**; food inflation jumped to **7.74%**. Rural **6.08%** vs urban **4.88%**. **Uttarakhand: 5.47%** (rural **5.95%**, urban **4.63%**). Highest item inflation: **onion 108.09%**. RBI's target band is **4% ±2%**.



SECTION C — NATIONAL & WORLD: Polity, Economy, IR, Environment & Defence

India–New Zealand FTA comes into force on Vijayadashami

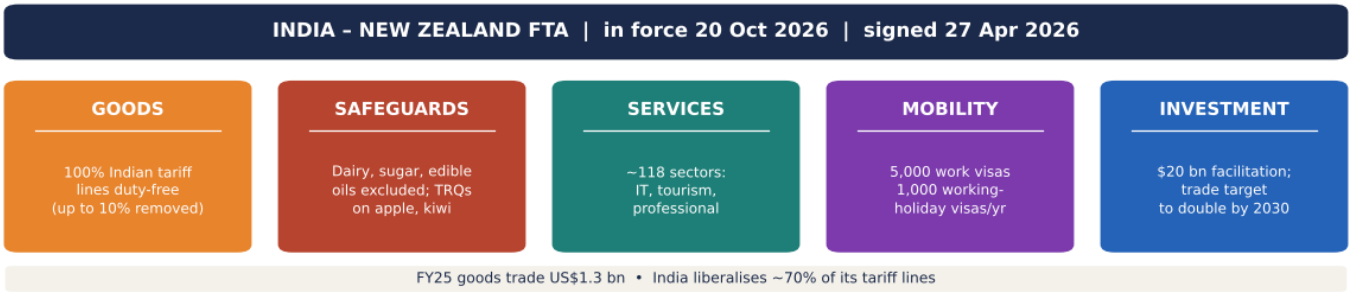
IR UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (International Relations & Economy)

Syllabus Linkage	India's trade agreements, WTO, export promotion; hill horticulture safeguards.
Context	Signed in **New Delhi on 27 April 2026** and passed by NZ's Parliament on **16 September**, the FTA takes effect on **20 October 2026**. **100% of tariff lines** on Indian exports to New Zealand become **zero from day one**.
Key Facts	● India liberalises about **70%** of its lines; **dairy**, sugar, edible oils kept out. ● **Apples, kiwifruit, Manuka honey** via **tariff-rate quotas** & minimum import prices — shields **Uttarakhand/HP growers**. ● **5,000** temporary employment visas; **1,000** working-holiday visas a year. ● NZ to facilitate **$20 billion** investment; FY25 goods trade **US$1.3 bn**.
Way Fwd	Use the deal for **textiles, pharma and engineering** exports while monitoring import surges in sensitive farm goods.
Concept	An **FTA** removes tariffs between members but each keeps its own external tariff (unlike a **customs union**). A **TRQ** allows a fixed quantity at low duty, higher duty beyond it.

SC: Internet access is a fundamental right of children too

POLITY UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity & Governance)

Syllabus Linkage	Fundamental Rights (**Arts 19, 21**), child protection, **POCSO**, IT Act, digital governance.
Context	In the **Just Rights for Children Alliance** matter, a bench led by **Justice J.B. Pardiwala** held that children have a **fundamental right to internet access** and **blanket bans are disproportionate**; it instead ordered systemic safeguards against **CSEAM** (child sexual exploitation and abuse material).
Key Facts	● Right flows from **Art. 19(1)(a)** and **Art. 21**; relies on **Anuradha Bhasin (2020)**. ● Centre to build a **national hash & URL database**, each entry verified by **3 human analysts**. ● Platforms: act within **2 hours** on flagged cases; **weekly** removal reports. ● A default **'child mode'**; universal **age-gating** rejected on privacy grounds.
Way Fwd	**MeitY** to frame enforceable child-mode rules under the **IT Act**; boost digital literacy in schools.
Concept	**Proportionality test** (Puttaswamy, 2017): **legality**, **legitimate aim**, **necessity/least restrictive means**. **Faheema Shirin (Kerala HC, 2019)** first termed internet access part of the right to education & privacy.



Ramsar network reaches 103 with Sukhna and Sauj Jheel

ENVIRONMENT UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Environment & Ecology)

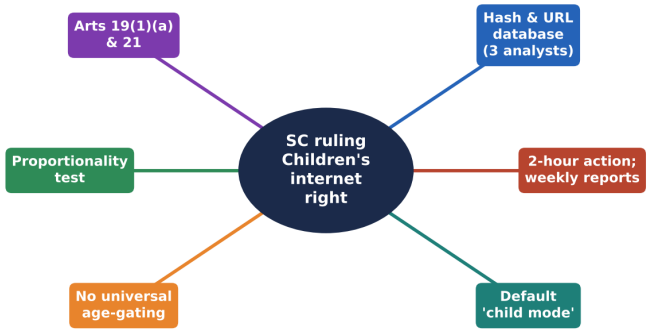
Syllabus Linkage	Wetland conservation, international conventions; Uttarakhand's Ramsar site.
Context	**Sukhna Wetland (Chandigarh)**, a reservoir at the foot of the **Shivaliks**, and **Sauj Jheel (Uttar Pradesh)**, a shallow Ganga-floodplain lake near **Saman Bird Sanctuary**, are India's newest Ramsar sites, taking the total to **103**.
Key Facts	● **Uttar Pradesh** now has **14** sites, second only to **Tamil Nadu**. ● Uttarakhand's only Ramsar site: **Asan Conservation Reserve (Dehradun), 2020**. ● Ramsar Convention: **1971, Ramsar (Iran)**; India joined in **1982**. ● India's first sites: **Chilika (Odisha)** & **Keoladeo (Rajasthan), 1981**.
Way Fwd	Uttarakhand can nominate high-altitude lakes and **Terai wetlands** under **Wetlands (C&M) Rules, 2017**.
Concept	**Montreux Record**: Ramsar sites under threat (India: **Keoladeo, Loktak**). **World Wetlands Day: 2 February**.

INS Samarthak: Navy's first indigenous multi-purpose vessel commissioned

DEFENCE UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Science-Tech & Security)

Syllabus Linkage	Defence indigenisation, **Make in India**, maritime security.
Context	Vice-President **C.P. Radhakrishnan** commissioned **INS Samarthak** at **INS Kadamba, Karwar (Karnataka)** on **16 October 2026**. Built by **L&T at Kattupalli (Tamil Nadu)**, it is the **first of four** multi-purpose vessels (MPVs).
Key Facts	● About **107 m** long; **over 75%** indigenous content. ● Roles: **weapon & sensor trials**, surveillance, towing, training, **HADR**. ● An **auxiliary platform**, not a frontline warship.
Way Fwd	Faster trials of indigenous radars/weapons cut import dependence and support **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**.
Concept	**INS Kadamba (Karwar)** is linked to **Project Seabird**. **HADR** = Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief.

Children & Internet: Key Directions



SECTION D — PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

Topic	Quick Fact
Khet Bachao Abhiyan (22–30 Oct)	**2,375** programmes in Uttarakhand; target **1.20 lakh** farmers
Vasundhara Tal (Chamoli)	Uttarakhand's **first glacial-lake early-warning system**; **13** of **344** lakes high-risk
Tungnath (3rd Kedar)	Closes **6 Nov**; winter seat **Makku Math**
Census (Amendment) Rules, 2026	**Private employees & teachers** can be appointed **enumerators**
India–Mauritius DTAA	Amended with a **Principal Purpose Test**; pre-**1 Apr 2017** investments protected
WTO trade outlook	2026 goods-trade growth raised to **3.9%** (from 1.9%), led by **AI** investment

SECTION E — PRACTICE CORNER (UKPSC Pattern)

Q1. With reference to the Governor of a State, consider the following statements: 1. The Governor is appointed by the President by warrant under hand and seal. 2. A person must have completed 30 years of age to be appointed Governor. 3. The oath of the Governor is administered by the Chief Justice of the High Court of that State. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) — **Art. 155** — appointment by warrant; **Art. 157** — minimum age is **35**, not 30; **Art. 159** — oath by the **Chief Justice of the High Court**. Dr Dhal Singh Bisen took oath as Uttarakhand's **9th Governor** on **19 Oct 2026**.

Q2. Which one of the following pairs of a Himalayan shrine and its winter seat is NOT correctly matched?

(a) Kedarnath — Ukhimath **(b)** Gangotri — Mukhba **(c)** Yamunotri — Kharsali **(d)** Badrinath — Makku Math

Answer: (d) — **Makku Math** is the winter seat of **Tungnath** (closes **6 Nov**). Badrinath's winter worship is at **Pandukeshwar/Jyotirmath**.

Mains Practice: Record footfall in the Char Dham Yatra is both an economic opportunity and an ecological risk for Uttarakhand. Discuss, and suggest a carrying-capacity based model for pilgrimage management. (UKPSC Mains, 200 words)

Hint: Intro: **56.89 lakh** pilgrims in 2026. Body: income for hotels, ponies, homestays vs. **landslide-prone** roads, waste, crowd crushes, glacial fragility. Way out: **registration caps**, slot-based darshan, **winter yatra**, Kedarnath–Hemkund **ropeways**, waste deposit-refund, disaster early-warning. Conclude with sustainable **Devbhoomi** tourism.

ONE-LINE REVISION: Bisen = 9th Governor (oath 19 Oct) | Char Dham record 56.89 lakh | Assembly at Bhararisain 27 Oct | India–NZ FTA live 20 Oct | Ramsar 103 | CPI Sep 5.54% (UK 5.47%)

Compiled & simplified by the **StudyForGS.com** Research Team | **▶ YouTube: @Study_ForGS** | **➤ Telegram: t.me/studyforgeneralstudies**