CURRENT AFFAIRS — 20 November 2026

Friday, 20 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

- **Igas Bagwal** (Budhi Diwali) is celebrated across Uttarakhand today, **11 days after Diwali**, on Devuthani Ekadashi.
- **Baini-Bhuli Yojana**: aid to **5 lakh+** SHG-linked women via DBT in **two instalments**; first in **December 2026**.
- **Char Dham Yatra 2026** closed with **65 lakh+** pilgrims; Badrinath **23 lakh+** (closed **16 Nov**).
- Kedarnath winter seat: **Omkareshwar Temple, Ukhimath**; Yamunotri's: **Kharsali**.
- **Uttarakhand Bird Count 2026**: **394 species**; Nainital tops with **273**.
- **Tejas**, Uttarakhand's **first white tiger**, opened to the public at **Dehradun Zoo** (19 Nov).
- **Himalayan MTB Challenge 2026**: **658 km** across **10 districts**, ends in **Mussoorie** on **26 Nov**.
- India's **first indigenous inactivated H5N1** poultry vaccine by **ICAR-NIHSAD, Bhopal** (clade **2.3.2.1a**).
- **1st SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum**, New Delhi, **20-22 Nov**; **15 countries** taking part.
- **₹1,976.40 crore** deal with **Israel Aerospace Industries** to upgrade the Navy's **Barak** point-defence system.

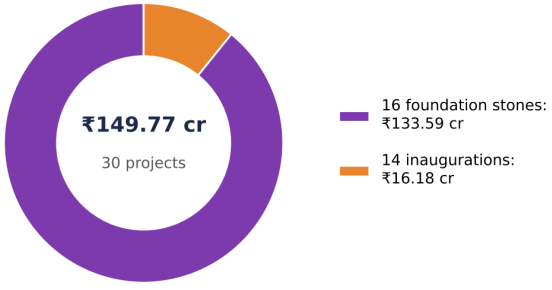
SECTION A — UTTARAKHAND SPECIAL: Schemes • Pilgrimage • Culture • Ecology • Tourism

Baini-Bhuli Yojana: DBT aid for 5 lakh+ women; ₹149.77 crore projects for Chamoli

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

Syllabus Linkage	Uttarakhand state schemes; women empowerment; **SHGs & rural livelihoods**; Prelims: scheme name, coverage, mode of transfer.
Context	At a **Matrushakti Sammelan** in **Pipalkoti (Chamoli)** on **17 Nov 2026**, CM **Pushkar Singh Dhami** announced the **Baini-Bhuli Yojana** and unveiled **30 projects** worth **₹149.77 crore**.
Key Facts	● Covers **5 lakh+ women** linked to **SHGs**, self-employment and livelihood programmes. ● Incentive by **DBT** in **two instalments**; **first instalment in December 2026**. ● **16 foundation stones (₹133.59 cr)** + **14 inaugurations (₹16.18 cr)**; incl. a **Govindghat motor bridge**. ● Linked state scheme: **Nanda Gaura Yojana** — **₹11,000** at a girl's birth and **₹51,000** after **Class 12**.
Way Fwd	Pair cash support with **market linkage** for hill produce and **digital literacy** so that 'Lakhpati Didis' scale up.
Concept	'**Baini-Bhuli**' means **sisters** in the local dialects. **DBT** (launched **2013**) uses the **JAM trinity** (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) to cut leakages.

Chamoli (Pipalkoti, 17 Nov): projects unveiled



Char Dham Yatra 2026 ends: 65 lakh+ pilgrims; deities move to winter seats

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

Syllabus Linkage	Uttarakhand pilgrimage tourism & economy; **carrying capacity**; crowd/disaster management; Prelims: shrines, rivers, winter seats.
Context	With **Badrinath's portals closing on 16 Nov**, the **2026 Char Dham Yatra** ended with **more than 65 lakh** pilgrims; **Kedarnath** and **Yamunotri** had closed on **11 Nov**.
Key Facts	● **Badrinath: 23 lakh+**; **Kedarnath: ~19.2 lakh**; **Yamunotri: 8.84 lakh** pilgrims. ● Winter seats: Kedarnath → **Omkareshwar Temple, Ukhimath**; Yamunotri → **Kharsali**; Gangotri → **Mukhba**; Badrinath → **Pandukeshwar/Jyotirmath**. ● Shrines and rivers: **Yamunotri (Yamuna)**, **Gangotri (Bhagirathi)**, **Kedarnath (Mandakini)**, **Badrinath (Alaknanda)**. ● State now promotes **winter Char Dham yatra** to the winter seats for year-round tourism.
Way Fwd	Fix **carrying capacity** per shrine, expand **ropeways** and real-time registration, and plan for **GLOF/landslide** risk on yatra routes.
Concept	**Kedarnath** is one of the **12 Jyotirlingas**; **Badrinath** is one of the **4 Dhams** of Adi Shankaracharya and lies between **Nar and Narayan** ranges.

CHAR DHAM YATRA 2026 - SEASON SCORECARD



Igas Bagwal today; Gauchar and Jauljibi fairs revive hill trade

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

Syllabus Linkage	Fairs, festivals and folk traditions of **Garhwal-Kumaon**; Prelims: festival timing, fair locations, river confluences.
Context	Uttarakhand celebrates **Igas Bagwal** (**Budhi Diwali**) on **20 Nov 2026**, a state holiday; the historic **Gauchar Mela** (Chamoli, opened **14 Nov**) and **Jauljibi Mela** (Pithoragarh) are under way.
Key Facts	● **Igas** falls **11 days after Diwali** on **Devuthani (Haribodhini) Ekadashi**; villagers swing flaming '**bhailo**' torches. ● **Gauchar Mela** began in **1943** as a trade fair; showcases **mandua, jhangora**, rajma and woollens. ● **Jauljibi** lies at the **Kali-Gori Ganga confluence**; its **100+-year-old** fair draws traders from **India and Nepal**. ● **Uttarakhand Gaurav Samman 2026** honours folk singers **Gopal Babu Goswami** and **Chandra Singh Rahi** (posthumous).
Way Fwd	Link fairs to **GI-tagged** products and **village tourism** so culture also earns income and checks **palayan**.
Concept	A popular legend links Igas to the late return of **Madho Singh Bhandari's** army from a Tibet campaign. **Jhangora** = barnyard millet; **mandua** = finger millet (ragi).

Tejas, Uttarakhand's first white tiger, opens to public at Dehradun Zoo

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

Syllabus Linkage	Ex-situ conservation; **Central Zoo Authority**; human-wildlife conflict; Prelims: zoo, animal exchange, rescue centres.
Context	CM Dhami opened the **white tiger enclosure** at **Dehradun Zoo (Malsi)** on **19 Nov** and announced **free entry for college students**.
Key Facts	● **Tejas** (male, **~2.5 years**) came from **Gandhi Zoological Park, Gwalior**, under a **CZA-approved** exchange for Bengal tiger **Bhola**. ● Zoo gets **~8.5 lakh visitors** and **₹7 crore+** revenue a year. ● **Bageshwar** gets its **first wildlife rescue centre** at **Vajyula — ₹1.60 crore**, **~1.5 ha**. ● Rescue teams in **6 forest ranges**; **568 monkeys** captured to curb crop damage.
Way Fwd	Use zoos for **conservation education**, and scale rescue centres to cut **human-wildlife conflict** in hill villages.
Concept	White coat comes from a **recessive gene** (it is **not albinism**; eyes are blue). **CZA** is a statutory body under the **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972**.

Himalayan MTB Challenge: 658 km across 10 districts to boost adventure tourism

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

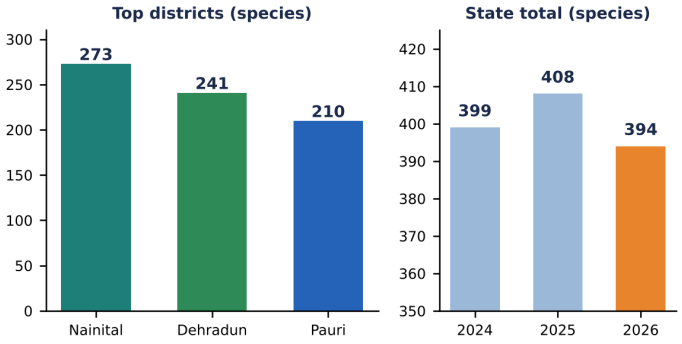
Syllabus Linkage	Tourism policy; **adventure & winter tourism**; Prelims: route and venues.
Context	The **Ultimate Uttarakhand Himalayan MTB Challenge 2026** is under way; CM Dhami addressed riders virtually at **Mukteshwar (Nainital)** on **20 Nov**.
Key Facts	● **658 km** route across **10 districts**; **~80 cyclists** from several states. ● Finish in **Mussoorie** on **26 Nov**. ● Folk showcase: **Rajula-Malushahi** ballad and **Chhapeli** dance; pitched as '**Vocal for Local**'.
Way Fwd	Build trail safety, **homestays** and rescue cover so off-season events spread tourism beyond the yatra months.
Concept	**Rajula-Malushahi** is a Kumaoni love ballad (**Malushahi** of the **Katyuri** line). **Chhapeli** is a Kumaoni couple dance.

Uttarakhand Bird Count 2026 records 394 species

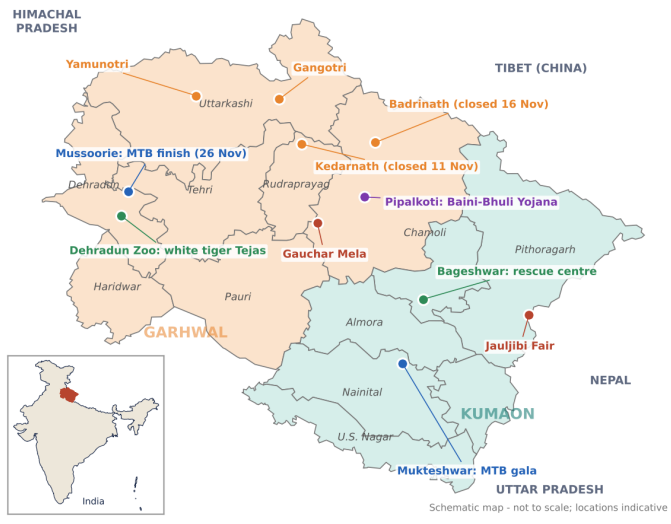
ENVIRONMENT UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Environment & Ecology — Uttarakhand)

Syllabus Linkage	Himalayan biodiversity; **citizen science**; protected areas of Uttarakhand; Prelims: counts, reserves, state bird.
Context	The two-day **Uttarakhand Bird Count (UBC-2026)**, backed by the **State Forest Department**, ended on **15 Nov** with **394 species** recorded across **all 13 districts**.
Key Facts	● **1,010 checklists**; **90+ individuals** and **50+ organisations** took part. ● District leaders: **Nainital 273**, **Dehradun 241**, **Pauri Garhwal 210** species. ● Earlier counts: **408 (2025)** and **399 (2024)**; observer effort affects totals. ● **Naina Devi Himalayan Bird Conservation Reserve** (Pangot route) hosts **350+** species.
Way Fwd	Make the count a **standardised annual protocol** and feed the data into **eco-sensitive zone** and tourism planning.
Concept	State bird: **Himalayan Monal**. **Asan Conservation Reserve** (Dehradun) became Uttarakhand's **first Ramsar site** in **2020**.

Uttarakhand Bird Count 2026: 394 species, 13 districts



Uttarakhand: today's news locations



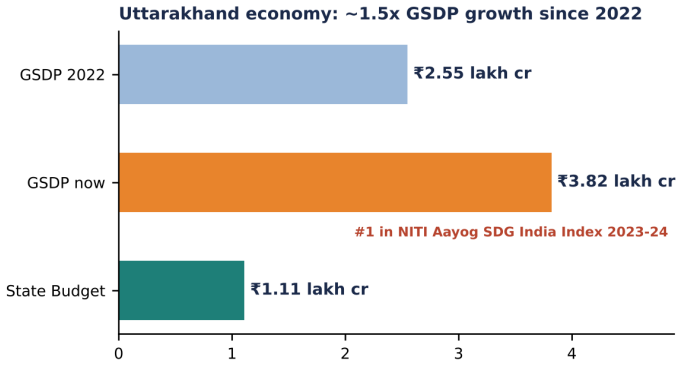
SECTION B — DATA POINT OF THE DAY

Uttarakhand GSDP (current prices)

₹3.82 lakh crore

Up from about **₹2.55 lakh crore in 2022** (~**1.5x**); state budget now exceeds **₹1.11 lakh crore**; Uttarakhand ranked **#1 in the NITI Aayog SDG India Index 2023-24**.

Exam angle: GSDP = value of all final goods & services produced within the state; **per capita income** = GSDP ÷ population. Uttarakhand's economy leans on **tertiary sector** (tourism, services) and **industry** (pharma, Haridwar-Pantnagar SIIDCUL estates).



SECTION C — NATIONAL & WORLD: Sci-Tech • Defence • IR • Disaster • Economy

India's first indigenous H5N1 bird-flu vaccine for poultry

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

Syllabus Linkage	Biotechnology; animal health; **One Health**; Prelims: institute, strain, vaccine type.
Context	Union Agriculture Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** dedicates India's **first indigenous inactivated H5N1 chicken vaccine** to the nation at **ICAR-NIHSAD, Bhopal**, on **20 Nov**.
Key Facts	● Targets **highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1**, **clade 2.3.2.1a**. ● Developed by **ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases**, Bhopal. ● India has seen **500+ H5N1/H5N8 outbreaks** since **2006**. ● Aims to reduce **mass culling** losses for poultry farmers.
Way Fwd	Use vaccination with **surveillance and biosecurity**, keep **DIVA** testing so trade is not hit, and link to **One Health** plans.
Concept	**Inactivated vaccine**: killed virus, safe but may need boosters. **One Health** links human, animal and environmental health.

New Delhi hosts first SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum (20-22 Nov)

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

Syllabus Linkage	Regional groupings; **soft power and cultural diplomacy**; Prelims: SCO members, HQ, India's entry.
Context	India hosts the **first SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum** in **New Delhi** from **20 to 22 Nov**, with **15 countries** confirmed, to build ties through **shared civilisational heritage**.
Key Facts	● Four focus areas: **cultural expression**, **art & architecture**, **language & literature**, **religious & philosophical traditions**. ● Exhibitions and cultural performances; all SCO members, incl. **Pakistan**, invited. ● Countries confirmed include **China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Iran, Belarus, Nepal** and **Saudi Arabia**. ● Builds on India's push for **people-to-people** links within SCO.
Way Fwd	Use the forum for **Buddhist and Silk Route heritage** links, student exchanges and joint digitisation of manuscripts.
Concept	**SCO**: set up **2001** (Shanghai); **10 members** (Iran **2023**, Belarus **2024**); India a member since **2017**; Secretariat **Beijing**, **RATS** in **Tashkent**.

₹1,976.40 crore deal to upgrade Navy's Barak missile shield

DEFENCE UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Security & IR)

Syllabus Linkage	Defence procurement; **India-Israel ties**; naval air defence; Prelims: deal value, firm, system type.
Context	The **Ministry of Defence** signed a **₹1,976.40 crore** contract with **Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)** on **18 Nov** in New Delhi to upgrade the **Barak point-defence missile system** on Navy warships.
Key Facts	● Covers **obsolescence management**, hardware-software overhaul and **better anti-air defence**. ● Signed under the **Other Capital Procurement Procedure**. ● Navy acquired **Barak-1** around **2000**; **VL-SRSAM** (DRDO) is the planned indigenous successor. ● Different from **Barak-8 / MRSAM**, which was jointly developed by **DRDO and IAI**.
Way Fwd	Upgrade now while speeding up **VL-SRSAM** to cut import dependence under **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**.
Concept	**Point defence** protects a ship against close-in **anti-ship missiles** and aircraft. **DAP 2020** gives top priority to **Buy (Indian-IDDM)**.

Cyclone Akvan nears Andhra coast; Odisha on alert

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

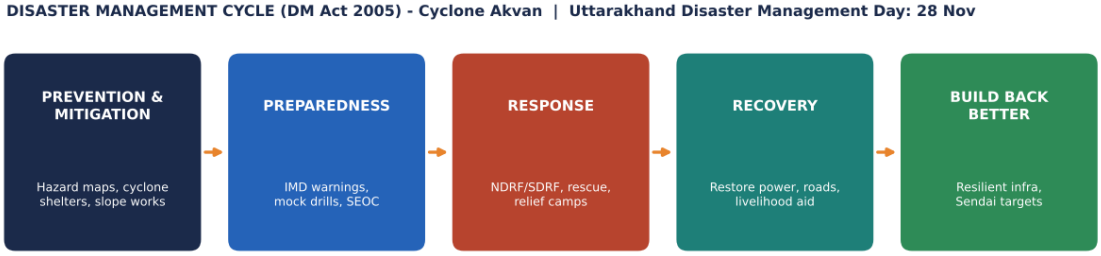
Syllabus Linkage	Tropical cyclones; **IMD classification**; disaster management; Prelims: naming, categories.
Context	**Severe Cyclonic Storm Akvan** over the **Bay of Bengal** was forecast to cross the **Andhra Pradesh-Yanam coast** between **Nellore and Visakhapatnam** around **20 Nov**.
Key Facts	● Forecast winds **100-110 km/h**, gusting to **120 km/h**; IMD **red warning** issued. ● Odisha mapped **1,902 vulnerable spots** and readied **3,329 cyclone shelters**. ● Railways cancelled **10 trains**; beach tourism suspended. ● Uttarakhand observes **Disaster Management Day on 28 Nov** (Silkyara rescue of **41 workers**, 2023).
Way Fwd	Stick to **zero-casualty** planning: early warning, timely evacuation, and quick restoration of power and roads.
Concept	IMD scale: **CS 62-88**, **SCS 89-117**, **VSCS 118-166 km/h**. Names come from the **WMO/ESCAP Panel** list of **13 countries**.

PM SVANidhi Samman Awards 2026 honour street-vendor support

ECONOMY UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Economy & Social Justice)

Syllabus Linkage	Financial inclusion; **urban informal sector**; Prelims: scheme ministry, loan tranches.
Context	Union Minister **Manohar Lal** presents **52 awards** and **5 special honours** to states, ULBs and institutions under **PM SVANidhi** in **New Delhi** on **20 Nov**.
Key Facts	● Scheme by **MoHUA**, launched **June 2020** for street vendors after COVID-19. ● Restructured: collateral-free loans of **₹15,000 / ₹25,000 / ₹50,000** in **3 tranches**. ● Lending period extended to **31 March 2030**; **UPI-linked RuPay credit card** added. ● Rewards **digital transactions** with cashback.
Way Fwd	Pair credit with **vending zones** under the **Street Vendors Act, 2014** and social-security links.
Concept	**Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014** requires a **Town Vending Committee** in every ULB.





SECTION D — PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

CM Announcements	**₹17.75 crore** sanctioned under CM announcements (19 Nov); biggest: **₹6.14 crore** for **20 km** internal roads in **Tanakpur-Banbasa**.
Hill Horticulture	**Neeraj Bhatt** of **Gopeshwar** grows **saffron by aeroponics**; unit backed under **PMFME** (**35%** central + **25%** state subsidy).
Disaster Mgmt	Uttarakhand **Disaster Management Day: 28 Nov**; programmes from **25-28 Nov**.
Culture / Films	**57th IFFI**, Goa, **20-28 Nov**; theme '**Stories Without Borders**'.
Health R&D	**ICMR** has completed **100 technology transfer agreements** for home-grown medical innovations.
Sports	**D Gukesh** defends his world chess title against **Javokhir Sindarov** (Uzbekistan) from **24 Nov** in **Geneva**.

SECTION E — PRACTICE CORNER (UKPSC PATTERN)

Q1. Consider the following pairs (Char Dham shrine — winter seat):
1. Kedarnath — Omkareshwar Temple, Ukhimath
2. Yamunotri — Kharsali
3. Gangotri — Mukhba

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

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

Answer: (c) — All three are correct. Kedarnath's deity winters at **Omkareshwar Temple, Ukhimath**, Yamunotri's at **Kharsali** and Gangotri's at **Mukhba**; Badrinath's puja moves to **Pandukeshwar/Jyotirmath**.

Q2. With reference to Igas Bagwal, consider the following statements:
1. It is celebrated eleven days after Diwali, on Devuthani Ekadashi.
2. Swinging of flaming 'bhailo' torches is a key ritual.
3. It is mainly a festival of the Terai region of Udham Singh Nagar.

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: (a) — Igas (**Budhi Diwali**) falls **11 days after Diwali** and features **bhailo** torches. It is a hill festival, mainly of **Garhwal**, not the Terai, so statement 3 is wrong.

MAINS PRACTICE

Pilgrimage tourism is the backbone of Uttarakhand's hill economy but also a source of ecological stress. In the light of the record Char Dham Yatra 2026, suggest a sustainable model for pilgrimage management. (200 words)

Hint: Cite **65 lakh+** pilgrims; discuss **carrying capacity**, crowd/traffic control, **GLOF/landslide** risk, waste on fragile slopes; suggest registration caps, ropeways, **winter Char Dham** yatra, homestays and local employment to curb **palayan**.

ONE-LINE REVISION: Igas = 11 days after Diwali | Char Dham 2026 = 65 lakh+ | Baini-Bhuli = 5 lakh+ women | UBC-2026 = 394 species | H5N1 vaccine = ICAR-NIHSAD Bhopal | SCO forum = 20-22 Nov | Barak deal = ₹1,976.40 cr

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