

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Char Dham 1st phase: record 51.06 lakh pilgrims; 2nd phase on since 15 Sep
- Uttarakhand Budget 2026-27: ₹1,11,703 crore on the GYAN model
- UCC Amendment 2026 tightens marriage, divorce & live-in rules
- Uttarakhand HC pulls up officials over Nainital water contamination
- GEP: Uttarakhand is India's first state to green-account its ecology
- Moody's raises India's FY27 GDP growth forecast to 7%
- SLINEX-26 India-Sri Lanka naval exercise off Visakhapatnam
- India-Russia sign AI & cybersecurity technology agreements
- First soil-carbon payments to 2,550 farmers in Punjab & Haryana
- EAM's Bhutan visit: ₹4,000 crore Line of Credit for energy

SECTION A • UTTARAKHAND SPECIAL

Char Dham Yatra 2026: Record First Phase, Second Phase Under Way

UTTARAKHAND	UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Geography & Governance — Uttarakhand)
Syllabus Linkage	Uttarakhand geography: pilgrimage circuits & river systems; governance of religious tourism; disaster-prone Himalayan terrain. Prelims: locations of the four dhams and their rivers.
Context	The Char Dham Yatra's first phase ended as the biggest ever, and the post-monsoon second phase is now on. The CM reviewed arrangements and offered prayers at Badrinath on 20 September 2026.
Key Facts	● First phase drew a record 51.06 lakh (50,56,160) pilgrims (till 14-15 Sep 2026). ● Dham-wise: Badrinath 17.36 lakh, Kedarnath 14.99 lakh, Gangotri 7.90 lakh, Yamunotri 7.08 lakh, Hemkund Sahib 3.23 lakh. ● Second phase on since 15 September 2026; total footfall expected to cross 55 lakh. ● Focus on CCTV coverage, traffic & crowd management and transparency in counting of offerings.
Way Fwd	Move to carrying-capacity based registration and eco-sensitive crowd caps to protect fragile shrine zones.
Concept	Char Dham = Yamunotri (Yamuna), Gangotri (Bhagirathi), Kedarnath (Mandakini), Badrinath (Alaknanda) ; linked by the Panch Prayag confluences of the Alaknanda.

UCC Uttarakhand: Amendment 2026 Streamlines Rules & Portal

POLITY	UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity, Governance & Social Justice)
Syllabus Linkage	Constitution & DPSP (Art. 44); social justice; state legislation. Prelims: UCC provisions, tribal exemption (Art. 342), live-in registration.
Context	Uttarakhand was the first state in independent India to enforce a Uniform Civil Code (from 27 Jan 2025). An Amendment Ordinance in 2026 simplified rules and the online registration system.
Key Facts	● Compulsory marriage registration and mandatory live-in relationship registration. ● Uniform grounds for divorce and equal inheritance/succession rights across communities. ● Bans polygamy, halala, iddat and sets a uniform marriage age. ● Scheduled Tribes are exempted (protected under Article 342); services via the ucc.uk.gov.in portal.
Way Fwd	Sustained public awareness and strong data-privacy safeguards for the registration database.
Concept	Article 44 (DPSP) directs the State to secure a UCC; personal law falls in the Concurrent List , allowing state action.

High Court Pulls Up Officials Over Nainital Water Contamination

POLITY	UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity, Governance & Public Health)
Syllabus Linkage	Judiciary & judicial activism; governance & service delivery; Right to Life (Art. 21). Prelims: PIL, High Court powers.
Context	The state High Court sharply criticised the administration over drinking-water contamination near Nainital, calling the situation "epidemic-like" and ordering urgent remedial steps.
Key Facts	● 2 deaths and 250+ people fell ill across villages such as Jeolikote, Ganja and Virbhathi. ● Cause: sewage water mixing with a drinking-water source near an old garbage pit. ● Court ordered a water-testing lab for the Kumaon region and sampling of 20-25 sources within 6 days. ● Released ₹4 lakh for ELISA/medical tests; DM to personally oversee relief and tanker supply.
Way Fwd	Protect water sources, run regular potability testing and fix accountability for civic lapses.
Concept	Access to clean water flows from the Right to Life (Article 21) ; courts use PIL and continuing mandamus to enforce it.

Gross Environment Product (GEP): Uttarakhand's Green Accounting Model

ENVIRONMENT	UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Environment & Economy — Uttarakhand)
Syllabus Linkage	Environment & sustainable development; green economy; state initiatives. Prelims: GEP, ecosystem services, natural capital.
Context	Uttarakhand remains India's first state to measure a Gross Environment Product — an ecological counterpart to GDP that puts a value on nature's services.
Key Facts	● GEP values the health of air, water, soil and forests as a growth indicator. ● It complements GDP with green accounting / natural-capital accounting. ● The concept was championed by environmentalist Anil Prakash Joshi (HESCO). ● Aligns with SDGs and the state's push for a low-carbon, green economy.
Way Fwd	Publish an annual GEP index and link it to Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) for hill communities.
Concept	Green GDP / Natural Capital Accounting ; ecosystem services span provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting functions.

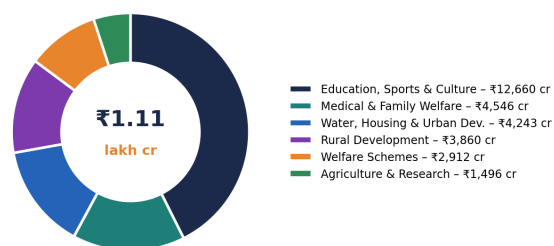
Uttarakhand Budget 2026-27: ₹1.11 Lakh Crore on the GYAN Model

ECONOMY	UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Economy of Uttarakhand)
Syllabus Linkage	State finances & budgeting; fiscal policy; welfare economics. Prelims: capital vs revenue expenditure, fiscal deficit, GSDP.
Context	The state's FY 2026-27 Budget was built around the GYAN model, prioritising the poor, youth, farmers and women, with a strong capital-expenditure push.
Key Facts	● Total size ₹1,11,703 crore (about 10% higher than the previous year). ● Capital expenditure ₹46,713.77 crore; fiscal deficit ₹12,579.70 crore (below 3% of GSDP). ● Gender budget ₹19,692 crore; ₹1,027 crore for Kumbh 2027 (Haridwar). ● ₹1,050 crore for PMGSY rural roads; ₹2,502 crore for PWD roads & bridges.
Way Fwd	Sharpen revenue mobilisation and ensure quality, time-bound capital spending in hill districts.
Concept	GYAN = Gareeb, Yuva, Annadata, Nari ; the FRBM framework caps fiscal deficit at 3% of GSDP .

Himalayan Disaster Management & GLOF Risk in Focus

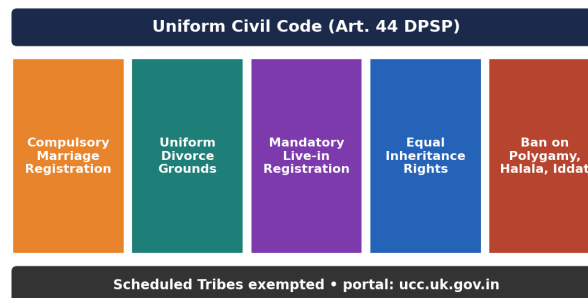
ENVIRONMENT	UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Geography & Disaster Management — Uttarakhand)
Syllabus Linkage	Physical geography of the Himalaya; disaster management; climate change. Prelims: seismic zones, GLOF, DM Act institutions.
Context	Fresh monsoon cloudbursts and landslides have again exposed Uttarakhand's fragility, sharpening focus on glacial-lake outburst and seismic risks.
Key Facts	● The state lies in seismic Zones IV and V — high earthquake risk. ● Recurrent cloudbursts, landslides and flash floods during the monsoon. ● GLOF danger from expanding glacial lakes — recall 2021 Chamoli and 2013 Kedarnath disasters. ● Response via USDMA/SDMA and rapid SDRF deployment with early-warning systems.
Way Fwd	Continuous glacial-lake monitoring, slope stabilisation and eco-sensitive limits on hill construction.
Concept	Disaster Management Act, 2005: NDMA → SDMA (CM as chair) → DDMA (DM as chair) ; GLOF = Glacial Lake Outburst Flood.

Uttarakhand Budget 2026-27 — Key Allocations



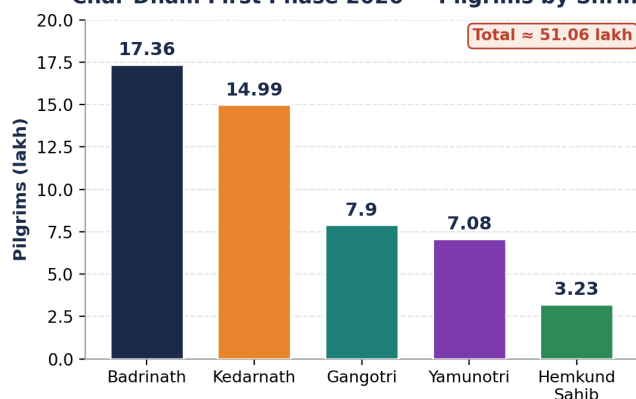
► Donut chart of Uttarakhand Budget 2026-27 major sector allocations led by education and health.

UCC Uttarakhand — Five Pillars



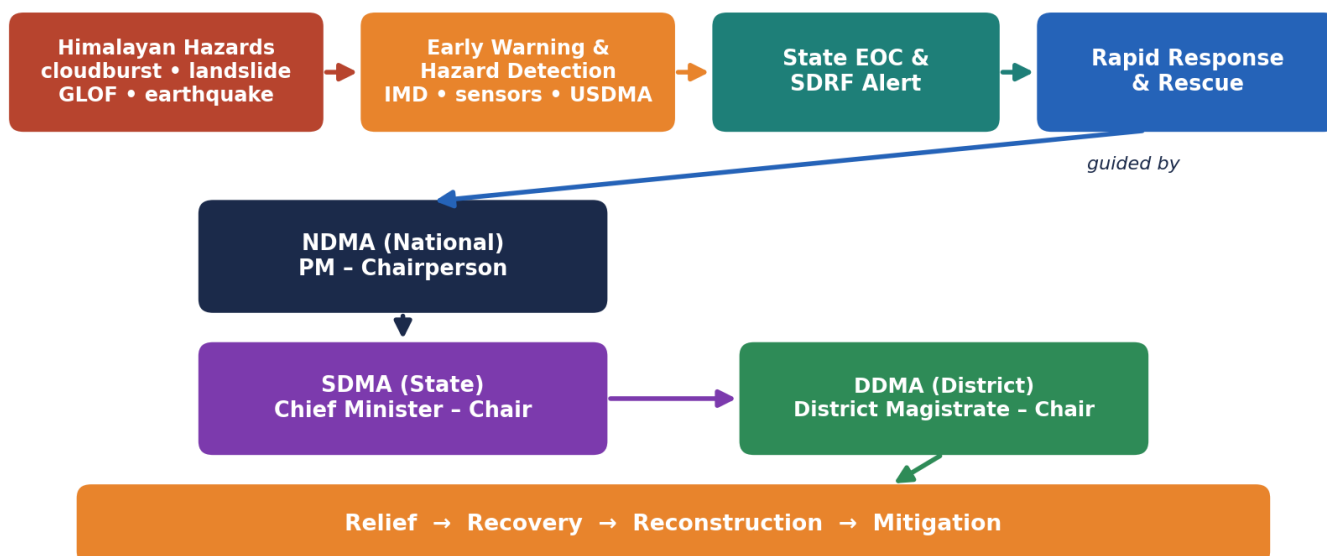
► Five-pillar diagram of UCC provisions: marriage registration, divorce uniformity, live-in registration, equal inheritance, banned practices.

Char Dham First Phase 2026 — Pilgrims by Shrine



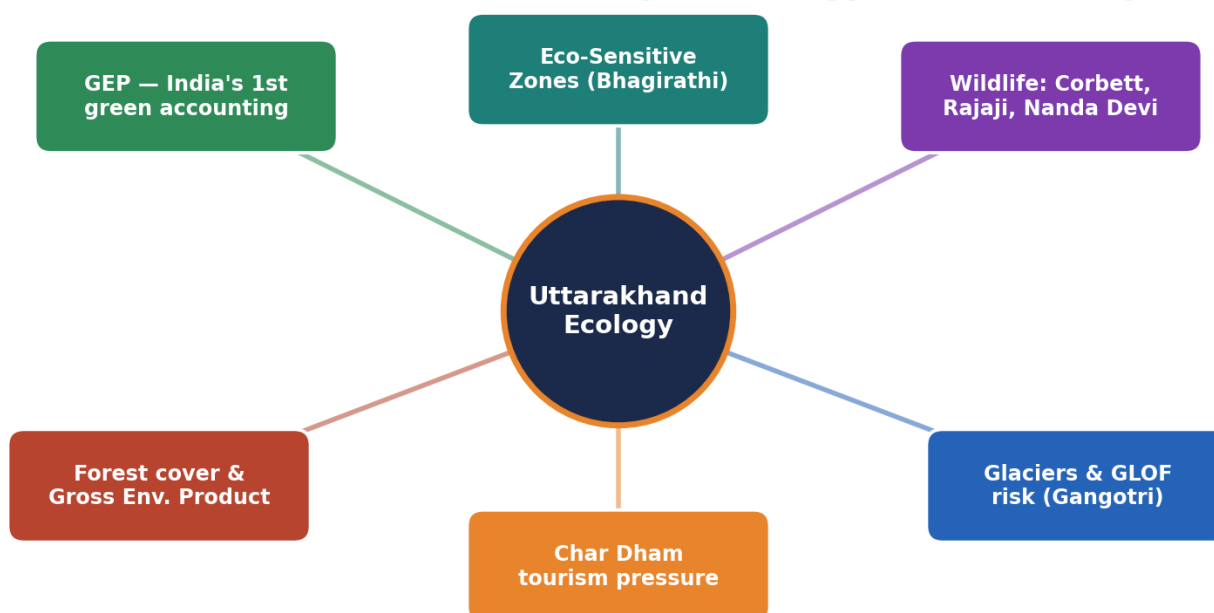
► Bar chart of first-phase Char Dham pilgrims by shrine, Badrinath highest at 17.36 lakh.

Uttarakhand Disaster Management Chain (DM Act, 2005)



► Flowchart of Uttarakhand's disaster-management chain from hazard detection to NDMA-SDMA-DDMA response and recovery.

Uttarakhand Green & Himalayan Ecology — Theme Map



► Mind-map of Uttarakhand's green and ecology themes: GEP, eco-sensitive zones, wildlife parks, glaciers and Char Dham tourism.

SECTION B • DATA POINT OF THE DAY

DATA POINT OF THE DAY	India's FY27 GDP growth forecast (Moody's, Sep 2026) 7.0%	Raised from 6.0% ; Q1 FY27 growth 7.8% , H1 CY2026 8.2% , projected inflation about 4.8% .
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SECTION C • NATIONAL & WORLD

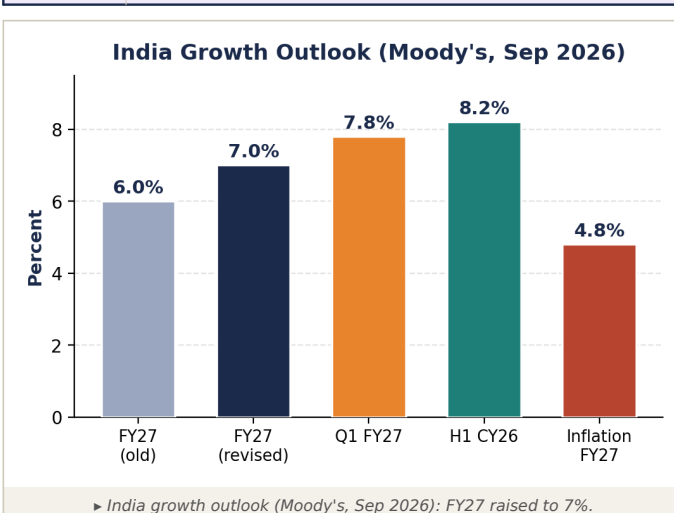
SLINEX-26: India-Sri Lanka Naval Exercise off Visakhapatnam	
DEFENCE	UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Security & International Relations)
Syllabus Linkage	India's neighbourhood & maritime security; bilateral exercises. Prelims: SLINEX, participating ships, Indian Ocean Region.
Context	The 13th edition of the India-Sri Lanka naval exercise SLINEX-26 was held off Visakhapatnam to boost maritime interoperability.
Key Facts	● Held 17-21 September 2026 off Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh). ● India fielded INS Kavaratti and INS Jyoti; Sri Lanka sent SLNS Sindurala. ● Comprised harbour and sea phases focused on interoperability. ● Reinforces maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
Way Fwd	Deepen cooperation under the SAGAR/MAHASAGAR vision for a secure, rules-based IOR.
Concept	SLINEX has run since 2005 ; bilateral naval drills build trust and interoperability among navies.

EAM's Bhutan Visit: ₹4,000 Crore Line of Credit for Energy	
IR	UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (International Relations)
Syllabus Linkage	India's neighbourhood policy; development diplomacy. Prelims: Line of Credit, Neighbourhood First, India-Bhutan ties.
Context	The External Affairs Minister visited Bhutan in mid-September 2026, launching projects and extending a fresh concessional credit line.
Key Facts	● Visit held 16-18 September 2026. ● Five development projects launched during the trip. ● A ₹4,000 crore concessional Line of Credit extended for the energy sector. ● Reaffirms deep hydropower and development cooperation.
Way Fwd	Sustain the Neighbourhood First push via hydropower, connectivity and people-to-people ties.
Concept	A Line of Credit (LoC) is a soft loan for development projects; Neighbourhood First anchors India's regional diplomacy.

India-Russia Sign AI & Cybersecurity Technology Pacts	
SCI-TECH	UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Science-Tech & International Relations)
Syllabus Linkage	Science & technology in bilateral ties; emerging tech. Prelims: India-Russia S&T cooperation, AI/cyber CoE.
Context	India and Russia inked four strategic technology agreements at a major industrial expo held in New Delhi in September 2026.
Key Facts	● Four strategic agreements signed at the industrial expo (9-11 Sep 2026, New Delhi). ● A joint Centre of Excellence in AI & cybersecurity. ● Pacts on investment promotion and healthcare collaboration. ● A joint venture in interactive technologies.
Way Fwd	Convert MoUs into technology transfer, R&D and indigenous manufacturing.
Concept	India-Russia enjoy a Special & Privileged Strategic Partnership ; S&T cooperation is a key pillar.

Indigenous KAL Long-Endurance Drone Tested at Pokhran	
DEFENCE	UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Defence & Science-Tech)
Syllabus Linkage	Defence indigenisation; emerging tech in security. Prelims: UAV classes, Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence.
Context	An indigenous long-endurance drone was successfully tested at the Pokhran field-firing range in Rajasthan, advancing self-reliance in defence.
Key Facts	● Range about 1,000 km with 7-8 hours endurance. ● Payload capacity 50 kg; service ceiling around 5,000 m. ● Developed by an Indian defence startup — boosts Atmanirbhar Bharat. ● Tested at the Pokhran Field-Firing Range (Rajasthan).
Way Fwd	Scale indigenous MALE/HALE UAVs for surveillance and precision roles.
Concept	UAV classes span mini, tactical, MALE and HALE by range/altitude; drones are force-multipliers in modern warfare.

First Soil-Carbon Payments to Farmers in Punjab & Haryana	
ENVIRONMENT	UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Environment & Agriculture)
Syllabus Linkage	Climate change & carbon markets; sustainable agriculture. Prelims: carbon credits, soil organic carbon, voluntary carbon market.
Context	India recorded its first farm-level soil-carbon payments, rewarding farmers for practices that lock carbon in the soil.
Key Facts	● 2,550 smallholder farmers received ₹2.9 crore in payments. ● Programme covered about 30,000 acres and generated 50,000+ verified carbon credits. ● Individual payouts ranged ₹3,000 to ₹15,000 per farmer. ● Rewards regenerative practices that raise soil organic carbon.
Way Fwd	Scale carbon markets with robust MRV (measurement, reporting, verification) standards.
Concept	Carbon credits monetise avoided/removed emissions; the voluntary carbon market funds climate-friendly farming.



Soil-Carbon Programme (Punjab & Haryana) — First Farm-Level Payments



► Stat-tile row of the soil-carbon programme: 2,550 farmers, Rs 2.9 crore, 30,000 acres, 50,000+ credits.

SECTION D • PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

Q1. A new wild cat, **Leopardus tilcayo**, was described from Bolivia's Yungas cloud forest (**17 Sep 2026**) — the first new living feline in over a century.

Q3. World Bamboo Day is observed on **18 September**.

Q5. India will host the **11th Asian Wushu Championships in 2028** (~500 athletes, 42 nations).

Q2. The Marathi film '**Gondhal**' is India's official entry for the **Oscars 2027** (Best International Feature Film).

Q4. Uttarakhand set a record by receiving **18 GI tags in a single day** — the most by any state.

Q6. Uttarakhand's **Valley of Flowers & Nanda Devi** form a UNESCO site; the state also has **Jim Corbett** (India's oldest NP, 1936) and **Rajaji** tiger reserves.

SECTION E • PRACTICE CORNER

Q1. With reference to the Char Dham of Uttarakhand, consider the following pairs (Dham : River): 1. Yamunotri - Yamuna; 2. Gangotri - Alaknanda; 3. Kedarnath - Mandakini; 4. Badrinath - Bhagirathi. How many pairs are correctly matched?

- (A) Only one pair
- (B) Only two pairs
- (C) Only three pairs
- (D) All four pairs

Ans: (B). Pairs 1 (Yamunotri-Yamuna) and 3 (Kedarnath-Mandakini) are correct. Gangotri is the source of the Bhagirathi (Ganga), not the Alaknanda; Badrinath lies on the Alaknanda, not the Bhagirathi. Hence only two pairs match.

Q2. Consider the following statements about Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code (UCC): 1. Uttarakhand is the first state in independent India to implement a UCC. 2. The UCC makes registration of live-in relationships mandatory. 3. Scheduled Tribes are exempted from its provisions. Which of the statements are correct?

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

Ans: (D). All three are correct. Uttarakhand became the first state (post-independence) to enforce a UCC (from 27 Jan 2025); it mandates registration of live-in relationships and marriages; and Scheduled Tribes are exempted, consistent with constitutional protections under Article 342.

Mains Practice: Uttarakhand's fragile Himalayan ecology is increasingly stressed by mass pilgrimage tourism and climate-driven disasters. Critically examine these challenges and suggest a sustainable, carrying-capacity based model for religious tourism in the state. (250 words)

Hint: Link record Char Dham footfall to GLOF/cloudburst risk and eco-sensitive zones; weave in GEP, disaster-management institutions (DM Act 2005) and carrying-capacity based registration as the sustainable model.

★ **ONE-LINE REVISION:** Char Dham 1st phase 51.06 lakh • UK Budget ₹1,11,703 cr (GYAN) • UCC Amendment 2026 • GEP = India's 1st state • SLINEX-26 • Moody's India FY27 GDP 7%.

Compiled & simplified by the StudyForGS.com Research Team

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