

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Char Dham 2026 nears a record: **6.6 cr** registrations, **5.05 cr** darshan.
- CM orders time-bound justice in **SC/ST atrocity** cases.
- HC calls Nainital water crisis '**epidemic-like**' — **2 deaths**, **250+** ill.
- GEP**: Uttarakhand's green accounting of air, water, forest, soil.
- UCC** Amendment Ordinance 2026 deepens the state's rollout.
- Monsoon blocked **100+ roads**; disaster machinery on alert.
- India-NZ FTA** to enter into force from **20 Oct 2026**.
- RBI absorbs **₹71,971 cr** via **VRRR** to manage liquidity.
- GDP revamp: new base year **2022-23**, **double deflation**.
- 55 of 100** fastest-growing cities are Indian (Oxford 2026).

SECTION A — UTTARAKHAND SPECIAL

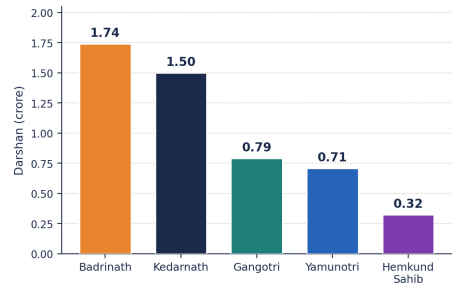
Char Dham Yatra 2026 Nears 5-Crore Darshan; State Reviews Safety

UTTARAKHAND

UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Geography & Governance — Uttarakhand)

Syllabus Linkage	Uttarakhand geography & tourism; pilgrimage/crowd management; state governance (UKPSC Prelims UK-specific + GS Mains).
Context	The state government reviewed Char Dham Yatra 2026 arrangements, with the pilgrimage nearing a record turnout and safety on Himalayan routes made the top priority.
Key Facts	6.607 crore (66.07 million) pilgrims registered by 14 September 2026; 5.056 crore darshan completed. - Shrine-wise darshan: Badrinath 1.74 cr, Kedarnath 1.50 cr, Gangotri 78.9 lakh, Yamunotri 70.8 lakh, Hemkund Sahib 32.2 lakh. - High-risk stretches flagged: Chirbasa, Bhairav Glacier, Syanachatti; movement of pilgrims, horses and mules regulated. - Second horse-parking at Yamunotri, route widening for Yamunotri & Gangotri, and better mobile coverage ordered.
Way Fwd	Real-time, weather-linked crowd caps and carrying-capacity limits can balance faith tourism with fragile-Himalaya safety.
Concept	Char Dham = Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, Badrinath (plus Hemkund Sahib); spread across Uttarkashi, Rudraprayag & Chamoli districts in the Garhwal Himalayas.

Char Dham 2026 — Darshan by Shrine (crore)



CM Orders Time-Bound Justice in SC/ST Atrocity Cases

SOCIETY

UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity, Governance & Social Justice)

Syllabus Linkage	Social justice & vulnerable sections; state governance & law and order; constitutional safeguards (UKPSC GS — Polity/Society).
Context	At a state-level vigilance committee meeting on 22 September 2026, the CM directed speedy, victim-centric disposal of cases under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.
Key Facts	- Cases pending since 2024 to be reviewed and disposed on priority with fixed timelines. Police, administration and prosecution told to coordinate on serious and longstanding cases. - Adequate special public prosecutors and continuous monitoring of special courts ordered. - Focus on victims getting justice, security and dignity in a time-bound manner.
Way Fwd	District-level monitoring dashboards and victim-witness protection can cut delays and improve conviction rates.
Concept	SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 — a special law providing Special/Exclusive Special Courts ; complements Art. 17 (abolition of untouchability) and Art. 15(4) .

High Court Slams Nainital Over 'Epidemic-Like' Water Contamination

POLITY

UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity & Governance)

Syllabus Linkage	Judiciary & PIL; Right to Life; public health governance in hill towns (UKPSC GS — Polity + Uttarakhand administration).
Context	The Uttarakhand High Court (Nainital) came down on the district administration after contaminated drinking water caused deaths and mass illness across several Nainital villages.
Key Facts	2 deaths and 250+ people sickened across Jeolikote, Ganja, Virbhatti, Chhina, Beluakhan, Sariyatal (8 Sept 2026). - The bench called it 'epidemic-like', blaming unrepaired sewer and drinking-water pipelines. DM to personally monitor relief and clean-water tankers; a sewer-leak helpline ordered. - Water-testing lab for Kumaon to be fast-tracked; 20-25 sources sampled in 6 days; ₹4 lakh released for medical testing.
Way Fwd	Piped-water source protection, routine potability testing and quick-response cells can prevent water-borne outbreaks in hill towns.
Concept	The Right to clean water flows from Art. 21 (Right to Life) ; PIL and judicial activism let High Courts (Art. 226) enforce civic duties.

Gross Environment Product: Uttarakhand's Green-Accounting Push

ENVIRONMENT

UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Environment & Economy — Uttarakhand)

Syllabus Linkage	Environmental economics & green accounting; Himalayan ecology; state innovations (UKPSC GS — Environment + Uttarakhand economy).
Context	Uttarakhand is India's first state to value its natural capital through a Gross Environment Product (GEP) index, complementing GDP with ecological worth.
Key Facts	• GEP assigns monetary value to four resources: air, water, forest and soil. • It covers provisioning, regulating and cultural ecosystem services. • First-of-its-kind in India (launched 2024); the index used 2020-22 data showing a 0.9% rise in environmental output. • It distinguishes man-made assets (amrit sarovars) from natural processes such as rainfall.
Way Fwd	Linking GEP to ecosystem-service payments and Green Bonus demands can reward Himalayan states for conservation.
Concept	GEP ≈ Green GDP — it internalises environmental degradation and biodiversity loss; about 66% of Uttarakhand's area is under forest.

Uniform Civil Code: Uttarakhand's Rollout Deepens

POLITY

UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity & Governance)

Syllabus Linkage	DPSP & Article 44; personal-law reform vs. religious freedom; state legislation (UKPSC GS — Polity, Uttarakhand-specific).
Context	Uttarakhand remains the first state to enforce a Uniform Civil Code, with the UCC Amendment Ordinance, 2026 refining rules on registration and compliance.
Key Facts	• UCC enforced from 27 January 2025; Amendment Ordinance, 2026 notified to ease implementation. • Mandatory registration of marriage, divorce and live-in relationships; equal inheritance rights. • Polygamy, halala, iddat and child marriage prohibited; a uniform marriageable age set. • Backed by Article 44 (DPSP) — the goal of a Uniform Civil Code across India.
Way Fwd	Clear grievance-redress and privacy safeguards for live-in registration will shape UCC's acceptance and its replication elsewhere.
Concept	Art. 44 is a Directive Principle (non-justiciable); the tension between personal-law reform and religious freedom (Art. 25) is the core debate.

Monsoon Aftermath Tests Uttarakhand's Disaster Machinery

ENVIRONMENT

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

Syllabus Linkage	Himalayan hazards & disaster management; seismic zones; state disaster institutions (UKPSC GS — Geography + Uttarakhand).
Context	A punishing 2026 monsoon — landslides blocking 100+ roads and washed-out highways — has kept Uttarakhand's disaster-response system on alert as the season winds down.
Key Facts	• At peak, 100+ roads were blocked; a 30-metre stretch of the Karnaprayag-Nainisain road washed away in Chamoli. • Alerts spanned Dehradun & Bageshwar (orange) and 8+ hill districts (yellow). • The state is prone to landslides, cloudbursts, flash floods, GLOF and earthquakes (Seismic Zones IV & V). • USDMA coordinates response; SDRF and early-warning systems are deployed.
Way Fwd	Glacial-lake monitoring, slope stabilisation on Char Dham routes and strict eco-sensitive-zone norms can lower disaster risk.
Concept	GLOF = Glacial Lake Outburst Flood; Uttarakhand's fragile geology plus high seismicity make it a multi-hazard Himalayan state.

Gross Environment Product — India's First Green-Accounting Index (Uttarakhand)



Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code — Four Pillars (Article 44)



Uttarakhand Disaster-Management Cycle (USDMA)



Multi-hazard state: landslides • cloudbursts • flash floods • GLOF • earthquakes (Seismic Zones IV & V)

SECTION B — DATA POINT OF THE DAY

DATA POINT OF THE DAY

~₹1.11 lakh crore

Uttarakhand State Budget, FY 2026-27

The state cabinet cleared a record budget of about **₹1.11 lakh crore** for **2026-27**, prioritising infrastructure, hill-area development and disaster resilience (official state release).

SECTION C — NATIONAL & WORLD

India-New Zealand FTA to Take Effect from 20 October 2026

IR

UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (International Relations & Economy)

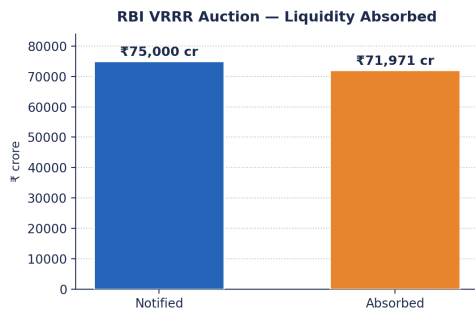
Syllabus Linkage	India & the world; trade agreements (FTA/BIT); economic diplomacy (UKPSC GS — Polity/IR & Economy).
Context	India and New Zealand's Free Trade Agreement will enter into force on 20 October 2026, opening markets and easing mobility for Indian professionals.
Key Facts	- NZ offers 100% duty-free access to Indian exports from day one; India opens 70.03% of tariff lines (~95% of bilateral trade). - A US\$20 billion New Zealand investment commitment over 15 years. 5,000 temporary work visas and 1,000 working-holiday visas a year for Indians; 3-year post-study work for STEM graduates. - India's arbitration base: Arbitration & Conciliation Act, 1996; recent BITs signed with UAE & Uzbekistan.
Way Fwd	Services mobility and mutual recognition of qualifications can make this FTA a template for India's deals with developed economies.
Concept	An FTA cuts tariffs and non-tariff barriers between partners; a BIT protects cross-border investment via ISDS dispute settlement.

RBI Drains ₹71,971 cr via VRRR to Manage Liquidity

ECONOMY

UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Economy — Banking & Monetary Policy)

Syllabus Linkage	Monetary policy & RBI tools; liquidity management; inflation control (UKPSC GS — Indian Economy).
Context	The RBI conducted a Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR) auction to absorb surplus banking-system liquidity and anchor short-term rates.
Key Facts	₹71,971 crore absorbed against a notified ₹75,000 crore. VRRR mops up liquidity, while VRR injects it — both are LAF tools. - Aim: control inflation, steady overnight/call rates, and curb excess credit growth. - The policy repo rate stays the RBI's key signalling rate.
Way Fwd	Fine-tuning VRRR tenors helps the RBI keep the operative rate aligned with the repo rate amid volatile liquidity.
Concept	LAF (Liquidity Adjustment Facility) : Repo injects, Reverse Repo/VRRR absorbs — part of the RBI's monetary-policy toolkit.



SC: No Penalty for Declining to Sing the National Song

POLITY

UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity — Fundamental Rights)

Syllabus Linkage	Fundamental Rights; freedom of conscience; National symbols & duties (UKPSC GS — Polity).
Context	The Supreme Court is examining whether compulsory singing of Vande Mataram at public functions can attract penal consequences, testing freedom of conscience.
Key Facts	- The Court's view: individuals cannot be penalised for declining to recite the National Song. - It is rooted in Art. 25 (freedom of conscience) and Art. 26. - Key precedent: Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala (1986) — the National Anthem case. Art. 51A(a) — the fundamental duty to respect the Constitution, National Flag and Anthem.
Way Fwd	Balancing constitutional patriotism with individual liberty keeps compulsory-expression rules within Art. 19 and 25 limits.
Concept	Vande Mataram is the National Song (Bankim Chandra Chatterjee), adopted 24 Jan 1950 — equal in status to Jana Gana Mana but with no codified singing rules.

55 Indian Cities Among the World's 100 Fastest-Growing

REPORT

UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Economy & Reports/Indices)

Syllabus Linkage	Reports & indices; urbanisation & economy (UKPSC GS — Economy, current-affairs indices).
Context	The Global Cities Index 2026 places a majority of the world's fastest-growing cities in India, underscoring its urban-economic momentum.
Key Facts	55 of 100 fastest-growing cities (by GDP growth) are Indian. Delhi ranked 268 overall on the broader global list. - The index weighs economics, human capital, quality of life, environment and governance. - It signals India's rising urban share of GDP and consumption.
Way Fwd	Investment in urban infrastructure, jobs and climate resilience can convert fast growth into higher liveability ranks.
Concept	A Global Cities Index benchmarks cities on multi-dimensional strength; rapid growth need not mean a high absolute rank (base effect).

GDP Data Revamp: New Base Year 2022-23, 'Double Deflation'

ECONOMY

UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Economy — National Income Accounting)

Syllabus Linkage	National income; GDP/GVA concepts; statistical systems (UKPSC GS — Indian Economy).
Context	India is overhauling its national accounts with a new base year and international best practices to improve the accuracy of GDP estimates.
Key Facts	- The base year shifts to 2022-23 (from 2011-12). Double deflation adopted for manufacturing — output and input prices adjusted separately. - Greater use of GST and administrative data for real-time coverage. - It aligns India's GVA/GDP estimates with global standards.
Way Fwd	Timely, granular data can sharpen fiscal and monetary decisions and reduce the size of later GDP revisions.
Concept	GDP = value of final goods/services; GVA = GDP + subsidies — product taxes; the base year fixes constant (real) prices.

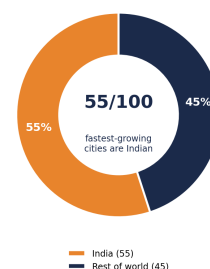
India-Mongolia 'Nomadic Elephant' Military Drill Begins

DEFENCE

UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Security & International Relations)

Syllabus Linkage	Defence exercises; internal & external security; India's bilateral ties (UKPSC GS — Security/IR).
Context	The 18th edition of the India-Mongolia joint military exercise Nomadic Elephant has commenced, deepening counter-insurgency and mountain-warfare cooperation.
Key Facts	- This is the 18th edition, which began 21 September 2026. - Focus: counter-terror and counter-insurgency operations in semi-mountainous, rural terrain. - Other India drills: Khaan Quest (Mongolia, multinational), Mitra Shakti (Sri Lanka), Garuda Shakti (Indonesia). - It boosts interoperability and strategic ties in the region.
Way Fwd	Regular high-altitude drills strengthen India's mountain-warfare readiness, relevant to its northern borders.
Concept	Bilateral exercises build interoperability ; Mongolia is a key 'third neighbour' in India's Act-East and Central-Asia outreach.

Global Cities Index 2026



India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement — Key Numbers

**20 Oct
2026**

Entry into
force

100%

NZ duty-free
access

US\$20 bn

NZ investment
(15 yrs)

5,000/yr

Work visas
(Indians)

70.03%

Indian tariff
lines opened

SECTION D — PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

- **NSWS** (National Single Window System) uses **PAN** as a **Single Business ID**; run by **DPIIT**; launched **22 Sept 2021**.
- **National Ayush Mission** received **₹6,406.99 crore** (2014-15 to 2025-26); it is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**.
- **Punjab** groundwater extraction is at **156.87%**; **115 of 153** units over-exploited — scheme '**Paani Bachao, Paisa Kamao**'.
- **Bab el-Mandeb Strait** links the **Red Sea** to the **Gulf of Aden**; **Perim Island** lies within it.
- **Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve** lies in the Southern **Western Ghats**, spanning **Kerala & Tamil Nadu**.
- Uttarakhand holds a record of **18 GI tags in a single day**; e.g., **Uttarakhand Pahari Toor Dal**.

SECTION E — PRACTICE CORNER

Q1. With reference to Uttarakhand's Gross Environment Product (GEP), consider: 1) It assigns a monetary value to air, water, forest and soil. 2) Uttarakhand was the first Indian state to launch it. 3) It is designed to replace GDP as the sole growth measure. Which are correct?

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

Ans: (a) GEP values four resources and Uttarakhand launched it first (2024); it complements — not replaces — GDP. Hence 1 and 2 only.

Q2. The Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR), often in the news, is used by the RBI primarily to:

- (a) Inject liquidity into the banking system
- (b) Absorb surplus liquidity from the banking system
- (c) Set the government's fiscal deficit target
- (d) Regulate foreign exchange reserves

Ans: (b) VRRR is an LAF tool to absorb/mop up surplus liquidity; repo injects liquidity. The RBI notified ₹75,000 cr and absorbed ₹71,971 cr.

Mains Practice Q. Uttarakhand's fragile Himalayan geography makes disaster management central to its governance. Discuss the state's key hazards and suggest a road map for building disaster resilience. (250 words)

Hint: Cover landslides, cloudbursts, flash floods, GLOF and seismic Zones IV/V; the role of USDMA/SDRF, early-warning systems, eco-sensitive-zone regulation, carrying-capacity limits on pilgrim routes, and slope stabilisation.

QUICK REVISION: Revise: Char Dham 5.05 cr darshan • GEP values air-water-forest-soil • UCC = Art. 44 • VRRR absorbs liquidity • India-NZ FTA from 20 Oct 2026 • GDP base year 2022-23.

Compiled & simplified by the StudyForGS.com Research Team

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