CURRENT AFFAIRS — 28 SEPTEMBER 2026

Monday, 28 September 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

- CM Dhami released **Uttarakhand STI Policy-2026** and **GEP technical report (2023-24 & 2024-25)**; ordered **carbon credits** to be built into policy.
- Forest Dept rescued **121 trekkers** from **Gomukh-Tapovan** (Gangotri National Park) after heavy snowfall.
- **136** people stranded near **Kalindi Pass** & **Auden's Col**; **3 helicopters** readied at **Harsil**.
- **Char Dham Yatra** resumed on **28 Sept** after a **two-day** weather suspension (red alerts in 4+ districts).
- Uttarakhand faces **~350 MW** peak-hour power deficit; UJVN hydro output fell from **1,094 MW to 912 MW**.
- **Bindukhatta** (Lalkuan, Nainital): **~15,000** marched for **revenue village** status under **FRA 2006**; CM to take it to cabinet.
- Panchayat by-polls: voting **12 Oct**, counting **14 Oct 2026**; model code in force in concerned blocks.
- OECD raised India's **FY27 GDP growth** forecast by **80 bps to 7.1%**; inflation seen at **4.7%**.
- India jumped **9 places to 31st** (score **4.42**) in **WEF TTDI 2026**; **Japan** tops **110** economies.
- **Tarang Shakti 2026** (2nd edition) operational phase began at **Jodhpur**; theme **"Power in Partnership"**.

SECTION A — UTTARAKHAND SPECIAL: Policy • Disaster • Ecology • State Economy

Uttarakhand releases GEP technical report & Science, Technology & Innovation Policy-2026

UTTARAKHAND UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Science-Tech & Environment — Uttarakhand)

Syllabus Linkage	Environment & ecology of Uttarakhand; state economy & green accounting; S&T policy. Prelims: **GEP**, **UCOST**, **HESCO**, first-state facts.
Context	On **26-27 Sept 2026**, **CM Pushkar Singh Dhami** released the **Uttarakhand Science, Technology & Innovation (STI) Policy-2026** and the **Gross Environment Product (GEP) technical reports for 2023-24 and 2024-25** in Dehradun, with **PM's Principal Scientific Adviser Prof. Ajay Sood** present.
Key Facts	■ GEP report values the state's natural capital — **forests, water, biodiversity, soil conservation** and **carbon sequestration** — in economic terms. ■ CM directed that **carbon-credit mechanisms** be built into the STI policy to reward conservation. ■ STI Policy-2026 focuses on **Himalaya-specific research**: **glacier science, disaster management, energy, water, agriculture, health**, plus **IPR** and start-ups. ■ Instruction to make **rainwater harvesting** low-cost and locally adapted for common citizens. ■ Nodal body: **UCOST** (Uttarakhand State Council for Science & Technology); partners incl. **IIT Roorkee**, **ANRF** and **HESCO**.
Way Fwd	Link GEP scores to **departmental budgets and district plans**, and use verified carbon credits to create green income for hill villages.
Concept	**GEP** = value of ecological goods/services, complementing **GDP**. Uttarakhand became the **first state** to launch a **GEP Index (July 2024)** built on **four pillars — Air, Water, Soil, Forest**. GEP idea was championed by **HESCO founder Dr Anil Prakash Joshi**.

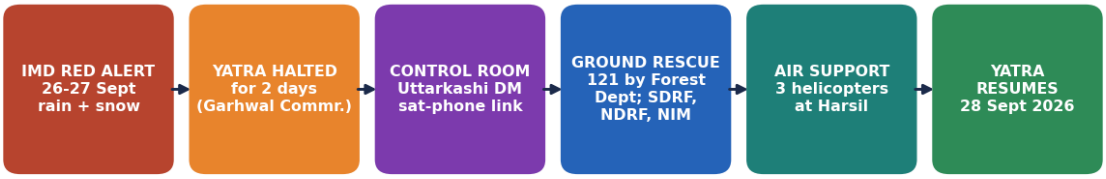
Early Himalayan snowfall: 121 trekkers rescued at Gomukh-Tapovan; Char Dham Yatra resumes

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

Syllabus Linkage	Disaster management in Uttarakhand; Himalayan geography, passes & protected areas; pilgrimage management. Prelims: **Kalindi Pass**, **Auden's Col**, **Gangotri NP**, **NIM Uttarkashi**.
Context	Heavy rain and unseasonal snowfall from **26 Sept** triggered **red alerts** across districts and a **two-day suspension** of the **Char Dham Yatra**. On **28 Sept**, the **Forest Department** brought **121 trekkers** safely from **Gomukh-Tapovan** to **Gangotri**, and the Yatra resumed.
Key Facts	■ **136** people stranded in high passes: **89** expedition members, **18** at **Kalindi Pass** base camp, **29** at **Auden's Col** base camp. ■ **3 helicopters** positioned at **Harsil**; agencies: **SDRF, NDRF, Police, Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM)**, Forest Dept. ■ Snowfall also reported at **Kedarnath, Gangotri** and **Hemkund Sahib**; **Garhwal Commissioner** ordered DMs to hold pilgrims at safe points. ■ Yatra began **19 April**; **2024** footfall exceeded **50.87 lakh** (**Badrinath 17.47 lakh**, highest).
Way Fwd	Make **weather-linked trekking permits**, satellite phones and **real-time registration** mandatory for high passes; extend **IMD impact-based forecasts** to trek routes.
Concept	**Kalindi Khal/Pass (~5,940 m)** links **Gangotri** with **Badrinath (Mana)**; **Auden's Col** joins **Gangotri** and **Bhilangna** valleys. **Gangotri National Park** (est. **1989**) lies in **Uttarkashi**. **SDRF Uttarakhand** was formed after the **2013 Kedarnath** disaster.



Uttarkashi snowfall response — Gomukh-Tapovan • Kalindi Pass • Auden's Col



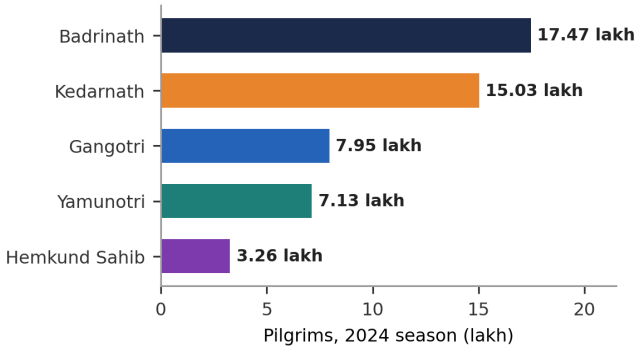
Stranded 136 = 89 expedition + 18 Kalindi Pass base camp + 29 Auden's Col base camp

Char Dham footfall snapshot: Badrinath & Kedarnath carry two-thirds of pilgrim load

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

Syllabus Linkage	Tourism economy of Uttarakhand; carrying capacity; pilgrimage circuits. Prelims: shrine-river-district matching.
Context	With the Yatra resuming after the snowfall halt, the **carrying capacity** debate returns: the last full-season official count (**2024**) shows how unevenly the pilgrim load falls on the four shrines, with a recent daily average of about **13,000** pilgrims.
Key Facts	■ **Badrinath 17.47 lakh**, **Kedarnath 15.03 lakh**, **Gangotri 7.95 lakh**, **Yamunotri 7.13 lakh** (2024). ■ **Hemkund Sahib** (Chamoli) recorded **3.26 lakh** visitors. ■ Yatra runs **April-November**; online **registration** is mandatory for all pilgrims. ■ Shrines: **Yamunotri & Gangotri — Uttarkashi**; **Kedarnath — Rudraprayag**; **Badrinath — Chamoli**.
Way Fwd	Enforce **shrine-wise daily caps**, promote **winter Char Dham** (seats at **Kharsali, Mukhba, Ukhimath, Joshimath/Pandukeshwar**) to spread the load.
Concept	**Rivers**: Yamunotri–**Yamuna**; Gangotri–**Bhagirathi**; Kedarnath–**Mandakini**; Badrinath–**Alaknanda**. **Carrying capacity** = maximum visitors a place can support without ecological or safety damage.

Char Dham footfall 2024 (total > 50.87 lakh)

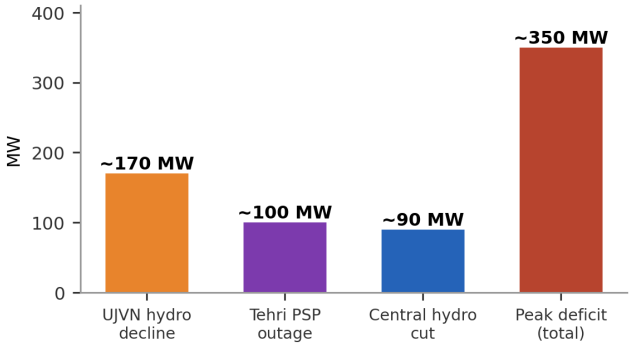


Uttarakhand's ~350 MW peak power deficit exposes hydro-dependence; NTPC-EDF pumped-storage JV

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

Syllabus Linkage	Energy resources & hydropower of Uttarakhand; infrastructure; national energy transition. Prelims: **UJVN, UPCL, Tehri PSP**, pumped storage.
Context	The state is facing a **~350 MW** shortfall during **peak hours**, with outages even in **Dehradun**. Nationally, **NTPC** and France's **EDF** signed a **50:50 JV (25 Sept)** for **pumped-storage and hydro** projects — the very technology whose outage is hurting the state.
Key Facts	■ **UJVN Ltd** hydro output down **~170 MW** year-on-year: **1,094 MW → 912 MW** in September. ■ Central hydro share down **~90 MW**; **Tehri Pumped Storage Plant** technical unavailability **~100 MW**. ■ **UPCL** (distribution utility) is trying to minimise cuts; state plans to recover dues from government offices. ■ NTPC-EDF JV cites national target of **100 GW pumped-storage capacity by 2036**.
Way Fwd	Diversify with **solar + storage**, speed up stalled small hydro, and sign **seasonal banking** agreements with plains states to cover lean-flow months.
Concept	**Pumped storage**: water pumped uphill when power is cheap and released through turbines at peak — a 'water battery'. **Tehri Dam** is on the **Bhagirathi** (Tehri Garhwal) and operated by **THDC India**; the state's power utilities are **UJVN (generation), PTCUL (transmission), UPCL (distribution)**.

Uttarakhand peak-hour power gap (Sept 2026)



Bindukhatta revenue-village demand: 15,000 march; CM to place issue before cabinet

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

Syllabus Linkage	Land administration & forest villages of Uttarakhand; Forest Rights Act; Tarai-Bhabar settlement. Prelims: **FRA 2006 Sec 3(1)(h)**, **khatta/goth** settlements.
Context	On **27 Sept 2026**, about **15,000** residents of **Bindukhatta** (**Lalkuan tehsil, Nainital**) marched in heavy rain on the **44th day** of their agitation for **revenue village** status. The CM's assurance to take the matter to the **cabinet** was conveyed by minister **Ram Singh Kaida**.
Key Facts	■ Bindukhatta began as a **British-era forest settlement** for cattle rearing; residents hold community, not individual, rights. ■ Demand pending since **1985**; block & district **Forest Rights Committees** have cleared the claim under **FRA 2006**. ■ File was sent back to the **Nainital DM** for re-examination, triggering the protest; markets at **Car Road & Ghodanala** shut in support. ■ A proposed **elephant corridor (2018)** in the area has added to residents' fears of displacement.
Way Fwd	Time-bound decision under **FRA** with clear demarcation of **elephant-corridor** land; conversion must pair land titles with **wildlife-conflict safeguards**.

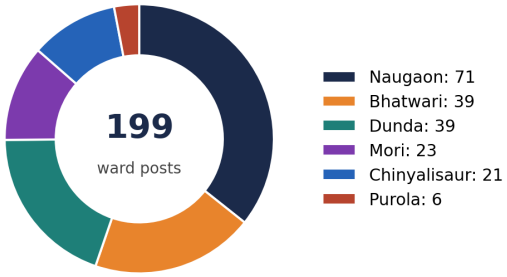
Concept	**Revenue village** = surveyed unit with defined boundaries where land is recorded in revenue records, enabling **ownership, registry, loans**. **FRA 2006 Sec 3(1)(h)** grants the right to **convert forest villages** into revenue villages; the **Gram Sabha** initiates claims.

Panchayat by-polls: voting on 12 October, results on 14 October

POLITY UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity & Governance — Uttarakhand)

Syllabus Linkage	Panchayati Raj in Uttarakhand; State Election Commission; 73rd Amendment. Prelims: **Art 243K**, **Uttarakhand Panchayati Raj Act 2016**.
Context	The **State Election Commission** has begun the process for by-elections to vacant panchayat posts; the **model code of conduct** is in force in the concerned blocks. In **Uttarkashi** alone, **199 ward-member posts** across six blocks go to the polls.
Key Facts	■ Schedule: nominations **30 Sept-1 Oct**; scrutiny **3 Oct**; withdrawal **4 Oct**; symbols **5 Oct**; **polling 12 Oct**; **counting 14 Oct**. ■ Uttarkashi: **1 Gram Pradhan** & **2 Kshetra Panchayat member** posts (**Bhatwari**) plus ward members. ■ Ward posts by block: **Naugaon 71**, **Bhatwari 39**, **Dunda 39**, **Mori 23**, **Chinyalisaur 21**, **Purola 6**. ■ Uttarakhand follows a **three-tier** system: **Gram Panchayat — Kshetra Panchayat — Zila Panchayat** (Haridwar polls held separately).
Way Fwd	Fill vacancies quickly so that **Finance Commission grants** and **GPDP** planning are not held up; strengthen women-led panchayats.
Concept	**Art 243K**: superintendence of panchayat elections vests in the **State Election Commission**, appointed by the **Governor**; removed only like a **High Court judge**. Vacancies must be filled within **6 months** (**Art 243E**).

Uttarkashi panchayat by-polls (vote 12 Oct)



NTCA clears second phase of tiger translocation from Corbett to Rajaji's western zone

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

Syllabus Linkage	Wildlife & protected areas of Uttarakhand; conservation strategies. Prelims: **Corbett TR**, **Rajaji TR**, **NTCA**, soft release.
Context	The **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** has approved **five more tigers** (**1 male, 4 females**) to be shifted from **Corbett Tiger Reserve** to the **western zone of Rajaji Tiger Reserve**, after an earlier batch of five was moved to its eastern zone.
Key Facts	■ Aim: revive Rajaji's **isolated western tiger population** and ease **human-tiger conflict** around Corbett. ■ Each tiger will be **radio-collared** after a health check. ■ **Soft release**: **3-4 days** in an acclimatisation enclosure, then **~3 months** of radio monitoring. ■ Rajaji's western part is cut off from the east by the **Ganga**, highways and settlements.
Way Fwd	Restore the **Chilla-Motichur corridor** and plan eco-bridges on highways so relocated tigers can breed and disperse naturally.
Concept	**Corbett** — India's **first national park (1936, Hailey NP)**; **Project Tiger launched here in 1973**. **Rajaji** declared **Tiger Reserve in 2015**, spread over **Haridwar, Dehradun, Pauri**. **NTCA** is a statutory body under **WPA 1972 (2006 amendment)**.

SECTION B — DATA POINT OF THE DAY

7.1%

OECD forecast for India's real GDP growth, FY 2026-27

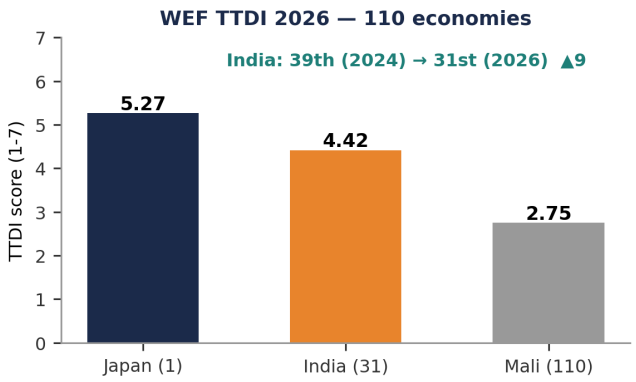
Raised by **80 bps** from **6.3%** (June); FY28 seen at **6.5%**, inflation **4.7%** (2026). Highest among major forecasters — **ADB, S&P, Moody's 7.0%**, **Fitch 6.9%**, **RBI 6.7%**. World growth: **2.9%** (2026).

SECTION C — NATIONAL & WORLD: Polity • Economy • IR • Defence

India climbs 9 places to 31st in WEF Travel & Tourism Development Index 2026

REPORT UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Economy — Tourism, India & Uttarakhand)

Syllabus Linkage	Indian economy — services & tourism; reports & indices. Prelims: **TTDI publisher, rank, topper**.
Context	The **World Economic Forum's TTDI 2026**, released on **25 Sept** ahead of **World Tourism Day (27 Sept)**, ranks India **31st of 110 economies** (up from **39th in 2024**) with a score of **4.42**.
Key Facts	■ Top 5: **Japan (5.27)**, **USA**, **Spain**, **Australia**, **France**; lowest: **Mali (2.75)**. ■ India's strengths: **price competitiveness**, **natural & cultural resources** (top-10 for **cultural World Heritage sites**), better infrastructure. ■ Weak spots: **workforce skills**, **environmental sustainability**, tourism infrastructure capacity. ■ **101 of 110** economies improved scores; average rise **2.1%**.
Way Fwd	For Uttarakhand: leverage **homestays, winter tourism and adventure circuits** while fixing sustainability gaps flagged by the index.
Concept	**TTDI** (successor to the **TTCI**, since **2022**) is published **biennially** by the **WEF** and measures enabling factors — not arrivals or spending. **World Tourism Day** is observed on **27 Sept** (UN Tourism).



UNGA adopts first-ever declaration on sea-level rise; protects statehood & maritime zones

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

Syllabus Linkage	International organisations; climate change; law of the sea. Prelims: **UNCLOS zones**, **SIDS**.
Context	On **24 Sept 2026**, a high-level meeting during the **81st UNGA session** adopted by consensus the first **political declaration on sea-level rise**, pushed by **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**.
Key Facts	■ Creates a **presumption of continued statehood** and preservation of **maritime zones** even if coastlines retreat. ■ Four pillars: **science & early warning**, **accessible finance**, protection of **livelihoods & heritage**, **international law**. ■ Global sea level rose **~6 mm in 2024** — the **largest annual rise on record**; **~770 million** people live within **5 m** of high tide. ■ Relevance to India: **Lakshadweep, Andaman & Nicobar, Sundarbans**; India has a **~11,000 km** coastline (revised).
Way Fwd	India should back **loss-and-damage** finance and fix its **baselines** under UNCLOS while investing in coastal adaptation.
Concept	**UNCLOS (1982)**: **Territorial sea 12 nm**, **Contiguous zone 24 nm**, **EEZ 200 nm** — all measured from **baselines**. **COP31** is due in **Antalya, Türkiye (Nov 2026)**.

Exercise Tarang Shakti 2026 enters operational phase at Jodhpur

DEFENCE UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Security & International Relations)

Syllabus Linkage	Defence & internal security; India's defence diplomacy. Prelims: **exercise-host-theme** matching.
Context	The **Indian Air Force's** multinational exercise **Tarang Shakti 2026** (**26 Sept-12 Oct**) began its **operational phase on 28 Sept** at **Air Force Station Jodhpur**, with foreign air forces flying alongside the IAF and dozens of nations attending as observers.
Key Facts	■ **2nd edition** — the first was held in **2024**; theme **"Power in Partnership"**. ■ Foreign participants: **Australia, USA, UAE, France, Germany, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh**. ■ Aircraft: **F-35 Lightning II, Rafale, F-16, A400M, MRTT, C-130J, KC-30A**; IAF fields **Tejas, Su-30MKI, Rafale**. ■ Includes seminars, **defence-industry** tours and cultural exchanges.
Way Fwd	Use the exercise to showcase **indigenous platforms (Tejas)** for exports and to deepen **interoperability** with Indo-Pacific partners.
Concept	**Interoperability** = ability of forces of different nations to operate together. Other IAF exercises: **Garuda (France)**, **Cope India (USA)**, **Red Flag (USA-hosted)**, **Pitch Black (Australia-hosted)**.

Right to vote: statutory or fundamental? Deletion errors revive constitutional debate

POLITY UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Polity & Governance)

Syllabus Linkage	Indian Constitution — elections, ECI, fundamental rights. Prelims: **Art 326**, **RPA 1951**, key judgments.
Context	Reports of eligible voters being dropped from rolls due to **software limits in ECINet** — and losing linked welfare benefits — have revived the question of whether voting should be a **fundamental right**, amid the ongoing **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls in states including Uttarakhand.
Key Facts	■ At present voting is a **statutory right** under **RPA 1951 (Sec 62)**; **Art 326** provides for **universal adult suffrage** at **18 years**. ■ **Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India (2006)**: right to vote is **statutory**, not fundamental. ■ **Justice Ajay Rastogi's 2023 dissent** linked voting to **Art 19(1)(a)** and **Art 21**. ■ **Supreme Court (May 2026)** upheld the ECI's authority to conduct the **SIR**.
Way Fwd	Build **human override and appeal** into electoral software, give written notice before any deletion, and de-link welfare eligibility from roll status.
Concept	**Art 324** — ECI superintends elections; **Art 326** — adult suffrage (voting age cut from **21 to 18** by the **61st Amendment, 1988**). **Right to vote** (statutory) differs from **freedom of voting** (expression, **PUCL 2013 — NOTA**).

SECTION D — PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

1. **Khatima (Udham Singh Nagar)**: CM inaugurated a **₹7.23 crore gaushala** at Haldighera and laid stones for **15 projects worth ₹108.84 crore** (24 Sept).

2. **STF Uttarakhand** cyber helpline **1930** saved **~₹73 lakh** from fraudsters in one week.

3. **Mega Ports**: **JNPT, Paradip, Kandla (Deendayal), Mundra** notified — criteria **150 MMT** bulk cargo or **7.5 million TEUs**; Mundra is the only private port.

4. **Mandeep K. Bhandari** (IAS 2001, AGMUT) appointed **CBSE Chairperson**.

5. **Poompuhar** (Mayiladuthurai, TN) underwater dig: **West Asian torpedo-jar** fragment, **ring wells**; habitation **5th-4th century BCE**.

6. **Lok Sabha** has stayed adjourned **sine die** (not prorogued) for **46+ days** since **13 Aug** — third-longest ever; record **76 days (1987)**.

SECTION E — PRACTICE CORNER (UKPSC PATTERN)

Q1. With reference to the Gross Environment Product (GEP) of Uttarakhand, consider the following statements: 1. Uttarakhand was the first Indian state to launch a GEP Index. 2. The GEP Index is built on the four pillars of air, water, soil and forest. 3. The GEP technical report released in September 2026 covers the years 2023-24 and 2024-25. 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: (d) — All three are correct: Uttarakhand launched India's **first GEP Index** in **July 2024** on **four pillars (air, water, soil, forest)**, and the **Sept 2026** technical report covers **2023-24 and 2024-25**.

Q2. Kalindi Pass and Auden's Col, recently in news due to stranded trekkers, are located in which district of Uttarakhand?

(a) Chamoli **(b)** Pithoragarh **(c)** Uttarkashi **(d)** Rudraprayag

Answer: (c) — Both high passes lie in the **Gangotri** region of **Uttarkashi** district; **Kalindi Khal** links Gangotri with **Badrinath (Chamoli)**, and **Auden's Col** links Gangotri with the **Bhilangna** valley (Tehri).

MAINS PRACTICE (GS)

"Uttarakhand's hydropower strength is also its seasonal vulnerability." In the light of the recent peak-hour power deficit, examine the state's energy challenges and suggest a diversified energy strategy. (200 words)

Hint: Intro: **~350 MW** deficit, UJVN output **1,094 → 912 MW**. Body: dependence on **run-of-river** hydro, lean-season flows, **Tehri PSP** outage, ecological limits after **2013/2021** disasters; solutions — **solar + storage**, **pumped storage (100 GW by 2036)**, power banking, demand management, green hydrogen. Conclude with **GEP**-aligned growth.

ONE-LINE REVISION: **GEP report + STI Policy-2026** (first-state green accounting) | **121 rescued at Gomukh-Tapovan**, Char Dham resumed **28 Sept** | **~350 MW** power gap | **OECD 7.1%** | **TTDI 31st** | **UN sea-level declaration (24 Sept)**.

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