CURRENT AFFAIRS — 29 September 2026

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR UTTARAKHAND PCS

Tuesday, 29 September 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Uttarakhand + National • UKPSC Prelims & Mains digest

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

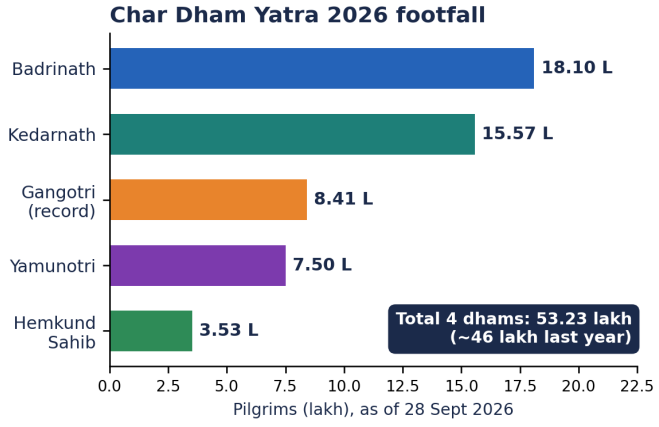
- Char Dham 2026 footfall: **53,23,401** pilgrims vs ~**46 lakh** last year; **Gangotri 8.41 lakh** is a record.
- **Hemkund Sahib** (Chamoli) crossed **3.5 lakh** pilgrims (**3,52,765**).
- Early snowfall trapped **136** climbers at **Kalindi Khal** & **Auden's Col**; **49** brought safely to **Harsil**.
- **SARRA** to revive **54** historic **naula-dhara** sources across all **13 districts** with zero-cement techniques.
- Uttarakhand panchayat by-polls: voting **12 Oct**, counting **14 Oct**.
- **120th All India Kisan Mela** at **GBPUAT Pantnagar**, **3–6 Oct**.
- WorldSkills Shanghai: Uttarakhand's **Sania Joshi** & **Parth Vohra** win **silver**; India **10th**.
- India's August **CPI 4.82%** (July 4.45%); **RBI MPC** meets **5–7 Oct**, repo at **5.25%**.
- **Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool**: capacity **₹13,906.50 cr**, sovereign guarantee **₹12,980 cr**.
- **Bio-bitumen** from rice straw by **CSIR-CRRI** & **CSIR-IIP Dehradun**: **20–30%** petroleum binder replaced.

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

Char Dham Yatra 2026 hits record 53.23 lakh pilgrims; Gangotri sets all-time high

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

Syllabus Linkage	**Uttarakhand geography & tourism economy**; pilgrimage circuits, carrying capacity, disaster-prone yatra routes (Prelims: shrine–river–district matching).
Context	As of **28 Sept 2026**, the four shrines have received **53,23,401** pilgrims against about **46 lakh** in the same period last year. The CM called the **first phase** a success; about **1.5 months** of the season remain.
Key Facts	■ **Badrinath 18.10 lakh**, **Kedarnath 15.57 lakh**, **Gangotri 8.41 lakh** (**highest ever**), **Yamunotri 7.5 lakh+**. ■ **Hemkund Sahib**: **3,52,765** pilgrims, past **3 lakh** for the first time in several years. ■ Disaster management teams on **24x7 alert** in **Rudraprayag, Chamoli, Uttarkashi**. ■ Second phase of the yatra began in **mid-September** after the monsoon.
Way Fwd	Link **registration caps to carrying capacity**, widen **real-time crowd & weather alerts**, and push **off-season / winter yatra** to spread load.
Concept	**Badrinath** (Chamoli, **Alaknanda**, Vishnu); **Kedarnath** (Rudraprayag, **Mandakini**, Jyotirlinga); **Gangotri** (Uttarkashi, **Bhagirathi**); **Yamunotri** (Uttarkashi, **Yamuna**). **Hemkund Sahib** lies near the **Valley of Flowers** (Chamoli).



Early snowfall strands 136 climbers in Uttarkashi; multi-agency air rescue under way

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

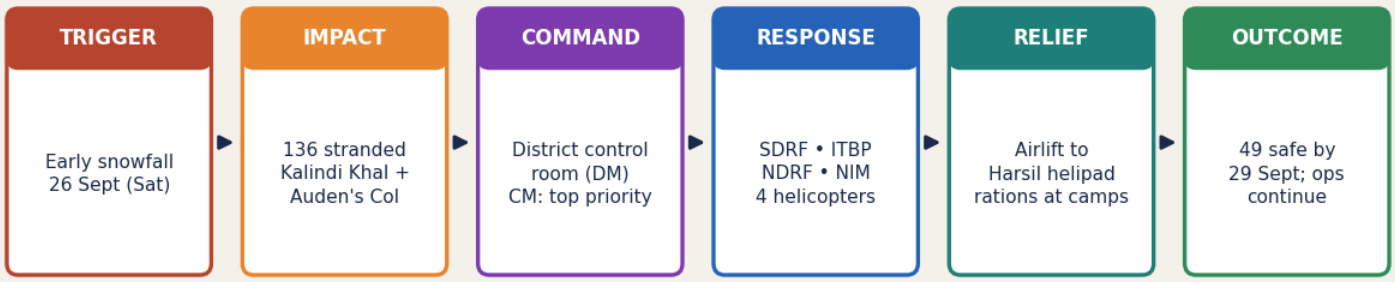
Syllabus Linkage	**Disaster management in Uttarakhand**; high-altitude hazards, role of **SDRF/NDRF/ITBP/NIM**, DM Act 2005 (Prelims: Himalayan passes & glaciers).
Context	Unseasonal **snowfall on Saturday (26 Sept)** trapped **136** climbers and trekkers at high-altitude camps above the **Gangotri glacier**. The CM directed that rescue get **top priority**; helicopters began airlifts from **Monday (28 Sept)**.
Key Facts	■ Stranded: **89** expedition members, **18** trekkers at **Kalindi Pass**, **29** at **Auden's Col**. ■ Monday: **40** evacuated by **4 helicopters** (29 from Auden's Col, 11 from Kalindi Khal); **9** more on Tuesday — **49** safe at **Harsil helipad**. ■ Agencies: **SDRF, ITBP, NDRF, NIM Uttarkashi**, Forest, Police, Health; district control room led by the **DM**. ■ Others still at camps near **Mount Jogin** and Kalindi base are being supplied rations and water.
Way Fwd	Make **weather-linked permits** and **satellite trackers** mandatory for high-altitude treks; pre-position **heli-rescue** in Harsil and Gangotri.
Concept	**Kalindi Khal** (~**5,940 m**) links **Gangotri to Badrinath (Mana)**; **Auden's Col** links the **Gangotri valley** to the **Khatling glacier** (Tehri). **NIM Uttarkashi** was set up in **1965**; state **SDRF** was raised after the **2013 Kedarnath disaster**.

Uttarakhand panchayat by-polls on 12 October; nominations open 30 September

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

Syllabus Linkage	**Panchayati Raj in Uttarakhand**; 73rd Amendment, State Election Commission (Prelims: Articles 243–243O, three-tier structure).
Context	The **State Election Commission** has announced by-elections to fill **vacant panchayat posts**. In **Uttarkashi** alone, polls cover a **gram pradhan** seat, **2 kshetra panchayat** member seats and ward member posts across six blocks.
Key Facts	■ Schedule: nominations **30 Sept–1 Oct**, scrutiny **3 Oct**, withdrawal **4 Oct**, symbols **5 Oct**. ■ **Voting 12 Oct**, **counting 14 Oct**. ■ Uttarkashi ward vacancies: **Naugaon 71**, **Bhatwari 39**, **Dunda 39**, **Mori 23**, **Chinyalisaur 21**, **Purola 6**.
Way Fwd	Many ward seats stay vacant for want of candidates — **migration (palayan)** and weak devolution must be tackled together.
Concept	**73rd Amendment (1992)** added **Part IX**; **Art. 243K** — State Election Commission conducts panchayat polls; **Art. 243E** — 5-year term, vacancies filled within **6 months**. Uttarakhand runs a **three-tier** system under the **Uttarakhand Panchayati Raj Act, 2016**.

Uttarkashi high-altitude rescue — disaster response chain (26–29 Sept 2026)



SARRA to scientifically revive 54 historic naula-dhara water sources across Uttarakhand

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

Syllabus Linkage	**Himalayan ecology & water security**; springshed management, traditional knowledge, culture (Prelims: naula, dhara, gul, SARRA).
Context	At a state-level technical workshop in Dehradun on **28 Sept 2026**, the **Spring and River Rejuvenation Authority (SARRA)** began a programme to restore **54 historic naulas and dharas** covering **all 13 districts**.
Key Facts	■ Ancient stone structures to be preserved with **zero-cement structural engineering** and **stone corbelling**. ■ Tools: **geo-tagging, GIS mapping**, **springshed** and **hydrogeological** analysis. ■ **Contour trenches** and recharge works in **catchment (recharge) zones**. ■ Partners: **UCOST**, **HNB Garhwal University**, Watershed Management Directorate and **gram panchayats**.
Way Fwd	Protect **recharge zones** through village bye-laws, create **spring-level user groups** and track discharge data publicly.
Concept	**Naula** = stone-lined stepwell-like spring tank (Kumaon); **dhara** = spring spout; **gul** = hill irrigation channel. SARRA was constituted in **2025**; drying Himalayan springs threaten both drinking water and river base flow.

120th All India Kisan Mela at GBPUAT Pantnagar from 3 to 6 October

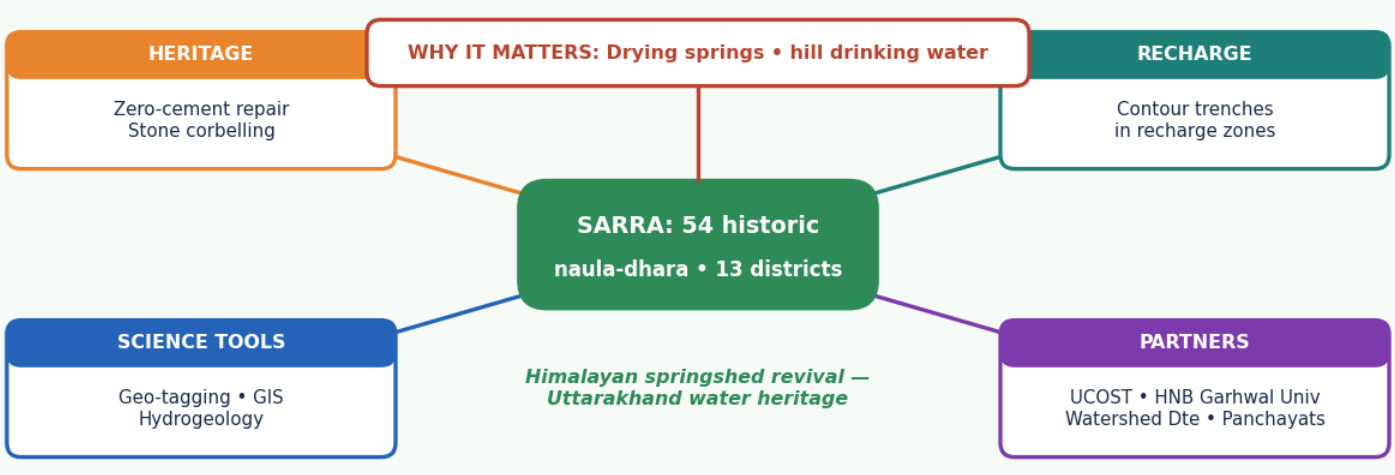
UTTARAKHAND **UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Agriculture & Economy — Uttarakhand)**

Syllabus Linkage	**Hill & plains agriculture of Uttarakhand**; seed systems, agri-tech, natural farming (Prelims: institutions of Uttarakhand).
Context	**G.B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology (GBPUAT)**, Pantnagar (Udham Singh Nagar) will host the **120th All India Kisan Mela** from **3–6 Oct 2026** on the theme **"Smart Farming, Healthy Earth and Prosperous Farmers"**.
Key Facts	■ **400+** stalls; focus on **drones**, **natural farming**, agri-machinery, **agri-startups**, traditional crops and cattle care. ■ Seeds on sale: **2,039 q wheat**, **100 q oilseeds**, **50 q lentil**, 26 q gram, 5 q barley. ■ **15% discount** on basic price of **breeder seed**; horticulture and forestry planting material too.
Way Fwd	Carry Pantnagar seed and drone advisories to **hill blocks** through KVKs so that **millets, pulses and horticulture** benefit.
Concept	**GBPUAT** (inaugurated **1960**) is India's **first agricultural university** on the land-grant model and a cradle of the **Green Revolution**; **breeder seed → foundation seed → certified seed** is the seed chain.

Uttarakhand's Sania Joshi and Parth Vohra win silver at WorldSkills Shanghai 2026

SOCIETY **UKPSC: Prelims (Sports, Awards & Persons — Uttarakhand)**

Syllabus Linkage	**Awards & achievements of Uttarakhand**; skill development and youth employment (Prelims: persons in news).
Context	At the **48th WorldSkills Competition** in **Shanghai, China (22–27 Sept 2026)**, India recorded its **best-ever** finish — **10th** globally — with **two silvers from Uttarakhand**.
Key Facts	■ **Sania Joshi** — silver in **Retail Sales**; **Parth Vohra** — silver in **Industrial Design Technology**. ■ India: **6 silver** medals and **20 Medallions for Excellence**. ■ About **1,400** competitors in **64 skill trades**. ■ Selected through **IndiaSkills 2025-26** (state → regional → national rounds).
Way Fwd	Use such winners as **master trainers** in state ITIs to link **Skill India** with hill-youth employment.
Concept	**WorldSkills** is a **biennial** "skills Olympics"; India's participation is coordinated under the **Skill India Mission** (launched **2015**).



SECTION B — DATA POINT OF THE DAY

5.22% of GDP
tourism's share in India's GDP

India's tourism economy (World Tourism Day, 27 Sept 2026)

Tourism supports **8.46 crore** jobs (2023-24); **foreign exchange earnings ₹2.77 lakh crore** and **2.53 crore foreign tourist visits** in **2025**; **e-Visa** now for **172 countries**. For Uttarakhand, religious and adventure tourism (Char Dham, treks) is a core growth engine — WTD 2026 theme: **"Digital Agenda and AI to Redesign Tourism"**.

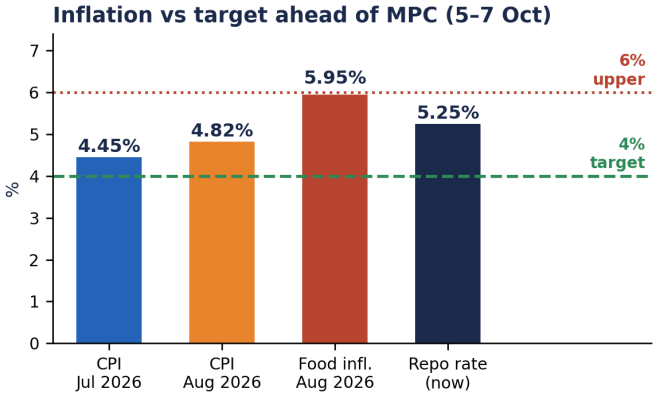
5.22%	8.46 cr	₹2.77 lakh cr	2.53 cr	172	53.23 lakh
Tourism share of GDP	Tourism jobs (2023-24)	Forex earnings (2025)	Foreign tourist visits (2025)	Countries with e-Visa	Char Dham 2026 (Uttarakhand)

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

CPI climbs to 4.82% in August; RBI MPC meets 5–7 October with repo at 5.25%

ECONOMY UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Indian Economy)

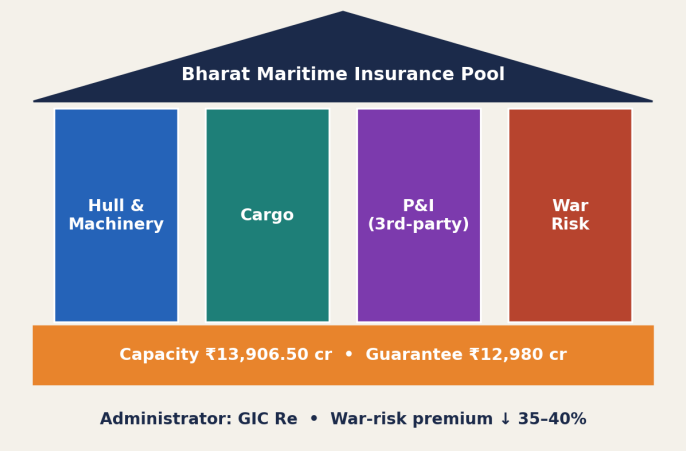
Syllabus Linkage	**Indian economy**: inflation, monetary policy, RBI (Prelims: MPC composition, inflation target, CPI vs WPI).
Context	Retail inflation rose to **4.82%** in **August 2026** from **4.45%** in July, led by **food inflation (5.95%)** — the **third straight month** above the **4%** target. The **MPC** meets on **5–7 Oct**; a poll of economists shows a split on a possible **hike**.
Key Facts	■ Current **repo rate 5.25%**, **neutral** stance (held in **August**). ■ Poll: **35 of 61** economists expect a **25 bps** hike to **5.50%**. ■ Inflation is now broad-based; policy transmission to loans is the key concern.
Way Fwd	Balance **price stability** with growth; supply-side steps on **food stocks and imports** can reduce the burden on rates.
Concept	**MPC** under **Sec 45ZB, RBI Act 1934** (inserted **2016**): **6 members**, Governor has a **casting vote**. **Flexible inflation targeting: 4% ± 2%** on **CPI (Combined)** released by **NSO/MoSPI**.



Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool builds a home-grown shield against war-risk premiums

ECONOMY UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Economy & Infrastructure)

Syllabus Linkage	**Infrastructure — ports & shipping**, insurance sector, strategic autonomy (Prelims: GIC Re, P&I cover).
Context	Official data (**28 Sept 2026**) shows the **Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMIP)** has cut dependence on foreign insurers for Indian ships and cargo amid West Asia sea-route risks.
Key Facts	■ Underwriting capacity **₹13,906.50 cr (~US$1.5 bn)**; **sovereign guarantee ₹12,980 cr**. ■ Covers **Hull & Machinery**, **Cargo**, **Protection & Indemnity (P&I)** and **War Risk**. ■ By **7 Sept**: **3,000** cargo-war, **92** hull war-risk, **3** P&I policies; war-risk premiums down **35–40%**. ■ Administered by **GIC Re**; tenure **10 years**, extendable to **15**.
Way Fwd	Grow a domestic **P&I club** and reinsurance depth so that India's **Maritime Amrit Kaal** goals are not hostage to global insurers.
Concept	**P&I** insurance covers **third-party liabilities** (crew, pollution, collision). Prior annual premium outflow was about **US$45–60 mn**.



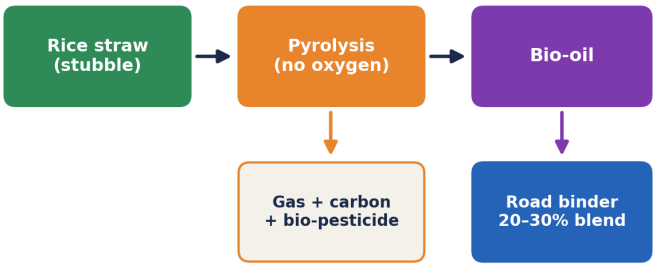
Rice-straw bio-bitumen moves towards highway standards; CSIR-IIP Dehradun a co-developer

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

Syllabus Linkage	**Science & technology, environment**: stubble burning, circular economy, Uttarakhand-based national labs (Prelims: pyrolysis).
Context	Official releases on **29 Sept 2026** highlighted the **bio-bitumen** technology of **CSIR-CRRI (New Delhi)** and **CSIR-IIP (Dehradun)**, transferred to industry in **January 2026**, with plans to include it in national highway standards.
Key Facts	■ Bio-oil replaces **20–30%** of the **petroleum binder** in bitumen. ■ Made by **pyrolysis** of post-harvest **rice straw** (high heat, **no oxygen**). ■ Field trial: **100 m** on **Jorabat–Shillong Expressway (NH-40)**, Meghalaya. ■ Co-products: combustible gas, bio-pesticide fractions, **high-grade carbon**.

Way Fwd	Set up **cluster-level pyrolysis units** in Punjab–Haryana to turn **stubble** into income and cut **bitumen imports**.
Concept	**Pyrolysis** = thermal decomposition without oxygen → bio-oil + syngas + biochar. **CSIR-IIP Dehradun** (est. **1960**) is a key petroleum and bio-fuel lab in Uttarakhand.

Rice straw → Bio-bitumen



CSIR-CRRI + CSIR-IIP Dehradun • Trial: NH-40, Meghalaya

Exercise VARUNA 2026: INS Trishul joins French Navy at Toulon for 24th edition

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

Syllabus Linkage	**India–France relations**, defence exercises (Prelims: exercise–country matching).
Context	Indian Navy frigate **INS Trishul** reached **Toulon, France** for the **24th edition** of the bilateral maritime exercise **VARUNA**, covering harbour and sea phases.
Key Facts	■ Bilateral naval exercise begun in **1993**, named **VARUNA** in **2001**. ■ **INS Trishul** is a **Talwar-class stealth frigate**. ■ Sea phase: anti-air, anti-submarine drills, cross-deck operations, replenishment at sea.
Way Fwd	Deepen **Indo-Pacific maritime domain awareness** and joint work in the **Western Indian Ocean**.
Concept	India–France **Strategic Partnership** since **1998**; other India–France exercises: **Shakti** (Army), **Garuda** (Air Force).

PM-AJAY: 18,093 SC-majority villages declared Adarsh Grams

SOCIETY UKPSC: Prelims + Mains (Social Justice & Welfare)

Syllabus Linkage	**Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections** (Prelims: scheme features, eligibility).
Context	Official progress data (as of **8 Sept 2026**) released on **29 Sept** shows the **Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY)** has covered **47,243** villages.
Key Facts	■ **18,093** villages declared **Adarsh Gram**; **47.79 lakh** beneficiaries. ■ Village eligibility: **≥40% SC** population and total population **≥500**. ■ **₹1,730+ cr** released (FY22–FY26); **785** hostels completed.
Way Fwd	Link Adarsh Gram plans with **skilling and credit** so that assets turn into **livelihoods**.
Concept	Launched **2021-22**, **100% centrally sponsored**; merged **PM Adarsh Gram Yojana**, **SCA to SCSP** and **Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana**.

SECTION D — PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

Topic	Quick fact
46th Chess Olympiad	Held at **Samarkand (Uzbekistan)**; India won **silver (Open)** and **bronze (Women)**; golds went to hosts **Uzbekistan** and **China**.
Dehradun chill	Night minimum **18.4°C** — coldest September night in about **14 years**; **Mukteshwar** max **16.6°C** (5°C below normal).
Health days	**World Heart Day** on **29 Sept**; **World Rabies Day** on **28 Sept** (death anniversary of **Louis Pasteur**; goal: zero dog-mediated rabies deaths by **2030**).
Green Highways Policy	Launched **2015**; **1%** of NH civil cost for plantation; NH network grew from **91,287 km (2014)** to **1,46,572 km (Mar 2026)**.
Kandla e-Methanol	**150 TPD** plant at **Deendayal Port**, Gujarat; cost **₹2,300 cr**; Phase-I (**50 TPD**) by **Jan 2027**.
Arogya Manthan 2026	Marks **8 years of AB PM-JAY** (launched **23 Sept 2018**) and **5 years of ABDM**.

SECTION E — PRACTICE CORNER (UKPSC PATTERN)

Q1. With reference to the Char Dham Yatra 2026, which of the following shrines recorded its highest-ever pilgrim footfall this season?

(a) Kedarnath (b) Badrinath
(c) Gangotri (d) Yamunotri

Answer: (c) — **Gangotri** recorded **8.41 lakh** pilgrims, its highest ever. **Badrinath (18.10 lakh)** had the largest absolute number; total footfall was **53,23,401**.

Q2. Kalindi Khal, where climbers were stranded after early snowfall, is a high-altitude pass that connects:

(a) Gangotri and Badrinath (b) Kedarnath and Badrinath
(c) Yamunotri and Har Ki Dun (d) Pindari and Milam glaciers

Answer: (a) — **Kalindi Khal (~5,940 m)** links the **Gangotri** region (Uttarkashi) with **Badrinath/Mana** (Chamoli). **Auden's Col** links Gangotri valley to the **Khatling glacier** (Tehri).

Mains Practice (GS): "Traditional naula-dhara systems are Uttarakhand's first line of water security." In the light of SARRA's revival drive, discuss the causes of drying springs in the Himalaya and suggest a springshed-based strategy. (125 words)

Hint: Causes: **deforestation**, **road-cutting**, concrete over **recharge zones**, changing rainfall, neglect after piped supply. Strategy: **springshed mapping (GIS)**, **recharge trenches**, **zero-cement heritage restoration**, **community user groups**, panchayat bye-laws, discharge monitoring, link with **Jal Jeevan Mission** and **GEP**.

ONE-LINE REVISION: Char Dham **53.23 lakh** (Gangotri record **8.41 lakh**) • **136** stranded at **Kalindi Khal/Auden's Col** • SARRA **54** naula-dhara • by-polls **12 Oct** • Kisan Mela **3–6 Oct** • CPI **4.82%**, repo **5.25%**, MPC **5–7 Oct** • BMIP **₹13,906.50 cr** • bio-bitumen **20–30%** • VARUNA **24th**, Toulon.

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