TODAY AT A GLANCE — Friday, 20 November 2026

- Lucknow plans a **258.59-acre AI City** in Vrindavan Yojana, ~60% for AI research.
- PM to honour **52 AITT 2026 toppers** (6 from UP) at the **5th National Skill Convocation**, Lucknow.
- Varanasi creates a **7.5-km two-lane Ganga boat route** (Namo–Assi Ghat) for **Dev Deepawali, 24 Nov**.
- UP Cabinet clears **30 of 31** proposals incl. a **₹281.03 crore Deep Tech U-Hub** at IIT Kanpur Noida.
- **Modified UDAN** MoU: VGF **80% Centre, 20% UP**; ATF VAT **≤1%** at RCS airports.
- **Bioenergy & Tourism Policies-2022** amended: CBG from paddy straw/press mud; budget hotels of **6–49 rooms**.
- Ordinance extends **gram panchayat administrators** by up to **6 months**; **Rani Lakshmibai Samman Kosh Rules, 2026**.
- **Urban Vision 2047**: urbanisation **24.5% → 60%**; SCR of **Lucknow + 5 districts**.
- UP tops **PM Surya Ghar** with **9,60,586** rooftop installations (13 Nov 2026).
- **EPFO** SWP approved; minimum PF balance **25% → 10%**, final withdrawal wait **12 → 2 months**.
- India–Japan **4th 2+2** in Tokyo: **Japanese forces to hold live-fire training in India**.

SECTION A — TODAY IN UP

UP-INFRA Lucknow plans India's first 'AI City' on 258.59 acres

UPPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-III (UP-special GS-VI)

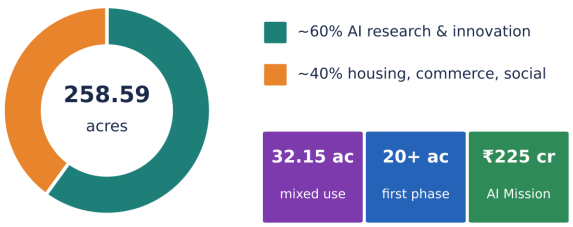
The state is planning a dedicated Artificial Intelligence City in the IT City area of Lucknow's Vrindavan Yojana; the project is still at proposal stage.

- Total area **258.59 acres** in **Vrindavan Yojana IT City, Lucknow**; **32.15 acres** earmarked for a convention centre, IT and mixed use.
- First phase over **20 acres**: office tower, **AI & deep-tech incubation centre**, high-performance computing, AI testing centres and simulation labs.
- Land plan: **~60% for AI research & innovation**, ~40% for residential, commercial and social infrastructure; likely **two phases on PPP model**.
- Power: **400 kV supply through three 220 kV grid stations**; linked to the state's **₹225 crore AI Mission** and the target of **50 AI startups in 5 years**.

Why it matters: Positions Lucknow as a tech hub beyond Noida-NCR, spreading high-skill jobs across the state; delivery depends on investor interest under PPP and on assured power and connectivity.

Concept: Public-Private Partnership (PPP): the government provides land and trunk infrastructure while private partners build and operate facilities, sharing risk and return.
Syllabus: GS-III: Science & Technology, Infrastructure | GS-VI: UP's industrial & IT policy

Lucknow AI City — proposed land use
258.59 acres, Vrindavan Yojana IT City (proposal stage)



UTTAR PRADESH Lucknow to host 5th National Skill Convocation; PM to honour 52 ITI toppers

UPPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II/GS-III

The 5th National Skill Convocation (Kaushal Deekshant Samaroh) 2026, organised by the Directorate General of Training, will be held at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan, Lucknow, on 21 November.

- PM to honour **52 meritorious trainees** who topped the **All India Trade Test (AITT) 2026**; **6 trainees from UP** (3 CTS + 3 CITS).
- About **5,650 trainees and staff** from UP's ITIs, the **UP Skill Development Mission** and the **NSTIs at Kanpur and Lucknow** to take part.
- Short films on **PM-SETU** will be screened — the **₹60,000 crore** scheme to upgrade **1,000 government ITIs** in hub-and-spoke clusters.
- Organiser: **Directorate General of Training (DGT)** under the **Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship**.

Why it matters: Gives social recognition to vocational skills; for UP, with the country's largest youth population, industry-linked ITIs are central to converting demographic dividend into jobs.

Concept: CTS (Craftsmen Training Scheme) trains ITI students in trades; CITS (Craft Instructor Training Scheme) trains the instructors who teach them.
Syllabus: GS-II: Welfare schemes, education & skilling | GS-III: Employment and human resource development

UP-CULTURE Varanasi splits the Ganga into two boat lanes for Dev Deepawali

UPPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-I (UP-special GS-V)

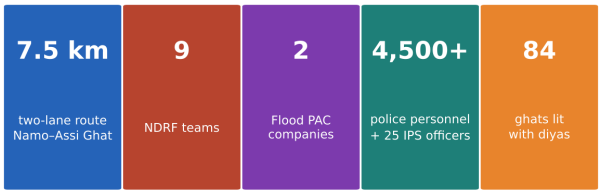
Ahead of Dev Deepawali on Kartik Purnima (24 November 2026), Varanasi police are introducing a first-of-its-kind two-way lane system for boats on the Ganga.

- A **7.5-km 'river expressway'** from **Namo Ghat to Assi Ghat**, divided with **floating jetties and water pendulums**, with fixed U-turn points.
- Safety: **9 NDRF teams**, **2 companies of Flood PAC**, Water Police, a **water ambulance**, floating rescue stations and **drone surveillance**.
- Mandatory **life jackets**; **minors barred from operating boats**; over **4,500 police personnel and 25 IPS officers** on duty.
- Dev Deepawali ("Diwali of the gods") falls on **Kartik Purnima**, **15 days after Diwali**; marks Shiva's victory over **Tripurasura** (Tripurari Purnima); lakhs of diyas on the **84 ghats**.

Why it matters: Applies road-traffic logic to river crowd management — a replicable model for Prayagraj, Ayodhya and other riverfront festivals where boat collisions and overcrowding are key risks.

Concept: Dev Deepawali also coincides with Guru Nanak Jayanti; it closes the Ganga Mahotsav that begins on Prabodhini Ekadashi.
Syllabus: GS-I: Indian culture, fairs & festivals | GS-III: Disaster management (crowd safety) | GS-V: UP culture & tourism

Dev Deepawali, Varanasi — river safety plan
Kartik Purnima: 24 November 2026



SECTION B — KEY UP DEVELOPMENTS

UP-SCHEME UP Cabinet clears 30 of 31 proposals; ₹281.03 crore Deep Tech U-Hub at IIT Kanpur's Noida campus

UPPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-III (UP-special GS-VI)

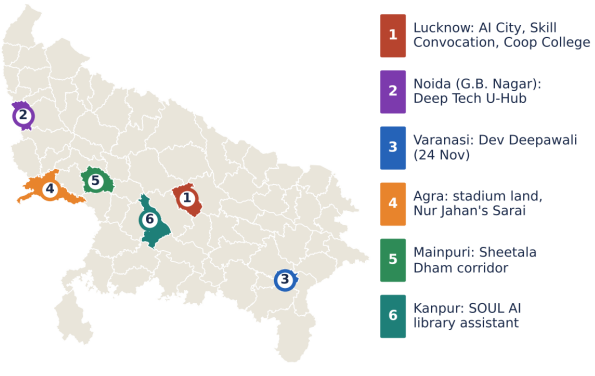
At the Cabinet meeting chaired by CM Yogi Adityanath on 18 November, 30 of the 31 proposals were approved; the headline decision is a building for the Deep Tech U-Hub at IIT Kanpur's Noida campus.

- Project cost **₹281.03 crore**, built in **EPC mode** with a **24-month** completion target.
- **₹100 crore** provided in **FY 2026-27** (₹30 crore capital + ₹70 crore revenue); **the Centre will not contribute** — fully state-funded.
- The U-Hub will run as a registered **Section 8 (not-for-profit) company**, giving startups mentorship and technical support.
- Same meeting also cleared a **State Cooperative College in Lucknow** and land for a **stadium in Agra** (see Rapid-Fire).

Why it matters: Links academic research with entrepreneurship in the Noida cluster; together with the AI City plan it signals UP's bid to build a deep-tech ecosystem rather than only manufacturing.

Concept: EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction): one contractor designs, procures and builds the asset for a fixed price and time; the owner bears no construction-management role.
Syllabus: GS-III: S&T, startups and innovation | GS-VI: UP's economy and industrial development

Uttar Pradesh in Today's News



Schematic; not to scale. District boundaries only.

UP-INFRA Modified UDAN: Centre–UP–AAI tripartite MoU with 80:20 VGF sharing

UPPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-III (UP-special GS-VI)

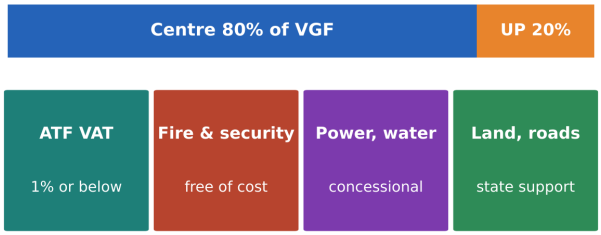
The Cabinet approved a tripartite MoU between the Centre, the UP government and the Airports Authority of India for the next phase of the Modified Regional Connectivity Scheme.

- **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)**: **Centre 80%**, **UP 20%**.
- **VAT on ATF** at regional-connectivity airports cut to **1% or below**.
- **Fire-fighting and security free of cost**; electricity, water and utilities at **concessional rates**; state to help with land and access roads.
- **Director, Civil Aviation, UP** authorised to sign; aim — link smaller cities with religious, heritage and tourism destinations.

Why it matters: Lower operating costs make thin regional routes viable for airlines; it complements UP's religious-tourism circuit (Ayodhya, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Mathura) and the new tourism-policy incentives.

Concept: UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik), launched in 2016, caps fares on regional routes; VGF covers the gap between an operator's cost and the capped fare revenue.
Syllabus: GS-III: Infrastructure — airports, regional connectivity | GS-VI: UP's infrastructure

Modified UDAN — Centre–UP–AAI tripartite MoU



ECONOMY Bioenergy Policy-2022 and Tourism Policy-2022 amended to widen incentives

UPPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-III (UP-special GS-VI)

The Cabinet amended two 2022 state policies to attract private investment in bioenergy plants and small tourism businesses.

- **Bioenergy Policy-2022** now folds in the Centre's **SASCI guidelines** and the **Model Compressed Biogas (CBG) Policy** of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.
- Feedstock mapped district-wise: **CBG from paddy straw and press mud** (sugar mills); **bio-coal** from maize, bajra, jowar, pulse, oilseed and cotton residue.
- **Tourism Policy-2022**: incentives extended to **budget hotels of 6–49 rooms**, homestays, farm tourism and cultural experience centres.
- Also covers **regional food trails, traditional food experiences and highway rest stops**.

Why it matters: Turning stubble and press mud into fuel tackles air pollution and adds farm income, while small-format tourism incentives spread visitor spending beyond big hotels.

Concept: Press mud is the solid residue left after filtering sugarcane juice in sugar mills — UP, India's top cane producer, generates it in large volumes.
Syllabus: GS-III: Energy, agriculture residue management, tourism economy | GS-VI: UP's policies

UP-GOVERNANCE Panchayat administrators' tenure extended by ordinance; new Rani Lakshmibai victim-compensation rules

UPPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II (UP-special GS-V)

The Cabinet approved the draft UP Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026, and the UP Rani Lakshmibai Mahila Evam Bal Samman Kosh Rules, 2026.

- Ordinance amends the **UP Panchayati Raj Act, 1947** to let **administrators run gram panchayats for up to six more months**.
- Reason: the **OBC reservation report** for panchayats is pending, so elections may come only **after the 2027 Assembly polls**.
- **Samman Kosh Rules, 2026** replace the **2015 framework** and align with the **NALSA Compensation Scheme for Women Victims/Survivors of Sexual Assault and Other Crimes, 2018**.
- Aim: faster **financial, medical and legal help** to women and children affected by sexual offences and other serious crimes.

Why it matters: Extended administrator rule raises questions about Article 243E's mandate of elections before a panchayat's term ends; the victim fund strengthens restorative justice for survivors.

Concept: Article 243E: a panchayat's term is five years and fresh elections must be completed before expiry; a dissolved panchayat must be re-elected within six months. Article 213 lets the Governor promulgate ordinances when the legislature is not in session.
Syllabus: GS-II: Local self-government, vulnerable sections | GS-V: UP's governance and panchayati raj

UP-GOVERNANCE UP Urban Development Vision 2047: urbanisation from 24.5% to 60%

UPPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-I/GS-III (UP-special GS-VI)

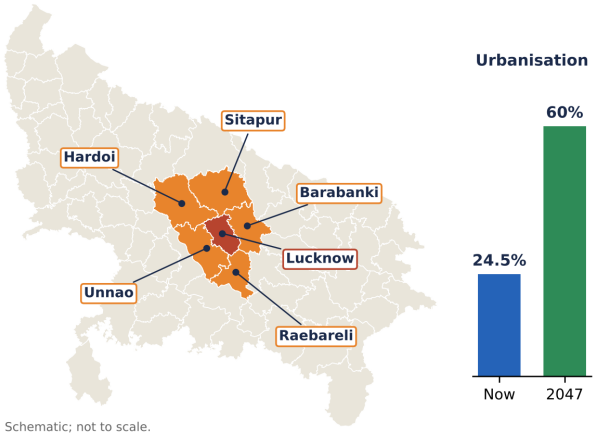
The state has prepared an urban development roadmap for 2047 targeting 60% urbanisation, six regional economic centres and Lucknow as a model metropolitan city.

- Raise urbanisation from **~24.5% to 60% by 2047**, in step with the **$6 trillion economy** goal; **three UP cities** to reach **global top-100** standards.
- **State Capital Region (SCR)**: **Lucknow + Sitapur, Unnao, Hardoi, Barabanki and Raebareli** for multi-modal connectivity and planned townships.
- **GIS-based master plans** and land banks through **Town Planning Schemes**; **at least one Urban Development Authority in each of 75 districts**.
- Proposed high-speed rail corridors: **Delhi–Lucknow–Prayagraj–Varanasi** and **Lucknow–Ayodhya**.

Why it matters: Planned regional growth can ease pressure on NCR and spread jobs to eastern UP, but needs municipal finance, affordable housing and strong urban local bodies to avoid unplanned sprawl.

Concept: The SCR is created under the UP State Capital Region and Other Area Development Authority Act, 2024 — modelled on the NCR idea of planning a capital with its hinterland.
Syllabus: GS-I: Urbanisation | GS-III: Infrastructure & planning | GS-VI: UP's urban development

State Capital Region (SCR) — Lucknow + 5 districts



Schematic; not to scale.

UP-SCHEME UP leads the country in PM Surya Ghar rooftop solar installations

UPPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-III (UP-special GS-VI)

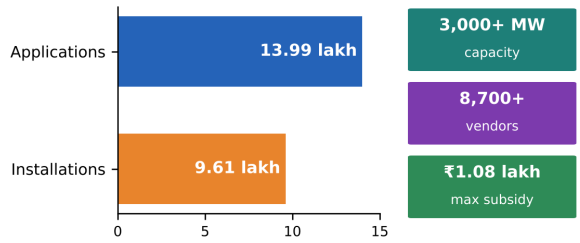
Official data show Uttar Pradesh has become the leading state under PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, with its rooftop-solar value chain now supporting thousands of local vendors.

- As of **13 Nov 2026**: **13,99,734 applications** and **9,60,586 installations** — **highest of any state**.
- Rooftop capacity above **3,000 MW**; a network of **8,700+ empanelled vendors**; about **1 lakh jobs**.
- Combined Centre + state subsidy **up to ₹1.08 lakh** per eligible household; implementing agency **UPNEDA** with the DISCOMs.
- **Lucknow** was the **first district in India to cross 88,000** rooftop installations (April 2026).

Why it matters: Distributed solar cuts household bills and DISCOM losses and creates MSME jobs; grid integration and battery storage (UPPTCL has earmarked land for 1,065 MW) are the next bottlenecks.

Concept: PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (Feb 2024) aims at rooftop solar for 1 crore households with up to 300 units of free electricity a month.
Syllabus: GS-III: Energy, renewable energy, employment | GS-VI: UP's energy sector

UP under PM Surya Ghar (as of 13 Nov 2026)



SECTION C — NATIONAL NEWS FOR UPPSC

NATIONAL EPFO approves Systematic Withdrawal Plan; minimum PF balance cut to 10%

UPPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II/GS-III

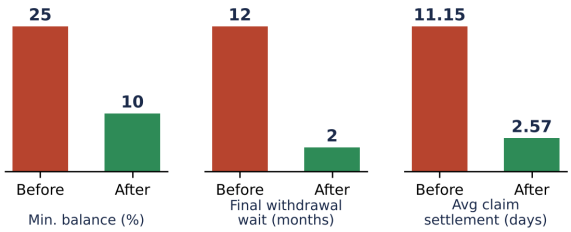
The 240th meeting of the EPFO's Central Board of Trustees, chaired by Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in New Delhi on 19 November, approved major withdrawal reforms.

- **Systematic Withdrawal Plan (SWP)**: retiring members can take PF savings in **monthly, quarterly or half-yearly** instalments instead of a lump sum.
- **Minimum balance** to be retained cut from **25% to 10%**; **waiting period for final withdrawal** after unemployment cut from **12 months to 2 months**.
- On a member's death, the **nominee** can withdraw the balance or continue the payouts.
- Average claim settlement time has fallen from **11.15 days to 2.57 days**.

Why it matters: SWP turns PF into a pension-like income stream, guarding retirees against spending the corpus at once; liquidity gains must be balanced against old-age security.

Concept: EPFO is a statutory body under the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952; the CBT is its apex body, chaired by the Union Labour Minister.
Syllabus: GS-II: Social security | GS-III: Labour reforms, financial inclusion

EPF rules: before vs after 240th CBT meeting



NATIONAL India–Japan deepen defence ties at fourth 2+2 Ministerial in Tokyo

UPPSC: Prelims + Mains GS-II

The defence and foreign ministers of India and Japan met for the fourth 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in Tokyo on 19 November.

- Both sides agreed that **Japanese forces will conduct live-fire training in India**.
- They welcomed **Malabar 2026** (multilateral naval) and **JAIMEX26** (India–Japan maritime exercise), both held **in Japan** this month.
- Focus on defence equipment and technology cooperation and a free, open **Indo-Pacific**.
- Separately, **HARIMAU SHAKTI–VI** (India–Malaysia army exercise, **240 personnel**, counter-terror drills) began in **Malaysia**.

Why it matters: Live-fire training on Indian soil marks a new level of operational trust and strengthens the Quad-linked maritime partnership.

Concept: A 2+2 dialogue brings together the foreign and defence ministers of two countries; India holds such dialogues with the US, Japan, Australia and Russia among others.
Syllabus: GS-II: India and its neighbourhood / bilateral relations | GS-III: Defence

DATA POINT: UP rooftop solar installations under PM Surya Ghar

9,60,586

As of 13 Nov 2026 — the highest of any state, from 13,99,734 applications.

SECTION D — UP RAPID-FIRE

Topic	Key fact
State Cooperative College, Lucknow	4.51 ha at Rahman Khera; to be affiliated to **Tribhuvan Sahkari University** (Gujarat); courses in AI, cybercrime, banking.
Agra stadium	2.476 ha at **Uganpura** gram panchayat (Bah constituency) transferred free to the Sports Department.
Nur Jahan's Sarai	near **Ram Bagh, Agra**: ASI begins conservation with an initial budget of **₹60 lakh**.
Maa Sheetala Dham corridor, Mainpuri	state approves **₹32.61 crore**.
CSJMU, Kanpur	launches **SOUL AI**, a smart library assistant at its central library.
Census 2027 in UP	self-enumeration **16–30 Nov 2026**; house-to-house enumeration **1 Dec 2026 – 4 Jan 2027**.

SECTION E — PRACTICE CORNER

Q1. The Deep Tech U-Hub approved by the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet on 18 November 2026 will be built at:
(a) IIT (BHU), Varanasi
(b) IIT Kanpur's Noida campus
(c) IIIT Lucknow
(d) Vrindavan Yojana IT City, Lucknow

Answer: (b) — The ₹281.03 crore U-Hub building will come up at **IIT Kanpur's Noida campus** in EPC mode within 24 months, fully state-funded. Trap: Vrindavan Yojana (Lucknow) is the site of the separate **AI City** proposal.

Q2. Consider the following about the Modified UDAN tripartite MoU approved by UP: 1. The Centre bears 80% of viability gap funding. 2. VAT on ATF at regional-connectivity airports will be 1% or below. 3. The Airports Authority of India is not a party to the MoU. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a) — VGF is shared **80:20 (Centre:UP)** and ATF VAT is cut to **1% or below**. Statement 3 is wrong — the MoU is tripartite among the **Centre, UP and AAI**.

Mains Practice: Uttar Pradesh aims to raise its urbanisation from about 24.5% to 60% by 2047. Discuss the opportunities and challenges of this target and the role of regional planning bodies such as the State Capital Region. (125 words)

Hint: Intro: current urbanisation, $6 trillion goal. Body: opportunities (agglomeration, jobs, services, SCR + six regional centres, GIS master plans, HSR corridors); challenges (municipal finance, land, housing, eastern-UP lag, environment, weak ULBs under the 74th Amendment). Conclude: balanced, inclusive and climate-resilient urban growth.

ONE-LINE REVISION: AI City = **258.59 acres, Vrindavan Yojana (Lucknow)** | U-Hub = **₹281.03 cr, IIT Kanpur Noida** | Modified UDAN VGF = **80:20** | Dev Deepawali = **24 Nov, 7.5-km Namo-Assi lane** | EPFO SWP: min balance **25%→10%**.

Compiled & simplified by the StudyForGS.com Research Team
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