UPPSC Daily Digest · Uttar Pradesh focus · Prelims + Mains · 11 stories, 7 visuals

Note: Today's (23 Nov) UP items come first. Sections B–C also carry key UP decisions and national events from this week (18–22 Nov 2026).

SECTION A — TODAY IN UP (23 NOV 2026)

UP-INFRA

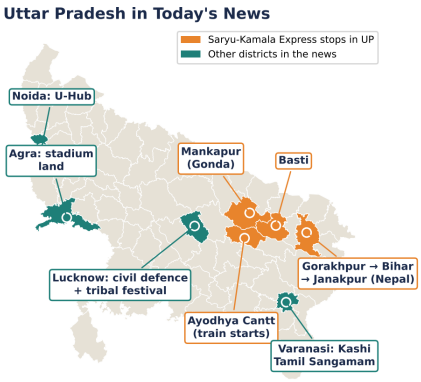
1. Saryu-Kamala Express: new direct Ayodhya–Janakpur train

A new weekly India–Nepal train linking Ayodhya (Lord Ram's birthplace) and Janakpur (Goddess Sita's birthplace) was set for a joint virtual flag-off on 23 Nov 2026.

- **Saryu-Kamala Express**: **Ayodhya Cantt** (UP) ↔ **Janakpur Dham** (Nepal), about **604 km** in about **19 hours**.
- Joint virtual flag-off on **23 Nov** by PM Narendra Modi and Nepal PM **Balendra Shah**; regular **weekly** service from **28 Nov**.
- UP stops: **Mankapur (Gonda), Basti, Gorakhpur**; then Narkatiaganj, Raxaul, Sitamarhi, Madhubani and **Jaynagar** in Bihar.
- **17 LHB coaches** (8 AC, 7 sleeper); aimed at the **Ramayana circuit** and pilgrim travel.

Why it matters: Links Awadh with Mithila — a UP-centred example of 'Neighbourhood First' and heritage-led tourism. Expect a direct MCQ on the name and the two terminals.

Static link: The name pairs the Saryu (Ayodhya) with the Kamala river, which flows from Nepal's Mithila region into Bihar.
Syllabus: GS-II India–Nepal relations; GS-III Railways & tourism; GS-V UP infrastructure and religious tourism



Schematic; not to scale. District boundaries: Uttar Pradesh (state-level only).

UP-GOVERNANCE

2. Civil defence network now in all 75 districts after statewide blackout drill

At the Air Raid & Blackout Mock Exercise-2026 at Reserve Police Lines, Lucknow, the CM said UP's civil defence system now covers every district (reported 23 Nov).

- Drill held simultaneously in all **75 districts** from **6 pm on 22 Nov**: sirens, blackout, evacuation and rescue with **NDRF, SDRF** and UP Police.
- About **1 lakh volunteers** (**1,01,362**) prepared; **1,08,627** citizens, students, NCC/NSS cadets and Home Guards trained so far.
- **60 new district units** created; air sirens installed in every district.
- Civil defence began after the **1962 India–China war**; expansion to all districts followed **Operation Sindoor** (2025).

Why it matters: Moves preparedness from a few districts to every district — a ready example for Mains answers on disaster management and community-based response.

Static link: Civil defence in India is governed by the Civil Defence Act, 1968; the nodal ministry is the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
Syllabus: GS-III Disaster management & internal security; GS-VI UP administration



UP-CULTURE

3. Janjatiya Bhagidari Utsav opens in Lucknow (23–26 Nov)

A four-day tribal festival tied to Bhagwan Birsa Munda's birth anniversary began at UP Darshan Park, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow.

- Dates **23–26 Nov 2026**; **500+ artists**; UP tribal troupes from **Sonbhadra, Lakhimpur Kheri, Bijnor, Chitrakoot and Prayagraj**.
- Foreign troupes from **Kazakhstan, Zimbabwe and Maldives** perform on 25–26 Nov.
- Organisers include the Culture Directorate, UP Lok evam Janjati Sanskriti Sansthan and the **Tribal Research Institute, Lucknow**.
- Jharkhand's play **'Dharti Aaba'** on Birsa Munda's life on the last two days.

Why it matters: Brings UP's tribal heritage (Tharu, Gond, Kharwar and others) into focus — link it with static questions on UP's tribes and their districts.

Static link: Birsa Munda (born 15 Nov 1875) is called 'Dharti Aaba'; 15 Nov is observed as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas since 2021.
Syllabus: GS-I Indian culture & tribes; GS-V UP art, culture and tribal communities

SECTION B — KEY UP DEVELOPMENTS (THIS WEEK)

UP-INFRA

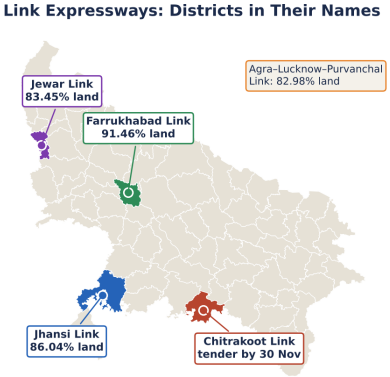
4. CM sets deadlines for link expressways and logistics hub

At a review at the State Transformation Commission, Lucknow on 22 Nov, the CM directed that expressway and industrial projects be completed on time.

- Land acquired: **Farrukhabad Link 91.46%**, **Jhansi Link 86.04%**, **Jewar Link 83.45%**, **Agra–Lucknow–Purvanchal Link 82.98%**.
- **Chitrakoot Link Expressway** tender to be finalised by **30 Nov**.
- Speed up land acquisition for **Meerut–Haridwar**, **Vindhya Expressway** and **Vindhya–Purvanchal spur**.
- **Greater Noida Multi-Modal Logistics Hub** financial bids within two weeks; **3,10,437** outsourced staff in **88 departments** to be paid on time.

Why it matters: Link expressways feed the main grid (Agra–Lucknow, Purvanchal, Bundelkhand, Ganga) and carry industry into lagging regions — learn which link serves which region.

Static link: UPEIDA is the nodal agency for UP's expressways; the 296 km Bundelkhand Expressway (Chitrakoot–Etawah) opened in July 2022.
Syllabus: GS-III Infrastructure & investment models; GS-VI UP expressways, industrial development



Schematic; not to scale. Districts highlighted, routes not drawn. State-level boundaries only.

UP-SCHEME

5. ₹281.03 crore Deep Tech U-Hub at IIT Kanpur's Noida campus

The UP Cabinet (18 Nov) approved 30 of 31 proposals; the headline project is a state-funded deep-tech innovation hub.

- Cost **₹281.03 crore**, **EPC** mode, completion in **24 months**.
- **₹100 crore** in 2026-27 (₹30 crore capital + ₹70 crore revenue); the **Centre has no financial share**.
- To run as a registered **Section 8 company**; about 4 lakh sq ft on 12 floors, with a presence in Noida and Lucknow.

Why it matters: Anchors UP's startup and deep-tech push in the NCR cluster — a strong example for Mains on state-led innovation ecosystems.

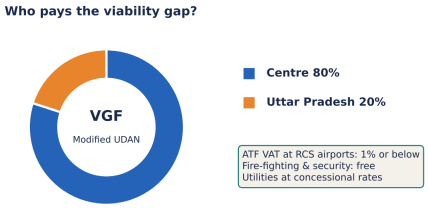
Static link: A Section 8 company (Companies Act, 2013) is a not-for-profit company; IIT Kanpur was set up in 1959.
Syllabus: GS-III Science & technology, startups; GS-VI UP industrial and innovation policy

UP-INFRA

6. Modified UDAN: Centre–UP–AAI tripartite MoU, ATF VAT cut

The same Cabinet approved UP's participation in the Modified UDAN regional air connectivity scheme.

- Tripartite MoU among the **Centre, UP Government and Airports Authority of India (AAI)**.
- Viability Gap Funding (VGF) split: **Centre 80% : State 20%**.
- **VAT on ATF** at regional connectivity airports cut to **1% or below**; free fire-fighting and security; utilities at concessional rates.
- **Director, Civil Aviation, UP** authorised to sign the MoU.



Why it matters: Lower operating costs make small-city routes viable — expect questions on the VGF ratio and ATF VAT.

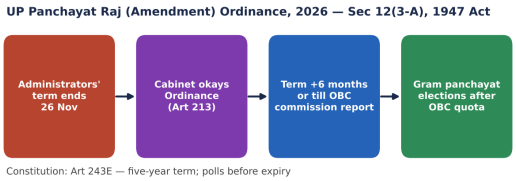
Static link: UDAN ('Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik') is the Regional Connectivity Scheme under the National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016; first flight Shimla–Delhi on 27 Apr 2017.
Syllabus: GS-III Civil aviation & regional connectivity; GS-VI UP infrastructure

UP-GOVERNANCE

7. Ordinance extends gram panchayat administrators' term by 6 months

The Cabinet approved an ordinance so that gram panchayats keep functioning while the OBC reservation exercise is completed; polls stand deferred.

- **UP Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026** amends **Section 12(3-A)** of the **UP Panchayat Raj Act, 1947**; issued under **Article 213**.
- Administrators' term ending **26 Nov** extended by **6 months** — or until the **Dedicated Backward Classes Commission** report, whichever is earlier.
- Reason: assessment of backwardness for OBC quota not complete.
- The **Allahabad High Court** had earlier directed that the polls be held within three months.



Why it matters: A ready polity link: state ordinance (Art 213), Art 243E on the five-year term, and the 'triple test' for OBC quota in local bodies.

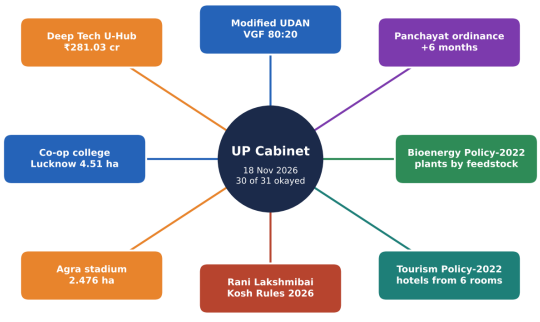
Static link: Art 243E: a panchayat's term is five years and elections must be completed before it expires; the 'triple test' comes from the Supreme Court's 2021 Vikas Kishanrao Gawali judgment.
Syllabus: GS-II Panchayati Raj, ordinance power of Governor; GS-V UP Panchayati Raj system

UP-SCHEME

8. Cabinet amends Bioenergy and Tourism policies; new victim-relief rules

The 18 Nov Cabinet also changed two 2022 sector policies and notified compensation rules for women and child victims.

- **UP State Bioenergy Policy-2022** amended: number of biogas plants per tehsil/district now tied to local feedstock (earlier one per tehsil); CBG from **paddy straw and press mud**.
- **UP Tourism Policy-2022** amended: budget hotels with as few as **6 rooms** now eligible; homestays, farm stays, B&B, food trails and highway rest stops supported.
- **Rani Lakshmibai Mahila Evam Bal Samman Kosh Rules, 2026** align the 2015 framework with **NALSA's 2018** compensation scheme for women victims.



Why it matters: One Cabinet, many sectors — ideal for 'match the policy' MCQs; the bioenergy change also turns crop residue into fuel instead of stubble burning.

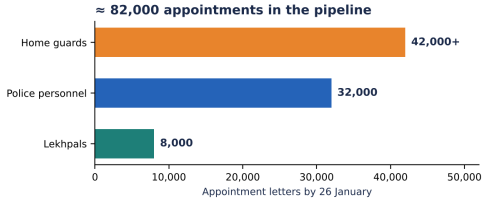
Static link: Press mud is the filter cake left by sugar mills; UP is India's largest sugarcane-producing state.
Syllabus: GS-III Renewable energy, tourism; GS-II Welfare of women & children; GS-VI UP state policies

UP-SCHEME

9. 82,000 appointment letters by 26 January; tablet scheme phase 2

At Gorakhpur (20 Nov), the CM distributed tablets under phase 2 of the Swami Vivekananda Yuva Sashaktikaran Yojana and announced appointment timelines.

- Letters by **26 January** for about **82,000**: **8,000 lekhpals, 32,000 police personnel, 42,000+ home guards**.
- Phase 2 target: **25 lakh tablets**; phase 1 gave **60 lakh** tablets/smartphones.
- A **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Skilling & Employment Zone** in every district, with Japanese and German language training.
- Paper-leak offences: up to **life imprisonment** and fine up to **₹1 crore**.



Why it matters: Links digital access with employability and exam integrity — useful for Mains on youth policy and recruitment reform.

Static link: The penalty comes from the UP Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024.
Syllabus: GS-II Welfare schemes for youth; GS-III Employment & skilling; GS-VI UP schemes

SECTION C — NATIONAL NEWS RELEVANT FOR UPPSC

NATIONAL

10. Nepal PM Balendra Shah's first bilateral visit to India

Nepal's PM held talks with PM Modi in New Delhi during a two-day state visit.

- State visit **22–23 Nov 2026** — his first bilateral foreign visit since becoming PM in **March 2026**.
- Ceremonial welcome at Rashtrapati Bhavan; talks at **Hyderabad House**.
- Agenda: hydropower, trade, connectivity, air routes; a **$2 billion** development package under discussion (not finalised).
- Rail links in focus: Jaynagar–Bijalpura–Bardibas, Jogbani–Biratnagar and the proposed **Raxaul–Kathmandu** line.

Why it matters: Seven UP districts touch Nepal (Pilibhit to Maharajganj), so open-border trade, pilgrim traffic and river management make this directly relevant for UP.

Static link: The India–Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950 underpins the open border.
Syllabus: GS-II India and its neighbourhood; UP–Nepal border issues

NATIONAL

11. First SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum held in New Delhi

India hosted the first-ever SCO forum on shared civilisational heritage.

- Held **20–22 Nov 2026** at **Purana Qila**, New Delhi; inaugurated by PM Modi on 20 Nov.
- Follows India's proposal at the **2025 SCO Summit in Tianjin**, China.
- Opening show theme **'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'**; exhibitions 'ASTITVA' and 'Mahabharat Scroll Pavilion – Anant'.

Why it matters: Shows culture as a foreign-policy tool within SCO — a handy Mains example of India's soft power.

Static link: SCO was founded in 2001 at Shanghai; its Secretariat is in Beijing; India became a full member in 2017.
Syllabus: GS-II Regional groupings; GS-I Indian heritage and soft power

SECTION D — UP RAPID-FIRE

Topic	Key fact
Kashi Tamil Sangamam 5.0	**28 Nov–12 Dec 2026**; theme 'Thirukkural Payilvom – Thirukkural Abhyas Karen'; Ministry of Education; tour covers **Varanasi, Prayagraj, Ayodhya**
45th IITF, Bharat Mandapam	**14–27 Nov 2026**, theme '**Vikas aur Virasat**'; **UP** is a partner state with Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan
Jhalkari Bai Jayanti (22 Nov)	Born **22 Nov 1830**, Bhojla village near **Jhansi**; served in Rani Lakshmibai's women's wing (Durga Dal)
Agra – sports stadium	**2.476 ha** at Uganpura gram panchayat (**Bah**, Agra) given free to the Sports Department
Lucknow – Cooperative College	**4.51 ha** at Rahman Khera; courses incl. AI, cybercrime, banking; affiliated to **Tribhuvan Sahkari University**, Gujarat

SECTION E — PRACTICE CORNER

Q1. The 'Saryu-Kamala Express', set for flag-off on 23 November 2026, connects which of the following pairs?
(a) Varanasi – Kathmandu (b) Ayodhya Cantt – Janakpur Dham (c) Gorakhpur – Lumbini (d) Ayodhya – Birgunj
Answer: (b) — The weekly train runs about 604 km between Ayodhya Cantt (UP) and Janakpur Dham (Nepal), linking the birthplaces of Lord Ram and Goddess Sita.

Q2. With reference to the UP Cabinet decisions of November 2026, consider the following statements: 1. Under Modified UDAN, the Centre bears 80% and the State 20% of viability gap funding. 2. The Deep Tech U-Hub at IIT Kanpur's Noida campus will be funded equally by the Centre and the State. 3. The panchayat ordinance amends the UP Panchayat Raj Act, 1947. Which of the statements given above are correct?
(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 3 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3
Answer: (b) — Statement 2 is wrong: the ₹281.03 crore U-Hub is fully state-funded and the Centre has no financial share. Statements 1 (VGF 80:20) and 3 (amends Section 12(3-A) of the 1947 Act) are correct.

Mains practice (GS-III / UP-special GS-VI): Uttar Pradesh is extending its expressway grid through link expressways such as Jhansi, Chitrakoot, Farrukhabad and Jewar. Discuss how these can reduce regional disparities between western UP, Bundelkhand and Purvanchal, and the challenges involved. (200 words)
Hint: *Use today's land-acquisition figures; link to logistics hubs, ODOP market access and industrial nodes; challenges — land acquisition, ecology, induced industrialisation, maintenance costs; conclude with balanced regional growth.*

ONE-LINE REVISION: Saryu-Kamala = Ayodhya Cantt–Janakpur Dham, 604 km | Civil defence in all 75 districts | Farrukhabad Link 91.46% land | U-Hub ₹281.03 cr | UDAN VGF 80:20 | Panchayat administrators +6 months

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