



STATE PCS CA

(CONSOLIDATION)

UTTARAKHAND

**MARCH
2024**

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Human-Wildlife Conflict in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

According to the State Forest Minister Subodh Uniyal, **444 people** in the Himalayan state have **lost their lives to human-wildlife conflict** since 2017.

Key Points

- The victims were killed in attacks by **leopards, tigers, bears, snakes, elephants and crocodiles** among others.

- A total of Rs 21.3 crore has been disbursed to family members of the victims.
- In addition to increasing the compensation amount for victims, it is for the first time that the state has made the provision to give **ex-gratia** to those attacked by **honeybee, hornet, monkey and langur**.
- **Ex-gratia payment** is the money which is paid due to moral obligation and not due to legal obligation.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT



When encounters between humans and wildlife lead to negative results, such as loss of property, livelihoods, and even life

Causes of HWC

- Agricultural Expansion
- Urbanization
- Infrastructure Development
- Climate Change
- Wildlife Populations Growth and Range Expansion

Impacts of HWC

- Grave injuries, Loss of life
- Damage to farms and crops
- ↑ violence against animals

WWF India during 2003-2004 developed the Sonitpur Model by which community members were connected with Assam Forest Dept and given training on how to drive elephants away from crop fields and human habitations safely.

In 2020, the SC upheld Madras HC's decision on the Nilgiris elephant corridor, affirming the right of passage of the animals and closure of resorts in the area.

Data on HWC

- Tigers killed 125 humans between 2019 and 2021
- Death of 329 tigers due to poaching, natural and unnatural causes.
- Elephants killed 1,579 humans in three years
- Death of 307 elephants due to poaching, electrocution, poisoning and train accidents

Advisory for HWC Management (Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife)

- Gram Panchayats empowered to deal with problematic wild animals (WPA 1972)
- Compensation against crop damage due to HWC (PM Fasal Bima Yojna)
- Local/State depts. to adopt early warning systems and create barriers
- Paying a part of ex-gratia as interim relief within 24 hours of the incident to the victim/family

State – Specific Initiatives

- **UP** - Man-animal conflict under **listed disasters** (in State Disaster Response Fund)
- **Uttarakhand** - **Bio-fencing** carried out by growing various species of plants in areas
- **Odisha** - Casting **seed balls** inside different forests to **enrich food stock for wild elephants**



Note:

Inauguration of New Heli Service in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

Recently, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama inaugurated **heli service in Uttarakhand** to boost connectivity within the state.

Key Points

- The newly launched helicopter service will **link Haldwani with Munsiyari, Pithoragarh, and Champawat.**
- This initiative is a part of the **Regional Connectivity Scheme** which aims to reduce the distance between these remote regions.
- Due to Uttarakhand's challenging terrains, aerial connectivity will help with both everyday travel and critical emergency response capabilities.
- This launch follows the recent inauguration of a new terminal building at **Jolly Grant Airport.**
- **Upcoming air routes** were also announced, including **Dehradun to Amritsar, Dehradun to Pantnagar, and Dehradun to Ayodhya.**

Regional Connectivity Scheme: UDAN

- **About:**
 - **UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagarik)** was launched by the Ministry of Civil Aviation for regional airport development and **regional connectivity enhancement.**
 - It is a part of the **National Civil Aviation Policy 2016.**
 - The scheme is applicable for a **period of 10 years.**
- **Phases:**
 - **Phase 1** was launched in 2017, with the objective of connecting underserved and unserved airports in the country.
 - **Phase 2** was launched in 2018, with the aim of expanding air connectivity to more remote and inaccessible parts of the country.
 - **Phase 3** was launched in November 2018, with the focus on enhancing air connectivity to hilly and remote regions of the country.

- **Phase 4** of the UDAN scheme was launched in December 2019, with a focus on connecting islands and other remote areas of the country.
- **Phase 5** was launched in April 2023, with a focus on **Category-2 (20-80 seats) and Category-3 (>80 seats) aircrafts with no restriction on the distance** between the origin and the destination of the flight.

Infrastructure Projects in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

According to the official sources, the Centre released **Rs 559 crore for 33 infrastructure projects** in the state.

Key Points

- A letter from the assistant director of the finance ministry stated that the amount has been granted as part of an additional allocation under Part-I of the **'Scheme for special assistance to states for capital investment 2023-24'** for the state.
 - Rs 26 crore has been earmarked for construction of a tunnel parking facility near the popular tourist spot of Kempty Fall.
 - Rs 10.8 crore has been released for development of an inter- state bus terminal at Herbertpur on the outskirts of Dehradun.
 - Rs 17 crore has been allocated for façade enhancement of Mall Road in Mussoorie, while Rs 20 crore is designated for strengthening the police force.
 - Rs 100 crore has been allocated for enhancing health infrastructure at Haridwar Medical College, with Rs 51 crore earmarked for construction of Shaurya Sthal in Dehradun.
 - Rs 88 crore has been allocated for the Song Dam Multipurpose project and Rs 25 crore has been designated for construction of residential buildings for cops in Udham Singh Nagar, Haridwar, and Dehradun.

Note:

Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment Scheme

- The Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure was launched in FY 2020-21 in the wake of **Covid-19 Pandemic**.
- The scheme has been expanded and continued as 'Scheme for Special Assistance to States for **Capital Investment 2023-24**' with allocation of **Rs 1.3-lakh crore**.

Tiger Safari Banned in Jim Corbett

Why in News?

Recently, the Supreme Court reprimanded the Uttarakhand government for its involvement in the felling of trees and unauthorised construction activities within the [Jim Corbett National Park](#).

Key Points

- According to the Supreme Court a committee will look into whether **tiger safaris can be permitted in buffer or fringe areas of national parks** in the country.
- The apex court also directed the Centre to establish a **committee tasked with proposing measures to alleviate the environmental damage** caused and to seek **reimbursement from those accountable**.
- The Supreme Court pulled up the government over unprecedented felling of trees and environmental damage in the Tiger reserve. It has asked for a **status report on illegal construction, felling of trees** in Corbett within three months.
- Earlier in January, the Supreme Court had dismissed the [National Tiger Conservation Authority's \(NTCA\)](#) proposal to establish a tiger safari within national parks, emphasizing the need for an **"animal-centric" approach over a "tourism-centric" one**.
- The Court's stance underscores the importance of **prioritizing the welfare and conservation of wildlife within national parks**, reaffirming the principle of maintaining natural habitats for animals over tourist attractions.

Jim Corbett National Park

- It is located in the **Nainital district of Uttarakhand**. The **Project Tiger** was launched in 1973 in **Corbett National Park (first National Park of India)**, which is part of Corbett Tiger Reserve.
 - The national park was established in 1936 as Hailey National Park to protect the endangered Bengal tiger.
 - It is named after Jim Corbett who played a key role in its establishment.
- The core area forms the **Corbett National Park while the buffer contains reserve forests** as well as the Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The entire area of the reserve is mountainous and falls in the Shivalik and Outer Himalaya geological provinces.
- **Ramganga, Sonanadi, Mandal, Palain and Kosi** are the major rivers flowing through the Reserve.
- Sprawling over **500 square kilometres**, CTR is home to 230 tigers and has the world's highest tiger density — at 14 tigers per hundred square kilometres.

National Tiger Conservation Authority's (NTCA)

- National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change**.
- It was established in **2005** following the recommendations of the Tiger Task Force.
- It was constituted under enabling provisions of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, as amended in 2006, for strengthening tiger conservation, as per powers and functions assigned to it.

Fast-Growing Glacial Lake in Uttarakhand Himalayas Raises Worries

Why in News?

According to the scientists at Dehradun-based **Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG)**, the **Bhilangana glacial lake** situated in the [Bhagirathi catchment](#) has grown to about 0.38 sq km area in the last 47 years and can pose a potential threat to people downstream.

Note:

Key Points

- **Glacial lakes** form when the vast sheet of glaciers **starts melting** and the melt water gets accumulated.
 - As the global temperatures rise and climate change intensifies, many of the glaciers have also begun to withdraw at a rapid rate, triggering the formation of numerous such glacial lakes, which, if unstable, can send torrents of water downstream and wreak **disastrous floods**.
- Studies show that over a thousand such glacial lakes have formed in the Uttarakhand Himalayas, but their understanding is limited due to lack of adequate ground-based studies.
 - **13 such glacial lakes are identified in Uttarakhand** that are **moraine-dammed lakes** and around ten glaciers which are being continuously monitored, as they may pose threat to people downstream.
 - Similar to this was experienced in **2013 in Kedarnath, 2021 in the Rishiganga- Dhauliganga glacial avalanche**, and more recently in **Sikkim's South Lhonak Lake**.
- According to the **Geological Survey of India (GSI)**, there are about 9,575 glaciers in the **Indian Himalayan Region (IHR)**, only 980 of them lie in the north-western state of Uttarakhand and the most sensitive ones are being continuously monitored by the team.
- The largest glacier in Uttarakhand Himalayas, **Gangotri Glacier** with a length of nearly 30 kms is retreating at a rate of about 15-20 metres per year.

Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG)

- The Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology is an **autonomous research Institute of the Department of Science & Technology**.
- Established in June, 1968 as a small nucleus in two rooms of the Botany Department, Delhi University, the Institute was shifted to DehraDun during April, 1976.

Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF)

- It is a type of catastrophic flood that occurs when the **dam containing a glacial lake fails**, releasing a large volume of water.

- This type of flood is **typically caused by rapid melting of glaciers or the buildup of water** in the lake due to heavy precipitation or the inflow of meltwater.
- In February 2021, **Chamoli district in Uttarakhand witnessed flash floods** which are **suspected to have been caused by GLOFs**.
- **Causes:**
 - These floods can be triggered by a number of factors, including **changes in the volume of the glacier**, changes in the **water level of the lake**, and **earthquakes**.
 - According to **NDMA (National Disaster Management Authority)**, **glacial retreat due to climate change** occurring in most parts of the **Hindu Kush Himalayas** has given rise to the formation of numerous new glacial lakes, which are the major cause of GLOFs.

Moraine-Dammed Lake

- A moraine-dammed lake occurs when the **terminal moraine** has prevented some **meltwater** from leaving the valley.
- When a glacier retreats, there is a space left over between the retreating glacier and the piece that stayed intact which holds leftover debris (**moraine**).
- Meltwater from both glaciers seep into this space creating a ribbon-shaped lake due to the pattern of ice melt.
- This ice melt may cause a glacier lake outburst flood, leading to severe damage to the environment and communities nearby.

India to Deploy Soldiers Along Border with China in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

The Indian government has freed a strong contingent of **10,000 soldiers** to strengthen its disputed border with China.

Note:



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Key Points

- It is supposed to be deployed to guard the strategically important 532 km (330.57 miles) stretch of the **Indo-China border** in the northern states of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.
- The unprecedented deployment of troops highlights both the **region's strategic importance** and its growing sensitivity in the eyes of India's leaders.
- The area has seen huge infrastructure investment and development in the last decade.
 - In 2021, India repositioned an additional **50,000 soldiers to patrol its border** along with China, after a deadly **border clash in 2020 that left at least 20 Indian soldiers dead at the Galwan area of Eastern Ladakh.**

Uttarakhand Government to Constitute Committee to Prepare for Char Dham Yatra

Why in News?

Recently, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami directed officials to constitute a committee to prepare for the upcoming **Char Dham Yatra.**

Key Points

- The CM also instructed officials:
 - **CCTV** should be installed on Char Dham routes and sensitive areas.
 - **Live monitoring of all the Char Dhams** should be done from the government level and the **disaster control room** should be operated properly.
 - To ensure a **plastic-free Char Dham yatra.**
 - **24-hour power supply** should be ensured in all the Dhams. Streetlights should also be installed on routes.
 - Along with the deployment of **medical and requisite staff**, arrangements should be made for life-saving medicines, equipment, portable oxygen cylinders

and ambulances/air ambulances in temporary medical centres on the yatra routes.

- To prevent diseases in horses and mules, **veterinarians should be deployed on the routes.**
- Arrangements should be made for **deployment of security forces.**
- Police officers of the rank of additional superintendent and above should be appointed to manage traffic during the pilgrimage period.

Note:

➤ Yamunotri Dham:

- **Location:** Uttarkashi district.
- **Dedicated to:** Goddess Yamuna.
- River Yamuna is the second-most sacred river in India after River Ganga.

➤ Gangotri Dham:

- **Location:** Uttarkashi district.
- **Dedicated to:** Goddess Ganga.
- Considered the most sacred of all Indian rivers.

➤ Kedarnath Dham:

- **Location:** Rudraprayag district.
- **Dedicated to:** Lord Shiva.
- Situated on the bank of the Mandakini River.
- One of the 12 Jyotirlingas (divine representations of Lord Shiva) in India.

➤ Badrinath Dham:

- **Location:** Chamoli district.
- Home to the sacred Badrinarayan Temple.
- **Dedicated to:** Lord Vishnu.
- One of the holy shrines for Vaishnavites.

Uttarakhand Launches Projects Worth Rs 8,000 Crore

Why in News?

Recently, Uttarakhand Chief Minister virtually launched **122 projects worth Rs 8,275.51 crore.**

Note:

Key Points

- Among these, Rs 1048.15 crore's worth of projects from 11 departments were inaugurated, while foundation stones were laid for Rs 7227.36 crore's worth of schemes from 15 departments.
- The CM marked the introduction of **prepaid meters by the energy department** and **distributed tool kits to registered workers** under the **Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board**.
- He distributed allotment letters for **solar energy** projects among entrepreneurs and beneficiaries of the **Mukhyamantri Solar Swarozgar Yojana**.
- In pursuit of enhancing Uttarakhand's economic prowess, the CM outlined plans to double the **Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)** within **five years**.
 - He articulated strategies to foster **innovation and best practices** at the district level by 2025.

Mukhyamantri Solar Swarozgar Yojana

- Uttarakhand launched the Mukhya Mantri Saur Swarozgar Yojana for **self-employment by solar energy farming**.
- The **aim of the scheme** is to promote the **production of green energy** and to **provide self-employment opportunities** to the youth of the State and returning migrants.
- Each beneficiary of this scheme will be allocated solar plants of **25 kilowatts**.

Hundreds Turn Up To Save Trees In Uttarakhand

Why in News?

Recently, hundreds of men, women and children gathered at the holy **Jageshwar Dham** in **Almora district of Uttarakhand** to tie **raksha sutra** (thread for protection) around the region's famous Himalayan **cedar trees (Cedrus Deodara)**.

Key Points

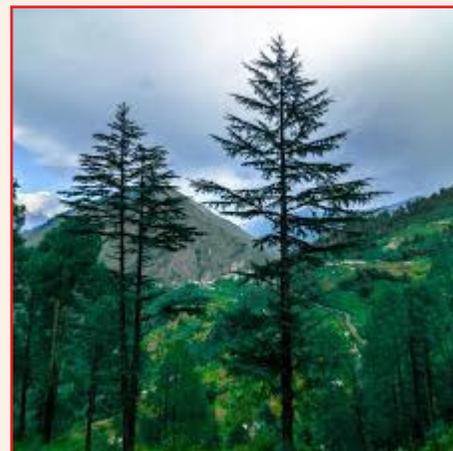
- Some of the **trees are over 500 years** old and they surround one of the largest clusters of 125 temples within one complex in the world, situated at 1,870 metres above sea level.
- The raksha sutra was tied around more than 1,000 trees that were to be axed for a road widening project

under the State government's '**Manas Khand Mandir Mala Mission**' that aims to improve connectivity to about 50 temples in Uttarakhand.

- It is similar to the famous **Chipko movement of the 1970s** to protect Uttarakhand's forests from the increasing destruction due to rapid **industrialisation**.
- This is not the first time that the State government had drawn criticism for its allegedly reckless cutting of trees to aid development in Jageshwar.
 - The **Uttarakhand High Court in September 2018** had **banned all construction activities around the temple site** until the government framed building bylaws.
 - The HC, taking **suo motu cognisance** of the "unplanned and unauthorised" construction around the Jageshwar temple complex, also ordered to stop the construction of the Aartola-Jageshwar road.

Cedar Trees

- *Cedrus deodara*, commonly known as the deodar cedar, is a **species of coniferous tree** native to the **western Himalayas**. It is **highly valued for its timber** and is widely cultivated for its ornamental beauty.
- These trees are adapted to cold climates and are often **found at higher elevations**.
- They are well-suited to **temperate and subalpine climates**.
- Deodar Cedars are often used in landscaping and as ornamental trees in parks and gardens due to their attractive, pyramid-shaped growth and aromatic wood.
- They provide habitat and food for various wildlife, including birds and small mammals.



Note:



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Manaskhand Mandir Mala Mission

- Under the Manaskhand Mandir Mission the government will develop better roads along with **better transportation facilities on the routes of the temples.**
- Development of **hotels and homestay facilities** along the routes of the temples keeping in mind the volume of pilgrims visiting these mandir in the next 25 years.
- Under the **first phase** of the Manaskhand Mandir Mala Mission, **16 identified temples in the Kumaon division will be developed.**
- Under the Manaskhand Temple Mala Mission following temples has been identified:
 - Jageshwar Mahadev Temple in Almora
 - Chitai Golu Temple
 - Suryadev Temple Katarmal,
 - Kasar Devi Temple
 - Nanda Devi Temple
 - Patal Bhuvaneshwar Temple in Pithoragarh
 - Haat Kalika Temple
 - Bagnath Temple in Bageshwar
 - Baijnath Temple
 - Patal Rudreshwar in Champawat
 - Maa Purnagiri Temple
 - Maa Barahi Devi Temple
 - Baleshwar Temple
 - Naina Devi Temple in Nainital
 - Kainchi dham Temple and Chaiti Dham Temple in Udham Singh Nagar

Chipko Movement

- It was a **non-violent agitation** which originated in Uttar Pradesh's **Chamoli district** (now Uttarakhand) in **1973.**
- The name of the movement '**chipko**' comes from the word '**embrace**', as the **villagers hugged the trees** and encircled them to prevent being hacked.

- It is best remembered for the **collective mobilisation of women** for the cause of preserving forests, which also brought about a change in attitude regarding their own status in society.
- Its biggest victory was **making people aware of their rights to forests, and how grassroots activism can influence policy-making** regarding ecology and shared natural resources.
- It led to a **ban on commercial felling of trees above 30 degrees slope** and above 1,000 msl (mean sea level) in **1981.**

Uttarakhand Announces Subsidy For Employment-Oriented Industries

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttarakhand government decided to give a subsidy of up to **Rs 100 crore for setting up employment-oriented** industries like hospitals, schools, hotels, film cities across the state.

Key Points

- According to the sources, the minimum investment limit in the hilly areas has been kept at Rs 50 crore and Rs 100 crore for the plains.
 - The industrial institutions to be established under this policy will be given a subsidy of **25 % of the total cost or a maximum of Rs 100 crore.**
 - The **subsidy will be given in five phases** after the completion of the project.
 - This policy will **remain in force in the state till December 31, 2030.**
- Under the **Atal Ayushman Yojana**, **100% medical reimbursement** has been approved for availing dialysis.
- The cabinet has also approved the operation of the Cancer Hospital in Harrawala and the Mother-Child Medical Institute through the **Public Private Partnership (PPP).**

Note:

- Under the Higher Education Department, approval has been given to provide a scholarship of Rs 5000 per month to 100 meritorious students doing PhD.

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri — Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)

- It is the **world's largest health insurance scheme** fully financed by the government.
- Launched in February 2018, it offers a sum insured of **Rs.5 lakh per family for secondary care and tertiary care.**
 - Health Benefit Packages covers surgery, medical and day care treatments, cost of medicines and diagnostics.

Asian Development Bank Approves Funding Developmental Projects in Tehri

Why in News?

Recently, **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has approved a funding of Rs 1,294 crore for various development projects in **Tehri district**.

Key Points

- The projects will be funded in a ratio of 80:20 with **ADB bearing 80% of the expenditure** and the **Uttarakhand government bearing 20%** of the expenses.
- In order to promote a sustainable, inclusive and climate resilient tourism development of designated areas in Tehri, the state government decided to develop the Tehri dam reservoir and surrounding areas as a special tourist area.
 - After which the **Tehri Special Area Development Authority (TADA)** was established under the **Tehri Special Area Development Act, 2013**.
 - This was followed by a series of consultations with the Department of Economic Affairs, Government of India and proposals to ADB, which has now fructified with a project management unit to oversee the implementation of the entire project.

- **Seven projects** have been identified to be accomplished on priority basis which include
 - A 15.7 kilometre tourism road from Koti Colony to **Dobra Chanthi bridge** which will have dedicated cycling track, view points and dedicated hawker area,
 - A 450 metre glass bottom pedestrian suspension bridge from Koti Colony to Tiwar village,
 - A cultural haat and Uttarakhand architecture theme park at **Dobra-Chanthi**,
 - Upgradation of village infrastructure at Tiwar village and new **ropeway project at Tipri-Madan Negi**.
- The project is **aimed at development of tourism infrastructure with focus also on** enhancement of green cover, livelihood generation, solid and liquid waste management and minimal disruption to the natural and socio-cultural environment.
- A total of 56 positions have been sanctioned for the project including engineers, architects, environment experts, gender experts and community experts who will ensure that the developmental activities are in line with internationally accepted environmental and socio-cultural standards.
- The **overall project will also include smart infrastructure improvement** with interventions like weather monitoring system, environmental data collection and establishment of an integrated command control centre.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- ADB, established in **1966** is owned by 68 members-49 from the region.
- It is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.
- Further, it **assists members and partners by providing** loans, technical assistance, grants, and equity investments to promote social and economic development.
- It aims to promote social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific.
- As of 31st December, 2019, **ADB's five largest shareholders are** Japan and the United States (each with 15.6% of total shares), the People's Republic of China (6.4%), India (6.3%), and Australia (5.8%).
- It is headquartered in **Manila, Philippines**.

Note:

UCC in Uttarakhand Gets President's Assent

Why in News?

The **Uniform Civil Code Bill**, passed by the **Uttarakhand Assembly** has become a law with **President Droupadi Murmu** giving her assent to it.

- Uttarakhand is the **first state in the country after Independence to adopt the UCC.**

Key Points

- The President gave her assent to the **Uniform Civil Code**, Uttarakhand, 2024 under **Article 201** of the Constitution of India.
- UCC will play an important role in **promoting harmony** by proving the importance of social equality.
- With its implementation in the state alongside providing equal rights to all citizens, the **oppression of women will also be curbed.**

Uniform Civil Code

- The Uniform Civil Code is **mentioned in Article 44 of the Indian Constitution**, which is part of the **Directive Principles of State Policy.**
- These principles are **not legally enforceable but are meant to guide the state** in making policies.
 - It has been supported by some as a way to **promote national integration and gender justice, but opposed by others as a threat to religious freedom and diversity.**
- The **only state in India that has a UCC is Goa**, which retained its common family law **known as the Goa Civil Code** after it was liberated from Portuguese rule in 1961.
- The **rest of India follows different personal laws** based on their religious or community identity.

Article 201

- It states that when a Bill is reserved for the consideration of the President, the **President may assent to or withhold assent** from the Bill.
- The President may also direct the Governor to return the Bill to the House or Houses of the Legislature of the State for reconsideration.

Gartang Gali

Why in News?

Gartang Gali in Uttarakhand was used as a **Silk Road trade route between India and Tibet.**

Key Points

- It is located in the **Nelong Valley in Uttarkashi district**, Uttarakhand. It also stands out as a unique tourist attraction.
- Situated in the remote corners of Uttarakhand, Gartang Gali offers a secluded retreat **away from the bustling tourist circuits.**
 - It's **off-the-beaten-path location** appeals to travellers seeking authentic experiences and tranquility amidst nature.
 - The village is inhabited by the **Bhotiya tribe**, an indigenous community known for their resilience, traditional way of life, and cultural heritage.
- Gartang Gali historically served as a crucial trade route **connecting the Indian subcontinent with Tibet and Central Asia.**
- Traders traversed through this mountain pass, facilitating the **exchange of goods, ideas, and cultural influences between different regions.**
- The Gartang Gali cliff-side hanging-stairway, also known as the **Gartang Gali bridge**, spans 500 metres along a vertical ridge at 11,000 feet in the Nelong river valley.
 - It was **constructed in traditional native style**, initially by **Pathan traders from Peshawar**, serving as a Silk Road trade route between Tibet and India.
 - Following the **1962 Sino-Indian War**, access was **restricted by the Indian military**, causing the bridge to fall into disrepair.
 - After India **reopened the area for tourism in 2015**, efforts were made to restore the wooden stairway using traditional methods.
 - After 59 years, the **bridge was reopened to the public in August 2021.**

Note:



The Silk Road

- It was a network of ancient commercial routes that **connected East and West from China to the Mediterranean Sea** and served as a major conduit for cultural exchange.
- The flourishing traffic in Chinese silk that took place across its length beginning in the **Han era (207 BCE – 220 CE)** gave rise to the term “Silk Road”. Around 114 BCE, the Han dynasty extended the trade routes through Central Asia, primarily as a result of the travels and missions of **Zhang Qian, a Chinese imperial envoy**.
- As a result of trade along the Silk Road, **long-distance political and economic ties between the civilizations of China, the Indian subcontinent, Persia, Europe, the Horn of Africa, and Arabia were established**.
- Although **silk was undoubtedly the main export from China**, the Silk Routes also saw the **exchange of several other items**, as well as **syncretic ideas, numerous technology, religions, and diseases**. The Silk Road was used by the civilizations along its network to conduct cultural exchange alongside commercial trade.

Bhotiya Tribe

- The Bhotia or Bhotiya are an occupational **caste of shepherds**.
- The Bhotiyas of Uttarakhand are scattered over the **seven main river valleys** in the **three border districts of Pithoragarh, Chamoli and Uttarkashi**.
- The **seven major Bhotiya groups in Uttarakhand** are the Johari, Darmiya, Chaudansi, Byansi, Marchha (Mana Valley), Tolchha (Niti Valley) and Jadh.

Uttarakhand Approved Forest Panchayat Amendment Rules

Why in News?

Recently, in an effort to make **Van (Forest) Panchayats** strong and self-reliant, the Uttarakhand government during a cabinet meeting approved the **Forest Panchayat Amendment Rules**, under which the **British-era ‘Acts of Forest Panchayat’** have been amended.

Key Points

- According to the new rules, a **nine-member forest panchayat** will be formed, which will have the rights to participate in **herbal production, tree planting, water harvesting, forest fire prevention, eco-tourism**.
- For the first time three-tier local bodies have also been linked to the forest management of **Van Panchayat**.
 - The concept of van panchayat- legally demarcated village forests which are managed and its natural resources shared by village communities **introduced in 1921**.
- Uttarakhand is the **only state in India where the van panchayat system is implemented**.
 - It is a historical community forest management organisation which has been operating **since the year 1930**.
 - At present, **11,217 forest panchayats are in the state** of which have 4.52 lakh hectares of forest area.
- The cabinet gave approval to the **‘Uttarakhand Clean Mobility Transformation Policy’** with an aim to **improve public transport in urban areas and reduce pollution** caused by old diesel fueled buses and three wheeler tempos.
 - The policy would be **first implemented in Dehradun** and thereafter extended to other districts.

Uttarakhand Launches Development Schemes in Gopeshwar

Why in News?

Recently, Uttarakhand Chief Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of various **development schemes worth Rs 229.3 crores**.

Key Points

- The development schemes were launched in the **‘Beneficiary Honor Ceremony’** organized at the Police Ground **Gopeshwar in Chamoli district**.
- During the occasion, the Chief Minister also made several announcements for the development of the district, which include:
 - the early completion of the construction work of the Hapla-Dhotidhar motor road,

Note:



- government and financial approval for the construction of motor road from kilometre one of Baitarni-Sirkhoma-Sentuna-Bairagana motor road to Setuna in Dasholi block from Gopeshwar temple road,
- construction of hanging bridge on Ramganga river from Ganganagar Mai temple to Bhairav Tok under Lambagad in Karnaprayag,
- establishment of Gau-Sarakshan Seva in four development blocks in Tharali assembly and approval of Center of Excellence in public interest in Tharali Kulsari.
- The Chief Minister also handed over the keys to beneficiaries of the houses constructed under **Atal Awas Yojana**.
 - Under the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)**, a cheque of 60 thousand was given to Neelam Devi under the second installment.
 - Under the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Rural)**, the keys of the house were given to Sangeeta Devi and Guddi Devi.
- Under the **Chief Minister's Self-Employment Scheme**, Rajeshwari Devi and Narendra Singh were given cheques of contribution amount of Rs 50,000 each.
- Under **women empowerment**, Mandodari Devi was given a **Mahalakshmi kit**.
 - For remarkable work, Yuvak Mangal Dal Bura was given cheques of Rs 75,000 and Mahila Mangal Dal Ala Jokhna was given cheques of incentive amount of Rs 37,500.
 - A cheque of Rs 20 lakh was given to **Devbhoomi Matsya Jeevi Sahakarita Samiti**.

Rise in Income of Uttarakhand Millet Farmers: Study

Why in News?

According to a study by the **Indian Institute of Management, Kashipur**, three out of four millet-growing farmers in Uttarakhand have seen a **10-20% increase** in their annual income owing to the push to **millet farming by the Centre and state government**.

- The study is named "**Millet Production in Uttarakhand: An Empirical Analysis of its Socio-Economic Impact and Marketability Challenges**".

Key Points

- The study conducted on more than 2,100 farmers found that **many of them are still not aware of the increased demand** for millet-based products, and are **still growing it on a smaller scale** for personal consumption only.
- According to the study, 75% of farmers in the state who grow millets have seen an increase in income by 10-20% as the Centre and state government continue to push farming of the crop.
 - The study, however, did not specify the number of millet-growing farmers among the 2,100 who were surveyed.
 - It was conducted by four senior professors and five data collectors of the institute over a period of six months.
- The study was conducted to address the marketability challenges of millet production and identify effective strategies to increase its economic presence.
 - The sample size for the survey was collected from the **major hilly regions of the state, including Pithoragarh, Joshimath, Rudraprayag, and Chamoli**.

Related Initiatives Taken by the Government

- **National Millets Mission (NMM)**: NMM was launched in 2007 to promote the production and consumption of millets.
- **Price Support Scheme (PSS)**: Provides financial assistance to farmers for the cultivation of millets.
- **Development of Value-Added Products**: Encourages the production of value-added millet-based products to increase the demand and consumption of millets.
- **Promoting Millets in PDS**: The government has introduced millets in the **Public Distribution System (PDS)** to make it **accessible and affordable** to the masses.
- **Promotion of Organic Farming**: The government is promoting organic farming of millets to increase the production and consumption of organic millets.

Note:



Millets

About

- Small-grained cereals also known as **coarse grains**
- Often referred to as **'Superfood'**
- Among the **first crops to be domesticated** - evidence of millet consumption dates back to the **Indus Valley Civilisation (3,000 BC)**

Climatic Conditions

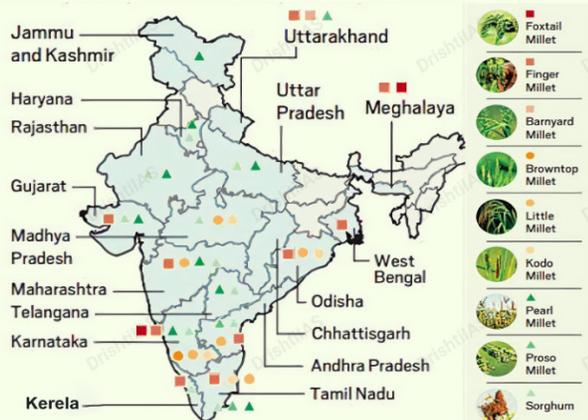
- Mainly a Kharif crop in India**
- Temperature:** 27°C - 32°C
- Rainfall:** Around 50-100 cm
- Soil Type:** Inferior alluvial or loamy soil

India and Millets

- Global Largest Millet Producer:**
 - 20% of global production, 80% of Asia's production
- Common Millets:**
 - Ragi** (Finger millet), **Jowar** (Sorghum), **Sama** (Little millet), **Bajra** (Pearl millet), and **Variga** (Proso millet)
 - Indigenous varieties** (small millets) - **Kodo, Kutki, Chenna and Sanwa**
- Top Millets Producing States:**
 - Rajasthan (largest), Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh
- Govt. Initiatives:**
 - Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millet Promotion (INSIMP)
 - 'India's Wealth, Millets for Health'
 - Millet Startup Innovation Challenge
 - Hiked MSP** for Millets
 - Agriculture Ministry declared millets as **"Nutri Cereals"** in 2018

Significance

- Less expensive, **nutritionally superior**
- High protein, fibre, minerals, iron, calcium and a **low glycemic index**
- Help tackle **lifestyle problems and health** (obesity, diabetes etc.)
- Photo-insensitive, **resilient to climate change & water efficient**



International Year of Millets - Year 2023

Proposed by India, declared by UNGA



Approval Accorded for Infrastructure Development in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA)** has allocated **Rs. 101.27 Crore** to Uttarakhand government for the **development of Educational Infrastructure**.

Key Points

- The Educational institutes would cater to 1,05,818 Lakh population out of which more than **25% belongs to the minority communities**.
- Acknowledging the importance of inclusive and holistic infrastructure during the complete educational journey of students, MoMA has approved these projects for the **Educational infrastructure development in colleges**.
- These facilities signify the importance of higher education, thereby reverberating the contribution of higher education in development of analytical mindset, skill development, career advancement etc., leading to academic and professional growth of youth of the state.

Constitutional Provisions for Minority

- **Article 29:**
 - It provides that any section of the citizens residing in any part of India having a distinct language, script or culture of its own, **shall have the right to conserve the same**.
 - It grants **protection to both religious minorities as well as linguistic minorities**.
 - However, the SC held that the scope of this article is not necessarily restricted to minorities only, as use of the word **'section of citizens' in the Article includes minorities as well as the majority**.
- **Article 30:**
 - All minorities shall have the **right to establish and administer educational institutions** of their choice.
 - The protection **under Article 30 is confined only to minorities** (religious or linguistic) and does not extend to any section of citizens (as under Article 29).
- **Article 350-B:**
 - The **7th Constitutional (Amendment) Act 1956** inserted this article which provides for a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities appointed by the President of India.

- It would be the duty of the **Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under the Constitution**.

Dilip Jawalkar Appointed Uttarakhand's Home Secretary

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttarakhand government has appointed IAS officer **Dilip Jawalkar** as the new **Home Secretary**.

Key Points

- Dilip Jawalkar, currently serving as **Secretary of Finance**, has been selected to assume the responsibilities of **Home Secretary in Uttarakhand**.
- The **Election Commission's** directive mandated the removal of home secretaries who held concurrent positions in their respective chief minister's offices, aiming to prevent potential conflicts of interest during the upcoming **Lok Sabha elections**.

Officials Asked to Shift Government Buildings From Red Zone in Joshimath

Why in News?

Recently, **Chamoli District** Magistrate (DM) asked officials to conduct a survey of government buildings and properties in the unsafe red zone in land-subsidence hit **Joshimath** and shift them to safe locations.

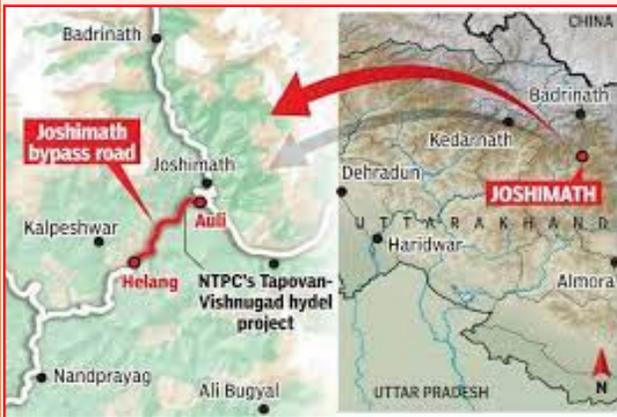
Key Points

- The DM also asked officials to offer all rehabilitation options to the subsidence-affected families falling under the red zone in Joshimath.
- **Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti** and **Joshimath Mool Niwasi Swabhiman Sangathan** have opposed the state government's rehabilitation policy and put forth 15 demands, including initiating remedial measures for the land-subsidence problem in Joshimath, and a displacement allowance for the affected people.

Note:

Joshimath

- Joshimath is a hilly town located on the **Rishikesh-Badrinath National Highway (NH-7)** in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand.
- The city serves as a **tourist town** as it acts as an **overnight rest stop for people visiting Badrinath, Auli, Valley of Flowers, and Hemkund Sahib, among other important religious and tourist locations** in the state.
- Joshimath is also of great strategic importance to **the Indian armed forces and is home to one of the Army's most important cantonments.**
- The town (fall in **high-risk seismic Zone-V**) is traversed by running streams with a high **gradient from Vishnuprayag, a confluence of the Dhauliganga and the Alaknanda rivers.**
- It is home to one of the **four cardinal maths or monasteries established by Adi Shankara - Sringeri in Karnataka, Dwarka in Gujarat, Puri in Odisha and Joshimath near Badrinath in Uttarakhand.**



Joshimath Sinking

- **Background:**
 - Cracks on walls and buildings were **first reported in 2021**, as Chamoli district of Uttarakhand experienced frequent landslides and flooding.
 - As per reports, the Uttarakhand government's expert panel in 2022 found that several pockets of **Joshimath are "sinking" owing to man-made and natural factors.**
 - It was found that a gradual settling or sudden sinking of the earth's surface due **to the removal or displacement of subsurface materials** — has induced structural defects and damage in almost all wards of the city.

Reasons:

- **Site of an Ancient landslide:** According to the **1976 Mishra Committee report, Joshimath lies on a deposit of sand and stone, not on the main rock.** It lies on an ancient landslide. The report added that undercutting by river currents of Alaknanda and Dhauliganga are also playing their part in bringing landslides.
 - The committee had recommended that **restrictions be placed on heavy construction work, blasting or digging to remove boulders** for road repairs and other construction, felling of trees.
- **Geography:** Scattered rocks in the area are **covered with old landslide debris comprising boulders, gneissic rocks, and loose soil, with a low bearing capacity.**
 - These gneissic rocks are highly weathered and have a low cohesive value with a tendency of high pore pressure when saturated with water, especially during monsoons.
- **Construction Activities:** Increased construction, hydroelectric projects, and the widening of the NH have made the slopes highly unstable in the last couple of decades.
- **Land Erosion:** Due to the running streams from Vishnuprayag and sliding along the natural streams are the other reasons behind the city's fate.

Impact:

- At least **66 families have fled the town while 561 houses have reported cracks.** A government official said that over 3000 people have been affected so far.

Over 700 Yoga Exponents Participated in Global Fest in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

Recently, more than 700 yoga exponents and practitioners from across the country and abroad participated in the week-long annual **International Yoga Festival** in Uttarakhand's Rishikesh.

Key Points

- Organised by the **Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board**, the festival was held at the **Yog Bharat Ganga Ghat at Muni-Ki-Reti.**

Note:

- The state government has been promoting the International Yoga Festival with an intent to provide a common platform for yoga enthusiasts, trainers, experts and students within India and beyond. **Rishikesh has become the global yoga capital** and this festival plays a vital role to further that.
- Yoga and religious institutions like **Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, Isha Foundation, Shivanand Ashram, Manav Dharma Ashram and Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram** also participated in the festival.

International Day of Yoga (IDY)

- It is celebrated on **21st June**, every year. The idea of IDY was proposed by India during the opening of the 69th session of the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**, held in 2014.
- The **first Yoga Day celebrations in 2015** at Rajpath in New Delhi created two Guinness World Records.

Expert Teams to Assess High-Risk Glacial Lakes of Uttarakhand

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttarakhand government has formed **two teams of experts to conduct a risk assessment and survey of five glacial lakes** in the state that are highly vulnerable to “**outburst floods**”.

Key Points

- It has been proposed that the teams will start their work on these lakes in May-June 2024.
- Of the **188 glacial lakes in Himalayan states, 13 are located in Uttarakhand**.
- Uttarakhand in **February 2021** saw a **glacial lake outburst in Chamoli district** that washed away a small hydel project on the **Rishiganga** and caused flash floods, killing many people.
- The **13 glacial lakes of Uttarakhand have been categorised as ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’, with ‘A’ being highly sensitive**.
 - **Out** of the 13 glacial lakes in Uttarakhand, **Five** fall in **category ‘A’** (highly sensitive), **four** in **category ‘B’** (sensitive) and **four** in **category ‘C’** (relatively less sensitive).
 - Out of the five highly sensitive lakes, **four are in Pithoragarh district and one in Chamoli**, and of the four sensitive lakes, **two are in Pithoragarh and one each in Chamoli and Tehri**.

- The **first team** consisting of experts from the National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee; the **Geological Survey of India, Lucknow**; the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, Dehradun; the Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority; and the Uttarakhand Landslide Mitigation and Management Centre **will assess the sensitivity of two glacial lakes**.
 - The work of the first phase will entail **satellite data study and data collection**, bathymetry and **area survey**.
- The **second team** headed by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune, as the lead technical agency and consisting of the Dehradun-based Indian Institute of Remote Sensing; the **Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology**; the Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority; and the Uttarakhand Landslide Mitigation and Management Centre **will study and survey the other three glacial lakes falling in the ‘A’ category**.

The Indian Institute of Remote Sensing

- It is an institute for research, **higher education and training in the field of remote sensing**, geoinformatics and GPS technology for natural resources, environmental and disaster management.
- The institute was **established in the year 1966** under the Indian Department of Space.
- It is located in **Dehradun, Uttarakhand**.

Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF)

- It is a type of catastrophic flood that occurs when the **dam containing a glacial lake fails**, releasing a large volume of water.
- This type of flood is **typically caused by rapid melting of glaciers or the buildup of water** in the lake due to heavy precipitation or the inflow of meltwater.
- In February 2021, **Chamoli district in Uttarakhand witnessed flash floods which are suspected to have been caused by GLOFs**.
- **Causes:**
 - These floods can be triggered by a number of factors, including **changes in the volume of the glacier**, changes in the **water level of the lake**, and **earthquakes**.
 - According to **NDMA (National Disaster Management Authority)**, **glacial retreat due to climate change** occurring in most parts of the **Hindu Kush Himalayas** has given rise to the formation of numerous new glacial lakes, which are the major cause of GLOFs.

Note:



Uttarakhand to Translocate Four Tigers to Rajasthan

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttarakhand government has agreed to translocate four tigers to Rajasthan following a request from the authorities.

Key Points

- According to guidelines of the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**, the tigers to be sent

to Rajasthan will not be captured from the protected forest area but from the **buffer zone**.

- A similar request for the **relocation of three tigers to Odisha** has also been received and it is under consideration.
- The requests from the Rajasthan and the Odisha governments for the translocation of tigers were received following the successful operation of the **tiger relocation project** in Uttarakhand under which four big cats were translocated from the **Corbett Tiger Reserve to Rajaji Tiger Reserve**.

TIGER

Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera Tigris*) is the National animal of India.

Subspecies of Tiger

- * The continental (*Panthera tigris tigris*)
- * The Sunda (*Panthera tigris sondaica*)

Habitat

Tropical rainforests, evergreen forests, temperate forests, mangrove swamps, grasslands, and savannas



Countries Where Tiger Population Is Found

- Found only in 13 Tiger Range countries- India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Russia, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam
- As per the latest report by IUCN, tiger has gone extinct in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam

Protection Status

- IUCN Red List: Endangered
- CITES: Appendix I
- WPA 1972: Schedule I

Threats

- Habitat loss
- Poaching and illegal trade
- Human-Wildlife conflict

Conservation Efforts

- International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA)**: For conservation of seven big cats namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma (launched by India)
- Tx2 campaign**: Launched by WWF; stands for 'Tiger times 2' signaling the goal to double the tiger population by 2022
- National Tiger Conservation authority (NTCA)**: Constituted under the WPA, 1972
- Project Tiger**: Launched in 1973
- Tiger Census**: Every 4 years

Tigers In India

- India has the **largest** population
 - As of 2022, India has 3167 tigers
 - Largest population has been found in Central Indian Highlands & Eastern Ghats Landscape
- Tiger Reserves**: India now has 53 tiger reserves
 - Ranipur in UP is the latest
 - Nagarjun Sagar (Andhra Pradesh) is the largest while Orang (Assam) is the smallest (Core area)




Drishti IAS

Note:

National Tiger Conservation Authority

- It is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change**.
- It was established in **2005** following the recommendations of the Tiger Task Force.
- It was constituted under enabling provisions of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, as amended in 2006, for strengthening tiger conservation, as per powers and functions assigned to it.

Rajaji Tiger Reserve

- It is located in **Haridwar (Uttarakhand)**, along the foothills of the Shivalik range. It is part of **Rajaji National Park**.
- Rajaji National Park was established in the year 1983 after amalgamating three sanctuaries in the Uttarakhand i.e., Rajaji, Motichur and Chila.
- It was **named after the famous freedom fighter C. Rajgopalachari**; popularly known as “Rajaji”.
- It was declared a **Tiger Reserve** in 2015 as the 48th tiger reserve of the country.

Indian Railway & Uttarakhand Tourism Launches Manaskhand Express

Why in News?

The Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board, along with the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation

Ltd. (IRCTC), has introduced a new tourist train called the “**Manaskhand Express**” to promote the hidden gems of the **Kumaon Region** in Uttarakhand.

Key Points

- The “**MANASKHAND EXPRESS - BHARAT GAURAV TOURIST TRAIN**” is a special 10 Nights/11 Days tour.
- This unique journey is designed to showcase the divine beauty and cultural richness of Uttarakhand’s Devbhoomi, known for its **spiritual significance and heritage sites**.
- **Departing on 22 April 2024**, the tour offers a comprehensive exploration of various destinations across Uttarakhand.
 - The train’s **boarding and deboarding stations** include Pune, Lonavala, Panvel, Kalyan, Nashik, Jalgaon, Bhusawal, Khandwa, Itarsi, and Rani Kamalapati, ensuring accessibility for travelers from different regions.
 - Some of the highlights of the tour include visits to Champawat/Lohaghat to explore Baleshwar, Tea Gardens, and Mayawati Ashram, **paying homage at Nanda Devi & Kainchi Dham - Baba Neem Karoli Temple**, and seeking blessings at Nanakmatta Gurudwara – **Khatima & Naina Devi - Nainital**.
 - Additionally, participants will have the chance to discover the spiritual aura of **Jageshwar Dham & Golu Devta – Chitai** and visit **Haat Kalika Temple & Patal Bhuvneshwar**.

Note:

