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Dhanyavaad Prakriti

Why in News?

Recently, in the 114th episode of Mann Ki Baat, Prime Minister highlighted the success of the Swachh Bharat Mission and praised individual cleanliness efforts across India.

Key Points

Uttarakhand's Jhala Village:

- o The youth of Jhala village in Uttarkashi have launched a campaign called 'Dhanyavaad Prakriti' (Thank You Nature).
- As part of the initiative, villagers spend **two hours** daily cleaning their surroundings, properly disposing of garbage outside the village.
- o The PM urged other villages and localities to replicate this initiative.

Swachh Bharat Mission's 10-Year Anniversary:

- o PM reminded listeners that the Swachh Bharat Mission will complete 10 years on 2nd October, 2024.
- He called the movement a fitting tribute to <u>Mahatma</u> **Gandhi's** lifelong commitment to cleanliness.
- o The Prime Minister highlighted the growing impact of the 'Waste to Wealth' mantra, where more people are adopting the principles of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)

About:

- o It is a massive mass movement that seeks to create a **Clean India**. The father of our nation Mahatma Gandhi always puts the emphasis on swachhta as swachhta leads to healthy and prosperous life.
- O Keeping this in mind, the Indian government has decided to launch the swachh bharat mission on October 2, 2014. The mission will cover all rural and urban areas.
 - The urban component of the mission will be implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, and the rural component by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Impact of Landslides in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

The Badrinath National Highway (NH-7) in Chamoli district has been repeatedly blocked due to heavy rainfall, causing landslides and debris accumulation.

Key Points

> The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted more isolated heavy rainfall in Uttarakhand which could potentially cause further disruptions.

> Landslide:

- O A landslide is a geological phenomenon involving the downward movement of a mass of rock, soil, and debris on a slope.
- Landslides can occur on both natural and manmade slopes, and they are often triggered by a combination of factors such as heavy rainfall, <u>earthquakes</u>, volcanic activity, human activities (such as construction or mining), and changes in groundwater levels.
- Landslides are classified into several types based on their movement characteristics:
 - Slides: These are movements of soil or rock along a rupture surface or a zone of weakness. They can be further divided into rotational slides, where the rupture surface is curved, and translational slides, where the rupture surface is planar.
 - **Flows:** These are movements of soil or rock that contain a large amount of water, which makes the mass flow like a fluid. They can be further divided into earth flows, debris flows, mudflows, and creep, depending on the material and the rate of movement.
 - **Spreads:** These are movements of soil or rock that involve lateral extension and cracking of the mass. They are usually caused by liquefaction or plastic deformation of the material.



- Topples: These are movements of soil or rock that involve forward rotation and free-fall of the mass from a vertical or near-vertical cliff or slope.
- Falls: These are movements of soil or rock that detach from a steep slope or cliff and descend by free-fall, bouncing, or rolling.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Home Stay Development Scheme in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

In celebration of <u>World Tourism Day</u> (27th September 2024), the Uttarakhand Government is taking significant steps to enhance its tourism infrastructure.

Key Points

- The state government has announced plans to increase the number of rooms available under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Home Stay Yojana, a scheme aimed at promoting affordable and authentic lodging options for tourists.
- Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Home Stay Development Scheme:
 - This scheme is designed to attract tourists to both popular and remote tourist destinations, enhance local accommodation facilities, create employment opportunities for local residents, and provide an additional source of income for homeowners.
 - o Main Objectives:
 - The primary goal of the scheme is to offer clean and affordable home stay facilities to both national and international tourists.
 - This facility also provides travelers with a unique opportunity to learn about Uttarakhand's culture and enjoy the state's delicious cuisine.
 - Subsidies and Support:
 - For Hilly Areas: The government provides a capital subsidy of 33% or Rs.10 lakh,

- whichever is lower, and an interest subsidy of 50% of the interest or **Rs. 1.50 lakh per year,** whichever is lower, for the **first five years** of loan repayment.
- For Plains Areas: The capital subsidy is 25% or Rs. 7.50 lakh, whichever is lower, and the interest subsidy is 50% of the interest or Rs. 1 lakh per year, whichever is lower, for the first five years of loan repayment.
- This scheme aims to make Uttarakhand a more attractive destination by enhancing the quality and availability of lodging while supporting the local economy.

Uttarakhand to Set up 42 Forest Labs

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttarakhand Forest department has established **42 ecological laboratories** to monitor the **impact of climate change** on the forests.

Key Points

- These labs will collect data on changes like early flowering in rhododendrons and Brahmakamal, and the quality of litchis affected by high temperatures.
- These 'ecological labs', also called 'living laboratories' are distributed across various ecosystems, from the Terai region to alpine meadows.
 - Uttarakhand is home to <u>46 distinct forest types</u>, which can play important role in global climate change research.
- Uttarakhand this summer has reported soaring temperatures beyond 42 degree celsius, which affected the quality of <u>Dehraduni and Ramnagar litchis</u>.
- Rhododendron: Rhododendron is a genus of flowering plants with around 1,000 species, known for their showy, brightly colored flowers, and are popular as ornamental shrubs or small trees.



- In India, <u>Pink Rhododendron</u> is the state flower of <u>Himachal Pradesh</u>, and <u>Rhododendron arboreum</u> is the <u>state flower of Nagaland</u> and the <u>State Tree</u> <u>of Uttarakhand</u>.
- Health benefits: Prevention and treatment of diseases associated with heart, dysentery, diarrhea, detoxification, inflammation, fever, constipation, bronchitis and asthma. The leaves possess effective antioxidant activity. The young leaves are used to alleviate headaches. The wood of this plant can be used for making khukri handles, pack saddles, gift boxes, and gunstocks.
- **Brahmakamal:** It is the state flower of Uttarakhand.
 - It occurs in alpine meadows of the <u>Himalayas</u>, <u>from</u>
 <u>Jammu and Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh</u>, and is also found in Bhutan, China, Nepal, and Pakistan at altitudes of 3700 to 4600 meters.
 - The plant's roots and floral buds are used to treat leucoderma, urinary issues, bone fractures, wounds, bone pain, cough, cold, and digestive problems; the whole plant is used for veterinary medicine in haematuria.
 - In Tawang, its dried powder or paste is applied for <u>skin diseases</u>, and floral buds are used to treat boils.

Litchi

- Botanical Classification: Litchi belongs to the Sapindaceae family and is known for its delicious, juicy, translucent aril or edible flesh.
- Climatic Requirements: Litchi thrives in sub-tropical climates and prefers moist conditions. It grows best in regions with low elevation, up to an altitude of around 800 meters.
- > **Soil Preference:** The ideal soil for litchi cultivation is deep, **well-drained loamy soil** rich in organic matter.
- Temperature Sensitivity: Litchi is sensitive to extreme temperatures. It does not tolerate temperatures above 40.5 degrees Celsius in summer or freezing temperatures in winter.
- Rainfall Impact: Prolonged rain, especially during flowering, can interfere with pollination and affect the crop adversely.

- Geographical Cultivation: In India, the commercial cultivation was traditionally restricted to the north in the foot hills of Himalayas from Tripura to Jammu & Kashmir and plains of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
 - But due to increased demand and viability, cultivation has expanded to states like Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh.
 - Bihar alone accounts for nearly 40% of India's litchi production. Bihar is followed by West Bengal (12%) and Jharkhand (10%).
- Global Production: India ranks as the second largest producer of litchi globally, following China. Other significant litchi-producing countries include Thailand, Australia, South Africa, Madagascar, and the United States.

CM Dhami Announces Major Subsidies and Projects

Why in News?

Recently, **Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami** announced several initiatives for the state on his birthday.

Key Points

- Development Projects: He inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for various development projects aimed at improving infrastructure and public services.
 - The Chief Minister of Uttarakhand announced a 50% subsidy on electricity for consumers using up to 100 and 200 units.
 - Under the <u>Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)</u>, 101 beneficiaries of the <u>Lakshmi Housing Scheme</u> in <u>Shikarpur</u>, <u>Roorkee</u>, <u>Haridwar</u>, were handed possession letters and keys to their new homes.
- Public Welfare Schemes: New public welfare schemes were introduced to benefit the residents of Uttarakhand.
 - He inaugurated five ADB-funded power projects, including GIS substations and transmission lines in various regions under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.



Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban

> About:

- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) falls under the Government's mission - Housing for All by 2022 for urban housing being implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).
- It makes home loans affordable for the urban poor by providing a subsidy on the Interest Rate of a home loan during repayment by way of EMI (Equated Monthly Installments).

> Beneficiaries:

- The Mission addresses urban housing shortage among the EWS/LIG and MIG categories including the slum dwellers.
- Economically Weaker Section (EWS) with a maximum annual family income of Rs. 3,00,000.
- Low Income Group (LIG) with maximum annual family income of Rs. 6,00,000.
- Middle Income Groups (MIG I & II) with a maximum annual family income of Rs. 18,00,000.
- A beneficiary family will comprise husband, wife, unmarried sons and/or unmarried daughters.

Government's Crackdown on Alleged Love Jihad and Land Jihad

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttarakhand government has initiated action against <u>Love Jihad</u>, <u>Land Jihad</u>, and <u>forced conversions</u>, amid rising concerns over <u>demographic changes</u> in the state.

Key Points

- Concerns over demographic changes were highlighted, especially in regions such as Purula, Dharchula, and Nandnagar.
- Uttarakhand's Population: Approximately 11.1 million, with <u>Hinduism</u> being the dominant religion

(82.97%), followed by Islam (13.95%) and Christianity (0.37%) according to <u>Census 2011</u> and 2023 projection estimates.

- While the state is experiencing urban migration and growth, concerns over demographic changes have heightened tensions, particularly in religiously sensitive areas.
- > The Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion Act, 2018:
 - This law requires people who convert religions to declare that the conversion was not done through force, coercion, or other fraudulent means.
 - It also allows the authorities to declare marriages null and void if they were performed solely to convert a girl from one religion to another.
 - Stringent Provisions: The Act makes unlawful religious conversion a cognizable and non-bailable offense, criminalizing conversion through force, greed, or fraud.
 - Greater Punishment: Offenders can face a jail term ranging from a minimum of 3 years to a maximum of 10 years for illegal religious conversion.
 - Higher Fines: A mandatory fine of Rs.50,000 is imposed, with offenders potentially paying up to Rs.5 lakhs as compensation to the victim.

Dehradun's Clock Tower

Why in News?

Recently, **Dehradun's iconic Clock Tower** stopped ticking after thieves dismantled its copper innards.

Key Points

- > Historical Significance:
 - Built in the 1940s and inaugurated by <u>Smt. Sarojini</u> Naidu in 1953.
 - Commissioned by Lala Sher Singh in memory of his father, Lala Balbir Singh.
 - A subtle reminder of <u>freedom fighters</u> who sacrificed their lives for <u>India's independence</u>.

> Architectural Design:

- Hexagonal structure with one clock on each of its six sides.
- The tower stands around 85 meters high, with its chimes once echoing through the city.
- The Clock Tower symbolizes the **city's evolution** and serves as a monument of pride for Dehradun.





Helicopter Service Tax for Religious Purposes Cut to 5%

Why in News?

Recently, at the 54th <u>Goods and Services Tax (GST)</u> Council Meeting, the Uttarakhand Finance Minister announced that helicopter services for pilgrims and tourists on a sharing basis will be taxed at 5%.

Key Points

- > The 54th GST Council Meeting was chaired by the Union Finance Minister and attended by State Finance Ministers.
- Helicopter services for religious purposes, such as <u>Kedarnath</u> and <u>Badrinath</u>, have had their GST reduced from 18% to 5%.
- Current GST Rates:
 - o **Domestic Passenger Transportation**: 5% GST with Input Tax Credit (ITC) only on input services (no ITC on goods).
 - o International Charter Flights: Zero-rated, meaning no GST is applicable as it is treated as an export of services.
 - o Non-Passenger Services: Generally 18% GST, similar to other non-passenger air services.



Goods and Services Tax (GST)

- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a value-added tax levied on most goods and services sold for domestic consumption. The GST is paid by consumers, but it is remitted to the government by the businesses selling the goods and services.
- Applicable On supply side: GST is applicable on 'supply' of goods or services as against the old concept on the manufacture of goods or on sale of goods or on provision of services.
- Destination based Taxation: GST is based on the principle of destination-based consumption taxation as against the present principle of origin-based taxation.
- Dual GST: It is a dual GST with the Centre and the States simultaneously levying tax on a common base. GST to be levied by the Centre is called Central GST (CGST) and that to be levied by the States is called State GST (SGST).
 - Import of goods or services would be treated as inter-state supplies and would be subject to Integrated Goods & Services Tax (IGST) in addition to the applicable customs duties.
- GST rates to be mutually decided: CGST, SGST & IGST are levied at rates to be mutually agreed upon by the Centre and the States. The rates are notified on the recommendation of the GST Council.

Maa Nanda - Sunanda Mohatsav

Why in News?

Recently, Uttarakhand CM virtually inaugurated the Maa Nanda-Sunanda Mahotsav, 2024, in Nainital highlighting the festival's role in connecting people with their cultural roots.

Key Points

- > Maa Nanda-Sunanda Mahotsav:
 - Celebrated in remembrance of the goddesses Nanda and Sunanda during the Nandashtami festival in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand every September.

- Observed in locations such as Almora, Nainital, Kot Along, Bhowali, and Johar.
- ➤ CM announced 2nd September as Bugyal Conservation Day to protect alpine meadows, describing them as the Himalayas' 'precious heritage'.

Bugyals

- Bugyals are high-altitude alpine meadows found in Uttarakhand.
 - These meadows are characterized by their lush greenery and are situated above 3,000 meters (10,000 feet) in elevation.
- Ecological Significance: Bugyals are crucial for the region's biodiversity, supporting a range of flora and fauna.
 - They serve as grazing grounds for livestock and are vital for maintaining ecological balance.
- > Popular Bugyals in Uttarakhand:
 - Dayara Bugyal: Known for its expansive meadows and stunning views.
 - Bedni Bugyal: Famous for its scenic beauty and as a trekking destination.
 - Auli Bugyal: Noted for its panoramic views and biodiversity, Auli is nestled amidst the giant snowy peaks of Nanda Devi, Kamet and Dunagiri.

Uttarakhand CM Approves Flood Relief Funds

Why in News?

Recently, Uttarakhand CM approved special assistance from the **Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund** to **aid businessmen affected by heavy rains** in the <u>Kedarnath area</u>.

Key Points

- The funds are allocated to compensate businessmen affected by damage to pedestrian and motor roads from Linchauli to Sonprayag due to heavy rains.
- > The approved amount will be used specifically for those affected by the damage on **31**st **July.**
- Payments will be made through <u>e-banking</u> or demand drafts, with details of beneficiaries to be maintained at the district level.



Approximately 17,000 people were evacuated from disaster-affected areas in <u>Rudraprayag district</u>.

CM Relief Fund (CMRF)

CMRF is an emergency assistance scheme for granting relief to deserving families and individuals affected by natural calamities like <u>floods</u>, <u>droughts</u>, <u>earthquakes</u> etc. or any other similar calamities.

SC Criticizes Appointment of New Director to Rajaji National Park

Why in News?

The <u>Supreme Court</u> recently criticized the <u>Uttarakhand</u> <u>Chief Minister</u> for the appointment of a forest officer (IFS) as the <u>Director of Rajaji National Park</u>.

Key Points

- Appointment Dispute: Uttarakhand Chief Minister's decision to appoint IFS officer as director of Rajaji National Park has sparked controversy due to his ongoing investigations by the CBI and ED for alleged illegal activities.
- Bypassing Officials: Allegations suggest that CM bypassed objections from the Forest Minister and Chief Secretary, who had recommended reconsideration of the appointment due to the officer's involvement in previous legal issues.
- > Supreme Court Observations: Emphasized that such decisions should not be made unilaterally.
 - The Court highlighted the importance of the <u>public</u> <u>trust doctrine</u>, stressing that the government's role is to protect natural resources responsibly, which was compromised in this case.

Rajaji National Park

- Location: Haridwar (Uttarakhand), along the foothills of the Shivalik range, spans 820 square kilometres.
- Background: Three sanctuaries in the Uttarakhand i.e. Rajaji, Motichur and Chila were amalgamated into a large protected area and named Rajaji National Park in the year 1983 after the famous freedom fighter C. Rajgopalachari; popularly known as "Rajaji".

Features:

- This area is the North Western Limit of habitat of <u>Asian elephants</u>.
- Forest types include sal forests, riverine forests, broad–leaved mixed forests, scrubland and grassy.
- It possesses as many as 23 species of mammals and 315 bird species such as elephants, tigers, leopards, deers and ghorals, etc.
- o It was declared a **Tiger Reserve** in 2015.
- o It is home to the **Van Gujjars** in the winters.

Jagar Lok Sanskriti Utsav

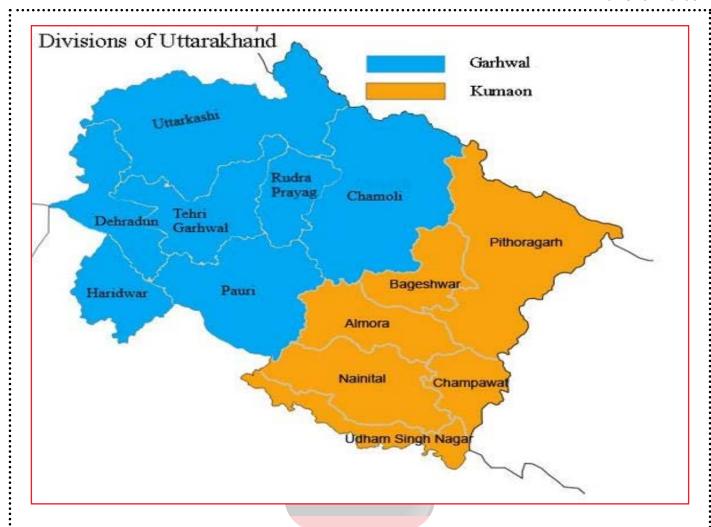
Why in News?

Recently, government celebrated the state's rich folk culture at the Jagar Lok Sanskriti Utsav, and released the book *Uttarakhand ka Lok Putra Pritam Bharatwan* by Sachidanand Semwal and praised Pritam Bharatwan as the brand ambassador of Uttarakhand's folk culture.

Key Points

- > Jagar Lok Sanskriti Utsav: It is a festival celebrating the folk culture and traditions of Uttarakhand.
- Jagar: It is a Hindu form of Shamanism which is practiced in the hills of Uttarakhand, both in Garhwal and Kumaon.
 - Shamanism is a global spiritual practice where a shaman enters altered states of consciousness to interact with the spirit world, heal, communicate with spirits, and guide souls.
 - As a ritual, Jagar is a way in which gods and local deities are woken from their dormant stage and asked for favors or remedies.
- > **Pritam Bharatwan:** He is known for promoting the traditional culture and folk arts of Uttarakhand.
- > Restoration and Recognition Efforts by Government:
 - Efforts are underway to restore traditional fairs to their original form and provide better platforms for artists.
 - Initiatives are being taken to gain recognition for the <u>Jagar singing style</u>.
 - Preservation and publication of scripts related to folk art and culture are being promoted through the Guru-Shishya tradition and art galleries.





Landslides Block Badrinath National Highway

Why in News?

Recently, a landslide blocked the **Jyotirmath-Malari road**, which connects to the **India-China border**, as well as the **Karnaprayag-Gwaldam national highway**.

Key Points

- Landslides triggered by heavy rain have blocked the highway at Pagalnala, Patalganga, and Nandaprayag.
- > **Jyotirmath-Malari Road**: A high mountain road within the **Nanda Devi National Park**, linking Jyotirmath (1,934 m) and Malari (3,033 m).
 - Extremely steep with numerous hairpin turns along the <u>Dhauliganga River</u>, subjected to periodic damage from winter snow, ice, and river flooding.
- > **Dhauliganga:** It originates from <u>Vasudhara Tal</u>, perhaps the largest glacial lake in Uttarakhand.
 - O Dhauliganga is one of the important tributaries of <u>Alaknanda</u>, the other being the Nandakini, Pindar, Mandakini and Bhagirathi.
 - o It merges with the Alaknanda at Vishnuprayag.
- Nanda Devi National Park: Situated around the peak of Nanda Devi (7,816 m) in Uttarakhand, India; includes the Nanda Devi Sanctuary, a glacial basin surrounded by peaks and drained by the Rishi Ganga.



 Established as Sanjay Gandhi National Park in 1982, renamed Nanda Devi National Park; inscribed as a <u>UNESCO World Heritage Site</u> in 1988.

Landslide

A landslide is the movement of rock, earth, or debris down a slope due to gravity, often triggered by factors such as heavy rain, earthquakes, or the instability of the slope. It results in the displacement of material, which can lead to significant damage and destruction.

Pitr Chaya Express

Why in News?

Recently, Uttarakhand announced plans to run a special train from Mumbai to Uttarakhand for temple visits.

Key Points

- Pitr Chaya Express: This train is dedicated to honoring ancestors, covering important pilgrimage sites like Tarpan at <u>Haridwar, Rishikesh</u>, <u>Panch Prayag</u>, and Brahma Kapal at <u>Badrinath</u>.
 - It aligns with the Hindu tradition of offering "Tarpan" to ancestors during the Shradh (Pitr Paksh) period.

Note: Manaskhand Express is another train which has started in June 2024, offers a journey covering popular destinations in Uttarakhand, including train.

travel, meals on the train, road travel within the state, sightseeing, and accommodation in hotels or homestays.

Destinations Covered: Punagiri Temple, Nanakmatta Gurudwara, Tea Garden at Champawat, Haat Kalika Temple, Patal Bhuvneshwar Temple, Jageshwar Temple, Golu Devta Temple, <u>Kainchi Dham</u>, Kasar Devi Temple, Sun Temple Katarmal, and <u>Naina Devi Temple</u>.

Changes to File Complaints in Government Departments

Why in News?

Recently, to prevent fake complaints, the <u>Uttarakhand</u> government has made it mandatory to submit an affidavit when filing a complaint.

Key Points:

- > Issue with False Details: Complaints with incorrect addresses and phone numbers have been found, leading to the new requirement.
- Affidavit Requirement: An affidavit must now be submitted with complaints to prevent fake submissions.
- Objective: The affidavit requirement aims to ensure accurate and valid complaints are registered and handled appropriately.
- > **Reason:** The move addresses the issue of false complaints, which waste resources and time, and helps ensure only genuine complaints are processed.

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