STATE
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(CONSOLIDATION)

UTTARAKHAND

JANUARY 2025

Content

Effective Control of Forest Fire in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

Uttarakhand CM **Pushkar Singh Dhami** has directed the **Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF)** to take **immediate action** against **forest fires** in **highly sensitive districts**.

Key Points

➢ **Appointment of Nodal Officers for Fire Control:**
  ○ **10 senior Forest Department officers** appointed as **district-level nodal officers**.
  ○ Their role is to **coordinate resources and departments** at the district level for better fire management.
    ● Efforts will focus on **strengthening management, control, monitoring, cooperation**, and **coordination** at the district level.

➢ **Pre-Fire Season Preparations:**
  ○ The **Uttarakhand Forest Department** issued an **office order** to appoint nodal officers before the season in which forest fires commonly occur.
  ○ Nodal officers will **review fire management preparations** and district-level control measures.

➢ **Community Participation in Fire Control:**
  ○ Along with this, to increase community participation in forest fire control and management, the Forest Department of Uttarakhand has been conducting research on-field personnel, **State Environmental Authority (SEA)** and the Forest Fire Management Committees to replicate the **'Sheetalakhet'** model in all the divisions of the state under the Almora Forest Division.
  ○ The **'Sheetalakhet' model**, developed under **Almora Forest Division**, is being replicated across all state divisions.

Forest Fire

➢ Forest fire is also called as **bush or vegetation fire or wildfire,** it can be described as any **uncontrolled and non-prescribed combustion or burning** of plants in a natural setting such as a **forest, grassland, brushland** or **tundra**, which consumes the natural fuels and spreads based on environmental conditions (e.g., wind, topography).

➢ A wildfire requires three essential elements to sustain combustion like **Fuel, Oxygen,** and a **Heat source.**

Infrastructure Development For 38th National Games

Why in News?

The roads connecting **Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium** in Raipur, Dehradun, will be widened to manage traffic more efficiently.

➢ The decision comes after **severe traffic congestion** during the **opening ceremony of the 38th National Games**.

Key Points

➢ **Future Events Consideration:** Since more sporting events will be held at the stadium in the future, the government aims to improve infrastructure and streamline traffic management.

➢ **National Games Closing Ceremony:** The closing ceremony is scheduled for **14 February 2025.**

➢ **National Games 2025:**
  ○ Into its **38th edition, the National Games,** India's own multi-sport event inspired by the Olympics, will see athletes from **28 states**, **eight Union Territories** and the **Services Sports Control Board (SSCB)** compete for medals in **32 different sports.**
  ○ The 2025 National Games kicked off with the **triathlon events on 26 January**.
  ○ The overall winner of the **National Games** is awarded the **Raja Bhalindra Singh Trophy** for each edition.
  ○ The champion state is judged based on points scored which are earned based on finishing positions in the events.
  ○ The **National Games 2025** will feature some top athletes from India, including **Olympic medallist Lovlina Borgohain (boxing), Swapnil Kusale, Sarabjot Singh** and **Vijay Kumar (shooting).**

Uttarakhand Implements UCC and Launches Portal

Why in News?

The **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** was officially implemented in Uttarakhand making it the first Indian state to implement the **UCC post Independence** and second state overall after Goa.

Note:

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➢ The newly launched UCC portal has enabled individuals to register their marriages online by submitting necessary documents and undergoing a live witness verification process.

Key Points

➢ **Features:**

○ The **UCC Bill**, passed by the **State Assembly** in **February 2024**, bans practices such as **halala, iddat,** and **talaq** (customs related to marriage and divorce in the Muslim Personal Law).

○ The UCC mandates **online registration** of **marriages, divorce** and **live-in relationships**.

○ A government portal has been formed for the purpose on which people can access **records, register complaints** and also upload their will on the portal.

➢ **Online Registration Process:** The UCC portal requires individuals to submit essential documents, including a **birth certificate, Aadhaar card, PAN card, domicile certificate,** and **details of the spouse.** Additionally, two witnesses, either parents or local guardians, must testify via live video.

○ The portal features an AI-based translation service that will translate the content into 22 languages, including English.

➢ **Chief Minister's Endorsement: CM Pushkar Singh Dhami** also registered his marriage on the **UCC portal** and shared his certificate on social media, assuring the

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Uniform Civil Code

➢ **About UCC:**

○ The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is outlined in **Article 44 of the Constitution** as part of the **Directive Principles of State Policy,** which states that the government should strive to establish a uniform civil code for all citizens across India.

● However, its implementation is left to the discretion of the government.

➢ **UCC in Goa:**

○ Goa follows the Portuguese Civil Code of 1867. The **Goa, Daman and Diu Administration Act of 1962** permitted it to retain the colonial-era civil code.

Asian Waterbird Census

Why in News?

Volunteers at **the Asan Wetland** in Dehradun district, Uttarakhand, identified **5,225 birds across 117 different species** during a **bird counting campaign.**

Key Points

➢ **About the Event:**

○ The bird counting campaign was organized by a team of 35 participants, divided into five groups.

○ It aimed to monitor both **domestic and migratory bird populations** in the Asan Wetland.

○ The teams conducted a comprehensive bird count at locations including **Asan Lake, the Yamuna** and **Asan rivers, the Shivalik mountain range,** and nearby protected forests.

➢ **Survey and Methodology:**

○ More than 150 volunteers and forest staff surveyed 23 sites following a pre-determined protocol to **count waterbirds and document other bird species.**

○ Observers also recorded the behaviors and activities of birds in and around the marshes and wetlands.

➢ Citizen Science Initiative:

○ **The Asian Waterbird Census** occurred simultaneously at **23 wetland sites** across Uttarakhand.

○ The initiative was supported by the **Uttarakhand Forest Department** and involved various **non-governmental organizations (NGOs).**

Asan Conservation Reserve

➢ **About:**

○ The Asan Conservation **Reserve spans 444 hectares** along the Asan River, extending to its confluence with **the Yamuna River** in Dehradun district.

○ The **Asan Barrage, built in 1967,** led to siltation above the dam, creating **bird-friendly habitats.**

Note:

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➢ **Biodiversity and Species:**

○ The reserve is home to 330 species of birds, including the critically endangered <u>red-headed vulture</u>, <u>white-rumped vulture</u>, and Baer's pochard.

○ The site records over 1% of the biogeographical populations of the **red-crested pochard and ruddy shelduck.**

○ Non-avian species present include 49 fish species, with the endangered **Putitor mahseer** among them.

Earthquake in Uttarkashi

Why in News?

According to the <u>National Center for Seismology (NCS)</u>, an <u>earthquake</u> of magnitude 3.5 on the Richter scale hit Uttarkashi in Uttarakhand.

➢ The **earthquake**, which occurred at a **depth of 5 km,** is part of a **sequence of <u>seismic events</u>,** with another earthquake of **magnitude 4.8** reported earlier in **Myanmar.**

Key Points

➢ **Uttarkashi and Seismic Sensitivity:**

○ Uttarkashi is located in the <u>Himalayan seismic belt,</u> making it highly prone to earthquakes.

○ The region has previously experienced **destructive earthquakes,** including the **Uttarkashi earthquake (6.8 magnitude)** in **1991** and the <u>Chamoli earthquake</u> in **1999.**

➢ **Geological Factors and Vulnerability:**

○ The region is **seismically active** due to the collision between the <u>Indian Plate</u> and the <u>Eurasian Plate</u>.

○ Unchecked construction and deforestation have worsened the situation, increasing the risk of destruction in case of major earthquakes.

○ **Uttarkashi** and surrounding cities like **Dehradun, Nainital,** and **Mussoorie** are densely populated, adding to the vulnerability during seismic events.

Earthquake

➢ **About:**

○ An earthquake is the shaking of the Earth's surface **caused by the sudden release of energy** beneath the Earth's crust.

○ This natural event generates seismic waves that travel in all directions through the Earth, resulting in ground movement.

➢ **Key Terms Related to Earthquake:**

○ **Hypocenter:** The location beneath the Earth's surface where the earthquake originates.

○ **Epicenter:** The point on the Earth's surface directly above the hypocenter, where the strongest shaking is felt.

○ **Types of Earthquakes:**

● **Fault Zones:** Earthquakes that occur due to the movement along fault lines in the Earth's crust.

● **Tectonic Earthquakes:** Result from the movement of tectonic plates beneath the Earth's surface.

● **Volcanic Earthquakes:** Caused by volcanic activity, typically due to the movement of magma beneath the Earth's surface.

● **Human-Induced Earthquakes:** Earthquakes triggered by human activities, such as mining or the injection of fluids into the ground.

○ **Scales of Measuring Earthquakes**

● **Magnitude Scale:**

➢ The magnitude of an earthquake refers to the amount of energy released. This is **measured using the Richter scale**, which ranges from 0 to 10, with each number representing a tenfold increase in amplitude. It provides a measure of the earthquake's strength.

● **Intensity Scale:**

➢ The intensity of an earthquake refers to the level of shaking experienced and the damage caused. The **Mercalli intensity scale**, developed by Italian seismologist Giuseppe Mercalli, ranges from 1 to 12, with higher numbers indicating more severe shaking and destruction.

Note:

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Seismic Zone Map of India: -2002

About **59 percent** of the land area of India is liable to seismic hazard damage

Zone	Intensity
Zone V	**Very High Risk Zone** Area liable to shaking Intensity IX (and above)
Zone IV	**High Risk Zone** Intensity VIII
Zone III	**Moderate Risk Zone** Intensity VII
Zone II	**Low Risk Zone** VI (and lower)

Zone II	40.93
Zone III	30.79
Zone IV	17.49
Zone V	10.79

LEGEND
ZONE II
ZONE III
ZONE IV
ZONE V
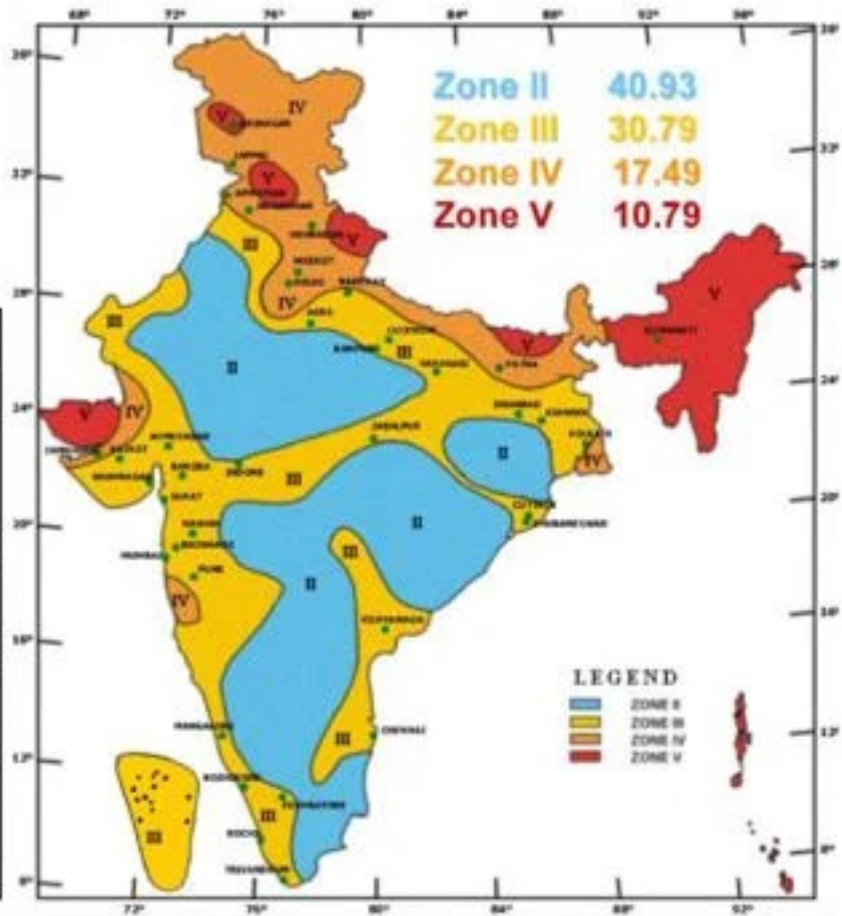
UCC Rules in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

Recently, **the Uttarakhand government** approved the rules for **the Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** and plans to **issue a gazette notification for the legislation by the end of January 2025**, paving the way for its implementation.

Key Points

➤ **Key Provisions of UCC:**
  ○ The UCC, **passed by the Uttarakhand Assembly in February 2024**, excludes tribal communities from its ambit.
  ○ It **bans practices such as halala, iddat, and talaq**, which are customs under **Muslim Personal Law.**
    • It ensures **women receive equal rights** in matters of property and inheritance.
  ○ The Code mandates the **registration of marriages and divorces**, with non-compliance leading to deprivation of government benefits.
  ○ Stringent provisions are in place for **unregistered live-in relationships**, though children born from such relationships are recognized as legitimate.

➤ **Implementation Measures:**
  ○ The government has set up an **online portal to register marriages, divorces, inheritance rights, live-in relationships, and terminations of live-in relationships.**
  ○ Citizens can access their data and application status via mobile phones or at home.
  ○ **Common Service Centres (CSCs)** have been authorized for online registration.
    • In remote areas without internet access, CSC agents will provide **door-to-door registration services.**

Note:

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○ **Aadhaar**-based registration and tracking via email and SMS have been introduced for simplicity and convenience.

○ An **online complaint registration mechanism** has also been established.

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

All sections of the society irrespective of their religion shall be treated equally according to a National Civil Code - the Uniform Civil Code.

THEY COVER AREAS LIKE

Marriage   Divorce

Maintenance   Inheritance   Adoption   Succession of Property
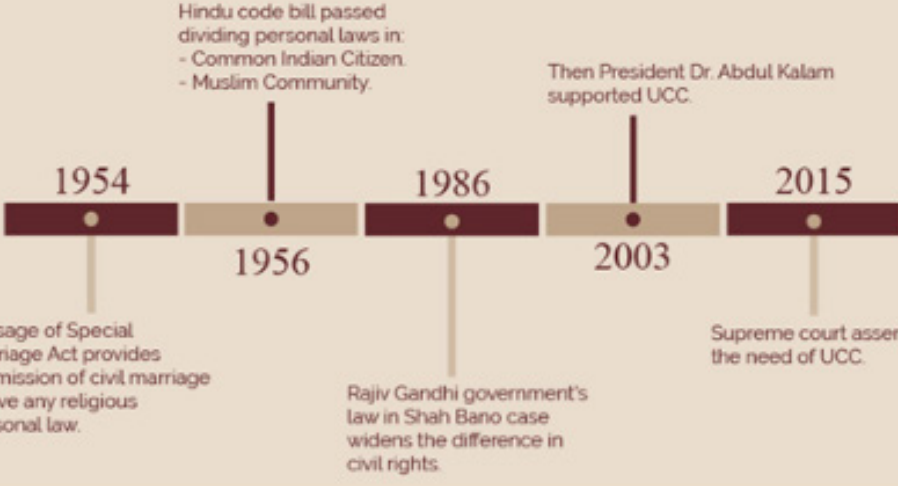
It is based on the premise that there is necessarily no connection between religion and personal law in a civilized society.

"UCC refers to a common set of laws governing civil rights of every citizen."

Article 44 of Directive Principles sets duty of state for implementing UCC.

TIMELINE

Hindu code bill passed dividing personal laws in:
- Common Indian Citizen.
- Muslim Community.

Then President Dr. Abdul Kalam supported UCC.

1954   **1986**   **2015**

1956   **2003**

Passage of Special Marriage Act provides permission of civil marriage above any religious personal law.

Rajiv Gandhi government's law in Shah Bano case widens the difference in civil rights.

Supreme court asserted the need of UCC.

The dialogue for UCC was started by the Law Comission in the year 2016

Note:

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Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary

Why in News?

Recently, the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) rejected the Uttarakhand government's proposal to permit soapstone mining on agricultural land at Pokhani, located near the Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary (KWLS).

Key Points

➢ **Wildlife Sanctuary and Endangered Species:**
  ○ The Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary is home to endangered species like the **Himalayan musk deer** and **Himalayan tahr**, both listed on the **IUCN Red List.**

➢ **Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) Guidelines:**
  ○ While the precise boundaries of the sanctuary's **eco-sensitive zone (ESZ)** have not been defined, the environment ministry's guidelines state that **an area of 10 km around protected zones is considered an ESZ in the absence of defined boundaries.**

➢ **Proposal for Soapstone Mining:**
  ○ **In 2023, the Uttarakhand authorities presented a proposal** to permit soapstone mining in Pokhani, located within the ESZ of Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary.

➢ **Environmentalists' Reaction:**
  ○ Environmentalists hailed the rejection as a **significant step in protecting the sanctuary and its surrounding areas.**
  ○ They emphasized that the decision reflected an **awareness of the risks posed by mining operations** to the region's ecology and local residents.

➢ **Concerns Over Unregulated Mining in Uttarakhand:**
  ○ Growing concerns over unregulated **mining activities,** particularly in Bageshwar district of Kumaon, have led to a stronger stance against such operations.
  ○ Reports from the **Uttarakhand Disaster Management Authority** revealed severe damage caused by mining, including cracks in 200 houses, roads, and agricultural fields across 11 vulnerable villages.

National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)

➢ National Board for Wildlife is a statutory Board constituted officially in 2003 under the **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.**
  ○ It replaced the Indian Board for Wildlife, established in 1952.

➢ The **NBWL is chaired by the Prime Minister** and is responsible for promotion of conservation and development of wildlife and forests.

➢ The board is **'advisory'** in nature and can only advise the Government on policy making for conservation of wildlife.

➢ It serves as **an apex body for the review of all wildlife-related matters** and for the approval of projects in and around national parks and sanctuaries.

➢ The standing committee of **NBWL is chaired by the Minister of Environment Forest and Climate Change.**
  ○ The standing committee approves all the projects falling within protected wildlife areas or within 10 km of them.

38th National Games

Why in News?

Uttarakhand is preparing to host the **38th National Games**, set to begin on **28th January, 2025.**

➢ The **38th National Games** will be the largest sporting event in Uttarakhand's history, with athletes from across India competing in **35 sports**.

Key Points

➢ The State has unveiled three significant symbols in line with the event: **the logo, the mascot Mauli,** and the **torch Tejaswini.**
  ○ These symbols reflect the essence of **Uttarakhand's rich culture, breathtaking landscapes,** and **unwavering spirit,** while marking the **State's 25th anniversary** with pride and celebration.
  ○ This sporting event promises to be not just a grand competition, but also a unique opportunity for Uttarakhand to showcase its **cultural and natural identity** to the nation.

Note:

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➢ **The Logo:**

○ The official logo of the 38th National Games is a harmonious blend of Uttarakhand's natural beauty and cultural heritage. It prominently features:

● **The Himalayan Peaks:** Representing the State's grandeur and resilience.

● **The Himalayan Monal:** Highlighting biodiversity and cultural pride.

● **The Ganga River:** A sacred symbol of purity and spirituality central to Uttarakhand's identity.

➢ **The Mascot Mauli:**

○ Named after Uttarakhand's State bird, the **Himalayan Monal,** the **mascot Mauli** embodies the **natural beauty, vibrant wildlife,** and **enduring spirit of the region.**

○ The Himalayan Monal, known for its **dazzling colors and grace,** is a symbol of **Uttarakhand's pristine environment,** from its majestic mountains to its lush forests.

○ Mauli reflects the determination, energy, and perseverance of the people of Uttarakhand and mirrors the same qualities that athletes bring to the games.

○ By choosing Mauli as the mascot, the State celebrates its harmonious connection with nature and the resilience of its people, **making it a fitting emblem** of the National Games.

➢ **The Torch Tejaswini:**

○ The official torch of the **38th National Games,** named **Tejaswini,** represents power, inspiration, and the relentless pursuit of excellence.

○ The torch will carry the **flame of sportsmanship** and **competition** across Uttarakhand, uniting the State and the nation in the **spirit of the games.**

○ Designed to reflect the **grandeur of Uttarakhand's mountains** and the **vibrant energy** of its people.

○ **Tejaswini** is a testament to the **State's commitment to excellence** and **unity.**

● Its radiant light symbolizes a bright future for Uttarakhand's athletes, inspiring them to achieve greatness while fostering a sense of pride and togetherness.

Himalayan Monal

➢ The Himalayan Monal, **also known as the Impeyan monal,** Impeyan pheasant, is a bird in the pheasant family, Phasianidae.

➢ It is the **state bird of Uttarakhand.** It has been selected as the mascot for the 38th **National games** that were held in Uttarakhand in 2018.

➢ Himalayan monal is a Schedule – I bird, according to the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** and classified as **Least Concern (LC) by the IUCN.**

Note:

Uttarakhand to Mandate 10 Subjects for Class X Students

Why in News?

A draft has been prepared by the **Uttarakhand's State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT)** has proposed **Class X students** to study **10 mandatory subjects,** replacing the current practice of five.

➤ This decision follows the framework set by the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** and the **National Curriculum Framework.**

Key Points

➤ The **State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT)** has prepared a draft of the **state curriculum framework**, aiming to enhance educational standards and better prepare students for future challenges.

- ○ The new curriculum marks the first major implementation since the **NEP of 1986**, which succeeded the **policy of 1968**.

➤ The draft of the state curriculum framework, prepared through various committees, will be reviewed by the state government.

- ○ It includes only those subjects that have been recommended by the NEP.

➤ All children studying in government schools will be required to take these subjects. They will have the option to change subjects starting from the 11th grade.

➤ The inclusion of new subjects under this policy will foster an entrepreneurial spirit among students. These will include courses in **beauty and wellness, drone technology,** and **various IT-related programmes.**

National Education Policy, 2020

➤ **About:**

- ○ The NEP 2020 aims at making "India a global knowledge superpower". It is only the 3rd major revamp of the framework of education in India since independence.
  - The two earlier education policies were brought in 1968 and 1986.

➤ **Salient Features:**

- ○ Ensuring Universal Access at All Levels of schooling from pre-primary school to Grade 12.

- ○ Ensuring quality early childhood care and education for all children between 3-6 years.
- ○ New Curricular and Pedagogical Structure **(5+3+3+4)** corresponds to the age groups of **3-8, 8-11, 11-14,** and **14-18 years** respectively.
  - It covers four stages of schooling: Foundational Stage (5 years), Preparatory Stage (3 years), Middle Stage (3 years), and Secondary Stage (4 years).
- ○ No hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams;
- ○ Emphasis on promoting multilingualism and Indian languages
- ○ Setting up of a new National Assessment Centre, **PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)**
- ○ A separate Gender Inclusion fund and Special Education Zones for disadvantaged regions and groups.

UCC in Uttarakhand with Stringent Registration Norms

Why in News?

The **Uttarakhand government** is preparing to implement its **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)** on **26th January, 2025,** introducing a host of mandatory requirements for registrations related to personal and civil matters.

Key Points

➤ **UCC Portal:**

- ○ **Services available on the portal include:**
  - Registration of marriages, divorces, and live-in relationships.
  - Termination of live-in relationships.
  - Intestate succession and legal heir declaration.
  - Testamentary successions.
  - Complaint registration and appeals in case of rejected applications.

➤ **Requirements for Various Personal and Civil Matters Include:**

- ○ **Live-in Relationship Registration:**
  - Both existing and new live-in couples must register their relationship.

Note:

- Applicants must provide details like **proof of age, nationality, religion, phone number,** and **previous relationship status**.
- Photos and declarations from both partners are mandatory.
- Children born in such relationships **must be registered within seven days of receiving their birth certificates.**

❍ **Marriage and Divorce Registration:**
- Strict requirements for marriages and divorces have been implemented through the UCC portal to promote transparency and accountability.

❍ **Testamentary Succession:**
- Declarants must submit **Aadhaar-linked details** of themselves, their heirs, and witnesses.
- Witnesses are required to **upload video recordings** of themselves reading the succession declaration to prevent forgery or disputes.

❍ **Complaint Mechanism for Marriages and Relationships:**
- A third party can object to a **marriage or live-in relationship** through a complaint on the **UCC portal.**
- Verification of such complaints will be carried out by a **sub-registrar** to counter false allegations.

Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

➢ The **Uniform Civil Code** refers to a single set of laws governing personal matters such as **marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance,** and **succession for all citizens of India.**

➢ The concept of UCC is mentioned in **Article 44** of the **Indian Constitution** as a **Directive Principle of State Policy,** which states that the state shall endeavor to secure a uniform civil code for citizens throughout the territory of India.

❍ However, it's important to note that this is not a legally enforceable right but a guiding principle for the state.

Uttarakhand Offers GST Registration Exemption

Why in News?

The Uttarakhand government has announced a significant relief for solar entrepreneurs by exempting them from the mandatory **Goods and Services Tax (GST) registration** under the **Mukhyamantri Saur Swarojgar Yojana.**

➢ This initiative aims to streamline processes and encourage investments in **renewable energy** projects across the state.

Key Points

➢ The Director General of Industries and Managing Director of SIDCUL (State Industrial Development Corporation of Uttarakhand Limited), disclosed this decision during the **Pravasi Sammelan (Diaspora Conference).**

❍ It was highlighted that the exemption comes in response to long-standing demands from **solar project investors** who faced delays due to **GST registration requirements**.

➢ Under the **Mukhyamantri Saur Swarojgar Yojana,** thousands of solar plants have already been installed, and many more are in progress.

➢ Previously, entrepreneurs had to register for GST to claim subsidies, despite solar energy being exempt from GST.

❍ The **new policy eliminates this step**, making the process more efficient and reducing bureaucratic hurdles for solar project developers.

➢ Uttarakhand Government's Renewable Energy Vision:

❍ This decision reflects the Uttarakhand government's commitment to promoting **renewable energy** and **sustainable development**.

❍ By simplifying the investment process, the government aims to attract more entrepreneurs to the solar energy sector, contributing to both **economic growth** and **environmental conservation**.

Mukhyamantri Solar Swarozgar Yojana

➢ In 2020, **Uttarakhand launched the Mukhya Mantri Saur Swarojgar Yojana** to promote self-employment through 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 Uttarakhand and returning migrants.

➢ Each beneficiary of this scheme will be allocated solar plants of **25 kilowatts.**

Note:

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PM to Inaugurate 38th National Games

Why in News?

The **Prime Minister** is going to inaugurate the **38th National Games** scheduled to take place **from 28th January to 14th February 2025 in Uttarakhand.**

Key Points

- **About the Games:**
  - **The Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** has announced **Uttarakhand as the host for the 2025 National Games.**
  - Over 10,000 athletes, officials, and coaches will participate, competing in **38 sports across multiple cities** in the state.
- **Landmark Event for Indian Sports:**
  - **IOA President P.T. Usha** described the 38th National Games as a significant **event to promote traditional and modern sports** in India.
  - The inclusion of demonstration sports like **kalarippayattu, yogasana, mallakhambh, and rafting** as a tribute to India's rich heritage and an opportunity for emerging athletes.
- **About the National Games:**
  - The National Games is an **Olympic**-style event where athletes from states and Union Territories compete for medals.
  - **The 2025 edition will feature 32 core sporting disciplines** and four demonstration events.
  - **Previous Editions:**
    - **The 2023 National Games were held in Goa** and spanned across five cities- Mapusa, Margao, Panjim, Ponda, Vasco.
    - **Maharashtra topped** the medal tally with 228 medals, including 80 gold.
    - The **2022 edition in Gujarat** marked a revival of the event after a seven-year gap since 2015.

Kalaripayattu

- It is a **martial art** based on **the ancient knowledge** of the human body.
- It originated in **Kerala** during the **3rd century BC to the 2nd century AD**. It is now practised in **Kerala** and in some parts of **Tamil Nadu.**

- The place where this martial art is practised is called a **'Kalari'.** It is a Malayalam word that **signifies a kind of gymnasium.** Kalari literally means **'threshing floor' or 'battlefield'.** The word Kalari first appears in the **Tamil Sangam literature** to describe both a battlefield and combat arena.
- It is considered to be one of the **oldest fighting systems** in existence.
- It is also considered as the **father of modern Kung - Fu.**

Mallakhamb

- Mallakhamb is a traditional sport, originating from the Indian subcontinent, in which a gymnast **performs aerial yoga or gymnastic postures and wrestling grips** with a vertical stationary or hanging wooden pole, cane, or rope
- The name Mallakhamb derives from the terms **malla, meaning wrestler, and khamb, which means a pole.** Literally meaning **"wrestling pole"**, the term refers to a traditional training implement used by wrestlers.
- **Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra** have been the hotspots of this sport.

Note:

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Soapstone Mining in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

Recently, **the Uttarakhand High Court** took **suo moto cognizance** and criticized the authorities for failing to regulate **soapstone mining** in **Bageshwar district of Uttarakhand.**

Key Points

➢ **Environmental Concerns:**
  ○ **Land Subsidence:**
    ● **Subsidence** is a critical issue in Uttarakhand, exacerbated by mining activities in **vulnerable areas like Kanda-Kanyal in Bageshwar.**
    ● Mining operations, **soil erosion**, removal of resources, and **earthquakes** contribute to the problem.
  ○ **Slope Instability:**
    ● Mining at lower slopes **weakens structural integrity**, affecting villages on upper slopes.
    ● **Loamy and loose soil increases susceptibility to erosion,** particularly during **monsoons.**
  ○ **Deficient Safety Measures:**
    ● Lack of green belts, retaining walls, buffer zones, slope monitoring, and protective structures accelerates erosion.
  ○ **Water and Air Pollution:**
    ● Mining activities lead to **water scarcity**, **contamination, and air pollution** in the region.
➢ **Cultural Concerns:**
  ○ **Impact on Traditional Architecture:**
    ● Land subsidence has damaged **Kumaoni Bakhli houses**, which historically demonstrated seismic resilience.
  ○ **Damage to Heritage:**
    ● Cracks in the **Kalika Temple floor in Kanda**, a **10th-century site of cultural and religious importance**, signify mining-related degradation.
    ● The region's cultural practices, including **folk music, dance, and handicrafts, are also affected.**
➢ **Administrative Lapses:**
  ○ The State and Union governments **failed to define "semi-mechanised mining,"** yet granted environmental clearances for such activities.
  ○ Heavy equipment use without clear policy limits has worsened the situation.

Soapstone

➢ Soapstone is a **soft metamorphic rock made of talc** with varying amounts of **chlorite**, **dolomite**, and **magnesite.**
➢ **Uses:**
  ○ Soapstone is widely used in industries for **making sculptures, countertops, sinks, and tiles** due to its **durability and aesthetic appeal.**
  ○ It is used in **stoves, fireplaces, and laboratory countertops** because of its excellent heat resistance.
  ○ Ground soapstone serves as a filler in **paper, cosmetics, and paints.**
  ○ It is also used for making **utensils, handicrafts, and idols.**
➢ **Availability in India:**
  ○ As per **the Indian Bureau of Mines**, **Rajasthan (57%) and Uttarakhand (25%) hold significant reserves.**
    ● **Rajasthan:** The largest producer, particularly in the Udaipur, Dungarpur, and Bhilwara regions.
    ● **Uttarakhand:** Notable deposits in Bageshwar, Pithoragarh, and Almora districts.
    ● **Tamil Nadu and Karnataka:** Smaller reserves also exist.

Landslide Dams in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

A recent study by **IIT Roorkee** identified **the Alaknanda River,** flowing through the Garhwal region, as the **most vulnerable to landslide-induced natural dams**. The study is titled **'Landslide Dam Studies in Uttarakhand, India: Past, Present, and Future'** and published by Springer.

➢ It highlights that the Alaknanda is followed by **the Mandakini**, **Dhauliganga**, and **Bhagirathi rivers** in terms of susceptibility to such dams.

Key Points

➢ **Findings of the Study:**
  ○ **Uttarakhand's Terrain:**
    ● Uttarakhand's narrow valleys and gorges make it highly vulnerable to landslide-induced natural dams, which block rivers and create upstream lakes.

Note:

- These blockages pose a significant risk of landslide lake outburst floods (LLOFs), which can have catastrophic consequences.
  ○ **Most Affected Areas:**
    - Chamoli, Rudraprayag and Uttarkashi, are the most affected by landslide dams.
    - The breach of **Gohna Tal in Chamoli** remains the region's most severe landslide dam incident, impacting areas downstream as far as Haridwar.
  ○ **Historical Context of Landslide Dams:**
    - Landslide dam formations in Uttarakhand trace back to t**he Last Glacial Maximum (LGM),** between 29,000 and 19,000 years ago.
    - Significant events of landslide damming have been recorded since the 19th century, with the most notable being the breach of Gohna Lake in 1970, which had long-term impacts.
  ○ **Current Trends and Concerns:**
    - The study indicates that the **peak month for landslide dam events is August**, coinciding with monsoon rains.
    - Climate change, deforestation, road construction, and hydropower projects have exacerbated the frequency of such events in recent decades.
  ○ **Risk Mitigation and Preparedness:**
    - While there have been fewer major incidents since 2018, the study stresses the need for **preparedness to mitigate future risks.**
    - The instability of landslide dams, especially in narrow valleys, poses significant challenges for disaster management.
  ○ **Key Triggers of Landslides:**
    - **Heavy rainfall and cloudbursts** are identified as major triggers of landslides.
    - Debris slides are the most common type of landslide responsible for blocking rivers in Uttarakhand's hills.

Alaknanda River
➢ It is one of the **headstreams of the Ganga.**
➢ It **rises at the confluence and feet of the Satopanth and Bhagirath glaciers** in Uttarakhand.
➢ It **meets the Bhagirathi River at Devprayag** after which it is called the Ganga.

➢ Its **main tributaries** are the **Mandakini, Nandakini, and Pindar rivers.**

➢ The Alaknanda system drains parts of **Chamoli, Tehri, and Pauri districts**

➢ The Hindu pilgrimage center of Badrinath and the natural spring Tapt Kund lie along the banks of the Alaknanda River.

Bhagirathi River

➢ It is a **turbulent Himalayan river** of Uttarakhand, and one of the two headstreams of the Ganges.

➢ The Bhagirathi **rises at the foot of Gangotri Glacier, at Gaumukh**, at an elevation of 3892m and fanning out into the 350 km wide Ganga delta, it finally empties into the Bay of Bengal.

➢ The **Bhagirathi and Alaknanda join at Devprayag in Garhwal** and are **thereafter known as the Ganges.**

Dhauliganga

➢ It originates from **Vasudhara Tal**, perhaps the **largest glacial lake** in Uttarakhand.

➢ Dhauliganga is one of the **important tributaries of Alaknanda**, the other being the **Nandakini, Pindar, Mandakini and Bhagirathi.**

  ○ Dhauliganga is joined by the **Rishiganga river at Raini.**

PM Invited to Attend National Games in Uttarakhand

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttarakhand Chief Minister invited the Prime Minister to attend the National Games, which will

Note:

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be held in the state **from 28th January to 14th February 2025**. This is the **first time Uttarakhand is hosting the event.**

Key Points

➢ **Gifts Presented to the PM:**
   ○ The Chief Minister presented a shawl made by **Malari artisans** from Chamoli district and a **replica of Narayan Ashram** to the Prime Minister during their meeting.

➢ **About the Projects:**
   ○ **Development Updates:**
      ● He informed the Prime Minister about ongoing development projects in Uttarakhand.
      ● He highlighted the fast-paced progress on **the first phase of the Rishikesh-Karnprayag rail line project.**
      ● He also mentioned the completion of the survey for **the Tanakpur-Bageshwar rail project.**
      ● He updated the Prime Minister on the **Jal Jeevan Mission**'s progress in Uttarakhand.
      ● He also proposed **closing the old Rishikesh railway station** and operating all trains from the **new Yoga Nagari railway station.**

➢ It was suggested that the land of the old station be repurposed for a new road system to improve traffic flow.
   ○ **Rishikesh as an Iconic City:**
      ● The Chief Minister expressed gratitude for selecting Rishikesh as an iconic city for river rafting.
      ● He requested Centre's support for **the Haridwar-Rishikesh Ganga Corridor** and Sharda Corridor **project** due to limited state resources.
   ○ **Geothermal Energy Project:**
      ● He shared that an MoU is proposed with **the Iceland Embassy** for exploiting **geothermal energy in Uttarakhand.**
      ● He confirmed receiving the necessary no-objection letters from **the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy**, and **Ministry of External Affairs.**

      ● He also requested technical and financial support for the project to help Uttarakhand contribute to **the zero carbon emission goal by 2070.**
   ○ Road Transport Proposals:
      ● The Chief Minister sought clearance for various road transport proposals sent to the Ministry of Road Transport. These include:
      ● Rishikesh Bypass
      ● Haridwar Bypass (Package 2)
      ● Dehradun-Mussoorie Connectivity
      ● Dehradun Ring Road
      ● Champawat Bypass
      ● Lalkuan, Haldwani, and Kathgodam Bypass
      ● Manaskhand Project

National Games

➢ **Background:**
   ○ The Olympic movement, which garnered the attention of the nation in **the 1920s, includes the National Games**. The **National Games** in India were first envisioned as the Indian Olympic Games with the goal of promoting Olympic sports in the nation.
      ● The **first edition** of the **Indian Olympic Games** at Lahore in an undivided Punjab in 1924.
      ● The Indian Olympic Games were named as **National Games** beginning in 1940. This competition sets athletes from several Indian states with one another in a variety of sporting disciplines.

➢ **Objectives:**
   ○ They are held for the benefit of Indian athletes, sports organisations etc.
   ○ They help in raising awareness among **states/UT's** about the necessity of developing internationally grade sports infrastructure.
   ○ It attempts to attract a wide number of youths to participate in sports activities.
   ○ It aims to inculcate sports culture in individuals from all walks of life and educate them on the value of sports in building a healthy society.

➢ **Jurisdiction:**
   ○ The duration and the regulations of the National Games are entirely within the jurisdiction of **the Indian Olympic Association.**

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CM Dhami Inspected Dehradun-Mussoorie Trek

Why in News?

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami recently inspected the **historic Dehradun-Mussoorie trek**, emphasizing the **need to enhance amenities and safety measures** for trekkers and tourists.

Key Points

➤ During his trek along the **Shahanshahi Ashram to Jhadipani route**, CM Dhami highlighted the importance of **preserving the natural beauty of Uttarakhand's trekking trails** while improving facilities.

➤ The Chief Minister directed the **Mussoorie Dehradun Development Authority (MDDA)** to oversee these improvements, ensuring that the trekking paths remain attractive and well-maintained.

➤ Emphasis was placed on the **importance of installing better signage and railings to effectively guide trekkers**.

  ○ Assurance was given that similar upgrades would be implemented on other trekking routes across the state **to improve visitors' experiences and showcase the region's rich cultural heritage** and natural beauty.

Mussoorie Dehradun Development Authority (MDDA)

➤ The MDDA was established in **1984** to **manage the city's urban planning and development** under the **UP Urban Planning and Development Act of 1973.**

➤ **MDDA** is focused on **keeping pace with the fast-growing population** and providing necessary infrastructure to accommodate this growth.

➤ The focus areas include **developing quality infrastructure**, addressing housing needs of the **underprivileged**, and **planning Dehradun and Mussoorie** in a structured and sustainable manner.

➤ To make the city meet modern urban standards, it undertakes the following:

  ○ Implementation of the Master Plan

  ○ Acquisition of land to implement the various schemes

  ○ Enforcement of plans and development schemes

  ○ Adaptation of measures for protection of the natural environment in the development area

Rampant Construction Threatens Uttarakhand's Foothill Ecosystem

Why in News?

The rapid expansion of real estate in Dehradun is raising significant concerns about **ecological degradation** and **biodiversity loss**.

➤ Rajpur and Mussoorie Road have reported **large residential projects** encroaching on both **private and public lands,** leading to the **clearing of green cover and posing risks to public safety**.

Key Points

➤ Construction Activities are **clearing forest land** and **private plots**, including areas with **natural drains leading to the Rispana river**.

➤ Ravines are being filled with mud, which is washed away during rainfall, and that the removal of native trees disrupts local biodiversity and development is exceeding the area's carrying capacity.

➤ The unchecked construction activities have led to the **loss of water sources and streams** in the Rajpur ridge area, with natural vegetation being replaced by urban development.

  ○ This situation underscores the urgent need for **sustainable urban planning** to balance development with environmental preservation.

➤ Unchecked construction in higher areas often results in **debris slides** and **landslides** in low-lying regions, endangering residents and the environment.

➤ To address these challenges, experts emphasize the importance of enforcing **building regulations,** conducting **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA),** and promoting responsible construction practices.

  ○ Public awareness and community involvement are also crucial in advocating for sustainable development that preserves the ecological integrity of Uttarakhand's foothill regions.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

➤ The EIA is a structured method used to analyze and understand the potential environmental effects that could occur from upcoming projects or activities.

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❍ It helps in evaluating and predicting how these projects might impact the natural surroundings before they are put into action.

➤ The concept of EIA emerged in the **1960s** and **1970s** as a response to growing concerns about the environmental impacts of large-scale development projects.

➤ On 27ᵗʰ January 1994, the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India issued the first EIA notification.

❍ The **United Nations Conference on the Human Environment** in Stockholm in **1972** was a significant milestone, emphasizing the need for environmental assessment in decision-making.

❍ Other notable agreements include the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** and the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),** which highlight the importance of considering environmental impacts in various sectors.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

EIA is a study conducted in the early stages of development project planning to predict and address potential environmental impacts

What are the Objectives of Environment Impact Assessment?

- To Promote Environment-Friendly and Long-Term Growth
- To Render Detail on the Environmental Impact
- To Predict & Evaluate The Ecological, Economic & Social Effects of Growth Related Activities
- Identification of Legitimate Options and Mitigation Measures.

ⓢ **Statutory Status:** Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 (Made EIA mandatory)

ⓢ **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)

ⓢ **Project Categorisation:** EIA Notification of 2006 categorised the developmental projects in:

▶ **Category A Project:** Needed prior Environmental Clearance (EC) from MoEF&CC

▶ **Category B Project:** Needed prior EC from State/UT Govt.
  - **Category B1 projects** (Mandatorily requires EIA)
  - **Category B2 projects** (Do not require EIA)

There are 39 categories of projects that require an EC process and are subject to EIA

EIA Process as per EIA Notification, 2006

Step	Objective	Carried Out By
▌Screening ▌Scoping	▌Need of EIA ▌Identifies important issues for EIA	▌State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) (Category B) ▌Standard Term of Reference (ToR) prepared by MoEF&CC with EAC/SEAC for Category B Projects"
▌Public Consultation	▌Addresses concerns of affected people	▌State Pollution Control Board (SPCB)/ UT Pollution Control Board (UTPCB)
▌Project Appraisal	▌Scrutiny of Final EIA Report/ Environmental Management Plan (EMP)	▌EAC for category A Projects and SEAC for category B1 Projects
▌Decision Making	▌Granting EC	▌Category A: MoEf&CC ▌Category B: State EIA Authority (SEIAA)
▌Monitoring (Post EC)	▌Compliance of general and specific conditions	▌SPCB / UTPCB and Regional Offices

Government Initiatives For EC

▶ **PARIVESH (Proactive and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous, and Environmental Single Window Hub):** Single Window System for EC
  ▶ Developed by MoEF&CC and National Information Centre (NIC)

▶ **Environmental Information System (ENVIS):** Collect, Collate, Storing, Retrieving and Disseminating Information Related to the Environment Sector

▶ **Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Notification 2020:** Published by MoEF&CC to replace existing EIA Notification, 2006

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Key Points

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