



Maha Kumbh 2025 | Uttar Pradesh | 06 Jan 2025

Why in News?

The upcoming [Maha Kumbh Mela](#) in **Prayagraj**, scheduled from **13th January to 26th February, 2025**, is set to transcend its **traditional spiritual significance** by incorporating extensive **health, educational, and environmental initiatives**.

Key Points

▪ Initiatives Taken For Maha Kumbh 2025

- **Netra Kumbh (Eye Camp):**
 - 'Netra Kumbh' has been inaugurated, spanning nine acres.
 - Over **500 doctors** from more than **150 hospitals** aim to treat **five lakh (500,000) eye patients**.
 - The camp plans to distribute **three lakh (300,000) free spectacles** and perform **50,000 cataract surgeries**.
 - During the **2019 Kumbh**, the initiative earned a place in the [Limca Book of World Records](#) by distributing **1.5 lakh (150,000) spectacles** and **screening three lakh (300,000) individuals**.
 - Patients requiring further treatment will receive referral cards for surgeries at hospitals near their residences.
- **Dant Kumbh (Dental Camp):**
 - For the first time, a 'Dant Kumbh' will be organized by the **Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)**.
 - Running from 10th January to 26th February, the camp will feature **five dental chairs**.
 - Each chair is expected to handle 500 dental examinations per day, providing free treatments and distributing complimentary oral care products to devotees.
- **Gyan Kumbh (Knowledge Confluence):**
 - The **Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas** is organizing the 'Gyan Mahakumbh' in bringing together over a thousand prominent **educators, university vice-chancellors, education ministers, and secretaries** from both central and state governments.
 - The event will focus on the implementation of the [National Education Policy, 2020](#) with sessions scheduled from **7th to 9th February**.
 - Discussions will cover topics such as the **role of private educational institutions, women's education, student engagement, traditional Indian knowledge systems, and the significance of Indian languages**.
- **Green Kumbh Initiative:**
 - In a bid to promote environmental consciousness, volunteers associated with the **Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas** and the [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's \(RSS\)](#) **environmental activities** have launched the 'Ek Thaila, Ek Thali' (**One Bag, One Plate**) initiative.
 - The campaign aims to distribute **1.5 million steel plates** and **two million cloth bags** to pilgrims, reducing the use of disposable items and encouraging sustainable practices.
 - As of the third week of December, over 150,000 steel plates have been distributed

to organizations operating food services within the mela area.

- Additionally, a '**Harit Mahakumbh**' (**Green Kumbh**) event is scheduled for 31st January at the **Gyan Mahakumbh**.
- **Vidya Kumbh:**
 - Children from **laborer families**, along with their families, will have the opportunity to participate in **Vidya Kumbh**, enabling them to experience the **cultural and educational** aspects of the **Maha Kumbh**.
 - **Free books, pens**, and other **educational materials** will be distributed to children to help them progress in their studies.
 - **Awareness sessions** will be held for the parents of laborer families to help them understand the importance of education and encourage them to support their children's learning.
- **Outreach to Underprivileged Children:**
 - Volunteers from **Vidya Bharati**, an organization linked to the **RSS**, plan to facilitate visits to the **Maha Kumbh** for children living in **slums**, along with their families, ensuring inclusivity and broader participation in the **cultural and spiritual festivities**.
 - These multifaceted initiatives reflect a holistic approach to the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, intertwining spirituality with **health, education**, and **environmental stewardship**, thereby enriching the experience for millions of participants.

Maha Kumbh

- Kumbh Mela comes under [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)'s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity](#).
- It is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth, during which participants bathe or take a dip in a sacred river.
- It takes place on the banks of the [Godavari river](#) in **Nashik**, the [Shipra river](#) in **Ujjain**, the **Ganges** in **Haridwar**, and the confluence of the **Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati river** in Prayagraj. The confluence is referred to as the '**Sangam**'.

Alarming Rise of Hypertension in Uttar Pradesh | Uttar Pradesh | 06 Jan 2025

Why in News?

Recent data from the [National Family Health Survey \(NFHS\)-6](#) reveals a worrying trend in **Uttar Pradesh**, where **one in every four individuals** is at risk of [hypertension](#).

- This health condition, often referred to as the ["silent killer,"](#) poses a significant threat due to its potential to cause severe complications such as **strokes** and [heart attacks](#).

Key Points

- The [All India Institute of Medical Sciences \(AIIMS\)](#) has observed that among patients seeking treatment, approximately **25%** are at risk of **hypertension**.
- Alarming, many of these individuals are unaware of their condition, increasing their vulnerability to severe health complications such as **brain strokes** and **heart attacks**.
- In response, AIIMS has initiated **comprehensive data collection** on patients and their caregivers to facilitate early detection and management of hypertension.

- The distinction between general **blood pressure** fluctuations and hypertension.
 - While a **normal blood pressure** reading for young adults is typically around **120/80 mm Hg**, readings of **140/90 mm Hg or higher** are indicative of hypertension.
- Regular monitoring is crucial, as even slight increases can lead to significant health issues.
- To combat this growing health concern, AIIMS is collaborating with the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** and the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**.
- This partnership aims to gather comprehensive data on patients and their families, focusing on the prevalence of blood pressure issues, hypertension, and **diabetes**.
 - The goal is to identify patterns and risk factors, enabling targeted interventions to prevent and manage hypertension effectively.
- The **NFHS report** serves as a critical reminder of the escalating risk of hypertension in Uttar Pradesh.
 - It underscores the necessity for increased awareness, regular health screenings, and prompt medical attention to mitigate the adverse effects associated with this condition.

Hypertension

- **About:**
 - **Hypertension (high blood pressure)** is when the pressure in your **blood vessels** is too high (**140/90 mmHg or higher**). It is common but can be serious if not treated.
 - Blood pressure is written as two numbers:
 - The **first (systolic) number** represents the pressure in blood vessels when the heart contracts or beats.
 - The **second (diastolic) number** represents the pressure in the vessels when the heart rests between beats.
 - **World Hypertension Day** is celebrated on **17th May every year** to promote awareness about hypertension and encourage people to prevent and control this silent killer.
- **India's Hypertension Burden**
 - India alone has an estimated **188.3 million adults aged 30-79 years** grappling with hypertension.
 - The prevalence of **high blood pressure** in India is slightly lower than the **global average of 31%**.
 - To reach a **50% control rate**, India needs to ensure that an additional **67 million people** with hypertension receive effective treatment.
 - If the progress scenario were achieved, **4.6 million deaths** due to high blood pressure would be averted by **2040**.

CM Dhama Inspected Dehradun-Mussoorie Trek | Uttarakhand | 06 Jan 2025

Why in News?

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama 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 Dhama 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 | Uttarakhand | 06 Jan 2025

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.
 - 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.

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

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



- 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screening Scoping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need of EIA Identifies important issues for EIA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) (Category B) Standard Term of Reference (ToR) prepared by MoEF&CC with EAC/SEAC for Category B Projects"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses concerns of affected people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Pollution Control Board (SPCB)/ UT Pollution Control Board (UTPCB)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Appraisal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny of Final EIA Report/ Environmental Management Plan (EMP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAC for category A Projects and SEAC for category B1 Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision Making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Granting EC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Category A: MoEF&CC Category B: State EIA Authority (SEIAA)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring (Post EC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance of general and specific conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Why in News?

Union Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari recently announced the completion of a significant stretch of the **Banihal Bypass** in **Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district**, which is expected to enhance both **national security logistics** and **tourism** prospects in the region.

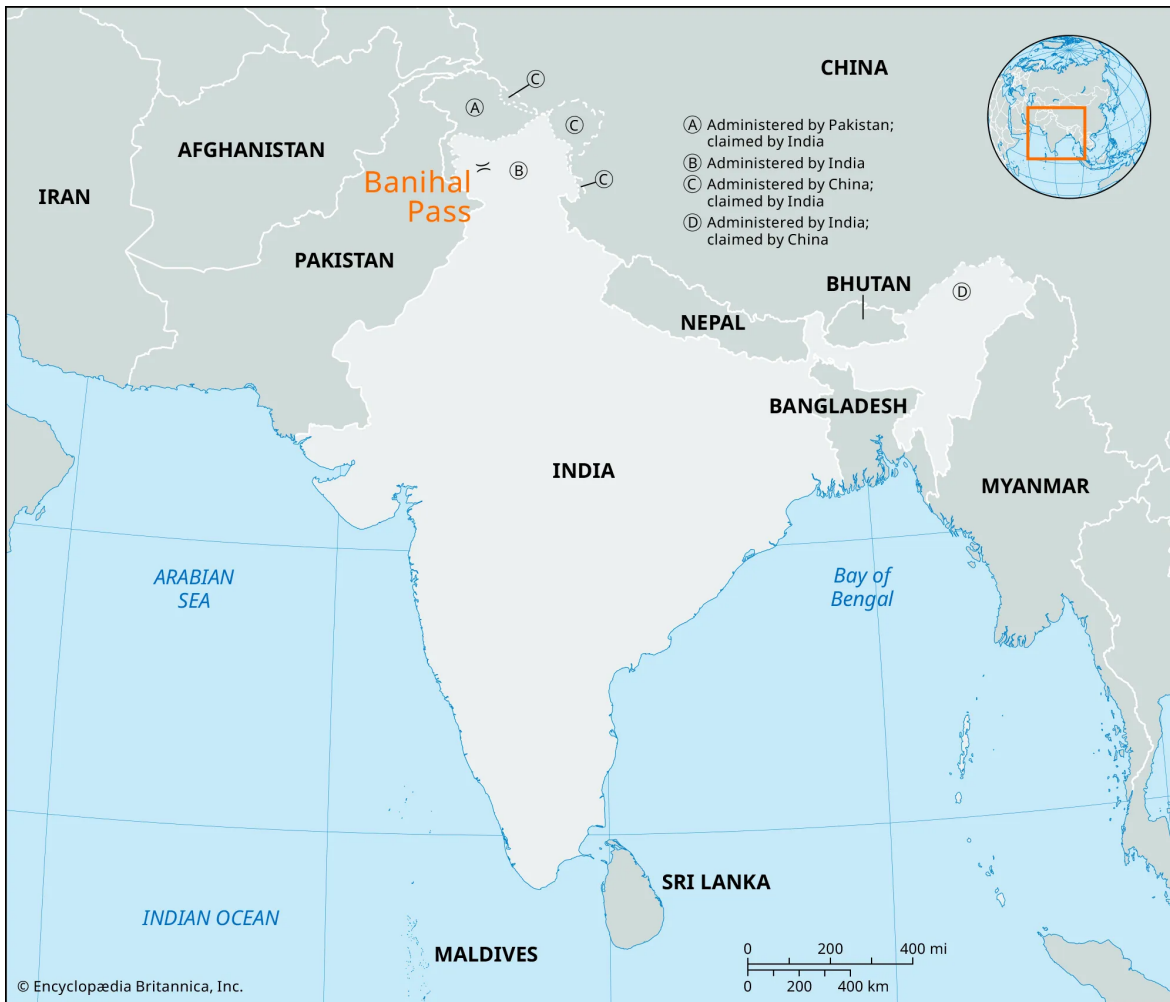
- This **four-lane bypass**, measuring **2.35 kilometers**, was constructed at a cost of **₹224.44 crore**.

Key Points

- The bypass is seen as a **crucial infrastructure upgrade**, reducing congestion and travel time, benefiting both tourists and defense vehicles and route to the **Kashmir Valley**.
- It is part of **the broader initiative to improve the National Highway (NH) - 44**, the completion of the **Banihal Bypass** is expected to significantly enhance the region's connectivity.
- Travel time on the **Jammu-Srinagar highway** has already been reduced through various infrastructure upgrades, including tunnels. Further developments, such as the construction of a **14-kilometer tunnel** between Ramban and Banihal, will contribute to further ease of travel.
- Travel time on the **290-km-long Jammu-Srinagar National Highway**, which is part of **NH-44**, has reduced from **nine hours to around six hours** after significant upgrades such as tunnels.
- The **NH-44** is a major highway and longest in the country, it stretches from **Srinagar** in the north to **Kanyakumari** in the south.
 - The Centre has embarked on a major mission in J&K to ensure that the **NH-44** remains an all-weather road connecting the **Kashmir Valley** with the rest of the country.

Banihal Pass

- Banihal Pass is a high mountain pass located in the **Pir Panjal range** in the **Jammu and Kashmir region** of India.
- It connects the **Jammu region** to the **Kashmir Valley**, serving as an important route for travel and transportation.
- The pass is situated at an elevation of approximately **2,832 meters (9,291 feet)** above sea level and is known for its **rugged terrain** and **scenic beauty**.
- The **Banihal Pass** is historically significant and is a key point for travelers crossing between the two regions.



PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/statepcs/06-01-2025/print>