Kedarnath portals closing for winter; deity's palanquin to Ukhimath

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12 November 2026: Amid Vedic chants and traditional rituals, the portals of Kedarnath Dham closed for winter on 11 November 2026. This season the temple drew more than 19 lakh devotees; the combined Char Dham footfall crossed 60 lakh - a record.

Ritual: After special prayers since morning, the utsav doli (ceremonial palanquin) of Lord Kedarnath left for the Omkareshwar Temple at Ukhimath, the winter seat, where worship will continue for the next six months.

Other shrines: The portals of Gangotri and Yamunotri have also closed - together they drew over 18 lakh devotees; Badrinath's portals will close on 16 November, with which the yatra will conclude.

Record: According to Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee (BKTC) chairman Hemant Dwivedi, over 60 lakh devotees visited the four shrines - the biggest Char Dham footfall ever.

Setting: Kedarnath temple sits at over 11,700 feet; the yatra began in April.

The Char Dham yatra is the backbone of Uttarakhand's economy: hotels, tour operations, taxis, mules, porters, priests and handicrafts together provide direct and indirect employment to more than 10 lakh people.

About Rs 7,500 crore in revenue over six months (official estimate).

Challenges: this season saw 287 health-related deaths of devotees; heavy monsoon rain and landslides also suspended the yatra for some time.

Syllabus link: General Studies - Indian culture, Uttarakhand GK (Char Dham, pilgrimage economy).

Key: Kedarnath's winter seat = Ukhimath (Omkareshwar Temple); Badrinath's = Joshimath (Narsingh Temple).

Possible confusion: Among the 12 Jyotirlingas, Kedarnath is in Uttarakhand; Gangotri-Yamunotri are not Jyotirlingas.

Q1: Where is Lord Kedarnath worshipped during winter?

(a) Narsingh Temple, Joshimath(b) Omkareshwar Temple, Ukhimath(c) Vishwanath Temple, Guptkashi(d) Triveni Ghat, Rishikesh

Answer and explanation: (b) After the portals close, the utsav doli goes to the Omkareshwar Temple at Ukhimath; Badrinath's winter seat is Joshimath.

Q2: What was the total Char Dham footfall in the 2026 season?

(a) Over 19 lakh(b) Over 30 lakh(c) Over 45 lakh(d) Over 60 lakh

Answer and explanation: (d) According to BKTC, over 60 lakh devotees across the four shrines - a record; Kedarnath alone drew over 19 lakh.

Q3: When will the Badrinath portals close in 2026?

(a) 11 November(b) 16 November(c) 26 November(d) 1 December

Answer and explanation: (b) Badrinath's portals will close on 16 November 2026, with which the Char Dham yatra will conclude.

The Hindu - Kedarnath temple closes for winter

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