

MAY

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MK Yadav Sir

Table of Contents

- 1 RBI Surplus Transfer
- 2 Angel Tax
- 3 Legal Tender Money
- 4 Religious Tourism Circuit
- 5 Govt. of NCT Ordinance, 2023
- 6 Kudumbashree
- 7 Stars Program
- 8 Group of Seven (G-7)
- 9 Lakes in India
- 10 Neh Pema Shelpu Drupkhang

RBI okays ₹87K-cr surplus transfer to govt for 2022-23

MANOJIT SAHA
Mumbai, 19 May

The board of the Reserve Bank of India on Friday approved ₹87,416 crore of surplus transfer to the government for 2022-23 and said it maintained the contingency risk buffer 50 basis points higher at 6 per cent for the year.

The surplus is almost three times the amount in 2021-22 (₹30,307 crore), though the figures are not exactly comparable as 2021-22 was a nine-month accounting year for the RBI.

The Indian central bank shifted its accounting year (AY) from July-June to April-March last year, in sync with the government's fiscal year.

In AY22, the contingency buffer was kept at 5.5 per cent; provision towards the contingency fund was around ₹1.15 trillion.

The surge in surplus is due to higher income during AY23, boosted by selling of foreign exchange reserves. "The board in its meeting reviewed

REVENUE BOOST

Amt (₹ cr)
RBI's surplus transfer
to govt in past years



Source: RBI

the global and domestic economic situation and associated challenges, including the impact of current global geopolitical developments," the central bank said in a statement.

Turn to Page 6 ▶

**RBI SURPLUS A WELCOME FISCAL
BOOST FOR CENTRE**

P4 ▶

Context: The board of the Reserve Bank of India approved ₹ 87,416 crore of surplus transfer to the government for 2022-23 and said it maintained the contingency risk buffer 50 basis points higher at 6 percent for the year.

RBI's Transfer of Surplus to Government

- **About:** RBI transfers its surplus profits to the Government according to the provisions of **Section 47 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.**
 - **Section 47** says that surplus profits of the RBI are to be transferred to the government.
 - **Surplus profit** is the profit left after making various contingency provisions for bad and doubtful debts, depreciation in assets, contributions to staff, and superannuation funds, etc.
- **RBI's Earning:**
 - Returns earned on its **foreign currency assets**, which could be in the form of bonds and treasury bills of other central banks or top-rated securities, and deposits with other central banks.
 - **Interest on its holdings** of local rupee-denominated government bonds or securities, and while lending to banks for very short tenures, such as overnight.
 - Management commission on **handling the borrowings** of state governments and the central government.
- **RBI's Expenditure:**
 - **Printing of currency notes** and on staff, besides the commission it gives to banks for undertaking transactions on behalf of the government across the country, and to primary dealers, including banks, for underwriting some of these borrowings.

Changes Proposed to Angel Tax Rules

SWFs, pension funds, FPIs, banks, insurers may be exempted from purview of angel tax

Our Bureau

New Delhi: India on Friday proposed to exclude a host of foreign investors including sovereign wealth funds and pensions funds from the purview of the so-called "angel tax", offering the much-needed relief to the startup sector staring at a funding winter.

Those entities that face this tax will also have more valuation flexibility while computing this it, according to the draft rules put out by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the apex direct taxes body.

Investments by non-resident investors including central banks, multilateral entities, foreign pension and endowment funds, banks and insurers, fore-

Five more valuation methods to determine tax could be allowed

A safe harbour of 10% variation from determined value may be provided

WHO ALL MAY BE EXEMPTED

Sovereign wealth funds, pension funds

Entities with direct or indirect govt ownership of 75% or above

CENTRAL BANKS, MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS, ENDOWMENT FUNDS, BANKS AND INSURERS

FPIs, entities registered with Sebi



ign portfolio investors and entities registered with market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India will not attract the angel tax.

Merchant Banker Valuation >> 13

Context: India proposed to exclude a host of foreign investors including sovereign wealth funds and pensions funds from the purview of the so-called "angel tax", offering the much-needed relief to the startup sector staring at a funding winter.

Key Points

- Those entities that face this tax will also **have more valuation flexibility** while computing this it, according to the draft rules put out by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).
- Investments by non-resident investors** including central banks, multilateral entities, foreign pension and endowment funds, banks and insurers, foreign portfolio investors and entities registered with market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India will not attract the angel tax.

Angel Tax

- A term used to **refer to the income tax payable** on the capital raised by unlisted companies.
- It is **levied on the capital raised via the issue of shares** from an Indian investor.
- This tax **predominantly affects start-ups** and the angel investments they attract.
- It derives its genesis from **section 56(2) (viib) of the Income Tax Act, 1961**.
 - Section 56(2) (viib)** was Introduced by the finance act, 2012
 - It taxes any **investment, received by any unlisted Indian company**, valued above the fair market value by treating it as income.
 - The investment in **excess of fair value** is characterized as 'Income from other sources.'
 - If the **fair market value of a startup share** is Rs 50 apiece, and in a subsequent funding round they offer it to an investor for Rs 60, then the difference of Rs 10 would be taxed as income.

₹2,000 notes pulled ahead of elections

People holding the notes have until 30 Sep to exchange them

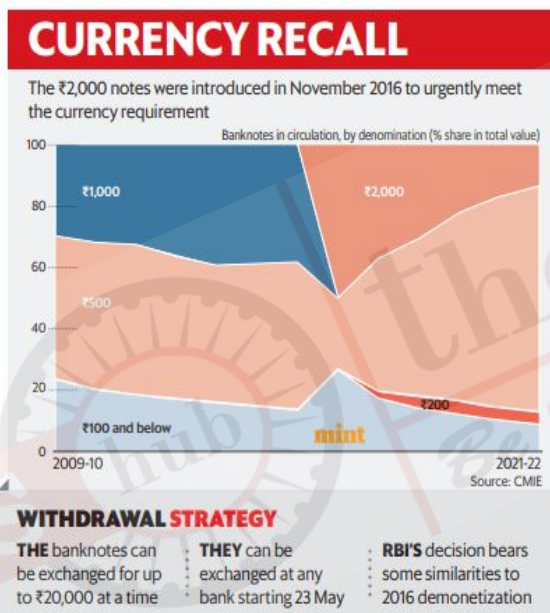
Gopika Gopakumar
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MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India has decided to withdraw ₹2,000 bank notes from circulation, even as it remains legal tender. The withdrawal comes months before crucial assembly elections in five states and national polls next year when cash in circulation surges.

People holding ₹2,000 notes have until 30 September to deposit or exchange the notes. The banknotes can be exchanged for up to ₹20,000 at a time at any bank starting from 23 May 2023. The facility for exchange will also be available at the 19 regional offices of RBI having issue departments. RBI has also asked banks to stop issuing ₹2,000 notes "with immediate effect".

RBI's decision bears some similarities to the 2016 demonetization event, where the central bank invalidated ₹500 and ₹1,000 banknotes, resulting in widespread chaos. However, in contrast to the significant cash removal during the previous measure, the impact of ₹2,000 notes is likely limited as it constitutes only a fraction of the currency in circulation.

With the notes being exchanged,



deposit accretion at banks could increase, reducing pressure to hike deposit rates, which in turn could also moderate the rise in short-term loan rates.

"As witnessed during demonetization, we expect the deposit accretion of banks could improve marginally in the near term. This will ease

the pressure on deposit rate hikes and could also result in a moderation in short-term interest rates," said Karthik Srinivasan, senior vice president of financial sector ratings at ICRA.

"A majority of the ₹2,000 denomi-

TURN TO PAGE 14

Context: The Reserve Bank of India has decided to withdraw ₹2,000 banknotes from circulation, even as it remains **legal tender**.

- People holding ₹2,000 notes have until 30 September to deposit or exchange the notes.
- RBI has also asked banks to **stop issuing ₹2,000 notes** "with immediate effect".

Legal tender money

- It is a **medium of payment** recognised by a legal system to be valid for meeting a financial obligation.
- Legal tender is any **official medium of payment** recognized by law that can be used to extinguish a public or private debt, or meet a financial obligation.
- It is the **money issued by monetary authority or government**, which cannot be refused by any person in payment for transactions.
- Government issues an order describing what is money and that becomes legal tender money.
- In India **currency notes and coins** are legal tender money.
 - **Every banknote** issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) shall be a legal tender in India, provided those notes are not removed from circulation.
- Governments can issue **fiat currency** and make it legal tender by setting it as the standard for debt repayment.
 - Fiat money has no intrinsic value, while legal tender is any currency declared legal by a government.
 - Fiat money refers to any currency lacking intrinsic value (without backup of gold or silver or any other reserves) that is declared legal tender by a government.
 - It is any money backed by the order of government to act as money.

MoU signed for 'Riverine Based Religious Tourism Circuit' to connect seven Religious places on Brahmaputra

Context: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in Guwahati, Assam for the development of '**Riverine Based Religious Tourism Circuit**' among Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), Sagarmala Development Corporation Limited (SDCL), Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) and Department of Inland Waterways Transport (DIWT), Government of Assam.

- The MoU will facilitate modern ferry service on a 'Hop On Hop Off' among **seven (07) historic religious sites around Guwahati**.
 - The seven religious sites are **Kamakhya, Pandunath, Ashwalknata, Doul Govinda, Umananda, Chakreshwar and Auniati Satra** to be covered with the help of this agreement.
- **SDCL and IWAI** will jointly contribute 55% of the project cost while the remaining will be provided by ATDC.

Tourism Circuits

- **About:** Under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, **fifteen thematic circuits have been identified**– Buddhist Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Desert Circuit, Eco Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Krishna Circuit, North East Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Sufi Circuit, Tirthankar Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Wildlife Circuit.
- **Swadesh Darshan scheme:** Swadesh Darshan, a **Central Sector Scheme**, was launched in 2014 -15 for integrated development of theme based tourist circuits in the country.
 - Under the scheme, the **Ministry of Tourism** provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for infrastructure development of circuits.
 - It is **100% centrally funded** and efforts are made to achieve convergence with other schemes of Central and State Governments and also to leverage the voluntary funding available for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and Corporate Sector.
- **Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0:** The Ministry of Tourism has revamped its Swadesh Darshan scheme as Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD2.0) with an aim to develop sustainable and responsible infrastructure at destinations.
 - The SD2. 0 aims to **address the negative impacts of tourism** and promote responsible tourism practices while also increasing private sector investments in the industry.

Negating SC order, Centre brings ordinance on Delhi officer postings

Sets Up Permanent Authority On Services In City

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In a big, dramatic move, the Centre Friday promulgated an ordinance to nullify the recent Supreme Court order that had given Delhi government control over officers dealing with subjects other than public order, police and land, and assigned the superintending

► **SC vindicates AAP govt on pick of DERC chairperson, P 4**

jurisdiction over the entire officer cadre in the National Capital Territory to the lieutenant governor.

The Government of NCT of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023, has created a National Capital Civil Service Authority to deal with service conditions, transfers and postings of officers. Although the committee will be headed by the chief minister of Delhi in his ex-officio

LG'S DECISION TO BE FINAL

► Centre constitutes 'National Capital Civil Services Authority' comprising Delhi CM, chief secy and home secy of Delhi govt to decide on transfer and posting of Group 'A' officers & DANICS officers

► All matters 'required to be decided by the Authority



shall be decided by majority of votes of the members present and voting', according to the ordinance

► Ordinance says if the Authority recommends transfer or posting of an officer, the LG's decision will be final in case of a difference of opinion

BJP is the killer of the Constitution! The ordinance brought by the central govt is contempt of the constitutional bench of the Supreme Court. The Modi govt has brought this ordinance due to the fear of giving power to the Kejriwal govt. @ArvindKejriwal ji may have been elected by the people of Delhi and given more than 90% seats. But Kejriwal will not run Delhi, Centre will run the Delhi govt

—AAP, in a tweet late Friday

capacity, it will also have the chief secretary and the principal home secretary of Delhi as ex-officio members with equal say. Differences of opinion are to be referred to the LG, whose decision will be final.

As members of the central services, over whom the Centre exercises disciplinary jurisdiction, the chief secretary and the principal home secretary can be expected to

be more amenable to the sensitivities of the central regime.

"The Authority shall have responsibility to recommend transfer and postings of all Group A officers and officers of DANICS serving in Delhi but not officers serving in connection with Entries 1, 2, 18 of List II of 7th Schedule and entries 64-66 if they relate to entries 1, 2 & 18," the ordinance said. "The Authority

to make recommendations to LG, who may ask for relevant material on Group A officers. In case LG differs from the recommendation made by authority, LG may return a file with reasons in writing. In case of difference of opinion, LG's decision will be final."

The ordinance came when AAP government was celebrating its victory in SC over who, the Delhi government or the Centre acting through the LG, would control services and appeared to be vigorously driving home the point by wielding the stick against select officers. The Centre's response should lead them to abort the festivities, with a strong possibility of protests breaking out. It signalled its determination to exercise control over services in Delhi, with the ordinance emphasising, in what appears to be a response to the SC order, the need to balance the right of the democratically elected government in Delhi with the fact of it being the national capital and the seat of national and international institutions.

► **'Larger national interest', P 2**

Context: The Centre promulgated an ordinance, **Government of NCT of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023**, to nullify the recent Supreme Court order that had given Delhi government control over officers dealing with subjects other than public order, police and land, and assigned the superintending jurisdiction over the entire officer cadre in the National Capital Territory to the lieutenant governor.

Key Points

- The Government of NCT of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023, has created a **National Capital Civil Service Authority** to deal with service conditions, transfers and postings of officers.
- Although the committee will be **headed by the chief minister of Delhi** in his ex-officio capacity, it will also have the chief secretary and the principal home secretary of Delhi as ex-officio members with equal say.
- Differences of opinion are to be referred to the LG, whose decision will be final.
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- The Authority to **make recommendations to LG**, who may ask for relevant material on Group A officers.
- In case LG differs from the recommendation made by authority, **LG may return a file with reasons in writing**. In case of difference of opinion, LG's decision will be final.

Recent SC Judgement over services

Powers of LG	Lt. Governor shall be bound by the decision of the Delhi government over services, apart from public order, police and land.
Powers of Central government	Centre had exclusive legislative and executive control over 'services' relating to public order, land and police as envisaged under Article 239AA.
Federalism in UT	The Centre had argued that the Constitution is a federal Constitution with a strong unitary bias as far as UTs are concerned. Contradicting it, SC said that Indian federalism is not unitary and any further expansion of the Union's power will be contrary to the Constitutional scheme.
Powers to the elected government	If a democratically elected government is not given the power to control the officers, the principle of the triple chain of accountability (Political, Administrative and Public accountability) will be redundant.
Principle of collective responsibility	It extends to the responsibility of officers, who in turn report to the ministers. If the officers stop reporting to the ministers or do not abide by their directions, the entire principle of collective responsibility is affected.

25 years of Kudumbashree: How this Kerala women's collective intervened to empower women, fight poverty

Whenever Kerala plunged into a deep crisis, be it floods or the pandemic, Kudumbashree has been there with the state and its people through thick and thin

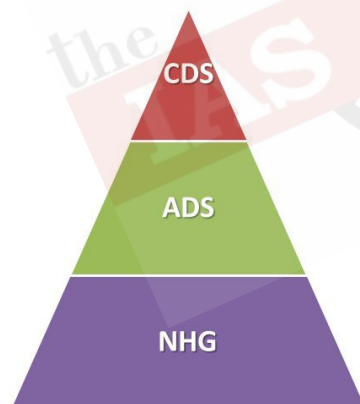


NEXT NEWS >

By K A Shaji
Published: Thursday 18 May 2023



Understanding Kudumbashree



Community Development Society

- Office bearers on ADSs in a local body*
- 7 office bearers
- Interfaces with local govt.

Area Development Society

- Office bearers on NHGs in a ward
- 7 office bearers
 - President
 - Secretary
 - 5 sector volunteer

Neighbourhood Groups

- 10 to 20 women; one from each family
- 5 office bearers
- Weekly thrift, min decided by NHG
- Can undertake economic activities

Context: In her maiden visit to Kerala on May 17, 2023, President inaugurated the silver jubilee celebrations of **Kudumbashree**, the **largest self-help group network** in the country.

- The silver jubilee highlighted a self-evaluation of its successes, including an examination of its members' quality of life, planning the future of neighbourhood groups, and **micro-level planning on sustainable development goals**.

Kudumbashree

- **About:** Kudumbashree, which means "prosperity of the family" in Malayalam, is a **women-led community network** that was launched in 1998 by the Government of Kerala.
 - The network aims to **eradicate poverty and empower women** through various social, economic and political interventions.
 - Today, Kudumbashree has more than 4.5 million members across 14 districts of Kerala, making it one of the largest women's collectives in the world.
- **Working Mechanism:** Kudumbashree approach is based on three pillars: **microfinance, entrepreneurship and social development**.
 - The network organizes women into neighbourhood groups (NHGs) of 10 to 20 members, who **save money and access credit** from banks through a federated structure of area development societies (ADS) and community development societies (CDS).
 - The NHGs also **identify and support potential entrepreneurs** among their members, who start various income-generating activities such as catering, tailoring, farming, handicrafts and tourism.
 - The network also **provides training, marketing and quality control** support to these enterprises.

Ministry of Education and World Bank organise a one of its kind workshop on School-to-Work Transition under the STARS Program

Context: Ministry of Education and World Bank organised a one of its kind workshop on School-to-Work Transition under the **STARS Program** in Mumbai.

- One of the key components of STARS program is **strengthening of Vocational Education and School-to-Work Transition**.
- The workshop focussed on discussion on a Skill Gap analysis of the six STARS States and Uttar Pradesh along with convergence of vocational and skill.

STARS (Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program -STARS)

- **About:** The STARS Project is a Union Government approved education reform initiative in India which is **financially aided by the World Bank**.
 - It is a project to **improve the quality and governance of school education** in six Indian states - Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan.
- **Nodal Ministry:** It comes under the **Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education (MoE)**.
 - The programme aims at working on similar objectives as followed by the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.
 - This project will be implemented through the **Samagra Shiksha Scheme**.
- **Reform initiatives under the project include:**
 - **Focusing more directly on the delivery of education services** at the state, district and sub district levels by providing customized local-level solutions towards school improvement.
 - **Addressing demands from stakeholders**, especially parents, for greater accountability and inclusion by producing better data to assess the quality of learning; giving special attention to students from vulnerable section.
 - **Equipping teachers** to manage this transformation by recognizing that teachers are central to achieving better learning outcomes.
 - **Investing more in developing India's human capital needs** by strengthening foundational learning for children in classes 1 to 3 and preparing them with the cognitive, socio-behavioural and language skills to meet future labour market needs.
- **Components of the project:**
 - **Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC):** The project includes a CERC under the National Component which would enable it to be **more responsive to any natural, man-made and health disasters**.
 - **PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) as a National Assessment Centre:** Included in the **National Education Policy 2020**, this autonomous institution under the Union Education Ministry will set norms for student assessment and evaluation for all school boards across the country, most of which currently follow norms set by State governments.

PM in Japan for G7, may meet Quad leaders, Zelenskyy on the sidelines

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, MAY 19

IN THE first visit to Hiroshima by an Indian Prime Minister since India conducted nuclear tests in 1974, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached the Japanese city on Friday for the G7 leaders' summit.

Besides bilateral meetings with various leaders on the sidelines of the summit, diplomats are working towards scheduling Modi's meeting with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who is also expected in Hiroshima, and a Quad leaders' meeting with US President Joe Biden, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

Modi is also scheduled to meet British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, French President Emmanuel Macron, South Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo and Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh.

Before leaving for Japan, Modi said: "My presence in this G7 summit is particularly meaningful as India holds the G20 presidency this year. I look forward to exchanging views with the G7 countries and other invited partners on challenges that the world faces and the need to collectively address them. I would also be holding bilateral meetings with



PM Narendra Modi in Hiroshima, Japan. PTI

some of the leaders attending the summit." In an interview to Tokyo-based newspaper Nikkei Asia, Modi said he would "amplify the voices and concerns of the Global South" countries at the G7 summit, and "foster synergy" with the broader G20 he is hosting later this year.

He said he was looking forward to discussing global changes and challenges in areas such as energy, digital technology and supply chains. "I will emphasise India's role as a reliable partner in addressing these challenges," he said.

Modi said that India and Japan's shared values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law have brought them closer. "We now see a growing convergence in our political, strategic, security and economic interests," he said in the interview.

On the Russia-Ukraine war, he said: "India stands on the side of

peace, and will remain firmly there. We are committed to supporting those who face challenges in meeting their basic needs, especially in the face of rising costs of food, fuel and fertilisers. We maintain communication with both Russia and Ukraine. Cooperation and collaboration should define our times, not conflict."

Asked if India could play the role of mediator, he said the country's position on the Ukraine conflict "is clear and unwavering".

On India's participation in different groupings like the Quad and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Modi said New Delhi has never wedded itself to security alliances. "Instead, we engage with a wide range of friends and like-minded partners around the world based on our national interests," he said.

The Quad countries' collective focus is on "fostering a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region," he said. On the other hand, the SCO plays a significant role in India's engagement with the "important" Central Asian region. "Participating in these two groups is not contradictory or mutually exclusive for India," he said.

"As a member of the Global South, our interest in any plurilateral setting is to serve as a bridge between diverse voices and contribute to a constructive and positive agenda," Modi said.

Context: In the first visit to Hiroshima by an Indian Prime Minister since India conducted nuclear tests in 1974, Prime Minister reached the Japanese city for the G7 leaders' summit.

Group of Seven (G-7)

- **About:** It is an **intergovernmental organisation of seven countries** that are the world's most industrialised and developed economies.
 - It **meets annually** to discuss issues of common interest like international security, energy policy and global economic governance.
 - It **does not have a formal constitution or a fixed headquarters** and the decisions taken by leaders during annual summits are non-binding.
- **Origin:** It traces its origin to an informal meeting of the Finance Ministers of France, West Germany, the US, Great Britain and Japan (Group of Five) in the wake of the **1973 oil crisis**.
 - **Canada joined the group in 1976** and the European Union (EU) began attending the meetings from 1977.
 - It was called the G8 after the original seven were joined by Russia in 1997 and it returned to being called G7 when **Russia was expelled** as a member in 2014 following the latter's annexation of the Crimea region of Ukraine.
- **Present Members:** France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, United States of America, Canada and Japan.
 - All the G7 countries and India are a **part of G20**.
- **Principles:** The group regards itself as "**a community of values**", with freedom and human rights, democracy, the rule of law, prosperity and sustainable development as its key principles.
 - It prides itself as a group of nations that steadfastly **promote liberal democracy and enjoy economic prosperity**, which they seek to institutionalise through multilateral cooperation.

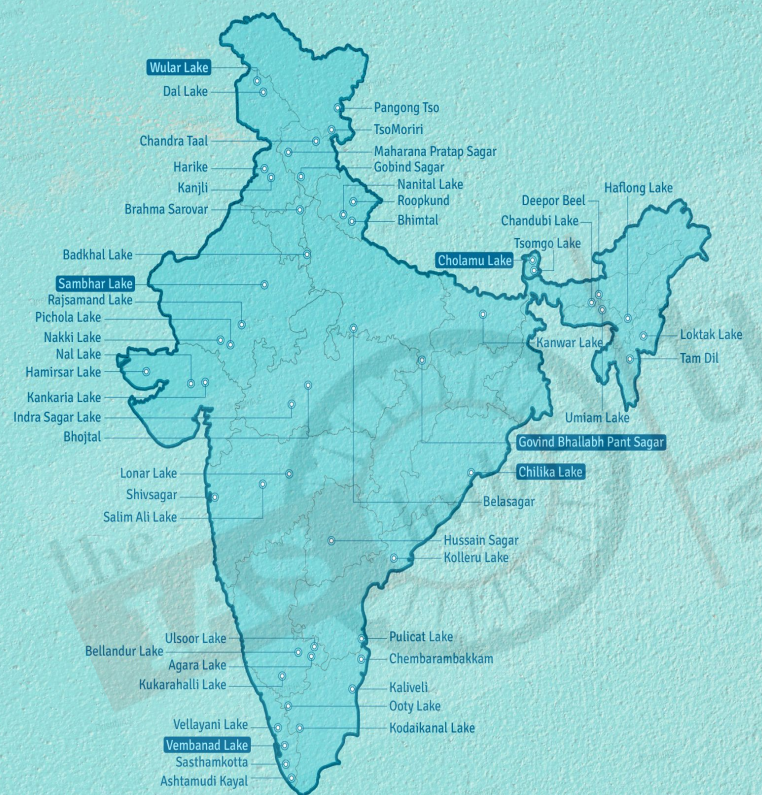
LAKES IN INDIA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)

Drying trends recorded in more than 30 Indian lakes: Study

In about 100 large lakes, climate change and human water consumption were identified as the main drivers of water losses and a decline in lake volume

IMPORTANT LAKES IN INDIA



Largest Freshwater Lake: Wular Lake, Jammu and Kashmir

Largest Brackish Water Lake: Chilika, Odisha

Largest Saltwater Lake: Sambhar Lake, Rajasthan

Largest Artificial Lake: Govind Ballabh Pant Sagar, Uttar Pradesh

Longest Lake: Vembanad Lake, Kerala

Largest High Altitude Lake: Chola Lake, Sikkim

Context: More than 30 large lakes in India have recorded a drying trend from 1992 to 2020, a new analysis revealed.

- Of them, 16 are the major lakes of southern India. Some of these include **Mettur, Krishnarajasagar, Nagarjuna Sagar and Idamalayar.**
- Recent droughts may have contributed to reservoir storage declines in southern India.
- The climate is **linked to factors contributing to the decline of lakes**, such as temperature and potential evapotranspiration (combined loss of water through the plant's process of transpiration and evaporation of water from the Earth's surface), precipitation and runoff, and human consumption.

Lake

- **About:** A lake is a **body of surface water** bordered on all sides by land.
 - Lakes will take water from rivers or function as a source of water since rivers will act as an outlet or inlet to them.
 - Lakes may be found in a variety of settings, including hilly areas, plains, plateaus, rift zones, and so on.
- **Formation:** Some lakes are **generated by the action of glaciers and ice sheets**, while others are formed by wind, river movement, and human activity.
- **Advantages:** Lakes are used for a variety of purposes, including **drinking water, irrigation, navigation, water storage, livelihood (fishing, for example), and influence on microclimate.**
- **Classifications:** There are several sorts of lakes that may be classed depending on a variety of factors - these include:
 - Freshwater Lakes,
 - Salt Water lakes,
 - Natural Lakes,
 - Artificial Lakes,
 - Oxbow lake,
 - Crater Lake.
- **Management and Regulation:** Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) plays an important role in restoration of lakes in India under its initiative called **National Lake Conservation Plan (NLCP)** developed in 2001 specifically for the protection and management of lakes.

NEH PEMA SHELPU DRUPKHANG CAVE**(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Art & Culture)**

NCM team visits Arunachal to look at 'disputed' site

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A two-member team of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) visited Mechukha in Arunachal Pradesh's Shi-Yomi district on Thursday to study a religious site disputed by the local Buddhists and Sikhs.

NCM vice-chairperson Kersi K. Deboo and member Rinchen Lhamo held a two-hour meeting with representatives of the Buddhist Memba community. No representative from the Sikh community participated in it, officials said.

"We placed our grievances and highlighted the issues arising out of mixing a gurdwara with our historical site, Neh Pema Shelpu Drupkhang where Rinpoche Padmasambhava meditated," Norbu Tsering Naksang, president of Neh-Nang Cultural Development Society told *The Hindu*.

"We are expecting a positive response from the commission and a peaceful solution to the issue," he



NCM team visiting a disputed shrine in Arunachal's Shi-Yomi district. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

said.

The NCM team also went for a site verification in the evening. The shrine is about 14 km from Mechukha, a subdivisional headquarters about 30 km from the nearest point of the Line of Actual Control dividing India and the Tibetan region of China.

The controversy over the shrine surfaced a few weeks ago when the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) claimed that Buddhists had taken over the site associated with Guru Nanak Dev. Based on this claim, the NCM sought a detailed report from the Arunachal government on April 24.

Context: A two-member team of the **National Commission for Minorities (NCM)** visited **Mechukha** in Arunachal Pradesh's Shi-Yomi district to study a religious site disputed by the local Buddhists and Sikhs.

- The society represents the **Memba community** inhabiting large swathes of the Shi-Yomi district for centuries.
- Sikhs claim that the **Neh Pema Shelpu Drupkhang**, a cave revered by the local Buddhist Memba community, is a gurdwara.
- The Membas follow **Nyingmapa Tibetan Buddhism** and have their own script, Hikor, which is derived from the Tibetan script.

National Commission for Minorities

- **About:** It is a **statutory body** that was originally titled Minorities Commission.
 - With the enactment of **National Commission for Minorities Act 1992**, the Minorities Commission (a non-statutory body) was renamed as National Commission for Minorities.
- **Objectives:** The commission works for the **development of the recognized minorities in India**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The commission works under the **Ministry of Minorities**.
 - **Linguistic Minorities do not come under the National Commission for Minorities' Jurisdiction** since the Ministry of Welfare Resolution 1988 was passed.
 - The first National Commission for Minorities was set up on 17th May 1993.
- **Minority communities are governed by NCM:** The six religious communities notified as minority communities in India:
 - Muslims
 - Christians
 - Sikhs
 - Buddhists
 - Zoroastrians/Parsis
 - Jains

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