Naini Lake's water crisis

Prelims – *Current events of National Importance*

Mains (GS- I) – *Location-changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and ice-caps).*

Why in News?

Naini Lake has recorded a water level of 4.7 feet, marking a five-year low that sparked concerns over drinking water scarcity ahead of the summer season.

- It is a natural kidney-shaped lake in Nainital, Uttarakhand surrounded by *seven hills*.
- **Discovered by** – P. Baron, a british businessman in 1839.
- The ***third largest lake*** in Uttarakhand by surface area.
- **Topology** –It is connected by a bridge between Mallital (north) and Tallital (south), and this bridge houses the *world's only post office on a lake bridge*.

76% of the city's water demand was met by the Naini Lake in 2024.

- **Reasons for the water crisis -** Decrease in snowfall and rainfall in the winter months.
- A report from the Uttarakhand State Council for Science and Technology found that *compared to other Kumaon lakes*, Naini Lake is subjected to the greatest man-made manipulations.
- It cited unplanned construction, encroachment, and degradation of recharge zones as key factors.
- The construction of concrete structures nearby further causes low rainwater infiltration, worsened by the low rainfall in some years.
- Enhancing siltation, dumping debris in ***Sukhatal Lake***, which is a major aquifer recharge area for Naini Lake, causing the lake to shrink.
- Pollution from the discharge of untreated wastewater, improper disposal of solid waste, and inadequate sewer systems causing sewage to overflow into stormwater drains, discharge into the Lake.

Reference

The Indian Express | Naini Lake



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