



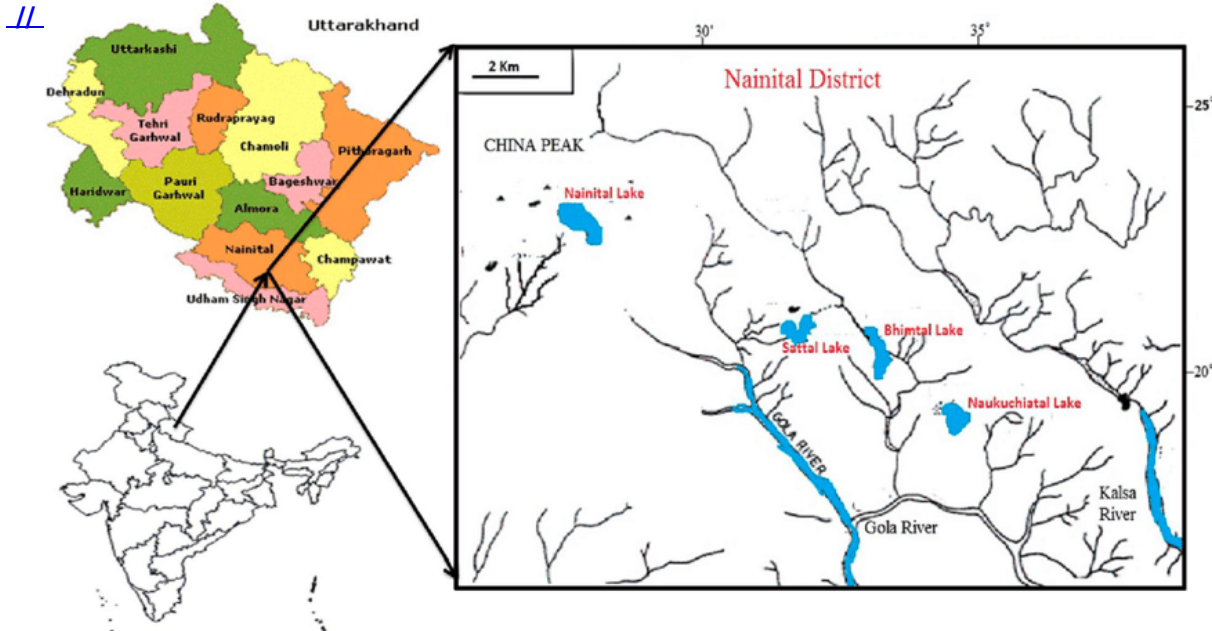
Bhimtal Lake | Uttarakhand | 03 May 2024

Why in News?

In response to a severe forest fire close to **Nainital district** headquarters the state government deployed the **Army's MI 17 helicopters** to fetch water from Bhimtal Lake and spray it over the affected forests.

Key Points

- Bhimtal Lake is the **largest lake in the Nainital district**, in the state of **Uttarakhand**. It is the largest lake in the **Kumaon region**, known as the "**lake district of India**".
 - It is named after the second **Pandava called Bhima** of the famous epic Mahabharata.
- It is a **natural lake** and its origin is attributed to **several faults** that occurred due to the shifting of the **Earth's crust**.
- The lake was built during **British time in 1883** and has a **masonry dam** built on it.
- The lake has rich flora and fauna around it and thick forests of **pine and oak** cover the hill slopes around the lake.
 - It is home to **a number of migratory birds** in the winter months.
 - Famous species found in the area include **bulbul, wall creeper, Emerald Dove, Black Eagle, and Tawny fish owl**.
- The lake has **an island at its centre** developed as a tourist attraction **with an aquarium**.



Nakshatra Sabha | Uttarakhand | 03 May 2024

Why in News?

The **Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board** has joined hands with **Starscapes**, a leading astro-tourism company, to introduce [Nakshatra Sabha](#), a new initiative to provide a comprehensive **Astro Tourism** experience to people.

Key Points

- The campaign will **offer a range of activities**, including stargazing, special solar observations, astrophotography contests, camping under the stars, and more.
- The initiative aims to bring together **astronomy enthusiasts**, adventurers, and **travellers** to marvel at the wonders of the **cosmos**.
 - Uttarakhand is well-positioned to attract Astro Tourists worldwide with its abundant forest cover, nature-based tourism, convenient access to major cities, and well-established hospitality sector, including homestays.
- **George Everest in Mussoorie** is set to host Nakshatra Sabha from early June until mid-2025, presenting a range of engaging events at different spots throughout Uttarakhand.
 - These events will **explore potential night sky sites** in districts such as **Uttarkashi, Pithoragarh, Nainital, and Chamoli**, along with seminars and webinars led by experts in the field.
- By creating a community of advocates committed to **conserving dark skies** in Uttarakhand, the Nakshatra Sabha campaign aims to promote professional training, skill development, and support local economies while advocating for the preservation of night skies.
 - It plans to establish a policy for preserving dark skies across the region in 2025.

Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB)

- It is a government body responsible for promoting tourism in the state of Uttarakhand.
- It was **established in 1976** and is **headquartered in Dehradun**.
- The UTDB works to **develop and promote tourism** infrastructure, attract investment, and market Uttarakhand as a tourist destination.

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/statepcs/03-05-2024/uttarakhand/print>