



Surajkund Fair 2025 | Haryana | 19 Dec 2024

Why in News?

The [Surajkund International Craft Fair](#) is scheduled **between 7th to 23rd February 2025 in Faridabad**. The authorities are likely to spend around Rs. 1.50 crore on repair work.

Key Points

▪ About the Fair:

- It is an effective **platform to connect our craftsmen with art lovers**. This fair is both an **art exhibition and a business centre**.
- The fair showcases the richness and diversity of the [handicrafts, handlooms and the cultural heritage of India](#).
- The department is focusing on **expanding the fair area in 2025**, with an emphasis on **increasing huts for artisans and participants**.
 - The number of additional huts is yet to be finalized and depends on the availability of open space.
 - Additional huts, designed to be weather-proof, are expected to meet the growing demand due to the fair's increasing popularity and participation.
 - In 2024, authorities provided around 1,150 huts, accommodating over 1,500 indigenous and 250 foreign craftspeople.
- Authorities have signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the [Delhi Metro Rail Corporation \(DMRC\)](#) for ticketing and parking facilities.
- **Partner Nations and Theme:**
 - [BIMSTEC countries](#) (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal, and Sri Lanka) remain **partner nations** for the event.
 - The **theme state for the upcoming fair is yet to be announced**, though Northeastern states like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, and Mizoram will be given special focus for showcasing art and craft.

BIMSTEC

- BIMSTEC is a **regional organisation** comprising **7 member states - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand**.
- It was formed in **1997** with the aim of promoting multifaceted technical and economic cooperation among the countries of the [Bay of Bengal region](#).
- The region covered by BIMSTEC is home to around **1.5 billion people**, with a combined GDP of over **USD 3.8 trillion**.

Low Water Supply in Haryana and UP | Haryana | 19 Dec 2024

Why in News?

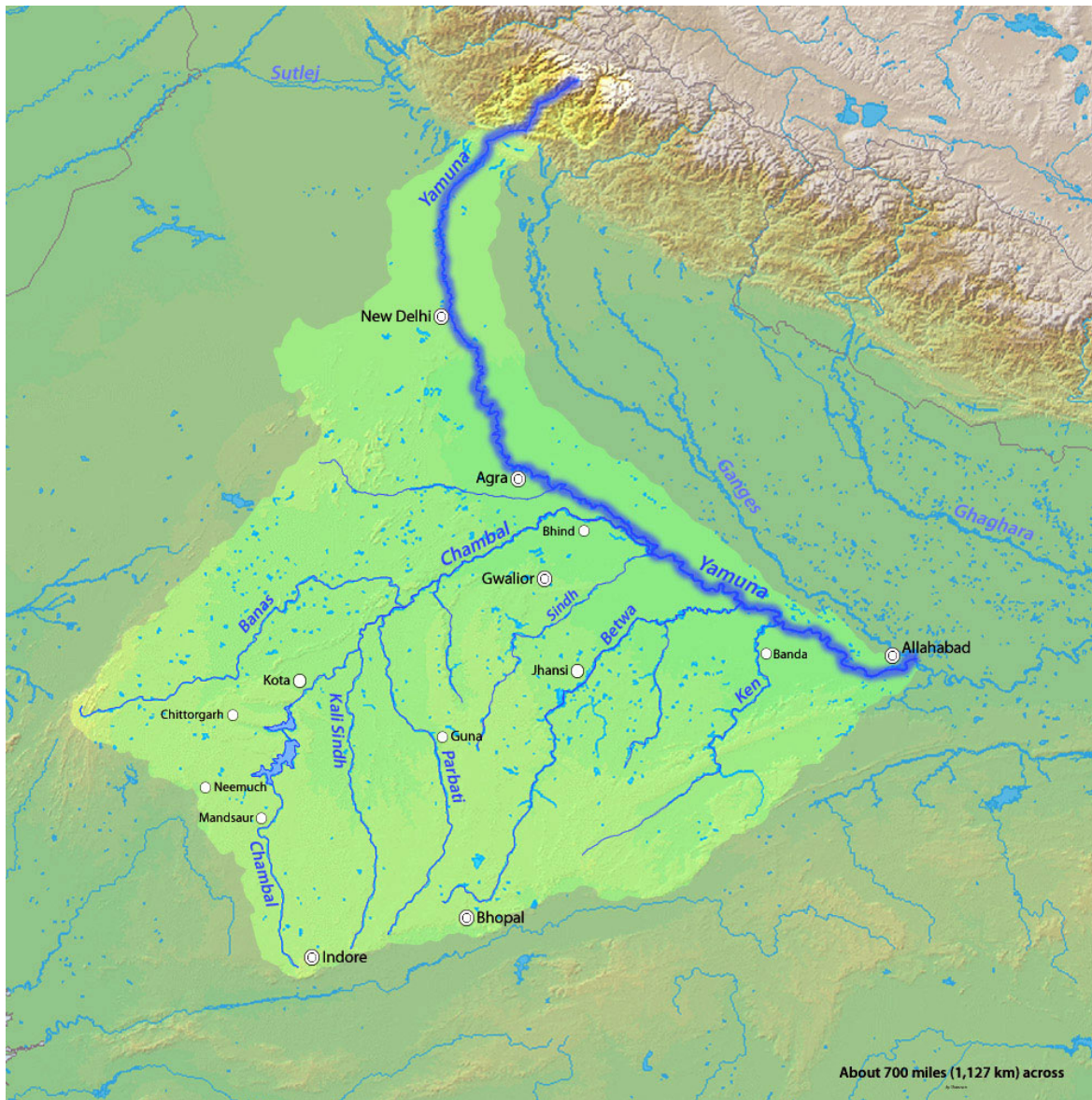
The water level of the [Yamuna](#) has significantly **decreased due to lack of rain in the upper hills of Himachal Pradesh**, causing a severe **shortfall in water supply in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh**.

Key Points

- **Water Level at Hathnikund Barrage:**
 - The **water level at Hathnikund Barrage** rose but despite the rise, the current supply remains far below demand, **impacting irrigation, drinking water supply, and hydropower generation.**
- **Western Jamuna Canal (WJC) Shortfall:**
 - The WJC has a water demand of 9,000 cusecs, but only 1,756 cusecs were released.
 - The **canal provides drinking water to Delhi and irrigates crops in southern Haryana**, both of which have been severely affected by the shortfall.
- **Eastern Jamuna Canal (EJC) Shortfall:**
 - The EJC, which **caters to Uttar Pradesh**, requires 1,500 cusecs but received only 182 cusecs.
 - **Water supply to the EJC was stopped due to low flow in the river**, which dropped to 1,142 cusecs.
- **Impact on Hydropower Projects:**
 - **Hydropower projects in Naino Wali, Bhudkalan, Begampur, and Dadupur villages have been impacted** by the Yamuna's water shortage.

Yamuna River

- **About:**
 - The Yamuna River is one of the major tributaries of the Ganges in Northern India.
 - It forms an integral part of the [Yamuna-Ganga Plain](#), one of the world's most extensive [alluvial plains](#).
- **Source:**
 - It has its source in the [Yamunotri Glacier](#) at an **elevation of 6,387 meters** on the southwestern sides of [Banderpooch crests](#) in the lower [Himalayan ranges](#).
- **Basin:**
 - It meets the **Ganges at the Sangam (where Kumbh mela is held)** in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh after flowing through **Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi**.
- **Important Dam:**
 - Lakhwar-Vyasi Dam (Uttarakhand), Tajewala Barrage Dam (Haryana) etc.
- **Important Tributaries:** [Chambal](#), [Sindh](#), [Betwa and Ken](#).



Urea-Efficient Wheat Varieties | Haryana | 19 Dec 2024

Why in News?

Indian and Japanese institutions are collaborating to develop India's first wheat varieties using **Biological Nitrification Inhibition (BNI) technology**, marking a significant step towards sustainable agriculture.

- **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-Central Soil Salinity Research Institute(CSSRI), Karnal** is involved in this project.

Key Points

- **Aim:**
 - These varieties **aim to reduce urea dependency**, addressing challenges such as **environmental sustainability, agricultural productivity, and the financial burden of urea subsidies**.
- **Collaborative Effort:**
 - The project is also a joint initiative by [Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research \(IIWBR\)](#), [Indian Agricultural Research Institute \(IARI\)](#), and [Borlaug Institute for South Asia \(BISA\)](#).
 - It is carried out in collaboration with the **Japan International Research Centre for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS)** and funded by the **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**.
- **Transformative Potential of BNI:**
 - According to Scientists at CSSRI, **BNI technology** can **reduce nitrogen fertiliser** demand without compromising yield or quality.
 - He added that BNI supports **sustainable agriculture by minimizing nitrogen leaching into groundwater**, thereby preserving **soil fertility** and **water resources**.
- **Promising Results:**
 - Senior Scientist at IIWBR, reported a **15-20% reduction in urea usage in initial experiments** without affecting yield or quality.
 - The breeding strategy for developing BNI-enabled wheat varieties is progressing well.
- **Future Implications:**
 - This breakthrough collaboration between India and Japan is set to revolutionize **wheat cultivation**, reduce urea dependency, and address global agricultural challenges.

Biological Nitrification Inhibition (BNI)

- It is a **natural plant process** that can help regulate **nitrification in agricultural systems**, and improve **nitrogen-use efficiency**.
- It can help **develop sustainable agricultural systems** that are productive but least damaging to the environment.
- High levels of nitrification can lead to **NO leaching, denitrification, and greenhouse gas emissions**.

Subsidy on Urea

- In India, **urea is the most produced, imported, consumed and physically regulated fertiliser** of all. It is subsidised only for agricultural uses.
- The Centre **pays a subsidy** on urea to fertiliser manufacturers on the basis of cost of production at each plant and the units are required to sell the **fertiliser at the government-set Maximum Retail Price (MRP)**.

Ropeway Project to Vaishno Devi Shrine | Jammu & Kashmir | 19 Dec 2024

Why in News?

Recently, a **shutdown was observed in Katra** to oppose a ropeway that **will connect Tarakote Marg to Sanji Chhat**, along the 12-kilometre steep track of the [Vaishno Devi shrine](#), in the Jammu region.

Key Points

- **Protest Against Ropeway Project:**
 - **The Vaishno Devi Trek Mazdoor Union**, voiced opposition to the **ropeway project**, stating it threatens the livelihood of over 60,000 families, including hoteliers, shopkeepers, pony operators, laborers, and transporters.
 - The **Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti** called for a shutdown in Katra, which disrupted business in the local market.
 - **Withdrawal of Shutdown Call:**
 - The Samiti withdrew the shutdown after receiving fresh assurances from local authorities.
 - The Deputy Commissioner requested five days to analyze their demands, according to Samiti members.
- **Shrine Board Meeting Chaired by Lieutenant Governor:**
 - J&K **Lieutenant Governor** chaired the **73rd Meeting of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board at Raj Bhawan**.
 - The Lieutenant Governor inaugurated new **pilgrim-centric facilities** and **laid the foundation stone for a new exit track** aimed at decongesting the Bhawan area.
- **Board's Decisions and Future Plans:**
 - The **Shrine Board conducted** a comprehensive review of its previous decisions but did not issue a specific statement on the ongoing protests in Katra.
 - The Lieutenant Governor emphasized improving transparency and efficiency to enhance the pilgrim experience.
- **MoU to Address Landslides:**
 - The Board approved a tripartite **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** and **THDC India Limited (THDCIL)**.
 - The MoU **aims to identify and treat slopes vulnerable to landslides and rockfalls** along the Yatra route between Adhkuwari and Bhawan.

Vaishno Devi Temple

- The temple is **located at 5,200 feet in the Trikuta mountains**, sees over one crore visitors annually, with a **12 km trek from Katra**.
- **Key Landmarks:** Darshani Deodhi, Banganga, Chara Paduka, Indraprastha, Adhkuari, Garbha Joon, Himkoti, Haathi Matha, Sanji Chhat Bhavan, Sher ka Panja and Bhairon Mandir.

Migratory Birds in Hokersar Wetland | Jammu & Kashmir | 19 Dec 2024

Why in News?

The **Hokersar wetland** in Srinagar has transformed into a **haven for numerous migratory birds**, drawing the attention of locals and **tourists** alike.

Key Points

- **Winter Arrival of Migratory Birds:**
 - Many **migratory birds from foreign countries flock to Hokersar wetland** during winter, making it a popular destination.
 - The wetland serves as a **crucial stopover** along the Central Asian Flyway, **providing food, shelter, and breeding grounds** for avian travelers.
- **Ideal Habitat for Birds:**
 - Hokersar's rich flora and diverse water bodies make it a perfect refuge for species like

the [Siberian crane](#), [bar-headed goose](#), and various ducks.

▪ **Conservation Efforts:**

- Local authorities and conservation groups are working to **protect Hokersar from threats like [pollution](#) and [encroachment](#).**
- Initiatives such as habitat restoration and proactive water management are vital to maintaining the wetland's ecological health.
- The [Forest Protection Force](#) has been deployed to ensure the safety of the birds and prevent [poaching](#).

Hokersar Wetland

▪ **Location:**

- The Hokersar wetland, a [Ramsar site](#), is situated in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. It is **also known as the 'Queen Wetland of Kashmir'**.

▪ **Geographic Setting:**

- It is a natural, perennial **wetland that is part of the [Jhelum](#) basin** and is located in the **northwest Himalayan biogeographic province of Kashmir**, at the foot of the snow-draped [Pir Panjal range](#).

▪ **Water Source:**

- The wetland receives water from the [Doodhganga River](#), a tributary of the [Jhelum](#).

▪ **Flora and Fauna:**

- It is **home to the last remaining reedbeds of Kashmir** and serves as a **critical pathway for 68 waterfowl species**.
- These birds, **migrating from regions like Siberia, China, Central Asia, and Europe**, include species such as the **little cormorant**, [common shelduck](#), **large egret**, and **great crested grebe**.
- The wetland is **vital for local biodiversity**, offering food sources, spawning grounds, and nurseries for fish, along with breeding habitats for various species.