

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## Cadets back at J&K lake after 33 years

Training drills in the area were suspended in 1989 under the shadow of militancy

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

Central Kashmir's Manasbal Lake is once again open for training drills, more than three decades after raging militancy forced the Navy to abandon it.

Amid picturesque hills and pristine waters, over 100 National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets, both from J&K and outside, participated in exercises like sailing and boat pulling on Wednesday.

"It's a historic day after a gap of 33 years. NCC training activities of the naval wing are being revived at the lake. Training in the area was suspended during the inception of militancy in the 1990s," said Group Commander, NCC, Brigadier K.S. Kalsi.

The participants expressed excitement at the resumption of training at the scenic lake. "The administration and armed forces have managed to improve the situation to the extent that the Navy was able to revive the



**Calm waters:** NCC cadets participate in training in the Manasbal Lake in central Kashmir on Wednesday. ■AP

training area," added Brigadier Kalsi.

### Participants upbeat

The exercises, which also saw the participation of girl cadets, may help students from various parts of J&K interact with each other. "It's an experience to undergo training here," Joginder Singh, a cadet from Jammu's Doda, said.

Located in Ganderbal dis-

trict, **Manasbal is a freshwater lake.** The site was abandoned by the Navy in 1989.

"The NCC has been working in J&K since 1965 and would train cadets on the shores of the Dal and Manasbal lakes. The security situation had forced us to shift the training module outside the Valley. However, such exercises here will motivate locals to join the NCC in the future," Brigadier Kalsi said.

Meanwhile, J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha visited the forward areas of Poonch on Wednesday and was briefed on the overall security situation prevalent on the Line of Control, counter-infiltration grid and operational preparedness.

"I salute the exemplary bravery of our armed forces. J&K is witnessing a new dawn of peace, progress and prosperity. India will give a befitting reply to anyone who tries to disturb the peace, unity and integrity of the country," Mr. Sinha said.

The Lt. Governor added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given special focus to the development and prosperity of people living along the border, especially the youth. "The young generation should come forward and avail the benefits of various schemes launched under 'Youth Mission' to become self-reliant and successful entrepreneurs," he said.

- ✓ **Manasbal Lake** is a freshwater lake located in Safapora area of Ganderbal District in Jammu and Kashmir, India. The name Manasbal is said to be a derivative of Manasarovar.
- ✓ The Mughal garden, called the Jaroka Bagh, (meaning bay window) built by Nur Jahan overlooks the lake.

# Cabinet approves addition of four tribes to ST list

Move will benefit communities in Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh: Tribal Affairs Minister

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday approved the addition of four tribes to the list of Scheduled Tribes (ST), including those from Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh.

Demands for the inclusion of the communities had been pending for decades, Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda told reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

The Hatti tribe in the Trans-Giri area of Sirmour district in Himachal Pradesh, the Narikoravan and Kurivikkaran hill tribes of Tamil Nadu, and the Binjhia tribe in Chhattisgarh, which



Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda and Sports Minister Anurag Thakur at a press meet on Wednesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

was listed as ST in Jharkhand and Odisha but not in Chhattisgarh, were the communities added to the list.

The Cabinet also approved a proposal to bring the Gond community, resid-

ing in 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh, under the ST list from the Scheduled Caste list. This includes the five subcategories of the Gond community: Dhuria, Nayak, Ojha, Pathari and Rajgond.

Mr. Munda said the demand for the Binjhia tribe to be added to the ST list in Chhattisgarh had been pending for around 15 years.

Sports Minister Anurag Thakur, who also attended the press briefing, said the Hatti tribe had been seeking their inclusion for around 50 years. Like the Binjhia community, the Hatti tribe had been in the ST list in Uttarakhand but not in Himachal Pradesh.

### ‘Historic decision’

“It is a historic decision. I thank Prime Minister Modi for this,” Mr. Thakur, who is an MP from the poll-bound Himachal Pradesh, said.

Mr. Munda said the inclusion of the Hatti community

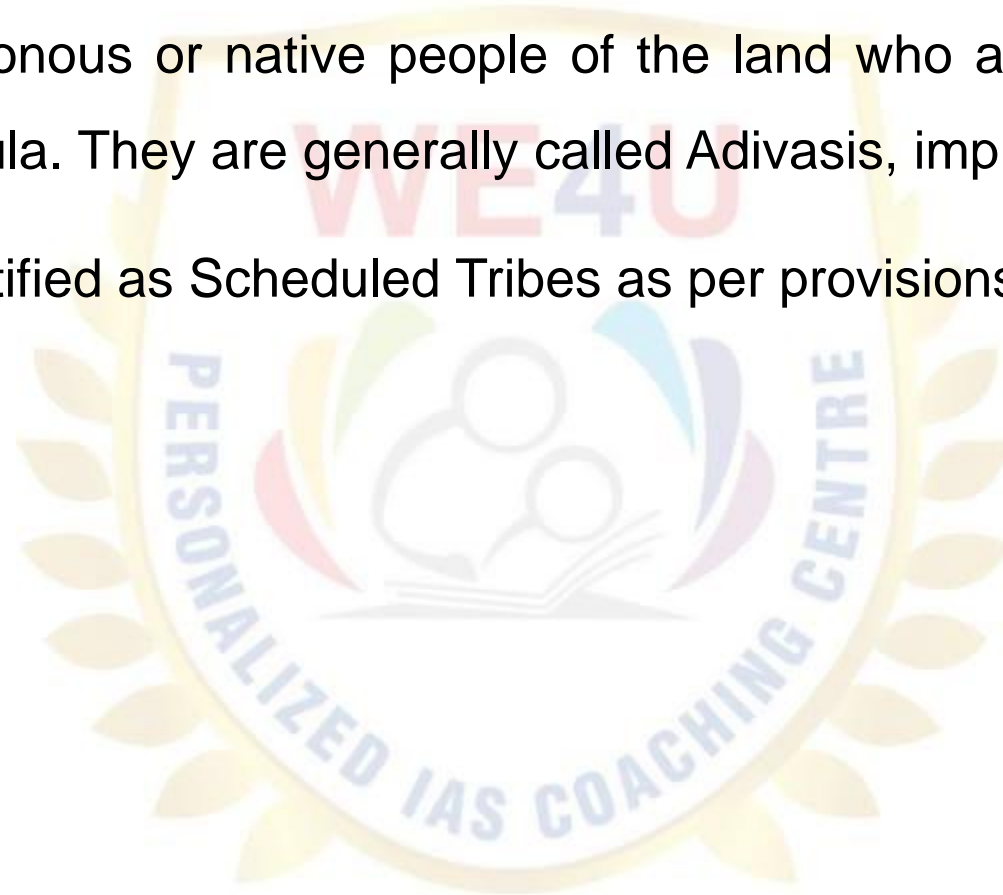
would benefit around 1.6 lakh people of this area-specific tribe in Himachal Pradesh. He said the Cabinet had also approved the inclusion of synonyms for 11 tribes in Chhattisgarh and one tribe in Karnataka so that variations in their spellings and pronunciations do not result in beneficiaries being left out of schemes.

The Cabinet approved ‘Betta-Kuruba’ as a synonym for the Kadu Kuruba tribe in Karnataka. In Chhattisgarh, the Cabinet approved synonyms for tribes like the Bharia (variations added include Bhumia and Bhuyian), Gadhwa (Gadwa), Dhanwar (Dhanawar, Dhanuwar), Nagesia (Nagasia, Kisan), and Pondh (Pond).

## Tribes

The tribes are the autochthonous or native people of the land who are believed to be the earliest settlers in the Indian Peninsula. They are generally called Adivasis, implying original inhabitants.

These communities were notified as Scheduled Tribes as per provisions contained in Clause 1 of 342 of the Constitution.



## Article 342

- ✓ The President may, with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a state, after consultation with the Governor thereof by public notification, specify the tribes.
- ✓ Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled tribes specified in a notification issued under clause(1) any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community, but save as aforesaid, a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification.
- ✓ Thus, the first specification of Scheduled Tribes in relation to a particular State/ Union Territory is by a notified order of the President, after consultation with the State governments concerned. These orders can be modified subsequently only through an Act of Parliament.

## India's growing water crisis, the seen and the unseen

Rural-urban water disputes are very likely to occur as scarcity grows, exacerbated by climate change



SRIKUMAR CHATTOPADHYAY

The UNESCO United Nations World Water Development Report of 2022 has encapsulated global concern over the sharp rise in freshwater withdrawal from streams, lakes, aquifers and human-made reservoirs, impending water stress and also water scarcity being experienced in different parts of the world. In 2007, 'Coping with water scarcity' was the theme of World Water Day (observed on March 22). The new Water Report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) sounded a note of caution about this silent crisis of a global dimension, with millions of people being deprived of water to live and to sustain their livelihood.

### Growing water stress

Further, the Water Scarcity Clock, an interactive webtool, shows that over two billion people live in countries now experiencing high water stress; the numbers will continue to increase. The Global Drought Risk and Water Stress map (2019) shows that major parts of India, particularly west, central and parts of peninsular India are highly water stressed and experience water scarcity. A NITI Aayog report, 'Composite Water Management Index' (2018) has sounded a note of caution about

the worst water crisis in the country, with more than 600 million people facing acute water shortages. The typical response of the areas where water shortage or scarcity is high includes transfer of water from the hinterlands/upper catchments or drawing it from stored surface water bodies or aquifers. This triggers sectoral and regional competition; rural-urban transfer of water is one such issue of global concern.

Increasing trans-boundary transfer of water between rural and urban areas has been noted in many countries since the early 20th century. A review paper published in 2019 reported that, globally, urban water infrastructure imports an estimated 500 billion litres of water per day across a combined distance of 27,000km. At least 12% of large cities in the world rely on inter-basin transfers. A UN report on 'Transboundary Waters Systems - Status and Trend' (2016) linked this issue of water transfer with various Sustainable Development Goals proposed to be achieved during 2015 to 2030. The report identified risks associated with water transfer in three categories of biophysical, socio-economic and governance. South Asia, including India, falls in the category of high biophysical and the highest socio-economic risks.

### Urban water use

According to Census 2011, the urban population in India accounted for 34% of total population distributed in 7,935 towns of all classes. It is estimated that the urban pop-



RAJEEV BHATT

ulation component in India will cross the 40% mark by 2030 and the 50% mark by 2050 (World Urbanization Prospects, 2018). The urban population accounted for 50% of the total world population by the end of the last century. Although the pace of India's urbanisation is relatively slow, it is now urbanising at a rapid pace – the size of the urban population is substantial. Water use in the urban sector has increased as more and more people shift to urban areas, and per capita use of water in these centres rises, which will continue to grow with improved standards of living.

Examining the urban water management trajectory, it is evident that in the initial stages when a city is small, it is concerned only with water supply; in a majority of cases, water is sourced locally, with groundwater meeting the bulk of the supply. As the city grows and water management infrastructures develop, dependence shifts to surface water.

With a further growth of cities, water sources shift further up in the hinterlands, or the allocation of urban water is enhanced at the

expense of irrigation water. Almost all cities in India that depend on surface water experience this trend. City water supply is now a subject of inter-basin and inter-State transfers of water.

### The case of Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad is an interesting case in this context. More than 80% of water supply in this city used to be met from groundwater sources till the mid-1980s. The depth to groundwater level reached 67 metres in confined aquifers. The city now depends on the Narmada canal for the bulk of its water supply. The shift is from local groundwater to canal water receiving supply from an inter-State and inter-basin transfer of surface water.

Dependence on groundwater continues particularly in the peri-urban areas in almost all large cities that have switched to surface water sources. While surface water transfer from rural to urban areas is visible and can be computed, the recharge areas of groundwater aquifers are spread over well beyond the city boundary or its periphery.

Whatever be the source, surface or groundwater, cities largely depend on rural areas for raw water supply, which has the potential to ignite the rural-urban dispute. Available studies covering Nagpur and Chennai indicate the imminent problem of rural-urban water disputes that the country is going to face in the not-so-distant future as water scarcity grows, which will be further exacerbated by climate change.

At present, the rural-urban transfer of water is a lose-lose situation in India as water is transported at the expense of rural areas and the agricultural sector; in cities, most of this water is in the form of grey water with little recovery or reuse, eventually contributing to water pollution. Rural and urban areas use water from the same stock, i.e., the water resources of the country. Therefore, it is important to strive for a win-win situation.

Such a situation is possible through a host of activities in the rural and urban areas, which is primarily a governance challenge. A system perspective and catchment scale-based approach are necessary to link reallocation of water with wider discussions on development, infrastructure investment, fostering a rural-urban partnership and adopting an integrated approach in water management.

Institutional strengthening can offer entry points and provide opportunities to build flexibility into water resource allocation at a regional level, enabling adjustments in rapidly urbanising regions. In India's 75th anniversary of Independence, it is time to examine the state of its water resources and ensure that the development process is not in jeopardy.

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## No specific law against hate speech: EC

Poll body says it resorts to provisions under IPC, RP Act to curb such violations

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) in the Supreme Court has said that due to the lack of a specific law against hate speech and rumour mongering during polls, it has to resort to the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Representation of the People (RP) Act to ensure that members of political parties do not make statements which can create disharmony in society.

“In the absence of any specific law governing hate speech and rumour mongering during elections, the Election Commission of India employs various provisions of the IPC and the RP Act, 1951 to ensure that members of political parties do not make statements to the effect of creating disharmony,” the poll body said.

The ECI said the Law Commission of India, in its 267th Report, had not made any recommendations with regard to a specific query

**The injury to the citizens is extremely large because ‘hate speech and rumour-mongering’ has the potential of provoking individuals or society to commit acts of terrorism. Hate speech is considered outside the realm of protective discourse**

ASHWINI UPADHYAY  
Petitioner



[from the Supreme Court] on whether the ECI ought to be conferred with the power to derecognise a political party for committing the “offence of hate speech”.

### No curbing action

Neither did the Law Commission make any recommendations to Parliament to strengthen the Election Commission to curb the “menace of hate speeches, irrespective of whenever made”.

The poll body said hate speeches were “often interconnected with appeals to religion, caste, community,

etc, during election campaigning.

It referred to several Supreme Court judgments, among them the Abhiram Singh case, which had held that “any appeal to vote or refrain from voting for a candidate on the grounds of religion, caste, race, community or language by a candidate or his agent to the electors would amount to corrupt practice under the 1951 Act”.

This judgment had been brought to the notice of political parties in January 2017. The parties were told by the ECI to desist from making hate statements. Hate

speech and communal statements by candidates or their agents could be raised in election petitions.

Though the Model Code of Conduct had no “legal sanctity”, the ECI said it had introduced guidelines in the Code asking parties to desist from making communal statements. In case any complaints were made, the ECI said it took “strict note” of it.

The ECI was responding to a plea by lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay seeking directions to the Centre to take appropriate steps to implement recommendations of the Law Commission Report 267 on hate speech.

“The injury to the citizens is extremely large because ‘hate speech and rumour-mongering’ has the potential of provoking individuals or society to commit acts of terrorism, genocides, ethnic cleansing, etc. Hate speech is considered outside the realm of protective discourse,” Mr. Upadhyay’s petition said.

# Wholesale inflation slowed to an 11-month low at 12.4% in Aug.

Primary food article prices harden, other segments report milder inflation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Inflation based on the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) eased in August to the slowest pace since last September at 12.4%, from 13.9% in July, with food being the sole segment to report faster price gains at 9.93% as it rebounded from July's three-month low of 9.41%.

August's reading, however, marks the 17th straight month when wholesale inflation has exceeded 10%. Among the WPI constituents, manufactured products inflation eased to 7.5%, while fuel and power inflation corrected from 43.8% in July to 33.7%. Primary arti-



**Pricier food:** Primary food inflation sped to 12.4% led by a sequential uptick in cereals, pulses and spices. ■ KAMAL NARANG

cles inflation slowed slightly to 14.9%, from July's 15%.

Within food items, primary food inflation quickened to 12.4%, from 10.8% in July, led by a broad-based sequential uptick across cereals,

pulses, vegetables, fruits, condiments and spices and other food articles, rating agency ICRA said in a note.

Price rise in vegetables sped to 22.3%, from 18.3% in July, and higher wheat and

rice prices pushed cereals inflation to 11.8%, from 9.8%. Fruits saw inflation of 31.7%.

"Wholesale inflation eased for a third straight month... with an increase in food inflation offset by easing of other commodity prices including crude oil," said Rajani Sinha, chief economist of CARE Ratings.

The Office of the Economic Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, revised June's WPI inflation to 16.2%, from 15.2% estimated earlier.

"It remains to be seen if firms will pass on the benefit to final consumers. If not, bringing retail inflation within the target range could take even longer," Ms. Sinha said.



## Wholesale Price Index

- ✓ It measures the changes in the prices of goods sold and traded in bulk by wholesale businesses to other businesses.
- ✓ Published by the Office of Economic Adviser, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- ✓ It is the most widely used inflation indicator in India.
- ✓ Major criticism for this index is that the general public does not buy products at wholesale price.
- ✓ The base year of All-India WPI has been revised from 2004-05 to 2011-12 in 2017.

# TOPIC: INFLATION

## Rice shipments may fall as levy turns exports pricier

Trade sees 5 million-tonne slide

REUTERS  
MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

India's rice exports could fall by about a quarter this year as New Delhi's restrictions force buyers to switch to rival suppliers which are offering the grain at a cheaper price, trade and industry officials said.

Late last week, the world's biggest exporter of the grain banned shipments of broken rice and imposed a 20% duty on exports of various other grades as the country tries to boost supplies and calm prices after below-average monsoon rainfall curtailed planting.

"The duty has made Indian rice expensive," B.V. Krishna Rao, president of The Rice Exporters Association told Reuters.

"Exports would drop by at least 5 million tonnes."



That would leave exports this year at about 16.2 million tonnes. Rice shipments reached a record 21.2 million tonnes in the 2021/22 fiscal year.

"We expect shipments to fall sharply in the coming months due to the recent policy decisions," said Dev Garg, the director of ViExport, a New Delhi-based exporter. Thailand, Vietnam and other suppliers have raised prices of white rice after India imposed curbs the last week.

**Export duties** consist of general or specific taxes on goods or services that become payable when the goods leave the economic territory or when the services are delivered to non-residents;



**THANK YOU**

