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- 
- 
- Home
- UPSC
 - Current Affairs IAS
 -    
 - Quiz IAS
 -     
 - UPSC News Editorial (/Eng)
 - Answer Writing ( /Eng)
 - UPSC Essay (/Eng)
 - UPSC GS (/Eng)
 - UPSC GS 1 ( /Eng)
 - UPSC GS-2 ( /Eng)
 - UPSC GS-3 ( /Eng)
 - UPSC GS-4 ( /Eng)
 - Kurukshetra ( /Eng)
 - Yojana ( /Eng)
 - IAS Strategy for Prelims
 - General Studies
 - CSAT
 - IAS Strategy for Mains
 - IAS GS 1
 - IAS GS 2
 - IAS GS 3
 - IAS GS 4
 - IAS Test Series
- Himachal HPAS
 - Himachal Daily Current Affairs
 -   
 - Daily Himachal GK Quiz

- Himachal HPAS
- Himachal News Editorial (Hindi/Eng)
- Answer Writing (Hindi /Eng)
- Himachal Essay (Hindi/Eng)
- Giriraj
 - Magazine
 - Giriraj Quiz
- Himachal
 - Himachal
 - Himachal Himachal
- HP Government Schemes
- Himachal Himachal Himachal Himachal
- Syllabus Prelims Himachal HPAS
 - GENERAL STUDIES
 - CSAT
 - English
 - Hindi
- Syllabus Mains Himachal HPAS
 - English,Hindi,Essay & One Optional
 - HPAS GS 3
 - HPAS GS 2
 - HPAS GS 1
- Himachal HPAS Test Series
- All You need to Know about Himachal HPAS
- HARYANA HCS
 - Haryana Current Affairs
 - Himachal Himachal Himachal
 - HCS Quiz
 - Himachal Himachal Himachal
 - Haryana News Editorial (Hindi/Eng)
 - Answer Writing (Hindi /Eng)
 - Haryana Essay (Hindi/Eng)
 - HR Government Schemes
 - Himachal Himachal Himachal Himachal
 - Syllabus Mains Haryana HCS
 - Syllabus Prelims Haryana HCS
 - HCS Prelims Test Series

- [Punjab PCS](#)
- [Punjab PCS Current Affairs](#)
- [Daily Quiz Punjab PCS](#)
- [Punjab News Editorial \(Eng\)](#)
- [Answer Writing \(Eng\)](#)
- [Punjab Essay \(Eng\)](#)
- [All you need to know about Punjab PCS Exam 2021](#)
- [Syllabus Prelims Punjab PCS](#)
 - [General Studies](#)
 - [Prelims GS 1](#)
- [Syllabus Mains Punjab PCS](#)
 - [PCS GS 1](#)
 - [PCS GS 2](#)
 - [PCS GS 3](#)
 - [PCS GS 4](#)
 - [Online PUNJAB PCS TEST SERIES 2020](#)
- [CSAT](#)
 - [CSAT English](#)
 - [Punjab PCS CSAT](#)
- [Concept Mindmaps](#)
 - [Polity \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Geography \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Environment \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [History \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Economics \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Science and Technology \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [CSAT Concepts \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Maps \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Art and Culture \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [International Affairs \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Punjab PCS Concepts](#)
 - [Himachal HPAS Concepts \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Haryana HCS Concepts \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Rajasthan RAS Concepts \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
- [Concept Quiz](#)
 - [Polity Quiz \(Hindi/Eng\)](#)

- Geography Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Environment Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- History Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Economics Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Science and Technology Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- CSAT Concepts Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Maps Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Art and Culture Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Punjab PCS Concepts Quiz
- Himachal HPAS Concepts Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Haryana HCS Concepts Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Rajasthan RAS Concepts Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Mains
 - UPSC Answer Writing (हिंदी/Eng)
 - HPPSC Answer Writing (हिंदी/Eng)
 - Haryana HCS Answer Writing (हिंदी/Eng)
 - Punjab PCS Answer Writing
- Exam Blogs
 - UPSC Exam Blogs
 - Himachal Exam Blogs
 - Punjab exam Blogs
 - Haryana Exam Blogs
 - Rajasthan Exam Blogs
 - E-Magazine
 - E-Magazine for HPAS
 - हिंदी/English में हिंदी-हिंदी/English
 - E-Magazine for Punjab PCS
- UPCOMING EXAMS
 - National Exams
 - Himachal Pradesh Exams
 - Punjab Exams
 - Test Series Planner
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6th, December, 2021

Topic: Environment

Importance: Himachal HPAS Mains

What is the news?

- Dharamsala is losing its tourist attractions – the Bhagsu Waterfall and Dal Lake – to an unscientific approach from local authorities.

Why?

- The Dal Lake has dried up due to unscientific removal of silt from its base, which has allegedly created water siphons at its base.
- Now the lake dries out right after the monsoons and has been reduced to a mud basin.

What is water siphons?

- The siphon is a liquid reservoir with an inverted U-tube. The liquid initially fills the tube. (There are several methods to achieve this initial state.)
- The purpose of the siphon is to drain liquid from the reservoir by liquid flow that passes over a higher level than the liquid surface in the reservoir.

Reason:

- About 12 lakh liters of water was being lifted daily for various water supply schemes of the Army and the IPH Department from the stream feeding the Bhagsu waterfall.
- This leaves almost nothing in the stream to create a waterfall. The quantity of water being lifted has increased over the past decade, adversely affecting its flow.

About Bhagsunag:

- Bhagsu/ Bhaksu (also called Bhagsunag or Bhagsunath) is a village close to McLeodganj in Dharamshala District, Himachal Pradesh.
- It is popular for the Bhagsunag waterfall and the ancient Bhagsunag shrine.
- Tourists need to trek to reach the waterfall.
- In the early 18th century, the Gurkhas moved here with the British and formed the historic 1st Gorkha Rifles in 1815 (The Malaun Regiment).
- Bhagsu is also the home of 1st Gorkha Rifles (The Malaun Regiment). Bhagsu is named after the Bhagsunag temple currently at McLeodGanj station, including Bhagsu itself, but also as Dharamshala, McLeodGanj and ForsythGanj.

As per the Indian mythology, the snake god got into a battle with King Bhagsu. The reason for the battle was that King Bhagsu had stolen water from the holy lake called NagDal Lake. King Bhagsu was defeated and finally pardoned, and the site was consecrated as Bhagsu Nag.

(Source: The HP Tribune)

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- 10000 10000000000
- 10000000 1000000000
- 10000 1-10000000
- 100000000 10000 1000 100000
- 1000000000 10000000000 100000 100000

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- Punjab Current Affairs
- PPSC Quiz
- Punjab Mindmaps
- Punjab Editorial
- Punjab E-Magazine
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- Haryana Current Affairs
- HCS Quiz
- HCS Editorials
- HCS Mindmaps
- HCS E-Magazine
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- HCS Prelims Test Series

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- UPSC Interview Answers
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