

# Najafgarh jheel wetland

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**In news-** Recently, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed **Delhi and Haryana** to enforce the Environment Management Plans (EMP) that the two governments have prepared for the rejuvenation and protection of the Najafgarh jheel, a transboundary wetland.

## **Key updates-**

- According to NGT, the implementation of these action plans is to be monitored by the National Wetland Authority through the respective State Wetland Authorities.
- The Union Environment Ministry set up a three-member committee to prepare an integrated EMP and the panel suggested setting up a “Transboundary Najafgarh Jheel Management Committee”.
- According to this plan, the top priority would be to notify the Najafgarh jheel and its area of influence under The Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017.
- The rules prohibit and regulate certain activities within wetlands and their ‘zone of influence’.

## **About Najafgarh jheel/Marsh wetland-**

- Najafgarh Lake, **fed by Sahibi River, used to be a vast lake in the south west of Delhi** in India near the town of Najafgarh from which it takes its name.
- It was **connected to the river Yamuna by a natural shallow nullah or drain** called the Najafgarh nullah.
- The *Najafgarh drain* or *Najafgarh nullah* (*nullah* in Hindi means drain) is just another name for the River Sahibi, it is a tributary to River Yamuna.
- However, after the **1960s the Flood Control Department of Delhi kept widening the Najafgarh drain in the pretext**

**of saving Delhi from floods** and eventually quickly drained the once huge and ecologically rich Najafgarh lake completely.

- The presence of 281 bird species, including several threatened ones such as Egyptian vulture, Sarus Crane, Steppe Eagle, Greater Spotted Eagle, Imperial Eagle and those migrating along the Central Asian Flyway has been reported at the lake.
- It is the second largest water body in Delhi-NCR after the Yamuna.
- Once spread over 226 sq km, the water body straddling Delhi and Gurugram has shrunk to just seven sq km due to rampant encroachment.
- The lake is largely filled with sewage from Gurugram and surrounding villages of Delhi.



► Najafgarh drain is a part of the dying Sahibi river, which originates in the Aravallis on the Rajasthan-Haryana border

**FROM RIVER TO A DRAIN & LAKE**

► The 41km-long drain is one of the most polluted in Delhi-NCR as untreated sewage flows into it

► Located in south-west Delhi and Haryana, the Najafgarh lake was created by the drain. Currently, the 7km-long lake lies both in Delhi & Haryana