



## News Regional Office of Inland Waterways Authority | Uttar Pradesh | 27 Jan 2025

### Why in News?

The [Inland Waterways Authority of India \(IWAI\)](#) upgraded its sub-office in **Varanasi** into a regional office to effectively implement [Inland Water Transport \(IWT\)](#) activities on [National Waterway-1 \(NW-1\)](#) along the [River Ganga](#).

### Key Points

- **IWAI Regional Offices:**
  - The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) operates under [the Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways](#).
  - It currently has **five regional offices in Guwahati (Assam), Patna (Bihar), Kochi (Kerala), Bhubaneswar (Odisha), and Kolkata (West Bengal)**.
  - The **newly established regional office in Varanasi** (Uttar Pradesh), **becomes the sixth**.
    - The Varanasi office will **manage operations over a 487-kilometre stretch from Majhua to the Varanasi Multi-Modal Terminal (MMT)** and up to Prayagraj.
    - It will **also oversee works related to other National Waterways (NWs)** in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP):**
  - The office will prioritize implementing [the World Bank](#)-supported [Jal Marg Vikas Project \(JMVP\)](#).
  - It aims to **enhance the capacity of River Ganga (NW-1)** through:
    - **River conservancy works** such as bandalling and maintenance dredging.
    - Construction of key infrastructure, including MMTs at **Varanasi, Sahibganj, and Haldia**, an intermodal terminal at Kalighat, and a new navigational lock at Farakka (West Bengal).
    - **Promoting cruise tourism** and seamless cargo movement along the waterway.
    - **Development of Community Jetties:**
      - Under JMVP, **60 community jetties** are being constructed across four states: **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal**.
      - These jetties **aim to benefit local commuters**, small and marginal farmers, artisans, and fishing communities.
      - The Varanasi Regional Office will monitor and ensure efficient execution of these activities.
- **National Waterways in Uttar Pradesh:**
  - Uttar Pradesh has around **30 rivers, with 10 declared as National Waterways**.
  - The office will oversee development works on [River Ganga](#) and its tributaries, including [Betwa, Chambal, Gomti, Tons, Varuna, Gandak, Ghagra, Karamnasa, and Yamuna](#).

### Inland Waterways Authority of India

- It **came into existence on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1986** for development and regulation of inland waterways for shipping and navigation.
- It primarily undertakes **projects for development and maintenance of IWT infrastructure** on

national waterways through grants received from the **Ministry of Shipping**.

## Inland Water Transport (IWT)

### ▪ About:

- Inland water transport refers to the transportation of people, goods, and materials via waterways such as **rivers, canals, lakes, and other navigable bodies of water** that are located within a country's boundaries.
- IWT is the **most economical mode of transportation**, especially for bulk cargo like coal, iron ore, cement, food grains and fertilizer. Presently, it remains **underutilized at a share of 2% in India's modal mix**.

### ▪ Socio-Economic Benefits of IWT:

- Cheaper operating cost and relatively lesser fuel consumption
- Less polluting mode of transportation
- Lesser requirement of land relative to other modes of transportation
- More environment friendly mode of transportation
- Moreover, waterways can be **used for recreational purposes such as boating and fishing**.

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## Dhanauri Wetland | Uttar Pradesh | 27 Jan 2025

### Why in News?

[The National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#) instructed **the Uttar Pradesh government** to submit the status of notifying the [Dhanauri water body](#) near [Jewar airport](#) as a [wetland](#) within four weeks.

### Key Points

#### ▪ State Government's Stand:

- The Uttar Pradesh's counsel stated that **the government is in the process of notifying Dhanauri as a wetland**.
- The NGT bench questioned the need for three months to complete the notification process when the site has already been identified for wetland status.

#### ▪ The Divisional Forest Officer (DFO):

- The DFO of Gautam Buddha Nagar informed the NGT through an affidavit that **the**

**proposed Dhanauri wetland spans 112.89 hectares.**

- The area **primarily includes privately owned land** located across the villages of Dhanauri Kalan, Thasrana, and Amipur Bangar in the Sadar tehsil of Gautam Buddha Nagar.
- The DFO requested **three months to consult with landowners and obtain their consent** before proceeding with further action.
- **Wetland Notification and Ramsar Site Process:**
  - State governments **can notify lakes and water bodies as wetlands** for protection.
  - **Ramsar site** designation requires approval from the Central Government, based on recommendations by state governments.
  - Wetlands qualifying under ecological and biodiversity criteria are identified under **the international Ramsar Convention treaty of 1971**, which ensures special conservation measures.

## Dhanauri Wetland

- **Location:**
  - Situated in **Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar district, Uttar Pradesh.**
  - Lies close to the **Okhla Bird Sanctuary** and **Surajpur Wetland**.
  - Positioned within the floodplains of the Yamuna Basin, about 15 km from the **River Yamuna**.
- **Ecological Significance:**
  - Composed mainly of marshes, the wetland is an essential habitat for the vulnerable **Sarus Crane (*Antigone antigone*)**.
  - Hosts a variety of bird species, including:
    - Common teal
    - Mallard
    - Northern pintail
    - Greylag geese
    - **Bar-headed geese**
    - **Woolly-necked stork**
    - Black-necked stork
    - **Painted stork**
    - Eurasian marsh harrier
- **Conservation Status:**
  - Recognized as an **Important Bird Area (IBA)** by **BirdLife International**.

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# Bihar CM Felicitates Olympians, Paralympic Athletes | Bihar | 27 Jan 2025

## Why in News?

During the **Sportstar Focus Bihar Conclave** at the **Taj City Centre in Patna**, Bihar Chief Minister honored **athletes and para-athletes** for their achievements and contributions in sports.

## Key Points

- **Athletes Felicitated:**
  - The event honored notable athletes and para-athletes, including:
    - **Deepa Malik**, **Paralympic** silver medallist.
    - **Vijender Singh**, Olympic bronze medal-winning boxer.
    - **P.R. Sreejesh**, double **Olympic** bronze medallist in hockey.
    - **Sharad Kumar**, double Paralympic medallist.
    - **Shiva Keshavan**, six-time **Winter Olympian**.
    - **Harendra Singh**, head coach of the **Indian women's hockey team**.
- **Special Awards for State Athletes:**
  - In keeping with the Sportstar Conclave tradition, two special awards were given to athletes from Bihar:
    - **Jai Prakash Singh**, a decathlete, received **the Unsung Champion Award**.
    - **Md. Reyan**, a teenage chess talent, was honored with **the Young Achiever Award**.
  - Both awardees were granted a **cash prize of Rs 50,000 each**.

## The Paralympics

- **The Paralympics** is the largest international event for **disabled athletes** and takes place shortly after the Olympic Games.
- Olympic-style games for athletes with a disability were organised for the **first time in Rome in 1960**.
- It is supervised by **the International Paralympic Committee (IPC)**, a body recognised by the IOC.



# OLYMPICS

## Ancient History

- ↳ Originated - Olympia, Greece (776 BC)
- ↳ Connected to Greek culture and religion
- ↳ Events - Running, wrestling, and chariot racing
- ↳ Abolished - 393 AD by Emperor Theodosius I

## Modern History

- ↳ Revived - Late 19<sup>th</sup> century by Pierre de Coubertin (Founding member of IOC)
- ↳ First modern Olympics - Athens, Greece (1896)

## Upcoming Events

- ↳ **Winter Olympics 2026:** Milan-Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy
- ↳ **Summer Olympics 2028:** Los Angeles, USA
- ↳ **Summer Olympics 2032:** Brisbane, Australia
- ↳ India intends to host Olympic Games 2036

## Logo and Motto

- ↳ **Logo:** 5 interlocking rings of blue, yellow, black, green, and red colors on a white background (**represents union of 5 continents and meeting of world athletes**)
- ↳ **Motto:** *Citius, Altius, Fortius – Communiter* (Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together) ('Communiter' was added in 2021)



## International Olympic Committee (IOC)

- ↳ Estd - 1894
- ↳ Guardian of the Olympic Games
- ↳ HQ - Lausanne, Switzerland

**5 new sports added in Tokyo 2020 Olympics: Surfing, Skateboarding, Sport Climbing, Karate and Baseball/Softball**

## PARIS OLYMPICS 2024

**India at 71<sup>st</sup> place in the medal tally; a decline from 48<sup>th</sup> place in Tokyo 2020)**

Indian Sportspersons /Team	Medal	Event
Neeraj Chopra	Silver	Men's Javelin Throw
Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh	Bronze	10m air pistol mixed team event
Swapnil Kusale	Bronze	Men's 50m rifle 3 positions
Indian Hockey team	Bronze	Men's hockey
Manu Bhaker	Bronze	Women's 10m air pistol event
Aman Sehrawat	Bronze	Wrestling Men's 57kg freestyle event

## Indian Olympic Association (IOA)

- ↳ Founded - 1927
- ↳ Selects athletes to represent India at Olympics, Asian Games and CWG



## Nahargarh Wildlife Sanctuary | Rajasthan | 27 Jan 2025

### Why in News?

The Forest Department has begun revising the boundaries of [Nahargarh Wildlife Sanctuary](#) to address

existing legal complications. This initiative originated during a meeting held in Jaipur led by **Rajasthan's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests** and **Chief Wildlife Warden**.

## Key Points

- **Discussion in the meeting:**
  - The meeting focused on resolving disparities between:
    - The **sanctuary's original notification** issued on **September 22, 1980**.
    - The **eco-sensitive zone (ESZ)** notification issued on **March 8, 2019**.
  - The Deputy Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Jaipur Zoo, presented the sanctuary's original boundary details.
    - The 1980 notification defined the sanctuary's boundaries using only 11 GPS coordinates.
    - The ESZ map from 2019 marked 100 reference points leading to significant boundary differences.
  - These inconsistencies have resulted in multiple legal cases and court challenges.
- **Decision on Revising Sanctuary Map:**
  - Authorities decided to create a revised **sanctuary map based on the Revenue records and the 1980 notification**.
  - The Deputy Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Jaipur Zoo, was assigned the task of drafting the new map.
  - The **draft map will be reviewed by a committee and subsequently submitted to the state government** for approval.
- **Opposition from Environmental Activists:**
  - Environmental advocates have highlighted discrepancies in the sanctuary and ESZ maps, accusing the Forest Department of preparing a false map.
  - A complaint was filed with **the Lokayukta**, which noted the issue.
- **Response from Forest Authorities:**
  - The Office of the **Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Rajasthan**, responded to the Lokayukta stating:
    - Questioning the maps after seven years was inappropriate.
    - The sanctuary and ESZ maps were approved and accurate.

## Nahargarh Wildlife Sanctuary

- **About:**
  - Situated in **the Aravalli hills**, approximately **20 kilometres from Jaipur**, Rajasthan.
  - Named after **Nahargarh Fort**, an **18<sup>th</sup>-century fort** built by **Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II**, the founder of Jaipur.
  - Covers an **area of 720 hectares**.
  - Includes **Nahargarh Biological Park**, renowned for its **lion** safaris.
- **Flora:** Comprises **dry deciduous forests, scrublands, and grasslands**.
- **Fauna:**
  - **Mammals:**
    - Common species include **leopards, wild boars, deer, lions, tigers, sloth bears**, and various small mammals.
  - **Birds:**
    - A paradise for bird watchers, featuring species such as **peacocks, owls, and eagles**.
  - **Reptiles and Amphibians:**
    - Home to reptiles like **Indian rock pythons and monitor lizards**.
    - Amphibians such as **frogs and toads** are also found here.

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## NMDC to Extract Diamonds Near Tiger Reserve | Madhya Pradesh | 27 Jan 2025

### Why in News?

India's [National Mineral Development Corporation \(NMDC\)](#) plans to extract **6,500 carats of diamonds**, valued at **USD 3.4 million**, from **ores** in a mine near [Panna tiger reserve](#).

### Key Points

- **Delays in Mining Operations:**
  - NMDC faced **delays in obtaining environmental clearances**, halting mining at the Panna mine in Madhya Pradesh for over three years due to its **proximity to the tiger reserve**.
  - [The Supreme Court](#) later allowed NMDC to **resume mining operations**, subject to certain guidelines, enabling the company to restart its work at the mine.
- **Diamond Extraction:**
  - Since resuming operations, **NMDC has extracted 3,700 carats of diamonds, valued at USD 1.93 million.**
- **About the Panna Mine:**
  - The Panna mine spans 275.96 hectares (681.91 acres) and began operations in the early 1970s.
  - It is the **only mechanized diamond mine** in India.
- **Diamond Mining in Madhya Pradesh:**
  - Madhya Pradesh is one of [Asia's major diamond mining regions](#).
  - Global and domestic companies have faced challenges in mining diamonds at the **Bunder project**, near the Panna reserve.

### Panna Tiger Reserve

- **About:**
  - Located in [the Vindhyan mountain range](#) in northern Madhya Pradesh.
  - Covers an **area of 542 sq.km.**
  - The **only Tiger Reserve in the Bundelkhand region.**
  - **Declared a Tiger Reserve** by the Government of India under [Project Tiger](#) in 1994.
- **Landscape:**

- The reserve features a **'Table Top' topography**.
- It includes **extensive plateaus and gorges**.
- [The Ken River](#) flows from south to north through the reserve.
- The area also contains **two-thousand-year-old rock paintings**.
- **Flora:**
  - Dominated by **dry deciduous forests** interspersed with grasslands.
  - In the north, the reserve is surrounded by [teak forests](#).
  - To the east, it is bordered by **Teak-Kardhai mixed forests**.
- **Fauna:**
  - The reserve is home to a significant population of [tigers](#), [sloth bears](#), [leopards](#), and [striped hyenas](#).
  - Other notable carnivores include **jackals, wolves, wild dogs, jungle cats, and the rusty spotted cat**.
  - [The Vindhya Hill ranges](#), running from NE to SW, help connect the eastern and western populations of wildlife.

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## Asian Waterbird Census | Uttarakhand | 27 Jan 2025

### Why in News?

Volunteers at [the Asan Wetland](#) in Dehradun district, Uttarakhand, identified **5,225 birds across 117 different species** during a **bird counting campaign**.

### Key Points

- **About the Event:**
  - The bird counting campaign was organized by a team of 35 participants, divided into five groups.
  - It aimed to monitor both **domestic and migratory bird populations** in the Asan Wetland.
  - The teams conducted a comprehensive bird count at locations including **Asan Lake, the Yamuna and Asan rivers, the Shivalik mountain range**, and nearby protected forests.
- **Survey and Methodology:**
  - More than 150 volunteers and forest staff surveyed 23 sites following a pre-determined protocol to **count waterbirds and document other bird species**.
  - Observers also recorded the behaviors and activities of birds in and around the marshes and wetlands.
- **Citizen Science Initiative:**
  - **The Asian Waterbird Census** occurred simultaneously at **23 wetland sites** across Uttarakhand.
  - The initiative was supported by the [Uttarakhand Forest Department](#) and involved various [non-governmental organizations \(NGOs\)](#).

### Asan Conservation Reserve

- **About:**
  - The Asan Conservation Reserve spans **444 hectares** along the Asan River, extending to its confluence with [the Yamuna River](#) in Dehradun district.



- The **Asan Barrage, built in 1967**, led to siltation above the dam, creating **bird-friendly habitats**.
- **Biodiversity and Species:**
  - The reserve is home to 330 species of birds, including the critically endangered **red-headed vulture, white-rumped vulture, and Baer's pochard**.
  - The site records over 1% of the biogeographical populations of the **red-crested pochard and ruddy shelduck**.
  - Non-avian species present include 49 fish species, with the endangered **Putor mahseer** among them.

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PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/statepcs/27-01-2025/print>

