



## Udhwa Lake | Jharkhand | 03 Feb 2025

### Why in News?

[The Ramsar Convention](#) has recognized four new [wetlands](#) in India, increasing the total number of such designated sites in the country to 89.

### Key points

- **New Additions to the Ramsar List:**
  - Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu)
  - Therthangal Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu)
  - Khecheopalri Wetland (Sikkim)
  - Udhwa Lake (Jharkhand)
- **State-Wise Distribution:**
  - **Tamil Nadu holds the highest number of Ramsar sites in India**, with 20 wetlands.
  - **Sikkim and Jharkhand** have **joined the Ramsar list for the first time** with their new designations.
- **India's Global Ranking:**
  - India has the **highest number of Ramsar sites in Asia** and **ranks third globally**:
    - **United Kingdom** (176 sites)
    - **Mexico** (144 sites)
    - Over the last decade, India's Ramsar sites increased from 26 to 89, with 47 sites added in just three years.
- **Significance of Wetlands:**
  - Wetlands are areas covered by water temporarily, seasonally, or permanently.
  - They provide crucial ecosystem services, including:
    - [Flood control](#)
    - Water supply
    - [Biodiversity](#) support
    - Food, fibre, and raw material sources
- **The Udhwa Lake:**
  - **Location:**
    - It is located in **Sahebganj district of Jharkhand**.
    - It is situated in a **small village called Udhwa**, which is named after **Saint Uddhava, a friend of Lord Krishna in the [Mahabharatha](#)**.
    - It is the **first Ramsar designated wetland** from Jharkhand.
  - **Establishment:**
    - In **1991**, the sanctuary was established to **safeguard and conserve the diverse bird species found in the region**.
    - Designated as the **sole bird sanctuary in Jharkhand**, it plays a crucial role in **preserving the natural heritage and biodiversity of the area**.
  - **Rivers:**
    - The Sanctuary has **two water bodies Patauran and Berhale**, interconnected by a water channel. Patauran is a comparatively clean water body.

### The Ramsar Convention

- The **Ramsar Convention** is an international treaty signed in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, under the

auspices of [UNESCO](#), aimed at conserving wetlands of international importance.

- In India, **it came into force on 1st February 1982**, under which wetlands of international importance are declared as Ramsar sites.
- **Montreux Record** is a register of **wetland sites** of International Importance where **changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring**, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.
  - It is maintained as part of the **Ramsar List**.

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## Sarna Code | Jharkhand | 03 Feb 2025

### Why in News?

The **Rashtriya Adivasi Samnvay Samiti**, based in Jharkhand, has urged [Scheduled Tribe associations](#) across the country to join a protest demanding a separate [Sarna religion code](#) in the upcoming [Census](#).

### Key Points

- **Protest at Jantar Mantar:**
  - The Rashtriya Adivasi Samnvay Samiti will lead a **mass demonstration at Jantar Mantar**, New Delhi, on 28th February 2025 **to demand a separate religion column for Scheduled Tribe communities** in the Census.
  - The protest call has been circulated among other [Adivasi groups](#), including the **Kendriya Sarna Samiti**, which have also pushed for a separate Sarna religion code.
    - Adivasi organizations, primarily from **Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and West Bengal**, have demanded a separate religion column in the Census for decades.
- **Impact of the Movement in 2011 Census:**
  - In the [2011 Census](#), the movement led to 4.9 lakh people marking their **religion** as Sarna in the 'Others' column.
  - Over 80% of these respondents were from Jharkhand, highlighting the strong regional support for this demand.
    - Since 2011, the demand for a separate Sarna religion code has gained momentum, particularly in eastern and central India, with increasing mobilization from tribal communities.

### Sarna Religion

- **About:**
  - Sarna religion is a **nature-worshipping faith** practiced by many tribal communities in India. It is also known as **Sarna Dharma** or **the Religion of the Holy Woods**.
  - They are concentrated mainly in the tribal belt states of **Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam**.
- **Features of the Sarna religion:**
  - They worship **nature, including water, forests, and land**.
  - They believe in protecting forests and pray to trees and hills. They **do not worship idols**.
  - They do not adhere to the **Varna system**.
  - They celebrate **the Sarhul festival**, which is the **New Year festival**.

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## Kanha Tiger Reserve | Madhya Pradesh | 03 Feb 2025

Why in News?

Recently, a [tigress](#) was found dead in the [Kanha Tiger Reserve](#) in Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh.

### Key Points

- **Discovery of the Carcass:**
  - Forest officials found the carcass of a two-year-old tigress in **the Mukki Forest Range**, located in **the Parsantola Beat of Kanha Tiger Reserve**.
  - Authorities secured the site and initiated an investigation following [the National Tiger Conservation Authority \(NTCA\)](#) guidelines and directives from the Chief Wildlife Conservator of Madhya Pradesh.
- **Post-Mortem:**
  - A team of expert wildlife doctors conducted the post-mortem examination.
  - Authorities confirmed that all body parts were intact, **ruling out poaching** as the **cause of death**.
  - They suspect the tigress died in a **territorial fight with another tiger**.
- **Kanha Tiger Reserve:**
  - It stretches over an area of 940 square km in the **two districts - Mandla and Balaghat - of Madhya Pradesh**.
  - The present-day Kanha area **was divided into two sanctuaries, Hallon and Banjar. Kanha National Park was created in 1955** and in **1973** was made the Kanha Tiger Reserve.
    - Kanha National Park is the **largest National Park in Central India**.

### National Tiger Conservation Authority

- National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is a **statutory body** under the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change**.
- It was established in **2005** following the recommendations of the Tiger Task Force.
- It was constituted under enabling provisions of **the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, as amended in 2006, for strengthening tiger conservation, as per powers and functions assigned to it.

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## Ghaggar Water | Haryana | 03 Feb 2025

Why in News?

A joint committee constituted by the [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#) found that [Ghaggar river](#) water remains unsuitable for bathing. The committee detected [biochemical oxygen demand \(BOD\)](#) levels in the river exceeding the prescribed limit.

### Key Points

### ▪ **Survey and Sample Collection:**

- Committee members and department representatives conducted a survey in December 2023, to identify pollution sources in Sukhna Choe.
- The survey revealed that slums near Mansa Devi Complex, Rajiv Colony, and Indira Colony in Haryana, as well as near Sohi Banquet Hall, were directly discharging solid and liquid waste into the choe.
- The committee took samples from the Panchkula drain at the Vikas Nagar Bridge, which showed that **BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand)** and **TSS (Total Suspended Solids)** levels exceeded environmental standards for inland surface water discharge.

### ▪ **Pollution Levels in Ghaggar River:**

- The committee collected water samples from upstream and downstream of Ghaggar River, near the Ambala-Chandigarh Highway Bridge in Zirakpur, where Sukhna Choe merges with it.
- **Findings:**
  - **pH values** were within the acceptable range for outdoor bathing.
  - BOD levels failed to meet the primary water quality criteria for outdoor bathing at both locations.
- **Recommendations:**
- Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh should:
  - Ensure regular cleaning of drains.
  - Instalment of **iron nets at culvert points** where roads cross the drain to prevent solid waste dumping.
- **Pollution Control Board should:**
  - Ensure proper **operation and maintenance of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs).**
  - **Prevent the disposal of untreated effluent** into the Ghaggar River.
- **Panchkula Municipal Corporation should:**
  - Ensure STPs operate efficiently, preventing untreated effluent from entering Sukhna Choe through drains.

## **Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD)**

- BOD is the **amount of dissolved oxygen used by microorganisms** in the biological process of metabolizing organic matter in water.
- The **more organic matter** there is (e.g., in sewage and polluted bodies of water), the **greater the BOD**; and the greater the BOD, the **lower the amount of dissolved oxygen** available for higher animals such as fishes.
- The BOD is therefore a **reliable gauge of the organic pollution of a body of water.**

# NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL

*The National Green Tribunal (NGT) is a specialised body for swift resolution of environmental and natural resource cases.*

## About

- 🕒 **Establishment:** By National Green Tribunal Act 2010
- 🕒 **Objective:** Quick resolution of environmental & natural resource cases
- 🕒 **Case Resolution:** Within 6 months
- 🕒 **Places of Sitting:** New Delhi (Principal), Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata, and Chennai

## Structure

- 🕒 **Composition:** Chairperson, Judicial Members, and Expert Members
- 🕒 **Tenure:** Up to 5 years/until age 65 (no reappointment)
- 🕒 **Appointments:** Chairperson - Central Government (with the CJI's consultation)
  - 🕒 10-20 judicial members & 10-20 expert members - Selection Committee

*India is the third country globally (after Australia and New Zealand) and the first developing nation to establish a specialised environmental tribunal like NGT.*

## Powers & Jurisdiction

- 🕒 **Jurisdiction:** Civil cases on environmental issues and rights
- 🕒 **Suo Motu Powers:** Granted since 2021
- 🕒 **Roles:** Adjudicatory, preventative, and remedial
- 🕒 **Procedures:** Follows Principles of natural justice
  - 🕒 Not bound by the CPC, 1908 or Indian Evidence Act, 1872
- 🕒 **Principles:** Sustainable Development; Precautionary; Polluter pays
- 🕒 **Orders:** Executable as civil court decrees; offers relief and compensation (**decisions are binding**)
- 🕒 **Appeals:** Tribunal can review its decisions.
  - 🕒 If decision fails - Appeal to the SC to be filed within 90 days

## NGT deals with Civil Cases under

- 🕒 Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
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- 🕒 Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980
- 🕒 Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981
- 🕒 Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
- 🕒 Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991
- 🕒 Biological Diversity Act, 2002



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## Global List of Wetland Accredited Cities | Rajasthan | 03 Feb 2025

### Why in News?

- **Indore and Udaipur** have become the **first two Indian cities** to be accredited as wetland cities under [the Ramsar Convention](#).

### Key Points

- **International Recognition for Wetland Conservation:**
  - [The Wetland City Accreditation](#) recognizes cities that prioritize the conservation of their **natural and human-made wetlands**.
  - The Advisory Committee on Wetland City Accreditation **accredited 31 new cities**, including Indore and Udaipur, bringing the **global total to 74 accredited cities**.
- **Bhopal Misses Out on Accreditation:**
  - Bhopal, which was nominated alongside Indore and Udaipur, did **not receive accreditation due to concerns** about the ecological impact on [Bhoj wetland](#).
  - Citizen groups **raised concerns** about a **proposed road project cutting through the wetland's catchment area**, potentially threatening local water bodies and wildlife.
- **Criteria for Wetland City Accreditation:**
  - Cities must satisfy **six international criteria**, including:
    - Conserving wetlands and their ecosystem services.
    - Ensuring sustainable socio-economic benefits for local populations.
- **Global Status of Wetland City Accreditation:**
  - **China leads the global list** with 22 accredited cities, **followed by France** with 9 cities.
  - The accreditation program promotes the **sustainable use of urban and peri-urban wetlands**.

## Wetland City Accreditation (WCA)

- The WCA is a **voluntary accreditation system established by the Ramsar Convention** during the **Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP) 12, 2015** to recognize cities that have taken exceptional steps to safeguard their urban wetlands.
  - The WCA is **valid for 6 years**.
- The scheme **aims to promote the conservation and wise use of urban and peri-urban wetlands**, as well as sustainable socio-economic benefits for local populations.

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/statepcs/03-02-2025/print>

