



Asteroid Discovery in Uttar Pradesh | Uttar Pradesh | 04 Feb 2025

Why in News?

Recently, [National Aeronautics and Space Administration \(NASA\)](#) has recognized Daksh Malik, a Class 9 student from Noida, for his **provisional discovery of an [asteroid](#)**, currently labeled as '2023 OG40.'

Key Points

- **Participation in the International Asteroid Discovery Project (IADP):**
 - Along with two school friends, the student has actively participated in the **IADP** which introduced them to the **International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC)**.
 - The IASC, a **NASA-affiliated citizen science initiative**, enables global participation in asteroid discovery.
 - It allows students and astronomy enthusiasts worldwide to **analyze celestial data and contribute to scientific research**.
- **A Rare Achievement:**
 - Despite more than 6,000 participants joining the IADP annually, only a few successfully identify new asteroids.
 - Before this discovery, only five students from the country had ever achieved a named asteroid discovery.
- **Naming the Asteroid:**
 - This achievement also gives **the privilege of naming the [celestial body](#)** after its verification process, which may take around four to five years.

Asteroids

- Asteroids, also referred to as **minor planets**, are remnants from the early stages of our solar system's formation approximately **4.6 billion years ago**.
- They predominantly exhibit **irregular shapes**, though some **display nearly spherical forms**.
- Many asteroids are accompanied by **small [moons](#)**, with some even having two moons.
- Additionally, binary asteroids consist of **two similar-sized rocky bodies** orbiting each other, and there are also triple asteroid systems.

Surajpur Wetland | Uttar Pradesh | 04 Feb 2025

Why in News?

[The Greater Noida Authority](#) has developed a project to safeguard and preserve [the Surajpur wetland](#).

Key Points

- **Threat from Polluted Wastewater:**
 - The wetland faces a **serious threat due to the indiscriminate discharge of highly polluted wastewater** into its channels, endangering its ecosystem.
- **Need for Technical Assistance:**
 - According to the authority, research institutes, [non-government organizations \(NGOs\)](#), and environmental experts can provide technical support to protect and restore the wetland.
- **Ecological Significance:**
 - Located in the heart of the industrial city of **Greater Noida**, the Surajpur wetland serves as a vital [wildlife habitat](#), making its conservation crucial.
- **Geographic Spread and Features:**
 - The sanctuary spans 325 hectares, including a 60-hectare natural lake situated along **the Dadri-Surajpur-Chhalera (DSC) road**, approximately 20 km from Noida.
- **Haven for Migratory Birds:**
 - During the winter season, the wetland attracts various species of [migratory birds](#), enhancing its ecological and environmental value.

Surajpur Wetland



- **Location and Administrative Jurisdiction:**
 - The wetland is **located near Surajpur Village** in Dadri Tehsil of **Gautam Budh Nagar district**.
 - It falls under the jurisdiction of the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Urban Wetland in the Yamuna Basin:**
 - The wetland serves as an excellent example of an urban wetland within the [Yamuna River basin](#).
- **Ecological Importance and Green Cover:**
 - It acts as a green lung for Greater Noida, covering a catchment area of 308 hectares, with 60 hectares dedicated to the waterbody.
- **Recognition as an Important Bird Area (IBA):**
 - BirdLife International has classified the wetland as an [Important Bird Area \(IBA\)](#) due to its significance in **bird conservation**.
- **Breeding and Wintering Habitat for Waterfowl:**
 - The wetland provides a breeding ground for waterfowl such as [Spot-billed Duck](#), [Lesser-](#)

whistling Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose, and Comb Duck.

- It also supports wintering waterfowl, including **Red-crested Pochard, Ferruginous Pochard, Bar-headed Goose, Greylag Goose, Common Teal, Northern Shoveler, and Gadwall.**

▪ **Diverse Wildlife Presence:**

- In addition to a rich bird population, the wetland sustains six mammal species, including **Nilgai, Indian Grey Mongoose, Indian Hare, Golden Jackal, and Five-striped Squirrel.**

▪ **Environmental Threats:**

- The wetland faces significant threats due to the indiscriminate discharge of highly polluted wastewater into its channels, posing risks to its ecosystem.

World Wetland Day 2025 | Uttar Pradesh | 04 Feb 2025

Why in News?

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) organised the **World Wetlands Day 2025** celebrations at the **Parvati Arga Ramsar Site**, Gonda, Uttar Pradesh (UP) on **2nd February 2025**.

Key Points

▪ **About:**

- It is observed annually to raise awareness about the **importance of wetlands** and marks the adoption of the **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands** in **1971** in Ramsar, Iran.
- **Theme for 2025:** Protecting Wetlands for our Common Future.

▪ **New Corridor:**

- The government announced a new **nature-culture tourism corridor** will be developed between **Ayodhya and Devi Patan** in UP.

▪ **Amrit Dharohar Initiative:**

- **Amrit Dharohar** was launched in **June 2023** to conserve Ramsar Sites that focuses on **four key components** i.e., **Species and Habitat Conservation, Nature Tourism, Wetlands Livelihood and Wetlands Carbon.**

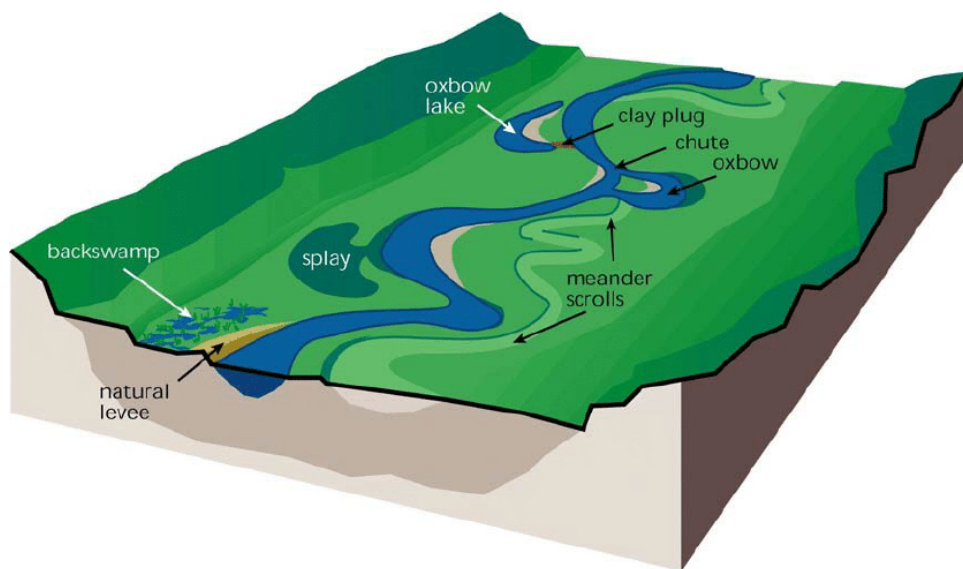
▪ **Threat:**

- The biggest threat to wetlands is **pollution from industrial and human effluents**, which degrade these ecosystems.

Parvati Arga Ramsar Site

▪ **About:** It is a **permanent freshwater environment**, consisting of **two oxbow lakes** i.e., **Parvati and Arga**, which are **rain-fed** and located in the **terai region** (Gangetic plains).

- The nearby **Tikri Forest** is also being developed as an **eco-tourism site**.
- **Oxbow lakes** are **U-shaped lakes** formed when a meander of a **river is cut off**, creating a **standalone water body**.



- **Ecological Significance:** It is a refuge for **critically endangered** [white-rumped vulture](#), [Indian vulture](#), and **endangered** [Egyptian vulture](#).
 - Migratory birds like **Eurasian coots**, **mallards**, **greylag geese**, **northern pintails**, and **red-crested pochards** visit the site in the winter months.
- **Invasive Species:** It faces threats from **invasive species**, notably the **common water hyacinth**.
- **Cultural Landmarks:** The region is home to cultural landmarks such as the birthplaces of **Maharishi Patanjali** and [Goswami Tulsidas](#), boosting religious and cultural tourism.

Union Budget 2025: Major Allocations for Bihar | Bihar | 04 Feb 2025

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Finance Minister **announced a series of projects for Bihar** in [Budget speech 2025](#).

Key Points

- **Boost for Foxnut Farmers:**
 - The newly announced [Makhana Board](#) will enhance production, processing, value addition, and marketing of **foxnuts**.
 - [Mithila Makhana](#) received a [Geographical Indication \(GI\) tag](#) in 2022, with Bihar contributing 80% of India's total production.
 - The initiative is expected to **benefit over five lakh farmers**, particularly in Darbhanga, Madhubani, Sitamarhi, Saharsa, Katihar, Purnia, Kishanganj, Araria, Supaul, and Madhepura.
- **Expansion of Aviation Infrastructure:**

- **New greenfield airports** in Bihar to meet future demands.
- Capacity expansion of Patna airport and the development of a brownfield airport at Bihta are also planned.
- **Investment in Education and Infrastructure:**
 - Additional funds will be allocated for capital investments, and Bihar's requests for external assistance from multilateral development banks will be fast-tracked.
 - A **National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship, and Management** will be set up under the Purvodaya initiative to develop eastern India.
 - Infrastructure expansion, including hostels, is planned for **the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Patna**.
- **Temple and Tourism Development:**
 - The Budget pledges support for the comprehensive development of the **Vishnupad and Mahabodhi temple corridors**, modeled after **the Kashi Vishwanath temple corridor**.
 - Nalanda will be developed as a major tourist center, with efforts to restore **Nalanda University** to its historical prominence.

Vishnupad Temple and the Mahabodhi Temple

- **Vishnupad Temple at Gaya:**
 - It is situated on the banks of the Phalgu/Falgu river in Gaya district of Bihar. The temple is dedicated to **Lord Vishnu**.
 - **Legend:**
 - According to local mythology, a demon named **Gayasur requested the gods to grant him the power** to help others attain moksha (liberation from the cycle of rebirth).
 - However, after misusing this power, Lord Vishnu subdued him, leaving a footprint in the temple, believed to be a mark of that event.
 - **Architectural Features:**
 - The temple stands about 100 feet tall and features 44 pillars constructed from **large gray granite blocks** (Munger Black stone) joined with **iron clamps**.
 - The **octagonal shrine** is oriented towards the east.
 - **Construction:**
 - It was constructed in **1787** under the orders of **Queen Ahilyabai Holkar**.
 - **Cultural Practices:**
 - The temple is particularly significant during **Pitra Paksha**, a period dedicated to honoring ancestors, attracting many devotees.
 - The **Brahma Kalpit Brahmins**, also referred to as Gayawal Brahmins, have been the traditional priests of the temple since ancient times.
- **Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya:**
 - It is believed to be the **site where Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment** under the Mahabodhi Tree.
 - **Construction of Temple:**
 - The original temple was built by **Emperor Ashoka** in the 3rd century BC, with the current structure dating back to the **5th-6th centuries**.
 - **Architectural Features:**
 - It comprises the **50 m high grand temple (the Vajrasana), sacred Bodhi Tree** and other 6 sacred sites of Buddha's enlightenment.
 - It is surrounded by numerous ancient **Votive stupas**, well maintained and protected by inner, middle and outer circular boundaries.
 - It is one of the earliest **brick temples** from the **Gupta period**, influencing later brick architecture.
 - The **Vajrasana (the Diamond Throne)** was originally installed by **Emperor Asoka to mark the spot where Buddha sat and meditated**.

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Anti-Conversion Bill | Rajasthan | 04 Feb 2025

Why in News?

The Rajasthan government introduced [the Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2025](#), aiming to **prevent religious conversions** through force, fraud, or inducement.

- The Bill includes provisions for **imprisonment of up to 10 years** and a **fine of up to Rs 50,000 for various offences**.

Key Points

- **Approval and Purpose:**
 - In November 2024, the **State Cabinet approved the draft of the Bill**, aiming to **stop the "increasing instances of 'love jihad'"** in certain areas of the State.
 - The term **'love jihad'** refers to Muslim men marrying Hindu women to convert them to Islam.
- **Bill Provisions:**
 - The State Medical and Health Minister introduced the Bill, which makes offences **cognisable, non-bailable, and triable in court**.
 - The Bill **criminalizes conversions** through misrepresentation, force, coercion, allurement, fraud, or marriage.
 - Individuals wishing to convert their religion must give a declaration to the District Magistrate at least 60 days in advance.
- **Rationale Behind the Bill:**
 - According to the Bill's statement, while other states have laws on the **right to religious freedom**, Rajasthan lacked such a statute.
 - The Bill aims to balance the individual right to religious freedom with the need to prevent proselytism, which could undermine **secularism**.

Religious Conversion

- Religious conversion is the **adoption of a set of beliefs identified with one particular religious denomination** to the exclusion of others.

- Thus "religious conversion" would describe the **abandoning of adherence to one denomination** and affiliating with another.
 - For example, Christian Baptist to Methodist or Catholic, Muslim Shi'a to Sunni.
- In some cases, religious conversion "marks a **transformation of religious identity** and is symbolized by special rituals".

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