



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**.

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**.

