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India Crosses 100 Ramsar Sites with Surha Tal in Ballia

6 June 2026

ENVIRONMENT

GS3

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

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India Crosses 100 Ramsar Sites with Surha Tal in Ballia

6 June 2026 · 3 min read · ·

Source: ujjyari.com — Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources
HOW

WHY IN NEWS

On **World Environment Day (June 5, 2026)**, the **Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary**, also known as **Surha Tal**, in **Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh**, was designated India's **100th Ramsar site**. The Prime Minister hailed the milestone in wetland conservation. With this, India has the **highest number of Ramsar sites in Asia** and ranks **third globally**, behind the United Kingdom (176) and Mexico (144).

ABOUT THE SITE

| FEATURE | DETAIL |
|--------------|--|
| Name | Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary (Surha Tal) |
| Location | Ballia district, Uttar Pradesh |
| Area | 34.32 sq km |
| Type | Freshwater wetland (an oxbow formed from a meander of the Ganga) |
| Significance | Important stopover for migratory birds |
| Rank | India's 100th Ramsar site; UP's 13th |

Surha Tal is a natural oxbow lake, formed when a loop (meander) of the **Ganga** was cut off from the main channel. Such wetlands are rich in biodiversity and serve as staging grounds for migratory birds along the Central Asian Flyway.

THE RAMSAR CONVENTION

| ASPECT | DETAIL |
|-----------------|--|
| Full name | Convention on Wetlands of International Importance |
| Signed | 1971, at Ramsar, Iran |
| India joined | 1982 |
| Core principle | “Wise use” of wetlands (sustainable use maintaining ecological character) |
| Montreux Record | A register of Ramsar sites where ecological character has changed or is threatened |

A “Ramsar site” is a wetland designated as internationally important under this convention. India’s tally crossing **100** reflects a sustained push to identify and protect wetlands.

GLOBAL STANDING

| COUNTRY | RAMSAR SITES |
|----------------|--------------|
| United Kingdom | 176 |
| Mexico | 144 |
| India | 100 |

India is now **first in Asia** and **third in the world**.

WHY WETLANDS MATTER

Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems on Earth and deliver outsized benefits:

- **Carbon sinks:** they store large amounts of carbon, aiding climate mitigation.
- **Flood buffers:** they absorb and slow floodwaters, protecting downstream areas.
- **Water security:** they recharge groundwater and filter pollutants.
- **Biodiversity:** they host migratory birds, fish, and aquatic life.
- **Livelihoods:** they support fishing, farming, and tourism.

India protects wetlands domestically through the **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017**, administered by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

UPSC RELEVANCE

Prelims

- India's 100th Ramsar site: **Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary (Surha Tal)**, Ballia, UP
- Designated on **World Environment Day, June 5, 2026**; UP's 13th Ramsar site
- India now **first in Asia, third globally** (UK 176, Mexico 144)
- Ramsar Convention: signed **1971, Ramsar, Iran**; India joined **1982**
- Domestic law: **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017**
- Montreux Record: threatened Ramsar sites

Mains Angles

- 1 **GS3 Conservation:** Wetlands are “kidneys of the landscape.” Discuss their ecological services and the adequacy of India's wetland-protection framework.
- 2 **GS3 Climate:** Examine the role of wetlands as carbon sinks and flood buffers in climate adaptation.
- 3 **GS3 Governance:** Assess the implementation gap in the Wetlands Rules 2017 despite India's rising Ramsar tally.

FACTS CORNER

| FACT | DETAIL |
|---------------------|--|
| 100th Ramsar site | Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary (Surha Tal) |
| Location | Ballia, Uttar Pradesh |
| Area | 34.32 sq km |
| Designated | June 5, 2026 (World Environment Day) |
| India's global rank | 3rd (after UK 176, Mexico 144) |
| India's Asia rank | 1st |
| Ramsar Convention | 1971, Ramsar, Iran |
| India joined | 1982 |
| Domestic law | Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 |
| UP's Ramsar count | 13 |

Sources: *PM India, The Tribune, PIB*

Source: India Crosses 100 Ramsar Sites with Surha Tal in Ballia — Ujiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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