

Clarity UPSC

PRELIMS 2027 · FREE EDITION

THE YEARLY COMPILATION

Protected Areas of India

2027

STATE BY STATE | **22 November 2026**

Every tiger reserve, national park, Ramsar site, biosphere reserve and elephant reserve of India, state by state, with the facts Prelims asks and the news of 2026.

58	106	103	18	33
TIGER RESERVES	NATIONAL PARKS	RAMSAR SITES	BIOSPHERE RESERVES	ELEPHANT RESERVES

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The five lists

Counts from the official lists on 22 November 2026.

58
Tiger reserves

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Section 38V. This section was added in 2006. The State Government notifies it on the recommendation of the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

A tiger reserve has a core and a buffer around the core. The Act calls the core the critical tiger habitat. Project Tiger began in 1973.

FIRST the first 9, in 1973 · **LARGEST** Nagarjunsagar Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh · **SMALLEST** Nameri, Assam · **NEWEST** Madhav, Madhya Pradesh (2025) · **MOST** Madhya Pradesh (9)

106
National parks

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Section 35. The State Government notifies it.

The Act protects a national park more strictly than a wildlife sanctuary. Grazing is not allowed inside a national park. Its boundary can be changed only on the recommendation of the National Board for Wild Life. This book prints the year in the Wildlife Institute of India's table. For some parks the final notification came later.

FIRST Corbett (1936) · **LARGEST** Hemis, Ladakh · **SMALLEST** Fossil, Madhya Pradesh · **NEWEST** Dihing Patkai, Assam (2021) · **MOST** Madhya Pradesh (11)

103
Ramsar sites

The Convention on Wetlands, signed at Ramsar in Iran on 2 February 1971. India joined it on 1 February 1982. The Government of India designates the wetland. The Convention's secretariat then adds it to the List of Wetlands of International Importance.

The country promises to keep the wetland's ecological character and to use it wisely. In India, the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 regulate wetlands.

FIRST Chilika Lake and Keoladeo (1981) · **LARGEST** Sundarban Wetland, West Bengal · **SMALLEST** Vembannur Wetland Complex, Tamil Nadu · **NEWEST** Sauj Jheel, Uttar Pradesh (2026) · **MOST** Tamil Nadu (20)

18
Biosphere reserves

No Act covers biosphere reserves. The Government of India notifies them under its own programme, which follows UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere programme. The Union Environment Ministry notifies it. UNESCO separately admits some biosphere reserves to its World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

A biosphere reserve is a large landscape with three zones. They are a protected core, a buffer and a transition zone where people live and work. National parks and sanctuaries often form the core. 13 of the 18 are in UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

FIRST Nilgiri (1986) · **LARGEST** Great Rann of Kutch, Gujarat · **SMALLEST** Dibru-Saikhowa, Assam · **NEWEST** Panna, Madhya Pradesh (2011) · **MOST** Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu (3)

33
Elephant reserves

No Act covers elephant reserves. They are notified under Project Elephant, a central scheme that began in 1992. The State Government notifies it after the Project Elephant Steering Committee approves. The Union Environment Minister chairs the committee.

An elephant reserve covers critical elephant habitat. It can overlap tiger reserves, wildlife sanctuaries and reserved forests. It is an administrative category. It has no separate legal status under the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

FIRST Singhbhum (2001) · **LARGEST** Singhbhum, Jharkhand · **SMALLEST** Singphan, Nagaland · **NEWEST** Terai, Uttar Pradesh (2022) · **MOST** Assam and Tamil Nadu (5)

Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

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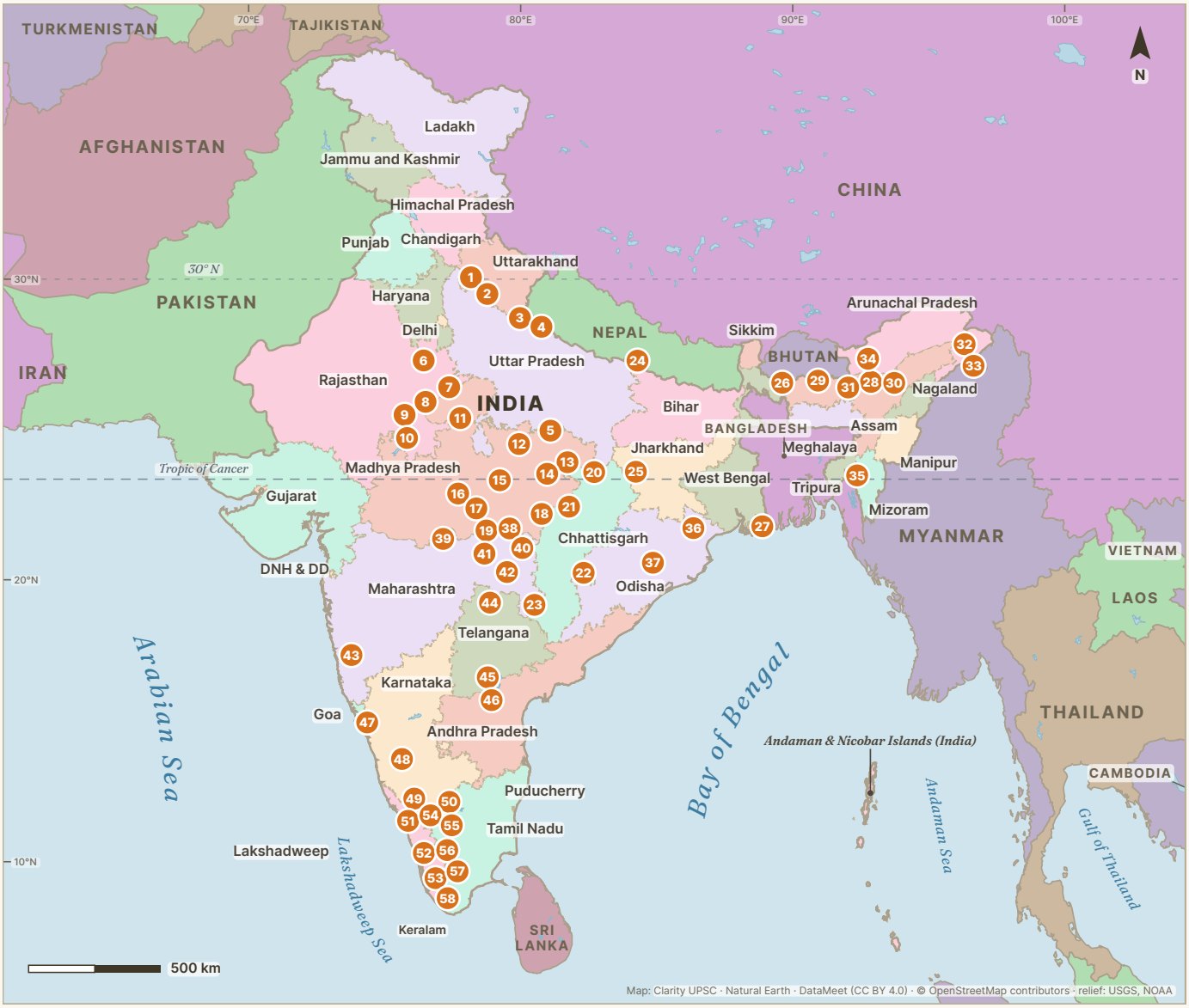
Delhi, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Puducherry and Lakshadweep have no area on these five lists.

India's 58 tiger reserves



Uttarakhand
1 Rajaji 2 Corbett

Uttar Pradesh
3 Pilibhit 4 Dudhwa
5 Ranipur

Rajasthan
6 Sariska
7 Dholpur-Karauli
8 Ranthambore
9 Ramgarh Vishdhari
10 Mukundara Hills

Madhya Pradesh
11 Madhav 12 Panna
13 Sanjay-Dubri
14 Bandhavgarh
15 Veerangana Durgavati
16 Ratapani 17 Satpura
18 Kanha 19 Pench

Chhattisgarh
20 Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla
21 Achanakmar
22 Udanti-Sitanadi
23 Indravati

Bihar
24 Valmiki

Jharkhand
25 Palamau

West Bengal
26 Buxa 27 Sundarban

Assam
28 Nameri 29 Manas
30 Kaziranga 31 Orang

Arunachal Pradesh
32 Kamlang 33 Namdapha
34 Pakke

Mizoram
35 Dampa

Odisha
36 Similipal 37 Satkosia

Maharashtra
38 Pench 39 Melghat
40 Nawegaon-Nagzira
41 Bor 42 Tadoba-Andhari
43 Sahyadri

Telangana
44 Kawal 45 Amrabad

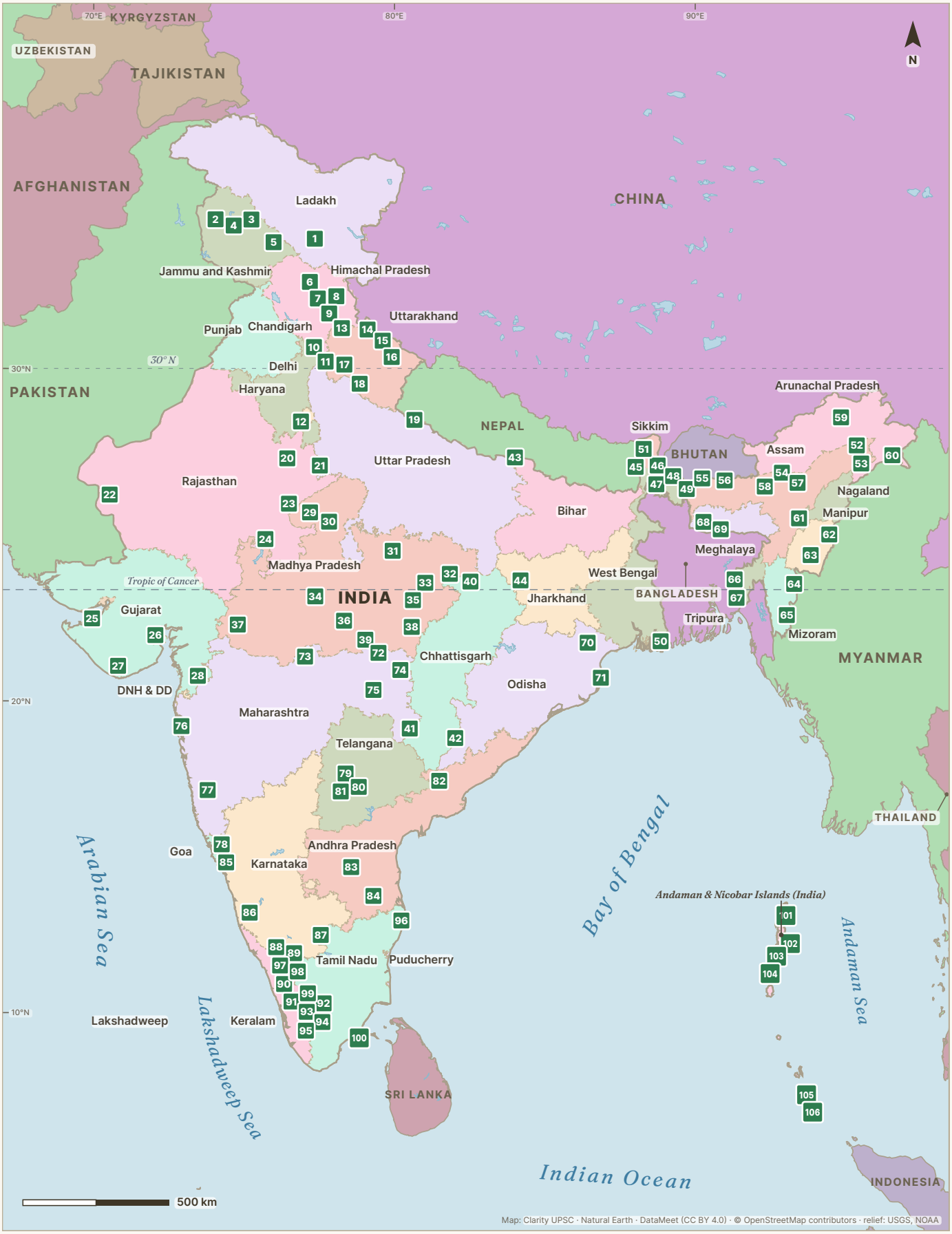
Andhra Pradesh
46 Nagarjunsagar Srisailam

Karnataka
47 Kali 48 Bhadra
49 Nagarahole
50 Biligiri Ranganatha Temple
51 Bandipur

Keralam
52 Parambikulam 53 Periyar

Tamil Nadu
54 Mudumalai
55 Sathyamangalam
56 Anamalai
57 Srivilliputhur Megamalai
58 Kalakad Mundanthurai

India's 106 national parks



The 106 national parks, state by state

Ladakh
1 Hemis

Jammu and Kashmir
2 Kazinag 3 Dachigam
4 City Forest (Salim Ali)
5 Kishtwar High Altitude

Himachal Pradesh
6 Inderkilla 7 Khirganga
8 Pin Valley 9 Great Himalayan
10 Col. Sherjung Simbalbara

Haryana
11 Kalesar 12 Sultanpur

Uttarakhand
13 Govind 14 Gangotri
15 Valley of Flowers 16 Nanda Devi
17 Rajaji 18 Corbett

Uttar Pradesh
19 Dudhwa

Rajasthan
20 Sariska 21 Keoladeo 22 Desert
23 Ranthambhore
24 Mukundra Hills

Gujarat
25 Marine National Park, Gulf of Kachchh
26 Blackbuck National Park, Velavadar
27 Gir 28 Vansda

Madhya Pradesh
29 Kuno 30 Madhav 31 Panna
32 Sanjay 33 Bandhavgarh
34 Van Vihar 35 Fossil 36 Satpura
37 Dinosaur Fossils 38 Kanha
39 Pench

Chhattisgarh
40 Guru Ghasidas 41 Indravati
42 Kanger Valley

Bihar
43 Valmiki

Jharkhand
44 Betla

West Bengal
45 Singalila 46 Neora Valley
47 Gorumara 48 Jaldapara
49 Buxa 50 Sundarban

Sikkim
51 Khangchendzonga

Assam
52 Dibru-Saikhowa 53 Dihing Patkai
54 Nameri 55 Raimona 56 Manas
57 Kaziranga 58 Orang

Arunachal Pradesh
59 Mouling 60 Namdapha

Nagaland
61 Intanki

Manipur
62 Shiroi 63 Keibul Lamjao

Mizoram
64 Murlen
65 Phawngpui (Blue Mountain)

Tripura
66 Clouded Leopard
67 Bison (Rajbari)

Meghalaya
68 Nokrek 69 Balphakram

Odisha
70 Similipal 71 Bhitarkanika

Maharashtra
72 Pench 73 Gugamal
74 Nawegaon 75 Tadoba
76 Sanjay Gandhi 77 Chandoli

Goa
78 Mollem

Telangana
79 Kasu Brahmananda Reddy
80 Mahaveer Harina Vanasthali
81 Mrugavani

Andhra Pradesh
82 Papikonda
83 Rajiv Gandhi (Rameswaram)
84 Sri Venkateswara

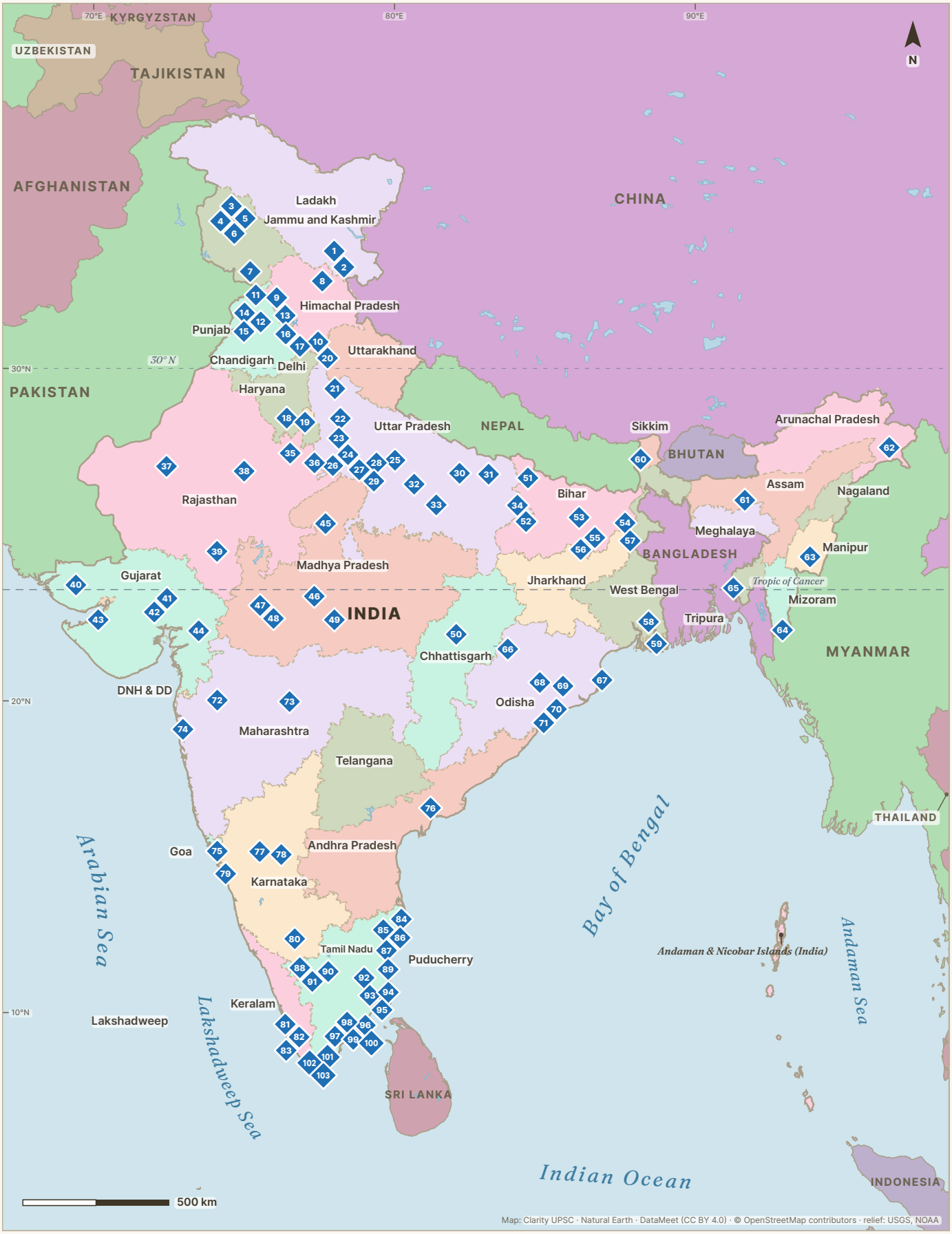
Karnataka
85 Anshi 86 Kudremukh
87 Bannerghatta 88 Nagarahole
89 Bandipur

Keralam
90 Silent Valley 91 Eravikulam
92 Anamudi Shola
93 Pambadum Shola
94 Mathikettan Shola 95 Periyar

Tamil Nadu
96 Guindy 97 Mudumalai
98 Mukurthi
99 Indira Gandhi (Anamalai)
100 Gulf of Mannar Marine

Andaman and Nicobar Islands
101 Saddle Peak
102 Rani Jhansi Marine
103 Mount Manipur
104 Mahatma Gandhi Marine
105 Campbell Bay 106 Galathea

India's 103 Ramsar sites



The 103 Ramsar sites, state by state

Ladakh
1. Tso Kar Wetland Complex
2. Tsomoriri Lake

Jammu and Kashmir
3. Wular Lake
4. Hygam Wetland Conservation Reserve
5. Shallbugh Wetland Conservation Reserve
6. Hokera Wetland
7. Surinsar-Mansar Lakes

Himachal Pradesh
8. Chandertal Wetland
9. Pong Dam Lake
10. Renuka Wetland

Punjab
11. Keshopur-Miani Community Reserve
12. Kanjli Lake
13. Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary
14. Beas Conservation Reserve
15. Harike Lake
16. Ropar Lake

Chandigarh
17. Sukhna Wetland

Haryana
18. Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary
19. Sultanpur

Uttarakhand
20. Asan Conservation Reserve

Uttar Pradesh
21. Haiderpur Wetland
22. Upper Ganga River
23. Sheikha Jheel Bird Sanctuary
24. Patna Bird Sanctuary
25. Sandi Bird Sanctuary
26. Sur Sarovar
27. Sauj Jheel
28. Saman Bird Sanctuary
29. Sarsai Nawar Jheel
30. Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary
31. Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary
32. Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary
33. Samaspur Bird Sanctuary
34. Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary

Rajasthan
35. Siliserh Lake
36. Keoladeo
37. Khichan Wetland
38. Sambhar Lake
39. Menar Wetland Complex

Gujarat
40. Chhari Dhand
41. Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary
42. Nalsarovar
43. Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary
44. Wadhvana Wetland

Madhya Pradesh
45. Sakhya Sagar
46. Bhoj Wetland
47. Yashwant Sagar
48. Sirpur Wetland
49. Tawa Reservoir

Chhattisgarh
50. Kopra Jalashay

Bihar
51. Udaipur Jheel
52. Gokul Jalashay
53. Kabartal Wetland
54. Gogabil Lake
55. Nakti Bird Sanctuary
56. Nagi Bird Sanctuary

Jharkhand
57. Udhwa Lake Bird Sanctuary

West Bengal
58. East Calcutta Wetlands
59. Sundarban Wetland

Sikkim
60. Khachoedpalri Wetland

Assam
61. Deepor Beel

Arunachal Pradesh
62. Glaw Lake

Manipur
63. Loktak Lake

Mizoram
64. Pala Wetland

Tripura
65. Rudrasagar Lake

Odisha
66. Hirakud Reservoir
67. Bhitarkanika Mangroves
68. Satkosia Gorge
69. Ansupa Lake
70. Chilika Lake
71. Tampara Lake

Maharashtra
72. Nandur Madhameshwar
73. Lonar Lake
74. Thane Creek

Goa
75. Nanda Lake

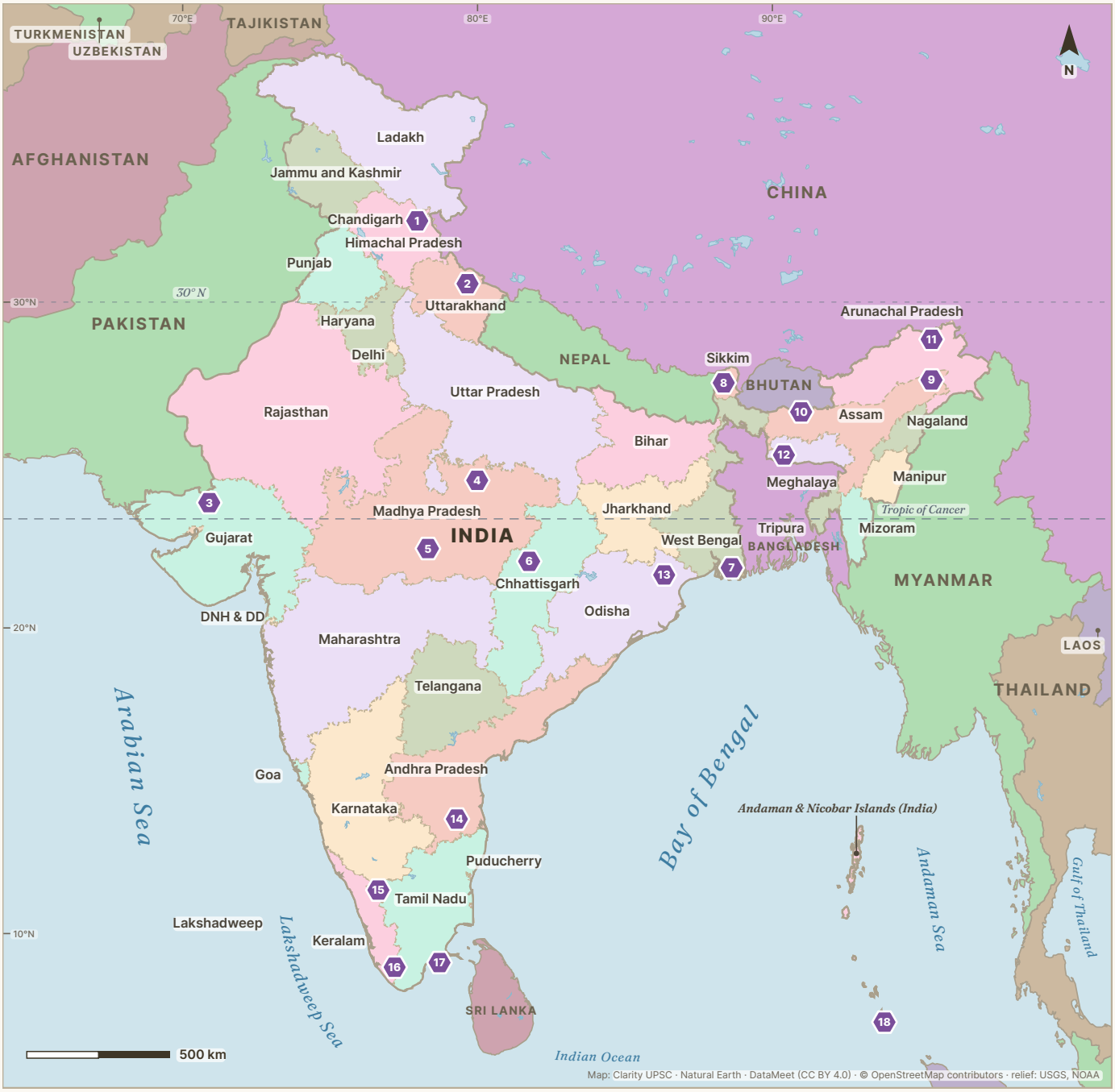
Andhra Pradesh
76. Kolleru Lake

Karnataka
77. Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve
78. Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve
79. Aghanashini Estuary
80. Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary

Keralam
81. Vembanad-Kol Wetland
82. Sasthamkotta Lake
83. Ashtamudi Wetland

Tamil Nadu
84. Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest
85. Karikili Bird Sanctuary
86. Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary
87. Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary
88. Longwood Shola Reserve Forest
89. Pichavaram Mangrove
90. Vellode Bird Sanctuary
91. Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary
92. Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary
93. Vaduvur Bird Sanctuary
94. Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary
95. Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary
96. Therthangal Bird Sanctuary
97. Kanjirankulam Bird Sanctuary
98. Chitrangudi Bird Sanctuary
99. Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary
100. Gulf of Mannar Marine
101. Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary
102. Vembannur Wetland Complex
103. Suchindram Theroor Wetland Complex

India's 18 biosphere reserves



Himachal Pradesh
1. Cold Desert

Uttarakhand
2. Nanda Devi

Gujarat
3. Great Rann of Kutch

Madhya Pradesh
4. Panna
5. Pachmarhi

Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh
6. Achanakmar-Amarkantak

West Bengal
7. Sundarbans

Sikkim
8. Khangchendzonga

Assam
9. Dibru-Saikhowa
10. Manas

Arunachal Pradesh
11. Dehang-Dibang

Meghalaya
12. Nokrek

Odisha
13. Similipal

Andhra Pradesh
14. Seshachalam

Tamil Nadu, Keralam and Karnataka
15. Nilgiri

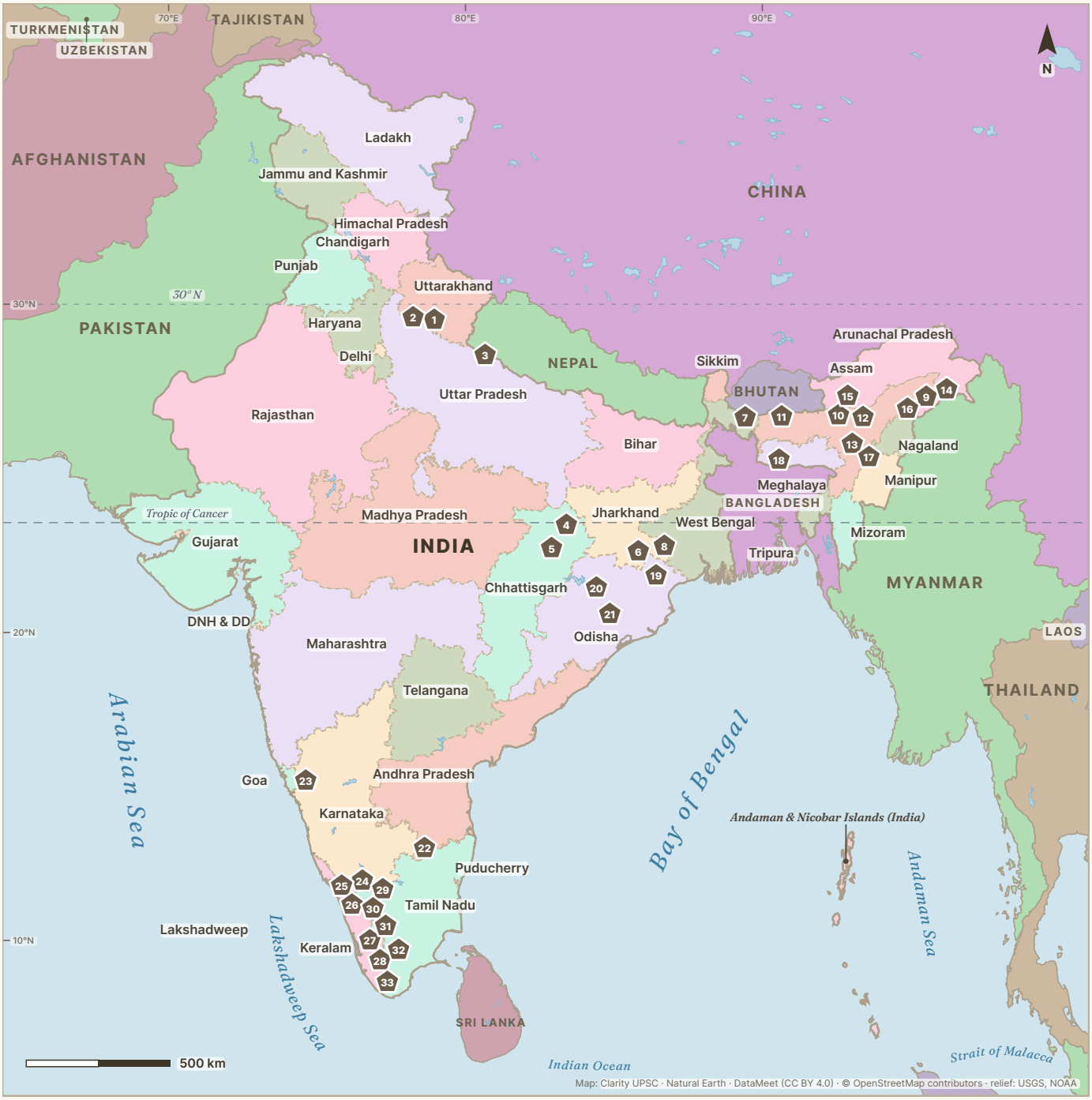
Keralam and Tamil Nadu
16. Agasthyamalai

Tamil Nadu
17. Gulf of Mannar

Andaman and Nicobar Islands
18. Great Nicobar

In UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves (13): Cold Desert, Nanda Devi, Panna, Pachmarhi, Achanakmar-Amarkantak, Sundarbans, Khangchendzonga, Nokrek, Similipal, Nilgiri, Agasthyamalai, Gulf of Mannar, Great Nicobar.

India's 33 elephant reserves



Uttarakhand
1. Shivalik

Uttar Pradesh
2. Uttar Pradesh Elephant Reserve
3. Terai

Chhattisgarh
4. Badalkhol-Tamorpingla
5. Lemru

Jharkhand
6. Singhbhum

West Bengal
7. Eastern Dooars
8. Mayurjharna

Assam
9. Dihing-Patkai
10. Sonitpur
11. Chirang-Ripu
12. Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong
13. Dhansiri-Lungding

Arunachal Pradesh
14. South Arunachal
15. Kameng

Nagaland
16. Singphan
17. Intanki

Meghalaya
18. Garo Hills

Odisha
19. Mayurbhanj
20. Sambalpur
21. Mahanadi

Andhra Pradesh
22. Rayala

Karnataka
23. Dandeli
24. Mysore

Keralam
25. Wayanad
26. Nilambur
27. Anamudi
28. Periyar

Tamil Nadu
29. Nilgiri
30. Coimbatore
31. Anamalai
32. Srivilliputtur
33. Agasthyamalai

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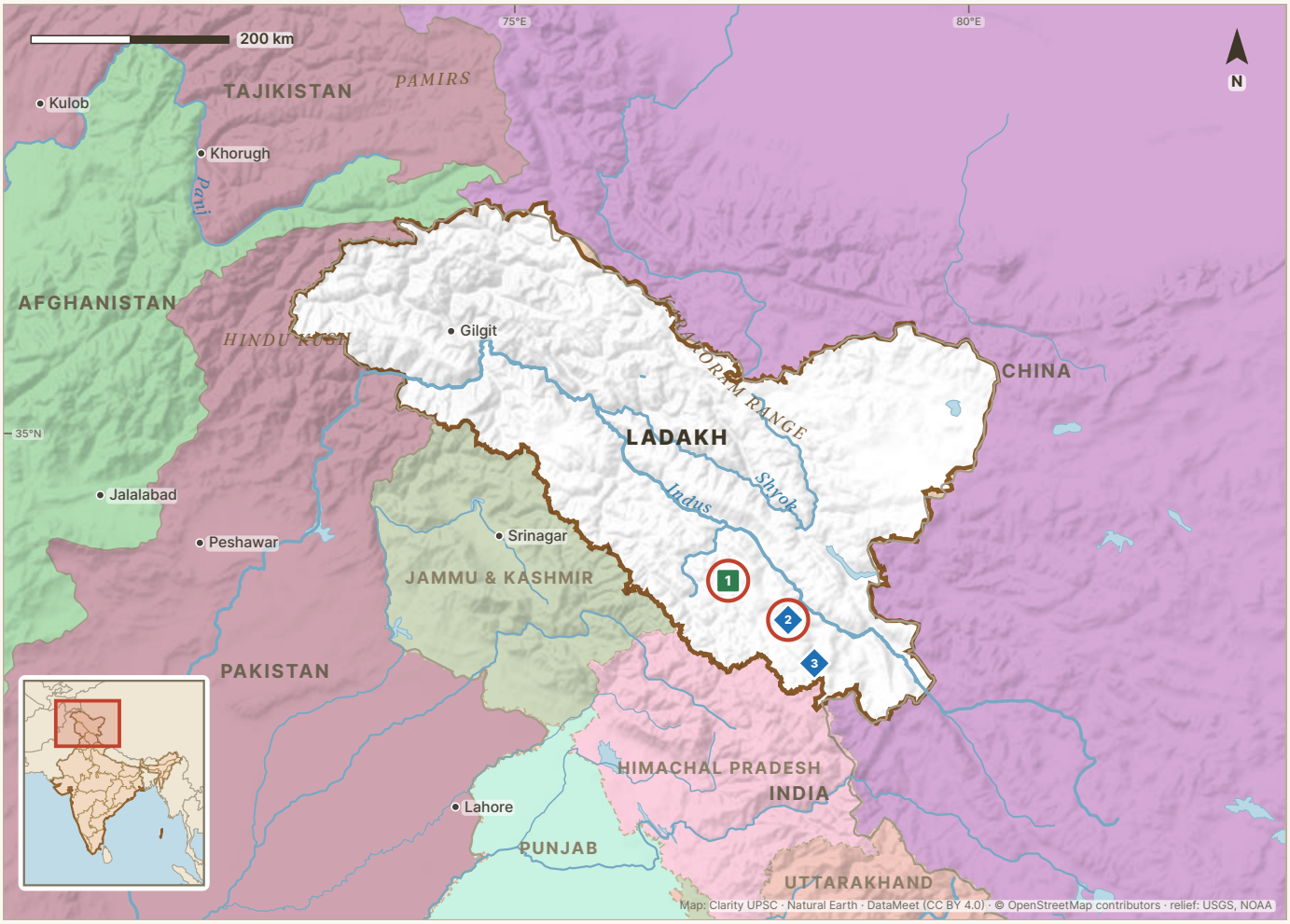
Ladakh

1 national park 2 Ramsar sites

Ladakh is a cold desert in the Trans-Himalaya, the dry land beyond the main Himalayan range. The upper Indus flows through it. In the east, the Changthang plateau forms the westernmost part of the Tibetan Plateau. Hemis, the largest national park of India, lies south of the Indus near Leh. Ladakh's two Ramsar sites, Tso Kar and Tsomoriri, are high lakes in Changthang.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

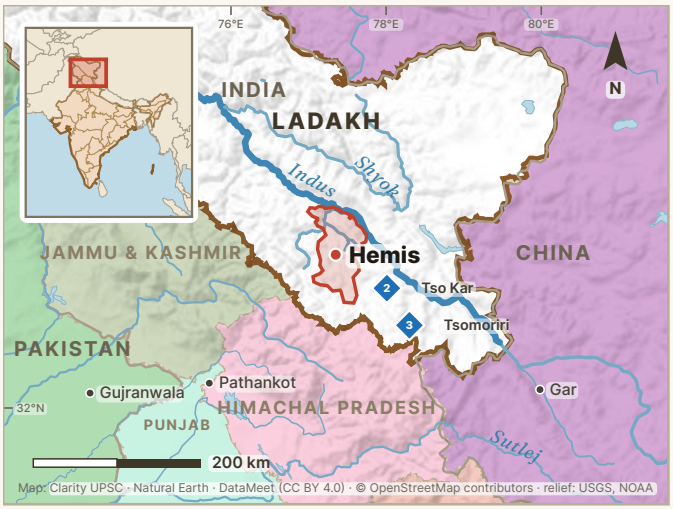
1 **Hemis** Leh	13	2 **Tso Kar** Changthang	14
3 **Tsomoriri** Changthang	15		

1 Hemis National Park

Leh · **Ladakh**

National park 1981 · 3,350 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Indus to the north, with the Markha, Rumbak and Shang streams	**Trans-Himalaya: the Zanskar Range south of the Indus**	**Snow leopard, bharal, Ladakh urial, Tibetan wolf**	**Largest national park of India (3,350 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Hemis is on the national parks list only.

Hemis National Park lies in Leh district, on the south bank of the Indus. It stretches south across the Zanskar Range. The park is named after Hemis Monastery, which stands near its eastern end. The Markha, Rumbak and Shang valleys lie inside it. The land is dry and rocky, with patches of juniper scrub and willow along the streams.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Hemis was created in 1981 and covers 3,350 sq km. It is the largest national park of India.
- A 2025 study found the highest snow leopard density of Ladakh inside Hemis, about 2.07 animals per 100 sq km. The authors called it the highest density recorded anywhere over a relatively large area.
- The park's other animals include the bharal, or blue sheep, the Asiatic ibex and the Ladakh urial. The Tibetan wolf, the Eurasian brown bear and the dhole also live here.
- The Markha, Rumbak and Shang streams flow north into the Indus. The Zanskar river meets the Indus at the edge of the park.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

9 October 2026 In October 2026, the Ladakh administration started a guided snow leopard safari with six open vehicles. The safari was to begin in Rumbak and Shang, which lie inside Hemis National Park, and in Uley. The administration said that it was also identifying routes across Hemis and other areas.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Desert National Park in Rajasthan, with 3,162 sq km, is the second largest national park of India, after Hemis. Older books place Hemis in Jammu and Kashmir. It has been in the Union Territory of Ladakh since 31 October 2019.

2 Tso Kar Wetland Complex

Changthang · **Ladakh**

Ramsar site 2020 · 95.77 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Glacier-fed Pulong Kha Phu and Nuruchan Lungpa streams	**High basin of Changthang, above 4,500 m**	**Black-necked crane, bar-headed goose, saker falcon, kiang**	**Only known breeding site of the saker falcon in India**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The Ramsar site lies partly inside Changthang Cold Desert Wildlife Sanctuary. Tsomoriri, the other Ramsar site of Ladakh, lies about 50 km to the south-east.

The Tso Kar Wetland Complex lies in the Changthang region of eastern Ladakh, more than 4,500 metres above sea level. It has two connected lakes. Startsapuk Tso, in the south, has fresh water. Tso Kar, in the north, is hypersaline, which means very salty. Tso Kar means 'white lake', after the white salt crusts on its shores.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tso Kar became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 17 November 2020. India announced it in December 2020 as its 42nd Ramsar site.
- Glacier-fed streams flow into Startsapuk Tso. Tso Kar gets its water only through a small channel from Startsapuk Tso. Its water evaporates and leaves the salt behind.
- The complex is one of the most important breeding areas of the black-necked crane in India. Bar-headed geese and great crested grebes also breed here.
- The kiang, or Tibetan wild ass, lives on the dry land around the lakes. The Tibetan argali, the Tibetan wolf and the snow leopard also use this land. Changpa herders graze livestock there.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

14 September 2026 On 13 September 2026, Ladakh's Lieutenant Governor launched a project to feed the shrinking Tso Kar. It sends water from the Rupsho Kharnak glacier stream through three natural hollows. From 9 September, 20 cusecs (cubic feet per second) entered the first one. Officials said the lake had shrunk from about 11,000 to 3,200 acres.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

The Ramsar site covers 9,577 hectares, and this area includes dry land. Tso Kar lake itself covers about 1,800 hectares.

3 Tsomoriri Lake

Changthang · **Ladakh**

Ramsar site 2002 · 120 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Fed by small mountain streams such as the Phirsa. No outflow	**Changthang, the western end of the Tibetan Plateau**	**Bar-headed goose, black-necked crane, kiang, Tibetan argali**	**Ramsar site since 2002, at 4,595 m above sea level**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The District Leh website calls the site Tsomoriri Wetland Conservation Reserve. In 2002, the Ramsar record placed the lake in the proposed Changthang sanctuary. Tso Kar, the other Ramsar site of Ladakh, lies about 50 km to the north-west.

Tsomoriri is a large lake in the Changthang region of south-eastern Ladakh, about 215 km south-east of Leh. It lies at 4,595 metres, and no stream flows out of it. The lake loses its water by evaporation, so its water is fresh to brackish, or slightly salty. Wet meadows border its northern and southern shores. Korzok, on the western shore, is its only village.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tsomoriri became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 19 August 2002. The site covers 12,000 hectares.
- The Ramsar record of 2002 describes Tsomoriri and Tso Kar as the only breeding grounds of the bar-headed goose in India. The black-necked crane also breeds here.
- Local Buddhists consider the lake sacred and do not use its water. Korzok monastery, about 400 years old, stands in the village.
- Changpa herders graze pashmina goats on the pastures around the lake. Large herds of kiang, the Tibetan wild ass, also graze there. The Tibetan argali lives in the area too.

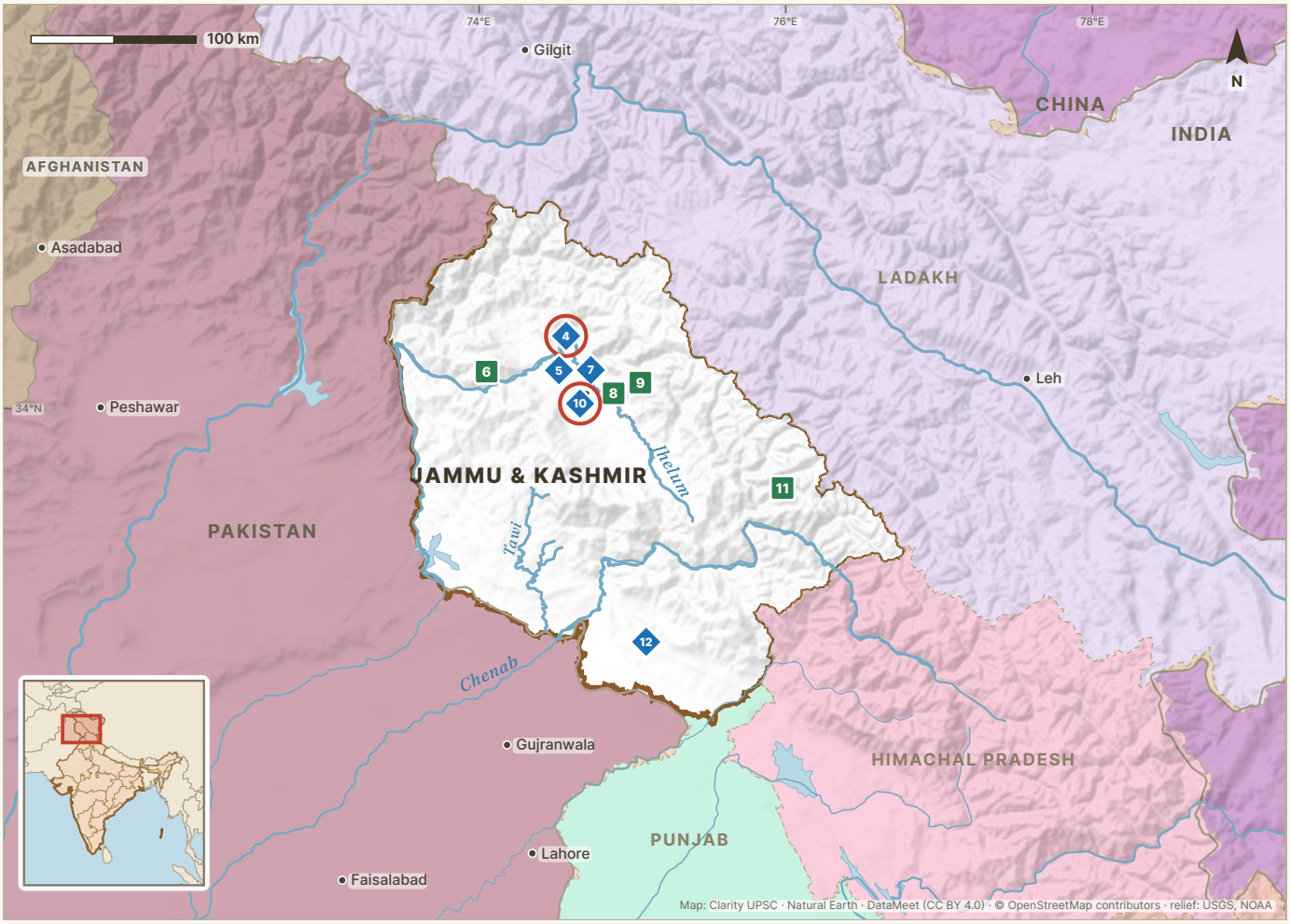
PRELIMS TRAP

Ladakh has two Ramsar sites, Tsomoriri and the Tso Kar Wetland Complex. Pangong Tso lies partly in Ladakh and partly in Tibet. It is not on India's list of Ramsar sites.

Jammu and Kashmir

4 national parks 5 Ramsar sites

Jammu and Kashmir has two regions. The Jhelum flows through the Kashmir Valley, a high basin with lakes and marshes on its floor. The Jammu region slopes down through the Shivalik hills to the plains. The Chenab flows through its eastern mountains. The Union Territory has four national parks and five Ramsar sites. Four of the Ramsar sites are in the valley. The fifth is a pair of lakes near Jammu.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

4	**Wular** Bandipora and Baramulla	17
5	**Hygam** Baramulla	18
6	**Kazinag** Baramulla	19
7	**Shallbugh** Srinagar and Ganderbal	20
8	**City Forest (Salim Ali)** Srinagar	20
9	**Dachigam** Srinagar and Pulwama	21
10	**Hokera** Srinagar and Budgam	22
11	**Kishtwar** Kishtwar	23
12	**Surinsar-Mansar** Samba, Jammu and Udhampur	24

4 Wular Lake

Bandipora and Baramulla · **Jammu and Kashmir**

Ramsar site 1990 · 189 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Jhelum, which enters at Banyari and leaves at Ningli	**Floor of the Kashmir Valley, with mountains to the north-east**	**Wintering and breeding waterbirds, water chestnut, fish**	**Largest freshwater lake of India (Ramsar record)**



Wular Lake lies on the floor of the valley in north Kashmir. High mountains rise on its north-eastern side. The lake acts as a huge reservoir that absorbs the flood water of the Jhelum. Water plants, especially water chestnut, cover large parts of it. The lake supports an important fishery and gives water for irrigation and homes.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Wular became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 23 March 1990. It covers 18,900 hectares. Its Ramsar record calls it the largest freshwater lake in India.
- The Jhelum enters the lake at Banyari and leaves it at Ningli, near Sopore. The Tulbul barrage, with a navigation lock, was planned at Ningli.
- Silt, willow plantations and paddy fields have taken over parts of the lake. The Wular Conservation and Management Authority was set up in 2012 to restore it.

ON THE OTHER LISTS

Hygam Wetland Conservation Reserve, a separate Ramsar site, lies next to the southern tip of Wular. The two wetlands form one connected system.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

17 February 2026 On 10 February 2026, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah spoke in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. He said that his government was working with the Centre to revive the Tulbul Navigation Project. Work on the barrage began in 1984 and stopped after Pakistan's objections and the rise of militancy in 1989.

13 April 2026 In April 2026, the Authority said that dredging had removed 78.43 lakh cubic metres of silt. This had restored about 5 sq km of the lake. About 1.31 lakh willow trees had also been removed, and 1,159 pillars now marked the lake's boundary.

PRELIMS TRAP

Wular is a Ramsar site. Dal Lake in Srinagar is not on India's list of Ramsar sites.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2023 · Q1

Also asked: 2010

Consider the following statements : 1. Jhelum River passes through Wular Lake. 2. Krishna River directly feeds Kolleru Lake. 3. Meandering of Gandak River formed Kanwar Lake. How many of the statements given above are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) All three (d) None

UPSC KEY **(a) Only one.** The Jhelum flows through Wular Lake, so statement 1 is correct. The Krishna does not feed Kolleru directly, and Kanwar Lake lies beside the Burhi Gandak, not the Gandak.

5 Hygam Wetland Conservation Reserve

Baramulla · **Jammu and Kashmir**

Ramsar site 2022 · 8.02 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Jhelum floodplain, fed by the Ningli and Balkul flood channels	**Shallow marsh on the Jhelum floodplain, at 1,580 m**	**Common pochard, mallard, Eurasian otter**	**Ramsar site since 2022, beside Wular Lake**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Hygam is both a Ramsar site and a wetland conservation reserve of the same name. It is connected to Wular Lake, another Ramsar site.

Hygam lies in Baramulla district, about 40 km from Srinagar. It is on the floodplain of the Jhelum, at 1,580 metres. It is a shallow, permanent freshwater wetland next to the southern tip of Wular Lake. Most of its water comes in through surface channels. It stores flood water and is recognised as an Important Bird Area.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Hygam became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 8 June 2022. It covers 801.82 hectares. India announced it on 13 August 2022, when its count of Ramsar sites reached 75.
- The area has been a wetland reserve since a cabinet order of 17 July 1945. Jammu and Kashmir now lists it among its wetland conservation reserves.
- Silt, willow plantations and nutrients are filling the wetland. Nearby villagers have turned some of the silted marshes into paddy fields.
- Its animals include the Eurasian otter, the common carp and the common pochard, a duck.

PRELIMS TRAP

Hygam and Shallbugh both became Ramsar sites on 8 June 2022. Hygam lies beside Wular Lake in Baramulla district. Shallbugh lies west of Anchar Lake, near Srinagar.

6 Kazinag National Park

Baramulla · **Jammu and Kashmir**

National park 2000 · 90.88 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Mountain streams that drain into the Jhelum	**Kazinag range, from 2,100 m to 4,305 m**	**Markhor, Kashmir musk deer, Himalayan brown bear, western tragopan**	**Last viable population of the Pir Panjal markhor**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kazinag is on the national parks list only. It lies next to Limber and Lachipora wildlife sanctuaries. The three share one eco-sensitive zone.

Kazinag National Park lies in Baramulla district, about 70 km from Srinagar. It is on the mountains north of the Jhelum. The park covers the Kazinag range, named after the Kazinag spring on its top. The Line of Control runs along its western side. Forests of deodar, fir and spruce rise to alpine meadows.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The park was formed from the higher parts of Lachipora and Limber wildlife sanctuaries and Naganari Conservation Reserve. These were once hunting grounds of Maharaja Hari Singh.
- The Union Environment Ministry's notification of 2022 says that the area has the last viable population of the Pir Panjal markhor. The markhor is a wild goat with corkscrew horns.
- The park's management plan for 2021–2031 estimates about 150 markhor in Kazinag in 2004–05. In 2023, monitoring by the Wildlife Trust of India recorded 221 markhor in the Kazinag range.
- The eco-sensitive zone is a belt around the park where some activities are limited. It is 0 to 5 km wide, and zero on the west and north-west, where the Line of Control and villages lie.

7 Shallbugh Wetland Conservation Reserve

Srinagar and Ganderbal · **Jammu and Kashmir**

Ramsar site 2022 · 16.75 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Sindh and Anchar Lake, draining into the Jhelum	**Shallow marsh in the Sindh delta, at about 1,580 m**	**Northern pintail, steppe eagle, Pallas's fish eagle**	**Ramsar site since 2022, next to Hokera Wetland**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Shallbugh is a Ramsar site and a wetland conservation reserve with the same boundary. Hokera Wetland, another Ramsar site, lies close to it. Together they form an important wetland habitat.

Shallbugh lies about 18 km from Srinagar. It is in the delta of the Sindh, west of Anchar Lake. The Sindh and Anchar Lake feed it, and it drains into the Jhelum in the north. The water is 0.3 to 2 metres deep. Large parts dry up between September and March. Reedbeds cover wide areas.

PRELIMS POINTERS

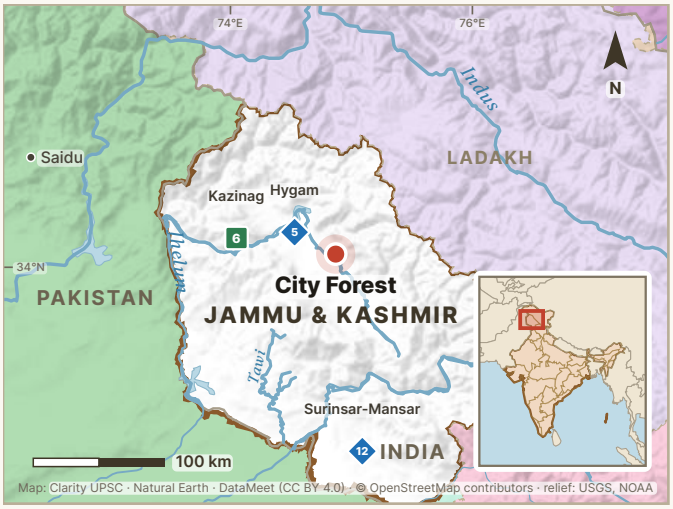
- Shallbugh became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 8 June 2022. It covers 1,675 hectares. India announced it on 13 August 2022, together with Hygam.
- Its Ramsar record says that more than four lakh resident and migratory birds of at least 21 species live here.
- Its threatened birds include three Endangered species: the steppe eagle, Pallas's fish eagle and the black-bellied tern.
- Heavy silt, most of it from the inlets of Anchar Lake, is making the wetland shallower.

8 City Forest (Salim Ali) National Park

Srinagar · **Jammu and Kashmir**

National park 1992 · 9.07 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	**Forest in Srinagar district, 1,542 m to 1,994 m**	**Hangul, Himalayan black bear, leopard, Himalayan monal**	**Smallest of the four national parks of Jammu and Kashmir**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

City Forest is on the national parks list only. Dachigam National Park lies a short distance to its north-east.

City Forest National Park lies in Srinagar district, between 1,542 metres and 1,994 metres above sea level. The Jammu and Kashmir Department of Wildlife Protection lists the hangul, the musk deer and the serow among its animals. The Himalayan black bear and the leopard are also on its list. The park's birds include the Himalayan monal and the koklass pheasant.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The park covers 9.07 sq km on the national list. It is the smallest of the four national parks of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Its forest has fir, spruce and blue pine. Horse chestnut and Himalayan elm grow here too, with wild apricot, peach and sour cherry.
- The Wildlife Institute of India lists it as City Forest (Salim Ali). The wildlife department of Jammu and Kashmir calls it Salim Ali City Forest National Park.

9 Dachigam National Park

Srinagar and Pulwama · **Jammu and Kashmir**

National park 1981 · 141 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Dachigam nallah, which flows from Marsar Lake and feeds Dal Lake	**Mountains north-east of Srinagar, 1,600 m to 4,250 m**	**Hangul, Asiatic black bear, Himalayan brown bear, leopard**	**Last viable population of the hangul (Kashmir stag)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Dachigam is on the national parks list only. It shares one eco-sensitive zone with Overa-Aru and Thajwas (Baltal) wildlife sanctuaries. This zone, a belt where some activities are limited, was notified in May 2024.

Dachigam National Park lies about 21 km north-east of Srinagar. Its land rises from about 1,600 metres to 4,250 metres. Lower Dachigam has forests, and Upper Dachigam has alpine meadows. The main stream, the Dachigam nallah, flows out of Marsar Lake. The park covers almost half the area that drains into Dal Lake, and it supplies drinking water to Srinagar.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The name Dachigam means 'ten villages'. Ten villages were moved out when the area became the Maharaja's hunting reserve. It stayed a hunting reserve from 1910 to 1947.
- Dachigam became a wildlife sanctuary in 1951 and a national park on 4 February 1981. It covers 141 sq km.
- A census in 2025 counted 323 hangul in Dachigam and the areas around it. The count in 2023 was 289. The IUCN lists the hangul, a subspecies of red deer, as Critically Endangered.
- The Wildlife Institute of India's Management Effectiveness Evaluation, reported in June 2025, rated 438 protected areas. Dachigam and Eravikulam in Keralam shared the top score, 92.97%.

PRELIMS TRAP

The hangul of Dachigam is the Kashmir red deer. The sangai of Keibul Lamjao in Manipur is another threatened deer with a small range. So is the barasingha of Kanha in Madhya Pradesh.

10 Hokera Wetland

Srinagar and Budgam · **Jammu and Kashmir**

Ramsar site 2005 · 13.75 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Doodhganga and Sukhnag streams, linked to the Jhelum	**Permanent marsh on the valley floor, at 1,584 m**	**White-eyed pochard, greylag goose, great crested grebe**	**Only wetland of Kashmir with remaining reedbeds (Ramsar record)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Hokera is a Ramsar site and a wetland reserve of Jammu and Kashmir. Shallbugh Wetland Conservation Reserve, another Ramsar site, lies close to it on the north.

Hokera, also called Hokersar, is a permanent natural marsh about 10 km west of Srinagar, at 1,584 metres. The Doodhganga stream feeds it from the south-east and the Sukhnag from the south-west. A small channel links it to the Jhelum. It stores flood water and helps to protect Srinagar from floods.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Hokera became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 8 November 2005. It covers 1,375 hectares. It has been a wetland reserve since a cabinet order of 1945.
- Its Ramsar record lists 68 species of birds. The Asian Waterbird Census of 2025 counted more than 400,000 waterfowl here.
- Ducks and geese come here in winter from Siberia, China and Central Asia. The Ramsar record lists the white-eyed pochard among them.
- Silt from the Doodhganga catchment has blocked most of its springs. New houses, garbage and the demand for tourist facilities threaten it.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

17 April 2026 The Comptroller and Auditor General of India reported on the lakes of Jammu and Kashmir. Its report was laid before the legislature on 30 March 2026. It found encroachment on 2,528.10 kanals of Hokersar, more than 125 hectares. This happened because the lake had not been surveyed and its boundary had not been marked.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Hokera Wetland is in Jammu and Kashmir, near Srinagar. A 2022 Prelims question paired it with Punjab, and that pair was wrong.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2022 · Q30

Consider the following pairs : Wetland/Lake — Location 1. Hokera Wetland — Punjab 2. Renuka Wetland — Himachal Pradesh 3. Rudrasagar Lake — Tripura 4. Sasthamkotta Lake — Tamil Nadu How many pairs given above are correctly matched ?

(a) Only one pair (b) Only two pairs (c) Only three pairs (d) All four pairs

UPSC KEY **(b) Only two pairs.** Hokera is near Srinagar and Sasthamkotta is in Keralam, so those two pairs are wrong. Renuka (Himachal Pradesh) and Rudrasagar (Tripura) are correct.

11 Kishtwar High Altitude National Park

Kishtwar · **Jammu and Kashmir**

National park 1981 · 2,191.5 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kibar, Nanth and Kiyar nallahs, which feed the Chenab	**Great Himalaya, from 2,148 m to 6,504 m**	**Snow leopard, Asiatic ibex, Kashmir musk deer, Himalayan brown bear**	**Largest national park of Jammu and Kashmir (2,191.50 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kishtwar is on the national parks list only. An eco-sensitive zone of 547.09 sq km surrounds it. This belt, where some activities are limited, was notified in October 2021.

Kishtwar High Altitude National Park lies about 60 km north of Kishtwar town, in the Great Himalaya. It covers the upper catchments, or drainage areas, of four streams: the Renai, Kiyar, Nanth and Kibar nallahs. The park runs from the watershed ridges down to the first villages. Its eastern edge is the ridge between Kishtwar and Kargil districts. Its streams feed the Chenab.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Jammu and Kashmir declared the park on 4 February 1981. A notification of 6 July 2015 redrew its boundary.
- In 2010, the Supreme Court allowed 386.186 hectares of the park to be used for the Pakal Dul hydroelectric project. One condition let the state redefine the core, the most protected part of the park.
- Kishtwar is the fourth largest national park of India, after Hemis, Desert and Gangotri.
- The park has about 25 species of mammals and over 200 species of birds. They include the snow leopard, the hangul, the musk deer and the western tragopan.

PRELIMS TRAP

Older lists give Kishtwar 425 sq km, the area of the 1981 notification. The present area, 2,191.50 sq km, comes from the notification of 2015.

12 Surinsar-Mansar Lakes

Samba, Jammu and Udhampur · **Jammu and Kashmir**

Ramsar site 2005 · 3.5 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Rain and surface run-off, with no permanent outlet	**Shivalik hills, with the lakes at 605 m and 710 m**	**Indian softshell turtle, Indian flapshell turtle, migratory ducks**	**Two lakes listed together as one Ramsar site (2005)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The Ramsar site lies inside Surinsar-Mansar Wildlife Sanctuary. An eco-sensitive zone of 72.42 sq km around the sanctuary was notified in January 2022. In this belt, some activities are limited.

Surinsar and Mansar are two freshwater lakes in the low hills north-east of Jammu. They lie more than 10 km apart in a straight line. Mansar, at 710 metres, is the larger lake and is 37.8 metres deep. Surinsar lies at 605 metres. Both lakes are sacred to Hindus and have temples around them. Fishing in them is discouraged for religious reasons.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The two lakes became one Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 8 November 2005. The site covers 350 hectares. Mansar covers 329.40 hectares and Surinsar 20.40 hectares.
- Surinsar-Mansar Wildlife Sanctuary was notified on 10 April 1990, with 97.82 sq km. It spreads over Jammu, Udhampur and Samba districts.
- The lakes have the Indian softshell turtle and the Indian flapshell turtle. Mansar also has a rare freshwater jellyfish, Mansariella lacustris.
- A report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India was laid in March 2026. It found that the lakes' boundaries were not marked and that untreated sewage entered them.

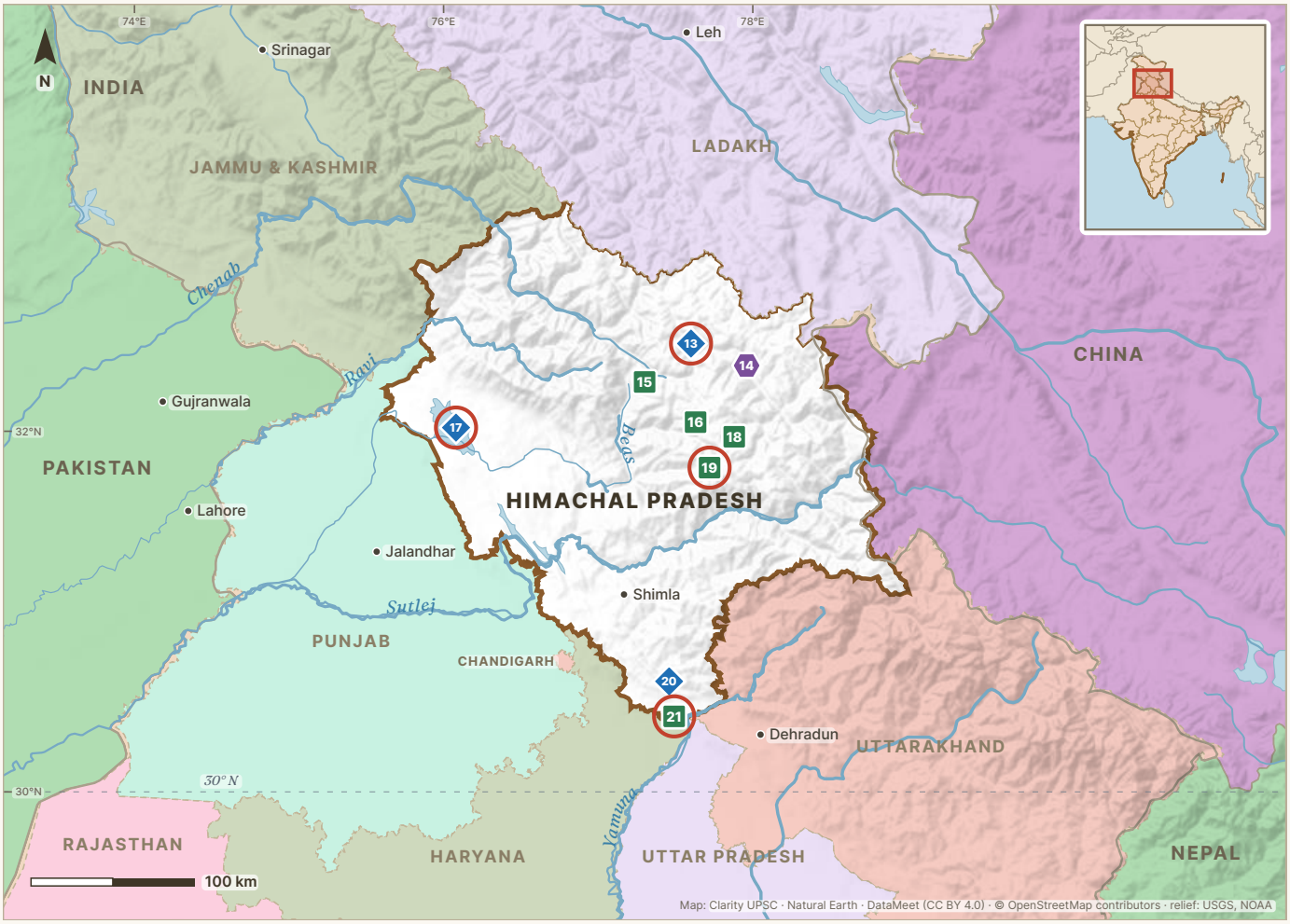
PRELIMS TRAP

Mansar Lake, near Jammu, is part of this Ramsar site. Manasbal Lake, in the Kashmir Valley, is a different lake and is not a Ramsar site.

Himachal Pradesh

5 national parks 3 Ramsar sites 1 biosphere reserve

Himachal Pradesh lies in the western Himalaya. Its land rises from the Shivalik foothills of Sirmaur in the south to the cold desert of Lahaul and Spiti in the north. The Beas flows through the Kullu valley. A dam in Kangra holds its water in Pong Dam Lake. The state has five national parks, three Ramsar sites and one biosphere reserve. It has no tiger reserve and no elephant reserve.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

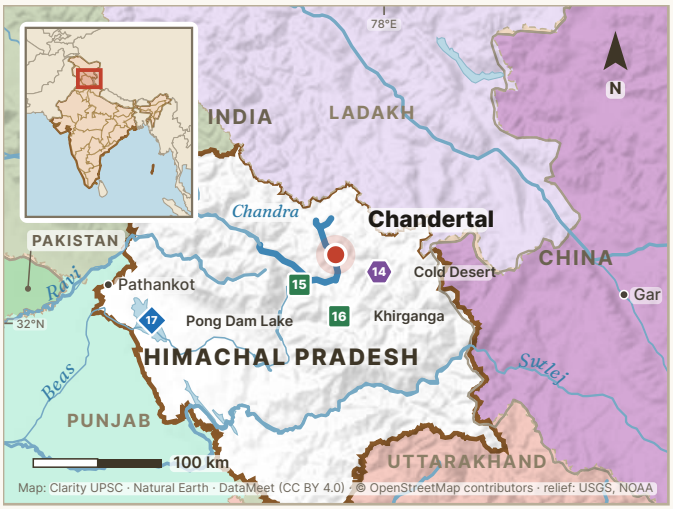
13	**Chandertal** Lahaul and Spiti	26
14	**Cold Desert** Lahaul and Spiti	27
15	**Inderkilla** Kullu	28
16	**Khirganga** Kullu	29
17	**Pong Dam Lake** Kangra	30
18	**Pin Valley** Lahaul and Spiti	31
19	**Great Himalayan** Kullu	32
20	**Renuka** Sirmaur	33
21	**Simbalbara** Sirmaur	34

13 Chandertal Wetland

Lahaul and Spiti · **Himachal Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2005 · 0.49 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Chandra, a headstream of the Chenab	**High lake basin between the Himalaya and the Pir Panjal**	**Snow leopard, Himalayan ibex, blue sheep**	**Ramsar lake at 4,337 m, in the cold desert of Lahaul and Spiti**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Chandertal lies at the centre of Chandratal Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary is one of the three protected areas of Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve. The other two are Pin Valley National Park and Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary.

Chandertal is a high lake in the upper valley of the Chandra river, in Lahaul and Spiti district. It lies at 4,337 metres, near the Kunzum pass. Rock debris and glacial deposits blocked a rock basin and formed the lake. Glaciers are its main source of water. The land around it is cold, dry and treeless, with meadows, rock, snow and loose stones.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Chandertal became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 8 November 2005. Its site number is 1569, and it covers 49 hectares. Renuka Wetland was listed on the same day.
- Chandratal Wildlife Sanctuary was first notified on 14 May 2007, with 38.56 sq km. It now covers 50.09 sq km.
- The Ramsar record says that the snow leopard lives here. It also lists the Himalayan ibex, the blue sheep and the red fox. The birds include the snowcock, the chukar and the golden eagle.
- Chandertal was declared a wetland of national importance in 1994.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

31 May 2026 On 31 August 2025, a Pallas's gull was seen at Chandratal, at about 4,300 metres. It is the first confirmed record of this gull from the Spiti valley. Two authors from the Spiti Wildlife Division published the record in April 2026, in the Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society. Newspapers reported it in May 2026.

PRELIMS TRAP

Chandertal is in Himachal Pradesh. Tsomoriri Lake and the Tso Kar Wetland Complex are also high-altitude Ramsar sites, but they are in Ladakh. The Ramsar list spells the lake Chandertal, while the forest department spells the sanctuary Chandratal.

14 Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve

Lahaul and Spiti · **Himachal Pradesh**

Biosphere reserve 2009 · 7,770 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Spiti, Pin and Chandra	Trans-Himalayan cold desert, from 3,300 m to 6,600 m	Snow leopard, Himalayan ibex, blue sheep, Himalayan wolf	India's 13th reserve in UNESCO's world network (2025)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Pin Valley National Park, Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary and Chandratal Wildlife Sanctuary lie inside the biosphere reserve. Chandertal Wetland, a Ramsar site, is inside Chandratal Wildlife Sanctuary.

Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve covers 7,770 sq km of the trans-Himalayan region in Lahaul and Spiti district. Its land lies between 3,300 and 6,600 metres. It has glacial valleys, alpine lakes, high-altitude deserts and windswept plateaus. UNESCO calls it one of the coldest and driest ecosystems in its network. About 12,000 people live in its scattered villages.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- India notified the reserve on 28 August 2009. It is number 16 on the national list of 18 biosphere reserves.
- The reserve joined UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves on 27 September 2025, at a meeting in Hangzhou, China. It became India's 13th reserve in the network.
- The Spiti Wildlife Division gives the sizes of three zones. The core, the most protected part, covers 2,665 sq km. The buffer around it covers 3,977 sq km, and the outer transition zone 1,128 sq km.
- UNESCO records 732 species of vascular plants here. The people grow barley and peas and herd yaks and goats. They also practise Sowa Rigpa, the traditional Tibetan system of medicine.

PRELIMS TRAP

Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve lies wholly in Himachal Pradesh. Changthang Cold Desert Wildlife Sanctuary is a different area, in Ladakh. India notified the biosphere reserve in 2009, and UNESCO added it to its world network in 2025.

15 Inderkilla National Park

Kullu · **Himachal Pradesh**

National park 2010 · 94 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Allain Nalla, a mountain stream on its western side	**High western Himalaya of upper Kullu, near the Hamta Pass**	**Snow leopard, Himalayan brown bear, Himalayan tahr, musk deer**	**One of the three national parks of Kullu district**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Inderkilla is on the national parks list only. Kullu district has two more national parks to its south-east, Khirganga and the Great Himalayan National Park.

Inderkilla National Park lies in the high mountains of Kullu district, near the Manali and Naggar forest ranges. The Hamta Pass, between Kullu and Lahaul, is close to its eastern side, and Bhrigu lake to its western side. Spruce, fir, kharsu oak and Himalayan birch grow in its forests. No village lies in its eco-sensitive zone, a belt where some activities are limited.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Wildlife Institute of India lists Inderkilla as a national park created in 2010, with 94 sq km. Official papers also spell the name Inderkila and Inderkala.
- A Union Environment Ministry notification of 17 January 2018 gives the park about 104 sq km. It created an eco-sensitive zone of 47.2 sq km around the park.
- The notification lists the snow leopard, the Himalayan brown bear and the Asiatic black bear in the park. It also lists the Himalayan tahr, the Himalayan ibex and the musk deer.
- Its birds include the Himalayan monal, the koklass pheasant, the kalij pheasant and the Himalayan griffon, which is a large vulture.

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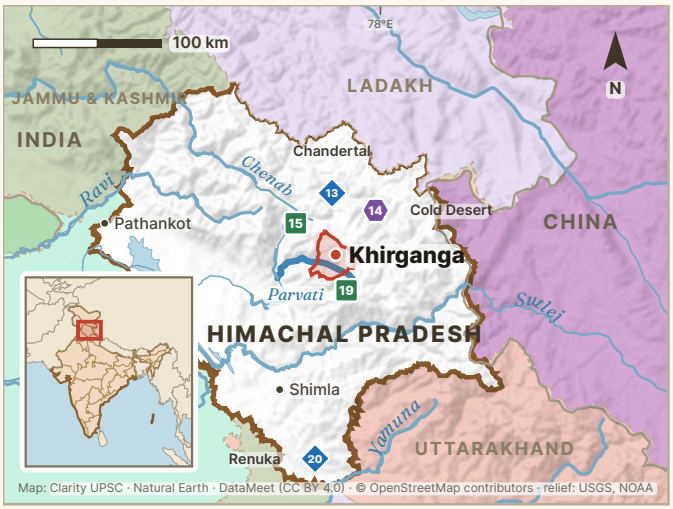
16 Khirganga National Park

Kullu · **Himachal Pradesh**

National park 2010 · 705 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Parvati, a tributary of the Beas	**High Himalayan catchment of the Parvati, with no village inside**	**Snow leopard, Himalayan brown bear, Himalayan monal**	**Next to the Great Himalayan National Park, on its northern side**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Khirganga is on the national parks list only. It lies outside the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, which UNESCO listed as a World Heritage Site in 2014. India has told UNESCO that it intends to add Khirganga to that site.

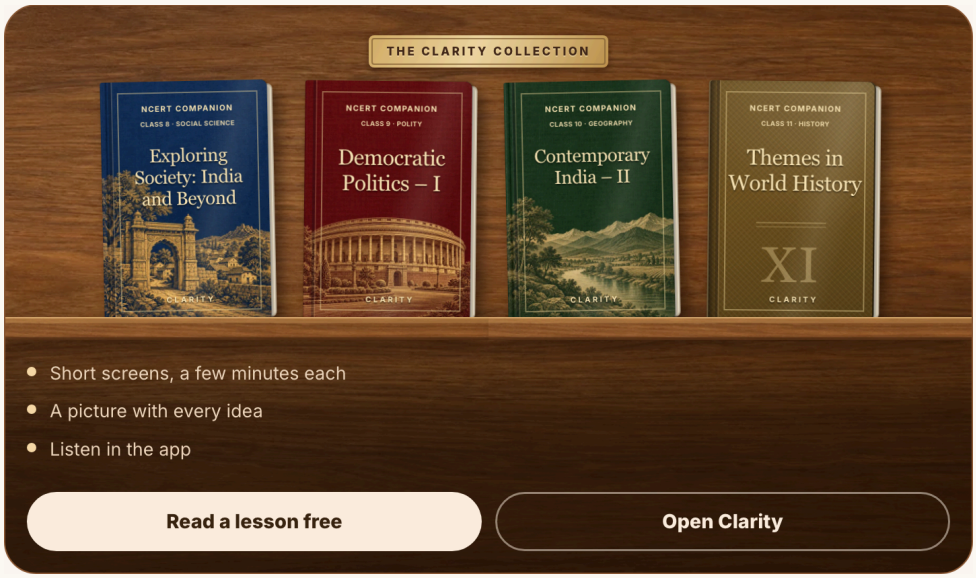
Khirganga National Park covers the catchment, or drainage area, of the Parvati river in Kullu district. The Great Himalayan National Park lies next to it on the south. No village lies inside the park. People of nearby villages have had rights to graze animals and collect herbs there. A popular trek leads to the hot springs of Khirganga.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Wildlife Institute of India lists Khirganga as a national park created in 2010, with 705 sq km. The Himachal Pradesh Forest Department gives it 710 sq km.
- The Great Himalayan National Park's website says that Khirganga adds to the wildlife corridor and helps animals move between habitats.
- The Pin-Parvati Pass connects the Parvati valley of Kullu with the Pin valley of Spiti. Pin Valley National Park lies on the other side of the pass.
- In 2016, officials said that Khirganga would be merged with the Great Himalayan National Park. In December 2023, India told UNESCO that the final notification of Khirganga was still awaited.

ON CLARITYUPSC.COM · NCERT LESSONS

NCERT, made clear.



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17 Pong Dam Lake

Kangra · **Himachal Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2002 · 156.62 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Beas	**Reservoir in the low Himalayan foothills of Kangra**	**Bar-headed goose, northern pintail, Eurasian coot**	**First Ramsar site of Himachal Pradesh (2002)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Pong Dam Lake is a Ramsar site and is also Pong Dam Lake Wildlife Sanctuary. The Himachal Pradesh Forest Department gives the sanctuary 207.59 sq km. The Ramsar site is smaller, with 156.62 sq km.

Pong Dam Lake is a reservoir on the Beas in Kangra district, in the low Himalayan foothills. It was created in 1975. It is also called Maharana Pratap Sagar. The water covers about 125 sq km in summer and about 220 sq km after the rains. When the water level falls, wide mudflats appear along the shore. Migratory waterbirds spend the winter here, from October to March.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Pong Dam Lake became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 19 August 2002. Its site number is 1211. It covers 15,662 hectares and was the first Ramsar site of Himachal Pradesh.
- The lake lies on the trans-Himalayan route of migratory birds. The Ramsar record lists more than 220 species of birds here. Of these, 54 are waterfowl.
- The bird census reported in February 2026 recorded 124,344 birds of 115 species, with 62,293 bar-headed geese. The 2025 census recorded 90,959 bar-headed geese, the most since counts began in 2004.
- The reservoir supplies irrigation water to Punjab and Rajasthan and produces electricity. The Ramsar record lists 27 species of fish in it.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

17 June 2026 In June 2026, The Tribune reported the first record of a knob-billed duck at Pong Dam Lake. A birdwatcher of the forest department saw the single bird in the Sathana area of the Dhameta range. It stayed for nearly three days. Officials said that the species had been recorded only once before in the state, in Sirmaur in 2013.

PRELIMS TRAP

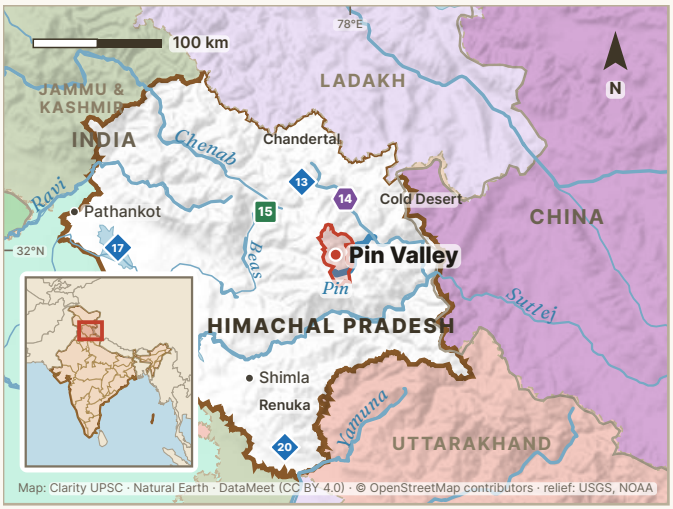
Pong Dam is on the Beas. Bhakra Dam and its reservoir, Gobind Sagar, are on the Sutlej. Both reservoirs are in Himachal Pradesh.

18 Pin Valley National Park

Lahaul and Spiti · **Himachal Pradesh**

National park 1987 · 675 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Pin, which joins the Spiti river	**Trans-Himalayan cold desert of the Pin valley**	**Snow leopard, Asiatic ibex, Himalayan brown bear, red fox**	**Breeding population of 200 to 250 Asiatic ibex**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Pin Valley National Park lies inside Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve, which joined UNESCO's world network in 2025. Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary and Chandratal Wildlife Sanctuary are the other two protected areas of the reserve.

Pin Valley National Park lies in the Spiti sub-division of Lahaul and Spiti district. Most of the park is in the catchment, or drainage area, of the Parahio, a part of the Pin river system. The Pin meets the Spiti river to the east of the park. The park lies in the dry trans-Himalaya. Open high grassland of grasses, sedges and low shrubs covers the land.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The park was created in 1987 and covers 675 sq km. The Spiti Wildlife Division treats this as the core zone, the most protected part. It adds a buffer zone of 1,150 sq km around it.
- The park has a breeding population of 200 to 250 Asiatic ibex, which is also called the Himalayan ibex. The ibex is the main prey of the snow leopard, the top predator of the park.
- The Great Himalayan National Park of Kullu lies next to it on the west. Rupi-Bhaba Wildlife Sanctuary of Kinnaur lies next to it on the south. The Bara Shigri glaciers lie to its north.
- Trekkers enter the Pin valley from Kullu over the Pin-Parvati Pass and from Kinnaur over the Pin-Bhaba Pass.

PRELIMS TRAP

Pin Valley National Park is in Lahaul and Spiti district. The Great Himalayan National Park next to it is in Kullu district. Only Pin Valley is part of Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve. Only the Great Himalayan park is a World Heritage Site.

19 Great Himalayan National Park

Kullu · **Himachal Pradesh**

National park 1984 · 754.4 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Tirthan, Sainj, Jiwa Nal and Parvati, all of the Beas system	**Western Himalaya, from below 2,000 m to above 6,000 m**	**Western tragopan, snow leopard, Himalayan tahr, musk deer**	**UNESCO World Heritage Site (2014)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The national park, Sainj Wildlife Sanctuary and Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuary together form the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area. This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Khirganga National Park lies next to the park on the north, and Pin Valley National Park on the east.

The Great Himalayan National Park lies in the Banjar sub-division of Kullu district, in the western Himalaya. It has high peaks, glaciers, alpine meadows and forests along its rivers. The Jiwa Nal, the Sainj, the Tirthan and the Parvati begin here. All four are tributaries of the upper Beas. UNESCO counts 25 types of forest in the conservation area.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Himachal Pradesh declared its intention to create the park in 1984. It notified the area as a national park in 1999. The park covers 754.4 sq km.
- UNESCO made the Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area a World Heritage Site on 23 June 2014, at Doha. The site covers 90,540 hectares. Its buffer zone, the Ecozone, covers 26,560 hectares.
- The site lies where two biogeographic realms meet, the Palearctic and the Indomalayan. UNESCO records 31 species of mammals and 209 species of birds in it.
- The western tragopan is a pheasant. The park's website says that its upper forests have the world's largest known population of this bird.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

3 May 2026 On 29 April 2026, the Union Environment Ministry published a draft notification for an eco-sensitive zone around the conservation area. This belt of 326.69 sq km would limit some activities. Comments were invited for 60 days.

PRELIMS TRAP

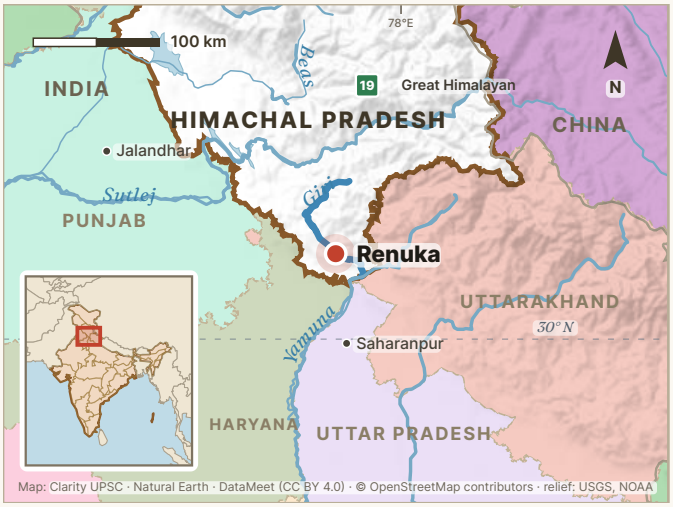
The World Heritage Site is larger than the national park. The park covers 754.4 sq km. The conservation area covers 905.4 sq km. It adds Sainj Wildlife Sanctuary, with 90 sq km, and Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuary, with 61 sq km.

20 Renuka Wetland

Sirmaur · **Himachal Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2005 · 0.2 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Giri	**Oblong lake between two parallel steep hills, at 672 m**	**Sambar, barking deer, goral**	**Largest natural lake of Himachal Pradesh**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Renuka Wetland is a Ramsar site, and it lies inside Renuka Ji Wildlife Sanctuary.

Renuka is a natural freshwater lake in Sirmaur district, at 672 metres above sea level. It lies between two parallel steep hills that run from east to west. Springs inside the lake feed it through the year. In the monsoon, 21 seasonal streams add water. A small stream links the lake to the Giri river. The lake is named after Renuka, the mother of the sage Parshuram.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Renuka became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 8 November 2005. Its site number is 1571. With 20 hectares, it is the smallest of the three Ramsar sites of Himachal Pradesh.
- The state's wetland authority calls Renuka the largest natural lake of Himachal Pradesh. A fair is held here every year in November in honour of Renuka and Parshuram.
- A Union Environment Ministry notification of 10 September 2021 gives Renuka Ji Wildlife Sanctuary 4.028 sq km. This is mainly the area that drains into the lake.
- The Ramsar record lists 103 species of birds and 19 species of fish here. Sambar, barking deer and goral live in the forest around the lake.

PRELIMS TRAP

Renuka is a natural lake. A 2018 Prelims question on artificial lakes had Renuka as a wrong option. Renuka covers only 20 hectares. Even so, the smallest Ramsar site on the Indian list is Vembannur Wetland Complex in Tamil Nadu, with 19.75 hectares.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2022 · Q30

Consider the following pairs : Wetland/Lake — Location 1. Hokera Wetland — Punjab 2. Renuka Wetland — Himachal Pradesh 3. Rudrasagar Lake — Tripura 4. Sasthamkotta Lake — Tamil Nadu How many pairs given above are correctly matched ?

(a) Only one pair (b) Only two pairs (c) Only three pairs (d) All four pairs

UPSC KEY **(b) Only two pairs.** Renuka is in Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh and Rudrasagar is in Tripura. Hokera is in Jammu and Kashmir, and Sasthamkotta is in Kerala.

21 Col. Sherjung Simbalbara National Park

Sirmaur · **Himachal Pradesh**

National park 2010 · 27.88 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Paonta valley, near the Yamuna	**Lower Shivalik hills with sal forest, 580 m to 700 m**	**Leopard, sambar, goral, Indian pangolin**	**Smallest national park of Himachal Pradesh (27.88 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The park is on the national parks list only. Old records show elephants here. The 2022 notification says that they now come only occasionally.

Col. Sherjung Simbalbara National Park lies in the Paonta valley of Sirmaur district, in the lower Shivalik hills. It covers 27.88 sq km, at 580 to 700 metres. Sal forest covers much of it. It shares its boundary with Kalesar National Park and Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary of Haryana. Its animals include the leopard, sambar and chital. Goral and barking deer also live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Wildlife Institute of India lists it as a national park created in 2010. The Union Environment Ministry's notification of 2022 says that the national park status took effect on 7 June 2013.
- Simbalbara is the smallest of the five national parks of Himachal Pradesh.
- The park lies where three biogeographic zones meet: the Himalaya, the arid zone and the Gangetic plain. Rajaji National Park of Uttarakhand is about 8 km to its east.
- On 9 May 2022, a camera trap took the first photographs of the Indian pangolin in the park. The 2022 notification records seventy species of butterflies here.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

20 April 2026 On 16 April 2026, the Himachal Pradesh High Court cancelled a 31.24 sq km eco-sensitive zone around the park. The Union Environment Ministry had notified the zone on 13 January 2022. Three gram panchayats had brought the case. The court said that surveys and a land-use inventory required by the 2011 guidelines were not done.

Full story

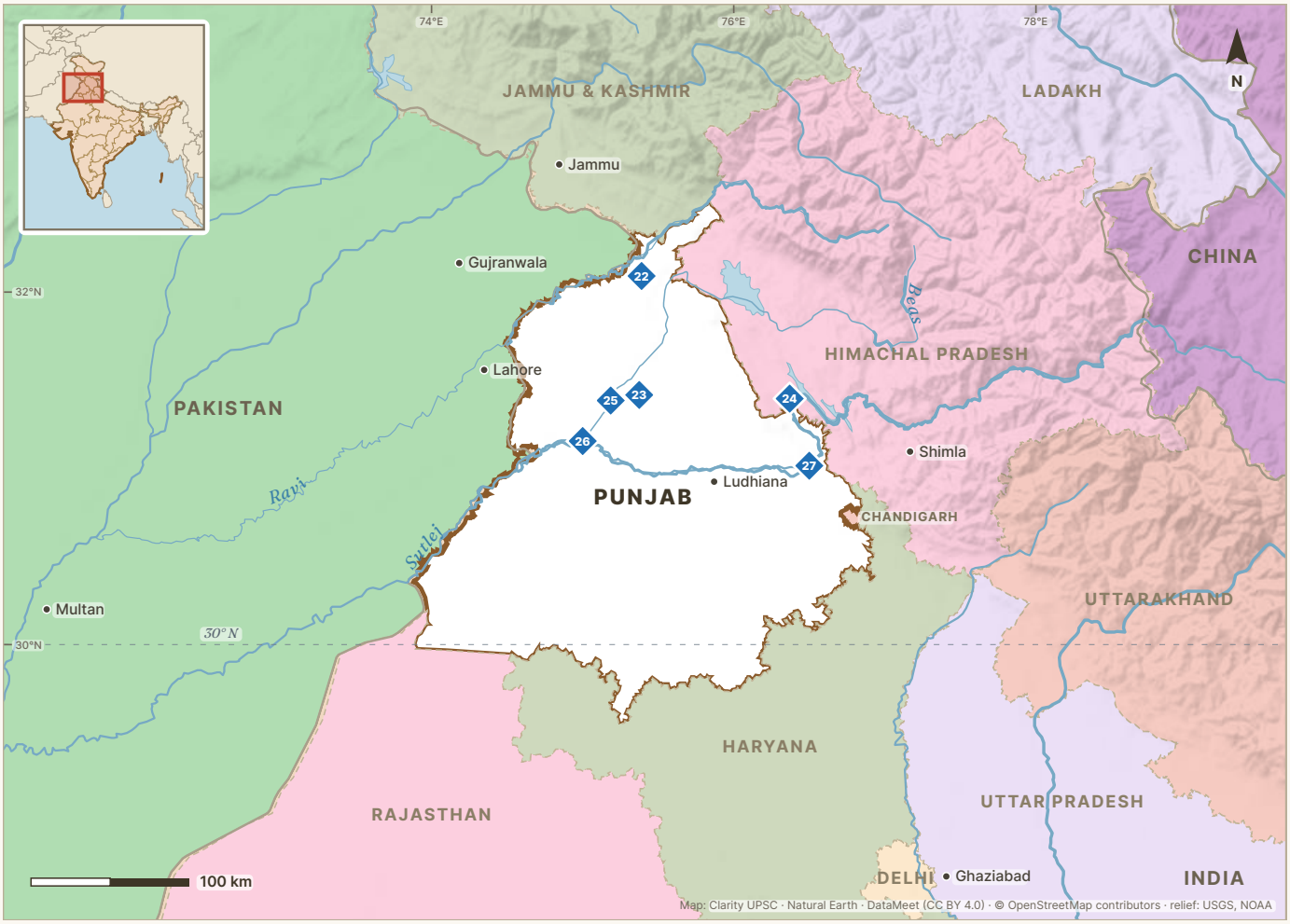
PRELIMS TRAP

Simbalbara National Park and Col. Sher Jung National Park are two names of one park. It lies in Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh. Kalesar National Park, next to it, is in Yamunanagar district of Haryana.

Punjab

6 Ramsar sites

Punjab is a farmed plain crossed by rivers of the Indus system. The Sutlej flows past Nangal and Ropar in the Shivalik foothills. The Beas meets the Sutlej at Harike. All six of the state's listings are Ramsar wetlands. Five of them lie on these two rivers or on the Kali Bein, a stream that joins the Beas. Several are also sanctuaries or reserves under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

22	**Keshopur-Miani** Gurdaspur	36
23	**Kanjli** Kapurthala	37
24	**Nangal** Rupnagar	38
25	**Beas** Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Amritsar and Tarn Taran	39
26	**Harike** Tarn Taran, Firozpur and Kapurthala	40
27	**Ropar** Rupnagar	41

22 Keshopur-Miani Community Reserve

Gurdaspur · **Punjab**

Ramsar site 2019 · 3.44 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Old flood plain of the Ravi and the Beas	**Marshes, fishponds and lotus fields on a flat plain**	**Sarus crane, common crane, common pochard**	**One of India's first two community reserves (2007)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Keshopur-Miani is a Ramsar site and also a community reserve under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Ramsar record says that the two have the same boundary.

Keshopur-Miani Community Reserve lies about 6 km from Gurdaspur town, on the old flood plain of the Ravi and the Beas. The reserve is a group of natural marshes, fishponds and fields where farmers grow lotus and water chestnut. Rain keeps the wetlands filled through the year. The land belongs to the panchayats, or village councils, of five villages.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Keshopur-Miani became a Ramsar site on 26 September 2019, with the site number 2414. It covers 343.9 hectares in Gurdaspur district.
- Punjab declared it a community reserve on 25 June 2007, three days after Lalwan in Hoshiarpur district. The state forest department calls these two the first community reserves notified in India.
- The Ramsar record calls it the only home of the sarus crane and the common crane in Punjab. Waterbird counts from 2017 to 2019 found between 21,040 and 23,018 birds.
- The state forest department calls the site Keshopur Chhamb. Its threatened species include the sarus crane, the common pochard, the greater spotted eagle and the spotted pond turtle.

PRELIMS TRAP

Keshopur-Miani is a community reserve. The State Government declares one on community or private land, under section 36C of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It declares a conservation reserve on government land, under section 36A. Prelims 2023 asked about community reserves.

23 Kanjli Lake

Kapurthala · **Punjab**

Ramsar site 2002 · 1.83 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kali Bein, which joins the Beas	**Small reservoir on a stream in the farmed plain**	**Common teal, pintail, mallard**	**On the Kali Bein, a stream linked with Guru Nanak Dev**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kanjli is on the Ramsar list only. The Ramsar record shows no protected status for it under Indian law. The Kali Bein joins the Beas upstream of Harike Lake, another Ramsar site.

Kanjli Lake lies on the Kali Bein, about 4 km from Kapurthala town. In 1870 a small barrage, called a head regulator, was built across the stream near Kanjli village. The barrage stored water for irrigation, and this formed the lake. The Kali Bein begins in Hoshiarpur district and runs almost parallel to the Beas. It then joins the Beas.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Kanjli became a Ramsar site on 22 January 2002, on the same day as Ropar. Its site number is 1160, and it covers 183 hectares.
- The Kali Bein is also called the West Bein. The Ramsar record calls it the most important stream of Punjab for religion. This is because it is linked with Guru Nanak Dev, the first Sikh Guru.
- The stream drains extra rainwater from the fields and refills the groundwater. Farmers also draw water from it directly for their crops.
- Water hyacinth, an invasive floating plant, grows over the lake and is removed from time to time. The Ramsar record also names pollution, grazing and the loss of trees in the catchment as threats.

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24 Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary

Rupnagar · **Punjab**

Ramsar site 2019 · 1.16 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Sutlej	Dam reservoir in the Shivalik foothills	Leopard, Indian pangolin, Egyptian vulture	Reservoir of the Bhakra-Nangal Project (1961)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nangal is a Ramsar site and also a wildlife sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Ramsar record says that the site has the same boundary as the sanctuary.

Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary is the reservoir behind Nangal Dam on the Sutlej, in Rupnagar district. The dam is 29 metres high and stands about 13 km downstream of Bhakra Dam. The reservoir was formed in 1961 as part of the Bhakra-Nangal Project. It lies in the Shivalik foothills, and its northern side runs along the boundary of Himachal Pradesh.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Nangal became a Ramsar site on 26 September 2019, with the site number 2407. The Ramsar site covers 116 hectares.
- Punjab declared the reservoir a wildlife sanctuary in 2009. Nangal Dam was built as a backup for times when the water level at Bhakra Dam changes.
- Its threatened mammals include the Indian pangolin, the hog deer and the leopard. Threatened birds include the Egyptian vulture and Pallas's fish eagle. Yearly counts found 5,312 to 6,113 waterbirds.
- Three of Punjab's Ramsar wetlands are on the Sutlej. Nangal comes first along the river, and Ropar lies downstream of it. Harike lies where the Beas joins the Sutlej.

PRELIMS TRAP

Gobind Sagar is the large reservoir of Bhakra Dam, and it lies in Himachal Pradesh. Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary is the much smaller reservoir of Nangal Dam, downstream in Punjab. Of the two, only Nangal is a Ramsar site.

25 Beas Conservation Reserve

Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Amritsar and Tarn Taran · **Punjab**

Ramsar site 2019 · 64.29 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Beas	Wide river channel with islands, sand bars and pools	Indus river dolphin, gharial, smooth-coated otter	India's only Indus river dolphins



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The Ramsar site has the same boundary as the conservation reserve. The reserve ends at the Harike Headworks, beside Harike Lake, another Ramsar site. Pong Dam Lake is a reservoir on the Beas upstream of the reserve. It is a Ramsar site of Himachal Pradesh.

Beas Conservation Reserve is a 185 km stretch of the Beas river in Punjab. It runs from the 52 Headworks at Talwara down to the Harike Headworks. The main channel is broad, with islands, sand bars and wide pools. The river is about 1.5 metres deep in the dry season and about 4.5 metres deep in the rains.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Punjab declared the stretch a conservation reserve on 29 August 2017. It became a Ramsar site on 26 September 2019, with the site number 2408. It covers 6,428.92 hectares.
- India's first dolphin estimate, made in 2021–23, found three Indus river dolphins, all in the Beas. Punjab made the species its State Aquatic Animal on 8 March 2019.
- A programme to bring the gharial back to the Beas began in 2017. The Ramsar record says that 47 gharials were released. The species had disappeared from the river more than thirty years earlier.
- The Ramsar record lists more than 500 species of birds along the river. The Beas and Harike together have more than 90 species of fish, including the endangered mahseer.

PRELIMS TRAP

The Indus river dolphin also lives in India, in the Beas. It is the State Aquatic Animal of Punjab. The Ganges river dolphin is a different species. It is the National Aquatic Animal of India.

26 Harike Lake

Tarn Taran, Firozpur and Kapurthala · **Punjab**

Ramsar site 1990 · 41 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Beas and Sutlej, at their meeting point	**Shallow barrage reservoir with islands, on the plain**	**Bar-headed goose, red-crested pochard, smooth Indian otter**	**Punjab's first Ramsar site (1990)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Harike is a Ramsar site and also a wildlife sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Beas Conservation Reserve, another Ramsar site, ends at the Harike Headworks. Kanjli Lake lies on the Kali Bein, which joins the Beas above Harike.

Harike Lake lies where the Beas meets the Sutlej, in Tarn Taran, Firozpur and Kapurthala districts. The Punjab forest department says that headworks built across the Sutlej in 1952 formed the lake. It calls Harike the largest wetland of northern India. The reservoir is shallow and has islands. The Ramsar record of 1990 says that water hyacinth covered a large part of it.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Harike became a Ramsar site on 23 March 1990, with the site number 462. It covers 4,100 hectares and was the first Ramsar site of Punjab.
- Two canals, the Rajasthan Feeder and the Sirhind Feeder, begin upstream of the Harike Headworks. The Rajasthan Feeder carries water for the Indira Gandhi Nahar Project in western Rajasthan.
- Harike Wildlife Sanctuary covers 8,600 hectares, so it is larger than the Ramsar site. Punjab issued the final notification of the sanctuary on 18 November 1999.
- The state forest department records 391 species of birds at Harike, and 59% of them are migratory. Its mammals include the smooth Indian otter and the Indus river dolphin.

PRELIMS TRAP

A 2014 Prelims question matched three wetlands with the meeting points of two rivers. Only Harike, where the Beas meets the Sutlej, was correct. Keoladeo and Kolleru were paired with rivers that do not meet there.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2014 · Q46

Consider the following pairs : Wetlands : Confluence of rivers 1. Harike Wetlands : Confluence of Beas and Satluj/Sutlej 2. Keoladeo Ghana National Park : Confluence of Banas and Chambal 3. Kolleru Lake : Confluence of Musi and Krishna Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

UPSC KEY **(a) 1 only.** A barrage at the meeting point of the Beas and the Sutlej formed Harike. Keoladeo and Kolleru do not lie where the rivers named for them meet.

27 Ropar Lake

Rupnagar · **Punjab**

Ramsar site 2002 · 13.65 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Sutlej	**Barrage reservoir and river below the Shivalik hills**	**Smooth Indian otter, hog deer, sambar**	**Headworks of the Sirhind Canal**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Ropar is a Ramsar site. On 5 September 2017 Punjab also notified Ropar Wetland Conservation Reserve, which covers 521.12 acres. Nangal lies upstream of Ropar on the Sutlej, and Harike lies downstream.

Ropar Lake is the stretch of the Sutlej held back by a barrage near Ropar town. The barrage was built in 1952 to divert river water for drinking and irrigation. The wetland lies at the foot of the Shivalik hills, about 45 km north-west of Chandigarh. About 800 hectares of it are river and reservoir.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Ropar became a Ramsar site on 22 January 2002, with the site number 1161. It covers 1,365 hectares.
- A small headworks was built here in 1882 to supply the Sirhind Canal. The barrage of 1952 also sends water into the Bist Doab Canal.
- The Ramsar record mentions an agreement made at Ropar in October 1831. Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Lord William Bentinck made it on the bank of the Sutlej.
- The Ramsar record lists the smooth Indian otter, the hog deer and the sambar here. It also lists 154 species of birds and 35 species of fish. Silt from the bare hills nearby is a main threat.

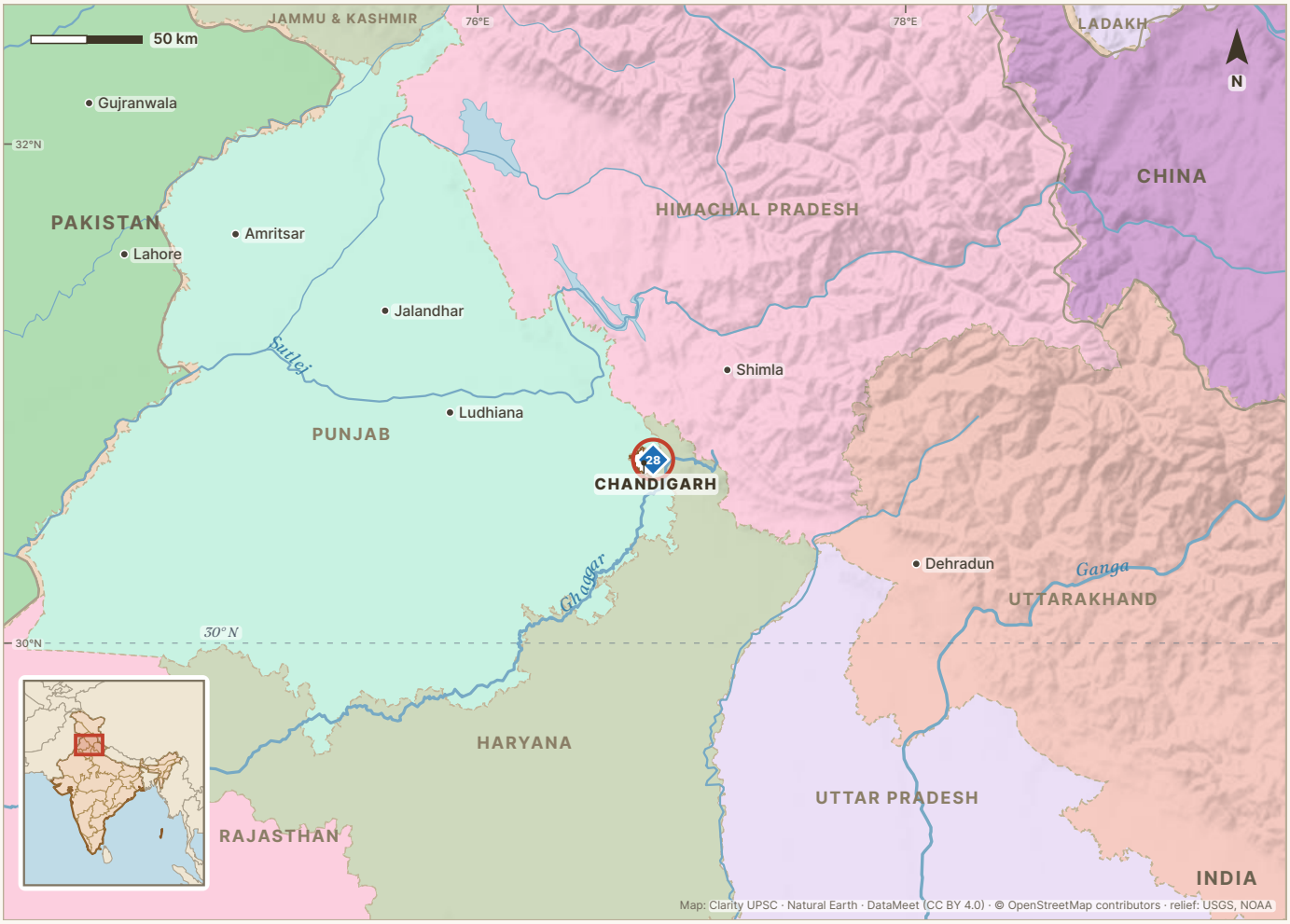
PRELIMS TRAP

The Ramsar List uses the name Ropar, but the town and the district are officially called Rupnagar. Rupnagar is also a site of the Indus Valley Civilisation. Prelims 2021 gave Ropar as an option in a question on Harappan towns.

Chandigarh

1 Ramsar site

Chandigarh is a Union Territory at the foot of the Shivalik hills. It is the capital of both Punjab and Haryana. Its one listing is Sukhna Wetland, a rain-fed lake made in 1958. The lake became the first Ramsar site of Chandigarh in 2026. Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary separately protects part of the wooded hills that drain into the lake.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

28	**Sukhna** Chandigarh	43

28 Sukhna Wetland

Chandigarh · **Chandigarh**

Ramsar site 2026 · 2 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Sukhna Choe, a seasonal stream of the Ghaggar basin	**Reservoir at the foot of the Shivalik hills**	**Common pochard, Pallas's fish eagle, black pond turtle**	**First Ramsar site of Chandigarh (2026)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sukhna is a Ramsar site and also a notified wetland under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017. Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary was notified in 1998 and covers 25.98 sq km. It protects part of the hilly catchment, to the north-east of the lake.

Sukhna Wetland is a human-made, rain-fed lake in the north-east corner of Chandigarh, at the foot of the Shivalik hills. The lake was formed in 1958. That year a dam of earth and rock, 12.8 metres high, was built across the seasonal Sukhna stream. Two hill streams, the Kansal and the Saketri, carry rainwater into it. People of the city use the lake for boating and walks.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sukhna became a Ramsar site on 16 March 2026, with the site number 2602. It covers 199.51 hectares and is the first Ramsar site of Chandigarh.
- The lake drains through the Sukhna Choe to the basin of the Ghaggar river. The wetland lies between about 304 and 365 metres above sea level.
- The lake's catchment, the land that drains into it, covers 10,395.72 acres in Chandigarh, Haryana and Punjab. The Ramsar record names silt from this land and invasive plants as the main problems.
- Its threatened species include the Egyptian vulture, Pallas's fish eagle, the Indian skimmer and the black pond turtle. The waterbird survey of February 2026 recorded about 500 common pochards.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

16 October 2026 On 15 October 2026 India announced two new Ramsar sites, Sukhna Wetland and Sauj Jheel in Uttar Pradesh. This took the number of Ramsar sites in India to 103.

Full story

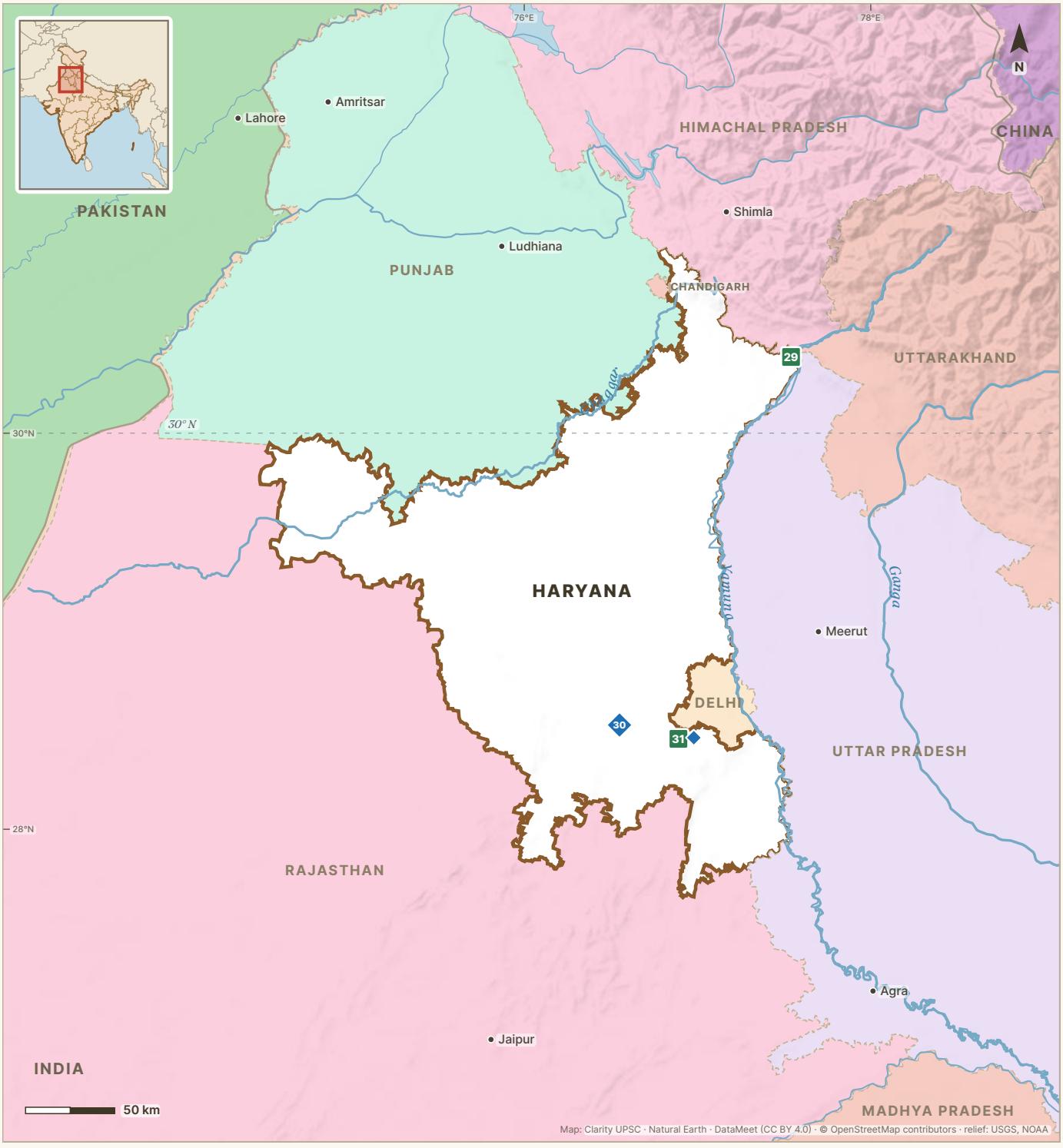
PRELIMS TRAP

Sukhna Wetland, the Ramsar site, is the lake. Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary covers part of the hills to its north-east, and it has a different boundary. The Ramsar designation is dated 16 March 2026, but India announced it on 15 October 2026.

Haryana

2 national parks 2 Ramsar sites

Haryana's listings lie at its two ends. Kalesar National Park protects sal forest in the Shivalik foothills of the north-east, beside the Yamuna. Sultanpur and Bhindawas are small wetlands on the hot, semi-arid plain of southern Haryana, south-west of Delhi. Both became Ramsar sites on the same day in 2021. Sultanpur is also a national park.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

Haryana: its areas

29 **Kalesar**
Yamunanagar 46

30 **Bhindawas**
Jhajjar 47

31 **Sultanpur**
Gurugram 48

29 Kalesar National Park

Yamunanagar · **Haryana**

National park 2003 · 46.82 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Yamuna, on the eastern boundary	Shivalik foothills with sal and khair forest	Leopard, goral, sambar, barking deer	The larger of Haryana's two national parks (2003)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kalesar is on the national parks list only. Col. Sherjung Simbalbara National Park of Himachal Pradesh lies across the ridge to its north.

Kalesar National Park lies in the Shivalik foothills of Yamunanagar district. The Yamuna forms its eastern boundary. To the north, the main Shivalik ridge divides Haryana from Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Dense sal forest, khair forest and patches of grassland cover the park. Leopard, goral and barking deer live here. So do sambar, chital and pythons.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Haryana declared Kalesar a national park on 8 December 2003. It covers 46.82 sq km, which the Haryana Forest Department gives as 11,570 acres.
- Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary lies next to the national park. Haryana notified the sanctuary earlier, on 13 December 1996.
- The park takes its name from the Kalesar temple of Shiva, which stands inside the protected area.
- The Haryana Forest Department says that tigers and elephants from Rajaji National Park of Uttarakhand visit Kalesar from time to time.

PRELIMS TRAP

Kalesar National Park and Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary are two separate protected areas of Haryana, side by side. Col. Sherjung Simbalbara National Park, across the ridge, is in Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh.

30

Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary

Jhajjar · **Haryana**

Ramsar site 2021 · 4.12 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
No river: fed by the Jawahar Lal Nehru canal	Saucer-shaped lake on a semi-arid plain	Greylag goose, Indian cormorant, steppe eagle	Largest wetland of Haryana (412 hectares)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Bhindawas is a Ramsar site and also a wildlife sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The two have the same boundary. Sultanpur National Park, the other Ramsar site of Haryana, was designated on the same day.

Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary is a human-made freshwater lake in Jhajjar district. It lies in a saucer-shaped hollow of the plain. It gets water from the Jawahar Lal Nehru canal through an escape channel. Extra water leaves through drain number 8. A raised bank, 12 km long, separates the lake from the farms around it. The climate is hot and semi-arid.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Bhindawas became a Ramsar site on 25 May 2021, with the site number 2459. It covers 412 hectares. The Ramsar record calls it the largest wetland of Haryana.
- Haryana notified it as a wildlife sanctuary on 5 July 1986. The Ramsar record says that the Union Environment Ministry declared an eco-sensitive zone for it in 2011.
- More than 250 species of birds use the lake through the year. Many birds rest here on their way to Keoladeo National Park at Bharatpur.
- The site regularly has more than 1.7% of the regional population of the greylag goose. It also has more than 2% of the regional population of the Indian cormorant.

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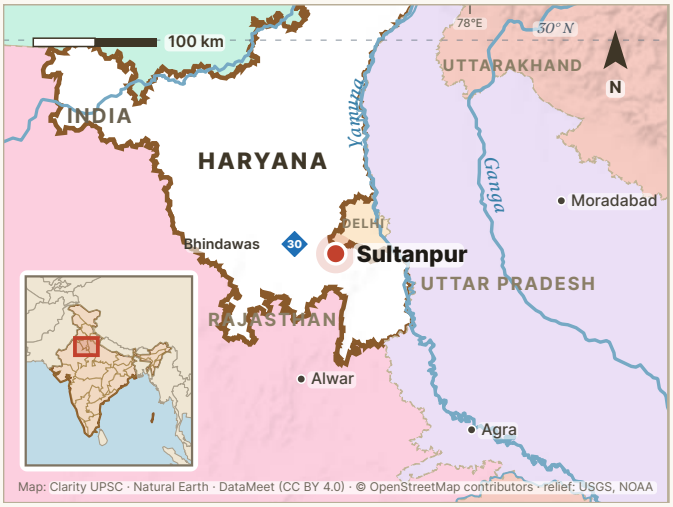
31 Sultanpur National Park

Gurugram · **Haryana**

National park 1989 · 1.43 sq km | **Ramsar site** 2021 · 1.43 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
No river: fed by canal overflow and groundwater	Shallow lake and grassland on a semi-arid plain	Bar-headed goose, greylag goose, sociable lapwing	Bird sanctuary of 1971, now a national park



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The national park and the Ramsar site have the same boundary. In 2010 the Union Environment Ministry made the area within 5 km of the park an eco-sensitive zone. Bhindawas, the other Ramsar site of Haryana, lies to its west in Jhajjar district.

Sultanpur National Park lies in Gurugram district, about 45 km south-west of Delhi. It is on the road from Gurugram to Farrukhnagar. A shallow lake forms its core. Overflow from nearby canals and fields fills the lake, and salty groundwater also feeds it. Open grassland surrounds the water, and acacia trees grow on human-made islands. A wall runs around the park.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sultanpur became a bird sanctuary on 2 April 1971. The Wildlife Institute of India lists it as a national park of 1989. The Haryana Forest Department dates the notification to 5 July 1991.
- The whole park became a Ramsar site on 25 May 2021, with the site number 2457. The site covers 142.52 hectares, which is about 1.43 sq km.
- The forest department says that Peter Jackson of the IUCN and Indira Gandhi helped to get the lake protected. This followed an IUCN conference at New Delhi in 1969.
- The Ramsar record lists the Critically Endangered sociable lapwing here. The site regularly has more than 7% of the regional population of the bar-headed goose.

PRELIMS TRAP

Prelims 2015 gave Sultanpur as an option for a national park that is a swamp with floating vegetation. That description fits Keibul Lamjao National Park in Manipur. Sultanpur is a shallow lake with grassland and planted islands.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2004 · Q65

Match List I (National Park/Sanctuary) with List II (State) and select the correct answer using the codes given below: List I A. Kanger Ghati National Park B. Nagerhole National Park C. Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary D. Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary List II 1. Chhattisgarh 2. Haryana 3. Himachal Pradesh 4. Karnataka

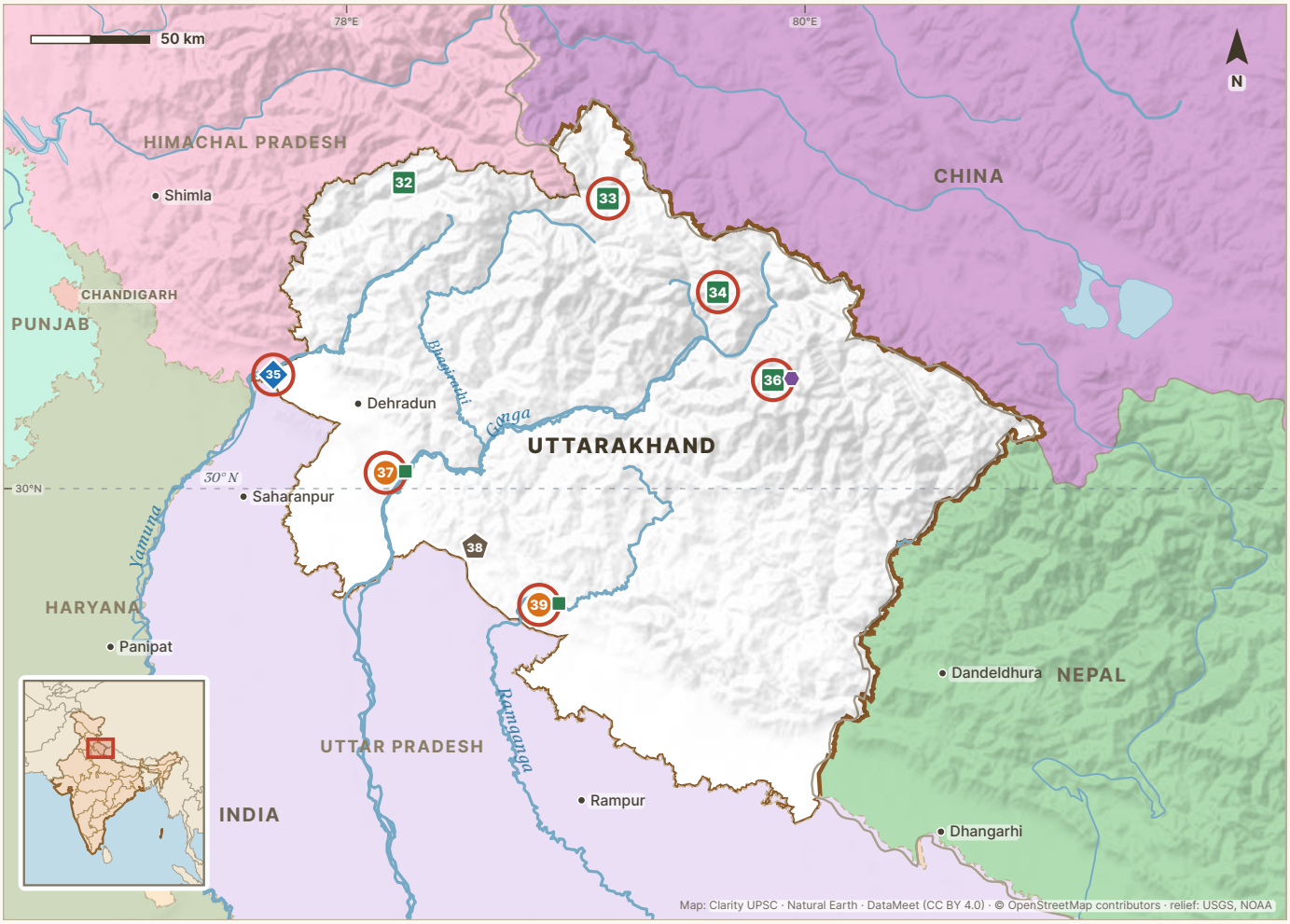
(a) A-3, B-2, C-1, D-4 (b) A-1, B-4, C-3, D-2 (c) A-3, B-4, C-1, D-2 (d) A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4

ANSWER (b) A-1, B-4, C-3, D-2. Sultanpur is in Gurugram district of Haryana. Kanger Ghati is in Chhattisgarh, Nagarhole is in Karnataka and Kugti is in Himachal Pradesh.

Uttarakhand

2 tiger reserves · 6 national parks · 1 Ramsar site · 1 biosphere reserve · 1 elephant reserve

Uttarakhand rises from the Terai plains and the Shivalik foothills in the south. In the north it reaches the snow peaks of the Great Himalaya. The Ganga and the Yamuna begin in its glaciers. Corbett and Rajaji, its two tiger reserves, lie in the foothills inside one large elephant reserve. Four of its six national parks protect high Himalayan valleys. Its one Ramsar site, Asan, lies in the Doon valley.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

32 **Govind** Uttarkashi	50	33 **Gangotri** Uttarkashi	51
34 **Valley of Flowers** Chamoli	52	35 **Asan** Dehradun	53
36 **Nanda Devi** Chamoli, Pithoragarh and Bageshwar	54	37 **Rajaji** Dehradun, Haridwar and Pauri Garhwal	55
38 **Shivalik** Dehradun, Haridwar, Pauri Garhwal, Tehri Garhwal, Nainital, Almora, Udham Singh Nagar and Champawat	56	39 **Corbett** Nainital, Pauri Garhwal and Almora	57

32 Govind National Park

Uttarkashi · **Uttarakhand**

National park 1990 · 472.08 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Tons, through the Rupin and the Supin	**Western Himalaya, from pine forest to alpine meadows**	**Snow leopard, Himalayan brown bear**	**National park beside the Govind sanctuary of 1955**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Govind is on the national parks list only. It lies next to Govind Wildlife Sanctuary, and Gangotri National Park lies to its east. Govind, Gangotri and Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary form one unbroken stretch of protected land.

Govind National Park lies in Uttarkashi district, in the upper valley of the Tons river. The land rises from pine forest at about 1,200 metres to oak and deodar forest. Above 3,500 metres there are alpine meadows, the high grasslands above the forest. The winters are very cold and snowy.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Govind National Park was notified in 1990 and covers 472.08 sq km.
- The Tons is the main tributary of the Yamuna. The Rupin and Supin valleys of the park are an important part of its catchment, the area that drains into the river.
- Govind Wildlife Sanctuary was notified in 1955 in the upper Tons valley. The national park and the sanctuary together cover about 958 sq km.
- The Wildlife Institute of India names the area as important for the conservation of the snow leopard. A 2025 study also lists the park among the places where the Himalayan brown bear lives.

PRELIMS TRAP

Govind National Park drains to the Yamuna through the Tons. The neighbouring Gangotri National Park drains to the Ganga through the Bhagirathi. Both parks are in Uttarkashi district.

33 Gangotri National Park

Uttarkashi · **Uttarakhand**

National park 1989 · 2,390.02 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Bhagirathi	**High Himalaya with glaciers, from 1,800 m to 7,083 m**	**Snow leopard, bharal, Himalayan tahr, musk deer**	**Largest protected area of Uttarakhand (2,390.02 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Gangotri is on the national parks list only. It joins Govind National Park in the west and Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary in the south. The three form one unbroken stretch of protected land.

Gangotri National Park covers the upper basin of the Bhagirathi in Uttarkashi district. The Gangotri glacier, after which the park is named, lies inside it. The north-eastern boundary of the park runs along the border between India and China. The land rises from 1,800 metres to 7,083 metres. It has high ridges and deep gorges, with cliffs, glaciers and narrow valleys.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Gangotri was notified in 1989. It covers 2,390.02 sq km and is the largest protected area in Uttarakhand.
- The Bhagirathi begins at Gaumukh, at the lower end of the Gangotri glacier, at a height of 3,892 metres. It meets the Alaknanda at Devprayag.
- The Nelang valley, near the China border, is called 'Mini Ladakh'. The Wildlife Institute of India places this valley in the Trans-Himalaya. It places the rest of the park in the western Himalaya.
- About 35 snow leopards are estimated to live in the park. It also has black bears, brown bears and musk deer. Bharal, Himalayan tahr and the Himalayan monal live here too.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

3 April 2026 Gangotri National Park reopened to visitors on 1 April 2026. The park closes every winter from 30 November to 31 March. Officials opened the Kankhu barrier on the Gaumukh trek. They also opened the way into the Nelang valley and Gartang Gali. Snow still covered parts of the Gaumukh and Kedartal routes.

PRELIMS TRAP

Gangotri National Park lies in the basin of the Bhagirathi, the headwater stream of the Ganga. Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers national parks lie in the basin of the Alaknanda.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2020 · Q77

Which of the following are the most likely places to find the musk deer in its natural habitat ? 1. Askot Wildlife Sanctuary 2. Gangotri National Park 3. Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary 4. Manas National Park Select the correct answer using the code given below :

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 3 and 4 only (d) 1 and 4 only

UPSC KEY **(a) 1 and 2 only.** Musk deer are recorded in high Himalayan areas such as Gangotri and Askot. Kishanpur and Manas are lowland areas.

34 Valley of Flowers National Park

Chamoli · **Uttarakhand**

National park 1982 · 87.5 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Pushpawati	**Alpine valley between the Zanskar and Great Himalaya ranges**	**Snow leopard, Asiatic black bear, blue sheep**	**World Heritage Site with Nanda Devi National Park (2005)**



The Valley of Flowers lies in the Pushpawati valley of the Garhwal Himalaya, in Chamoli district. UNESCO describes it as a gentle, high valley with meadows of alpine flowers. It is known for endemic alpine plants, which grow only in this region. The valley lies where the Zanskar and Great Himalaya ranges meet.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The British mountaineer Frank Smythe reached the valley in 1931 and made it famous. It became a national park of 87.50 sq km in 1982.
- The Pushpawati joins the Lakshman Ganga near Ghangaria to form the Bhyundar Ganga. The Bhyundar Ganga meets the Alaknanda at Govindghat.
- Visitors walk to the valley from Govindghat through Ghangaria. The Sikh shrine of Hemkund Sahib is in the neighbouring Hemkund valley.
- The wider World Heritage area has the snow leopard, the Asiatic black bear and the blue sheep, which is also called bharal.

ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve has two core zones, its most strictly protected parts. They are Valley of Flowers National Park and Nanda Devi National Park. The two parks together are one UNESCO World Heritage Site.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

14 January 2026 On 9 January 2026 a forest fire broke out in the Govindghat forest range. The spot was about 7 km in a straight line from the Valley of Flowers National Park. The fire was still burning five days later. The Indian Air Force sent an Mi-17 V5 helicopter to Joshimath. Officials said the park and Hemkund Sahib were safe.

4 June 2026 The park opened to visitors for its summer season on 1 June 2026. The forest department said that the valley would stay open until 31 October. It also said that more than 300 species of flowers grow there.

19 October 2026 In October 2026 Uttarakhand officials were reported to be studying how many visitors the area can support. The study is meant to shape a proposed eco-sensitive zone, a belt around the park where some activities are controlled. A draft notification for such a zone had appeared in November 2015.

PRELIMS TRAP

UNESCO listed Nanda Devi National Park as a World Heritage Site in 1988. It added the Valley of Flowers to the site in 2005. The Valley of Flowers became a national park earlier, in 1982.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2019 · Q18

Which one of the following National Parks lies completely in the temperate alpine zone?

(a) Manas National Park
(b) Namdapha National Park
(c) Neora Valley National Park
(d) Valley of Flowers National Park

UPSC KEY **(d) Valley of Flowers National Park.** The whole park is a high valley of alpine meadows, glaciers and snowy peaks. The other three parks also have forests at lower altitudes.

35 Asan Conservation Reserve

Dehradun · **Uttarakhand**

Ramsar site 2020 · 4.44 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Asan, where it meets the Yamuna	**Barrage reservoir on the river, in the Doon valley**	**Ruddy shelduck, red-crested pochard, Pallas's fish eagle**	**Uttarakhand's first Ramsar site (2020)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Asan is a Ramsar site and also a conservation reserve under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The two have the same boundary. The boundary between Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh forms the northern edge of the reserve.

Asan Conservation Reserve is a stretch of the Asan river in Dehradun district. It runs down to the point where the Asan meets the Yamuna, and it covers 444.4 hectares. The Asan Barrage was built across the river in 1967. Silt then collected above the barrage and helped to create habitats that suit birds. The Ramsar record lists 330 species of birds and 49 species of fish here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Asan became a Ramsar site on 21 July 2020, with the site number 2437. It was the first Ramsar site of Uttarakhand and is still the only one.
- Uttarakhand notified Asan as a conservation reserve on 5 August 2005, under section 36A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Counts at Asan have found more than 1% of the regional populations of two waterbirds. They are the ruddy shelduck and the red-crested pochard.
- Its birds include three Critically Endangered species: the red-headed vulture, the white-rumped vulture and Baer's pochard. Its fish include the endangered golden mahseer.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

5 August 2026 On 4 August 2026 the Supreme Court heard Himachal Pradesh on its order of 14 February 2024. The order bars mining within 10 km of Asan without permission. This must come from the National Board for Wildlife's Standing Committee, the Union Environment Ministry, or both. The court asked them if Himachal Pradesh has such a reserve.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

A conservation reserve and a Ramsar site are two different labels. The first comes from India's Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The second comes from the international Convention on Wetlands. Asan has both.

36 Nanda Devi National Park and Biosphere Reserve

Chamoli, Pithoragarh and Bageshwar · **Uttarakhand**

National park 1982 · 624.6 sq km | **Biosphere reserve** 1988 · 6,407.03 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Rishi Ganga	High Himalayan basin around Nanda Devi (7,817 m)	Snow leopard, Himalayan musk deer, bharal	India's second biosphere reserve (1988)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve has two core zones, its most strictly protected parts. They are Nanda Devi National Park and Valley of Flowers National Park. The two parks together are one UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Nanda Devi National Park lies in Chamoli district, around the 7,817-metre peak of Nanda Devi. UNESCO calls the peak India's second-highest mountain. The way into the park is through the gorge of the Rishi Ganga. UNESCO describes this gorge as one of the deepest in the world. The biosphere reserve around the park spreads over Chamoli, Pithoragarh and Bageshwar districts.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The national park was created on 6 September 1982 and covers 624.60 sq km. In 1983 the government banned mountaineering and the entry of people into the park.
- The biosphere reserve was notified on 18 January 1988. It is the second biosphere reserve of India.
- The Rishi Ganga drains the park and joins the Dhauli Ganga near Raini village. The Dhauli Ganga meets the Alaknanda at Vishnuprayag, near Joshimath.
- The biosphere reserve rises from about 1,800 metres to 7,817 metres. Its alpine meadows are called bugyals. Its animals include the snow leopard, the musk deer and the bharal.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

11 October 2026 In October 2026 the New Indian Express reported on a new monitoring campaign in Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve. The campaign found that areas at risk of landslides had nearly doubled since the 2015 survey. It also described a glacial lake forming at about 5,000 metres, behind a ridge of rock and soil left by a glacier.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Nanda Devi has two separate UNESCO labels. The national park became a World Heritage Site in 1988, and the site was extended in 2005. The biosphere reserve joined UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2004.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2008 · Q90

Also asked: 1995 · 2003 · 2022

Out of all the Biosphere Reserves in India, four have been recognized on the World Network by UNESCO. Which one of the following is not one of them?

(a) Gulf of Mannar (b) Kanchenjunga (c) Nanda Devi (d) Sunderbans

Since then: Since then: Khangchendzonga joined the network in 2018. India now has 13 biosphere reserves in it. The 13th, Cold Desert, joined on 27 September 2025.

ANSWER **(b) Kanchenjunga.** By 2008 the four Indian reserves in UNESCO's network were Nilgiri, Gulf of Mannar, Sunderbans and Nanda Devi. Kanchenjunga was not yet one of them.

37 Rajaji National Park and Tiger Reserve

Dehradun, Haridwar and Pauri Garhwal · **Uttarakhand**

Tiger reserve 2015 · 1,075.17 sq km | **National park** 1983 · 820 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ganga	Foothills of the Shivalik range, on both banks of the Ganga	Asian elephant, tiger, leopard	Named after C. Rajagopalachari, who was called Rajaji



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Rajaji National Park is the core of Rajaji Tiger Reserve. Reserve forest next to the park was added as the buffer in 2015. Rajaji is also part of Shivalik Elephant Reserve.

Rajaji lies in the Shivalik foothills, around Haridwar, Rishikesh and Dehradun. The Ganga flows through it and divides it into two parts. The western part has the Rajaji and Motichur areas, and the eastern part is called Chilla. Broadleaved forest is among its main habitats. Grassland, scrub and riverside plants also grow there. Elephants, tigers and leopards live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The park was formed in 1983 by joining three wildlife sanctuaries: Rajaji, Motichur and Chilla. It is named after the freedom fighter C. Rajagopalachari, who was known as Rajaji.
- Rajaji became a tiger reserve in 2015. Its core is 819.54 sq km. Its buffer, the outer zone around the core, is 255.63 sq km. The total is 1,075.17 sq km.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority calls the forest link between Rajaji and Corbett crucial. The Chilla–Motichur elephant corridor is on the national list of elephant corridors.
- Two tigers from Corbett were released in Rajaji in December 2020 and January 2021. This was the first such release in Uttarakhand. The 2022 tiger estimate found 54 tigers inside Rajaji Tiger Reserve.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

14 February 2026 On 12 February 2026 the Supreme Court allowed the 11.5 km Laldhang–Chillarkhal road in Uttarakhand to be paved. The road serves 18 remote villages. The court did not allow commercial vehicles on it. A 4.7 km stretch of the road is the only working wildlife corridor between the Rajaji and Corbett tiger reserves.

38

Shivalik Elephant Reserve

Dehradun, Haridwar, Pauri Garhwal, Tehri Garhwal, Nainital, Almora, Udham Singh Nagar and Champawat · **Uttarakhand**

Elephant reserve 2002 · 5,405 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ganga and Ramganga	Shivalik hills and the forests of the plains below them	Asian elephant, tiger	Only elephant reserve of Uttarakhand (2002)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Shivalik Elephant Reserve contains both tiger reserves of Uttarakhand, Corbett and Rajaji, with their national parks. It also contains Sonanadi and Nandhaur wildlife sanctuaries and Pawalgarh Conservation Reserve.

Shivalik Elephant Reserve covers the forests of southern Uttarakhand, from the Shivalik hills down to the plains. It includes eleven forest divisions, from Kalsi in the west to Champawat in the east. Its forests include several types of sal forest, with chir pine and oak higher up. The land rises from 202 metres to 2,249 metres.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Uttarakhand notified the reserve in October 2002 under the guidelines of Project Elephant. It covers about 5,405 sq km and is the only elephant reserve of the state.
- The 2021–25 national estimate found 1,792 wild elephants in Uttarakhand. In north-west India, elephants range as far west as the Yamuna river.
- Uttar Pradesh Elephant Reserve lies just to its south, in Saharanpur and Bijnor districts.

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Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True · ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

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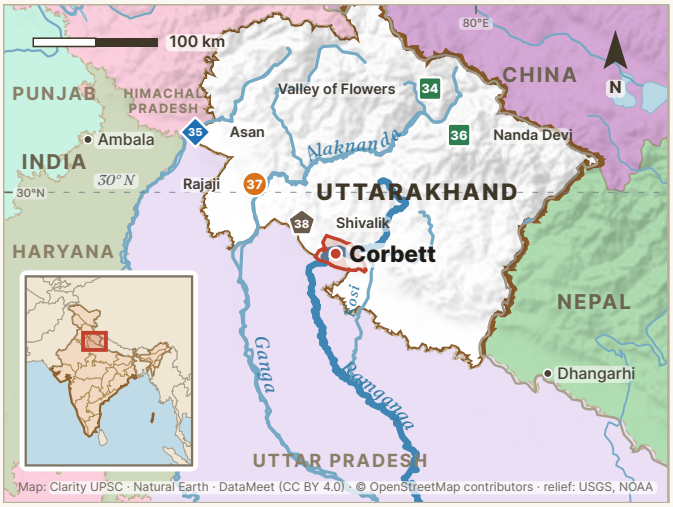
39 Corbett National Park and Tiger Reserve

Nainital, Pauri Garhwal and Almora · **Uttarakhand**

Tiger reserve 1973 · 1,288.31 sq km | **National park** 1936 · 520.82 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ramganga	Lower Shivalik hills and the Bhabar	Tiger, Asian elephant, gharial	India's first national park (1936)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Corbett National Park and Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary form the core of Corbett Tiger Reserve. The reserve is also part of Shivalik Elephant Reserve. The National Tiger Conservation Authority lists the Amanagarh buffer with Corbett. This area of 80.60 sq km lies in Uttar Pradesh.

Corbett lies in the foothills of the Himalaya, in the lower Shivalik hills and the Bhabar. The Bhabar is a belt of boulders and sand, and water sinks into it easily. The Ramganga, the Sonanadi and the Palain flow through the valleys. The forest is mainly sal and mixed forest. The open grasslands are called chaurs. Tigers, elephants, leopards and gharials live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Corbett began in 1936 as Hailey National Park, the first national park of India. It was later named Ramganga National Park. In the 1950s it became Corbett National Park, after Jim Corbett.
- Project Tiger was launched at Corbett on 1 April 1973. Corbett was one of the first nine tiger reserves.
- The 2022 tiger estimate found 260 tigers inside Corbett Tiger Reserve. This was the highest number in any tiger reserve of India.
- The tiger reserve covers 1,288.31 sq km. Its core is 821.99 sq km, and the buffer around the core is 466.32 sq km. Part of the core lies under the reservoir of the Kalagarh Dam.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

6 May 2026 In early May 2026 a tiger named Vikram died of old age at the Dhela Rescue Centre of Corbett Tiger Reserve. He was about 20 years old. He had been captured in the Dhikala area in 2019, after three forest workers were killed there.

Full story

28 August 2026 On 26 August 2026 Bhola, a male tiger about nine years old, died at the Dhela Rescue Centre. He was being treated for injuries. Visitors knew him from the Phato tourism zone of the Terai West Forest Division. Samples were sent for tests to find the cause of death.

PRELIMS TRAP

The Ramganga flows through Corbett. The Ganga flows through Rajaji, the other tiger reserve of Uttarakhand. A 2013 Prelims question matched Corbett National Park with the Ganga. That match was wrong.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2013 · Q32

Consider the following pairs: National Park : River flowing through the Park 1. Corbett National Park : Ganga 2. Kaziranga National Park : Manas 3. Silent Valley National Park : Kaveri Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

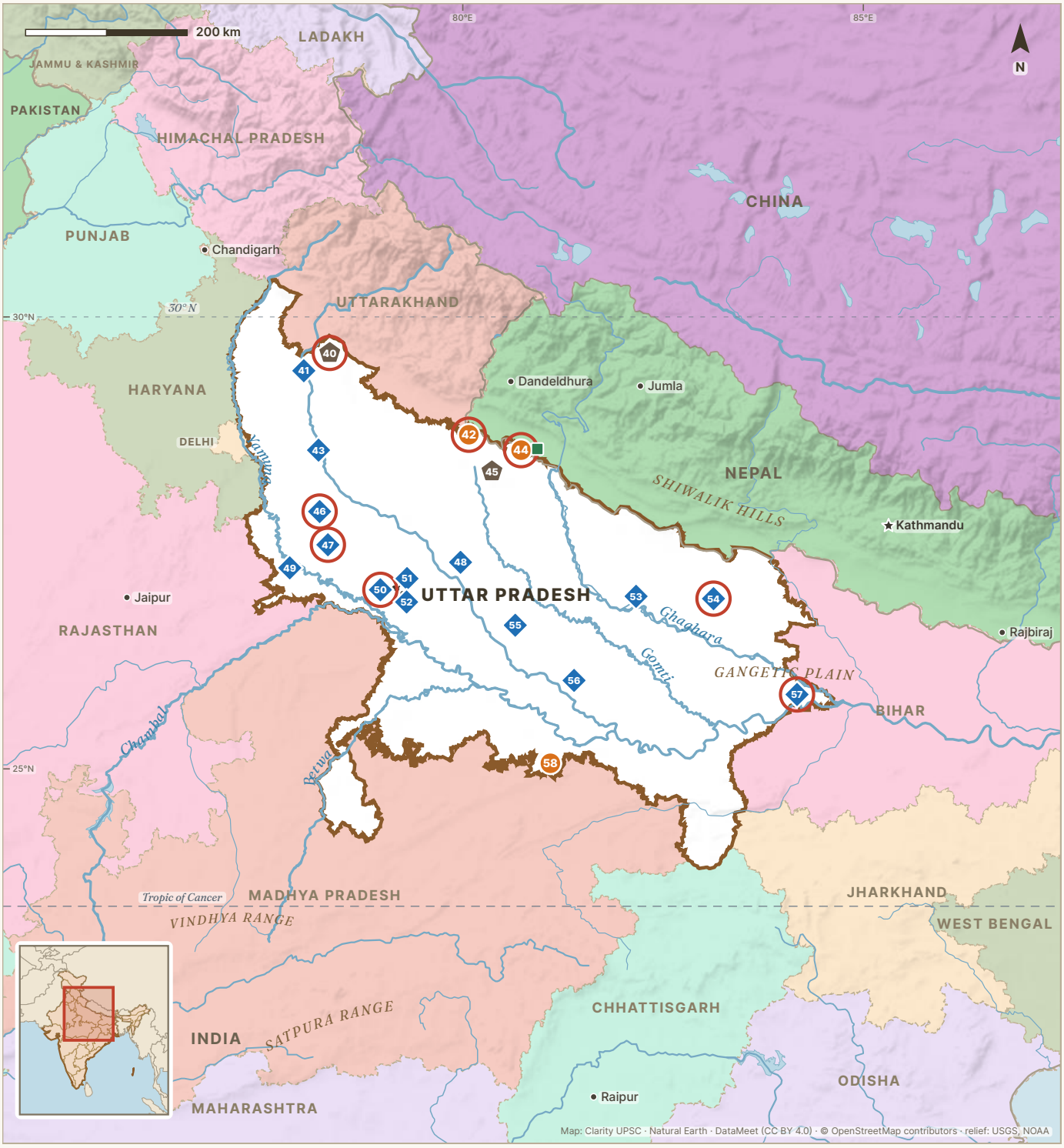
(a) 1 and 2 (b) 3 only (c) 1 and 3 (d) None

UPSC KEY (d) None. The Ramganga flows through Corbett, the Diphlu through Kaziranga and the Kunthipuzha through Silent Valley. So none of the three pairs is correct.

Uttar Pradesh

3 tiger reserves · 1 national park · 14 Ramsar sites · 2 elephant reserves

Uttar Pradesh is mostly a farmed plain of the Ganga and its tributaries. Dudhwa and Pilibhit tiger reserves lie in the Terai, the low plain along the Nepal border, inside Terai Elephant Reserve. The Shivalik forests of Saharanpur and the forests of Bijnor form Uttar Pradesh Elephant Reserve. Ranipur, the third tiger reserve, is in Bundelkhand. The state has 14 Ramsar sites, and only Tamil Nadu has more.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

Uttar Pradesh: its areas

40 **Uttar Pradesh Elephant Reserve** — Saharanpur and Bijnor — 60

41 **Haiderpur** — Bijnor and Muzaffarnagar — 61

42 **Pilibhit** — Pilibhit and Shahjahanpur — 62

43 **Upper Ganga River** — Bulandshahr, Amroha and other districts along the river — 63

44 **Dudhwa** — Lakhimpur Kheri, Bahraich, Pilibhit and Shahjahanpur — 64

45 **Terai** — Lakhimpur Kheri, Pilibhit, Bahraich and Shahjahanpur — 65

46 **Sheikha Jheel** — Aligarh — 66

47 **Patna Bird Sanctuary** — Etah — 67

48 **Sandi** — Hardoi — 68

49 **Sur Sarovar** — Agra — 69

50 **Sauj Jheel** — Mainpuri — 70

51 **Saman** — Mainpuri — 71

52 **Sarsai Nawar** — Etawah — 72

53 **Parvati Arga** — Gonda — 73

54 **Bakhira** — Sant Kabir Nagar — 74

55 **Nawabganj** — Unnao — 75

56 **Samaspur** — Raebareli — 76

57 **Surha Tal** — Ballia — 77

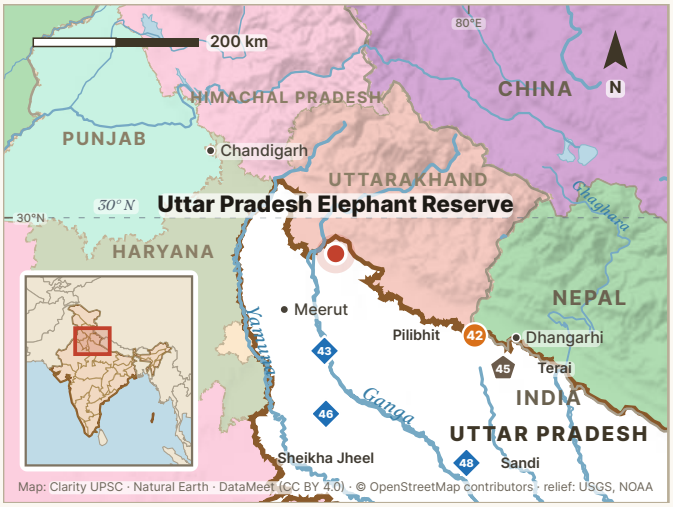
58 **Ranipur** — Chitrakoot — 78

40 Uttar Pradesh Elephant Reserve

Saharanpur and Bijnor · **Uttar Pradesh**

Elephant reserve 2009 · 744 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Between the Yamuna and the Ganga, and east of the Ganga	Shivalik hills and the forest plain below them	Asian elephant, tiger, leopard	First elephant reserve of Uttar Pradesh (2009)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The reserve borders Shivalik Elephant Reserve of Uttarakhand in the north. The atlas of elephant reserves names Amangarh as the tiger reserve inside it. The National Tiger Conservation Authority lists the Amangarh buffer of Corbett at 80.60 sq km.

Uttar Pradesh Elephant Reserve lies in the north-west of the state, in Saharanpur and Bijnor districts. It has two separate blocks, with Uttarakhand between them. The western block is the Shivalik forest of Saharanpur. The eastern block is the Najibabad and Amangarh forest of Bijnor. Dry sal forest and mixed deciduous forest grow here. The land rises from 213 to 919 metres.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Uttar Pradesh notified the reserve on 9 September 2009 under the guidelines of Project Elephant. It covers 744 sq km and was the first elephant reserve of the state.
- About 55% of the reserve is forest. The atlas of elephant reserves names its five forest ranges: Barkala, Shakumbhari, Mohand, Najibabad and Amangarh.
- The 2021–25 elephant estimate treats the elephants of the Shivalik Forest Division and Rajaji Tiger Reserve as one population. It groups the Bijnor forests with the Gohri and Chilla ranges of Rajaji.
- Amangarh, in Bijnor, became a buffer, or outer zone, of Corbett Tiger Reserve in 2012. The 2022 tiger estimate identified 20 tigers there with camera traps.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

17 June 2026 In June 2026 the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department extended the eco-tourism season at Amangarh, in Bijnor district, by 15 days. The season was due to end on 15 June, and the new closing date was 30 June.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Shivalik Elephant Reserve is in Uttarakhand. The reserve in the Shivalik forests of Saharanpur is named Uttar Pradesh Elephant Reserve. Some news reports call it the Shivalik reserve. The second elephant reserve of Uttar Pradesh is Terai.

41 Haiderpur Wetland

Bijnor and Muzaffarnagar · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2021 · 69.08 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ganga, with the Solani	**Floodplain wetland above the Madhya Ganga Barrage**	**Swamp deer, gharial, greylag goose, bar-headed goose**	**Human-made wetland inside Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Haiderpur is a Ramsar site, and it lies wholly inside Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary. Upper Ganga River, another Ramsar site, is a separate stretch of the same river further downstream. It runs from Brijghat to Narora.

Haiderpur lies on the floodplain of the Ganga, in Muzaffarnagar and Bijnor districts. It formed in 1984, when the Madhya Ganga Barrage was built about 10 km west of Bijnor city. Water from the Ganga flows back into it in the monsoon and stays until the end of February. It has a deep reservoir, shallow flooded land and stretches of the Ganga and the Solani.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Haiderpur became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 13 April 2021. Its site number is 2463.
- The wetland covers 6,908 hectares. It is the second-largest Ramsar site of Uttar Pradesh.
- More than 300 species of birds are recorded here, and the site supports more than 25,000 waterbirds. More than 1% of the populations of the greylag goose and the bar-headed goose use it regularly.
- The northern subspecies of the swamp deer takes refuge here during its seasonal movement away from floods. The Critically Endangered gharial and the Endangered hog deer are also found here.

PRELIMS TRAP

Haiderpur lies on a natural floodplain. Still, the Ramsar record lists it as a human-made wetland, because a barrage created it in 1984. The record calls this barrage both the Madhya Ganga Barrage and the Bijnor Barrage.

42 Pilibhit Tiger Reserve

Pilibhit and Shahjahanpur · **Uttar Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 2014 · 730.25 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Sharda and Chuka. The Gomti rises here.	**Terai sal forest, tall grassland and swamps**	**Tiger, swamp deer, Bengal florican, hispid hare**	**Tiger reserve since 2014, linked with Shuklaphanta in Nepal**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Pilibhit Wildlife Sanctuary is the core of the tiger reserve. Pilibhit Tiger Reserve is part of Terai Elephant Reserve, which Uttar Pradesh notified in 2022.

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve lies in the Terai of northern Uttar Pradesh, beside Nepal and Uttarakhand. It is part of the Terai Arc Landscape. Sal forest covers almost 76% of the reserve. It also has tall grassland and swamps, which the rivers flood from time to time. The Sharda Sagar Dam, 22 km long, lies on its boundary. Tigers, leopards, swamp deer and hog deer live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Uttar Pradesh notified the reserve on 9 June 2014. Its core, the inner zone, covers 602.79 sq km, and its buffer, the outer zone, covers 127.45 sq km.
- The Gomti, a tributary of the Ganga, rises at Gomat Taal, also called Fulhar Jheel, near Madhotanda in Pilibhit district. The reserve is also part of the catchment of the Sharda.
- Forest corridors link Pilibhit with Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. They also link it with the Surai range of Uttarakhand.
- The 2022 tiger estimate identified 63 tigers in the reserve with camera traps. The Bengal florican and the hispid hare, two rare animals of tall grassland, are also recorded here.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

2 March 2026 The Union Environment Ministry's draft notification dated 13 February 2026 proposed an eco-sensitive zone around the reserve. It would reach up to 2 km and include 230 villages. On the night of 28 February 2026 an adult male tiger was found dead near the Dhamela watchtower. Officials said the post-mortem would show the cause.

22 September 2026 On 20 September 2026 the field director of Pilibhit Tiger Reserve announced a longer tourism season. It would run from 1 November to 30 June. The season had generally run from 15 November to 15 June.

PRELIMS TRAP

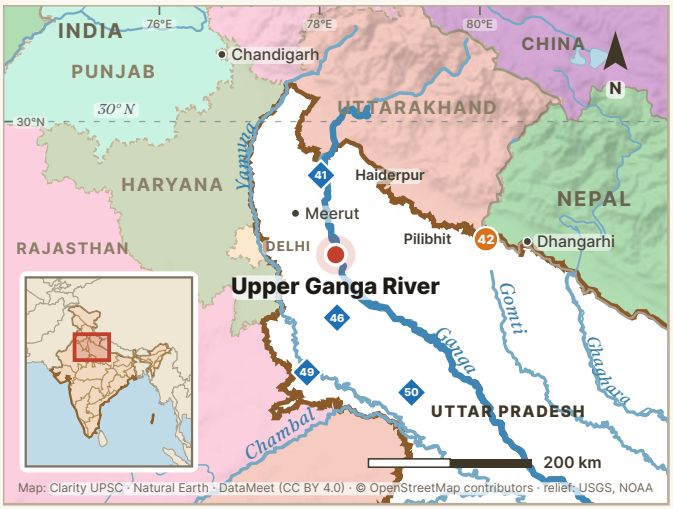
Pilibhit connects with Shuklaphanta National Park of Nepal through the Lagga-Bagga forest. Katarniaghat, in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, connects with Bardia National Park of Nepal. Valmiki Tiger Reserve of Bihar borders Chitwan National Park of Nepal.

43 Upper Ganga River (Brijghat to Narora)

Bulandshahr, Amroha and other districts along the river · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2005 · 265.9 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ganga	Shallow river with deep pools, on the Ganga plain	Ganges river dolphin, gharial, mugger, softshell turtle	First Ramsar site of Uttar Pradesh (2005) and its largest



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Upper Ganga River is on only one list, the Ramsar list of wetlands of international importance. Haiderpur Wetland, another Ramsar site, lies upstream on the same river, at the barrage near Bijnor.

The Upper Ganga River site is a stretch of the Ganga in western Uttar Pradesh, from Brijghat down to Narora. The stretch is about 85 km long. The river here is shallow, with a few deep pools and some reservoirs above the barrages. Its banks are sandy and muddy. Many ghats along it are places of pilgrimage, where people bathe and cremate the dead.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Upper Ganga River became a Ramsar site on 8 November 2005, with the site number 1574. It covers 26,590 hectares and is the first and the largest Ramsar site of Uttar Pradesh.
- The Ramsar record lists the Ganges river dolphin, the gharial, the mugger crocodile and otters. It also lists 82 species of fish and 12 species of turtles, six of them endangered.
- More than 100 species of birds are recorded on the stretch. A survey of 2002 reported more than 20,000 birds, and the coot was the most common of them.
- The Ramsar record of 2004 says that the stretch had no protected area then. It lists sewage, farm run-off, mass bathing and large-scale fishing among the threats.

PRELIMS TRAP

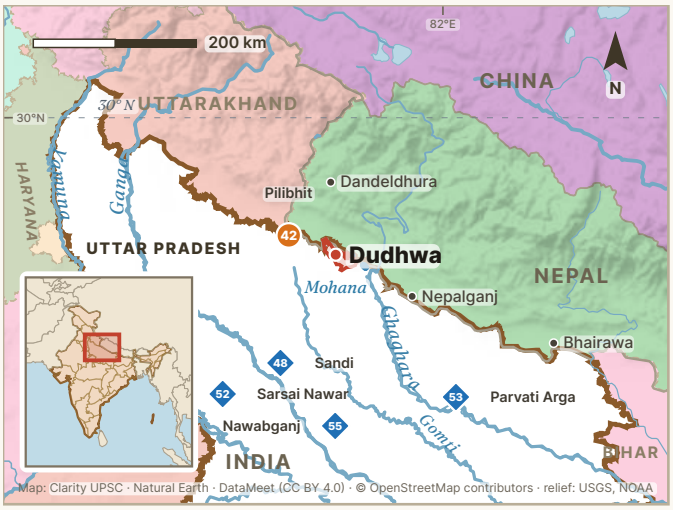
Upper Ganga River is a Ramsar site of Uttar Pradesh, on the plains. The only Ramsar site of Uttarakhand is Asan Conservation Reserve.

44 Dudhwa National Park and Tiger Reserve

Lakhimpur Kheri, Bahraich, Pilibhit and Shahjahanpur · **Uttar Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 1987 · 2,201.77 sq km | **National park** 1977 · 490 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Mohana, Suheli, Sharda, and Girwa in Katarniaghat	**Terai plain of sal forest, tall grassland and marsh**	**Tiger, greater one-horned rhinoceros, swamp deer, gharial**	**Only national park of Uttar Pradesh. Rhinoceros brought back in 1984.**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Dudhwa National Park, Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary and Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary together form the core of Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. Katarniaghat became a sanctuary in 1976 and joined Project Tiger in 2003. The tiger reserve is also part of Terai Elephant Reserve.

Dudhwa lies in the Terai of northern Uttar Pradesh, along the Nepal border. The national park, in Lakhimpur Kheri district, is a wide alluvial plain, made of soil laid down by rivers. It lies between the Mohana in the north and the Suheli in the south. Sal forest, tall grassland and marshes cover it. Tigers, elephants, swamp deer and the greater one-horned rhinoceros live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sonaripur Sanctuary was created in 1958, mainly to protect the swamp deer. It grew into Dudhwa Sanctuary in 1968 and became Dudhwa National Park in 1977. Dudhwa joined Project Tiger in 1987–88.
- The core of the tiger reserve, its inner zone, covers 1,093.79 sq km. The buffer, the outer zone, covers 1,107.98 sq km.
- Rhinoceroses were brought back to Dudhwa in 1984. Uttar Pradesh, Assam and West Bengal are the three states of India that have wild greater one-horned rhinoceroses.
- The Girwa river in Katarniaghat has gharials and Ganges river dolphins. The 2022 tiger estimate identified 135 tigers in the reserve with camera traps.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

7 March 2026 The Union Environment Ministry's draft notification dated 16 February 2026 proposed a one-kilometre eco-sensitive zone around the reserve, with 178 villages. On 4 March 2026 Rajeshwari, a female rhinoceros, died in a tiger attack at the Amha pool. The pool is in Rhino Rehabilitation Area-1 of the South Sonaripur range.

26 May 2026 On 25 May 2026 a tiger killed a woman who was collecting firewood near Amritpur village, in Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary. The forest department then increased its watch over the area.

13 July 2026 Dudhwa's fourth rhinoceros census was held from 25 to 27 June 2026 and reported in July. It counted 53 greater one-horned rhinoceroses: 17 adult males, 25 adult females and 11 calves. Eleven of the 53 live outside the two fenced areas.

PRELIMS TRAP

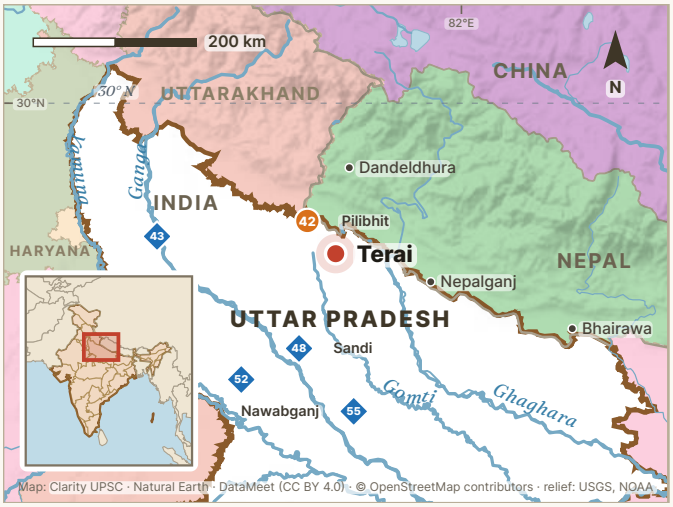
Dudhwa National Park, of 490 sq km, is one part of Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, of 2,201.77 sq km. The park lies in Lakhimpur Kheri district. Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, also in the core of the reserve, lies in Bahraich district.

45 Terai Elephant Reserve

Lakhimpur Kheri, Pilibhit, Bahraich and Shahjahanpur · **Uttar Pradesh**

Elephant reserve 2022 · 3,072.36 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Sharda, Mohana, Suheli and Girwa	**Terai forest and grassland from Pilibhit to Katarniaghat**	**Asian elephant, tiger, greater one-horned rhinoceros**	**India's 33rd elephant reserve (2022), the latest one**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Terai Elephant Reserve contains two tiger reserves, Dudhwa and Pilibhit. It also contains Dudhwa National Park and the Kishanpur and Katarniaghat wildlife sanctuaries.

Terai Elephant Reserve covers the Terai forests of northern Uttar Pradesh, next to the forests of Nepal. About 80% of the reserve is forest. Besides two tiger reserves, it includes the Gola and Mohammadi ranges of the South Kheri forests. Elephants move between these forests and Shuklaphanta and Bardia in Nepal.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Uttar Pradesh notified the reserve on 29 December 2022. It covers 3,072.358 sq km in four districts and is the second elephant reserve of the state.
- Terai is the 33rd elephant reserve of India and the latest one. Agasthyamalai in Tamil Nadu became the 32nd in August 2022.
- Elephants from Nepal began to come to these forests around 1960. Since 1991 they have lived in and around Dudhwa through the year.
- The all-India elephant estimate of 2021–25 gives 257 wild elephants for Uttar Pradesh. The report describes them as spread from Pilibhit Tiger Reserve to Dudhwa Tiger Reserve.

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46 Sheikha Jheel Bird Sanctuary

Aligarh · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2026 · 0.4 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
No river. The Upper Ganga Canal flows beside it.	**Small freshwater lake with dry deciduous forest around it**	**Bar-headed goose, painted stork, sarus crane**	**India's 99th Ramsar site and the smallest in Uttar Pradesh**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sheikha Jheel is a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance. It is also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the two have the same boundary. It is an Important Bird Area as well.

Sheikha Jheel Bird Sanctuary lies in Koil tehsil of Aligarh district, in western Uttar Pradesh. It is a freshwater lake that has water through the year. Dry deciduous forest surrounds it. The lake formed after the Upper Ganga Canal was built beside it in the 1850s. The canal marks the eastern boundary of the site. The Ramsar record lists 249 species of birds here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Ramsar List gives 19 January 2026 as the date of designation and 2594 as the site number.
- The site covers 40.309 hectares and is the smallest Ramsar site of Uttar Pradesh. The state notified the bird sanctuary on 8 February 2016.
- Three winter counts, from 2022–23 to 2024–25, gave an average of 21,218 waterbirds. The lake is a winter stop on the Central Asian Flyway for the bar-headed goose, the painted stork and many ducks.
- Two Endangered turtles live here, the Indian softshell turtle and the spotted pond turtle. The sarus crane, the river tern and the common pochard are among its Vulnerable birds.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

22 April 2026 In April 2026 the Union Environment Minister, Bhupender Yadav, announced that Sheikha Jheel Bird Sanctuary in Aligarh had become a Ramsar site. It was India's 99th Ramsar site and the 12th of Uttar Pradesh.

PRELIMS TRAP

Sheikha Jheel lies beside the Upper Ganga Canal. Upper Ganga River is a different Ramsar site, a stretch of the river itself between Brijghat and Narora. The Press Information Bureau spells the lake Shekha Jheel, and the Ramsar List spells it Sheikha Jheel.

47 Patna Bird Sanctuary

Etah · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2025 · 1.09 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
No river. It lies in the Ganga basin.	**Marsh, woodland and grassland among farmland**	**Gadwall, greylag goose, oriental darter, sarus crane**	**One of two sites that took India's count to 98 (January 2026)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Patna is a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, and a bird sanctuary. The two have the same boundary. It is also an Important Bird Area.

Patna Bird Sanctuary lies in Jalesar tehsil of Etah district, in western Uttar Pradesh. It is a small site of 108.86 hectares, with freshwater marsh, woodland and grassland. Farmland surrounds it. The Ramsar record lists 178 species of birds and 252 species of plants here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Ramsar List gives 4 December 2025 as the date of designation and 2589 as the site number.
- Uttar Pradesh notified the sanctuary on 22 December 1990 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The waterbird counts of 2021 to 2023 gave an average of 48,339 birds. The count of 2023 was the highest of the three, at 55,585.
- More than 1% of the regional populations of four birds use the site. They are the gadwall, the greylag goose, the knob-billed duck and the oriental darter.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

1 February 2026 At the end of January 2026, just before World Wetlands Day, the Union Environment Minister, Bhupender Yadav, announced two new Ramsar sites. They were Patna Bird Sanctuary in Etah, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhari-Dhand in Kutch, Gujarat. The two additions took India's total to 98.

PRELIMS TRAP

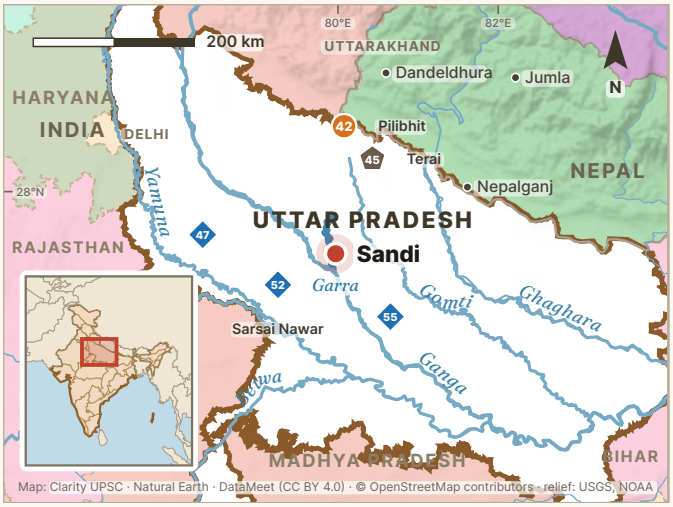
Patna Bird Sanctuary is in Etah district of western Uttar Pradesh. A village named Patna lies on its northern side. Patna, the capital of Bihar, is a different place.

48 Sandi Bird Sanctuary

Hardoi · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2019 · 3.09 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Garra, in the Ganga basin	Freshwater marsh of the Indo-Gangetic plain	Sarus crane, red-crested pochard, common teal	A resident flock of about 200 sarus cranes



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sandi is a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance. It is also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Ramsar record says that the site overlaps with the boundaries of the sanctuary. It is an Important Bird Area as well.

Sandi Bird Sanctuary is a freshwater marsh in Bilgram tehsil of Hardoi district, Uttar Pradesh. It lies about 1 km from Sandi town. It is typical of the wetlands of the Indo-Gangetic plain. Most of its water comes from the monsoon rain, and at times the Garra river floods into it. The marsh is rich in water plants, and thousands of ducks and geese spend the winter here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sandi became a Ramsar site on 26 September 2019, with the site number 2409. It covers 308.54 hectares, which is about 3.09 sq km.
- A flock of about 200 sarus cranes lives in the sanctuary through the year. The sarus crane is Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.
- More than 40,000 waterfowl were counted in 2018. The site has more than 1% of the South Asian populations of the common teal, the red-crested pochard and the ferruginous duck.
- The Ramsar record names drought as a threat. In 2014 and 2015 the sanctuary dried out, and its waterbird numbers fell sharply.

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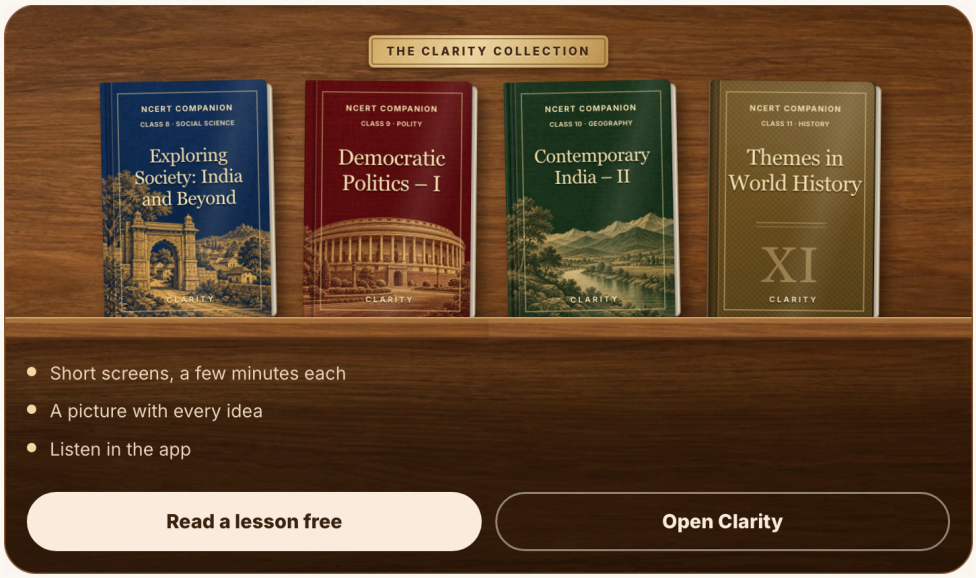

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49 Sur Sarovar (Keetham Lake)

Agra · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2020 · 4.31 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Yamuna, through the Agra Canal	**Human-made reservoir on the Yamuna floodplain**	**Greylag goose, sarus crane, greater spotted eagle**	**Also called Keetham Lake, with a temple complex of Surdas**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sur Sarovar is a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance. It is the water area of Sur Sarovar Bird Sanctuary. It is also an Important Bird Area.

Sur Sarovar, also called Keetham Lake, is a human-made reservoir in Agra district of Uttar Pradesh. It lies 20 km from Agra city, beside the Yamuna, on the highway between Delhi and Mathura. The British built it to supply water to Agra in summer. Its water comes from the Yamuna through a branch of the Agra Canal. More than 30,000 waterbirds visit it every year.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sur Sarovar became a Ramsar site on 21 August 2020, with the site number 2440. The site covers 431 hectares, which is 4.31 sq km.
- A temple complex of Surdas, the blind Bhakti poet of the 16th century, stands in the sanctuary.
- The site has more than 1% of the South Asian population of the greylag goose. The sarus crane and the greater spotted eagle, both Vulnerable, are among its threatened birds.
- The reservoir has more than 60 species of fish. It also supplies water to the Mathura oil refinery.

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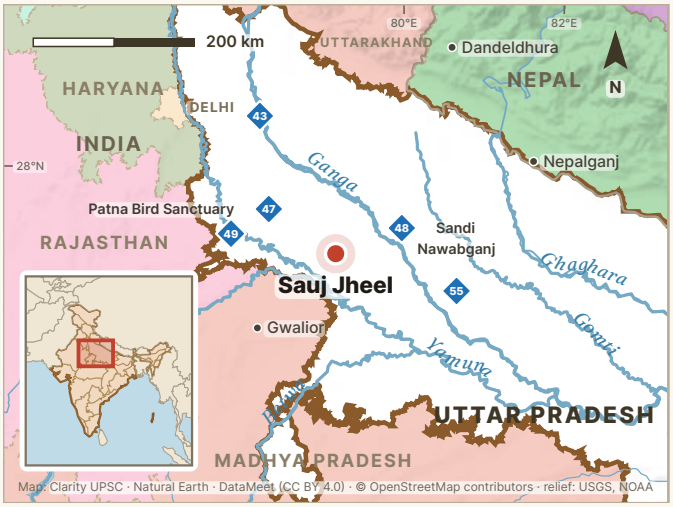
50 Sauj Jheel

Mainpuri · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2026 · 0.41 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Yamuna basin, on the Ganga plain	**Shallow floodplain lake among farmland**	**Sarus crane, greater spotted eagle, great white pelican**	**Uttar Pradesh's 14th and newest Ramsar site (2026)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sauj Jheel is on only one list, the Ramsar list of wetlands of international importance. The Ramsar record shows no sanctuary status for it. BirdLife International lists it as an Important Bird Area. Its extra water drains into Saman Bird Sanctuary, a Ramsar site about 3 km away.

Sauj Jheel is a shallow lake in Mainpuri district of Uttar Pradesh, on the floodplain of the Ganga. Farmland and villages surround it. In the monsoon, rain and water running off the fields fill the lake. Much of it often dries between April and June. The Ramsar record says that it regularly supports more than 30,000 waterbirds.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sauj Jheel became a Ramsar site on 18 June 2026, with the site number 2603. It covers 40.759 hectares, which is about 0.41 sq km.
- The Ramsar record lists 43 species of waterbirds, 19 species of fish and 7 species of reptiles at the lake. Painted storks, Asian openbills and black-headed ibises gather here in large numbers.
- Sarus cranes and black-necked storks breed at the lake. Great white pelicans, greylag geese, bar-headed geese and ruddy shelducks spend the winter there.
- The spotted pond turtle and the Indian peacock softshell turtle of the lake are Endangered on the IUCN Red List. The sarus crane and the greater spotted eagle are Vulnerable.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

16 October 2026 On 15 October 2026 India announced Sauj Jheel as a Ramsar site, together with Sukhna Wetland of Chandigarh. The number of Ramsar sites in India rose to 103. The Ramsar record of the lake was published the same day. It proposed a seasonal ban on fishing, limits on fine-mesh nets and control over cattle entering the wetland.

Full story

51 Saman Bird Sanctuary

Mainpuri · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2019 · 5.26 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Yamuna basin, on the Ganga plain	Seasonal oxbow lake among farmland	Sarus crane, greylag goose, greater spotted eagle	Bird sanctuary of 1990, notified for its sarus cranes



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Saman is a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance. It is also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the whole sanctuary is the Ramsar site. It is an Important Bird Area as well. Sauj Jheel, another Ramsar site, lies about 3 km to its west.

Saman Bird Sanctuary lies near Saman village in Karhal tehsil of Mainpuri district, Uttar Pradesh. It is a seasonal oxbow lake on the floodplain of the Ganga. An oxbow lake is a curved lake that a river leaves behind when it changes its course. Most of the water comes from the monsoon rain of July and August. More than 50,000 waterbirds regularly use the lake.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Saman became a Ramsar site on 2 December 2019, with the site number 2413. It covers 526.3 hectares, which is about 5.26 sq km.
- Uttar Pradesh notified the sanctuary on 23 May 1990. The Mainpuri district website says that the aim was to protect the large population of sarus cranes in the area.
- The Ramsar record lists 187 species of birds here. In winter the lake has more than 1% of the South Asian population of the greylag goose.
- Three to five pairs of sarus cranes breed in the sanctuary. The sarus crane and the greater spotted eagle are both Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

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52 Sarsai Nawar Jheel

Etawah · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2019 · 1.61 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Yamuna basin, on the Ganga plain	**Permanent marsh among cultivated fields**	**Sarus crane, painted stork, white-rumped vulture**	**Roost of the largest flock of sarus cranes in the region**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sarsai Nawar Jheel is on only one list, the Ramsar list of wetlands of international importance. BirdLife International lists it as an Important Bird Area.

Sarsai Nawar Jheel is a permanent marsh in Takha tehsil of Etawah district, Uttar Pradesh. It is a natural hollow in the Indo-Gangetic plain, and rain water fills it in the monsoon. Cultivated fields surround the marsh. Nearly 400 sarus cranes gather here to roost, or rest for the night. The Ramsar record calls them the largest flock of this crane in the region.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sarsai Nawar Jheel became a Ramsar site on 19 September 2019, with the site number 2411. It covers 161.27 hectares, which is about 1.61 sq km.
- The Ramsar record says that the wetland takes its name from the sarus crane. This large crane does not migrate, and it is Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.
- Three storks feed here through the year: the painted stork, the woolly-necked stork and the black-necked stork. The Critically Endangered white-rumped vulture is also recorded.
- The Hajari Mahadev temple stands at the wetland, and thousands of pilgrims visit it every year. The Ramsar record says that farming at the site helps to keep the habitat of the waterbirds.

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53 Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary

Gonda · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2019 · 7.22 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Saryu basin	Two oxbow lakes in the Terai plain	Sarus crane, white-rumped vulture, Indian vulture	Twin lakes, Parvati and Arga, about 1.5 km apart



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Parvati Arga is a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance. It is also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the whole sanctuary is the Ramsar site. It is an Important Bird Area as well. The Sohelwa Wildlife Division manages the sanctuary.

Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary lies in Tarabganj tehsil of Gonda district, Uttar Pradesh, in the Terai plain. It has two horseshoe-shaped oxbow lakes, Parvati and Arga, about 1.5 km apart. An oxbow lake is a curved lake left by a river. The rain-fed lakes have water through the year. The Ramsar record calls it one of the largest natural floodplain wetlands of the state.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Parvati Arga became a Ramsar site on 2 December 2019, with the site number 2416. It covers 722 hectares, which is 7.22 sq km.
- Uttar Pradesh notified the bird sanctuary on 23 May 1990. It lies about 22 km from Ayodhya. The Ramsar record says that the site supports more than 200 sarus cranes.
- Three threatened vultures have been recorded here. The white-rumped vulture and the Indian vulture are Critically Endangered, and the Egyptian vulture is Endangered.
- The Ramsar record says that annual counts have found more than 100,000 birds. It names the water hyacinth, an invasive plant, as a threat to the lakes.

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All 74 figures, the release calendar, and the Budget and Economic Survey numbers.

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54 Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary

Sant Kabir Nagar · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2021 · 28.94 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ami flows in, and the outflow reaches the Rapti	**Freshwater marsh in the Terai plain**	**Sarus crane, purple swamphen, red-crested pochard**	**Largest natural floodplain wetland of eastern Uttar Pradesh**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Bakhira is a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance. It is also a wildlife sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the whole Ramsar site lies inside it. It is an Important Bird Area as well.

Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary is a freshwater marsh in Sant Kabir Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh. It lies to the west of the Rapti river. The land is flat Terai country, about 100 metres above sea level. Rain and the Ami river supply the water, so the marsh has water through the year. Water flows out of the marsh into the Rapti through the Churna nala, a stream.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Bakhira became a Ramsar site on 29 June 2021, with the site number 2465. It covers 2,894 hectares, which is 28.94 sq km.
- The Ramsar record calls Bakhira the largest natural floodplain wetland of eastern Uttar Pradesh. An eco-sensitive zone, a protective belt, extends up to one kilometre around the sanctuary.
- More than 25 species of birds that migrate along the Central Asian Flyway spend the winter here. They include the red-crested pochard, the northern pintail and the northern shoveller.
- Sarus cranes gather at the marsh, and the purple swamphen breeds there. The Ramsar record also lists 119 species of plants and 45 species of fish.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

11 September 2026 Scientists of the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences studied the sediments of Bakhira Lake, the layers that settle on its bed. Their findings were reported on 10 September 2026. The study traced the Indian summer monsoon over about 25,000 years. The monsoon was weaker in cold periods such as the Younger Dryas.

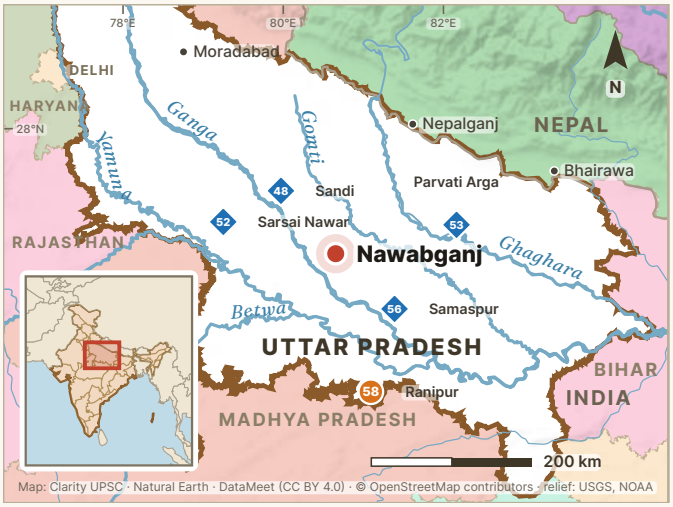
Full story

55 Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary

Unnao · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2019 · 2.25 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ganga basin, with water from the Sharda Canal	**Shallow marsh among plantations and fields**	**Pallas's fish eagle, Egyptian vulture, lesser adjutant**	**Renamed after Chandra Shekhar Azad in 2015**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nawabganj is a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance. It is also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the whole sanctuary is the Ramsar site. It is an Important Bird Area as well.

Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary is a shallow marsh in Hasanganj tehsil of Unnao district, Uttar Pradesh. It lies about 45 km from Lucknow, on the highway to Kanpur. Plantations and fields surround the marsh. Water running off the land in the monsoon fills it, and the Sharda Canal adds more. About 25,000 waterbirds are regularly recorded here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Nawabganj became a Ramsar site on 19 September 2019, with the site number 2412. It covers 224.6 hectares, which is about 2.25 sq km.
- The Ramsar record lists 220 species of resident and migratory birds. It names the Egyptian vulture and Pallas's fish eagle as Endangered species of the site.
- The Ramsar record says that protection and tree planting have increased the wildlife. The golden jackal and the jungle cat are now present.
- The Ramsar record names the water hyacinth, an invasive water plant, as a threat to the marsh.

PRELIMS TRAP

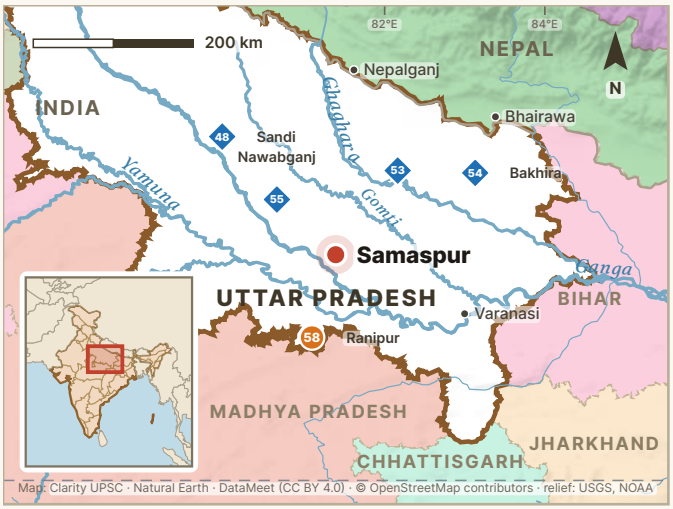
The Ramsar List calls this site Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary. In 2015 the sanctuary was renamed Shaheed Chandra Shekhar Azad Bird Sanctuary. Both names refer to the same wetland in Unnao district.

56 Samaspur Bird Sanctuary

Raebareli · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2019 · 7.99 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ganga basin, with water from the Sharda Canal	**Lowland marsh of six connected lakes**	**Common pochard, Pallas's fish eagle, black-necked stork**	**Bird sanctuary since 1987, with six connected lakes**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Samaspur is a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance. It is also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the whole sanctuary is the Ramsar site. It is an Important Bird Area as well.

Samaspur Bird Sanctuary is a lowland marsh in Salon tehsil of Raebareli district, Uttar Pradesh. Six connected lakes form an S-shaped wetland. A seventh lake, Bissaiya, lies close by. The wetland has water through the year. It receives water from the Sharda Canal and from monsoon run-off. More than 75,000 waterbirds can be seen here in winter.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Samaspur became a Ramsar site on 3 October 2019, with the site number 2415. It covers 799.371 hectares, which is about 7.99 sq km.
- The bird sanctuary was set up in 1987.
- More than 1% of the South Asian population of the common pochard, a Vulnerable duck, is found here. More than 250 species of resident and migratory birds have been recorded.
- At least 46 species of fish use the wetland. Twelve of them move between the rivers and the wetland.

PRELIMS TRAP

Saman and Samaspur are two different Ramsar sites of Uttar Pradesh with similar names. Saman Bird Sanctuary is in Mainpuri district. Samaspur Bird Sanctuary is in Raebareli district.

57 Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary (Surha Tal)

Ballia · **Uttar Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2026 · 34.32 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ganga, through the Katahar nala	**Floodplain lake between the Ganga and the Ghaghara**	**Red-crested pochard, sarus crane, fishing cat**	**India's 100th Ramsar site (announced on 5 June 2026)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Surha Tal is a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance. It is also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the two have the same boundary. It is an Important Bird Area as well. It was announced as the 13th Ramsar site of Uttar Pradesh.

Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary, also called Surha Tal, is a freshwater wetland in eastern Uttar Pradesh. It lies about 10 km from Ballia town, between the Ghaghara in the north and the Ganga in the south. An old bend of the Ganga formed the lake. Three channels bring water into it. The main one, the Katahar nala, connects it with the Ganga.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Ramsar List gives 19 January 2026 as the date of designation and 2595 as the site number. The site covers 3,432 hectares, which is 34.32 sq km.
- Uttar Pradesh notified the bird sanctuary on 27 March 1991. Most of the land inside it is private land, and farmers grow deep-water rice along its edges.
- The Ramsar record lists 221 species of plants, 66 species of fish and 54 species of waterbirds. The waterbird counts of 2019 to 2023 gave an average of 51,083 birds.
- The Indian softshell turtle of the site is Endangered. The fishing cat, the sarus crane and the river tern are Vulnerable.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

6 June 2026 On World Environment Day, 5 June 2026, the Prime Minister welcomed the designation of Surha Tal in Ballia as a Ramsar site. It was India's 100th Ramsar site.

PRELIMS TRAP

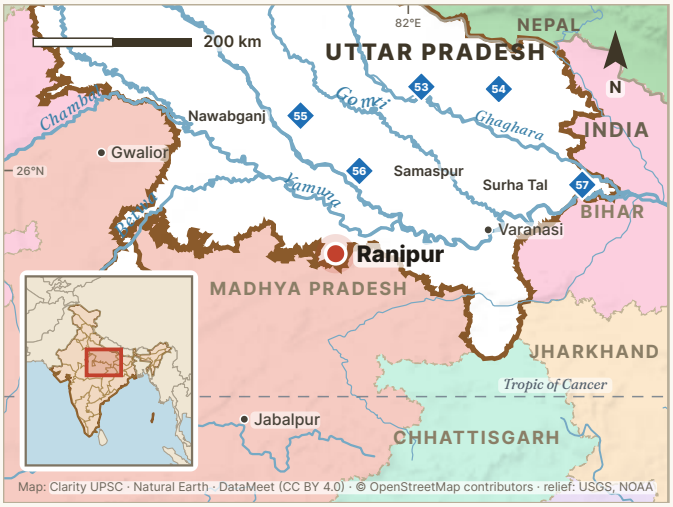
Surha Tal and Sheikha Jheel Bird Sanctuary have the same designation date on the Ramsar List, 19 January 2026. India announced Sheikha Jheel as its 99th site in April 2026. It announced Surha Tal as its 100th site on 5 June 2026.

58 Ranipur Tiger Reserve

Chitrakoot · **Uttar Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 2022 · 529.36 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Dry deciduous forest on the Vindhyan range	Tiger, leopard, sloth bear, chinkara	India's 53rd tiger reserve (2022)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Ranipur Wildlife Sanctuary, notified on 24 January 1977, is the core of the tiger reserve. It lies in the Manikpur and Markundi forest ranges. An eco-sensitive zone, a protective belt of up to one kilometre, was notified around the sanctuary in 2017. The reserve is on the tiger reserves list only.

Ranipur Tiger Reserve lies in Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh, in the Bundelkhand region. It spreads over the Vindhyan range, and the nearest railway station is Manikpur. Dry deciduous forest covers the reserve. Its trees include tendu, mahua and khair, as well as palash and salai. Leopards, sloth bears, wolves and wild dogs live here. So do sambar, chital and chinkara.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Uttar Pradesh notified the reserve on 19 October 2022 under section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It is number 53 on the list of the National Tiger Conservation Authority.
- The reserve covers 529.36 sq km. Its core, the inner zone, covers 230.31 sq km, and its buffer, the outer zone, covers 299.05 sq km.
- Ranipur is the first tiger reserve in the Bundelkhand part of Uttar Pradesh. Panna Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh is about 150 km away.
- In the 2022 tiger estimate, camera traps photographed four tigers in Ranipur, one more than in 2018. Three of them were also photographed in the Satna forests of Madhya Pradesh.

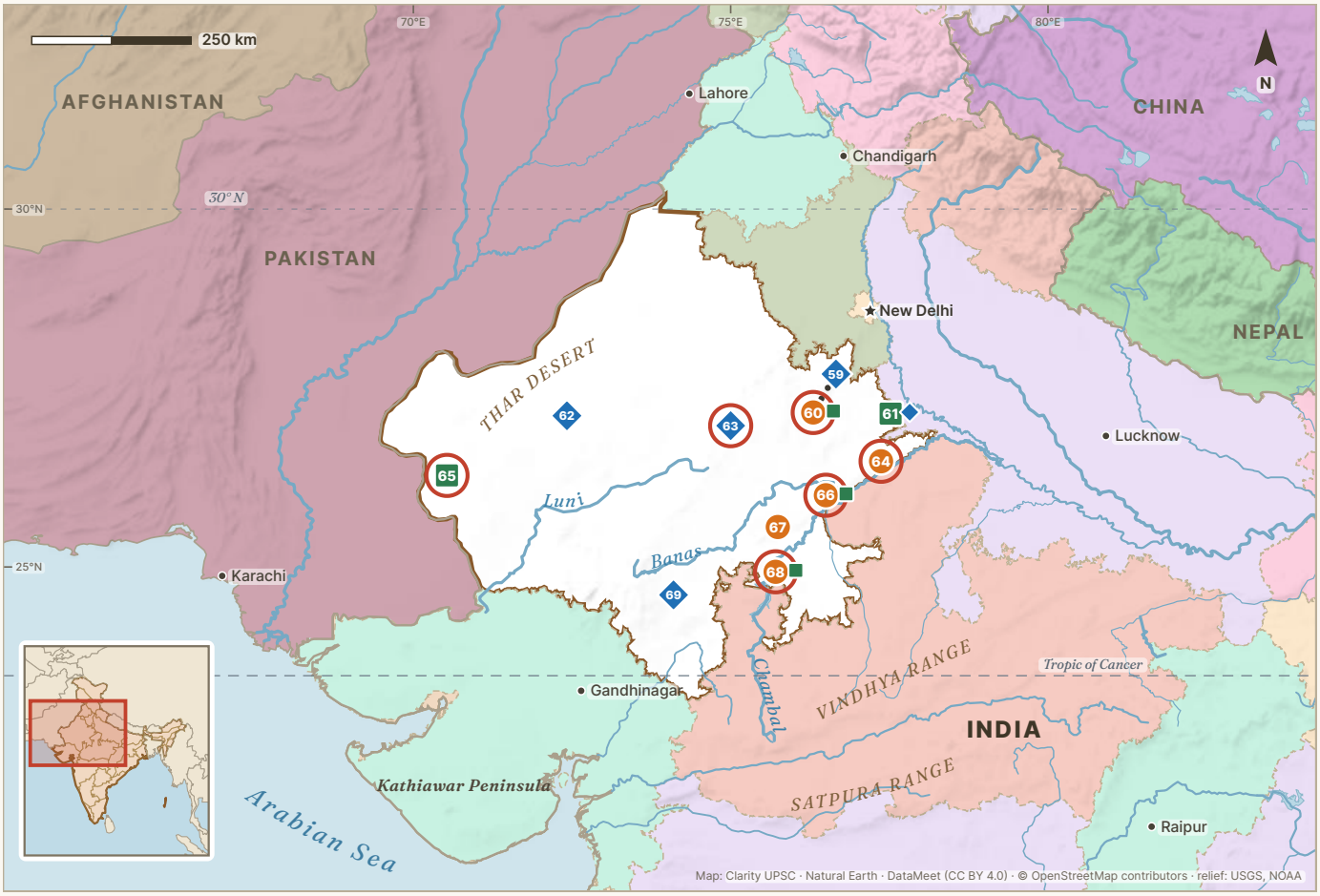
PRELIMS TRAP

News reports of 2022 called Ranipur the fourth tiger reserve of Uttar Pradesh, because they counted Amangarh. The National Tiger Conservation Authority lists three for the state: Dudhwa, Pilibhit and Ranipur. It lists Amangarh as a buffer of Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Rajasthan

● 5 tiger reserves ■ 5 national parks ◆ 5 Ramsar sites

The Aravalli range crosses Rajasthan from the south-west to the north-east. The Thar Desert lies to its west, and the Chambal and the Banas drain the land to its east. All five tiger reserves are in the eastern half of the state, and Desert National Park is in the Thar. Rajasthan has five national parks and five Ramsar sites. It has no biosphere reserve and no elephant reserve.



● Tiger reserve ■ National park ◆ Ramsar site ⬢ Biosphere reserve ⬟ Elephant reserve ◯ In our news in 2026

59 ◆ **Siliserh** — Alwar	80	60 ■ **Sariska** — Alwar	81
61 ■◆ **Keoladeo** — Bharatpur	82	62 ◆ **Khichan** — Phalodi	83
63 ◆ **Sambhar** — Jaipur, Ajmer and Didwana-Kuchaman	84	64 ● **Dholpur-Karauli** — Dholpur and Karauli	85
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69 ◆ **Menar** — Udaipur	90		

59 Siliserh Lake

Alwar · **Rajasthan**

Ramsar site 2025 · 3.16 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
A tributary of the Ruparel, dammed in 1845	**Forested Aravalli hills near Alwar, in a semi-arid zone**	**Black stork, river tern, mugger crocodile**	**Rajasthan's fifth Ramsar site (2025)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Siliserh Lake lies in the buffer zone of Sariska Tiger Reserve, the outer zone around its core. Tigers and other animals of the reserve use the lake. The other Ramsar sites of Rajasthan are Keoladeo National Park, Sambhar Lake, Khichan Wetland and Menar Wetland Complex.

Siliserh Lake is a human-made lake about 13 km south-west of Alwar city, among the forested Aravalli hills. Maharaja Vinay Singh of Alwar created it in 1845. He built a bund, or embankment, across a tributary of the Ruparel river. He made the lake to supply drinking water to Alwar and water for irrigation.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Siliserh became a Ramsar site on 7 July 2025, with the site number 2581. It covers 315.97 hectares. India announced it on 12 December 2025. India then had 96 Ramsar sites.
- The Ramsar record counts 149 species of birds and 17 species of mammals. About 55 black storks use the lake. This is more than 1% of the bird's population in the region.
- The lake lies in the basin of the Ruparel river. The Ruparel is part of the Yamuna and Ganga river system. Mugger crocodiles live in the lake.

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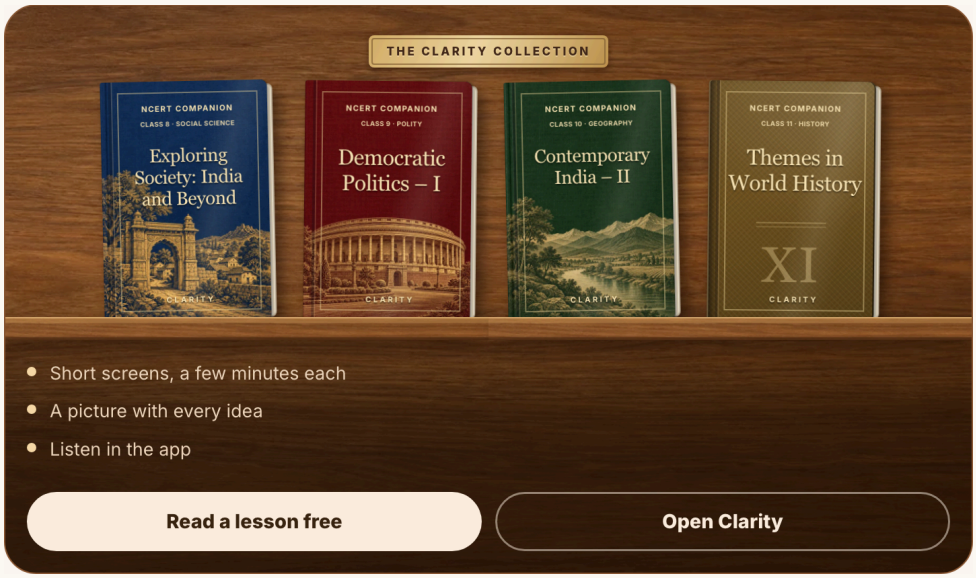

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60

Sariska National Park and Tiger Reserve

Alwar · **Rajasthan**

Tiger reserve 1978 · 1,213.34 sq km | **National park** 1992 · 273.8 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
No perennial river, only seasonal streams	Aravalli hills with dry deciduous and thorn forest	Tiger, leopard, striped hyena, sambar	World's first reintroduction of tigers (2008)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sariska National Park, of 273.80 sq km, is part of the core of Sariska Tiger Reserve. The core is built around Sariska Wildlife Sanctuary. The buffer, the outer zone, includes part of Jamwa Ramgarh Wildlife Sanctuary. Siliserh Lake, a Ramsar site, also lies in the buffer.

Sariska lies in the Aravalli hills of Alwar district, about 107 km from Jaipur. Its forest is of two kinds, dry deciduous forest and thorn forest. The dhok tree covers more than 40 per cent of the forest. Most of its streams and pools dry up in summer. Tigers, leopards and hyenas live here. The reserve also has sambar and nilgai.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sariska became India's eleventh tiger reserve under Project Tiger in 1978–79. It covers 1,213.34 sq km. Its core, the inner zone, is 881.11 sq km, and its buffer is 332.23 sq km.
- By 2005 Sariska had no tigers left. A male tiger from Ranthambore was released here on 28 June 2008 and a female on 4 July 2008. It was the first reintroduction of tigers in the world.
- The forest was a hunting ground of the former Alwar State. It became a wildlife sanctuary in 1958. The first notice to make part of the core a national park was issued in 1982.
- Kankwari Fort stands in the middle of the reserve. The ruins of Shiva and Jain temples at Neelkanth and Garh Rajor date from the ninth and tenth centuries.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

29 June 2026 On 28 June 2026 it was 18 years since tigers were brought back to Sariska. That day the Union Environment Minister, Bhupender Yadav, opened a national workshop on tiger reintroduction at Alwar. His social media post said that Sariska had 53 tigers. The Press Information Bureau reported that he said 56 at the workshop.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Sariska has no perennial river, which means a river that flows all year. Ranthambore Tiger Reserve has the Banas to its north and the Chambal to its east. Sariska is in the Aravalli hills. Ranthambore lies where the Aravalli and Vindhya ranges meet.

61 Keoladeo National Park

Bharatpur · **Rajasthan**

National park 1981 · 28.73 sq km | **Ramsar site** 1981 · 28.73 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Gambhir and Banganga	Human-made marshes on the edge of the Gangetic plain	Painted stork, sarus crane, Indian python	One of India's first two Ramsar sites (1981)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The national park, the Ramsar site and the UNESCO World Heritage Site cover the same 28.73 sq km. A boundary wall two metres high encloses the whole park. Many people live close to the wall, so there is no room for a buffer zone around the park.

Keoladeo National Park lies beside Bharatpur city in eastern Rajasthan, about 50 km west of Agra. It is a small park of 2,873 hectares with marshes, grassland and woodland. The marshes are human-made. They lie in a low area where the Gambhir and Banganga rivers meet. Sluice gates and earth walls called dykes control the water. About 375 species of birds have been recorded here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Keoladeo and Chilika Lake became India's first two Ramsar sites on 1 October 1981. UNESCO made Keoladeo a World Heritage Site in 1985. It is also called Keoladeo Ghana and Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary.
- The Maharajas of Bharatpur kept the area as a duck-shooting reserve. The marshes were first flooded on purpose in 1901, with water from the Ajan Bund. The area became a bird sanctuary in 1956.
- Keoladeo was the last known place in India where the Siberian crane spent the winter. This Critically Endangered crane has not been reported here since 2002.
- The park was placed on the Montreux Record on 4 July 1990 because of water shortage and unbalanced grazing. The Record lists Ramsar sites whose ecology has changed, is changing or is likely to change.

PRELIMS TRAP

A 2014 Prelims question paired Keoladeo with the meeting point of the Banas and the Chambal. That pair was wrong. Keoladeo lies where the Gambhir and the Banganga meet. Its wetlands depend on the monsoon and on water brought from outside.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2014 · Q46

Consider the following pairs : Wetlands : Confluence of rivers 1. Harike Wetlands : Confluence of Beas and Satluj/Sutlej 2. Keoladeo Ghana National Park : Confluence of Banas and Chambal 3. Kolleru Lake : Confluence of Musi and Krishna Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

UPSC KEY **(a) 1 only.** Harike lies where the Beas and the Sutlej meet. Keoladeo lies where the Gambhir and the Banganga meet. Kolleru lies between the Godavari and Krishna deltas.

62 Khichan Wetland

Phalodi · **Rajasthan**

Ramsar site 2025 · 0.54 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ratri nadi and Vijaysagar talab, filled by rain	**Northern Thar Desert, with two water bodies and scrub land**	**Demoiselle crane (kurjan)**	**Winter flocks of over 22,000 demoiselle cranes**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Rajasthan declared Khichan a conservation reserve in April 2023. Such a reserve is a kind of protected area under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Khichan is the smallest of Rajasthan's five Ramsar sites. India announced Khichan and Menar together on 4 June 2025. India then had 91 Ramsar sites.

Khichan Wetland lies beside Khichan village in the northern Thar Desert. The village is 5 km east of Phalodi town and about 150 km north of Jodhpur. The site is small, at 54.187 hectares. It has two water bodies, the Ratri nadi and the Vijaysagar talab, with scrub land around them. Demoiselle cranes rest at these waters in the evening, and wild animals drink there.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- More than 20,000 demoiselle cranes spend each winter at Khichan. Their yearly average for 2017 to 2022 was 22,667. Local people call the crane kurjan. The flocks stay until the end of March.
- Khichan became a Ramsar site on 19 February 2025, with the site number 2568. Menar Wetland Complex in Udaipur district became one on the same day.
- The villagers feed the cranes at a fenced ground called the chugga ghar. They have put a chain-link fence around the site to keep out stray dogs. They also work to reduce bird deaths from power lines.
- The Ramsar record lists 159 species of birds here. They include two Critically Endangered vultures, the Indian vulture and the white-rumped vulture.

PRELIMS TRAP

Khichan is known for the demoiselle crane. Keoladeo National Park in Bharatpur was known for the Siberian crane. That crane has not been reported at Keoladeo since 2002.

63 Sambhar Lake

Jaipur, Ajmer and Didwana-Kuchaman · **Rajasthan**

Ramsar site 1990 · 240 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Mendha and Rupangarh	**Shallow salt basin with sand flats and thorn scrub**	**Greater flamingo, lesser flamingo**	**India's largest inland saline lake**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sambhar Lake is on the Ramsar list only. The Ramsar record of 1990 shows no protected status for the lake under Indian law, such as a wildlife sanctuary.

Sambhar Lake lies about 70 km west of Jaipur, in east-central Rajasthan. It is a large, shallow salt lake. Seasonal rivers and streams feed it, mainly the Mendha and the Rupangarh. Its water level changes with the seasons. Sand flats and dry thorn scrub surround the lake. Large numbers of flamingos and other waterbirds spend the winter here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sambhar became a Ramsar site on 23 March 1990, on the same day as Loktak Lake in Manipur. The site covers 24,000 hectares.
- A sandstone dam 5.1 km long divides the lake. Sambhar Salts runs the salt pans east of the dam. Hindustan Salts owns 60 per cent of this company, and the Rajasthan government owns 40 per cent.
- Rajasthan Tourism gives the lake's catchment as about 5,700 sq km. The rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur jointly owned the lake. They leased it to the British in 1870.
- In 1990 India told the Ramsar Convention that only the Rann of Kutch had more flamingos than Sambhar. A temple of the goddess Shakambhari stands beside the lake.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

7 May 2026 On 28 April 2026 the Rajasthan High Court lifted its stay on a solar project near Sambhar Lake. The 100 MW project is at Nawa. The court said the solar panels must stand at least 1.5 metres high, so birds can nest below them. Three trees must be planted for each tree removed. Rain water must still flow freely onto the land.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Sambhar is India's largest inland salt lake. Chilika in Odisha is a lagoon on the coast. Its water is brackish, which means partly salty.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2004 · Q62

Lake Sambhar is nearest to which one of the following cities of Rajasthan?

(a) Bharatpur (b) Jaipur (c) Jodhpur (d) Udaipur

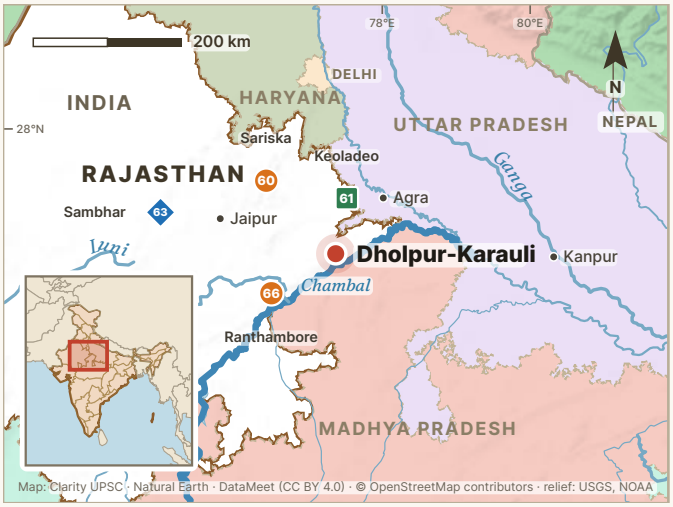
ANSWER **(b) Jaipur.** Sambhar Lake lies about 70 km west of Jaipur. Bharatpur, Jodhpur and Udaipur are all much farther from the lake.

64 Dholpur-Karauli Tiger Reserve

Dholpur and Karauli · **Rajasthan**

Tiger reserve 2023 · 1,057.88 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Chambal	**Dry forest and river ravines beside the Chambal**	**Tiger, leopard, gharial**	**Rajasthan's fifth tiger reserve (2023)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The reserve is on the tiger reserves list only. Part of Kailadevi Wildlife Sanctuary lies in its core. The rest of the sanctuary belongs to Ranthambore Tiger Reserve. So the boundary between the two tiger reserves runs through Kailadevi.

Dholpur-Karauli Tiger Reserve lies in Dholpur and Karauli districts of eastern Rajasthan, north-east of Ranthambore. The Chambal flows along its edge. The river separates this part of Rajasthan from Madhya Pradesh. The land is dry forest with deep river ravines.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The National Tiger Conservation Authority gave the reserve its final approval. Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced this on 22 August 2023. It is Rajasthan's fifth tiger reserve.
- The reserve covers 1,057.88 sq km. Its core, called the critical tiger habitat, is 599.64 sq km. Its buffer, the outer zone, is 458.24 sq km.
- The core has three parts. They are Dholpur Wildlife Sanctuary, a stretch of the National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary and part of Kailadevi Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Rajasthan notified Dholpur Wildlife Sanctuary on 28 September 2023. The state then declared the core of the reserve under section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

4 February 2026 On 3 February 2026 Rajasthan's forest minister, Sanjay Sharma, spoke in the Assembly. He said villagers in the Karauli tiger reserve would not be moved without their consent. Voluntary relocation from the core had not begun. Relief for a death in human–wildlife conflict would be doubled to ₹10 lakh after the rules were amended.

PRELIMS TRAP

Reports of August 2023 called Dholpur-Karauli India's 54th tiger reserve. The list of the National Tiger Conservation Authority places it 55th. It comes after Veerangana Durgavati in Madhya Pradesh, notified on 20 September 2023.

65 Desert National Park

Jaisalmer and Barmer · **Rajasthan**

National park 1992 · 3,162 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Arid zone, with under 100 mm of rain a year	**Thar Desert: sand dunes, gravel plains and grassland**	**Great Indian bustard, chinkara, desert fox**	**India's second-largest national park (3,162 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Desert National Park is on the national parks list only. Since 26 May 2009 it has been on India's Tentative List, the list of places India may propose as World Heritage Sites. The Rajasthan Forest Department has fenced about 200 sq km of grassland inside the park for the great Indian bustard.

Desert National Park lies in the Thar Desert, in Jaisalmer and Barmer districts of western Rajasthan. Of its 3,162 sq km, 1,900 sq km is in Jaisalmer and 1,262 sq km is in Barmer. The land has sand dunes, gravel plains, rocky ridges and open grassland. It receives less than 100 mm of rain a year. The great Indian bustard, the chinkara and the desert fox live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The great Indian bustard is Critically Endangered and is the state bird of Rajasthan. Local people call it godawan. Rajasthan told UNESCO that the park is the most important site for its survival.
- People live inside the park. Rajasthan's submission to UNESCO counts 73 villages there. There are also smaller settlements called dhanis.
- The national park also manages the Wood Fossil Park at Akal, 17 km from Jaisalmer. Its fossil tree trunks are about 180 million years old, from the Jurassic period.
- With 3,162 sq km, it is the second-largest national park of India, after Hemis in Ladakh. The chinkara and the camel are Rajasthan's state animals. The khejri is the state tree.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

28 March 2026 In March 2026 a Global Action Plan for the steppe eagle for 2026–2035 was reported as approved. It comes under the Convention on Migratory Species, whose 15th conference was meeting in Brazil. It names Desert National Park and Jorbeer Conservation Reserve near Bikaner. Surveys found over 2,000 steppe eagles at the two sites.

Full story

5 October 2026 On 4 October 2026 the Union Environment Minister, Bhupender Yadav, released two male great Indian bustards at Sam in Desert National Park. Both birds came from the conservation breeding programme. Its centres at Sam and Ramdevra had 97 birds at that time. Of these, 11 were chosen for release into the wild.

PRELIMS TRAP

Desert National Park has many villages inside it. A 2020 Prelims question said that the park has no human habitation. That statement was wrong.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2020 · Q95

Also asked: 2010

With reference to India's Desert National Park, which of the following statements are correct ? 1. It is spread over two districts. 2. There is no human habitation inside the Park. 3. It is one of the natural habitats of Great Indian Bustard. Select the correct answer using the code given below :

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

UPSC KEY **(c) 1 and 3 only.** The park lies in Jaisalmer and Barmer and is a habitat of the great Indian bustard. It has villages inside it, so statement 2 is wrong.

66 Ranthambore National Park and Tiger Reserve

Sawai Madhopur, Karauli, Bundi and Tonk · **Rajasthan**

Tiger reserve 1973 · 1,411.29 sq km | **National park** 1980 · 282 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Banas across the reserve, Chambal on its eastern side	**Steep hills where the Aravalli and Vindhyan ranges meet**	**Tiger, leopard, caracal, striped hyena**	**One of the first nine Project Tiger reserves (1973)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The core of the tiger reserve includes Ranthambhore National Park, Sawai Madhopur and Sawai Mansingh sanctuaries and part of Kailadevi Wildlife Sanctuary. Most of the rest of Kailadevi is in Dholpur-Karauli Tiger Reserve. Ranthambore Fort is one of the Hill Forts of Rajasthan, a World Heritage Site.

Ranthambore lies near Sawai Madhopur in south-eastern Rajasthan, where the Aravalli and Vindhyan ranges meet. Dhok is the main tree of its dry deciduous forest. The national park has lakes such as Padam Talab and Rajbagh. Ranthambore Fort stands on a hill inside it. Tigers, leopards, caracals and sloth bears live here. The park also has sambar and chital.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Ranthambore was a hunting reserve of the Jaipur and Karauli princely states. Sawai Madhopur sanctuary was created in 1955. Its inner part became Ranthambhore National Park on 1 November 1980.
- Ranthambore was one of the first nine reserves of Project Tiger in 1973. The tiger reserve covers 1,411.29 sq km. Its core, also called the critical tiger habitat, is 1,113.36 sq km.
- The Banas flows between the national park and Kailadevi Wildlife Sanctuary and divides the reserve into two parts. The Chambal flows on the eastern side of the reserve.
- The 2022 tiger estimate put the number of tigers inside the reserve at 57. In 2008 tigers from Ranthambore were moved to Sariska Tiger Reserve, where the tiger had died out.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

24 June 2026 On 23 June 2026 a long-billed vulture bred in captivity reached Ranthambore Tiger Reserve from Melghat Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra. The bird, tagged X67, was released in Melghat on 2 January 2026. It left on 28 May and flew 3,334 km in 27 days. It stopped at Satpura National Park, in the Bhopal region and at Kuno National Park.

Full story

17 October 2026 On 16 October 2026 WWF-India and the Rajasthan Forest Department released a study of Kailadevi Wildlife Sanctuary. Part of the sanctuary is in the core of the reserve. Camera traps recorded 27 mammal species and 29 leopards. The report said that three adult tigers and eight cubs had lived there in the past five years.

26 October 2026 On 25 October 2026 the tigress T-2403 was seen with three cubs in Zone 8 of the reserve. These were her first cubs. The Forest Department said that it would confirm the number of cubs from camera-trap pictures.

PRELIMS TRAP

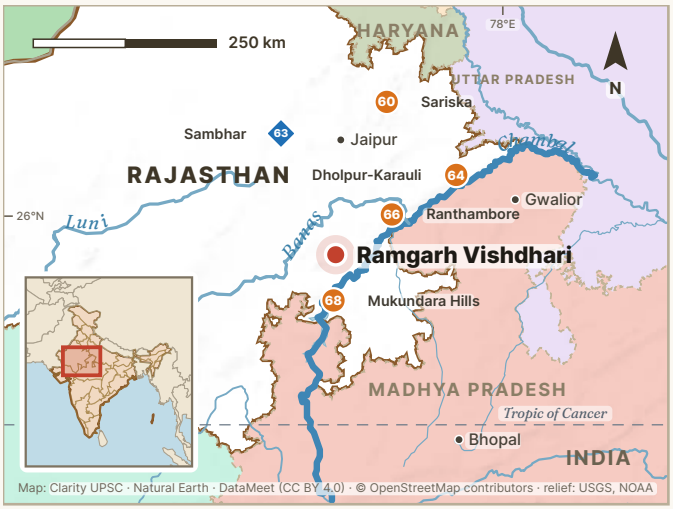
Prelims 2020 asked which tiger reserve has the largest critical tiger habitat. Ranthambore was one of the options, with 1,113.36 sq km. The largest, 2,595.72 sq km, is in Nagarjunsagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve in Andhra Pradesh.

67 Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve

Bundi, Kota and Bhilwara · **Rajasthan**

Tiger reserve 2022 · 1,501.89 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Mez, a tributary of the Chambal	**Rugged hills with both Vindhyan and Aravalli features**	**Leopard, sloth bear, tiger, sambar**	**India's 52nd tiger reserve and Rajasthan's fourth (2022)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Ramgarh Vishdhari is on the tiger reserves list only. Its core has two parts: Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary and a stretch of the National Chambal Sanctuary along the Chambal.

Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve lies in south-eastern Rajasthan, mainly in Bundi district. The Mez, a tributary of the Chambal, flows through it. The land is mostly rugged and hilly. Dhok is the main tree of its dry deciduous forest. Leopards and sloth bears are its main large animals. It also has chital, sambar, nilgai and wild boar.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Rajasthan notified the reserve on 16 May 2022. It is No. 52 on the national list of tiger reserves. It was the fourth in Rajasthan, after Ranthambore, Sariska and Mukundara Hills.
- The reserve covers 1,501.89 sq km. It has a core, or inner zone, of 481.91 sq km and a buffer, or outer zone, of 1,019.98 sq km. Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary was established in 1982.
- The reserve joins the buffer of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in the north-east. It joins Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve in the south. Tigers that move out of Ranthambore use this link.
- The area once had a good number of tigers, but they died out locally. Camera traps of the 2022 tiger estimate photographed one male tiger in the reserve.

PRELIMS TRAP

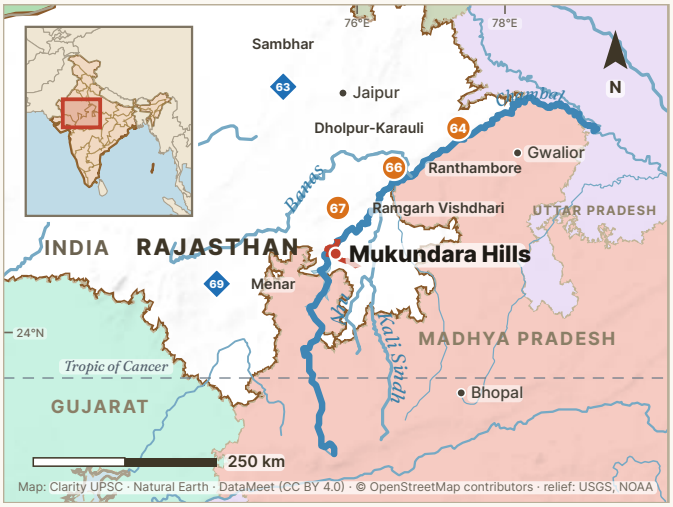
Rajasthan has more than one protected area with Ramgarh in its name. A part of Jamwa Ramgarh Wildlife Sanctuary is in the buffer of Sariska Tiger Reserve. Ramgarh Vishdhari lies mainly in Bundi district, between Ranthambore and Mukundara Hills.

68 Mukundara Hills National Park and Tiger Reserve

Kota, Bundi, Chittorgarh and Jhalawar · **Rajasthan**

Tiger reserve 2013 · 759.99 sq km | **National park** 2006 · 200.54 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Chambal, Kali Sindh, Ahu and Amjhar	**Two parallel flat-topped hills of the Vindhyan range**	**Tiger, leopard, sloth bear, gharial**	**Rajasthan's third tiger reserve (2013)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The reserve's core includes Mukundra Hills National Park, Darrah and Jawahar Sagar wildlife sanctuaries and part of the National Chambal Sanctuary. The reserve is linked to Ramgarh Vishdhari and Ranthambore tiger reserves, and to Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh.

Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve lies in south-eastern Rajasthan, with its headquarters at Kota. Two flat-topped, almost parallel hills of the Vindhyan range run here. They stretch for about 80 km, from the Chambal to the Kali Sindh. Dhok is the main tree of its dry deciduous forest. Leopard, sloth bear, nilgai and chinkara live here. The reserve also has gharial and crocodile.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The two hills are called Mukundra and Gagrola. The Mukundra range is named after Maha Rao Mukund, a former ruler of Kota. Darrah Wildlife Sanctuary was created in 1955.
- Rajasthan notified the tiger reserve on 9 April 2013. It was the state's third tiger reserve. The core covers 417.17 sq km, and the buffer covers 342.82 sq km.
- The reserve's tiger conservation plan says that a tiger was last heard here in 2003. A male tiger was moved here on 3 April 2018. More tigers were later brought from Ranthambore Tiger Reserve.
- The Chambal, the Kali Sindh, the Ahu and the Amjhar flow along the edges of the reserve. Gagron Fort is in this area. It is one of the Hill Forts of Rajasthan on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

15 June 2026 'Enchanting Mukundra' is a documentary film on the reserve. It shows the forests, rivers, valleys and wildlife of the reserve. The reserve administration had released its poster and trailer at Kota on 23 December 2025. The aim was to promote tourism and wildlife conservation.

PRELIMS TRAP

The national parks list spells the park 'Mukundra Hills'. The tiger reserves list prints 'Mukundara'. Both spellings refer to the same hills near Kota. Darrah Wildlife Sanctuary lies in the core of the tiger reserve.

69 Menar Wetland Complex

Udaipur · **Rajasthan**

Ramsar site 2025 · 4.63 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
None named. Rain and water running off the land fill the ponds	**Three ponds with farmland and scrub land around them**	**Sarus crane, Indian skimmer, long-billed vulture**	**Wetland protected by its village, a Ramsar site since 2025**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Menar is on the Ramsar list only. The Forest Department and the Menar gram panchayat, the village council, manage the site. It partly overlaps the Menar Important Bird Area. Rajasthan has four other Ramsar sites: Keoladeo National Park, Sambhar Lake, Khichan Wetland and Siliserh Lake.

Menar Wetland Complex lies beside Menar village in Udaipur district, about 50 km from Udaipur city. It has three ponds: Braham Talab, Dhand Talab and Kheroda Talab. It also has farmland that goes under water in the monsoon. Rain and water running off the land fill the ponds. The Ramsar record lists 259 species of birds here, and 110 of them are waterbirds.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Menar became a Ramsar site on 19 February 2025, with the site number 2567. India announced it with Khichan on 4 June 2025. India then had 91 Ramsar sites.
- The villagers of Menar do not allow hunting or fishing in the ponds. The Ramsar record calls the site one of the best examples in Rajasthan of wetland conservation led by local people.
- The site covers 463.414 hectares. Its birds include two Critically Endangered vultures, the white-rumped vulture and the long-billed vulture. The Endangered Indian skimmer is also found here.
- The sarus crane, a Vulnerable species, breeds at Menar. A large colony of Indian flying foxes, a kind of fruit bat, lives in the mango trees at Braham Talab.

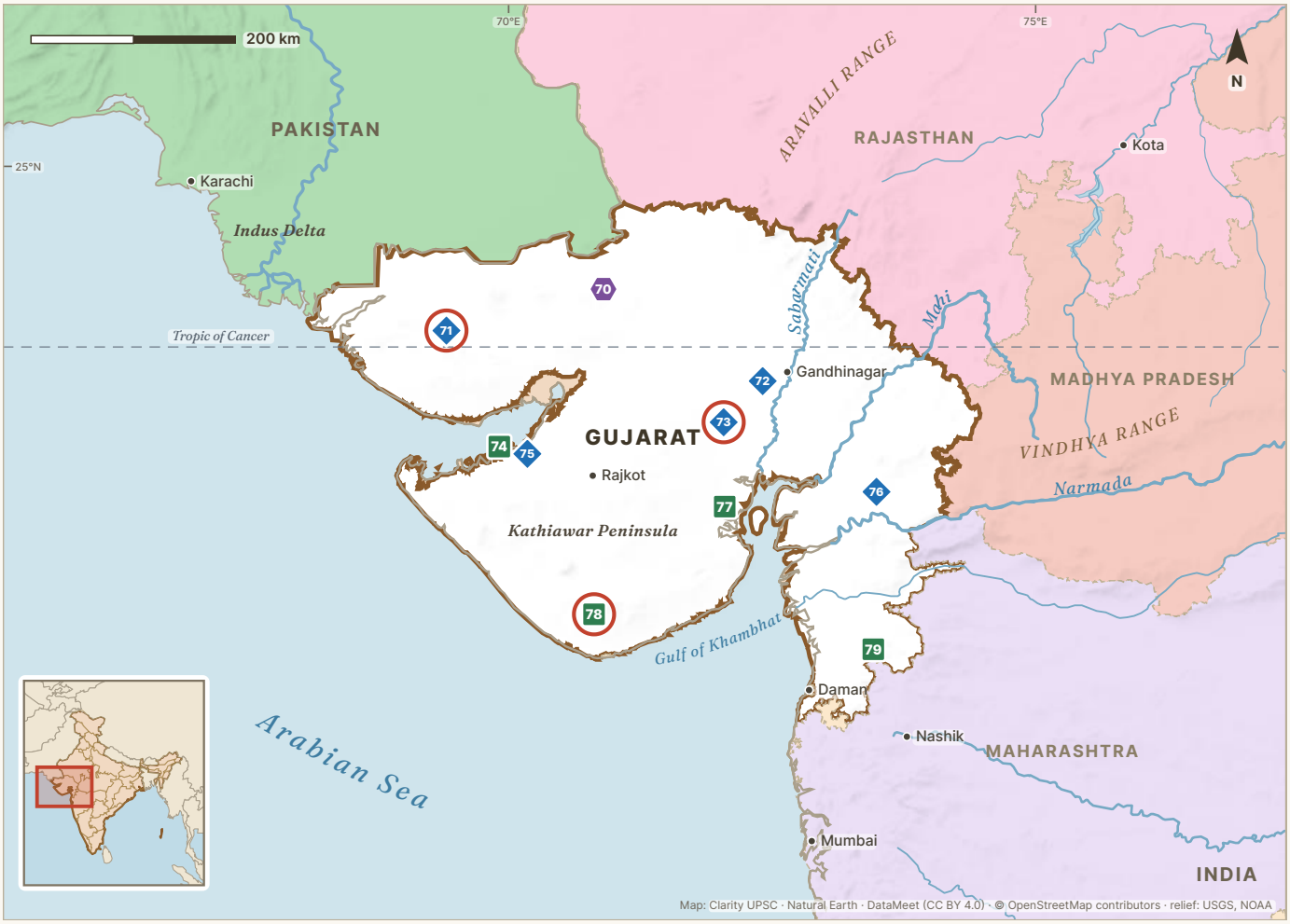
PRELIMS TRAP

Menar and Khichan, both in Rajasthan, were announced as Ramsar sites on the same day. Menar is in Udaipur district. Khichan, where demoiselle cranes spend the winter, is in Phalodi district.

Gujarat

4 national parks 5 Ramsar sites 1 biosphere reserve

Gujarat has the salt desert of the Rann of Kachchh in the north-west. The Saurashtra peninsula lies between the Gulfs of Kachchh and Khambhat. The state's one biosphere reserve covers the Rann. The four national parks protect lions at Gir and grassland at Velavadar. They also protect coral islands in the Gulf of Kachchh and moist forest at Vansda. The five Ramsar sites are lakes and marshes where waterbirds spend the winter.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

70	**Great Rann of Kutch** Kachchh, Morbi, Surendranagar and Patan	92
71	**Chhari Dhand** Kachchh	93
72	**Thol Lake** Mehsana	94
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70 Great Rann of Kutch Biosphere Reserve

Kachchh, Morbi, Surendranagar and Patan · **Gujarat**

Biosphere reserve 2008 · 12,454 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Luni, which ends in the Rann	Salt flats, seasonal marsh and rocky islands called bets	Indian wild ass, greater flamingo, chinkara	Largest biosphere reserve of India (12,454 sq km)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The reserve mainly covers two wildlife sanctuaries, Kachchh Desert in the Great Rann and Wild Ass in the Little Rann. Dholavira, a Harappan city on Khadir island, became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2021. The buffer zone of this World Heritage Site overlaps Kachchh Desert Wildlife Sanctuary.

This biosphere reserve is made up mainly of the Great Rann and the Little Rann of Kachchh, in north-western Gujarat. Kutch is another spelling of Kachchh. The Rann is flat, salty land with rocky islands called bets. Water 0.5 to 1.5 metres deep covers it from the monsoon to early winter. After October and November the water dries up, and the land becomes a salt desert.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- India notified the reserve on 29 January 2008 as its 15th biosphere reserve. With 12,454 sq km it is the largest in India. It is not in UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
- Kachchh Desert Wildlife Sanctuary, in the Great Rann, is the largest sanctuary of Gujarat. Greater flamingos breed there at a place called Flamingo City, near the hill of Kala Dungar.
- Wild Ass Sanctuary, in the Little Rann, protects the Indian wild ass, which is found only in Gujarat. Gujarat's count of 2024 estimated 7,672 wild asses.
- The Luni is the largest river system of Rajasthan west of the Aravallis. It flows south-west and ends in the marshes of the Rann of Kachchh, without reaching the sea.

PRELIMS TRAP

The reserve is named after the Great Rann, but it also covers the Little Rann and its Wild Ass Sanctuary. Some official tables call it Kachchh Biosphere Reserve.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2023 · Q5 Also asked: 2010 · 2011

Which one of the following is the best example of repeated falls in sea level, giving rise to present-day extensive marshland?

(a) Bhitarkanika Mangroves (b) Marakkanam Salt Pans (c) Naupada Swamp (d) Rann of Kutch

UPSC KEY **(d) Rann of Kutch.** The Rann of Kachchh was once a shallow arm of the Arabian Sea. Repeated falls in sea level left a wide salt marsh that floods in the monsoon.

71 Chhari Dhand

Kachchh · **Gujarat**

Ramsar site 2025 · 227 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Seasonal rivers Chhari, Layari and Gajansar	**Shallow saline basin between Banni grassland and the Great Rann**	**Common crane, sociable lapwing, Dalmatian pelican, chinkara**	**First Ramsar site of Kachchh district**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Chhari Dhand is a Ramsar site and a conservation reserve. A conservation reserve is a kind of protected area under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Chhari Dhand is the only conservation reserve of Gujarat in the table of the Wildlife Institute of India.

Chhari Dhand is a seasonal wetland in the Banni grassland of Kachchh district. The Great Rann of Kachchh lies to its north. The word chhari means salt-affected land, and dhand means a shallow wetland. Rain water fills it in the monsoon, and the water turns salty as it dries. In years of good rain, 25,000 to 40,000 common cranes spend the winter here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Chhari Dhand is Ramsar site number 2588 and covers 22,700 hectares, which is 227 sq km. It is the fifth Ramsar site of Gujarat and the first in Kachchh district.
- Gujarat notified Chhari Dhand as a conservation reserve in 2008. The Ramsar site has the same boundary as the conservation reserve.
- Its birds include the Critically Endangered sociable lapwing and the Vulnerable common pochard. Dalmatian pelicans and rosy pelicans also come here in years of good rain.
- Chinkara, wolves and caracals live in the dry country around the wetland. Desert cats and desert foxes also live there.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

1 February 2026 At the end of January 2026 the Union Environment Minister announced two new Ramsar sites. They were Chhari Dhand in Gujarat and Patna Bird Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh. This raised the number of Ramsar sites in India to 98. The announcement came just before World Wetlands Day on 2 February.

30 May 2026 On 22 May 2026 more than 500 Maldharis and other villagers met near Fulay village, on the southern edge of Chhari Dhand. They protested against a solar project planned near the wetland. The Maldharis are herders who fear losing their grazing land. The Conservator of Forests said the project land lies outside the Ramsar site.

PRELIMS TRAP

The Ramsar list gives 16 June 2025 as the date of designation of Chhari Dhand. India announced the site at the end of January 2026. So the site carries the year 2025, although it was in the news in 2026.

72 Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary

Mehsana · **Gujarat**

Ramsar site 2021 · 6.99 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
No river: canals and rain water fill the lake	Shallow human-made lake among farm fields	Sarus crane, osprey, glossy ibis	327 bird species in about 7 sq km



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Thol is a Ramsar site and also a wildlife sanctuary. Gujarat notified the sanctuary in November 1988 to protect its birds. The sanctuary and the Ramsar site both cover 6.99 sq km, or 699 hectares.

Thol Lake is a shallow reservoir in Mehsana district, 25 km from Ahmedabad. The Gaekwad rulers built it in 1912 to store rain water for irrigation. An earthen bund, or embankment, on its southern, western and eastern sides keeps the water in. Open water covers most of the lake, and farm fields surround it.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Thol became a Ramsar site on 5 April 2021, with the site number 2458. Wadhvana Wetland, also in Gujarat, was designated on the same day.
- The Ramsar record lists 327 species of birds at Thol. This is about 57% of all the bird species recorded in Gujarat.
- Thol regularly has more than 1% of the population of the glossy ibis. The sarus crane also lives here. The forest department calls it the tallest flying bird in the world.
- When the water in the lake rises to 9 feet, the extra water flows out through a channel on its eastern side. The channel leads towards Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary.

PRELIMS TRAP

Thol and Nalsarovar are both bird sanctuaries and Ramsar sites of Gujarat. Thol is a small human-made reservoir of 6.99 sq km in Mehsana district. Nalsarovar is a natural lake of 120 sq km in Ahmedabad and Surendranagar districts.

73 Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary

Ahmedabad and Surendranagar · **Gujarat**

Ramsar site 2012 · 120 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Surendranagar-Bhogavo and Brahmani flow into it	**Shallow natural lake with marshes and about 360 islets**	**Flamingos, pelicans, sarus crane, Indian wild ass**	**Gujarat's first Ramsar site (2012)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nalsarovar is a Ramsar site and also a wildlife sanctuary, known as Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary. Extra water from Thol Lake, another Ramsar site, is sent towards it.

Nalsarovar is a shallow natural lake in Ahmedabad and Surendranagar districts. The Ramsar record calls it a relict sea, which means that the sea once covered this land. Its depth and saltiness change with the rainfall. The lake has 360 islets, or small islands, and most of them show when the water is low. Rain water from the two districts fills the lake in the monsoon.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Nalsarovar became a Ramsar site on 24 September 2012, with the site number 2078. It was Gujarat's first Ramsar site. The state's next sites came in 2021.
- The lake and the wetlands around it were declared a bird sanctuary in April 1969. The sanctuary covers 120.82 sq km, and the Ramsar site covers 12,000 hectares.
- The Ramsar record calls it the largest natural wetland in the Thar Desert Biogeographic Province. A small group of Indian wild asses uses the area in the dry season.
- India has three species of pelican. Two of them, the rosy pelican and the Dalmatian pelican, are found here. Greater and lesser flamingos also come to the lake.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

5 February 2026 In February 2026 the Gujarat Forest Department released the results of its bird census at Nalsarovar. The census takes place every two years. Teams counted in 50 zones and recorded about 6.42 lakh birds of 270 species. The 220 participants included students, birdwatchers, forest staff and 99 local boatmen and guides.

74 Marine National Park, Gulf of Kachchh

Jamnagar and Devbhumi Dwarka · **Gujarat**

National park 1982 · 162.89 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
No river: it lies in the Gulf of Kachchh, Arabian Sea	42 islands with coral reefs, mangroves and mudflats	Corals, dugong, sea turtles, dolphins	First marine sanctuary of India (1980)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The forest department manages the national park and the Marine Sanctuary of 1980 together. Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary, a Ramsar site, lies along the southern boundary of the Marine National Park and Sanctuary.

The Marine National Park lies in the tidal zone along the Jamnagar coast and its islands, in the Gulf of Kachchh. The tidal zone is the strip between the high-tide and low-tide lines. So the sea covers much of the park twice a day. The park has coral reefs, mangroves and mudflats. It also has creeks and sandy shores. Narara island is one of its main sites for visitors.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Gujarat declared the Marine Sanctuary in 1980 and the national park in 1982. A 1999 Prelims question described this sanctuary as the first marine sanctuary of India.
- The Marine Sanctuary covers 295.03 sq km and the national park covers 162.89 sq km. Together they cover about 458 sq km.
- Coral reefs grow in the Gulf of Kachchh. The forest department lists 42 species of hard coral and 10 species of soft coral in the park.
- Dugongs, sea turtles and dolphins live in these waters. Six species of mangrove grow here. Young fish and prawns grow up in the mangrove swamps.

PRELIMS TRAP

The Gulf of Kachchh has a marine national park and a marine sanctuary. It is not a biosphere reserve. Gujarat's biosphere reserve is the Great Rann of Kutch, on land. The Gulf of Mannar in Tamil Nadu is a marine biosphere reserve. Prelims asked about this in 1995.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 1999 · Q73

Also asked: 1995 · 2014

The first marine sanctuary in India, having within its bounds coral reefs, Mollusca, dolphins, tortoises and various kinds of sea birds, has been established in

(a) Sundarbans (b) Chilka Lake (c) Gulf of Kachchh (d) Lakshadweep

ANSWER **(c) Gulf of Kachchh.** India's first marine sanctuary was created in the Gulf of Kachchh in 1980. The area has coral reefs and molluscs. Dolphins, sea turtles and sea birds also live there.

75 Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary

Jamnagar · **Gujarat**

Ramsar site 2021 · 5.12 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ruparel and Kalindri	**Coastal marsh behind earthen bunds, on the Gulf of Kachchh**	**Dalmatian pelican, common crane, Indian skimmer**	**Freshwater and saltwater wetlands side by side**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Khijadia is a Ramsar site and also a wildlife sanctuary, often called Khijadia Bird Sanctuary. It lies along the southern boundary of the Marine National Park and Sanctuary of the Gulf of Kachchh.

Khijadia is a coastal wetland 15 km from Jamnagar, near the Gulf of Kachchh. The ruler of the former Jamnagar State built an earthen bund, or embankment, here in 1920. The bund kept sea water away from farmland, and fresh water collected on one side of it. Today one side of the bund has fresh water and its birds. The other side has sea water and its birds.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Khijadia became a Ramsar site on 13 April 2021, with the site number 2464. India announced it on World Wetlands Day, 2 February 2022. India then had 49 Ramsar sites.
- Gujarat declared Khijadia a wildlife sanctuary in May 1981. The sanctuary covers 6.05 sq km, and the Ramsar site covers 511.745 hectares.
- The Ramsar record lists 312 species of birds. The Endangered Pallas's fish eagle and Indian skimmer are among them.
- The Ramsar record counted 16,125 common cranes here in 2021, about 23% of their population in this region. It also counted 78 Dalmatian pelicans, just over 1% of their regional population.

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76 Wadhvana Wetland

Vadodara · **Gujarat**

Ramsar site 2021 · 6.3 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Orsang, a tributary of the Narmada, through a canal	**Reservoir among wheat fields, paddy fields and villages**	**Red-crested pochard, sarus crane, river tern**	**Built in 1909-10 by Sayajirao Gaekwad III of Baroda**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Wadhvana is on the Ramsar list only. Of the five Ramsar sites of Gujarat, it is the only one that lies outside a wildlife sanctuary or a conservation reserve.

Wadhvana is a reservoir in Dabhoi taluka of Vadodara district, 45 km from Vadodara city. Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III of the former Baroda State built it in 1909-10 for irrigation. Wheat fields, paddy fields and villages surround it. A canal connects it with the Orsang river, a tributary of the Narmada. It also receives water from the Narmada canal.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Wadhvana became a Ramsar site on 5 April 2021, with the site number 2454. The Ramsar site covers 630 hectares.
- More than 80 species of migratory waterbirds have been recorded here. They use the Central Asian Flyway, a bird migration route. The Ramsar record counts 46,281 waterbirds from mid-winter censuses.
- The red-crested pochard, a duck that is rare in western India, comes here regularly in winter. The sarus crane and the river tern are also found here. Both are Vulnerable.

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77 Blackbuck National Park, Velavadar

Bhavnagar · **Gujarat**

National park 1976 · 34.53 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Between the Parvalia and the Alang	**Flat grassland of the Bhal region, near the Gulf of Khambhat**	**Blackbuck, Indian wolf, lesser florican, harriers**	**One of the largest winter roosts of harriers**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Velavadar is on the national parks list only.

Blackbuck National Park lies in the Bhal region of Saurashtra, in Bhavnagar district. It is open grassland between two rivers, the Parvalia and the Alang. Both rivers flow to the Gulf of Khambhat. The land is often flooded in the monsoon. Herds of blackbuck live mostly in the northern part. The southern part has patches of thorn forest and a small wetland.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Gujarat declared the area a national park in July 1976, mainly to protect the blackbuck. The park covers 34.53 sq km.
- Four species of harrier, a kind of bird of prey, spend the winter here. The forest department calls the park one of the largest places where migratory harriers roost, or rest at night.
- The lesser florican, a Critically Endangered bird of grasslands, comes to the park in the monsoon, and it breeds here.
- The Indian wolf, the striped hyena and the jungle cat also live in the park. The Alang river, on the southern border, is a favourite place of the wolves.

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Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

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78 Gir National Park

Junagadh and Gir Somnath · **Gujarat**

National park 1975 · 258.71 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Hiran, Shetrunji, Shingoda and Raval	**Dry deciduous forest on ridges, hills and plateaus of Saurashtra**	**Asiatic lion, leopard, marsh crocodile, chital**	**Core of the only wild population of the Asiatic lion**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The national park is the core of Gir. The wider Gir area covers about 1,880 sq km. It includes the national park, the Gir, Paniya and Mitiyala wildlife sanctuaries and a forest buffer. It lies in Junagadh, Gir Somnath and Amreli districts.

Gir lies in the Saurashtra peninsula of Gujarat. It is hilly country with ridges, plateaus and valleys. It is the largest dry deciduous forest of Saurashtra. Teak is one of its common trees. Several rivers flow through it, among them the Hiran, the Shetrunji and the Shingoda. The Asiatic lion lives in the wild only in Gir and other parts of Saurashtra.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Gir was declared a wildlife sanctuary on 18 September 1965. In 1975 a core of 258.71 sq km became the national park. The sanctuary covers 1,153.42 sq km.
- The lion count of May 2025 estimated 891 Asiatic lions. The core population of 394 lived in and around the Gir and Pania sanctuaries. The other 497 lived in nine satellite populations and corridors.
- The forest department records that the number of lions fell to 20 in 1913. The Nawab of Junagadh protected them, and the number has grown since then.
- Herders called Maldharis live in Gir, in settlements called nesses. Gir is also known for its marsh crocodiles.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

27 May 2026 On 29 May 2026 Gujarat's Forest Minister said that eight Asiatic lion cubs had died of a suspected Babesia infection. Babesia is a parasite that ticks spread. The cubs died outside Gir Wildlife Sanctuary, in Gir Somnath and Amreli districts. On 31 May he said that 17 other lions were in isolation. No lion had died after 28 May.

Full story

15 July 2026 On 14 July 2026 the Gujarat government reported that the Indian grey hornbill had been breeding in Gir for four years. The bird had disappeared from Gir between the 1950s and the 1960s. The forest department released 40 hornbills there: 28 in 2021 and 2022, and 12 in 2023. It fitted 11 males with satellite transmitters.

PRELIMS TRAP

The Supreme Court ordered in 2013 that lions from Gir be moved to Kuno in Madhya Pradesh. No lion has been moved there. Cheetahs were released in Kuno in 2022. In Gujarat, lions now also live in Barda Wildlife Sanctuary.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2017 · Q95

Also asked: 2019

Recently there was a proposal to translocate some of the lions from their natural habitat in Gujarat to which one of the following sites ?

(a) Corbett National Park
(b) Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary
(c) Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary
(d) Sariska National Park

Since then: Since then: Kuno became a national park in 2018, and cheetahs from Namibia were released there in 2022.

UPSC KEY **(b) Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary.** Kuno-Palpur in Madhya Pradesh was chosen as a second home for lions. This was so that one disease or disaster could not destroy the only wild population.

79 Vansda National Park

Navsari · **Gujarat**

National park 1979 · 23.99 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ambika	**Moist deciduous forest at the northern limit of the Western Ghats**	**Leopard, four-horned antelope, barking deer**	**Smallest national park of Gujarat (23.99 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Vansda is on the national parks list only. Its forest joins the forests of the Dangs district on the eastern side. The South Dangs forest division manages the park.

Vansda National Park lies in Vansda taluka, in south Gujarat. Its moist deciduous forest has tall teak trees and bamboo. The land is flat or gently sloping. The forest department describes the area as the northern and western limit of the Western Ghats.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Vansda was declared a protected area in April 1979. With 23.99 sq km it is the smallest of the four national parks of Gujarat.
- The Ambika river drains the park and reaches the sea near Navsari.
- The park has leopard, four-horned antelope, barking deer and striped hyena. The forest department lists 443 species of flowering plants and 155 species of birds.
- Its birds are those of moist forest, such as the Malabar trogon. The forest department also lists the forest spotted owlet, a globally threatened bird.

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RBI MPC · 7 Oct 2026	NSO · Oct 2026	NSO · Q1 2026-27	RBI · 6 Nov 2026

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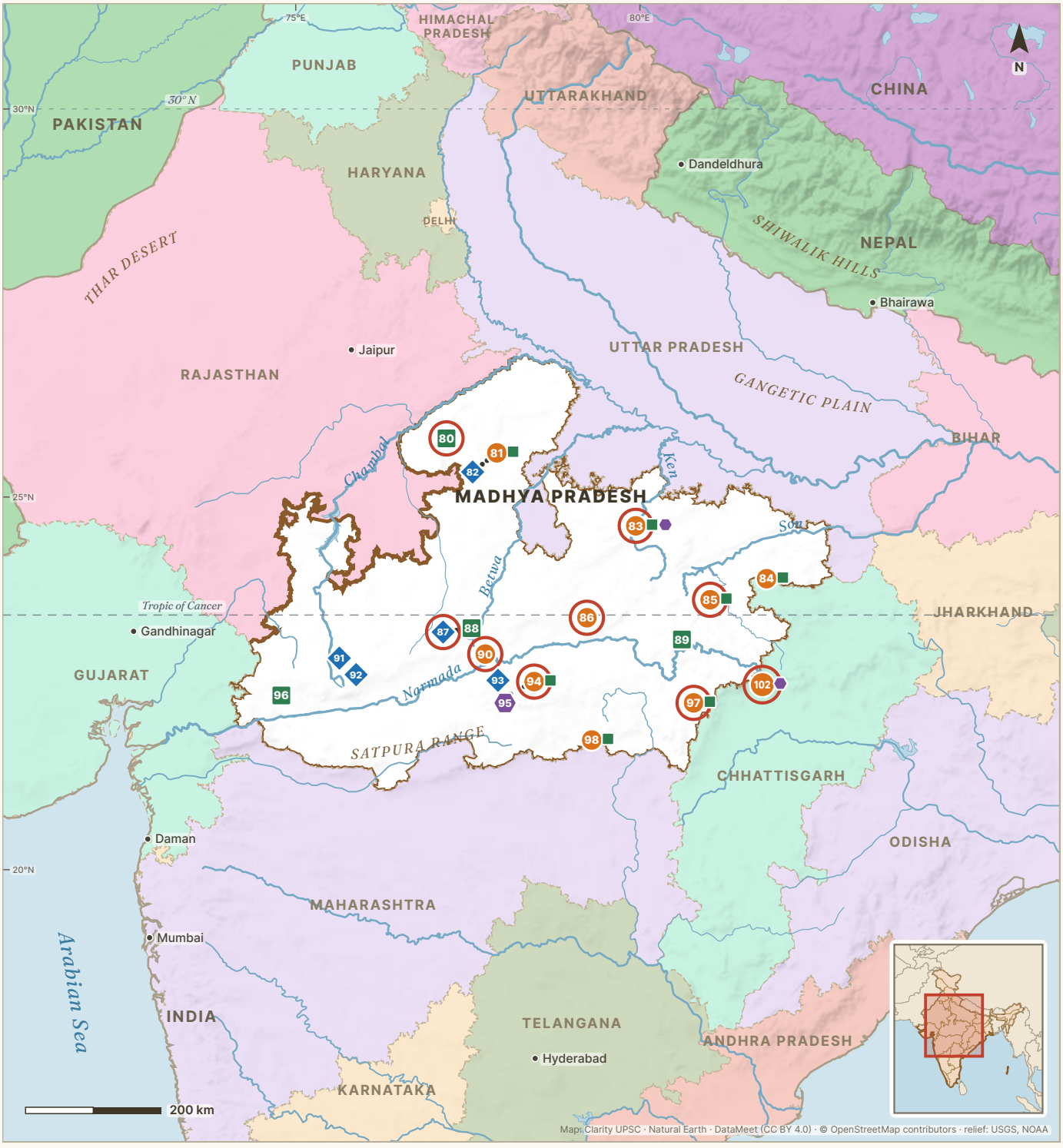
Clarity UPSC

Madhya Pradesh

9 tiger reserves · 11 national parks · 5 Ramsar sites · 3 biosphere reserves

Madhya Pradesh lies at the centre of India, across the Malwa plateau and the Vindhyan and Satpura hills. The Narmada flows west between these ranges. The Chambal, Betwa and Ken flow north. The state has nine tiger reserves, the most in India. In the 2022 estimate, it had 785 tigers, the highest number. It has 11 national parks, five Ramsar sites and three biosphere reserves. One of the biosphere reserves is shared with Chhattisgarh.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

Madhya Pradesh: its areas

80 **Kuno** — Sheopur — 104

82 **Sakhya Sagar** — Shivpuri — 106

84 **Sanjay-Dubri** — Sidhi and Shahdol — 108

86 **Veerangana Durgavati** — Sagar, Damoh and Narsinghpur — 110

88 **Van Vihar** — Bhopal — 112

90 **Ratapani** — Raisen and Sehore — 114

92 **Sirpur** — Indore — 116

94 **Satpura** — Narmadapuram and Chhindwara — 118

96 **Dinosaur Fossils** — Dhar — 120

98 **Pench (Madhya Pradesh)** — Seoni and Chhindwara — 122

81 **Madhav** — Shivpuri — 105

83 **Panna** — Panna, Chhatarpur and Damoh — 107

85 **Bandhavgarh** — Umaria and Katni — 109

87 **Bhoj Wetland** — Bhopal and Sehore — 111

89 **Fossil (Ghughua)** — Dindori — 113

91 **Yashwant Sagar** — Indore — 115

93 **Tawa** — Narmadapuram — 117

95 **Pachmarhi** — Narmadapuram, Chhindwara and Betul — 119

97 **Kanha** — Mandla and Balaghat — 121

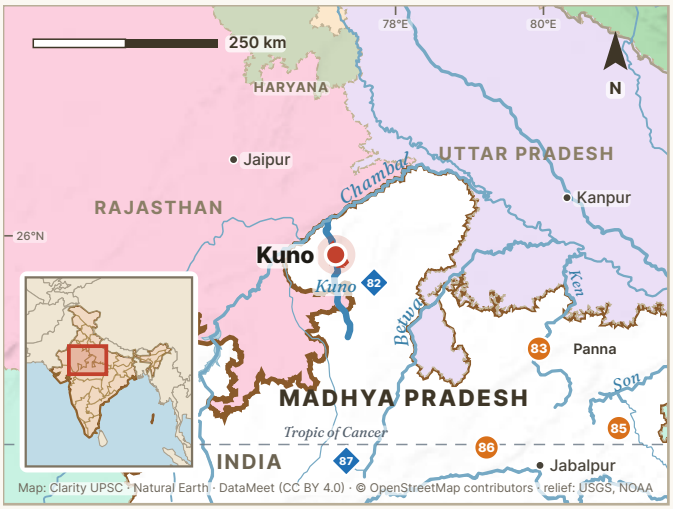
102 **Achanakmar** — entry under Chhattisgarh — 128

80 Kuno National Park

Sheopur · **Madhya Pradesh**

National park 2018 · 748.76 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kuno, a tributary of the Chambal that flows all year	**Dry deciduous open forest and grassland of Sheopur–Shivpuri**	**Cheetah, leopard, striped hyena, Indian wolf**	**First release site of Project Cheetah (2022)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kuno is on the national parks list only. Forest across the Chambal links it with Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan. The upper Vindhyan hills link it with Madhav National Park.

Kuno National Park lies in Sheopur district of northern Madhya Pradesh. The Kuno river flows through the middle of the park all year round. Hills with medium to steep slopes rise west of the river. The land to the east is flatter. Patches of grassland lie between dry deciduous forests of kardhai, khair and salai trees. Leopards, striped hyenas, wolves and sloth bears live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Kuno was a hunting reserve of the rulers of Gwalior. It became a wildlife sanctuary of 344.68 sq km in 1981. In 2018 it became a national park of about 748 sq km.
- Kuno was chosen as a second home for the Asiatic lion of Gir. For this, 23 of the 24 villages in the sanctuary were moved out. Gujarat did not agree to give its lions.
- Cheetahs came to Kuno in three groups. Eight came from Namibia on 17 September 2022, and 12 from South Africa on 18 February 2023. Nine came from Botswana on 28 February 2026.
- On 5 October 2026 a female cheetah born in India gave birth to five cubs at Kuno. India then had 60 cheetahs, and 41 of them were born in India.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

1 March 2026 In late February 2026 officials reported that a tourism operator, Labh Yadav, had seen an endangered forest owlet in Kuno. The bird was in the Parond beat, a forest patrol area. Vivek Patel of the Wildlife Research and Conservation Society, Pune, confirmed it on the spot. It was the first verified record of this owl in the park.

Full story

7 June 2026 On 6 June 2026 All India Radio News reported a caracal in Kuno National Park. A recent camera-trap survey had recorded the animal. The report called it the first sighting of this rare wild cat in the park in several decades. The park's field director said it was the first record of a caracal in his four years there.

PRELIMS TRAP

Kuno was prepared as a second home for the Asiatic lion of Gir, but no lions have been moved there. The big cats it received under Project Cheetah are African cheetahs.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2017 · Q95

Recently there was a proposal to translocate some of the lions from their natural habitat in Gujarat to which one of the following sites ?

(a) Corbett National Park
(b) Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary
(c) Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary
(d) Sariska National Park

Since then: Since then: Kuno became a national park in 2018. African cheetahs have come to it since September 2022. No lions have been moved there.

UPSC KEY **(b) Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary.** Kuno-Palpur in Madhya Pradesh was chosen as a second home for the lions of Gir. Corbett, Mudumalai and Sariska are tiger reserves.

Clarity UPSC

81 Madhav National Park and Tiger Reserve

Shivpuri · **Madhya Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 2025 · 1,651.39 sq km | **National park** 1959 · 375.23 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Manier, dammed to form both lakes, and the Sind on the east	**Upper Vindhyan hills and plateaus with two lakes**	**Tiger, leopard, chinkara, marsh crocodile**	**India's 58th tiger reserve (2025)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Madhav National Park is the core, or inner zone, of Madhav Tiger Reserve. The core covers 375.233 sq km, and the buffer around it covers 1,276.154 sq km. Sakhya Sagar, a Ramsar site, lies inside the park. The upper Vindhyan hills link Madhav with Kuno National Park.

Madhav National Park lies beside Shivpuri town, in the upper Vindhyan hills. It has forested hills and plateaus, patches of grassland and two lakes, Sakhya Sagar and Madhav Sagar. Leopards, wolves, sambar and chital live in the park. So do nilgai, chinkara and chowsingha. Marsh crocodiles live in its lakes.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The park was a hunting ground of the Mughal emperors and later of the Maharajas of Gwalior. Shivpuri town was also the summer capital of the Maharajas.
- Madhav became India's 58th tiger reserve and the ninth of Madhya Pradesh. The state government declared it on 7 March 2025. The Union Environment Minister announced it on 9 March 2025.
- Tigers have been brought back to Madhav. On 10 March 2025 the Chief Minister, Mohan Yadav, released a tigress there. The reserve then had six tigers.

PRELIMS TRAP

Ratapani became India's 57th tiger reserve in December 2024. Madhav became the 58th in March 2025. Both are in Madhya Pradesh.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2026 · Q22

With reference to Madhav National Park, which of the following statements is/are correct ? 1. It was declared a Tiger Reserve in India in 2025. 2. Sakhya Sagar, which is designated as a Ramsar Site, is situated within this National Park. 3. Its area is shared between Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Select the answer using the code given below :

(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 (c) 2 and 3 (d) 3 only

UPSC KEY **(b) 1 and 2.** Madhav became a tiger reserve in March 2025. Sakhya Sagar, inside the park, is a Ramsar site. The park lies wholly in Madhya Pradesh.

82 Sakhya Sagar

Shivpuri · **Madhya Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2022 · 2.48 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Manier, dammed in 1918, in the Sind basin	**Reservoir in the upper Vindhyan hills, beside Shivpuri town**	**Marsh crocodile, common pochard, pintail, teal**	**Ramsar site since 2022, with many marsh crocodiles**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sakhya Sagar lies inside Madhav National Park. The park is the core of Madhav Tiger Reserve. The lake is one of the five Ramsar sites of Madhya Pradesh.

Sakhya Sagar is a human-made lake on the edge of Shivpuri town. The Scindia Maharaja made it in 1918 by building a dam across the Manier river. The lake covers 248 hectares. It gives the wildlife of Madhav National Park water all through the year. Marsh crocodiles are common here, and thousands of migratory waterbirds visit the lake.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sakhya Sagar became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 7 January 2022. Its site number is 2483. India announced it on 26 July 2022.
- Its catchment, the land that drains into the lake, covers 37,522 hectares. Most of it is the forest of Madhav National Park.
- The Ramsar record lists 73 species of birds and 19 species of fish here. Local people call the lake Chandpatha.

PRELIMS TRAP

Madhav National Park has two lakes, Sakhya Sagar and Madhav Sagar. Only Sakhya Sagar is on the Ramsar list.

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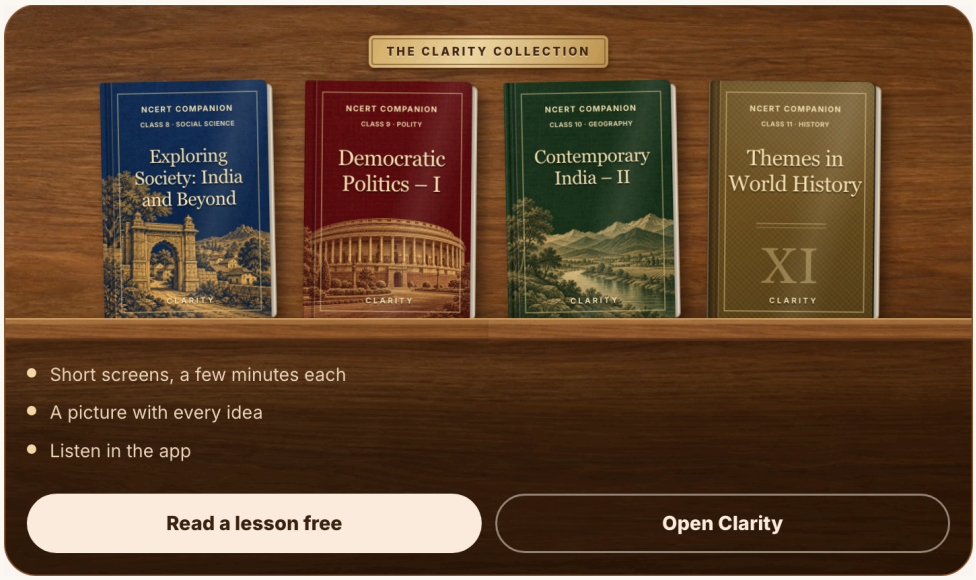

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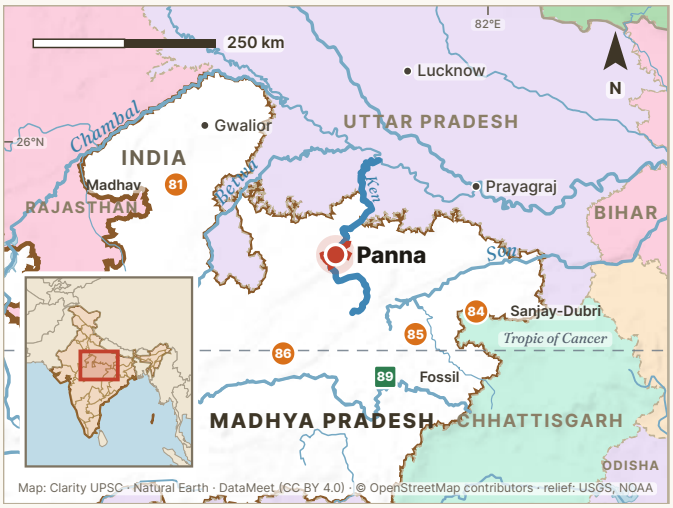
83 Panna National Park, Tiger Reserve and Biosphere Reserve

Panna, Chhatarpur and Damoh · **Madhya Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 1993 · 1,598.1 sq km | **National park** 1981 · 542.66 sq km | **Biosphere reserve** 2011 · 2,998.98 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ken	Flat-topped Vindhyan plateaus, cliffs and gorges	Tiger, sloth bear, striped hyena, vultures	Tigers lost to poaching by 2008, brought back in 2009



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Panna National Park and part of Gangau Wildlife Sanctuary form the core of Panna Tiger Reserve. The biosphere reserve includes the national park, three parts of Gangau Sanctuary and the forests of the North Panna forest division.

Panna lies in the Vindhyan hills of northern Madhya Pradesh. The Ken river enters it from the south and flows through it for almost 55 km. Flat plateaus covered with grass and thin scrub end in cliffs. Teak and mixed forest grow on the slopes below the cliffs. Tigers, leopards, sloth bears and striped hyenas live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Panna lost all its tigers to poaching by 2008. Tigers were brought back in 2009. In the 2022 estimate, the reserve had 55 tigers.
- The Ken–Betwa link project will create the Daudhan reservoir. It is expected to flood about 4,141 hectares of the core of Panna Tiger Reserve and 1,314 hectares of its buffer.
- India declared Panna Biosphere Reserve on 25 August 2011. It is the newest of India's 18 biosphere reserves.
- The cliffs of Panna are known for vultures. Long-billed, white-backed, red-headed and Egyptian vultures live here all year. Three other kinds visit as migrants.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

9 May 2026 In early May 2026 a two-year-old tiger was found dead in the Amanganj buffer area of Panna Tiger Reserve. It had earlier been rescued from Tara village and released with a radio collar. It was the 28th tiger death in Madhya Pradesh since 7 January 2026.

PRELIMS TRAP

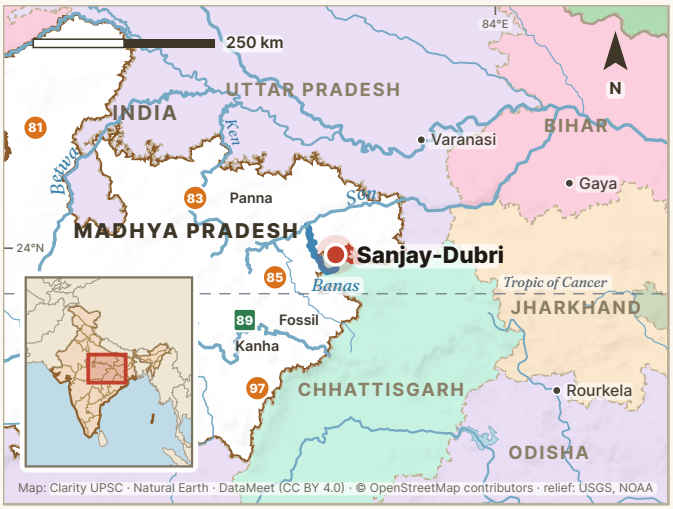
India declared Panna Biosphere Reserve in 2011. UNESCO added it to its World Network in 2020. Panna had become a tiger reserve much earlier, in 1993–94.

84 Sanjay National Park and Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve

Sidhi and Shahdol · **Madhya Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 2008 · 1,674.5 sq km | **National park** 1981 · 464.64 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Gopad and Banas, which flow into the Son	**Rolling hills of Sanjay and the flat land of Dubri**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, sloth bear, gaur**	**The white tiger Mohan was found in this landscape (1951)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sanjay National Park and Dubri Wildlife Sanctuary form the core of Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve. The reserve borders Guru Ghasidas National Park, which is part of Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh. A forest corridor of about 30 km joins Dubri to Bandhavgarh.

Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve lies in north-eastern Madhya Pradesh, on the border with Chhattisgarh. Sanjay National Park has rolling hills, and Dubri Wildlife Sanctuary is almost flat. Moist and dry sal forest covers both. Wild elephants shelter in its thick bamboo. The Gopad and the Banas are among its rivers that flow all year. Both flow into the Son.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Guru Ghasidas National Park, now in Chhattisgarh, lies south of Sanjay-Dubri. The two were one park until Chhattisgarh was formed in 2000.
- Sanjay-Dubri became a tiger reserve under Project Tiger in 2008–09. In the 2022 estimate, the reserve had 16 tigers.
- Martand Singh, the Maharaja of Rewa, found the white tiger Mohan in this landscape in 1951. The reserve says that white tigers in zoos across the world descend from Mohan.
- Gaur, the Indian bison, had died out in Sanjay-Dubri. Forty-four gaur were then brought in, 28 from Kanha and 16 from Satpura.

PRELIMS TRAP

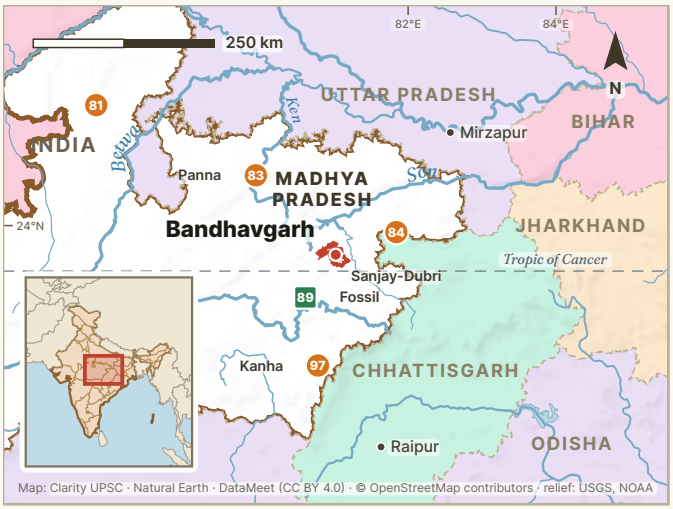
Sanjay National Park is in Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh. Sanjay Gandhi National Park is a different park, in Mumbai and Thane, Maharashtra. It has the Kanheri caves.

85 Bandhavgarh National Park and Tiger Reserve

Umaria and Katni · **Madhya Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 1993 · 1,536.93 sq km | **National park** 1968 · 448.84 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Streams that flow all year, fed by its sandstone hills	**Hills, valleys and plains between the Vindhyan and Satpura ranges**	**Tiger, gaur, hard-ground barasingha, Asian elephant**	**Largest tiger population of central India (2022 report)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Bandhavgarh National Park and Panpatha Wildlife Sanctuary form the core of Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. A forest corridor through North Shahdol joins Panpatha with Dubri Wildlife Sanctuary of Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve.

Bandhavgarh lies in Umaria and Katni districts of eastern Madhya Pradesh, between the Vindhyan and Satpura ranges. Its land has hills, valleys and plains. The old Bandhavgarh fort stands on one of the hills. Sal forest, mixed forest and bamboo surround open grasslands called vahs. The vahs turn marshy in the rains. Tigers, leopards, wild dogs and sloth bears live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Bandhavgarh became a national park of 105 sq km in 1968. It was enlarged in 1982. Its name means 'brother's fort'. A legend says that Rama gave the fort to his brother Lakshmana.
- The reserve joined Project Tiger in 1993–94. In the 2022 estimate it had 135 tigers, the largest number in central India. In all, 165 tigers used the reserve.
- Gaur had died out in Bandhavgarh. They were brought back from Kanha. In 2023, 50 hard-ground barasingha, a kind of swamp deer, were also released in the reserve.
- A herd of wild elephants came from Guru Ghasidas National Park in Chhattisgarh through forest corridors. It settled in Bandhavgarh in November 2018.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

19 February 2026 On 11 February 2026 the Madhya Pradesh High Court asked the reserve's field director, its head, to report on tiger deaths. His report of 25 February listed eight deaths between 21 November 2025 and 2 February 2026. Four tigers died inside the reserve, and four were electrocuted in forest outside it.

Full story

1 October 2026 From 24 to 28 September 2026 the reserve held a rest and health camp for its working elephants. The camp was near Parasi Gate, in the Dhamokhar buffer zone. Nine of its 15 camp elephants received rest, health checks and nutritious food.

86 Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve

Sagar, Damoh and Narsinghpur · **Madhya Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 2023 · 2,339.12 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kopra, Bamner and Bearma, tributaries of the Ken	**Upper Vindhyan plateau above the Narmada valley**	**Tiger, cheetah, Indian wolf, chinkara**	**Largest tiger reserve of Madhya Pradesh (2,339.12 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The reserve is on the tiger reserves list only. The 2022 tiger report names forest corridors from Nauradehi to Bandhavgarh, Satpura and Ratapani.

Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve lies in Sagar, Damoh and Narsinghpur districts. Most of it lies on the Nauradehi plateau of the upper Vindhyan range. In the south, the plateau drops steeply into the Narmada valley. Much of the reserve is open, dry deciduous woodland of teak with grass. Wolves, sloth bears, chinkara and blackbuck live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Madhya Pradesh declared the reserve on 20 September 2023 as India's 54th tiger reserve. It is named after Rani Durgavati, the ruling queen of Gondwana in the mid-16th century.
- Its core has two sanctuaries: Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary of 1,390.036 sq km and Veerangana Durgavati Wildlife Sanctuary of 23.97 sq km. The buffer covers 925.12 sq km.
- The Kopra, Bamner and Bearma rivers flow north through the reserve to the Ken. The 2022 tiger report lists Nauradehi among the places where tigers were brought back.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

8 February 2026 The standing committee of the National Board for Wildlife recommended the use of about 272 hectares of forest in the reserve. The land is for the Kopra medium irrigation project. Newspapers reported the recommendation in February 2026.

12 March 2026 On 10 March 2026 Mohan Yadav, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, spoke about the reserve. He said that cheetahs would be released in its Nauradehi area in about two months.

7 October 2026 On 7 October 2026 the Chief Minister released two cheetahs, Vyom and Neera, from Kuno into the Muhali range. They went into soft-release enclosures. These fenced areas let the animals get used to a new place before they are set free. The reserve became the third cheetah site of Madhya Pradesh, after Kuno and Gandhi Sagar.

PRELIMS TRAP

Kopra Jalashay is a reservoir in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh. It has been a Ramsar site since 2025. The Kopra medium irrigation project is a different project, inside this tiger reserve in Madhya Pradesh.

87 Bhoj Wetland

Bhopal and Sehore · **Madhya Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2002 · 32.01 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kolans, dammed to form the Upper Lake	**Two human-made lakes in Bhopal city**	**Sarus crane, red-crested pochard and other waterbirds**	**Upper Lake made by a dam in the 11th century**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Bhoj Wetland is on the Ramsar list only. Van Vihar National Park lies beside the Upper Lake.

Bhoj Wetland is made up of two lakes in Bhopal, the Upper Lake and the Lower Lake. An earthen dam across the Kolans river formed the Upper Lake in the 11th century. The Lower Lake was built in 1794, and the city surrounds it. Most of the Lower Lake's water seeps through from the Upper Lake. The lakes are rich in fish, birds and water plants.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Bhoj Wetland became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 19 August 2002. Its site number is 1206. It covers 3,201 hectares.
- Many people trace the name Bhopal to 'Bhojpal', which means Bhoj's dam. A minister of Raja Bhoj, the Paramara ruler of Dhar, is said to have built the dam.
- A management plan for the lakes began in 1995, with money from the government of Japan. Since then, birds that were rarely or never seen in the region have been recorded here.
- The Upper Lake is a major source of drinking water for Bhopal. Water leaving the lake flows through the Kaliasot river into the Betwa. The Betwa flows on to the Yamuna.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

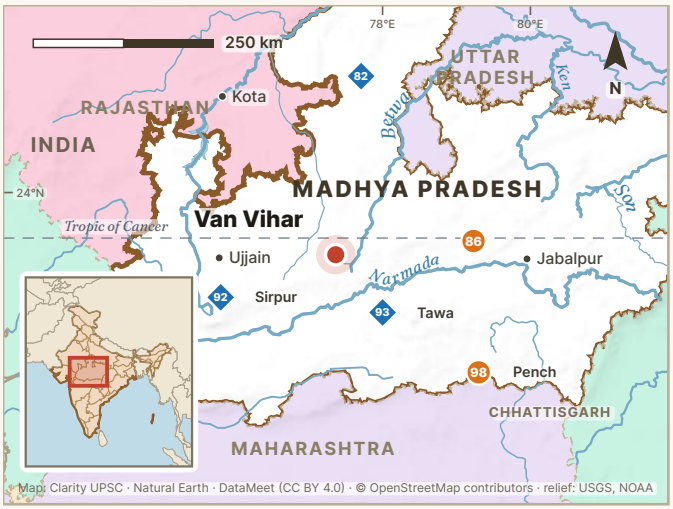
24 April 2026 On 2 April 2026 the National Green Tribunal issued notices about the Lower Lake. They went to the Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board, the Bhopal Municipal Corporation, the Bhoj Wetland Authority and other bodies. A petition said that encroachment, dumped debris and untreated sewage were harming the lake.

88 Van Vihar National Park

Bhopal · **Madhya Pradesh**

National park 1979 · 4.45 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
No river. Part of the Upper Lake's catchment	**Restored land beside the Upper Lake, within Bhopal city**	**Chital, blackbuck, hard-ground barasingha**	**A national park that is also a zoo and a rescue centre**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Van Vihar is on the national parks list only. It lies beside the Upper Lake, which is part of the Bhoj Wetland Ramsar site.

Van Vihar National Park lies within the city limits of Bhopal, beside the Upper Lake. It was made on bare, damaged land, most of it owned by the government. The aim was to bring back its plants and animals. The park is run as an open zoo. Tigers, lions, leopards and bears live in large wire enclosures. Chital and blackbuck move freely.

PRELIMS POINTERS

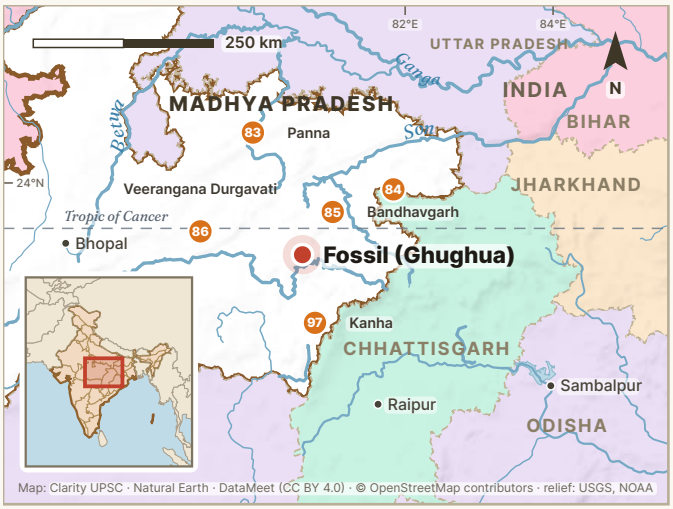
- Van Vihar has a rescue centre. It cares for lions and tigers taken from circuses and sloth bears taken from street performers. It also takes in wild animals in distress.
- In 2015 Van Vihar set up a breeding centre for the hard-ground barasingha, the state animal of Madhya Pradesh. The first seven animals came from Kanha National Park.
- Van Vihar and the Bombay Natural History Society run a vulture breeding centre near Kerwa dam, about 7 km away. The centre breeds white-backed and long-billed vultures.
- Migratory birds come to the lakeside of the park in winter. The park stays open all year. Most other national parks shut in the monsoon months.

89 Fossil National Park, Ghughua

Dindori · **Madhya Pradesh**

National park 1983 · 0.27 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	**Fossil beds at Ghughua village, near Shahpura**	**Fossils of palms and other trees**	**Smallest area on the list of 106 national parks (0.27 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Fossil National Park is on the national parks list only.

Fossil National Park lies at Ghughua village in Dindori district, about 70 km from Dindori town. The park protects fossils of plants. Visitors can see tree trunks that have turned to stone, and fossils of leaves. According to the district administration, these plants lived between 40 million and 150 million years ago.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The park was declared in 1983 and covers 0.27 sq km. This is the smallest area among the 106 national parks on the Wildlife Institute of India's table.
- The Dindori district website calls it the National Fossil Park, Ghughwa. Ghughua was part of Mandla district until Dindori district was formed on 25 May 1998.
- The fossil trunks belong to palms, other flowering plants and gymnosperms, which are plants with naked seeds. Scientists have identified plant fossils of 31 genera in 18 families here.
- Dr Dharmendra Prasad, the statistical officer of the undivided Mandla district, found the fossils. Dr M. B. Bande of the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences later studied them.

PRELIMS TRAP

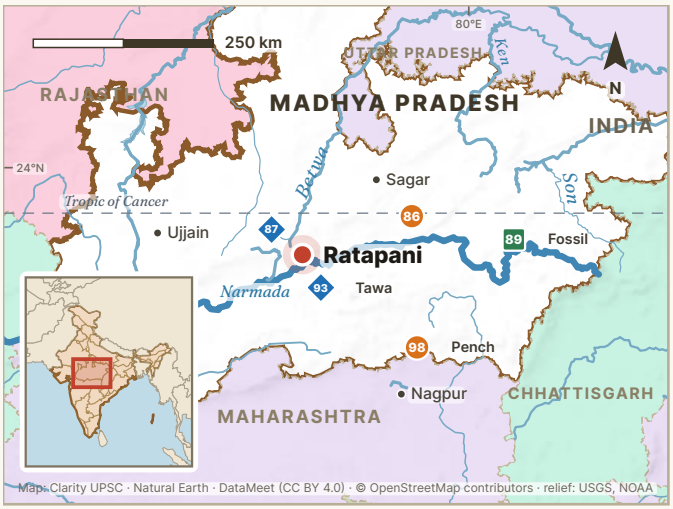
Madhya Pradesh has two national parks for fossils. Fossil National Park at Ghughua in Dindori district has plant fossils. Dinosaur Fossils National Park in the Bagh area of Dhar district has dinosaur eggs and bones.

90 Ratapani Tiger Reserve

Raisen and Sehore · **Madhya Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 2024 · 1,271.46 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Narmada to the south, Kolar on the sanctuary's western edge	**Dry and moist deciduous forest, mostly teak**	**Tiger, leopard, sloth bear, dhole**	**57th tiger reserve of India (2 December 2024)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The core of the tiger reserve lies inside Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary. UNESCO's advisory body on heritage sites reviewed Bhimbetka in 2003. It found that much of the World Heritage Site lies inside this sanctuary. Ratapani is on the tiger reserves list only.

Ratapani Tiger Reserve lies in Raisen and Sehore districts, next to the city of Bhopal. Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary runs along the northern side of the Narmada river. Teak makes up more than half of its dry and moist deciduous forest. Tigers, leopards, wild dogs and sloth bears live here. Hyenas, chital and sambar are also found.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Madhya Pradesh declared Ratapani a tiger reserve on 2 December 2024. It is the 57th tiger reserve of India and the eighth of Madhya Pradesh.
- The reserve covers 1,271.465 sq km. Its core, the inner zone, is 763.812 sq km. The buffer, the outer zone around the core, is 507.653 sq km.
- Ratapani became a wildlife sanctuary in 1976. In 2008 the National Tiger Conservation Authority agreed in principle to a tiger reserve here.
- UNESCO listed the Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka as a World Heritage Site in 2003 for their rock paintings. The shelters lie in the foothills of the Vindhyan Mountains.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

10 January 2026 On 9 January 2026 Chief Minister Mohan Yadav spoke at the 19th Wakankar National Award ceremony in Bhopal. He announced that Ratapani Tiger Reserve would be named after the archaeologist Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar. In 1957 Wakankar discovered the prehistoric rock paintings of nearby Bhimbetka.

24 January 2026 In January 2026 a forest department camera trap in Ratapani recorded a dhole, also called the Asiatic wild dog. The animal was photographed during routine patrolling, and experts confirmed the image. IUCN lists the dhole as Endangered.

PRELIMS TRAP

Madhav Tiger Reserve came after Ratapani, in March 2025. Madhav is the 58th tiger reserve of India and the ninth of Madhya Pradesh.

91 Yashwant Sagar

Indore · **Madhya Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2022 · 8.23 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Gambhir, in the Chambal sub-basin	**Reservoir among open fields in the Malwa region**	**Sarus crane, common pochard, river tern**	**Sarus crane site that supplies water to Indore**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Yashwant Sagar is on the Ramsar list only. It is also an Important Bird Area. The Indore Municipal Corporation looks after it.

Yashwant Sagar is a reservoir on the Gambhir river, about 26 km west of Indore city. Yashwant Rao Holkar, the ruler of Indore State, built it in 1930 for irrigation and drinking water. Today it mainly supplies water to Indore. Open fields surround it. Its shallow backwaters and reed beds attract many waterbirds in winter.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Yashwant Sagar became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 7 January 2022. Its site number is 2495. It covers 822.9 hectares in Indore district.
- The Ramsar record says that the Gambhir is a tributary of the Chambal. The Chambal is part of the Yamuna basin.
- The Ramsar record calls the reservoir one of the main homes of the sarus crane in central India. IUCN lists the sarus crane as Vulnerable.
- The record lists about 239 species of birds and 39 species of fish. It gives a count of 23,420 waterbirds for the years 2018 to 2020.

PRELIMS TRAP

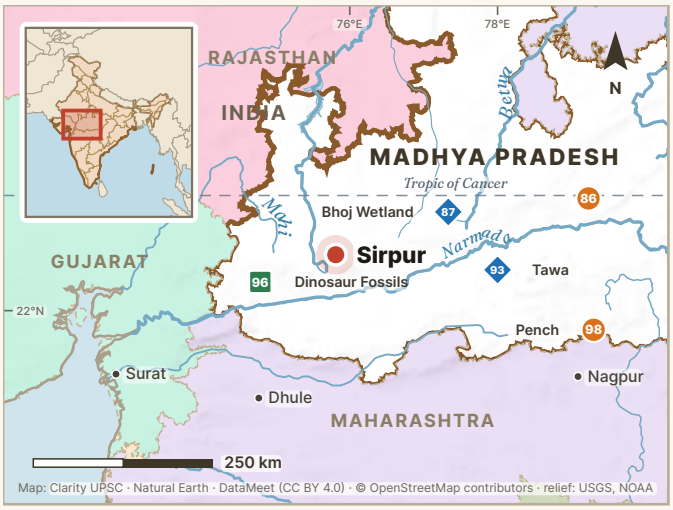
Indore district has two Ramsar sites. Both were listed on 7 January 2022. Yashwant Sagar is the reservoir on the Gambhir river, west of the city. Sirpur Wetland is the smaller lake on the edge of the city.

92 Sirpur Wetland

Indore · **Madhya Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2022 · 1.61 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Chambal sub-basin of the Yamuna basin	**Shallow, alkaline freshwater lake at the edge of the city**	**Common pochard, Egyptian vulture, river tern**	**Smallest Ramsar site of Madhya Pradesh (161 hectares)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sirpur is on the Ramsar list only. The Ramsar record of 2022 says that it is being developed as a bird sanctuary and a centre for learning about nature. Yashwant Sagar, the other Ramsar site of Indore district, lies west of the city.

Sirpur Wetland lies on the edge of Indore city. The Holkar rulers of Indore State made it. Over about two centuries it has come to look like a natural lake. The wetland is shallow, and the monsoon fills it to a depth of at most 2 metres. Many people call it Pakshi Vihar, which means bird sanctuary.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sirpur Wetland became a Ramsar site on 7 January 2022. Its site number is 2478. With 161 hectares, it is the smallest of the five Ramsar sites of Madhya Pradesh.
- The Ramsar record describes Sirpur as a shallow, alkaline freshwater wetland that is rich in nutrients. Its catchment, the land that drains into it, covers about 1,000 hectares.
- The record lists 130 species of birds, 30 species of fish and 175 species of land plants. The Indore Municipal Corporation looks after the wetland.
- Its birds include the Egyptian vulture, which IUCN lists as Endangered. The common pochard and the river tern also come here, and IUCN lists both as Vulnerable.

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93 Tawa Reservoir

Narmadapuram · **Madhya Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2024 · 200.5 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Tawa, with its tributary the Denwa	**Reservoir beside the forests of the Satpura hills**	**Indian skimmer, river tern, tor mahseer**	**Largest Ramsar site of Madhya Pradesh (20,050 hectares)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Tawa Reservoir lies inside Satpura Tiger Reserve. It forms the western boundary of Satpura National Park and Bori Wildlife Sanctuary.

Tawa Reservoir lies where the Tawa and the Denwa rivers meet, about 26 km south-east of Itarsi town. It was built mainly for irrigation. It is now also used for power and fish farming. Its waters and shores are an important home for many resident and migratory birds.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tawa Reservoir became a Ramsar site on 8 January 2024. Its site number is 2547. India announced it on 14 August 2024, when its count of Ramsar sites reached 85.
- The Tawa rises in the Mahadeo hills and joins the Narmada in Narmadapuram district. The Press Information Bureau calls it the longest tributary of the Narmada, at 172 km.
- The reservoir covers 20,050 hectares. It is the largest of the five Ramsar sites of Madhya Pradesh.
- The Ramsar record lists 57 species of fish, including the tor mahseer, the state fish of Madhya Pradesh. Its birds include the Indian skimmer and the river tern.

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94 Satpura National Park and Tiger Reserve

Narmadapuram and Chhindwara · **Madhya Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 1999 · 2,133.31 sq km | **National park** 1981 · 528.73 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Denwa and Tawa, which drain to the Narmada	**Satpura hills, from 300 m to Dhoopgarh (1,352 m)**	**Tiger, gaur, hard-ground barasingha, Indian giant squirrel**	**Bori forest, a reserve forest since 1865**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Satpura National Park and the Bori and Pachmarhi wildlife sanctuaries form the core of Satpura Tiger Reserve. The same three areas are in the core zone of Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve. Tawa Reservoir, a Ramsar site, lies inside the tiger reserve.

Satpura Tiger Reserve lies in the Satpura hills of Narmadapuram district, south of the Narmada river. The land rises from 300 metres to 1,352 metres at Dhoopgarh. Sal forest grows on the sandstone of the Pachmarhi plateau. Teak grows on the lower land, where the rock is basalt.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Satpura National Park was declared in 1981. The area came under Project Tiger in 1999–2000. Madhya Pradesh declared its core of 1,339.26 sq km in 2007.
- Bori was declared a reserve forest, a forest protected by law, in 1865. The National Tiger Conservation Authority's 2023 profile of tiger reserves calls the area the first reserve forest of India.
- The reserve has the three highest peaks of central India: Dhoopgarh (1,352 m), Mahadeo (1,330 m) and Chauragarh (1,308 m). The hill station of Pachmarhi lies inside it.
- The Satpura range separates the river basins of the Narmada and the Tapti. The Denwa meets the Tawa at Tawa Reservoir.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

29 March 2026 In January 2026 twelve hard-ground barasingha were moved from Kanha to Satpura Tiger Reserve. They were eight adult females and four fawns. Between 2015 and 2023, 98 barasingha had been moved there in seven phases. A Wildlife Institute of India study, reported in April 2026, found that they had grown to 172 by 2023.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

The Satpura range lies south of the Narmada. The Vindhyan range lies north of it. Satpura Tiger Reserve is in the Satpura range.

95 Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve

Narmadapuram, Chhindwara and Betul · **Madhya Pradesh**

Biosphere reserve 1999 · 4,981.72 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Denwa and Tawa, with the Dudhi near the eastern edge	**Pachmarhi plateau and Satpura hills, up to 1,352 m**	**Gaur, tiger, Indian giant squirrel**	**First biosphere reserve of Madhya Pradesh (1999)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The core zone includes Satpura National Park and the Bori and Pachmarhi wildlife sanctuaries. These three areas are also the core of Satpura Tiger Reserve. The biosphere reserve is more than twice as large as the tiger reserve.

Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve covers parts of Narmadapuram, Chhindwara and Betul districts. The Satpura range crosses India from west to east. The Pachmarhi plateau lies at its centre. Forests cover about 63 per cent of the reserve. Teak and sal are the most common trees. Gond and Korku people live in the reserve.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Government of India declared the reserve on 3 March 1999. UNESCO added it to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2009.
- The reserve covers 4,981.72 sq km. Its core zone covers 1,555.23 sq km and its buffer zone 1,785.58 sq km. The outer transition zone covers 1,640.91 sq km.
- Dhoopgarh, at 1,352 metres, is the highest peak of the reserve. Mahadeo and Chauragarh are other well-known peaks here.
- UNESCO calls the Pachmarhi plateau the 'Queen of Satpura'. Captain James Forsyth explored the area in 1862. He wrote about its many caves.

PRELIMS TRAP

Pachmarhi is the name of a hill town, a wildlife sanctuary and a biosphere reserve. The tiger reserve and the national park in the same hills are both called Satpura.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2005 · Q82

Which one of the following is not a Biosphere Reserve?

(a) Agasthyamalai (b) Nallamalai (c) Nilgiri (d) Panchmarhi

ANSWER **(b) Nallamalai.** Pachmarhi became a biosphere reserve in 1999. Nallamalai is a hill range and is not on the list of biosphere reserves.

96 Dinosaur Fossils National Park

Dhar · **Madhya Pradesh**

National park 2011 · 0.9 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Narmada valley	**Fossil beds in the Bagh area of Dhar district**	**Fossil dinosaur eggs and bones, sharks and trees**	**National park made for dinosaur fossils (2011)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Dinosaur Fossils National Park is on the national parks list only.

Dinosaur Fossils National Park lies in the Bagh area of Dhar district, in the Narmada valley. The district administration lists fossil eggs and bones of dinosaurs in the park. It also lists remains of sharks, fossil trees and fossil sea animals. Scientists have found many dinosaur nests in other parts of Dhar district. Some of these nests have been moved to the park.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The park was declared in 2011 and covers 0.897 sq km. It has the second smallest area on the Wildlife Institute of India's table, after Fossil National Park.
- The district administration says that the fossil eggs of plant-eating dinosaurs kept here are 65 million years old. It also lists bones of sauropod and abelisaur dinosaurs.
- A study published in 2023 recorded 92 egg clutches, or nests, with 256 eggs of titanosaurs in Dhar district. Titanosaurs were a group of very large plant-eating dinosaurs.
- The eggs lie in rocks called the Lameta Formation, from the Late Cretaceous period. The same rocks have dinosaur eggs near Jabalpur and at Balasinor in Gujarat.

97

Kanha National Park and Tiger Reserve

Mandla and Balaghat · **Madhya Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 1973 · 2,051.79 sq km | **National park** 1955 · 941.79 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Banjar and Halon, which drain to the Narmada	Maikal hills, with meadows and flat hilltops called dadars	Tiger, hard-ground barasingha, gaur, dhole	Among the first nine tiger reserves (1973)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kanha National Park forms the core of Kanha Tiger Reserve. Phen Wildlife Sanctuary, of 110.74 sq km, is a small second core. The same field director, who heads the reserve, manages both.

Kanha Tiger Reserve lies in the Maikal hills of the Satpura range, in Mandla and Balaghat districts. Sal forest, mixed forest, grassy meadows and flat hilltops called dadars make up the land. Two rivers, the Banjar and the Halon, flow through the reserve. Tigers, leopards and dholes, or wild dogs, live in Kanha. So do gaur and sloth bears.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Part of the Banjar valley became a wildlife sanctuary in 1933. Part of the Halon valley became one in 1935. The Banjar valley sanctuary became Kanha National Park in 1955.
- Kanha was one of the first nine tiger reserves when Project Tiger began in 1973. In the 2022 tiger survey, camera traps identified 105 tigers in the reserve.
- Only 66 hard-ground barasingha were left in Kanha by 1970. Reports in 2026 said there were about 1,100. This deer is the state animal of Madhya Pradesh.
- With 941.793 sq km, Kanha is the largest national park of Madhya Pradesh. Forest corridors link it with Pench and with Achanakmar in Chhattisgarh.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

26 April 2026 Three cubs of the tigress T-141 were found dead in Kanha between 21 and 26 April 2026. The tigress and her last cub were moved to the Mukki quarantine centre on 27 April. Both died soon after. In early May, tests in a Jabalpur laboratory confirmed canine distemper virus as the cause. Vaccination of dogs in nearby villages began.

8 October 2026 A three-year-old tigress died on 6 October 2026 at the wildlife treatment centre in the Mukki range of Kanha. A patrol team had found her very weak on 26 August. During treatment she showed symptoms of canine distemper. Officials said that she was not from Kanha. Samples were sent to a laboratory in Jabalpur.

14 October 2026 Eight wild water buffaloes from Kaziranga National Park in Assam reached Kanha in two groups, on 28 April and 9 May 2026. On 11 October 2026 the six females and two males left a one-hectare enclosure. They moved into a 17-hectare enclosure in the Supkhar range. Madhya Pradesh plans to bring 50 buffaloes in three years.

PRELIMS TRAP

Kanha is the natural home of the hard-ground barasingha. Animals from Kanha have since been moved to Satpura and Bandhavgarh tiger reserves and to Van Vihar National Park. The deer now lives in those places too.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2020 · Q75

Which one of the following protected areas is well-known for the conservation of a sub-species of the Indian swamp deer (Barasingha) that thrives well on hard ground and is exclusively graminivorous ?

(a) Kanha National Park
(b) Manas National Park
(c) Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary
(d) Tal Chhapar Wildlife Sanctuary

UPSC KEY **(a) Kanha National Park.** Kanha saved the hard-ground barasingha, the swamp deer that lives on firm ground and eats only grass. Only 66 were left by 1970.

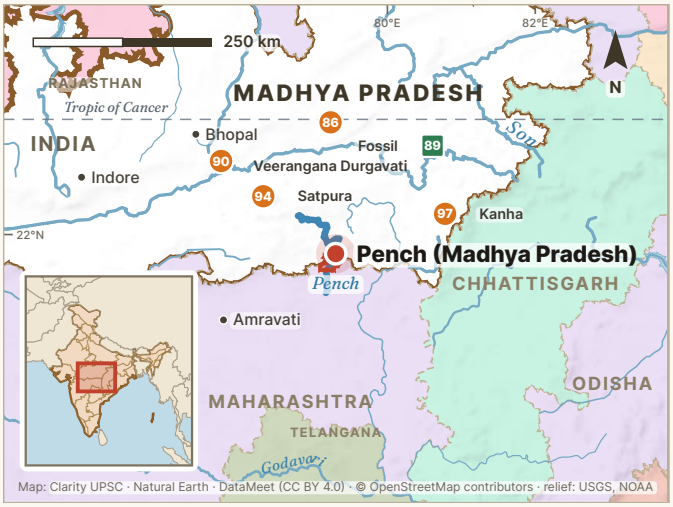
98

Pench National Park and Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh)

Seoni and Chhindwara · **Madhya Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 1992 · 1,179.63 sq km | **National park** 1975 · 292.86 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Pench, which flows from north to south	Southern slopes of the Satpura range	Tiger, chital, gaur, wild dog	Forests linked with Kipling's 'The Jungle Book'



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Indira Priyadarshini Pench National Park and Pench Mowgli Sanctuary form the core of the tiger reserve.

Pench Tiger Reserve lies on the southern slopes of the Satpura range, in Seoni and Chhindwara districts. The Pench river flows through it from north to south. The river forms the boundary between the two districts. The reserve is known for large herds of chital, sambar, nilgai and gaur. Pench Tiger Reserve of Maharashtra joins it on the southern side.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The tiger reserve has a core of 411.33 sq km. Its buffer, the outer zone around the core, covers 768.30 sq km.
- Pench came under Project Tiger in 1992–93. It is number 19 on the list of tiger reserves. In the 2022 tiger survey, camera traps identified 77 tigers in the reserve.
- The Meghdoot dam on the Pench river at Totladoh forms a reservoir of 72 sq km. Of this, 54 sq km is in Madhya Pradesh, and the rest is in Maharashtra.
- Forests of Seoni, Balaghat and Mandla districts connect Pench with Kanha. A corridor also links Pench with Satpura Tiger Reserve.

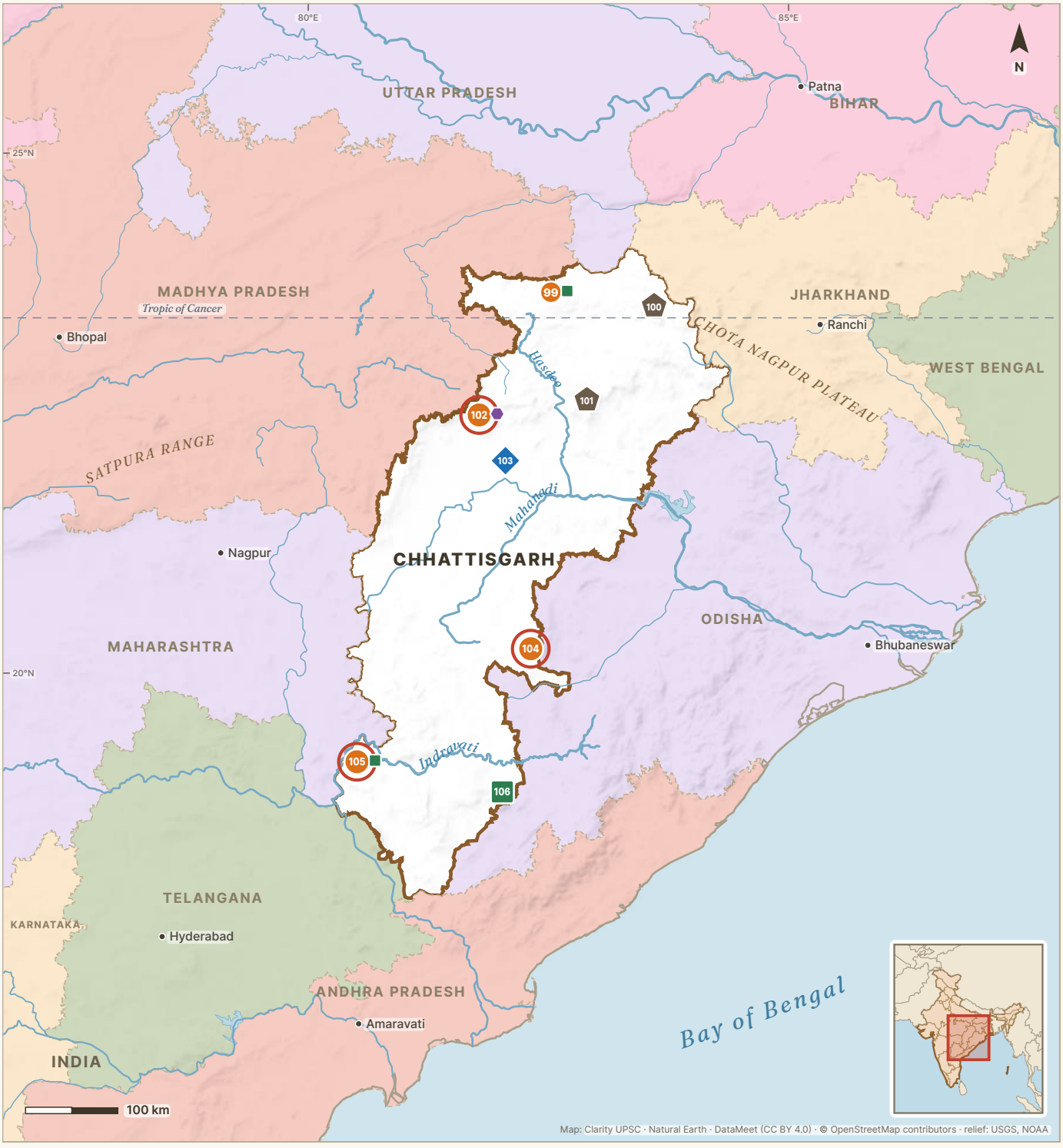
PRELIMS TRAP

Two tiger reserves and two national parks carry the name Pench. One pair is in Seoni and Chhindwara districts of Madhya Pradesh. The other pair is in Nagpur district of Maharashtra. The lists count each of the four separately.

Chhattisgarh

4 tiger reserves · 3 national parks · 1 Ramsar site · 1 biosphere reserve · 2 elephant reserves

Chhattisgarh lies in central India. The Chota Nagpur and Baghelkhand plateaus rise in the north. The Mahanadi plains lie in the centre, and the Bastar plateau forms the south. Sal forests grow in its four tiger reserves and three national parks, and most of them also have teak. Both elephant reserves are in the north. Achanakmar-Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve lies in the Maikal hills. The only Ramsar site is a reservoir near Bilaspur.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

Chhattisgarh: its areas

Guru Ghasidas 125
Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur, Korea, Surajpur and Balrampur

Badalkhol-Tamorpingla 126
Surajpur, Balrampur-Ramanujganj and Jashpur (the official lists print Surguja and Jashpur)

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Kopra 129
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Gariaband and Dhamtari

Indravati 131
Bijapur

Kanger Valley 132
Bastar

99 Guru Ghasidas National Park and Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve

Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur, Korea, Surajpur and Balrampur · **Chhattisgarh**

Tiger reserve 2024 · 2,829.39 sq km | **National park** 1981 · 1,440.71 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Gopad rises in the park. Rihand, a Son tributary, drains Tamor Pingla	**Chota Nagpur and Baghelkhand plateaus, hills of 300 to 950 m**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, Indian wolf, chinkara**	**Third largest tiger reserve of India (56th, notified 2024)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Guru Ghasidas National Park and Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary form the core of Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve. Tamor Pingla is also one of the three sanctuaries of Badalkhol-Tamorpingla Elephant Reserve.

Guru Ghasidas National Park lies in north-western Chhattisgarh. Forest covers its hills, which rise from about 300 metres to 950 metres. Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary lies to its east. The tiger reserve lies on the Chota Nagpur plateau and partly on the Baghelkhand plateau.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- From 1981 the park was part of Sanjay National Park of undivided Madhya Pradesh. Chhattisgarh notified it as a separate park on 7 August 2001 and named it after Guru Ghasidas.
- The park covers 1,440.71 sq km and is the largest national park of Chhattisgarh. Tigers, Indian wolves and sloth bears live in it. Chinkara and sambar live there too, and elephants use its forests.
- Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla became India's 56th tiger reserve in 2024. It covers about 2,829 sq km and is India's third largest tiger reserve, after Nagarjunsagar Srisailam and Manas.
- The reserve borders Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh. The two form a landscape of nearly 4,500 sq km. Forest links reach Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in the west and Palamau in the east.

PRELIMS TRAP

The Madhya Pradesh part of the old Sanjay National Park is still called Sanjay National Park. It lies in Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve. Sanjay Gandhi National Park, with a similar name, is in Mumbai.

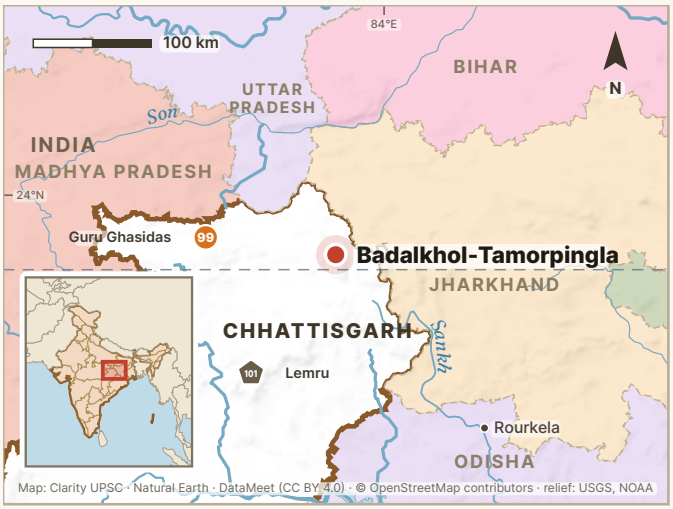
100

Badalkhol-Tamorpingla Elephant Reserve

Surajpur, Balrampur-Ramanujganj and Jashpur (the official lists print Surguja and Jashpur) · **Chhattisgarh**

Elephant reserve 2011 · 1,143.34 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Rihand (Tamor Pingla) and Ib (Badalkhol)	**Hills and plateaus of north Chhattisgarh, 333 to 1,236 m**	**Asian elephant, leopard, sloth bear**	**First elephant reserve of Chhattisgarh (15 September 2011)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary is the largest of the three parts. It also forms the core of Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve, together with Guru Ghasidas National Park.

Badalkhol-Tamorpingla Elephant Reserve lies in north Chhattisgarh, near the borders of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. It is made up of three separate wildlife sanctuaries: Tamor Pingla, Semarsot and Badalkhol. Sal and mixed deciduous forest covers its hills and plateaus, which lie between 333 metres and 1,236 metres.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Chhattisgarh notified the reserve on 15 September 2011 as Sarguja-Jashpur Elephant Reserve. The Union Environment Ministry's lists now call it Badalkhol-Tamorpingla.
- The notification gives the reserve 1,143.34 sq km. Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary covers 608.53 sq km of it. Semarsot covers 430.36 sq km, and Badalkhol covers 104.45 sq km.
- Elephants had disappeared from Chhattisgarh by the mid-20th century. Herds came in from Jharkhand in 1988 and began to enter regularly from 1995. The 2021–25 estimate gave the state 451 elephants.
- Badalkhol, in Jashpur district, was once a hunting reserve of the rulers of Jashpur. The forest department says elephant herds from neighbouring states use it as a corridor, a route between forests.

PRELIMS TRAP

Badalkhol-Tamorpingla and Guru Ghasidas-Tamor Pingla share the Tamor Pingla sanctuary. The first is an elephant reserve of 2011, and the second is a tiger reserve of 2024.

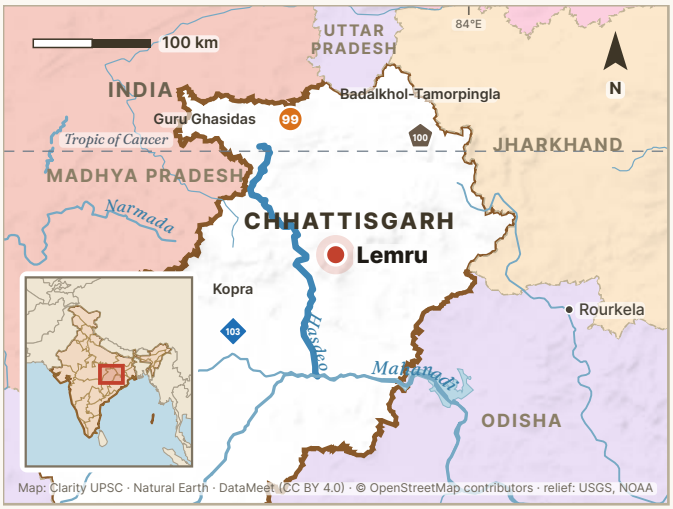
101

Lemru Elephant Reserve

Korba, Surguja and Raigarh · **Chhattisgarh**

Elephant reserve 2021 · 1,995.48 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Hasdeo, whose Bango reservoir lies at its western end	**Forested hills of north Korba, 254 to 1,164 m**	**Asian elephant**	**India's 31st elephant reserve (notified 7 October 2021)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Lemru is only on the list of elephant reserves. Chhattisgarh's other elephant reserve, Badalkhol-Tamorpingla, lies farther north.

Lemru Elephant Reserve covers the forested hills of north Korba district and nearby parts of Surguja and Raigarh. Forest covers 86% of the reserve. Most of it is sal and mixed deciduous forest with bamboo. The land lies between 254 metres and 1,164 metres.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- In 2007 the Union Government approved a Lemru Elephant Reserve of 450 sq km. Chhattisgarh did not notify it then. On 7 October 2021 the state notified a much larger reserve of 1,995.48 sq km.
- In 2009 Chhattisgarh rejected the Lemru proposal. It decided instead to form its first elephant reserve from the Badalkhol, Semarsot and Tamor Pingla sanctuaries.
- The reserve lies in a forest belt with coal deposits. In 2020 the magazine Down To Earth reported three coal blocks in the area proposed for it. These were Parsa East, Kanta Basan and Kete Extension.

PRELIMS TRAP

The Union Environment Ministry's web list still gives Lemru 450 sq km and the year 2022. The state notification of 7 October 2021 gives 1,995.48 sq km. The Ministry's elephant reserve atlas of 2023 uses the same figure.

102 Achanakmar Tiger Reserve and Achanakmar-Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve

Mungeli, Bilaspur and Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi in Chhattisgarh, Anuppur and Dindori in Madhya Pradesh · **Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh** · spans 2 states

Tiger reserve 2009 · 914.02 sq km | **Biosphere reserve** 2005 · 3,835.46 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Maniyari. The Narmada, Son and Johila rise in the biosphere reserve	**Maikal hills, near the meeting of the Vindhya and Satpura ranges**	**Tiger, gaur, four-horned antelope, dhole**	**UNESCO biosphere reserve since 2012 (notified in India in 2005)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Achanakmar Wildlife Sanctuary lies in the core of the tiger reserve. It is also the whole core zone of Achanakmar-Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve.

Achanakmar Tiger Reserve lies in the Maikal hills of Chhattisgarh. The land rises and falls gently, with several valleys. The Maniyari river flows through it. Its forests are mainly sal and mixed deciduous forests. The whole tiger reserve lies inside a larger biosphere reserve that reaches Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Achanakmar became a wildlife sanctuary in 1975 and a tiger reserve on 20 February 2009. Its core, the inner zone, covers 626.19 sq km. Its buffer, the zone around the core, covers 287.82 sq km.
- The biosphere reserve was notified on 30 March 2005. It joined UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2012. About 2,611 sq km of it is in Chhattisgarh and 1,225 sq km is in Madhya Pradesh.
- The Narmada, the Son and the Johila rise in the biosphere reserve, in and around Amarkantak.
- The Kanha–Achanakmar corridor links the reserve with Kanha Tiger Reserve. The 2022 national estimate found five tigers here. Forest department figures reported in September 2026 put the number at 18.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

28 January 2026 On 25 January 2026 a forest patrol found a young male tiger dead in the Kuderpani area of the reserve's Achanakmar range. The tiger was about two years old. The post-mortem found a broken neck bone and bite marks on the neck. Officials concluded that it died in a fight with another male tiger over territory.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Achanakmar Tiger Reserve is in Chhattisgarh. Amarkantak, where the Narmada and the Son rise, is in Anuppur district of Madhya Pradesh. It lies in the Maikal hills, where the Vindhya and Satpura ranges meet.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2009 · Q43

Also asked: 2007 · 2023

At which one of the following places do two important rivers of India originate; while one of them flows towards north and merges with another important river flowing towards Bay of Bengal, the other one flows towards Arabian Sea ?

(a) Amarkantak (b) Badrinath (c) Mahabaleshwar (d) Nasik

ANSWER **(a) Amarkantak.** The Son and the Narmada both rise at Amarkantak. The Son flows north and joins the Ganga, which reaches the Bay of Bengal. The Narmada flows west to the Arabian Sea.

103 Kopra Jalashay

Bilaspur · **Chhattisgarh**

Ramsar site 2025 · 2.1 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Overflow to the Ghonga, then the Maniyari and the Sheonath	**Irrigation reservoir in the upper Mahanadi basin, 287 to 295 m**	**Lesser whistling duck, northern pintail, Asian openbill**	**First and only Ramsar site of Chhattisgarh (2025)**



Kopra Jalashay is a reservoir in Takhatpur block of Bilaspur district, about 10 km west of Bilaspur city. Jalashay means reservoir. The Chhattisgarh Water Resources Department built it in 1993 for household use and irrigation. It covers 210 hectares. Resident and migratory waterbirds use it, and villagers fish in it.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Kopra Jalashay became a Ramsar site on 8 August 2025, with the site number 2583. India announced it on 12 December 2025. It is the first and only Ramsar site of Chhattisgarh.
- Kopra Jalashay qualified under Ramsar criterion 5 because it supports more than 20,000 waterbirds. Winter counts from 2019 to 2024 found between 20,000 and 25,500 birds.
- The Ramsar record lists 149 bird species. Of these, 88 are resident and 61 are migratory. The list includes the Egyptian vulture, the river tern, the greater spotted eagle and the common pochard.
- Water that overflows the reservoir enters the Ghonga river, which joins the Maniyari. The Maniyari then flows into the Sheonath, in the upper Mahanadi basin.

PRELIMS TRAP

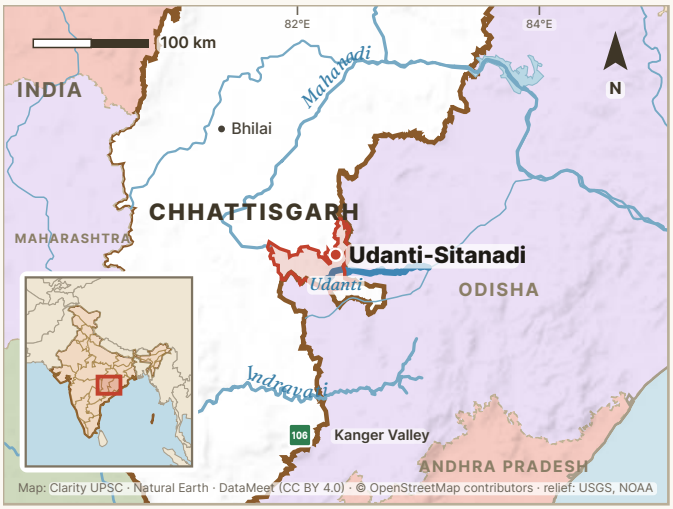
Kopra Jalashay is a reservoir near Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh. The Kopra irrigation project, in the news in February 2026, is a different project. It lies in Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh.

104 Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve

Gariaband and Dhamtari · **Chhattisgarh**

Tiger reserve 2009 · 1,842.54 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Udanti, Sitanadi, Indravan and Pairi, in the Mahanadi system	**Hills and valleys with sal, teak and bamboo forest**	**Wild water buffalo, tiger, Malabar pied hornbill, Indian wolf**	**Wild water buffalo, the state animal of Chhattisgarh**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Udanti and Sitanadi wildlife sanctuaries form the two core areas of the tiger reserve. The National Tiger Conservation Authority treats the reserve and Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary in Odisha as one tiger conservation unit.

Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve lies in Gariaband and Dhamtari districts, on the border with Odisha. Its Udanti part borders Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary and the Khariar forest division of Odisha. Sal, teak and mixed deciduous forests cover its hills and valleys, with bamboo on the slopes.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Chhattisgarh notified the tiger reserve on 20 February 2009. Its core, the inner zone, is 851.09 sq km. Its buffer, the zone around the core, is 991.45 sq km.
- Undivided Madhya Pradesh declared Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary in 1984. The reserve is named after the Udanti and Sitanadi rivers, which flow through its two parts.
- The wild water buffalo is the state animal of Chhattisgarh. The 2022 tiger report says that in central India the buffalo survives only in the Gadchiroli–Indravati forests and in Udanti-Sitanadi.
- The Udanti, Sitanadi, Indravan and Pairi rivers of the reserve belong to the Mahanadi system. The Godena and Deodhara waterfalls lie inside it.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

18 February 2026 In February 2026 the forest department began to set up six 'hornbill restaurants' in the reserve. These are groups of fig trees, such as peepal and banyan, whose fruit feeds the Malabar pied hornbill. The bird was first recorded in the reserve in 2017.

Full story

14 June 2026 In June 2026 the Indian Express reported that only one wild water buffalo was left in the reserve. In August 2026 officials said that this lone male was ageing. They planned to bring in three females, and 17 villages in the core area had agreed to their release.

4 October 2026 In October 2026 officials reported about 2,500 girdled trees near Karka village, in the area that drains into the Sondhur dam. Girdling removes a ring of bark and slowly kills a tree. Officials sought expert help to save more than 500 recently girdled trees by bridge grafting, which joins living tissue across the cut.

105

Indravati National Park and Tiger Reserve

Bijapur · **Chhattisgarh**

Tiger reserve 1982 · 2,799.07 sq km | **National park** 1982 · 1,258.37 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Indravati, a tributary of the Godavari	**Small hills of the Bastar region, with grasslands**	**Wild water buffalo, tiger, gaur, sloth bear**	**Oldest tiger reserve of Chhattisgarh (Project Tiger, 1982–83)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Indravati National Park forms the core of Indravati Tiger Reserve.

Indravati lies in Bijapur district, in the Bastar region of southern Chhattisgarh. The Indravati river forms its northern and western boundary. This is also the state border with Maharashtra. Small hills such as Kutru cover most of the land. Grasslands lie among moist and dry deciduous forests, some of them with teak.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Undivided Madhya Pradesh first notified the park as Kutru National Park, with 1,258.37 sq km. The tiger reserve adds a buffer of 1,540.70 sq km around it.
- Indravati came under Project Tiger in 1982–83 and is the oldest tiger reserve of Chhattisgarh. It covers 2,799.07 sq km and is India's fourth largest tiger reserve.
- The reserve and the Bhairamgarh and Pamed wildlife sanctuaries form the Indravati landscape. It is linked with the Kawal (Telangana), Tadoba (Maharashtra) and Kanha (Madhya Pradesh) tiger reserves.
- A forest department count of February and March 2025 recorded 14 to 17 wild water buffaloes in the reserve. Udanti-Sitanadi had only one in the same count.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

10 April 2026 In April 2026 officials announced plans to reopen Indravati Tiger Reserve to tourists. They also planned a tourism village on the bank of the Indravati. The reserve opened to tourists on 1 November 2026, for the first time in about four decades.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

The Indravati river is a tributary of the Godavari. A 2015 Prelims question tested this. The rivers of Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve drain to the Mahanadi instead.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2007 · Q33

Which of the following is located in the Bastar region?

(a) Bandhavgarh National Park
(b) Dandeli Sanctuary
(c) Rajaji National Park
(d) Indravati National Park

ANSWER **(d) Indravati National Park.** Indravati National Park lies in Bijapur district of the Bastar region. Bandhavgarh is in Madhya Pradesh, Dandeli in Karnataka and Rajaji in Uttarakhand.

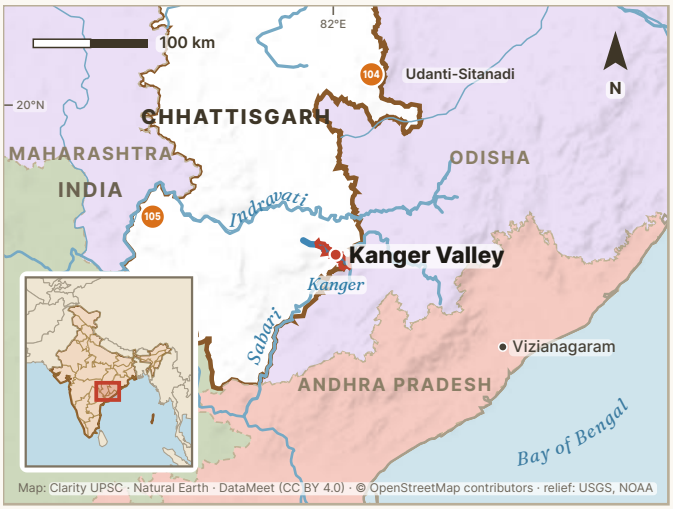
106

Kanger Valley National Park

Bastar · **Chhattisgarh**

National park 1982 · 200 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kanger, which joins the Kolab (Sabari) on the Odisha border	**Narrow valley in the Bastar region, with limestone caves**	**Bastar hill myna, leopard, dhole, Indian giant squirrel**	**On UNESCO's Tentative List for World Heritage (2025)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kanger Valley is on the national parks list only. The Chhattisgarh Forest Department says that the valley has also been proposed as a biosphere reserve. The proposal is under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme.

Kanger Valley National Park lies in Bastar district, about 27 km from Jagdalpur. It stretches from Tirathgarh to the Odisha border. The valley is about 34 km long and about 6 km wide on average. The Kanger river flows through its middle and gives the park its name. Moist peninsular sal forest covers much of it.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Undivided Madhya Pradesh notified its intention to create the park on 22 July 1982. The park covers 200 sq km in the Kanger, Darbha and Machkote forest ranges.
- The park has more than 20 limestone caves. The forest department dates the discovery of Kotumsar Cave to 1900. Its stalactites and stalagmites are still forming, and blind fish live in its pools.
- The Tirathgarh waterfall is on the Mungabahar river. The Kanger river joins the Kolab, also called the Sabari, which forms the border with Odisha.
- On 11 February 2025 India added the park to its Tentative List for UNESCO World Heritage, as a natural site. The list entry records 201 bird species, including the Bastar hill myna.

PRELIMS TRAP

Kanger Valley and Kanger Ghati are the same park. Ghati means valley. Prelims questions of 2004 and 2005 used the names Kanger Ghati and Kangerghat.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2004 · Q65

Also asked: 2005

Match List I (National Park/Sanctuary) with List II (State) and select the correct answer using the codes given below: List I A. Kanger Ghati National Park B. Nagerhole National Park C. Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary D. Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary List II 1. Chhattisgarh 2. Haryana 3. Himachal Pradesh 4. Karnataka

(a) A-3, B-2, C-1, D-4 (b) A-1, B-4, C-3, D-2 (c) A-3, B-4, C-1, D-2 (d) A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4

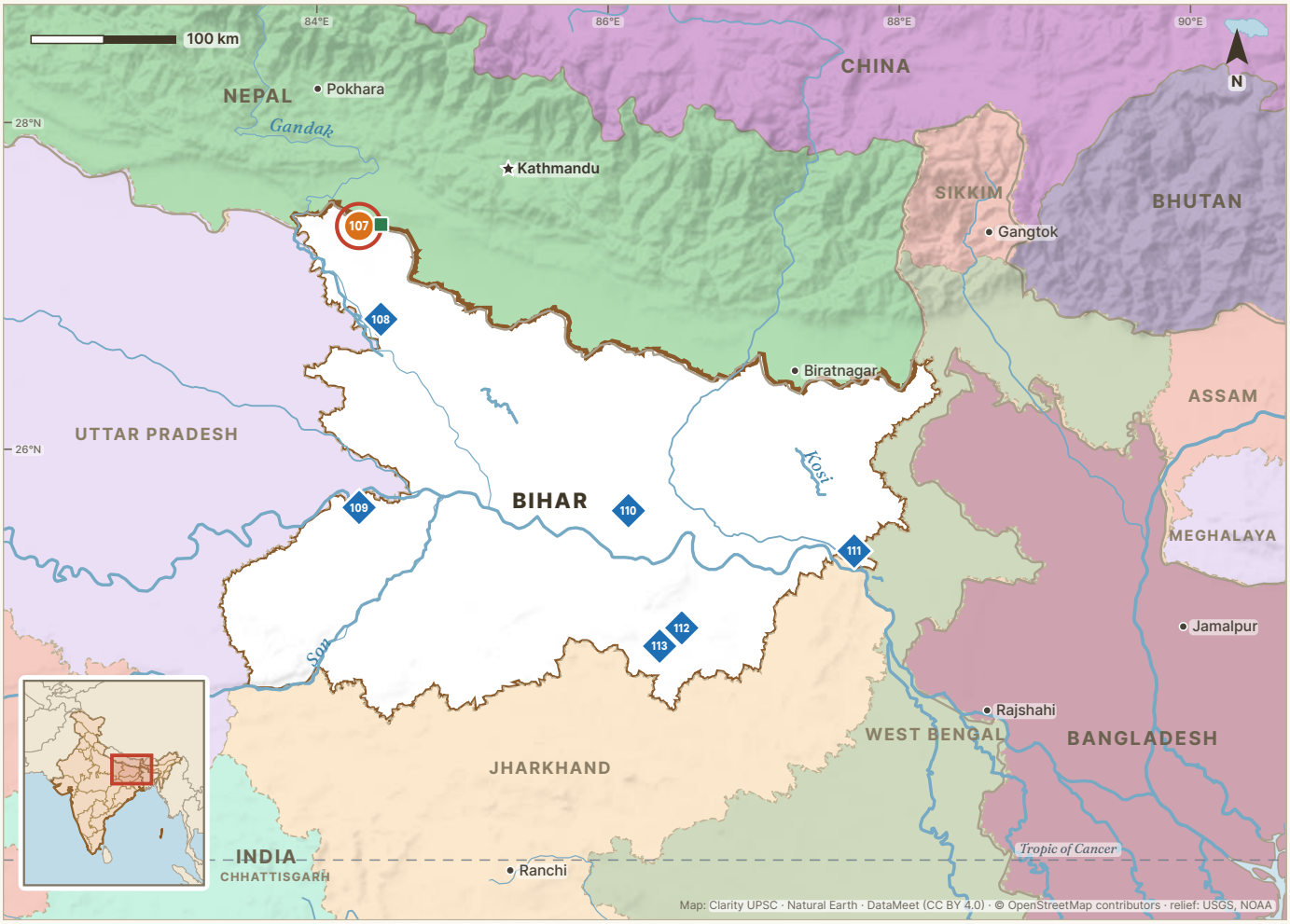
Since then: The question calls Sultanpur a bird sanctuary. It has been listed as a national park since 1989 and became a Ramsar site in 2021.

ANSWER **(b) A-1, B-4, C-3, D-2.** Kanger Ghati is in Chhattisgarh, Nagarhole in Karnataka, Kugti in Himachal Pradesh and Sultanpur in Haryana. So the code is A-1, B-4, C-3, D-2.

Bihar

1 tiger reserve 1 national park 6 Ramsar sites

Bihar lies in the middle Ganga plain. The Ganga crosses it from west to east. Rivers from Nepal, such as the Gandak and the Kosi, flow across the plain north of the Ganga. The Himalayan foothills reach only the north-western corner of the state. Valmiki Tiger Reserve lies there, on the border with Nepal. Bihar's six Ramsar sites are three oxbow lakes, a floodplain wetland and two reservoirs.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

107 **Valmiki** West Champaran	134	108 **Udaipur Jheel** West Champaran	135
109 **Gokul Jalashay** Buxar	136	110 **Kabartal** Begusarai	137
111 **Gogabil** Katihar	138	112 **Nakti** Jamui	139
113 **Nagi** Jamui	140		

107 Valmiki Tiger Reserve and National Park

West Champaran · **Bihar**

Tiger reserve 1989 · 899.38 sq km | **National park** 1989 · 335.65 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Gandak, with the Pandai, Manor, Harha and Masan	**Shivalik hills, doon valleys and the bhabar and terai**	**Tiger, gaur, wild dog, hog deer**	**Bihar's only tiger reserve, India's 18th (1989–90)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Valmiki National Park and Valmiki Wildlife Sanctuary together form the tiger reserve. In the north the reserve borders Chitwan National Park of Nepal. The forested border between them is about 100 km long.

Valmiki Tiger Reserve lies in the north-western corner of Bihar, in West Champaran district, along the border with Nepal. The Gandak river forms its western boundary. Rocky Shivalik hills and valleys called doons slope down to the plains. The vegetation is mainly sal and mixed forest, with grassland and swamps. Someshwar peak, the highest point of Bihar, lies in the reserve.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Valmiki came under Project Tiger in 1989–90 as the 18th tiger reserve of India. Bihar notified the reserve on 11 March 1994. It is the only tiger reserve of Bihar.
- Bihar notified Valmiki Wildlife Sanctuary on 4 May 1978. The reserve's history page says that part of the sanctuary became Valmiki National Park on 5 December 1990.
- The 2022 tiger estimate found 54 tigers in the reserve. In 2018 the estimate for the whole of Bihar was 31. Eight tigers were recorded both in Valmiki and in Chitwan National Park of Nepal.
- The 2022 tiger report says that Valmiki has the only gaur and wild dogs left in the Indian Terai. Rhinoceroses have been reported in its northern parts, which connect with Chitwan.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

15 July 2026 In July 2026 a news report called Valmiki Tiger Reserve one of Bihar's richest reptile habitats and a snake hotspot. It said that more than 45 species of snakes had been recorded there. It also said that monsoon floods were bringing more snakes close to villages.

Full story

13 September 2026 In September 2026 West Bengal prepared to move a tigress from Valmiki to Buxa Tiger Reserve. She was released at Buxa on 2 October 2026 with a radio collar. About three weeks later she crossed the Sankosh river into Raimona National Park in Assam.

PRELIMS TRAP

Valmiki in Bihar borders Chitwan National Park of Nepal. Farther west, in Uttar Pradesh, Pilibhit Tiger Reserve is linked with Shuklaphanta in Nepal. Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary is linked with Bardia National Park.

108 Udaipur Jheel

West Champaran · **Bihar**

Ramsar site 2025 · 3.19 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Gandak, joined to the lake by a canal	**Oxbow lake on the Gandak plain, with forest to the north and west**	**Common pochard and other wintering ducks**	**Ramsar site of 2025, added with Gokul Jalashay**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Udaipur Jheel is a Ramsar site, and most of it lies within Udaipur Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary's dense forest borders the lake on the north and west. The sanctuary is a small, separate forest, away from the main forest of Valmiki Tiger Reserve in the same district.

Udaipur Jheel is an oxbow lake in West Champaran district. An oxbow lake is a curved lake left behind when a river changes its course. This one formed in the floodplain of the Gandak. A canal joins it to the river. The lake almost surrounds a village, and jamun trees line its banks.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Udaipur Jheel became a Ramsar site on 13 May 2025, with the site number 2577. India added it to its list on 26 September 2025, together with Gokul Jalashay.
- More than 280 species of plants have been recorded in the sanctuary around the lake. They include Alysicarpus roxburghianus, a herb found only in India.
- About 35 species of migratory birds spend the winter at the lake. They include the common pochard, a duck that IUCN lists as Vulnerable.
- The Bettiah Forest Division manages the wetland. Illegal fishing and the heavy use of fertilisers and pesticides on nearby farms are the main threats.

PRELIMS TRAP

Udaipur Jheel is in West Champaran district of Bihar. The city of Udaipur is in Rajasthan. In January 2025 that city became one of India's first two Ramsar-accredited Wetland Cities, together with Indore.

109 Gokul Jalashay

Buxar · **Bihar**

Ramsar site 2025 · 4.48 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ganga floods and the Dharmavati River	**Oxbow lake on the southern edge of the Ganga floodplain**	**Blackbuck, waterbirds**	**Ramsar site of 2025, added with Udaipur Jheel**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Gokul Jalashay is on the Ramsar list only.

Gokul Jalashay is a permanent oxbow lake on the southern edge of the Ganga in Buxar district. The lake changes through the year with the rise and fall of the Ganga's floods. In the dry months, marshes and fields appear. After the monsoon, the water spreads. During floods the lake takes in water and protects the villages nearby.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Gokul Jalashay became a Ramsar site on 13 May 2025, with the site number 2576. It covers 448 hectares. India added it to its list on 26 September 2025.
- The Ramsar record lists 57 species of birds in and around the lake. The lake is also an important home of the blackbuck. The blackbuck is in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Local people use the lake for fishing, farming and irrigation. Every year, during a traditional festival, villagers work together to clear weeds. They also clean the land that drains into the lake.

PRELIMS TRAP

Gokul Jalashay is in Buxar district of Bihar. Kopra Jalashay, another Ramsar site of 2025, is in Chhattisgarh.

ON CLARITYUPSC.COM · DAILY QUIZ

Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

clarityupsc.com/daily-quiz

110 Kabartal Wetland (Kanwar Jheel)

Begusarai · **Bihar**

Ramsar site 2020 · 26.2 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Burhi Gandak	**Floodplain wetland of the Gandak–Kosi plain in north Bihar**	**Wintering ducks and coots, vultures, Baer's pochard**	**Bihar's first Ramsar site (2020)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kabartal is a Ramsar site and also a bird sanctuary, Kanwar Jheel Pakshi Vihar. The sanctuary covers 6,311.63 hectares, more than the 2,620 hectares of the Ramsar site. The Ramsar record describes Kabartal as one of 18 wetlands in a large floodplain complex.

Kabartal, also called Kanwar Jheel, is a floodplain wetland in Begusarai district of north Bihar. It is the largest of a group of shallow wetlands. They lie in a low area between the Burhi Gandak and an old channel of the Bagmati. In the monsoon Kabartal floods to a depth of 1.5 metres. In the dry season parts of the marsh dry out, and farmers grow crops there.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Kabartal became a Ramsar site on 21 July 2020, with the site number 2436. It covers 2,620 hectares and was the first Ramsar site of Bihar.
- Bihar declared the area a bird sanctuary in 1989. More than 200 species of birds have been recorded here, and 58 of them are migratory waterbirds.
- Five Critically Endangered species are found here. Three are vultures: the red-headed, white-rumped and Indian vultures. The other two are the sociable lapwing and Baer's pochard.
- The wetland soaks up floodwater and recharges groundwater. Its fisheries and farms support nearly 15,000 households in 17 villages.

PRELIMS TRAP

Kabartal lies beside the Burhi Gandak, a different river from the Gandak. A 2023 Prelims statement said that the meandering, or winding, of the Gandak formed Kanwar Lake. UPSC's answer key treated this statement as wrong.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2023 · Q1

Consider the following statements : 1. Jhelum River passes through Wular Lake. 2. Krishna River directly feeds Kolleru Lake. 3. Meandering of Gandak River formed Kanwar Lake. How many of the statements given above are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) All three (d) None

UPSC KEY **(a) Only one.** Only statement 1 is correct. The Jhelum flows through Wular Lake. The Krishna does not feed Kolleru directly. Kanwar Lake lies by the Burhi Gandak, not the Gandak.

111 Gogabil Lake

Katihar · **Bihar**

Ramsar site 2025 · 0.87 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Mahananda and Ganga	**Oxbow lake on the plain between the Mahananda and the Ganga**	**Bar-headed goose, red-crested pochard, black-bellied tern**	**Bihar's first community reserve (2019)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Gogabil is a Ramsar site. It is also a community reserve and a conservation reserve under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. A community reserve is community or private land that people have offered for conservation. Gogabil covers 86.63 hectares and is the smallest of Bihar's six Ramsar sites.

Gogabil Lake is an oxbow lake in the Amdabad block of Katihar district. The Bihar Government says that it formed when the Mahananda changed its course. The Mahananda flows to its north-east and the Ganga to its south. In floods the lake joins both rivers. Local people use it for irrigation, fishing and boating.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Gogabil became a Ramsar site on 13 May 2025, with the site number 2579. India added it to its list on 30 October 2025 as its 94th site.
- In August 2019 Bihar declared Gogabil its first community reserve. About 57 hectares are a community reserve, and about 30 hectares are a conservation reserve.
- Large flocks of bar-headed and greylag geese spend the winter here. So do red-crested pochards, common pochards and northern pintails. The Endangered black-bellied tern has also been recorded.

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112

Nakti Bird Sanctuary

Jamui · **Bihar**

Ramsar site 2023 · 3.33 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Nakti	**Reservoir of the Nakti Dam, among hills with dry deciduous forest**	**Red-crested pochard, black-bellied tern**	**About 2% of the regional red-crested pochard population**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nakti is a Ramsar site and a bird sanctuary. Nagi Bird Sanctuary, another Ramsar site, lies about 5 km to its south-west in the same district.

Nakti Bird Sanctuary is a human-made wetland in Jamui district of south Bihar. It formed after the Nakti Dam was built on the Nakti River, mainly for irrigation. The land that drains into it is mostly dry deciduous forest, with hills around. Its water serves farms and homes, and its floodplain recharges the groundwater.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Nakti became a Ramsar site on 11 October 2023, with the site number 2546. India added it to its list, together with Nagi, on 5 June 2024.
- Bihar declared the wetland a bird sanctuary in 1987. More than 20,000 birds gather here in winter.
- Nakti has one of the largest gatherings of the red-crested pochard on the Indo-Gangetic plain. It supports about 2% of the regional population of this duck.

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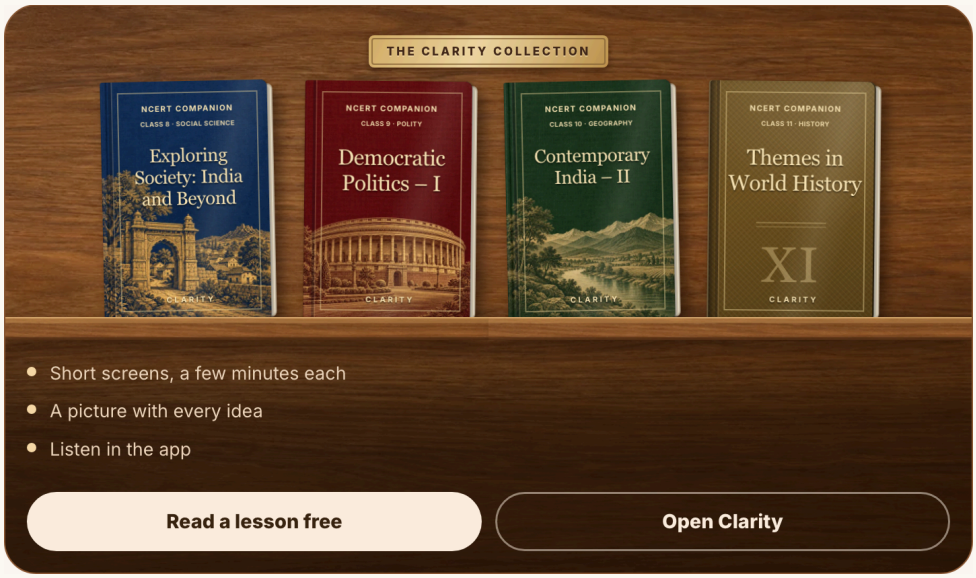

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113 Nagi Bird Sanctuary

Jamui · **Bihar**

Ramsar site 2023 · 2.06 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Nagi	**Reservoir among farmland and rocky hillocks**	**Bar-headed goose, Baer's pochard, steppe eagle**	**Over 1.6% of the flyway's bar-headed geese, with Nakti**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nagi is a Ramsar site and a bird sanctuary. Nakti Bird Sanctuary, another Ramsar site, lies about 5 km to its north-east in the same district.

Nagi Bird Sanctuary is a reservoir in Jamui district of south Bihar. It formed after a dam was built on the Nagi River to store monsoon water for irrigation. Canals carry its water to about 4,000 hectares of farmland. Fields and rocky hillocks surround the lake. Its water is clear and has many water plants.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Nagi became a Ramsar site on 11 October 2023, with the site number 2545. India added it to its list, together with Nakti, on 5 June 2024.
- The wetland was declared a bird sanctuary in 1987. Many birds that migrate along the Central Asian Flyway spend the winter here. A flyway is a route that migratory birds follow every year.
- About 1,600 bar-headed geese have been counted at Nagi and nearby Nakti. This is more than 1.6% of the whole flyway population of the species.
- Nagi's winter visitors include the Critically Endangered Baer's pochard and the Endangered steppe eagle.

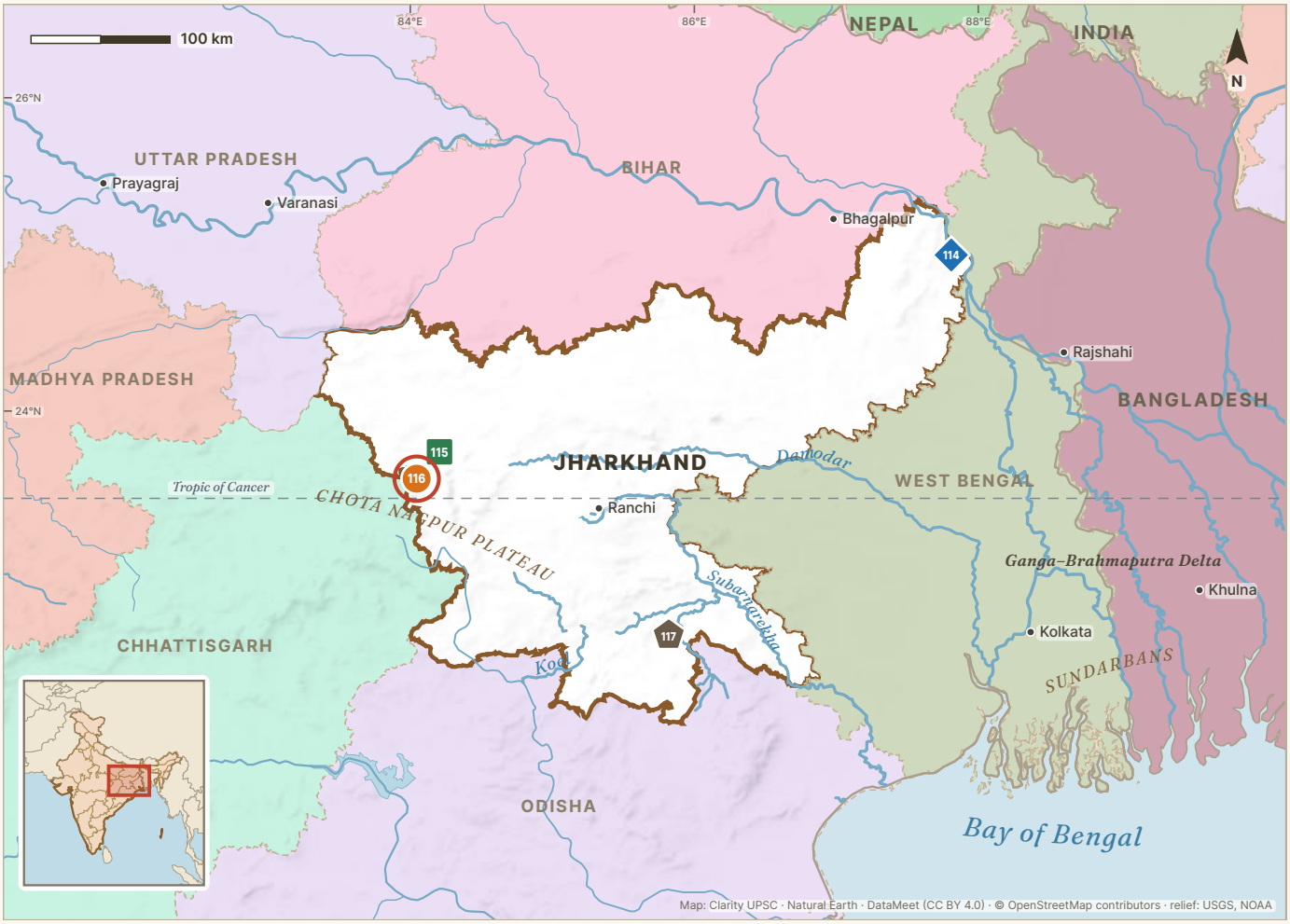
PRELIMS TRAP

Nagi and Nakti are two separate Ramsar sites. Both are reservoirs in Jamui district. Nagi is known for its bar-headed geese, and Nakti for its red-crested pochards.

Jharkhand

1 tiger reserve · 1 national park · 1 Ramsar site · 1 elephant reserve

Jharkhand lies mostly on the Chota Nagpur plateau, which has old rocks, forested hills and mineral deposits. Palamau Tiger Reserve, with Betla National Park inside it, lies in the west of the state. Singhbhum Elephant Reserve lies in the south. Udhwa Lake, the only Ramsar site of Jharkhand, lies on the Ganga plain in Sahibganj district, in the north-east.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

114 **Udhwa** Sahibganj	142	115 **Betla** Latehar	143
116 **Palamau** Latehar and Garhwa	144	117 **Singhbhum** West Singhbhum, Seraikela-Kharsawan and East Singhbhum	145

114 Udhwa Lake Bird Sanctuary

Sahibganj · **Jharkhand**

Ramsar site 2024 · 9.36 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ganga, through the Udhwa Nala	Ganga floodplain at the foot of the Rajmahal hills	Woolly-necked stork, lesser adjutant, fishing cat	First Ramsar site of Jharkhand (2024)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Udhwa is a Ramsar site and a bird sanctuary. The Ramsar site covers 935.5 hectares. The sanctuary covers 565 hectares, which is the area of the two lakes.

Udhwa Lake Bird Sanctuary lies in the Rajmahal subdivision of Sahibganj district. It has two connected lakes, Pataura and Berhale, on the alluvial plain of the Ganga. Hillocks of the Rajmahal hills surround them. A stream called the Udhwa Nala joins the lakes to the Ganga near the Farakka Barrage. It is their main source of water.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Udhwa became a Ramsar site on 8 January 2024, with the site number 2559. India added it to its list on 30 January 2025. It was the first Ramsar site of Jharkhand and is still the only one.
- Bihar notified the two lakes as a bird sanctuary in 1991, before Jharkhand became a separate state. Pataura covers 155 hectares, and Berhale covers 410 hectares.
- The Ramsar record calls Udhwa the largest natural Gangetic floodplain wetland of Jharkhand. It lists 146 species of birds and more than 45 species of fish. It also lists the fishing cat and the otter.
- About 14 of its species are threatened. They include the woolly-necked stork, the lesser adjutant and the common pochard. In 2016 Udhwa was named an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area.

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115

Betla National Park

Latehar · **Jharkhand**

National park 1986 · 226.33 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
North Koel, Auranga and Burha drain the tiger reserve	Sal and bamboo forest of the Chota Nagpur plateau	Asian elephant, gaur, chital, leopard	Only national park of Jharkhand (1986)



Betla National Park lies in Latehar district, about 25 km from Daltonganj, on the Chota Nagpur plateau. It is the main tourist centre of Palamau Tiger Reserve. Forest, hills and valleys surround the village of Betla. Chital and gaur graze in the grasslands. Elephants, leopards, wolves and wild dogs also live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Betla became a national park in 1986 and covers 226.33 sq km. The Jharkhand Forest Department describes it as the only national park of the state.
- The core of Palamau Tiger Reserve covers 414.08 sq km. Betla makes up more than half of this core.
- The 2022 tiger report says that sambar in Jharkhand are seen mainly in Betla National Park and Hazaribag Wildlife Sanctuary.

ON THE OTHER LISTS

Betla National Park lies in the core of Palamau Tiger Reserve, the only tiger reserve of Jharkhand.

PRELIMS TRAP

Betla National Park covers 226.33 sq km. It lies inside Palamau Tiger Reserve, which covers 1,129.93 sq km. The tiger reserve is the larger area, and Betla is a part of its core.

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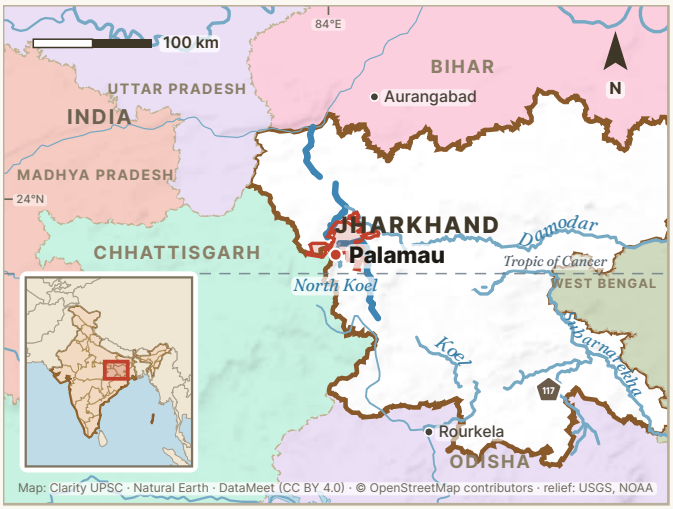
116 Palamau Tiger Reserve

Latehar and Garhwa · **Jharkhand**

Tiger reserve 1973 · 1,129.93 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
North Koel, Auranga and Burha	Western Chota Nagpur plateau, from Netarhat to the Auranga	Asian elephant, Indian grey wolf, gaur, four-horned antelope	One of the first nine Project Tiger reserves (1973–74)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Betla National Park, the only national park of Jharkhand, forms part of the core of Palamau Tiger Reserve. Forests in Chhattisgarh link the reserve with Sanjay-Dubri and Bandhavgarh tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh.

Palamau Tiger Reserve lies on the western part of the Chota Nagpur plateau, in Latehar and Garhwa districts. It stretches from the Netarhat hills in the south to the Auranga river in the north. Sal grows in the valleys, and dry deciduous forest covers the upper slopes. There are also bamboo and open grassy patches. Lodh Falls, the highest waterfall of Jharkhand, lies in it.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Palamau was one of the nine tiger reserves of the first Project Tiger year, 1973–74. It covers 1,129.93 sq km. Its core is 414.08 sq km, and its buffer, the zone around the core, is 715.85 sq km.
- The Jharkhand Forest Department's Palamau page says that the world's first tiger census by pugmarks was held here in 1932. A pugmark is a big cat's footprint. Its Betla page says 1934.
- The 2022 tiger estimate found no photograph of a tiger in the reserve. Genetic tests showed that three tiger droppings came from the same animal. So only one tiger was present.
- The North Koel, the Auranga and the Burha flow through its valleys. The elephant, the Indian grey wolf and the wild dog live here. So do the gaur, the sloth bear and the four-horned antelope.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

23 February 2026 On 17 February 2026 the south division of the reserve started a programme called 'Vanjeevi Didi' in its Garu range. It chose 18 educated women from each of 17 villages to work as ambassadors for the forest and its wildlife. Each woman was to receive ₹3,000 a month during a two-month trial.

Full story

14 May 2026 In May 2026 Jharkhand drafted a proposal for India's first research centre on conflict between people and elephants. A 20-acre site was chosen inside the reserve, between Palamu Fort and Kamaldah Lake. It would analyse conflict data, study elephant calls and behaviour, and use artificial intelligence to suggest solutions.

12 October 2026 During Wildlife Week in October 2026, people of 25 villages in the Garu area of the reserve handed over 31 country-made guns. ETV Bharat reported on 9 October 2026 that they came forward on their own.

PRELIMS TRAP

The North Koel flows through Palamau and joins the Son, a tributary of the Ganga. The South Koel is a different river. It meets the Sankh in Odisha, and together they form the Brahmani.

117

Singhbhum Elephant Reserve

West Singhbhum, Seraikela-Kharsawan and East Singhbhum · **Jharkhand**

Elephant reserve 2001 · 13,440 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Subarnarekha, beside Dalma	**Hills and sal forests of Saranda, Kolhan, Porahat and Dhalbhum**	**Asian elephant, sloth bear, barking deer**	**Largest elephant reserve of India (13,440 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Singhbhum Elephant Reserve borders Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve of Odisha in the south. It also borders Mayurjharna Elephant Reserve of West Bengal.

Singhbhum Elephant Reserve covers southern Jharkhand, in West Singhbhum, Seraikela-Kharsawan and East Singhbhum districts. It includes the forests of Saranda, Kolhan and Porahat. The Chaibasa and Dhalbhum forests are also part of it. Forest covers about 38% of the reserve. This forest is mainly sal and dry mixed deciduous forest. The land rises from 37 metres to 942 metres.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Jharkhand notified the reserve on 26 September 2001. This is the earliest date of notification in the Union Environment Ministry's list of elephant reserves.
- Singhbhum covers 13,440 sq km and is the largest elephant reserve of India. Mysore Elephant Reserve in Karnataka is the second largest.
- Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary lies inside the reserve, near Jamshedpur, and covers 193.22 sq km. Bihar notified it on 17 July 1976, before Jharkhand became a separate state.
- According to the 2021–25 elephant estimate, Jharkhand has 217 wild elephants. It was the first national estimate based on DNA. The report says it cannot be compared with older counts.

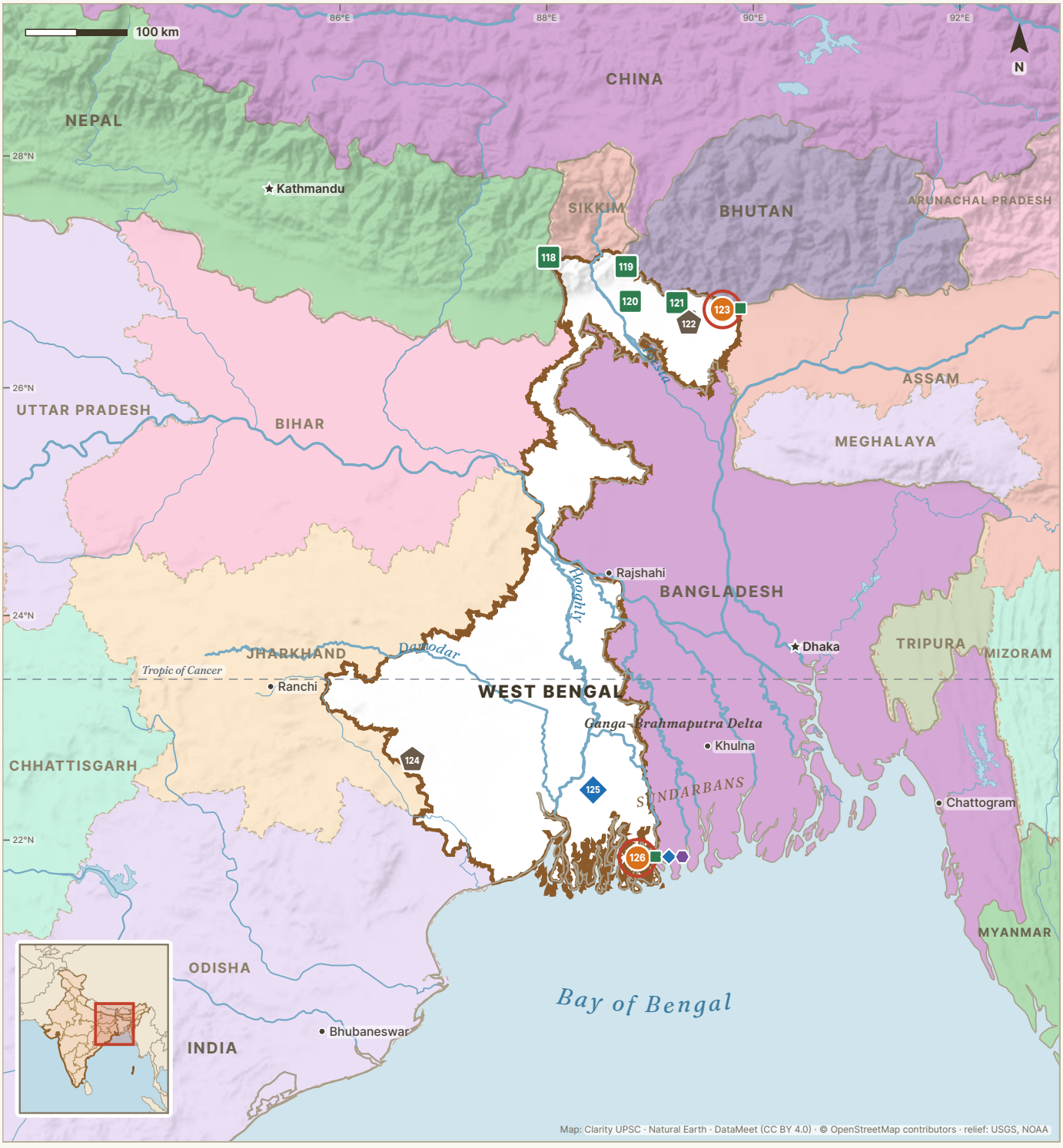
PRELIMS TRAP

Official lists give two areas for Singhbhum. The Union Environment Ministry's web list still prints 4,530 sq km. The Parliament reply of December 2023 and the 2023 atlas give 13,440 sq km.

West Bengal

2 tiger reserves · 6 national parks · 2 Ramsar sites · 1 biosphere reserve · 2 elephant reserves

West Bengal stretches from the Eastern Himalaya in Darjeeling and Kalimpong to the Bay of Bengal. Five of its six national parks lie in the north. Two are in the hills, and three are in the Dooars, the forest belt below Bhutan. Buxa, one of these three, is also a tiger reserve. In the south, the Sundarbans mangrove delta is on four of the five lists. East Calcutta Wetlands lies beside Kolkata.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

West Bengal: its areas

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119 **Neora Valley** — Kalimpong — 149

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121 **Jaldapara** — Alipurduar — 151

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118 Singalila National Park

Darjeeling · **West Bengal**

National park 1986 · 78.6 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Rammam and Sirikhola	Singalila Ridge of the Eastern Himalaya, above 2,100 m	Red panda, Himalayan black bear, satyr tragopan	Sandakphu (3,636 m), the highest peak of West Bengal



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Singalila is on the national parks list only.

Singalila National Park lies on the Singalila Ridge in Darjeeling district. It is at a height of more than 7,000 feet, or about 2,100 metres. Sikkim is to its north and Nepal is to its west. Forests of bamboo, oak, magnolia and rhododendron cover the ridge between 2,000 and 3,600 metres. The trekking route from Manebhanjan to Sandakphu and Phalut runs through the park.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sandakphu, at 3,636 metres, and Phalut, at 3,600 metres, are the two highest peaks of West Bengal. Both stand on the Singalila Ridge, inside the park.
- Singalila has been protected since 1986. The park covers 78.60 sq km, and the Rammam and the Sirikhola rivers flow through it.
- The Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park in Darjeeling bred two female red pandas. They were released in Singalila in November 2004, and one of them later gave birth in the wild.

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119 Neora Valley National Park

Kalimpong · **West Bengal**

National park 1986 · 159.89 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Neora	Eastern Himalayan hill forest, from 183 m to about 3,200 m	Red panda, clouded leopard, musk deer	On India's tentative list for World Heritage since 2009



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Neora Valley is on the national parks list only. To its south, the forests of Jalpaiguri district connect it with Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary and Gorumara National Park.

Neora Valley National Park lies in the Kalimpong hills of the Eastern Himalaya. The land rises from 183 metres to about 3,200 metres near the border with Sikkim. The forest changes with height, from subtropical broadleaf forest to temperate forest and rhododendron forest. Much of the park is hard to reach, so the forest has stayed largely undisturbed.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The park touches Sikkim in the north and Bhutan in the north-east. It links Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary in Sikkim with the Toorsa Strict Reserve of Bhutan.
- Rechela Danda, at about 10,600 feet, is the highest point of the park. Water from the park feeds the Neora river, which supplies drinking water to Kalimpong.
- India placed the park on its tentative list for World Heritage on 26 May 2009. This is the list of sites that a country plans to nominate to UNESCO.
- The Wildlife Institute of India gives the park the year 1986 and an area of 159.89 sq km. Camera traps of the 2022 tiger estimate photographed a tiger here.

PRELIMS TRAP

Prelims has used Neora Valley as a wrong option in two questions on climate zones of national parks. The 2015 answer was Namdapha, where the climate varies from tropical to arctic. The 2019 answer was Valley of Flowers. Neora Valley rises from 183 metres to about 3,200 metres.

120

Gorumara National Park

Jalpaiguri · **West Bengal**

National park 1992 · 79.45 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Jaldhaka and Murti	Dooars floodplain: sal forest and grassland along rivers	Greater one-horned rhinoceros, gaur, Asian elephant	Rhinoceros sanctuary since 1949



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Gorumara is on the national parks list only. Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary lies close to it. The notification of Eastern Dooars Elephant Reserve places both in its zone of influence. This zone lies outside the reserve itself.

Gorumara National Park lies in the Dooars of Jalpaiguri district. The Dooars is a belt of forest and river grassland at the foot of the Eastern Himalaya. The park lies on the floodplain of the Murti, and its main river is the Jaldhaka. Sal forest, bamboo groves and grassland cover the land. Its large animals are rhinoceroses, gaur and elephants.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Gorumara was a reserve forest from 1895. It became a wildlife sanctuary in 1949 because the greater one-horned rhinoceros bred there.
- The count of 5 and 6 March 2025 estimated 61 rhinoceroses in Gorumara. The estimate for the whole of West Bengal was 392.
- The Jaldhaka belongs to the Brahmaputra river system. The national park covers 79.45 sq km. The Wildlife Institute of India gives its year as 1992.
- The leopard is the only big cat that lives in the park. The state forest department says that tigers are seen here only occasionally.

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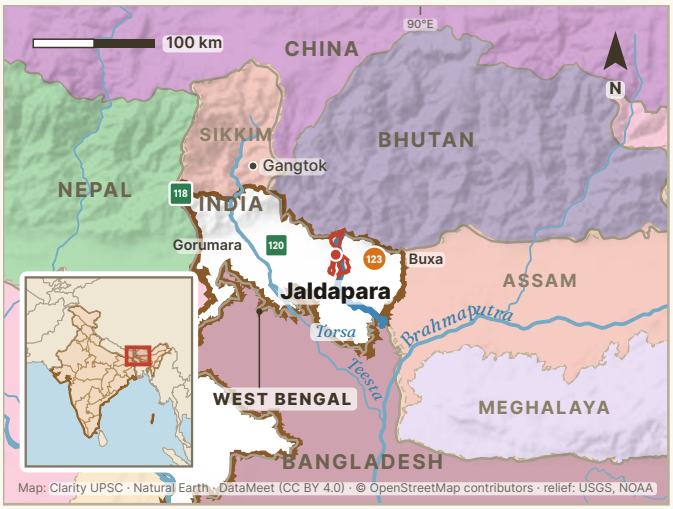
121 Jaldapara National Park

Alipurduar · **West Bengal**

National park 2014 · 216.34 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Torsa	Tall-grass savannah of the Dooars, at about 61 m	Greater one-horned rhinoceros, Asian elephant, Bengal florican	India's second-largest rhinoceros population, after Kaziranga



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Jaldapara lies inside Eastern Dooars Elephant Reserve. Forest corridors through Chilapata connect it with Buxa Tiger Reserve to its east. A corridor is a strip of forest that animals use to move between two areas.

Jaldapara National Park lies on the banks of the Torsa river in Alipurduar district, at the foot of the Eastern Himalaya. Most of the park is savannah, open grassland with tall elephant grass, at a height of about 61 metres. It has the most greater one-horned rhinoceroses in West Bengal. It is also one of the few places in India where the Bengal florican is seen.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The count of 5 and 6 March 2025 estimated 331 rhinoceroses in Jaldapara. All India Radio called it the second-largest habitat of the species in India, after Kaziranga in Assam.
- Jaldapara became a sanctuary on 13 March 1941 and was later made a national park. The Wildlife Institute of India gives the year 2014 and an area of 216.34 sq km.
- Totopara, the only village of the Toto tribe, lies next to the park.

PRELIMS TRAP

West Bengal has rhinoceroses in two national parks. Jaldapara lies on the Torsa in Alipurduar district. Gorumara lies on the Murti and the Jaldhaka in Jalpaiguri district.

122

Eastern Dooars Elephant Reserve

Alipurduar · **West Bengal**

Elephant reserve 2002 · 978 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Torsa in the west, Sankosh on the eastern edge	**Dooars forest and grassland below Bhutan, 43 to 1,754 m**	**Asian elephant, greater one-horned rhinoceros, gaur**	**Only elephant reserve of North Bengal (2002)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Buxa Tiger Reserve, Buxa National Park and Jaldapara National Park lie inside the elephant reserve.

Eastern Dooars Elephant Reserve covers the forests of the Dooars between Jaldapara and the Sankosh river. Bhutan lies to its north, and the Sankosh forms its eastern boundary. Sal forest, wet mixed forest and alluvial grassland, on soil laid down by rivers, cover the land. The land rises from 43 metres to 1,754 metres.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- West Bengal declared the reserve on 28 August 2002 under Project Elephant. The notification gives 977.51 sq km, with a core of 484 sq km and a buffer of 493.51 sq km. The buffer is the outer zone.
- The 2021–25 national estimate put the number of elephants in North Bengal at 676. The report calls Eastern Dooars the only elephant reserve of North Bengal.
- Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve of Assam adjoins it in the east, across the Sankosh river.
- The core consists of 369 sq km of Buxa Tiger Reserve and 115 sq km of Jaldapara. The notification also names a zone of influence of 1,800 sq km around the reserve, with tea gardens.

PRELIMS TRAP

An elephant reserve is declared under Project Elephant. The West Bengal notification says that it adds no legal controls under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Buxa and Jaldapara lie inside it, and that Act protects them as a tiger reserve and a national park.

123 Buxa Tiger Reserve and National Park

Alipurduar · **West Bengal**

Tiger reserve 1982 · 757.9 sq km | **National park** 1992 · 117.1 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Raidak and Jayanti, with the Sankosh in the east	**Plains rising to the Sinchula hills, up to about 1,750 m**	**Asian elephant, gaur, clouded leopard, tiger**	**A tigress from Valmiki was released here in October 2026**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Buxa National Park and Buxa Wildlife Sanctuary form the core of Buxa Tiger Reserve. The reserve lies inside Eastern Dooars Elephant Reserve. Elephants move between Buxa and Jaldapara National Park through the Chilapata forest.

Buxa Tiger Reserve lies in Alipurduar district. Its northern boundary runs along Bhutan and the Sinchula hills. Its eastern boundary touches Assam. Moist tropical forest spreads from the plains up to about 1,750 metres. Elephants, gaur and clouded leopards live here. The 2018 national tiger estimate recorded no tiger here, and the 2022 estimate recorded one.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Buxa joined Project Tiger in 1982–83. The tiger reserve covers 757.90 sq km. Its core, the strictly protected centre, covers 390.58 sq km, and its buffer 367.32 sq km.
- In 1992 West Bengal declared its intention to make 117.10 sq km of Buxa Wildlife Sanctuary a national park. The final notification came on 5 December 1997.
- The British used Buxa Fort, at about 2,600 feet, as a prison for many freedom fighters. The Raidak and the Jayanti rivers flow through the forest.
- Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary of Bhutan borders Buxa on the north. In the east, the forest at the Sankosh river joins Buxa with the Ripu forest of Assam.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

13 September 2026 In September 2026 West Bengal prepared to bring a tigress from Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar to Buxa. The animal was to be chosen at Valmiki after an assessment. Experts of the Wildlife Institute of India and the National Tiger Conservation Authority were to take part.

Full story

27 October 2026 The tigress was released at Buxa on 2 October 2026 with a radio collar. About three weeks later she crossed the Sankosh river into Raimona National Park in Assam. Forest officials tracked her through the collar. In early November 2026 forest teams caught her in Assam with a sedative dart and brought her back to Buxa.

PRELIMS TRAP

Buxa is in West Bengal, Raimona National Park is in Assam, and Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary is in Bhutan. The three form one connected landscape across the borders. Valmiki Tiger Reserve, the source of the tigress, is in Bihar on the border with Nepal.

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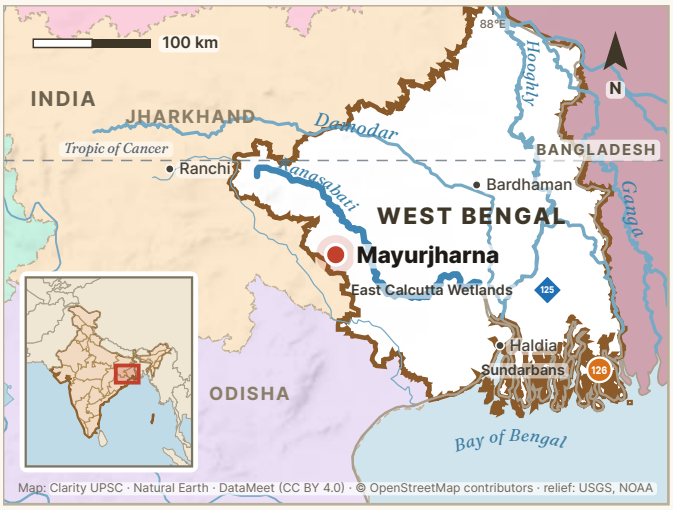
Mayurjharna Elephant Reserve

Jhargram, Bankura and Purulia · **West Bengal**

Elephant reserve 2002 · 414 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kangsabati, in the Ranibandh and Jhilimili forests	**Dry sal forest on low hills of south-west Bengal, 65 to 425 m**	**Asian elephant**	**Elephant reserve of South Bengal (2002)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Mayurjharna is on the elephant reserves list only.

Mayurjharna Elephant Reserve covers 414 sq km of forest where Jhargram, Bankura and Purulia districts meet. The land is low and hilly, between 65 and 425 metres. Dry sal forest and dry mixed deciduous forest grow here. Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary of Jharkhand lies to its west.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- West Bengal declared the reserve on 24 October 2002 under Project Elephant. Its forest blocks include Kankrajhore, Mayurjharna, Banspahari and Ranibundh.
- The reserve borders Singhbhum Elephant Reserve of Jharkhand, which is the largest elephant reserve in India.
- The 2021–25 national estimate put the number of elephants in South Bengal at 31. The report says that elephants come from Dalma into West Bengal every year between September and February.
- The notification of 2002 placed the reserve in Midnapore, Bankura and Purulia districts. The Midnapore part is now in Jhargram district.

PRELIMS TRAP

Mayurjharna Elephant Reserve is in West Bengal. Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve is in Odisha. Both adjoin Singhbhum Elephant Reserve of Jharkhand.

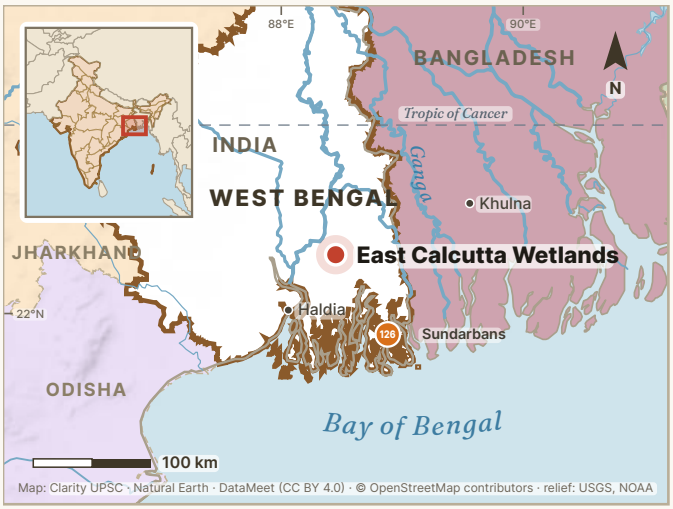
125

East Calcutta Wetlands

Kolkata, North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas · **West Bengal**

Ramsar site 2002 · 125 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Fed by the wastewater canals of Kolkata	Sewage-fed fish ponds, farms and marsh east of Kolkata	Pond-reared fish, waterfowl	World's largest wastewater-fed fish-farming system



ON THE OTHER LISTS

East Calcutta Wetlands is on the Ramsar list only.

East Calcutta Wetlands lies on the eastern edge of Kolkata, between Salt Lake and the new township at Rajarhat. The city's wastewater flows through fish ponds that cover about 4,000 hectares. Sunlight and natural oxidation clean the water. Algae and plankton grow in it and feed the fish. Plankton are tiny drifting plants and animals. The treated water is also used for farming.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- East Calcutta Wetlands became a Ramsar site on 19 August 2002, with the site number 1208. It covers 12,500 hectares. The Press Information Bureau writes the name as East Kolkata Wetlands.
- The Ramsar record says that the wetland has saved Kolkata the cost of building and running wastewater treatment plants. Local people developed the system over many years.
- The Ramsar record of 2002 says the wetland produces about 10,500 tonnes of fish a year and about 150 tonnes of vegetables a day. It has nearly 254 sewage-fed fisheries.
- A West Bengal law, the East Kolkata Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Act, 2006, protects the site. It set up the East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority.

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The Sundarbans: National Park, Tiger Reserve, Biosphere Reserve and Ramsar Site

South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas · **West Bengal**

Tiger reserve 1973 · 2,584.89 sq km | **National park** 1984 · 1,330.1 sq km | **Ramsar site** 2019 · 4,230 sq km | **Biosphere reserve** 1989 · 9,630 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Matla, Raimangal, Harinbhanga and other tidal rivers	Mangrove delta of the Ganga and the Brahmaputra	Tiger, saltwater crocodile, Irrawaddy dolphin, river terrapin	India's largest Ramsar site, and tigers in mangroves



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sundarban National Park and Sajnekhali Wildlife Sanctuary form the core of the tiger reserve. The national park is also the core of the biosphere reserve and a World Heritage Site. The tiger reserve lies inside the Ramsar site.

The Sundarbans is the mangrove delta of the Ganga and the Brahmaputra on the Bay of Bengal. Mangroves are trees that grow in salty tidal water. India and Bangladesh share the delta. The Indian part is a maze of tidal rivers, creeks and about 100 islands. The 2022 estimate put the number of tigers at 101 in the tiger reserve and the forest division beside it.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sundarban was one of the first nine tiger reserves of Project Tiger in 1973. The reserve covers 2,584.89 sq km, with a core, its strictly protected part, of 1,699.62 sq km.
- Sundarban National Park covers 1,330.10 sq km and dates from 1984. UNESCO added it to the World Heritage List in 1987.
- The biosphere reserve was declared on 29 March 1989 and covers 9,630 sq km. It joined UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2001.
- Sundarban Wetland became a Ramsar site on 30 January 2019. At 4,230 sq km it is the largest Ramsar site of India. The Ramsar record says that it has over 60% of India's mangrove forest area.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

18 January 2026 On 17 January 2026 the Union Environment Ministry began the second national estimate of river and estuarine dolphins. The work started at Bijnor in Uttar Pradesh. The plan placed the Sundarbans in the second phase. For the first time in this exercise, the Irrawaddy dolphin was to be estimated in the Sundarbans and Odisha.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

The World Heritage Site of 1987 covers only Sundarban National Park, 1,330.10 sq km. The biosphere reserve is far larger, at 9,630 sq km, and joined UNESCO's network in 2001. The Sundarbans of Bangladesh is a separate World Heritage Site, listed in 1997.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2012 · Q87

Also asked: 1995 · 2008 · 2014

Consider the following protected areas : 1. Bandipur 2. Bhitarkanika 3. Manas 4. Sunderbans Which of the above are declared Tiger Reserves?

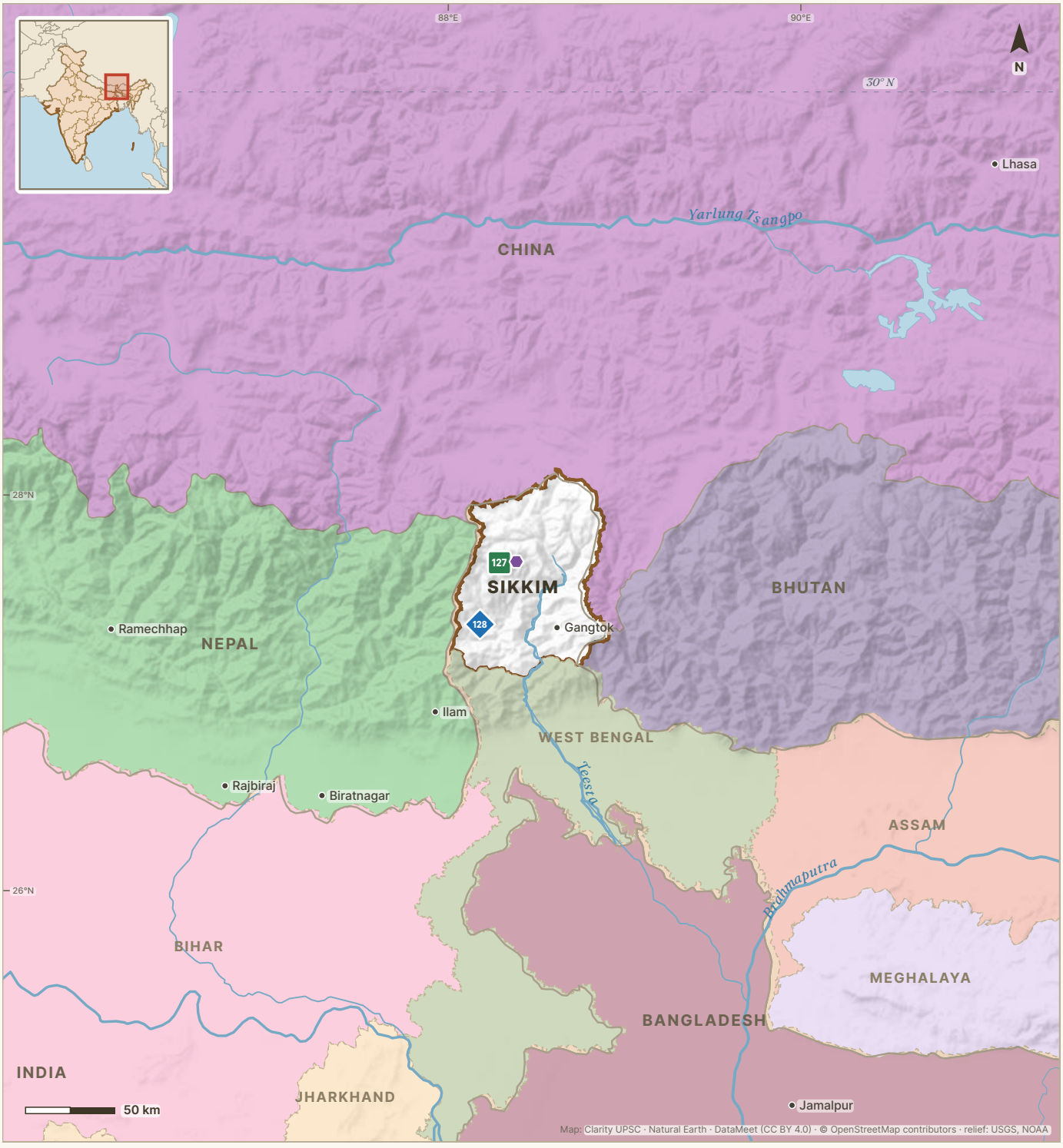
(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 1, 3 and 4 only (c) 2, 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

UPSC KEY (b) 1, 3 and 4 only. Bandipur, Manas and Sundarban are tiger reserves, all among the first nine of 1973. Bhitarkanika in Odisha is a national park, and it is not a tiger reserve.

Sikkim

1 national park 1 Ramsar site 1 biosphere reserve

Sikkim lies in the Eastern Himalaya. UNESCO says the range is at its narrowest here, and the land is very steep. Khangchendzonga National Park covers about a quarter of the state. It is the core of a biosphere reserve of the same name. Sikkim's one Ramsar site, Khachoedpalri, is a small sacred lake in Gyalshing district. The state is on three of the five lists: national parks, biosphere reserves and Ramsar sites.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

Sikkim: its areas

Khangchendzonga 159
Mangan and Gyalshing

Khachoedpalri 160
Gyalshing

127

Khangchendzonga National Park and Biosphere Reserve

Mangan and Gyalshing · **Sikkim**

National park 1977 · 1,784 sq km | **Biosphere reserve** 2000 · 2,931.12 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Streams fed by glaciers, in seven watersheds	**Eastern Himalaya, from 1,220 m to the summit at 8,586 m**	**Snow leopard, red panda, musk deer, blue sheep**	**India's first mixed World Heritage Site (2016)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The national park is the core zone of Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve, its most strictly protected part. The World Heritage Site also has a buffer zone, a protective belt around it. This belt lies inside the biosphere reserve. In Nepal, the park adjoins the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area.

Khangchendzonga National Park covers about a quarter of Sikkim, along the border with Nepal. The land rises from 1,220 metres to 8,586 metres at Mount Khangchendzonga, the third-highest peak in the world. The park has 18 glaciers, including the 26 km long Zemu Glacier, and 73 glacial lakes. The vegetation changes with height, from subtropical forest to alpine meadows.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The national park was set up in 1977 and enlarged in 1997. It covers 1,784 sq km.
- UNESCO added the park to the World Heritage List in 2016, for both its cultural and its natural value. It is India's first mixed World Heritage Site.
- India declared the biosphere reserve on 7 February 2000. It covers 2,931.12 sq km and joined UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2018.
- Buddhists regard the region as a beyul, a sacred hidden land. The Lepcha people call it Mayel Lyang. Six species of cat live in the park, among them the snow leopard.

PRELIMS TRAP

Khangchendzonga has two separate UNESCO labels. The national park became a World Heritage Site in 2016. The biosphere reserve joined UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2018. India had declared it in 2000.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2008 · Q90

Also asked: 2004

Out of all the Biosphere Reserves in India, four have been recognized on the World Network by UNESCO. Which one of the following is not one of them?

(a) Gulf of Mannar (b) Kanchenjunga (c) Nanda Devi (d) Sunderbans

Since then: Since then: Khangchendzonga joined the network in 2018. India now has 13 biosphere reserves in it. The 13th, Cold Desert, joined on 27 September 2025.

ANSWER **(b) Kanchenjunga.** By 2008 the four Indian reserves in UNESCO's network were Nilgiri, Gulf of Mannar, Sunderbans and Nanda Devi. Khangchendzonga (Kanchenjunga) was not yet one of them.

128 Khachoedpalri Wetland

Gyalshing · **Sikkim**

Ramsar site 2024 · 1.72 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Rathong Chu basin, which drains to the Rangit and the Teesta	**Hill lake and peatland at about 1,700 m, in temperate forest**	**Baer's pochard, red panda, Himalayan black bear**	**First Ramsar site of Sikkim (on the Ramsar list from 2024)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Khachoedpalri is on the Ramsar list only. The whole site lies in Dhupuk Reserve Forest. The Ramsar record says that the Khangchendzonga World Heritage Site lies next to it. A Sikkim notification of 20 September 2001 names the lake as one of the state's sacred natural sites.

Khachoedpalri Wetland lies in Gyalshing district of Sikkim, at about 1,700 metres. The site is made up of a lake, the peatland around it and the part of Dhupuk Reserve Forest that drains into the lake. The forest has evergreen oaks, chestnuts and laurels. The people of Sikkim hold the lake sacred, and pilgrims and tourists visit it.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Ramsar list gives the site the date 15 July 2024 and the number 2560. It covers 172 hectares. The Press Information Bureau calls it the first Ramsar site of Sikkim.
- India declared the site on 30 January 2025, together with three others. The number of Ramsar sites in India then rose from 85 to 89.
- The Ramsar record lists 682 species here. They include the Critically Endangered Baer's pochard, the Endangered red panda and the Himalayan black bear.
- Peat covers about 14.57 hectares of the basin. Peat is soil made of plant remains that have only partly decayed in waterlogged ground. It stores carbon.

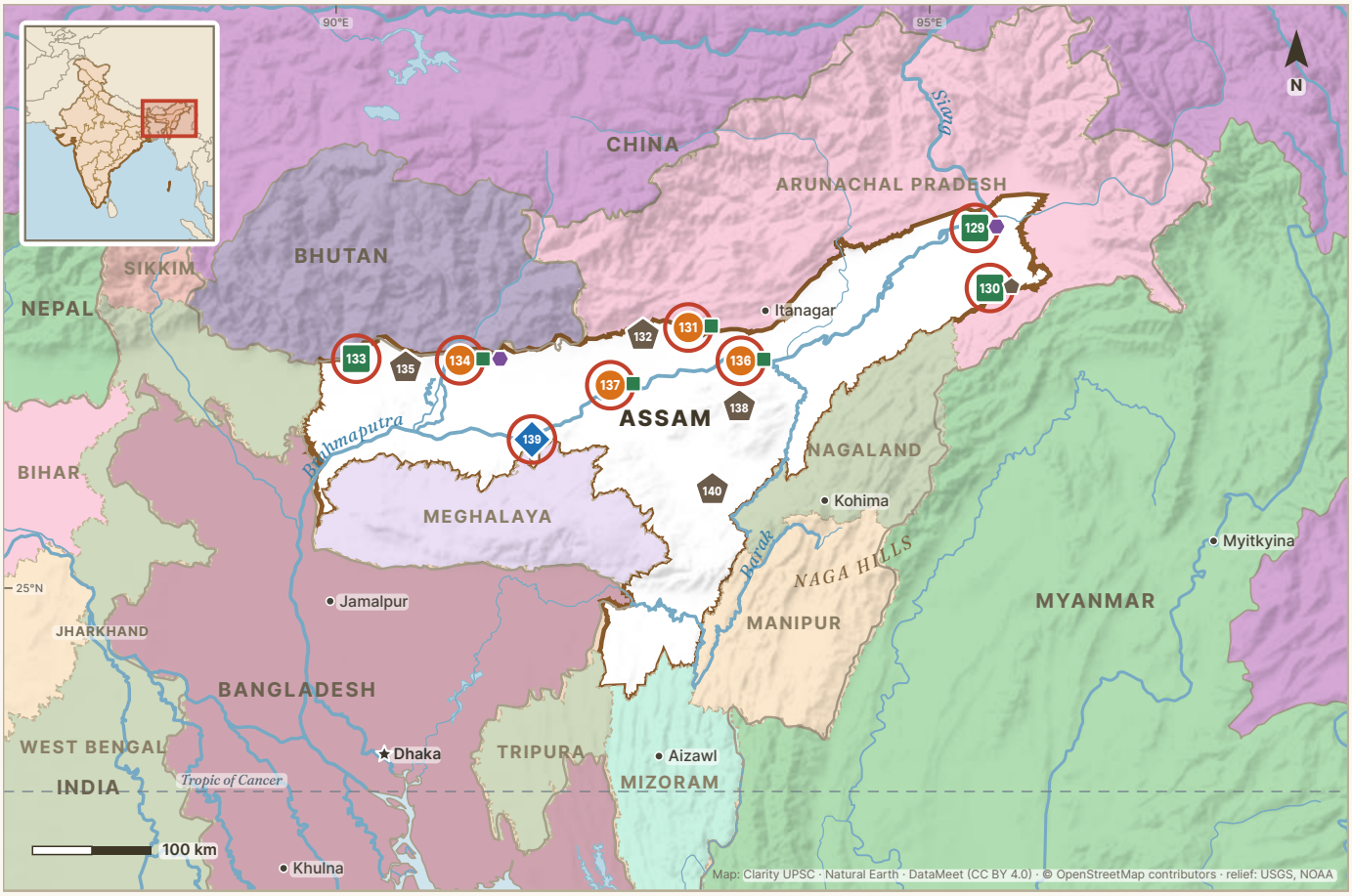
PRELIMS TRAP

The Ramsar list spells the name Khachoedpalri, while the Press Information Bureau writes Khecheopalri. Both names are for the same lake. The site has two dates: 15 July 2024 on the Ramsar list, and 30 January 2025, when India declared it.

Assam

4 tiger reserves · 7 national parks · 1 Ramsar site · 2 biosphere reserves · 5 elephant reserves

The Brahmaputra plain is one of Assam's three natural divisions. The Himalayan foothills along Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh rise to its north, and the Karbi Anglong hills to its south. Assam's seven national parks lie on the floodplain and in the foothills. Kaziranga and Manas Wildlife Sanctuary are World Heritage Sites. Assam also has four tiger reserves, five elephant reserves, two biosphere reserves and one Ramsar site, Deepor Beel.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

129 **Dibru-Saikhowa** — Tinsukia and Dibrugarh	162	130 **Dihing Patkai** — Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Sivasagar	163
131 **Nameri** — Sonitpur	164	132 **Sonitpur** — Sonitpur and Darrang	165
133 **Raimona** — Kokrajhar	166	134 **Manas** — Chirang, Baksa, Kokrajhar and Udalguri	167
135 **Chirang-Ripu** — Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup and Darrang (districts of 2003)	168	136 **Kaziranga** — Golaghat, Nagaon and Sonitpur	169
137 **Orang** — Darrang and Sonitpur	170	138 **Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong** — Golaghat, Karbi Anglong, Nagaon and Sonitpur	171
139 **Deepor Beel** — Kamrup Metropolitan	172	140 **Dhansiri-Lungding** — Karbi Anglong, Nagaon and Dima Hasao	173

129 Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Biosphere Reserve

Tinsukia and Dibrugarh · **Assam**

National park 1999 · 340 sq km | **Biosphere reserve** 1997 · 765 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Brahmaputra and Lohit (north), Dibru (south)	Low floodplain of swamp forest, grassland and river channels	Feral horse, wild water buffalo, Ganges river dolphin	Smallest biosphere reserve on the Ministry list (765 sq km)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Dibru-Saikhowa National Park is the core of Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve. The other 425 sq km of the reserve is buffer, the outer zone around the core. UNESCO has not added the biosphere reserve to its World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Dibru-Saikhowa lies in Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts of Upper Assam. It is a low floodplain. The Brahmaputra and the Lohit bound it on the north, and the Dibru on the south. Its habitats include grassland and swamp forest of Salix, or willow, trees. The Assam forest department says that the great earthquake of 1950 changed this habitat greatly.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The biosphere reserve was declared on 28 July 1997 with 765 sq km. Its 340 sq km core became Dibru-Saikhowa National Park in 1999.
- On the Union Environment Ministry's list, Dibru-Saikhowa is the smallest biosphere reserve of India.
- The park is known for its feral horses, horses that have gone wild. Wild water buffaloes, Ganges river dolphins and hoolock gibbons also live here.
- Two forest villages, Laika and Dodhia, lie inside the park. Walking and boats are the only ways to travel in its core. More than 382 bird species have been recorded here.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

13 April 2026 On 9 April 2026, the day of the Assam Legislative Assembly election, armed forest guards escorted polling teams to Laika and Dodhia. In the same month the forest department reported the park's first camera-trap photographs of a tiger. They were taken on 14 December 2025 and 1 January 2026.

Full story

23 September 2026 In September 2026 scientists of the Zoological Survey of India described a new parasitoid wasp, Oxyserphus narendrani. They described it from a specimen collected in the park in November 2024. It is the first record of its genus in India. A parasitoid grows in or on another animal, its host, and in the end kills it.

PRELIMS TRAP

Dibru-Saikhowa and Dihing Patkai lie in the same two districts, Tinsukia and Dibrugarh. Dibru-Saikhowa is a floodplain park on the Brahmaputra. Dihing Patkai protects lowland rainforest near the Patkai hills.

130 Dihing Patkai National Park and Elephant Reserve

Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Sivasagar · **Assam**

National park 2021 · 234.26 sq km | **Elephant reserve** 2003 · 937 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Dihing	Tropical wet evergreen forest below the Patkai hills	Asian elephant, tiger, leopard, clouded leopard	National park since June 2021, declared with Raimona



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Dihing Patkai National Park lies inside Dihing-Patkai Elephant Reserve. The elephant reserve also covers reserve forests in Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Sivasagar districts.

Dihing Patkai National Park lies in Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts of Upper Assam. It protects tropical wet evergreen forest, a lowland rainforest in which Dipterocarpus trees are typical. The name, also spelt Dehing Patkai, comes from the Dihing river and the Patkai hills. The rainforest continues into Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Dihing Patkai became a wildlife sanctuary on 19 June 2004. Assam declared it a national park in June 2021, together with Raimona. The two raised the state's number of national parks to seven.
- Dihing-Patkai Elephant Reserve was declared on 17 April 2003 and covers 937 sq km. It includes the Dihing Patkai sanctuary and more than 20 reserve forests, such as Upper Dihing, Digboi and Joypur.
- The elephant reserve adjoins South Arunachal Elephant Reserve to the east and Singphan Elephant Reserve of Nagaland to the south. Singphan is the smallest elephant reserve of India.
- The Dibrugarh district administration lists about 42 mammal and 40 reptile species here, and over 200 each of butterflies and birds. The elephant reserve gets about 4,000 mm of rain a year.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

25 August 2026 A camera-trap survey recorded a male tiger in Dihing Patkai National Park. The Zoological Survey of India ran the survey with the Margherita West forest range. Assam's forest minister announced the result on 19 August 2026. Before this, only pugmarks, the footprints of tigers, had suggested that tigers used the park.

131

Nameri National Park and Tiger Reserve

Sonitpur · **Assam**

Tiger reserve 1999 · 464 sq km | **National park** 1998 · 200 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Jia-Bhoroli (west) and Bor-Dikorai (east)	**Himalayan foothills on the north bank of the Brahmaputra**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, white-winged wood duck**	**Smallest tiger reserve in India by total area (464 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nameri National Park forms the core of Nameri Tiger Reserve. Part of Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary is a satellite core. The park and the sanctuary both lie inside Sonitpur Elephant Reserve.

Nameri lies in the north of Sonitpur district, along the foothills that rise into Arunachal Pradesh. The Jia-Bhoroli river forms the western boundary of the national park, and the Bor-Dikorai the eastern one. Evergreen, semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests cover most of the park. Grassland along the rivers covers less than a tenth of it.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Nameri National Park was declared in 1998 with 200 sq km. Nameri became a tiger reserve under Project Tiger in 1999–2000.
- The core of the tiger reserve covers 320 sq km. It is made of the national park and 120 sq km of Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary. This part became a satellite core, a separate core area, in 2015.
- The buffer, the outer zone, of 144 sq km comes from the Naduar and Balipara reserve forests. With 464 sq km in all, Nameri is the smallest tiger reserve on the national list.
- Pakke Tiger Reserve of Arunachal Pradesh adjoins Nameri to the north. The two share one tiger population. Nameri is famous for the white-winged wood duck.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

4 July 2026 In July 2026 Assam's forest minister said that Nameri had three tigers in 2022 and 12 by the end of 2025. He said that the Wildlife Institute of India had confirmed the figures. Two tigers had also returned to Sonai Rupai after decades.

Full story

9 October 2026 On 10 September 2026 Nameri received approval under Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards. This international system assesses how well a tiger area is managed. With Nameri, all four tiger reserves of Assam now have this approval.

PRELIMS TRAP

Nameri is in Assam, and Pakke, to its north, is in Arunachal Pradesh. The two tiger reserves adjoin each other, but each is a separate reserve.

132 Sonitpur Elephant Reserve

Sonitpur and Darrang · **Assam**

Elephant reserve 2003 · 1,420 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Jia-Bhoroli and other north-bank streams of the Brahmaputra	**Foothills and plains north of the Brahmaputra**	**Asian elephant, tiger, gaur**	**Contains Nameri National Park and Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sonitpur Elephant Reserve contains Nameri National Park and Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary. The park is the core of Nameri Tiger Reserve. Part of the sanctuary is a satellite core of the same tiger reserve.

Sonitpur Elephant Reserve lies in northern Assam, between the Brahmaputra and the hills of Arunachal Pradesh. Its reserve forests include Balipara, Naduar and Behali. Singlijan and Gohpur are also among them. The forest includes semi-evergreen forest, Mesua forest and sal on the upper bhabar, the gravelly belt at the foot of the hills. Forest covers about 39% of the reserve.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Assam declared the reserve in March 2003 under Project Elephant. It covers 1,420 sq km in Sonitpur and Darrang districts.
- It adjoins Kameng Elephant Reserve of Arunachal Pradesh, which contains Pakke Tiger Reserve.
- The national elephant report for 2021–25 says that large-scale forest clearing in Sonitpur district has caused frequent conflict between people and elephants.

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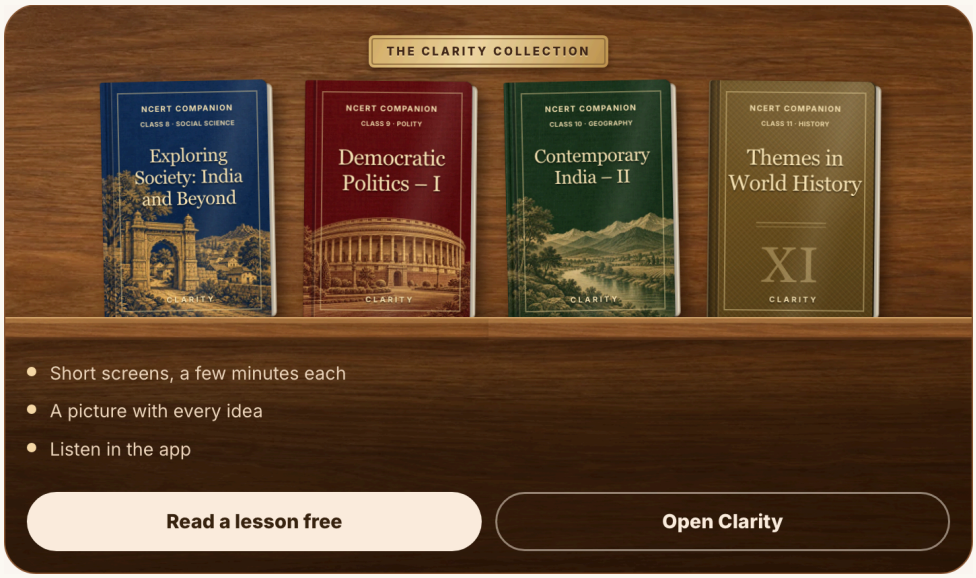

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133 Raimona National Park

Kokrajhar · **Assam**

National park 2021 · 422 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Sankosh (west) and Saralbhanga (east)	**Foothill forest along the Bhutan border**	**Golden langur, Asian elephant, tiger, clouded leopard**	**Declared on 8 June 2021 from the northern part of Ripu Reserved Forest**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Raimona is the westernmost part of the buffer of Manas Tiger Reserve. The buffer is the outer zone around the core. Raimona also lies in Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve, which includes Ripu Reserved Forest.

Raimona National Park lies in the Gossaigaon subdivision of Kokrajhar district, in the Bodoland Territorial Region. Bhutan forms its northern boundary. The Sankosh river runs along its western side, on the border with West Bengal. In the east, the park reaches the Saralbhanga river. The park was made from the northern part of Ripu Reserved Forest.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Assam Gazette of 8 June 2021 declared Raimona a national park under section 35 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It covers 422 sq km.
- The Kachugaon Forest Division of the Bodoland Territorial Council manages the park. Ripu Reserved Forest was declared in 1893.
- The park is home to the golden langur. Elephants, tigers and clouded leopards also live here.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

14 April 2026 On 13 April 2026 Assam's Chief Minister announced a new bent-toed gecko, Cyrtodactylus raimonaensis, described in the journal Zootaxa. It was found in the Kachugaon area of Kokrajhar district, near Raimona National Park. The gecko is named after the park.

Full story

27 October 2026 On 2 October 2026 a tigress from Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar was released in Buxa Tiger Reserve, West Bengal. About three weeks later she crossed the Sankosh river into Raimona. Forest teams followed her through her radio collar. In early November 2026 they caught her in Assam with a sedative dart and took her back to Buxa.

PRELIMS TRAP

Raimona is in Assam. Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary, to its north, is in Bhutan, and Buxa Tiger Reserve, across the Sankosh, is in West Bengal.

134 Manas National Park, Tiger Reserve and Biosphere Reserve

Chirang, Baksa, Kokrajhar and Udalguri · **Assam**

Tiger reserve 1973 · 2,837.1 sq km | **National park** 1990 · 500 sq km | **Biosphere reserve** 1989 · 2,837 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Manas and Beki	**Bhabar and terai belts at the foot of the Eastern Himalaya**	**Tiger, pygmy hog, golden langur, hispid hare**	**One of the first nine tiger reserves (1973)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Manas National Park is the core of Manas Tiger Reserve. Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary and Raimona National Park lie in its buffer, the outer zone. The park lies in Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve. Manas Biosphere Reserve, declared in 1989, is outside UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Manas lies in the Himalayan foothills of western Assam, along the border with Bhutan. The Manas and Beki rivers flow through it and later join the Brahmaputra. The north is bhabar, a belt of boulders and gravel. The south is terai, with finer soil and groundwater close to the surface. Semi-evergreen and deciduous forests and grasslands cover the land.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Manas was one of the first nine tiger reserves when Project Tiger began in 1973. With 2,837.10 sq km, it is the second-largest tiger reserve of India, after Nagarjunsagar Srisailam.
- Manas became a World Heritage Site in 1985. It was on the List of World Heritage in Danger from 1992 to 2011. The National Tiger Conservation Authority dates the armed unrest there from 1989 to 2003.
- Manas became a game reserve in 1928. Its forests had been reserved earlier. Additions in 1951 and 1955 enlarged the sanctuary to 391 sq km. It became a national park of 500 sq km in 1990.
- UNESCO says that Manas is home to 22 of India's most threatened mammals. Rhinoceroses died out here during the unrest and were brought back from Kaziranga and Pobitora.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

12 July 2026 In July 2026 data from the forest department of the Bodoland Territorial Council showed a change in Manas Tiger Reserve. Grassland fell from 53.61% of its area in 1990 to 30.24% in 2019. Woodland rose from 40.42% to 60.62%. Forest officials named 14 invasive plants, fires, grazing and the civil unrest of 1988–2004 as causes.

Full story

26 October 2026 On 22 October 2026 the botanists Barnali Das and Namita Nath described a new flowering shrub, Osbeckia assamensis, in the journal Phytotaxa. Reports placed it in the grasslands of Manas National Park. It has pink flowers. Its describers assessed it as Data Deficient: too little is known to judge its risk of extinction.

PRELIMS TRAP

Manas National Park is in Assam. Royal Manas National Park lies across the border in Bhutan. The Manas river and its tributaries separate the two parks.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2012 · Q87

Also asked: 2008

Consider the following protected areas : 1. Bandipur 2. Bhitarkanika 3. Manas 4. Sunderbans Which of the above are declared Tiger Reserves?

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 1, 3 and 4 only (c) 2, 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

UPSC KEY **(b) 1, 3 and 4 only.** Bandipur, Manas and Sunderbans were among the first nine tiger reserves of 1973. Bhitarkanika in Odisha is not a tiger reserve.

135

Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve

Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup and Darrang (districts of 2003) · **Assam**

Elephant reserve 2003 · 2,600 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Sankosh, Saralbhanga, Aie and Manas	**Bhabar foothills along the Bhutan border, 23 m to 418 m**	**Asian elephant, tiger, golden langur**	**Contains Manas and Raimona national parks**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve contains Manas National Park and Raimona National Park. Manas National Park is the core of Manas Tiger Reserve. The Assam forest department calls Manas the core area of this elephant reserve.

Chirang-Ripu Elephant Reserve covers 2,600 sq km of forest along the Bhutan border in western Assam. It runs from the West Bengal border to the forests around Manas National Park. Its reserve forests include Ripu, Chirang, Kachugaon and Manas. Sal grows on the upper bhabar, the gravelly belt at the foot of the hills. Semi-evergreen and khair-sissoo forests also grow here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Assam declared the reserve in March 2003 under Project Elephant.
- Raimona National Park was formed in 2021 from the northern part of Ripu Reserved Forest. The Ripu forest is part of this elephant reserve.
- Its western boundary meets Buxa Tiger Reserve of West Bengal, which is part of Eastern Dooars Elephant Reserve. Its northern boundary meets Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary of Bhutan.
- The national elephant report for 2021–25 names Chirang-Ripu and Manas among the key areas. They keep the elephant forests of Assam connected with those across the border.

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136

Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve

Golaghat, Nagaon and Sonitpur · **Assam**

Tiger reserve 2007 · 1,173.58 sq km | **National park** 1974 · 889.51 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Brahmaputra (north) and Diphlu	**Floodplain of tall wet grassland, shallow pools and woodland**	**Greater one-horned rhinoceros, tiger, wild water buffalo, swamp deer**	**World's largest one-horned rhino population (2,613 in 2022)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kaziranga National Park forms the core of Kaziranga Tiger Reserve. The tiger reserve has a core of 625.58 sq km and a buffer, the outer zone, of 548 sq km. The park lies in Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Elephant Reserve.

Kaziranga lies on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, which forms its northern boundary. The Diphlu flows through the park, and the Karbi Anglong hills rise to the south. UNESCO says that wet alluvial grassland, on soil laid down by rivers, covers nearly two-thirds of the park. Shallow pools and woodland patches lie within it. Yearly floods and burning maintain the grassland.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Kaziranga became a national park in 1974 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985. It became a tiger reserve in 2007.
- The 2022 count found 2,613 greater one-horned rhinoceroses in Kaziranga. This is the largest population of the species in the world.
- The Assam forest department says that more than 60% of India's wild water buffaloes live in Kaziranga. The park also has the eastern swamp deer and a high density of tigers.
- National Highway 715, earlier numbered 37, runs along the southern edge of the park. In floods many animals cross it to reach higher ground in the Karbi Anglong hills.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

17 January 2026 On 18 January 2026 Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed the bhoomi pujan, a ground-breaking ceremony, for the Kaziranga Elevated Corridor at Kaliabor. The ₹6,957 crore project widens 85.675 km of National Highway 715 to four lanes. About 34.5 km of the road will be raised so that animals can pass beneath it.

Full story

24 February 2026 In February 2026 a study by the Kaziranga Tiger Cell identified at least 57 fishing cats in the park. It covered more than 450 sq km and used camera-trap photographs from the All India Tiger Estimation. IUCN lists the fishing cat as Vulnerable.

17 March 2026 In March 2026 Assam planned to move about 50 wild water buffaloes from Kaziranga to Kanha Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh. The move was to happen in stages. The first animals reached Kanha in April and May 2026. Wild buffaloes had been absent from Kanha for about a century.

PRELIMS TRAP

Kaziranga lies on the south bank of the Brahmaputra. Orang lies on the north bank, to the west of Kaziranga.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2013 · Q32

Consider the following pairs: National Park : River flowing through the Park 1. Corbett National Park : Ganga 2. Kaziranga National Park : Manas 3. Silent Valley National Park : Kaveri Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

(a) 1 and 2 (b) 3 only (c) 1 and 3 (d) None

UPSC KEY (d) None. The Diphlu flows through Kaziranga, the Ramganga through Corbett and the Kunthipuzha through Silent Valley. So none of the three pairs is correct.

137

Orang National Park and Tiger Reserve

Darrang and Sonitpur · **Assam**

Tiger reserve 2016 · 492.46 sq km | **National park** 1999 · 78.81 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Brahmaputra (south), with the Pachnoi, Belsiri and Dhansiri	**Floodplain of grassland, swamp forest and wetlands**	**Greater one-horned rhinoceros, tiger, pygmy hog**	**Smallest core of any tiger reserve (79.28 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Orang National Park forms the core of Orang Tiger Reserve. The National Tiger Conservation Authority describes a corridor that links Orang with Kaziranga. It runs through the river islands of the Brahmaputra.

Orang lies on the north bank of the Brahmaputra in Darrang and Sonitpur districts. The Brahmaputra flows along its southern boundary. The Pachnoi, Belsiri and Dhansiri rivers flow along its edges. Its vegetation includes moist deciduous forest, swamp forest, khair-sissoo woods and wet alluvial grassland.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Orang became a national park in 1999 and a tiger reserve in 2016. On 1 September 2021 the Assam cabinet decided to drop "Rajiv Gandhi" from its name. Some official lists still use the old name.
- The tiger reserve has the smallest core area in India, 79.28 sq km. With its buffer, the outer zone, of 413.18 sq km, it covers 492.46 sq km.
- A 2025 report to CITES lists 125 greater one-horned rhinoceroses in Orang. In India only Kaziranga and Jaldapara have more.
- Orang is one of the grasslands where pygmy hogs bred in captivity have been released. Fifty-nine hogs were set free here between 2011 and 2015.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

29 September 2026 In September 2026 Assam's forest minister announced the first official record of the Indian peafowl in Orang. A wildlife photographer and a cinematographer photographed the bird. This confirmed what forest staff had seen near the Rowmari and Hazaribagh anti-poaching camps.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Nameri, with 464 sq km, is the smallest tiger reserve by total area. Orang has the smallest core, 79.28 sq km, and its whole reserve covers 492.46 sq km.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2005 · Q12

Match List-I with List-II and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists: List I (National Park/Wild-life Sanctuary) A. Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary B. Kangerghat National Park C. Orang Sanctuary D. Ushakothi Wildlife Sanctuary List II (State) 1. Orissa 2. Assam 3. Chhattisgarh 4. Goa 5. Tripura

(a) A-2, B-4, C-5, D-1 (b) A-4, B-3, C-2, D-1 (c) A-2, B-3, C-5, D-4 (d) A-4, B-1, C-2, D-3

Since then: Since then: Orang became a tiger reserve in 2016. Orissa was renamed Odisha in 2011.

ANSWER **(b) A-4, B-3, C-2, D-1.** Orang is in Assam. Bondla is in Goa, Kanger Ghati in Chhattisgarh and Ushakothi in Odisha, so the code is A-4, B-3, C-2, D-1.

138

Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Elephant Reserve

Golaghat, Karbi Anglong, Nagaon and Sonitpur · **Assam**

Elephant reserve 2003 · 3,270 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Brahmaputra (north) and Diphlu	**Brahmaputra floodplain and the Karbi plateau, 27 m to 1,361 m**	**Asian elephant, greater one-horned rhinoceros, tiger**	**Largest elephant reserve of Assam (3,270 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Elephant Reserve contains Kaziranga National Park, the core of Kaziranga Tiger Reserve. Kaziranga is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Elephant Reserve lies in central Assam. It joins the Kaziranga floodplain with the Karbi Anglong hills to the south. Elephants move between the two each season along corridors, strips of habitat that link them. These corridors are broken in places and often pass through tea gardens. Its forests include tropical wet evergreen and semi-evergreen forest.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Assam declared the reserve on 17 April 2003 under Project Elephant. With 3,270 sq km it is the largest of the five elephant reserves of Assam.
- Kaziranga Tiger Reserve and East Karbi Anglong Wildlife Sanctuary lie inside the reserve. Dhansiri-Lungding Elephant Reserve adjoins it to the south.
- The 2021–25 national estimate put the number of wild elephants in Assam at 4,159. This is the second-highest number in India, after Karnataka.
- The national elephant report names two limits on elephant movement in this area. They are National Highway 715 and the growth around the Numaligarh refinery.

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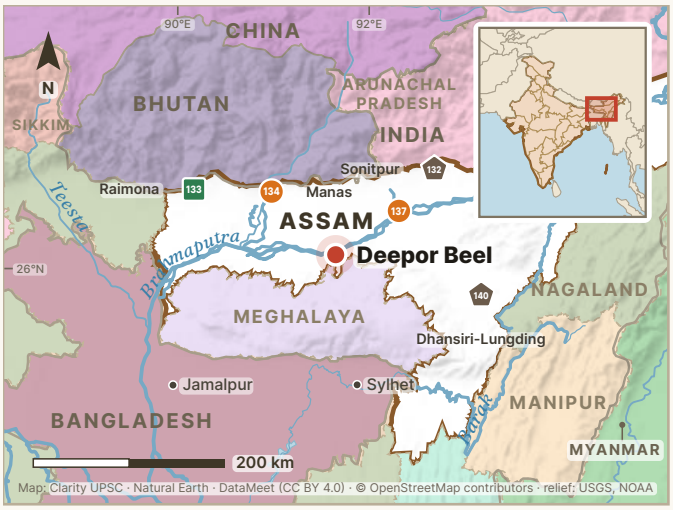
139 Deepor Beel

Kamrup Metropolitan · **Assam**

Ramsar site 2002 · 40 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Fed by the Basistha and Kalmani, drained by the Khonajan channel	**Former channel of the Brahmaputra, now a freshwater lake**	**Spot-billed pelican, greater adjutant, Baer's pochard**	**Assam's only Ramsar site (2002)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Assam has declared a part of the Ramsar site as Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary.

Deepor Beel is a permanent freshwater lake on the south-western edge of Guwahati. It lies in a former channel of the Brahmaputra. The Basistha and Kalmani rivers feed it. The Khonajan channel drains it into the Brahmaputra, about 5 km to the north. The lake also stores the storm water of Guwahati in the monsoon.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Deepor Beel became a Ramsar site on 19 August 2002, with an area of 4,000 hectares. It is still the only Ramsar site of Assam.
- Its water spreads over 30 to 40 sq km in the monsoon and shrinks to about 10 sq km in winter. Farmers grow rice on the exposed edges when the water falls.
- The Ramsar record lists 219 bird species, 70 of them waterbirds. Wild elephants still visit the lake, although it lies beside a large city.
- A draft notification of August 2025 proposed an eco-sensitive zone of 38.84 sq km around Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary. Such a zone limits harmful activities around a protected area.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

14 March 2026 In January 2026 the eastern bench of the National Green Tribunal looked at pollution in Deepor Beel. It found the reply of the Assam State Wetlands Authority inadequate. A Central Pollution Control Board report had found faecal bacteria above permitted limits. The tribunal gave the authority four weeks to act.

PRELIMS TRAP

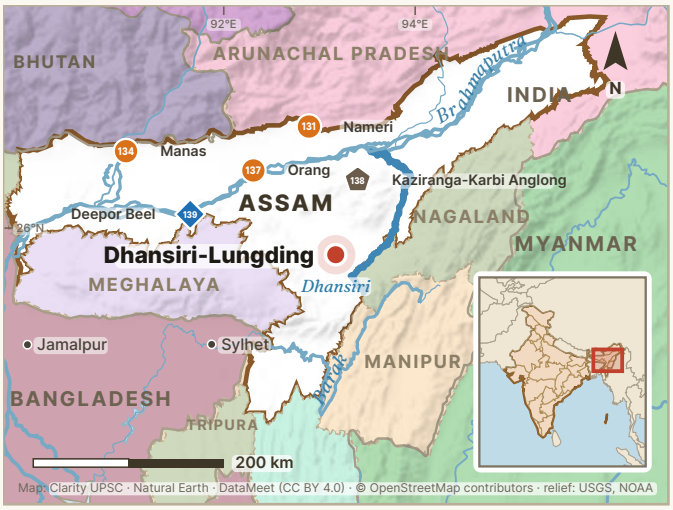
Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary covers 4.14 sq km. The Ramsar site is much larger, at 40 sq km, so the two have different boundaries.

140 Dhansiri-Lungding Elephant Reserve

Karbi Anglong, Nagaon and Dima Hasao · **Assam**

Elephant reserve 2003 · 2,740 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Dhansiri and Lungding	**Hills of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao, 70 m to 1,239 m**	**Asian elephant, hoolock gibbon, capped langur**	**Most forested elephant reserve of Assam (89% forest)**



Dhansiri-Lungding Elephant Reserve covers 2,740 sq km of hills in Karbi Anglong, Nagaon and Dima Hasao districts. It runs south from Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Elephant Reserve to the border of Nagaland. Its forests include Cachar tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen forest, moist deciduous forest and bamboo.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Assam declared the reserve on 19 April 2003 under Project Elephant. Forest covers about 89% of it.
- Its reserve forests include Lumding and Dhansiri. The name of the reserve is also written Dhansiri-Lumding.
- The national elephant report says that new roads and railways have reduced elephant movement in the Dhansiri–Intanki area.

ON THE OTHER LISTS

Dhansiri-Lungding Elephant Reserve contains Marat Longri Wildlife Sanctuary. It adjoins Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Elephant Reserve to the north and Intanki Elephant Reserve of Nagaland to the east.

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Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

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✓ True · ✕ False

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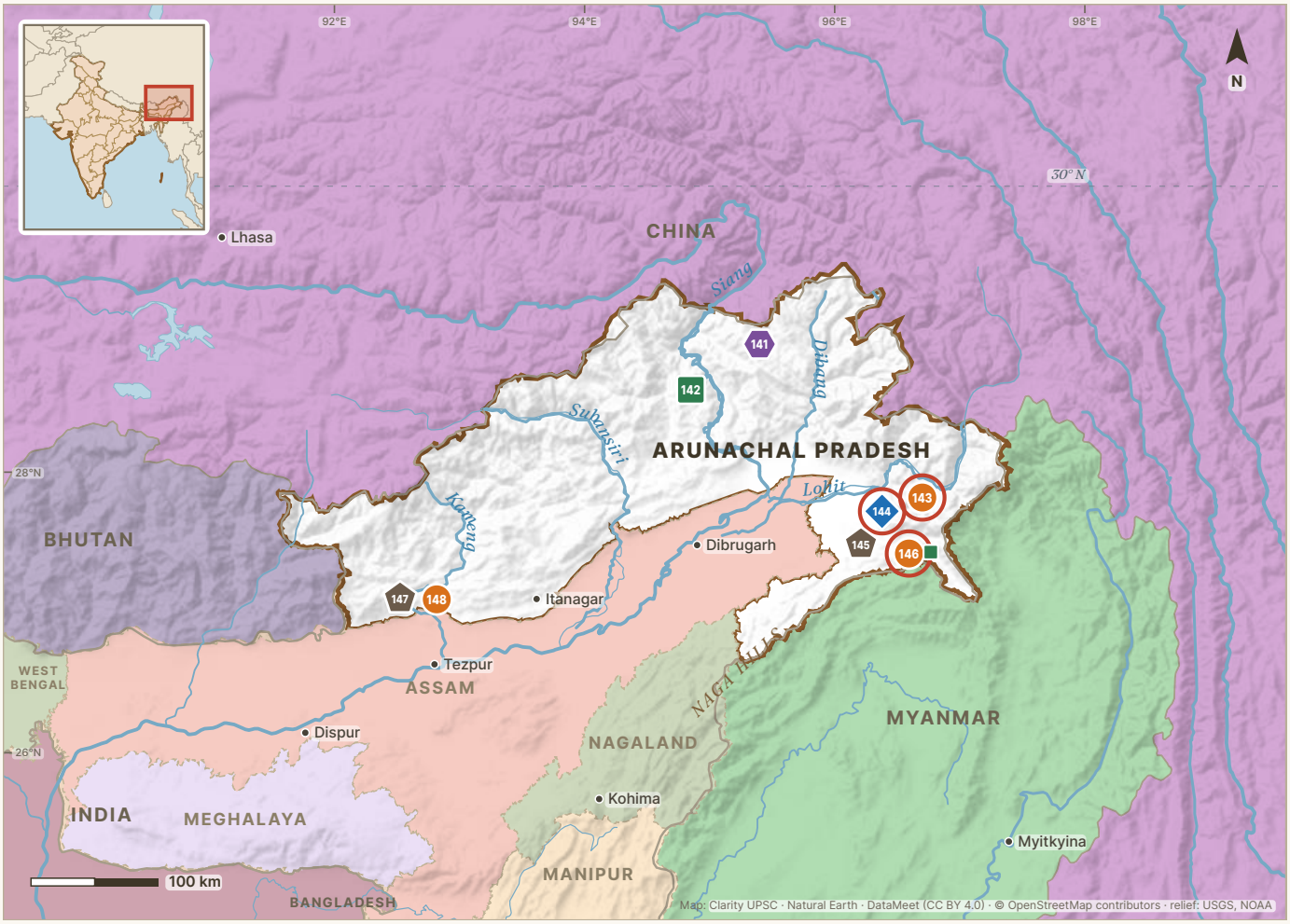
Clarity UPSC

Arunachal Pradesh

3 tiger reserves · 2 national parks · 1 Ramsar site · 1 biosphere reserve · 2 elephant reserves

Arunachal Pradesh lies in the Eastern Himalaya. Forest and tree cover is about 80 per cent of its area. The Kameng, the Siang, the Dibang and the Lohit flow from its mountains, and all four belong to the Brahmaputra river system. Pakke lies in the western foothills. Namdapha and Kamlang lie side by side in the far east. The state's two elephant reserves adjoin those of Assam, and Glaw Lake is its only Ramsar site.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

141	**Dehang-Dibang** Upper Siang, West Siang and Dibang Valley	175
142	**Mouling** Upper Siang	176
143	**Kamlang** Lohit	177
144	**Glaw Lake** Lohit	178
145	**South Arunachal** Tirap, Changlang and Lohit	179
146	**Namdapha** Changlang	180
147	**Kameng** West Kameng, East Kameng and Pakke Kessang	181
148	**Pakke** Pakke Kessang (earlier part of East Kameng)	182

141

Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve

Upper Siang, West Siang and Dibang Valley · **Arunachal Pradesh**

Biosphere reserve 1998 · 5,111.5 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Siang (Dihang) and Dibang	**Eastern Himalaya, from tropical forest to mountain tundra**	**Takin, serow, Himalayan black bear**	**Only biosphere reserve of Arunachal Pradesh (1998)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Mouling National Park forms the western part of the biosphere reserve. Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary, which covers 4,149 sq km, also lies partly in it.

Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve lies in the Eastern Himalaya, in parts of the Siang and Dibang valleys. A large part of it lies above the tree line, the height above which trees do not grow. The state forest department says that its natural vegetation runs without a break from the tropics to the mountain tundra.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- India declared the reserve on 2 September 1998. It covers 5,111.5 sq km. Its core zone is 4,094.8 sq km, and the buffer zone around the core is 1,016.7 sq km.
- The Brahmaputra comes out of the hills as the Siang, also called the Dihang. After the Dibang and the Lohit join it, the river is called the Brahmaputra.
- The takin is an unusual hoofed animal of the Eastern Himalaya. It lives here in small herds between 2,500 and 4,000 metres. The reserve also has more than 50 species of rhododendron.
- Since 2022-23 the Union Environment Ministry has run a five-year Integrated Management Plan here as a pilot. Nanda Devi, Pachmarhi and Agasthyamalai are also in the pilot.

PRELIMS TRAP

Dehang-Dibang is one of India's 18 biosphere reserves. It is outside UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves, which has thirteen Indian reserves. India has sent UNESCO a proposal to add Dehang-Dibang.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2004 · Q107

Match List I (Biosphere Reserve) with List II (States) and select the correct answer using the codes given below: List I A. Simlipal B. Dehong Deband C. Nokrek D. Kanchenjunga List II 1. Sikkim 2. Uttaranchal 3. Arunachal Pradesh 4. Orissa 5. Meghalaya

(a) A-1, B-3, C-5, D-4 (b) A-4, B-5, C-2, D-1 (c) A-1, B-5, C-2, D-4 (d) A-4, B-3, C-5, D-1

Since then: Since then, Orissa has been renamed Odisha and Uttaranchal has been renamed Uttarakhand.

ANSWER (d) A-4, B-3, C-5, D-1. Dehang-Dibang is in Arunachal Pradesh, Simlipal in Orissa, Nokrek in Meghalaya and Kanchenjunga in Sikkim. So the code is A-4, B-3, C-5, D-1.

142 Mouling National Park

Upper Siang · **Arunachal Pradesh**

National park 1986 · 483 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Siyom in the west, streams to the Siang in the east	**Rugged Eastern Himalaya, 750 m to Mouling Peak (3,064 m)**	**Takin, serow, hornbills, Sclater's monal**	**Second national park of Arunachal Pradesh (1986)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Mouling National Park forms the western part of Dehang-Dibang Biosphere Reserve. It is on the national parks list only.

Mouling National Park lies mainly in Upper Siang district, with parts in West Siang and East Siang. It is on the right bank of the Siang. The park is named after Mouling Peak. Its rugged land rises from 750 metres to 3,064 metres at this peak. Tropical evergreen forest covers the lower areas, and temperate and coniferous forest grows higher up.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Mouling became a national park in 1986 and covers 483 sq km. It was the second national park of Arunachal Pradesh, after Namdapha.
- The Siyom river flows along the western edge of the park. Small rivers such as the Siring, the Krobong, the Semong and the Subong flow into the Siang near its eastern boundary.
- No road reaches the park. In winter visitors walk in on seasonal trekking paths from Bomdo and Ramsing villages.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2025 · Q52

Consider the following pairs : State : Description I. Arunachal Pradesh : The capital is named after a fort, and the State has two National Parks II. Nagaland : The State came into existence on the basis of a Constitutional Amendment Act III. Tripura : Initially a Part 'C' State, it became a centrally administered territory with the reorganization of States in 1956 and later attained the status of a full-fledged State How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) All the three (d) None

UPSC KEY **(c) All the three.** UPSC's key marks all three pairs correct. Arunachal Pradesh has two national parks, Namdapha and Mouling. Its capital, Itanagar, is named after Ita Fort.

143 Kamlang Tiger Reserve

Lohit · **Arunachal Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 2017 · 783 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kamlang, Lang and Lati, which flow to the Lohit	Rugged Eastern Himalayan hills, with Glaw Lake at 1,168 m	Tiger, clouded leopard, hoolock gibbon, slow loris	India's 50th tiger reserve (2017)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Glaw Lake, a Ramsar site, lies inside the reserve. Namdapha Tiger Reserve adjoins it in the south. South Arunachal Elephant Reserve includes a part of Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary.

Kamlang Tiger Reserve lies in the south-eastern part of Lohit district. Its headquarters is at Wakro. The reserve is named after the Kamlang river, which flows through it and joins the Lohit. The Lang river forms its northern boundary. The land is very rugged, except for the narrow floodplains of the rivers.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Kamlang became a wildlife sanctuary on 18 October 1989. Arunachal Pradesh declared it a tiger reserve on 6 March 2017, with the same boundary of 783 sq km.
- Rain that falls in the reserve drains into the Kamlang, the Lang and the Lati. All three flow to the Lohit, which is part of the Brahmaputra river system.
- Camera traps in the national tiger surveys of 2018 and 2022 photographed no tiger in Kamlang. A tiger was photographed in 2020 during routine monitoring.
- The Dapha Bum peak separates the south-western part of Kamlang from Namdapha. The animals of the reserve include the hoolock gibbon, the clouded leopard and the slow loris.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

31 August 2026 In August 2026 the Wildlife Trust of India gave field gear and equipment to the frontline staff of Kamlang Tiger Reserve. The Serenity Trust and the state forest department helped. The staff included forest guards and the Special Tiger Protection Force. The gear is meant to make patrols safer and to support anti-poaching work.

Full story

144 Glaw Lake

Lohit · **Arunachal Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2026 · 1.29 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
A small outlet stream to the Kamlang	**Freshwater lake at 1,168 m, with marshes and forested hills**	**Clouded leopard, eastern hoolock gibbon, red goral, sun bear**	**India's 101st Ramsar site and the state's first (2026)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Glaw Lake lies inside Kamlang Tiger Reserve and Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary. The Ramsar record names the tiger reserve as the national protected area that covers the whole site.

Glaw Lake is a natural freshwater lake in Lohit district, inside Kamlang Tiger Reserve. It lies at 1,168 metres, about 18 to 20 km south-east of Wakro. Marshes and patches of forest surround it. Its catchment, the land that drains into the lake, covers nearly 700 hectares. The Ramsar record says that the lake is sacred to the Mishmi people.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Glaw Lake is Ramsar site number 2597. The Ramsar record also calls it Glaw Tuwi.
- The Ramsar site is the lake at its largest water spread, which is 128.98 hectares. The state forest department gives the area of the lake as 82 hectares.
- More than 150 species of trees and 49 species of orchids have been recorded in the site and its catchment.
- The lake's outlet is a small stream that joins the Kamlang river. A small hill separates the lake from the Kamlang, which flows to its north.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

4 August 2026 On 3 August 2026 the Union Environment Minister announced Glaw Lake as India's 101st Ramsar site. It became the first Ramsar site of Arunachal Pradesh.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Glaw Lake has two dates. The Ramsar list gives 21 January 2026 as its date of designation. India announced the site on 3 August 2026, and the count of 101 Ramsar sites belongs to that announcement.

145

South Arunachal Elephant Reserve

Tirap, Changlang and Lohit · **Arunachal Pradesh**

Elephant reserve 2008 · 1,957.5 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Noa-Dihing, which flows through the Namdapha part	**Hills and foothills beside Myanmar, 121 m to 3,756 m**	**Asian elephant, tiger, clouded leopard**	**Larger of Arunachal Pradesh's two elephant reserves (2008)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The elephant reserve includes parts of Namdapha National Park and Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary. Namdapha National Park is the core of Namdapha Tiger Reserve. Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary forms the whole of Kamlang Tiger Reserve. Dihing-Patkai Elephant Reserve of Assam adjoins it on the west.

South Arunachal Elephant Reserve lies in the south-eastern corner of Arunachal Pradesh, in Tirap, Changlang and Lohit districts. It shares its southern and eastern boundary with Myanmar. The reserve is made of reserve forests and parts of protected areas. The land rises from 121 metres to 3,756 metres, and forest covers 85.5 per cent of the reserve.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Arunachal Pradesh notified the reserve on 29 February 2008 under Project Elephant. It covers 1,957.5 sq km.
- The national elephant report of 2021–25 calls the reserve important for its link with Dihing-Patkai in Assam. The reserve has fewer elephants than Kameng.
- The same report notes a recent photograph of a wild elephant in Namdapha Tiger Reserve. It says the area helps to keep elephant habitat connected across the international border.

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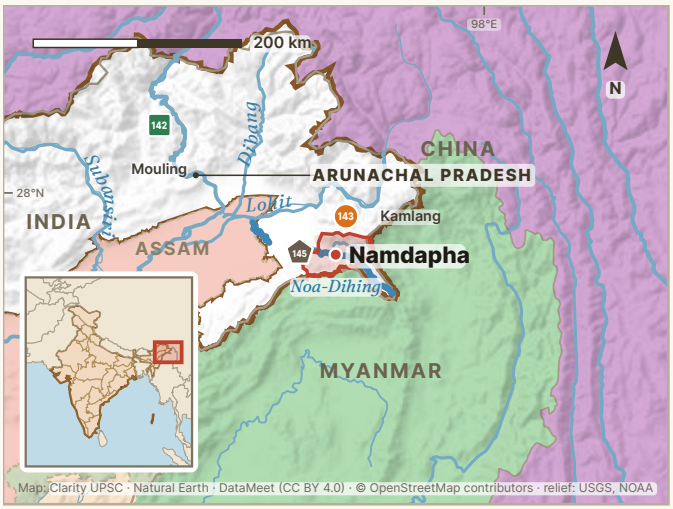
146

Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve

Changlang · **Arunachal Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 1982 · 2,052.82 sq km | **National park** 1983 · 1,807.82 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Noa-Dihing, with the Namdapha river	**Between the Patkai hills and the Himalaya, 200 m to 4,571 m**	**Tiger, clouded leopard, snow leopard, white-bellied heron**	**Four big cats: tiger, leopard, clouded leopard, snow leopard**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Namdapha National Park is the core of Namdapha Tiger Reserve. Kamlang Tiger Reserve adjoins it in the north. South Arunachal Elephant Reserve includes a part of the park. The World Heritage tentative list names Namdapha together with Kamlang and the Jairampur Forest Division.

Namdapha lies in Changlang district, close to the point where India, Myanmar and China meet. The Patkai hills lie to its south and south-east, and the Himalaya lies to its north. The Noa-Dihing river, a tributary of the Brahmaputra, flows west through the middle of the park. The land rises from 200 metres to 4,571 metres at Dapha Bum.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Namdapha became a national park in 1983. It joined Project Tiger in 1982-83 and was the first tiger reserve of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The park is named after the Namdapha river, which rises on Dapha Bum and joins the Noa-Dihing. Dapha is the name of a hill, and bum means the peak of a hill.
- Namdapha is known for four big cats: the tiger, the leopard, the clouded leopard and the snow leopard. The Ramsar record of Glaw Lake says that Kamlang Tiger Reserve also has all four.
- The national park covers 1,807.82 sq km and the tiger reserve 2,052.82 sq km. Since 2006 Namdapha has been on India's tentative list of sites for World Heritage.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

23 April 2026 In April 2026 scientists of the Wildlife Institute of India described a new frog from the Kamala Valley of Namdapha Tiger Reserve. They named it Limnonectes motijheel, after Motijheel, a small wetland in the reserve. They found a male calling from a mud nest under fallen leaves.

Full story

28 May 2026 In May 2026 a paper reported the long-tailed duskhawker, a dragonfly, from Deban in Namdapha. This was its first confirmed sighting in Arunachal Pradesh in 110 years. In August 2026 a second paper reported the spoon-tailed duskhawker from India for the first time. Its photograph was taken in Namdapha on 16 October 2024.

13 October 2026 On 12 October 2026 staff of Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve gave a written list of demands to the field director. They said that their wages from April to September 2026 had not been paid. They asked for payment within ten days, or they would leave their camps.

PRELIMS TRAP

A 2013 Prelims question paired Namdapha National Park with the Dafla Hills, and that pair was wrong. Namdapha lies in the far east of Arunachal Pradesh, between the Patkai hills and the Himalaya.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2015 · Q52

Also asked: 2013

Which one of the following National Parks has a climate that varies from tropical to subtropical, temperate and arctic?

(a) Khangchendzonga National Park
(b) Nandadevi National Park
(c) Neora Valley National Park
(d) Namdapha National Park

UPSC KEY **(d) Namdapha National Park.** Namdapha rises from 200 metres to 4,571 metres. So its climate changes from tropical in the valleys to arctic on the highest peaks.

147

Kameng Elephant Reserve

West Kameng, East Kameng and Pakke Kessang · **Arunachal Pradesh**

Elephant reserve 2002 · 1,892 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kameng, called the Jia Bhoroli in Assam	**Eastern Himalayan foothills and hills, 106 m to 3,222 m**	**Asian elephant, tiger, great hornbill**	**First elephant reserve of Arunachal Pradesh (2002)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Pakke Tiger Reserve, Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary and Sessa Orchid Sanctuary lie inside the elephant reserve. Sonitpur Elephant Reserve of Assam adjoins it.

Kameng Elephant Reserve covers 1,892 sq km in the west of Arunachal Pradesh, along the border with Assam. It is made up of reserve forests and three sanctuaries: Pakke, Eaglenest and Sessa Orchid. The land rises from 106 metres to 3,222 metres, and forest covers 99 per cent of the reserve.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Arunachal Pradesh notified the reserve on 19 June 2002 under Project Elephant. It includes the Amartala, Doimara and Papum reserve forests.
- Nameri National Park and Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary of Assam adjoin the reserve. Both are part of Sonitpur Elephant Reserve.
- The Kameng river forms the western boundary of Pakke. In Assam the Kameng is called the Jia Bhoroli. It is a right-bank tributary of the Brahmaputra.
- The 2021–25 national estimate put the number of elephants in Arunachal Pradesh at 617. The report says that most of them live in Kameng Elephant Reserve.

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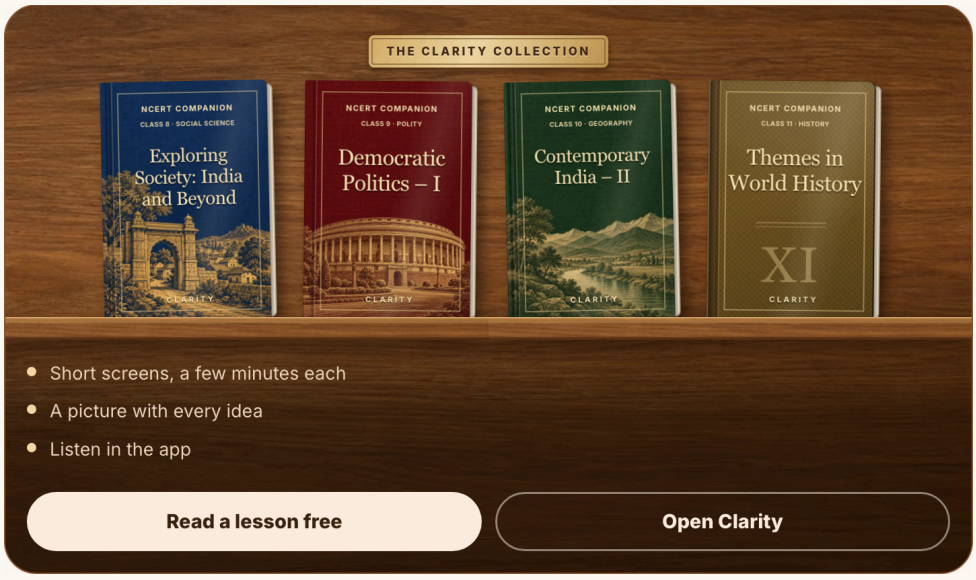

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148

Pakke Tiger Reserve

Pakke Kessang (earlier part of East Kameng) · **Arunachal Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 1999 · 1,198.45 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kameng in the west, Pakke in the east	**Eastern Himalayan foothills, 150 m to 2,000 m**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, great hornbill, wreathed hornbill**	**Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme with Nyishi villagers (2011)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Pakke Wildlife Sanctuary is the core of the tiger reserve. The reserve lies inside Kameng Elephant Reserve. Nameri Tiger Reserve of Assam adjoins it in the south.

Pakke Tiger Reserve lies in the foothills of the Eastern Himalaya. Its headquarters is at Seijosa in Pakke Kessang district. The Kameng river forms its western boundary, and the Pakke river its eastern boundary. The land rises from 150 metres to 2,000 metres, and tropical semi-evergreen forest covers the lower areas.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Pakke became a wildlife sanctuary in 1977 and joined Project Tiger in 1999-2000.
- Four hornbills live here: the great, the wreathed, the oriental pied and the rufous-necked hornbill. Since 2011 Nyishi villagers have guarded hornbill nests under the Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme.
- The Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme won the India Biodiversity Award 2016 in the category of conservation of threatened species.
- The 2022 tiger survey photographed six tigers in Pakke. Two of them were also photographed in Nameri. The report treats Pakke and Nameri as one tiger population.

PRELIMS TRAP

Pakhui and Pakke are two names of the same sanctuary and tiger reserve. The 2018 Prelims question used the older name, Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2018 · Q94

In which one of the following States is Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary located ?

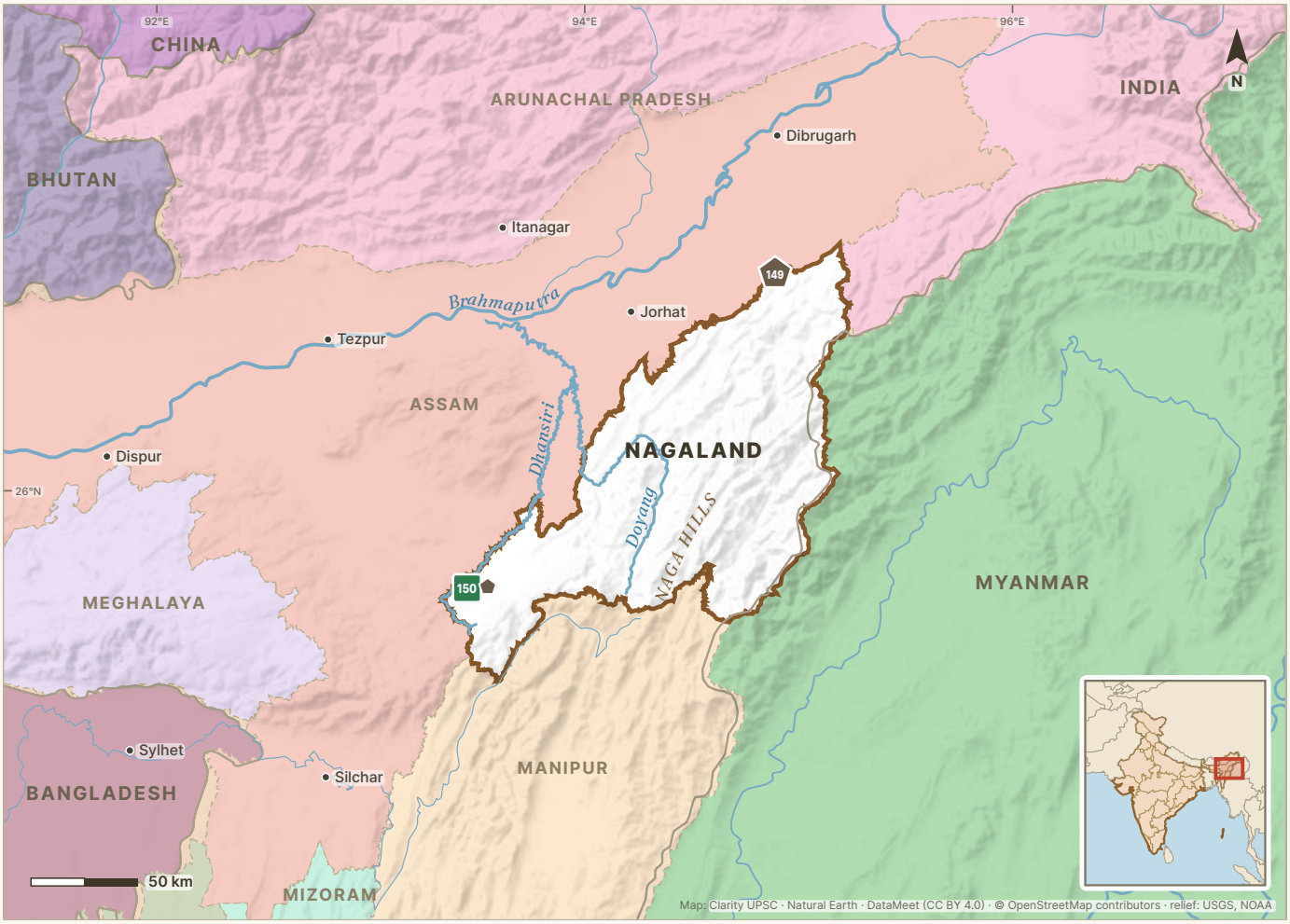
(a) Arunachal Pradesh (b) Manipur (c) Meghalaya (d) Nagaland

UPSC KEY **(a) Arunachal Pradesh.** Pakhui is the older name of Pakke Wildlife Sanctuary. It lies in the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh, beside Nameri in Assam.

Nagaland

1 national park 2 elephant reserves

Nagaland is a hill state of the north-east. The national elephant report says that about 74 per cent of it is forest. Its one national park, Intanki, lies in the low hills of Peren district near Assam. Its two elephant reserves are Intanki, which covers the same area as the park, and Singphan in Mon district. The state has no tiger reserve, Ramsar site or biosphere reserve.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

149 **Singphan** — Mon — 184

150 **Intanki** — Peren — 185

149

Singphan Elephant Reserve

Mon · **Nagaland**

Elephant reserve 2018 · 23.57 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Brahmaputra basin, south bank	Low hills of northern Nagaland, 105 m to 323 m	Asian elephant	Smallest elephant reserve in India (23.57 sq km)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Dihing-Patkai Elephant Reserve of Assam adjoins Singphan.

Singphan Elephant Reserve lies in Mon district, in the northern part of Nagaland, on the border with Assam. It is made up of reserve forest and Singphan Wildlife Sanctuary. The land is low, from 105 metres to 323 metres, and forest covers 93 per cent of the reserve. The forest is mainly moist bamboo thicket and East Himalayan sal forest.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Nagaland notified the reserve on 16 August 2018. It covers 23.57 sq km and is the smallest elephant reserve in India.
- The national elephant report places Singphan, South Arunachal and Dihing-Patkai in one elephant population. This population lives south of the Brahmaputra.
- The 2021–25 national estimate put the number of elephants in Nagaland at 252. The report says these elephants are linked with those of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

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150 Intanki National Park and Elephant Reserve

Peren · **Nagaland**

National park 1993 · 202.02 sq km | **Elephant reserve** 2005 · 202 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Dhansiri on the northern edge, with the Intanki and Monglu	Low forested hills, 178 m to 698 m	Asian elephant, hoolock gibbon, sloth bear	Only national park of Nagaland (1993)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Intanki National Park and Intanki Elephant Reserve cover the same area. Dhansiri-Lungding Elephant Reserve of Assam adjoins it. The 2022 tiger report says that weak links of degraded forest join Intanki to the forests of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

Intanki, also spelt Ntangki, lies in Peren district in south-western Nagaland. It is about 37 km from Dimapur. The land is low and hilly, from 178 metres to 698 metres, and forest covers 97 per cent of it. The forest has moist bamboo thickets, East Himalayan sal forest and moist mixed deciduous forest.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Intanki became a national park in 1993 and covers 202.02 sq km. It is the only national park of Nagaland.
- Nagaland notified Intanki Elephant Reserve on 28 February 2005.
- The Dhansiri river marks the park's northern boundary with Assam. The Monglu, the Intanki and the Duilong flow through the park and join the Dhansiri.
- The British administration made Intanki a reserve forest in 1923. The Peren district administration lists the hoolock gibbon, the sloth bear and the wild dog among its animals.

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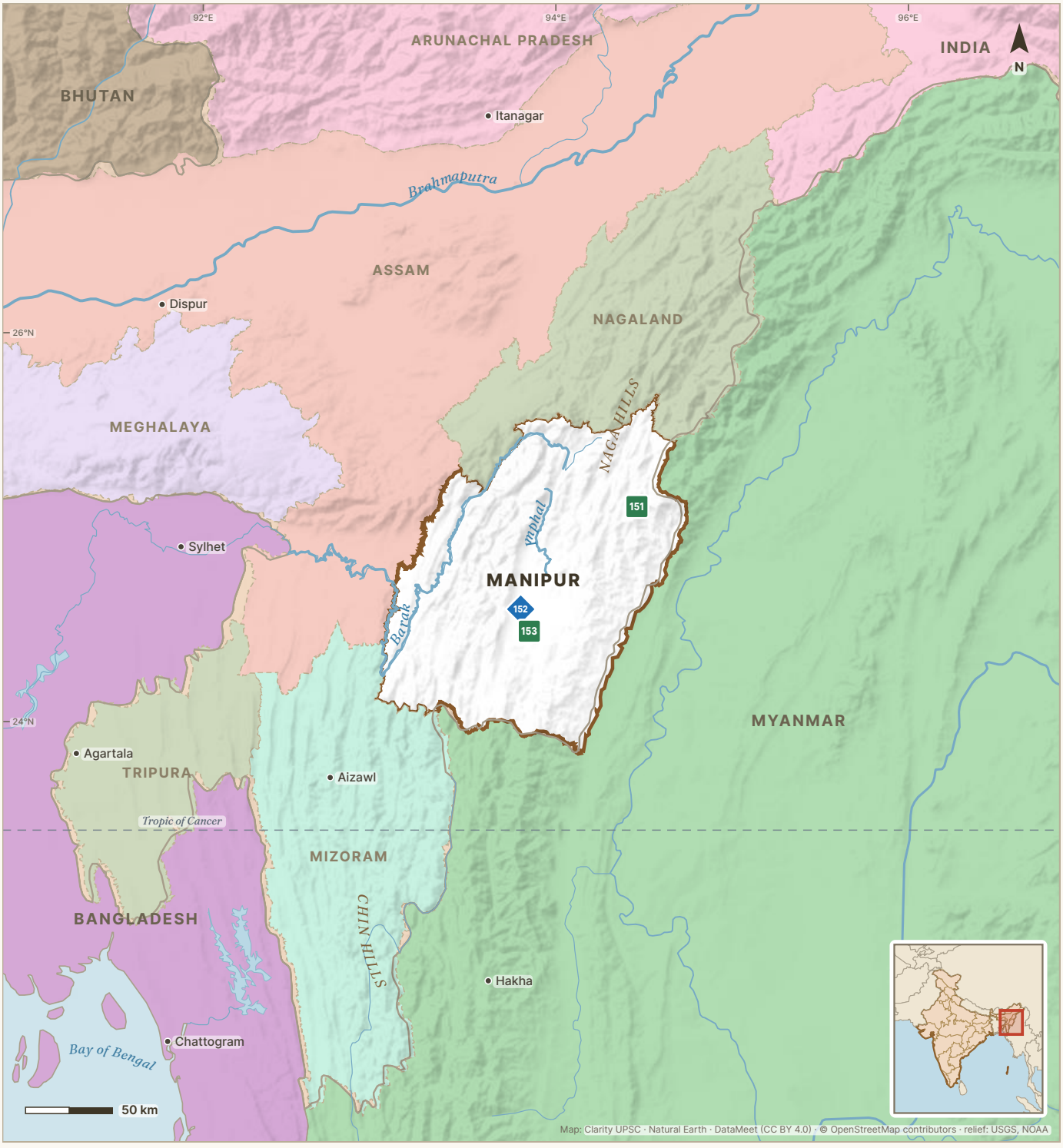
Manipur

2 national parks 1 Ramsar site

Manipur has an oval valley at its centre, with hills on all sides. Loktak Lake, in the south of the valley, is a Ramsar site. Keibul Lamjao National Park floats on its phumdis, or floating mats, at the southern end of the lake. Shiroi National Park lies on the Shirui hills of Ukhrul district, in the north-east of the state. Manipur has no tiger reserve, elephant reserve or biosphere reserve.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

Manipur: its areas

151	**Shiroi** Ukhrul	188
152	**Loktak** Bishnupur	189
153	**Keibul Lamjao** Bishnupur	190

151 Shiroi National Park

Ukhrul · **Manipur**

National park 1982 · 100 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Rivers that rise on the slopes of Shirui peak	Shirui hill range in Ukhrul district	Shirui lily (Lilium mackliniae)	Shirui lily, the state flower of Manipur



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Shiroi is on the national parks list only.

Shiroi National Park lies on the Shirui hill range in Ukhrul district of Manipur. Its best-known peak, Shirui Kashong, is about 18 km east of Ukhrul town. The park is known for the Shirui lily, a rare pinkish-white lily of these hills. The lily flowers on the hilltop in May and June.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Wildlife Institute of India table records that Shiroi National Park was created in 1982 and covers 100 sq km. Its name is also spelt Shirui or Siroy.
- The Shirui lily, Lilium mackliniae, is the state flower of Manipur. It is endemic to the Shirui (Siroy) hill range of Ukhrul district, which means it grows naturally nowhere else.
- The lily is named after Jean Macklin, wife of the plant collector Frank Kingdon-Ward. He found the flower in 1946 while collecting plant specimens.
- The fifth Shirui Lily Festival took place in Ukhrul district from 20 to 24 May 2025. That is the season when the lily flowers.

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152

Loktak Lake

Bishnupur · **Manipur**

Ramsar site 1990 · 266 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Manipur river, with the lake's outlet at Ithai	**Floodplain lake in the south of the Manipur valley**	**Sangai, wintering ducks and other waterbirds**	**Largest natural freshwater lake of north-east India**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Keibul Lamjao National Park covers the southern part of the lake, south of the Thanga, Ithing and Sendra islands. The park has its own entry. Loktak itself is on the Ramsar list only.

Loktak Lake lies in the southern part of the Manipur valley, in Bishnupur district. It is a floodplain lake of the Manipur river. The lake is oval, about 32 km long and 13 km wide. Floating mats of soil and plants, called phumdis, cover almost half of it. Its water is used for irrigation, for drinking and for a hydropower station of 105 megawatts.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Loktak became a Ramsar site on 23 March 1990, with the site number 463. The Loktak Development Authority calls it the largest natural freshwater lake in north-east India.
- Loktak was placed on the Montreux Record on 16 June 1993. The Ramsar record names deforestation in the catchment, water hyacinth and pollution as the reasons.
- The Ithai barrage, a low dam at the outlet of the lake, began working in 1983. Before that, the water level rose and fell with the seasons. Since then it has stayed nearly the same all year.
- Phumdis are masses of soil, plants and organic matter at different stages of decay. Fishermen live on some of them in floating huts called phumsangs.

PRELIMS TRAP

Loktak in Manipur and Keoladeo in Rajasthan are on the Montreux Record. This Ramsar register lists wetlands whose ecology has changed, is changing or is likely to change. Chilika in Odisha was removed from it in 2002.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2013 · Q17 Also asked: 1998

Consider the following pairs: 1. Nokrek Biosphere Reserve : Garo Hills 2. Loktak Lake : Barail Range 3. Namdapha National Park : Dafla Hills Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1, 2 and 3 (d) None

UPSC KEY (a) 1 only. Nokrek is in the Garo Hills. Loktak lies in the Manipur valley, away from the Barail range. Namdapha lies far east of the Dafla Hills. Only pair 1 is correct.

153

Keibul Lamjao National Park

Bishnupur · **Manipur**

National park 1977 · 40 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Loktak Lake, in the Manipur river floodplain	**Thick floating phumdis in the south of Loktak Lake**	**Sangai (brow-antlered deer), hog deer, otter**	**Only floating national park in the world**



Keibul Lamjao National Park covers the southern part of Loktak Lake, south of the Thanga, Ithing and Sendra islands. About 15 sq km of its 40 sq km is thick phumdi, and this forms its core. The park is the last natural home of the sangai. Hog deer, otters and many waterbirds also live here. Migrant birds come from November to March.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Keibul Lamjao was created in 1977 and covers 40 sq km in Bishnupur district. Manipur's tourism department calls it the only floating national park in the world.
- The sangai, Rucervus eldii eldii, is the brow-antlered deer of Manipur. In Manipur it is called the dancing deer.
- The sangai is the state animal of Manipur. The Manipur Sangai Festival, usually held from 21 to 30 November, is named after it.

ON THE OTHER LISTS

Loktak Lake, on which the park lies, has been a Ramsar site since 1990. The lake has its own entry.

PRELIMS TRAP

Keibul Lamjao in Manipur floats on the phumdis of Loktak Lake. Keoladeo in Rajasthan is also a wetland national park. It is a group of ten man-made seasonal lagoons known for water birds. The 2015 Prelims question gave both as options.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2015 · Q9

Which of the following National Parks is unique in being a swamp with floating vegetation that supports a rich biodiversity?

(a) Bhitarkanika National Park
(b) Keibul Lamjao National Park
(c) Keoladeo Ghana National Park
(d) Sultanpur National Park

UPSC KEY **(b) Keibul Lamjao National Park.** Keibul Lamjao floats on the phumdis of Loktak Lake. Bhitarkanika is a mangrove park, and Keoladeo and Sultanpur are bird wetlands.

Mizoram

● 1 tiger reserve ■ 2 national parks ◆ 1 Ramsar site

Mizoram is a state of steep hills and deep valleys. Bangladesh lies to its west, and Myanmar to its east and south. Most of the state is forest, with large areas of bamboo. Dampa, on the Bangladesh border, is its only tiger reserve. Murlen and Phawngpui are its two national parks. Pala Wetland, in the far south, is its only Ramsar site.



● Tiger reserve ■ National park ◆ Ramsar site ⬢ Biosphere reserve ⬟ Elephant reserve ◎ In our news in 2026

Mizoram: its areas

154	**Murlen** Champhai	193
155	**Dampa** Mamit	194
156	**Phawngpui** Lawngtlai	195
157	**Pala** Siaha	196

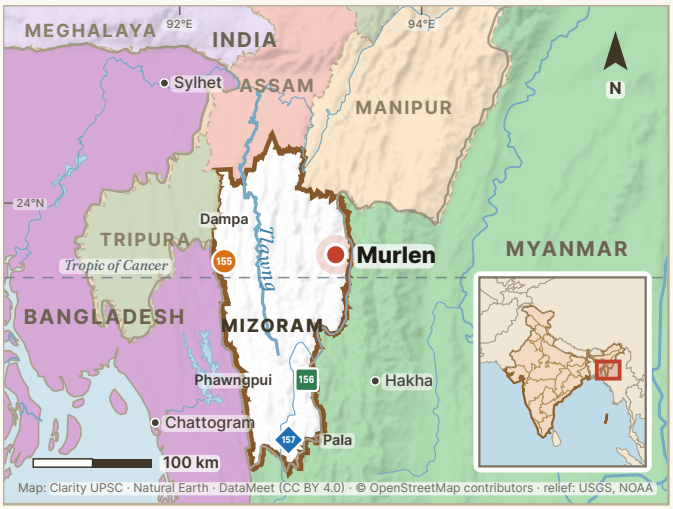
154

Murlen National Park

Champhai · **Mizoram**

National park 2003 · 100 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Hills from about 400 m to 1,900 m, near Myanmar	Tiger, serow, goral, Mrs Hume's pheasant	A new snake, Trachischium lalremsangai, described from here (2026)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Murlen is on the national parks list only.

Murlen National Park lies in Champhai district of Mizoram, near the border with Myanmar. The land rises from about 400 metres to 1,900 metres. The forest department lists the tiger, leopard, serow and goral among its animals. Its list also has the sambar and barking deer. The park's birds include Mrs Hume's pheasant, the kalij pheasant and the Bhutan peacock-pheasant.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Mizoram notified Murlen National Park on 24 January 2003. It covers 100 sq km.
- Murlen and Phawngpui are the only two national parks of Mizoram. The Khawzawl Wildlife Division manages Murlen together with Lengteng Wildlife Sanctuary.
- In May 2026 researchers described a new burrowing snake, Trachischium lalremsangai, in the journal Herpetozoa. The specimen that defines the species was collected in Murlen National Park.

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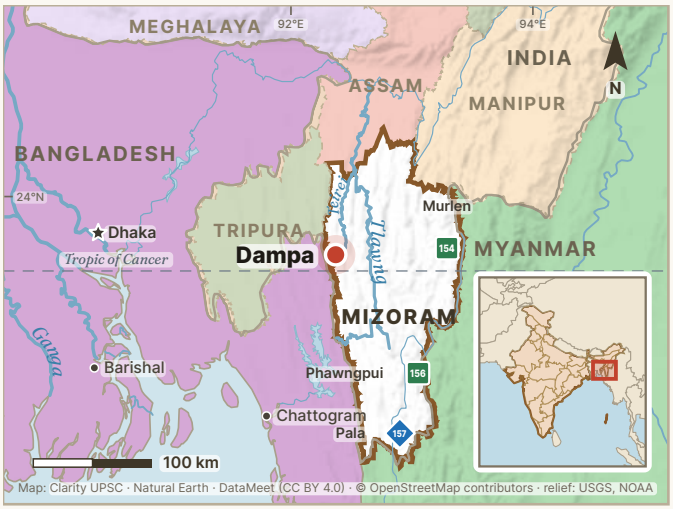
155 Dampa Tiger Reserve

Mamit · **Mizoram**

Tiger reserve 1994 · 988 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Khawthlangtuipui in the west, Teirei in the east	**Steep hills from 49 m to 1,095 m, with large bamboo forests**	**Tiger, clouded leopard, hoolock gibbon, Malayan sun bear**	**Only tiger reserve of Mizoram (1994)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Dampa Wildlife Sanctuary, declared in 1974 and notified again in 1985, became Dampa Tiger Reserve in 1994. The reserve is linked to Thorangtlang Wildlife Sanctuary in the south-east and to forests across the border in Bangladesh.

Dampa Tiger Reserve lies in Mamit district, in the west of Mizoram. Its western edge meets the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. The land is hilly and rises from 49 metres to 1,095 metres at Chhawrpialtlang peak. Evergreen forest grows in the moist valleys. The steeper slopes have more deciduous trees, and bamboo forest covers large areas.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Dampa came under Project Tiger in 1994–95. Its core zone covers 500 sq km. The buffer zone around the core adds 488 sq km, for a total of 988 sq km.
- The Khawthlangtuipui drains the west of the reserve, and the Teirei drains the east. The Keisalam, Seling and Aivapui are tributaries of the Teirei.
- Camera traps in the national tiger surveys of 2018 and 2022 photographed no tiger in Dampa. A tiger was photographed there during routine monitoring in 2021.
- The 2022 tiger report says Dampa is reported to have the highest density of clouded leopards in India. Hoolock gibbons and Malayan sun bears also live in the reserve.

PRELIMS TRAP

Dampa Tiger Reserve is in Mizoram. The 2014 Prelims question paired Gumti with Sikkim, but Gumti is a wildlife sanctuary in Tripura.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2014 · Q9

Consider the following pairs : 1. Dampa Tiger Reserve : Mizoram 2. Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary : Sikkim 3. Saramati Peak : Nagaland Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

UPSC KEY **(c) 1 and 3 only.** Dampa is in Mizoram, and Saramati is the highest peak of Nagaland. Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary is in Tripura, so pair 2 is wrong.

156 Phawngpui (Blue Mountain) National Park

Lawngtlai · **Mizoram**

National park 1997 · 50 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Mountain slopes from about 1,000 m to the 2,157 m summit	Blyth's tragopan, clouded leopard, hoolock gibbon, serow	Highest peak of Mizoram (2,157 m)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Phawngpui is on the national parks list only.

Phawngpui National Park lies in Lawngtlai district in the south of Mizoram. It covers the upper slopes of Phawngpui, also called the Blue Mountain. This is the highest peak of the state. The land rises from about 1,000 metres to 2,157 metres. A semicircle of steep cliffs on the western side, called Thlazuang Khàm, is home to mountain goats.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Mizoram notified Phawngpui National Park on 22 July 1997. It covers 50 sq km and is one of the two national parks of the state.
- The Farpak grassland in the park lies beside a line of cliffs. Blyth's tragopan, Mrs Hume's pheasant and the peregrine falcon are seen there. The clouded leopard has also been recorded in the area.
- The forest department lists the tiger, leopard and clouded leopard among the park's animals. Its list also has the hoolock gibbon, serow and goral.
- Above about 1,600 metres, Phawngpui has temperate forest with the pine Pinus kesiya. A few other high forests of Mizoram have it too.

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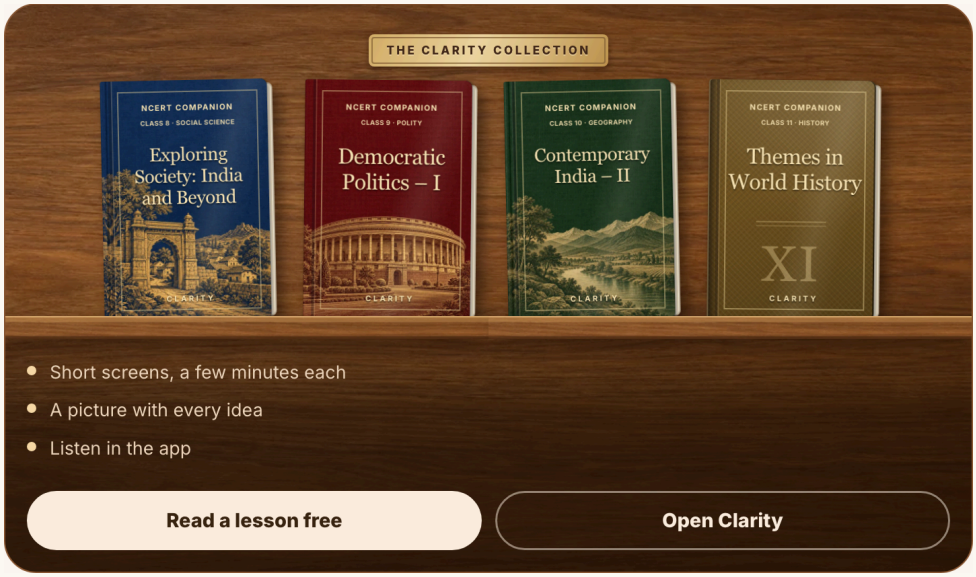

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157

Pala Wetland

Siaha · **Mizoram**

Ramsar site 2021 · 18.5 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Fed by springs; drains to the Pala river and the Salyu	Lake in a forested hollow between hills, 275–589 m	Hoolock gibbon, Phayre's leaf monkey, slow loris, sambar	Largest natural wetland of Mizoram



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Pala is on the Ramsar list only.

Pala Wetland lies in Siaha district in the far south of Mizoram, about 6 km from Phura village. The Ramsar site covers 1,850 hectares, and the lake itself is about 135 hectares. The lake lies in a hollow between hills covered with semi-evergreen forest. Underground springs are thought to be its main source of water.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Pala was designated a Ramsar site on 31 August 2021, with the site number 2484. India announced it on 26 July 2022, when India's count of Ramsar sites reached 54.
- The Ramsar site has the same boundary as Pala Wetland Reserve Forest, designated in 1998. It includes the lake and the forest of its catchment.
- The Mara people hold the lake sacred. Their oral history says that the earliest Mara settlements after their migration from Myanmar were around it.
- The Ramsar record lists 222 species of birds, 21 of reptiles and 11 of amphibians. Primates in the wetland include the hoolock gibbon and Phayre's leaf monkey.

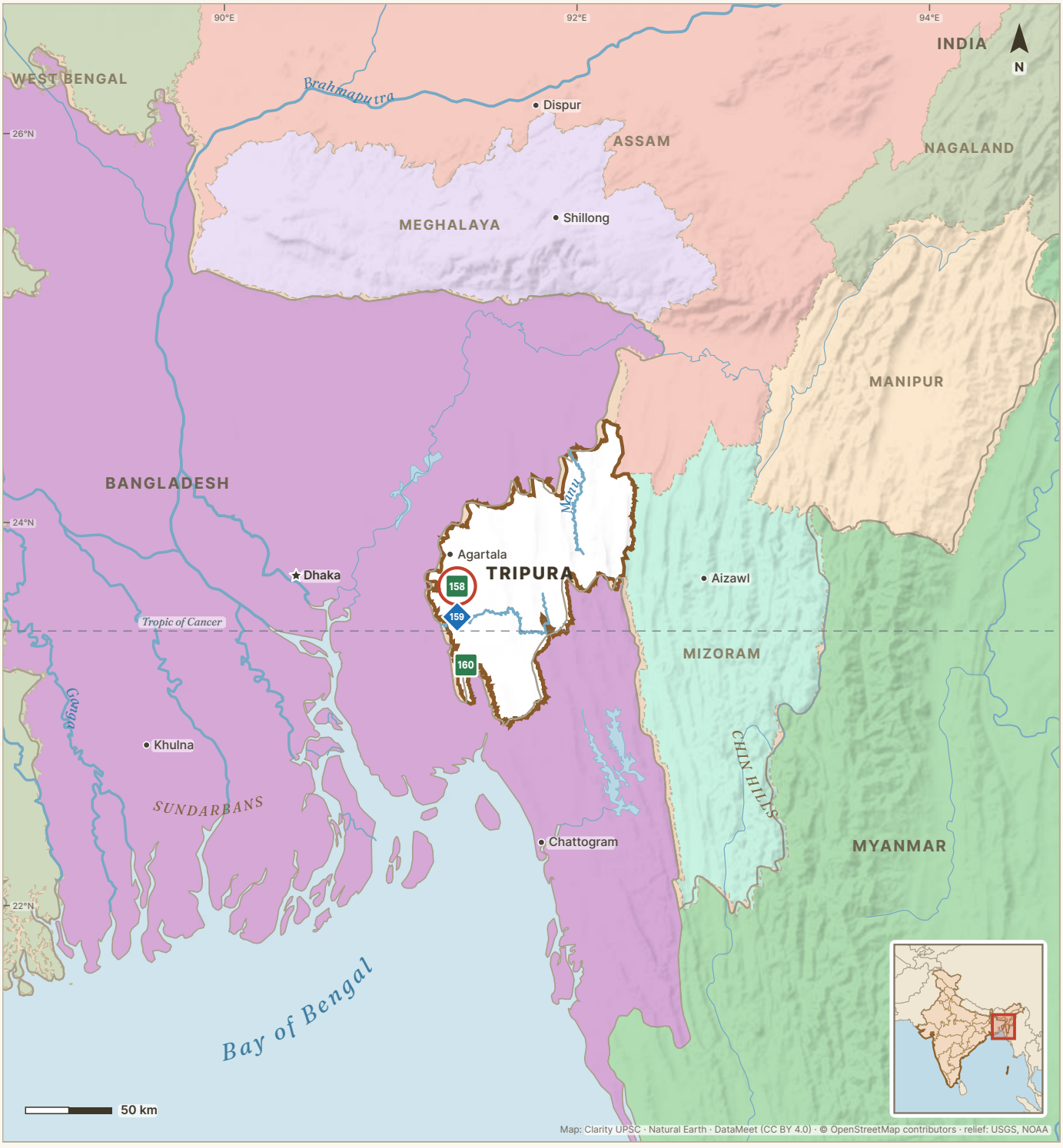
PRELIMS TRAP

The Ramsar list names the site Pala Wetland. Mizoram's forest department calls it Palak Dil or Palak Wetland. Its Mara name is Pala Tipo, which means 'swallowing lake'. All these names refer to the same lake.

Tripura

2 national parks 1 Ramsar site

Tripura is a small, hilly state with Bangladesh on all sides except the north-east. Its six protected areas are four wildlife sanctuaries and two national parks. Clouded Leopard National Park lies inside Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary. Bison National Park lies inside Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary. Rudrasagar Lake, with its water palace, is the state's only Ramsar site.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

Tripura: its areas

158	**Clouded Leopard** Sepahijala	199
159	**Rudrasagar** Sepahijala	200
160	**Bison (Rajbari)** South Tripura	201

158

Clouded Leopard National Park

Sepahijala · **Tripura**

National park 2007 · 5.08 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Deciduous to semi-evergreen forest near Bishalgarh	Clouded leopard, hoolock gibbon, leopard cat	Park of 5.08 sq km inside Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Clouded Leopard National Park lies inside Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary, which also contains Sepahijala Zoological Park. The park is on the national parks list only.

Clouded Leopard National Park lies inside Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary in Sepahijala district, about 25 km from Agartala. It covers 5.08 sq km of deciduous to semi-evergreen forest. The Tripura Forest Department names the clouded leopard, the hoolock gibbon and the leopard cat as its main animals.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Wildlife Institute of India table records that Clouded Leopard National Park was created in 2007. The Tripura Forest Department says its final notification has been issued.
- Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary was notified on 2 February 1987. Sepahijala Zoological Park was started on 2 October 1972.
- The zoo started a conservation breeding centre on 24 May 2010. The forest department names it the lead zoo for breeding the clouded leopard, binturong, Phayre's leaf monkey and pig-tailed macaque.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

27 January 2026 On 16 January 2026 Tripura's Forest Minister, Animesh Debbarma, said the state had received over ₹57 crore. The money came from the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region. He said it would modernise Sepahijala Zoo, in the sanctuary around the park, under a plan approved by the Central Zoo Authority.

10 October 2026 In October 2026 officials reported that three Bengal tiger cubs had been born at Sepahijala Zoological Park around 30–31 August. The births raised the number of tigers at the zoo to seven. The same pair of tigers had three cubs in 2025.

PRELIMS TRAP

Sepahijala is the name of a district, a wildlife sanctuary of 1987 and a zoo of 1972. Clouded Leopard National Park is a separate unit of 5.08 sq km inside the sanctuary.

159

Rudrasagar Lake

Sepahijala · **Tripura**

Ramsar site 2005 · 2.4 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Fed by three streams, it drains to the Gumti	**Lowland lake where the silt of its streams settles**	**Three-striped roof turtle, freshwater fish, migratory ducks**	**Neermahal water palace, built 1930–1938**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Rudrasagar is on the Ramsar list only. The Tripura Forest Department says it is the nodal agency for managing the lake.

Rudrasagar Lake lies at Melaghar in Sepahijala district, about 52 km from Agartala. Three perennial streams, which flow all year, feed the lake. The silt they carry settles in the lake, and the water flows out through a channel to the Gumti river. In winter the lake has migratory birds such as the lesser whistling duck, the gadwall and the northern shoveler.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Rudrasagar was designated a Ramsar site on 8 November 2005, with the site number 1572. It covers 240 hectares and is the only Ramsar site of Tripura.
- Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya built the Neermahal palace in the middle of the lake as a summer residence. The work began in 1930 and was finished by 1938.
- The Ramsar Information Sheet names the three-striped roof turtle as one reason for the site's importance. IUCN then listed the turtle as Endangered. It now lists it as Critically Endangered.
- Silt from farmland and cleared forest in the catchment is the main threat. It has reduced the area of the lake and the water it can hold.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2022 · Q30

Consider the following pairs : Wetland/Lake — Location 1. Hokera Wetland — Punjab 2. Renuka Wetland — Himachal Pradesh 3. Rudrasagar Lake — Tripura 4. Sasthamkotta Lake — Tamil Nadu How many pairs given above are correctly matched ?

(a) Only one pair (b) Only two pairs (c) Only three pairs (d) All four pairs

UPSC KEY **(b) Only two pairs.** Rudrasagar is in Tripura, and Renuka is in Himachal Pradesh. Hokera is in Jammu and Kashmir, and Sasthamkotta is in Keralam. So only two pairs are correct.

160

Bison (Rajbari) National Park

South Tripura · **Tripura**

National park 2007 · 31.63 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Perennial streams and water bodies of Trishna	Low hills and water bodies with deciduous to semi-evergreen forest	Indian gaur, hoolock gibbon, Phayre's leaf monkey	Named after the Indian gaur, commonly called bison



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Bison (Rajbari) National Park lies inside Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary. It is on the national parks list only.

Bison (Rajbari) National Park lies inside Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary in South Tripura district, near the town of Belonia. The sanctuary has streams that flow all year, water bodies, grassland and patches of untouched forest. The Indian gaur, commonly called bison, is its best-known animal.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tripura notified the park on 6 December 2007. It covers 31.63 sq km. The forest department's table says that its final notification is still being processed.
- The park takes its name from the Indian gaur, Bos gaurus. Visitors watch gaur at a site in the sanctuary called Eden of Bison.
- Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary was notified in November 1988. Official pages give two figures for its area, 163.08 sq km and 194.708 sq km.
- Trishna's animals include the hoolock gibbon, Phayre's leaf monkey (spectacled langur), capped langur and clouded leopard. Forest of garjan trees lines its water bodies.

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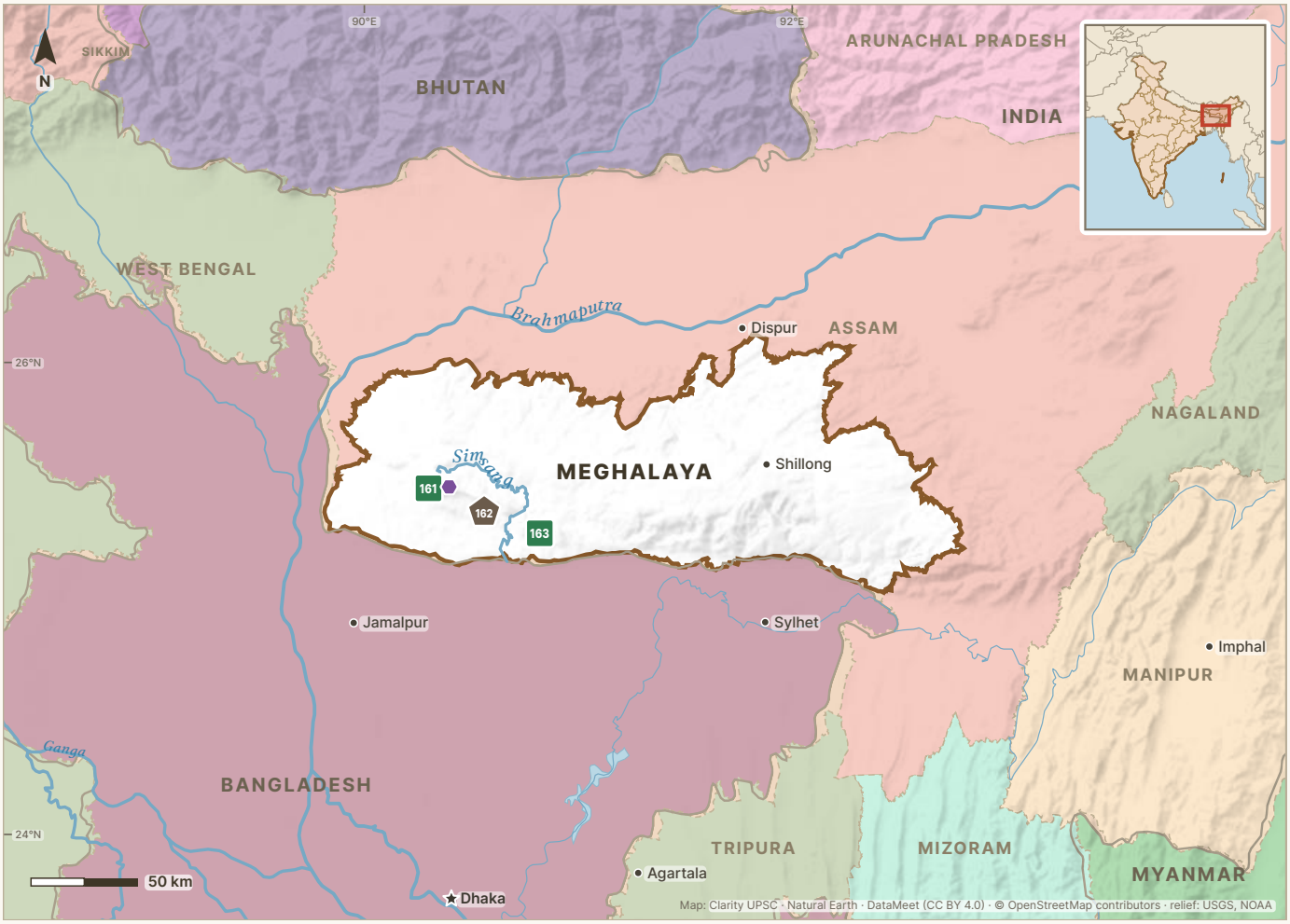
Meghalaya

2 national parks · 1 biosphere reserve · 1 elephant reserve

Meghalaya is mainly a plateau, with narrow plains along its borders. All four of its listings are in the Garo Hills, the western part of the state. The Simsang, the longest river of Meghalaya, rises there. Nokrek National Park is the core of Nokrek Biosphere Reserve. Balpakram National Park lies south-east of Nokrek. Both parks are inside Garo Hills Elephant Reserve.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

161 Nokrek 203
East Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills

162 Garo Hills 204
East Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills

163 Balpakram 205
South Garo Hills

161 Nokrek National Park and Biosphere Reserve

East Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills · **Meghalaya**

National park 1997 · 47.48 sq km | **Biosphere reserve** 1988 · 820 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Simsang, Ganol and Dareng begin here	**Tura Range of the Meghalaya Plateau, Nokrek peak 1,412 m**	**Hoolock gibbon, Asian elephant, clouded leopard, Indian wild orange**	**First UNESCO biosphere reserve of North-East India (2009)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nokrek National Park is the core zone of Nokrek Biosphere Reserve. It lies inside Garo Hills Elephant Reserve. The park is also in the core of the Garo Hills Conservation Area. In 2018 India added this area to its World Heritage tentative list, the list of sites a country may nominate to UNESCO.

Nokrek lies on the Tura Range in western Meghalaya, where East, West and South Garo Hills districts meet. Nokrek peak, at 1,412 metres, is the highest point of the Garo Hills. The Simsang, Ganol and Dareng rivers begin here. Evergreen and semi-evergreen forest covers most of the land. The reserve is home to a large population of hoolock gibbons, the only ape found in India.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The national park covers 47.48 sq km. Meghalaya notified it on 29 November 1986. The Wildlife Institute of India list gives the year as 1997.
- The biosphere reserve was notified on 1 September 1988, the third in India. In May 2009 it became the first reserve of North-East India in UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
- The Indian wild orange, Citrus indica, grows here. Local people call it memang narang, 'orange of the spirits'. The National Citrus Gene Sanctuary, in the buffer zone around the core, protects it.
- At 820 sq km, Nokrek is the smallest of the 13 Indian biosphere reserves in UNESCO's network. Dibru-Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve in Assam is smaller, at 765 sq km, but it is outside the network.

PRELIMS TRAP

Nokrek is the highest peak of the Garo Hills, on the Tura Range of the Meghalaya Plateau. A 2022 Prelims question matched Nokrek with the Sikkim Himalaya, and that match was wrong.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2013 · Q17 Also asked: 2004 · 2022

Consider the following pairs: 1. Nokrek Biosphere Reserve : Garo Hills 2. Loktak Lake : Barail Range 3. Namdapha National Park : Dafla Hills Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1, 2 and 3 (d) None

UPSC KEY **(a) 1 only.** Nokrek Biosphere Reserve is in the Garo Hills. Loktak Lake lies in the Manipur valley. Namdapha lies far east of the Dafla Hills. So only pair 1 is correct.

162 Garo Hills Elephant Reserve

East Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills · **Meghalaya**

Elephant reserve 2001 · 3,500 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Simsang, the longest river of Meghalaya	**Forested Garo Hills, with 87% of the area under forest**	**Asian elephant, hoolock gibbon, gaur**	**Only elephant reserve of Meghalaya (2001)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The reserve contains Balpakram and Nokrek national parks and Siju Wildlife Sanctuary. Nokrek National Park is the core of Nokrek Biosphere Reserve. The buffer area of the Garo Hills Conservation Area, on UNESCO's World Heritage tentative list, follows the boundary of the elephant reserve.

Garo Hills Elephant Reserve covers about 3,500 sq km of the Garo Hills. It is made up of protected areas and of reserved forests such as Rewak, Emangre and Tura Peak. The clan and community land between them is also part of it. Its forests include tropical evergreen forest, sal and bamboo. The reserve borders Bangladesh, and elephants move across that border.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Meghalaya notified the reserve on 31 October 2001, under the guidelines of Project Elephant, a central government scheme.
- The forest department controls only about 9% of the reserve. Most of it is community land, where people practise jhum, or shifting cultivation.
- The all-India elephant estimate of 2021–25 put Meghalaya's elephants at 677. This is the second-largest number in the North-East, after Assam. South Garo Hills district has the largest share.
- In 2023 the Union Environment Ministry listed 150 elephant corridors checked on the ground. Six are in Meghalaya. Five of these are in the Garo Hills, including Siju–Rewak and Nokrek–Emangre.

PRELIMS TRAP

Meghalaya has one notified elephant reserve, Garo Hills. An older official table, last updated in 2015, also listed a Khasi Hills Elephant Reserve of 1,331 sq km. The Government of India had approved it, but the state had not notified it. It is not on the present list of 33.

163 Balpakram (Balphakram) National Park

South Garo Hills · **Meghalaya**

National park 1986 · 220 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Mahadeo, through a deep gorge	**Plateau with grasslands and deep gorges**	**Asian elephant, gaur, sambar, clouded leopard**	**Resting place of the spirits of the dead in Garo belief**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Balpakram lies inside Garo Hills Elephant Reserve, and Siju Wildlife Sanctuary adjoins it. Balpakram, Nokrek and Siju are in the core of the Garo Hills Conservation Area. India added this area to UNESCO's World Heritage tentative list in 2018.

Balpakram National Park lies on a plateau in South Garo Hills district. Deep gorges cut the plateau, and the Mahadeo river flows through one of them. The Garo people regard the plateau and its gorge as sacred. They believe it is the resting place of the spirits of the dead. The park has large grasslands and mixed forest. Elephants, gaur, sambar and clouded leopards live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Meghalaya notified the park on 15 February 1986. It covers 220 sq km. The Wildlife Institute of India table spells its name Balphakram.
- Before 1986 the land belonged to Garo communities, who practised jhum, or shifting cultivation, on it. The government paid the communities for the land.
- Chitmang peak, inside the park, is the second-highest peak of the Garo Hills after Nokrek. Rocks of the Mahadeo river in the park have fossils of plants and of ammonites, extinct shelled sea animals.
- The insect-eating pitcher plant Nepenthes khasiana, found only in Meghalaya, grows in the Baghmara–Balpakram landscape. Sundews, which also eat insects, grow there too.

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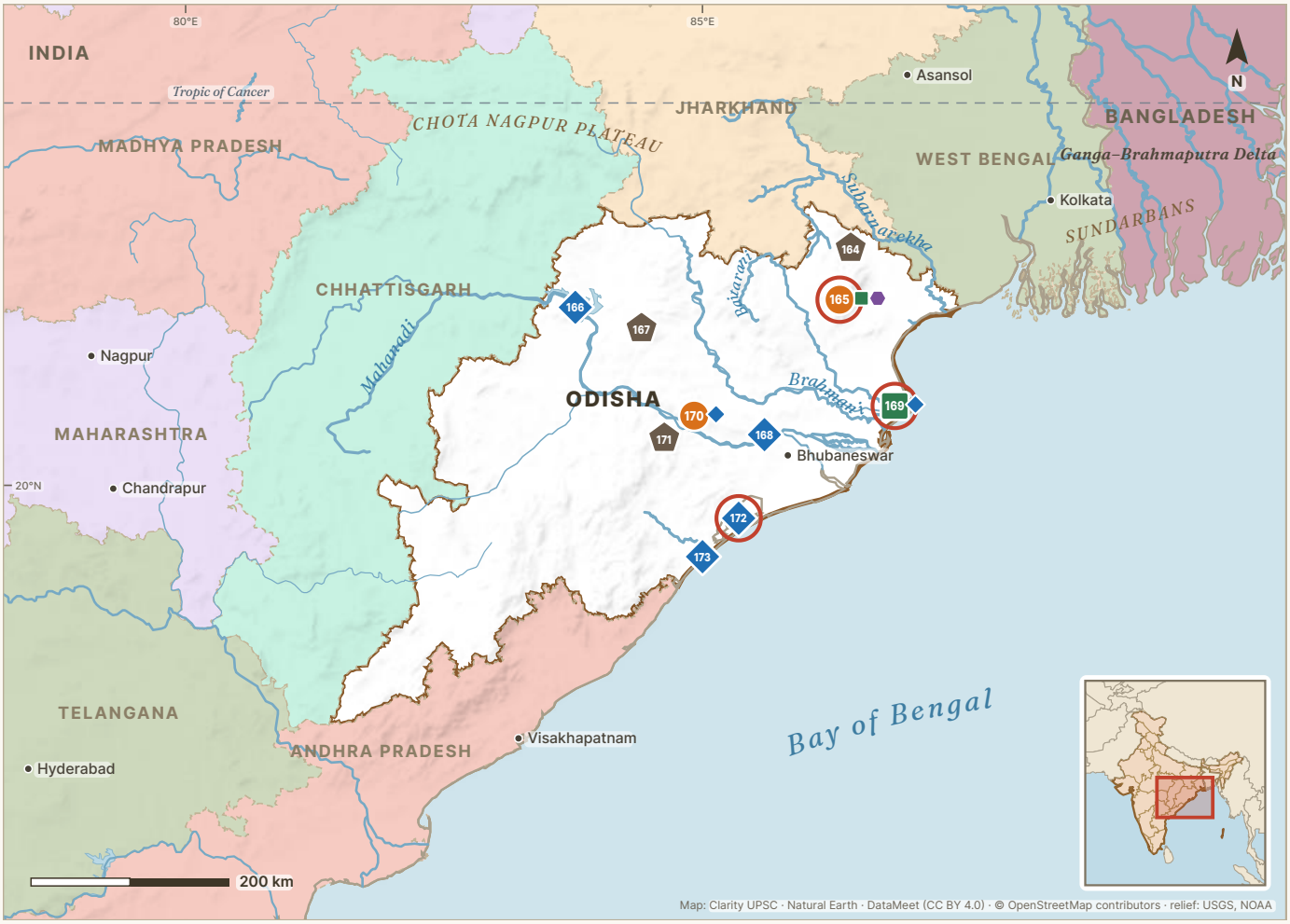
Odisha

2 tiger reserves · 2 national parks · 6 Ramsar sites · 1 biosphere reserve · 3 elephant reserves

Odisha lies on the Bay of Bengal. Inland, the land rises to the Chota Nagpur plateau in the north and to the Eastern Ghats in the south. The Mahanadi crosses the middle of the state. Three of Odisha's six Ramsar sites lie along it: Hirakud, Satkosia Gorge and Ansupa. Similipal, in the north, is a tiger reserve, a national park and the state's only biosphere reserve. Bhitarkanika and Chilika lie on the coast.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

164	**Mayurbhanj** Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak and Keonjhar	207
165	**Similipal** Mayurbhanj	208
166	**Hirakud** Sambalpur, Jharsuguda and Bargarh	209
167	**Sambalpur** Sambalpur	210
168	**Ansupa** Cuttack	210
169	**Bhitarkanika** Kendrapara	211
170	**Satkosia** Angul, Cuttack, Boudh and Nayagarh	212
171	**Mahanadi** Angul, Boudh, Cuttack and Nayagarh	213
172	**Chilika** Puri, Khordha and Ganjam	214
173	**Tampara** Ganjam	215

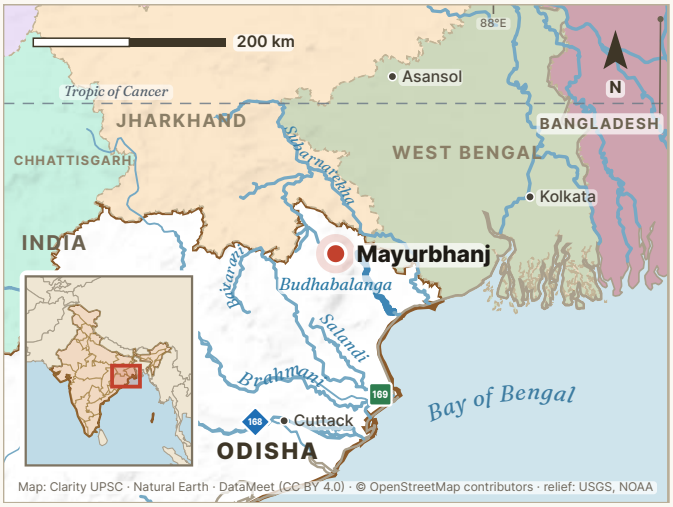
164

Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve

Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak and Keonjhar · **Odisha**

Elephant reserve 2001 · 3,214 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Budhabalanga, Salandi and streams of the Baitarani	**Similipal hills and the forests around them, 14 to 1,183 m**	**Asian elephant, tiger, gaur**	**Odisha's first elephant reserve (2001)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Similipal National Park and Similipal Tiger Reserve lie at the centre of the elephant reserve. Similipal Biosphere Reserve, with a core zone of 845 sq km, also covers the Similipal hills.

Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve covers 3,214 sq km in north-eastern Odisha, around the Similipal hills. It includes reserve forests of the Baripada, Karanjia and Keonjhar forest divisions. Its forests range from semi-evergreen forest to moist and dry sal forest. The land rises from 14 metres to 1,183 metres.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Odisha notified the reserve on 29 September 2001 under Project Elephant. It was the first of the state's three elephant reserves. It is also the largest of them.
- In the north it borders Singhbhum Elephant Reserve of Jharkhand. Both belong to the East-Central elephant landscape of Odisha, Jharkhand and south-western West Bengal.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority says Similipal has the largest elephant population in Odisha. The 2021–25 national estimate, based on DNA, put Odisha's elephants at 912.
- Mayurbhanj is one of India's sites under MIKE, the CITES programme for Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants.

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LEVEL 1 · POLITY

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165 Similipal Tiger Reserve, National Park and Biosphere Reserve

Mayurbhanj · **Odisha**

Tiger reserve 1973 · 2,750 sq km | **National park** 1980 · 845.7 sq km | **Biosphere reserve** 1994 · 5,569 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Budhabalanga, Salandi and tributaries of the Baitarani	**Hills of the Chota Nagpur plateau, Khairiburu peak 1,168 m**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, mugger, gaur**	**One of the first nine Project Tiger reserves (1973–74)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Similipal National Park is the old core of Similipal Tiger Reserve. Similipal Biosphere Reserve, 5,569 sq km in all, spreads around them. The park and the tiger reserve also lie inside Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve.

Similipal lies in Mayurbhanj district, in the far north of Odisha. It is a block of hills on the Chota Nagpur plateau. Its highest peak, Khairiburu, is 1,168 metres high. Moist mixed deciduous forest covers most of the land, with patches of semi-evergreen forest and grassland. Streams that flow all year run from it into the Budhabalanga, the Salandi and the Baitarani.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Similipal was one of the first nine Project Tiger reserves of 1973–74. The 2022 All India Tiger Estimation found 16 tigers. A National Tiger Conservation Authority report of June 2026 counts 32.
- Odisha first proposed a national park here in 1980. It issued the final notification for 845.70 sq km on 24 April 2025, 45 years later.
- India notified Similipal Biosphere Reserve on 21 June 1994. UNESCO added it to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2009.
- Many Similipal tigers are pseudo-melanistic. A change in the Taqpep gene makes their stripes broad and joined, so the coat looks black. A 2021 study linked this to the small, isolated population.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

5 June 2026 In early June 2026 Similipal Tiger Reserve shared a photograph of a black, or pseudo-melanistic, tigress with three black cubs. Officials said that the cubs looked healthy and moved about with their mother. An official said that the reserve now lets tigers breed and thrive naturally.

10 August 2026 In August 2026 Odisha prepared a second phase of bringing tigers to Similipal, to widen its gene pool. The proposal sought one male and one female from central India. Officials said it was at an early stage. In 2024 the tigresses Jamuna and Zeenat came from Tadoba–Andhari Tiger Reserve. Zeenat had four cubs in May 2026.

PRELIMS TRAP

Odisha called Similipal India's 107th national park when it issued the final notification in April 2025. The Wildlife Institute of India had listed Similipal as a national park since 1980. So the national count stayed at 106.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2004 · Q107

Match List I (Biosphere Reserve) with List II (States) and select the correct answer using the codes given below: List I A. Simlipal B. Dehong Deband C. Nokrek D. Kanchenjunga List II 1. Sikkim 2. Uttaranchal 3. Arunachal Pradesh 4. Orissa 5. Meghalaya

(a) A-1, B-3, C-5, D-4 (b) A-4, B-5, C-2, D-1 (c) A-1, B-5, C-2, D-4 (d) A-4, B-3, C-5, D-1

ANSWER (d) A-4, B-3, C-5, D-1. Similipal is in Orissa, now Odisha (4). Dehang-Debang is in Arunachal Pradesh, Nokrek in Meghalaya and Kanchenjunga in Sikkim, so the code is A-4, B-3, C-5, D-1.

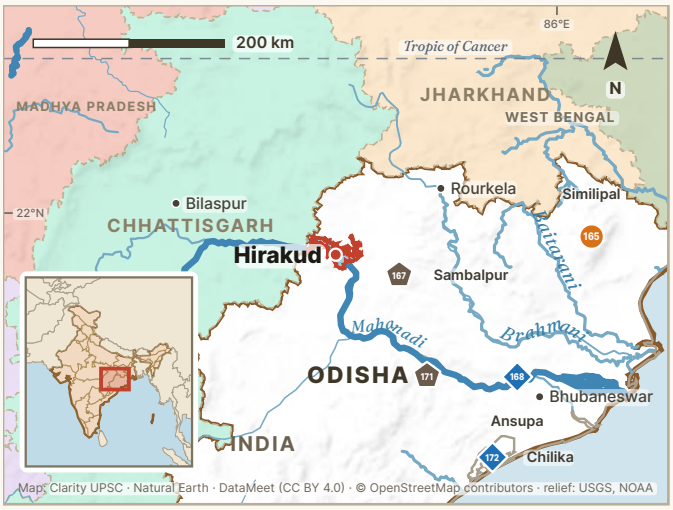
166

Hirakud Reservoir

Sambalpur, Jharsuguda and Bargarh · **Odisha**

Ramsar site 2021 · 654 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Mahanadi	**Large reservoir behind a masonry dam and earthen dykes**	**Red-crested pochard, ruddy shelduck, cotton pygmy goose**	**Reservoir of a dam that began working in 1957**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Hirakud is on the Ramsar list only. Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, in Bargarh district, lies along its shore. The Ramsar record names the sanctuary as part of the site's boundary.

Hirakud Reservoir lies on the Mahanadi near Sambalpur, in western Odisha. It was formed by the Hirakud Dam, which began working in 1957. The masonry dam and its earth embankments are about 25.8 km long in all. The upper part of the reservoir flows like a river, while the water near the dam is still, like a lake. These different habitats support many fish and waterbirds.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Hirakud became a Ramsar site on 12 October 2021, with the site number 2494. It covers 654 sq km.
- The Ramsar record lists more than 130 bird species and 54 fish species. The state forest department counted 142,466 waterbirds there in 2020–22.
- For seven waterbird species, more than 1% of the whole population uses the reservoir. They include the red-crested pochard, the ruddy shelduck and the cotton pygmy goose.
- The reservoir reduces floods in the Mahanadi delta, and its water irrigates about 436,000 hectares. Its fish support about 7,000 fisher households.

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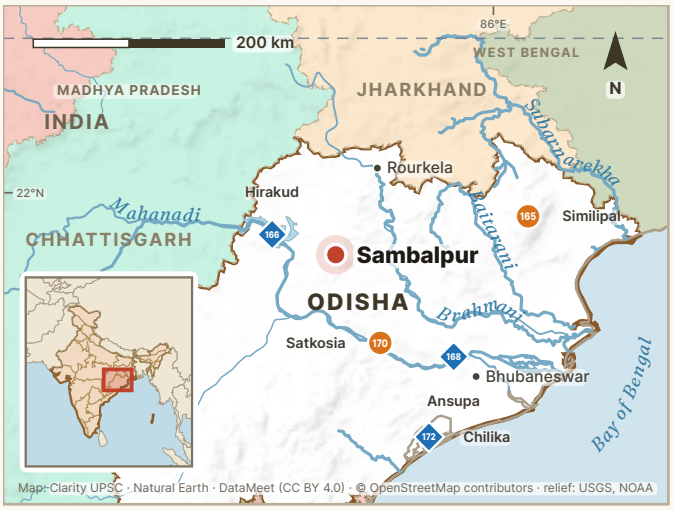
167 Sambalpur Elephant Reserve

Sambalpur · **Odisha**

Elephant reserve 2002 · 427 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Sal-covered hills, 199 to 776 m	Asian elephant, leopard, sloth bear, gaur	Smallest of Odisha's three elephant reserves (427 sq km)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sambalpur Elephant Reserve is on the elephant reserves list only.

Sambalpur Elephant Reserve lies in the hills of Sambalpur district, in northern Odisha. It is made up mainly of two wildlife sanctuaries, Badrama and Khalasuni. The two share a boundary of 37 km. The forest is mainly sal, with asan, piasal and patches of bamboo. Elephants, leopards, sloth bears and gaur live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Odisha notified the reserve on 27 March 2002. At 427 sq km it is the smallest of Odisha's three elephant reserves.
- Badrama Wildlife Sanctuary covers 304.63 sq km and also reaches into Deogarh district. Khalasuni Wildlife Sanctuary covers 116 sq km.
- The reserve lies in the Bamra and Rairakhol forest divisions. The land rises from 199 metres to 776 metres.

168 Ansupa Lake

Cuttack · **Odisha**

Ramsar site 2021 · 2.31 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Mahanadi, linked by the Kabula Nala channel	Oxbow lake among low hills	Indian skimmer, black-bellied tern, river tern	Oxbow lake formed by the Mahanadi



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Ansupa is on the Ramsar list only. It was one of four Odisha wetlands designated on 12 October 2021, with Satkosia Gorge, Hirakud Reservoir and Tampara Lake.

Ansupa Lake lies in the Banki sub-division of Cuttack district. The Mahanadi formed it as an oxbow lake. An oxbow lake is a curved lake left behind when a river changes its course. Ansupa lies among small hills such as Saranda, Bishnupur and Dhanagarh. A channel called the Kabula Nala links it to the Mahanadi. The river's flood water used to enter the lake through it.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Ansupa became a Ramsar site on 12 October 2021, with the site number 2487. It covers 231 hectares, or 2.31 sq km.
- The Ramsar record lists 194 bird species, 61 fish species and 26 mammal species. Its threatened birds include the Indian skimmer and the black-bellied tern.
- The Ramsar record says the channel no longer works, and it rates droughts as a high threat. Silt and weeds also threaten the lake.

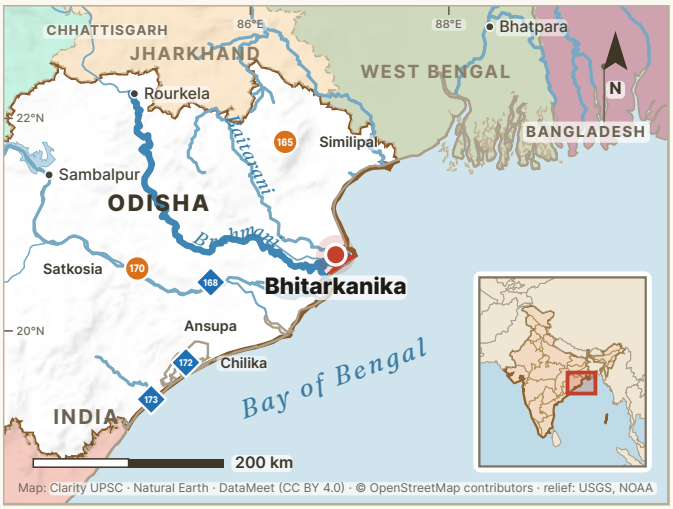
169

Bhitarkanika National Park and Bhitarkanika Mangroves

Kendrapara · **Odisha**

National park 1988 · 145 sq km | **Ramsar site** 2002 · 650 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Brahmani, Baitarani and the Dhamra estuary	**Mangrove forest, tidal creeks and mudflats of a river delta**	**Saltwater crocodile, water monitor, fishing cat**	**India's largest natural population of saltwater crocodiles**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Bhitarkanika National Park lies inside Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary, which covers 673 sq km. Gahirmatha Marine Wildlife Sanctuary adjoins the sanctuary on the east. Olive ridley turtles come there in very large numbers to nest.

Bhitarkanika lies in Kendrapara district, in the delta of the Brahmani and the Baitarani. The two rivers reach the Bay of Bengal through the Dhamra estuary. Tidal creeks run through dense mangrove forest and mudflats. The Ramsar record calls it one of the finest remaining mangrove forests on the Indian coast. Saltwater crocodiles, water monitors and many waterbirds live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Wildlife Institute of India lists the national park from 1988. Odisha notified its 145 sq km as Bhitarkanika National Park on 16 September 1998.
- Bhitarkanika Mangroves became a Ramsar site on 19 August 2002 and covers 650 sq km. It was Odisha's second Ramsar site, after Chilika.
- A 2023 draft notification of the Union Environment Ministry says Bhitarkanika has India's largest natural population of saltwater crocodiles. It also records Asia's largest heronry there.
- The same notification records 88 species of mangroves and the plants that grow with them. Kanika Sundari (Heritiera kanikensis), a mangrove tree, is found only in the Bhitarkanika area.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

22 January 2026 In January 2026 the winter census counted 152,762 migratory birds of 106 species in Bhitarkanika National Park. The count a year earlier had been 151,614 birds of 118 species.

8 September 2026 Odisha's census of 8 to 10 January 2026 counted 1,858 saltwater crocodiles, 32 more than a year earlier. Most were in the Kanika range of Bhitarkanika. In early September 2026 young crocodiles began to hatch. Forest officials had found 117 nesting sites that season.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Odisha's two tiger reserves are Similipal and Satkosia. Bhitarkanika is a national park, a wildlife sanctuary and a Ramsar site. A 2012 Prelims question listed it beside three tiger reserves to test this.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2011 · Q12

Also asked: 2010

Two important rivers – one with its source in Jharkhand (and known by a different name in Odisha), and another, with its source in Odisha – merge at a place only a short distance from the coast of Bay of Bengal before flowing into the sea. This is an important site of wildlife and biodiversity and a protected area. Which one of the following could be this?

(a) Bhitarkanika (b) Chandipur-on-sea (c) Gopalpur-on-sea (d) Simlipal

UPSC KEY **(a) Bhitarkanika.** The Brahmani and the Baitarani meet near the coast at Bhitarkanika. The Brahmani is formed by rivers that flow in from Jharkhand, and the Baitarani rises in Odisha.

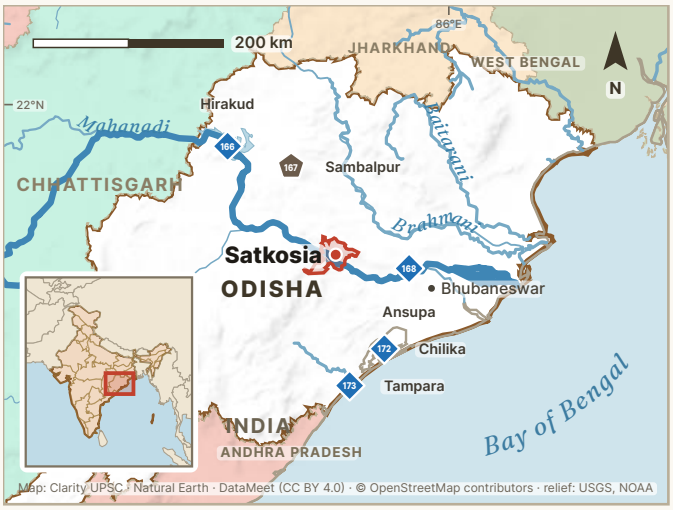
170

Satkosia Tiger Reserve and Satkosia Gorge

Angul, Cuttack, Boudh and Nayagarh · **Odisha**

Tiger reserve 2007 · 963.87 sq km | **Ramsar site** 2021 · 981.97 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Mahanadi	**River gorge where the Chota Nagpur plateau meets the Eastern Ghats**	**Gharial, mugger, Asian elephant, leopard**	**Its name means 'seven kos', the 22.4 km length of its gorge**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Satkosia Gorge became a Ramsar site on 12 October 2021. The Ramsar record says its boundary follows Satkosia Gorge Wildlife Sanctuary, a part of the tiger reserve. The tiger reserve lies inside Mahanadi Elephant Reserve.

Satkosia lies in central Odisha, where the Mahanadi flows through a narrow, deep gorge about 22.4 km long. The land is hilly. It rises from 37 metres near the river to 932 metres at Sunakhania peak. Moist sal forest and mixed deciduous forest cover the hills. Gharials and muggers, two kinds of crocodile, live in the river. Elephants and leopards live in the forests.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The name comes from 'sat' (seven) and 'kos', an old measure of about two miles. The gorge is 14 miles, or 22.4 km, long.
- Satkosia Gorge Wildlife Sanctuary was set up in 1976. Together with Baisipalli Wildlife Sanctuary, it became Satkosia Tiger Reserve in 2007. The reserve covers 963.87 sq km.
- Satkosia is where the Chota Nagpur plateau and the Eastern Ghats meet. The land north of the Mahanadi belongs to the Garhjat hills. The land south of it belongs to the Eastern Ghats.
- The 2022 All India Tiger Estimation found no tigers in Satkosia. The National Tiger Conservation Authority says that past efforts to bring tigers back did not succeed.

PRELIMS TRAP

Satkosia Gorge is the Odisha wetland known for the gharial and the mugger. Bhitarkanika is known for the saltwater crocodile. A 2017 Prelims question asked for the best place to see gharials in the wild. Bhitarkanika Mangroves was one of its wrong options.

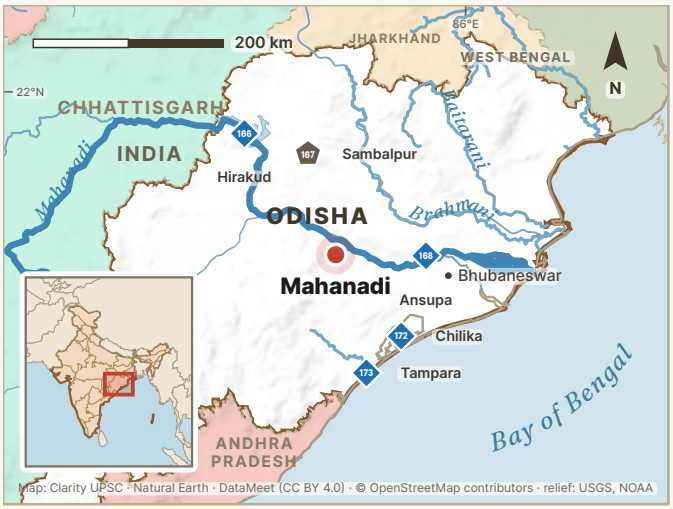
171

Mahanadi Elephant Reserve

Angul, Boudh, Cuttack and Nayagarh · **Odisha**

Elephant reserve 2002 · 1,038 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Mahanadi	**Hills and narrow valleys of central Odisha, 13 to 934 m**	**Asian elephant, leopard, gaur**	**Elephant reserve around Satkosia Tiger Reserve (2002)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Satkosia Tiger Reserve lies inside the elephant reserve and has its own entry. The Ramsar site Satkosia Gorge covers much of the same land.

Mahanadi Elephant Reserve lies in central Odisha, where the Mahanadi cuts through the hills. It covers 1,038 sq km in Angul, Boudh, Cuttack and Nayagarh districts. Most of it is Satkosia Tiger Reserve. Forest covers about 86% of the land. It is mainly sal and mixed deciduous forest, with bamboo.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Odisha notified the reserve on 20 July 2002 under Project Elephant. It takes in forests of the Angul, Athagarh and Boudh divisions. The Nayagarh and Mahanadi Wildlife divisions also have forest in it.
- Satkosia Gorge Wildlife Sanctuary (745.52 sq km) and Baisipalli Wildlife Sanctuary (168.35 sq km) lie inside it.
- Elephants once moved between Satkosia and Similipal through Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack and Keonjhar. The National Tiger Conservation Authority says this link has broken up and needs restoring.
- The 2021–25 national elephant report names Satkosia–Baisipalli as one of the four main elephant population blocks of Odisha.

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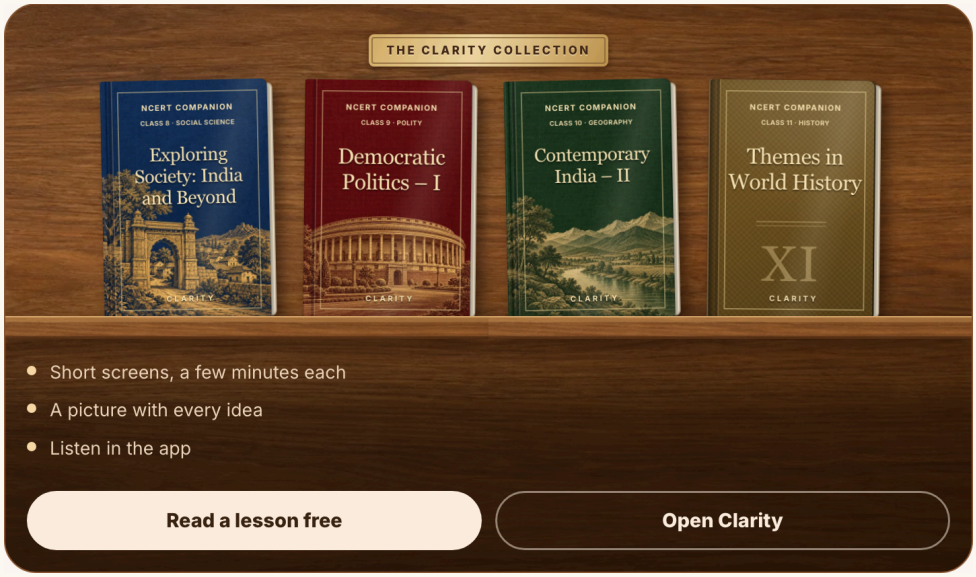

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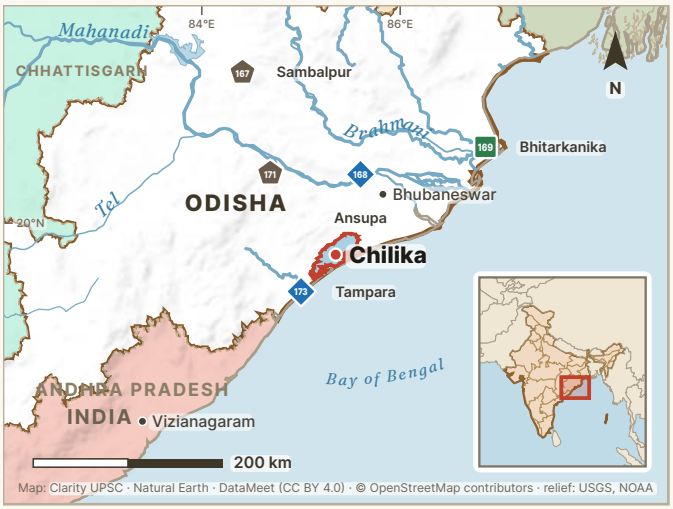
172

Chilika Lake

Puri, Khordha and Ganjam · **Odisha**

Ramsar site 1981 · 1,165 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Daya and Bhargavi, with a 32 km channel to the sea	**Shallow coastal lagoon behind a long sandy ridge**	**Irrawaddy dolphin, flamingo, migratory waterfowl**	**One of India's first two Ramsar sites (1 October 1981)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Chilika is on the Ramsar list only. Nalabana Island, 15.57 sq km in area, lies inside the lagoon. It is notified as a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Chilika is a shallow lagoon on the coast of Odisha, in Puri, Khordha and Ganjam districts. A long sandy ridge separates it from the Bay of Bengal. A channel about 32 km long joins it to the sea. Its water covers about 1,165 sq km in the monsoon and 900 sq km in summer. Sea water and river water mix in it, so its saltiness changes with place and season.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Chilika became a Ramsar site on 1 October 1981, with the site number 229.
- In 1993 silt was choking its mouth, so Chilika was put on the Montreux Record of threatened Ramsar sites. A new mouth was opened in 2000. In 2002 it became the first Asian site to leave the Record.
- The Chilika Development Authority received the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award for 2002 for this restoration. The lagoon supports about 0.2 million fisherfolk.
- Most of Odisha's Irrawaddy dolphins live in Chilika. A state census on 20 January 2026 counted 208 in Odisha. Of these, 159 were in Chilika, the same Chilika figure as in 2025.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

5 January 2026 In January 2026 Odisha planned to restore Chilika, as silt was filling its mouth. IIT Madras had studied the problem. On 12 January the Chilika Development Authority adopted a five-year plan at a meeting chaired by the Chief Minister. It includes digging out the mouth and deepening channels at Balugaon, Magarmukha and Palur.

Full story

27 July 2026 In July 2026 forest officials arrested 24 people for fishing inside Nalabana Bird Sanctuary, where fishing is banned. They seized three motor boats, nets and about 23 kg of fish.

PRELIMS TRAP

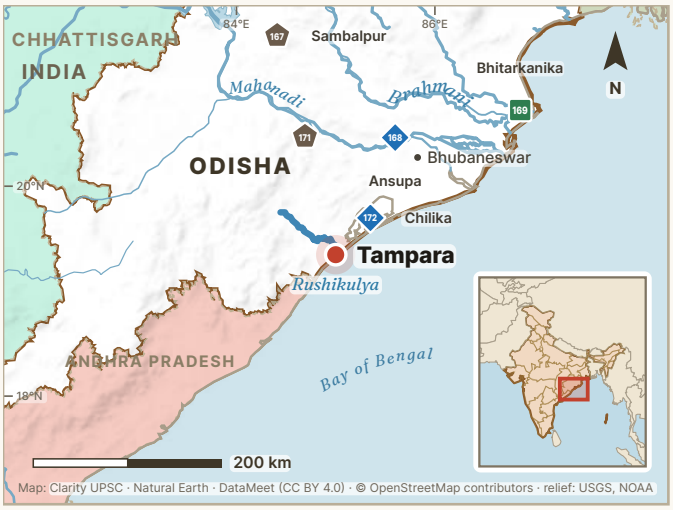
Chilika and Keoladeo National Park in Rajasthan were designated on the same day, 1 October 1981. The two together are India's first Ramsar sites.

173 Tampara Lake

Ganjam · **Odisha**

Ramsar site 2021 · 3 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Rushikulya	**Freshwater lake on the coastal plain, about 1 km from the sea**	**Common pochard, river tern, red-crested pochard**	**A hollow made in 1766 that later filled with rainwater**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Tampara is on the Ramsar list only. It is the southernmost of the six Ramsar sites of Odisha.

Tampara Lake lies near Chatrapur town in Ganjam district, in the basin of the Rushikulya river. It runs parallel to the coast, about a kilometre inland, behind sand dunes. The lake is about 5.8 km long. A channel joins it to the Rushikulya, and the river's flood water reaches the lake through it.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tampara became a Ramsar site on 12 October 2021, with the site number 2489. It covers 300 hectares, or 3 sq km.
- The Ramsar record says the lake began as a hollow made by explosives in 1766. That year the English East India Company took Ganjam from the French. Rainwater later filled the hollow.
- The lake supports at least 60 bird species and 46 fish species. Its fish catch, about 12 tonnes a year, supports local families.

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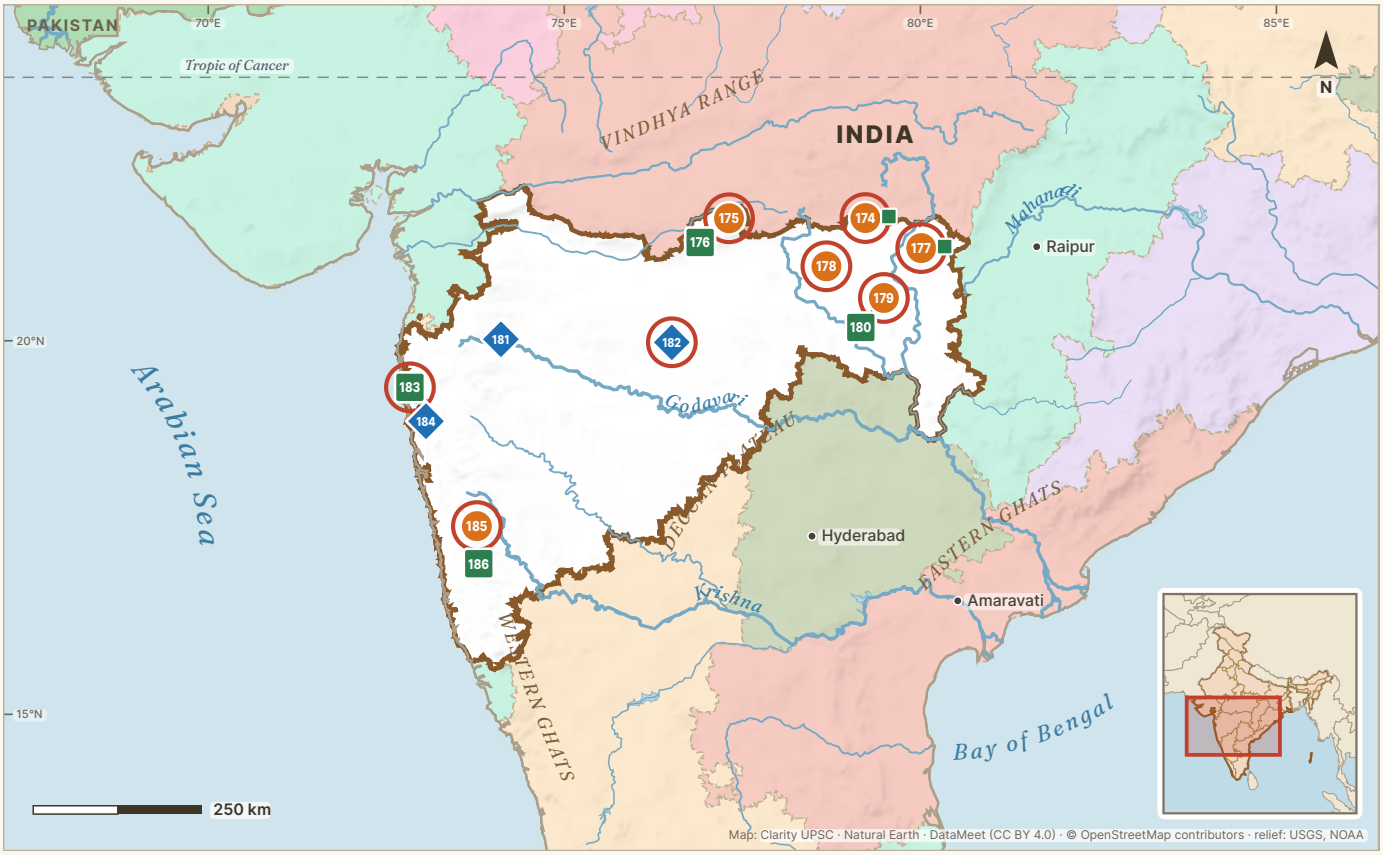
Maharashtra

6 tiger reserves 6 national parks 3 Ramsar sites

Maharashtra stretches from the Konkan coast in the west to the forests of Vidarbha in the east. Between them lie the Western Ghats, called the Sahyadri here, and the Deccan plateau. Five of its six tiger reserves lie in Vidarbha, from Melghat in the Satpura hills to Tadoba-Andhari in Chandrapur. Sahyadri Tiger Reserve is the only one in the Western Ghats. The state has six national parks and three Ramsar sites.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

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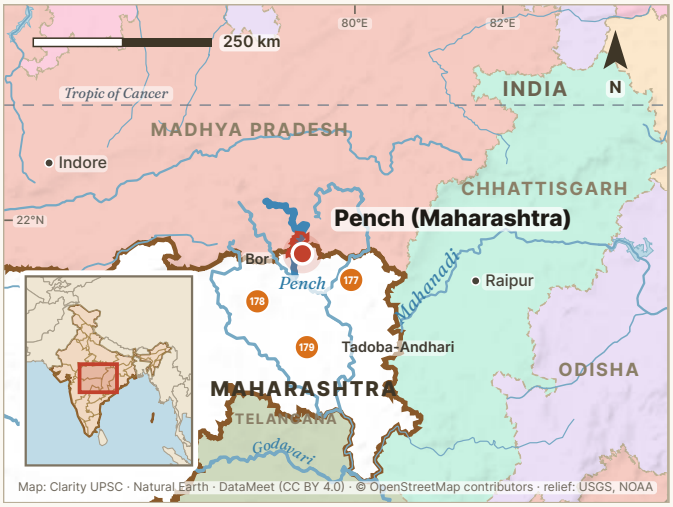
174 Pench National Park and Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra)

Nagpur · **Maharashtra**

Tiger reserve 1998 · 741.22 sq km | **National park** 1975 · 257.26 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Pench, which flows north to south to the Kanhan	**Satpura–Maikal hills, with dry deciduous teak forest**	**Tiger, leopard, dhole, gaur**	**India's first Dark Sky Park (2024)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Pench National Park forms the whole core of the tiger reserve, its inner zone. Mansinghdeo Wildlife Sanctuary is also part of the reserve. Pench Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh borders it on the north and has its own entry. Through it, the forests connect to Kanha by the Kanha–Pench corridor.

Pench Tiger Reserve of Maharashtra lies in Nagpur district, in the Satpura–Maikal hills. The Pench river flows from north to south through its middle and divides it into two halves. The river then joins the Kanhan. The forest is southern tropical dry deciduous forest with teak. Tigers, leopards, dholes and gaur live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The national park covers 257.26 sq km. It was first notified as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru National Park.
- The Pench river rises in the Mahadeo hills of the Satpura range. The Totladoh dam on the Pench lies in the reserve.
- In January 2024 the reserve became the first Dark Sky Park of India and the fifth in Asia. The title recognised its work to protect the night sky from light pollution.
- Camera traps in the 2022 tiger estimate identified 48 tigers in the reserve. The tigers of the two Pench reserves, in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, form one population.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

1 November 2026 On 29 October 2026 a young tiger was seen near the Chorbahuli gate of the reserve. It was a cub from the last litter of tigress F2 of Gothangaon, in Umred-Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary. Officials said the sighting showed young tigers moving out across the landscape. They added that its route still needed scientific study.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Two national parks have Pench in their name. The Maharashtra park was first notified as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru National Park. The Madhya Pradesh park is Indira Priyadarshini Pench National Park. Each forms part of the tiger reserve of its own state.

175 Melghat Tiger Reserve

Amravati, Akola and Buldhana · **Maharashtra**

Tiger reserve 1973 · 2,768.52 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Tapti, with tributaries such as the Sipna and the Gadga	**Gavilgarh hills, a southern branch of the Satpura range**	**Tiger, sloth bear, gaur, dhole**	**One of the first nine tiger reserves (1973–74)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Melghat is on the tiger reserves list only. Gugamal National Park, a part of its core, has its own entry. Forest divisions of Narmadapuram, Betul and East Nimar in Madhya Pradesh connect Melghat with Satpura Tiger Reserve.

Melghat Tiger Reserve lies on the Gavilgarh hills, a southern branch of the Satpura range, in northern Maharashtra. The land has steep hills, deep valleys and plateaus. The Tapti forms its northern and eastern boundary. The Sipna, Gadga and Dolar rivers drain the reserve into the Tapti, and so do the Khandu and the Khapra. Teak is the main tree of its dry deciduous forest.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Melghat was one of the nine tiger reserves of the first Project Tiger year, 1973–74. It covers 2,768.52 sq km and is the largest tiger reserve of Maharashtra.
- Its core, the inner zone, covers 1,500.49 sq km. The core is made up of Gugamal National Park and four wildlife sanctuaries: Melghat, Narnala, Ambabarwa and Wan.
- A steep ridge forms the southern boundary of the reserve. Its highest point is Vairat, at 1,178 metres. Chikhaldara, Makhala and Gugamal are among its plateaus.
- Camera traps in the 2022 tiger estimate identified 57 tigers in Melghat. The report treats Melghat and Satpura Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh as one tiger population.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

7 January 2026 On 2 January 2026 the Bombay Natural History Society began releasing 15 Indian vultures in the Somthana range of Melghat. The birds were bred at Pinjore in Haryana. They spent months in a large cage in the reserve. Staff opened its gates and left food outside, so the birds could leave on their own. All carried tracking tags.

10 February 2026 In February 2026 a wild Himalayan griffon vulture was seen feeding with the released birds in Melghat. It was the first such sighting in nearly a decade. By then, 34 vultures had been released in Melghat, Pench and Tadoba in 2025–26.

11 May 2026 Another bird, a female named X67, left Melghat on 28 May and flew 3,334 km in 27 days. She stopped at Satpura, the Bhopal region and Kuno. She reached Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan on 23 June.

PRELIMS TRAP

Melghat's rivers drain to the Tapti, which flows west into the Arabian Sea. In eastern Vidarbha, the Wainganga and the Wardha join to form the Pranhita. The Pranhita flows into the Godavari, which reaches the Bay of Bengal.

176 Gugamal National Park

Amravati · **Maharashtra**

National park 1975 · 361.28 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Tributaries of the Tapti	Hills and plateaus of the Satpura range in Melghat	Tiger, sloth bear, gaur, sambar	Only national park in Melghat Tiger Reserve



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Gugamal is on the national parks list only. Melghat Tiger Reserve, whose core includes the park, has its own entry.

Gugamal National Park lies in Amravati district, in the hills of Melghat. Gugamal is also the name of one of the plateaus in these hills. The streams of the park drain to the Tapti. The forest is dry deciduous forest with teak as the main tree. Tigers, sloth bears, gaur and sambar live in Melghat.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Gugamal National Park covers 361.28 sq km in Amravati district. It is the only national park inside Melghat Tiger Reserve.
- Gugamal and four wildlife sanctuaries form the core, or inner zone, of Melghat Tiger Reserve. The sanctuaries are Melghat, Narnala, Ambabarwa and Wan. The core covers 1,500.49 sq km.
- Melghat Tiger Reserve is managed as three wildlife divisions: Sipna, Gugamal and Akot.

PRELIMS TRAP

The national park inside Melghat Tiger Reserve is named Gugamal. The national parks list has no park called Melghat. Melghat is the name of the tiger reserve and of a wildlife sanctuary in its core.

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177 Nawegaon National Park and Nawegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve

Gondia and Bhandara · **Maharashtra**

Tiger reserve 2013 · 1,894.94 sq km | **National park** 1975 · 133.88 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Streams of the Wainganga basin	**Undulating hills rising to Zenda Pahad (about 702 m)**	**Tiger, leopard, dhole, gaur**	**Fifth tiger reserve of Maharashtra (2013)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The national park is on the national parks list, and the tiger reserve is on the tiger reserves list. The park forms part of the reserve's core.

Nawegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve lies in Gondia and Bhandara districts, in the north-east of Maharashtra. The land is gently rolling. Its highest point, Zenda Pahad, is about 702 metres high. The forest is southern tropical dry deciduous forest. Tigers, leopards, wolves and dholes live here. Sloth bears, gaur and mouse deer are also found.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The reserve was formed on 12 December 2013 as the fifth tiger reserve of Maharashtra. Its core, the inner zone, covers 653.67 sq km. It joins Nawegaon National Park with four wildlife sanctuaries.
- The four sanctuaries are Nawegaon, Nagzira, New Nagzira and Koka. The national park lies in the southern part, in Arjuni Moregaon taluka. Nagzira lies further north.
- The 2022 tiger estimate identified 11 tigers. Two tigresses were released here in May 2023, and a third in April 2024. A National Tiger Conservation Authority report of June 2026 counts 23 tigers.
- The reserve links Tadoba-Andhari, Pench and Kanha. A railway line passes through it. The land between Nawegaon and Nagzira is the most broken-up part of the reserve.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

31 March 2026 From 1 April 2026 the reserve took control of 652.20 sq km of forest in its buffer. A Maharashtra government resolution of 24 December 2025 moved this land from the Forest Department and the state Forest Development Corporation. The reserve then managed 1,305.88 sq km in twelve forest ranges instead of seven.

PRELIMS TRAP

The name is written both Nawegaon and Navegaon. The National Tiger Conservation Authority writes Nawegaon-Nagzira. State officials and many news reports write Navegaon-Nagzira. Both names mean the same reserve.

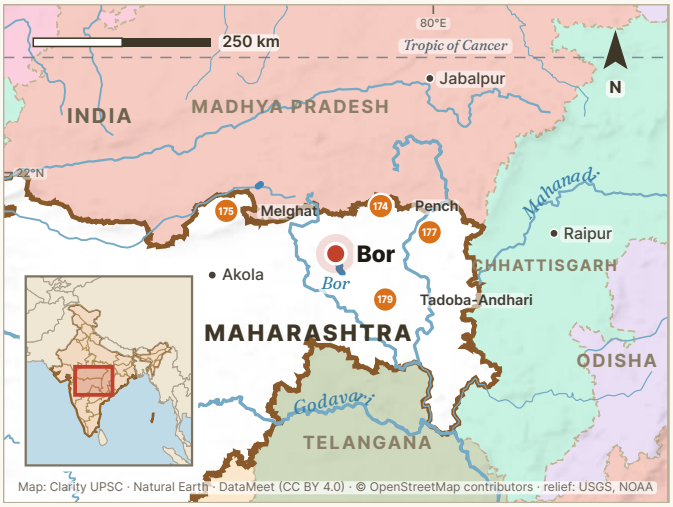
178

Bor Tiger Reserve

Wardha and Nagpur · **Maharashtra**

Tiger reserve 2014 · 816.27 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Bor river, dammed by the Bor Dam	**Dry deciduous forest and savannah around a reservoir**	**Tiger, leopard, dhole, gaur**	**Second-smallest core of any tiger reserve (138.12 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Bor Wildlife Sanctuary forms the core of the tiger reserve. Bor is on the tiger reserves list only. Pench (Maharashtra) lies to its north-east, Nawegaon-Nagzira to its east and Tadoba-Andhari to its south-east.

Bor Tiger Reserve lies near Hingani in Wardha district, west of Nagpur, and extends into Nagpur district. The reservoir of the Bor Dam divides the forest into two parts. The land has dry savannah, a grassland with scattered trees, and dry deciduous forest of teak, tendu and bamboo. Tigers, leopards, dholes and gaur live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Bor Wildlife Sanctuary became a tiger reserve in July 2014. The core, or inner zone, covers 138.12 sq km. The buffer, the outer zone around it, adds 678.15 sq km.
- The 2022 tiger report says that Bor has the second-smallest core of any tiger reserve. Only Orang in Assam has a smaller core, of 79.28 sq km.
- Camera traps in the 2022 tiger estimate identified 9 tigers. The report calls Bor an important link between Pench (Maharashtra) and Tadoba-Andhari.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

22 February 2026 On 20 February 2026 forest staff saw a black leopard near Budlagarh tank, in the Rahati gate area of the reserve. It was reported as the first black leopard seen in Bor. In the same month Maharashtra approved moving five villages out of the reserve. It also approved ₹13.18 crore for a nature-tourism centre at Salod in Wardha.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Bor is often called India's smallest tiger reserve. Only its core is among the smallest. With its buffer, Bor covers 816.27 sq km. In total area, 11 tiger reserves are smaller, among them Pench in Maharashtra.

Clarity UPSC

179 Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve

Chandrapur · **Maharashtra**

Tiger reserve 1993 · 1,727.59 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Andhari	**Hills, lakes and grassland in dry teak and bamboo forest**	**Tiger, leopard, sloth bear, dhole**	**Most tigers of Maharashtra's reserves (97 in 2022)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Tadoba National Park and Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary form the core of the tiger reserve. Tadoba National Park is on the national parks list and has its own entry. Forest corridors link the reserve with Nawegaon-Nagzira, Pench, Kawal in Telangana and Indravati in Chhattisgarh.

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve lies in Chandrapur district of eastern Maharashtra. It is named after the Andhari river and after Taru, or Tadoba. He was a local Gond headman who is worshipped as a god, and his shrine stands by Tadoba Lake. Dry deciduous teak forest, bamboo, grassland and lakes make up the land.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tadoba became a national park in 1955, and Andhari became a wildlife sanctuary in 1986. The two were joined to form the tiger reserve in 1993.
- Bamboo covers about 40% of the habitat. The National Tiger Conservation Authority records 280 species of birds in the reserve.
- Camera traps in the 2022 tiger estimate identified 97 tigers, the highest number among Maharashtra's reserves. Tigers from Tadoba move out into the forests around it.
- In October and November 2024 two Tadoba tigresses, Jamuna and Zeenat, were moved to Similipal in Odisha. Officials called this the first move of tigers from Maharashtra to another state.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

8 January 2026 In January 2026 the reserve reported a drive to sterilise and vaccinate stray dogs in its 95 buffer villages. The dogs had killed deer, hares and peafowl. Since January 2025, 2,271 dogs had been treated. On 1 May 2026 a yearly count from watchtowers recorded 5,765 sightings of animals, including 42 tigers and 13 leopards.

27 July 2026 A study published in 2026 used DNA from dhole droppings collected in the reserve in 2022 and 2023. It found 15 prey species in 169 samples. Chital appeared in 70.4% of the samples and sambar in 66.9%. Cattle and buffalo appeared only rarely. The diet varied more in the monsoon than in winter.

10 August 2026 In May 2026 Zeenat, a tigress moved to Similipal in 2024, had four cubs there. Odisha then began to plan a second phase of tiger moves. In August, 216 Indian star tortoises rescued from traffickers in Mumbai and Thane were released in Tadoba.

PRELIMS TRAP

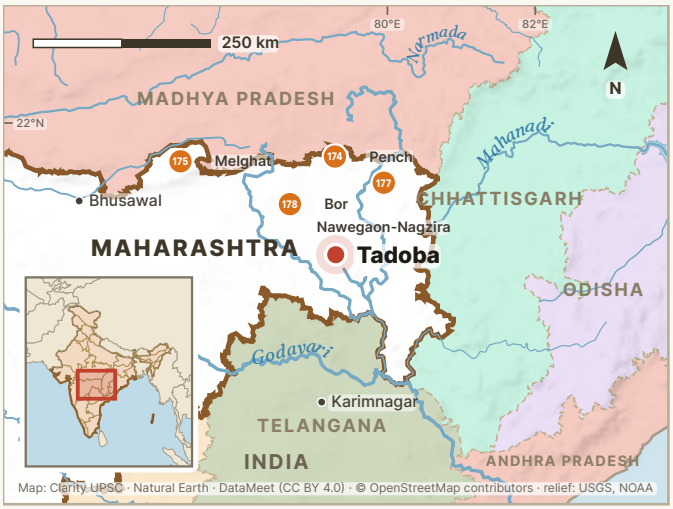
Tadoba National Park dates from 1955, but the tiger reserve was formed only in 1993. The oldest and the largest tiger reserve of Maharashtra is Melghat, one of the first nine reserves of 1973–74.

180 Tadoba National Park

Chandrapur · **Maharashtra**

National park 1955 · 116.55 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Tadoba Lake, with the Andhari river in the wider reserve	**Central plateau of the Deccan, with dry deciduous forest**	**Tiger, leopard, sloth bear, dhole**	**Oldest national park of Maharashtra (1955)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Tadoba National Park and Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary, of 508.25 sq km, together form the core of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve. The core is the inner zone of the reserve. The tiger reserve has its own entry.

Tadoba National Park lies in Chandrapur district of eastern Maharashtra, on the central plateau of the Deccan. The forest is tropical dry deciduous, with teak and bamboo. The park also has grasslands, lakes and streams. Tigers, leopards, sloth bears and dholes live here. Gaur, chital and sambar are also found.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tadoba became a national park in 1955 with an area of 116.55 sq km. It is the oldest of the six national parks of Maharashtra on the Wildlife Institute of India list.
- The park is named after Tadoba, or Taru, a local god. Local tradition says that Taru was a village headman who was killed by a tiger. His shrine stands beside Tadoba Lake.
- Teak, ain and bija are among the main trees of the tiger reserve. Haldu, salai and tendu are among its other main trees. Bamboo grows over 40% of its habitat.

PRELIMS TRAP

Tadoba National Park dates from 1955, but Tadoba-Andhari came under Project Tiger in 1993–94. The oldest tiger reserve of Maharashtra is Melghat, which came under Project Tiger in 1973–74.

181 Nandur Madhameshwar

Nashik · **Maharashtra**

Ramsar site 2019 · 14.37 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Godavari and Kadwa, at their confluence	Marshes, pools and riverside forest above a weir	Indian vulture, white-rumped vulture, Deolali minnow	First Ramsar site of Maharashtra (2019)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nandur Madhameshwar is on the Ramsar list only. The Ramsar site and Nandur Madhameshwar Wildlife Sanctuary have the same boundary.

Nandur Madhameshwar is a wetland in Niphad taluka of Nashik district, about 40 km from Nashik town. A weir, a low dam across a river, was built where the Kadwa river joins the Godavari. The water held behind it formed a mix of marshes, pools and riverside forest. The land around the wetland is fairly dry, because it lies in the rain shadow of the Western Ghats.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Nandur Madhameshwar was designated a Ramsar site on 21 June 2019, with the site number 2410. It was the first of the three Ramsar sites of Maharashtra.
- The weir releases water and dams upstream send more. So from September to March the water level changes by more than half a metre. Wading birds feed on the ponds and mudflats below the weir.
- The Ramsar record lists 265 species of birds, of which 148 are migratory. In winter the site regularly has more than 20,000 waterbirds.
- The Indian vulture and the white-rumped vulture, both Critically Endangered, are found here. The Deolali minnow, a Critically Endangered fish of the upper Godavari basin, also lives here.

ON CLARITYUPSC.COM · DAILY QUIZ

Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

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✓ True · ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

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182 Lonar Lake

Buldhana · **Maharashtra**

Ramsar site 2020 · 4.27 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
None: a closed basin fed by springs	Impact crater in the basalt of the Deccan Plateau	Asian woollyneck, common pochard, grey wolf	Lake in a meteorite impact crater in basalt



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Lonar is on the Ramsar list only. The Ramsar site has the same boundary as Lonar Wildlife Sanctuary, which was declared in 2000. The lake is also a national geo-heritage site, a place of special value for its rocks and landforms.

Lonar Lake lies in Buldhana district, on the Deccan Plateau. It sits in an almost round crater, about 1.83 km wide and 150 metres deep. The crater was made when a meteorite struck the basalt rock. No stream flows out of the lake. Minerals collect as its water evaporates, so the water is salty and alkaline.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Lonar was designated a Ramsar site on 22 July 2020, with the site number 2441. The site includes the lake, the crater walls and the forest around them.
- The crater is usually dated to about 50,000 years ago. A study published in 2011 used argon dating and gave a much older age, of about 570,000 years.
- Special micro-organisms, such as cyanobacteria, live in the salty and alkaline water. Springs around the crater bring fresh water, so plant and animal life is more varied outside the lake.
- The Ramsar record lists 160 species of birds, 46 of reptiles and 12 of mammals, such as the grey wolf. Among its birds, the common pochard is Vulnerable and the Asian woollyneck is Near Threatened.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

27 June 2026 In June 2026 the Deccan Herald reported that the water of Lonar Lake had been rising since late 2025. Several old temples around the lake, including the Kamalja Devi temple, were partly or fully under water. The Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court had taken up the matter on its own. The cause was not yet known.

PRELIMS TRAP

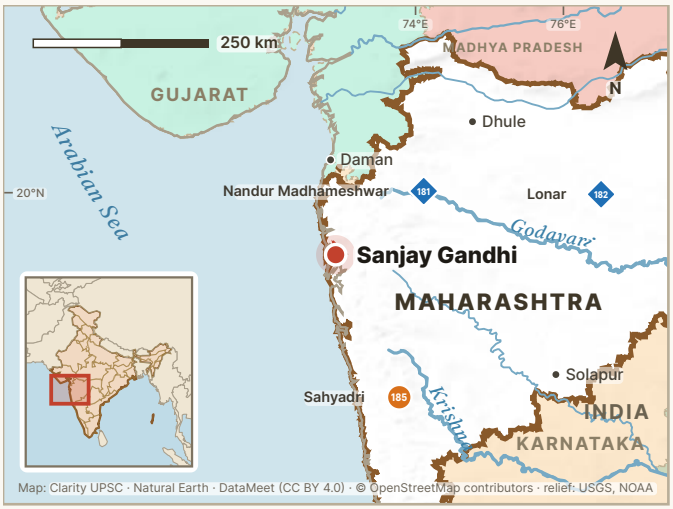
Lonar lies in basalt, a rock of the Deccan Plateau that formed from volcanic lava. The crater itself was made by the impact of a meteorite.

183 Sanjay Gandhi National Park

Mumbai Suburban and Thane · **Maharashtra**

National park 1983 · 86.96 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Tulsi and Vihar lakes, which supply water to Mumbai	**Forested hills on the northern edge of Mumbai**	**Leopard, chital, sambar, crocodile**	**Kanheri Caves, a Buddhist cave complex, inside the park**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sanjay Gandhi National Park is on the national parks list only. Thane Creek, a Ramsar site, lies to its south-east.

Sanjay Gandhi National Park covers forested hills on the northern edge of Mumbai, between Borivali and Thane. Two lakes, Tulsi and Vihar, lie inside it. The British built them to supply drinking water to Mumbai. The park's records list 274 species of birds, 35 of mammals, 170 of butterflies and more than 1,300 of trees.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The park began as Krishnagiri National Park, of about 20 sq km. It was later called Borivali National Park. In 1981 it was renamed Sanjay Gandhi National Park.
- The Kanheri Caves lie in the centre of the park. Buddhist monks cut more than 100 caves into a large basalt rock. The site was a centre of learning and pilgrimage.
- The park has one of the highest known densities of leopards for such a forest. A 2015 study of their droppings found that domestic animals made up 43% of their diet, and stray dogs 24%.
- The Bombay Municipal Corporation acquired the land that drains into the Tulsi and Vihar lakes. These forests are now part of the park. Crocodiles live in Tulsi Lake.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

4 May 2026 In early May 2026 the Maharashtra forest department put a planned fee rise on hold. The yearly pass for morning walkers in the park was to rise from ₹348 to ₹10,000 from 1 May.

Full story

18 September 2026 On 16 September 2026 Bijalee, an 18-year-old tigress kept in the park, died during veterinary treatment. She had come from Pench Tiger Reserve in July 2016. Officials said that a post-mortem would find the cause. Her death left 11 tigers in the park's care.

PRELIMS TRAP

Sanjay Gandhi National Park is in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Sanjay National Park is a different park in Madhya Pradesh, and it is part of the core of Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve.

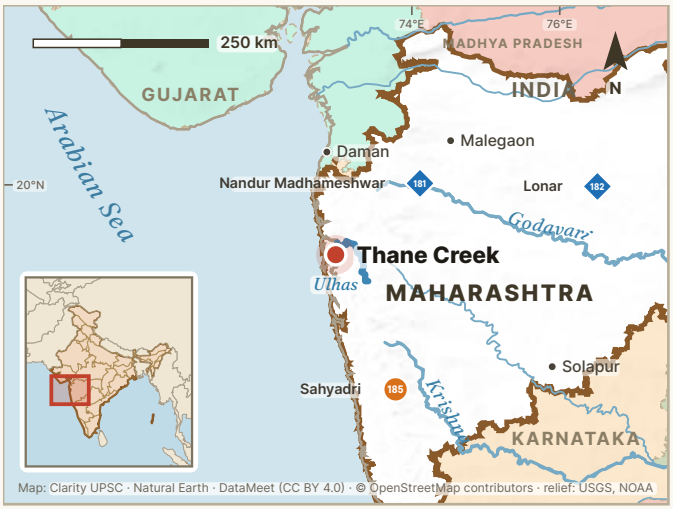
184

Thane Creek

Thane, Mumbai and Mumbai Suburban · **Maharashtra**

Ramsar site 2022 · 65.21 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Brackish creek fed by the Ulhas and many city drains	**Inlet of the sea lined with mangroves, inside a large city**	**Flamingos, great knot, river tern**	**Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary covers 1,690.53 hectares of the Ramsar site. The other 4,830.55 hectares form the eco-sensitive zone around the sanctuary. The Union Environment Ministry notified this zone on 14 October 2021. Reserved forests also lie inside the site.

Thane Creek is a long inlet of the sea on the eastern side of Mumbai. The Ulhas river and many drains from Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane bring fresh water into it. Its water is therefore brackish, a mix of salt and fresh water. Mangrove forests line both banks, and young fish of many kinds grow up in them. Thousands of flamingos arrive here every year in October and November.

PRELIMS POINTERS

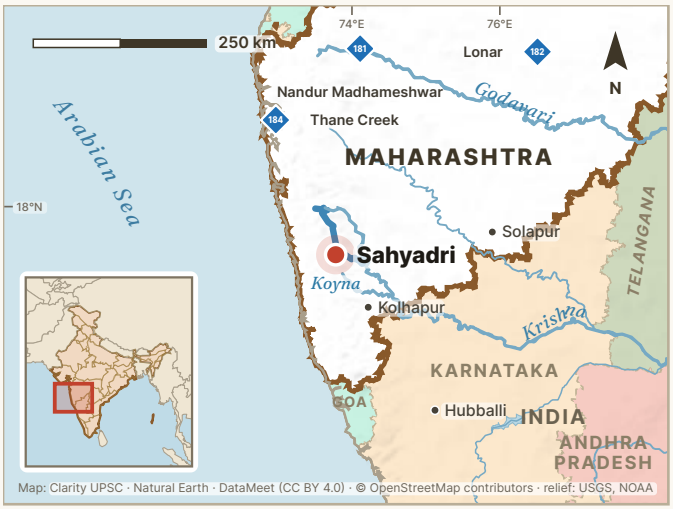
- Thane Creek was designated a Ramsar site on 13 April 2022, with the site number 2490. It was the third Ramsar site of Maharashtra and the 72nd of India.
- The Mangrove Cell of Maharashtra calls Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary the state's second marine sanctuary, after Malvan Marine Sanctuary in Sindhudurg.
- The creek lies on the Central Asian Flyway, a route of migratory birds. It is also an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area. The Ramsar record lists 202 species of birds.
- Its threatened birds include the great knot, which is Endangered, and the river tern, which is Vulnerable. The mangroves also shield the coast from floods, cyclones and the entry of sea water.

185 Sahyadri Tiger Reserve

Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur and Ratnagiri · **Maharashtra**

Tiger reserve 2009 · 1,165.57 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Koyna and Warna (Varna), with their reservoirs in the reserve	**Crest of the Sahyadri range, with flat lateritic plateaus**	**Tiger, leopard, dhole, gaur**	**First tiger reserve of western Maharashtra**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary and Chandoli National Park form the core, or inner zone, of the reserve. Chandoli has its own entry. Both are parts of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site. Through Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary, the forests link to those of Goa and to Kali Tiger Reserve in Karnataka.

Sahyadri Tiger Reserve runs along the Sahyadri ranges of the Western Ghats in Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur and Ratnagiri districts. Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary forms its northern part, and Chandoli National Park forms its southern part. Evergreen, semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests cover the slopes. Flat, rocky plateaus called sadas have steep cliffs at their edges.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The reserve has a core of 600.12 sq km and a buffer of 565.45 sq km. The National Tiger Conservation Authority calls it the first tiger reserve of western Maharashtra and the fourth of the state.
- The sadas are plateaus of laterite, a red soil rich in iron. They have few trees, but many small plants flower on them during the monsoon.
- The Union Environment Ministry approved moving eight tigers, three males and five females, to Sahyadri. The first tigress came from Tadoba in November 2025. By June 2026 the reserve had seven tigers.
- Other animals include the dhole, gaur and sambar. The four-horned antelope, mouse deer and Indian giant squirrel also live here. The blue-finned mahseer, a fish, lives in the Koyna.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

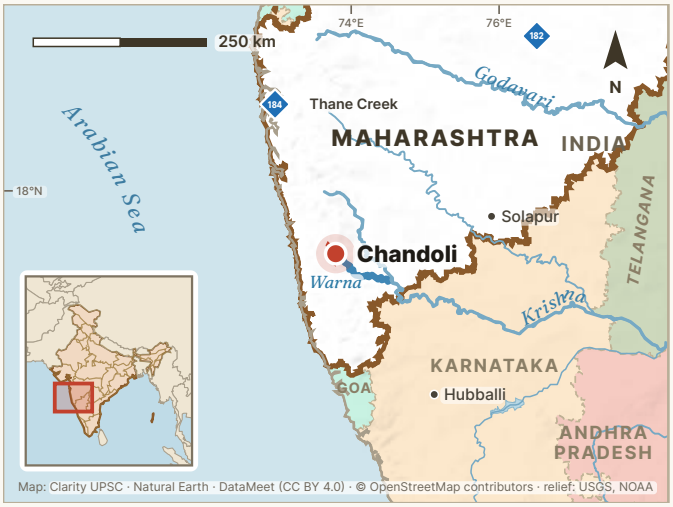
9 February 2026 On 7 February 2026 Sahyadri Tiger Reserve released a tigress from Pench Tiger Reserve into the core forest of Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary. She was the third tigress brought to the reserve. She was given the code STR-06, and local guides call her Hirkani. A male tiger, STR-03 or Baji, was already living in the area.

186 Chandoli National Park

Sangli, Satara, Kolhapur and Ratnagiri · **Maharashtra**

National park 2004 · 317.67 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Warna (Varna), a tributary of the Krishna	**Crest of the Sahyadri range, around a long dammed valley**	**Tiger, leopard, sloth bear, gaur**	**Part of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site (2012)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Chandoli National Park forms the southern part of the core of Sahyadri Tiger Reserve, with Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary to its north. It is also one of the four parts of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site in Maharashtra.

Chandoli National Park lies along the top of the Sahyadri range, where Sangli, Satara, Kolhapur and Ratnagiri districts meet. Its forests surround the long valley flooded by the Chandoli dam on the Warna river. Dense semi-evergreen forest covers the slopes, and flat, rocky plateaus rise above them.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The forests that drain into the Chandoli dam became Chandoli Wildlife Sanctuary in September 1985. Maharashtra declared the area a national park by a notification of 14 May 2004.
- The Warna, also written Varna, flows east from the Chandoli dam and forms the boundary between Kolhapur and Sangli districts. It then joins the Krishna.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority notes that the river tern breeds in Chandoli and in the Koyna sanctuary. Sloth bears live on the rocky edges of the cliffs in the park.
- On 20 November 2025 a tigress from Tadoba, T-20-S-2, walked out of an enclosure into the open forest of Chandoli. She was fitted with a radio collar so that field teams could follow her.

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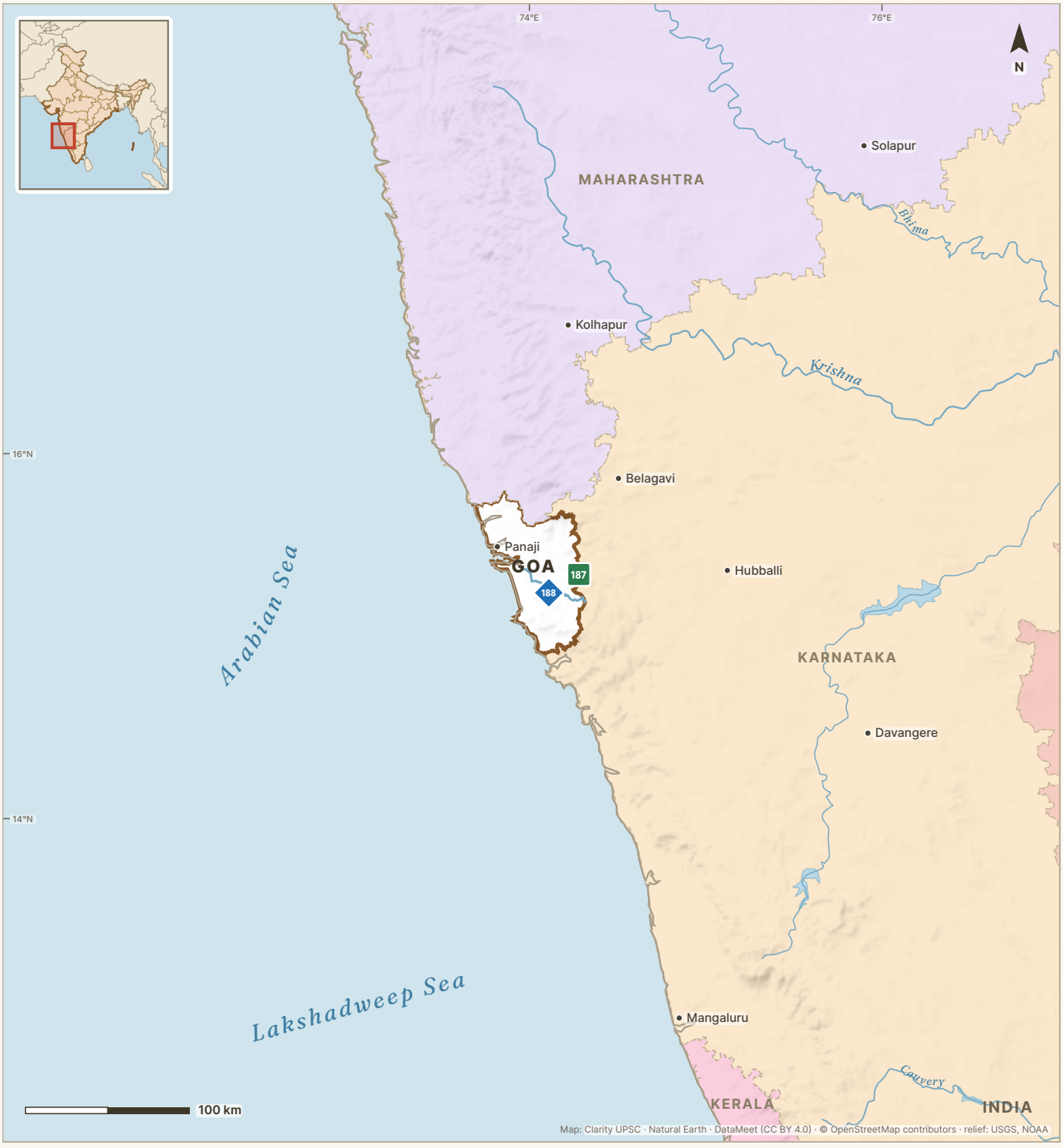
Goa

1 national park 1 Ramsar site

Goa lies between the Western Ghats in the east and the Arabian Sea in the west. Its main rivers are the Mandovi and the Zuari. Goa's only national park, Mollem, lies on the Karnataka border, beside Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary. Streams from these hills feed both rivers. Goa's only Ramsar site, Nanda Lake, is a freshwater marsh in Quepem taluka. The state has no tiger reserve, elephant reserve or biosphere reserve.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

Goa: its areas

Mollem 232
Kushavati (South Goa until December 2025)

Nanda Lake 233
Kushavati (South Goa until December 2025)

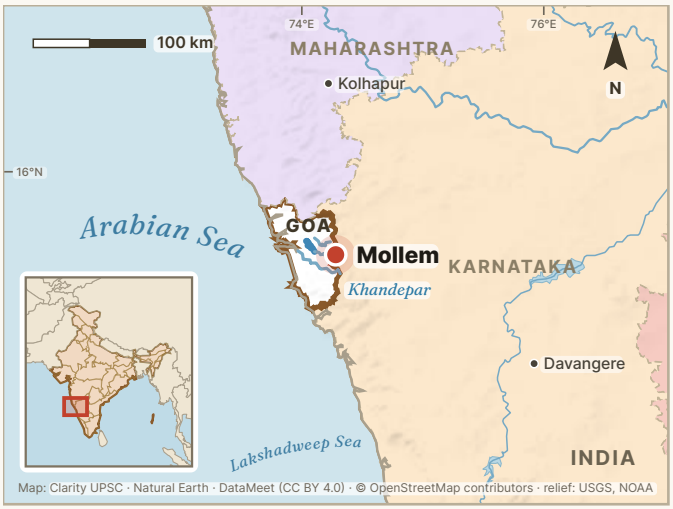
187

Mollem National Park

Kushavati (South Goa until December 2025) · **Goa**

National park 1978 · 107 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Khandepar (Dudhsagar) and Ragada, in the Mandovi system	**Slopes of the Western Ghats on Goa's eastern border**	**Gaur, leopard, sloth bear, sambar**	**Goa's only national park (1978)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Mollem is on the national parks list only. On the east, the park and Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary share a border with Kali Tiger Reserve in Karnataka.

Mollem National Park lies in Sanguem and Dharbandora talukas, on Goa's eastern border with Karnataka. The park and Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary beside it together cover 240 sq km. This is the largest continuous protected area in Goa. The forest is mostly evergreen and semi-evergreen. Gaur, leopards and sloth bears live here. Sambar and barking deer are also found.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The national park was notified on 13 April 1978, with an area of 107 sq km. The Wildlife Institute of India now lists it as Bhagwan Mahavir (Mollem) National Park.
- The park and the sanctuary include the Dudhsagar waterfall, which drops 306 metres in two parts. The Mahadev temple at Tambdi Surla also lies here. It is the only temple of black basalt in Goa.
- Streams from the area feed the Khandepar, also called the Dudhsagar river, and the Ragada. Both rivers are in the Mandovi system. The Ugem river also rises here, and it later flows as the Zuari.
- Tigers are seen here at times. The management plan says there is no scientific proof that tigers live here all the time. It says they probably come in from the tiger reserves of Karnataka.

PRELIMS TRAP

Mollem National Park and Bhagwan Mahavir National Park are two names of the same park. Bhagwan Mahavir is also the name of the wildlife sanctuary beside it. The sanctuary was called Mollem Wildlife Sanctuary until 1984.

188 Nanda Lake

Kushavati (South Goa until December 2025) · **Goa**

Ramsar site 2022 · 0.42 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
A major tributary of the Zuari	Seasonal freshwater marsh, flooded through a sluice gate	Black-headed ibis, bronze-winged jacana, lesser whistling duck	Only Ramsar site of Goa (2022)



Nanda Lake is a group of seasonal freshwater marshes in Quepem taluka of Goa. The marshes lie beside one of the main tributaries of the Zuari river. A sluice gate, a gate that controls the flow of water, joins them to the tributary. When the gate is closed, water floods the marshes. The Ramsar site covers about 42 hectares.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Nanda Lake was designated a Ramsar site on 8 June 2022, with the site number 2471. It is the only Ramsar site of Goa.
- Its birds include the black-headed ibis, the bronze-winged jacana and the lesser whistling duck. The common kingfisher and the wire-tailed swallow are also found here.
- Villagers store water in the lake for the dry months and use it for rice fields downstream. The lake also protects the land below it from monsoon floods.
- The Ramsar record of 2022 lists Nanda Lake as a wetland under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017. The record names invasive species, garbage and overfishing as threats.

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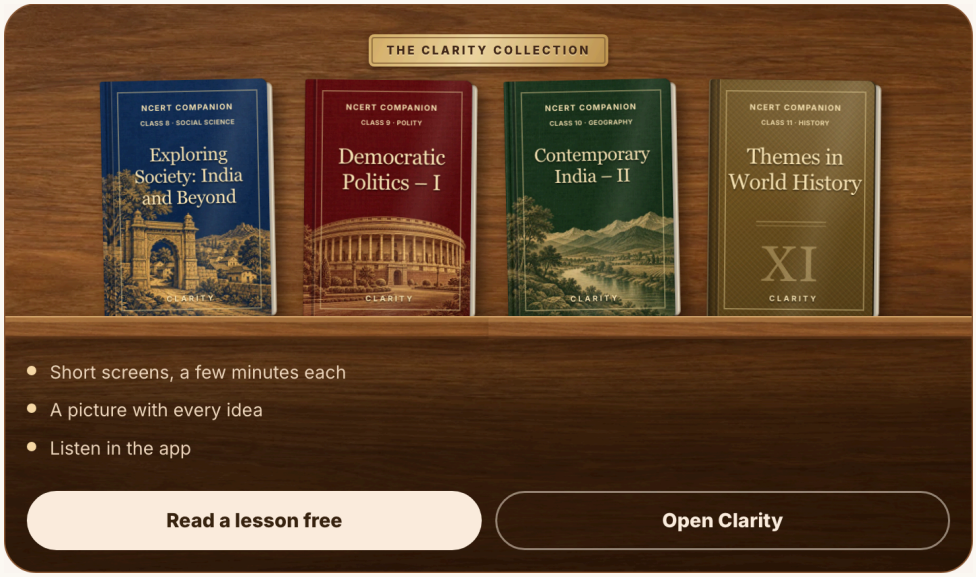

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Telangana

2 tiger reserves 3 national parks

Telangana lies on the Deccan plateau. The Godavari drains its north and the Krishna its south. Kawal Tiger Reserve protects dry teak forest in the Godavari basin. Amrabad Tiger Reserve covers the Nallamala hills north of the Krishna. The state's three national parks are small forests in and around Hyderabad. Telangana has no Ramsar site, biosphere reserve or elephant reserve.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

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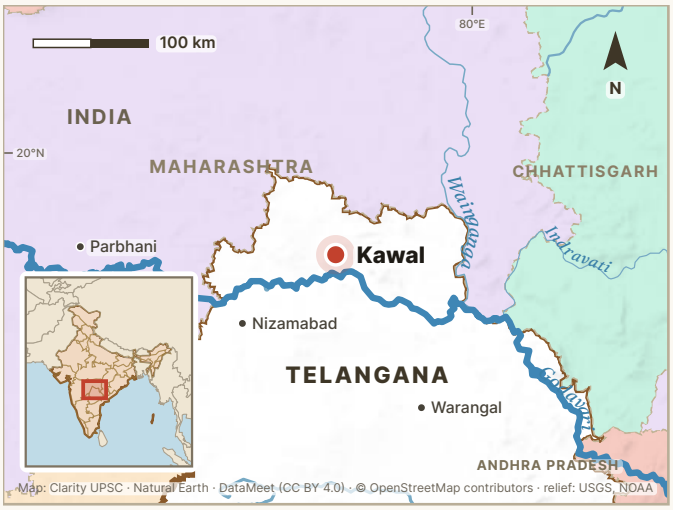
189 Kawal Tiger Reserve

Mancherial and Nirmal · **Telangana**

Tiger reserve 2012 · 2,015.44 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Godavari and its tributary, the Kadam	**Deccan plateau, dry teak and bamboo forest with grassland**	**Tiger, gaur, four-horned antelope, sloth bear**	**Southern tip of the Central Indian Tiger Landscape**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kawal is on the tiger reserves list only. The Kawal sanctuary forms its core, and the buffer lies around it.

Kawal Tiger Reserve lies in northern Telangana, on the banks of the Godavari. Its forest is southern tropical dry deciduous forest, with teak and bamboo. The reserve also has grasslands, streams and water bodies. Its core is the catchment, or drainage area, of the Kadam, a tributary of the Godavari. Gaur, nilgai, four-horned antelope, sloth bear, wild dog and leopard live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Kawal became a tiger reserve on 10 April 2012. Its core, the inner protected zone, is 892.23 sq km. The buffer around it is 1,123.21 sq km, so the reserve covers 2,015.44 sq km.
- Kawal lies at the southern tip of the Central Indian Tiger Landscape. Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve lies about 100 km to its north and Indravati Tiger Reserve about 150 km to its east.
- The 2022 tiger estimate detected no tiger in Kawal. A 2026 study found that 15 tigers came from Maharashtra in the previous decade. Only two were female, and no resident population formed.
- Gond, Naikpod and Kolam tribal communities live in the area. Official records list 673 plant species, about 260 bird species and 75 mammal species.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

16 January 2026 In January 2026 Kawal Tiger Reserve prepared for the All India Tiger Estimation. The count was planned from 19 to 26 January. For the first time, the reserve invited volunteers to walk with the forest staff. Officials said that tigers from Tadoba and Tipeshwar in Maharashtra were moving into the area more often.

18 May 2026 On 16 May 2026 a wildlife researcher photographed a red-necked falcon near Kothapet village, in the Indanpalli forest range of Kawal. The falcon is rarely seen in this region. The IUCN lists the Asian red-necked falcon as Near Threatened.

23 July 2026 On 28 June 2026 the Union Environment Minister released a road map for the active management of tigers. It named Kawal a priority site for tiger recovery. In September 2026 news reports described a study in the journal Oryx, published in April. It estimated that the prey animals in Kawal's core could support more than 30 tigers.

PRELIMS TRAP

Kawal lies in the Godavari basin of northern Telangana. Amrabad, Telangana's other tiger reserve, lies in the Nallamala hills of the Krishna basin.

190 Kasu Brahmananda Reddy National Park

Hyderabad · **Telangana**

National park 1994 · 1.43 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Rocky Deccan ground with deciduous forest, in Banjara Hills	Indian peafowl, white-throated kingfisher, rose-ringed parakeet	Former royal estate of the Nizam of Hyderabad



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kasu Brahmananda Reddy National Park is on the national parks list only. It is one of three small national parks in and around Hyderabad, with Mrugavani and Mahaveer Harina Vanasthali.

Kasu Brahmananda Reddy National Park lies in the Banjara Hills area of Hyderabad. It covers about 353 acres of deciduous forest, open clearings and rocky outcrops, which are typical of the Deccan plateau. More than 120 bird species have been recorded here. The Indian peafowl is common, and kingfishers and parakeets are often seen.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Wildlife Institute of India lists the park with the year 1994 and an area of 1.425 sq km. It is the smallest of the three national parks of Telangana.
- The land was once a private estate of the Nizam of Hyderabad. The park is named after Kasu Brahmananda Reddy, a former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.
- The park's own website says that the area was declared a protected forest in 1994 and a national park in 1998.
- On 27 October 2020 the Union Environment Ministry notified an eco-sensitive zone of 3 to 29.80 metres around the park. A public walkway 25 to 35 metres wide is the only open space around it.

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191 Mahaveer Harina Vanasthali National Park

Ranga Reddy · **Telangana**

National park 1994 · 14.59 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Deccan scrub forest and rock formations	Blackbuck, four-horned antelope, spotted deer, Indian pangolin	Largest of Telangana's three national parks (14.59 sq km)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Mahaveer Harina Vanasthali National Park is on the national parks list only. It is one of three small national parks in and around Hyderabad, with Kasu Brahmananda Reddy and Mrugavani.

Mahaveer Harina Vanasthali National Park lies in Ranga Reddy district, close to the city of Hyderabad. The name is also spelt Mahavir. The park was once a royal hunting ground. Its plants are typical of the Deccan. Its records list more than 600 plant species and 110 bird species.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Wildlife Institute of India lists the park with the year 1994 and an area of 14.59 sq km. It is the largest of the three national parks of Telangana.
- The Union Environment Ministry calls the park the last remaining patch of the Deccan plateau's plants, animals and rock formations near Hyderabad.
- Its animals include the Indian blackbuck, the four-horned antelope and the spotted deer. The Indian porcupine, the Indian pangolin and the black-naped hare also live here.
- The Ministry notified an eco-sensitive zone of up to one kilometre around the park on 26 May 2017. This belt, where some activities are controlled, covers 40.56 sq km and 17 villages.

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192 Mrugavani National Park

Ranga Reddy · **Telangana**

National park 1994 · 3.6 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Dry deciduous woodland, grassland and rocky Deccan ground	Spotted deer, sambar, wild boar, jungle cat	Its name means 'forest of deer' in Telugu



Mrugavani National Park lies at Chilkur, in Moinabad mandal of Ranga Reddy district. It is about 20 km by road from Hyderabad. The park has woodland, grassland and rocky ground, and most of the forest is southern tropical dry deciduous. About 350 spotted deer live here, with sambar, wild boar, jungle cat and civet.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Wildlife Institute of India lists Mrugavani with the year 1994 and an area of 3.6 sq km.
- The name joins two Telugu words, 'mrugu' for deer and 'vani' for forest. So Mrugavani means 'forest of deer'.
- The park conserves native plants of the Hyderabad region that are disappearing elsewhere. Its records list about 600 plant species and more than 100 bird species.

ON THE OTHER LISTS

Mrugavani National Park is on the national parks list only. It is one of three small national parks in and around Hyderabad, with Kasu Brahmananda Reddy and Mahaveer Harina Vanasthali.

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Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

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✓ True ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

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193 Amrabad Tiger Reserve

Nagarkurnool and Nalgonda · **Telangana**

Tiger reserve 2015 · 2,611.39 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Krishna	**Nallamala hills of the Eastern Ghats: plateaus, ridges and gorges**	**Tiger, leopard, wild dog, mouse deer**	**Second-largest core among India's tiger reserves**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Amrabad is on the tiger reserves list only. It was the northern part of Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary.

Amrabad Tiger Reserve lies in the Nallamala hills of Nagarkurnool and Nalgonda districts, north of the Krishna. The land has plateaus, ridges, gorges and deep valleys. Dry deciduous forest, bamboo and grass cover it. Its streams drain into the Krishna and feed the Srisailam and Nagarjunasagar reservoirs.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Amrabad was the Telangana part of Nagarjunsagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve. Telangana was formed in 2014, and it notified Amrabad as a separate tiger reserve on 6 February 2015.
- Its core, the inner protected zone, is 2,166.37 sq km, and its buffer is 445.02 sq km. This core is the second largest on the National Tiger Conservation Authority's list.
- The Chenchus, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group, live in the reserve. Many live in small forest hamlets called pentas. More than 100 Chenchus work in the reserve as protection watchers.
- In September 2017 the reserve began to release mouse deer into the wild. The programme is run with the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

26 March 2026 On 25 March 2026 Telangana allotted ₹62.55 crore to move 417 families of four villages out of the core of Amrabad. Each family could take ₹15 lakh in cash, or a house and five acres of farmland at Bacharam, in Nagarkurnool district. Officials handed over the first cheques that day.

Full story

18 April 2026 On 17 April 2026 Chenchu people from several hamlets inside the reserve petitioned the vice-chairman of the Telangana State Planning Board. They said that they did not want to leave the forest. He directed that no Chenchu family should be forced to leave.

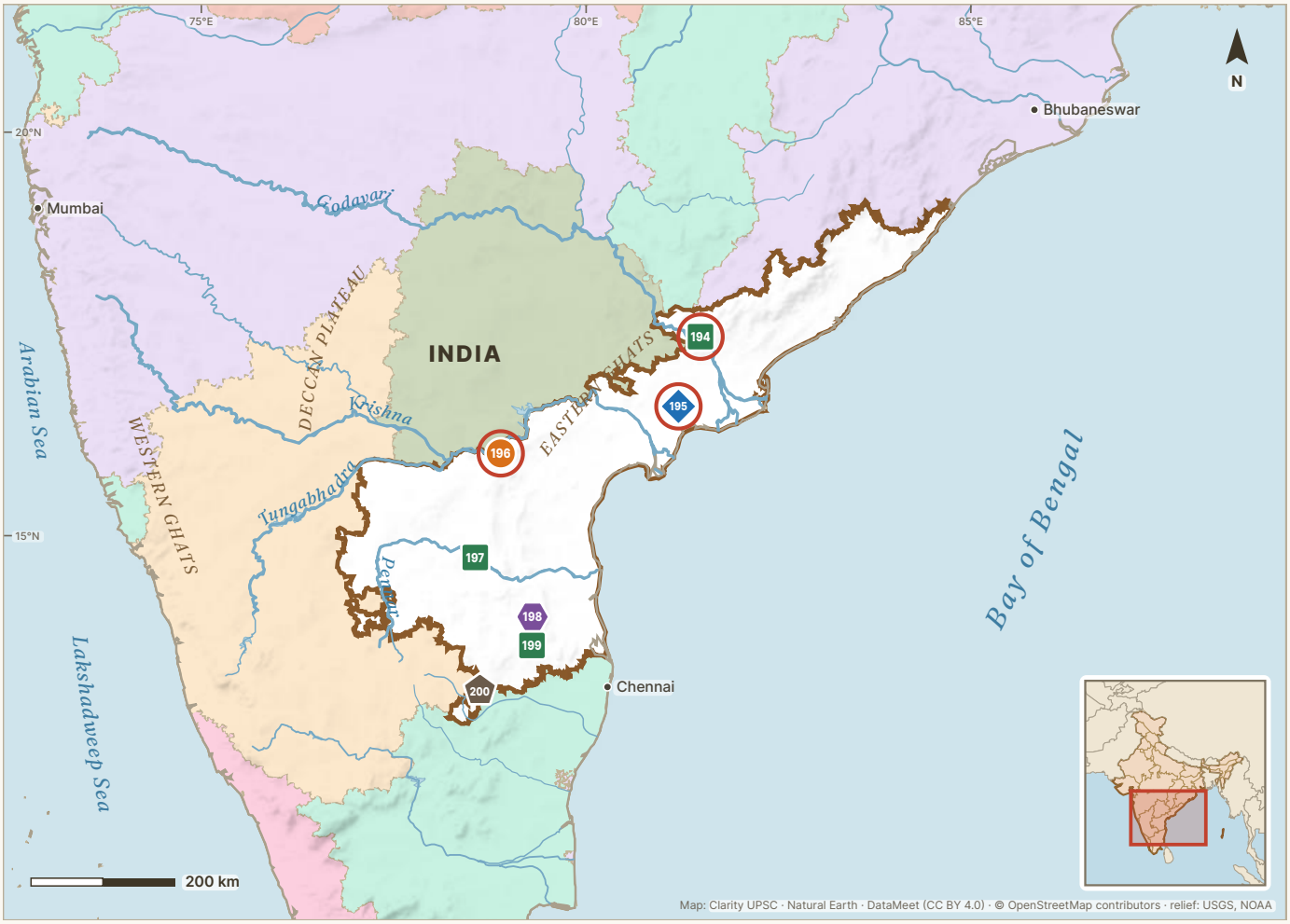
PRELIMS TRAP

Amrabad and Nagarjunsagar Srisailam both lie in the Nallamala hills, on either side of the Krishna. Amrabad, on the north bank, is in Telangana. Nagarjunsagar Srisailam, on the south bank, is in Andhra Pradesh.

Andhra Pradesh

1 tiger reserve · 3 national parks · 1 Ramsar site · 1 biosphere reserve · 1 elephant reserve

Andhra Pradesh stretches from the Eastern Ghats down to the deltas of the Godavari and the Krishna, on the Bay of Bengal. Nagarjunsagar Srisailam, the largest tiger reserve in India, lies in the Nallamala hills on the Krishna. Kolleru Lake lies between the two deltas. In the dry south, Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve covers the hills around Tirupati. Rayala Elephant Reserve lies on the border with Tamil Nadu.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

194 **Papikonda** — Polavaram and Eluru — 241

195 **Kolleru** — Eluru and West Godavari — 242

196 **Nagarjunsagar Srisailam** — Nandyal, Markapuram and Palnadu — 243

197 **Rajiv Gandhi (Rameswaram)** — YSR Kadapa — 244

198 **Seshachalam** — Chittoor and Kadapa — 245

199 **Sri Venkateswara** — Tirupati — 246

200 **Rayala** — Chittoor — 247

194 Papikonda National Park

Polavaram and Eluru · **Andhra Pradesh**

National park 2008 · 1,012.86 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Godavari	**Steep Eastern Ghats hills with many streams**	**Gaur, tiger, leopard, Indian golden gecko**	**Largest national park of Andhra Pradesh (1,012.86 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Papikonda National Park is on the national parks list only.

Papikonda National Park lies in the Eastern Ghats along the Godavari. Its steep hills get heavy rain and have many streams. They support moist and dry deciduous forest, with teak in the drier parts. The forest department lists tigers, leopards and hyenas. It also lists gaur, sambar and 92 bird species. Its reptiles include the python, the crocodile and the Indian golden gecko.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Wildlife Institute of India lists Papikonda with the year 2008 and an area of 1,012.86 sq km. It is the largest of the three national parks of Andhra Pradesh.
- Part of the park lies in the submergence area of the Polavaram project on the Godavari. This is the land marked to go under its reservoir, which the forest department calls Indira Sagar.
- The forest department names the gaur as the park's keystone species. This is the species on which much of its ecosystem depends.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

15 February 2026 On 14 February 2026 a three-year-old male tiger was released into Papikonda with a tracking collar. The tiger had roamed villages around Rajamahendravaram and killed nine cattle. It was tranquilised at Kurmapuram on 6 February. The Deccan Chronicle reported that it had come from the Tadoba forests of Maharashtra.

PRELIMS TRAP

Papikonda lies on the Godavari, so it is in the Godavari basin. A 2020 Prelims question put it in a list with protected areas of the Cauvery basin. It was the one that did not belong.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2020 · Q73

Which of the following Protected Areas are located in Cauvery basin ? 1. Nagarhole National Park 2. Papikonda National Park 3. Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve 4. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary Select the correct answer using the code given below :

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 3 and 4 only (c) 1, 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

UPSC KEY **(c) 1, 3 and 4 only.** Nagarhole and Wayanad drain to the Kabini, and Sathyamangalam drains to the Moyar and Bhavani. These rivers are in the Cauvery basin. Papikonda is on the Godavari.

195 Kolleru Lake

Eluru and West Godavari · **Andhra Pradesh**

Ramsar site 2002 · 901 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Fed by the Budameru and Tammileru, drained by the Upputeru	**Lake on the alluvial plains between the Godavari and Krishna deltas**	**Grey (spot-billed) pelican, painted stork, Asian openbill, glossy ibis**	**Ramsar site since 19 August 2002**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kolleru is on the Ramsar list of wetlands of international importance. Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary, declared under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, covers only the inner part of the lake.

Kolleru is a large natural freshwater lake between the deltas of the Godavari and the Krishna. It stores flood water between the two rivers, like a natural reservoir. Seasonal streams such as the Budameru and Tammileru feed it. The Upputeru carries its water to the Bay of Bengal. Pelicans, storks and ibises gather here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Kolleru became a Ramsar site on 19 August 2002. The site covers 90,100 hectares at maximum flooding. Its listing names the grey pelican and the lake's migratory waterbirds.
- Andhra Pradesh issued the final notification of Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary on 4 October 1999. The sanctuary covers 30,855.20 hectares, up to the 5-foot contour above mean sea level.
- More than 67 drains connect Kolleru with the irrigation systems of the Krishna and Godavari deltas. The Krishna river itself does not flow into the lake.
- In 2006 officials carried out 'Operation Kolleru' on Supreme Court orders. They demolished 1,776 fish tanks inside the sanctuary, covering about 43,724 acres.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

21 February 2026 On 20 February 2026 The Hindu reported that fish tanks had come back on about 5,000 acres of the sanctuary. This land had been cleared a few months earlier, in a drive that followed Supreme Court orders. On 6 February villagers had stopped forest officials from demolishing tanks at Paidichintapadu.

23 March 2026 In March 2026 conservationist Bolisetty Satyanarayana wrote to the Prime Minister about the lake. He said that satellite data showed its open water shrinking from about 2.22 lakh acres in 1975 to nearly 94,000 acres. He blamed this mostly on fish ponds and encroachment, the illegal use of the lake's land.

20 July 2026 In July 2026 the Central Empowered Committee of the Supreme Court asked Andhra Pradesh to answer complaints about Kolleru. The complaints spoke of new encroachments, illegal fish ponds and pollution.

PRELIMS TRAP

The sanctuary and the Ramsar site have different boundaries. The sanctuary stops at the 5-foot contour and covers about 308.55 sq km. The Ramsar site covers 901 sq km.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2010 · Q95

Also asked: 2014 · 2023

Which one of the following pairs is not correctly matched? Dam/Lake — River

(a) Govind Sagar : Satluj
(b) Kolleru Lake : Krishna
(c) Ukai Reservoir : Tapi
(d) Wular Lake : Jhelum

ANSWER **(b) Kolleru Lake : Krishna.** Kolleru lies between the Godavari and Krishna deltas and is fed by streams such as the Budameru and Tammileru. The Krishna does not flow into it.

196 Nagarjunsagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve

Nandyal, Markapuram and Palnadu · **Andhra Pradesh**

Tiger reserve 1982 · 3,296.31 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Krishna, through a deep gorge	**Nallamala hills of the Eastern Ghats: plateaus, ridges and gorges**	**Tiger, leopard, wild dog, mugger**	**Largest tiger reserve and largest core in India (NTCA list)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nagarjunsagar Srisailam is on the tiger reserves list only. A forest corridor through the Seshachalam hills links the reserve with Sri Venkateswara National Park to the south. The National Tiger Conservation Authority calls this corridor fragmented and in need of urgent recovery.

Nagarjunsagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve lies in the Nallamala hills, a branch of the Eastern Ghats, south of the Krishna. The river cuts through the hills in a deep, narrow gorge. Dry deciduous forest with bamboo and grass covers the plateaus, ridges and valleys. Tigers, leopards, wolves and wild dogs live here. Mugger crocodiles and otters live in the river.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The reserve came under Project Tiger in 1982-83. Its core, the inner protected zone, is 2,595.72 sq km. With a buffer of 700.59 sq km, it covers 3,296.31 sq km.
- It is the largest tiger reserve on the list of the National Tiger Conservation Authority. It also has the largest core. Another name for the core is the critical tiger habitat.
- Two sanctuaries make up the reserve: Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary. Both received their final notifications on 27 June 1998.
- The reserve was divided after Telangana was formed in 2014. Its part north of the Krishna became Amrabad Tiger Reserve in 2015.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

13 April 2026 On 3 January 2026 the forest department began the camera-trap phase of the All India Tiger Estimation in the reserve. In the Markapur division alone, staff placed 1,406 cameras in pairs at 703 points where tigers move. The exercise was planned to run for 40 days.

PRELIMS TRAP

A 2005 Prelims question asked which of four areas was not a biosphere reserve. The answer was Nallamalai. The Nallamala hills have two tiger reserves, Nagarjunsagar Srisailam and Amrabad. Seshachalam is the only biosphere reserve of Andhra Pradesh.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2020 · Q100

Also asked: 2005

Among the following Tiger Reserves, which one has the largest area under "Critical Tiger Habitat" ?

(a) Corbett
(b) Ranthambore
(c) Nagarjunsagar-Srisailam
(d) Sunderbans

UPSC KEY **(c) Nagarjunsagar-Srisailam.** Its core, or critical tiger habitat, is 2,595.72 sq km, the largest in India. The core of Sundarban is 1,699.62 sq km, and those of Corbett and Ranthambore are smaller.

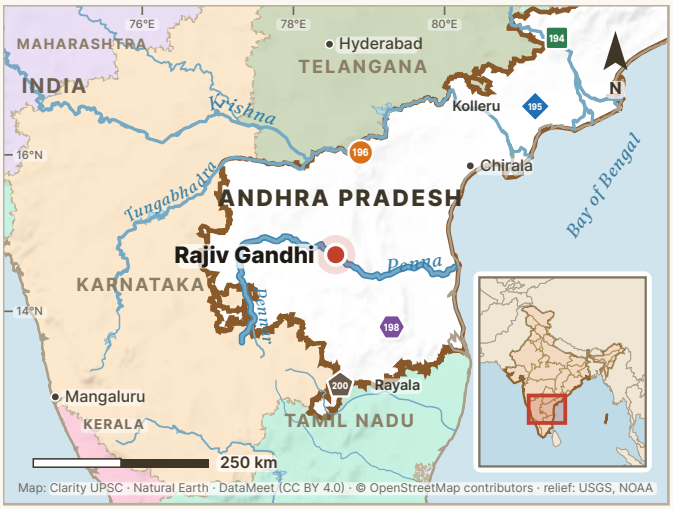
197

Rajiv Gandhi (Rameswaram) National Park

YSR Kadapa · **Andhra Pradesh**

National park 2005 · 2.4 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Penna (Pennar)	**Sand dunes on the river bank, with dry deciduous forest**	**Black-naped hare, Indian peafowl, Russell's viper**	**A sand-dune ecosystem of 2.3952 sq km**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Rajiv Gandhi (Rameswaram) National Park is on the national parks list only.

Rajiv Gandhi National Park lies on the bank of the Penna near Proddatur town, in YSR Kadapa district. It is also called Rameswaram National Park. The land is a sand-dune ecosystem with tropical dry deciduous forest, sissoo trees and palmyra palms. Black-naped hares, peafowl, parakeets and burrowing snakes live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Wildlife Institute of India lists the park with the year 2005 and an area of 2.3952 sq km. It is the smallest of the three national parks of Andhra Pradesh.
- The forest department describes the park as sand dunes that rise from the sandy bed of the Penna. Burrowing snakes, such as Russell's earth boa, show the state of this habitat.
- An eco-sensitive zone of 500 metres around the park was notified on 15 May 2017. This belt, where some activities are controlled, covers 4.1506 sq km and four villages.

PRELIMS TRAP

Three national parks carry Rajiv Gandhi's name: this one in Andhra Pradesh, Nagarhole in Karnataka and Orang in Assam. Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary, a part of Nagarjunsagar Srisailam Tiger Reserve, also carries the name.

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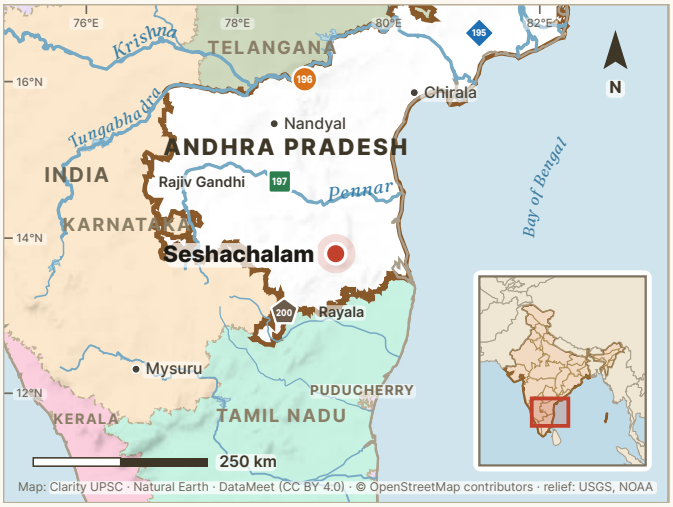
Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve

Chittoor and Kadapa · **Andhra Pradesh**

Biosphere reserve 2010 · 4,755.58 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Seshachalam hill ranges of the Eastern Ghats	Red sanders, slender loris, Indian golden gecko	Only biosphere reserve of Andhra Pradesh (2010)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sri Venkateswara National Park and Sri Venkateswara Wildlife Sanctuary lie in the Seshachalam hills, the area of the biosphere reserve. Seshachalam is not in UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve covers the Seshachalam hill ranges of the Eastern Ghats. The official lists place it in parts of Chittoor and Kadapa districts, as these districts were before 2022. Tirumala lies in these hills. Its dry forests have red sanders, a tree that grows wild almost only in Andhra Pradesh. Slender lorises and Indian golden geckos also live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Seshachalam became India's 17th biosphere reserve on 20 September 2010. It covers 4,755.58 sq km and is the only biosphere reserve of Andhra Pradesh.
- The Union Environment Ministry places the reserve in the Eastern Ghats biogeographic zone, a region marked by its own plants and animals.
- Red sanders is an Endangered tree listed in CITES Appendix II. The largest area where it grows wild is in the Seshachalam hills.
- A forest corridor links Sri Venkateswara National Park with Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary in the Nallamala hills. Most of this corridor lies in the Seshachalam hills.

PRELIMS TRAP

The Seshachalam hills belong to the Eastern Ghats. A 2023 Prelims question called them the southernmost part of the Western Ghats. That statement was wrong.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2023 · Q9

Consider the following statements : 1. Amarkantak Hills are at the confluence of Vindhya and Sahyadri Ranges. 2. Biligirirangan Hills constitute the easternmost part of Satpura Range. 3. Seshachalam Hills constitute the southernmost part of Western Ghats. How many of the statements given above are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) All three (d) None

UPSC KEY **(d) None.** Amarkantak is where the Vindhya and Satpura meet. The Biligirirangan hills join the two Ghats, and Seshachalam is in the Eastern Ghats. So all three are wrong.

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Sri Venkateswara National Park

Tirupati · **Andhra Pradesh**

National park 1989 · 353.62 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Seshachalam hills of the Eastern Ghats, dry deciduous forest	Slender loris, Indian golden gecko, mouse deer, red sanders	Named after Lord Venkateswara of Tirumala



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sri Venkateswara is on the national parks list. It lies in the Seshachalam hills, the area of Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve.

Sri Venkateswara National Park lies in the Seshachalam hills near Tirumala, in Tirupati district. Its forests are southern tropical dry deciduous, with dry red sanders forest and mixed deciduous forest. Leopards, sloth bears, mouse deer, giant squirrels and four-horned antelopes live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Sri Venkateswara Wildlife Sanctuary, of 525.97 sq km, was declared on 2 September 1985. Its core of 353.62 sq km became the national park on 16 October 1989.
- The forest department names four species that show the park's health. They are the cycad Cycas beddomei, red sanders, the slender loris and the Indian golden gecko.
- Some of its plants and animals are found only in the Seshachalam hills. The park is named after Lord Venkateswara, the deity of Tirumala.
- Elephants move along the corridor of Rayala Elephant Reserve, which links Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary with this park.

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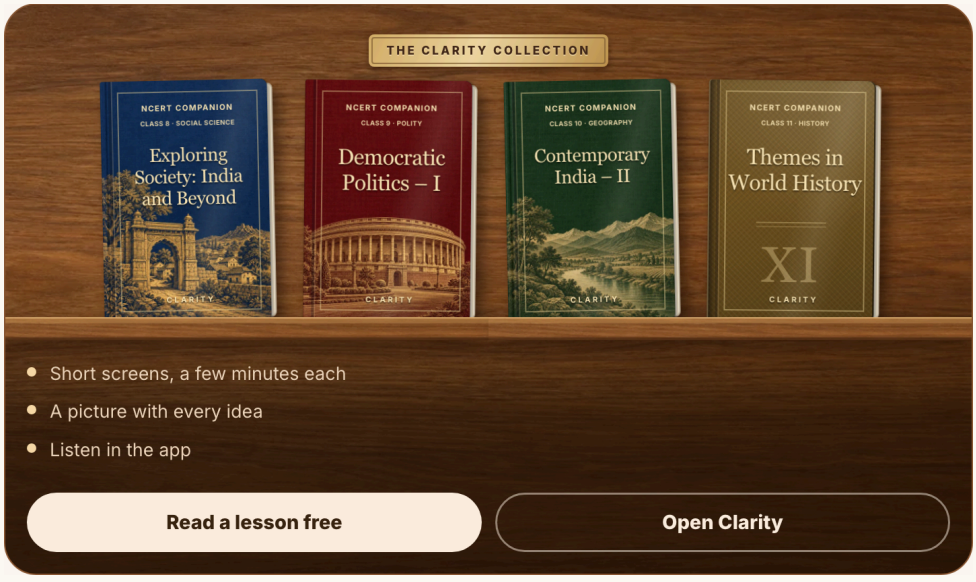

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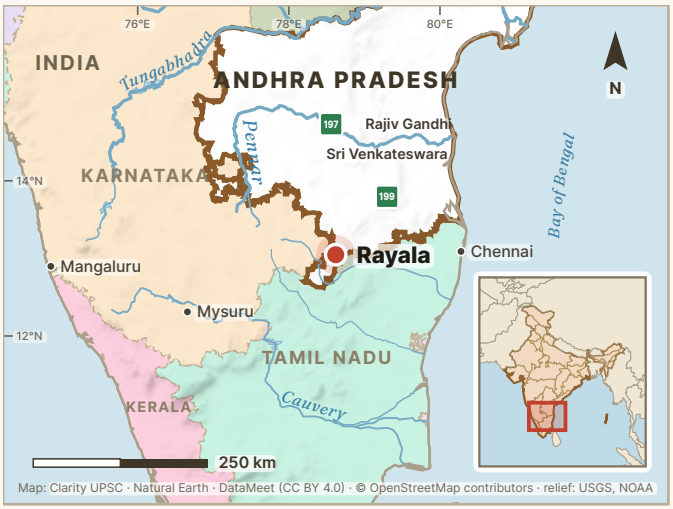
Rayala Elephant Reserve

Chittoor · **Andhra Pradesh**

Elephant reserve 2003 · 766 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Southern Eastern Ghats, dry scrub and thorn forest, 356 to 817 m	Asian elephant	Only elephant reserve of Andhra Pradesh (2003)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Rayala is on the elephant reserves list only. The atlas of elephant reserves lists no elephant reserve next to it.

Rayala Elephant Reserve covers 766 sq km of Chittoor district. It lies in the southern Eastern Ghats, next to the forests of Tamil Nadu. It includes Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary and the reserve forests of the Chittoor West Forest Division. Dry deciduous scrub, dry mixed deciduous forest and thorn forest cover most of it.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Andhra Pradesh notified the reserve on 9 December 2003, under the guidelines of Project Elephant. It is the state's only elephant reserve.
- Elephants had been absent from Andhra Pradesh for about 200 years. In the early 1980s a small herd came from the Hosur and Dharmapuri forests of Tamil Nadu. It came during a drought and stayed.
- The 2021–25 national elephant estimate put the elephants of Andhra Pradesh at about 120. The corridor of the reserve, from Koundinya to Sri Venkateswara National Park, has 50 to 60 of them.

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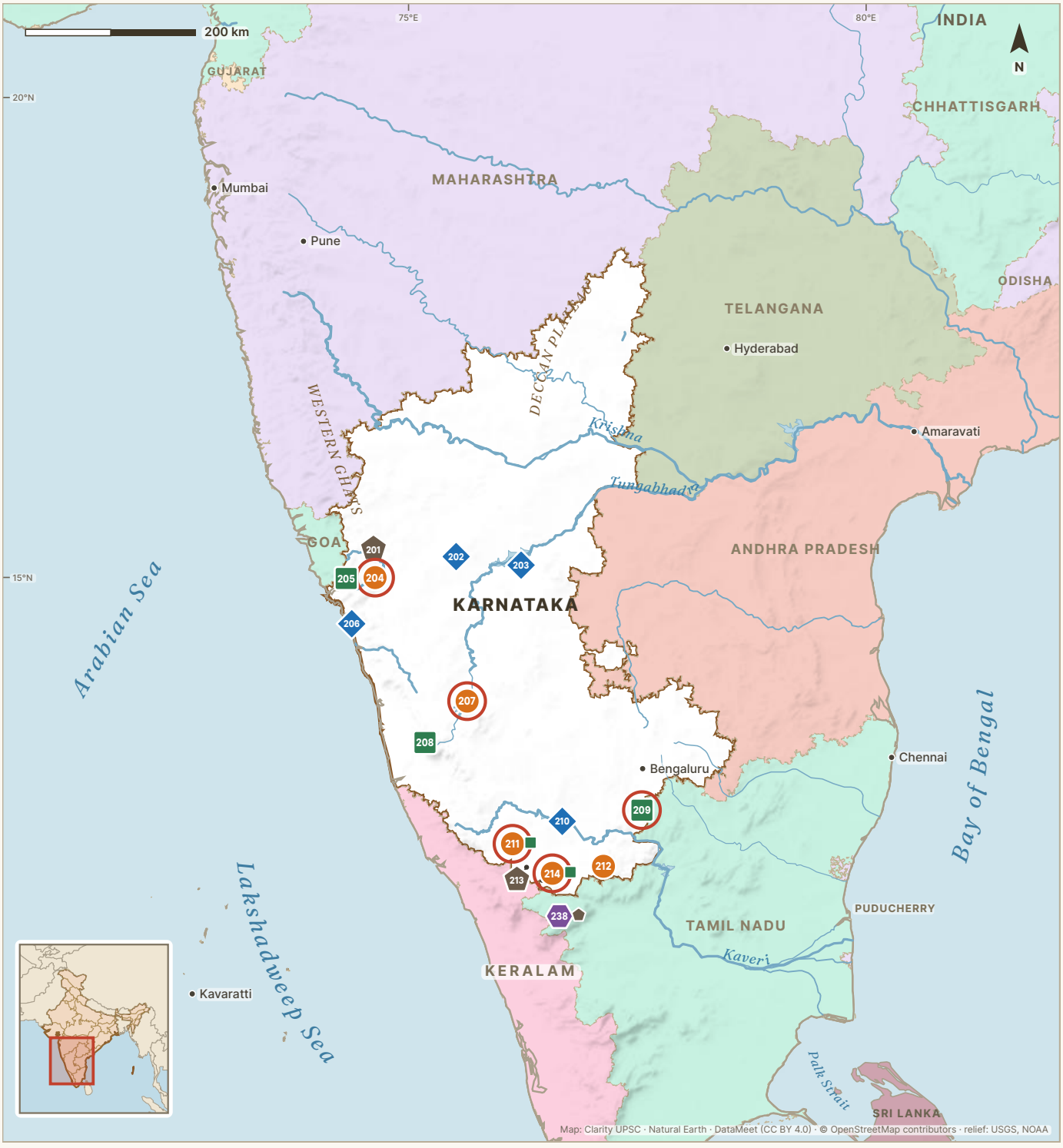
Karnataka

5 tiger reserves · 5 national parks · 4 Ramsar sites · 1 biosphere reserve · 2 elephant reserves

Karnataka's main forests lie on the Western Ghats, which run along the west of the state. The drier Deccan plateau lies to the east. All five of its tiger reserves lie at least partly inside its two elephant reserves. Its four Ramsar sites are an estuary on the Arabian Sea, islets on the Kaveri and two irrigation tanks. The 2021–25 national elephant estimate gave Karnataka 6,013 elephants, more than any other state.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

Karnataka: its areas

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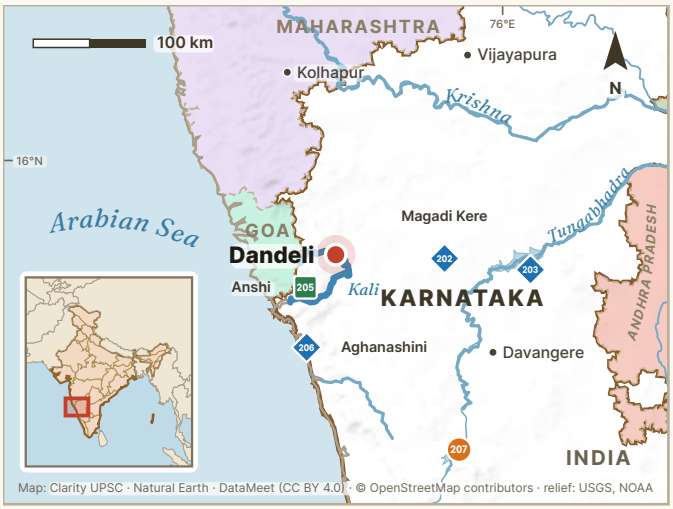
201

Dandeli Elephant Reserve

Uttara Kannada, Belagavi, Haveri and Dharwad · **Karnataka**

Elephant reserve 2015 · 2,321.11 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kali	**Northern Western Ghats, from 45 m to 1,036 m**	**Asian elephant, tiger, hornbills**	**Karnataka's second elephant reserve (2015), after Mysore (2002)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Dandeli Elephant Reserve includes Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary, which is part of the core of Kali Tiger Reserve. The elephant reserves atlas puts about 441 sq km of Kali Tiger Reserve inside it.

Dandeli Elephant Reserve covers forests of northern Karnataka, near the borders of Goa and Maharashtra. It spreads over Uttara Kannada, Belagavi, Haveri and Dharwad districts. Its forests range from west coast evergreen forest to moist teak forest and dry thorn forest. Forest covers about 58% of the reserve. The average rainfall is about 4,145 mm.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Karnataka notified the reserve on 26 March 2015 under the guidelines of Project Elephant. It covers 2,321.11 sq km and was the state's second elephant reserve, after Mysore.
- It includes the Hornbill Conservation Reserve of 52.5 sq km. This reserve follows the Kali river from Supa dam to Dandeli town.
- The 2021–25 national estimate found a low density of elephants here. Elephants from Kali Tiger Reserve sometimes move into five forest divisions: Sirsi, Belagavi, Haliyal, Yellapura and Dharwad.

PRELIMS TRAP

Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary and Dandeli Elephant Reserve are different areas. The elephant reserve is much larger. It includes the sanctuary and reaches into Belagavi, Haveri and Dharwad districts.

202

Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve

Gadag · **Karnataka**

Ramsar site 2023 · 0.54 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Rain-fed tank in the Southern Deccan Plateau	**Human-made tank among farms and villages, at 663 m**	**Bar-headed goose, common pochard, river tern, painted stork**	**One of south India's largest wintering grounds of the bar-headed goose**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Magadi Kere is both a Ramsar site and a conservation reserve, and the two have the same boundary. The whole site is also an Important Bird Area.

Magadi Kere is a human-made tank, or reservoir, in Shirahatti taluk of Gadag district. It lies about 30 km from Gadag, on the road to Laxmeshwar. It was built to store rainwater for irrigation. Its water later became too salty and alkaline for irrigation. The tank still keeps its water even in droughts. More than 166 species of birds have been recorded here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Magadi Kere became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 14 February 2023. Its site number is 2536. Its certificate was handed over on 31 January 2024.
- Karnataka notified it as a conservation reserve on 25 June 2015 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It covers 134.375 acres in Magadi and Holalapur villages.
- The Ramsar record says the tank supports 25,668 bar-headed geese each year. This is 23.3% of the regional population of the species.
- Its birds include two species that the IUCN lists as Vulnerable, the common pochard and the river tern. The Indian pangolin, listed as Endangered, has also been recorded at the tank.

PRELIMS TRAP

A conservation reserve and a Ramsar site are two different labels. The state declares a conservation reserve under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. A Ramsar site is listed under the international Convention on Wetlands. Magadi Kere has both.

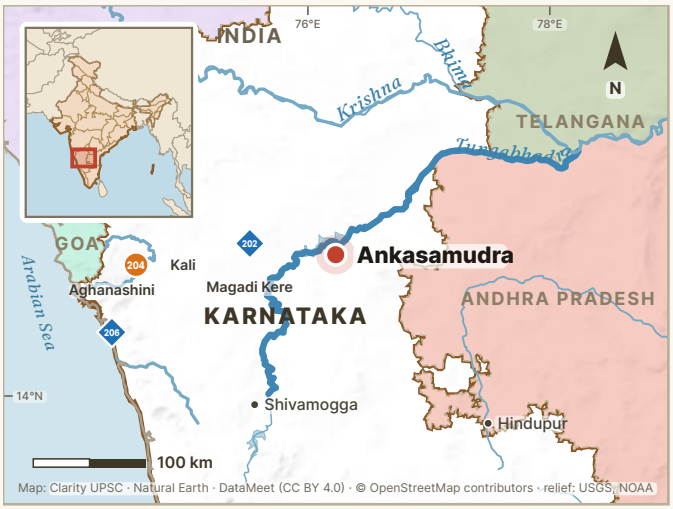
203

Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve

Vijayanagara · **Karnataka**

Ramsar site 2023 · 0.99 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Tungabhadra basin, near the backwaters of the dam	**Seasonal village tank on the Deccan plateau, 502 m to 517 m**	**Painted stork, spot-billed pelican, Asian openbill, black-headed ibis**	**First bird conservation reserve of Kalyana Karnataka (2017)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Ankasamudra is both a Ramsar site and a conservation reserve, with the same boundary. Its birds also feed in the backwaters of the nearby Tungabhadra reservoir.

Ankasamudra is a village irrigation tank in Hagaribommanahalli taluk of Vijayanagara district, about 40 km from Hampi. It was built centuries ago to hold the monsoon rainwater that runs off the land. It dries by the middle of summer. More than 5,000 gum arabic trees, locally called karijali, grow on the tank bed. Large waterbirds nest and rest in them.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Karnataka notified Ankasamudra as a conservation reserve on 31 January 2017 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It covers 98.76 hectares.
- It became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 10 March 2023. Its site number is 2535. Its certificate was handed over on 31 January 2024.
- About 29 species of waterbirds breed here, and 19 of them nest in large colonies in the trees. The Ramsar record counts more than 30,000 waterbirds nesting and resting.
- The tank supports more than 1% of the regional populations of five waterbird species. They include the painted stork, the black-headed ibis and the spot-billed pelican.

PRELIMS TRAP

Ankasamudra is in Vijayanagara district. This district was formed from part of Ballari district and became Karnataka's 31st district. The Karnataka Forest Department's page on the reserve still places it in Ballari district.

204 Kali Tiger Reserve

Uttara Kannada · **Karnataka**

Tiger reserve 2007 · 1,097.51 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kali, with its tributaries the Nagzari and the Kaneri	**Western Ghats forest in Haliyal, Joida and Karwar taluks**	**Tiger, leopard, dhole, gaur**	**Named after the Kali river in 2015, earlier Dandeli-Anshi**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary and Anshi National Park form the core of Kali Tiger Reserve. The reserve lies partly inside Dandeli Elephant Reserve, which includes Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary.

Kali Tiger Reserve lies in the Western Ghats of Uttara Kannada district, in Haliyal, Joida and Karwar taluks. It is the main catchment, or drainage area, of the Kali river and its tributaries, the Nagzari and the Kaneri. The Kali flows west through the reserve to the Arabian Sea. The forests are tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen and moist deciduous.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The reserve was declared on 4 January 2007 as Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve. A notification of 11 December 2015 renamed it after the Kali river.
- Its core, the inner protected zone, is 814.88 sq km. With a buffer of 282.63 sq km, the reserve covers 1,097.51 sq km.
- Camera traps recorded four tigers here in 2018 and 17 tigers in 2022. Tigers from the reserve have started to spread into nearby forests in Goa and northern Karnataka.
- The reserve has a 33 km border with Goa. Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary lies next to it on the north. Goa's Mhadei, Bhagwan Mahaveer, Netravali and Cotigao sanctuaries lie to the west.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

29 March 2026 On 27 March 2026 scientists described a new night frog, Nyctibatrachus kali, in the journal PeerJ. They found it in the Castle Rock area of the reserve. It looks like the Kumbara night frog, but its DNA and its calls are different. Forest staff helped to find it. It is the 35th known species of night frog.

13 April 2026 On 2 April 2026 the Union Environment Ministry issued a draft notification for an eco-sensitive zone around the reserve. The zone is a belt of 663.32 sq km, up to 10 km wide, where some activities are controlled. No zone was marked to the north, west and north-west, because Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary adjoins the reserve.

19 June 2026 In June 2026 news reports described a new forester moth, Mimeusemia kali, found in the reserve. Scientists of the Zoological Survey of India in Pune and the Natural History Museum in London described it. Their paper appeared in the journal Zootaxa on 18 May 2026.

PRELIMS TRAP

Kali Tiger Reserve and Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve are the same reserve. The National Tiger Conservation Authority's brief note on the reserve still uses the older name.

205 Anshi National Park

Uttara Kannada · **Karnataka**

National park 1987 · 417.34 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kali	Western Ghats evergreen and semi-evergreen forest	Tiger, leopard, dhole, gaur	Part of the core of Kali Tiger Reserve since 2007



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Anshi National Park and Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary together form the core of Kali Tiger Reserve, which has its own entry.

Anshi National Park lies in Joida and Karwar taluks of Uttara Kannada district, in the Western Ghats. It forms the western part of Kali Tiger Reserve. Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary lies next to it on the north-east. Most of its forest is tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen. The Kali river flows through the park.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Anshi National Park and Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary were declared together as Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve on 4 January 2007. The reserve was renamed Kali Tiger Reserve in 2015.
- On the western side of the tiger reserve, five protected areas of Goa lie next to Anshi.
- The Karnataka Forest Department places the tiger reserve in a larger tiger landscape. This landscape covers about 8,800 sq km of protected areas and reserved forests.

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206 Aghanashini Estuary

Uttara Kannada · **Karnataka**

Ramsar site 2023 · 48.01 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Aghanashini, also called the Tadri	**Brackish estuary with mangroves, mudflats, salt flats and dunes**	**River tern, black-headed ibis, Oriental darter**	**Largest of Karnataka's four Ramsar sites (48.01 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Aghanashini Estuary is on the Ramsar list only. Its Ramsar Information Sheet does not name any Indian protected area that covers the site.

Aghanashini Estuary is the mouth of the Aghanashini river, where it meets the Arabian Sea. It lies in Kumta taluk of Uttara Kannada district, between Gokarna in the north and Kumta in the south. It is about 13 km long. The site includes its brackish water and the mangroves, mudflats, salt flats and sand dunes around it. It supports the livelihoods of 6,000 to 7,500 families.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The estuary became a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 14 February 2023. Its site number is 2534. Its certificate was handed over on 31 January 2024.
- The Aghanashini, also called the Tadri, rises in the Western Ghats. The Ramsar record says that it flows west for 117 km before it reaches the sea.
- People here fish, collect clams and crabs, and make salt. They also raise fish in rice fields inside the estuary, which are called gazni fields.
- The Ramsar record lists 84 species of fish and 117 of birds. More than 1% of the regional populations of nine waterbird species use the estuary. One of them is the river tern.

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✓ True ✕ False

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207 Bhadra Tiger Reserve

Chikkamagaluru and Shivamogga · **Karnataka**

Tiger reserve 1998 · 1,064.29 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Bhadra, which joins the Tunga to form the Tungabhadra	**Saucer-shaped valley in the Western Ghats, 650 m to 1,875 m**	**Tiger, leopard, gaur, dhole**	**First tiger reserve in India to complete village relocation**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary is the core of Bhadra Tiger Reserve. In 2015 the sanctuary and nearby areas, 1,331.94 sq km in all, were added to Mysore Elephant Reserve.

Bhadra Tiger Reserve lies in the Western Ghats of Chikkamagaluru and Shivamogga districts. It is shaped like a saucer, with valleys and steep hills. The Mullayanagiri, Hebbegiri, Gangegiri and Bababudangiri ranges surround it. The Bhadra river and its tributaries drain it. A dam stands across the river near Lakkavalli.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The area became Jagara Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in 1951. In 1974 it was re-formed as Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary. It became a tiger reserve under Project Tiger in 1998.
- Its core, the inner protected zone, is 492.46 sq km. With a buffer of 571.83 sq km, the reserve covers 1,064.29 sq km.
- Kallathigiri, at 1,875 metres, is the highest point of the sanctuary. Mullayanagiri, the highest peak of Karnataka, touches its northern boundary.
- Camera traps identified 28 tigers in the reserve in 2022. Bhadra, Kudremukh National Park and Shettihalli Wildlife Sanctuary form one landscape, but the forest links between them are fragile.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

14 February 2026 In February 2026 pictures from the reserve were widely shared online. They showed a black panther and a spotted leopard drinking side by side. The wildlife photographer Arvind Karthik took them. A black panther is a leopard with very dark fur. The dark colour comes from a condition called melanism.

208 Kudremukh National Park

Chikkamagaluru, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada · **Karnataka**

National park 1987 · 600.57 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Tunga, Bhadra and Netravati rise here	**Central Western Ghats, from 135 m to 1,900 m**	**Lion-tailed macaque, tiger, king cobra**	**Largest population of the lion-tailed macaque in India**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

UNESCO listed the Western Ghats as a World Heritage Site in 2012. Kudremukh National Park is one of its 39 parts. The 2022 national tiger estimate treats Kudremukh and Bhadra Tiger Reserve as one tiger landscape.

Kudremukh National Park lies in the central Western Ghats, where Chikkamagaluru, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts meet. The land rises from 135 m to 1,900 m. Wet evergreen forest covers the lower slopes. Higher up, grassland grows with patches of shola, the evergreen forest of the hilltops. The park receives about 7,000 mm of rain a year.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Kudremukh became a national park in 1987 and covers 600.57 sq km. Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary lies next to it on the north.
- Three major rivers rise in the park: the Tunga, the Bhadra and the Netravati. The Tunga and the Bhadra later join near Shivamogga to form the Tungabhadra.
- Kudremukh has the largest population of the lion-tailed macaque in India and in the world. The Union Environment Ministry says so in its notification of 2020.
- On 2 July 2020 the Ministry notified an eco-sensitive zone of 316.63 sq km around the park. This protective belt is up to 9.60 km wide. It has no width on the north, next to Someshwara.

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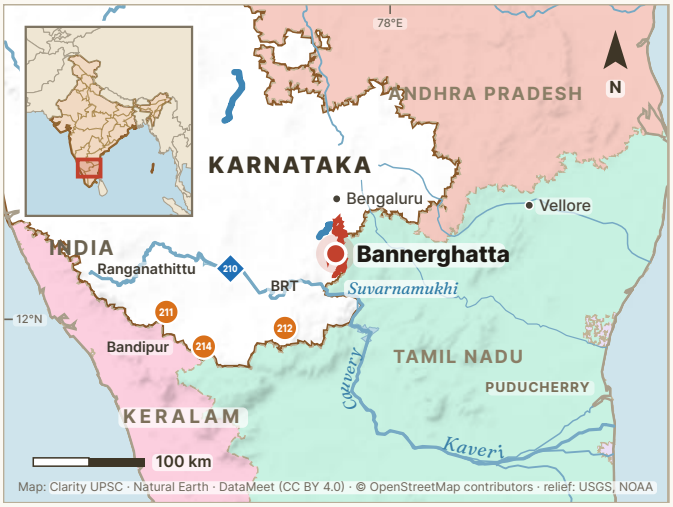
209 Bannerghatta National Park

Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru South · **Karnataka**

National park 1974 · 260.51 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Suvarnamukhi and Arkavathi, which drain to the Kaveri	**Hills and valleys about 22 km south of Bengaluru**	**Asian elephant, leopard, dhole, sloth bear**	**Northern end of Mysore Elephant Reserve**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Bannerghatta National Park lies inside Mysore Elephant Reserve and forms its northern end. Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary is also part of the elephant reserve.

Bannerghatta National Park lies in hills about 22 km south of Bengaluru. Dry deciduous and scrub forest cover the hills, and moist deciduous forest grows in the valleys. Rain on the park drains into the Arkavathi, the Suvarnamukhi and other streams that join the Kaveri. Elephants breed here, and leopards, dholes and sloth bears also live here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Bannerghatta became a national park in 1974 and covers 260.51 sq km. It lies in the south-eastern corner of Karnataka, close to the border with Tamil Nadu.
- Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary lies next to the park on the south. The Thali and Javalagiri reserved forests of Tamil Nadu lie to its south-east. Together they form nearly 1,400 sq km of wildlife habitat.
- Elephants move between the park and the Thali forests. The Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee named three elephant corridors here: Karadikkal–Madeshwara, Tali–Bilikal and Bilikal–Jowlagiri.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

13 January 2026 On 5 January 2026 the Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee reported on the park's eco-sensitive zone. A notification of March 2020 had reduced the zone to 168.84 sq km. The committee recommended withdrawing it. It asked for the 268.96 sq km zone of the 2016 draft to be notified again within six months.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

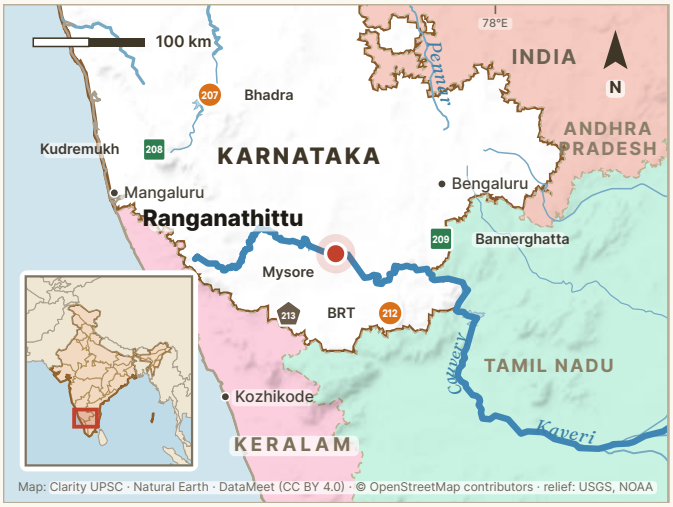
An eco-sensitive zone, a protective belt around a park, is notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The park itself is declared under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. A 2014 Prelims statement placed these zones under the 1972 Act. That statement was wrong.

210 Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary

Mandya · **Karnataka**

Ramsar site 2022 · 5.18 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kaveri, below the Krishna Raja Sagara dam	**River islands on the southern Deccan plateau**	**Painted stork, spot-billed pelican, mugger crocodile**	**Karnataka's first Ramsar site (2022)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Ranganathittu is a Ramsar site and also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Karnataka notified the sanctuary under the Act on 1 September 1998.

Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary is a group of islands and islets in the middle of the Kaveri, in Mandya district. It lies about 3 km from Srirangapatna and 18 km from Mysuru. A weir, a low dam across the river, keeps the water level up around the islands. It was built between 1645 and 1648. Large waterbirds nest in the trees on the islands, and mugger crocodiles also nest there.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- India designated Ranganathittu as a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 15 February 2022. Its site number is 2473. It covers 517.7 hectares below the Krishna Raja Sagara dam.
- The bird expert Salim Ali drew attention to the islands in 1939. The government of the Maharaja of Mysore declared them a bird sanctuary on 1 July 1940.
- The Ramsar record lists more than 225 species of birds and 69 species of fish. The site regularly supports more than 1% of the regional populations of the spot-billed pelican and the painted stork.
- The river around the islands also supports the smooth-coated otter and the hump-backed mahseer, an endangered fish.

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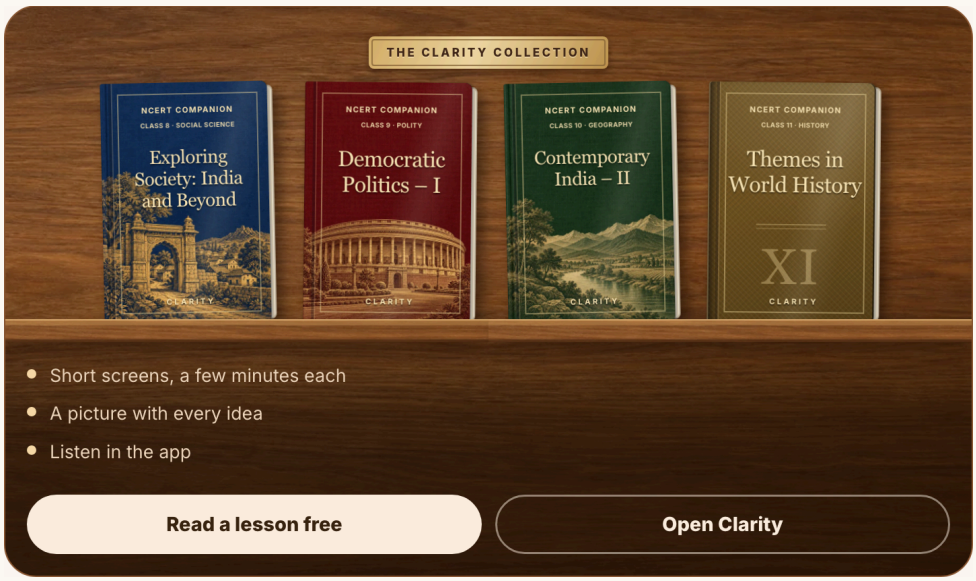

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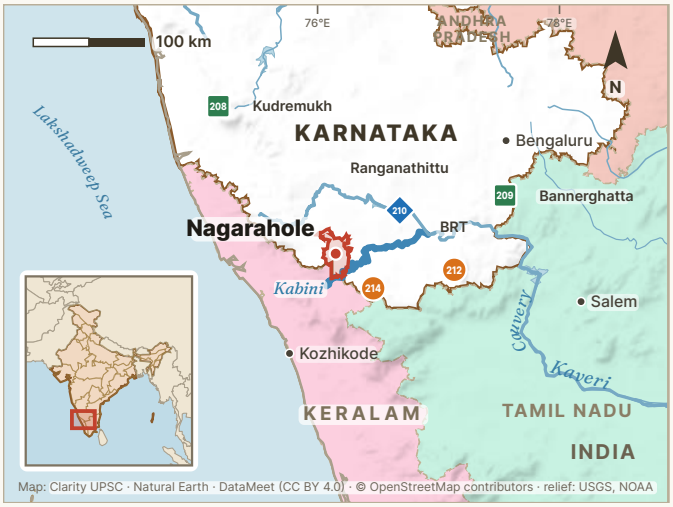
211

Nagarahole National Park and Tiger Reserve

Mysuru and Kodagu · **Karnataka**

Tiger reserve 2007 · 1,205.76 sq km | **National park** 1988 · 643.39 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kabini, a tributary of the Kaveri	**Forest at 700–960 m, wetter towards the west**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, dhole, gaur**	**One of India's highest tiger densities (2022 estimate)**



Nagarahole lies in Mysuru and Kodagu districts, on the Kabini river. Its name means 'snake stream' in Kannada. The Nagarahole stream winds through the forest and joins the Kabini. The forest is dry deciduous in the east. In the wetter west it is moist deciduous and semi-evergreen. Grassy swamps called hadlu feed plant-eating animals in summer.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Nagarahole was first set up as a wildlife sanctuary of 285 sq km in 1955. The national park is also called Rajiv Gandhi National Park. It covers 643.39 sq km.
- The core, the inner zone of the tiger reserve, covers 643.35 sq km. It was notified on 20 December 2007. A buffer, the outer zone, of 562.41 sq km was added on 14 August 2012.
- The 2022 tiger estimate put the number of tigers inside Nagarahole Tiger Reserve at 141. The density was about 11 tigers in every 100 sq km.
- Three Scheduled Tribes live in the region: the Jenu Kuruba, the Betta Kuruba and the Yerava.

ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nagarahole National Park is the core of Nagarahole Tiger Reserve. The reserve is part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and Mysore Elephant Reserve. Bandipur Tiger Reserve lies across the Kabini to the south-east. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary of Keralam lies to the south-west.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

16 September 2026 On 2 September 2026 the Union Environment Ministry proposed an eco-sensitive zone, a protective belt, around the tiger reserve. The draft notification covers 573.959 sq km and all or part of 101 villages. The zone has no width on the south-east, south and south-west. The public had 60 days to send objections.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Three national parks carry Rajiv Gandhi's name in the Wildlife Institute of India table. They are Nagarahole in Karnataka, Orang in Assam and Rameswaram in Andhra Pradesh.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2020 · Q73

Also asked: 2004

Which of the following Protected Areas are located in Cauvery basin ? 1. Nagarhole National Park 2. Papikonda National Park 3. Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve 4. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary Select the correct answer using the code given below :

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 3 and 4 only (c) 1, 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

UPSC KEY **(c) 1, 3 and 4 only.** The Kabini drains Nagarahole and Wayanad. The Moyar drains Sathyamangalam. These rivers belong to the Cauvery basin. Papikonda is on the Godavari.

212 Biligiri Ranganatha Temple Tiger Reserve

Chamarajanagar · **Karnataka**

Tiger reserve 2011 · 574.82 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Gundal and Suvarnavathi, tributaries of the Kaveri	**Biligirirangan Hills, where the Western and Eastern Ghats meet**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, gaur, dhole**	**Soliga community forest rights inside a tiger reserve (2011)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

BRT is part of Mysore Elephant Reserve. It lies next to Malai Mahadeshwara Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka. Reserved forests in Tamil Nadu connect it to Sathyamangalam, Mudumalai and Bandipur tiger reserves.

Biligiri Ranganatha Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve lies in the Biligirirangan Hills of Chamarajanagar district, near Tamil Nadu. The hills link the Western and Eastern Ghats. The vegetation ranges from dry scrub to evergreen forest, shrub savanna and high grassland. The name comes from Biligiri, a white rocky cliff with a temple of Vishnu.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The hills became a wildlife sanctuary in 1974. Karnataka declared the tiger reserve on 24 January 2011. Its core covers 359.10 sq km and its buffer 215.72 sq km.
- About 13,000 Soligas live inside the reserve. On 2 October 2011, 25 Soliga village assemblies received community forest rights under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.
- The 2022 tiger estimate put the number of tigers inside the reserve at 37. The density fell from about 11 tigers in every 100 sq km in 2014 to about 4 in 2022.
- Rain on the reserve drains into the Gundal and the Suvarnavathi, two tributaries of the Kaveri.

PRELIMS TRAP

The Biligirirangan Hills lie where the Western and Eastern Ghats meet in southern Karnataka. A 2023 Prelims statement called them the easternmost part of the Satpura Range. That statement is wrong.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2023 · Q9

Consider the following statements : 1. Amarkantak Hills are at the confluence of Vindhya and Sahyadri Ranges. 2. Biligirirangan Hills constitute the easternmost part of Satpura Range. 3. Seshachalam Hills constitute the southernmost part of Western Ghats. How many of the statements given above are correct?

(a) Only one (b) Only two (c) All three (d) None

UPSC KEY **(d) None.** Amarkantak lies where the Vindhya and Satpura ranges meet. The Biligirirangan Hills lie where the two Ghats meet. Seshachalam is in the Eastern Ghats. None is correct.

Mysore Elephant Reserve

213

Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Kodagu, Mandya, Hassan, Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru Rural, with Chikkamagaluru and Shivamogga for the 2015 extension · **Karnataka**

Elephant reserve 2002 · 8,055.94 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kaveri and Kabini, and the Bhadra in the 2015 extension	**Mysore plateau, the Western Ghats and the Biligirirangan Hills**	**Asian elephant, tiger, gaur**	**Most elephants of any Western Ghats elephant reserve (2021–25)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Bandipur, Nagarahole, Biligiri Ranganatha Temple and Bhadra tiger reserves lie at least partly inside this elephant reserve. Bandipur and Nagarahole are in Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Brahmagiri, Talacauvery and Pushpagiri sanctuaries are parts of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site.

Mysore Elephant Reserve covers the main elephant forests of southern Karnataka. Its forests run from Bannerghatta near Bengaluru through Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary and the Biligirirangan Hills. They continue to Bandipur, Nagarahole and the hills of Kodagu. They range from tropical evergreen forest to dry deciduous forest, thorn forest and thorn scrub.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Karnataka notified the reserve on 25 November 2002. On 26 March 2015 it added Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary and nearby forests of 1,331.94 sq km. The reserve now covers 8,055.94 sq km.
- The reserve includes Bandipur, Nagarahole and Bannerghatta national parks. It also includes seven wildlife sanctuaries, among them Cauvery, Bhadra and Biligiri Ranganatha Temple.
- The 2021–25 national estimate put Karnataka's wild elephants at 6,013, the highest of any state. Mysore has the largest population among the elephant reserves of the Western Ghats.
- In the south, the reserve meets Wayanad Elephant Reserve of Keralam and Nilgiri Elephant Reserve of Tamil Nadu. Dandeli is the other elephant reserve of Karnataka.

214 Bandipur National Park and Tiger Reserve

Mysuru and Chamarajanagar · **Karnataka**

Tiger reserve 1973 · 1,456.3 sq km | **National park** 1974 · 872.24 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kabini, Moyar and Nugu	**Where the Western and Eastern Ghats meet**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, gaur, dhole**	**One of the first nine tiger reserves (1973)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Bandipur National Park is the core of Bandipur Tiger Reserve. The reserve is part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and Mysore Elephant Reserve. In Karnataka it lies next to Nagarahole and Biligiri Ranganatha Temple.

Bandipur lies in Mysuru and Chamarajanagar districts, where Karnataka meets Tamil Nadu and Keralam. The forest changes from scrub in the east to dry deciduous forest in the centre and moist deciduous forest in the west. In summer, elephants and gaur gather in large numbers beside the Kabini reservoir in the north-west of the park.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Bandipur was one of the nine reserves of Project Tiger in 1973. The national park was formed in 1974, mainly from the forests of the earlier Venugopala Wildlife Park.
- The tiger reserve covers 1,456.30 sq km. Its core, the inner zone, is the national park of 872.24 sq km. Its buffer, the outer zone, covers 584.06 sq km.
- The 2022 tiger estimate put the number of tigers inside Bandipur Tiger Reserve at 150. This was the second-highest figure for any reserve, after Corbett's 260.
- Rain on the reserve feeds three rivers that flow all year: the Kabini, the Moyar and the Nugu.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

6 July 2026 In 2026 Karnataka ordered a study of Bandipur's carrying capacity, how many tigers its forest can support. The Forest Minister had said its tigers rose from 12 in 1972 to 175–200. Safaris here and in Nagarahole stopped on 7 November 2025, after tigers killed three people nearby. In June 2026 the state chose to reopen them fully.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Bandipur is in Karnataka, but three protected areas next to it lie in other states. Mudumalai and Sathyamangalam are in Tamil Nadu, and Wayanad is in Keralam.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2012 · Q87

Consider the following protected areas : 1. Bandipur 2. Bhitarkanika 3. Manas 4. Sunderbans Which of the above are declared Tiger Reserves?

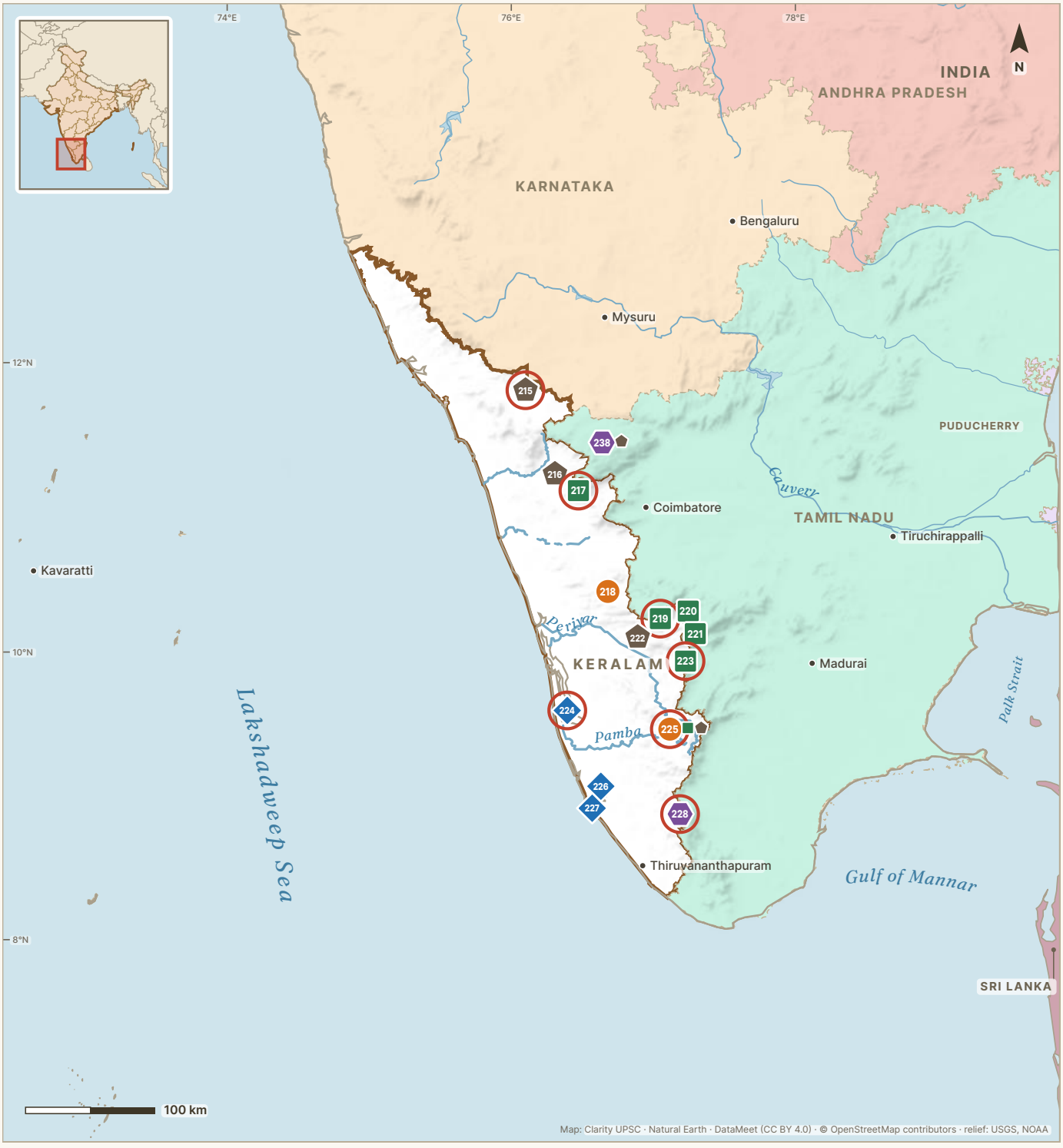
(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 1, 3 and 4 only (c) 2, 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

UPSC KEY **(b) 1, 3 and 4 only.** Bandipur, Manas and the Sunderbans were among the first nine tiger reserves of 1973. Bhitarkanika in Odisha is a national park and a Ramsar site, not a tiger reserve.

Keralam

2 tiger reserves · 6 national parks · 3 Ramsar sites · 2 biosphere reserves · 4 elephant reserves

Keralam is a narrow state between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats. Most of its protected areas are in the forests of the Ghats. Its two tiger reserves are Periyar and Parambikulam, and it has four elephant reserves. Four of its six national parks are in the hills around Munnar. Its three Ramsar sites are lakes and backwaters. It shares the Nilgiri and Agasthyamalai biosphere reserves with other states.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

Keralam: its areas



Wayanad 266
Wayanad, Kannur and Kozhikode



Silent Valley 268
Palakkad



Eravikulam 270
Idukki



Pambadum Shola 272
Idukki



Mathikettan Shola 274
Idukki



Periyar 276
Idukki, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam, and for the elephant reserve also Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram



Ashtamudi 278
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Nilgiri 289
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Nilambur 267
Malappuram, Palakkad and Kozhikode



Parambikulam 269
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Anamudi 273
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Vembanad-Kol 275
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Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta (Keralam), Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari (Tamil Nadu)

215 Wayanad Elephant Reserve

Wayanad, Kannur and Kozhikode · **Keralam**

Elephant reserve 2002 · 1,200 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kabini, a tributary of the Cauvery	**Wayanad plateau and the slopes of the Western Ghats**	**Asian elephant, tiger, gaur**	**Northernmost of the four elephant reserves of Keralam (2002)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The reserve includes Wayanad, Aralam, Kottiyoor and Malabar wildlife sanctuaries. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary is part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the 39 parts of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site.

Wayanad Elephant Reserve lies in northern Keralam, in Wayanad, Kannur and Kozhikode districts. Its reserved forests and wildlife sanctuaries cover the Wayanad plateau and the slopes of the Western Ghats. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary is its largest protected area. The forests range from evergreen forest on the hilltops to moist and dry deciduous forest.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Keralam notified the reserve on 2 April 2002, together with Nilambur, Anamudi and Periyar elephant reserves. It covers 1,200 sq km, and about 80% of it is forest.
- Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary was formed in 1973 and covers 344.44 sq km in two separate parts. Muthanga in the south lies next to Bandipur and Mudumalai. Tholpetty in the north lies next to Nagarhole.
- The Panamaram and Mananthavady rivers of Wayanad form the Kabini. The Kabini joins the Cauvery in Karnataka, so Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary lies in the Cauvery basin.
- The national elephant estimate of 2021–25 put the number of wild elephants in Keralam at 2,785. It found a high density of elephants where Wayanad meets Mudumalai and Nagarhole.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

27 February 2026 In February 2026 experts reported that recent counts had found about 80 vultures in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. It is the only place in Keralam where vultures are found. They said the number was stable, but nesting had declined. A sanctuary official said human activity and invasive plants, such as Senna, may be the cause.

Full story

15 September 2026 On 27 August 2026 a paper in Records of the Zoological Survey of India described a new darkling beetle from Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. Named Steneucyrtus wayanadensis, it was caught in light traps in the Chethalayam forest. The paper also gave the first Indian record of Steneucyrtus pexicollis since its description in 1896.

27 September 2026 On 26 and 27 September 2026 a survey counted vultures in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. The Forest Department, WWF-India and the Hume Centre for Ecology and Wildlife Biology ran it. It recorded 65 different vultures: 54 white-rumped and 11 red-headed. The Indian vulture also lives there. All three species are Critically Endangered.

PRELIMS TRAP

Camera traps identified 80 tigers in the Wayanad landscape for the 2022 tiger estimate. This is the largest tiger population in Keralam. Wayanad has a wildlife sanctuary and an elephant reserve, but no tiger reserve. Keralam's two tiger reserves are Periyar and Parambikulam.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2020 · Q73

Which of the following Protected Areas are located in Cauvery basin ?
1. Nagarhole National Park 2. Papikonda National Park 3. Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve 4. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary Select the correct answer using the code given below :

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 3 and 4 only (c) 1, 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

UPSC KEY (c) 1, 3 and 4 only. The Kabini drains Nagarhole and Wayanad. The Moyar and the Bhavani drain Sathyamangalam. These rivers join the Cauvery. Papikonda is on the Godavari.

216 Nilambur Elephant Reserve

Malappuram, Palakkad and Kozhikode · **Keralam**

Elephant reserve 2002 · 1,419 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Chaliyar and Kunthipuzha	**Hill forests of Nilambur, Mannarkkad and Palakkad**	**Asian elephant, lion-tailed macaque**	**Elephant reserve that contains Silent Valley National Park**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Silent Valley National Park lies inside the reserve. The Union Environment Ministry lists Nilambur and Silent Valley among the areas of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Silent Valley and the Kalikavu range of this reserve are among the 39 parts of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site.

Nilambur Elephant Reserve lies south of Wayanad Elephant Reserve, in Malappuram, Palakkad and Kozhikode districts. Most of it is reserved forest of the Nilambur, Mannarkkad, Palakkad and nearby forest divisions. The atlas of elephant reserves gives its highest point as 2,574 metres above sea level. The forests include evergreen forest, moist teak forest and bamboo.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Keralam notified the reserve on 2 April 2002. It covers 1,419 sq km, and about 82% of it is forest.
- In the east, the reserve meets Coimbatore and Nilgiri elephant reserves of Tamil Nadu.
- Karimpuzha Wildlife Sanctuary, of 227.97 sq km, lies in Malappuram district next to Silent Valley National Park.
- Nilambur is known for teak. Conolly's Plot, near Nilambur town, was planted beside the Chaliyar in 1846. The state tourism department calls it the oldest teak plantation in the world.

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217 Silent Valley National Park

Palakkad · **Keralam**

National park 1984 · 89.52 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kunthipuzha	**Rainforest valley on the western side of the Nilgiri hills**	**Lion-tailed macaque, Nilgiri langur, tiger**	**National park that followed the Save Silent Valley movement (1984)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Silent Valley is a core area of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, which was notified in 1986. It lies inside Nilambur Elephant Reserve. UNESCO listed the Western Ghats as a World Heritage Site in 2012. Silent Valley is one of its 39 parts.

Silent Valley National Park lies in the Nilgiri hills, in Palakkad district of northern Keralam. The Kunthipuzha flows through its evergreen rainforest. Higher up, the park has shola forest and open grassland. The park is known for the lion-tailed macaque, a monkey found only in the Western Ghats. The visitors' centre is at Sairandhri.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The state electricity board planned a hydroelectric dam on the Kunthipuzha. The Save Silent Valley movement opposed it. The project was dropped in 1983, and the area became a national park in 1984.
- The core of the park covers 89.52 sq km. A buffer zone, an outer belt of 148 sq km, surrounds it. The forest department therefore gives the whole area as 237.52 sq km.
- The state forest department says that the park has the largest number of lion-tailed macaques. Elephants, tigers, Nilgiri langurs and Nilgiri tahr also live here.
- Mukurthi National Park of Tamil Nadu and Karimpuzha Wildlife Sanctuary of Keralam lie next to the park. Birdwatchers have recorded 220 species of birds in Silent Valley over the years.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

5 March 2026 In February 2026 a paper in the journal Zootaxa described two new earthworms from the park, Moniligaster girishi and Drawida reynoldsi. They were collected near Chembotti and between Sispara and Anginda. On 30 June 2026 the same journal described a new jumping spider named after the park, Onomastus silentvalley.

10 March 2026 From 6 to 8 March 2026 a bird survey recorded 192 species in the park. It covered both the core and the buffer zone. The Forest Department and the Malabar Natural History Society carried it out with 85 birdwatchers. The birds included the Asian house martin and 20 species found only in the Western Ghats.

17 March 2026 Vela carli is a freshwater crab of the central Western Ghats. On 10 March 2026 a paper in the journal Crustaceana reported gynandromorphy in it. A gynandromorph has both male and female body parts. Three of the crabs collected in the park were gynandromorphs. This is the first such record in the crab family Gecarcinucidae.

PRELIMS TRAP

The Kunthipuzha flows through Silent Valley. Through the Thuthapuzha it joins the Bharathappuzha, which reaches the Arabian Sea. The Bhavani rises nearby and flows east to the Cauvery. A 2013 Prelims question paired the park with the Cauvery. That pair is not correct.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2005 · Q134

Also asked: 2013

Consider the following statements: 1. Silent Valley National Park is in the Nallamalai range. 2. Pathrakkadavu Hydroelectric Project is proposed to be built near the Silent Valley National Park. 3. The Kunthi river originates in Silent Valley's rainforests. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 3 (b) 2 only (c) 2 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER (c) 2 and 3. The park is in the Nilgiris. The Nallamalai range is in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The Kunthipuzha rises here, and the Pathrakkadavu project was planned near the park.

218 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve

Palakkad and Thrissur · **Keralam**

Tiger reserve 2009 · 643.66 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Chalakudy river system	**Anamalai and Nelliampathy hills, south of the Palghat gap**	**Tiger, gaur, Asian elephant, lion-tailed macaque**	**Second tiger reserve of Keralam (2009)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The reserve lies inside Anamudi Elephant Reserve. Karian Shola, a part of Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary, is one of the 39 parts of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site. Across the state border, the reserve meets Anamalai Tiger Reserve of Tamil Nadu.

Parambikulam Tiger Reserve lies in Palakkad and Thrissur districts, in the Anamalai and Nelliampathy hills of the Western Ghats. It lies south of the Palghat gap. Its forests are evergreen, semi-evergreen and deciduous, with teak plantations. Marshy grasslands here are called vayals.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Keralam notified the tiger reserve in December 2009. Its core, the inner zone, is 390.89 sq km. Its buffer, the outer zone, is 252.77 sq km, for a total of 643.66 sq km.
- The core includes Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary, which was formed in 1973 and covers 285 sq km. Four tribal communities live in the reserve: Kadar, Malasar, Muduvar and Mala Malasar.
- Three dams stand inside the reserve: Parambikulam, Thunakadavu and Peruvaripallam. Tamil Nadu built them. Tunnels and canals carry their water to the Aliyar dam in Tamil Nadu.
- Camera traps identified 31 tigers in the reserve for the 2022 tiger estimate. The Kannimara teak tree here is 48.5 metres tall and is said to be more than 450 years old.

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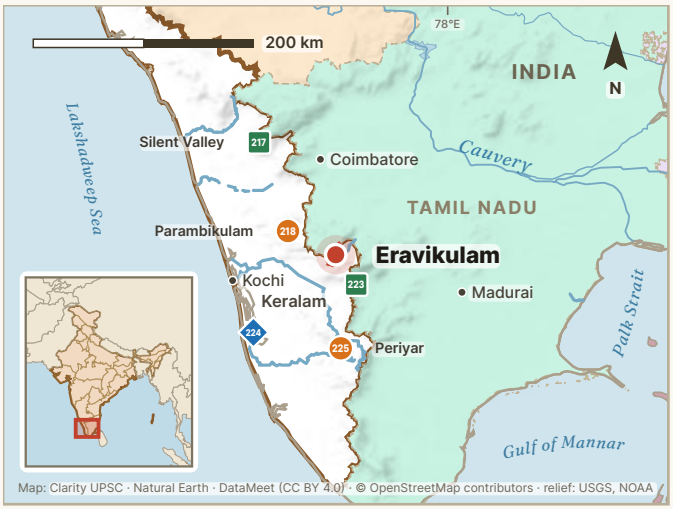
219 Eravikulam National Park

Idukki · **Keralam**

National park 1978 · 97 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Streams to the Periyar in the west and the Pambar in the east	**High plateau of grassland and shola, about 2,000 m**	**Nilgiri tahr, Nilgiri marten, resplendent shrub frog**	**First national park of Keralam (1978)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Eravikulam is one of the 39 parts of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site. It lies inside Anamudi Elephant Reserve. Its northern boundary meets Anamalai Tiger Reserve of Tamil Nadu. Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary lies to its north-east.

Eravikulam National Park lies in the High Ranges of Idukki district, 13 km from Munnar. Most of it is a rolling plateau about 2,000 metres high, called the Hamilton plateau. Grassland covers the plateau, and patches of evergreen forest called sholas grow in the valleys. Anamudi stands inside the park. At 2,695 metres, it is the highest peak south of the Himalaya.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The area became Eravikulam-Rajamala Wildlife Sanctuary in 1975 and a national park in 1978. It was the first national park of Keralam and covers 97 sq km.
- The 2025 count found 841 Nilgiri tahr in the park. This is the largest single population of the tahr. The animal lives only in the Western Ghats of Keralam and Tamil Nadu.
- The neelakurinji shrub flowers in a mass once in 12 years on these hills. The last mass flowering was in 2018. The state forest department expects the next one in 2030.
- Streams from the park flow west to the Periyar, which reaches the Arabian Sea. Other streams flow east through the Pambar to the Cauvery, which reaches the Bay of Bengal.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

10 September 2026 In early September 2026 the forest department and the Aranyakam Nature Foundation ran a four-day survey around Munnar. It covered four national parks and Kurinjimala Sanctuary. It recorded 54 species of amphibians and 52 of reptiles.

PRELIMS TRAP

Eravikulam in Keralam has the largest population of the Nilgiri tahr, but the tahr is the state animal of Tamil Nadu. Anamudi peak is inside Eravikulam National Park. Anamudi Shola National Park is a separate, smaller park to the east.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2010 · Q64

Consider the following pairs: Protected area — Well-known for 1. Bhitarkanika, Orissa — Salt Water Crocodile 2. Desert National Park, Rajasthan — Great Indian Bustard 3. Eravikulam, Kerala — Hoolak Gibbon Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched ?

(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only (c) 2 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

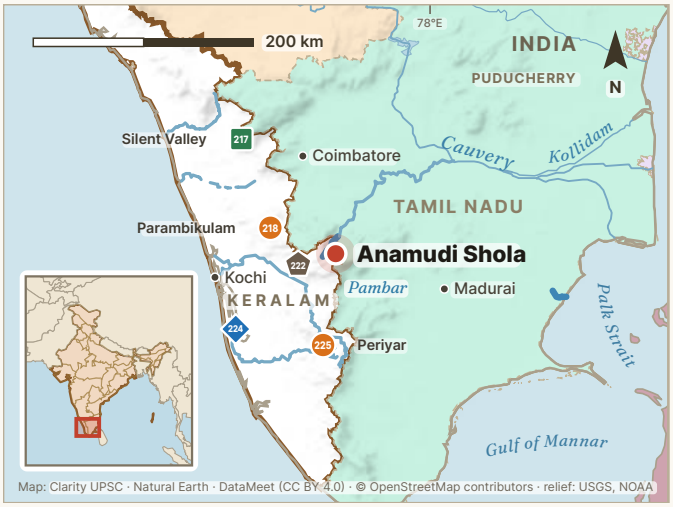
ANSWER **(b) 1 and 2 only.** Eravikulam is known for the Nilgiri tahr. The hoolock gibbon lives in north-east India, so only pairs 1 and 2 are correctly matched.

220 Anamudi Shola National Park

Idukki · **Keralam**

National park 2003 · 7.5 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Pambar and Thalinji Aar, which flow to the Amaravathi	Shola forest of the High Ranges, 1,700 m to 2,500 m	Tree fern Cyathea crinita, elephant, gaur, Nilgiri marten	Mannavan, Idivara and Pullaradi sholas in one park



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Mannavan Shola is one of the 39 parts of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site. The park's management plan counts it among the protected areas of Anamudi Elephant Reserve. The park lies next to Kurinjimala Sanctuary in the east and Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary in the north.

Anamudi Shola National Park lies in Devikulam taluk of Idukki district, about 35 km from Munnar. It is made up of three old reserved forests: Mannavan Shola, Idivara Shola and Pullaradi Shola. Sholas are evergreen forests of the high hills, and cloud often covers them. The park stands between 1,700 and 2,500 metres above sea level.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Keralam declared the park by a notification of 14 December 2003. The notified area is about 7.5 sq km. The forest department's own mapping of the same boundary gives 32.85 sq km.
- The Travancore government first notified the three shola forests as reserves on 22 October 1901.
- The park's streams flow into the Pambar and the Thalinji Aar. Both are tributaries of the Amaravathi river, so the park drains into the Amaravathi. The Amaravathi dam is in Tamil Nadu.
- The tree fern Cyathea crinita, an Endangered plant, is the flagship species of the park. Muthuvan families live in three settlements inside it.

PRELIMS TRAP

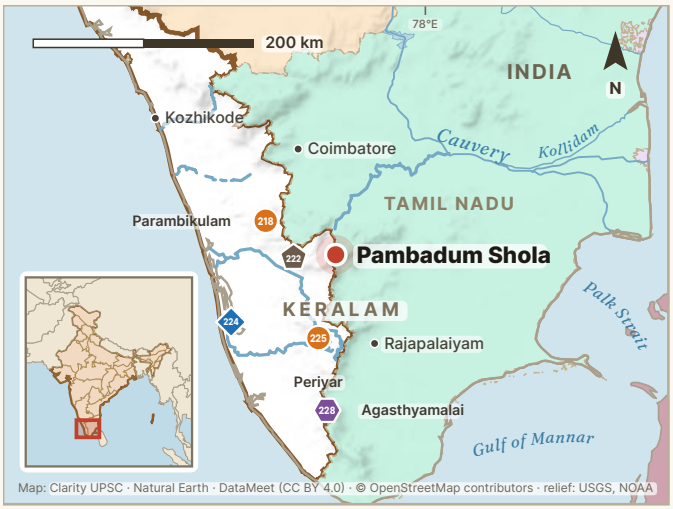
Anamudi, the highest peak of south India at 2,695 metres, stands in Eravikulam National Park. Anamudi Shola National Park is a separate park to the east. Its land reaches only about 2,500 metres.

221 Pambadum Shola National Park

Idukki · **Keralam**

National park 2003 · 1.32 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Vattavada Aar, which flows to the Amaravathi	**Shola forest between the Kannan Devan Hills and the Palani Hills**	**Nilgiri marten, gaur, tiger, leopard**	**Smallest national park of Keralam (2003)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The park's management plan counts Pambadum Shola among the protected areas of Anamudi Elephant Reserve. The park joins Kurinjimala Sanctuary in Keralam and Kodaikanal Wildlife Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu.

Pambadum Shola National Park lies in Vattavada panchayat of Idukki district, about 37 km from Munnar. The Kannan Devan Hills are to its west, and the Palani Hills of Tamil Nadu are to its east. Its eastern and southern boundaries follow the state border. The park has shola forest, with grassland higher up. It stands between 1,760 and 2,531 metres.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Keralam declared the park by a notification of 14 December 2003. The forest department calls it the smallest national park of the state. The department spells the name Pampadum Shola.
- The notified area is about 1.32 sq km. The forest department's own mapping of the same boundary gives 11.69 sq km.
- The Nilgiri marten is the flagship species of the park. This small carnivore is found only in the southern Western Ghats. The IUCN lists it as Vulnerable.
- Water from the park flows north through the Vattavada Aar and the Thalinji Aar to the Amaravathi reservoir in Tamil Nadu. The old road from Munnar to Kodaikanal passes through the park.

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LEVEL 1 POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

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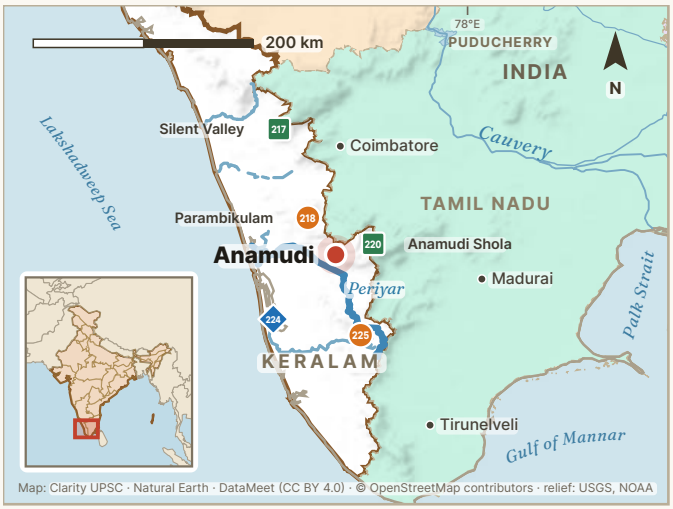
222

Anamudi Elephant Reserve

Idukki, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Palakkad · **Keralam**

Elephant reserve 2002 · 3,728 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Periyar and Chalakudy	**Western Ghats hills south of the Palghat gap**	**Asian elephant, tiger, Nilgiri tahr**	**With Anamalai, the second-largest elephant population in India**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Anamudi Elephant Reserve contains Parambikulam Tiger Reserve and Eravikulam National Park. It meets Anamalai Elephant Reserve of Tamil Nadu in the east and Periyar Elephant Reserve in the south.

Anamudi Elephant Reserve covers 3,728 sq km of central Keralam, in Idukki, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Palakkad districts. It lies in the Western Ghats, south of the Palghat gap. Its forests range from evergreen and semi-evergreen forest to teak, deciduous and mountain forest. About 74% of the reserve is forest.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Keralam notified the reserve on 2 April 2002. One government order created it together with Wayanad, Nilambur and Periyar elephant reserves.
- The reserve also includes six sanctuaries, among them Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary and Thattekkad Bird Sanctuary.
- The all-India elephant report for 2021–25 says that the Anamalai-Anamudi block has the second-largest elephant population in India. Dams, plantations and roads break up its habitat.
- Anamudi peak, 2,695 metres high, is the highest peak south of the Himalaya. It stands in Eravikulam National Park, inside this reserve.

PRELIMS TRAP

Anamudi Elephant Reserve is in Keralam. Anamalai Elephant Reserve and Anamalai Tiger Reserve lie across the border in Tamil Nadu.

223 Mathikettan Shola National Park

Idukki · **Keralam**

National park 2003 · 12.82 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Streams that feed the Panniyar	**Cardamom Hills, evergreen forest and shola at 1,200–1,800 m**	**Galaxy frog, Asian elephant, gaur**	**The galaxy frog, its flagship species**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The park's management plan groups it with the protected areas of Anamudi Elephant Reserve. Its eastern side joins the forests of Theni Forest Division in Tamil Nadu.

Mathikettan Shola National Park lies in the Cardamom Hills of Idukki district. Mountain evergreen forest grows here between 1,200 and 1,800 metres, with patches of shola and grassland higher up. Three streams that rise in the park feed the Panniyar river. Elephants use the park as a corridor, a route between forests.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Keralam declared the park on 10 October 2003. It covers 12.82 sq km in Poopara village of Udumbanchola taluk, Idukki district.
- The area was once part of the Cardamom Hill Reserve. It became a national park because of its shola forest and its value as an elephant corridor.
- The park's management plan treats the galaxy frog as its flagship species. This rare frog lives only in the southern Western Ghats.
- The Forest Department says the name comes from a Tamil word that means 'one who had his mind confused'. Local stories say that visitors lose their way here.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

9 September 2026 In September 2026 researchers reported a new lichen, Buellia maharajensis, from the park. A lichen is a fungus that lives together with algae or cyanobacteria. This one grows on rock at about 1,351 metres. Its name honours Maharaja's College, Ernakulam, in the college's 150th year.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

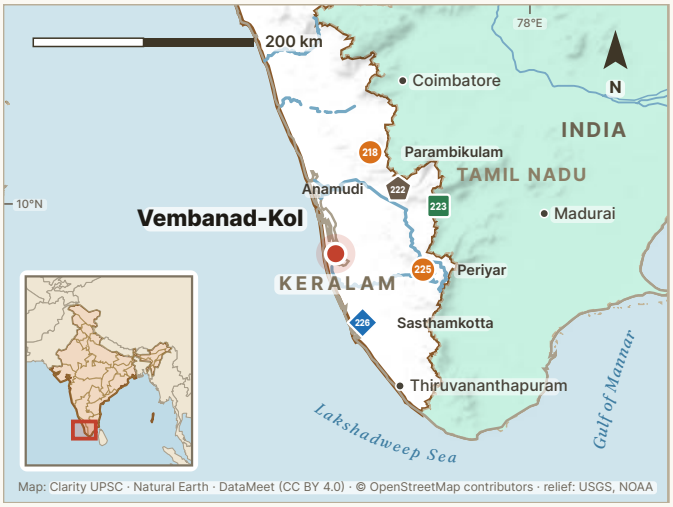
Mathikettan Shola, Anamudi Shola and Pambadum Shola are three separate small national parks of Idukki district. All three were declared in 2003.

224 Vembanad-Kol Wetland

Alappuzha, Kottayam, Ernakulam and Thrissur · **Keralam**

Ramsar site 2002 · 1,512.5 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Ten rivers from the Western Ghats	**Coastal backwaters and rice fields below sea level**	**Spot-billed pelican, migratory waterbirds, clams**	**Second-largest Ramsar site of India (1,512.5 sq km)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Vembanad-Kol is the largest of the three Ramsar sites of Keralam. The other two, Ashtamudi and Sasthamkotta, are in Kollam district.

Vembanad-Kol Wetland lies along the central coast of Keralam, between Alappuzha and Thrissur. Vembanad Lake, a long backwater, is its main part. The northern part of the lake is mostly salt water, and the southern part is mostly fresh water. In Kuttanad, rice grows in polders, fields that lie below sea level. The Kole wetlands of Thrissur also belong to the site.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- India designated Vembanad-Kol as a Ramsar site, a wetland of international importance, on 19 August 2002. Ashtamudi and Sasthamkotta were designated on the same day.
- The Ramsar Information Sheet calls it the largest brackish, humid tropical wetland on the south-west coast of India. Each winter count from 1994 to 1996 found more than 20,000 waterbirds.
- The Thanneermukkom barrier keeps sea water out of the rice fields of Kuttanad. The Ramsar sheet says that it has also harmed the prawn, clam and estuary fisheries.
- Vembanad is the longest lake in India and the largest lake in Keralam. Cochin Port stands in its northern part.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

23 February 2026 In February 2026 scientists of Christ College, Irinjalakuda, reported 12 species of pygmy grasshoppers from the Kole wetlands. Four of them had not been recorded in the state before. These small insects live on wet ground and react quickly to changes in it. This means they can show the health of a wetland.

Full story

26 May 2026 In January 2026 the state High Court passed a temporary order on pollution from houseboats. Under it, houseboats that could not treat their waste were barred from Vembanad Lake after 19 April 2026. Sewage and farm run-off also pollute the lake. The Thanneermukkom barrier stays closed for long spells, so pollution builds up.

5 September 2026 On 24 August 2026 a paper in the journal Crustaceana described two new species of pistol shrimp from the Cochin estuary. This estuary is the northern part of the Vembanad system. One shrimp is named Alpheus vembanadi after the lake, and the other is Alpheus harii. Both descriptions used body features and a gene sequence.

PRELIMS TRAP

Vembanad-Kol, at 1,512.5 sq km, is a larger Ramsar site than Chilika Lake, at 1,165 sq km. Only Sundarban Wetland of West Bengal is a larger Ramsar site in India.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2002 · Q61

Match List I (Mangrove) with List II (State) and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists: List I (Mangrove) A. Achra Ratnagiri B. Coondapur C. Pichavaram D. Vembanad List II (State) 1. Karnataka 2. Kerala 3. Andhra Pradesh 4. Maharashtra 5. Tamil Nadu

(a) A-2, B-1, C-5, D-4 (b) A-4, B-5, C-3, D-2 (c) A-2, B-5, C-3, D-4 (d) A-4, B-1, C-5, D-2

Since then: Kerala was later renamed Keralam, on 25 August 2026.

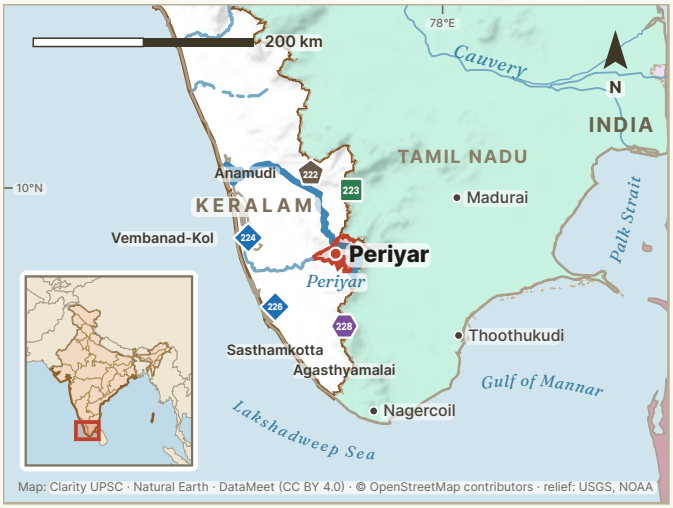
ANSWER (d) A-4, B-1, C-5, D-2. Vembanad, with mangroves along its backwaters, is in Keralam. Achra-Ratnagiri is in Maharashtra, Coondapur in Karnataka and Pichavaram in Tamil Nadu.

225 Periyar National Park, Tiger Reserve and Elephant Reserve

Idukki, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam, and for the elephant reserve also Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram · **Keralam**

Tiger reserve 1978 · 925 sq km | **National park** 1982 · 350 sq km | **Elephant reserve** 2002 · 3,742 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Periyar and Pamba	**Hills of the southern Western Ghats, up to 2,016 m**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, gaur, Nilgiri tahr**	**First tiger reserve to register a Tiger Conservation Foundation**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Periyar National Park lies inside Periyar Tiger Reserve. The tiger reserve lies inside Periyar Elephant Reserve, which also includes Neyyar, Peppara and Shendurney sanctuaries. Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve of Tamil Nadu lies next to it on the east.

Periyar Tiger Reserve lies in the hills of the southern Western Ghats, mainly in Idukki and Pathanamthitta districts. The Periyar and the Pamba rivers drain it. Evergreen forest is the main vegetation, with semi-evergreen forest, moist deciduous forest and grassland. Periyar Lake, a reservoir of 26 sq km, lies in the reserve. Visitors enter at Thekkady.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Nellikkampetty Sanctuary was set up here in 1934. It was enlarged to 777 sq km and named Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary in 1950. An area of 350 sq km within it became a national park in 1982.
- Periyar joined Project Tiger in 1978–79. Keralam notified its core, the inner zone, of 881 sq km in 2007. A buffer, the outer zone, of 44 sq km followed in 2011, for a total of 925 sq km.
- Camera traps identified 30 tigers in the reserve for the 2022 tiger estimate. Periyar Lake and the Sabarimala shrine lie in its small buffer.
- Keralam notified Periyar Elephant Reserve on 2 April 2002. It covers 3,742 sq km and is the largest elephant reserve of Keralam. It runs south from the tiger reserve to Neyyar.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

25 February 2026 From late February to 27 March 2026 the reserve ran the camera-trap phase of the All India Tiger Estimation 2025–26. Staff placed two cameras in each of 470 grids of 2 sq km, 940 cameras in all. Each pair was placed to photograph both sides of every tiger. The data were then to go to the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

Full story

10 June 2026 In June 2026 scientists described a new fish, Eechathalakenda incognita, from fast-flowing rocky streams inside the reserve. For about 70 years it had been mistaken for a related fish of the upper Pamba. It is the ninth fish species known only from the reserve.

PRELIMS TRAP

Mullaperiyar Dam stands inside the tiger reserve in Keralam, but the Government of Tamil Nadu owns and runs it. The dam was completed in 1895. Its water formed Periyar Lake.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2002 · Q24

Which one of the following is not a lagoon?

(a) Ashtamudi lake (b) Chilka lake (c) Periyar lake (d) Pulicat lake

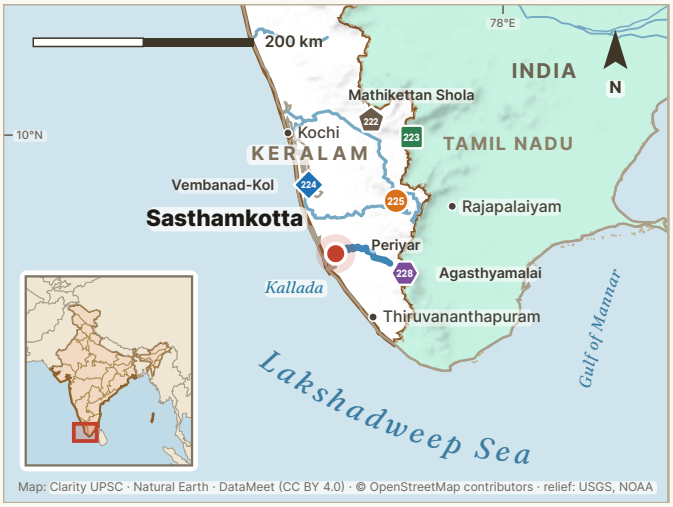
ANSWER **(c) Periyar lake.** Periyar Lake is a freshwater reservoir made by the Mullaperiyar Dam, so it is not a lagoon. Chilika and Pulicat are coastal lagoons, and Ashtamudi is an estuary.

226 Sasthamkotta Lake

Kollam · **Keralam**

Ramsar site 2002 · 3.73 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kallada river basin	**Spring-fed lake with hills on three sides**	**Pearlspot and other freshwater fish**	**Largest freshwater lake of Keralam**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sasthamkotta, Ashtamudi and Vembanad-Kol are the three Ramsar sites of Keralam. All three were designated on the same day. Ashtamudi is also in Kollam district.

Sasthamkotta Lake lies in Kollam district, in the basin of the Kallada river. Hills surround it on three sides. On the south, a bund, an earth bank, separates it from rice fields. Springs under the lake supply its water. The lake is a source of drinking water for Kollam district.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- India designated Sasthamkotta as a Ramsar site on 19 August 2002. At 3.73 sq km it is the smallest of the three Ramsar sites of Keralam.
- The Ramsar Information Sheet records 27 species of freshwater fish that depend on the lake. They use it for food, for laying eggs and as a nursery for their young.
- The Ramsar sheet says that Chaoborus larvae are plentiful in the lake and help to keep its water pure.
- The old Sastha temple, an important centre of pilgrimage, gives its name to the town of Sasthamkotta.

PRELIMS TRAP

The Ramsar Information Sheet calls Sasthamkotta the largest freshwater lake of Keralam. Vembanad is the largest lake of Keralam, but much of its water is brackish, or slightly salty.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2022 · Q30

Consider the following pairs : Wetland/Lake — Location 1. Hokera Wetland — Punjab 2. Renuka Wetland — Himachal Pradesh 3. Rudrasagar Lake — Tripura 4. Sasthamkotta Lake — Tamil Nadu How many pairs given above are correctly matched ?

(a) Only one pair (b) Only two pairs (c) Only three pairs (d) All four pairs

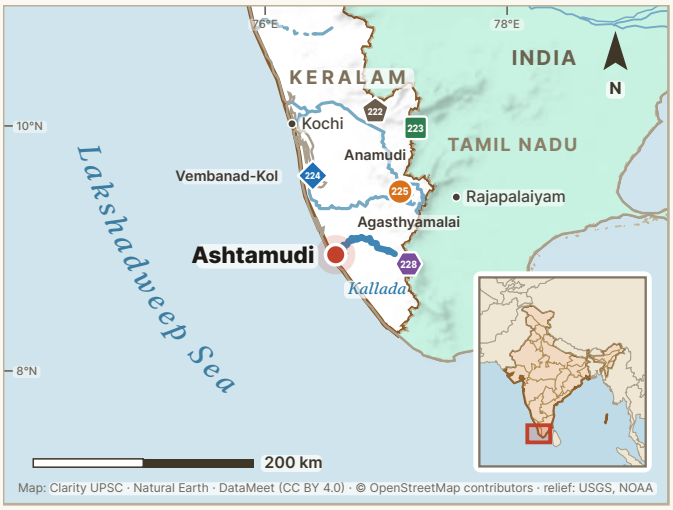
UPSC KEY **(b) Only two pairs.** Sasthamkotta is in Kollam district of Keralam and Hokera is in Jammu and Kashmir. Only Renuka (Himachal Pradesh) and Rudrasagar (Tripura) are correctly matched.

227 Ashtamudi Wetland

Kollam · **Keralam**

Ramsar site 2002 · 61.4 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kallada	**Estuary that opens to the sea at Neendakara**	**Short-necked clam, prawns, mangroves**	**First fishery in India certified by the Marine Stewardship Council**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Ashtamudi, Sasthamkotta and Vembanad-Kol are the three Ramsar sites of Keralam. All three were designated on the same day.

Ashtamudi Wetland lies beside the city of Kollam. It is an estuary, the place where a river meets the sea. The water body is shaped like a palm with eight arms. The arms meet at one outlet to the sea at Neendakara. The Kallada river flows into it after a course of about 120 km. Mangroves grow along parts of its banks.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- India designated Ashtamudi as a Ramsar site on 19 August 2002. It covers 61.4 sq km.
- The Ramsar Information Sheet calls it the second largest wetland of Keralam and its deepest estuary. It is 6.4 metres deep where its arms meet.
- The sheet records 97 species of fish, 57 species of birds and three species of true mangrove, among them Avicennia officinalis.
- Its short-necked clam fishery was the first fishery in India certified by the Marine Stewardship Council. This body certifies fisheries as sustainable. The certificate has since been withdrawn.

PRELIMS TRAP

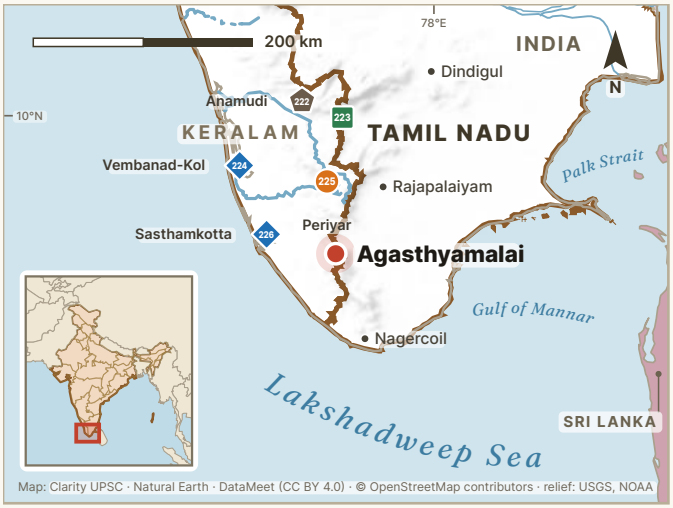
Ashtamudi and Sasthamkotta are both Ramsar sites in Kollam district. Ashtamudi is an estuary open to the sea at Neendakara. Sasthamkotta is a freshwater lake fed by springs.

228 Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve

Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta (Keralam), Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari (Tamil Nadu) · **Keralam and Tamil Nadu** · spans 2 states

Biosphere reserve 2001 · 3,500 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Fourteen rivers rise in Kalakad Mundanthurai	**Southern Western Ghats, with peaks up to 1,868 m**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, leopard**	**In UNESCO's network since 2016, with 2,254 species of higher plants**



Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve covers the southern end of the Western Ghats, across Keralam and Tamil Nadu. Its peaks reach 1,868 metres. Most of it is tropical forest. UNESCO records 2,254 species of higher plants here, and about 405 of them are endemic, found nowhere else. Kani tribal people live in the reserve on both sides of the border.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Keralam part, of 1,828 sq km, was notified on 12 November 2001. A notification of 4 August 2005 added 1,672.36 sq km in Tamil Nadu. This brought the total to 3,500.36 sq km.
- UNESCO added the reserve to its World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2016 under the name Agasthyamala.
- UNESCO calls the reserve a genetic reservoir of crop plants. It names cardamom, jamun and nutmeg. It also names pepper and plantain.

ON THE OTHER LISTS

Neyyar, Peppara and Shendurney wildlife sanctuaries of Keralam lie in the reserve and also in Periyar Elephant Reserve. In Tamil Nadu, Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve lies within it.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

3 June 2026 On 29 May 2026 the Supreme Court ordered a time-bound plan to evict encroachers. It ordered action against 118 government servants among them. The plan covers protected areas in the Agasthyamalai landscape of Tamil Nadu and Keralam. If the state fails, the court's Central Empowered Committee may recommend paramilitary forces.

Full story

4 September 2026 In September 2026 botanists of the Botanical Survey of India reported a new flowering plant from the shola grasslands of the reserve. Its name, Osbeckia ulotricha, refers to its woolly, curly hairs. The botanists found about 50 plants at three sites within less than 1 sq km, between 1,200 and 1,500 metres.

PRELIMS TRAP

Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve of 2001 covers 3,500 sq km in Keralam and Tamil Nadu. Agasthyamalai Elephant Reserve is a separate reserve. Tamil Nadu notified it in 2022 over 1,197.48 sq km.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2019 · Q27

Which of the following are in Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve?

(a) Neyyar, Peppara and Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve

(b) Mudumalai, Sathyamangalam and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Silent Valley National Park

(c) Kaundinya, Gundla Brahmeswaram and Papikonda Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Mukurthi National Park

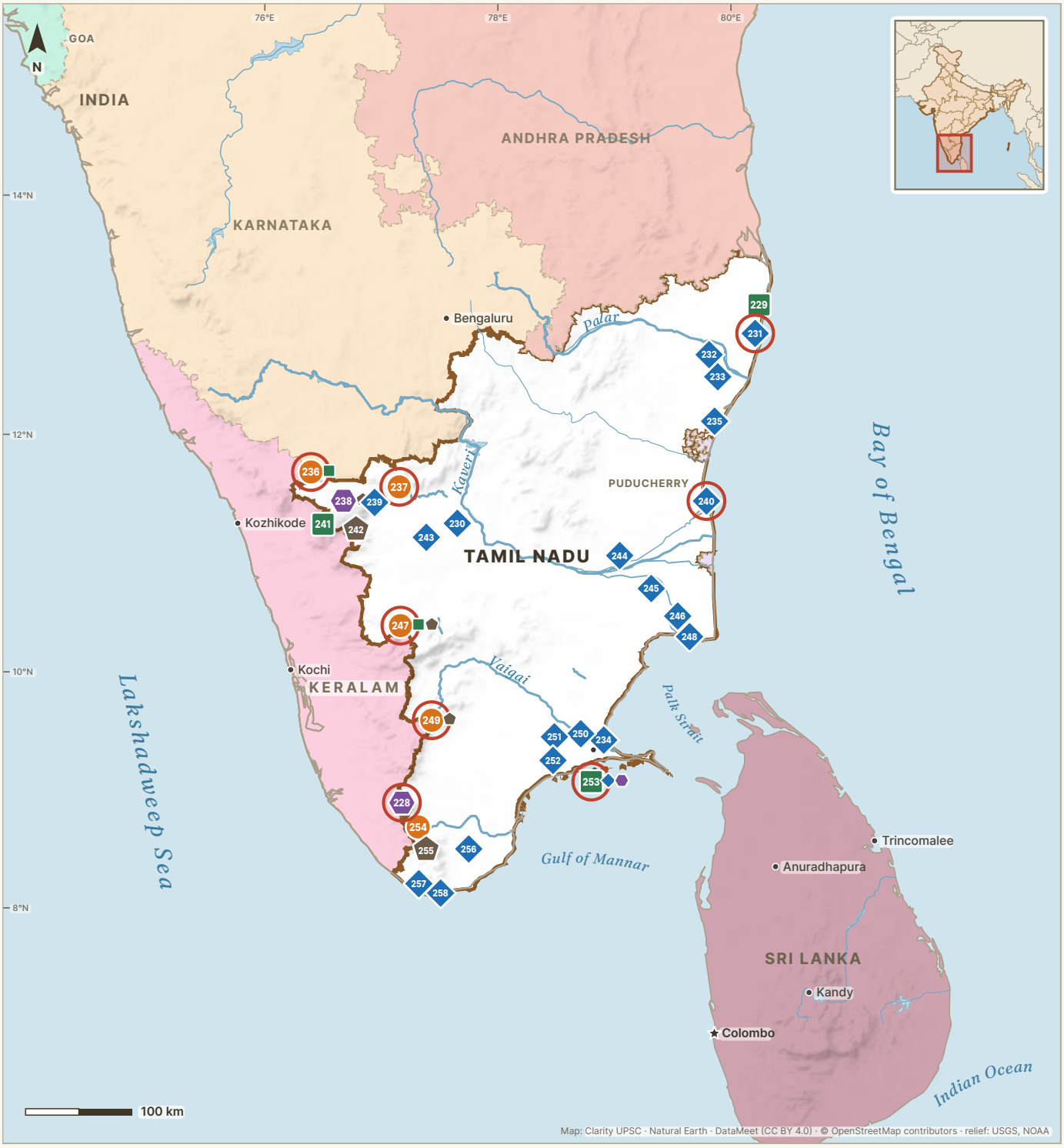
(d) Kawal and Sri Venkateswara Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve

UPSC KEY (a) Neyyar, Peppara and Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve. Neyyar, Peppara and Shendurney sanctuaries of Keralam and Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve of Tamil Nadu all lie in Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve.

Tamil Nadu

5 tiger reserves · 5 national parks · 20 Ramsar sites · 3 biosphere reserves · 5 elephant reserves

The Western Ghats and the Nilgiri hills form the west of Tamil Nadu. The Coromandel coast lies to the east, and the Gulf of Mannar to the south-east. All five of the state's tiger reserves lie in the hills. Tamil Nadu has 20 Ramsar sites, more than any other state, and 14 of them are bird sanctuaries. The Nilgiri and Agasthyamalai biosphere reserves extend into Keralam. Nilgiri also extends into Karnataka.



Tiger reserve · National park · Ramsar site · Biosphere reserve · Elephant reserve · In our news in 2026

Tamil Nadu: its areas

228 **Agasthyamalai** — entry under Keralam — 279

230 **Vellode** — Erode — 282

232 **Karikili** — Chengalpattu and Kancheepuram — 284

234 **Sakkarakottai** — Ramanathapuram — 285

236 **Mudumalai** — The Nilgiris — 287

238 **Nilgiri** — The Nilgiris, Erode, Coimbatore, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri in Tamil Nadu, with parts of Keralam and Karnataka — 289

240 **Pichavaram** — Cuddalore — 291

242 **Coimbatore** — Coimbatore and Nilgiris — 293

244 **Karaivetti** — Ariyalur — 295

246 **Udhayamarthandapuram** — Tiruvarur — 297

248 **Point Calimere** — Nagapattinam and Tiruvarur — 299

250 **Therthangal** — Ramanathapuram — 301

252 **Chitrangudi** — Ramanathapuram — 303

254 **Kalakad Mundanthurai** — Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari — 305

256 **Koonthankulam** — Tirunelveli — 307

258 **Suchindram Theroor** — Kanniyakumari — 309

229 **Guindy** — Chennai — 282

231 **Pallikaranai** — Chennai — 283

233 **Vedanthangal** — Chengalpattu — 285

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239 **Longwood Shola** — The Nilgiris — 290

241 **Mukurthi** — The Nilgiris — 292

243 **Nanjarayan** — Tiruppur — 294

245 **Vaduvur** — Tiruvarur — 296

247 **Anamalai** — Coimbatore, Tiruppur and Dindigul — 298

249 **Srivilliputhur Megamalai** — Virudhunagar, Madurai, Theni and Tirunelveli — 300

251 **Kanjirankulam** — Ramanathapuram — 302

253 **Gulf of Mannar** — Ramanathapuram, Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari — 304

255 **Agasthyamalai** — Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari — 306

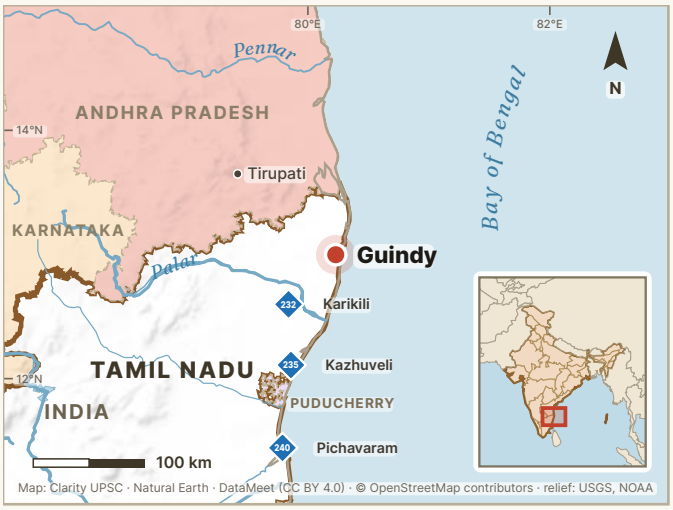
257 **Vembannur** — Kanniyakumari — 308

229 Guindy National Park

Chennai · **Tamil Nadu**

National park 1976 · 2.71 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Coastal plain of Chennai: dry evergreen forest, grassland, scrub	Blackbuck, spotted deer, jackal	One of the smallest national parks of India (2.70 sq km)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Guindy is on the national parks list only. Its zoo, Guindy Children's Park, was set up in 1959.

Guindy National Park lies in the middle of Chennai and covers 2.70 sq km. It protects one of the few remaining patches of southern tropical dry evergreen forest. Patches of grassland and scrub lie between the trees. Scientists have identified 350 species of plants here, and most of them are native. Blackbuck and spotted deer live in the open grassland.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Guindy was declared a reserve forest in 1920. The national park covers 270.57 hectares of the old Guindy Park Reserved Forest.
- The Tamil Nadu Forest Department calls the park's tropical dry evergreen forest the rarest type of vegetation. It also calls Guindy one of the smallest national parks.
- Guindy Children's Park, in the north-east corner, is a zoo recognised by the Central Zoo Authority. So the park protects animals in their natural habitat (in situ) and in a zoo (ex situ).

230 Vellode Bird Sanctuary

Erode · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2022 · 0.77 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Seepage from the Lower Bhavani Project canal, north-east monsoon rain	Human-made irrigation tank on plains that slope to the Cauvery	Spot-billed pelican, painted stork, black-headed ibis, river tern	Bird sanctuary since 2000, Ramsar site since 2022



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Vellode is a Ramsar site and also a bird sanctuary. It lies on the Central Asian Flyway, a route of migratory birds.

Vellode Bird Sanctuary is a human-made irrigation tank in Perundurai taluk of Erode district, about 12 km from Erode. Local people call it Periyakulam Yeri. Water seeps in from the Lower Bhavani Project canal, and the north-east monsoon brings rain. The Forest Department planted gum arabic trees here, and birds perch and nest in them.

PRELIMS POINTERS

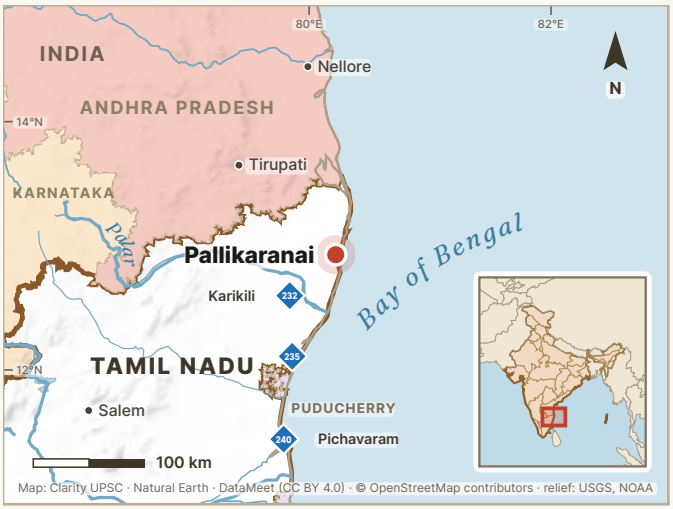
- Tamil Nadu notified Vellode as a bird sanctuary in 2000 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. It covers 77.185 hectares.
- Vellode became a Ramsar site on 8 April 2022, with the site number 2475. India announced it on 3 August 2022.
- The Ramsar record lists 148 species of birds. Counts at the tank have found more than 20,000 waterbirds.
- Spot-billed pelicans are reported to breed here. The river tern, which is Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, also breeds at the tank.

231 Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest

Chennai · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2022 · 12.48 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Drains through Okkiyam Madavu and Kovalam Creek to the sea	**Low coastal floodplain of southern Chennai**	**Glossy ibis, pheasant-tailed jacana, Russell's viper**	**City marsh that soaks up flood water for Chennai**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Pallikaranai is a Ramsar site and also a reserve forest. It is on none of the other four lists.

Pallikaranai Marsh lies in southern Chennai. The Buckingham Canal and Old Mahabalipuram Road run along its eastern side. It is a freshwater marsh, but part of its water is salty. The marsh soaks up water in wet periods and releases it in dry spells. So it reduces flooding in Chennai and Chengalpattu districts. The summary of the Ramsar record lists 115 bird species here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Pallikaranai became a Ramsar site on 8 April 2022, with the site number 2481. India announced it on 26 July 2022, together with Karikili and Pichavaram.
- Water from 65 wetlands of south Chennai drains into the marsh. It leaves through two outlets, Okkiyam Madavu and the Kovalam creek, and reaches the Bay of Bengal.
- Its birds include the glossy ibis, the grey-headed lapwing and the pheasant-tailed jacana. Russell's viper is among its reptiles.
- The Ramsar record rates housing, roads, sewage, garbage, invasive species and drought as high threats to the marsh.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

19 July 2026 On 18 November 2026 the Madras High Court kept a freeze on building within 1 km of the marsh. The Supreme Court oversees the marking of the boundary.

PRELIMS TRAP

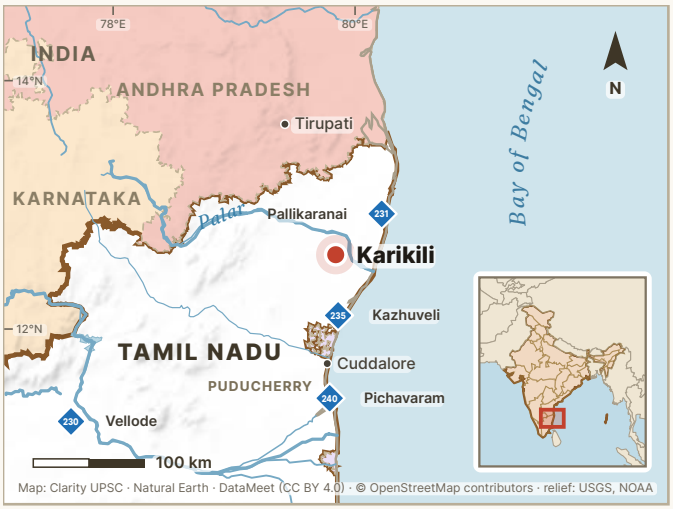
The Ramsar site covers 1,247.537 hectares, which is about 12.5 sq km. News reports give a figure of 250 sq km with it. That figure is the area of south Chennai that drains into the marsh.

232 Karikili Bird Sanctuary

Chengalpattu and Kancheepuram · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2022 · 0.58 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Rain-fed tanks that collect run-off from Karikili hill	**Flat Chengalpattu plain with low rocky hillocks**	**Spot-billed pelican, oriental darter**	**Twin sanctuary of Vedanthangal, about 6 km away**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Karikili is a Ramsar site and a bird sanctuary. Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, another Ramsar site, lies about 6 km to its south.

Karikili Bird Sanctuary is made up of two rain-fed irrigation tanks in Chengalpattu and Kancheepuram districts. Together they cover a little more than 58 hectares. The land is flat, with low rocky hills nearby. The Forest Department planted its trees, which are mainly Barringtonia and Acacia nilotica. Many resident and migratory birds live here, and most of them are waterbirds.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Karikili became a Ramsar site on 8 April 2022, with the site number 2480. India announced it on 26 July 2022.
- The oriental darter and the spot-billed pelican, both near threatened, breed here. Jungle cat, bonnet macaque, jackal and python also live in the area.
- Villagers have long protected the birds. The birds' droppings, called guano, enrich the tank water that irrigates the villagers' fields.
- Run-off from Karikili hill fills the tanks, mostly during the north-east monsoon. The water then lasts until the months of March to May.

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▲ +25 bp	▲ +0.55 pp	▼ −0.8 pp	▲ +0.3%
RBI MPC · 7 Oct 2026	NSO · Oct 2026	NSO · Q1 2026-27	RBI · 6 Nov 2026

All 74 figures, the release calendar, and the Budget and Economic Survey numbers.

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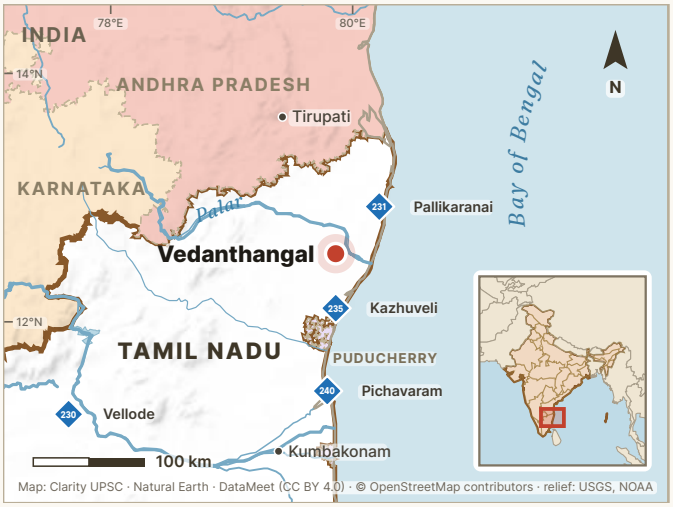
233 Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary

Chengalpattu · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2022 · 0.4 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Rain-fed irrigation tank in Vedanthangal village	Rocky plains of Chengalpattu with low, bare hillocks	Black-headed ibis, Eurasian spoonbill, painted stork	One of the oldest bird sanctuaries of India



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Vedanthangal is a Ramsar site and a bird sanctuary. Karikili Bird Sanctuary, another Ramsar site, lies about 6 km to its north.

Vedanthangal is a small irrigation tank in Vedanthangal village of Chengalpattu district. Rocky plains and low, bare hillocks surround it. Barringtonia trees grow around the tank, and birds nest and breed in them. In a good monsoon year more than 40,000 birds of over 20 species gather here.

PRELIMS POINTERS

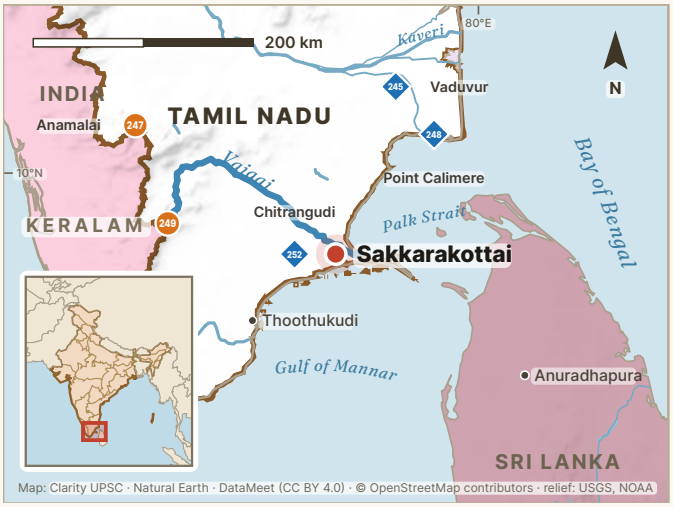
- Vedanthangal became a Ramsar site on 8 April 2022, with the site number 2477. India announced it on 3 August 2022.
- The Tamil Nadu Forest Department calls it one of the oldest bird sanctuaries in India. Villagers have protected the nesting birds for centuries, because the manure-rich water raises their crop yields.
- The Ramsar record calls it an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area. It names four birds: the black-headed ibis, the Eurasian spoonbill, the black-crowned night heron and the painted stork.

234 Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary

Ramanathapuram · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2024 · 2.3 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Tributaries of the Vaigai	Seasonal tank with babul trees, Vaigai basin	Spot-billed pelican, black-headed ibis, oriental darter	Bird sanctuary (2012) and Ramsar site (2024)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Sakkarakottai is a Ramsar site and also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary is a wetland at the edge of Ramanathapuram town. It spreads over three villages, and tributaries of the Vaigai fill it in the rainy season. The forest department planted babul trees here, and the birds nest in them. Villagers use its water, rich in bird droppings, for their fields.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tamil Nadu declared Sakkarakottai a bird sanctuary in April 2012. It covers about 230.5 hectares.
- More than 120 species of birds have been recorded. They include the Endangered Egyptian vulture and the Vulnerable Indian spotted eagle.
- Eight species of birds nest in its babul trees. The near-threatened spot-billed pelican is one of them.
- It became a Ramsar site on 15 July 2024. India announced it on 30 January 2025, with Therthangal, Udhwa Lake and Khachoedpalri. India's count of Ramsar sites then reached 89.

235

Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary

Viluppuram · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2024 · 51.52 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Uppukalli creek joins it to the Bay of Bengal	Coastal lake, salty in the north and fresh in the south	Spot-billed pelican, imperial eagle, river tern	Second largest brackish lake of South India



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kazhuveli is a Ramsar site and a bird sanctuary. It is on none of the other four lists.

Kazhuveli is a shallow brackish lake, with slightly salty water, on the Coromandel coast. It lies in Viluppuram district, north of Puducherry. In the north the Uppukalli creek joins it to the Bay of Bengal. Sea water enters during high tides and cyclones. So the water is salty in the north and becomes fresh in the south, in the Kazhuveli basin.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tamil Nadu declared Kazhuveli its 16th bird sanctuary in 2021. It became a Ramsar site on 16 January 2024, and India announced it on 14 August 2024.
- The Ramsar record calls it the second largest brackish lake in South India. It lies on the Central Asian Flyway, a route used by migratory birds.
- Each breeding season about 2,000 birds, mainly spot-billed pelicans, nest in colonies in its trees. The Ramsar record lists 229 species of birds and 85 of fish.
- Reeds cover several hundred hectares of the lake. Patches of Avicennia mangrove grow in its brackish part, but they are highly degraded.

PRELIMS TRAP

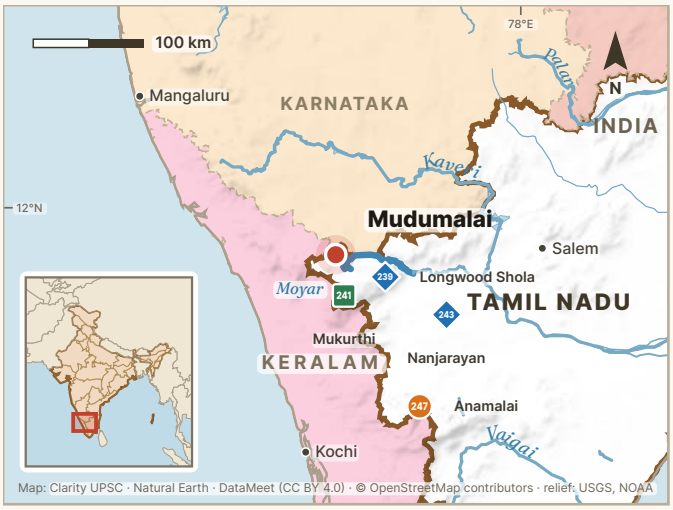
Kazhuveli lies just north of Puducherry, but it is in Viluppuram district of Tamil Nadu.

236 Mudumalai National Park and Tiger Reserve

The Nilgiris · **Tamil Nadu**

Tiger reserve 2007 · 688.59 sq km | **National park** 1990 · 103.23 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Moyar	**Northern slopes of the Nilgiris, down to the Mysore plateau**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, gaur, wild dog**	**Wildlife sanctuary since 1940, tiger reserve since 2007**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Mudumalai National Park and Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary form the core of the tiger reserve. Mudumalai is part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and Nilgiri Elephant Reserve. It adjoins Bandipur Tiger Reserve of Karnataka in the north and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary of Keralam in the west.

Mudumalai lies in the Nilgiris district, where the northern slopes of the Nilgiri hills descend to the Mysore plateau. Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Keralam meet here. The Moyar flows through the reserve. The western half gets the south-west monsoon, and the eastern half gets the north-east monsoon. So the forest ranges from semi-evergreen to scrub.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Mudumalai became a wildlife sanctuary of the Madras Presidency in 1940. Its name means 'old hill range' in Tamil.
- The 2022 tiger estimate put the number of tigers inside the reserve at 114. Camera traps in the same survey photographed 10 young tigers.
- The Moyar valley links Mudumalai with Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve. Elephants use small corridors in its buffer, the outer zone, to move between the Western and Eastern Ghats.
- Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Keralam count vultures together in the Nilgiri landscape. Their third joint survey found 75 active vulture nests, and 54 of them were in Mudumalai.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

3 January 2026 A wildlife enthusiast photographed a pair of eastern imperial eagles in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. The Hindu reported this on 30 December 2025. Records on eBird from 2020 to 2025 show that the eagle visits the reserve regularly in winter. The IUCN lists it as Vulnerable.

6 April 2026 In early April 2026 the Nilgiris Collector crossed the river by coracle, a round basket boat, to Thengumarahada. This village lies inside the core of Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. Before the Tamil Nadu Assembly election, the Collector checked the polling stations for electricity, drinking water, toilets and ramps.

PRELIMS TRAP

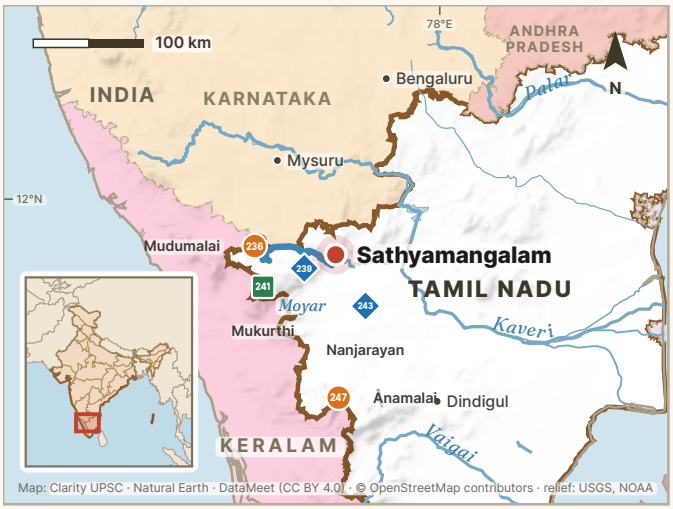
Three different areas are given for Mudumalai. The national park covers 103.23 sq km. The core of the tiger reserve, which is the sanctuary and the park together, covers 321 sq km. The whole tiger reserve covers 688.59 sq km.

237 Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve

Erode · **Tamil Nadu**

Tiger reserve 2013 · 1,408.4 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Moyar on the south side, Palar draining the plateau northwards	**Junction of the Western and Eastern Ghats, mostly dry forest**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, gaur, blackbuck**	**Link between the Western and Eastern Ghats**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Part of the reserve lies in Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Nilgiri Elephant Reserve includes Sathyamangalam Wildlife Sanctuary. The reserve adjoins Mudumalai Tiger Reserve.

Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve lies in the north of Erode district, where the Western Ghats meet the Eastern Ghats. Karnataka lies to its north. Most of its forest is dry forest. The eastern part lies in the rain shadow of the Western Ghats, so it gets little rain. Animals gather along the Moyar, which flows all through the year.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tamil Nadu declared 524.34 sq km here a wildlife sanctuary in 2008 and added the rest in 2011. It declared the sanctuary, except its tribal settlements, a tiger reserve on 15 March 2013.
- The reserve covers 1,408.40 sq km. Its inner core is 793.49 sq km and its outer buffer is 614.91 sq km. The 2022 tiger estimate put the number of tigers inside it at 85.
- The Great Moyar Corridor links Mudumalai with Sathyamangalam. The reserve also adjoins the Bandipur and Biligiri Ranganatha Temple tiger reserves of Karnataka.
- Soliga, Urali and Irula tribal communities live in and around the reserve and depend on its forests.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

20 March 2026 In March 2026 Tamil Nadu told the Madras High Court that 53 resorts and farmhouses stood in the reserve's eco-sensitive zone. Only 11 had valid permission, and the other 42 had been sealed in January. On 16 July 2026 officials sealed 21 resorts in the buffer zone. Two others had stay orders from the court.

Full story

PRELIMS TRAP

Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve is in Tamil Nadu. Biligiri Ranganatha Temple Tiger Reserve, which adjoins it in the north, is in Karnataka.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2017 · Q4

Also asked: 2020

From the ecological point of view, which one of the following assumes importance in being a good link between the Eastern Ghats and the Western Ghats ?

(a) Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve
(b) Nallamala Forest
(c) Nagarhole National Park
(d) Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve

UPSC KEY **(a) Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve.** Sathyamangalam links the Western and Eastern Ghats where they meet. Nallamala and Seshachalam are in the Eastern Ghats, and Nagarhole is in the Western Ghats.

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Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and Elephant Reserve

The Nilgiris, Erode, Coimbatore, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri in Tamil Nadu, with parts of Keralam and Karnataka · **Tamil Nadu, Keralam and Karnataka** · spans 3 states

Biosphere reserve 1986 · 5,520 sq km | **Elephant reserve** 2003 · 4,663 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Moyar and Bhavani, in the Cauvery basin	**Nilgiri hills, 300 m to 2,670 m, from rainforest to thorn forest**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, Nilgiri tahr, lion-tailed macaque**	**India's first biosphere reserve (1986)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The Union Environment Ministry places the reserve in parts of Wayanad, Nagarhole, Bandipur and Mudumalai. Parts of Nilambur and Silent Valley are also in it. It includes Mukurthi National Park and the Longwood Shola Ramsar site. The elephant reserve includes Mudumalai and Sathyamangalam.

Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve covers 5,520 sq km of the Western Ghats around the Nilgiri hills. It lies in Tamil Nadu, Keralam and Karnataka. The land rises from about 300 metres to 2,670 metres. Seasonal rainforest grows in the low hills, and montane forest and grassland cover the high ground. Towards the plains in the east, the forest becomes dry deciduous forest and scrub.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- India notified Nilgiri as its first biosphere reserve in September 1986. UNESCO added it to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2000.
- Tamil Nadu has 2,537.6 sq km of the biosphere reserve, Karnataka has 1,527.4 sq km and Keralam has 1,455.4 sq km. Its core, the inner zone, covers 1,240 sq km.
- The name Nilgiris means 'blue mountains'. UNESCO says it comes from the blue flowers that cover the mountains of the Nilgiri plateau.
- Tamil Nadu notified Nilgiri Elephant Reserve on 19 September 2003. It takes in the Gudalur, Nilgiri North and Nilgiri South forest divisions. It also takes in Erode, Dharmapuri and Hosur divisions.

PRELIMS TRAP

Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and Nilgiri Elephant Reserve are different areas. India notified the biosphere reserve in 1986, and it covers parts of three states. Tamil Nadu notified the elephant reserve in 2003, and it lies only in Tamil Nadu.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2005 · Q82

Also asked: 2008

Which one of the following is not a Biosphere Reserve?

(a) Agasthyamalai (b) Nallamalai (c) Nilgiri (d) Panchmarhi

ANSWER **(b) Nallamalai.** Nilgiri (1986), Agasthyamalai and Panchmarhi are biosphere reserves. Nallamalai is a range of hills in the Eastern Ghats and is not one.

239 Longwood Shola Reserve Forest

The Nilgiris · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2023 · 1.16 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Small streams and marshes inside the forest	**Shola forest near Kotagiri, beside the eastern slopes of the Nilgiris**	**Nilgiri laughingthrush, Nilgiri blue robin, Nilgiri wood pigeon**	**Ramsar site that is a shola forest (2023)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Longwood Shola is a Ramsar site and a reserve forest. The Ramsar record places it inside Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.

Longwood Shola lies near Kotagiri, next to the eastern slopes of the Nilgiri hills. A shola is a patch of tropical montane, or mountain, forest of south India. Grassland usually separates one shola from the next. This shola has marshes and streams inside it. The Ramsar record calls it the only natural shola left near Kotagiri.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Longwood Shola became a Ramsar site on 24 May 2023, with the site number 2538. India announced it on 31 January 2024, with four other sites.
- The Press Information Bureau says 14 of the 26 endemic bird species of the Western Ghats live here. Endemic species are found nowhere else.
- It is a key area for two endangered birds, the black-chinned Nilgiri laughingthrush and the Nilgiri blue robin. It is also a key area for the vulnerable Nilgiri wood pigeon.
- The word shola comes from the Tamil word solai. The Bureau says sholas grow high in the Nilgiris, Anamalais and Palni hills. They also grow high in Kalakad, Mundanthurai and Kanyakumari.

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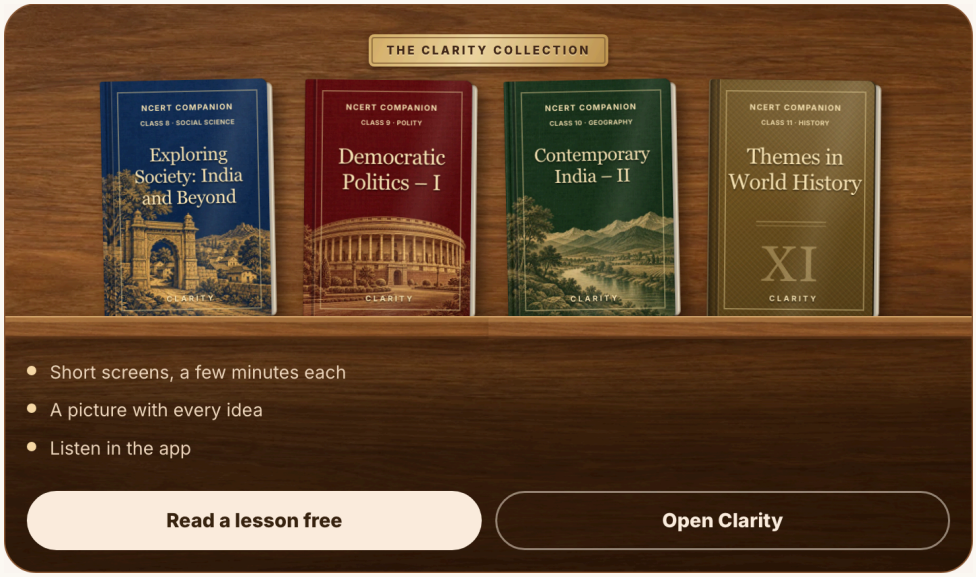

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240 Pichavaram Mangrove

Cuddalore · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2022 · 14.79 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Vellar and Coleroon (Kollidam) estuaries	**Mangrove swamp and backwaters on the Coromandel coast**	**Rhizophora mangroves, olive ridley turtle, prawns**	**One of the largest mangrove areas of India**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Pichavaram is on the Ramsar list only.

Pichavaram lies in Cuddalore district, between the estuaries of the Vellar and the Coleroon rivers, where they meet the sea. Its mangrove trees stand in a few feet of water all the time, among channels and backwaters. It is a breeding and nursery ground for prawns, crabs and fish. The vulnerable olive ridley turtle is among its threatened animals.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Pichavaram became a Ramsar site on 8 April 2022, with the site number 2482. India announced it on 26 July 2022.
- It has Rhizophora annamalayana, a hybrid mangrove that formed naturally from two Rhizophora mangroves.
- Pichavaram Reserve Forest was notified on 11 February 1893, a year after the adjoining Killai Reserve Forest.
- More than 1,000 families depend on the mangrove for fishing, firewood, forest produce and grazing.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

4 September 2026 On 14 July 2026 the Times of India reported a study of the mangroves. The state forest authorities did it with the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru. The study valued the benefits at ₹2,485.38 crore, or ₹1.83 crore per hectare. Carbon stored in the trees and the soil made up about ₹1,612 crore of this.

Full story

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2002 · Q61

Match List I (Mangrove) with List II (State) and select the correct answer using the codes given below the lists: List I (Mangrove) A. Achra Ratnagiri B. Coondapur C. Pichavaram D. Vembanad List II (State) 1. Karnataka 2. Kerala 3. Andhra Pradesh 4. Maharashtra 5. Tamil Nadu

(a) A-2, B-1, C-5, D-4 (b) A-4, B-5, C-3, D-2 (c) A-2, B-5, C-3, D-4 (d) A-4, B-1, C-5, D-2

ANSWER **(d) A-4, B-1, C-5, D-2.** Achra-Ratnagiri is in Maharashtra, Coondapur in Karnataka, Pichavaram in Tamil Nadu and Vembanad in Kerala. So the code is A-4, B-1, C-5, D-2.

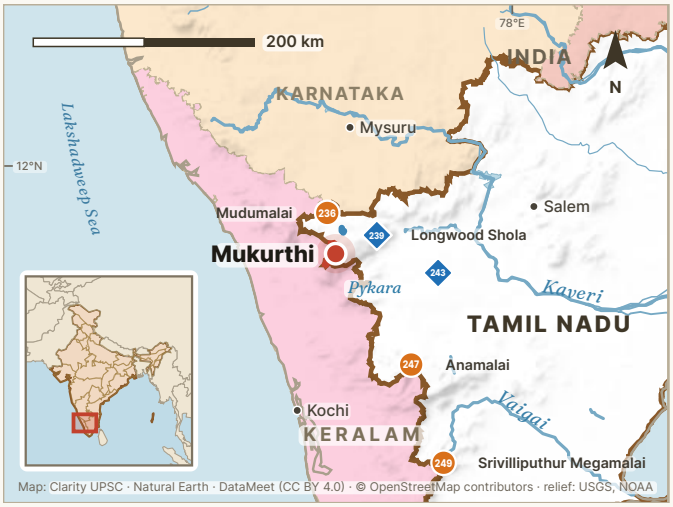
241

Mukurthi National Park

The Nilgiris · **Tamil Nadu**

National park 1990 · 78.46 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Pykara, which rises at Mukurthi peak	Montane grassland and shola on the Nilgiri plateau	Nilgiri tahr, tiger, Asian elephant	One of the few viable populations of the Nilgiri tahr



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Mukurthi lies inside Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and Coimbatore Elephant Reserve. It adjoins Silent Valley National Park of Keralam. UNESCO lists it as one of the 39 parts of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site, inscribed in 2012.

Mukurthi National Park lies on the Nilgiri plateau in the Nilgiris district. The Tamil Nadu Forest Department says it is one of the very few areas with a viable Nilgiri tahr population. Many of its plants and animals are endemic, which means they are found only in this region. Some of them are related to Himalayan plants and animals.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tamil Nadu announced in 1990 that it intended to make Mukurthi Wildlife Sanctuary a national park. The final order came on 12 December 2001.
- The Status of Tigers 2022 report says the park has a thriving population of the endangered Nilgiri tahr. It identified nine tigers in the park in 2022.
- A Wildlife Institute of India evaluation of 2006–2009 found no human settlements in the park. It named wattle, a foreign tree once planted in the grasslands for its bark, as the main disturbance.
- The Pykara, the largest river of the Nilgiris district, rises at Mukurthi peak. It flows north, turns west at the edge of the plateau and drops in a series of falls.

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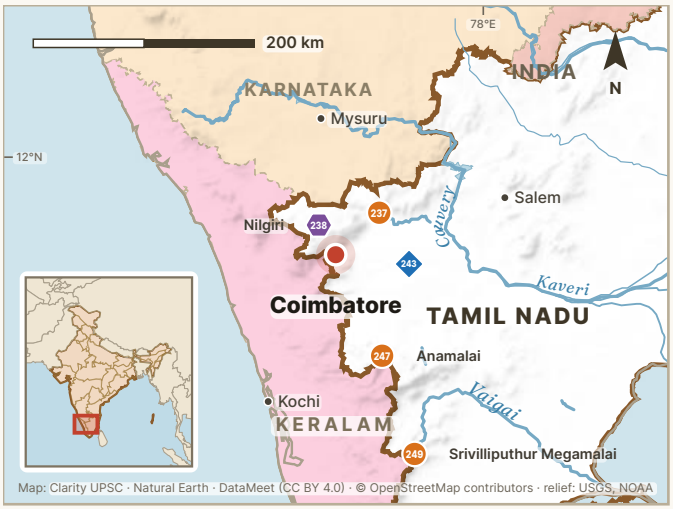
242 Coimbatore Elephant Reserve

Coimbatore and Nilgiris · **Tamil Nadu**

Elephant reserve 2003 · 566 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Bhavani	**Western Ghats foothills and the southern Nilgiris, 211 m to 2,625 m**	**Asian elephant, Nilgiri tahr**	**Includes Mukurthi National Park**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Mukurthi National Park is one of the 39 parts of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site. The park and part of the Coimbatore forests also lie in Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Nilgiri Elephant Reserve lies to the north, and Nilambur Elephant Reserve of Keralam lies to the west.

Coimbatore Elephant Reserve covers the forests of the Coimbatore and Nilgiris South forest divisions, together with Mukurthi National Park. The land rises from 211 metres in the foothills to 2,625 metres in the Nilgiris. Its vegetation ranges from thorn and dry deciduous forest to evergreen forest, shola forest and montane grassland.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tamil Nadu notified the reserve on 19 September 2003 under Project Elephant. Its elephants belong to the Brahmagiri–Nilgiri–Eastern Ghats population block, the largest in the Western Ghats.
- The 2003 order gave the reserve an inner core of 48,196 hectares and an outer buffer of 8,361 hectares. Together they make about 566 sq km.
- Its forest ranges include Mettupalayam, Sirumugai and Coimbatore in the foothills. Boluvampatti and Madukarai are also foothill ranges. The Kundah and Naduvattam ranges lie in the Nilgiris.
- The Wildlife Institute of India's elephant report for 2021–25 gives a decade's conflict toll for the Coimbatore Forest Division. Elephant attacks killed 150 people, and 170 elephants died.

PRELIMS TRAP

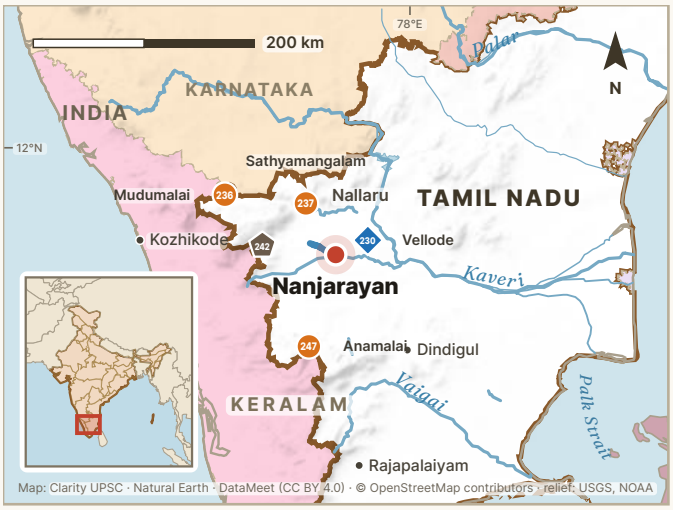
Tamil Nadu's 2003 order names this reserve Nilambur–Silent Valley–Coimbatore and adds 'Nilambur Elephant Reserve' in brackets. Nilambur Elephant Reserve and Silent Valley National Park are separate areas in Keralam.

243 Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary

Tiruppur · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2024 · 1.26 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Nallaru, a tributary of the Noyyal	**Shallow freshwater lake in the Noyyal basin, near Tiruppur**	**Spot-billed pelican, Indian cormorant, Indian darter**	**Tamil Nadu's 17th bird sanctuary (2022)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Nanjarayan is a Ramsar site and also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Forest Department manages it with local community groups.

Nanjarayan is a shallow freshwater lake about 10 km north of Tiruppur, in Neruperichal and Sarkar Periyapalayam villages. Rain, water running off the land around it and the Nallaru stream fill it. The lake is named after King Nanjarayan, who repaired and restored it. Gum arabic trees on its banks give waterbirds places to nest.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tamil Nadu notified Nanjarayan as its 17th bird sanctuary in September 2022. It covers 125.865 hectares.
- Nanjarayan became a Ramsar site on 16 January 2024, with the site number 2549. India announced it on 14 August 2024, when its count of Ramsar sites reached 85.
- More than 1% of the South Asian populations of the spot-billed pelican and the Indian cormorant use the lake. About 191 species of birds have been recorded here.
- The Nallaru flows through Tiruppur city into the lake. It is a tributary of the Noyyal, which joins the Cauvery.

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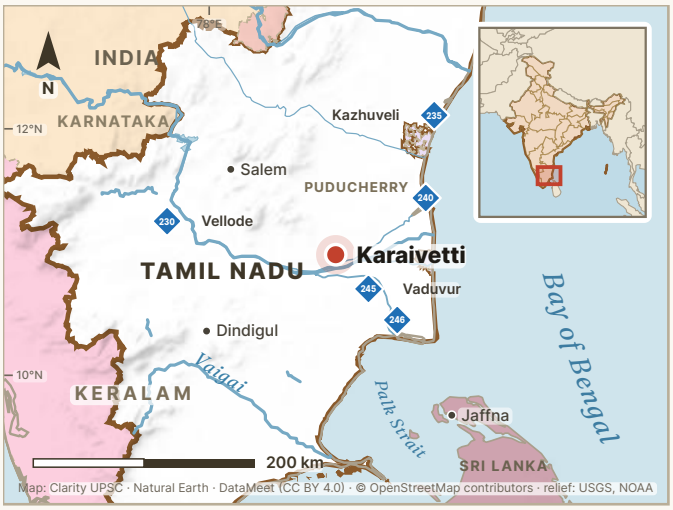
244 Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary

Ariyalur · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2023 · 4.54 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Mettur Dam water through the Pullambadi canal	**Large inland freshwater lake in the plains of Ariyalur**	**Bar-headed goose, painted stork, black-headed ibis, oriental darter**	**One of the largest gatherings of waterbirds in Tamil Nadu**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Karaivetti is a Ramsar site and also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Forest Department and the Public Works Department manage the lake together.

Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary is a large freshwater lake in Ariyalur district, about 12 km from Ariyalur town. Water from the Mettur Dam reaches it through the Pullambadi canal, and the north-east monsoon adds more. Farmers use the lake water to irrigate about 4,000 hectares of paddy, sugar cane, cotton and other crops.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Karaivetti became a Ramsar site on 24 May 2023, with the site number 2537. India announced it on 31 January 2024, when its count of Ramsar sites reached 80.
- The Ramsar record calls it one of the largest inland freshwater lakes in Tamil Nadu. It covers 453.715 hectares.
- About 198 species of birds have been recorded here. Some 10,000 waterbirds of 14 species nest together in colonies in its trees.
- Tamil Nadu declared its intention to make the lake a bird sanctuary in 1997, for an area of 260.16 hectares. An order of 5 April 1999 replaced that notice and enlarged the area to 453.71 hectares.

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245 Vaduvur Bird Sanctuary

Tiruvarur · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2022 · 1.13 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kannanar and Vadavar canals, with Mettur Dam water	**Human-made irrigation tank in the Cauvery delta**	**Spot-billed pelican, Eurasian wigeon, northern pintail, garganey**	**Bird sanctuary since 1999, Ramsar site since 2022**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Vaduvur is a Ramsar site and also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary, another Ramsar site in the same district, lies about 58 km away.

Vaduvur Bird Sanctuary is a large human-made irrigation tank in Needamangalam taluk of Tiruvarur district, about 22 km from Thanjavur. It lies in the Cauvery delta. The Kannanar and Vadavar canals bring it water released from the Mettur Dam. The north-east monsoon adds more. Water stays in the tank for six to eight months a year.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Vaduvur was declared a bird sanctuary in 1999. It became a Ramsar site on 8 April 2022, with the site number 2493. India announced it on 13 August 2022.
- The Ramsar record lists about 118 species of birds. Counts at the tank have found more than 20,000 waterbirds.
- Wintering ducks such as the Eurasian wigeon, the northern pintail and the garganey gather here in large numbers.
- On 13 September 2019 the Union Environment Ministry notified an eco-sensitive zone around the sanctuary. It is a protective belt 0.5 km wide and covers 1.229 sq km.

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Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary

Tiruvarur · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2022 · 0.44 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Mettur Dam water through the Koraiyar canal	**Human-made irrigation tank on the Cauvery delta plain**	**Oriental darter, Eurasian spoonbill, black-headed ibis, garganey**	**Bird sanctuary since 1998, Ramsar site since 2022**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Udhayamarthandapuram is a Ramsar site and also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Ramsar record places it about 10 km from the Point Calimere sanctuary and about 58 km from Vaduvur Bird Sanctuary.

Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary is a human-made irrigation tank in Thiruthuraipoondi taluk of Tiruvarur district. Water from the Mettur Dam reaches it through the Koraiyar canal from August. The north-east monsoon adds more. The tank stays dry for several months before the canal water arrives. Gum arabic trees on its banks give birds places to rest and nest.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tamil Nadu declared the tank a bird sanctuary by an order of 31 December 1998. It covers 43.767 hectares.
- Udhayamarthandapuram became a Ramsar site on 8 April 2022, with the site number 2476. India announced it on 3 August 2022.
- The Ramsar record lists about 104 species of birds and more than 20,000 waterbirds. The tank is an important breeding site for the oriental darter and the Eurasian spoonbill.
- The Koraiyar river runs south of the sanctuary and drains into the Muthupet mangroves. These mangroves are part of the Point Calimere Ramsar site.

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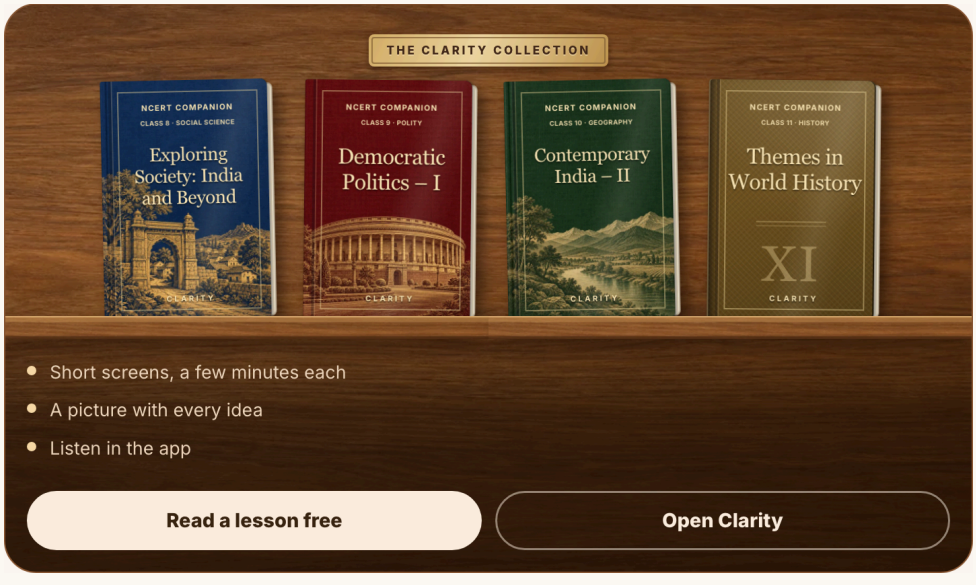

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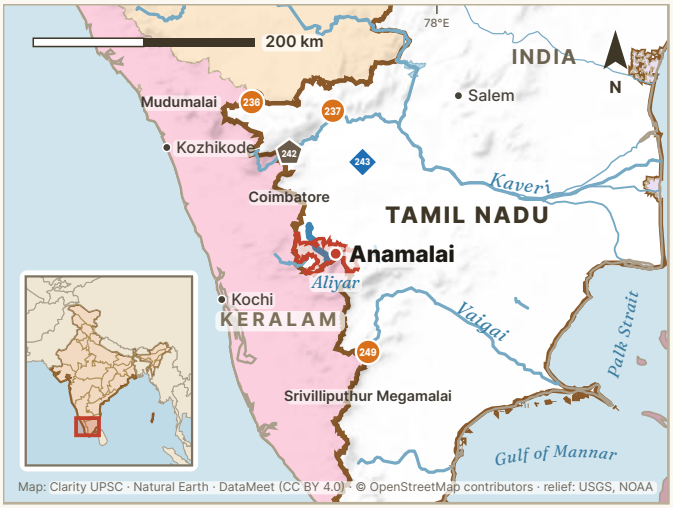
247 Anamalai Tiger Reserve, Elephant Reserve and Indira Gandhi National Park

Coimbatore, Tiruppur and Dindigul · **Tamil Nadu**

Tiger reserve 2007 · 1,479.87 sq km | **National park** 1989 · 117.1 sq km | **Elephant reserve** 2003 · 1,457 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Feeds the Aliyar, Sholayar and Amaravathi reservoirs	**Anaimalai Hills, from thorn forest to shola and grassland**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, Nilgiri tahr, lion-tailed macaque**	**Grass Hills and Karian Shola: World Heritage Site parts (2012)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary, with the national park inside it, forms the core of the tiger reserve. It also lies inside Anamalai Elephant Reserve. UNESCO lists Grass Hills and Karian Shola, two parts of the park, in the Western Ghats World Heritage Site.

Anamalai Tiger Reserve lies in the Anaimalai Hills of the Western Ghats, south of the Palghat gap. Its forests range from wet evergreen and shola forest to dry thorn forest, with montane grassland. Its animals include tigers, elephants and gaurs. Nilgiri tahrs and lion-tailed macaques live here too. So do six indigenous peoples, among them the Kadar and the Malai Malasar.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The area became Anaimalai Wildlife Sanctuary in 1976 and was later renamed Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary. In 2007 it became the core of Anamalai Tiger Reserve.
- In 1989 Tamil Nadu declared its intention to make parts of the sanctuary the Indira Gandhi National Park. They are Grass Hills, Karian Shola, the Manjampatti valley and shola forests near it.
- The 2022 tiger estimate put 16 tigers inside the reserve and 20 tigers using it. Anamalai shares its tigers with Parambikulam Tiger Reserve across the border in Keralam.
- Tamil Nadu notified Anamalai Elephant Reserve on 19 September 2003. It covers about 1,457 sq km and reaches east into the Dindigul and Kodaikanal forest divisions.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

9 January 2026 On 7 January 2026 staff of the reserve began the All India Tiger Estimation survey. The M-STrIPES app recorded each sign and its location. More than 340 staff from eight forest ranges walked 115 survey paths called transects. They looked for signs of large animals from 8 to 10 January and counted prey from 11 to 13 January.

20 April 2026 During the Assembly poll on 23 April 2026, staff guarded about 40 polling booths in the Valparai and Manombolly ranges from wild elephants.

PRELIMS TRAP

Anamalai Tiger Reserve and Anamalai Elephant Reserve are in Tamil Nadu. Parambikulam Tiger Reserve and Anamudi Elephant Reserve, which adjoin them, are in Keralam.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2007 · Q123

Which one of the following is also known as Top Slip?

(a) Simlipal National Park
(b) Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary
(c) Manjira Wildlife Sanctuary
(d) Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park

Since then: Since then: the sanctuary and park became the core of Anamalai Tiger Reserve in 2007.

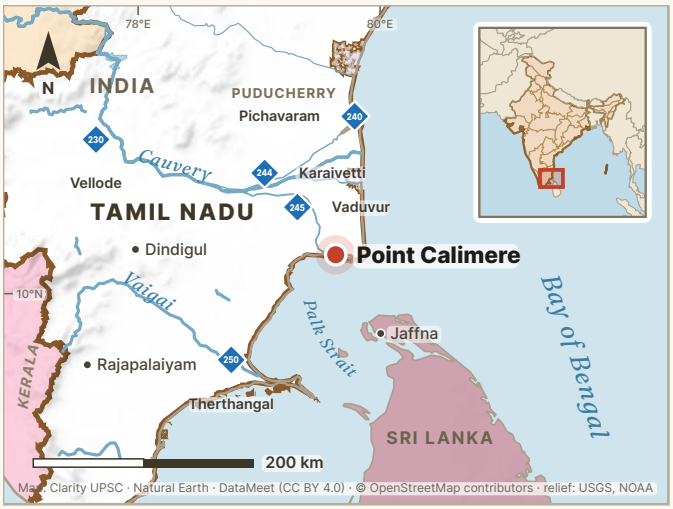
ANSWER **(d) Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park.** Top Slip is a visitor centre of the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park in the Anaimalai Hills. It has a reception and an eco shop.

248 Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary

Nagapattinam and Tiruvarur · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2002 · 385 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Cauvery delta, with the Korayar flowing into the Muthupet mangroves	**Coastal dry evergreen forest, lagoons, mudflats and mangroves**	**Greater and lesser flamingos, spot-billed pelican, blackbuck**	**Tamil Nadu's first Ramsar site (2002)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The Ramsar site includes Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary, the Great Vedaranyam Swamp with the Muthupet mangroves, and Talaignayar Reserve Forest. Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary, another Ramsar site, lies about 10 km away.

Point Calimere lies at the southern end of Nagapattinam district, where the Cauvery delta meets the sea. The Bay of Bengal lies to its east, and the Palk Strait lies to its south. It has dry evergreen forest and grassland. It also has lagoons, mudflats, salt marsh and mangroves.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Point Calimere became a Ramsar site on 19 August 2002, with the site number 1210. It covers 38,500 hectares and was the first Ramsar site of Tamil Nadu.
- The ornithologist Salim Ali identified Point Calimere as important for birds in 1962. The 2002 Ramsar record lists 257 species of birds and about 30,000 flamingos.
- Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary was declared in June 1967. It is known for its blackbucks, which graze on the open grasslands south and west of the forest.
- Its forest is tropical dry evergreen forest. This type of forest is found only along the Coromandel coast and in northern Sri Lanka.

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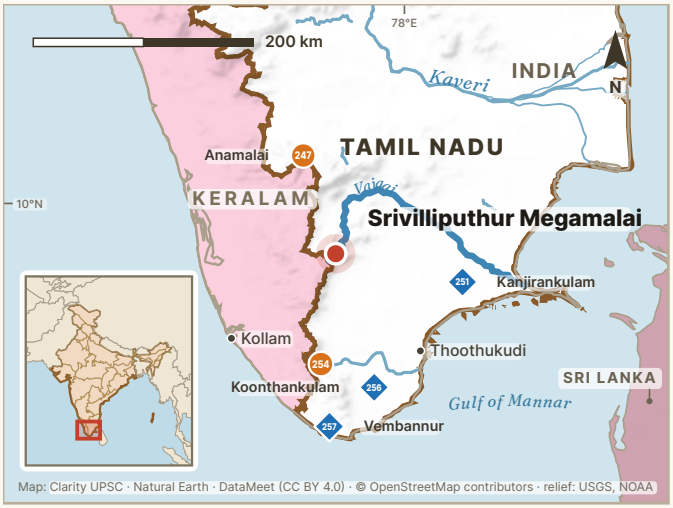
249 Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve and Srivilliputtur Elephant Reserve

Virudhunagar, Madurai, Theni and Tirunelveli · **Tamil Nadu**

Tiger reserve 2021 · 1,016.57 sq km | **Elephant reserve** 2003 · 1,249 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Vaigai, Suruliyaru and Shanmuganathi	**Southern Western Ghats on the Keralam border**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, grizzled giant squirrel, Nilgiri tahr**	**India's 51st tiger reserve (2021)**



Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve lies in the southern Western Ghats along the border with Keralam. Its forests range from dry deciduous forest to evergreen forest, shola and grassland on the high slopes. The Vaigai, the Suruliyaru and the Shanmuganathi flow from it and meet at the Vaigai Dam.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tamil Nadu formed the tiger reserve on 8 February 2021 by joining the Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel and Megamalai wildlife sanctuaries. It became the 51st tiger reserve of India.
- Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary was declared in 1988 to protect the grizzled giant squirrel. Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary was declared in 2009.
- The 2022 tiger estimate put 12 tigers inside the reserve and 18 tigers using it. The reserve forms one tiger landscape with Periyar Tiger Reserve of Keralam.
- Tamil Nadu notified the elephant reserve on 19 September 2003 as Periyar (Srivilliputhur) Elephant Reserve. It covers about 1,249 sq km.

ON THE OTHER LISTS

The 2003 order for the elephant reserve covers the Srivilliputhur sanctuary and the Theni and Tirunelveli forest divisions. UNESCO lists the Srivilliputhur sanctuary as one of the 39 parts of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

16 March 2026 In March 2026 the Zoological Survey of India reported nine species new to science from its 2018–22 surveys of Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary. They include a jumping spider, two mayflies and a damselfly. The surveys recorded 977 species of animals in all.

Full story

24 April 2026 Vellimalai, an estate settlement deep in the reserve's forests, had a polling booth for only five voters. All five voted in the Assembly election on 23 April 2026. Many people had moved out of the area after the tiger reserve brought forest restrictions.

24 September 2026 Nochiodai is a Paliyar settlement of 18 families inside the reserve. On 22 September 2026 a solar mini-grid opened there. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development paid ₹25 lakh, and the Forest Department built it. It lights homes, 36 street lamps and the community hall.

PRELIMS TRAP

Tamil Nadu's 2003 order calls the elephant reserve here Periyar (Srivilliputhur). Periyar Elephant Reserve and Periyar Tiger Reserve are separate reserves in Keralam, across the border.

250

Therthangal Bird Sanctuary

Ramanathapuram · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2024 · 0.29 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Vaigai and Gundar, through a channel	Seasonal marshy lake in the Vaigai basin	Spot-billed pelican, painted stork, black-headed ibis	Bird sanctuary (2010) and Ramsar site (2024)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Therthangal is a Ramsar site and also a bird sanctuary.

Therthangal Bird Sanctuary is a marshy lake of about 29.3 hectares in Therthangal village, Ramanathapuram district. It fills only in the rainy season, through a channel from the Vaigai and Gundar rivers. The forest department planted babul trees in the lake, and waterbirds nest in them. Nearby villages use the stored water for their fields.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Tamil Nadu declared Therthangal a bird sanctuary in December 2010 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The Ramsar record lists 96 species of birds. They include the Endangered Egyptian vulture and the Vulnerable Indian spotted eagle.
- Eight species of birds breed here, among them the spot-billed pelican, the painted stork, the oriental darter and the black-headed ibis.
- It became a Ramsar site on 15 July 2024. India announced it on 30 January 2025, together with Sakkarakottai. India's count of Ramsar sites then reached 89.

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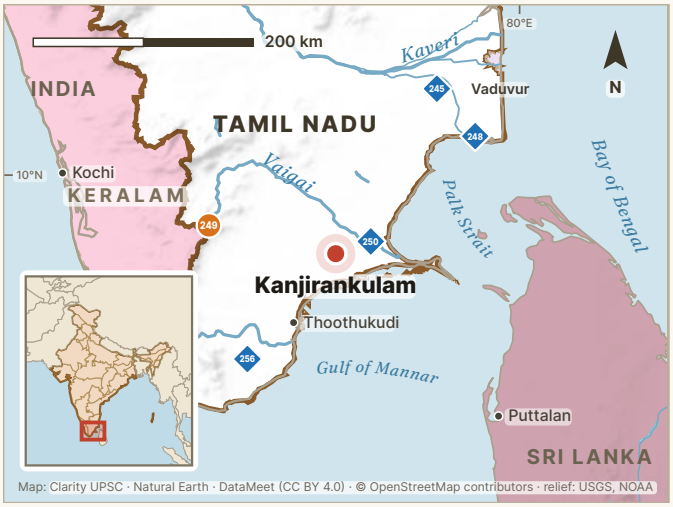
251 Kanjirankulam Bird Sanctuary

Ramanathapuram · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2022 · 0.97 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Gundar, through the Raghunatha Cauvery canal	**Irrigation tank with babul trees, lower Gundar basin**	**Painted stork, spot-billed pelican, herons, ibises**	**Bird sanctuary since 1989**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Kanjirankulam is a Ramsar site and also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Kanjirankulam Bird Sanctuary is an irrigation tank near Mudukulathur in Ramanathapuram district. The Sethupathi kings dug the Raghunatha Cauvery canal from the Gundar river, and this canal feeds the tank. Babul trees grow in the tank, and herons, storks and ibises nest in them from October to February. In a year of normal rain, the tank keeps water for three to five months.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Kanjirankulam became a bird sanctuary in 1989. It lies in Mudukulathur taluk of Ramanathapuram district.
- The spot-billed pelican breeds here, and so the site is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area. The Ramsar record also lists the painted stork and the oriental darter, both near-threatened.
- Prosopis, an invasive tree, is spreading in the sanctuary. It slows the growth of the babul trees in which the birds nest.
- It became a Ramsar site on 8 April 2022. India announced it on 13 August 2022, when its count of Ramsar sites reached 75.

PRELIMS TRAP

Kanjirankulam and Chitrangudi are two separate Ramsar sites, about 2 km apart near Mudukulathur. Chitrangudi became a Ramsar site on 8 November 2021, and Kanjirankulam on 8 April 2022.

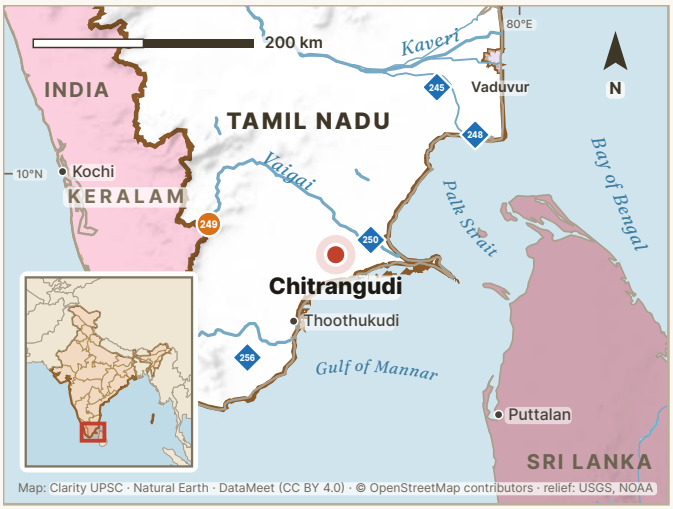
252

Chitrangudi Bird Sanctuary

Ramanathapuram · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2021 · 2.6 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Gundar, through an aqueduct	**Crescent-shaped irrigation tank in a dry, drought-prone area**	**Spot-billed pelican, painted stork, grey heron**	**Protected since 1989, Ramsar site since 2021**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Chitrangudi is a Ramsar site and also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. With Kanjirankulam, it forms one Important Bird and Biodiversity Area.

Chitrangudi Bird Sanctuary lies in Chitrangudi village, about 5 km from Mudukulathur in Ramanathapuram district. Local people call the tank Chitrangudi Kanmoli. It is crescent-shaped, and an aqueduct brings water into it from the Gundar river. Rain and runoff also fill it. Because it depends on rain, the tank sometimes dries up. Farm fields surround it.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The wetland has been protected since 1989 as a bird sanctuary. It lies next to Kanjirankulam Bird Sanctuary.
- A 2016 study recorded about 50 species of birds. Spot-billed pelicans, painted storks, little egrets and grey herons breed here in winter.
- The flame lily, the state flower of Tamil Nadu, grows at the site, along with the holy basil.
- It became a Ramsar site on 8 November 2021. India announced it on 13 August 2022, when its count of Ramsar sites reached 75.

ON CLARITYUPSC.COM · DAILY QUIZ

Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True · ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

clarityupsc.com/daily-quiz

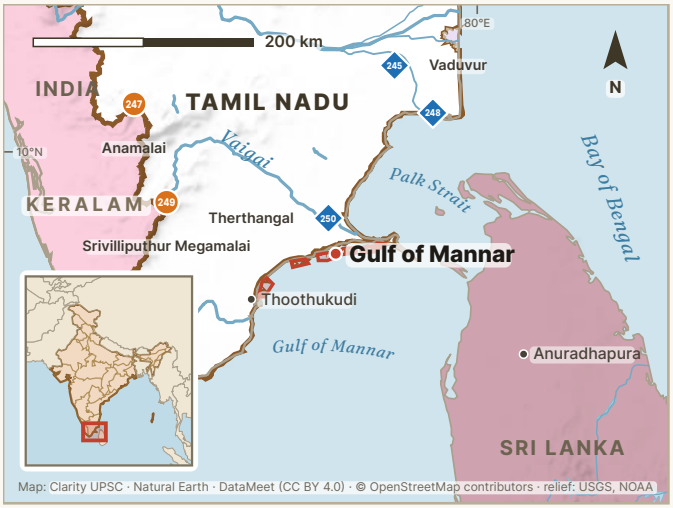
253

Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park and Biosphere Reserve

Ramanathapuram, Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari · **Tamil Nadu**

National park 1980 · 526.02 sq km | **Ramsar site** 2022 · 526.72 sq km | **Biosphere reserve** 1989 · 10,500 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Thamirabarani and Vaippar flow into the gulf	**Coral islands, reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves**	**Dugong, sea turtles, reef corals, Balanoglossus**	**First marine biosphere reserve in South and South-East Asia (1989)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The marine national park is the core zone of Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve. The Ramsar site is named Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve. It covers about 527 sq km, close to the area of the park. The Ramsar record gives the marine national park as its legal status in India.

The Gulf of Mannar lies between south-eastern Tamil Nadu and western Sri Lanka. Rameswaram Island and Adam's Bridge separate it from Palk Bay to the north. The marine national park covers 21 small islands between Thoothukudi and Dhanushkodi and the shallow sea around them. Coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves surround the islands.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The islands lie 1 to 10 km from the mainland coast. Two of the 21 are now under the sea. One of them, Villanguchalli near Thoothukudi, sank a few decades ago because of coral mining.
- The Wildlife Institute of India table gives 1980 for the national park. Tamil Nadu's order of 10 September 1986 declared its intention to make the 21 islands a national park.
- The biosphere reserve was set up on 18 February 1989 and covers about 10,500 sq km. It joined UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2001.
- The Ramsar record lists 117 species of coral in the gulf. The dugong, a marine mammal, feeds on its seagrass beds. UNESCO calls Balanoglossus, an acorn worm of the gulf, a living fossil.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

23 February 2026 In February 2026 the Tamil Nadu Coastal Restoration Mission reviewed ten years of reef restoration around Vaan Island. The work gave benefits worth ₹61.67 crore, more than twice its cost, adjusted for inflation. The island shrank from about 20 hectares in 1969 to 1.53 hectares in 2015. It has since grown to over 2.3 hectares.

Full story

31 October 2026 All 8,500 artificial reef modules were placed around Kariyachalli Island, off Thoothukudi, The New Indian Express reported on 30 October 2026. The work is part of a Tamil Nadu project funded by the World Bank. The island shrank from 20.85 hectares in 1969 to 3.14 hectares in 2025.

PRELIMS TRAP

The Gulf of Mannar lies south of Rameswaram and Adam's Bridge, and Palk Bay lies north of them. Tamil Nadu's Dugong Conservation Reserve of 2022 is in Palk Bay. The marine national park and the biosphere reserve are in the Gulf of Mannar.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2014 · Q41

Also asked: 1996 · 2001 · 2008

Which of the following have coral reefs? 1. Andaman and Nicobar Islands 2. Gulf of Kachchh 3. Gulf of Mannar 4. Sunderbans Select the correct answer using the code given below.

(a) 1, 2 and 3 only (b) 2 and 4 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

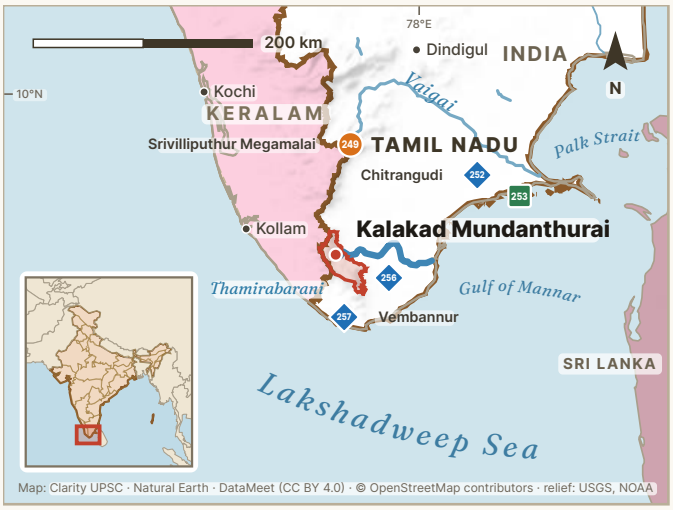
UPSC KEY **(a) 1, 2 and 3 only.** Coral reefs grow around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and in the Gulfs of Kachchh and Mannar. The muddy fresh water of the Sunderbans does not suit corals.

254 Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve

Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari · **Tamil Nadu**

Tiger reserve 1988 · 1,601.54 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Thamirabarani, one of 14 rivers that rise in the reserve	**Southern Western Ghats, from thorn scrub to evergreen forest**	**Tiger, Asian elephant, lion-tailed macaque, Nilgiri tahr**	**Southernmost tiger reserve of India**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The reserve lies in the Tamil Nadu part of Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve, which has its own entry under Keralam. Agasthyamalai Elephant Reserve includes its forests.

Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve lies in the southern Western Ghats, mainly in Tirunelveli district. Its vegetation ranges from thorn scrub to evergreen forest. Fourteen rivers rise in the reserve and feed many irrigation tanks in the plains. The Mundanthurai part takes in the catchment of the Thamirabarani, the land that feeds the river with water.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Mundanthurai Wildlife Sanctuary (1962) and Kalakad Wildlife Sanctuary (1976) were joined in 1988 to form the tiger reserve. It also takes in part of Kanyakumari Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Wildlife Institute of India call it India's southernmost tiger reserve in their 2022 report. Camera traps identified five tigers in it that year.
- UNESCO inscribed the Western Ghats World Heritage Site in 2012, and Kalakad Mundanthurai is one of its parts. Five settlements of the Kani people lie inside the core of the reserve.
- The Shencottah gap separates the Agasthyamalai hills from the Periyar landscape to the north. Roads, a railway, plantations and villages lie in the gap.

PRELIMS TRAP

Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve includes Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu and the Neyyar, Peppara and Shendurney sanctuaries in Keralam. Mudumalai, Wayanad and Silent Valley lie in Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2019 · Q27

Which of the following are in Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve?

(a) Neyyar, Peppara and Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve

(b) Mudumalai, Sathyamangalam and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Silent Valley National Park

(c) Kaundinya, Gundla Brahmeswaram and Papikonda Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Mukurthi National Park

(d) Kawal and Sri Venkateswara Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve

UPSC KEY (a) Neyyar, Peppara and Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuaries; and Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve. Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve includes Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve and the Neyyar, Peppara and Shendurney sanctuaries of Keralam.

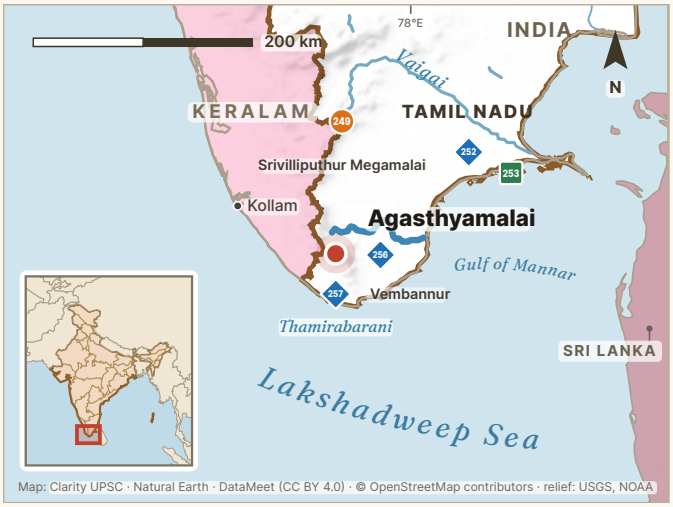
255

Agasthyamalai Elephant Reserve

Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari · **Tamil Nadu**

Elephant reserve 2022 · 1,197.48 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Upper catchment of the Thamirabarani	**Southern Western Ghats, from 40 m to 1,980 m**	**Asian elephant, tiger**	**32nd elephant reserve of India (2022)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The reserve includes the forests of Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve. The tiger reserve also lies in Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve, which has its own entry under Keralam.

Agasthyamalai Elephant Reserve covers forests of the southern Western Ghats in Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari districts. It takes in the Kalakad, Mundanthurai and Kanyakumari wildlife sanctuaries. It also takes in forests of the Tirunelveli and Kanniyakumari forest divisions. The land rises from 40 metres to 1,980 metres. The forests range from thorn scrub to evergreen forest.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Union Environment Minister announced the reserve on World Elephant Day, 12 August 2022. It added about 1,197 sq km to India's elephant reserves and became the 32nd elephant reserve of India.
- Tamil Nadu notified the reserve by an order dated 10 August 2022. The state gazette published the order on 12 August 2022, the day of the announcement.
- It is the newest of the five elephant reserves of Tamil Nadu. It borders Periyar Elephant Reserve of Keralam in the north-west.

PRELIMS TRAP

Agasthyamalai Elephant Reserve, notified in 2022, lies only in Tamil Nadu. Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve spans Tamil Nadu and Keralam. India notified it in 2001, and UNESCO added it to its network in 2016.

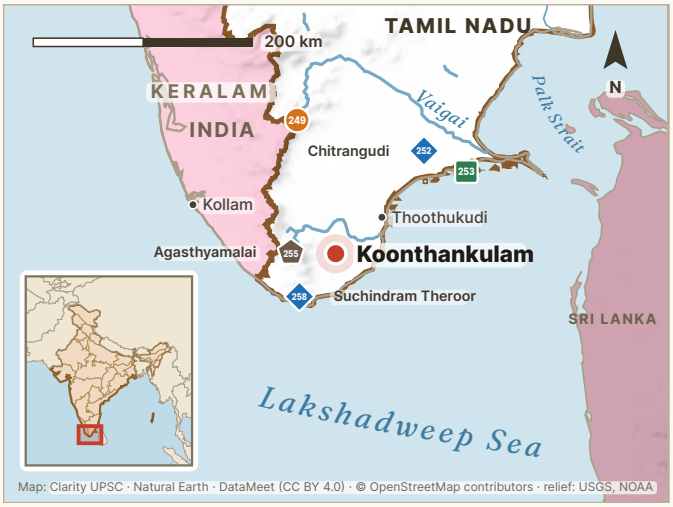
256

Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary

Tirunelveli · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2021 · 0.72 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Manimuthar canals, in the Thamirabarani system	Two old irrigation tanks in the plains of Tirunelveli	Spot-billed pelican, painted stork, black-headed ibis	Largest waterbird breeding reserve in South India



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Koonthankulam is a Ramsar site and also a bird sanctuary under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary lies beside Koonthankulam village in Nanguneri taluk, about 38 km from Tirunelveli. It is made of two old irrigation tanks, Koonthankulam and Kadankulam. Canals bring them extra water from the Manimuthar dam, and rain also fills them. The villagers protect the nesting birds. They use the silt, which is rich in bird droppings, in their fields.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Koonthankulam became a bird sanctuary in 1994. It became a Ramsar site on 8 November 2021, and India announced it on 3 August 2022.
- The Ramsar record calls it the largest reserve for breeding resident and migratory waterbirds in South India.
- More than 1% of the South Asian populations of the spot-billed pelican, the painted stork and the black-headed ibis use the wetland.
- The site is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area on the Central Asian Flyway, a route of migratory birds.

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5.50%	6.09%	7.8%	$719.5 bn
▲ +25 bp	▲ +0.55 pp	▼ −0.8 pp	▲ +0.3%
RBI MPC · 7 Oct 2026	NSO · Oct 2026	NSO · Q1 2026-27	RBI · 6 Nov 2026

All 74 figures, the release calendar, and the Budget and Economic Survey numbers.

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257

Vembannur Wetland Complex

Kanniyakumari · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2022 · 0.2 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Pazhayar, through the Therrakal canal	**Human-made irrigation tank near the southern tip of India**	**Spot-billed pelican, Indian river tern, garganey**	**Smallest Ramsar site of India by area (19.75 ha)**



Vembannur Wetland Complex is a human-made irrigation tank about 8 km west of Nagercoil. It lies in Kanniyakumari district, near the southern tip of mainland India. A canal brings it water from the Pazhayar river. The tank waters more than 2,000 hectares of farmland, and more than 1,000 families depend on this land. It also gives fish and drinking water.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Vembannur covers 19.75 hectares on the Ramsar record. By this area, it is the smallest Ramsar site in India.
- Its waterbirds include the spot-billed pelican, the Indian river tern, the garganey and the spotted greenshank. The site is part of an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area.
- It became a Ramsar site on 8 April 2022. India announced it on 3 August 2022, on the same day as Koonthankulam and the Gulf of Mannar.

ON THE OTHER LISTS

The Ramsar record says the wetland is notified under section 36A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. This section deals with conservation reserves.

PRELIMS TRAP

Vembannur, at 19.75 hectares, and Renuka Wetland of Himachal Pradesh, at 20 hectares, are India's two smallest Ramsar sites. Vembannur is the smaller of the two.

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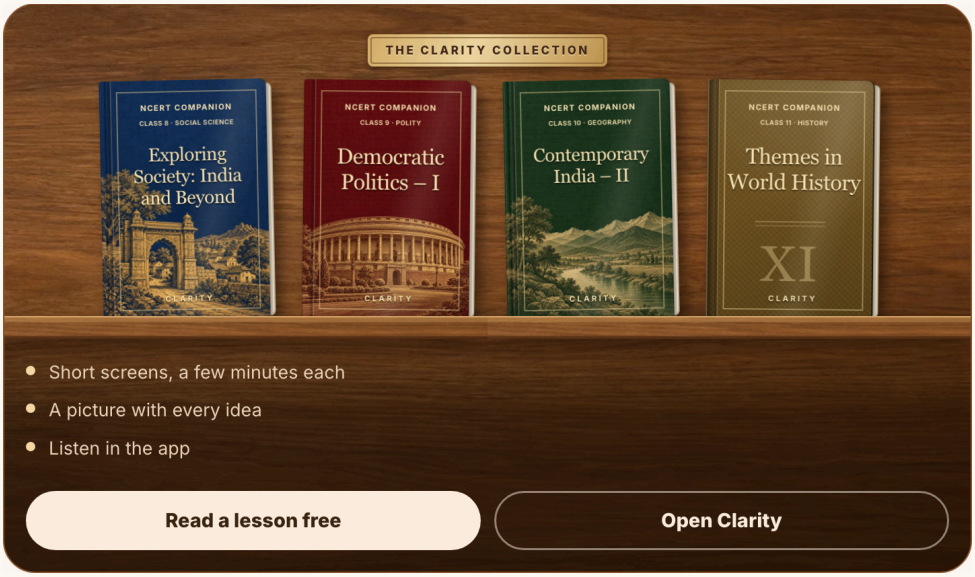
NCERT, made clear.



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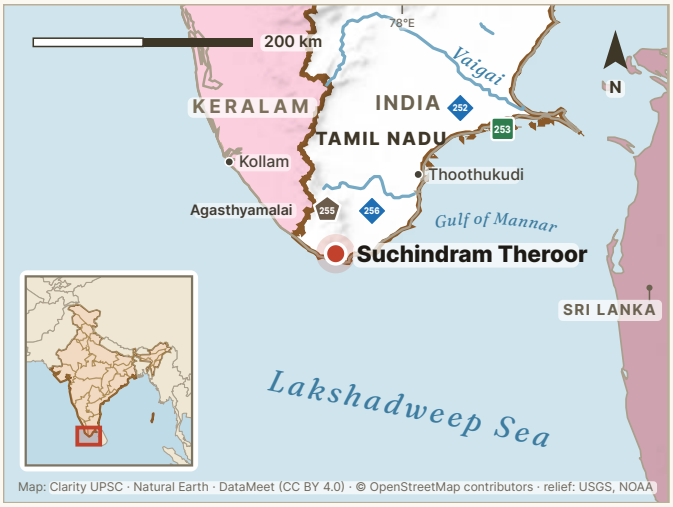
258 Suchindram Theroor Wetland Complex

Kanniyakumari · **Tamil Nadu**

Ramsar site 2022 · 0.94 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kodaiyar irrigation system	Two human-made reservoirs near the southern tip of India	Painted stork, pelican, darter, spoonbill	Southern tip of the Central Asian Flyway



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Suchindram Theroor is a Ramsar site. The conservation reserve that contains it comes under section 36A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The site is also an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area.

Suchindram Theroor Wetland Complex lies in Kanniyakumari district, near the southern tip of India. It is made of two human-made reservoirs, Suchindram and Theroor, in the Kodaiyar river system. The Pechiparai, Perunchani and Kodaiyar dams store water and release it into a channel. This channel feeds thousands of ponds. The Theroor tank gets water from the Thovalai channel.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The site is part of Suchindram-Theroor-Manakudi Conservation Reserve. Tamil Nadu declared the reserve by an order dated 19 March 2015.
- About 250 species of birds have been recorded here, and 53 of them are migratory. The site lies at the southern tip of the Central Asian Flyway, a route of migratory birds.
- The irrigation system here dates from the ninth century. It supports the livelihoods of about 75% of the people in the villages around the wetland.
- It became a Ramsar site on 8 April 2022. India announced it on 13 August 2022, when its count of Ramsar sites reached 75.

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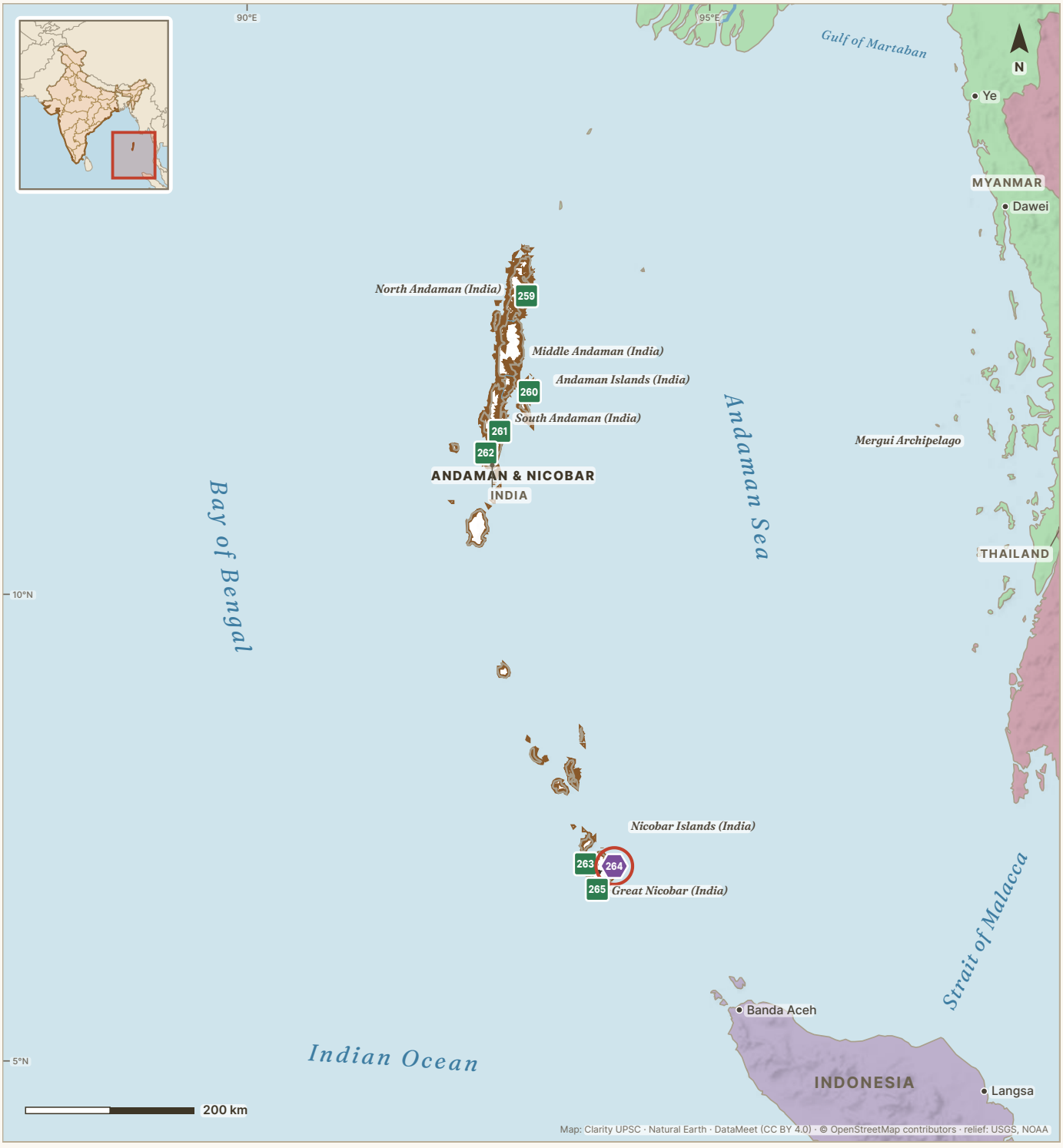
Andaman and Nicobar Islands

6 national parks 1 biosphere reserve

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are about 836 islands, islets and rocks in the Bay of Bengal. The Ten Degree Channel separates the Andaman group in the north from the Nicobar group in the south. Four of the territory's six national parks are in the Andamans. The other two lie on Great Nicobar, inside the territory's only biosphere reserve.



Tiger reserve National park Ramsar site Biosphere reserve Elephant reserve In our news in 2026

Andaman and Nicobar Islands: its areas

259 **Saddle Peak** — North and Middle Andaman — 312

260 **Rani Jhansi** — South Andaman — 313

261 **Mount Manipur** — South Andaman — 314

262 **Mahatma Gandhi Marine** — South Andaman — 315

263 **Campbell Bay** — Nicobars — 316

264 **Great Nicobar** — Nicobars — 317

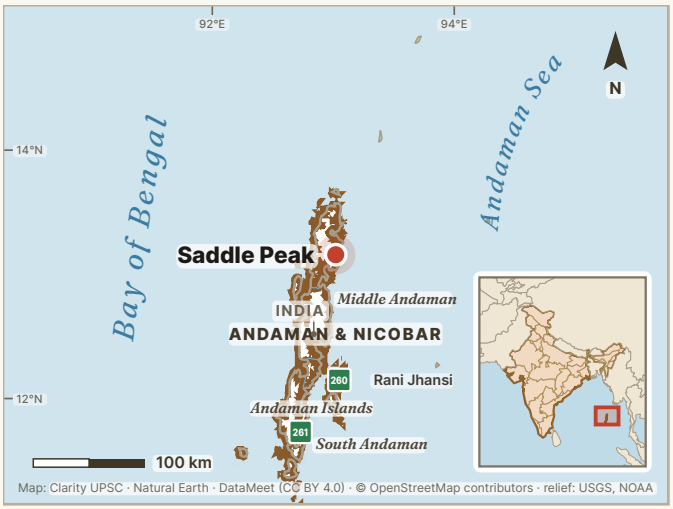
265 **Galathea** — Nicobars — 318

259 Saddle Peak National Park

North and Middle Andaman · **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

National park 1987 · 32.54 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Kalpong, which rises in the Saddle Peak area	**Forested hills along the east coast of North Andaman**	**Andaman wood pigeon, Andaman horseshoe bat, saltwater crocodile**	**Highest point of the islands (732 m)**



Saddle Peak National Park lies in Diglipur tehsil of North and Middle Andaman district. The park runs from north to south along the eastern coast of North Andaman. The sea forms most of its eastern boundary. Near the coast it has littoral forest, the forest of the seashore. The hills have tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forest.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Saddle Peak rises to 732 metres and is the highest point of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Its double-humped shape, like a saddle, gives it its name.
- The Kalpong river rises in the Saddle Peak area. The Andaman and Nicobar Forest Department calls it the largest river of the Andaman Islands.
- Visitors trek about 8 to 9 km to the summit from the park entry at Lamiya Bay, near Diglipur. The park's management plan records 89 species of birds.
- BirdLife International lists the park as an Important Bird Area. Its account records 11 of the 13 restricted-range birds of the Andamans. These birds live only in a small area.

PRELIMS TRAP

Saddle Peak (732 m), in North Andaman, is the highest point of the islands. Mount Thullier (642 m), on Great Nicobar, is the highest point of the Nicobar group.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 1996 · Q48

'Saddle Peak', the highest peak of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, is located in

(a) Great Nicobar (b) Middle Andaman (c) Little Andaman (d) North Andaman

ANSWER (d) North Andaman. Saddle Peak is in North Andaman. It is the highest point of the islands and lies in the national park near Diglipur.

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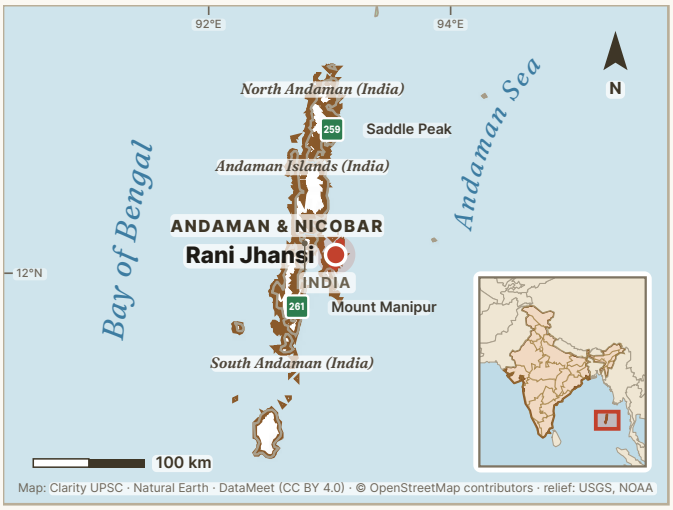
Rani Jhansi Marine National Park

South Andaman · **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

National park 1996 · 320.06 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Creeks and small streams on the islands	**Islands with lagoons, coral reefs, beaches and mangroves**	**Andaman teal, sea turtles, corals**	**One of two marine national parks of the Andaman Islands**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

The Wildlife Institute of India's 2018 table also listed North, Middle and South Button Island national parks. These islands lie in the same archipelago, and the institute's current table does not list them.

Rani Jhansi Marine National Park lies in Ritchie's Archipelago, a chain of islands about 14 km north-east of South Andaman. BirdLife International's account of 2004 names three islands in it: Outram, Henry Lawrence and John Lawrence. The islands have lagoons, coral reefs, beaches and mangrove forest. They also have evergreen and semi-evergreen forest.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Wildlife Institute of India's table of 2018 gave the park 256.14 sq km. Its current table gives 320.06 sq km, and its 2025 list gives 2017 as the year of notification.
- Four species of sea turtle occur here: the olive ridley, the green, the hawksbill and the leatherback. More than 80 species of coral are reported from one part of the park.
- A 1997 study reported more than 100 Andaman teal in a freshwater stream on John Lawrence Island. The Andaman teal is a duck found only in the Andaman Islands.

PRELIMS TRAP

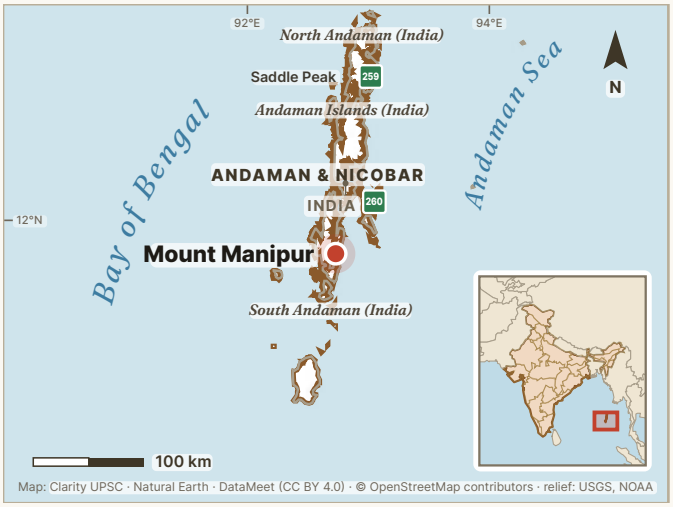
The Andaman Islands have two marine national parks. Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park lies off Wandoor in South Andaman. Rani Jhansi Marine National Park lies in Ritchie's Archipelago, north-east of South Andaman.

261 Mount Manipur National Park

South Andaman · **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

National park 1987 · 46.62 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Hill streams that drain east into the sea	Hill ranges running north to south, steeper on the east	Andaman wild pig, Andaman crake, monitor lizard	Honours Manipur's freedom fighters of 1891



Mount Manipur National Park lies in Ferrargunj tehsil of South Andaman. Its hill ranges run from north to south, and they are steeper on the eastern side. Freshwater streams rise in these hills and drain into the sea on the east coast. The forests are mainly tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen and moist deciduous. Littoral forest, or seashore forest, grows near the coast.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The Andaman and Nicobar Forest Department calls its 365-metre peak the third-highest of the islands. Only Saddle Peak (732 m) and Mount Thullier (642 m) are higher.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke at Port Blair, now Sri Vijaya Puram, on 16 October 2021. He announced that Mount Harriet would be renamed Mount Manipur, in honour of freedom fighters from Manipur.
- Manipur fought the British in 1891. Afterwards Maharaja Kulachandra Singh and 22 other freedom fighters were sent to the Andamans. The Home Minister said they were kept on Mount Harriet.
- Official lists use different names. The Wildlife Institute of India's table prints 'Mount Harriett', and the forest department lists 'Manipur Parvat National Park'.

PRELIMS TRAP

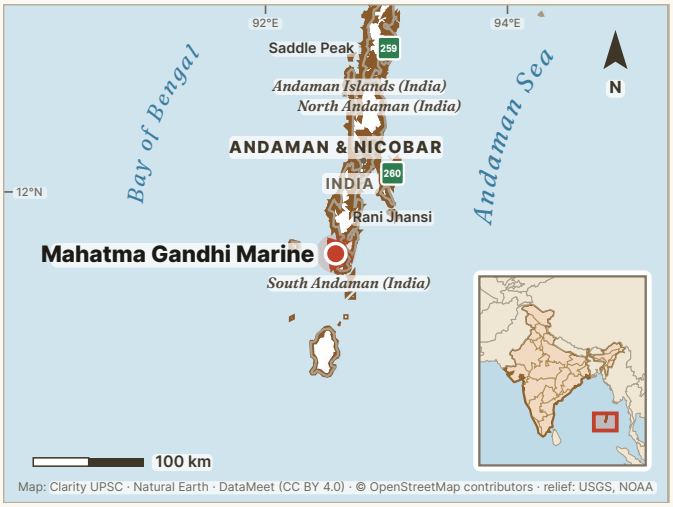
Mount Manipur National Park is in South Andaman, in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Its name honours freedom fighters from the state of Manipur who were imprisoned there.

262 Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park

South Andaman · **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

National park 1983 · 281.5 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
No river: sea channels and mangrove creeks	Fifteen islands with fringing coral reefs and mangroves	Corals, sea turtles, dugong, saltwater crocodile	Jolly Buoy and Red Skin, the two islands open to visitors



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park is on the national parks list only. Lohabarrack Crocodile Sanctuary lies to its north, and Rutland Island borders the park.

Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park lies off Wandoor in South Andaman, 29 km from Sri Vijaya Puram, earlier called Port Blair. It covers 281.50 sq km, of which 220 sq km is sea. Its 15 islands have tropical forest, beaches and creeks lined with mangroves. Fringing coral reefs, which grow close to the shore, surround the islands.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- The park was established in 1983. Jolly Buoy, Red Skin, Grub and Chester are among its islands rich in coral diversity. Only Jolly Buoy and Red Skin are open to tourists.
- The forest department records more than 300 species of fish and 120 species of coral in the park. The dugong and the saltwater crocodile also live here.
- Four species of sea turtle nest here: the green, the leatherback, the hawksbill and the olive ridley. Boat, Tarmugli, Rutland and Twins islands have nesting beaches.

PRELIMS TRAP

The park was earlier called Wandoor National Park. Boats leave for its islands from Wandoor village. The Wildlife Institute of India's table still prints the name 'Mahatama Gandhi Marine (Wandoor)'.

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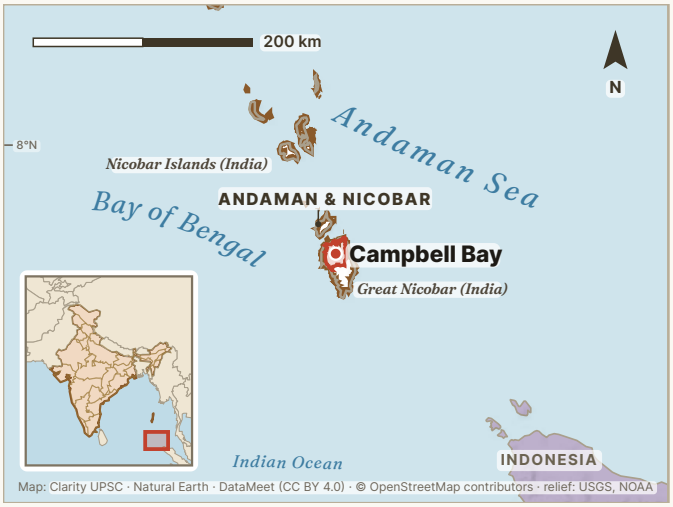
263 Campbell Bay National Park

Nicobars · **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

National park 1992 · 426.23 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Tropical evergreen forest in the north of Great Nicobar	Nicobar megapode, crab-eating macaque, robber crab	Largest national park of the islands (426.23 sq km)



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Campbell Bay National Park lies inside Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve. BirdLife International names it, Galathea National Park and Galathea Bay sanctuary as the core of the reserve.

Campbell Bay National Park lies in the northern part of Great Nicobar, in Nicobars district. The Andaman and Nicobar Forest Department describes its tropical evergreen forest, tree ferns and ground orchids. Its animals include the crab-eating macaque, the giant robber crab, the Nicobar megapode and the Nicobar pigeon.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Campbell Bay National Park was created in 1992. With 426.23 sq km it is the largest of the six national parks of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The Nicobar megapode, a ground bird found only in the Nicobar Islands, lives in Campbell Bay and Galathea national parks. It lays its eggs in mound nests near the coast.
- Campbell Bay and Galathea national parks together cover about half of Great Nicobar. A broad strip of primary forest, never cleared, lies between them. The island's east-west road crosses this strip.

PRELIMS TRAP

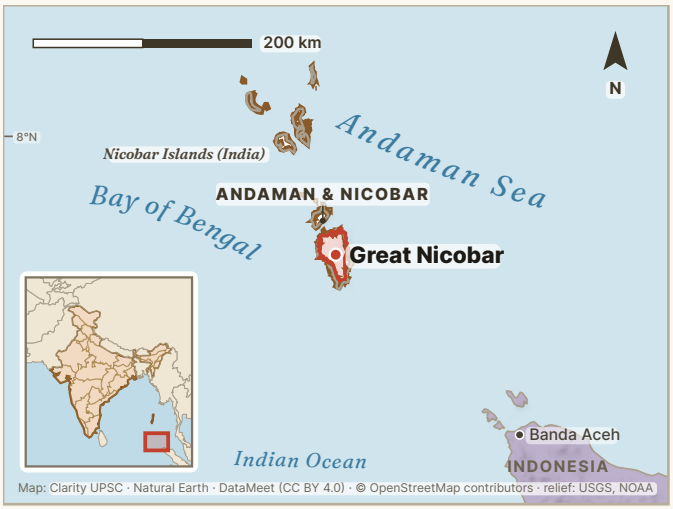
Campbell Bay is also the name of a settlement on the east coast of Great Nicobar. The naval air station INS Baaz stands there. The national park covers forest in the north of the island.

264 Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve

Nicobars · **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

Biosphere reserve 1989 · 885 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
Rivers and streams along which the Shompen live	**Wet evergreen forest, hills up to 642 m, coastal plains**	**Nicobar megapode, crab-eating macaque, Nicobar tree shrew**	**UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves (2013)**



ON THE OTHER LISTS

Campbell Bay and Galathea national parks lie inside the reserve. BirdLife International names them as its core, together with the Galathea Bay sanctuary. That sanctuary was denotified, or removed from the protected list, in January 2021.

Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve covers most of Great Nicobar, the southernmost island of the Nicobar group. UNESCO describes its tropical wet evergreen forest, mountain ranges and coastal plains. Mount Thullier, at 642 metres, is its highest point. The Shompen live in its forests, mainly along rivers and streams.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- India notified the reserve on 6 January 1989. Its official area is 885 sq km. India's list gives a core of 705 sq km and a buffer of 180 sq km around it.
- UNESCO added the reserve to its World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2013. UNESCO's area of 103,870 hectares is larger, because it also counts an outer transition zone on land and at sea.
- UNESCO records 14 mammal, 71 bird and 26 reptile species here, and 10 amphibian and 113 fish species. Of these, 11 mammals, 32 birds, 7 reptiles and 4 amphibians are endemic, found only in the region.
- The Shompen, who hunt and gather, move between the core and buffer zones. The Nicobarese and the settlers live along the coast in the transition zone.

IN THE NEWS, 2026

Full story

8 May 2026 In May 2026 the Congress party demanded a debate in Parliament on the plan to develop Great Nicobar. It includes a transshipment port at Galathea Bay, an international airport and a township. Supporters pointed to its strategic value. Critics warned of forest loss and harm to the island's tribal communities.

13 June 2026 INS Baaz is the naval air station at Campbell Bay. In June 2026 the Defence Ministry dropped a plan to lengthen its runway. It chose a new airport for civil and military flights at Chingen, beside Galathea Bay. The airport would cost ₹13,000 crore and was expected to take five years.

14 August 2026 In August 2026 the Tribal Council of Great and Little Nicobar made an allegation against the islands' then chief secretary. The council said the chief secretary had told a meeting on 16 July that the Shompen must adopt a modern lifestyle. The Hindu reported the allegation on 13 August 2026.

PRELIMS TRAP

Two years are linked to this reserve. India notified it on 6 January 1989, and UNESCO added it to its World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2013.

ASKED IN PRELIMS 2017 · Q98

Also asked: 1995 · 2009

Which of the following is geographically closest to Great Nicobar ?

(a) Sumatra (b) Borneo (c) Java (d) Sri Lanka

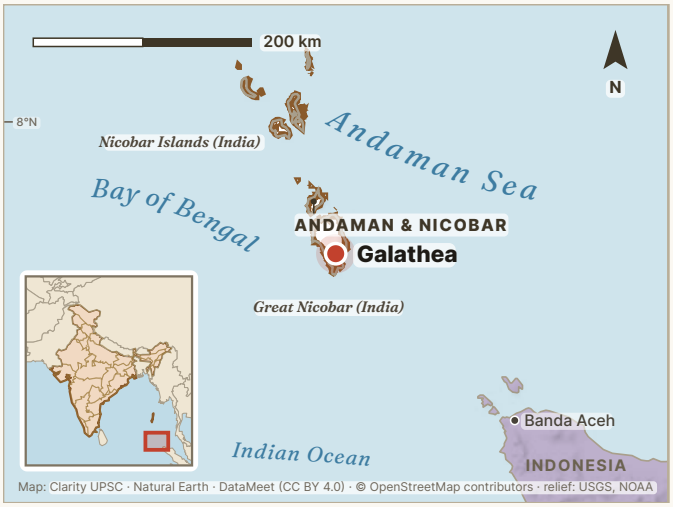
UPSC KEY (a) Sumatra. The Six Degree Channel separates Great Nicobar from Sumatra in Indonesia, which lies to its south-east. Borneo, Java and Sri Lanka are much farther away.

265 Galathea National Park

Nicobars · **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**

National park 1992 · 110 sq km

RIVER OR WATER	HILLS OR LANDSCAPE	FLAGSHIP SPECIES	BEST KNOWN FOR
—	Tropical forest in the south of Great Nicobar	Nicobar megapode, giant robber crab, Nicobar pigeon	The smaller of the two parks on Great Nicobar (110 sq km)



Galathea National Park covers 110 sq km in the southern part of Great Nicobar, in Nicobars district. The Andaman and Nicobar Forest Department calls it important for the Nicobar megapode, the giant robber crab and the Nicobar pigeon. It lies to the south of Campbell Bay National Park.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- Galathea National Park was created in 1992. It is the smaller of the two national parks on Great Nicobar.
- Galathea Bay lies just south of the park. Forest department data show 869 leatherback turtle nests on its beach in the season that ended in March 2026. No other Indian Ocean beach had more.
- The Great Nicobar project plans an international container transshipment port at Galathea Bay, to move cargo between ships. It also plans a new airport at Chingen, beside the bay.

ON THE OTHER LISTS

Galathea National Park lies inside Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve. BirdLife International names it, Campbell Bay National Park and Galathea Bay sanctuary as the core of the reserve.

PRELIMS TRAP

Galathea National Park and Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary were two separate protected areas. The sanctuary was denotified in January 2021, but the national park is still on the national list. The Wildlife Institute of India's table names the park 'Galathea Bay'.

Sources

Tiger reserves: National Tiger Conservation Authority, read on 22 November 2026. **National parks:** Wildlife Institute of India, National Wildlife Database, read on 22 November 2026. **Ramsar sites:** Ramsar Sites Information Service, read on 22 November 2026. **Biosphere reserves:** Union Environment Ministry (MoEFCC) · UNESCO, read on 22 November 2026. **Elephant reserves:** Project Elephant, Union Environment Ministry (MoEFCC), read on 22 November 2026.

Where two official sources differ, the year or area printed is the one on the official list named above. Our own stories are linked by their QR codes; the stories still awaiting a correction carry no link.

LADAKH

1 Hemis: WII national parks table · WII national parks PDF (2025) · Key Biodiversity Areas factsheet · District Leh · PLOS ONE (2025) · Ladakh administration · **2** Tso Kar: Ramsar Sites Information Service · Ramsar Information Sheet (2020) · MoEFCC list of Ramsar sites · Ladakh administration (2026) · PTI (ThePrint) · **3** Tsomoriri: Ramsar Sites Information Service · Ramsar Information Sheet (2002) · District Leh · MoEFCC list of Ramsar sites

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

4 Wular: Ramsar Sites Information Service · Ramsar information (1990) · Ramsar Information Sheet of Hygam (2022) · The Indian Express · PTI (The Tribune) · **5** Hygam: Ramsar Sites Information Service · Ramsar Information Sheet (2022) · Jammu and Kashmir Wildlife Protected Area Network Atlas (2021) · MoEFCC list of Ramsar sites · **6** Kazinag: WII national parks table · Jammu and Kashmir Department of Wildlife Protection (atlas, management plan 2021–2031) · Gazette of India S.O. 1330(E), 2022 · Mongabay India (2025) · **7** Shallbugh: Ramsar Sites Information Service · Ramsar Information Sheet (2022) · Jammu and Kashmir Department of Wildlife Protection · MoEFCC list of Ramsar sites · **8** City Forest (Salim Ali): WII national parks table · Jammu and Kashmir Wildlife Protected Area Network Atlas (2021) · Jammu and Kashmir Department of Wildlife Protection · **9** Dachigam: WII national parks table · Dachigam management plan 2020–2030 · Gazette of India S.O. 2002(E), 2024 · Jammu and Kashmir Department of Wildlife Protection · Mongabay India · IUCN Red List · The Tribune (2025) · Wildlife Institute of India, Management Effectiveness Evaluation report 2020–2025

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HIMACHAL PRADESH (CONTINUED)

19 Great Himalayan: WII national parks table · UNESCO World Heritage Centre · Great Himalayan National Park (official website) · Himachal Pradesh Forest Department · Spiti Wildlife Division · PTI · **20** Renuka: Ramsar Sites Information Service · Himachal Pradesh State Wetland Authority · Gazette of India (S.O. 3682(E), 10 September 2021) · Himachal Pradesh Forest Department · **21** Simbalbara: WII national parks table · Gazette of India (S.O. 172(E), 13 January 2022) · Journal of Threatened Taxa (2023) · ANI · The Tribune

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22 Keshopur-Miani: Ramsar Information Sheet (2020) · Ramsar Sites Information Service · Punjab Department of Forests and Wildlife Preservation · Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 · **23** Kanjli: Ramsar Information Sheet (2001) · Ramsar Sites Information Service · **24** Nangal: Ramsar Information Sheet (2020) · Ramsar Sites Information Service · WII sanctuaries table · Bilaspur district, Himachal Pradesh · **25** Beas: Ramsar Information Sheet (2020) · Punjab Department of Forests and Wildlife Preservation · WII dolphin estimate 2021–23 · PIB factsheet (25 October 2026) · **26** Harike: Ramsar Sites Information Service · Punjab Department of Forests and Wildlife Preservation · PIB (Cabinet release, 26 September 2018) · Ministry of Jal Shakti annual report · **27** Ropar: Ramsar Information Sheet (2001) · Ramsar Sites Information Service · Punjab Department of Forests and Wildlife Preservation · Rupnagar district website

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28 Sukhna: Ramsar Information Sheet (2026) · Ramsar Sites Information Service · PIB (15 October 2026) · WII sanctuaries table · Chandigarh Administration

HARYANA

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UTTARAKHAND

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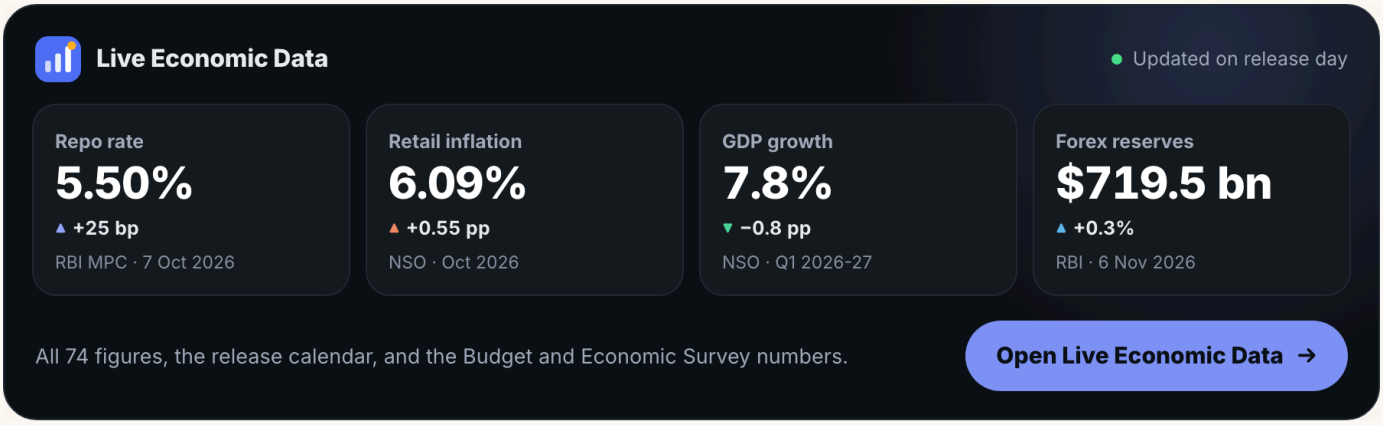

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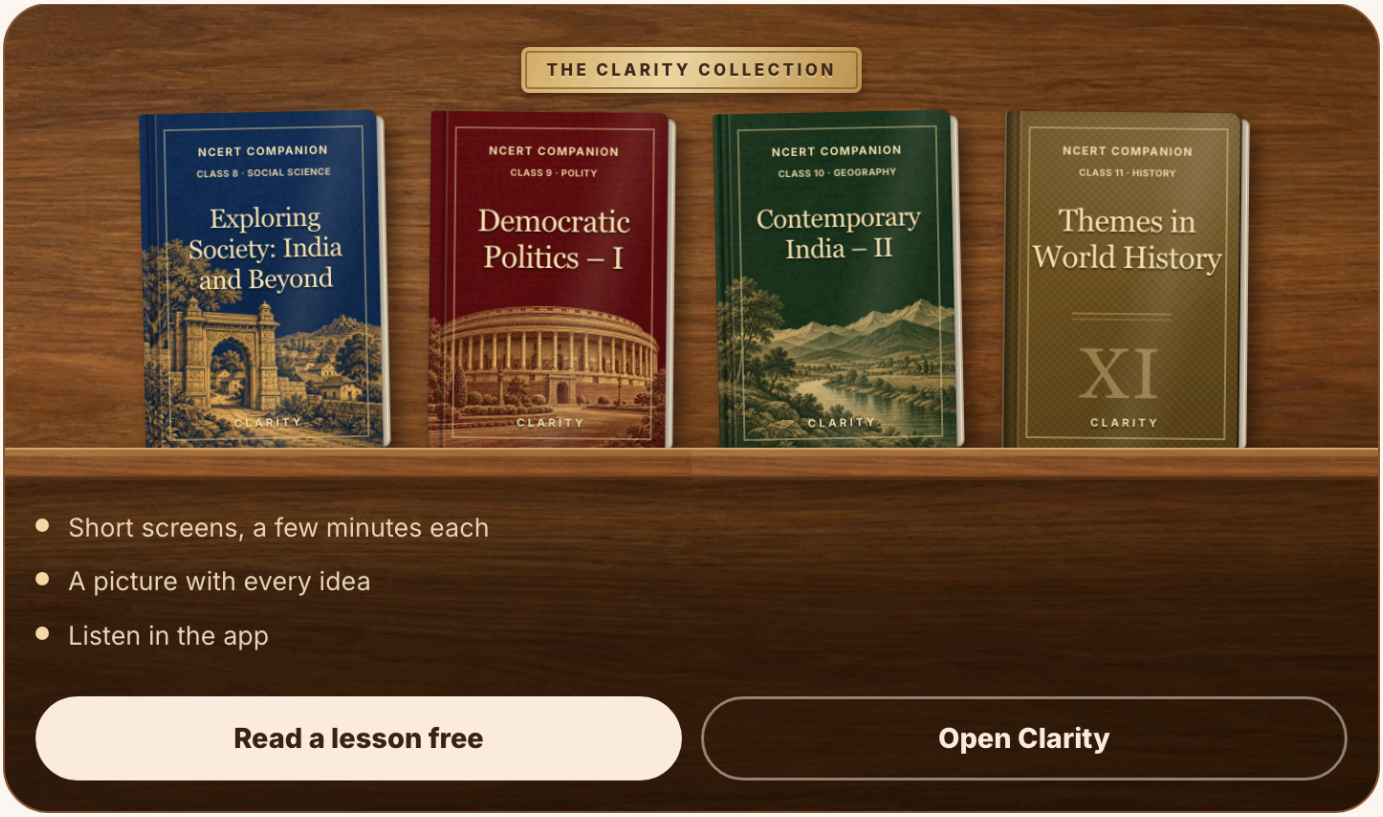

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