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2 February 2024

West Bengal News

World Wetlands Day 2024

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Wetlands and Human Wellbeing

Context:

- World Wetlands Day is celebrated annually on February 2nd
- It aims to raise global awareness about the vital role of wetlands for both people and the planet.
- It also commemorates the signing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 1971, an international treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
- The theme for 2024 is: "Wetlands and Human Wellbeing"
- It focuses on the interconnectedness between wetlands and various aspects of human well-being, including physical, mental and environmental health

About:

- Wetlands are ecosystems where water saturates the land for extended periods, creating unique habitats for diverse plants and animals.
- Examples include marshes, swamps, bogs, mangroves, and even rice paddies.

Did you Know?

- The state of Tamil Nadu (14) has the most Ramsar sites in India, followed by the state of Uttar Pradesh with 10 sites.
- India currently has 80 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites).

Major Wetland types

- As per the Ramsar Convention, a wetland is defined as 'areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tides does not exceed six meters.

Types:

- Human-made wetlands
- Lakes
- River Floodplains
- Ox-bow Lakes
- Marshes
- Estuaries



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swamps</li> </ul> <p><b>Ramsar sites of WB:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>East Kolkata Wetlands</li> <li>Sunderbans wetlands</li> </ul>
<b>Bengal may emerge as e-3-wheeler hub</b>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finance minister <b>Nirmala Sitharaman's ambitious plans in interim budget 2024 strengthening the electric vehicle (EV) ecosystem</b> in India may further propel the spread of <b>Kolkata's electric vehicles</b>, particularly electric buses, and Bengal's <b>emergence as a major e-three-wheeler hub</b>.</li> <li>The <b>emphasis is on infrastructure expansion and support for manufacturing</b>, with a particular focus on <b>promoting e-buses</b> for public transport, aiming to generate employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>Integrated Aqua Park to be set up in Bengal</b>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Seafood Exporters' Association of India (SEAI), West Bengal region, has demanded that an integrated aqua park should be set up in Bengal.</b></li> <li>Union finance minister <b>Nirmala Sitharaman has declared to set up five integrated aqua parks in the interim budget</b> tabled yesterday</li> <li>Bengal has the <b>potential to become the top marine product exporting state in the country.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Ramsar Sites in West Bengal</b>	<p><b>Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wetlands that have been recognized as Ramsar Sites in India under the Ramsar Convention. It is an international environmental agreement focused on protecting wetlands and using resources sustainably. This agreement was signed in the Iranian city of Ramsar.</li> </ul> <p><b>There are 2 Ramsar Wetlands in West Bengal</b></p> <p><b>East Kolkata Wetlands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sprawling across <b>12,500 hectares, the EKW comprises a unique network of fish ponds, agricultural fields, and wetlands interwoven with urban settlements.</b></li> </ul>



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- The wetlands **naturally purify sewage from millions of Kolkata residents**, fostering a diverse array of microorganisms and aquatic plants that break down pollutants.

### Sundarbans Wetland

- Encompassing **4,230 square kilometers in the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta**, the Sundarbans constitute the **largest single-block mangrove forest in the world**.
- The Sundarbans boast 64 mangrove species, providing critical nursery grounds for fish and shrimp, sheltering numerous migratory birds, and acting as natural barriers against cyclones and tidal surges.

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