Newly declared Ramsar sites

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister welcomed new Ramsar sites at Patna Bird Sanctuary and Chhari-Dhand.

- **Location –** The new Ramsar sites are
  - **Patna Bird Sanctuary** – Etah district, Uttar Pradesh.
  - **Chhari-Dhand** – Kutch district, Gujarat.
- **Key Highlights –**
- Both wetlands are vital habitats for migratory and native species.
- India's Ramsar network ***expanded from 26 (2014) to 98 (2026), an increase of over 276%.***
- India has the highest number of Ramsar sites among Asian countries.
- **Patna Bird Sanctuary – Habitat –** A wetland bird sanctuary with a lake ecosystem.
- During summers, the lake is covered with macrophytic vegetation such as water hyacinth and Potamogeton species.
- **Biodiversity –** Supports migratory and resident birds, including Pied mynas, herons, cormorants, ducks and geese;
- Important aquatic birds include Lesser Whistling Duck, Graylag Goose, Comb Duck, Ruddy Shelduck, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Northern Shoveler and Northern Pintail.
- **Significance –** It is the ***smallest bird sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh***.
- **Chhari-Dhand – Population –** Attracts numerous migratory birds every year during the monsoon and winter seasons.
- **Habitat –** Seasonal desert wetland located between the arid Banni grasslands and ***marshy salt flats of the Rann of Kutch.***
- It becomes swampy during the monsoon and is fed by north-flowing rivers and surrounding hills.
- **Biodiversity –** Endangered species such as Dalmatian Pelican, Oriental Darter, Black-necked Stork and Indian Skimmer.

- It also supports chinkara, wolves, caracal, desert cats and desert foxes.
- **Significance -** Located at the *interface of grasslands and salt flats.*
- Rich biodiversity makes it a major bird-watching destination.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
• Ramsar site is a ***wetland of International Importance*** mentioned under the Ramsar Convention. • It is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. • **Adoption –** In 1971 (Ramsar, Iran) and enforced in 1975. It is the only global environmental treaty that deals with a particular ecosystem. • **Definition –** Wetlands are 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. • It also includes areas of marine water, the depth of which at low tide does not exceed 6 meters. • **India's position** – India became a contracting party in 1981. • The Indian government's definition as per ***the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017*** excludes river channels, paddy fields and other areas where commercial activity takes place. • Ramsar Convention is not affiliated with the United Nations system of Multilateral Environmental Agreements. • Every year, *2nd February is celebrated as World Wetlands Day.*

References

1. PIB | New Ramsar sites
2. TH| New Ramsar sites

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering