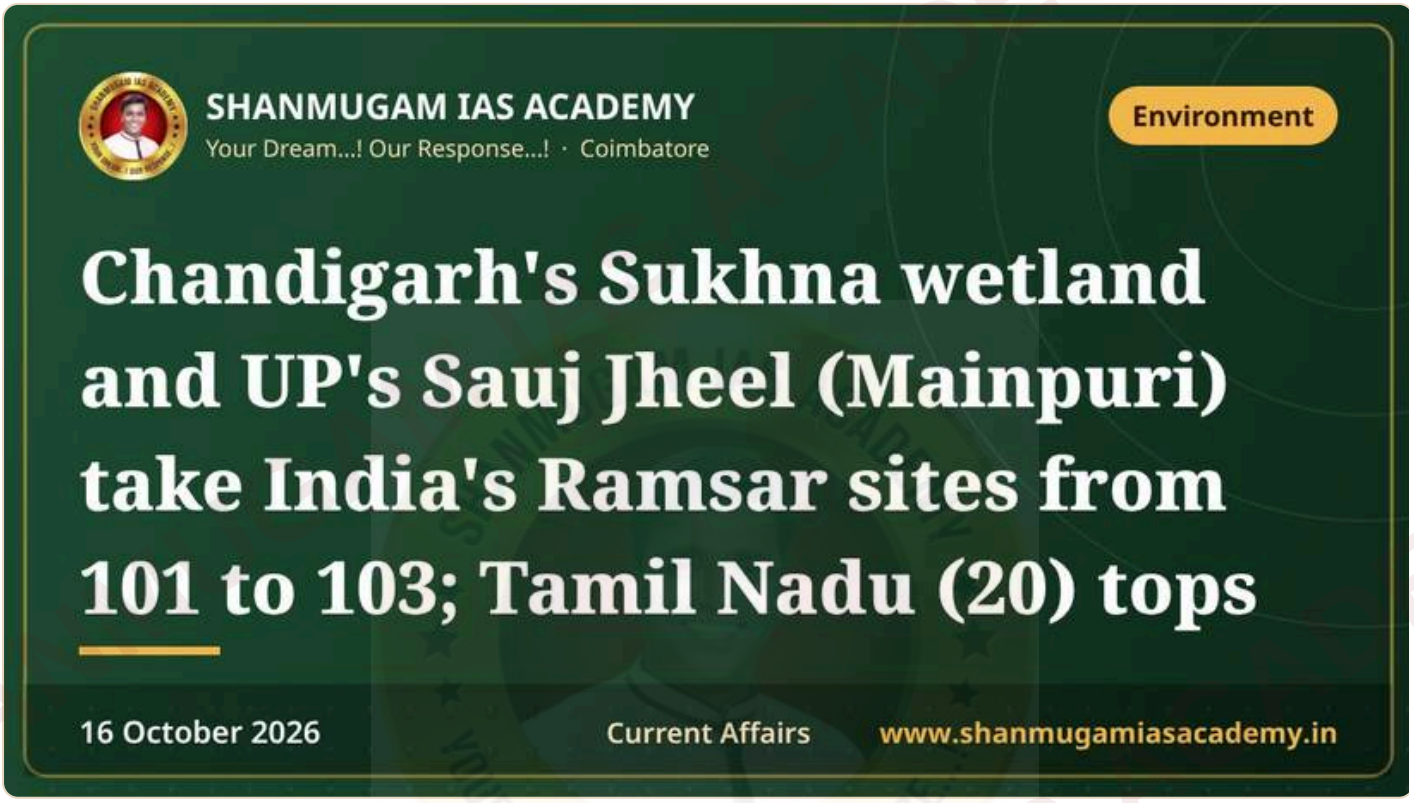
Chandigarh's Sukhna wetland and UP's Sauj Jheel (Mainpuri) take India's Ramsar sites from 101 to 103; Tamil Nadu (20) tops

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News

On 15 Oct 2026 Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced that Chandigarh's Sukhna wetland (Ramsar site no. 2602) and Sauj Jheel near Kishni, Mainpuri district, Uttar Pradesh (no. 2603) had been designated Ramsar sites, taking India's tally from 101 to 103. Sukhna is Chandigarh's first Ramsar site; Sauj Jheel takes UP's count to 14. Tamil Nadu leads with 20 sites, and UP is second with 14.

Key facts

Announced	15 Oct 2026 – Union Minister Bhupender Yadav; India 101 → 103
Sukhna	Chandigarh; Shivalik foothills; man-made lake formed in 1958 by damming the Sukhna Choe; Chandigarh's first Ramsar site
Sauj Jheel	Kishni, Mainpuri district, UP; shallow Gangetic-floodplain lake; 30,000+ waterbirds; Sarus crane, Greater spotted eagle (Vulnerable)
Species (Sukhna)	Common pochard (Vulnerable), Pallas's fish eagle and black pond turtle (both Endangered); Central Asian Flyway
State count	Tamil Nadu 20 (first); Uttar Pradesh 14 (second)
Mainpuri	Now two Ramsar sites, with Saman Bird Sanctuary (2019)

Background

- Ramsar Convention: signed on 2 Feb 1971 at Ramsar, Iran; in force from 1975. 2 Feb is World Wetlands Day. India joined on 1 Feb 1982; its first sites were Chilika Lake (Odisha) and Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan), 1981.
- Montreux Record: a list of Ramsar sites at risk of ecological change; from India, Keoladeo and Loktak (Manipur) are on it; Chilika was removed in 2002. Ramsar COP15 – July 2025, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.
- UP's 2026 additions: Patna Bird Sanctuary (Etah), Shekha Jheel (Aligarh – 99th) and Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary / Surha Tal (Ballia – 100th, June 2026). The 101st was Glaw Lake (Arunachal Pradesh, Aug 2026). India has the most Ramsar sites in Asia and is third in the world (after the UK and Mexico).
- History: Sukhna Lake was created in 1958 by Chandigarh's planner Le Corbusier and chief engineer P.L. Varma. Its catchment has been notified as the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary.

Tamil Nadu link: with 20 Ramsar sites Tamil Nadu leads the country. Its first was Point Calimere (Kodiakkarai) Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary, 2002. In Jan 2025 the Sakkarakottai and Therthangal bird sanctuaries of Ramanathapuram district were added, making 20. Vedanthangal (Chengalpattu) and the Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve are also Ramsar sites.

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