



# **TODAY'S ANALYSIS**

## **(30 January 2025)**

### **TOPICS TO BE COVERED**

- **WETLAND CITY ACCREDITATION**
- **INDIA CHINA RELATIONS IMPROVING**
- **KAILASH MANSAROVAR YATRA**
- **MCQs**



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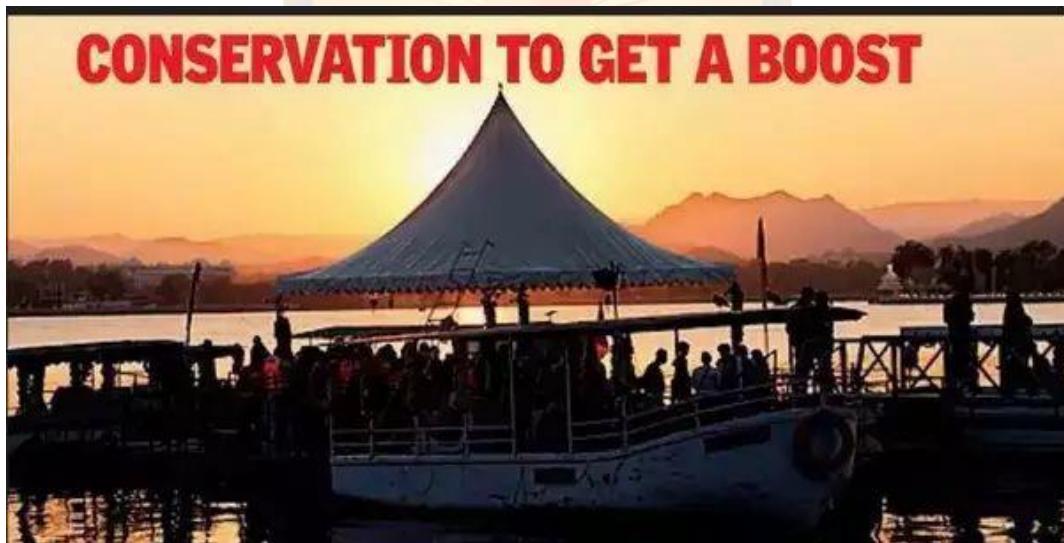
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## WETLAND CITY ACCREDITATION

### Overview:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently praised **Indore** and **Udaipur** for becoming the **first two Indian cities** to be included in the global list of **wetland cities** under the **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**.
- This recognition, awarded to **31 cities worldwide**, highlights India's growing focus on **wetland conservation** alongside **urban development**.



► Udaipur is **surrounded by 5 lakes**, which also **conserve many fish species and attract migratory birds**

► **Ramsar Conference** of the Parties in 2015 (COP12) **passed the establishment of Wetland City Accreditation system globally**

► **First batch of wetland cities** from China, France and Sri Lanka, among others, was **notified in 2018**

► **Second batch** of cities from Japan, Morocco, Iraq, Spain, and others was **declared in 2022**

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## WHAT IS WETLAND CITY ACCREDITATION?

- **Wetland City Accreditation (WCA)** is a program that recognizes cities for their efforts in managing and protecting **wetlands**.
- The program was introduced in **2015** during the **12th Conference of the Ramsar Convention** in Uruguay.

- Cities that receive this recognition show a commitment to **sustainable development** and are seen as examples for others to follow.
- This recognition lasts for **6 years**, after which cities must apply for renewal.

## WHAT IS WETLAND?

- Wetlands are areas where water is found either **permanently or seasonally**. These areas are home to many plants and animals.
- **Types of Wetlands** include **marshes, swamps, and bogs**.
- Wetlands are important because they help with **water purification, flood control, and biodiversity**.

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## WETLANDS IN INDORE & UDAIPUR

### Indore:

- **Sirpur Lake:**
  - Located in Indore, **Sirpur Lake** is a **Ramsar site**, meaning it has international importance.
  - It supports a variety of **water birds** and plays a key role in the city's **biodiversity**.
  - There are plans to develop **Sirpur Lake into a bird sanctuary**, which will make it an even more important spot for **conservation** and **tourism**.



### Udaipur:

- Udaipur is famous for its beautiful **lakes**, including **Pichola Lake**, **Fateh Sagar**, **Rang Sagar**, **Swaroop Sagar**, and **Doodh Talai**.
- These lakes are not only important for the city's heritage but also help in managing water resources and protecting the city from extreme weather events like **droughts** and **heatwaves**.
- The wetlands in Udaipur support local **wildlife** and are crucial for maintaining **climate resilience**.

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## BENEFITS OF WETLAND CITIES

- **Flood Control:** Wetlands absorb excess water during rains, helping to reduce the risk of **flooding** in cities.
- **Water Purification:** Wetlands filter out harmful substances from water, improving its **quality**.
- **Biodiversity Support:** Wetlands provide **habitats** for many species, including **migratory birds** and other wildlife.

## INDIA'S WETLAND CONSERVATION & RAMSAR SITES

### Ramsar Convention:

- The **Ramsar Convention** is an international treaty signed in **1971** in **Ramsar, Iran**, aimed at protecting wetlands around the world.
- It helps countries to **conserve wetlands**, which are valuable for their role in **flood control, water purification**, and providing **wildlife habitats**.
- **India became a signatory in 1982** and has since been working to increase the number of Ramsar sites in the country.

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## India's Ramsar Sites:

- As of **January 2025**, India has **85 Ramsar sites**.
- India has been steadily adding Ramsar sites, with **26 sites** between **1982-2013** and **59 new sites** between **2014-2025**.
- **Tamil Nadu** has the **highest number** of Ramsar sites, followed by **Uttar Pradesh**.

## WHY WETLAND CONSERVATION IS IMPORTANT?

- **Water Security:** Wetlands are essential for managing **water resources** in India. They help recharge **groundwater** and reduce **soil erosion**.
- **Climate Resilience:** Wetlands act as natural buffers against extreme weather events like floods and droughts, helping cities become more **resilient** to climate change.
- **Biodiversity:** Wetlands support many species of plants, animals, and birds, contributing to **biodiversity** and **ecological balance**.
- **Urban Livability:** Wetland conservation improves the **quality of life** in cities by providing clean **air** and water, and supporting local **wildlife**.

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## INDIA CHINA RELATIONS IMPROVING

In **January 2025**, India and China took major steps to improve their relations, **3 months after resolving the military stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.

- These steps include resuming **direct flights**, issuing **visas**, increasing exchanges in various sectors, and restarting the **Mansarovar Yatra** for Indian pilgrims.
- Both countries also agreed to restart talks on shared **rivers** and the sharing of **hydrological data**, which China had not been providing.
- These measures are part of a larger effort to stabilize and rebuild ties between the two countries.



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## KEY AGREEMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Resumption of Direct Flights and Visa Issuance:

- **Direct Flights:** India and China agreed to restart **direct flights**, which had been stopped in **2020** due to the **COVID-19 pandemic** and rising tensions at the **LAC**.
- **Visa Issuance:** The countries will begin issuing **visas** again, **allowing easier travel for business, tourism, and study between the two nations**. This move is seen as a step toward improving the relationship.

### Mansarovar Pilgrimage:

- **Mansarovar Yatra:** The pilgrimage to **Mount Kailash** and **Mansarovar**, which had been **stopped since the border tensions in 2020**, will restart in the **summer of 2025**.
- **Implications:** Restarting this pilgrimage is an important symbolic and practical step toward improving relations, showing both governments' recognition of its cultural significance.

### Trans-Border Rivers and Hydrological Data:

- **Hydrological Data Sharing:** A key agreement is the restart of talks on shared **rivers**, especially concerning the sharing of **water data**.

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- China had stopped sharing this data, particularly for the **Brahmaputra River** (known as **Yarlung Zangpo** in Tibet), which is important for water management in India.
- **Expert-Level Mechanism:** The **India-China Expert Level Mechanism** will meet to discuss the return of hydrological data and other cooperation related to shared water resources.
- **Brahmaputra River Concerns:** India has expressed worry about China's **hydropower projects** on the Brahmaputra, which could affect water flow into India.

## BILATERAL RELATIONS AND CELEBRATORY EVENTS

- **75th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties:** 2025 marks the **75th year** of diplomatic relations between India and China.
- Both countries plan to celebrate this anniversary with events to strengthen cultural and economic ties.
- **Foreign Minister's Remarks:** Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi called for an end to **mutual distrust** and **separation**, stressing the need for both countries to focus on **cooperation** instead of **conflict**.
- **Government Commitment:** Both sides pledged to work on stabilizing relations, aiming to find mutual benefits and avoid further disputes.

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## ECONOMIC & TRADE RELATIONS

### Trade and Economic Disputes:

- Despite record levels of trade, India and China have imposed restrictions on each other due to **political tensions** that began after **2020**.
- India's Restrictions:** India put several restrictions on **Chinese businesses**, such as requiring **Home Ministry approval** for **Chinese investments** (as a security measure), denying **business visas**, and carrying out **raids** on Chinese telecom companies.
- China's Restrictions:** China responded by limiting exports of key materials to India, like **Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs)**, **high-tech products**, and equipment for major infrastructure projects (e.g., **Tunnel Boring Machines**).
- Trade Imbalance:** China remains one of India's biggest trade partners, but India has expressed concerns over the growing **trade deficit** and the lack of fair opportunities for **Indian businesses** in China.

## DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENTS

### Foreign Secretary's Visit to China:

- Vikram Misri's Visit:** Indian **Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri** visited **Beijing** from **January 26-27, 2025**, for talks with Chinese officials, including **Vice Foreign Minister**

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**Sun Weidong, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, and Liu Jianchao** (Member of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee).

- **Resumption of Bilateral Dialogue:** Misri's visit marked the return of regular dialogues between the two sides, which had been suspended after the **2020 Galwan clashes**.
- **India's Support for China's SCO Chairmanship:** During his visit, Misri showed India's support for China's leadership of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** in **2025**, highlighting the importance of cooperation in multilateral organizations.

## FUTURE ENGAGEMENTS

- **Modi-Xi Summit Possibility:** Officials did not comment on whether an **informal summit** between **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **Chinese President Xi Jinping** will happen in **2025**, similar to previous meetings in **Wuhan (2018)** and **Mamallapuram (2020)**. However, the return of regular dialogues suggests more **high-level interactions** could take place.
- **SCO Summit in June 2025:** Prime Minister Modi is expected to attend the **SCO summit in June 2025**, which will provide another opportunity to strengthen ties between the two countries.

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## KAILASH MANSAROVAR YATRA

- The yatra includes visits to **Mount Kailash** and **Mansarovar Lake in Tibet**.
- The **Ministry of External Affairs, India** organises the Yatra during **June to September** through **two** different routes:
  - **Lipulekh Pass** (Uttarakhand)
  - **Nathu La Pass** (Sikkim).
- It is open to **eligible Indian citizens** holding valid Indian passports.
- The Yatra is **organised with the support** from state governments of Uttarakhand, Delhi, and Sikkim; and cooperation of Indo Tibetan Border Police.
- Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) **does not provide any subsidy** or financial assistance to Yatris.



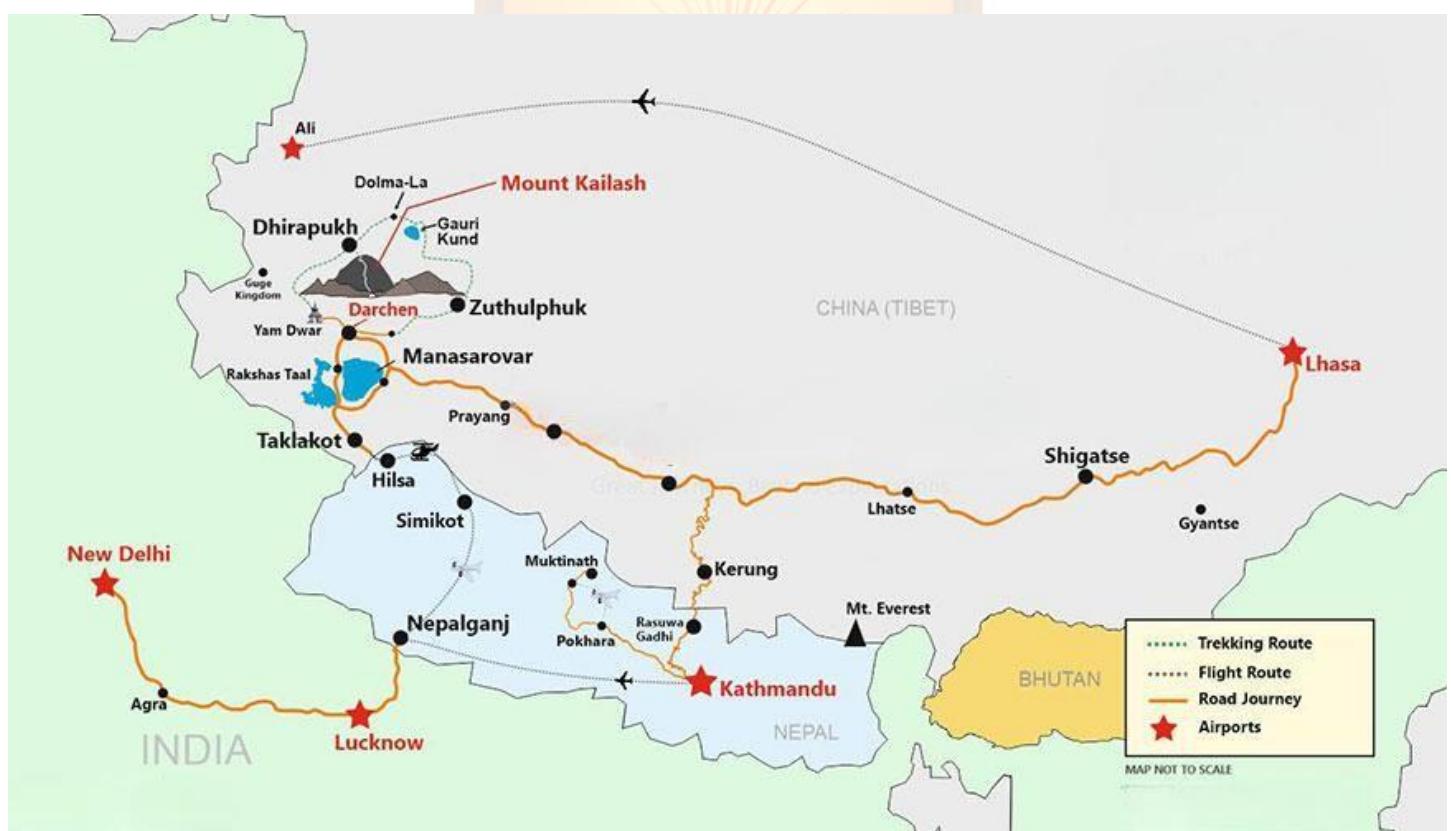
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## LOCATION

- **Mount Kailash** is located in the **Kailash Range** (forms part of the Trans Himalaya) in Tibet.
- **Lake Manasarovar** is a high altitude **freshwater lake** near Mount Kailash in Tibet.
- **Four rivers** emerge from the Kailash-Manasarovar region: **Sutlej, Brahmaputra, Indus and Kamali (Karnali)**.



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## RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF KAILASH MANSAROVAR YATRA

- Hindus believe Mount Kailash is the **abode of Lord Shiva**. Mansarovar lake is said to be one of Goddess Sati's 51 Shakti Peethas.
- Tibetans, Buddhists and Jains revere it as the '**Stairway to heaven**'.
- Jains hold that **Rishabhanatha**, the first Tirthankar (Jains' spiritual preacher), found enlightenment at Mount Kailash.
- The Mount is referred to in Jain literature as "**Ashtapada**," or "the eight steps," which can pave the way to enlightenment and spiritual advancement.

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## MCQs

1. Which cities in India have been accredited as the Wetland cities?

- (A) Udaipur & Bharatpur
- (B) Udaipur & Ujjain
- (C) Udaipur & Indore
- (D) None of the above

**Ans. (C)**

2. Which state in India has the highest number of Ramsar sites in India?

- (A) Gujarat
- (B) Odisha
- (C) West Bengal
- (D) None of the above

**Ans. (D)**

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3. A pilgrim going for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra from India to China passes through which pass?

- (A) Khardung La
- (B) Jelep La
- (C) Nathu La
- (D) Baralacha La

**Ans. (C)**

4. Which of these rivers do not originate from the Kailash Mansarovar?

- (A) Yarlung Tsangpo
- (B) Indus
- (C) Yangtse
- (D) Sutlej

**Ans. (C)**

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