

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 71
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.02.2026

Inclusion of Bortir Bil, as a Ramsar Site

*71. SHRI SAMIK BHATTACHARYA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of Bortir Bil, a seasonal wetland in North 24 Parganas, West Bengal and its ecological functions in flood moderation, groundwater recharge, fisheries and local livelihoods;
- (b) whether any scientific or ecological assessment has been conducted by the Ministry or its agencies to evaluate Bortir Bil against the criteria of Ramsar Convention on Wetlands;
- (c) whether State Government of West Bengal has submitted or been advised to submit, a proposal for inclusion of Bortir Bil as Ramsar Site; and
- (d) if not, the steps proposed to initiate baseline studies, biodiversity surveys and stakeholder consultations for its potential nomination?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (D) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. *71 TO BE ANSWERED ON THURSDAY, THE 5TH FEBRUARY, 2026 ON 'INCLUSION OF BORTIR BIL, AS A RAMSAR SITE' RAISED BY SHRI SAMIK BHATTACHARYA.

(a) As per the information provided by Government of West Bengal, Bortir Bil (also known as Bortir Beel) located near Beraberia in Shyamnagar, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, is a seasonal wetland of significant ecological and socio-economic importance. The Beel is important for its ecological character and rich biodiversity. During the monsoon, the Beel expands into a large waterbody that supports a rich assemblage of native fishes, snails, crabs, and other aquatic fauna. In the dry season, the water level recedes, revealing mudflats and emergent vegetation that sustain diverse terrestrial and semi-aquatic species.

The wetland also serves as a crucial habitat for both resident and migratory birds, particularly during the winter months. Aquatic plants such as water lilies and water hyacinth contribute to the ecological balance by offering food and shelter to aquatic organisms and avifauna. Beyond its biodiversity value, Bortir Beel sustains the livelihoods of local fishing communities and acts as a natural carbon sink, helping to regulate the regional microclimate. This makes it an ecologically vital component of the North 24 Parganas landscape.

A study of the wetland was conducted by Botanical Survey of India aiming to document and assess the diverse flora found in and around the Bortir Beel wetland. It was found in the study that the wetland supports a rich variety of aquatic plants, both submerged and floating, which in turn sustain a wide range of organisms, including numerous local and migratory bird species. This study documented the floristic diversity of the Bortir Beel wetland, recording a total of 134 species which includes 129 species of angiosperms and 5 species of pteridophytes.

(b) to (d) As per the information provided by Government of West Bengal, a preliminary study on the ecological characteristics of the wetland was conducted by an agency of State Government in September 2025. The State Government proposal for nomination of Bortir Beel as a Ramsar site can be taken up only after its inventorisation and demarcation of boundary by the State Government. Further, MoEF&CC has advised all the States/UTs including West Bengal to identify the potential wetlands for designation as Ramsar sites and submit the proposals as per the criterion laid down by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
