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Title: Regarding East Kolkata Wetland - Laid.

**SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY (BAHARAMPUR):** One of the wetlands which provides most of the ecosystem services as designated in the millennium assessment report about wetlands is the East Kolkata Wetlands or EKW. EKW is the world's largest resource recycling ecosystem which helps to treat around 600 million litres of sewage and wastewater daily. This sewage and wastewater are generated mainly by the city of Kolkata (Mukherjee 2016). Canals and creeks, both natural and man-made, constructed during the colonial times are used to bring sewage to flow through the wetlands.

Development of such a system to treat sewage has been possible because the old city Calcutta (now Kolkata) is located between the river Hooghly, a distributary of the Ganga on its west and numerous Wetlands on its east. These wetlands are the inter-distributary marshes between the Hooghly and the now dead Bidyadhri river (declared dead in 1920), another distributary of the Ganga and the Brahmaputra delta (Chatterjee 1993). These water bodies, being the spill basin of the estuarine river Bidyadhari, are salty in nature and thus earned the name salt lakes. From the 1940s, the distributary is further east of the city. Before this, since the last decade of the 19th century, the locals had embanked these salt lakes and started saline water fishing. But the treated sewage water is sweet in nature since it is domestic sewage and thus the local fishers switched to sweet water fishes from the saline ones. This treated water is also used for paddy and vegetables cultivation. The wetlands, over a period of time, not only treated sewage of the city but also performed

various ecosystem services which appealed to the locals who adapted to the wetland.

The beautiful wetland is a victim of human aggression including builders and promoters. This needs to be protected.

I urge upon the concerned ministry to look into the issue.