



Mapping Series

Current Affairs

Places in News

Compilation

Jan 2025 - Dec 2025

UPSC Prelims 2026



How to Use This Current Affairs Magazine Effectively for UPSC Prelims?

This Current Affairs Magazine is designed to help you understand current affairs, not just read them.

What makes this magazine different?

Topic-wise, Complete Coverage

- ✓ Each topic is covered as a single unit, with **all relevant news from the last 1 to 1.5 years placed together**. This helps you understand every dimension of an issue and recall it easily in real exam conditions.

Subject-wise Structure

- ✓ The magazine is **organised subject-wise, not month-wise**. If you are preparing Geography, you can read only Geography current affairs. This **aligns perfectly with UPSC-style preparation and PRAYAAS test series**, improving conceptual clarity and recall.

Direct Newspaper Source Links

- ✓ Each topic **includes direct links to original newspaper articles**, allowing you to read the source anytime and develop a deeper, authentic understanding of the issue.

Simple & Sober Language

- ✓ The **content is written in easy, clear language, without heavy words**, making reading and revision smooth and stress-free.

Static + Current Linked Together

- ✓ Every current issue is **directly linked to the static syllabus**, so you don't need to search for background information elsewhere. **Everything is available at one place.**

Prelims-Focused Highlighting

- ✓ Important facts, ministries and keywords are bolded for quick identification. You can highlight directly—no separate note-making needed in the first readings.

Focus on Understanding, Not Memorising

- ✓ This magazine **ensures you don't just read current affairs—you understand them conceptually**. When used along with video lectures, it becomes an extremely powerful learning tool.

Our Aim is-

To make current affairs a **core part of your UPSC preparation, not an extra burden.**

- ❖ Read less.
- ❖ Understand more.
- ❖ Connect everything.

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PRAYAAS

1.Asia

1.1 Thailand–Cambodia Border Dispute

Context: -

- Recent Dispute and border clashes.

Origin

- Dispute traces back to 1907.
- Based on a **French-era boundary map**.
- Accepted by Cambodia, contested by Thailand.

Nature of Dispute

- Border **demarkation** issue.
- Involves ancient **Khmer temples** and strategic highlands.
- Periodic military clashes since 2008.



Main Disputed Areas

Preah Vihear Temple

- Ancient Khmer temple.
- Declared UNESCO World Heritage Site for Cambodia.
- Thailand disputes adjacent surrounding territory.

Ta Moan Thom Temple

- 11th-century Khmer temple.
- Located in Thailand, claimed by Cambodia.

Chong Bok Plateau

- Strategic highland zone.
- Site of recent escalation.

Recent Developments

- Renewed tensions reported near Chong Bok area.
- Border incidents linked to troop movement and patrols.
- ICJ rulings favoured Cambodia on Preah Vihear temple, but interpretation of surrounding area remains contentious.

Surrounding Countries:

- As shown in map



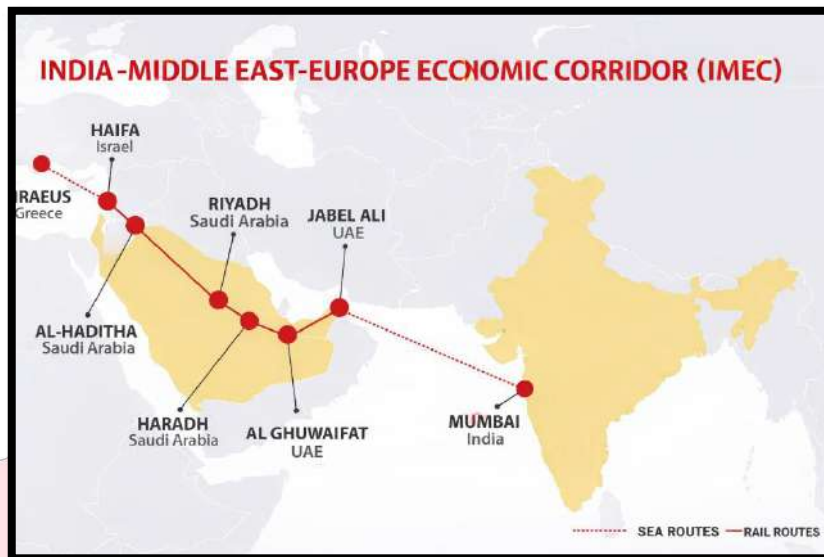
1.2 India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

Context: -

- IMEC, **announced during the G20** aims to link India with Europe via the Middle East through a mix of rail, port, digital, and energy infrastructure.

About: -

- Span from **India to Europe** through **India, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Greece.**
- It will include **railway lines, shipping lanes, and road networks.**
- Indian ports that will be connected to IMEC: **Mundra (Gujarat), Kandla or Deendayal Port (Gujarat), and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (Navi Mumbai).**
- It is a **counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, which aims to connect China to Europe and Africa.
- The corridor is estimated to cut the journey time from India to Europe by 40% and slash transit costs by 30%.



1.3 Port Louis

Context: -

- Indian Navy ship **INS Imphal** visited **Port Louis** as part of a goodwill mission aimed at strengthening maritime cooperation and bilateral ties.

About:

- Capital** city of Mauritius
- Located on the **Indian Ocean**

Serves as:

- Major commercial port
- Key financial and economic hub
- Important for trade, tourism, and foreign investment
- Strategically significant in India's Indian Ocean outreach

(Mauritius is frequently linked with India's maritime diplomacy and SAGAR policy)



Static:

- Mauritius is part of the **African** continent (island nation)
- Capital: Port Louis

Member of:

- African Union
- Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)
- Commonwealth

1.4 Ayni Air Base**Context in News:**

- India has **ended its presence at the Ayni Air Base (also known as Gissar Air Base) in Tajikistan**, marking a shift in India's overseas military footprint.

About:

- Located near **Dushanbe**, Tajikistan
- Approximately 20 km from **Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor**
- India earlier established an overseas military facility at **Farkhor** (Tajikistan) in 1998
- Farkhor was **India's first overseas air base**, mainly for medical and logistical support

Geostrategically close to:

- China's Xinjiang region
- Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK)
- Originally a Soviet-era air base
- Upgraded by India under a 2002 agreement with Tajikistan

Strategic Significance:

- Provided India with a direct foothold in Central Asia
- Region traditionally dominated by Russian and Chinese influence
- Strategic reach towards Afghanistan

Present Status:

- India currently has no fully operational overseas military base

Wakhan Corridor:

- Narrow strip of Afghan territory
- Separates Pakistan and Tajikistan
- Acts as a buffer between Central Asia and South Asia

India's Strategic Presence:

- **Agaléga** (Mauritius)
- Upgraded airstrip and jetty



1.5 Bagram Air Base

Context: -

- US President Donald Trump demanded the **return** of Bagram Air Base (**Afghanistan**).

About: -

- Located in **Parwan province**, Bagram links major Afghan highways, making it a vital gateway to Central and South Asia.
- Served as the **epicentre of the "War on Terror,"** enabling strikes on Al-Qaeda, Taliban, IS-K and other terror groups.
- Control of Bagram offers access to **Afghanistan's \$1-3 trillion mineral reserves**, critical for EVs, electronics, and defence technologies.
- From Bagram, US ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) could monitor **China's Xinjiang** and **Russia's Central Asian sphere**.



Surrounding Countries:

- Afghanistan is **landlocked** and shares borders with six countries:
- Pakistan** – East & South, **Iran** – West, **Turkmenistan** – Northwest, **Uzbekistan** – North, **Tajikistan** – Northeast and **China** – Extreme Northeast (via **Wakhan Corridor**)



1.6 Torkham Crossing

- **Major transit point on the Durand Line** between Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- It is situated along the **historic Grand Trunk Road in the Khyber Pass region**, connecting the city of Jalalabad in Afghanistan to Peshawar in Pakistan.



1.7 Bandar Abbas Port

Context: -

- Huge explosion occurred at the Shahid Rajaei port of Bandar Abbas in southern Iran.

About: -

- **Shahid Rajaee Port** is one of two parts of the **port of Bandar Abbas**, which is on the country's southern coast, **on the Persian Gulf**.
- Bandar Abbas is also a **city and capital of Hormozgan province in Iran**.
- Distance between Chabahar port and Bandar Abbas port is about 500 km.
- **Iran's largest and most important port**. The port is strategically important because of its **proximity to the Strait of Hormuz**, through which about 20% of the world's petroleum passes.
- Bandar Abbas Port plays a vital **role in Iran's economy**, serving as a **hub for trade** not only for Iran but also for landlocked neighbouring countries like Afghanistan.



1.8 Iran's Nuclear Sites targeted by USA

- Under Operation Midnight Hammer, the United States launched coordinated strikes on three key nuclear sites in Iran to destroy Iran's nuclear programme.
- U.S. targeted 3 key sites: Natanz, Isfahan, & Fordow, central to Iran's controversial nuclear program.



1.9 Mount Lewotobi

Context: -

- Mount Lewotobi in **Indonesia's East Nusa Tenggara province** erupted recently.

About: -

- Situated on **Flores Island in East Nusa Tenggara province**, Indonesia.
- Located at the **convergence** of the Eurasian, Australian and Pacific tectonic plates.
- Lies **within Pacific 'Ring of Fire'**, a seismically active zone prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.
- Volcano Type:** Stratovolcano (composite volcano) featuring steep profiles and periodic explosive eruptions.
- Twin Structure: Comprises two peaks, Lewotobi Lakilaki (male) and Lewotobi Perempuan (female), Lakilaki has erupted frequently in 19th & 20th centuries. Perempuan only twice in recorded history.



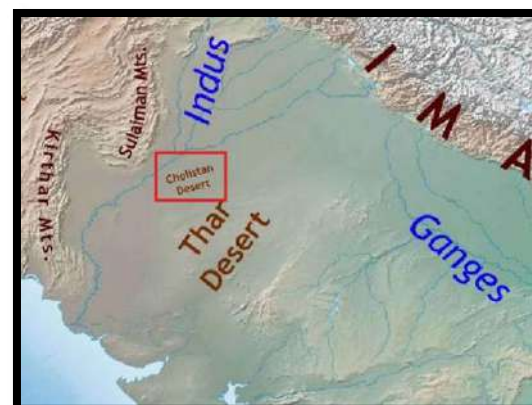
1.10 Cholistan Desert

Context: -

- Pakistan has **paused its Green Pakistan Initiative**, which includes six strategic canals, most notably the Cholistan Canal, aimed at irrigating the Cholistan Desert.

About: -

- Locally known as **Rohi**, a desert in the southern part of Punjab, Pakistan.
- Borders the Thar Desert in India.**
- Known for its **arid and semi-arid tropical desert climate**, it is characterised by sandy terrain with some alluvial flats and small sandy dunes.
- Centre for caravan trade, leading to the construction of numerous forts in the medieval period to protect trade



routes, of which the Derawar Fort is the best-preserved example. Derawar fort was built in the 9th century by Rai Jajja Bhatti.

1.11 Gulf of Tonkin

Context: -

- Crescent-shaped, shallow, semi-enclosed water body in the northwestern **part of South China Sea**.

About: -

- Known as the '**Beibu Gulf**' in China and the '**Bac Bo Gulf**' in Vietnam.
- Receives the **Red River**.
- **Bounded by:** China (north and east), Hainan Island (east), and northern Vietnam (west).
- Connects to the **South China Sea via the gulf's mouth in the south and the Hainan Strait (Qiongzhou Strait)** in the northeast.
- The infamous "Gulf of Tonkin Incident (1964)" led the US Congress to pass the "Gulf of Tonkin Resolution," leading to a **direct engagement** of the US in the Vietnam War (1954-75).



1.12 Scarborough Shoal

Context: -

- China announced the creation of a "**National Nature Reserve**" at Scarborough Shoal.

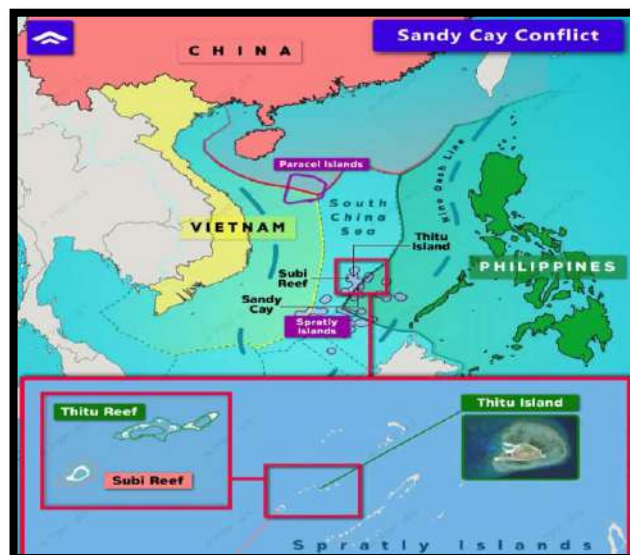
About: -

- It is a **triangular-shaped atoll** located in the **South China Sea**, named after a British Ship, grounded on the atoll nearly three centuries ago.
- Located ~120 nautical miles west of the **Philippine island of Luzon** and inside its exclusive economic zone.
- Also called **Huangyan Island by Beijing** and **Panatag Shoal** or Bajo de Masinloc by Manila, it has long been a **flashpoint** over sovereignty & fishing access.



1.13 Sandy Cay Reef

- Tensions escalated between China and the Philippines after China claimed it had seized control of Sandy Cay Reef.
- Aka Texian Reef, it is a small sandbar located in the Spratly Islands, part of South China Sea.
- Positioned near Thitu Island (Pagasa), a major Philippine-administered Island, **Sandy Cay lies within international disputed waters, claimed by China, Philippines, & Vietnam.**
- Rich in maritime resources e.g fisheries, oil and gas reserves; serves as a critical shipping lane.



1.14 Philippines

Context: -

- 6.9 magnitude earthquake recently hit the coastal city of Cebu in the Philippines.

About: -

- Philippines is an island nation of Southeast Asia in the western Pacific Ocean
- its **capital is Manila.**
- **Maritime Borders:** The Philippine Sea to the east, the South China Sea to the west, the Sulu Sea to the southwest, and the Celebes Sea to the south.
- **Mount Apo is the highest mountain,** the **Cagayan River** is the longest river, and the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River in Palawan is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Active **volcanoes include Mayon, Taal, & Pinatubo,** which are part of the Pacific "Ring of Fire"



1.15 Chagos Islands

Context: -

- **United Kingdom officially handed over sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius.**

About: -

- Chagos archipelago is a **group of seven atolls in the Indian Ocean**, comprising at least 60 islands about 500 km south of the Maldives and more than 2000 km northeast of Mauritius.
- Chagos Islands are the **southernmost archipelago of the Chagos-Laccadive Ridge**, a long submarine mountain range in the Indian Ocean.



- **Key Islands:** Salomon Islands, Diego Garcia, Nelsons Island, etc. The Great Chagos Bank is the largest at all in the world.

1.16 Gulf of Aden

Context: -

- Satellite imagery shows new UAE military runways and bases circling the Gulf of Aden.

About: -

- The Gulf of Aden is in the **Indian Ocean, between Yemen on the south coast of the Arabian Peninsula and Somalia** in Africa.
- The Gulf runs in a **west-east direction, roughly 900 kilometres** long and 500 kilometres wide. It is an important waterway for transporting Persian Gulf oil.
- **Together with the Red Sea**, which connects within the northwest **through the Bab el Mandeb**, it forms an essential oil transport route between Europe and the Far East.



1.17 Kurdish Conflict

Context: -

- Stateless **ethnic group native** to a region historically called Kurdistan.

About: -

- Kurdistan **overlaps with the Levant Region**, which is a historical region **covering parts of Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan and Iraq**.
- **Geographic spread:** Largest populations in Turkey (43%), Iran (31%), Iraq (18%), Syria (6%), and smaller pockets in Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- **Concentrated in southeastern Turkey**, particularly in **Diyarbakir**, a historical flashpoint.
- Kurdish issue was a key factor in Turkey's EU accession talks; "**Road to EU goes through Diyarbakir**".
- Mostly Sunni Muslims with some Sufi followers.
- Speak Kurdish dialects like Kurmanji (Latin script) & Sorani (Arabic script).
- Turkish government stance: No official census by ethnicity; resisted Kurdish autonomy demands.
- Kurds form about 20% of Turkey's 86 million population.

Levant Region

- Levant comes from French "lever" = to rise (sunrise → east)
- Refers to the Eastern Mediterranean region

1.18 Suez Canal

- Suez Canal is a 193-km-long artificial waterway connecting the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea through the Isthmus of Suez.
- It was constructed over a decade and opened on November 17, 1869.
- The canal is one of the **world's busiest and most strategic maritime routes**, linking the **Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean**. It is the **world's largest shipping chokepoint**.

Importance:

- Reduces travel distance between Europe and Asia by **up to 7,000 km**.
- Accounts for nearly 12-15% of global trade. Key passage for 8-9% of global energy flows.
- For India, **nearly 80% of its exports** to Europe passing through the Suez Canal.



1.19 Strait of Hormuz

Context:

- Iran's Parliament closed the Strait of Hormuz amid tension with Israel.

Interesting facts:

- **Operation Rising Lion (Israel):** Targeted Iranian nuclear & military sites through airstrikes & drone attacks to halt Iran's nuclear weapon advancement.
- **Operation True Promise 3(Iran):** Retaliatory missile strikes on Israel, causing explosions in Jerusalem & Tel Aviv.

About:

- Located at the **mouth of the Persian Gulf**.
- It lies between **Oman and Iran**.



- It connects the **Persian Gulf in the north to the Gulf of Oman** and the Arabian Sea in the south.
- It is 21 miles (33 km) wide at its narrowest point, with the shipping lane just two miles (three km) wide in either direction.
- Importance: About a **fifth of all oil traded** at sea passes through it.
- It is also the **route used for nearly all the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)** produced by the **world's biggest LNG exporter, Qatar**.
- India imports approximately 40% of its oil and about half of its gas through the narrow Strait.
- India is the **world's third-largest** importer of crude oil.

1.20 Qatar

- Qatar is a country in Western Asia.
- **Capital:** Doha.
- It occupies the small Qatar Peninsula on the northeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula.
- It shares its **sole land border** with Saudi Arabia to the south.
- **Gulf of Bahrain**, an inlet of the Persian Gulf, separates Qatar from Bahrain.
- It is a high-income economy backed by the world's third-largest natural gas and oil reserves.
- Qatar **hosted the 2022 FIFA World Cup**, making it the first Muslim and Arab country to host it.
- The 2030 Asian Games were also held in Qatar.
- India is **Qatar's second-largest** trading partner.



1.21 Netzarim Corridor

Context:

- Israel has **initiated the withdrawal of troops** from the **Netzarim corridor in Gaza** as part of a ceasefire agreement with Hamas.

About:

- It is a **7km east-west passage** from the **Israeli border south of Nahal Oz** to the Mediterranean, holding strategic and military relevance, separating Gaza City from the rest of the Gaza Strip.
- Bisepts northern and southern Gaza. Historically **restricted** Palestinian movement.



Philadelphi Corridor

- Originally established under the **1979 Israel Egypt Peace Treaty**.
- Narrow strip of land along the **Gaza-Egypt border**.
- Serves as a critical border area between the southern **Gaza Strip** and **Egypt's Sinai Peninsula**.

- Runs from the **Mediterranean to Kerem Shalom** crossing with Israel and was designated as a de militarised border zone after the withdrawal of Israeli settlements and troops from Gaza in 2005.

1.22 Famine in Gaza

- UN-backed **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)** has declared a famine in Gaza Governorate, the first officially declared famine in West Asia.

Gaza Strip

- The Gaza Strip is a narrow coastal territory on the **eastern Mediterranean, bordered by Israel (north and east) and Egypt (southwest)**.
- It is part of the Palestinian territories (with West Bank).
- Hamas controls internal governance: Israel regulates external access points.
- Israel **manages most crossings, and Egypt exclusively controls the Rafah terminal**.
- No recognised authority exercises complete territorial and administrative control



What is a Famine?

- A famine is the most severe level of acute food insecurity.

For an area to be classified (IPC Phase 5). All three criteria must be met:

- Food Access: At least 20% of households face extreme food shortages, unable to meet basic needs.
- Child Malnutrition: Acute malnutrition affects $\geq 30\%$ of children (6-59 months), measured by weight-for-height, arm circumference, or oedema.
- Death Rate: Crude mortality rate is ≥ 2 deaths per 10,000 people/day, or ≥ 4 under-five deaths per 10,000 children/day.
- IPC Phase 5 is "the absolute inaccessibility of food for an entire population or subgroup, potentially causing death in the short term."

1.23 International Recognition of Palestinian Statehood

- **France, joined by Australia, Canada, U.K., and Portugal,** has formally recognised Palestinian statehood.
- Out of 193 United Nations member states, 147, including major powers like India, China, and Russia, have already recognised the Palestinian state.

Two-state solution

- It is a proposed framework to resolve the Israeli Palestinian conflict by creating two independent states, coexisting side by side with mutual peace, security, and recognition.

1.24 Great Bitter Lake

- Great Bitter Lake is a **crucial water body in Egypt located along the Suez Canal**, which serves as a passage for international maritime trade.
- Situated in Egypt, spanning ~ 60 km², it is a saltwater lake between the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea**, connected to both seas through the Suez Canal.
- The site was originally a dry salt valley before the construction of the Suez Canal.
- Evidence of trade routes via the Suez Canal dates back to the era of Pharaoh Senusert III, suggesting the region's historical significance for maritime commerce.
- The Suez Canal, with the Great Bitter Lake as a key component, shortens the maritime route between Europe and Asia by up to 7,000 kilometres.



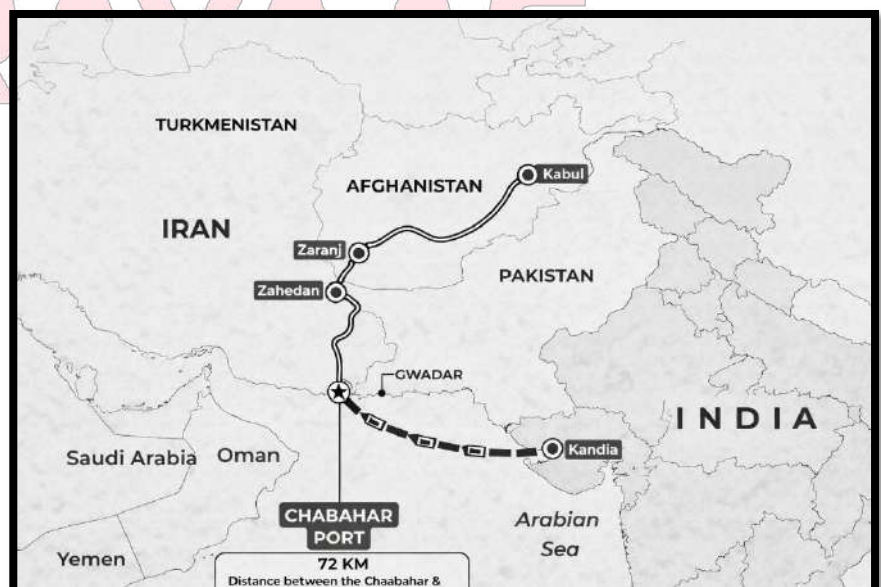
1.25 Chabahar Port

Context: -

- USA has **granted India a six-month exemption** from sanctions for operations at Iran's Chabahar Port.

About:

- India and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2015 under which India agreed to develop the **Shahid Beheshti Terminal** in the port.
- Chabahar is **located at the mouth of the Gulf of Oman**.
- Situated in **energy-rich Sistan-Balochistan province** of southeastern Iran **near the China controlled Gwadar Port**.
- Chabahar is **Iran's only oceanic port** and the **first deepwater port** that puts Iran on the global oceanic trade route map.
- The port is **integrated into the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**, enhancing connectivity from the Indian Ocean to Northern Europe.



- Chabahar Project **was signed in 2003**, and the port is being developed in four Phases.
- There are **two main ports in Chabahar – the Shahid Kalantari port and the Shahid Beheshti port**. The Shahid Kalantari port was developed in the 1980s.
- Provides India direct access to Afghanistan & Central Asia.

International North-South Transport Corridor

- Multi-modal transportation route **linking the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf** to the Caspian Sea via Iran and onward to **northern Europe via St. Petersburg in Russia**.
- It envisages the movement of goods **from Mumbai to Shahid Beheshti Port – Chabahar (Iran) by sea, from Chabahar to Bandar-e-Anzali (an Iranian port on the Caspian Sea) by road, and then from Bandar-e-Anzali to Astrakhan**.
- (a Caspian port in the Russian Federation) **by ship across the Caspian Sea, and after that from Astrakhan to other regions of the Russian Federation and further into Europe**
- Originally decided between India, Iran, and Russia in 2000 in St Petersburg and **subsequently included ten other Central Asian and West Asian countries**.
- **Objective:** To increase trade connectivity between major cities such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Astrakhan, etc. Aims to reduce the carriage cost between India and Russia by about 30% and bring down the transit time from 40 days by more than half.

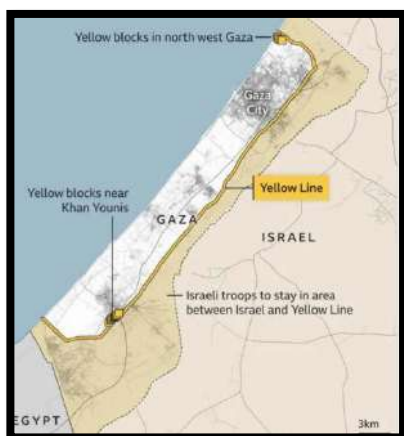


1.26 Morag Axis

- Israel completed the takeover of Morag axis

1.27 Yellow Line

- Temporary military demarcation under the US brokered ceasefire, which separates Israeli-controlled eastern Gaza from Palestinian-held humanitarian zones.
- It divides Gaza into 2 parts, i.e. Israeli-controlled eastern territories & Palestinian-administered Western Areas
- It is called the Yellow Line because Israeli forces marked the boundary using yellow concrete blocks and poles, making the colour a common media and military shorthand rather than an official designation



1.28 Zangezur Corridor

- The Zangezur Corridor, **supported by Turkey and Azerbaijan**, aims to establish a **new trade link through Armenia that could bypass India's Chabahar Armenia-Black Sea route**.
- Proposed land link connecting **Azerbaijan's mainland to its exclave Nakhchivan via Armenia's Syunik region**, ultimately connecting to Turkey through Kars.



1.29 Suwayda

- Syria's **Druze community in Suwayda** faces **ethnic cleansing by Bedouin militias**.
- Suwayda is a city in southern Syria near the Jordan-Israel-Syria tri-junction.
- Lies on Hauran Plateau**, shaped by volcanic activity of Jabal al-Druze.
- The city is **called "Little Venezuela"** due to Latin American return migration.
- The Druze, or Banu Ma'ruf, are an Arabic-speaking ethnoreligious group from the Levant.
- They believe in reincarnation and al-Hakim's divinity and reject Islamic orthodoxy and rituals.



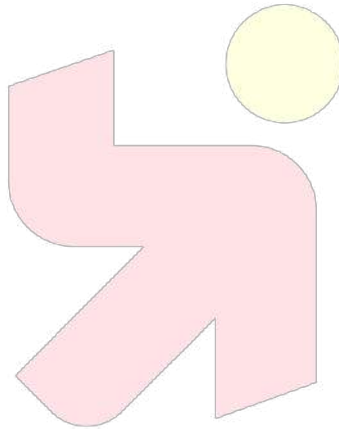
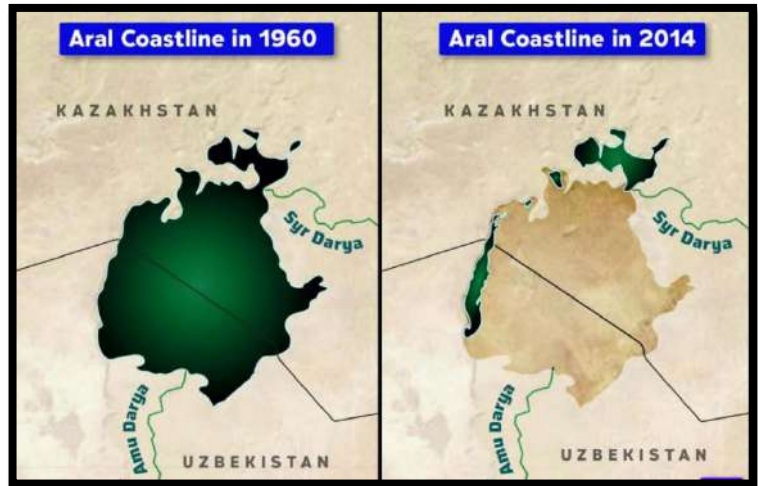
1.30 Mekong River

- Intensive sand mining in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta disrupts natural replenishment, causing severe environmental damage.
- It also faces challenges related to upstream dam construction.
- Source: Tanggula Mountains, China.
- Mouth: Mekong Delta, Vietnam, South China Sea.
- Important Cities: Vientiane (Laos), Phnom Penh (Cambodia), Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)



1.31 Aral Sea

- Kazakhstan Urges Regional Cooperation to Save the Aral Sea.
- Aral Sea is an endorheic lake (lake with no outlet) located in the heart of Central Asia, roughly 200 miles east of the Caspian Sea.
- Bordered by Kazakhstan on the north and Uzbekistan on the south. It was formerly a large saltwater lake.
- Once the fourth largest body of inland water in the world, it lost almost three-quarters of its volume and approximately half of its area.
- Reasons: The drying up of the Aral Sea resulted mainly from the overuse of its two main tributaries—the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya—for irrigation.



PRAYAAS

2. AFRICA

2.1 Uturuncu Volcano

Context: -

- According to scientists, the **"zombie"-like unrest of Uturuncu volcano** is due to the movement of liquid and gas beneath the crater, which is **unlikely** to have an imminent eruption.

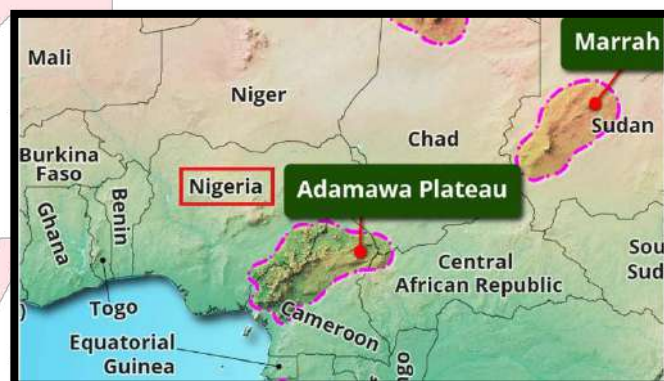
About: -

- Uturuncu, **Bolivia**, is the **highest mountain in southern Bolivia**, lying deep in the **Central Andes**.
- It is a stratovolcano to the east of the **Laguna Colorada ignimbrite shield**.
- Called a 'zombie' volcano because, despite **being technically dead** (last erupting 250 thousand years ago), it still **shows signs of unrest**, including earthquakes and plumes of gases.
- Uturuncu sits above the **world's largest known magma body** in Earth's crust, the **Altiplano-Puna Volcanic Complex** and an active hydrothermal system connect this body and the surface.



2.2 Nigeria

- Nigeria is **Africa's largest democracy**. It is the fastest-growing economy in Africa, with the 4th largest economy and 3rd largest manufacturing sector on the continent.
- With the largest population in Africa, it is often referred to as the **"Giant of Africa"**.
- It is situated on **Africa's West Coast, bordered by the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea**.
- It is a founding member of the African Union. Additionally, Nigeria is a member of the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).
- Joined BRICS as partner country (2025) under BRICS Plus Partnership created at 16th BRICS Summit



2.3 Mozambique

- Mozambique is **grappling with a triple crisis of ongoing armed conflict, frequent natural disasters, and prolonged political unrest**, driving the country into a severe humanitarian emergency.
- Southeastern African country situated in the southern and eastern hemispheres.
- Capital: Maputo.**
- It has a lengthy eastern coastline along the Indian Ocean, separated from island nations Madagascar, Comoros, and Mayotte by Mozambique Channel.



- Borders: Tanzania to the north; Malawi and Zambia to the northwest; Zimbabwe to the west; and South Africa and Eswatini to the southwest.
- Major rivers: **Zambezi** (the largest), Limpopo, Li cunگو, Lúrio, and Rovuma, with most emptying into the Indian Ocean.

2.4 Darfur Region

- A devastating landslide nearly erased Tarasin village in **Sudan's** Darfur region.

2.5 Kurukop echo

- Study suggests a distinct echo "Kurukop echo" at tracted ancient artists to one site.
- Kurukop, is in Nama Karoo region of South Africa's Northern Cape province.



2.6 Congo

Context: -

- M23 (March 23 Movement) rebels have expanded control in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), **capturing Goma and pushing toward Bukavu.**

Democratic Republic of Congo

- Second-largest country in Africa.
- Home to vast natural resources, including cobalt, copper, and coltan.
- Congo river basin: 2nd longest river in Africa.
- Congo rainforest: 2nd largest tropical rainforest.
- Remains mired in poverty, corruption, and ongoing conflict, with **regions like North and South Kivu often the centre of insurgencies.**
- **Goma is situated near the borders with Rwanda and Uganda.**



2.7 Sea Level Rise in Sierra Leone

- **Nyangai and Plantain Islands**, part of Sierra Leone's Turtle Islands, are **shrinking due to rising sea levels.**
- In West Africa.
- Capital: Freetown
- Borders: On north and east by Guinea, on south by Liberia, west by Atlantic Ocean.
- Internal conflict weakened the country from the late 1980s on ward, culminating in a brutal civil war that took place from 1991 to 2002



2.8 Tuti Island

- Tuti Island has been **devastated by two years of war between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).**
- Located at the **confluence of Blue & White Nile in Khartoum, Sudan.**
- Crescent-shaped island was formed by deposition of silt.
- **In habitants:** The Tuti people, trace their roots to the **Mahas** who settled there in the 15th century.
- Other Threats to Island: Flooding, droughts, desertification.



2.9 Civil War in Sudan

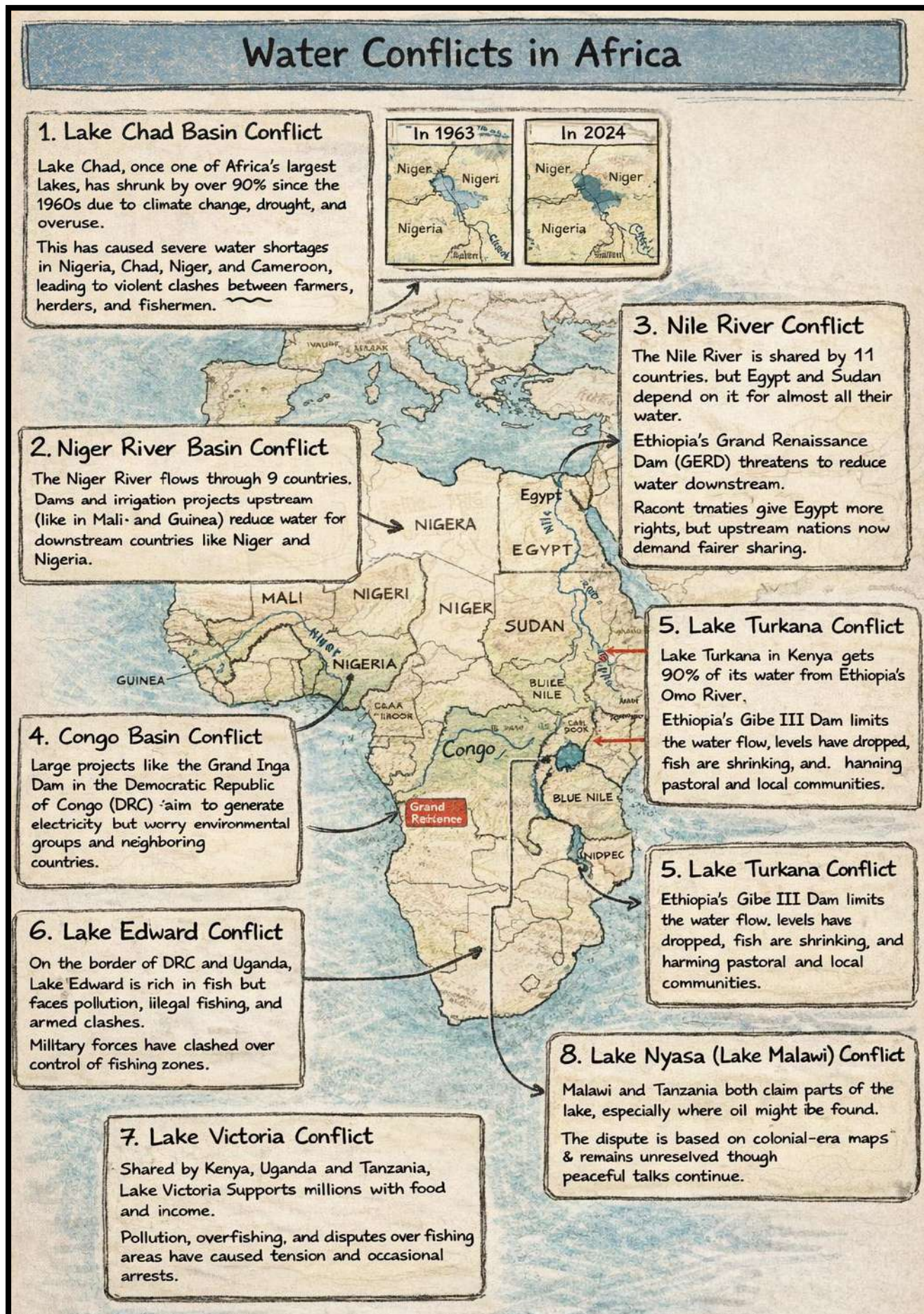
- Sudan in northeast Africa, is bordered by Egypt (north), Eritrea and Ethiopia (east), South Sudan (south), the CAR and Chad (west), Libya (northwest), and the Red Sea (northeast maritime boundary).
- Africa's third-largest country, with Khartoum serving as its capital.
- Includes Sahara Desert, Jebel Marra, and the Nile system, with the White Nile joining the Blue Nile at Khartoum.
- World's top producer of Gum Arabic, vital for the food and pharmaceutical industries.

2.10 Benin

- **Cotonou in Benin recently witnessed a failed coup attempt by a group of soldiers.**
- Republic of Benin is a **West African country with its capital at Porto Novo.** Cotonou is its largest city and the administrative centre.
- French is the official language.
- The region was ruled by the Kingdom of Dahomey (17th–19th centuries) and later became a French colony called French Dahomey.
- **Physical Features:** Southern coastline along Bight of Benin (part of Gulf of Guinea), central plateaus (Barre Country), and northwest Atakora Mountains, with Mont Sokbaroas the highest point.

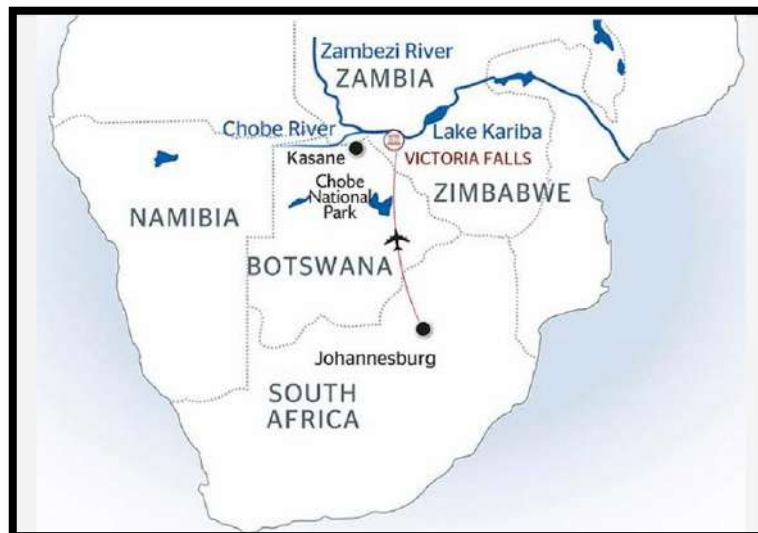


2.11 Water Conflicts in Africa



2.12 Zambezi River

- **Source:** Kalena Hills, Zambia.
- Mouth: Mozambique, Indian Ocean.
- **Cities:** Lusaka (capital of Zambia)
- Forms **Kariba Dam** which is the largest reservoir in the world in terms of volume.
- **Victoria Falls is located on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe.**



2.13 Lake Turkana

- Changes in Lake Turkana's water levels affected fault movement & magma generation in Lake Turkana.
- World's largest permanent desert lake and the largest alkaline lake, mainly situated in Kenya's Great Rift Valley.
- Its northern end extends into Ethiopia.
- Known as "Jade Sea" for its turquoise colour, its basin was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997
- Turkana Basin is a significant paleoanthropological site, often referred to as the "Cradle of Humankind" due to numerous hominin fossil discoveries
- Three rivers, Omo, Turkwel, and Kerio, feed the lake, with the Omo River contributing nearly 90% of the total inflow. • It has the world's largest breeding colony of Nile crocodiles.



2.14 Great Ruaha River

- Great Ruaha River, one of Tanzania's major rivers, is drying up due to climate change and mismanagement.
- Originates in Kipengere mountains and stretches roughly 84,000 km, flowing through the wetlands of the Usungu valley and the Ruaha national park, eventually emptying into the Rufiji river.

3. NORTH AMERICA

3.1 Mount Spurr Volcano

Context: -

- Alaska's Mount Spurr volcano shows **signs of an imminent eruption** due to increased seismic activity and gas emissions.

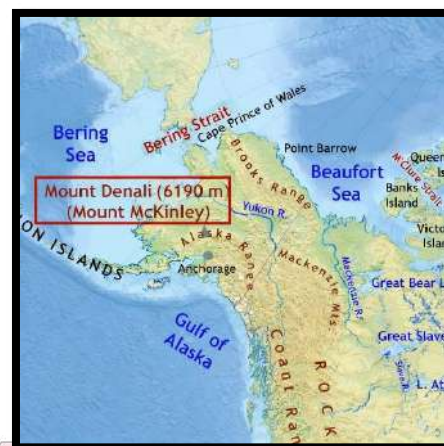
About: -

- Location:** Situated at the southern edge of a fault breaking the Alaska Range in the US. It is an andesitic Stratovolcano, ice-and snow-covered.
- Part of the Aleutian Arc and located on the **Pacific Ring of Fire**.
- Lake Formation: **Chakachamna Lake** emerged post-caldera collapse ~10,000 years ago.



3.2 Mount Denali

- President Trump's executive order mandates the **renaming of North America's highest peak**, reversing the Obama era decision to call it Denali, **citing the historical significance of President McKinley**.
- Denali National Park and Preserve** retain its name despite the mountain's renaming.



3.3 Gulf of Mexico

Context: -

- US President Donald **Trump signed an executive order** to rename the 'Gulf of Mexico' as the '**Gulf of America**' and declared **February 9** as the '**Gulf of America Day**'.

Can a Country Rename a Gulf Unilaterally?

- International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) manages global standardisation of sea & ocean names.
- However, **no binding international treaty exists for maritime naming**, meaning individual countries can use different names domestically. Any renaming proposal must undergo international consensus, not unilateral declaration.



About: -

- A **partially landlocked marginal sea** of the **Atlantic Ocean**. it is the **largest gulf globally**, surrounded by **Mexico, the US, the Caribbean, and Cuba**.
- Created 300 million years ago during the late Triassic period due to seafloor subsidence from tectonic plate movement.
- Drained by **rivers like the Mississippi and Rio Grande**, which are rich in petroleum & natural gas.
- Linked to the **Caribbean Sea via Yucatán Channel**, and the **Atlantic Ocean through the Florida Straits**.
- Control & Ownership: Shared by U.S., Mexico, and Cuba

3.4 Alcatraz Island

- US President announced plans to rebuild and expand the **infamous Alcatraz prison**, shut for over 60 years.
- Location: **Rocky island** covering 22 acres in **San Francisco Bay**, about 2 km off the coast of California.

**3.5 Poás Volcano**

- The Poás Volcano in Costa Rica erupted blanketing nearby areas in volcanic ash.
- Poás Volcano is located in central Costa Rica.

**3.6 Panama Canal**

- Panama has decided not to renew its MoU with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- Completed in 1914, it is an artificial waterway that connects the Atlantic & Pacific Oceans, significantly reducing travel time for ships.
- Originally built and controlled by the US, the canal was transferred to Panama in 1999, **following the Torrijos-Carter Treaties of 1977**, though the US retains military defence rights.
- Remains a critical artery for global trade, especially for US shipping routes.
- The canal transports ships **through Gatun Lake**.

**3.7 Colorado River**

- Colorado River basin has lost over 10 trillion gallons of water in two decades due to the climate crisis. Source: Continental Divide, Colorado, USA.
- Mouth: Gulf of California (Pacific Ocean), Mexico.
- Important Cities: Las Vegas, Los Angeles, and San Diego.
- The Grand Canyon is an important feature.

4. SOUTH AMERICA

4.1 Perito Moreno Glacier

Context: -

- **Argentina's iconic Perito Moreno Glacier**, once unusually stable, has now begun retreating rapidly since 2020 due to climate change.

About: -

- Located in **Los Glaciares National Park, Santa Cruz Province, near El Calafate, Argentina**, it covers ~250 sq km, stretches over 30 km, and rises 60 m above lake level.
- Formed around 18,000 years ago during the last Ice Age
- Nicknamed the '**White Giant**'.
- Declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1981 for its glacial and ecological importance.
- Known for dramatic ice calving events since 1917, a key global tourist draws.

Ice calving

- It is the natural process where **large chunks of ice break off from** the edge of a glacier and fall into the water body, often creating **dramatic waves and sounds**. It is a key way glaciers lose mass and reshape their structure over time.

4.2 Colombia

Context: -

- Colombia signed a significant **cooperation pact with China** under Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

About: -

- **Capital: Bogota**, located in the northwestern part of South America.
- **Borders:** Northwest by Panama; south by Ecuador and Peru; east by Venezuela; southeast by Brazil.
- **Maritime boundaries** include the Caribbean Sea to the north and the Pacific Ocean to the west.
- Dominated **geographically by Andes Mountains** on the west and Amazon Rainforest in the southeast.
- **Rich in Natural Resources:** Petroleum, natural gas, coal, iron ore, nickel, gold, copper, and among the **world's leading producers of emeralds**.



4.3 Fuego Volcano

Context: -

- Guatemala's Fuego volcano erupted.

About: -

- Location:** Southern Guatemala, about 18 km from **Antigua city**.
- It is Stratovolcano; one of Central America's most active volcanoes.
- Elevation: Around 3,763 meters above sea level.
- Tectonic Setting: **Part of the Pacific Ring of Fire**, a seismically active zone.
- Formed by the **subduction of the Cocos Plate beneath the Caribbean Plate**.



4.4 State of Emergency in Peru

- Reason:** Rise in organised crime.
- Located on the western coast of South America, **bordered by Ecuador and Colombia to the north, Brazil to the east, Bolivia and Chile to the south**, and Pacific Ocean to the west.
- Physical Divisions:** Three distinct regions — arid coast in the west, Sierra (central highlands) with the Andes mountains, and humid Selva (jungle) with Amazon rainforest in east.
- Includes the Amazon River, which originates in the Andes and flows into the Atlantic Ocean, and Lake Titicaca, the world's highest navigable lake.
- Climate: Varies from dry coastal deserts to humid rainforests due to latitude, elevation, and opposing currents of the cold Humboldt and warm El Niño



4.5 Parana River

- Declining water levels in the Parana River in Argentina have disrupted soybean oil transport. Source: Brazil.
- Mouth: Uruguay, Atlantic Ocean.
- Important Cities: Brasilia & São Paulo (Brazil), Asunción (Paraguay), and Buenos Aires (Argentina).



5. Arctic

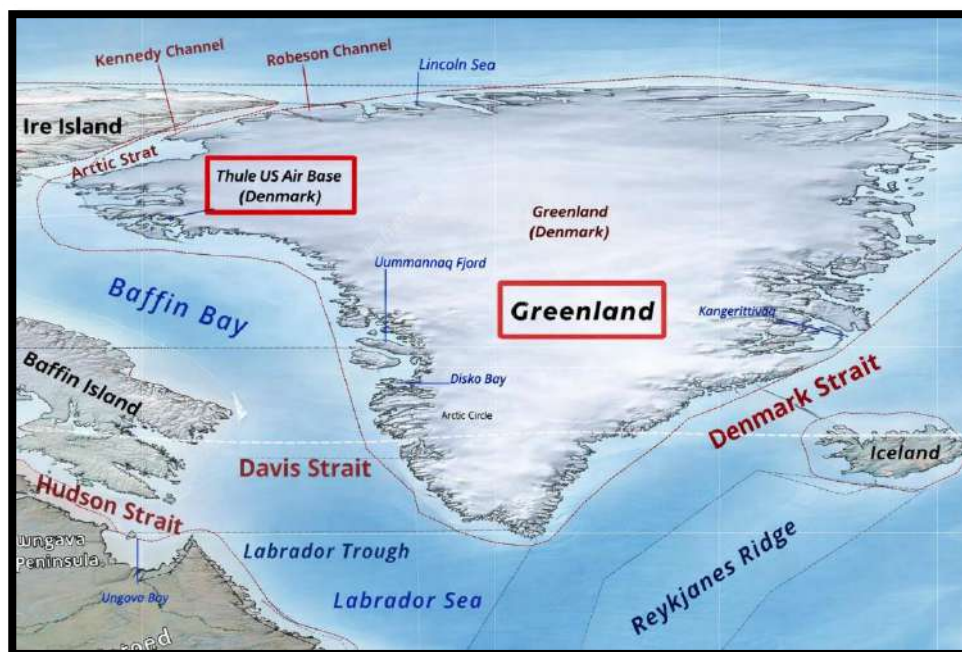
5.1 Greenland

Context: -

- Greenland's Parliament **adopted a legislation that limits foreigners' right to property** on the Island.

About: -

- Located in the **North Atlantic Ocean**, Greenland is the world's largest island.
- The island is a **territory of Denmark but enjoys extensive autonomy**.
- Capital: Nuuk
- Highest Point: Gunnbjorn's Fjeld
- It is **not a member of the European Union but a part of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**.
- Its **nearest neighbour is Canada's Ellesmere Island**, which is located 16 miles to the north of Greenland.
- Two-thirds of Greenland **lies above the Arctic Circle**, creating frigid climate year-round.
- Large mass of glacier ice, which **covers about 80% of the island**.
- The Greenland Ice Sheet is the **second largest in the world after the Antarctic Ice Sheet**.
- Nearly half of Greenland** is protected as the National Park of Greenland—Greenland's only national park, and the **world's largest national park**.
- Home to the **northernmost point** of land in the world, **Kaffeklubben Island**.
- Under Danish control for over 300 years, integrated into Denmark in 1953. Gained home rule in 1979 and self-governing status in 2009.
- Rich in gold, nickel, cobalt, and 23 of 34 rare earth minerals**.
- Contains **reserves** of oil and natural gas.
- Home to **Pituffik Space Base**, vital for US missile defence operations & space monitoring in the Arctic.



Pituffik Space Base

- 1,500 km **from Nuuk, Greenland's capital**, it is the northernmost US military base.
- Established under a **1951 US-Denmark defence agreement**, critical during the Cold War.
- Previously **known as Thule Air Base**.
- Continuous **daylight** from May to August; Complete **darkness** from November to February. Still base remains operational year-round.

6. ANTARTICA

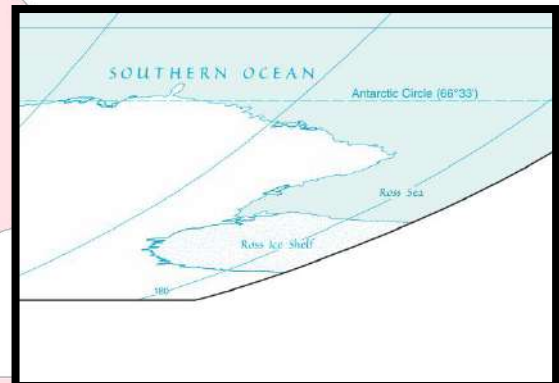
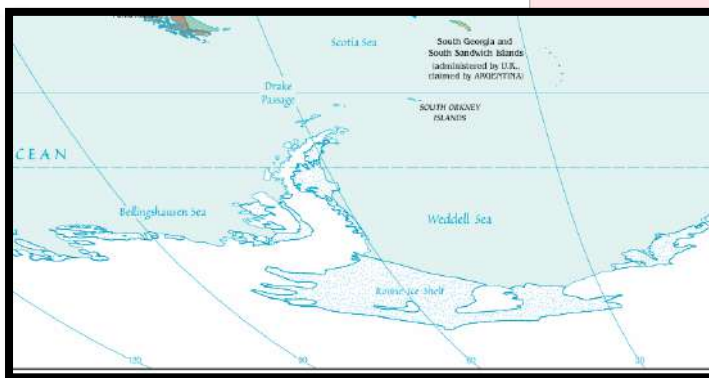
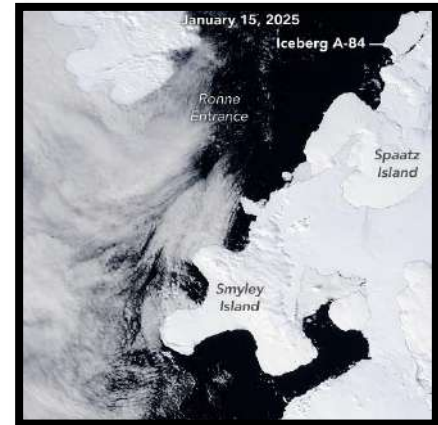
6.1 Life Beneath Antarctic Ice Shelf

Context: -

- Scientists discovered a thriving marine ecosystem beneath the Antarctic ice shelf after the A-84 ice berg broke away as part of the Challenger 150 mission.

About: -

- The A-84 iceberg, measuring 510 sq. km, separated from the George VI Ice Shelf. This exposed an underwater region previously covered by 150-metre-thick ice for centuries.
- Challenger 150 mission** is a global deep-sea 8-day research exploration **supported by UNESCO** to study marine biodiversity & ecosystem functioning, capturing high-resolution images/videos while collecting biological specimens.
- Remotely operated vehicle (ROV) **SuBastian** was deployed to examine the newly exposed seafloor.



Highest peak in Antarctica: -

Mount Vinson

- Height: **4,892 m**
- Located in **Ellsworth Mountains**
- Near **Ronne Ice Shelf**

7. EUROPE

7.1 Mount Vesuvius

Context: -

- Scientists confirmed that a man's brain turned into glass during the 79 AD Mount Vesuvius eruption, marking the only known case of human brain vitrification.

About: -

- Composite stratovolcano made up of pyroclastic flows.
- Active volcano in **southern Italy**, the **only one on the European mainland**.
- Home to volcanoes such as **Mount Etna** and **Stromboli**.



7.2 Vatican City

Context: -

- Papal Succession After Pope Francis' Death

About: -

- Smallest sovereign state in the world**, and the headquarters of Roman Catholic Church situated in Rome.
- The Holy See is the government of the Catholic Church, essentially the **central administration of the church, with its seat in Vatican City**.
- Governance:** Ecclesiastical monarchy ruled by the Pope.



Office of the Pope

- Holds **supreme authority as Bishop of Rome**, head of the Holy See and sovereign of Vatican City.
- Regarded as **Christ's representative on Earth** and successor to Saint Peter.
- Elected by the College of Cardinals in a conclave, typically from among cardinals, and leads a sovereign state with global diplomatic ties.

7.3 Santorini Island

Context: -

- **Greece has declared a state of emergency on Santorini** due to frequent earthquakes shaking the island and nearby Aegean islands.

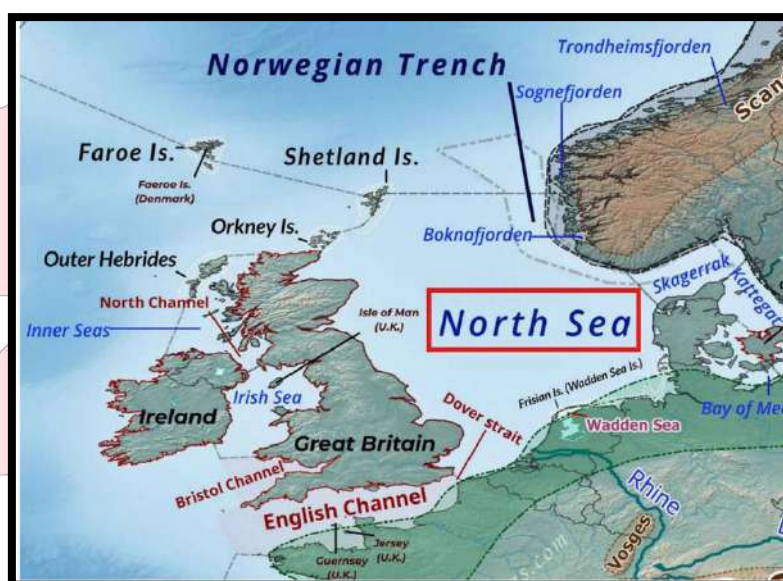
About: -

- Location: Santorini (Thera) is a volcanic crater island in **Southern Aegean Sea**, southeastern Greece.
- Southernmost island of the **Cyclades** located 128 nautical miles southeast of the Greek mainland and 63 nautical miles north of Crete.



7.4 North Sea

- A marginal sea of the **Atlantic Ocean**, bordered by **England and Scotland (west), the Netherlands, Belgium, and France (south), and Norway, Denmark, and Germany (east).**
- It is one of the **richest fishing zones** in the world, supporting economies of bordering nations.
- It is a crucial **maritime route for European trade**, connecting major ports like **Rotterdam, Hamburg, and London**
- **Marginal Sea:** Partially enclosed by land but connected to a larger ocean; influenced by surrounding geography, climate, and ocean currents.



7.5 Russian Territorial Control in Ukraine

- Russia controls about one-fifth of Ukraine, incl. key industrial & strategic hubs.

Areas Under Russian Control:

- **Crimea:** Annexed in 2014; strategic naval and military base in the Black Sea.
- **Luhansk:** Fully under control; industrial Donbas hub rich in metals and chemicals.
- **Kherson:** ~73% controlled; crucial link in "land bridge" to Crimea.
- **Kharkiv & Sumy:** Strategically important occupied pockets.
- **Zaporizhzhia:** Home to Europe's largest nuclear power plant.
- **Donetsk:** ~75% controlled; part of Donbas with Ukraine's heavily fortified "fortress belt" defence.

Recent News: -

- Russia launched two ballistic missiles on Sumy, Ukraine, on Palm Sunday.
- North-eastern Ukrainian city, **capital of Sumy Oblast** (Province/State). ☞
- Located around 350 km east of Kyiv and 180 km northwest of Kharkiv, on the banks of the Psel River.

**7.6 Pokrovsk**

- Russia captured the city of Pokrovsk in eastern Ukraine.
- Pokrovsk is a **major industrial centre and logistics hub** located in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region.
- It serves as a primary supply route for Ukrainian forces along the eastern front.
- The **city hosts Ukraine's only coking coal mine**; gateway to northern Donetsk, including the twin cities of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk.

7.7 Operation Spider's Web

- Ukraine announced a **successful covert operation** named Operation Spider's Web.
- **Conducted by:** Ukrainian Security Service (SBU)
- **Objective:** Deep strike on Russian airbases to cripple strategic air power.

Targeted Locations:

- Belaya Air Base: Irkutsk, Southeastern Siberia.
- Olenya Air Base: Murmansk, Northwestern Russia.
- Dyagilevo Air Base: Ryazan, Western Russia.
- Ivanovo Severny Air Base: Ivanovo, Western Russia.
- Amur region, Far East Russia (claimed by Russian Defence Ministry)
- Technology Used: 117 short-range First Person View (FPV) drones laden with explosives.

**First Person View (FPV) drones**

- Small unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) equipped with a forward-facing camera that streams live video to the operator, enabling precise real-time remote control.

Key Features:

- Small size and high mobility allow penetration deep into enemy territory while evading air defences.
- Operate within 2–5 km; autonomous navigation, obstacle avoidance, target recognition, & precision strikes without relying on GPS.
- Can carry explosives, sensors, specialized equipment tailored to mission needs.
- Applications: Combat operations, surveillance, reconnaissance, search & rescue, & commercial filming.

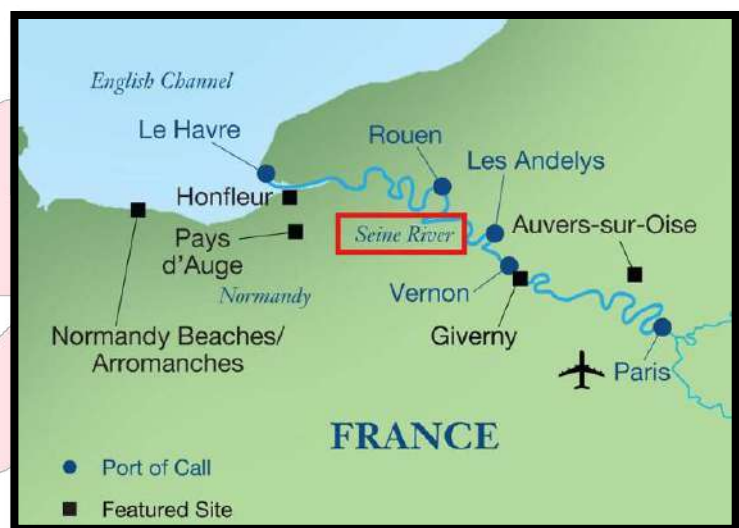
7.8 Kerch Strait

- Kerch bridge was hit by Ukraine with underwater explosives.
- Kerch Strait **connects** the **Black Sea and the Sea of Azov**.
- It **separates** the **Kerch Peninsula of Crimea** in the west from the **Taman Peninsula of Russia's Krasnodar Krai** in the east.
- Only direct link **between Russia and Crimea**.
- Important for supply of fuel and other essential goods.



7.9 Seine River

- Seine River was opened for public swimming for the first time since 1923.
- **Location:** Paris empties into the English Channel at Le Havre.
- Length: 775 km, France's second longest river after Loire.
- Flows through Paris for about 13 kilometres from west to east, joined by the Marne River.
- Drainage Basin: Covers approximately 79,000 square km, draining northern France.



PRAYAAS

8. AUSTRALIA

8.1 Rottnest Island

Context: -

- Seaplane crashed near Rottnest Island, Australia.

About: -

- Rottnest Island, known as Wadjemup to the Whadjuk Noongar people, holds cultural significance.
- Located 19 km off the coast of Fremantle, near Perth, Western Australia.
- Home to the **Quokka (*Setonix brachyurus*)**, a rare marsupial on the mainland.

Quokka

- Quokkas are **nocturnal**. They are known for **being social and curious**, often approaching humans for food, though they are not aggressive.
- **Habitat:** Native to Australia, **quokkas are primarily found on Rottnest Island**, with a small population on the mainland in bushland areas.
- IUCN: **Vulnerable**



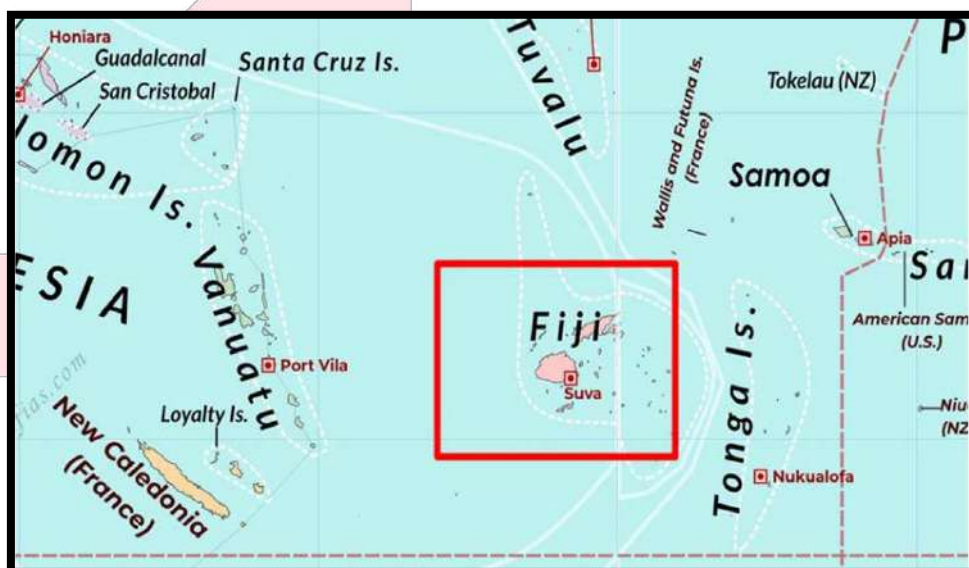
8.2 Fiji

Context: -

- Iguanas (primarily terrestrial reptiles) **colonised Fiji after surviving an 8,000-kilometre sea voyage**, the longest known oceanic migration by any land-dwelling vertebrate.
- Fiji Eliminated **Trachoma**

About: -

- Republic of Fiji is an **island nation in the South Pacific Ocean** made up of over 330 islands, about one third of which are permanently inhabited.
- **Capital: Suva**, located on the southeast coast of the largest island, Viti Levu.
- Gained independence from British rule in October 1970.
- Mount Tomaniivi (1,324 m) is the highest peak



Iguanas

- Reptile
- Native to Central & South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean
- **Third (parietal) eye on head** - detects predators
- **Not found in India.**



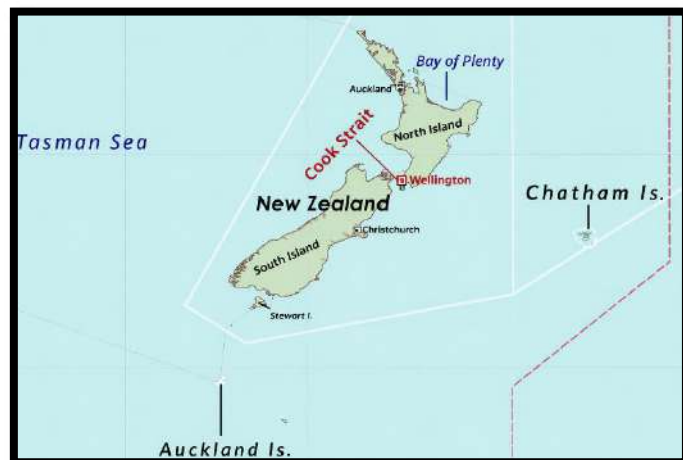
8.3 New Zealand

Context: -

- 6.7 magnitude earthquake struck off New Zealand's South Island.

About: -

- An island nation in the **South Pacific Ocean**, consisting of 2 main islands, **North Island and South Island**, along with numerous smaller islands.
- Capital: Wellington (located on the North Island).
- **Southern Alps**: A 480 km long mountain range on South Island, **home to Aoraki/Mount Cook** (12,316 ft), the **country's highest peak**.
- **Longest River**: Waikato River (North Island).
- New Zealand is **part of the Pacific Ring of Fire**, a **seismically active region** known for frequent earthquakes and volcanic activity.
- **Government type**: **Parliamentary** democracy & constitutional monarchy, with **British monarch** as head of state



8.4 Mount Taranaki

- New Zealand's Mount Taranaki has been **granted legal personhood, recognising it as a living entity with rights, responsibilities, and powers**, in a landmark agreement with Maori tribes.
- A legal entity acts as a person in legal terms, represented through designated individuals, and is capable of holding rights and responsibilities.
- Mount Taranaki (Taranaki Maunga), also known as Mount Egmont, is located on the west coast of New Zealand's North Island.

Legal Entity Status in India

- Madras High Court granted **'Mother Nature'** the status of a legal entity, recognising it as a living being with rights, duties, and liabilities like a person.
- **Rights for Protection**: Like fundamental & constitutional rights, ensuring its survival and well-being.
- The court invoked this principle, empowering the state to act on behalf of nature as a guardian to protect its interests.
- E.g. Animals in Haryana (2018), Ganga and Yamuna rivers (2017), and Sukhna Lake (2020).

9. INDIA

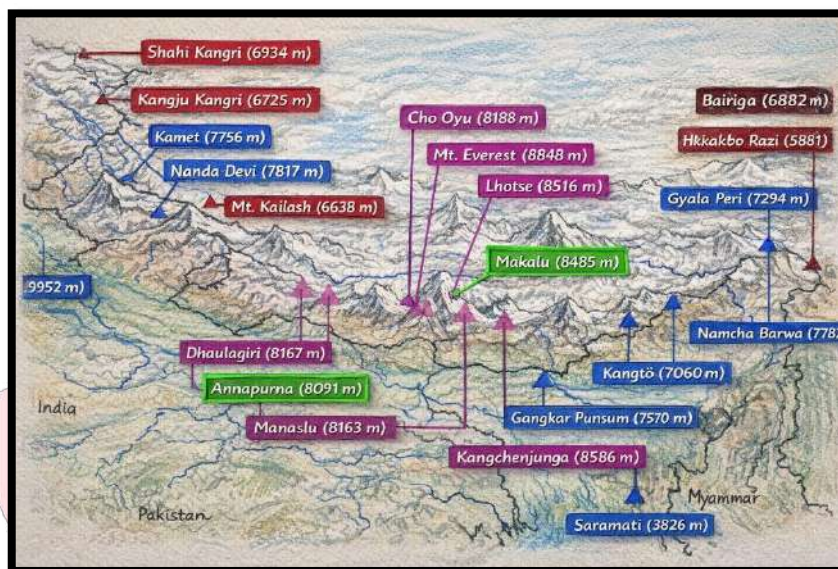
9.1 Mount Makalu

Context: -

- ITBP successfully summited Mt. Makalu, as part of its first twin-summit attempt with Mt. Annapurna as part of the 'Clean Himalaya – Save Glacier' initiative to collect non-biodegradable waste.

About: -

- Makalu I, or Mt. Makalu (the main summit), is the **fifth-highest mountain in the world**, rising to a height of 8,485 meters (27,838 feet) above sea level.
- Located in the **Mahalangur Himalaya range**, on the border **between Nepal and Tibet** (China) and lies about 19 km southeast of Mount Everest.
- Known for its distinct **pyramid shaped peak** with four sharp ridges. It has two notable subsidiary peaks nearby: Makalu II or Kangchungtse (7,678 m) & Chomo Lonzo (7,804 m).
- The **Barun Valley**, at its base, is known for rich biodiversity and stunning natural beauty.
- Inhabited by the Sherpa and Kirati communities



Mount Annapurna

- It is the **10th highest mountain** in the world, standing at 8,091 meters (26,545 feet) & located in **central Nepal** in Himalayas, part of the Annapurna Massif.
- The mountain lies within the **Annapurna Conservation Area**, Nepal's largest protected region.

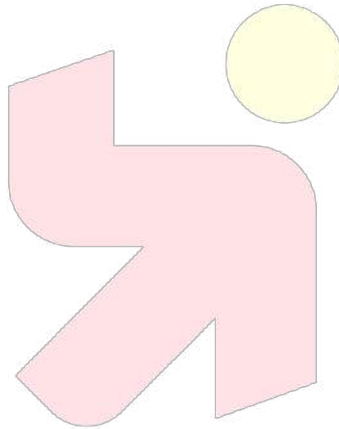
9.2 Petrapole Land Port

- India has officially **terminated the transshipment facility** that **allowed Bangladesh to export goods to third countries via the Petrapole Land Port**.
- This facility was granted in 2020.
- Petrapole is **largest land port in South Asia**, situated on the **Indo-Bangladesh border**.
- Nearly 30% of land-based trade between India and Bangladesh occurs through the Land Port Petrapole.



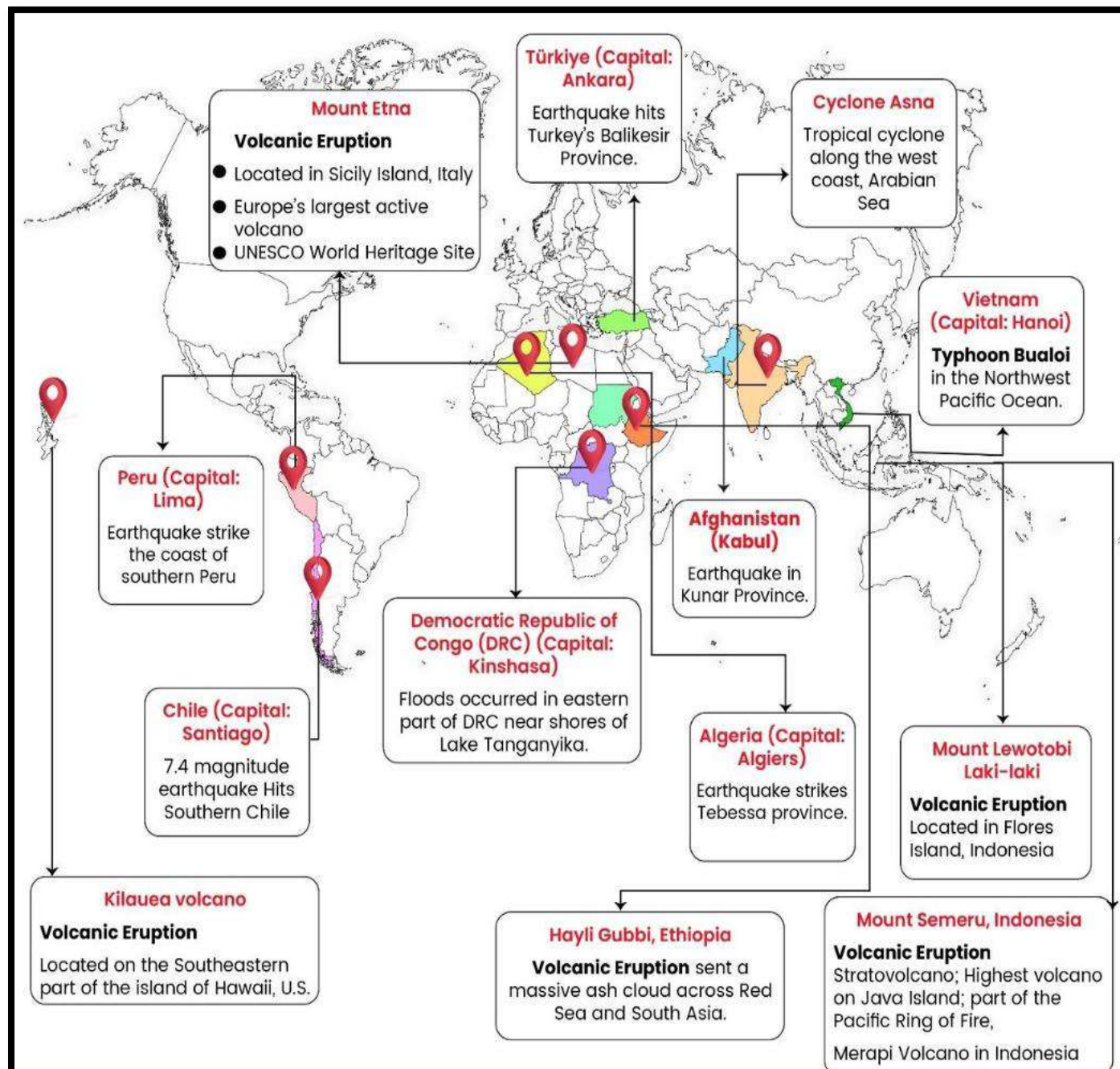
9.3 Mayotte

- **Tropical Cyclone Dikeledi** (Jan 2025) struck Mayotte, a French territory in the Indian Ocean, causing severe flooding and displacing 14,500 people.
- It followed Tropical Cyclone Chido (Dec 2024), the strongest storm in 90 years, which devastated Southeast Africa.
- Mayotte is in the Mozambique Channel, part of the Comoros Archipelago in the Indian Ocean.

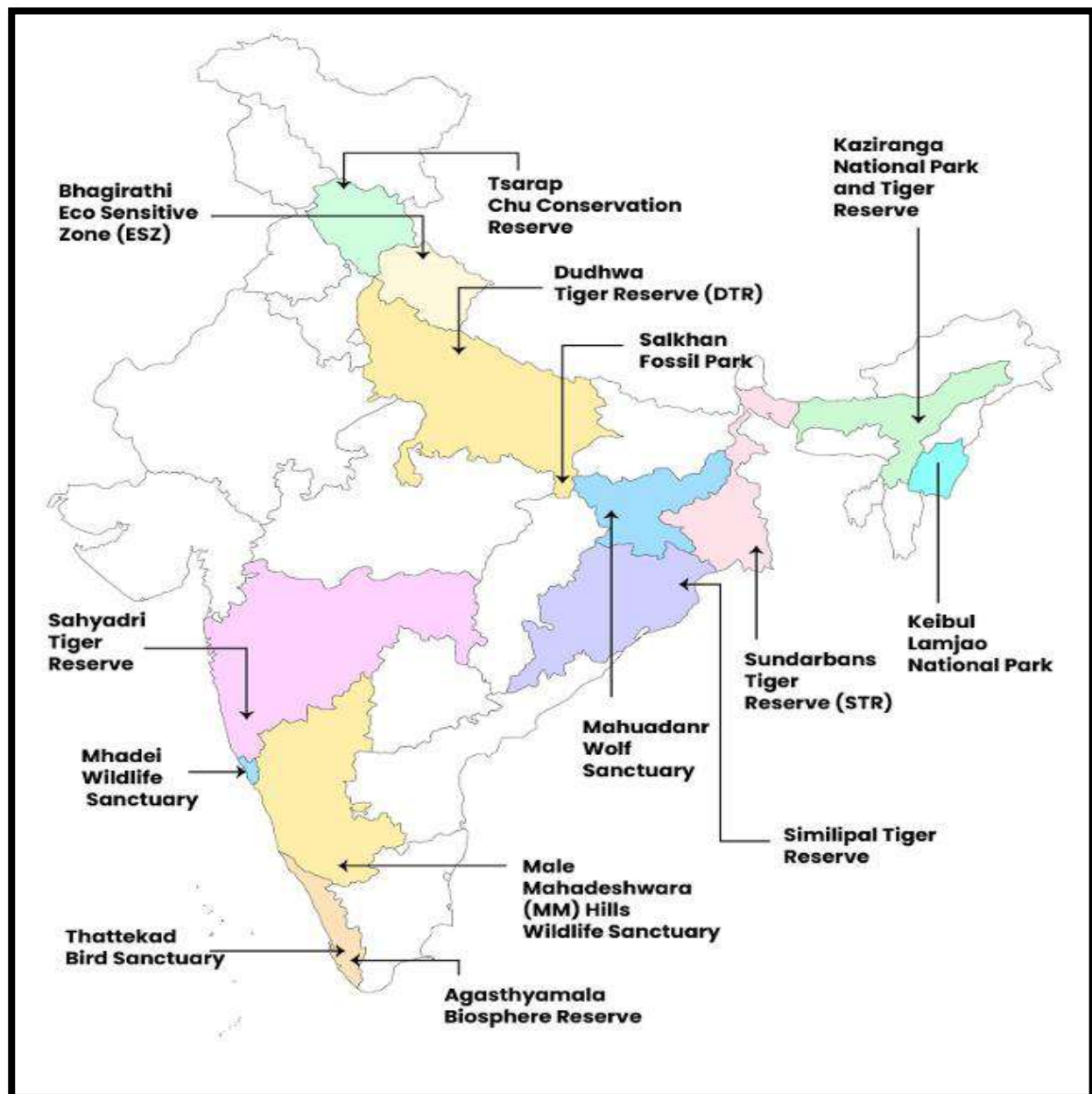


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9.4 Disaster Affected Areas in News



9.5 Protected Areas in News





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CTS NO 1262/B Plot No. 594B,
Office 301A, 3012nd floor Starling Plaza,
J M Road, Pune, +91 73787 43031