

Places in News

World

AFRICA

Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

- The DRC is 2nd largest country in Africa and the 11th largest in the world
- **Capital** – Kinshasa, the capital of the DRC, is situated on the Congo River, which is the only river in Africa that crosses the equator twice.
- **Boundaries:** DRC is bounded by **nine countries** - Central African Republic, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, Angola and Congo. To the west is the country's short **Atlantic coastline** (about 40 km).
- **Provinces in news – North Kivu and South Kivu**, provinces in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, were involved in the Kivu armed conflict over natural resources.
- The **Katanga Plateau** is a rich mining region that supplies cobalt, copper, tin, radium, uranium, and diamonds.
- **Ituri Province:** The region has been affected by armed conflicts and inter-communal violence.
- **BULENGO CAMP:** Persistent socio-political insecurity in the DRC's **North Kivu province** has led to the creation of many internally displaced camps (IDCs).
 - One such camp is **Bulengo camp**, located at the far western edge of Goma city.

Mass Kidnappings in Nigeria

- **Capital** – Abuja
- **Bordering countries:** Benin, Niger, Chad, Cameroon
- **Water bodies:** Atlantic Ocean
- Nigeria is Africa's most populous country (second most populous is Ghana).
- The largest city in Nigeria is Lagos
- Nigeria is named after the Niger River, which is its principal river. Niger drains into the Gulf of Guinea.
- Nigeria has a tropical climate with variable rainy and dry seasons.
- **Active Militant Group** – Boko Haram

Rwanda

- **About:** Rwanda is a small, landlocked country in east-central Africa, just south of the equator.

- It is part of the Great Rift Valley region.
- **Borders:** Burundi (south), Tanzania (east), Uganda (north), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (west).
- **Relevance:** Rwanda, the primary backer of the **M23 armed group**, is supporting its offensive in eastern DRC.
- **Important Place:**
 - **Lake Kivu:** It is one of Africa's Great Lakes, it forms part of **Rwanda's western border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.**

Sudan

- **About:** Sudan is located in northeastern Africa.
- **Borders:** Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the Red Sea.
- **Relevance:** Sudan is seeing violence and fighting among groups amid an attempt to transition its polity from an autocracy.
- **Important Places:** Capital Khartoum, Omdurman (largest city), Darfur, Kordofan, Port Sudan, Zamzam Camp, Abiey Region, El Fashaga Region etc.
 - **Omdurman:** One of the conflict zones that experienced spread of violence beyond the initial fighting in Khartoum.
 - **El Fasher:** Located in Darfur, heavily impacted by clashes and a critical area in the ongoing humanitarian crisis.
 - **Darfur and Kordofan States:** Regions facing severe humanitarian issues, including famine and ethnic-targeted violence due to the conflict.
 - **Zamzam Camp, North Darfur:** Declared as having famine conditions, hosting nearly 500,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs).
 - **Abiey Region:** Disputed land between Sudan and South Sudan.
 - **Jazeera State:** Facing food insecurity crisis similar to conditions in Zamzam camp due to the ongoing conflict.
 - **El Fashaga Region:** Border area with Ethiopia, witnessing frequent clashes over agricultural land amid the ongoing instability.
 - **Kordofan region** constitutes the central and southern area of Sudan. It lies between Darfur on the west and the valley of the White Nile River on the east.

South Sudan

- **About:** It is a landlocked country in East Africa.
- **Borders:** Sudan, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Uganda, Kenya, Central African Republic (CAR)
- **Important Places:** Jonglei State, Upper Nile State, Abyei Region (yet to be determined between Sudan and South Sudan)

Somalia

- **About:** It is a country located in the Horn of Africa.
- **Borders:** Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya
- **Bordering water bodies:** Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean. Its coast touches the Bab-el-Mandeb strait, a gateway to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal.
- **Important Places:** Puntland region, Jubaland, Ogaden Region and Somaliland
 - **Puntland region (autonomous):** Las Anod city ("homeland" for the Harti community), a site of contention between Puntland & Somali Govt.
 - **Jubaland (autonomous):** Some regions under conflict between Kenya and Somalia.
 - **Ogaden Region:** Ethiopia & Somalia dispute
 - **Somaliland (capital - Hargeisa):** Self-governing region but not recognised.

Cabo Verde (Capital: Praia)

- **Location:** It is a small archipelago (volcanic origin) situated in the Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of **West Africa**.
- **Island Groups:** Divided into two groups—Barlavento (Windward) in the north and Sotavento (Leeward) in the south.
- **Largest Port:** Mindelo, located on the island of São Vicente.

Lake Naivasha

- It is a shallow freshwater lake situated in **Kenya's southern Rift Valley**.
- It is designated as the **Ramsar site**.
- It is of relatively recent geological origin and is surrounded by extinct or dormant volcanoes.
- The lake is fed by the perennial **Malewa and Gilgil Rivers**, which drain the Aberdare Mountains of central Kenya.
- The lake is famous for its **high populations of hippos and flamingos**.

Lake Victoria

- It is **situated in East Africa** and is bordered by three countries: Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya.
- It is the **world's largest tropical lake** and the **second-largest freshwater lake by surface area** after Lake Superior.
- It is the largest lake in the African Great Lakes region.
- It serves as the **source of the White Nile**, which flows northward and merges with the Blue Nile in Sudan to form the Nile River.

Mount Kenya

- **Location:** Central Kenya, just south of the Equator.
- **Elevation:** 5,199 meters (17,058 feet) at its highest peak, Batian.

- **Peaks:** Batian (5,199m), Nelion (5,188m), and Point Lenana (4,985m)
- **Geology:** An extinct **stratovolcano** that has undergone significant erosion over time.
- **Glaciers:** Hosts Lewis Glacier and Tyndall Glacier, among Africa's few remaining tropical glaciers.
- **UNESCO Status:** Recognized as a World Heritage Site in 1997 for its ecological and cultural importance.
- **Sacred Mountain:** Considered sacred by the Kikuyu people, who believe it is the home of their god, Ngai.

Port of Tubruk (Libya)

- The Port of Tobruk is a port located at **Tobruk, Libya**.
- Opened in 1986, it is located in Eastern Libya near the Egyptian border.

Lake Kariba

- It is the **world's largest artificial lake** and reservoir by volume.
- Located in Central Africa, within the **Zambezi River** basin.
 - It lies on the border between **Zambia and Zimbabwe**.

MID-WEST ASIA/ CENTRAL ASIA

Caspian Sea

- It is the world's largest water body that is enclosed or bordered by land on all sides.
- This massive lake is located between Asia and Europe.
- It is an **endorheic basin** (drainage basin without an outflow)..
- **Bordering countries:** It is bordered by Russia and Azerbaijan on the west, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan on the north and east, and Iran on the south
- **Three major rivers**—the Volga, the Ural, and the Terek—empty into the Caspian from the north.

Kurdistan Region

- It is a broadly defined geographic region traditionally inhabited mainly by Kurds.
- It consists of an extensive plateau and mountain area, spread over large parts of what are now eastern **Turkey, northern Iraq, and western Iran and smaller parts of northern Syria and Armenia**.
- **Governorates:** Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk, Halabja.

- **Capital:** Erbil
- **Geographical features:**
 - **Mountains:** It includes the mountain systems of the **Zagros** and the eastern extension of the **Taurus**.
 - **Rivers:** **Tigris** and **Greater Zab Rivers** flow through this region and support agriculture and settlements.
- India established a consulate in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan region, in August 2016 to enhance economic and commercial ties with Iraq.

Nagorno Karabakh

- **Location** – Nagorno-Karabakh, called Artsakh by Armenians, is a landlocked mountainous region in the South Caucasus.
- The territory is internationally recognised as part of oil-rich Azerbaijan, but its inhabitants are predominantly ethnic Armenians.

South Caucasus

- The South Caucasus, also known as the **Transcaucasus**, is a geographical region on the **border of Eastern Europe and West Asia**, straddling the **southern Caucasus Mountains**.
- The South Caucasus roughly corresponds to **modern Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan** which are sometimes collectively known as the **Caucasian States**.

Baalbek, Tyre and Anjar Sites

- **Context:** Several Israeli strikes on Baalbek in the east and Tyre in the south hit close to ancient Roman ruins designated as UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Baalbek:

- Baalbek is a city located east of the **Litani River in Lebanon's Beqaa Valley**, about 67 km northeast of Beirut.
- It is home to the UNESCO-listed Baalbek **Roman temples**, including the Temples of Bacchus, Jupiter, and Venus, showcasing intricate architecture.
- It was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1984**.

Tyre:

- Tyre, a city in southern **Lebanon**, is one of the **oldest continually inhabited cities** in the world.
- Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in **1984**.

Anjar:

- Anjar is an ancient city in the **Beqaa Valley of Lebanon**.
- It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (designated in **1984**).

Palmyra, Syria

- **In News:** Israeli air strikes on residential buildings and an industrial area in the

central Syrian town of Palmyra, Syrian.

- **Location:** Located in the **north-east of Damascus**, Palmyra contains the monumental ruins of a great city that was one of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world.
- A **UNESCO** World Heritage today.

Tartous province (Syria)

- **In News:** The violence in Tartous province of Syria has marked the deadliest challenge to the Sunni Islamist-led authorities.
- Tartous is a **major port city on the Mediterranean coast of Syria**.
- It is the second largest port city in Syria (after **Latakia**).

City of Kobani/Kobane (Syria)

- It is a **Kurdish-majority city in northern Syria**, lying immediately **south of the Syria–Turkey border**.
- Turkish-backed Syrian rebels attacked near the strategic northern border town of Kobani, which is under the control of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

HODEIDAH AND AL-SALIF REGIONS (YEMEN)

- **In News:** U.S. strikes the Hodeida and Al-Salif regions

Hodeidah:

- Hodeidah is located in western Yemen.
- The Al Hodeidah city is situated on the Tihamah coastal plain that borders the Red Sea.

Al-Salif region:

- Al-Salif is located in western Yemen.
- It is situated in the southern coast of Kamaran Bay of the Red Sea.

BAB-EL-MANDEB

- **In News:** The Red Sea and surrounding region has been in news due to attacks launched by the US on Houthi rebels in Yemen.
- **Location:** The Red Sea is an inlet of the Indian Ocean, situated between the Arabian Peninsula (Asia) and the Horn of Africa (Africa).
- **Connecting:** The Red Sea connects to the Indian Ocean via the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and the Gulf of Aden.

Al-Jawf Region, Saudi Arabia

- **Location:** Al-Jawf is located in the northern part of Saudi Arabia, bordering Jordan and Iraq, and is part of the Arabian Desert.
- **Climate:** The region is typically arid, with hot summers and mild winters, characterized by vast stretches of sandy terrain.
- **Cultural Significance:** Al-Jawf has historical and archaeological importance, with ancient sites such as Al-Rajajil and ruins from past civilizations, highlighting its long history of human settlement.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE-LEBANON CONFLICT

Netzarim Corridor

This strategic military zone was established by the Israel Defense Forces during the Gaza War, stretching from the Gaza-Israel border to the Mediterranean Sea and effectively dividing the Gaza Strip.

'BLUE LINE' boundary

- The Blue Line is a demarcation line **between Israel and Lebanon**, established by the United Nations in 2000.
- The 120-km Blue Line is an UN-recognised demarcation line to indicate that Israel had withdrawn its military from southern Lebanon.
- It **separates Lebanon from Israel and the Golan Heights**, but it is not an official international border.

Nuseirat Camp:

- **Context:** Israel-Hamas conflict
- Nuseirat is a **Palestinian refugee camp** located in the middle of the Gaza Strip, five kilometers north-east of Deir al-Balah.

NUR SHAMS REFUGEE CAMP (Palestine)

- **In News:** A raid by the Israeli security forces in West Bank's refugee camps.
- Nur Shams is a **Palestinian refugee camp** in the Tulkarm Governorate in the north-western West Bank, located three kilometers east of Tulkarm.
- **Note:** The camp is **not located in GAZA**.

Golan Heights

- **Location:** It is a strategically significant plateau located in southwestern Syria, near the borders of Israel, Lebanon, and Jordan.
- The region overlooks the upper Jordan River valley to the west and is named after the biblical city of refuge, Golan in Bashan.
- **It is bounded by:**
 - Jordan River and Sea of Galilee to the west
 - Mount Hermon to the north
 - Wadi Al-Ruqqād River to the east
 - Yarmūk River to the south.

Philadelphi Corridor

- **Location:** A narrow strip of land, approximately 14 km long and 100 meters wide, along Gaza's border with Egypt, including the Rafah crossing.

- **Demilitarized Zone:** Designated as a demilitarized border zone after Israel withdrew its settlements and troops from Gaza in 2005.
- **Geography:** Extends from the Mediterranean Sea to the Kerem Shalom crossing with Israel.

NEGEV DESERT (ISRAEL)

- **In News:** Houthi militants launched a volley of drones and missiles into Israel, mostly landing in the Negev Desert.
- It is a **desert and semi-desert region of southern Israel**.
- Located **west of the Jordan River**.
- It is bounded by the **Sinai Peninsula (west) and the Jordan Valley (east)**.
- The region's largest city and administrative capital is **Beersheba** in the north.
- At its southern end is the **Gulf of Aqaba and the resort city and port of Eilat**.

NORTH AMERICA/CARIBBIANS

Gulf of Mexico

- **Location:** The Gulf of Mexico is a large body of water bordered by the southeastern United States, Mexico, and Cuba.
- **Connections:**
 - Connected to the **Atlantic Ocean** via the **Straits of Florida**
 - Connected to the **Caribbean Sea** through the **Yucatán Channel**
- **Size:** It is the **largest gulf in the world** and a marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean.
- **Climate**
 - **Type:** Ranges from tropical to subtropical.
 - **Severe Weather:** The region is known for hurricanes, tornadoes, and thunderstorms.
- **Rivers-** The Mississippi River and the Rio Grande are the two major rivers that drain into the Gulf.

Tampa Bay, Yucatan Peninsula

- **Context:** Florida faced Hurricane Milton, a Category 5 Storm- one of five most intense storms in Atlantic history.
- **Tampa Bay Area:** The Tampa Bay area is a major metropolitan area surrounding Tampa Bay on the Gulf Coast of Florida in the United States.
- **Yucatan Peninsula:** The Yucatan Peninsula is a large **peninsula in Mexico and Central America** that is significant for its role in the Maya civilization:
 - **Location:** The Yucatan Peninsula is located in **southeast Mexico and**

extends into parts of Belize and Guatemala.

- It's bordered by the **Gulf of Mexico** to the north and west, and the **Caribbean Sea** to the east.

Baltimore

- It is a shipping port located along the tidal basins of the Patapsco River in Baltimore, Maryland, near the upper northwest shore of the Chesapeake Bay.
- Baltimore was the 17th biggest port in the United States in 2021.
- It's the largest vehicle-handling port in the US.

Potomac River (USA)

- **Context:** Passenger plane collides with U.S. military helicopter mid-air before crashing into Potomac river in Washington.
- The Potomac River is a **major river in the eastern United States**, flowing through West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.
- It **originates from Fairfax Stone**, West Virginia, and extends approximately 652 km before emptying into the **Chesapeake Bay**.
 - The **Chesapeake Bay** is the **largest estuary** in the United States, located on the **East Coast**, primarily between the states of Maryland and Virginia.
 - It is an **inlet of the Atlantic Ocean** and plays a crucial role in the region's ecology, economy, and history.

Mount Adams

- **Location:** Situated in Washington State, United States.
- **Type:** Stratovolcano.
- **Size:** Washington's largest volcano by volume, surpassing Mount Rainier, which is the state's highest peak.

Trinidad and Tobago:

- **In News:** Following a deadly weekend of violence in the dual-island nation in the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago declared a state of emergency.
- **Location:** Trinidad and Tobago is the southernmost island country in the Caribbean.
- It is located 11 kilometres northeast off the coast of Venezuela, 130 kilometres south of Grenada, and west of Barbados.
- Its capital city is **Port of Spain**.
- Despite its proximity to South America, Trinidad and Tobago is generally considered to be **part of the West Indies**.

SOUTH AMERICA

Chancay Port (Peru)

- **Context:** The \$3.6 billion Chinese-funded Chancay port project in Peru, US concerns around it.
- Also called a "new **land-sea corridor between China and Latin America.**"
- Located about 78 km north of the Peruvian capital of Lima, Chancay is a small fishing town with a population of around 60,000.
- It is a **natural deep-water port**, however, previous feasibility studies on building up infrastructure pointed out heavy construction costs.

Essequibo region (Guyana)

- The **Guyana–Venezuela territorial dispute** is an ongoing territorial dispute between Guyana and Venezuela over the Essequibo region.
- It is a 159,500 square km area west of the Essequibo River.
- The Essequibo region accounts for almost **two-thirds of Guyana's territory** and its boundaries were set by a ruling of the international tribunal in 1,899, as a British colony.
- It is also claimed by Venezuela as the Guayana Esequiba State.

DARIEN GAP

- **In News:** The illegal journey into the US often involves dangerous crossings through multiple countries, including the treacherous Darien Gap - a vast, roadless jungle that connects Colombia and Panama.
- **Location:** Darien gap is a geographic region in the **Isthmus of Panama connecting the American continents within Central America.**
- It consists of a large **watershed, forest, and mountains** in **Panama's** Darién Province and the northern portion of **Colombia's** Chocó Department.

Panama canal

- It is a man-made waterway that **connects the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific Ocean.**
- It is built across the **Isthmus of Panama** in the country of Panama.
- Constructed by the United States, the canal was officially opened in 1914.
- Recognized as one of the world's key maritime choke points, it facilitates around 6% of global maritime trade.
- The canal was controlled by the U.S. until 1999 when it was transferred to Panama under the **Torrijos-Carter Treaties (1977).**

Honduras

- It is located in Central America.
- **Honduras Bordered by:**

- **Guatemala to the west; by El Salvador to the southwest; and by Nicaragua to the southeast.**
- It is also bounded by the Pacific Ocean at the Gulf of Fonseca to the south and by the Caribbean Sea at the Gulf of Honduras to the north.

Salar de Uyuni (Bolivia)

- It is the world's largest salt flat, located in southwest **Bolivia**.
- Salar de Uyuni is a critical source of lithium, a key element in the global energy transition, particularly for electric vehicle batteries.
- **Lithium Triangle:** It lies in the 'Lithium Triangle', an area that includes parts of Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia, which holds some of the largest lithium reserves globally.
- **Geographical Location:** The salt flat is situated near the crest of the Andes Mountains in Bolivia.

EUROPE

Santorini Island

- **Location** = Greek islands located in **Aegean Sea**
- Southernmost islands in Cyclades island group.
- It is a volcanic crater island i.e. it is the remaining portion of an exploded volcano.

Greenland

- Greenland is the world's largest island, located in the North Atlantic Ocean.
- It is geographically part of North America but politically an autonomous territory of Denmark.
- **Capital and Highest Point:** The capital is Nuuk, and the highest point is Gunnbjørn's Fjeld.
- **Borders and Maritime Connections:** It is bordered by the Arctic Ocean, Greenland Sea, North Atlantic Ocean, and Baffin Bay and shares maritime borders with Canada, Iceland, and Norway.
- **Northeast Greenland National Park** is the world's largest national park.

Baltic Sea

- **In News:** Chinese registered ship held in Baltic Sea sabotage investigation.

- **Location:** The Baltic Sea is an arm of the Atlantic Ocean that is enclosed by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden, and the North and Central European Plain.
- It is a **shelf sea and marginal sea of the Atlantic** with limited water exchange between the two, making it an inland sea.
- It drains through the **Danish straits** into the **Kattegat** by way of the **Oresund, Great Belt and Little Belt**.
- It includes the **Gulf of Bothnia** (divided into the Bothnian Bay and the Bothnian Sea), the **Gulf of Finland, the Gulf of Riga and the Bay of Gdańsk**.
- It is **connected** by artificial waterways to the **White Sea** via the **White Sea–Baltic Canal** and to the German Bight of the North Sea via the **Kiel Canal**.

Albania

- **Context:** Italian PM calls plan to send migrants to Albania courageous, unprecedented.
- Albania is a country in **Southeast Europe**.
- It is in the **Balkans**, on the **Adriatic and Ionian Seas** within the Mediterranean Sea and shares land borders with **Montenegro** to the northwest, **Serbia** to the northeast, and **North Macedonia** to the east and **Greece** to the south.

Moldova

- **Capital:** Chisinau
- **Location:** Moldova is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe.
- **Borders:** It is bordered by Romania to the west and Ukraine to the north, east, and south.
- **Geography:** Moldova is situated in the northeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula, east of the Carpathian Mountains.
- **Rivers:** Most of the country lies between the Prut River, which forms the border with Romania to the west, and the Dniester River, a major waterway running through the east.
- **Notable Landscapes:** The Bălți Steppe and Codru Hills are known for their scenic beauty and fertile lands.
- **EU Status:** Moldova is not a member of the European Union, but it was granted EU candidate status in 2022.
- **Frozen Conflict:** Transnistria region is the frozen conflict region in Moldova.

Romania

- **In News:** Far-right pro-Russian populist surprises in Romanian presidential election; set to enter runoff against PM.

- **Location:** Romania is located in the geographic centre of Europe.
- **Borders:** Its neighbours are Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, the **Black Sea**, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Hungary.
- Europe's second-longest river, the **Danube**, empties into the Danube Delta in the southeast of the country.

ISLAND OF CRETE (GREECE)

- **In News:** These places are often seen in news related to migration of people from the Port of Tubruk in Libya to the Island of Crete in Greece.
- Crete is the largest and most populous of the **Greek islands, the 88th largest island in the world and the fifth largest island in the Mediterranean Sea**, after Sicily, Sardinia, Cyprus, and Corsica.

Little Prespa Lake

- **Location:** Little Prespa Lake is situated on the border between **Albania and Greece** in southeastern Europe, with the majority of the lake lying in Greek territory.
- **Size:** It is smaller than its northern counterpart, Great Prespa Lake.
- **Protection:** The lake is part of the larger Prespa National Park, which is a protected area.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Black Sea

- **Location-** It is a marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean lying between Europe and Asia.
- **Bordering countries:**
 - North: Russia and Ukraine.
 - South: Turkey.
 - West: Bulgaria.
 - East: Georgia.
 - Romania also has access to the Black Sea.
- **Other Geographical features:**
 - The Black Sea connects to the Aegean Sea (Mediterranean) through the Bosphorus Strait, Sea of Marmara, and Dardanelles Strait.
 - The **Kerch Strait links it to the Sea of Azov.**
 - **Russia has the longest coastline** (2,300 km), followed by Turkey (1,329 km) and Ukraine (1,282 km).
 - The Crimean Peninsula extends into the Black Sea from the north.

- **Major rivers** flowing into it include the Danube, Dnieper, Southern Bug, Rioni, and Dniester.

Kara Sea

- **Location:** A marginal sea of the Arctic Ocean, situated north of **Siberia, Russia**.
- **Geographical Boundaries:**
 - **Northwest:** Franz Josef Land
 - **West:** Novaya Zemlya archipelago (separates it from the Barents Sea)
 - **East:** Severnaya Zemlya archipelago (separates it from the Laptev Sea)
 - **North:** Connected to the Arctic Basin
- **Climate:** Among the **world's coldest seas**, it remains ice-covered from September to May.
- **Major Rivers Draining into Kara Sea:** Kara, Ob, Pyasina, and Yenisei.

Kerch Strait

- **Location:** It is a strait in Eastern Europe.
- It 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.

Kursk Region

- It is in the western part of Russia, bordering Ukraine to the southwest.
- The basins of the Dnieper (Seim, Psel) and Don rivers are located on its territory.
- The main type of soil is chernozem or black soil.
- The region has prospected deposits of iron ore, phosphorites, peat, and building materials.

Other regions of Conflicts:

- Lipetsk region (Russia)
- Nizhny Novgorod region (Russia)
- Bryansk region (Russia)
- Astrakhan region (Russia)

Urengoy-Pomary-Uzhgorod pipeline (Russian)

- **In News:** Russian gas supplies sent to Europe via Ukraine for more than 40 years came to a stop after Kyiv refused to renegotiate a five-year-old transit deal amid war with Moscow.
- Also known as the **Bratstvo pipeline, Brotherhood pipeline, West-Siberian Pipeline, or Trans-Siberian Pipeline**.

- It is one of Russia's **main natural gas export pipelines**, partially owned and operated by Ukraine.
- It carried gas from **Siberia via the town of Sudzha — currently, under the control of Ukrainian military forces — in Russia's Kursk region.**
- The pipeline flows through Ukraine to **Slovakia** where the pipeline splits into branches going to the **Czech Republic and Austria.**
- The biggest brunt will be borne by Eastern European countries — primarily **Austria, Slovakia, and Moldova.**

ODESA REGION (UKRAINE)

- **In News:** The region is in news again due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.
- **Location:** In the far Southwest of Ukraine.
- **Neighbouring countries:** Moldova and Romania.

REST OF ASIA AND OCEANIA

Mount Taranaki (Also known as Mount Egmont)

- Volcanic mountain in New Zealand which is known by its Maori name **Taranaki Maunga.**
- It is a dormant stratovolcano (also known as composite cone volcano) & is made up of alternative layers of lava & ash.
- It is now the 3rd natural feature in New Zealand to receive this status after **Te Urewera National Park & Whanganui River.**

Mount Dukono (INDONESIA)

- **Height:** Stands at 1,087 meters above sea level and is among Indonesia's 127 active volcanoes.
- **Location:** Situated on Halmahera Island.

Other Recent Volcanic Eruptions in Indonesia

- **Mount Merapi:** Located near Yogyakarta.
- **Mount Ruang:** A stratovolcano in the Sulawesi Islands.
- **Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki:** Located on Flores Island.

Triton Island

- **Location:** Triton Island is part of the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea.
- **Control:** It is effectively controlled by China but also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan.
- **Geography:** Triton is the southernmost island in the Paracel group.

Chagos Island

- **Location:** Chagos Archipelago is situated in the central Indian Ocean, about 500 km south of the Maldives.
- **Colonial History:** Originally uninhabited, the archipelago was colonized by the French and then ceded to the British in 1814.
- **Strategic Importance:** Diego Garcia, the largest island in the archipelago, houses a significant U.S. military base.

Scarborough Shoal

- **Location:** Scarborough Shoal is situated in the eastern part of the South China Sea, and it is the largest oceanic coral atoll that developed on top of a seamount.
- **Shape and Size:** It has a triangular shape and is a significant feature in the contested region, with its reefs and islands submerged during high tide but visible during low tide.
- **Disputed Territory:** The shoal is claimed by China, the Philippines, and Taiwan, leading to ongoing geopolitical tensions over sovereignty.

Mount Fuji

- **Highest Mountain in Japan:** Mount Fuji, also known as Fuji-san, is Japan's tallest mountain, standing at 3,776 meters (12,389 feet).
- **Location:** It is located on the island of Honshu, near the Pacific coast, roughly 100 kilometers southwest of Tokyo.
- Mount Fuji is a stratovolcano.
- **Dormant but Active:** Though it has been dormant since its last eruption in 1707, Mount Fuji is still classified as an active volcano by geologists due to its potential for future eruptions.

Luzon Island and Strait

- Luzon is the **largest and most populous island** in the **Philippines**.
- **Location:** In the northern portion of the Philippine archipelago, it is the economic and political center of the nation, being home to the country's capital city, Manila, as well as Quezon City, the country's most populous city.
- It is the 15th largest island in the world by land area.
- **Luzon Strait:** The Luzon Strait is the strait **between Luzon and Taiwan**.
 - The strait thereby **connects the Philippine Sea to the South China Sea** in the western Pacific Ocean.

Saint Martin's Island

- It is situated in the northeastern region of the Bay of Bengal, near the border between **Bangladesh and Myanmar**.
- It is Bangladesh's only coral island.
- It is located 9 kms from the southern tip of Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar-Teknaf peninsula.
- In the 18th century, Arab merchants settled on the island, initially naming it "Jazira" and later changing it to "Narikel Jinjira" or "Coconut Island."
- In 1900, British India annexed the island during a land survey, naming it St Martin's Island after the Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong, Martin.

Sittwe Port (Myanmar)

- It is a deep-water port located in Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State in Myanmar.
- It is located at the mouth of the Kaladan River, which flows into the Bay of Bengal.
- India constructed the port as part of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project.

Agalega Islands

- The Agalega Islands are located about 650 nautical miles (1,050 km) north of **Mauritius**.
- This group consists of two islands with a total area of 26 sq km and a native population of around 300 people.
- **Significance:** Developing the Agalega Islands serves the socio-economic and national security interests of Mauritius and aligns with India's maritime vision.

Chabahar Port

- It is a deep-water port, located on the Makran Coast of Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan province.
- It is next to the Gulf of Oman and at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz.
- It is the only Iranian port with direct access to the Indian Ocean and consists of two separate ports named Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti.

Dukki Coal Mines (Pakistan)

- Located in the Balochistan province of Pakistan.
- In the news due to frequent attacks on miners and security forces.

Baghlan Province (Afghanistan)

- **In News:** Many were killed when a gunman opened fire on a Sufi shrine in Afghanistan's northern Baghlan province
- It is located north of **Kabul** and surrounded by Bamian, Parwan, Takhar, Kunduz and Samangan provinces.
- It lies on the main route to the north and Northeastern regions of Afghanistan.

TORKHAM CROSSING AND CHAMAN BORDER (AFGHANISTAN)

- **Context:** Afghan and Pakistani forces trade fire at the border as key crossing remains closed.

About Torkham Crossing:

- The Torkham Crossing, a critical border point **connecting Pakistan and Afghanistan**.
- Its strategic location makes it a vital entry point for trade and connectivity between the two nations.

About Chaman Border:

- It is one of the major international border crossings **between Afghanistan and Pakistan**.
- It links the two provincial capitals: Quetta and Kandahar.

South-China Sea

- It is an arm of the western Pacific Ocean that borders the Southeast Asian mainland.
- It is connected by Taiwan Strait with the East China Sea and by Luzon Strait with the Philippine Sea.
- It contains numerous shoals, reefs, atolls and disputed islands. For example – The Paracel Islands, the Spratly Islands (between China, Vietnam and Philippines) and the Scarborough Shoal (China and Philippines)

Wadge Bank

- It is a 10,000 square kilometers area, located approximately 50 kilometers south of **Kanyakumari**.
- It features shallow waters, a nearly flat bottom topography, and a continental shelf.
- This area is rich in biodiversity and is considered India's most valuable fishery resource.

India

Z-Morh tunnel

- It is located between Gagangir and Sonamarg in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
- Stretching over 6.5 km, it offers a reliable, all-weather route, serving as an alternative to the **Zojila Pass** — a crucial link between Srinagar and Leh.
- **Strategic Importance:** Alongside the upcoming Zoji-La Tunnel, the Z-Morh Tunnel forms a vital part of the Srinagar-Leh National Highway. It ensures year-round connectivity to key locations like Baltal (gateway to the Amarnath Cave), Kargil, and other parts of Ladakh, significantly boosting the region's strategic and economic landscape.

Pangsau Pass

- **Location:** Situated at 3,727 feet (1,136 m) in the Patkai Hills along the India-Myanmar border.
- **Origin of Name:** Named after the nearest Burmese village, Pangsau.
- **Historical Significance:** Believed to be the route of the 13th-century Ahom invasion of Assam by the Shan tribe.
- **Connectivity:** The historic Stilwell Road (Ledo Road) passes through Nampong and Pangsau Pass into Myanmar.

Ana Sagar Lake

- **Location**– It is an **artificial lake (man-made lake)** located in the **Ajmer district of Rajasthan**.
- **Constructed by**– **King Arnoraja** , the grandfather of Prithviraj Chauhan, between 1135-1150 AD.
- **Historical significance:**
 - **Mughal Emperor Jahangir** established the renowned **Daulat Bagh garden** next to the lake.
 - Later, **Shah Jahan** enhanced the site by adding **five marble pavilions (Baradaris)** along the lake, transforming it into a prominent tourist and heritage attraction.

Asan Wetland

- It is situated near the borders of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh in **Dehradun district**, it lies at the confluence of the Asan River and the Eastern Yamuna Canal.
- It was declared as **Uttarakhand's first Ramsar site in 2020..**
- Birds like the **Brahminy duck, red-crested pochard, gadwall**, and mallard migrate here from Central Asia

Bungus Valley

- Bungus Valley is situated in the Kupwara district of Jammu & Kashmir.
- It lies within the Handwara sub-district, located in the Trans-Himalayan region of northern India.
- Bungus Valley is an ecologically rich area with a unique mountain biome.
- It **features a grassland biome** at lower altitudes and is home to dense Coniferous forests (Budloo), which resemble a Taiga ecosystem.

Musi River

- **Origin:** Ananthagiri Hills, Rangareddy district, Telangana.
- **Tributary of: Krishna River.** It flows into the Osmansagar and Himayatsagar reservoirs.
- **Rivulets:** Formed by the convergence of two rivulets—Esi (8 km) and Musa (13 km).
- **Significance:** A vital water source for Hyderabad

Pangong Tso Lake

- It is an endorheic lake (landlocked) located in eastern Ladakh.
- The lake is located partly in India's Ladakh region and partly in Tibet (China).
- It is the world's highest saltwater lake.
- The Karakoram Mountain Range, which spans Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, and India, ends at the northern bank of Pangong Tso.
- Pangong Tso is known for its color-changing waters, which can appear blue, green, or red at different times of the day.

Shyok River

- **Source** – Originates from the Rimo Glaciers in the Karakoram Range.
- It is a tributary of the Indus River.
- **Course:** It flows through northern Ladakh and Gilgit-Baltistan and joins the Indus River near Skardu.
- Its major right bank tributary is the Nubra River.

Kalapani and Limpiyadhura

- **Location:** The Kalapani, Limpiyadhura, and Lipulekh areas are located in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand, India.
- **Dispute:** Nepal claims that these areas are part of its Dharchula district and belong to it historically and evidently. India has administered the land for a long time.
- **The Kali River** is said to originate from a stream at Limpiyadhura, northwest of Lipu Lekh.

- The united stream of Kalapani flows southwest and joins the Kuthi Yankti river, which arises from the Limpiyadhura Pass. The combined river is called the "Kali River".

Vadhavan port

- Vadhavan Port is a **greenfield deep sea port** at Vadhavan in Palghar district of **Maharashtra**.
- The port will be built on the coast of the **Arabian Sea** and the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) is responsible for the construction of the port.
- It will be the country's first Offshore Port in which the port will be built on an artificial island.
- After the construction of the port, it will be the **2nd Mother Port in India** after Vizhinjam International Seaport Thiruvananthapuram.