Clarity UPSC

PRELIMS 2027 · FREE EDITION

THE YEARLY COMPILATION

Places in News

2027

VOLUME 1 January–April 2026

Every place from the news of January–April 2026, located on a clear map and explained for Prelims: why it was in the news, where it is, what surrounds it, and the facts UPSC asks. The world is read region by region, India theme by theme.

266	119	147	266
PLACES	WORLD	INDIA	MAPS

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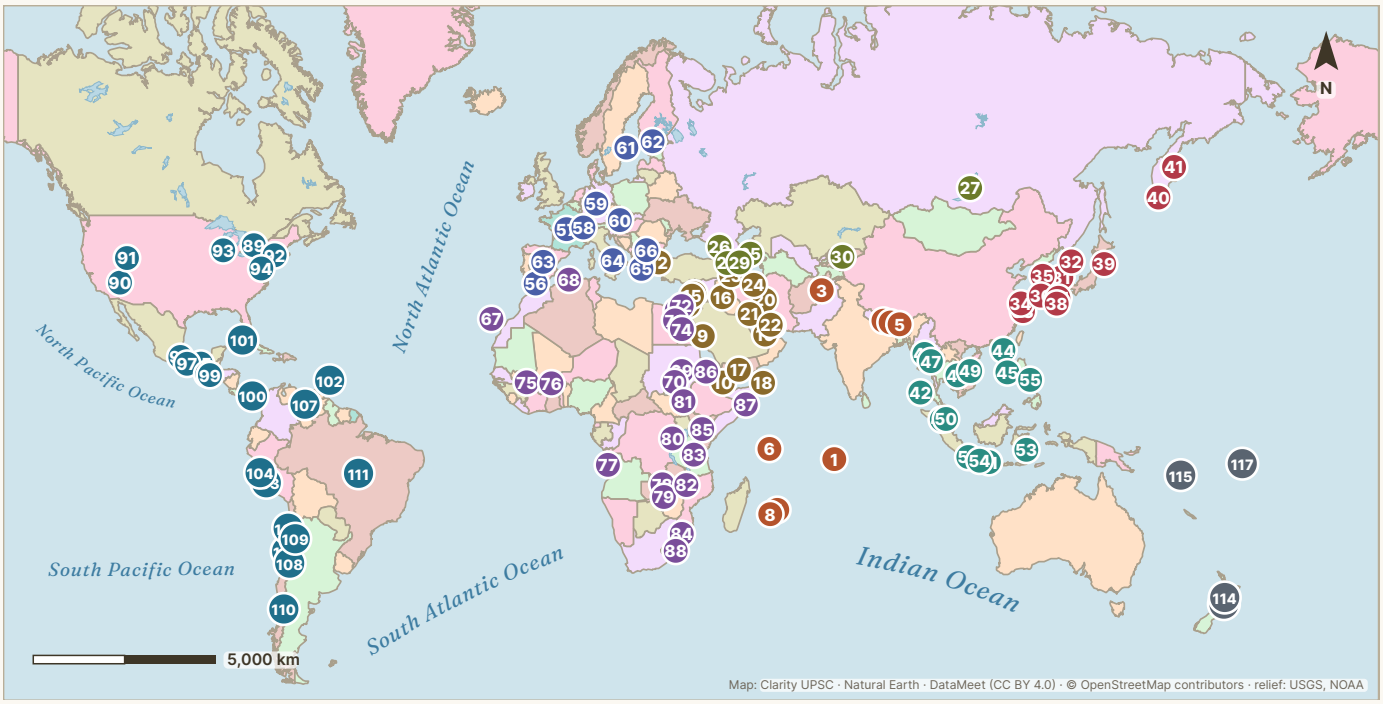
Free for every aspirant. The full story of every place is on the website; the Clarity UPSC app is on Android, iPhone and the web.

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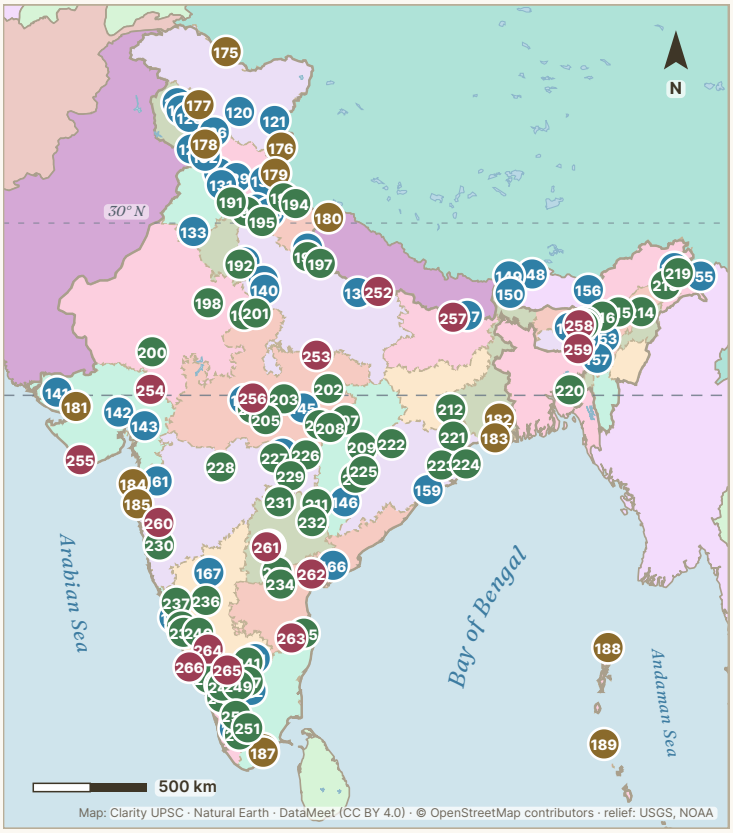
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Where the news happened

Each number is a place in this volume. Find it on the map, then turn to its page.



- The place in the news
- Red outline: the extent of a lake, park or island
- *Blue italic* seas, straits and rivers
- Small inset: where the map sits on the globe, or in India
- A volcano or summit in the news
- ★ National capital · ● town
- *BROWN ITALIC* ranges, deserts, plateaus
- Gold: the country or state it is in
- ----- Tropic of Cancer or Capricorn, Equator
- Numbered dot: another place in this volume, under that number



CHAPTERS

WORLD

- South Asia and the Indian Ocean (8) p. 3
- West Asia (16) p. 11
- Russia, Central Asia and the Caucasus (6) p. 28
- East Asia (11) p. 34
- Southeast Asia (14) p. 44
- Europe (11) p. 58
- Africa (22) p. 67
- The Americas (23) p. 85
- Oceania, the Pacific and the polar regions (8) p. 105

INDIA

- Rivers, lakes, wetlands and dams (55) p. 114
- Mountains, passes, islands and coasts (15) p. 162
- Protected areas (62) p. 177
- Heritage places (15) p. 233

The world is numbered first, region by region from India outwards; then India, state by state from north to south. A dot's colour is its chapter's.

Maps: Clarity UPSC. Boundaries: Natural Earth (India's official boundary) and DataMeet (CC BY 4.0). Rivers and outlines: © OpenStreetMap contributors. Relief: Terrain Tiles (USGS, NOAA and others).

WORLD

South Asia and the Indian Ocean

8 places

1 Chagos Archipelago (Diego Garcia) · Archipelago

2 Hindu Kush Himalaya · Mountain region

3 Afghanistan · Country

4 Arun River and the Lower Arun project (Nepal) · River (hydropower project)

5 Wangchhu (Raidak) River and the Wangchhu project · River (hydropower project)

6 Seychelles · Island nation (archipelago)

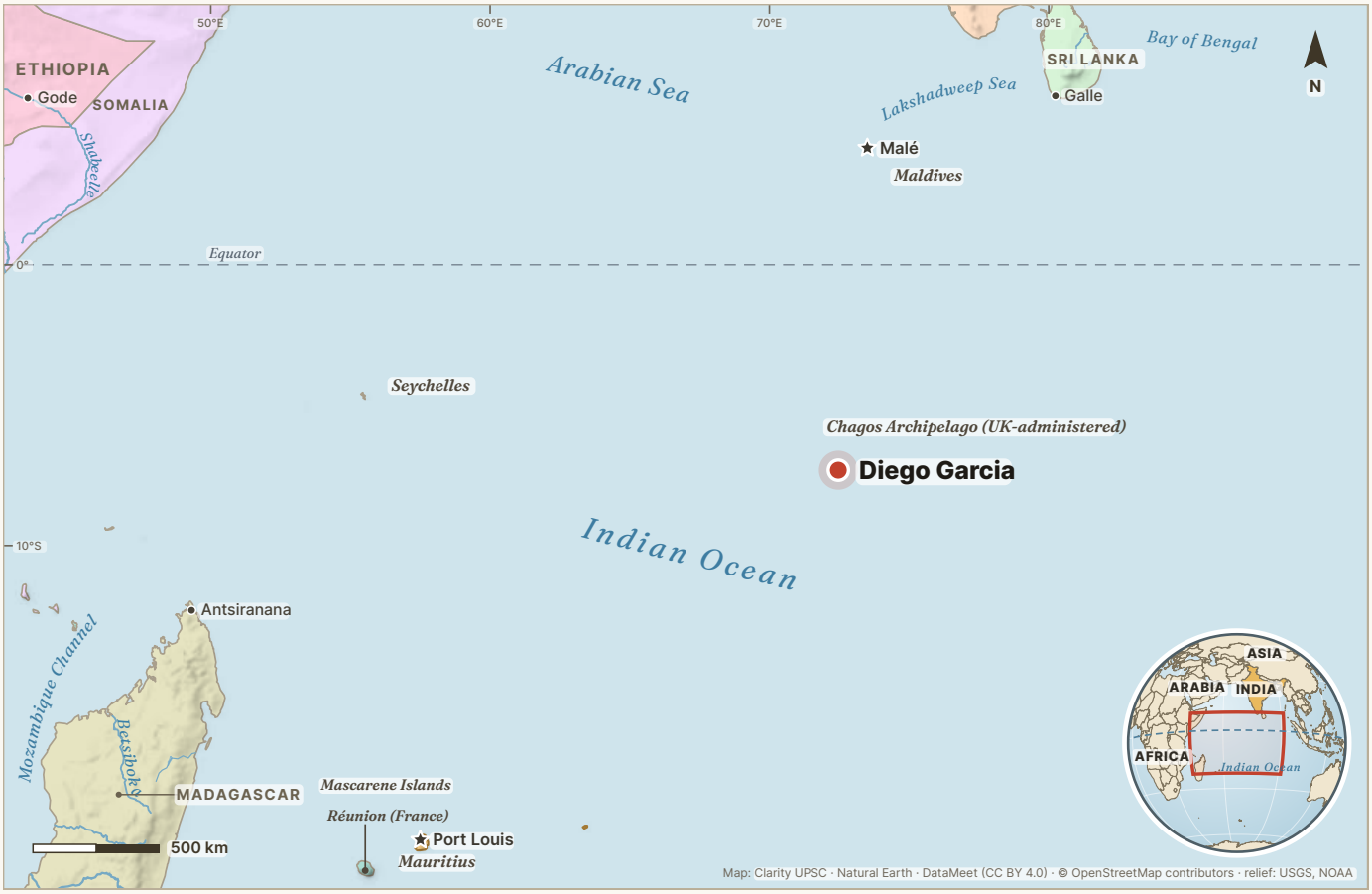
7 Mauritius · Island country

8 Piton de la Fournaise · Volcano

1 Chagos Archipelago (Diego Garcia)

Archipelago · Mar 2026 · Apr 2026

Central Indian Ocean, south of the Maldives



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 Britain said Iran had fired two ballistic missiles towards the UK–US base on Diego Garcia; neither came close. Iran denied it. On 13 April Britain said it could not yet ratify the treaty transferring the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, because the US President's position had changed.

WHERE IT IS

The Chagos Archipelago is a group of coral atolls in the central Indian Ocean, south of the Maldives. Diego Garcia, its largest island, lies at the southern end and hosts a joint UK–US military base.

SURROUNDED BY Indian Ocean · Maldives (north) · India and Sri Lanka (north-east) · Seychelles (west) and Mauritius (south-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Britain detached the islands from Mauritius in 1965 to form the British Indian Ocean Territory and removed about 1,500 islanders between 1967 and 1973.
- In 2019 the International Court of Justice advised that the detachment left Mauritius's decolonisation incomplete and that the UK should end its administration rapidly.
- The treaty signed on 22 May 2025 recognises Mauritian sovereignty and lets the UK run Diego Garcia for an initial 99 years.
- Ratification needs an updated 1966 UK–US exchange of notes; the implementing bill could not finish before the parliamentary session ended.

PRELIMS TRAP Diego Garcia belongs to the Chagos Archipelago, not the Maldives; Agaléga, where India built an airstrip and jetty, belongs to Mauritius.

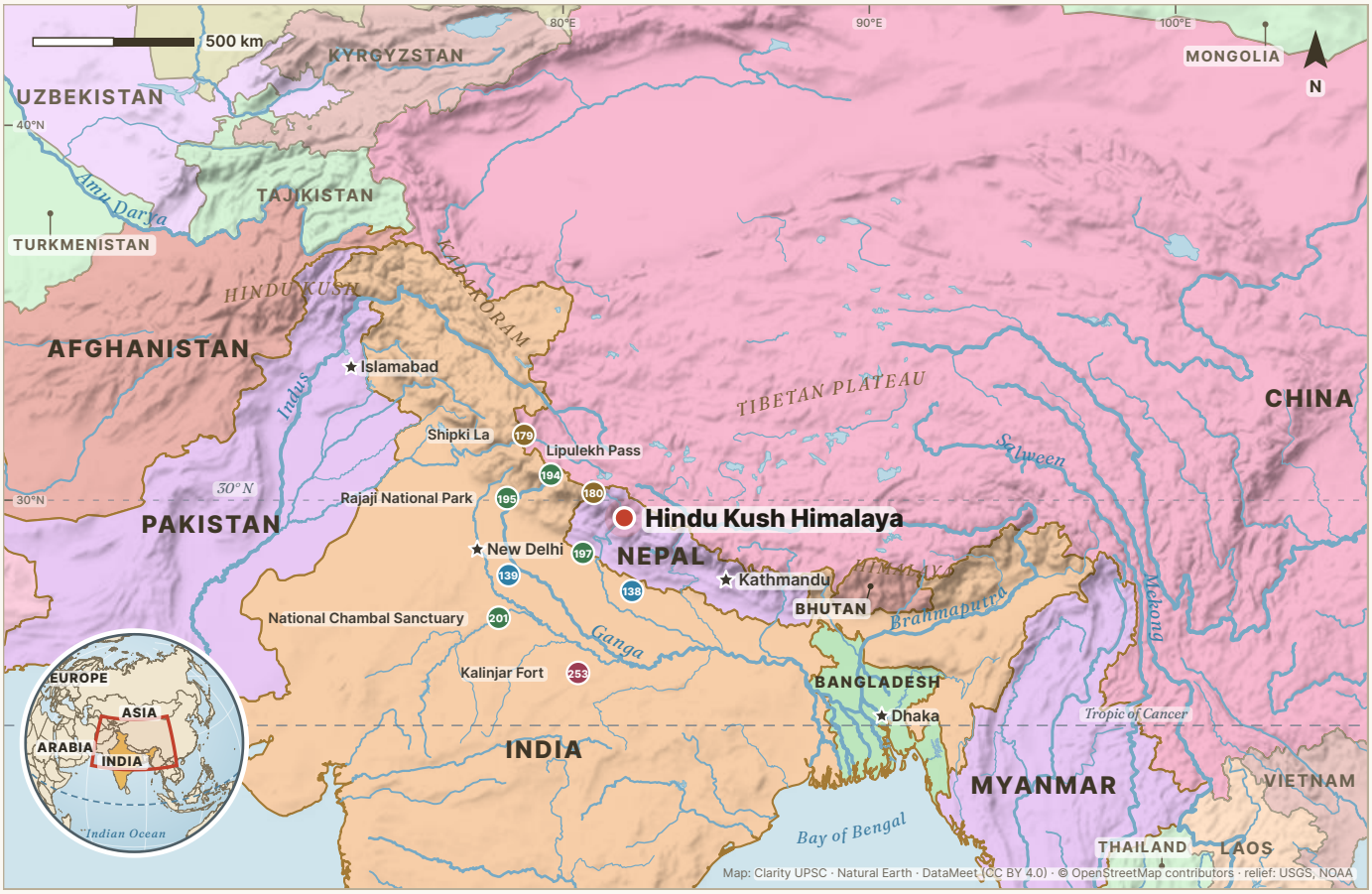
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Mountain region · Apr 2026

2 Hindu Kush Himalaya

High Asia, from Afghanistan to Myanmar



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) reported that snow persistence across the Hindu Kush Himalaya in 2025–26 was 27.8% below normal. It was the fourth straight below-normal year and a new record low. Only the Ganges and Irrawaddy basins had above-normal snow.

WHERE IT IS

The Hindu Kush Himalaya stretches about 3,500 km from Afghanistan in the west to Myanmar in the east, across the Hindu Kush, Karakoram, Himalaya and Tibetan Plateau. Its snow and ice feed 12 major river basins, including the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra and Amu Darya.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

- Afghanistan, Pakistan (west)
- India, Nepal, Bhutan (south)
- China (Tibet, north)
- Myanmar, Bangladesh (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Mekong (–59.5%), Tibetan Plateau (–47.4%) and Salween (–41.8%) had the sharpest snow shortfalls; the Ganges was 16.3% above normal.
- Snowmelt supplies up to 77.5% of annual runoff in the Helmand basin and 74.4% in the Amu Darya, ICIMOD says.
- Nearly two billion people depend on water from the region's 12 major river basins.
- ICIMOD, based in Kathmandu, is an intergovernmental centre of the eight HKH countries, including India.

PRELIMS TRAP The Hindu Kush lies mainly in Afghanistan and Pakistan; the Karakoram, home to K2, is a separate range to its east.

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3

Afghanistan

Landlocked South-Central Asia

Country | Apr 2026



WHY IN NEWS

From late March 2026 heavy rain caused floods, landslides and lightning deaths across Afghanistan. By 12 April disaster authorities counted at least 179 dead and 236 injured, with more than 1,200 homes destroyed. On 3 April a magnitude 5.8 earthquake in the Hindu Kush killed eight people in a house collapse in Kabul.

WHERE IT IS

Afghanistan is a landlocked country in South-Central Asia. The Hindu Kush runs across it from north-east to south-west, between the Amu Darya plains in the north and the Helmand basin in the south-west. The narrow Wakhan Corridor reaches China.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Pakistan | Iran | Turkmenistan | Uzbekistan | Tajikistan | China | India (Gilgit-Baltistan, under Pakistani occupation)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Amu Darya forms much of the northern border with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and flows towards the Aral Sea.
- The Kabul River flows east into Pakistan and joins the Indus near Attock.
- The Hindu Kush of north-eastern Afghanistan is one of the world's most active zones of intermediate-depth earthquakes.
- India's official map shows a 106-km India–Afghanistan border along the Wakhan Corridor, in Gilgit-Baltistan.

PRELIMS TRAP The Durand Line is the Afghanistan–Pakistan border; the Wakhan Corridor in the far north-east touches China and Gilgit-Baltistan.

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River (hydropower project) Apr 2026

4 Arun River and the Lower Arun project (Nepal)

Sankhuwasabha and Bhojpur districts, eastern Nepal



WHY IN NEWS

On 23 April 2026 Patel Engineering said it was the lowest bidder for a ₹1,593-crore civil and hydro-mechanical package of the 669 MW Lower Arun project in eastern Nepal. India's state-owned SJVN is building the project through a Nepal subsidiary.

WHERE IT IS

The Arun rises in Tibet (China), cuts south through the Himalaya into eastern Nepal and flows past Tumlingtar in Sankhuwasabha district. It joins the Sun Kosi and Tamur to form the Sapta Koshi, which enters Bihar as the Kosi.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

China (Tibet, north)

India (Bihar, south, via the Kosi)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Lower Arun lies downstream of SJVN's Arun-3 plant and will run in tandem with it; SJVN expects about 2,901 million units a year.
- Package 2 covers 5.41 km of 10.5-metre-diameter head-race tunnel, surge and pressure shafts and the powerhouse, to be built in 54 months.
- The Arun is an antecedent river: it is older than the Himalaya and kept cutting its gorge as the range rose.

PRELIMS TRAP The Arun reaches India as part of the Kosi in Bihar; it does not flow into Sikkim or West Bengal.

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India's economy, as it stands today.

Live Economic Data

Updated on release day

Repo rate	Retail inflation	GDP growth	Forex reserves
5.50%	6.09%	7.8%	$719.5 bn
▲ +25 bp	▲ +0.55 pp	▼ −0.8 pp	▲ +0.3%
RBI MPC · 7 Oct 2026	NSO · Oct 2026	NSO · Q1 2026-27	RBI · 6 Nov 2026

All 74 figures, the release calendar, and the Budget and Economic Survey numbers.

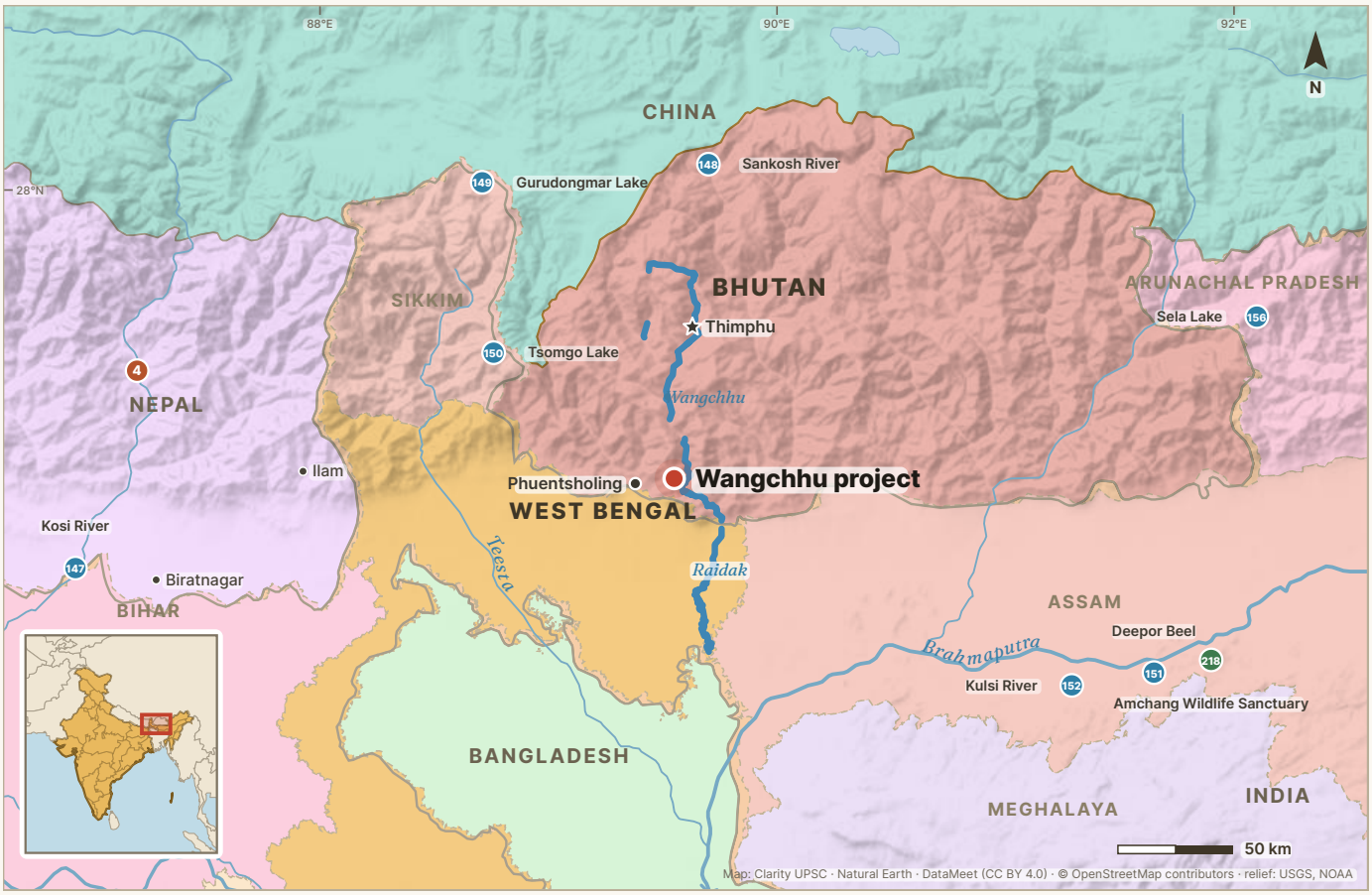
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5 Wangchhu (Raidak) River and the Wangchhu project

River (hydropower project) Jan 2026

Western Bhutan (Thimphu and Chhukha); enters West Bengal as the Raidak



WHY IN NEWS

On 4 January 2026 Bhutan's Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay and Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani laid the foundation stone of the 570 MW Wangchhu hydroelectric project in Chhukha district. Druk Green Power Corporation holds 51 per cent and Adani Power 49 per cent. Completion is targeted within five years.

WHERE IT IS

The Wangchhu flows south through western Bhutan past Thimphu and Chhukha, then enters India's West Bengal as the Raidak. The new project lies downstream of the 1,020 MW Tala plant in Chhukha district.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Bhutan · India (West Bengal) · Bangladesh (downstream)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is a peaking run-of-river scheme on a build–own–operate–transfer basis, costing about ₹6,000 crore (Nu 60 billion).
- It is the first project under a May 2025 agreement between Druk Green and Adani to develop 5,000 MW in Bhutan.
- Bhutan dropped an earlier 900 MW reservoir plan because the reservoir area had poor geology.
- Chukha (336 MW) and Tala (1,020 MW), built with Indian help, already use the same river.

PRELIMS TRAP The Wangchhu becomes the Raidak in India; the Punatsangchhu becomes the Sankosh. Both are north-bank tributaries of the Brahmaputra.

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6 Seychelles

Western Indian Ocean, north-east of Madagascar

Island nation (archipelago) **Feb 2026**

In news: On 7 February 2026, during President Patrick Herminie's visit to India, he and Ports and Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal led an India–Seychelles business roundtable in Mumbai on maritime trade and the blue economy.

SURROUNDED BY Western Indian Ocean; Madagascar (south-west); East African coast (west); Mauritius (south-east)

- India–Seychelles ties began in 1976; the 2026 SESEL Joint Vision builds on MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions).
- India announced a US$175 million package in February 2026, including a US$125 million line of credit.
- Seychelles has about 115 islands; Victoria, the capital, is on Mahé, where Morne Seychellois (905 m) is the highest point.

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7 Mauritius

South-western Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar (Mascarene Islands)

Island country **Apr 2026**

In news: On 9 April 2026 External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam exchanged letters in Port Louis to carry out a Special Economic Package announced in September 2025, reported at about US$680 million. Jaishankar also opened a renal transplant unit and launched a civil-service training portal.

SURROUNDED BY Indian Ocean; Réunion (France, south-west); Madagascar (west); Rodrigues (east)

- Mauritius is the first country for which India built a dedicated iGOT Karmayogi portal for civil servants.
- India runs about 100 community projects across Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agaléga.
- A government-to-government agreement for India to supply oil and gas was still being finalised in April 2026.

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Volcano | Feb 2026

8 Piton de la Fournaise

South-eastern Réunion, a French overseas department in the western Indian Ocean



WHY IN NEWS

Piton de la Fournaise erupted briefly from 18 January 2026 and again from 13 February, when four fissures opened at the summit and on the south-south-east flank. Lava cut the coastal RN2 road on 13 March and flowed into the Indian Ocean. The eruption, with pauses, ended on 12 April.

WHERE IT IS

The volcano forms the south-eastern part of Réunion Island, about 700 km east of Madagascar. Its summit lies in the Enclos Fouqué caldera, which opens eastward down the Grandes Pentes to the sea. The older, eroded Piton des Neiges forms the rest of the island.

SURROUNDED BY Indian Ocean | Mauritius (north-east) | Madagascar (west) | Piton des Neiges massif (north-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is a basaltic shield volcano, among the world's most active, fed by the Réunion hotspot.
- The Réunion hotspot is linked to the Deccan Traps flood basalts of India, about 66 million years ago.
- The island's 'Pitons, cirques and remparts' became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2010.
- Most eruptions stay inside the Enclos Fouqué caldera, which opens east to the sea; the coastal RN2 road crosses its lower slopes.

PRELIMS TRAP Réunion is a French overseas department. Mauritius, its Mascarene neighbour to the north-east, is an independent country.

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WORLD

West Asia

16 places

9	Red Sea · Sea	
10	Bab el-Mandeb Strait · Strait	
11	Strait of Hormuz · Strait	
12	Dardanelles · Strait	
13	Rafah Border Crossing · Border crossing	
14	Lebanon and the Shebaa Farms · Country	
15	Litani River · River	
16	Iraq · Country	
17	Yemen · Country	
18	Socotra · Island	
19	United Arab Emirates · Country	
20	Iran · Country	
21	Kharg Island · Island	
22	Qeshm Island · Island	
23	Lake Urmia · Lake (salt lake)	
24	Golestan Palace, Tehran · Palace (World Heritage Site)	

9 Red Sea

Between north-east Africa and the Arabian Peninsula



WHY IN NEWS

On 19 March 2026, during the US–Israeli war with Iran, a drone crashed into the Samref refinery at Yanbu on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast. Yanbu lies outside Iran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. Saudi shipments from Yanbu had more than doubled since early March to replace lost Persian Gulf exports.

WHERE IT IS

The Red Sea lies between Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. In the north it splits into the Gulf of Suez, leading to the Suez Canal, and the Gulf of Aqaba. In the south, Bab el-Mandeb joins it to the Gulf of Aden.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Egypt · Sudan · Eritrea · Djibouti · Saudi Arabia · Yemen

Israel and Jordan (only at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It lies over the Red Sea Rift, part of the Great Rift Valley system, where the African and Arabian plates are moving apart.
- It is the world's northernmost tropical sea; its shallow shelves hold extensive coral reefs.

PRELIMS TRAP The Gulf of Suez leads to the Suez Canal; the Gulf of Aqaba, east of Sinai, leads to Aqaba (Jordan) and Eilat (Israel).

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The UPSC preparation guide.

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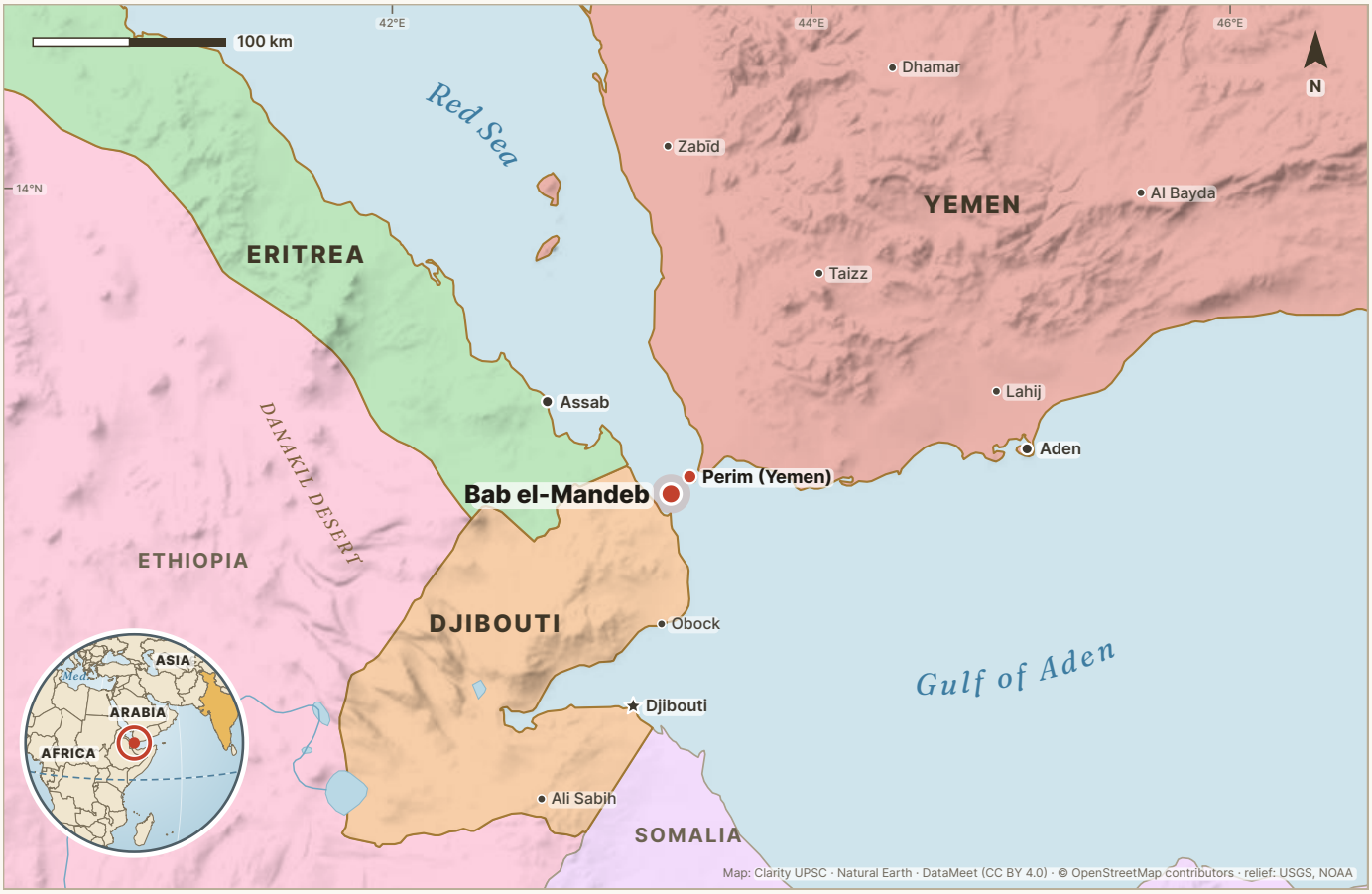
By those who have qualified the exam multiple times.

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10 Bab el-Mandeb Strait

Between Yemen and Djibouti, at the southern end of the Red Sea



WHY IN NEWS

During the US–Israeli war with Iran, Yemen's Houthis fired their first missile of the war at Israel on 28 March 2026. On 18 April a Houthi official, Hussein al-Ezzi, warned that Bab el-Mandeb 'could be closed'; Iran reimposed restrictions on maritime traffic the same day.

WHERE IT IS

Bab el-Mandeb joins the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden, which opens into the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Yemen lies on its eastern side and Djibouti on its western side; Eritrea borders the north-western approach.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Yemen · Djibouti · Eritrea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its name is commonly translated as 'Gate of Tears'; the narrow crossing is about 26–32 km wide.
- Perim Island divides it: large ships use the deeper western channel, Dact-el-Mayun; the shallower Bab Iskender lies next to Yemen.
- It lies on the shortest Asia–Europe sea route via the Suez Canal; disruption diverts ships around the Cape of Good Hope.
- Tankers leaving Saudi Arabia's Red Sea port of Yanbu, outside the Hormuz blockade, must still pass Bab el-Mandeb to reach Asia.

PRELIMS TRAP Bab el-Mandeb links the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden; the Strait of Hormuz links the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman.

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Strait · Feb 2026

11 Strait of Hormuz

Between Iran and Oman's Musandam Peninsula; links the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman



WHY IN NEWS

After the United States and Israel attacked Iran on 28 February 2026, Iran's Revolutionary Guards threatened to set fire to any ship using the Strait of Hormuz, and tanker traffic almost stopped in early March. India, which bought more than half its imported crude from the Middle East, looked for other supplies.

WHERE IT IS

The Strait of Hormuz links the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Iran's Hormozgan coast lies on its northern shore and Oman's Musandam Peninsula, an exclave, on its southern shore. The islands of Qeshm, Hormuz, Larak and Hengam lie in the strait.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Iran (north) · Oman – Musandam (south) · United Arab Emirates (south-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The only sea route out of the Persian Gulf, it carries a large share of the world's oil and gas exports.
- Saudi Arabia's East–West pipeline to the Red Sea and the UAE's pipeline to Fujairah can carry some Gulf oil around the strait.
- Bandar Abbas, Iran's main port, stands on the northern shore of the strait.
- The IMO, a UN agency based in London, produced the SOLAS and MARPOL conventions.

PRELIMS TRAP Hormuz links the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman; Bab el-Mandeb links the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden.

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Strait · Jan 2026

12 Dardanelles

North-western Türkiye, between the Gallipoli peninsula (Europe) and Anatolia (Asia)



WHY IN NEWS

On 16 January 2026 southbound traffic through the Dardanelles was halted after the Mozambique-flagged tanker Boston Beacon suffered an engine failure near Nara. The shipping agent Tribeca said southbound traffic would resume at 16:00 GMT.

WHERE IT IS

The Dardanelles links the Aegean Sea with the Sea of Marmara in north-western Türkiye. It separates the Gallipoli peninsula in Europe from Anatolia in Asia. The city of Çanakkale lies on its narrowest stretch.

SURROUNDED BY

- Gallipoli peninsula (Europe)
- Anatolia (Asia)
- Aegean Sea
- Sea of Marmara

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- With the Bosporus and the Sea of Marmara, it forms the Turkish Straits, the only sea link between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.
- It is about 61 km long and 1.2–6 km wide; the 1915 Çanakkale Bridge (2022) is its first fixed crossing.
- The 1936 Montreux Convention governs passage through the Turkish Straits, especially for warships.

PRELIMS TRAP The Dardanelles joins the Aegean to the Sea of Marmara. The Bosporus joins the Sea of Marmara to the Black Sea at Istanbul.

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ON CLARITYUPSC.COM · DAILY QUIZ

Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

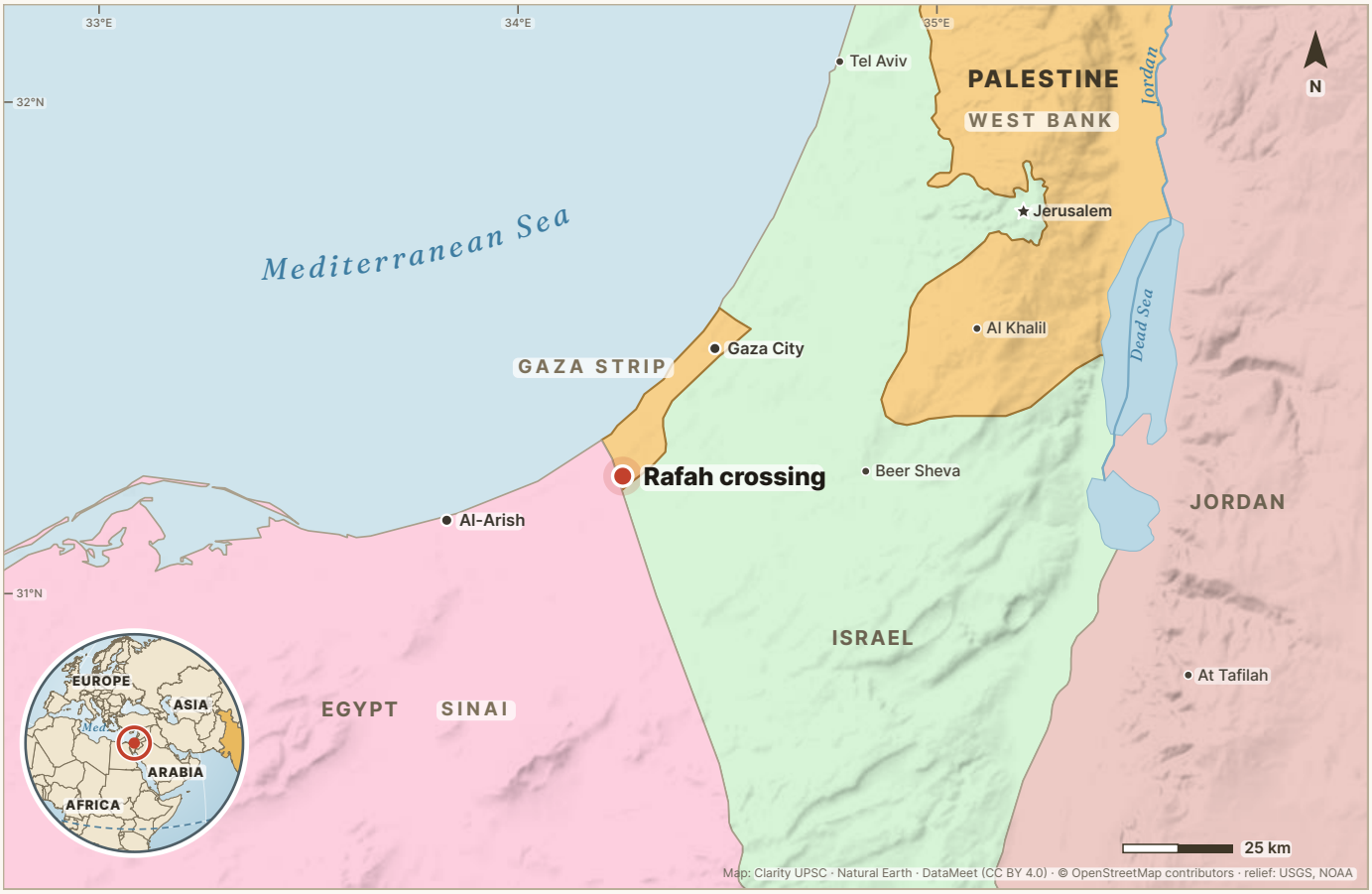
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Border crossing · Feb 2026

13 Rafah Border Crossing

Southern tip of the Gaza Strip, on its border with Egypt's Sinai Peninsula



WHY IN NEWS

The Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt reopened on 2 February 2026 for limited movement of people under the US-brokered ceasefire of October 2025. Israeli troops had seized it in May 2024. Israel closed it again when war with Iran began on 28 February and reopened it on 19 March.

WHERE IT IS

The crossing lies at the southern end of the Gaza Strip, where Gaza meets Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. The town of Rafah straddles the border. Israel borders Gaza to the north and east, and the Mediterranean Sea lies to the west.

SURROUNDED BY Gaza Strip · Egypt (Sinai Peninsula) · Israel · Mediterranean Sea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Rafah is Gaza's only crossing to a country other than Israel.
- European Union border monitors supervise the crossing; Israel and Egypt vet the travellers.
- Israel opened the crossing after the 1979 Egypt–Israel peace treaty and handed it over when it left Gaza in 2005.

PRELIMS TRAP Rafah joins Gaza to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. The West Bank, not Gaza, borders Jordan.

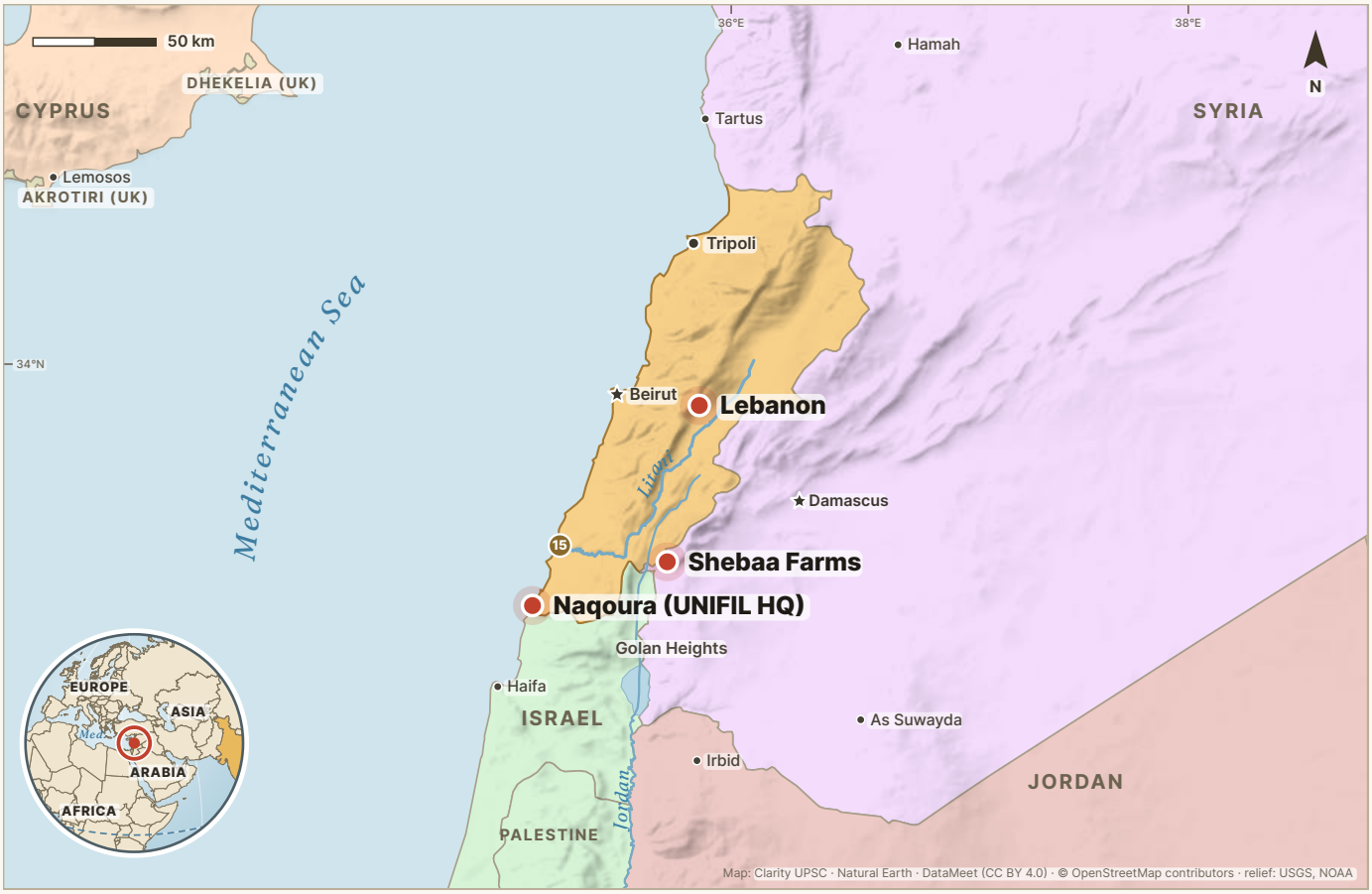
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Country · Mar 2026

14 Lebanon and the Shebaa Farms

Eastern Mediterranean coast, between Syria and Israel



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026, during the Israel–Hezbollah war, Lebanon ordered Iran's ambassador to leave, and three Indonesian peacekeepers of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) were killed in the south. India's Permanent Mission to the UN condemned the attacks and sought accountability.

WHERE IT IS

Lebanon is a small country of about 10,400 sq km on the eastern Mediterranean coast. Syria borders it to the north and east, and Israel to the south. Its capital is Beirut. UNIFIL works in the south, between the Litani River and the Blue Line.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Syria (north and east) · Israel (south) · Mediterranean Sea (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Israel has held the Shebaa Farms, on the Lebanon–Golan Heights border, since 1967; Lebanon claims them, and the UN treats them as Syrian territory.
- UNIFIL was created in 1978 by Security Council Resolutions 425 and 426; Resolution 2790 (2025) extended it a final time to 31 December 2026.
- India, with 642 personnel in February 2026, was UNIFIL's fourth-largest contributor; it piloted Resolution 2589 (2021) on crimes against peacekeepers.
- Independent from France in 1943; Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000 and Syria left in 2005.

PRELIMS TRAP The Blue Line separates Lebanon from Israel in place of a permanently demarcated border; the disputed Shebaa Farms lie at its eastern end, beside the Golan Heights.

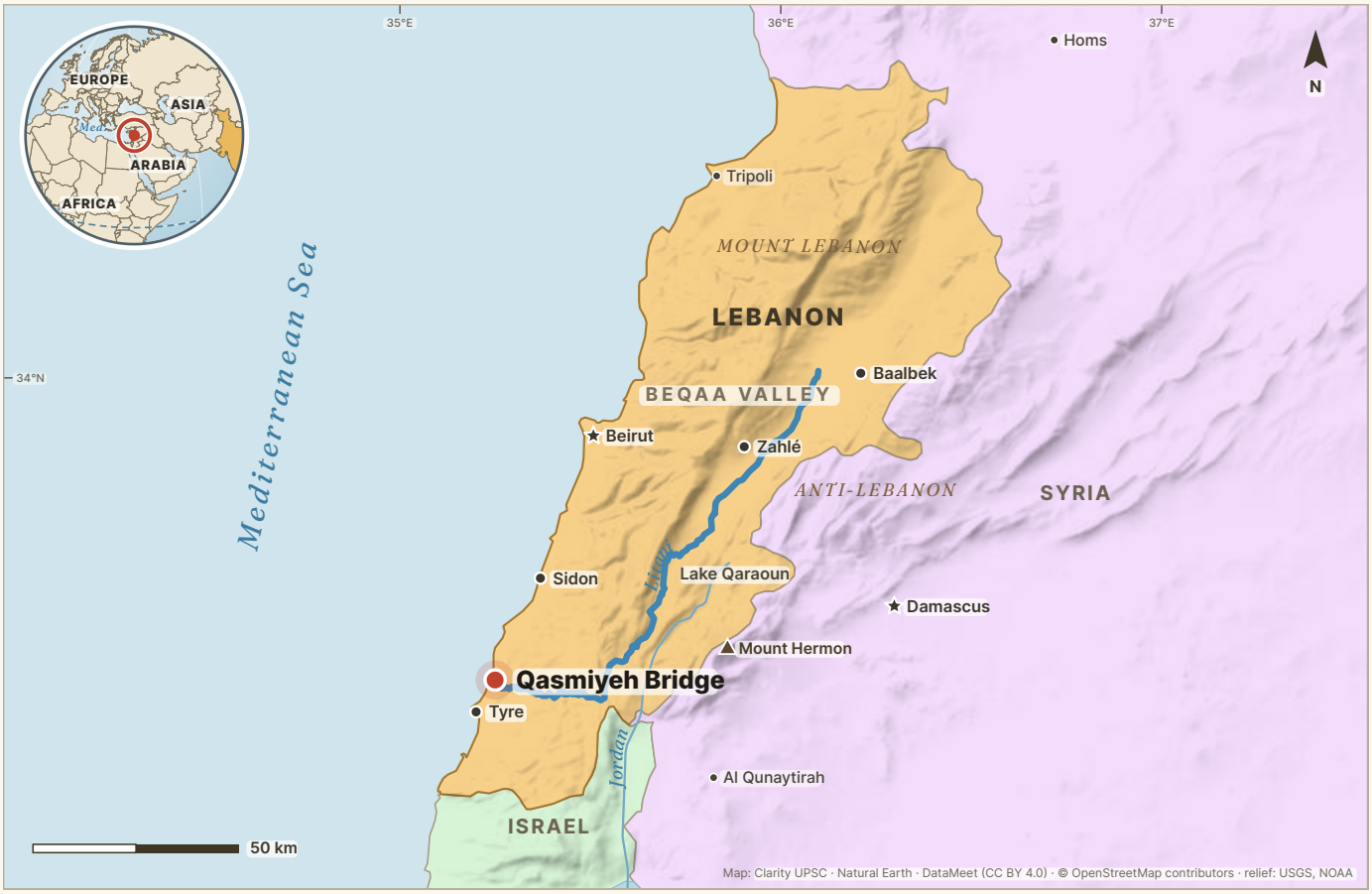
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Clarity UPSC

River · Mar 2026

15 Litani River

Southern Lebanon, from the Beqaa Valley to the Mediterranean north of Tyre



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026, during the Israel–Hezbollah war, Israel struck bridges over the Litani, including the Qasmiyeh Bridge near Tyre on 22 March. On 24 March Defence Minister Israel Katz said Israel would control the remaining bridges and a 'security zone' up to the river. A strike on 16 April completely destroyed the Qasmiyeh Bridge.

WHERE IT IS

The Litani rises in the Beqaa Valley, west of Baalbek, between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges. It flows south, then turns west and reaches the Mediterranean north of Tyre. Its mouth lies about 30 km north of the Israeli border.

SURROUNDED BY Beqaa Valley · Mount Lebanon range · Anti-Lebanon range · Israel (to the south) · Mediterranean Sea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- At more than 140 km, it is the longest river that flows entirely within Lebanon.
- The Qaraoun Dam, Lebanon's largest, forms Lake Qaraoun on its middle course for hydropower, irrigation and water supply.
- UN Resolution 1701 (2006) seeks an area between the Blue Line and the Litani free of armed groups other than Lebanon's army and UNIFIL.
- Israel's 1978 invasion of southern Lebanon was called Operation Litani; it led to UNIFIL's creation.

PRELIMS TRAP The Litani and the Orontes both rise in the Beqaa Valley. The Litani turns west to the Mediterranean in Lebanon; the Orontes flows north into Syria.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

16 Iraq

West Asia, at the head of the Persian Gulf



WHY IN NEWS

On 12 March 2026 a US Air Force KC-135 refuelling tanker supporting the war against Iran crashed in western Iraq, killing all six crew. US Central Command said the crash followed an incident involving two aircraft and was not caused by hostile or friendly fire.

WHERE IT IS

Iraq occupies most of Mesopotamia, between the Zagros Mountains of Iran and the Syrian and Arabian deserts. It reaches the Persian Gulf only along a short coast near Umm Qasr and Al-Faw.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Türkiye · Iran · Kuwait · Saudi Arabia · Jordan · Syria

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Tigris and Euphrates meet at Al-Qurnah to form the Shatt al-Arab, which flows into the Persian Gulf.
- Baghdad, the capital, stands on the Tigris.
- The autonomous Kurdistan Region in the north has its capital at Erbil.

PRELIMS TRAP Baghdad lies on the Tigris; the Euphrates flows farther west, past cities such as Ramadi and Fallujah.

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Repo rate	Retail inflation	GDP growth	Forex reserves
5.50%	6.09%	7.8%	$719.5 bn
▲ +25 bp	▲ +0.55 pp	▼ −0.8 pp	▲ +0.3%
RBI MPC · 7 Oct 2026	NSO · Oct 2026	NSO · Q1 2026-27	RBI · 6 Nov 2026

All 74 figures, the release calendar, and the Budget and Economic Survey numbers.

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Country · Jan 2026

17 Yemen

South-western Arabian Peninsula, overlooking Bab el-Mandeb



WHY IN NEWS

On 2 January 2026 the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC) proclaimed a 'State of South Arabia' with Aden as capital. Saudi-backed government forces then retook Hadramawt, al-Mahra and Aden; STC leader Aidarous al-Zubaidi fled on 7 January, and the STC then announced its dissolution, which some members disputed.

WHERE IT IS

Yemen occupies the south-west of the Arabian Peninsula. It shares a long land border with Saudi Arabia and overlooks the Bab el-Mandeb strait between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Houthis hold Sana'a; the recognised government is based mainly in Aden.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Saudi Arabia · Oman · Red Sea · Gulf of Aden · Arabian Sea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Houthis (Ansar Allah) seized Sana'a in 2014; a Saudi-led coalition intervened in March 2015.
- South Yemen (People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) existed from 1967 to 1990, with Aden as capital, before unification with the north.
- Jabal an-Nabi Shu'ayb (3,666 m), west of Sana'a, is the highest peak of Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula.
- Hadramawt, Yemen's largest governorate, has Mukalla as its capital.

PRELIMS TRAP Bab el-Mandeb joins the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden; the Strait of Hormuz joins the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.

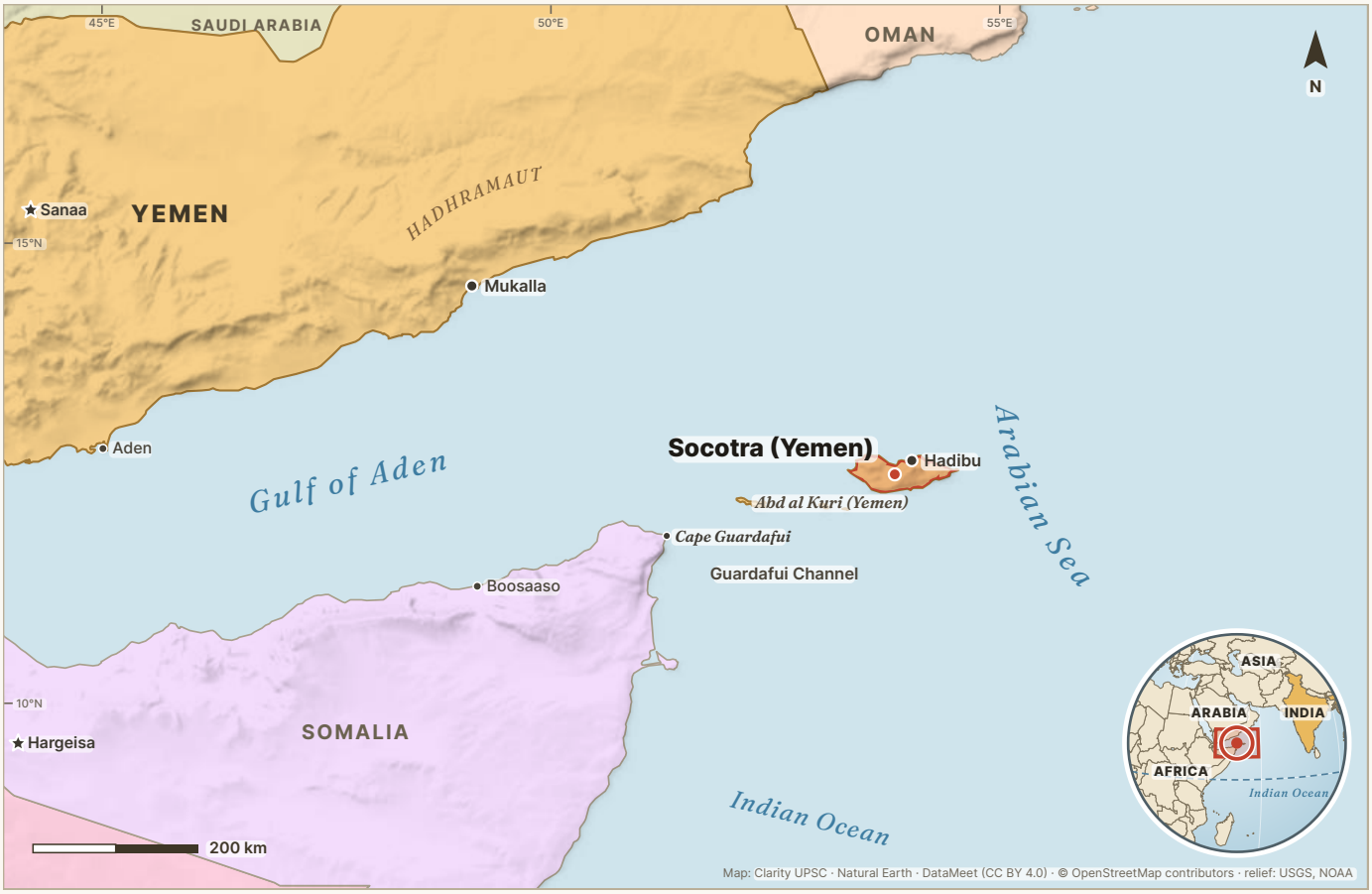
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Clarity UPSC

Island · Jan 2026

18 Socotra

Arabian Sea, east of the Horn of Africa; Socotra Governorate, Yemen



WHY IN NEWS

In early January 2026 hundreds of foreign tourists were stranded on Socotra. Fighting on the mainland between southern separatists and Saudi-backed government forces had disrupted travel. Yemen's government completed their evacuation by 10 January.

WHERE IT IS

Socotra lies where the Gulf of Aden opens into the Arabian Sea. It is about 380 km south of the Arabian Peninsula and 232 km east of Cape Guardafui, the tip of the Horn of Africa. It is the largest island of a six-island archipelago.

SURROUNDED BY Arabian Sea · Gulf of Aden · Guardafui Channel · Somalia (Horn of Africa) · Yemen (mainland)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- UNESCO inscribed the Socotra Archipelago as a natural World Heritage Site in 2008; about a third of its plants are endemic.
- The dragon's blood tree (Dracaena cinnabari), with its umbrella-shaped crown, is its best-known endemic plant.
- Geologically it is a continental fragment linked to the Somali Plate, though Yemen governs it.
- It became a separate governorate in 2013; it had been part of Hadramawt governorate since 2004.

PRELIMS TRAP Socotra belongs to Yemen although it lies nearer Somalia. Somalia's Cape Guardafui faces it across the Guardafui Channel.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

Country · Jan 2026

19 United Arab Emirates

South-eastern Arabian Peninsula, on the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman



WHY IN NEWS

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan made a two-hour visit to New Delhi on 19 January 2026. ADNOC Gas agreed to sell Hindustan Petroleum 0.5 million tonnes of LNG a year for ten years. The two countries signed a letter of intent towards a strategic defence partnership.

WHERE IT IS

The UAE lies on the south-eastern Arabian Peninsula, mostly along the Persian Gulf, with a short Gulf of Oman coast around Fujairah. It borders Saudi Arabia and Oman. Oman's Musandam peninsula separates it from the Strait of Hormuz.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Saudi Arabia (west and south) · Oman (east) · Persian Gulf (north) · Gulf of Oman (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Six emirates formed the federation on 2 December 1971; Ras Al Khaimah joined in February 1972. Abu Dhabi is the capital.
- India and the UAE signed a CEPA in February 2022 and aim to double bilateral trade to $200 billion by 2032.
- Jebel Jais's 1,934 m summit lies in Oman; the UAE's highest point, about 1,892 m, is on its slope in Ras Al Khaimah.
- The Habshan–Fujairah pipeline lets Abu Dhabi export crude from Fujairah, outside the Strait of Hormuz.

PRELIMS TRAP Fujairah faces the Gulf of Oman, outside the Strait of Hormuz. Abu Dhabi and Dubai lie inside the Persian Gulf.

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Country · Jan 2026

20 Iran

West Asia, between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman



WHY IN NEWS

Protests over prices began in Tehran on 28 December 2025 and spread to every province in January 2026. Security forces killed thousands. On 28 February 2026 US and Israeli strikes killed Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, in power since 1989. Iran struck back at Israel and at US bases in Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE and Bahrain.

WHERE IT IS

Iran lies in West Asia, with the Caspian Sea to the north and the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman to the south. The Zagros and Alborz ranges ring a dry central plateau. Iran holds the northern shore of the Strait of Hormuz.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Iraq · Türkiye · Armenia · Azerbaijan · Turkmenistan · Afghanistan · Pakistan

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Iran covers about 1.65 million sq km; its capital, Tehran, lies at the southern foot of the Alborz range.
- The Dasht-e Kavir and Dasht-e Lut deserts occupy the central plateau; Mount Damavand in the Alborz is the highest peak.
- Iran shares the Caspian Sea with Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.
- In May 2024 India signed a 10-year deal to run Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti terminal, its gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

PRELIMS TRAP Chabahar lies on the Gulf of Oman, outside the Strait of Hormuz; Bandar Abbas lies on the strait itself. Pakistan's Gwadar port is just east along the same coast.

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Island · Mar 2026

21 Kharg Island

Northern Persian Gulf, Bushehr Province, Iran



WHY IN NEWS

On the night of 13 March 2026 US forces struck more than 90 military targets on Kharg Island, including naval-mine stores and missile bunkers, US Central Command said. The oil installations were spared, but President Donald Trump warned he could hit them if Iran blocked shipping in the Strait of Hormuz.

WHERE IT IS

Kharg is a small coral island in the northern Persian Gulf, about 25–28 km off Iran's coast and 55 km north-west of Bushehr port, in Bushehr Province. Iraq and Kuwait lie towards the Gulf's north-western end. The Strait of Hormuz lies far to the south-east.

SURROUNDED BY Persian Gulf · Iran: Bushehr coast (east) · Kuwait and Iraq (north-west, at the head of the Gulf) · Saudi Arabia (south-west, across the Gulf)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Kharg handles about 90 per cent of Iran's crude exports; the EIA put its maximum loading capacity at seven million barrels a day (2021).
- Pipelines from mainland and offshore fields feed its storage and loading installations; it was repeatedly damaged in the 1980–88 Iran–Iraq War.
- About 20 million barrels of oil a day passed through the Strait of Hormuz in 2024, about one-fifth of global consumption.
- The Goreh–Jask pipeline to Jask on the Gulf of Oman offers a route that bypasses Hormuz.

PRELIMS TRAP Kharg, near Bushehr, is Iran's main oil-export island; Qeshm, in the Strait of Hormuz, is Iran's largest island.

Read the full story
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Island · Mar 2026

22 Qeshm Island

Strait of Hormuz, off Iran's Hormozgan coast



WHY IN NEWS

On 7 March 2026 Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said a US strike had hit a freshwater desalination plant on Qeshm Island. He said the water supply to 30 villages was cut, called the strike a "blatant and desperate crime" and warned of serious consequences.

WHERE IT IS

Qeshm lies in the Strait of Hormuz, separated from the Iranian mainland near Bandar Abbas by the narrow Khuran (Clarence) Strait. Hormuz and Larak islands lie to its east and Hengam to its south.

SURROUNDED BY

- Khuran Strait and Bandar Abbas (north)
- Hormuz and Larak islands (east)
- Hengam Island (south)
- Persian Gulf (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Covering about 1,490 sq km and about 135 km long, Qeshm is Iran's largest island.
- Hara mangrove forests grow along the Khuran Strait between the island and the mainland.
- The Qeshm Island UNESCO Global Geopark includes the Namakdan salt cave, one of the longest known salt caves.
- In 1991 Iran chose Qeshm, Kish Island and Chabahar for free trade zones.

PRELIMS TRAP Hormuz Island, which gives the strait its name, is a small island east of Qeshm.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

23 Lake Urmia

Lake (salt lake) | Feb 2026

North-western Iran, between West Azerbaijan and East Azerbaijan provinces



WHY IN NEWS

Heavy rain from late September 2025 to March 2026, about double the previous year's, partly refilled Lake Urmia after it had shrunk to about 480 sq km. By April 2026 its level had risen about 1.2 m and water covered roughly half the lakebed. Officials said it was still 3.4 m below its ecological level.

WHERE IT IS

Lake Urmia lies in north-western Iran between West Azerbaijan and East Azerbaijan provinces, with Urmia city to its west and Tabriz to its east. It has no outlet to the sea. A causeway and bridge, completed in 2008, divide it into northern and southern parts.

SURROUNDED BY West Azerbaijan province (west and south) | East Azerbaijan province (east and north) | Urmia city (west) | Tabriz (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- At its largest it covered 5,000–6,000 sq km and was the largest lake in West Asia; its closed basin makes the water hypersaline.
- Lake Urmia became a Ramsar site in June 1975 and a UNESCO biosphere reserve in 1976; most of it is a national park.
- Dams, farm expansion and drought in its basin have shrunk the lake since the 2000s, exposing salt flats that raise salt storms.
- By April 2026 dams, mainly Boukan and Mahabad, had released about 1.28 billion cubic metres of water into the lake.

PRELIMS TRAP Lake Urmia is in north-western Iran; Lake Van, another large closed salt lake, lies to its west in eastern Türkiye.

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24 Golestan Palace, Tehran

Old citadel (Arg) area of central Tehran, Iran

Palace (World Heritage Site) · Mar 2026



WHY IN NEWS

On 2 March 2026 an airstrike on Arg Square in central Tehran sent debris and a shock wave into the Golestan Palace, UNESCO reported. The square lies in the World Heritage site's buffer zone. Photos showed broken glass and debris on the palace floors.

WHERE IT IS

The palace stands in the old walled citadel (Arg) of central Tehran, beside the Grand Bazaar. Tehran, Iran's capital, lies on the southern slopes of the Alborz range, south of the Caspian Sea.

SURROUNDED BY Arg Square (buffer zone) · Tehran Grand Bazaar (south) · Alborz Mountains (north of the city)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- UNESCO inscribed it as a World Heritage Site in 2013; it is Tehran's only World Heritage Site.
- Its citadel dates from Safavid ruler Tahmasp I in the 16th century; the Qajar dynasty made it their seat of government.
- Rebuilt in the mid-1800s, it blends Persian and European styles and is known for its mirror-work and tiles.
- The coronations of Reza Shah (1926) and Mohammad Reza Shah (1967) took place there.

PRELIMS TRAP Golestan Palace is in Tehran; Golestan is also the name of a province on Iran's Caspian coast.

Read the full story
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WORLD

Russia, Central Asia and the Caucasus

6 places

25 Caspian Sea · Lake (inland sea)

26 Mount Elbrus · Peak

27 Lake Baikal · Lake

28 Armenia · Country

29 Azerbaijan · Country

30 Kyrgyzstan · Country

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25

Caspian Sea

Between Europe and Asia; no outlet to the ocean

Lake (inland sea) | Mar 2026



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 Kazakhstan's Ministry of Ecology reported that the Caspian Sea's level along the Kazakh coast was still falling. The 2025 average in the Kazakh sector was about 29.35 m below sea level, and the shoreline had retreated 30–35 km in places since 2006.

WHERE IT IS

The Caspian lies between Europe and Asia and has no outlet to the ocean. Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Azerbaijan border it. Its northern part, off Kazakhstan and Russia, is very shallow, so a small fall in level exposes wide strips of seabed. The Volga enters from the north-west.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Russia | Kazakhstan | Turkmenistan | Iran | Azerbaijan

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The world's largest inland water body, about 371,000 sq km; its water is about 1.2% salt, roughly a third of ocean salinity.
- The Volga supplies about 80% of the river inflow; the Ural, Kura and Terek bring most of the rest.
- About 90 percent of the world's remaining sturgeon, the source of caviar, live here.
- The 2003 Tehran Convention covers its environment; the five shore states signed a convention on its legal status at Aktau, Kazakhstan, in 2018.

PRELIMS TRAP The Caspian is the world's largest lake by area; Lake Baikal is the deepest and oldest freshwater lake.

Read the full story
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Watch the 2-minute video
Clarity UPSC on YouTube



26 Mount Elbrus

Kabardino-Balkaria, Russia, in the Greater Caucasus

Peak | Jan 2026

In news: On 15 January 2026 a large avalanche came down a slope of Mount Elbrus, and its powder cloud swept over a car park at the Elbrus ski resort; no deaths were reported. Five days earlier, avalanche danger had closed the resort's cable cars and slopes for a day.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Russia (host) | Georgia (south of the range)

- A heavily glaciated stratovolcano; its last known eruption was around AD 50, and fumaroles show remaining heat.
- It is Russia's highest peak; the Baksan valley, with the ski resort's lifts, lies below its southern slopes.
- Khillar Khashirov made the first recorded ascent of the east summit in 1829; a British party climbed the west summit in 1874.

Read the full story
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27 Lake Baikal

South-eastern Siberia, Russia

Lake | Feb 2026

In news: On 20 February 2026 a van carrying Chinese tourists fell through the ice of Lake Baikal near Cape Khoboy, the northern tip of Olkhon Island. Divers recovered seven bodies and one tourist escaped; officials said that season's ice road had not yet been officially opened.

SURROUNDED BY Irkutsk Oblast (west) | Republic of Buryatia (east) | Siberia, Russia | Mongolia (to the south)

- The world's oldest and deepest freshwater lake, about 1,642 m deep; it holds roughly 20 percent of Earth's unfrozen fresh water.
- The Selenga, flowing in from Mongolia, is its largest inflow; the Angara, its only outflow, joins the Yenisei, which flows to the Arctic Ocean.
- Over 1,000 species, including the freshwater Baikal seal, are found nowhere else; it has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1996.

Read the full story
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Country Feb 2026

28 Armenia

Landlocked South Caucasus, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea



WHY IN NEWS

On 9–10 February 2026 JD Vance made the first visit to Armenia by a sitting US president or vice-president. He and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan signed a civil nuclear '123 agreement' covering small modular reactors. The visit also advanced the TRIPP transit route agreed in the August 2025 Armenia–Azerbaijan peace deal.

WHERE IT IS

Armenia is a landlocked, mountainous country in the South Caucasus. It borders Georgia to the north and Azerbaijan to the east. Iran lies to the south, and Türkiye and Azerbaijan's Nakhchivan exclave lie to the west and south-west.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Georgia (north); Azerbaijan (east; its Nakhchivan exclave lies to the south-west); Iran (south); Türkiye (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The proposed 43-km TRIPP route across southern Armenia would link mainland Azerbaijan with Nakhchivan and onward to Türkiye.
- Armenia's only nuclear plant, the Russian-built Metsamor, is ageing; US, Russian, Chinese, French and Korean firms are bidding to replace it.
- Lake Sevan, a high-altitude freshwater lake, is Armenia's largest lake; Mount Aragats (4,090 m) is its highest peak.
- In 301 CE Armenia became the first state to adopt Christianity as its state religion.

PRELIMS TRAP Mount Ararat, Armenia's national symbol, stands in Türkiye. Armenia's highest peak is Mount Aragats.

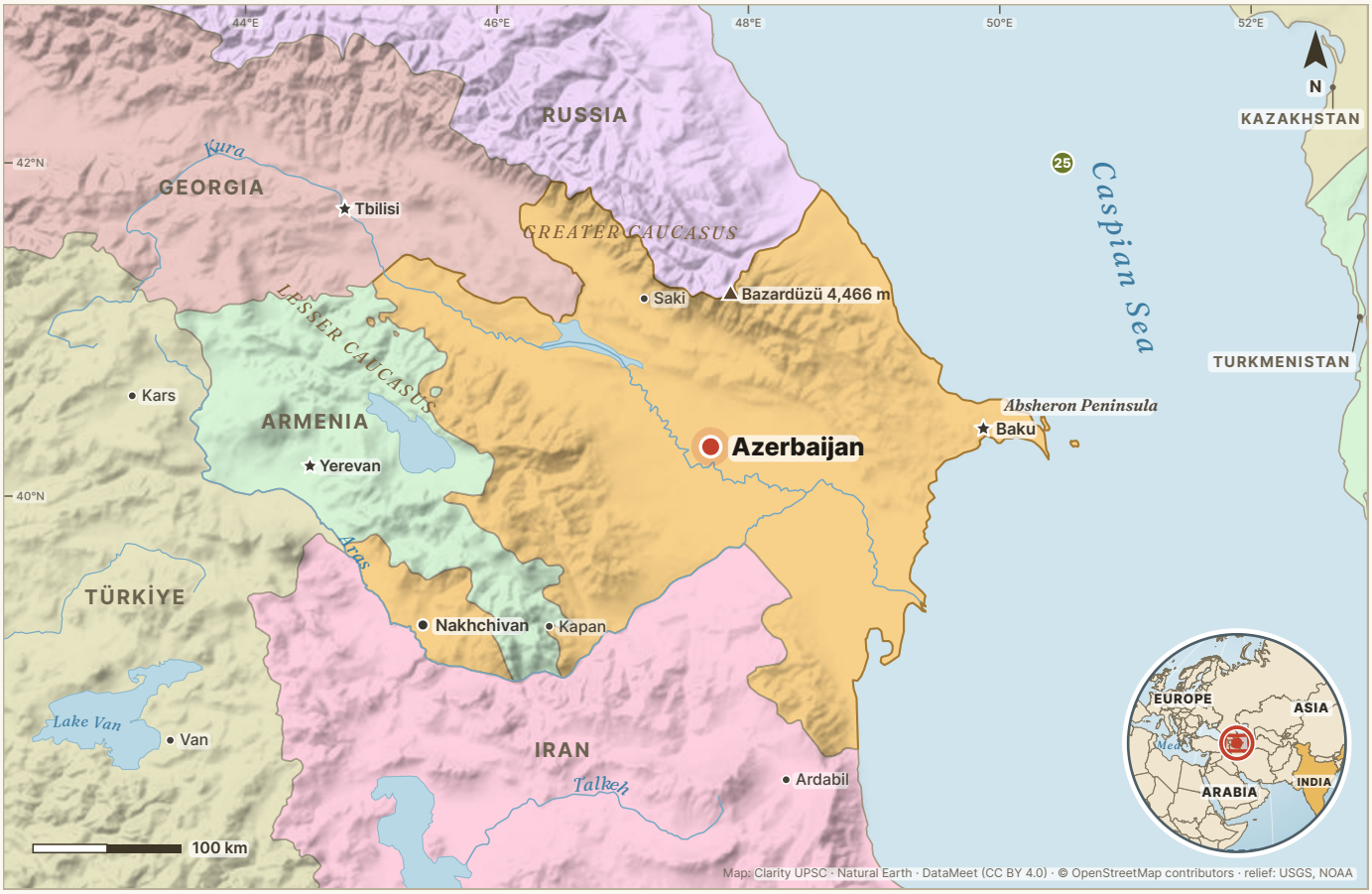
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Country · Apr 2026

29 Azerbaijan

South Caucasus, western shore of the Caspian Sea



WHY IN NEWS

On 3 April 2026 India's Secretary (West), Sibi George, visited Baku for the sixth round of India–Azerbaijan Foreign Office Consultations and called on Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov.

WHERE IT IS

Azerbaijan lies in the South Caucasus on the western shore of the Caspian Sea, south of the Greater Caucasus. Baku stands on the Absheron Peninsula. The Kura, joined by the Aras, crosses the central lowland to the Caspian. Armenia separates the Nakhchivan exclave from the main territory.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Russia · Georgia · Armenia · Iran · Türkiye

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Türkiye is Azerbaijan's fifth neighbour, touching only the Nakhchivan exclave along a short border.
- The western route of the International North–South Transport Corridor runs from Russia through Azerbaijan to Iran.
- Bazardüzü (4,466 m), on the Russian border, is Azerbaijan's highest peak; Elbrus (5,642 m) in Russia is the Caucasus's highest.
- ONGC Videsh holds stakes in the Azeri–Chirag–Gunashli oil fields and the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline.

PRELIMS TRAP Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan share the Caspian with Azerbaijan but are not its land neighbours.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Country · Apr 2026

30 Kyrgyzstan

Landlocked Central Asia, in the Tian Shan



WHY IN NEWS

On 28 April 2026 Bishkek hosted the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's defence ministers' meeting. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh called for united action against terrorism and met Kyrgyz Defence Minister Ruslan Mukambetov. India gave Kyrgyzstan two Bhishm health cubes for disaster relief.

WHERE IT IS

Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked, mountainous country in Central Asia; Tian Shan ranges cover more than 80% of it. Bishkek lies in the north near the Kazakh border, and the Fergana Valley in the south-west.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Kazakhstan · Uzbekistan · Tajikistan · China

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Jengish Chokusu (7,439 m), on the China border, is the highest peak.
- Issyk-Kul, in the north-east, is the world's second-largest mountain lake after Titicaca.
- The Naryn flows west into the Fergana Valley, where it joins the Kara Darya to form the Syr Darya.

PRELIMS TRAP Kyrgyzstan does not border Afghanistan; Tajikistan does, along the Panj River and the Wakhan Corridor.

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WORLD

East Asia

11 places

31 Liancourt Rocks (Dokdo / Takeshima) · Islets

32 Sea of Japan (East Sea) · Sea

33 Ningbo-Zhoushan Port · Port

34 Yangtze River · River

35 South Korea · Country

36 Jeju Island · Island

37 Mount Aso · Volcano (caldera)

38 Sakurajima · Volcano

39 Sanriku coast (Honshu earthquakes) · Earthquake zone

40 Kamchatka Peninsula · Earthquake zone

41 Shiveluch (Sheveluch) Volcano · Volcano

Islets · Feb 2026

31 Liancourt Rocks (Dokdo / Takeshima)

Sea of Japan (East Sea), between the Korean Peninsula and Japan; administered by South Korea



WHY IN NEWS

On 22 February 2026 Japan's Shimane Prefecture held its annual 'Takeshima Day' ceremony, attended by a Cabinet Office vice-minister. South Korea protested and summoned a senior Japanese diplomat. On 2 March Kim Shin-yeol, the islets' last civilian resident, died at 88.

WHERE IT IS

The rocks lie in the Sea of Japan (East Sea), about 216 km from the Korean mainland and 211 km from Japan's Honshu. Ulleungdo, 87 km to the west, is the nearest inhabited island; Japan's Oki Islands lie 157 km to the south-east.

SURROUNDED BY

Sea of Japan (East Sea) · Ulleungdo (South Korea) · Oki Islands (Japan) · Korean Peninsula

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- South Korea administers them as part of Ulleung County, North Gyeongsang; Japan claims them as part of Okinoshima, Shimane Prefecture.
- Japan incorporated the islets into Shimane Prefecture in February 1905; Shimane declared 22 February 'Takeshima Day' in 2005.
- Two main islets and 89 smaller rocks, about 19 hectares; the English name comes from the French whaler Le Liancourt (1849).

PRELIMS TRAP Dokdo/Takeshima is disputed between South Korea and Japan. The Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands in the East China Sea are administered by Japan and claimed by China and Taiwan.

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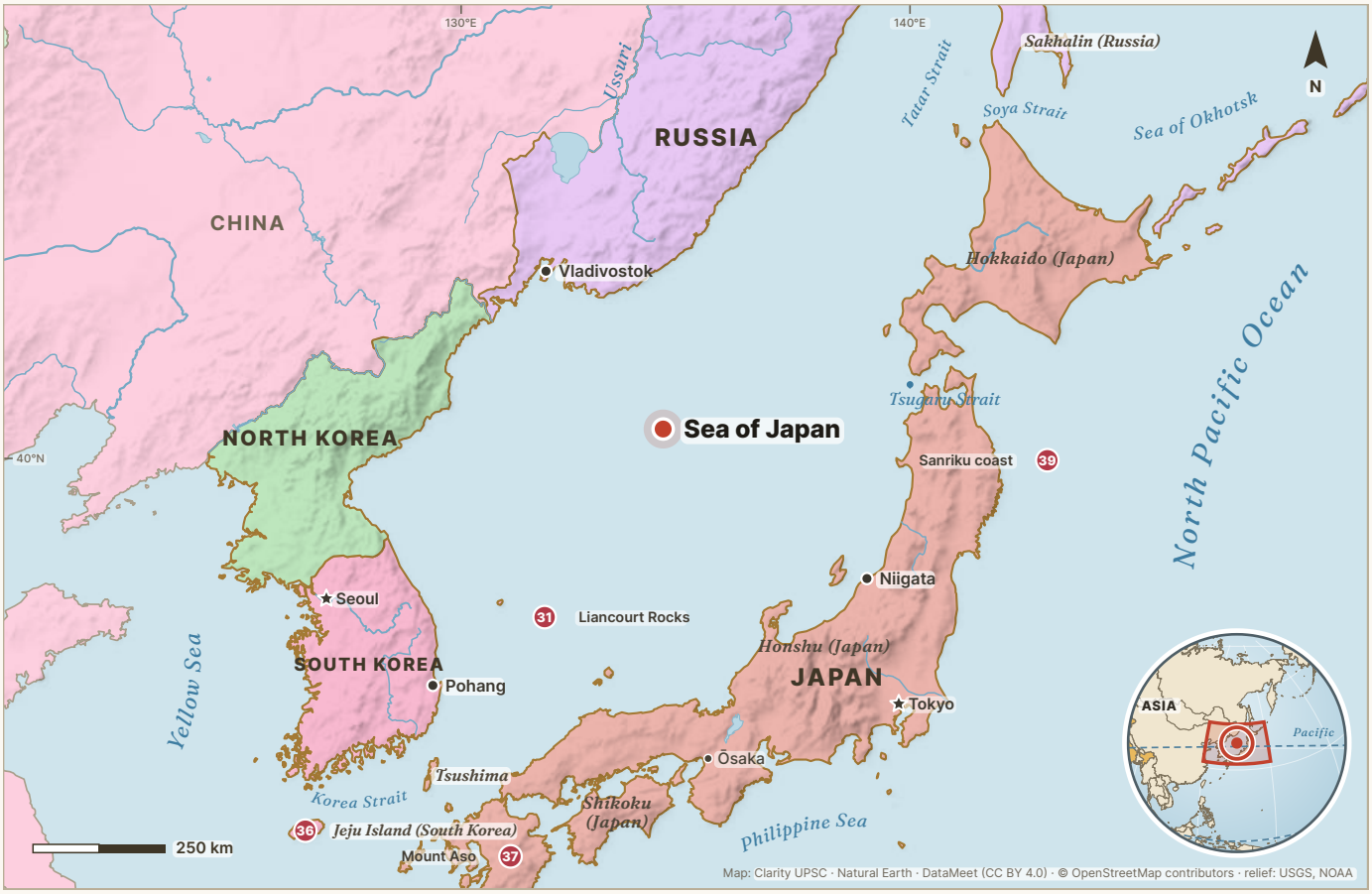
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Clarity UPSC

Sea | Jan 2026

32 Sea of Japan (East Sea)

Marginal sea of the north-western Pacific, between the Asian mainland and Japan



WHY IN NEWS

North Korea fired ballistic missiles towards the Sea of Japan on 4 January 2026, hours before South Korea's president left for a summit in China, and again on 27 January; Japan said the later missiles fell outside its exclusive economic zone.

WHERE IT IS

The Sea of Japan lies between the Asian mainland and the Japanese archipelago. Japan forms its eastern side, while Russia and the Korean Peninsula form its northern and western rim. Sakhalin lies to the north. Korean usage calls it the East Sea.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Japan | Russia | North Korea | South Korea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its straits: Korea (Tsushima) to the East China Sea, Tsugaru to the Pacific, Soya (La Pérouse) and Tatar towards the Sea of Okhotsk.
- The Tsushima Warm Current enters from the south, partly leaving through the Tsugaru Strait; the cold Liman Current flows south along the Russian coast.
- In winter, cold north-west monsoon winds pick up moisture over the sea and bring heavy snow to Japan's western coast.
- All its straits are shallow (about 100 m or less), so its deep water mixes little with the Pacific; its floor has three basins: Japan (north, the deepest), Yamato and Ulleung (Tsushima).

PRELIMS TRAP Tsugaru Strait separates Honshu from Hokkaido; Soya (La Pérouse) separates Hokkaido from Sakhalin; the Korea Strait lies between Korea and Japan.

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33 Ningbo-Zhoushan Port

Zhejiang province, eastern China, on the East China Sea



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 Chinese state media reported that Ningbo-Zhoushan Port handled more than 1.4 billion tonnes of cargo in 2025, the first port to pass that mark. It was the port's 17th straight year as the world's busiest by cargo tonnage. Its container traffic exceeded 40 million TEU.

WHERE IT IS

The port lies on the East China Sea coast of Zhejiang province, at the south-eastern end of Hangzhou Bay. It combines mainland harbours at Ningbo, such as Beilun, with the islands of the Zhoushan archipelago. Shanghai lies across the bay to the north.

SURROUNDED BY East China Sea (east) · Hangzhou Bay (north) · Zhoushan archipelago · Shanghai (across the bay)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The ports of Ningbo and Zhoushan merged in 2006 to form one port.
- More than 300 shipping routes link it with over 700 ports in more than 200 countries and regions.

PRELIMS TRAP Ningbo-Zhoushan leads the world by cargo tonnage. Shanghai leads by container traffic.

Read the full story
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ON CLARITYUPSC.COM · DAILY QUIZ

Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True · ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

clarityupsc.com/daily-quiz

Clarity UPSC

River · Apr 2026

34 Yangtze River

China, from the Tibetan Plateau to the East China Sea at Shanghai



WHY IN NEWS

On 29 March 2026 the 'Linghang' shield machine finished an 11.18-km underwater drive beneath the Yangtze for the Chongming–Taicang tunnel, a record for a 15-metre-class machine. The 14.25-km tunnel, up to 89 m below the river, will carry the Shanghai–Chongqing–Chengdu high-speed railway at up to 350 km/h.

WHERE IT IS

The tunnel crosses the Yangtze estuary between Chongming Island, part of Shanghai, and Taicang in Jiangsu province. The Yangtze rises on the Tibetan Plateau and flows east for about 6,300 km to the East China Sea at Shanghai.

SURROUNDED BY Shanghai (Chongming Island) · Jiangsu province (Taicang, Nantong) · East China Sea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Yangtze is Asia's longest river and the world's third-longest, after the Nile and the Amazon.
- Its headwaters rise near Geladandong in the Tanggula Mountains; the Three Gorges Dam stands on it in Hubei province.
- Chongming, an alluvial island built from Yangtze silt at the river's mouth, is one of China's largest islands.
- The Yangtze river dolphin, or baiji, was declared functionally extinct in 2006.

PRELIMS TRAP The Yangtze reaches the East China Sea at Shanghai; the Yellow River (Huang He) enters the Bohai Sea.

Read the full story
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35 South Korea

Southern Korean Peninsula, East Asia

Country · Feb 2026

In news: On 13 February 2026 India and South Korea held their sixth Foreign Policy and Security Dialogue in Seoul. Senior officials of the two foreign ministries reviewed cooperation in defence, shipbuilding, critical minerals, AI and semiconductors under the Special Strategic Partnership.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

- North Korea (land)
- Japan (across the Korea Strait)
- China (across the Yellow Sea)

- India and South Korea raised their ties to a Special Strategic Partnership in 2015.
- Mountains cover about 70 percent of the country; the Taebaek and Sobaek ranges run north–south, with most summits below 1,000 m.
- Volcanic Jeju Island holds Hallasan, the highest peak; the west and south coasts are deeply indented (rias).

Read the full story
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36 Jeju Island

Korea Strait, about 83 km south of the Korean Peninsula; South Korea

Island · Feb 2026

In news: In February 2026 India's embassy in Seoul issued an advisory for Indians visiting Jeju Island. Travel vlogger Sachin Awasthi had said he and his wife were refused entry and held overnight. Jeju allows visa-free tourist entry, but immigration officers decide admission at the airport.

SURROUNDED BY

- Korea Strait
- East China Sea (south)
- Korean Peninsula (north)
- Tsushima, Japan (east)

- Hallasan (1,947 m), the shield volcano at the island's centre, is South Korea's highest peak.
- UNESCO lists 'Jeju Volcanic Island and Lava Tubes' as a natural World Heritage Site (2007).
- The island was built by volcanic eruptions that began on the seabed about 2 million years ago.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



37 Mount Aso

Aso caldera, Kumamoto Prefecture, central Kyushu, Japan

Volcano (caldera) | Jan 2026

In news: On 20 January 2026 a sightseeing helicopter carrying a pilot and two Taiwanese tourists disappeared on a 10-minute tour over Mount Aso. Police spotted wreckage inside the crater of Nakadake, the volcano's active cone.

SURROUNDED BY

- Aso caldera towns: Aso, Takamori, Minamiaso
- Kumamoto city (west)
- Kuju volcanoes (north-east)

- Four huge eruptions between about 300,000 and 90,000 years ago formed the caldera.
- Takadake (1,592 m) is the highest of its five central peaks; Nakadake last erupted in October 2021.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



38 Sakurajima

Kagoshima Prefecture, southern Kyushu, Japan

Volcano | Apr 2026

In news: In April 2026 Sakurajima's Minamidake summit crater erupted 15 times, eight of them explosively, after no eruptions in March, the Japan Meteorological Agency reported. Plumes rose up to 3,400 m above the crater rim, and Alert Level 3, which restricts entry to the mountain, stayed in force.

SURROUNDED BY Kagoshima Bay

- Kagoshima city
- Osumi Peninsula

- It is a composite volcano (stratovolcano) of andesite and dacite, built by repeated eruptions of lava and fragments.
- It has three peaks, Kitadake, Nakadake and Minamidake; Minamidake and the Showa crater on its flank are the active vents.
- Japan's volcanic alert system has five levels, tied to the area at risk and the action required.

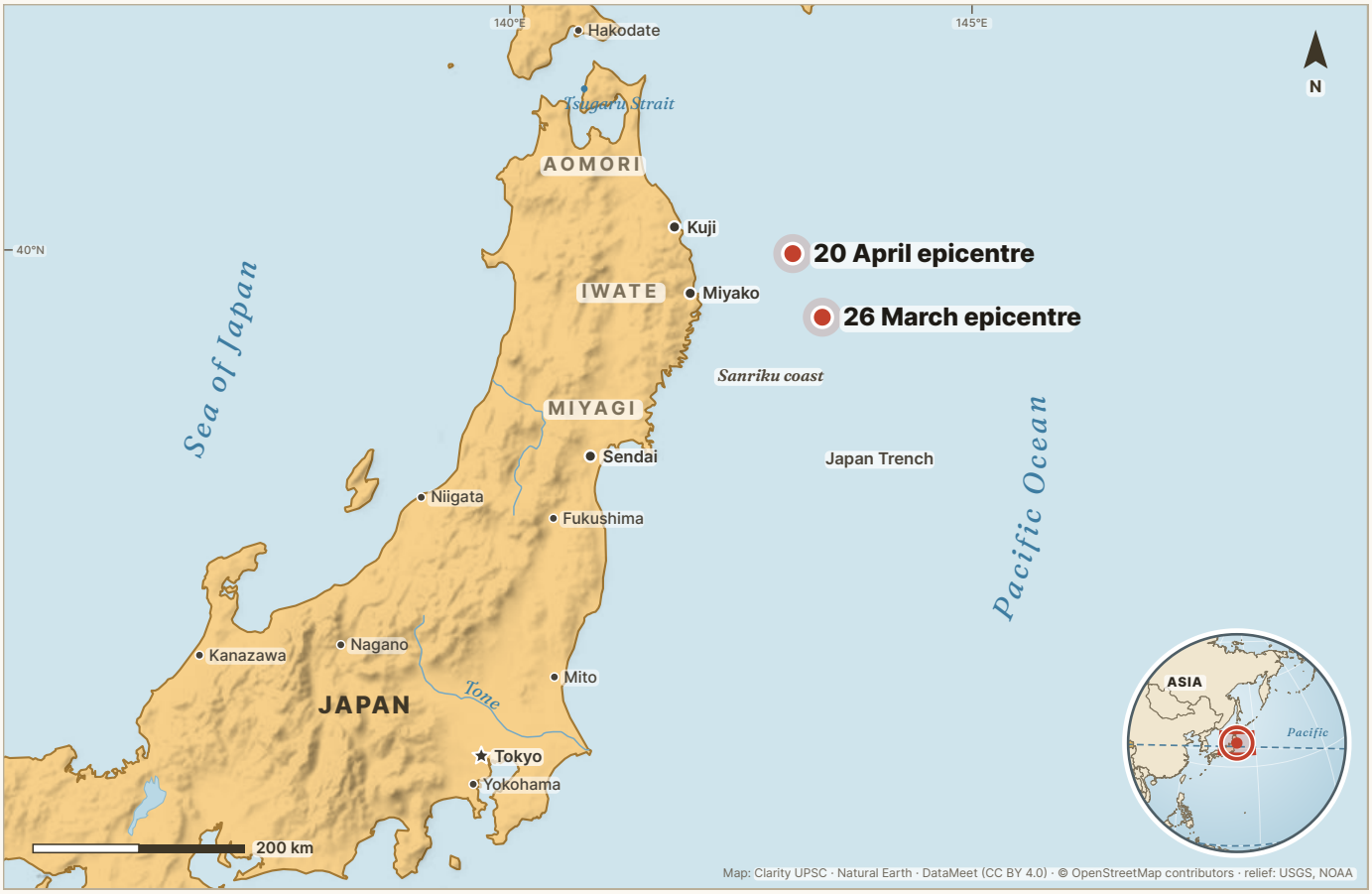
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Clarity UPSC

Earthquake zone · Mar 2026

39 Sanriku coast (Honshu earthquakes)

Pacific Ocean off Iwate Prefecture, north-eastern Honshu, Japan



WHY IN NEWS

On 26 March 2026 a magnitude 6.7 earthquake (Japan Meteorological Agency) struck off the Sanriku coast of Iwate at a depth of about 15 km. On 20 April a magnitude 7.7 quake in the same area sent an 80-cm tsunami into Kuji port, and Japan issued a special advisory for a possible larger quake.

WHERE IT IS

The Sanriku coast is the Pacific shore of Iwate and neighbouring prefectures in north-eastern Honshu. Offshore, the Pacific Plate moves west about 83 mm a year and dives beneath Japan at the Japan Trench.

SURROUNDED BY Pacific Ocean and the Japan Trench (east) · Aomori Prefecture (north) · Miyagi Prefecture (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The US Geological Survey rated the 20 April quake M7.4, from thrust faulting on the Pacific–North America plate boundary.
- The advisory, introduced in December 2022, was issued for only the second time and covered 182 municipalities from Hokkaido to Chiba.
- The magnitude 9.0 Tōhoku earthquake of 11 March 2011 struck off this coast, and its tsunami devastated Sanriku towns.
- The Sanriku shore is a ria coast of drowned river valleys, whose narrow bays can amplify tsunami waves.

PRELIMS TRAP The Japan Trench lies off north-eastern Honshu; the Nankai Trough lies off south-western Japan.

Read the full story
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Earthquake zone · Jan 2026

40 Kamchatka Peninsula

Russian Far East, between the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 record snowfall buried Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, the peninsula's main city. The city declared a state of emergency, buses stopped running, schools switched to remote classes and snow falling from roofs killed two people.

WHERE IT IS

Kamchatka projects south from Russia's Far East. The Sea of Okhotsk lies to its west, the Bering Sea to the north-east and the Pacific Ocean to the east. The Kuril Islands curve south-west from it towards Hokkaido in Japan.

SURROUNDED BY Sea of Okhotsk · Bering Sea · Pacific Ocean · Kuril Islands

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Along the Kuril–Kamchatka arc, about 2,100 km long, the Pacific plate subducts beneath the Okhotsk microplate.
- Deep earthquakes are less likely to move the seabed enough to cause a tsunami.
- Klyuchevskaya Sopka is the peninsula's tallest volcano; the Volcanoes of Kamchatka World Heritage site dates from 1996, extended in 2001.
- City snow cover reached 170 cm, over 2.5 m in places; the regional hydrometeorology centre said such snowfall was last seen in the early 1970s.

PRELIMS TRAP Kamchatka is a peninsula joined to the Asian mainland; Sakhalin, an island, lies farther west across the Sea of Okhotsk.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Volcano · Jan 2026

41 Shiveluch (Sheveluch) Volcano

Northern Kamchatka Peninsula, Russian Far East



WHY IN NEWS

On 28 January 2026 Shiveluch volcano in Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula sent an ash column nearly 9 km above sea level, the Kamchatka branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences reported. The Kamchatka Volcanic Eruption Response Team issued an Orange aviation alert, one step below the highest.

WHERE IT IS

Shiveluch stands at the northern end of the Kuril–Kamchatka volcanic arc in Russia's Far East. The Kamchatka Peninsula lies between the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean.

SURROUNDED BY Kamchatka Peninsula, Russia · Bering Sea (north-east) · Pacific Ocean (east) · Sea of Okhotsk (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A stratovolcano about 3,283 m high, it is Kamchatka's northernmost active volcano and one of its largest and most active.
- Its summit has a 9-km-wide caldera, with a lava dome growing inside since 1999.
- A subduction-zone volcano on the Pacific Ring of Fire; water- and gas-rich magma makes its eruptions explosive.
- Aviation colour codes run Green, Yellow, Orange and Red; Orange warns pilots of an eruption with ash or a high risk of one.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

WORLD

Southeast Asia

14 places

42 Andaman Sea · Sea

43 Strait of Malacca · Strait

44 Pratas (Dongsha) Island · Island (atoll)

45 Scarborough Shoal · Shoal (atoll)

46 Myanmar · Country

47 Salween River · River

48 Preah Vihear Temple · Temple (World Heritage Site)

49 Vietnam · Country

50 Malaysia · Country

51 Mount Semeru · Volcano

52 West Bandung landslide (Java) · Landslide zone

53 Muna Island (Liang Metanduno cave) · Rock-art cave (archaeological site)

54 Prambanan Temple · Temple (World Heritage Site)

55 Mayon Volcano · Volcano

42 Andaman Sea

Sea | Apr 2026

North-eastern Indian Ocean, between the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the coasts of Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia



WHY IN NEWS

On 9 April 2026 an overcrowded trawler carrying Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshis from Teknaf towards Malaysia capsized in the Andaman Sea near the Andaman Islands. A passing tanker, MT Meghna Pride, rescued nine people. The International Organization for Migration said about 250 were feared dead or missing.

WHERE IT IS

The Andaman Sea is a marginal sea of the north-eastern Indian Ocean. Myanmar and Thailand lie to its north and east, and the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra to the south-east and south. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands separate it from the Bay of Bengal.

BORDERING COUNTRIES India (Andaman and Nicobar Islands) | Myanmar | Thailand | Malaysia | Indonesia

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It covers about 797,000 sq km and opens south-eastward into the Strait of Malacca.
- The Irrawaddy and Salween rivers drain into its north, depositing mud in the Gulf of Martaban.
- Barren Island, India's only active volcano, rises from the Andaman Sea; Narcondam, with no recorded eruptions, lies further north.
- IOM data show Rohingya deaths and disappearances in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal rose from 598 in 2024 to 860 in 2025.

PRELIMS TRAP The Ten Degree Channel separates the Andaman Islands from the Nicobar Islands; the Great Channel (Six Degree Channel) separates Great Nicobar from Sumatra.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Strait | Apr 2026

43 Strait of Malacca

Between the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, linking the Andaman Sea and the South China Sea



WHY IN NEWS

On 22 April 2026 Indonesia's Finance Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa floated a levy on ships using the Strait of Malacca, citing Iran's charges on Hormuz traffic. He soon backed off. Foreign Minister Sugiono ruled out any toll; Singapore rejected one, and Malaysia said nothing could be decided unilaterally.

WHERE IT IS

The strait runs about 900 km between the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian island of Sumatra. It links the Andaman Sea of the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea through the Singapore Strait.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Indonesia (Sumatra) · Malaysia · Singapore · Thailand (northern approach)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Under UNCLOS, ships have a right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation; coastal states cannot suspend it.
- In early 2026 about 4,500 large ships a month passed through it, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence.
- Its narrowest point, near Singapore, is less than two nautical miles wide.
- The Sunda and Lombok–Makassar straits offer longer routes through Indonesia.

PRELIMS TRAP The Malacca Strait separates Sumatra from the Malay Peninsula. The Sunda Strait separates Sumatra from Java; the Lombok Strait separates Bali from Lombok.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

44 Pratas (Dongsha) Island

Island (atoll) Jan 2026

Northern South China Sea, about 310 km south-east of Hong Kong; administered by Taiwan



WHY IN NEWS

On 17 January 2026 a Chinese military drone flew over Taiwan-held Pratas (Dongsha) Island for several minutes and left after radio warnings. It flew above the range of the island's anti-aircraft weapons. Taiwan's defence ministry called the flight 'provocative and irresponsible'.

WHERE IT IS

Pratas is a crescent-shaped coral island on the rim of Pratas Atoll in the northern South China Sea. It lies about 310 km south-east of Hong Kong and more than 400 km south-west of mainland Taiwan.

SURROUNDED BY South China Sea

Hong Kong and Guangdong (north-west) · Taiwan (north-east) · Luzon Strait (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Taiwan administers it as part of Kaohsiung's Cijin District; China claims it as part of Guangdong province.
- About 240 hectares, including a 64-hectare lagoon, it is the largest of the South China Sea islands.
- Taiwan created Dongsha Atoll National Park in 2007 to protect its reefs and seagrass beds.

PRELIMS TRAP Taiwan holds Pratas (Dongsha). China holds the Paracels (Xisha), which Vietnam and Taiwan also claim. The Spratlys are divided among several claimants.

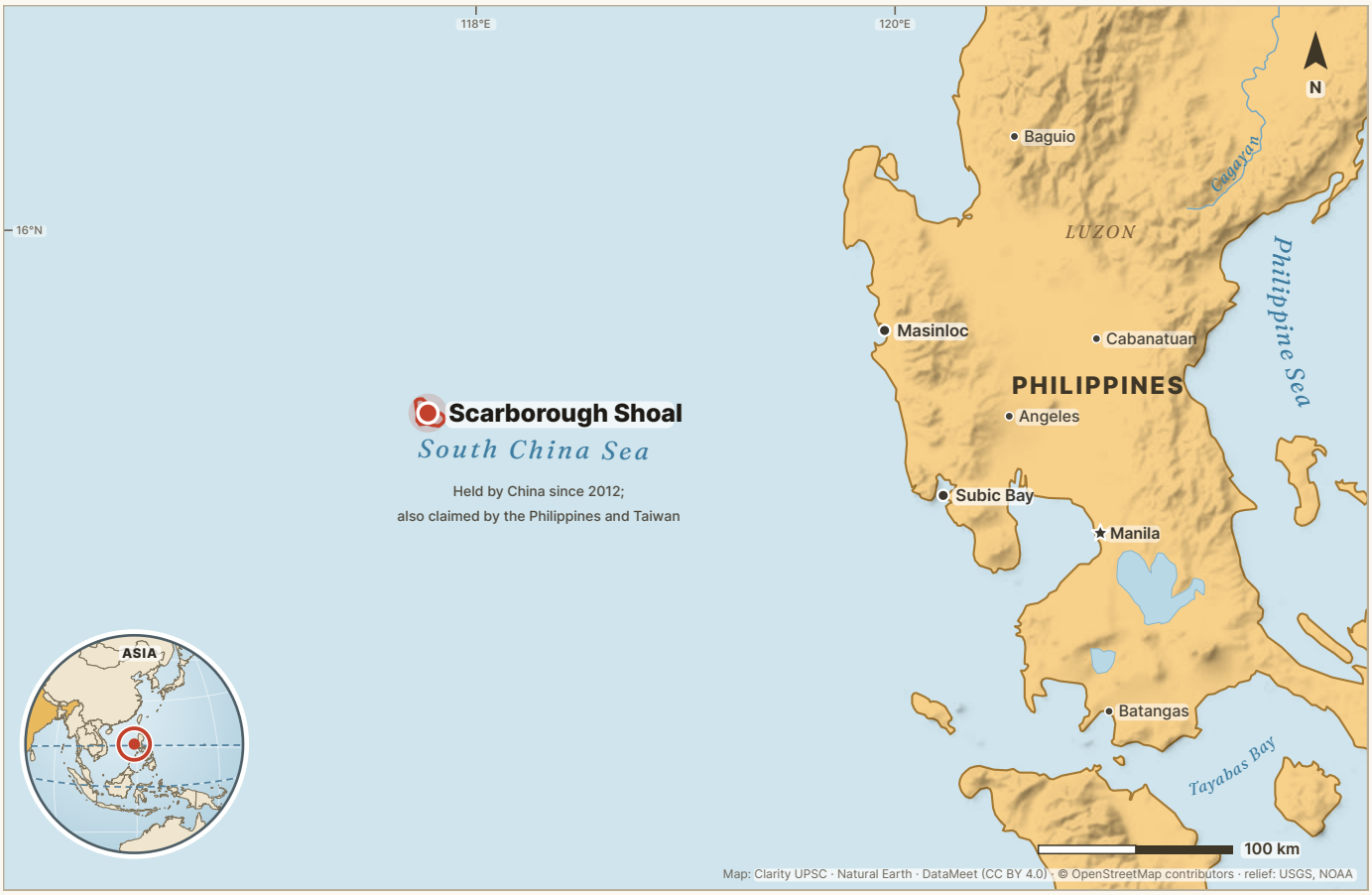
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Clarity UPSC

Shoal (atoll) Apr 2026

45 Scarborough Shoal

Eastern South China Sea, about 120 nautical miles west of Zambales, Luzon; controlled by China since 2012, claimed by China, the Philippines and Taiwan



WHY IN NEWS

Satellite images of 10–11 April 2026 showed four Chinese fishing boats anchored across the entrance of Scarborough Shoal and a 352-metre floating barrier. The Philippine Navy counted ten Chinese coast guard ships at the shoal between 5 and 12 April. The barrier appeared to be removed days later.

WHERE IT IS

The shoal is a triangle-shaped ring of reefs and rocks around a lagoon in the eastern South China Sea. It lies about 120 nautical miles west of the Zambales coast of Luzon, within 200 nautical miles of the Philippines.

SURROUNDED BY South China Sea | Zambales coast of Luzon (east) | Subic Bay (south-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- China calls it Huangyan Island; the Philippines calls it Bajo de Masinloc. China has controlled access since a 2012 standoff.
- The 2016 arbitral award classed it as a rock with no EEZ and upheld traditional fishing rights; it did not decide sovereignty.
- China approved a nature reserve at the shoal in September 2025; Manila called it a pretext for occupation.

PRELIMS TRAP Scarborough Shoal lies in the South China Sea, west of Luzon. The Philippine Sea lies east of Luzon.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Country · Jan 2026

46 Myanmar

Mainland South-East Asia, on the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea



WHY IN NEWS

Myanmar's first general election since the 2021 military coup ended on 25 January 2026, after phases on 28 December 2025 and 11 January 2026. The military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) claimed victory, and ASEAN said it did not recognise the elections.

WHERE IT IS

Myanmar is the largest country of mainland South-East Asia. India and Bangladesh lie to its west, China to the north and north-east, and Laos and Thailand to the east. It has a long coast on the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea.

BORDERING COUNTRIES India · Bangladesh · China · Laos · Thailand

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Myanmar shares about 1,643 km of border with four Indian states: Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.
- A horseshoe of highlands (Rakhine and Chin hills, Shan Plateau, Tenasserim hills) rings the Ayeyarwady–Chindwin basin.
- Hkakabo Razi (5,881 m) is the highest peak; the central 'dry zone' in the Rakhine rain shadow gets under 1,000 mm.
- Known for teak, jade and rubies; the Kaladan project links Indian ports with Myanmar's rivers and roads.

PRELIMS TRAP The Chindwin is a tributary of the Ayeyarwady. The Salween (Thanlwin) flows separately down the east to the Gulf of Martaban.

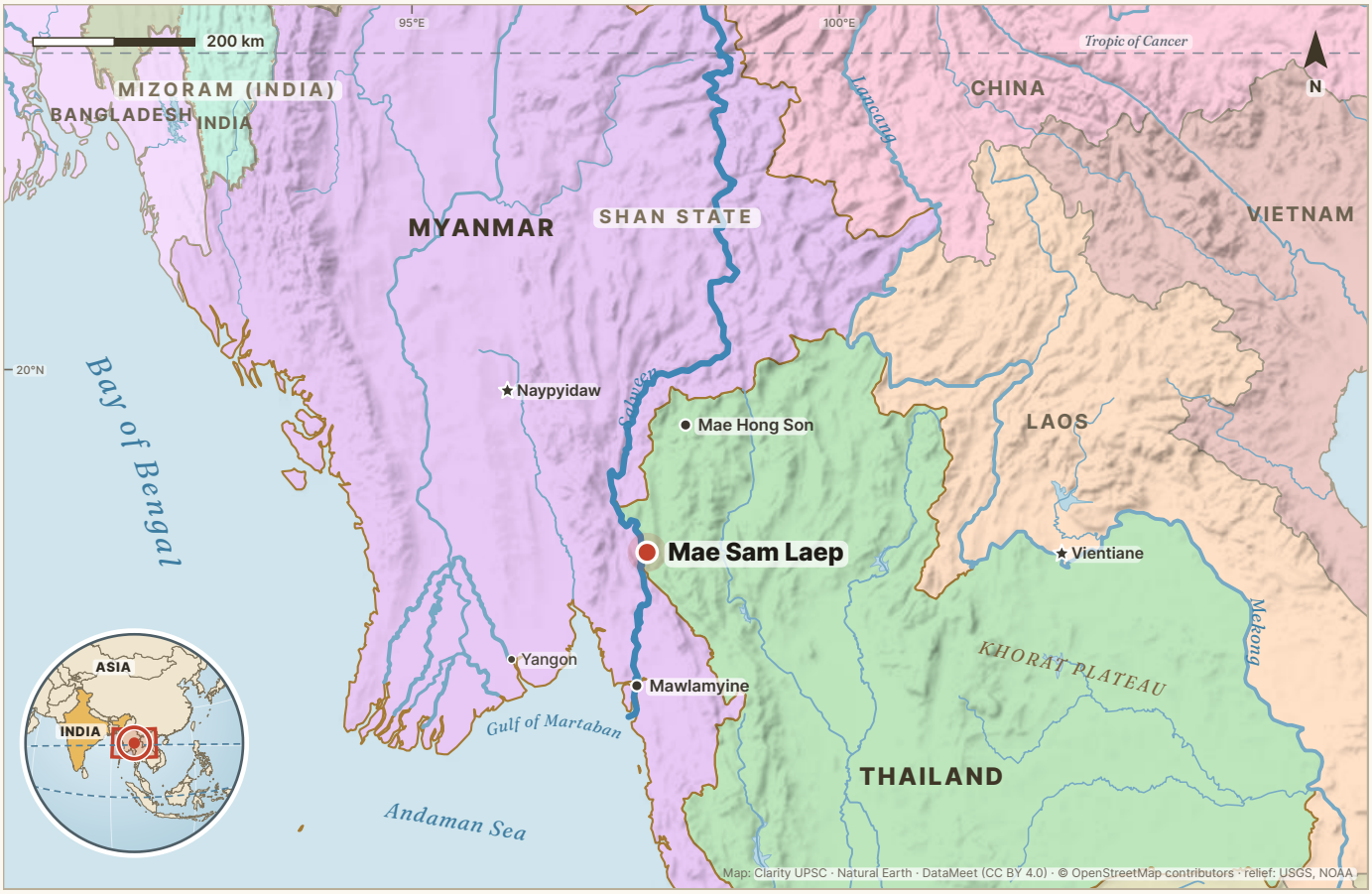
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47

Salween River

River · Apr 2026

China, Myanmar and Thailand; flows into the Andaman Sea



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 Mongabay reported arsenic contamination in the Salween linked to mines upstream in Myanmar's Shan State. Thailand's Pollution Control Department found 0.023–0.038 mg/L in January 2026, above the WHO limit of 0.01 mg/L. A Stimson Center analysis counted 127 suspected mines in the basin, some using rare-earth leaching.

WHERE IT IS

The Salween rises on the Tibetan Plateau and flows south through Yunnan and Myanmar's Shan, Kayah and Kayin states. For about 120 km it marks the Myanmar–Thailand border beside Thailand's Mae Hong Son province, then enters the Andaman Sea at Mawlamyine.

BORDERING COUNTRIES China · Myanmar · Thailand

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Called the Nu in China and the Thanlwin in Myanmar, it runs about 3,300 km; only two small dams stand on it, in Tibet.
- In Yunnan it flows through the Three Parallel Rivers World Heritage area, beside the Jinsha (upper Yangtze) and Lancang (upper Mekong).
- Thai officials warned residents against eating Salween fish; affected villages include Sop Moei and Mae Sam Laep in Mae Hong Son.
- Arsenic from Shan State mines had earlier polluted the Kok and Sai rivers, Mekong tributaries in northern Thailand.

PRELIMS TRAP The Salween and the Irrawaddy both end in the Andaman Sea; the Mekong ends in the South China Sea.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

48 Preah Vihear Temple

Temple (World Heritage Site) · Apr 2026

Dângrêk Mountains, Preah Vihear province, Cambodia, on the Thai border



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 Cambodian officials, taking AFP into Preah Vihear temple, reported 562 damaged parts: 142 from fighting with Thailand in July 2025 and 420 from December 2025. Some damage cannot be repaired, they said. In March the site remained closed to visitors, with unexploded ordnance still present.

WHERE IT IS

Preah Vihear stands on a cliff top in the Dângrêk Mountains, about 525 m above the Cambodian plain, in Cambodia's Preah Vihear province. The range forms the Cambodia–Thailand border, and the temple's easiest approach is from the Thai side.

SURROUNDED BY Thailand (Sisaket province, north) · Cambodian plain (south) · Dângrêk Mountains

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Built mainly under the Khmer kings Suryavarman I and Suryavarman II, it was dedicated to Shiva and listed as a World Heritage Site in 2008.
- The International Court of Justice ruled in 1962 that the temple belongs to Cambodia, and in 2013 that the surrounding promontory does too.
- Restoration funding from India, China and the United States has been on hold since the fighting began.

PRELIMS TRAP Preah Vihear (Shiva, on the Thai border) and Angkor Wat (Vishnu, near Siem Reap) are separate Khmer World Heritage Sites.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



49 Vietnam

Eastern Indochinese Peninsula, South-east Asia

Country | Jan 2026 | Apr 2026

In news: Vietnam's Communist Party held its 14th National Congress in Hanoi from 19 to 23 January 2026 and re-elected To Lam as general secretary. On 7 April 2026 the National Assembly unanimously elected him state president, so he held the top party and state posts together; Le Minh Hung became prime minister the same day.

BORDERING COUNTRIES: China | Laos | Cambodia | South China Sea (East Sea)

- Hanoi, the capital, lies in the Red River delta in the north; Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), the largest city, lies in the south.
- The Truong Son (Annamite) Range runs parallel to the coast and divides the Mekong basin from Vietnam's narrow coastal plain.
- India–Vietnam diplomatic ties date from 1972; a Strategic Partnership (2007) became a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2016.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



50 Malaysia

South-east Asia: the Malay Peninsula and northern Borneo

Country | Feb 2026

In news: On 7–8 February 2026 Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an official visit to Malaysia, hosted by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. India and Malaysia have had a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership since Anwar Ibrahim's visit to India in August 2024.

BORDERING COUNTRIES: Thailand | Indonesia | Brunei | Singapore (across the Strait of Johor) | Philippines (by sea)

- Kuala Lumpur is the capital; Putrajaya is the federal administrative centre.
- Mount Kinabalu (4,095 m) in Sabah is Malaysia's highest peak; Kinabalu Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Malaysia was formed in 1963 from Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore; Singapore left in 1965.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Volcano | Apr 2026

51 Mount Semeru

Lumajang and Malang regencies, East Java, Indonesia



WHY IN NEWS

On 6 April 2026 Indonesia's volcanology agency recorded 79 eruption earthquakes and a pyroclastic flow at Mount Semeru. It kept the volcano at Level III (Siaga), the second-highest alert, and barred activity within 5 km of the summit and 13 km along the Besuk Kobokan valley.

WHERE IT IS

Semeru rises 3,676 m at the southern end of the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park in East Java. The city of Malang lies to its west and Lumajang to its east; the Indian Ocean coast lies to the south.

SURROUNDED BY Tengger caldera and Mount Bromo (north) | Malang (west) | Lumajang (east) | Indian Ocean (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Semeru, also called Mahameru, is the highest mountain on Java.
- It lies on the Sunda Arc, where the Indo-Australian Plate subducts beneath the Eurasian (Sunda) Plate.
- Indonesia's four volcano alert levels are Normal (I), Waspada (II), Siaga (III) and Awas (IV).
- In December 2021 a pyroclastic flow down the Besuk Kobokan valley killed dozens of people.

PRELIMS TRAP Semeru is Java's highest volcano; Bromo, in the same national park, is a smaller cone inside the Tengger caldera to its north.

Read the full story
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Landslide zone · Jan 2026

52 West Bandung landslide (Java)

Pasirlangu village, Cisarua district, West Bandung Regency, West Java, Indonesia



WHY IN NEWS

Before dawn on 24 January 2026 heavy rain set off a landslide that buried homes in Pasirlangu village, Cisarua district, West Bandung, on Java. When the search ended on 14 February, 83 victims had been identified and 20 people were still missing.

WHERE IT IS

West Bandung Regency lies in the volcanic highlands north-west of Bandung, the capital of West Java province. Java lies between the Java Sea to the north and the Indian Ocean to the south.

SURROUNDED BY

- Bandung city (south-east)
- Java Sea (north)
- Indian Ocean (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Java sits above the subduction of the Australian Plate beneath the Sunda Plate, which built its chain of volcanoes.
- Java holds more than half of Indonesia's people, including the capital, Jakarta.

PRELIMS TRAP Java is Indonesia's most populous island, not its largest; Sumatra and Sulawesi are both bigger.

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ON CLARITYUPSC.COM · LIVE ECONOMIC DATA

India's economy, as it stands today.

Live Economic Data · Updated on release day

Repo rate	Retail inflation	GDP growth	Forex reserves
5.50%	6.09%	7.8%	$719.5 bn
▲ +25 bp	▲ +0.55 pp	▼ −0.8 pp	▲ +0.3%
RBI MPC · 7 Oct 2026	NSO · Oct 2026	NSO · Q1 2026-27	RBI · 6 Nov 2026

All 74 figures, the release calendar, and the Budget and Economic Survey numbers.

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53

Muna Island (Liang Metanduno cave)

Rock-art cave (archaeological site) | Jan 2026 | Mar 2026

Muna Island, Southeast Sulawesi province, Indonesia



WHY IN NEWS

On 21 January 2026 a study in Nature dated a red hand stencil in Liang Metanduno cave on Muna Island to at least 67,800 years ago. It is the oldest dated rock art in the world, slightly older than a Neanderthal-attributed hand stencil in Spain.

WHERE IT IS

Muna lies just off the south-eastern peninsula of Sulawesi, west of Buton Island, in Indonesia's Southeast Sulawesi province. Sulawesi is the largest island of Wallacea, the island zone between mainland Asia's Sunda shelf and Australia–New Guinea (Sahul).

SURROUNDED BY

- Sulawesi's south-eastern peninsula (north and west)
- Buton Island (east)
- Banda Sea (east)
- Flores Sea (south-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Scientists dated calcite over the stencil by laser-ablation uranium-series dating to 71,600 years, giving the art a minimum age of 67,800 years.
- The Muna date is 16,600 years older than the oldest dated art in the Maros-Pangkep karst of south-western Sulawesi.
- The authors say people reaching Sahul about 65,000 years ago probably made sea crossings between Borneo and New Guinea.
- Rock art in the karst caves of Southeast Sulawesi, a region that includes Muna, was first reported in 1977.

PRELIMS TRAP Muna is off south-eastern Sulawesi; the earlier record-holding Maros-Pangkep caves are in south-western Sulawesi, near Makassar.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Temple (World Heritage Site) | Mar 2026

54 Prambanan Temple

Near Yogyakarta, on the border of Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia



WHY IN NEWS

On 16 March 2026 Indonesia's Culture Minister Fadli Zon met a team from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) about conserving the Prambanan temple complex. After inspecting the site, the ASI experts proposed restoring fallen temples by anastylosis, re-assembling them from their original stones.

WHERE IT IS

Prambanan stands on the plain about 17 km north-east of Yogyakarta city in south-central Java, below the Merapi volcano. The Buddhist temples of Sewu and Plaosan lie close by.

SURROUNDED BY

- Yogyakarta city (south-west)
- Mount Merapi (north)
- Sewu and Plaosan temples (north)
- Borobudur (north-west, about 35 km)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Built in the 9th century, it is Indonesia's largest Hindu temple complex, dedicated to the Trimurti: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.
- The central Shiva temple is 47 m tall; reliefs on its balustrades tell the Ramayana.
- UNESCO listed the Prambanan Temple Compounds as a World Heritage Site in 1991.
- Fadli Zon said Prambanan, Sewu and Plaosan form one cultural landscape that should be protected together.

PRELIMS TRAP Prambanan is a Hindu temple complex; Borobudur, also near Yogyakarta, is a Buddhist monument.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Volcano | Jan 2026

55 Mayon Volcano

Near Legazpi City, Albay, southern Luzon, Philippines



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) raised Mayon's alert to Level 3 after collapsing lava sent pyroclastic density currents down the Bonga Gully. It recommended evacuating the 6-km Permanent Danger Zone, and Tabaco City declared a state of calamity on 20 January.

WHERE IT IS

Mayon rises in Albay province on the Bicol Peninsula of south-eastern Luzon. Legazpi City lies at its southern foot and Tabaco City to the north-east. The Philippines lies between the Philippine Sea and the South China Sea, on the Pacific Ring of Fire.

SURROUNDED BY Legazpi City | Tabaco City | Albay Gulf | Philippine Sea | Bicol region of Luzon

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A stratovolcano about 2,462 m high, famous for its almost perfect cone.
- Pyroclastic density currents ('uson' locally) are fast flows of hot gas, ash and rock formed when lava collapses.
- It was declared a national park in 1938 (now Mayon Volcano Natural Park) and anchors the UNESCO Albay Biosphere Reserve (2016).
- It has erupted about 50 times since records began in 1616; the 1814 eruption buried Cagsawa town, killing about 1,200.

PRELIMS TRAP Mayon is a near-perfect cone in Albay, south-east Luzon. Taal, also on Luzon, lies inside a lake in Batangas, south of Manila.

Read the full story
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WORLD

Europe

11 places

56 Strait of Gibraltar · Strait

57 France · Country

58 Lake Neuchâtel · Lake

59 Germany · Country

60 Austria · Country

61 Sweden · Country

62 Finland · Country

63 Spain · Country

64 Pompeii · Archaeological site (World Heritage Site)

65 Greece · Country

66 Bulgaria · Country

56

Strait of Gibraltar

Between southern Spain and northern Morocco

Strait | Feb 2026



WHY IN NEWS

On 20 February 2026 the US aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford passed through the Strait of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean. It was moving from the Caribbean to the Middle East amid tension with Iran. After a supply stop in Crete, it was due off Israel's northern coast on 27 February.

WHERE IT IS

The strait links the Atlantic Ocean with the Mediterranean Sea. It separates Spain and the British territory of Gibraltar in Europe from Morocco and the Spanish city of Ceuta in Africa. At its narrowest it is about 13 km wide.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Spain | Gibraltar (UK) | Morocco | Ceuta (Spain)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is the Mediterranean's only natural link with the open ocean; the Suez Canal joins the Mediterranean to the Red Sea.
- Less salty Atlantic water flows east into the Mediterranean near the surface; denser, saltier Mediterranean water flows west at depth.
- The Rock of Gibraltar and Jebel Musa on the Moroccan shore are the classical 'Pillars of Hercules'.
- Morocco's Tanger Med port, east of Tangier, handles large volumes of container trade on the strait.

PRELIMS TRAP Gibraltar joins the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. The Bosporus and Dardanelles join it to the Black Sea, and the Suez Canal to the Red Sea.

Read the full story
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57 France

Western Europe, between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean

Country · Feb 2026

In news: In February 2026 India and France held their 6th Annual Defence Dialogue in Bengaluru, renewed their defence cooperation agreement for ten years and agreed on a BEL–Safran joint venture to make Hammer missiles in India.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Belgium · Luxembourg · Germany · Switzerland · Italy · Monaco · Spain · Andorra

- Rivers: Loire (longest), Seine, Garonne, Rhône and Rhine; the Seine drains to the English Channel and the Rhône to the Mediterranean.
- Mont Blanc (4,807 m) in the Alps is the highest point; Corsica is French, while Sardinia to its south is Italian.
- Réunion and Mayotte, overseas departments, give France territory in the western Indian Ocean near Madagascar; French Guiana borders Brazil and Suriname.

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58 Lake Neuchâtel

Western Switzerland, at the foot of the Jura Mountains

Lake · Apr 2026

In news: In March 2026 archaeologists in Switzerland announced the recovery of a Roman cargo from the bed of Lake Neuchâtel. Divers raised more than 1,000 objects of the first century AD, including Swiss-made tableware, Spanish olive-oil jars, tools, wagon wheels and swords. The ship itself has not been found.

SURROUNDED BY Jura Mountains (north-west) · Neuchâtel city (north) · Yverdon-les-Bains (south-west) · Lake Biel (north-east) · Lake Morat (east)

- At about 218 sq km it is the largest lake lying wholly within Switzerland.
- La Tène, on its north-eastern shore, gave its name to the late Iron Age Celtic La Tène culture.
- The canton's archaeology office spotted the cargo in aerial photographs in November 2024; finds will be shown at the Laténium museum in Hauterive.

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59 Germany

Central Europe

Country | Apr 2026

In news: During Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's three-day visit to Germany, the two countries signed a Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap in Berlin on 22 April 2026, with an arrangement on UN peacekeeping training.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

Denmark | Poland | Czechia | Austria | Switzerland | France | Luxembourg | Belgium | Netherlands

- Germany borders nine countries, the most of any EU member within Europe.
- The Kiel Canal crosses Schleswig-Holstein, linking the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.
- Diplomatic ties with India date from 1951 and a strategic partnership from 2000; Chancellor Friedrich Merz visited India in January 2026.

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60 Austria

Landlocked, Central Europe

Country | Apr 2026

In news: Austrian Chancellor Christian Stocker visited India in April 2026, the first visit by an Austrian chancellor in over four decades. On 16 April he held talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House, New Delhi. The two sides announced 15 outcomes, including MoUs on defence cooperation and counter-terrorism.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

Germany, Czechia (north)

Slovakia, Hungary (east)

Slovenia, Italy (south)

Switzerland, Liechtenstein (west)

- Austria borders eight countries; the Grossglockner (3,798 m) in the Hohe Tauern is its highest peak.
- The 1955 State Treaty restored its independence, and it declared permanent neutrality that year; it joined the EU in 1995 but not NATO.
- The Brenner Pass links Innsbruck in the Austrian Tyrol with Italy's South Tyrol.

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61 Sweden

Eastern Scandinavian Peninsula, northern Europe

Country | Feb 2026

In news: In February 2026, on the sidelines of the India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, the IndiaAI Mission and Business Sweden signed a Statement of Intent on artificial intelligence. They will build the Sweden–India Technology and Artificial Intelligence Corridor (SITAC).

BORDERING COUNTRIES Norway | Finland | Denmark (across the Öresund)

- Sweden joined the European Union in 1995 and NATO in March 2024.
- The Öresund strait separates southern Sweden from Denmark; a bridge links Malmö with Copenhagen.
- Stockholm, the capital, stands on islands where Lake Mälaren meets the Baltic Sea.

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62 Finland

Northern Europe, between Sweden and Russia

Country | Feb 2026 | Mar 2026

In news: In February 2026 Finland's Prime Minister Petteri Orpo met Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi. During President Alexander Stubb's state visit to India on 4–7 March 2026, the two countries raised ties to a Strategic Partnership in Digitalisation and Sustainability.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Sweden | Norway | Russia

- Finland joined the EU in 1995 and became NATO's 31st member on 4 April 2023.
- The Åland Islands, between Finland and Sweden, form an autonomous, demilitarised, Swedish-speaking region of Finland.
- Finland's land border with Russia, about 1,340 km long, is the EU's longest border with Russia.

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Country · Mar 2026

63 Spain

Iberian Peninsula, south-western Europe



WHY IN NEWS

On 30 March 2026 Defence Minister Margarita Robles said Spain had closed its airspace to US military aircraft involved in the war on Iran. The step extended Spain's earlier refusal to let the US use the jointly operated bases at Rota and Morón for the war.

WHERE IT IS

Spain occupies most of the Iberian Peninsula in south-western Europe. Portugal and the Atlantic lie to its west, the Bay of Biscay to its north, France and Andorra across the Pyrenees to its north-east, and the Mediterranean to its east.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Portugal · France · Andorra · Gibraltar (UK) · Morocco (land borders at Ceuta and Melilla)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Meseta Central plateau dominates the interior; the Pyrenees form a barrier along the French border.
- The Strait of Gibraltar, about 14 km wide at its narrowest, separates Spain from Morocco; Ceuta and Melilla are autonomous Spanish cities in North Africa.
- US forces use Rota, a naval base near Cádiz, and Morón, an air base near Seville, under a 1988 defence agreement; the bases remain Spanish.
- Spain joined NATO in 1982 and the European Communities in 1986.

PRELIMS TRAP Teide on Tenerife is Spain's highest point; Mulhacén is mainland Spain's highest. The Tagus is Iberia's longest river; the Ebro is the longest entirely in Spain.

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64

Pompeii

Campania, southern Italy, south-east of Mount Vesuvius

Archaeological site (World Heritage Site) · Apr 2026



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 the Pompeii Archaeological Park and the University of Padua released an AI-assisted reconstruction of a man killed in the AD 79 eruption of Vesuvius. Found near the Porta Stabia necropolis, he carried a terracotta mortar, apparently used to shield his head, plus an oil lamp, an iron ring and ten bronze coins.

WHERE IT IS

Pompeii lies near the Bay of Naples in Campania, southern Italy, about 10 km south-east of Mount Vesuvius and close to the mouth of the Sarno River. Naples lies about 25 km to the north-west.

SURROUNDED BY

- Mount Vesuvius (north-west)
- Bay of Naples (west)
- Sarno River (south)
- Torre Annunziata (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Pompeii, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata form one UNESCO World Heritage Site, inscribed in 1997.
- Ash and pumice from Vesuvius buried the city, preserving streets, houses, frescoes and the hollows left by victims' bodies.
- A charcoal inscription found in 2018 suggests the eruption came in October AD 79, not on the traditional date of 24 August.
- Vesuvius, a stratovolcano above the Bay of Naples, last erupted in 1944.

PRELIMS TRAP Pompeii lies south-east of Vesuvius; Herculaneum, also buried in AD 79, lies on the coast west of the volcano.

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Country · Feb 2026

65 Greece

Southern tip of the Balkan Peninsula, south-eastern Europe



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 Greek Defence Minister Nikos Dendias visited India. He and Rajnath Singh signed a Joint Declaration of Intent on defence industrial cooperation, the start of a five-year roadmap, and exchanged a military cooperation plan for 2026.

WHERE IT IS

Greece lies at the southern tip of the Balkan Peninsula. The Ionian Sea is to its west, the Aegean to its east and the Mediterranean to its south. It borders Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Türkiye.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Albania · North Macedonia · Bulgaria · Türkiye · Ionian Sea · Aegean Sea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- About four-fifths is mountainous; the Pindus range runs north to south, and Mount Olympus (2,917 m) is the highest point.
- Greece agreed to post a liaison officer at the Information Fusion Centre–Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) in Gurugram.
- Has one of Europe's longest coastlines (13,676 km) and thousands of islands, about 200 of them inhabited.

PRELIMS TRAP The Aegean Sea separates Greece from Türkiye; the Ionian Sea separates Greece from Italy.

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Country · Apr 2026

66 Bulgaria

Eastern Balkan Peninsula, south-eastern Europe, on the Black Sea



WHY IN NEWS

Bulgaria adopted the euro on 1 January 2026, becoming the 21st euro-area member. On 19 April 2026 it held its eighth parliamentary election since 2021; Progressive Bulgaria, led by former president Rumen Radev, won 131 of 240 seats, an outright majority.

WHERE IT IS

Bulgaria occupies the eastern Balkan Peninsula. The Danube forms most of its northern border with Romania, and the Black Sea lies to the east. The Balkan Mountains run east–west across the centre, above the Thracian plain.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Romania · Serbia · North Macedonia · Greece · Türkiye

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The lev was converted at 1.95583 to the euro; the EU Council took the final decisions on 8 July 2025.
- Musala (2,925 m) in the Rila Mountains is the highest peak of the Balkan Peninsula.
- The Maritsa rises in the Rila and flows to the Aegean, forming much of the Greece–Türkiye border as the Evros.
- Varna and Burgas are its main Black Sea ports; Bulgaria joined NATO in 2004 and the EU in 2007.

PRELIMS TRAP The Balkan Mountains, which gave the peninsula its name, lie in Bulgaria, but its highest peak, Musala, is in the separate Rila range.

Read the full story
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WORLD

Africa

22 places

67 Canary Islands · Archipelago

68 Algeria · Country

69 Sudan · Country

70 Kordofan, Sudan · Region

71 Egypt · Country

72 Pelusium (Tell el-Farama) · Archaeological site

73 El Ashmunein (Hermopolis Magna) · Archaeological site

74 Valley of the Kings, Luxor · Royal necropolis (World Heritage Site)

75 Mali · Country

76 Burkina Faso · Country

77 Angola · Country

78 Zambia · Country

79 Lake Kariba · Reservoir

80 Rwanda · Country

81 Akobo, South Sudan · Town (conflict zone)

82 Malawi · Country

83 Tanzania · Country

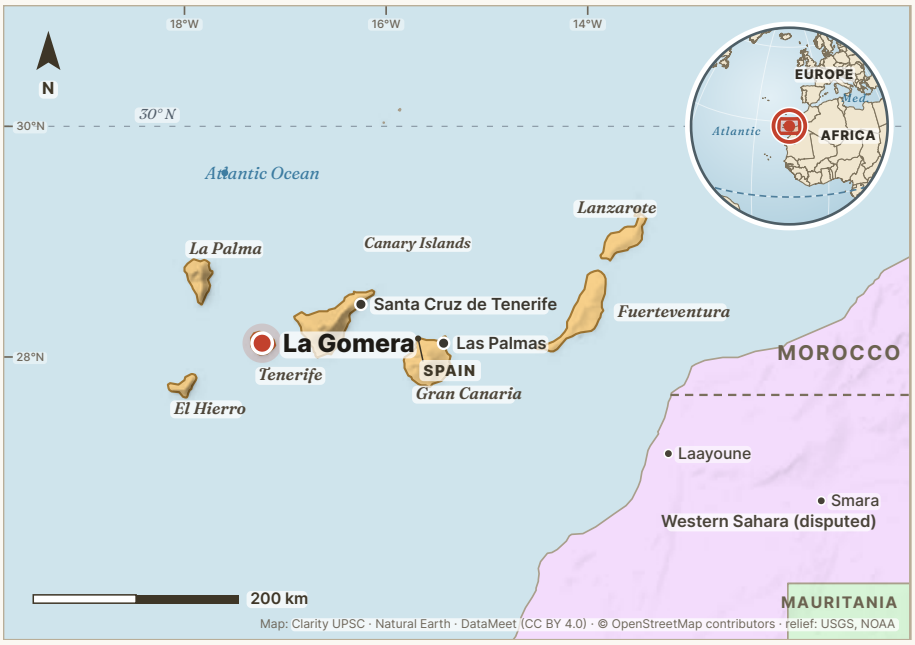
84 Mozambique · Country

85 Kenya · Country

86 Eritrea · Country

87 Somalia · Country

88 Umbilo Shree Ambalavaanar Alayam, Durban · Temple



67 Canary Islands

Atlantic Ocean, off north-west Africa; an autonomous community of Spain

Archipelago · Apr 2026

In news: On 10 April 2026 a coach carrying 27 British tourists left the GM-2 road near San Sebastián de La Gomera, in Spain's Canary Islands, and fell into a ravine. A 77-year-old British man died and 27 people were injured.

SURROUNDED BY Atlantic Ocean · Morocco (east) · Western Sahara (south-east) · Madeira, Portugal (north)

- Seven main islands form two provinces, Las Palmas and Santa Cruz de Tenerife; the two provincial capitals share the regional capital role.
- La Gomera's Garajonay National Park protects laurel forest and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (1986).
- The islands are an outermost region of the EU; the cool Canary Current keeps most of them dry.

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68 Algeria

Maghreb, North Africa, on the Mediterranean

Country · Apr 2026

In news: India and Algeria held the seventh round of their Foreign Office Consultations in Algiers on 29 March 2026. India's Secretary (South), Neena Malhotra, and Algeria's foreign ministry Secretary General, Lounes Magramane, reviewed trade, worth about US$1.7 billion, and cooperation in energy, mining and counter-terrorism.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Tunisia · Libya · Niger · Mali · Mauritania · Western Sahara · Morocco

- Mount Tahat (about 3,000 m) in the Hoggar Mountains is Algeria's highest point.
- Hassi Messaoud (oil) and Hassi R'Mel (gas) are its main hydrocarbon fields; pipelines carry gas under the Mediterranean to Italy and Spain.
- The Tassili n'Ajjer plateau, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, holds thousands of prehistoric rock paintings.

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Country · Apr 2026

69 Sudan

North-east Africa, on the Red Sea



WHY IN NEWS

On 15 April 2026, as the war between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) entered its fourth year, donors meeting in Berlin pledged €1.3 billion in humanitarian aid. UN Secretary-General António Guterres said nearly 34 million people needed aid; Sudan's government rejected the meeting.

WHERE IT IS

Sudan lies in north-east Africa and is the continent's third-largest country, at about 1.89 million sq km. It has a Red Sea coast and borders seven countries. The Blue Nile and White Nile meet at Khartoum to form the Nile.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Egypt · Libya · Chad · Central African Republic · South Sudan · Ethiopia · Eritrea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The RSF captured El Fasher, capital of North Darfur, in October 2025; a UN report accused it of possible war crimes.
- Port Sudan, on the Red Sea, became the army-backed government's main base after fighting reached Khartoum in 2023.
- The Deriba Caldera in the Marrah Mountains of Darfur rises to about 3,042 m.
- The Sennar and Roseires dams lie on the Blue Nile; the Jebel Aulia dam is on the White Nile.

PRELIMS TRAP The Blue Nile comes from Ethiopia's Lake Tana; the White Nile comes from the Lake Victoria region. They meet at Khartoum.

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Region · Feb 2026

70 Kordofan, Sudan

Central Sudan, between Darfur and the White Nile



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 the war between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) hit civilians across Kordofan. A doctors' group said an RSF drone attack near Er Rahad in North Kordofan killed 24 people, including eight children. Strikes in North and West Kordofan on 16 February killed 59 more.

WHERE IT IS

Kordofan is a historic region in central Sudan, east of Darfur and west of the White Nile. It is divided into North, South and West Kordofan states. The Nuba Mountains rise in South Kordofan, and South Sudan lies to the south.

SURROUNDED BY Darfur region (west) · White Nile valley (east) · Northern State (north) · South Sudan (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- El Obeid is the capital of North Kordofan, Kadugli of South Kordofan and El Fula of West Kordofan.
- Kordofan is Sudan's traditional source of gum arabic; groundnuts, millet and livestock are other mainstays.
- The army–RSF war began in April 2023; by early 2026 the RSF held almost all of Darfur, and the fighting had moved into Kordofan.

PRELIMS TRAP Kordofan lies east of Darfur; both are in Sudan. Abyei, claimed by both Sudan and South Sudan, lies on Kordofan's southern edge.

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71 Egypt

North-east Africa, with the Sinai Peninsula in Asia

Country | Apr 2026

In news: India and Egypt held the 11th meeting of their Joint Defence Committee in Cairo, ending on 22 April 2026. They agreed a defence cooperation plan for 2026–27 covering training, maritime security, exercises and defence production. The two navies held their first staff talks on the sidelines.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

Libya | Sudan | Israel | Gaza Strip

- The Suez Canal, opened in 1869, links Port Said on the Mediterranean with Suez on the Red Sea; it has no locks.
- The Aswan High Dam on the Nile created Lake Nasser, which extends south into Sudan.
- India and Egypt raised ties to a strategic partnership in 2023, when President el-Sisi was India's Republic Day chief guest.

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72 Pelusium (Tell el-Farama)

Tell el-Farama, North Sinai, Egypt, south-east of Port Said

Archaeological site | Apr 2026

In news: In April 2026 Egypt's antiquities ministry announced that a circular structure at Tell el-Farama, ancient Pelusium, was a water temple. Its 35-m circular basin was linked by channels to the Pelusiac branch of the Nile. Excavators think it honoured Pelusius, a local god. Found in 2019, it was first taken for a senate house.

SURROUNDED BY

Mediterranean Sea (north) | Port Said and the Suez Canal (west) | North Sinai coast (east)

- In 525 BCE the Persian king Cambyses II defeated Egypt's army near Pelusium and conquered Egypt.
- Egypt's antiquities ministry dates the temple to the 2nd century BC and says it stayed in use until the 6th century AD.
- Pelusius's name is linked to the Greek word for mud or clay, matching the silt-laden Nile water that filled the basin.

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73

El Ashmunein (Hermopolis Magna)

West bank of the Nile, near Mallawi, Minya governorate, Middle Egypt

Archaeological site · Mar 2026



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 an Egyptian–American mission finished restoring a seated limestone colossus of Pharaoh Ramesses II at El Ashmunein. It re-erected the statue, about 6.7 m high and over 40 tonnes, in front of the temple's northern entrance. The upper part was found in 2024 and the lower part in 1930.

WHERE IT IS

El Ashmunein lies on the west bank of the Nile in Minya governorate, Middle Egypt, near the town of Mallawi. The necropolis of Tuna el-Gebel lies to the west, and the rock tombs of Beni Hasan lie to the north-east, across the river.

SURROUNDED BY

- Nile (east)
- Mallawi (nearby town)
- Tuna el-Gebel necropolis (west)
- Beni Hasan (across the Nile)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Ancient Khmunu, which the Greeks called Hermopolis Magna, was the main cult centre of Thoth, god of wisdom and writing, shown as an ibis.
- Ramesses II, a New Kingdom pharaoh of the 13th century BCE, also built the temples of Abu Simbel.
- The joint mission is led by Bassem Gehad of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities and Yvona Trnka-Amrhein of the University of Colorado.

PRELIMS TRAP Hermopolis, in Middle Egypt, was Thoth's city. Heliopolis, near Cairo, was the centre of the sun god Ra.

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74 Valley of the Kings, Luxor

West bank of the Nile opposite Luxor, southern Egypt

Royal necropolis (World Heritage Site) · Feb 2026



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 Ingo Strauch (University of Lausanne) and Charlotte Schmid (French School of Asian Studies) reported about 30 Indian inscriptions, 20 in Tamil-Brahmi, in six tombs of Egypt's Valley of the Kings. The name 'Cikai Korran' appears eight times in five tombs. They date to about the 1st–3rd centuries CE.

WHERE IT IS

The Valley of the Kings lies on the west bank of the Nile, opposite Luxor (ancient Thebes) in southern Egypt. It is part of the Theban Necropolis, cut into the desert hills.

SURROUNDED BY Nile River · Luxor (ancient Thebes) · Theban Necropolis

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- New Kingdom pharaohs of the 18th–20th dynasties were buried here; it is part of the World Heritage Site 'Ancient Thebes with its Necropolis' (1979).
- The other inscriptions are in Prakrit, Sanskrit and Gandhari in Kharoshthi; one Sanskrit text records an envoy of a Kshaharata king.
- The tombs hold more than 2,000 Greek graffiti; one Tamil text, 'came and saw', seems to imitate their formula.
- Some of the Tamil names also occur at Berenike, a Roman-era Egyptian port on the Red Sea.

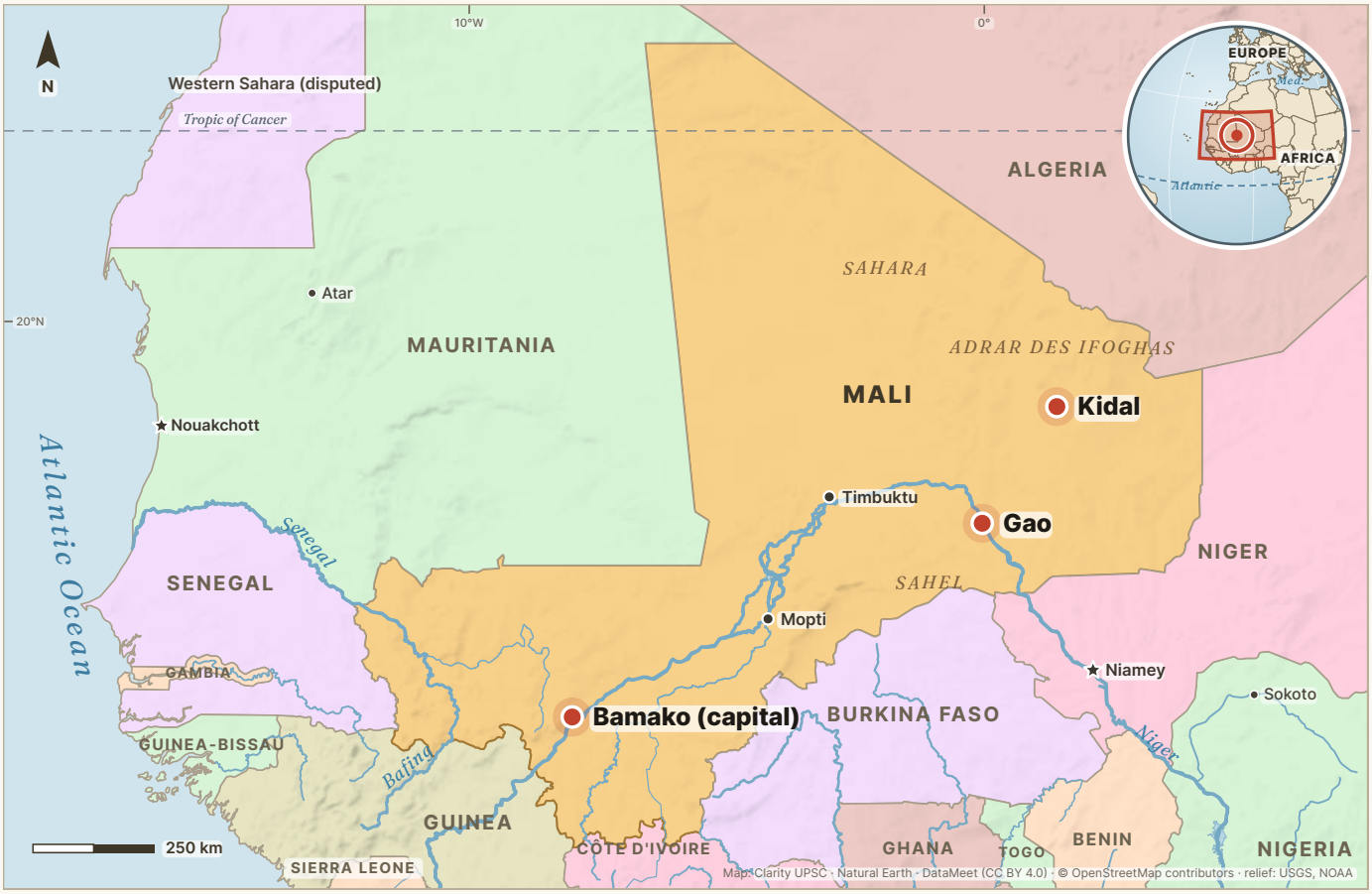
PRELIMS TRAP The Valley of the Kings holds rock-cut tombs at Luxor in southern Egypt; the pyramids of Giza stand near Cairo in the north.

Read the full story
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Country · Apr 2026

75 Mali

Landlocked West Africa, from the humid south to the Sahel and Sahara



WHY IN NEWS

On 25 April 2026 the al-Qaeda-linked JNIM and the Tuareg-led Azawad Liberation Front (FLA) launched coordinated attacks across Mali, including near Bamako's airport, at the main army base in Kati, and at Sévaré, Gao and Kidal. Defence Minister Sadio Camara was killed, and Russia's Africa Corps was forced out of Kidal.

WHERE IT IS

Mali is a landlocked West African country stretching from wetter southern farmland to the Sahel and the Sahara. The capital, Bamako, stands on the Niger River in the south-west. Gao lies on the Niger's eastern stretch, and Kidal in the north-eastern Adrar des Ifoghas massif.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Algeria · Niger · Burkina Faso · Côte d'Ivoire · Guinea · Senegal · Mauritania

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Niger's great bend passes Timbuktu and Gao before the river turns south-east into Niger.
- Kidal and the Adrar des Ifoghas massif are the heartland of Tuareg separatism; rebels call northern Mali 'Azawad'.
- Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger formed the Alliance of Sahel States and left ECOWAS in January 2025.
- World Cotton Day began in 2019 on the initiative of the Cotton-4: Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali.

PRELIMS TRAP Bamako, Mali's capital, stands on the Niger River; Niamey is the capital of the separate country of Niger.

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76 Burkina Faso

Landlocked West Africa, in the Sahel

Country | Apr 2026

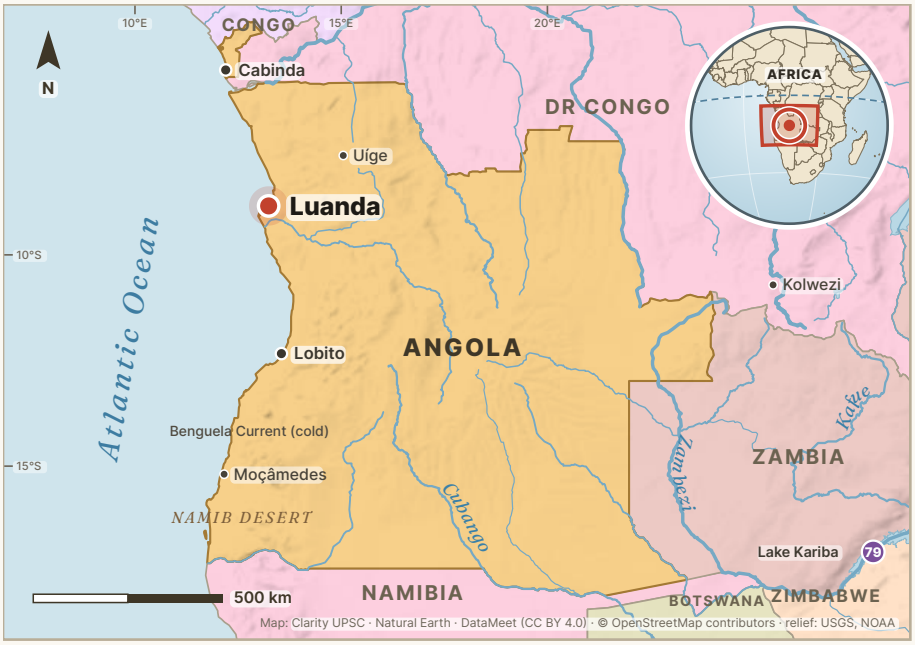
In news: In early April 2026 India sent 1,000 tonnes of rice to Burkina Faso as humanitarian aid. External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said it would support vulnerable communities and internally displaced people.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

Mali | Niger | Benin | Togo | Ghana | Côte d'Ivoire

- The Black, White and Red Volta rivers cross it and flow south into Ghana, where they feed Lake Volta.
- The country was called Upper Volta until 1984.
- With Mali and Niger it left ECOWAS in January 2025; the three had formed the Alliance of Sahel States in 2023.

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77 Angola

Atlantic coast of south-western Africa

Country | Apr 2026

In news: In late March 2026 India's state-run oil and gas companies were reported to be negotiating term contracts with Angola's state energy company, Sonangol, for cooking gas (LPG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG). The talks followed supply disruptions after the Strait of Hormuz was closed during the Iran war.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

Republic of the Congo (Cabinda) | Democratic Republic of the Congo | Zambia | Namibia

- Angola left OPEC in January 2024 after a dispute over production quotas.
- The Benguela railway links the port of Lobito with the copper belts of DR Congo and Zambia, forming the Lobito Corridor.
- The cold Benguela Current flows along its south-western coast, where the Namib Desert begins.

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Country · Apr 2026

78 Zambia

Landlocked, south-central Africa



WHY IN NEWS

On 16 April 2026 Reuters reported that India's critical-minerals talks with Zambia had stalled. Zambia had not given assurances on mining rights in a cobalt and copper exploration area of about 9,000 sq km allocated to India the previous year.

WHERE IT IS

Zambia is a landlocked high plateau in south-central Africa with eight neighbours. The Zambezi drains the south and west and forms Victoria Falls on the Zimbabwe border. Lake Kariba lies on that border; Lake Tanganyika touches the far north.

BORDERING COUNTRIES DR Congo · Tanzania · Malawi · Mozambique · Zimbabwe · Botswana · Namibia · Angola

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Tanzania–Zambia Railway (TAZARA) links the Copperbelt to Dar es Salaam.
- The Lobito Corridor railway is being upgraded to carry Zambian and Congolese copper to Angola's Atlantic port of Lobito.
- A major copper and cobalt producer; it defaulted on sovereign debt in 2020.

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Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True · ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

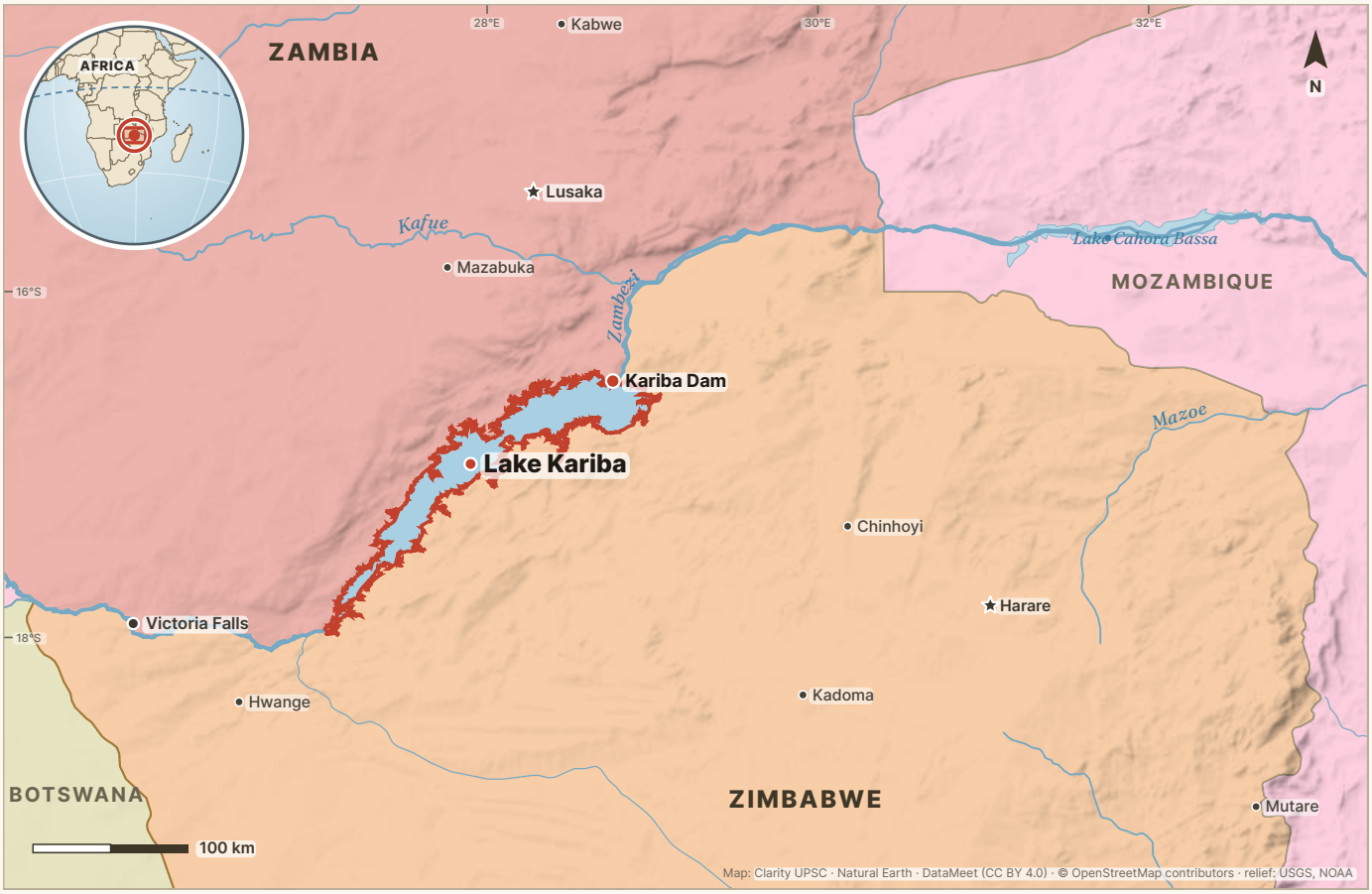
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Clarity UPSC

Reservoir · Mar 2026

79 Lake Kariba

On the Zambezi River, on the Zambia–Zimbabwe border



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 Zimbabwe's government presented plans for a 500 MW floating solar plant on Lake Kariba, the pilot of a planned 1 GW hybrid project; Afreximbank funded US$4.4 million of feasibility studies.

WHERE IT IS

Lake Kariba lies on the middle Zambezi, along the border between Zambia (north) and Zimbabwe (south). It formed when the river was dammed at Kariba Gorge. At full capacity it stretches about 280 km long and up to 40 km wide.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Zambia · Zimbabwe

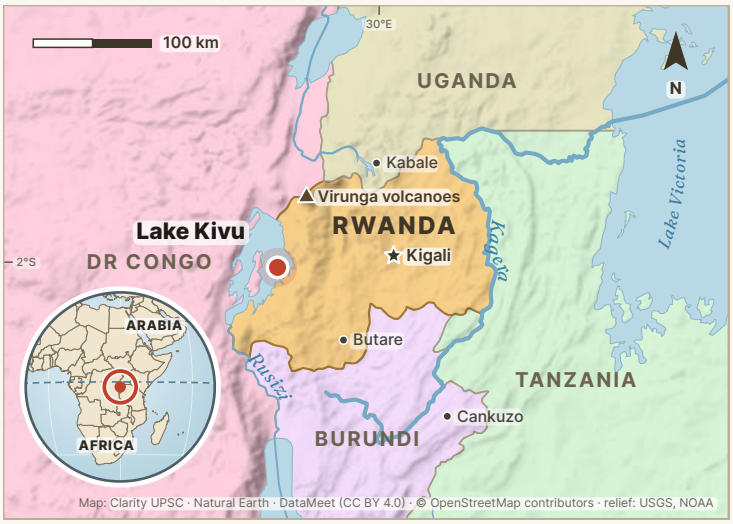
KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The world's largest man-made reservoir by volume, holding about 181 billion cubic metres.
- The 128-m double-curvature arch dam was built in 1956–59; power stations on both banks give about 2,130 MW.
- The solar plan includes fish farming beneath the panels; floating panels also shade the water and reduce evaporation.
- About 57,000 Batonga people were displaced; 'Operation Noah' rescued stranded animals.

PRELIMS TRAP Kariba (Zambia–Zimbabwe) is the largest reservoir by volume. Cahora Bassa lies downstream on the Zambezi in Mozambique; Lake Volta (Ghana) is largest by area.

Read the full story
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Watch the 2-minute video
Clarity UPSC on YouTube



80 Rwanda

Landlocked east-central Africa, just south of the Equator

Country | Feb 2026

In news: On 21 February 2026, during the India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, Rwanda's ICT Minister Paula Ingabire and India's Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh discussed cooperation in AI, biotechnology and nuclear energy. On 2–3 March the second India–Rwanda Joint Commission met in New Delhi and signed a cultural exchange programme for 2026–30.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Uganda | Tanzania | Burundi | DR Congo

- Called the 'land of a thousand hills', Rwanda straddles the divide between the Nile and Congo river basins.
- Kigali, the capital, lies near the centre; the Virunga volcanoes in the north-west shelter mountain gorillas.

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81 Akobo, South Sudan

Akobo County, eastern Jonglei State, South Sudan, on the Ethiopian border

Town (conflict zone) | Mar 2026

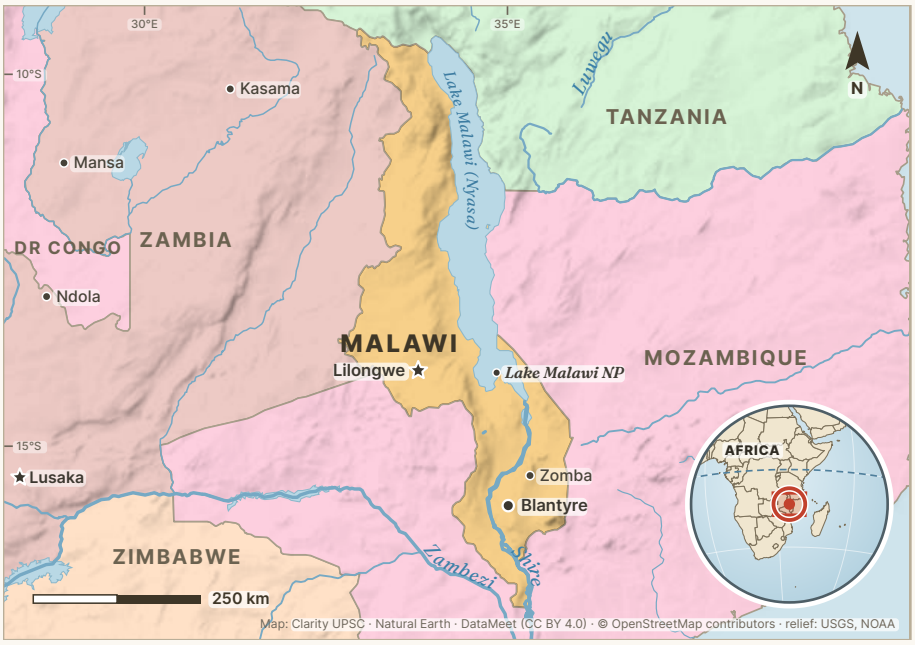
In news: In March 2026 South Sudan's army ordered civilians, UN peacekeepers and aid agencies out of Akobo, an opposition-held town, before an offensive. Thousands fled into Ethiopia and MSF withdrew its medical team. The army said it retook Akobo on 9 March; witnesses said fighters of the opposition SPLA-IO recaptured it on 13 April.

SURROUNDED BY

Ethiopia (Gambela region, across the rivers) | Pibor River | Akobo River | Greater Pibor Administrative Area (south) | Upper Nile State (north)

- The Pibor joins Ethiopia's Baro River to form the Sobat, which enters the White Nile near Malakal.
- A 2018 deal ended the war between forces of President Salva Kiir and Riek Machar; Machar has been under house arrest since March 2025.
- Before the March 2026 order, Akobo sheltered more than 82,000 displaced people; MSF was among the few health providers for about 112,000 people.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



82 Malawi

Landlocked south-eastern Africa, along Lake Malawi

Country | Mar 2026

In news: On 9 March 2026 India shipped 1,000 tonnes of rice from Nhava Sheva port to Malawi as humanitarian aid. The consignment was meant to ease food shortages after a drought linked to El Niño.

BORDERING COUNTRIES: Tanzania | Mozambique | Zambia

- Lake Malawi, Africa's third-largest lake, drains south through the Shire River into the Zambezi.
- Lake Malawi National Park, at the lake's southern end, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its cichlid fishes.
- Lilongwe is the capital; Blantyre, in the south, is the main commercial city.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



83 Tanzania

East Africa, on the Indian Ocean

Country | Mar 2026 | Apr 2026

In news: In March 2026 the Indian Navy ship INS Trikand carried life-saving medicines from India for Shree Hindu Mandal Hospital in Dar es Salaam, which the Indian-origin community founded in 1919. On 20 April 2026 India's High Commissioner handed the hospital a further two tonnes of medical supplies.

BORDERING COUNTRIES: Kenya | Uganda | Rwanda | Burundi | DR Congo (across Lake Tanganyika) | Zambia | Malawi | Mozambique

- Kilimanjaro's Uhuru Peak (5,895 m), near the Kenyan border, is Africa's highest point; its Kibo cone is dormant.
- Tanzania shares Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika (the world's second-deepest freshwater lake) and Lake Nyasa (Malawi).
- The Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in the north are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

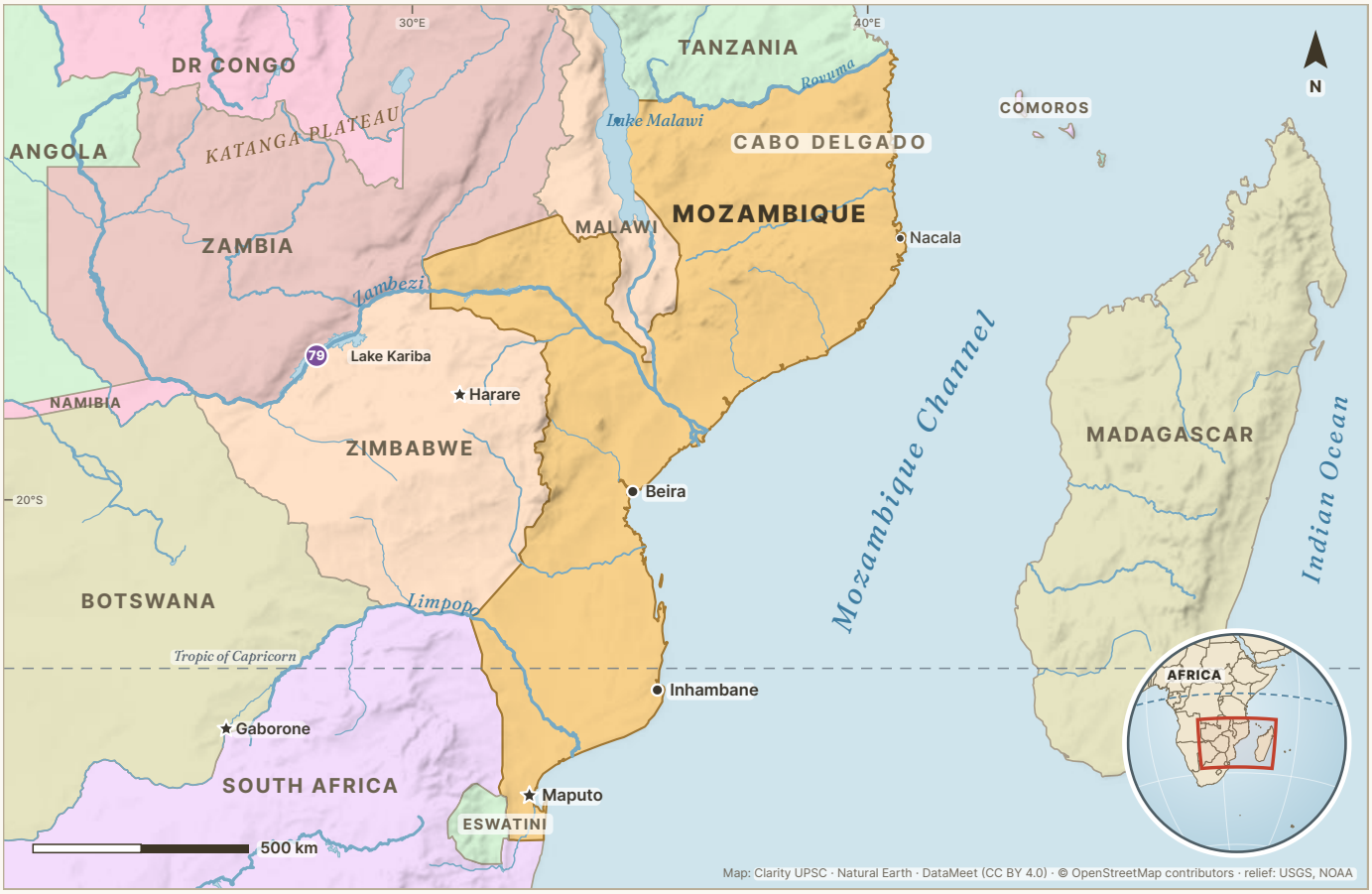
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Clarity UPSC

Country · Mar 2026

84 Mozambique

South-east coast of Africa, on the Mozambique Channel



WHY IN NEWS

In early 2026 floods in central and southern Mozambique affected more than 700,000 people, and Cyclone Gezani struck Inhambane province in mid-February. In late March the Indian Navy ship INS Trikand brought relief material and medicines to Maputo, and India handed over 86 tonnes of medicines.

WHERE IT IS

Mozambique lies on Africa's south-east coast, along the Mozambique Channel, which separates it from Madagascar. The Zambezi and Limpopo rivers cross it to the Indian Ocean. It borders Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Eswatini.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Tanzania · Malawi · Zambia · Zimbabwe · South Africa · Eswatini

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Maputo, the capital, lies in the far south, close to the South African and Eswatini borders.
- The Zambezi and Limpopo drain large upstream basins, so heavy rain in neighbouring countries can flood Mozambique's plains.
- The 86 tonnes completed a medicine gift India announced in June 2025 to mark 50 years of diplomatic relations.
- The Rovuma basin off Cabo Delgado, in the far north, holds large gas fields in which Indian companies hold stakes.

PRELIMS TRAP The Mozambique Channel separates Mozambique from Madagascar. The Comoros lie at the channel's northern end.

Read the full story
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85 Kenya

Eastern Africa, on the Equator and the Indian Ocean



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 India and Kenya held their third Foreign Office Consultations and fourth Joint Defence Coordination Committee in Nairobi, and the first meeting of their Joint Working Group on Agriculture online. Their 10th Joint Trade Committee met in Nairobi in April 2026.

WHERE IT IS

Kenya lies in eastern Africa and crosses the Equator. Its south-eastern coast faces the Indian Ocean. Lake Victoria touches the west, the Rift Valley crosses the interior and Mount Kenya rises in the central highlands.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Ethiopia | Somalia | South Sudan | Uganda | Tanzania | Indian Ocean

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Nairobi hosts the headquarters of UNEP and UN-Habitat.
- Lake Turkana, in the northern Rift Valley, is the world's largest permanent desert lake.
- Mombasa serves Uganda and other landlocked neighbours; Lamu port anchors the planned LAPSSET corridor to South Sudan and Ethiopia.

PRELIMS TRAP Mount Kenya stands just south of the Equator in Kenya; Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, lies in Tanzania.

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Live Economic Data — Updated on release day

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▲ +25 bp	▲ +0.55 pp	▼ −0.8 pp	▲ +0.3%
RBI MPC · 7 Oct 2026	NSO · Oct 2026	NSO · Q1 2026-27	RBI · 6 Nov 2026

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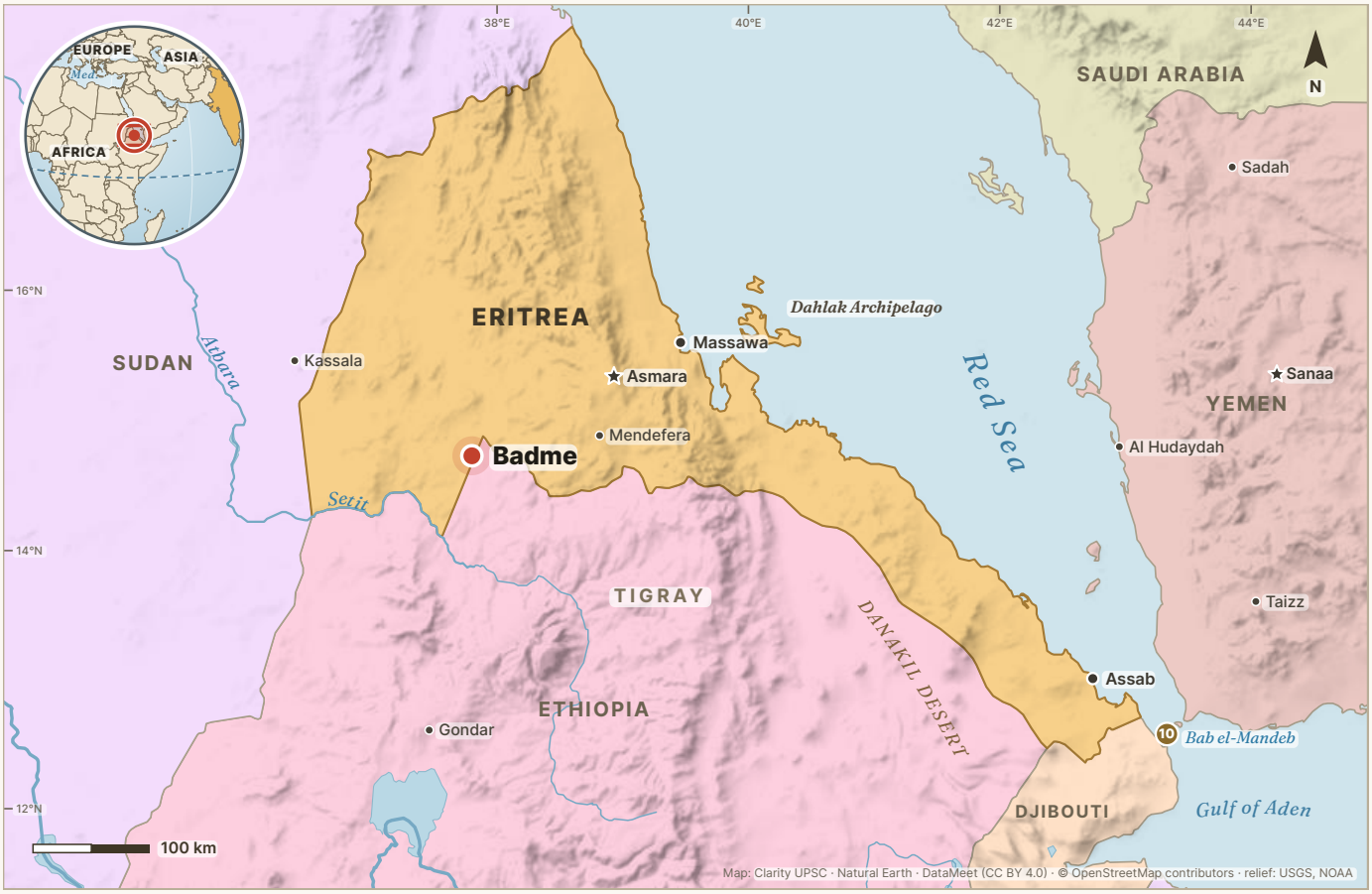
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Clarity UPSC

Country · Feb 2026

86 Eritrea

Horn of Africa, on the south-western shore of the Red Sea



WHY IN NEWS

On 7 February 2026 Ethiopia demanded that Eritrea immediately withdraw its troops from Ethiopian territory and stop backing rebel groups. Eritrea's foreign minister called the charge false. Ethiopian, Tigrayan and Eritrean forces were mobilising in northern Ethiopia, raising fears of a new war.

WHERE IT IS

Eritrea lies on the south-western shore of the Red Sea in the Horn of Africa. It borders Sudan to the west, Ethiopia to the south and Djibouti to the south-east. Its coast faces Yemen and Saudi Arabia and includes the Dahlak Archipelago.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Sudan (west) · Ethiopia (south) · Djibouti (south-east) · Red Sea (east; Saudi Arabia and Yemen lie across it)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

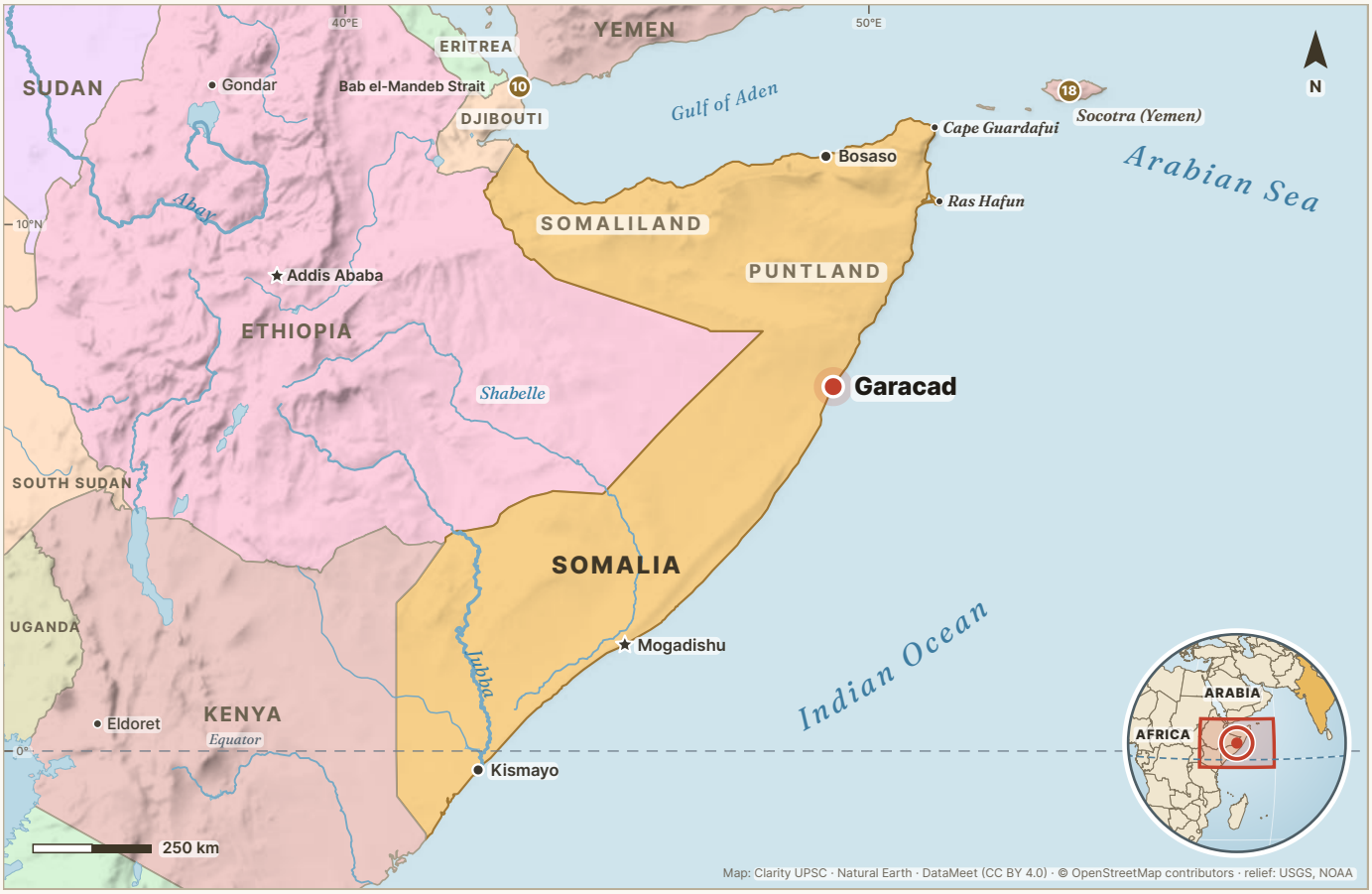
- Eritrea became independent from Ethiopia in 1993 after a referendum; Ethiopia has since been landlocked and trades mainly through Djibouti.
- Asmara, the capital, sits on the highland plateau; Massawa and Assab are Eritrea's Red Sea ports.
- A 1998–2000 border war over Badme ended with the December 2000 Algiers Agreement; a boundary commission awarded Badme to Eritrea in 2002.

Read the full story
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Country · Apr 2026

87 Somalia

Horn of Africa, on the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean



WHY IN NEWS

Somali piracy returned in April 2026. Pirates seized the Palau-flagged tanker Honour 25 off Puntland late on 22 April; its 17 crew included Pakistanis, Indonesians and an Indian. On 27 April pirates hijacked the St Kitts and Nevis-flagged cement carrier Sward off Garacad; its 15 crew included two Indians.

WHERE IT IS

Somalia occupies the Horn of Africa. It borders Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya and faces the Gulf of Aden to the north and the Indian Ocean to the east. Puntland is a semi-autonomous state in the north-east.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Ethiopia (west) · Kenya (south-west) · Djibouti (north-west) · Gulf of Aden (north) · Indian Ocean (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Somalia has the longest coastline of any country on mainland Africa.
- The Jubba and Shabelle rivers rise in the Ethiopian highlands; the Jubba reaches the Indian Ocean near Kismayo.
- Cape Guardafui in Puntland is the tip of the Horn of Africa; Ras Hafun is mainland Africa's easternmost point.
- The Equator crosses southern Somalia near Kismayo.

PRELIMS TRAP Puntland, in the north-east, is a semi-autonomous Somali state. Somaliland, in the north-west, declared independence in 1991.

Read the full story
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Temple · Jan 2026

88 Umbilo Shree Ambalavaanar Alayam, Durban

Umbilo, Durban (eThekwini), KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 the Umbilo Shree Ambalavaanar Alayam in Durban, a temple built by Indian indentured labourers about 150 years ago, faced unpaid municipal bills above half a million rand. Its management began a forensic audit after allegations that donations went to private accounts. The South African Hindu Maha Sabha appealed for support.

WHERE IT IS

The temple stands in Umbilo, a suburb of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal province, on South Africa's Indian Ocean coast. Durban grew as the port of the former British colony of Natal.

SURROUNDED BY Durban (eThekwini) · Indian Ocean (east) · KwaZulu-Natal

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Indentured Indian labourers began arriving in Natal in 1860 to work on sugar plantations.
- The temple is a declared national monument in South Africa.
- Mahatma Gandhi set up the Phoenix Settlement near Durban in 1904.

PRELIMS TRAP Gandhi's Phoenix Settlement (1904) is near Durban. Tolstoy Farm (1910) is near Johannesburg.

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WORLD

The Americas

23 places

89 Canada · Country

90 Colorado River: Lake Mead and Lake Powell · Reservoir

91 Great Salt Lake · Lake

92 Hudson River · River

93 Lake Michigan · Lake

94 Potomac River · River

95 El Chichón · Volcano

96 Popocatépetl · Volcano

97 Zapotec tomb, San Pablo Huitzo · Archaeological site

98 Santiaguito (Santa María volcano) · Volcano (lava dome)

99 Volcán de Fuego · Volcano

100 Panama Canal · Canal

101 Cuba · Island country

102 Barbados · Island country

103 Chincha Valley, Peru · Archaeological region

104 Áspero (Caral–Supe), Peru · Archaeological site

105 Chile · Country

106 Atacama Desert · Desert

107 Venezuela · Country

108 Aconcagua · Peak

109 Ojos del Salado · Volcano

110 Patagonia · Region

111 Brazil · Country

Country · Jan 2026

89 Canada

Northern North America



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026, at India Energy Week in Goa, Canada's Energy Minister Tim Hodgson and India's Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri relaunched the India–Canada Ministerial Energy Dialogue.

WHERE IT IS

Canada occupies the northern part of North America. The Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic oceans border it on three sides, and the United States lies to the south and north-west (Alaska). Ottawa is the capital; Toronto stands in southern Ontario on Lake Ontario.

SURROUNDED BY

- United States (south and north-west)
- Greenland (Denmark; north-east, land border on Hans Island)
- Pacific Ocean (west)
- Atlantic Ocean (east)
- Arctic Ocean (north)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Canada is the world's second-largest country by area and has the longest coastline, about 243,042 km.
- Canada shares the world's longest land border, 8,891 km, with the United States.
- Under a June 2022 agreement Canada and Denmark split Hans Island in the Nares Strait, creating a 1.28 km land border with Greenland.

PRELIMS TRAP Ottawa is Canada's capital; Toronto is its largest city and financial centre.

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Reservoir | Apr 2026

90 Colorado River: Lake Mead and Lake Powell

Colorado River, south-western United States



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 forecasters expected April–July inflow into Lake Powell of only about 22% of average after record-low snowpack, and the US Bureau of Reclamation considered cutting Powell's releases from 7.48 to 6 million acre-feet.

WHERE IT IS

Lake Powell lies behind Glen Canyon Dam near Page, Arizona, in the canyons of the Colorado Plateau across southern Utah and northern Arizona. Downstream, Lake Mead lies behind Hoover Dam on the Nevada–Arizona boundary. Powell's releases feed Mead.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Nevada | Arizona | Utah

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Colorado rises in Colorado's Rocky Mountains and historically reached the Gulf of California; tributaries include the Green, San Juan and Gila.
- Lees Ferry, below Glen Canyon Dam, separates Upper and Lower Basin obligations; Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming form the Upper Division.
- Below 3,490 ft, the minimum power pool, Glen Canyon Dam cannot generate hydropower; a March 2026 projection showed Powell falling below it by December.
- Current operating rules expire after 2026; the seven basin states missed a deadline to agree new ones, leaving the decision to the federal government.

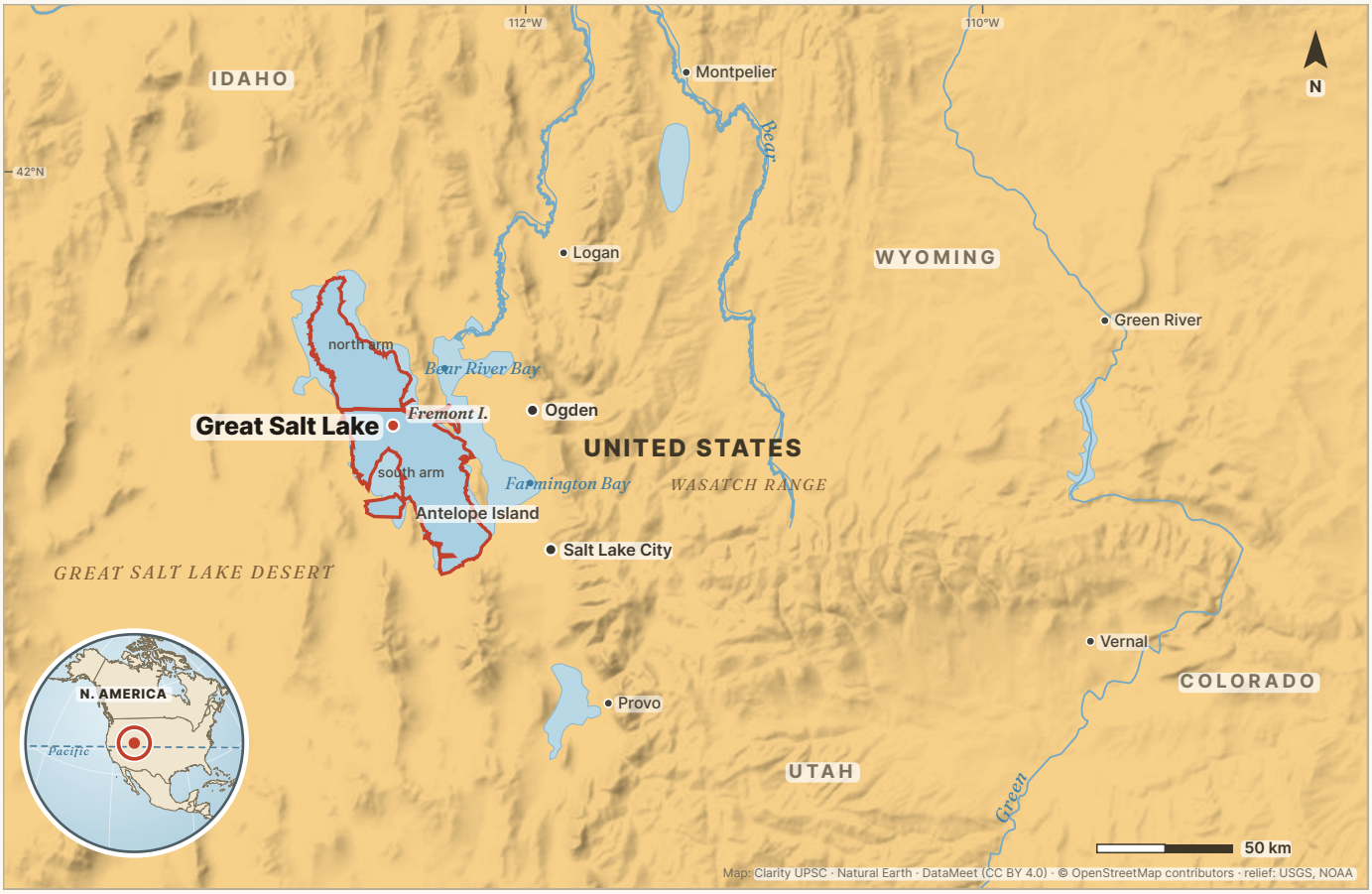
PRELIMS TRAP Hoover Dam holds back Lake Mead; Glen Canyon Dam, upstream, holds back Lake Powell.

Read the full story
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Lake · Mar 2026

91 Great Salt Lake

Northern Utah, United States, west of Salt Lake City



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 University of Utah researchers led by Michael Zhdanov reported in Scientific Reports that freshwater fills sediments 3–4 km deep beneath parts of Great Salt Lake. A helicopter electromagnetic survey mapped Farmington Bay and northern Antelope Island. The team is studying whether this water could wet dust hotspots on the exposed lakebed.

WHERE IT IS

Great Salt Lake lies in northern Utah, between the Wasatch Range to the east and the Great Salt Lake Desert to the west. Salt Lake City and Ogden stand near its south-eastern and eastern shores. A railroad causeway divides it into north and south arms.

SURROUNDED BY

- Wasatch Range and Wasatch Front cities (east)
- Salt Lake City (south-east)
- Great Salt Lake Desert (west)
- Bear River Bay (north-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is the largest saltwater lake in the Western Hemisphere and a remnant of prehistoric Lake Bonneville, which once covered much of western Utah.
- It is a terminal lake: the Bear, Weber and Jordan rivers flow in, and water leaves only by evaporation, so salts build up.
- The saltier north arm, cut off by the causeway, turns reddish or purplish from salt-loving microbes.
- It supplies about 35–45% of the world's brine shrimp cysts; its level hit a record low of 4,188.5 ft in November 2022.

PRELIMS TRAP Utah's Jordan River flows from Utah Lake into Great Salt Lake; the Jordan River of West Asia flows into the Dead Sea.

Read the full story
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92 Hudson River

New York state, USA; its lower course separates New York from New Jersey

River · Feb 2026

In news: In early February 2026 New York and New Jersey sued the US government over frozen federal funds for a new Gateway rail tunnel under the Hudson River. Construction halted on 6 February. Federal judge Jeannette Vargas ordered the money released, and work restarted in late February.

SURROUNDED BY

- New York state
- New Jersey (west bank, lower course)
- Manhattan (east bank)
- Upper New York Bay (mouth)

- The $16-billion project builds a new two-tube rail tunnel, then repairs the century-old tunnels flooded by seawater in Hurricane Sandy (2012).
- The Erie Canal links the Hudson near Albany to Lake Erie, joining the port of New York to the Great Lakes.
- The lower Hudson is a tidal estuary; tides reach Troy, about 240 km upstream.

Read the full story
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93 Lake Michigan

North-central United States; one of the five Great Lakes

Lake · Feb 2026

In news: In February 2026 shipwreck hunters announced that they had found the Lac La Belle, a 66-metre steamer that sank in a Lake Michigan gale on 13 October 1872. The wreck lies about 32 km offshore between Racine and Kenosha, Wisconsin. Eight of the 53 people aboard died.

SURROUNDED BY

- Wisconsin (west)
- Illinois (south-west)
- Indiana (south)
- Michigan (east)
- Lake Huron (via the Straits of Mackinac)

- Chicago and Milwaukee are its main ports; Chicago's canals link the lake to the Illinois River and the Mississippi basin.
- Invasive quagga mussels now coat many of its wrecks, including the Lac La Belle.

Read the full story
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94 Potomac River

Eastern United States: West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C.



WHY IN NEWS

On 13 April 2026 the conservation group American Rivers ranked the Potomac first on its list of America's Most Endangered Rivers. It cited a historic sewage spill and rapid, unchecked data-centre building that threaten drinking water for Washington, D.C., and nearby areas.

WHERE IT IS

The Potomac rises in the Allegheny highlands of West Virginia and flows south-east past Washington, D.C., into Chesapeake Bay. It forms much of the boundary between Maryland to the north and Virginia and West Virginia to the south.

SURROUNDED BY West Virginia · Maryland · Virginia · Washington, D.C. · Chesapeake Bay

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The river is about 652 km (405 miles) long, and its basin covers about 38,000 sq km.
- It drops from the Piedmont to the coastal plain at the fall line near Washington, D.C., over Great Falls and Little Falls.
- The Shenandoah River joins the Potomac at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

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ON CLARITYUPSC.COM · DAILY QUIZ

Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

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Clarity UPSC

Volcano | Feb 2026

95 El Chichón

Northern Chiapas, southern Mexico, near the Tabasco border



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 scientists of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) reported hydrothermal unrest at El Chichón's crater lake. Gas bubbling through a pool of liquid sulphur at up to 118 °C formed hollow sulphur spheres. The lake water neared 100 °C. The volcano stayed on yellow alert, with no sign of rising magma.

WHERE IT IS

El Chichón stands in the forested hills of northern Chiapas, near the Tabasco state border, in southern Mexico. Its 1982 eruption left a crater about 1 km wide. An acidic, turquoise lake now fills the crater floor.

SURROUNDED BY Chiapas highlands (south) | Tabasco lowlands (north) | Villahermosa (north) | Tuxtla Gutiérrez (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its Plinian eruptions of March–April 1982 (VEI 5) killed nearly 2,000 people and destroyed nine villages.
- The 1982 eruption sent about 7 million tonnes of sulphur dioxide into the stratosphere, a classic case in volcanic-aerosol climate studies.
- It belongs to the Chiapanecan Volcanic Arc, between the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt and the Central America Volcanic Arc.
- UNAM, CENAPRED and UNICACH monitor it; more than 3,100 small earthquakes, up to magnitude 3.8, were recorded in 2021–2025.

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96

Popocatépetl

Volcano · Jan 2026

Puebla, Morelos and México states, about 70 km south-east of Mexico City



WHY IN NEWS

Scientists at Mexico's National Autonomous University (UNAM) released the first 3-D image of Popocatépetl's interior on 30 December 2025; it was reported in January 2026. The image reaches about 18 km below the crater and shows several magma pools at different depths.

WHERE IT IS

Popocatépetl stands where the states of Puebla, Morelos and México meet, about 70 km south-east of Mexico City. It lies in the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt and is joined to Iztaccíhuatl, to the north, by the Paso de Cortés saddle.

SURROUNDED BY Iztaccíhuatl (north) · Puebla (east) · Mexico City (north-west) · Morelos (south-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The UNAM team expanded the seismic network from 12 to 22 stations and used AI to sort tremor types before mapping the interior.
- About 25 million people live within 100 km of the volcano, which has been active almost continuously since 1994.
- At Yellow Phase 2, its alert level through early 2026, CENAPRED keeps a 12-km exclusion radius around the crater.
- UNESCO lists the early 16th-century monasteries on its slopes as a World Heritage Site (1994).

PRELIMS TRAP Popocatépetl is Mexico's second-highest peak. Pico de Orizaba (Citlaltépetl), farther east, is the highest; both lie in the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt.

Read the full story
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97 Zapotec tomb, San Pablo Huitzo

Archaeological site · Jan 2026

San Pablo Huitzo, Central Valleys of Oaxaca, southern Mexico



WHY IN NEWS

On 23 January 2026 Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum announced a Zapotec tomb found at San Pablo Huitzo, Oaxaca. Archaeologists of the national institute INAH date it to about AD 600. A carved owl crowns its entrance, and a mural inside shows a procession carrying bags of copal incense.

WHERE IT IS

San Pablo Huitzo lies in the Central Valleys of Oaxaca state, about 30 km north-west of Oaxaca City. The tomb sits on Cerro de la Cantera. These valleys were the heartland of the Zapotec civilisation, whose hilltop capital was Monte Albán.

SURROUNDED BY

- Central Valleys of Oaxaca
- Oaxaca City (south-east)
- Monte Albán (south-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The owl, linked to night and death, holds in its beak the painted face of a man, possibly the ancestor the tomb honours.
- Carved male and female figures stand on the door jambs; a frieze above carries stone plaques with calendar names.
- Monte Albán and the historic centre of Oaxaca form a UNESCO World Heritage Site, inscribed in 1987.

PRELIMS TRAP The Zapotecs built Monte Albán in Oaxaca. The Aztecs ruled from Tenochtitlan in central Mexico, and the Maya lived in Yucatán and Guatemala.

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98 Santiaguito (Santa María volcano)

Volcano (lava dome) | Apr 2026

South-west flank of Santa María, Quetzaltenango department, western Guatemala



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 Guatemala's monitoring institute, INSIVUMEH, reported up to three explosions an hour at Santiaguito, lava extrusion at its Caliente dome and short pyroclastic flows. Around 20 April a sudden explosion sent tourists near the crater running, although access to the dome is restricted. Activity continued at one to two explosions an hour.

WHERE IT IS

Santiaguito is a group of lava domes on the south-west flank of Santa María volcano, in Quetzaltenango department of western Guatemala, about 115 km west of Guatemala City. Its flows run south towards the Pacific coastal plain.

SURROUNDED BY Santa María summit (north-east) | Quetzaltenango city (north) | Pacific coastal plain (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Santa María (3,772 m) erupted violently in 1902 after centuries of quiet; Santiaguito's domes began growing in its crater in 1922.
- Santiaguito has four domes: El Caliente, La Mitad, El Monje and El Brujo. Caliente has been the main vent in recent decades.
- Santa María–Santiaguito is a Decade Volcano, chosen by volcanologists for special study because of its risk to nearby people.
- A dome collapse in November 1929 sent pyroclastic flows into the valleys below, killing at least several hundred people; some estimates reach 5,000.

PRELIMS TRAP Santiaguito grows on Santa María in western Guatemala; Fuego, another very active volcano, stands near Antigua Guatemala.

Read the full story
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99

Volcán de Fuego

Volcano | Feb 2026

Southern Guatemala, south-west of Antigua Guatemala



WHY IN NEWS

In late February 2026 Guatemala's Volcán de Fuego produced 9 to 14 explosions an hour, with ash columns up to about 4,500–5,000 m above sea level. The disaster agency CONRED kept an orange alert in Sacatepéquez department. Ash fell on the northern part of La Aurora airport in Guatemala City.

WHERE IT IS

Fuego rises in southern Guatemala, about 18 km south-west of the colonial city of Antigua Guatemala. It forms a twin massif with the older Acatenango volcano to its north. Its southern slopes descend to the Pacific coastal plain.

SURROUNDED BY

- Acatenango volcano (north)
- Antigua Guatemala (north-east)
- Escuintla department (south)
- Pacific coastal plain

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Fuego stands about 3,763 m high and is often described as Central America's most active volcano.
- In June 2018 pyroclastic flows from Fuego buried the village of San Miguel Los Lotes and killed at least 190 people.
- Fuego belongs to the Central America Volcanic Arc, formed where the Cocos Plate subducts beneath the Caribbean Plate.
- In February 2026 Fuego, Santiaguito and Pacaya were Guatemala's three erupting volcanoes.

PRELIMS TRAP Volcán de Fuego is in Guatemala. Mexico's Colima volcano is also called 'Volcán de Fuego de Colima'.

Read the full story
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Canal · Mar 2026

100 Panama Canal

Isthmus of Panama, Central America



WHY IN NEWS

On 20 March 2026 Panama Canal administrator Ricaurte Vásquez said the canal was operating at top capacity, with 36–38 vessels a day. The Iran war had raised demand from LNG tankers loading at US ports, so the canal moved to offer one LNG slot a day, up from four a month.

WHERE IT IS

The Panama Canal crosses the Isthmus of Panama, the narrow land bridge joining North and South America. Panama has the Caribbean Sea to its north and the Pacific Ocean to its south, with Costa Rica to its west and Colombia to its east.

SURROUNDED BY Caribbean Sea (north) · Pacific Ocean (south) · Costa Rica (west) · Colombia (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The canal is about 80 km long; freshwater locks lift ships to Gatun Lake, 26 m above sea level, formed by damming the Chagres River.
- It opened in 1914; Panama took full control on 31 December 1999 under the 1977 Torrijos–Carter Treaties.
- New, wider locks opened in 2016 for Neopanamax ships; drought in 2023 and 2024 forced the canal to cut daily transits.
- The isthmus bends, so the Pacific entrance lies south-east of the Caribbean entrance.

PRELIMS TRAP The Panama Canal is a lock canal fed by Gatun Lake; the Suez Canal, linking the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, has no locks.

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101 Cuba

Island country · Feb 2026

Northern Caribbean, south of Florida



WHY IN NEWS

Cuba faced a deep energy crisis in early 2026. In January, US raids in Venezuela killed 32 Cubans, and Washington threatened tariffs on any country supplying Cuba with oil. In February jet-fuel shortages halted many flights, and Reuters reported Cuban advisers and doctors leaving Venezuela. The national grid collapsed three times in March.

WHERE IT IS

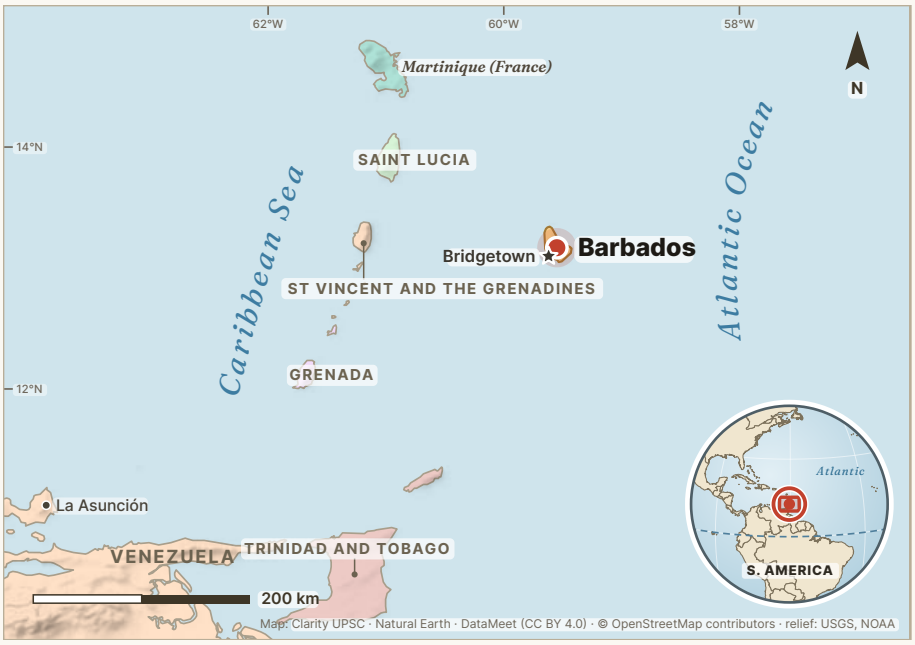
Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean. It lies south of Florida across the Straits of Florida, east of Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula across the Yucatán Channel, and west of Hispaniola across the Windward Passage. Havana is on the north-west coast.

SURROUNDED BY United States (Florida, north) · Bahamas (north-east) · Haiti (east) · Jamaica (south) · Mexico (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Cuba produces only about 40 per cent of the fuel it needs; oil from Venezuela, long its main supplier, stopped arriving from mid-December 2025.
- The United States keeps a naval base at Guantánamo Bay in south-eastern Cuba under a 1903 lease.
- Pico Turquino in the Sierra Maestra, in the south-east, is Cuba's highest peak.
- The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis followed the Soviet deployment of nuclear missiles on the island.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



102 Barbados

Western Atlantic Ocean, east of the Lesser Antilles arc

Island country | Feb 2026

In news: In the general election of 11 February 2026, Prime Minister Mia Mottley's Barbados Labour Party won every seat in the 30-member House of Assembly. It was her third clean sweep in a row since 2018. The opposition leader, Ralph Thorne, lost his own seat.

SURROUNDED BY Atlantic Ocean

- Saint Lucia (north-west)
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (west)
- Trinidad and Tobago (south-west)

- Independent from Britain since 30 November 1966, Barbados became a parliamentary republic on 30 November 2021 and remains in the Commonwealth.
- Mottley became Barbados's first woman prime minister in 2018.
- Mount Hillaby, about 340 m, is the island's highest point.

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103 Chincha Valley, Peru

Ica region, southern coast of Peru

Archaeological region | Feb 2026

In news: A study published in PLOS ONE in February 2026 found that farmers of the Chincha Kingdom in southern Peru fertilised maize with seabird guano by at least AD 1250. Very high nitrogen isotope values in 35 ancient maize cobs pointed to guano, most likely from the offshore Chincha Islands.

SURROUNDED BY Pacific Ocean (west)

- Chincha Islands (offshore)
- Pisco valley (south)
- Peruvian coastal desert

- Control of guano helped the Chincha, a powerful pre-Inca coastal polity, negotiate a strategic alliance with the Inca Empire.
- Cold, upwelling waters of the Humboldt (Peru) Current feed the fish that sustain Peru's guano-producing seabird colonies.
- Spain's seizure of the Chincha Islands in 1864 set off the Chincha Islands War (1864–66).

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104 Áspero (Caral–Supe), Peru

Mouth of the Supe River, Barranca province, Lima region, Peru

Archaeological site **Apr 2026**

In news: In April 2026 archaeologists of the Caral Archaeological Zone, led by Ruth Shady, reported a two-level structure at Áspero, Peru, that they linked to astronomical observation. Built of rounded stones set in clay in Sector J1, it overlooks the coast and the lower Supe Valley. It was later covered and turned into living space.

SURROUNDED BY Pacific Ocean (west) · Supe Valley (east) · Caral (inland) · Barranca (north)

- Áspero was occupied from about 3000 to 1800 BC and exchanged marine produce with farming settlements of the Supe Valley.
- The Sacred City of Caral-Supe became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2009; it is among the oldest cities in the Americas.
- The excavators think specialists there tracked the sun and moon to plan fishing, shellfish gathering and exchange.

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105 Chile

Long coastal strip of south-western South America

Country **Jan 2026**

In news: In mid-January 2026 wildfires in the Ñuble and Biobío regions of south-central Chile killed at least 18 people, forced more than 50,000 to evacuate and burned homes in Penco, near Concepción. President Gabriel Boric declared a state of catastrophe in both regions.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Peru · Bolivia · Argentina · Pacific Ocean

- The Atacama Desert lies in the north; central Chile has a Mediterranean climate; the south has forests, fjords and glaciers.
- Concepción, near the mouth of the Biobío River about 500 km south of Santiago, is the main city of the fire-hit region.
- An India–Chile Preferential Trade Agreement, signed in 2006 and in force from 2007, was expanded in May 2017.

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106

Atacama Desert

Desert Apr 2026

Northern Chile, between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes



WHY IN NEWS

On 23 January 2026 the energy company AES Andes said it would drop INNA, a green hydrogen and ammonia complex planned near the Paranal Observatory in Chile's Atacama Desert. The European Southern Observatory (ESO) had warned that INNA's lights, dust, vibration and air turbulence would cause severe, irreversible damage to Paranal's dark skies.

WHERE IT IS

The Atacama is a desert strip about 1,000–1,100 km long in northern Chile, between the Pacific coast and the Andes. Paranal stands in the Antofagasta Region, near Cerro Armazones, where ESO is building the Extremely Large Telescope.

SURROUNDED BY Pacific Ocean (west) · Andes (east) · Peru (north) · Bolivia and Argentina (east, across the Andes)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is the driest non-polar desert: the cold Humboldt Current, a Pacific high-pressure system and rain shadows on both sides block rain.
- Its sodium nitrate deposits led to the War of the Pacific (1879–84), after which Chile took the region from Bolivia and Peru.
- ALMA, a radio observatory, stands on the Chajnantor plateau; ESO's Very Large Telescope stands on Cerro Paranal.
- The Chinchorro people of the Atacama coast mummified their dead about 7,000 years ago; their sites became a World Heritage Site in 2021.

PRELIMS TRAP The Atacama (Chile) and the Namib (Namibia) are both coastal deserts beside cold currents: the Humboldt and the Benguela.

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107

Venezuela

Country · Jan 2026

Northern South America, on the Caribbean Sea



WHY IN NEWS

On 3 January 2026 the United States struck military targets in and around Caracas, and US special forces captured President Nicolás Maduro, who was flown to New York to face narco-terrorism charges. Vice-President Delcy Rodríguez was sworn in as acting president on 5 January.

WHERE IT IS

Venezuela lies in northern South America on the Caribbean Sea. The Andes and Maracaibo Lowlands are in the north-west, the Guiana Highlands in the south-east, and grassy llanos stretch across the centre to the Orinoco delta.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Colombia (west) · Brazil (south) · Guyana (east) · Caribbean Sea (north) · Atlantic Ocean (north-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Holds some of the world's largest proven oil reserves, especially around Lake Maracaibo and the Orinoco Belt; Indian refineries use its heavy crude.
- Angel Falls (979 m), the world's tallest uninterrupted waterfall, drops from Auyán-tepui in Canaima National Park.
- Venezuela claims the Essequibo region, which Guyana administers west of the Essequibo River.
- Pico Bolívar (4,978 m), in the Andes of Mérida state, is the highest peak.

PRELIMS TRAP The llanos are the grasslands of Venezuela and Colombia; the pampas are in Argentina and the campos in Brazil.

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108 Aconcagua

Andes of Mendoza province, western Argentina, near the Chilean border

Peak | Feb 2026

In news: On 5 February 2026 Defence Minister Rajnath Singh flagged off a six-member joint expedition to Mount Aconcagua in Argentina. The climbers were instructors from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi, and the Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering and Winter Sports, Pahalgam. The team left India on 6 February.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

Argentina (Mendoza province)

Chile (west)

- At 6,961 m it is the highest peak in South America and the highest mountain outside Asia, one of the Seven Summits.
- The Andes rise where the Nazca Plate subducts beneath the South American Plate.
- Most climbers take the normal route up the Horcones valley, with base camp at Plaza de Mulas.

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109 Ojos del Salado

Andes, on the Chile–Argentina border

Volcano | Mar 2026

In news: In March 2026 a study in Geophysical Journal International reported that 29 geophones on Ojos del Salado had recorded clusters of small earthquakes near its summit and to the north in February 2024. The authors concluded that volcanic activity continued there and that the volcano could benefit from monitoring.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Chile

Argentina

- The Smithsonian's Global Volcanism Program gives its height as 6,879 m and its last known eruption around 750 CE; fumaroles remain active.
- A crater lake about 100 m across, at about 6,480–6,500 m, is considered the highest lake on Earth.
- The first recorded ascent was made in 1937 by a Polish expedition.

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Region · Jan 2026

110 Patagonia

Southern end of South America, shared by Argentina and Chile



WHY IN NEWS

From 5 January 2026 wildfires spread from Puerto Patriada in Chubut province, Argentine Patagonia, to Epuyén and El Hoyo. More than 3,000 people were evacuated, and Chubut's chief prosecutor said fuel residues pointed to arson. By 13 January about 52,000 hectares had burned across Patagonia.

WHERE IT IS

Patagonia is the southern tip of South America, shared by Argentina and Chile. The Andes, with lakes, forests and glaciers, run along its west; dry steppe and tablelands cover the east. The fires burned in the Andean foothills of north-western Chubut.

SURROUNDED BY Andes (west) · Atlantic Ocean (east) · Pacific Ocean (west) · Strait of Magellan (south) · Chile

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Mainland Argentine Patagonia covers Neuquén, Río Negro, Chubut and Santa Cruz, with Tierra del Fuego at its tip; the Colorado River usually marks its northern limit.
- The Andes block the moist westerlies, so eastern Patagonia's steppe lies in a rain shadow.
- The fires neared 'El Abuelo', an alerce (Patagonian cypress) over 2,600 years old in Los Alerces National Park.
- The Strait of Magellan, the Beagle Channel and the Drake Passage lie at its southern end.

PRELIMS TRAP Eastern Patagonia is dry because it lies in the Andes' rain shadow. Chile's Atacama is dry mainly because of the cold Humboldt Current and the subtropical high.

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111

Brazil

Eastern South America, on the Atlantic

Country · Feb 2026



WHY IN NEWS

Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on 21 February 2026. The two countries signed an agreement on critical minerals and rare earths, along with nine other agreements.

WHERE IT IS

Brazil occupies nearly half of South America and faces the Atlantic Ocean. The Equator crosses its north and the Tropic of Capricorn its south. The Amazon basin covers much of the north, and most large cities lie along the Atlantic coast. Brasília is the capital.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Uruguay · Argentina · Paraguay · Bolivia · Peru · Colombia · Venezuela · Guyana · Suriname · French Guiana (France)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Brazil is the world's second-largest producer and exporter of iron ore, after Australia, and the largest producer of niobium.
- The Itaipu Dam on the Paraná River, on the Brazil–Paraguay border, is one of the world's largest hydroelectric plants.
- The Pantanal in west-central Brazil is one of the world's largest freshwater wetlands.
- Brazil's northern neighbours include French Guiana, an overseas territory of France.

PRELIMS TRAP Chile and Ecuador are the only South American countries that do not border Brazil.

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WORLD

Oceania, the Pacific and the polar regions

8 places

112 New Zealand · Country

113 Chatham Islands · Archipelago

114 North Island, New Zealand (earthquake) · Earthquake zone

115 Makira, Solomon Islands · Earthquake zone

116 Tonga (deep earthquake) · Earthquake zone

117 Tuvalu · Archipelago

118 South Shetland Islands · Earthquake zone

119 Thwaites Glacier · Glacier

Country Apr 2026

112 New Zealand

South-western Pacific Ocean, south-east of Australia



WHY IN NEWS

On 27 April 2026 India and New Zealand signed a free trade agreement in New Delhi. India agreed to remove or cut tariffs on 95% of New Zealand's exports but kept most dairy products, onions, sugar and edible oils out.

WHERE IT IS

New Zealand is an island nation in the south-western Pacific, across the Tasman Sea from Australia. It has two main islands, the North Island and the South Island, separated by the Cook Strait, and many smaller islands.

SURROUNDED BY South Pacific Ocean | Tasman Sea (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Under the agreement New Zealand removes duties on all Indian goods and committed to facilitating about US$20 billion of investment in India over 15 years.
- Aoraki/Mount Cook (3,724 m), in the Southern Alps of the South Island, is the highest peak; the North Island has volcanic landscapes.
- The country sits on the Pacific Ring of Fire; Lake Taupō, its largest lake, fills a volcanic caldera on the North Island.
- New Zealand gained full statutory independence from Britain in 1947; India and New Zealand established diplomatic relations in 1952.

PRELIMS TRAP Wellington is New Zealand's capital; Auckland is its largest city.

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113 Chatham Islands

South-west Pacific Ocean, about 800 km east of New Zealand's South Island; part of New Zealand

Archipelago · Jan 2026

In news: On 16 January 2026 NASA's Earth Observatory published a satellite image, taken on 10 January by the VIIRS instrument on NOAA-20, of a large phytoplankton bloom ringing the Chatham Islands. Currents and eddies had drawn the bloom into bright green and blue swirls.

SURROUNDED BY South Pacific Ocean · Chatham Rise · New Zealand's South Island (west)

- Over the Chatham Rise, cold nutrient-rich water from the south meets warm subtropical water, so plankton blooms are common.
- The Moriori, of Polynesian descent, were the first inhabitants; Waitangi is the main settlement.
- The surrounding waters support fisheries for pāua, rock lobster and blue cod.

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114 North Island, New Zealand (earthquake)

South Taranaki, west coast of New Zealand's North Island

Earthquake zone · Jan 2026

In news: A deep magnitude 5.4 earthquake struck about 10 km south-west of Waverley in South Taranaki, on New Zealand's North Island, at about 8.30 am on 9 January 2026. GeoNet put its depth at 107 km. More than 14,000 people, from Taranaki to Nelson and Blenheim, reported feeling it.

SURROUNDED BY Tasman Sea (west) · Taranaki region · Whanganui · Mount Ruapehu (north-east)

- Deep quakes like this occur inside the Pacific Plate as it sinks beneath the North Island, so shaking spreads widely but weakly.
- Cook Strait separates the North Island from the South Island; Mount Ruapehu (2,797 m) is the North Island's highest point.

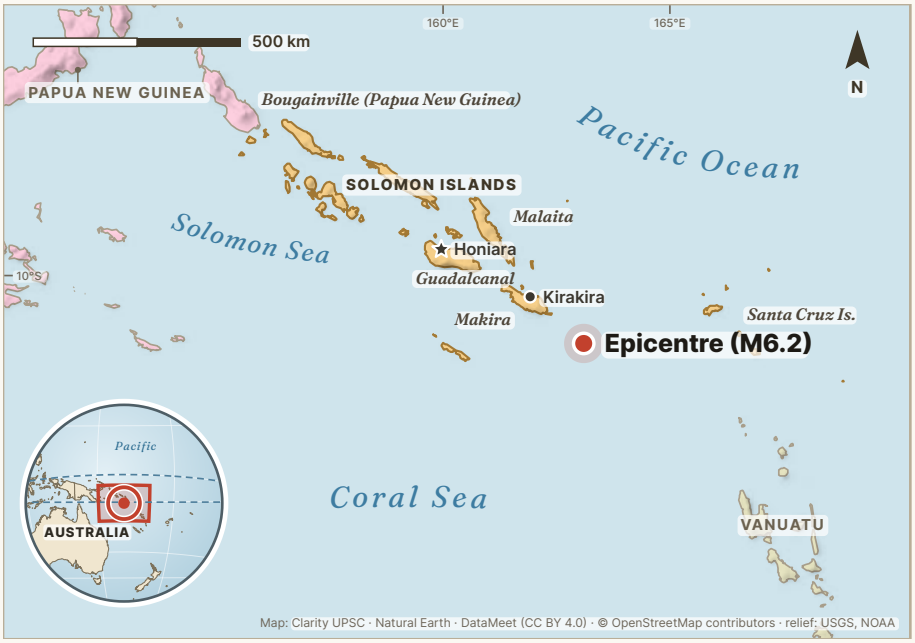
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Earthquake zone · Mar 2026

115 Makira, Solomon Islands

South-eastern Solomon Islands, south-west Pacific Ocean



WHY IN NEWS

On 6 March 2026 (UTC) a magnitude 6.2 earthquake struck at a shallow depth of 10 km in the sea about 170 km south-east of Kirakira, on Makira island in the Solomon Islands. The US Geological Survey's impact estimate was green, meaning a low likelihood of casualties and damage.

WHERE IT IS

Makira, formerly San Cristobal, is the south-easternmost large island of the main Solomon Islands chain. The epicentre lay in the open ocean south-east of Makira. The Solomon Islands lie east of Papua New Guinea and north-west of Vanuatu.

SURROUNDED BY

- Coral Sea (south-west)
- Papua New Guinea (north-west)
- Vanuatu (south-east)
- Santa Cruz Islands (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The islands lie on the Pacific Ring of Fire, where the Australian and Pacific plates converge.
- Honiara, the capital, is on Guadalcanal; the country became independent from Britain in 1978.
- A 2022 security agreement between the Solomon Islands and China drew concern from Australia and the United States.

PRELIMS TRAP Bougainville, at the north-western end of the Solomon chain, belongs to Papua New Guinea.

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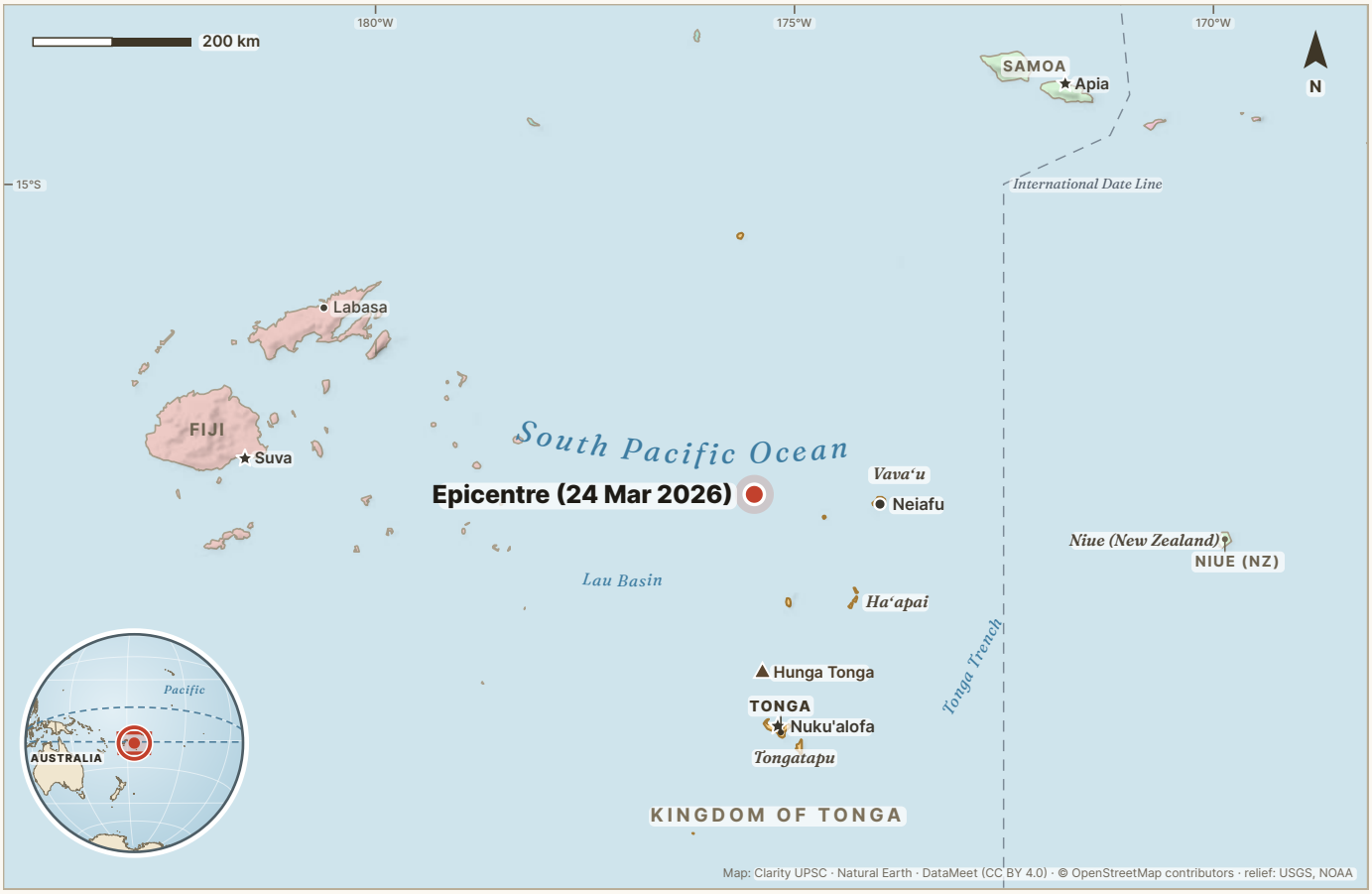
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Earthquake zone | Mar 2026

116 Tonga (deep earthquake)

South Pacific, west of the Vava'u group, northern Tonga



WHY IN NEWS

On 24 March 2026 a magnitude 7.5 earthquake struck about 158 km west of Neiafu, Tonga, at a depth of about 234 km (USGS). Tonga's disaster office told coastal residents to move inland, but the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said the quake was too deep to cause a tsunami. No damage was reported.

WHERE IT IS

The epicentre lay under the sea west of the Vava'u island group in northern Tonga. Tonga's islands run north–south in three main groups: Vava'u, Ha'apai and Tongatapu, where the capital Nuku'alofa stands. The Tonga Trench lies to the east.

SURROUNDED BY Fiji (north-west) | Samoa (north-east) | Niue (east) | Tonga Trench (east) | Lau Basin (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Here the Pacific Plate sinks westward beneath the Tonga Plate at the Tonga Trench, at up to about 24 cm a year, among Earth's fastest.
- The quake struck inside the sinking slab; such deep quakes barely move the seafloor, so they rarely raise tsunamis.
- Horizon Deep in the Tonga Trench, about 10.8 km down, is the ocean's second-deepest point after the Challenger Deep.
- In January 2022 the Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai volcano erupted and sent tsunami waves across the Pacific.

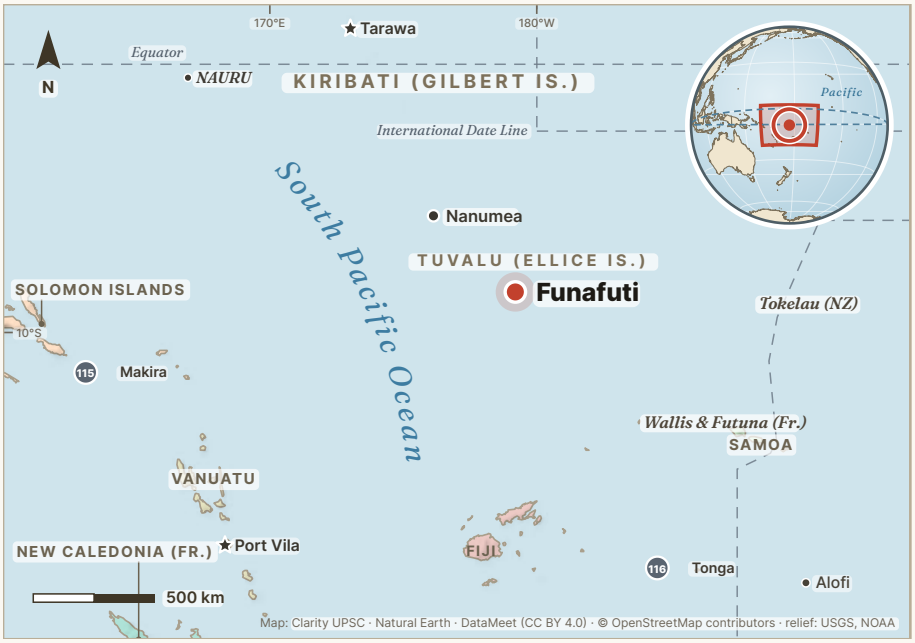
PRELIMS TRAP Neiafu is the main town of Vava'u in the north; Nuku'alofa, the capital, is on Tongatapu in the south.

Read the full story
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117 Tuvalu

Archipelago · Apr 2026

Western-central Pacific Ocean, between Australia and Hawaii



WHY IN NEWS

On 13 April 2026 Tuvalu's Governor-General declared a two-week state of emergency on Funafuti over unstable electricity generation and risks to fuel and power supplies. Tuvalu reportedly spends about a quarter of its GDP on imported petroleum.

WHERE IT IS

Tuvalu lies in the western-central Pacific, between Australia and Hawaii. Its nine low-lying island groups have only about 26 sq km of land. The capital, Funafuti, is an atoll: reef islands around a lagoon. The country has no land borders.

SURROUNDED BY Pacific Ocean · Kiribati (to the north) · Fiji (to the south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Coral bleaching is the loss of a coral's food-supplying algae under stress; bleached coral can recover, but prolonged stress kills it.
- Under the Falepili Union treaty with Australia, up to 280 Tuvaluans a year can move to Australia.
- Tuvalu, the former Ellice Islands, became independent from Britain in 1978.

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118 South Shetland Islands

Southern Ocean, off the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula

Earthquake zone · Mar 2026

In news: On 20 March 2026 a magnitude 6.5 earthquake struck the South Shetland Islands, off the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, at a depth of about 21 km, the US Geological Survey reported. The islands have no permanent residents, only research stations.

SURROUNDED BY Drake Passage (north) · Bransfield Strait (south) · Antarctic Peninsula (south) · Southern Ocean

- Here a remnant of the Phoenix Plate subducts beneath the Antarctic Plate at the South Shetland Trench; the Bransfield Strait is a rift.
- Deception Island, a flooded caldera in the group, is an active volcano.
- The islands fall under the 1959 Antarctic Treaty; Argentina, Chile and the United Kingdom all claim the area.

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Glacier | Feb 2026

119 Thwaites Glacier

West Antarctica, Amundsen Sea coast



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 the British Antarctic Survey reported that British and South Korean scientists had drilled about 1,000 m through the main trunk of Thwaites Glacier. Their instruments jammed in the borehole and were lost, but first measurements showed turbulent, relatively warm water beneath the trunk, able to melt the ice base.

WHERE IT IS

Thwaites drains the West Antarctic Ice Sheet into the Amundsen Sea, part of the Southern Ocean. It lies near 75°30′ S, 106°45′ W, in the same coastal sector as Pine Island Glacier.

SURROUNDED BY Amundsen Sea | Pine Island Glacier | West Antarctic Ice Sheet

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its drainage basin covers about 192,000 sq km; losing all its grounded ice could raise sea level by about 65 cm.
- The grounding line or zone is where ice resting on bedrock begins to float.
- Ocean water reaching the underside melts the ice from below, thinning it and shifting where it rests on the bed.
- In places the glacier moves more than 9 m a day; the 30-cm borehole was melted with water heated to about 80 °C.

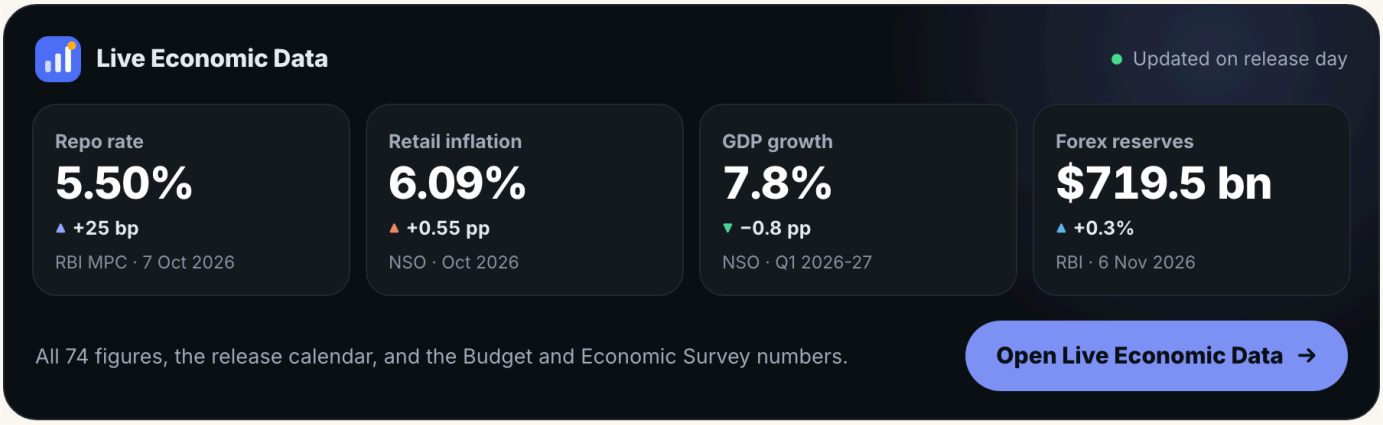
PRELIMS TRAP A floating ice shelf already displaces seawater; sea level rises mainly when grounded ice, resting on bedrock, flows into the ocean.

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LIVE ECONOMIC DATA

India's economy, as it stands today.

Every key figure on the day it is released: the repo rate, inflation, GDP growth, forex reserves and 70 more, with the release calendar and the Budget and Economic Survey numbers.

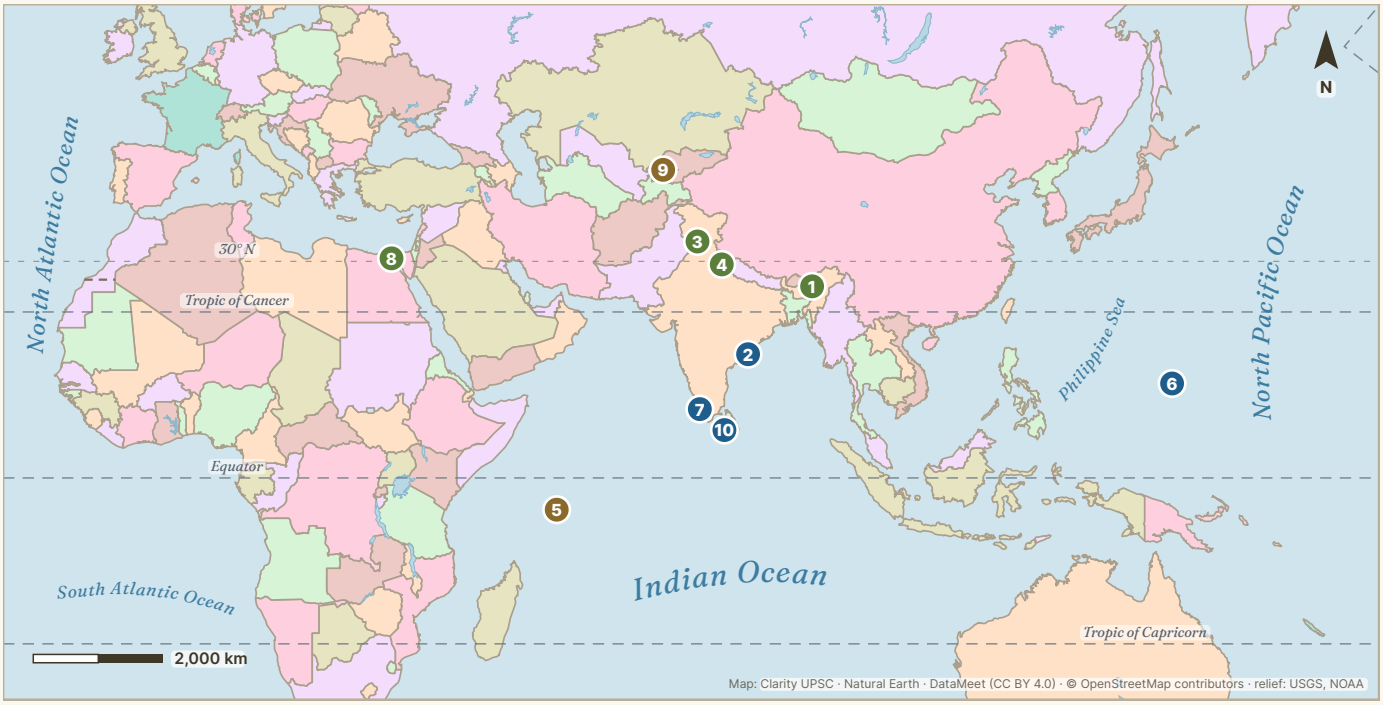


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Military exercises, January–April 2026

Where India trained with partner forces. Prelims asks which countries take part and which service runs an exercise.



Army · Navy · Air Force · Coast Guard · Joint

#	EXERCISE	WITH	SERVICE	WHERE	WHEN
1	**KHANJAR-XIII**	Kyrgyzstan	Army	Missamari, Sonitpur district, Assam	Feb 2026
2	**International Fleet Review 2026 and MILAN 2026**	Navies and delegations of 74 countries	Navy	Off Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh (Bay of Bengal)	Feb 2026
3	**Vajra Prahar 2026**	United States	Army	Special Forces Training School, Bakloh, Chamba district, Himachal Pradesh	Feb 2026
4	**Dharma Guardian 2026**	Japan	Army	Foreign Training Node, Chaubattia, Almora district, Uttarakhand	Feb 2026
5	**LAMITIYE-2026**	Seychelles	Joint	Seychelles Defence Academy, Ile Perseverance (off Victoria, Mahé); validation on Praslin, Seychelles	Mar 2026
6	**Sea Dragon 2026**	United States (host), Australia, Japan, New Zealand	Navy	Andersen Air Force Base, Guam (US territory), western Pacific	Mar 2026
7	**IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) TTX 2026**	Bangladesh, France, Indonesia, Kenya, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Timor-Leste	Navy	Maritime Warfare Centre, Southern Naval Command, Kochi, Kerala	Mar 2026
8	**Cyclone-IV**	Egypt	Army	Anshas, Sharqia Governorate, Egypt	Apr 2026
9	**Dustlik 2026**	Uzbekistan	Joint	Gurumsaray Field Training Area, Pap district, Namangan Region, Uzbekistan	Apr 2026
10	**IN–SLN DIVEX 2026**	Sri Lanka	Navy	Colombo, Western Province, Sri Lanka	Apr 2026

INDIA

Rivers, lakes, wetlands and dams

55 places

120 Zanskar River · River

121 Pangong Tso · Lake

122 Wular Lake · Lake (Ramsar site)

123 Dal Lake · Lake

124 Hokersar Wetland · Wetland (Ramsar site)

125 Jhelum River · River

126 Chenab River and its hydropower projects · River

127 Mansar Lake · Lake (Ramsar site)

128 Beas River · River

129 Pandoh Dam · Dam

130 Shongtong–Karcham Hydroelectric Project · Hydroelectric project

131 Bhakra Dam and Gobind Sagar · Dam

132 Ravi River · River

133 Ghaggar River · River

134 Lakhwar Dam (Lakhwar multipurpose project) · Dam

135 Tehri Lake (Tehri Dam reservoir) · Reservoir

136 Sharda (Kali) River at Tanakpur · River

137 Hindon River · River

138 Rapti River and the Suav · River

139 Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary · Wetland (Ramsar site, bird sanctuary)

140 Patna Bird Sanctuary · Wetland (Ramsar site, bird sanctuary)

141 Chhari-Dhand Wetland · Wetland (Ramsar site, conservation reserve)

142 Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary · Wetland (Ramsar site)

143 Vishwamitri River · River

144 Lower Lake (Bhoj Wetland), Bhopal · Lake (Ramsar site)

145 Bargi Dam · Dam

146 Indravati River · River

147 Kosi River · River

148 Sankosh River (Punatsangchhu) · River

149 Gurudongmar Lake · Lake

150 Tsomgo (Changu) Lake · Lake

151 Deepor Beel · Wetland

152 Kulsi River · River

153 Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Project · Hydroelectric project

154 Dibang Multipurpose Project · Dam

155 Lohit River · River

156 Sela Lake · Lake

157 Barak River and the Kushiyara · River

158 Umiam Lake · Reservoir

159 Chilika Lake · Lake

160 Futala Lake · Lake

161 Gangapur Dam · Dam

162 Hussain Sagar · Lake

163 Musi River · River

164 Neknampur Lake (Ibrahim Bagh Cheruvu) · Lake

165 Mir Alam Tank · Reservoir

166 Kolleru Lake · Lake

167 Almatti Dam · Dam

168 Aghanashini River · River

169 Souparnika River · River

170 Idukki Dam (Idukki Hydroelectric Project) · Dam

171 Ponnaiyar (Thenpennai) River · River

172 Bhavani River and Bhavanisagar Dam · River

173 Pykara Lake · Reservoir

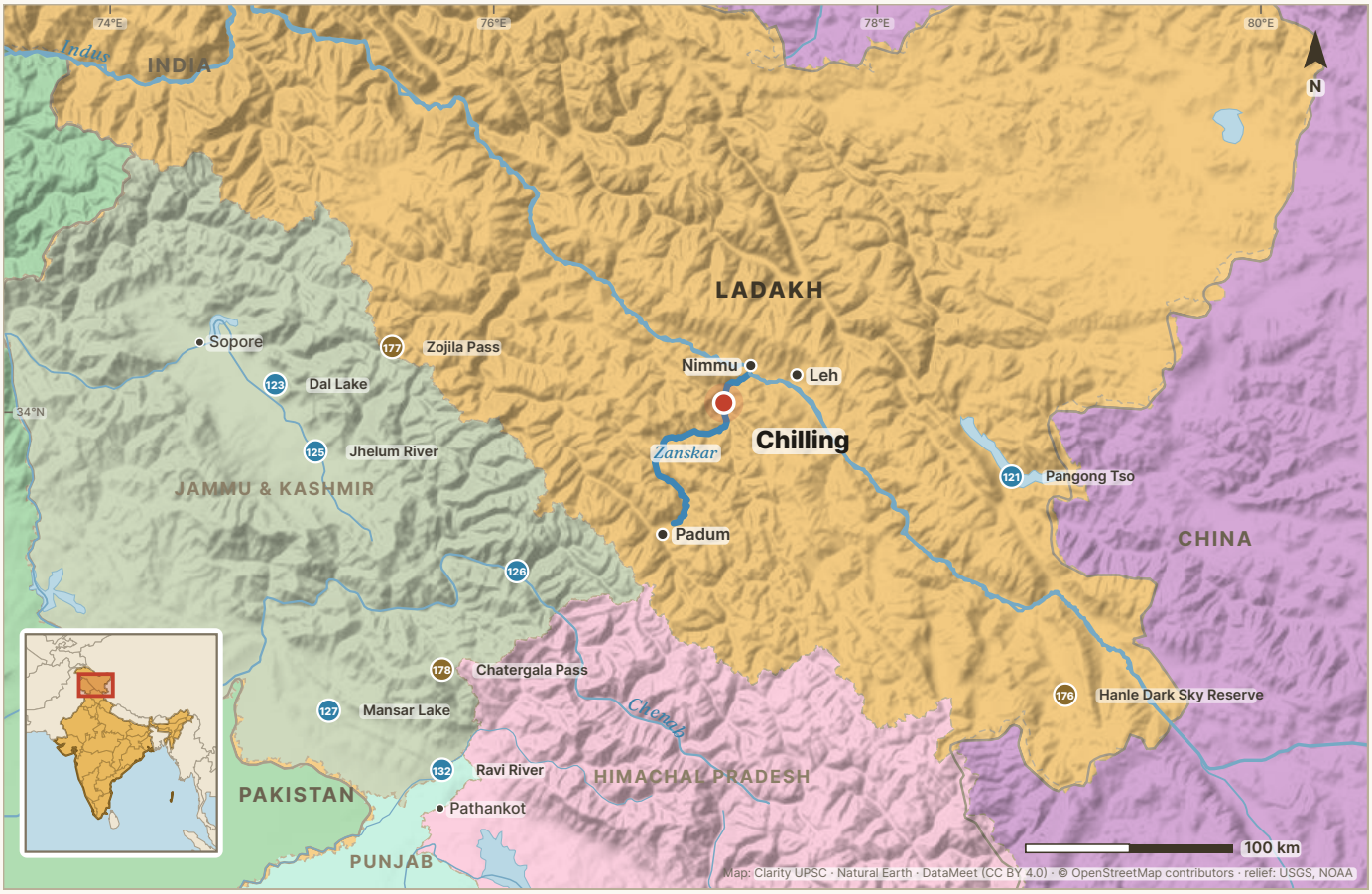
174 Noyyal River · River

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River · Jan 2026

120 Zanskar River

Zanskar valley (Kargil district) to Nimmu (Leh district), Ladakh



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 the Chadar Trek, a winter walk on the frozen Zanskar River in Ladakh, was put on hold because the ice had not formed thick enough. An unusually mild winter left flowing water and uneven ice along the gorge.

WHERE IT IS

The Zanskar is a tributary of the Indus in Ladakh. Its two headstreams, the Doda and the Lungnak, meet in the central Zanskar valley near Padum. The river then cuts a deep gorge and joins the Indus near Nimmu, west of Leh.

SURROUNDED BY Zanskar Range · Padum (Zanskar valley) · Indus valley at Nimmu · Lahaul, Himachal Pradesh (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Doda rises near the Pensi La; the Lungnak forms from the Kargyag, rising near Shingo La, and the Tsarap, near Baralacha La.
- The Chadar Trek starts near Chilling and follows the frozen river through the gorge.
- In summer the stretch from Chilling to Nimmu is used for river rafting.

PRELIMS TRAP The Zanskar joins the Indus near Nimmu in Ladakh; the Shyok joins the Indus in Gilgit-Baltistan, under Pakistani occupation.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Lake · Feb 2026

121 Pangong Tso

Changthang, eastern Ladakh; eastern end in Tibet



WHY IN NEWS

On 24 and 25 February 2026 runners raced on the frozen Pangong Tso in the Pangong Frozen Lake Marathon, held with the Ladakh administration, from full-marathon to short-distance races. The event began in February 2023, when its half marathon set a Guinness record as the highest frozen-lake half marathon.

WHERE IT IS

Pangong Tso is a long, narrow lake over 4,200 m high in eastern Ladakh, about 134 km long. The Line of Actual Control with China crosses it, and its eastern end lies in Tibet.

SURROUNDED BY Changthang plateau · Leh district, Ladakh (west) · Tibet, China (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- An endorheic lake: it has no outflow and its water is brackish, yet it freezes over in winter.
- Indian and Chinese troops disengaged from its north and south banks in February 2021.

PRELIMS TRAP Pangong Tso lies on the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh; Tso Moriri, a Ramsar site, lies further south in Changthang.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

ON CLARITYUPSC.COM · DAILY QUIZ

Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

clarityupsc.com/daily-quiz

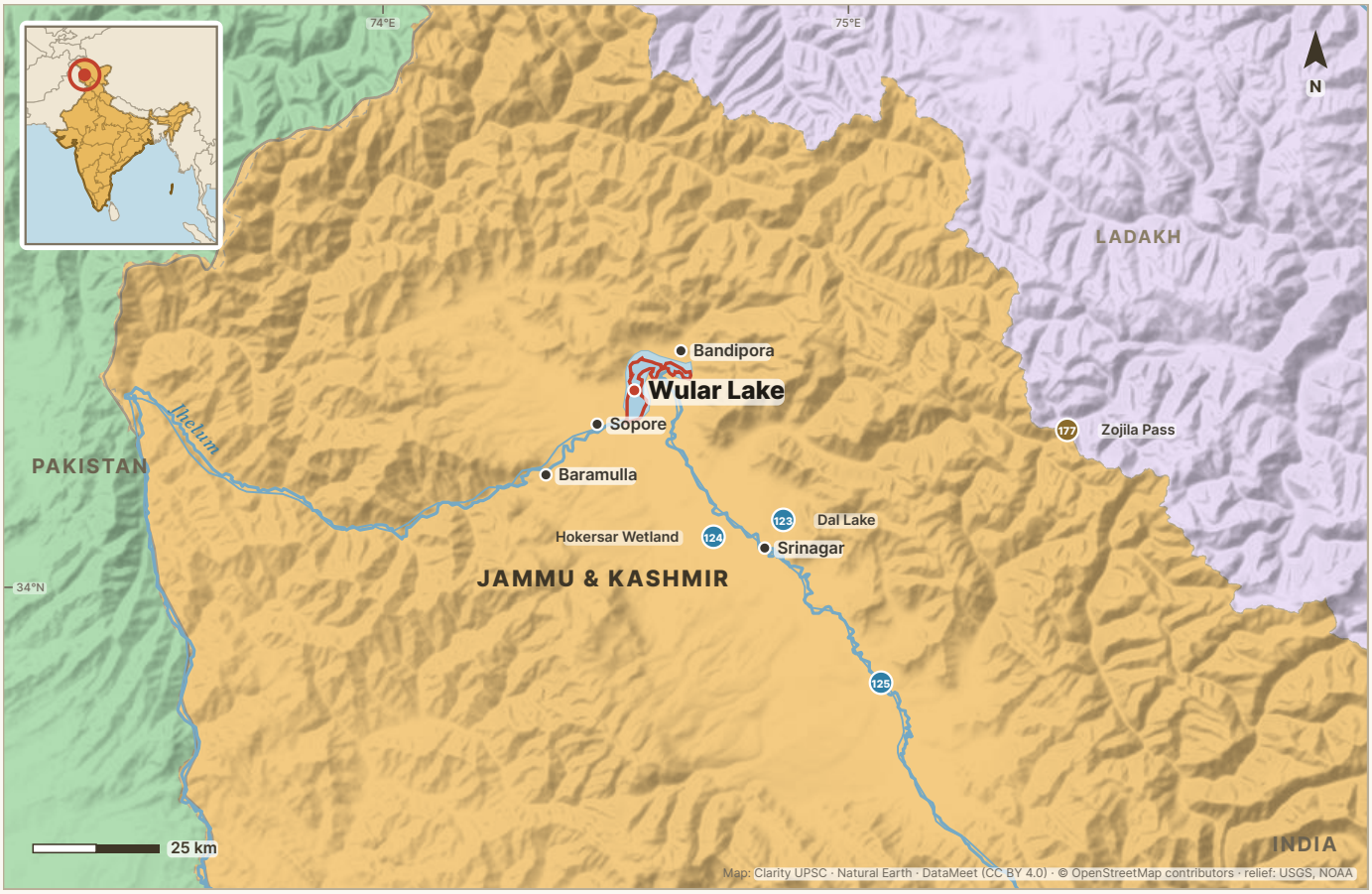
Clarity UPSC

122

Wular Lake

Lake (Ramsar site) | Feb 2026 | Apr 2026

North Kashmir, mainly Bandipora district, Jammu & Kashmir; on the Jhelum



WHY IN NEWS

On 10 February 2026 Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah told the Legislative Assembly that his government was working with the Centre to revive the Tulbul Navigation Project. The barrage, where the Jhelum leaves Wular Lake, was halted in the 1980s after Pakistan objected under the Indus Waters Treaty.

WHERE IT IS

Wular Lake lies in north Kashmir, mainly in Bandipora district. The Jhelum flows into the lake and leaves it at Sopore, heading on to Baramulla. The lake holds back the Jhelum's flood water.

SURROUNDED BY

- Bandipora town (north-east shore)
- Sopore, Baramulla district (south-west)
- Jhelum River (inflow and outflow)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Designated a Ramsar site on 23 March 1990; its water spread swings widely between seasons as the Jhelum rises and falls.
- The barrage was planned at Ningli in Sopore as a navigation lock with a control structure, about 135 m long and 12 m wide.
- It was meant to store water in the lake during high flows and release it in the lean season, keeping the Jhelum navigable.
- The Kishanganga hydro project releases its diverted water into Bonar Nallah, which drains into Wular Lake.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



123 Dal Lake

Srinagar, Kashmir Valley, Jammu & Kashmir

Lake · Jan 2026

In news: In January 2026, during Chillai Kalan, parts of Dal Lake froze, including its interior; Srinagar recorded −5.2 °C on the night of 13 January.

SURROUNDED BY: Srinagar city · Kashmir Valley · Zabarwan hills (east)

- Farm runoff and untreated sewage feed water hyacinth, Salvinia and Azolla, which cut oxygen and block navigation.
- Chillai Kalan, Kashmir's 40-day spell of harshest winter cold, runs from 21 December to 30 January.
- The Mughal gardens of Shalimar Bagh and Nishat Bagh lie along its eastern shore.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

124 Hokersar Wetland

About 10 km north-west of Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir

Wetland (Ramsar site) · Apr 2026



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 a CAG report on Jammu & Kashmir's lakes found that 2,528 kanals of Hokersar wetland had been encroached for construction, plantations and farming. Its open water shrank 7% between 2014 and 2020 as scrub spread, and untreated sewage still flows in.

WHERE IT IS

Hokersar lies on the Kashmir Valley floor about 10 km north-west of Srinagar, near Zainakot. The Doodhganga stream feeds it from the east and the Sukhnag from the west.

SURROUNDED BY: Srinagar city (south-east) · Doodhganga stream (east) · Sukhnag stream (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Designated a Ramsar site on 8 November 2005; it covers about 13.75 sq km and is a conservation reserve under the J&K wildlife law.
- The same CAG report found that 315 of the 697 lakes recorded in Jammu & Kashmir in 1967 have vanished.
- Its Padshahi Bagh spill channel, built for 17,000 cusecs, now carries about 6,000 because of silt and debris.

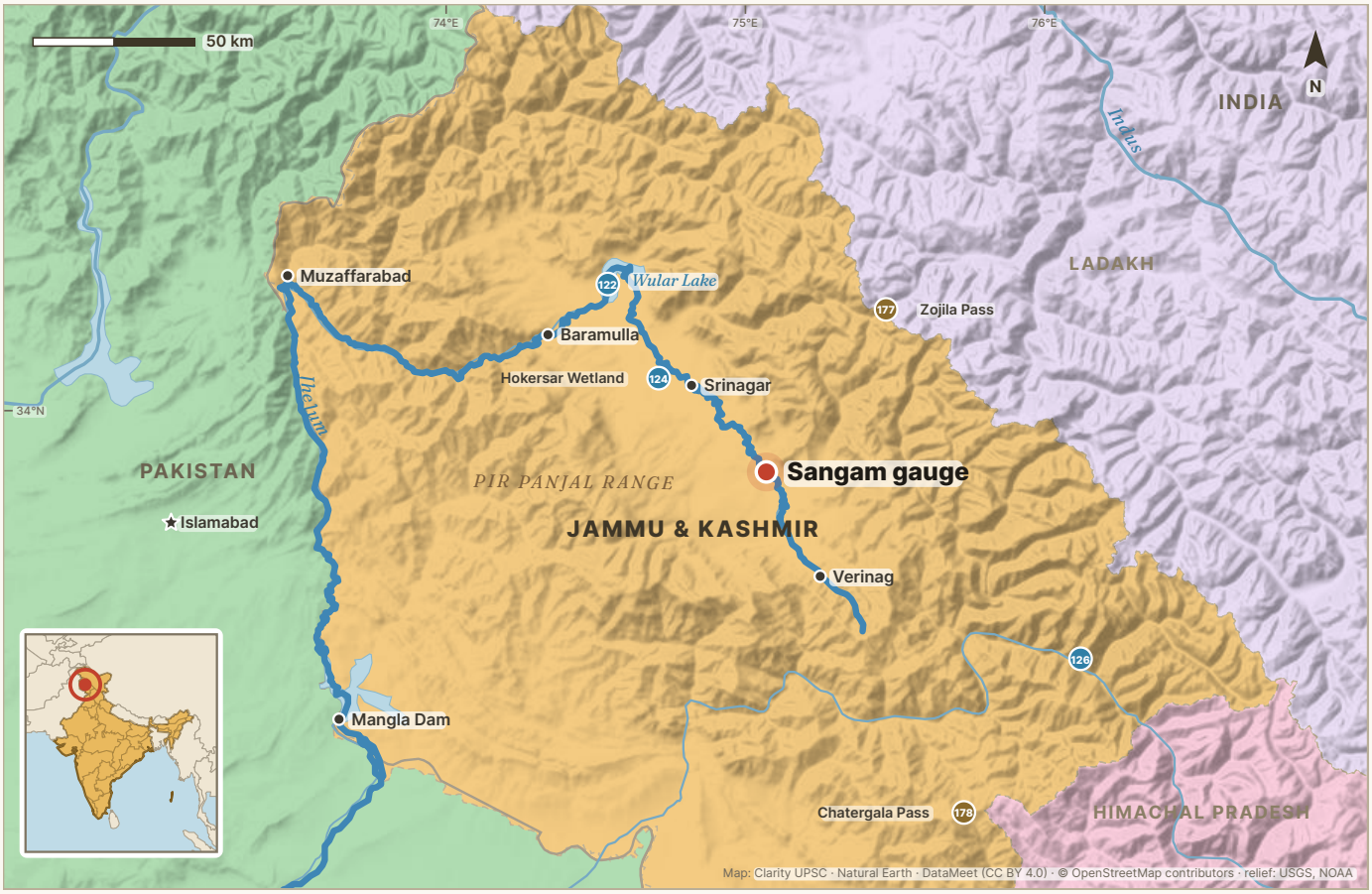
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Clarity UPSC

River · Mar 2026

125 Jhelum River

Kashmir Valley, Jammu & Kashmir; then Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and Pakistan's Punjab



WHY IN NEWS

On 5 March 2026 the Jhelum at Sangam in south Kashmir fell to −0.86 ft, below the gauge's zero mark. Jammu & Kashmir's December–February precipitation was about 65% below normal, its seventh deficient winter in a row, and early March brought record heat.

WHERE IT IS

The Jhelum rises at the Verinag spring in Anantnag district and flows north-west through the Kashmir Valley, past Srinagar, into Wular Lake. It leaves the valley through a gorge below Baramulla, crosses Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and joins the Chenab in Pakistan's Punjab.

SURROUNDED BY Pir Panjal Range (south-west) · Great Himalayan Range (north-east) · Wular Lake · Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (downstream)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Snowmelt usually lifts the river 5–8 ft in warm spells; in March 2026 it barely rose, threatening irrigation for paddy.
- The Kishanganga (Neelum) joins it at Muzaffarabad; further downstream Pakistan built the Mangla Dam on it near Mirpur, in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
- Ancient Greeks called it the Hydaspes; Alexander defeated Porus on its banks in 326 BCE.

PRELIMS TRAP The Jhelum rises at Verinag in Kashmir; the Chenab forms from the Chandra and Bhaga in Himachal Pradesh's Lahaul.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

River · Jan 2026

126 Chenab River and its hydropower projects

Chenab River: Lahaul (Himachal Pradesh), then Kishtwar, Doda, Ramban and Reasi districts of Jammu & Kashmir, into Pakistan



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 Power Minister Manohar Lal told NHPC to speed up silt removal at Salal; in February NHPC said the Chenab's first-ever dredging had raised Salal's storage to about 14 million cubic metres.

WHERE IT IS

The Chandra and Bhaga meet at Tandi in Himachal Pradesh's Lahaul to form the Chenab. It enters Jammu & Kashmir near Paddar and flows through Kishtwar, Doda, Ramban and Reasi before entering Pakistan near Akhnoor. Kirthai-II, Kiru, Kwar and Ratle lie in Kishtwar district; Salal lies in Reasi.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Himachal Pradesh (Lahaul and Pangi) · Jammu & Kashmir · Pakistan (downstream)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Salal (690 MW, Reasi) has run since 1987; silt cut its reservoir from about 284 million cubic metres to about 10 million by May 2025.
- Salal dredging began after India put the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance in April 2025; Salal raised the treaty's first design dispute (settled 1978).
- Kiru (624 MW, 135 m dam) and Kwar (540 MW, 109 m dam), both in Kishtwar, are built by NHPC–JKSPDC's Chenab Valley Power Projects Ltd.
- Ratle (850 MW, 133 m gravity dam) lies between Dul Hasti and Baglihar and is due in 2028; Pakistan objected to it.

PRELIMS TRAP Under the Indus Waters Treaty the Chenab is a western river; the eastern rivers are the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



127 Mansar Lake

Samba district, Jammu & Kashmir, about 62 km from Jammu

Lake (Ramsar site) · Apr 2026

In news: On 19 April 2026 Samba's Senior Superintendent of Police reviewed security at Mansar Lake, checking deployment, surveillance and access points for tourists. That month a CAG report also listed Mansar among six Jammu & Kashmir lakes it examined in detail.

SURROUNDED BY

- Samba district
- Udhampur district (north)
- Jammu district (west)

- Surinsar and Mansar lakes were designated together as a Ramsar site in November 2005.
- A shrine to Sheshnag stands on its eastern bank; newly-weds walk around the lake to seek blessings.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



128 Beas River

Himachal Pradesh (Kullu, Mandi, Kangra) to Harike in Punjab

River · Mar 2026

In news: On 1 March 2026 four people were swept away in the Beas near Bharoli in Kangra district; three were recovered and a search continued for the fourth. On 6 April the Bhakra Beas Management Board installed six early-warning units on the banks to alert residents before releases from Pong Dam.

NEIGHBOURING STATES

- Himachal Pradesh
- Punjab

- Ancient Greeks called it the Hyphasis; it marked the eastern limit of Alexander's campaign in 326 BCE.
- Pandoh Dam (Mandi) and Pong Dam (Kangra) stand on it; Harike wetland, a Ramsar site, lies at its meeting with the Sutlej.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



129 Pandoh Dam

On the Beas, Mandi district, Himachal Pradesh

Dam | Jan 2026

In news: In January 2026 Punjab objected after the Bhakra Beas Management Board sent silt-laden water from Pandoh Dam into the Sutlej instead of down the Beas. Punjab said this broke a technical committee decision, put its loss at ₹190 crore and sought an independent audit.

SURROUNDED BY Mandi district | Beas valley | Sundernagar (south-west)

- A 76 m earth dam completed in 1977; the Beas–Sutlej Link diverts about 256 cumecs (9,000 cusecs) of Beas water.
- Dehar Power House has six 165 MW units (990 MW); the diverted water also raises inflow into Gobind Sagar behind Bhakra.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



130 Shongtong–Karcham Hydroelectric Project

Sutlej, near Reckong Peo, Kinnaur district, Himachal Pradesh

Hydroelectric project | Apr 2026

In news: On 14 April 2026 Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu reviewed the 450 MW Shongtong–Karcham project in Kinnaur. With about 75% of the work done, he directed that the first phase be finished by January 2027 and the whole project by the end of the financial year.

SURROUNDED BY Kinnaur district | Sutlej valley | Reckong Peo

- Expected to generate about 1,579 million units a year and add nearly ₹900 crore a year to Himachal Pradesh's economy.
- A run-of-river scheme: a barrage diverts the Sutlej through a tunnel to the turbines, with little storage.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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Dam | Feb 2026

131 Bhakra Dam and Gobind Sagar

Sutlej river, Punjab–Himachal Pradesh border



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 the Bhakra Beas Management Board was finalising an MoU with the Geological Survey of India to study the hills around Bhakra Dam, where monsoon landslides had blocked road and rail links.

WHERE IT IS

Bhakra Dam stands on the Sutlej near Bhakra village at the Punjab–Himachal Pradesh border. Its reservoir, Gobind Sagar, stores up to 9.34 billion cubic metres over about 168 sq km. A smaller barrage downstream diverts water into canals.

STATES LINKED TO THE DAM Himachal Pradesh (dam site) | Punjab | Haryana (shares water) | Rajasthan (shares water)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A concrete gravity dam 225.55 m high, built 1948–1963 under American engineer Harvey Slocum; its two powerhouses have about 1,415 MW installed.
- Feeds the Bhakra–Beas–Indira Gandhi canal system, irrigating about 10 million acres (about 4 million hectares) in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.
- Gobind Sagar, named after Guru Gobind Singh, spreads across Bilaspur and Una districts; silt has taken over 25 percent of its storage.
- The Beas–Sutlej Link diverts Beas water from Pandoh Dam through the Dehar power plant into the Sutlej and Gobind Sagar.

PRELIMS TRAP Bhakra Dam and Gobind Sagar are on the Sutlej; Pong Dam (Maharana Pratap Sagar) is on the Beas.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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River · Feb 2026

132 Ravi River

Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir border; flows on to Pakistan



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 Jammu & Kashmir minister Javed Ahmed Rana said the Shahpur Kandi project on the Ravi would be completed by 31 March 2026. Surplus Ravi water that crossed into Pakistan past Madhopur would then irrigate drought-prone Kathua and Samba districts.

WHERE IT IS

The Ravi rises in the Bara Bhangal area of Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh, and flows west through Chamba to the Ranjit Sagar (Thein) Dam. Downstream, the Shahpur Kandi project and the Madhopur headworks lie in Pathankot district of Punjab, on the Jammu & Kashmir border. The river then flows on to Pakistan.

NEIGHBOURING STATES: Himachal Pradesh · Jammu & Kashmir · Punjab · Pakistan

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, the Ravi is one of the three eastern rivers allotted to India.
- Shahpur Kandi is meant to irrigate over 32,000 ha in Kathua and Samba and about 5,000 ha in Punjab, and to generate 206 MW.
- Shahpur Kandi was first envisaged in 1979 and declared a national project in 2008; work resumed after a 2018 Punjab–Jammu & Kashmir agreement.
- NDVI compares reflected visible and near-infrared light to estimate green vegetation from satellites.

PRELIMS TRAP The Ranjit Sagar (Thein) Dam is on the Ravi; the Bhakra Dam is on the Sutlej and the Pong Dam on the Beas.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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River · Apr 2026

133 Ghaggar River

Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 a Punjab Vidhan Sabha committee urged the state government to oppose three new dams Haryana has proposed on the Ghaggar. On 12 January 2026 the Supreme Court had directed the Central Water and Power Research Station to complete a revised Ghaggar flood study within 12 months.

WHERE IT IS

The Ghaggar rises near Dagshai in the Shivalik hills of Himachal Pradesh and flows south-west through Haryana and Punjab into Rajasthan. Below Ottu barrage near Sirsa it is known as the Hakra, a mostly dry channel that continues into Pakistan.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Himachal Pradesh · Haryana · Punjab · Rajasthan · Pakistan (as the Hakra)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A monsoon-fed seasonal river, it repeatedly floods Patiala, Sangrur and Mansa districts of Punjab through embankment breaches.
- Its tributaries include the Kaushalya, Markanda, Tangri and Chautang.
- Ottu barrage (1896–97) near Sirsa feeds the Northern and Southern Ghaggar canals.
- Harappan sites such as Kalibangan and Banawali lie along the Ghaggar–Hakra, which some scholars identify with the Rig Vedic Saraswati.

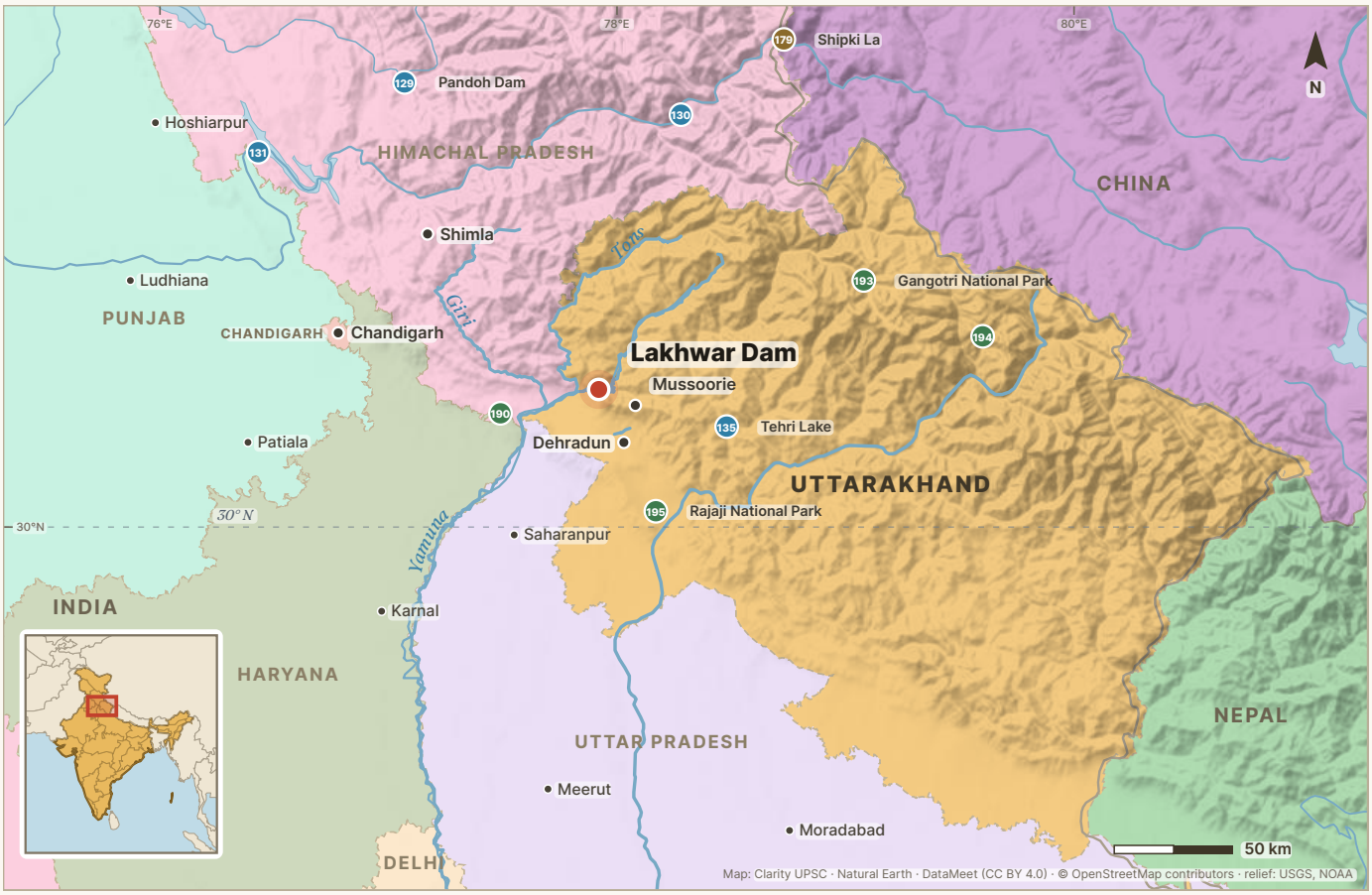
PRELIMS TRAP Kaushalya Dam stands on the Kaushalya, a Ghaggar tributary, near Pinjore; Ottu barrage, near Sirsa, stands on the Ghaggar itself.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Dam | Apr 2026

134 Lakhwar Dam (Lakhwar multipurpose project)

Yamuna River near Lohari village, Dehradun district, Uttarakhand



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 Union Jal Shakti Secretary V. L. Kantha Rao reviewed the Lakhwar multipurpose project on the Yamuna and told officials to keep to timelines. In March the Uttar Pradesh cabinet had approved ₹356.07 crore as the state's share. The project will store Yamuna water for six states.

WHERE IT IS

The 204 m concrete dam is being built across the Yamuna near Lohari village in Dehradun district, Uttarakhand, in the upper Yamuna basin. The project area spans Dehradun and Tehri Garhwal districts, north-west of Mussoorie.

SURROUNDED BY Dehradun district | Tehri Garhwal district | Mussoorie (south-east) | Yamuna River

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- First approved in 1976, work stopped in 1992; the Centre and six states signed an MoU to revive it on 28 August 2018.
- Live storage of 330.66 million cubic metres will irrigate 33,780 ha, supply 78.83 MCM for drinking and industry, and support 300 MW.
- Stored water is shared among Uttarakhand, UP, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi under their 12 May 1994 Yamuna water-sharing MoU.
- The Centre pays 90% of the irrigation and drinking-water cost; Uttarakhand pays for the power part and receives all the electricity.

PRELIMS TRAP Lakhwar is on the Yamuna itself; the Kishau dam is on the Tons and the Renukaji dam on the Giri, both Yamuna tributaries.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



135 Tehri Lake (Tehri Dam reservoir)

Bhagirathi River at New Tehri, Tehri Garhwal district, Uttarakhand

Reservoir | Jan 2026

In news: On 29 January 2026 two paraglider pilots fell into Tehri Lake after a failed acrobatic manoeuvre at the Acro Festival and SIV Championship; the State Disaster Response Force rescued both. On 14 April a 19-seater seaplane made its first trial landing on the lake, flying from Dehradun's Jolly Grant Airport.

SURROUNDED BY New Tehri | Tehri Garhwal district | Bhagirathi River | Koteshwar Dam (downstream)

- Tehri Dam, a 260.5 m rock-and-earth-fill embankment dam, is the tallest dam in India.
- THDC India's Tehri complex includes a 1,000 MW power station, a 1,000 MW pumped-storage plant and the 400 MW Koteshwar dam.
- The dam lies in the Central Himalayan Seismic Gap, which keeps its geological safety under debate.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



136 Sharda (Kali) River at Tanakpur

Kali (Sharda) River on the India–Nepal border; Tanakpur, Champawat district, Uttarakhand

River | Feb 2026

In news: On 7 February 2026 Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami laid the foundation stone of the Sharda River corridor at Tanakpur in Champawat district. The plan covers nearly 200 sq km with a proposed investment of ₹3,300 crore. Its first phase includes redeveloping Sharda Ghat and a drainage system for Tanakpur.

BORDERING COUNTRIES India (Uttarakhand) | Nepal (Sudurpashchim Province)

- The plan proposes river rafting and paragliding, and aims to stretch the three-month Purnagiri temple fair into a year-round draw.
- India and Nepal signed the Mahakali Treaty on 12 February 1996; it covers the Sarada and Tanakpur barrages and the proposed Pancheshwar project.
- The proposed Pancheshwar dam would stand just below the Kali's confluence with the Sarju (Saryu) of Kumaon.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



137 Hindon River

Western Uttar Pradesh, from Saharanpur to Gautam Buddha Nagar

River · Feb 2026

In news: In late January and early February 2026 the Greater Noida authority, acting on National Green Tribunal directions, sealed over 100 illegal flats and cleared over 54,000 sq m of the Hindon floodplain. On 16 February the tribunal asked Uttar Pradesh to act quickly on demarcating the floodplain.

SURROUNDED BY Saharanpur · Meerut · Ghaziabad · Gautam Buddha Nagar · Yamuna River

- The Kali West and Krishni are its main tributary streams.
- The CPCB has identified the Hindon as polluted along its length, mainly from untreated sewage and industry.
- Alamgirpur, near the Hindon in Meerut district, is the easternmost known site of the Harappan civilisation.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



138 Rapti River and the Suav

Suav: Balrampur district; Rapti: Nepal to eastern Uttar Pradesh (Shravasti, Balrampur, Siddharthnagar, Gorakhpur)

River · Feb 2026

In news: In February 2026 the National Green Tribunal ordered Uttar Pradesh to record the Suav, a tributary of the Rapti in Balrampur district, as a river instead of a drain (nullah). The Balrampur district magistrate must correct revenue records within three months, and no new building is allowed in its demarcated floodplain.

SURROUNDED BY Balrampur · Siddharthnagar · Shravasti · Nepal (north)

- A 1906 gazetteer of Gonda named the Burhi Rapti (north bank) and the Suav (south bank) as the Rapti's only significant tributaries.
- The Suav fills dozens of wetlands and ponds along its course and helps absorb Rapti floodwater in the monsoon.
- The Rapti is identified with the ancient Aciravati; Shravasti, capital of the Kosala kingdom, stood on its bank.

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139 Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary

Wetland (Ramsar site, bird sanctuary) · Apr 2026

Shekha village, about 17 km east of Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

On 21 April 2026 the Ramsar Secretariat listed Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary in Aligarh district as a wetland of international importance. Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced it as India's 99th Ramsar site. It is Uttar Pradesh's 12th, second only to Tamil Nadu's count.

WHERE IT IS

The 25-ha lake lies near Shekha village, about 17 km east of Aligarh and 5 km from the Grand Trunk Road, in western Uttar Pradesh. The Upper Ganges Canal flows beside it.

SURROUNDED BY Aligarh (west) · Upper Ganges Canal · Grand Trunk Road · Hathras (south-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The perennial freshwater lake formed after the Upper Ganges Canal was built beside it in 1852.
- It is a winter stopover on the Central Asian Flyway for bar-headed geese, painted storks and many ducks.
- Uttar Pradesh's 12 Ramsar sites cover 39,914.27 ha, about 3.21% of the state's wetland area in the National Wetland Atlas.

PRELIMS TRAP Uttar Pradesh's 2026 Ramsar sites are Patna Bird Sanctuary (Etah), Shekha Jheel (Aligarh), Surha Tal (Ballia) and Sauj Jheel (Mainpuri).

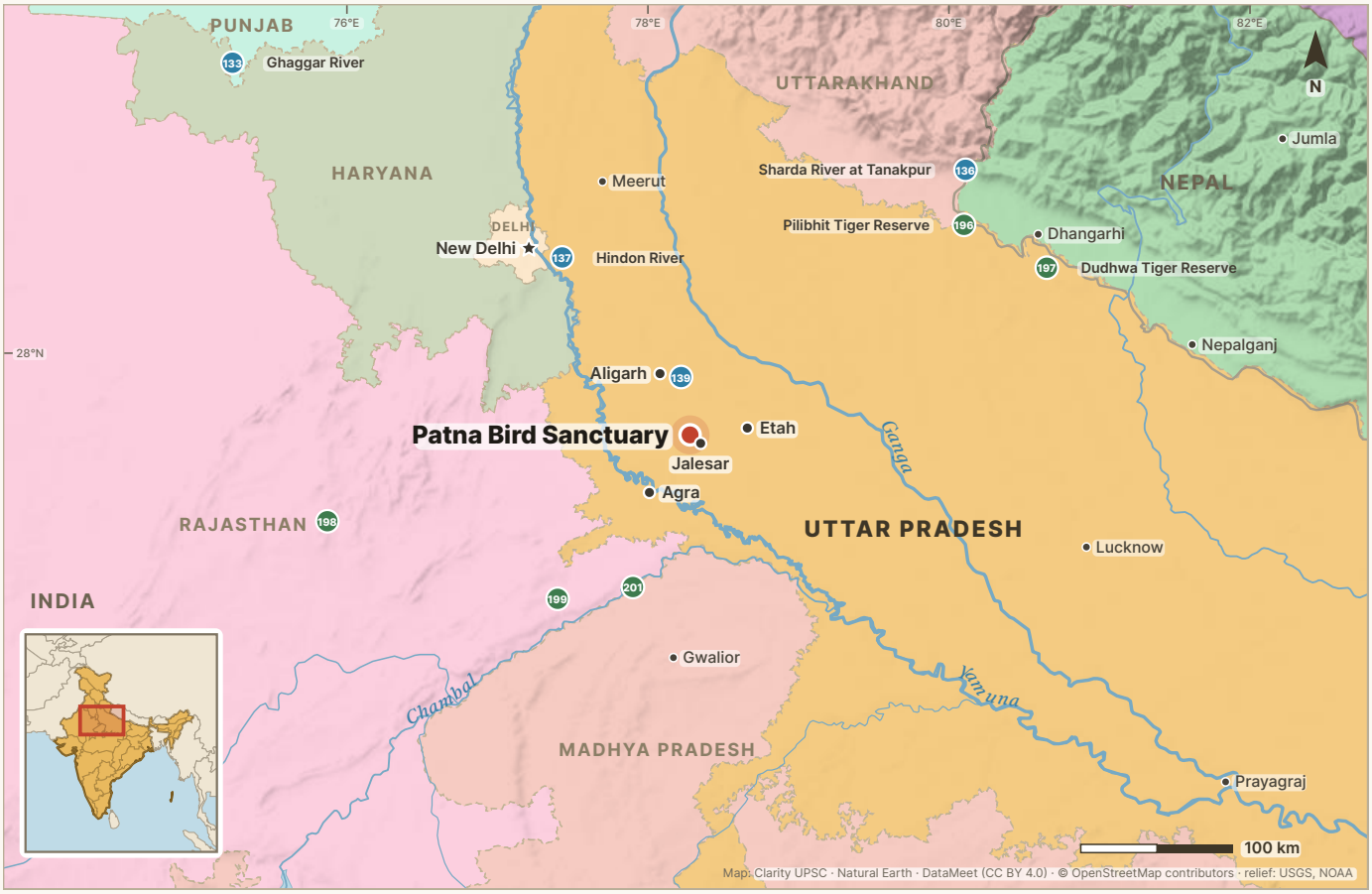
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140 Patna Bird Sanctuary

Jalesar tehsil, Etah district, western Uttar Pradesh

Wetland (Ramsar site, bird sanctuary) | Feb 2026



WHY IN NEWS

On 31 January 2026, just before World Wetlands Day, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced that Patna Bird Sanctuary in Etah, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhari-Dhand in Kutch, Gujarat, had become Ramsar sites. The two additions took India's total to 98.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary lies in Jalesar tehsil of Etah district, in western Uttar Pradesh, north-east of Agra. Its shallow lake of about 1 sq km is ringed by freshwater marsh, woodland and grassland, with farmland all around.

SURROUNDED BY Jalesar | Etah district | Agra (south-west) | Aligarh (north-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Founded in 1991, it covers about 108 ha; Etah's district administration calls it Uttar Pradesh's smallest bird sanctuary.
- Surveys have recorded 178 bird species and 252 plant species; more than 50,000 birds use the wetland each year.
- BirdLife International lists it as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area; large gatherings of sarus cranes form there in winter.
- An old Shiva temple inside the sanctuary draws pilgrims; religious tourism and invasive plants are listed among its pressures.

PRELIMS TRAP Patna Bird Sanctuary is in Etah district, western Uttar Pradesh; it is unrelated to Patna, the capital of Bihar.

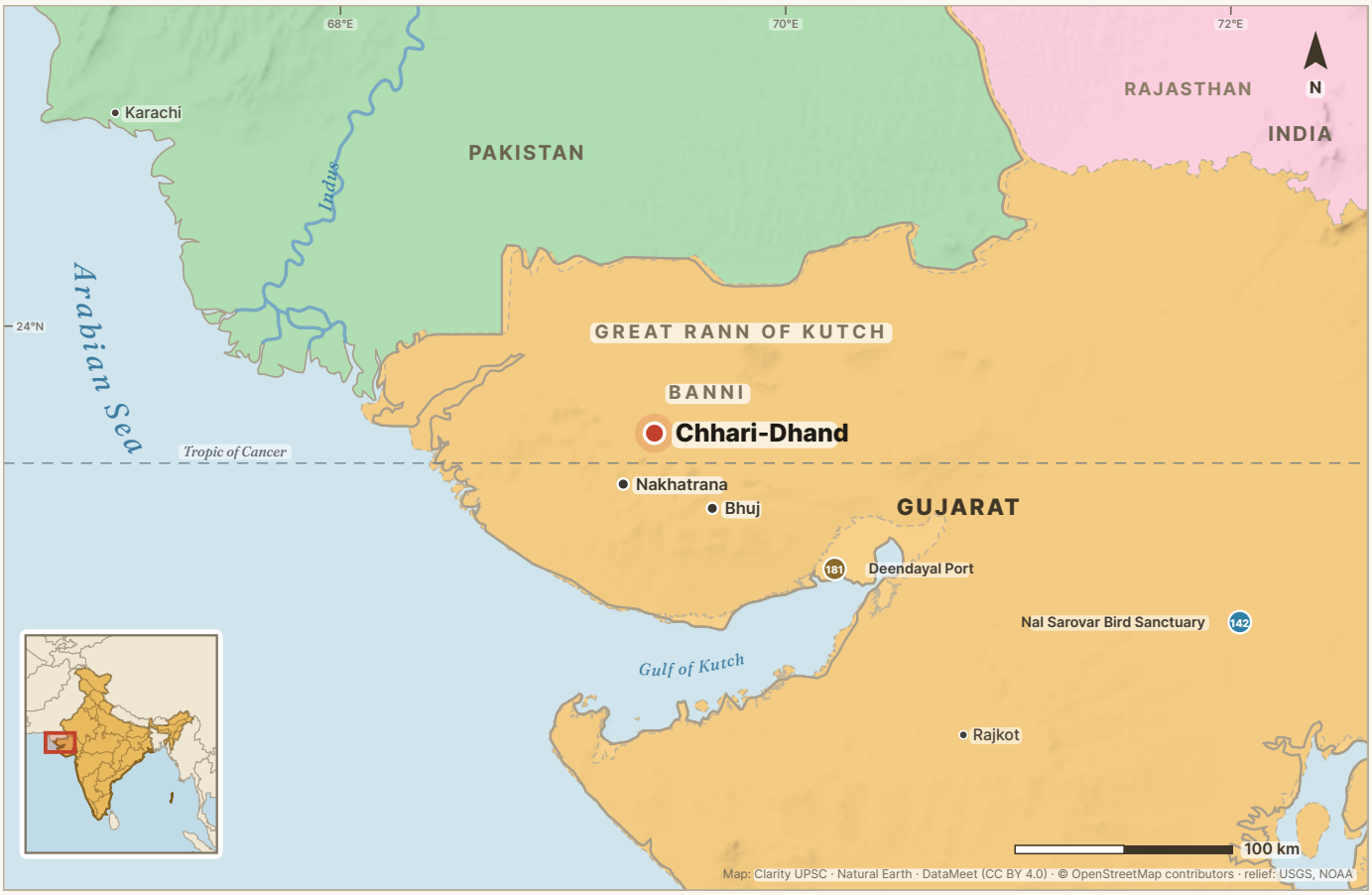
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141

Chhari-Dhand Wetland

Wetland (Ramsar site, conservation reserve) Feb 2026

Kutch district, Gujarat; between the Banni grasslands and the Rann of Kutch



WHY IN NEWS

On 31 January 2026 India added Chhari-Dhand in Kutch, Gujarat, and Patna Bird Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh to the Ramsar list of wetlands of international importance, taking its total to 98. Chhari-Dhand became Gujarat's fifth Ramsar site, after Nal Sarovar, Thol, Khijadia and Wadhwana.

WHERE IT IS

Chhari-Dhand is a seasonal saline wetland in Kutch district, Gujarat, at the edge of the arid Banni grasslands and the salt flats of the Rann of Kutch. It fills in a good monsoon, when rivers and run-off from the surrounding hills flow into its shallow basin.

SURROUNDED BY Banni grasslands · Great Rann of Kutch · Kutch district · Bhuj (south-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Gujarat declared it the state's first Conservation Reserve in 2008; it spreads over about 227 sq km (22,700 ha).
- 'Chhari' means saline and 'Dhand' a shallow lake; more than 250 bird species have been recorded, with 25,000–40,000 birds in winter.
- About 30,000 common cranes winter here, with the critically endangered sociable lapwing and the vulnerable common pochard.
- Chinkara, wolves, caracal, desert cats and desert foxes live in the surrounding dry country.

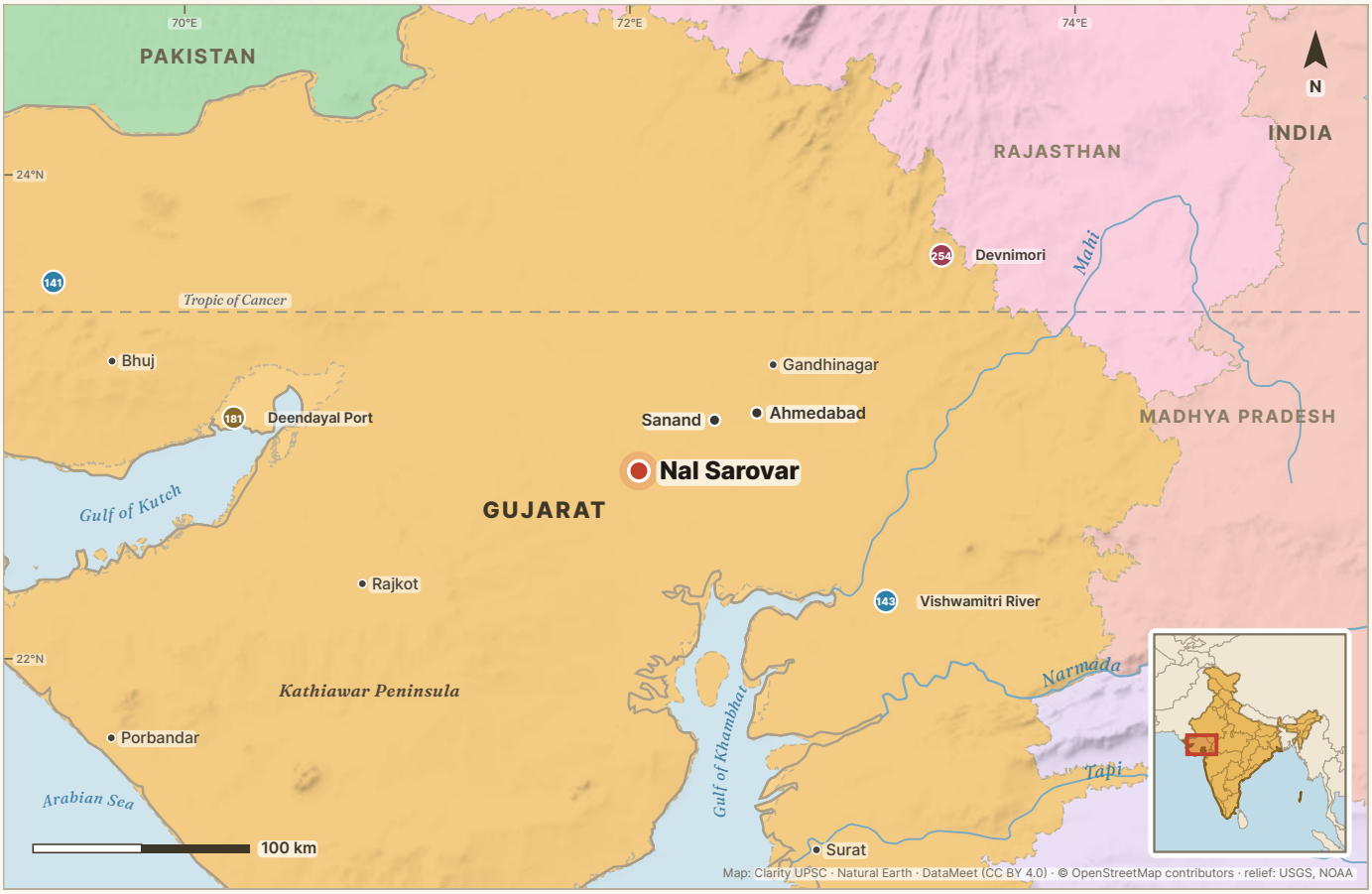
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142 Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary

Wetland (Ramsar site) · Feb 2026

About 64 km west of Ahmedabad, near Sanand, Gujarat



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 Gujarat's forest department released its biennial bird census of Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary. Teams counting in 50 zones recorded about 6.42 lakh birds of 270 species. The 220 participants included students, birdwatchers, forest staff and 99 local boatmen and guides.

WHERE IT IS

Nal Sarovar is a shallow lake with marshes in the low plain between Saurashtra and mainland Gujarat, about 64 km west of Ahmedabad. The depression once linked the Gulf of Kutch and the Gulf of Khambhat.

SURROUNDED BY Ahmedabad district · Surendranagar district · Saurashtra (west) · Little Rann of Kutch (north-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The lake and marshes cover about 120.8 sq km; the area became a bird sanctuary in April 1969.
- Nal Sarovar was designated a Ramsar site in 2012.
- Winter visitors include flamingos, pelicans, white storks and ruddy shelducks.

PRELIMS TRAP Nal Sarovar (Ahmedabad) and Thol Lake (Mehsana) are both Gujarat bird sanctuaries and Ramsar sites; Nal Sarovar is far larger.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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River · Feb 2026

143 Vishwamitri River

Vadodara, Gujarat



WHY IN NEWS

On 7 February 2026 Maharaja Sayajirao University's zoology department, NGOs and the forest department counted mugger crocodiles along a 25-km stretch of the Vishwamitri in Vadodara. The preliminary count was 417, against 212 in 2020 and 447 in 2025.

WHERE IT IS

The Vishwamitri rises near the Pavagadh hills in Panchmahal district and flows west through Vadodara. It belongs to the Dhadhar drainage system, whose waters reach the Gulf of Khambhat on the Arabian Sea.

SURROUNDED BY

Pavagadh hills (Panchmahal) · Vadodara city · Dhadhar river system · Gulf of Khambhat

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Vadodara has one of India's best-known urban populations of the mugger, Crocodylus palustris.
- The mugger is IUCN Vulnerable and listed in CITES Appendix I.
- Sewage, urban runoff and floodplain encroachment degrade the river corridor.

PRELIMS TRAP The mugger, or marsh crocodile, lives in freshwater; the saltwater crocodile lives in Bhitarkanika and the Sundarbans.

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Repo rate	Retail inflation	GDP growth	Forex reserves
5.50%	6.09%	7.8%	$719.5 bn
▲ +25 bp	▲ +0.55 pp	▼ −0.8 pp	▲ +0.3%
RBI MPC · 7 Oct 2026	NSO · Oct 2026	NSO · Q1 2026-27	RBI · 6 Nov 2026

All 74 figures, the release calendar, and the Budget and Economic Survey numbers.

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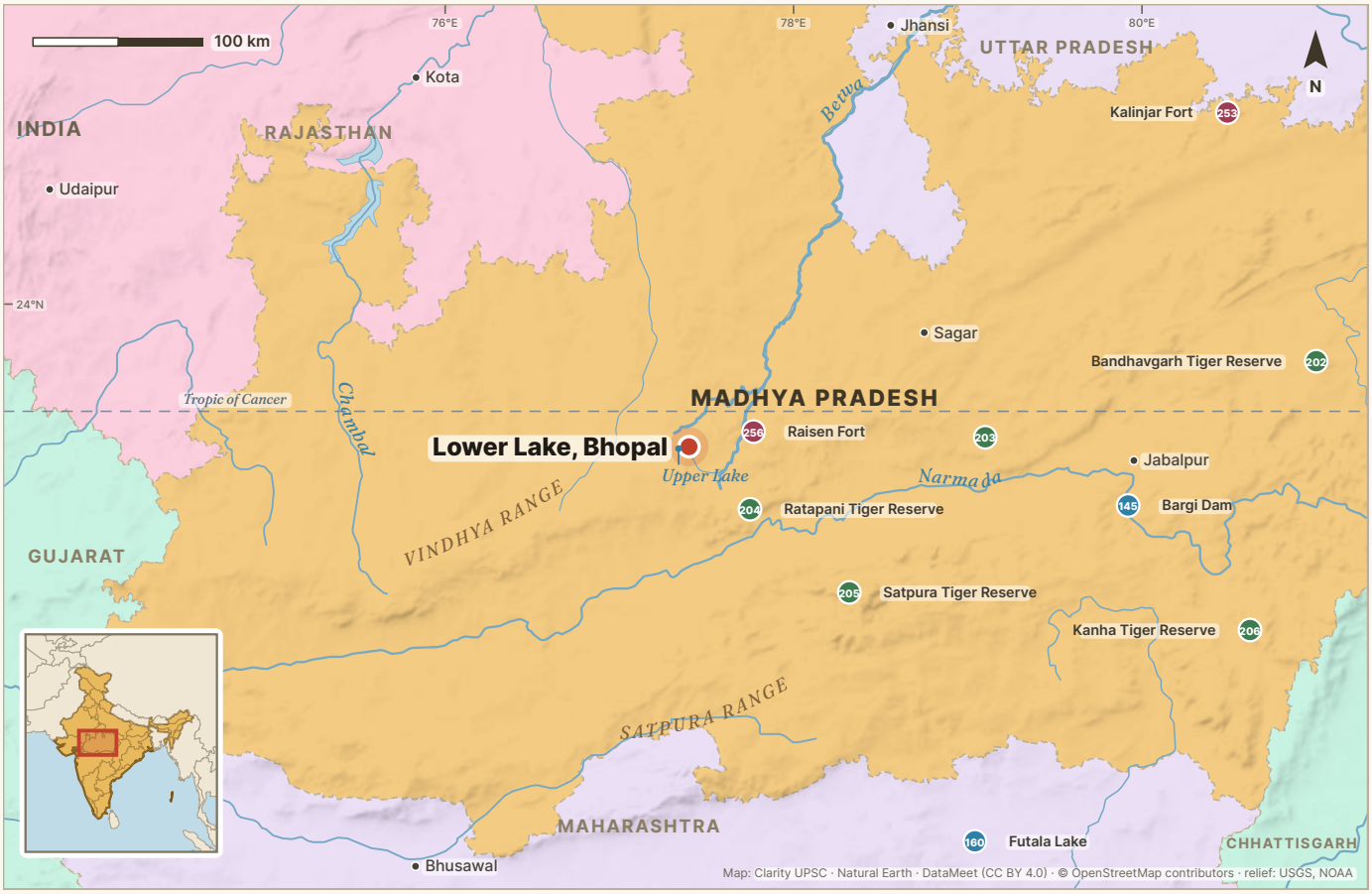
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144

Lower Lake (Bhoj Wetland), Bhopal

Central Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, east of the Upper Lake

Lake (Ramsar site) · Apr 2026



WHY IN NEWS

On 2 April 2026 the National Green Tribunal issued notices to the Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board, Bhopal Municipal Corporation, Bhoj Wetland Authority and four other bodies over the Lower Lake. Activist Rashid Noor Khan's petition alleged encroachment, debris dumping and untreated sewage causing eutrophication.

WHERE IT IS

The Lower Lake lies in central Bhopal, east of the much larger Upper Lake, from which an earthen dam separates it. It has no river inflow; it gets seepage from the Upper Lake and drains through the Patra drain to the Halali, a Betwa tributary.

SURROUNDED BY Upper Lake (Bhojtal), west · Old Bhopal city · Patra drain · Halali River

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Chhote Khan, a minister of Nawab Hayat Muhammad Khan, built the lake in 1794.
- It covers about 1.29 sq km and has a mostly urban catchment of 9.6 sq km.
- The Upper and Lower lakes together form the Bhoj Wetland, a Ramsar site since 2002.
- Raja Bhoj of the Paramara dynasty created the Upper Lake in the 11th century by damming the Kolans river.

PRELIMS TRAP Bhopal's lakes drain north to the Betwa, through the Kaliasot and Halali rivers; the Narmada flows well south of Bhopal.

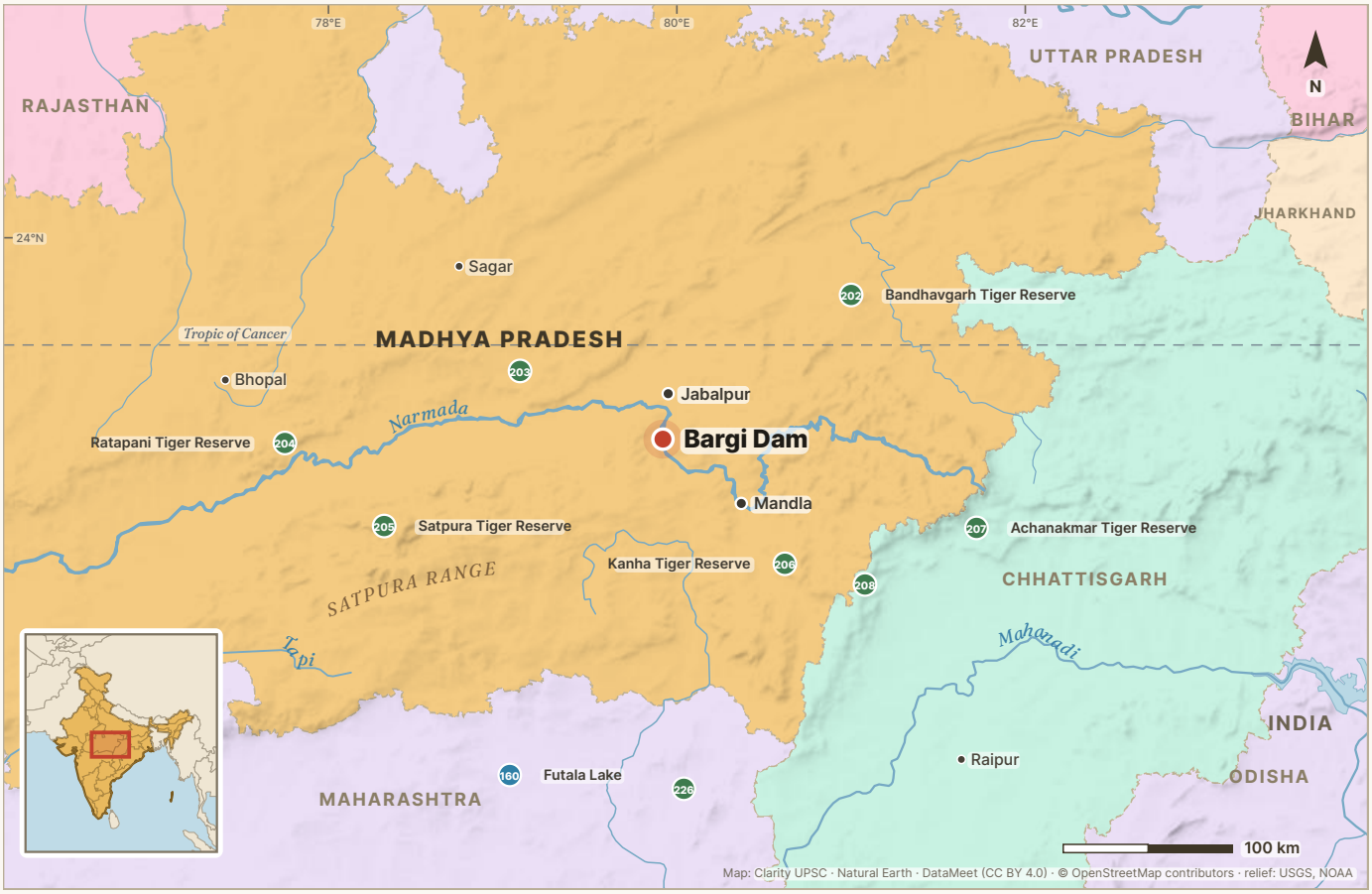
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Dam · Jan 2026

145 Bargi Dam

On the Narmada, Jabalpur district, Madhya Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 Down To Earth reported a show-cause notice from the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) to the Narmada Valley Development Authority over Bargi Dam. The notice cited heavy leakage from the masonry spillway gallery, reported since 2018, weak structural monitoring and poor security. It called the dam's 'minor deficiencies' rating gross negligence.

WHERE IT IS

Bargi Dam stands on the upper Narmada in Jabalpur district, upstream of Jabalpur city. Its reservoir, the Rani Avanti Bai Lodhi Sagar, stretches back into Mandla and Seoni districts.

SURROUNDED BY Jabalpur district · Mandla district · Seoni district · Narmada River

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Bargi is a 'specified dam' under the Dam Safety Act, 2021; it serves irrigation, water supply and power generation.
- The Central Water Commission first flagged leakage at Bargi in a letter of April 1988.
- NDSA gave the authority 30 days to reply; Sections 41 and 42 of the Act provide penalties for responsible officials.

PRELIMS TRAP Bargi is the upper Narmada dam near Jabalpur; Indira Sagar and Omkareshwar lie downstream in Khandwa district, and Sardar Sarovar is the terminal dam in Gujarat.

Read the full story
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River · Feb 2026

146 Indravati River

Kalahandi (Odisha) to Bijapur (Chhattisgarh); a Godavari tributary



WHY IN NEWS

On 26 February 2026 security forces killed two Maoists in an encounter in the Indravati river area of Bijapur district, Chhattisgarh, the district's police chief said. Three rifles and other weapons and ammunition were recovered.

WHERE IT IS

The Indravati rises at about 914 m in Odisha's Kalahandi district, on the western slopes of the Eastern Ghats. It flows west into Chhattisgarh's Bastar, turns south along the Chhattisgarh–Maharashtra boundary and joins the Godavari near Bhadrakali village in Bijapur district.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Odisha · Chhattisgarh · Maharashtra · Telangana

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The river is about 535 km long; it forms the Odisha–Chhattisgarh boundary for 9.5 km and the Chhattisgarh–Maharashtra boundary for about 129 km.
- It joins the Godavari where Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Telangana meet.
- The Upper Indravati project dam stands near Mukhiguda in Kalahandi district.

PRELIMS TRAP The Indravati drains to the Godavari; the Sabari, also a Godavari tributary, receives Indravati floodwater through the Jaura Nallah in Odisha.

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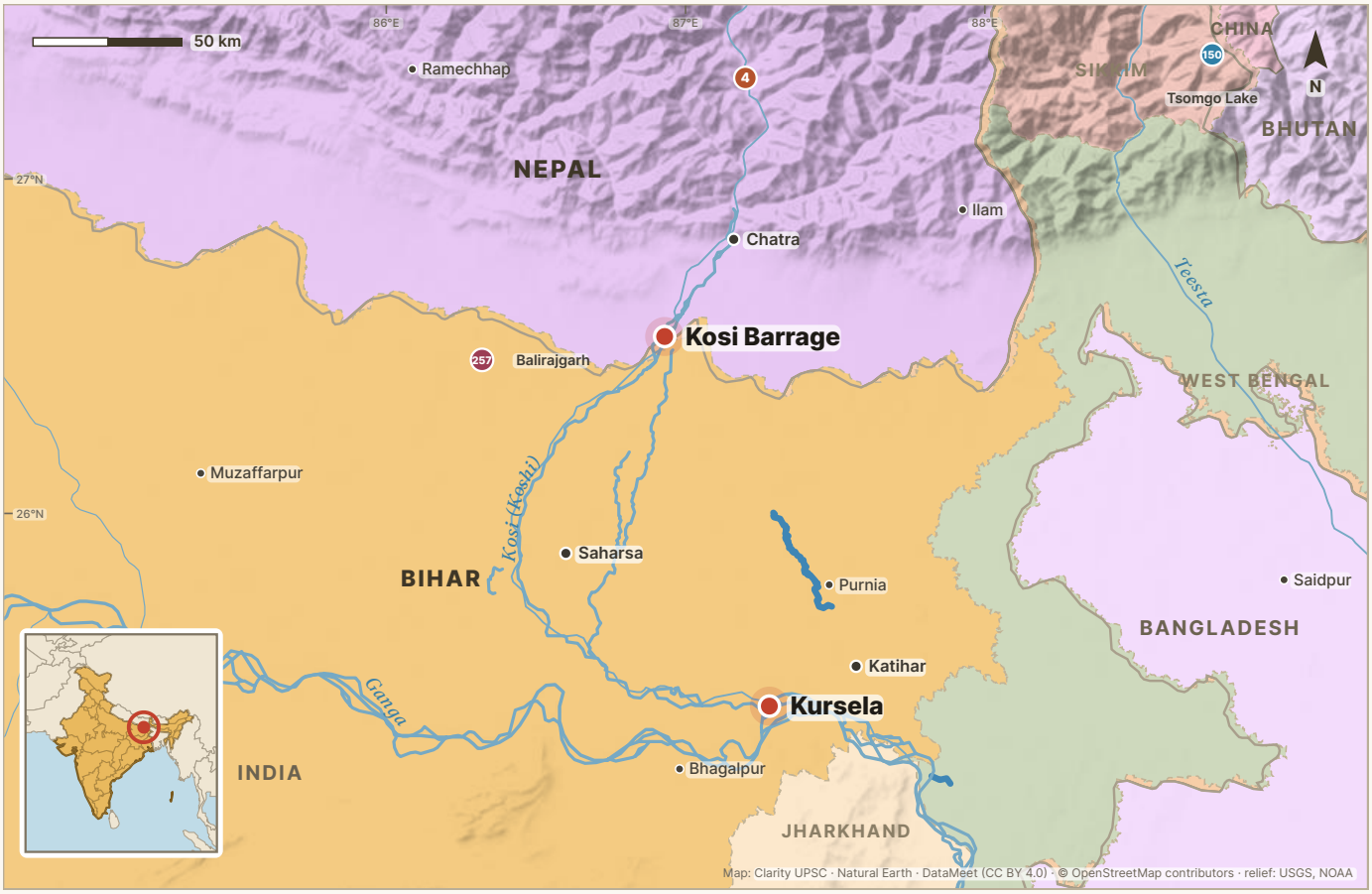
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River · Mar 2026

147 Kosi River

Tibet and Nepal into north Bihar; joins the Ganga in Katihar district



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 Bihar began the first phase of the Kosi–Mechi river link near Birpur in Supaul district, by widening and deepening the 41-km main irrigation canal fed from the Eastern Kosi canal. The ₹6,282-crore project will divert surplus Kosi water to the Mechi, a Mahananda tributary, to irrigate about 2.14 lakh hectares.

WHERE IT IS

The Sun Kosi, Arun and Tamur meet at Tribeni in eastern Nepal to form the Sapta Kosi, which cuts through the Chatra gorge. Below the Kosi barrage near Bhimnagar on the India–Nepal border, the river crosses north Bihar and joins the Ganga near Kursela in Katihar district.

BORDERING COUNTRIES China (Tibet) · Nepal · India (Bihar)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Below the hills the Kosi has built a megafan of about 15,000 sq km, across which its channel has shifted repeatedly.
- Its silt and shifting course earned it the name 'Sorrow of Bihar'; in August 2008 it breached its embankment at Kusaha in Nepal.
- India and Nepal signed the Kosi Agreement on 25 April 1954 (revised 1966), leading to the Bhimnagar barrage and embankments.
- The barrage feeds the Eastern Kosi canal, which supplies the Kataiya hydel station before reaching the main irrigation canal.

PRELIMS TRAP The Kosi–Mechi link joins two Ganga-basin rivers within Bihar; the Ken–Betwa link joins two Yamuna tributaries in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

Read the full story
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River · Apr 2026

148 Sankosh River (Punatsangchhu)

Bhutan and the West Bengal–Assam plains (Alipurduar, Cooch Behar)



WHY IN NEWS

On 10 April 2026 India's Power Minister Manohar Lal and Bhutan's Energy Minister Gem Tshering attended a concrete-pouring ceremony that restarted dam work at the 1,200 MW Punatsangchhu-I project, halted since 2019 because the right-bank slope was unstable.

WHERE IT IS

The Mo Chhu and Pho Chhu meet at Punakha in Bhutan to form the Punatsangchhu, also called the Sankosh. Punatsangchhu-I lies downstream, in Wangdue Phodrang district. The river flows south to the Indian plains and joins the Brahmaputra as a north-bank tributary. Sintaphu Lake lies at the Mo Chhu's headwaters.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Bhutan · West Bengal · Assam

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its lower course in India is also called the Gangadhar.
- A moraine, a natural ridge of glacial rock and sediment, holds many glacial lakes and can fail suddenly.
- Punatsangchhu-I, Bhutan's largest ongoing hydropower project, is funded by India through a 40 per cent grant and a 60 per cent loan.
- Downstream, the 1,020 MW Punatsangchhu-II plant was inaugurated in November 2025.

PRELIMS TRAP The Punatsangchhu and the Sankosh are one river; the Manas is a different river that reaches Assam farther east.

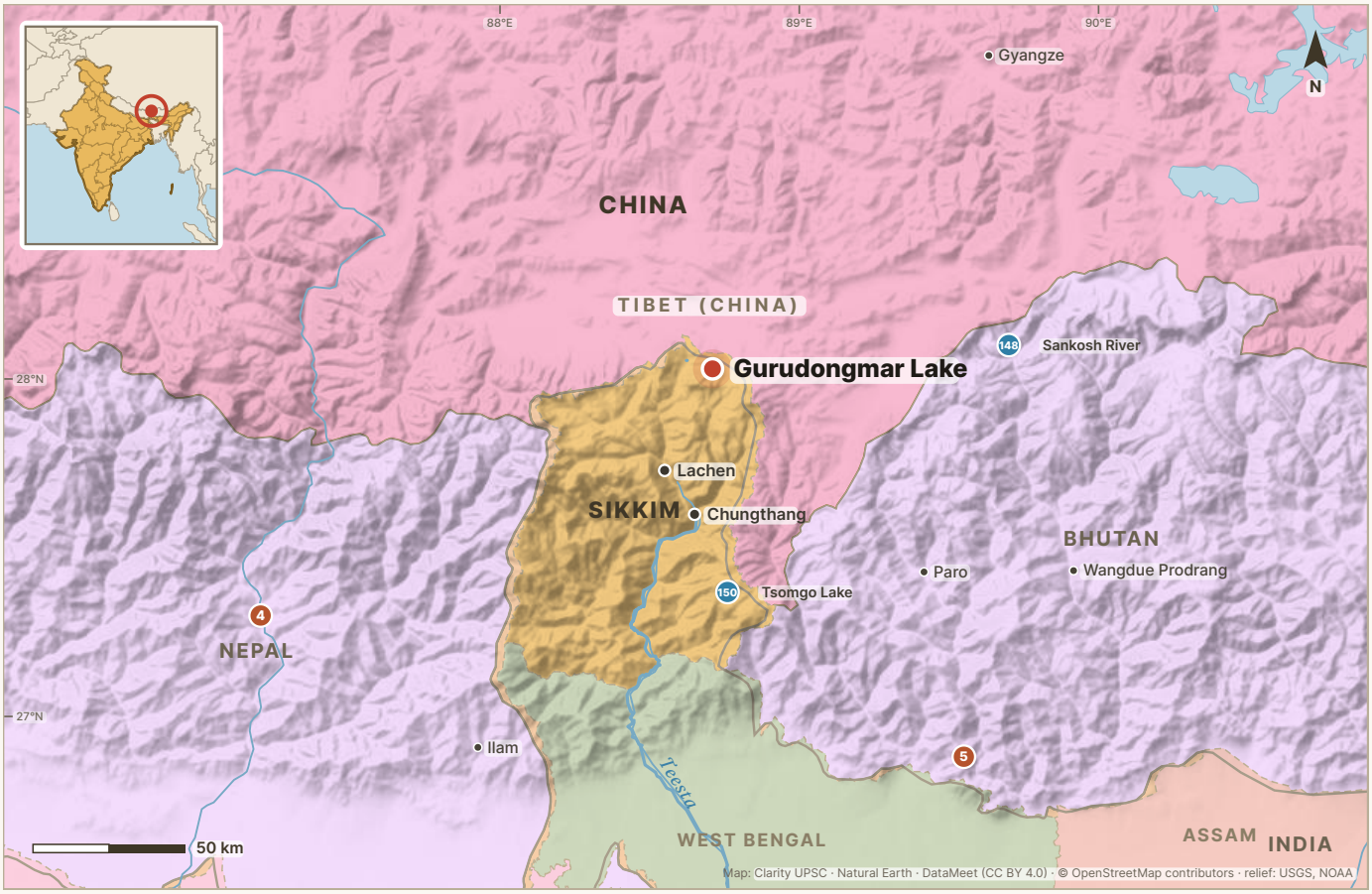
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Lake · Mar 2026

149 Gurudongmar Lake

Mangan (North Sikkim) district, Sikkim, near the Tibet border



WHY IN NEWS

In early March 2026 tourists could again travel to Gurudongmar Lake in North Sikkim, 887 days after the October 2023 South Lhonak Lake outburst flood cut the route. The Chungthang–Lachen road reopened after a new 400-foot bridge over the Taram Chu was inaugurated, and tourist permits resumed.

WHERE IT IS

Gurudongmar Lake lies above 5,000 m in Mangan (North Sikkim) district, about 5 km south of the border with China's Tibet region. It is reached from Chungthang through Lachen and the Thangu valley.

SURROUNDED BY Lachen · Thangu valley · Tso Lhamo plateau · Tibet (China), north

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Government of Sikkim gives its height as about 5,430 m, making it one of India's highest lakes.
- The glacier-fed, moraine-dammed lake freezes in winter; one of its streams feeds Tso Lhamo, a headwater of the Teesta.
- The 2023 flood washed away bridges and long stretches of the road to Lachen, halting tourism in the Lachen belt.

PRELIMS TRAP South Lhonak Lake, whose October 2023 outburst flood devastated the Teesta valley, is a different glacial lake in north-western Sikkim.

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Lake · Feb 2026

150 Tsomgo (Changu) Lake

Changu, Gangtok district, East Sikkim, on the Gangtok–Nathu La road



WHY IN NEWS

On 22 February 2026 sudden heavy snowfall in East Sikkim's high-altitude areas, around the Changu (Tsomgo)–Nathu La belt, halted traffic and stranded tourist vehicles. The Army rescued 46 tourists under Operation Himrahat and moved more than 150 vehicles to safety. It was the first proper snowfall after an unusually dry winter.

WHERE IT IS

Tsomgo Lake lies at about 3,753 m at Changu in Gangtok district, East Sikkim, about 40 km from Gangtok on the road to Nathu La. The border with China's Tibet region lies about 5 km to the east-north-east.

SURROUNDED BY Gangtok (south-west) · Nathu La (north-east) · Kupup · Tibet (China), east

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The oval glacial lake covers about 24 ha and freezes in winter; local Sikkimese hold it sacred.
- Visitors need permits because the lake lies in a restricted border area.
- The dry winter of 2025–26 brought wildfires even to the high reaches of Kupup and Gnathang in East Sikkim.

PRELIMS TRAP Tsomgo (Changu) Lake is on the Gangtok–Nathu La road in East Sikkim; Gurudongmar and Tso Lhamo lie in North Sikkim's Mangan district.

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▲ +25 bp	▲ +0.55 pp	▼ −0.8 pp	▲ +0.3%
RBI MPC · 7 Oct 2026	NSO · Oct 2026	NSO · Q1 2026-27	RBI · 6 Nov 2026

All 74 figures, the release calendar, and the Budget and Economic Survey numbers.

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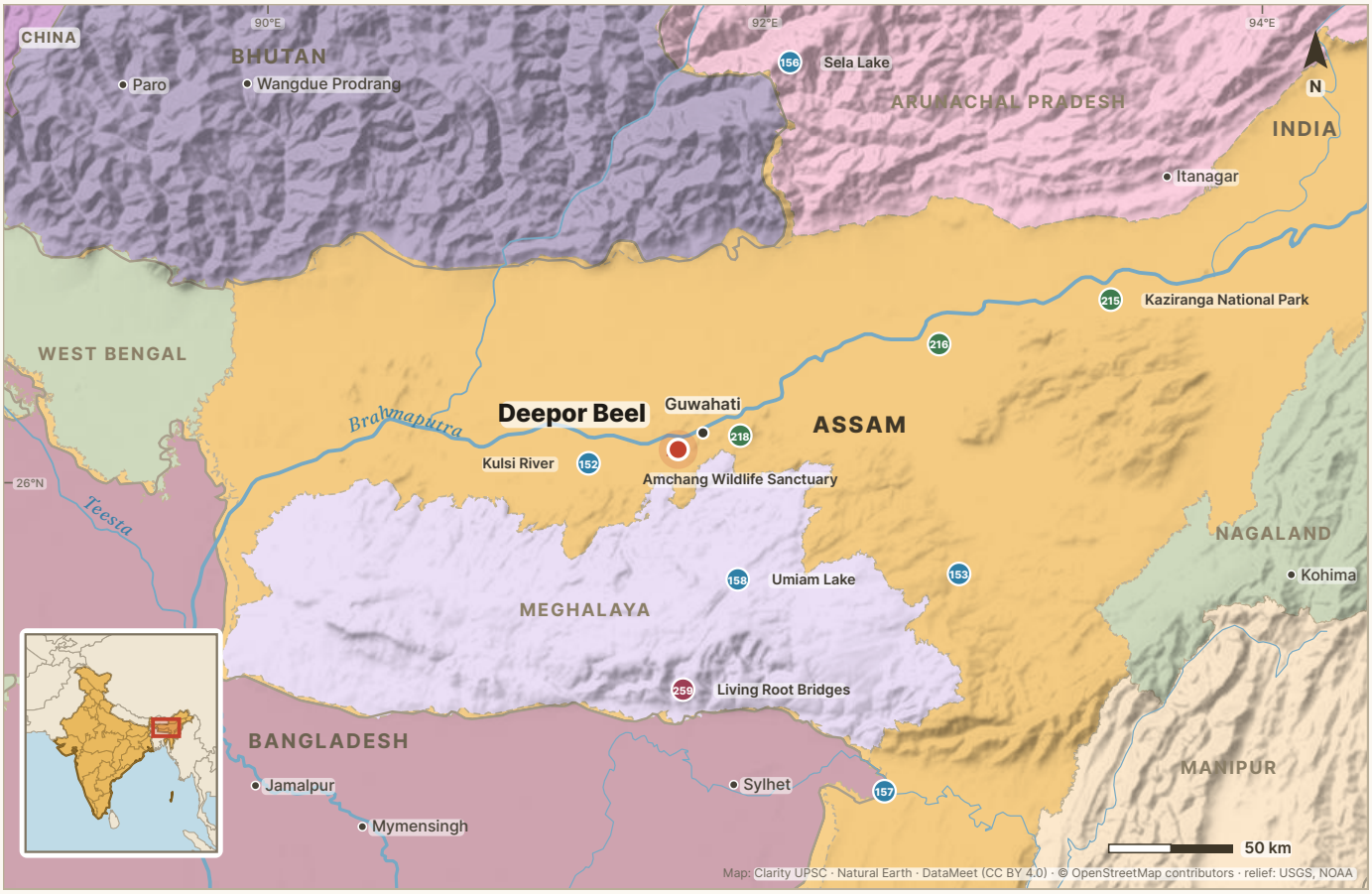
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151

Deepor Beel

Wetland · Mar 2026

South-western edge of Guwahati, Kamrup Metropolitan district, Assam



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 the National Green Tribunal's eastern bench found the Assam State Wetlands Authority's reply on pollution in Deepor Beel inadequate. A Central Pollution Control Board report had found faecal bacteria above permitted limits. The tribunal gave the authority four weeks to act and added Guwahati Municipal Corporation to the case.

WHERE IT IS

Deepor Beel lies on the south-western edge of Guwahati in Kamrup Metropolitan district. It occupies a former channel of the Brahmaputra. The Basistha and Kalmani rivers feed it, and the Khonajan channel drains it into the Brahmaputra about 5 km to the north.

SURROUNDED BY Guwahati city · Brahmaputra River (north) · Rani and Garbhanga reserved forests · Kamrup Metropolitan district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It became a Ramsar site on 19 August 2002, covering 4,000 ha; it is Assam's only Ramsar site.
- Assam declared 4.14 sq km of the wetland a wildlife sanctuary in 1989.
- Its water spread is about 10 sq km in winter and about 40 sq km in the monsoon.
- An August 2025 draft notification proposed a 38.84 sq km eco-sensitive zone around the sanctuary.

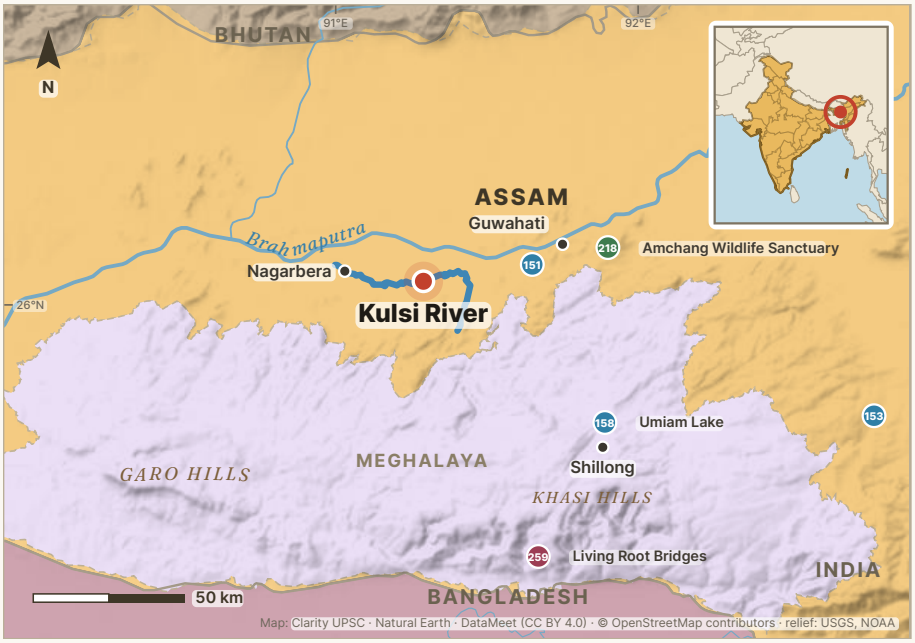
PRELIMS TRAP The Deepor Beel sanctuary (4.14 sq km) is far smaller than the Ramsar site (40 sq km); the two have different boundaries.

Read the full story
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River · Apr 2026

152 Kulsi River

West Khasi Hills (Meghalaya) to Kamrup district (Assam)



WHY IN NEWS

On 27 March 2026 Garo, Rabha and other community bodies met at Ukiam, on the Assam–Meghalaya border, and demanded cancellation of the proposed 55 MW hydroelectric project on the Kulsi River. Residents fear displacement and environmental damage. Assam had not formally dropped the project.

WHERE IT IS

The Kulsi rises in Meghalaya's West Khasi Hills, where its upper course is called the Khri. It flows north through Kamrup district of Assam and joins the Brahmaputra at Nagarbera.

NEIGHBOURING STATES

- Meghalaya (West Khasi Hills)
- Assam (Kamrup district)

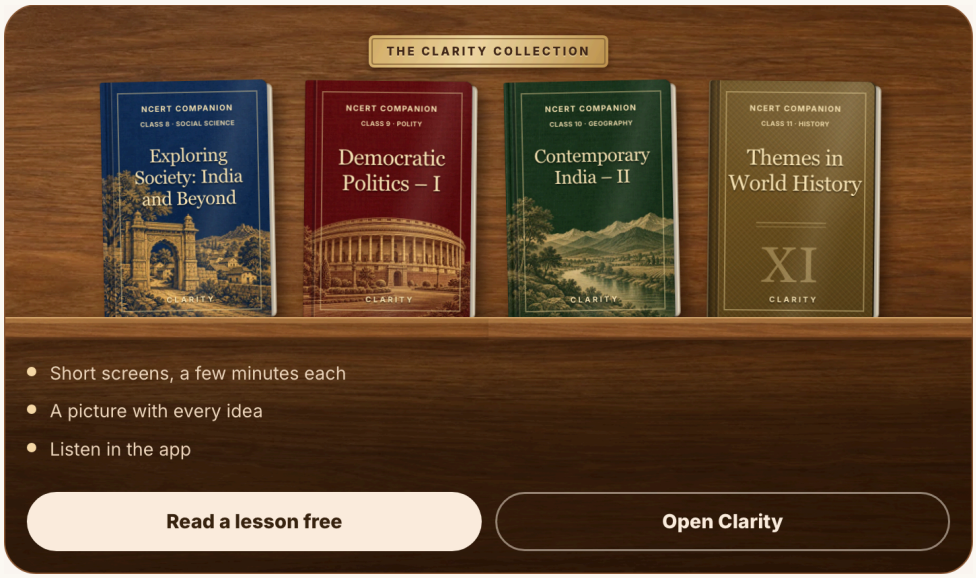
KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Kulsi is a breeding habitat of the endangered Ganges river dolphin (Platanista gangetica); sand mining has cut its numbers.
- The dam is proposed at Ukiam; protesters say about 25 villages could be affected.
- Opponents included the Kamrup District Garo National Council and the All Rabha National Council.

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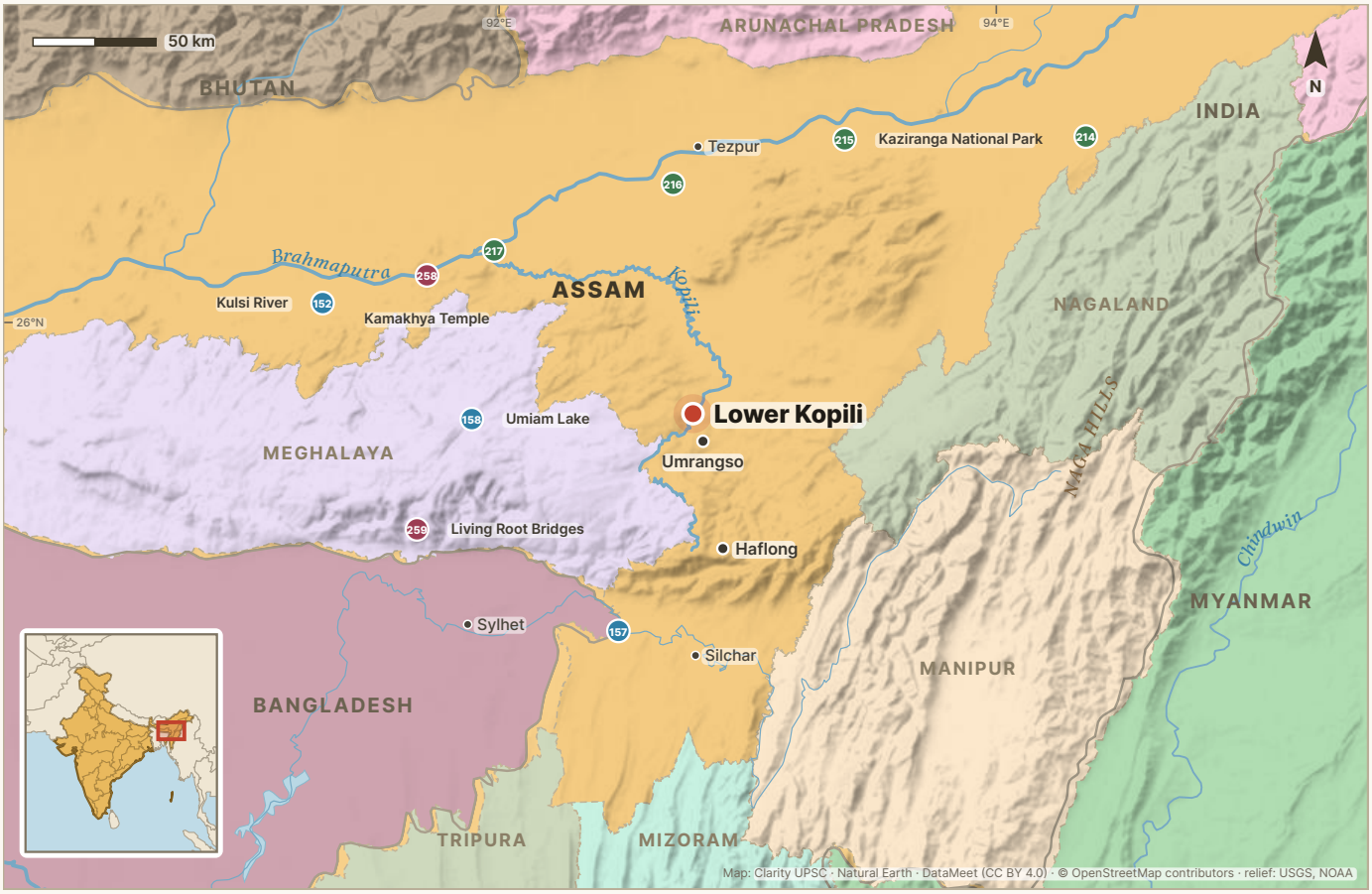
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153

Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Project

Hydroelectric project | Mar 2026

Longku, Dima Hasao district, Assam (Kopili River)



WHY IN NEWS

On 13 March 2026 Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the 120 MW Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Project at a ceremony in Guwahati. The run-of-river project at Longku in Assam's Dima Hasao district cost over ₹2,300 crore. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had laid its foundation stone on 7 October 2021.

WHERE IT IS

Longku lies on the Kopili River in Dima Hasao district, in Assam's central hills. The Kopili rises on the Meghalaya plateau, drains Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, Kamrup and Nagaon districts, and enters the plains in Nagaon before joining the Brahmaputra.

SURROUNDED BY Dima Hasao district | Karbi Anglong | Meghalaya (upstream) | Nagaon district (plains)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Kopili is the largest south-bank tributary of the Brahmaputra in Assam, about 341 km long.
- Upstream, NEEPCO's 275 MW Kopili project uses the Khandong and Umrangso dams.
- An Asian Development Bank loan funds the project; in 2021 the Centre was to bear 77% of the cost and Assam 23%.
- Acid drainage from opencast coal mining in Meghalaya has left parts of the upper Kopili biologically dead.

PRELIMS TRAP The Kopili joins the Brahmaputra from the south bank; the Subansiri and Kameng join from the north bank.

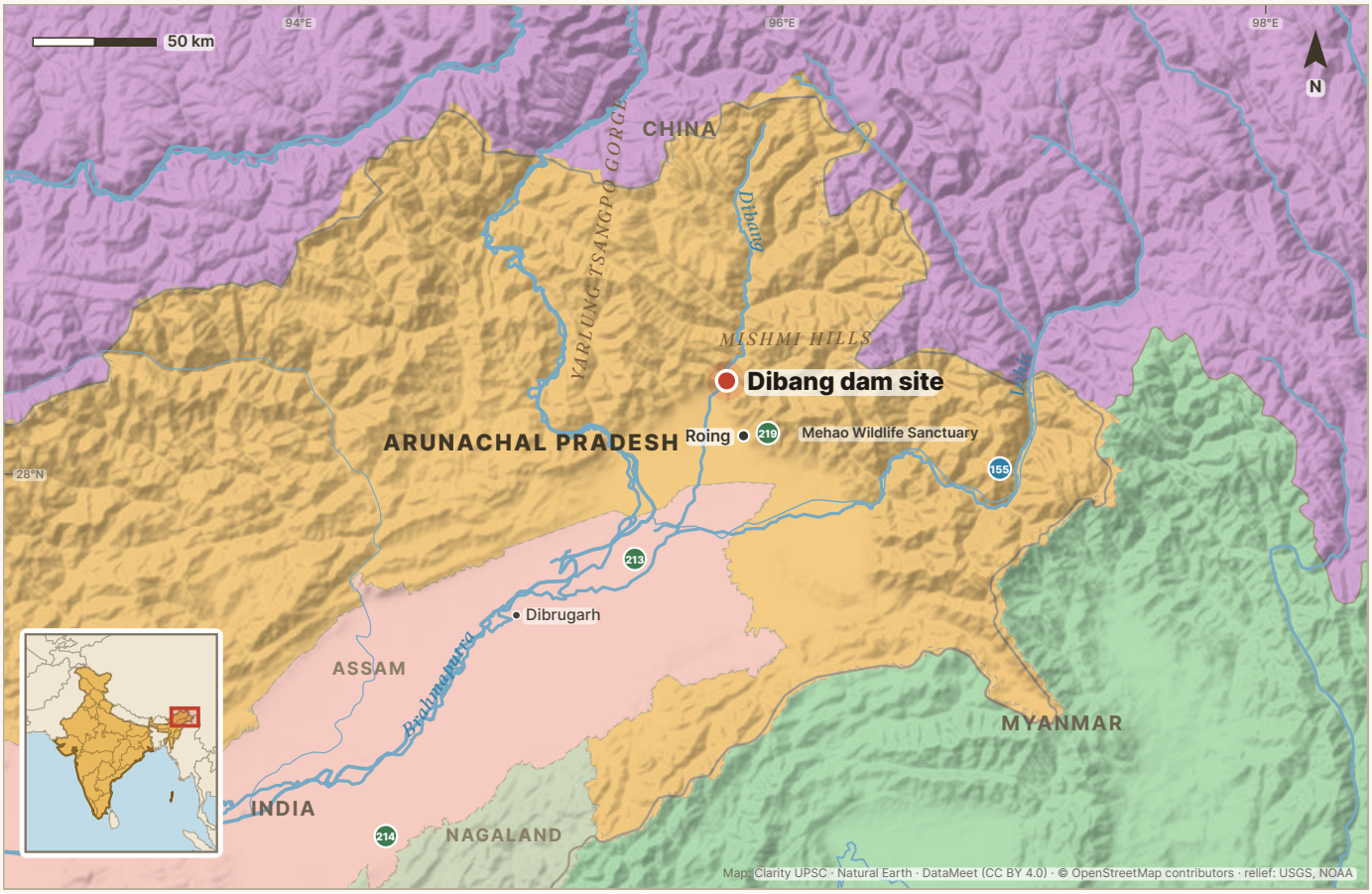
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Dam Feb 2026

154 Dibang Multipurpose Project

Dibang River near Munli, Lower Dibang Valley district, Arunachal Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

On 17 February 2026 NHPC completed the 'daylighting' of Diversion Tunnel-3 at the 2,880 MW Dibang Multipurpose Project, opening the tunnel from end to end. On 28 April 2026 contractor L&T broke through Diversion Tunnels 4 and 5. These tunnels will carry the Dibang River around the dam site during construction.

WHERE IT IS

The dam site lies on the Dibang River near Munli village in Lower Dibang Valley district, about 43 km from Roing. The Dibang rises near the Keya pass on the India–China border, crosses the Mishmi Hills and joins the Lohit near Sadiya in Assam.

SURROUNDED BY Mishmi Hills | Dibang Valley district (north) | Roing (south) | Assam plains near Sadiya

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A 278 m concrete gravity dam will feed 12 units of 240 MW, with a design energy of 11,223 million units a year.
- It is also designed to moderate monsoon floods downstream by up to 3,000 cumecs.
- The CCEA approved its investment on 27 February 2023 at ₹31,876.39 crore, with a nine-year construction period.
- The Dibang is about 195 km long; its tributaries include the Sisar, Mathun, Tangon and Ithun.

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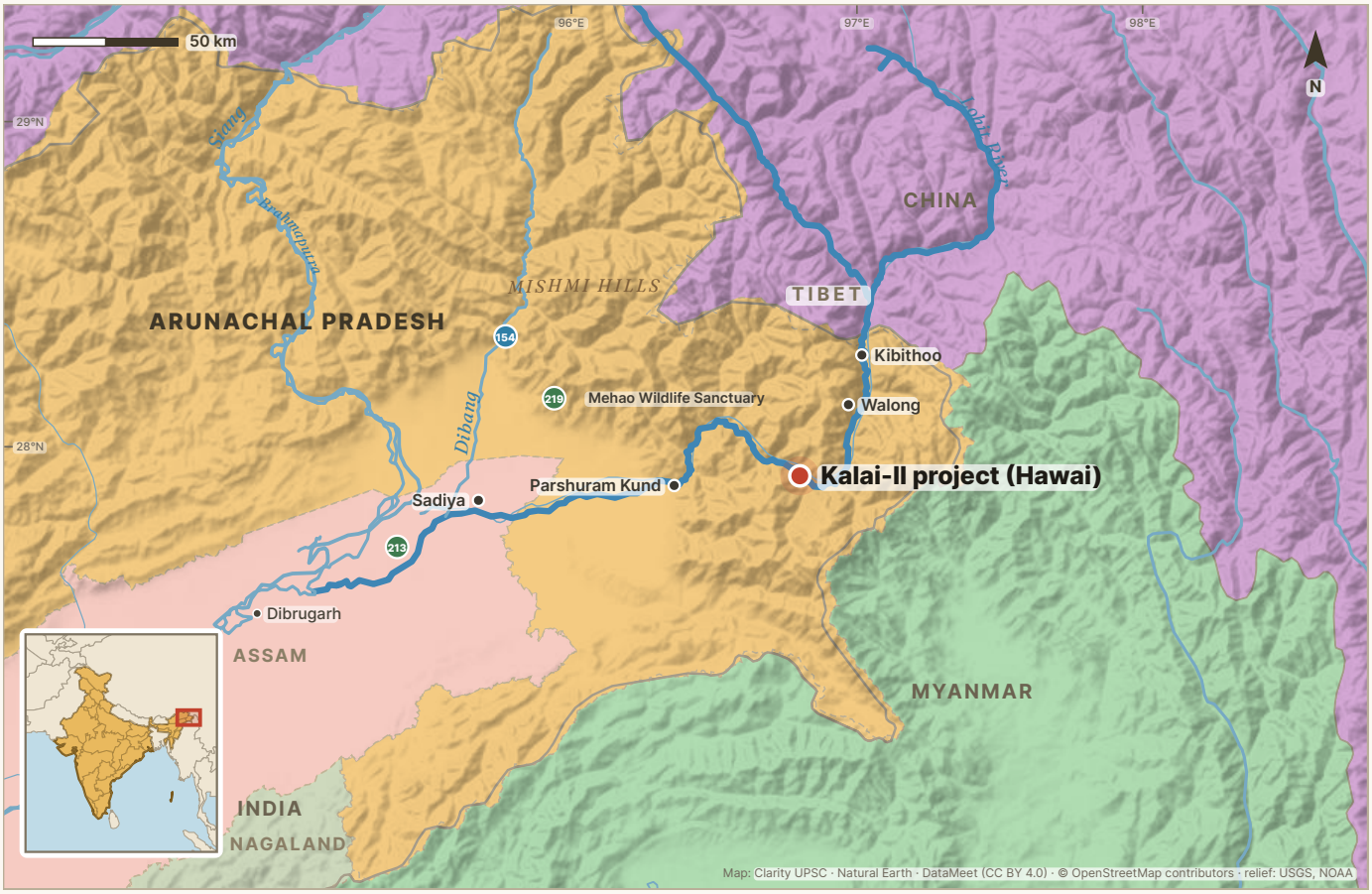
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155

Lohit River

River | Jan 2026 | Apr 2026

Tibet (China) to Anjaw and Lohit districts, Arunachal Pradesh, and Assam



WHY IN NEWS

In December 2025 an environment ministry expert committee recommended environmental clearance for the 1,200 MW Kalai-II hydroelectric project on the Lohit in Anjaw district. Conservationists objected because the Lohit valley is a habitat of the critically endangered white-bellied heron. In April 2026 the Union Cabinet approved ₹14,105.83 crore for the project, with a 78-month completion period.

WHERE IT IS

The Lohit rises in Tibet and enters Arunachal Pradesh near Kibithoo. In Anjaw district it passes Walong and the Kalai-II site near Hawai. It then cuts through the Mishmi Hills, approaches the plains around Parshuram Kund and joins the Dibang and Siang in eastern Assam to form the Brahmaputra's upper course.

SURROUNDED BY Tibet, China (north) | Myanmar (east) | Mishmi Hills | Assam plains (downstream)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- THDC India Ltd will build the project's concrete gravity dam and underground powerhouse, diverting 869.35 ha of semi-evergreen forest.
- The white-bellied heron is Critically Endangered and listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Anjaw district, headquartered at Hawai, borders Tibet to the north and Myanmar to the east.
- The 9.15-km Dhola–Sadiya bridge (Bhupen Hazarika Setu, opened 2017) crosses the Lohit in Assam's Tinsukia district.

PRELIMS TRAP The Lohit, Dibang and Siang join in eastern Assam to form the Brahmaputra; the Siang continues the Tsangpo from Tibet.

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Lake · Jan 2026

156 Sela Lake

Near Sela Pass, Tawang district, Arunachal Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

On 16 January 2026 two young tourists from Kerala drowned in the frozen Sela Lake in Arunachal Pradesh. One member of their group of seven slipped through the ice and got out; the two men who went in to help were pulled under. Officials had posted signs warning visitors not to walk on frozen surfaces.

WHERE IT IS

Sela Lake lies just north of Sela Pass (4,170 m), on the Tawang side of the Tawang–West Kameng district border. National Highway 13 crosses the pass and links Tawang with Dirang and Guwahati.

SURROUNDED BY Tawang district · West Kameng district · Sela Pass (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Sela Lake is one of about 101 lakes in the area held sacred in Tibetan Buddhism.
- The lake's outflow feeds the Nuranang River, a tributary of the Tawang River.
- The Sela Tunnel, inaugurated on 9 March 2024, gives Tawang a route that avoids the snowbound pass.

PRELIMS TRAP Sela Pass is in Arunachal Pradesh; Nathu La and Jelep La are passes in Sikkim.

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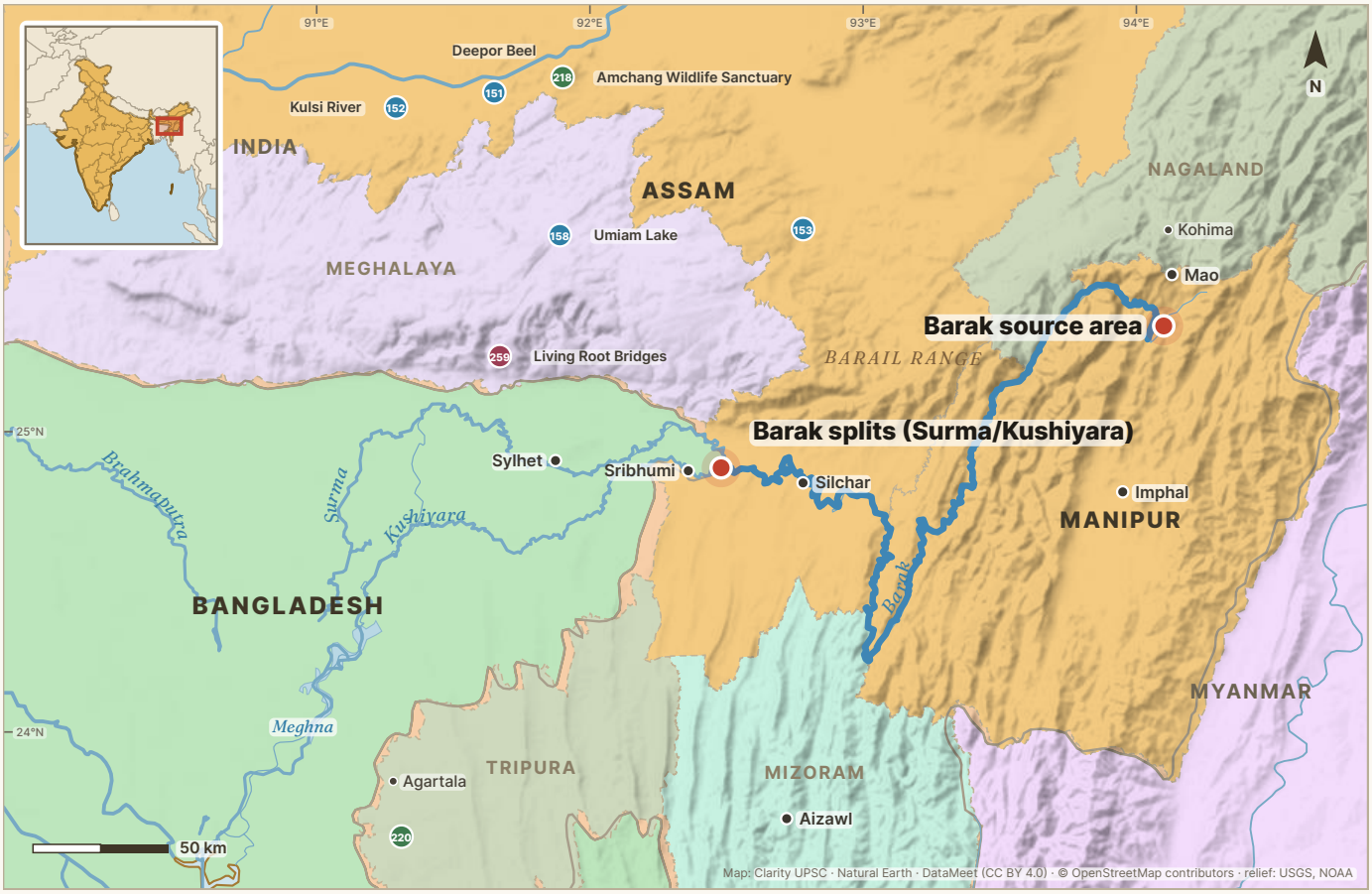
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River · Jan 2026

157 Barak River and the Kushiyara

Manipur and southern Assam (Cachar, Sribhumi); India–Bangladesh border



WHY IN NEWS

In early January 2026 Manipur's Senapati Forest Division held a community-led Participatory Rural Appraisal at Saranamai village in the Barak River catchment. The baseline was to shape a CAMPA-funded plan to restore degraded land across the watershed.

WHERE IT IS

The Barak rises in the Manipur hills south of Mao and enters Assam's Cachar plain. At the India–Bangladesh border it splits into the Surma (north-west) and the Kushiyara (south-west). The Kushiyara forms part of the boundary before both branches feed the Upper Meghna.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Manipur · Assam · Mizoram · Tripura · Meghalaya · Nagaland · Bangladesh (downstream)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The 121-km Lakhipur–Bhanga stretch of the Barak is National Waterway 16, linked to the Indo–Bangladesh Protocol routes.
- The Barak basin, the second largest in north-east India, is separated from the Brahmaputra basin by the Barail range.
- A September 2022 MoU lets India and Bangladesh each withdraw up to 153 cusecs from the Kushiyara between 1 November and 31 May.
- CAMPA funds come from payments for compensatory afforestation when forest land is diverted.

PRELIMS TRAP The 2022 Kushiyara MoU followed the 2019 Feni River MoU, so it was not India–Bangladesh's first water arrangement since the 1996 Ganga treaty.

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Reservoir · Apr 2026

158 Umiam Lake

Ri Bhoi district, Meghalaya, about 15 km north of Shillong



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 the Meghalaya government dropped Lumpongdeng Island in Umiam Lake from a planned five-star Taj resort project after protests, including a hunger strike of nearly two weeks. The resort will use the existing Umiam Orchid Lake Resort site of about 30 acres, and the island will stay out of commercial tourism.

WHERE IT IS

Umiam Lake, also called Bara Pani, is a reservoir in Ri Bhoi district about 15 km north of Shillong. The Umiam Dam, built in the early 1960s, holds back the Umiam River; the Wah Umkhrah and Wah Umshyrpi streams feed the lake.

SURROUNDED BY Ri Bhoi district · Shillong (south) · Guwahati–Shillong road · East Khasi Hills district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Assam State Electricity Board built the dam; its Stage I powerhouse, with four 9 MW units, began operating in 1965.
- Umiam Stage I was the first reservoir-storage hydroelectric project commissioned in north-east India.
- Traditional village heads (Synjuk Ki Rangbah Shnong) met government representatives before the decision.

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Lake · Jan 2026

159 Chilika Lake

Puri, Khordha and Ganjam districts, Odisha coast



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 Odisha moved to restore Chilika Lake, whose mouth to the sea has been silting up. On 12 January Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi chaired the Chilika Development Authority meeting, which adopted a five-year integrated plan. It includes excavating the lake's mouth and dredging feeder channels; IIT Madras had prepared a restoration roadmap.

WHERE IT IS

Chilika is a brackish lagoon on the Odisha coast, spread over Puri, Khordha and Ganjam districts. The Daya River flows into its northern end, and a channel links it to the Bay of Bengal. Its area ranges from about 900 sq km in summer to about 1,165 sq km in the monsoon.

SURROUNDED BY Bay of Bengal (east) · Puri district · Khordha district · Ganjam district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The plan dredges feeder channels at Balugaon, Magarmukha and Palur and adds fish landing centres.
- Chilika supports the endangered Irrawaddy dolphin and more than 225 bird species.
- About two lakh fisherfolk from over 130 villages depend on the lagoon.
- Chilika and Keoladeo became India's first Ramsar sites in 1981; Chilika won the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award in 2002.

PRELIMS TRAP Chilika is India's largest brackish-water lagoon; Pulicat, the second largest, lies on the Andhra Pradesh–Tamil Nadu coast.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



160 Futala Lake

Western Nagpur, Maharashtra

Lake · Feb 2026

In news: At a hearing on 3 February 2026 the National Green Tribunal directed the Nagpur Municipal Corporation to submit a cleaning and revival plan for Futala Lake. In March 2026 the state told its legislative council that a pipeline in Kashmiri Basti would stop sewage overflowing into the lake.

SURROUNDED BY Nagpur city · Ambazari Lake (south) · Vidarbha region

- The Bhonsle rulers of Nagpur built the lake about two centuries ago; it covers about 60 acres (24 ha).
- The state also reported heavier waterweed growth in Ambazari Lake and falling water quality in Nagpur's lakes; the NMC is seeking NEERI's help.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



161 Gangapur Dam

On the Godavari, just west of Nashik, Maharashtra

Dam · Jan 2026

In news: On 22 and 23 January 2026 the Indian Air Force's Surya Kiran aerobatic team flew nine Hawk Mk-132 jets over Gangapur Dam near Nashik. It was the team's first show in Nashik; the aircraft operated from Ozar airport, about 26 km away.

SURROUNDED BY Nashik city (east) · Trimbakeshwar (south-west) · Nashik district

- Gangapur is an earth-fill dam about 3.9 km long and 36.6 m high.
- Silt cut its storage, so the Kashyapi Dam was built upstream and opened in 2000.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

Lake · Apr 2026

162 Hussain Sagar

Between Hyderabad and Secunderabad, Telangana



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 a thick green algal bloom spread across Hussain Sagar as temperatures neared 40 °C, and a strong stench hung over Tank Bund and Necklace Road. The Buddha Purnima Project Authority raised microbial spraying to 30 tankers a day and considered hiring speedboats to break up the bloom.

WHERE IT IS

Hussain Sagar lies in the heart of the city and separates Hyderabad from Secunderabad. It was built across a tributary of the Musi and covers about 5.7 sq km. Tank Bund runs along one bank, and Necklace Road curves around another.

SURROUNDED BY Hyderabad · Secunderabad · Tank Bund · Necklace Road · Lumbini Park

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah built the lake in 1562; it is named after Hussain Shah Wali, who oversaw the work.
- Officials said the water also turned yellowish in February 2026, a change they see as temperatures rise at the start of summer.
- An 18-m monolithic Buddha statue, erected in 1992, stands on Gibraltar Rock in the middle of the lake.
- Sewage and effluents load it with nitrates and phosphates; summer heat and low inflow let algae bloom, and decaying algae use up the oxygen.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

River · Mar 2026

163 Musi River

Vikarabad, Hyderabad and Nalgonda, Telangana; tributary of the Krishna



WHY IN NEWS

On 23 March 2026 Telangana's Chief Minister offered to form a Cabinet sub-committee, led by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, to hear all parties on the Musi Riverfront Development Project. On 2 April the NGT dismissed a plea against the project as premature. In April its corporation planned to intercept sewage along a 34-km stretch.

WHERE IT IS

The Musi rises in the Ananthagiri Hills near Vikarabad and flows about 250 km east through Hyderabad, dividing the Old City from newer areas. It joins the Krishna at Vadapally, near Miryalaguda in Nalgonda district.

SURROUNDED BY

- Ananthagiri Hills (source)
- Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar
- Hyderabad
- Nalgonda district
- Krishna River (confluence)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A cloudburst on 28 September 1908 flooded Hyderabad and killed about 15,000 people.
- After the flood, M. Visvesvaraya's advice led to Osman Sagar (1920) on the Musi and Himayat Sagar (1927) on its tributary, the Esi.
- The sewage plan, for Bapu Ghat to Gowrelly, puts interception structures at nala mouths, trunk sewers on both banks and small decentralised treatment plants.
- Funding for the sewage works is sought under the National River Conservation Plan; a 50-metre buffer along the river had been fixed earlier.

PRELIMS TRAP Osman Sagar is on the Musi itself; Himayat Sagar is on its tributary, the Esi. Both reservoirs lie upstream, west of Hyderabad.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



164 Neknampur Lake (Ibrahim Bagh Cheruvu)

Manikonda–Neknampur area, western Hyderabad, Rangareddy district, Telangana

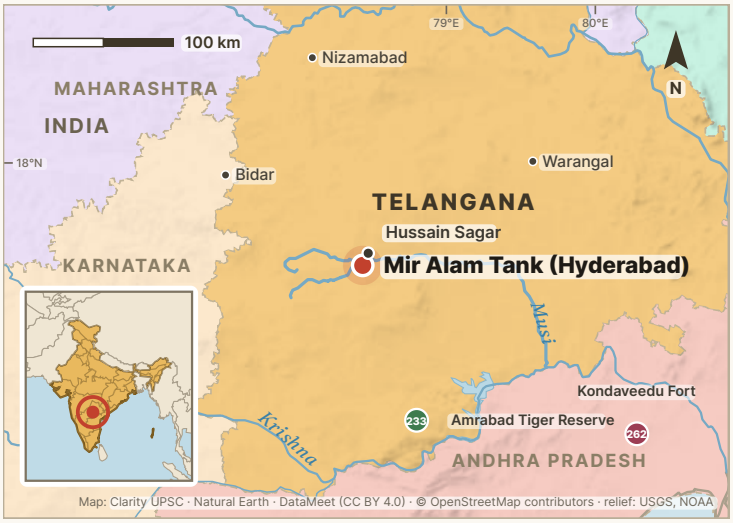
Lake | Jan 2026

In news: In April 2026 the managing director of the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board inspected the site of a proposed sewage treatment plant at Neknampur, under AMRUT 2.0. Sewage from Malkam Cheruvu is to be diverted to the plant, treated and released into Neknampur's Ibrahim Cheruvu.

SURROUNDED BY: Manikonda | Hyderabad city (east) | Osman Sagar (west) | Rangareddy district

- Restored from 2016 by the NGO Dhruvansh, it was among India's first lakes with floating wetlands, plants grown on rafts without soil.
- NITI Aayog's Compendium of Best Practices in Water Management 3.0 (2023) cited Neknampur as a model of lake restoration.
- The Neknampur plant is one of 39 sewage treatment plants proposed for Hyderabad under AMRUT 2.0.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



165 Mir Alam Tank

South of the Musi, beside Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, Telangana

Reservoir | Jan 2026

In news: On the night of 25 January 2026 Hyderabad's disaster-response agency HYDRAA rescued nine workers and engineers stranded on Mir Alam Tank. They had gone out to test soil for a proposed bridge across the tank. Their boat's engine failed, and dense water hyacinth blocked a first rescue attempt.

SURROUNDED BY: Nehru Zoological Park | Bahadurpura | Old City of Hyderabad | Musi River (north)

- Built in 1804–1806 under Diwan Mir Alam, its dam rests on 21 semicircular masonry arches about 1.5 km long.
- It was Hyderabad's main source of drinking water until Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar were built after the 1908 Musi flood.
- The state plans a 2.5 km cable bridge across the tank as part of a tourism project.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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166

Kolleru Lake

Lake · Mar 2026 · Apr 2026

Between the Krishna and Godavari deltas, Andhra Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 conservationist Bolisetty Satyanarayana wrote to the Prime Minister that satellite data showed Kolleru's open water shrinking from about 2.22 lakh acres in 1975 to nearly 94,000 acres. In April 2026 he alleged that more than 6,000 acres had been encroached in the previous two years.

WHERE IT IS

Kolleru is a large, shallow freshwater lake in Andhra Pradesh between the Krishna and Godavari deltas, spread across Eluru and Krishna districts. The Tammileru, Budameru and Ramileru drain into it, and the Upputeru carries its water to the Bay of Bengal.

SURROUNDED BY Godavari delta · Krishna delta · Eluru · Upputeru channel · Bay of Bengal

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Kolleru was notified a wildlife sanctuary in 1999 and became a Ramsar site on 19 August 2002.
- In 2006 'Operation Kolleru', following Supreme Court directions, cleared more than 43,000 acres of illegal fish ponds.
- Pelicans, painted storks and Asian openbills arrive along the Central Asian Flyway.
- Its storage reduces delta flooding; aquaculture bunds block inflow and add nutrients that cause eutrophication.

PRELIMS TRAP Kolleru's sanctuary (five-foot contour, about 308.55 sq km) and its Ramsar site (ten-foot contour, about 901 sq km) have different boundaries.

Read the full story
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Dam Feb 2026

167 Almatti Dam

Krishna River, on the Vijayapura–Bagalkot district boundary, northern Karnataka



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu wrote to Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil opposing Karnataka's plan to raise Almatti Dam's full reservoir level from 519.6 m to 524.256 m. He argued that higher storage would cut the water reaching downstream Andhra Pradesh.

WHERE IT IS

Almatti Dam stands across the Krishna in northern Karnataka, on the edge of Vijayapura and Bagalkot districts. It is the main storage of the Upper Krishna Project; water released after power generation flows to the Narayanpur reservoir downstream.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Maharashtra (upstream) · Telangana · Andhra Pradesh (downstream)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The second Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal, headed by Justice Brijesh Kumar, allowed the higher level in 2010; the Centre has not notified it.
- At 519 m the reservoir holds about 123 TMC; raising it to 524 m would take gross storage to nearly 200 TMC.
- Its powerhouse, run by KPCL, has 290 MW: five 55 MW units and one 15 MW unit.
- In August 2025 Maharashtra also objected, fearing backwater flooding in Sangli and Kolhapur.

PRELIMS TRAP Almatti Dam is officially the Lal Bahadur Shastri Dam (Krishna, Karnataka); Nagarjuna Sagar's left-bank canal is the Lal Bahadur Shastri Canal.

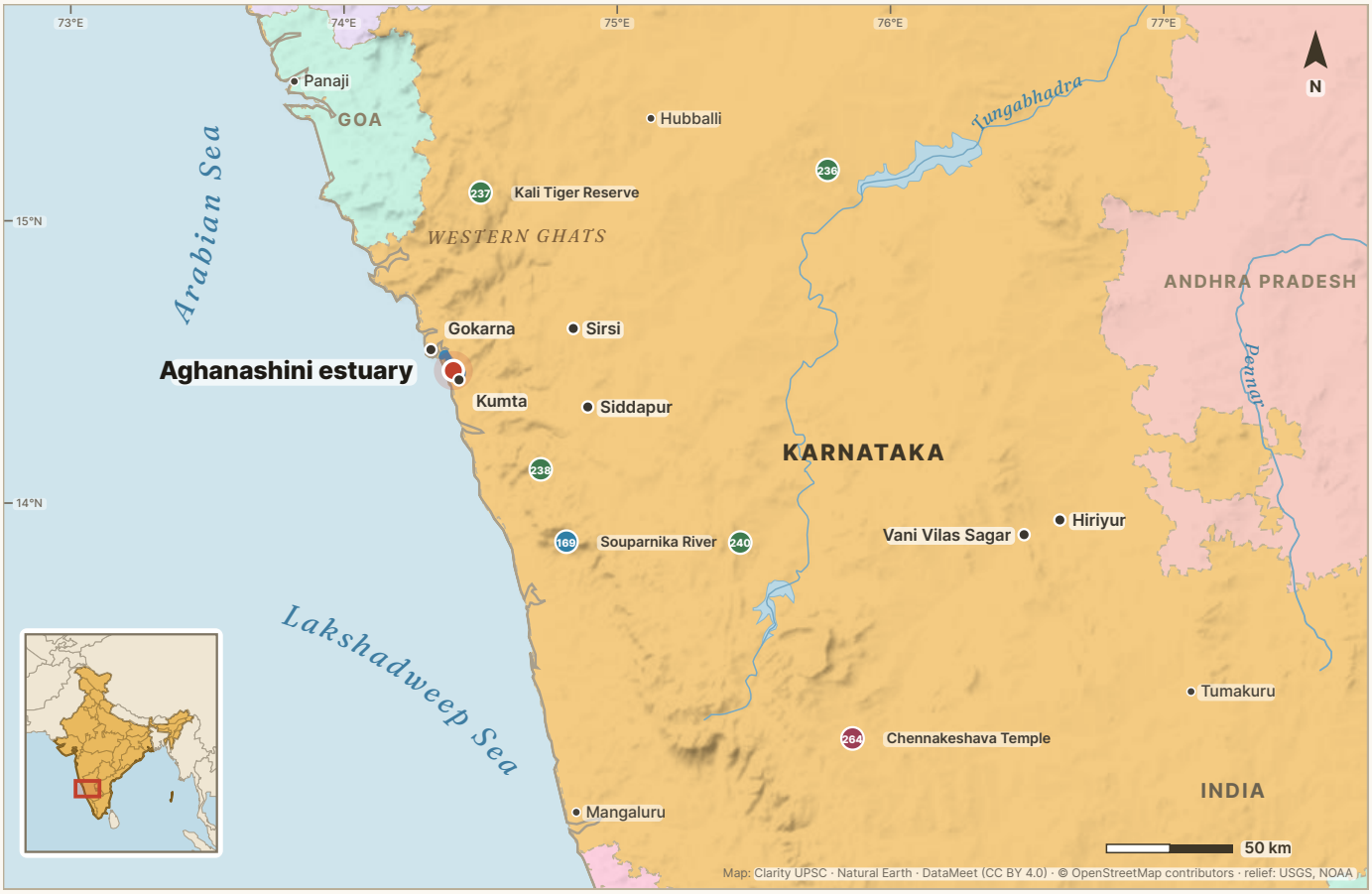
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Clarity UPSC

168 Aghanashini River

River · Mar 2026 · Apr 2026

Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka; Western Ghats to the Arabian Sea near Kumta



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 UNESCO, answering a February memorandum from Sirsi activist Ravindra Naik, asked the Centre to follow World Heritage norms on the proposed Aghanashini–Vedavathi link, which would pump 35 TMC ft of water east. From 30 March to 1 April volunteers surveyed wild Appemidi mango trees along 35 km of the river.

WHERE IT IS

The Aghanashini rises near Sirsi in Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka, and flows west through the Western Ghats for about 117 km. It enters the Arabian Sea through a wide estuary between Gokarna and Kumta.

SURROUNDED BY Sirsi · Siddapur · Kumta · Gokarna · Arabian Sea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is one of the few large undammed rivers of the Western Ghats; its estuary was added to India's Ramsar list in 2024.
- The link plans to carry the water about 194 km by canals and pipelines to Vani Vilas Sagar at Hiriyur, Chitradurga district.
- Karnataka's Biodiversity Board has recommended declaring the Aghanashini Appemidi mango cluster a biodiversity heritage site.
- A March 2026 IISc report proposed a GI tag for Kagga, a salt-tolerant rice grown in the estuary's 'gazni' fields.

PRELIMS TRAP The Vedavathi (Hagari) flows east into the Tungabhadra, in the Krishna basin; the Aghanashini flows west to the Arabian Sea.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



169 Souparnika River

Byndoor taluk, Udupi district, coastal Karnataka

River · Jan 2026

In news: A National Green Tribunal order reported in January 2026 directed the Udupi Deputy Commissioner and the Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Drainage Board to report how they would stop sewage entering the Souparnika at Kollur. Sewage from lodges and hotels near the Mookambika temple is blamed for years of pollution.

SURROUNDED BY Kollur · Western Ghats · Byndoor · Arabian Sea

- An underground sewerage scheme costing ₹19.97 crore was built at Kollur between 2015 and 2020, but the contamination continued.
- The NGT also asked the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board to identify violators and report the action taken against them.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



170 Idukki Dam (Idukki Hydroelectric Project)

Periyar River, Idukki district, Kerala

Dam · Feb 2026

In news: In February 2026 the Idukki hydroelectric project in Kerala completed 50 years of operation. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi dedicated it to the nation in February 1976. In March 2026 Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan launched its golden jubilee celebrations.

SURROUNDED BY Cheruthoni Dam · Kulamavu Dam · Moolamattom power station · Idukki district, Kerala

- A double-curvature arch dam about 169 m high, built with Canadian loans and grants under the Colombo Plan.
- Moolamattom's underground power station has six 130 MW Pelton-turbine units, 780 MW in all.
- In late April 2026 the reservoir held only 34% of its capacity, as summer inflow from diversion schemes had stopped.

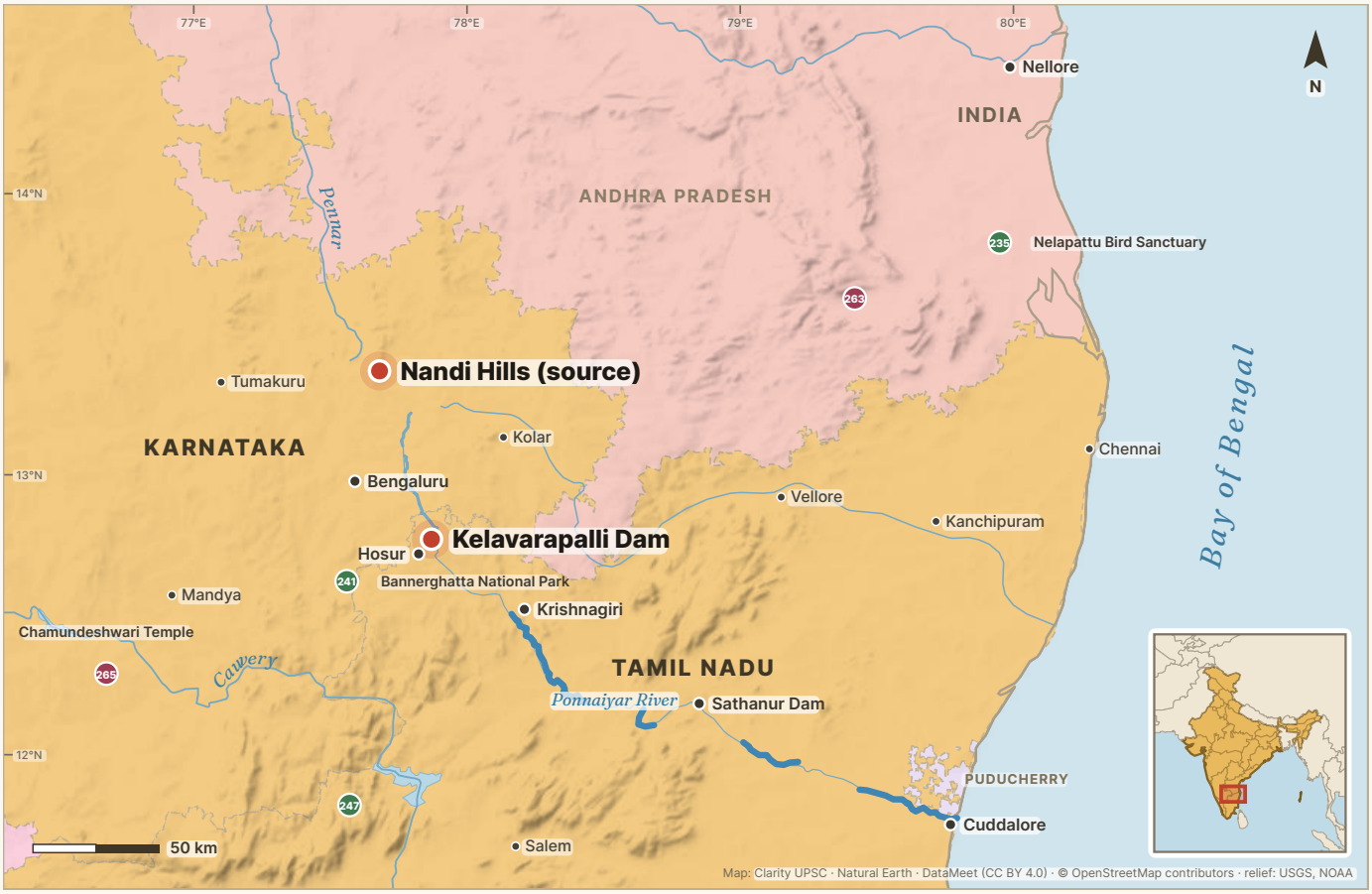
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Clarity UPSC

River · Feb 2026

171 Ponnaiyar (Thenpennai) River

Karnataka and Tamil Nadu; reaches the Bay of Bengal near Cuddalore



WHY IN NEWS

On 2 February 2026 the Supreme Court directed the Centre to constitute and notify, within one month, a water disputes tribunal for the Ponnaiyar dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Tamil Nadu's 2018 suit challenged Karnataka's check dams and diversion works on the river.

WHERE IT IS

The Ponnaiyar rises in the Nandi Hills of Chikkaballapur district, Karnataka, and flows south-east through Tamil Nadu past Hosur and Krishnagiri. It reaches the Bay of Bengal near Cuddalore. Its dams include Kelavarapalli, Krishnagiri and Sathanur.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Karnataka · Tamil Nadu

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Under Section 4 of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956, the Centre forms a tribunal when negotiations cannot settle a dispute.
- Court-ordered talks began in January 2024 and failed by November 2024; Tamil Nadu also objects to Bengaluru's sewage reaching the river.
- A negotiation committee proposed Karnataka release 15% of the daily average flow at Yargol dam on the Markandeya tributary; Tamil Nadu called it too little.
- In January 2026 Krishnagiri farmers reported chemical foam in water released into the river from the Kelavarapalli reservoir near Hosur.

PRELIMS TRAP The South Pennar (Ponnaiyar) reaches the sea near Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu; the North Pennar (Penneru) reaches it near Nellore in Andhra Pradesh. Both rise in the Nandi Hills.

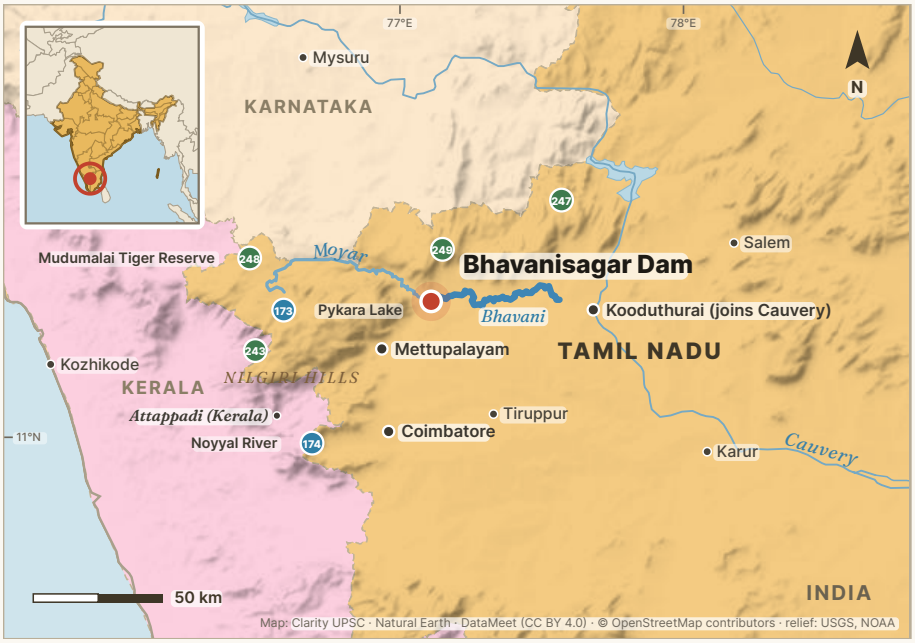
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Clarity UPSC

River Feb 2026

172 Bhavani River and Bhavanisagar Dam

Nilgiris to Erode district, Tamil Nadu (with a stretch in Kerala)



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 S. Basha, an RTI activist from Mettupalayam, petitioned the Prime Minister's Office over pollution of the Bhavani, which supplies drinking water to Coimbatore and Tiruppur. He alleged that untreated sewage and industrial effluents reached the river and sought a joint central–state inspection.

WHERE IT IS

The Bhavani rises in the Billimala range of the Nilgiri Hills, flows west into Kerala's Attappadi region and turns east into Tamil Nadu. Bhavanisagar Dam stores its water near Sathyamangalam in Erode district. The river joins the Cauvery at Kooduthurai in Bhavani town.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Tamil Nadu · Kerala · Karnataka

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- About 234 km long, it is a right-bank tributary of the Cauvery; the Moyar joins near Bhavanisagar reservoir, and the Siruvani supplies Coimbatore.
- The Lower Bhavani Project (Bhavanisagar Dam), begun in 1948, was among independent India's earliest large irrigation projects; the Kalingarayan anicut lies downstream.
- Water hyacinth (Pontederia crassipes, formerly Eichhornia crassipes) is a South American floating plant that thrives on sewage nutrients.

PRELIMS TRAP The Bhavani rises in Tamil Nadu, loops through Kerala and returns to join the Cauvery; the Kabini rises in Kerala's Wayanad and joins the Cauvery in Karnataka.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

Reservoir · Apr 2026

173 Pykara Lake

Pykara River, about 19 km from Ooty, Nilgiris district, Tamil Nadu



WHY IN NEWS

On 13 March 2026 the Madras High Court stayed motorised boating on Pykara Lake in the Nilgiris, citing harm to wildlife and water. The tourism corporation (TTDC) began a few battery-powered boats in April. On 24 April the court refused to lift the ban until soil and water test reports arrive.

WHERE IT IS

Pykara Lake is a reservoir on the Pykara River, about 19 km from Ooty near the Ooty–Gudalur road, Nilgiris district, Tamil Nadu. The river rises at Mukurthi peak, flows north and then turns west off the plateau.

SURROUNDED BY Mukurthi National Park · Ooty (Udhagamandalam) · Nilgiris district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Pykara joins the Moyar, which flows into the Bhavani, a tributary of the Cauvery.
- Pykara's hydroelectric station, first commissioned in October 1932, is among South India's oldest; its falls drop 55 m and 61 m.
- The court sought a study by SACON and ICAR-IISWC Ooty; lake samples went to NEERI for testing.
- TTDC plans to replace its 22 petrol boats with battery-operated ones.

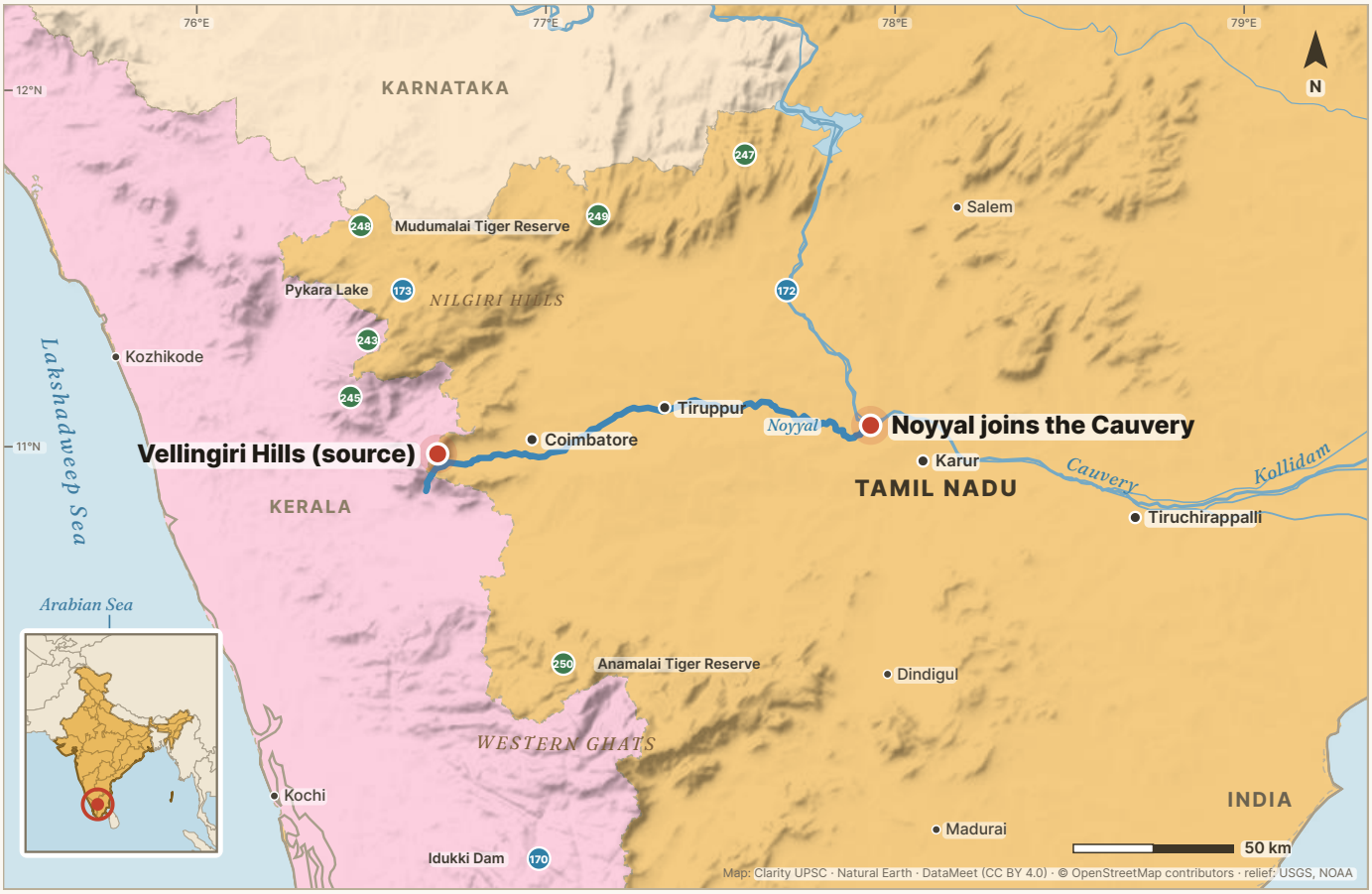
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Clarity UPSC

River · Jan 2026

174 Noyyal River

Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Erode and Karur districts, Tamil Nadu



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 the Noyyal Farmers' Protection Association asked Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation to stop dumping and burning household, medical and plastic waste on the river's banks. The commissioner ordered the waste removed and announced a 200-tonne solid-waste management park.

WHERE IT IS

The Noyyal rises in the Vellingiri Hills of the Western Ghats in Coimbatore district and flows east through Coimbatore and Tiruppur. It joins the Cauvery at Noyyal village in Karur district. Tiruppur, on its banks, is a hosiery and cotton-garment centre.

SURROUNDED BY Coimbatore · Tiruppur · Erode · Karur · Cauvery river

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Noyyal is a seasonal river; the Vellingiri Hills where it rises are part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.
- The Nallaru, which feeds Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary (a Ramsar site), is a Noyyal tributary.
- Tiruppur's textile units use zero liquid discharge (ZLD) systems that recover water by reverse osmosis and manage the leftover concentrate.
- Surfactants from detergents help river foam form and last; foam alone cannot reveal the source of pollution.

Read the full story
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INDIA

Mountains, passes, islands and coasts

15 places

175 Shaksgam Valley · Valley

176 Hanle Dark Sky Reserve · Dark sky reserve

177 Zojila Pass · Pass

178 Chatergala Pass · Pass

179 Shipki La · Pass

180 Lipulekh Pass · Pass

181 Deendayal Port (Kandla) · Port

182 Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata · Port

183 Sagar Island · Island

184 Vadhavan Port · Port

185 Gilbert Hill · Hill (basalt monolith)

186 Panaiyur fossil bed, Thoothukudi · Fossil site (coast)

187 Vaan Island · Island

188 Diglipur mud volcanoes (Jal Tikry) · Mud volcano

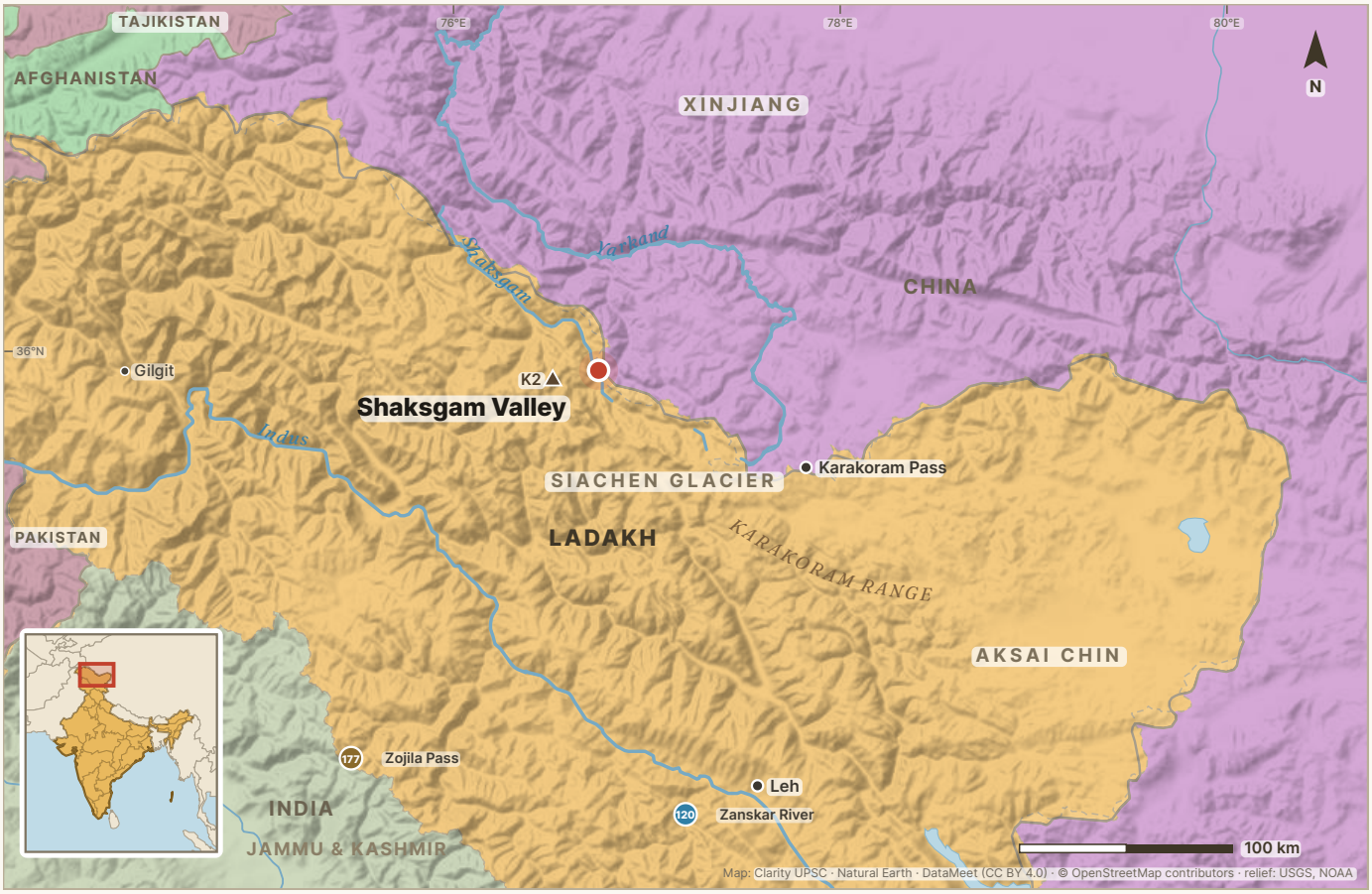
189 Car Nicobar · Island (air base)

Clarity UPSC

Valley · Jan 2026

175 Shaksgam Valley

North of the Karakoram and the Siachen Glacier, Ladakh; under Chinese occupation



WHY IN NEWS

On 9 January 2026 India's Ministry of External Affairs said the Shaksgam Valley is Indian territory and objected to China's construction there. On 12 January China's foreign ministry said the territory belongs to China. India's Army Chief also called the 1963 China–Pakistan agreement illegal.

WHERE IT IS

The Shaksgam Valley lies north of the main Karakoram range and the Siachen Glacier, along the Shaksgam River. It is part of Ladakh and has been under Chinese occupation since 1963. China's Xinjiang lies to its north.

SURROUNDED BY

- Xinjiang, China (north)
- Siachen Glacier (south)
- Gilgit-Baltistan, under Pakistani occupation (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Under a 1963 agreement, which India rejects as illegal and invalid, Pakistan ceded about 5,180 sq km of Indian territory, including the valley, to China.
- The Shaksgam River flows north-west into the Yarkand River in Xinjiang.
- India also told China it does not recognise the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor.

PRELIMS TRAP Pakistan handed the Shaksgam Valley to China in 1963; Aksai Chin, further east, has been under Chinese occupation since the 1950s.

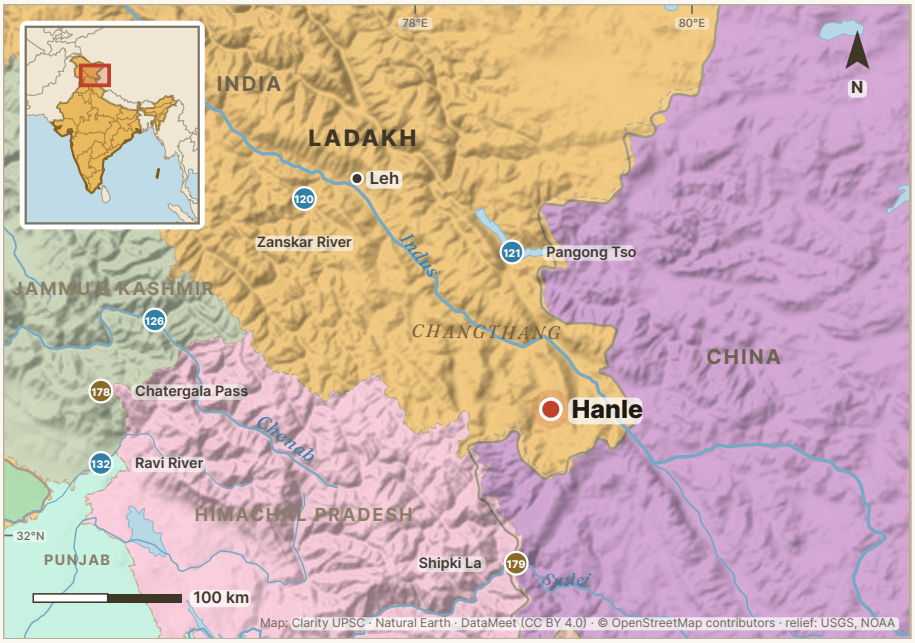
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Clarity UPSC

Dark sky reserve · Jan 2026

176 Hanle Dark Sky Reserve

Hanle, Changthang plateau, south-eastern Ladakh



WHY IN NEWS

On the nights of 19 and 20 January 2026 the all-sky camera of the Indian Astronomical Observatory at Hanle recorded a rare red aurora. A coronal mass ejection from an X-class solar flare on 18 January had set off a severe (G4) geomagnetic storm.

WHERE IT IS

Hanle lies on the Changthang plateau in south-eastern Ladakh, near the Line of Actual Control. The reserve covers about 1,073 sq km around Hanle village, within the Changthang Cold Desert Wildlife Sanctuary.

SURROUNDED BY

- Changthang Cold Desert Wildlife Sanctuary
- Hanle village and its hamlets
- Line of Actual Control (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- India's first dark sky reserve, set up in 2022; outdoor lighting is shielded and restricted to keep the skies dark.
- The Indian Institute of Astrophysics runs the observatory at about 4,500 m; its 2-m Himalayan Chandra Telescope saw first light in 2000.
- From such low latitudes only the aurora's highest part shows, where oxygen atoms more than 200 km up glow red.

Read the full story
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ON CLARITYUPSC.COM · DAILY QUIZ

Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

clarityupsc.com/daily-quiz

Clarity UPSC

Pass · Mar 2026

177

Zojila Pass

Between Sonamarg (Ganderbal district, Jammu & Kashmir) and Drass (Kargil district, Ladakh), on the Srinagar–Leh highway



WHY IN NEWS

On 27 March 2026 an avalanche at Zojila Pass hit vehicles on the Srinagar–Leh highway, killing seven people and injuring five. Earlier that month the Border Roads Organisation said the pass had closed for only four days during the winter.

WHERE IT IS

Zojila, at about 3,528 m, crosses the Great Himalayan range between Sonamarg in Kashmir's Ganderbal district and Drass in Ladakh's Kargil district. National Highway 1 crosses it from Srinagar to Kargil and Leh.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Jammu & Kashmir (Ganderbal district) · Ladakh (Kargil district)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- In November 1948 the Indian Army took tanks over Zojila in Operation Bison to recapture the pass from raiders.
- Ladakh's two main road links are the Srinagar–Kargil–Leh road over Zojila and the Manali–Leh road.
- A decade ago the pass stayed shut for nearly five months each winter; BRO's Project Vijayak now keeps the axis open.
- The Zojila Tunnel is being built beneath the pass to give Ladakh an all-weather road link.

PRELIMS TRAP Zojila links the Kashmir Valley with Drass in Ladakh; Rohtang Pass links Kullu with Lahaul in Himachal Pradesh.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

178 Chatergala Pass

Pass · Jan 2026

Between Bhaderwah (Doda district) and Bani (Kathua district), Jammu & Kashmir



WHY IN NEWS

Heavy snow ending around 23 January 2026 buried the Bhaderwah–Chatergala road, stranding 40 soldiers of 4 Rashtriya Rifles and 20 civilians. The Border Roads Organisation cleared about 38 km of road under five to six feet of snow. Everyone was evacuated safely by 26 January.

WHERE IT IS

Chatergala Pass, about 3,200 m (10,500 ft) high, lies in the Middle Himalaya of the Jammu region. It links Bhaderwah in the Neeru valley of Doda district with Bani and Basohli in Kathua district.

SURROUNDED BY

- Bhaderwah, Doda district (north)
- Bani, Kathua district (south)
- Basohli, Kathua district (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A 6.8 km road tunnel is planned under the pass to give Kathua and Doda an all-weather link.
- BRO's 118 Road Construction Company of 35 Border Roads Task Force, under Project Sampark, carried out the clearance.

Read the full story
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Repo rate	Retail inflation	GDP growth	Forex reserves
5.50%	6.09%	7.8%	$719.5 bn
▲ +25 bp	▲ +0.55 pp	▼ −0.8 pp	▲ +0.3%
RBI MPC · 7 Oct 2026	NSO · Oct 2026	NSO · Q1 2026-27	RBI · 6 Nov 2026

All 74 figures, the release calendar, and the Budget and Economic Survey numbers.

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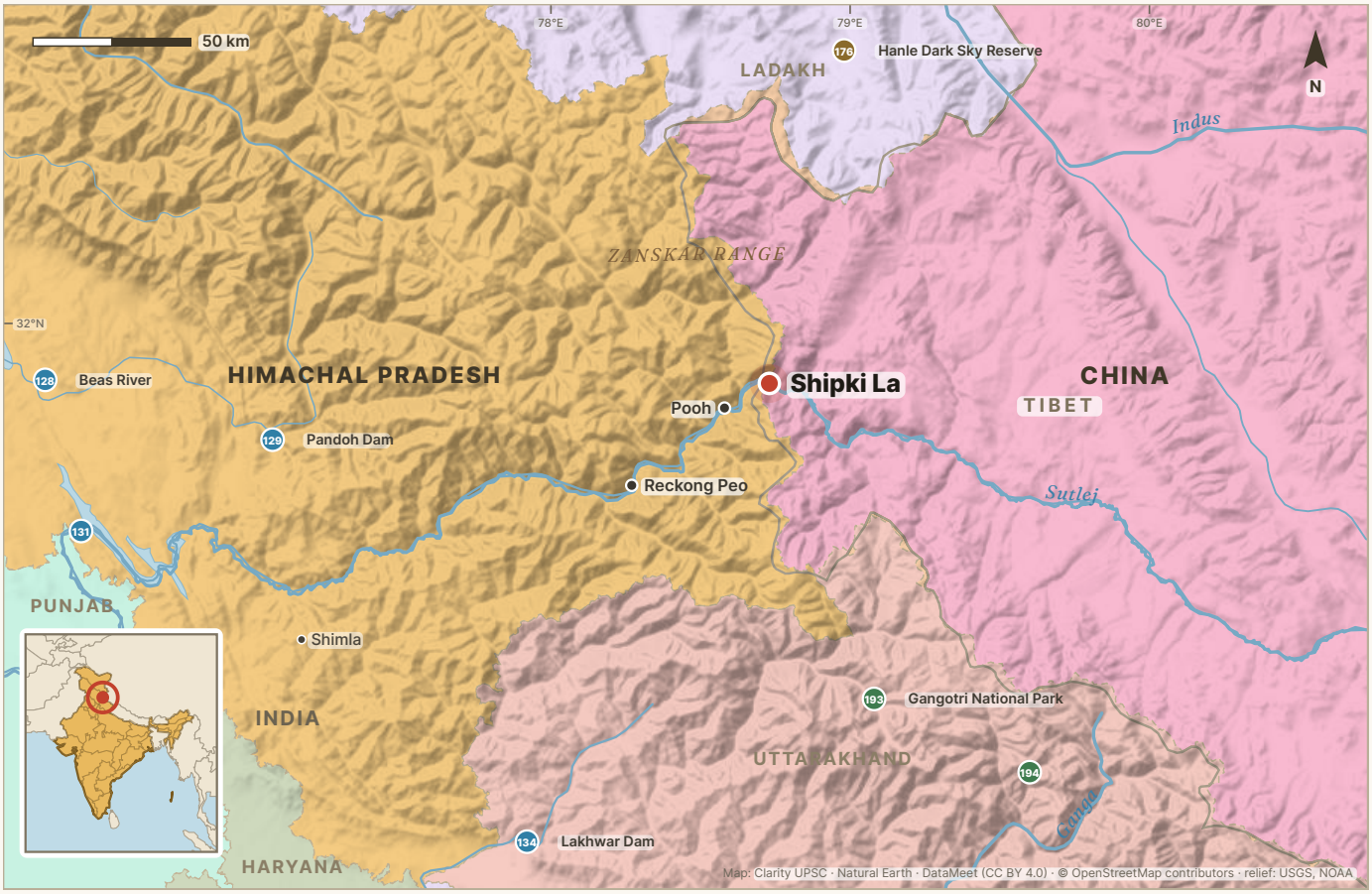
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Pass · Feb 2026

179 Shipki La

Kinnaur district, Himachal Pradesh, on the border with Tibet



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 Kinnaur's district administration prepared for India–China border trade through Shipki La to restart on 1 June 2026, with a trade mart at Namgya in Pooh subdivision. India and China had agreed in August 2025 to reopen trade through Shipki La, Lipulekh and Nathu La.

WHERE IT IS

Shipki La, at about 3,930 m, lies in Kinnaur district on Himachal Pradesh's border with Tibet. The Sutlej enters India near the pass, and National Highway 5, the old Hindustan–Tibet Road, climbs towards it.

SURROUNDED BY Kinnaur district, Himachal Pradesh · Tibet Autonomous Region, China (east) · Sutlej valley

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Shipki La, Lipulekh (Uttarakhand) and Nathu La (Sikkim) are the three designated India–China border trade points.
- The Sutlej rises near Lake Mansarovar in Tibet, where it is called the Langqên Zangbo, and enters India near Shipki La.
- Reo Purgyil (6,816 m), Himachal Pradesh's highest peak, rises just north of the pass, at the southern end of the Zanskar Range.

PRELIMS TRAP Shipki La (Himachal Pradesh) is a Sutlej-valley trade pass; Lipulekh (Uttarakhand) carries the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and is claimed by Nepal.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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180

Lipulekh Pass

Pass | Mar 2026 | Apr 2026

Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand, on the route to Tibet (China); claimed by Nepal



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 Pithoragarh officials said India–China border trade through Lipulekh would resume in June, after the Ministry of External Affairs cleared it; trade last ran in 2019. On 30 April the ministry announced the 2026 Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, with ten batches of 50 pilgrims crossing at Lipulekh.

WHERE IT IS

Lipulekh is a Himalayan pass above 5,000 metres on the route from Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district into Tibet, administered by China. The Indian approach runs through Kumaon and the upper Kali valley past Dharchula. Taklakot (Purang) is the market on the Tibetan side. India administers the area; Nepal claims it.

SURROUNDED BY Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand (India) | Tibet (China) | Nepal (across the Kali)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Lipulekh trade stopped after the 1962 India–China war and reopened as regulated border trade in 1992; the pandemic caused another break.
- India and China agreed in August 2025 to reopen border trade through Lipulekh, Shipki La and Nathu La.
- Citing the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli, Nepal claims Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura; it added them to its official map by a 2020 constitutional amendment.

PRELIMS TRAP Lipulekh lies in the Kali valley and Limpiyadhura in the Kuti valley; they are separate places in Nepal's claim, not two names for one pass.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

Port | Mar 2026 | Apr 2026

181 Deendayal Port (Kandla)

Kandla Creek, Gulf of Kutch, Kutch district, Gujarat



WHY IN NEWS

Deendayal Port handled 160.11 million tonnes of cargo in 2025–26, the most among India's major ports, overtaking Paradip; the totals were announced around National Maritime Day, 5 April 2026. In early April it also ran India's first shore-to-ship methanol bunkering trial, verified by DNV.

WHERE IT IS

The port lies on Kandla Creek near the head of the Gulf of Kutch in Kutch district, next to Gandhidham. Its oil terminal at Vadinar lies across the gulf on the southern shore.

SURROUNDED BY Gulf of Kutch | Gandhidham | Kutch district | Vadinar (south shore)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- India's major ports together handled a record 915.17 million tonnes in 2025–26, up about 7%.
- Kandla was built in the 1950s to serve western India after Partition took Karachi; it was renamed Deendayal Port in 2017.
- DNV rated Kandla Level 6 on the IAPH Port Readiness scale for methanol bunkering; partners included Indian Oil and Stolt Tankers.
- The port plans about 500,000 tonnes a year of e-methanol by 2028–29 and has begun a 150-tonne-per-day plant.

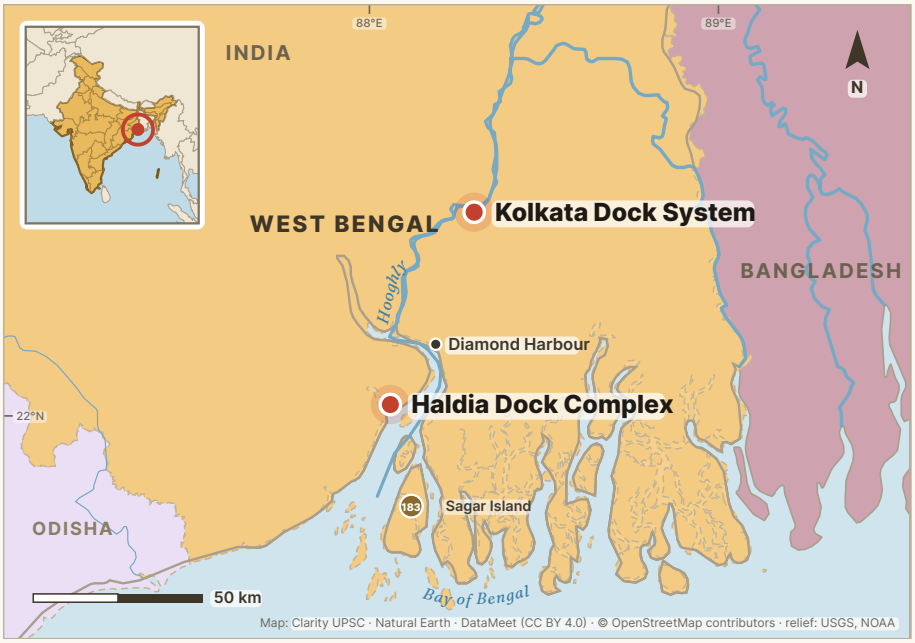
PRELIMS TRAP Deendayal (Kandla) is a government major port; Mundra, on the same Gulf of Kutch, is a privately run Adani port.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Port · Mar 2026

182 Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata

Hooghly River, Kolkata, West Bengal (Kolkata Dock System and Haldia Dock Complex)



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata, began a ₹117.5-crore renovation of the 1966 bascule bridge in its Kolkata Dock System. The bridge opens to let ships pass between Kidderpore Docks I and II. The Ports Ministry granted ₹40 crore under the Sagarmala scheme; completion is due by May 2027.

WHERE IT IS

The port lies on the Hooghly, the Ganga's main distributary in West Bengal, far upstream from the Bay of Bengal. Its Kolkata Dock System is in the city, at Kidderpore and Garden Reach; its Haldia Dock Complex lies downstream.

SURROUNDED BY Hooghly River · Kidderpore · Garden Reach · Haldia Dock Complex (downstream)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is India's only riverine major port and its oldest operating port; the Kolkata port trust dates from 1870.
- The double-leaf rolling bridge, built by Austria's Waagner-Biro, links Garden Reach–Metiabruz with the rest of the city.
- Kidderpore Dock I opened in 1892 and Dock II in 1902.

PRELIMS TRAP Haldia Dock Complex is part of Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata, India's only riverine major port.

Read the full story
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Island · Jan 2026

183 Sagar Island

Mouth of the Hooghly, South 24 Parganas district, West Bengal



WHY IN NEWS

On 5 January 2026 West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee laid the foundation stone of the Gangasagar Setu at Sagar Island. The 4.8-km, ₹1,670-crore bridge over the Muriganga will link Kakdwip on the mainland with Kachuberia on the island. The Gangasagar Mela began on 8 January.

WHERE IT IS

Sagar Island lies in the Ganga delta, about 100 km south of Kolkata, where the Hooghly enters the Bay of Bengal. It forms the Sagar block of South 24 Parganas district. The Muriganga channel separates it from Kakdwip on the mainland.

SURROUNDED BY Bay of Bengal (south) · Hooghly River (west) · Muriganga channel (east) · Kakdwip

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is West Bengal's largest island; the 2011 Census counted 212,037 people.
- The Gangasagar Mela, at Makar Sankranti, is held at the island's southern tip near the Kapil Muni Ashram, where the Hooghly meets the sea.
- Larsen & Toubro is to build the four-lane bridge in about two years; ferries now cross from Harwood Point near Kakdwip to Kachuberia.
- The state expected more than one crore pilgrims at the 2026 mela.

Read the full story
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184

Vadhavan Port

Port · Jan 2026

Near Dahanu, Palghar district, Maharashtra, on the Arabian Sea coast



WHY IN NEWS

On 19 January 2026 thousands of fisherfolk, Adivasis and farmers marched to the Palghar Collectorate to demand cancellation of the planned Vadhavan port. They also opposed a proposed airport, the Murbe port and a textile park, and said the impact assessments were flawed. Officials said the demands would be examined.

WHERE IT IS

Vadhavan lies on the Arabian Sea coast near Dahanu, at the northern edge of Palghar district, about 150 km north of Jawaharlal Nehru Port. Gujarat's Valsad district and Daman lie a short way to the north.

SURROUNDED BY

- Arabian Sea (west)
- Dahanu taluka, Palghar district
- Valsad district, Gujarat (north)
- Daman (north)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (74%) and the Maharashtra Maritime Board (26%) are developing the greenfield port as a joint venture on a landlord model.
- A natural depth of about 20 m lies within 10 km of the coast, so the largest container ships can call with little dredging.
- The plan reclaims about 1,448 hectares of sea and builds about 10.14 km of breakwater.
- A 1991 notification declared Dahanu taluka ecologically fragile; the Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority permitted the port in July 2023.

PRELIMS TRAP Vadhavan is a new major port in Palghar, Maharashtra; Vadinar is Deendayal (Kandla) Port's oil terminal on the Gulf of Kutch in Gujarat.

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185 Gilbert Hill

Andheri, suburban Mumbai, Maharashtra

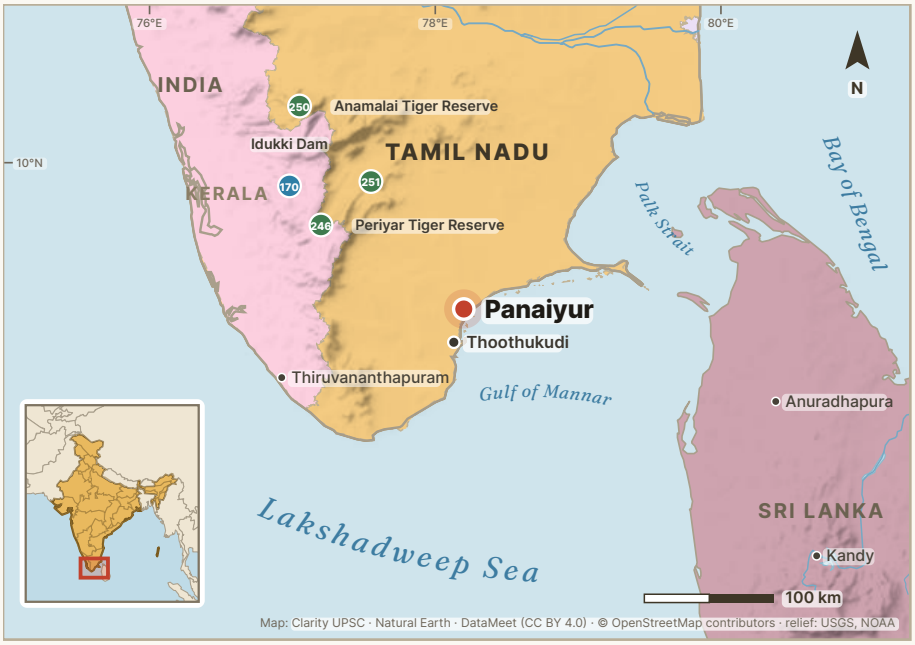
Hill (basalt monolith) **Feb 2026**

In news: In February 2026 industrialist Anand Mahindra posted about Gilbert Hill in Mumbai and asked how it could draw more visitors. His post called it one of only three such volcanic columns in the world, and the rock drew fresh public attention.

SURROUNDED BY Andheri · Jogeshwari · Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport · Mumbai Suburban district

- It is a column of black basalt formed about 66 million years ago, when Deccan Traps lava spread across western and central India.
- Geologists compare its vertical basalt columns with Devils Tower in Wyoming and Devils Postpile in California, USA.
- Similar columns at nearby Jogeshwari were quarried away. The BMC made Gilbert Hill a Grade II heritage site in 2007.

Read the full story
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186 Panaiyur fossil bed, Thoothukudi

Panaiyur, Kulathur South panchayat, about 25 km north of Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu

Fossil site (coast) **Apr 2026**

In news: On 27 April 2026 Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced a Zoological Survey of India assessment confirming a Holocene fossil bed at Panaiyur in Thoothukudi district. ZSI's report to the district collector dated the marine shells to about 8,000–12,000 years ago.

SURROUNDED BY Thoothukudi district · Gulf of Mannar coast

- ZSI scientists surveyed the site on 5–10 January 2026 and collected 104 mollusc specimens, mainly bivalves and gastropods.
- The bed formed during the Holocene marine transgression, when the rising post-glacial sea flooded the coastal plain.
- The Holocene epoch began about 11,700 years ago, at the end of the last glacial period.

Read the full story
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Island · Feb 2026

187 Vaan Island

Gulf of Mannar, off Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 an assessment by the Tamil Nadu Coastal Restoration Mission, the Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Foundation and IIT Madras valued a decade of reef restoration around Vaan Island at ₹61.67 crore in benefits, more than twice its inflation-adjusted cost. The island has regrown from 1.53 ha to over 2.3 ha.

WHERE IT IS

Vaan Island is a small uninhabited coral island off Thoothukudi in the Gulf of Mannar, south-eastern Tamil Nadu. It is one of 21 islands in the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park, between India and Sri Lanka.

SURROUNDED BY Gulf of Mannar · Thoothukudi coast · Kariyachalli Island

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The island shrank by 92%, from about 20 ha in 1969 to 1.53 ha in 2015, through coral mining, sea-level rise and reef damage.
- From 2015, 10,600 artificial reef modules were placed around it; each now carries about 81 coral colonies on average.
- Reef-fish density rose eight-fold, from 106 to 875 per hectare; coastal protection made up ₹28.57 crore, about 46% of the benefits.
- Tamil Nadu has begun a ₹50-crore reef project to save Kariyachalli Island on the same 'Vaan model'.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

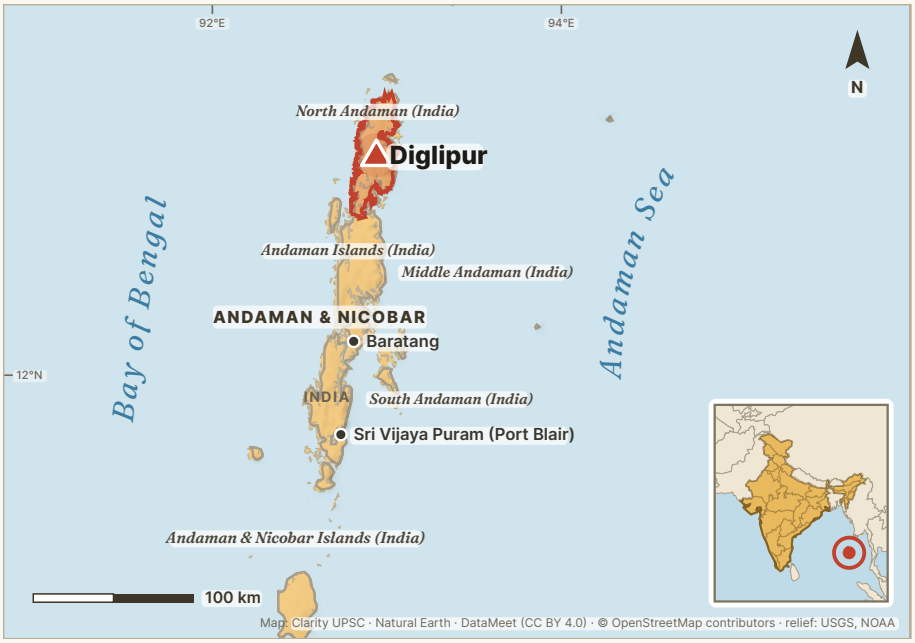
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188

Diglipur mud volcanoes (Jal Tikry)

Shyam Nagar, Diglipur tehsil, North Andaman Island

Mud volcano | Feb 2026



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 a mud volcano at Jal Tikry (Jol Tekri) in Shyam Nagar, Diglipur, North Andaman, erupted with a loud rumble and flowing mud. Police and the Forest Department cordoned off the site; no injuries were reported. A local representative said it was the first eruption since 2004.

WHERE IT IS

The site lies in the Shyam Nagar forest near Hathi Level, about 20 km from Diglipur, the largest town of North Andaman Island. Diglipur is about 300 km north of Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair); Saddle Peak, the islands' highest point, rises nearby.

SURROUNDED BY Diglipur | Saddle Peak | Aerial Bay | Andaman Sea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Mud volcanoes erupt cool mud, water and gas, mainly methane, instead of lava.
- In April 2026 BSIP Lucknow began studying Baratang's active mud volcano and Diglipur's mud volcanoes for clues to past climate and methane release.
- Baratang's mud volcano, in Middle Andaman, erupted in October 2025.

PRELIMS TRAP Baratang and Diglipur have mud volcanoes; Barren Island in the Andaman Sea is India's only active lava volcano.

Read the full story
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Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 | POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True | ✗ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

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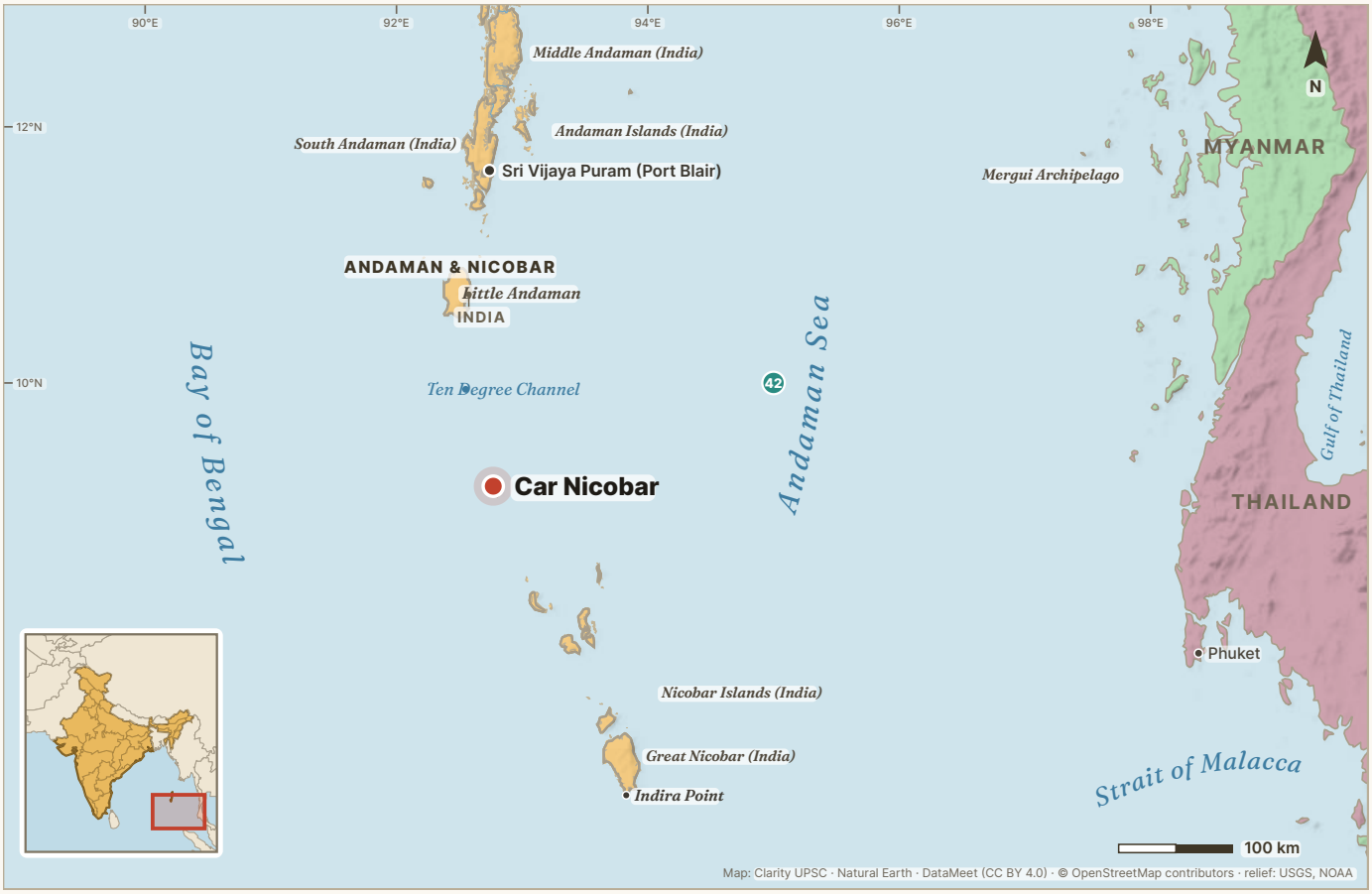
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189

Car Nicobar

Northernmost of the Nicobar Islands, Bay of Bengal

Island (air base) Jan 2026



WHY IN NEWS

On 2 January 2026 Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan inaugurated the resurfaced and upgraded runway at the Indian Air Force base on Car Nicobar. The upgrade expands apron areas and strengthens India's reach over the approaches to the Malacca Strait.

WHERE IT IS

Car Nicobar is the northernmost of the Nicobar Islands, about 260 km south of Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair). The Ten Degree Channel separates it from Little Andaman to the north; the Andaman Sea lies to the east.

SURROUNDED BY Ten Degree Channel · Little Andaman (north) · Bay of Bengal · Andaman Sea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The island covers about 127 sq km; it had 17,841 people in 2011 and serves as the Nicobar district headquarters.
- The base belongs to the Andaman and Nicobar Command, India's only tri-service command, and hosts C-130J transport aircraft.
- The December 2004 tsunami devastated the base, killing 122 air warriors and family members.
- The Japanese built the first airstrip here during their 1942–45 occupation.

PRELIMS TRAP Car Nicobar is the northernmost Nicobar island; Great Nicobar, ending at Indira Point, is the southernmost.

Read the full story
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INDIA

Protected areas

62 places

190 Col. Sher Jung National Park (Simbalbara) · National Park

191 Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

192 Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

193 Gangotri National Park · National Park

194 Valley of Flowers National Park · National Park

195 Rajaji National Park · National Park (Tiger Reserve)

196 Pilibhit Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

197 Dudhwa Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

198 Nahargarh Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

199 Dholpur–Karauli Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

200 Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

201 National Chambal Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

202 Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

203 Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

204 Ratapani Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

205 Satpura Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

206 Kanha Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

207 Achanakmar Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

208 Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

209 Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

210 Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

211 Indravati Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

212 Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

213 Dibru-Saikhowa National Park · National Park

214 Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

215 Kaziranga National Park · National Park

216 Laokhowa and Burachapori Wildlife Sanctuaries · Wildlife Sanctuary

217 Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

218 Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

219 Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

220 Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

221 Similipal Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

222 Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

223 Kapilash Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

224 Bhitarkanika National Park · National Park

225 Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

226 Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

227 Bor Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

228 Dnyanganga Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

229 Tadoba–Andhari Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

230 Sahyadri Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

231 Kawal Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

232 Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

233 Amrabad Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

234 Nagarjunasagar–Srisailam Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

235 Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary · Bird Sanctuary

236 Kappatagudda Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

237 Kali Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

238 Sharavathi Lion-Tailed Macaque Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

239 Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

240 Shettihalli Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

241 Bannerghatta National Park · National Park

242 Aralam Butterfly Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

243 Karimpuzha Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

244 Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

245 Silent Valley National Park · National Park

246 Periyar Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

247 Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

248 Mudumalai Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

249 Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

250 Anamalai Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

251 Srivilliputhur–Megamalai Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

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190

Col. Sher Jung National Park (Simbalbara)

National Park | Apr 2026

Paonta valley, Sirmaur district, Himachal Pradesh, on the Haryana border



WHY IN NEWS

On 16 April 2026 the Himachal Pradesh High Court quashed the Union environment ministry's January 2022 notification of an eco-sensitive zone around Col. Sher Jung National Park. It held that the surveys, land-use inventory and consultations required by the 2011 guidelines were skipped. Three gram panchayats had challenged it.

WHERE IT IS

The park lies in the Paonta valley of Sirmaur district, in the Shivalik foothills on Himachal Pradesh's border with Haryana. Haryana's Kalesar National Park and Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary adjoin it.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Himachal Pradesh (Sirmaur) | Haryana (Kalesar National Park) | Uttarakhand (across the Yamuna, east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Declared Simbalbara Wildlife Sanctuary in 1958 (19.03 sq km); upgraded to a national park of about 27.88 sq km in 2010.
- Named after Colonel Sher Jung of Nahan, a freedom fighter and hunter-turned-conservationist; sal forests dominate the park.
- Eco-sensitive zones are notified by the Union environment ministry under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

PRELIMS TRAP Col. Sher Jung (Simbalbara) National Park is in Himachal Pradesh's Sirmaur district; Kalesar National Park next to it is in Haryana's Yamunanagar district.

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Wildlife Sanctuary | Feb 2026

191 Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary

Shivalik foothills, Chandigarh (bordering Punjab and Haryana)



WHY IN NEWS

On 28 February 2026 the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wild Life deferred a proposal linked to Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary until Punjab finalises the sanctuary's eco-sensitive zone on its side.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary covers the Shivalik foothills north-east of Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh, including much of the lake's catchment. Chandigarh administers it, and its boundary touches Punjab and Haryana.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Punjab | Haryana

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Chandigarh declared the sanctuary in March 1998; it covers about 26 sq km of wooded and scrub-covered Shivalik foothills.
- Eco-sensitive zones are final in Chandigarh (2.0–2.75 km) and Haryana (1.0–2.035 km); Punjab proposed 100 m in 2025, below a court-ordered 1 km minimum.
- The November 2025 survey recorded 16 mammal and 132 bird species, up from 14 and 67 in 2021.
- Afforestation and soil conservation in its hills began to stop silt filling Sukhna Lake, created in 1958.

PRELIMS TRAP Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary (the hilly catchment, declared 1998) and Sukhna Wetland (the lake, a Ramsar site) are separate designations.

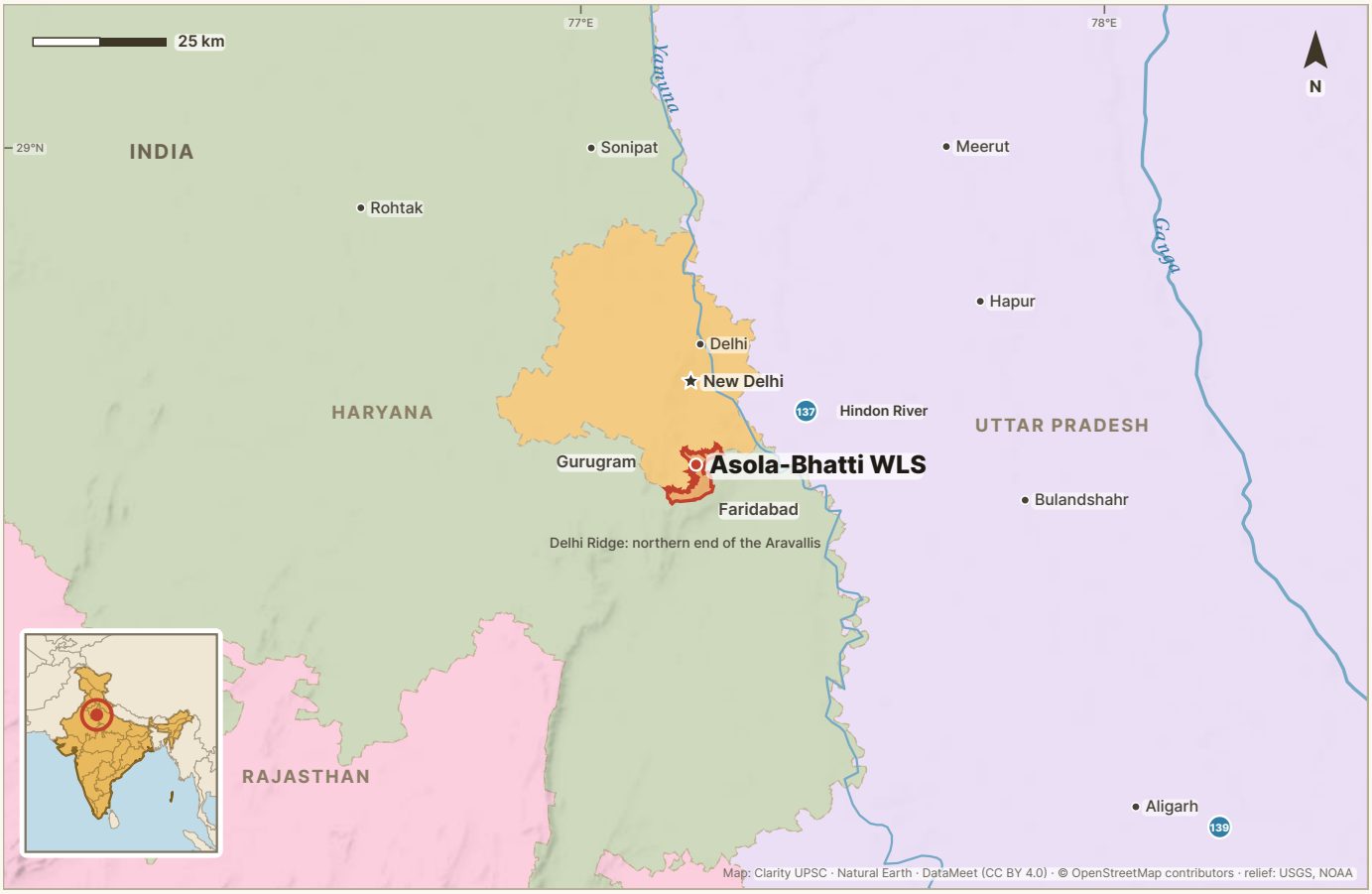
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Wildlife Sanctuary · Jan 2026

192 Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary

Southern Delhi Ridge, on the Delhi–Haryana boundary



WHY IN NEWS

On 14 January 2026 Delhi's environment minister told the Assembly that more than 6,000 monkeys had been moved to Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary from 2021 to 2025. Civic bodies catch the macaques in residential and commercial areas; a 2024 Delhi High Court order directed them to relocate monkeys there.

WHERE IT IS

Asola-Bhatti protects part of the southern Delhi Ridge, near the Delhi–Haryana boundary. The Delhi Ridge is the northern continuation of the Aravalli landscape. Rocky ridges, scrub, wooded patches and old excavations make an uneven, varied terrain.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Delhi · Haryana

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Asola was notified in 1986 and Bhatti added in 1991. The 2024–35 management plan counts 19.73 sq km as notified sanctuary within a managed reserve of about 32 sq km; 32.71 sq km is the figure usually quoted.
- The rhesus macaque lost its protected status under the Wildlife (Protection) Act when the law was amended in 2022.
- Over 23,000 monkeys had been moved there before February 2021; nearly 30,000 macaques have been rehabilitated there in all.
- Lantana-dominated and sewage habitats had fewer bird species than abandoned mines and deep lakes, so the study favours keeping varied habitats over planting every patch.

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National Park · Apr 2026

193 Gangotri National Park

Uttarkashi district, Uttarakhand; upper Bhagirathi catchment



WHY IN NEWS

Gangotri National Park reopened to visitors on 1 April 2026 after its annual winter closure from 30 November to 31 March. Officials unlocked the Kankhu barrier on the Gaumukh trek and the gates to Kedartal and Gartang Gali; snow still covered the Gaumukh and Kedartal routes. The park drew 29,162 visitors in 2025.

WHERE IT IS

The park covers the upper catchment of the Bhagirathi in Uttarkashi district, Uttarakhand. Its north-eastern boundary runs along the international border with China (Tibet). Gaumukh, the snout of the Gangotri Glacier where the Bhagirathi rises, lies inside the park.

SURROUNDED BY

China (Tibet), north-east · Gangotri town · Harsil · Uttarkashi district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Established in 1989; officials estimate that about 35 snow leopards live in the park.
- Nelang Valley, near the China border, is called 'Mini Ladakh'; Gartang Gali, a cliff-side wooden trail on an old Tibet trade route, reopened in 2021.
- Daily entries on the Gaumukh–Tapovan trek are capped at 150 visitors.

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▲ +25 bp	▲ +0.55 pp	▼ −0.8 pp	▲ +0.3%
RBI MPC · 7 Oct 2026	NSO · Oct 2026	NSO · Q1 2026-27	RBI · 6 Nov 2026

All 74 figures, the release calendar, and the Budget and Economic Survey numbers.

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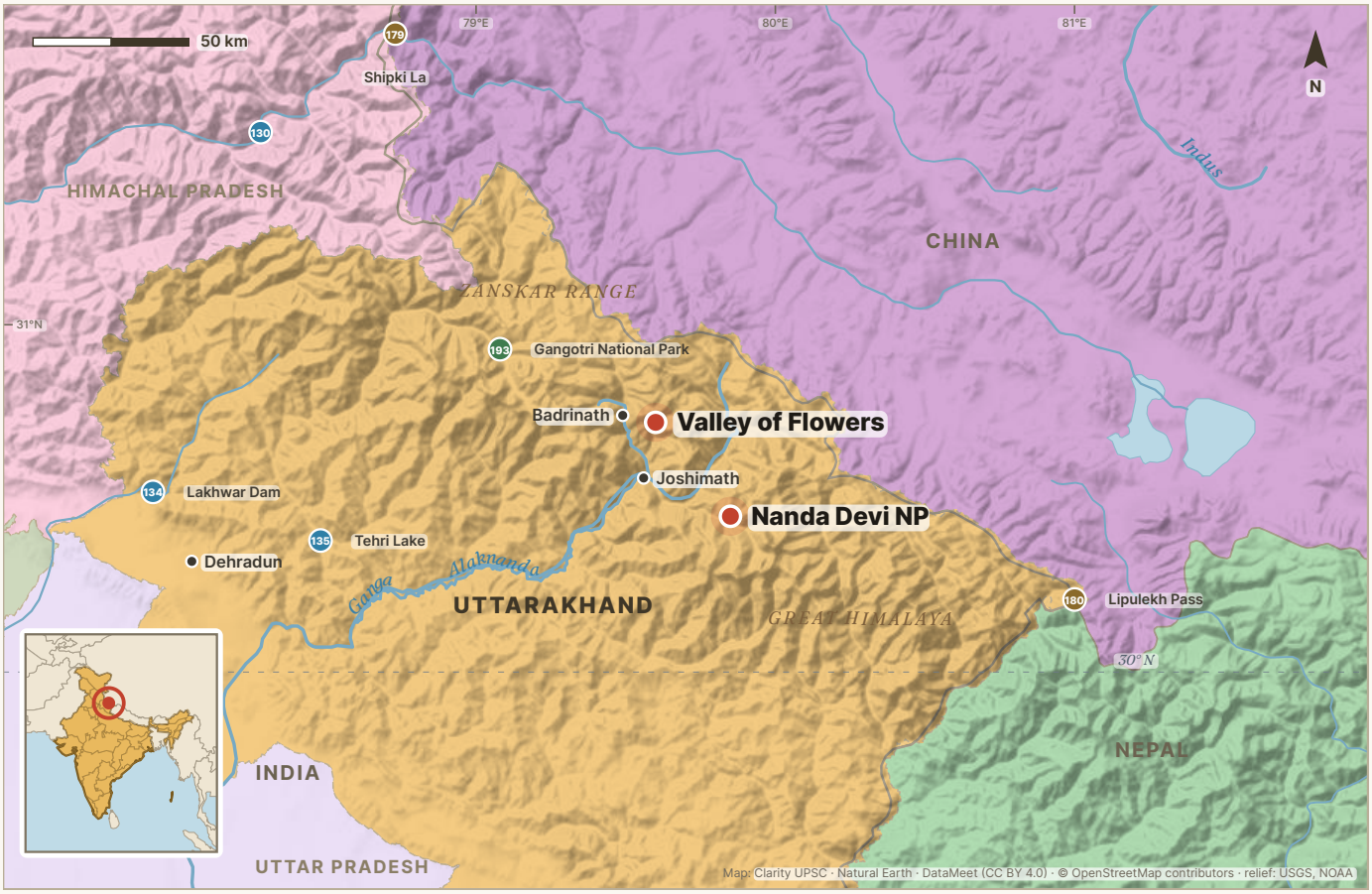
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Clarity UPSC

National Park · Jan 2026

194 Valley of Flowers National Park

Chamoli district, Uttarakhand; Garhwal Himalaya



WHY IN NEWS

On 9 January 2026 a forest fire broke out on slopes of the Govindghat range, about 7 km by air from the Valley of Flowers National Park. It burned for about six days; the Indian Air Force sent an Mi-17 V5 helicopter to Joshimath, and officials said the park and Hemkund Sahib were safe.

WHERE IT IS

The Valley of Flowers lies in the Pushpawati valley of the Garhwal Himalaya in Chamoli district, Uttarakhand. The Pushpawati joins the Lakshman Ganga near Ghangaria to form the Bhyundar Ganga, which meets the Alaknanda at Govindghat.

SURROUNDED BY Nanda Devi National Park · Hemkund valley · Ghangaria · Govindghat

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- British mountaineer Frank Smythe made the valley famous after reaching it in 1931; it became a national park of about 87.5 sq km in 1982.
- With Nanda Devi National Park it forms a core zone of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, which covers about 6,407 sq km.
- It is known for endemic alpine flora where the Zanskar and Great Himalayan ranges meet; the wider landscape holds snow leopard and blue sheep.
- Eco-sensitive zones are notified under section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; a draft for this park appeared in November 2015.

PRELIMS TRAP UNESCO inscribed Nanda Devi National Park in 1988; the Valley of Flowers was added as an extension in 2005.

Read the full story
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195

Rajaji National Park

National Park (Tiger Reserve) | Feb 2026

Haridwar, Dehradun and Pauri Garhwal districts, Uttarakhand; Shivalik hills



WHY IN NEWS

On 12 February 2026 the Supreme Court allowed paving of the 11.5 km Laldhang–Chillarkhal road in Uttarakhand, which serves 18 remote villages, but barred commercial vehicles. A 4.5 km stretch, from Chamaria bend to Siggadi Sot, is the only working wildlife corridor between the Rajaji and Corbett tiger reserves.

WHERE IT IS

Rajaji National Park lies in the Shivalik hills around Haridwar, Rishikesh and Dehradun. The Ganga divides it into a western part (Rajaji and Motichur) and an eastern part (Chilla). The Laldhang–Chillarkhal road runs south-east of it through the foothills towards Kotdwar.

SURROUNDED BY Haridwar | Rishikesh | Dehradun | Kotdwar and Corbett Tiger Reserve (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Formed in 1983 by merging the Rajaji, Motichur and Chilla sanctuaries; it became a tiger reserve in 2015.
- Uttarakhand said paving would shorten the Kotdwar–Haridwar route by 65 km; commercial traffic must use roads through Uttar Pradesh.
- The Supreme Court stayed work in January 2023 over missing tiger-authority and wildlife-board clearances; the National Board for Wildlife approved it in August 2025.
- The state has proposed a 400 m elevated stretch to let animals cross beneath the road.

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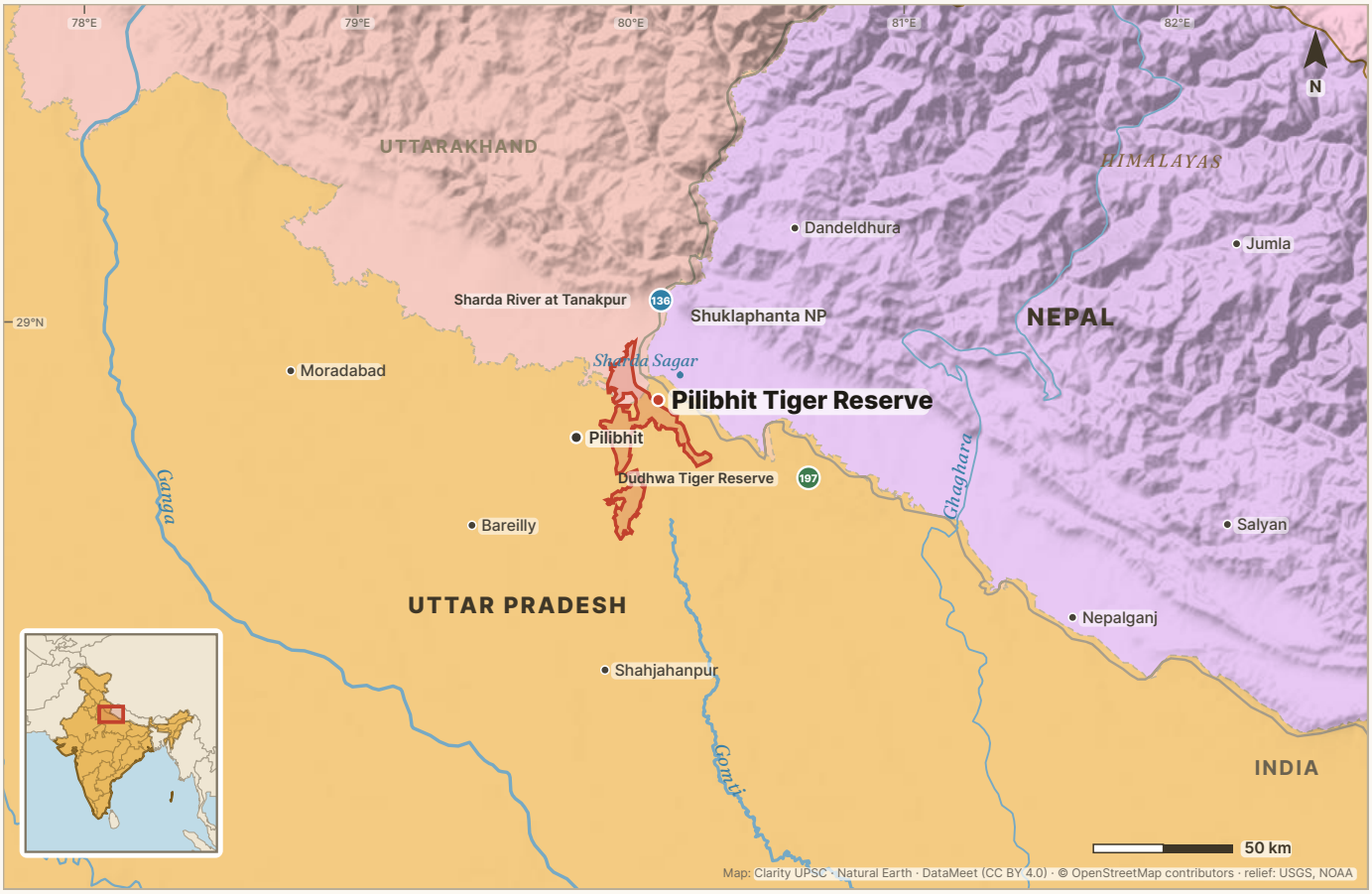
Clarity UPSC

Tiger Reserve · Feb 2026

196

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve

Terai of northern Uttar Pradesh, on the Nepal border



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 the Environment Ministry issued a draft eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) notification for Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, covering 230 villages. On 28 February 2026 an adult male tiger was found dead in the reserve's Mala range, its 27th tiger death since 2012; canine distemper was suspected.

WHERE IT IS

Pilibhit lies in northern Uttar Pradesh's Terai, along the Himalayan foothill belt and upper Gangetic plain, beside Nepal. Sal forest, tall grassland and wetlands form its habitat, with the Sharda Sagar reservoir in its setting. Corridors link it to Kishanpur, Dudhwa and Nandhaur, and to Nepal's Shuklaphanta.

SURROUNDED BY

- Nepal (north)
- Uttarakhand (Nandhaur, north-west)
- Shahjahanpur district (south)
- Kishanpur–Dudhwa landscape (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- NTCA lists about 730.25 sq km: a 602.80 sq km core and a 127.45 sq km buffer. The Gomti rises nearby, at Gomat Taal near Madhotanda in Pilibhit district.
- Pilibhit's forests were notified as a wildlife sanctuary on 28 February 2014 and declared a tiger reserve on 9 June 2014.
- The draft ESZ extends 0 km towards Uttarakhand and Nepal, 1 km towards Shahjahanpur district and 2 km within Pilibhit district.
- Canine distemper is a viral disease of carnivores spread by feral dogs or jackals; officials planned to vaccinate village dogs if tests confirmed it.

PRELIMS TRAP Pilibhit's Nepal link is Shuklaphanta, through Lagga-Bagga; Bihar's Valmiki links instead with Nepal's Chitwan.

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Tiger Reserve | Feb 2026 | Mar 2026

197 Dudhwa Tiger Reserve

Lakhimpur Kheri and Bahraich districts, Uttar Pradesh, on the Nepal border



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 the Environment Ministry issued a draft eco-sensitive zone for Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, extending 1 km beyond its boundary and covering 178 villages. In March 2026 two tigers killed Rajeshwari, a 30-year-old female one-horned rhinoceros, in the Sonaripur range.

WHERE IT IS

Dudhwa Tiger Reserve lies in the Terai of northern Uttar Pradesh along the Nepal border. It joins Dudhwa National Park with the Kishanpur and Katerniaghat sanctuaries, and connects with Nepal's Shuklaphanta and Bardia protected areas.

SURROUNDED BY Nepal (north)

Shuklaphanta National Park (Nepal) | Bardia National Park (Nepal) | Sharda River

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Rhinos were reintroduced in 1984 with seven founders from Assam and Nepal, kept in South Sonaripur's fenced rehabilitation area.
- Uttar Pradesh is one of only three Indian states with wild greater one-horned rhinoceros.
- Protection began around Sonaripur in 1958 for swamp deer; Dudhwa became a national park in 1977 and joined Project Tiger in 1987–88.
- The draft eco-sensitive zone covers the whole buffer; a 10-member committee under the Lucknow divisional commissioner would oversee activities in it.

PRELIMS TRAP Dudhwa National Park is one part of the larger Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, which also includes the Kishanpur and Katerniaghat sanctuaries.

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Wildlife Sanctuary | Apr 2026

198 Nahargarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Aravalli hills on the northern edge of Jaipur, Rajasthan



WHY IN NEWS

On 27 April 2026 the Rajasthan High Court set aside the National Board for Wildlife standing committee's 2024 refusal of wildlife clearance to Taj Amber, a hotel about 97 m from the Nahargarh sanctuary boundary at Amer. Justice Sameer Jain held it was an existing unit with approvals predating the cut-off dates.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary covers the Aravalli ridges that rise above Jaipur's north side, between the old walled city and Amer. Nahargarh Fort stands on its southern edge; Amer and Jaigarh forts lie to the north-east.

SURROUNDED BY Jaipur city (south) | Amer (north-east) | Aravalli Range

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh built Nahargarh Fort mainly in 1734 as a retreat on the ridge above Jaipur.
- Walls link Nahargarh with Jaigarh, the fort above the old Kachwaha capital of Amer.
- The NBWL standing committee had rejected clearance on 28 February 2024; the court called the rejection arbitrary and non-speaking.
- The sanctuary was notified on 22 September 1980 and covers about 50 sq km of Aravalli hill forest; Nahargarh Biological Park is part of it.

PRELIMS TRAP Amber Fort is one of the six UNESCO 'Hill Forts of Rajasthan'; Nahargarh and Jaigarh, on the same ridge, are not on that list.

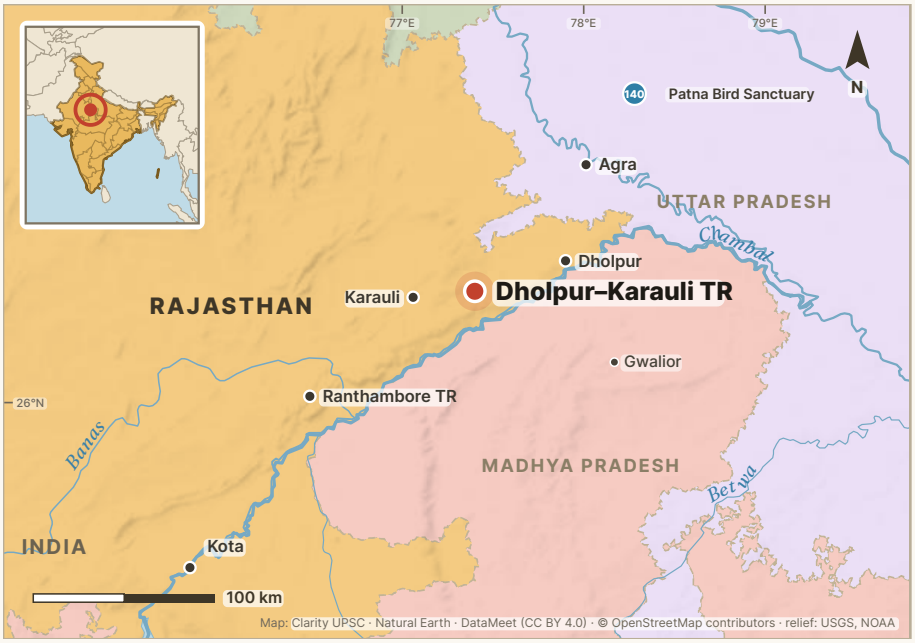
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Tiger Reserve · Feb 2026

199 Dholpur–Karauli Tiger Reserve

Dholpur and Karauli districts, eastern Rajasthan



WHY IN NEWS

On 3 February 2026 Rajasthan's forest minister Sanjay Sharma told the Assembly that villagers in the Karauli tiger reserve would not be displaced without consent. Voluntary relocation from the Dholpur–Karauli critical tiger habitat had not begun. He said ex-gratia for deaths in human–wildlife conflict would double to ₹10 lakh.

WHERE IT IS

The reserve covers forest and ravine country in Dholpur and Karauli districts of eastern Rajasthan, north-east of Ranthambore. The Chambal River, to its south and east, separates this part of Rajasthan from Madhya Pradesh.

NEIGHBOURING STATES

Madhya Pradesh · Uttar Pradesh

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- NTCA approved it in August 2023 as Rajasthan's fifth tiger reserve and India's 54th.
- Rajasthan's other tiger reserves are Ranthambore, Sariska, Mukundra Hills and Ramgarh Vishdhari.
- Any future voluntary relocation will follow NTCA guidelines of 2002, 2008 and July 2025, the minister said.

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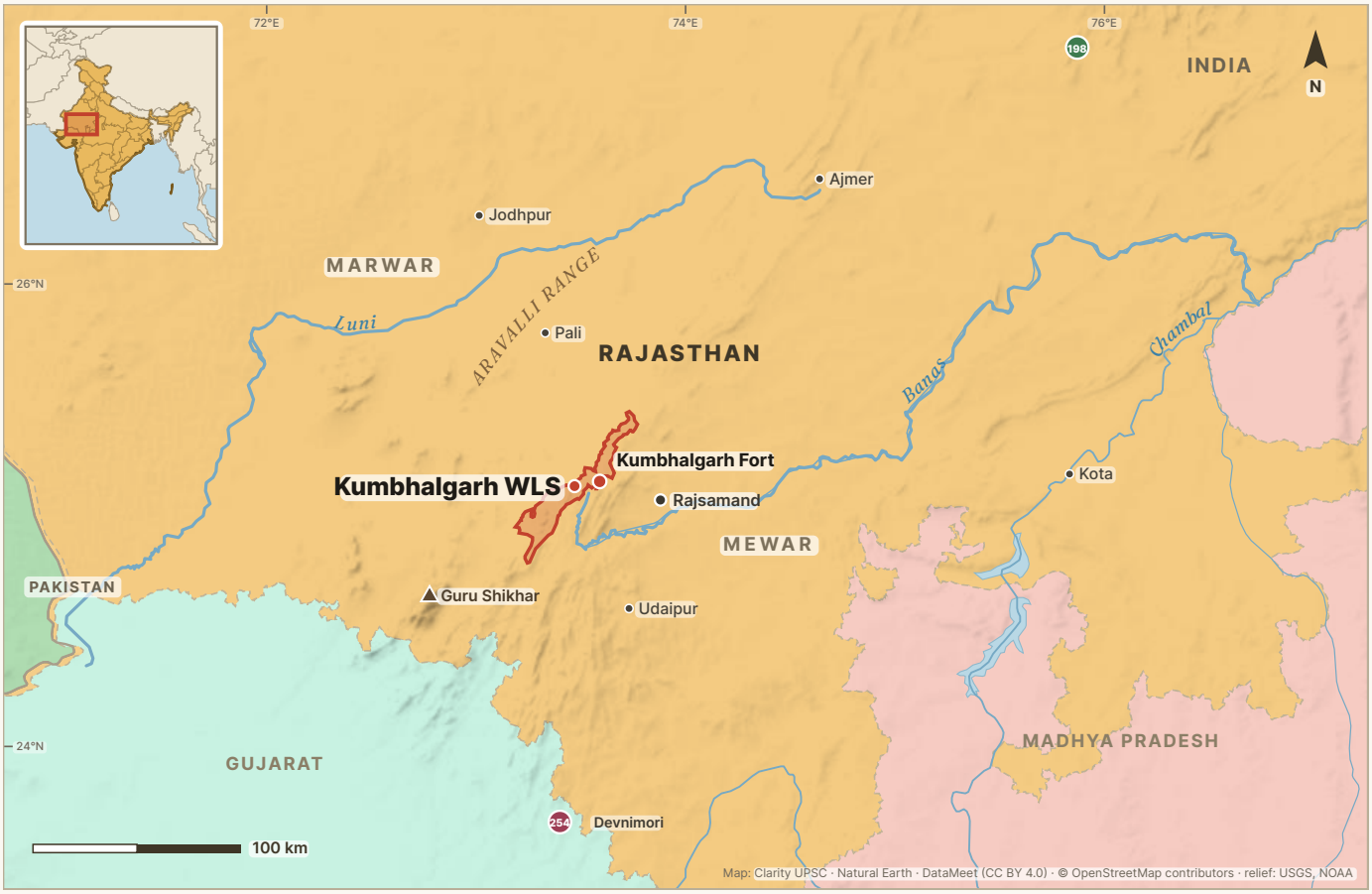
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Wildlife Sanctuary | Jan 2026

200 Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Aravalli hills across Rajsamand, Udaipur and Pali districts, Rajasthan



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 the Union Environment Ministry notified an eco-sensitive zone around Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, extending 0 to 1 km from its boundary. The zone covers about 243 sq km and 94 villages in Udaipur, Pali and Rajsamand districts. Mining, brick kilns, large industries and new hotels and resorts are restricted there.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary spreads over the Aravalli ranges of southern Rajasthan, where Rajsamand, Udaipur and Pali districts meet. It surrounds Kumbhalgarh Fort, on the ridge between the Mewar uplands to the east and the Marwar plains to the west.

SURROUNDED BY Rajsamand district | Udaipur district | Pali district | Aravalli Range

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The sanctuary covers about 610.5 sq km: a 224.9 sq km core and a 385.6 sq km buffer.
- Its forests form a catchment for the Banas and Luni river systems.
- Kumbhalgarh Fort is one of the six Hill Forts of Rajasthan on UNESCO's World Heritage List since 2013.
- Wildlife includes leopards, sloth bears, chinkara and the Indian pangolin; the grey junglefowl and painted francolin live here.

PRELIMS TRAP Kumbhalgarh feeds two systems: the Banas flows east to join the Chambal, while the Luni flows south-west into the Rann of Kutch.

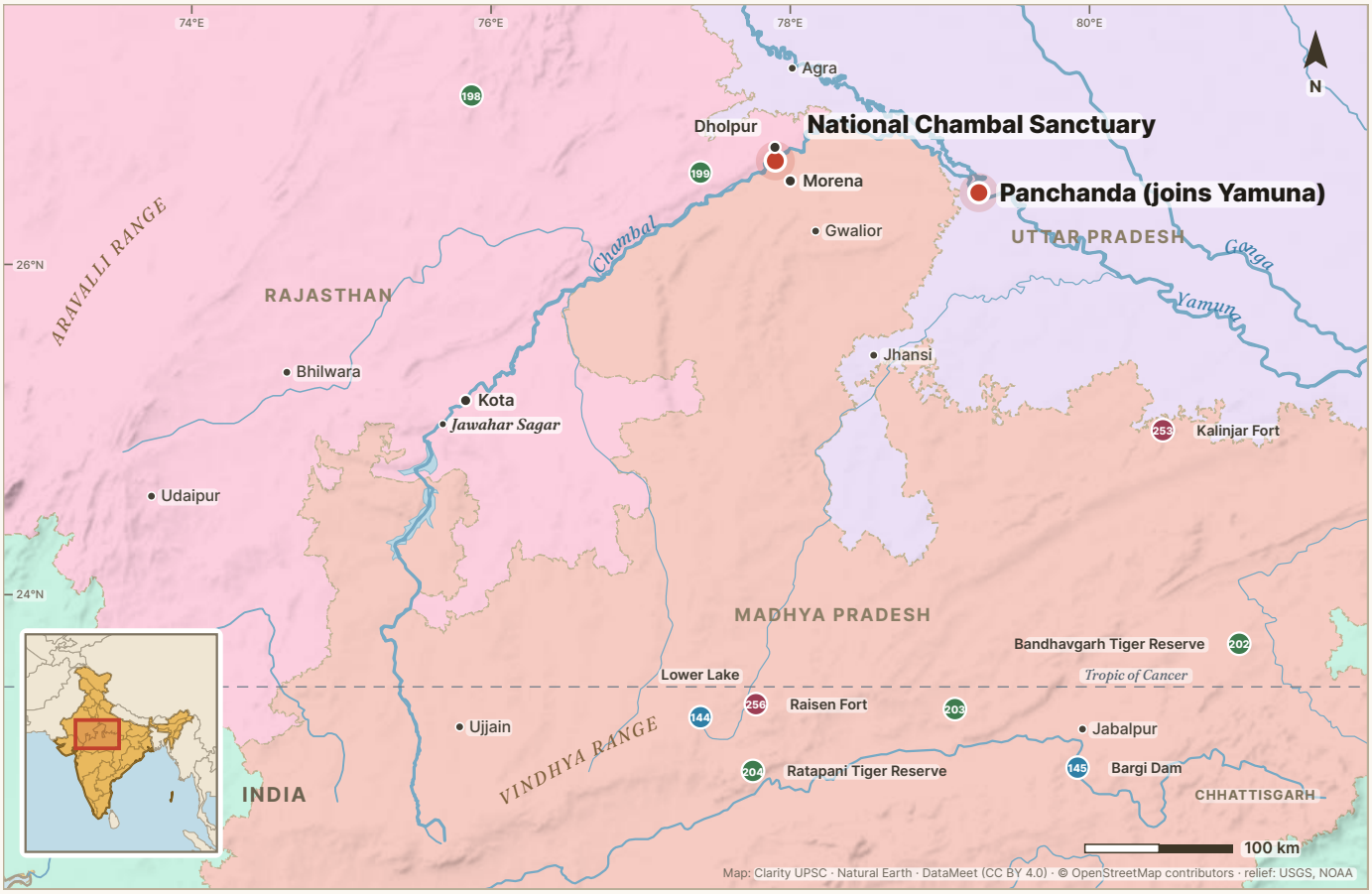
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Wildlife Sanctuary | Mar 2026

201 National Chambal Sanctuary

Chambal River across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 the Supreme Court took suo motu cognisance of illegal sand mining in the National Chambal Sanctuary. It issued notice to Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, and on 2 April stayed Rajasthan's notification removing 732 hectares from the sanctuary.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary follows about 600 km of the Chambal, from Jawahar Sagar towards the Panchanda confluence, across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The Chambal rises near Janapav in Madhya Pradesh, cuts deep ravines and joins the Yamuna in Uttar Pradesh.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Madhya Pradesh | Rajasthan | Uttar Pradesh

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A tri-state river sanctuary of about 5,400 sq km; Madhya Pradesh first protected its stretch in 1978.
- It holds the world's largest wild population of the critically endangered gharial, which basks and nests on sandbanks that mining removes faster than floods replace.
- It also shelters the endangered Ganges river dolphin and the critically endangered red-crowned roofed turtle (Batagur kachuga).
- In March 2026 the National Board for Wildlife's standing committee paused new Chambal hydro and irrigation proposals, except drinking-water schemes, until flows improve.

PRELIMS TRAP The Chambal joins the Yamuna in Uttar Pradesh; the sanctuary spans three states, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

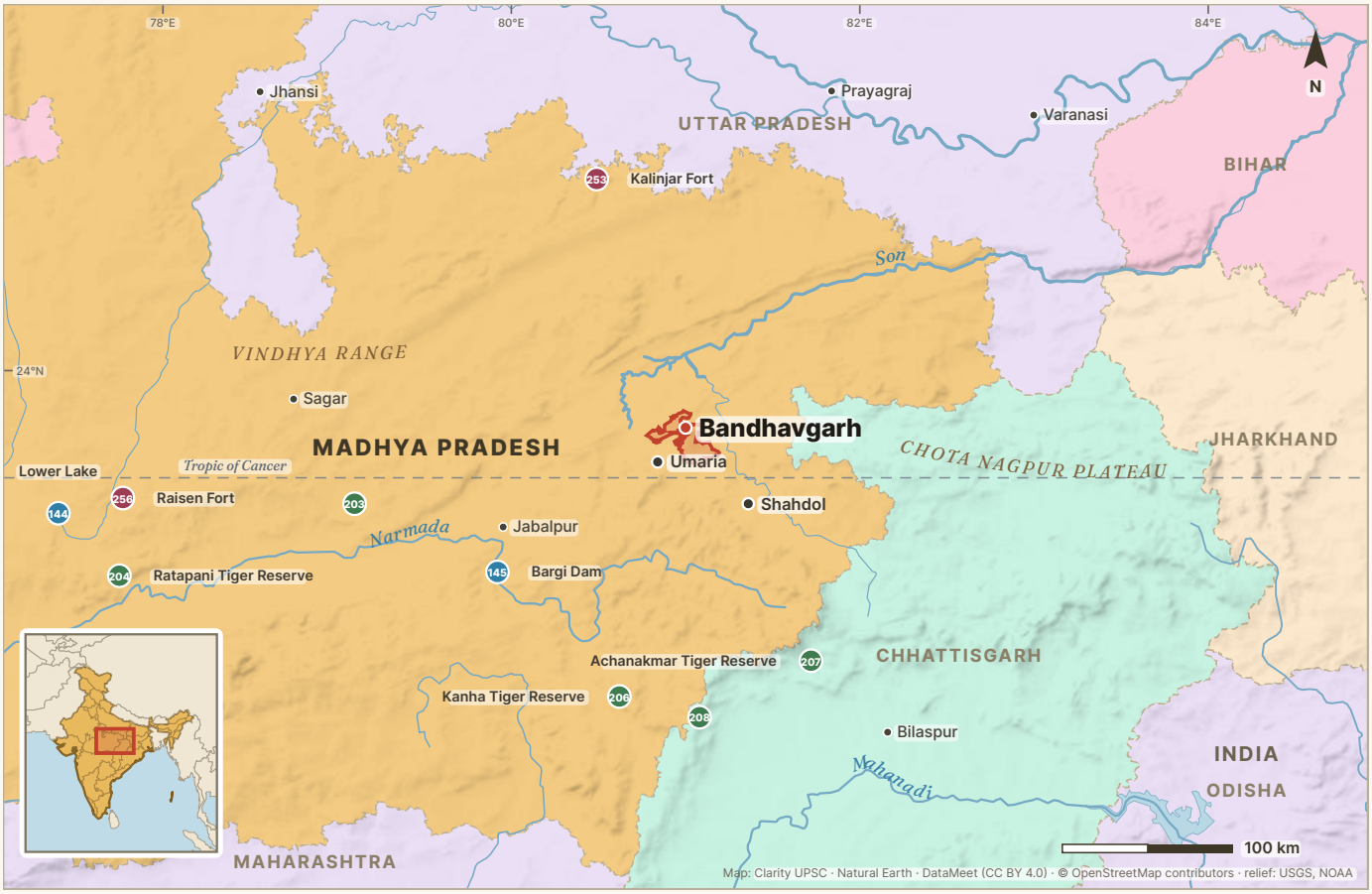
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Tiger Reserve · Feb 2026

202 Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

Umaria district, north-eastern Madhya Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

On 11 February 2026 the Madhya Pradesh High Court at Jabalpur ordered Bandhavgarh's field director to report on tiger deaths, on a petition by activist Ajay Dubey. The report, filed on 25 February, listed eight deaths between 21 November 2025 and 2 February 2026; electrocution killed four in forest outside the reserve.

WHERE IT IS

Bandhavgarh lies in Umaria district of north-eastern Madhya Pradesh, between the Vindhyan Range and the north-eastern flanks of the Satpura system. Sal and mixed woodland, grasslands and bamboo form its habitat. Habitat links lead towards Sanjay-Dubri and neighbouring forests.

SURROUNDED BY Vindhyan Range · Satpura flanks · Sanjay-Dubri landscape

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Declared a national park in 1968, Bandhavgarh became a tiger reserve under Project Tiger in 1993.
- Its area is about 1,537 sq km: roughly 717 sq km core and 820 sq km buffer.
- It holds a fort, caves and archaeological remains; sandstone springs feed its streams and wet areas.
- The petition said Madhya Pradesh lost 54 tigers in 2025, the most in any year since Project Tiger began in 1973.

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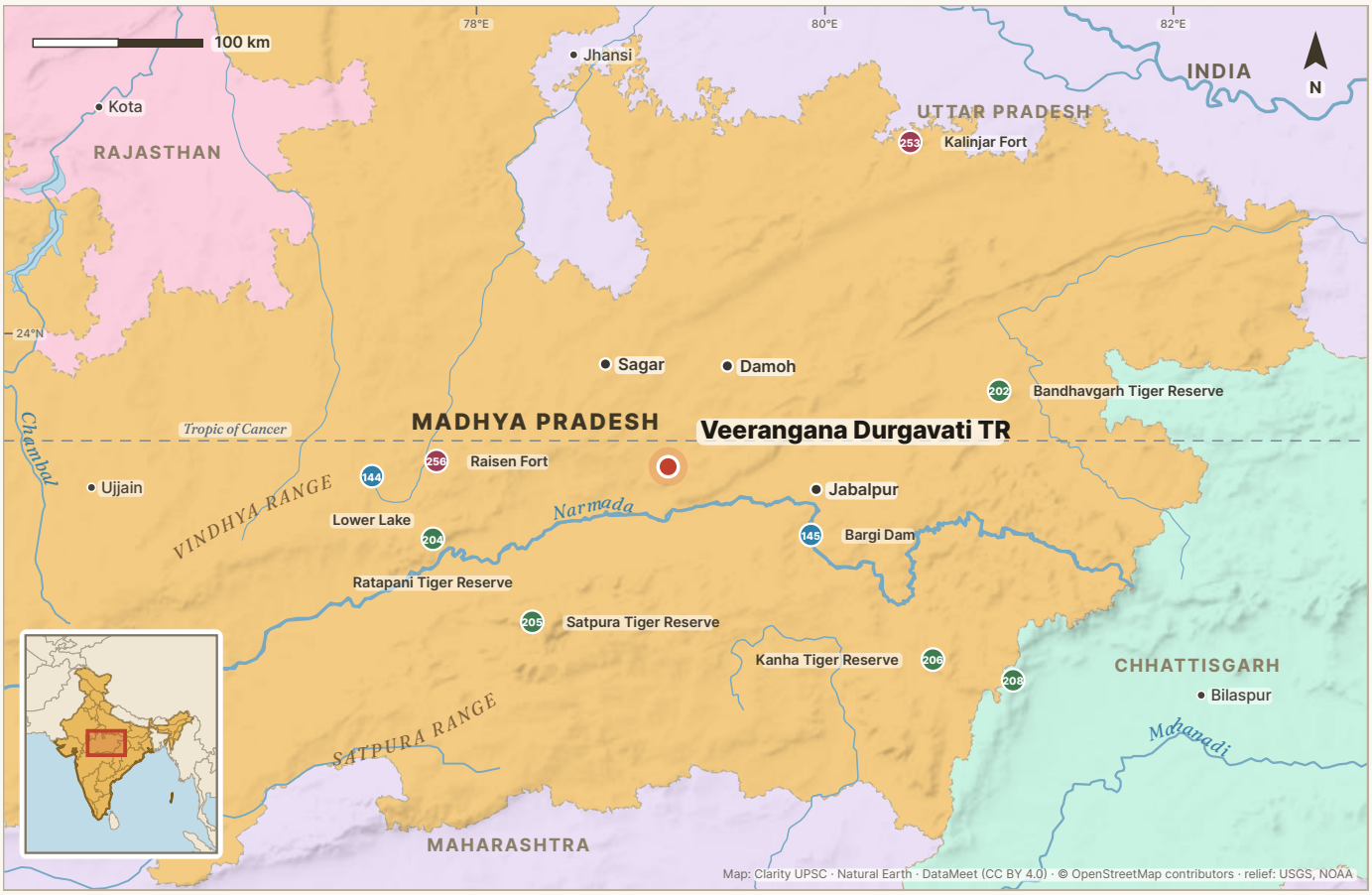
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203

Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve

Tiger Reserve | Feb 2026 | Mar 2026

Sagar, Damoh and Narsinghpur districts, Madhya Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 the National Board for Wildlife's standing committee recommended diverting about 272 hectares of forest in Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve for the Kopra medium irrigation project. In March 2026 Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said cheetahs would reach the reserve within about two months.

WHERE IT IS

Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve spans Sagar, Damoh and Narsinghpur districts of Madhya Pradesh. Notified in 2023, it covers roughly 2,339 sq km and joins the Nauradehi and Durgavati wildlife-sanctuary landscapes. Dry deciduous forest, teak, bamboo and grassland form its habitat.

SURROUNDED BY Sagar district | Damoh district | Narsinghpur district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The reserve was notified in 2023 partly to offset tiger habitat that the Ken–Betwa river-link project will submerge in Panna.
- Kuno received the first cheetahs of India's reintroduction programme in September 2022; by March 2026 it held about 50, Gandhi Sagar about eight.
- Tigers, leopards and Indian wolves already live here, so cheetahs share the range with resident predators.
- Soft-release enclosures let animals adjust under supervision before free-ranging release; radio-telemetry then tracks them.

PRELIMS TRAP Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve absorbed the Nauradehi sanctuary; Kuno and Gandhi Sagar are separate cheetah sites.

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Tiger Reserve · Jan 2026

204 Ratapani Tiger Reserve

Raisen and Sehore districts, Madhya Pradesh, south-east of Bhopal



WHY IN NEWS

On 9 January 2026 Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced that Ratapani Tiger Reserve would be named after archaeologist Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar. Wakankar brought the prehistoric rock paintings of nearby Bhimbetka to world attention in 1957. The announcement came at the Wakankar National Award ceremony in Bhopal.

WHERE IT IS

Ratapani lies in Raisen and Sehore districts and adjoins Bhopal on its south-eastern side. Its forests cover the Vindhyan hills that slope south towards the Narmada valley.

SURROUNDED BY Bhopal (north-west) · Raisen district · Sehore district · Narmada valley (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Notified on 2 December 2024 as Madhya Pradesh's eighth tiger reserve, with a 763.8 sq km core and a 507.7 sq km buffer.
- Ratapani had been a wildlife sanctuary since 1976; teak covers more than half of its dry and moist deciduous forest.
- The Delhi–Mumbai railway line crosses the reserve; local media have reported tigers, leopards and a sloth bear killed by trains since 2015.
- The Bhimbetka rock shelters, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2003, lie beside the reserve in Raisen district.

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Tiger Reserve · Mar 2026

205 Satpura Tiger Reserve

Narmadapuram district, Madhya Pradesh (Satpura range)



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 twelve hard-ground barasingha, eight adult females and four fawns, were moved from Kanha to Satpura Tiger Reserve. In April 2026 a Wildlife Institute of India study reported that 98 swamp deer moved to Satpura in seven phases from 2015 had grown to 172 by 2023.

WHERE IT IS

Satpura Tiger Reserve lies in Narmadapuram district of Madhya Pradesh, on the Satpura range south of the Narmada. Its core joins Satpura National Park with the Bori and Pachmarhi wildlife sanctuaries.

SURROUNDED BY Narmadapuram district · Narmada valley (north) · Chhindwara district · Betul district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The reserve covers about 2,133 sq km: a 1,339 sq km core and a 794 sq km buffer.
- Satpura is the second home of the hard-ground barasingha; before the translocations the subspecies survived naturally only in Kanha.
- The deer first lived in a 50-hectare predator-proof enclosure in the Bori range before release into open grassland.
- Dhoopgarh, about 1,350 m near Pachmarhi, is the highest point of the Satpura range.

PRELIMS TRAP The Satpura range lies south of the Narmada; the Vindhyas lie north of it.

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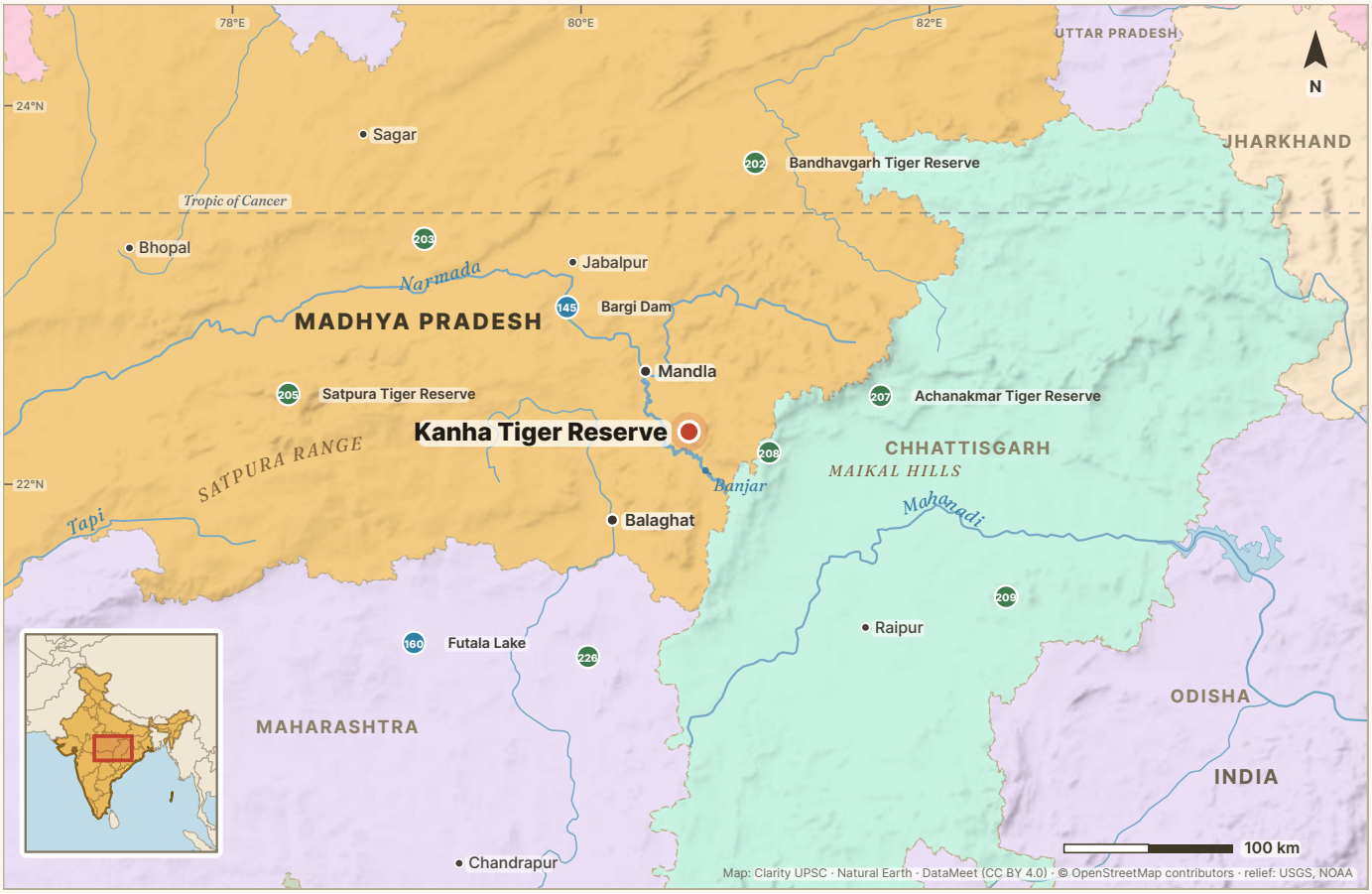
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Tiger Reserve | Apr 2026

206

Kanha Tiger Reserve

Mandla and Balaghat districts, Madhya Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 three cubs of Kanha's tigress T-141 died within a week; they were found on 21, 23 and 25 April. A preliminary post-mortem of the female cub found acute respiratory failure and lung lesions.

WHERE IT IS

Kanha lies in Mandla and Balaghat districts of Madhya Pradesh, in the Maikal hills of the Satpura landscape. Its sal forests, grasslands and flat hilltops called dadars sit on the watershed between the Narmada and Mahanadi systems.

SURROUNDED BY Mandla district | Balaghat district | Maikal hills | Banjar river

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The wild water buffalo is IUCN Endangered; officials described the move as returning it to Madhya Pradesh after about a century.
- Kanha is the natural stronghold of the hard-ground barasingha, which recovered from 66 animals in the 1970s to about 1,100.
- The Banjar and Halon catchments inside Kanha belong to the Narmada drainage.
- Kanha became a national park in 1955 and one of the first nine Project Tiger reserves in 1973.

PRELIMS TRAP Bubalus arnee is the wild water buffalo; Bubalus bubalis is the domestic buffalo.

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207 Achanakmar Tiger Reserve

Mungeli district, Chhattisgarh (Maikal hills)

Tiger Reserve | Jan 2026

In news: On 25 January 2026 a forest patrol found a two-year-old tiger dead in the Kuterpani compartment of Achanakmar Tiger Reserve, Chhattisgarh. The post-mortem found a broken neck bone and bite marks, and another tiger's hair was in its claws. Officials concluded that it died in a territorial fight.

SURROUNDED BY Mungeli district | Bilaspur district | Madhya Pradesh (Anuppur, Dindori) | Maikal hills

- It became a sanctuary in 1975 and a tiger reserve in 2009, with a 626.19 sq km core and 287.82 sq km buffer.
- Chhattisgarh's tiger count rose from 17 in 2022 to 35 by April 2025, officials said.
- The biosphere reserve spans Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh and is a source area of the Narmada, Johilla and Son.

Read the full story
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208 Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary

Kabirdham (Kawardha) district, Chhattisgarh

Wildlife Sanctuary | Feb 2026

In news: In February 2026 officials were in the final stages of preparing a jungle safari of about 34 km inside Bhoramdeo Wildlife Sanctuary. The route runs through Maikal forests and crosses the Sakri River several times; the Thanwarjhol Forest Management Committee was to run the vehicles.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Madhya Pradesh

- The sanctuary takes its name from the Bhoramdeo temple, often called the 'Khajuraho of Chhattisgarh'.
- Its eco-sensitive zone, notified in March 2025, covers 179.317 sq km, extends up to 8.3 km and narrows to zero beside Kanha.
- Sal, mahua and palas are major trees; fauna include leopards, sloth bears, striped hyenas, fish owls, gaur, chital and sambar.

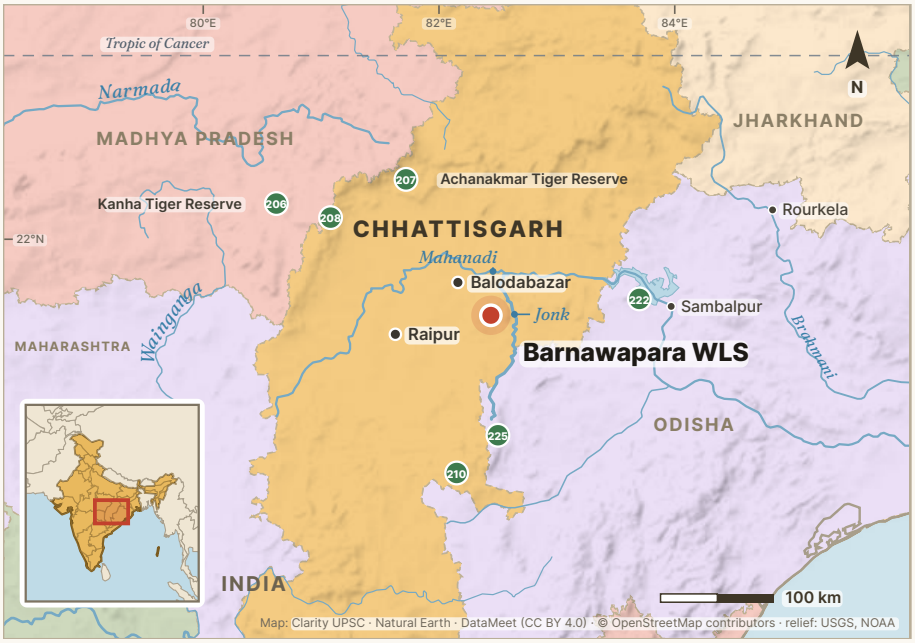
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Wildlife Sanctuary · Apr 2026

209 Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary

Balodabazar-Bhatapara district, central Chhattisgarh (Mahanadi basin)



WHY IN NEWS

On 26 April 2026 Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the return of blackbucks to Chhattisgarh in his Mann Ki Baat broadcast. The antelope had vanished from the state by the 1970s. Forest officials said the Barnawapara herd, founded with 77 animals in 2018, now numbers more than 200.

WHERE IT IS

Barnawapara lies in the Mahanadi basin of central Chhattisgarh, east of Raipur. The Balamdehi River forms its western boundary and the Jonk River, a Mahanadi tributary, its north-eastern boundary.

SURROUNDED BY

- Balodabazar-Bhatapara district
- Mahasamund district
- Balamdehi River (west)
- Jonk River (north-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The 77 founders came from Kanan Pendari Zoo, Bilaspur (27), and the National Zoological Park, Delhi (50); they were released gradually from a 4-hectare enclosure.
- About 40 blackbucks are to move to Gomarda Wildlife Sanctuary; a release in Achanakmar Tiger Reserve awaits NTCA approval.
- Notified in 1976, it covers about 245 sq km of tropical dry deciduous forest with sal, teak, mahua, tendu and bamboo.

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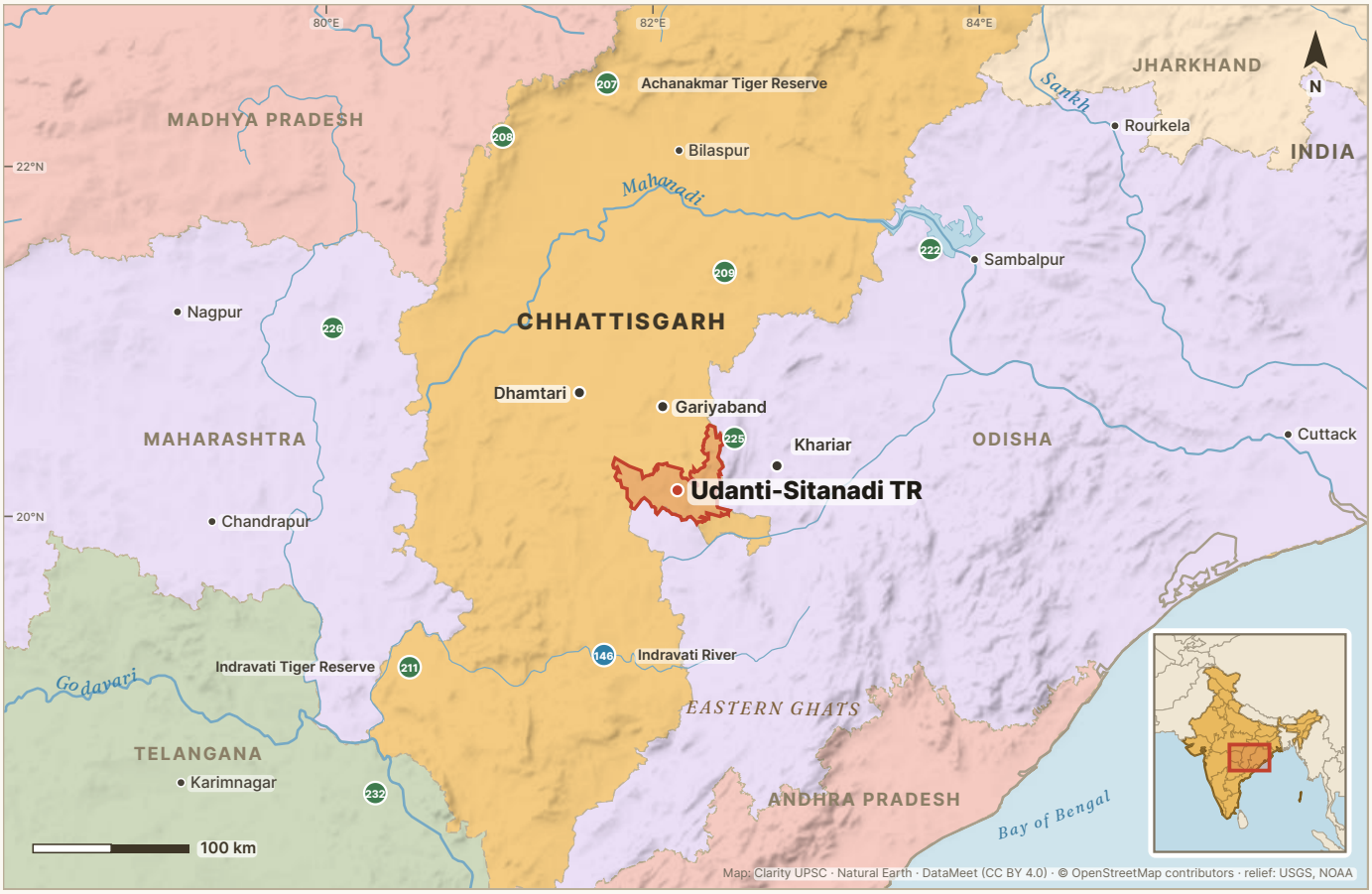
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Tiger Reserve | Mar 2026 | Apr 2026

210 Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve

Gariyaband and Dhamtari districts, Chhattisgarh, on the Odisha border



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 officials said the tiger census, begun in January, covered all 143 forest beats of Udanti-Sitanadi for the first time because Maoist influence had ended. In April 2026 satellite and drone surveys showed about 106 hectares of core forest cleared by encroachers; cases were filed against 166 people.

WHERE IT IS

Udanti-Sitanadi spans Gariyaband and Dhamtari districts of south-eastern Chhattisgarh, along the Odisha border. Its Sitanadi forests hold the source area of the Mahanadi, and an elephant corridor crosses them. To the east, its forests connect towards the Sonabeda and Khariar areas of Odisha.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Chhattisgarh | Odisha

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Formed in 2009 by joining the Udanti and Sitanadi wildlife sanctuaries; the NTCA records about 1,843 sq km of core and buffer.
- The wild water buffalo is Chhattisgarh's state animal; poaching and cross-breeding with domestic buffaloes have left few pure-bred animals.
- Girdling damages the phloem around a trunk and starves the roots of sugars; the tree may stand for a while as it dies.
- Forest Rights Act Section 3(1)(i) recognises community rights to protect, regenerate, conserve or manage community forest resources.

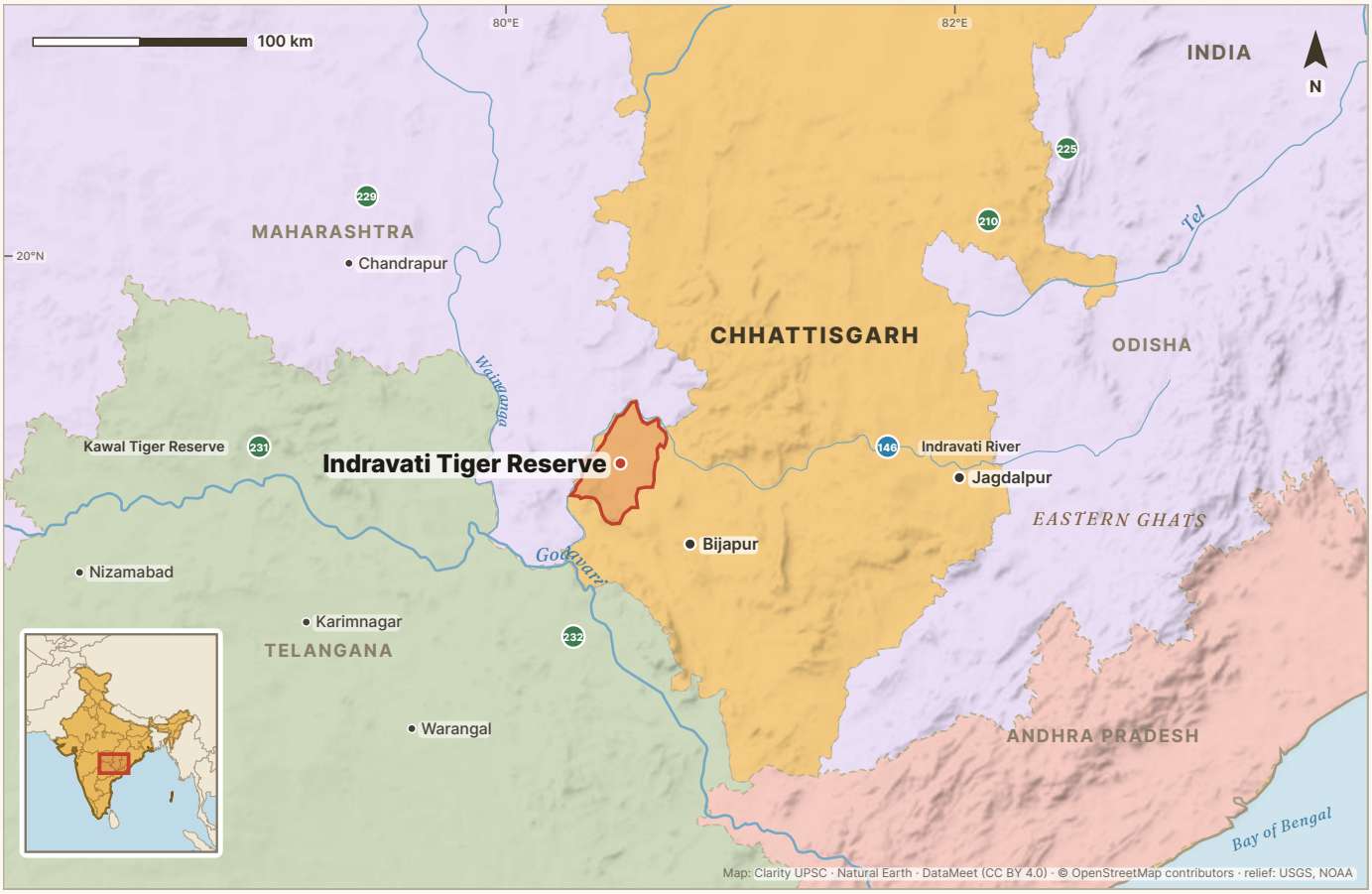
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211 Indravati Tiger Reserve

Tiger Reserve | Jan 2026 | Mar 2026

Bijapur district, Bastar region, southern Chhattisgarh



WHY IN NEWS

On 17–18 January 2026 security forces killed six Maoists in Bijapur district, including Dilip Bedja, long active in the Indravati National Park area; Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma said the area was almost free of Maoists. In March 2026 a report said Maoist threats might keep the tiger census from covering the whole reserve.

WHERE IT IS

Indravati Tiger Reserve lies in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh's Bastar region, near the borders of Maharashtra and Telangana. It takes its name from the Indravati River, a Godavari tributary whose upper catchment lies in Odisha. Hills, seasonal streams, grasslands and deciduous forests make up the landscape.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Maharashtra | Telangana | Odisha (upper Indravati catchment)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Indravati National Park was established in 1981 and came under Project Tiger in 1983.
- Chhattisgarh has four tiger reserves: Indravati, Udanti-Sitanadi, Achanakmar and Guru Ghasidas–Tamor Pingla.
- The park is a refuge for one of India's remaining wild buffalo populations; gaur also live there.
- Moist and dry mixed deciduous forests, including teak, support leopards, sloth bears and deer across a 2,799.07 sq km core and buffer.

PRELIMS TRAP Wild buffalo and gaur are different animals; Indravati is a key wild buffalo refuge. The Indravati River drains to the Godavari, not the Mahanadi.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

212

Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary

Wildlife Sanctuary | Feb 2026 | Apr 2026

Dalma hills near Jamshedpur; East Singhbhum and Seraikela-Kharsawan districts, Jharkhand



WHY IN NEWS

On 7 February 2026 Jharkhand's tourism minister Sudivya Kumar flagged off five jungle-safari vehicles at Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary near Jamshedpur. He laid the foundation stone for 30 eco-cottages with 59 rooms, at Makulakocha and Pindrabera. In April the state's first elephant rescue centre neared completion at the Dalma foothills.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary covers about 195 sq km of the Dalma hills in East Singhbhum and Seraikela-Kharsawan districts of Jharkhand. It overlooks Jamshedpur, and Dimna Lake lies at its foothills. The Subarnarekha flows to the south.

SURROUNDED BY Jamshedpur | Dimna Lake | East Singhbhum district | Seraikela-Kharsawan district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Set up in the mid-1970s, the sanctuary is known for Asian elephants that move seasonally to and from West Bengal.
- The elephant rescue centre, on 7 ha near Dimna Lake, has a kraal for treating injured wild elephants without tranquilising them.
- Each year tribal groups enter Dalma for the Sendra hunting ritual; in 2026 the forest department posted over 500 personnel to prevent hunting.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

ON CLARITYUPSC.COM · DAILY QUIZ

Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 | POLITY

The President of India can return a Money Bill to Parliament for reconsideration.

✓ True | ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

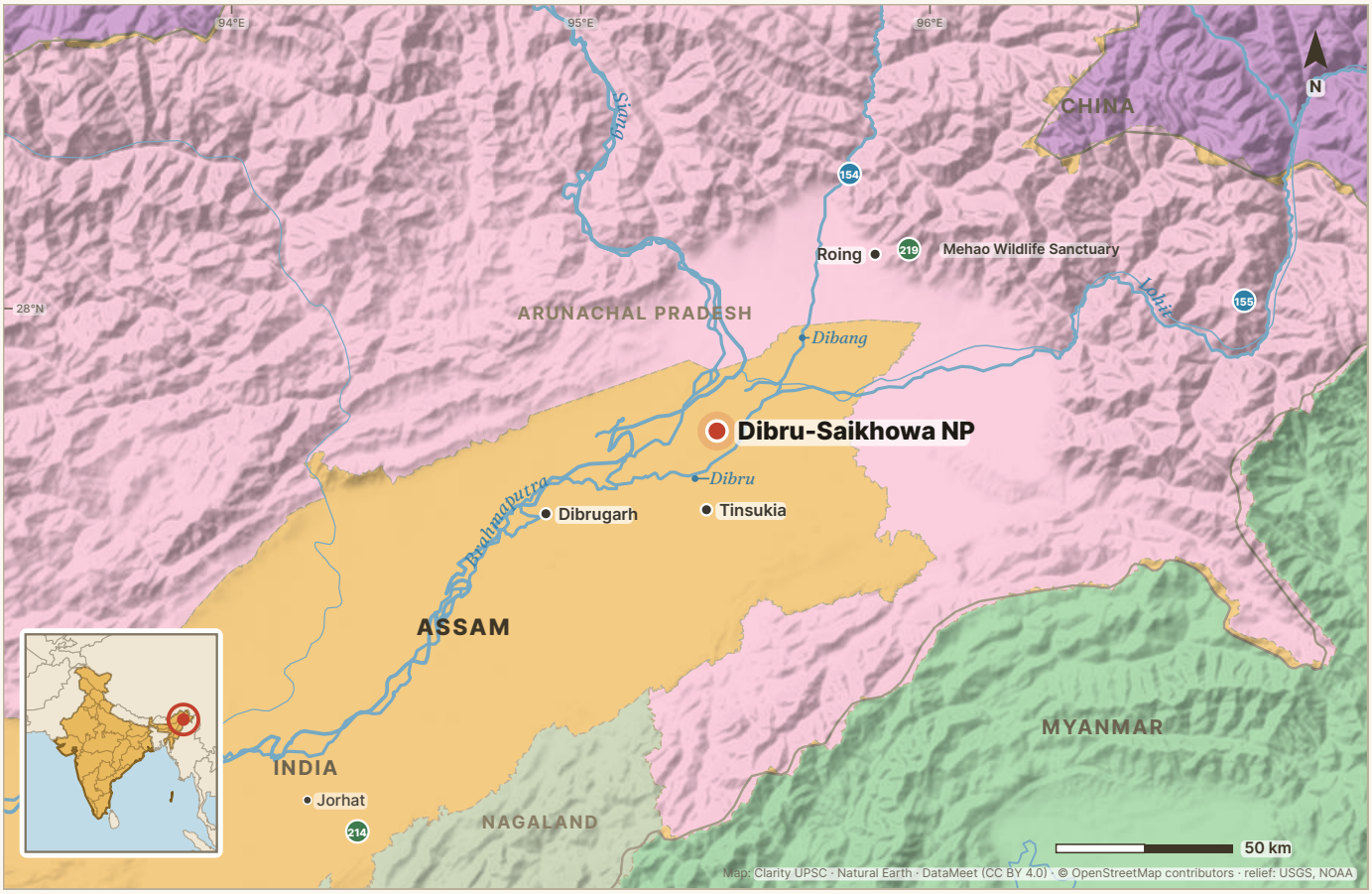
clarityupsc.com/daily-quiz

Clarity UPSC

National Park · Apr 2026

213 Dibru-Saikhowa National Park

Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts, Upper Assam



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 Mongabay-India reported the first camera-trap photographs of a tiger in Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, taken on 14 December 2025 and 1 January 2026.

WHERE IT IS

The park lies in Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts of Upper Assam. It is a low-lying floodplain bounded by the Brahmaputra and Lohit rivers to the north and the Dibru River to the south.

SURROUNDED BY Brahmaputra and Lohit rivers (north) · Dibru River (south) · Tinsukia district · Dibrugarh district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A 765 sq km biosphere reserve was declared in 1997; its 340 sq km core became a national park in 1999.
- Two forest villages, Laika and Dodhia, lie inside the park, with 38 villages in its buffer zone; floods often displace their residents.
- Camera traps also recorded black panther, leopard and wild buffalo; the park is known for its feral horses.
- Its vegetation includes Salix swamp forest, semi-evergreen and deciduous forest, canebrakes and grassland.

PRELIMS TRAP Dibru-Saikhowa is a Brahmaputra floodplain park; Dihing Patkai, in the same two districts, protects lowland rainforest along the Dihing.

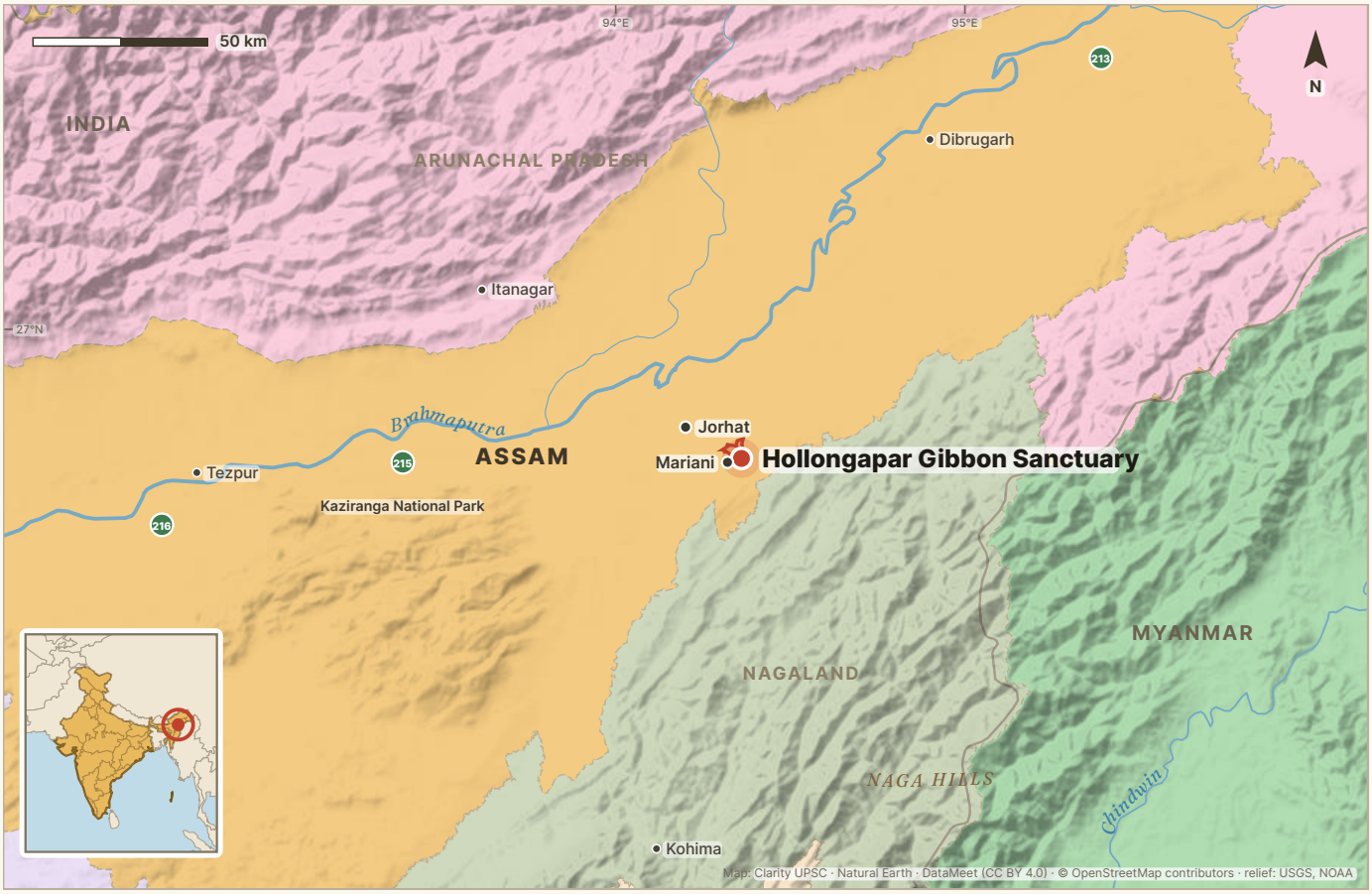
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Clarity UPSC

Wildlife Sanctuary | Feb 2026

214 Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary

Jorhat district, Assam



WHY IN NEWS

On 8 February 2026 a male western hoolock gibbon was electrocuted by the 25-kV overhead line on the railway through Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary. It died about 30 m from a new canopy bridge.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary covers about 21 sq km in Jorhat district of upper Assam, south of the Brahmaputra. The Lumding–Dibrugarh railway line has split it since the late 19th century into a small northern compartment and larger southern compartments. Tea gardens surround the forest.

SURROUNDED BY Jorhat district | Lumding–Dibrugarh railway line | Tea gardens | Nagaland foothills (south-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The western hoolock gibbon is India's only ape; it is IUCN Endangered and in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- India's only sanctuary named after a gibbon; its seven primate species give it the highest primate diversity of any Indian protected area.
- The National Board for Wildlife approved electrifying the 1.65-km stretch in October 2024; the Wildlife Institute of India had recommended moving the line out.
- About 125 western hoolock gibbons live in four compartments; gibbons are monogamous, and young males cross between compartments to find mates.

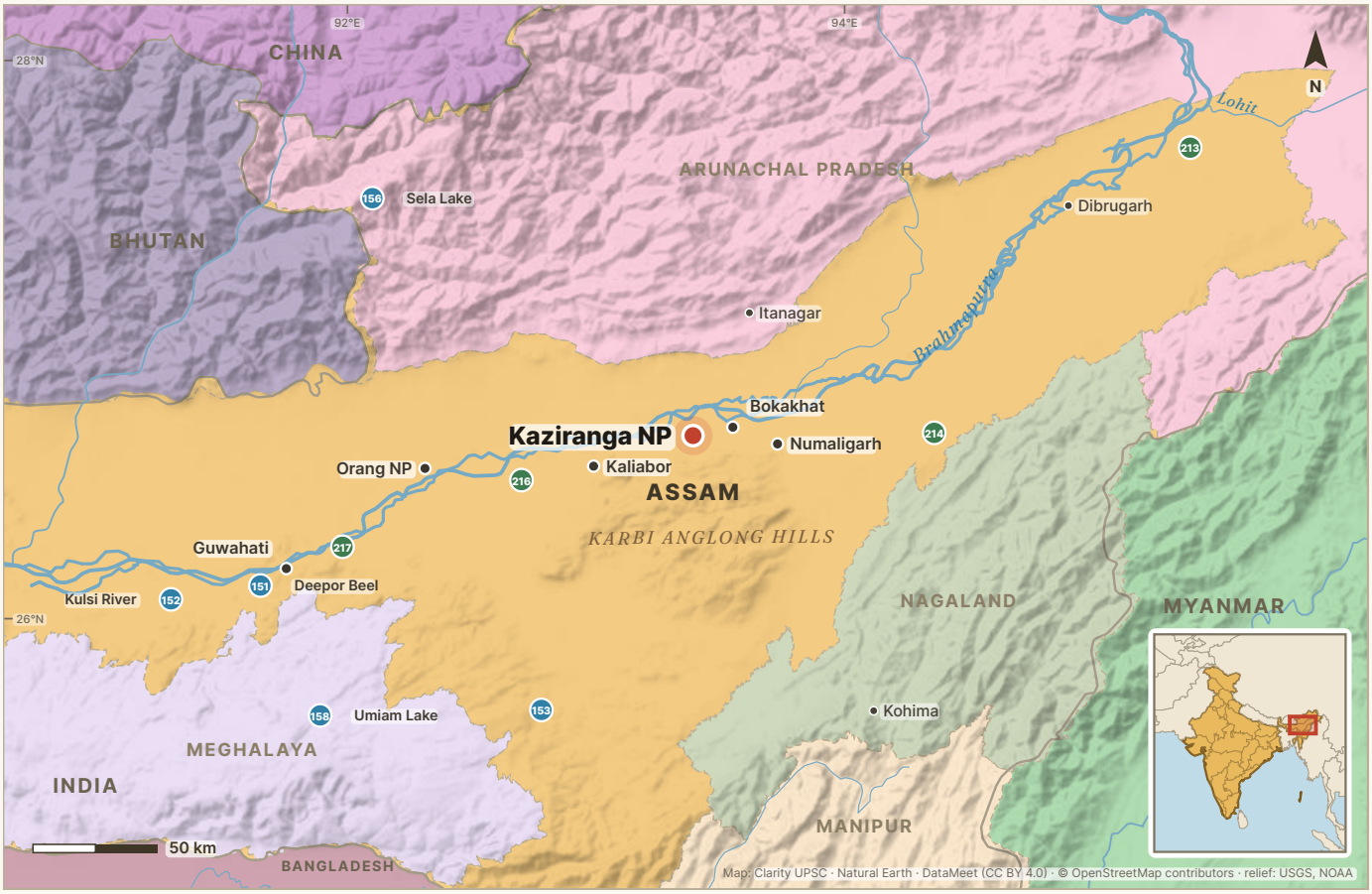
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National Park · Jan 2026

215 Kaziranga National Park

Golaghat and Nagaon districts, Assam, on the south bank of the Brahmaputra



WHY IN NEWS

On 18 January 2026 Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed the bhoomi pujan for the ₹6,957-crore Kaziranga Elevated Corridor at Kaliabor, Assam. The project four-lanes 85.675 km of NH-715 between Kaliabor and Numaligarh. About 34.5 km will be elevated so that animals can cross between the park and the Karbi Anglong hills.

WHERE IT IS

Kaziranga lies on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, mainly in Golaghat and Nagaon districts of Assam. The river forms its northern boundary. NH-715 runs along the southern edge, and the Karbi Anglong hills rise beyond it. Animals move to these hills when floods cover the park.

SURROUNDED BY Brahmaputra River (north) · Karbi Anglong hills (south) · Golaghat district · Nagaon district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Kaziranga became a national park in 1974 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985.
- It holds the world's largest population of the greater one-horned rhinoceros.
- Its tiger reserve, notified in 2007, has a 625.58 sq km core and a 548 sq km buffer.
- The highway project also builds 21 km of bypasses around Jakhalabandha and Bokakhat; NHAI invited the EPC bids.

PRELIMS TRAP Kaziranga lies on the Brahmaputra's south bank; Orang National Park lies across the river on the north bank.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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Wildlife Sanctuary | Mar 2026

216 Laokhowa and Burachapori Wildlife Sanctuaries

Nagaon and Sonitpur districts, Assam, south bank of the Brahmaputra



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 Assam proposed a new 224.325-ha Burhachapori No. 5 Reserved Forest beside Burachapori Wildlife Sanctuary, as compensatory afforestation land for highway, oil and gas, coal and power-line projects.

WHERE IT IS

Laokhowa lies on the south bank of the Brahmaputra in Nagaon district, Assam. The adjoining Burachapori sanctuary is recorded mainly in Sonitpur district. Together they form a buffer of Kaziranga Tiger Reserve and link it with Orang and Pobitora.

SURROUNDED BY

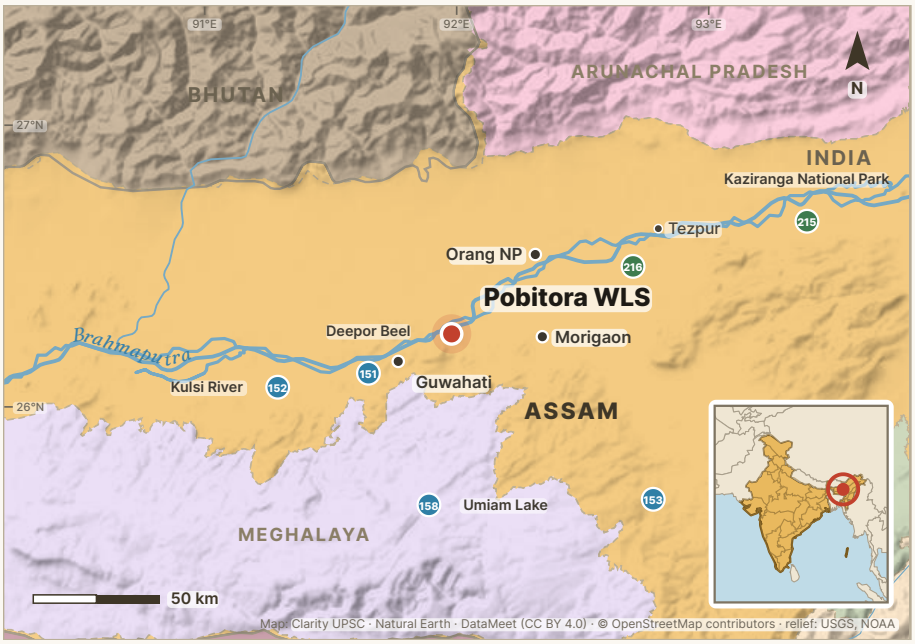
- Brahmaputra River (north)
- Kaziranga Tiger Reserve (east)
- Orang National Park (north bank, west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- They serve as a flood-season corridor for animals moving between Kaziranga, Orang and Pobitora.
- The wild water buffalo (Bubalus arnee) is IUCN Endangered, threatened by habitat loss and breeding with domestic buffalo; rhinos and elephants share these grasslands.
- The critically endangered Bengal florican uses the grasslands; the wetlands support Gangetic dolphins.
- Under the Assam Forest Regulation, 1891, a Forest Settlement Officer settles existing rights before a proposed reserved forest is finally notified.

PRELIMS TRAP Laokhowa and Burachapori lie on the Brahmaputra's south bank; Orang National Park lies across the river on the north bank.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



217 Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary

Morigaon district, Assam, south bank of the Brahmaputra

Wildlife Sanctuary | Mar 2026

In news: On 18 February 2026 forest staff found a male rhino, about 40 years old, dead near Chitalmari beel in Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam. A veterinary officer said it died of natural causes. The horn was intact and was kept in safe custody.

SURROUNDED BY

- Brahmaputra River (north)
- Morigaon district
- Guwahati (west)

- The 2022 rhino estimation counted 107 rhinos in Pobitora, behind Kaziranga (2,613) and Orang (125).
- Rhinos from Pobitora have been translocated to Manas National Park.
- It was declared a sanctuary in 1987 and is an Important Bird Area.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



218 Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary

Eastern fringe of Guwahati, Kamrup Metropolitan district, Assam

Wildlife Sanctuary | Apr 2026

In news: On 8 April 2026 the Gauhati High Court restrained Assam from finalising a tender to fell trees inside Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary for the 121-km Guwahati Ring Road. A public interest petition said a bypass alignment cut through the sanctuary and its eco-sensitive zone. The court asked the state for an affidavit.

SURROUNDED BY

- Guwahati city (west)
- Kamrup Metropolitan district
- Khanapara area (south)

- Its elephants and gaur form isolated populations with no links to other forests.
- Amchang is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area; white-backed and slender-billed vultures occur.
- NHAI is executing the ₹6,000-crore ring road.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



219 Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary

Lower Dibang Valley district, Arunachal Pradesh

Wildlife Sanctuary | Feb 2026

In news: On 2 February 2026 a tiger killed police head constable Chikseng Manpung on the Roing–Mayodia road in Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh. Forest Minister Wanki Lowang allowed the tiger's capture and announced ₹10 lakh ex gratia. On 5 February a sub-adult tigress was found dead in the Mayodia area with a gunshot wound.

SURROUNDED BY: Roing town | Lower Dibang Valley district | Mishmi Hills | Dibang River valley

- Forests range from tropical evergreen to temperate coniferous; the Mishmi takin, red panda and clouded leopard live here.
- Its plants include the medicinal Coptis teeta (Mishmi teeta) and many orchids.
- Officials were investigating whether the tigress was killed in retaliation for the attack.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



220 Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary

South of Agartala, Tripura

Wildlife Sanctuary | Jan 2026

In news: On 16 January 2026 Tripura Forest Minister Animesh Debbarma said the state had received over ₹57 crore from the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region to modernise Sepahijala Zoo under a Central Zoo Authority plan. The plan included a clean-up after foreign tourists complained of plastic waste.

SURROUNDED BY: Agartala (north) | Sepahijala district | Bangladesh (west)

- Clouded Leopard National Park was notified in 2008 over 5.08 sq km, surrounded by Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Sepahijala began in 1972 as a botanical garden and a small deer park.
- The Central Zoo Authority made it a coordinating zoo for breeding clouded leopards, spectacled langurs, binturongs and pig-tailed macaques.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

Tiger Reserve · Jan 2026

221 Similipal Tiger Reserve

Mayurbhanj district, northern Odisha



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 a census counted 84 crocodiles in Similipal Tiger Reserve, up from 81, and in March 2026 officials confirmed the seizure of a melanistic tiger's hide near Kuliana, with nine arrests.

WHERE IT IS

Similipal lies in Mayurbhanj district of northern Odisha and covers about 2,750 sq km. Sal forest mixes with grasslands, rivers and waterfalls such as Joranda and Barehipani.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Jharkhand · West Bengal

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Sanctuary 1979, biosphere reserve 1994 (UNESCO network 2009); its 845.7 sq km core was notified a national park only in April 2025.
- Named after the simul (silk cotton) tree; it has over 1,000 plant species, including nearly 100 orchids.
- Genetic rescue adds unrelated animals to widen a small population's gene pool; the Tadoba tigresses Jamuna and Zeenat arrived in 2024.
- The Deo River held 60 of the 84 crocodiles; the Ramatirtha centre breeds hatchlings for release.

PRELIMS TRAP Similipal's 'black' tigers are Bengal tigers with a recessive Taqpep gene mutation that broadens and merges their stripes; they are a colour variant of the same species.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



222 Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Bargarh district, western Odisha, beside Hirakud Reservoir

Wildlife Sanctuary | Jan 2026 | Mar 2026

In news: A census on 5–7 January 2026 counted 848 gaur in 69 herds in Odisha's Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, up from 659 in the first census of November 2024. On 8 March 2026 the sanctuary held its second Indian Bison Fest, with night camping, a gaur safari and stargazing.

SURROUNDED BY: Hirakud Reservoir | Bargarh district | Sambalpur

- Notified in 1985, the sanctuary covers about 347 sq km and holds gaur, deer, wild boar, leopards and many birds.
- Hirakud Reservoir, operating since 1957, is a Ramsar site with its own boundary.
- Eco-development committees manage tourism through revenue sharing with the forest department.

Read the full story
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223 Kapilash Wildlife Sanctuary

Dhenkanal district, Odisha

Wildlife Sanctuary | Feb 2026

In news: By February 2026 the Centre had granted wildlife clearance for the Gobindpur–Tangi stretch of the Capital Region Ring Road around Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. About 1 km of this stretch passes through Kapilash Wildlife Sanctuary in Dhenkanal district. A standing committee of Odisha's State Wildlife Board had cleared it in December 2025.

SURROUNDED BY: Dhenkanal district | Cuttack district

- The Kapilash (Chandrasekhar) temple was built in 1246 CE by the Eastern Ganga king Narasinghdeva I.
- The ring road is a six-lane, access-controlled greenfield highway; the Union environment ministry also gave it environmental clearance.
- The sanctuary was notified on 2 April 2011 and covers about 125.5 sq km; sal dominates its forest, and elephants use it.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

National Park · Jan 2026

224 Bhitarkanika National Park

Kendrapara district, Odisha coast



WHY IN NEWS

A January 2026 census counted 1,52,762 migratory birds in Bhitarkanika National Park, slightly more than a year earlier, but bird species fell to 106 from 118. The great bittern was recorded in the park for the first time.

WHERE IT IS

Bhitarkanika lies in Kendrapara district on Odisha's north-eastern coast, in a tidal delta of the Brahmani and Baitarani rivers. The Dhamra estuary links its creeks to the Bay of Bengal, and Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary lies seaward.

SURROUNDED BY Bay of Bengal · Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary · Dhamra estuary · Brahmani–Baitarani delta

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its 145 sq km core became a national park in 1998; Bhitarkanika Mangroves became a Ramsar site in 2002.
- Female crocodiles build mound nests of vegetation and mud and lay about 50–60 eggs, which hatch after 70–80 days.
- Bhitarkanika, Chilika and Hirakud Reservoir are Odisha's main winter grounds for migratory birds from the northern hemisphere.
- The adjoining Gahirmatha coast is famous for olive ridley turtle nesting.

PRELIMS TRAP Bhitarkanika's sanctuary (672 sq km), national park (145 sq km) and Ramsar site (650 sq km) are three different boundaries.

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Clarity UPSC

Wildlife Sanctuary · Jan 2026

225 Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary

Nuapada district, western Odisha, on the Chhattisgarh border



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 Odisha's wildlife wing planned to restore day tourism at three waterfalls in Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary, Godhus, Beniadhus and Kharaldhas, as Maoist influence fell. Tourism at the waterfalls had been restricted for more than 15 years. In April 2026 CRPF personnel found a Maoist camp with about 70 gelatine sticks inside the sanctuary.

WHERE IT IS

Sunabeda lies in Nuapada district of western Odisha, on the border with Chhattisgarh. Its plateau is cut by valleys and gorges, with waterfalls more than 100 ft high. It adjoins Chhattisgarh's Udanti–Sitanadi Tiger Reserve, forming one large forest block.

SURROUNDED BY Nuapada district · Chhattisgarh (west) · Udanti–Sitanadi Tiger Reserve · Khariar (south-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The sanctuary covers about 600 sq km; officials say almost half of it was earlier under Maoist influence.
- It is a proposed tiger reserve with the NTCA's in-principle approval; with Maoist activity reduced, staff have placed camera traps in every sector.
- It forms the catchment of the Jonk River, a Mahanadi tributary dammed for irrigation.

PRELIMS TRAP Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary is in Nuapada district; Sunabeda town, home to HAL's aero-engine division, is in Koraput district.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

Tiger Reserve | Mar 2026

226 Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve

Gondia and Bhandara districts, north-eastern Maharashtra



WHY IN NEWS

From 1 April 2026 Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve took unified control of its 652.2 sq km notified buffer, under a Maharashtra government resolution of 24 December 2025. The transfer from the Forest Department and the Forest Development Corporation roughly doubled the area it manages, to 1,305.88 sq km.

WHERE IT IS

The reserve lies in Gondia and Bhandara districts in north-eastern Maharashtra, in the Central Indian tiger landscape. Gondia district borders Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The buffer holds 185 villages: 112 in Gondia and 73 in Bhandara.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Madhya Pradesh | Chhattisgarh

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It was notified on 12 December 2013 as India's 46th tiger reserve and Maharashtra's fifth.
- It joins five protected areas: Navegaon National Park and the Navegaon, Nagzira, New Nagzira and Koka wildlife sanctuaries.
- The core covers 653.67 sq km; with the buffer, the reserve now has 12 forest ranges instead of seven.
- Officials plan new safari gates and homestays in the buffer, where tourism can continue in the monsoon while the core is closed.

PRELIMS TRAP Maharashtra has six tiger reserves: Melghat, Tadoba-Andhari, Pench, Sahyadri, Navegaon-Nagzira and Bor. Only Sahyadri lies in the Western Ghats.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



227 Bor Tiger Reserve

Wardha district, near Hingani, eastern Maharashtra

Tiger Reserve | Jan 2026

In news: In February 2026 Maharashtra approved the relocation of five villages from Bor Tiger Reserve and sanctioned ₹13.18 crore for a nature-tourism centre at Salod in Wardha. The same month a black leopard was recorded in the reserve for the first time.

SURROUNDED BY

Wardha district | Nagpur district | Bor Dam

- Bor became a tiger reserve in July 2014; its core is only about 138 sq km.
- With so small a core, Bor is often called India's smallest tiger reserve.
- A black leopard is an ordinary leopard with melanism, an excess of dark pigment.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



228 Dnyanganga Wildlife Sanctuary

Buldhana district, western Vidarbha, Maharashtra

Wildlife Sanctuary | Jan 2026

In news: In January 2026 a three-year-old male tiger, PKT7CP1, was moved to Dnyanganga Wildlife Sanctuary for rewilding, first into a 5-hectare enclosure. He and his sister had been rescued as orphaned cubs in Yavatmal district and raised at Pench Tiger Reserve.

SURROUNDED BY

Buldhana (south-west) | Khamgaon (north-east) | Buldhana district

- The sanctuary covers about 205 sq km and was notified in 1997.
- His sister was to be released in Painganga Wildlife Sanctuary in Yavatmal district.
- Leopards, sloth bears, striped hyenas, nilgai and sambar live in its forests.

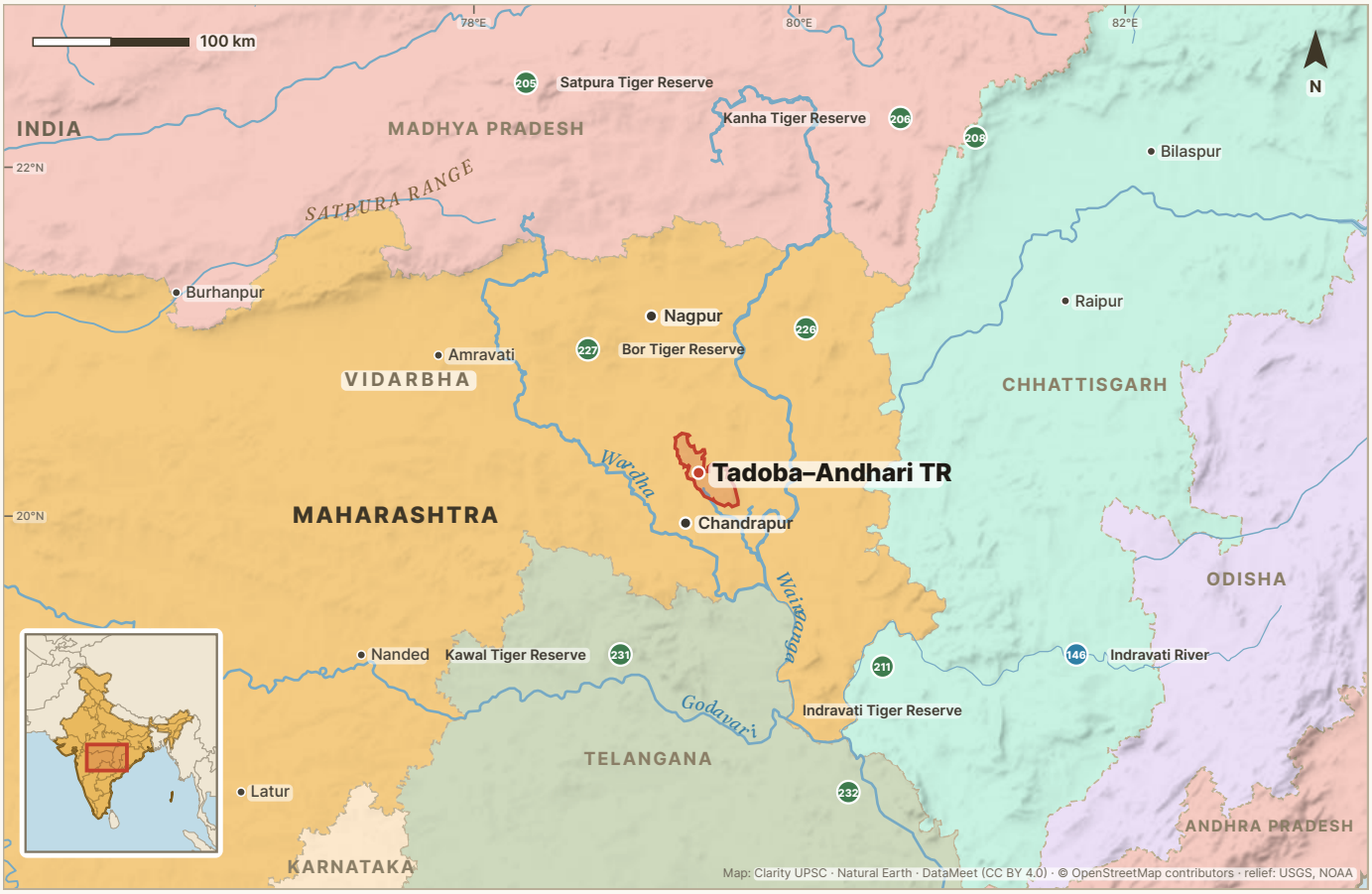
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Tiger Reserve · Jan 2026

229 Tadoba–Andhari Tiger Reserve

Chandrapur district, Maharashtra



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 Tadoba–Andhari Tiger Reserve reported a drive to sterilise and vaccinate stray dogs in its 95 buffer-zone villages; 2,271 dogs had been treated since January 2025. Dog attacks had killed deer, hares and peafowl and spread rabies and distemper.

WHERE IT IS

The reserve lies in Chandrapur district of eastern Maharashtra (Vidarbha). It covers about 1,727 sq km, including a core of about 625 sq km. Tadoba Lake, Kolsa Lake and the Andhari River keep water available all year.

SURROUNDED BY Chandrapur (about 45 km) · Nagpur (about 150 km) · Vidarbha region

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Tadoba National Park (116.55 sq km, 1955) is Maharashtra's oldest national park.
- Named after the local deity Taru (Tadoba) and the Andhari River.
- Brought under Project Tiger in 1993–94; southern tropical dry deciduous teak forest.
- Marsh crocodiles live in its lakes; gaur, dhole and sloth bear also occur.

Read the full story
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Tiger Reserve · Feb 2026

230 Sahyadri Tiger Reserve

Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur and Ratnagiri districts, northern Western Ghats, Maharashtra



WHY IN NEWS

On 7 February 2026 Sahyadri Tiger Reserve released a third translocated tigress, Hirkani (STR-06), in the core of Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary. She came from Pench Tiger Reserve and crossed the Koyna reservoir by boat. She was the fourth tiger moved in under the reintroduction project, after Baji, Tara and Chanda from Tadoba.

WHERE IT IS

The reserve runs along the crest of the northern Western Ghats, on the western edges of Satara and Sangli districts above the Konkan. Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary forms its northern part and Chandoli National Park its southern part.

SURROUNDED BY Satara district · Sangli district · Kolhapur district · Ratnagiri district (Konkan)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The reserve covers about 1,165 sq km: roughly 600 sq km core and 565 sq km buffer.
- The Shivsagar reservoir of the Koyna dam lies in its northern part; the Warna's Chandoli reservoir lies in the south.
- Hirkani was PTR-123 in Pench; she travelled about 850 km by road before the boat crossing.
- Camera traps photographed a tiger in Chandoli in May 2018, the first such evidence in eight years.

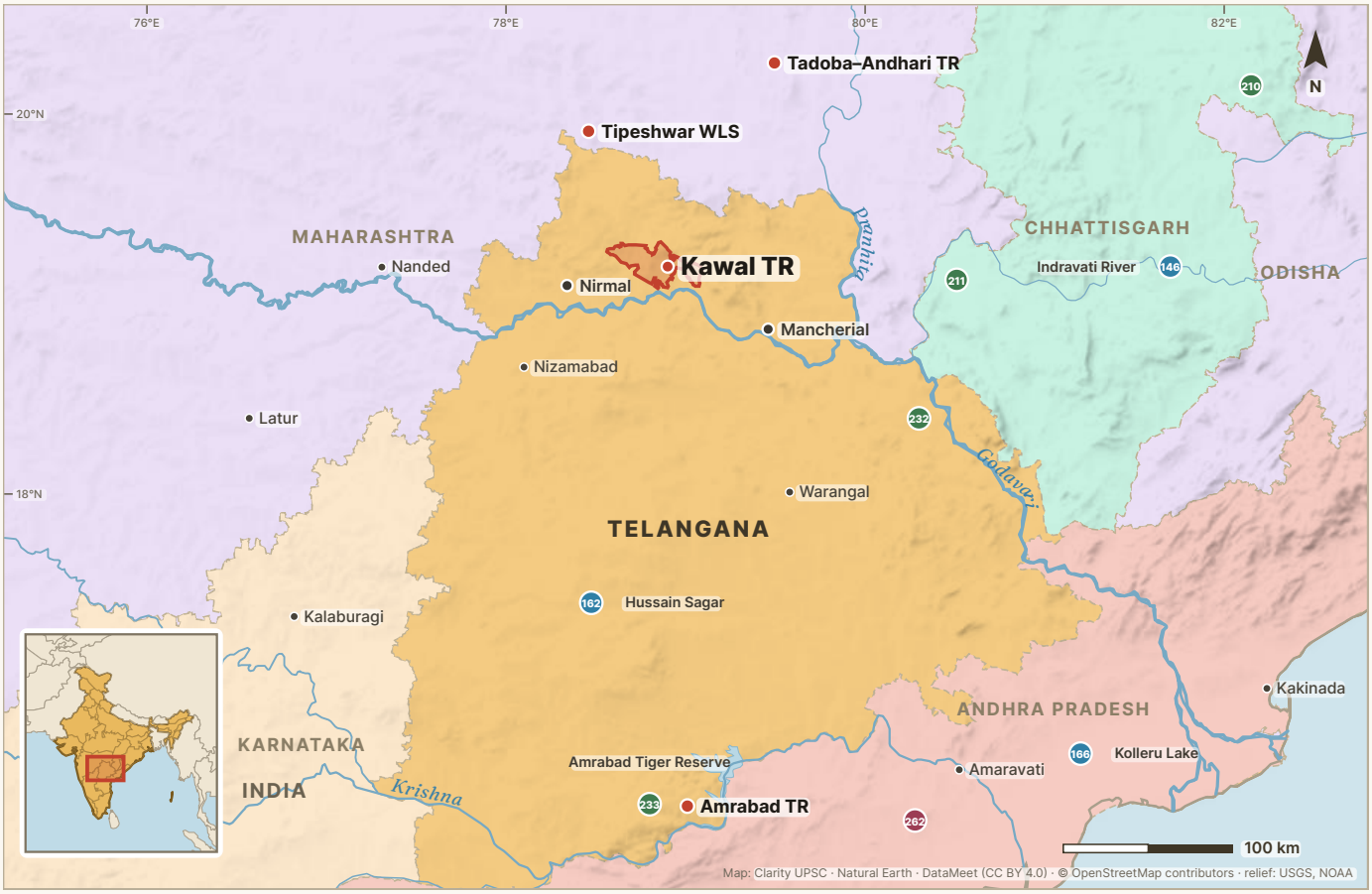
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Tiger Reserve | Jan 2026 | Feb 2026

231 Kawal Tiger Reserve

Northern Telangana, Godavari catchment



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 Kawal Tiger Reserve enlisted volunteers for the first time in its All India Tiger Estimation count. In February 2026 officials proposed bringing tigers from Madhya Pradesh, because about 23 tigers had passed through but none had settled.

WHERE IT IS

Kawal lies in Mancherial and Nirmal districts of northern Telangana, in the catchment of the Godavari and its tributary, the Kadam. It sits at the southern edge of the Central Indian Tiger Landscape. Tigers reach it from Maharashtra's Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve and Tipeshwar sanctuary, crossing the Penganga.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Maharashtra

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1965, Kawal was notified as a tiger reserve in 2012; the NTCA lists 2,015.44 sq km.
- The All India Tiger Estimation, held every four years, uses pugmarks, scat and hair samples, line-transect walks and camera traps.
- Carrying capacity is what habitat and prey can sustain. Reintroduction restores a vanished population; augmentation adds animals to a small one.
- Its dry deciduous forests hold about 260 bird species, including the red-necked falcon (Falco chicquera), which the IUCN lists as Near Threatened.

PRELIMS TRAP Kawal lies in the Godavari basin of northern Telangana; Amrabad lies in the Nallamala hills of the Krishna basin.

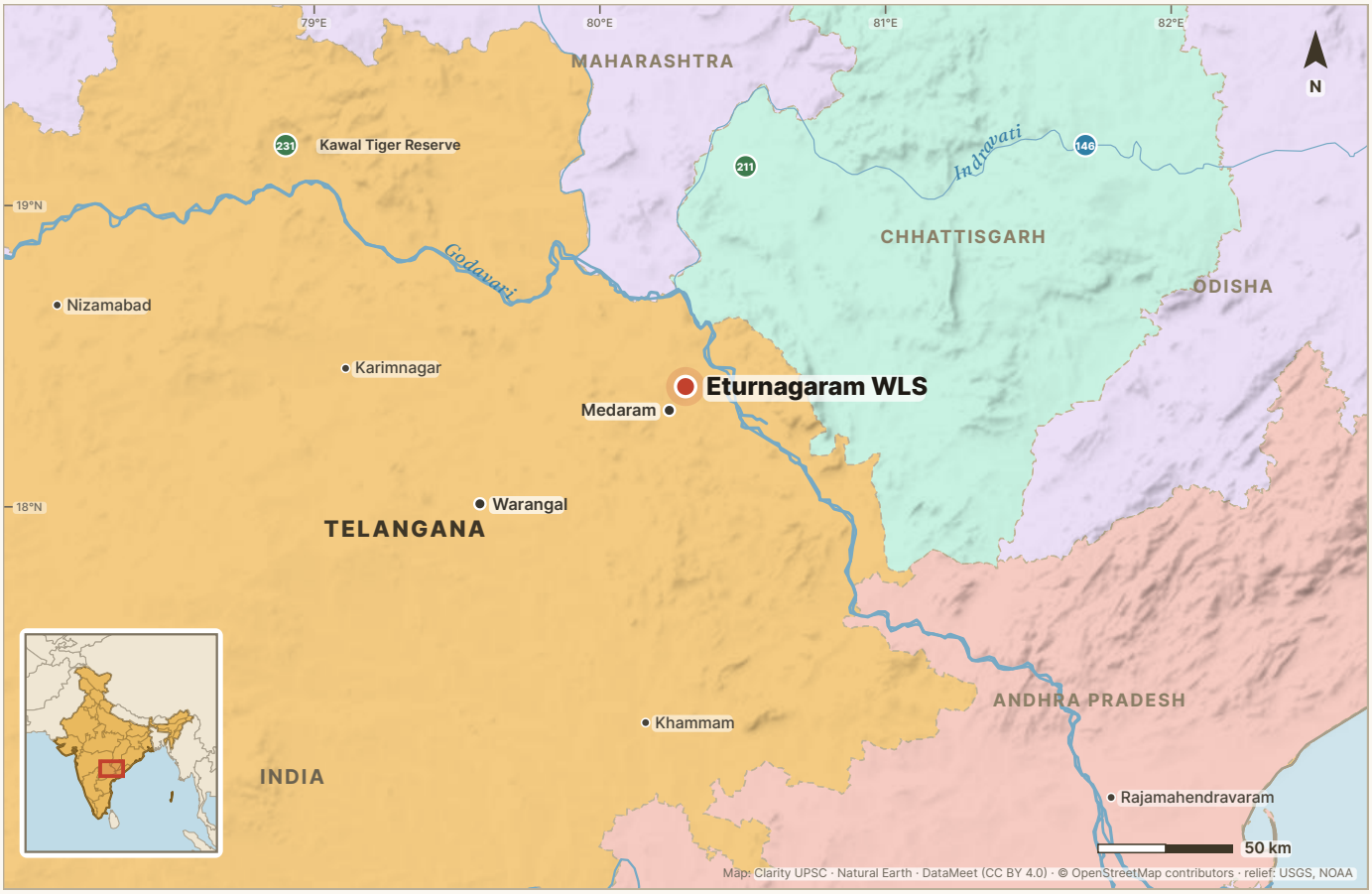
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Clarity UPSC

Wildlife Sanctuary · Apr 2026

232 Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary

Mulugu district, north-eastern Telangana, on the Godavari



WHY IN NEWS

In mid-April 2026 a forest fire burned hundreds of hectares of Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary in the Tadvai and Eturnagaram ranges. The district forest officer said the fires were set deliberately to help the collection of tendu leaves and mahua flowers. Ten quick-response teams and drones were deployed.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary lies in Mulugu district of Telangana, near the Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra borders. The Godavari passes through it, and a perennial stream, Dayyam Vagu, splits it into two halves. Mulugu has about 2.9 lakh hectares of forest, the most of any Telangana district.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Chhattisgarh · Maharashtra

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Declared on 30 January 1952 by the Hyderabad government, it is one of Telangana's oldest sanctuaries and covers about 812 sq km.
- The biennial Sammakka Saralamma Jatara at Medaram, one of India's largest tribal festivals, is held inside the sanctuary.
- Its southern tropical dry deciduous forest is dominated by teak, with bamboo, madhuca, terminalia and pterocarpus.
- Tigers, leopards, wolves, dholes, sloth bears, gaur and mugger crocodiles are recorded.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

Tiger Reserve · Apr 2026

233 Amrabad Tiger Reserve

Nallamala Hills, Nagarkurnool and Nalgonda districts, Telangana



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 a plan to relocate families from Amrabad Tiger Reserve's core divided the Chenchu community. On 17 April residents of several hamlets petitioned against eviction and were assured that no one would be moved by force; on 27 April other families rallied in Achampet for faster relocation.

WHERE IT IS

Amrabad lies in the Nallamala Hills of Telangana's Nagarkurnool and Nalgonda districts. Its perennial streams feed the Krishna River and reservoirs such as Srisailam and Nagarjunasagar.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Andhra Pradesh (across the Krishna)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Covers about 2,611 sq km; its core is the second largest among Indian tiger reserves, and it holds Telangana's largest tiger population.
- The Chenchus, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group, live in forest hamlets called pentas.
- Phase one of relocation covers 417 families from four core villages; each may take ₹15 lakh in cash or resettle at Bacharam reserve forest.
- Rights groups say moving Chenchus out of the Scheduled Area would weaken Fifth Schedule and PESA protections and require gram sabha consent.

PRELIMS TRAP Amrabad (Telangana) and Nagarjunasagar–Srisailam (Andhra Pradesh) tiger reserves both lie in the Nallamala Hills, on either side of the Krishna.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

Tiger Reserve | Apr 2026

234 Nagarjunasagar–Srisailam Tiger Reserve

Nallamala Hills, Nandyal, Palnadu and Markapuram districts, Andhra Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

On 3 January 2026 the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department began the camera-trap phase of the All India Tiger Estimation in Nagarjunasagar–Srisailam Tiger Reserve. In the Markapur division alone, 1,406 infrared cameras were paired at 703 tiger-movement points to identify tigers by their stripes over 40 days.

WHERE IT IS

The reserve lies in the Nallamala Hills of the Eastern Ghats, in Nandyal, Palnadu and Markapuram districts of Andhra Pradesh. Markapuram district was carved out of Prakasam on 31 December 2025. The Krishna has cut a gorge about 200 m deep through the reserve. Amrabad Tiger Reserve lies across the river in Telangana.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Telangana (Amrabad, across the Krishna)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- At about 3,728 sq km it is among India's largest tiger reserves; it was established in 1983.
- The reserve has four divisions: Markapur, Giddalur, Atmakur and Nandyal.
- The estimation ran in spells: a sign survey of carnivores and prey (1–7 December 2025), movement data, then camera traps; images go to the NTCA.
- India estimates its tigers every four years; the 2026 exercise follows the 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2022 cycles.

PRELIMS TRAP Nagarjunasagar–Srisailam is in Andhra Pradesh; Amrabad, across the Krishna, is Telangana's reserve in the same Nallamala landscape.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

Bird Sanctuary · Jan 2026

235 Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary

Doravarisatram mandal near Sullurpeta, Tirupati district, Andhra Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

On 10–11 January 2026 Tirupati district held its annual Flamingo Festival, with events at Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary and along Pulicat Lake. Forest officials estimated that more than 7,500 birds were nesting at Nelapattu that winter.

WHERE IT IS

Nelapattu lies in Doravarisatram mandal near Sullurpeta, close to National Highway 16, in Tirupati district of Andhra Pradesh. Pulicat Lake, a brackish lagoon on the Andhra Pradesh–Tamil Nadu border, lies to the south-east.

SURROUNDED BY Sullurpeta · Pulicat Lake (south-east) · National Highway 16 · Sriharikota (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Established in 1976, it covers about 459 ha: the Kalluru reserve forest, unreserved land and the Nelapattu irrigation tank.
- Spot-billed pelicans nest high on Barringtonia acutangula trees rising from the tank; openbills take the middle branches and cormorants the lower ones.
- About 189 bird species are recorded, around 50 of them migratory.

PRELIMS TRAP Nelapattu is a freshwater tank where pelicans breed; Pulicat, India's second-largest brackish lagoon, straddles the Andhra Pradesh–Tamil Nadu border.

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Wildlife Sanctuary | Mar 2026

236 Kappatagudda Wildlife Sanctuary

Gadag, Mundargi and Shirahatti taluks, Gadag district, northern Karnataka



WHY IN NEWS

In early March 2026 the Karnataka High Court directed the state to notify the left-out parts of the Kappatagudda Reserve Forest as part of Kappatagudda Wildlife Sanctuary. The court called the 2019 notification, which covered only 244.15 sq km of the roughly 300 sq km forest, arbitrary.

WHERE IT IS

Kappatagudda is a range of dry hills south of Gadag town in northern Karnataka. The sanctuary spans Gadag, Mundargi and Shirahatti taluks of Gadag district. Stone-crushing units operate near the fourth block of the reserve forest.

SURROUNDED BY Gadag town (north) | Mundargi taluk (east) | Shirahatti taluk (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It was notified on 16 May 2019, though the State Board for Wildlife had resolved on 9 January 2019 to include the whole reserve forest.
- The court dismissed petitions by stone-crushing firms, noting that their units fall within the eco-sensitive zone notified on 4 June 2025.
- The state may still alter the boundary later, but only through the procedure of the Wildlife (Protection) Act.
- Its dry deciduous scrub and grasslands hold wolves, striped hyenas, blackbuck, chinkara and four-horned antelope.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

Tiger Reserve · Apr 2026

237 Kali Tiger Reserve

Western Ghats, Uttara Kannada, northern Karnataka



WHY IN NEWS

On 2 April 2026 the Union environment ministry issued a draft notification declaring 663.32 sq km around Karnataka's Kali Tiger Reserve an eco-sensitive zone (ESZ), extending up to 10 km from the reserve boundary.

WHERE IT IS

Kali Tiger Reserve lies in the Western Ghats of Uttara Kannada district, northern Karnataka, on the Goa border. The Kali River, after which the moth is named, flows through it. The draft ESZ marks no zone on the north, west and north-west sides, citing the adjoining Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary.

SURROUNDED BY Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary (north) · Goa · Kali River · Dandeli town · Uttara Kannada district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary (1956) and Anshi National Park (1987) form the reserve; it became Anshi–Dandeli Tiger Reserve in 2007 and was renamed Kali in 2015.
- Moist deciduous, semi-evergreen and evergreen forests place it in the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot.
- The reserve holds the main catchment of the Kali River and its tributaries, the Nagzari and the Kaneri.
- The Union environment ministry notifies eco-sensitive zones under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, to regulate activities such as mining and polluting industry around protected areas.

PRELIMS TRAP Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary, north of Kali, is in Karnataka's Belagavi district; Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary is in Maharashtra's Western Ghats.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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Wildlife Sanctuary | Mar 2026

238 Sharavathi Lion-Tailed Macaque Wildlife Sanctuary

Shivamogga and Uttara Kannada districts, Karnataka



WHY IN NEWS

On 10 March 2026 the Karnataka High Court, hearing a PIL against the 2,000 MW Sharavathi pumped-storage project, barred any work on the ground in the sanctuary and its eco-sensitive zone without its order. Minutes released in March showed the National Board for Wildlife's standing committee had deferred the project after its inspection panel recommended rejection.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary covers about 930.16 sq km across Shivamogga and Uttara Kannada districts of Karnataka. It includes forests around the Sharavathi and Aghanashini catchments. The Sharavathi flows west, forms Jog Falls and reaches the Arabian Sea.

SURROUNDED BY Linganamakki Reservoir | Sharavathi River | Aghanashini River | Western Ghats

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Karnataka expanded and renamed it in 2019, adding the Aghanashini conservation reserve; it holds the lion-tailed macaque's northernmost viable population.
- The lion-tailed macaque (Macaca silenus) is Endangered, found only in the Western Ghats, and rarely crosses open ground.
- The project would use the Talakalale and Gerusoppa reservoirs; RTI papers showed NBWL's June 2025 in-principle recommendation was conveyed in July 2025 as full clearance.
- Pumped storage works like a battery: the panel noted the plant would draw over 2,500 MW by day to supply 2,000 MW at night.

PRELIMS TRAP The Sharavathi flows west to the Arabian Sea; the Tunga and Bhadra, from the same Ghats, flow east to the Krishna system.

Read the full story
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Wildlife Sanctuary · Apr 2026

239 Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary

Western Ghats, Udupi district, Karnataka (around Kollur)



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 the National Green Tribunal sought a plan to stop untreated sewage from Kollur, the temple town inside Karnataka's Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary, entering the Souparnika river. In April 2026 a Deccan Herald report described pilgrimage waste turning the river into a sewer inside the sanctuary.

WHERE IT IS

Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary lies in the Western Ghats of Udupi district, Karnataka. The Kollur Mookambika temple, a major pilgrimage centre, stands within it. The Souparnika and Chakra rivers flow through the sanctuary.

SURROUNDED BY Kollur temple town · Souparnika River · Chakra River · Udupi district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Karnataka notified the sanctuary in 1974; it was later enlarged to about 370 sq km.
- It forms a chain of protected forests with Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary and Kudremukh National Park.
- Kollur's underground drainage scheme, begun in 2015 at about ₹20 crore and finished in 2020, has not stopped sewage reaching the river.

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Shettihalli Wildlife Sanctuary

Shivamogga district, Karnataka (Western Ghats foothills)

Wildlife Sanctuary | Jan 2026



WHY IN NEWS

On 28 January 2026 Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre visited Shettihalli Wildlife Sanctuary amid a row over the state's move to shrink its boundary. Weeks earlier the State Board for Wildlife had deferred the 'rationalisation' proposal because of legal complications.

WHERE IT IS

Shettihalli lies in Shivamogga district on the foothills of the Western Ghats, between Shivamogga city and Thirthahalli. Its original boundary takes in part of Shivamogga city, including a bus station and government buildings, which the state wants to leave out.

SURROUNDED BY Shivamogga city (north-east) | Thirthahalli (south-west) | Western Ghats foothills

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It was notified on 23 November 1974 under Section 18 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, which defines a sanctuary by its boundary.
- The state puts the extent at 395.6 sq km; records show 695.6 sq km, and the 1974 boundary encloses over 700 sq km.
- In July 2025 the state Cabinet approved the reduction; the NBWL accepted 28.75 sq km added to Bhadra Tiger Reserve in exchange.
- A Supreme Court order in Writ Petition 337 of 1995 bars de-reservation of sanctuaries pending its orders.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

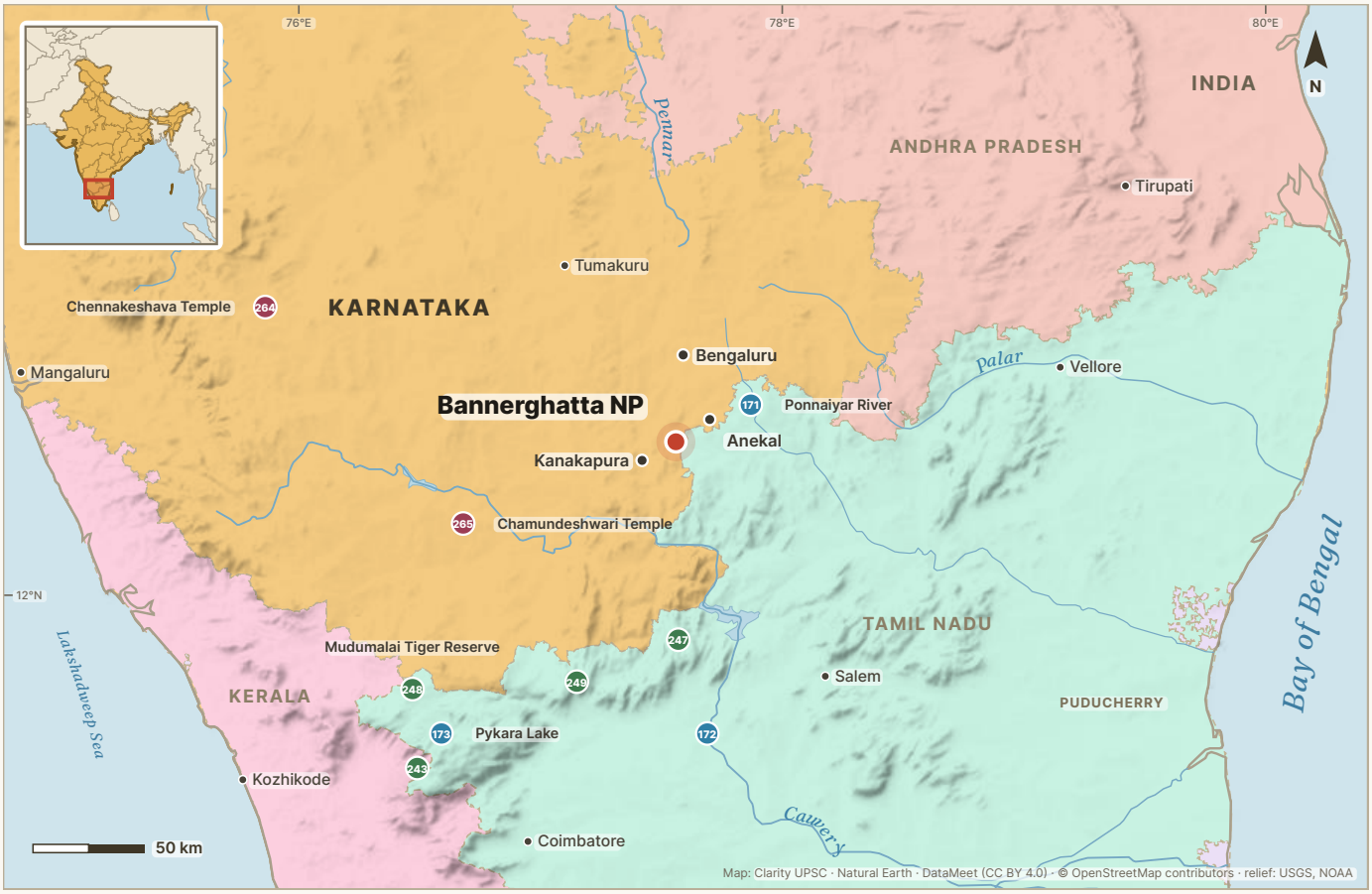
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241

Bannerghatta National Park

National Park · Jan 2026

Anekal hills, about 22 km south of Bengaluru, Karnataka



WHY IN NEWS

On 5 January 2026 the Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee recommended withdrawing the March 2020 notification that cut Bannerghatta National Park's eco-sensitive zone to 168.84 sq km. It asked for the 2016 draft extent of 268.96 sq km to be restored and re-notified within six months.

WHERE IT IS

Bannerghatta lies in the Anekal hills about 22 km south of Bengaluru. With three wildlife sanctuaries in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, it forms a contiguous forest complex of about 3,000 sq km that holds about 100 elephants in some seasons.

SURROUNDED BY Bengaluru (north) · Anekal (east) · Kanakapura (west) · Tamil Nadu border (south-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Declared a national park in 1974, it covers about 260.5 sq km of granite hills, scrub and deciduous forest.
- The 2016 draft set the zone at 100 m to 4.5 km from the park boundary; the 2020 notification cut it to 100 m–1 km.
- The CEC named three elephant corridors: Karadikkal–Madeshwara, Tali–Bilikal and Bilikal–Jowlagiri.
- It found that a Cabinet sub-committee, not the expert committee required under the 2011 ESZ guidelines, had decided the reduction.

PRELIMS TRAP Eco-sensitive zones are notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; national parks and sanctuaries are declared under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Read the full story
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Wildlife Sanctuary · Jan 2026

242 Aralam Butterfly Sanctuary

Near Iritty, Kannur district, northern Kerala (Western Ghats)



WHY IN NEWS

In January 2026 Kerala announced that Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary in Kannur district had been renamed the Aralam Butterfly Sanctuary, the state's first, by a notification dated 26 December 2025. The State Board for Wildlife had recommended the change because of the area's rich butterfly life.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary covers about 55 sq km on the western slopes of the Western Ghats in Kannur district, northern Kerala, near Iritty. Its forests are contiguous with those of Kodagu district in Karnataka.

NEIGHBOURING STATE

Karnataka (Kodagu district)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Established in 1984, it records about 266 butterfly species, more than 80% of those found in Kerala.
- From December to February, Common Albatross and other butterflies move down from the hills and gather on wet riverbanks to 'mud-puddle'.
- Aralam is part of the Western Ghats UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Kerala plans a 'butterfly village' linking the Kelakam, Kanichar, Aralam and Muzhakunnu panchayats with the sanctuary.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



243 Karimpuzha Wildlife Sanctuary

Nilambur area, Malappuram district, northern Kerala

Wildlife Sanctuary · Feb 2026

In news: From 22 to 25 January 2026 a faunal survey of Kerala's Karimpuzha Wildlife Sanctuary recorded 171 bird, 177 butterfly and 42 dragonfly and damselfly species. Eight birds, 20 butterflies and seven odonates were new to the sanctuary. The Forest Department ran it with STEAR, Nilambur, and the Travancore Natural History Society.

SURROUNDED BY

Silent Valley National Park · Mukurthi National Park (Tamil Nadu) · Nilambur · Malappuram district

- Notified in 2020 as Kerala's youngest protected area, it covers about 227 sq km and rises from about 40 m to over 2,500 m.
- Its records now total 247 bird, 223 butterfly and 63 odonate species.
- Dragonflies and damselflies (odonates) breed in water, so their variety is used as a sign of healthy streams.

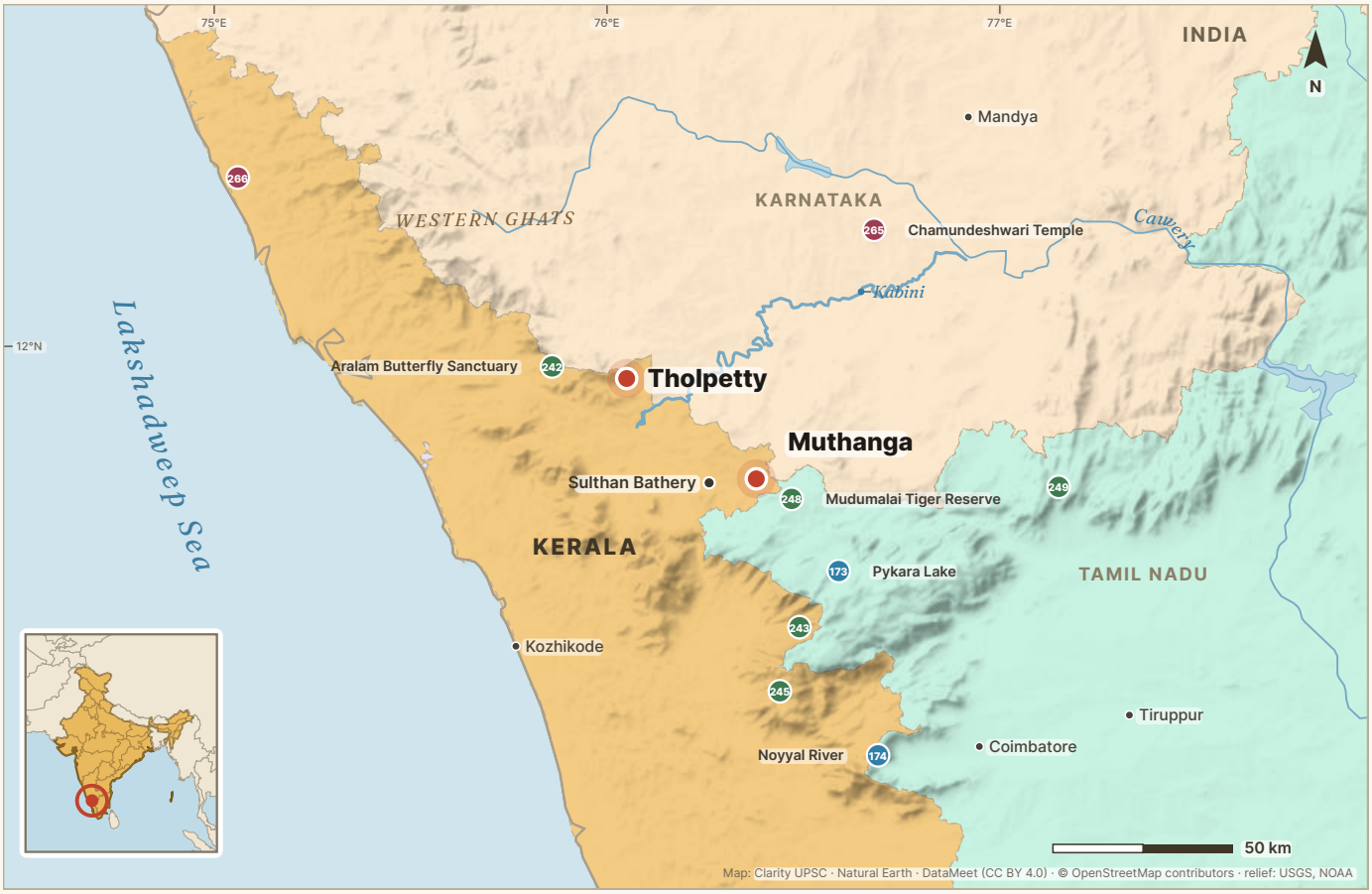
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244

Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary

Wayanad district, northern Kerala, at the Kerala–Karnataka–Tamil Nadu junction

Wildlife Sanctuary | Feb 2026 | Mar 2026



WHY IN NEWS

In February 2026 experts reported that vulture nesting in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary had declined, linked to human disturbance and invasive Senna trees, but the population stayed stable at about 80 birds. On 7–8 March 2026 Wayanad joined a synchronised vulture census across Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala.

WHERE IT IS

Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary lies in the Western Ghats of northern Kerala, in two separate blocks. Muthanga, near Sulthan Bathery, adjoins Bandipur in Karnataka and Mudumalai in Tamil Nadu. Tholpetty, near Thirunelli, adjoins Nagarahole in Karnataka. The forests form part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Karnataka | Tamil Nadu

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Declared in 1973, the sanctuary covers about 344 sq km of mainly moist and dry deciduous forest.
- Its resident vultures are White-rumped, Indian and Red-headed, all Critically Endangered; Himalayan Griffon and Cinereous vultures visit occasionally.
- Veterinary diclofenac, which damages vultures' kidneys, drove South Asia's Gyps collapse; India banned its veterinary use.
- Wayanad is the only place in Kerala where vultures live; its less dense forests hold nearly 170 swampy grasslands called vayals.

PRELIMS TRAP Wayanad Sanctuary has two separate blocks: Muthanga adjoins Bandipur and Mudumalai, while Tholpetty adjoins Nagarahole.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

National Park · Mar 2026

245 Silent Valley National Park

Palakkad district, northern Kerala (Nilgiri Hills)



WHY IN NEWS

From 6 to 8 March 2026 the first bird survey covering both the core and buffer of Kerala's Silent Valley National Park recorded 192 species, including the rare migrant Asian house martin. The Forest Department and the Malabar Natural History Society ran it with 85 birdwatchers.

WHERE IT IS

Silent Valley National Park lies in the Nilgiri Hills in Palakkad district, northern Kerala. Mukurthi National Park in Tamil Nadu and Karimpuzha Wildlife Sanctuary adjoin it. The Kunthipuzha drains the valley, and the Bhavani rises nearby.

SURROUNDED BY

- Mukurthi National Park (Tamil Nadu)
- Karimpuzha Wildlife Sanctuary
- New Amarambalam Reserved Forest
- Attappadi Reserved Forest

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A 'Save Silent Valley' campaign stopped a hydroelectric dam on the Kunthipuzha; the park was formally inaugurated in September 1985.
- It is the core of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (1986) and part of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site.
- The survey found 20 Western Ghats endemics, such as the Nilgiri laughingthrush, and breeding Sri Lankan frogmouths and Malabar trogons.
- A 2023 survey limited to the 89.5 sq km core had recorded 175 species.

PRELIMS TRAP Silent Valley's Kunthipuzha flows south to the Bharathappuzha, which reaches the Arabian Sea; the Bhavani, which rises nearby, flows east to the Cauvery.

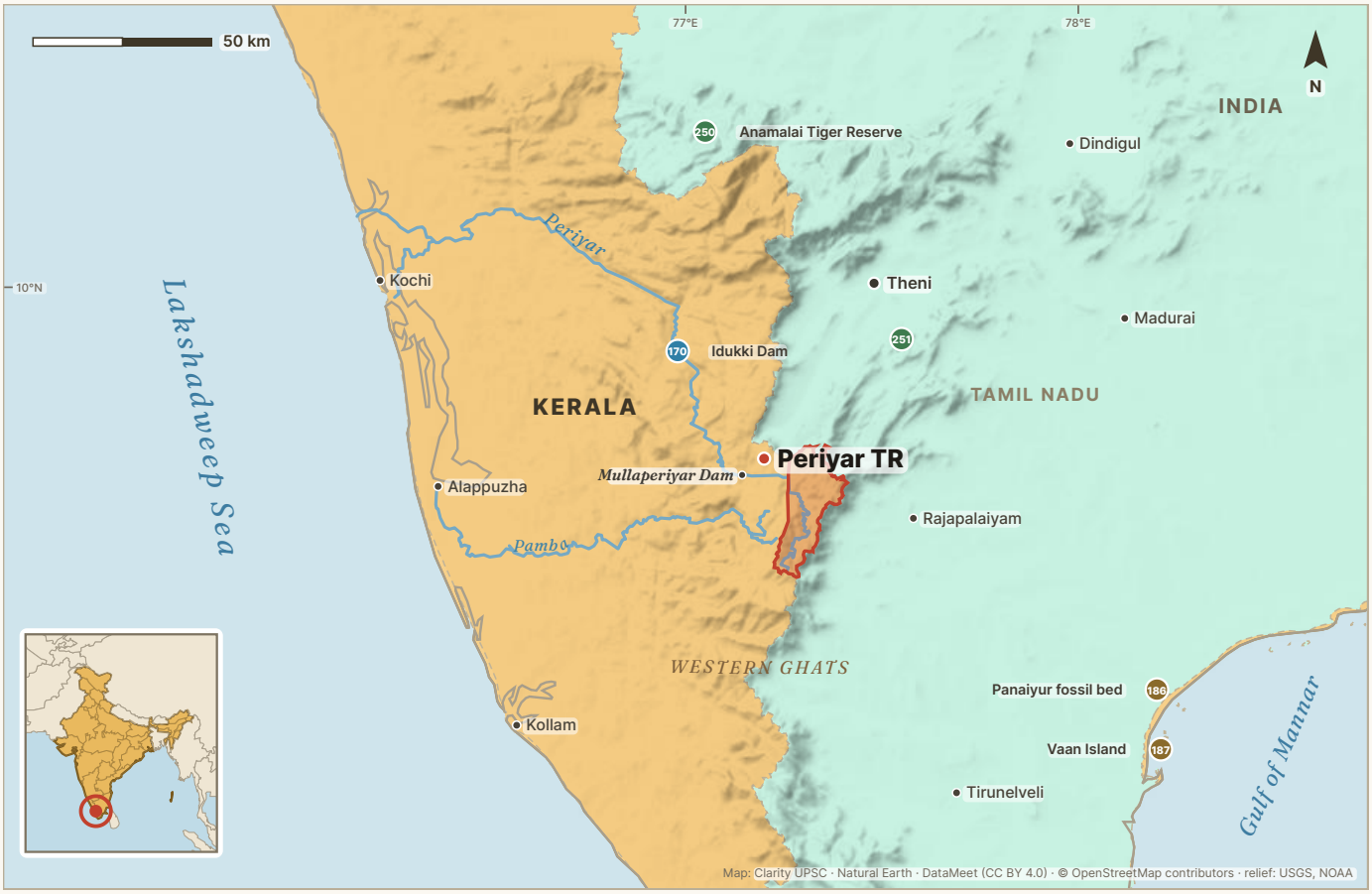
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Tiger Reserve · Mar 2026

246 Periyar Tiger Reserve

Idukki and Pathanamthitta districts, Kerala



WHY IN NEWS

From late February to 27 March 2026 Periyar Tiger Reserve ran the camera-trap phase of the 2025–26 All India Tiger Estimation, placing two cameras in each of 470 grids to photograph both sides of every tiger.

WHERE IT IS

Periyar Tiger Reserve lies in Kerala's southern Western Ghats across Idukki and Pathanamthitta districts. Tamil Nadu's Srivilliputhur–Megamalai Tiger Reserve adjoins it to the east. It protects the watersheds of the Periyar and Pamba rivers, and its forests surround Periyar Lake, formed by the Mullaperiyar Dam in 1895.

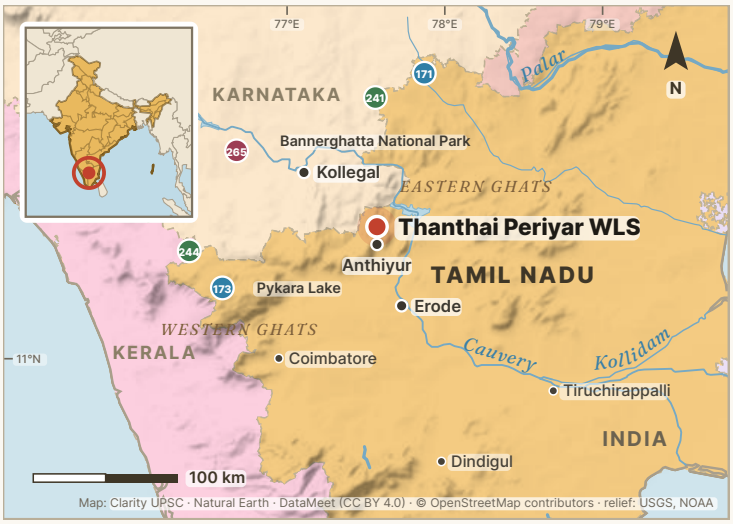
NEIGHBOURING STATE: Tamil Nadu

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Travancore created Nellikkampatty Game Sanctuary here in 1934; Periyar joined Project Tiger in 1978–79 and covers 925 sq km.
- The African catfish (Clarias gariepinus) breathes air and spreads aggressively; India prohibits its culture and breeding.
- Eco Development Committees link nearby communities with protected-area management.
- In the tiger estimation, camera trapping follows an eight-day sign survey, and the data go to the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

PRELIMS TRAP Periyar Lake was created by the Mullaperiyar Dam, which stands in Kerala but is operated by Tamil Nadu.

Read the full story
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247 Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary

Bargur and Anthiyur hills, Erode district, north-western Tamil Nadu

Wildlife Sanctuary | Jan 2026

In news: On 31 January–1 February 2026 Tamil Nadu's first synchronised raptor census recorded 25 species of birds of prey in the Erode Forest Division, which covers Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary. A near-threatened grey-headed fish eagle was seen along the Palar in the Chennampatti range.

SURROUNDED BY Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve | Kollegal forests (Karnataka) | Palar River | Anthiyur

- Notified in 2024 as Tamil Nadu's 18th wildlife sanctuary; six tribal habitations and roads were left out of its area.
- The census covered the Anthiyur, Bargur, Thattakarai, Chennampatti and Erode ranges with night point counts, vehicle searches and GPS-tracked foot surveys.
- It is named after the social reformer E.V. Ramasamy, known as 'Thanthai Periyar'.

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248 Mudumalai Tiger Reserve

Nilgiris district, Tamil Nadu, at the Tamil Nadu–Karnataka–Kerala junction

Tiger Reserve | Apr 2026

In news: In March 2026 forest officials reported the first vulture nest found in the core of Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. In April 2026 the Nilgiris Collector crossed by coracle to Thengumarahada, a village in the core, to check its polling booths before Tamil Nadu's Assembly election on 23 April.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Tamil Nadu | Karnataka | Kerala

- Protected since 1940, it joined the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve in 1986 and became a tiger reserve in 2007, with a 367.59 sq km buffer.
- The previous vulture census counted 75 active nests in the landscape, 54 of them in Mudumalai.
- 'Mudumalai' joins the Tamil words for 'ancient' and 'hill'.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

Tiger Reserve · Mar 2026

249 Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve

Erode district, north-western Tamil Nadu



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 the Tamil Nadu government told the Madras High Court that 42 of 53 resorts and farmhouses inspected in the eco-sensitive zone of Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve lacked permissions and had been sealed.

WHERE IT IS

Sathyamangalam lies in Erode district of north-western Tamil Nadu, where the Western and Eastern Ghats meet. It is part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve landscape and connects with the Mudumalai, Bandipur and Biligiri Ranganatha Temple (BRT) forests.

SURROUNDED BY Mudumalai Tiger Reserve · Bandipur Tiger Reserve · BRT Tiger Reserve · Moyar valley

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A sanctuary in 2008 and a tiger reserve in 2013, under Section 38V of the Wild Life (Protection) Act; it covers 1,408.41 sq km.
- Tiger numbers rose to 80 by 2018 from about 25–28 in 2011; the reserve won the TX2 award in 2022.
- Project Elephant, a centrally sponsored scheme begun in 1992, supports elephant habitat, corridors and conflict management.
- Building in notified hill areas here needs Hill Area Conservation Authority approval.

PRELIMS TRAP Sathyamangalam is in Tamil Nadu; the BRT Tiger Reserve that it adjoins is in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar district.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

Tiger Reserve | Jan 2026 | Apr 2026

250 Anamalai Tiger Reserve

Anaimalai Hills, Coimbatore and Tiruppur districts, Tamil Nadu



WHY IN NEWS

From 7 January 2026 Anamalai Tiger Reserve staff used the M-STrIPES app for the All India Tiger Estimation, walking 115 transect lines. In April 2026, before the Assembly poll on 23 April, forest staff guarded about 40 polling booths in the Valparai and Manombolly ranges against wild elephants.

WHERE IT IS

Anamalai Tiger Reserve lies in the Anaimalai Hills of the Western Ghats in Coimbatore and Tiruppur districts, Tamil Nadu. Kerala's Parambikulam Tiger Reserve adjoins it across the state border. Elevations range from 340 m to 2,513 m.

SURROUNDED BY Parambikulam Tiger Reserve (Kerala) | Valparai plateau | Pollachi | Tiruppur district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its tigers rose from 10 in 2014 to 15 in 2018 and 25 in 2022; seven or eight also range into Parambikulam.
- Formerly the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park; Tamil Nadu notified it as a tiger reserve in 2007.
- More than 4,600 Adivasi people of six tribes, including the Kadar, Malasar, Pulaiyar and Eravallan, live in 34 settlements inside.
- M-STrIPES (Monitoring System for Tigers – Intensive Protection and Ecological Status) lets staff record and geotag sightings and signs on phones.

PRELIMS TRAP Anamalai Tiger Reserve is in Tamil Nadu; the adjoining Parambikulam Tiger Reserve is in Kerala's Palakkad district.

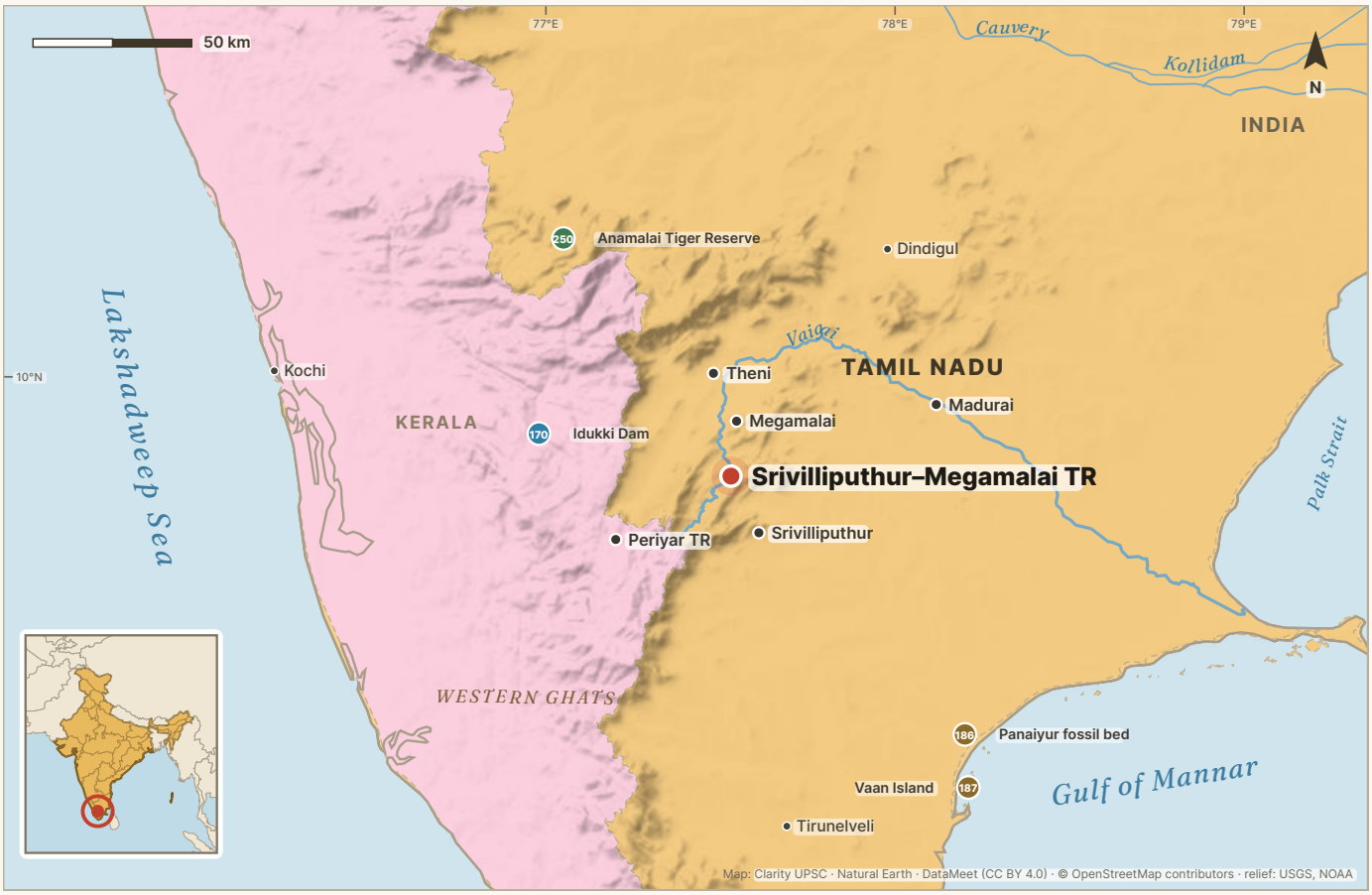
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Tiger Reserve | Mar 2026 | Apr 2026

251 Srivilliputhur–Megamalai Tiger Reserve

Theni and Virudhunagar districts, Tamil Nadu, on the Kerala border



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 the Zoological Survey of India reported nine new species, including a jumping spider and a damselfly, from its 2018–22 surveys of Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuary. On 23 April 2026 all five voters at Vellimalai, an estate booth deep in the reserve's forests, cast their votes.

WHERE IT IS

The reserve lies in the Western Ghats of Theni and Virudhunagar districts, Tamil Nadu, along the Kerala border. It adjoins Kerala's Periyar Tiger Reserve and links forests towards Anamalai and Kalakad–Mundanthurai. The Vaigai rises in its Megamalai hills.

SURROUNDED BY Periyar Tiger Reserve (Kerala) | Theni district | Virudhunagar district | Vaigai headwaters

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Formed in 2021 from the Megamalai and Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel sanctuaries, it is India's 51st tiger reserve and covers about 1,016.57 sq km.
- The ZSI surveys recorded 977 species: 511 vertebrates, including 286 birds, and 466 invertebrates; about 82% of 69 land snails are Western Ghats endemics.
- New species include the jumping spider Stenaelurillus megamalai, two mayflies, a damselfly endemic to the Megamalai–Periyar landscape, and a bark louse and cockroach.
- Vellimalai's booth, in Andipatti Assembly constituency, recorded 100% turnout; many residents left after the tiger reserve brought forest restrictions.

Read the full story
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INDIA

Heritage places

15 places

252 Piprahwa Stupa · Stupa (archaeological site)

253 Kalinjar Fort · Fort (National Geo-Heritage Site)

254 Devnimori · Buddhist stupa site

255 Somnath Temple, Prabhas Patan · Temple

256 Raisen Fort · Fort

257 Balirajgarh · Archaeological site (fortified mound)

258 Kamakhya Temple, Guwahati · Temple

259 Living Root Bridges, Meghalaya · Cultural landscape

260 Sinhagad Fort · Hill fort

261 Manchirevula (Beerappa Gudi hill) · Prehistoric site

262 Kondaveedu Fort · Hill fort

263 Sri Govindaraja Swamy Temple, Tirupati · Temple

264 Chennakeshava Temple, Belur · Temple

265 Chamundeshwari Temple, Chamundi Hills · Hill temple

266 Panayal megalithic rock-cut chamber · Megalithic burial site

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252

Piprahwa Stupa

Stupa (archaeological site) · Apr 2026

Siddharthnagar district, Uttar Pradesh, near the Nepal border



WHY IN NEWS

On 29 April 2026 the Piprahwa relics of the Buddha reached Leh by Indian Air Force aircraft. Their first exposition in Ladakh ran from 1 to 14 May 2026, at Jive-Tsal and other venues in Leh, with a visit to Zanskar.

WHERE IT IS

Piprahwa lies in Siddharthnagar district of Uttar Pradesh, just south of the Nepal border and near Lumbini. Many scholars identify it with ancient Kapilavastu, capital of the Shakyas.

SURROUNDED BY

- Siddharthnagar district, Uttar Pradesh
- Nepal (north)
- Lumbini, Nepal (north-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- In 1898 William Claxton Peppé found a stone coffer here with relic caskets; a Brahmi inscription linked them to the Buddha's Shakya kin.
- Excavations led by K. M. Srivastava in the 1970s found two more soapstone caskets deeper in the stupa.
- Gem relics held by the Peppé family were withdrawn from a Sotheby's auction in May 2025 and returned to India in July 2025.

PRELIMS TRAP Piprahwa (India) and Tilaurakot (Nepal) are both identified with ancient Kapilavastu.

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Kalinjar Fort

Fort (National Geo-Heritage Site) · Mar 2026

Banda district, Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh, on the Madhya Pradesh border



WHY IN NEWS

In March 2026 the Geological Survey of India (GSI) declared the hill around Kalinjar Fort in Banda district, Uttar Pradesh, a National Geo-Heritage Site. Rajinder Kumar, head of the GSI's Northern Region, inaugurated the site, where the GSI installed a board explaining its geology.

WHERE IT IS

Kalinjar Fort stands on an isolated hill in Banda district, in the Bundelkhand region of southern Uttar Pradesh. The Madhya Pradesh border (Panna district) lies just to the south. Banda town is to the north, Chitrakoot to the north-east and Khajuraho to the west.

SURROUNDED BY Banda (north) · Chitrakoot (north-east) · Panna district, Madhya Pradesh (south) · Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The hill shows the Eparchaean Unconformity: about 2.5-billion-year-old Bundelkhand granite overlain by about 1.2-billion-year-old Kaimur sandstone.
- An unconformity is a buried erosion surface; here it marks a gap of over a billion years in the rock record.
- Experts said the rock formations gave the fort its defensive strength; officials hope to promote Kalinjar with Khajuraho and Chitrakoot.
- A Chandela stronghold, Kalinjar saw Sher Shah Suri killed during his 1545 siege; Akbar's forces took it in 1569.

PRELIMS TRAP The Tirumala hills in Andhra Pradesh also expose an Eparchaean Unconformity, a GSI National Geological Monument; Kalinjar's new geo-heritage site is in Uttar Pradesh.

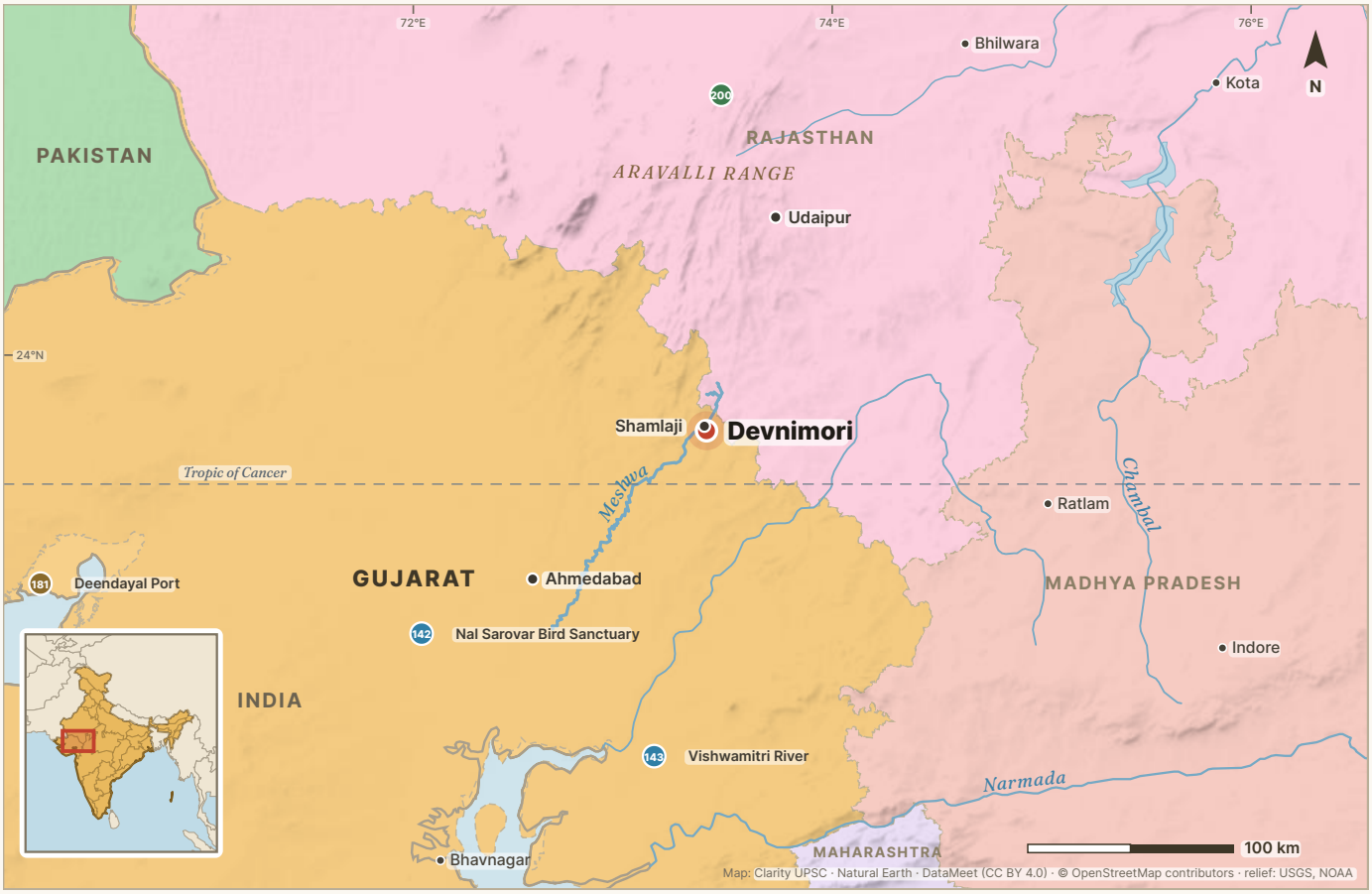
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254 Devnimori

Buddhist stupa site | Feb 2026

Near Shamlaji, Aravalli district, Gujarat, beside the Meshvo river



WHY IN NEWS

Buddha relics excavated at Devnimori, Gujarat, were displayed outside India for the first time, at Gangaramaya Temple in Colombo, from 4 to 10 February 2026. Sri Lanka's President Anura Kumara Dissanayake opened the exposition on 4 February, Sri Lanka's Independence Day. The relics returned on 11 February.

WHERE IT IS

Devnimori lies about 2 km from the temple town of Shamlaji in Aravalli district, north-eastern Gujarat, near the Rajasthan border. The site stood beside the Meshvo (Meshwa) river in the Aravalli foothills. The Meshvo reservoir later submerged the excavated remains.

SURROUNDED BY Shamlaji (Aravalli district) | Meshvo river and reservoir | Aravalli hills | Rajasthan (north-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- First explored in 1957 and excavated in 1960–63 by the M.S. University of Baroda, which keeps the relics in Vadodara.
- A Brahmi-script Sanskrit inscription on the casket reads 'dashabala sharira nilaya', the abode of the Buddha's bodily relics.
- The casket inscription is dated in the reign of the Western Kshatrapa ruler Rudrasena; scholars date the stupa to the 3rd–4th century CE.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the exposition during his state visit to Sri Lanka in April 2025.

PRELIMS TRAP The Devnimori relics come from Gujarat. The Piprahwa relics, linked to Kapilavastu, come from Siddharthnagar district in Uttar Pradesh.

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255 Somnath Temple, Prabhas Patan

Prabhas Patan, near Veraval, Gir Somnath district, Gujarat

Temple · Jan 2026

In news: From 8 to 11 January 2026 the Somnath Swabhiman Parv marked 1,000 years since Mahmud of Ghazni's raid on Somnath in 1026; Prime Minister Narendra Modi took part. Reports during the event highlighted a 1169 CE inscription in Prabhas Patan's Bhadrakali temple that records Somnath's history.

SURROUNDED BY Arabian Sea (south) · Veraval · Gir Somnath district · Saurashtra peninsula

- Somnath is revered as the first of the twelve Jyotirlingas of Shiva.
- The present temple, in Maru-Gurjara style, was rebuilt after Independence on Vallabhbhai Patel's initiative.
- The Bhadrakali inscription honours Bhava Brihaspati, preceptor of the Chalukya (Solanki) king Kumarapala of Anahilapataka (Patan).

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256 Raisen Fort

Hilltop above Raisen town, Raisen district, Madhya Pradesh

Fort · Mar 2026

In news: In March 2026 the National Human Rights Commission sought action-taken reports on cannon firing at Raisen Fort from the district magistrate and police, the Archaeological Survey of India and the culture ministry. The complaint said the firing damaged the ASI-protected fort, and videos showed provocative statements.

SURROUNDED BY Raisen town · Bhopal (west) · Sanchi (north)

- The fort dates to about the 11th century; it was first a Hindu stronghold and later passed to Afghan and Mughal rulers.
- Sher Shah Suri besieged Raisen and took it from the Rajput chief Puran Mal in 1543.
- Sanchi's stupas, in the same district, have been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1989.

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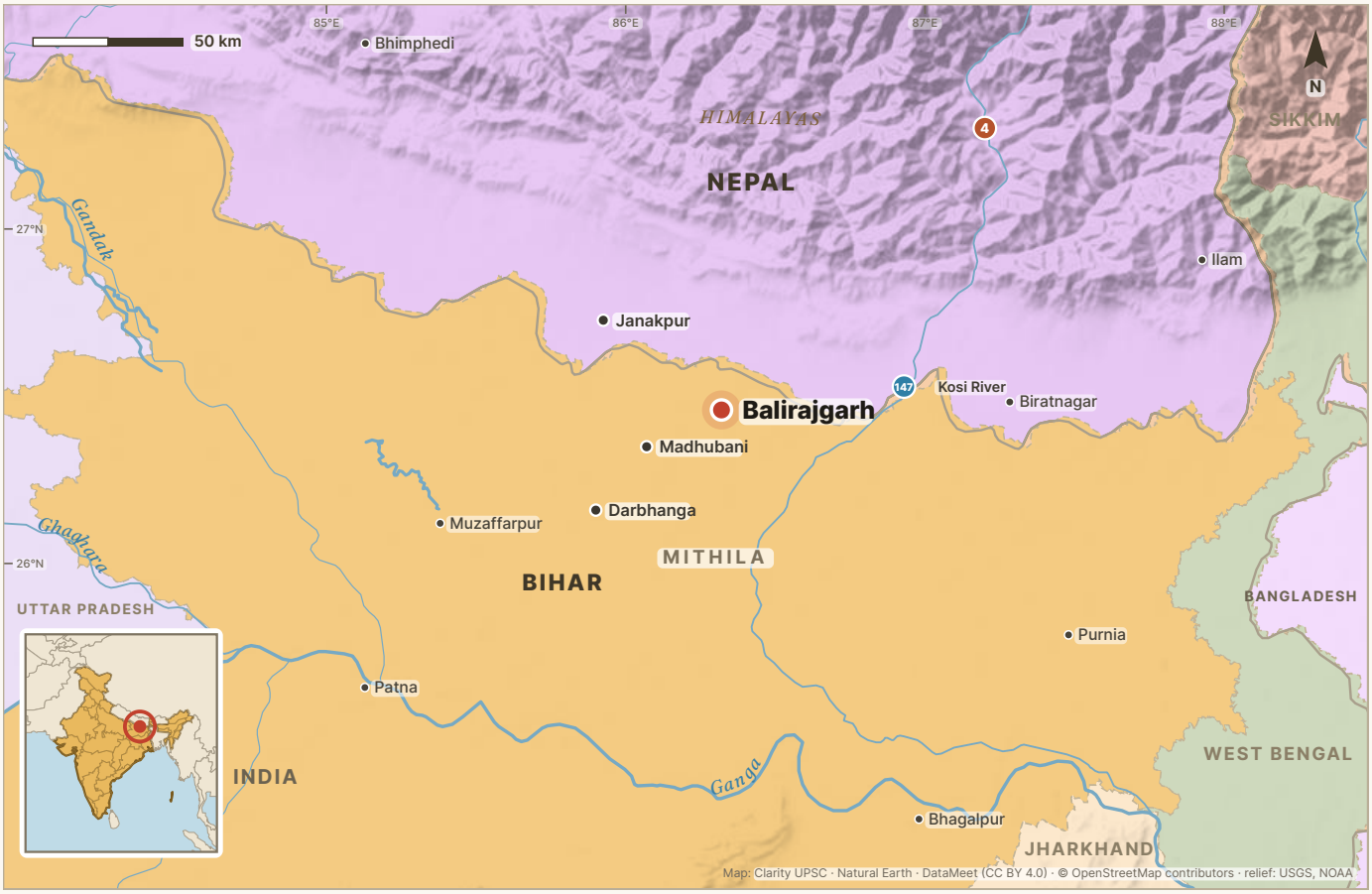
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Balirajgarh

Babubarhi block, Madhubani district, Bihar (Mithila region)

Archaeological site (fortified mound) | Mar 2026



WHY IN NEWS

On 28 March 2026 the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) began fresh excavation at Balirajgarh in Madhubani district, Bihar, after approving it on 26 February. The ASI's Patna circle hopes to trace Mithila's early urban past; earlier excavations at the site had been left unfinished.

WHERE IT IS

Balirajgarh lies in Babubarhi block of Madhubani district, about 35 km from the district town, in the Mithila region of north Bihar. The protected site, known locally as Raja Bali ka Garh, holds more than 20 mounds. Madhubani district borders Nepal to the north.

SURROUNDED BY Madhubani district | Mithila region | Nepal (north) | Darbhanga (south-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The ASI lists it as a centrally protected monument named 'Remains of Ancient Fort of Garh'.
- Earlier digs found a five-fold sequence from the Northern Black Polished Ware phase through the Shunga, Kushan, Gupta and Pala periods.
- Some scholars, including archaeologist Dilip K. Chakrabarti, identify Balirajgarh with Mithila, capital of the Videhas.
- George Grierson, then Madhubani's subdivisional magistrate, first identified the site in 1884.

PRELIMS TRAP Vajji, one of the sixteen mahajanapadas, was a confederacy of clans with its capital at Vaishali; the Videhas of Mithila belonged to it.

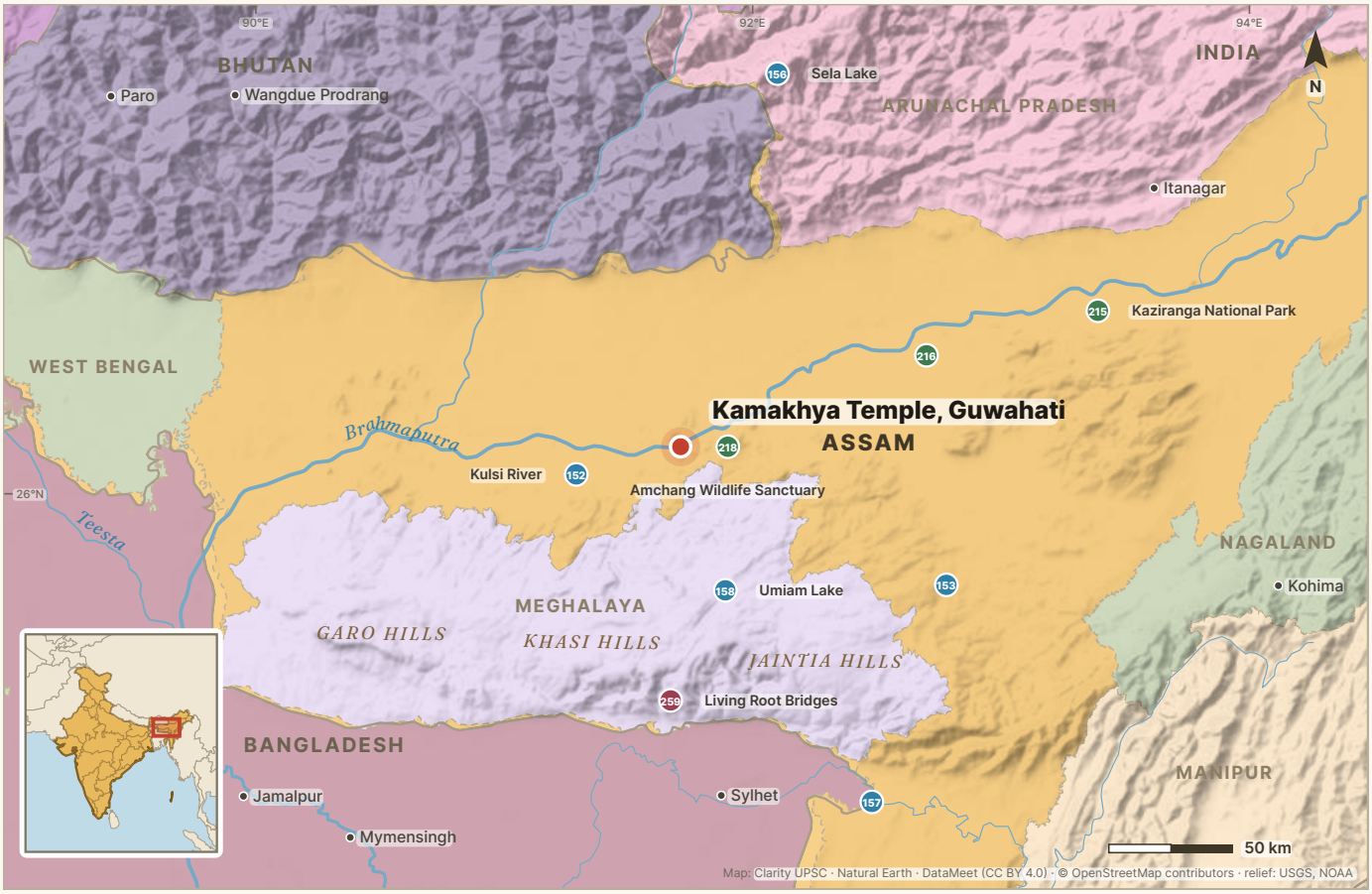
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Temple · Mar 2026

258 Kamakhya Temple, Guwahati

Nilachal Hill, Guwahati, Assam



WHY IN NEWS

On 13 February 2026 the Gauhati High Court disposed of two petitions against an access corridor to the Maa Kamakhya Temple, letting Assam proceed. The court relied on a National Institute of Hydrology study, vetted by IIT Guwahati, which found the project would not harm the temple or its underground holy springs.

WHERE IT IS

The temple stands on Nilachal Hill in Guwahati, on the south bank of the Brahmaputra. The planned corridor covers about 15,000 sq m of the hilltop. Its main part is a three-level walkway of about 350 m from the parking area to the temple entrance.

SURROUNDED BY Guwahati city · Brahmaputra River (north) · Kamrup Metropolitan district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The present main temple was completed in 1565 under the Koch king Nara Narayan; his brother Chilarai supervised the work.
- Its Nilachal style places a hemispherical dome on a cruciform base, ringed by smaller spires.
- Kamakhya is among the oldest Shakta pithas; the annual Ambubachi Mela marks the goddess's yearly menstruation.
- The corridor project is estimated at about ₹500 crore and has five components.

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Living Root Bridges, Meghalaya

Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya

Cultural landscape · Jan 2026



WHY IN NEWS

On 29 January 2026 India submitted the 'Jingkieng Jri / Lyu Chrai Cultural Landscape' of Meghalaya to UNESCO for World Heritage status. Ambassador Vishal V. Sharma handed the nomination to the World Heritage Centre for the 2026–27 evaluation cycle. The landscape centres on living root bridges grown by Khasi and Jaintia communities.

WHERE IT IS

The bridges lie in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills along the southern edge of the Shillong Plateau, above the plains of Bangladesh. Villages near Sohra (Cherrapunji) in East Khasi Hills, such as Nongriat, hold well-known examples.

SURROUNDED BY East Khasi Hills district · West Jaintia Hills district · Shillong Plateau · Bangladesh (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Villagers train the aerial roots of the rubber fig (Ficus elastica) across streams until they root on the far bank.
- Nongriat's 'Double Decker' bridge is estimated to be about 200 years old.
- The nomination reflects the Khasi and Jaintia ideal of living in harmony with Mother Earth, called Mei Ramew.
- Two of the three known double-decker root bridges are in West Jaintia Hills.

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Hill fort | Mar 2026

260 Sinhagad Fort

Bhuleshwar range of the Sahyadri, south-west of Pune, Maharashtra



WHY IN NEWS

On 8 March 2026 a swarm of bees attacked visitors near Tanaji Malusare's memorial at Sinhagad Fort near Pune, after stones thrown by tourists allegedly struck hives. Forest officials counted eight injured, including a toddler; rescuers put the number affected at 25–27. Entry to the fort was closed for a time.

WHERE IT IS

Sinhagad stands on an isolated cliff of the Bhuleshwar range of the Sahyadri, south-west of Pune, about 1,317 m above sea level. The Khadakwasla reservoir lies to its north. On clear days the Rajgad, Torna and Purandar forts can be seen from it.

SURROUNDED BY

- Pune city (north-east)
- Khadakwasla reservoir (north)
- Rajgad Fort (south-west)
- Torna Fort (south-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Earlier called Kondhana, it fell to Muhammad bin Tughluq's forces in 1328 after an eight-month siege.
- The Treaty of Purandar (1665) gave it to the Mughals; in 1670 Tanaji Malusare retook it for Shivaji and died in the battle.
- Rajaram I, the third Maratha Chhatrapati, died at the fort in 1700; his memorial stands there.

PRELIMS TRAP Nearby Rajgad is one of the 12 forts of UNESCO's Maratha Military Landscapes (2025); Sinhagad is not among them.

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261 Manchirevula (Beerappa Gudi hill)

Gandipet mandal, Rangareddy district, western outskirts of Hyderabad, Telangana

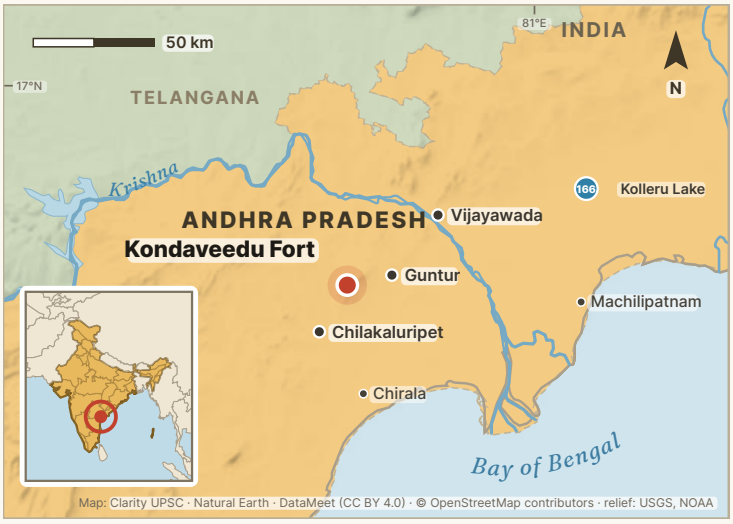
Prehistoric site | Mar 2026

In news: In March 2026 Kotha Telangana Charitra Brundam researchers reported finds from the hill behind Beerappa Gudi, Manchirevula: an Upper Palaeolithic quartz point and two carvings they dated to medieval times, a trident-and-circle motif and a Daadi Aata game board. Later that month they reported Lower Palaeolithic hand axes on the nearby forest track.

SURROUNDED BY Osman Sagar (west) | Narsingi | Gandipet mandal | Hyderabad city (east)

- Prof. Ravi Korisettar of Dharwad identified the 7-cm quartz point as Upper Palaeolithic; in India that period spans roughly 40,000 to 10,000 years ago.
- Daadi Aata is a strategy board game like Nine Men's Morris; a similar carved board is known from Golankonda hill in Alair mandal.
- Middle Palaeolithic rock art and stone tools had earlier been reported from the same forest track.

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262 Kondaveedu Fort

Kondaveedu, Chilakaluripet constituency, Palnadu district, Andhra Pradesh, west of Guntur

Hill fort | Feb 2026

In news: On 13 February 2026 Narasaraopet MP Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu asked Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat to sanction Swadesh Darshan 2.0 funds for Kondaveedu Fort. Andhra Pradesh had approved a detailed project report of about ₹100 crore for restoration, visitor amenities and an interpretation centre.

SURROUNDED BY Guntur (east) | Narasaraopet (west) | Chilakaluripet (south-west) | Palnadu district

- The Reddi kings under Prolaya Vema Reddy moved their capital here from Addanki in the 14th century.
- Vijayanagara's Krishnadevaraya captured it in 1516; the Golconda Sultanate took it in 1579 and renamed it Murtazanagar.
- Inscriptions at Simhachalam record Kondaveedu ruler Anavema Reddy's eastern campaign, which reached as far as Mahendragiri.

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263 Sri Govindaraja Swamy Temple, Tirupati

Central Tirupati, near the railway station, Tirupati district, Andhra Pradesh

Temple | Jan 2026

In news: On 2 January 2026 a youth from Telangana climbed a gopuram of the Govindaraja Swamy Temple in Tirupati after the night's closing ritual and threatened to jump unless given liquor. Security staff brought him down and police registered a case. The episode exposed security gaps at the busy temple.

SURROUNDED BY Tirupati town | Tirupati railway station | Tirumala (north-west) | Seshachalam hills

- Ramanuja consecrated the shrine in 1130 CE; the deity is Vishnu as Govindaraja, reclining in yoga nidra.
- Its seven-storey eastern rajagopuram, about 50 m tall, was built by a local chieftain, Matla Anantaraja.
- The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams administers the temple; worship follows the Vaikhanasa Agama.

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264 Chennakeshava Temple, Belur

Belur, Hassan district, Karnataka, on the Yagachi River

Temple | Feb 2026

In news: On 13 February 2026 Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Seva Teerth, the new Prime Minister's Office complex in New Delhi. Its carved stone plinth band is inspired by the base mouldings of the 12th-century Chennakeshava temple at Belur, in Karnataka's Hassan district.

SURROUNDED BY Hassan (south-east) | Halebidu (east) | Chikkamagaluru district (north) | Yagachi River

- Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana commissioned it in 1117 CE; it took about 103 years, over three generations, to finish.
- With Halebidu's Hoysaleswara temple and Somanathapura's Keshava temple, it forms the UNESCO World Heritage Site 'Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas' (2023).
- Seva Teerth's entrance portal draws on the stone screen-work of 11th–13th-century Chalukyan temples, and its metal domes on Buddhist stupas.

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265 Chamundeshwari Temple, Chamundi Hills

Hill temple · Apr 2026

Chamundi Hills, on the south-eastern edge of Mysuru city, Karnataka



WHY IN NEWS

On 7 April 2026 the Karnataka High Court ordered an immediate halt to all construction at the Chamundeshwari Temple on Chamundi Hills, Mysuru. The works use ₹47 crore released by the Centre under its PRASHAD scheme. The court found permanent structures being built despite the state's undertaking not to build them.

WHERE IT IS

Chamundi Hills rise to about 1,060 m on the south-eastern edge of Mysuru city in southern Karnataka. The Chamundeshwari Temple stands on the summit. A stone stairway of more than 1,000 steps climbs the hill, with a giant Nandi statue halfway up.

SURROUNDED BY Mysuru city · Mysuru district, Karnataka

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Chamundeshwari (Mahishasura Mardini) is the Mysore royal family's deity; the name Mysuru comes from 'Mahishuru', the town of Mahishasura.
- Dodda Devaraja Wodeyar built the stairway in 1659; the monolithic Nandi on the way up is about 4.8 m tall and 7.5 m long.
- PRASHAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive) is a Union Ministry of Tourism scheme for pilgrimage sites.
- In the same case, Pramoda Devi Wadiyar of the former royal family challenges the Chamundeshwari Kshetra Development Authority Act, 2024.

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266 Panayal megalithic rock-cut chamber

Megalithic burial site · Mar 2026

Panayal, Pallikkara grama panchayat, Kasaragod district, northern Kerala (about 4 km north-east of Bekal)



WHY IN NEWS

On 1 March 2026 workers digging for a compound wall at Panayal in Kerala's Kasaragod district uncovered a laterite rock-cut chamber of the Megalithic period, about 2,000 years old. Officials of the State Archaeology Department inspected the site, and further excavation was planned.

WHERE IT IS

Panayal is a village in Pallikkara grama panchayat, Kasaragod district, northern Kerala. It lies about 4 km north-east of the coastal town of Bekal, whose sea fort overlooks the Arabian Sea.

SURROUNDED BY Bekal (Bekal Fort) · Kanhangad · Kasaragod district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A shaft about three feet deep leads down to a circular burial chamber cut into laterite; a stone slab sealed its entrance.
- Such chambers are known locally as 'Muniyara' or 'Pandava cave'; umbrella stones (kudakkallu) survive nearby at Munikkal, Karippadakam and Kulathur.
- Similar rock-cut burial chambers are known elsewhere in Kasaragod district, at Pilicode, Parappa and Kuttikol.

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LEVEL 1 · POLITY

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✓ True · ✕ False

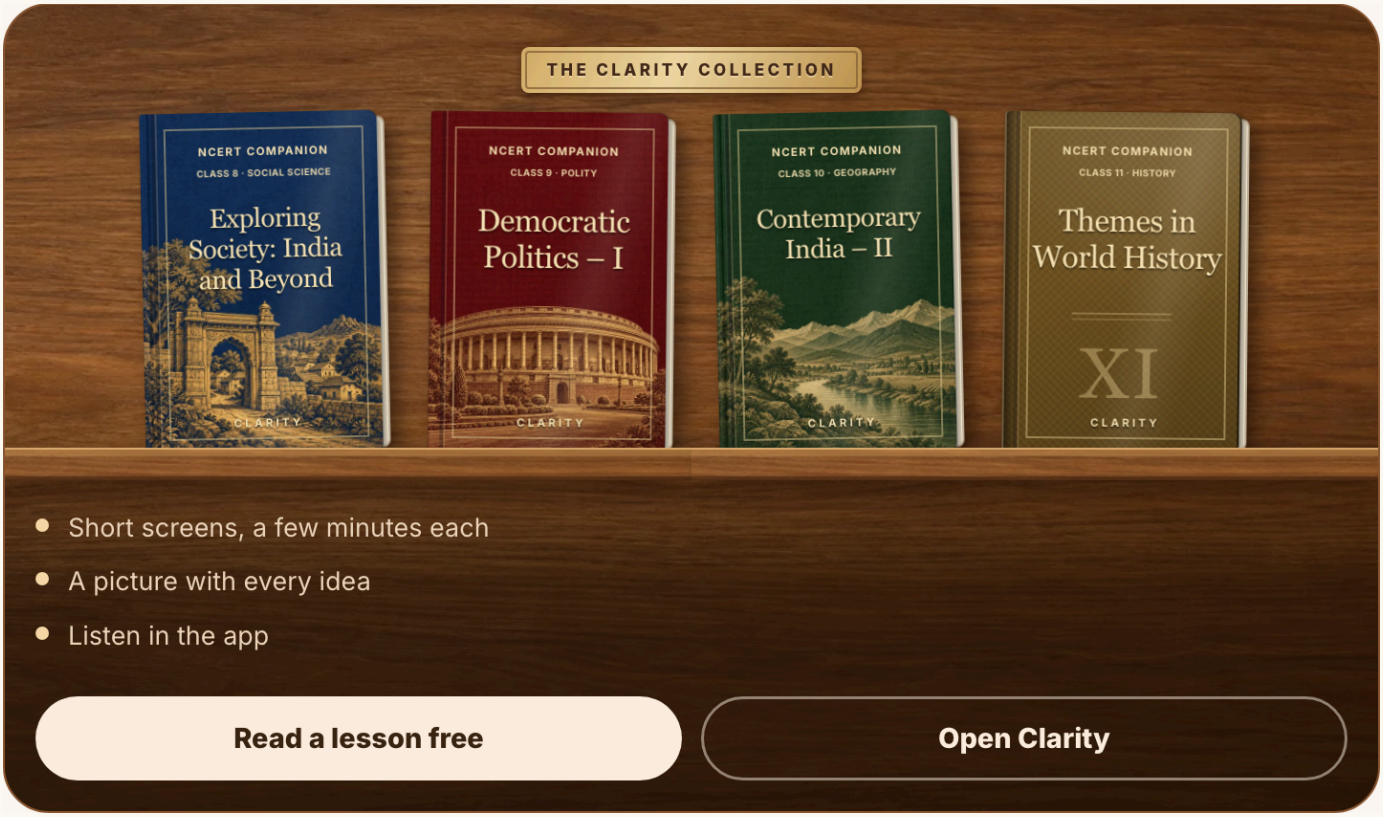
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this volume

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VOLUME 3
September–December 2026
to come

VOLUME 4
January–April 2027
to come