Clarity UPSC

PRELIMS 2027 · FREE EDITION

THE YEARLY COMPILATION

Places in News

2027

VOLUME 2 | **May–August 2026**

Every place from the news of May–August 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.

284	134	150	284
PLACES	WORLD	INDIA	MAPS

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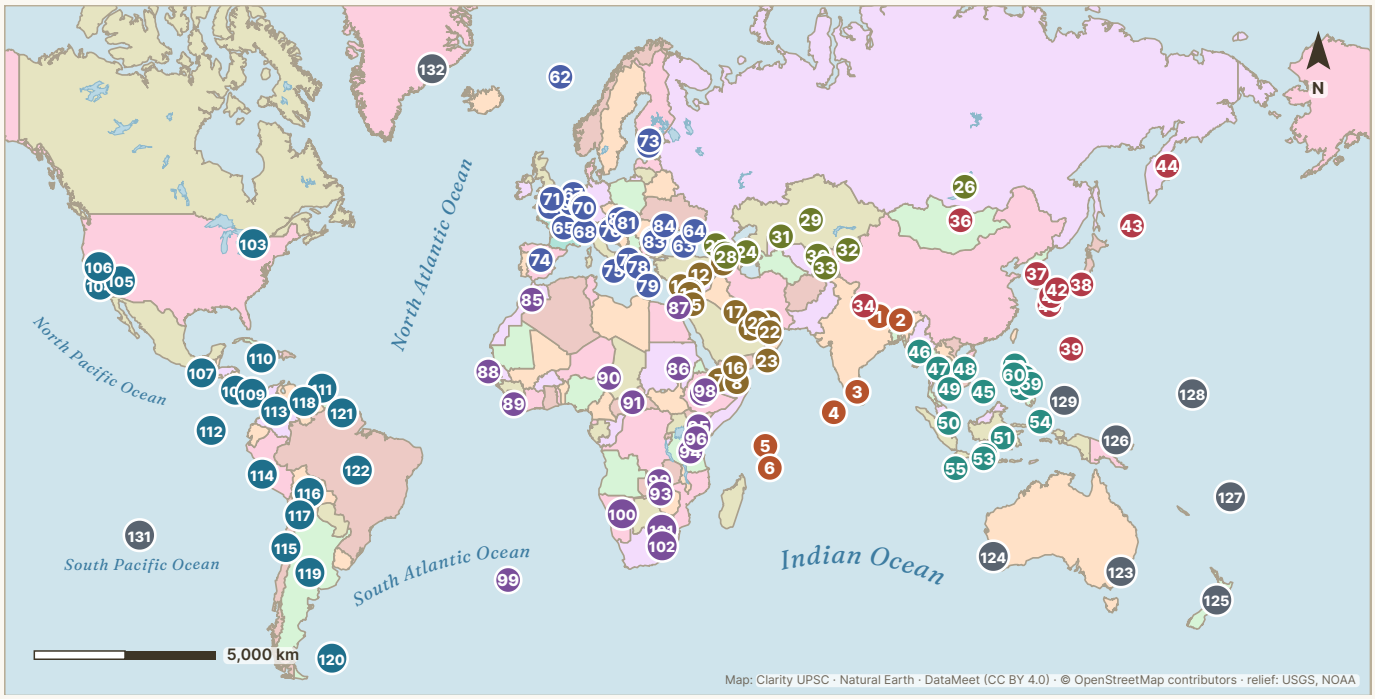
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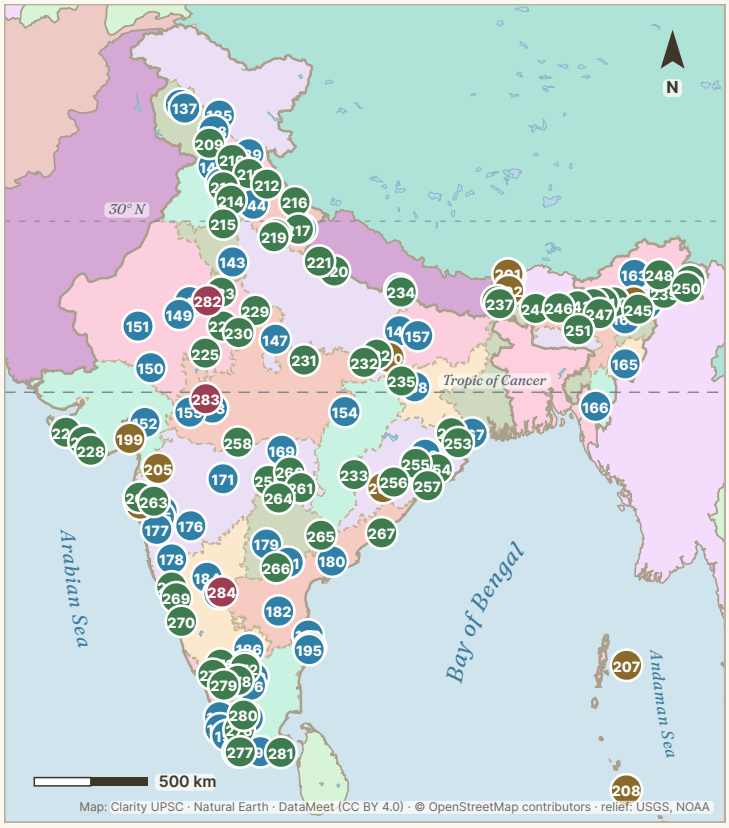
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Where the news happened

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



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WORLD

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INDIA

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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

6 places

1 Rasuwa–Kyirong border corridor (Lhende Khola barrier lake) · Barrier lake

2 Kurichhu River and the Dorjilung project · River (hydropower project)

3 Delft Island (Neduntivu) · Island

4 Maldives · Archipelago

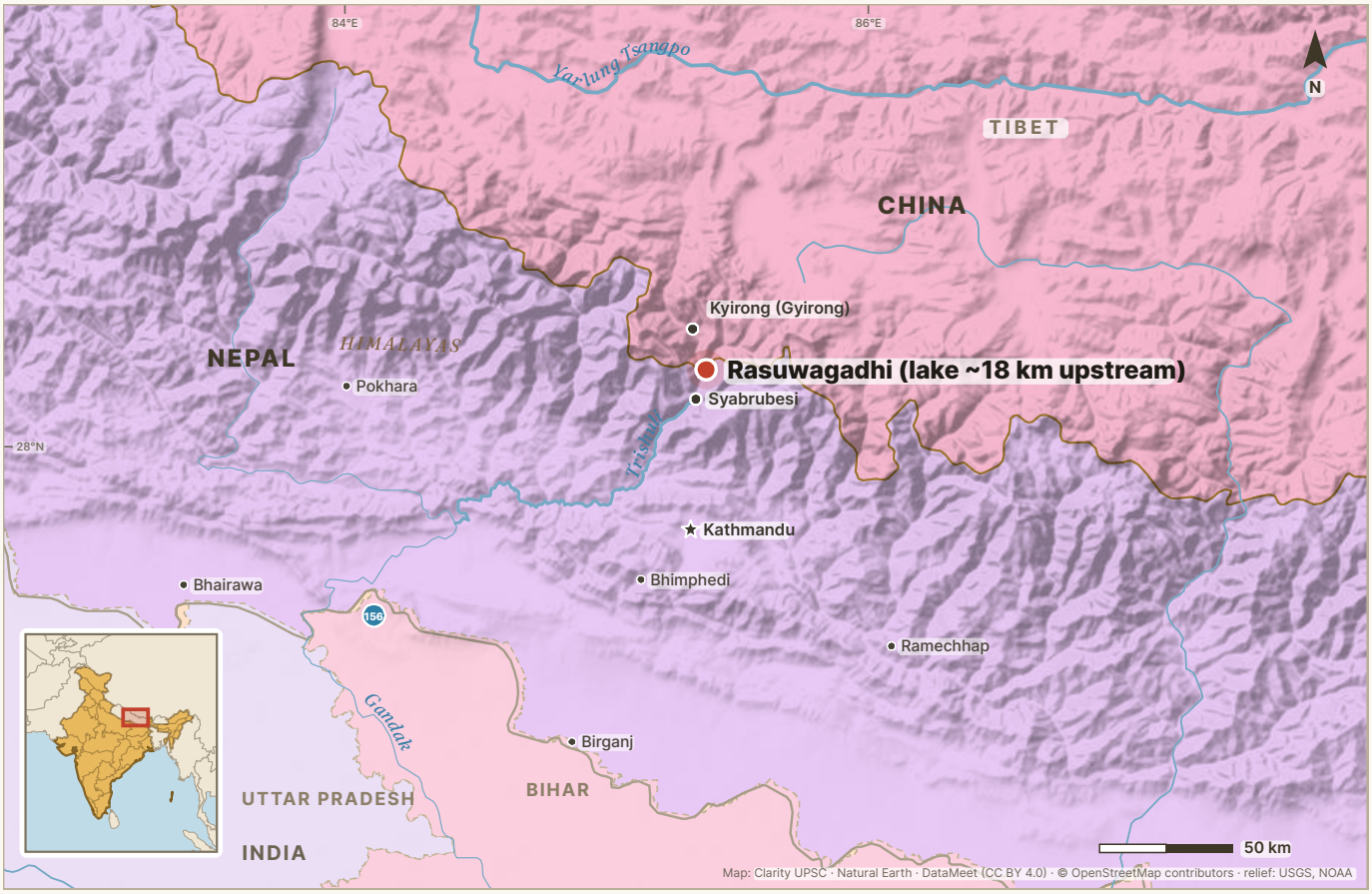
5 Seychelles · Island nation (archipelago)

6 Agaléga Islands · Island

1 Rasuwa–Kyirong border corridor (Lhende Khola barrier lake)

Barrier lake | Aug 2026

Nepal–China (Tibet) border, Rasuwa district, Bagmati Province



WHY IN NEWS

On 26 August 2026 a deadly flash flood struck the Kyirong–Rasuwa border corridor. Satellite images reviewed by Nepal's disaster authority on 27 August showed a new barrier lake of about 0.11 sq km on the Lhende Khola in Tibet, about 18 km upstream of Rasuwagadhi. Water began escaping, but warnings continued.

WHERE IT IS

Rasuwa district lies in northern Bagmati Province, Nepal, and meets Tibet to the north. Rasuwagadhi is a border trade crossing on the Bhote Koshi corridor, with Kyirong (Gyirong) to the north. The Bhote Koshi meets the Langtang Khola near Syabrubesi and continues as the Trishuli.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Nepal | China (Tibet Autonomous Region)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A barrier lake forms when landslide, avalanche or ice debris blocks a valley; its natural dam has no engineered spillway.
- Overtopping or seepage can erode the loose dam quickly and release a destructive surge.
- The corridor is a key Nepal–China trade route; roads, bridges and customs posts share a narrow valley.

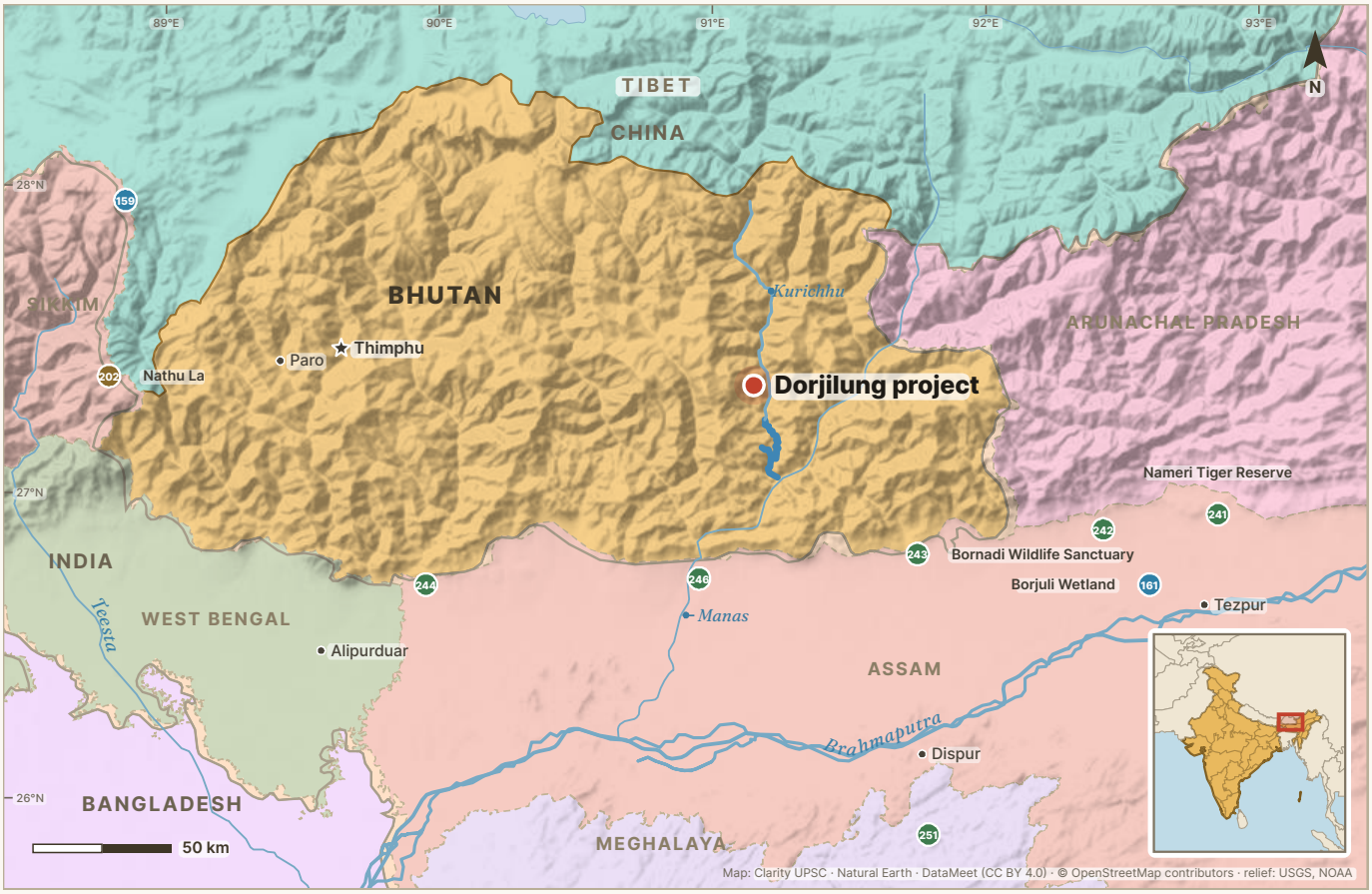
PRELIMS TRAP The Rasuwa lake was dammed by avalanche and landslide debris; a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) comes from a lake held by moraine or ice.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

River (hydropower project) May 2026

2 Kurichhu River and the Dorjilung project

Eastern Bhutan



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 Bhutan signed a $515 million World Bank financing package for the 1,125 MW Dorjilung Hydroelectric Project on the Kurichhu River. It will be Bhutan's largest hydropower plant. About 80 per cent of its power will go to India.

WHERE IT IS

The Kurichhu rises in Tibet (China), where it is called the Lhobrak, and flows south through Lhuentse and Mongar in eastern Bhutan. It joins the Drangme Chhu, which enters Assam as the Manas, a north-bank tributary of the Brahmaputra.

SURROUNDED BY China (Tibet, north) · Arunachal Pradesh, India (east) · Assam, India (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A run-of-river scheme of about 4,500 GWh a year, without a large reservoir.
- A public–private partnership of Druk Green Power Corporation and India's Tata Power.
- Will raise Bhutan's hydropower capacity by about 40 per cent; World Bank IDA, IBRD and IFC fund it.
- Tala, Chukha and Mangdechhu were earlier Indian-aided projects exporting power to India.

PRELIMS TRAP Dorjilung is on the Kurichhu. Tala and Chukha are on the Wangchhu, and Mangdechhu is on the river of the same name.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Island · Aug 2026

3 Delft Island (Neduntivu)

Palk Strait, Jaffna district, Sri Lanka



WHY IN NEWS

On 6 August 2026 the Sri Lanka Navy rescued 11 Indian fishermen after their trawler grounded on a reef south of Delft Island. The Navy alleged that the boat had crossed the International Maritime Boundary Line and used bottom trawling. Delft Police took charge of the crew for legal proceedings.

WHERE IT IS

Delft, also called Neduntivu, is a low-lying island in Sri Lanka's Jaffna district. It lies in the Palk Strait, south-west of the Jaffna peninsula, and covers about 48–50 sq km.

SURROUNDED BY Palk Strait · Jaffna peninsula (Sri Lanka) · Katchatheevu · Tamil Nadu coast (India)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Coral limestone, shallow soils and scarce freshwater shape the island; fishing is the main livelihood.
- Sri Lanka declared Delft National Park, 1,846.2 hectares, in 2015.
- Surrounding reefs and seagrass beds are fish nurseries; bottom trawling damages this seabed habitat.
- India and Sri Lanka hold a Joint Working Group on Fisheries on the Palk Bay dispute.

PRELIMS TRAP Delft (Neduntivu) and Katchatheevu are different islands; both figure in the India–Sri Lanka fisheries debate.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Archipelago · Jul 2026

4 Maldives

Indian Ocean, south-west of India and Sri Lanka



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 India and the Maldives completed the first round of free trade agreement negotiations, reporting progress on market access and investment. Bilateral trade exceeded US$771 million in 2025–26; no agreement had been signed.

WHERE IT IS

The Maldives lies in the Indian Ocean, south-west of India and Sri Lanka. About 1,192 coral islands form a double chain of 26 natural atolls. Malé is the capital.

SURROUNDED BY Indian Ocean · Lakshadweep (India) to the north · Sri Lanka to the north-east

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Eight Degree Channel separates India's Minicoy from the northern Maldives; the One and a Half Degree Channel lies farther south.
- It is the world's lowest-lying country: average ground height is about 1.5 m and the highest natural point about 2.4 m.
- India launched Operation Cactus in 1988 to help defeat an attempted coup.

PRELIMS TRAP The Eight Degree Channel separates Minicoy from the Maldives; the Nine Degree Channel separates Minicoy from the main Lakshadweep islands.

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Repo rate	Retail inflation	GDP growth	Forex reserves
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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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5 Seychelles

Western Indian Ocean, north-east of Madagascar

Island nation (archipelago) | Feb 2026 | Jun 2026 | Also in Volume 1



WHY 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. On 27 June 2026 Prime Minister Narendra Modi began a three-day state visit to Seychelles as Guest of Honour at its Golden Jubilee National Day. The visit marked 50 years of diplomatic ties and included the first address by an Indian Prime Minister to its National Assembly.

WHERE IT IS

Seychelles is an island nation in the western Indian Ocean, north-east of Madagascar. It sits near major shipping lanes, which makes it important for maritime security. Its capital is Victoria.

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

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- 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.

PRELIMS TRAP Seychelles' inner islands are granitic, unlike the coral atolls of the Maldives or volcanic Mauritius.

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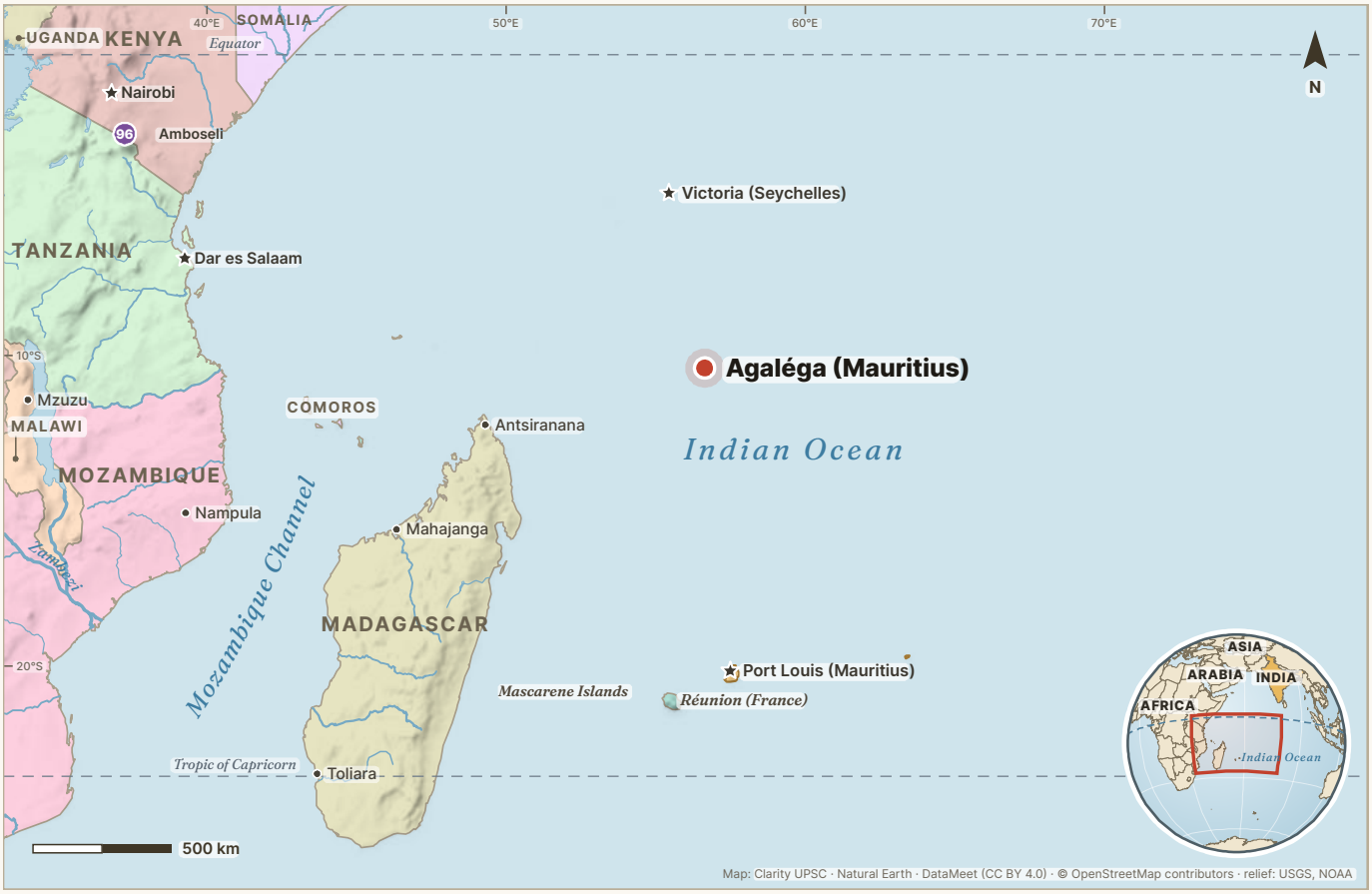
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Island · May 2026

6 Agaléga Islands

Western Indian Ocean, about 1,100 km north of Mauritius



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 the 3-km airstrip and deep-sea jetty that India built on Mauritius's Agaléga Islands drew attention. AFCONS built them under a $250 million agreement. They let heavy aircraft such as the P-8I and naval vessels operate in the western Indian Ocean.

WHERE IT IS

Agaléga is a pair of small islands belonging to Mauritius, about 1,100 km north of the main island. Together they cover about 25 sq km. They lie near sea lanes linking Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

SURROUNDED BY Indian Ocean · Mauritius (south) · Seychelles (north) · Madagascar (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Fewer than 300 people live there, depending on coconuts and fishing.
- Built under a 2015 India–Mauritius agreement; work began in 2019, and the two prime ministers inaugurated the runway and jetty on 29 February 2024.
- Before the project there was only an 800-m runway and no deep-water jetty.
- Residents fear restrictions and environmental damage; both governments promise better connectivity and services.

PRELIMS TRAP Agaléga belongs to Mauritius. Assumption Island, where India also proposed a facility, belongs to Seychelles.

Read the full story
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WORLD

West Asia

17 places

7 Bab el-Mandeb Strait · Strait

8 Gulf of Aden · Gulf

9 Strait of Hormuz · Strait

10 Cyprus · Island country

11 Mount Ararat · Peak

12 Euphrates River · River

13 Lebanon and the Shebaa Farms · Country

14 Beaufort Castle (Qal'at Shaqif) · Hilltop fortress (region)

15 Jordan · Country

16 Yemen · Country

17 Kuwait · Country

18 Qatar · Country

19 Greater Tunb Island · Island

20 Larak Island · Island

21 Lavan Island · Island

22 Sohar Port (and Salalah), Oman · Port

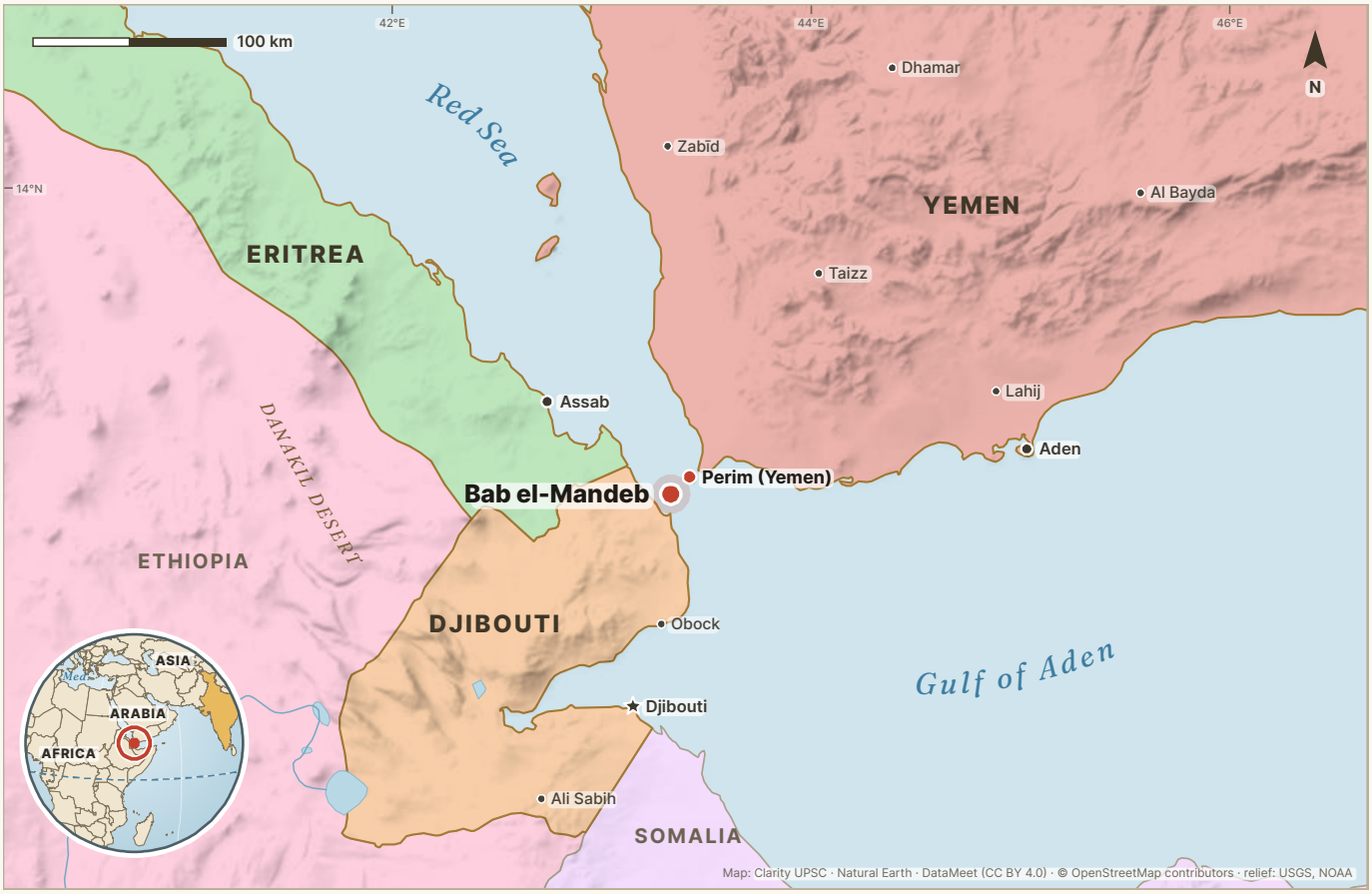
23 Hallaniyat Islands · Archipelago

7

Bab el-Mandeb Strait

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

Strait | Mar 2026 | Apr 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. In July 2026 the Houthis announced a maritime blockade against Saudi Arabia and threatened vessels serving Saudi ports, raising shipping risks near the strait. Saudi Arabia rejected the threat and promised to protect commercial ships.

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.

Read the full story
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8 Gulf of Aden

Between Yemen and the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Djibouti)



WHY IN NEWS

In early May 2026 armed men hijacked the fuel tanker M/T Eureka off Yemen and steered it towards the Gulf of Aden before coast guard forces intervened. The attack renewed concern over piracy on one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

WHERE IT IS

The gulf lies between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa. Its western end narrows into the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea. Its eastern end opens into the Arabian Sea.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Yemen · Djibouti · Somalia

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Part of the shortest sea route between Europe and Asia via the Suez Canal.
- The Sheba Ridge, part of the Indian Ocean ridge system, runs along its floor; the Alula-Fartak Trench exceeds 5 km depth.
- Yemen administers the Socotra archipelago near its eastern mouth.
- Monsoon-driven upwelling makes its waters rich in fish.

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

Read the full story
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9 Strait of Hormuz

Strait | Mar 2026 | Jun 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In June 2026, after a US–Iran ceasefire, the International Maritime Organization announced plans to guide about 11,000 stranded seafarers out through the strait, past floating mines and damaged vessels.

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.

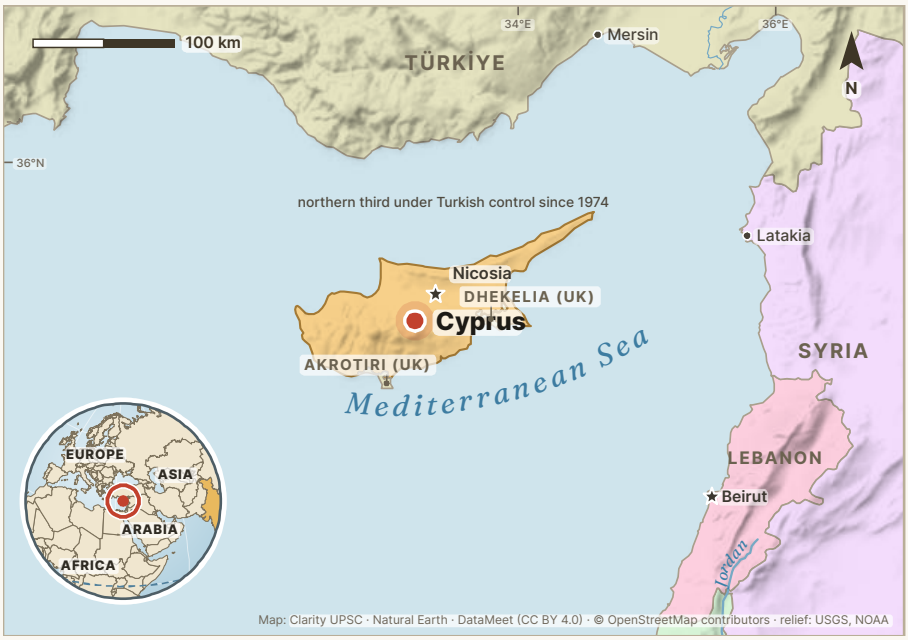
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Island country · May 2026

10 Cyprus

Eastern Mediterranean Sea



WHY IN NEWS

Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides made a state visit to India from 20 to 23 May 2026. The two countries upgraded ties to a strategic partnership and adopted a 2026–2031 defence cooperation roadmap. Cyprus will join India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.

WHERE IT IS

Cyprus is an island in the eastern Mediterranean, at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa. Türkiye (Turkey) lies to its north and Syria and Lebanon to its east. Nicosia is the capital.

SURROUNDED BY Mediterranean Sea · Türkiye (north) · Syria and Lebanon (east) · Egypt (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The third-largest island in the Mediterranean.
- Independent from Britain in 1960; divided since 1974, when Turkish forces occupied the northern third.
- Nicosia is Europe's only divided capital.

PRELIMS TRAP Cyprus is the Mediterranean's third-largest island. Sicily is the largest and Sardinia second.

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Peak · Aug 2026

11 Mount Ararat

Ağrı and Iğdır provinces, eastern Türkiye, near Armenia and Iran



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 a German–Turkish team led by the University of Münster completed the first survey of Mount Ararat's summit glacier. Working above 5,000 m for two weeks, with the Alfred Wegener Institute running the measurements, it used ground radar and seismic methods to choose a site for a future ice-core drill.

WHERE IT IS

Mount Ararat rises to 5,137 m in eastern Türkiye, across Ağrı and Iğdır provinces. The volcanic massif stands near Türkiye's borders with Armenia and Iran, where Anatolia, the Caucasus and West Asia meet.

SURROUNDED BY Türkiye (Ağrı and Iğdır provinces) · Armenia (north-east) · Iran (south-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is Türkiye's highest mountain, and its summit ice is the country's largest glacier.
- Satellite studies show the summit ice cap shrank from about 8.0 sq km in 1976 to 5.7 sq km in 2011, a loss of 29%.
- No ice core has yet come from Ararat. In the wider Mediterranean region such records exist only for the Alps, so a core here could fill a gap.

PRELIMS TRAP Mount Ararat stands wholly in Türkiye, in Ağrı and Iğdır provinces; Armenia lies just across the border and sees the peak from Yerevan.

Read the full story
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12 Euphrates River

Türkiye, Syria and Iraq (Mesopotamia)



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 environmental reports warned that the Euphrates is shrinking fast. Satellite data show the Tigris–Euphrates basin has lost more than 100 cubic km of freshwater since the early 2000s, and flow has fallen by over half. Parts of the river could run dry by 2040.

WHERE IT IS

The Euphrates rises in the mountains of eastern Türkiye. It flows about 2,800 km through Syria and Iraq, joins the Tigris and empties into the Persian Gulf. Its floodplains nurtured Mesopotamia's earliest cities.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Türkiye · Syria · Iraq

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Less snow in the Taurus Mountains, groundwater over-extraction and upstream dams have cut its flow.
- Türkiye's Atatürk Dam on the Euphrates reduces flow reaching Syria and Iraq.
- Downstream Syria and Iraq complain of too little water for farming and drinking.
- With the Tigris it formed Mesopotamia, the 'land between the rivers'.

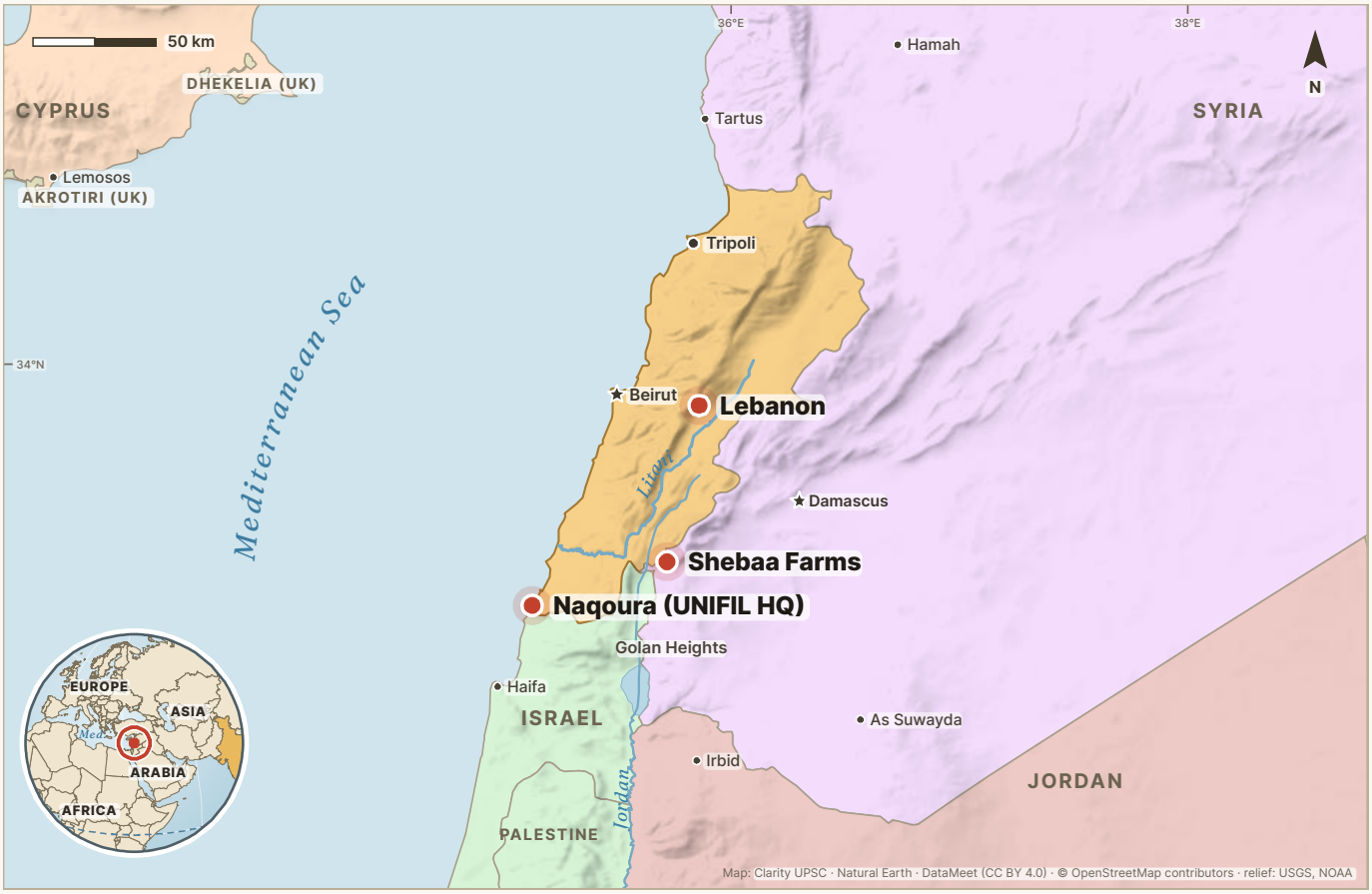
PRELIMS TRAP The Atatürk Dam is on the Euphrates; the Ilısu Dam is on the Tigris. The two rivers join as the Shatt al-Arab before the Persian Gulf.

Read the full story
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13 Lebanon and the Shebaa Farms

Country | Apr 2026 | Jun 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In mid-June 2026 Israeli airstrikes killed dozens of people in southern Lebanon despite a ceasefire; more than 4,000 people had died since fighting resumed in March. The United States planned talks in Switzerland to restore the ceasefire.

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.

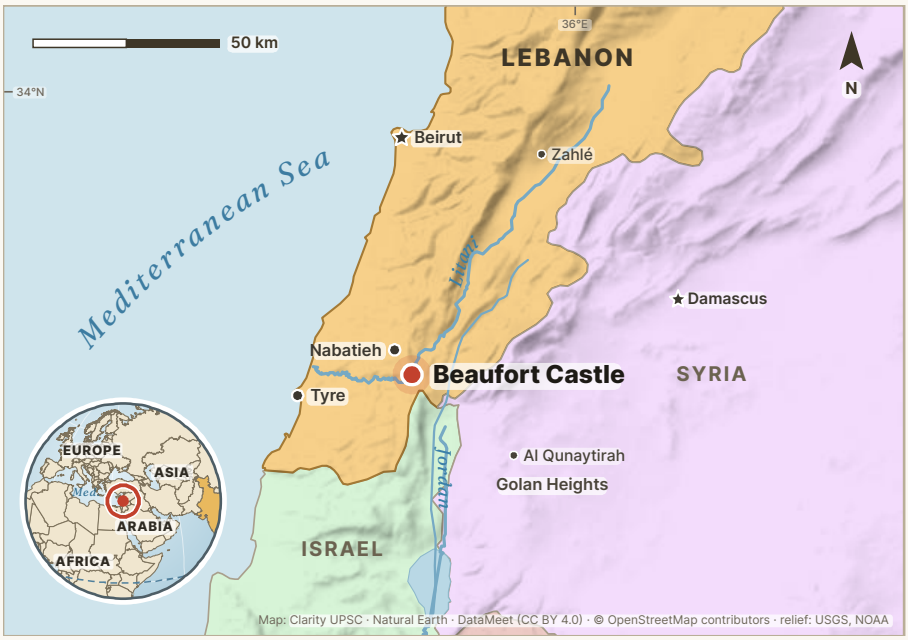
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14 Beaufort Castle (Qal'at Shaqif)

Hilltop fortress (region) · Jun 2026

Near Nabatieh, southern Lebanon, above the Litani River



WHY IN NEWS

On 1 June 2026 Israeli troops seized Beaufort Castle near Nabatieh in southern Lebanon. Reports called it Israel's deepest incursion since its 2000 withdrawal, reaching up to 30 km into Lebanon. Troops used the castle as an observation post.

WHERE IT IS

The castle stands on a 300-m cliff above the Litani River near Nabatieh in southern Lebanon. It overlooks the border region with Israel. Crusaders built it to guard the road between Damascus and the Mediterranean.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Lebanon · Israel (south) · Syria (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Built by Crusaders after 1139; it fell to Saladin in 1190 and to the Mamluk sultan Baibars in 1268.
- Israel captured it in 1982 and held it until withdrawing from southern Lebanon in 2000.

PRELIMS TRAP The Litani rises in the Beqaa Valley and flows wholly within Lebanon to the Mediterranean. The Jordan rises near Mount Hermon and flows south.

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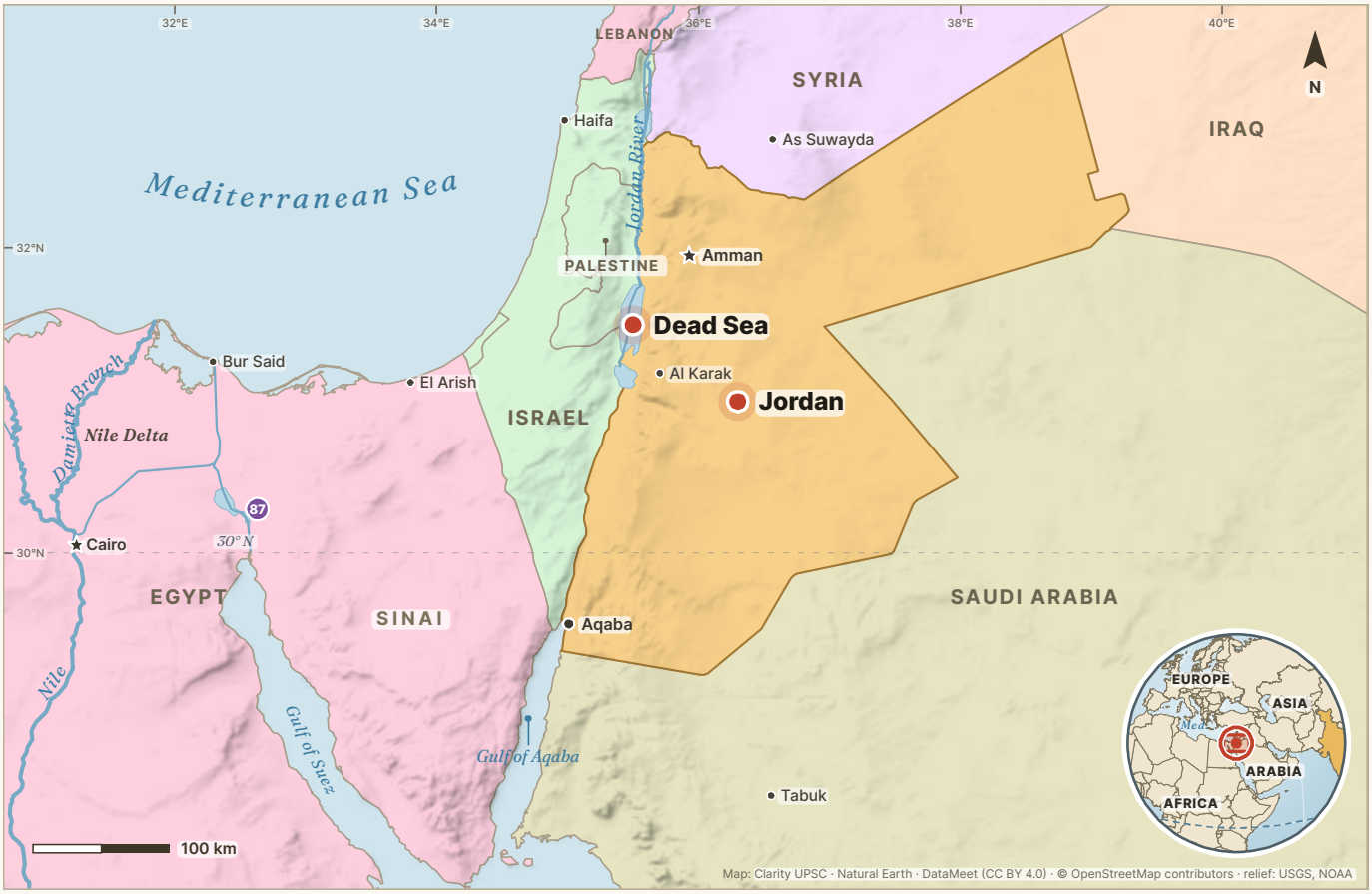
By those who have qualified the exam multiple times.

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15 Jordan

West Asia, between Israel and Iraq, with an outlet on the Gulf of Aqaba



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 Jordan was in the news after Iranian missile and drone attacks targeted US military bases on its soil during a wider Middle East conflict. The strikes caused no significant damage but underlined Jordan's strategic role in regional security.

WHERE IT IS

Jordan lies in West Asia. Syria is to the north, Iraq to the north-east, Saudi Arabia to the east and south, and Israel and the West Bank (Palestine) to the west. Its only sea outlet is the Gulf of Aqaba.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Syria · Iraq · Saudi Arabia · Israel · Palestine (West Bank) · Gulf of Aqaba (south-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Dead Sea on its western border is the lowest point on land, more than 430 m below sea level and still falling.
- The Jordan River flows along the north-western border and empties into the Dead Sea.
- About three-quarters of its 89,000 sq km is desert; the highest point is Jebel Umm ad Dami (1,854 m).
- Has phosphate, potash and shale oil deposits but faces severe water scarcity.

PRELIMS TRAP The Gulf of Aqaba, Jordan's outlet, lies east of the Sinai Peninsula; the Gulf of Suez lies west of it.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Watch the 2-minute video
Clarity UPSC on YouTube

16 Yemen

Country | Jan 2026 | Aug 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. On 6 August 2026 Saudi authorities said Houthi cross-border strikes wounded 11 civilians, after years of lower violence since the April 2022 UN-brokered truce. Independent verification was limited.

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.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



17 Kuwait

North-western end of the Persian Gulf

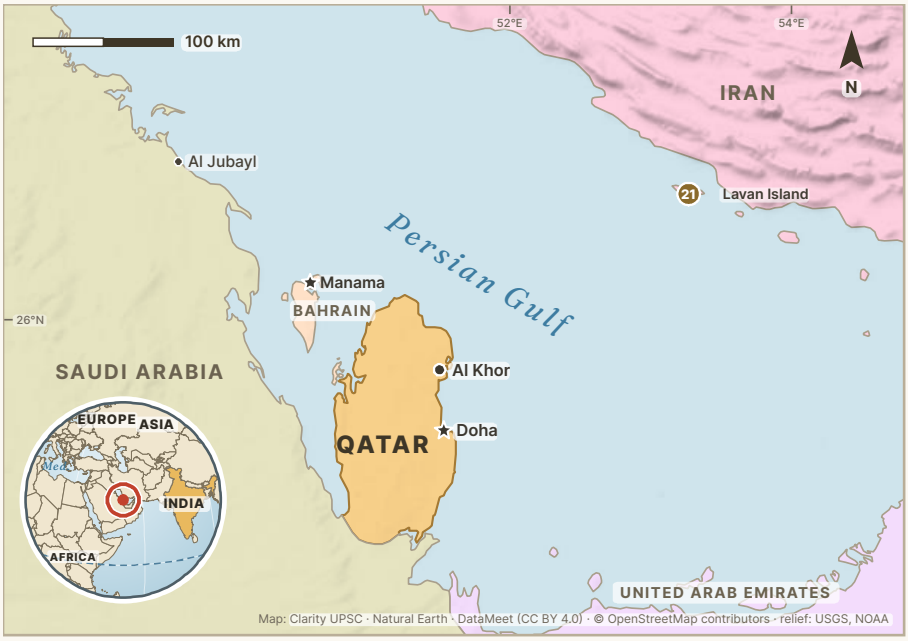
Country | Aug 2026

In news: India and Kuwait held their first Joint Defence Committee meeting in New Delhi on 28 August 2026. They discussed training, exercises, military medicine, defence industry and research under their December 2024 defence cooperation memorandum.

BORDERING COUNTRIES: Iraq | Saudi Arabia | Persian Gulf

- Kuwait City and the main ports face the Gulf; maritime trade predates the oil economy.
- India established diplomatic relations in 1962; the Indian rupee circulated in Kuwait before 1961.
- The relationship became a strategic partnership in December 2024.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



18 Qatar

Peninsula on the Persian Gulf, eastern Arabia

Country | Jul 2026

In news: In early July 2026 External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited Doha and met Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. They reviewed energy cooperation, trade, investment and the welfare of about seven lakh Indians living in Qatar.

BORDERING COUNTRIES: Saudi Arabia (only land border) | Persian Gulf

- The country covers about 11,610 sq km; its highest point is only about 103 m above sea level.
- Qatar holds the world's third-largest proven natural gas reserves and is one of India's main LNG suppliers.
- Doha is the capital; Qatar hosted the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

Island · Jul 2026

19 Greater Tunb Island

Persian Gulf, west of the Strait of Hormuz



WHY IN NEWS

On 15 July 2026 United States forces struck Iranian military targets on Greater Tunb Island during renewed regional conflict and a naval blockade. US Central Command reported a 90-minute operation against defence and missile sites. Iran controls the island; the United Arab Emirates claims it.

WHERE IT IS

Greater Tunb is a small island of about 10 sq km in the Persian Gulf, close to the Strait of Hormuz. The Iranian mainland lies to its north and Ras al-Khaimah, an emirate of the UAE, to its south-east.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Iran · United Arab Emirates · Oman (across the Strait of Hormuz)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Iran took Greater and Lesser Tunb in November 1971; Ras al-Khaimah, which claimed them, joined the UAE in February 1972.
- The UAE also claims Abu Musa, where a 1971 Iran–Sharjah memorandum divided administration without settling sovereignty.
- The Strait of Hormuz, about 33 km wide at its narrowest, is the only sea entrance to the Persian Gulf.
- Roughly one-fifth of the world's consumed petroleum liquids usually passes through the strait.

PRELIMS TRAP The three disputed islands, Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunb, lie inside the Persian Gulf; Hormuz joins the Gulf with the Gulf of Oman.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

Island · Aug 2026

20 Larak Island

Strait of Hormuz, Hormozgan Province, Iran



WHY IN NEWS

On 30 August 2026 US forces struck two Iranian rocket launchers on Larak Island, saying they were being prepared to fire sea mines at shipping. Iran reported casualties and fired missiles towards US sites in Jordan; Jordan said it intercepted eight. Several claims remained unverified.

WHERE IT IS

Larak is an Iranian island in Hormozgan Province near the southern entrance of the Strait of Hormuz. The larger Qeshm Island lies to its north-west, and the port of Bandar Abbas is farther north. Oman's Musandam Peninsula forms the strait's southern shore.

SURROUNDED BY Strait of Hormuz · Qeshm Island (north-west) · Bandar Abbas (north) · Musandam Peninsula, Oman (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Strait of Hormuz links the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.
- About 20 million barrels of oil a day passed through in 2024, about one-fifth of world petroleum liquids consumption (US EIA).
- Ships use defined traffic lanes, and Larak lies close to their approaches.
- Sea mines stay dangerous after fighting ends; clearing a lane needs specialised ships and divers.

PRELIMS TRAP Hormuz separates Iran from Oman's Musandam exclave; the United Arab Emirates lies farther west along the southern Gulf coast.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

21 Lavan Island

Central Persian Gulf, Hormozgan province, Iran



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 media reports said the UAE secretly struck Iranian targets during the mid-April 2026 Iran–Israel escalation, including a refinery on Lavan Island. The UAE has not acknowledged the strikes. Iran has played down any damage.

WHERE IT IS

Lavan Island lies in the central Persian Gulf, about 18 km south of the Iranian mainland, in Hormozgan province. It is about 23 km long and 4–5 km wide, covering roughly 78 sq km. Its climate is arid, hot and humid.

SURROUNDED BY Persian Gulf · Iranian mainland (north) · Kish Island (east) · United Arab Emirates (across the Gulf)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Crude from the offshore Salman, Resalat and Reshadat fields is piped to Lavan for processing, storage and export.
- Sits atop the Lavan gas field and hosts one of Iran's main crude export terminals.
- The Iranian Offshore Oil Company runs its plants, tanks and loading jetty; residents are mostly oil workers.

PRELIMS TRAP Lavan lies in the central Gulf off Hormozgan. Kharg Island, Iran's largest oil terminal, lies in the northern Gulf off Bushehr.

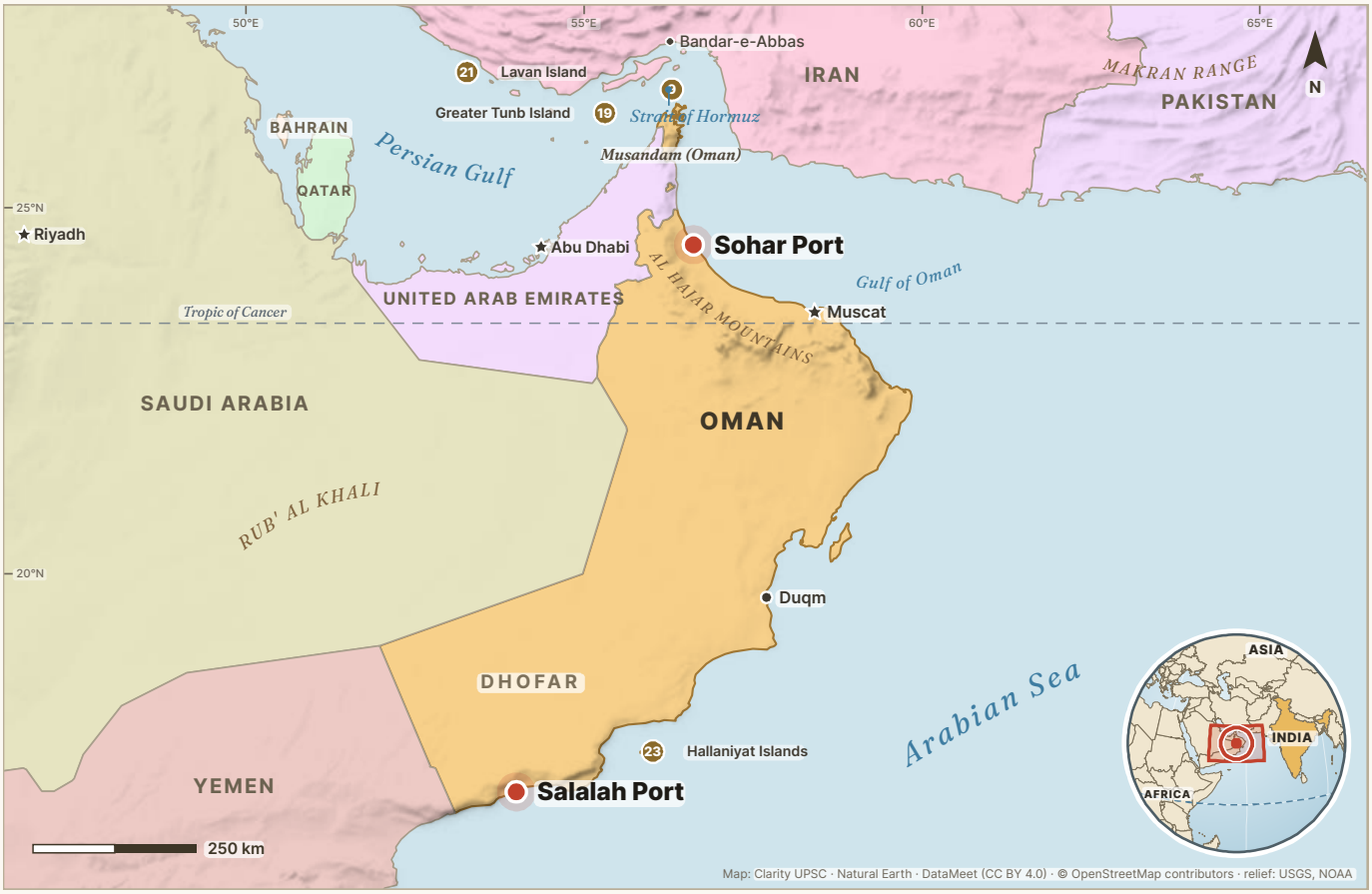
Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

Port · May 2026

22 Sohar Port (and Salalah), Oman

Oman: Sohar on the Gulf of Oman; Salalah on the Arabian Sea (Dhofar)



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 tensions in the Strait of Hormuz disrupted Persian Gulf shipping. Indian exporters and GCC countries turned to Oman's Sohar and Salalah ports, which lie outside the strait; their bulk-food terminals kept Indian grain moving to Gulf markets.

WHERE IT IS

Oman occupies the south-eastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula, facing the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Sohar lies on the Gulf of Oman coast in the north, outside the Strait of Hormuz. Salalah lies in the southern Dhofar region on the Arabian Sea. Oman is in two parts on the map: the Musandam Peninsula, on the Strait of Hormuz itself, is Omani territory cut off from the rest of the country by the United Arab Emirates.

BORDERING COUNTRIES United Arab Emirates · Saudi Arabia · Yemen

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Oman is the Arabian Peninsula's third-largest country; the Al Hajar Mountains, topped by Jabal Shams (about 2,980 m), run through the north.
- Sohar, in North Al Batinah, has operated since 2004; Oman's Asyad group and the Port of Rotterdam run it as a 50:50 joint venture.
- Sohar has Oman's first terminal for bulk agricultural products; Salalah handles over 2,500 vessel calls a year.
- Dhofar receives the south-west monsoon, the khareef, from late June to September; India and Oman hold the naval exercise Naseem Al Bahr.

PRELIMS TRAP Sohar, Duqm and Salalah are Omani ports outside Hormuz. Chabahar, also outside the strait on the Gulf of Oman, is in Iran.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

Archipelago · Aug 2026

23 Hallaniyat Islands

Arabian Sea, off Dhofar, southern Oman



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 oil from the grounded, sanctioned tanker Caroline Bezengi reached Al Qibliyah Island in Oman's Hallaniyat archipelago. The Suezmax tanker had grounded in June carrying nearly one million barrels. Satellite analysis reported on 7 August estimated a sheen of about 800 sq km.

WHERE IT IS

The Hallaniyat archipelago lies in the Arabian Sea off Dhofar, southern Oman, about 50 km from the Hasik coast. It falls under the wilayat of Shalim and the Hallaniyat Islands.

SURROUNDED BY Arabian Sea · Dhofar coast, Oman · Hasik (mainland)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The group has five islands; Hallaniyah is the largest and the only permanently inhabited one.
- Its waters support corals, seabirds, turtles, dolphins and whales.
- Oman created a marine buffer nature reserve around the islands in 2025.
- The islands were formerly known as the Kuria Muria Islands.

PRELIMS TRAP The Hallaniyat (Kuria Muria) Islands belong to Oman; Socotra, near the mouth of the Gulf of Aden, belongs to Yemen.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

WORLD

Russia, Central Asia and the Caucasus

10 places

24 Caspian Sea · Lake (inland sea)

25 Mount Elbrus · Peak

26 Lake Baikal · Lake

27 Kura (Mtkvari) River · River

28 Armenia–Azerbaijan border (South Caucasus) · Region (international border)

29 Kazakhstan · Country

30 Uzbekistan · Country

31 Aral Sea · Lake

32 Lake Issyk-Kul · Lake

33 Tajikistan · Country

24 Caspian Sea

Between Europe and Asia; no outlet to the ocean

Lake (inland sea) | Mar 2026 | Jun 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. In June 2026 a peer-reviewed study in Earth's Future warned that climate change and human water use could lower the level by 8 to 30 metres by 2100, endangering sturgeon, wetlands, ports and livelihoods.

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
www.clarityupsc.com

Watch the 2-minute video
Clarity UPSC on YouTube



25 Mount Elbrus

Kabardino-Balkaria, Russia, in the Greater Caucasus

Peak | Jan 2026 | Aug 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In August 2026 a news report said Andhra Pradesh police Sub-Inspector V. Venkateswara Rao reached the summit and displayed a 100-metre Indian flag for India's 80th Independence 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
www.clarityupsc.com



26 Lake Baikal

South-eastern Siberia, Russia

Lake | Feb 2026 | Jun 2026

Also in Volume 1

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. In June 2026 Lake Baikal featured in discussions of the world's superlative geographic features and of freshwater conservation. Industrial pollution, tourism and climate change threaten the lake.

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
www.clarityupsc.com

River Jun 2026

27 Kura (Mtkvari) River

South Caucasus: Türkiye, Georgia and Azerbaijan



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 the Mtkvari, known internationally as the Kura, featured in reports on trans-boundary water management. Urban growth, industrial waste and over-extraction have degraded its water, and its dams have slowed its flow.

WHERE IT IS

The Kura rises in the Kars upland of north-eastern Türkiye at about 2,740 m. It flows about 1,515 km east through Georgia, past Tbilisi, and across Azerbaijan to the Caspian Sea. It crosses into Azerbaijan just below its confluence with the Khrami.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Türkiye · Georgia · Azerbaijan · Armenia and Iran (via the Aras)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The longest river in the Caucasus.
- Its largest tributary, the Aras, drains much of Armenia and north-western Iran.
- The Mingachevir reservoir in Azerbaijan generates power and supports farming.

PRELIMS TRAP The Kura (Mtkvari) flows east into the Caspian Sea. The Rioni, also in Georgia, flows west into the Black Sea.

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

28 Armenia–Azerbaijan border (South Caucasus)

Region (international border) · Jun 2026

South Caucasus, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea



WHY IN NEWS

On 29 April 2026 Armenia and Azerbaijan held the 13th meeting of their border delimitation commissions at Aghveran in Armenia. They agreed and exchanged draft guidelines for expert groups, delimitation maps and publishing border documents, to be sent to both governments for approval.

WHERE IT IS

Armenia is a landlocked country in the South Caucasus, bounded by Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iran and Türkiye. Azerbaijan lies to its east on the Caspian Sea. Much of Armenia sits on the Armenian Highland.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Georgia · Azerbaijan · Iran · Türkiye

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Both sides back the 1991 Almaty Declaration, which recognises Soviet-era administrative borders.
- Nagorno-Karabakh, an ethnic-Armenian enclave of Soviet Azerbaijan, came under Azerbaijani control after the 2020 war and a 2023 offensive.
- Armenia's highest point is Mount Aragats (4,090 m); its average elevation is about 1,800 m.
- Armenia adopted Christianity as its state religion in the early fourth century.

PRELIMS TRAP Nakhchivan is an Azerbaijani exclave cut off from mainland Azerbaijan by Armenia; Nagorno-Karabakh lies within mainland Azerbaijan.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Watch the 2-minute video
Clarity UPSC on YouTube



29 Kazakhstan

Central Asia; a small western part lies in Europe by convention

Country | Aug 2026

In news: On 4 August 2026 India's Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar, met Kazakhstan's ambassador in New Delhi. They agreed to deepen training and exchanges between their election bodies. India chairs the Council of Member States of International IDEA in 2026.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Russia | China | Kyrgyzstan | Uzbekistan | Turkmenistan | Caspian Sea

- World's largest landlocked country and ninth-largest country by area.
- The capital moved from Almaty to Akmola in 1997; it became Astana (1998), Nur-Sultan (2019) and Astana again (2022).
- Large oil, gas and uranium reserves shape its economy; the currency is the tenge.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



30 Uzbekistan

Landlocked Central Asia

Country | May 2026

In news: On 13 May 2026 India and Uzbekistan held their 17th round of Foreign Office Consultations in New Delhi. They reviewed trade of about US$1.3 billion in 2025 and cooperation in tourism, education, technology and renewable energy.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Kazakhstan | Kyrgyzstan | Tajikistan | Afghanistan | Turkmenistan

- Became independent in 1991 after the Soviet Union collapsed; capital Tashkent.
- Silk Road cities include Samarkand and Bukhara; it has reserves of natural gas and gold, and grows cotton.
- One of the world's two doubly landlocked countries; the other is Liechtenstein.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Lake Jul 2026

31 Aral Sea

Central Asia, between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 a new study reported that the dried bed of the Aral Sea has turned from a carbon store into a major carbon source. Exposed sediments released about 748 million tonnes of carbon dioxide between 1960 and 2022. Researchers examined whether partial reflooding could curb further emissions.

WHERE IT IS

The Aral Sea is a terminal inland lake in Central Asia between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The Syr Darya fed it from the north-east and the Amu Darya from the south. Around 1960 it was the world's fourth-largest lake.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Kazakhstan · Uzbekistan

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Soviet-era canals diverted both rivers to irrigate farms, mainly cotton; the lake split into northern and southern parts.
- The exposed bed has become the Aralkum Desert, from which winds carry salt and polluted dust.
- The eastern lobe of the South Aral dried in 2014; water remains in the managed northern basin.
- Waterlogged sediments store carbon; drying exposes them to oxygen, and microbes then release carbon dioxide.

PRELIMS TRAP The Amu Darya fed the Aral from the south and the Syr Darya from the north-east; the Caspian Sea, farther west, is a separate inland sea.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

Lake · Jun 2026

32 Lake Issyk-Kul

Tian Shan mountains, eastern Kyrgyzstan



WHY IN NEWS

A Kyrgyz–Russian team began a new underwater excavation season at the submerged Toru-Aygyr settlement in Lake Issyk-Kul on 20 June 2026, with a second stage planned for September.

WHERE IT IS

Issyk-Kul lies at 1,607 m in the Tian Shan of eastern Kyrgyzstan. The Kungey Ala-Too range runs along its northern shore and the Teskey Ala-Too along its southern shore. Kazakhstan lies beyond the northern range. Toru-Aygyr is on the lake's north-western shore.

SURROUNDED BY

- Kungey Ala-Too range (north)
- Teskey Ala-Too range (south)
- Issyk-Kul Region, Kyrgyzstan
- Kazakhstan (beyond the northern range)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The lake has no outlet and its water is slightly saline, so it rarely freezes; its name means 'hot lake'.
- Issyk-Kul is a Ramsar site and part of the Issyk-Kul Biosphere Reserve.
- The town existed from at least the 10th to 13th century; estimates of its flooding range from about 800 years ago to the 15th century.
- The area once lay under the Karakhanids, a Turkic dynasty; the lake was a Silk Road stopover described by Xuanzang in the 7th century.

PRELIMS TRAP Issyk-Kul is in Kyrgyzstan; Lake Balkhash, a larger lake with fresh and saline halves, is in Kazakhstan.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

33 Tajikistan

Landlocked Central Asia, in the Pamir and Alay ranges



WHY IN NEWS

On 10 June 2026 India and Tajikistan held the 12th meeting of their Joint Commission on trade and technical cooperation. A protocol covered pharmaceuticals, agriculture, energy and connectivity, including the International North–South Transport Corridor and Iran's Chabahar port.

WHERE IT IS

Tajikistan is a landlocked country in Central Asia, dominated by the Pamir and Alay mountain ranges. It borders Afghanistan, China, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Dushanbe is the capital.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

Afghanistan (south) · China (east) · Kyrgyzstan (north) · Uzbekistan (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Independent from the Soviet Union since 1991; key industries are aluminium, cement, hydropower and agriculture.
- Mountains cover more than 90 per cent of the country; Ismoil Somoni Peak (7,495 m) in the Pamirs is its highest point.
- India's exports to Tajikistan grew over 27 percent in 2025–26, led by drug formulations and pulses.

PRELIMS TRAP Afghanistan's narrow Wakhan Corridor separates Tajikistan from Pakistan and from Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir, which is part of India.

Read the full story
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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.

Open Live Economic Data →

clarityupsc.com/live-economic-data

WORLD

East Asia

11 places

34 Lake Manasarovar · Lake

35 Mongolia · Country

36 Gandantegchinling Monastery, Ulaanbaatar · Monastery

37 South Korea · Country

38 Japan · Country (archipelago)

39 Okinotori Island · Atoll

40 Kikai Caldera · Volcano

41 Kumamoto (Kyushu), Japan · Earthquake zone

42 Daishō-in Temple, Miyajima · Temple

43 Kuril Islands · Archipelago

44 Shiveluch (Sheveluch) Volcano · Volcano

Clarity UPSC

Lake · Jul 2026

34 Lake Manasarovar

Burang County, south-western Tibet Autonomous Region, China



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 pilgrims on the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra could not bathe in Lake Manasarovar, because Chinese authorities kept their ban on entering the lake for a holy dip. India ran ten official batches each through Lipulekh (Uttarakhand) and Nathu La (Sikkim).

WHERE IT IS

Lake Manasarovar is a high-altitude freshwater lake in Burang County, in the south-west of China's Tibet Autonomous Region. Mount Kailash rises to its north and Gurla Mandhata to its south. The saline Lake Rakshastal lies immediately to its west.

SURROUNDED BY Mount Kailash (north) · Gurla Mandhata (south) · Lake Rakshastal (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its surface lies about 4,590 m above sea level, among the world's highest large freshwater lakes.
- A natural channel, the Ganga Chhu, links it with Rakshastal and may carry its overflow westward.
- The Indus, Sutlej, Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) and Karnali rise in the wider Kailash region.
- The lake is sacred in Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Bon traditions.

PRELIMS TRAP Manasarovar is fresh and Rakshastal saline. The four great rivers rise in the wider Kailash region rather than flowing out of the lake itself.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Country · Aug 2026

35 Mongolia

Landlocked, between Russia and China



WHY IN NEWS

Mongolia hosted the 17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (COP17) in Ulaanbaatar from 17 to 28 August 2026, themed 'Restoring Land. Restoring Hope.' On 24 August India reported 21.76 million hectares under restoration during 2011–2020.

WHERE IT IS

Mongolia is a landlocked country in the heart of Asia, with Russia to the north and China on the east, south and west. Taiga and mountain forest in the north give way to central steppe and the Gobi in the dry south.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Russia · China

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Average elevation is about 1,580 m; more than four-fifths of the land lies above 1,000 m.
- The UNCCD entered into force in 1996; 2026 is the UN International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.
- India's Bonn Challenge goal is to restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.
- Drought before a harsh winter can kill large numbers of livestock in its herding economy.

PRELIMS TRAP Desertification means land degradation in dry areas from climate variation and human activity; the land need not become sand desert.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



36 Gandantegchinling Monastery, Ulaanbaatar

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Monastery | May 2026 | Jun 2026

In news: In late May 2026 India sent relics of the Buddha's chief disciples Sariputra and Mahamoggallana (Maudgalyayana) from Sanchi to Mongolia. They were enshrined for ten days at Gandantegchinling Monastery in Ulaanbaatar. It was only the second time the relics had gone abroad; the first was in 2024.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Russia (north) | China (south, east and west)

- The relics come from Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, where British excavators found them in the 1850s; its Great Stupa dates from Ashoka's reign.
- Mongolia adopted Buddhism in the 16th century; India promised to send these relics during Prime Minister Modi's 2015 visit to Mongolia.
- An Indian Air Force aircraft carried the relics; twenty items on the Buddha's life were displayed with them.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



37 South Korea

Southern Korean Peninsula, East Asia

Country | Feb 2026 | May 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In May 2026 India's Defence Minister visited South Korea to strengthen strategic ties.

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
www.clarityupsc.com

38 Japan

North-west Pacific Ocean, east of the Asian mainland

Country (archipelago) · Jun 2026



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 Japan hosted a series of diplomatic meetings, renewing interest in its geography. Its position where tectonic plates converge explains its frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

WHERE IT IS

Japan is an archipelago in the north-west Pacific, stretching about 2,360 km north to south. Its four main islands are Hokkaido, Honshu (the largest), Shikoku and Kyushu.

SURROUNDED BY Pacific Ocean (east) · Sea of Japan (west) · Sea of Okhotsk (north) · East China Sea (south-west)

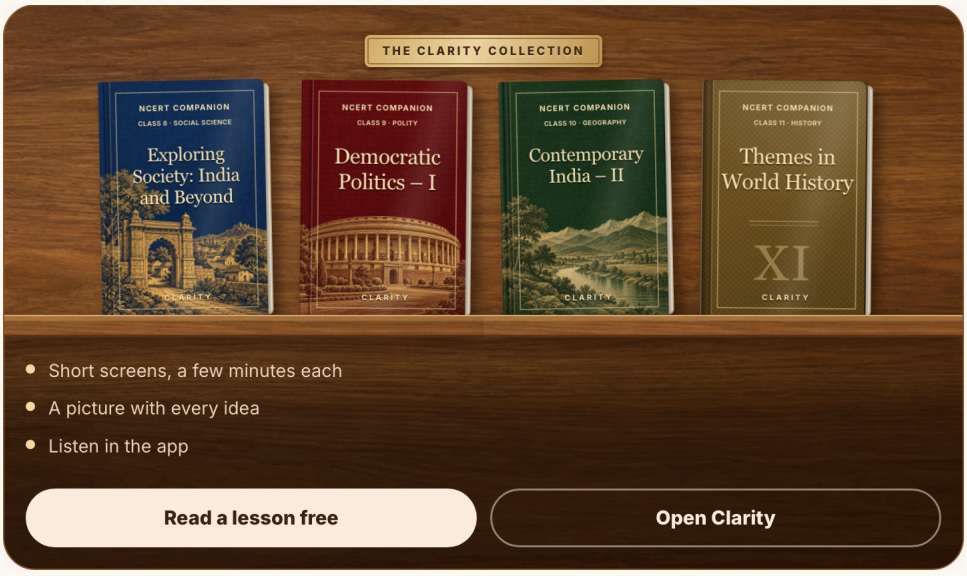
KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Sits where four plates meet: the Pacific, Philippine Sea, Eurasian and North American; about 111 of its roughly 200 volcanoes are active.
- About 80 percent of the land is mountainous; Mount Fuji (3,776 m), a stratovolcano, is the highest peak.
- Past disasters include the 1923 Great Kantō and 1995 Kobe earthquakes; typhoons strike in late summer and autumn.

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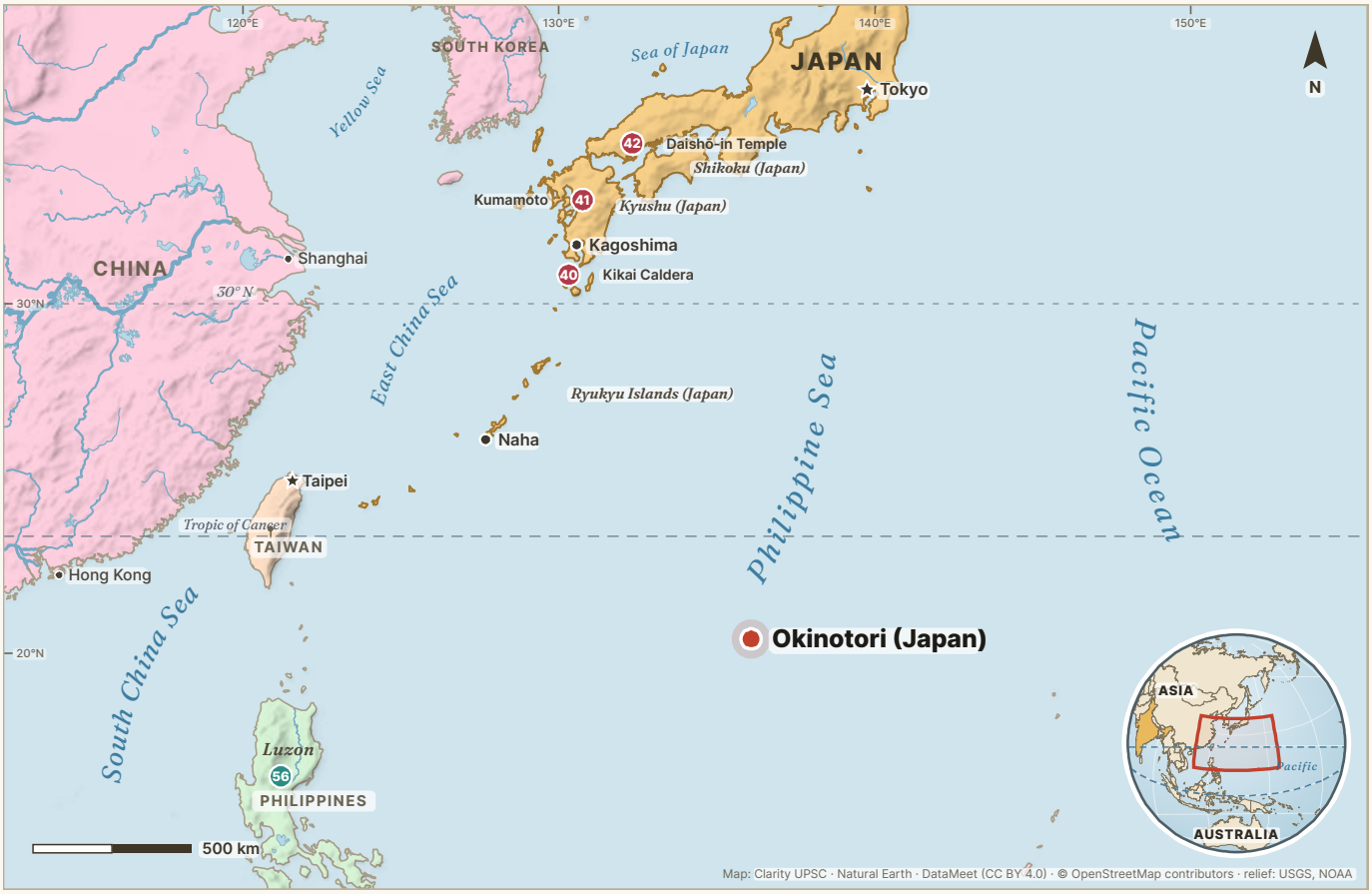


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Atoll Jul 2026

39 Okinotori Island

Philippine Sea, about 1,700 km south of Tokyo



WHY IN NEWS

On 19 July 2026 Japanese forces observed three Chinese vessels and a Russian frigate near Japan-administered Okinotori, where a Chinese destroyer conducted live-fire training. Japan protested over navigation safety; China rejected Japan's claimed maritime rights around the atoll.

WHERE IT IS

Okinotori is a remote coral atoll in the Philippine Sea, about 1,700 km from central Tokyo. It sits on a seamount of the Kyushu–Palau Ridge. Japan administers it as part of Ogasawara Village in Tokyo Metropolis.

SURROUNDED BY Philippine Sea · Kyushu–Palau Ridge · Pacific Ocean

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is Japan's southernmost administered island and its only territory south of the Tropic of Cancer.
- Only two tiny islets, Kitakojima and Higashikojima, stay above water at high tide; concrete works protect both.
- Japan bases an exclusive economic zone of about 420,000 sq km on it, larger than Japan's whole land area.
- UNCLOS Article 121 denies an EEZ to rocks that cannot sustain habitation or economic life; China calls Okinotori such a rock.

PRELIMS TRAP A territorial sea (up to 12 nautical miles) carries sovereignty; an EEZ (up to 200 nautical miles) grants resource rights and limited jurisdiction.

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Volcano · Jul 2026

40 Kikai Caldera

Mostly under the sea, south of Kyushu, Japan



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 a report revisited a March 2026 study of Japan's mostly submerged Kikai caldera, south of Kyushu. Seismic evidence suggests fresh melt has entered a large, shallow magma reservoir. The study does not predict an imminent eruption.

WHERE IT IS

Kikai is a mostly underwater volcanic caldera south of Kyushu in south-western Japan. It lies near the northern end of the Ryukyu volcanic arc, where subduction drives repeated volcanic activity.

SURROUNDED BY Kyushu (north) · Ryukyu Islands (south) · East China Sea · Pacific Ocean

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It produced the Kikai-Akahoya eruption about 7,300 years ago, probably the largest known eruption of the Holocene epoch.
- The reservoir lies about 2.5–6 km below the caldera and holds roughly 3–6% melt.
- At least 32 cubic km of melt may have entered the reservoir during the last 3,900 years.
- Kobe University and Japan's marine-earth science agency imaged it using 39 ocean-bottom seismometers.

PRELIMS TRAP A caldera is a broad depression formed by collapse after a volcano empties a large volume of magma; a crater is a much smaller summit opening.

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Clarity UPSC

Earthquake zone · Jul 2026

41 Kumamoto (Kyushu), Japan

Central Kyushu, south-western Japan



WHY IN NEWS

On 28 July 2026 a magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck Kumamoto Prefecture on Kyushu at about 10 km depth, with maximum intensity seven on the Japan Meteorological Agency scale. By 30 July at least 23 deaths were confirmed. A tsunami advisory was issued and later lifted.

WHERE IT IS

Kumamoto Prefecture lies in central Kyushu, the south-western of Japan's four largest islands. The Sea of Japan lies west of the Japanese arc, the Pacific Ocean to its east and the East China Sea along its south-western island chains.

SURROUNDED BY East China Sea · Pacific Ocean · Sea of Japan

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Philippine Sea Plate subducts beneath south-western Japan, including Kyushu; the Pacific Plate descends beneath northern and eastern Japan.
- Magnitude measures energy released at the source; intensity measures shaking at a place. The US estimate was moment magnitude 6.8.
- Kumamoto was also hit by destructive earthquakes in April 2016.
- Japan's four largest islands are Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu; Mount Fuji (3,776 m) stands on Honshu.

PRELIMS TRAP The Philippine Sea Plate subducts near Kyushu; the Pacific Plate subducts beneath north-eastern Japan.

Read the full story
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Temple · May 2026

42 Daishō-in Temple, Miyajima

Miyajima (Itsukushima) island, Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan



WHY IN NEWS

On 21 May 2026 fire destroyed the Reikado Hall of Daishō-in, a Buddhist temple on Miyajima Island near Hiroshima, Japan. The wooden hall housed a flame said to have burned since the temple's founding. Officials retrieved the flame, pledged to rebuild and began investigating the cause; no casualties were reported.

WHERE IT IS

Daishō-in stands partway up Mount Misen on Miyajima (Itsukushima), a small island in Hiroshima Bay in the Seto Inland Sea, off south-western Honshu. The Itsukushima Shrine and its 'floating' torii gate lie nearby on the shore.

SURROUNDED BY

- Hiroshima Bay (Seto Inland Sea)
- Hatsukaichi and Hiroshima on the Honshu mainland

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The monk Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi), who brought Shingon Buddhism to Japan, is credited with founding it in 806 CE; it long administered Itsukushima Shrine.
- The flame is said to have lit the Peace Flame at Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park; an earlier hall housing it burned in 2005.
- Itsukushima Shrine, a Shinto shrine built on stilts over tidal flats, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site; its present torii dates from 1875.

PRELIMS TRAP Daishō-in is a Shingon Buddhist temple; the nearby Itsukushima Shrine is Shinto.

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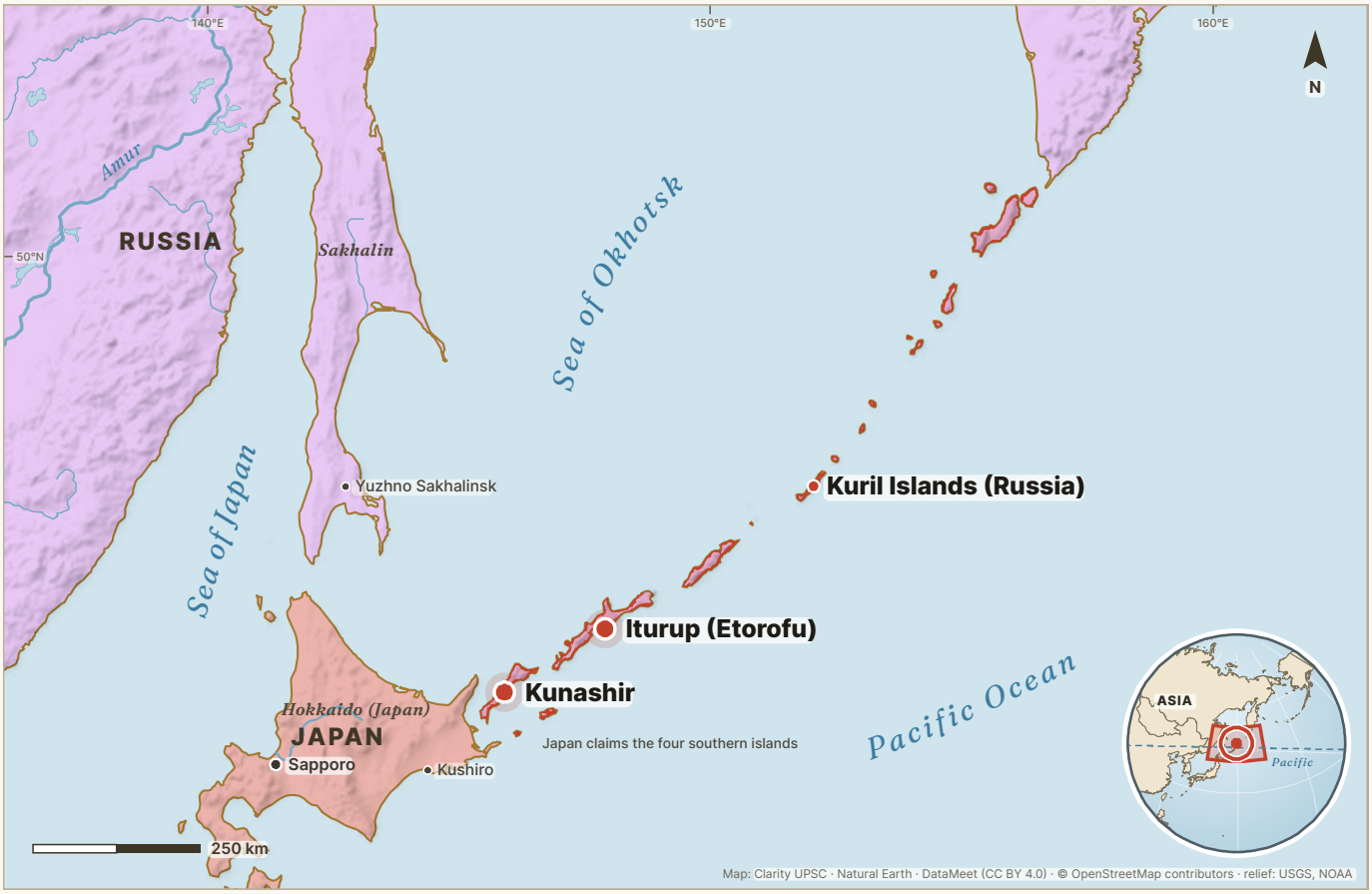
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Archipelago · Aug 2026

43 Kuril Islands

Between Kamchatka (Russia) and Hokkaido (Japan)



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Iturup, which Japan calls Etorofu. It was his first visit to the disputed southern Kuril Islands, and he inspected a fish plant, hospital and school. Japan protested.

WHERE IT IS

The volcanic Kuril chain runs between Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula and Japan's Hokkaido. It separates the Sea of Okhotsk from the North Pacific. Russia controls the whole chain.

SURROUNDED BY Sea of Okhotsk · North Pacific Ocean · Kamchatka Peninsula (Russia) · Hokkaido (Japan)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Japan claims Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and the Habomai group as its Northern Territories.
- Soviet forces took the southern islands at the end of the Second World War; the dispute has blocked a peace treaty.
- The 1956 Japan–Soviet Joint Declaration ended the state of war and restored relations but left sovereignty unsettled.
- Control of the southern chain shapes Russia's naval access to the Sea of Okhotsk.

PRELIMS TRAP The Kurils separate the Sea of Okhotsk from the Pacific; Sakhalin, a separate Russian island, lies to the west.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

44 Shiveluch (Sheveluch) Volcano

Volcano · Jan 2026 · Jun 2026 · Also in Volume 1

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. In early June 2026 the eruptive phase continued, with ash plumes up to 10.8 km high, and the aviation colour code stayed at Orange.

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.

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WORLD

Southeast Asia

16 places

45 South China Sea · Sea

46 Myanmar · Country

47 Thailand · Country

48 Vietnam · Country

49 Phu Quoc Island · Island

50 Singapore · Island city-state

51 Indonesia · Country (archipelago)

52 Madura Island · Island

53 Mount Bromo · Volcano

54 Mount Dukono · Volcano

55 Christmas Island · Island

56 Luzon (Philippines) · Island

57 Mayon Volcano · Volcano

58 Mount Kanlaon · Volcano

59 Philippines (Samar earthquake) · Earthquake zone

60 Taal Volcano · Volcano

Sea | Jul 2026

45 South China Sea

Western Pacific, between southern China, South-East Asia and the Philippines



WHY IN NEWS

On 25 July 2026 the Vietnamese cargo ship Khoi Nguyen 18, carrying 62 Vietnamese nationals, sank in bad weather near Fiery Cross Reef. A Chinese rescue ship picked up its distress signal, and a multinational search had rescued 46 people by late 26 July.

WHERE IT IS

The South China Sea is a marginal sea of the western Pacific between southern China, mainland South-East Asia, the Philippines and Borneo. The Taiwan Strait lies to its north, the Luzon Strait to its east and the Strait of Malacca to its south-west.

BORDERING COUNTRIES China | Taiwan | Vietnam | Philippines | Malaysia | Brunei | Indonesia

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- China controls the Paracel Islands, which Vietnam also claims; several countries occupy different reefs and islands of the Spratlys.
- China has built a large artificial island on Fiery Cross Reef in the Spratlys.
- China and the Philippines dispute Scarborough Shoal; Taiwan administers the Pratas Islands.
- After the Philippines began UNCLOS arbitration in 2013, a tribunal issued its major award on maritime entitlements in 2016.

PRELIMS TRAP Vietnam calls these waters the East Sea and the Philippines the West Philippine Sea. The Paracels lie in the north-west of the sea; Fiery Cross Reef lies in the Spratlys.

Read the full story
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46 Myanmar

Country | Jan 2026 | Jun 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In June 2026 high-level meetings between Indian and Myanmar leaders put the country in the spotlight. India treats Myanmar as its land bridge to ASEAN under the Act East and Neighbourhood First policies.

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.

Read the full story
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Country · Jun 2026

47 Thailand

Mainland South-East Asia, between the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 Thailand featured in news of high-level visits, trade talks and regional cooperation with India under ASEAN and BIMSTEC. India and Thailand share a maritime boundary in the Andaman Sea.

WHERE IT IS

Thailand lies in mainland South-East Asia. It borders Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia, with the Andaman Sea to the south-west and the Gulf of Thailand to the south.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

Myanmar (west) · Laos (north and east) · Cambodia (south-east) · Malaysia (south) · Andaman Sea · Gulf of Thailand

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Chao Phraya waters the central alluvial plain; the rolling Khorat Plateau lies in the north-east.
- Joint exercises with India include Maitree (army) and Indo-Thai CORPAT; both work on the India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway.
- The Isthmus of Kra, the narrowest part of the Malay Peninsula (about 44 km), separates the Andaman Sea from the Gulf of Thailand.

PRELIMS TRAP The Khorat Plateau is in north-east Thailand; the Shan Plateau is in eastern Myanmar.

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LEVEL 1 · POLITY

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Tap your answer — the reason follows.

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48 Vietnam

Country | Mar 2026 | Aug 2026 | Also in Volume 1

Eastern Indochinese Peninsula, South-east Asia



WHY 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. On 25 August 2026 Indian and Vietnamese coast guard chiefs held their seventh high-level meeting in Chennai; their joint exercise SAHYOG-HOPTAC was scheduled for 27 August.

WHERE IT IS

Vietnam occupies the eastern side of the Indochinese Peninsula, in an elongated S-shape. China lies to the north and Laos and Cambodia to the west. Its long coast faces the South China Sea, with the Gulf of Tonkin in the north and the Gulf of Thailand in the south-west.

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

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- 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.

PRELIMS TRAP Vietnam calls the South China Sea the 'East Sea'; the Philippines calls part of it the 'West Philippine Sea'.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Island Jul 2026

49 Phu Quoc Island

Gulf of Thailand, off south-western Vietnam



WHY IN NEWS

On 11 July 2026 a tourist speedboat carrying 36 people capsized near Vietnam's Phu Quoc Island. Fifteen of the 32 Indian tourists aboard died and 21 people survived. Police detained the captain; rough seas were reported, but the cause remained unconfirmed.

WHERE IT IS

Phu Quoc is Vietnam's largest island, in the Gulf of Thailand off the country's south-western coast. It lies closer to Cambodia than to mainland Vietnam. Since a 2025 reform it has been a special zone of An Giang province.

SURROUNDED BY Gulf of Thailand · Cambodia (north) · Vietnam (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The island covers about 575 sq km and stretches about 50 km north to south; Mount Chua (about 603 m) is its highest point.
- Phu Quoc National Park protects its north and north-east; the island is part of UNESCO's Kien Giang Biosphere Reserve (2006).
- It became Vietnam's first island city in 2020; older books place it in Kien Giang province.
- It is known for fermented fish sauce, pepper, coral reefs and seagrass beds.

PRELIMS TRAP Phu Quoc lies in the Gulf of Thailand rather than the South China Sea; it is close to Cambodia but belongs to Vietnam.

Read the full story
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Island city-state | May 2026

50 Singapore

Southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, between Malaysia and Indonesia



WHY IN NEWS

On 28 May 2026 India and Singapore held their 16th Defence Policy Dialogue in Singapore. India's Defence Secretary co-chaired it with Singapore's Permanent Secretary for Defence. They reviewed joint exercises and training and discussed cyber security, artificial intelligence and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.

WHERE IT IS

Singapore is an island city-state at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, between Malaysia and Indonesia. It lies on the Straits of Malacca route, which makes it one of the world's busiest ports. Its terrain is mostly low-lying.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

Malaysia (north) | Indonesia (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Bukit Timah, the highest natural point, rises to 164 m.
- Independent in 1965; India and Singapore signed a defence cooperation agreement in 2003.
- India trains Singaporean forces at Kalaikunda and Babina; the two join Thailand in the SITMEX naval exercise.

PRELIMS TRAP The Strait of Malacca separates the Malay Peninsula from Sumatra. The Singapore Strait, south of Singapore, links it to the South China Sea.

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51 Indonesia

Country (archipelago) · Jun 2026

South-East Asia, between the Indian and Pacific oceans



WHY IN NEWS

On 7 June 2026 External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono co-chaired the 8th India–Indonesia Joint Commission in New Delhi. They discussed direct shipping and ferry links between the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Sumatra.

WHERE IT IS

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelagic country, with over 17,000 islands. Its main islands are Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and Papua. The Great Channel (Six Degree Channel) separates Sumatra's northern tip from India's Great Nicobar, and the two countries share a maritime boundary in the Andaman Sea.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Malaysia (on Borneo) · Papua New Guinea (on New Guinea) · Timor-Leste (on Timor) · India (maritime, Andaman Sea)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Highest peak: Puncak Jaya (4,884 m) on New Guinea; longest river: the Kapuas (about 1,143 km) in West Kalimantan.
- Rich in petroleum, natural gas, coal, tin, copper, nickel, gold and timber.
- India and Indonesia have had a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership since 2018.

PRELIMS TRAP Kalimantan is Indonesia's part of Borneo, shared with Malaysia and Brunei; Papua is Indonesia's half of New Guinea.

Read the full story
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Island · Aug 2026

52 Madura Island

North-east of Java, Indonesia



WHY IN NEWS

On 2 August 2026 the ferry Mutiara Sentosa 2 caught fire near Indonesia's Madura Island soon after leaving Surabaya for Makassar. By 4 August authorities had reconciled the manifest: 238 people were aboard, 233 survived and five died.

WHERE IT IS

Madura lies immediately north-east of Java and belongs to East Java province. The Madura Strait separates it from Surabaya, and the Suramadu Bridge links the two by road.

SURROUNDED BY Java Sea (north) · Madura Strait (south) · Java (Surabaya)

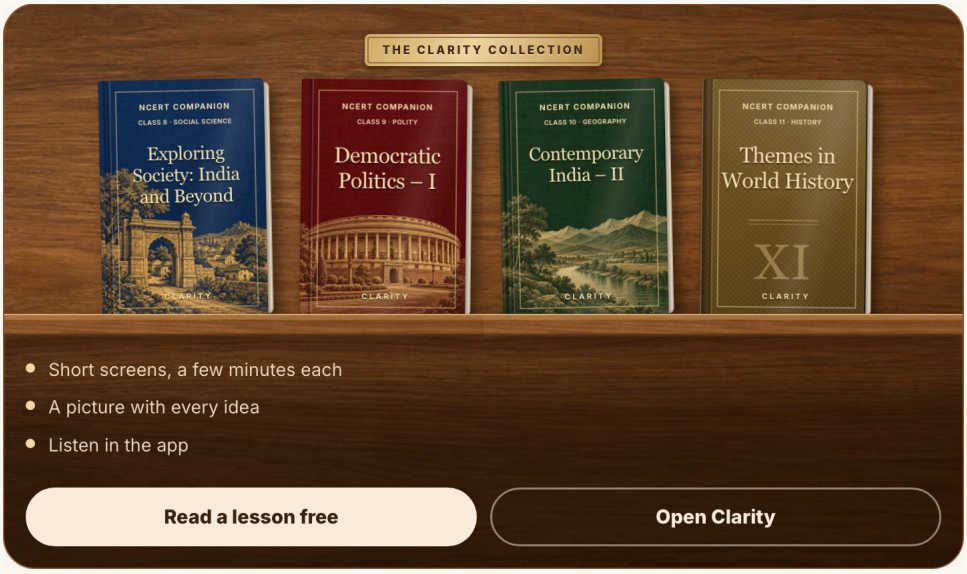
KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its four regencies are Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan and Sumenep.
- The island is known for salt production, cattle rearing and karapan sapi, a traditional bull race.

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Volcano · Aug 2026

53 Mount Bromo

Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, East Java, Indonesia



WHY IN NEWS

In early August 2026 a wildfire spread across Mount Bromo's national park in East Java. Authorities closed the park to visitors on 8 August, and about 176 hectares had burned by 9 August. Its cause was not established, and officials did not link it to volcanic activity.

WHERE IT IS

Mount Bromo is a cinder cone inside the Tengger caldera of East Java, with its summit at 2,329 m. It lies within Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park, one of Indonesia's best-known tourist landscapes.

SURROUNDED BY Tengger caldera (Sandsea) · Mount Semeru · Java Sea (north) · Indian Ocean (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Bromo is the youngest active cone in the Tengger caldera's Sandsea.
- Java's volcanoes lie on the Sunda arc, where the Indo-Australian Plate descends beneath the Eurasian margin.
- The Tengger people's Yadnya Kasada observance is linked to Bromo's crater.
- Indonesia expected high fire danger in August and September 2026 after an unusually dry season.

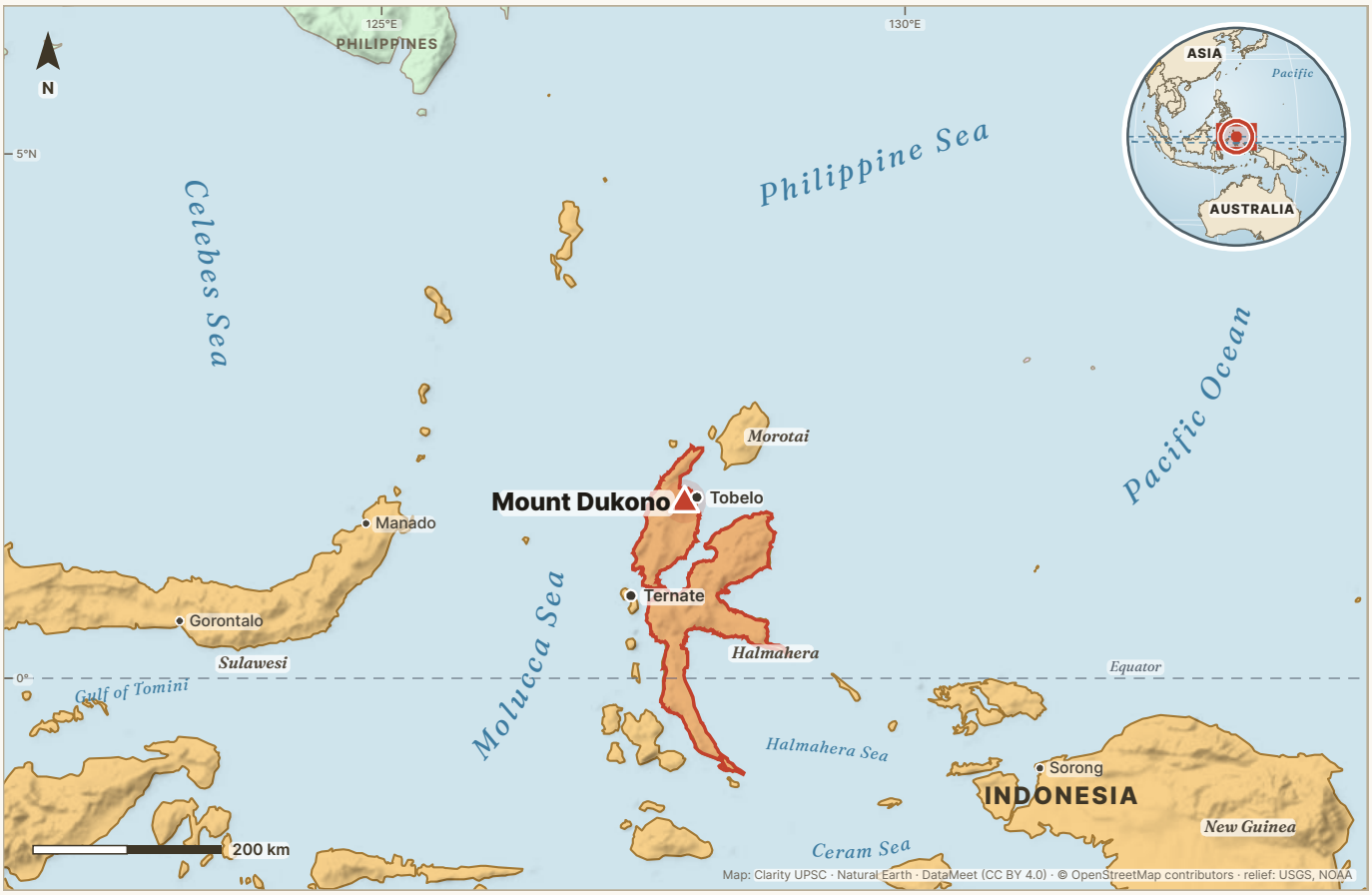
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Volcano | May 2026

54 Mount Dukono

Northern tip of Halmahera Island, North Maluku province, Indonesia



WHY IN NEWS

Mount Dukono erupted again in April 2026. Authorities reported an ash column about 1.4 km above the summit. They advised people to stay at least 4 km from the crater because of ashfall and breathing problems.

WHERE IT IS

Dukono stands on the northern tip of Halmahera, the largest island of Indonesia's North Maluku province. Halmahera lies between the Molucca Sea to the west and the Pacific Ocean to the east, south of the Philippine island of Mindanao.

SURROUNDED BY Halmahera Sea | Molucca Sea | Pacific Ocean | Ternate island (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A broad, low complex volcano about 1,273 m high, with several overlapping craters, including Malupang Warirang.
- Nearly continuous eruptions since 1933; the first recorded eruption, in 1550, filled a nearby strait with lava and ash.
- Indonesia's volcanology agency keeps it at Alert Level II (caution).
- Indonesia lies where the Indo-Australian, Pacific and Philippine Sea plates converge with the Eurasian (Sunda) plate.

Read the full story
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Island · Aug 2026

55 Christmas Island

Eastern Indian Ocean; an Australian external territory



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 SpaceX towed its intact Starship upper stage, Ship 40, to calmer waters near Christmas Island after about 24 days. The 52-metre vehicle had made a controlled Indian Ocean splashdown after Flight 13 on 24 July 2026. Engineers planned an inspection offshore.

WHERE IT IS

Christmas Island is an Australian external territory in the eastern Indian Ocean, about 490 km south of Jakarta and 2,600 km north-west of Perth. Java is the nearest large landmass; the Cocos Islands lie far to the south-west.

SURROUNDED BY Indian Ocean | Java, Indonesia (north) | Cocos (Keeling) Islands (south-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The island is the summit of a submarine mountain, with a central plateau rising to about 360 m.
- Christmas Island National Park covers about 85 sq km, nearly two-thirds of the 135 sq km territory.
- Tens of millions of red crabs migrate to the sea each year.
- Flying Fish Cove is the main settlement and port; deep water lies close to shore.

PRELIMS TRAP Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean is Australian; Kiritimati, also called Christmas Island, is in the central Pacific and belongs to Kiribati.

Read the full story
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Island · Aug 2026

56 Luzon (Philippines)

Northern Philippines



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 the south-west monsoon, enhanced by cyclones Luis and Maymay, affected more than 2.27 million people in the Philippines and displaced about 163,700. Maymay crossed near Magsingal in Ilocos Sur on 6 August; Luis had formed east of Quezon on 1 August.

WHERE IT IS

Luzon is the large northern island of the Philippines. Its Ilocos coast faces the South China Sea, called the West Philippine Sea locally, while Quezon faces the Philippine Sea to the east. Western Visayas lies farther south.

SURROUNDED BY

South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) · Philippine Sea · Visayas (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A tropical cyclone can draw moist south-westerly winds across the archipelago, bringing heavy rain far from its centre.
- Mountain ranges intensify rain on windward slopes and add landslide risk.

PRELIMS TRAP The Philippine Sea lies east of Luzon; the South China Sea, called the West Philippine Sea locally, lies to its west.

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57 Mayon Volcano

Near Legazpi City, Albay, southern Luzon, Philippines

Volcano | Jan 2026 | May 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. Mayon erupted again in early May 2026, with the alert at Level 3 on a 0–5 scale. Thousands were evacuated from the danger zone, and flights were warned away.

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.

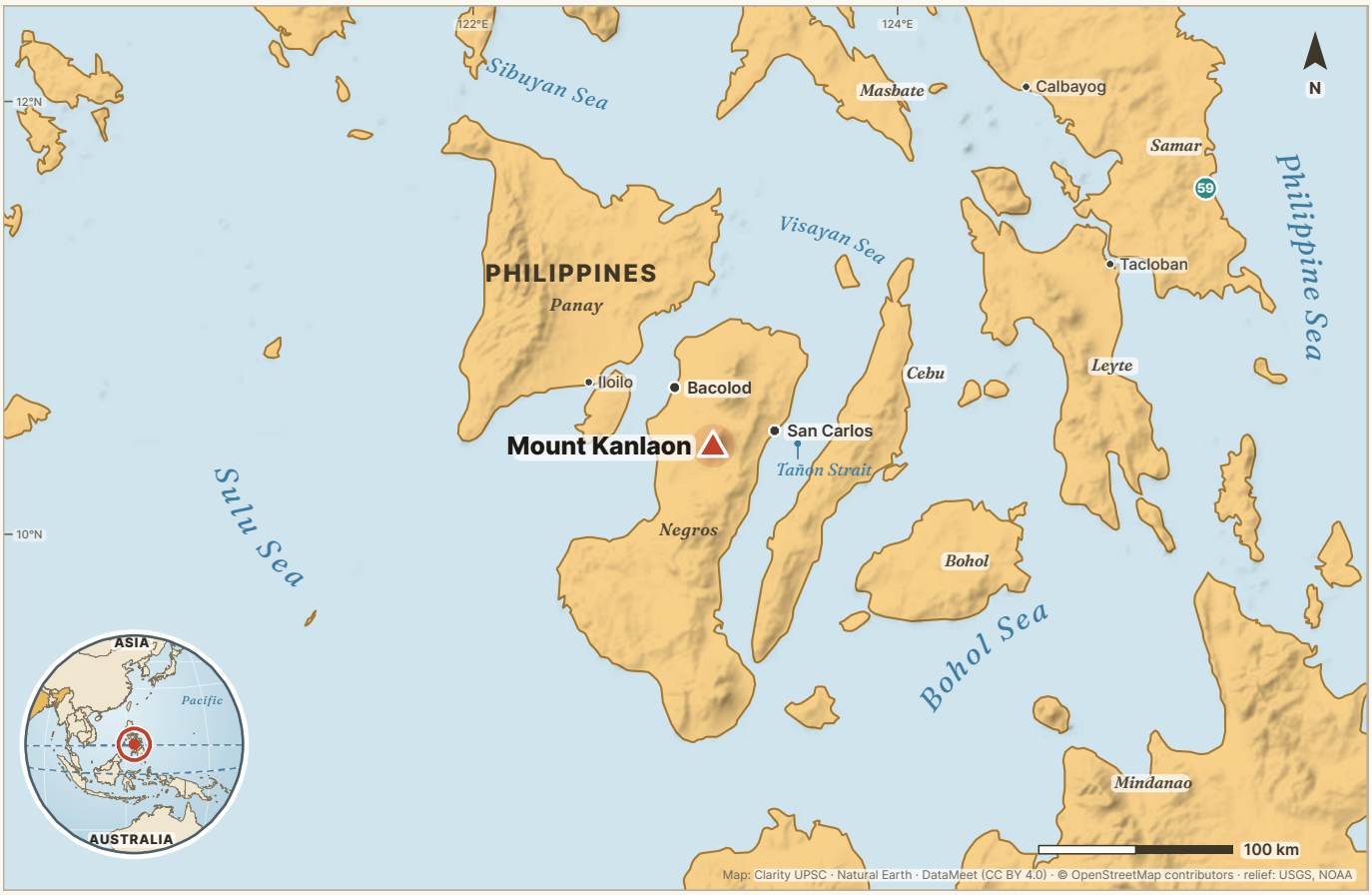
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Volcano · Aug 2026

58 Mount Kanlaon

Negros Island, central Philippines



WHY IN NEWS

On 13 August 2026 Mount Kanlaon emitted a grey plume, reported to contain ash, that rose about 200 m and drifted north, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said. The volcano stayed at Alert Level 2 after a moderately explosive eruption on 9 July 2026.

WHERE IT IS

Kanlaon stands on Negros Island in the central Philippines, straddling Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental provinces. At about 2,435 m it is the island's highest point; published figures range from 2,422 m to 2,465 m.

SURROUNDED BY

- Negros Occidental (west)
- Negros Oriental (east)
- Cebu (east, across the Tañon Strait)
- Panay (north-west, across the Guimaras Strait)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- An active stratovolcano of the subduction-related Negros–Sulu volcanic arc, on the Pacific Ring of Fire.
- A northern caldera holds a crater lake; the historically active summit vent lies farther south.
- Alert Level 2 means moderate unrest; entry into the 4 km Permanent Danger Zone is banned.
- Rain can turn loose volcanic deposits into lahars that follow valleys.

PRELIMS TRAP Kanlaon is on Negros in the Visayas; Mayon and Taal, the other well-known Philippine volcanoes, are on Luzon.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Earthquake zone | May 2026

59 Philippines (Samar earthquake)

Samar Island, Eastern Samar province, Visayas, Philippines



WHY IN NEWS

On 4 May 2026 a magnitude-6.0 earthquake struck Samar Island in Eastern Samar province, Philippines, at a depth of about 56 km. It caused no major damage; minor cracks and aftershock warnings followed.

WHERE IT IS

Samar is an island of the Visayas, the central group of the Philippine archipelago between Luzon and Mindanao. Its east coast faces the Philippine Sea. The archipelago separates the Philippine Sea from the South China Sea.

SURROUNDED BY Philippine Sea | South China Sea | Luzon (north) | Mindanao (south) | Leyte (south-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- More than 7,600 islands in three groups: Luzon (north), Visayas (centre) and Mindanao (south).
- Mount Apo on Mindanao (2,954 m) is the highest peak.
- The northeast monsoon (amihan) wets east coasts in winter; the southwest monsoon (habagat) wets west coasts in summer.
- Third-largest geothermal producer and a major nickel producer; more than 800 earthquakes a year.

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60

Taal Volcano

Volcano | Jul 2026

Batangas Province, Luzon, Philippines (about 50 km south of Manila)



WHY IN NEWS

On 30 June 2026 the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology reported a brief phreatomagmatic eruption at Taal Volcano. The four-minute blast sent a plume about 450 m high and reminded residents of the volcano's persistent hazards.

WHERE IT IS

Taal lies in Batangas Province on Luzon, about 50 km south of Manila. A caldera nearly 30 km wide is filled by Taal Lake, and Volcano Island in the lake holds its own crater lake.

SURROUNDED BY: Taal Lake | Batangas Province | Luzon island | Manila (about 50 km north)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A phreatomagmatic eruption happens when magma meets groundwater or lake water and flashes it to steam.
- At least 34 recorded eruptions in about 450 years make it one of the Philippines' most active volcanoes.
- A complex volcano of overlapping stratovolcanoes and maars; Vulcan Point is a small plug in Volcano Island's crater lake.
- It lies on the Pacific Ring of Fire; dense lakeshore populations face base surges, ashfall and lahars.

Read the full story
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WORLD

Europe

24 places

61 English Channel · Channel
62 Norwegian Sea · Sea
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77 Vjosa–Narta Lagoon · Lagoon (protected wetland)
78 Greece · Country
79 Crete · Island
80 Slovakia · Country
81 Hungary · Country
82 Romania · Country
83 Danube River · River
84 Moldova · Country

Clarity UPSC

Channel · Aug 2026

61 English Channel

Between southern England and northern France



WHY IN NEWS

On 4 August 2026 French and British teams rescued 157 people from a burning, overloaded small boat in the English Channel. The boat had left Normandy, and its engine caught fire near British waters inside France's search-and-rescue zone. Survivors were brought to Boulogne-sur-Mer.

WHERE IT IS

The Channel separates southern England from northern France and links the Atlantic Ocean with the North Sea. It is about 560 km long and narrows eastward into the Strait of Dover, about 33 km wide between Dover and Cap Gris-Nez.

BORDERING COUNTRIES United Kingdom · France

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The French call it La Manche, meaning 'the sleeve'.
- The Channel Tunnel links Folkestone and Coquelles; about 38 km of its 50 km runs under the sea.
- Strong tides, cold water and dense shipping make small-boat crossings dangerous.
- The Channel Islands (Jersey and Guernsey) lie close to the French coast; they are British Crown Dependencies, not part of the United Kingdom.

PRELIMS TRAP The Strait of Dover is the Channel's narrowest, eastern end, where it meets the North Sea; the Channel Tunnel runs beneath it. The Channel's western end opens to the Atlantic Ocean.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Sea · Jul 2026

62 Norwegian Sea

North Atlantic, between Norway and Iceland



WHY IN NEWS

On 7 July 2026 British F-35 jets intercepted a Russian reconnaissance aircraft over the Norwegian Sea. The Russian plane had dropped sonobuoys near the carrier HMS Prince of Wales, and London called the action unsafe.

WHERE IT IS

The Norwegian Sea is a marginal sea of the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. It lies between Norway to the east, Iceland to the west and the island of Jan Mayen to the north. It sits near NATO's northern flank.

SURROUNDED BY Norway (east) · Iceland (west) · Jan Mayen, Norway (north) · Faroe Islands, Denmark (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It formed when the Eurasian and North American plates began separating about 55 million years ago; its average depth is about 2 km.
- The warm North Atlantic Current keeps the sea largely ice-free all year.
- Europe's richest cod fishery lies near the Lofoten Islands; cold-water Lophelia pertusa coral reefs grow on its floor.
- Oil and gas fields developed since the 1990s support Norway's economy; the Moskstraumen whirlpool lies off Lofoten.

PRELIMS TRAP The Norwegian Sea lies north-west of Norway, towards Iceland; the North Sea lies farther south, between Norway, Britain and Denmark.

Read the full story
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Sea | Jul 2026

63 Black Sea

Between south-eastern Europe and western Asia



WHY IN NEWS

On 23 July 2026 India issued a maritime security advisory for the Black Sea covering Indian ships and foreign ships with Indian crews. Missile and drone attacks had increased; an attack on MV Golden Leo as it left Odesa killed four Indian nationals.

WHERE IT IS

The Black Sea lies between south-eastern Europe and western Asia, with the Crimean Peninsula projecting into its north. Ukraine lies to the north, Russia to the north-east, Georgia to the east, Türkiye to the south, and Bulgaria and Romania to the west. Crimea is internationally recognised as part of Ukraine; Russia has held it since 2014.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Ukraine | Russia | Georgia | Türkiye | Bulgaria | Romania

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Kerch Strait links it with the Sea of Azov; the Bosporus and Dardanelles lead, via the Sea of Marmara, to the Aegean.
- It is the world's largest natural anoxic basin: more than 90% of its water lacks oxygen, and hydrogen sulphide fills the deep layers.
- The Danube, Dniester, Dnieper, Southern Bug and Rioni flow into it, which keeps its salinity relatively low.
- The 1936 Montreux Convention governs passage through the Turkish Straits and limits warships of non-Black Sea states.

PRELIMS TRAP The Bosporus connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara; the Dardanelles connect Marmara with the Aegean Sea.

Read the full story
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Sea · Jun 2026

64 Sea of Azov

Eastern Europe, between Ukraine and Russia; north of the Black Sea



WHY IN NEWS

In early June 2026 Ukrainian officials claimed to have struck ships carrying illegal cargoes in the Sea of Azov. The incident put this shallow inland sea back at the centre of the Russia–Ukraine conflict.

WHERE IT IS

The Sea of Azov is a northern extension of the Black Sea. Ukraine lies to its north-west and Russia to its south-east. The narrow Kerch Strait, between the Crimean and Taman peninsulas, links it to the Black Sea.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Ukraine · Russia

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The world's shallowest sea, with a maximum depth of about 14 metres; it covers about 37,600 sq km.
- The Don and Kuban rivers bring over 90 percent of its fresh water, making the Taganrog Gulf almost fresh.
- The 113-km Arabat Spit separates it from the hypersaline Syvash lagoons.
- Ports include Taganrog and Yeysk (Russia), and Mariupol and Berdyansk in Ukraine, under Russian occupation since 2022; the Crimean Bridge spans the Kerch Strait.

PRELIMS TRAP The Kerch Strait links the Sea of Azov to the Black Sea; the Bosporus links the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara.

Read the full story
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65 France

Western Europe, between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean

Country | Feb 2026 | Jun 2026

Also in Volume 1

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. In June 2026 France was in focus amid renewed talks on India's Jaitapur nuclear project, for which France would supply reactors.

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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66 Belgium

Western Europe, on the North Sea

Country | Jul 2026

In news: On 15 July 2026 India and Belgium held their first Strategic Dialogue in Brussels. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Belgian Foreign Minister Maxime Prévot discussed trade, technology, energy and security.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Netherlands | Germany | Luxembourg | France

- Brussels hosts NATO's headquarters and major EU institutions; Antwerp is a global diamond-trading centre.
- Belgium has three regions (Flemish, Walloon, Brussels-Capital) and three official languages (Dutch, French, German).
- The Scheldt and Meuse are its main rivers; Signal de Botrange (694 m) in the Ardennes is the highest point.

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67 Netherlands

North-western Europe, on the North Sea

Country | May 2026

In news: On 16 May 2026, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit, India and the Netherlands raised ties to a Strategic Partnership and adopted a 2026–2030 roadmap. The Netherlands also returned the Chola-era Anaimangalam (Leiden) copper plates.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

Germany (east) | Belgium (south) | North Sea (west and north)

- The IJsselmeer, a freshwater lake, was created by damming the Zuiderzee; Vaalserberg (about 322 m) in Limburg is the highest mainland point.
- The Kingdom of the Netherlands has four countries: the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten; Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba are Dutch public bodies.
- An earlier Indo-Dutch Centre of Excellence for vegetables and flowers opened at Ambalavayal, Wayanad (Kerala), in November 2020.

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68 Switzerland

Landlocked; where Western and Central Europe meet

Country | Jun 2026

In news: In June 2026 Switzerland hosted high-level talks between United States and Iranian officials on Iran's nuclear programme and regional tensions. Its long tradition of neutrality makes it a preferred venue for such negotiations.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

Germany (north) | France (west) | Italy (south) | Austria (east) | Liechtenstein (east)

- Neutral for centuries; it stays outside the EU and NATO.
- Dufourspitze (4,634 m) in the Pennine Alps is the highest peak; Lake Geneva is shared with France.
- Four official languages: German, French, Italian and Romansh.

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Volcano (caldera lake) | Jun 2026

69 Lake Laach (Laacher See)

Eifel region, western Germany, near the Rhine



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 a German seismic study around Lake Laach, published in November 2025, made news. Over 1,000 tiny earthquakes revealed a slanted magma reservoir beneath the volcano. Scientists said the system is active but no eruption is imminent.

WHERE IT IS

Lake Laach is a caldera lake in the Eifel region of western Germany, near the Rhine Valley. It lies in the Eifel volcanic field, where small eruptions have occurred over millions of years.

SURROUNDED BY Eifel volcanic field | Rhine Valley (east) | Neuwied Basin

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A huge eruption about 13,000 years ago formed the crater and spread ash across Europe.
- Micro-quakes at 10–16 km depth show the magma store tilting towards the Neuwied Basin.
- A future eruption could come from another vent in the volcanic field.

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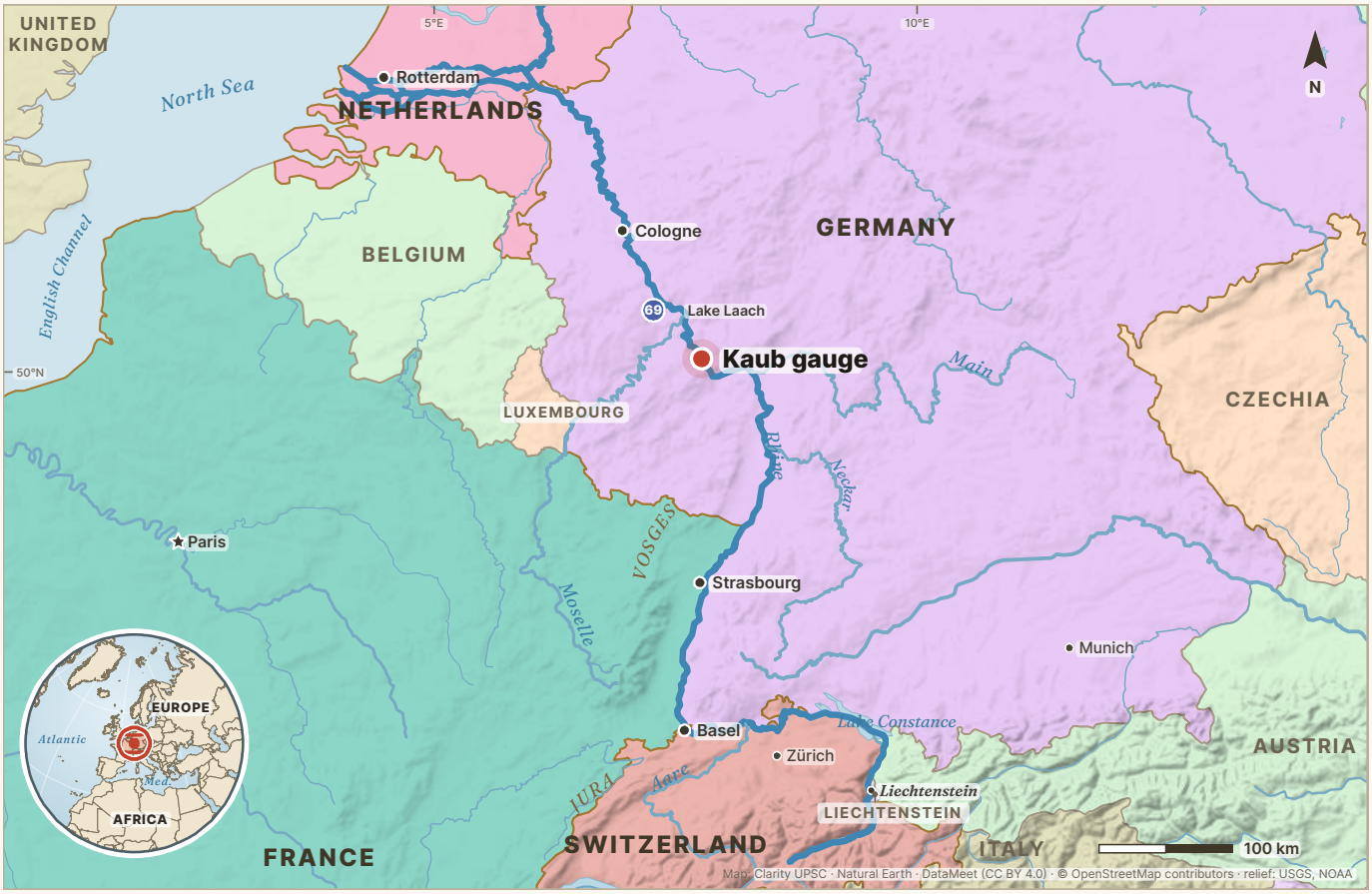
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Clarity UPSC

River · Aug 2026

70 Rhine River

Swiss Alps to the North Sea, through Germany and the Netherlands



WHY IN NEWS

Heat and weak rainfall lowered the Rhine sharply in July 2026. Many cargo barges carried about one-fifth of normal loads, raising costs for German steel and chemical firms. The Kaub gauge recovered to 88 cm on 20 July and stayed above its October 2018 record low of 25 cm.

WHERE IT IS

The Rhine rises in the Swiss Alps, passes through Lake Constance and flows north along national borders. It crosses Germany, enters the Netherlands and reaches the North Sea. The river is about 1,230 km long.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Switzerland · Liechtenstein · Austria · Germany · France · Netherlands

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Major tributaries are the Aare, Neckar, Main, Moselle and Ruhr.
- Kaub, near Koblenz, is a critical shallow section for barge traffic.
- Barges link Basel with ports in Germany, France and the Netherlands, carrying fuel, coal, chemicals and grain.
- The International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine coordinates environmental cooperation along the river.

PRELIMS TRAP A Kaub gauge reading of 50 cm does not mean the river is 50 cm deep; the gauge measures water height against a local reference zero.

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71 River Thames

Southern England, flowing east through London to the North Sea

River · Aug 2026

In news: In August 2026 Chinmaya Mission UK announced a public Ganga Aarti beside the Thames at the Royal Steps of the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, for 13 September 2026. The event marks the mission's 75th anniversary and is supported by the Totally Thames festival.

SURROUNDED BY Cotswolds (source) · Oxford · London · Kent and Essex · North Sea (mouth)

- The Port of London Authority manages navigation on about 95 miles of tidal river.
- Maritime Greenwich became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997; the Old Royal Naval College is its centrepiece.
- Greenwich links Britain's maritime history with astronomy, navigation and global timekeeping.

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72 Estonia

North-eastern Europe, on the Baltic Sea

Country · Jun 2026

In news: In June 2026 Estonia's foreign minister and business leaders visited India to discuss trade, digital governance and defence cooperation. Estonia offered itself as a gateway for Indian firms into northern Europe and proposed co-development and co-production of defence equipment.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Latvia (south) · Russia (east) · Finland (across the Gulf of Finland)

- Estonia regained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and joined the European Union in 2004; it runs e-residency and has pioneered online voting.
- Its defence budget exceeds five per cent of GDP, a response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- India–Estonia merchandise trade was about €139 million in 2025, up over 150 per cent on the previous year.

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73 Finland

Country | Feb 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1

Northern Europe, between Sweden and Russia



WHY 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. In July 2026 Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal visited Finland for talks on investment, digitalisation and emerging technologies. Both sides aim to double bilateral trade by 2030.

WHERE IT IS

Finland is a Nordic country in northern Europe. Sweden lies to its west, Norway to its north and Russia to its east. The Gulf of Bothnia lies to its west and the Gulf of Finland along its southern coast, both part of the Baltic Sea.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Sweden | Norway | Russia

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- 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.

PRELIMS TRAP The Gulf of Bothnia lies between Finland and Sweden; the Gulf of Finland lies between Finland and Estonia.

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74 Spain

Iberian Peninsula, south-western Europe

Country | Apr 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. In July 2026 severe wildfires struck Spain and neighbouring France. By 24 July about 166,000 people had been evacuated across both countries, about 25,000 of them in Spain's Madrid region.

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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Strait · Jun 2026

75 Strait of Messina

Between mainland Italy (Calabria) and Sicily



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 Japan's Prime Minister voiced support for a long-delayed bridge across Italy's Strait of Messina. Japan's IHI is in the Eurolink consortium with Italy's Webuild and Spain's Sacyr. Seismic, environmental and cost concerns have stalled the project for decades.

WHERE IT IS

The Strait of Messina is a narrow Mediterranean channel between mainland Italy (Calabria) and the island of Sicily. It is about 3.1 km wide at its narrowest and joins the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Ionian Sea.

SURROUNDED BY Sicily (west) and Calabria (east), both in Italy; Tyrrhenian Sea (north); Ionian Sea (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Strong currents and whirlpools gave rise to the Greek myth of Scylla and Charybdis.
- The planned bridge would have a central span of about 3.3 km and carry road and rail traffic.
- Estimated cost is about €13.5 billion; Italy shelved an earlier version in 2012 under austerity.
- Earthquake risk, marine ecology and corruption investigations are the main hurdles.

PRELIMS TRAP The Strait of Messina separates Sicily from mainland Italy; the Strait of Sicily separates Sicily from Tunisia; the Strait of Bonifacio separates Corsica from Sardinia.

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Country · Jun 2026

76 Slovenia

Junction of Central and South-Eastern Europe, on the Adriatic



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 India's External Affairs Minister congratulated Tone Kajzer on becoming Slovenia's Foreign Minister and sought deeper bilateral cooperation. The exchange drew attention to Slovenia's position between the Alps and the Balkans.

WHERE IT IS

Slovenia lies where Central and South-Eastern Europe meet. It borders Austria, Hungary, Italy and Croatia, and has a 47-km Adriatic coastline on the Gulf of Trieste. Ljubljana is the capital.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Austria (north) · Hungary (north-east) · Croatia (south-east) · Italy (west) · Adriatic Sea (Gulf of Trieste)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Sits at the junction of the Alps, Dinaric Alps, Pannonian Basin and Mediterranean coast; Mount Triglav (2,864 m) is highest.
- Declared independence from Yugoslavia on 25 June 1991; joined the EU and NATO in 2004 and the euro in 2007.
- The Drava and Sava rivers give it abundant hydropower potential.

PRELIMS TRAP Slovenia (capital Ljubljana) has an Adriatic coast; Slovakia (capital Bratislava) is a landlocked Central European country.

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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

77

Vjosa–Narta Lagoon

Lagoon (protected wetland) Jun 2026

Mouth of the Vjosa River, south-western coast of Albania



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 thousands of Albanians protested in Tirana and other cities against a US$1.6 billion luxury resort and casino planned in the Vjosa–Narta Protected Area. Demonstrators carried inflatable flamingos to symbolise the threatened wetland.

WHERE IT IS

The Vjosa–Narta Lagoon is a protected coastal wetland at the mouth of the Vjosa River in Albania. Albania lies on the Balkan Peninsula, facing the Adriatic and Ionian seas.

ALBANIA'S NEIGHBOURS Montenegro (north-west) · Kosovo (north-east) · North Macedonia (east) · Greece (south) · Adriatic and Ionian seas (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A key stopover for birds migrating between Europe and Africa; over 200 bird species, including flamingos.
- Loggerhead turtles and monk seals also depend on it; more than 70 endangered species use the lagoon.
- In 2024 Albania's parliament lifted a ban on construction in protected areas.
- The Vjosa rises in Greece's Pindus mountains as the Aoös; in March 2023 Albania declared it Europe's first Wild River National Park.

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78 Greece

Country | Feb 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In July 2026 India and Greece explored deeper economic ties, especially in financial services, fintech and digital payments such as UPI-based remittances.

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.

Read the full story
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Island Jul 2026

79 Crete

Eastern Mediterranean, south of mainland Greece



WHY IN NEWS

In late July 2026 wildfires in southern Crete forced about 8,000 people out of villages and tourist areas around Agia Galini. Two firefighters died near Krya Vrysi. Strong winds hampered more than 200 firefighters and supporting aircraft.

WHERE IT IS

Crete is Greece's largest island, about 160 km south of mainland Greece at the southern edge of the Aegean. The Sea of Crete lies to its north, the Libyan Sea to its south, the Myrtoan Sea to its west and the Carpathian Sea to its east.

SURROUNDED BY Sea of Crete | Libyan Sea | Myrtoan Sea | Carpathian Sea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is the Mediterranean's fifth-largest island, about 8,336 sq km; Heraklion is the capital and largest city.
- Mount Ida (Psiloritis) is its highest point; the White Mountains and the Dikti range also cross the island.
- It was the centre of the Bronze Age Minoan civilisation, with palaces at Knossos, Phaistos, Malia and Zakros.
- Crete united with Greece on 1 December 1913.

PRELIMS TRAP Crete belongs to Greece; Cyprus is a separate island country in the eastern Mediterranean. The Libyan Sea lies south of Crete.

Read the full story
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80 Slovakia

Central Europe (landlocked)

Country | Jun 2026

In news: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Slovakia was scheduled for 14–16 June 2026, the first by an Indian prime minister since Slovakia's independence in 1993. He was to meet President Peter Pellegrini, Prime Minister Robert Fico and business leaders in Bratislava.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Czechia | Poland | Ukraine | Hungary | Austria

- Slovakia emerged peacefully from the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993; it joined the EU in 2004, Schengen in 2007 and the euro in 2009.
- Slovakia's first satellite, skCUBE, was launched on India's PSLV in 2017.
- Bilateral trade reached €1.28 billion in 2024; India exports vehicles, pharmaceuticals and textiles and imports machinery and auto components.

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81 Hungary

Landlocked, Central Europe (Carpathian Basin)

Country | Jul 2026

In news: On 18 July 2026 Hungarian President Tamás Sulyok signed a constitutional amendment that ends his own mandate early. Parliament, where the Tisza Party won a two-thirds majority in April 2026, had passed it by 139 votes to six. Speaker Ágnes Forsthoffer will perform presidential functions in the interim.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Austria | Slovakia | Ukraine | Romania | Serbia | Croatia | Slovenia

- Hungary is a parliamentary republic: Parliament elects the President, and the Prime Minister heads the government.
- Lake Balaton is the largest lake in Central Europe; the Tisza crosses the Great Hungarian Plain in the east.
- Its currency is the forint and its official language Hungarian.

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Clarity UPSC

Country · Jul 2026

82 Romania

South-eastern Europe, on the Black Sea



WHY IN NEWS

On 23 July 2026 President Droupadi Murmu reached Bucharest on the first Indian presidential State Visit to Romania in nearly three decades. She and President Nicușor Dan agreed to work towards doubling bilateral trade within three years and to deepen education, science and defence ties.

WHERE IT IS

Romania lies in south-eastern Europe, where Central Europe meets the Balkans, with a Black Sea coastline. The Carpathians curve through its centre, dividing the Transylvanian basin from the outer plains. The Danube forms much of its southern border.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Ukraine · Moldova · Bulgaria · Serbia · Hungary

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Moldoveanu Peak (2,544 m) in the Southern Carpathians is Romania's highest point.
- The Danube Delta, shared with Ukraine, has channels, reed beds, lakes and internationally important wetlands.
- Romania joined NATO in 2004 and the EU in 2007; it keeps the leu and became a full Schengen member in January 2025.

PRELIMS TRAP Romania, an EU and NATO member, uses the Romanian leu; neighbouring Moldova uses the Moldovan leu.

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Repo rate	Retail inflation	GDP growth	Forex reserves
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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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Clarity UPSC

River · Jul 2026

83 Danube River

Central and south-eastern Europe, from Germany to the Black Sea



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 exceptionally low Danube water during heat and drought exposed possible mammoth remains near Ryahovo in northern Bulgaria. Museum specialists identified a lower jaw, two tusks and a possible rib; their age and origin awaited scientific study.

WHERE IT IS

The Danube flows about 2,857 km from Germany's Black Forest to the Black Sea, through or along ten countries. Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest and Belgrade stand on its banks. Its delta lies mainly in Romania, with a smaller part in Ukraine.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Germany · Austria · Slovakia, Hungary · Croatia, Serbia · Bulgaria, Romania · Moldova · Ukraine

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is Europe's second-longest river after the Volga and begins where the Breg and Brigach streams meet in Germany.
- Tributaries include the Inn, Drava, Sava, Tisza, Morava and Prut; the Iron Gates gorge separates parts of Serbia and Romania.
- The Romanian Danube Delta became a UNESCO World Heritage property in 1991 and hosts more than 300 bird species.
- The Rhine–Main–Danube waterway links inland routes between the North Sea and the Black Sea.

PRELIMS TRAP Ten countries touch the Danube's main course, while nineteen share some part of its basin.

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Clarity UPSC

Country · Jul 2026

84 Moldova

Landlocked, Eastern Europe, between Romania and Ukraine



WHY IN NEWS

On 20 July 2026 President Droupadi Murmu reached Chișinău, the first visit by an Indian President to Moldova. She held talks with President Maia Sandu on technology, agriculture, health and economic cooperation, on the first leg of a tour that included North Macedonia and Romania.

WHERE IT IS

Moldova is a small landlocked Eastern European country between Romania and Ukraine, east of the Carpathians. The Prut forms most of its western border with Romania, and the Dniester flows through its east towards the Black Sea.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Romania · Ukraine

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Transnistria, a narrow territory along the Dniester in the east, has run separately since a 1992 ceasefire; Russian troops remain there.
- Gagauzia in the south is an autonomous region of the Turkic-speaking, Orthodox Christian Gagauz people.
- Moldova declared independence from the Soviet Union on 27 August 1991; Romanian is the official language.

PRELIMS TRAP The Prut marks Moldova's border with Romania; the Dniester crosses eastern Moldova and reaches the Black Sea through Ukraine.

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WORLD

Africa

18 places

85 Morocco · Country

86 Sudan · Country

87 Gulf of Suez, Egypt · Earthquake zone

88 Senegal · Country

89 Liberia · Country

90 Lake Chad · Lake

91 Central African Republic · Country

92 Zambia · Country

93 Lake Kariba · Reservoir

94 Tanzania · Country

95 Kenya · Country

96 Amboseli, Kenya · National Park

97 Ethiopia · Country

98 Amhara highlands, Ethiopia · Landslide zone

99 Tristan da Cunha · Archipelago

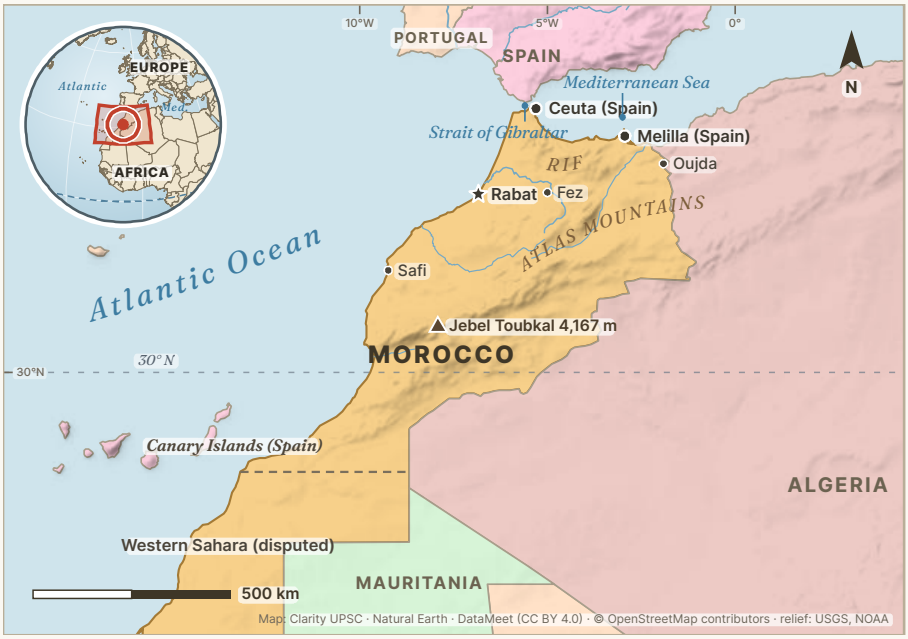
100 Namibia · Country

101 South Africa · Country

102 Lesotho · Country

85 Morocco

North-western Africa (Maghreb)



WHY IN NEWS

Minister of State Jitin Prasada co-chaired the seventh India–Morocco Joint Commission in Morocco on 24–25 August 2026. Both sides agreed to seek doubled bilateral trade within five years and signed arrangements on food safety and on cultural exchange for 2026–2030.

WHERE IT IS

Morocco occupies the north-western edge of Africa, with the Atlantic to the west, the Mediterranean to the north and Algeria to the east. The Strait of Gibraltar separates it from Spain. The Rif and the Atlas ranges cross the country.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Algeria

Western Sahara (disputed)

Spain (land borders at Ceuta and Melilla; mainland across the Strait of Gibraltar)

Atlantic Ocean · Mediterranean Sea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Jebel Toubkal, 4,167 m, in the High Atlas is North Africa's highest peak.
- Morocco holds major phosphate reserves; phosphate fertilisers are a key export to India.
- Morocco administers most of Western Sahara and claims it; the UN lists it as a Non-Self-Governing Territory.

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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

86 Sudan

North-east Africa, on the Red Sea

Country | Apr 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. In July 2026 the war, which began in April 2023, kept Sudan in global headlines with a severe humanitarian crisis.

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.

Read the full story
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87 Gulf of Suez, Egypt

North-eastern Egypt, at the head of the Gulf of Suez

Earthquake zone | Aug 2026

In news: On 3 August 2026 a magnitude 5.0 earthquake (USGS) struck about 36 km north-north-east of Suez, Egypt, at 10 km depth. Egyptian reports gave preliminary magnitudes of 5.4–5.6. No major damage or casualties were reported.

SURROUNDED BY

- Sinai Peninsula (east)
- Egypt's Eastern Desert (west)
- Suez and the Suez Canal (north)
- Red Sea (south)

- The Suez Canal crosses the Isthmus of Suez and links the Mediterranean with the Red Sea without locks.
- Egypt is transcontinental: the Sinai Peninsula lies in Asia; the Gulf of Aqaba, east of Sinai, is another active plate-boundary zone.
- The Nile Valley interior is generally less seismically active than Egypt's eastern rift margins.

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88 Senegal

Atlantic coast of West Africa

Country | Jul 2026

In news: On 19 July 2026 Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye was elected chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at its 69th Ordinary Session in Freetown, Sierra Leone. He succeeded Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio.

BORDERING COUNTRIES

- Mauritania
- Mali
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- The Gambia

- Pointe des Almadies, near Dakar, is mainland Africa's westernmost point.
- The Senegal River forms much of the northern border with Mauritania; the Saloum Delta holds mangroves and tidal channels.
- ECOWAS (Treaty of Lagos, 1975; headquarters Abuja) has twelve members since Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger withdrew in January 2025.

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89 Liberia

West Africa, on the Atlantic coast



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 India's women and child development minister met a Liberian parliamentary delegation to discuss women's leadership and gender-responsive governance. The talks built on an India-backed project that works with Liberia's Women Legislative Caucus.

WHERE IT IS

Liberia lies on West Africa's Atlantic coast. It borders Sierra Leone to the north-west, Guinea to the north and Côte d'Ivoire to the east. Monrovia, the capital, is its political and economic centre.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Sierra Leone · Guinea · Côte d'Ivoire

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA Fund) supports the governance project in Liberia.
- Founded through the settlement of freed African Americans, Liberia declared independence in 1847 and is Africa's oldest republic.

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India's economy, as it stands today.

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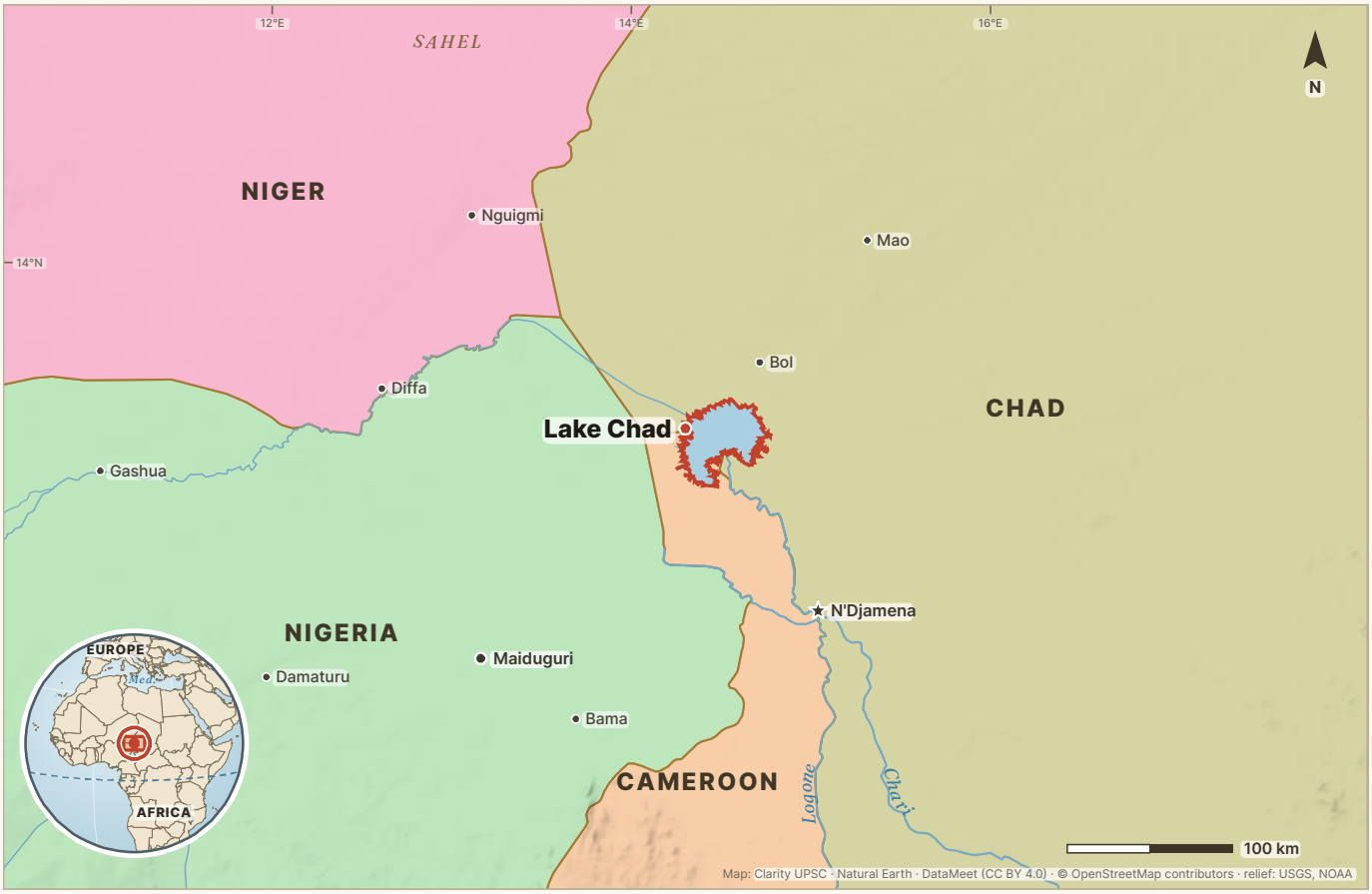
All 74 figures, the release calendar, and the Budget and Economic Survey numbers.

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90 Lake Chad

Sahel, where Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon meet



WHY IN NEWS

In early May 2026 militants linked to Boko Haram attacked a Chadian army post on Barka Tolorom Island in Lake Chad. The assault killed 23 soldiers before security forces repelled the attackers.

WHERE IT IS

Lake Chad lies in the Sahel and straddles the borders of Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon. Its islands, swamps and reed beds shelter fishing and herding communities. The same terrain gives armed groups places to hide.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Chad · Niger · Nigeria · Cameroon

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Once among Africa's largest lakes, it has shrunk sharply through drought, climate change and unsustainable irrigation.
- About 30 million people depend on it for drinking water, farming and fishing.
- The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) of Chad, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Benin fights Boko Haram and ISWAP.
- Boko Haram began its insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria in 2009.

PRELIMS TRAP Lake Chad touches four countries: Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon. Benin contributes troops to the MNJTF but does not border the lake.

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Country · Aug 2026

91 Central African Republic

Landlocked state in the centre of Africa



WHY IN NEWS

On 18 August 2026 an artisanal gold mine collapsed in the Abba area of Nana-Mambéré prefecture, in the western Central African Republic. At least 30 miners died and others were trapped; the toll was provisional while rescue continued.

WHERE IT IS

The Central African Republic is a landlocked plateau of about 623,000 sq km. Chad lies to the north, Sudan and South Sudan to the east, the two Congos to the south and Cameroon to the west. Nana-Mambéré lies in the west near Cameroon.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Chad · Sudan · South Sudan · DR Congo · Republic of the Congo · Cameroon

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It sits on a drainage divide: southern rivers feed the Ubangi and Congo, northern waters the Chari and Lake Chad.
- Forest lies in the south; savanna covers much of the interior.
- Western and central areas hold many alluvial gold and diamond sites.

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92 Zambia

Country | Apr 2026 | Aug 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. On 18 August 2026 Hakainde Hichilema was declared re-elected after the 13 August general election. Violence, a temporary counting suspension and arrests of opposition officials drew concern.

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

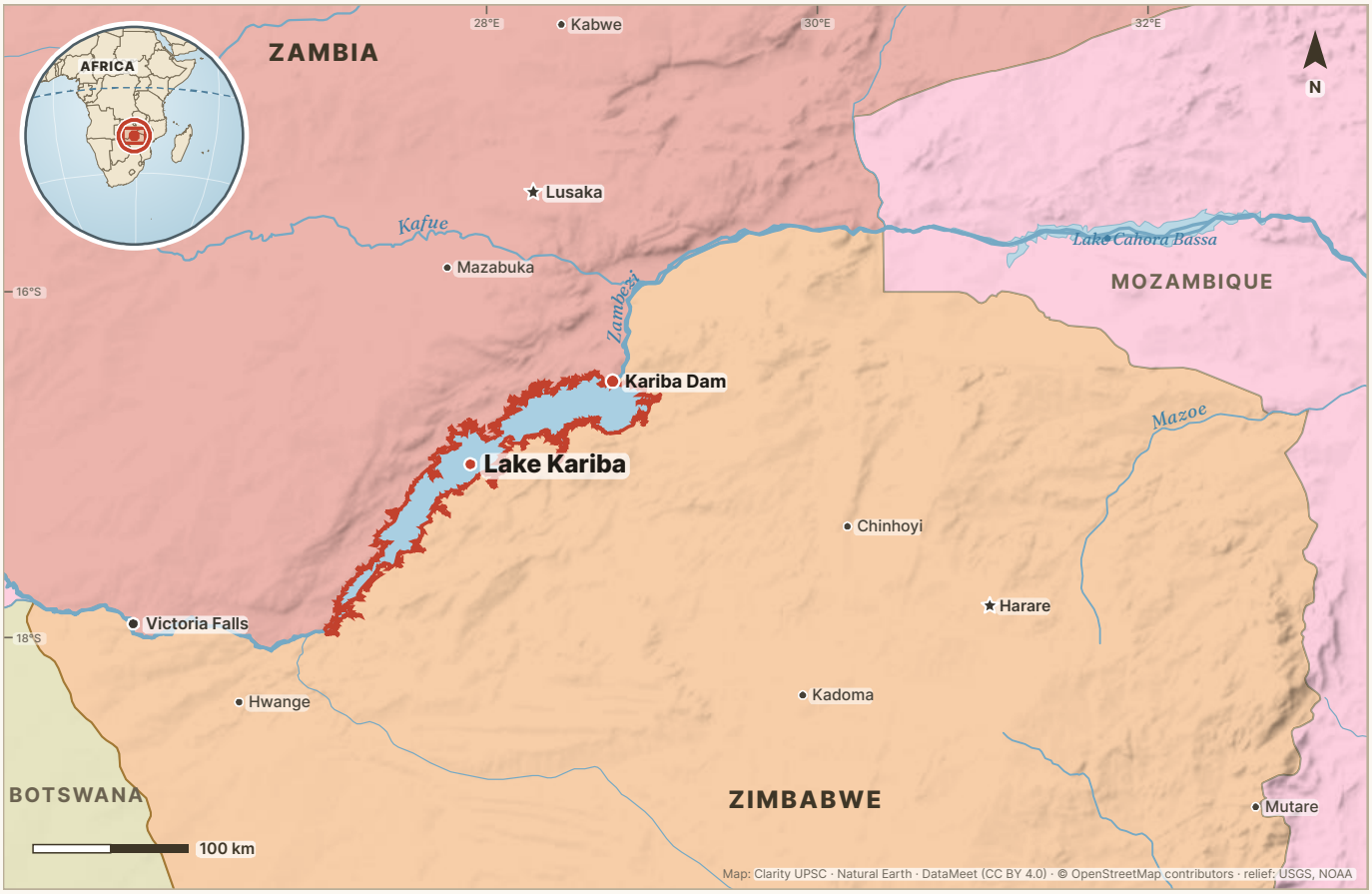
- The Tanzania–Zambia Railway (TAZARA) links the Copperbelt to Dar es Salaam.
- The Lobito Corridor railway is being upgraded to carry Zambian and Congolese copper to Angola's Atlantic port of Lobito.
- A major copper and cobalt producer; it defaulted on sovereign debt in 2020.

Read the full story
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93 Lake Kariba

Reservoir | Mar 2026 | May 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. Heavy rains in early 2026 raised the lake to levels not seen for several years by May 2026. Higher water promised more power from the Kariba Dam, less load-shedding in Zambia and Zimbabwe, and better fish catches and tourism after years of drought.

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.

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94 Tanzania

East Africa, on the Indian Ocean

Country | Mar 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. On 22 July 2026 India and Tanzania held Foreign Office Consultations in Dar es Salaam and reviewed trade, defence, development and digital cooperation.

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.

Read the full story
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95 Kenya

Eastern Africa, on the Equator and the Indian Ocean

Country | Feb 2026 | Aug 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In August 2026 Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, after meeting Kenya's National Assembly Speaker in New Delhi, welcomed Kenya's recognition of its Indian-origin community; Kenya had earlier recognised Kenyan Asians as its 44th ethnic community.

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

- 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.

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National Park · Aug 2026

96 Amboseli, Kenya

Southern Kenya, below Mount Kilimanjaro



WHY IN NEWS

Kenyan authorities investigated the unusual deaths of 15 elephants around Amboseli between 24 June and 24 July 2026. Several showed weakness or paralysis before dying. Initial government tests did not confirm the toxins examined, and the cause remained unconfirmed.

WHERE IT IS

Amboseli lies in southern Kenya near the Tanzania border, below Mount Kilimanjaro across that border. Underground flows from Kilimanjaro's catchment feed its freshwater swamps. Elephants range beyond the park into community lands, ranches and conservancies.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Kenya · Tanzania (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Amboseli National Park, gazetted in 1974, covers about 392 sq km.
- UNESCO recognised the wider Amboseli area as a biosphere reserve in 1991; it covers about 798,298 ha.
- The park joined Kenya's tentative World Heritage list in 2023, a step that comes before any nomination.
- Carcasses were found in the park, Kimana Sanctuary and Kuku Ranch; most dead elephants were adult females or calves.

PRELIMS TRAP Amboseli National Park is in Kenya; Mount Kilimanjaro, which overlooks it, stands in Tanzania.

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Country · May 2026

97 Ethiopia

Landlocked Horn of Africa



WHY IN NEWS

On 22 May 2026 India and Ethiopia signed a bilateral protocol in Geneva supporting Ethiopia's entry into the World Trade Organization. Ethiopia has negotiated membership since 2003. India is its second-largest trading partner.

WHERE IT IS

Ethiopia is a landlocked country in the Horn of Africa, covering about 1.1 million sq km. Its capital, Addis Ababa, stands in the Ethiopian Highlands at about 2,350 m.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Eritrea · Djibouti · Somalia · Kenya · South Sudan · Sudan

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The ancient kingdom of Aksum flourished here from the 1st to 7th centuries CE.
- Ethiopia defeated Italy at Adwa in 1896 and stayed independent; Italy occupied it from 1936 to 1941.
- Coffee is the leading export; the Blue Nile (Abay) rises at Lake Tana in the Ethiopian Highlands.

PRELIMS TRAP Ethiopia is landlocked. Eritrea, independent since 1993, holds the Red Sea coast.

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Landslide zone · Aug 2026

98 Amhara highlands, Ethiopia

Northern Ethiopian highlands, Horn of Africa



WHY IN NEWS

On 3 August 2026 a rain-triggered landslide struck Tsadqane Debre Mitmaq Saint Mary Monastery in Ethiopia's Amhara region during a large religious gathering. At least 14 people died and seven were injured in the first count. Searches continued for missing visitors.

WHERE IT IS

Amhara lies in Ethiopia's northern highlands. Ethiopia is a landlocked Horn of Africa country with Eritrea to the north, Djibouti and Somalia to the east, and Kenya, South Sudan and Sudan to the south and west.

ETHIOPIA'S NEIGHBOURS Eritrea · Djibouti · Somalia · Kenya · South Sudan · Sudan

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Great Rift Valley separates the western and northern highlands from the eastern and southern uplands; Addis Ababa lies in the central highlands.
- Lake Tana feeds the Blue Nile; the Awash ends inland in the Afar region; the Omo flows south into Lake Turkana.
- Ras Dashen (about 4,550 m) is the highest peak; the Danakil Depression lies partly below sea level.
- The main highland rains fall from June to September and saturate steep, weathered slopes.

PRELIMS TRAP Ethiopia is landlocked; Eritrea and Djibouti hold the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden coasts beside it.

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Archipelago · May 2026

99 Tristan da Cunha

South Atlantic Ocean, roughly midway between southern Africa and South America



WHY IN NEWS

In early May 2026 the UK carried out its first medical parachute mission. An RAF A400M flew from Ascension Island to Tristan da Cunha, where paratroopers and clinicians dropped oxygen and supplies. They treated an islander with a suspected hantavirus infection linked to the cruise ship Hondius.

WHERE IT IS

Tristan da Cunha is a group of volcanic islands in the South Atlantic, roughly midway between southern Africa and South America. It lies about 2,400 km from St Helena and about 2,800 km from Cape Town, South Africa.

SURROUNDED BY South Atlantic Ocean · Gough Island · Inaccessible Island · St Helena (about 2,400 km north)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A British overseas territory, discovered in 1506 by Portuguese explorer Tristão da Cunha.
- About 220 people live at Edinburgh of the Seven Seas, called the world's most remote settlement; land is communally owned.
- There is no airstrip; the only way in or out is by ship, about six days from Cape Town.
- Gough and Inaccessible islands form a UNESCO World Heritage Site for their unique ecosystems.

PRELIMS TRAP Tristan da Cunha, St Helena and Ascension form one British territory. Tristan lies far south, near 37°S; Ascension lies just south of the equator.

Read the full story
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100 Namibia

South-western Africa, on the Atlantic coast

Country | Aug 2026

In news: India and Namibia held their fourth Joint Trade Committee in New Delhi and signed the agreed minutes on 11 August 2026. Talks covered health, engineering goods, digital payments and critical minerals. Merchandise trade was $592.94 million in 2025–26.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Angola | Zambia | Botswana | South Africa | Atlantic Ocean

- Walvis Bay is a deep-water port serving Namibia and inland southern Africa.
- In June 2026 Namibia unveiled WayaMe, a payment system developed with India's UPI technology.
- Namibia sent eight cheetahs to Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh, in September 2022, the first batch under Project Cheetah.

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101 South Africa

Southern tip of Africa

Country | Jun 2026

In news: On 3 June 2026 India's Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh met South Africa's Deputy Minister Nomalungelo Gina in New Delhi. They agreed to expand cooperation in artificial intelligence, quantum technology, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing and hydrogen energy.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Namibia | Botswana | Zimbabwe | Mozambique | Eswatini | Lesotho (enclave)

- India and South Africa set up formal science and technology cooperation in 1995 and work together in IBSA and BRICS.
- Joint work includes astronomy through the Square Kilometre Array, a radio-telescope project with sites in South Africa and Australia.
- Cape Agulhas, not the Cape of Good Hope, is Africa's southernmost point and the official dividing point of the Atlantic and Indian oceans.

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Country · Aug 2026

102 Lesotho

Southern Africa, entirely surrounded by South Africa



WHY IN NEWS

India and Lesotho held the sixth session of their Joint Bilateral Commission for Cooperation in New Delhi on 30 July 2026. Officials reviewed development, training and capacity-building links. The commission first met in March 2009.

WHERE IT IS

Lesotho is a landlocked mountain kingdom completely surrounded by South Africa. Maseru is its capital. The Maloti and Drakensberg ranges dominate the east, where Thabana Ntlenyana rises to 3,482 m.

SURROUNDED BY South Africa: Free State · South Africa: KwaZulu-Natal · South Africa: Eastern Cape

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The only independent state lying entirely above 1,000 m; its lowest point is about 1,400 m.
- The Senqu River rises in its highlands and becomes South Africa's Orange River.
- The 1986 Lesotho Highlands Water Project sends water to South Africa's Gauteng region and generates hydropower; Phase II includes Polihali Dam.

PRELIMS TRAP Lesotho is wholly enclosed by South Africa; Eswatini, the other small southern African kingdom, also borders Mozambique.

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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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WORLD

The Americas

20 places

103 Canada · Country

104 San Andreas Fault · Earthquake zone (transform fault)

105 Colorado River: Lake Mead and Lake Powell · Reservoir

106 Lake Tahoe · Lake

107 Chiapas coast, Mexico · Earthquake zone

108 Costa Rica · Country

109 Panama Canal · Canal

110 Jamaica · Island country

111 Trinidad and Tobago · Island country

112 Galapagos Islands · Archipelago

113 Colombia · Country

114 Peru · Country

115 Chile · Country

116 Bolivia · Country

117 Uturuncu Volcano · Volcano

118 Venezuela · Country

119 Argentina · Country

120 Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) · Archipelago

121 Suriname · Country

122 Brazil · Country

103 Canada

Northern North America

Country | Jan 2026 | May 2026 | Aug 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. In May 2026 Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal led India's largest-ever business delegation to Canada to advance trade-agreement (CEPA) talks. In August 2026 the two finance ministers held the first India–Canada Economic and Financial Dialogue in Toronto and backed a 2030 bilateral-trade target of 70 billion Canadian dollars.

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.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

104 San Andreas Fault

Earthquake zone (transform fault) · Jun 2026

California, USA; boundary of the Pacific and North American plates



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 a study modelling over 1,000 years of earthquake history found the San Andreas and San Jacinto faults in southern California under their greatest stress in a millennium. It suggested both faults could rupture together, raising the risk of a major earthquake.

WHERE IT IS

The San Andreas Fault runs about 1,200 km through the US state of California, from the Salton Sea in the south, past Los Angeles and San Francisco, to the Mendocino Triple Junction off the north coast. The San Jacinto Fault branches from it in southern California.

SURROUNDED BY Pacific Plate (west) · North American Plate (east) · Gulf of California (south) · Pacific Ocean

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A transform boundary: the Pacific Plate slides northward past the North American Plate, mostly horizontally.
- Formed about 30 million years ago; major earthquakes struck along it in 1857 and 1906.
- Cajon Pass, where the two faults meet, acts as an 'earthquake gate' that can stop or pass a rupture.

PRELIMS TRAP The San Andreas is a transform boundary where plates slide past each other; at convergent boundaries such as Japan's, one plate subducts beneath another.

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Watch the 2-minute video
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105

Colorado River: Lake Mead and Lake Powell

Reservoir | Apr 2026 | Aug 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In August 2026 both reservoirs reached record lows: Lake Mead fell to 1,040.4 feet on 7 August, and Lake Powell to about 3,519.91 feet by 16 August.

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
www.clarityupsc.com

106 Lake Tahoe

Sierra Nevada, on the California–Nevada border, USA



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 Nevada's NV Energy told Liberty Utilities it would end about 75 per cent of its power supply to the California side of Lake Tahoe by May 2027. The power will go to AI data centres in northern Nevada, affecting about 49,000 customers.

WHERE IT IS

Lake Tahoe is a deep alpine lake that straddles the border between the US states of California and Nevada. Reno and the Tahoe–Reno Industrial Center lie to its north-east.

SURROUNDED BY California · Nevada · Sierra Nevada · Reno (north-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- About two million years old and 501 m deep, it is the second-deepest lake in the United States after Crater Lake; the Truckee River is its only outlet.
- Data centres used about 22 per cent of Nevada's electricity in 2024, possibly 35 per cent by 2030.

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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

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Earthquake zone | Jul 2026

107 Chiapas coast, Mexico

Pacific coast of southern Mexico, near Guatemala



WHY IN NEWS

On 17 July 2026 a magnitude 7.3 earthquake struck off the Chiapas coast of southern Mexico, about 15 km deep and roughly 58 km from Puerto Madero. Coasts within about 300 km received tsunami warnings, later lifted. Early assessments found no deaths or widespread damage.

WHERE IT IS

Chiapas lies on Mexico's southern Pacific coast and borders Guatemala. Mexico has the United States to its north, Guatemala and Belize to its south-east, the Pacific to its west and south, and the Gulf of Mexico to its east.

MEXICO'S NEIGHBOURS United States (north) | Guatemala (south-east) | Belize (south-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Cocos Plate subducts beneath Mexico along the Middle America Trench, placing the country on the Pacific Ring of Fire.
- Subduction feeds the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt; the Gulf of California marks separation of the Pacific and North American plates.
- Mexico City's soft lake sediments amplified shaking in the destructive 1985 earthquake.
- The Isthmus of Tehuantepec is Mexico's narrowest mainland section.

PRELIMS TRAP The Yucatán Peninsula lies between the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean; Baja California extends along the Pacific side in the north-west.

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Country · Jul 2026

108 Costa Rica

Central America, between Nicaragua and Panama



WHY IN NEWS

On 6–7 July 2026 India and Costa Rica held the first meeting of their Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO). The virtual meeting covered standards, food safety and pharmaceutical regulation. Bilateral merchandise trade reached US$391 million in 2025–26.

WHERE IT IS

Costa Rica lies on the narrow land bridge linking North and South America. Nicaragua lies to its north and Panama to its south-east. The Pacific forms its western coast and the Caribbean Sea its eastern coast.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Nicaragua · Panama · Pacific Ocean · Caribbean Sea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Cocos Plate subducts beneath the Caribbean Plate here, creating volcanoes such as Arenal, Poás, Irazú and Turrialba.
- Cerro Chirripó (about 3,821 m) in the Talamanca range is the highest point; San José is the capital.
- The San Juan River along the northern border belongs to Nicaragua; Costa Rica has treaty-based navigation rights.

PRELIMS TRAP Lake Arenal is Costa Rica's largest lake by area but is an enlarged reservoir; Lake Cote is the largest natural lake.

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109 Panama Canal

Isthmus of Panama, Central America

Canal | Mar 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. On 22 July 2026 India and Panama discussed deeper maritime cooperation, and India proposed cooperation in green ship recycling.

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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110 Jamaica

Caribbean Sea, south of Cuba and west of Hispaniola

Island country | May 2026

In news: In April 2026 India delivered portable Aarogya Maitri health-care cubes (BHISHM) to Jamaica. The kits support the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) during disasters. Each BHISHM unit can treat up to 200 trauma patients.

SURROUNDED BY

- Caribbean Sea
- Cuba (north)
- Hispaniola: Haiti and Dominican Republic (east)

- Blue Mountain Peak (2,256 m) is the highest point; the slopes grow coffee.
- An inland limestone belt has karst hills and caverns.
- Bauxite, limestone and gypsum are major mineral exports.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



111 Trinidad and Tobago

Southern end of the Caribbean, just off Venezuela

Island country | May 2026

In news: In May 2026 External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited Port of Spain on a three-nation Caribbean tour. He met Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar and handed over locally made laptops to schoolchildren.

SURROUNDED BY

- Venezuela (south-west, about 11 km away)
- Grenada (north)
- Caribbean Sea
- Atlantic Ocean
- Gulf of Paria

- Independent in 1962 and a republic in 1976; Port of Spain is the capital.
- About 35 per cent of people (2011 census) are of Indian origin, descendants of 19th-century indentured labourers.
- Its economy rests on petroleum and natural gas.

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Archipelago · May 2026

112 Galapagos Islands

Eastern Pacific Ocean, on the equator, about 1,000 km west of Ecuador



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 conservationists urged stronger protection after UNESCO's 2025 World Heritage Outlook rated the Galapagos of 'significant concern'. Later that month scientists described a new deep-sea octopus, Microeledone galapagensis, collected in 2015 at about 1,770 m near Darwin Island.

WHERE IT IS

The archipelago lies on the equator in the eastern Pacific, about 1,000 km west of mainland Ecuador. It has 19 large volcanic islands and more than 100 islets. The islands rise from the Nazca Plate over a hotspot.

SURROUNDED BY Pacific Ocean · Ecuador (mainland, east) · Cocos Island of Costa Rica (north-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Darwin's 1835 visit (finches, giant tortoises, marine iguanas) shaped his theory of natural selection.
- Ecuador made 97 per cent of the land a national park in 1959; UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1978.
- Isabela, the largest island, holds Wolf Volcano (1,707 m); the Galapagos penguin is the only penguin living at the equator.
- Threats include more than 1,575 introduced species, tourism, illegal fishing and El Niño; the Galapagos Marine Reserve protects its seas.

PRELIMS TRAP The Galapagos belong to Ecuador and straddle the equator. Easter Island, far to the south-west, belongs to Chile.

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Country · Jun 2026

113 Colombia

North-western South America, on both the Pacific and the Caribbean



WHY IN NEWS

On 21 June 2026 Colombia held a presidential runoff. Nationalist lawyer Abelardo de la Espriella won 49.66 percent of the vote, narrowly beating left-wing senator Iván Cepeda. The result ended Gustavo Petro's progressive administration and marked a rightward shift.

WHERE IT IS

Colombia lies in north-western South America. It borders Venezuela and Brazil to the east, Peru and Ecuador to the south and Panama to the north-west. It is the only South American country with both Pacific and Caribbean coasts.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Venezuela · Brazil · Peru · Ecuador · Panama · Caribbean Sea · Pacific Ocean

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Second most biodiverse country after Brazil; it holds about 10 percent of known species and over 1,900 bird species.
- Landscapes include Amazon rainforest, the Andes and the llanos; major rivers are the Magdalena, Cauca, Atrato and Sinú.
- The world's main producer of emeralds; it exports coffee, bananas, oil, coal and gold.
- Presidents serve one four-year term; since a 2015 reform no president can be re-elected.

PRELIMS TRAP Colombia is the only South American country on both the Pacific and the Caribbean; Panama, its north-western neighbour, is in Central America.

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114 Peru

Western South America, on the Pacific

Country | Jul 2026

In news: In July 2026 Peru featured in world news for its political developments, economic reforms and cultural heritage. The country has seen several changes of president in recent years amid political instability.

BORDERING COUNTRIES: Ecuador | Colombia | Brazil | Bolivia | Chile

- Nevado Huascarán (6,768 m) in the Cordillera Blanca is Peru's highest peak and the world's highest tropical mountain.
- Lake Titicaca on the Bolivian border is the world's highest navigable lake; the Amazon River rises in southern Peru.
- Machu Picchu and the Nazca Lines are UNESCO World Heritage Sites; Lima is the capital.

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115 Chile

Long coastal strip of south-western South America

Country | Jan 2026 | Aug 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. On 26 August 2026 Indian and Chilean officials reviewed negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement in Santiago. Most chapters were closed; market access and critical minerals remained open.

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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Country · Jun 2026

116 Bolivia

Landlocked country in central South America



WHY IN NEWS

On 20 June 2026 President Rodrigo Paz declared a nationwide state of emergency after about 50 days of protests and roadblocks. The blockades, sparked by fuel-subsidy cuts, caused shortages of food, fuel and medicines. At least 14 people died in the unrest.

WHERE IT IS

Bolivia is a landlocked country in the heart of South America. It borders Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile and Peru, and stretches about 1,500 km north to south and 1,300 km east to west.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Brazil · Paraguay · Argentina · Chile · Peru

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Sucre is the constitutional capital; La Paz houses the executive and legislature.
- Rich in natural gas, tin, silver and zinc; the Salar de Uyuni, the world's largest salt flat, holds its lithium.
- Paz took office after nearly two decades of Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) rule; protests were led by groups allied to Evo Morales.
- Shares Lake Titicaca, a high Andean lake, with Peru.

PRELIMS TRAP Bolivia and Paraguay are South America's only landlocked countries; Bolivia lost its Pacific coast to Chile in the 19th-century War of the Pacific.

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Clarity UPSC

Volcano | May 2026

117 Uturuncu Volcano

Potosí department, south-western Bolivia (Central Andes)



WHY IN NEWS

Studies published in 2025–26, reported in May 2026, traced uplift and tremors at Bolivia's Uturuncu to circulating hot fluids and gases rather than rising magma. This lowers fears of a large eruption soon, though smaller steam-driven eruptions remain possible.

WHERE IT IS

Uturuncu stands in Potosí department of south-western Bolivia, in the Central Andean volcanic chain. It sits on the Altiplano plateau, near the borders with Chile and Argentina.

SURROUNDED BY Altiplano of south-western Bolivia | Chile (west) | Argentina (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A stratovolcano about 6,008 m high; it last erupted roughly 250,000 years ago.
- Sits atop the Altiplano–Puna magma body, the world's largest known continental magma chamber.
- Radar showed uplift of 1–2 cm a year (1996–2000) in a 'sombrero'-shaped pattern.
- Called a 'zombie' volcano: it shows unrest long after its last eruption.

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118 Venezuela

Country | Jan 2026 | Jun 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In early June 2026 she visited India for talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi focused on oil; in May India had imported about 427,000 barrels a day, making it the second-largest buyer of Venezuelan crude after the United States.

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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119 Argentina

Southern South America



WHY IN NEWS

India and Argentina held their fourth Joint Trade Committee in Buenos Aires on 24 August 2026. Officials reviewed trade above $6.5 billion in 2025 and focused on minerals, medicines, agriculture and digital technology, including KABIL's lithium exploration in Catamarca.

WHERE IT IS

Argentina occupies southern South America, from the subtropical north to cold Patagonia. Chile lies west across the Andes, Bolivia and Paraguay to the north, and Brazil, Uruguay and the South Atlantic to the east. The fertile Pampas support grain and livestock.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Chile · Bolivia · Paraguay · Brazil · Uruguay · South Atlantic Ocean

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Catamarca, Salta and Jujuy, in the north-western Andes and Puna, lie in a lithium-rich zone shared with Chile and Bolivia.
- KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Ltd) holds exploration rights in Catamarca and has completed second-phase drilling.
- Lithium is extracted from brines in dry salt flats, which raises water concerns.

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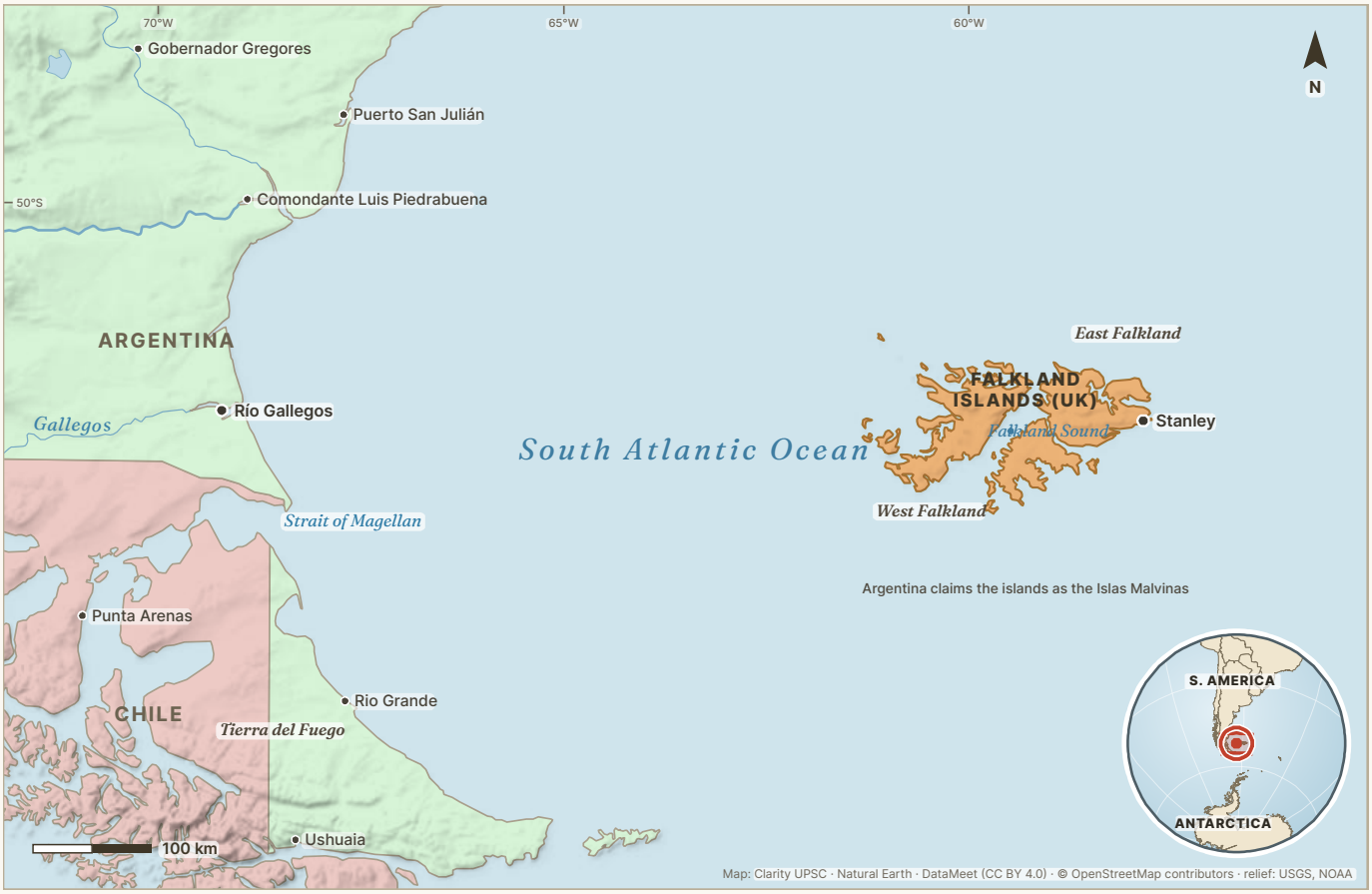
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Archipelago | Jul 2026

120 Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)

South-western Atlantic Ocean, east of southern South America



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026, after Argentina beat England 2–1 in a World Cup semi-final, two Argentine players displayed a banner reading 'Las Malvinas son Argentinas'. FIFA began reviewing whether the display broke rules on political messages.

WHERE IT IS

The Falkland Islands lie in the south-western Atlantic, east of southern South America. East Falkland and West Falkland, separated by Falkland Sound, are the two main islands; 776 smaller islands surround them. Stanley, on East Falkland, is the capital.

SURROUNDED BY South Atlantic Ocean

Argentina (mainland to the west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The United Kingdom administers the islands as an Overseas Territory; Argentina, which calls them the Islas Malvinas, claims sovereignty.
- Britain re-established permanent administration in 1833; Argentina has disputed that action ever since.
- UN General Assembly Resolution 2065 (1965) recognised a sovereignty dispute and urged negotiations.
- Argentine forces invaded on 2 April 1982 and surrendered at Stanley on 14 June, after 74 days of war.

PRELIMS TRAP The UN uses 'Falkland Islands (Malvinas)'. UN resolutions recognise a sovereignty dispute; they have awarded the islands to neither the UK nor Argentina.

Read the full story
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121 Suriname

North-eastern South America, on the Atlantic coast



WHY IN NEWS

In early May 2026 India's External Affairs Minister visited Paramaribo for the eighth India–Suriname Joint Commission Meeting. The visit marked 50 years of diplomatic relations. India offered new lines of credit for infrastructure and energy projects.

WHERE IT IS

Suriname lies on the northern Atlantic coast of South America, between Guyana to the west and French Guiana to the east. Its capital and largest city is Paramaribo.

BORDERING COUNTRIES Guyana · French Guiana (France) · Brazil · Atlantic Ocean

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The smallest independent country in South America and the only Dutch-speaking member of CARICOM.
- Became a Dutch colony in 1667 and independent on 25 November 1975.
- About 27 per cent of its people (2012 census) descend from Indian indentured labourers; it belongs to the ISA and IBCA.

PRELIMS TRAP Suriname (Dutch-speaking) lies between Guyana (English-speaking) and French Guiana, which is part of France.

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Read a statement. Is it correct?

LEVEL 1 · POLITY

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✓ True · ✕ False

Tap your answer — the reason follows.

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122

Brazil

Eastern South America, on the Atlantic

Country | Feb 2026 | Aug 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. On 21 August 2026 they signed a telecom and ICT cooperation memorandum in Pune, after the 12th BRICS Communications Ministers' Meeting under India's chair. It covers spectrum, 5G and 6G, Open RAN, satellite links, submarine cables, cybersecurity and digital public infrastructure.

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.

Read the full story
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WORLD

Oceania, the Pacific and the polar regions

12 places

123 Australia · Country

124 Rottnest Island · Island

125 New Zealand · Country

126 Bismarck Sea (submarine eruption) · Submarine volcano

127 Fiji · Archipelago

128 Marshall Islands · Island nation (atolls)

129 Palau: Ulong Island and Koror · Island country

130 Hawai'i (Big Island) · Island (earthquake zone)

131 Easter Island (Rapa Nui) · Island

132 Greenland · Island

133 Petermann Glacier · Glacier

134 Mount Erebus · Volcano

Country | May 2026

123 Australia

Island continent between the Indian and South Pacific oceans



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 India and Australia continued to strengthen their strategic partnership for a free, open and prosperous Indo-Pacific. Australia's geography and minerals explain much of its value as a partner.

WHERE IT IS

Australia is an island continent between the Indian Ocean (west) and the South Pacific (east). The Torres Strait and Coral Sea separate it from Papua New Guinea; the Timor and Arafura seas from Indonesia. The Tasman Sea separates it from New Zealand.

SURROUNDED BY Indian Ocean | South Pacific Ocean | Papua New Guinea | Indonesia | Timor-Leste | New Zealand

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The flattest continent; the Great Dividing Range runs down the east, and Mount Kosciuszko (2,228 m) is the highest mainland peak.
- The Murray–Darling is the largest river system; deserts include the Great Victoria, Gibson, Great Sandy and Simpson.
- A leading producer of bauxite, iron ore, lithium, rare earths, uranium and mineral sands.

PRELIMS TRAP The Torres Strait separates Australia from Papua New Guinea. The Bass Strait separates mainland Australia from Tasmania.

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Island · May 2026

124 Rottnest Island

Indian Ocean, off Fremantle, Western Australia



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 a 38-year-old man died in a suspected shark attack near Rottnest Island, a holiday spot off Western Australia. The incident drew attention to the island's history and wildlife.

WHERE IT IS

Rottnest Island lies in the Indian Ocean about 19 km west of Fremantle, the port at the mouth of the Swan River. It is a low limestone plateau about 11 km by 5 km, with sand dunes and hypersaline lakes.

SURROUNDED BY Indian Ocean · Fremantle · Perth · Swan River mouth

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Named 'Rottenest' (rat's nest) in 1696 by Dutch captain Willem de Vlamingh, who mistook quokkas for rats.
- Quokkas, small protected wallabies, are its best-known animals.
- From 1838 to 1931, with a break in 1849–55, about 3,700 Aboriginal men and boys were imprisoned on the island.

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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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125

New Zealand

South-western Pacific Ocean, south-east of Australia

Country | Apr 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. In July 2026 Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a visit to New Zealand on 11 July, the first by an Indian prime minister in four decades.

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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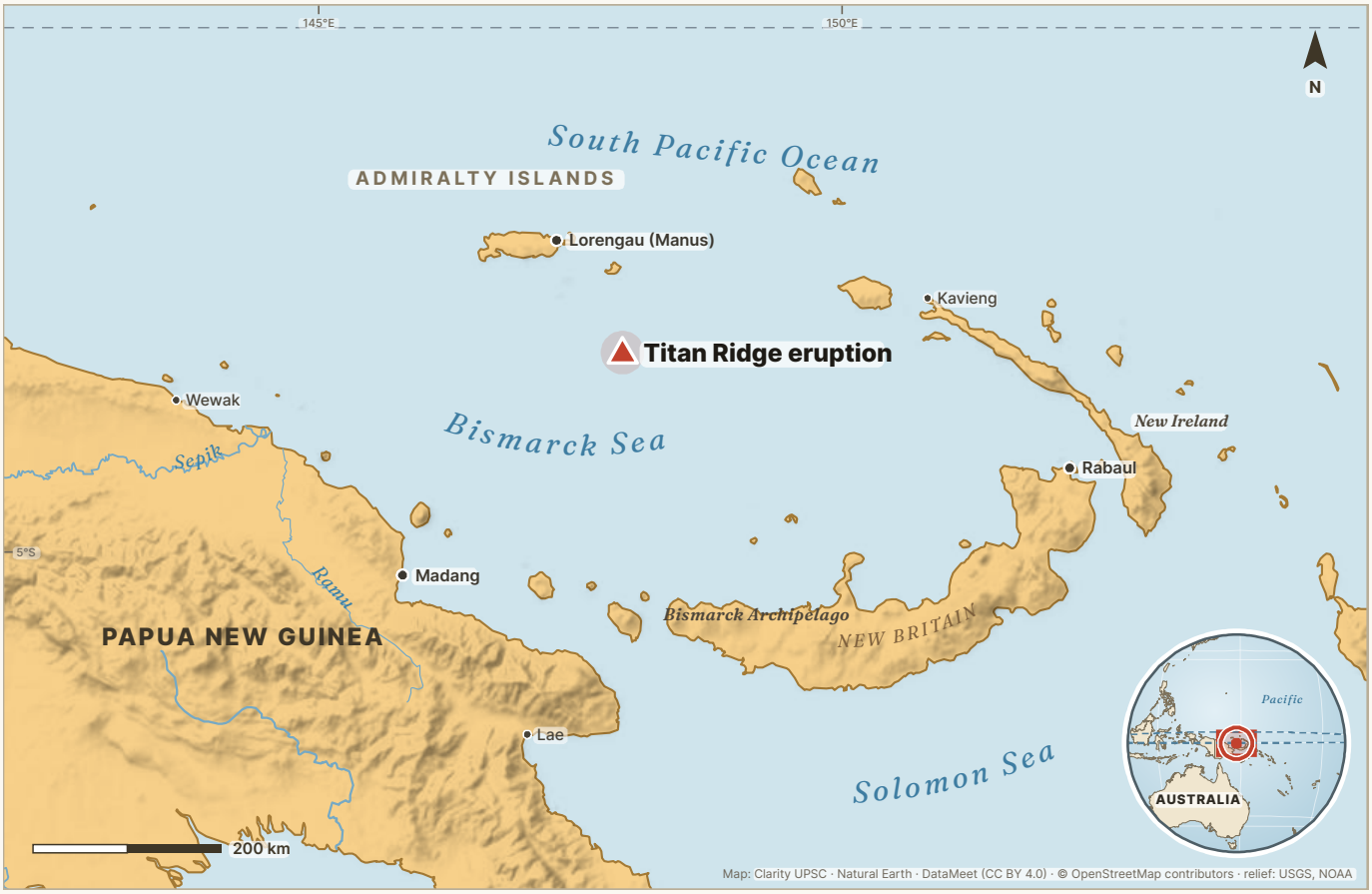
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126

Bismarck Sea (submarine eruption)

Submarine volcano | May 2026

South-western Pacific, between mainland Papua New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago



WHY IN NEWS

On 8 May 2026 satellites detected a submarine eruption in the central Bismarck Sea, probably on the Titan Ridge. It produced steam-rich plumes, ash, discoloured water and pumice rafts. Scientists tracked possible new land with radar satellites such as NISAR and RADARSAT.

WHERE IT IS

The Bismarck Sea lies in the south-western Pacific between the island of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago. New Britain lies to its south, New Ireland to its east and the Admiralty Islands (Manus) to its north. The eruption site lies in the remote north-central part of the sea.

SURROUNDED BY New Guinea mainland (south-west) | New Britain (south) | New Ireland (east) | Admiralty Islands (north) | Pacific Ocean

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Colliding microplates give the sea deep basins, hydrothermal vents and many submarine volcanoes.
- The eruption was steam-dominated and caused no large tsunami.
- Much of the seafloor is unmapped; many undersea volcanoes are found only through discoloured water or pumice rafts.
- NISAR is a joint NASA–ISRO radar satellite.

PRELIMS TRAP The Bismarck Sea lies north of New Britain; the Solomon Sea lies to its south. Both are in Papua New Guinea's waters.

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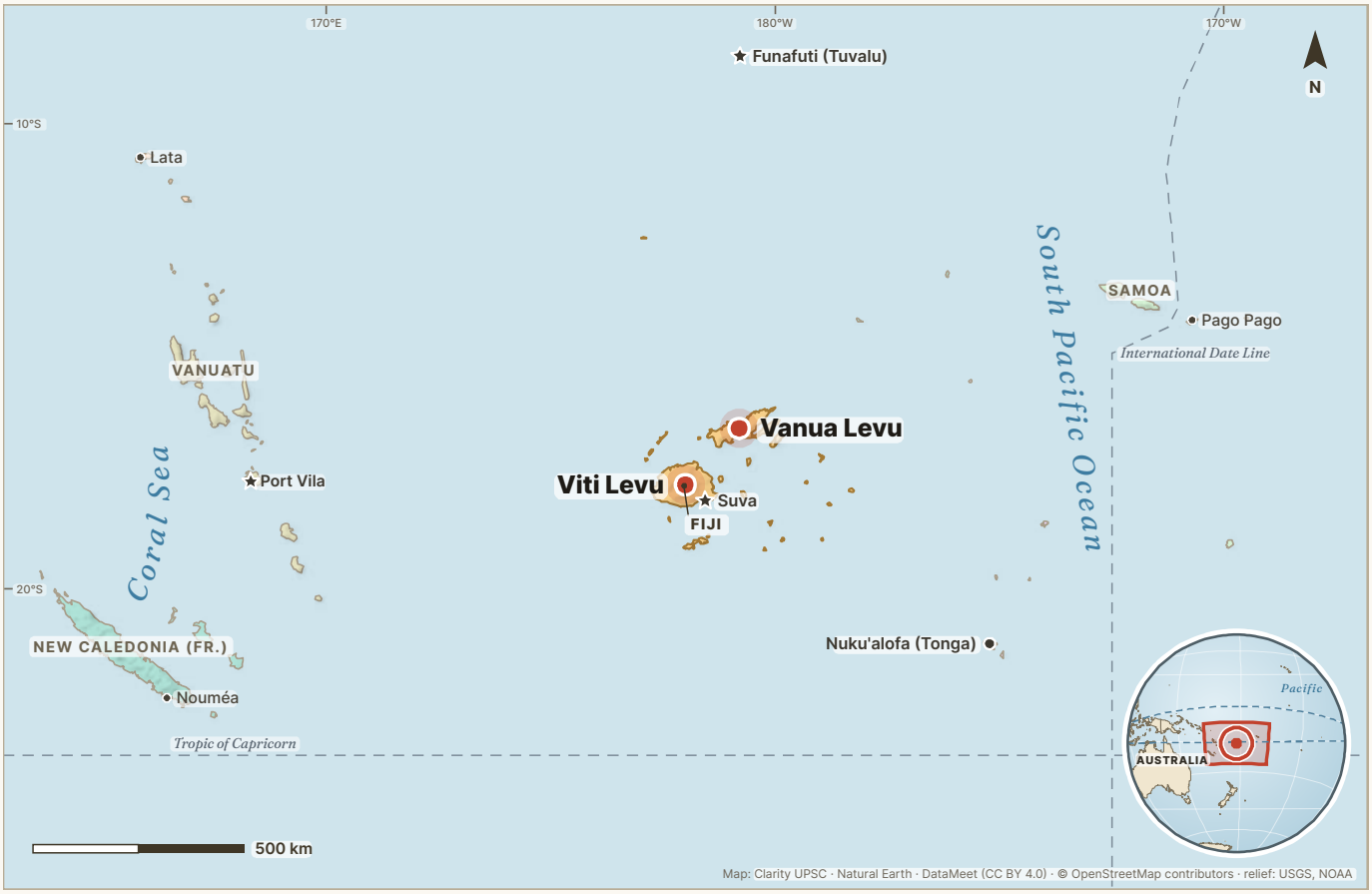
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Archipelago · May 2026

127 Fiji

South Pacific Ocean



WHY IN NEWS

On 26 May 2026 Quad foreign ministers (Australia, India, Japan, US) announced plans to jointly build a model port in Fiji. It will be the Quad's first collective infrastructure project in the Pacific Islands. They also announced frameworks on critical minerals and energy security.

WHERE IT IS

Fiji is an island nation in the South Pacific Ocean. It has about 322 islands and more than 500 islets, of which about 110 are inhabited. Suva, the capital, lies on the main island of Viti Levu.

SURROUNDED BY South Pacific Ocean · Vanuatu (west) · New Caledonia (south-west) · Tonga (south-east) · Tuvalu (north)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its Exclusive Economic Zone covers about 1.26 million sq km.
- English, Fijian and Hindi are major languages; Indo-Fijians and indigenous iTaukei make up most people.
- Tourism makes up about 40 per cent of GDP; sugarcane, coconuts and kava are key crops.
- The port offers an alternative to China's Belt and Road port investments in the Pacific.

PRELIMS TRAP The 180° meridian crosses Fiji's islands. The International Date Line bends east around Fiji, so the whole country keeps one date.

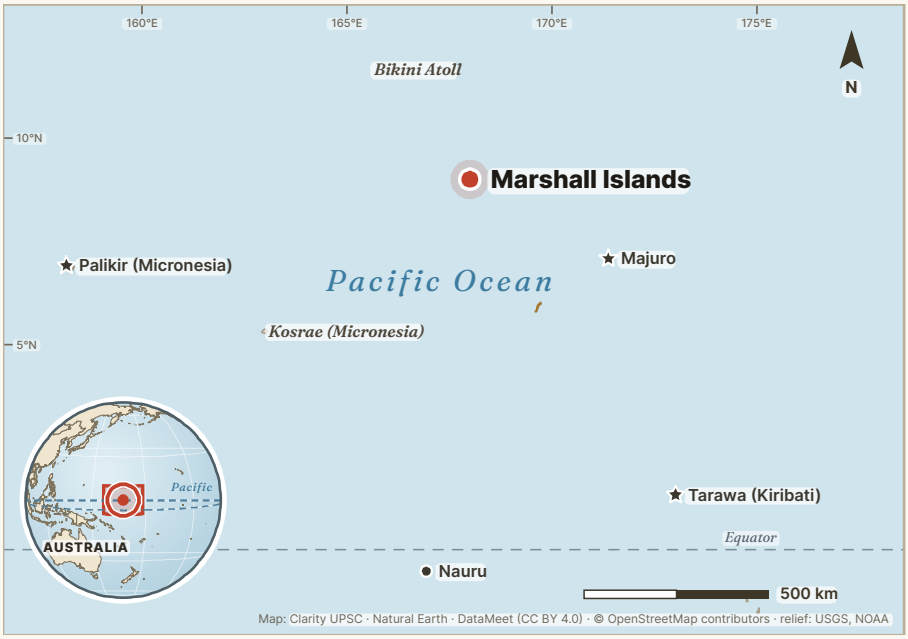
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128 Marshall Islands

Central Pacific Ocean

Island nation (atolls) · Jun 2026



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 the World Bank approved an extra US$9 million for the Marshall Islands to cope with soaring fuel costs. The money will subsidise household electricity and health services while the country invests in solar power and battery storage.

WHERE IT IS

The Marshall Islands is a small island nation of about 42,000 people (2021 census) spread across 29 atolls in the central Pacific Ocean. Its capital is Majuro.

SURROUNDED BY Central Pacific Ocean · Federated States of Micronesia (west) · Kiribati (south) · Nauru (south-west)

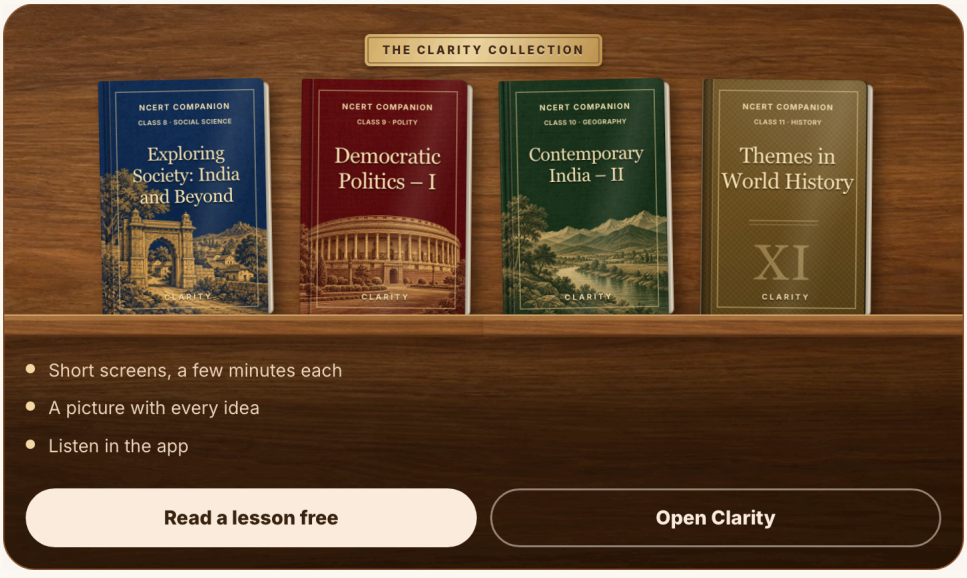
KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Self-governing since 1979; a 1986 Compact of Free Association with the United States provides defence and financial aid.
- Depends on imported fuel for power, transport and desalination; sea-level rise and storms threaten its low atolls.
- Fuel imports reached about 11.5 percent of GDP, and the government declared a state of economic emergency.

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129 Palau: Ulong Island and Koror

Island country | Aug 2026

Rock Islands, Koror State, Palau (western Pacific)



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 early monitoring on Palau's Ulong Island reported returning seabirds and more reef fish after invasive rats were removed in 2023.

WHERE IT IS

Palau is an island country in Micronesia, in the western Pacific, south-east of the Philippines and south-west of Guam. Ulong belongs to Koror State and the Rock Islands group of limestone islands, marine lakes and coral habitats.

SURROUNDED BY Pacific Ocean | Philippines (north-west) | Indonesia (south) | Federated States of Micronesia (east) | Guam, USA (north-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- UNESCO inscribed the Rock Islands Southern Lagoon in 2012 as a mixed natural and cultural World Heritage site.
- Monitoring compared Ulong with nearby Ngeruktabel, which kept its rats; bridled tern calls rose 286 per cent.
- Seabird guano carries marine nutrients onto islands and back to reefs; one site showed 183 per cent more fish biomass.
- The Pacific Islands Forum (1971) has 18 members, including Australia and New Zealand; India is a dialogue partner.

PRELIMS TRAP The Pacific Islands Forum has 18 members; India's separate Forum for India–Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) covers 14 island countries.

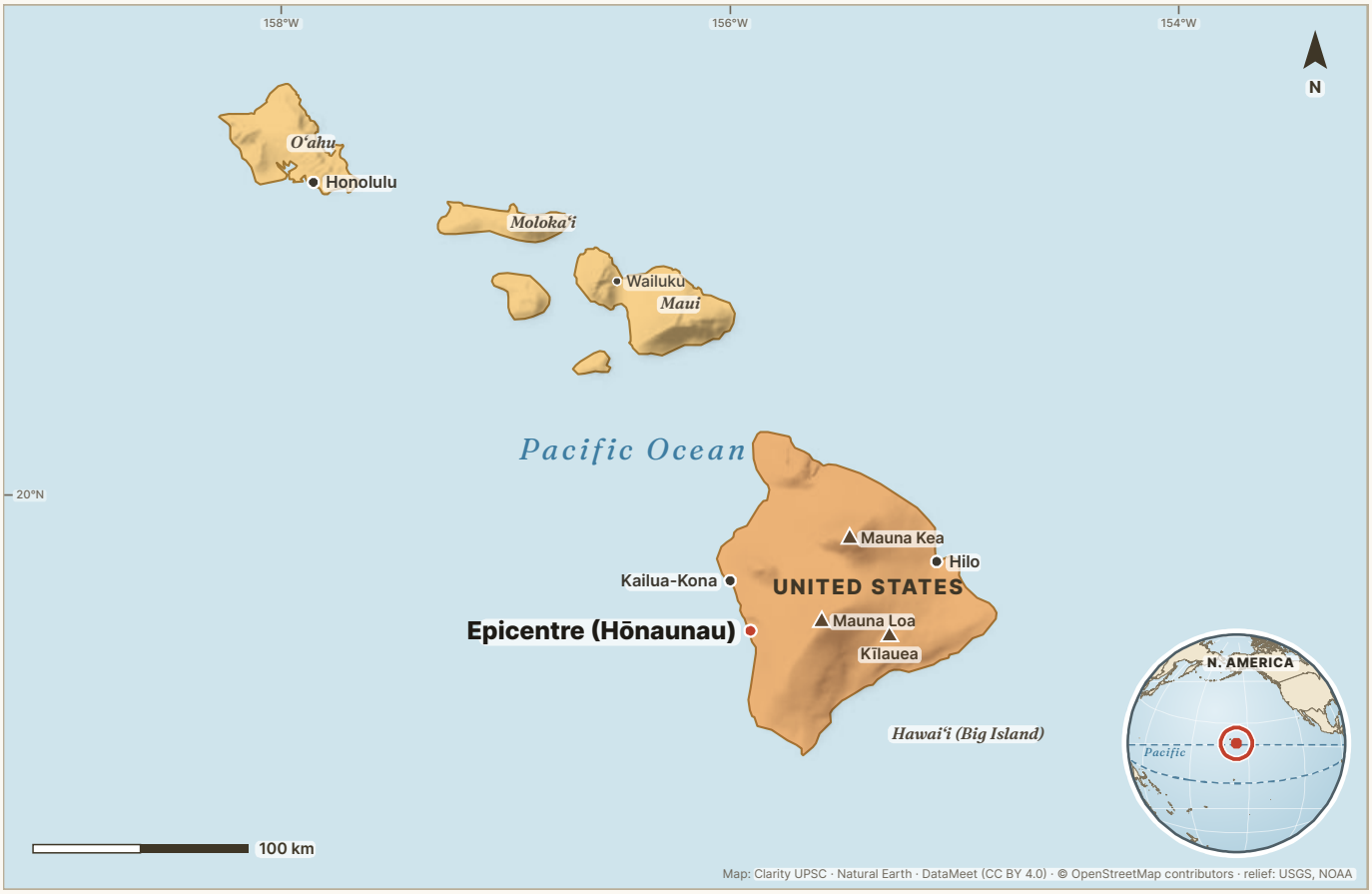
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Island (earthquake zone) May 2026

130 Hawai‘i (Big Island)

Largest island of the Hawaiian chain, central Pacific Ocean, USA



WHY IN NEWS

On 22 May 2026 a magnitude-6.0 earthquake struck near Hōnaunau-Nāpō‘opo on the Big Island's west coast, at about 22 km depth. At least eight homes were destroyed and an emergency was declared. The USGS attributed it to the island's weight bending the Pacific Plate.

WHERE IT IS

The Big Island is the largest and youngest island of the Hawaiian chain in the central Pacific. It sits on the Pacific Plate over the Hawaiian hotspot. Hilo lies on its east coast and Kailua-Kona on its west.

SURROUNDED BY Pacific Ocean · Maui (north-west) · Hilo (east coast) · Kailua-Kona (west coast)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- About 10,432 sq km; built by five shield volcanoes, of which Mauna Loa, Kīlauea and Hualālai are active.
- Mauna Kea (4,205 m) is the highest point.
- The quake was a 'lithospheric flexure' event: the island's mass bends the plate until the crust snaps.
- Climates range from tropical rainforest to alpine desert on Mauna Kea.

PRELIMS TRAP Hawaii's volcanoes form over a hotspot in the middle of the Pacific Plate. Ring of Fire volcanoes, such as Mayon, form at subduction zones.

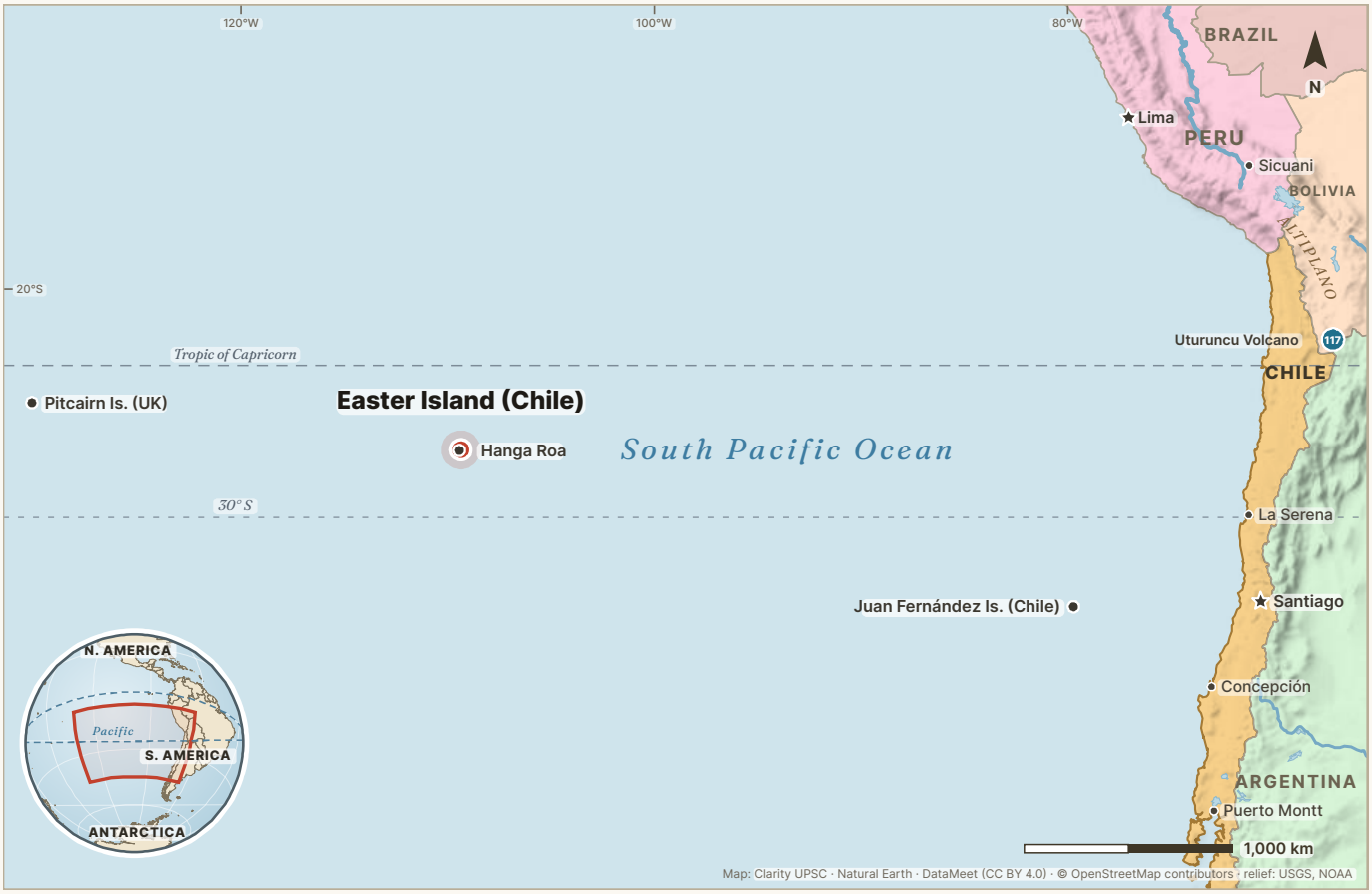
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Island | May 2026

131 Easter Island (Rapa Nui)

South-eastern Pacific Ocean; a Chilean territory



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 researchers reported radiocarbon dates for Rapa Nui's Rongorongo tablets. One tablet's wood dated to 1493–1509, before Europeans arrived in 1722. If confirmed, Rongorongo would be one of the world's few independently invented scripts.

WHERE IT IS

Easter Island is a small volcanic island in the south-eastern Pacific Ocean. It lies far west of the South American mainland and belongs to Chile. Its Polynesian people call the island Rapa Nui.

SURROUNDED BY South Pacific Ocean

Chile (mainland to the east) | Pitcairn Islands (to the west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Nearly 1,000 stone statues called moai were carved by the Rapa Nui mostly between about 1250 and 1500.
- Only 27 Rongorongo tablets survive; radiocarbon dating gives when the wood was cut, not when glyphs were carved.
- Other independent scripts: Mesopotamian cuneiform, Egyptian hieroglyphs, Chinese characters and Mesoamerican scripts.
- Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen reached the island in 1722.

PRELIMS TRAP Easter Island is a Chilean island in the Pacific Ocean. Christmas Island is an Australian territory in the Indian Ocean.

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Island · Jul 2026

132 Greenland

North Atlantic and Arctic, north-east of Canada



WHY IN NEWS

On 16 July 2026 an international science team set out on a six-week voyage to Greenland aboard RRS Sir David Attenborough. The GIANT programme, led by the British Antarctic Survey, will study how glacier melt in Kangerlussuaq Fjord affects North Atlantic circulation.

WHERE IT IS

Greenland, the world's largest island, lies mainly within the Arctic Circle and geographically belongs to North America. The Arctic Ocean lies to its north, the Greenland Sea to its east, and Baffin Bay and Davis Strait to its west.

SURROUNDED BY Arctic Ocean · Greenland Sea · Baffin Bay · Davis Strait · Denmark Strait (towards Iceland) · Nares Strait (towards Canada)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is a self-governing territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, with its capital at Nuuk; it left the European Economic Community in 1985.
- Its ice sheet, about 1.71 million sq km, is the world's second-largest ice body after Antarctica's.
- Complete melting would raise average sea level by about 7.4 m; meltwater also changes North Atlantic temperature and salinity.
- Gunnbjørn Fjeld (about 3,694 m) is the highest point; Nares Strait separates Greenland from Canada's Ellesmere Island.

PRELIMS TRAP Denmark Strait separates Greenland from Iceland; Davis Strait lies between Greenland and Canada's Baffin Island.

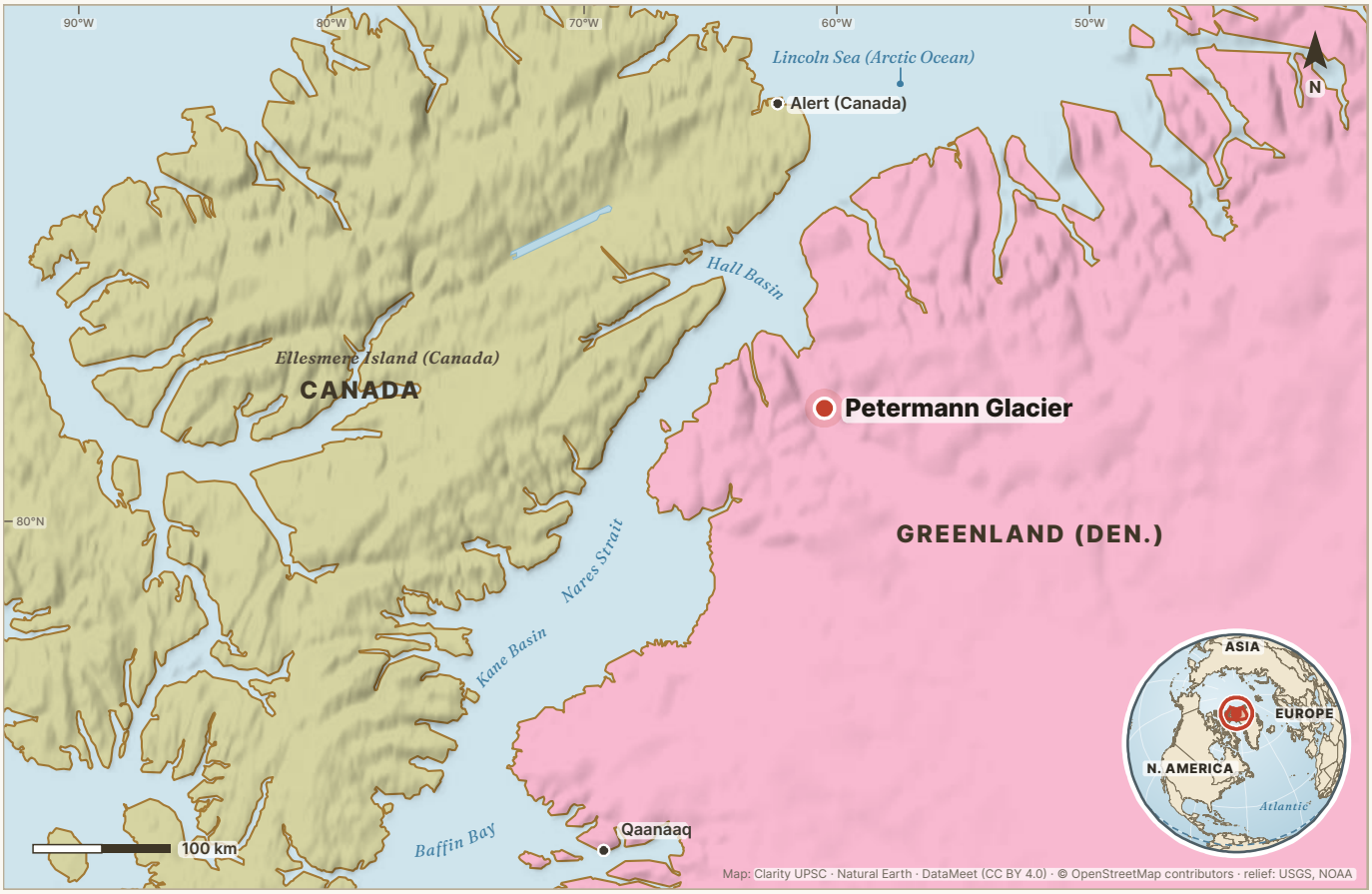
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Glacier · Aug 2026

133 Petermann Glacier

North-western Greenland, near Nares Strait



WHY IN NEWS

On 4 August 2026 a 76.4 sq km ice island broke from Petermann Glacier in north-western Greenland. University of Stirling scientists tracked it with Sentinel-1 radar. It was the glacier's largest calving since 2012 and the Arctic's largest reported calving since 2020.

WHERE IT IS

Petermann Glacier drains the north-western Greenland Ice Sheet. Its long floating tongue extends through Petermann Fjord towards Nares Strait, which separates Greenland from Canada's Ellesmere Island.

SURROUNDED BY Nares Strait · Ellesmere Island (Canada) · Lincoln Sea · Baffin Bay

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Nares Strait links the Lincoln Sea and Arctic Ocean with northern Baffin Bay and carries sea ice south.
- The detached block was already floating, so its loss adds little directly to sea level.
- A floating ice tongue can restrain the grounded glacier behind it; two more fractures, about 94 and 84 sq km, remain attached.
- Petermann also produced major ice islands in 2010 and 2012.

PRELIMS TRAP Nares Strait separates Greenland from Ellesmere Island; Davis Strait, farther south, separates Greenland from Baffin Island.

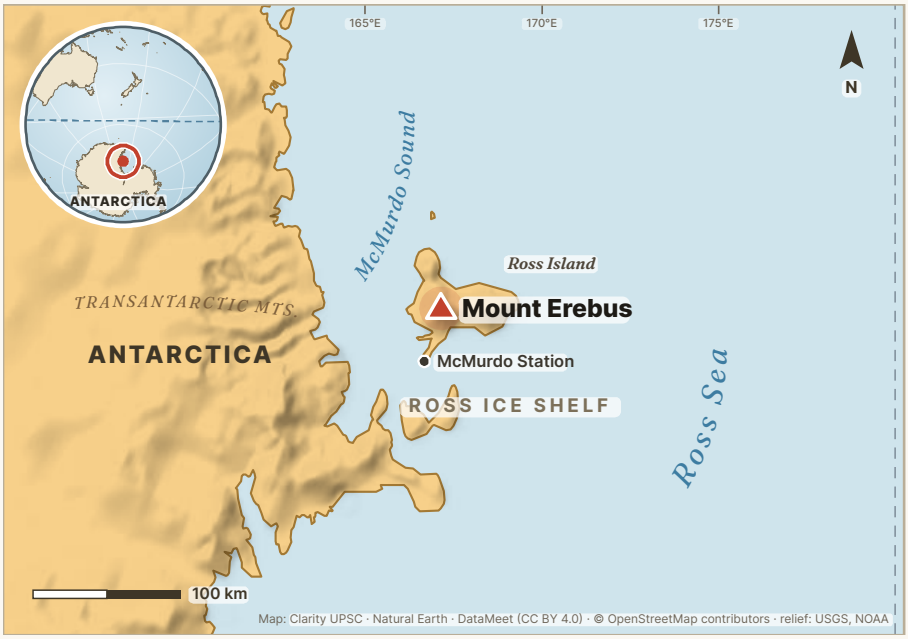
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Volcano · Jul 2026

134 Mount Erebus

Ross Island, Ross Sea, Antarctica



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 scientists reported continued activity at Mount Erebus on Antarctica's Ross Island. Its persistent lava lake and small eruptions drew renewed interest as researchers planned fieldwork for the austral summer.

WHERE IT IS

Mount Erebus stands on Ross Island in the Ross Sea, Antarctica. At 3,794 m it is the continent's second-highest volcano and the southernmost active volcano on Earth.

SURROUNDED BY Ross Island · Ross Sea · Ross Ice Shelf (south) · McMurdo Sound (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Continuously active since at least 1972, with a convecting lava lake in its summit crater.
- Its lava is anorthoclase phonolite, an alkaline rock; tiny gold crystals have been found in its plume.
- Small Strombolian explosions throw volcanic bombs onto the crater rim.

PRELIMS TRAP Mount Erebus is Antarctica's well-known active volcano on Ross Island; Vinson Massif is the continent's highest peak.

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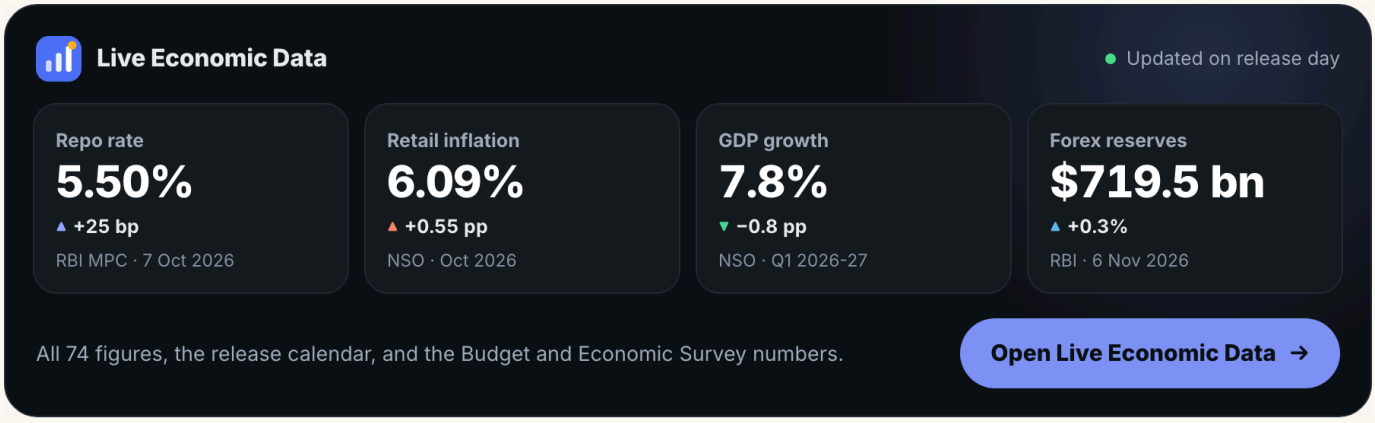
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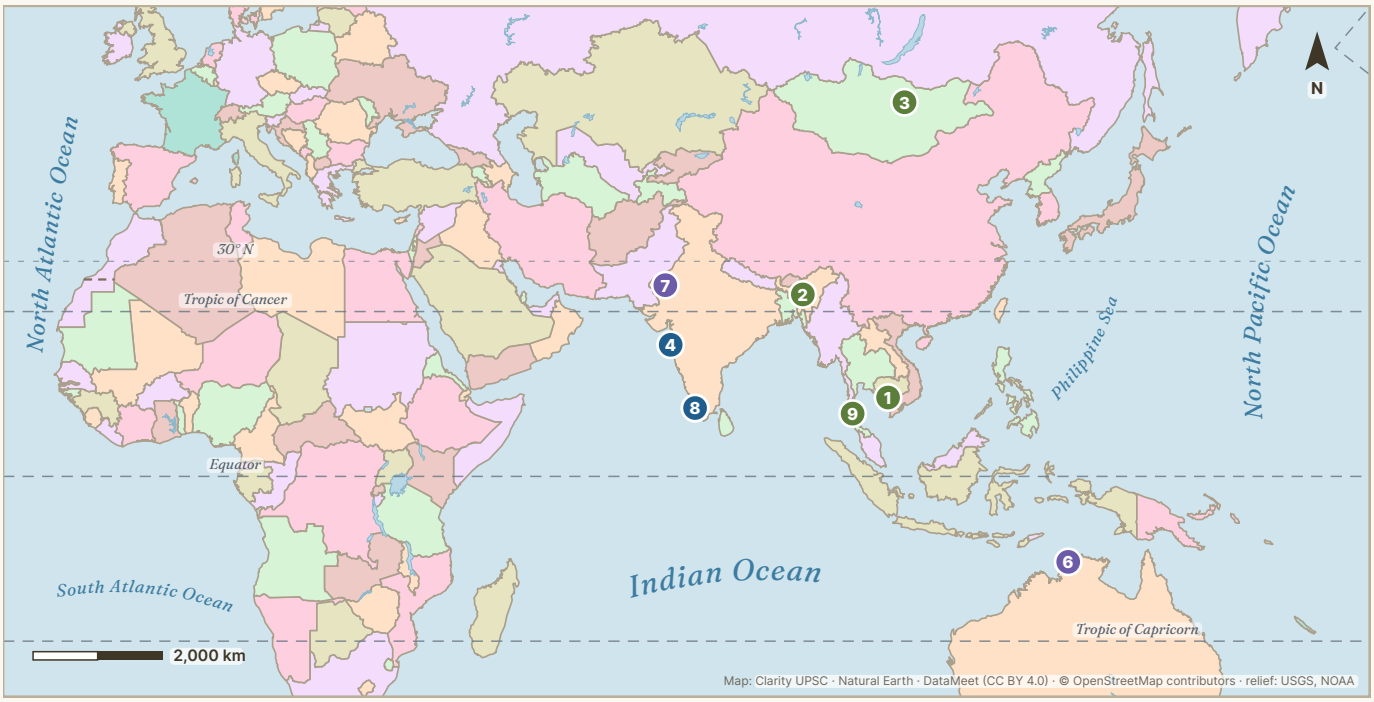
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Military exercises, May–August 2026

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	**CINBAX-II**	Cambodia	Army	Camp Basil, Kampong Speu province, Cambodia	May 2026
2	**PRAGATI 2026**	Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Vietnam	Army	Umroi Military Station, Ri-Bhoi district, Meghalaya	May 2026
3	**Khaan Quest 2026**	Mongolia (host), multinational contingents	Army	Five Hills Training Area, near Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	Jun 2026
4	**India–Japan PASSEX (INS Surat–JS Takanami)**	Japan	Navy	Off Mumbai, Arabian Sea	Jul 2026
5	**Operation Southern Readiness 26-2**	Combined Maritime Forces partners	Navy	Southern Naval Command, Kochi, Kerala	Jul 2026
6	**Pitch Black 2026**	Australia (host), about 20 other countries	Air Force	RAAF Base Darwin (also Tindal and Amberley), Australia	Jul 2026
7	**ROTOR CLAP III**		Air Force	Pokhran Field Firing Range, Jaisalmer district, Rajasthan	Aug 2026
8	**India–US Explosive Ordnance Disposal exercise**	United States	Navy	Kochi, Kerala	Aug 2026
9	**MAITREE-XV**	Thailand	Army	Vibhavadi Rangsit Camp, Surat Thani, Thailand	Aug 2026

INDIA

Rivers, lakes, wetlands and dams

64 places

135 Suru River · River

136 Manasbal Lake · Lake

137 Dal Lake · Lake

138 Chenab River and its hydropower projects · River

139 Chandratal Lake · Lake (Ramsar site)

140 Pong Dam Lake (Maharana Pratap Sagar) · Reservoir (Ramsar site)

141 Bhakra Dam and Gobind Sagar · Dam

142 Koldam · Dam

143 Chandu–Budhera wetlands (Najafgarh Jheel) · Wetland

144 Kishau Dam Project · Dam

145 Saryu River (Kumaon) · River

146 Surha Tal (Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary) · Wetland (Ramsar site)

147 Parichha Dam and the Betwa River · Dam

148 Sambhar Lake · Lake (Ramsar site)

149 Ana Sagar Lake · Lake

150 Sabarmati River · River

151 Jojari River · River

152 Vishwamitri River · River

153 Kshipra (Shipra) River · River

154 Narmada River · River

155 Mahi River · River

156 Gandak River · River

157 Sone River · River

158 Damodar River · River

159 Teesta River · River

160 Dikhow River · River

161 Borjuli Wetland (Biodiversity Heritage Site) · Wetland

162 Dhansiri River · River

163 Subansiri River · River

164 Glaw Lake · Lake

165 Loktak Lake · Lake (Ramsar site)

166 Khawthlangtuipui (Karnaphuli) River · River

167 Subarnarekha River · River

168 Brahmani River · River

169 Ambazari Lake · Lake

170 Ulhas River · River

171 Lonar Lake · Lake (impact crater)

172 Powai Lake · Lake (reservoir)

173 Vihar Lake · Lake

174 Indrayani River · River

175 Khadakwasla Dam · Dam

176 Bhima River and Ujani Dam · River

177 Krishna River · River

178 Panchganga River · River

179 Himayat Sagar · Reservoir

180 Kolleru Lake · Lake

181 Nagarjuna Sagar Dam · Dam

182 Pennar (Penneru) River · River

183 Pulicat Lake · Lagoon

184 Malaprabha River · River

185 Tungabhadra Dam · Dam

186 Ulsoor (Halasuru) Lake · Lake

187 Mekedatu · Proposed reservoir

188 Periyar River · River

189 Vembanad Lake · Lake (Ramsar site)

190 Mullaperiyar Dam · Dam

191 Pamba River · River

192 Adyar River · River

193 Mettur Dam (Stanley Reservoir) · Dam

194 Buckingham Canal · Canal

195 Pallikaranai Marsh · Wetland

196 Bhavani River and Bhavanisagar Dam · River

197 Vaigai River · River

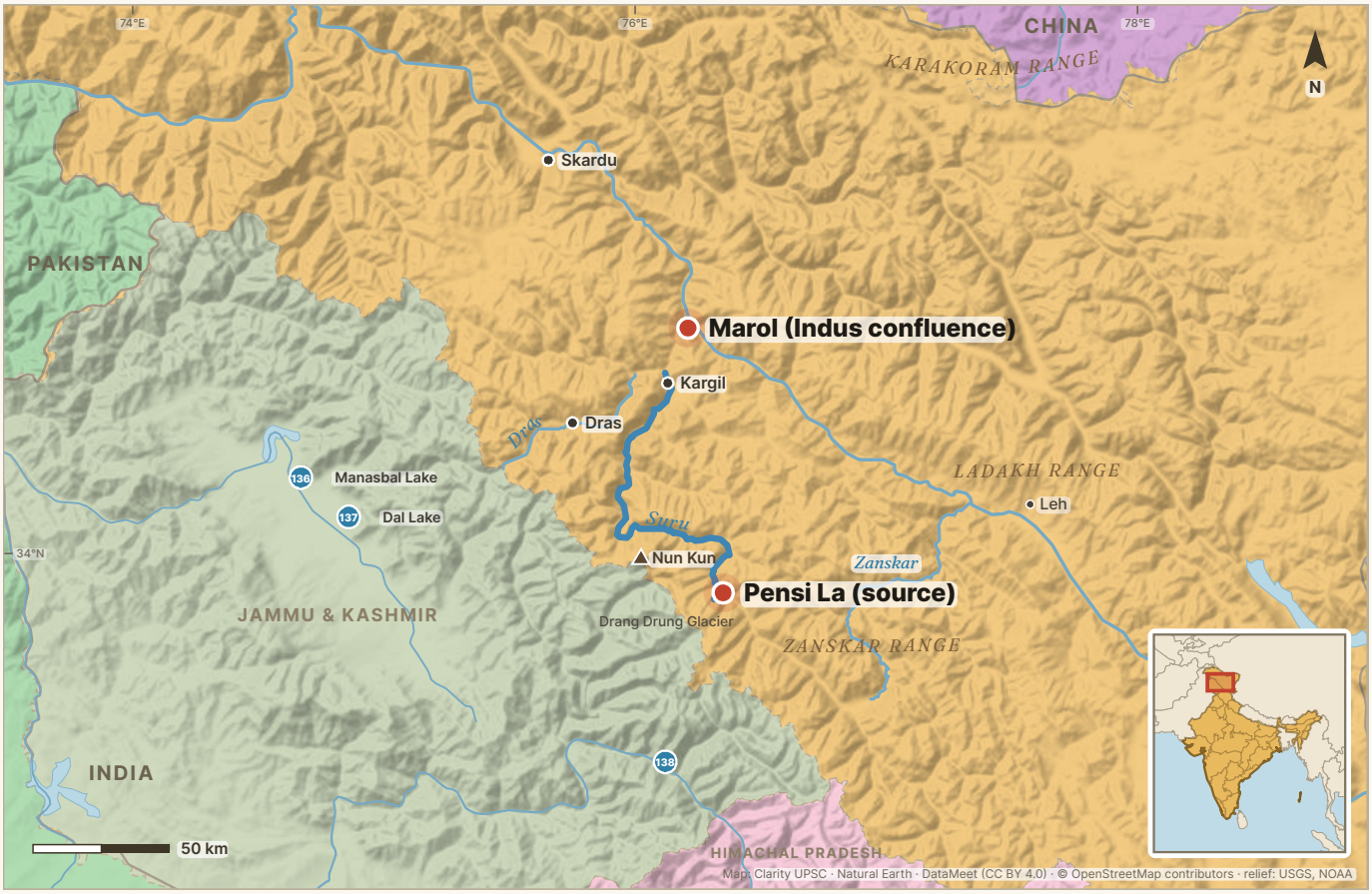
198 Thamirabarani River · River

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River · May 2026

135 Suru River

Kargil district, Ladakh



WHY IN NEWS

On 6 May 2026 Pakistan returned, through the Teetwal crossing, the body of a Kargil boy who drowned in the Suru River on 20 March 2026. The current had carried him across the Line of Control into Baltistan. Leaders sought a formal repatriation mechanism.

WHERE IT IS

The Suru rises from the Panzella Glacier at Pensi La, near the Drang Drung Glacier, in Kargil district of Ladakh. It flows west and north past Kargil town. It then enters Gilgit-Baltistan, Indian territory under Pakistani occupation, and joins the Indus at Marol.

SURROUNDED BY Zanskar Range · Nun Kun massif · Kargil town · Dras River (tributary) · Gilgit-Baltistan (downstream)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A 185-km left-bank tributary of the Indus; the Shafat Nala, Botkul and Dras rivers join it.
- Forms the western and northern boundary of the Zanskar Range.
- Suru Valley canals irrigate barley, buckwheat, turnips and mustard, a rarity in Ladakh.
- A branch of the Silk Road followed the valley from Kargil to Skardu.

PRELIMS TRAP The Suru rises at Pensi La. The Drang Drung Glacier beside it feeds the Zanskar River system, a separate Indus tributary.

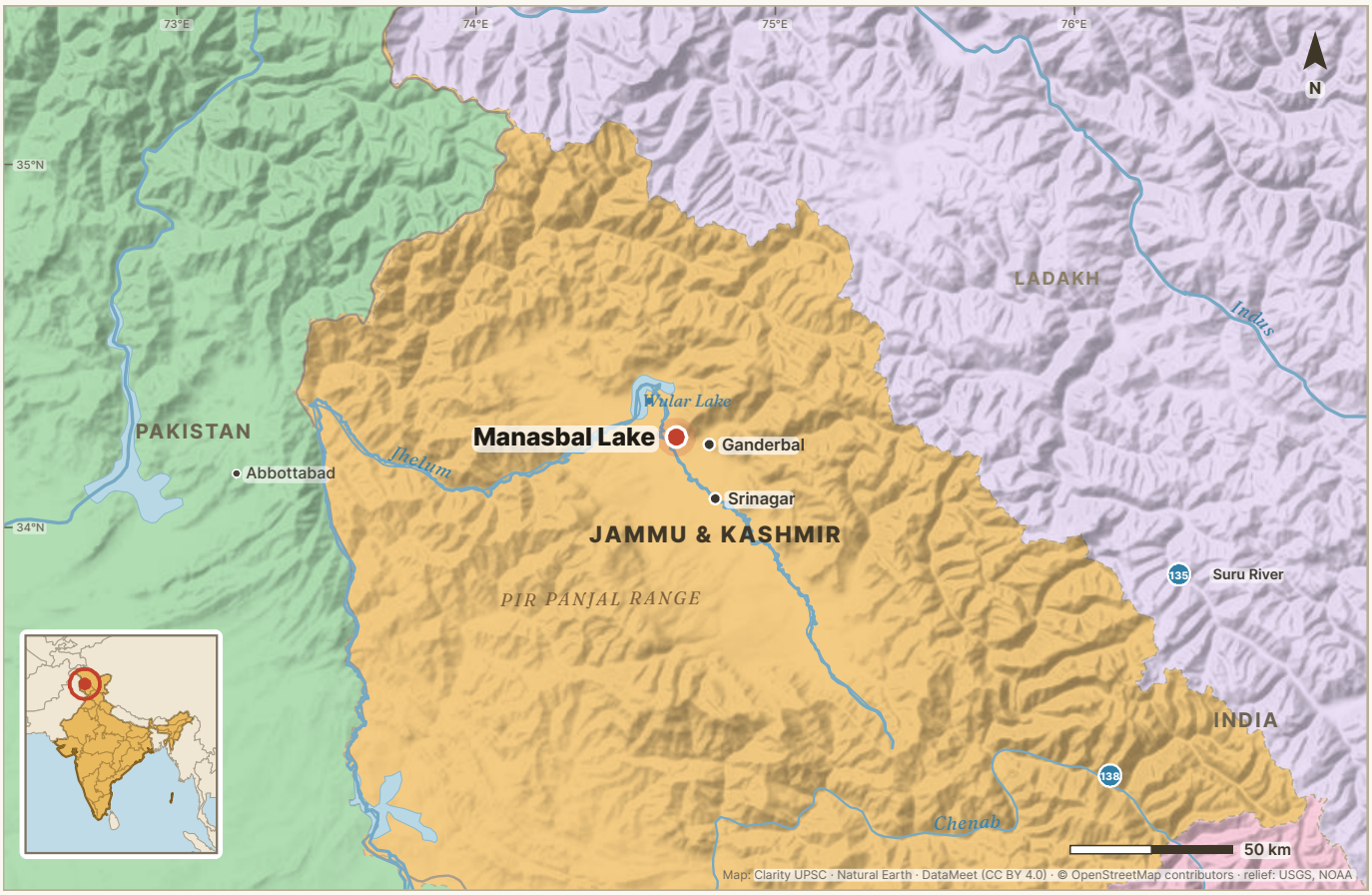
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Lake · Jul 2026

136 Manasbal Lake

Ganderbal district, Jammu & Kashmir



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 migratory birds returned to Manasbal Lake in notable numbers. Authorities linked the return to restoration by the Wular-Manasbal Development Authority, which reported dredging about 1.3 sq km and removing nearly 7,000 cubic metres of weeds by March 2026. Pollution pressures remain.

WHERE IT IS

Manasbal is a freshwater lake near Safapora in Ganderbal district, Jammu & Kashmir, about 30 km north-west of Srinagar. It lies at about 1,583 m. Its outlet, the Nunnyar Nallah, connects it with the Jhelum river system.

SURROUNDED BY Safapora town · Ganderbal district · Nunnyar Nallah (outlet to the Jhelum)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Springs and groundwater feed it; its surface area is about 2.81 sq km and its maximum depth about 12–13 m.
- Scientists describe it as warm monomictic: its water layers mix fully once a year, in the cool season.
- Nur Jahan built the Mughal garden Jaroka Bagh overlooking the lake in the seventeenth century.
- Sewage and farm runoff caused eutrophication; lotus beds supply edible stems and local livelihoods.

PRELIMS TRAP Manasbal is often called India's deepest freshwater lake, though its published maximum depth is only about 12–13 m.

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137 Dal Lake

Srinagar, Kashmir Valley, Jammu & Kashmir

Lake | Jan 2026 | Jun 2026 | Also in Volume 1



WHY 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. In June 2026 Jammu & Kashmir authorities stepped up removal of invasive weeds from the lake. Mechanical harvesters and labourers worked round the clock to clear thick weed mats that threaten its ecology and tourism.

WHERE IT IS

Dal Lake is a freshwater lake in Srinagar, at the foot of the Zabarwan hills in the Kashmir Valley of Jammu & Kashmir. Causeways divide it into basins such as Gagribal, Lokut Dal, Bod Dal and Nagin. It is known for its houseboats and floating gardens.

SURROUNDED BY Srinagar city | Kashmir Valley | Zabarwan hills (east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- 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.

PRELIMS TRAP Dal Lake lies in Srinagar city; Wular Lake, a larger freshwater lake fed by the Jhelum, is in Bandipora district.

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Chenab River and its hydropower projects

River | Jan 2026 | Feb 2026 | Jun 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In May–July 2026 Kirthai-II (930 MW) got updated terms of reference, Kiru (624 MW) crossed 83% progress and Kwar's (540 MW) approval and tendering drew attention. On 21 July heavy rain forced Salal to open all its gates and damaged a cofferdam at Ratle; India rejected allegations of deliberate flooding.

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.

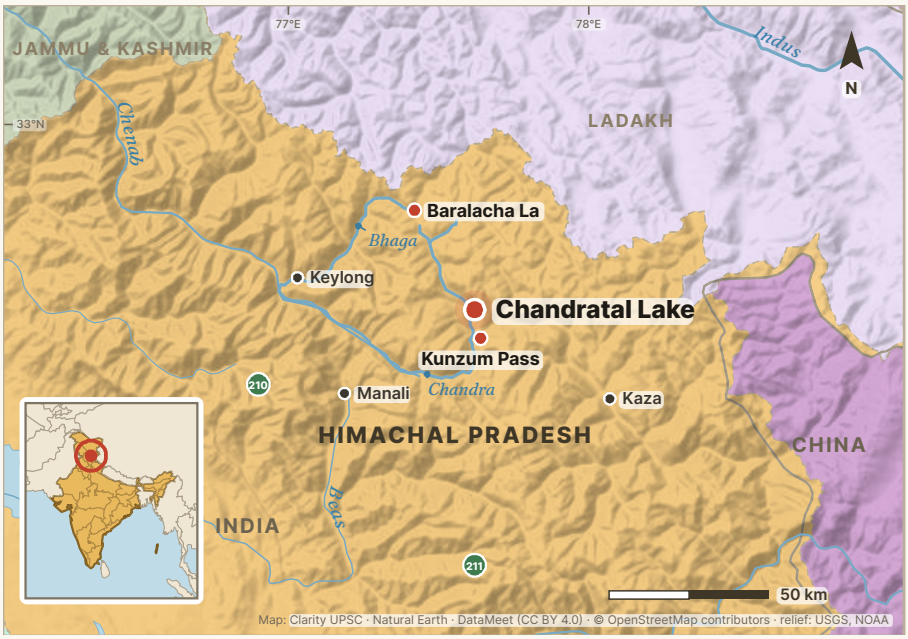
NEIGHBOURING STATES Himachal Pradesh (Lahaul and Pangi) | Jammu & Kashmir | Pakistan (downstream)

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
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139 Chandratal Lake

Lahaul and Spiti district, Himachal Pradesh

Lake (Ramsar site) | May 2026

In news: A note in the Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, reported in May 2026, recorded the first confirmed Pallas's gull in Himachal Pradesh. Birdwatchers photographed it at Chandratal Lake in August 2025, at about 4,300 m, the species' highest recorded altitude in India.

SURROUNDED BY

Kunzum Pass (south-east) | Chandra valley (Lahaul) | Spiti valley (east) | Lahaul and Spiti district

- A Ramsar-listed wetland and a stepping stone on the Central Asian Flyway.
- Pallas's gull (Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus) breeds around the Caspian Sea and Central Asia; earlier Indian records came from Ladakh and Pong Dam.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



140 Pong Dam Lake (Maharana Pratap Sagar)

Beas River, Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh

Reservoir (Ramsar site) | Jun 2026

In news: In June 2026 birdwatchers reported knob-billed ducks, rarely seen in northern India, at several wetlands including Pong Dam Lake.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Punjab

- Also called Maharana Pratap Sagar; a Ramsar site since 19 August 2002 (15,662 ha), on a trans-Himalayan bird migration route.
- The Bhakra Beas Management Board runs its 396 MW power station; the dam is an earth-core, gravel-shell structure on the Beas.
- The knob-billed (comb) duck lives mainly in central and southern Indian wetlands; the IUCN lists it as Least Concern.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

141 Bhakra Dam and Gobind Sagar

Dam | Feb 2026 | Jun 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In May 2026 the board found the dam's main wall deflecting outward by about 1.77 inches, beyond the 1.03-inch limit, and commissioned an emergency study led by IIT Roorkee; officials said there was no immediate danger. In July 2026 Himachal Pradesh was developing its first island tourism project on Gobind Sagar.

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



142 Koldam

Satluj River, Bilaspur district, Himachal Pradesh

Dam | Jul 2026

In news: In July 2026 NTPC reported that Koldam generated a record 3,612.819 million units in 2025–26, its highest output since commissioning and about 18% above its design energy. The 800 MW station stands on the Satluj in Himachal Pradesh.

SURROUNDED BY

- Satluj River
- Bilaspur district
- Gobind Sagar (downstream)

- It is NTPC's first hydropower station: four 200 MW units in commercial operation since 2015, behind a rock-and-gravel dam with a clay core.
- Satluj projects include Nathpa Jhakri, Karcham Wangtoo, Bhakra and Koldam; the Beas joins the Satluj at Harike, Punjab.
- The project lies in Seismic Zone V, India's highest hazard category.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



143 Chandu–Budhera wetlands (Najafgarh Jheel)

Gurugram district, Haryana (Gurugram side of Najafgarh Jheel)

Wetland | May 2026

In news: Rare shorebirds drew attention to the Chandu wetlands near Gurugram in 2026: a red-necked phalarope in May and a greater sand plover (the area's fifth record) in July. Both are rarely recorded at inland sites.

SURROUNDED BY

- Najafgarh Jheel (Haryana–Delhi)
- Sultanpur National Park (west)
- Gurugram city (east)

- Najafgarh Jheel is a fragment of a much larger historic lake; the Najafgarh Drain carries its water east through Delhi towards the Yamuna.
- The red-necked phalarope breeds in Arctic tundra and winters at sea; females are brighter than males, and males incubate the eggs.
- The sharp-tailed sandpiper breeds in north-eastern Siberia and winters mainly in Australia and New Zealand.

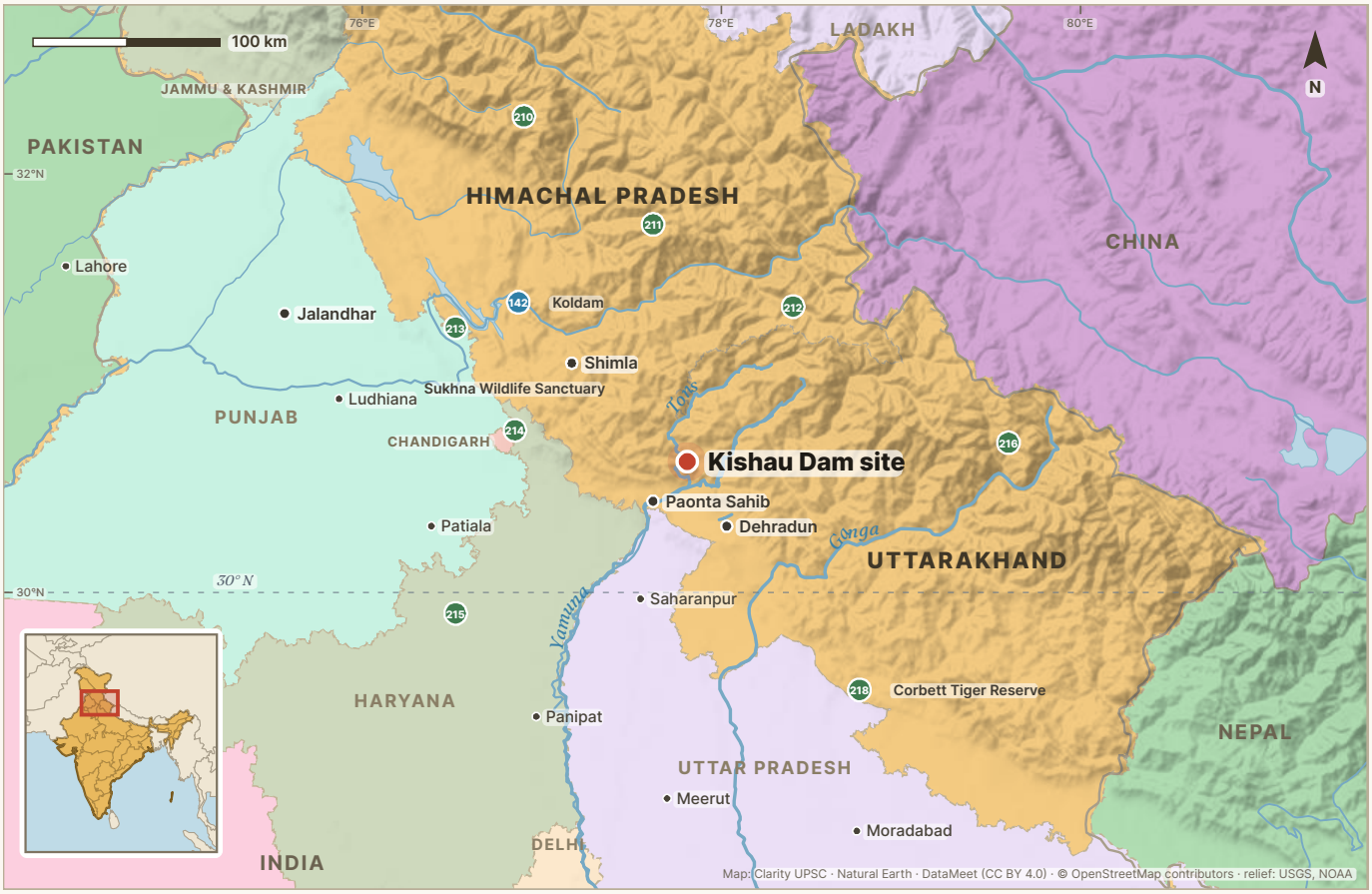
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Dam · Jun 2026

144 Kishau Dam Project

Tons river, Uttarakhand–Himachal Pradesh border



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 an eight-year deadlock over the Kishau Dam ended when the Union government and beneficiary states agreed on funding. The Centre will fund the water component; Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh will share the power component of about ₹2,000 crore.

WHERE IT IS

The dam site is on the Tons, a major tributary of the Yamuna, on the border of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. The project belongs to the Upper Yamuna Basin agreements.

DAM-SITE STATES AND BENEFICIARIES

- Uttarakhand
- Himachal Pradesh
- Haryana (beneficiary)
- Delhi (beneficiary)
- Rajasthan (beneficiary)
- Uttar Pradesh (beneficiary)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Plans a 236-metre concrete gravity dam, about 660 MW of power and live storage of about 1,300 million cubic metres.
- Will irrigate about 97,000 hectares and supply 517 million cubic metres of drinking water a year, including to Delhi.
- Estimated cost is about ₹15,000 crore; forest submergence and displacement are key concerns.

PRELIMS TRAP This Tons is a Yamuna tributary on the Uttarakhand–Himachal border; a different Tons (Tamsa) flows from Madhya Pradesh to join the Ganga in Uttar Pradesh.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Watch the 2-minute video
Clarity UPSC on YouTube

River · Jul 2026

145 Saryu River (Kumaon)

Bageshwar, Almora and Pithoragarh districts, Uttarakhand



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 the National Green Tribunal sought a report on waste disposal beside the Saryu River in Uttarakhand. An inspection had found scattered municipal waste near Sera Ghat in Almora district, but no direct sewage discharge. Almora authorities must report corrective action within three months.

WHERE IT IS

The Kumaon Saryu rises near Sarmul in Bageshwar district, Uttarakhand. It flows past Kapkot to Bageshwar town, where the Gomti joins it, and then joins the Kali at Pancheshwar on the India–Nepal border.

SURROUNDED BY Bageshwar district · Almora district · Pithoragarh district · Nepal (across the Kali)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Kumaon Saryu joins the Kali; the Kali becomes the Sharda downstream, and the Sharda joins the Ghaghara.
- The Gomti–Saryu confluence gives Bageshwar town religious and geographical importance.
- A downstream sample met CPCB Designated Best Use Class B, which means water fit for organised outdoor bathing.
- The National Green Tribunal was set up under the NGT Act, 2010; its principal bench is in New Delhi.

PRELIMS TRAP The lower Ghaghara near Ayodhya is popularly called the Sarayu; the Kumaon Saryu is an upstream tributary in the same river system.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

146 Surha Tal (Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary)

Wetland (Ramsar site) · Jun 2026

Ballia district, eastern Uttar Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

On World Environment Day, 5 June 2026, the Prime Minister announced that Surha Tal, the Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh, had been listed under the Ramsar Convention. It became India's 100th Ramsar site.

WHERE IT IS

Surha Tal lies near Basantpur village in Ballia district of eastern Uttar Pradesh. It is a freshwater oxbow lake left by an old meander of the Ganga and is fed by three channels.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Bihar

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Declared a bird sanctuary in 1991; it supports about 221 plant species and 66 fish species, including Wallago attu.
- Hosts resident purple swamphens and migratory pintail ducks; fishing cats use the adjoining marshes.
- It absorbs Ganga floodwater, reducing downstream flooding and recharging groundwater.
- The Ramsar Convention was adopted in 1971 at Ramsar, Iran; India joined in 1982.

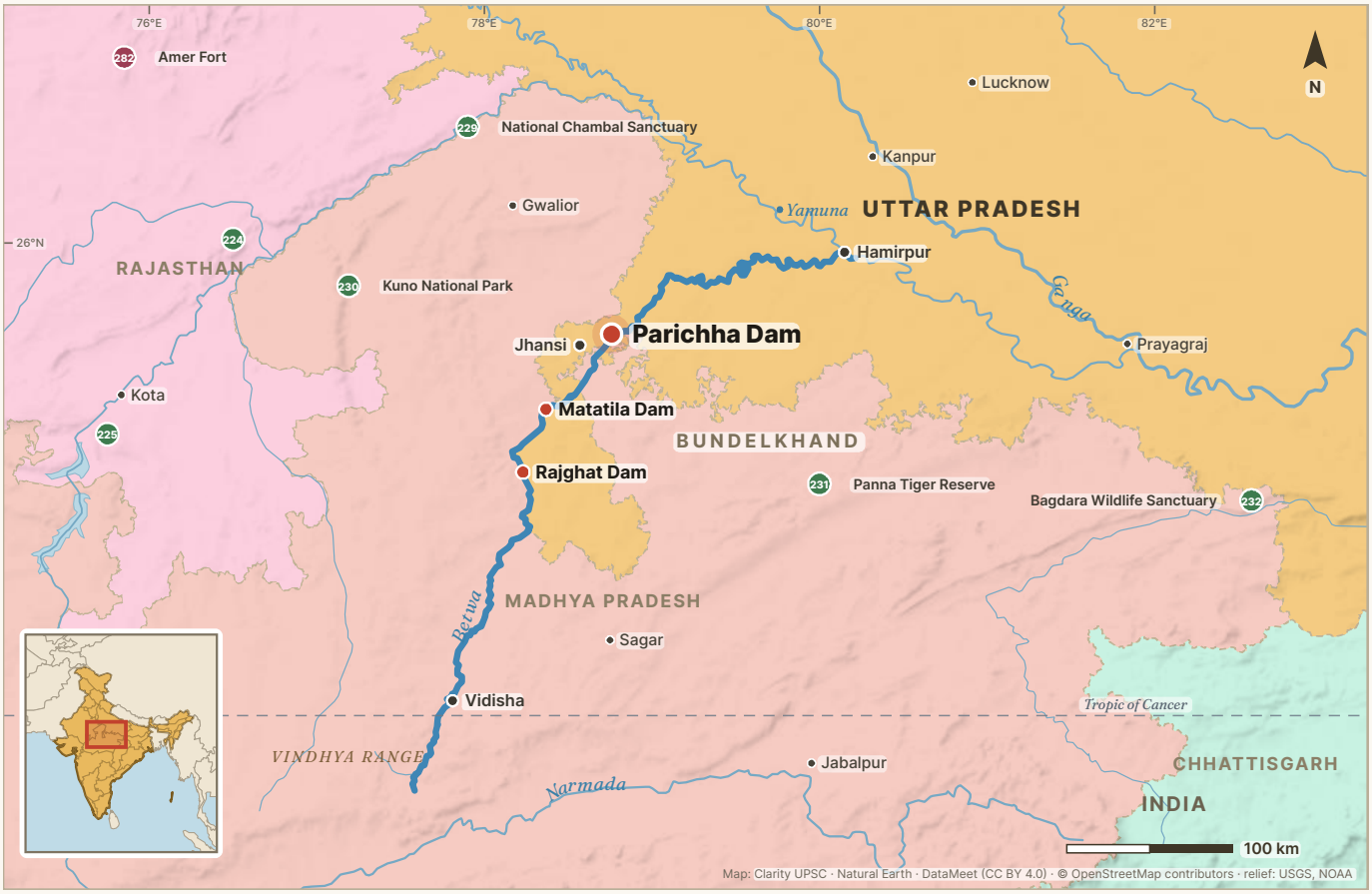
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147

Parichha Dam and the Betwa River

Dam · Aug 2026

Betwa River, Jhansi district, Uttar Pradesh (Bundelkhand)



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 heavy rain and dam releases pushed the Betwa into spate in Madhya Pradesh's Vidisha district. That month the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage also selected Parichha Dam, on the Betwa near Jhansi, as a World Heritage Irrigation Structure; Uttar Pradesh received the letter on 13 August.

WHERE IT IS

The Betwa rises in the Vindhyan uplands near Bhopal and flows north-east across the Bundelkhand plateau into Uttar Pradesh. It joins the Yamuna near Hamirpur after about 590 km. Parichha stands about 25 km from Jhansi.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Madhya Pradesh

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Parichha was built in 1881–1886 as a weir for diversion and storage; it feeds the Betwa Canal in drought-prone Bundelkhand.
- The structure is about 1,174 m long with 318 steel gates; it also supplies the Parichha Thermal Power Project.
- Dhukwan Weir and the Matatila and Rajghat dams form the linked modern Betwa system.
- ICID, founded in 1950, recognises working irrigation structures normally more than 100 years old.

PRELIMS TRAP A World Heritage Irrigation Structure is an ICID listing, separate from UNESCO's World Heritage List.

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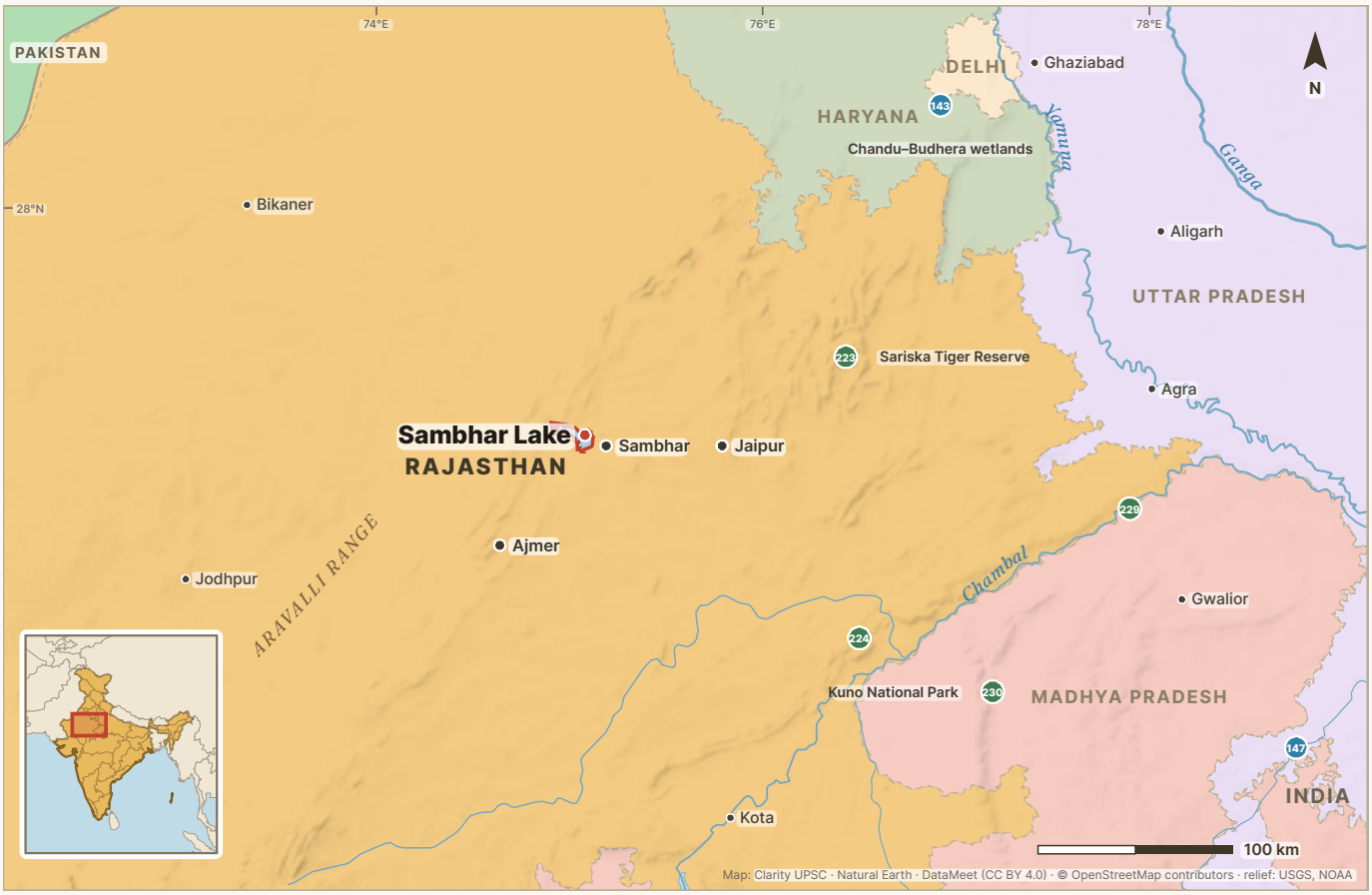
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148

Sambhar Lake

About 60 km west of Jaipur, Rajasthan

Lake (Ramsar site) | May 2026



WHY IN NEWS

On 28 April 2026 the Rajasthan High Court vacated a stay on a 100 MW solar project about 2.25 km from Sambhar Lake. Panels must stand at least 1.5 m high, three saplings must replace each tree cut, and rainwater flows must stay open.

WHERE IT IS

Sambhar Lake lies west of Jaipur in east-central Rajasthan; Sambhar town, near its eastern end, is about 60 km from the city. It is a shallow basin fed by seasonal streams. It spreads to about 230 sq km in the monsoon and often dries in summer.

SURROUNDED BY Jaipur district | Ajmer district | Didwana-Kuchaman district (carved from Nagaur in 2023) | Sambhar town

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- India's largest inland saline lake and a Ramsar site since 1990.
- Its alkaline waters feed tens of thousands of migratory birds, including greater and lesser flamingos.
- A 5.1-km sandstone dam separates the eastern salt pans; Sambhar Salts, a joint venture of Hindustan Salts and the Rajasthan government, runs the saltworks.
- Legend links its origin to the goddess Shakambari.

PRELIMS TRAP Sambhar is India's largest inland saline lake. Chilika in Odisha is India's largest brackish-water lagoon.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



149 Ana Sagar Lake

Ajmer city, Rajasthan

Lake · Jul 2026

In news: In July 2026 large numbers of fish died in Ajmer's Ana Sagar Lake, and residents reported a foul smell. Water had been lowered for desilting before a delayed monsoon, and drains added pollution; only scientific tests could confirm the cause.

SURROUNDED BY Ajmer city · Daulat Bagh · Aravalli hills

- Chahamana ruler Arnoraj (Anaji) built it between 1135 and 1150; the lake bears his name.
- Jahangir laid out Daulat Bagh beside it, and Shah Jahan added five marble pavilions called Baradaris.
- Sewage raises biochemical oxygen demand and lowers dissolved oxygen, which can kill fish.

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www.clarityupsc.com



150 Sabarmati River

Rajasthan and Gujarat; ends in the Gulf of Khambhat

River · May 2026

In news: In May 2026 debates on urban water management and pollution in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar brought the Sabarmati into focus. Industrial and domestic pollution remain concerns despite the Ahmedabad riverfront project.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Rajasthan · Gujarat

- A 371-km monsoon-fed west-flowing river; 48 km lie in Rajasthan and 323 km in Gujarat.
- The Watrak is its largest (left-bank) tributary; the Sei is a right-bank tributary.
- The Dharoi Dam (1978) and Vasna Barrage regulate its water.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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River · Aug 2026

151 Jojari River

Western Rajasthan (Nagaur and Jodhpur), a tributary of the Luni



WHY IN NEWS

On 24 August 2026 the Supreme Court ordered interim safeguards for Rajasthan's polluted Jojari River. It barred construction within 100 m of the river's edge and potentially polluting activity within 500 m on either side until the High Flood Line and ecological buffers are scientifically mapped.

WHERE IT IS

The Jojari is an ephemeral river of arid western Rajasthan. It rises near Pudlu village in southern Nagaur district, flows through the Jodhpur area and joins the Luni south-west of Jodhpur. The Luni drains towards the Rann of Kachchh.

SURROUNDED BY Nagaur district · Jodhpur · Luni River

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Outside the monsoon, wastewater dominates parts of its channel.
- Jodhpur's urban drains and textile-processing units have polluted the Jojari–Bandi–Luni system.
- The suo motu case is titled 'In Re: 2 Million Lives at Risk, Contamination in Jojari River, Rajasthan'.
- An Integrated Coordination Group under the Chief Secretary and a High-Level Ecosystem Oversight Committee oversee restoration.

PRELIMS TRAP The Jojari is the Luni's right-bank tributary and does not rise in the Aravallis; most other Luni tributaries come from the Aravallis on the left bank.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



152 Vishwamitri River

Vadodara, Gujarat

River · Jan 2026 · Aug 2026 · Also in Volume 1

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. On 22 August 2026 a 43-year-old man died after falling into the monsoon-swollen river near Talsat village on Vadodara's outskirts, where a mugger crocodile attacked him, local reports said.

SURROUNDED BY

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

- 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.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



153 Kshipra (Shipra) River

Malwa Plateau, Madhya Pradesh

River · Jun 2026

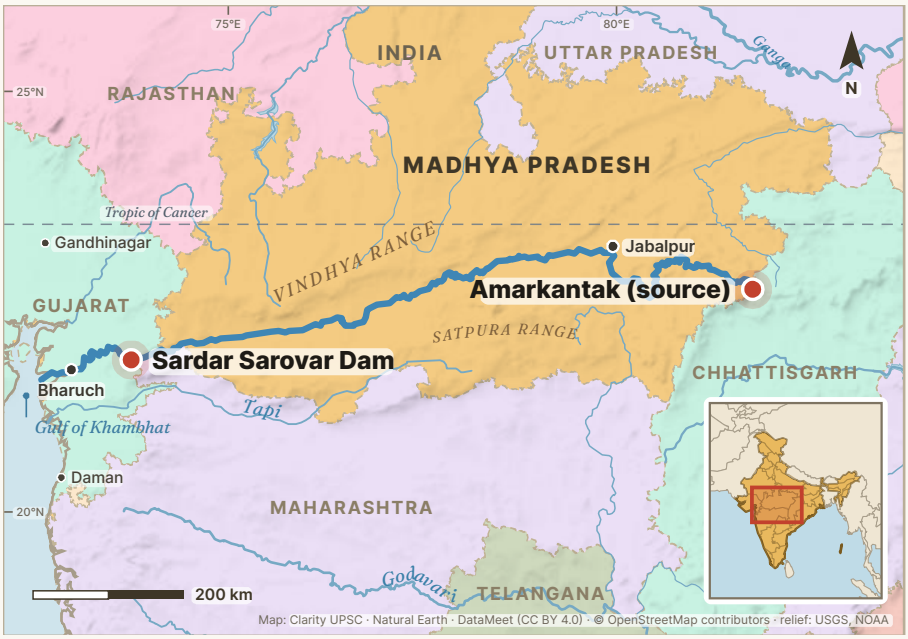
In news: In June 2026 Madhya Pradesh was working to raise the Kshipra's flow for the forthcoming Ujjain Simhastha and to fight its pollution. The Narmada–Kshipra link, which pumps Narmada water to the river, is central to the effort.

NEIGHBOURING STATE

- Rajasthan (near the Chambal confluence)

- A right-bank tributary of the Chambal; the Khan and Gambhir join it.
- Ujjain, one of the seven sacred Sapta Puri cities, hosts the Simhastha Kumbh on its ghats every 12 years.
- The Narmada–Kshipra link, opened in February 2014, pumps Narmada water to the river; it is part of the Narmada–Malwa project.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



154 Narmada River

Central India: Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat

River · May 2026

In news: In May 2026 the Narmada was in the news for projects that use its water for irrigation, power and tourism. These include the Sardar Sarovar Dam, completed in 2017, and the nearby Statue of Unity.

NEIGHBOURING STATES

Madhya Pradesh · Maharashtra · Gujarat

- A west-flowing peninsular river; its basin covers about 98,800 sq km.
- Forms the marble gorge at Bhedaghat and the Dhuandhar Falls near Jabalpur.
- Dams include Bargi, Indira Sagar, Omkareshwar, Maheshwar and Sardar Sarovar (about 1,450 MW).

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



155 Mahi River

Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat; ends in the Gulf of Khambhat

River · May 2026

In news: On 5 May 2026 a country boat carrying six people capsized in the Mahi River near Bhainsau village in Banswara district, Rajasthan. Four were rescued; two remained missing. The accident renewed calls for safety rules on inland waterways.

NEIGHBOURING STATES

Madhya Pradesh · Rajasthan · Gujarat

- About 580 km long; the Som and Anas are tributaries.
- The Mahi Bajaj Sagar and Kadana dams store water for irrigation and hydropower.
- A west-flowing river that crosses the Tropic of Cancer twice.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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Gandak River

River | Jun 2026 | Jul 2026

Nepal (Narayani), then north-western Bihar and the Uttar Pradesh–Bihar border



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 officials released 31 gharial hatchlings into the Gandak near Bagaha, Bihar; the river's gharial count had risen from about 54 in 2015 to 372 in 2026. In July 2026 heavy rain in Nepal pushed the Gandak two centimetres above its danger level at a Gopalganj gauge. The Valmikinagar Gandak Barrage recorded 221,000 cusecs one night and 183,900 cusecs the next noon. Bihar cancelled engineers' leave.

WHERE IT IS

In Nepal the Kali Gandaki and the Trishuli meet at Devghat to form the Narayani. The river enters India near Triveni and Valmikinagar as the Gandak, forms part of the Uttar Pradesh–Bihar boundary and joins the Ganga near Sonpur, opposite Patna.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Bihar | Uttar Pradesh | Nepal

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Gandak is a left-bank tributary of the Ganga; its Nepalese headwaters form the Sapta Gandaki system.
- The Kali Gandaki cuts a deep gorge between Dhaulagiri and Annapurna; the Kosi basin lies to the east and the Karnali–Ghaghara to the west.
- The 1959 India–Nepal Gandak Agreement led to the Valmikinagar barrage; its canals serve Nepal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
- The critically endangered gharial (Gavialis gangeticus) eats mainly fish; the Gandak, beside Valmiki and Chitwan, is one of its strongholds.

PRELIMS TRAP The Gandak and the Burhi Gandak are separate rivers; the Burhi Gandak follows a different course farther east in Bihar.

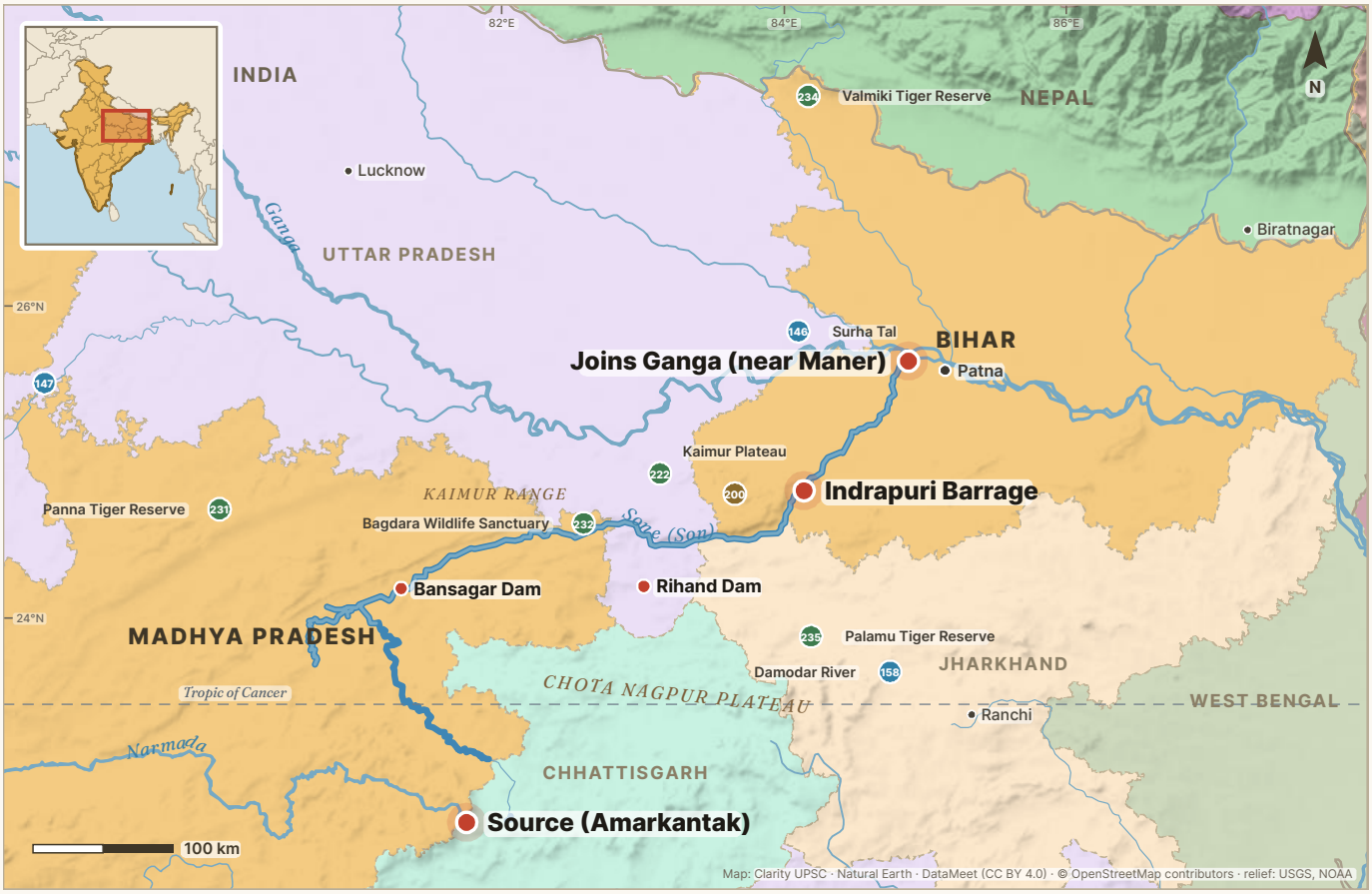
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River · Jul 2026

157 Sone River

Amarkantak highlands (Chhattisgarh–Madhya Pradesh) to Bihar; a right-bank tributary of the Ganga



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 Bihar and Jharkhand completed internal approvals to share the Sone's water, and the Union government proposed signing an agreement in August 2026. Of undivided Bihar's 7.75 million acre-feet share, Bihar would receive 5.75 MAF and Jharkhand 2 MAF.

WHERE IT IS

The Sone rises in the Amarkantak highlands of the Maikal range, close to the Narmada's source. The government's water-resources database places the source in Chhattisgarh; many reference books say Madhya Pradesh. The river flows north-west through Madhya Pradesh, turns east along the Kaimur Range, crosses Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, and joins the Ganga near Maner, west of Patna.

STATES ON ITS COURSE Chhattisgarh · Madhya Pradesh · Uttar Pradesh · Jharkhand · Bihar

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is a right-bank tributary of the Ganga; its tributaries include the Johila, Gopad, Rihand, Kanhar and North Koel.
- Bansagar Dam and Indrapuri Barrage are on the main Sone; Rihand Dam stands on its Rihand tributary.
- The 1973 Bansagar Agreement divided its water among Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and undivided Bihar; Jharkhand separated in November 2000.
- A British anicut at Dehri (1873–74) fed south Bihar's canals before the Indrapuri Barrage replaced it in 1968.

PRELIMS TRAP The Sone and the Narmada both rise near Amarkantak; the Narmada flows west to the Arabian Sea, the Sone north-east to the Ganga.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

River · May 2026

158 Damodar River

Jharkhand and West Bengal



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 the Damodar was in the news over flood management and the Damodar Valley Corporation's control of its waters; critics said siltation and unplanned dam releases still flood areas downstream.

WHERE IT IS

The Damodar rises in the Khamarpat hills of the Chota Nagpur Plateau in Jharkhand. It flows east for about 592 km into West Bengal and joins the Hooghly in Howrah district. Its basin is forested and rich in coal.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Jharkhand · West Bengal

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Called the 'Sorrow of Bengal' for its floods; the Damodar Valley Corporation (1948) was modelled on the USA's Tennessee Valley Authority.
- DVC dams: Tilaiya and Maithon on the Barakar, Konar on the Konar, and Panchet on the Damodar; the Durgapur Barrage lies downstream.
- Hilsa (Tenualosa ilisha) is anadromous: adults move from coastal waters into rivers to breed.

PRELIMS TRAP The Damodar is the 'Sorrow of Bengal'. The Kosi is the 'Sorrow of Bihar'.

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.

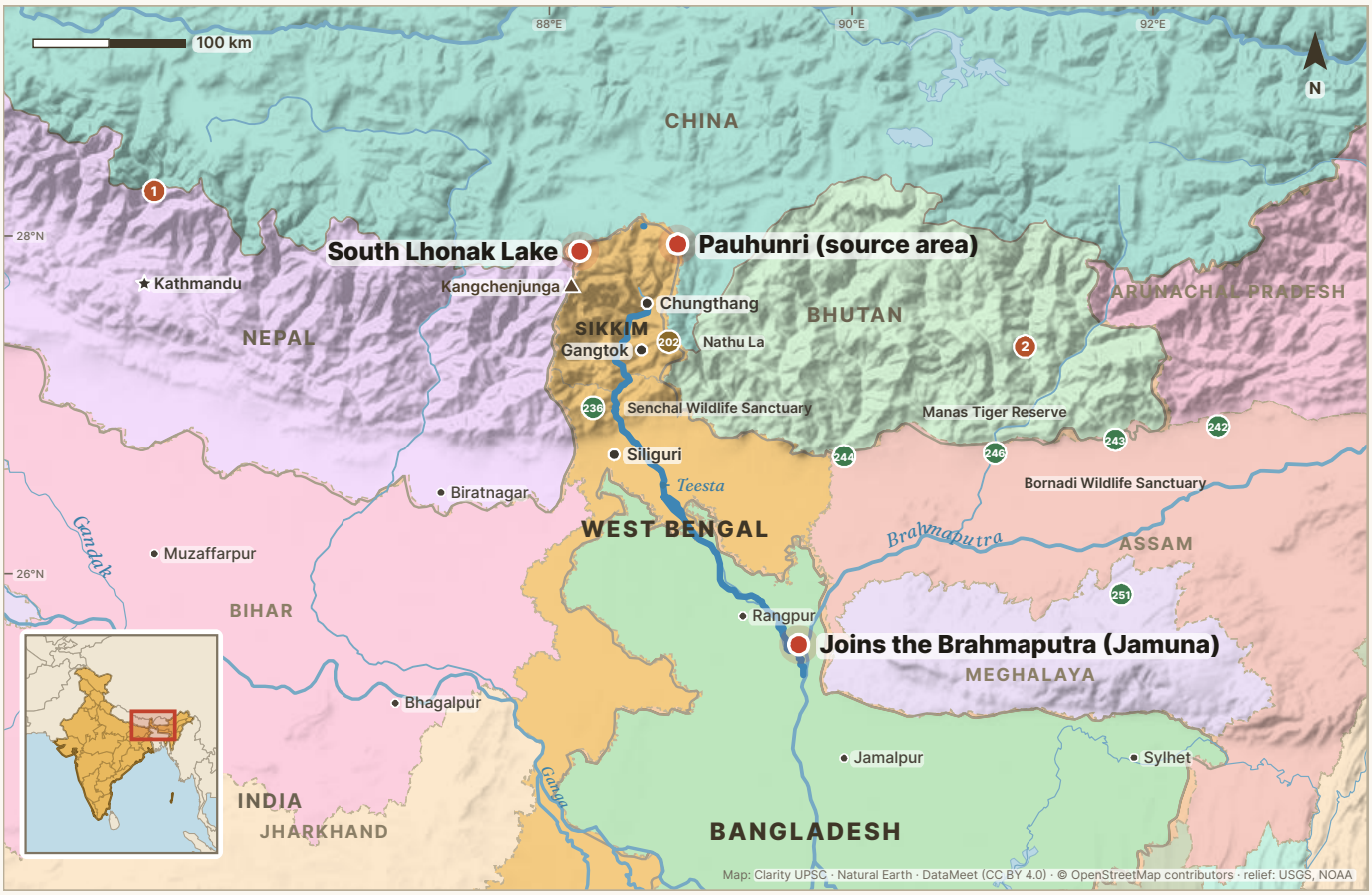
clarityupsc.com/daily-quiz

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River · May 2026

159 Teesta River

Sikkim and West Bengal (India) and Bangladesh



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 Bangladesh's new government said it wanted to restart talks with India on sharing the Teesta's waters. The issue has been pending for more than a decade. It affects farmers and ecosystems in both countries.

WHERE IT IS

The Teesta rises at the Teesta Khangtse glacier near Pauhunri peak in northern Sikkim (Mangan district), close to the Tibet border. It flows south through Sikkim and northern West Bengal into Bangladesh. There it joins the Brahmaputra, known locally as the Jamuna.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Sikkim · West Bengal · Bangladesh (downstream)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- About 414 km long; its main tributary, the Rangit (Rangeet), joins it at Tribeni near the Sikkim–West Bengal border.
- A 2011 draft gave India 42.5% and Bangladesh 37.5% of dry-season flow; West Bengal's opposition stalled it.
- In October 2023 a glacial lake outburst flood from South Lhonak Lake badly damaged the Teesta III dam.

PRELIMS TRAP The Teesta joins the Brahmaputra (Jamuna) in Bangladesh. The 1996 India–Bangladesh water treaty covers the Ganga at Farakka.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

River · Aug 2026

160 Dikhow River

Nagaland hills to Sivasagar district, Assam



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 the swollen Dikhow River flooded Nepali Khuti, a Gorkha dairy-farming village in Assam's Sivasagar district. Reports said floodwater overwhelmed homes within about an hour and affected around 200 families. The flood was part of wider monsoon flooding across Assam.

WHERE IT IS

The river rises in the Nagaland hills, where it is called the Dikhu. It leaves the hills near Naginimora, crosses the Assam plains past Simaluguri and Sivasagar, and joins the Brahmaputra at Dikhowmukh.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Nagaland · Assam

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A south-bank (left-bank) tributary of the Brahmaputra, joining it at Dikhowmukh.
- Steep Nagaland catchments send runoff quickly; the water slows and spreads on Assam's flat floodplain.
- High Brahmaputra levels can block drainage near the confluence and worsen local floods.
- The Dikhu rises in Nagaland's Zunheboto district; in Assam it flows past Sivasagar, which as Rangpur was the Ahom capital from 1699 to 1788.

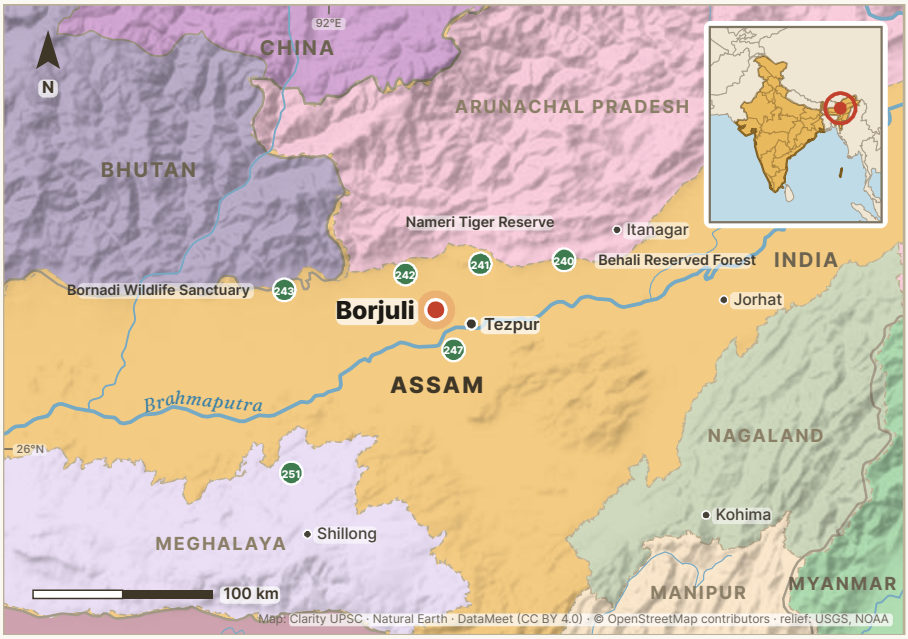
PRELIMS TRAP Dikhu (Nagaland) and Dikhow (Assam) are one river. Its published length varies, about 160 km or 236 km, depending on the source.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

161 Borjuli Wetland (Biodiversity Heritage Site)

Wetland | Jul 2026

Borjuli village, Sonitpur district, Assam (Brahmaputra floodplain)



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 Assam's State Biodiversity Board notified a 0.41-hectare wetland in Borjuli village, Sonitpur district, as a Biodiversity Heritage Site. The marsh holds a natural population of wild rice Oryza rufipogon, considered the ancestor of Asian cultivated rice.

WHERE IT IS

The Borjuli wetland sits on the Brahmaputra floodplain in Sonitpur district, Assam, on the river's north bank. It was traditionally used for grazing.

SURROUNDED BY Brahmaputra floodplain | Sonitpur district | Tezpur (district headquarters)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- States declare Biodiversity Heritage Sites under the Biological Diversity Act, in consultation with local communities.
- Oryza rufipogon carries genes for flood tolerance, pest resistance and salt resilience used in rice breeding.
- Encroachment, pesticide runoff and climate-driven floods threaten the site.

PRELIMS TRAP A Biodiversity Heritage Site is notified by a state under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002; a Ramsar site is listed under an international convention.

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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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River · Aug 2026

162 Dhansiri River

Nagaland to Golaghat district, Assam



WHY IN NEWS

On 7 August 2026 parts of Assam's Golaghat district flooded as the Dhansiri and Doyang rivers swelled. The Dhansiri crossed its danger level, affecting villages in Bokakhat, Golaghat and Khumtai. Officials partly linked the rise to four gates opened at the Doyang hydropower project in Nagaland.

WHERE IT IS

The Dhansiri rises near Laisang Peak in Nagaland and flows about 352 km, generally south to north, to join the Brahmaputra. It links Nagaland's hill catchments with Assam's plains and wetlands.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Nagaland · Assam

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its tributaries include the Doyang, Nambor, Doigrung and Kalioni.
- The Doyang tributary hosts a hydropower project in Nagaland, upstream of Golaghat.
- For part of its course it is the boundary between Assam's Karbi Anglong and Nagaland, with Dhansiri Reserved Forest on one bank and Intanki National Park on the other.

PRELIMS TRAP This is the Dhansiri (South), commonly called the Dhansiri; the North Dhansiri is a separate Brahmaputra tributary system.

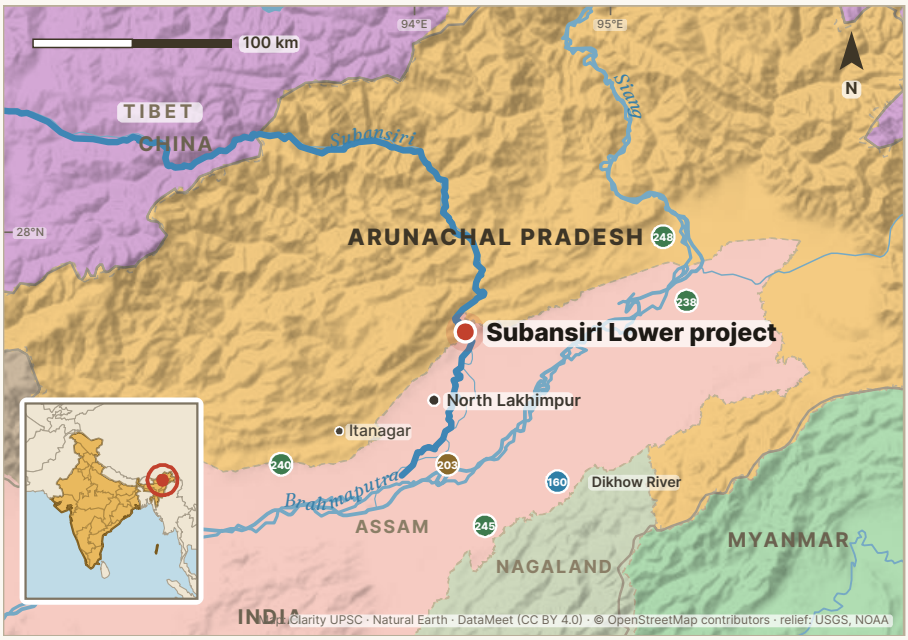
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River · Aug 2026

163 Subansiri River

Tibet (China) to Arunachal Pradesh and Assam



WHY IN NEWS

On 15 August 2026 residents in Arunachal Pradesh's Upper Subansiri district reported a sudden, forceful rise in the Subansiri, with floating timber, despite little local rain. No official cause was established.

WHERE IT IS

The Subansiri rises in the Tibetan mountains, enters Arunachal Pradesh and descends through deep Himalayan valleys, crossing Upper Subansiri district. It reaches the Assam plains and joins the Brahmaputra from the north.

NEIGHBOURING STATES

Tibet, China (upstream) · Arunachal Pradesh · Assam

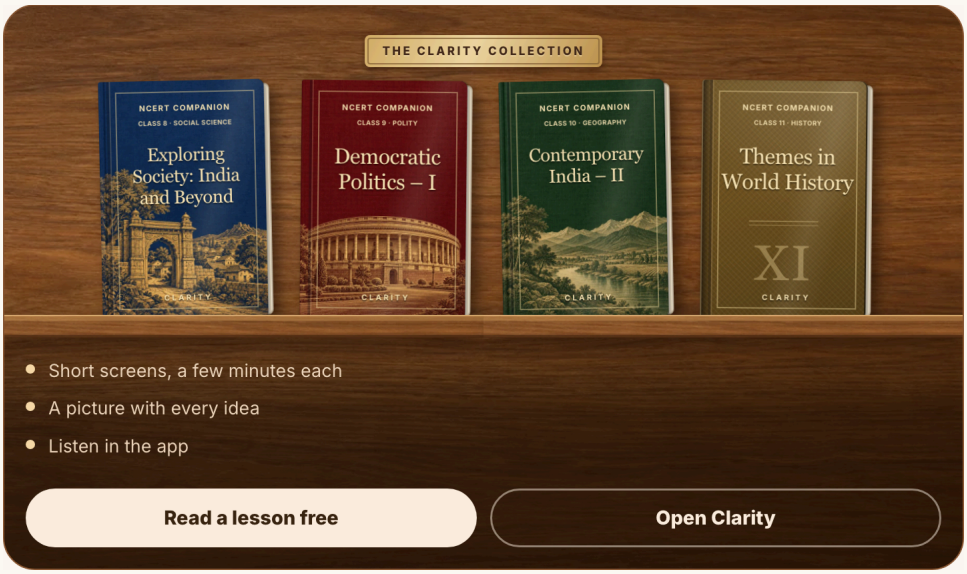
KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The 2,000 MW Subansiri Lower project lies near the Arunachal Pradesh–Assam boundary.
- Downstream exposure includes Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts in Assam.
- It is the Brahmaputra's largest tributary: about 518 km long, it drains about 32,640 sq km and brings nearly 8 per cent of the Brahmaputra's flow.

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Lake · Aug 2026

164 Glaw Lake

Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary, Lohit district, Arunachal Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

On 3 August 2026 India designated Glaw Lake in Arunachal Pradesh as its 101st Ramsar Site. It became the state's first wetland on the Ramsar list. The freshwater lake lies inside Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary and Tiger Reserve.

WHERE IT IS

Glaw Lake lies in Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh in the Eastern Himalaya, about 18–20 km from Wakro. Its catchment feeds the Kamlang, Lang and Lati rivers, which join the Lohit, an eastern tributary system of the Brahmaputra.

SURROUNDED BY Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary and Tiger Reserve · Wakro · Lohit River · Namdapha Tiger Reserve (wider landscape)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The lake covers about 82 ha at roughly 1,168 m and is fed by perennial mountain streams.
- Official information records more than 150 tree species and 49 orchid species in the site and its catchment.
- The Ramsar Convention was adopted at Ramsar, Iran, in 1971 and entered into force in 1975; it promotes the 'wise use' of wetlands.

PRELIMS TRAP Ramsar status is an international wetland commitment, separate from UNESCO World Heritage listing and from Indian protected-area law.

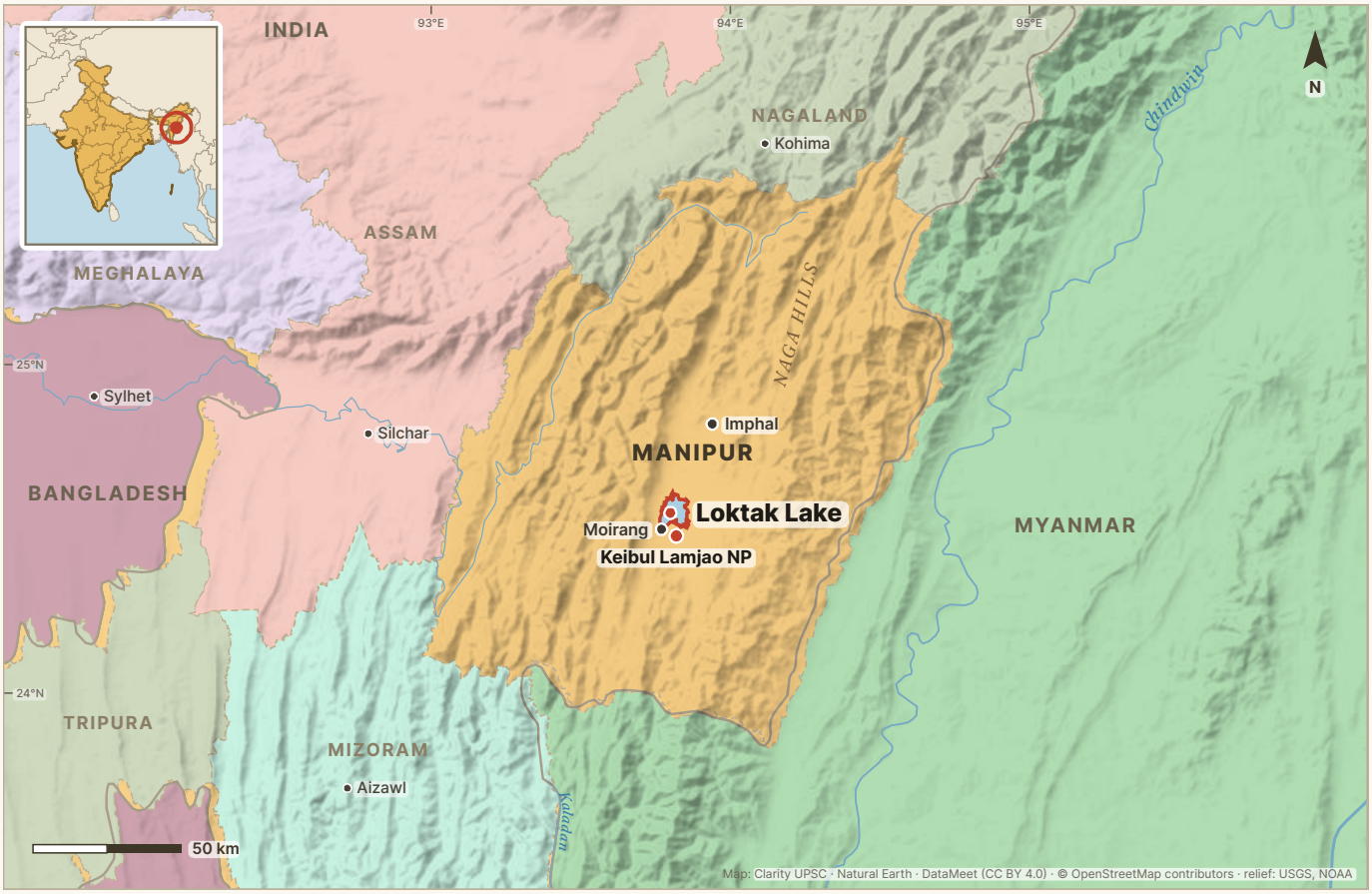
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165 Loktak Lake

Moirang basin, Manipur

Lake (Ramsar site) | May 2026



WHY IN NEWS

Reports in May 2026 highlighted severe pressure on Loktak Lake. People displaced by ethnic violence in Manipur have settled on its floating islands and turned to fishing. This added to older problems of silt, pollution and habitat loss.

WHERE IT IS

Loktak lies in the Moirang basin of the Manipur valley, south of Imphal. It covers about 287 sq km and is the largest freshwater lake in north-east India. Floating mats of soil and vegetation called phumdis cover much of it.

SURROUNDED BY Moirang town | Imphal (north) | Keibul Lamjao National Park (south) | Manipur valley

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Keibul Lamjao, the world's only floating national park, lies on its phumdis and shelters the endangered sangai (brow-antlered deer).
- The Ithai barrage of the 1980s kept water levels high all year, stopping phumdis from sinking and renewing.
- Placed on the Ramsar Montreux Record of threatened wetlands in 1993.
- Supports 132 plant and 54 fish species; over one-tenth of Manipur's people depend on it.

PRELIMS TRAP Loktak (Manipur) and Keoladeo (Rajasthan) are on the Montreux Record. Chilika (Odisha) was removed from it in 2002.

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166

Khawthlangtuipui (Karnaphuli) River

River · Jul 2026

Southern Mizoram, flowing into Bangladesh



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 a week of heavy rain made the Khawthlangtuipui River overflow in Lunglei district, southern Mizoram. More than 80 families were evacuated from Tlabung and Tipperaghat, and landslides blocked National Highway 54. No deaths had been reported.

WHERE IT IS

The river rises in the western Mizo Hills and flows south through Mizoram; about 128 km of its 270-km course lies in the state. In Bangladesh it is called the Karnaphuli; it crosses the Chittagong Hill Tracts and enters the Bay of Bengal near Chattogram.

SURROUNDED BY Lunglei district (Mizoram) · Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bangladesh) · Bay of Bengal

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its Mizo name means 'western river'; its tributaries include the Tuichawng, Phairuang and Kawrpui.
- Bangladesh's Kaptai Dam (1962, Rangamati district) on the Karnaphuli is the country's only hydroelectric station, with 230 MW capacity.
- Kaptai Lake, Bangladesh's largest human-made lake, displaced about 100,000 people, including many Chakma families; some later moved to India.
- Its estuary lies near Chattogram, Bangladesh's busiest seaport.

PRELIMS TRAP Khawthlangtuipui (in Mizoram) and Karnaphuli (in Bangladesh) are names of the same river, which ends in the Bay of Bengal near Chattogram.

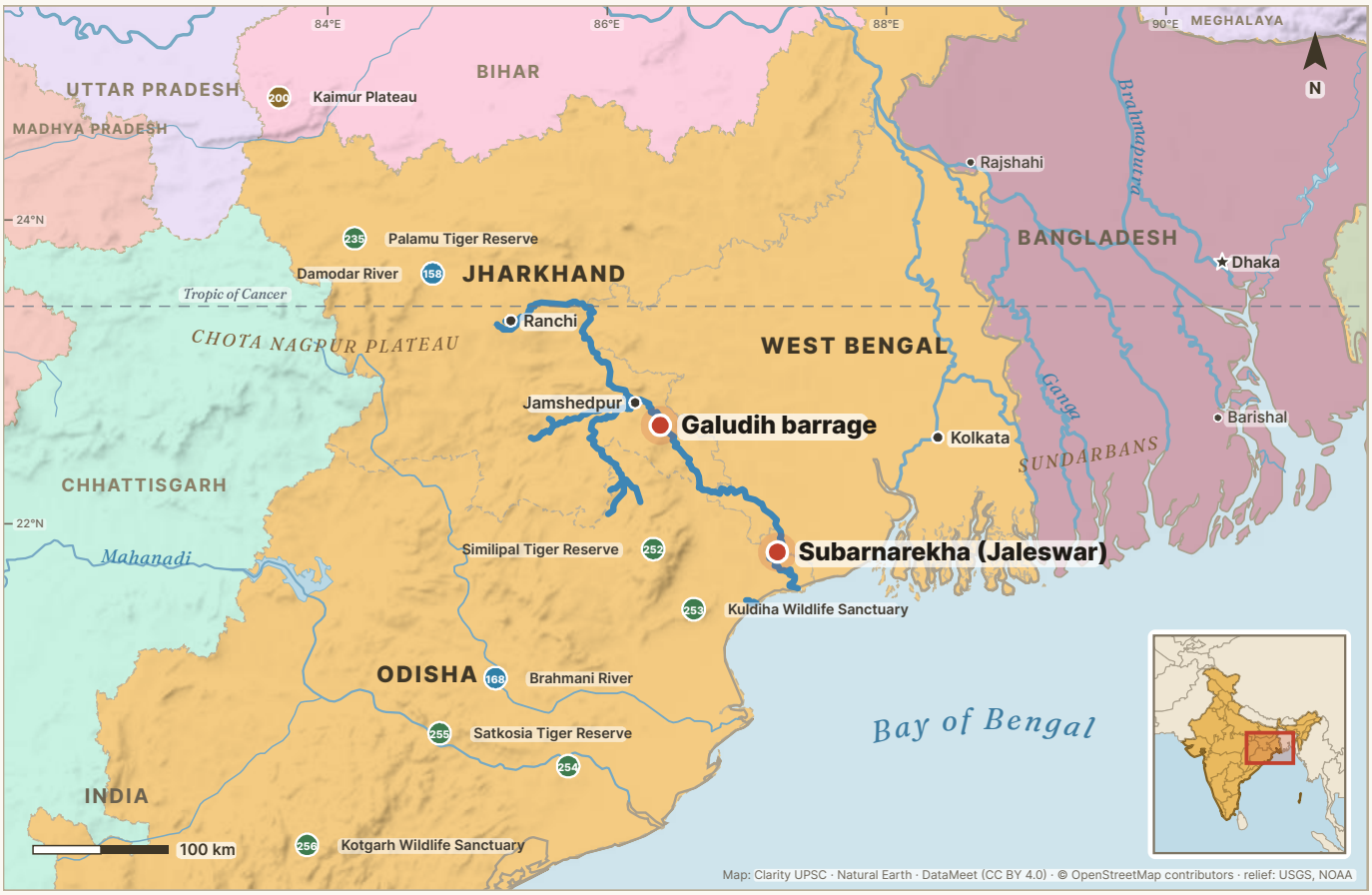
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River · Aug 2026

167 Subarnarekha River

Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 heavy rain in Jharkhand and water released from Galudih barrage pushed the Subarnarekha above its danger level in Odisha. On 20 August the river stood at 11.80 m at Rajghat in Balasore district, against a 10.36 m danger mark; about 2.8 lakh people were affected.

WHERE IT IS

The Subarnarekha rises near Nagri village in Ranchi district, Jharkhand, at about 600 m. It flows about 395 km through Jharkhand, West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur and Odisha's Balasore district. It joins the Bay of Bengal near Talsari.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Jharkhand · West Bengal · Odisha

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Hundru Falls, about 98 m high, lies on the Subarnarekha's upper course near Ranchi.
- Tributaries include the Kharkai, Kanchi, Karkari and Dulang; the Kharkai joins at Sonari (Domuhani) in Jamshedpur.
- Chandil Dam and, downstream, Galudih barrage belong to the Subarnarekha Multipurpose Project for irrigation, power and water supply.
- The basin covers about 18,951 sq km, mostly in Jharkhand; water released at Galudih crosses West Bengal before reaching Odisha.

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River · Jun 2026

168 Brahmani River

Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha; delta at Dhamra on the Bay of Bengal



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 researchers from Auburn University, Nalanda University and other institutions reported microplastics building up in Brahmani River sediments in Odisha. The particles carry toxic metals such as chromium, arsenic, cadmium and lead towards the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary.

WHERE IT IS

The Brahmani is an east-flowing river formed by the South Koel and Sankh near Rourkela. It runs about 799 km through Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, and joins the Baitarani to form a delta near Dhamra on the Bay of Bengal.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Jharkhand · Chhattisgarh · Odisha

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Drains about 39,033 sq km; its major tributaries are the Sankh, Tikra and Karo.
- Its delta holds Bhitarkanika, India's second-largest mangrove ecosystem, home to saltwater crocodiles and Olive Ridley turtles.
- Nylon (polyamide) fibres were the most common microplastic; the study gives the river's first baseline.

PRELIMS TRAP The Brahmani is formed by the South Koel and Sankh at Rourkela; the North Koel is a different river that joins the Son.

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169 Ambazari Lake

South-western edge of Nagpur, Maharashtra

Lake · May 2026

In news: In May 2026 the Nagpur Municipal Corporation began removing water hyacinth from Ambazari Lake with harvester machines. The aim was to clear the invasive weed before the monsoon. The machines were bought with District Mineral Foundation funds.

SURROUNDED BY Nagpur city · Nag River (outflow) · Ambazari garden

- An older Bhonsle-era tank, it was developed around 1870–72, under British rule, as Nagpur's drinking-water reservoir; amba (mango) trees gave its name.
- Water hyacinth (Eichhornia crassipes) blocks sunlight, cuts oxygen and breeds mosquitoes.

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170 Ulhas River

Raigad, Pune and Thane districts, Maharashtra

River · Jul 2026

In news: On 7 July 2026 heavy rain pushed the Ulhas River above its danger mark at Badlapur and Ambernath in Maharashtra. Its tributary, the Kalu, crossed the warning level at Titwala. About 250 residents were evacuated.

SURROUNDED BY Western Ghats · Mumbai Metropolitan Region · Vasai Creek · Thane Creek · Arabian Sea

- Its main tributary, the Kalu, joins it near Kalyan.
- The river is vital for the water supply of Mumbai and its surrounding areas.
- It separates Salsette Island, on which Mumbai and Thane stand, from the mainland; the Barvi is another tributary.

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171 Lonar Lake

Lake (impact crater) · Jun 2026

Buldhana district, Maharashtra (Deccan Plateau)



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 environmentalists reported that Lonar Lake's water had risen about 15–20 feet since September 2025, partly submerging ancient temples. The Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court ordered a public interest litigation to examine the cause, which remains unknown.

WHERE IT IS

Lonar Lake lies in Buldhana district of Maharashtra, on the Deccan Plateau. It fills a crater left by a meteorite impact in basalt rock. The impact is usually dated to about 50,000 years ago; one argon dating study put it at about 570,000 years.

SURROUNDED BY Lonar town · Kamalja Devi and Shiva temples · Deccan Plateau basalt · Buldhana district, Maharashtra

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- One of the world's few known impact craters in basalt; its water is saline and alkaline.
- Four perennial springs feed the lake; fresh water is diluting its salinity, and fish have appeared for the first time.
- In 2020 the lake briefly turned pink because of salt-loving microbes.
- A national geo-heritage site and a Ramsar wetland; the Kamalja Devi Temple and Deepstambh stand partly underwater.

PRELIMS TRAP Lonar Lake was formed by a meteorite impact; Lake Laach in Germany and Taal Lake in the Philippines fill volcanic calderas.

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172 Powai Lake

Suburban Mumbai, beside IIT Bombay, Maharashtra

Lake (reservoir) · Jun 2026

In news: In mid-June 2026 the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation decided to appoint AECOM Asia, at about ₹1.85 crore, to plan the redevelopment of the 1.8-km Powai Lake promenade. Sewage diversion and a new treatment plant are also planned.

SURROUNDED BY

- IIT Bombay
- Powai suburb
- Adi Shankaracharya Marg promenade
- Sanjay Gandhi National Park (north)

- Built in the late 19th century to supply drinking water to Mumbai.
- Sewage has fed thick mats of water hyacinth; the lake still supports marsh crocodiles and birds.
- Environmentalists hope it could become a Ramsar site once sewage inflow stops.

Read the full story
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173 Vihar Lake

Sanjay Gandhi National Park, north Mumbai, Maharashtra

Lake · Jul 2026

In news: On the night of 7 July 2026 Vihar Lake overflowed into the Mithi River, the first of Mumbai's seven supply reservoirs to fill that monsoon. Tulsi Lake overflowed hours later. The event drew attention to the lake's role in the city's water system.

SURROUNDED BY

- Sanjay Gandhi National Park
- Tulsi Lake
- Powai Lake
- Mithi River

- Built between 1856 and 1860, it was Mumbai's first piped water supply scheme; the dam was raised in 1872.
- It supplies about 3% of Mumbai's drinking water through a filtration plant at Bhandup.
- Mugger (marsh) crocodiles live in its waters.

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River · Jun 2026

174 Indrayani River

Pune district, Maharashtra; tributary of the Bhima



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 residents of Alandi near Pune reported thick foam and dead fish in the Indrayani River. Viral images prompted calls for urgent action against untreated sewage and industrial effluents.

WHERE IT IS

The Indrayani rises at Kurvande village near Lonavala in Maharashtra and flows east past Alandi to join the Bhima at Tulapur, north-east of Pune. It belongs to the Krishna basin.

SURROUNDED BY Lonavala (source) · Talegaon and Pimpri-Chinchwad · Alandi · Bhima River (confluence at Tulapur)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Sacred to followers of Sant Tukaram and Sant Dnyaneshwar, who lived on its banks.
- Lonavala, Talegaon and Pimpri-Chinchwad discharge large volumes of wastewater into it.
- A ₹526-crore rejuvenation project approved in 2025 has moved slowly.

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Dam Jul 2026

175 Khadakwasla Dam

Mutha River, about 20 km south-west of Pune, Maharashtra



WHY IN NEWS

In early July 2026 three days of heavy rain filled Pune's reservoirs, and Khadakwasla Dam released water into the Mutha River. Discharge reached 27,203 cusecs on 8 July. Low-lying parts of Sinhagad Road flooded, and five families were moved to safety.

WHERE IT IS

Khadakwasla Dam stands on the Mutha River about 20 km south-west of central Pune, Maharashtra. It works with the upstream Panshet, Varasgaon and Temghar reservoirs. The Mutha joins the Mula in Pune, and the combined Mula–Mutha flows into the Bhima.

SURROUNDED BY Panshet Dam (Ambi River) · Varasgaon Dam (Mose River) · Temghar Dam · Pune city

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is a composite earth-and-masonry dam about 32.9 m high, built mainly for irrigation and water supply; its reservoir was once called Lake Fife.
- On 12 July 1961 the upstream Panshet Dam failed; the surge breached Khadakwasla, and floodwater devastated Pune.
- The Mutha joins the Mula; the Mula–Mutha joins the Bhima, a major tributary of the Krishna.
- A cusec is one cubic foot of water per second; 27,203 cusecs equals about 770 cubic metres each second.

PRELIMS TRAP Khadakwasla is on the Mutha near Pune; Chaskaman is a separate dam on the Bhima River.

Read the full story
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River · Aug 2026

176 Bhima River and Ujani Dam

Rises at Bhimashankar (Maharashtra); impounded at Ujani (Solapur); joins the Krishna near Raichur (Karnataka)



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 the Bombay Natural History Society reported that about 5,116 kg of invasive suckermouth catfish had been removed from Ujani reservoir, on the Bhima, in May.

WHERE IT IS

The Bhima rises near Bhimashankar in Maharashtra's Western Ghats and flows south-east to join the Krishna near Raichur, Karnataka. Ujani Dam in Solapur district impounds it, with backwaters reaching Bhigwan and Indapur in Pune district. Its catchment spans Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telangana.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Maharashtra · Karnataka · Telangana

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The Bhima, a left-bank Krishna tributary, is about 861 km long with a 70,614 sq km catchment (Central Water Commission).
- Suckermouth catfish (family Loricariidae) come from Central and South America and spread through aquarium releases; some burrow into riverbanks.
- Its tributaries include the Mula, Mutha, Nira, Ghod, Man and Sina.
- Ujani's invasive fish include suckermouth catfish, tilapia and African catfish; 1.22 crore carp fingerlings were released in February 2026.

PRELIMS TRAP The Bhima is the Krishna's longest tributary, but the Tungabhadra has the larger catchment. Ujani Dam is on the Bhima, not the Krishna.

Read the full story
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River · Jul 2026

177 Krishna River

Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 a week-long dry spell reduced inflows into the upper Krishna system in Maharashtra and Karnataka. Authorities withheld irrigation releases while they assessed the water available.

WHERE IT IS

The Krishna rises near Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra's Western Ghats at about 1,337 m. It flows about 1,400 km east through Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and enters the Bay of Bengal near Hamsaladeevi.

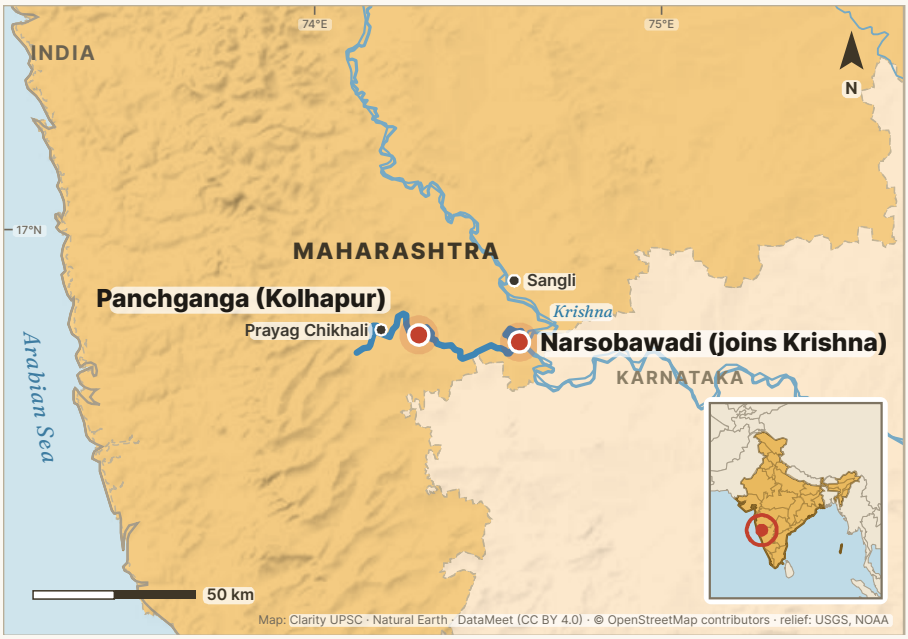
NEIGHBOURING STATES Maharashtra · Karnataka · Telangana · Andhra Pradesh

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its basin of about 258,948 sq km covers nearly 8% of India.
- Its tributaries include the Koyna, Panchganga, Ghataprabha, Malaprabha, Bhima, Tungabhadra, Musi and Munneru.
- Major projects include Almatti, Narayanpur, Srisailam, Nagarjuna Sagar and the Prakasam Barrage.
- The first Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (1969) gave an award notified in 1976; a second tribunal was formed in April 2004.

PRELIMS TRAP The Bhima and the Tungabhadra are Krishna tributaries; the Manjira and the Pranhita belong to the Godavari system.

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178 Panchganga River

Kolhapur district, south-western Maharashtra

River · Jul 2026

In news: In July 2026 heavy monsoon rain pushed the Panchganga River close to its danger mark. Authorities issued alerts in Kolhapur and nearby districts, and residents demanded action on pollution and siltation.

SURROUNDED BY

Sahyadri (Western Ghats) · Kolhapur city · Krishna River

- It forms from four visible streams, the Kasari, Kumbhi, Tulsi and Bhogawati, and a fifth subterranean stream believed to be the Saraswati.
- Temples on its banks include the Narsobawadi shrine of Shri Dattatreya and the Mahalaxmi temple of Kolhapur.
- Untreated sewage and siltation reduce its carrying capacity and worsen floods.

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179 Himayat Sagar

About 20 km south-west of Hyderabad, Telangana

Reservoir · Jun 2026

In news: In late June 2026 Hyderabad's water board opened several floodgates of Himayat Sagar after heavy rain in its catchment, releasing about 1,000 cusecs to prevent overtopping. Alerts went out to low-lying areas downstream.

SURROUNDED BY Hyderabad (north-east)

Osman Sagar (twin lake) · Esi River · Musi River basin

- Built 1920–1927 by the seventh Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, after the devastating Musi flood of 1908.
- Named after the Nizam's son Himayat Ali Khan; siltation has cut storage from about 4.25 to 2.97 Tmc ft.
- With Osman Sagar (Gandipet), it protects Hyderabad from floods and supplies drinking water.

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180 Kolleru Lake

Between the Krishna and Godavari deltas, Andhra Pradesh

Lake | Feb 2026 | Mar 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. In July 2026 the Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee sought Andhra Pradesh's response to alleged fresh encroachments, illegal fish ponds and pollution. State officials disputed parts of the allegations and described some reported work as desilting.

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.

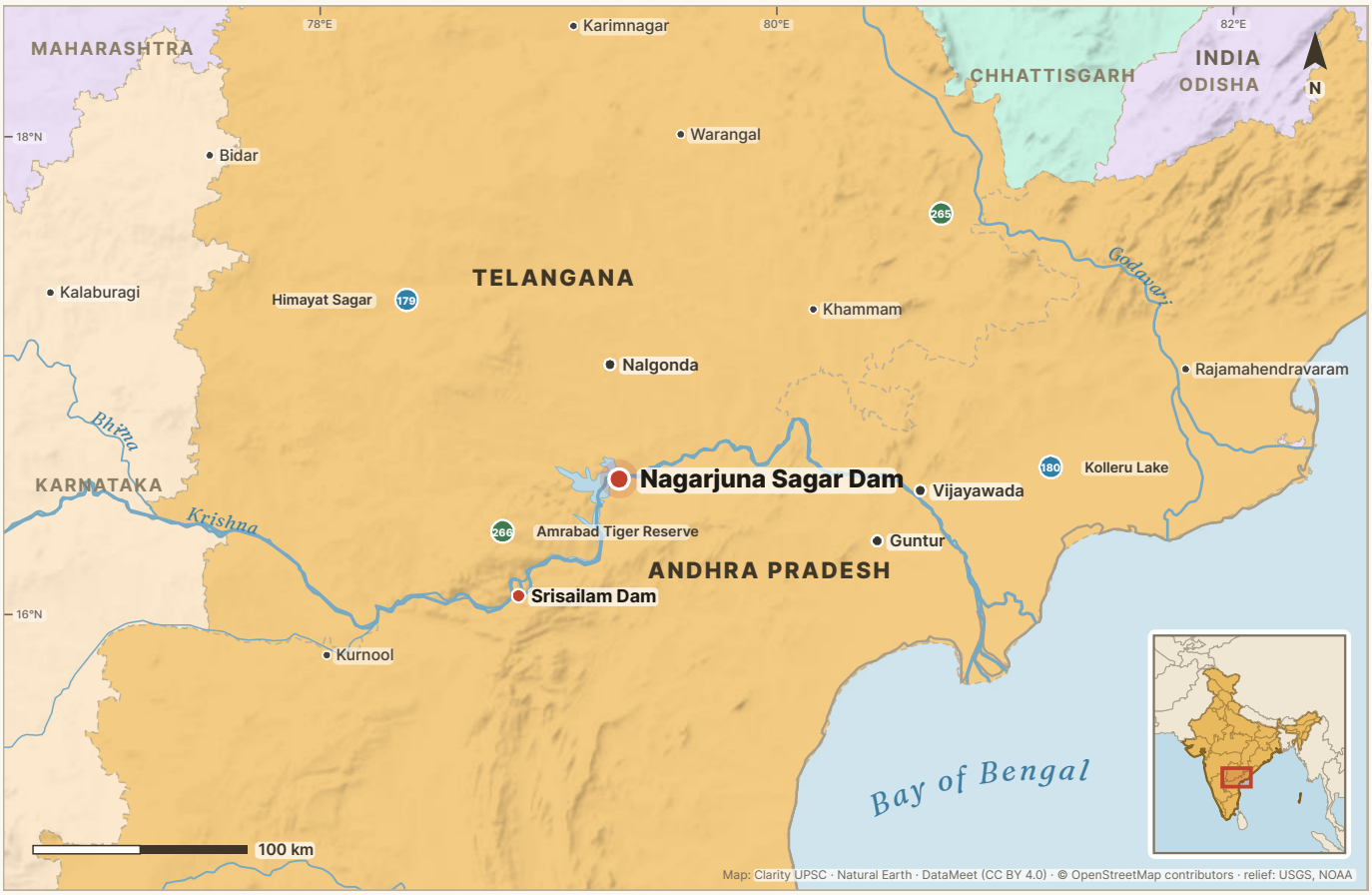
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Dam · Aug 2026

181 Nagarjuna Sagar Dam

Krishna River, on the Telangana–Andhra Pradesh border



WHY IN NEWS

On 4 August 2026 Nagarjuna Sagar marked 59 years since Prime Minister Indira Gandhi released water into its right canal in 1967. Jawaharlal Nehru had laid the project's foundation in December 1955, and major construction ran from 1956 to 1967.

WHERE IT IS

The dam stands across the Krishna River between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, beside Nalgonda district and the Palnadu side of the river. Its reservoir spreads over about 285 sq km at full level.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Telangana · Andhra Pradesh

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Official agencies call it the world's highest and largest masonry dam: about 1,450 m long and 125 m high, with 26 crest gates.
- The right canal is the Jawahar Canal; the left is the Lal Bahadur Shastri Canal.
- Named after Nagarjunakonda, a Buddhist centre; its relics were moved to an island museum before submergence.
- Installed hydropower capacity is commonly stated near 960 MW, including reversible pump-turbine units.

PRELIMS TRAP Its 'world's largest' superlative applies to masonry dams only; concrete and earth dams are compared separately.

Read the full story
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River · Jun 2026

182 Pennar (Penneru) River

Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh; flows to the Bay of Bengal



WHY IN NEWS

In early June 2026 the normally dry Pennar River began to flow before the south-west monsoon arrived. Local reports linked the rise to isolated pre-monsoon showers in its catchment. The flow reportedly filled the Dharmavaram reservoir in drought-prone Rayalaseema.

WHERE IT IS

The Pennar rises in the Nandi Hills of Karnataka and flows about 597 km east through Andhra Pradesh to the Bay of Bengal. Its basin of about 55,000 sq km covers the semi-arid Rayalaseema region.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Karnataka · Andhra Pradesh

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Also called the Penneru or Pinakini; an east-flowing river of peninsular India.
- Tributaries include the Jayamangali, Kunderu, Sagileru, Chitravathi, Papagni and Cheyyeru.
- Low rainfall, hard rocks and heavy groundwater use keep it dry outside the monsoon months.

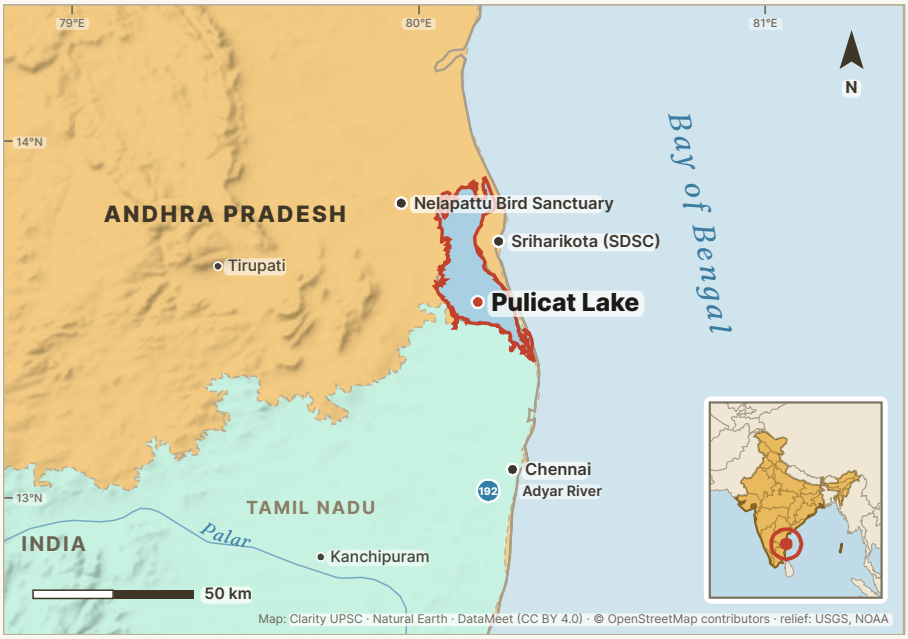
PRELIMS TRAP The Pennar (Karnataka–Andhra Pradesh) flows east to the Bay of Bengal; the Periyar, Kerala's longest river, flows west to the Arabian Sea.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Lagoon | May 2026

183 Pulicat Lake

Andhra Pradesh–Tamil Nadu border, Coromandel coast



WHY IN NEWS

On 21 May 2026 environmentalists and birdwatchers highlighted Pulicat Lake as migratory birds returned in large numbers. Local authorities discussed eco-tourism plans for the lagoon.

WHERE IT IS

Pulicat is a brackish lagoon on the border of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, north of Chennai. The barrier island of Sriharikota separates it from the Bay of Bengal. Narrow channels at either end of Sriharikota let sea water in and out.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Andhra Pradesh | Tamil Nadu

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- India's second-largest brackish-water lagoon after Chilika; its water surface swings between about 250 and 450 sq km with the tides.
- Sriharikota houses the Satish Dhawan Space Centre.
- Flamingos, spot-billed pelicans and painted storks winter here; pelicans link it to Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary.

PRELIMS TRAP Chilika (Odisha) is India's largest brackish lagoon and Pulicat (AP–TN) the second. Chilika is a Ramsar site; Pulicat was not on India's list of 103 Ramsar sites in October 2026.

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River · Jul 2026

184 Malaprabha River

Northern Karnataka; tributary of the Krishna



WHY IN NEWS

In early July 2026 reports said the Malaprabha River in Karnataka had dried up. Farmers and towns such as Dharwad faced shortages, and water tankers were deployed. Weak rainfall, over-extraction and low storage in the Renukasagar dam were blamed.

WHERE IT IS

The Malaprabha rises near Kanakumbi in Belagavi (Belgaum) district, in the Western Ghats at about 792 m. It flows east for about 300 km through Karnataka and joins the Krishna at Kudala Sangama.

SURROUNDED BY Western Ghats (source) · Belagavi district · Dharwad (water supply) · Bagalkot district (heritage sites) · Krishna River (confluence)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Catchment about 11,500 sq km; sub-tributaries include the Bennihalla, Hirehalla and Tuparihalla.
- The Renukasagar (Naviluteertha) Dam on the river supplies towns such as Dharwad.
- Chalukya-era temple sites Aihole, Pattadakal and Badami lie in its valley.

PRELIMS TRAP The Malaprabha and Ghataprabha are both Krishna tributaries in north Karnataka; Aihole and Pattadakal stand on the Malaprabha.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



185 Tungabhadra Dam

On the Tungabhadra River near Hosapete (Hospet), Karnataka

Dam · May 2026

In news: In May 2026 debates on water-sharing and dam safety brought the Tungabhadra Dam into focus. The dam supplies irrigation, power and drinking water to Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

NEIGHBOURING STATE: Andhra Pradesh

- Foundation stones were laid in February 1945; the dam was largely complete by 1953, and its reservoir covers 378 sq km when full.
- About 49 m high and 2.4 km long; silt has cut its storage from about 133 TMC ft to about 100 TMC ft.
- Canals irrigate parts of Karnataka and Rayalaseema; a hydel plant of about 127 MW runs here.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



186 Ulsoor (Halasuru) Lake

Central Bengaluru, Karnataka

Lake · May 2026

In news: In May 2026 Bengaluru authorities drained Ulsoor Lake for its first full desilting since 2001–02. Workers are removing up to a metre of silt, debris and idols. The ₹4 crore project is funded by the National Disaster Mitigation Fund.

SURROUNDED BY: Halasuru neighbourhood · MG Road area · Central Bengaluru

- Built in the 19th century by Commissioner Lewin Bentham Bowring on the site of an older tank.
- Sewage, idols and encroachment caused eutrophication and loss of depth.
- Desilting aims to raise water-holding capacity and cut flood risk nearby.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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187 Mekedatu

Proposed reservoir · May 2026

Cauvery River gorge, Bengaluru South (formerly Ramanagara) district, Karnataka, near the Tamil Nadu border



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 the Supreme Court dismissed Tamil Nadu's review petition against Karnataka's proposed Mekedatu balancing reservoir on the Cauvery. The court called it premature because regulators had not yet examined the project report. Karnataka said it would submit a revised Detailed Project Report.

WHERE IT IS

Mekedatu ('goat's leap') is a narrow gorge on the Cauvery in Karnataka's Bengaluru South district (formerly Ramanagara), close to the Tamil Nadu border. The site lies within the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, south of Bengaluru.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Karnataka · Tamil Nadu

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Planned storage of about 67 tmc ft; about 4.75 tmc ft of drinking water a year for Bengaluru and about 400 MW of power.
- Would submerge about 7,800 acres of sanctuary forest and 4,600 acres of reserve forest.
- The Cauvery Water Management Authority and Regulation Committee must examine it under the 2018 Cauvery verdict.
- Tamil Nadu fears lower flows to the Cauvery delta.

PRELIMS TRAP Mekedatu is on the Cauvery in Karnataka near the border. Mettur (Stanley Reservoir) is downstream in Tamil Nadu; Krishna Raja Sagar is upstream near Mysuru.

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River · Jun 2026

188 Periyar River

Kerala; rises in the Western Ghats near the Tamil Nadu border, flows to the Arabian Sea



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 scientists described a new fish, Eechathalakenda incognita, from the upper Periyar in Periyar Tiger Reserve. Later that month the Kerala High Court called for a unified authority to keep the river clean, citing pollution and fragmented management.

WHERE IT IS

The Periyar rises in the Sivagiri Hills of the Western Ghats near the Tamil Nadu border. It flows north through Periyar Tiger Reserve and Periyar Lake, then west past Kalady to Vembanad Lake and the Arabian Sea north of Kochi.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Kerala | Tamil Nadu (source area)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Kerala's longest river at about 244 km, called the 'lifeline of Kerala'.
- Idukki, one of India's largest arch dams, is on the Periyar; a dam built in 1895 created Periyar Lake.
- About a quarter of Kerala's industries stand on its banks, a major source of pollution.
- The new fish is known only from Periyar Tiger Reserve; its relative E. ophicephala lives in the Pamba.

PRELIMS TRAP Mullaperiyar Dam stands in Kerala on the Periyar but is operated by Tamil Nadu, which diverts its water east to the Vaigai basin.

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189

Vembanad Lake

Lake (Ramsar site) | May 2026

Central Kerala coast, between Kochi and Alappuzha



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 the Kerala High Court directed authorities to regulate houseboats on Vembanad Lake after pollution complaints. Environmentalists said the crisis also stems from decades of unplanned development, the Thanneermukkom barrage and poor waste management.

WHERE IT IS

Vembanad stretches about 84 km along the central Kerala coast, separated from the Arabian Sea by a sandbar. Six major rivers, including the Pamba, Meenachil, Muvattupuzha and Periyar, feed it. Its backwaters irrigate the Kuttanad rice bowl.

SURROUNDED BY Alappuzha district | Kottayam district | Ernakulam district (Kochi) | Kuttanad (south) | Arabian Sea (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- India's longest lake; formed when river silt built a sandbar parallel to the Arabian Sea.
- The Thanneermukkom barrage (1976) keeps out seawater for year-round rice farming but reduced tidal flushing.
- Over 170 bird species, including spot-billed pelicans; mangroves such as Avicennia officinalis line its shores.
- Part of the Vembanad–Kol wetland, a Ramsar site since 2002.

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Dam · Aug 2026

190 Mullaperiyar Dam

Periyar river system, Idukki district, Kerala



WHY IN NEWS

Tamil Nadu's revised 2026–27 budget promised to pursue a higher water level at Mullaperiyar Dam. On 5 August 2026 Kerala protested, saying safety must come first, and opposed storage beyond the Supreme Court-permitted 142 feet. Both States explored talks, possibly between their Chief Ministers.

WHERE IT IS

Mullaperiyar is a masonry gravity dam on the Periyar river system in Kerala's Idukki district. It diverts water east across the Western Ghats into Tamil Nadu's Vaigai basin for irrigation, drinking water and power.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Tamil Nadu

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Built under the Periyar Lake Lease Agreement of 29 October 1886 between Travancore and British India; completed in 1895.
- It stands in Kerala but is owned, operated and maintained by Tamil Nadu.
- The Supreme Court allowed storage up to 142 feet in 2006; in 2014 it struck down Kerala's law blocking this and created a Supervisory Committee.
- In April 2022 the Court gave that committee National Dam Safety Authority powers under the Dam Safety Act, 2021.

PRELIMS TRAP Mullaperiyar stands in Kerala but is run by Tamil Nadu, and its water is diverted east to the Vaigai basin.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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River · Aug 2026

191 Pamba River

Idukki and Pathanamthitta districts to Kuttanad, Kerala



WHY IN NEWS

In early August 2026 heavy monsoon rain made the Pamba overflow in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district. The Central Water Commission reported a severe flood situation at Malakkara, and floodwater entered roads and settlements.

WHERE IT IS

The Pamba rises around the Peerumedu plateau of Idukki in the Western Ghats. It flows west past Ranni, Kozhencherry, Aranmula and Chengannur into low-lying Kuttanad, and its lower branches drain into Vembanad Lake.

SURROUNDED BY Western Ghats · Pathanamthitta district · Kuttanad · Vembanad Lake

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- At about 176 km, it is Kerala's third-longest river after the Periyar and the Bharathapuzha.
- The Pamba and Kakki reservoirs feed the Sabarigiri hydroelectric system; pilgrims gather at Pamba before climbing to Sabarimala.
- A CWC 'severe' flood means water above the danger level; 'extreme' means reaching the highest recorded flood level.
- Parts of Kuttanad lie near or below mean sea level, so high river levels flood farms and homes.

PRELIMS TRAP The Manimala and the Achankovil are separate rivers whose lower channels join the Pamba–Kuttanad network.

Read the full story
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192 Adyar River

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

River · Aug 2026

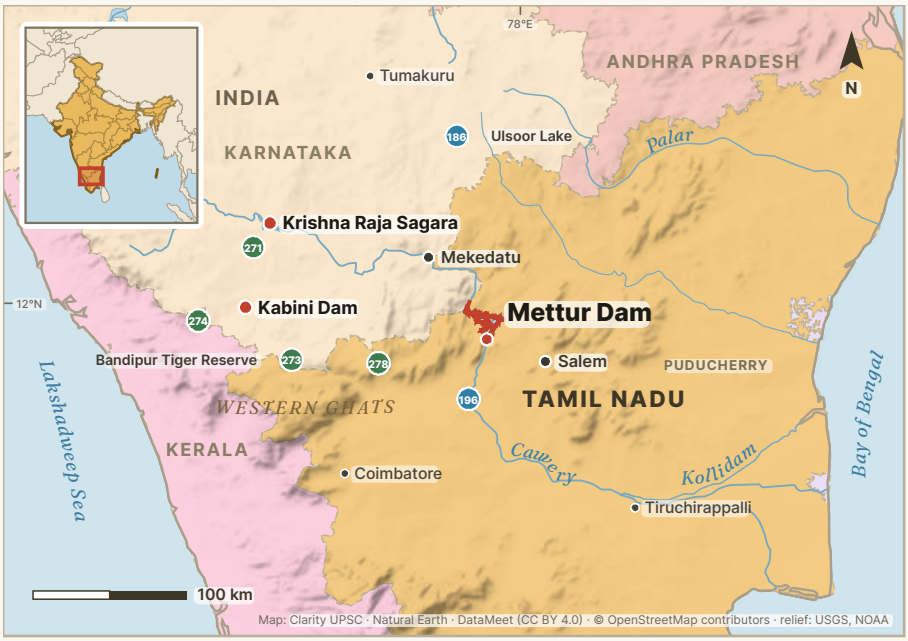
In news: In August 2026 Tamil Nadu's Water Resources Minister inspected cleaning work and civic needs along the Adyar River in Chennai. The visit followed a late-July desilting drive across the city's major water bodies, including the Adyar near Manapakkam.

SURROUNDED BY

- Chembarambakkam tank system
- Chennai metropolitan area
- Bay of Bengal

- A 2014 IIT Madras study for the State Pollution Control Board found untreated sewage the main pollutant and proposed an interceptor sewer.
- The estuary is a tidal wetland that supports biodiversity and helps hold floodwater.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



193 Mettur Dam (Stanley Reservoir)

On the Kaveri (Cauvery), Salem district, Tamil Nadu

Dam · Jun 2026

In news: In early June 2026 the Mettur Dam was in the news, as it is every June, when authorities fix the date to open its sluices. The mid-June release serves the kuruvai crop in the Kaveri delta.

NEIGHBOURING STATE

- Karnataka (upstream)

- Opened for irrigation on 12 June 1934 and inaugurated on 21 August 1934 by Madras Governor Sir George Stanley, hence 'Stanley Reservoir'.
- About 1,700 m long; stores about 93 tmc ft and irrigates over a million acres in Salem, Erode, Tiruchirappalli and Thanjavur districts.
- Releases begin in mid-June for kuruvai and in September for samba.

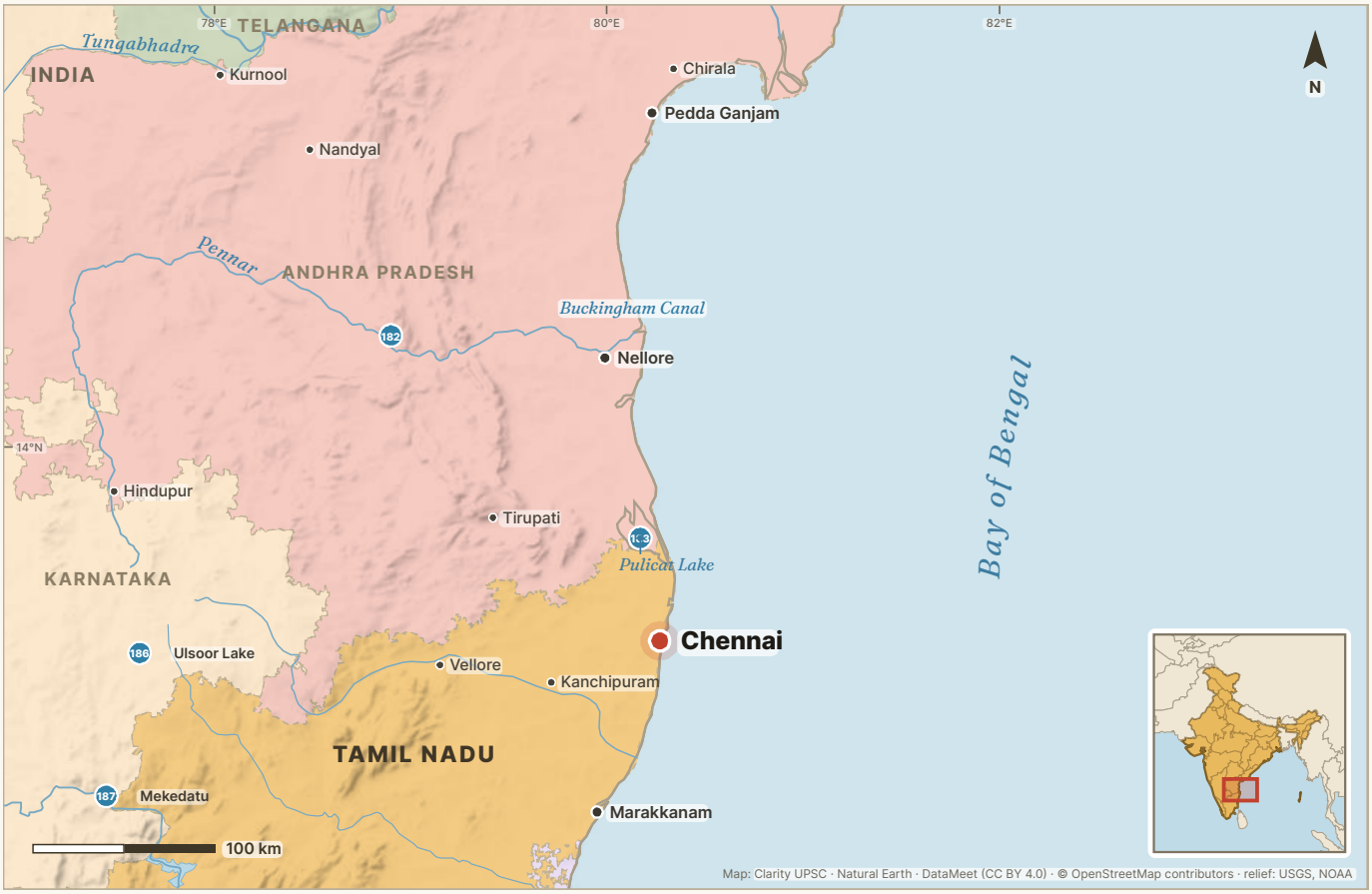
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Canal · Aug 2026

194 Buckingham Canal

Coromandel Coast, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu (National Waterway 4)



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 Tamil Nadu was examining a ₹876.35-crore plan to revive 7.2 km of the Buckingham Canal in central Chennai, from Napier Bridge to the Adyar River. It proposes passenger boats, cargo and floating restaurants, but about 50 million litres of sewage enter the stretch daily.

WHERE IT IS

The canal runs nearly parallel to the Coromandel Coast on the Bay of Bengal side, linking stretches in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Northern reaches pass coastal lagoons; southern reaches continue towards Marakkanam and the Kaluvelly wetland.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Andhra Pradesh · Tamil Nadu

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Begun around 1806 by Basil Cochrane as a Chennai–Ennore canal; it took the name Buckingham Canal in the late nineteenth century.
- The historic system is about 448 km long; irrigation canals once linked it with the Krishna and Godavari.
- It is part of National Waterway 4 under the National Waterways Act, 2016; the IWAI coordinates navigation.
- Low bridges and MRTS pillars obstruct boats in the Chennai stretch.

PRELIMS TRAP National Waterway 4 includes the Buckingham Canal and stretches of the Krishna and Godavari; NW-1 is the Ganga–Bhagirathi–Hooghly system.

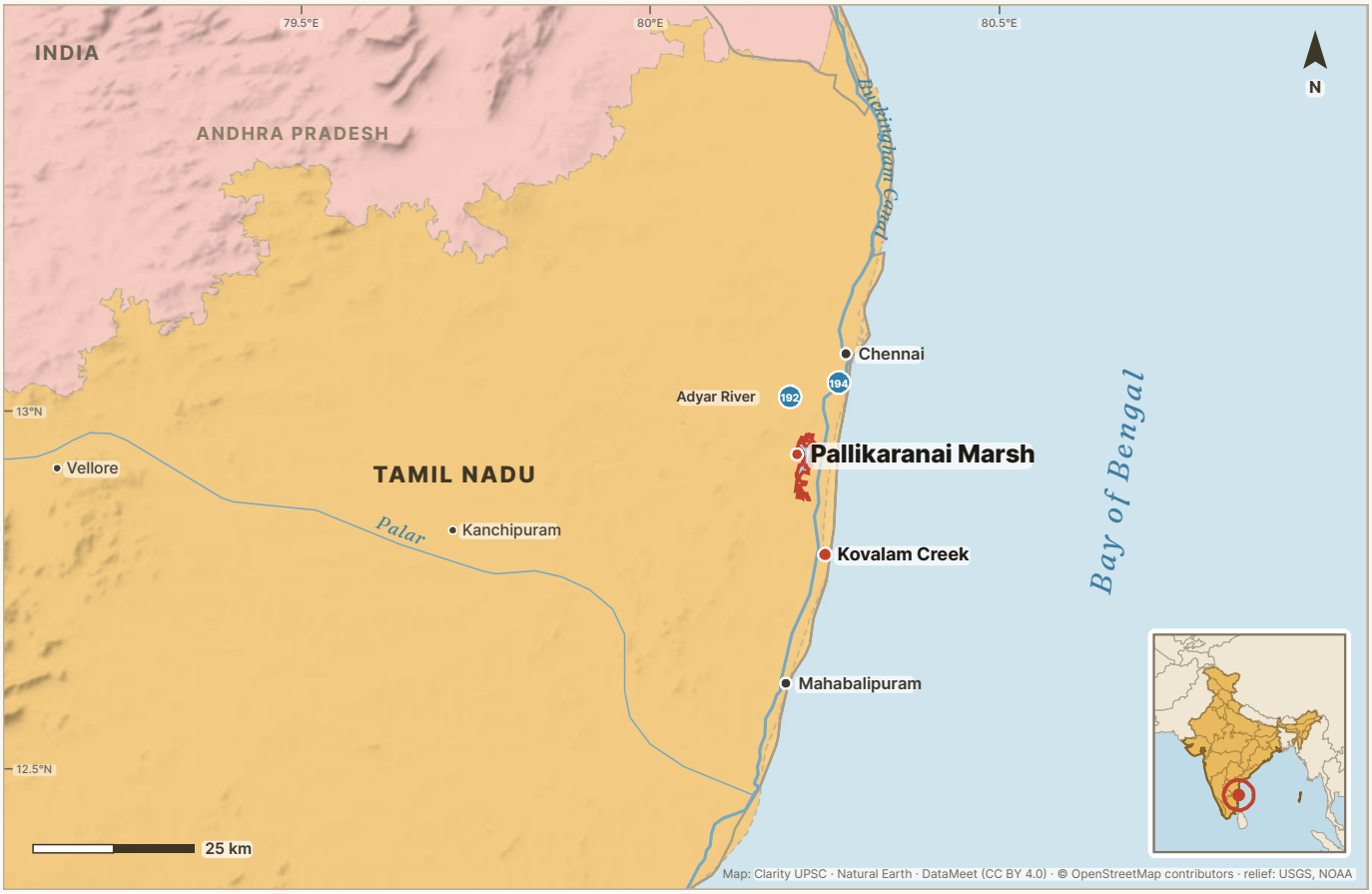
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Wetland · Jul 2026

195 Pallikaranai Marsh

Southern Chennai, Tamil Nadu



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 a new report examined the conflict between rapid development in southern Chennai and the protection of Pallikaranai Marsh. Courts and authorities were considering building restrictions nearby, and scientific mapping of the marsh's boundary remained central to the dispute.

WHERE IT IS

Pallikaranai is one of Chennai's last natural wetlands, in southern Chennai near the IT corridor. It drains a 250 sq km catchment of 65 wetlands. Water leaves through Okkiyam Madavu and Kovalam Creek to the Bay of Bengal; the Buckingham Canal lies to its east.

SURROUNDED BY Old Mahabalipuram Road (east) · Buckingham Canal · Okkiyam Madavu · Kovalam Creek · Bay of Bengal

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest became a Ramsar site on 8 April 2022 (Ramsar number 2481), covering 1,247.537 ha.
- The freshwater-to-brackish marsh is at least 1,000 years old; about 90% of the original wetland has been lost.
- It works as a natural flood buffer, storing storm water and releasing it slowly.
- Official records list 625 species, including 176 birds such as the glossy ibis and pheasant-tailed jacana.

PRELIMS TRAP Pallikaranai's 250 sq km is its catchment, 1,247.537 ha its Ramsar site and about 694 ha the Forest Department area.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

196

Bhavani River and Bhavanisagar Dam

River | Feb 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In July 2026 dense water-hyacinth mats covered stretches near Kooduthurai, its confluence with the Cauvery.

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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River · Jun 2026

197 Vaigai River

Tamil Nadu; Western Ghats to the Palk Bay



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 the Madras High Court directed local bodies in five districts to prepare a comprehensive plan to cut pollution in the Vaigai River. Petitions had highlighted untreated sewage and industrial waste entering the river.

WHERE IT IS

The Vaigai rises on the eastern slopes of the Varusanadu hills in the Western Ghats. It flows about 258 km east and south-east through Theni, Dindigul, Madurai, Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram districts into the Palk Bay.

SURROUNDED BY Theni · Dindigul · Madurai · Sivaganga · Ramanathapuram · Palk Bay (mouth)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Drains about 7,741 sq km; left-bank tributaries include the Suruliyar and Manjalar.
- Vaigai Dam, below the Suruliyar confluence, supplies irrigation and drinking water to Madurai.
- The river nourished ancient Madurai and appears in Sangam literature; the Chithirai festival depends on its flow.
- Deforestation in the Megamalai forests that feed it has dried some stretches.

PRELIMS TRAP The Vaigai ends in the Palk Bay; the Thamirabarani, further south, ends in the Gulf of Mannar.

Read the full story
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River | Jun 2026 | Jul 2026

198 Thamirabarani River

Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts, Tamil Nadu



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 conservation groups held a fish count and an otter awareness drive on the Thamirabarani; volunteers saw rare smooth-coated otters at Papanasam, but otter sightings were dwindling. In July 2026 the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court examined pollution by clothes and other ritual waste left after funeral rites. A May clean-up had removed about 86–90 tonnes of clothing. The court invited public proposals before giving final directions.

WHERE IT IS

The Thamirabarani rises in the Pothigai Hills of the Western Ghats above Papanasam, Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu. It flows east for about 128 km through Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts and enters the Gulf of Mannar near Punnaikayal.

SURROUNDED BY Pothigai Hills (Agasthyamalai) | Tirunelveli | Thoothukudi | Gulf of Mannar

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The river flows entirely within Tamil Nadu; rain from both the southwest and the northeast monsoons keeps it perennial.
- Early Tamil literature calls it Porunai; ancient Korkai in its lower valley was a pearl-fishing and trading port.
- Its tributaries include the Karaiyar, Servalar, Manimuthar, Pachaiyar and Chittar; the Papanasam dam also generates hydroelectricity.
- A 2024 survey recorded 36 fish species, including the endemic Thamirabarani barb; smooth-coated, Asian small-clawed and Eurasian otters live in the river.

PRELIMS TRAP The Thamirabarani is a major perennial river of Tamil Nadu; calling it the state's only perennial river is disputed.

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INDIA

Mountains, passes, islands and coasts

10 places

199 Gulf of Khambhat · Gulf

200 Kaimur Plateau · Plateau

201 Tso Lhamo Plateau · Plateau

202 Nathu La · Pass

203 Majuli Island · River island

204 Niyamgiri Hills · Hill range

205 Nashik earthquake swarm · Earthquake zone

206 Nhava Sheva (Jawaharlal Nehru Port) · Port

207 Barren Island · Volcano (island)

208 Great Nicobar Island · Island

Gulf · Jul 2026

199 Gulf of Khambhat

Between Saurashtra and mainland Gujarat, Arabian Sea



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 the Centre told the Rajya Sabha that the Detailed Project Report for Gujarat's Kalpasar Project was nearing finalisation. Kalpasar proposes a dyke across the Gulf of Khambhat to store river water, with a road-cum-rail link and about 2,470 MW of hybrid renewable power. Construction has not begun.

WHERE IT IS

The Gulf of Khambhat is a funnel-shaped inlet of the Arabian Sea between the Saurashtra peninsula and mainland Gujarat. The Sabarmati, Mahi, Dhadhar, Narmada and Tapi flow into it. Strong tides and currents move large amounts of sediment.

SURROUNDED BY Saurashtra peninsula (west) · Mainland Gujarat (east) · Arabian Sea (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Kalpasar would hold river water behind a dyke before it mixes with the sea, slowly creating a freshwater reservoir for Saurashtra.
- The dyke road would cut the Bhavnagar–Surat journey from about 356 km to about 177 km.
- The Netherlands is giving technical cooperation on dykes, hydraulic modelling and salinity management.
- The gulf, earlier called the Gulf of Cambay, is about 200 km long, about 20 km wide at its head and up to 70 km wide at its mouth.

PRELIMS TRAP The Gulf of Khambhat lies between Saurashtra and mainland Gujarat; the Gulf of Kutch lies north of Saurashtra.

Read the full story
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200 Kaimur Plateau

Kaimur and Rohtas districts, south-western Bihar

Plateau · May 2026

In news: In May 2026 Zoological Survey of India scientists and collaborators described a new leopard gecko, Eublepharis jhuma, from the rocky hills of the Kaimur Plateau in Bihar. It is the first leopard gecko recorded from the state and was found during a survey of Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary.

NEIGHBOURING STATES

- Uttar Pradesh (west)
- Jharkhand (south)
- Madhya Pradesh (range continues west)

- Eublepharis jhuma reaches about 14 cm snout-to-vent, differs 6.9–7.8% genetically from E. satpuraensis and is named after ZSI director Dhriti Banerjee ('Jhuma').
- The gecko lives in rocky, dry deciduous forest; researchers describe the plateau as a centre of endemism shaped by ancient geological events.
- Rohtasgarh Fort stands on the plateau's eastern edge, above the Son valley.

Read the full story
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201 Tso Lhamo Plateau

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

Plateau · Jul 2026

In news: In July 2026 a camera trap on the Tso Lhamo plateau in North Sikkim photographed a Eurasian lynx at 17,224 feet. It was the first confirmed photograph of the species in Sikkim and the second in the eastern Himalayas, after Arunachal Pradesh in 2025. The record came from a snow-leopard monitoring project.

SURROUNDED BY

- Tibet Autonomous Region, China (north and east)
- Lachen–Thangu valley (south)
- Gurudongmar and Tso Lhamo lakes

- In India the Eurasian lynx (Lynx lynx) was known mainly from Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir; it hunts mostly at night or twilight.
- The plateau's wildlife includes snow leopards and Tibetan wolves; nomadic herders had long reported a large spotted cat there.
- Tso Lhamo (Cholamu) Lake, among India's highest lakes, is one of the Teesta's sources.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Pass · Aug 2026

202 Nathu La

East Sikkim, on the India–China (Tibet) border



WHY IN NEWS

On 1 August 2026 border trade through Nathu La in Sikkim resumed after missing six trading seasons in a row since 2020. Registered traders attended the reopening, which follows existing bilateral rules and notified trade marts.

WHERE IT IS

Nathu La is a pass on the Dongkya Range of the Himalaya, on Sikkim's eastern frontier, linking it with China's Tibet Autonomous Region. It stands about 4,310 m high, roughly 54 km from Gangtok, and leads into the Chumbi Valley on the Tibetan side.

BORDERING COUNTRIES India (Sikkim) · China (Tibet) · Bhutan (south-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- India closed the route after the 1962 war; trade restarted on 6 July 2006 under a 2003 memorandum.
- Sherathang in Sikkim and Renqinggang in Yadong County are the designated trade marts.
- Since 2015 the pass has also served as a Kailash Mansarovar Yatra route.
- Serious India–China military clashes took place around Nathu La in 1967.

PRELIMS TRAP Nathu La and Jelep La lead from Sikkim to the Chumbi Valley; Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh lies near where the Sutlej enters India.

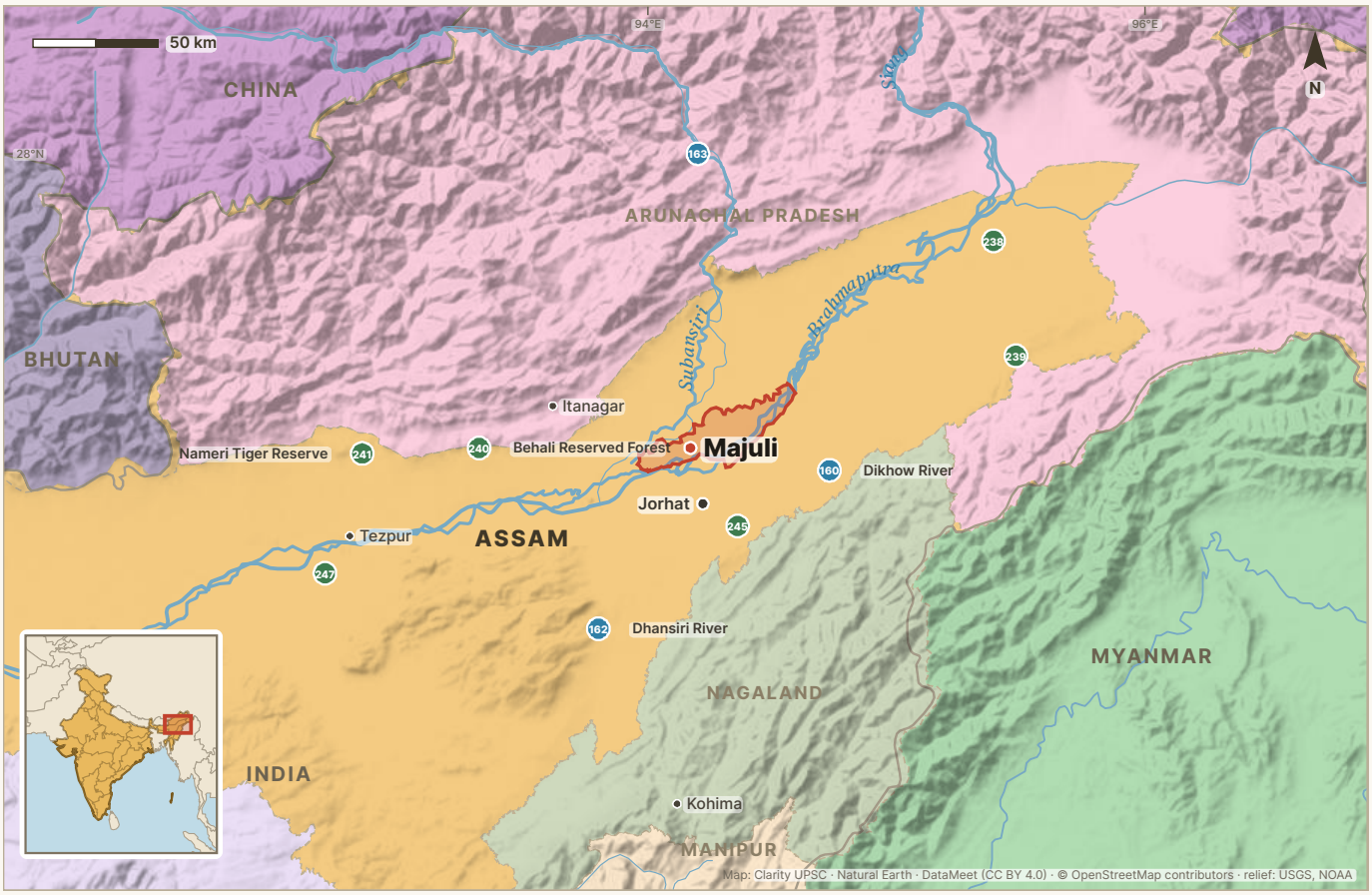
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River island · Jun 2026

203 Majuli Island

In the Brahmaputra River, upper Assam (opposite Jorhat)



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 conservationists campaigned for UNESCO World Heritage status for Majuli. They also called for urgent action against severe erosion by the Brahmaputra, which keeps shrinking the island.

WHERE IT IS

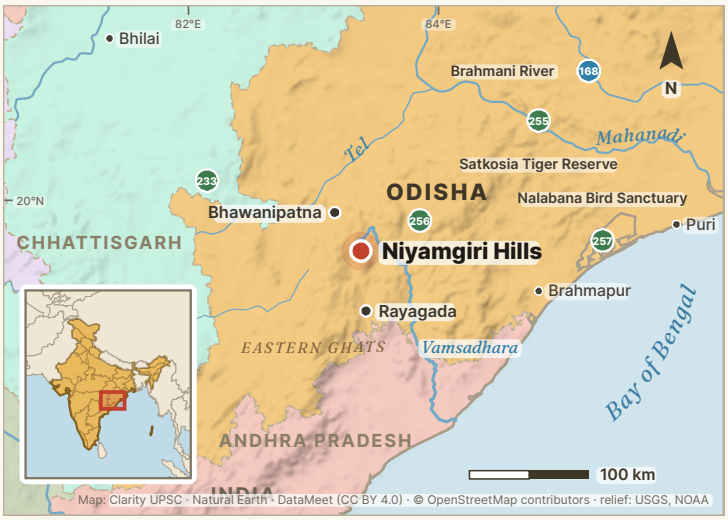
Majuli lies in the Brahmaputra River in upper Assam. The Brahmaputra flows along its south, and the Kherkutia Xuti channel, joined by the Subansiri, along its north. Ferries link the island to Jorhat on the south bank.

SURROUNDED BY Brahmaputra River (south) · Kherkutia Xuti channel (north) · Subansiri River (north) · Jorhat (across the river, south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- In 2016 Majuli became India's first island district.
- It is a mid-river delta built from Brahmaputra silt; erosion has shrunk it from about 1,255 sq km to about 880 sq km.
- Srimanta Sankardeva founded satras here in the 16th century; about 30 satras on the island and nearby keep neo-Vaishnavite dance, drama and mask-making alive.
- Mishing, Deori and Sonowal Kachari communities live here, many in bamboo stilt houses built for floods.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



204 Niyamgiri Hills

Rayagada and Kalahandi districts, south-western Odisha

Hill range · Jun 2026

In news: In June 2026 a feature highlighted the Dongria Kondh of Odisha's Niyamgiri Hills, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group. Their campaign against bauxite mining in the hills has become a symbol of indigenous rights and conservation.

SURROUNDED BY

- Rayagada district
- Kalahandi district
- Vamsadhara river (rises here)
- Andhra Pradesh (downstream)

- Bauxite-capped hills absorb monsoon rain and feed over 100 perennial streams, including the Vamsadhara.
- In 2013 the Supreme Court let Gram Sabhas decide on Vedanta's bauxite mining plan; all 12 rejected it.
- The Dongria worship the mountain deity Niyam Raja and practise shifting horticulture.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



205 Nashik earthquake swarm

Northern Nashik district, Maharashtra, near the Gujarat border

Earthquake zone · Aug 2026

In news: In August 2026 officials planned four continuous seismic stations in Nashik district after a cluster of shallow tremors in late July. National Centre for Seismology listings showed magnitudes of 2.8 to 3.9, one only about 5 km deep. The stations were sited in Surgana, Peth, Dindori and Kalwan talukas.

NEIGHBOURS OF NASHIK DISTRICT

- Gujarat: Dang, Navsari, Valsad (north-west and west)
- Dhule (north)
- Jalgaon (east)
- Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (south-east)
- Ahilyanagar (south)
- Thane and Palghar (south-west)

- A swarm is a cluster of nearby earthquakes without one clearly dominant mainshock.
- The National Centre for Seismology, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, is India's nodal earthquake-monitoring agency.
- Denser networks sharpen depth and epicentre estimates and speed up public information after felt tremors.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Port · Aug 2026

206 Nhava Sheva (Jawaharlal Nehru Port)

Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence seized about 56 kg of methamphetamine at Nhava Sheva port. The drug was allegedly mixed with maize in one bag of a 351-bag export consignment bound for Saudi Arabia. Two people were arrested.

WHERE IT IS

Nhava Sheva, formally Jawaharlal Nehru Port, lies at Navi Mumbai on the eastern side of Mumbai Harbour. It faces the Arabian Sea through the harbour's shipping channels.

SURROUNDED BY Mumbai Harbour · Navi Mumbai · Arabian Sea

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Commissioned on 26 May 1989, it is the largest container port among India's government-owned major ports; it handled a record 8.17 million TEUs (twenty-foot container units) in 2025–26.
- The DRI, India's apex anti-smuggling agency, works under the CBIC in the Ministry of Finance.
- Methamphetamine is controlled under the NDPS Act, 1985; Section 23 covers illegal import, export and transshipment.

PRELIMS TRAP Nhava Sheva is another name for Jawaharlal Nehru Port; Mumbai Port lies across the harbour on Mumbai island.

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

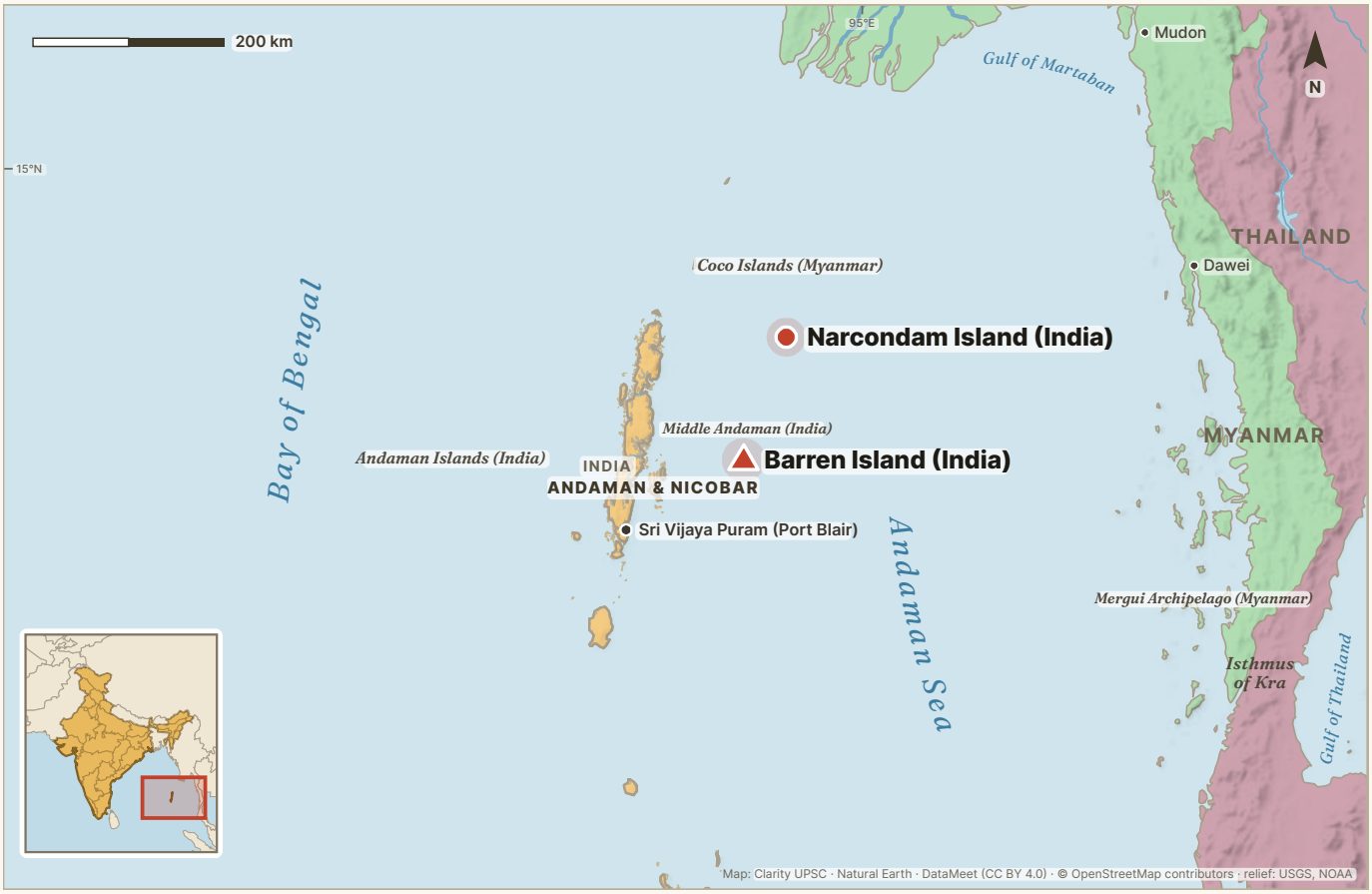
Clarity UPSC

207

Barren Island

Volcano (island) Jun 2026

Andaman Sea, about 138 km north-east of Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair)



WHY IN NEWS

Barren Island stayed in the news in June 2026 for its intermittent eruptions. The Darwin Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre recorded ash plumes and thermal anomalies in early 2026, after two minor eruptions in September 2025.

WHERE IT IS

Barren Island is a small, uninhabited island about 3 km wide in the Andaman Sea, roughly 138 km north-east of Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair). It lies on a north–south volcanic arc that runs from Sumatra to Myanmar.

SURROUNDED BY Andaman Sea · Andaman Islands (west) · Sri Vijaya Puram (south-west) · Narcondam Island (north-north-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- India's only confirmed active volcano and the only one in South Asia; it rises about 354 m above sea level.
- It sits where the Indian Plate subducts beneath the Burmese microplate, producing basaltic magma.
- First recorded eruption 1787; it reawakened in 1991 after a 159-year lull.
- Lies within the Barren Island Wildlife Sanctuary; feral goats live there and access is restricted.

PRELIMS TRAP Barren Island is India's only active volcano; Narcondam Island, about 140 km to its north-north-east, is a dormant volcano.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Island · May 2026

208 Great Nicobar Island

Southernmost island of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 MPs and environmental groups debated the plan to develop Great Nicobar. It includes a transshipment port at Galathea Bay, an international airport and a township. Supporters cite strategic gains; critics warn of forest loss and threats to Indigenous communities.

WHERE IT IS

Great Nicobar is the southernmost island of the Andaman and Nicobar chain, covering about 921 sq km. The Andaman Sea lies to its north-east. The Six Degree Channel separates it from Sumatra in Indonesia to the south-east.

SURROUNDED BY Andaman Sea · Indian Ocean · Six Degree Channel · Little Nicobar (north-west) · Sumatra, Indonesia (south-east)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Home to the Shompen and Nicobarese peoples; much of it lies in the Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO, 2013).
- Endemics include the Nicobar megapode and Nicobar tree shrew; its beaches are leatherback turtle nesting sites.
- The 2021 plan would cut more than 8 lakh trees; it has conditional environmental clearance.
- The port aims to cut dependence on hubs such as Singapore for East Asia–Indian Ocean container traffic.

PRELIMS TRAP The Ten Degree Channel separates the Andaman and Nicobar groups. The Six Degree Channel separates Great Nicobar from Sumatra.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Watch the 2-minute video
Clarity UPSC on YouTube

INDIA

Protected areas

73 places

209 Gamgul Siyabehi Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

210 Dhauladhar Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

211 Great Himalayan National Park · National Park

212 Rakchham–Chitkul Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

213 Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Wildlife Sanctuary (Jhajjar–Bachauli) · Wildlife Sanctuary

214 Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

215 Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

216 Valley of Flowers National Park · National Park

217 Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

218 Corbett Tiger Reserve · National Park

219 Amangarh Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

220 Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

221 Dudhwa Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

222 Chandraprabha Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

223 Sariska Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

224 Ranthambore Tiger Reserve and Kailadevi Sanctuary · Tiger Reserve

225 Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

226 Barda Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

227 Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

228 Gir National Park · National Park

229 National Chambal Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

230 Kuno National Park · National Park

231 Panna Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

232 Bagdara Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

233 Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

234 Valmiki Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

235 Palamu Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

236 Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

237 Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

238 Dibru-Saikhowa National Park · National Park

239 Dihing Patkai National Park · National Park

240 Behali Reserved Forest · Reserved Forest

241 Nameri Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

242 Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

243 Bornadi Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

244 Buxa Tiger Reserve and Raimona National Park · National Park

245 Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

246 Manas Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

247 Laokhowa and Burachapori Wildlife Sanctuaries · Wildlife Sanctuary

248 Daying Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

249 Kamlang Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

250 Namdapha National Park · National Park

251 Nongkhyllem Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

252 Similipal Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

253 Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

254 Chandaka-Dampara Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

255 Satkosia Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

256 Kotgarh Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

257 Nalabana Bird Sanctuary · Bird Sanctuary

258 Melghat Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

259 Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

260 Tadoba–Andhari Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

261 Chaprala Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

262 Sanjay Gandhi National Park · National Park

263 Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

264 Kawal Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

265 Kinnerasani Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

266 Amrabad Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

267 Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

268 Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

269 Kali Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

270 Sharavathi Lion-Tailed Macaque Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

271 Arabithittu Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

272 Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

273 Bandipur Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve

274 Tholpetty Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

275 Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary · Wildlife Sanctuary

276 Periyar Tiger Reserve · Tiger Reserve



209 Gamgul Siyabehi Wildlife Sanctuary

Bhandal valley, Salooni tehsil, Chamba district, Himachal Pradesh

Wildlife Sanctuary · May 2026

In news: In May 2026 the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department obtained the first photographic evidence of a Himalayan brown bear in Gamgul Siyabehi Wildlife Sanctuary. Camera traps recorded the bear in this remote high-altitude area.

NEIGHBOURING STATE: Jammu & Kashmir

- Established in 1962.
- The only sanctuary in Himachal Pradesh known to have once supported the Kashmir stag (hangul).
- Musk deer, Himalayan tahr and pheasants also live here; an eco-sensitive zone has been prepared.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Watch the 2-minute video
Clarity UPSC on YouTube



210 Dhauladhar Wildlife Sanctuary

Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh

Wildlife Sanctuary · Aug 2026

In news: On 1 August 2026 officials announced the first scientific photograph of a snow leopard in Himachal Pradesh's Dhauladhar Wildlife Sanctuary. A camera trap took it on 21 December 2025 at 2,836 m during a Wildlife Institute of India survey.

SURROUNDED BY: Dhauladhar Range · Kangra Valley · Palampur–Baijnath area

- It was established in 1994; the survey's 117 camera traps recorded 22 mammal species.
- The snow leopard (Panthera uncia) is Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List and in Schedule I in India.
- The sanctuary also holds Himalayan tahr, Himalayan musk deer, and Asiatic black and Himalayan brown bears.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



211 Great Himalayan National Park

Kullu district, Himachal Pradesh (western Himalayas)

National Park · May 2026

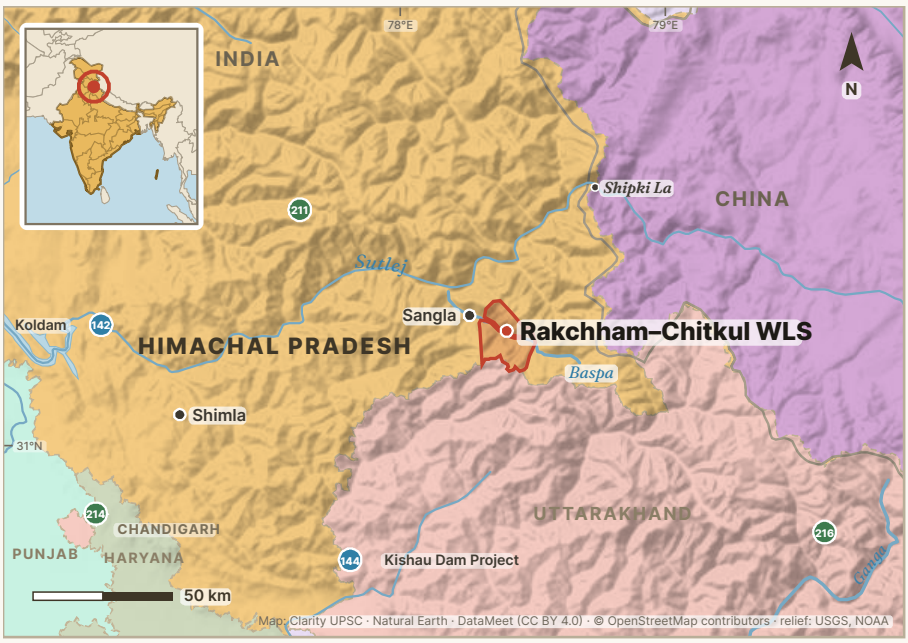
In news: In May 2026 the Great Himalayan National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was in the news for its conservation work and biodiversity studies. Authorities are balancing protection with livelihoods for about 160 buffer-zone villages.

SURROUNDED BY

- Sainj Wildlife Sanctuary
- Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuary
- Kullu valley (Beas)
- Pin Valley National Park (north-east)

- Inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014; the conservation area totals 90,540 ha.
- Lies where the Palearctic and Indomalayan realms meet.
- Shelters the western tragopan, Himalayan tahr, snow leopard, musk deer and Himalayan brown bear.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



212 Rakchham–Chitkul Wildlife Sanctuary

Kinnaur district, Himachal Pradesh, bordering Tibet

Wildlife Sanctuary · May 2026

In news: On 9 May 2026 researchers photographed a Himalayan brown bear with two cubs in Rakchham–Chitkul Wildlife Sanctuary. It is only the second confirmed photographic record of the species there since 2016–17.

SURROUNDED BY

- Baspa (Sangla) valley
- Kinnaur district
- Tibet, China (east)

- The Himalayan brown bear (Ursus arctos isabellinus) is in Schedule I in India; the IUCN rates the brown bear species Least Concern.
- Ibex, snow leopard and red fox live here among birch, willow and medicinal herbs.
- Notified in 1989, it lies in the valley of the Baspa, which joins the Sutlej at Karcham.

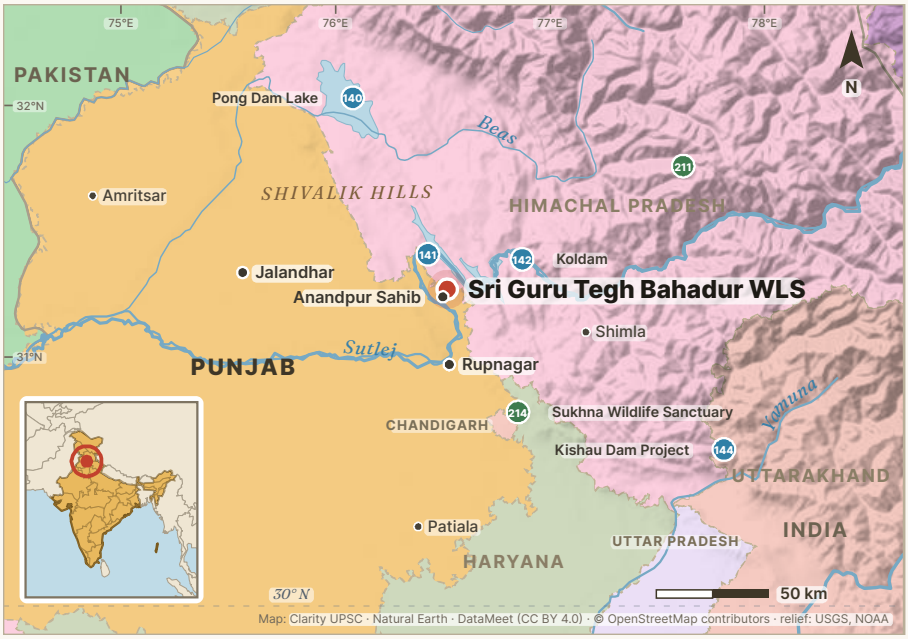
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Clarity UPSC

Wildlife Sanctuary · Jun 2026

213 Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Wildlife Sanctuary (Jhajjar–Bachauli)

Rupnagar district, Punjab, near Anandpur Sahib



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 the Punjab Forest Department prepared a ₹5.36 crore plan for the Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Wildlife Sanctuary near Anandpur Sahib, including a leopard safari. The Jhajjar–Bachauli sanctuary was renamed after the ninth Sikh Guru in January 2026.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary covers 289 acres in the villages of Jhajjar, Bachauli and Lamlehri in Rupnagar district, Punjab. It lies in the Shivalik foothills near the Sutlej River, close to the Himachal Pradesh hills.

NEIGHBOURING STATE

Himachal Pradesh

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- First notified in 1998 (final notification 2003); dry deciduous forest of khair, neem and shisham with tall grasses.
- Sambar, barking deer, nilgai and wild boar live here; leopards occasionally come from the Himachal hills.
- The planned safari would house rescued or captive-bred leopards in a fenced enclosure.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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.

Open Live Economic Data →

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214

Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary

Shivalik foothills, Chandigarh (bordering Punjab and Haryana)

Wildlife Sanctuary | Feb 2026 | May 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. In May 2026 Chandigarh reported that a survey with the Wildlife Institute of India had confirmed two adult male leopards.

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.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

Wildlife Sanctuary · May 2026

215 Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary

Kaithal district, near Pehowa, Haryana



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 reports highlighted Haryana's first Nakshatra Vatika (constellation garden), developed at Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary near Pehowa by the Haryana Saraswati Heritage Development Board and the wildlife department. Its 27 plots hold trees linked to the 27 lunar mansions.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary, also called Seonsar Forest or Saraswati Conservation Reserve, lies in Kaithal district of Haryana. It covers about 4,453 hectares of tropical deciduous forest of kikar, neem, shisham and peepal.

SURROUNDED BY Kaithal district · Pehowa town · Kurukshetra district (north-east)

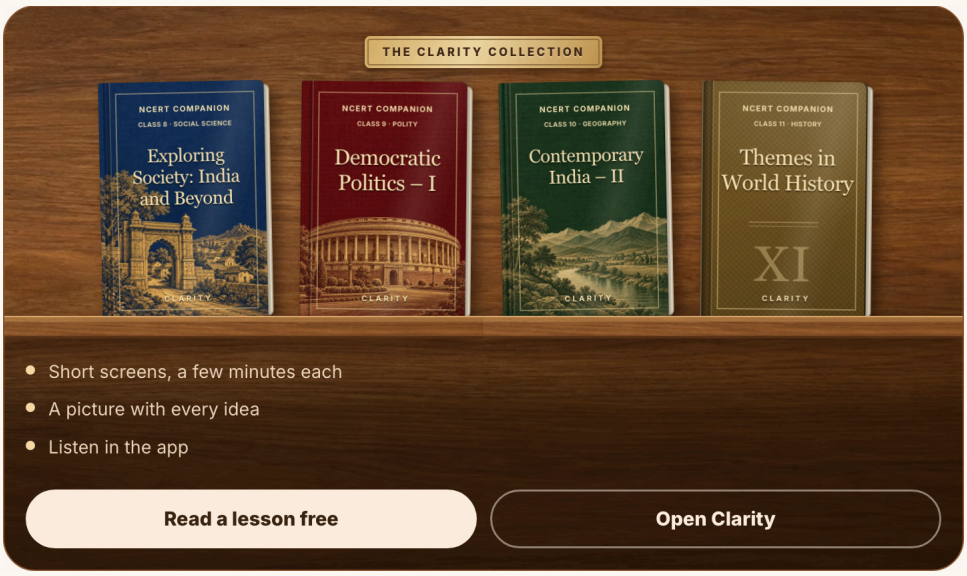
KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Notified as a sanctuary in July 1988 and declared a conservation reserve in October 2007.
- Holds Kushan- and Gupta-period remains and a Mughal-era well.
- Nilgai, spotted deer and over 250 bird species live here.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

ON CLARITYUPSC.COM · NCERT LESSONS

NCERT, made clear.

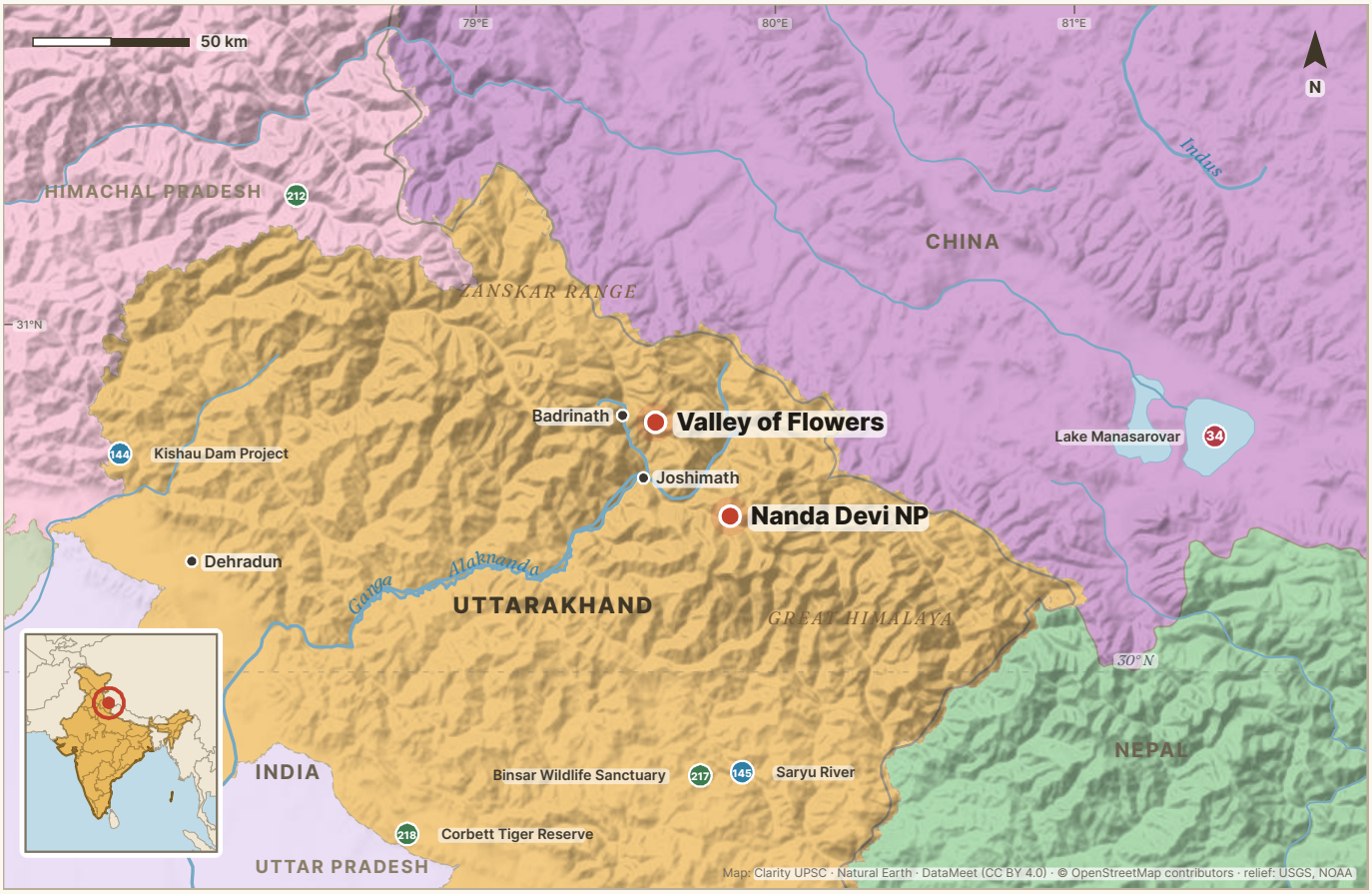


app.clarityupsc.com/lessons

216 Valley of Flowers National Park

National Park | Jan 2026 | Jun 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. The park opened for its summer season in early June 2026.

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
www.clarityupsc.com



217 Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary

Jhandi Dhar hills, Almora district, Kumaon, Uttarakhand

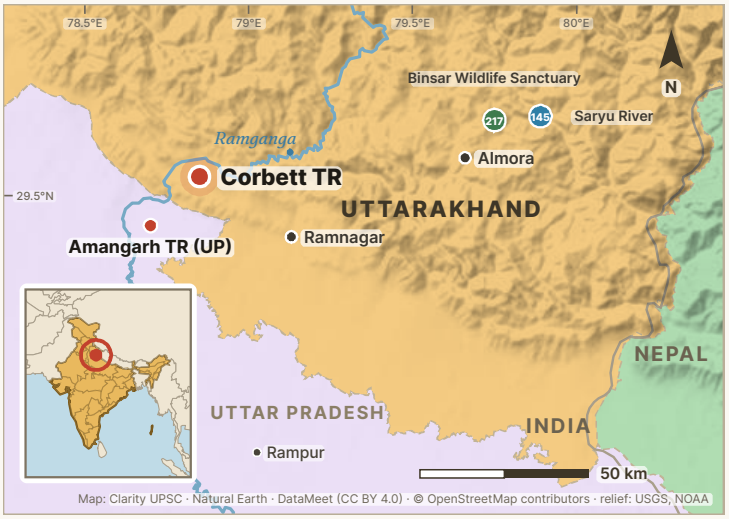
Wildlife Sanctuary | May 2026 | Aug 2026

In news: In early May 2026 the Uttarakhand forest department began a camera-trap census of Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary, with more than 100 cameras across 50 grids. In August 2026 forest staff reported a tiger near the sanctuary's Zero Point, at an elevation of about 8,000 feet.

SURROUNDED BY: Almora town (about 33 km) | Kumaon hills | Views of Nanda Devi, Trishul and Panchachuli

- Established in 1988 to protect high-altitude broadleaf oak and rhododendron forest.
- Once a summer capital of the Chand dynasty; named after the Bineshwar Mahadev temple.
- An Important Bird Area with more than 200 bird species.

Read the full story
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218 Corbett Tiger Reserve

Himalayan foothills, Uttarakhand

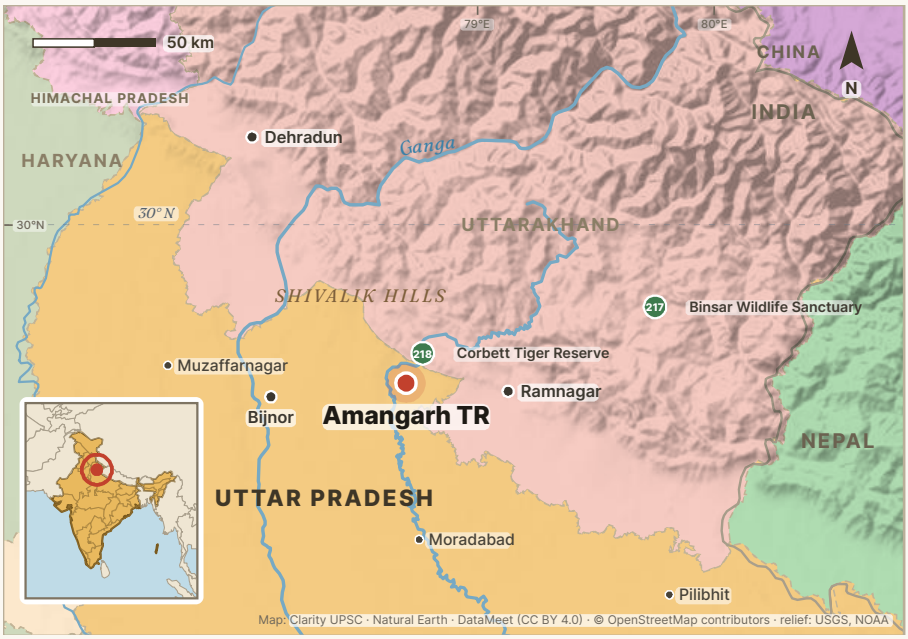
National Park | May 2026 | Aug 2026

In news: In early May 2026 Vikram, a 21-year-old tiger captured after killing three forest staff in 2009, died of age-related ailments at the Dhela Rescue Centre. In August 2026 Bhola, an adult male tiger known to visitors from the Phato tourism zone, died there during treatment for injuries. Samples were sent for tests to find the cause.

SURROUNDED BY: Ramnagar (south-east) | Terai West Forest Division (Phato zone) | Ramganga River | Nainital, Pauri and Almora districts

- Began in 1936 as Hailey National Park, India's first national park; renamed Ramganga, then Corbett National Park, in the 1950s.
- The tiger reserve's core and buffer cover 1,288.31 sq km in Nainital, Pauri and Almora districts; the Amangarh buffer lies in Uttar Pradesh.
- One of the nine original Project Tiger reserves (1973); it supports about 250 tigers, elephants and over 600 bird species.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



219 Amangarh Tiger Reserve

Bijnor district, Uttar Pradesh, adjoining Corbett

Tiger Reserve · Jun 2026

In news: In June 2026 the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department extended the eco-tourism season at Amangarh Tiger Reserve to 30 June. Over 3,000 tourists visited in the fourth season, which opened in November 2025.

NEIGHBOURING STATE: Uttarakhand

- Notified in 2012 as the Uttar Pradesh buffer of Corbett Tiger Reserve; NTCA lists it at 80.6 sq km.
- Sal forest, grassland and seasonal rivers support tigers, leopards, elephants and over 300 bird species.
- Ticket revenue funds habitat management, anti-poaching patrols and community work.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



220 Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary

Bahraich district, Uttar Pradesh, on the Nepal border

Wildlife Sanctuary · May 2026

In news: On 25 May 2026 a tiger killed a woman collecting firewood near Amritpur village in Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary. Authorities stepped up patrols and reminded villagers of safety rules.

SURROUNDED BY

Bardia National Park, Nepal (north) · Dudhwa National Park (west) · Girwa River · Bahraich district

- Declared a sanctuary in 1976, it joined Dudhwa Tiger Reserve under Project Tiger in 2003; corridors link it with Nepal's Bardia.
- The Girwa holds gharials and mugger crocodiles; Gangetic dolphins also occur.
- Home to the one-horned rhinoceros, swamp deer and Bengal florican.

Read the full story
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Watch the 2-minute video
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221

Dudhwa Tiger Reserve

Lakhimpur Kheri and Bahraich districts, Uttar Pradesh, on the Nepal border

Tiger Reserve | Mar 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. Dudhwa's fourth rhinoceros census, held from 25 to 27 June 2026 and reported in July, counted 53 greater one-horned rhinoceroses: 17 adult males, 25 adult females and 11 calves.

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.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



222 Chandraprabha Wildlife Sanctuary

Chandauli district, Uttar Pradesh

Wildlife Sanctuary | Jul 2026

In news: In July 2026 scientists named a new fungal genus, Hyalokamalomyces, from Chandraprabha Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh. The fungus grew on diseased leaves of the amaltas tree, and genetic evidence showed that its earlier classification was wrong.

SURROUNDED BY Kaimur Range | Chandraprabha River | Karmanasa River

- It became a wildlife sanctuary in May 1957; three Asiatic lions introduced in 1958 grew to eleven but had vanished by 1970.
- The Rajdari and Devdari waterfalls lie within it; dry deciduous forests hold leopards, sloth bears and chinkara.
- The new genus belongs to the family Mycosphaerellaceae; its living culture is kept by the National Fungal Culture Collection of India, Pune.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



223 Sariska Tiger Reserve

Aravalli hills, Alwar district, Rajasthan

Tiger Reserve | Jun 2026

In news: In June 2026 conservationists reported that Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan now holds around 53 tigers. Sariska became famous for the world's first tiger relocation, after poaching wiped out its tigers by 2004.

SURROUNDED BY Aravalli hills | Alwar district | Jaipur (about 110 km)

- Declared a sanctuary in 1958 and made a tiger reserve under Project Tiger in 1978–79.
- In 2008 one male and one female tiger were moved from Ranthambore, the world's first such relocation.
- Dhok trees dominate; ruins such as Kankwari Fort lie inside the forest.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Watch the 2-minute video
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224 Ranthambore Tiger Reserve and Kailadevi Sanctuary

Tiger Reserve | Jun 2026

Sawai Madhopur and Karauli districts, south-eastern Rajasthan



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 reports said a captive-bred long-billed vulture, X67, released in Melghat Tiger Reserve, flew 3,334 km to Ranthambore in 27 days, stopping at Satpura and Kuno.

WHERE IT IS

Ranthambore lies near Sawai Madhopur in south-eastern Rajasthan, where the Aravalli and Vindhyan ranges meet. The reserve covers about 1,411 sq km and includes Ranthambore Fort. Kailadevi Wildlife Sanctuary (676.82 sq km), in Karauli district, lies to the north-east across the Banas. The Chambal forms Kailadevi's southern boundary.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Madhya Pradesh (across the Chambal)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A former hunting ground of the Jaipur royals; sanctuary in 1955, among the nine original Project Tiger reserves in 1973, national park in 1980.
- Kailadevi includes 401.63 sq km of the reserve's critical tiger habitat; its deep ravines, called khohs, shelter wildlife.
- A 2021 genome study found higher inbreeding in Ranthambore's small, isolated tiger population than in larger, connected populations.
- Vultures fell by more than 90 percent because of the veterinary drug diclofenac; X67's route linked Melghat, Satpura, Kuno and Ranthambore.

PRELIMS TRAP Ranthambore and Sariska are both Rajasthan tiger reserves; Sariska, in Alwar district, received two Ranthambore tigers in 2008 after losing all its own.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

Tiger Reserve · Jun 2026

225 Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve

Kota, Bundi, Chittorgarh and Jhalawar districts, south-eastern Rajasthan



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 a documentary, 'Enchanting Mukundra', showcased the landscapes and wildlife of Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan. It aims to promote eco-tourism and awareness of conservation challenges in this lesser-known reserve.

WHERE IT IS

The reserve lies in south-eastern Rajasthan across Kota, Bundi, Chittorgarh and Jhalawar districts. Its valley runs between two parallel, flat-topped Vindhyan ranges, the Mukundra and the Gagrola. The Chambal, Kali Sindh, Ahu and Ramzan rivers bound it.

SURROUNDED BY Chambal River · Kali Sindh River · Ahu River · Ramzan River

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Notified in 2013 as Rajasthan's third tiger reserve; it covers about 759 sq km.
- Combines Mukundra National Park, Darrah and Jawahar Sagar sanctuaries and part of the Chambal Sanctuary.
- Locally called Darrah ('pass'), it was once the Maharaja of Kota's hunting ground; earlier relocated tigers died here.

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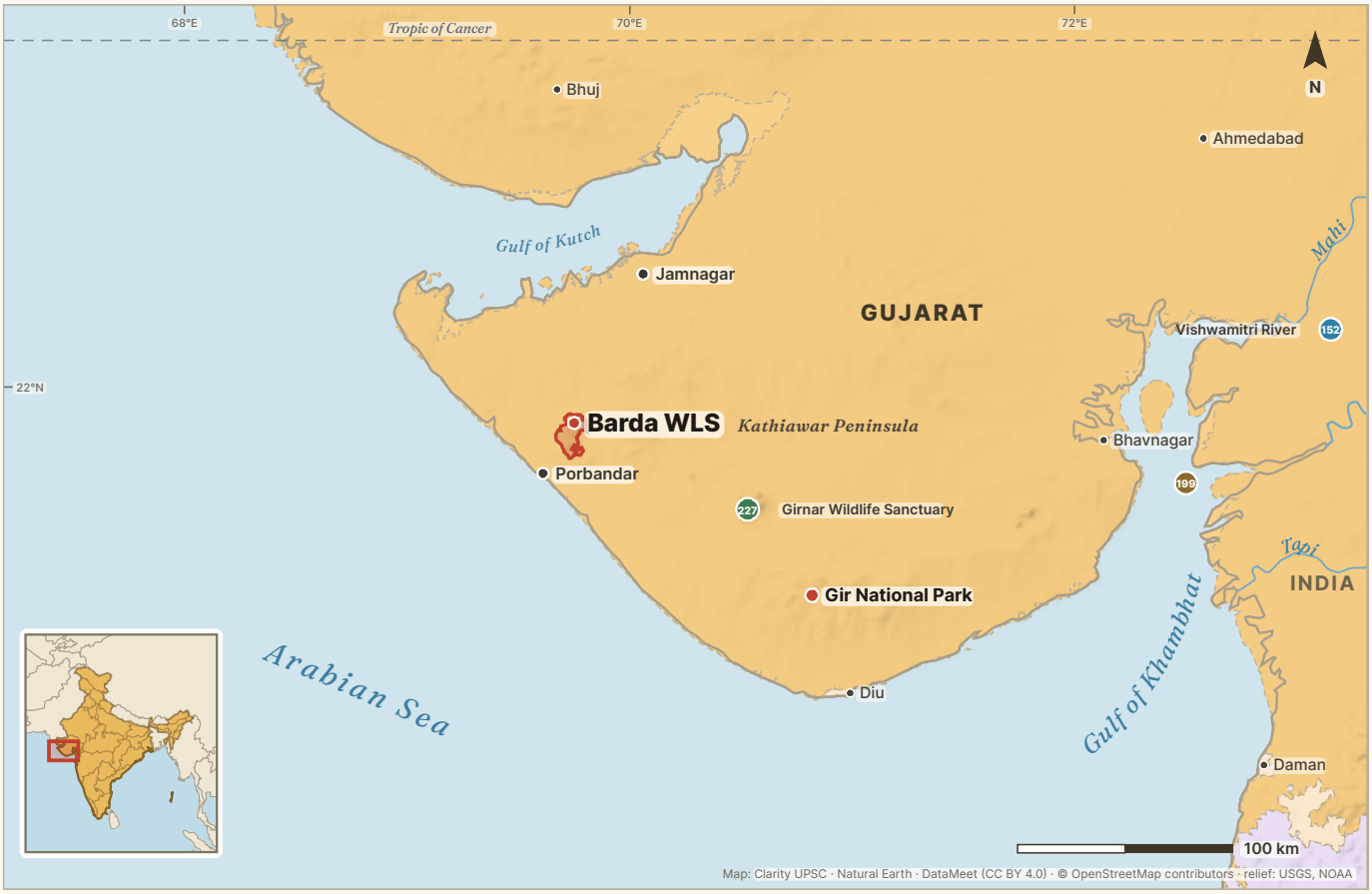
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Clarity UPSC

Wildlife Sanctuary | May 2026

226 Barda Wildlife Sanctuary

Near Porbandar, Saurashtra, Gujarat



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 Gujarat declared Barda Wildlife Sanctuary a second home for Asiatic lions, with 17 lions recorded there; it is 'Satellite Population 8' under Project Lion.

WHERE IT IS

Barda lies about 100 km west of Gir National Park, near Porbandar on Gujarat's Saurashtra coast. Its 192 sq km of semi-arid hills have dry deciduous forest and thorn scrub. Lions lived here until the late 19th century.

SURROUNDED BY Porbandar (south-west) | Jamnagar (north-east) | Gir National Park (about 100 km east) | Arabian Sea coast

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A private hunting reserve until it became a sanctuary in 1979; the 192.31-sq-km sanctuary has a 65.58-sq-km eco-sensitive zone (2017).
- A male lion arrived naturally in 2023; five lionesses followed from Gir. Counts: 17 lions in May 2025, 26 reported in August 2026.
- Project Lion: a ten-year, ₹2,927-crore programme launched in 2020; Gujarat's 2025 estimate put lions at 891, up from 674 in 2020.
- In 2018 canine distemper killed 28 Gir lions, showing the risk of a single population.

PRELIMS TRAP Barda is a second lion home inside Gujarat. Kuno in Madhya Pradesh, once planned for Gir lions, now hosts African cheetahs.

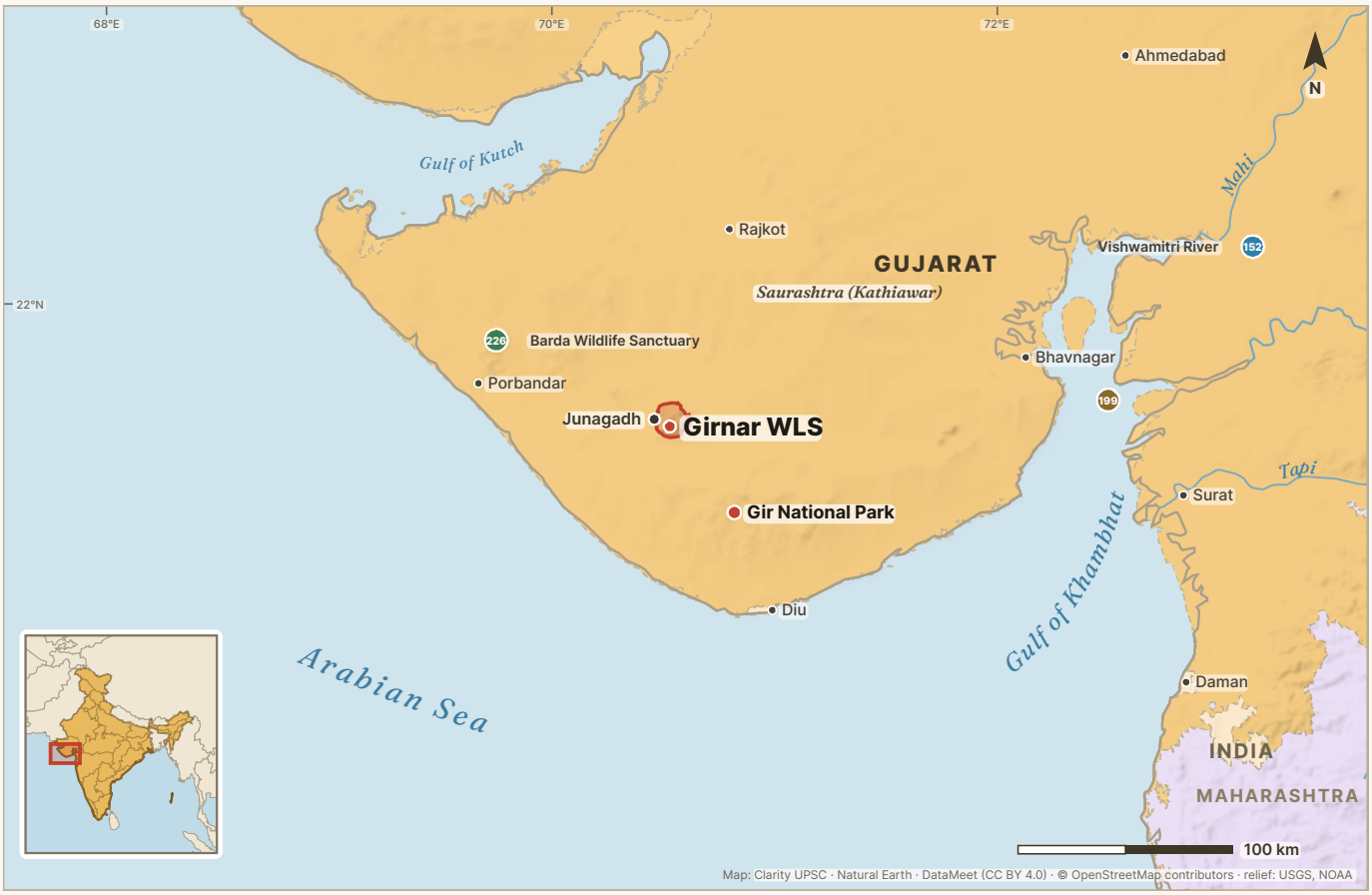
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Wildlife Sanctuary | May 2026

227 Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary

Girnar hills, Junagadh district, Gujarat



WHY IN NEWS

In April 2026 monks of the Girnar hill temples demanded that the eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) around Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary be abolished. They sought roads, power lines and large festivals. Forest officials and conservationists warned this could harm the habitat and raise human–lion conflict.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary covers about 179 sq km in and around the Girnar hills of Junagadh district, in Gujarat's Saurashtra region. It lies about 50 km from Gir National Park and holds Hindu and Jain pilgrimage sites on Mount Girnar.

SURROUNDED BY Junagadh city (west) | Gir National Park (about 50 km) | Saurashtra peninsula

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Established in 2008 as a home for Asiatic lions ranging outside Gir; lions rose from four in 1999 to over 50.
- The Environment Ministry notified its eco-sensitive zone on 31 May 2012; it covers about 9,318 hectares and 27 villages.
- Changing ESZ limits needs approval from both the state and national wildlife boards.
- Dry deciduous forest of teak and dhavdo (Anogeissus latifolia); also leopards, chousingha and chinkara.

PRELIMS TRAP Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary is a separate protected area about 50 km from Gir National Park. Both hold Asiatic lions in Gujarat's Saurashtra region.

Read the full story
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National Park · May 2026

228 Gir National Park

Junagadh, Gir Somnath and Amreli districts, Saurashtra peninsula, Gujarat



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 an outbreak of the tick-borne parasite Babesia killed eight Asiatic lions in Gir National Park between April and May. Seventeen other sick lions were treated and recovered. Forest staff stepped up tick control and checked nearby livestock.

WHERE IT IS

Gir lies in the Saurashtra peninsula of southern Gujarat. Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary lies about 50 km to its north-west, and Barda Wildlife Sanctuary about 100 km to its west.

SURROUNDED BY Junagadh (north-west) · Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary · Barda Wildlife Sanctuary (west) · Saurashtra peninsula

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- All wild Asiatic lions live in and around Gir, so one disease outbreak can threaten the whole population.
- In 2018 canine distemper killed 28 Gir lions; Barda was later developed as a second home.
- Babesia infects red blood cells and spreads mainly through tick bites.
- Gir was set up in 1965 and covers about 1,410 sq km; a 258.71 sq km core is the national park and the rest a wildlife sanctuary.

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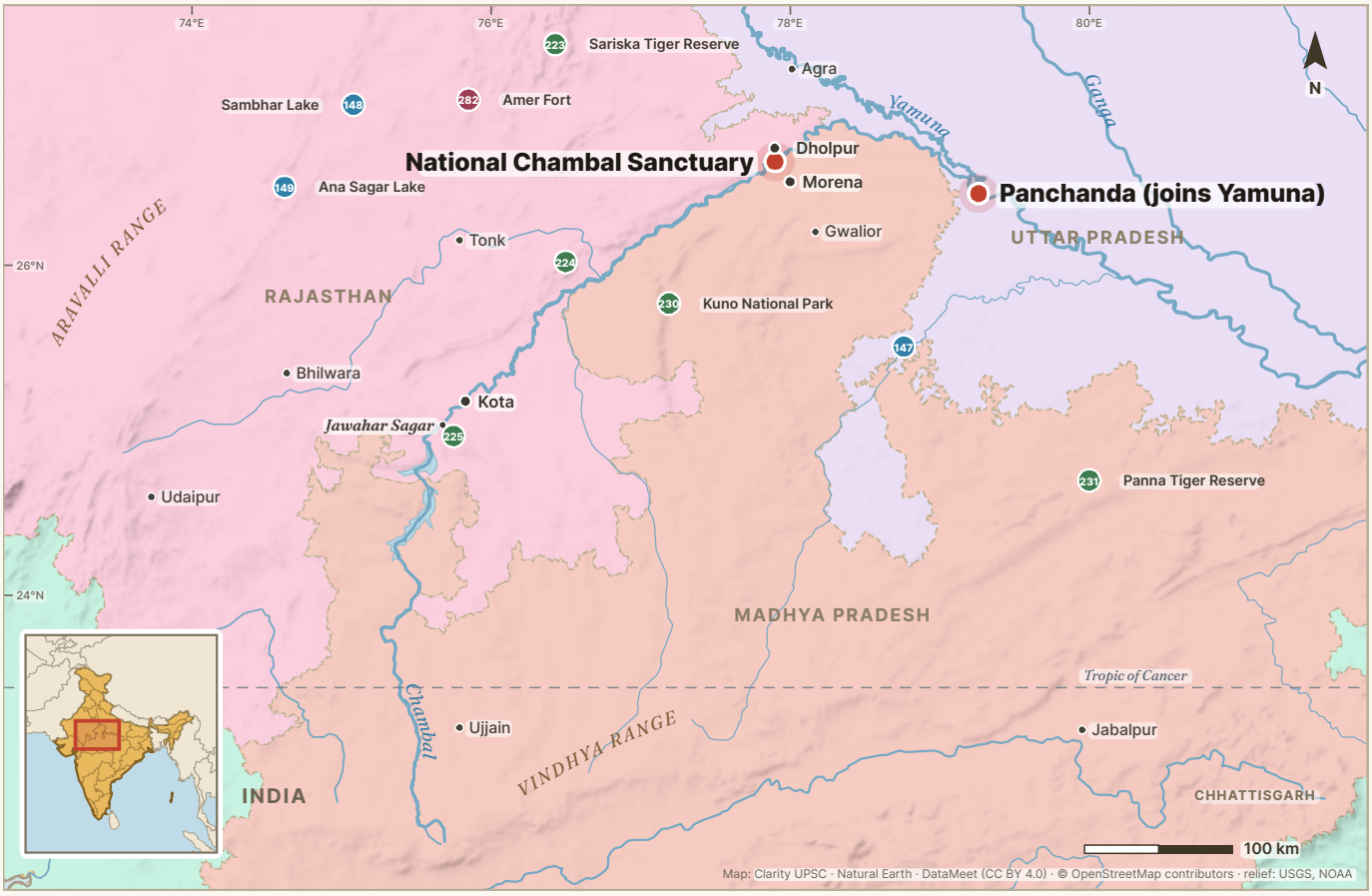
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229 National Chambal Sanctuary

Chambal River across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh

Wildlife Sanctuary | Mar 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. On 22 July 2026 the court was told that Morena authorities had identified 551 mining facilitators; the bench suggested preventive detention for selected offenders and sought stronger enforcement and protection for staff.

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.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

National Park · Jun 2026

230 Kuno National Park

Sheopur district, Gwalior–Chambal region, northern Madhya Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

Around World Environment Day in June 2026, a camera-trap survey in Kuno National Park recorded a wild caracal for the first time in decades. Experts saw the sighting of this elusive 'flying cat' as a sign of healthier grasslands.

WHERE IT IS

Kuno lies in the Gwalior–Chambal region of northern Madhya Pradesh and covers about 748.76 sq km. The Kuno River flows north through the Vindhyan hills and divides the park.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Rajasthan

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Sanctuary in 1981, national park in 2018; dry deciduous forest of khair, salai and kardhai with wide grasslands.
- Under Project Cheetah, eight cheetahs from Namibia arrived in September 2022 and 12 from South Africa in February 2023.
- Predators include leopard, sloth bear, dhole, striped hyena and Indian wolf; the caracal now joins the list.
- The translocations aim to restore the cheetah, which vanished from India in the 1950s.

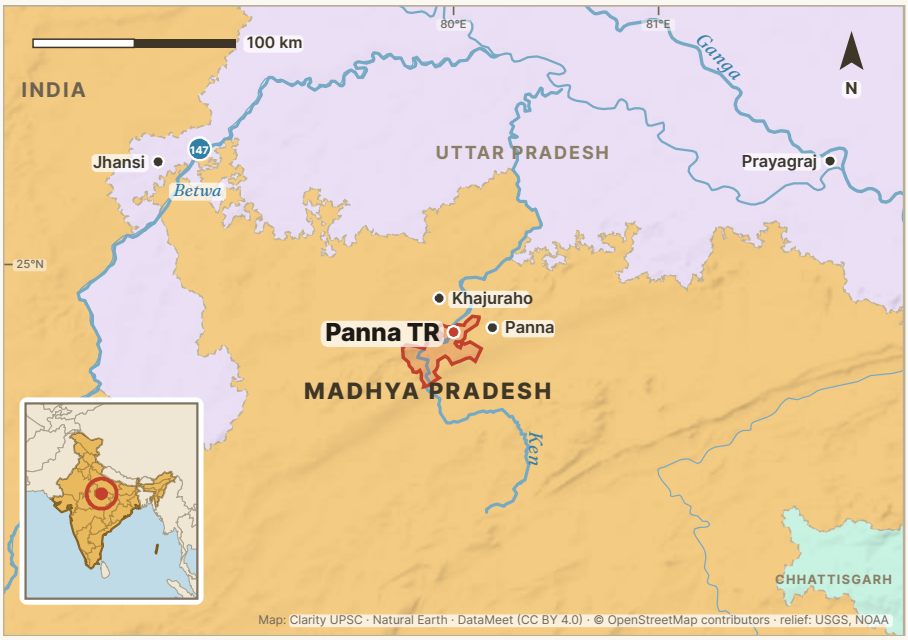
PRELIMS TRAP Kuno was prepared for Asiatic lions from Gir, but no lions have moved; it received African cheetahs under Project Cheetah instead.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Tiger Reserve · May 2026

231 Panna Tiger Reserve

Panna and Chhatarpur districts, northern Madhya Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

On 7 May 2026 a two-year-old male tiger was found dead in the buffer zone of Panna Tiger Reserve. It had been rescued from a village and released there. It was the 28th tiger death reported in Madhya Pradesh in 2026.

WHERE IT IS

The reserve lies in the Vindhyan range of northern Madhya Pradesh, across Panna and Chhatarpur districts. The Ken River flows through its teak and dry deciduous forests, grasslands and rocky plateaus.

SURROUNDED BY Panna district · Chhatarpur district · Ken River · Khajuraho (north)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Panna National Park was created in 1981 and became India's 22nd tiger reserve in 1994.
- Poaching wiped out almost all its tigers by 2009; a reintroduction programme repopulated the forest.
- Also holds leopards, chinkara, crocodiles and more than 300 bird species.

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Tap your answer — the reason follows.

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Wildlife Sanctuary | Aug 2026

232 Bagdara Wildlife Sanctuary

Sidhi and Singrauli districts, Madhya Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

Madhya Pradesh proposed denotifying Bagdara Wildlife Sanctuary, citing local development difficulties. On 9 July 2026 the National Board for Wildlife's Standing Committee asked the state to examine other landscapes for a compensatory notification. The sanctuary had not been denotified.

WHERE IT IS

Bagdara lies across Sidhi and Singrauli districts of Madhya Pradesh. The Son River forms its southern boundary and links it with the wider Vindhyan landscape. About 64 villages with over 32,000 people lie inside it.

SURROUNDED BY Son River (south) | Vindhyan landscape | Sidhi district | Singrauli district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It was established in 1978, mainly to protect blackbuck; the Wildlife Institute of India records its area as 478 sq km.
- The committee suggested Balaghat, east of Kanha, or land between Sanjay-Dubri and Bandhavgarh as possible replacement areas.
- The NBWL Standing Committee, under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, is chaired by the Union Environment Minister.

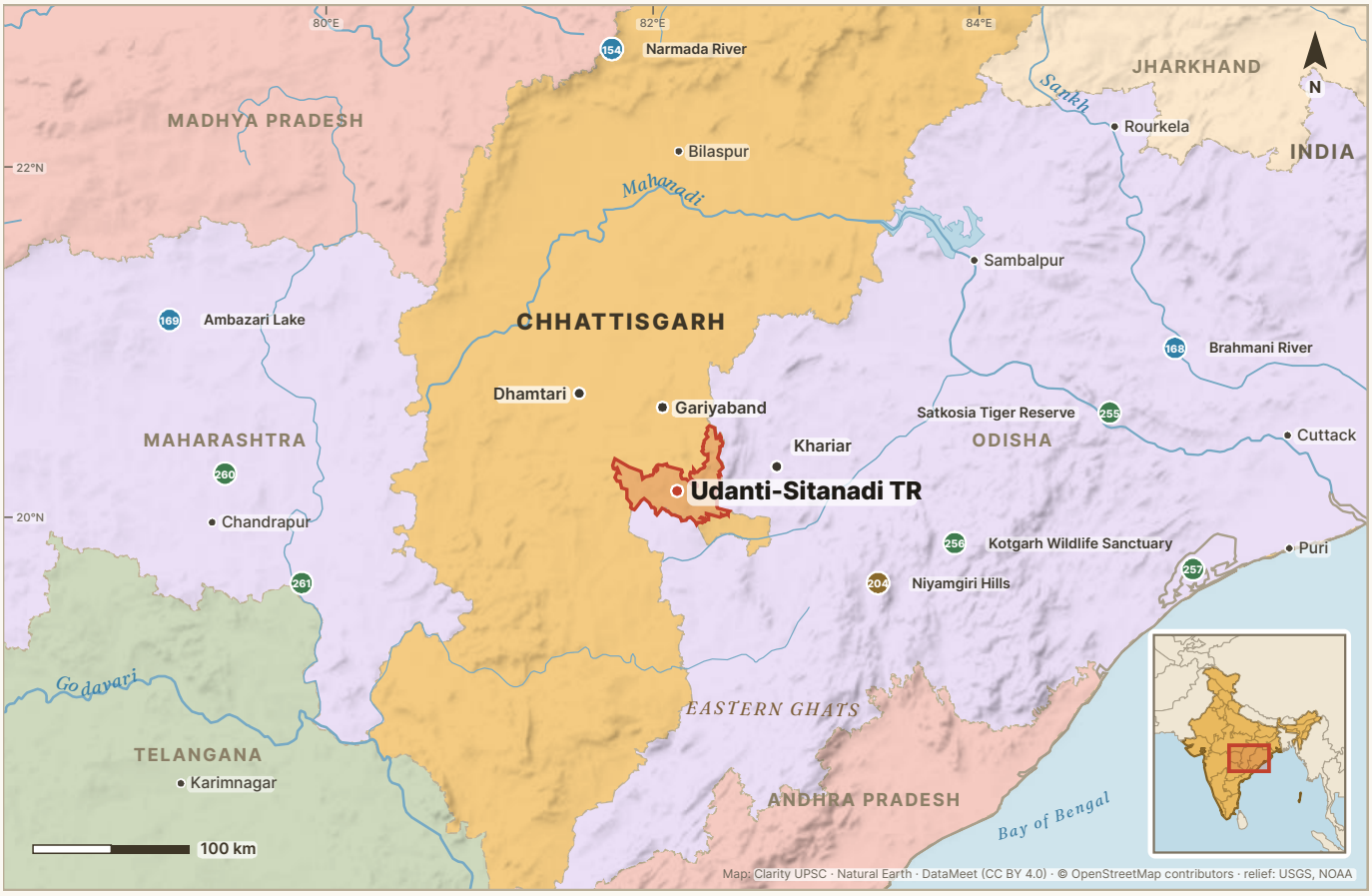
PRELIMS TRAP Bagdara (Sidhi–Singrauli) is in Madhya Pradesh, close to its border with Uttar Pradesh.

Read the full story
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233 Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve

Tiger Reserve | Mar 2026 | Apr 2026 | Jun 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In June 2026 the reserve had one pure-bred male wild water buffalo, and officials planned to bring two females from Barnawapara.

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.

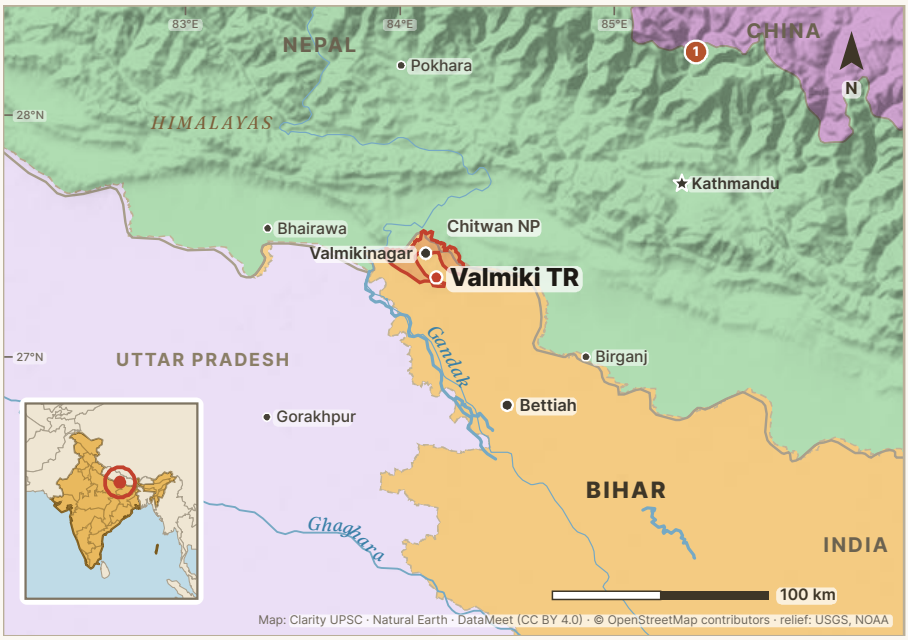
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Tiger Reserve · Jul 2026

234 Valmiki Tiger Reserve

West Champaran district, north-western Bihar



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 a field report described Valmiki Tiger Reserve as Bihar's main snake hotspot, with more than 45 species recorded. Monsoon floods were increasing snake encounters near settlements.

WHERE IT IS

Valmiki lies in West Champaran district of north-western Bihar, beside Nepal's Chitwan forests. The Gandak flows along its western side. It marks the easternmost limit of India's Himalayan Terai forests.

SURROUNDED BY Chitwan forests (Nepal) · Gandak River (west) · Uttar Pradesh (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Bihar's first tiger reserve (Kaimur has in-principle approval to become the second), it became India's 18th in 1994, after sanctuary (1978) and national park (1990) status; NTCA lists 899 sq km.
- Streams sink into the porous, pebbly Bhabar and reappear in the wetter, marshy Terai to its south.
- The long-snouted vine snake (Ahaetulla longirostris), described in 2024, is recorded from Bihar, Meghalaya and Uttar Pradesh.

PRELIMS TRAP Valmiki (Bihar) adjoins Nepal's Chitwan; Dudhwa (Uttar Pradesh) connects with Nepal's Shuklaphanta and Bardia.

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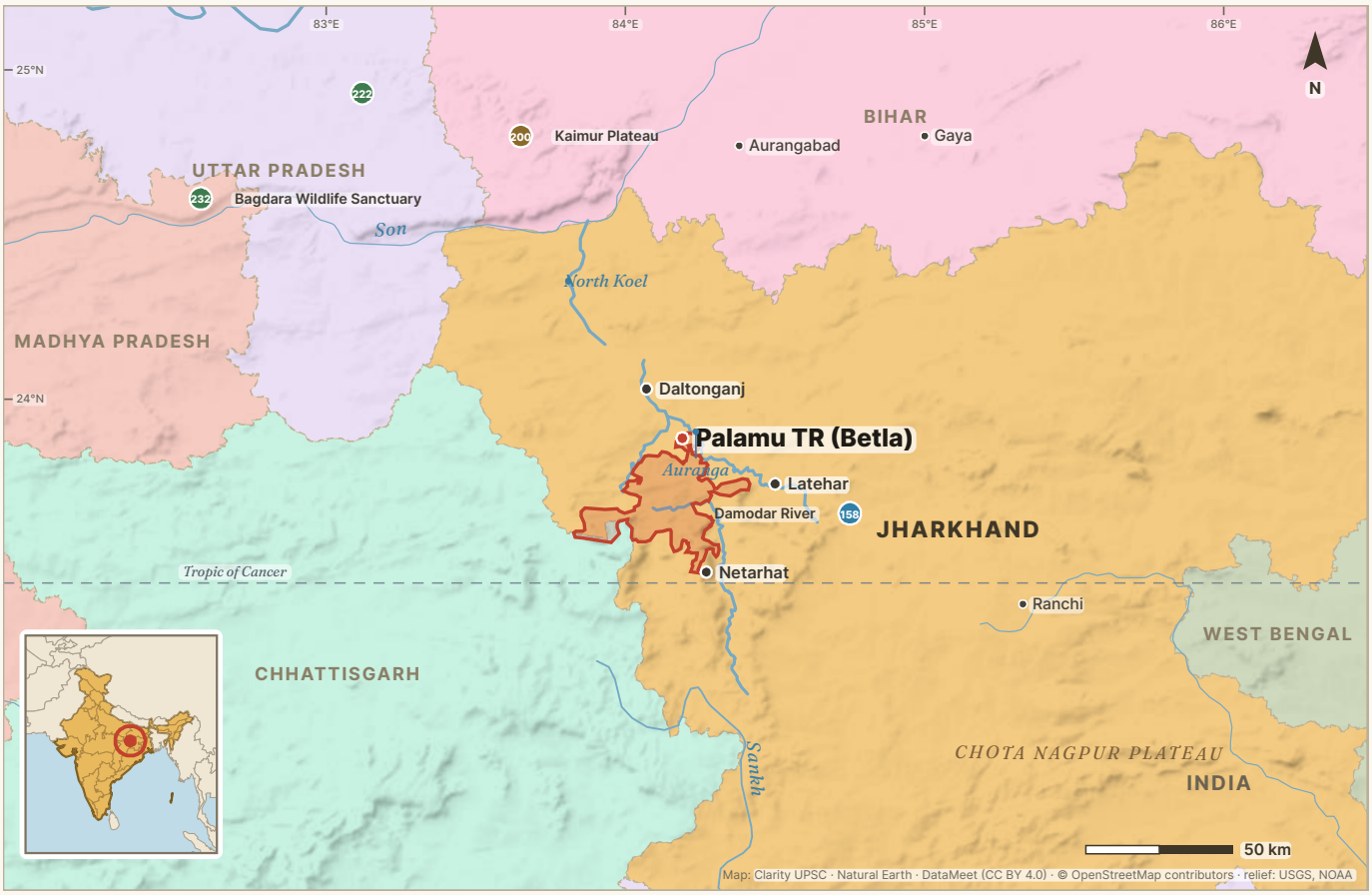
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Tiger Reserve · May 2026

235 Palamu Tiger Reserve

Latehar district, Chhotanagpur plateau, Jharkhand



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 Jharkhand prepared a proposal for India's first dedicated human–elephant conflict research centre, on a 15-acre site in Palamu Tiger Reserve. It would use artificial intelligence to study elephant calls, behaviour and movement.

WHERE IT IS

The reserve lies in western Latehar district on the Chhotanagpur plateau of Jharkhand. It sits between the Netarhat forest to the south and the Auranga River to the north. It covers about 1,130 sq km of sal, mixed deciduous forest and bamboo.

SURROUNDED BY Netarhat forest (south) · Auranga River (north) · Koel and Burha rivers · Latehar district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- One of the first nine Project Tiger reserves (1973–74); the first tiger census by pugmark tracking was held here in 1932.
- Betla National Park (226.32 sq km) lies within the 1,129.93-sq-km reserve.
- A watershed for the North Koel, Burha and Auranga rivers; the Burha is a tributary of the North Koel.
- Threats include poaching, illegal logging, forest fires, invasive plants, proposed mining, and roads and railways that cut animal movement.

Read the full story
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Wildlife Sanctuary · Aug 2026

236 Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary

Darjeeling hills, West Bengal



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 a very dark, melanistic leopard cub was photographed near Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary in West Bengal's Darjeeling hills. The cub shows that leopards breed in the wider landscape. Earlier camera work had also recorded melanistic leopards in the sanctuary.

WHERE IT IS

Senchal lies about 11 km from Darjeeling town and covers about 39 sq km of steep Eastern Himalayan terrain, from about 1,500 m to above 2,600 m. Tiger Hill and the Senchal lakes lie within this highland.

SURROUNDED BY Darjeeling town · Tea plantations · Roads and settlements

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The sanctuary is a water catchment for Darjeeling; its forest protects streams and reservoirs.
- Mammals include leopards, Himalayan black bears, barking deer and serow.
- Set up in 1915, it is among India's oldest wildlife sanctuaries; oak and rhododendron forest covers its slopes.

PRELIMS TRAP A 'black panther' is a melanistic leopard, Panthera pardus; its rosettes still show under suitable light.

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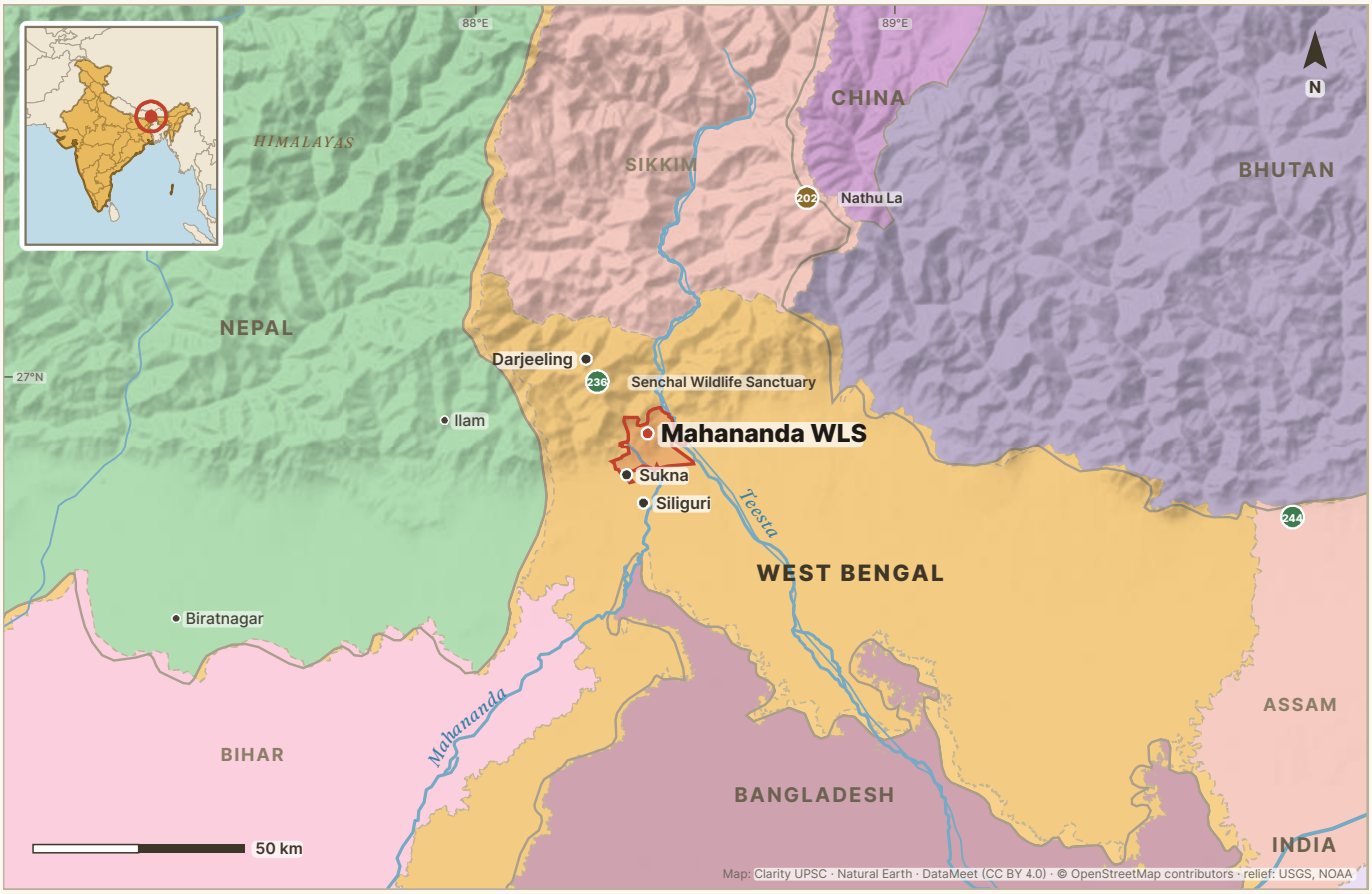
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Wildlife Sanctuary | Jul 2026

237 Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary

Darjeeling district, northern West Bengal



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 West Bengal announced plans to shrink the proposed eco-sensitive zone around Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary from five km to one km. Officials cited infrastructure around Siliguri, Dabgram, Salugara and Sukna; environmental groups warned that wildlife corridors could be exposed. The change needs central notification.

WHERE IT IS

Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary covers about 158 sq km in the Himalayan foothills of Darjeeling district, northern West Bengal. Siliguri and Sukna lie close to its boundary. The Teesta lies to its east, and the Mahananda River drains its western part.

SURROUNDED BY: Teesta River (east) | Mahananda River | Siliguri | Sukna

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its altitude rises from about 166 m near Sukna to about 1,500 m around Latpanchar, giving several habitat types.
- It began as a game sanctuary in 1955; a 1976 notification brought it under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The Union Environment Ministry notifies eco-sensitive zones under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- The Supreme Court set a default one-km zone in June 2022 and allowed site-specific zones in April 2023.

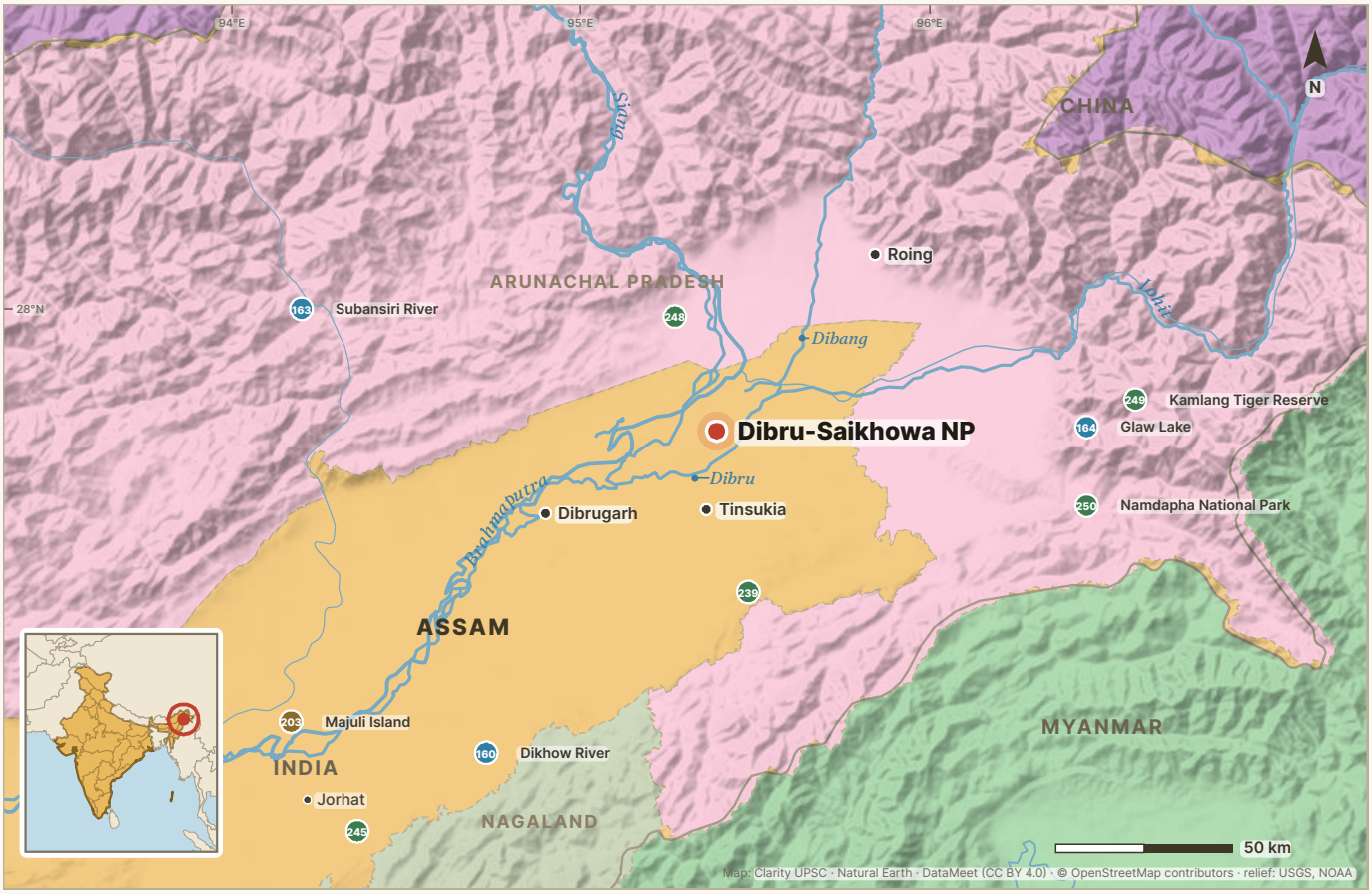
PRELIMS TRAP An eco-sensitive zone is a regulated belt outside the sanctuary boundary; activities there are graded as prohibited, regulated or permitted.

Read the full story
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238 Dibru-Saikhowa National Park

National Park | Apr 2026 | May 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In May 2026 groups in Jagun, Tinsukia district, opposed a reported plan to resettle families of Laika, a forest village inside the park, in Tirap Reserved Forest.

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.

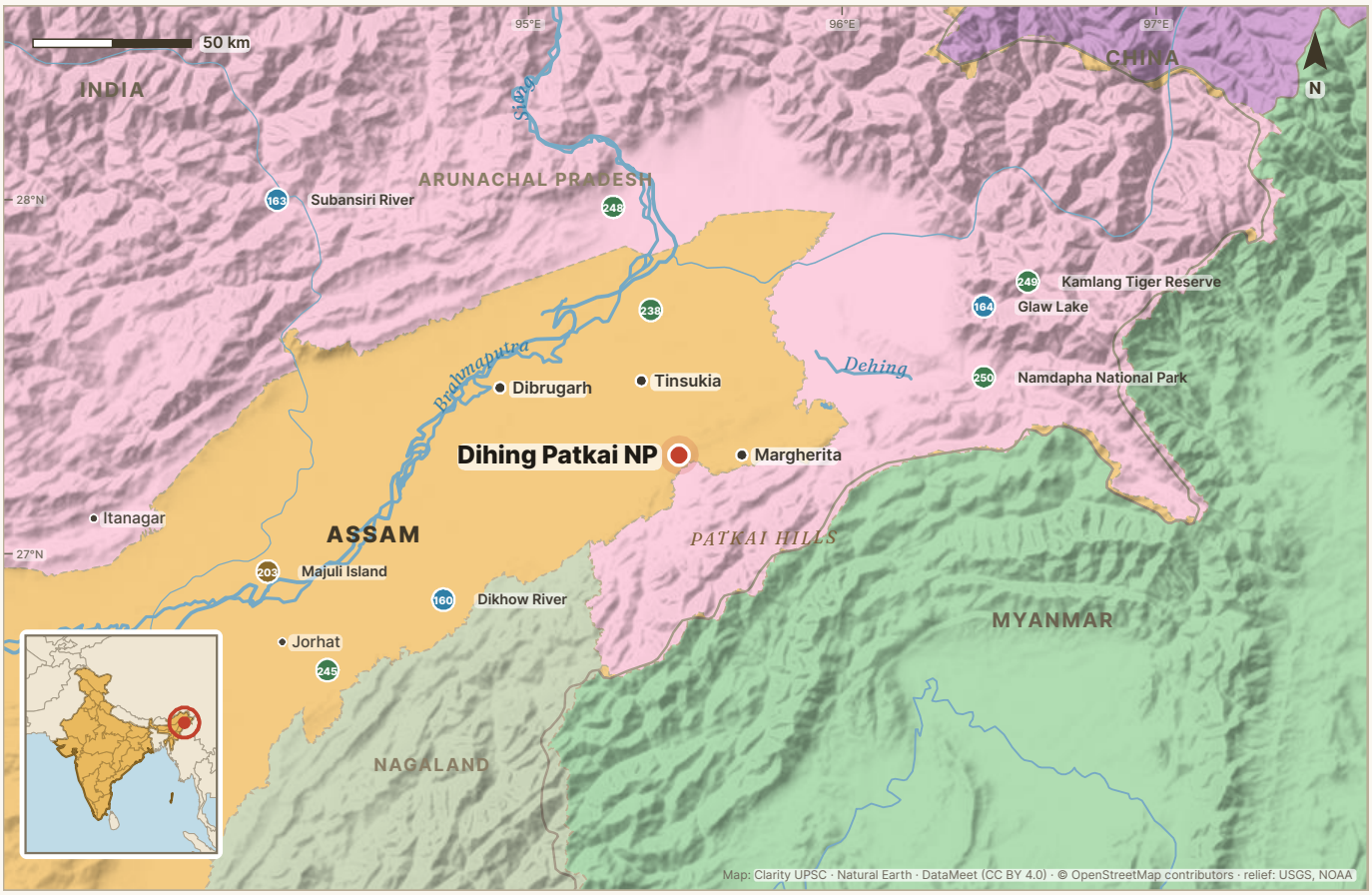
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National Park | Aug 2026

239 Dihing Patkai National Park

Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts, Upper Assam



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 a camera trap photographed a male Bengal tiger inside Dihing Patkai National Park, Assam. The Zoological Survey of India ran the exercise with the Margherita West Forest Range, and the State's forest minister announced the result on 19 August. Earlier, only pugmarks had suggested tiger presence.

WHERE IT IS

Dihing Patkai lies in the Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts of Upper Assam and covers 234.26 sq km. The Dehing River and the Patkai hills, which extend towards the India–Myanmar border, give it its name.

SURROUNDED BY Reserve forests | Tea estates | Coal and oil areas | Patkai hills (towards Myanmar)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It protects tropical lowland evergreen rainforest; official records also spell it 'Dehing Patkai'.
- It became a wildlife sanctuary in June 2004 and a national park in June 2021.
- Known for a rich wild-cat community, including tiger, leopard and clouded leopard.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

240

Behali Reserved Forest

Biswanath district, Assam, on the Arunachal Pradesh border

Reserved Forest | Jul 2026



WHY IN NEWS

On 7 July 2026 armed men reportedly fired about 16 rounds at forest guards who were trying to stop illegal tree felling inside Behali forest in Assam. The incident renewed attention on encroachment and the Assam–Arunachal Pradesh boundary dispute.

WHERE IT IS

Behali lies in Biswanath district of Assam, north of the Brahmaputra, in the Eastern Himalayan foothills. Its northern edge meets the Assam–Arunachal Pradesh boundary. The Borgang River lies to its west and the Buroi River to its east.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Assam | Arunachal Pradesh

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It has been a Reserved Forest since 1917; a May 2022 preliminary notification proposed a 157.25 sq km wildlife sanctuary.
- It is part of the Sonitpur Elephant Reserve (2003) and links elephant habitats of northern Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is an Important Bird Area (1994) and a Key Biodiversity Area (2004), with white-winged duck and great and wreathed hornbills.
- A Reserved Forest is notified under forest law; a wildlife sanctuary is declared under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

PRELIMS TRAP Behali's legal status is Reserved Forest; its wildlife sanctuary is still proposed, after a preliminary notification in May 2022.

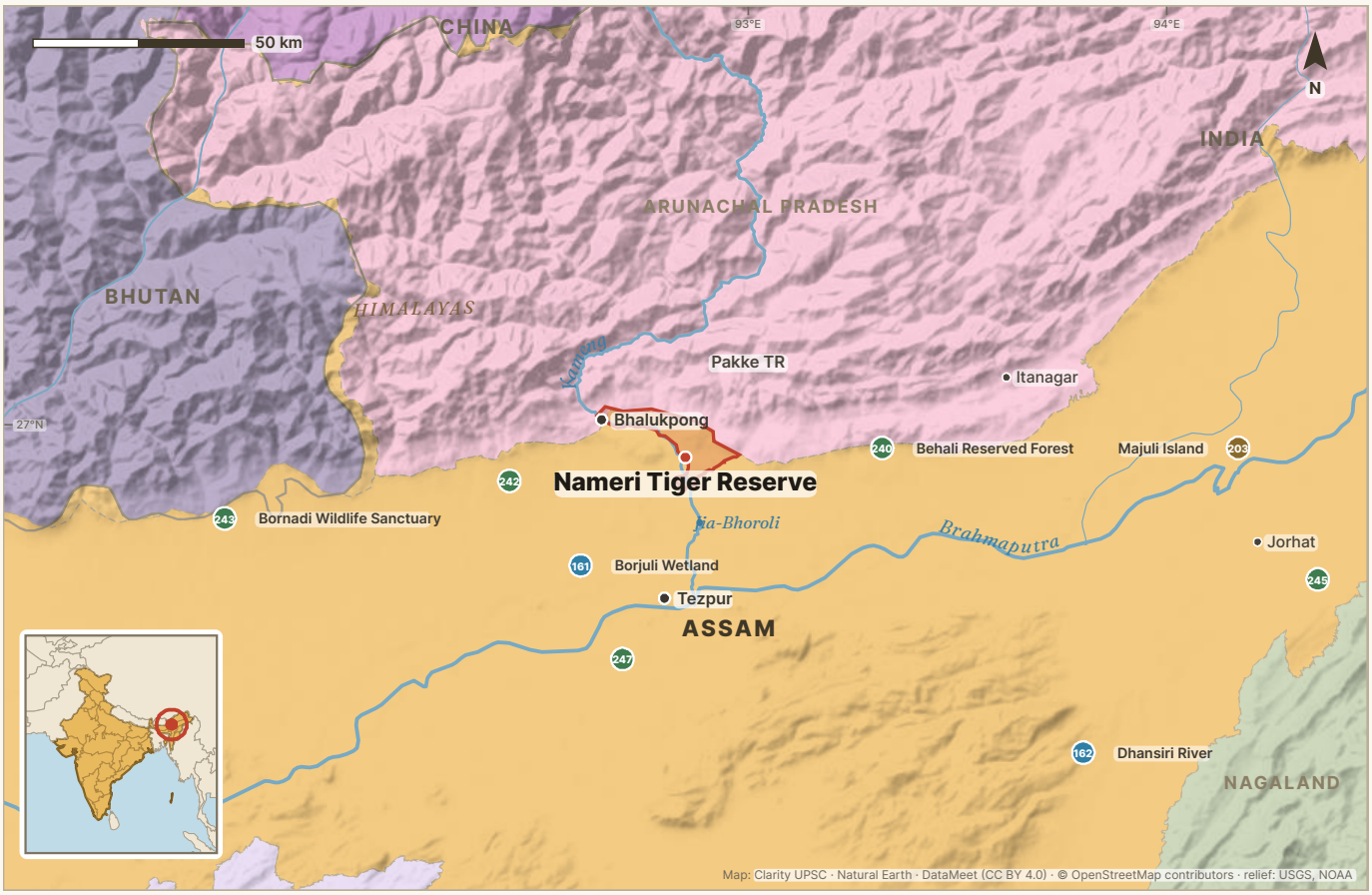
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Clarity UPSC

Tiger Reserve · Jul 2026

241 Nameri Tiger Reserve

Sonitpur district, northern Assam, on the Arunachal Pradesh border



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 Assam announced that tigers recorded in Nameri Tiger Reserve had risen from three in 2022 to twelve, a rise validated by the Wildlife Institute of India; two tigers had also returned to the Sonai-Rupai satellite core.

WHERE IT IS

Nameri lies in Sonitpur district, on the north bank side of Assam's Brahmaputra landscape, along the Eastern Himalayan foothills. Its northern boundary meets Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh. The Jia-Bhoroli and Bordikorai rivers are key features around its core.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Assam · Arunachal Pradesh

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- NTCA lists a 320 sq km core and 144 sq km buffer; 120 sq km of Sonai-Rupai Sanctuary became a satellite core in 2015.
- CA|TS assesses management against seven pillars and 17 elements; approval follows national, independent and executive-committee review.
- Forests, grasslands and wetlands support elephants and white-winged wood ducks besides tigers.
- The Phase-IV protocol separates a minimum count of identified tigers from a statistical population estimate.

PRELIMS TRAP Nameri (Assam) and Pakke (Arunachal Pradesh) are adjoining but separate tiger reserves. The Jia-Bhoroli at Nameri is called the Kameng in Arunachal Pradesh.

Read the full story
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Clarity UPSC

Wildlife Sanctuary · Aug 2026

242 Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary

Sonitpur district, Assam (Himalayan foothills)



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 the National Tiger Conservation Authority documented tiger recovery at Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam. Tiger signs, lost after severe encroachment in the late 1990s and early 2000s, reappeared in 2013–14. The account linked recovery to better protection and the sanctuary's role beside Nameri Tiger Reserve.

WHERE IT IS

Sonai Rupai lies in Assam's Sonitpur district, in the Himalayan foothills north of the Brahmaputra valley. Its notified area is about 220 sq km. Its forests extend towards Arunachal Pradesh, in a wider landscape that includes Nameri, Doimara and the Eaglenest region.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Arunachal Pradesh

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Notified in 1998, it lies in the bhabar–terai transition of forests, grasslands and perennial rivers.
- In 2015 about 120 sq km became a satellite core of Nameri Tiger Reserve.
- The landscape once held rhinoceros, wild buffalo, tigers and the Bengal florican.
- Its corridors also serve elephants and gaur moving between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

PRELIMS TRAP Sonai Rupai keeps its wildlife-sanctuary status; about 120 sq km of it serves as a satellite core of Nameri Tiger Reserve.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

Wildlife Sanctuary · Jul 2026

243 Bornadi Wildlife Sanctuary

Udalguri and Baksa districts, Assam, on the Bhutan border



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 field observations and camera traps confirmed dholes inside Assam's Bornadi Wildlife Sanctuary, a species rarely seen in its recent records. The finding suggests that prey and forest links may still support predators.

WHERE IT IS

Bornadi (also spelt Barnadi) lies in the Himalayan foothills of Assam across Udalguri and Baksa districts, with Bhutan directly to its north. The Bornadi River forms its western boundary, and the sanctuary sits on the porous Bhabar belt.

SURROUNDED BY Bhutan (north) · Udalguri district · Baksa district · Bornadi River (west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It was notified on 22 August 1980 over 26.22 sq km, mainly to protect the pygmy hog and the hispid hare.
- The dhole (Cuon alpinus), or Asiatic wild dog, is Endangered on the IUCN Red List.
- It lies within the wider Bhutan–Greater Manas landscape used by wide-ranging animals.

Read the full story
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National Park | Jul 2026

244 Buxa Tiger Reserve and Raimona National Park

Alipurduar district (West Bengal) and Kokrajhar district (Assam), along the Bhutan border



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 a local report described an alleged forest-guard firing in Raimona National Park's Athiabari Range; a man reportedly suspected of illegal tree felling had not been found.

WHERE IT IS

Buxa Tiger Reserve lies in Alipurduar district of northern West Bengal, with Bhutan to the north and Assam to the east. Raimona National Park lies across the Sankosh River in Kokrajhar district, on Assam's western edge. Bhutan's Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary adjoins Raimona, and the three form one transboundary landscape.

SURROUNDED BY

- Bhutan (north)
- Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary (Bhutan)
- Sankosh River (Buxa–Raimona link)
- Jaldapara (west of Buxa)
- Kachugaon Forest Division (Assam)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Assam notified Raimona as a national park on 8 June 2021; it covers 422 sq km in the Kachugaon Forest Division.
- The 2018 national tiger assessment recorded no tigers in Buxa; its forests meet Assam's at the Sankosh, a recognised Buxa–Ripu corridor.
- The golden langur is Raimona's flagship primate; elephants, gaur, clouded leopards and hornbills also live here.
- A national park allows fewer private rights and less grazing than a wildlife sanctuary under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

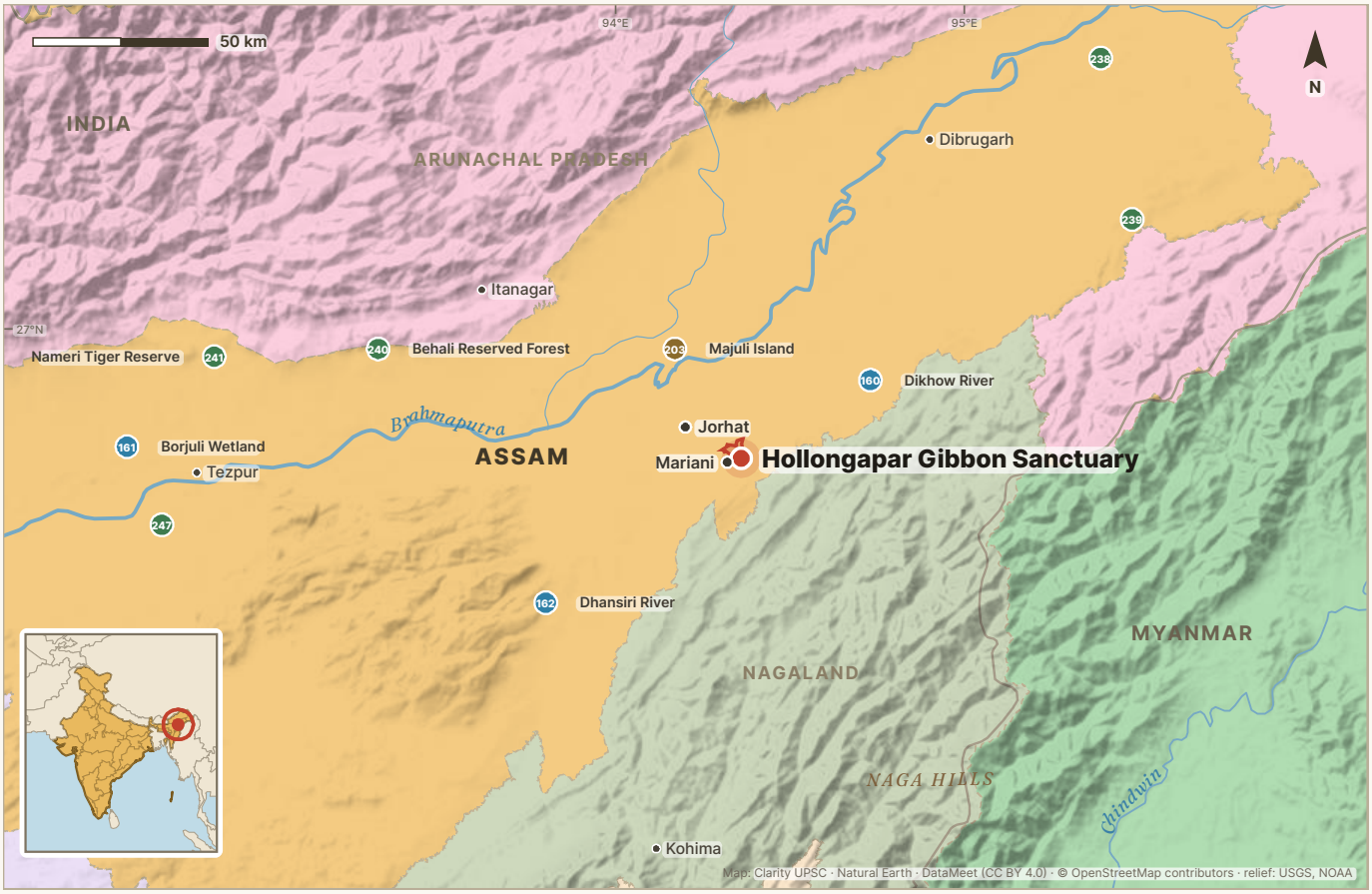
PRELIMS TRAP Raimona belongs to Assam; Phibsoo lies in Bhutan and Buxa in West Bengal.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

245 Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary

Wildlife Sanctuary | Feb 2026 | May 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. On 16 May 2026 another male gibbon was filmed crossing a rope-and-net canopy bridge over the line, believed to be the first such use by a gibbon anywhere. In July 2026 a new field guide recorded 281 butterfly species in the sanctuary.

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.

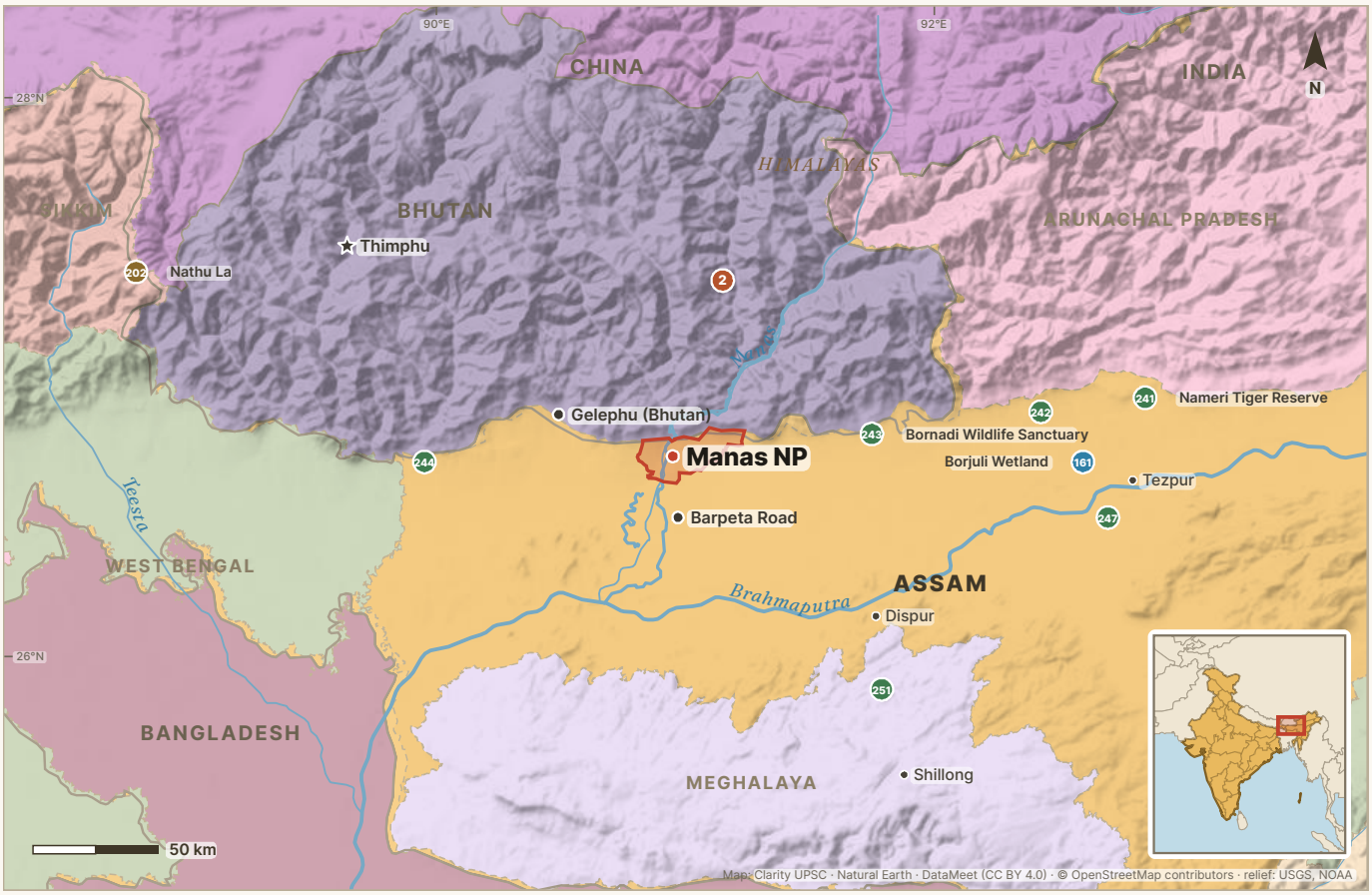
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Tiger Reserve | Jun 2026 | Jul 2026

246 Manas Tiger Reserve

Himalayan foothills of western Assam, on the Bhutan border



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 surveys reported stable or rising numbers of greater one-horned rhinoceroses and pygmy hogs in Manas. In July 2026 an assessment found that grassland in the tiger reserve fell from 53.61% of the study area in 1990 to 30.24% in 2019, as aggressively spreading plants, encroachment, grazing and fire changed the habitat.

WHERE IT IS

Manas lies in Assam's Himalayan foothills along the Bhutan border and takes its name from the Manas River. It adjoins Bhutan's Royal Manas National Park, forming a transboundary landscape of alluvial grasslands and riverine and tropical forests.

SURROUNDED BY Royal Manas National Park (Bhutan) | Manas River | Brahmaputra plains (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- One of India's first nine Project Tiger reserves (1973), it became a World Heritage Site in 1985 and was 'in Danger' 1992–2011.
- The tiger reserve covers 2,837.31 sq km and the World Heritage property about 391 sq km; the boundaries overlap but differ.
- Chromolaena odorata, Mikania micrantha and Lantana camara smother grasslands that sustain pygmy hogs, hispid hares, Bengal floricans and rhinoceroses.
- Osbeckia assamensis (family Melastomataceae) is a pink-flowered shrub; its describers assessed it as Data Deficient under IUCN criteria.

PRELIMS TRAP Manas National Park is in Assam; Royal Manas National Park lies across the border in Bhutan.

Read the full story
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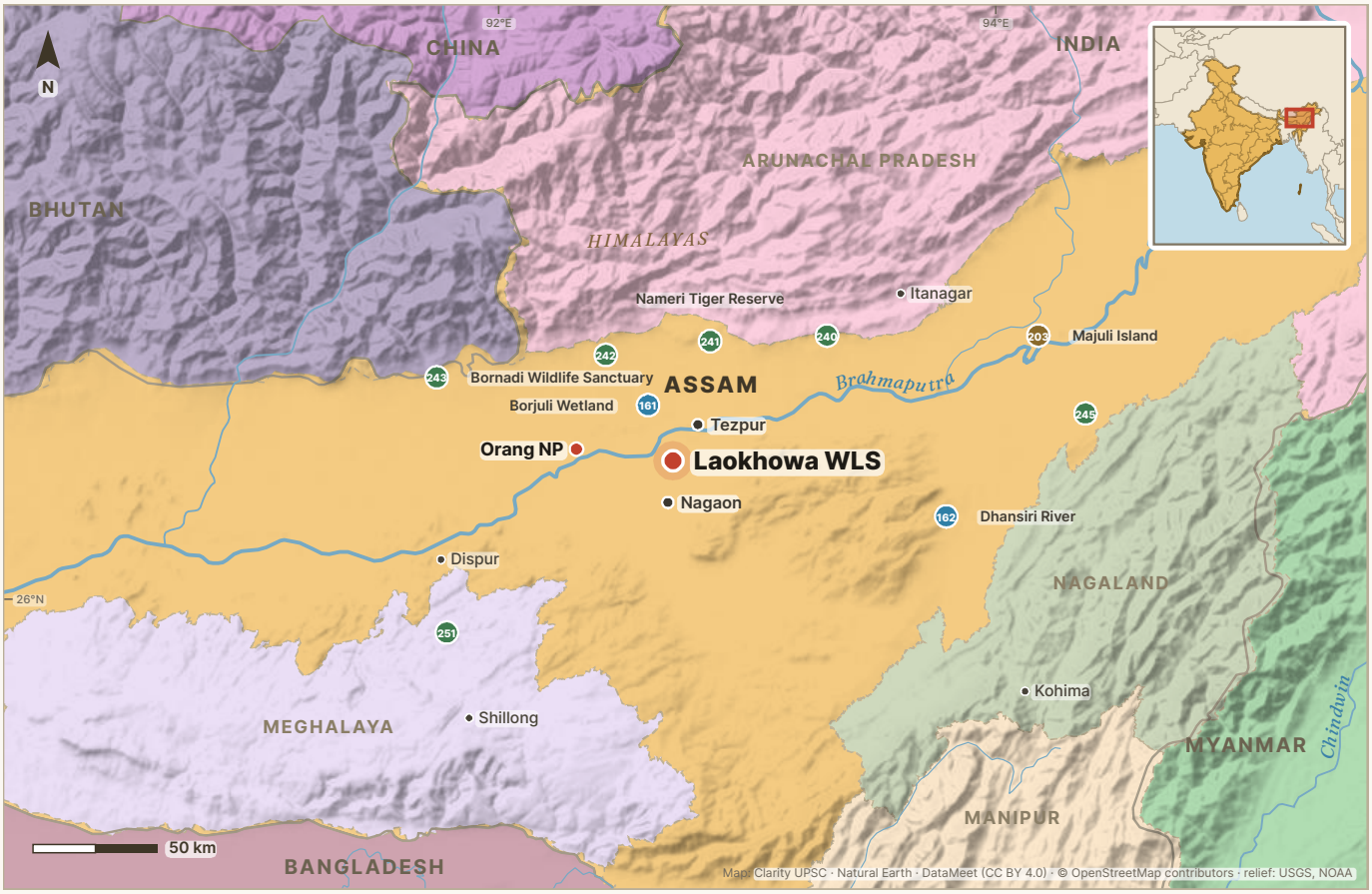
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Laokhowa and Burachapori Wildlife Sanctuaries

Wildlife Sanctuary | Mar 2026 | Jul 2026 | Aug 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In early July 2026 Assam's forest department ran an eviction drive in Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary against illegal crop fields and fish ponds; residents alleged excessive force. In August 2026 officials announced Laokhowa's first recorded smew, a Eurasian diving duck.

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.

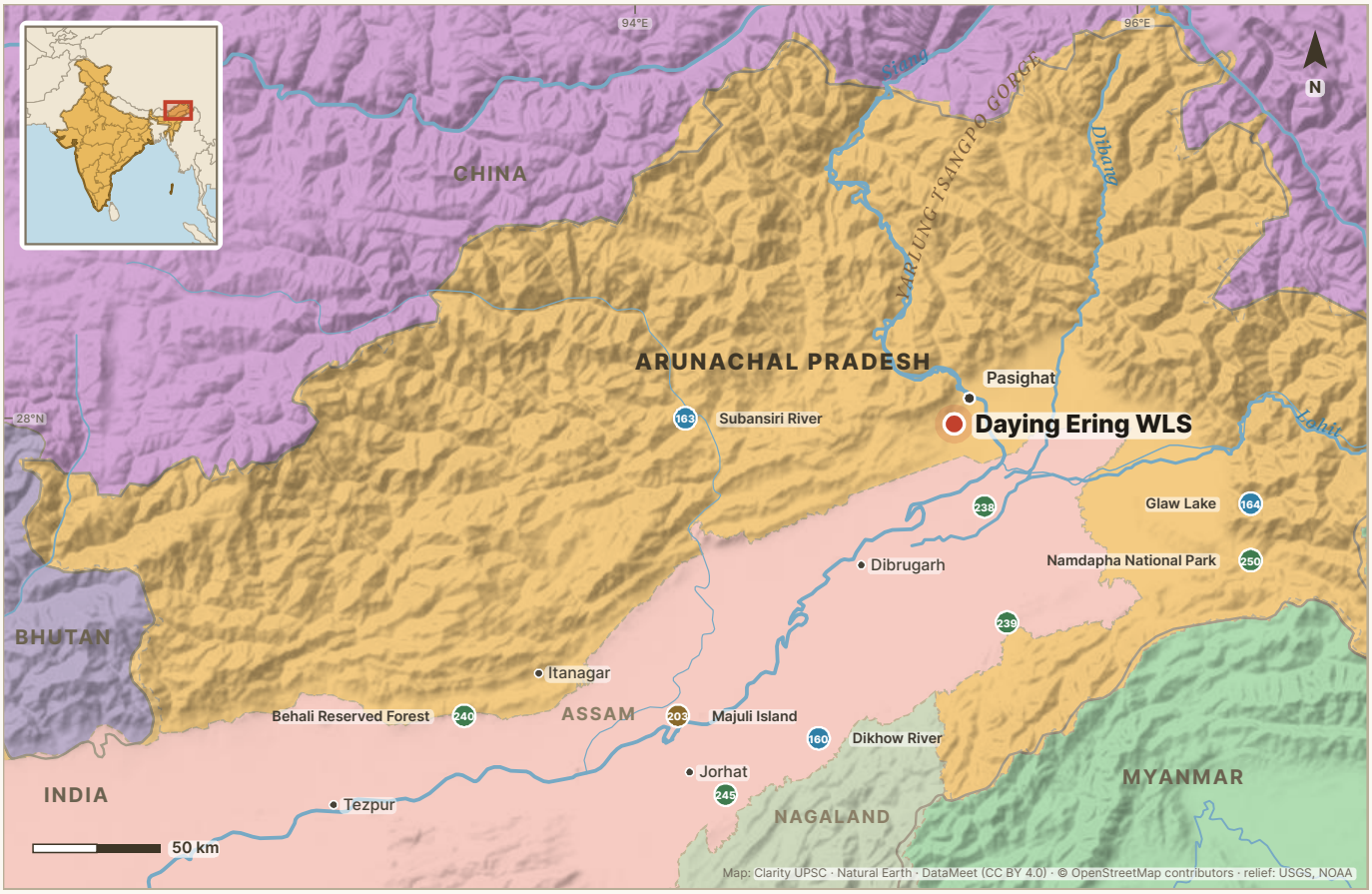
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Wildlife Sanctuary | May 2026

248 Daying Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary

Near Pasighat, East Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 conservationists reported the first camera-trap photograph of a tiger in Daying Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary in nearly 20 years. The image was recorded on 14 January 2026 by forest staff and ATREE researchers, with help from local communities.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary lies about 13 km from Pasighat in East Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh. It spreads over river islands formed by the Siang and Sibia rivers. Grasslands, swamp forests and water channels form its landscape.

SURROUNDED BY Siang River | Sibia (Sibya) River | Pasighat town | East Siang district

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Named after Daying Ering, a former Member of Parliament and social worker.
- Camera traps also recorded the critically endangered Chinese pangolin and the hispid hare.
- An important wintering ground for migratory waterfowl; hoolock gibbons and hog deer also occur.

PRELIMS TRAP The Siang is the name of the Brahmaputra (Tsangpo in Tibet) in Arunachal Pradesh. It becomes the Brahmaputra after the Dibang and Lohit join it in Assam.

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249 Kamlang Tiger Reserve

Lohit district, Arunachal Pradesh

Tiger Reserve · Aug 2026

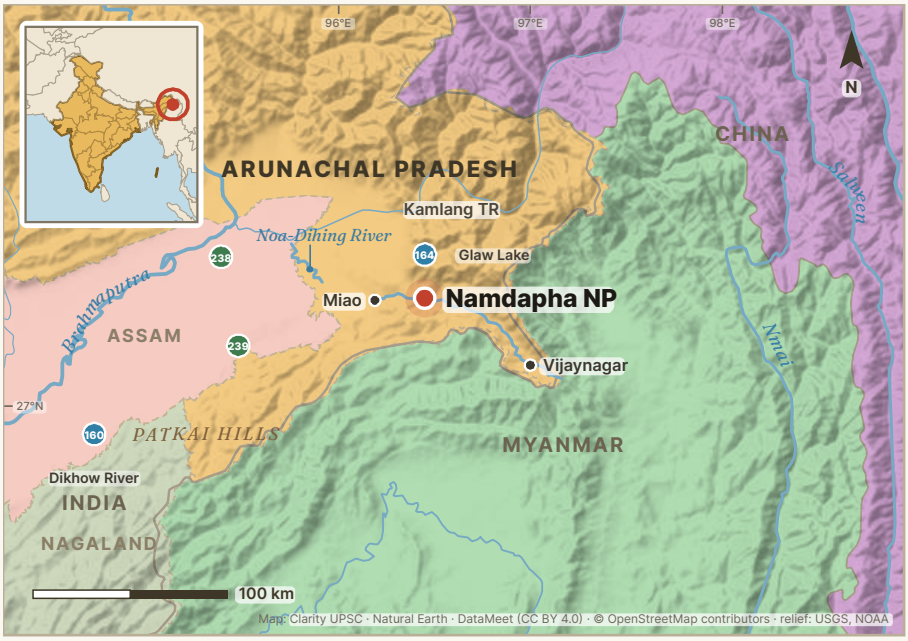
In news: In August 2026 frontline staff of Kamlang Tiger Reserve, including the Special Tiger Protection Force, received new field and patrol equipment. Wildlife Trust of India and Serenity Trust supported the State forest department to improve patrol safety and anti-poaching work.

SURROUNDED BY

- Namdapha Tiger Reserve (south)
- Lohit River basin
- Myanmar (east)

- India's 50th tiger reserve (2017); a sanctuary since 1989, it covers 783 sq km, with 671 sq km of core.
- Glaw Lake is a notable high-elevation water body inside the reserve.
- It forms part of the wider Kamlang–Namdapha–Hukawng landscape shared with Myanmar.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



250 Namdapha National Park

Changlang district, eastern Arunachal Pradesh

National Park · Aug 2026

In news: In August 2026 a peer-reviewed study confirmed the spoon-tailed duskhawker dragonfly, Gynacantha basiguttata, in India from a re-examined photograph taken in Namdapha in October 2024.

SURROUNDED BY

- Myanmar (south and south-east)
- Kamlang Tiger Reserve (north)
- Namsai–Nampong forests (west)

- Elevation runs from about 200 m to 4,571 m, so vegetation ranges from tropical evergreen forest to temperate forest and alpine scrub.
- Four big cats are recorded here (tiger, leopard, snow leopard and clouded leopard); the Namdapha flying squirrel was first described from the park.
- It is both a national park and a tiger reserve; the Miao–Vijaynagar road runs through it.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Wildlife Sanctuary · Jun 2026

251 Nongkhyllem Wildlife Sanctuary

Ri-Bhoi district, Meghalaya



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 environmental groups opposed a proposed ₹23.60 crore ecotourism project inside Nongkhyllem Wildlife Sanctuary in Meghalaya. They warned that new infrastructure could harm its fragile habitats and rare wildlife.

WHERE IT IS

Nongkhyllem lies in Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya. Its undulating plains and low hills cover about 29 sq km, with the Umtrew River forming its western boundary.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Assam

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Notified in 1981, it lies in the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot; an eco-sensitive zone was declared in 2017.
- Over 400 bird species, including the rufous-necked hornbill; clouded leopard and Asian elephant also live here.
- Rated North-East India's best-managed protected area in the 2021 Management Effectiveness Evaluation.

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

252

Similipal Tiger Reserve

Mayurbhanj district, northern Odisha

Tiger Reserve | Jan 2026 | Jun 2026 | Aug 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. In June 2026 photographers released images of a pseudo-melanistic 'black' tigress with cubs, confirming that this rare variant breeds in the wild. In August 2026 Odisha prepared a second phase of tiger supplementation from Maharashtra's Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve; Zeenat, a first-phase tigress, had four cubs in May.

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
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253 Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary

Balasore district, Odisha

Wildlife Sanctuary | Jul 2026

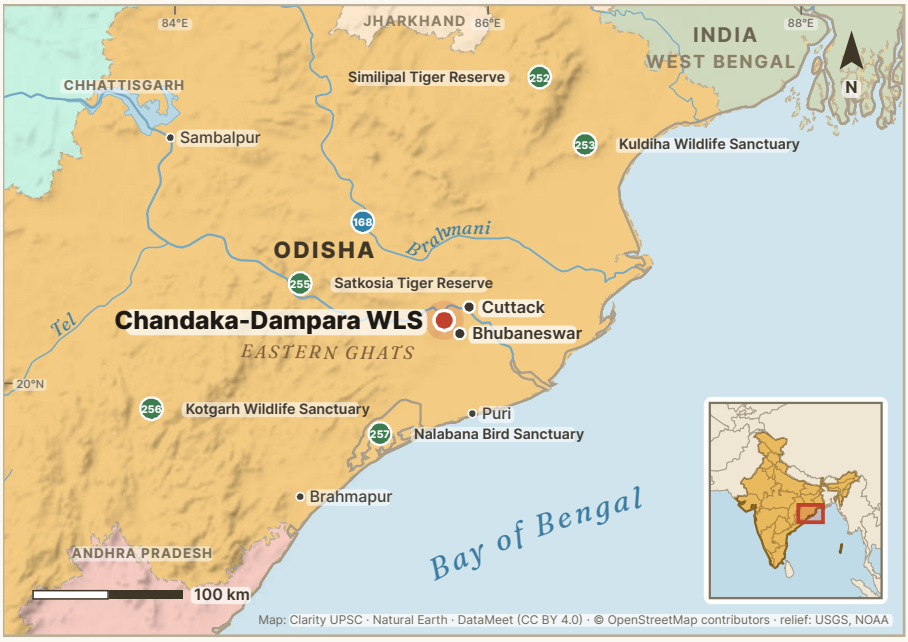
In news: In July 2026 a 26-year-old farmer was critically injured inside Odisha's Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary after following two stray bullocks into the forest. Preliminary field reports and photographs indicated a leopard attack.

SURROUNDED BY

- Similipal Tiger Reserve
- Hadgarh Wildlife Sanctuary
- Balasore district

- It was notified on 4 January 1984 and officially covers 272.75 sq km of mixed deciduous sal forest.
- Odisha notified the Similipal–Hadgarh–Kuldiha Conservation Reserve in 2023; the area belongs to the Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve landscape.
- The leopard is Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List and listed in Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



254 Chandaka-Dampara Wildlife Sanctuary

Near Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Wildlife Sanctuary | Jul 2026

In news: In July 2026 the Odisha Forest Department shelved a plan to bring Indian gaurs from Debrigarh to Chandaka-Dampara Wildlife Sanctuary. Officials cited heavy human and livestock pressure and the risk of cattle diseases.

SURROUNDED BY

- Bhubaneswar (about 20 km)
- Villages and farmland
- Kumarkhunti reservoir (inside)
- Eastern Ghats (north-eastern end)

- Designated in December 1982 mainly to protect Asian elephants; their numbers have fallen, to about 40 in a 2024 count.
- Has no perennial streams; the 100-ha Kumarkhunti reservoir is the main dry-season water source.
- An estimated 5,000 cattle graze inside its boundaries.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

Clarity UPSC

Tiger Reserve · Jun 2026

255 Satkosia Tiger Reserve

Angul, Cuttack, Nayagarh and Boudh districts, central Odisha (Mahanadi gorge)



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 the Environment Ministry issued a draft notification for an eco-sensitive zone of about 548.7 sq km around Satkosia Tiger Reserve. Some stretches have a zero-kilometre zone because of nearby settlements such as Athmallik, which has sparked debate.

WHERE IT IS

Satkosia lies along a deep gorge cut by the Mahanadi River in central Odisha. It marks the meeting point of the Deccan Peninsula and Eastern Ghats biogeographic regions.

SURROUNDED BY Mahanadi River gorge · Baisipalli Sanctuary (south of the gorge) · Athmallik town · Mahanadi Elephant Reserve

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Named after a gorge seven kos (about 14 miles) long; first notified in 1976 to protect gharials and mugger crocodiles.
- Satkosia Gorge and Baisipalli sanctuaries became a tiger reserve in December 2007; it now spans 1,136.7 sq km.
- Part of the Mahanadi Elephant Reserve; islands in the gorge support Indian skimmers.
- The draft bans commercial mining, large industries and new hydro projects in the zone, and new hotels within 1 km.

PRELIMS TRAP Satkosia guards the Mahanadi gorge in central Odisha; Similipal, Odisha's other well-known tiger reserve, lies in Mayurbhanj in the north.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



256 Kotgarh Wildlife Sanctuary

Baliguda subdivision, Kandhamal district, Odisha

Wildlife Sanctuary | May 2026

In news: News reports on 1 May 2026 said Odisha forest officials had arrested four suspected poachers in Kotgarh Wildlife Sanctuary. The men carried guns, ammunition and gunpowder. They allegedly tried to set the forest on fire to flush out animals.

SURROUNDED BY

- Kandhamal district
- Rayagada district (south)
- Kalahandi district (west)
- Eastern Ghats hills

- Noted for the chousingha (four-horned antelope); tigers, leopards, elephants and gaur also roam its forests.
- Sal (Shorea robusta) dominates; more than 650 plant species, including the cycad Cycas sphaerica, are recorded.
- Kutia Kondh villagers keep sacred groves and practise shifting cultivation in designated areas.

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257 Nalabana Bird Sanctuary

Island in Chilika Lake, Odisha

Bird Sanctuary | Jul 2026

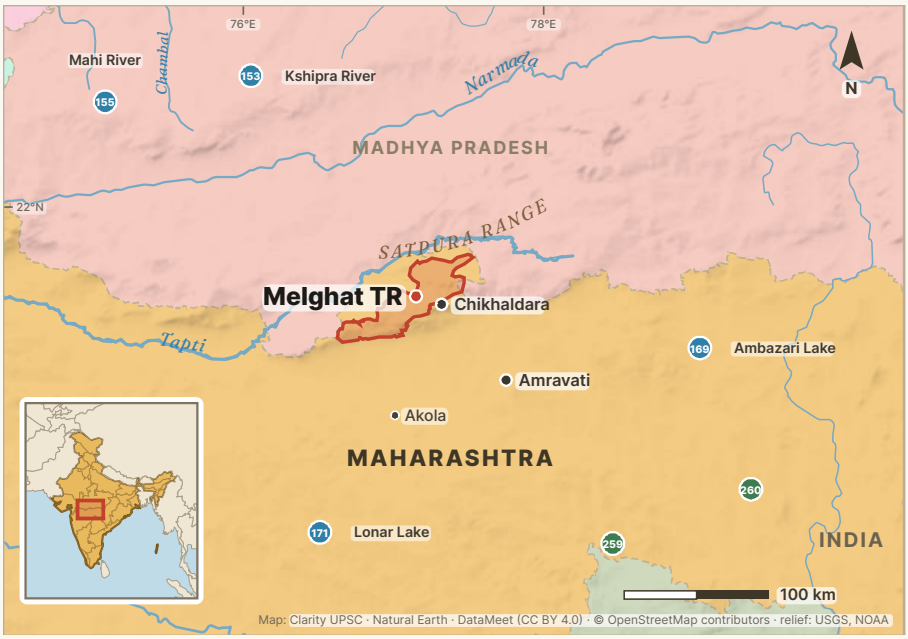
In news: In July 2026 forest officials arrested 24 people for fishing inside Nalabana sanctuary in Odisha's Chilika Lake. Patrols seized three mechanised boats, nets and about 23 kg of fish; fishing inside the protected island is prohibited.

SURROUNDED BY

- Chilika Lake (on every side)
- Bay of Bengal (beyond the sand bar, through the sea mouth)
- Daya and Bhargavi rivers (enter the lake's northern end)

- Odisha declared it a bird sanctuary on 17 December 1987.
- Chilika and Keoladeo became India's first Ramsar sites together on 1 October 1981.
- Chilika entered the Montreux Record in 1993; after a new sea mouth opened in 2000, it left the record in 2002.

Read the full story
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258 Melghat Tiger Reserve

Satpura ranges, Amravati district, Maharashtra

Tiger Reserve | May 2026

In news: In May 2026 reports said two of 15 satellite-tagged Indian (long-billed) vultures released in Melghat Tiger Reserve had flown more than 1,000 km in all to reach Bhopal. The Bombay Natural History Society bred the birds at Pinjore; releases began in January 2026.

NEIGHBOURING STATE: Madhya Pradesh

- Set up in 1974 as one of the first nine Project Tiger reserves; covers about 2,768 sq km.
- Teak forests with ain, haldu and bamboo; home to the Endangered forest owlet.
- The Indian vulture (Gyps indicus) crashed by over 97% because of the veterinary drug diclofenac.

Read the full story
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259 Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

Yavatmal district, Maharashtra

Wildlife Sanctuary | May 2026

In news: In May 2026 the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court sought replies from the Maharashtra government and forest department. Petitioners alleged that resorts and agro-tourism projects run inside Tipeshwar's eco-sensitive zone without approval, damaging wildlife corridors.

NEIGHBOURING STATE: Telangana

- Notified in 1997; it links Tadoba–Andhari Tiger Reserve with Kawal Tiger Reserve in Telangana.
- Teak covers about 60 per cent of the dry deciduous forest.
- More than 20 tigers have been recorded, with 182 bird species.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

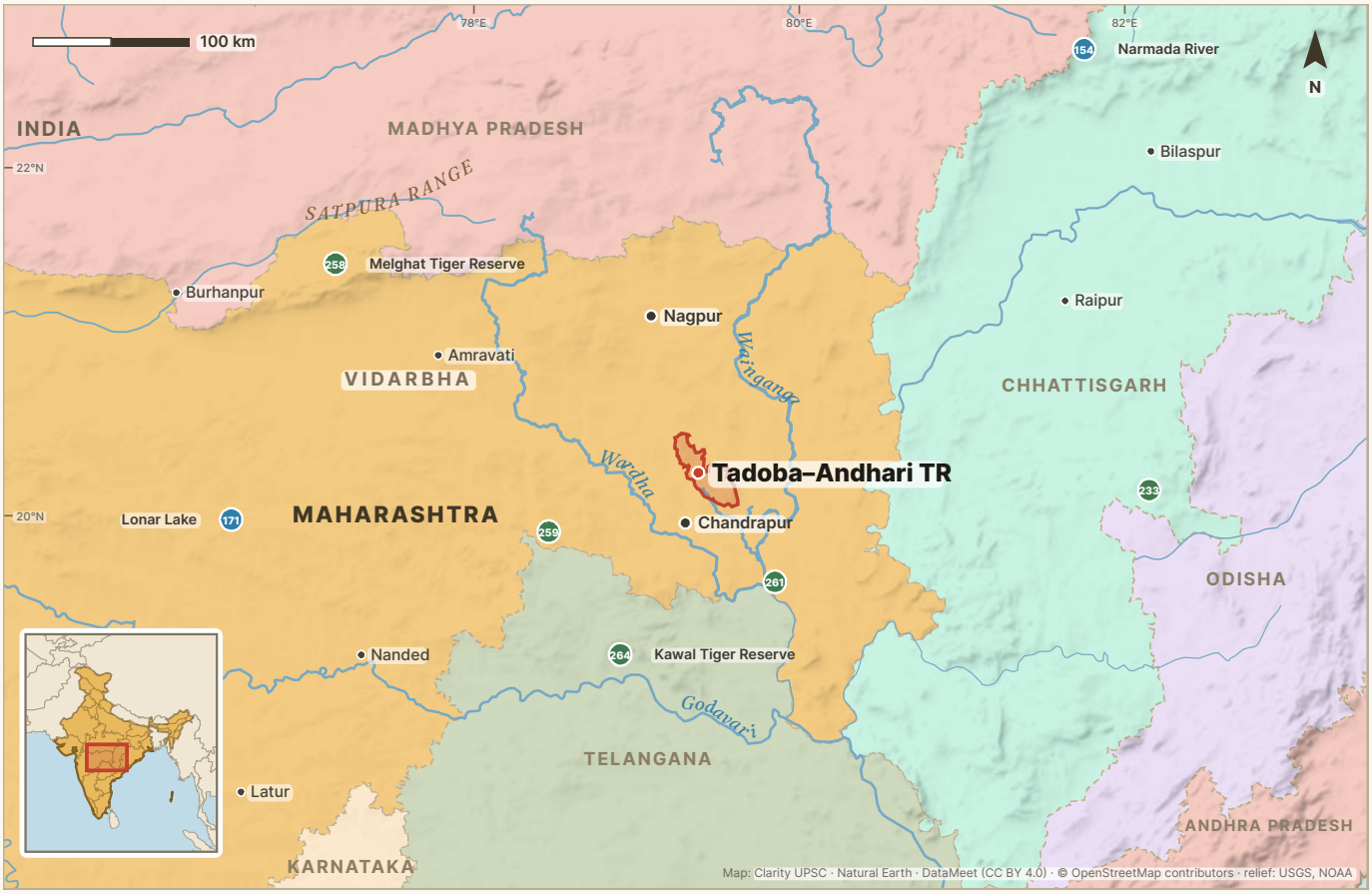
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Tadoba–Andhari Tiger Reserve

Chandrapur district, Maharashtra

Tiger Reserve | Jan 2026 | May 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. On 1 May 2026 the reserve's annual machan (watchtower) census recorded 5,765 wildlife sightings, including 42 tigers and 13 leopards; herbivores made up more than half.

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
www.clarityupsc.com

Wildlife Sanctuary · May 2026

261 Chaprala Wildlife Sanctuary

Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra, on the Pranhita River



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 Chaprala drew attention for two reasons. Engineers adjusted the proposed Pranhita–Chevella irrigation barrage so it would not submerge the sanctuary. Its first citizen-science bird survey also recorded the rare striated grassbird among more than 140 species.

WHERE IT IS

Chaprala lies in Gadchiroli district of eastern Maharashtra, near the confluence of the Wardha and Wainganga. The Pranhita flows along its western boundary, with Telangana across the river. The Markhanda and Pedigundam hills flank it.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Telangana

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Established in 1986; covers about 134.78 sq km of southern tropical dry deciduous forest.
- The Wardha and Wainganga join to form the Pranhita, the largest tributary of the Godavari.
- Managed under the unified control of Tadoba–Andhari Tiger Reserve.
- Tigers, dholes, blackbuck and four-horned antelope live here; turtles and prawns live in the Pranhita.

PRELIMS TRAP The Wardha and Wainganga join to form the Pranhita, which meets the Godavari at Kaleshwaram. The Penganga is a tributary of the Wardha.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



262 Sanjay Gandhi National Park

Northern edge of Mumbai, Maharashtra

National Park · May 2026

In news: In May 2026 the Maharashtra forest department put on hold a plan to raise the yearly morning-walker pass at Sanjay Gandhi National Park from ₹348 to ₹10,000, after public backlash.

SURROUNDED BY

- Mumbai suburbs (Borivali, Goregaon)
- Thane city (east)
- Vihar and Tulsi lakes (inside)

- Vihar and Tulsi lakes inside the park were built in British times to supply Mumbai's drinking water; the park protects their catchments.
- Holds the Kanheri caves; renamed Sanjay Gandhi National Park in 1981 (earlier Krishnagiri, then Borivali National Park).
- Its wild fauna includes leopards, chital, sambar, crocodiles and more than 250 bird species; the park also keeps tigers in captive care.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com



263 Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary

Western Ghats, north-west of Pune, Maharashtra

Wildlife Sanctuary · May 2026

In news: In May 2026 Maharashtra announced a detailed survey to estimate the population of the Indian giant squirrel in Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary. The data will guide habitat protection and eco-tourism rules.

SURROUNDED BY Pune district

- Thane district (west)
- Western Ghats crest

- Notified in 1985 to protect the Indian giant squirrel (Ratufa indica elphinstonii).
- The Indian (Malabar) giant squirrel is Maharashtra's state animal.
- The Bhima, a tributary of the Krishna, rises near the Bhimashankar temple, one of the twelve jyotirlinga shrines.

Read the full story
www.clarityupsc.com

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264 Kawal Tiger Reserve

Tiger Reserve | Jan 2026 | Feb 2026 | May 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In May 2026 a rare red-necked falcon was photographed in its Indanpalli range; in July a national tiger roadmap named Kawal a priority recovery site.

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.

Read the full story
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Wildlife Sanctuary · Jun 2026

265 Kinnerasani Wildlife Sanctuary

Bhadradri Kothagudem district, Telangana



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 the Telangana Forest Department announced plans to start safari tours in Kinnerasani Wildlife Sanctuary. The circuit, reported to cover an eight-kilometre stretch, aims to boost eco-tourism around the Kinnerasani River and its reservoir.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary lies in Bhadradri Kothagudem district of Telangana, near Paloncha and Kothagudem. It covers about 635 sq km around the Kinnerasani Dam on the Kinnerasani, a tributary of the Godavari.

SURROUNDED BY Kinnerasani reservoir · Paloncha and Kothagudem towns · Godavari basin · Eastern Ghats forest blocks

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Dry deciduous forest of teak and bamboo shelters tigers, leopards, sloth bears, gaur and chousingha.
- The reservoir supports crocodiles and draws migratory birds in winter.
- Part of the Eastern Ghats eco-region, it links several forest blocks.

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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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266 Amrabad Tiger Reserve

Tiger Reserve | Mar 2026 | Apr 2026 | Jun 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In June 2026 conservationists highlighted the reserve as a key habitat for tigers and the Chenchus, as surveys and eco-tourism projects drew attention to its management challenges.

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

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Wildlife Sanctuary | Aug 2026

267 Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary

Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh (Eastern Ghats)



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 the Andhra Pradesh High Court reportedly advanced to 24 August a hearing on land near Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary allotted for a hyperscale data-centre park. The petition challenges an allotment of about 160 acres and alleges tree felling and risks to streams and Mudasarlova reservoir.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary covers 71.39 sq km of Eastern Ghats hills near Visakhapatnam and was notified in 2002. It sits inside a fast-growing urban region, and its slopes drain towards the Mudasarlova reservoir.

SURROUNDED BY

- Visakhapatnam city
- Mudasarlova reservoir catchment
- National highway on the northern edge

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It protects dry evergreen and mixed scrub forest; a Wildlife Institute of India study calls it a green lung for the city.
- A 2017 notification set a 30.51 sq km Eco-Sensitive Zone covering 14 villages; its width ranges from zero to 4.33 km.
- The zone bans commercial mining and specified polluting industries; felling, land conversion and major construction are regulated.
- A zonal master plan and a monitoring committee are meant to guide development in the zone.

PRELIMS TRAP Eco-Sensitive Zones are site-specific: Kambalakonda's runs from zero to 4.33 km wide, rather than a uniform 10 km buffer.

Read the full story
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Wildlife Sanctuary | May 2026

268 Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary

Belagavi district, Karnataka, on the Goa border (Western Ghats)



WHY IN NEWS

In May 2026 Karnataka issued rules for the eco-sensitive zone around Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary, following Supreme Court directions. Any construction or commercial project in the zone's villages now needs approval from a committee chaired by the Regional Commissioner.

WHERE IT IS

Bhimgad covers about 200 sq km of the Western Ghats in Belagavi district, on the Karnataka–Goa border. The Mahadayi River rises in its forests and flows west into Goa as the Mandovi.

NEIGHBOURING STATES Karnataka | Goa | Maharashtra

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Notified in 2011 to protect Wroughton's free-tailed bat; the Barapede caves are its only known breeding site.
- A corridor linking Dandeli and Anshi in Karnataka with Goa's Bhagwan Mahaveer, Mollem and Netravali sanctuaries.
- Wet evergreen forests hold tigers, mouse deer, over 180 bird species and endemics such as Myristica malabarica.
- Families from Talewadi have been relocated out of the sanctuary.

PRELIMS TRAP Karnataka's Mahadayi becomes Goa's Mandovi. The Karnataka–Goa Mahadayi water dispute concerns Karnataka's plans to divert its water.

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269

Kali Tiger Reserve

Western Ghats, Uttara Kannada, northern Karnataka

Tiger Reserve | Apr 2026 | Jun 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. In June 2026 reports highlighted a new forester moth, Mimeusemia kali, found in the reserve. The Zoological Survey of India and London's Natural History Museum described it, the first addition to its genus in nearly 30 years.

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.

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270

Sharavathi Lion-Tailed Macaque Wildlife Sanctuary

Wildlife Sanctuary | Mar 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. In July 2026 a Union environment ministry expert committee's report opposing the project, citing habitat fragmentation in the Western Ghats, reached the High Court.

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 · Jun 2026

271 Arabithittu Wildlife Sanctuary

Hunsur taluk, Mysuru district, Karnataka (about 20 km west of Mysuru)



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 a leopard was killed by a speeding vehicle on a road near Arabithittu Wildlife Sanctuary in Mysuru district, Karnataka. The death drew attention to roadkill and human–wildlife conflict around the sanctuary.

WHERE IT IS

Arabithittu lies about 20 km west of Mysuru city, in Hunsur taluk of Mysuru district, Karnataka. The small sanctuary, about 13.5 sq km, sits on undulating plains with dry deciduous forest, scrub and rocky outcrops.

SURROUNDED BY

- Mysuru city (about 20 km)
- Mysuru district farmland
- Small tanks and moist pockets

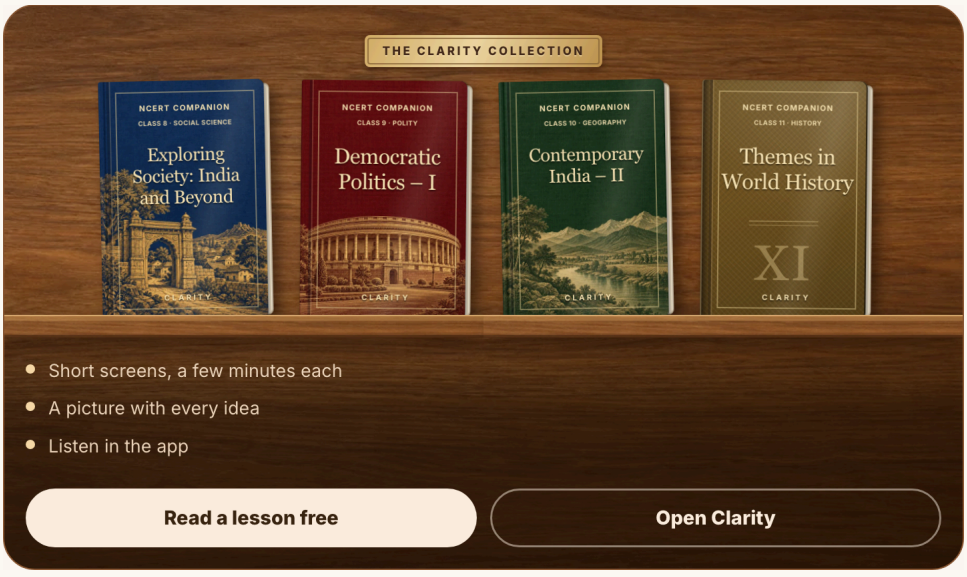
KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- A former reserve forest, declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1985.
- Eucalyptus and sandalwood plantations from the 1960s have grown into thick groves.
- Over 230 bird species recorded; occasional leopards, spotted deer and porcupines.

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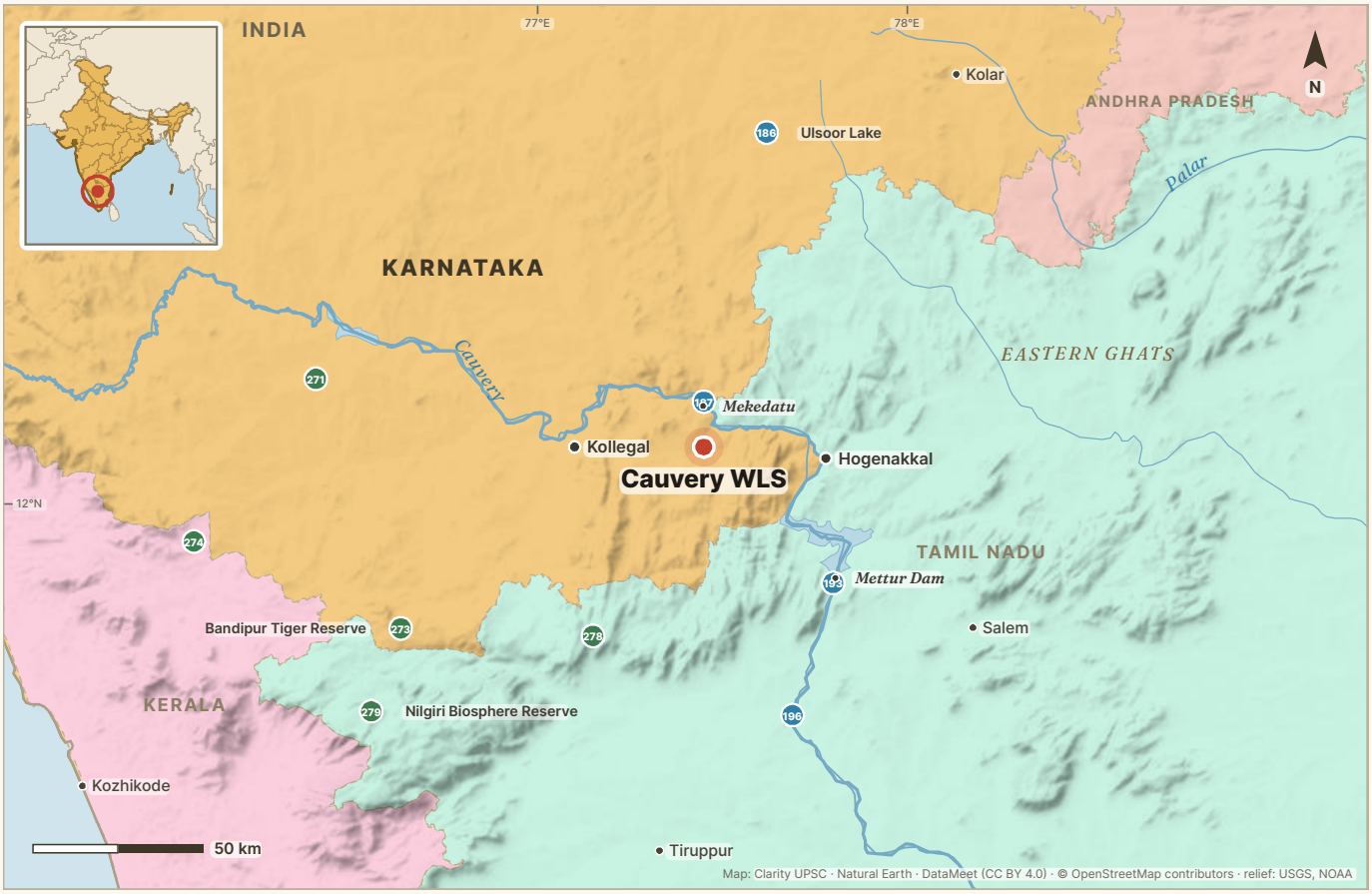
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Wildlife Sanctuary · Aug 2026

272 Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary

Chamarajanagar, Mandya and Bengaluru South (formerly Ramanagara) districts, Karnataka



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 three men, described by officials as alleged poachers, died in firing involving forest personnel in Karnataka's Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary. Officials alleged that the group fired first; one person reportedly escaped. These accounts were preliminary and awaited ballistic, post-mortem and witness evidence.

WHERE IT IS

The sanctuary spans parts of Chamarajanagar, Mandya and Bengaluru South (formerly Ramanagara) districts, and the Cauvery flows through its centre for about 105 km. It lies at the southern end of the Eastern Ghats, near the Western Ghats transition, along the Tamil Nadu border.

NEIGHBOURING STATE Tamil Nadu

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The 2017 eco-sensitive-zone notification recorded an area of about 1,027.5 sq km.
- Corridors link it with Male Mahadeshwara Hills, Biligiri Ranganathaswamy Temple Tiger Reserve and Bannerghatta National Park.
- Riparian forests support elephants, tigers and the grizzled giant squirrel.
- The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 prohibits hunting except in narrow statutory cases.

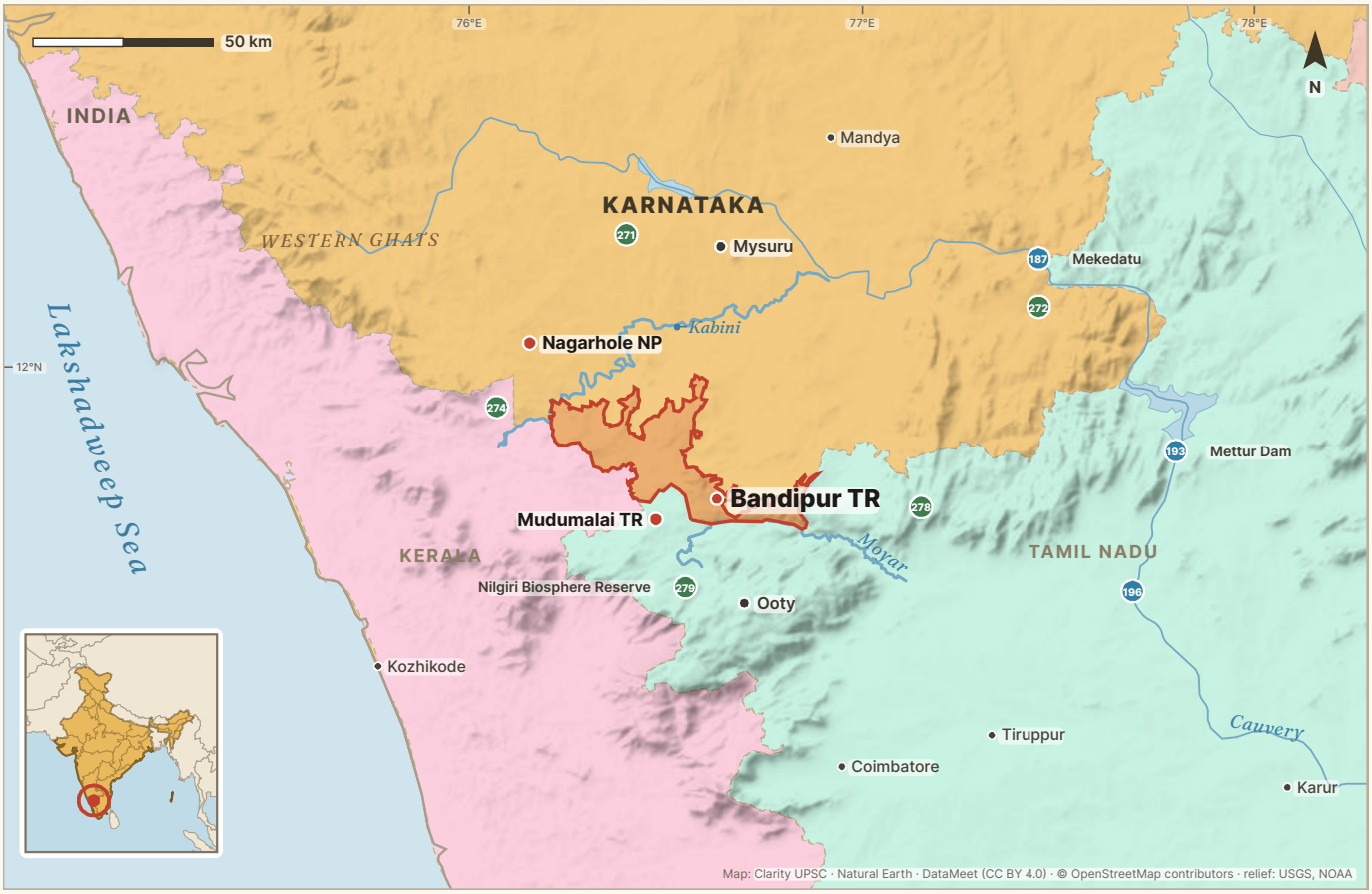
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Tiger Reserve · Jul 2026

273 Bandipur Tiger Reserve

Mysuru and Chamarajanagar districts, Karnataka



WHY IN NEWS

In July 2026 the Karnataka government ordered a study of Bandipur Tiger Reserve's carrying capacity after tiger numbers rose to about 175, from 12 in 1972. Fatal tiger attacks on villagers in 2025–26 had led authorities to halt jeep safaris temporarily.

WHERE IT IS

Bandipur lies in Mysuru and Chamarajanagar districts of southern Karnataka, where the state meets Tamil Nadu and Kerala. It forms part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve with Mudumalai and Wayanad. The Kabini, Moyar and Nugu rivers flow through it.

SURROUNDED BY Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) · Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala) · Kabini River · Moyar River

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- One of the first nine Project Tiger reserves (1973); the national park covers about 874 sq km and the whole reserve about 1,456 sq km.
- Its dry deciduous and moist forests hold sandalwood, teak, rosewood and bamboo.
- Elephants, gaur, leopards, sloth bears and dholes live here, with more than 200 bird species, including the Malabar pied hornbill.
- Carrying capacity is the number of animals that a habitat and its prey base can sustain.

PRELIMS TRAP Bandipur is in Karnataka; the adjoining Mudumalai is in Tamil Nadu and Wayanad in Kerala.

Read the full story
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274 Tholpetty Wildlife Sanctuary

Wayanad district, northern Kerala, on the Karnataka border

Wildlife Sanctuary | May 2026

In news: On 11 May 2026 Kerala's Forest Department tranquillised a wild gaur that had roamed villages in Kannur district for days. Officials darted it at Pinarayi and relocated it to Tholpetty Wildlife Sanctuary in Wayanad.

NEIGHBOURING STATES: Kerala | Karnataka | Tamil Nadu

- Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary is a corridor linking forest tracts of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- Home to elephants, tigers, gaur and the Malabar grey hornbill; more than 300 bird species.
- Wayanad adjoins Nagarhole and Bandipur (Karnataka) and Mudumalai (Tamil Nadu).

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275 Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary

Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala (southern Western Ghats)

Wildlife Sanctuary | Aug 2026

In news: In August 2026 a monsoon survey by the Thiruvananthapuram Wildlife Division and the group Warblers and Waders recorded 124 bird species in Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary. It documented active nesting of the broad-tailed grassbird, a Western Ghats grassland species.

SURROUNDED BY: Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary | Kalakkad–Mundanthurai landscape (Tamil Nadu) | Karamana River

- Notified on 21 December 1983 to protect the reservoir catchment; it includes the Palode and Kottoor reserved forests.
- Forest types include evergreen, semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forest, with Myristica swamps.
- The great hornbill, Kerala's state bird, and the endemic white-bellied sholakili were recorded.

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Periyar Tiger Reserve

Idukki and Pathanamthitta districts, Kerala

Tiger Reserve | Feb 2026 | Jul 2026 | Also in Volume 1



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. In July 2026 a project led by the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies began removing invasive African catfish from the reserve. The catch was to be processed into jerky, pickles and pet chews, and local Eco Development Committees were to be trained to market them.

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.

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Biosphere Reserve · Jun 2026

277 Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve

Southern Western Ghats, Kerala and Tamil Nadu



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 the Supreme Court ordered the immediate removal of encroachers and illegal structures across the Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve. It warned that paramilitary forces could be deployed if Kerala and Tamil Nadu delayed action.

WHERE IT IS

The reserve lies in the southern Western Ghats across Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It covers about 3,500 sq km and takes its name from Agasthyarkoodam peak (1,868 m).

NEIGHBOURING STATES Kerala · Tamil Nadu

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Established in 2001; added to UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2016.
- Includes Shendurney, Peppara and Neyyar sanctuaries in Kerala and the Kalakkad–Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu.
- Has about 2,254 higher plant species, roughly 400 of them endemic, and animals such as the Nilgiri tahr and Great Indian hornbill.
- The Kani (Kanikaran) tribe lives here and holds deep knowledge of local ecology and traditional medicine.

PRELIMS TRAP Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve spans Kerala and Tamil Nadu; the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, India's first, spans Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka.

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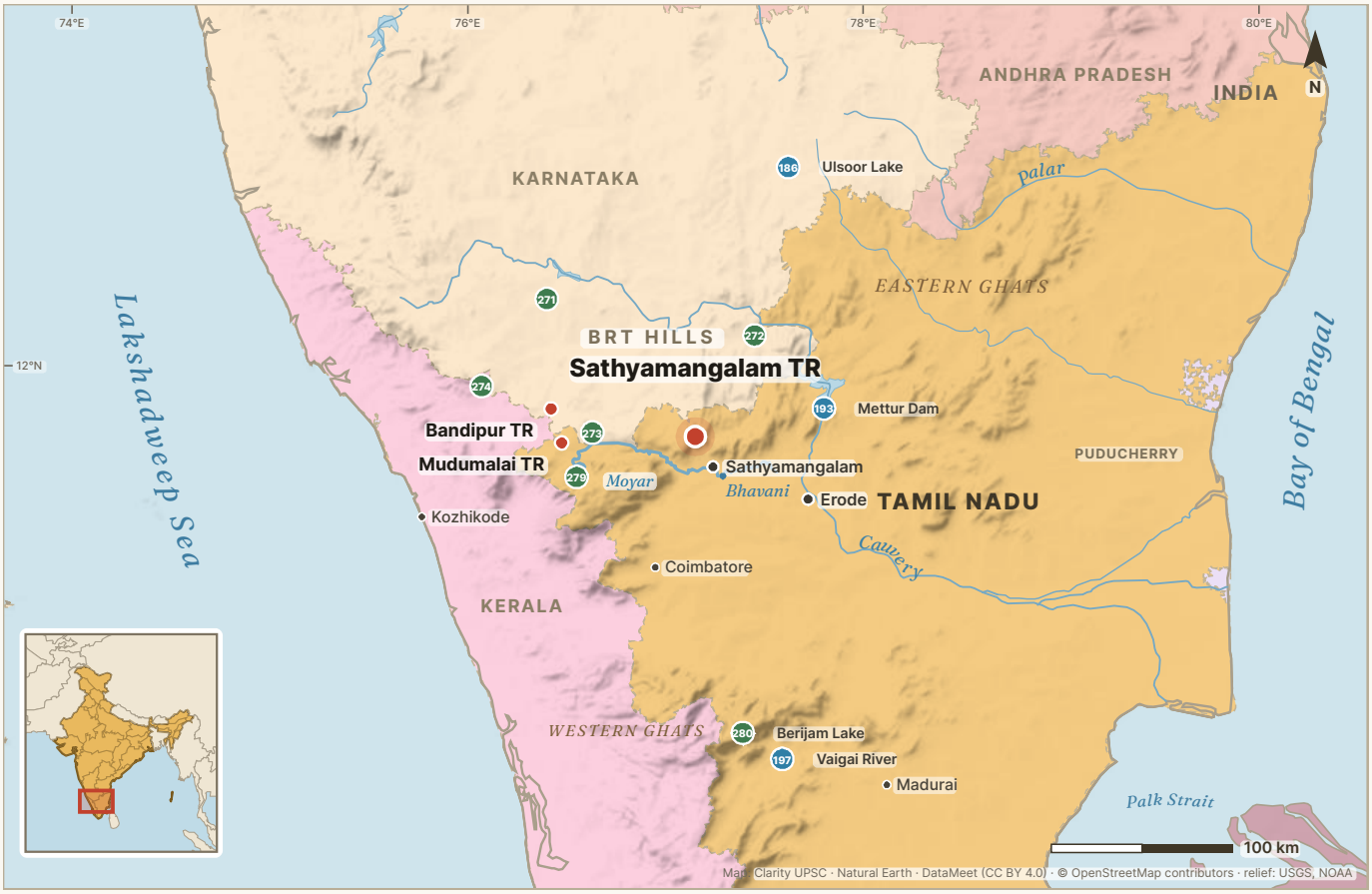
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Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve

Tiger Reserve | Mar 2026 | Jul 2026 | Aug 2026 | Also in Volume 1

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. On 16 July 2026, following the court's directions, officials sealed 21 resorts lacking clearances in the Hasanur, Germalam and Thalamalai areas. In August 2026 a solar-powered water supply, supported under Project Elephant, began serving Velladhotti, a tribal hamlet in the reserve's Germalam range.

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.

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Biosphere Reserve · Aug 2026

279 Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

Western Ghats; Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka



WHY IN NEWS

In August 2026 research using MODIS satellite vegetation data for 2001–2020 showed shifting forest seasons in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The growing season started later in 2001–2010 and earlier in 2011–2020. Weather records since 1950 showed gradual warming and declining average rainfall.

WHERE IT IS

The reserve covers 5,520 sq km of the Western Ghats around the Nilgiri massif, across Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Elevation ranges from about 300 m to 2,670 m, and several protected areas form one connected landscape.

SPREAD ACROSS Tamil Nadu · Kerala · Karnataka

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- India's first biosphere reserve, established in 1986; UNESCO added it to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2000.
- Habitats range from lowland dry forest and moist deciduous forest to evergreen forest and high shola–grassland.
- It includes Mudumalai, Mukurthi, Nagarhole, Bandipur and Silent Valley national parks, and the Wayanad and Sathyamangalam sanctuaries.
- Phenology studies the timing of recurring events such as leaf emergence, flowering, fruiting and leaf fall.

PRELIMS TRAP Nilgiri became India's first biosphere reserve in 1986 but joined UNESCO's World Network only in 2000.

Read the full story
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280 Berijam Lake (Kodaikanal Wildlife Sanctuary)

Lake (in a wildlife sanctuary) · Jun 2026

Palani Hills, Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 the Madras High Court heard a public interest petition seeking a scientific census of tigers around Berijam Lake in Kodaikanal Wildlife Sanctuary. Tiger sightings and a viral video prompted the plea, which also sought curbs on tourism and vehicles.

WHERE IT IS

Berijam Lake lies about 21 km from Kodaikanal in Tamil Nadu's Palani Hills, part of the Western Ghats. The lake area is a wildlife movement corridor within Kodaikanal Wildlife Sanctuary.

SURROUNDED BY

- Kodaikanal Wildlife Sanctuary
- Palani Hills
- Western Ghats
- Kodaikanal town (about 21 km)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- The forest department restricted entry after tourists filmed tigers near the lake.
- Conservationists say the area could become a tiger reserve if a census confirms resident tigers.
- Kodaikanal Wildlife Sanctuary, created in 2013, covers about 609 sq km of the Palani Hills.

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281 Gulf of Mannar

Between south-eastern Tamil Nadu and western Sri Lanka

Marine Biosphere Reserve · Jul 2026



WHY IN NEWS

A study published on 15 June 2026 and reported in July found that shorebird numbers in the Gulf of Mannar fell about 57% over four decades. Repeatedly surveyed sites showed a 70% fall. Researchers examined 40 species at Dhanushkodi, Pillaimadam, Manoli Island and Valinokkam.

WHERE IT IS

The Gulf of Mannar lies between south-eastern Tamil Nadu and western Sri Lanka and forms part of the Lakshadweep Sea (Laccadive Sea). Rama Setu (Adam's Bridge), to its north-east, separates it from Palk Bay. Thoothukudi is the major Indian port on this coast.

SURROUNDED BY

- India (Tamil Nadu coast)
- Sri Lanka (west coast)
- Palk Bay (beyond Rama Setu)
- Open Lakshadweep Sea (south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Its marine national park (1986) protects 21 islands; the biosphere reserve (1989) joined UNESCO's global network in 2001.
- Seagrass meadows feed dugongs; coral reefs, mangroves and mudflats support migratory shorebirds.
- The Thamirabarani and Vaippar rivers enter it from India; the gulf supported ancient pearl and chank fisheries.
- Siberian sand plover and curlew sandpiper numbers fell sharply; Kentish and greater sand plovers increased.

PRELIMS TRAP Gulf of Mannar is India's first marine biosphere reserve; the Gulf of Kutch had India's first marine national park. Palk Bay lies north of Rama Setu.

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INDIA

Heritage places

3 places

282 Amer Fort (Amber Fort), Jaipur · Fort-palace (World Heritage Site)

283 Mahakaleshwar Temple, Ujjain · Temple (Jyotirlinga)

284 Hampi · Heritage town (World Heritage Site)

282 Amer Fort (Amber Fort), Jaipur

Fort-palace (World Heritage Site) | Jun 2026 | Aug 2026

Amer, about 11 km from Jaipur, Rajasthan



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts began an estimated ₹2.32-crore scientific restoration of murals in the Bhojanshala, Amer Fort's royal dining hall, to undo poor repairs made in 2008 and 2017. In August 2026 fort records showed elephant-ride users had fallen about 70% since 2018–19.

WHERE IT IS

Amer Fort stands on a hill of the Aravalli range about 11 km from Jaipur, overlooking Maota Lake. Jaigarh Fort rises on the ridge above it, and an underground passage links the two.

SURROUNDED BY Aravalli hills | Maota Lake | Jaigarh Fort (above) | Jaipur city

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is one of six forts inscribed in 2013 as the UNESCO World Heritage Site 'Hill Forts of Rajasthan'.
- The palace, of red sandstone and marble, rises in four levels with courtyards, including the Diwan-e-Aam, Sheesh Mahal and Sukh Niwas.
- The Bhojanshala dates from Raja Man Singh I's reign in the 16th century; its murals show Ayodhya, Kashi, Mathura and Vrindavan.
- Elephant-ride users fell from 1,64,608 in 2018–19 to 48,474 in 2025–26.

PRELIMS TRAP Jaipur has three World Heritage listings: Jantar Mantar (2010), Amer Fort within the Hill Forts of Rajasthan (2013), and the walled Jaipur City (2019).

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Temple (Jyotirlinga) May 2026

283 Mahakaleshwar Temple, Ujjain

Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, on the Shipra River



WHY IN NEWS

On 1 May 2026 news agencies reported that a large stone Shivalinga had been unearthed near the Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain during digging for a ramp to an underground tunnel, part of preparations for the 2028 Simhastha. Work was halted and the archaeology department was informed to study its age.

WHERE IT IS

Mahakaleshwar stands beside the Shipra River in Ujjain, on the Malwa plateau of western Madhya Pradesh. Indore lies about 55 km to the south.

SURROUNDED BY Ujjain city · Shipra River · Malwa plateau · Indore (to the south)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- It is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas; its south-facing (Dakshinamurti) linga is unique among them.
- The temple has five levels, one underground; the Nagchandreshwar shrine on the third storey opens only on Nag Panchami.
- Ujjain hosts the Simhastha Kumbh Mela every 12 years; the next is due in 2028.

PRELIMS TRAP Madhya Pradesh has two Jyotirlingas: Mahakaleshwar on the Shipra at Ujjain and Omkareshwar on the Narmada in Khandwa district.

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Hampi

Vijayanagara district, Karnataka, on the Tungabhadra

Heritage town (World Heritage Site) · Jun 2026



WHY IN NEWS

In June 2026 the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) removed brick walls built inside the eastern gopuram of Hampi's Virupaksha Temple, reopening its original mantapa.

WHERE IT IS

Hampi lies on the south bank of the Tungabhadra in Vijayanagara district, central Karnataka. Ruins of the Vijayanagara capital spread across granite boulder hills, with temples, markets and water works. Hosapete and the Tungabhadra Dam lie to the south-west.

SURROUNDED BY

- Tungabhadra River (north)
- Anegundi, across the river
- Hosapete and Tungabhadra Dam (south-west)

KNOW FOR PRELIMS

- Virupaksha Temple is Hampi's principal shrine and a living temple; its earliest shrines date to the seventh century, most of it to the 14th–16th centuries.
- HAL approved ₹23.60 crore in principle for 2026–27 to 2028–29; the National Culture Fund coordinates and the ASI supervises the technical work.
- The Hampi work targets the historic North and South Bazaar areas, part of the Vijayanagara capital's urban landscape.
- The Group of Monuments at Hampi became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986.

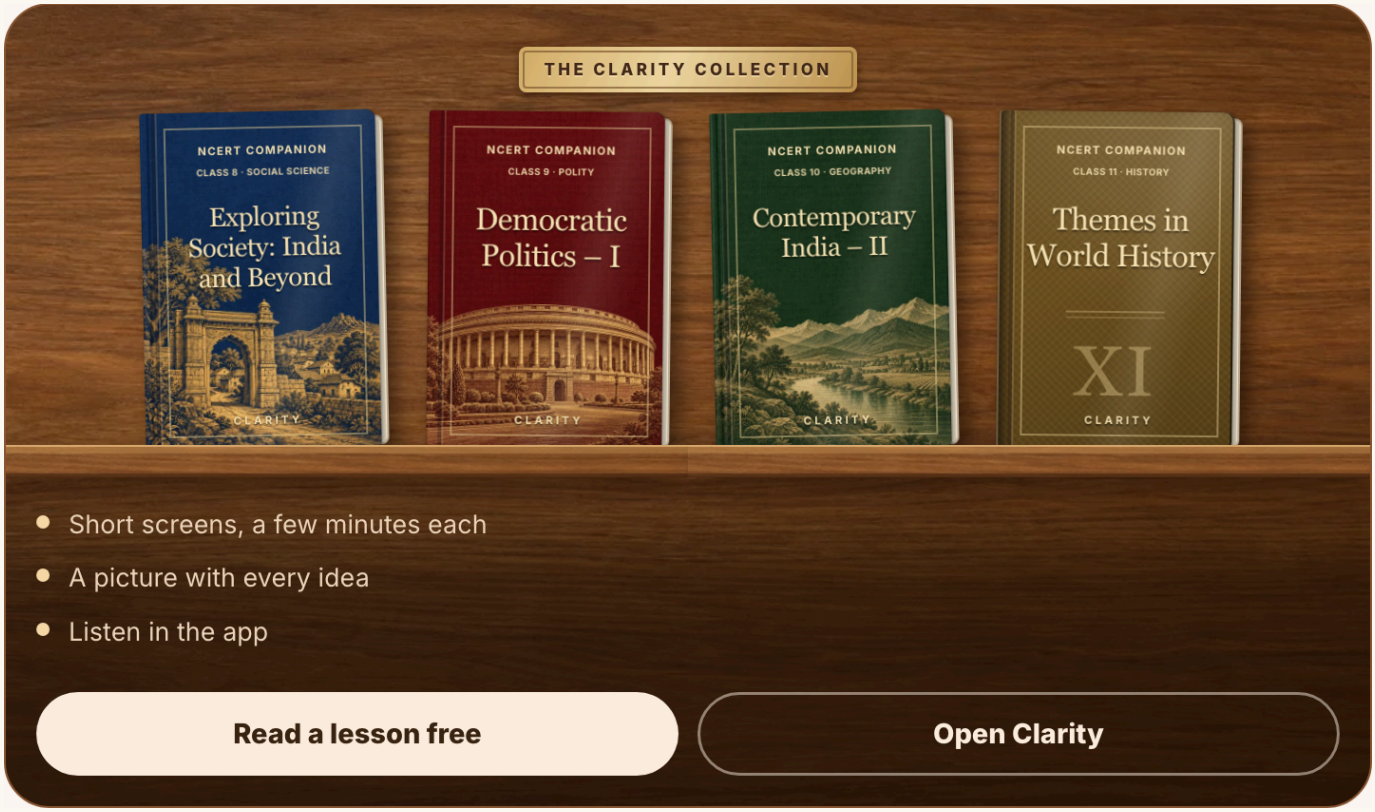
PRELIMS TRAP Hampi, the Vijayanagara capital, lies on the Tungabhadra; Pattadakal, the Chalukya temple group, lies on the Malaprabha.

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out now

VOLUME 2
May–August 2026
this volume

VOLUME 3
September–December 2026
to come

VOLUME 4
January–April 2027
to come