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# **INSTAMAPS FOR UPSC CSE: IMPORTANT PLACES IN NEWS IN INDIA & THE WORLD**

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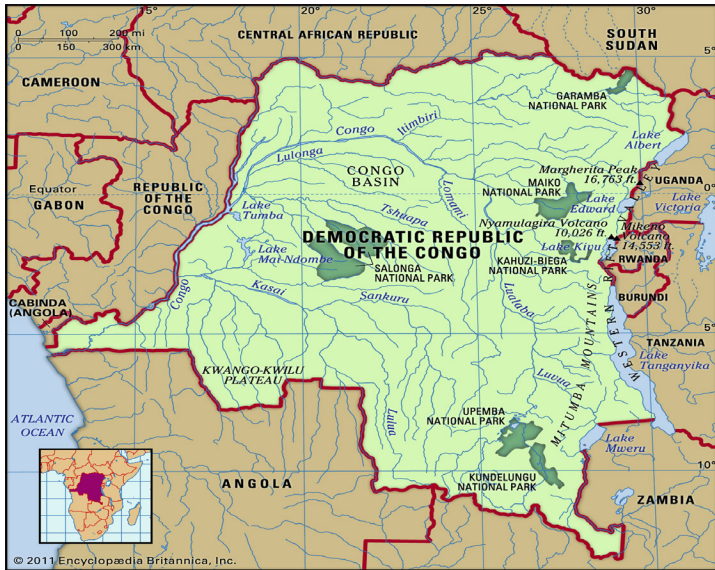
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## WORLD:: PLACES IN NEWS::

### DR CONGO

#### Context:

Over 100 people, mostly children and the elderly, were killed in [Sud Kivu province](#), eastern DR Congo, as flash floods triggered by torrential rains swept through Kasaba village.



#### About DR Congo:

- **Location:**
  - Located in **Central Africa**, it is the **second largest country** in Africa after Algeria.
  - The DRC has a **short 40 km coastline** on the Atlantic Ocean but is largely **landlocked**.
- **Capital City:** Kinshasa.
- **Neighbouring Countries:** Central African Republic, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Republic of the Congo, Atlantic Ocean, and the Angolan exclave of Cabinda.
- **Geological and Physical Features:**
  - **Mountains:**
    - Ruwenzori Range (with [Margherita Peak](#) at 5,109 m – the highest point)
    - Virunga Mountains (volcanic range including Mount Nyiragongo)
    - Mitumba Mountains and Cristal Mountains
  - **Plateaus:**
    - Ubangi-Uele Plateau (North)
    - Katanga Plateau (Southeast,

includes Kundelungu and Hakansson highlands)

- Angola Plateau (Southwest)
- **Rivers:**
  - [Congo River](#) – the world’s deepest river and second longest in Africa, forms the main drainage system
  - **Major tributaries:** Kasai, Aruwimi, Lomami, Ubangi
- **Lakes:**
  - Lies along the **Western Rift Valley**, includes Lakes Tanganyika, Albert, Edward, Kivu, Mweru
  - Lake Mai-Ndombe and Lake Tumba are significant in the western basin
- **Drainage Basin:**
  - Congo River Basin spans **3.46 million sq. km**, supports dense rainforest ecosystems
  - Features rich [alluvial soils](#), vital for agriculture in valleys

### LEBANON

#### Context:

A UN peacekeeping patrol in southern Lebanon was attacked by civilians with metal rods and axes; no casualties were reported, though vehicles were damaged.

#### About Lebanon:

- **Located in:** Western Asia, on the **eastern Mediterranean coast**.
- **Capital:** Beirut
- **Neighbouring Countries:** Bordered by Syria, Israel, and the Mediterranean Sea.



## Geological Features:

- **Mountains:**
  - **Lebanon Mountains:** Dominant limestone-sandstone ridge; highest peak at **Qurnat al-Sawda' (3,088 m)**.
  - **Anti-Lebanon Range:** Runs parallel to the Lebanon Mountains; includes **Mount Hermon (2,814 m)**.
- **Plains and Valleys:**
  - **Bekaa Valley:** Fertile rift valley between the two mountain ranges; part of the **Great East African Rift System**.
- **Rivers:**
  - **Litani River:** Longest River within Lebanon; flows southward into the Mediterranean.
  - **Orontes River and Kabir River** also serve as significant drainage channels.

## About UN Peacekeepers:

- **What It Is?**
  - **UN Peacekeeping** involves the deployment of **military personnel, police, and civilians** to conflict zones to maintain peace and security under UN mandates.
- **Established In:** Started in **1948**, when the UN deployed observers in West Asia following the **Arab-Israeli armistice**.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Mandated by:** UN Security Council through formal resolutions.
  - **Managed by:** UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO).
  - **Core Principles:**
    - Consent of the parties
    - Impartiality
    - Non-use of force, except in self-defence or defence of mandate
  - **Funding:** Approved by the **UN General Assembly** and contributed by member states.
  - **Objective:** Help countries **navigate the transition from conflict to peace**, ensure humanitarian aid, and support institution-building.



## About South Africa Land Uplift:

- **What It Is?**
  - A **gradual uplift of land** observed in parts of South Africa due to reduced surface and groundwater pressure.
- **Reason Behind the Uplift:**
  - **Elastic rebound effect:** Removal of surface water (from drought or overuse) reduces weight on the Earth's crust, causing it to **rise upward**.
  - Confirmed via **GNSS-Trignet base stations** and satellite data (GRACE).
  - Unlike **subsidence** caused by aquifer collapse, this is a **loading-unloading effect**.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Uplift Rate:** About **2 mm/year**, totaling nearly 6 mm between 2012 and 2020.
  - **Cape Town Impact:** Severe drought years showed clear correlation between Total Water Storage (TWS) loss and land uplift.
  - **Measurement Tools:** **Global Navigation Satellite System** (GNSS), hydrological models, and gravity satellite data (GRACE).
  - **Distinction from Subsidence:**
    - **Uplift** = Loss of surface load (elastic rebound).
    - **Subsidence** = Collapse of pore structure due to **groundwater over-extraction** (poro-elastic effect).

## About South Africa:

- **Location:** Southernmost country on the African continent.
- **Bordered by:** Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Eswatini
  - Encloses **Lesotho** as an independent country.
- **Capitals & Cities:**
  - Pretoria (Executive capital)

# SOUTH AFRICA

## Context:

Study published in Journal of Geophysical Research: Solid Earth reported that land in South Africa has been rising at 2 mm per year from 2012 to 2020.

- Cape Town (Legislative capital)
- Bloemfontein (Judicial capital)
- **Geological Features:**
  - **Mountains:**
    - **Great Escarpment** includes **Drakensberg Mountains** (Njesuthi: 3,408m)
    - **Other ranges:** Stormberg, Roggeveld, Table Mountain ranges
  - **Plateaus:**
    - Dominated by **Highveld Plateau** (1,200–1,800m elevation)
    - Formed from ancient **Karoo System rocks**
  - **Rivers:**
    - **Orange River** and tributaries (Caledon, Vaal) drain into Atlantic
    - **Limpopo System** drains north-east into Indian Ocean
    - **Other rivers:** Tugela, Mgeni, Great Kei, Gourits

**gentle undulations** and low hills.

- **Highest elevation:** Al-Shiqaya Peak at 290 metres.
- **Major Landforms:**
  - **Al-Zawr Escarpment** near Kuwait Bay (145 m high).
  - **Kuwait Bay:** A significant natural harbour and economic zone.
- **Water Resources:**
  - **No permanent rivers or lakes.**
  - Features intermittent **wadis** and **seasonal basins.**
  - Lacks natural freshwater sources and relies on **desalination.**
- **Ethnic Composition:**
  - Only **~30% of Kuwait's population are citizens.**
  - Large **expatriate community**, with **Bidoon (stateless residents)** numbering ~1 lakh.
  - Indigenous Kuwaiti identity is often defined **through paternal lineage.**

## KUWAIT

### Context:

Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah revoked the citizenship of over 37,000 people, mostly women naturalised through marriage, citing a reformist agenda.



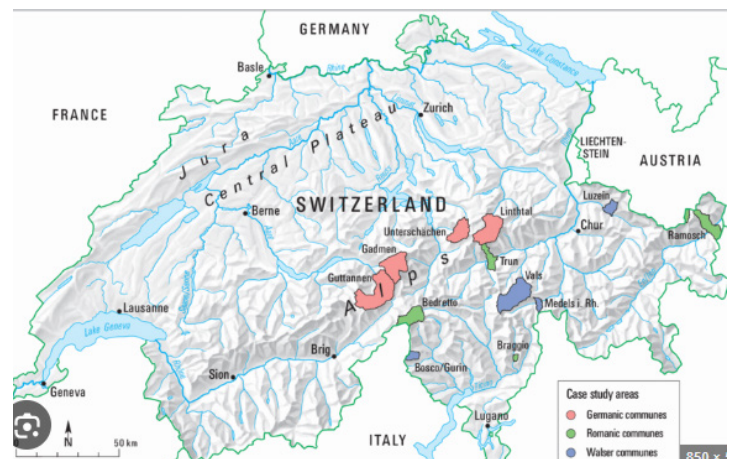
### About Kuwait:

- **Located in:** Northwestern Persian Gulf, Kuwait is a small constitutional monarchy in **West Asia.**
- **Capital:** Kuwait City.
- **Neighbouring Nations:** Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and [Persian Gulf](#).
- **Geological Features:**
  - **Topography:**
    - Mostly **flat desert terrain**, with

## LONZA VALLEY

### Context:

A massive glacier collapse in Switzerland's Loetschental valley on May 28, 2025, buried Blatten village under ice and rock debris, triggering flood fears as River Lonza's flow is blocked.



### About Lonza Valley:

- **Location:** Loetschental (Lonza) Valley is located in the *canton of Valais*, in *southern Switzerland*, within the Alpine region.
- **Country Involved:** *Switzerland* is directly affected, with international attention on climate-induced glacial hazards.

• **Key Features:**

- River Lonza flows through the valley, fed by [Alpine glaciers](#).
- The valley is part of a fragile high-altitude ecosystem highly sensitive to global warming.
- It houses small Alpine settlements like Blatten, known for their proximity to glaciers and scenic landscapes.
- It is vulnerable to glacial retreat, permafrost thawing, and associated hazards like landslides and [flash floods](#).

- **Himalayas** in the south and [Kunlun Mountains](#) in the north.

○ **Mountains and Peaks:**

- [Mount Everest \(Qomolangma\)](#) – World’s tallest peak on the Tibet–Nepal border.
- **Mount Kailash** – Sacred to Hindus and Buddhists.
- **Other Ranges:** Gangdise, Himalayas, Kunlun, Tanglha.

○ **Major Rivers Originating in Tibet:**

- [Yarlung Tsangpo](#) (Upper Brahmaputra) – Cuts through the Himalayas into India.
- **Indus, Sutlej, Mekong, Salween, Yangtze** – All originate here.
- **Notable lakes:** Lake Nam, Lake Siling, Lake Mapam (Manasarovar).

• **Flora:**

- Dominant vegetation includes [grasslands](#), alpine shrubs, and sparse forests of bamboo, rhododendrons, oaks, and conifers.
- Medicinal and edible plants like **gro-ba**, **om-bu**, and **khres-pa** grow in river valleys and wet lowlands.

- **Fauna:** Tibet hosts over 100 mammals like wild yak, snow leopard, musk deer, and Tibetan antelope.

## TIBET

**Context:**

A 5.5-magnitude earthquake struck Shigatse in Tibet at a shallow depth of 10 km, as reported by the China Earthquake Administration.



**About Tibet:**

- Located in **Central Asia**, Tibet is officially known as the [Tibet Autonomous Region \(TAR\)](#) of **China**.
- **Capital:** Lhasa, situated at an elevation of 3,650 metres.
- **Neighbouring Regions and Countries:** China, **India**, **Nepal**, **Bhutan**, and **Myanmar**.
- **Physical Features of Tibet:**
  - **Topography:**
    - Known as the “**Roof of the World**”, Tibet lies on the **Tibetan Plateau**, averaging **4,500–5,000 metres** elevation.
  - **Major landforms:**
    - **Qiangtang Plateau** in the north – high-altitude, cold desert.
    - Deep **valleys and ravines** in the southeast.

## CHAGOS ISLANDS

**Context:**

The United Kingdom has officially agreed to transfer sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to [Mauritius](#), ending decades of British control.

**About Chagos Islands:**

• **Location:**

- The **Chagos Archipelago** consists of over **60 small islands** located in the central Indian Ocean, south of the Maldives, and east of Seychelles.



- The **largest island**, **Diego Garcia**, hosts a key US-UK military base.
- **Previous Control:**
  - The islands were under **British rule since 1814**, ceded by France.
  - In **1965**, the UK separated Chagos from **Mauritius**, forming the **British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)** before Mauritius gained independence in 1968.
- **Strategic Significance:**
  - Diego Garcia has served as a critical logistics and intelligence base for **US military operations** in West Asia, South Asia, and East Africa.
  - It has hosted over **2,500 personnel**, nuclear-capable aircraft, and surveillance systems.



#### About UK–Mauritius Chagos Sovereignty Deal (2025):

- After a UK **High Court ruling**, England **Prime Minister** signed a treaty handing **sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius**.
- The deal includes a **99-year lease** of **Diego Garcia** to the **UK and US** for continued military use.
- The UK will pay Mauritius approximately **£101 million/year**, totalling billions over the lease period.
- **Significance:**
  - Marks the completion of **Mauritius’s decolonisation process**.
  - Balances **sovereignty claims** with strategic military requirements of Western allies.
  - Seen as a **“win-win”**—recognising Mauritian control while maintaining UK-US security presence.

#### India’s Official Stance:

India has **consistently supported Mauritius’s claim** over Chagos in line with its principles of territorial integrity, sovereignty, and international law.

## NEW CALEDONIA

#### Context:

Talks over a new political status for **New Caledonia** broke down on May 8, 2025, after loyalist factions rejected France’s proposal for “sovereignty in partnership”.

#### About New Caledonia:

- **Location:** Situated in the **Southwestern Pacific Ocean**, about 1,500 km east of Australia.
- **Capital city:** Nouméa.
- **Political Control:** It is a **French overseas collectively**, with administrative ties to France but enjoys a high degree of autonomy.
- **Geopolitical Neighbours:** Surrounded by **Australia** to the west, **Vanuatu** to the north, and **Fiji** to the northeast.
- **Historical Context:**
  - Colonised by France in **1853** as a penal colony.
  - Indigenous **Kanak people** resisted colonisation, leading to civil strife in the 1980s.
  - **1998 Nouméa Accord** granted significant autonomy and promised referendums on independence (held in 2018, 2020, and 2021 — all rejected).
  - Post-2021 unrest revived demands for full independence, especially after a disputed referendum boycott by the Kanak-led FLNKS.

#### Geographical & Ecological Features:

- **Topography:**
  - **Main island:** Grande Terre — 310 km long and 50 km wide.
  - Rugged terrain with **Mount Panié** (1,628 m) as the highest point.
  - Enclosed by one of the world’s largest **coral reef lagoons** (New Caledonian Barrier Reef - **UNESCO World Heritage Site**).
- **Rivers & Climate**
  - **Longest river:** Diahot River (100 km).
  - **Subtropical climate:** East coast receives over 3,000 mm rainfall/year and west coast is drier (1,000 mm/year).

- **Biodiversity:**
  - Home to **Amborella trichopoda**, a rare evolutionary link in plant taxonomy.
  - Hosts endemic birds like the **kagu**, but lacks native mammals and frogs.

## KILAUEA VOLCANO

### Context:

Kilauea volcano in Hawaii erupted with lava fountains over 1,000 feet, marking the most intense activity since the Pu'u'ō'ō eruption of the 1980s.



### About Kilauea volcano:

- Located on the **southeastern shore of Hawaii's Big Island**.
- Formed by the **Hawaiian hotspot** — not at plate boundaries but caused by a **mantle plume** under the **Pacific Plate**.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Type:** **Shield volcano** — broad, dome-shaped with gentle slopes.
  - **Crater:** Halema'uma'u, considered the mythological home of **Pele**, Hawaiian goddess of volcanoes.
  - **Eruption Style:** Frequent, fluid lava flows; episodic fountaining.
  - **Rift Zones:** Two major rift zones (east – 125 km, southwest – 35 km).
  - **Age:** Between 210,000 to 280,000 years; emerged above sea level ~100,000 years ago.
- **Volcanic Activity Timeline**
  - **1983–2018:** Longest recorded eruption — destroyed towns like Kalapana and Kaimū.
  - **2018:** Lava lake collapse and ash explosions up to 30,000 ft and 716 homes destroyed.

- **2024–25:** Renewed eruption cycles with episodic lava fountaining and toxic gas emissions.

### Environmental & Ecological Significance:

- Emits **sulphur dioxide**, leading to **volcanic smog (vog)** and acid rain.
- Impacts local **air quality** and **ecosystem growth** (e.g., Ka'ū Desert).
- Rich in **endemic species** due to isolation.
- Protected under **Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### Cultural Relevance:

- Studied extensively by the **Hawaiian Volcano Observatory (est. 1912)**.
- First described in detail by **William Ellis**, an English missionary.
- Holds deep **spiritual significance** in Hawaiian mythology.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### Context:

Southern Australia, including South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania, is facing one of the worst droughts in decades, raising alarm about the region's climate vulnerability and water security.



### About South Australia:

- Located in **south-central Australia**.
- **Borders:** Western Australia (west), Northern Territory (north), Queensland (northeast), New South Wales & Victoria (east).
  - Southern coastline faces the **Great Australian Bight** (Southern Ocean).
- **Capital:** Adelaide.
- **Key Features of South Australia:**
- **Geographic Profile:**
  - Covers an area of 983,482 sq. km (approx. one-eighth of Australia).

- Mostly **flat plains and deserts**, with over 80% of land <300m above sea level.
- **Highest point:** Mount Woodroffe (1,435 m) in the Musgrave Ranges.
- **Water Resources:**
  - **Murray River** is the only major perennial river, vital for drinking and irrigation.
  - **Major water supply:** Pipelines from Murray River & Desalination Plants.
  - The **Great Artesian Basin** supports remote pastoral and mining operations.
- **Climate:**
  - **Driest state** in Australia.
  - Southern parts have a **Mediterranean climate** - wet winters, dry summers.
  - Prone to **droughts and bushfires**, particularly in summer months.
  - Temperature extremes due to contrasting air masses from inland and ocean.
- **Natural Resources:**
  - Features include **Lake Eyre** (below sea level), Mount Lofty Ranges, Kangaroo Island, and Flinders Ranges.
  - Rich in **minerals**, particularly uranium, copper, and gold — Olympic Dam is a major mining hub.

- **Located in:** Southeast **Flores Island**, Indonesia; part of the Lesser Sunda Islands volcanic arc.
- **Geological Features:**
  - **Twin peaks:** Laki-laki (more active) and Perempuan (less active).
  - Formed due to subduction of the Indo-Australian Plate beneath the Eurasian Plate.
  - Known for frequent eruptions, pyroclastic activity, and ash columns reaching over 5 km.

#### About Indonesia:

- **Location:** Archipelagic country in Southeast Asia; lies between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.
- **Capital:** Jakarta (on the island of Java).
  - Indonesia is relocating its capital from Jakarta to a **new city called Nusantara**.
- **Borders:** Shares land borders with **Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste**.
- **Geological Features:**
  - **Islands:** Over 17,000 islands – major ones include Sumatra, Java, Borneo (Kalimantan), Sulawesi, New Guinea (Papua).
  - **Mountains/Volcanoes:** Over 100 active volcanoes including Merapi, Agung, Sinabung, and Krakatoa; part of the **Pacific Ring of Fire**.
  - **Rivers:**
    - **Longest:** Kapuas (1,140 km) in Kalimantan.
    - **Others:** Barito, Mahakam, Mamberamo.
  - **Tectonic Setting:** Junction of **Indo-Australian, Eurasian, and Pacific plates**—making it one of the most seismically active regions globally.

## MOUNT LEWOTOB I LAKI-LAKI

#### Context:

**Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki** in Indonesia erupted multiple times over the weekend and again on Monday, prompting the government to raise the alert level to the highest tier.



#### About Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki:

- **What it is:** A stratovolcano forming part of a twin volcanic system with Lewotobi Perempuan, often symbolised as a “husband-wife” pair.

## ANGOLA

#### Context:

Prime Minister of India held bilateral talks with Angolan President João Lourenço in New Delhi, offering a \$200 million defence credit line and expanding ties in infrastructure, defence, and space technology.

- The visit also marks the **40th anniversary of India-Angola diplomatic relations**.

#### About Angola:

- Angola is located in **southwestern Africa**, bordered by the **Atlantic Ocean** on the west.

- **Capital:** Luanda, a coastal port city.
- **Neighbouring Countries:** Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, Namibia, and Atlantic Ocean.

**Note:** It also includes an exclave, **Cabinda**, north of the main territory.

- **Geographical Features:**

- **Major Plateaus:** Bié Plateau (~2,600 m), Huíla Plateau (~2,300 m), and Malanje Highlands.
- **Highest Point:** Mount Moco (8,596 ft / 2,620 m) near Huambo.
- **Major Rivers:**
  - **Cuanza (Kwanza):** Largest River within Angola.
  - **Cunene River:** Border river with Namibia.
  - **Cuango River:** Tributary of the Congo River.



- Other rivers drain into **Zambezi** and **Okavango systems**.
- **Desert Region:** Southwest Angola is part of the **Namib Desert**.
- **Climate:** Tropical climate with distinct rainy and dry seasons. Influenced by the **Benguela Current** (cold oceanic current).
- **Ethnic:** Angola is **ethnically diverse** with Bantu-speaking groups like Ovimbundu, Kimbundu, and Bakongo.

- **Economic Significance:**

- One of **Africa's top oil producers**; rich in **diamonds, iron ore, copper, and gold**.
- The **northeast** is known for **diamond deposits** in river gravels.

**About Anak Krakatau Volcano:**

- **Location:** **Anak Krakatau** ("Child of Krakatoa") is located in the **Sunda Strait**, between **Java and Sumatra** in Indonesia.
- **Volcano Type:** Stratovolcano



- **Tectonic Context:** Situated at the **convergent boundary** between the Indo-Australian and Eurasian plates.
  - It is part of the **Pacific Ring of Fire**, a seismically active zone encircling the Pacific Ocean.
- **2018 Disaster:** In December 2018, its southwest flank collapsed into the sea during an eruption, generating a tsunami that killed over 400 people and injured thousands more.

- **New Research & Discovery:**

- **Technology used:**
  1. **InSAR (Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar):** Satellite-based remote sensing that detects **surface deformation** within **centimetre to millimetre accuracy**.
  2. Data was sourced from **ALOS-1, COSMO-SkyMED, and Sentinel-1** satellites over a **10+ year period**.
- **Findings**
  1. The volcano's **flank slipped ~15 meters** between **2006 and 2018**.
  2. **Acceleration of slip** observed **months before the 2018 collapse** — a key precursor to disaster.

- **Broader Implications:**

- Highlights the **risk of collapse in ocean volcanoes** and **potential for tsunami generation**.
- **Ground-based GPS** is often **impractical** in such regions due to cost, terrain, and safety issues.
- **Real-time InSAR processing** offers a promising solution for **early detection** in remote areas.

## ANAK KRAKATAU VOLCANO

**Context:**

A new study reveals that **Indonesia's Anak Krakatau volcano**, which collapsed catastrophically in 2018 causing a deadly tsunami, showed **warning signs years in advance**.

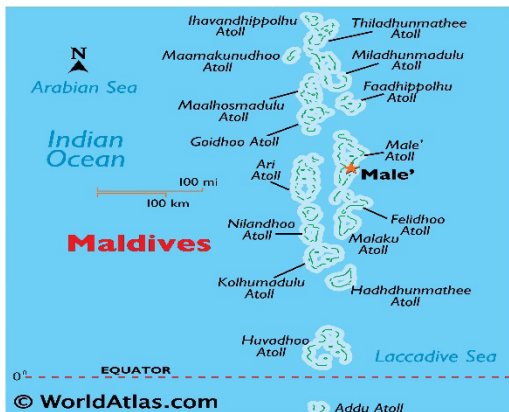
## MALDIVES

### Context:

INS Sharda arrived at Maafilaafushi Atoll, Maldives to participate in a [Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief \(HADR\) exercise](#).

### About Maldives:

- South Asia, located in the **north-central Indian Ocean**, southwest of Sri Lanka and India.
- **Capital: Male** – also the most populous city.
- **Geography:**
  - An **archipelago of ~1,200 coral islands** grouped into **26 atolls**, of which ~200 are inhabited.



- **Low-lying terrain:** None of the islands rise above **1.8 metres (6 feet)**.
  - Protected by **barrier reefs** from monsoon damage.
- **Strategic Atoll: Maafilaafushi** – a northern atoll often used for **naval exercises and logistics support**.
- **Official Language: Dhivehi (Maldivian)**, an Indo-Aryan language.
- **Other spoken languages: Arabic, Hindi, English.**
- **Religion:** Islam is the **state religion**.
- **Ethnic Composition:**
  - Dominated by **Maldivian ethnic group**, with ancestry tracing to **Tamils, Sinhalese, Arabs**, and traders from Africa and Southeast Asia.
- **Strategic Importance:**
  - Lies on major **global shipping lanes** in the Indian Ocean.
  - Serves as a **critical maritime partner** for India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and **MAHASAGAR doctrines**.
  - Proximity to Lakshadweep (~400 km) enhances India's **naval surveillance** and regional outreach.

## BALUCHISTAN

### Context:

On May 9, 2025, Mir Yar Baloch declared [Baluchistan's](#) independence from Pakistan, urging India to recognize it and host an embassy in New Delhi, the UN to deploy peacekeepers, and the Pakistani Army to withdraw.

### About Balochistan:

- **Region:** Southwestern province of **Pakistan**, largest by area (~44% of Pakistan's territory), bordering **Iran and Afghanistan**, and facing the **Arabian Sea**.
- **Area:** ~347,190 sq km
- **Capital:** Quetta (near the Afghan border)
- **Borders:**
  - **East:** Sindh and Punjab provinces
  - **West:** Iran
  - **Northwest:** Afghanistan (Durand Line)
  - **South:** Arabian Sea (~770 km coastline)

### Terrain and Climate:

- Mostly **arid, rugged terrain** with mountains (e.g., Sulaiman Range, Makran Range)
- **Desert and dry steppe climate**
- Sparse population, vast mineral resources

### Ethnic and Demographic profile:

- **Dominant Group:** Baloch people (ethnic Iranian descent)
- **Others:** Pashtuns (north), Brahuis
- **Languages:** Balochi, Pashto, Brahui, Urdu
- **Religion:** Predominantly Sunni Islam

### Strategic and Geopolitical Importance:

- **Natural Resources:**
  - Rich in **natural gas, coal, copper, and gold** (Reko Diq mine)
  - Supplies **~40% of Pakistan's gas**, but remains underdeveloped

### CPEC & China's Interest:



- Gwadar is the **southern node of China's BRI in Pakistan**

- Offers Beijing direct access to **Arabian Sea and West Asia**
- **India's Concerns:**
  - India has repeatedly raised human rights issues in Balochistan
  - Balochistan factors into India's **Indo-Pacific strategy** and **balancing CPEC-Chinese expansion**
- **Insurgency Movements:**
  - Several **Baloch nationalist groups** demand greater autonomy or independence
  - Regular attacks on **CPEC infrastructure**, Pakistani army convoys, and Chinese workers.

## INDIA:: PLACES IN NEWS::

### TSARAP CHU CONSERVATION RESERVE

#### Context:

Himachal Pradesh notified Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve, India's largest protected area (1,585 sq km), to safeguard high-altitude biodiversity, particularly snow leopards, and strengthen wildlife corridors.



#### About Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve:

##### What is Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve?

A protected area in Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh, notified under **Section 36A (1) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**

Aims to conserve **snow leopards**, rare Himalayan fauna, and critical wildlife corridors.

#### Location & Significance:

**Area:** 1,585 sq km (India's largest conservation reserve).

**Borders:** Ladakh (UT), Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary, Kabjima Nala, and [Chandratal Wildlife Sanctuary](#).

Connects Kibber & Chandratal sanctuaries, acting as a **vital wildlife corridor**.

#### Key Flora & Fauna:

- **Flagship Species:** Snow leopard ("Ghost of the Mountains").
- **Other Wildlife:**
  - Tibetan wolf, **bharal (blue sheep)**, Himalayan ibex, **kiang (wild ass)**, Tibetan argali.
  - Rare birds: **Rose finch**, Tibetan raven, **yellow-billed chough**.
- **Ecosystem:** High-altitude **Trans-Himalayan biodiversity hotspot**.

#### Unique Features:

- **Community Involvement:** Managed by a **Conservation Reserve Management Committee** (includes local panchayats).
- **Livelihood Boost:** Promotes **eco-tourism**, trekking, wildlife research.
- **Climate Resilience:** Protects **snow leopard habitats** and alpine ecosystems.

### ARUNACHAL PRADESH

#### Context:

India has strongly rejected China's latest attempt to rename places in Arunachal Pradesh, calling it a "preposterous" move to justify false territorial claims.



- This is part of China's ongoing strategy to assert unilateral authority over areas it labels "Zangnan" or "[South Tibet](#)."

#### About Arunachal Pradesh:

- **China's Claim:**
  - China claims around **90,000 sq. km** of Arunachal Pradesh, referring to it as "**Zangnan**" (**South Tibet**).
  - It **rejects the McMahon Line**, agreed upon during the **1914 Simla Convention**, as the legal boundary.

- Cites **historical religious and cultural ties** between **Tawang Monastery and Lhasa** to reinforce its narrative.
- **India's Position:**
  - India asserts that **Arunachal Pradesh was, is, and will remain an integral part** of the country.
  - The **McMahon Line**, despite Chinese objections, is internationally recognized as the **de facto boundary**.
- **China's Renaming Tactic:**
  - Since **2017**, China has **repeatedly issued "standardised" Chinese names** for Indian locations in Arunachal.
  - These include **residential areas, rivers, mountains, and towns**—clearly within Indian territory.
  - The motive is to exert **psychological and diplomatic pressure** and reinforce territorial assertions.

#### About Arunachal Pradesh:

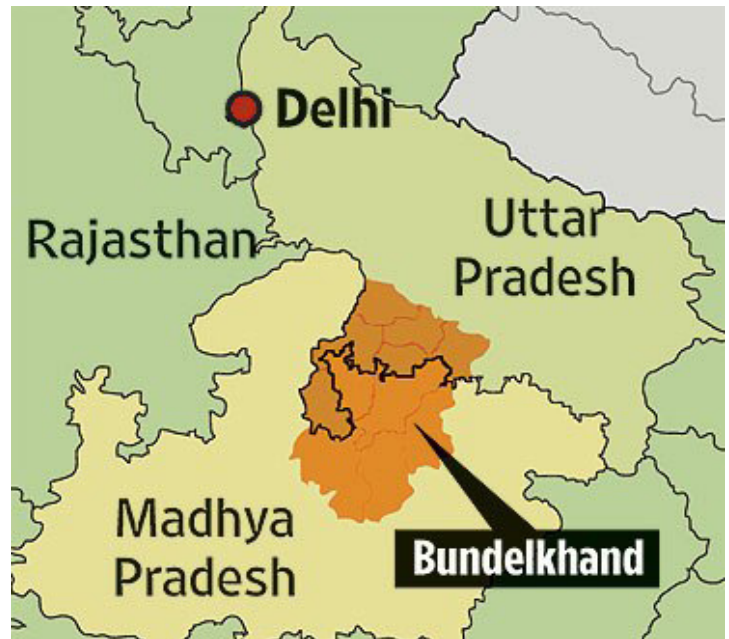
- Located in **Northeast India**, it became the **24th state of India in 1987**.
- Earlier known as the **North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA)**.
- **Capital:** Itanagar
- **State Borders:** Assam and Nagaland
- **International Borders:** China (1030 km), Myanmar (440 km), and Bhutan (160 km)
- **Ecological Importance:**
  - Known as the **"Orchid Paradise"** and **"Land of the Rising Sun"**.
  - Home to **dense forests, medicinal herbs, and rare wildlife species**.
  - Major **protected areas** include: [Namdapha National Park](#), Pakke Tiger Reserve, and Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Tribal Diversity:**
  - Inhabited by over **25 major tribes** including **Nyishi, Apatani, Mishmi, Wancho, Momba, Khamti, and Abor**.
  - Rich cultural heritage with unique **festivals** like **Losar, Solung, Dree, Nyokum, and Boori-Boot**.
- **Geological & River Features:**
  - **Rivers:** Siang (Tsangpo in Tibet), Kameng, Subansiri, [Lohit](#), Tirap – mostly snow-fed and flowing from the Himalayas.
  - **Mountain Ranges:**
    - Dafla, Miri, Abor, Mishmi Hills
    - Part of the Eastern Himalayas with alpine and temperate climates.

- **Passes:** Bum La, Bomdila, Tunga, and Dihang Pass provide critical border access.

## BUNDELKHAND

#### Context:

Bundelkhand's [water crisis](#) continues to deepen, placing a disproportionate burden on women and girls who travel long distances daily for water.



#### About Bundelkhand:

- Bundelkhand is a **historic plateau region** located in **central India**, now spread across **northern Madhya Pradesh** and **southern Uttar Pradesh**.
- It includes districts like Jhansi, Banda, Hamirpur (Uttar Pradesh), and Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh, Panna (Madhya Pradesh).

#### Geographical Features:

- Lies in the **Vindhyan hills** and ravine-cut plains with steep, isolated rocky outcrops ideal for fortifications.
- **Major rivers:** Betwa, Ken, Dhasan, and Tons — most flow through deep gorges, limiting irrigation potential.
- **Diamond deposits** are found near **Panna**, and major crops include wheat, cotton, and jowar.

#### Historical Background:

- Known as **Jejakabhukti** in ancient times; ruled by dynasties like **Gaharwars, Pratiharas, and Chandelas**.
- Famous for **Khajuraho temples**, the region

fell to Prithviraj Chauhan in 1182 CE.

- The **Bundela Rajputs**, from whom the region takes its name, resisted Mughal and **Delhi Sultanate** rule through guerrilla tactics.

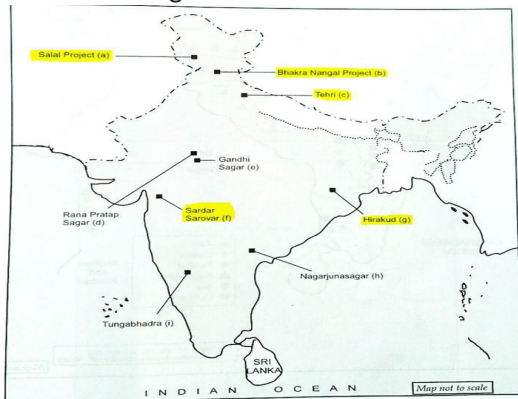
## BAKRA DAM

### Context:

The **Bhakra Beas Management Board** (BBMB) ordered the release of 8,500 cusecs of water to Haryana, sparking strong opposition from the Punjab government, which cited an ongoing water crisis.

### About Bhakra Dam:

- **Location:** Situated on the **Sutlej River** near **Bhakra village in Bilaspur district**, Himachal Pradesh, around **13 km upstream from Nangal (Punjab)**.
  - Bhakra dam is in Himachal, while Nangal is in Punjab.
- **States involved:** Jointly managed by **Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Himachal Pradesh** via **BBMB**.
- **Key Features:**
  - Bhakra Dam is a concrete gravity dam.
  - **Asia's second tallest dam:** Height of **225.55 meters**.
  - **Gobind Sagar Reservoir:** Capacity of **9.34 billion cubic meters**, India's **second largest** after Indira Sagar.



- Provides **irrigation, hydroelectric power, flood control, and drinking water** to several states.
- It is known as the **“New Temple of Resurgent India”** by Jawaharlal Nehru.
- **Nangal dam** is another dam downstream of Bhakra dam. Sometimes both the dams together are called **Bhakra-Nangal dam** though they are two separate dams.

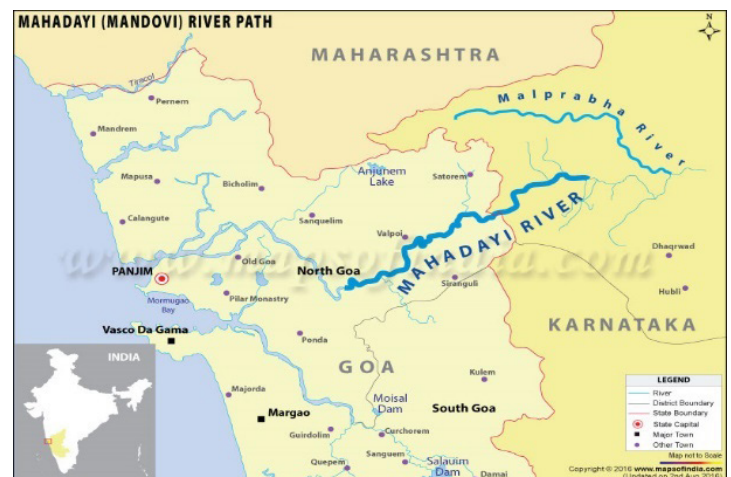
### About Sutlej River:

- **Origin:**
  - Rises from **Lake Rakshastal**, near **Mount Kailash** in **southwestern Tibet**, at an elevation of over **15,000 feet (4,600 metres)**.
  - It is one of the **three trans-Himalayan rivers** that originate in Tibet and cut through the Himalayas, along with the **Indus** and **Brahmaputra**.
- **States it flows through:** Tibet (China), Himachal Pradesh (India), Punjab (India), and Pakistan.
  - Entry into India through the **Shipki La Pass** in Himachal Pradesh.
- **Tributaries of Sutlej:**
  - **Left-bank tributaries:** Spiti River, Baspa River, and Nogli Khad.
  - **Right-bank tributaries:** Soan River and Ghaggar-Hakra (historically connected)
- **Sutlej as a Tributary:**
  - Sutlej is the **longest of the five tributaries of the Indus River**.
  - After joining the **Beas River** in Punjab, it continues into Pakistan, meets the **Chenab**, and together they form the **Panjnad**, which ultimately merges into the Indus River.
- **Major Hydroelectric & Irrigation Projects:** Bhakra-Nangal Project, Nathpa Jhakri Hydroelectric Project (Himachal Pradesh), Karcham Wangtoo Hydroelectric Plant, **Sutlej Valley Project**, and Sirhind Canal System.

## MAHADAYI RIVER

### Context:

A new scientific paper by CSIR-NIO and **INCOIS** claims that Karnataka's diversion of Mahadayi River will have limited ecological impact on Goa, sparking protests by local groups in Goa.



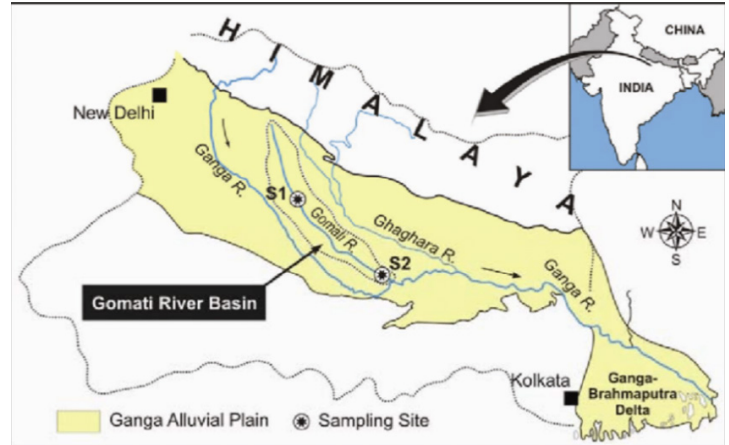
### About Mahadayi River:

- **What it is?** Mahadayi (also called **Mandovi** or **Mhadei**) is a **rain-fed interstate river** known as Goa's **lifeline**, vital for drinking water, agriculture, biodiversity, and economy.
- **Origin:** Originates in the **Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary**, Belagavi district, Karnataka.
- **States it flows through:**
  - Flows through **Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Goa**.
  - **Total length:** 111 km — 35 km in Karnataka, 1 km in Maharashtra, 76 km in Goa.
- **Tributaries:**
  - **Major tributaries:** Kalasa, Banduri, Mapusa, Ragada, Nanuz, Valvoti, Nerul, St. Inez Creek, Dudhsagar, Kotrachi Nadi, Rio de Ourém.
  - The **Cumbarjua Canal** links Mahadayi and Zuari rivers.
- **Mouth:** Empties into the **Arabian Sea** at **Panaji**, Goa, near **Mormugao Harbour**.
- **Features of the River:**
  - Known for **Dudhsagar Falls, Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary** on Chorão Island.
  - Supports navigation, iron ore mining transport, and tourism (Mandovi cruises).
  - Hosts three parallel bridges including the **Atal Setu**, Goa's tallest bridge.
  - **Catchment area:** 2,032 km<sup>2</sup> (Goa – 1,580; Karnataka – 375; Maharashtra – 77).
- **What is the Dispute?**
  - **Karnataka** seeks to divert Mahadayi water for **drinking needs** in **drought-prone districts** (Belagavi, Dharwad, Bagalkot, Gadag).
  - **Goa** opposes it, citing **ecological harm** to its wildlife sanctuaries and dependence on the river.
  - The issue led to the formation of **Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal (MWDT)** under the **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act**.
- **About Kalasa-Banduri Project:**
  - A Karnataka-proposed project from the **1980s** to divert water from Mahadayi (Kalasa & Banduri tributaries) to the **Malaprabha basin** (Krishna River system).
  - Aims to meet drinking water demands in northern Karnataka.

## GOMTI RIVER

### Context:

The Gomti River in Lucknow is at risk of becoming ecologically dead due to rising untreated sewage, declining oxygen levels, and increasing **faecal coliform levels**.



### About Gomti River:

- **Origin:**
  - Arises from **Gomat Taal (Fulhaar Jheel)** near **Madho Tanda**, Pilibhit district, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Course:**
  - Flows entirely through **Uttar Pradesh**, traversing districts like **Lucknow, Sitapur, Sultanpur, Jaunpur, Faizabad**, and others.
  - Joins the **Ganga River** at **Kaithi** in **Ghazipur** district.
- **Length & Basin:**
  - **Total Length:** ~960 km
  - **Drainage Area:** ~18,750 sq km (7,240 sq miles)
  - Perennial river with sluggish flow except during the **monsoon season**.
- **Major Tributaries:** Sai River, Chowka River, Kathina River, Saryu River, and Sarayan River.
- **Cultural and Religious Significance:**
  - Considered **sacred in Hinduism**, believed to be the daughter of **Rishi Vashishtha**.
  - Mentioned in the **Bhagavata Purana** as one of the **five transcendental rivers**.
  - The rare **Gomti Chakra** is found in its sands.

## KALESHWARAM LIFT IRRIGATION PROJECT

### Context:

The [National Dam Safety Authority \(NDSA\)](#) has found serious structural damage in Telangana's Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP) barrages, recommending urgent repairs and a complete safety review.



### About Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project:

- **What is KLIP?**
  - KLIP is the **world's largest multi-stage lift irrigation project**, aimed at diverting water from the [Godavari River](#) to drought-prone regions of **Telangana**.
- **Location:**
  - Situated at **Kaleshwaram**, Jayashankar Bhupalpally district, Telangana
  - It draws water from the **confluence of Pranahita and Godavari Rivers**
- **Lift Irrigation Technology:**
  - Uses **massive pumps** to lift water against gravity from lower elevations to higher regions
  - Includes **four major pump stations**, with Ramadugu being Asia's largest (powered by 7 x 140 MW pumps from BHEL)
- **Key Features of KLIP:**
  - **World's Largest Lift Irrigation Project:** Draws water from the Godavari-Pranahita confluence to irrigate over 18 lakh acres in Telangana.
  - **Massive Infrastructure:** Covers ~500 km across 13 districts with 1,800 km canal network and major barrages at Medigadda, Annaram, and Sundilla.

- **High Water Capacity:** Total 240 TMC – including 195 TMC from Medigadda Barrage and rest from Yellampalli & groundwater.
- **Multi-purpose Use:** Supplies water for agriculture (169 TMC), Hyderabad city (30 TMC), industry (16 TMC), and rural drinking needs (10 TMC).

### About National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA):

- **What is NDSA?**
  - The **National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)** is a **statutory regulatory body** established under **Section 8(1) of the National Dam Safety Act, 2021**.
  - It was created by the **Central Government** to institutionalize dam safety and oversee compliance with safety standards across India.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Key Functions of NDSA:**
  - **Dam Regulation:** Formulates national policies for **design, construction, maintenance, and operation** of dams.
  - **Dispute Resolution:** Mediates conflicts between [State Dam Safety Organisations \(SDSOs\)](#) or between SDSOs and **dam owners**.
  - **Inspection & Oversight:** Conducts periodic **safety inspections**, especially for specified large dams.
  - **Disaster Preparedness:** Develops and monitors **emergency action plans** to respond to dam-related hazards.
  - **Public Awareness:** Leads **national campaigns** to build awareness on dam safety, flood risks, and community preparedness.
  - **Technical Support:** Provides **capacity building**, research, and guidelines for dam design and hydrological safety.

## ARABIAN SEA

### Context:

The IMD has forecast a low-pressure system forming over the east-central Arabian Sea, likely to intensify into a depression in the next 36 hours.

### About Arabian Sea:

- **Location:** The Arabian Sea is a **northwestern extension of the Indian Ocean**, bordered by **India** to the east and the [Arabian Peninsula](#) to the west.



### River.

- Known for **ferromanganese nodules, hydrogen sulfide zones, and polymetallic sulfides.**

## VIZHINJAM PORT

### Context:

Prime Minister of India formally dedicated the Vizhinjam International Seaport to the nation, marking a strategic leap in India's maritime infrastructure.

### About Vizhinjam Port:

- What it is?**
  - India's first **deep-water, all-weather, automated transshipment port**, designed for handling next-gen ultra-large container vessels (ULCVs).
  - Functions under the **landlord port model**, integrating smart tech and scalable design.
- Location:** Situated at **Vizhinjam near Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala**—just **10 nautical miles** from key global shipping routes (Suez–Far East & Far East–Middle East).

### Neighbouring Nations:

- Coastal countries:** India, Pakistan, Iran, Oman, Yemen, and Somalia.
- Key maritime links:** [Gulf of Oman](#) (to Persian Gulf) and [Gulf of Aden](#) (to Red Sea).

### Indian Coastal States:

Indian states bordering the Arabian Sea include: Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Lakshadweep UT.

### Geographical Features:

- Depth:** Average depth ~2,734 m and max depth at **Wheatley Deep** ~5,803 m
- Major Submarine Features:**
  - Carlsberg Ridge** (seismic, mid-ocean ridge)
  - Murray Ridge**, Somali and Arabian Basins
  - Indus submarine canyon** and abyssal cone
- Key Islands:**
  - Socotra (Yemen), Kuria Muria Islands (Oman), Lakshadweep (India)

### Role in Monsoon:

- Monsoon Influence:**
  - Southwest monsoon winds (April–November) gather moisture from the Arabian Sea, triggering **heavy rains in India.**
  - Upwelling near the Somali and Arabian coasts** aids in nutrient cycling and monsoon onset.
- Ocean Currents:**
  - Hosts the **Somali Current**, one of the fastest ocean currents (~13 km/hr), seasonally reversing with monsoons.
  - Drives **clockwise circulation** during summer and weakens during winter monsoon.
- Sediments & Marine Geology:**
  - High sedimentation from the [Indus](#)



- Developed & Operated By:** Owned by the Government of Kerala and **operated by Adani Ports & SEZ** under a 40-year concession.
- Key Features:**
  - Natural depth of 24 meters** – no capital dredging required; supports 24,000+ TEU vessels.
  - AI-based Vessel Traffic Management System (VTMS)** & radar-powered tracking.
  - World-class infrastructure:** Deepest breakwater (28m), tallest STS crane in India, cruise berth, and upcoming railway tunnel (India's 3rd longest).
  - Capable of handling **50% of India's**

transshipment cargo, reducing \$200+ million in annual foreign port dependency.

- **Strategic Importance:**
  - **Transshipment Hub:** Directly competes with Colombo, Singapore, and Jebel Ali by offering lower-cost, high-efficiency cargo handling.
  - Reduces **double handling costs**, transit delays, and boosts **Make in India** exports.
- **Trade Facilitation:**
  - Facilitates **containerized export** of goods such as electronics, textiles, seafood, and perishables.
  - Enhances port connectivity to both **east and west Indian coasts** and improves access to global markets.

Sikkimese belief.

- Surrounded by **four major glaciers:** **Zemu Glacier** (northeast), Talung Glacier (southeast), Yalung Glacier (southwest), and Kanchenjunga Glacier (northwest).
- Receives heavy summer snowfall due to monsoons, with **lighter winter snow**.

- **Cultural Importance:**

- Revered as a sacred mountain and **abode of guardian deity 'Dzoe-Nga'**.
- Considered inviolable by Sikkim's **Bhutia and Lepcha** communities.
- **Climbing is banned** from the Indian side under **Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991** and **Article 371(F)**, which protects Sikkim's customs post-merger with India.

- **Historical Significance:**

- Believed to be the highest peak until **Mount Everest was confirmed in 1856**.
- **First climbed in 1955** by **Joe Brown and George Band** (British expedition).
- Climbers traditionally stop short of the summit to honour religious sentiments.
- Charles Evans also led an expedition on the southwest face in 1955.

## MOUNT KANCHENJUNGA

### Context:

Sikkim Chief Minister has urged the Centre to request a ban on scaling Mount Kanchenjunga from [Nepal](#), citing its deep spiritual significance to Sikkim's indigenous communities.



### About Mount Kanchenjunga:

- **Location:**
  - Lies in the **eastern Himalayas**, straddling the **India–Nepal border**, 74 km north-northwest of Darjeeling.
  - Stands at an elevation of **8,586 metres (28,169 ft)**, making it the **third-highest mountain in the world** and the **highest peak in India**.
- **States Associated:**
  - Located between **Sikkim (India)** and **Taplejung District (Nepal)**.
  - The Indian side lies within the Khangchendzonga National Park in Sikkim.
- **Geographical Features:**
  - Comprises **five prominent peaks**, referred to as the **"Five Treasures of the Snow"** in