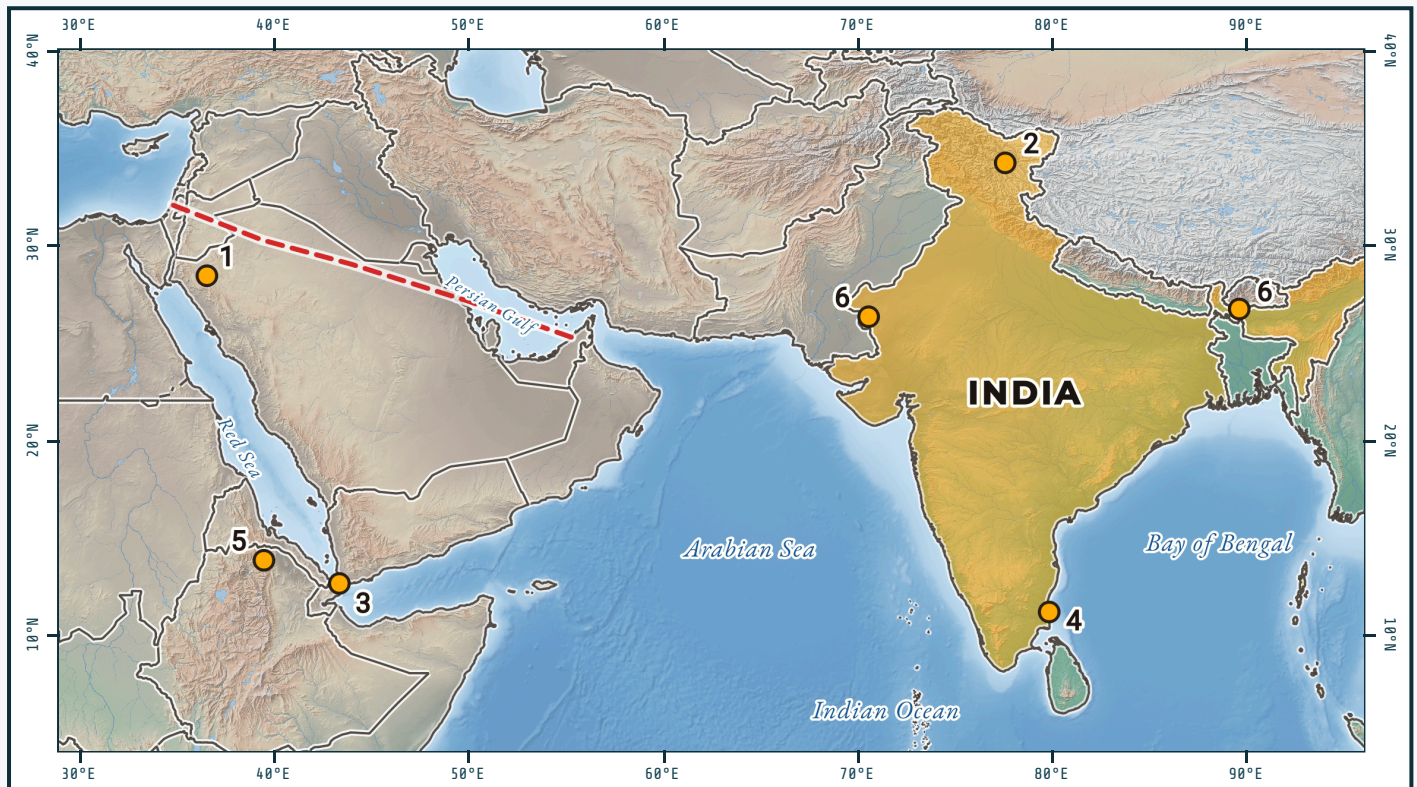


Places *in* News

**OCT 2026
WEEK 1**

News of 1-7 October 2026

MAP · FACTS · PYQ · MAINS



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▶ **WATCH** 3D map video · Hindi + English audio

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WHY IN NEWS

On **30 Sep 2026**, a flydubai flight from the **UAE to Israel** made an emergency landing at **Tabuk, Saudi Arabia**: the co-pilot allegedly stabbed the Indian captain and tried to crash the plane, but passengers and crew overpowered him. Motive unknown — the UAE is probing a possible terror link.



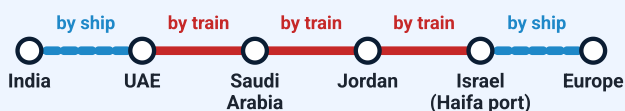
Flight path is indicative (country level). IMEC rail link is proposed, not built.

KEY FACTS

- **Why is there a UAE-Israel flight at all?** In 2020 the UAE and Bahrain started normal relations with Israel — the **Abraham Accords** (signed 15 Sep 2020, White House). Morocco joined in Dec 2020.
- **Normalised ties** = normal diplomatic, trade and travel links. Since 2020, Israelis holiday in the UAE — hence these flights.
- Before 2020, only **Egypt (1979)** and **Jordan (1994)** had peace treaties with Israel.
- **Why over Saudi Arabia?** It lies between the UAE and Israel. It has **no diplomatic ties** with Israel, yet has let UAE/Bahrain-Israel flights cross since 2020, and opened its airspace to **all airlines** in July 2022.
- Saudi Arabia stays out of the Accords — it wants a path to a **Palestinian state** first.

CONCEPT • IMEC — A NEW INDIA-EUROPE TRADE ROUTE

A **planned route** to move goods from India to Europe — part by **ship**, part by **train** — instead of only by sea via the Suez Canal.



Why it matters: gives India an **alternative route** to Europe and less dependence on the Suez Canal.

Status: announced at the **G20 summit, New Delhi (9 Sep 2023)**; the full cross-border rail link is not built yet.

Remember: 8 signatories — India, USA, Saudi Arabia, UAE, EU, France, Germany, Italy. **Israel and Jordan did not sign.**

MAP MEMORY

- **Red Sea coast — 6:** Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti (west) • Saudi Arabia, Yemen (east).
- **Gulf of Aqaba** head touches **4:** Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia.
- Red Sea: very little rain, **no river flows into it** (PYQ 2024).

INDIA ANGLE

~**34 lakh** Indians live in the UAE (MEA). India-UAE trade: **US\$ 100 bn+** in FY 2024-25 (CEPA).

UPSC PRELIMS PYQ • 2023

Statement-I: Israel has established diplomatic relations with some Arab States.

Statement-II: The 'Arab Peace Initiative' mediated by Saudi Arabia was signed by Israel and Arab League.

(a) Both correct; II explains I

(b) Both correct; II does not explain I

(c) I correct, II incorrect

(d) I incorrect, II correct

✓ (c) — The Arab Peace Initiative (Beirut, 2002) was Saudi-proposed and Arab League-endorsed; Israel never signed it.

MAINS LINK • 2025 GS-II

"Energy security constitutes the dominant kingpin of India's foreign policy, and is linked with India's overarching influence in Middle Eastern countries." How would you integrate energy security with India's foreign policy trajectories in the coming years?

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following countries:

I. Egypt II. Jordan III. Lebanon IV. Saudi Arabia

How many of the above touch the head of the Gulf of Aqaba?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) Only three

(d) All four

Answer on the last page

WHY IN NEWS

On **2 Oct 2026**, India gave **standard names to 28 places** in Ladakh on the official **Survey of India map** — peaks, glaciers, passes, a river and a lake — for correct recognition and public awareness. Two of them, **Gogra** and **Hot Spring**, were friction points in the **2020 India–China standoff**.



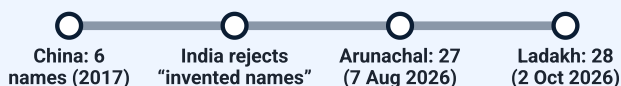
India's official boundary: Aksai Chin and Gilgit-Baltistan are part of Ladakh. Orange pins = some of the 28 new names; small dark dots = other places. LAC not drawn.

KEY FACTS

- Aksai Chin** = Ladakh's north-east corner, about **38,000 sq km** of high, dry land. India's position: Indian territory under China's **illegal occupation since the 1962 war**.
- LAC (Line of Actual Control)** = the line where the two armies stand today. It is **not a border**, and in some areas the two sides do not see it the same way.
- Several new names lie **across the LAC, in Aksai Chin** (Tribune): **Kumarayana Point** is on the China-built **G219 highway**; **Guru Rinpoche Lake** lies just east of it.
- 2020 standoff**: clash on the north bank of **Pangong Tso** (5 May) and in **Galwan valley** (15 Jun, 20 Indian soldiers killed). **Gogra–Hot Springs disengagement**: Sep 2022.
- Names carry history: **Kanishka Peak** (Kushana king who held a Buddhist council), **Zorawar Peak** (Dogra general who took Ladakh in 1834).

CONCEPT • A NAME ON THE OFFICIAL MAP = A STATEMENT OF SOVEREIGNTY

Writing standard names for places on a country's **official map** records that the land is its own. India has now named places in **Ladakh**, its own territory, on the Survey of India map.



Status: China: six lists since 2017 (MEA rejects them). India: Arunachal (Aug) and Ladakh (Oct 2026).

Remember: India's lists come from the **Home Ministry (MHA)**, on the Survey of India map.

MAP MEMORY

- Water line:** Siachen → Nubra → Shyok → Indus. Siachen (Karakoram) = 2nd-longest non-polar glacier.
- Ranges:** Karakoram, Ladakh, Zaskar; the Indus flows NW between Ladakh and Zaskar.
- Cold desert** (NCERT): -45°C winters, under 50 cm rain; salt lakes Pangong Tso, Tso Moriri.

BACKGROUND

Ladakh became a **Union Territory** on **31 Oct 2019**. Galwan 2020 = first deaths on this border in **45 years** (EAM).

UPSC PRELIMS PYQ • 2020

Siachen Glacier is situated to the

- (a) East of Aksai Chin (b) East of Leh
(c) North of Gilgit (d) North of Nubra Valley

✓ (d) — Siachen's meltwater forms the Nubra River, so the glacier lies at the head (north) of the Nubra Valley. Aksai Chin lies to its east.

MAINS LINK • 2026 GS-III

Ladakh is strategically located between China and Pakistan. As a measure to win hearts and minds of locals, discuss the Border Area Development Programmes (BADP) by the Central Government and civic actions by the Army. Also discuss demand of promulgation of provision of the Sixth Schedule of constitution for Ladakh.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following pairs:

Glacier/River : Its water flows into

I. Siachen Glacier : Nubra

II. Nubra : Shyok

III. Shyok : Jhelum

In how many of the above rows is the information correctly matched?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) All three (d) None

Answer on the last page

■ WHY IN NEWS

On **5 Oct 2026**, Yemeni officials said forces of the Saudi-backed government **retook a town just north of the Bab-el-Mandeb strait and areas around it** from the **Houthis** — an Iran-backed armed group from northern Yemen. In September the Houthis had seized Yemen's Red Sea coast up to the strait, and **Perim island** in it.



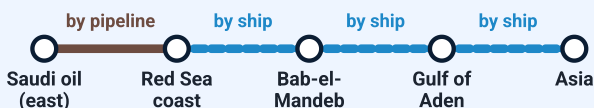
Marker = area retaken on 5 Oct (claim by Yemeni officials), approximate. Pipeline route not shown.

■ KEY FACTS

- **Bab-el-Mandeb** = narrow strait between Arabia and Africa, linking the **Red Sea** to the **Gulf of Aden**. Arabic for 'Gate of Tears' (old sailing dangers).
- **Shores:** Yemen (Asia) · **Djibouti, Eritrea** (Africa). Yemen's small **Perim island** splits it into two channels.
- **Why now?** Iran has blockaded **Hormuz** since Feb 2026, so Saudi oil goes west by the **East-West pipeline** to the Red Sea — its short route to Asia is via Bab-el-Mandeb.
- **Two Yemens until 1990** (North + South). The Houthis took the capital in **2014**; a Saudi-led coalition joined in **2015**. The recognised government sits in the south.
- **4–5 Oct:** Yemen's military, with Saudi air cover, claimed **1,000+ strikes**; Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye agreed 'rapid deployment' of forces in Saudi Arabia.

■ CONCEPT · CHOKEPOINT – SAUDI OIL'S 'DOUBLE BLOCKADE'

A **chokepoint** = a narrow channel on a busy sea route; block it and ships must go the long way, e.g. round Africa.



Why it matters: with Hormuz shut, Saudi oil shipped from the Red Sea takes Bab-el-Mandeb as its **short route** to Asia.

Status: Iran blockades Hormuz; the Houthis have declared a blockade on Saudi ships (since July 2026).

Remember: Gulf oil to Europe via Suez passes **both** Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb (2024 PYQ: SUMED).

■ MAP MEMORY

- **Yemen's land neighbours — only 2:** Saudi Arabia (N), Oman (E).
- **Djibouti** sits on the strait: Eritrea to its north, Ethiopia west, Somalia south.
- **Socotra** = Yemen's largest island, in the Arabian Sea.

■ INDIA ANGLE

MEA, condemning Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia (15 Sep): they 'threaten freedom of navigation through the Bab-el-Mandeb'. Navy: Gulf of Aden anti-piracy patrol since **2008**.

■ UPSC PRELIMS PYQ · 2024

Statement-I: Sumed pipeline is a strategic route for Persian Gulf oil and natural gas shipments to Europe.

Statement-II: Sumed pipeline connects the Red Sea with the Mediterranean Sea.

(a) Both correct; II explains I

(b) Both correct; II does not explain I

(c) I correct, II incorrect

(d) I incorrect, II correct

✓ (a) — SUMED runs through Egypt from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, so Gulf oil that has entered the Red Sea can go on to Europe.

■ MAINS LINK · 2022 GS-I

Mention the significance of straits and isthmus in international trade.

■ PRACTICE QUESTION

Which of the following countries have a coastline **only** on the Red Sea?

1. Sudan 2. Eritrea 3. Egypt 4. Oman

Select the answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 1, 2 and 3 only

(c) 3 and 4 only

(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer on the last page

WHY IN NEWS

From **6 to 22 Sep 2026**, divers of the **Tamil Nadu archaeology department** (with the Indian Maritime University) explored the sea off **Poompuhar**, where the **Kaveri** meets the Bay of Bengal. About **2 km offshore**, ~10 m deep, they found a **torpedo-jar** piece believed to be from **West Asia**; the survey also found 4 ring wells and 250+ ceramic pieces.



The dot marks Poompuhar on the coast; the finds lie offshore (approx.). Trade arrows are indicative.

KEY FACTS

- Torpedo jar** = a long, cylinder-shaped clay jar with a narrow mouth, used to ship **wine or oil**; its shape stopped spills. The first such find underwater off Poompuhar.
- Why a port here?** Poompuhar sits at the **Kaveri's mouth** (river mouth = where a river meets the sea). Crops of the fertile Kaveri valley reached this coast, where sea routes began.
- Then called **Puhar** (Kaveripoompattinam), it was the chief port of the **early Cholas**. Ships sailed from here to **Southeast Asia, Arabia and Rome**.
- Sangam literature** = early Tamil poems, believed composed in assemblies (*sangams*) of poets. **Pattinappalai**, praising Chola king Karikala, describes Puhar's ships and markets.
- Lost to the sea:** the Tamil epic **Manimekalai** says the sea swallowed Puhar. A large part of the city is thought lost to floods, coastal erosion, a rising sea and perhaps a tsunami.

CONCEPT · RING WELLS – SIGN OF A DROWNED SETTLEMENT

A **ring well** = clay rings stacked into a shaft – used as a well, and also for drainage.



Why it matters: built **only on dry land** – so wells on the seabed suggest a settlement once stood there.

Status: **4 wells** (60–65 cm wide) found; only ~10% of the planned survey done – next phase **Jan 2027**.

Remember: Not only drinking water: NCERT notes some were **drains**, toilets and garbage pits.

MAP MEMORY

- Three chiefs (Muvendar), three ports:** Poompuhar – **Chola** · Korkai – **Pandya** · Muchiri (Muziris) – **Chera**.
- Muziris: **Periyar** mouth, Kerala · Korkai: **Thamirabarani**, south Tamil Nadu.
- Early Chola capital: **Uraiyyur**; Puhar is also called a Chola capital (PYQ trap).

WHAT NEXT

Tamil Nadu also surveyed the sea off **Korkai**; reports on the Korkai and Poompuhar surveys are due by **Feb 2027**.

UPSC PRELIMS PYQ · 2023

With reference to ancient South India, Korkai, Poompuhar and Muchiri were well known as

(a) capital cities

(b) ports

(c) centres of iron-and-steel making

(d) shrines of Jain tirthankaras

✓ (b) – Puhar was the premier Chola port, Korkai the major Pandya port and Muchiri a Chera port.

MAINS LINK · 2013 GS-I

Though not very useful from the point of view of a connected political history of South India, the Sangam Literature portrays the social and economic conditions of its time with remarkable vividness. Comment.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following pairs:

Port : Dynasty

I. Korkai : Pandya

II. Kaveripoompattinam : Chola

III. Muchiri : Chola

In how many of the above rows is the information correctly matched?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

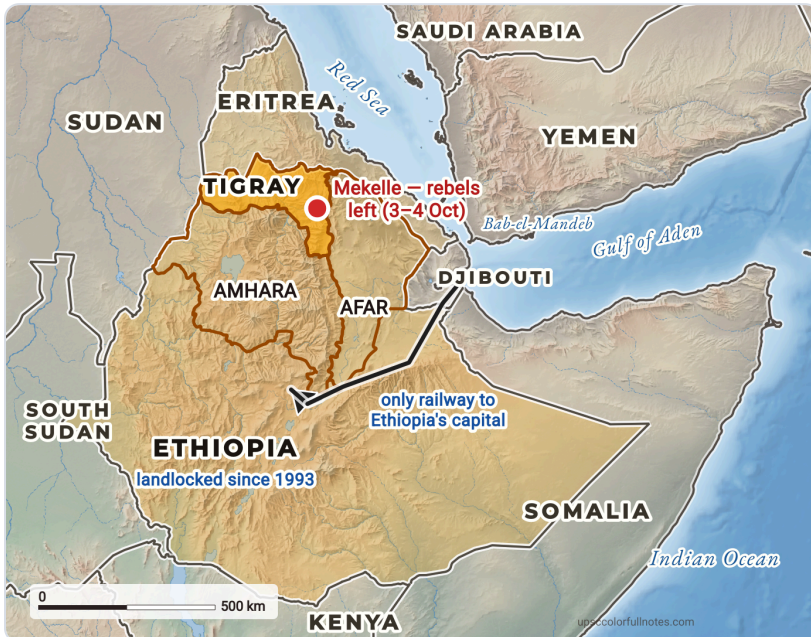
(c) All three

(d) None

Answer on the last page

■ WHY IN NEWS

On 3–4 Oct 2026, TPLF fighters — Tigray's own party with its own army — pulled out of **Mekelle**, capital of Ethiopia's **Tigray** region. Government forces entered the city and seized its airport. The fighting began on **23 Sep**: the worst since the **2020–22 civil war**.



Railway path is indicative. Tigray, Amhara and Afar are regions (like states) of Ethiopia.

■ KEY FACTS

- **Where?** Tigray is Ethiopia's **northernmost region**: Eritrea (N), Sudan (W), Amhara (S), Afar (E). The rebels first attacked Amhara and Afar.
- **Who?** The TPLF ruled all of Ethiopia **1991–2018**, then lost power. It fought the government in a **civil war** (war inside one country), **2020–22**.
- The **Pretoria Agreement** (2 Nov 2022, African Union-led) stopped that war, but was **never fully implemented**.
- In 2020–22 **Eritrea** backed the government. Now Ethiopia **accuses** it (and Egypt, Sudan) of backing the rebels — all deny. Ties have broken.
- Eritrea says Ethiopia plans to seize its coast; the TPLF leader calls it “a war to control the Red Sea”.

■ CONCEPT · LANDLOCKED ETHIOPIA — A HOUSE WITHOUT A FRONT DOOR

A **landlocked** country has **no coastline**. Ethiopia became landlocked in **1993**, when **Eritrea**, its Red Sea province, became independent.



Why it matters: most Ethiopian imports, **even fuel**, pass through Djibouti — so Ethiopia wants its **own sea access** back.

Status: Eritrea fears Ethiopia will seize its coast; ties broken (Oct 2026). Earlier border war: **1998–2000**.

Remember: Eritrea became independent in **1993**. Ethiopia's door to the sea today is **Djibouti**, not Eritrea.

■ MAP MEMORY

- **Ethiopia's 6 neighbours:** Eritrea (N), Djibouti (NE), Somalia (E), Kenya (S), South Sudan and Sudan (W).
- **Horn of Africa (core 4):** Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia.
- **Tigray touches 4:** Eritrea, Sudan, Amhara, Afar. UPSC asked Ethiopia's regions 3 times: Oromia 2018, Amhara 2022, Tigray 2023.

■ INDIA ANGLE

Dec 2025: PM Modi's first bilateral visit to Ethiopia; ties raised to a **Strategic Partnership**. ~2,500 Indians live in Ethiopia.

■ UPSC PRELIMS PYQ · 2023

Consider the following pairs:

Area of conflict mentioned in news : Country where it is located

1. Donbas : Syria
2. Kachin : Ethiopia
3. Tigray : North Yemen

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) All three

(d) None

✓ (d) — Donbas is in Ukraine, Kachin in Myanmar, Tigray in Ethiopia. All three pairs are wrong.

■ MAINS LINK · 2021 GS-II

“If the last few decades were of Asia's growth story, the next few are expected to be of Africa's.” In the light of this statement, examine India's influence in Africa in recent years.

■ PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following countries:

I. Djibouti II. Eritrea III. Somalia IV. Sudan

How many of the above share a land border with Ethiopia?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) Only three

(d) All four

Answer on the last page

WHY IN NEWS

During **Wildlife Week 2026**: on **2 Oct** a tigress from Bihar's **Valmiki TR** was released in **Buxa TR, West Bengal**; on **4 Oct** two captive-bred male **Great Indian Bustards** were freed in Rajasthan's **Desert National Park** – the first captive-bred GIBs released into the wild.



Arrow = the tigress's move (indicative, not the road route). Green = tiger reserves, red = Desert National Park.

KEY FACTS

- **Why was Buxa empty?** Habitat degraded and broken up, land use changed, **prey declined** – no tiger could settle. Camera traps saw tigers only passing through.
- **Where is Buxa?** North Bengal – **Bhutan's forests** to the north, Manas TR (Assam) to the east: a forest chain tigers can move along.
- **Why Valmiki?** Bihar's only TR, in the **Himalayan foothills** on the **Nepal** border – terrain like Buxa's. A move from the mangrove **Sundarbans** 'may not have worked'.
- **Great Indian Bustard (GIB):** Rajasthan's state bird, **Critically Endangered**, about 150 or fewer in the wild. Weak forward vision – it flies straight into **power lines**.
- **Slow breeder** – eggs once in 1–2 years. Since **2019**, wild eggs are hatched at **Sam and Ramdevra** centres: 40 birds from wild eggs, 57 bred in captivity.

CONCEPT • EX SITU → IN SITU CONSERVATION

Ex situ = saving a species **outside** its habitat (breeding centre). **In situ** = in its **own habitat** (national park).



Why it matters: the GIB breeds too slowly to recover alone; centres raise birds, release rebuilds the wild flock.

Status: first captive-bred GIBs freed **4 Oct 2026** – the 'first step' in rewilding captive-bred birds.

Remember: Buxa's tiger = **reintroduction** (none living there). The GIB release = **reinforcement** – wild birds still live in Desert NP.

MAP MEMORY

- **First tiger reintroduction:** Sariska (Rajasthan), 2008; then Panna (MP).
- **Valmiki** touches Nepal's Chitwan NP • **Buxa** touches Bhutan.
- **Thar** = NW of the Aravalli, rain below 150 mm/yr (NCERT).

COURT ANGLE

Supreme Court (Dec 2025): bury **80 km of 33 kV** and **250 km of 'critical'** power lines in Rajasthan within 2 years.

UPSC PRELIMS PYQ • 2020

With reference to India's Desert National Park, which of the following statements are correct?

1. It is spread over two districts.
2. There is no human habitation inside the Park.
3. It is one of the natural habitats of Great Indian Bustard.

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

✓ (c) – Statement 2 is wrong: 73 villages lie inside the park.

MAINS LINK • 2026 GS-III

Discuss the aim and goals of Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework. Mention India's commitments and initiatives to achieve the goals and targets of this framework giving suitable examples.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following pairs:

Tiger Reserve : State

I. Valmiki : Bihar

II. Buxa : West Bengal

III. Sariska : Madhya Pradesh

In how many of the above rows is the information correctly matched?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) All three

(d) None

Answer on the last page



1. **UAE-Israel** — (c) Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia (with Israel) touch the head of the Gulf of Aqaba; Lebanon lies on the Mediterranean.
2. **Ladakh** — (b) Siachen's meltwater forms the Nubra, which joins the Shyok; the Shyok drains into the Indus, not the Jhelum.
3. **Yemen** — (a) Sudan and Eritrea face only the Red Sea (their ships pass Bab-el-Mandeb to reach the Indian Ocean). Egypt also has a Mediterranean coast; Oman faces the Arabian Sea.
4. **Poompuhar** — (b) Korkai was a Pandya port and Kaveripoompattinam (Poompuhar) a Chola port; Muchiri (Muziris), in Kerala, was a Chera port.
5. **Tigray** — (d) All four border Ethiopia; its six neighbours are Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, South Sudan and Sudan.
6. **Rewilding** — (b) Valmiki is in Bihar and Buxa in West Bengal; Sariska is in Rajasthan.