



Drishti IAS Presents...

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MAPS



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SAARC

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation



- **Members:** 8
- **Estd. by signing SAARC Charter in Dhaka (Dec 1985)**
- **HQ:** Kathmandu, Nepal
- **9 Permanent Observers to SAARC:** Australia, China, EU, Iran, Japan, S. Korea, Mauritius, Myanmar and US
- **Comprises 3% of the world's area, 21% of the world's population and 3.8% of the global economy**
- **Agreements under SAARC:** SAPTA, SAFTA, SATIS, SAARC University

AFGHANISTAN

- It is India's gateway to the oil and mineral-rich Central Asian republics.
- Salma Dam in Afghanistan is aka Afghanistan-India Friendship Dam.
- From 2002 to 2021, India spent USD 4 bn in development assistance in Afghanistan, building high-visibility projects (highways, hospitals, Parliament building, rural schools, and electricity transmission lines).
- Afghanistan becoming a safe haven for terrorism is direct threat to India's national security.

NEPAL

- Shares border with 5 Indian states (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Sikkim and Bihar)
- Bharat Gaurav Tourist Train connecting India's Ayodhya and Nepal's Janakpur
- Major Issues: Territorial Disputes (Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh)
- Military Exercise: Surya Kiran (Army)

BHUTAN

- India is Bhutan's largest trade partner.
- Mutually Beneficial Hydropower Cooperation: Mangdechhu, Kholongchhu, Chukha hydropower Projects.
- India's grant assistance to Gyalshing Project.
- Integration of Bhutan's DrukRen with India's National Knowledge Network

PAKISTAN

- Indo-Pak diplomatic relations are quite limited with periodic attempts to improve relations often failing.
- India revoked Pakistan's Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status following the Pulwama terrorist attack (2019).
- Indus Water Treaty 1960 is often cited as one of the most successful intl. treaties in South Asia.
- Major issues: Cross-border terrorism, Kashmir issue, CPEC affecting India's Sovereignty

BANGLADESH

- Shares the longest border of over 4,096 km with India.
- Largest trading partner in South Asia.
- Water Sharing Agreements: Koshiyara river (2022), Ganga Water Treaty (1996).
- Major Issues: Teesta River Water Dispute.
- Military Exercises: SAMPRITI-X (Military Training), Bongosagar (Naval).

MALDIVES

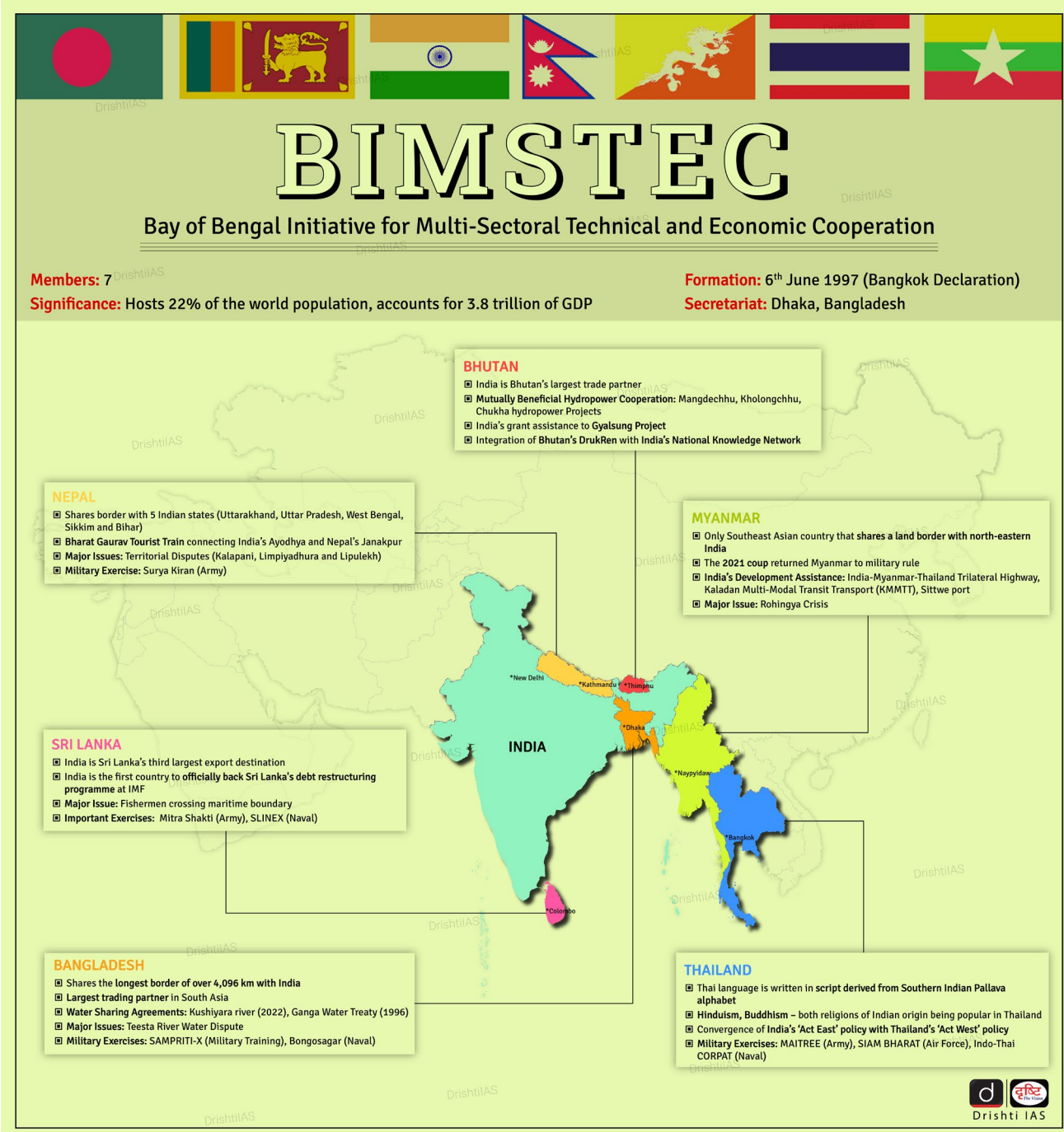
- India is Maldives 2nd largest trading partner.
- Exercises with India - Ekuverin, Dosti, Ekatha and Operation Shield.
- Greater Male Connectivity Project by an Indian company is the largest-ever infra project in Maldives.
- Major Issues:
 - Maldives an important 'pearl' in China's String of Pearls.
 - Increasingly Maldivian drawn towards Pak-based terrorist groups.
 - India being projected as the bully and a big brother - 'India Out' Campaign

SRI LANKA

- India is Sri Lanka's third largest export destination.
- India is the first country to officially back Sri Lanka's debt restructuring programme at IMF.
- Major Issue: Fishermen crossing maritime boundary. ICG
- Important Exercises: Mitra Shakti (Army), SLINEX (Naval)



Note:



BIMSTEC
Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation

Members: 7
Significance: Hosts 22% of the world population, accounts for 3.8 trillion of GDP

Formation: 6th June 1997 (Bangkok Declaration)
Secretariat: Dhaka, Bangladesh

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NEPAL

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MYANMAR

- Only Southeast Asian country that shares a land border with north-eastern India
- The 2021 coup returned Myanmar to military rule
- India's Development Assistance: India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport (KMMTT), Sittwe port
- Major Issue: Rohingya Crisis

SRI LANKA

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INDIA

THAILAND

- Thai language is written in script derived from Southern Indian Pallava alphabet
- Hinduism, Buddhism – both religions of Indian origin being popular in Thailand
- Convergence of India's 'Act East' policy with Thailand's 'Act West' policy
- Military Exercises: MAITREE (Army), SIAM BHARAT (Air Force), Indo-Thai CORPAT (Naval)

BANGLADESH

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Drishiti IAS

Note:

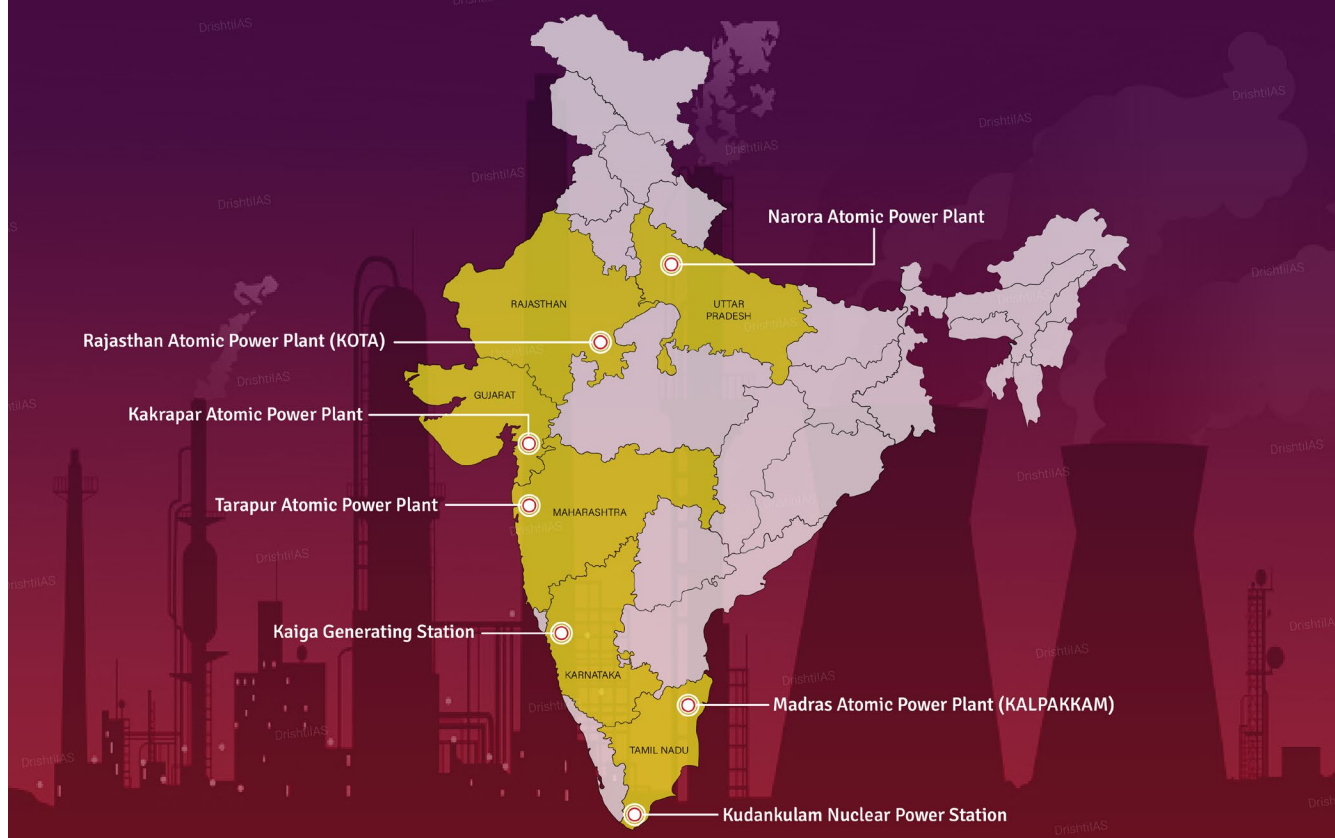
Major Ports in India



- Ports in India are classified as **Major** and **Minor Ports** according to the jurisdiction of the Central and State government as defined under the **Indian Ports Act, 1908** i.e. Major Ports are owned and managed by the Central Government and Minor ports are owned and managed by the State Governments.
- The **Major Port Authorities Act, 2021** provides for regulation, operation and planning of major ports in India and provide greater autonomy to these ports. It replaced the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963.
- There are **12 major ports**. **13th Major Port** (under construction) is **Vadhavan port, Maharashtra**.

Note:

Operational Nuclear Power Plants in India



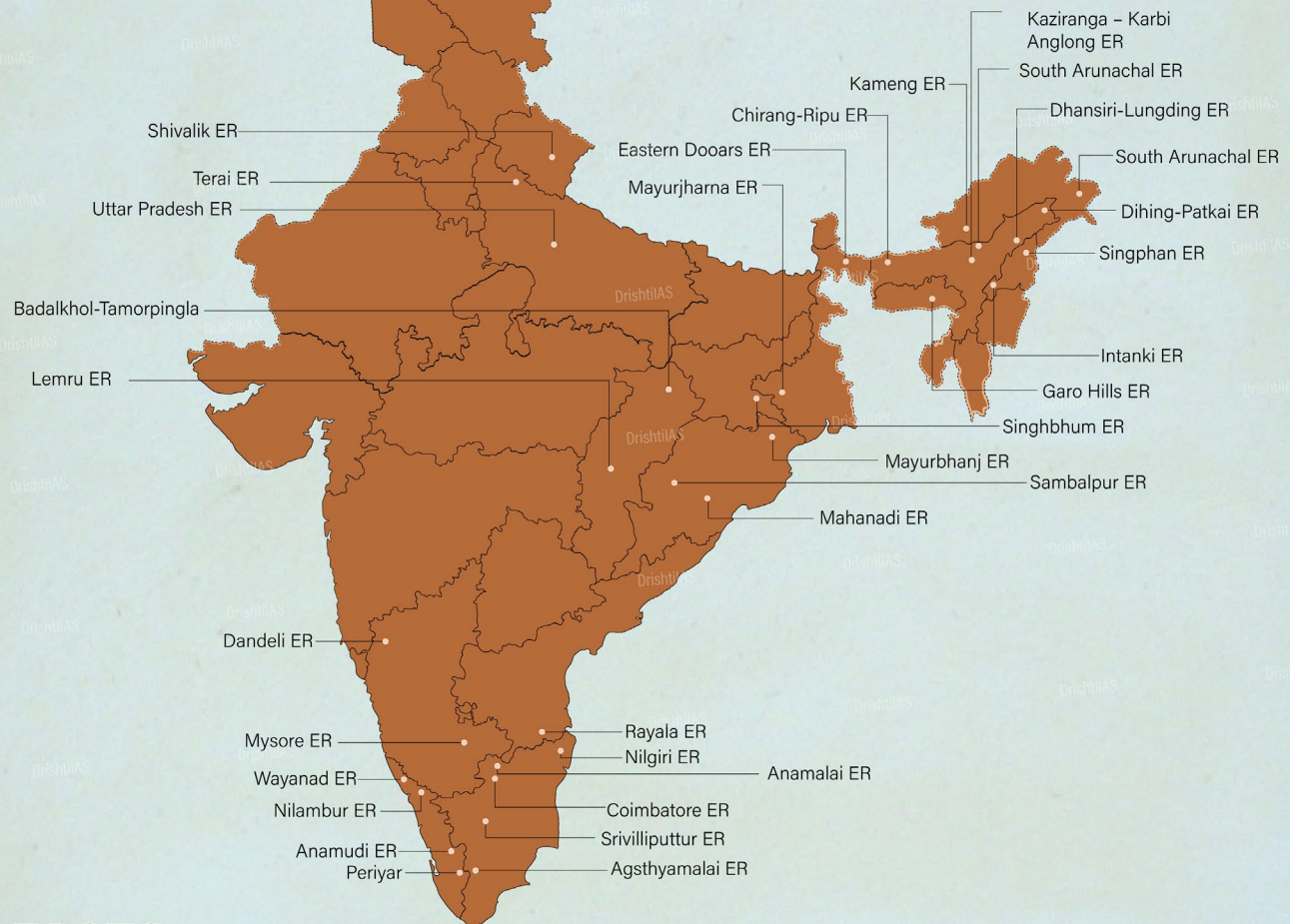
FACTS

- Presently, India has 22 nuclear power reactors operating in 6 states, with an installed capacity of 6780 MegaWatt electric (MWe).
- Activities concerning the establishment and utilization of nuclear facilities and use of radioactive sources are **carried out in India in accordance with the Atomic Energy Act, 1962.**
- Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) **regulates nuclear & radiation facilities and activities.**
- **Newest & Largest Nuclear Power Plant:** Kudankulam Power Plant, Tamil Nadu.
- **First & Oldest Nuclear Power Plant:** Tarapur Power Plant, Maharashtra.

Note:

Elephant Reserves

33 Elephant Reserves
(as of November 2022)



FACTS

- Tamil Nadu and Assam have the highest number (5) of elephant reserves in India.
- The Indian elephant *Elephas maximus* is included in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and in Appendix I of CITES.
- Indian Elephant has also been listed in the Appendix I of the Convention of the Migratory Species and as 'Endangered' in the IUCN Red List.
- The elephant was declared the National Heritage Animal of India in 2010.
- MoEFCC provides financial and technical support to major elephant range states in the country through Project Elephant. Project Elephant was launched by the Government of India in the year 1992 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.



Note:

GRASSLAND OF THE WORLD



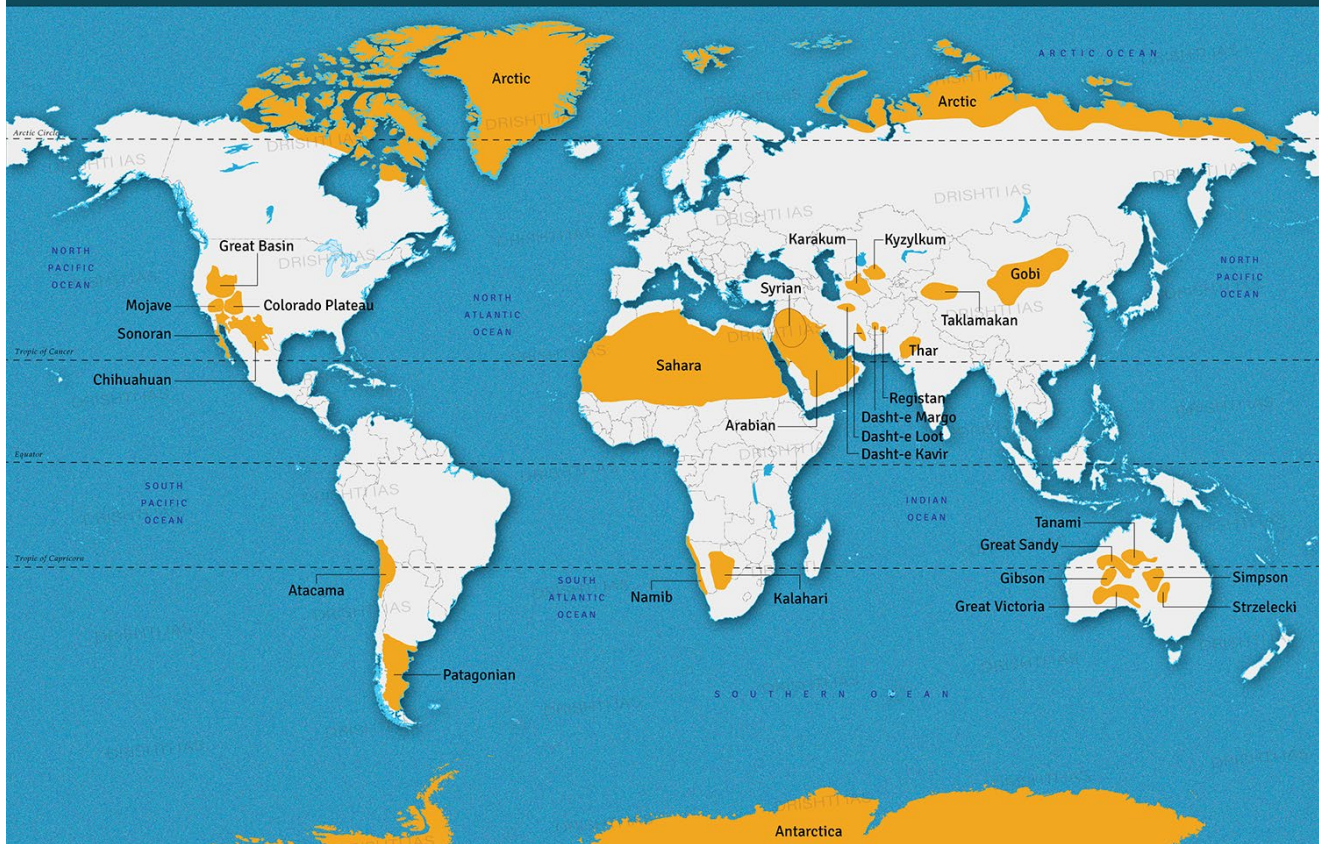
FACTS

- There are **two main kinds of grasslands**: tropical and temperate. Examples of **temperate grasslands** include Eurasian **steppes**, North American **prairies**, and Argentine **pampas**. **Tropical grasslands** include the hot **savannas** of sub-Saharan Africa and northern Australia.
- Tropical grasslands have dry and wet seasons that remain warm all the time (**temperature: 25°C to 30°C**). Temperate grasslands have cold winters and warm summers with some rain (**below 0°C in winters to 32°C in summers**).
- **Wildfires are vital for grasslands' existence**; they prevent woody plants from spreading and enable the grass to re-grow thicker and healthier.



Note:

DESERTS IN THE WORLD



FACTS

- The largest hot desert in the world – Sahara (northern Africa), reaches temperatures of up to 50°C during the day.
- The Gobi desert in Asia and the polar deserts of the Antarctic and Arctic, which are the world's largest, are always cold.
- Chile's Atacama desert is the driest in the world (after Antarctica) having parts that receive < 2 mm of precipitation/year.
- Namib Desert (Southern Africa) is believed to be as old as 55 million years; the oldest desert in the world.
- Thar Desert (India) is believed to be the most civilised desert in the world due to having roads, infrastructure and human settlements dating back to thousands of years (about 50,000 years old).

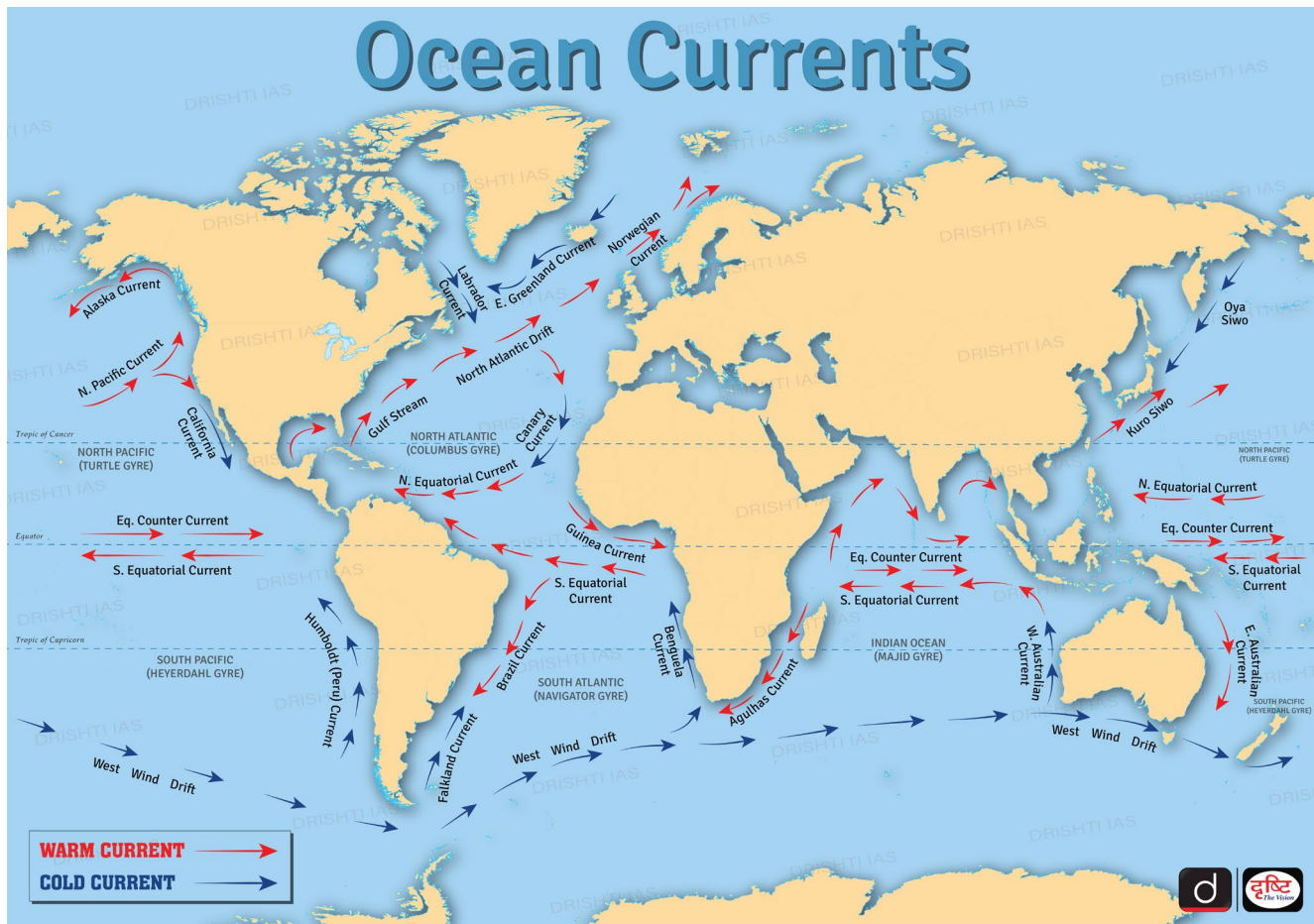


Note:

MOUNTAIN RANGES IN WORLD



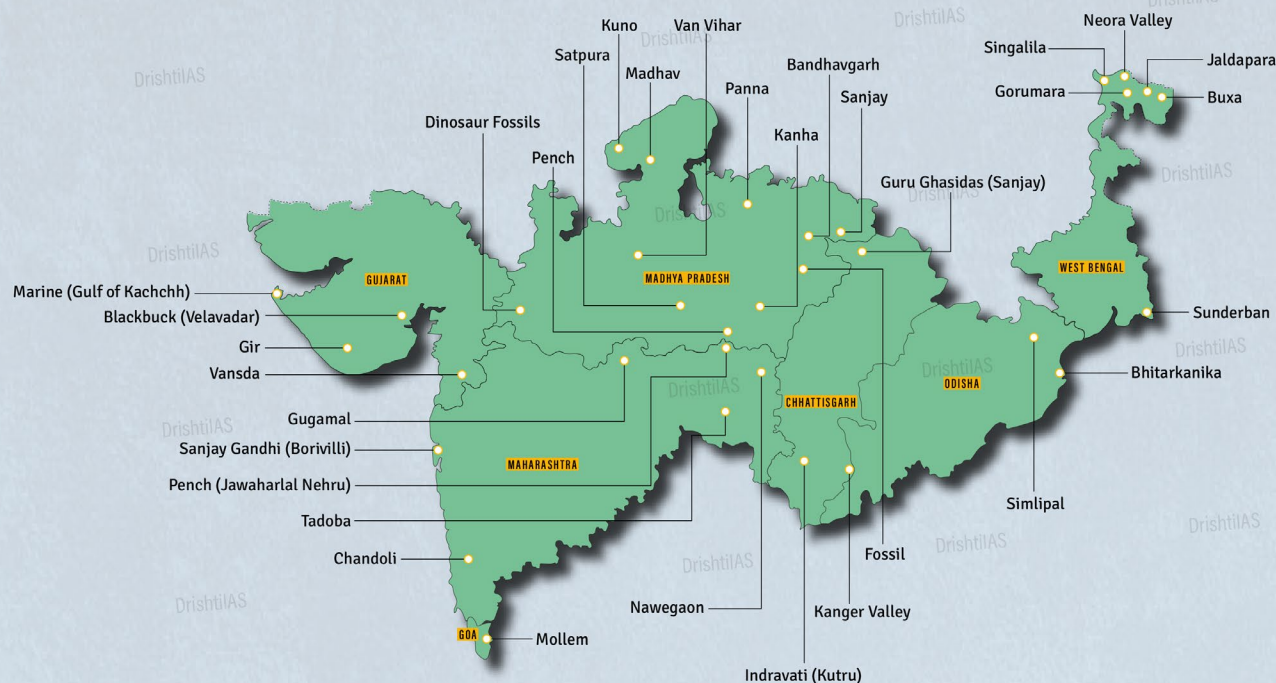
Note:



Note:

National Parks-II

106 National Parks (2022)



ABOUT

- A national park can be notified by the state government for the preservation of its ecological, faunal, floral, geomorphological, or zoological importance.
- The areas are secured under the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972.
- No human activity is permitted inside the national park except for the ones permitted by the Chief Wildlife Warden of the state under the conditions given in the WPA.

FACTS

- Gir National Park (Gujarat): The only abode of the Asiatic Lion.
- Kuno National Park (Madhya Pradesh): Wild Cheetahs bought from Namibia have been introduced in KNP (under Project Cheetah - world's first inter-continental large wild carnivore translocation project).
- Sundarbans National Park (West Bengal): It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (1987) and contains the world's largest area of mangrove forests.



Note:

National Parks-III

106 National Parks (2022)



ABOUT

- A national park can be notified by the state government for the preservation of its ecological, faunal, floral, geomorphological, or zoological importance.
- The areas are secured under the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972.
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FACTS

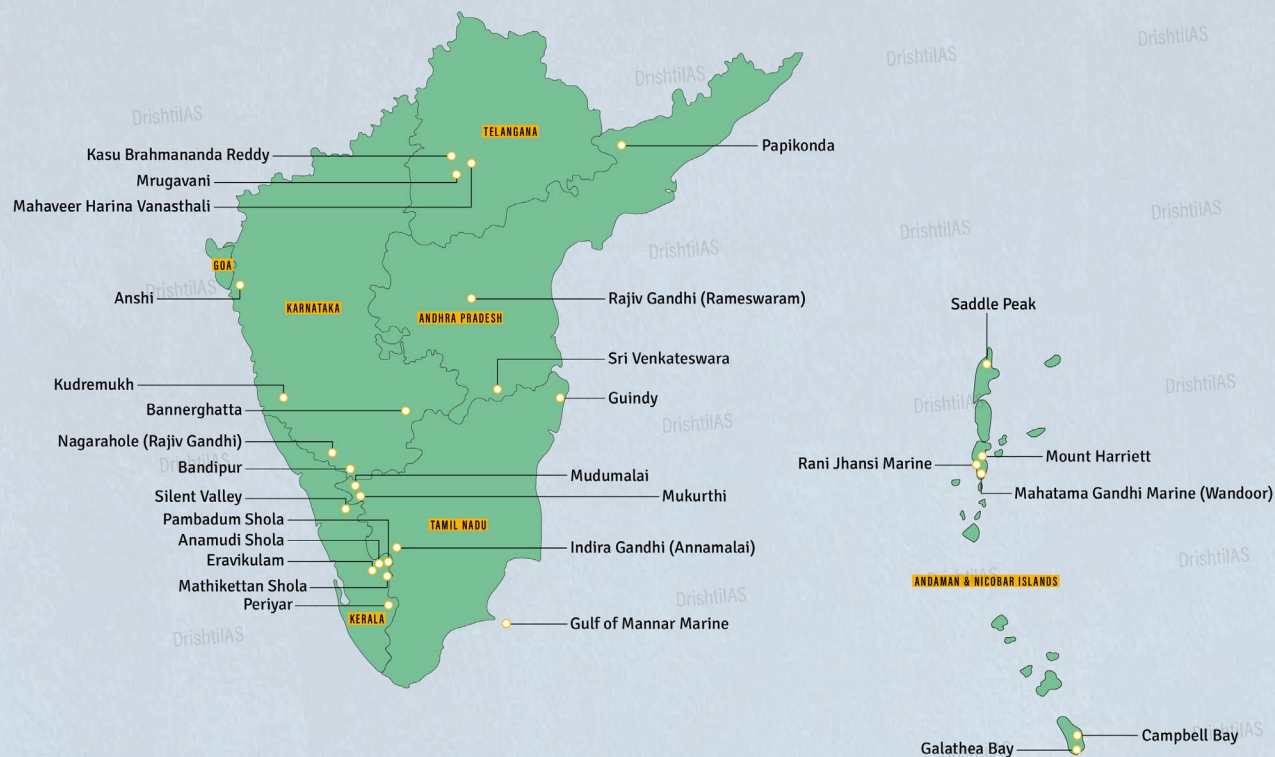
- Keibul-Lamjao National Park (Manipur): Only floating National Park in the world.
- Khangchendzonga National Park (Sikkim): It is India's first and only 'Mixed World Heritage Site' declared by UNESCO in 2016.
- Namdapha National Park (Arunachal Pradesh): It is the only park in the world to have the four feline species of big cat namely the Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Clouded Leopard.



Note:

National Parks-IV

106 National Parks (2022)



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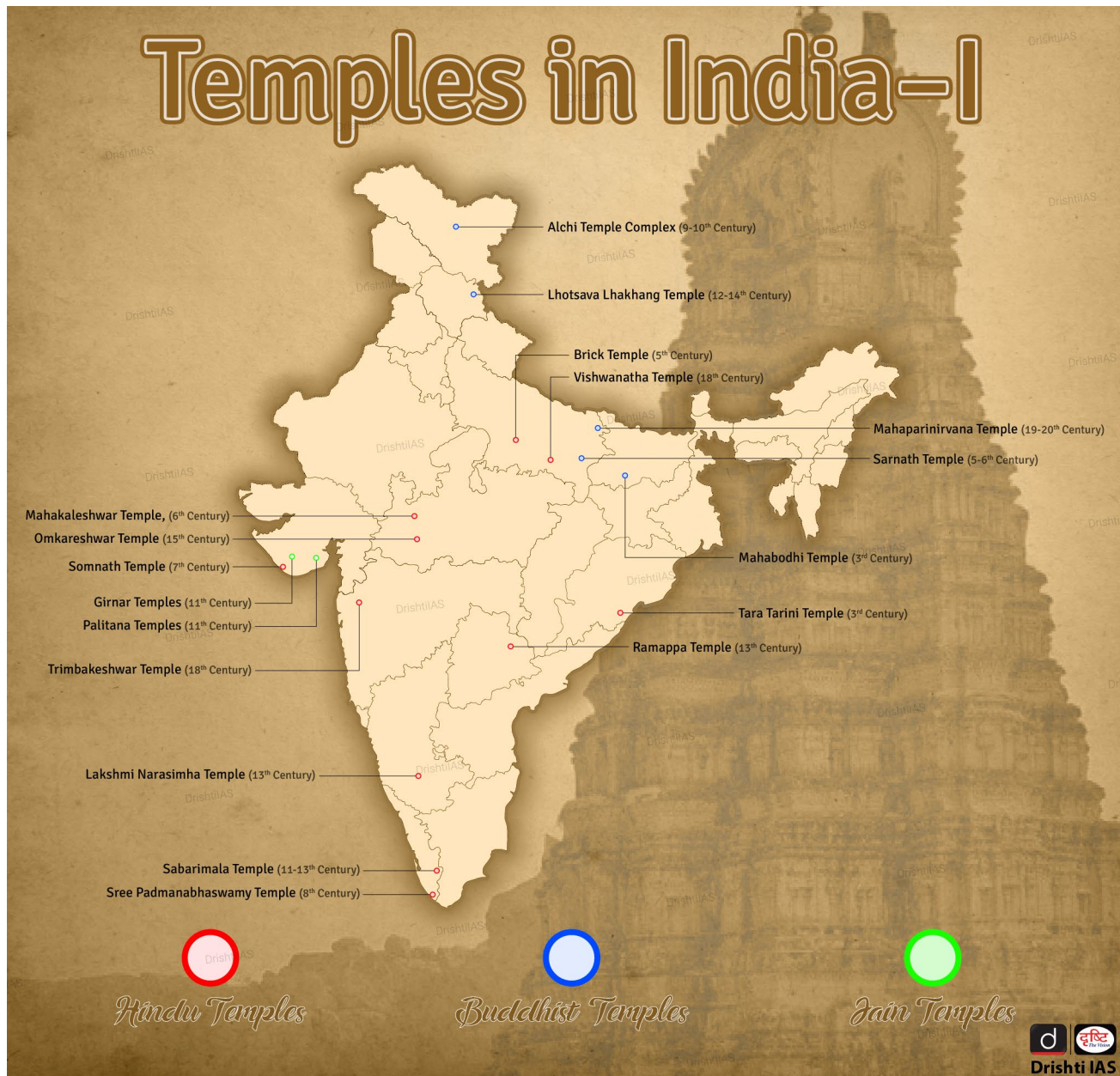
FACTS

- Eravikulam National Park (Kerala): Famous for the natural habitat of Nilgiri Tahr, the endangered mountain goat. This is also the land of "Neelakurinji", the flower that blooms once in twelve years.
- Mukurthi National Park, Silent Valley, Wynad Wildlife Sanctuary (Kerala), Bandipur National Park, Nagarhole National Park (Karnataka), and Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu) are the protected areas within Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve - first biosphere reserve in India established in the year 1986.



Note:

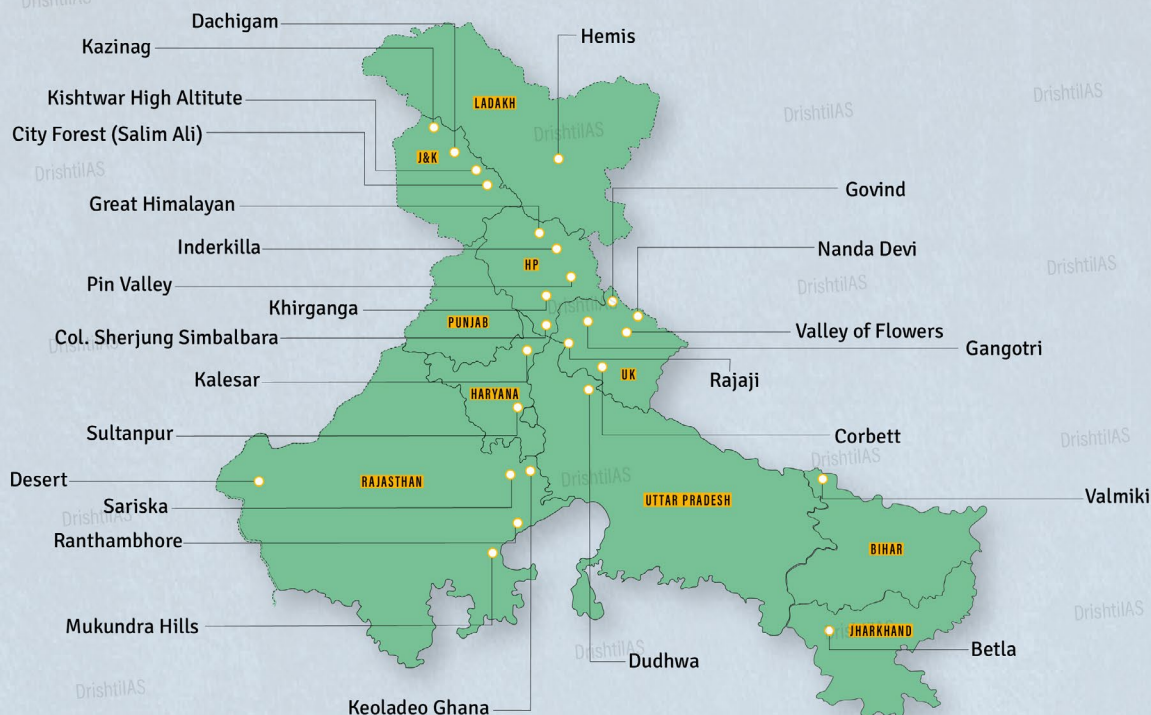
Temples in India-I



Note:

National Parks-I

106 National Parks (2022)



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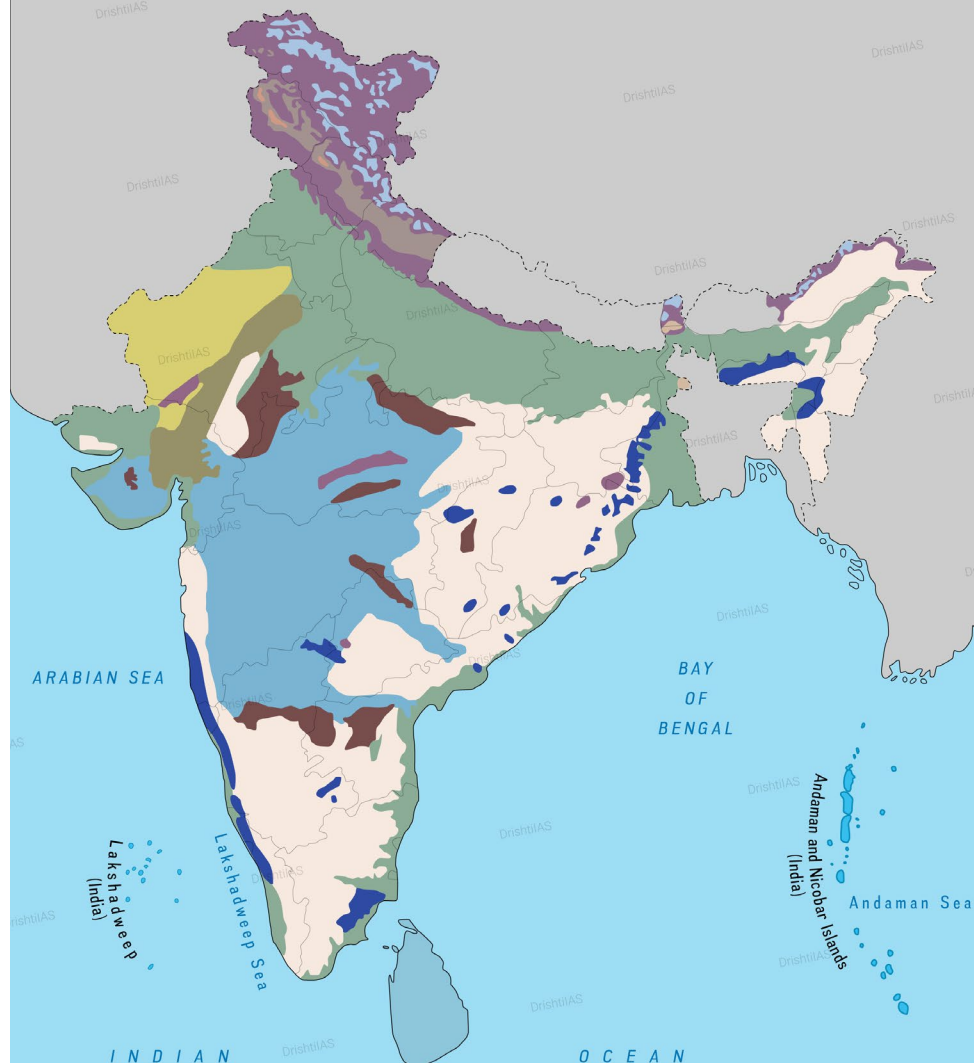
FACTS

- Hemis National Park (Ladakh): Largest in South Asia. Also known as Snow Leopard Capital.
- Jim Corbett National Park (Uttarakhand): India's first national park. Project Tiger (1973) was started here.
- Desert National Park (Rajasthan): Second-largest national park in India.



Note:

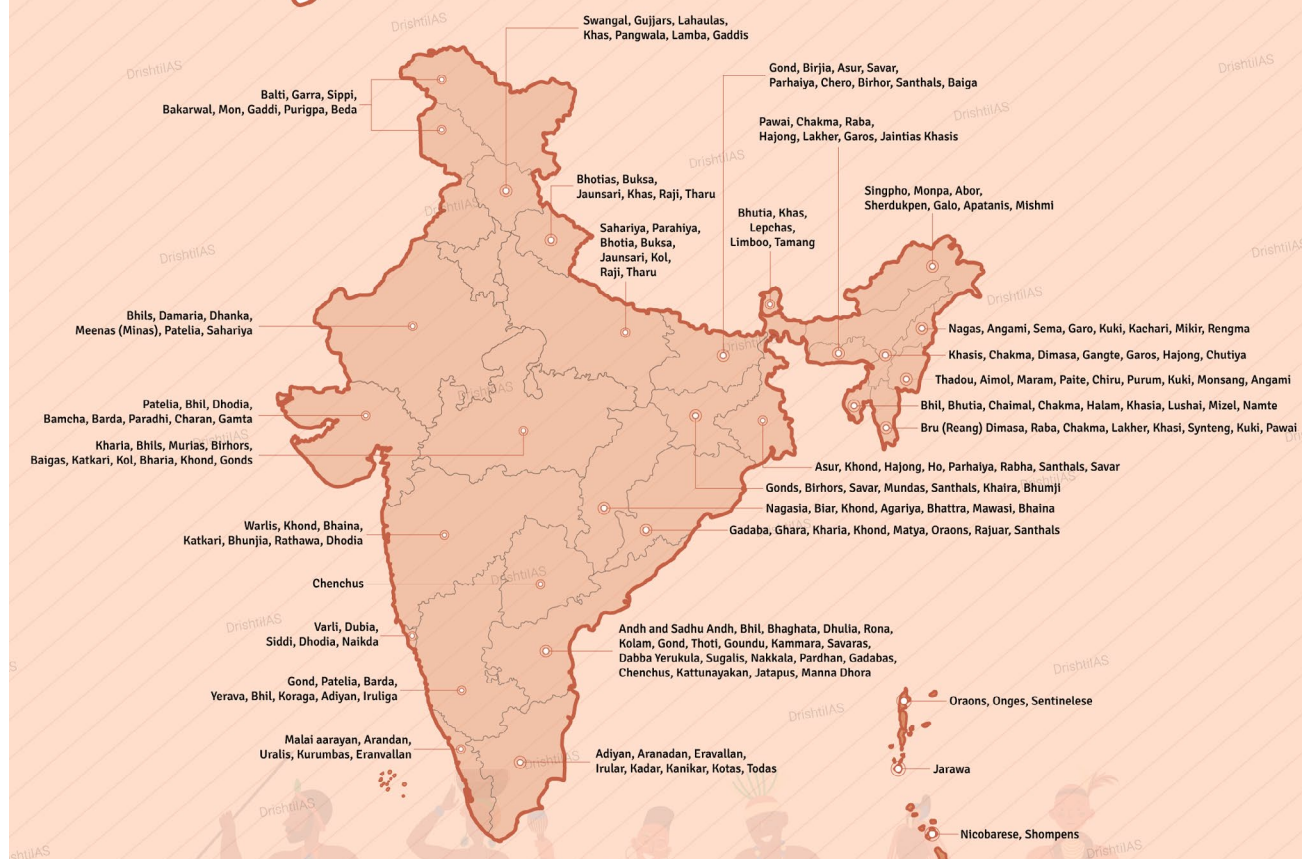
Types of Soil in India



Alluvial Soil (29.55%)	In the Upper and Middle Ganga plain, two different types of alluvial soils have developed, viz. Khadar and Bhangar.	
Black Soil (19.62%)	It is also known as 'Regur Soil' or the 'Black Cotton Soil'.	
Red Soil (19.62%)	The soil develops a reddish colour due to a wide diffusion of iron in crystalline and metamorphic rocks. It looks yellow when it occurs in a hydrated form.	
Desert Soil (14.02%)	They are generally sandy in structure and saline in nature.	
Laterite Soil (4.77%)	Laterites are not suitable for cultivation. Thus, are widely cut as bricks for use in house construction.	
Mountain Soil	It is also known as 'Forest Soil'. They are loamy and silty on valley sides and coarse-grained in the upper slopes.	
Snowfields	This soil is found under the snow and glaciers at the highest peak of the greater Himalayas, Karakoram, Ladakh, and Zaskar.	
Grey and Brown Soil	Submontane Soil	Red and Black Soil

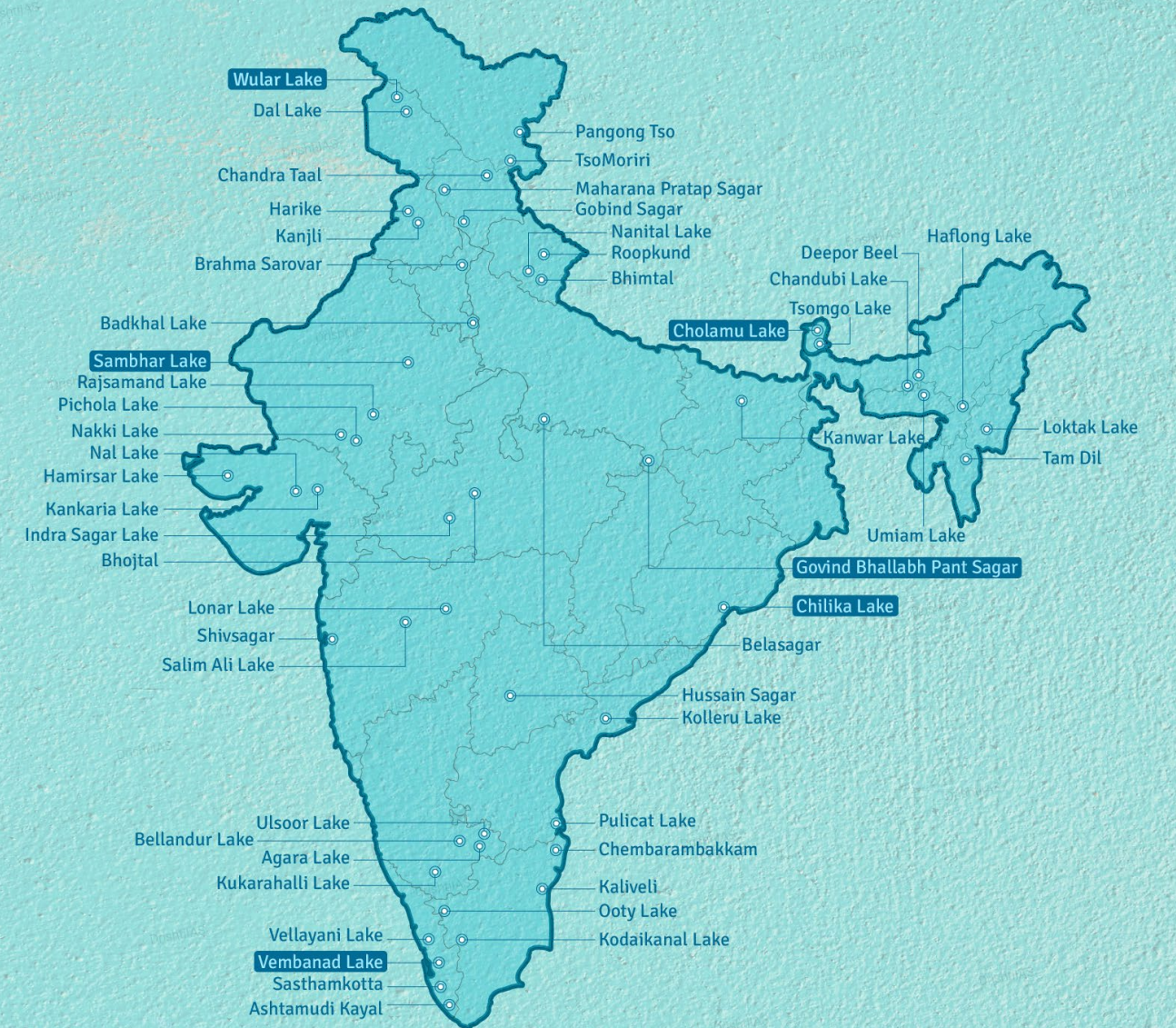
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Major Tribes in India



- STs constitute **8.6% of the population of India** (Census 2011). Draft National Tribal Policy, 2006 records **698 STs** in India.
- **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** are more vulnerable among the tribal groups. Among the 75 listed PVTGs, the highest number is found in Odisha.
- **Bhil is the largest tribal group** (38% of the total scheduled tribal population of India) followed by the Gonds.
- **Madhya Pradesh has the highest tribal population** in India (Census 2011).
- The **Santhal** are the **oldest tribes** in India. The Santhal system of governance, known as **Manjhi-Paragana**, can be compared to local self-governance.
- According to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes list (modification orders), 1956, the inhabitants of **Lakshadweep** who and both of whose parents were born in these islands are treated as STs.
- **Article 342** of the Constitution prescribes procedure to be followed for specification of STs.
- **Article 275** provides for the **grant of special funds** by the Union Government to the State Government for promoting the welfare of Scheduled Tribes and providing them with a better administration.

IMPORTANT LAKES IN INDIA



Largest Freshwater Lake: Wular Lake, Jammu and Kashmir

Largest Brackish Water Lake: Chilika, Odisha

Largest Saltwater Lake: Sambhar Lake, Rajasthan

Largest Artificial Lake: Govind Ballabh Pant Sagar, Uttar Pradesh

Longest Lake: Vembanad Lake, Kerala

Largest High Altitude Lake: Chollamu Lake, Sikkim

Note:

MOUNTAIN RANGES IN INDIA



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MANGROVES IN INDIA



FACTS

- * UNESCO observes July 26 as the International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem.
- * As per ISFR 2021, the mangrove cover in India is 4,992 sq km, which is 0.15% of the country's total geographical area.
- * West Bengal>Gujarat>A&N Islands>Andhra Pradesh>Maharashtra, have the largest Mangrove cover in India (ISFR 2021).
- * In India, mangroves are protected by the Environmental (Protection) Act 1986 and Coastal Zone Regulations.
- * Sunderbans, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the world's largest single patch of Mangrove Forests.
- * Sundarbans is the first Mangrove forest in the world, which was brought under scientific management, as early as in 1892.
- * The emergence of shrimp farms is responsible for at least 35% of the overall loss of mangrove forests.

Note:

MAJOR PASSES IN INDIA



FACTS

- **Umling La pass** located in Eastern Ladakh has recently become the **world's highest motorable pass** (Project Himank).
- **Lipu Lekh Pass** is located close to the **tri junction of Uttarakhand (India), China and Nepal**.
- **Nathu La** (Sikkim) is situated on the **Indo-Tibetan border**. It is **one of the three open trading passes** between India and China (other two: **Shipki La and Lipu Lekh Pass**).
- **Naku La**, located in Sikkim, was recently in news due to the **Indo-China face-off along the LAC at the pass**.
- **Zoji La** links Leh with Srinagar and is known as the "**Mountain Pass of Blizzards**". The Zojila tunnel is **Asia's longest tunnel**.
- **Dungri La** (or Mana) Pass connects India and Tibet. It is **located in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve** of the Zaskar mountain range (Uttarakhand). Even Indian nationals **need prior permits from the Army** to travel through this pass.
- **Rohtang Pass** (Himachal Pradesh) is situated in the **Pir Panjal Range** of the great Himalayas and **connects Kullu Valley with Lahaul and Spiti Valleys**.
- The **widest gap of Western Ghats** is at **Palakkad (or Pal Ghat)** in Kerala adjoining Tamil Nadu.



Note:

Biodiversity Hotspots in India

Himalayas

- The **youngest and highest mountain chain** on Earth, stretches in an arc across northern Pakistan; Nepal; Bhutan; the northwestern and northeastern states of India adjoining Myanmar; and the southwest China border in the east.
- Home to important populations of numerous large bird and mammal species, including vultures, tigers, rhinos and wild water buffalo.
- Many unique and diverse human groups are also found here. **Nepal** counts more than 27 ethnic groups, either of Tibetan-Burmese or Indo-Aryan descent, while **Bhutan** has three main ethnic groups—the Ngalongs, Sharchogpas and Lhotsampas. The northeast part of India, meanwhile, has more than 500 distinct ethnic groups.

Western Ghats and Sri Lanka

- Western Ghats, a biogeographically important formation of the **Gondwanaland**, is formed of the Malabar plains and the chain of mountains running parallel to India's west coast, about 30 to 50 km inland.
- The Western Ghats **indigenously known as 'Sahyadri'**, starts downwards from the Tapi River in Gujarat to the country's southernmost tip Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu.
- It is interrupted by a number of natural gaps and passes, and the **widest being the Palakkad (Palghat) Gap**.
- The Agasthyamalai hills, Nilgiris, Anamalai hills, Palani hills, Meghamalai, Cardamom hills, Silent Valley– New Amarambalam forests, Wyanad–Kodagu, Shimoga–Kanara, Konkan and Mahabaleshwar–Khandala are some of chief centres of plant diversity and endemism in the Western Ghats.
- The 'Western Ghats' is a **world heritage site**.
- Sri Lanka is a continental island **separated from southern India by the 20-meter-deep Palk Strait**.

Indo-Burma

- Covers Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos PDR and includes the Gangetic plains, areas around the Brahmaputra River and parts of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The **limestone karst formations** that are found throughout the hotspot support highly unique ecosystems, with high levels of endemism, particularly among plants, reptiles and molluscs.

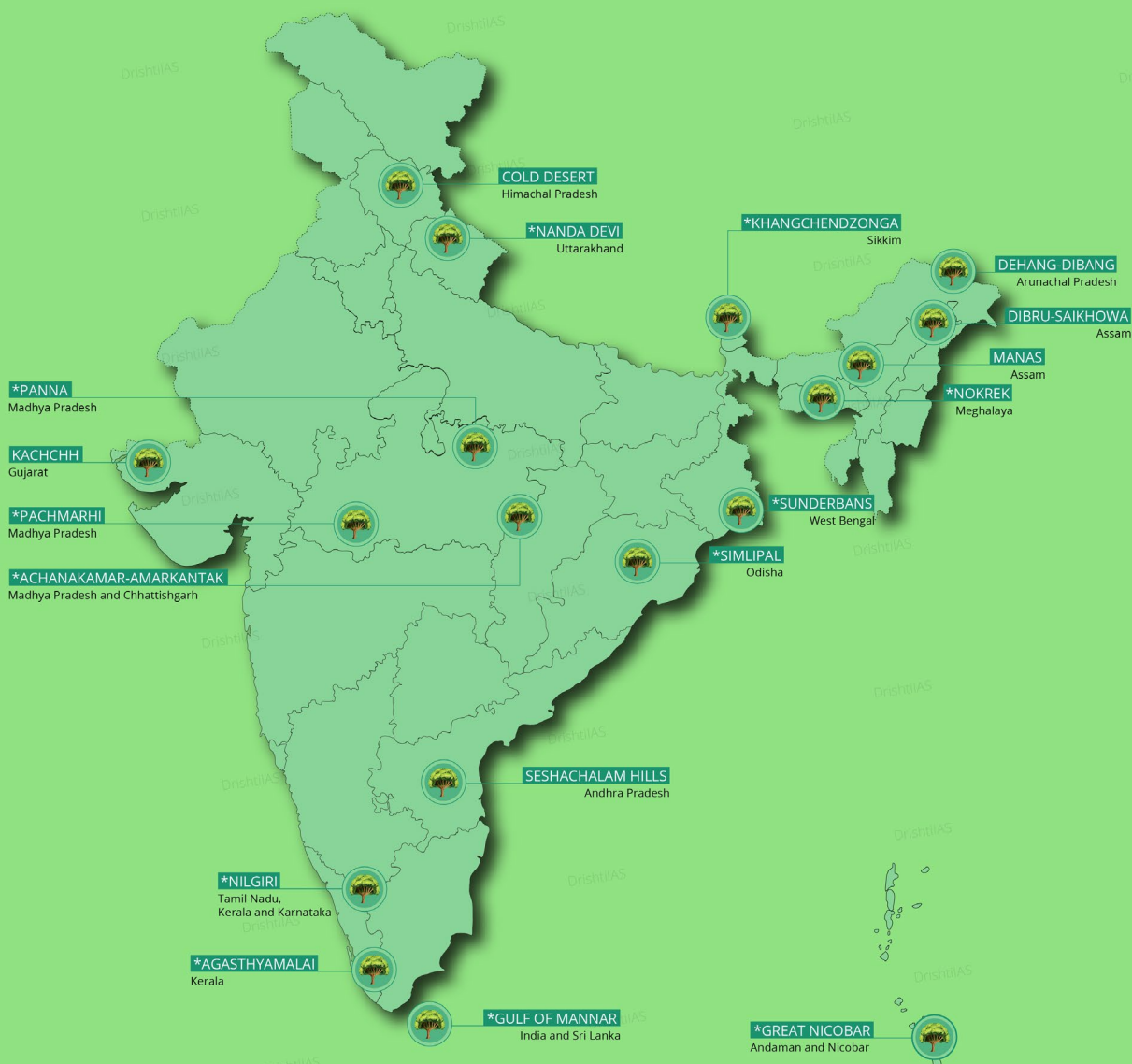
Sundaland

- Politically, the hotspot **covers** a small portion of southern Thailand; nearly all of Malaysia; Singapore; Brunei; and the western half of Indonesia. The **Nicobar Islands**, which are under Indian jurisdiction, are also included. Interestingly, it extends to the tectonic plates under the Indian Ocean.
- The hotspot is **home to iconic species** like orangutans, pig-tailed langurs, Javan and Sumatran rhinos, and proboscis monkeys found only in Borneo.
- Sundaland also has the distinction of **being home to the world's largest flowers**, the rafflesia, which measure one metre across.

FACTS

- The term 'biodiversity hotspot' was **coined by Norman Myers (1988)**.
- The **Conservation International** (non-profit organization) in association with Myers made the first systematic update of the hotspots.
- There are **currently 36 recognized biodiversity hotspots**. To qualify as a biodiversity hotspot, an area **must meet two strict criteria**:
 - Contain at least 1,500 species of vascular plants found nowhere else on Earth (known as "endemic" species).
 - Have lost at least 70 percent of its primary native vegetation.
- **Biodiversity Hotspots in India (4):** The Himalayas, The Western Ghats and Sri Lanka, The Indo-Burma and The Sundaland.

Biosphere Reserves in India



NOTE

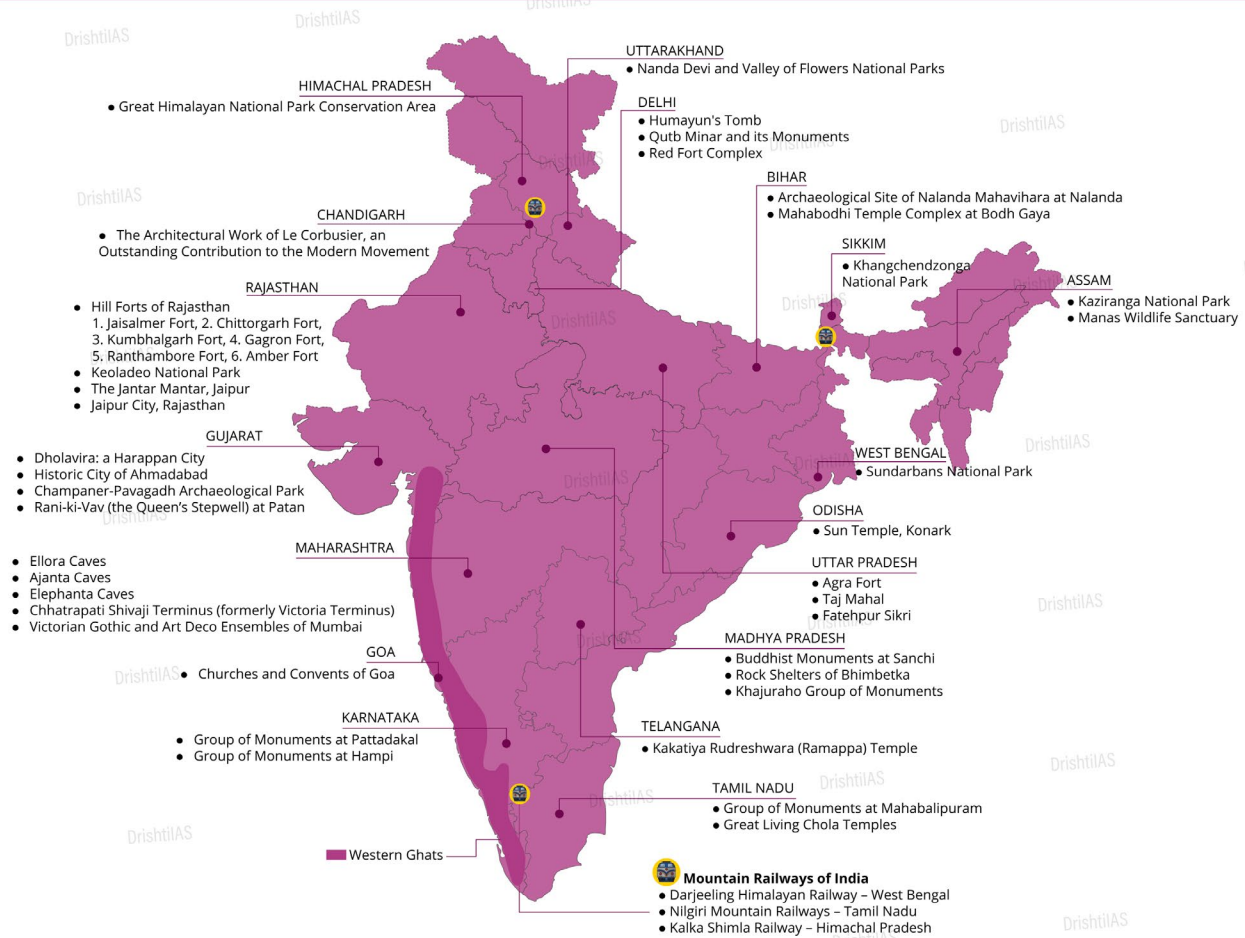
- The idea of 'Biosphere Reserves' was initiated by UNESCO in 1973-74 under its Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme.
- A scheme called Biosphere Reserve is being implemented by Government of India since 1986.
- India has 18 biospheres reserves, of which 12 have been included in the MAB Programme. Panna (Madhya Pradesh) was included in MAB in 2020.
- Mura-Drava-Danube (MDD) is the world's first 'five-country biosphere reserve' (Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia).

*World Network of Biosphere Reserve (MAB-UNESCO)



Note:

UNESCO World Heritage Sites



FACTS

- **Total Number of World Heritage Sites in India:** 40
- **Total Cultural Heritage Sites:** 32
- **Total Natural Sites:** 7 (Kaziranga National Park, Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, Western Ghats, Sundarbans National Park, Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks, Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, Keoladeo National Park)
- **Mixed Site:** 1 (Khangchendzonga National Park)
- **World Heritage Sites Listed First:** Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Ajanta Caves and Ellora Caves (all in 1983)
- **Latest Addition (2021):** Harappan city of Dholavira (40th site), Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple (39th site)
- **Countries With the Most UNESCO World Heritage Sites:** Italy (58), China (56), Germany (51), France (49), Spain (49)
- **India is 6th in number of World Heritage Sites in the World**

Tiger Reserves

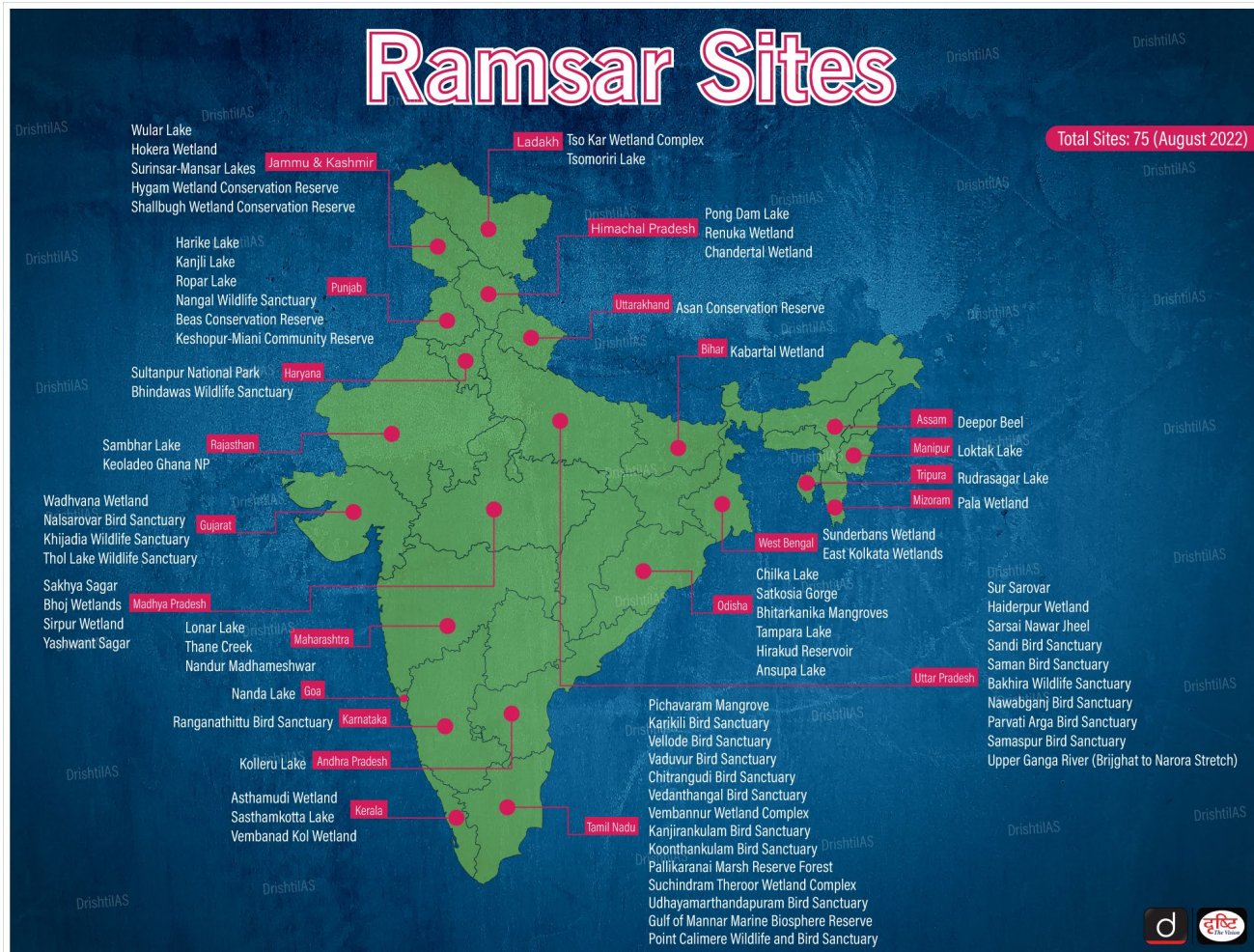
53 Tiger Reserves
(as of August, 2022)


FACTS

- A State Government, on the recommendation of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, notify an area as a tiger reserve.
- Largest Tiger Reserve (Core Area): Nagarjunsagar Srisailem (Andhra Pradesh).
- Smallest Tiger Reserve (Core Area): Orang (Assam).
- Reserve with Highest Tiger Density: Corbett (Uttarakhand) (All India Tiger Estimation 2018).
- State with Maximum Tigers: Madhya Pradesh (All India Tiger Estimation 2018).



Note:



Note:

Key Points

Details

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Summary

Key Points

Details

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Summary