



Ukraine's Counter-Offensive

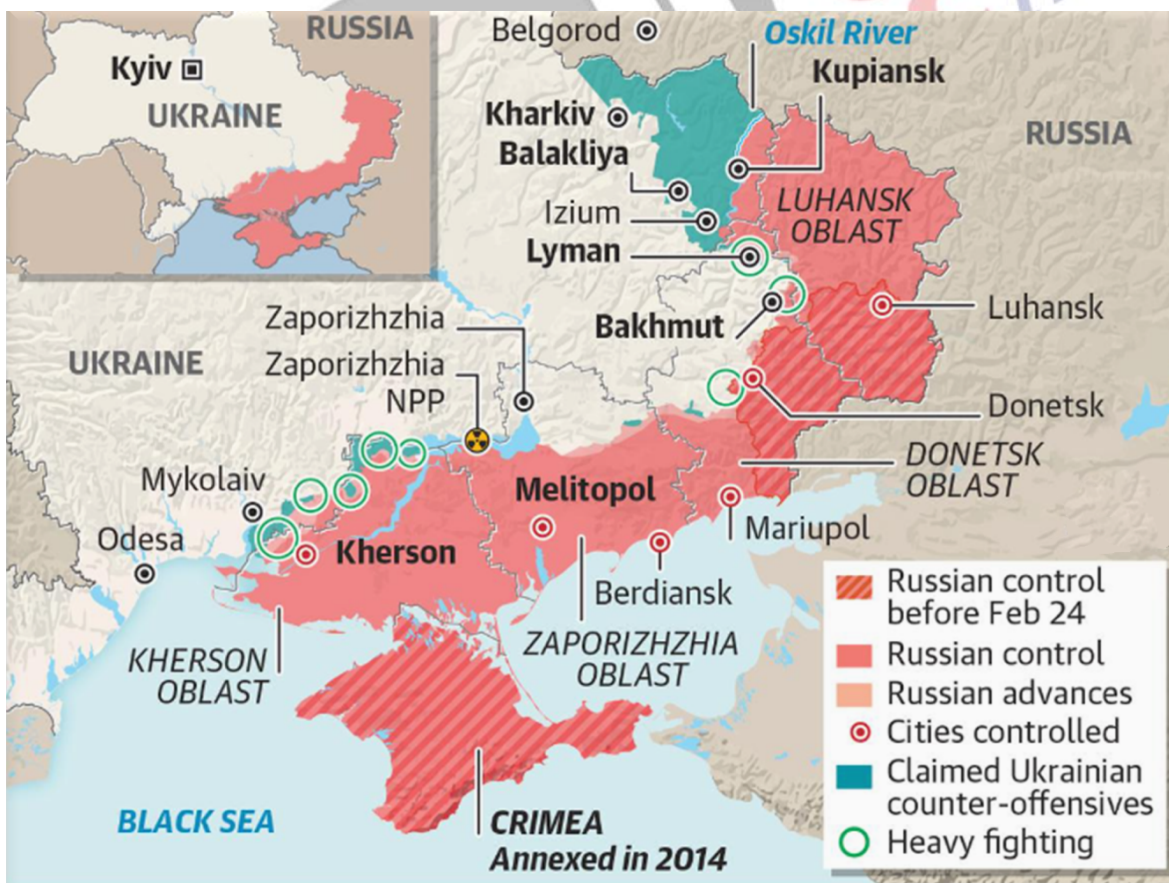
For Prelims: Russia-Ukraine Conflict, Regions of Kharkiv Oblast, NATO, Minsk Protocols

For Mains: Ukraine-Russia Conflict and India's Interests in Ukraine and Russia, Implications of Conflict on India

Why in News?

Recently, **Ukraine has launched a lightning counter-offensive** in the country's northeast that saw **surprising territorial gains**.

- Its forces have **pushed back Russian soldiers from most of Kharkiv Oblast**, retaking **thousands of square kilometres of territory**.
- This is the **first time that Ukrainian troops have pushed back the Russians** through combat since the [Russia Ukraine conflict](#) began.



How did Ukraine Push Back Russia in Kharkiv Oblast?

- **Halt of Russian Forces:**
 - After capturing Lysychansk in July 2022 and taking the whole of Luhansk province coming under its control, **Russia's battlefield combat came to a halt.**
 - Russia was controlling **almost 25% of Ukraine at this time.**
 - The halt of Russian forces **opened a window opportunity for Ukraine** to move ahead with its counter-offensive plans.
- **Help from US:**
 - **Advanced mid-range rocket systems** such as **High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS).**
 - **Military assistance worth more than USD 14.5 billion.**
 - **U.S. intelligence agencies** also provided information to Ukraine on the weak links of the Russian defence.
- **Sanctions on Russia:**
 - Russia was being **faced with sanctions** which made it difficult to make sure their supply was intact and they had to turn to Iran and North Korea.
- **Ukraine's Attacks:**
 - Ukraine started attacks in **southern Ukraine** in **Kherson** and **sabotage hits in Crimea**, which Russia annexed in 2014.
 - Russia, faced with the Ukrainian attacks in the south, **bolstered the defences of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia.**
 - Ukraine broke into the **relatively weaker defence lines** in the northeast and successfully **pushed the Russians back.**

What do we need to know about the Russia Ukraine Conflict?

- **History:**
 - In 2014, Russia had annexed **Crimea from Ukraine** following a hastily called referendum, a move that **sparked fighting between Russia-backed separatists and government forces in eastern Ukraine.**
 - Ukraine urged the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** to speed up the country's membership in the alliance.
 - Russia declared such a move a **"red line"**, and worried about the **consequences of the US-led military alliances** expanding right up to its doorstep.
 - **This has led to the present war between Russia and Ukraine.**
- **Invasion of Ukraine:**
 - The conflict is now the **largest attack by one state on another in Europe** since the **Second World War**, and the first since the **Balkan conflict in the 1990s.**
 - With the invasion of Ukraine, agreements like the **Minsk Protocols of 2014**, and the **Russia-NATO Act of 1997** stand all but voided.
- **Stand of Other Countries:**
 - **Global:**
 - The **G7 nations** **strongly condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine.**
 - Sanctions have been imposed on Russia by the **U.S., the European Union (EU), the UK, Australia, Canada and Japan.**
 - China **rejected calling Russia's moves on Ukraine an "invasion"** and urged all sides to exercise restraint.
 - **India's Stand:**
 - India **did not join the Western powers' condemnation** of Russia's intervention in Crimea and kept a **low profile on the issue.**
 - However, in August 2022, **India voted against Russia** during a **"procedural vote"** at the **United Nations Security Council on Ukraine.**

Source: TH

