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Strait of Magellan

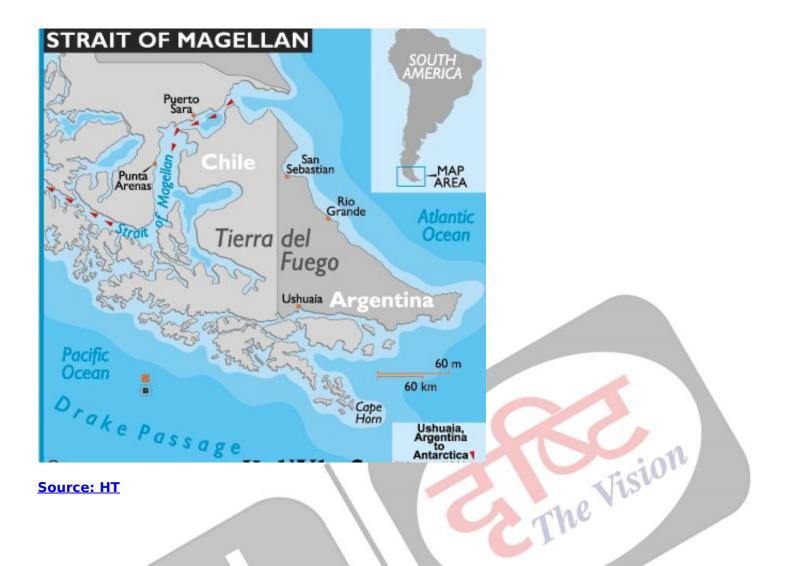
- The Strait of Magellan is located near southern <u>Chile</u> along the southern edges of the South American continent and links the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.
- It is named after the **Portuguese adventurer**, **Ferdinand Magellan**, the first explorer to circumnavigate the globe.
- Sheltered by mainland South America and the islands of Tierra Del Fuego archipelago, this
 route was considered much safer than the Drake Passage, a more violent stretch of chaotic
 water between Antarctica and South America.
- Located on the Strait of Magellan, Chile's port city, Punta Arenas was once one of the most important supply stops for mariners, until the Panama Canal opened in 1914.

Ferdinand Magellan

- He set off from Spain 500 years ago on an audacious voyage to sail all the way around the globe for the first time, a landmark in the history of exploration.
- While crossing the strait, the explorer and his crew observed two galaxies visible to the naked eye from the southern hemisphere, now known as the **Magellanic Clouds**.
- The voyage also contributed to Europeans' knowledge of the universe.

Magellanic Clouds

- They are comprised of two irregular galaxies, the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC) and the Small Magellanic Cloud (SMC), which orbit the <u>Milky Way</u> once every 1,500 million years and each other once every 900 million years.
- Lying only about 200,000 light years away, they were the closest known galaxies to the Milky Way
 until recently, when the Sagittarius and Canis Major <u>dwarf galaxies</u> were discovered and found to
 be even closer.
- Although very close to us, the Magellanic Clouds have played a significant role in our understanding of the distant Universe.



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