



Black Sea

Why in News

Recently, the **US** Defence Secretary has urged **more defence cooperation among friendly [Black Sea countries](#) amid Russia “militarisation” of the region.**

- This came ahead of a [NATO](#) Ministers summit.



Key Points

- **Geographical Location of Black Sea:**
 - The **Black Sea** is located **between Eastern Europe and Western Asia**.
 - It is **surrounded by the Pontic, Caucasus, and Crimean Mountains** in the south, east and north respectively.
 - The Black Sea is also **connected to the Sea of Azov by the Strait of Kerch**.
 - The **Turkish straits system** - the Dardanelles, Bosphorus and Marmara Sea - forms a **transitional zone between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea**.
 - The **bordering countries** of Black Sea are: **Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania**.
 - There is a significant **absence of oxygen** in the water (**anoxic waters**).
- **Russian Interest in Black Sea:**
 - The unique geography of the Black Sea region confers **several geopolitical advantages**

to Russia.

- Firstly, it is **an important crossroads and strategic intersection** for the entire region.
 - Access to the Black Sea is vital for **all littoral and neighboring states**, and greatly enhances the projection of power into several adjacent regions.
 - Secondly, the region is an **important transit corridor** for goods and energy.
 - Thirdly, the Black Sea region is rich in **cultural and ethnic diversity**, and due to geographical proximity, shares close historical ties with Russia.
- Russia **invaded Ukraine in 2014** and **carved off the strategically vital peninsula of Crimea**, the **largest land grab** from a sovereign state in this century.
 - Most countries do not recognise the takeover and stand behind Ukraine's claims to the waters.
 - In **November 2020, India voted against a Ukraine-sponsored resolution** in the UN that condemned alleged human rights violations in Crimea thereby backing old ally Russia on the issue.
- **US Interest in Black Sea:**
 - The Black Sea is bordered by Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. **All these countries are NATO countries.**
 - Due to this **faceoff between NATO countries and Russia**, the Black sea is a region of strategic importance & a potential maritime flashpoint.
 - NATO members Turkey, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria are in the Black Sea, but warships from the US, UK and other NATO allies also have made increasingly frequent visits in a show of support to Ukraine.
 - Russia has frequently responded to NATO warships visits near Crimea, casting them as destabilizing.

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