



Gulf of Aden and Red Sea

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Why in News?

India's Defence Minister hinted at a possibility of an increase in threats like [maritime piracy](#), [terrorism](#), and regional conflicts in the [Gulf of Aden](#), [Red Sea](#) and the sea areas adjacent to East African countries.

- In addition, **2024** was commemorated as the '**Year of Naval Civilians**' that constitute a third of the Navy's workforce.

Note: Naval Civilians include **soldiers without uniforms** that play a pivotal role behind the scenes like **technical assistance, administrative management and logistics support** to provide significant strength to the troops.

What are Key Facts About the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea?

- **Gulf of Aden:**
 - **About:** It is an **extension of the [Indian Ocean](#)**, situated between the [Arabian Peninsula](#) to the north and the **African continent** to the south.
 - **Location:** It is bounded by **Somalia** and the Socotra Islands to the south, **Yemen** to the north, the **Arabian Sea** to the east, and **Djibouti** to the west.
 - It connects to the **Somali Sea** via the **Guardafui Channel** and to the **Red Sea** through the [Strait of Bab el Mandeb](#).
 - **Economic Importance:** Around **10% of global seaborne petroleum** and over **USD 110 billion in India's trade** pass through the Gulf of Aden.



▪ Red Sea:

- **About:** It is the world's **northernmost tropical sea** and is underlain by the **Red Sea Rift**, making it part of the [Great Rift Valley](#).
 - The name **Red Sea** may originate from the seasonal blooms of a **red-colored cyanobacteria (*Trichodesmium erythraeum*)**.
 - The **Red Sea Rift**, a [divergent boundary](#) between the **African and Arabian Plates**, is part of the **Great Rift Valley system** stretching from East Africa to the Middle East.
- **Location:** The Red Sea lies between **Africa and Asia** and is a **semi-enclosed** extension of the Indian Ocean.
 - It connects to the **Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea** via the **Bab el Mandeb Strait** and **Gulf of Aden** in the south.
 - In the north, it **bifurcates** into the [Gulf of Aqaba](#) and [Gulf of Suez](#) at the [Sinai Peninsula](#), connecting to the [Mediterranean Sea](#) via the [Suez Canal](#).



- **Bordering Countries:** The Red Sea borders **six countries** i.e., **Yemen and Saudi Arabia** to the east, and **Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti** to the west.
 - The Gulf of Aqaba is bordered by **Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia**.
- **Islands:** Prominent islands include **Tiran** near the Gulf of Aqaba, **Shadwan** at the Gulf of Suez, and Yemen-controlled **Kamaran, Perim, Hanish, and Socotra**.
 - The largest group of islands are the **Farasan Islands** in the east and the **Dahlak Archipelago** in the west.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following pairs: (2019)

Sea Bordering	Country
1. Adriatic Sea	Albania
2. Black Sea	Croatia
3. Caspian Sea	Kazakhstan
4. Mediterranean Sea	Morocco
5. Red Sea	Syria

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 5 only

(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Ans: (b)

Q. Which one of the following countries of South-West Asia does not open out to the Mediterranean Sea? (2015)

(a) Syria

(b) Jordan

(c) Lebanon

(d) Israel

Ans: (b)

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