



DATE: 22 JULY 2026

## 1 White-bellied Heron (Source: The Hindu)

*The White-bellied Heron, also known as the imperial heron or great white-bellied heron, is a large species of heron.*

- **Habitat:** Strictly dependent on free-flowing, fast-flowing eastern Himalayan riverine habitats with low human disturbance.
- **Distribution:** Distributed across Himalayan freshwater ecosystems spanning Bhutan, India, Myanmar, China, and Bangladesh.
- **Major Threats:** Hydropower dams (habitat fragmentation, altered river flows), habitat loss, hunting, and anthropogenic disturbances.
- **Conservation Status**
  - **IUCN Status:** Critically Endangered
  - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule-I



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## 2 Black Sea (Source: The Hindu)

- **Location:** Between Eastern Europe and Western Asia
- **Bordering Mountain Ranges:** Pontic, Caucasus, and Crimean Mountains.
- **Connecting Straits**
  - **Dardanelles Strait:** Connects the Sea of Marmara with the Aegean and Mediterranean seas
  - **Bosporus Straits:** Connects the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara
  - **Strait of Kerch:** Connects Black Sea to the Sea of Azov
- **Bordering Countries:** Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania.



## 3 Chabahar Port (Source: The Indian Express)

- It is a deep-water port located in Iran's Sistan-Baluchistan province.
- It is on the Gulf of Oman at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz.
- It is the only Iranian port having direct access to the Indian Ocean.
- It is a key transit hub on the **International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**
- It is a joint initiative of **India and Iran**.

### International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)

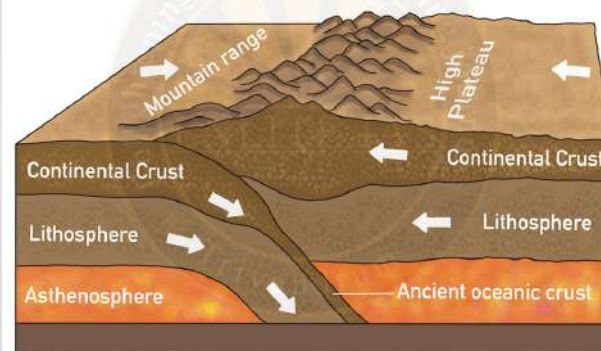
- INSTC is a multimodal transportation route linking the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea via Iran, and onward to northern Europe via Saint Petersburg, Russia.

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## 4 Aravalli Range (Source: The Indian Express)

- They are aligned in a north - east to south - west direction.
- They run for about 800 km **between Delhi and Ahmedabad in Gujarat**, with the width and the height decreasing from Gujarat to Delhi.
- They were formed during the **Aravalli-Delhi Orogeny** involving the collision of microplates which later became part of the Indian plate.

### Continental- Continental Convergence



- They continue up to Haridwar and are buried under the alluvial Ganga plains.
- Aravallis have an average elevation in the range of 400-600m.
  - **Mt. Gurushikhar (1722m) is the highest point of the Aravallis.**
- Aravallis share the western border with the Thar Desert and the eastern border with the Mewar Plateau.

#### Significance

- Serves as a natural barrier against desertification and sandstorms.
- Source of important rivers such as Chambal, Sabarmati, and Luni.
- Provides essential resources like fuelwood, fodder, fruits, and commercial products.
- Helps in regulating precipitation through evapotranspiration.