



MANIKA IAS

TURNING ASPIRANTS INTO ACHIEVERS



PLACES IN NEWS

PRELIMS 2026



CONTENT

Highlight: All map-work for Iran-US and Israel War

A. Places in News: World

1. Continents

- a. North America
- b. South America
- c. Europe
- d. Africa
- e. Asia
 - i. East Asia
 - ii. Central Asia
 - iii. South Asia
 - iv. West Asia
 - v. South East Asia
- f. Antarctica and Oceania

2. Water Bodies

B. Places in News: India

- a. West India
- b. North-East India
- c. East India
- d. Central India
- e. South India

C. Rivers in News

D. Forest and National Park

E. Wildlife Sanctuary

F. Bird Sanctuary

G. Tiger Reserve

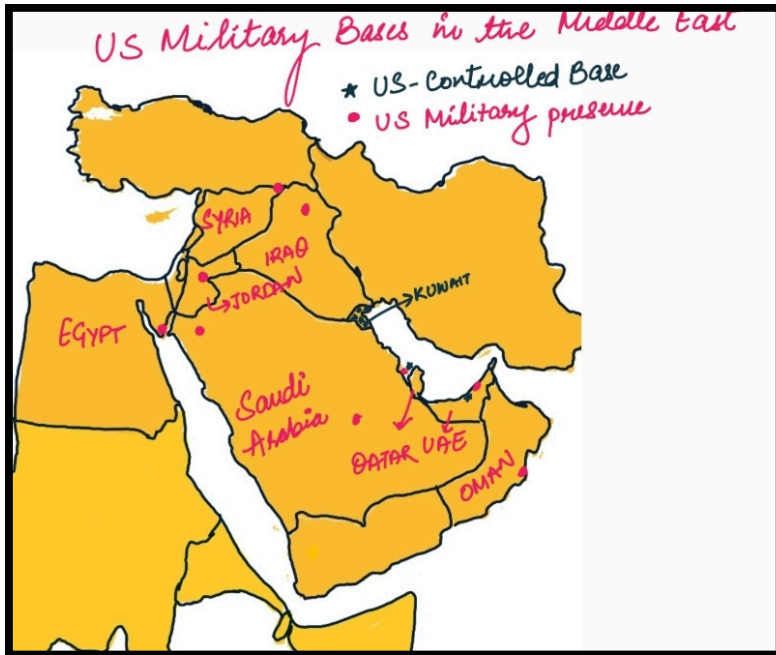
H. Temples in News

I. Forts and caves

ALL MAP-WORK FROM IRAN-US & ISRAEL WAR

Map of West Asia





Iran and its bordering Countries

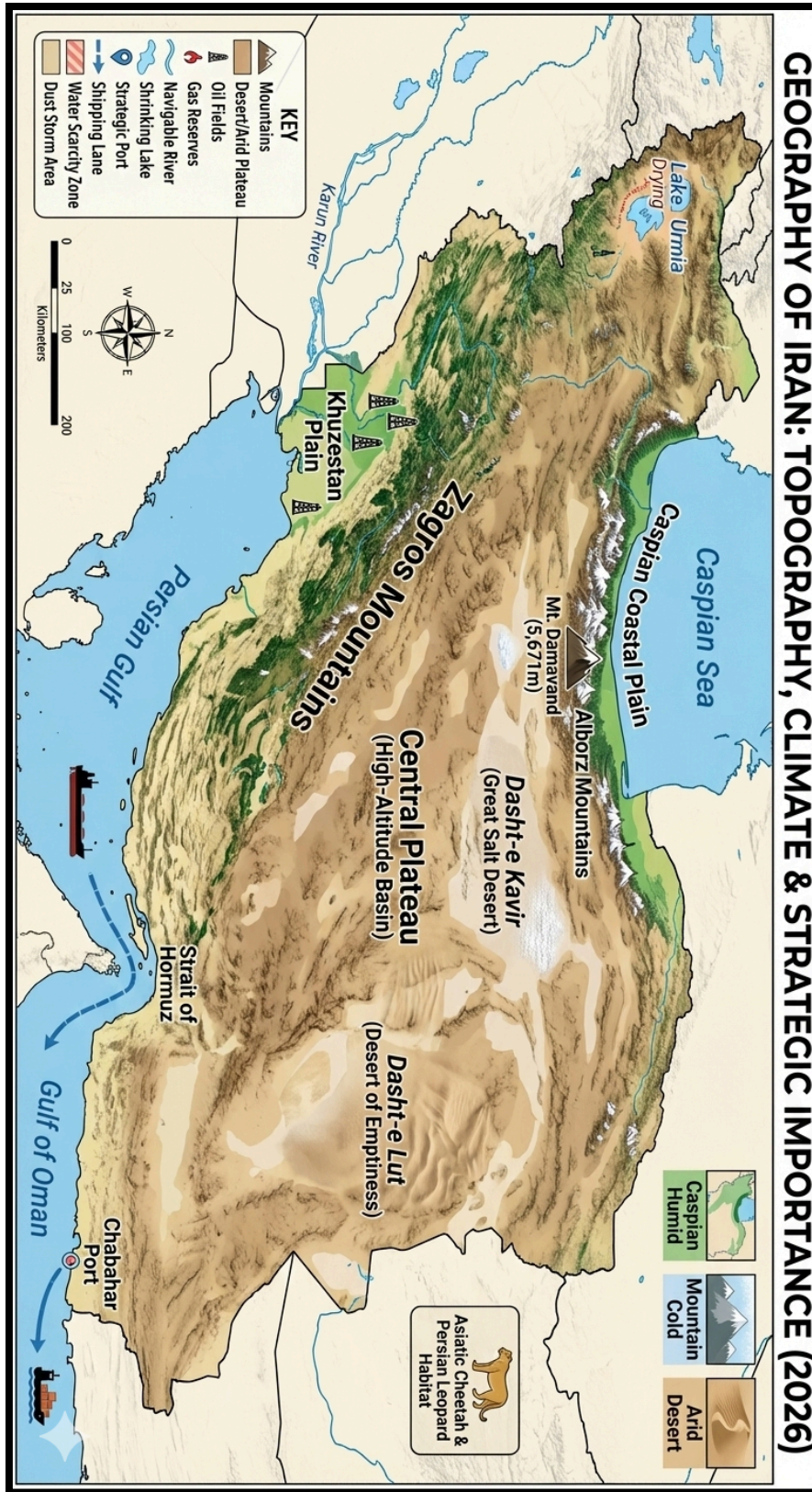


Mnemonic: PITA ATA"

- P - Pakistan (East)
- I - Iraq (West)
- T - Turkey
(Northwest)
- A - Afghanistan
(East)
- A - Armenia
(Northwest)
- T - Turkmenistan
(Northeast)
- A - Azerbaijan
(Northwest)

Strait of Hormuz & Gulf of Oman: This narrow waterway connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the wider Arabian Sea. Bordered by Iran to the north and Oman/UAE to the south, it is the world's most critical oil chokepoint (handling roughly 20% of global petroleum). It remains heavily in the news due to Iran's temporary closures and the seizure of oil tankers in the deep-water basin of the Gulf of Oman, prompting increased naval deployments by the US, UK, and India.

Geography of Iran

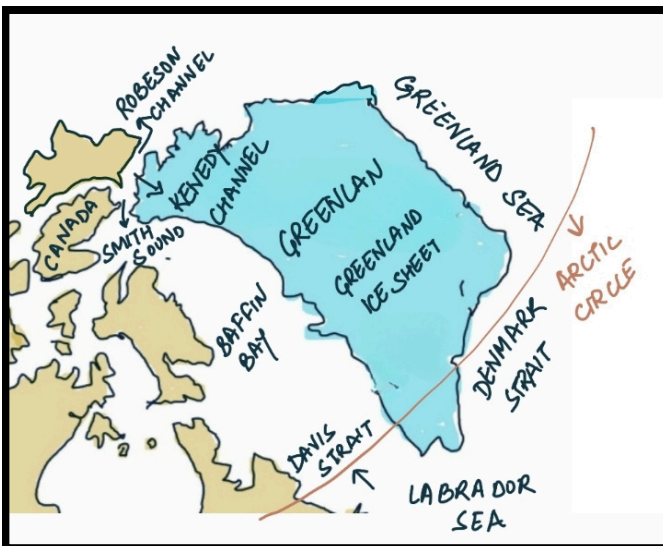
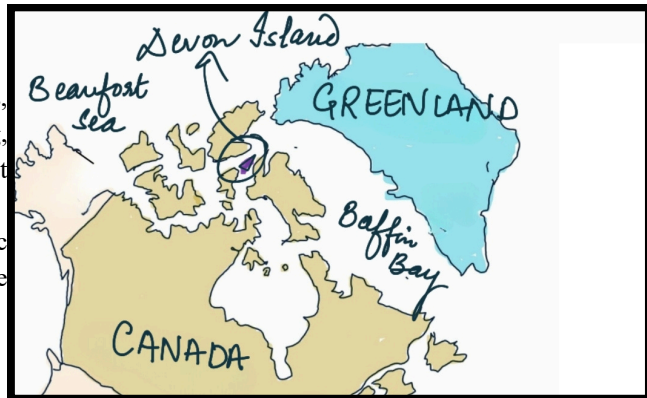


North America

Devon Island

NASA uses Devon Island to study Mars, primarily because it's barren and its freezing, polar desert conditions allow researchers to test next-generation rovers.

- It is located in the Canadian arctic archipelago, within the zone classified as the High Arctic.
- It is the world's largest uninhabited island.



Greenland

An autonomous territory of the Kingdom of Denmark. Recent U.S. interest in acquisition stems from countering Russian and Chinese polar expansion.

- **Thule Air Base (Pituffik):** A critical U.S. military installation for ballistic missile early warning.
- **Rare Earth Elements (REEs):** Greenland holds some of the world's largest undeveloped deposits of REEs (e.g., Neodymium, Praseodymium) and Zinc, essential for the global green energy transition.

Kvanefjeld Project: A controversial mining site due to uranium by-products, reflecting the tension between environmental protection and economic independence.

India's Arctic Policy (2022): Focuses on "Scientific Research" and "Sustainable Resource Development." India aims to secure "Critical Mineral Partnerships" to bolster its National Mission on Transformative Mobility.



Sonora, Mexico

Located in northwestern Mexico, this state has become a focal point for the global energy transition. It houses vast **lithium deposits** essential for **EV batteries and clean tech**. Combined with Mexico's position as a major "**nearshoring**" hub under the highly anticipated 2026 USMCA trade review, Sonora is deeply significant for global supply chain geography.



Panama Canal: The canal is recovering from a severe climate-induced drought that drastically reduced daily transits in 2023–2024. To combat future climate vulnerabilities, the Río Indio Reservoir project is currently being developed to secure freshwater for the lock systems. Additionally, early 2026 disruptions in the Middle East have diverted significant LNG and container traffic back toward the Panama Canal, elevating its geostrategic importance.



Darién Gap:

The treacherous, densely forested geographical choke point connecting North America to South America (specifically between Panama and Colombia). It has been heavily in the news throughout 2025 and 2026 due to its role as a dangerous corridor for migration and trafficking, heavily influencing US hemispheric policy.

Route Geography & Navigation

- Atlantic to Pacific Connection**
The route establishes a primary maritime link between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.
- Essential Arctic Waterways**
Navigation depends on several critical sounds and straits throughout the archipelago.

Major Arctic Hubs
Key regional communities are identified on the map using circle icons.

Strategic & Environmental Impact

- Shrinking Summer Sea Ice**
Climate change is reducing ice extent, making the passage increasingly accessible for seasonal shipping.
- Strategic Significance**
The passage is a focal point for global shipping, resource extraction (Oil & Gas), and sovereignty.

Regional Segments & Key Water Bodies	
Region	Key Water Bodies
Eastern Arctic	Baffin Bay, Lancaster Sound, Prince Regent Inlet
Central Arctic	Viscount Melville Sound, Amundsen Gulf
Western Arctic	Beaufort Sea, Chukchi Sea, Bering Sea

The Northwest Passage (Canadian Arctic/Alaska):

Accelerated melting of Arctic sea ice has opened this historically unnavigable route. It drastically reduces shipping times between the Atlantic and Pacific but has sparked intense territorial and geopolitical competition involving the US, Canada, Russia, and China over maritime rights and resource extraction.



Great Salt Lake (Utah, USA):

In March 2026, scientists discovered a massive, **hidden freshwater reservoir extending up to 4 kilometers deep beneath the Great Salt Lake** using airborne electromagnetic surveys. This is a critical geographical discovery amid the broader, chronic water scarcity crisis facing the North American West.



Kilauea Volcano, Hawaii (USA):

Located in the central Pacific Ocean, this intraplate "shield volcano" is built over a mantle plume hotspot and is known for its basaltic, less-viscous lava. It has erupted again, marking its 42nd episodic fountaining since 2024. It is geographically significant as one of the world's most active volcanoes and serves as a prime example for studying hotspot volcanism and magma dynamics.

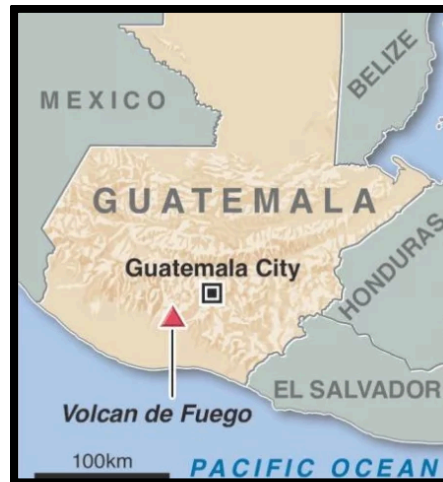


Fuego Volcano, Guatemala:

This volcano is in the news due to an extreme eruption sending volcanic ash over 15,000 feet into the air.

It poses a constant threat of ashfalls, avalanches, and potential lahars to the 1.5 million people living in the surrounding valleys.

Located in the Central American Volcanic Arc along the Pacific Ring of Fire, it is a steep, conical stratovolcano (composite volcano) formed by the subduction of the Cocos plate beneath the Caribbean plate.





Canada:

Mentioned due to upgraded relations with India and an expected visit from the Canadian PM for a potential trade deal. Geographically, **Canada features the mineral-rich Canadian Shield, Rocky Mountains, and Arctic Tundra, and is bordered by the US, the Arctic Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean.** It is a key NATO member and holds strategic importance in growing Arctic geopolitics.

