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preparation

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MCQs

High-Yield
Map Facts

50+
Prelims-
ready maps

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Maps
Included



MAP-ZINE HIGHLIGHTS:

- Latest Places in News
- Static Geography Maps
- Visually rich, region-specific maps
- MCQs with explanations
- Significance & exam-oriented notes
- Practice maps for revision

Part of MAP-ZINE Bi-Monthly Series

MAP-ZINE
VOLUME - 4 (Sample)
DECEMBER-JANUARY 2026

This volume includes coverage of:
Important Deserts of the World



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Corporate Office:

EDUBABA

C/o Thermo Ceramics India

62- A, Katayghat Road, Industrial Area

Baragwan, Katni (M.P.) - 483501

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Preface

Mapwork is no longer a supplementary area in competitive examinations — it is a decisive one. In recent years, questions increasingly test spatial awareness, location intelligence, and the ability to connect current events with geography.

However, the challenge for aspirants lies not in the absence of information, but in its excess. Vast atlases, scattered notes, and unstructured reading often lead to confusion rather than clarity.

MAP-ZINE has been designed to address this gap.

Instead of overwhelming learners with bulky general maps, we have focused on region-specific, exam-oriented maps that reflect how questions are actually framed in UPSC Prelims. Each map is accompanied by structured MCQs, elimination logic, and concise significance notes to build both accuracy and confidence.

The emphasis throughout the book is on:

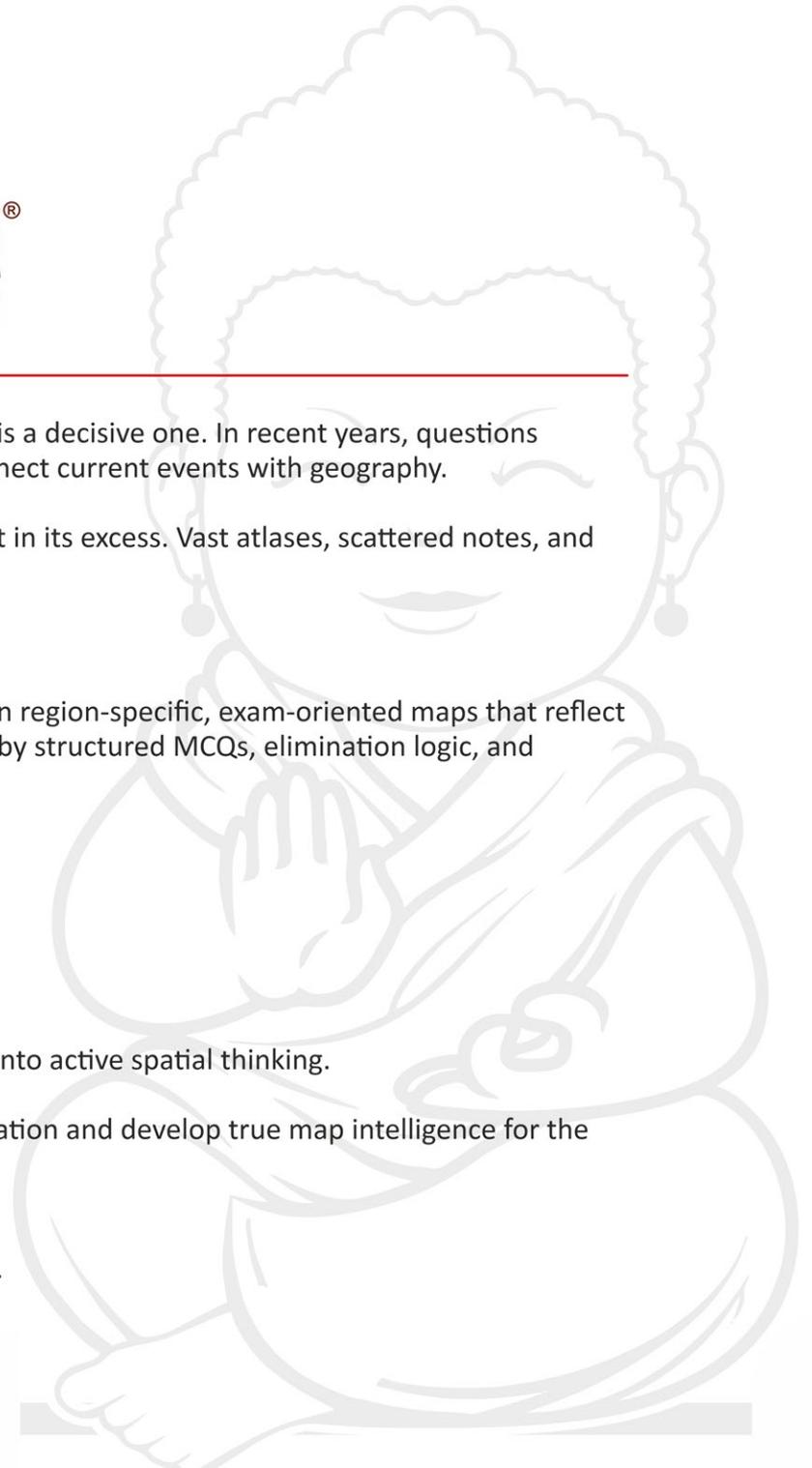
- *Places in News*
- *Static–Current integration*
- *Visual memory reinforcement*
- *Practice through exam-style questions*

Our objective is simple — to transform map preparation from passive reading into active spatial thinking.

We hope this structured approach helps aspirants move beyond rote memorisation and develop true map intelligence for the examination.

MAP-ZINE is not just a compilation of maps — it is a preparation framework. Because in UPSC, knowing the map is not enough — you must think through it.

— Team Edubaba



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PLACES IN NEWS (DECEMBER - JANUARY 2026)

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IMPORTANT DESERTS OF INDIA

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QUESTION A-01

Consider the following statements regarding Venezuela:

1. Venezuela is located at the northern end of South America, bordered by the Caribbean Sea to the north and Guyana to the east.
2. Venezuela's major river system, the Orinoco River, flows into the Pacific Ocean.
3. In January 2026, a U.S. military operation led to the capture of President Nicolás Maduro and intensified U.S. involvement in Venezuelan oil affairs.
4. Venezuela is rich in energy resources, with the Faja Petrolífera del Orinoco (Orinoco Oil Belt) being among the largest oil deposits in the world.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

UPSC KEY FACTS

- ✓ **Venezuela holds the world's largest proven oil reserves**, estimated at around **303 billion barrels**, accounting for roughly **17 % of global reserves**, primarily concentrated in the **Orinoco Belt**.
- ✓ It is located at the **northern end of South America**, bordered by the **Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean** to the north, and shares land borders with **Colombia, Brazil and Guyana**.
- ✓ **Orinoco River** is one of South America's major river systems, **draining into the Atlantic Ocean through a vast delta in eastern Venezuela**, and forms a key part of the country's **drainage and ecological network**.
- ✓ Ongoing **U.S.-Venezuela tensions over oil exports, sanctions, and maritime enforcement actions** have heightened its global significance, with recent actions affecting oil trade and geopolitical alignment.

! Significance: Venezuela has become central to current affairs due to its strategic oil reserves, geopolitical shifts following U.S. military action and leadership change, and resultant global energy and regional security dynamics.

UPSC KEY FACTS

- ✓ Lake Chad is a *shallow, endorheic (closed-basin) freshwater lake* in the *Sahel*, meaning it *does not drain into any ocean* and loses water mainly through evaporation.
- ✓ It is a *transboundary lake shared by Chad, Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon*, making it geopolitically sensitive for water-sharing and livelihoods.
- ✓ The *Chari-Logone river system* provides the *majority of inflow*, and fluctuations in its discharge have led to *severe shrinkage of the lake*, impacting ecology, food security, and regional stability.

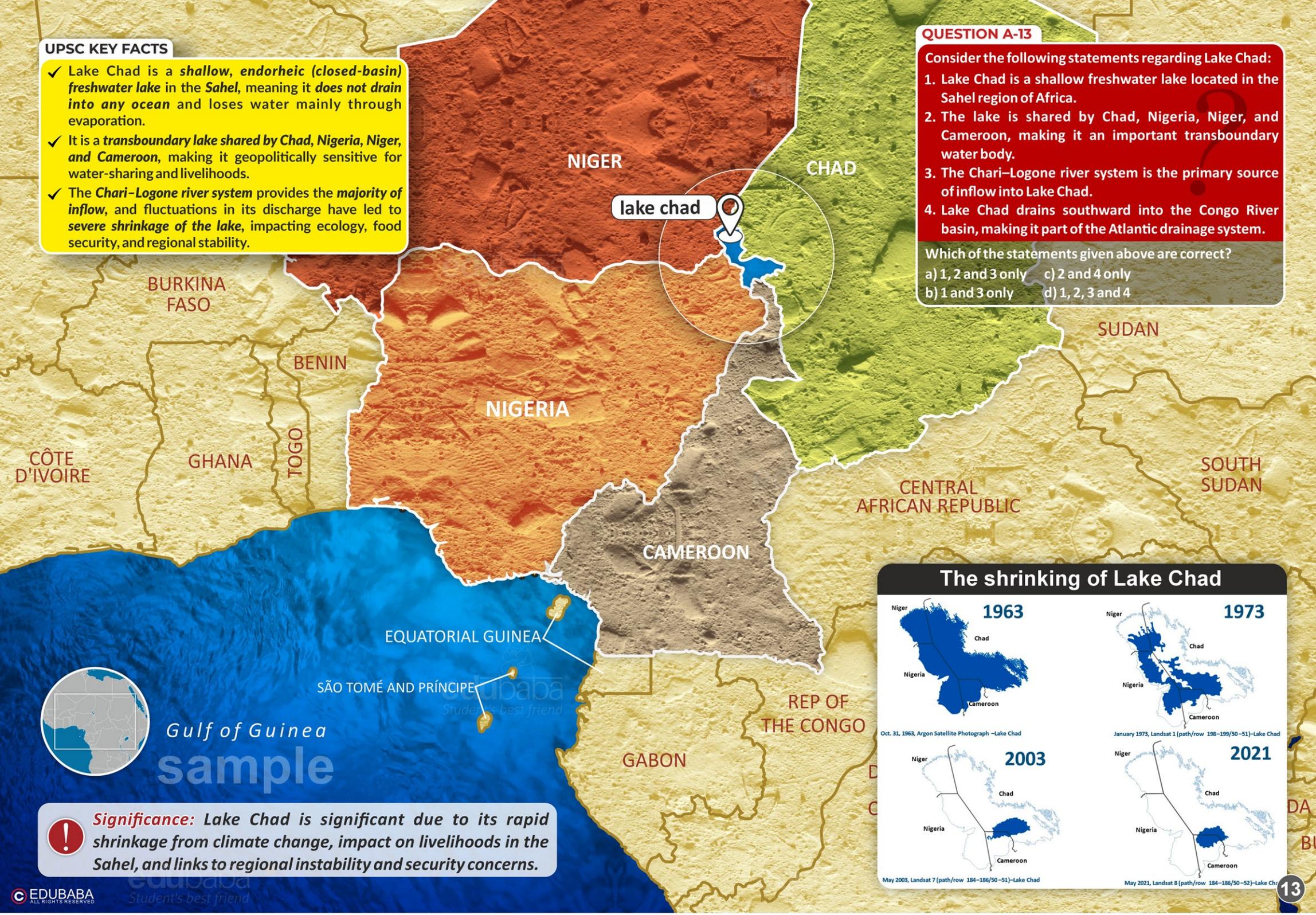
QUESTION A-13

Consider the following statements regarding Lake Chad:

1. Lake Chad is a shallow freshwater lake located in the Sahel region of Africa.
2. The lake is shared by Chad, Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon, making it an important transboundary water body.
3. The Chari-Logone river system is the primary source of inflow into Lake Chad.
4. Lake Chad drains southward into the Congo River basin, making it part of the Atlantic drainage system.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

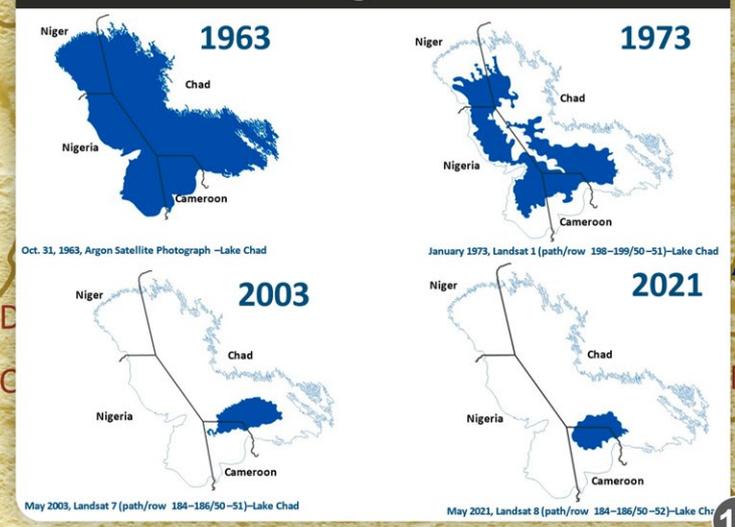


Gulf of Guinea
sample



Significance: Lake Chad is significant due to its rapid shrinkage from climate change, impact on livelihoods in the Sahel, and links to regional instability and security concerns.

The shrinking of Lake Chad





Canary Islands (SPAIN)

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WESTERN SAHARA

23.5° N
Tropic of Cancer

S A H A R A
D E S E R T

MAURITANIA

MALI

NIGER

CHAD

EGYPT

SUDAN

Red Sea

SENEGAL

GAMBIA

GUINEA-BISSAU

GUINEA

SIERRA LEONE

LIBERIA

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

BURKINA FASO

GHANA

BENIN

TOGO

NIGERIA

ERITREA

SYRIA

LEBANON

ISRAEL

IRAQ

JORDAN

SAUDI ARABIA

B-1 Which of the following statements is/ are correct regarding the Sahara Desert?

1. Located in northern Africa, it is the largest desert in the world.
2. Both the Tropic of Cancer and the Equator cuts through the Sahara Desert.

Select the correct answer based on the codes given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

B-2 Which of the following is/ are NOT the spanning countries of the Sahara Desert?

1. Mali
2. Nigeria
3. Tunisia
4. Burkina Faso
5. Mauritania
6. South Sudan

Select the correct answer based on the codes given below:

- a) 2, 4 and 6 only
- b) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6
- c) 1, 3, 4 and 5 only
- d) 2, 3, 5 and 6 only



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Gulf of Guinea



SOLUTIONS & EXPLANATIONS

Detailed, clear understanding for every map-based question

SECTION A — PLACES IN NEWS (DECEMBER–JANUARY)

- Extreme heat,
- Salt flats, and
- Volcanic landscapes.
- **Statement 3 — Correct**
 - The Afar Region is a **tectonic triple junction**.
 - It marks the point where:
 - The **African Plate is splitting into the Nubian and Somali plates**, and
 - The **Arabian Plate is moving away**.
 - This causes:
 - **Active rifting**,
 - **Frequent earthquakes**, and
 - **Volcanism** (e.g., **Erta Ale volcano**).
 - A classic **plate-tectonics + geography integration** for UPSC.

Significance: *The Afar Region is in focus as scientists study it to observe plate tectonics in real time, since it marks an active tectonic triple junction where continental rifting is occurring, offering rare insights into how new ocean basins form and strengthening understanding of plate tectonic theory.*

A-15 The Correct Answer is: b) 2 and 3 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 – Incorrect**
 - **The "UPSC Binary" Trap:** In geography exams, a country is either landlocked (0% coast) or not. While Jordan is "nearly landlocked," it has ~26 km of coastline.
 - **Surrounding Countries Breakdown:**
 - **North:** Borders **Syria** (the border is partially marked by the **Yarmouk River**).
 - **Northeast:** Borders **Iraq**.
 - **East and South:** Shares its longest border with **Saudi Arabia**.
 - **West:** Borders **Israel** and the **West Bank** (Palestine).
 - *Note: Jordan does **not** border Egypt by land; they are separated by the Gulf of Aqaba.*
- **Statement 2 – Correct**
 - **The Strategic Window:** Jordan's only outlet to the world's oceans is the **Port of Aqaba**.
 - **Connectivity:** The **Gulf of Aqaba** is a northern extension of the **Red Sea**.
 - **The Sinai Factor:** Jordan sits at the northern tip of the Gulf, across from Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and adjacent to Israel's port of Eilat.
- **Statement 3 – Correct**
 - **The Western Natural Frontier:**
 - **Jordan River:** Flows from the **Sea of Galilee** in the north down to the **Dead Sea**, serving as the international boundary with the West Bank and Israel.

sample



SOLUTIONS & EXPLANATIONS

Detailed, clear understanding for every map-based question

SECTION A — PLACES IN NEWS (DECEMBER–JANUARY)

- **Statement 2 – Correct**
 - The two major rivers feeding the Aral Sea were:
 - **Amu Darya** (originating in the Pamir region)
 - **Syr Darya** (originating in the Tien Shan mountains)
 - During the Soviet period (1960s onward), these rivers were heavily diverted for **cotton cultivation (irrigation projects)** in Uzbekistan and surrounding areas.
 - As river inflow sharply declined:
 - Water level dropped drastically
 - Surface area reduced by more than 80%
 - Salinity increased several times
 - Fisheries collapsed
 - Local climate became more extreme
 - The exposed seabed transformed into the **Aralkum Desert**, generating saline and pesticide-laden dust storms affecting public health.
 - This is regarded as one of the **worst anthropogenic ecological disasters of the 20th century**.
- **Statement 3 – Incorrect (Important UPSC Trap)**
 - The Aral Sea does **NOT** have any natural outlet. It is **not hydrologically connected** to the Caspian Sea.
 - Both are **separate inland basins**:
 - The **Caspian Sea** is the world's largest enclosed inland water body.
 - The **Aral Sea** was once the fourth-largest inland lake but has drastically shrunk.

Significance: *The Aral Sea has re-entered global discussions amid Central Asian water-sharing tensions, climate change–induced glacier retreat affecting the Amu Darya and Syr Darya flows, and renewed regional cooperation efforts between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to restore parts of the North Aral Sea and prevent further desertification.*

A-18 The Correct Answer is: c) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 — Correct**
 - The **Caribbean Sea** is a **marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean**.
 - It lies:
 - East of **Central America**, and
 - North of **South America** (notably Venezuela and Colombia).
 - It forms a key maritime space within the **Atlantic basin**.
 - **Core map-based prelim fact.**
- **Statement 2 — Correct**
 - The Caribbean Sea connects with the **open Atlantic Ocean** through several natural passages:
 - Between islands of the **Greater Antilles** (Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, Puerto Rico), and

QUESTION A-10

Consider the following statements regarding South Africa:

1. South Africa lies at the southern tip of the African continent, with coastlines along both the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean.
2. South Africa shares land borders with Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Eswatini, and completely surrounds Lesotho.
3. The Drakensberg Mountains form a major mountain system along South Africa's eastern interior and constitute part of the boundary between South Africa and Lesotho.
4. The Agulhas Current is a cold ocean current flowing northward along the eastern coast of South Africa.
5. The Orange River flows westward across South Africa and drains into the Atlantic Ocean, forming part of the South Africa–Namibia border.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only c) 1, 3 and 5 only
b) 1, 2 and 3 only d) All of the above

sample



B-5 Which of the following correctly gives the location of the Kalahari Desert?

1. To the north of the Algoa Bay
2. To the north of the Okavango Swamps
3. To the west of Madagascar
4. To the east of the Namib Desert

Select the correct answer based on the codes given below:

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

B-6 Consider the following statements regarding the Kalahari Desert:

1. The Tropic of Capricorn passes through all the countries spanning the Kalahari Desert.
2. It is part of the Great Rift Valley of the African continent.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

B-7 Which of the following statements is/ are NOT correct regarding the Kalahari Desert?

1. The desert is sometimes considered a pseudo desert due to relatively higher precipitation and vegetation.
2. The Bushmen or San people have inhabited the region for the last 20,000 years.
3. It is spread through only two countries of Africa.

Select the correct answer based on the codes given below:

- a) 1 and 3 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 2 only
- d) 2 and 3 only

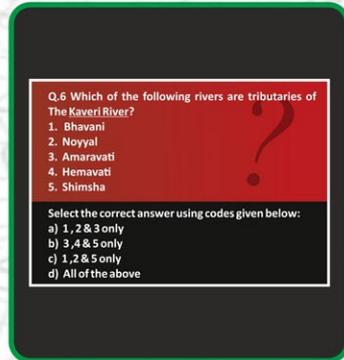
HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

STEP-1



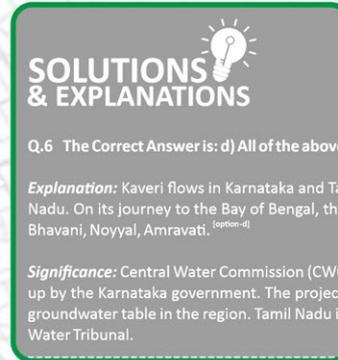
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Content-Rich Maps.

STEP-2



Attempt the Questions
Map based questions
specific to current affairs
and ongoing events.

STEP-3



Check the Solution
Clear solutions with
detailed explanations for
optimal understanding.

STEP-4



Practice the Map
Check your understanding
by attempting the practice
maps provided.

STEP-5



Reinforce
Supplement your learning
with videos and related
resources on Youtube and
Edubaba website.



TESTIMONIAL # 1

I found this book wonderfully effective for targeted map-work practice. Thank you Edubaba.

-TANYA SETHI
M.B.A.



TESTIMONIAL # 2

I suggested this book to my own students for Civil Services Exams. The results have been impressive. Good effort!!

-ABHISHEK TIWARI
Teacher, M.Sc., B.Ed.



For any queries / complaints / suggestions contact us on any of the following:



info@edubaba.in



+91 91719-98829



+91 99820-69191



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