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Part of MAP-ZINE Bi-Monthly Series

MAP-ZINE
VOLUME - 5 (Sample)
FEBRUARY-MARCH 2026

This volume includes coverage of:
Important Deserts of the World



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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:

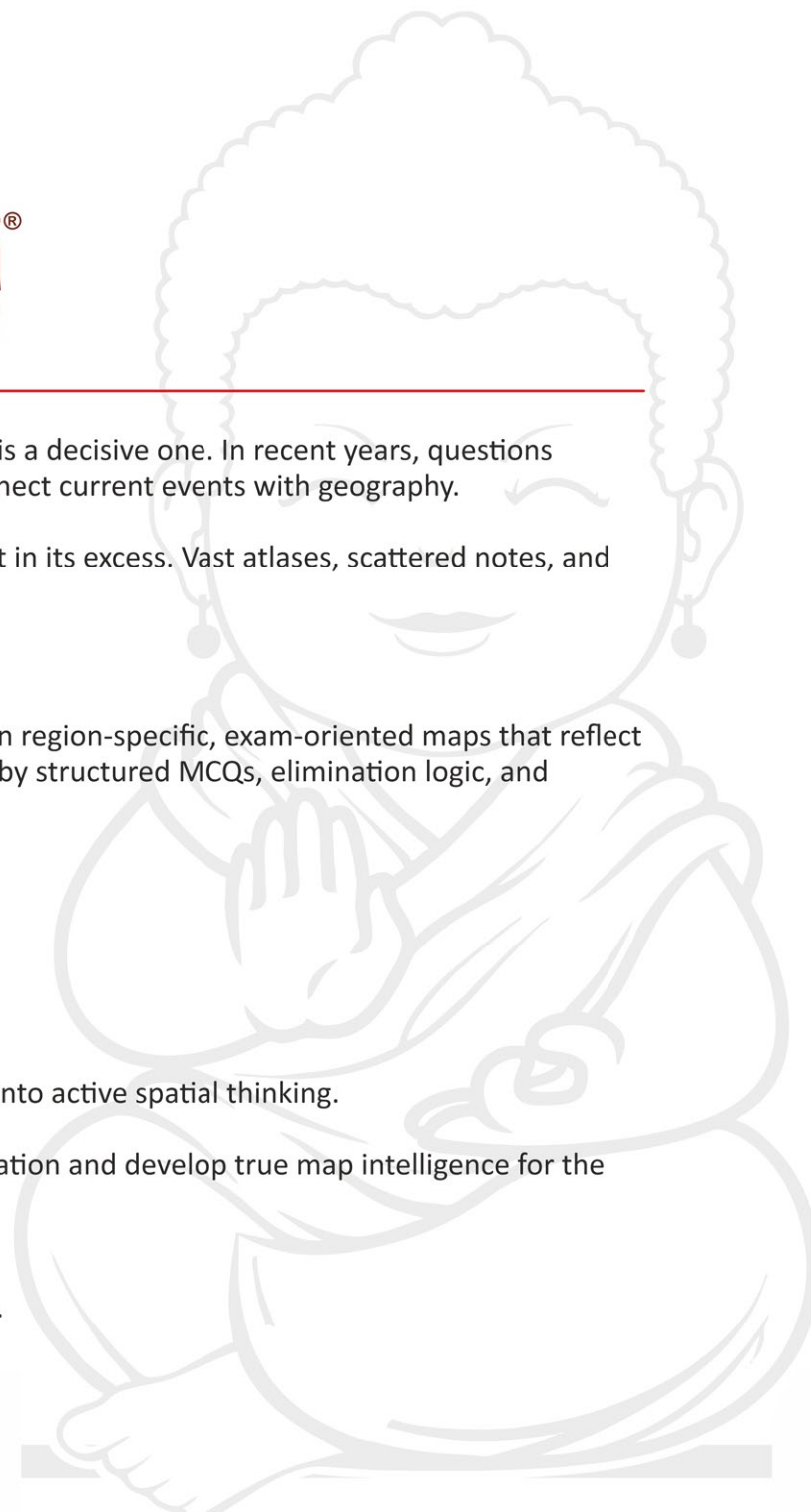
- *Places in News*
- *Static–Current integration*
- *Visual memory reinforcement*
- *Practice through exam-style questions*

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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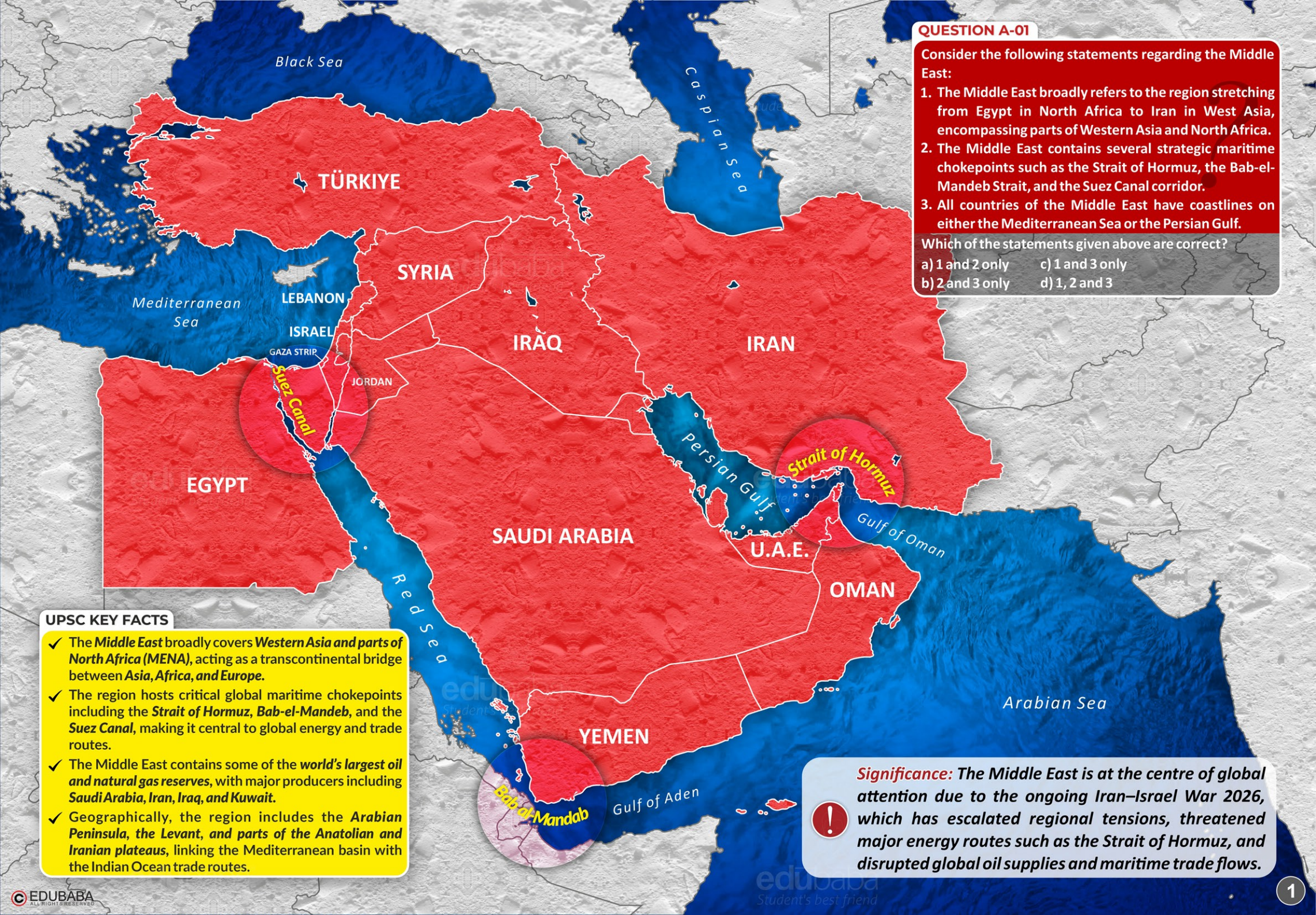
PLACES IN NEWS (FEBRUARY - MARCH 2026)

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IMPORTANT MOUNTAIN RANGES OF THE WORLD & INDIA

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QUESTION A-01

Consider the following statements regarding the Middle East:

1. The Middle East broadly refers to the region stretching from Egypt in North Africa to Iran in West Asia, encompassing parts of Western Asia and North Africa.
2. The Middle East contains several strategic maritime chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, and the Suez Canal corridor.
3. All countries of the Middle East have coastlines on either the Mediterranean Sea or the Persian Gulf.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

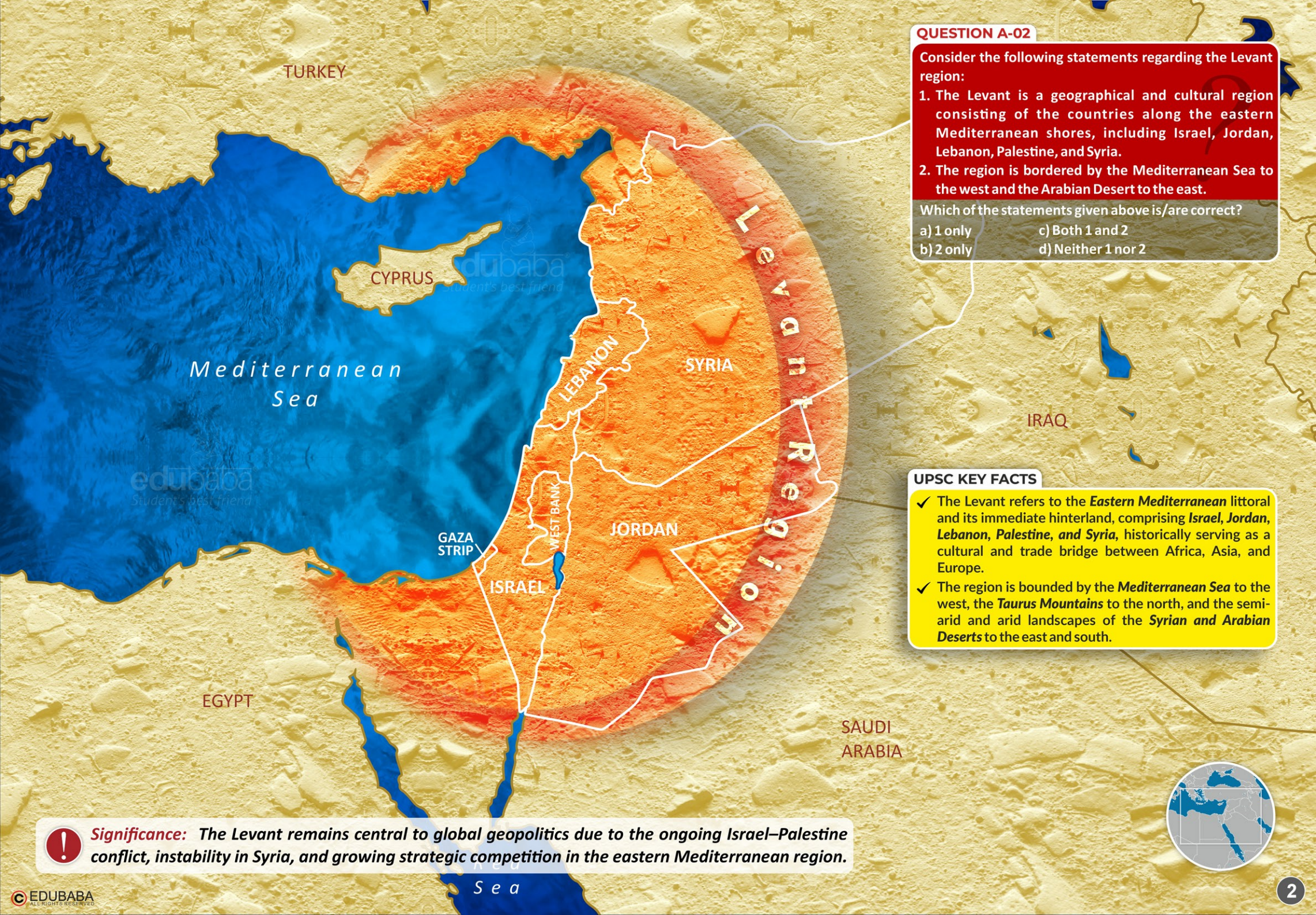
- a) 1 and 2 only c) 1 and 3 only
b) 2 and 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3

UPSC KEY FACTS

- ✓ The *Middle East* broadly covers *Western Asia and parts of North Africa (MENA)*, acting as a transcontinental bridge between *Asia, Africa, and Europe*.
- ✓ The region hosts critical global maritime chokepoints including the *Strait of Hormuz, Bab-el-Mandeb*, and the *Suez Canal*, making it central to global energy and trade routes.
- ✓ The Middle East contains some of the *world's largest oil and natural gas reserves*, with major producers including *Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait*.
- ✓ Geographically, the region includes the *Arabian Peninsula, the Levant, and parts of the Anatolian and Iranian plateaus*, linking the Mediterranean basin with the Indian Ocean trade routes.

Significance: The Middle East is at the centre of global attention due to the ongoing Iran–Israel War 2026, which has escalated regional tensions, threatened major energy routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, and disrupted global oil supplies and maritime trade flows.





QUESTION A-02

Consider the following statements regarding the Levant region:

1. The Levant is a geographical and cultural region consisting of the countries along the eastern Mediterranean shores, including Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria.
2. The region is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the Arabian Desert to the east.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

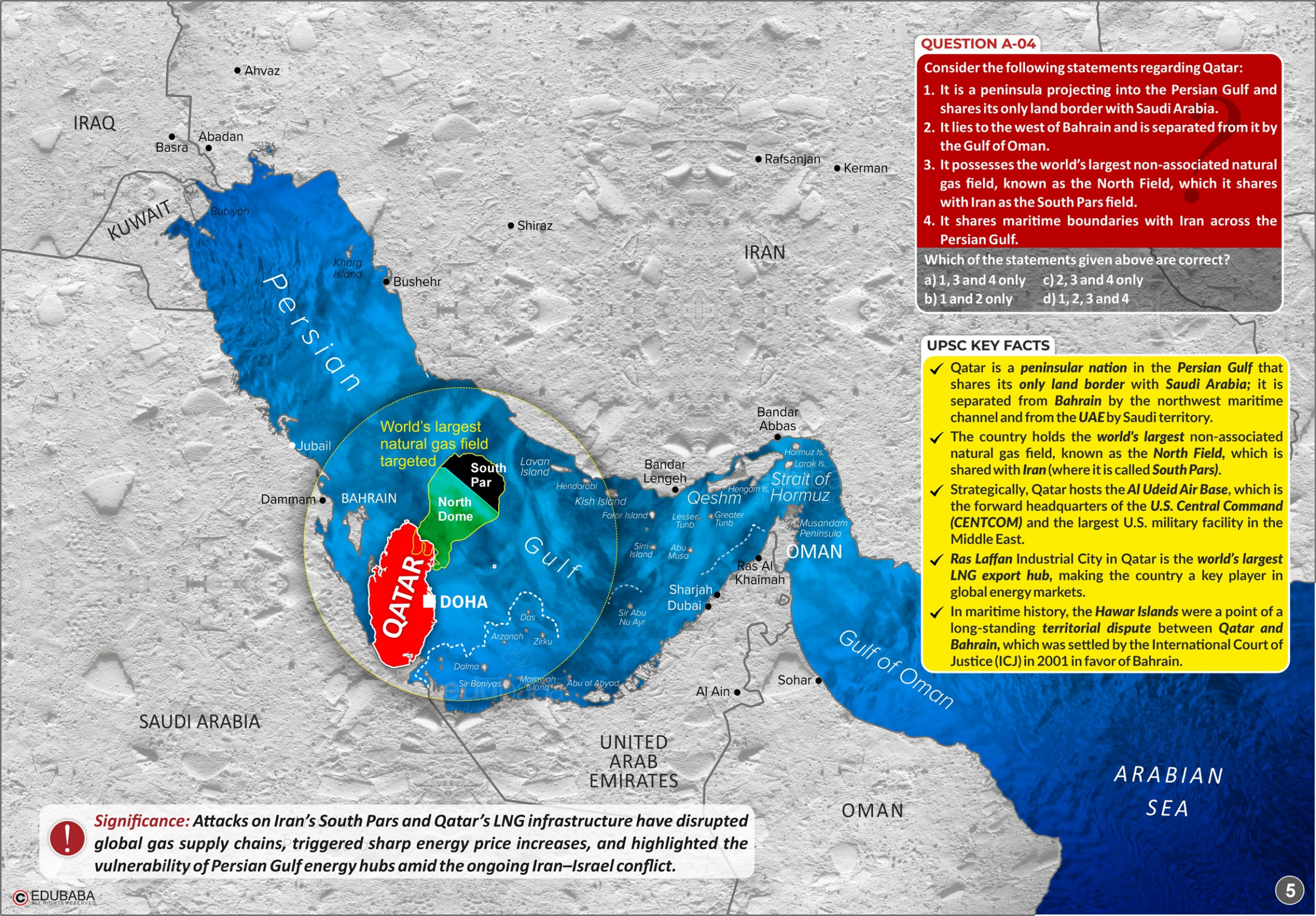
- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

UPSC KEY FACTS

- ✓ The Levant refers to the *Eastern Mediterranean* littoral and its immediate hinterland, comprising *Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria*, historically serving as a cultural and trade bridge between Africa, Asia, and Europe.
- ✓ The region is bounded by the *Mediterranean Sea* to the west, the *Taurus Mountains* to the north, and the semi-arid and arid landscapes of the *Syrian and Arabian Deserts* to the east and south.

Significance: The Levant remains central to global geopolitics due to the ongoing Israel–Palestine conflict, instability in Syria, and growing strategic competition in the eastern Mediterranean region.





QUESTION A-04

- Consider the following statements regarding Qatar:
1. It is a peninsula projecting into the Persian Gulf and shares its only land border with Saudi Arabia.
 2. It lies to the west of Bahrain and is separated from it by the Gulf of Oman.
 3. It possesses the world's largest non-associated natural gas field, known as the North Field, which it shares with Iran as the South Pars field.
 4. It shares maritime boundaries with Iran across the Persian Gulf.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

UPSC KEY FACTS

- ✓ Qatar is a *peninsular nation* in the *Persian Gulf* that shares its *only land border* with *Saudi Arabia*; it is separated from *Bahrain* by the northwest maritime channel and from the *UAE* by Saudi territory.
- ✓ The country holds the *world's largest* non-associated natural gas field, known as the *North Field*, which is shared with *Iran* (where it is called *South Pars*).
- ✓ Strategically, Qatar hosts the *Al Udeid Air Base*, which is the forward headquarters of the *U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM)* and the largest U.S. military facility in the Middle East.
- ✓ *Ras Laffan Industrial City* in Qatar is the *world's largest LNG export hub*, making the country a key player in global energy markets.
- ✓ In maritime history, the *Hawar Islands* were a point of a long-standing *territorial dispute* between *Qatar and Bahrain*, which was settled by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2001 in favor of Bahrain.



Significance: Attacks on Iran's South Pars and Qatar's LNG infrastructure have disrupted global gas supply chains, triggered sharp energy price increases, and highlighted the vulnerability of Persian Gulf energy hubs amid the ongoing Iran-Israel conflict.

QUESTION A-19

Consider the following statements regarding Japan:

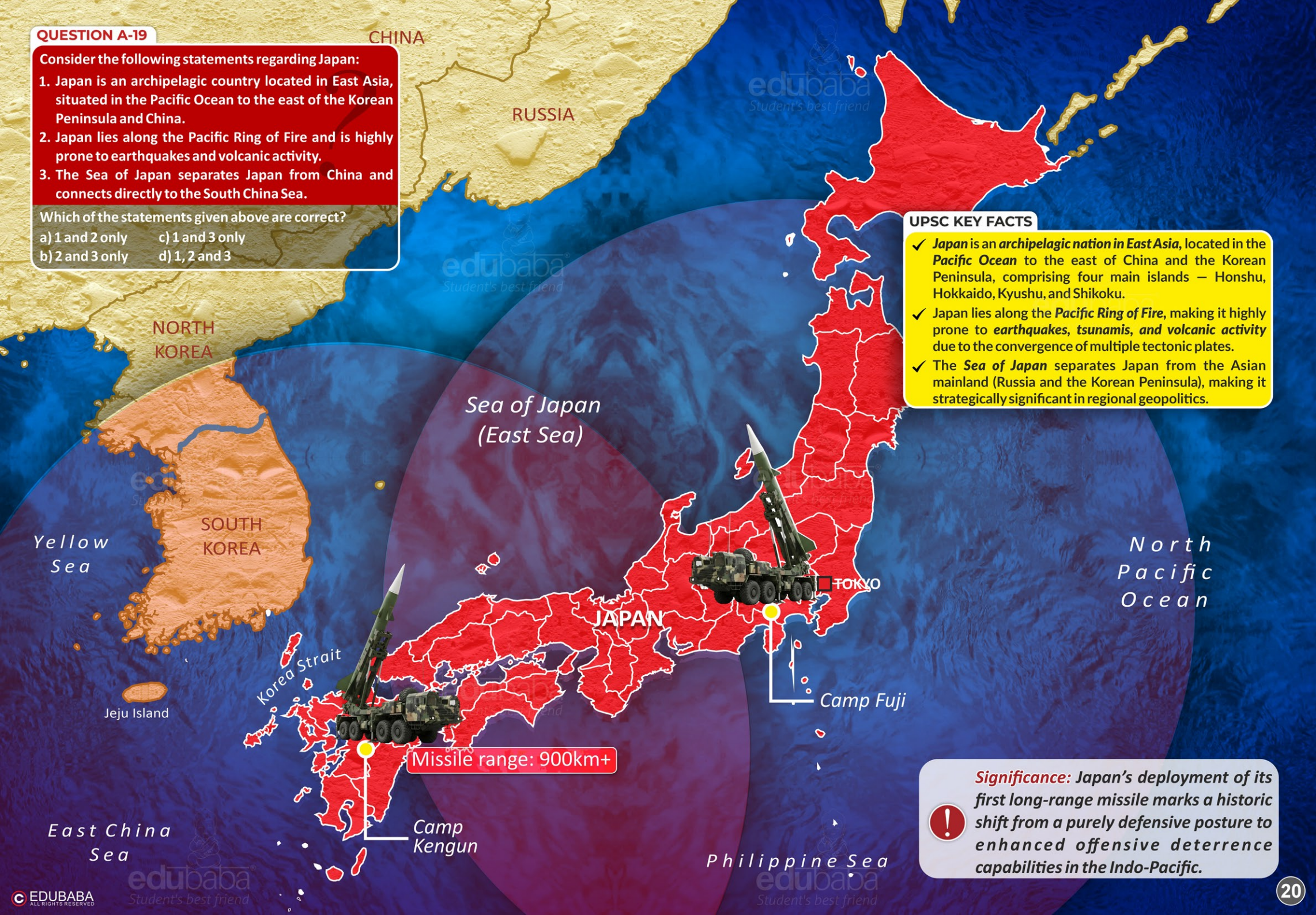
1. Japan is an archipelagic country located in East Asia, situated in the Pacific Ocean to the east of the Korean Peninsula and China.
2. Japan lies along the Pacific Ring of Fire and is highly prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity.
3. The Sea of Japan separates Japan from China and connects directly to the South China Sea.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

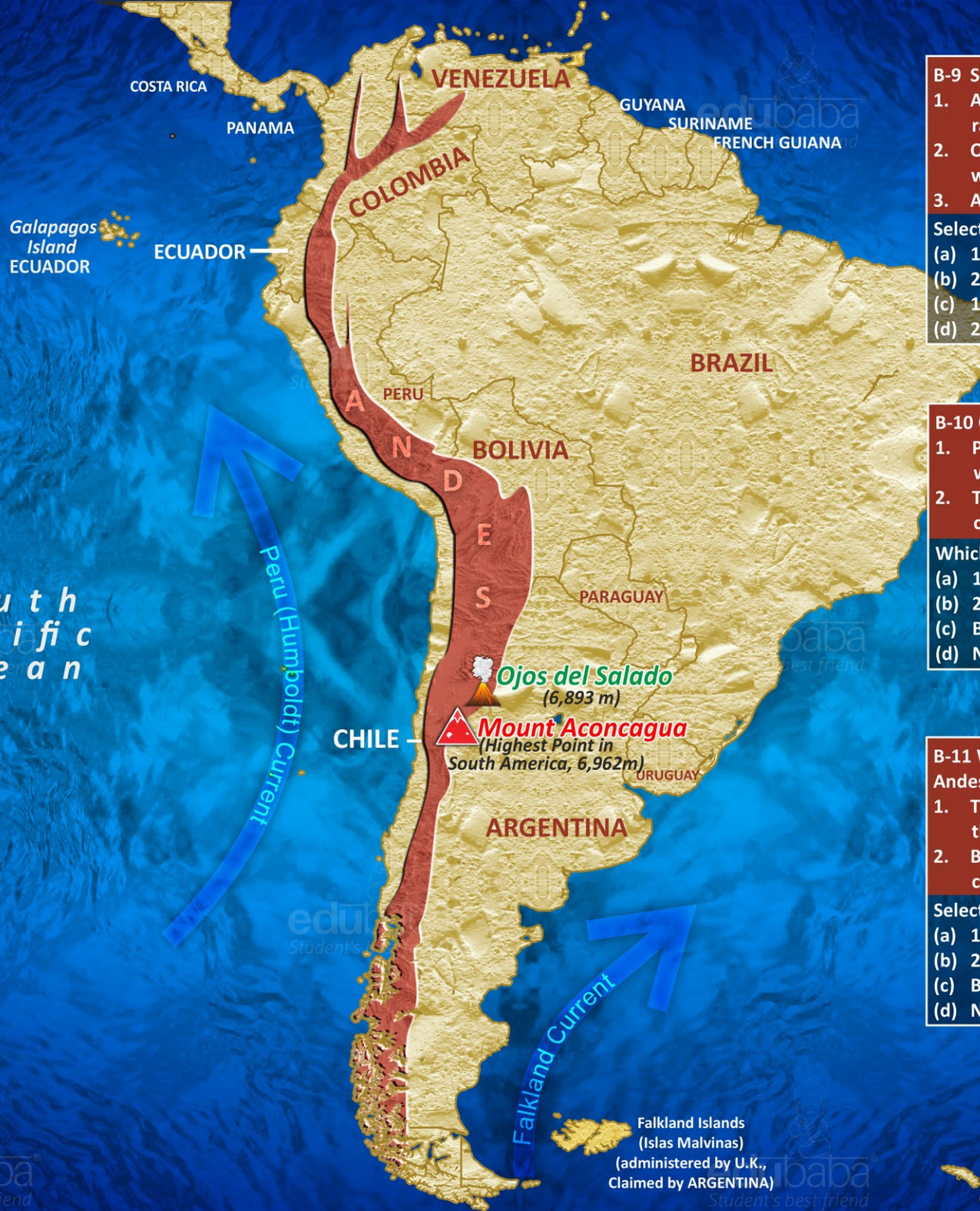
UPSC KEY FACTS

- ✓ Japan is an archipelagic nation in East Asia, located in the Pacific Ocean to the east of China and the Korean Peninsula, comprising four main islands – Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, and Shikoku.
- ✓ Japan lies along the Pacific Ring of Fire, making it highly prone to earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic activity due to the convergence of multiple tectonic plates.
- ✓ The Sea of Japan separates Japan from the Asian mainland (Russia and the Korean Peninsula), making it strategically significant in regional geopolitics.



Significance: Japan's deployment of its first long-range missile marks a historic shift from a purely defensive posture to enhanced offensive deterrence capabilities in the Indo-Pacific.





B-9 Select the correct statements:

1. Andes are the longest continental mountain range in the world.
2. Ojos del Salado is the highest volcano on the earth which is found in the Hawaiian archipelago.
3. Andes is the world's highest mountain range.

Select the correct answer based on codes given below:

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

B-10 Consider the following statements:

1. Peru and Falkland Cold currents flow along the western boundaries of the Andes.
2. The Andes spread across six South American countries only.

Which of the given statement(s) is/ are correct?

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

B-11 Which of the following statements regarding the Andes mountains range is/ are correct?

1. The Roaring Forties and Furious Fifties flow across the Andes.
2. Both the Line of Equator and Tropic of Capricorn cut through the Andes mountains.

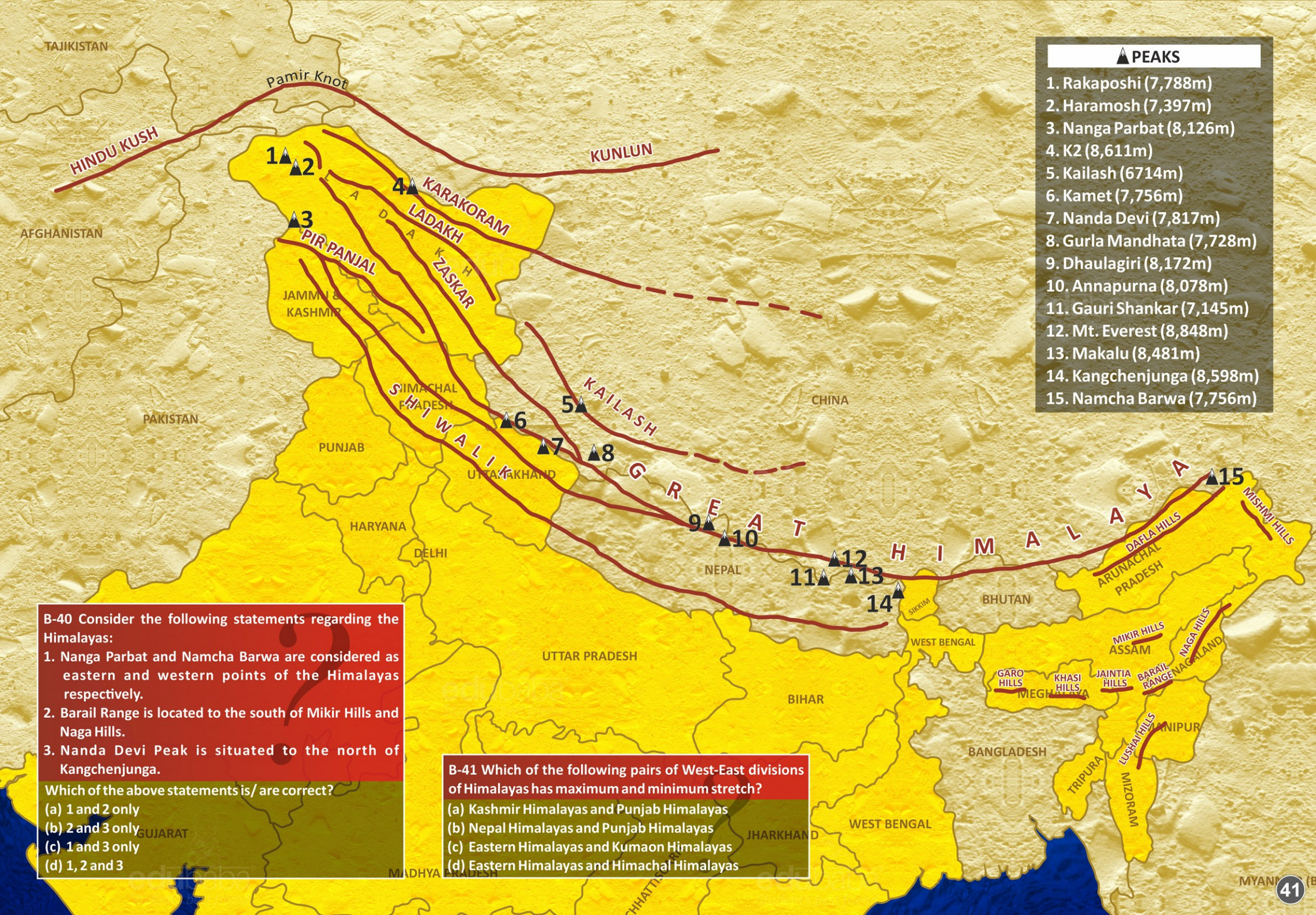
Select the correct code based on statements above:

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

South
Atlantic
Ocean

Falkland Islands
(Islas Malvinas)
(administered by U.K.,
Claimed by ARGENTINA)

South Georgia and
South Sandwich Islands
(administered by U.K.,
Claimed by ARGENTINA)



▲ PEAKS	
1.	Rakaposhi (7,788m)
2.	Haramosh (7,397m)
3.	Nanga Parbat (8,126m)
4.	K2 (8,611m)
5.	Kailash (6714m)
6.	Kamet (7,756m)
7.	Nanda Devi (7,817m)
8.	Gurla Mandhata (7,728m)
9.	Dhaulagiri (8,172m)
10.	Annapurna (8,078m)
11.	Gauri Shankar (7,145m)
12.	Mt. Everest (8,848m)
13.	Makalu (8,481m)
14.	Kangchenjunga (8,598m)
15.	Namcha Barwa (7,756m)

B-40 Consider the following statements regarding the Himalayas:

1. Nanga Parbat and Namcha Barwa are considered as eastern and western points of the Himalayas respectively.
2. Barail Range is located to the south of Mikir Hills and Naga Hills.
3. Nanda Devi Peak is situated to the north of Kangchenjunga.

Which of the above statements is/ are correct?

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

B-41 Which of the following pairs of West-East divisions of Himalayas has maximum and minimum stretch?

- (a) Kashmir Himalayas and Punjab Himalayas
- (b) Nepal Himalayas and Punjab Himalayas
- (c) Eastern Himalayas and Kumaon Himalayas
- (d) Eastern Himalayas and Himachal Himalayas



A-01 The Correct Answer is: a) 1 and 2 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 – Correct**
 - **The Region:** The **Middle East** is a geopolitical term that broadly encompasses **Western Asia and North Africa**, often collectively referred to as **MENA (Middle East and North Africa)**.
 - **Continental Span:** The region acts as a **transcontinental bridge**, stretching from **Egypt** in the west (Africa) to **Iran** in the east (Asia), and includes the **Arabian Peninsula and the Levant region**.
- **Statement 2 – Correct**
 - **Strategic Maritime Chokepoints:** The Middle East contains some of the world's most critical maritime gateways.
 - **Strait of Hormuz**
 - Connects the **Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman**.
 - Lies between **Iran and Oman**.
 - Handles roughly **one-quarter of global seaborne oil trade**.
 - **Bab-el-Mandeb**
 - Connects the **Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden**.
 - Located between **Yemen and Djibouti / Eritrea**.
 - Acts as the maritime gateway between the **Indian Ocean and Mediterranean trade routes**.
 - **Suez Canal**
 - Located entirely within **Egypt**.
 - Connects the **Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea**, enabling direct maritime trade between Europe and Asia.
- **Statement 3 – Incorrect (Classic UPSC Generalization Trap)**
 - The word **“All”** is a typical UPSC red flag. While many Middle Eastern countries are coastal, the region also includes countries that are landlocked or nearly landlocked.
 - **Landlocked / Nearly Landlocked Examples:** **Jordan** is almost landlocked, possessing only a very small coastline on the **Gulf of Aqaba**. Additionally, **Afghanistan**, which is often included in the broader **“Greater Middle East”** concept, is completely landlocked.
 - **Maritime Diversity:** Several Middle Eastern countries border neither the **Mediterranean Sea** nor the **Persian Gulf**. For instance, **Oman** and **Yemen** primarily border the **Arabian Sea** and the **Gulf of Aden**.

Significance: *The Middle East is at the centre of global attention due to the ongoing Iran–Israel War 2026, which has escalated regional tensions, threatened major energy routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, and disrupted global oil supplies and maritime trade flows.*

A-02 The Correct Answer is: c) Both 1 and 2

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 – Correct**
 - The **Levant** is a geographical and cultural region located along the **eastern Mediterranean coast of Southwest Asia**.



SOLUTIONS & EXPLANATIONS

Detailed, clear understanding for every map-based question

SECTION A — PLACES IN NEWS (FEBRUARY–MARCH)

- The term "Levant" (derived from the French lever, meaning "to rise," as in the sun rising in the east) refers to a large area in Southwest Asia south of the Taurus Mountains.
- In its modern sense, the Levant generally includes:
 - **Cyprus**
 - **Israel**
 - **Jordan**
 - **Lebanon**
 - **Palestine**
 - **Syria**
- The region historically served as a **crossroads linking Asia, Europe, and Africa**, shaping trade routes and cultural exchanges.
- **Statement 2 – Correct**
 - Geographically, the Levant is anchored by the **Mediterranean Sea to the west**.
 - Moving eastward, the region gradually transitions into the **semi-arid landscapes of the Syrian Desert and the northern Arabian Desert**.
- **Map Logic (UPSC Tip):**
 - The Levant represents a **Mediterranean coastal belt that transitions into inland desert terrain**, a key geographical feature of West Asia.
 - While the region is often used interchangeably with "**Middle East**" or "**Near East**," the **Levant specifically refers to the Eastern Mediterranean littoral and its immediate hinterland**.

Significance: *The Levant remains central to global geopolitics due to the ongoing Israel–Palestine conflict, instability in Syria, and growing strategic competition in the eastern Mediterranean region.*

A-03 The Correct Answer is: a) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only

Explanation:

- **Statement 1 – Correct**
 - **Dual-Littoral Geography:** Iran is considered a **dual-littoral state** because it borders multiple major water bodies.
 - **Northern Coast: Caspian Sea** – the world's largest enclosed inland water body.
 - **Southern Coasts: Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman**
 - These southern waterways ultimately connect Iran to the **Arabian Sea and the wider Indian Ocean**, giving the country major strategic maritime access.
- **Statement 2 – Correct**
 - **Major Mountain System:** The **Zagros Mountains** constitute the **largest and most extensive mountain system in Iran**.
 - **Geographic Extent:**
 - Stretch from **northwestern Iran near the Turkish border** to the **southeastern regions near the Strait of Hormuz**.
 - Run roughly **parallel to the Iran–Iraq border**.
 - **Geological Importance:**
 - The range is formed by the **collision of the Arabian Plate with the Eurasian Plate**.



- The **Zagros foothills** contain many of Iran's major oil and gas reserves, making the region crucial to the country's energy geography.
- **Statement 3 – Correct**
 - **Desert Geography of the Iranian Plateau:** Iran's interior is dominated by arid and semi-arid landscapes forming part of the **Iranian Plateau**.
 - Two major deserts are:
 - **Dasht-e Kavir (Great Salt Desert)** – characterized by salt flats and marshes.
 - **Dasht-e Lut (Lut Desert)** – one of the **hottest places on Earth**, known for extreme surface temperatures.
 - Both deserts lie in **central and eastern Iran**, shaping settlement patterns, water scarcity, and transportation routes.
- **Statement 4 – Incorrect**
 - **Lake Urmia** lies in **northwestern Iran** and is an **endorheic lake**, meaning it has **no outlet to the sea**.
 - However, the statement is incorrect because:
 - Lake Urmia is a **saline (saltwater) lake**, not a freshwater lake.
 - Historically it was one of the **largest salt lakes in the Middle East**, but its area has **dramatically decreased due to drought and water diversion for irrigation**.
- **Statement 5 – Correct**
 - **Global Energy Chokepoint:**
 - The **Strait of Hormuz** lies between:
 - **Iran** (north)
 - **Musandam Peninsula of Oman** (south)
 - **Connectivity:**
 - It links the **Persian Gulf** to the **Gulf of Oman**, which opens into the **Arabian Sea**.
 - **Strategic Importance:**
 - A significant portion of the **world's seaborne oil exports** passes through this narrow strait, making it one of the most critical maritime chokepoints globally.
- **Statement 6 – Incorrect**
 - Iran does share land borders with **seven countries**, but the statement is incorrect because **Syria does not border Iran**.
 - **Actual neighboring countries of Iran: (Mnemonic - “Tall Iranians Are Always Tall And Proud”)**
 - **Turke, Iraq, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan**

Significance: *The geography of Iran has gained major strategic importance due to the ongoing Israel–Iran war (2026), particularly because of its control over the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global energy corridor.*

- *The conflict has heightened tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly 20% of global oil and LNG shipments normally pass, making it one of the world’s most vital energy chokepoints.*
- *Following military strikes and retaliatory attacks in the war, threats of disruption or closure of the strait have caused global oil price volatility and shipping disruptions, highlighting the geopolitical importance of the Persian Gulf region.*
- *The crisis has also raised concerns for energy security of major importers such as India, China, and Japan, which rely heavily on oil transported through this corridor.*
- *In essence: the Iran–Israel conflict demonstrates how Iran’s geography—especially its proximity to the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz—can directly influence global energy markets and maritime security.*

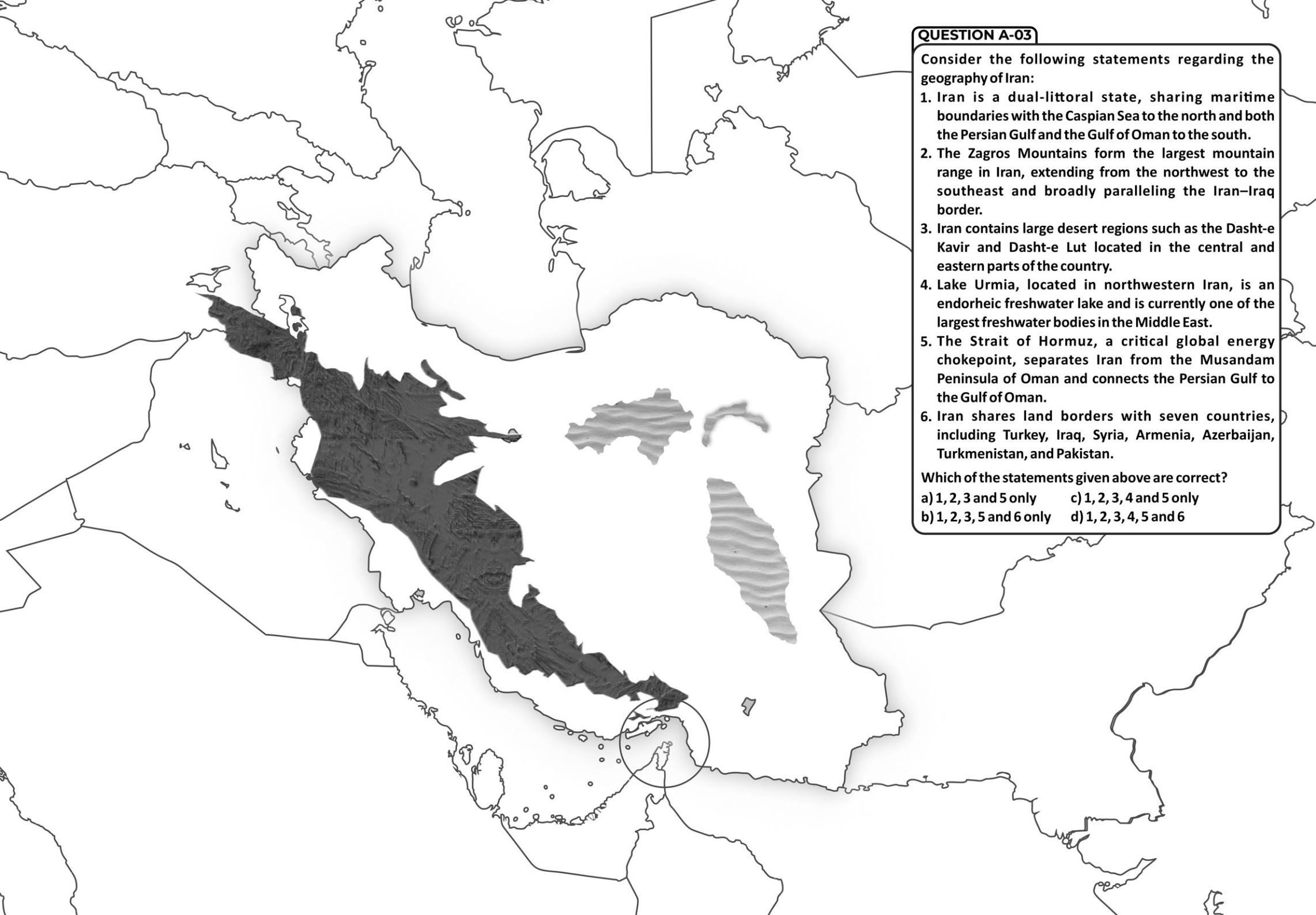
QUESTION A-03

Consider the following statements regarding the geography of Iran:

1. Iran is a dual-littoral state, sharing maritime boundaries with the Caspian Sea to the north and both the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman to the south.
2. The Zagros Mountains form the largest mountain range in Iran, extending from the northwest to the southeast and broadly paralleling the Iran–Iraq border.
3. Iran contains large desert regions such as the Dasht-e Kavir and Dasht-e Lut located in the central and eastern parts of the country.
4. Lake Urmia, located in northwestern Iran, is an endorheic freshwater lake and is currently one of the largest freshwater bodies in the Middle East.
5. The Strait of Hormuz, a critical global energy chokepoint, separates Iran from the Musandam Peninsula of Oman and connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.
6. Iran shares land borders with seven countries, including Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Pakistan.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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



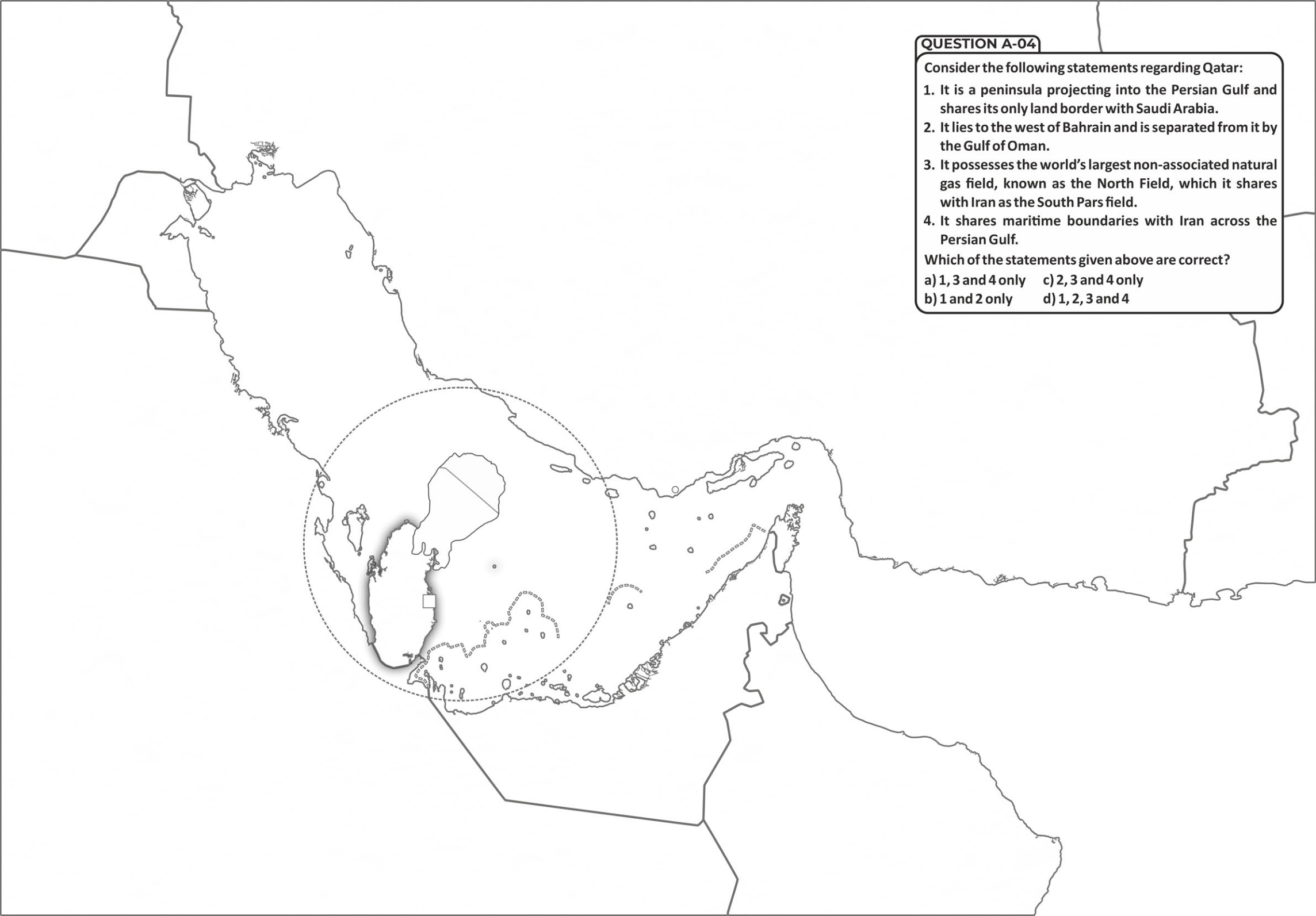
QUESTION A-04

Consider the following statements regarding Qatar:

1. It is a peninsula projecting into the Persian Gulf and shares its only land border with Saudi Arabia.
2. It lies to the west of Bahrain and is separated from it by the Gulf of Oman.
3. It possesses the world's largest non-associated natural gas field, known as the North Field, which it shares with Iran as the South Pars field.
4. It shares maritime boundaries with Iran across the Persian Gulf.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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



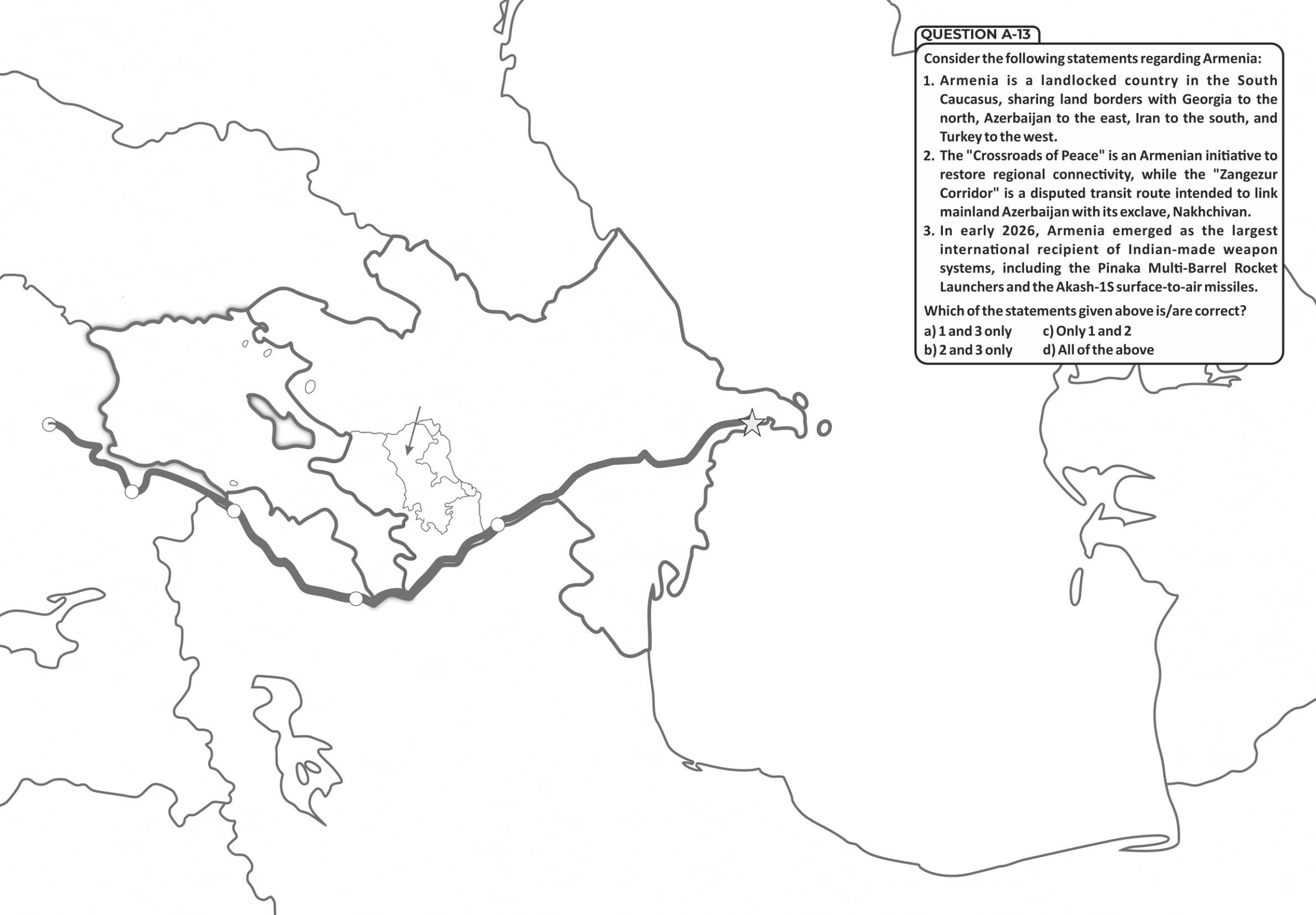
QUESTION A-13

Consider the following statements regarding Armenia:

1. Armenia is a landlocked country in the South Caucasus, sharing land borders with Georgia to the north, Azerbaijan to the east, Iran to the south, and Turkey to the west.
2. The "Crossroads of Peace" is an Armenian initiative to restore regional connectivity, while the "Zangezur Corridor" is a disputed transit route intended to link mainland Azerbaijan with its exclave, Nakhchivan.
3. In early 2026, Armenia emerged as the largest international recipient of Indian-made weapon systems, including the Pinaka Multi-Barrel Rocket Launchers and the Akash-1S surface-to-air missiles.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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



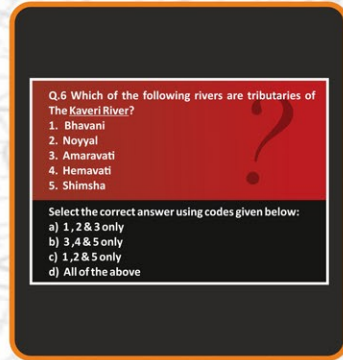
HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

STEP-1



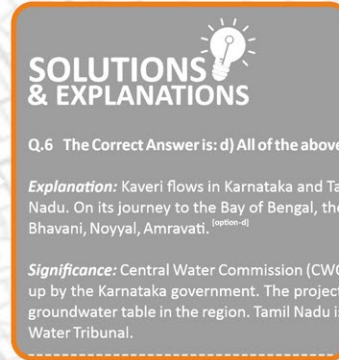
Study the Map
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STEP-2



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.



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