Sir Creek

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance*

Why in news?

The Defence Minister of India has warned Pakistan that "any misadventure in the Sir Creek sector will invite a decisive response".

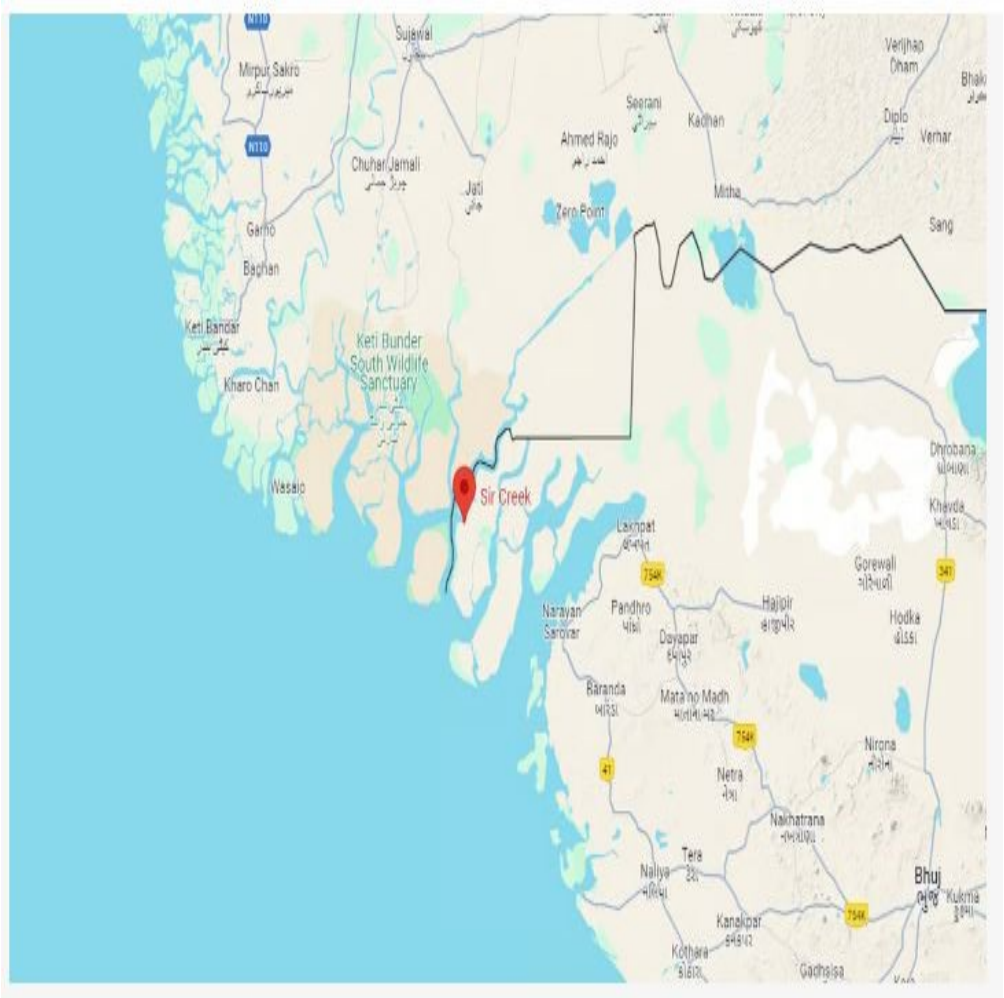
- **Sir Creek –** Is a 98-km uninhabited tidal estuary between in the Rann of Kutch marshlands, which opens up into the Arabian Sea.
- **Name –** It is named after a British representative; its original name was Ban Ganga.
- **Location –** To its east lies the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, and to its west, the province of Sindh in Pakistan.
- **Disputed territory –** Between India and Pakistan along the International border, dispute lies in the ***interpretation of the maritime boundary*** line between Kutch and Sindh.
- **Dispute –** Post-Independence, after the India-Pakistan War of 1965, Pakistan claimed jurisdiction of over half of the Rann of Kutch.
- India argues the creek falls under the ***Thalweg principle*** because it remains navigable and is frequented by fishermen.
- Pakistan rejects this, claiming instead that the creek is not navigable, meaning the principle does not apply.

> ***Thalweg Principle****, a rule of international law that dictates the boundary between two states separated by a* ***navigable river or waterway*** *should follow the main navigable channel, or the line of the greatest depth.*

This principle ensures that both nations have equal access to and use of the waterway for navigation

- **Tribunal –** While this dispute was settled by a tribunal in 1968 — India was granted 90% of the Rann and Pakistani claims were largely rejected — Sir Creek was not included in this resolution.
- **Security –** On the Indian side, the region is under the strong presence of Border Security Force, the Indian Army, the Indian Coast Guard and the Indian Air Force.
- **Settlement –** This region is sparsely populated and difficult to police duo to its very inhospitable weather and terrain.
- **Fauna –** The region is home to poisonous snakes and scorpions.

- **Significance -** India considers the area as vital for oil and gas exploration as well as fishing rights.
- India's major ports, Mundra and Kandla, located in the Gulf of Kutch, are also in close vicinity.



References

[The Hindu | Marshland trap: on Sir Creek, Pakistan's activities]

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering