Thitu Island

Why in News?

Chinese ship runs aground off Philippines-occupied island in the disputed South China Sea.

- Thitu Island, also referred to as Pag-asa Island, is situated in the South China Sea and is part of the Spratly Islands archipelago.
- This region is a focal point of territorial disputes, with China, Taiwan, and Vietnam asserting full claims, while Malaysia and the Philippines claim portions of the area.
- It is the largest of the nine islands currently occupied by the Philippines and serves as a vital location for both civilian and military presence.
- **Bordered by** - North Danger Reef to the north, Subi Reef to the southwest, and Loaita and Tizard Banks to the south.
- It is home to a Philippine fishing village and Filipino forces.
- It serves as the administrative center (Poblacion) of the Kalayaan municipality.
- Thitu Island oversees nearly a dozen additional islets, cays, and reefs in the region.
- Since 1971, Thitu Island has been under Philippine administration, with civilian settlement beginning in the mid-1990s.
- The island boasts a permanent civilian population and features essential infrastructure, including a school, Rancudo Airfield, a sizable harbor, and a lighthouse to aid navigation.
- Its proximity to China's Subi Reef, located approximately 24–27 kilometers away, which is home to a substantial military base, further underscores its strategic significance in the region.

Reference

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