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News: Kerch Bridge

- Kerch Bridge is 19km long and has two parallel roadways and railways connecting the Crimean Peninsula with Russian mainland. The bridge is constructed over the Kerch Strait that connects the Black sea with Taman Bay (a portion of Sea of Azov).
- The bridge was opened by Russia in 2018, 4 years after the annexation of Crimea.
- The railway line can carry 94 trains a day and around 14 million passengers and 12 million cargos a year. The road line is a four – lane highway which can handle around 40,000 vehicles a day.
- The bridge thus, is a critical link between Russian mainland and Crimean Peninsula.
- When Russia swiftly moved to annex Crimea in 2014, after a pro Russian elected government in Kyiv fell amid West backed anti regime protests, there was no direct connectivity between the Russian mainland and Crimea.
- Mr. Putin immediately ordered the construction of the bridge. But the bridge remained a weak link as Ukraine grew in military strength, backed by the West, in the subsequent years.

- When Mr. Putin ordered a full scale war on February 24, 2022 (what the Russians still call a ‘special military operation’), **one of the military objectives, according to experts, was to secure a “land bridge” from mainland Russia to Crimea.**
- **Russia now has the land bridge extending from northeastern Ukraine through the Donbas and Kherson to Crimea, but it is not far from the frontline and well within the range of Ukrainian fire.**
- So, the Kerch Bridge **remains a critical logistical supply link for the Russian troops in the south.**
- Recently, the bridge was attacked by the Ukraine.

News: Delimitation of Constituencies

Delimitation Commission

- The Delimitation Commission is **appointed by the President** of India and **works in collaboration with the Election Commission of India.**
- It includes **Retired Supreme Court judge, Chief Election Commissioner and Respective State Election Commissioners.**

- The commission examines population data, existing constituencies, the number of seats to be analysed, holds meetings with all the stakeholders and submits its recommendation to the government.
- The draft report of the Delimitation Commission is published in the Gazette of India, the official gazettes of the states concerned and at least two vernacular publications seeking feedback from the general public.
- The Delimitation Commission in India is a high power body whose orders have the force of law and cannot be called in question before any court.

Powers and functions

- To determine the number of boundaries of constitution to make population of all constituencies nearly equal.
- To identify seats reserved for SC and ST communities, wherever their population is relatively large.
- In case of difference of opinion among members, majority opinion prevails.