

Russia, UK spar over Black Sea

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In news- Russia has accused Britain of spreading lies over a warship confrontation in the Black Sea.

Key updates-

- Russia has warned the UK of further provocative actions by the British Navy off the coast of Russia-annexed Crimea.
- Russia seized and annexed the Crimea peninsula from Ukraine in 2014 and considers areas around its coast to be Russian waters.
- However, Western countries deem the Crimea to be part of Ukraine and reject Russia's claim to the seas around it.
- Hence Britain has said that **HMS Defender**, the Royal Navy ship, was conducting **innocent passage through Ukrainian territorial waters**.
- Under international law of the sea, innocent passage permits a vessel to pass through another state's territorial waters so long as this does not affect its security.

About Black Sea-

- The Black Sea is a **marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean** lying **between Europe and Asia**.
- It lies east of the Balkans (Southeast Europe), south of the East European Plain in Eastern Europe, west of the Caucasus, and north of Anatolia in Western Asia.
- It is supplied by **major rivers, principally the Danube, Dnieper, Don, Dniester and Kuban**.
- Basin countries are Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine.
- **Important cities** along the coast include Istanbul,

Odessa, Varna, Samsun, Sochi, Sevastopol, Constanța, Trabzon, Novorossiysk, Burgas, Batumi.

- Denser, more saline water from the Aegean flows into the Black Sea underneath the less dense, fresher outflowing water from the Black Sea.
- This creates a significant and permanent layer of deep water that does not drain or mix and is therefore **anoxic** and is responsible for the preservation of ancient shipwrecks which have been found in the Black Sea.
- The Black Sea ultimately **drains into the Mediterranean Sea**, via the Turkish Straits and the Aegean Sea.
- The **Bosporus Strait** connects it to the small Sea of Marmara which in turn is connected to the Aegean Sea via the Strait of the Dardanelles.
- To the north, the Black Sea is connected to the Sea of Azov by the **Kerch Strait**.

