

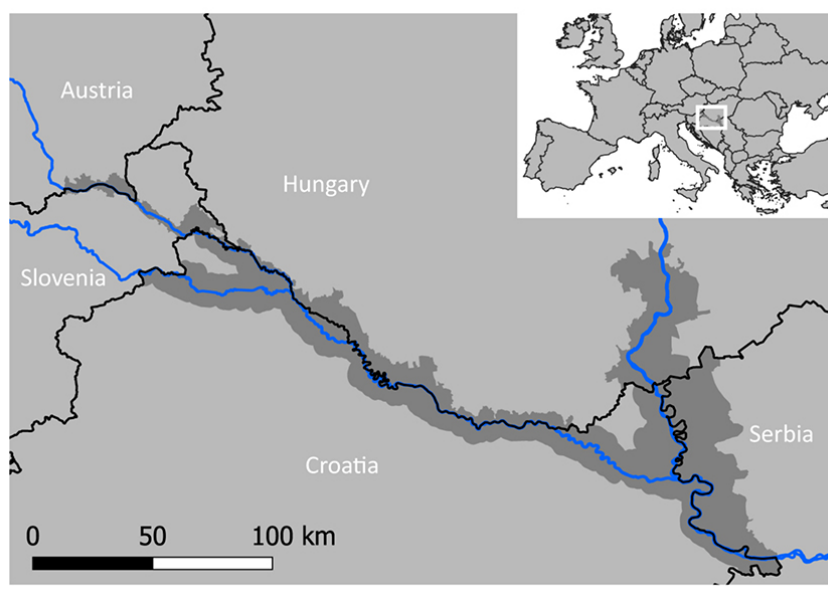


World's First 'Five-Country Biosphere Reserve'

Why in News

Recently, **Mura-Drava-Danube (MDD)** was declared as the **world's first 'five-country biosphere reserve'** by the [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#).

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Key Points

▪ About MDD:

- The biosphere reserve **covers 700 kilometres** of the **Mura, Drava and Danube rivers** and stretches across **Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia**.
- The total area of the reserve is a **million hectares** - in the so-called '**Amazon of Europe**', which is now the **largest riverine protected area in Europe**.
- The biosphere "represented **an important contribution to the [European Green Deal](#)** (climate action plan) and contributed to the **implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy** in the Mura-Drava-Danube region."

- The strategy's aim is to revitalise 25,000 km of rivers and protect 30% of the European Union's land area by 2030.

▪ Importance of the MDD:

- The area is **one of the richest in Europe** in terms of species diversity.
- It is **home to** floodplain forests, gravel and sand banks, river islands, oxbows and meadows.
- The area is home to the **highest density in Europe of breeding pairs** of white-tailed eagle and endangered species such as the little tern, black stork, otters, beavers and

- sturgeons.
- It is also an **important stepping stone** for more than 2,50,000 migratory waterfowls every year.

Biosphere Reserve (BR)

▪ About:

- BR is an international designation by (**UNESCO**) for representative parts of natural and cultural landscapes extending over large areas of terrestrial or coastal/marine ecosystems or a combination of both.
- BR tries to **balance economic and social development** and maintenance of associated cultural values along with the preservation of nature.
- BRs are **nominated by national governments** and remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they are located.
- These are **designated under the intergovernmental MAB Programme** by the Director-General of UNESCO following the decisions of the MAB International Coordinating Council (MAB ICC).
 - The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme is **an intergovernmental scientific programme** that aims to establish a scientific basis for enhancing the relationship between people and their environments.
- Their status is **internationally recognized**.
- There are **727 biosphere reserves in 131 countries**, including 22 transboundary sites.

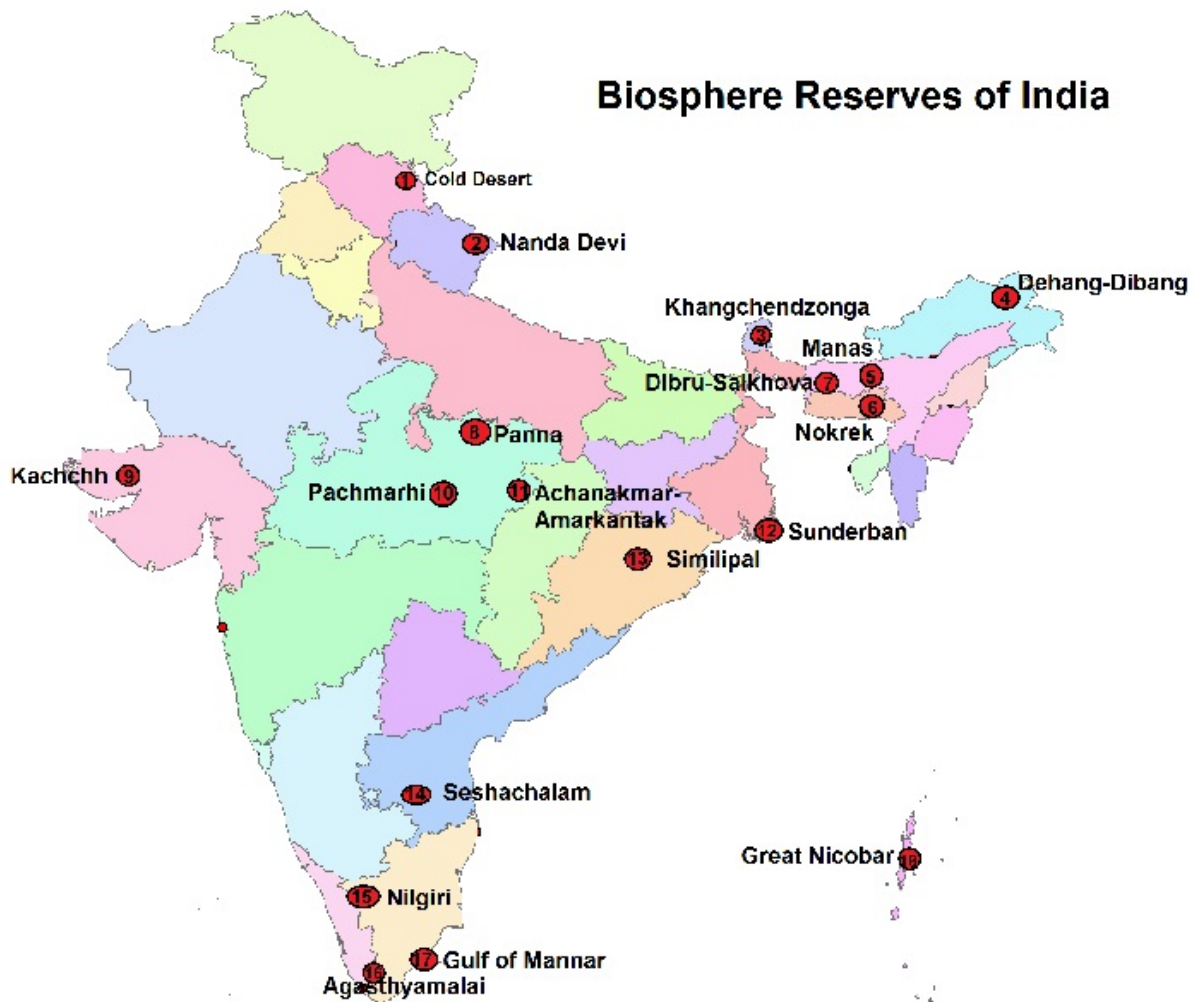
▪ Three Main Zones:

- **Core Areas:** It comprises a strictly protected zone that contributes to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation.
- **Buffer Zones:** It surrounds or adjoins the core area(s), and is used for activities compatible with sound ecological practices that can reinforce scientific research, monitoring, training and education.
- **Transition Area:** The transition area is where communities foster socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable economic and human activities.

▪ Biosphere Reserves in India:

- Presently, there are **18 Biosphere Reserves in India**, among which **12 Biosphere reserves in India** find their place in **UNESCO's List of Man & Biosphere Reserves Programme**.
 - The latest included under the MAB was **'Panna Biosphere Reserve'** (Madhya Pradesh).

Biosphere Reserves of India



Source: DTE

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