



Golan Heights

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Why in News?

The [Golan Heights](#) has become a focal point of international attention as Israel announces plans to double its population in the strategically important region.



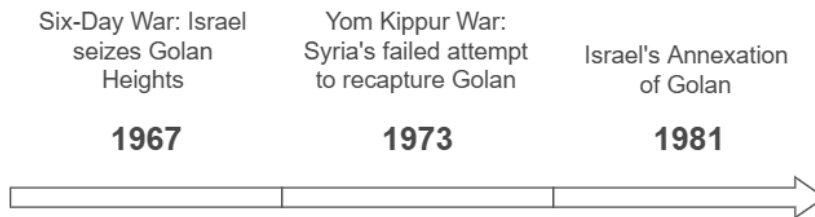
What are Key Facts About Golan Heights?

- **Geography:** The Golan Heights is a **1,200-square-kilometre** rocky plateau in southwestern Syria, overlooking the **Jordan River Valley**.
 - The name "Golan" is derived from the **biblical city of refuge**, Golan in Bashan, which is mentioned in the Bible.
 - The Golan is bounded by **Mount Hermon (north)**, the **Yarmūk River(south)**, the **Jordan River and Sea of Galilee (west)**, and the **seasonal Wadi Al-Ruqqād (east)**.
 - The area is a key source of water for an arid region. Rainwater from the Golan's catchment feeds into the **Jordan River**.
- **Historical Context:** Israel captured most of the Golan Heights from Syria in the [1967 Six-Day War](#). Syria's attempt to retake it during the 1973 war failed.
 - In 1974, Israel and Syria signed the **Agreement on Disengagement**, which established a ceasefire following the **Yom Kippur War**.
 - This agreement led to the creation of the [United Nations Disengagement Observer Force \(UNDOF\)](#) to monitor the ceasefire line in the Golan Heights.
 - Israel annexed the region in **1981**, a move not recognized internationally, though the [US](#)

[acknowledged Israeli sovereignty in 2019](#). Syria still demands its return.

- **Military Presence:** The area remains divided by a [United Nations-monitored demilitarized zone \(DMZ\)](#), with Israeli and Syrian forces separated by the "**Area of Separation**," a buffer zone created under the **1974 Agreement**.
- **Military Significance:** The Golan Heights is considered a vital **security buffer zone**. Israel's military presence in the area serves as a deterrent against potential threats from Syria and other regional actors.
 - The plateau's elevated position allows Israel to monitor movements in both **Syria and Lebanon**.

Key Events Regarding Golan Heights



Note: In December 2024, India voted in favor of the [United Nations General Assembly \(UNGA\)](#) resolution demanding **Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights**.

- The resolution stressed the illegality of Israeli settlement construction and other activities in the occupied Syrian Golan since 1967.

Read more: [Conflict between Israel and Syria](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q1. Consider the following pairs: (2018)

	Towns sometimes mentioned in news	Country
1.	Aleppo	Syria
2.	Kirkuk	Yemen
3.	Mosul	Palestine
4.	Mazar-i-sharif	Afghanistan

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 1 and 4
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 3 and 4

Ans: (b)

Q2. Which one of the following countries of South-West Asia does not open out to the Mediterranean Sea? (2015)

- (a) Syria
- (b) Jordan
- (c) Lebanon
- (d) Israel

Ans: (b)

Q3. The area known as 'Golan Heights' sometimes appears in the news in the context of the events related to (2015)

- (a) Central Asia
- (b) Middle East
- (c) South-East Asia
- (d) Central Africa

Ans: (b)

Q4. Yom Kippur War was fought between which sides/ countries? (2008)

- (a) Turkey and Greece
- (b) Serbs and Croats
- (c) Israel, and Arab countries led by Egypt and Syria
- (d) Iran and Iraq

Ans: (c)

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