

## OUR COUNTRY - INDIA

### INDIA AT AGLANCE

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of India.

**NATIONALITY:** Indian(s).

**CAPITAL:** New Delhi.

**LOCATION:** South Asia.

**Boundaries-** Afghanistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea.

**AREA:** 32,87,590 sq. km.

**PHYSICAL FEATURES :** Highest point -Mount Godwin Austin (K2) in Kashmir 8,611 m. Lowest point - sea level,

**Chief Rivers-** Indus; Ganges, Brahmaputra, Jamuna (yamuna), Godavari, Narmada, Kaveri.

**MAJOR LANGUAGES:** Hindi, English (associate), Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Malayalam, Kannada, Oriya, Punjabi, Assamese, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Sanskrit, Nepali, Manipuri, Konkani, Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santhali (all official).

**MAJOR RELIGIONS:** Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism.

**GOVERNMENT:** Federal Republic.

**'Head of State** - President.

**Head of Government** - Prime Minister

**Legislature** - Two houses of Parliament.

**Chief Cities :** Mumbai, New Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Nagpur, Lucknow, Pune (Poona).

**Chief minerals** - coal, iron-ore, manganese, mica, bauxite, chromite, natural gas.

**Chief agricultural products** - rice, other cereals, pulses, oilseeds, cotton, jute, sugarcane, tobacco, tea, coffee.

**Industries and products** - textiles, food processing, steel, machinery, transportation equipment, cement, jute products, electronics.

**Chief exports** - cut diamonds, engineering goods, iron-ore, chemicals, textiles, clothing, tea.

**Chief imports** - petroleum, gems, fertiliser, chemicals, machinery and transportation equipment.

**MONETARY UNIT:** 1 Indian rupee = 100 paise.

India is one of the largest countries of the world. It is a land of high mountains, mighty rivers, extensive plains and forests, ..wide plateaus, beautiful hills, lovely waterfalls and refreshing shores. So it is natural' that we find diversities in relief, climate, vegetation, animals, and in the ways of living of the people in different regions. But we also find unity in this diversity. This unity is reflected in physical, social, cultural and historical aspects that binds us into a great nation. According to the Census of 2011, its population is about 121 crores.

### LOCATION AND SIZE

India lies in the south of Asia, at the head of the Indian Ocean between 8° 4' and 37° 6' North latitudes and 68° 7' E and 97° 25' E longitudes. It lies in the Eastern and Northern Hemispheres. The Tropic of Cancer passes nearly midway across India and divides it into two parts -the Northern India and the Deccan and Peninsular India, India is bounded by the great Himalayas in the north, the Bay of Bengal in the east, the Arabian Sea in the west and Indian Ocean in the south.

The longitudinal or east-west extent of India is about 30° (97°25' -68°). It has great significance. it means that the sun rises (30 x 4 =) 120 minutes or two hours earlier in the easternmost part of India (in Arunachal Pradesh) than in the western-most part of India (Dwarka in Gujarat) . It may create confusion in time from place to place. To avoid this confusion, we have accepted 82°30' E longitude as the Standard Meridian for India. The local time at this meridian has been accepted as the Standard Time all over India. It has brought harmony in time throughout the country.

## OUR COUNTRY - INDIA

India is a vast country and is often called a subcontinent. It is the seventh largest country of the world. Its area is about 3.28 million sq. km.



### India and its neighbouring countries

It is about 2% of the total area of the world. The north-south extent of India is 3200 (or exactly 3,214) km. It spreads from snow-covered Himalayas in the north to the southern tip at Kanyakumari. It is about 1/12 of the earth's circumference (about 40,000 km). The east-west extent of our country is about 3,000 km (exactly 2,933 km). It is big enough to include about two dozen countries of West Europe. It measures 3,000 (or exactly 2,933) km from east to west.

## POLITICAL DIVISIONS

The Republic of India is a Union of States. It consists of 29 States and 7 union Territories for administrative convenience. New Delhi is our national capital. The states are formed on the basis of languages.

## OUR NEIGHBOURS

Two Union Territories of Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands lie in the sea, quite separated from the mainland of India. These two form the two Island Groups of India. The Andaman and Nicobar islands lie in the Bay of Bengal. Many of these islands are not inhabited. Many of them are too small and uninhabited. The Lakshadweep islands lie in the Arabian Sea. They are smaller in number and size as compared to the Nicobar Island.

While Myanmar and Bangladesh lie to our east, India is responsible for the defence of Bhutan, a small Himalayan kingdom. Two more countries lying across the sea, i.e. Sri Lanka and Maldives, are our close island neighbours. India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives are the members of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

- Our neighbouring countries share land boundaries with India.
- Sri Lanka is an island and is separated by a narrow passage of water. Such a passage of water is known as a strait. This strait which connects India and Sri Lanka is known as Palk Strait.

## PHYSIOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS OF INDIA

India is marked by a diversity of physical features such as mountains, plains, deserts, plateaus, coasts and islands.



**Political map of India**

- The Great Mountains of the North:** These fold mountains extend from the plateaus of Pamirs to the frontiers of Myanmar (Burma) for a distance of nearly 3,000 km. Their width varies from 150 to 400 km. They are well-known for their snow covered peaks, big and small glaciers, deep gorges and thick forests which attract tourists from allover the world. They are young fold mountains with parallel ranges and high peaks which are always covered with perpetual snow. 'Himalaya' means the 'Abode of Snow'.

The Himalayas can be divided into three main ranges that run parallel to each other .

The northern-most range is called the Himadri. Its average height is 6,000 metres. The world's highest peaks are found in this range. Mt. Everest is the highest peak (8,848 metres) which is in Nepal. There are some other peaks, such as Kanchenjunga (8,598 metres), Dhaulagiri (8,172 m), Nanga Parbat (8,126 m), Annapurna (8,076 m), Nandadevi (7,817 m) etc. Kanchenjunga is the highest peak in India. It is in Sikkim.

South of the Himadri lies the Himachal. Its average height is 5,000 metres above the sea level. There are alternating ridges and valleys among these ranges. Important hill statins like Shimla, Mussoorie, Nainital and Darjeeling lie in this range.

Shivalik is the southern-most range of the Himalayas. Its average height is 1,250 metres above the sea level.

## OUR COUNTRY - INDIA

It is also known for its longitudinal valleys called the Duns. Dehradun lies in this range.

Besides these three main ranges the Himalayas have their extensions in the north-west and in the north-east. The north-western extension consists of the Karakoram mountains lying in the northern part of Kashmir.

The eastern extension of the Himalayas in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh is called the Eastern Himalayas. However, their extension along the eastern borders of our country, in Nagaland and Manipur, is known as Purvanchal Hills.

### INDIAN STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES

S.No.	States/Union Territory	Capital	Area in sq. km	Population 2001 (in thousands)
1	Andhra Pradesh	Hyderabad	2,75,068	84,665,533
2	Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar	83,743	1,382,611
3	Assam	Dispur	78,438	31,169,272
4	Bihar	Patna	94,163	103,804,637
5	Chhattisgarh	Raipur	1,35,194	25,540,196
6	Goa (smallest state)	Panji	3,702	1,457,723
7	Gujarat	Gandhinagar	1,96,024	60,383,628
8	Haryana	Chandigarh	44,212	25,353,081
9	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla	55,673	6,856,509
10	Jammu & Kashmir	Srinagar	2,22,236	12,548,926
11	Jharkhand	Ranchi	79,714	32,966,238
12	Karnataka	Bengaluru	1,91,791	61,130,704
13	Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram	38,863	33,387,677
14	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	3,08,252	72,597,565
15	Maharashtra	Mumbai	3,07,690	112,372,972
16	Manipur	Imphal	22,327	2,721,756
17	Meghalaya	Shilong	22,429	2,964,007
18	Mizoram	Aizawl	21,081	1,091,014
19	Nagaland	Kohima	16,579	1,980,602
20	Orissa	Bhubaneswar	1,55,707	41,947,358
21	Punjab	Chandigarh	50,382	27,704,236
22	Rajasthan (largest state)	Jaipur	3,42,239	68,621,012
23	Sikkim	Gangtok	7,096	607,688
24	Tamil Nadu	Chennai	1,30,058	72,138,958
<b>25</b>	<b>Telangana</b>	<b>Hyderabad (Amravati)</b>		
<b>26</b>	<b>Tripura</b>	<b>Agartala</b>	<b>10,486</b>	<b>3,671,032</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>Uttar Pradesh</b>	<b>Lucknow</b>	<b>2,41,068</b>	<b>199,581,477</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>Uttarakhand</b>	<b>Dehra Dun</b>	<b>53,343</b>	<b>10,116,752</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>West Bengal</b>	<b>Kolkata</b>	<b>88,752</b>	<b>91,347,736</b>
<b>UNION TERRITORIES</b>				
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Port Blair	8,249	379,944
2	Chandigarh	Chandigarh	114	1,054,686
3	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	Silvassa	491	342,853
4	Daman & Diu	Daman	112	242,911
5	Lakshadweep	Kavaratti	32	64,429
6	Pondicherry (Puducherry)	Pondicherry	492	1,244,464
7	National Capital Territory of Delhi	Delhi	1,483	16,753,235
			<b>3</b>	<b>1,210,193,422</b>

2. **The Great Northern Plain:** It lies to the south of the Himalayas. It extends from the Punjab Plain in the west to the Brahmaputra valley in the east for a distance of about 2,500 km . It is 145 to 480 km broad . It is bound by the mighty Himalayas in the north and by the Vindhya in the south. It is one of the richest plains of the world. It is made up of the fertile alluvial soil brought down by the Indus, the Ganga and the Brahmaputra rivers and their tributaries. This plain is extremely level and is the most thickly populated region of India.

The Great Plain has two river basins. The Indus Basin is drained by the Indus and its tributaries - the Satluj, the Beas, the Ravi, the Chenab and the Jhelum. All these rivers flow into the Arabian Sea.

The Ganga Basin is drained by the Ganga and its tributaries, i.e. the Yamuna, Ghaghara, Gandak, Kosi and the Tista, which rise in the Himalayas and the Chambal, Betwa, Son and the Damodar which rise in the Vindhya or the Chhota Nagpur region. The Ganga and the Brahmaputra join together before falling into the Bay of Bengal and form a very fertile delta which is the largest delta in the world . The density of population is the highest in this basin.

The Ganga and the Brahmaputra rivers drain into the Bay of Bengal. They form a delta when they join the sea. A delta is a triangular area of land which is formed at the mouth of the river when it falls into the sea. The Ganga-Brahmaputra rivers form the Sundarbans Delta.

3. **The Thar Desert:** As we proceed westward in the Great Northern Plain, we find trees disappearing and the climate becoming hotter. This part is called the Thar Desert which is devoid of plains and trees. The rocky terrain is covered with sand.

4. **The Great Plateau of Peninsular India:** The Deccan Plateau lies in the south of the Great Northern Plain. This plateau is the oldest part of the Indian subcontinent. It is made up of hard and igneous rocks. It is composed of two parts, i.e. the Malwa Plateau in the north and the Deccan Plateau in the south. These two parts are separated by the Vindhya and the Satpura ranges. The Narmada river, flowing from east to west, divides the Malwa Plateau from the Deccan Plateau. The northern part of the Malwa Plateau is flanked by the Aravali, the oldest mountain range in India, in the west and the Vindhya in the south.

The western edge of the Deccan Plateau is formed by the Sah'yadri , the Nilgiri , the Annamalai and the Cardamom Hills. Together they are known as the Western Ghats. Anai Mudi in Kerala is the highest peak. The Western Ghats run parallel to the coast facing the Arabian Sea.

The eastern -edge of the Plateau is called the Eastern Ghats. These are low and discontinuous hills. They slope towards the east. Both the Eastern Ghats and Western Ghats converge at Nilgiris . It may be mentioned here that the peninsular hills are quite low and old . They do not have high peaks and glaciers like those on the Himalayas. As already mentioned , Anai Mudi, the highest peak of the Deccan, is only 2,695 metres high.

The north western part of the Deccan Plateau is called the Deccan Trap . It is made of volcanic rocks which were made of lava flows. It occupies the whole of Maharashtra and parts of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

5. **The Coastal Plains:** The Deccan Plateau is flanked by the narrow coastal plains in the east and the west. The Western Coastal Plain lies between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. Its northern part is called Konkan and the southern part Malabar. The natural harbours of Mumbai and Marmagao are located on the western coast. The Eastern Coastal Plain lies between the Bay of Bengal and the Eastern Ghats. Its southern part is called the Coromandel Coast. It contains deltas of the Mahan'adi, Godavari, Krishna and the Kaveri. The northern part of the eastern coast is called the Northern Circars. In this part lie West Bengal and Orissa.

Various rivers flow in the plateau of Deccan. The Narmada and Tapi rivers flow from east to west and fall into the Arabian Sea. On the other hand, the Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri rivers flow from west to east and fall into the Bay of Bengal'. The Godavari is the longest river of the Deccan Plateau.

As discussed above, there are three distinct physical divisions of India the Himalayas, the Great Northern Plain and the Great Plateau of Peninsular India. They are inter-dependent and complementary to one another. Each helps the others in the march towards economic prosperity.



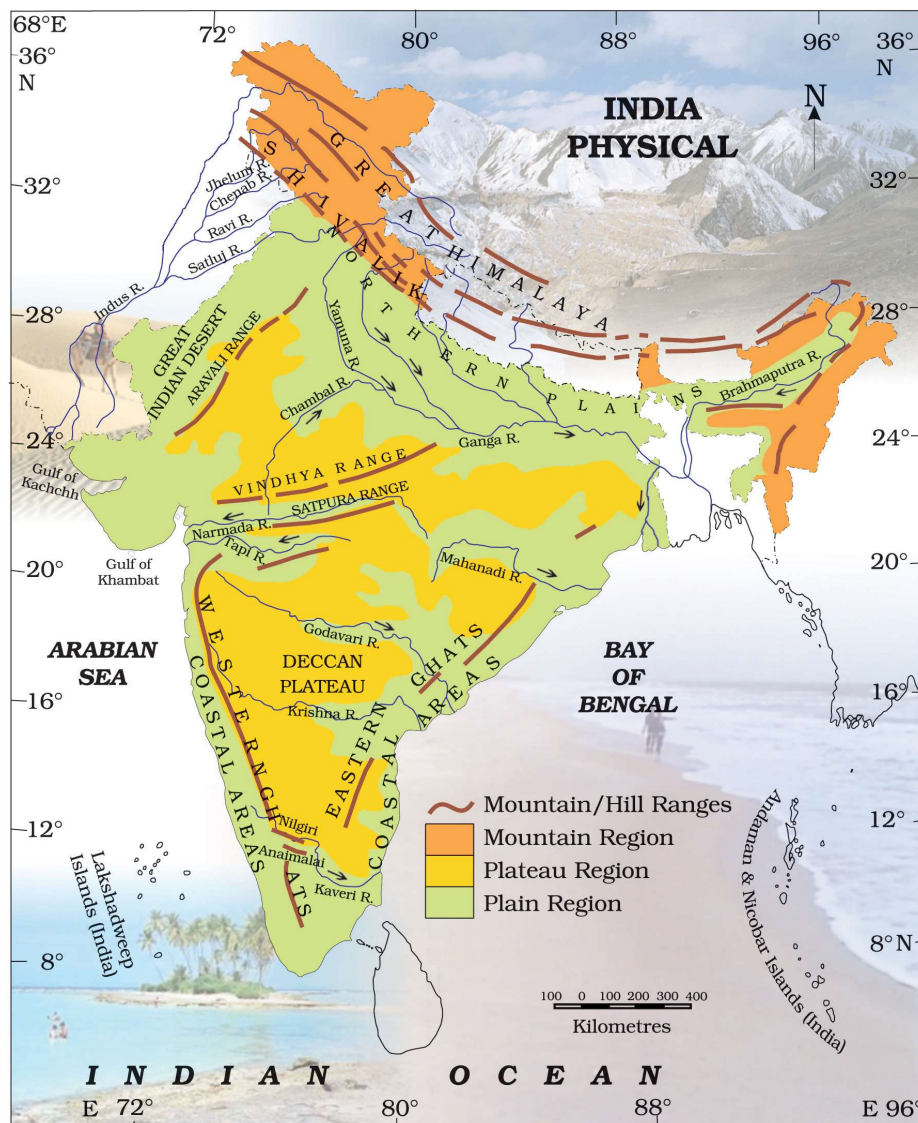
**6. The Groups of Indian Islands:** In addition to the mainland, India has two sets of islands: one is known as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the other is known as the Lakshadweep Islands. Andaman and Nicobar Islands -These islands lie in the Bay of Bengal. They are 233 in number. The northern cluster of islands is known as the Andaman Islands. They are 214 in number. The southern cluster of islands are known as the Nicobar Islands. They are 19 in number. Many of these islands are small and uninhabited. They are located on a submerged hilly range. A few of these islands are of the volcanic origin. One of these islands still has volcano.

These islands form the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands with Port Blair as its capital.

**Lakshadweep Islands.** They lie in the Arabian Sea about 300 kilometres away from the Kerala Coast. They are horse-shoe shaped coral islands. The islands are 27 in number and about 17 of them are uninhabited. Kavaratti is the capital of these groups of islands. They are smaller in number and size as compared to the Nicobar islands. These islands form the Union Territory of Lakshadweep.

**How are coral islands formed?**

Coral polyps are short lived microscopic species. When living polyps die their remains are left. Other polyps grow on top of the hard skeleton. This happens till coral islands are formed.



India : Physical Divisions