INDIAN GEOGRAPHY

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1. Area

Coastal Boundaries of India: Length and states with coastline

- Total Coastline: 7516.6 km (Mainland + Islands).
- Mainland Coastline: 6100 km.
- Coastal States: 9 (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal).
- Coastal Union Territories: 4 (Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu).
- State with Longest Coastline: Gujarat.
- UT with Longest Coastline (and overall longest): Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- Territorial Sea Limit: Extends up to 12 nautical miles (approx 21.9 km) from the baseline.

Comparison with other countries/continents based on area

- India ranks 7th largest in the world by area.
- India ranks 2nd most populous country in the world.

India's Share of World's Land Area

- India's total land area constitutes about 2.4% of the world's total land area.

Island Territories: Location, area, and significance

- Lakshadweep: Total surface area is 32 sq km.

Land Boundaries of India: Length and shared countries

- India shares land boundaries with 7 countries.
- Total length of India's land boundary: 15,106.7 km.
- Countries and their approximate border lengths with India (ranked longest to shortest):
    - Bangladesh: 4096.7 km
    - China: 3488 km
    - Pakistan: 3323 km
    - Nepal: 1751 km
    - Myanmar: 1643 km
    - Bhutan: 699 km
    - Afghanistan: 106 km (shortest)
- Length of Rajasthan's international boundary with Pakistan: 1070 km.
- Sir Creek: A 96 km tidal estuary on the border of India (Gujarat) and Pakistan (Sindh).
- Thalweg Principle: International law stating that the boundary between two states separated by a navigable river or watercourse is the middle of the deepest channel. India applies this principle for the Sir Creek dispute.

Longitudinal Extent of India

- India's mainland longitudinal extent is from 68°7' East to 97°25' East.
- The westernmost point is near Ghuar Mota in Kutch, Gujarat (approx. 68°E).
- The easternmost point is Kibithu in Anjaw district, Arunachal Pradesh (approx. 97°E).
- This longitudinal difference is approximately 30 degrees.
- This longitudinal extent results in a time difference of nearly two hours between the extreme west and extreme east of India.
- The Standard Meridian of India is 82°30' East longitude, passing through Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh.
- The Standard Meridian is used to maintain uniform Indian Standard Time (IST) across the country.

Northernmost, Southernmost, Easternmost, and Westernmost Points

- Northernmost Point: Indira Col, Siachen Glacier, Ladakh (Union Territory).
- Southernmost Point (mainland India): Cape Comorin (Kanyakumari), Tamil Nadu.
- Southernmost Point (overall Indian Union): Indira Point (Pygmalion Point/Parthian Point), Great Nicobar Island, Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

- Easternmost Point: Kibithu, Anjaw district, Arunachal Pradesh.
- Westernmost Point: Ghuar Mota (Guhar Moti), Kutch district, Gujarat.

States and Union Territories: Area-wise distribution and ranking

- India's largest states by area (descending): Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh.
- Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra together account for approximately 30% of India's total area.
- India's smallest states by area (ascending): Goa, Sikkim, Tripura, Nagaland, Mizoram. Goa is the smallest state.
- States arranged in descending order of area: Chhattisgarh (>135k km²), Jharkhand (>79k km²), Himachal Pradesh (>55k km²), Uttarakhand (>53k km²).
- States arranged in ascending order of area: Jharkhand (<79k km²), West Bengal (<88k km²), Tamil Nadu (<130k km²), Chhattisgarh (<135k km²).
- States arranged in ascending order of area: Haryana (<44k km²), Punjab (<50k km²), Uttarakhand (<53k km²), Himachal Pradesh (<55k km²).
- Among Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, Tamil Nadu is the smallest by area (~130,060 km²).
- Uttarakhand ranks 19th among Indian states by geographical area.
- The forest area in Uttarakhand is approximately 34,651 sq. km.
- Rajasthan has the largest area under wasteland in India.
- The Thar desert is located primarily in Rajasthan.
- As per land use statistics 2017-18, the forest area in Rajasthan is approximately 8.04 percent.
- As per Census 2011, Bikaner district in Rajasthan had the lowest population density among the options provided (Jaisalmer is lowest overall).
- As per Census 2011, Banswara and Udaipur districts of Rajasthan recorded a relatively low percentage of Scheduled Caste population.
- As per Census 2011, Rudraprayag district has the lowest population in Uttarakhand.

Strategic Location and Geopolitical Significance of India's Area

- India's Postal Index Number (PIN) system comprises 8 geographical regions and 1 region specifically for the Army Postal Service.

Total Geographical Area of India

- India's total geographical area: 3,287,263 sq km (approximately 3.28 million sq km).
- India's area constitutes about 2.4% of the world's total land area.
- India is the 7th largest country in the world by area.
- North-South extent of India: 3,214 km.
- East-West extent of India: 2,933 km.
- India's land frontier (land boundary): 15,200 km.
- Land Revenue Records maintained in India categorize land-use into 9 categories.
- The area for which land-use classification data can be obtained is called the Reporting area.
- About 33% of India's total geographical area is affected by the condition of recurring severe droughts.
- Among Built-up area, Wasteland, Waterbodies, and Grazing land, 'Wasteland' often accounts for a significant percentage of geographical area in India.
- Techniques for area delineation include the Weighted Index Number Method and Gravitation Analysis.
- As per URDPFI (Urban and Regional Development Plan Formulation and Implementation Guidelines), the area requirement for a 'Neighbour Park' to serve a population of 15,000 is 1.2 Ha.
- Plane surveying means that the surface of the earth is considered as a plane.
- The net crop sown area (Net Sown Area) in India is about 14 crore ha (140 million ha).

- Volume conversion: 1 cubic meter = 1000 litres.

2. Latitudinal Expansion

Impact on Temperature Regimes: tropical versus subtropical climates

- India's latitudinal extent: 8°4' N to 37°6' N.
- The Tropic of Cancer (23.5° N) passes almost midway through India, dividing the country into two distinct climatic zones based on temperature.
- **South of Tropic of Cancer (Tropical Climate)**

  Regions experience higher mean annual temperatures and less seasonal temperature variation. This is due to greater proximity to the Equator, resulting in higher insolation throughout the year.
- **North of Tropic of Cancer (Subtropical/ Temperate Climate)**

  Regions exhibit distinct seasonal variations, with hot summers and cold winters. This is due to greater distance from the Equator and more varied solar angles throughout the year.
- Proximity to the Equator directly correlates with higher average temperatures and narrower diurnal/annual temperature ranges.
- **Latitudes of given State Capitals (approximate)**
  - Panaji (Goa): ~15.5° N
  - Hyderabad (Telangana): ~17.4° N
  - Mumbai (Maharashtra): ~19.1° N
  - Bhubaneswar (Odisha): ~20.3° N
- Among the listed capitals, Panaji is located at the lowest latitude, making it geographically closest to the Equator.

Latitudinal Extent of Indian Mainland

- India is located entirely in the Northern and Eastern Hemispheres.
- The latitudinal extent of the Indian mainland is from 8°4′ N to 37°6′ N.
- The southernmost point of the Indian Union (including islands) is Indira Point at 6°45′ N in the Great Nicobar Island.
- The southernmost point of the Indian mainland is Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) at 8°4′ N in Tamil Nadu.
- The northernmost point of India is Indira Col at 37°6′ N in Siachen Glacier.
- The longitudinal extent of India is from 68°7′ E (Guhar Moti/Sir Creek, Gujarat) to 97°25′ E (Kibithu, Arunachal Pradesh).
- The angular latitudinal and longitudinal extents are approximately 29° each.
- The North-South extent of the Indian mainland is 3214 km.
- The East-West extent of the Indian mainland is 2933 km.
- The difference between the North-South and East-West extensions is 281 km (3214 km - 2933 km).
- Despite similar angular extents, India's North-South length is greater than its East-West length because the distance between two longitudes decreases significantly poleward, whereas the distance between two latitudes (meridians) remains relatively constant (approx. 111 km/degree).
- The total geographical area of India is approximately 3.28 million sq. km.
- One nautical mile is equivalent to 1.852 km.
- Example: The latitudinal extent of Rajasthan is 23°3′ N to 30°12′ N.

Latitudinal Variation in Day and Night Duration throughout the year

- Day and night duration varies with latitude and the Earth's orbital position (time of year).
- **Equinoxes (March 21 - Vernal; September 23 - Autumnal)**

  Sun's rays fall directly on the Equator (0° latitude). Day and night duration is approximately 12 hours each globally, including all regions of India.
- **Summer Solstice (June 21)**

  Sun's rays fall directly on the Tropic of Cancer (23.5° N). The Northern Hemisphere

experiences its longest day and shortest night. In India, day length increases significantly as one moves from south to north (e.g., Srinagar experiences much longer days than Chennai).

- **Winter Solstice (December 22)**

  Sun's rays fall directly on the Tropic of Capricorn (23.5° S). The Northern Hemisphere experiences its shortest day and longest night. In India, day length decreases (becomes shorter) as one moves from south to north.
- Due to Earth's rotation from West to East, locations situated further to the East experience sunrise and sunset earlier in local time.

Total Latitudinal Extent of India (including island territories)

- Mainland India Latitudinal Extent: 8°4′ N (Kanyakumari) to 37°6′ N (Indira Col).
- Southernmost point of Indian Union (including islands): Indira Point, Great Nicobar, at 6°45′ N.
- Total Latitudinal Extent of Indian Union (incl. island territories): 6°4′ N to 37°6′ N (using 6°4′ N for exam question consistency, reflecting Indira Point).
- Longitudinal Extent of India: 68°7′ E to 97°25′ E.

Tropic of Cancer: Passage through India, states traversed, and its geographical significance

- **Tropic of Cancer (23.5° N latitude):**
- Divides India into roughly two equal halves: tropical zone (south) and sub-tropical/ temperate zone (north).
- **States traversed (8 states, West to East):** Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tripura, Mizoram.
- **Geographical Significance:** Marks the northernmost latitude where the sun's rays can be directly overhead (Summer Solstice, June 21st), influencing regional climate and insolation.
- **Latitudinal Context of Indian States:**
- **Sikkim**

  Lies approximately between 27° N and 28° N latitude.
- **Bihar**

  Northern parts extend to approximately 27.8° N, sharing latitudes with Sikkim.
- **Rajasthan**

  Covers a broad latitudinal range, from ~23° N to ~30° N.
- **24° N Latitude**

  Passes through a significant number of Indian states, often cited as among the maximum (similar to the Tropic of Cancer).

3. India and the Tropic of Cancer

Climatic Division: India's position in tropical and subtropical zones

- Tropic of Cancer (23.5° N latitude) divides India into two almost equal climatic halves.
- It passes through eight Indian states: Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tripura, and Mizoram.
- Regions south of the Tropic of Cancer fall under the tropical zone, experiencing high temperatures year-round.
- Regions north of the Tropic of Cancer fall under the subtropical or temperate zone, experiencing warm summers and cool winters.
- The Sun's apparent movement is confined between the Tropic of Cancer (23.5°N) and the Tropic of Capricorn (23.5°S).
- Therefore, the Sun's rays are perpendicular (overhead) only in the geographical region lying between these two tropics.
- States or parts of states through which the Tropic of Cancer passes, or those lying entirely south of it, experience perpendicular sun rays at least once a year.

- States lying entirely north of the Tropic of Cancer, such as Bihar and Manipur, never experience perpendicular sun rays.

Definition and Geographical Significance of Tropic of Cancer

- The Tropic of Cancer is an imaginary line of latitude situated at 23.5° North of the Equator.
- It passes almost midway through India, roughly dividing the country into two halves.
- Geographically and climatically, it divides India into a northern part (subtropical/temperate zone) and a southern part (tropical zone).
- The Tropic of Cancer passes through eight Indian states: Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tripura, and Mizoram.
- The Mahi River is the only river in India that crosses the Tropic of Cancer twice.
- The Tropic of Cancer and the Indian Standard Time (IST) Line (82.5° E longitude) intersect each other on the Baghelkhand plateau.
- The line connecting the easternmost and westernmost points of India lies to the north of the Tropic of Cancer.
- Among major latitudes, only the Tropic of Cancer passes through India; the Equator and Tropic of Capricorn do not.

Important cities/towns located near the Tropic of Cancer in India

- Tropic of Cancer (23.5°N) passes through 8 Indian states: Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tripura, Mizoram.
- **Vertical Sun**

  The sun shines vertically (directly overhead) at least once a year only for locations between the Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn.
- In India, cities located on or south of the Tropic of Cancer will experience vertical sun. Cities north of it (e.g., Delhi, Jaipur) will not.
- **Cities experiencing Vertical Sun (examples among MCQs)**

  Ahmedabad (~23.03°N) and Nagpur (~21.15°N) are south of the Tropic of Cancer.
- **Cities/Towns located "on" or extremely close to Tropic of Cancer (key for MCQs)**
  - **Banswara (Rajasthan)**

    Frequently cited as a town/district directly on the Tropic of Cancer.
  - **Aizawl (Mizoram, ~23.34°N)**

    Very close, often the nearest city among common MCQ options.
  - **Mehsana (Gujarat, ~23.59°N)**

    Very close, and often the nearest option for questions about vertical sun on 21 June.
  - **Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh, ~23.17°N) and Bhuj (Gujarat, ~23.25°N)**

    Also very close to the Tropic of Cancer.
  - **Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh, ~23.25°N) and Gandhinagar (Gujarat, ~23.22°N)**

    Also very close to the Tropic of Cancer.
- **Kolkata (West Bengal, ~22.57°N)**

  While not directly on the Tropic, it is significantly closer than cities like Delhi, Jodhpur, Nagpur, or Chandigarh, making it the nearest among such groups in MCQs.

Pattern of solar insolation and apparent movement of the sun

- Earth's axial tilt (23.5°) results in the apparent movement of the sun between the Tropic of Cancer (23.5°N) and the Tropic of Capricorn (23.5°S).
- **Apparent Overhead Sun**

  Occurs when the sun is directly at the zenith (90° angle) at noon.
- Locations situated **between** the Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn experience the overhead sun **twice a year**.

- Locations situated **on** the Tropic of Cancer (or Capricorn) experience the overhead sun **once a year** (on Summer/Winter Solstice, respectively).
- Locations situated **north of the Tropic of Cancer** (or south of the Tropic of Capricorn) **never** experience the overhead sun.
- The Tropic of Cancer passes through 8 Indian states: Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tripura, and Mizoram.
- Therefore, places in India **south of the Tropic of Cancer** (e.g., Digha, West Bengal ~21.6°N) experience the noon sun exactly overhead twice a year.
- Places in India **north of the Tropic of Cancer** (e.g., Patna ~25.5°N, Kanpur ~26.4°N, Delhi ~28.7°N) never experience the noon sun exactly overhead.

States in India intersected by the Tropic of Cancer (names and sequence)

- The Tropic of Cancer is located at approximately 23.5° N latitude.
- It passes through 8 Indian states.
- **Sequence of states from West to East**

  Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tripura, Mizoram.
- **Coastal States intersected**

  2 (Gujarat, West Bengal).
- **Landlocked States intersected**

  6 (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Tripura, Mizoram).
- The Tropic of Cancer does **NOT** pass through states like Manipur, Odisha/Orissa, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, or Jammu & Kashmir.
- The Mahi River is the only river in India that crosses the Tropic of Cancer twice (first in Madhya Pradesh and then again in Gujarat).
- Globally, the Tropic of Cancer passes through 17 countries.

4. Standard Time

Calculation of IST in relation to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) / Universal Coordinated Time (UTC)

- Indian Standard Time (IST) is determined by the 82°30' East longitude.
- This meridian passes roughly through Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh.
- Earth rotates 1° longitude in 4 minutes.
- Calculation: 82.5° E * 4 minutes/degree = 330 minutes.
- 330 minutes equals 5 hours and 30 minutes.
- Therefore, IST is **5 hours 30 minutes ahead** of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) / Universal Coordinated Time (UTC).
- India operates under a **single standard time zone** for its entire geographical extent, including all states and Union Territories like Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

Debate and demands for a second time zone in India (especially for Northeast India)

- India's longitudinal extent is approximately 30 degrees (from 68°7′ E to 97°25′ E), leading to a local time difference of about 2 hours between its westernmost and easternmost points.
- India currently observes a single Standard Time, Indian Standard Time (IST), based on the 82°30′ E (82.5° E) meridian passing near Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh.
- The demand for a second time zone primarily arises from Northeast India, where sunrise occurs significantly earlier (up to two hours) compared to western parts of the country.
- Consequences in Northeast India due to a single time zone include:
  - Loss of valuable daylight hours in the morning for productive activities.

    - Early darkness in the evening, leading to increased energy consumption for lighting.
    - Adverse impact on biological clocks and daily routines of residents.
- Historically, "Chaibagaan Time" or "Tea Garden Time" was a practice in Assam where clocks were set one hour ahead of IST to optimize daylight for tea garden workers.
- Proposals for a second time zone often suggest:
    - A western time zone based on the 75° E meridian (30 minutes behind IST).
    - An eastern time zone based on the 90° E meridian (30 minutes ahead of IST). This would result in a 1-hour difference between the two proposed zones.
- States like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, and Manipur are most affected by the current single time zone and would significantly benefit from an advanced eastern time zone.
- If India adopts two time zones with an eastern zone at 90° E, **Manipur** would be among the states of eastern India to benefit most due to its geographical location being significantly eastward (average longitude around 93.8° E), experiencing very early sunrises relative to IST.

Difference between Local Time and IST across India (e.g., Gujarat vs. Arunachal Pradesh)

- India's longitudinal extent is approximately from 68°7'E (Gujarat) to 97°25'E (Arunachal Pradesh).
- This longitudinal difference is about 29°18', often rounded to 30 degrees.
- Each degree of longitude corresponds to 4 minutes of time difference.
- Therefore, the local time difference between the easternmost (Arunachal Pradesh) and westernmost (Gujarat) parts of India is approximately 2 hours (30 degrees * 4 minutes/degree = 120 minutes).
- Arunachal Pradesh experiences sunrise and sunset roughly 2 hours earlier than Gujarat based on local time.
- India observes a single time zone, the Indian Standard Time (IST), for administrative convenience and national uniformity.
- The IST is based on the 82°30'E longitude, which passes approximately through Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh.
- IST is 5 hours 30 minutes ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) or Coordinated Universal Time (UTC).
- Due to the single time zone, all watches across India show the same IST, despite local time variations.
- This means that while the sun rises locally earlier in the east (e.g., Arunachal Pradesh) and later in the west (e.g., Gujarat), all clocks show the same IST. For instance, if the sun rises at 5:00 AM IST in Arunachal Pradesh, it will rise around 7:00 AM IST in Gujarat.
- The local time in Arunachal Pradesh is approximately 1 hour ahead of IST.
- The local time in Gujarat is approximately 1 hour 16 minutes behind IST.
- The local time of Chennai (Tamil Nadu, ~80.2°E) and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh, ~80.9°E) is almost the same due to their close longitudinal proximity.
- The local time of Kolkata (West Bengal, ~88.3°E) is about 1 hour ahead of Mumbai (Maharashtra, ~72.8°E), as Kolkata is significantly to the east.

Geographical significance of the IST Meridian (e.g., passing through Mirzapur)

- Indian Standard Time (IST) is based on the 82°30' East longitude.
- This meridian passes near Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh, historically associated with Allahabad/Prayagraj.
- IST is 5 hours 30 minutes ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) / Coordinated Universal Time (UTC).
- The 82°30' E meridian passes through five Indian states.
- The five states are: Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh.

Longitudinal Extent of India and its impact on local time differences

- India's longitudinal extent: 68°7′E (western Gujarat) to 97°25′E (eastern Arunachal Pradesh).
- Approximate longitudinal difference across India: ~30 degrees.
- Earth rotates 1 degree in 4 minutes.
- Time difference between India's extreme East (Arunachal Pradesh) and West (Gujarat): ~2 hours (30° x 4 min/degree = 120 min).
- Impact: Sun rises approximately 2 hours earlier in eastern Arunachal Pradesh than in western Gujarat.
- Principle: Sun rises earliest in the easternmost locations.
- **For MCQ 1**

  Solapur (Maharashtra) is eastward of Rajkot, Surat (Gujarat), and Ratlam (Madhya Pradesh), thus experiencing the earliest sunrise among these options.
- **For MCQ 3 (Chronological order of sunrise, earliest to latest - East to West)**

  Imphal (Manipur) > Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh) > Aizawl (Mizoram) > Agartala (Tripura).

Selection of 82°30' E Longitude as the Indian Standard Time (IST) Meridian

- Indian Standard Time (IST) is calculated based on the 82°30' East (82.5° E) line of longitude.
- This longitude is designated as the Standard Meridian of India.
- The 82°30' E meridian passes approximately through Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh (near Allahabad).
- It was selected as a central meridian to minimize time variations across India's significant longitudinal extent.
- India's longitudinal extent is about 30° (from roughly 68°7' E to 97°25' E).
- This longitudinal difference leads to an approximate 2-hour time lag between the westernmost part (Gujarat) and the easternmost part (Arunachal Pradesh) of India.
- The 82°30' E meridian ensures a uniform standard time for the entire country.
- IST is 5 hours and 30 minutes ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) or Coordinated Universal Time (UTC).

5. Extreme Points

Easternmost point of India

- Geographical Easternmost point of India: Kibithu, Anjaw district, Arunachal Pradesh (~97°25′E longitude).
- Easternmost point (terminus) of the East-West Corridor (part of National Highways Development Project): Silchar, Assam.

Extreme Northern Latitude of India

- India's extreme northern point: Indira Col.
- Location of Indira Col: Siachen Glacier, Great Karakoram, Ladakh (Union Territory).
- North-South extent of India (from Indira Col to Kanyakumari): 3,214 km.

Southernmost point of the Indian Union

- The southernmost point of the Indian Union is **Indira Point**.
- It is located on **Great Nicobar Island** within the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- Indira Point is situated at **6°45' N latitude**.
- It was formerly known as **Pygmalion Point** (or Pigmalion Point) and also Parsons Point.
- **Kanyakumari** (8°4' N latitude) is the southernmost point of mainland India.

Westernmost point of India

- Westernmost point: Guhar Moti (also spelled Ghuar Mota) in the Kutch district.
- State of location: Gujarat.
- Easternmost state (for comparative reference): Arunachal Pradesh.