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# India Geography Facts

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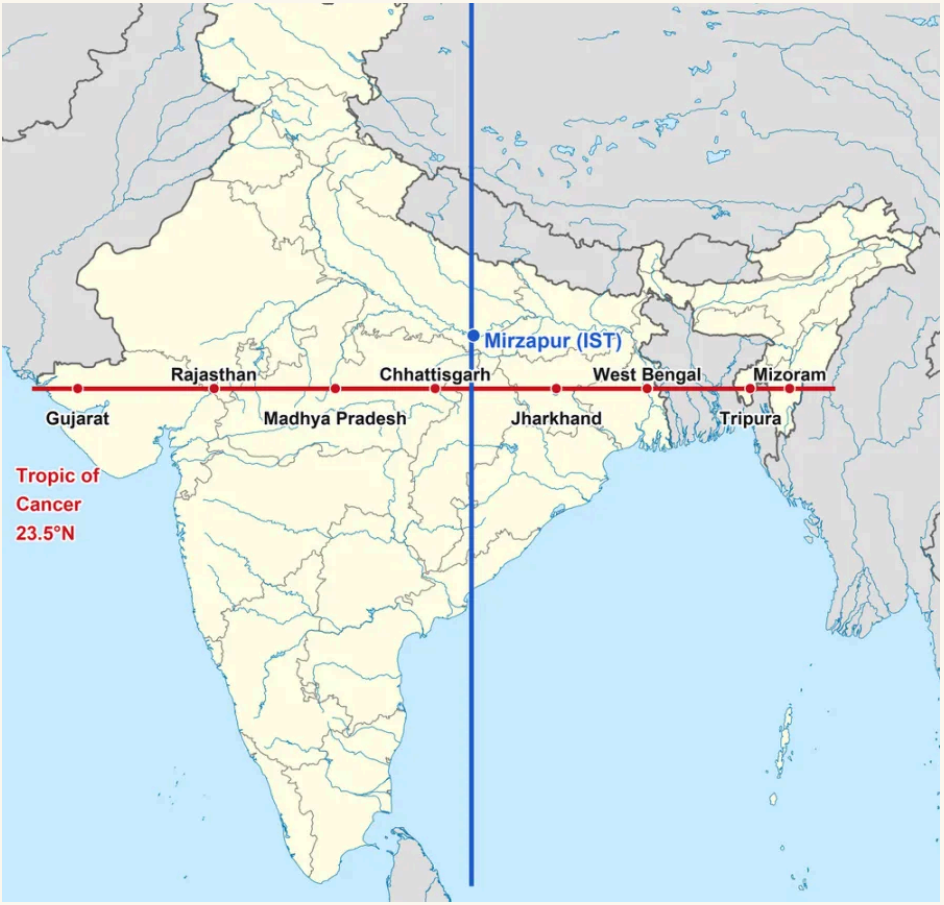
# India Geography Facts

Picture a big map of India on your wall. A few lines and landmarks on it come up again and again in exams.

The Tropic of Cancer cuts across the middle. The Himalayas wall off the north. Rivers, a desert, an island and a delta fill the rest.

This lesson walks through them one card at a time. Each card gives one idea, with its source.




The Tropic of Cancer and the Standard Meridian (82°30'E) on a map of India. Map drawn with India's boundary as per the Survey of India.

## At a glance

| Point | Detail |
|---|---|
| Tropic of Cancer | Crosses central India, east to west; 8 states. |
| Standard Meridian | 82°30'E, which sets Indian Standard Time. |
| Longest river in India | The Ganga, 2,525 km. |

| Point | Detail |
|---|---|
| Highest peak in India | Kangchenjunga, 8,586 m. |
| Thar | The great desert of Rajasthan. |
| Longest coastline | Gujarat, 2,340.62 km. |
| Largest state by area | Rajasthan. |

**Tropic of Cancer** is the line of latitude at about 23½°N. It crosses the middle of India from east to west.

**Standard Meridian** is the longitude used to set one time for the whole country. It is 82°30'E.

**Peninsular plateau** is the old, hard tableland of southern India. The Deccan Plateau is its largest part.

**Delta** is land built where a river meets the sea. The Sundarbans is one.

## The Tropic of Cancer

The Tropic of Cancer passes through the central part of India, in an east-west direction. It splits India into two climate zones. The northern part lies in the sub-tropical and temperate zone. The southern part lies in the tropical zone.

The line crosses eight states: Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tripura and Mizoram. Gujarat and West Bengal touch the sea. The others are landlocked.

Sources: ncert.nic.in

> **Quick check 1.** The Tropic of Cancer passes through the southern tip of India. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

## The Standard Meridian

India stretches a long way from east to west. So the sun rises much earlier in the east than in the west. One time had to be chosen for the whole country. The line chosen is 82°30’E, the “standard meridian” of India.

Indian Standard Time is ahead of Greenwich Mean Time by 5 hours and 30 minutes. The line passes near Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh.

Sources: ncert.nic.in

## Ganga, Godavari and other rivers

The Ganga is 2,525 km long within India. It is the longest river in the country. The Godavari is the largest Peninsular river system. People call it the Dakshin Ganga, the “Ganga of the South”.

The other big Peninsular rivers are the Mahanadi, the Krishna and the Kaveri. Most of them flow east into the Bay of Bengal. The Narmada and the Tapi are exceptions. They flow through rift valleys and drain into the Arabian Sea.

The Periyar also drains west into the Arabian Sea.

Sources: ncert.nic.in

> **Quick check 2.** The Narmada flows east into the Bay of Bengal. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

## Kangchenjunga and the Deccan

Kangchenjunga is the highest mountain in India. It stands at 8,586 m. It is the third highest in the world. The highest peak of the Peninsular plateau is Anaimudi, at 2,695 m.

It lies in the Anaimalai hills of the Western Ghats. The Deccan Plateau is bordered by the Western Ghats in the west and the Eastern Ghats in the east. In the north it meets the Satpura, Maikal range and Mahadeo hills.

Sources: armchairmountaineer.com; ncert.nic.in




Landmarks from this lesson on one map. Boundary as per the Survey of India.

## The Thar Desert and the Loo

The Thar is the great sandy desert of Rajasthan. NCERT calls it the “Marusthali”. Days in the Thar are hot. Nights are cool.

If the day temperature is around 50°C, the night can drop to 15–20°C. Hot, dry winds called the Loo blow there in the afternoon. They often continue until midnight.

Sources: ncert.nic.in

> **Quick check 3.** In the Thar, nights are as hot as the days. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

## Konark Sun Temple

The Konark Sun Temple in Odisha is built as a giant chariot of the Sun God. It is a 13th-century temple of the late Kalinga style. It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984. The spokes of its famous wheels are believed to have worked as sundials.

Sources: sahapedia.org

## Majuli, the river island

Majuli lies in the Brahmaputra in Assam. Guinness World Records recognises it as the largest river island. The river keeps changing its channels, so the island keeps losing land to erosion.

This is not only history. On 22 August 2026, strong Brahmaputra currents caused severe embankment erosion at Aphalamukh in Majuli.

Sources: guinnessworldrecords.com; boroktimes.com

> **Quick check 4.** Majuli is a mountain in the Himalayas. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

## The Sundarbans

The Sundarbans is a mangrove delta in the Bay of Bengal region. The Sundarban National Park has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1987. Mangroves hold the soft delta mud together and shield the coast.

Sources: sundarbantigerreserve.org

> **Think it through: why does Majuli keep shrinking?**
>
> Majuli sits in the middle of a river that keeps shifting its channels.
>
> Each flood can cut away the bank, so the island loses land and its embankments need repair.

## Coastline and the largest state

India’s coastline was officially revised in 2025 to 11,098.81 km. Gujarat has the longest coastline of any state, now 2,340.62 km. The old figure for Gujarat was much shorter. Exam keys may still show it.

Rajasthan is the largest state by area. The Thar lies mostly within it.

Sources: deshgujarat.com; mcqquestion.com

> **Quick check 5.** Maharashtra has the longest coastline of any Indian state. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

## How has this been asked in exams?

### CDS (I) 2023

The question asked how many coastal and landlocked states the Tropic of Cancer passes through. Use the state list in the first card: two coastal, six landlocked. See this question.

### CAPF (AC) 2018

The question asked which river among the options is west-flowing. The Godavari flows east. The Periyar is the west-flowing river. See this question.

### SSC CGL 2024

The question asked where the hot wind Loo blows. The answer is the north-western part of India, around the Thar. See this question.

### CDS (I) 2017

The question asked for the river sequence along the east coast from Chennai to Kolkata. It tests whether you know the eastern rivers in order. See this question.

### Exam trap

Learn the exceptions, not just the rule. Most Peninsular rivers flow east, but the Narmada and Tapi flow west. Also check which coastline figure the question uses.

### Quick Q&A

- **Longest river in India?** The Ganga, 2,525 km.
- **Highest peak in India?** Kangchenjunga, 8,586 m.
- **Which meridian sets IST?** 82°30’E.

- **Which state has the longest coastline?** Gujarat.
- **Where is Konark?** Odisha; UNESCO site since 1984.

**Remember This**

- **Tropic of Cancer**: central India, 8 states.
- **IST**: 82°30'E, 5 h 30 min ahead of GMT.
- **Narmada and Tapi**: the west-flowing exceptions.
- **Majuli**: river island in Assam, eroding.
- **Sundarbans**: mangrove delta, UNESCO since 1987.

## Practice MCQ

## Practice MCQs

**1. Which river is called the 'Ganga of the South' (Dakshin Ganga)?**

**A.** Krishna

**B.** Godavari

**C.** Kaveri

**D.** Mahanadi

See answer ↓

**2. Which of these rivers flows west into the Arabian Sea?**

**A.** Godavari

**B.** Krishna

**C.** Narmada

**D.** Mahanadi

See answer ↓

**3. Indian Standard Time is based on which meridian?**

**A.** 77°E

**B.** 82°30'E

**C.** 90°E

**D.** 68°7'E

See answer ↓

**4. Which state has the longest coastline in India after the 2025 revision?**

**A.** Maharashtra

**B.** Tamil Nadu

**C.** Gujarat

**D.** Andhra Pradesh

See answer ↓

**5. The Tropic of Cancer divides India into which two zones?**

**A.** Tropical and sub-tropical

**B.** Arid and humid

**C.** Hot and cold

**D.** Coastal and inland

See answer ↓

**6. Which peak is the highest in India?**

**A.** Nanda Devi

**B.** Kangchenjunga

**C.** Anaimudi

**D.** Mount Everest

See answer ↓

# Answer Key

1. **B.**
   The Godavari is called Dakshin Ganga. It is the largest Peninsular river system.
   Sources: NCERT Class XI India: Physical Environment, chapter 3 · NCERT Class XI India: Physical Environment, chapter 4.
   ↑ Q1
2. **C.**
   The Narmada and the Tapi are exceptions among Peninsular rivers. They flow through rift valleys into the Arabian Sea.
   Sources: NCERT Class XI India: Physical Environment, chapter 3 · NCERT Class XI India: Physical Environment, chapter 4.
   ↑ Q2
3. **B.**
   The standard meridian of India is 82°30'E. IST is 5 hours 30 minutes ahead of GMT.
   Sources: NCERT Class XI India: Physical Environment, chapter 1 · NCERT Class XI India: Physical Environment, chapter 4.
   ↑ Q3
4. **C.**
   Gujarat's coastline is now 2,340.62 km. India's total coastline is 11,098.81 km.
   Sources: DeshGujarat · NCERT Class XI India: Physical Environment, chapter 1.
   ↑ Q4
5. **A.**
   The northern part lies in the sub-tropical and temperate zone. The southern part lies in the tropical zone.
   Sources: NCERT Class XI India: Physical Environment, chapter 4 · NCERT Class XI India: Physical Environment, chapter 1.
   ↑ Q5

6. **B.**
   Kangchenjunga stands at 8,586 m. Anaimudi is only the highest peak of the Peninsular plateau.
   Sources: Armchair Mountaineer · NCERT Class XI India: Physical Environment, chapter 2.
   ↑ Q6

## Quick-check answers

1. **False.** It crosses the central part of India, east to west. The southern tip lies far south of it. ↑ 1
2. **False.** The Narmada and the Tapi are exceptions. They flow west into the Arabian Sea. ↑ 2
3. **False.** Nights cool down a lot. A 50°C day can fall to 15–20°C at night. ↑ 3
4. **False.** Majuli is a river island in the Brahmaputra, in Assam. ↑ 4
5. **False.** Gujarat has the longest coastline, at 2,340.62 km after the 2025 revision. ↑ 5

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