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The Eastern Ghats

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The Eastern Ghats

Four of peninsular India’s biggest rivers have spent millions of years cutting through the Eastern Ghats. That is why this range never forms one unbroken wall.

At a glance

Four key facts on this topic

01 **Extent** Odisha to Tamil Nadu

02 **Peak** Jindhagada, 1,690 m

03 **Average** About 520 m

04 **Rivers** Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri

Shape and height

1 A range broken by rivers

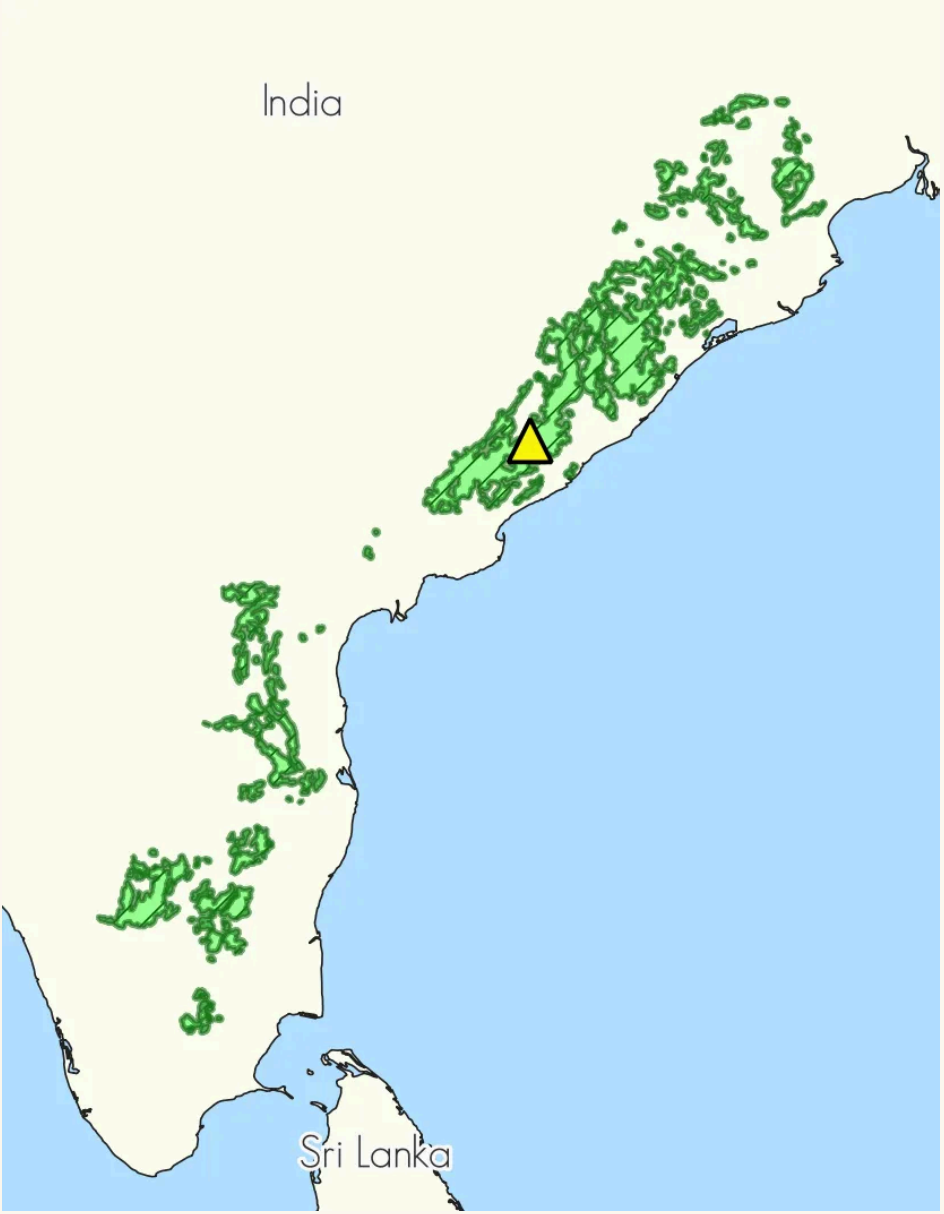
1.1 Why don't the Eastern Ghats form one wall?

The Eastern Ghats are a **discontinuous range** of mountains. They run north to south, east of the Deccan plateau.

Four big rivers cut through them: the **Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri**. Each gap splits the hills into a separate cluster.



Eastern Ghats near Talakona, Andhra Pradesh. Photo: Vinayaraj, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0.



Locator map of the discontinuous Eastern Ghats hill ranges along India’s east coast. Map: BenJenkins, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.

1.2 Where do they run?

IISc says the range passes through Odisha in the north. It then runs through Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to Tamil Nadu.

A few hills touch parts of Karnataka. The similar-sounding Western Ghats form a long, steadier wall on the other coast.

> 13. **Think it through:** Why do rivers break a hill range? See answer ↓

> **Quick check 1.** True or false: The Eastern Ghats are broken into clusters mainly by rivers cutting through them. *(True or False?)*
> See answer ↓

Sources: indiaflora-ces.iisc.ac.in

2 Older, lower and worn down

2.1 How do they compare with the Western Ghats?

The Eastern Ghats are **older** than the Western Ghats. IISc links their history to the building and breaking of ancient supercontinents.

Their average height is only about 520 m. Remember three words: older, lower, broken.

2.2 What is the land like?

Outlook Traveller calls the Eastern Ghats generally dry. It says they have short and rocky hills.

That is a different picture from the wet, forested slopes many people link with the Western Ghats.

14. **Think it through:** Does older mean taller? See answer ↓

Quick check 2. True or false: The Eastern Ghats are younger and taller than the Western Ghats. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Quick check 3. True or false: The Eastern Ghats have an average elevation of about 520 m. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: outlookindia.com

3 The highest peaks

3.1 What is the highest peak?

IISc names **Jindhagada Peak, 1,690 m**, as the highest peak of the Eastern Ghats. Arma Konda follows at 1,680 m.

Gali Konda (1,643 m) and Sunkrametta (1,620 m) complete the top group. These summits lie in the northern ranges, in Andhra Pradesh.

3.2 What about Odisha?

Odisha's highest peak is **Deomali**, at 1,672 m, in Koraput district.

It is the highest point in the state. It is not the highest point of the whole range.

15. **Think it through:** Why do two peaks sit only 10 m apart? See answer ↓

Quick check 4. True or false: Deomali is the highest peak of the whole Eastern Ghats. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

4 Exam trap: Mahendragiri

4.1 Why do some questions call Mahendragiri the highest?

Some older questions name Mahendragiri as the top peak. That is wrong for the whole range.

A school-board page calls it the **second-highest peak in Odisha**, at 1,501 m. It is in Gajapati district.

4.2 Why is the hill important?

The same page says it became a Biodiversity Heritage Site in 2022. It cites over 1,300 plant and animal species.

So Mahendragiri is a real and important hill. It is just not the tallest.

4.3 What should you do in the exam?

Know both names and both states. If a question’s premise looks wrong, answer what it asks.

Then note the mismatch in your own mind, not on the answer sheet.

16. **Think it through:** Odisha second-highest or range second-highest? See answer ↓

Quick check 5. True or false: Mahendragiri is the highest peak of the Eastern Ghats. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: dietgajapati.scert.odisha.gov.in

Places and people

5 The southern hills

5.1 Where do the hills end in the south?

At the southern end, IISc says the Eastern Ghats form several ranges of low hills. The Sirumalai, Alaghar and Karanthamalai Hills are the last of them.

That is the Tamil Nadu end of the range.

5.2 Where are the Shevaroy Hills?

Yercaud hill station lies in the **Shevaroy Hills**, part of the Eastern Ghats. They are in Tamil Nadu, near Salem.

A recent SSC CGL question asked which hills sit in the Eastern Ghats. The right pick was Shevaroy, not Naga or Khasi.

17. **Think it through:** How do you place a hill range quickly? See answer ↓

Quick check 6. True or false: The Shevaroy Hills are a part of the Eastern Ghats. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

6 The northern end

6.1 Where does the range begin in the north?

IISc says the Similipal Massif is the farthest northern extension of the Eastern Ghats. It lies in Odisha.

So the range spans Odisha at the top and Tamil Nadu at the bottom.

6.2 Why does the Odisha stretch matter?

Odisha holds both the state's highest peak, Deomali, and the Mahendragiri hills.

It is also where the bauxite conflicts of later cards play out.

18. **Think it through:** Where does the range start and end? See answer ↓

Quick check 7. True or false: The Similipal Massif is the farthest northern extension of the Eastern Ghats. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

7 Araku coffee

7.1 Who grows coffee here?

Araku Valley coffee is grown by **tribal farmers** in the Agency region of Andhra Pradesh, says Deccan Chronicle.

The Girijan Cooperative Corporation promotes it as a tribal-grown brand.

7.2 Is it linked to Koraput?

Exam notes pair Araku with Koraput in Odisha. A fetched page confirms only the Araku part.

Treat Koraput as exam knowledge, and Araku as the sure answer.

> 19. **Think it through:** Why mention tribal farmers at all? See answer ↓

> **Quick check 8.** True or false: Araku coffee is grown mainly by tribal farmers. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: deccanchronicle.com

Bauxite and recap

8 Buried bauxite

8.1 What lies under the Odisha hills?

The Sijimali mine is planned over 1,549 hectares. It holds an estimated **311 million tonnes** of high-grade bauxite.

Bauxite is the ore aluminium is made from. Vedanta plans about nine million tonnes a year for its Lanjigarh refinery.

8.2 Who lives above it?

Kandha and Paroja communities oppose the project. They cite loss of customary rights, forest produce and sacred hilltops.

The project would displace 129 families from two villages.

> 20. **Think it through:** Why do bauxite and forests collide? See answer ↓

Quick check 9. True or false: Sijimali is a bauxite project in the Odisha stretch of the Eastern Ghats. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: odishabytes.com; outlookbusiness.com

9 The clearance trail

9.1 How far has the clearance got?

In August 2025 the Forest Advisory Committee deferred a decision. Odisha's reports did not answer villagers' concerns.

The Orissa High Court had recorded claims that Gram Sabha resolutions were obtained fraudulently.

9.2 What happened next?

OdishaBytes reports that the committee gave in-principle **Stage-I** forest clearance in December 2025.

An expert panel then recommended environmental clearance, with a condition. No mining can happen in 709.72 hectares without Stage-II forest clearance.

9.3 Is the mine cleared?

Not fully, on these reports. Stage-II forest clearance is still the missing step.

Court cases are also pending, so details can change.

21. **Think it through:** What do Stage-I and Stage-II mean? See answer ↓

Quick check 10. True or false: Stage-II forest clearance is the final approval for forest diversion. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

10 The access road

10.1 What about the access road?

The Wire reports that the Centre gave final clearance for a **2.98-km road** in Kashipur tehsil.

It will divert 4.911 hectares of forest. It is meant to carry bauxite from Sijimali to the Lanjigarh refinery.

10.2 Why does that matter?

A plea against the earlier approval is still pending before the National Green Tribunal.

So the road and the mine have separate forest approvals, and separate disputes.

22. **Think it through:** Why track both the road and the mine? See answer ↓

Quick check 11. True or false: The Sijimali road and the mine have separate forest-diversion proposals. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: m.thewire.in

11 Putting it together

11.1 What should you remember?

The range is older, lower and broken by four rivers. Jindhagada (1,690 m) is the top peak.

Mahendragiri (1,501 m) is second in Odisha, behind Deomali (1,672 m).

11.2 What links the current-affairs items?

Araku shows a tribal coffee economy. Sijimali shows a tribal land conflict.

Both sit in the same hills, and both can appear in a mixed question.

23. **Think it through:** Can you say it in one line? See answer ↓

Quick check 12. True or false: The Eastern Ghats are continuous and taller than the Western Ghats. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Exam Practice

Remember this

- **Shape:** Discontinuous, cut by four rivers
- **Age:** Older and lower than the Western Ghats
- **Peak:** Jindhagada 1,690 m, not Mahendragiri
- **Odisha:** Deomali 1,672 m is the state high point
- **Sijimali:** Stage-II forest clearance is the missing step

Explain it back: Which peak is the highest in the Eastern Ghats?

Practice MCQs

1. Compared to the Western Ghats, the Eastern Ghats are generally characterised as?

A. Higher in height and fully continuous

B. Lower in height and more discontinuous

C. Younger in geological age

D. Entirely volcanic in origin

See answer ↓

2. What key structural feature distinguishes the Eastern Ghats from the continuous Western Ghats?

A. The Eastern Ghats have no rivers cutting through them at all

B. The Eastern Ghats are younger than the Western Ghats

C. The Eastern Ghats are entirely underwater, unlike the Western Ghats

D. The Eastern Ghats are discontinuous, broken up by erosion from major rivers

See answer ↓

3. Which four major peninsular rivers cut through the Eastern Ghats?

A. The Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, and Chenab

B. The Narmada, Tapi, Sabarmati, and Mahi

C. The Ganga, Yamuna, Brahmaputra, and Indus

D. The Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna, and Kaveri

See answer ↓

4. What is the Eastern Ghats' highest peak, and where is it located?

A. Guru Shikhar, in Rajasthan, at 1,722 metres

B. Doddabetta, in Tamil Nadu, at 2,637 metres

C. Jindhagada, in Andhra Pradesh's Araku Valley, at 1,690 metres

D. Anamudi, in Kerala, at 2,695 metres

See answer ↓

5. How does the Eastern Ghats' average elevation compare to the Western Ghats?

A. The Eastern Ghats have no measurable average elevation, being entirely flat

B. The Eastern Ghats average about 520 metres, well below the Western Ghats' 900-1,600 metres

C. Both ranges share an identical average elevation of about 1,200 metres

D. The Eastern Ghats average higher elevation than the Western Ghats

See answer ↓

6. Which two regions are the Eastern Ghats' established coffee-growing areas, and who mostly farms this coffee?

A. Ooty and Kodaikanal; farmed mostly by government plantations

B. Wayanad and Chikmagalur; farmed mostly by foreign-owned estates

C. Araku Valley and Koraput; farmed mostly by tribal cooperatives

D. Munnar and Coorg; farmed mostly by large private estates

See answer ↓

7. Which of the following hills is located in the Eastern Ghats? (SSC CGL 2024, Tier-I, General Awareness, 12 Sep Shift 2, Q23)

A. Naga hills

B. Shevaroy hills

C. Anamudi hills

D. Khasi hills

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **B.** The correct answer is **Lower in height and more discontinuous**. The Eastern Ghats are older than the Western Ghats. Four big rivers cut through them, so the hills break into clusters. The average height is about 520 m. The option 'higher and fully continuous' describes the Western Ghats. They are not volcanic or younger. Memory hook: older, lower, broken. ↑ Q1
2. **D.** The correct answer is **They are discontinuous, broken up by erosion from major rivers**. IISc calls the Eastern Ghats a discontinuous range. Rivers cut through them, so there is no single wall. They are not underwater and not younger than the Western Ghats. Memory hook: rivers break the Eastern Ghats. ↑ Q2
3. **D.** The correct answer is **The Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri**. IISc says these four rivers cut through the Eastern Ghats. The other sets are Himalayan, west-flowing or north-western rivers. Memory hook: M-G-K-K cut the range. ↑ Q3
4. **C.** The correct answer is **Jindhagada, in Andhra Pradesh's Araku Valley, at 1,690 metres**. IISc names Jindhagada Peak as the highest of the Eastern Ghats. Arma Konda is close behind at 1,680 m. Anamudi, Guru Shikhar and Doddabetta are not in the Eastern Ghats. Memory hook: Jindhagada tops the east. ↑ Q4
5. **B.** The correct answer is **About 520 metres, well below the Western Ghats**. IISc gives the Eastern Ghats an average elevation of about 520 m. Exam notes put the Western Ghats at 900 to 1,600 m, but that range is not on a fetched page. The two ranges do not share one height. Memory hook: lower and more worn. ↑ Q5
6. **C.** The correct answer is **Araku Valley and Koraput; farmed mostly by tribal cooperatives**. Deccan Chronicle reports that Araku coffee is grown by tribal farmers in the Agency region. The Girijan Cooperative Corporation promotes the brand. Koraput is named in exam notes, not on a fetched page. Munnar, Coorg and Ooty lie in the Western Ghats or Nilgiris. Memory hook: Araku means tribal coffee. ↑ Q6

7. **B.** The correct answer is **Shevaroy hills**. Outlook Traveller places the Shevaroy Hills in the Eastern Ghats, near Yercaud. Naga and Khasi hills are in the north-east. Anamudi is in the Western Ghats. Memory hook: Shevaroy sits in the south-east. ↑ Q7

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** The Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri cut through the range. ↑ 1
2. **False.** They are older and lower, with an average height near 520 m. ↑ 2
3. **True.** IISc gives this figure. ↑ 3
4. **False.** Deomali (1,672 m) is the highest peak in Odisha. Jindhagada (1,690 m) is the highest peak of the range. ↑ 4
5. **False.** Jindhagada (1,690 m) is higher. Mahendragiri is 1,501 m. ↑ 5
6. **True.** Yercaud lies in the Shevaroy Hills, in Tamil Nadu. ↑ 6
7. **True.** IISc describes it this way. ↑ 7
8. **True.** The Girijan Cooperative Corporation promotes it as a tribal-grown brand. ↑ 8
9. **True.** Its reserves are estimated at 311 million tonnes. ↑ 9
10. **True.** Stage-I is in-principle only. The panel's condition needs Stage-II before mining on 709.72 hectares. ↑ 10
11. **True.** The Wire describes them as separate proposals. ↑ 11
12. **False.** They are discontinuous and lower, with a 520 m average. ↑ 12
13. **Think it through.** A river that flows for millions of years cuts a valley. If the valley is wide enough, the hills on either side stand apart as separate clusters. ↑ 13
14. **Think it through.** Old mountains have had more time to wear down. Wind and water lower them, so the older range is the lower one here. ↑ 14
15. **Think it through.** Jindhagada and Arma Konda are close in height. Some sources mix their names, so check which peak and which height a question uses. ↑ 15
16. **Think it through.** The source says second-highest in Odisha. Do not stretch that to the whole range. Deomali (1,672 m) is higher than Mahendragiri (1,501 m). ↑ 16
17. **Think it through.** Pair each range with a direction. Naga and Khasi sit in the north-east. Shevaroy sits in the south-east. ↑ 17

18. **Think it through.** Think of Similipal in the north and the low hills of Tamil Nadu in the south. The Mahanadi is the first big river to cut through it. ↑ 18

19. **Think it through.** The coffee belongs to a hill economy, not a big private estate. That is the point exams like to test. ↑ 19

20. **Think it through.** The ore sits under hills that tribal groups use for water, food and worship. A mine needs the land they depend on. ↑ 20

21. **Think it through.** Stage-I is in-principle approval. Stage-II is the final one. Work on the diverted forest land needs the second. ↑ 21

22. **Think it through.** Each has its own forest land to divert. A question may ask about one and not the other. ↑ 22

23. **Think it through.** Four rivers break an old, low range, whose top peak is Jindhagada and whose Odisha hills hold the bauxite fight. ↑ 23

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