

# India : Size and Location

## Location

India is a vast country located in the Northern hemisphere. Its mainland extends between latitudes<sup>1</sup> 8°4' N and 37°6' N and longitudes<sup>2</sup> 68°7' E and 97°25' E.

India is divided into almost two equal parts by the Tropic of Cancer<sup>3</sup> (23° 30' N). It passes through the States of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Tripura and Mizoram.

Andaman and Nicobar islands are situated in South-East of mainland in the Bay of Bengal. Lakshadweep islands are situated in South-West of mainland in the Arabian Sea. These are the two groups of islands belonging to India.

*Note:* The Southernmost point of the Indian Union, 'Indira Point', got submerged under the sea water in 2004 during the Tsunami.

## Size

- Area of India is 3.28 million sq km which occupies 2.4% of the total geographical area of the world.
- India is the seventh largest country of the world, after Russia, Canada, USA, China, Brazil and Australia.
- India has a land boundary of about 15200 km.
- The total length of its coastline<sup>4</sup> of the mainland including Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands is about 7516.6 km.

## Chapter Syllabus

- Location
  - Size
  - Extent
- India and the World
- India's Neighbours

<sup>1</sup> Latitudes The positions North or South of the equator, measured from 0° to 90°, they run horizontally.

<sup>2</sup> Longitudes The position on the Earth's surface to the East or West of the Greenwich near London in England, they run vertically.

<sup>3</sup> Tropic of Cancer A latitude at 23°30'N. South of this is considered the tropical zone and North is sub-tropical.

<sup>4</sup> Coastline A line that forms the boundary between the land and the ocean or a sea where land meets the sea or ocean.

## Extent

- India is bounded by young fold mountains in the North-West, North and North-East.
- India's landmass begins to taper (become a cone shape) from the South of about 22° North latitude.
- India's landmass extends towards the Indian Ocean and divides it into Arabian sea to West and the Bay of Bengal to East.
- The latitudinal and longitudinal extent of the mainland is about 30° but the East-West extent appears smaller than the North-South extent.
- The North-South distance is 3214 km while the East-West distance is 2933 km.

## Indian Standard Time (IST)

- There is a time lag (period of time) of almost two hours between Gujarat in the West and Arunachal Pradesh in the East. Hence, time along the Standard Meridian of India (82°30' E) passing through Mirzapur (in Uttar Pradesh) is taken as Indian Standard Time (IST) for the whole country.
- The latitudinal extent influences the duration of day and night as one moves from South to North.



India - Extent and Standard Meridian

## Check Point 01

1. The latitudinal extent of India is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Name the Southernmost point of the Indian Union.
3. Which type of mountains bounded India in the North-West, North and North-East?
4. Name any four states through which the Tropic of Cancer passes.

## India and the World

India occupies a major part of South Asia. It is centrally located between the East and the West Asia. India has a Southward extension in the Asian continent. The Trans Indian Ocean routes, which connect the countries of Europe in the West and the countries of East Asia, provide a strategic Central location to India. The Deccan Peninsula extends towards the Indian ocean, helping India to establish close contact with West Asia, Africa and Europe from the Western coast and with South-East and East Asia from the Eastern coast.

India has the longest coastline on the Indian ocean as compared to other countries. Due to this reason, the Indian ocean is named after India.

**Note** Due to the opening of Suez Canal in 1869, India's distance from Europe has been reduced by 7000 km.

## India's Contact with the World

India's contacts with the world have continued through the ages, but its relationships through the land routes are much older than its maritime contacts. The various passes across the mountains in the North have provided passages to the ancient travellers while oceans restricted such interactions.

Some examples are

- The ideas of the Upanishads and the Ramayana, the stories of the Panchatantra, Indian numerals and decimal system have reached many parts of the world.
- Spices, muslin and other merchandise were taken from India to different countries.
- The influence of Greek sculpture and the architectural style of domes and minarets from West Asia can be seen in many parts of India.

## India's Neighbours

India has an important strategic position in South Asia. It has 28 states and 8 Union Territories.

India shares its land boundaries with Pakistan and Afghanistan in the North-West, China (Tibet), Nepal and Bhutan in the North, and Myanmar and Bangladesh in the East.

Two island countries, Sri Lanka and Maldives, lie to the South of India across the Indian ocean.

India and Sri Lanka are separated by a narrow channel of sea formed by the Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar.

Maldives lie to the South of Lakshadweep group of islands. Thus, India has strong geographical and historical links with its neighbours.

## Check Point 02

1. When was Suez Canal opened?
2. India's interaction with other countries through \_\_\_\_\_ routes is older than \_\_\_\_\_ routes.
3. Name the two countries separated by Palk Strait.
4. Which countries are included in the Indian subcontinent?

## SUMMARY

- India is a vast country located in the Northern hemisphere.
- The Indian mainland extends between latitudes 8°N and 37°N and longitudes 68°E and 97°E.
- India is divided into almost two equal parts by the Tropic of Cancer (23°30'N).
- Area of India is 3.28 million sq. km which occupies 2.4% of the total geographical area of the world.
- India is the seventh largest country of the world after Russia, Canada, USA, China, Brazil and Australia.
- India has a land boundary of about 15200 km. The total length of its coastline including Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands, is about 7516.6 km.
- India is bounded by young fold mountains in the North-West, North and North-East.
- The latitudinal and longitudinal extent of the mainland is about 30° but the East-West extent appears smaller than the North-South extent.

- The Standard Meridian of India (82°30' E) passing through Mirzapur (in Uttar Pradesh) is taken as the Indian Standard Time for the whole country.
- The Indian landmass is centrally located between the East and the West Asia.
- The Trans-Indian ocean routes, connect Europe in West and the countries of East Asia, provide a strategic central location to India.
- India has 28 states and 8 Union Territories.
- India shares its land boundaries with Pakistan and Afghanistan in the North-West, China, Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan in the North and Myanmar and Bangladesh in the East.
- Two island countries Sri Lanka and Maldives lie to the South of India across the Indian Ocean.

**Fold Mountains** Mountains which develop when two tectonic plates come together causing compression, resulting in folding of rocks.

**Standard Meridian** The longitude which passes through a country/region which is used to fix the standard time for that country/region.

**Indian Standard Time (IST)** This is local time of the longitude 82°30' East, taken as the time for the whole of India. This is five-and-a-half hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).