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OUR COUNTRY – INDIA

India is a country of vast geographical expanse. In the north, it is bound by the lofty **Himalayas**. The **Arabian Sea** in the west, the **Bay of Bengal** in the east and the **Indian Ocean** in the south, wash the shores of the Indian peninsula.

India has an area of about 3.28 million sq. km. The north-south extent from Ladakh to Kanyakumari is about 3,200 km. And the east-west extent from Arunachal Pradesh to Kuchch is about 2,900 km. The lofty mountains, the Great Indian Desert, the Northern Plains, the uneven plateau surface and the coasts and islands present a diversity of landforms. There is a great variety in the climate, vegetation, wildlife as well as in the language and culture. In this diversity, we find unity that is reflected in traditions that bind us as one nation. India has a population of more than one hundred twenty crores since the year 2011. It is the *second most populous* country of the world after China.

The peninsula is a piece of land that is surrounded by water on three sides (figure 6.1).

LOCATIONAL SETTING

India is located in the northern hemisphere. The **Tropic of Cancer (23°30'N)** passes almost halfway through the country (Figure 7.2). From south to north, main land of India extends between **8°4'N** and **37°6'N latitudes**. From west to east, India extends between **68°7'E** and **97°25'E longitudes**. If we divide the world into eastern and western hemispheres, which hemisphere would India belong to? Due to great longitudinal extent of about 29°, there could be a wide difference in local time of places located at two extreme points of India. As such, the difference between these two points would be of

Do you know?



Large countries which stretch extensively from east to west do not have a single Standard Time for the whole country. The USA and Canada have seven and six time zones respectively. Do you remember how many time zones are there in Russia?

States and 8 Union Territories (Appendix-I). Delhi is the national capital. The states have been formed mainly on the basis of languages.

PHYSICAL DIVISIONS

India is marked by a diversity of physical features such as mountains, plateaus, plains, coasts and islands. Standing as sentinels in the north are the lofty snow-capped Himalayas. *Him+alaya* mean 'the abode of snow'. The Himalayan mountains are divided into three main parallel ranges. The northernmost is the **Great Himalaya** or **Himadri**. The world's highest peaks are located in this range. **Middle Himalaya** or **Himachal** lies to the south of Himadri.

Many popular hill stations are situated here. Find out the names of five hill stations. The **Shiwalik** is the southernmost range.

The **Northern Indian plains** lie to the south of the Himalayas. They are generally level and flat. These are formed by the alluvial deposits laid down by the rivers—the Indus, the Ganga, the Brahmaputra and their *tributaries*. These river plains provide fertile land for cultivation. That is the reason for high concentration of population in these plains.

In the *western* part of India lies the **Great Indian desert**. It is a dry, hot and sandy stretch of land. It has very little vegetation.

To the south of northern plains lies the **Peninsular plateau**. It is triangular in shape. The relief is highly uneven. This is a region with numerous hill ranges and valleys. Aravali hills, one of the oldest ranges of the world, border it on the north-west side. The **Vindhyas** and the **Satpuras** are the important ranges. The rivers **Narmada** and **Tapi** flow through these ranges. These are west-flowing rivers that drain into the Arabian Sea. The **Western Ghats** or **Sahyadris** border the plateau in the west and the **Eastern Ghats** provide the eastern boundary. While the Western Ghats are almost continuous, the Eastern Ghats are broken and uneven (Figure 7.3). The plateau is rich in minerals like coal and iron-ore.

To the West of the Western Ghats and the East of Eastern Ghats lie the **Coastal plains**. The western

Alluvial deposits : These are very fine soils, brought by rivers and deposited in the river basins.

Tributary : A river or stream which contributes its water to a main river by discharging it into main river from either side (Figure 6.1).



Do you know?

The Ganga and the Brahmaputra form the world's largest delta, the Sundarbans delta. The delta is triangular in shape. It is an area of land formed at the *mouth of the river* (Where rivers enter the sea, that point is called the mouth of the river, Figure 6.1).



Let's Do

Many girls are named after rivers eg. Yamuna, Mandakini, and Kaveri. Do you know anyone in your locality who is named after a river? Ask your parents and others and make a list of such names. Could you also find other names related to water e.g. Shabnam?