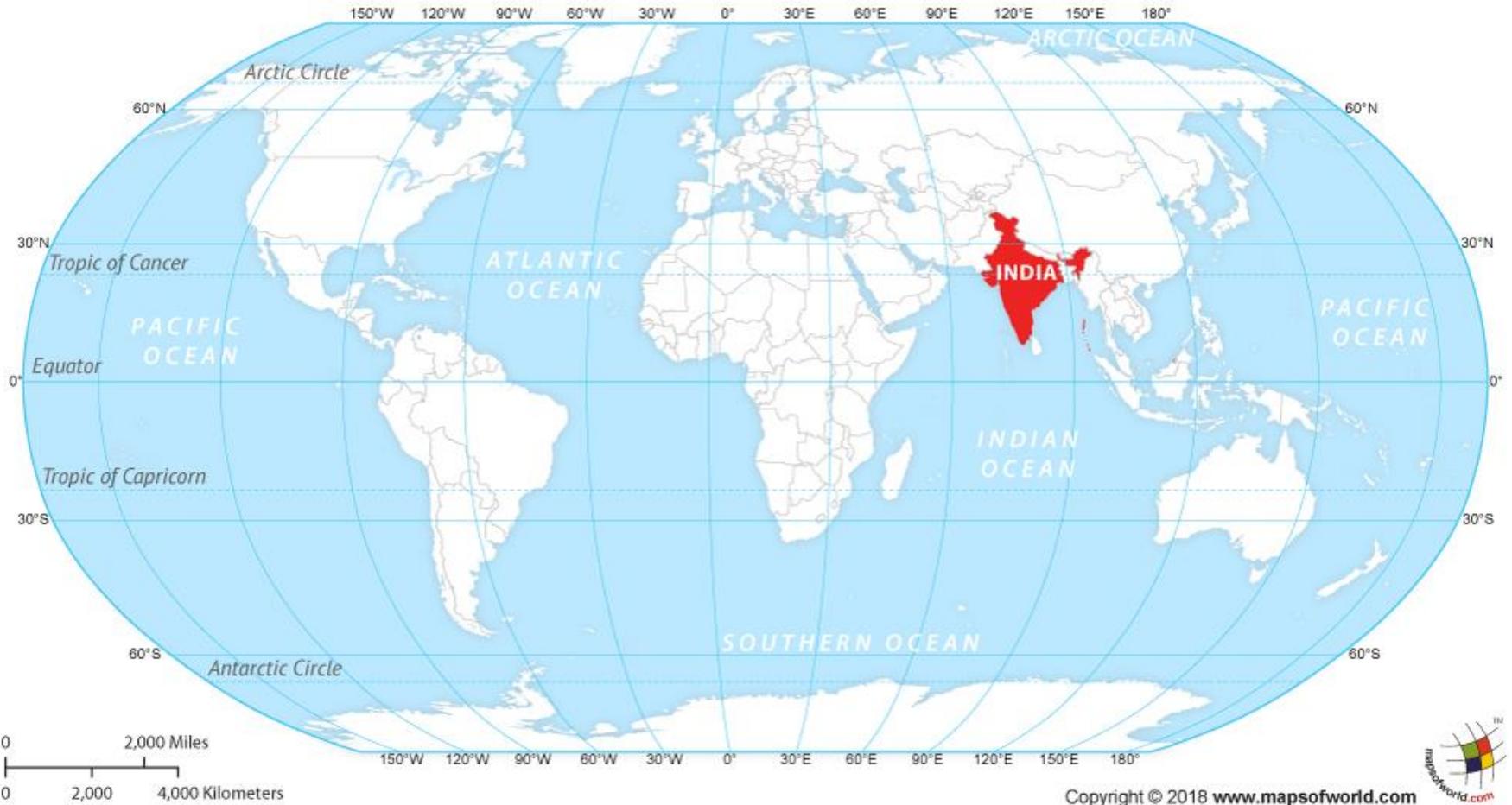


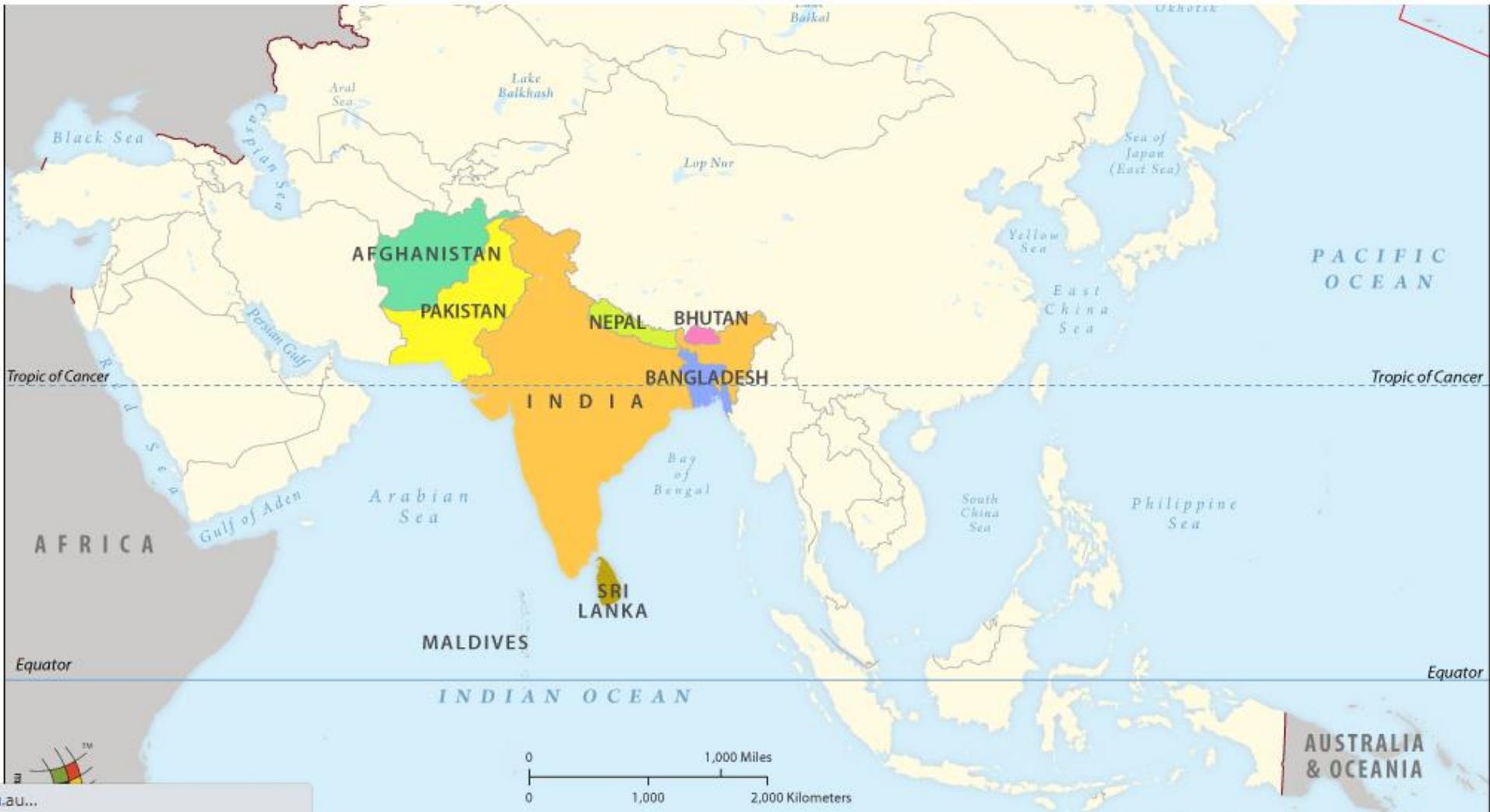
BA/BSc. 5th semester (Major Course)
Paper 502: Regional Geography of India and SAAC
nations

Unit 1: Regional Geography of India

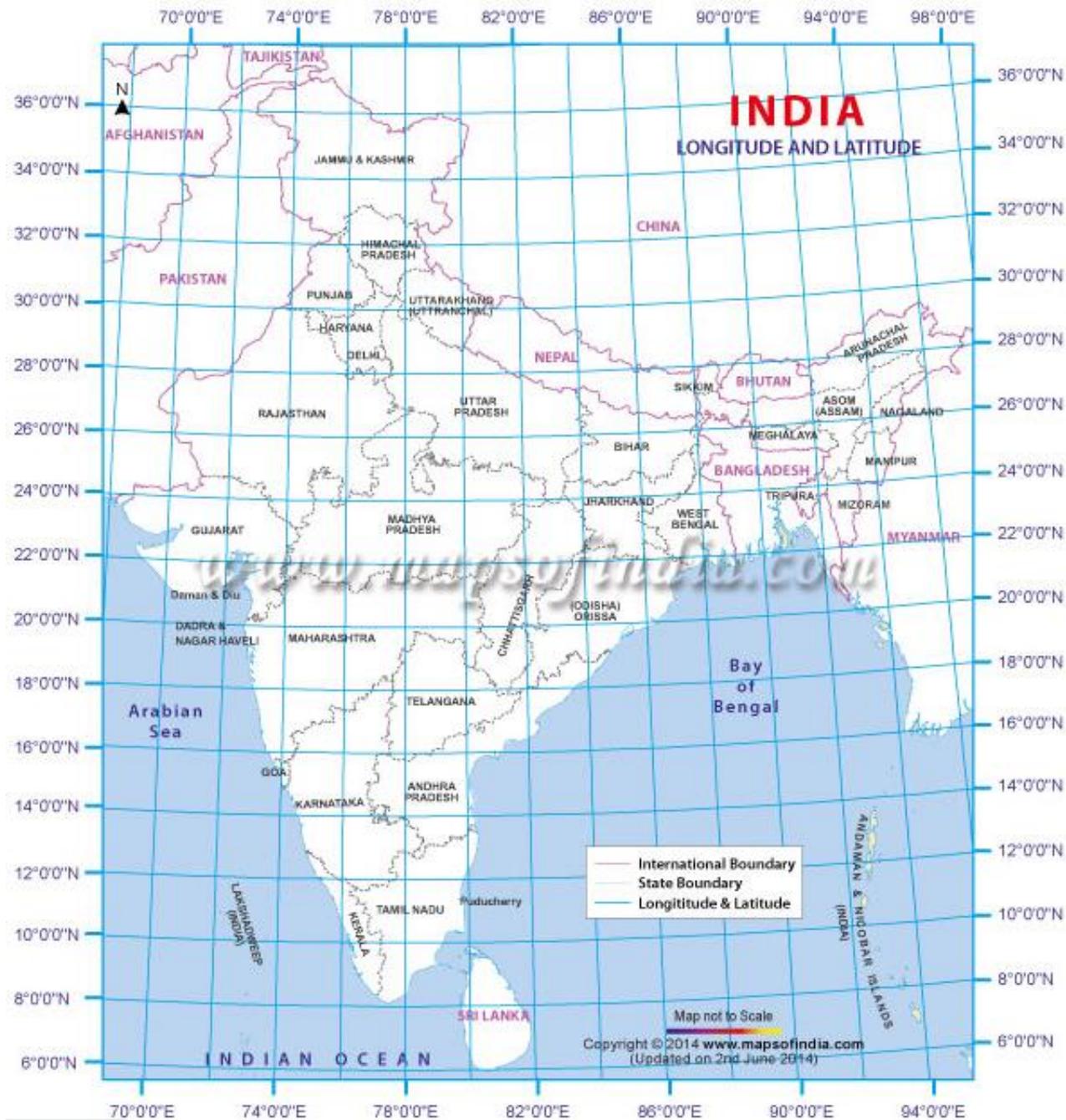
Locational Significance

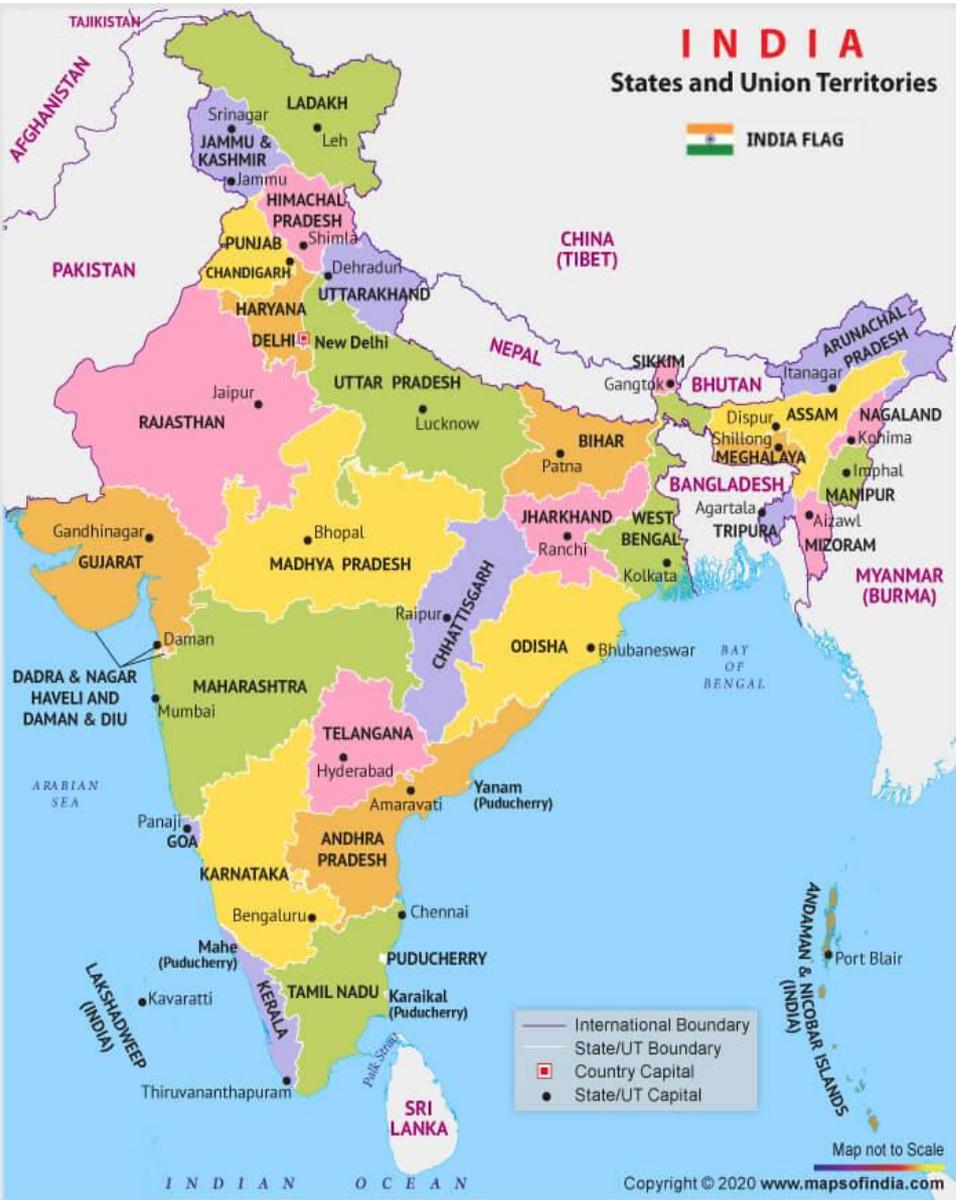
Location of India in world map

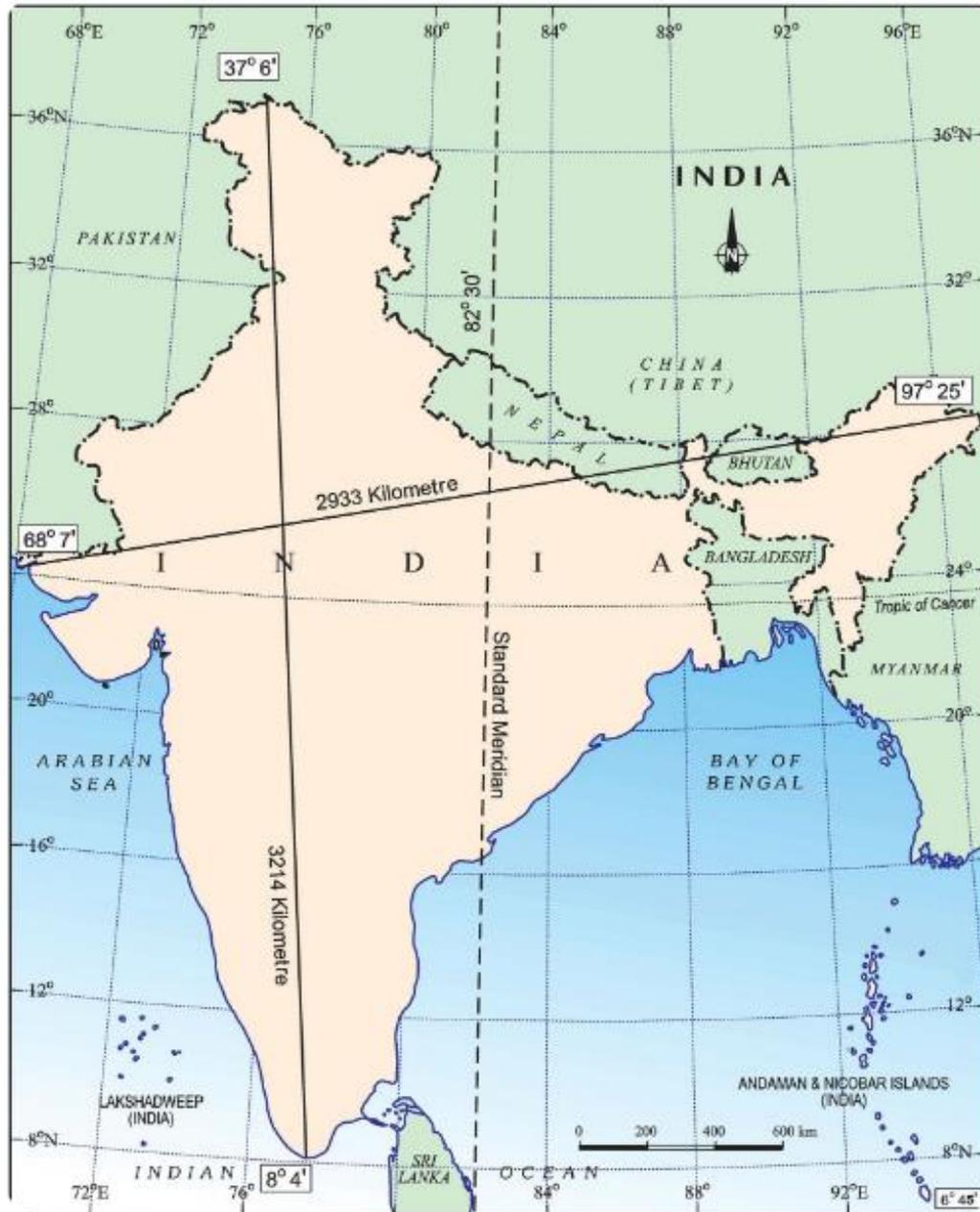




- India is a vast country. (**India**: Greek origin “Indoi”-the land near the Indos)
Romans- pronounced the word as Indus; **Persians**- Hindu (for Sindhu)
- Lying in the Northern hemisphere
- Extension: latitudes: **8°4’N** and **37°6’N** and longitudes: **68°7’E** and **97°25’E**.
- The **Tropic of Cancer (23° 30’N)** divides the country into almost two equal parts.
- Area: **3.28 million square km** (3,287,263 sq km or 1,269,219 sq miles)
- **2.4 %** of the total geographical area of the world.
- **7th** largest country of the world.
- Distance: North-South: **3,214 km (1,997 mi)**; East -West: **2,933 km (1,822 mi)**
- Land boundary: **15,200 km**
- Coast line: **7,516.6 km** (including Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep)
- Bounded by the **young fold mountains** in the northwest, north and north east.
- South of **22°N lat** it extends towards the Indian Ocean **dividing it into two seas**, the Arabian Sea on the west and the Bay of Bengal on its east.
- **Southernmost tip** of the Indian mainland: Kanyakumari (8°4’41”N & 77°55’230”E)
- **Southernmost point**: Indira Point on Great Nicobar Island.
- **Northernmost point**: Indira Col, Siachen Glacier (under Indian administration)
- **Easternmost point**: Kibithu, Arunachal Pradesh
- **Westernmost Point**: Ghuar Mota, Kutch region of Gujarat
- **India's territorial waters**: 12 nautical miles (13.8 mi; 22.2 km) from the coast baseline.







- **Central location** between the **East and the West Asia**.
- **Southward extension** of the **Asian Continent**.
- The **trans Indian Ocean routes** provide a **strategic central location to India**.
- **Close contact** with West Asia, Africa and Europe from the **western coast** and with Southeast and East Asia from the **eastern coast**.
- **Long coastline** on the Indian Ocean and it is India's eminent position in the Indian Ocean which justifies the **naming of an ocean** after it.
- **India's contacts with the world have continued through the ages** but her relationships through the land routes are much older than her maritime contacts. The **various passes** across the mountains in the north have provided passages to the ancient travellers, while the oceans restricted such interaction for a long time.
- Land routes have contributed in the **exchange of ideas and commodities** since ancient times.
- The ideas of the **Upanishads and the Ramayana, the stories of Panchtantra, the Indian numerals and the decimal system** thus could reach many parts of the world.
- The **spices, muslin and other merchandise** were taken from India to different countries.
- The influence of Greek sculpture, and the architectural styles of **dome and minarets** from West Asia can be seen in different parts of our country.

➤ India occupies an important strategic position in South Asia. India has **28 states and 7 Union Territories**.

➤ Shares its **land boundaries with Pakistan and Afghanistan** in the northwest, **China (Tibet), Nepal and Bhutan** in the north and **Myanmar and Bangladesh** in the east.

➤ Southern neighbours across the sea consist of the **two island countries, namely Sri Lanka and Maldives**.

Sri Lanka is separated from India by a narrow channel of sea formed by the Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar while Maldives Islands are situated to the south of the Lakshadweep Islands

➤ India is one of the **ancient civilisations in the world**.

➤ **Multi-faceted socioeconomic progress** during the last five decades.

➤ Remarkable progress in the field of **agriculture, industry, technology and overall economic development**.

➤ India has also contributed significantly to the making of world history.

The geographical location of India

1. Latitudes and Longitudes:

Latitude: Being located in the **northern hemisphere**. India stretches from $8^{\circ}04'$ N latitude in the south to $37^{\circ}06'$ N latitude in the north, i.e. the mainland of India extends from Kanyakumari in the south to Kashmir in the north. The southernmost point of Indian union is Indira Point which was previously known as Persons Pygmalion; is actually the southernmost point of Car Nicobar where it touches the parallel of $6^{\circ}45'$ N.

Longitude: In the **eastern hemisphere**, India stretches from $68^{\circ}07'$ E longitude in the west to $97^{\circ}25'$ E longitude in the east, i.e. between the western frontier of Gujarat in the west to the eastern frontier of Arunachal Pradesh in the east.

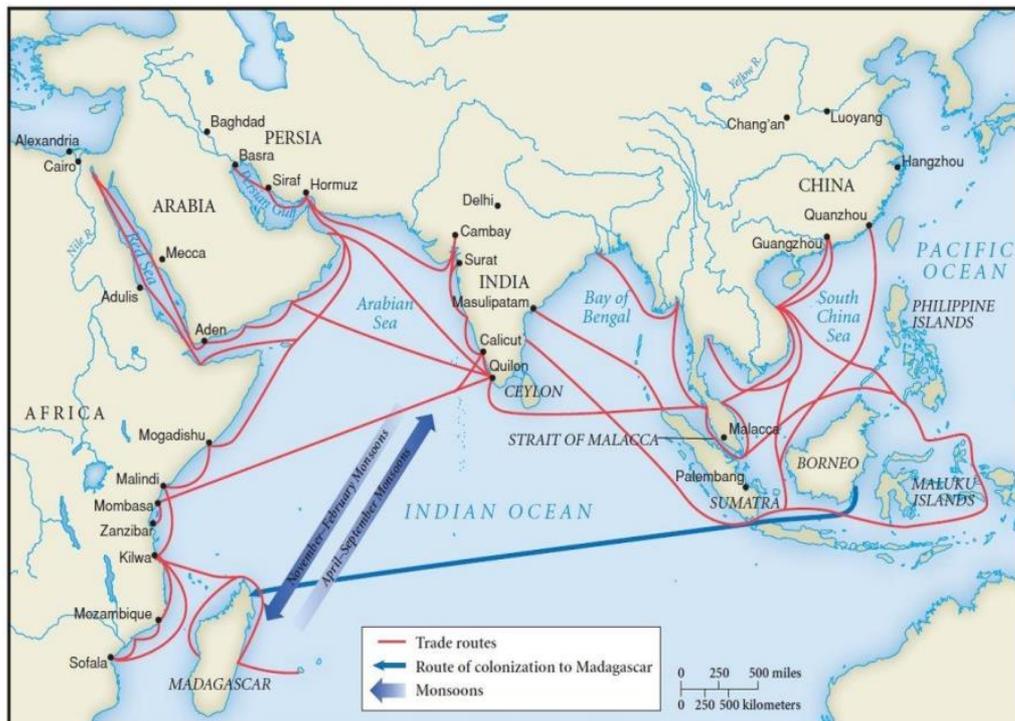
2. Distance from the sea: India is surrounded by (i) the Bay of Bengal in the east, (ii) the Arabian Sea in the west, (iii) the Indian Ocean in the south and (iv) the Lakshadweep Sea to the southwest.

3. Location of neighbouring countries: India is bordered on the north by China (the largest neighbour, 96 lakhs sq. km), Nepal and Bhutan, on the east by Myanmar and Bangladesh, on the south By Sri Lanka, on the west by Pakistan and on the north-west by Afghanistan. The smallest neighbour of India (298 sq. km), Maldives, lies to the south-west of India; with these neighbours India has trade relations as well as cultural links.

LOCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIA

1. **Central location at the head of Indian Ocean:** India commands an important strategic position on the globe with respect to **trade as well as social and cultural interaction.**

- India stands at the head of the Indian Ocean
- Commanding trade routes running in all directions
- East and West coast have many natural harbours due to which India had a flourishing sea trade from ancient times.



- The Peninsula India gets into the Indian Ocean for a distance of about 1600 km and divides it into two parts the Western and Eastern parts are known as the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal respectively
- No other country has such a long coastline on this ocean as India has.
- India is strategically located at the centre of the trans Indian Ocean routes which connect the European countries in the west and the countries of East Asia.

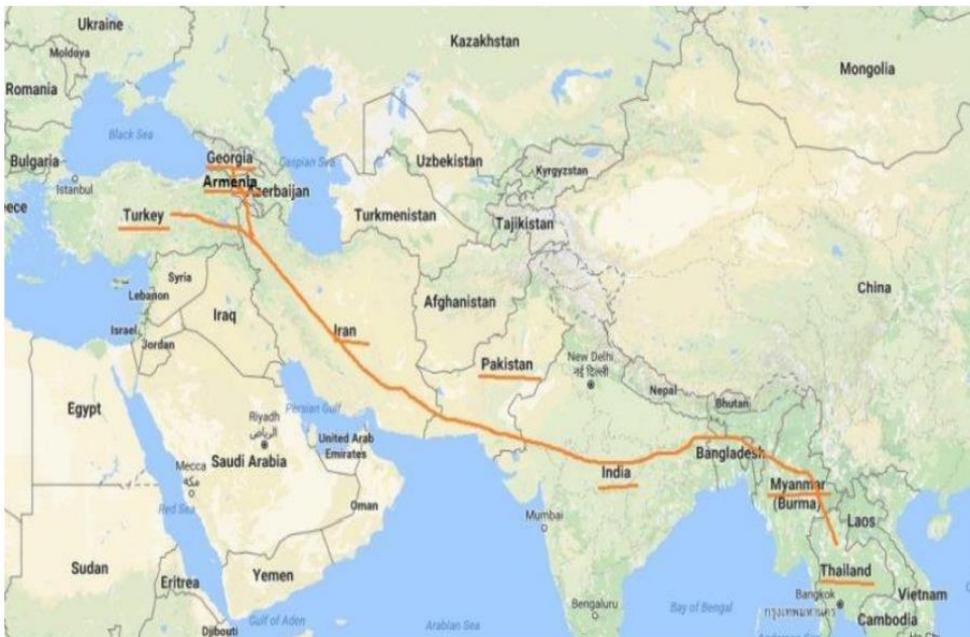
2. Central Location in Eastern Hemisphere:

- India is very favourably located in relation to Eurasia, Africa and Australia.
- It occupies central position in the eastern hemisphere.
- India's location has many economic advantages.
- It helped in establishing economic and cultural contacts with the East Asian countries.
- It could establish close contact with Southeast and East Asia from the sea ports of eastern coast.
- It is favourably located on the world's highway of trade and commerce, both to the east and the west.
- There are some prominent air routes and sea routes passing through the Indian subcontinent.



3. Central Location in Southern Part of Asia's Continent:

- India is centrally located between the East and the West Asia.
- India is strategically located at the centre of the trans Indian Ocean routes which connect the European countries in the west and the countries of East Asia.
- India could establish close contact with West Asia, Africa and Europe from the western coast and Southeast and East Asia from the eastern coast.
- India is a south extension of the Asian continent.
- The Trans Indian Ocean routes which connect the developed countries of Europe in the west and the developing countries of East Asia in the east must skirt the shores of India thus provide a strategic central location to India.



- The Deccan Peninsula, India's Southward extension protrudes into Indian Ocean and divides it into two seas, the Arabian Sea on the West and the Bay of Bengal on its East and thus helping India to establish easy contact with West Asia, East Africa and Europe from Western coast also establishes contacts with South-East Asia, East Asia and Australia from Eastern coast.

4. Strategic position midway between the Far East and the Middle East:

It is significant because the TransIndian Ocean routes connect the industrially developed countries of Europe in the west and the underdeveloped countries of East Asia.

- Advantageous position for doing trade with Australia and the countries of Africa, the Middle East and the Far East.
- India dominates the Indian Ocean and commands an important strategic position.
- Keep a close contact for business purpose with West Asia, Africa and Europe from western coast, and Southeast and East Asia from the eastern coast.
- The air routes between Europe, West Asia and Africa in the west and East Asia, Southeast Asia, Japan & Australia in the east also pass through India.



Conclusion:

The **centrality** and the consequent significance of India to broader Indian Ocean **geopolitics and economics** have been proved beyond doubt.

It was India's status as the **principal entrepot** in a highly profitable oceanic trade structure which attracted the West Asian Muslims, and the European colonial powers towards India.

India became the '**jewel in the crown**' of the vast British Empire due to its wealth and because of its role as a fulcrum upon which the imperial and commercial system in Asia was balanced.

India thus commands an important strategic position on the globe with respect to trade as well as **social and cultural interaction**.