**INDIA – SIZE AND LOCATION**

**Introduction:**

India is a land of remarkable diversity – from ancient traditions and artistic heritage to magnificent landscapes and culinary creations – India tosses up the unexpected. One of the oldest civilizations in the world, India has always been looked at as a treasure trove given the immense resources available through its length and breadth. It is a land of mixed cultures and through the ages, India has been a great contributor to world history. While the great explorer Christopher Columbus, who discovered the Americas, was actually looking for India -Vasco da Gama sailed west, south and east to stumble on this proverbial golden sparrow! Over the past 5 decades, India has progressed politically, geographically, socially, and economically.

In fact the economy of India is the 6th largest in the world when measured by nominal GDP.

**Location**

* India lies entirely in the Northern hemisphere.
* The main land extends between 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.
* The Andaman and Nicobar islands lie to the southeast and the Lakshadweep islands in Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea lie to the southwest of the mainland.
* The southernmost point of the Indian Union– ‘Indira Point’ got submerged under the sea water in 2004 during the Tsunami.

**Size**

* The land mass of India has an area of 3.28 million square km.
* India’s total area accounts for about 2.4 per cent of the total geographical area of the world.
* India is the seventh largest country of the world.
* It has a land boundary of about 15,200 km and the total length of the coastline of the mainland, including Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep, is 7,516.6 km.
* India is bounded by the young fold mountains in the northwest, north and northeast.
* At about 22° north latitude, it begins to taper, and extends towards the Indian Ocean, dividing it into two seas, the Arabian Sea on the west and the Bay of  Bengal on its east.
* Despite the fact that the latitudinal and longitudinal extent of the mainland is about 30°, the east-west extent appears to be smaller than the north-south extent.
* From Gujarat to Arunachal Pradesh, there is a time lag of two hours.The Standard Meridian of India, 82°30 E passes through Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh.

**India and the world**

* India is located centrally between the East and the West Asia.
* The Trans Indian Ocean routes connect the countries of Europe in the West and the countries of East Asia.
* The Deccan Peninsula protrudes into the Indian Ocean, thus helping India to establish close contact with West Asia, Africa and Europe from the western coast and with Southeast and East Asia from the eastern coast.
* India has the longest coastline on the Indian Ocean and hence the ocean is named after the country.
* 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.
* These routes have contributed in the exchange of ideas and commodities since ancient times.
* On the other hand, 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’s neighbours**

* India has 29 states and seven Union Territories.
* Pakistan and Afghanistan lie in the northwest, China (Tibet), Nepal and Bhutan lie in the north and Myanmar and Bangladesh are in the east.
* In the south we have 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.