LOTUSARISE IAS

MAINS 2027 EDITION

FREE SAMPLE

UPSC CSE MAINS

GEOGRAPHY OPTIONAL

PAPER II

Indian Geography Mapping Notes

For the compulsory map question of Paper II: mountains, rivers, coasts, protected areas, transport, energy and cultural sites, with all 132 places from the 2013 to 2026 papers located and explained.

Compiled by Arvind KrS

RELIEF · RIVERS · COASTS · PROTECTED AREAS · TRANSPORT · ENERGY · PLACES

38	8	132	243
Chapters	Units	Places from map questions	Diagrams and figures

IN THIS BOOK

01	Mountains and Highlands	02	Plains, Coasts and Islands
03	Rivers, Lakes and Water Projects	04	Protected Areas
05	Transport Links	06	Energy
07	Cities, Hill Stations and Heritage	08	The Map Question, Year by Year

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Updated to UPSC Mains 2026

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LOTUSARISE IAS

Geography Optional — Indian Geography Mapping

Paper II · Geography of India: Map Question

Mains 2027 Edition · Compiled November 2026

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Questions or corrections: support@lotusarise.com

The outline map of India on the cover and on the chapter and unit pages is decorative and not to scale.

How to read these notes

Every chapter is marked against the questions UPSC has actually asked on it, so the points that matter most stand out on the first read and are quick to find at revision.

India's only active volcano lies in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands: Barren Island.

Yellow marker: key point. A point that carries the ideas UPSC has asked about in this chapter. Read these first, and make sure each one is in your answer.

A gorge is a deep valley with very steep to straight sides.

Blue marker: definition. The cleanest definition of a term, ready to open an answer with.

A **glacier** is a mass of ice moving under its own weight.

Saffron underline: PYQ term. A key term or phrase that appears in this chapter's previous year questions.

Himalayan Rivers PYQ 2026 · 2025 · 2024 +7

PYQ tag on a heading. The years in which UPSC asked about this section. Sections without a tag are background or linking material.

PYQ RADAR **13** questions Last asked **2026**

PYQ radar. At the start of each chapter: how many times the topic has been asked, and how recently. The contents page shows the same count for every chapter.

Suggested method. First read: the whole chapter. Revision: the yellow and blue marks, the tagged headings and the PYQ list at the end of the chapter. Last week before Mains: the PYQ list alone, answering each question in your head from the marked points.

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Mountains and Highlands



Paper II: *Compulsory map question: relief features, peaks, passes and glaciers.*

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GEOGRAPHY OPTIONAL | PAPER II · MAPPING

Major Mountain Passes in India



PYQ RADAR **6** questions Last asked **2023** 2023 · 2022 · 2020 · 2016 · 2014 · 2013

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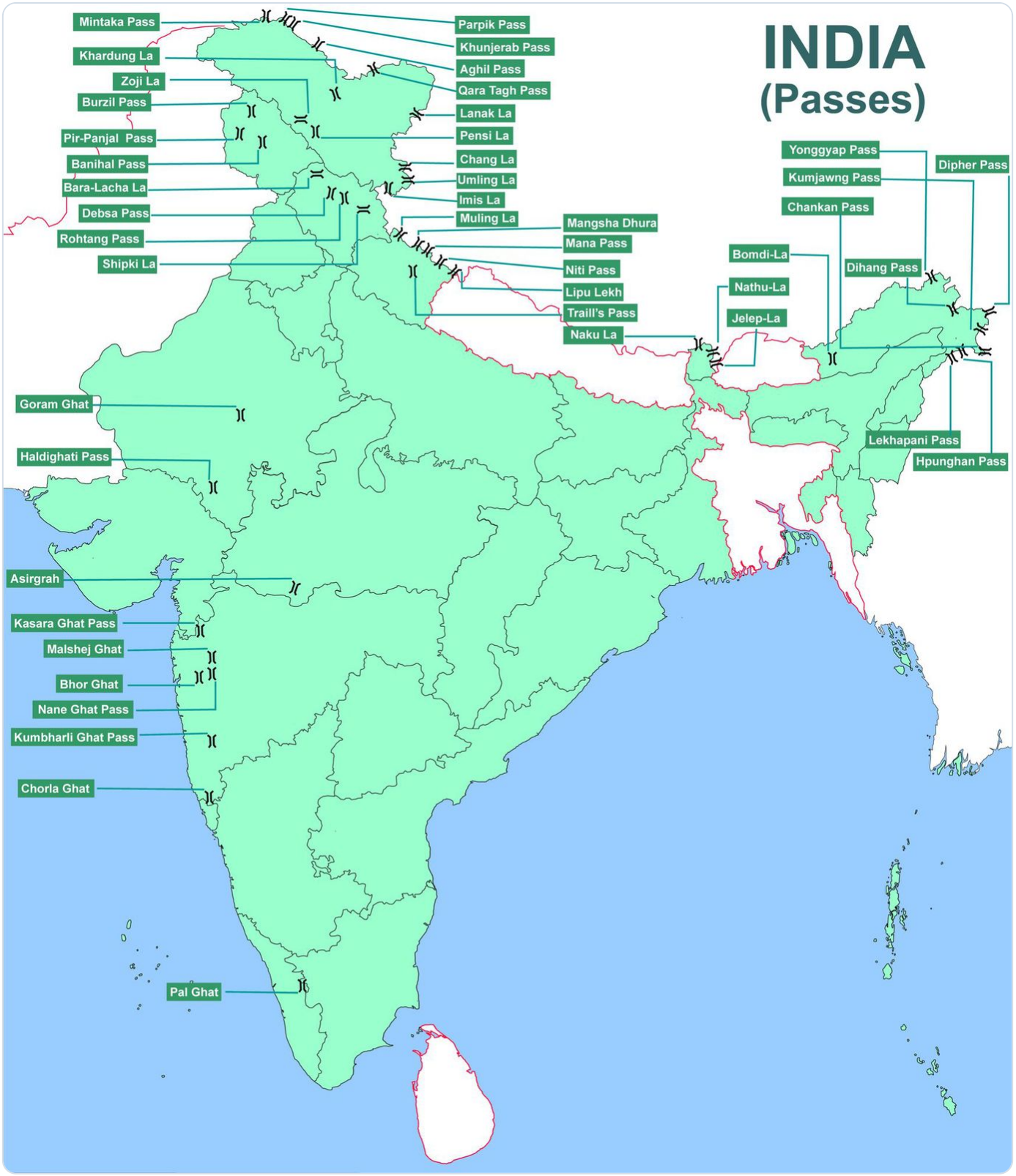
- A **mountain pass** is a **navigable route through a mountain range or over a ridge.** It serves as a gateway between parts of the country and between India and its neighbours. Passes across the **mountain chains** have shaped trade, war, pilgrimage and the migration of people and animals throughout history.
- India's passes fall into three sets: the **high Himalayan and Karakoram passes**, the **lower passes and gaps of the Peninsula**, and the north-western gateways that now lie in Pakistan.
- Local names show their setting: **La** is Tibetan for pass, **ghat** is used in the Western Ghats and the Aravalli, and gap marks a wide break in a range.

01 Meaning and Importance

What a Pass Is

- At lower elevations, a pass may be called a **hill** pass.
- Passes often lie **just above the source of a river**, and so form a **drainage divide**.
  - The **Chenab** starts near Bara Lacha La, and the Beas and Ravi near Rohtang.
  - **Mariam La** parts the source of the Brahmaputra from the Manasarovar basin.
  - The **Satluj** works the other way, as an antecedent river, also spelt Sutlej, that enters India near Shipki La.
- Form varies. A pass may be **very short**, with steep slopes up to its top, or a **valley many kilometres long**, whose highest point can be identified only by surveying.

- The **Greater Himalaya** is the hardest barrier. Its passes are generally **above 4,570 m** and snowbound for most of the year.
- Height alone does not rule a route. Rainfall, landslides, avalanches, dense forest and the political line can each close it.



- On this map, read **Asirgarh** for “Asirgrah”.

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Routes into India

- The northern mountain wall **isolates India without sealing it**. Settlers, invaders, traders and pilgrims crossed it in every age, and Indian commerce and culture went out by the same routes.
- **North:** three very high passes, **Muztagh, Karakoram and Changchemo**, gave little scope for movement, being given as over 6,000 m in older accounts. The Karakoram Pass is now put at 5,540 m.
- **Across the main range:** Burzil and Zoji La in the Kashmir section; Bara Lacha La and Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh; Thaga La, Niti and Lipu Lekh in Uttarakhand; Nathu La and Jelep La in Sikkim.
- **North-west:** the Hindukush is pierced by many passes that are snow-covered in winter but open in other seasons.
  - **Khyber, Malakand, Tochi, Gomal and Kohat** led from Afghanistan to the subcontinent.
  - The roads from **Herat and Seistan** meet at Quetta, above the Bolan Pass.
  - **Greeks, Huns, Turks and Mughals** came mainly by these routes, which is why the north-west shaped so much of India's political history.
- **North-east:** hills on the Myanmar border are low, rarely above 3,000 m, yet dense forest, heavy rain and swift rivers made them an effective barrier. Few outsiders crossed here.
  - The **Moreh–Tamu** road link between Manipur and Myanmar opened in 1995.
  - **Pangsau Pass** carried the Ledo (Stilwell) Road into Burma during the Second World War.

02 Passes of the Himalaya

PYQ 2016 · 2013

Jammu and Kashmir

- **Banihal Pass (2,832 m, 9,291 ft):** crosses the **Pir Panjal Range** and joins the Kashmir Valley with the outer Himalaya and the plains to the south.
  - In Kashmiri, **Banihal means "blizzard"**. It is snow-covered in winter.
  - **Jawahar Tunnel** (about 2.85 km), opened in December 1956, took the Jammu–Srinagar road under the pass.
  - The **Banihal–Qazigund road tunnel** (8.45 km) opened to traffic on trial in August 2021.
  - An **11 km rail tunnel** between Banihal and Qazigund opened in 2013. The **Udhampur–Srinagar–Baramulla line** was commissioned in June 2025.
- **Zoji La (about 3,528 m, 11,578 ft):** links **Srinagar with Kargil and Leh** on National Highway 1 (formerly NH-1D). Higher figures of 3,850 m and 12,400 ft appear in older accounts.
  - It lies on the boundary of **Ganderbal district (Jammu and Kashmir) and Kargil district (Ladakh)**, and is commonly placed at the western end of the Zaskar Range.
  - It is a **water parting**: the Sind runs west to the Jhelum, and the Dras runs east towards the Suru and the Indus.
  - The **Beacon Force** of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) clears and maintains the road. Snow has usually closed it from about December to mid-May.

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- **Pir Panjal Pass (about 3,480 m), or Peer Ki Gali:** the traditional crossing from Jammu to Srinagar on the **Mughal Road**, and the shortest road access from Jammu to the Valley.
  - It was closed after the Partition. The Mughal Road, joining Rajouri and Poonch with Shopian, now carries traffic again in the open season.

PHYSICAL SETTING · MOUNTAIN PASSES

Passes of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh

From the Pir Panjal to the Karakoram; Mintaka, Parpik, Khunjerab and Burzil lie in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, which is part of India.



Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet).

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Ladakh

- **Khardung La (5,359 m, 17,582 ft):** on the Ladakh Range, about 40 km north of Leh. It joins the **Indus and Shyok valleys**, and leads on to the Nubra valley and the Siachen Glacier.
  - BRO built the road in **1976**. It is closed in winter.
  - It was long advertised at **5,602 m (18,380 ft)** as the world's highest motorable road.
- **Taglang La, Tanglang La or Thang La (5,328 m, 17,480 ft):** on the **Leh–Manali Highway**. Once called the second-highest motorable pass in India, it has been passed by newer high roads.

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- **Umling La (19,024 ft, 5,799 m):** in eastern Ladakh near Demchok. Its road entered **Guinness World Records in November 2021** as the highest motorable road.
- **Mig La (about 19,400 ft):** BRO completed the 64 km **Likaru–Mig La–Fukche road** in October 2025, going higher still.
- **Chang La (5,360 m, 17,585 ft):** on the **Leh–Pangong Lake road**, between Leh and the Shyok valley in the Changthang side of Ladakh. It stays within Ladakh.
  - The road beyond it is very steep, and it is closed in winter. A temple to **Chang La Baba** stands at the top.
- **Lanak La (5,466 m, 17,933 ft):** India's boundary pass on the **Aksai Chin** side, under China's illegal occupation beyond the Line of Actual Control.
  - It was the old passage from Ladakh towards Lhasa. China built a **road joining Xinjiang with Tibet** across Aksai Chin in the 1950s.
- **Imis La (over 4,500 m):** on the old Ladakh–Tibet route near Hanle. Terrain and steep slopes make it hard, and winter closes it.
- **Pensi La (4,400 m):** on the **Kargil–Padum road**, known as the gateway to Zanskar. It joins the Suru valley with the Zanskar valley, and has been closed by snow from about November to mid-May.
- **Karakoram Pass (5,540 m):** the highest point on the old caravan route from Leh to **Yarkand**, on the boundary between Ladakh and Xinjiang.
  - **Saser La (5,411 m)** was the summer stage on the same route, from the Nubra valley into the upper Shyok.
  - **Qara Tag La** lay near it on an offshoot of the Silk Route, and is snowbound in winter.
- **Aghil Pass (about 5,000 m):** north of **K2 (Godwin-Austen)**, leading from the Shaksgam side to Xinjiang. It is closed from November to May.
  - Pakistan **illegally ceded the Shaksgam tract** to China in 1963, and India has never recognised that agreement.
- **Siachen passes on the Saltoro Ridge: Sia La, Bilafond La and Gyong La.** These have been held by India since **Operation Meghdoot (13 April 1984)**. Pakistan claims the area.
- **Line of Actual Control passes in eastern Ladakh:**
  - **Kongka La (5,171 m):** the site of the October 1959 attack on an Indian patrol, a turning point in the boundary dispute.
  - **Rezang La (about 5,500 m):** near Chushul, known for the battle of the 1962 war.
  - **Spanggur Gap (about 4,900 m):** south of Pangong Tso.
  - **Dehra Compass** was a caravan camp rather than a true pass, in Aksai Chin.

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PHYSICAL SETTING · MOUNTAIN PASSES

Passes of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh

From the Pir Panjal to the Karakoram; Mintaka, Parpik, Khunjerab and Burzil lie in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, which is part of India.



Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet).

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Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir

- These passes lie in territory that is part of India and under **Pakistan's illegal occupation**.
- **Burzil Pass (about 4,100 m):** on the historic **Srinagar–Gilgit route**. It leads from the Kishanganga side to the Astore valley, beside the Deosai Plains of Baltistan.
- **Khunjerab Pass (4,693 m):** on the **Karakoram Highway** between Hunza and Xinjiang. It serves China and Pakistan as a road link.
- **Mintaka Pass (4,709 m)** and **Parpik Pass:** further along the same line, near the old meeting point with Afghanistan and China.
  - Mintaka and the nearby Kilik were the old routes from the upper Hunza valley to the Pamir side.

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Himachal Pradesh

- **Rohtang Pass (3,978 m, 13,051 ft):** at the eastern end of the Pir Panjal, about **51 km from Manali**. It joins the Kullu valley with Lahaul and Spiti.
  - The name is usually read as "pile of corpses", a mark of its old danger.
  - It is on the Manali–Leh road. Military, public and tourist traffic long crowded it, until the **Atal Tunnel** (9.02 km) opened beneath it in October 2020.
- **Bara Lacha La (about 4,890 m, 16,040 ft):** on the **Leh–Manali Highway**, joining Lahaul in Himachal Pradesh with Leh district in Ladakh. It is placed in the Zaskar Range and carries snow in winter. An older height of 16,400 ft is also found.
- **Shipki La (about 3,930 m):** a border post on the **boundary with Tibet** in Kinnaur district, with a dozen substantial buildings. The Satluj enters India near it.
  - The old **Hindustan–Tibet Road**, from Shimla to Gartok, used it.
  - Local trade here has long been by **barter**.
- **Debsa Pass (about 5,360 m, 17,590 ft):** between the **Kullu and Spiti** districts, joining the Parvati valley with Spiti. It gives an easier and shorter option to the older Pin–Parvati Pass. Older figures are 5,270 m and 17,520 ft.
- **Other passes:** Kunzum (4,551 m) between Lahaul and Spiti; Shinku La or Shingo La (5,091 m) between Lahaul and Zanskar; Indrahar (4,342 m) in the Dhauladhar; Chanshal (3,749 m) in Shimla district; Lamkhaga (5,282 m) between Kinnaur and Harsil.

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PHYSICAL SETTING · MOUNTAIN PASSES

Passes of Himachal Pradesh

Rohtang, Bara Lacha La and Debsa Pass inside the State, and Shipki La on the boundary with Tibet.



Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet).

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Uttarakhand

- **Lipu Lekh (about 5,334 m, 17,500 ft):** in **Pithoragarh district**, near the trijunction of India, Tibet and Nepal. It joins Uttarakhand with Tibet towards Taklakot (Purang), and is a border trading post and the **Kailash Manasarovar** route.
  - Landslides in the rains and avalanches in winter make it hard.
  - Nepal claims the area south of the pass. India holds that Kalapani is part of Pithoragarh district.
- **Mana Pass (about 5,632 m, 18,478 ft):** just north of **Badrinath**, in Chamoli district, on the boundary with Tibet.
  - **BRO built a road** here for the military between 2005 and 2010, which rises to about 5,610 m. It is among the world's highest vehicle-accessible passes.
  - Snow closes it for about **six months** a year.
- **Niti Pass (about 5,068 m):** in the Greater Himalaya, joining Uttarakhand with Tibet. Some accounts give 5,800 m. It is snow-covered in winter, from about November to mid-May.
- **Mangsha Dhura (over 5,000 m):** in Pithoragarh district, at the head of the **Kuthi valley**. It was also a Manasarovar route, and landslides trouble it.
- **Muling La (5,669 m):** north of Gangotri, a seasonal pass to Tibet that snow closes in winter.

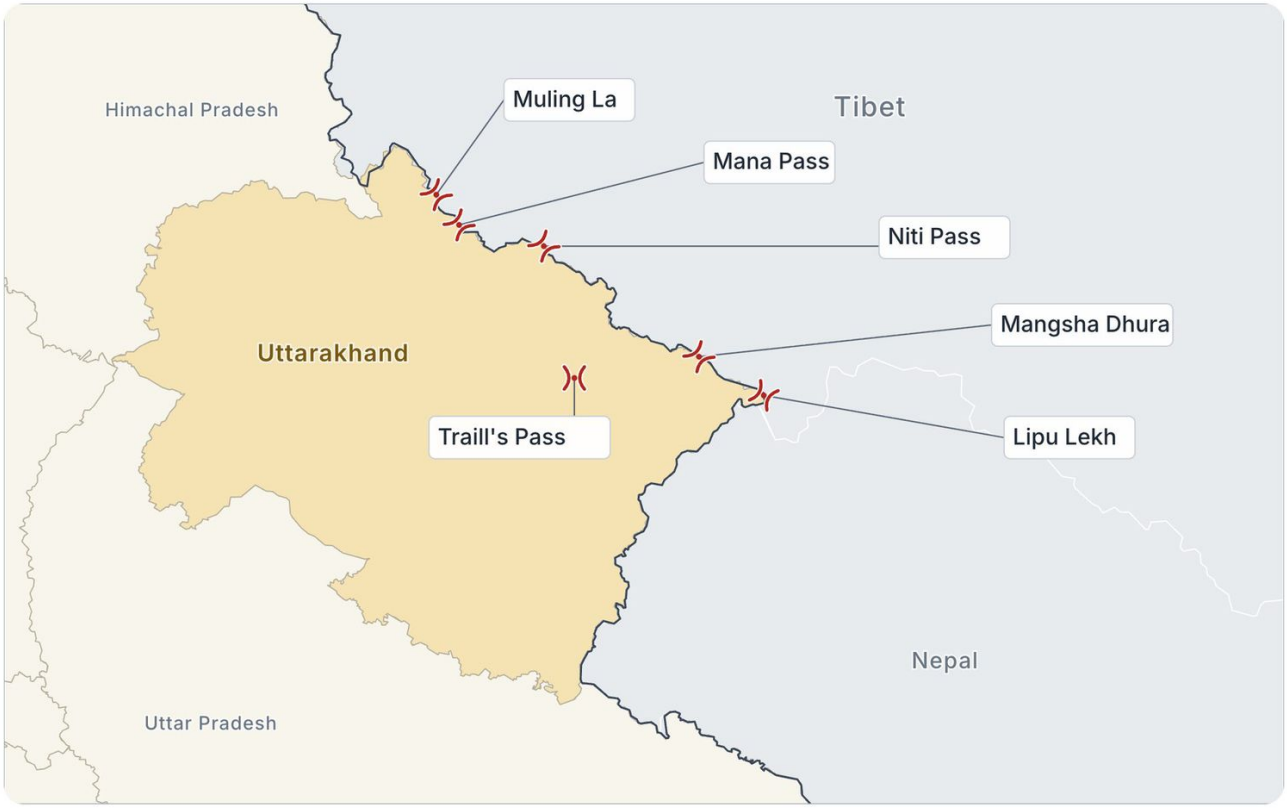
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- **Traill's Pass (5,212 m, 17,100 ft):** beyond the head of the **Pindari Glacier**, leading across to the Milam valley, on the Bageshwar–Pithoragarh line. It is steep and rugged, and is a mountaineers' crossing rather than a trade route.
- **Other names of this frontier:** Thaga La, Marhi La, Kungri Bingri, Darma, Lampiya Dhura, Sin La, Auden's Col and Mayali.

PHYSICAL SETTING · MOUNTAIN PASSES

Passes of Uttarakhand

Five passes on the boundary with Tibet, and Traill's Pass between the Pindari and Milam valleys.



Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet). lotusarise.com

Sikkim

- **Nathu La (4,310 m, 14,140 ft):** in the **Dongkya Range**, in East Sikkim district, on the boundary with Tibet. It leads into the lower Chumbi valley.
  - In Tibetan, **Nathu means "listening ears" and La means "pass"**.
  - It was an offshoot of the old **Silk Route**. It closed after the 1962 war and reopened for trade in 2006.
- **Jelep La (about 4,386 m, 14,390 ft):** about 4 km south of Nathu La and a little higher. An older figure is 4,267 m (13,999 ft).
  - It passes through the **Chumbi valley**, on the route that linked Kalimpong with Lhasa, and carried much of British India's Tibet trade.

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- **Others:** Goecha La (4,940 m), with its view of Kanchenjunga; Dongkha La (about 5,534 m); Naku La on the northern frontier.

Arunachal Pradesh and the Myanmar Border

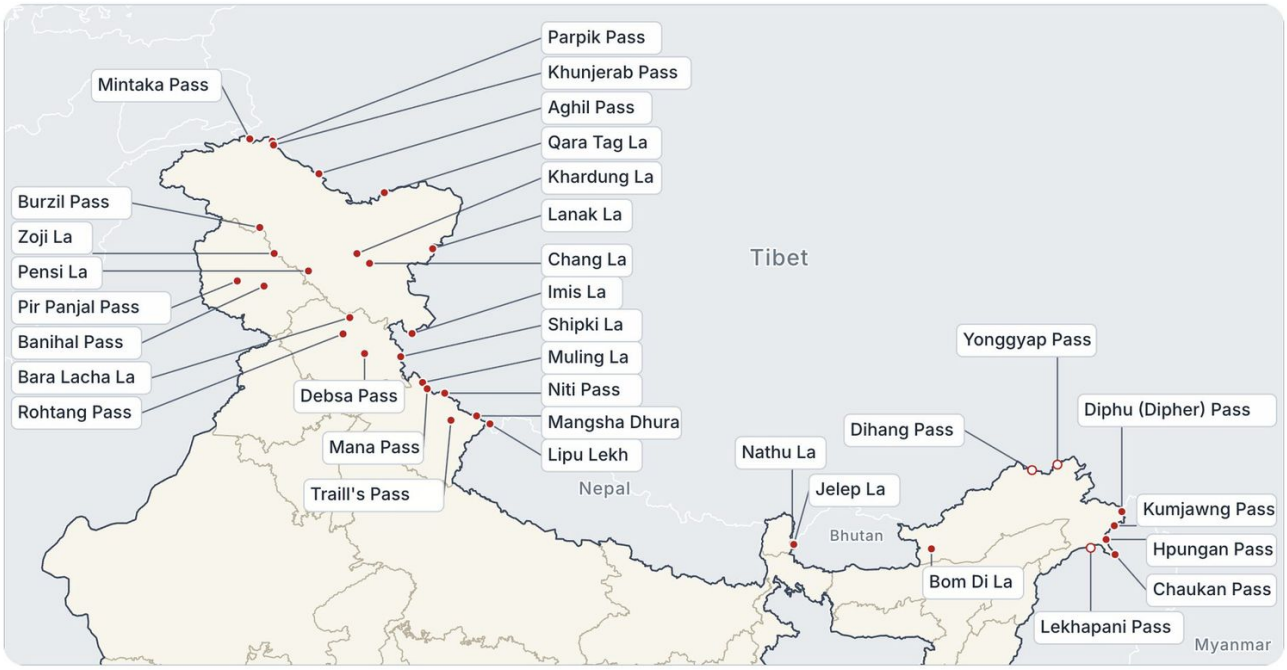
- Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India. China's claim to it is rejected by India, which treats the **McMahon Line (1914)** as the boundary.
- **Bom Di La:** on the road to Tawang in West Kameng district, east of Bhutan. Older accounts give it 4,331 m and describe it as the way to Lhasa. **Bomdila town** itself stands at about 2,415 m.
- **Bum La (about 15,200 ft):** the actual **border pass**, 37 km from Tawang. It is a trading point and an agreed Border Personnel Meeting Point with China.
- **Sela or Se La (about 4,170 m, 13,700 ft):** on the Tawang road, between Tawang and West Kameng districts. It saw hard fighting in the **1962 war**. The Sela Tunnel now bypasses it.
- **Yonggyap Pass (3,962 m):** on the boundary with Tibet in the far north.
- **Dihang Pass (over 4,000 m):** on the upper Dihang, giving passage towards Myanmar and Mandalay.
- **Diphu or Dipher Pass (4,587 m):** on the India–Myanmar border, and a strategic approach to eastern Arunachal Pradesh.
  - China and Burma took their border to Diphu Pass under their treaty of **October 1960**. This lies about five miles south of the watershed.
  - India objected. The point where **India, Tibet and Myanmar meet lies near the Talu Pass, about five miles north of the Diphu Pass**, on the watershed, so the two are separate places. The question is now part of the wider India–China dispute.
- **Kumjawng Pass (2,929 m), Hpungan Pass (3,072 m) and Chaukan Pass (2,432 m):** on the India–Myanmar border, joining Arunachal Pradesh with Myanmar.
- **Pangsau Pass (1,136 m, 3,727 ft):** on the crest of the **Patkai Hills**, and one of the easiest routes into Myanmar from the Assam plains. It is named after Pangsau village, 2 km beyond it.
- **Lekhapani (Likhapani) Pass**, on the same frontier, also leads to Myanmar.

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PHYSICAL SETTING · MOUNTAIN PASSES

Passes of the Himalaya in India

From the Karakoram and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and the Myanmar border.



Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet). Schematic: a hollow mark shows a generalised position.

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PHYSICAL SETTING · MOUNTAIN PASSES

Passes of Arunachal Pradesh and the Myanmar Border

Bom Di La on the Tawang road, passes on the boundary with Tibet, and the crossings into Myanmar.



Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet). Schematic: a mark with a hollow centre shows a generalised position. lotusarise.com

Tunnels, All-Weather Roads and Border Work

- High passes close for months. The present strategy is to **tunnel under them and keep strategic roads open all year**.

WORK	PASS OR ROUTE	LENGTH	POSITION (DATE)
Atal Tunnel	Rohtang	9.02 km	Open since October 2020
Sela Tunnel	Se La, Tawang road	About 13,000 ft site	Dedicated 9 March 2024
Sonamarg (Z-Morh) Tunnel	Gagangir to Sonamarg	About 6.4–6.5 km	Inaugurated 13 January 2025
Zojila Tunnel	Zoji La, Sonamarg to Dras side	About 13.15 km	Breakthrough 9 June 2026; opening targeted for February 2028

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WORK	PASS OR ROUTE	LENGTH	POSITION (DATE)
Shinku La Tunnel	Nimmu–Padum–Darcha road	About 4.1 km	Under construction; target 2028
Likaru–Mig La–Fukche road	Mig La	64 km	Completed October 2025

- The earlier Zojila target of 2026 was moved back. With the Sonamarg tunnel, it is meant to give the **Srinagar–Leh axis all-weather road access**.
- The **Nimmu–Padum–Darcha road** gives a further route to Ladakh, away from the frontier. Work on it is under BRO's **Project Yojak**.
- **BRO** was set up in **1960**, and its **frontier road work** is central to all of these.
- Mountain roads also bring costs: landslides, slope loss and heavy traffic in a **fragile mountain setting**.

Trade and Pilgrimage in the Present

- **Border trade** with Tibet runs through three agreed points: **Lipulekh, Shipki La and Nathu La**. India dates trade through Lipulekh to 1954. In modern times it reopened at Lipulekh in 1992 and Shipki La in 1994, and began at Nathu La in 2006.
  - It stopped in **2020**. At the Special Representatives' talks of 19 August 2025, the two countries agreed to reopen it.
  - Seasonal trade resumed at **Nathu La and Shipki La on 1 August 2026**, after about six years, and at Lipulekh in the same season.
- **Kailash Manasarovar Yatra:** resumed in **2025** after a gap of five years.
  - In **2026**, the Ministry of External Affairs chose 1,000 pilgrims in 20 batches of 50, with ten batches each through Lipulekh and Nathu La, from June to August.
- **Nepal's claim:** on **3 May 2026** Nepal objected to the yatra through Lipulekh. India replied that trade through the pass has run since 1954, and called the claim a "unilateral artificial enlargement". The **international boundary** with Nepal turns on the source of the Kali.

03 Passes of the Peninsula

PYQ 2016 · 2013

- These are lower and open most of the year. Their importance lies in **joining coast and plateau, or north India and the Deccan**.

Western Ghats

- **Thal Ghat, also Thul or Kasara Ghat (about 585 m):** near **Kasara** in Maharashtra on the Mumbai–Nashik road. It is one of the four main road and rail routes into Mumbai.
  - The railway climbs it at a **gradient of 1 in 37**, among the steepest on India's main lines. The rack section of the Nilgiri Mountain Railway is steeper still.

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- **Bhor Ghat, also Bor or Bhore Ghat (about 622 m):** on the crest between **Palasdari and Khandala by rail**, and Khopoli and Khandala by road. An older height is 441 m.
  - It joins Mumbai and Pune. It was an ancient route developed by the **Satavahanas**, linking Konkan ports such as Chaul, Revdanda and Panvel with the Deccan.
  - The **Great Indian Peninsula Railway** later took its Mumbai–Pune line through it.
  - The **Mumbai–Pune Expressway's 13.3 km "Missing Link"** between Khopoli and Kusgaon opened on 1 May 2026, bypassing the ghat stretch.
- **Thal and Bhor** give road and rail passage between the **Konkan and the Deccan**.
- **Naneghat (about 750 m):** between the **Konkan coast and Junnar** in Pune district, on the old trade route.
  - **Nane means "coin" and ghat means "pass"**, because tolls were taken here. Its cave holds Satavahana inscriptions of the 2nd–1st century BCE.
- **Malshej Ghat:** in the Sahyadri, known for birds such as **quails, rails, crakes, flamingos and cuckoos**.
- **Tamhini Ghat:** between **Mulshi and Tamhini** in Pune district, known for green slopes, misty roads and waterfalls.
- **Amba Ghat (about 2,000 ft):** on the **Ratnagiri–Kolhapur** road, known for its scenery, pleasant climate and paragliding.
- **Kumbharli Ghat (about 625 m):** between **Ratnagiri district in the Konkan and Satara district in the Desh**, on the Chiplun–Karad road near the Koyna Dam.
- **Amboli Ghat:** joins **Sawantwadi with Belgaum (Belagavi)**, and is noted for heavy rain, wildlife, dense forest, waterfalls and the Hiranyakeshi temple.
- **Chorla Ghat (about 800 m):** where **Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra** meet, about 50 km from Panaji and 55 km from Belgaum. It is known for the barred wolf snake (*Lycodon striatus*).
- **Palghat or Palakkad Gap (about 140 m):** between the **Nilgiri Hills to the north and the Anaimalai Hills to the south**, joining Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu with Palakkad in Keralam (Kerala).
  - This is the **main break in the Western Ghats**. It is 24–30 km wide, and the land in it runs from 75 to 300 m, against bordering hills of 1,500–2,000 m.
  - It is probably a **rift valley**, formed by subsidence between two faults.
  - Road and rail routes pass through it. It lets **south-west monsoon moisture** reach some way inland, towards the rain-shadow plateau.
  - It has carried **human migration** across the southern tip throughout settled history.
- **Shencottah (Shenkottai) Gap:** joins **Madurai in Tamil Nadu with Kottayam in Keralam**.
  - This is described as the **second-largest gap** in the Western Ghats. It lies about 5 km from Shencottah town.
  - Road and rail lines through it join **Shencottah with Punalur**.
- **Thamarassery Pass:** on the road from the Kozhikode plain up to Wayanad, between old **Malabar and Mysore**.

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PHYSICAL SETTING · MOUNTAIN PASSES

Passes of the Peninsula

Ghats and gaps of the Aravalli, the Satpura and the Western Ghats, joining coast and plateau or north India and the Deccan.



Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet).

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Satpura and Central India

- **Asirgarh Pass (about 260 m):** in the **Satpura Range** in Madhya Pradesh, joining the Narmada and Tapi valleys.
  - It is known as the **"Key to the Deccan"**, as one of the main routes from north India to the south. The Asirgarh Fort, about 20 km north of Burhanpur, overlooks it.
  - In the Mughal era, **Hindustan was taken to run from Delhi to Asirgarh**, and the land beyond it was the Deccan.

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- **Burhanpur Gap:** in Burhanpur district, where the **Tapi and the Satpura** act as natural limits. It lies north of the Tapi valley and carries National Highway 52 and main railway lines between the Ganga plain and the Deccan.
- **Khandwa Gap:** at **Khandwa**, a city in the Nimar region of Madhya Pradesh. It is a large railway junction, where the Malwa line from Indore meets the Mumbai–Kolkata line.
- **Jabalpur Gap:** named after **Jabalpur (formerly Jubbulpore)**, a tier-2 city of Madhya Pradesh on the Narmada.

Aravalli

- **Haldighati Pass:** between Rajsamand and Udaipur districts, about **40 km from Udaipur**.
  - The name comes from its **turmeric-coloured soil** (*haldi* in Hindi).
  - The **Battle of Haldighati (1576)** was fought here between Maharana Pratap of Mewar and the army of Emperor Akbar.
  - The Government of India commissioned the **Maharana Pratap National Memorial** here in 1997, with a bronze statue of his horse Chetak.
- **Goram Ghat:** on the Rajsamand–Pali border, joining **Mewar and Marwar**.
  - A railway line here crosses **2 tunnels and 172 bridges**.
  - It has dense **Dhok forest**, medicinal plants, and animals such as sloth bears, leopards and wild boars.

04 Passes Beyond the Frontier

- These lie today in **Pakistan**, but they have shaped Indian history.

Khyber Pass

- It lies in **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan**, on the border with **Afghanistan (Nangarhar Province)**, at about 1,070 m.
- It joins **Landi Kotal with the Valley of Peshawar at Jamrud**, across part of the **Spin Ghar (Safed Koh)** mountains.
- It was a part of the ancient **Silk Road**, with lasting cultural, economic and geopolitical value for Eurasian trade.
- Through history, it has been a main trade route between Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent, and a **strategic military choke point** for the powers that held it.

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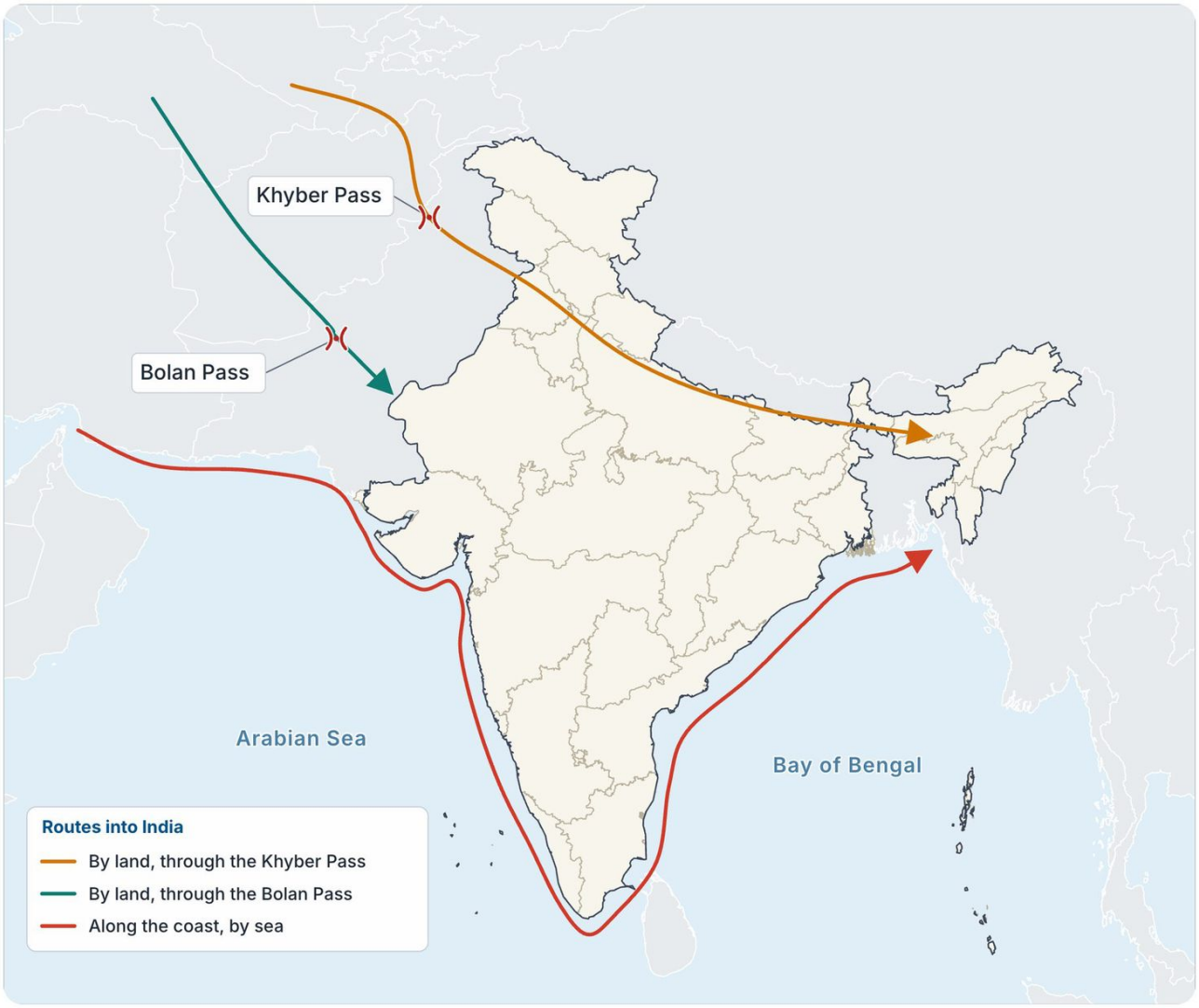


- On this map, read **Afghanistan** for “Afganistan” and **Gujarat** for “Gujrat”. It also marks the Gomal Pass to the south.

PHYSICAL SETTING · MOUNTAIN PASSES

Routes into India through Khyber and Bolan

Land routes from the north-west through the two passes, with the sea route round the Peninsula.



Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet). Schematic: routes are generalised.

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Bolan Pass

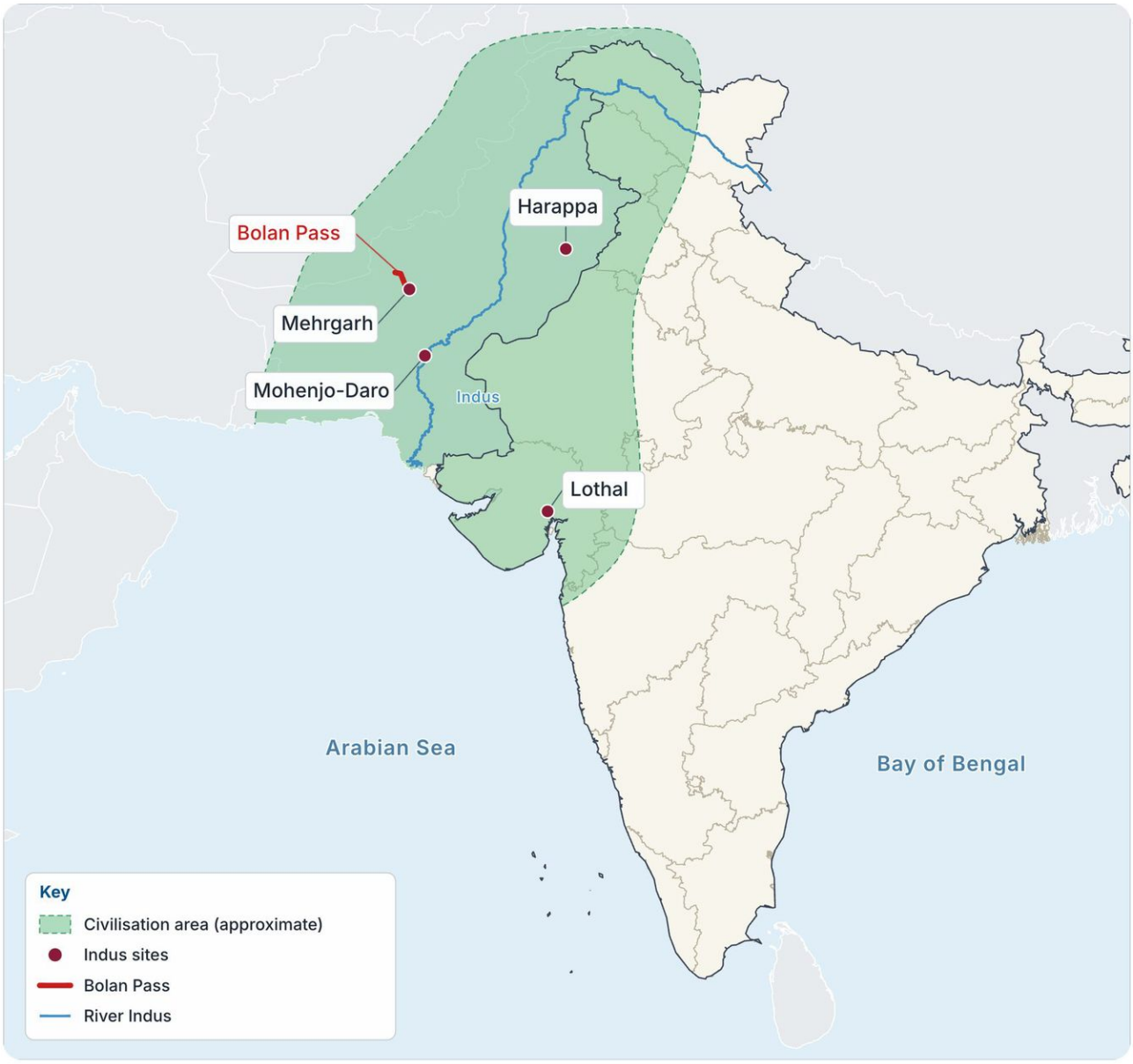
- It runs through the **Toba Kakar Range** of **Balochistan province** in western Pakistan, about 120 km from the Afghanistan border, at about 1,793 m. These mountains form a southern offshoot of the Himalayan arc.
- It is an **89 km stretch of the Bolan river valley**, from **Rindli in the south to Darwaza near Kolpur in the north**, made up of narrow gorges and stretches.
- It lies **south-east of Quetta**, and joins Quetta with Sibi by road and rail.
- **Mehrgarh**, an early farming site of the subcontinent, lies near it.

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PHYSICAL SETTING · MOUNTAIN PASSES

Bolan Pass and the Indus Civilisation

Mehrgarh, an early farming site, lies near the pass; Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro and Lothal mark the civilisation area.



Boundaries: Survey of India outline (datameet). Schematic: the shaded limits are generalised. lotusarise.com

05 List of Major Mountain Passes in India

- Heights are in feet. Where an older figure differs, it stands in brackets.

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NAME	STATE OR UT	HEIGHT (FT)	BETWEEN OR SEPARATING
Asirgarh	Madhya Pradesh	about 850	Narmada and Tapi valleys
Auden's Col	Uttarakhand	18,010 (17,552)	Rudugaira and Bhilangna valleys
Banihal Pass	Jammu and Kashmir	9,291	Jammu and Kashmir Valley
Bara Lacha La	Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh	16,040 (16,400)	Lahaul and Leh
Bilafond La	Ladakh (Siachen)	17,881	Saltoro Ridge
Bomdila	Arunachal Pradesh	–	Road to Tawang
Chang La	Ladakh	17,585	Leh and Changthang
Chanshal Pass	Himachal Pradesh	12,300 (peak 14,830)	Rohru and Dodra Kwar
Debsa Pass	Himachal Pradesh	17,590 (17,520)	Kullu and Spiti
Dehra Compass	Ladakh (Aksai Chin)	Camp site	Old caravan route
Dhumdhar Kandi Pass	Uttarakhand	–	–
Diphu Pass	Arunachal Pradesh	15,049 (4,587 m)	India and Myanmar
Dongkha La	Sikkim	18,156 (12,000)	Sikkim and Tibet
Fotu La	Ladakh	13,478 (13,451)	Kargil and Leh; highest on the highway
Goecha La	Sikkim	16,207	Trek pass below Kanchenjunga
Gyong La	Ladakh (Siachen)	18,655	Saltoro Ridge
Haldighati Pass	Rajasthan	About 1,227	Rajsamand and Udaipur
Indrahar Pass	Himachal Pradesh	14,245 (14,473)	Kangra and Chamba
Jelep La	Sikkim	14,390 (14,300)	Sikkim and Tibet
Karakoram Pass	Ladakh	18,176	Ladakh and Xinjiang

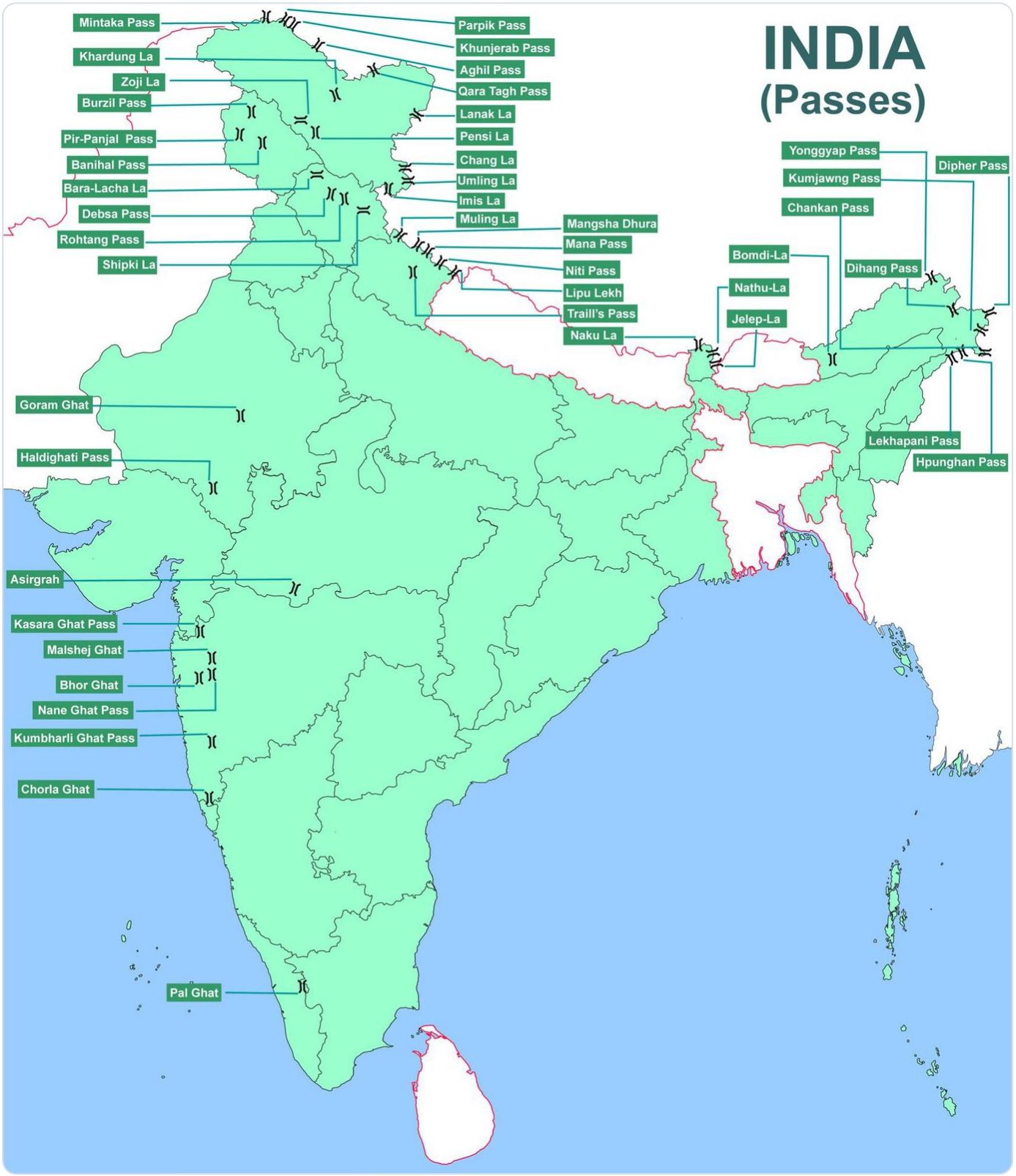
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NAME	STATE OR UT	HEIGHT (FT)	BETWEEN OR SEPARATING
Khardung La	Ladakh	17,582	Leh and Nubra
Kongka Pass	Ladakh	16,965	Ladakh and Aksai Chin
Kunzum Pass	Himachal Pradesh	14,931	Lahaul and Spiti
Lamkhaga Pass	Himachal Pradesh	17,320 (17,336)	Kinnaur and Harsil
Lanak Pass	Ladakh	17,933	Ladakh and Tibet
Lipulekh Pass	Uttarakhand	17,500	Uttarakhand and Tibet
Lungalacha La	Ladakh	16,600	Leh–Manali road
Mana Pass	Uttarakhand	18,478	Uttarakhand and Tibet
Marsimik La	Ladakh	18,314	Chang Chenmo Range
Mayali Pass	Uttarakhand	16,371	Garhwal Himalaya
Mig La	Ladakh	about 19,400	Likaru and Fukche
Nama Pass	Uttarakhand	17,100 (18,399)	Pithoragarh district
Namika La	Ladakh	12,139	Kargil and Leh
Nathu La	Sikkim	14,140	Sikkim and Tibet
Niti Pass	Uttarakhand	About 16,627 (19,029)	Uttarakhand and Tibet
Palakkad Gap	Keralam, Tamil Nadu	About 460 (750)	Keralam and Tamil Nadu
Pensi La	Ladakh	14,400	Suru and Zanskar
Rezang La	Ladakh	About 18,045	Chushul valley
Rohtang Pass	Himachal Pradesh	13,051	Manali and Lahaul
Sasser La	Ladakh	17,753	Nubra and upper Shyok
Sela Pass	Arunachal Pradesh	13,700 (14,000)	Tawang and West Kameng

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NAME	STATE OR UT	HEIGHT (FT)	BETWEEN OR SEPARATING
Shenkottai Pass	Keralam, Tamil Nadu	690	Travancore and Tamil Nadu; near Kollam
Shingo La	Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh	16,703	Lahaul and Zanskar
Shipki La	Himachal Pradesh	About 12,894	Himachal Pradesh and Tibet
Sia La	Ladakh (Siachen)	18,337	Saltoro Ridge
Sin La	Uttarakhand	–	Pithoragarh district
Spangur Gap	Ladakh	About 16,100	Ladakh and Tibet
Tanglang La	Ladakh	17,480 (17,583)	Leh–Manali road
Thamarassery Pass	Keralam	1,700	Malabar and Mysore; Wayanad
Traill's Pass	Uttarakhand	17,100	Pindari and Milam valleys
Umling La	Ladakh	19,024	Chisumle and Demchok
Zoji La	Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh	11,578 (12,400)	Kashmir and Ladakh

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Previous Year Questions

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2023	Map item: Nathula
2022	Map item: Bomdila
2020	Map item: Bum La
2016	Map item: Nathu La Pass
2014	Map item: Bhor Ghat
2013	Map item: Lipulekh Pass

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UNIT 08 | 1 CHAPTER | PAPER II

The Map Question, Year by Year

Paper II: *Compulsory map question: every place set from 2013 to 2026, with location and significance.*



CHAPTERS

38 The Map Question: Every Place, 2013 to 2026 651

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GEOGRAPHY OPTIONAL
PAPER II · MAPPING

The Map Question: Every Place, 2013 to 2026



PYQ RADAR **17** questions Last asked **2026**

2026 · 2025 · 2024 · 2023 · 2022 · 2021 · 2020 · 2019 · 2018 · 2017 · 2016 · 2015 ×2 · 2014 ×2 · 2013 ×2

CONTENTS

01	Places in 2026	02	Places in 2025
03	Places in 2024	04	Places in 2023
05	Places in 2022	06	Places in 2021
07	Places in 2020	08	Places in 2019
09	Places in 2018	10	Places in 2017
11	Places in 2016	12	Places in 2015
13	Places in 2014	14	Places in 2013
15	Places That Have Repeated	16	Previous Year Questions

- **Question 1(a) of Paper II** sets a map exercise: mark places on the outline map of India and write the significance of each in not more than 30 words, for 2 marks each.
- This chapter gives **every place from 2013 to 2026**, year by year: 140 entries and 132 different places.
- In 2013, 2014 and 2015 the ten places were split, five in Question 1 and five in Question 5.

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01 Places in 2026

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Bitra Island	Lakshadweep	Smallest inhabited island of the group, with a large lagoon; a 2025 proposal sought its land for defence use.
Lohit River	Arunachal Pradesh and Assam	Enters India from Tibet near Kibithu and joins the Brahmaputra system near Sadiya; Parshuram Kund and the Dhola-Sadiya Bridge lie on it.
Dras	Kargil district, Ladakh	Town beyond Zoji La on the Srinagar-Leh highway; among the coldest inhabited places in India; Kargil War Memorial of the 1999 conflict.
Kuno National Park	Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh	Site of Project Cheetah since September 2022, when cheetahs from Africa were reintroduced; dry deciduous forest and grassland on the Kuno River.
Yadadri	Telangana	Yadagirigutta temple town of Lakshmi Narasimha, rebuilt in stone and reopened in 2022; the name also marks the Yadadri Thermal Power Station in Nalgonda.
Mahi Basin	Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat	West-flowing river from the Vindhyas to the Gulf of Khambhat, crossing the Tropic of Cancer twice; Mahi Bajaj Sagar and Kadana dams.
Tamralipta	Tamluk, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal	Ancient port on the Rupnarayan, linking Bengal with Sri Lanka and South-East Asia in early historic times.
Toranmal	Nandurbar district, Maharashtra	Satpura hill station at about 1,150 m around Yashwant Lake, in a tribal belt; one of the state's highest hill stations.
Raya Heritage City	Raya, near Mathura, Uttar Pradesh	Planned heritage and tourism township of the Yamuna Expressway authority, linked to the Braj pilgrimage circuit and the expressway.
Varkala	Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala	Laterite and sedimentary cliffs rising directly above the Arabian Sea beach, a recognised geo-heritage site; Papanasam beach and Sivagiri Mutt.

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02 Places in 2025

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Rushikulya River	Odisha	Rises in the Eastern Ghats near Daringbadi and meets the Bay of Bengal in Ganjam; its mouth is a mass nesting site of olive ridley turtles.
Datar Hill	Girnar, near Junagadh, Gujarat	One of the principal Girnar peaks at about 847 m, with the Jamiyal Shah Datar shrine revered by Hindus and Muslims alike.
Kikruma	Phek district, Nagaland	Chakhesang village where Zabo farming developed: rainwater ponds, paddy, fish and livestock combined on a hilltop in rain shadow.
Choritand Tilaiya	West Bokaro coalfield, Bokaro district, Jharkhand	Coal block of the Damodar valley Gondwana belt, allotted for captive mining by steel producers.
Byalalu	Near Bengaluru, Karnataka	Indian Deep Space Network of the space programme; its large antennas tracked the Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan missions.
Neyyar	Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala	River, dam and wildlife sanctuary in the Agasthyamala landscape of the southern Western Ghats; supplies irrigation and has a crocodile rehabilitation centre.
Uttarlai	Barmer district, Rajasthan	Indian Air Force base in the Thar Desert close to the Pakistan border, important for western air defence.
Sri Vijayapuram	South Andaman, Andaman and Nicobar Islands	Capital of the Union Territory, named Port Blair until 2024; main port and airport, and a strategic base in the Bay of Bengal.
Dharwas	Pangi valley, Chamba district, Himachal Pradesh	Remote settlement at about 2,400 m in the far north of the state, in the Chenab valley between the Pir Panjal and Zanskar; known for the Tilmili mineral spring.
Gitabitan	Near Santiniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal	State township project of about 100 acres with a culture and tourism focus, named after Rabindranath Tagore's collection of songs.

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03 Places in 2024

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Lunkaransar	Bikaner district, Rajasthan	Thar playa that once yielded salt; canal irrigation has made the area known for groundnut.
Gua	West Singhbhum, Jharkhand	Iron ore mine of the public-sector steel industry in the Singhbhum-Keonjhar belt.
Raidak River	Bhutan, West Bengal and Assam	Called the Wang Chhu in Bhutan, where the Chukha hydro project stands; joins the Brahmaputra after crossing the Duars.
Ekta Nagar	Kevadia, Narmada district, Gujarat	Site of the 182 m Statue of Unity near the Sardar Sarovar Dam; planned tourism township on the Narmada.
Chandanwari	Near Pahalgam, Anantnag, Jammu and Kashmir	Starting point of the Amarnath Yatra trek on the Pahalgam route, in the Lidder valley.
Babina	Jhansi district, Uttar Pradesh	Cantonment with field firing ranges on the Bundelkhand plateau, used for armoured exercises.
Tatipaka	Konaseema, Andhra Pradesh	Mini refinery of the national oil company in the Krishna-Godavari basin, in the Godavari delta.
Along Airport	Aalo, West Siang, Arunachal Pradesh	Advanced Landing Ground serving the Siang valley close to the China border; strategic and civil use.
Karaikal	Puducherry Union Territory, on the Tamil Nadu coast	Former French enclave in the Kaveri delta, with a port handling coal and bulk cargo.
Panna	Madhya Pradesh	India's main diamond belt at Majhgawan, along with a tiger reserve and biosphere reserve on the Ken River.

04 Places in 2023

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Nathu La	Sikkim, on the boundary with Tibet	Pass at about 4,310 m on an old silk route; border trade reopened in 2006 and it carries the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.
Hutti	Raichur district, Karnataka	India's main working gold mine, in the Archaean Hutti-Maski greenstone belt.

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PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Ross Island	Off Sri Vijaya Puram, Andaman and Nicobar Islands	British administrative seat of the penal settlement; renamed Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep in 2018.
Moreh	Tengnoupal district, Manipur	Border trade town opposite Tamu in Myanmar, on the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway; a gateway of the Act East policy.
Ramappa	Palampet, Mulugu district, Telangana	Kakatiya Rudreshwara Temple of the 13th century, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2021, with a medieval irrigation lake beside it.
Namdapha National Park	Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh	Tiger reserve on the Noa-Dihing with a wide altitude range; known for four big cats and the hoolock gibbon.
Sela Tunnel	West Kameng, Arunachal Pradesh	Twin-tube road tunnel at about 13,000 ft, opened in March 2024, giving all-weather access to Tawang.
Ennore Port	North of Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Kamarajar Port, the first major port run as a company; handles coal, petroleum and cars, and eases load on Chennai.
Ramagundam	Peddapalli district, Telangana	Godavari-side power and industrial centre: NTPC super thermal station, a 100 MW floating solar plant, a revived fertiliser plant, and Singareni coal.
Betwa River	Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh	Yamuna tributary from the Vindhyas, joining at Hamirpur; Rajghat and Matatila dams; receiving river of the Ken-Betwa link.

05 Places in 2022

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Tharangambadi (Tranquebar)	Mayiladuthurai district, Tamil Nadu	Danish trading settlement from 1620 on the Coromandel Coast; Dansborg Fort survives; the coast was badly hit by the 2004 tsunami.
Mahe	Puducherry Union Territory, within Kerala	Former French enclave on the Malabar Coast at the mouth of the Mayyazhi River; fishing and small port.
Bomdila	West Kameng, Arunachal Pradesh	District headquarters at about 2,400 m on the road to Tawang; Buddhist monasteries; a battleground in 1962.

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PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Dhola Sadiya Bridge	Across the Lohit, Assam-Arunachal Pradesh	Bhupen Hazarika Setu, 9.15 km long, opened in 2017; among India's longest river bridges and of strategic value for the eastern border.
Talakaveri	Brahmagiri hills, Kodagu, Karnataka	Traditional source of the Kaveri, a pilgrimage centre in the Western Ghats.
Satkosia	Angul district, Odisha	Mahanadi gorge cutting the Eastern Ghats, about 22 km long; tiger reserve and gharial habitat.
Dholavira	Khadir Bet, Kutch, Gujarat	Major Harappan city known for its water management; a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2021.
Sonamarg	Ganderbal district, Jammu and Kashmir	Sindh valley hill resort on the way to Zoji La and Baltal; the Z-Morh Tunnel, opened in 2025, keeps it open all year.
Maliku Atoll	Minicoy, Lakshadweep	Southernmost atoll of the group, between the Eight Degree and Nine Degree Channels, close to busy sea lanes; Mahl-speaking people.
Gangasagar	Sagar Island, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal	Where the Hooghly meets the Bay of Bengal; Kapil Muni Temple draws a large Makar Sankranti pilgrimage; the island faces erosion.

06 Places in 2021

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Ziro Valley	Lower Subansiri, Arunachal Pradesh	Apatani plateau with wet paddy-cum-fish cultivation and no draught animals; on India's tentative list for World Heritage.
Khecheopalri Lake	West Sikkim	Sacred lake to Buddhists and Hindus, in a forested basin, protected by local custom.
Toranmal	Nandurbar district, Maharashtra	Satpura hill station at about 1,150 m around Yashwant Lake, in a tribal belt; one of the state's highest hill stations.
Subarnarekha River	Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha	Rises on the Ranchi Plateau and reaches the Bay of Bengal independently; Hundru Falls, Chandil Dam, and the Jamshedpur industrial belt.
Koderma	Jharkhand	Historic heart of India's mica belt, with the Tilaiya Dam and a Damodar Valley thermal station nearby.

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PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Sir Creek	Rann of Kutch, between Gujarat and Sindh	Tidal estuary of about 96 km under boundary dispute with Pakistan, affecting the maritime boundary and fishing.
Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary	Idukki, Kerala	Tiger and elephant habitat around the Mullaperiyar reservoir at Thekkady, in the Cardamom Hills.
Peechi Dam	Thrissur district, Kerala	On the Manali River, supplying irrigation and drinking water; adjoins the Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary.
Digha Beach	Purba Medinipur, West Bengal	Popular seaside resort near the Odisha border, with a wide flat beach under continual erosion.
Pamban Island	Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu	Between Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar; Ramanathaswamy Temple; a new vertical-lift sea bridge opened in 2025.

07 Places in 2020

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Vadhawan	Palghar district, Maharashtra	Deep-draught port approved in 2024, with about 20 m of natural depth, designed to take the largest container ships.
Salkhan	Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh	Fossil park in the Kaimur region with algal stromatolites about 1,400 million years old.
Coorg	Kodagu district, Karnataka	Western Ghats district of coffee, cardamom and sacred groves; the catchment of the Kaveri.
Mhow	Dr Ambedkar Nagar, Indore, Madhya Pradesh	Old cantonment with Army training institutions, and the birthplace of B. R. Ambedkar (1891).
Umroi	Ri-Bhoi district, Meghalaya	Site of Shillong Airport and an Army station used for joint training, on the Shillong Plateau.
Thoothukudi	Tamil Nadu	V. O. Chidambaranar Port on the Gulf of Mannar; salt and pearl fishing traditions; a developing green hydrogen hub.
Bargarh	Odisha	Rice bowl of the state in the Hirakud command area; hosts the Dhanu Yatra, a large open-air theatre.
Atal Tunnel	Rohtang, Himachal Pradesh	9.02 km highway tunnel under the Pir Panjal above 10,000 ft, opened in 2020, linking Manali with Lahaul-Spiti all year.

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PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Guru Shikhar	Mount Abu, Sirohi, Rajasthan	Highest point of the Aravalli Range (1,722 m), with a Dattatreya shrine and an observatory nearby.
Bum La	Tawang district, Arunachal Pradesh	Pass on the India-China boundary, used as a Border Personnel Meeting point; a route of the 1962 conflict.

08 Places in 2019

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Lothal	Ahmedabad district, Gujarat	Harappan port town with a dockyard near the Gulf of Khambhat; site of a National Maritime Heritage Complex.
Beas River	Himachal Pradesh and Punjab	Rises near Rohtang, drains the Kullu valley and joins the Satluj at Harike; Pandoh and Pong dams; part of the Indus Waters Treaty's eastern rivers.
Chikhaldara	Amravati district, Maharashtra	Satpura hill station beside the Melghat Tiger Reserve; the only coffee-growing area of Vidarbha.
Narora	Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh	Atomic Power Station of 2 × 220 MW on the Ganga; a barrage feeding the Lower Ganga Canal; a Ramsar stretch for river dolphins.
Lengpui	Mamit district, Mizoram	Airport serving Aizawl, built on a levelled hilltop; Mizoram's main air link.
Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary	Balasore district, Odisha	Sal forest linked to Similipal through the Sukhupada hills, forming an elephant habitat.
Thenmala	Kollam district, Kerala	India's first planned ecotourism destination, at the Kallada irrigation dam on the Western Ghats edge.
Anamudi	Eravikulam National Park, Idukki, Kerala	Highest peak of Peninsular India (2,695 m), where the Anaimalai, Palani and Cardamom hills meet; home of the Nilgiri tahr.
Barren Island	Andaman Sea	India's only active volcano, on the Indonesia-Myanmar subduction arc.
Durgaduani Creek	Gosaba, Sundarbans, West Bengal	Chosen for a 3.75 MW tidal power demonstration plant sanctioned in 2008, later dropped because of high cost.

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09 Places in 2018

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Shyok River	Ladakh	Indus tributary from the Rimo Glacier; receives the Nubra; the Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldi road follows it.
Mawlynnong	East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya	Khasi village known for community cleanliness, often called the cleanest in Asia; living root bridges nearby.
Shravasti	Uttar Pradesh	Capital of ancient Kosala on the Rapti; Jetavana monastery, where the Buddha spent many rainy seasons.
Kori Creek	Kutch, Gujarat	Tidal inlet on the western Kutch coast, a former Indus channel, near the Pakistan border; mangroves and fisheries.
Amarkantak	Anuppur district, Madhya Pradesh	Maikal hills, source of the Narmada and the Son; pilgrim centre, bauxite area, and part of a biosphere reserve.
Ghatshila	East Singhbhum, Jharkhand	On the Subarnarekha in the Singhbhum copper belt, with the Moubhandar smelter nearby.
Tawang	Arunachal Pradesh	Town at about 3,000 m with India's largest Buddhist monastery, strategically close to the China border.
Neyyar	Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala	River, dam and wildlife sanctuary in the Agasthyamala landscape of the southern Western Ghats; supplies irrigation and has a crocodile rehabilitation centre.
Dandeli	Uttara Kannada, Karnataka	On the Kali River, with the Kali Tiger Reserve, a paper mill and hornbill habitat.
Mulshi Lake	Pune district, Maharashtra	Reservoir on the Mula built for hydropower by the Tatas in the 1920s; recalled for the Mulshi Satyagraha against displacement.

10 Places in 2017

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Thumba	Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala	Equatorial Rocket Launching Station of 1963, sited near the magnetic equator; start of India's space programme.
Nayachar Island	Hooghly estuary, opposite Haldia, West Bengal	Young river island used for fisheries; a proposed chemical hub was dropped on environmental grounds.

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PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Doddabetta	Nilgiri Hills, Tamil Nadu	Highest peak of the Nilgiris (2,637 m), near Ooty.
Devasthal	Nainital district, Uttarakhand	Observatory with a 3.6 m optical telescope, commissioned in 2016, and a liquid mirror telescope; dark, clear Himalayan skies.
Pangong Lake	Ladakh and Tibet	Long, brackish, inland-draining lake at about 4,225 m, crossed by the Line of Actual Control.
Hampi	Vijayanagara district, Karnataka	Capital ruins of the Vijayanagara Empire on the Tungabhadra, among granite boulders; a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1986.
Havelock Island	South Andaman, Andaman and Nicobar Islands	Renamed Swaraj Dweep in 2018; coral reefs and Radhanagar Beach; a tourism centre.
Luni River	Rajasthan and Gujarat	Inland drainage of the Thar from the Aravallis near Ajmer to the Rann of Kutch; turns saline below Balotra.
Daringbadi	Kandhamal district, Odisha	Eastern Ghats hill station called the Kashmir of Odisha for its cool climate; pine forest and coffee.
Dudhsagar Waterfalls	Goa-Karnataka border	Tiered falls of about 310 m on the Mandovi, in the Bhagwan Mahavir Sanctuary, beside a railway line.

11 Places in 2016

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Pir Panjal Range	Jammu and Kashmir, and Himachal Pradesh	Longest range of the Lesser Himalaya; crossed by the Banihal rail tunnel and the Atal Tunnel; separates the Kashmir valley from the Jammu hills.
River Indravati	Odisha and Chhattisgarh	Godavari tributary from Kalahandi across Bastar; Chitrakote Falls and the Indravati Tiger Reserve.
Nathu La	Sikkim, on the boundary with Tibet	Pass at about 4,310 m on an old silk route; border trade reopened in 2006 and it carries the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.
Jog Falls	Sharavati River, Karnataka	Plunge of 253 m in four streams on the Western Ghats edge; the Linganamakki dam feeds the Sharavati hydro project.

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PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Pulicat Lake	Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu	India's second-largest brackish lagoon, behind the Sriharikota barrier; a flamingo wintering site.
Kudankulam	Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu	India's largest nuclear power station, built with Russian pressurised water reactors of 1,000 MW each.
Nalanda	Bihar	Ancient Buddhist university and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2016; a new university has been set up nearby.
Kudremukh	Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka	Western Ghats iron ore area whose mining ended in 2005 under court order; now a national park of shola and grassland.
Headquarters of North-Eastern Railways	Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh	Railway zone headquarters serving the northern plain; an important rail junction and regional centre.
Farakka Barrage	Murshidabad, West Bengal	On the Ganga, diverting water to the Hooghly to flush Kolkata Port; subject of the 1996 water-sharing treaty with Bangladesh.

12 Places in 2015

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Tharangambadi (Tranquebar)	Mayiladuthurai district, Tamil Nadu	Danish trading settlement from 1620 on the Coromandel Coast; Dansborg Fort survives; the coast was badly hit by the 2004 tsunami.
Namcha Barwa	Tibet, near the Arunachal Pradesh boundary	Peak of 7,782 m at the eastern end of the Himalaya, where the Tsangpo bends sharply before entering India.
Narcondam	Andaman Sea	Dormant volcanic island, the only home of the Narcondam hornbill.
Khajjiar	Chamba district, Himachal Pradesh	Meadow and small lake ringed by deodar in the Dhauladhar foothills, known as a mini Switzerland.
Chunchanakatte	Mysuru district, Karnataka	The Kaveri falls about 20 m here in two cascades, with a Rama temple beside it; the stretch below Krishnaraja Sagar has mini hydel projects.

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PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Nokrek	West Garo Hills, Meghalaya	Highest peak of the Garo Hills and a UNESCO biosphere reserve since 2009; red panda and wild citrus.
Gorakhnath Peak	Girnar, Junagadh, Gujarat	Highest point of Gujarat, on an igneous massif rising from the Deccan Traps; a Hindu and Jain pilgrimage.
Indrakiladri Peak	Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh	Hill on the Krishna bank with the Kanaka Durga Temple.
Polavaram	Godavari River, Andhra Pradesh	National multipurpose project with a Godavari-Krishna link; submergence affects tribal areas, including in Odisha and Chhattisgarh.
Anamudi	Eravikulam National Park, Idukki, Kerala	Highest peak of Peninsular India (2,695 m), where the Anaimalai, Palani and Cardamom hills meet; home of the Nilgiri tahr.

13 Places in 2014

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Guru Shikhar	Mount Abu, Sirohi, Rajasthan	Highest point of the Aravalli Range (1,722 m), with a Dattatreya shrine and an observatory nearby.
Bhor Ghat	Western Ghats, Maharashtra	Pass between Khopoli and Lonavala carrying the Mumbai-Pune railway and expressway.
Shravanabelagola	Hassan district, Karnataka	Jain centre with the 17 m Gomateshwara statue of about 981 CE; the Mahamastakabhisheka festival.
Kalibangan	Hanumangarh, Rajasthan	Harappan site on the dry Ghaggar with a ploughed field and fire altars.
Gangasagar	Sagar Island, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal	Where the Hooghly meets the Bay of Bengal; Kapil Muni Temple draws a large Makar Sankranti pilgrimage; the island faces erosion.
Mundra Port	Kutch, Gujarat	India's largest private commercial port with a special economic zone; a large coal-based power cluster stands beside it.
Chandipur	Balasore, Odisha	Integrated Test Range for missiles; a beach where the sea recedes far at low tide.

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PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Mahendragiri	Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu; a peak of the same name in Gajapati, Odisha	In Tamil Nadu, the space programme's Propulsion Complex; in Odisha, an Eastern Ghats peak of about 1,500 m.
Hazira	Surat, Gujarat	Industrial port with an LNG terminal, steel and petrochemical plants; start of the Hazira-Vijaipur-Jagdishpur gas pipeline.
Vembanad Lake	Kerala	India's longest lake and a Ramsar site since 2002; Kuttanad below-sea-level farming and the Thanneermukkom barrier.

14 Places in 2013

PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Mishmi Hills	Arunachal Pradesh	Where the Eastern Himalaya turns south into the Purvanchal, drained by the Dibang and Lohit; rich in biodiversity.
Lipulekh Pass	Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand	Pass near the India-Nepal-China tri-junction, on the Kailash Mansarovar route and a border trade point; its surrounding area is claimed by Nepal.
Beas River	Himachal Pradesh and Punjab	Rises near Rohtang, drains the Kullu valley and joins the Satluj at Harike; Pandoh and Pong dams; part of the Indus Waters Treaty's eastern rivers.
Rihand Dam	Pipri, Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh	Govind Ballabh Pant Sagar on a Son tributary; anchors the Singrauli power and coal region.
Amarnath	Anantnag, Jammu and Kashmir	Himalayan cave shrine at about 3,888 m with a natural ice lingam; a large annual yatra.
Rajgir	Nalanda district, Bihar	First capital of Magadha, ringed by hills, with hot springs and Vulture Peak; site of the first Buddhist Council.
Sindri	Dhanbad, Jharkhand	India's first large fertiliser plant (1951), closed in 2002; a new urea plant began in 2022.
National Highway No. 24	Delhi to Lucknow, by the old numbering	Link across the Ganga plain through Moradabad, Rampur and Bareilly; since 2010 mainly part of NH 9 and NH 30.

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PLACE	WHERE	SIGNIFICANCE
Churk	Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh	Cement town on Kaimur limestone, with a plant dating from the 1950s and captive power.
Indira Gandhi Canal	Punjab and Rajasthan	From Harike Barrage into the Thar across Ganganagar, Bikaner and Jaisalmer; changed desert farming, but brought waterlogging and salinity.

15 Places That Have Repeated

PLACE	YEARS
Anamudi	2015, 2019
Beas River	2013, 2019
Ganga Sagar	2014, 2022
Guru Shikhar	2014, 2020
Nathu La	2016, 2023
Neyyar	2018, 2025
Tharangambadi	2015, 2022
Toranmal	2021, 2026

Previous Year Questions

2026

On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in no more than 30 words for each entry: [2 × 10 = 20] Bitra Island; Lohit River; Dras; Kuno National Park; Yadadri; Mahi Basin; Tamralipta; Toranmal; Raya Heritage City; Varkala.

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2025 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry : 2×10=20 Rushikulya River; Datar Hill; Kikruma; Choritand Tillaya; Byalalu; Neyyar; Uttarlai; Sri Vijayapuram; Dharwas; Gitabitan.

2024 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 10 = 20) Lunkaransar; Gua; Raidak River; Ekta Nagar; Chandanwari; Babina; Tatipaka; Along Airport; Karaikal; Panna.

2023 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 10 = 20) Nathula; Hutti; Ross Island; Moreh; Ramappa; Namdapha National Park; Sela Tunnel; Ennore Port; Ramagundam; Betwa River.

2022 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 10 = 20) Tarangambadi; Mahe; Bomdila; Dhola Sadiya Bridge; Talakaveri; Satkosia; Dholavira; Sonamarg; Maliku Atoll; Gangasagar.

2021 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 10 = 20) Ziro Valley; Khecheopalri Lake; Toranmal; Subarnarekha River; Koderma; Sir Creek; Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary; Peechi Dam; Digha Beach; Pamban Island.

2020 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 10 = 20) Vadhawan; Salkhan; Coorg; Mhow; Umroi; Thoothukudi; Bargarh; Atal Tunnel; Gurushikhar; Bum La.

2019 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 10 = 20) Lothal; River Beas; Chikhaldara; Narora; Lengpui; Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary; Thenmala; Anamudi; Barren Island; Durgaduani Creek.

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2018 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 10 = 20) Shyok River; Mawlynnong; Shravasti; Kori Creek; Amarkantak; Ghatshila; Tawang; Neyyar; Dandeli; Mulshi Lake.

2017 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 10 = 20) Thumba; Nayachar Island; Doddabetta; Devasthal; Pangong Lake; Hampi; Havelock Island; Luni River; Daringbadi; Dudhsagar Waterfalls.

2016 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 10 = 20) Pir Panjal Range; River Indravati; Nathu La Pass; Jog Falls; Pulicat Lake; Kudankulam; Nalanda; Kudremukh; Headquarters of North-Eastern Railways; Farakka Barrage.

2015 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the locations of all the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 5 = 10) Tharangambadi; Namcha Barwa; Narcondam; Khajjiar; Chunchanakatte.

2015 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the locations of all the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 5 = 10) Nokrek; Gorakhnath Peak; Indrakiladri Peak; Polavaram; Anamudi.

2014 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 5 = 10) Guru Shikhar; Bhor Ghat; Shravanabelagola; Kalibangan; Ganga Sagar.

2014 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 5 = 10) Mundra Port; Chandipur; Mahendragiri; Hazira; Vembanad Lake.

2013 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 5 = 10) Mishmi Hills; Lipulekh Pass; Beas River; Rihand Dam; Amarnath.

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2013 On the outline map of India provided to you, mark the location of all of the following. Write in your QCA Booklet the significance of these locations, whether physical / commercial / economic / ecological / environmental / cultural, in not more than 30 words for each entry (2 × 5 = 10) Rajgir; Sindri; National Highway No. 24; Churk; Indira Gandhi Canal.

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