

Indian Peninsula

Features

- The Peninsular Plateau is a one of the **oldest and the most stable landmass** of India composed mostly of the Archaean gneisses and schists.
- Roughly triangular in shape and lie in the south of the great plain of North India.
- It is bordered on all sides by the hill ranges:
 - North-west (extension of Aravalis) = Delhi ridge
 - East = Rajmahal hills
 - West = Gir range
 - South = Cardamom hills (constitute the outer extent of the peninsular plateau)
 - Outlier = Shillong and Karbi-Anglong plateau
- It covers a total area of about **16 lakh square kilometer** (India as a whole is 32 lakh sq km).
- The average height of the plateau is **600-900 meter above sea level**
- Most of the peninsular rivers **flow from west to east** indicating the general elevation of the plateau is from the west to the east.
- **Narmada-Tapti** are the exceptions which flow from east to west in a rift (rift is caused by divergent boundary).

Hill Ranges

1. Aravalli Hills

- The length of the Aravalis is **1100 km** which extends from Delhi to Ahmedabad.
- They are one of the **oldest fold mountains of the world** and the oldest in India.
- Only a few peaks reach an elevation of above 1000m.
- Its highest peak is **Guru Shikhar**. It is on the 'Abu hills'. **Mt. Abu** is a famous hill station.
- Rivers **Banas, Luni, Sabarmati** are initiates from Aravallis.
- It contain several lakes such as **Lake Sambhar** (largest inland saline water body in India), **Lake Dhebar, Lake Jaisamand**, etc.

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2. Satpura Range

- Satpura hills are tectonic mountains formed as a result of folding and structural uplift
- With peaks more than 1,200m high, the Satpura Range includes the Mahadeo Hills to the north, the Maikala Range to the east, and the Rajpipla Hills to the west.
- The Satpura range is a block mountain which has Narmada river valley on its northern side and that of the Tapi on the western side.
- It stretches for a distance of about 900 km.
- Dhupgarh on Mahadev Hills (near Pachmarhi) is the highest peak of the Satpura range.
- Amarkantak is another important peak, highest of the Maikal hills, from where two prominent rivers, the Narmada and the Son originate.
- It is noteworthy that three rivers do originate from the three sides of the Maikal hills but only two rivers, the Narmada and the Son originate from Amarkantak and not the Mahanadi.
- Due to the presence of Gondwana rocks, these hills are rich in bauxite.
- The rivers in the Satpura range make several waterfalls like Dhuandhar waterfall on the Narmada river.

3. Vindhyan Range

- It runs parallel to the Narmada Valley in an east-west direction from Bharuch in Gujarat to Sasaram in Bihar for a distance of over 1,200 km.
- The general elevation of the Vindhyan Range is in between of 300 to 650 meters.
- Most parts of the Vindhyan Range are comprised of horizontally bedded sedimentary rocks of ancient age.
- They locally named as Panna, Kaimur, Rewa etc.
- This range acts as a divide between the Ganga system and the river systems of south India.

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4. Western Ghats (Sahyadris)

- The Western Ghats present a stepped topography facing the Arabian Sea coast due to the horizontally bedded lavas.
- From the Deccan plateau, they have a gentle slope towards their eastern edge and don't appear to be a tall range of hills.
- Northern Section:
 - This section of the Western Ghats is located in Maharashtra and also known as the Sahyadris.
 - The average height of Sahyadris is about 1200 meter
 - Sahyadris are made of volcanic igneous rocks (Deccan lavas or Deccan Traps).
 - Godavari, Bhima, and Krishna are the main rivers of this section.
 - Some of the prominent peaks of the Sahyadris are - Kalasubai peak (the tallest peak of the Sahyadris), Salher peak, Harischandragarh peak etc.
- Middle Section:
 - This section runs through Karnataka and Goa and terminates in the Nilgiris, where it joins the Eastern Ghats.
 - They are made of igneous and metamorphic rocks like the granite and gneiss.
 - Their average height is around 1200 meters and some of the prominent peaks such as Vavulmala, Kudremukh, Pushpagiri etc.
- Southern Section:
 - This section comprising the Annamalai and Cardamom hill ranges.
 - Palghat gap is the largest gap in the Western Ghats (about 24 km wide) which separates the Nilgiris from the Annamalai hills.
 - Anaimudi peak is the highest point of peninsular India lying in the Annamalai hills.
 - The southernmost section of the Western Ghats is Agasthyamalai hills situated in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The southernmost peak of peninsular India is Agasthamalai peak.

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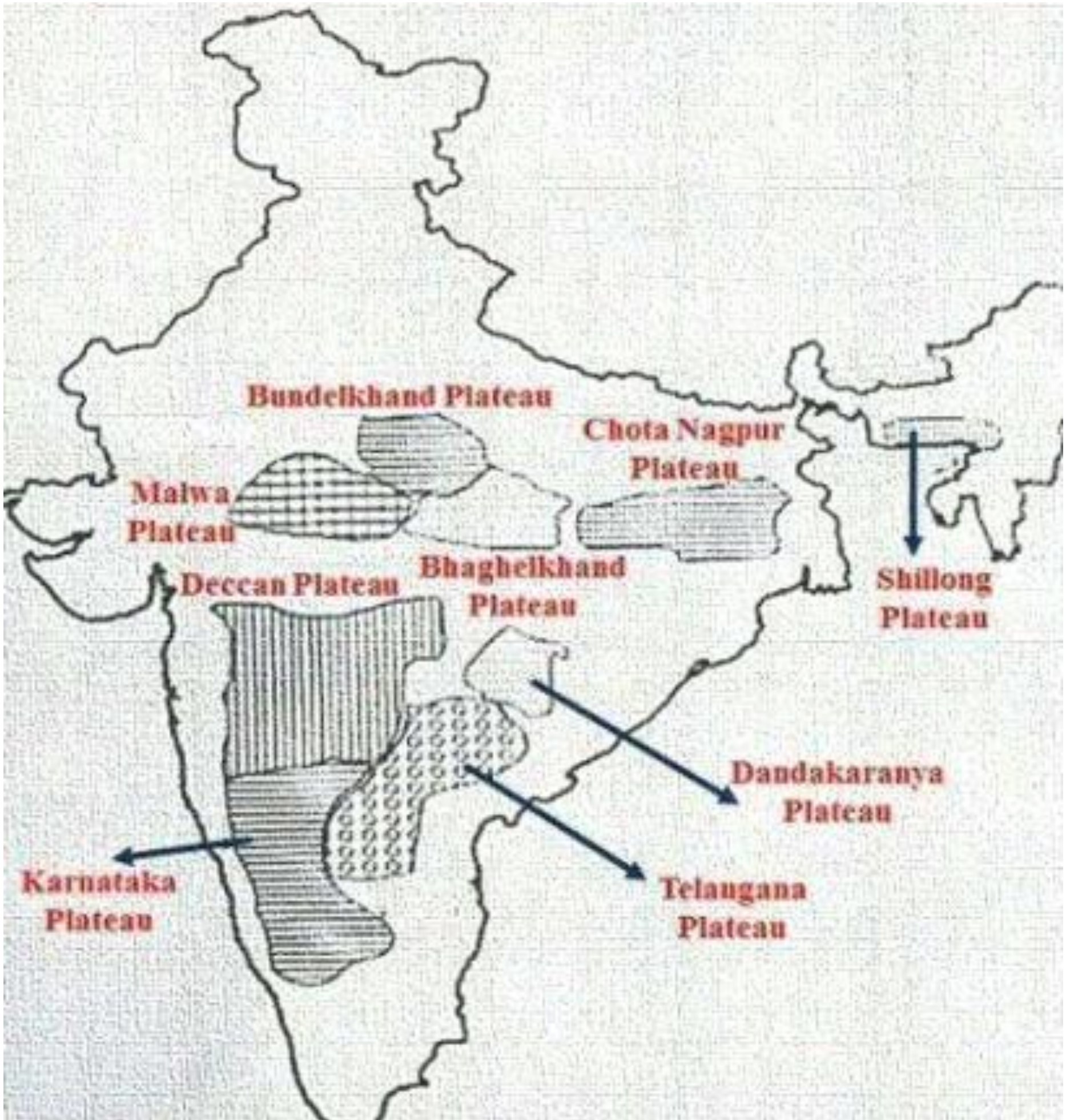
5. Eastern Ghats

- Eastern Ghats run almost parallel to the eastern coast of India leaving broad plains between their base and the coast.
- It has been eroded than the Western Ghats. Therefore, it is of less height.
- They are mainly comprising of Dharwar igneous and metamorphic rocks.
- These hills lack structural and physiographic continuity unlike Western Ghats
- Some prominent hills:
 - Andhra Pradesh = Velikonda hills, Palakonda hills, and the Seshachalam
 - Tamil Nadu = Javadi hills and Shevaroy hills
- Eastern Ghats merge with the Western Ghats at the Nilgiris.

The Western Ghats	The Eastern Ghats
The Western Ghats lie on the western margin of the Deccan Plateau.	The Eastern Ghats lie on the eastern margin of the Deccan Plateau.
The Western Ghats are higher in elevation. Their average elevation is from 900 to 1600 metres.	The Eastern Ghats are lower in elevation. Their average elevation is 600 metres.
They have a continuous chain of mountains and can be crossed through passes only.	The mountain chains are not continuous and are denuded by the rivers which flow into the Bay of Bengal.
No major river has cut across them.	They have been cut across by major rivers like the Godavari, Mahanadi, Krishna and Kaveri.

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Plateaus



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Plateaus

1. Marwar or Mewar Plateau

- It is the plateau in eastern Rajasthan. (Marwar plain lie in the west of Aravalis whereas Marwar plateau lie in the east).
- The height is in between 250-500 meters above sea level and it slopes down eastwards.
- It contains sandstone, shales and limestones of the Vindhayan period.

2. Central Highlands

- Also known as Madhya Bharat Pathar
- It is a rolling plateau with sandstone containing rounded hills.
- Thick forests grow here
- Ravines or badlands of the Chambal river found in the north

3. Bundelkhand Plateau

- Yamuna river to the north, Malwa Plateau to the south, Vindhyan Ranges to the east and south-east and Madhya Bharat Pathar to the west.
- It is the old dissected (divided by a number of deep valleys) upland of the 'Bundelkhand gneiss' made up of granite and gneiss rocks.
- The height of the plateau is in the range of 300-600 meters.
- It has a drainage system into the Bay of Bengal.
- Streams like Betwa, Dhasan and Ken flow through the plateau.

4. Baghelkhand

- It is situated east of Maikala range and is made of limestone and sandstone on the west and granite in the east.
- The plateau has a general elevation of 150 meters to 1200 meters and has uneven relief.
- The main elements of Physiography are scarps of the Vindhyan sandstones between the Ganga plain and the Narmada-Son trough.

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5. Malwa Plateau

- The Malwa Plateau roughly forms a triangle based on the Vindhyan Hills, bounded by the Aravali Range from the west and Madhya Bharat Pathar from the north and Bundelkhand from the east.
- This plateau has two systems of drainage
 - Towards the Arabian sea (Narmada, Tapi and Mahi)
 - Towards the Bay of Bengal (Chambal and Betwa by joining the Yamuna)
- The average elevation of the plateau is 500 meter

6. Chotanagpur Plateau

- It's a continental plateau with an average elevation of the plateau is 700 meter above sea level.
- It is spread in Jharkhand, northern part of Chattisgarh and Purulia district of West Bengal and parts of Odisha.
- Damodar rift valley (DRV) is the most prominent structure of this plateau which possess Gondwana rocks making it one of the richest coal deposits of India viz., the Damodar Valley Coal Fields.

7. Meghalaya or Shillong Plateau

- The peninsular plateau extends further east beyond the Rajmahal hills to form Meghalaya or the Shillong plateau.
- An extension of the peninsular plateau is also visible in the northeast, locally known as the Meghalaya or the Shillong plateau, Karbi-Anglong Plateau and North Cachar Hills.
- It is separated by a fault from the Chotanagpur Plateau and its western boundary more or less coincides with the Bangladesh border.
- Three prominent hill ranges from the west to the east are the Garo, the Khasi and the Jaintia Hills.
- Its average height is about 1500 meters above the mean sea level.
- Cherrapunji and Mawsynram are the wettest places in India and are a part of the plateau located in the Khasi hills

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8. Kathiawar Plateau

- Located in the Kathiawar region of Gujarat having many pipe-like volcanic openings which gave rise to many hill ranges such as the Girnar range, Junagarh range, Pavagarh range etc.
- Lake Nalsarovar (a bird sanctuary) forms the Northeast boundary of the plateau.
- To the north of Kathiwar plateau, Little Rann is situated.
- It has some volcanic rocks in the form of Mandav hills and Balda hills.
- Mt. Girnar = Highest point of Kathiawar plateau

9. Deccan Plateau

- This is the largest unit of Peninsular Plateau of India covering an area of about 5 lakh sq km.
- It is triangular in shape and is bordered by
 - the Satpura and the Vindhya in the north-west
 - the Mahadev and the Maikal in the north
 - the Western Ghats in the west
 - the Eastern Ghats in the east
- Its average elevation is 600 m.
- It rises upto 1000 meter in the south but dips to 500 meter in the north.
- Its general slope is from west to east which is indicated by the flow of its major rivers like the Mahanadi, Godavari, the Krishna and the Cauvery. These rivers have further subdivided this plateau into a number smaller plateaus described as under:
 - The Maharashtra Plateau - it has typical deccan trap topography underlain by basaltic rock, the regur.
 - The Karnataka Plateau (also known as Mysore plateau) - divided into western hilly country region of 'Malnad' and plain 'Maidan'
 - Telangana Plateau

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Himalayan Region Vs Peninsular Plateau

The Himalayan Region	The Peninsular Plateau
Having a comparatively recent origin, it is made up of young fold mountains.	It is the oldest landmass of the Indian subcontinent; was part of the Gondwana land.
Consists of the loftiest mountains and deep valleys.	Consists of broad and shallow valleys, and rounded hills.
Formed due to the collision of the Indo-Australian and Eurasian plates.	Formed due to the breaking and drifting of the Gondwana land.
Composed of sedimentary rocks.	Composed of igneous and metamorphic rocks.
From the point of view of geology, this region forms an unstable zone.	This region forms a stable zone.
Major rivers like – the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra originate from the Himalayas.	Major rivers like – the Narmada and the Tapti, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri originate from these hills.
Important hill stations like – Shimla, Mussoorie, Darjeeling, Nainital, etc. are found on the Himalayas.	Important hill stations like - Khandala, Panchgani, Ooty, Kodaikanal, etc. are found on the Peninsular Plateau.