

BA (H) PART I GEOGRAPHY






PAPER II (A)

ASIA: REGIONAL STUDY

SOME NOTABLE POINTS ABOUT ASIA:-

- ❖ It's the largest Continent on the planet with a total size 44,579,000 km²
- ❖ Most populous Continent with 4.46 billion population
- ❖ Most Renewable Electricity Produced by Bhutan (99.9%, hydropower)
- ❖ Population Density: 246 people per square kilometer
- ❖ Largest Watershed: Ob River (3 million square kilometers/1.15 million square miles)
- ❖ Highest Elevation: Mount Everest, Nepal: 8,848 meters/29,029 feet
- ❖ Largest Urban Area: Tokyo-Yokohama, Japan (37.8 million people)
- ❖ Largest City: Tokyo
- ❖ The Gobi Desert is the largest desert in Asia
- ❖ More than 2300 languages are recognized on the continent
- ❖ Baikal Lake is the largest lake in the world
- ❖ The Yangtze River is the largest river on the Asian continent
- ❖ Japan has the longest life expectancy (84.2 Years) in the world.
- ❖ Deepest trench of the world: Mariana Trench lies in the Pacific Ocean near Philippines.
- ❖ Arabian Peninsula is the largest Peninsula in the World.
- ❖ Pamir Plateau is known as 'Roof of the World' situated in the Central Asia.
- ❖ It is the birth place of the oldest civilizations of the World, i.e. Indus Valley Civilisation, Mesopotamia, and Chinese Civilization.
- ❖ The highest rainfall in the World is received at Mawsynram near Cherapunji (new name Sohra), situated in the Khasi Hills in Meghalaya.
- ❖ The World's highest railway line has been constructed in China. It starts from Qinghai provinces of China to Lhasa of Tibet. Its height is 4500m above sea-level.
- ❖ **Major Food Crops:** Paddy, Wheat, Maize, Jowar-Bajra and Ragi.

- ❖ **Major Cash Crops:** Tea, Sugarcane, Jute, Cotton, Rubber and Tobacco
- ❖ Longest railway platforms in the World lies in Asia: Gorakhpur railway station, Uttar Pradesh, India (1,366.33 m) (4,483 ft.) (Longest in the world); Kollam Junction, Kerala, India (1,180.5 m) (3,873 ft.); Kharagpur, West Bengal, India: 1,072.5 m (3,519 ft.).
- ❖ The longest (9439m) railway route in the world i.e. Trans-Siberian Railway are in Asia.
- ❖ **Major Mountain Ranges:** Hindukush, Zagros, Himalaya, Karakoram, Kunlun and Tien Shan.
- ❖ **Major Plateaus:** Bagua Plateau, Bashang Plateau, Bolaven Plateau, Central Siberian Plateau, Chota Nagpur Plateau, Dadu Plateau, Deccan Plateau, Eastern Plateau, Golan Heights, Hetao Plateau, Iranian Plateau, Karbi-Meghalaya Plateau, Khorat Plateau, Ladakh Plateau, Linkou Plateau, Loess Plateau, Malwa Plateau, Mongolian Plateau, Mysore Plateau, Nakai Plateau, Ngong Ping Plateau, Phouane Plateau, Shillong Plateau, Taoyuan Plateau, Tibetan Plateau, Ufa Plateau, Ukok Plateau, Ustyurt Plateau, Xiangkhoang Plateau and Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau.
- ❖ **Major Rivers:** Ob River, Irtys River, Yenisey River, the Angara River, Lena River, Yana River, Indigirka River, Kolyma Rivers, Anadyr River, Amur River, Huang He (Yellow River) River, Yangtze (Chang) River, Xi River, Red River, Mekong River, Chao Phraya River, Salween River, Irrawaddy River, Brahmaputra River, Ganges (Ganga) River, Godavari River, Krishna River, Indus River, Kura River, Aras River, Amu Darya (ancient Oxus River), Syr Darya (ancient Jaxartes River), Ili (Yili), Tarim River, Helmand River, and Harirud River.
- ❖ **Major Strait:** Malacca Strait, Palk Strait, Sunda Strait, Bering Strait, Bonne-Fasio Strait, Bosporous Strait, Hormuz Strait, Makkassar Strait, Tsungaru Strait and Formosa Strait.
- ❖ **Time Zone:** There are **eleven different time zones** in Asia which is span from UTC (GMT) +4 to UTC (GMT) +10.
- ❖ 9 out of 10 Tallest buildings in the world are in Asia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_tallest_buildings):

Rank	Name	City	Country	Height ^[9]		Floors	Year
				m	ft		
1	Burj Khalifa	Dubai	 UAE	828	2,717	163	2010
2	Shanghai Tower	Shanghai	 China	632	2,073	128	2015
3	Abraj Al-Bait Clock Tower	Mecca	 Saudi Arabia	601	1,971	120	2012
4	Ping An Finance Center	Shenzhen	 China	599	1,965	115	2017
5	Goldin Finance 117	Tianjin	 China	596.6	1,957	128	2019
6	Lotte World Tower	Seoul	 South Korea	554.5	1,819	123	2016
7	One World Trade Center	New York City	 United States	541.3	1,776	104	2014
8	Guangzhou CTF Finance Center	Guangzhou	 China	530	1,739	111	2016
9	Tianjin CTF Finance Center	Tianjin	 China	530	1,739	98	2018
10	China Zun	Beijing	 China	528	1,732	108	2018

A. Physical Regions: Asia makes up the eastern portion of the Eurasian supercontinent; Europe occupies the western portion. The border between the two continents is debated. However, most geographers define Asia's western border as an indirect line that follows the Ural Mountains, the Caucasus Mountains, and the Caspian and Black Seas. Asia is bordered by the Arctic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. Asia can be divided into five major physical regions (<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/asia/>):-

1. Mountain Systems;
2. Plateaus;
3. Plains, Steppes, and Deserts;
4. Freshwater Environments; and
5. Saltwater Environments.



Source: <https://www.ezilon.com/maps/asia-physical-maps.html>

1. Mountain Systems

The Himalaya mountains extend for about 2,500 kilometers (1,550 miles), separating the Indian subcontinent from the rest of Asia. The Indian subcontinent, once connected to Africa, collided with the Eurasian continent about 50 million to 55 million years ago, forming the Himalayas. The Indian subcontinent is still crashing northward into Asia, and the Himalayas are

growing about 5 centimeters (2 inches) every year. The Himalayas cover more than 612,000 square kilometers (236,000 square miles), passing through the northern states of India and making up most of the terrain of Nepal and Bhutan. The Himalayas are so vast that they are composed of three different mountain belts. The northernmost belt, known as the Great Himalayas, has the highest average elevation at 6,096 meters (20,000 feet). The belt contains nine of the highest peaks in the world, which all reach more than 7,925 meters (26,000 feet) tall. This belt includes the highest mountain summit in the world, Mount Everest, which stands at 8,850 meters (29,035 feet).

The Tien Shan mountain system stretches for about 2,400 kilometers (1,500 miles), straddling the border between Kyrgyzstan and China. The name Tien Shan means “Celestial Mountains” in Chinese. The two highest peaks in the Tien Shan are Victory Peak, which stands at 7,439 meters (24,406 feet), and Khan Tängiri Peak, which stands at 6,995 meters (22,949 feet). Tien Shan also has more than 10,100 square kilometers (3,900 square miles) of glaciers. The largest glacier is Engil'chek Glacier, which is about 60 kilometers (37 miles) long.

The Ural Mountains run for approximately 2,500 kilometers (1,550 miles) in an indirect north-south line from Russia to Kazakhstan. The Ural Mountains are some of the world's oldest, at 250 million to 300 million years old. Millions of years of erosion have lowered the mountains significantly, and today their average elevation is between 914 and 1,220 meters (3,000 to 4,000 feet). The highest peak is Mount Narodnaya at 1,895 meters (6,217 feet).

2. Plateaus

Asia is home to many plateaus, areas of relatively level high ground. The Iranian plateau covers more than 3.6 million square kilometers (1.4 million square miles), encompassing most of Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The plateau is not uniformly flat, but contains some high mountains and low river basins. The highest mountain peak is Damavand, at 5,610 meters (18,410 feet). The plateau also has two large deserts, the Dasht-e Kavir and Dasht-e Lut.

The Deccan Plateau makes up most of the southern part of India. The plateau's average elevation is about 600 meters (2,000 feet). It is bordered by three mountain ranges: the Satpura Range in the north, and the Eastern and Western Ghats on either side. The plateau and its main waterways—the Godavari and Krishna rivers—gently slope toward the Eastern Ghats and the Bay of Bengal.

The Tibetan Plateau is usually considered the largest and highest area ever to exist in the history of Earth. Known as the “Rooftop of the World,” the plateau covers an area about half the size of the contiguous United States and averages more than 5,000 meters (16,400 feet) above sea level. The Tibetan Plateau is extremely important to the world's water cycle because of its tremendous number of glaciers. These glaciers contain the largest volume of ice outside the poles. The ice and snow from these glaciers feed Asia's largest rivers. Approximately 2 billion people depend on the rivers fed by the plateau's glaciers.

3. Plains, Steppes, and Deserts

The West Siberian Plain, located in central Russia, is considered one of the world's largest areas of continuous flatland. It extends from north to south about 2,400 kilometers (1,500 miles) and from west to east about 1,900 kilometers (1,200 miles). With more than 50 percent of its area at less than 100 meters (330 feet) above sea level, the plain contains some of the world's largest swamps and flood plains.

Central Asia is dominated by a steppe landscape, a large area of flat, unforested

grassland. Mongolia can be divided into different steppe zones: the mountain forest steppe, the arid steppe, and the desert steppe. These zones transition from the country's mountainous region in the north to the Gobi Desert on the southern border with China

The Rub' al Khali desert, considered the world's largest sand sea, covers an area larger than France across Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. It holds roughly half as much sand as Africa's Sahara desert, even though it is 15 times smaller in size. The desert is known as the Empty Quarter because it is virtually inhospitable to humans except for Bedouin tribes that live on its edges.

4.Freshwater

Lake Baikal, located in southern Russia, is the deepest lake in the world, reaching a depth of 1,620 meters (5,315 feet). The lake contains 20 percent of the world's unfrozen freshwater, making it the largest reservoir on Earth. It is also the world's oldest lake, at 25 million years old.

The Yangtze is the longest river in Asia and the third longest in the world (behind the Amazon of South America and the Nile of Africa). Reaching 6,300 kilometers (3,915 miles) in length, the Yangtze moves east from the glaciers of the Tibetan Plateau to the river's mouth on the East China Sea. The Yangtze is considered the lifeblood of China. It drains one-fifth of the country's land area, is home to one-third of its population, and contributes greatly to China's economy.

The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers begin in the highlands of eastern Turkey and flow through Syria and Iraq, joining in the city of Qurna, Iraq, before emptying into the Persian Gulf. The land between the two rivers, known as Mesopotamia, was the center of the earliest civilizations, including Sumer and the Akkadian Empire. Today, the Tigris-Euphrates river system is under threat from increased agricultural and industrial use. These pressures have caused desertification and increased salts in the soil, severely damaging local watershed habitats.

5.Saltwater

The Persian Gulf has an area of more than 234,000 square kilometers (90,000 square miles). It borders Iran, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Iraq. The gulf is subject to high rates of evaporation, making it shallow and extremely salty. The seabed beneath the Persian Gulf contains an estimated 50 percent of the world's oil reserves. The countries that border the gulf have engaged in a number of disputes over this rich resource.

The Sea of Okhotsk covers 1.5 million square kilometers (611,000 square miles) between the Russian mainland and the Kamchatka Peninsula. The sea is largely frozen between October and March. Large ice floes make winter navigation almost impossible.

The Bay of Bengal is the largest bay in the world, covering almost 2.2 million square kilometers (839,000 square miles) and bordering Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Burma. Many large rivers, including the Ganges and Brahmaputra, empty into the bay. The briny wetlands formed by the Ganges-Brahmaputra on the Bay of Bengal is the largest delta in the world.

B. Flora and Fauna

1. Terrestrial Flora and Fauna

Botanists nickname China the “Mother of Gardens.” It has more flowering plant species than North and South America combined. Because China has such diverse landscapes, from the arid Gobi Desert to the tropical rain forests of Yunnan Province, many flowers can adapt to climates all over the world. From roses to peonies, many familiar flowers most likely originated in northern China. China is the likely origin of such fruit trees as peaches and oranges. China is also home to the dawn redwood, the only redwood tree found outside North America.

Asia’s diverse physical and cultural landscape has dictated the way animals have been domesticated. In the Himalayas, communities use yaks as beasts of burden. Yaks are large animals related to cattle, but with a thick fiber coat and the ability to survive in the oxygen-poor high altitude of the mountains. Yaks are not only used for transportation and for pulling plows, but their coats are sources of warm, hardy fiber. Yak milk is used for butter and cheese.

In the Mongolian steppe, the two-humped Bactrian camel is the traditional beast of burden. Bactrian camels are critically endangered in the wild. The camel’s humps store nutrient-rich fat, which the animal can use in times of drought, heat, or frost. Its size and ability to adapt to hardship make it an ideal pack animal. Bactrians can actually outrun horses over long distances. These camels were the traditional animals used in caravans on the Silk Road, the legendary trade route linking eastern Asia with India and the Middle East.

2. Aquatic Flora and Fauna

The freshwater and marine habitats of Asia offer incredible biodiversity. Lake Baikal’s age and isolation make it a unique biological site. Aquatic life has been able to evolve for millions of years relatively undisturbed, producing a rich variety of flora and fauna. The lake is known as the “Galápagos of Russia” because of its importance to the study of evolutionary science. It has 1,340 species of animals and 570 species of plants. Hundreds of Lake Baikal’s species are endemic, meaning they are found nowhere else on Earth. The Baikal seal, for instance, is one of the few freshwater seal species in the world. The Baikal seal feeds primarily on the Baikal oil fish and the omul. Both fishes are similar to salmon, and provide fisheries for the communities on the lake.

The Bay of Bengal, on the Indian Ocean, is one of the world’s largest tropical marine ecosystems. The bay is home to dozens of marine mammals, including the bottlenose dolphin, spinner dolphin, spotted dolphin, and Bryde’s whale. The bay also supports healthy tuna, jack, and marlin fisheries. Some of the bay’s most diverse array of organisms exist along its coasts and wetlands. Many wildlife reserves in and around the bay aim to protect its biological diversity.

The Sundarbans is a wetland area that forms at the delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers. The Sundarbans is a huge mangrove forest. Mangroves are hardy trees that are able to withstand the powerful, salty tides of the Bay of Bengal as well as the freshwater flows from the Ganges and Brahmaputra. In addition to mangroves, the Sundarbans is forested by palm trees and swamp grasses. The swampy jungle of the Sundarbans supports a rich animal community. Hundreds of species of fish, shrimp, crabs, and snails live in the exposed root system of the mangrove trees. The Sundarbans supports more than 200 species of aquatic and wading birds.

These small animals are part of a food web that includes wild boar, macaque monkeys, monitor lizards, and a healthy population of Bengal tigers.

C. Regional Classification of Asia: Asia is divided into 5 major sub regions as below with total 48 countries while five of them (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkey) are transcontinental countries and having part of their land in Europe.

S. N.	Sub Region	Countries	Sub Total
1.	Southeast Asia	Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Burma (Myanmar), Philippines, East Timor, Brunei	11
2.	East Asia	China, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Japan	05
3.	Central Asia	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.	06
4.	South Asia	Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives	08
5.	West Asia	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.	19
Total number of Countries			48

S.N.	Country	Population (2020)	Sub region
1	China	1,439,323,776	Eastern Asia
2	India	1,380,004,385	Southern Asia
3	Indonesia	273,523,615	South-Eastern Asia
4	Pakistan	220,892,340	Southern Asia
5	Bangladesh	164,689,383	Southern Asia
6	Japan	126,476,461	Eastern Asia
7	Philippines	109,581,078	South-Eastern Asia
8	Vietnam	97,338,579	South-Eastern Asia
9	Turkey	84,339,067	Western Asia
10	Iran	83,992,949	Western Asia
11	Thailand	69,799,978	South-Eastern Asia
12	Myanmar	54,409,800	South-Eastern Asia
13	South Korea	51,269,185	Eastern Asia
14	Iraq	40,222,493	Western Asia
15	Afghanistan	38,928,346	Southern Asia
16	Saudi Arabia	34,813,871	Western Asia
17	Uzbekistan	33,469,203	Central Asia
18	Malaysia	32,365,999	South-Eastern Asia
19	Yemen	29,825,964	Western Asia
20	Nepal	29,136,808	Southern Asia
21	North Korea	25,778,816	Eastern Asia

22	Sri Lanka	21,413,249	Southern Asia
23	Kazakhstan	18,776,707	Central Asia
24	Syria	17,500,658	Western Asia
25	Cambodia	16,718,965	South-Eastern Asia
26	Jordan	10,203,134	Western Asia
27	Azerbaijan	10,139,177	Western Asia
28	United Arab Emirates	9,890,402	Western Asia
29	Tajikistan	9,537,645	Central Asia
30	Israel	8,655,535	Western Asia
31	Laos	7,275,560	South-Eastern Asia
32	Lebanon	6,825,445	Western Asia
33	Kyrgyzstan	6,524,195	Central Asia
34	Turkmenistan	6,031,200	Central Asia
35	Singapore	5,850,342	South-Eastern Asia
36	Oman	5,106,626	Western Asia
37	State of Palestine	5,101,414	Western Asia
38	Kuwait	4,270,571	Western Asia
39	Georgia	3,989,167	Western Asia
40	Mongolia	3,278,290	Eastern Asia
41	Armenia	2,963,243	Western Asia
42	Qatar	2,881,053	Western Asia
43	Bahrain	1,701,575	Western Asia
44	Timor-Leste	1,318,445	South-Eastern Asia
45	Cyprus	1,207,359	Western Asia
46	Bhutan	771,608	Southern Asia
47	Maldives	540,544	Southern Asia
48	Brunei	437,479	South-Eastern Asia

Dependencies or other territories

S.N.	Territory	Population (2020)	Dependency of
1	Taiwan	23,816,775	(China)
2	Hong Kong	7,496,981	China
3	Macao	649,335	China