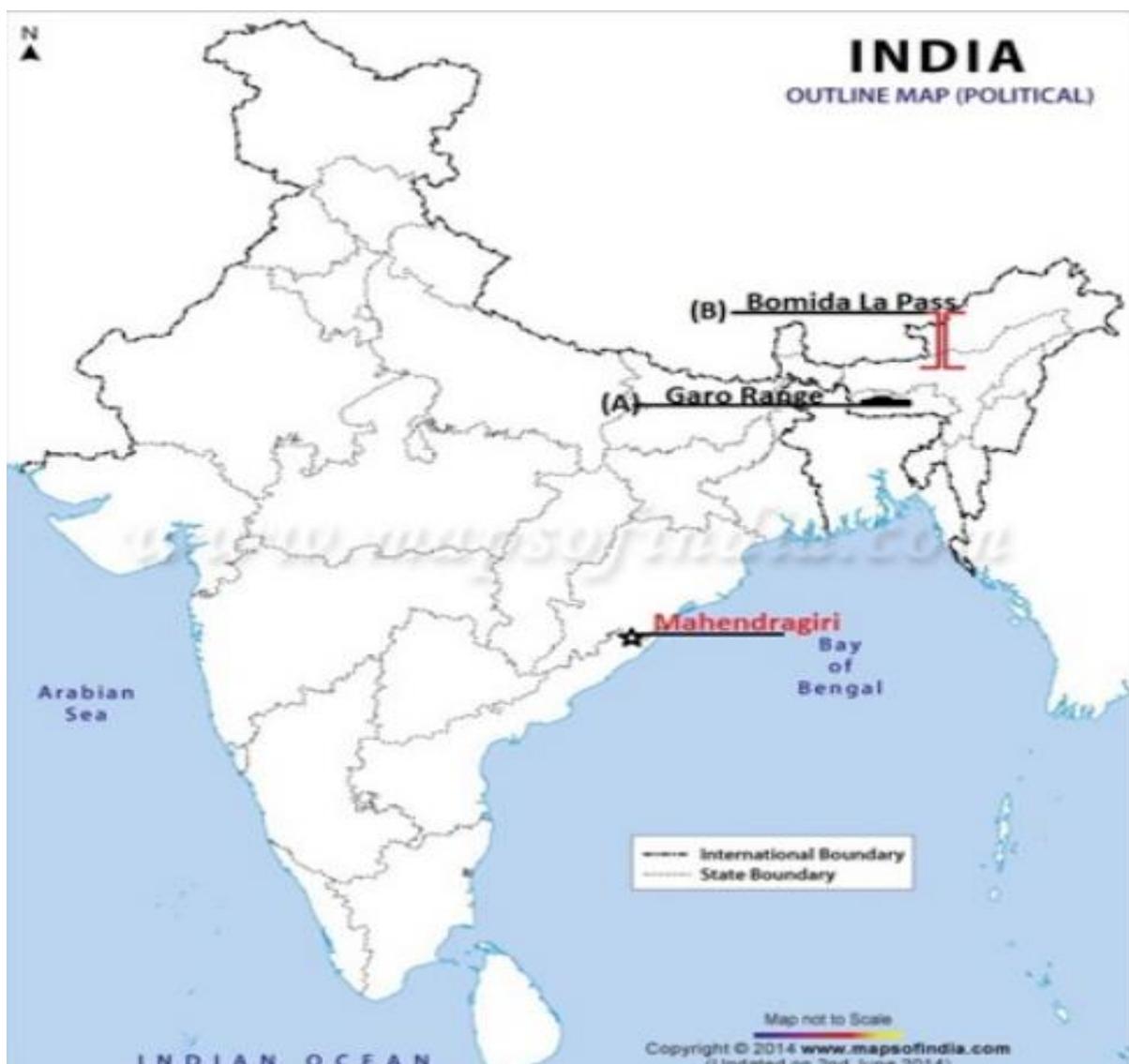




Place in News - Mahendragiri Hills

Context: Environmentalists have expressed concerns regarding the unregulated tourism and construction activities in the ecologically sensitive Mahendragiri hills of Odisha, which jeopardize its biodiversity despite being designated as a Biodiversity Heritage Site since 2022.



About Mahendragiri Hills:

ADD.: 1/53 2nd floor, near Gurudwara, Lalita Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi, 110092

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30 Sep 2025

- A mountain range located in the Eastern Ghats, esteemed for its mythological, cultural, and ecological importance.
- Designated as a Biodiversity Heritage Site in 2022 due to its abundant flora and fauna.

Location:

- Positioned in the Gajapati district, Odisha, at an altitude of 1,501 meters (4,925 ft).
- Approximately 175 km from Berhampur, situated in the heart of the Eastern Ghats.

Features:

- **Biodiversity:** Hosts 1,348 plant species and 388 animal species, many of which are endemic and at risk.
- **Cultural heritage:** Referred to as Mahendra Parvata in the Ramayana and Mahabharata; believed to be the location of Lord Parashurama's penance.
- **Temples:** Contains Panchpandava temples and shrines dedicated to Shiva, drawing thousands of pilgrims during Maha Shivaratri.
- **Tribal presence:** Inhabited by the Saora (Saura) and Kondh tribes, who rely on the forests for their livelihoods.
- **Scenic ecology:** A delicate mountain ecosystem vulnerable to pressures from deforestation, tourism, and the decline of wildlife (e.g., elephants and tigers).