

# India

## Geography

Location: Southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Bangladesh and Pakistan

Area:

total area: 3,287,590 km<sup>2</sup>

land area: 2,973,190 km<sup>2</sup>

Land boundaries: total 14,103 km, Bangladesh 4,053 km, Bhutan 605 km, Burma 1,463 km, China 3,380 km, Nepal 1,690 km, Pakistan 2,912 km

Coastline: 7,000 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm  
territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: varies from tropical monsoon in south to temperate in north

Terrain: upland plain (Deccan Plateau) in south, flat to rolling plain along the Ganges, deserts in west, Himalayas in north

Natural resources: coal (fourth-largest reserves in the world), iron ore, manganese, mica, bauxite, titanium ore, chromite, natural gas, diamonds, petroleum, limestone

Land use:

arable land: 55%

permanent crops: 1%

meadows and pastures: 4%

forest and woodland: 23%

other: 17%

Irrigated land: 430,390 sq km (1989)

Environment:

current issues: deforestation; soil erosion; overgrazing; desertification; air pollution from industrial effluents and vehicle

emissions; water pollution from raw sewage and runoff of agricultural pesticides; tap water is not potable throughout the country; huge and rapidly growing population is overstraining natural resources

natural hazards: droughts, flash floods, severe thunderstorms common; earthquakes

Note: dominates South Asian subcontinent; near important Indian Ocean trade routes

## People

Population: 936,545,814 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 35% (female 159,921,309; male 168,812,255)

15-64 years: 61% (female 274,105,407; male 296,145,798)

65 years and over: 4% (female 18,870,762; male 18,690,283) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.77% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 27.78 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 10.07 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 76.3 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 59.04 years

male: 58.5 years

female: 59.61 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 3.4 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Indian(s)

adjective: Indian

Ethnic divisions: Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid and other 3%

Religions: Hindu 80%, Muslim 14%, Christian 2.4%, Sikh 2%, Buddhist 0.7%, Jains 0.5%, other 0.4%

Languages: English enjoys associate status but is the most important language for national, political, and commercial communication, Hindi the national language and primary tongue of 30% of the people, Bengali (official), Telugu (official), Marathi (official), Tamil (official), Urdu (official), Gujarati (official), Malayalam (official), Kannada (official), Oriya (official), Punjabi (official), Assamese (official), Kashmiri (official), Sindhi (official), Sanskrit (official), Hindustani a popular variant of Hindu/Urdu, is spoken widely throughout northern India  
note: 24 languages each spoken by a million or more persons; numerous other languages and dialects, for the most part mutually unintelligible

Literacy:

total population: 52%

male: 64%

female: 39%

## Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of India

conventional short form: India

Capital: New Delhi

Independence: 15 August 1947 (from UK)

National holiday: Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic,  
26 January (1950)

Constitution: 26 January 1950

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: three equal horizontal bands of orange (top), white, and green with a blue chakra (24-spoked wheel) centered in the white band; similar to the flag of Niger, which has a small orange disk centered in the white band

## Economy

Overview: India's economy is a mixture of traditional village farming, modern agriculture, handicrafts, a wide range of modern industries, and a multitude of support services. A large share of the population, perhaps as much as 40%, remains too poor to afford an adequate diet. New Delhi has always paid its foreign debts on schedule and has stimulated exports, attracted foreign investment, and revived confidence in India's economic prospects.

Industries: textiles, chemicals, food processing, steel, transportation equipment, cement, mining, petroleum, machinery

Agriculture: accounts for 34% of GDP; principal crops - rice, wheat, oilseeds, cotton, jute, tea, sugarcane, potatoes; livestock - cattle, buffaloes, sheep, goats, poultry; fish catch of about 3 million metric tons ranks India among the world's top 10 fishing nations

Illicit drugs: licit producer of opium poppy for the pharmaceutical trade, but an undetermined quantity of opium is diverted to illicit international drug markets; major transit country for illicit narcotics produced in neighboring countries; illicit producer of hashish and methaqualone; produced 82 metric tons of illicit opium in 1994

## Transportation

### Railroads:

total: 62,211 km (6,500 km electrified; 12,617 km double track)

### Highways:

total: 1.97 million km

Inland waterways: 16,180 km; 3,631 km navigable by large vessels

Pipelines: crude oil 3,497 km; petroleum products 1,703 km; natural gas 902 km (1989)

Ports: Bombay, Calcutta, Cochin, Haldia, Kandla, Madras, Mormugao, New Mangalore, Pondicherry, Port Blair (Andaman Islands), Tuticorin, Vishakhapatnam

### Airports:

total: 352

## Defence Forces



Branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, various security or paramilitary forces (includes Border Security Force, Assam Rifles, and Coast Guard)