

Text extracted from URL 1:

Bihari culture refers to the culture of the Indian state of Bihar. Bihari culture includes Angika culture, Mithila culture, Bhojpuri Culture and the culture of Magadha.

Bihar has produced a number of writers of Hindi, including Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar', [1] Ram Briksh Benipuri, Phanishwar Nath 'Renu', Gopal Singh "Nepali", Baba Nagarjun Raja Radhika Raman Singh [2] and Shiva Puja Sahay. [3] Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayan, the great writer and Buddhist scholar, was born in U.P. but spent his life in the land of Lord Buddha, i.e., Bihar. Hrishikesh Sulabh and Neeraj Singh (from Ara) are the prominent writer of the new generation. They are short story writer, playwright and theatre critic. Arun Kamal and Aalok Dhanwa are the well-known poets. Different regional languages also have produced some prominent poets and authors. Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay, who is among the greatest writers in Bengali, resided for some time in Bihar. Upamanyu Chatterjee also hails from Patna in Bihar. Devaki Nandan Khatri, who rose to fame at the beginning of the 20th century on account of his novels such as Chandrakanta and Chandrakanta Santati, was born in Muzaffarpur, Bihar. Bhikhari Thakur is known as the Shakespeare of Bhojpuri. Heera Dom, a Bhojpuri poet has contributed to Dalit literature. Vidyapati is the most renowned poet of Maithili (c. 14–15th century). Satyapal Chandra [4] has written many English best-seller novels and he is one of India's emerging young writer.

Despite of the large number of speakers of Bihari languages, they have not been constitutionally recognised in India, except Maithili which is recognised under the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Hindi is the language used for educational and official matters in Bihar. [5] These languages were legally absorbed under the subordinate label of Hindi in the 1961 Census. Such state and national politics are creating conditions for language endangerment. [6]

The first success in spreading Hindi occurred in Bihar in 1881, when Hindi displaced Urdu as the sole official language of the province. In this struggle between competing Hindi and Urdu, the potential claims of the three large mother tongues in the region – Bhojpuri, Maithili and Magahi were ignored. After independence Hindi was again given the sole official status through the Bihar Official Language Act, 1950. [7] Urdu became the second official language in the undivided State of Bihar on 16 August, 1989. Bihar also produced several eminent Urdu writers including Kalim Aajiz, Bismil Azimabadi, Shad Azimabadi, Sulaiman Nadvi, Manazir Ahsan Gilani, Abdul Qavi Desnavi, Paigham Afaqui, Jabir Husain, Sohail Azimabadi, Hussain Ul Haque, Dr. Shamim Hashimi, [8] Wahab Ashrafi [9] etc.

Bihar has also produced some prominent poets and authors who write in various regional languages:

In 1984, Satish Anand had evolved a new 'Bidesia Style' for modern Indian theatre. [12] The new style used elements of traditional folk theatre from indigenous Bihari culture. [13] Some other traditional Bihari forms of theatre include those centred around Raja Salhesh, and the festival of Sama Chakeva originating from the Mithila region of Bihar. [14]

Jhijhiya is a ritual dance mostly performed at time of Dusshera, in dedication to Durga Bhairavi, the goddess of victory. [15] In Bihar, Domkach is a ceremonial dance form performed in the Mithila and Bhojpur regions. [16] Bideshiya is a form of dance-drama that is believed to have been created by Bhikhari Thakur, a barber with a passion for drama. [17] It deals with social issues and conflict between traditional and modern, rich and poor. Fagua is a dance and also a type of folk song performed during Holi. Painki evokes the infantry's agility, courage, and excitement. [18] Danced on flat ground, it highlights the dancers' weapon-handling ability. Jat Jatin Dance of the Mithila region of Bihar is supposed to be performed on moonlit nights during the monsoons. [19]

Bihar has contributed a lot to the Indian classical music. Bihar has produced musicians like Bharat Ratna Ustad Bismillah Khan and dhrupad singers like the Malliks (Darbhanga Gharana) and the Mishras (Bettiah Gharana) along with poets like Vidyapati Thakur who contributed to Maithili Music.

There are several traditional styles of painting practised in Bihar. One is Mithila painting, a style of Indian painting used in the Mithila region of Bihar. The Mithila painting was one of the skills that were passed down from generation to generation in the families of the Mithila region, mainly by women. The painting was usually done on walls during festivals, religious events, and other milestones of the life cycle, like birth, Upanayanam (the sacred thread ceremony), and marriage.[20] Mithila painting was traditionally done on huts' freshly plastered walls. Today it is also done on cloth, handmade paper, and canvas. Mithila painting is also called Madhubani art.[21] It depicts human beings and their association with nature. The sun, moon, and religious plants like tulsi are widely painted. Following the scenes from the royal court and social events like weddings. Generally, no space is left empty.[20] Common scenes illustrate deities like Krishna, Ram, Shiva, Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati from ancient epics. Famous Mithila painters include Smt Bharti Dayal, Mahasundari Devi, the late Ganga Devi, and Sita Devi.

Historically, the Patna School of Painting (Patna Qualam), sometimes called Company Painting, flourished in Bihar during the early 18th to mid-20th centuries.[22] The Patna School of Painting was an offshoot of the well-known Mughal Miniature School of Painting. Those who practised this art form were descendants of Hindu artisans of Mughal painting. Facing persecution from the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb, these artisans found refuge, via Murshidabad, in Patna during the late 18th century.[22] Their art shared the characteristics of the Mughal painters. Whereas the Mughal style depicted only royalty and court scenes, the Patna artists also started painting bazaar scenes. They used watercolours on paper and on mica. The style's subject matter evolved to include scenes of Indian daily life, local rulers, festivals, and ceremonies. This school of painting formed the basis for the formation of the Patna Art School under the leadership of Shri Radha Mohan.[22] The School is an important centre of fine arts in Bihar.[23]

The first sculptures in Bihar date back to the Mauryan Empire. The Pillars of Ashoka, Masarh lion and Didarganj Yakshi are estimated to be at least 2000 years old, and were carved out of a single piece of stone.[24] Ancient statues are found throughout Bihar. Some of these sculptures were made from bronze, an advanced technique at that time. For example, the Sultanganj Buddha statue, estimated to be 1500 years old, is about seven feet tall and made of 500 kg of bronze, making it the largest statue of that period. Many statues, ranging from Hellenistic gods to various Gandharan lay devotees, are combined with what are thought to be early representations of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas.

Today, it is still unclear exactly when the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara emerged. However, evidence from Sirkap indicates that this style of art was already highly developed before the advent of the Kushans. Mandar Hill features the unique image of Lord Vishnu, from the Gupta period, in his man-lion incarnation. The image is 34 inches high and made of black stone.[25]

The first significant architectural pieces in Bihar date back to the Vedic period. While the Mauryan period marked a transition to the use of brick, stone and wood remained the material of choice. Contemporary writers, like Chanakya in the Arthashastra, advised the use of brick and stone for their durability. However, in his writings, Megasthenes described a wooden palisade encircling the capital city of Pataliputra. Evidence of ancient structures have been found in recent excavations in Kumrahar, in modern-day Patna. Remains of an 80-pillared hall have also been unearthed.

The Buddhist stupa, a dome-shaped monument, was used in India as a commemorative monument used to enshrine sacred relics.[26] The stupa architecture was adopted in Southeast and East Asia, where it became prominent.[26] Many stupas, like those at Nalanda and Vikramshila, were originally built as brick and masonry mounds during the reign of Ashoka (273 BCE - 232 BCE). Fortified cities with stūpas, viharas, and temples were constructed during the Maurya empire (c. 321–185 BCE). Wooden architecture remained popular, while rock-cut architecture became solidified. Guard rails—consisting of posts, crossbars, and a coping—became a safety feature surrounding a stupa. Upon its discovery by Westerners, the stupa became known as pagoda in the West.[26]

Temples—built on elliptical, circular, quadrilateral, or apsidal plans—were constructed using brick and timber. The Indian gateway arches, the torana, reached East Asia with the spread of Buddhism.[27] Some scholars hold that torii derives from the torana gates at the Buddhist historic site of Sanchi (3rd century BCE – 11th century CE).[28]

Important features of the architecture during this period included walled and moated cities with large gates and multi-storied buildings, which consistently used arched windows and doors. . The Indian emperor Ashoka, who ruled from 273 BCE to 232 BCE, established a chain of hospitals throughout the Mauryan empire by 230 BCE.[29] One of the edicts of Ashoka reads: "Everywhere, King Piyadasi (Ashoka) erected two kinds of hospitals, hospitals for people and hospitals for animals. Where there were no healing herbs for people and animals, he ordered that they be bought and planted." [30]

Buddhist architecture blended with Roman and Hellenistic architecture to give rise to unique new styles, such as the Greco-Buddhist style.[31]

Rock-cut stepwells in India date from 200 to 400 CE.[32] Subsequently, the wells at Dhank (550–625 CE) and the stepped ponds at Bhinmal (850–950 CE) were constructed.[32]

Bihar was largely in ruins when visited by Xuanzang, and suffered further damage at the hands of Mughal raiders in the 12th century.[33] Though parts of the Bihar have been excavated, much of its ancient architecture still lies buried beneath the modern city.

Persian influence can be seen in surviving Mughal tombs made of sandstone and marble.[34] Surviving Mughal architecture includes Sher Shah Suri Tomb, built by Sher Shah Suri and his successor. Ibrahim Khan, Governor of Bihar and a disciple of Makhdum Daulat, oversaw the completion of Makhdum Daulat mausoleum in 1616.[35] Another example of Mughal architecture is the building at Maner Sharif. The domed building features walls adorned with intricate designs and a ceiling full of inscriptions from the Quran.

Patna High Court, Bihar Vidhan Sabha, Bihar Vidhan Parishad, Transport Bhawan, Patna, Golghar St. Mary's Church and Patna Museum are some example of Indo-Saracenic Architectures.

Strips or cane reeds painted in vivid colours are commonly found in homes of the people of Bihar. A special container called a "pauti," woven out of Sikki Grass Craft in the north, is a sentimental gift that accompanies a bride when she leaves her home after her wedding. Bihar is well known for the games played there, for example - Kabaddi.

Bhagalpur is well known for its sericulture, manufacture of silk yarn, and silk-weaving. Silk produced here is called tussah or tussar silk. Appliqué works in Bihar are known as Khatwa.

Bihari cuisine is eaten mainly in the eastern Indian state of Bihar, as well as in the places where people originating from the state of Bihar have settled: Jharkhand, Eastern Uttar Pradesh,

Bangladesh, Nepal, Mauritius, South Africa, Fiji, some cities of Pakistan, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Jamaica, and the Caribbean. Bihari cuisine includes Angika cuisine, Bhojपुरi cuisine,[36] Maithil cuisine and Magahi cuisine.

The cuisine of Bihar is largely similar to North Indian cuisine and East Indian cuisines (for example Bengali cuisine). It is highly seasonal; watery foods such as watermelon and sharbat made from the pulp of the wood-apple fruit is consumed mainly in the summer months, while dry foods such as preparations made of sesame seeds and poppy seeds are consumed more frequently in the winter months.

There are numerous Bihari meat dishes, with chicken and mutton being the most common. Fish dishes are especially common in the Mithila region of North Bihar due to the number of rivers, such as the Sone, Gandak, Ganges and Koshi. Dairy products are consumed frequently throughout the year, including dahi (yogurt), spiced buttermilk (known as mattha), ghee, lassi and butter.

Dishes for which Bihar is famous include Litti (cuisine), Chokha, Kadhi bari, Ghugni, Khichdi, Bihari kebabs, Champaran meat, Machhak Jhor (fish curry), Makhana. Famous native sweets include halwa of posta-dana and Makhana, Khaja, Tilkut and Anarasa.

Hindu Goddess Sita, the consort of Lord Rama, is believed to have been born in Sitamarhi district in the Mithila region of modern-day Bihar.[37][38] It was the Ancient Bihar that gave birth to new Indic religions: Buddhism and Jainism.[39] Gautama Buddha attained Enlightenment at Bodhi Gaya, a town located in the modern-day district of Gaya in Bihar.[40] Vasupujya, the 12th Jain Tirthankara was born in Champapuri, Bhagalpur. Vardhamana Mahavira, the 24th and last Tirthankara of Jainism, was born in Vaishali around the 6th century BC.[41] Bodhi Gaya in Bihar is an important pilgrimage center for the global Buddhists. The tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh, was born here in 1666 and spent his early years here before moving to Anandpur.[42] The Gurdwara at Patna Sahib marks the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh.[42]

Chhath, also called "Dala Chhath", Surya vrat, is a Vedic festival celebrated in Bihar. It is celebrated twice a year: once in the summers, called the Chaiti Chhath, and once around a week after Deepawali, called the Karthik Chhath. The Karthik Chhath is more popular because winters are the usual festive season in northern India, and fasting without water for around 42 hours or more, as required for worshipers during Chhath Puja, is easier to do in the Indian winters.

In Chhath prayers are offered to Sun God, known as Surya.[43] Wherever people from Bihar have migrated, they have taken with them the tradition of Chhath. During Chhath worshipers do ritual bathing that follows a period of abstinence and segregation from their main household for four days.[43] On the eve of Chhath, houses and their surroundings are scrupulously cleaned. Further, the ritual bathing and worship of the Sun God is performed twice: once in the evening and once at dawn, usually on the banks of a flowing river, or a common large water body. The main god worshiped is Aditya the sun god with his wife Ushas the evening dusk goddess and Kiran the dawn goddess and Aditi the mother of Gods, the occasion generally resembles a carnival.[43] For several days, ritual renditions of regional folk songs are sung. These folk songs have been carried on through oral transmission from mothers and mothers-in-law to daughters and daughters-in-law for generations. It is one of the oldest festivals continuously celebrated since the time of Vedic period.

Durga puja is the second big festival of Bihar.[44] Here, it is celebrated for ten days. People do fasts. All married women perform Saanjh (transl. Evening) which means Sandhya Arti and "khoecha" is given to the goddess. Traditionally, in Bihar when a daughter comes to her father's house "khoecha" is given to her by her mother. It is believed that goddess Durga comes to her Maayka

(transl. Mother's Home) from her Sasural (transl. Husband's Home) every year. Whole cities and villages are decorated with beautiful lights and pandals[45] are created for this grand occasion. During ten days of fasting pure vegetarian dishes are cooked in households. These dishes do not contain onion and garlic. Ritually, kanya puja is performed on the auspicious day of Ashtami (transl. Eighth Day) and Navami (transl. Ninth Day). On Dashami (transl. Tenth Day) the "Visarjan puja" is performed in which "Jayanti from 'Kalash" is distributed to devotees and "Aprajita Puja" is performed in which Goddess is worshiped from the vines of a flower named "Aprajita" (*Clitoria ternatea*). After Puja "Dahi Chhurra" (Curd (India) and Churra) is presented to Goddess Durga. The idols of goddess Durga are immersed in water (also, known as visarjan) on Dashmi or the Day after Dashmi. The visarjan of "Bari Devi ji" and "Choti Devi ji" in Patna and visarjan of "Bari Durga Maharani ji," "Choti Durga ji," "Bari Kali ji," and "Choti Kali ji" in Munger and Jamalpur holds a grand procession.

Saraswati Puja is performed by students.[46] Usually, Students start preparations for the special day around one month early. It is mainly celebrated in schools and colleges. Nowadays, Saraswati puja is also performed in households and localities. In Bihar, students offer their books and study materials as well as musical instruments in front of the goddess Saraswati who is believed to be the goddess of knowledge and wisdom.[47]

Other local festivals celebrated with fervor in Bihar include:

This is a 15-day fair held on the bank of River Falgu at Gaya during Pitru Paksha every year. Pilgrims from all parts of India visit Gaya, offering pinda to honor their ancestors. According to estimates from the Bihar Tourism Department, about 500,000 to 750,000 pilgrims arrive in Gaya each year during the Pitri Paksha Mela.[48]

Shravani Mela is an important month-long ritual observance, held along a 108-kilometre route linking the towns of Sultanganj and Deoghar (now located in the state of Jharkhand.) It is held every year in the Hindu month of Shravan (the lunar month of July–August). Pilgrims, known as Kanwarias, wear saffron-coloured clothes and collect water from a sacred Ghat (river bank) at Sultanganj. They walk the 108 km stretch barefoot to the town of Deoghar to bathe a sacred Shiva-Linga. The observance draws thousands of people from all over India to the town of Deoghar.

Popular Hindi newspapers in Bihar include the Hindustan Times, Dainik Jagran, Navbharat Times, Aj The Hindu and Prabhat Khabar. E-papers, such as the Bihar Times and Patna Daily, have become very popular among educated Biharis, especially those living outside the region. National English dailies like The Times of India and The Economic Times and Bihar Now are read in urban regions.

Several national and international television channels are popular in Bihar. DD Bihar, Sahara Bihar, and Zee Bihar-Jharkhand are the channels dedicated specifically to Bihar. In 2008, two dedicated Bhojpuri channels, called Mahuaa TV,[49][50] and Purva TV[51] were launched.

Several government radio channels exist in Bihar. All India Radio has stations in Bhagalpur, Daltonganj, Darbhanga, Patna, Purnea, and Sasaram. Other government radio channels include Gyan Vani in Patna; Radio Mirchi, also in Patna; and Radio Dhamaal in Muzaffarpur.[52]

Bihar has a robust Bhojpuri-language cinema industry. There are also small Maithili-, Angika- and Magadhi-language film industries in the region.

The earliest Bihari films were released in the 1960s. The first Bhojpuri film was Ganga Jamuna, released in 1961.[53] The same year also saw the release of the first Magadhi-language film, called Bhaiyaa.[54] In 1962, a well-received Bhojpuri film, Ganga Maiyya Tohe Piyari Chadhaibo ("Mother

Ganges, I will offer you a yellow sari"), was released, directed by Kundan Kumar.[55] Three years later, the first movie filmed in significant portions in the Maithili language, Kanyadan, was released.[56]

Over the next two decades, films were produced sporadically. In general, Bhojpuri films were not commonly made in the 1960s and 1970s. By the 1980s, though, enough Bhojpuri films had been made to comprise a small industry. Films such as Mai ("Mom," 1989, directed by Rajkumar Sharma) and Hamar Bhauji ("My Brother's Wife," 1983, directed by Kalpataru) continued to have at least sporadic success at the box office. However, this trend faded out by the end of the decade, and by 1990, the Bihari film industry seemed to be defunct.[57]

Yet the industry took off again in 2001 with the extremely popular Saiyyan Hamar ("My Sweetheart," directed by Mohan Prasad).[58] This success was quickly followed by several other very popular films, including Panditji Batai Na Biyah Kab Hoi ("Priest, tell me when I will marry," 2005, directed by Mohan Prasad) and Sasura Bada Paisa Wala ("My father-in-law, the rich guy," 2005). In a measure of the Bhojpuri film industry's rising status, both of these films did much better business in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar than mainstream Bollywood hits did. Additionally, both films, made on extremely small budgets, earned back more than ten times their production costs.[59] The success, status, and visibility of Bhojpuri cinema has continued to increase. The industry now supports an awards show[60] and a trade magazine, Bhojpuri City,[61] and now produces over one hundred films per year. Many of the major stars of mainstream Bollywood cinema, including Amitabh Bachchan, have recently worked in Bhojpuri films.

Text extracted from URL 2:

Bihar (/bɪˈhɑːr/; Hindi pronunciation: [bɪˈɦaːr] ⓘ) is a state in Eastern India. It is the third largest state by population, the 12th largest by area, and the 14th largest by GDP in 2021.[10][11][12] Bihar borders Uttar Pradesh to its west, Nepal to the north, the northern part of West Bengal to the east, and Jharkhand to the south. Bihar is split by the river Ganges, which flows from west to east.[3]

On 15 November 2000, southern Bihar was ceded to form the new state of Jharkhand.[13] Only 11.27% of the population of Bihar lives in urban areas as per a 2020 report.[14] Additionally, almost 58% of Biharis are below the age of 25, giving Bihar the highest proportion of young people of any Indian state.[15] The official language is Hindi, which shares official status alongside that of Urdu. Additionally, other languages are common, such as Maithili, Magahi, Bhojpuri, and several others.

In Ancient and Classical India, the area that is now Bihar was considered the centre of political and cultural power and as a haven of learning.[16] From Magadha arose India's first empire, the Maurya empire, as well as one of the world's most widely adhered-to religions: Buddhism.[17][failed verification] Magadha empires, notably under the Maurya and Gupta dynasties, unified large parts of South Asia under a central rule.[18] Another region of Bihar, Mithila, was an early centre of learning and the centre of the Videha kingdom.[19][20]

However, since the late 1970s, Bihar has lagged far behind other Indian states in terms of social and economic development.[21] Many economists and social scientists claim that this is a direct result of the policies of the central government, such as the freight equalisation policy,[22][23] its apathy towards Bihar,[24] lack of Bihari sub-nationalism,[25] and the Permanent Settlement of 1793 by the British East India Company.[23] The state government has, however, made significant strides in developing the state.[26] Improved governance has led to an economic revival in the state through

increased investment in infrastructure,[27] better healthcare facilities, greater emphasis on education, and a reduction in crime and corruption.[28]

The name Bihar is derived from the Sanskrit and Pali word *vihāra* (Devanagari: विहार), meaning "abode". The region roughly encompassing the present state had many Buddhist *vihāras*, the abodes of Buddhist monks in the ancient and medieval periods. Medieval writer Minhaj al-Siraj Juzjani records in the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* that in 1198 Bakhtiyar Khalji committed a massacre in a town identified with the word, later known as Bihar Sharif, about 70 km (43 mi) away from Bodh Gaya.[29][30]

Chirand, on the northern bank of the Ganga River, in Saran district, has an archaeological record from the Neolithic age (c. 2500–1345 BCE).[31][32] Regions of Bihar – such as Magadha, Mithila, and Anga – are mentioned in religious texts and epics of ancient India.

Mithila gained prominence after the establishment of the Videha Kingdom.[3][33] During the late Vedic period (c. 1100–500 BCE), Videha became one of the major political and cultural centers of South Asia, along with Kuru and Pañcāla. The kings of the Videha Kingdom were called Janakas.[34] Sita, a daughter of one of the Janaks of Mithila is mentioned as the consort of Lord Rama, in the Hindu epic *Ramayana*, written by Valmiki.[3][35][page needed] The Videha Kingdom later became incorporated into the Vajjika League which had its capital in the city of Vaishali, which is also in Mithila.[36] Vajji had a republican form of government where the head of state was elected from the *rajas*. Based on the information found in texts pertaining to Jainism and Buddhism, Vajji was established as a republic by the sixth century BCE, before the birth of Gautama Buddha in 563 BCE, making it the first known republic in India.

The Haryanka dynasty, founded in 684 BCE, ruled Magadha from the city of Rajgriha (modern Rajgir). The two well-known kings from this dynasty were Bimbisara and his son Ajatashatru, who imprisoned his father to ascend the throne. Ajatashatru founded the city of Pataliputra which later became the capital of Magadha. He declared war and conquered the Vajjika League. The Haryanka dynasty was followed by the Shishunaga dynasty. Later, the Nanda Dynasty ruled a vast tract stretching from Bengal to Punjab.

The Nanda dynasty was replaced by the Maurya Empire, India's first empire. The Maurya Empire and the religion of Buddhism arose in the region that now makes up modern Bihar. The Mauryan Empire, which originated from Magadha in 325 BCE, was founded by Chandragupta Maurya, who was born in Magadha. It had its capital at Pataliputra (modern Patna). Mauryan Emperor Ashoka, who was born in Pataliputra (Patna), is often considered to be among the most accomplished rulers in world history.[37][38]

The Gupta Empire, which originated in Magadha in 240 CE, is referred to as the Golden Age of India in science, mathematics, astronomy, commerce, religion, and Indian philosophy.[39] Bihar and Bengal were invaded by Rajendra Chola I of the Chola dynasty in the 11th century.[40][41] Buddhism in Magadha declined due to the invasion of Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji, during which many of the *viharas* were destroyed along with the universities of Nalanda and Vikramashila. Some historians believe that thousands of Buddhist monks were massacred during the 12th century.[42][43][44][45] D. N. Jha suggests, instead, that these incidents were the result of Buddhist–Brahmin skirmishes in a fight for supremacy.[46] After the fall of the Pala Empire, the Chero dynasty ruled some parts of Bihar from the 12th century until Mughal rule in the 16th century.[47] In 1540, the great Pathan chieftain, Sher Shah Suri, took northern India from the Mughals and declared Delhi his capital.

From the 11th century to the 20th century, Mithila was ruled by various indigenous dynasties. The first of these were the Karnatas, followed by the Oiniwar dynasty and Raj Darbhanga.[48]

It was during this period that the capital of Mithila was shifted to Darbhanga.[49][50]

The tenth and the last guru of Sikhism, Guru Gobind Singh, was born in Patna in 1666. With political instability in the Mughal Empire following Aurangzeb's death in 1707, Murshid Quli Khan declared Bengal's independence and named himself Nawab of Bengal. After the Battle of Buxar (1764), the British East India Company obtained the diwani rights (rights to administer and collect tax revenue) for Bihar, Bengal, and Odisha. The rich resources of fertile land, water, and skilled labour had attracted the foreign imperialists, particularly the Dutch and British, in the 18th century. A number of agriculture-based industries had been started in Bihar by foreign entrepreneurs.[51] Bihar remained a part of the Bengal Presidency of British India until 1912, when Bihar and Orissa were carved out as separate provinces.

Farmers in Champaran had revolted against indigo cultivation in 1914 (at Pipra) and 1916 (Turkaulia). In April 1917, Mahatma Gandhi visited Champaran, where Raj Kumar Shukla had drawn his attention to the exploitation of the peasants by European indigo planters. The Champaran Satyagraha that followed received support from many Bihari nationalists, such as Rajendra Prasad, Shri Krishna Sinha and Anugrah Narayan Sinha.[52][53]

In the northern and central regions of Bihar, the Kisan Sabha (peasant movement) was an important consequence of the independence movement. It began in 1929 under the leadership of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati who formed the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha (BPKS), to mobilise peasant grievances against the zamindari attacks on their occupancy rights. The movement intensified and spread from Bihar across the rest of India, culminating in the formation of the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) at the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress in April 1936, where Saraswati was elected as its first president.[54]

Following independence, Bihari migrant workers have faced violence and prejudice in many parts of India, such as Maharashtra, Punjab, and Assam.[55][56]

Bihar covers a total area of 94,163 km² (36,357 sq mi), with an average elevation above sea level of 173 feet (53 m). It is land locked by Nepal in the north, Jharkhand in the south West Bengal in the east and Uttar Pradesh to the west.[58] It has three parts on the basis of physical and structural conditions: the Southern Plateau, the Shivalik Region, and Bihar's Gangetic Plain.[59] Furthermore, the vast stretch of the fertile Bihar Plain is divided by the Ganges River into two unequal parts – North Bihar and South Bihar.[60] The Ganges flows west–east and, along with its tributaries, regularly floods parts of the Bihar plain. The main northern tributaries are the Gandak and Koshi, which originate in the Nepalese Himalayas, and the Bagmati, which originates in the Kathmandu Valley. Other tributaries are the Son, Budhi Gandak, Chandan, Orhani and Phalgu. Bihar has some small hills, such as the Rajgir hills in center, Kaimur Range in south-west and Shivalik Range in North. Bihar has a forest area of 6,764.14 km², which is 7.1 per cent of its geographical area.[61] The sub-Himalayan foothills of Shivalik ranges, primary Someshwar and Dun mountain, in West Champaran district are clad in a belt of moist deciduous forest. As well as trees, this consists of brush, grasses and reeds.

Bihar lies completely in the Subtropical region of the Temperate Zone, and its climatic type is humid subtropical. Its temperature is subtropical in general, with hot summers and cold winters. Bihar has

an average daily high temperature of only 26 °C with a yearly average of 26 °C. The climate is very warm, but has only a very few tropical and humid months. Several months of the year it is warm to hot at temperatures continuously above 25 °C, sometimes up to 29 °C. Due to less rain the best time for travelling is from October to April. The most rainy days occur from May to September.[62]

Bihar has a nature conservation area of 6,845 km² (2,643 sq mi), which is 7.27% of its geographical area.[63] The sub-Himalayan foothill of Someshwar and the Dun ranges in the Champaran district have belts of moist deciduous forests, mixed with shrubs, grass and reeds. High rainfall (above 1,600 mm [63 in]) promotes forests of Sal (*Shorea robusta*) in these areas. Other important trees are Sal *Cedrela Toona*, Khair, and Semal. Deciduous forests also occur in the Saharsa and Purnia districts,[64] with common trees including *Shorea robusta* (sal), *Diospyros melanoxylon* (kendu), *Boswellia serrata* (salai), *Terminalia tomentosa* (asan), *Terminalia bellerica* (bahera), *Terminalia arjuna* (arjun), *Pterocarpus marsupium* (paisar), and *Madhuca indica* (mahua).

Valmiki National Park covers about 800 km² (309 sq mi) of forest and is the 18th Tiger Reserve of India, ranked fourth in terms of the density of its tiger population.[65] It has a diverse landscape and biodiversity in addition to sheltering protected carnivores. Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary in Bhagalpur region is a reserve for the endangered South Asian river dolphin.[63] Other species in Bihar include leopard, bear, hyena, bison, chital and barking deer. Crocodilians including gharials and muggers as well as Gangetic turtles can be found in the river systems. Karkatgarh Waterfall on Karmanasa River is a natural habitat of the crocodilians. In 2016, the government of Bihar has accepted the proposal of the forest authorities to turn the area into a Crocodile Conservation Reserve (CCR).[66] Other notable wildlife sanctuaries include Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhimbandh Wildlife Sanctuary and Gautam Buddha Wildlife Sanctuary. Many varieties of local and migratory bird species can be seen in natural wetland of Kanwar Lake Bird Sanctuary, Asia's largest oxbow lake and only Ramsar site in Bihar, and other notable wetlands of Baraila lake, Kusheshwar Nath Lake, Udaypur lake.[63]

Bihar is the principal holder of the country's pyrite reserves and possesses 95% of all known resources.[67]

In May 2022, a gold mine was found in the district of Jamui.[68] It accounts for more than 44% of the country's gold reserve, approximately 223 million tons.[69]

At the 2011 Census, Bihar was the third most populous state of India with a total population of 104,099,452. It was also India's most densely populated state, with 1,106 persons per square kilometre. The sex ratio was 1090 females per 1000 males in the year 2020.[72] Almost 58% of Bihar's population was below 25 years age, which is the highest in India. In 2021, Bihar has had an urbanisation rate of 20%.[14][73] Bihar has an adult literacy rate of 68.15% (78.5% for males and 57.8% for females) in 2020.[72] Population increased to 130,725,310 as per the Bihar caste survey conducted in 2023.[71]

Religion in Bihar (2023)[1][74]

According to the 2023 census, 81.99% of Bihar's population practised Hinduism, while 17.70% followed Islam.[1] Christianity (0.05%), Buddhism (0.08%), and Sikhism (0.01%) are religious minorities in Bihar. Most of Bihar's population belongs to Indo-Aryan-speaking ethnic groups. It also attracted Punjabi Hindu refugees during the Partition of British India in 1947.[75]

Languages of Bihar from 2011 census[76]

Hindi is the official language of the state and is spoken natively by 25.54% of the total population.[77] At 8.42%, Urdu is the second official language in 15 districts of the state.[78] However, the majority of the people speak one of the Bihari languages, most of which were classified as dialects of Hindi during the census. The major ones are Bhojpuri (24.86%), Maithili (12.55%) and Magahi (10.87%)[79][80] Angika and Bajjika, two other Bihari languages, are classified under other dialects of Hindi in the census. Maithili is a recognised regional language of India under the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India. Proponents have called for Bhojpuri, Magahi, Angika, and Bajjika to receive the same status.[81][82] Smaller communities of Bengali and Surjapuri speakers are found in some parts of the state, especially in the eastern districts and urban areas.[76]

Under the Constitution of India, the Governor is the head of the government of Bihar, and is appointed by the President of India. The Chief minister is the executive head of the government who, with its cabinet ministers, makes all important policy decisions. The political party or coalition of political parties having a majority in the Bihar Legislative Assembly forms the government.

The Chief Secretary is the head of the bureaucracy of the state, under whom a hierarchy of officials is drawn from the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service, Indian Forest Service, and different wings of the state civil services. The judiciary is headed by the Chief Justice of the High Court. Bihar has a high court in Patna, which has been functioning since 1916. All the branches of the government are located in the state capital, Patna.

The state is administratively divided into 9 divisions and 38 districts. For the administration of urban areas, Bihar has 19 municipal corporations, 89 nagar parishads (city councils), and 154 nagar panchayats (town councils).[83][84][85][86][87][88][89]

The politics of Bihar have been based on caste since the onset of Indian independence. The important castes with political presence and influence in Bihar includes: Yadav, Koeri, Kurmi, Rajput, Bhumihar, and Brahmin. Before 1990, politics was dominated by Forward Castes— Brahmin, Rajput, Bhumihar, and Kayastha. The numerous Other Backward Class group was only given a token representation in the government. This over representation of upper castes was due to their dominance in the Indian National Congress, which dominated the politics of the state for three decades after the independence of India. According to political scientist Sanjay Kumar: "Using their dominant role in state's government, in the period before 1990, the Forward Castes deliberately subverted the 'land reforms', which could have helped Backward Castes and the Scheduled Castes". The upper backwards relied on the political parties of Lok Dal and later Janata Dal for increasing their political representation. The year of 1989-90 saw the implementation of Mandal Commission's recommendation by Vishwanath Pratap Singh's government, which reserved 27% per cent seats in government jobs and educational institutions for the members of Other Backward Class. This event mobilised them against the "politics of religion" of the Bhartiya Janata Party, which was backed by the Forward Castes. Important figures such as Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar took a leading role in this mobilisation, and by 1990, the upper backwards— Koeri, Kurmi, Yadav became the new political elites of the state.[91]

However, the tipping point of this Backward Caste unity came in 1995 Bihar Legislative Assembly election, when the dominant OBC castes, who were at the forefront in the collective struggle against the Forward Castes, were divided into two rival political camps. While one of these camps was led by Yadavs under Janata Dal, the other camp was led by Koeri and Kurmis, who assembled under the Samata Party. According to Sanjay Kumar, this was the election in which the caste divide in the state was most evident not between the Forward and Backward Castes, but rather between two groups of Backward Castes itself. It was this election from which the Forward Castes felt completely

marginalised in Bihar's electoral politics and from then onwards, no longer held any significant role in the state's politics.[92]

By 2004, The Economist magazine said that "Bihar [had] become a byword for the worst of India, of widespread and inescapable poverty, of corrupt politicians indistinguishable from mafia-dons they patronise, caste-ridden social order that has retained the worst feudal cruelties".[93] In 2005, the World Bank believed that issues faced by the state were "enormous" because of "persistent poverty, complex social stratification, unsatisfactory infrastructure and weak governance".[94]

As of 2023,[update] there are two main political formations: the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) which comprises Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party (RLJP); and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) between Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Hindustani Awam Morcha, Rashtriya Lok Samta Party, Janata Dal (United) (JDU) and Indian National Congress (INC). There are many other political formations. The Communist Party of India had a strong presence in Bihar at one time, which has since weakened.[95] The Communist Party of India (Marxist) CPI(M) and CPM and All India Forward Bloc (AIFB) have a minor presence, along with the other extreme leftist parties.[96]

Nitish Kumar has been chief minister of Bihar for 13 years between 2005 and 2020. In contrast to prior governments, which emphasised divisions of caste and religion, his political platform was based on economic development, reduction of crime and corruption, and greater social equality. Since 2010, the government confiscated the properties of corrupt officials and redeveloped them into school buildings.[97] They also introduced the Bihar Special Court Act to curb crime.[98] It also legislated a two-hour lunch break on Fridays, to enable Muslim employees to pray and thereby reduce absenteeism.[99] The government has prohibited the sale and consumption of alcohol in the state since March 2016,[100] which has been linked to a drop in tourism[101] and a rise in substance abuse.[102]

Bihar generally ranks among the weakest in health outcomes in comparison to other Indian states because it lacks adequate health care facilities.[103][104] While the National Health Mission, the Clinical Establishments Act of 2010, and the formation of the Empowered Action Group (EAG)[105] provide federal funds to expand and improve healthcare services, Bihar's ability to fully utilise this funding is lacking.[103][104]

Research indicates that Bihar relies on privatised hospitals to provide healthcare to the masses, with the second-highest ratio among Indian states for private to public spending and high levels of corruption.[103] These factors are associated with slower healthcare delivery and steep healthcare costs.[106][107][108][109] Corruption is enabled as Bihar lacks continuity and transparency of health reporting as required by the Clinical Establishments Act of 2010. In turn, this prevents the government from making evidence-based conclusions about policy changes and hospital effectiveness, resulting in patterns of ill-informed spending and inconsistent hiring.

When comparing Bihar to Kerala, the number of healthcare professionals (including registered nurses, auxiliary nurses, physicians and health supervisors) at each hospital are significantly lower, and remain constant over time while they steadily increase in number in Kerala.[110] According to Ministry of Health statistics, the greatest shortfalls are for physicians and specialists at 75%.[103] Bihar has only 50% of the sub-health centres, 60% of the primary health centres, and 9% of the community health centres required by the national supply-to-population standards. The number of public hospital beds in Bihar decreased between 2008 and 2015.[110] Given the high population density of the state, Bihar is significantly behind in the number of healthcare professionals that should be employed.[111][110] Despite these shortcomings, Bihar has shown gradual signs of

improvement for female health workers,[103] the overall death rate, and infant, neo-natal, child and maternal mortality rates.[103]

Bihar's gross state domestic product (GSDP) for the fiscal year (FY) 2013–14 was around ₹3,683.37 billion. By sectors, its composition is 22% agriculture, 5% industry and 73% services.[citation needed] Bihar has the fastest-growing state economy in terms of GSDP, with a growth rate of 17.06% in FY 2014–15.[115] The economy of Bihar was projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13.4% during 2012–2017 (the 12th Five-Year Plan). Bihar has experienced strong growth in per capita net state domestic product (NSDP). At current prices, per capita NSDP of the state grew at a CAGR of 12.91% from 2004 to 2005 to 2014–15.[116] Bihar's per capita income went up by 40.6% in FY 2014–15.[117] The state's debt was estimated at 77% of GDP by 2007.[118]

Among the states of India, Bihar is the fourth-largest producer of vegetables and the eighth-largest producer of fruits. About 80% of the state's population is employed in agriculture, which is above the national average.[116] The main agricultural products are litchi, guava, mango, pineapple, brinjal, lady's finger, cauliflower, cabbage, rice, wheat, sugarcane, and sunflower. Though good soil and favourable climatic conditions favour agriculture, this can be hampered by floods and soil erosion.[119] The southern parts of the state endure annual droughts, which affect crops such as paddy.[120]

Begusarai is the industrial and financial capital of Bihar. It has major industries like Barauni Refinery, NTPC, Barauni (BTPS), Barauni Fertiliser Plant (HURL, Barauni), Sudha Dairy Plant, Pepsi Bottling Plant.

Hajipur, Dalmianagar, Munger, Jamalpur and Barauni are the major industrial cities in Bihar[121][122] The capital city, Patna, is one of the better-off cities in India when measured by per capita income.[relevant?][123]

The Finance Ministry has sought to create investment opportunities for big industrial houses like Reliance Industries. Further developments have taken place in the growth of small industries, improvements in IT infrastructure, a software park in Patna, Darbhanga, Bhagalpur,[124] and the completion of the expressway from the Purvanchal border through Bihar to Jharkhand. In August 2008, a Patna-registered company called the Security and Intelligence Services[125] took over the Australian guard and mobile patrol services business of American conglomerate, United Technologies Corporation (UTC). SIS is registered and taxed in Bihar.[126][relevant?]

Prior to prohibition, Bihar emerged as a brewery hub with numerous production units.[127] In August 2018, United Breweries Limited announced it would begin production of non-alcoholic beer at its previously defunct brewery in Bihar.[128][129]

In terms of income, the districts of Patna, Munger, and Begusarai placed highest among the 38 districts in the state, recording the highest per capita gross district domestic product of ₹1,15,239, ₹42,793 and ₹45,497, respectively, in FY 2020-21.[123]

Bihar also ranks very low in per capital income in comparison to other cities in India. Patna has per capital income of 1.15L, which is much lower than other cities like Gurugram (₹7.41L), Noida (₹6.13), Bengaluru (₹6.21L), Hyderabad (₹6.58L) and Mumbai (₹6.43).

Rumela Sen, a lecturer at Columbia University,[130] outlines the inequalities and backwardness prevalent in Bihar in the post-independence period as a consequence of the "delaying tactics" against the implementation of land reform and utilisation of kinship ties by the upper-caste

landlords, who had an obstructionist attitude towards land reform policies.[131] The upper-caste not only dominated the administration, but also the politics in the post-independence period; they utilised their caste ties in order to prevent the distribution of about 9000 acres of land intended for the poor. Since the landlords primarily belonged to upper-castes, just like the politicians and administrators in the early decades after independence, they were successful in grabbing large holdings of land amidst the passage of the Zamindari abolition act of 1952.[132]

There are several traditional styles of painting practised in Bihar. One is Mithila painting, a style used in the Mithila region of Bihar. Traditionally, this form was practised mainly by women, passed down generation to generation. Painting was usually done on walls during festivals, religious events, births, marriages, and other cultural milestones.[133] It was traditionally done on the plastered walls of mud huts, and is also done on cloth, handmade paper and canvas. Famous Mithila painters include Smt Bharti Dayal, Mahasundari Devi, the late Ganga Devi, and Sita Devi.

Mithila painting is also called Madhubani art. It mostly depicts human beings and their association with nature. Common scenes illustrate deities and Saraswati from ancient epics, celestial objects, and religious plants like Tulsi, and scenes from the royal court and social events. Generally, no space is left empty.[133]

Bhojpuri painting is a folk painting style that has flourished in the Bhojpuri region of Bihar thousands of years ago. This painting style is a type of wall painting primarily done on temple walls or on walls of the rooms of newly married couples and the main motifs are that of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Although in recent times motifs of natural objects and life and struggles of village people are also depicted to make the painting more acceptable among the common people and bring the style close to reality.[134]

The Patna School of Painting (Patna Kalam), sometimes called "Company Painting", flourished in Bihar during the early 18th to mid-20th centuries. It was an offshoot of the Mughal Miniature School of Painting. Those who practised this art form were descendants of Hindu artisans of Mughal painting. Facing persecution from the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb, these artisans found refuge, via Murshidabad, in Patna during the late 18th century. Their art shared the characteristics of the Mughal painters, expanded subject matter from court scenes to bazaar scenes, daily life and ceremonies. They used watercolours on paper and on mica. This school of painting formed the basis for the formation of the Patna Art School under the leadership of Shri Radha Mohan. The school is an important centre of the fine arts in Bihar.

Bihar has produced musicians like Bharat Ratna and Ustad Bismillah Khan, and dhrupad singers like the Malliks (Darbhanga Gharana) and the Mishras (Bettiah Gharana), along with poets like Vidyapati Thakur who contributed to the genre of Maithili music. The classical music in Bihar is a form of Hindustani classical music.[citation needed]

Gaya is another centre of classical music, particularly of the Tappa and Thumri varieties. Pandit Govardhan Mishra—son of the Ram Prasad Mishra, himself an accomplished singer— is perhaps the finest living exponent of Tappa singing in India, according to Padma Shri Gajendra Narayan Singh, founding secretary of the Sangeet Natak Academi of Bihar[citation needed].

Gajendra Narayan Singh also writes, in his memoir, that Champanagar, Banaili, was another major centre of classical music. Rajkumar Shyamanand Sinha of Champanagar, Banaili princely state, was a great patron of music and was himself a renowned figure in the world of classical vocal music in Bihar in his time.[135] Singh, on the subject of Indian classical music in a separate book of his, wrote that "Kumar Shyamanand Singh of Banaili estate had such expertise in singing that many great

singers including Kesarbai Kerkar acknowledged his ability. After listening to bandishes from Kumar Sahib, Pandit Jasraj was moved to tears and lamented that, alas, he did not have such ability himself." [136][137]

During the 19th century, many Biharis emigrated as indentured labourers to the West Indies, Fiji, and Mauritius. During this time many sorrowful plays and songs called birha became popular in the Bhojpur region, as Bhojpuri Birha. Dramas incorporating this theme continue to be popular in the theatres of Patna. [138][better source needed]

Bihar has a robust Bhojpuri-language film industry. There is also a smaller production of Magadhi-, Maithili language films. The first film with Bhojpuri dialogue was Ganga Jamuna, released in 1961. [139]

Bhaiyaa, the first Magadhi film, was released in 1961. [140]

The first Maithili movie was Kanyadan released in 1965. [141]

Maithili film Mithila Makhaan won the

National Film Award for Best Maithili Film in 2016. [142]

The history of films entirely in Bhojpuri begins in 1962 with the well-received film Ganga Maiyya Tohe Piyari Chadhaibo ("Mother Ganges, I will offer you a yellow sari"), which was directed by Kundan Kumar. [143]

1963's Lagi nahin chute ram was the all-time hit Bhojpuri film, and had higher attendance than Mughal-e-Azam in the eastern and northern regions of India. Bollywood's Nadiya Ke Paar is another well-known Bhojpuri-language movie. Films such as Bidesiya ("Foreigner", 1963, directed by S. N. Tripathi) and Ganga ("Ganges", 1965, directed by Kundan Kumar) were profitable and popular, but in general Bhojpuri films were not commonly produced in the 1960s and 1970s.

In the 1980s, enough Bhojpuri films were produced to support a dedicated industry. Films such as Mai ("Mom", 1989, directed by Rajkumar Sharma) and Hamar Bhauji ("My Brother's Wife", 1983, directed by Kalpataru) had success at the box office. However, this trend faded during the 1990s. [144]

In 2001, Bhojpuri films regained popularity with Saiyyan Hamar ("My Sweetheart", directed by Mohan Prasad), which raised actor Ravi Kishan to prominence. [145] Several other commercially successful films followed, including Panditji Batai Na Biyah Kab Hoi ("Priest, tell me when I will marry", 2005, directed by Mohan Prasad) and Sasura Bada Paisa Wala ("My father-in-law, the rich guy", 2005). These films did much better business in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar than mainstream Bollywood hits at the time, and were both made on extremely tight budgets. [146] Sasura Bada Paisa Wala also introduced Manoj Tiwari, formerly a well-loved folk singer, to the wider audiences of Bhojpuri cinema. The success of Ravi Kishan and Manoj Tiwari's films led to a revival in Bhojpuri cinema, and the industry began to support an awards show [147] and trade magazine Bhojpuri City. [148] The industry produces over one hundred films per year. [citation needed]

In 2019, the Maithili film Mithila Makhaan won Best Maithili Film in the 63rd National Film Awards. [149]

Biharbandhu was the first Hindi newspaper published in Bihar. It was started in 1872 by Madan Mohan Bhatta, a Marathi Brahman who settled in Bihar Sharif. [150] Hindi journalism often

failed[151] until it became an official language in the state. Hindi was introduced in the law courts in Bihar in 1880.[150][152]

Urdu journalism and poetry have a long history in Bihar, with many poets such as Shaad Azimabadi, Kaif Azimabadi, Kalim Ajiz and Bismil Azimabadi. Bihar publishes many Urdu dailies, such as Qomi Tanzim and Sahara, and the monthly Voice of Bihar.[153]

The beginning of the 20th century was marked by a number of notable new publications. A monthly magazine named Bharat Ratna was started in Patna, in 1901. It was followed by Ksahtriya Hitaishi, Aryavarta from Dinapore, Udyoga, and Chaitanya Chandrika.[154] Udyog was edited by Vijyaanand Tripathy, a famous poet of the time, and Chaitanya Chandrika by Krishna Chaitanya Goswami, a literary figure of that time. The literary activity was not confined to Patna alone but to other districts of Bihar.[150][155]

Chhath Puja is the biggest and most popular festival in Bihar.[156] The four-day-long holy Hindu festival includes intense celebration across the state. Chhath Puja are done in various cities, towns, and villages throughout Bihar. All of Bihar involves itself in devotion to Chhath Puja. The city is decked up in lighting decorations and thousands of colourful ghats are set up, where effigies of the goddess Chhath Maiya and her brother God Surya are displayed and worshipped at both sunset and sunrise. People of all religious backgrounds go to the bank of any river or near by a pond or lake in order to give arghya to the Sun. They carry fruits and thekuaa along with them in soop and daura (a bowl-like structure made of bamboo) for their worship activities. Nowadays, these traditions have spread to multiple countries worldwide wherever Bihari community is present.

Durga Puja is also the biggest, most popular and widely celebrated festival in Bihar.[157] The ten-day-long colourful Hindu festival includes intense celebration across the state. Pandals are erected in various cities, towns, and villages throughout Bihar. The cities of Bihar are transformed during Durga Puja. Urban areas are decked up in lighting decorations and thousands of colourful pandals are set up where effigies of the goddess Durga and her four children are displayed and worshipped. The idols of the goddess are brought in from Kumortuli, where idol-makers work throughout the year fashioning clay models of the goddess. Since independence in 1947, Durga Puja has slowly changed into more of a glamorous carnival than that of a religious festival. Today people of diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds partake in the festivities. On Vijayadashami, the last day of the festival, the effigies are paraded through the streets with riotous pageantry before being immersed into the rivers.

Bihar is visited by many tourists from around the world,[158] In 2019, 33 million tourists visited Bihar, including more than 1 million foreign tourists.[159] Bihar is home to two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, as well as many other ancient monuments. The Mahabodhi Temple (literally: "Great Awakening Temple"), a UNESCO World Heritage site, is an ancient Buddhist temple in Bodh Gaya, marking the location where the Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment. The Khuda Bakhsh Library, which has one of the world's largest collection of books, rare manuscripts and paintings is located in Patna. Bodh Gaya (in Gaya district) is about 96 km (60 mi) from Patna. Nalanda Mahavihara, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is among the oldest universities in the world, situated in Nalanda, Bihar. It comprises the archaeological remains of a monastic and scholastic institution dating from the third century BCE to the 13th century CE. It includes stupas, shrines, viharas (residential and educational buildings) and important art works in stucco, stone and metal. Nalanda stands out as the most ancient university of the Indian subcontinent. Archaeological Survey of India has recognised 72 monuments in Bihar as Monuments of National Importance. Furthermore,

Archaeological Survey of India has recognised 30 additional monument as protected monuments in Bihar.

Bihar has many places for ecotourism, which includes Valmiki National Park, famous for its national park and tiger reserve. Vikramshila Dolphin Sanctuary is home to the endangered Gangetic Dolphin. Bihar has many wildlife sanctuaries such as Bhimbandh Wildlife Sanctuary, Gautam Buddha Wildlife Sanctuary, Kaimur Sanctuary, Udaypur Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Pant Wildlife Sanctuary. Bihar is host to many species of migratory birds at bird sanctuaries like Kanwar Lake Bird Sanctuary and the Nagi Dam Bird Sanctuary.

Many tourists visit Bihar because of the religious significance of the area. The Hindu Goddess Sita, the consort of Lord Rama, is believed to have been born in Sitamarhi in the Mithila region of modern-day Bihar.[160][161] Gautama Buddha is believed to have attained Enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, a town located in the modern day district of Gaya in Bihar. Vasupujya, the 12th Jain Tirthankara was born in Champapuri, Bhagalpur. Mahavira, the 24th and last Tirthankara of Jainism, was born in Vaishali around the sixth century BCE.[162] The Śrāddha ritual performed in the Pitru Paksha period is considered to be most powerful in the holy city of Gaya, which is seen as a special place to perform the rite, and hosts a fair during the Pitri Paksha period.[163]

Bihar has a total of three operational airports as of 2020: Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Airport in Patna, Gaya Airport in Gaya, and Darbhanga Airport in Darbhanga. All three airports have scheduled flights to major cities around India. Gaya Airport is the only international airport in Bihar, having seasonal flights to countries like Thailand, Bhutan, and Myanmar.

Bihar has a rail network length of 3,794 km (2,357 mi) in 2020.[164] All major cities, districts and towns are well connected. Munger, Jamalpur and Bhagalpur are well connected with all major Stations of country. Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor, after completion, will pass through Kaimur, Rohtas, Aurangabad, and Gaya with a total length of 239 km (149 mi) in Bihar.[165]

Gaya-Darbhanga Expressway (access controlled highway) will be Bihar's first expressway, with a length of 189 km. It is expected to be completed by 2024.[166]

Bihar has state highways with a total length of 4,006 km (2,489 mi) and national highways with a total length of 5,358 km (3,329 mi).

Patna will be the first city in Bihar to have mass rapid transit system. Patna Metro with network of 31 km (19 mi) length is under construction as of 2022.[167] However, it is currently delayed due to land acquisition process.[168]

Bihar State Road Transport Corporation (BSRTC) runs interstate, intrastate, and international route buses.[169] BSRTC has a daily ridership of around 100,000. Its fleet includes non-electric and electric buses, and AC and non-AC buses. Delhi, Ranchi, and Kathmandu in Nepal are some of the destinations served outside Bihar. Patliputra Inter-State Bus Terminal is a major bus transit hub in Bihar.[170]

National Waterways-1 runs along the Ganges river. Gaighat in Patna has a permanent terminal of inland waterways for handling cargo vessels.[171] The Ganges is navigable throughout the year, and was the principal river highway across the vast Indo-Gangetic Plain. Vessels capable of accommodating five hundred merchants were known to ply this river in the ancient period, when it served as a conduit for overseas trade. The role of the Ganges as a channel for trade was enhanced by its natural links to major rivers and streams in north and south Bihar.[172]

Historically, Bihar has been a major centre of learning, home to the ancient universities of Nalanda (est. 450 CE), Odantapurā (est. 550 CE), and Vikramashila (est. 783 CE). Nalanda and Vikramshila universities were destroyed by the invading forces of Bakhtiyar Khilji in 1200 CE.[173] Bihar saw a revival of its education system during the later part of the British rule, when Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library was established in 1891 by Sir Khan Bahadur Khuda Bakhsh which is currently one of the world's largest functioning library and boasts more than five million items. It is known for its paintings and rare manuscripts.[174] Patna University, the seventh oldest university on the Indian subcontinent, was established in 1917.[175] Some other centres of high learning established under British rule are Patna College (est. 1839), Bihar School of Engineering (est. 1900; now known as National Institute of Technology, Patna), Prince of Wales Medical College (est. 1925; now Patna Medical College and Hospital), Science College, Patna (est. 1928), Patna Women's College, Bihar Veterinary College (est. 1927), and Imperial Agriculture Research Institute (est. 1905; now Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agriculture University, Pusa). The Patna University, one of the oldest universities in Bihar, was established in 1917, and is the seventh oldest university of the Indian subcontinent. NIT Patna, the second oldest engineering college of India, was established as a survey training school in 1886 and later renamed as the Bihar College of Engineering in 1932.

Today, Bihar is home to eight Institutes of National Importance: IIT Patna, IIM Bodh Gaya, AIIMS, Patna, NIT Patna, IIIT Bhagalpur, NIPER Hajipur, Khuda bakhsh Oriental Library, and the Nalanda International University. In 2008, Indian Institutes of Technology Patna was inaugurated with students from all over India[176] and in the same year the National Institute of Fashion Technology Patna was established as the ninth such institute in India.[177] The Indian Institute of Management Bodh Gaya was established in 2015. In March 2019, the government of Bihar sent a proposal to the centre government to upgrade Darbhanga Medical College and Hospital into an AIIMS-like institution.[178] Bihar is home of four Central universities which includes Central University of South Bihar, Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agriculture University and Nalanda University. In 2015, the central government proposed the re-establishment of Vikramshila in Bhagalpur and had designated ₹500 crores (₹5 billion) for it.[179] Bihar also has the National Institute of Fashion Technology Patna, National Law University, Patna Institute of Hotel Management (IHM), Footwear Design and Development Institute, Bihta and Central Institute of Plastic Engineering & Technology (CIPET) Center. CIPET and IHM was established in Hajipur in 1994 and 1998 respectively. Bihar Engineering University was established under Bihar Engineering University Act, 2021 of Bihar Government[180] with the purpose of the development and management of educational infrastructure related to technical, medical, management, and related professional education in Bihar.[181] Based on 2020–21 data, Bihar Engineering University has 56 http://www.beu-bih.ac.in/BEUP/Affiliated_Colleges.aspx and Bihar medical science University under the Bihar medical science University act, 2021. There are Pharmacy colleges, 15 Medical colleges, and 36 Nursing colleges after establishing this university. Aryabhatta Knowledge University has 33 educational colleges, 8 community colleges, and one vocational college.[182] Chanakya National Law University and Chandragupt Institute of Management were established in the later half of 2008 and now attracts students from not just within Bihar but also students from far flung states. Nalanda International University was established in 2014 with active investment from countries such as Japan, Korea, and China. The A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies is a premier research institute in the state.[183] Bihar has eight medical colleges which are funded by the government, namely Patna Medical College and Hospital, Nalanda Medical College and Hospital, Vardhman Institute of Medical Sciences, Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Darbhanga Medical College and Hospital, Anugrah Narayan Magadh Medical College and Hospital Gaya, Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Bhagalpur, Government Medical College, Bettiah and

five private medical colleges[184] Bihar has the seven oldest Government Engineering colleges; Muzaffarpur institute of technology, Bhagalpur college of Engineering, Gaya college of Engineering, Nalanda College of Engineering, Darbhanga college of Engineering, Motihari college of Engineering, and the Loknayak Jai Prakash Institute of Technology.

Bihta, a suburb of the state capital Patna, is home of institutes like IIT Patna, AIIMS, Patna, BIT, Patna and is now emerging as an educational hub.[185][186] With institutes like Super 30, Patna has emerged as a major center for engineering and civil services coaching. The major private IIT-JEE coaching institutes have opened up their branches in Bihar and this has reduced the number of students who go to, for example, Kota and Delhi for engineering/medical coaching.

Bihar e-Governance Services & Technologies (BeST) and the government of Bihar have initiated a unique program to establish a centre of excellence called Bihar Knowledge Center, a school to equip students with the latest skills and customised short-term training programs at an affordable cost. The centre aims to attract the youth of the state to improve their technical, professional, and soft skills, to meet the current requirements of the industrial job market.[187] The National Employability Report of Engineering Graduates, 2014,[188] puts graduates from Bihar in the top 25 per cent of the country, and rates Bihar as one of the three top states at producing engineering graduates in terms of quality and employability.[189]

Text extracted from URL 3: The state of Jharkhand in India is located in the eastern part of the country and is known for its vivid culture, distinct paintings, traditions and festivals.[1]

Hindi is the official language of Jharkhand. There are many regional and tribal languages in Jharkhand.[1]

The regional languages that belong to the Indo-Aryan branch; in Jharkhand, they are Khortha, Nagpuri, and Kudmali spoken by the Sadan, the Indo-Aryan ethnic groups of Chotanagpur.[2] Other Indo-Aryan languages include Bhojpuri, Magahi, Maithili, Bengali, and Odia.[3] The languages that belong to the Austroasiatic branch are Mundari, Santali, Bhumij and

Ho. The languages that belong to the Dravidian language family are Kurukh and Malto.[1]

The staple foods in Jharkhand are rice, dal, vegetables, and tubers. Some dishes include Chilka Roti, Malpua, Dhooska, Arsa roti, and Pitha. Rugra (a type of mushroom) and bamboo shoots are also used as vegetables.[4][5] The leaves of the Munga tree (*Moringa oleifera*) and the Koinar tree (*Bauhinia variegata*) are used as leafy vegetables or Saag.[6]

Local alcoholic drinks are Handia made from rice and Mahua ,daru made from flowers of the Mahua tree.[7][8][9]

Karam is a major native harvest festival of Jharkhand. It is celebrated on the 11th day of a full moon of the month of Bhado by the Sadan (Khortha, Nagpuri, Kurmali-speaking ethnic group) and the tribal (Munda, Bhumij, and Oraon) people of Jharkhand.[10] During this festival, people bring branches of the Karam tree to the village and then place them on the ground. The branches are washed with milk and handia, and decorated with garlands, curd, rice, flowers and grains. The village priest "Pahan" offer sacrifice of Karam devta for good harvest.

During the festival of Jitua, mothers fast for the well being of their children. It is celebrated from the seventh to the ninth lunar day of Krishna-Paksha, in the month of Ashwin.

Nawakhani is an important festival that occurs in Jharkhand. During this festival, grains are eaten following the harvest.

Sohrai is a cattle festival of Jharkhand's. It is celebrated during the Amavasya of the month of Kartik. It coincides with the Diwali festival. People fast throughout the day, and bathe their cattle. In the evening, sacrifices are offered to the cattle deity.[11]

Phaguwa, or Holi, is the spring festival which falls in the month of Phalgun. In spring, people collect sal flower blossoms and place them on their roofs. There are special songs and dances for this festival.

Other festivals include Tusu, Dussehra, Sarhul, Baha and Sendra parha festivals.[12]

There are several folk dances in Jharkhand, including Jhumair, Domkach, Lahasua, Vinsariya, Jhumta, Fagua, Firkal, Painki, and Chhau.[13]

Musical instruments used include Mandar, Dholki, Bansi, Nagara, Dhak, Shehnai, Khartal, and Narsinga, among others.

Sohrai painting is performed during the Sohrai festival. Various designs are painted in courtyards and on walls.[14]

The local tattoo tradition of Godna is an essential part of local tradition.[15]

Jharkhand produces many films in regional languages, including Nagpuri, Khortha, Santali, Ho, and Kurukh.[16] The first feature film of Jharkhand was Aakarant, made under the banner of Drishyantar International in 1988. The first Nagpuri film was Sona Kar Nagpur (1994), produced and directed by Dhananjay Nath Tiwari.[17][18][19][20]

Text extracted from URL 4:

Jharkhand (/ˈdʒɑːrkənd/;[8] Hindi: [d͡ʒʱɑːrkʰəɳd̪]; lit. 'the land of forests') is a state in eastern India.[9] The state shares its border with the states of West Bengal to the east, Chhattisgarh to the west, Uttar Pradesh to the northwest, Bihar to the north and Odisha to the south. It is the 15th largest state by area, and the 14th largest by population. Hindi is the official language of the state.[3] The city of Ranchi is its capital and Dumka its sub-capital. The state is known for its waterfalls, hills and holy places; Baidyanath Dham, Parasnath, Dewri and Rajrappa are major religious sites.[10][11] Jharkhand is primarily rural, with about 24% of its population living in cities.[12]

Jharkhand suffers from what is sometimes termed a resource curse: it accounts for more than 40% of India's mineral resources but 39.1% of its population is below the poverty line and 19.6% of children under five years of age are malnourished.[13][14][15]

The word "Jhar" means 'forest' and "Khand" means 'land' in various Indo-Aryan languages. Thus "Jharkhand" means forest land.[16]

In the ancient period, in the Mahabharata, the region was referred as Kark Khand due to location near Kark Rekha, that is, Tropic of Cancer.[17][verification needed] During the Medieval period, the region was known as Jharkhand. According to Bhavishya Purana (1200 CE), Jharkhand was one of the

seven Pundra desa. The name is first found on a 13th-century copper plate in Kendrapada, Odisha region from the reign of Narasimha Deva II of Eastern Ganga dynasty. Forest land from Baidhnath dham to Puri was known as Jharkhand. In Akbarnama, from Panchet in the east to Ratanpur to west, Rohtasgarh to the north and the frontier of Odisha to the south was known as Jharkhand.[18][19]

The region has been inhabited since the Mesolithic-Chalcolithic period, as shown by several ancient cave paintings.[20][21][22]

Stone tools have been discovered from Chota Nagpur Plateau region which are from the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods.[20] There are ancient cave paintings in Isko, Hazaribagh district which are from Meso-chalcolithic period (9000–5000 BCE).[21] During 2nd millennium BCE the use of Copper tools spread in Chota Nagpur Plateau and these find complexes are known as the Copper Hoard Culture.[23] In the Kabra-Kala mound at the confluence of the Son and North Koel rivers in Palamu district various antiquities and art objects have been found which are from the Neolithic to the medieval period and pot-sherds of Redware, black and red ware, black ware, black slipped ware and NBP ware are from Chalcolithic to the late medieval period.[24] Several iron slags, microliths, and potsherds have been discovered from Singhbhum district that are from 1400 BCE according to carbon dating age.[22] The region was ruled by many empires and dynasties including Nanda, Maurya and Gupta during ancient period.

In the Mahabharata, the region was referred as Kark Khand due to its location near Tropic of Cancer.[17] During the age of Mahajanpadas around 500 BCE, Jharkhand state was a part of Magadha and Anga.[25][citation needed] In the Mauryan period, this region was ruled by a number of states, which were collectively known as the Atavika (forest) states. These states were subdued and were forced to accept the hegemony of the Maurya empire during Ashoka's reign (c. 232 BCE). In the ancient site of Saridkel, burnt brick houses, red ware pottery, copper tools, coins and iron tools have been found which belong to the early centuries CE.[26] Brahmi inscriptions have been found in Khunti district which are from the 3rd century BCE.[27] Samudragupta, while marching through the present-day Chotanagpur region (North and South), directed the first attack against the kingdom of Dakshina Kosala in the Mahanadi valley.[28]

In the 7th century, the Chinese traveller Xuanzang passed through the region. He described the kingdom as Karnasuvarna, with Shashanka as its ruler. To the north of Karn-Suberna was Magadha, Champa was in the east, Mahendra in the west, and Orissa in the south.[29]

During the medieval period, the region was governed by Nagvanshi, Pala, Khayaravala, Ramgarh Raj and Chero rulers.[30][31] A Buddhist monastery has been found in Hazaribagh which was built during the Pala period in the 10th century.[32] Bhim Karn was a Nagvanshi king during medieval period. He defeated the Raksel dynasty of Surguja when they invaded the region with cavalry.[33]

Mughal influence reached Palamu during the reign of Emperor Akbar when it was conquered by Rajput Raja Mansingh in 1574. Several invasions took place during Mughal rule.[34] During the reign of the Nagvanshi King Madhu Singh, Akbar's general invaded Khukhra. Also there was an invasion during the reign of Durjan Shah.[35]

King Ram Shah ruled Navratangarh from 1640 to 1663. He built the Kapilnath Temple in 1643. He was succeeded by his son Raghunath Shah. Thakur Ani Nath Shahdeo built the Jagannath temple of Ranchi in 1691.[36] The King Medini Ray ruled from 1658 to 1674 in Palamu.[37] His rule extended to areas in South Gaya and Hazaribagh. He attacked Navratangarh and defeated the Nagvanshi Maharaja of Chhotanagpur.[38] Chero rule in the Palamu region lasted until the 19th century until

internal conflict between various factions weakened the Cheros and they were defeated by the East India Company. Later Palamu estates were sold by the British.[39]

During the 18th century, regions under the Kings of the Chero dynasty, Nagvanshi dynasty, Ramgarh and Kharagdiha became parts of territories of East India Company. Ramgarh Raj along with estates of other chiefs in the regions were permanently settled as Zamindari estates. The Kharagdiha Rajas were settled as Rajas of Raj Dhanwar in 1809, and the Kharagdiha gadis were separately settled as zamindari estates. Some of the notable Kharagdiha Zamindari estates were Koderma, Gadi Palganj and Ledo Gadi.[40] The princely states in the Chota Nagpur Plateau came within the sphere of influence of the Maratha Empire, but they became tributary states of British East India Company as a result of the Anglo-Maratha Wars and became known as Chota Nagpur Tributary States.[41]

Subjugation, colonisation and imposition of taxes by the British East India Company resulted in spontaneous resistance from the local people. Chuar Rebellion, the first revolt against the British East India Company led by Jagannath Singh Patar in 1767 with the Bhumij tribals. The Bhumijes again revolted in 1769–71, led by their Sardar Ghatwals in Dhalbhum. In 1769, Raghunath Mahato also revolted against the British East India Company (EIC).[42]

In 1771, the revolt against the landlords and the British government was led by Tilka Majhi, a Paharia leader in Rajmahal Hills. Soon after in 1779, the Bhumij tribes again rose in arms against the British rule in Manbhum, called the Chuar Rebellion. In 1807, the Oraons in Barway murdered their landlord from Srinagar. The Munda tribe rose in revolt in 1811 and 1813. Bakhtar Say and Mundal Singh, two landowners, fought against the British East India Company in 1812.[43]

The Hos in Singhbhum revolted in 1820 and a Kol revolt occurred in 1832. Also in 1832 the Bhumijes revolted again against the British, this time under the leadership of Ganga Narayan Singh, known as the Bhumij Rebellion. During the 19th century, large numbers of santals from Manbhum, Hazaribagh, Midnapore were settled by British in Damin-i-koh to cultivate the land and generate revenue. But the Santal revolted against tax imposition.

The Santhal rebellion broke out in 1855 under the leadership of two brothers Sidhu and Kanhu. Later the British renamed it as Santal Pargana.[44]

Thakur Vishwanath Shahdeo and Pandey Ganpat Rai rebelled against the British East India Company in the 1857 rebellion. In the Battle of Chatra, conflict took place between the rebels and the East India company.[45][46] Tikait Umrao Singh, Sheikh Bhikhari, Nadir Ali and Jai Mangal Singh played pivotal role in the Indian Rebellion of 1857.[47] The brothers Nilambar and Pitambar were chiefs of Bhogta clan of the Kharwar tribe who held ancestral jagirs with many Chero Jagirdars and led revolt against the British East India company.[34]

After the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the rule of the British East India Company was transferred to the Crown in the person of Queen Victoria,[48] who, in 1876, was proclaimed Empress of India. The Cheros and Kharwars again rebelled against the British in 1882 but the attack was repulsed.[49] Then Birsa Munda revolt,[50] broke out in 1895 and lasted until 1900. The revolt though mainly concentrated in the Munda belt of Khunti, Tamar, Sarwada and Bandgaon.

In October 1905, the exercise of British influence over the predominantly Hindi-speaking states of Chang Bhakar, Jashpur, Koriya, Surguja, and Udaipur was transferred from the Bengal government to that of the Central Provinces, while the two Oriya-speaking states of Gangpur and Bonai were attached to the Orissa Tributary States, leaving only Kharsawan and Saraikela answerable to the Bengal governor.[51]

In 1936, all nine states were transferred to the Eastern States Agency, the officials of which came under the direct authority of the Governor-General of India, rather than under that of any provinces.

In March 1940, the INC 53rd Session[52][53] occurred under the presidency of Maulana Abul Qalam Azad at Jhanda Chowk, Ramgarh now Ramgarh Cantonment. Mahatma Gandhi,[54] Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Sarojini Naidu, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Acharya J.B. Kripalani, Industrialist Jamnalal Bajaj and other great leaders[55] of the Indian freedom movement attended the Ramgarh Session.[56] Mahatma Gandhi also opened the khadi and village Industries Exhibition at Ramgarh.[57]

At that time, under the leadership of Netajee Subhas Chandra Bose a conference against Samjhauta was also completed. In Ramgarh, Subhas Chandra Bose was seen as president of the All India Forward Block and M. N. Roy was seen as leader of the Radical democratic party.

After Indian independence in 1947, the rulers of many states chose to accede to the Dominion of India. Changbhakar, Jashpur, Koriya, Surguja and Udaipur later became part of the state of Madhya Pradesh, but Gangpur and Bonai became part of the state of Orissa and Kharsawan and Saraikela became part of the state of Bihar.[58] In 1928, a separate state was demanded by Unnati Samaj, the political wing of the Christian Tribals Association, which submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission to constitute a tribal state in eastern India.[18] Prominent leaders like Jaipal Singh Munda and Ram Narayan Singh also demanded a separate state. In 1955, the Jharkhand Party, led by Jaipal Singh Munda, submitted a memorandum to the States Reorganization Commission for a separate Jharkhand state comprising the tribal area of South Bihar, but it was rejected because there were many languages, no link language in the region, tribals were in the minority, Hindustani was the majority language, and it risked adverse effect on the economy of Bihar.[59][60]

Later the Sadan people, the native various caste/non-tribal groups, also joined the movement for a separate state.[59] In 1972, Binod Bihari Mahato, Shibu Soren and A. K. Roy founded Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. Nirmal Mahto founded the All Jharkhand Students Union. They led the movement for a separate state of Jharkhand. The Jharkhand coordination committee (JCC), consisting of Ram Dayal Munda, B. P. Keshri, Binod Bihari Mahato, Santosh Rana and Suraj Singh Besra started a new initiative and tried to coordinate between different parties. Keshri sent a memorandum to form Jharkhand state in 1988.[61] The Jharkhand co-ordination committee was then led by Congress General Secretary Ram Ratan Ram, who urged Rajiv Gandhi to pay attention to the issue at hand.

In July 1988, the Bharatiya Janata party led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Lal Krishna Advani, and Murli Manohar Joshi decided to demand a separate state, Vanachal, comprising the forest region of South Bihar in Jamshedpur. Inder Singh Namdhari, Samresh Singh, and Rudra Pratap Sarangi were the leaders of the Vanachal movement. They organised several rallies to form a separate state.[62]

The central government formed a committee on the Jharkhand matter in 1989. It stressed the need for greater allocation of development funds for the area. There was a provision for limited internal autonomy in the hill area of Assam. Other tribal areas were covered by the fifth schedule of the constitution. Chotanagpur and Santal Pargana development boards were constituted under the chairmanship of the then chief minister of Bihar under the provision of the fifth schedule in 1972. This failed to achieve the desired result. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha wanted more representation and the All Jharkhand Students Union was against it. Due to differences these parties broke away from each other. The All Jharkhand Students Union introduced elements of violence in the movement and called for a boycott of election while Jharkhand Mukti Morcha opposed this. The Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council bill passed in Bihar's legislative assembly in December 1994. The Jharkhand

Area Autonomous Council were given responsibility for forty areas including agriculture, rural health, public work, public health and minerals. The council has power to recommend legislation to the Assembly through the state government and to frame bylaws and regulations.[31][59]

In 1998, when the separate state movement was falling apart, Justice Lal Pingley Nath Shahdeo was leading the movement. In 1998, the Union government decided to send the bill concerning the formation of the state of Jharkhand to the Bihar Legislative Assembly to which Lalu Prasad Yadav had said that the state would be divided over his dead body. A total of 16 political parties including the Bharatiya Janata Party, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, the All Jharkhand Students Union, and the Congress came in one platform and formed the 'All Party Separate State Formation Committee' to start the movement. Shahdeo was elected as the convener of the committee. Voting on the Jharkhand Act was to be done on 21 September 1998 in Bihar legislation. On that day the committee, under the leadership of Shahdeo called for Jharkhand Bandh and organised a protest march. Thousands of supporters of a separate state took to the streets led by Shahdeo. He was arrested and detained in a police station for hours along with many supporters.[63][64]

In 1999 the Bharatiya Janata party promised to form a separate Vanachal state if they won the state election with a majority of votes.[62] After the last Assembly election in the state resulted in a hung assembly, RJD's dependence on the Congress extended support on the precondition that RJD would not pose a hurdle to the passage of the Bihar reorganisation Bill. Finally, with the support from both RJD and Congress, the ruling coalition at the Centre led by the Bharatiya Janata Party which had made statehood its main poll plank in the region in successive polls earlier, cleared the Bihar reorganisation Bill in the monsoon session of the Parliament on 2 and 11 August in Loksabha and Rajyasabha. This paved the way for the creation of a separate Vanachal state comprising the Chota Nagpur Division and Santhal Pargana Division of South Bihar.[65] NDA formed the government with Babulal Marandi as chief minister. Later the name of the state was changed from Vanachal to Jharkhand.[62][66] Babulal Marandi took the oath of chief minister on 15 November 2000 on the anniversary of the birth of tribal leader Birsa Munda.[31]

The dynamics of resources and the politics of development still influence the socio-economic structures in Jharkhand, which was carved out of the relatively underdeveloped southern part of Bihar. According to the 1991 census, the state has a population of over 20 million out of which 28% is tribal while 12% of the people belong to scheduled castes. Jharkhand has 24 districts, 260 blocks, and 32,620 villages out of which only 45% have access to electricity while only 8,484 are connected by roads. Jharkhand is the leading producer of mineral wealth in the country after Chhattisgarh state, endowed as it is with a vast variety of minerals like iron ore, coal, copper ore, mica, bauxite, graphite, limestone, and uranium. Jharkhand is also known for its vast forest resources.[67]

Jharkhand has been at the centre of the Naxalite-Maoist insurgency. Since the uprising of the Naxalites in 1967, 6,000 people have been killed in fighting between the Naxalites and counter-insurgency operations by the police, and its paramilitary groups such as the Salwa Judum.[68]

Despite having a presence in almost 7.80% of India's geographical area[69] (home to 5.50% of India's population), the state of Jharkhand is part of the "Red Corridor" comprising 92,000 square kilometres,[69] where the highest concentration of the groups estimated 20,000 combatants fight.[70] Part of this is due to the fact that the state harbours an abundance of natural resources, while its people live in abject poverty and destitution.[71] The impoverished state provides ample recruits for communist insurgents, who argue that they are fighting on behalf of the landless poor and tribals that see few benefits from the resource extractions.[71] As the federal government holds a monopoly on sub-surface resources in the state, the tribal population is prevented from staking

any claim on the resources extracted from their land.[71] In response, the insurgents have recently begun a campaign of targeting infrastructure related to the extraction of resources vital for Indian energy needs, such as coal.[69]

On 5 March 2007, Sunil Mahato, a member of the national parliament, was shot dead by Naxalite rebels near Kishanpur while watching a football match on the Hindu festival of Holi. His widow, Suman Mahato, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha candidate, won the Jamshedpur Lok Sabha by-election in September 2007 and served in parliament until 2009.[72]

Jharkhand is located in the eastern part of India and is enclosed by West Bengal to the eastern side, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh to the western side, Bihar to the northern part and Odisha to the southern part.

Jharkhand envelops a geographical area of 79,716 square kilometres (30,779 sq mi). Much of Jharkhand lies on the Chota Nagpur Plateau. Many rivers pass through the Chota Nagpur plateau. They are: Damodar, North Koel, Barakar, South Koel, Sankh and Subarnarekha rivers. The higher watersheds of these rivers stretch out within the Jharkhand state. Much of the Jharkhand state is still enclosed by forest. Forests sustain the population of elephants and tigers.

Climate of Jharkhand varies from Humid subtropical in the north to tropical wet and dry in the south-east.[73] The main seasons are summer, rainy, autumn, winter and spring. The summer lasts from mid-April to mid-June. May, the hottest month, characterised by daily high temperatures around 37 °C (99 °F) and low temperatures around 25 °C (77 °F). The southwest monsoon, from mid-June to October, brings nearly all the state's annual rainfall, which ranges from about 1,000 mm (40 in) in the west-central part of the state to more than 1,500 mm (60 in) in the southwest. Nearly half of the annual precipitation falls in July and August. The winter season lasts from November to February. The temperatures in Ranchi in December usually vary from 10–24 °C (50–75 °F). Spring season lasts from mid-February to mid-April.[74]

For the list of dams built across these rivers refer to [2]

Jharkhand has a rich variety of flora and fauna. The national parks and the zoological gardens in the state of Jharkhand present a panorama of this variety.

Part of the reason for the variety and diversity of flora and fauna found in Jharkhand state may be accredited to the Palamau Tiger Reserves under the Project Tiger. This reserve is abode to hundreds of species of flora and fauna,[76] as indicated within brackets: mammals (39), snakes (8), lizards (4), fish (6), insects (21), birds (170), seed bearing plants and trees (97), shrubs and herbs (46), climbers, parasites and semi-parasites (25), and grasses and bamboos (17).

According to the 2011 Indian Census, Jharkhand has a population of 32.96 million, consisting of 16.93 million males and 16.03 million females.[78] The sex ratio is 947 females to 1,000 males.[78] The literacy rate of the state was 67.63% with Ranchi district being most educated at 77.13% compared to rural Pakur district being least at 50.17%.[78] In social demographics, Jharkhand's Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes populations are 3,985,644 (12.08%) and 8,646,189 (26.21%), respectively. Nationally, they rank 14th and 6th, comprising 1.98% and 8.29% of the total population within these social groups. They are predominantly concentrated in south-western district Simdega (78.23%), Khunti (77.77%), Gumla (72.11%), Paschim Singhbhum (71.1%), Latehar (66.85%), and in Lohardaga district (60.21%).

Languages of Jharkhand (2011)[79]

Jharkhand is linguistically diverse, with speakers of Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, and Austroasiatic languages. Among those, Hindi is accorded the status of the official language and is spoken as the link language by the people of the state,[3] although different regional languages exist. Those include Nagpuri, Khortha, Kurmali, Magahi and Bhojpuri. Jharkhand has accorded additional official language status to Angika, Bengali, Bhojpuri, Bhumij, Ho, Kharia, Kurukh, Khortha, Kurmali, Magahi, Maithili, Mundari, Nagpuri, Odia, Santali and Urdu.[4][80][3]

Religion in Jharkhand (2011)[81]

The unclassified religion mostly consists of adherents of Sarnaism.[b] As per the 2011 census, Hinduism is the majority religion in the state at 67.8%, followed by Islam at 14.5% and Christianity at 4.3%.[81] Other religions, primarily Sarnaism, claim to be 12.8% of the population.[84]

Hindus form majority in 19 out of 24 districts of the Jharkhand. Christianity forms majority in Simdega district (51.04%).[85] Sarna forms majority in Lohardaga (51.01%), West Singhbhum (62.29%) and plurality in Gumla (44.62%) and Khunti (45.37%).[86] Muslims have highest presence in Pakur district and Sahebganj district of Jharkhand forming 35% and 34% of the population.[87]

The constitutional head of the government of Jharkhand is the governor, who is appointed by the President of India. The real executive power rests with the chief minister and the cabinet. The political party or the coalition of political parties having a majority in the Legislative Assembly forms the government.

The head of the bureaucracy of the state is the chief secretary. Under this position, is a hierarchy of officials drawn from the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service, Indian Forest Service and different wings of the state civil services. The judiciary is headed by the Chief Justice. Jharkhand has a High Court which has been functioning since 2000. All the branches of the government are located in the state capital, Ranchi.

The state was formed with 18 districts that were formerly part of south Bihar. Some of these districts were reorganised to form 6 new districts, namely, Latehar, Saraikela Kharsawan, Jamtara, Pakur, Khunti and Ramgarh. At present, the state has 5 Divisions and 24 Districts. One interesting thing about Jharkhand is that all its districts, except Lohardaga and Khunti, share a border with a neighbouring state.[88]

Largest Cities in Jharkhand(2011 Census of India estimate)[89]

The gross domestic product of Jharkhand is estimated at ₹3.83 lakh crore (US\$48 billion) in 2020–21. The per capita GDP of Jharkhand in 2018-19 was ₹82,430 (US\$1,000).[90]

Jharkhand has several towns and innumerable villages with civic amenities. Urbanization ratio is 24.1%.[91] Jharkhand also has immense mineral resources: minerals ranging from (ranking in the country within bracket) from iron ore (4th), coal (3rd), copper ore (1st), mica (1st), bauxite (3rd), manganese, limestone, china clay, fire clay, graphite (8th), kainite (1st), chromite (2nd), asbestos (1st), thorium (3rd), sillimanite, uranium (Jaduguda mines, Narwa Pahar) (1st) and even gold (Rakha Mines) (6th) and silver and several other minerals. Large deposits of coal and iron ore support concentration of industry, in centres like Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, Bokaro and Ranchi. Tata Steel, a NSE NIFTY 500 conglomerate has its corporate office and main plant in Tatanagar, Jharkhand.[92] It reported a gross income of ₹. 204,910 million for 2005. NTPC will start coal production from its captive mine in state in 2011–12, for which the company will be investing about Rs 18 billion.[93]

In February 2006, the government of Jharkhand established the Jharkhand Silk Textile and Handicraft Development Corporation (Jharcraft) which promotes local sericulture and weaving and the wider marketing of these products.[94][95]

Agriculture is another major economic sector. Farmers in Jharkhand produce several crops such as rice, wheat, maize, pulses, potatoes, and vegetables such as tomato, carrots, cabbage, brinjal, pumpkin, and papaya. Other important industries include the cottage industry and IT.[96]

Staple foods of Jharkhand are rice, dal, vegetables, and tubers. Spices are sparingly used in cuisine. Famous dishes include Chhilka Roti, Malpua, Pitha, Dhooska, Arsa roti, Dudhauri, and Panipuri (Gupchup).[97][98] Rugra and Putoo is a type of edible mushroom that is grown extensively in Jharkhand and harvested during the rainy months. It has a hardened, white, edible shell and a softer dark coloured centre. Bamboo shoot are a versatile ingredient used in many culinary traditions, particularly in Jharkhand cuisine. They can be boiled, steamed, stir-fried, or pickled, making them a popular addition to dishes such as soups, curries, and salads. Bamboo shoots are known for their ability to absorb the flavours of the ingredients they are cooked with, enhancing the overall taste of the dishes.[99] The leaves of Munga (*Moringa oleifera*) and Koinar (*Bauhinia variegata*) trees are used as a leafy vegetable or Saag.[100]

Local alcoholic drinks include rice beer, originally known as Handi or Handia, named after the vessel, handi (earthen pot), used to make it. Handia is culturally associated with natives, i.e., Sadans and Tribals; this drink is consumed by both men and women on social occasions like marriage and festivals.[101][102] Another common liquor is called Mahua daru, made from flowers of the Mahua tree (*Madhuca longifolia*).[103]

There are several folk dances in Jharkhand such as: Jhumair, Mardani Jhumar, Janani Jhumar, Domkach, Vinsariya, Jhumta, Fagua, Angnai, Paiki, Chhau, Firkal, Mundari, and Santali dance.[104]

Major local festivals of Jharkhand are Sarhul, Baha Parab, Karam Parab, Mage Parab, Sohrai, Bandna, Tusu festival, Makar Sankranti, Nawakhani, Durga Puja, Jitiya, Manasa Puja, Diwali, Dussehra, Ram Navami, Rath Yatra, Saraswati Puja, Phagua and the Sendra festival.[105]

Sohrai and Khovar painting is a mural art form practised by women. Sohrai painting is traditionally done at the Sohrai harvest festival, while Khovar painting is done at weddings.[105]

The tattoo making tradition of Godna is an essential part of local tradition.[105]

Jharkhand produces many films in regional and Tribal languages including Nagpuri, Khortha, Santali, Ho, and Kurukh.[106] The film industry in the state of Jharkhand is known as Jollywood.[107][108]

There are some television channels, newspapers, and radio stations which operate in Jharkhand. DD Jharkhand is an important channel in Jharkhand. All India Radio operates from Ranchi.[109]

Hindustan, Dainik Jagran, Sokal Sokal, Prabhat Khabar, and Ranchi Express are some of the Hindi newspapers and The Hindu, The Times of India, Hindustan Times, Navbharat Times, The Pioneer, and The Telegraph are some English newspapers in Jharkhand.

Birsa Munda Airport is the largest domestic airport in the state with air connectivity to major Indian cities of Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad among others.[110]

Deoghar Airport is the second busiest airport located in the state of Jharkhand, India. It is the second operational airport in state of Jharkhand after Ranchi.[111]

Sonari Airport at Jamshedpur is the third operational airport in the state and it has daily flight to Bhubaneswar and Kolkata.

Bokaro Airport is currently under construction and once completed will be 4th operational airport of the state. It is being developed under UDAN scheme.

Other airports present in the state are Chakulia Airport, Dumka Airport and Dhanbad Airport which mostly run private and charter flights.[112]

Jharkhand has extensive network of National Highways and State Highways.[113] There is 2,661.83 km (1,653 mi 1,733 yd) of paved National Highways in the state as of 2016.[113] The National highways present in the state are numbered 18, 19, 20, 22, 33, 39, 43, 114A, 118, 133, 133A, 133B, 139, 143, 143A, 143AG, 143D, 143H, 218, 220, 320D, 320G, 333, 333A, 343, 419 and 522.[113] The Golden Quadrilateral network of Delhi – Kolkata route runs through Jharkhand notably at Dhanbad.[114][115]

Jharkhand is landlocked state but has numerous rivers and waterways.[116] A multi-modal port has been planned at Sahebganj where river Ganges flows.[117] The project is estimated to cost ₹65,000 million and phase-1 is estimated to be completed by 2019.[118]

Jharkhand is very well connected by railways. The state has numerous railway stations and railway junctions.[119] Hilly regions of state are equipped with tunnels that form essential organ of railways.

As per the 2011 census conducted by Government of India the official literacy rate for the state was 66.41% (male: 76.84%; female: 55.42%) with nine districts above the average literacy rate:[120][121]

Since the formation of the new state, the Jharkhand Education Project Council (JEPC) has been implementing four projects to spread elementary education: DPEP, SSA, NPEGEL, and KGBV. The state has been moving towards the goal of universal elementary education but the target of 100% enrolment and retention of children in schools has not yet been attained.[122] Jharkhand has made primary education so accessible that 95% of children of ages 6–11 are enrolled in school, as opposed to 56% in 1993–94; this will likely improve literacy a great deal.[citation needed]

The medium of instruction in schools is Hindi/English with English/Hindi/Sanskrit/Bengali/Odia as second language. After 10 years of schooling, students can join two years of Intermediate course (or +2 courses) in Arts, Science and Commerce. This is followed by three years of degree courses (graduation) or four years of Engineering/Agriculture/Medicine degree.

The school system comprises various private and public schools. The government schools are abundant. Few notable schools are: St. Thomas School, Ranchi, Sainik School Tilaiya, Loyola School, Jamshedpur, Delhi Public School, Bokaro, Delhi Public School, Ranchi, Bishop Westcott Boys' School, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar, De Nobili School and St. Xavier's School, Hazaribagh.

In 2009 Franz Gastler established Yuwa School a NGO in Hutup village in Ranchi district with helps of friends to use football as a platform to combat child marriage, illiteracy and human trafficking in rural India.[123] In 2019, It won the Laureus Sport for Good Award.[124]

Because of its mild climate, Jharkhand, particularly its capital Ranchi, has been a health resort. As far back as 1918, facilities were set up for treatment of mentally challenged.[125]

European Mental Hospital was established along with Indian Mental Hospital. Today they are called Central Institute of Psychiatry and Ranchi Institute of Neuro-psychiatry and Allied Sciences respectively.

In certain areas of Jharkhand, poverty and consequent malnutrition have given rise to diseases like tuberculosis (TB). In fact, TB has assumed epidemic proportions in certain areas of the state. For management and treatment of such TB, Itki TB Sanatorium, Ranchi, established in 1928 has been doing work as a premier institute for clinical and programmatic management of TB. The Itki TB Sanatorium is well equipped and accredited by the Indian government for quality assurance and Culture and Drug Sensitivity Testing for M.TB. It provides free of cost treatment for TB as well as drug-resistant TB. Likewise, in the field of treatment of cancer, Tata Main Hospital, Jamshedpur,[126] is rendering pioneering work. In the same way, Bokaro General Hospital equipped with modern facilities for the treatment of cancer and heart-related problems with the capacity of 1100 beds one of the largest in eastern India.

Although several public and private health facilities are available in the state, overall infrastructure for dispensing health related services require improvements. An exception is the Tata Motors Hospital which is an example of an ISO 14001 and 18001 certified hospital with DNB teaching facilities.[citation needed]

Ranchi, the capital, has witnessed a sharp growth in the number of hospitals.

Fluoride in groundwater presents a public health problem in Jharkhand. A recent survey led by the Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Ranchi in collaboration with UNICEF in the northwest districts of Palamau and Garhwa found fluoride levels above the drinking WHO drinking water guidelines.[127] Excessive amounts of fluoride in drinking water can lead to dental fluorosis, prevalent bone fractures, and skeletal fluorosis, an irreversible disabling condition.[128] Some work has focused on combating fluorosis through increased calcium intake by consuming local plants.[129] Researchers at Princeton University and the Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Ranchi are currently investigating defluoridation options, while performing an epidemiological survey to assess the extent of fluoride linked health problems and the impact of future interventions.[130][131]

Almost 80% of Jharkhand's people are farmers, although it contains 40% of India's mineral reserves it has some of India's poorest people, in Summer 2009 the state was threatened by drought, with people criticising the government for not providing food aid or assistance.[132]

JRD TATA Sports Complex, Jamshedpur hosts football matches of Indian Super League and is the home of ISL based football club Jamshedpur FC.

Cricket, hockey, and football are common games in Jharkhand. Players like Jaipal Singh, a former Indian hockey captain and Olympian and Manohar Topno currently play for the Indian Hockey team. Jaipal Singh was the captain of the hockey team that won the first gold medal for India in the 1928 Summer Olympics in Amsterdam. Mahendra Singh Dhoni who was the captain of Indian cricket team and led the Indian cricket team to ICC Cricket World Cup glory on 2 April 2011, ending a 28-year wait to repeat the feat achieved by former Indian captain Kapil Dev in 1983 at Lord's, England is from here.[133]

Other notable cricketers from Jharkhand are Varun Aaron, Shahbaz Nadeem, and Saurabh Tiwary. He was one of the key batsmen in the Indian team that won the 2008 U/19 Cricket World Cup in Malaysia. Other sportspeople include Deepika Kumari, a young archer who won gold medal in the 2010 Commonwealth games in the women's individual recurve event. Nikki Pradhan currently a member of the national hockey team. Pradhan was the first female hockey player from Jharkhand to represent India in the Olympics.

An International Cricket stadium with an indoor stadium and a practice ground has been constructed. This international stadium has hosted an International match between India and England on 19 January 2013.[134] Apart from that, this stadium has hosted two IPL 6 matches for KKR and qualifier 2 of IPL 8 between CSK and RCB and Celebrity Cricket League Matches for Bhojpuri Dabanggs. A tennis academy, which was inaugurated by Sania Mirza and Shoaib Malik, also runs besides the cricket stadium.[135] Ranchi is among six cities in Hockey India League to be played in January 2013. Ranchi franchise was bought by Patel-Uniexcel Group and the team named Ranchi Rhinos which is now being co-hosted by Mahendra Singh Dhoni and named as Ranchi Rays.[136]

Jharkhand is known for its waterfalls, hills and holy places.[137][10] Parasnath, Baidyanath Dham, Maa Dewri Temple and Chhinnamasta Temple are major religious places.[138][139]

Tattapani Hot Water Spring is located 8 km from Latehar. The hot spring water come out from different places on the Sukari River bed. Rich in sulphur, the hot spring is believed to have medicinal properties and good for skin.[140]

Itkhor is a holy place for Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. It is believed to be the place from where Gautama Buddha started his journey for Bodh Gaya. Many sculptures of Hindu, Jain and Buddhist art styles were found in 2018.[141][142] Rankini Temple of Jadugora is famous in Jharkhand, as well as in Odisha, West Bengal and Bihar.[143][144] There are several waterfalls in the state including Jonha Falls, Hundru Falls, Dassam Falls, Perwaghagh Falls and Panchghagh Falls.[145][146][147] Netarhat is a hill station in the state.[148][149][150]

There are several attractions and wildlife sanctuaries in Jharkhand including Betla National Park and Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary, which are major attraction for tourists.[151][152][153][154]

State Museum, Hotwar and Tribal Research Institute and Museum showcase various cultural heritage and tribal culture of Jharkhand.[155][156]

Government

General information

Text extracted from URL 5:

The Culture of Uttar Pradesh is an Indian culture which has its roots in Hindi, Bhojpuri and Urdu literature, music, fine arts, drama and cinema.[1] Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, has historical monuments including Bara Imambara and Chhota Imambara, and has preserved the damaged complex of the Oudh-period British Resident's quarters, which are being restored.

Varanasi's ghats (bathing steps along the river) draws pilgrims year-round who bathe in the Ganges River. Mathura's celebrations of the Holi festival attract many tourists.

Thousands gather at Allahabad (Prayagraj) to take part in the annual Magh Mela festival on the banks of the Ganges which is organised on a larger scale every 12th year, when it is called the Kumbha Mela, where over 10 million Hindu pilgrims congregate – one of the largest gathering of human beings in the world. Badaun is a religiously significant city whose historical monuments and tombs attract thousand of tourists annually.

The historical towns of Sarnath and Kushinagar are not far from Varanasi. Gautama Buddha gave his first sermon at Sarnath and died at Kushinagar; both are important pilgrimage sites for Buddhists. Also at Sarnath are the Pillars of Ashoka and the Lion Capital of Ashoka, archaeological artefacts

with national significance.[further explanation needed] Ghazipur, 80 km from Varanasi, has Ganges Ghats and the Tomb of British potentate Lord Cornwallis, maintained by the Archaeologic survey of India.

During the Gupta and Harsh Vardhan eras, Uttar Pradesh was a centre for musical innovation. Swami Haridas was a musician who championed Hindustani Classical Music. Tansen, a musician in Mughal Emperor Akbar's court, was a disciple of Swami Haridas.

Kathak is a classical dance form from Uttar Pradesh. Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Awadh, was a patron and champion of Kathak. Today, the state is home to two prominent schools of this dance form, Lucknow Gharana and Banaras Gharana.

Music personalities including Naushad Ali, Talat Mehmood, Begum Akhtar , Anup Jalota, Shubha Mudgal, Bismillah Khan, Ravi Shankar, Kishan Maharaj, Vikash Maharaj, Hari Prasad Chaurasia, Gopal Shankar Misra, Siddheshwari Devi, Girija Devi and Sir Cliff Richard were originally from Uttar Pradesh.

The region's folk heritage includes songs called rasiya (especially popular in Braj), which celebrate the mythological love of Radha and Krishna. These songs are accompanied by large drums known as bumb and are performed at many festivals. Other folk dances or folk theater forms include Raslila, Swang, Ramlila (a dramatic enactment of the entire Ramayana), Nautanki, Naqal (mimicry) and Qawwali.

The Bhatkhande Music Institute is situated in Lucknow.

The common state-language of Uttar Pradesh is standard Hindi. While standard Hindi (Khari boli) is the official language, several regional Hindi 'dialects' are spoken in the state including: Awadhi, Braj, Kannauji, Bagheli and Bundeli, as well as several local dialects that do not have a formal name. Bhojpuri is the second most spoken language of Uttar Pradesh,[2] it is spoken by almost 11% of the population. Urdu is prominent in Uttar Pradesh as Lucknow was once the centre of Indo-Persianate culture in north India. The language of Lucknow ("Lakhnawi Urdu") is a form of high literary Urdu.

Uttar Pradesh attracts large number of visitors, both national and international; with more than 71 million domestic tourists (in 2003) and almost 25% of the All-India foreign tourists visiting Uttar Pradesh, it is one of the top tourist destinations in India. There are two regions in the state where a majority of the tourists go, the Hindu pilgrimage circuit and the Agra circuit.

The pilgrimage circuit includes the most religiously prestigious of the cities considered holy in Hinduism on the banks of the Ganges and Yamuna, rivers which are also considered sacred: Varanasi, Ayodhya (in mythology the birthplace of Rama), Mathura (in mythology the birthplace of Krishna), Vrindavan (in mythology where Krishna spent his childhood), and Allahabad (Prayagraj) (the confluence or 'holy-sangam' of the Ganges-Yamuna rivers).[citation needed]

The city of Agra is near three World Heritage Sites: Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and the nearby Fatehpur Sikri.[3] Taj Mahal is a mausoleum built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. It is cited as "the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world's heritage". Agra Fort is about 2.5 km northwest of its much more famous sister monument, the Taj Mahal. The fort can be more accurately described as a walled palatial city. Fatehpur Sikri was the 16th-century capital city near Agra, built by the Mughal emperor Akbar the Great, whose mausoleum is in Agra.

Dayal Bagh in Agra is a modern-day temple and tourist site with lifelike marble sculptures. Agra's attractions also include Asia's largest spa as well as Asia's second 6D theatre.[citation needed]

Prem Mandir, Vrindavan, is called the "temple of love."

Some of the main natural protected areas in Uttar Pradesh are:-

Some areas require a special permit for non-Indians to visit.

The people of Uttar Pradesh wear a variety of native- and Western-style dress. Traditional styles of dress include colourful draped garments – such as sari for women and dhoti or lungi for men – and tailored clothes such as salwar kameez for women and kurta-pyjama for men. Men also often sport a headgear like topi or pagri. Sherwani is a more formal male dress and is frequently worn along with chooridar on festive occasions. European-style trousers and shirts are also common among men. Young adults are most commonly found in jeans and t-shirts.

Uttar Pradesh's centres of art and craft include:

Many festivals are religious in origin, although several of them are celebrated irrespective of caste and creed.

Hindu festivals include Diwali, Holi and Dussehra, which are also observed by Jains. Ten days of Ramlila takes place during the period of navratri and on the 10th day an effigy of Raavan is burnt. Chhath Puja is the biggest festival of eastern Uttar Pradesh.[6] Durga puja is also observed in many parts of the state during navratri. Eid e milad un nabi, Eid, Bakreed, Muharram and the birthday of Ali ibn Abitalib are recognised official Muslim religious festivals. Mahavir Jayanti is celebrated by Jains, Buddha Jayanti by Buddhists, Guru Nanak Jayanti by Sikhs and Christmas by the Christians.[7] Other festivals include Ram navami, Krishna-Janmashtami, Mahashivratri, etc.

Text extracted from URL 6:

Uttar Pradesh (/ˌʊtər prəˈdeɪ/;[13] lit. 'North Province') is a state in northern India. With over 241 million inhabitants, it is the most populated state in India as well as the most populous country subdivision in the world – more populous than all but four other countries outside of India[14] – and accounting for 16.5 per cent of the total population of India. It was established in 1950 after India had become a republic. It is a successor to the United Provinces, established in 1935 by renaming the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, in turn established in 1902 from the North-Western Provinces and the Oudh Province. Lucknow serves as the state capital, with Prayagraj being the judicial capital. The state is divided into 18 divisions and 75 districts. On 9 November 2000, a new state, Uttaranchal (now Uttarakhand), was created from Uttar Pradesh's western Himalayan hill region. The two major rivers of the state, the Ganges and its tributary Yamuna, meet at the Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad), a Hindu pilgrimage site. Other notable rivers are Gomti and Saryu. The forest cover in the state is 6.1 per cent of the state's geographical area. The cultivable area is 82 per cent of the total geographical area, and the net area sown is 68.5 per cent of the cultivable area.[15]

The state is bordered by Rajasthan to the west, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi to the northwest, Uttarakhand and an international border with Nepal to the north, Bihar to the east, Madhya Pradesh to the south and also bordered by Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. It covers 243,286 km² (93,933 sq mi), equal to 7.3 per cent of the total area of India, and is the fourth-largest Indian state by area. Though long known for sugar production, the state's economy is now

dominated by the services industry. The service sector comprises travel and tourism, hotel industry, real estate, insurance and financial consultancies. The economy of Uttar Pradesh is the third-largest state economy in India, with ₹18.63 lakh crore (US\$230 billion) in gross domestic product and a per capita GSDP of ₹68,810 (US\$860).[9] President's rule has been imposed in Uttar Pradesh ten times since 1968, for different reasons and for a total of 1,700 days.[16] The state, at present, has three international airports – Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport (Lucknow), Lal Bahadur Shastri Airport (Varanasi) and Kushinagar International Airport (Kushinagar). Prayagraj Junction is the headquarters of the North Central Railway, and Gorakhpur Railway Station serves as the headquarters of the North Eastern Railway. The High Court of the state is located in Prayagraj. The state contributes 80 seats and 31 seats to the lower house Lok Sabha and the upper house Rajya Sabha, respectively.

Inhabitants of the state are called Awadhi, Bagheli, Bhojpuriya, Braji, Bundeli, Kannauji or Rohilkhandi depending upon their region of origin. Hinduism is practised by more than three-fourths of the population, with Islam being the next-largest religious group. Hindi is the most widely spoken language and is also the official language of the state, along with Urdu. Uttar Pradesh was home to most of the mainstream political entities that existed in ancient and medieval India including the Maurya Empire, Harsha Empire, Gupta Empire, Pala Empire, Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire as well as many other empires. At the time of the Indian independence movement in the early 20th century, there were three major princely states in Uttar Pradesh – Ramgadi, Rampur and Benares. The state houses several holy Hindu temples and pilgrimage centres. Along with several historical, natural and religious tourist destinations, including Agra, Aligarh, Ayodhya, Bareilly, Gorakhpur, Kanpur, Kushinagar, Lucknow, Mathura, Meerut, Prayagraj, Varanasi, and Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh is also home to three World Heritage sites.

Modern human hunter-gatherers have been in Uttar Pradesh[17][18][19] since between around[20] 85,000 and 72,000 years ago. There have also been prehistorical finds in the state from the Middle and Upper Paleolithic dated to 21,000–31,000 years old[21] and Mesolithic/Microlithic hunter-gatherer settlement, near Pratapgarh, from around 10550–9550 BCE. Villages with domesticated cattle, sheep, and goats and evidence of agriculture began as early as 6000 BCE, and gradually developed between c. 4000 and 1500 BCE beginning with the Indus Valley Civilisation and Harappa culture to the Vedic period and extending into the Iron Age.[22][23][24]

Out of the sixteen mahajanapadas (lit. 'great realms') or oligarchic republics that existed in ancient India, seven fell entirely within the present-day boundaries of the state.[25] The kingdom of Kosala, in the Mahajanapada era, was also located within the regional boundaries of modern-day Uttar Pradesh.[26] According to Hinduism, the divine King Rama of the Ramayana epic reigned in Ayodhya, the capital of Kosala.[27] Krishna, another divine king of Hindu legend, who plays a key role in the Mahabharata epic and is revered as the eighth reincarnation (Avatar) of the Hindu god Vishnu, is said to have been born in the city of Mathura.[26] The aftermath of the Kurukshetra War is believed to have taken place in the area between the Upper Doab and Delhi, (in what was Kuru Mahajanapada), during the reign of the Pandava King Yudhishtira. The kingdom of the Kurus corresponds to the Black and Red Ware and Painted Gray Ware culture and the beginning of the Iron Age in northwest India, around 1000 BCE.[26]

Control over Gangetic plains region was of vital importance to the power and stability of all of India's major empires, including the Maurya (320–200 BCE), Kushan (100–250 CE), Gupta (350–600), and Gurjara-Pratihara (650–1036) empires.[28] Following the Huns' invasions that broke the Gupta empire, the Ganges-Yamuna Doab saw the rise of Kannauj.[29] During the reign of Harshavardhana (590–647), the Kannauj empire reached its zenith.[29] It spanned from Punjab in the north and

Gujarat in the west to Bengal in the east and Odisha in the south.[26] It included parts of central India, north of the Narmada River and it encompassed the entire Indo-Gangetic Plain.[30] Many communities in various parts of India claim descent from the migrants of Kannauj.[31] Soon after Harshavardhana's death, his empire disintegrated into many kingdoms, which were invaded and ruled by the Gurjara-Pratihara empire, which challenged Bengal's Pala Empire for control of the region.[30] Kannauj was several times invaded by the South Indian Rashtrakuta dynasty, from the 8th century to the 10th century.[32][33] After the fall of the Pala empire, the Chero dynasty ruled from the 12th century to the 18th century.[34]

Uttar Pradesh was partially or entirely ruled by the Delhi Sultanate for 320 years (1206–1526). Five dynasties ruled over the Delhi Sultanate sequentially: the Mamluk dynasty (1206–90), the Khalji dynasty (1290–1320), the Tughlaq dynasty (1320–1414), the Sayyid dynasty (1414–51), and the Lodi dynasty (1451–1526).[35][36]

The first Sultan of Delhi, Qutb ud-Din Aibak, conquered some parts of Uttar Pradesh, including Meerut, Aligarh, and Etawah. His successor, Iltutmish, expanded the Sultanate's rule over Uttar Pradesh by defeating the King of Kannauj. During the reign of Sultan Balban, the Mamluk dynasty faced numerous rebellions in the state, but he was able to suppress them and establish his authority. Alauddin Khilji, extended his conquests to various regions in the state, including Varanasi and Prayagraj. Apart from the rulers, the Delhi Sultanate era also saw the growth of Sufism in Uttar Pradesh. Sufi saints, such as Nizamuddin Auliya and Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, lived during this period and their teachings had a significant impact on the people of the region. Sultanat era in the state also witnessed the construction of mosques and tombs, including the Atala Masjid in Jaunpur, the Jama Masjid in Fatehpur Sikri, and the Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq's Tomb in Tughlaqabad.

In the 16th century, Babur, a Timurid descendant of Timur and Genghis Khan from Fergana Valley (modern-day Uzbekistan), swept across the Khyber Pass and founded the Mughal Empire, covering India, along with modern-day Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh.[37] The Mughals were descended from Persianised Central Asian Turks (with significant Mongol admixture). In the Mughal era, Uttar Pradesh became the heartland of the empire.[31] Mughal emperors Babur and Humayun ruled from Delhi.[38][39] In 1540 an Afghan, Sher Shah Suri, took over the reins of Uttar Pradesh after defeating the Mughal King Humayun.[40] Sher Shah and his son Islam Shah ruled Uttar Pradesh from their capital at Gwalior.[41] After the death of Islam Shah Suri, his prime minister Hemu became the de facto ruler of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and the western parts of Bengal. He was bestowed the title of Hemchandra Vikramaditya (title of Vikramāditya adopted from Vedic period) at his formal coronation took place at Purana Qila in Delhi on 7 October 1556. A month later, Hemu died in the Second Battle of Panipat, and Uttar Pradesh came under Emperor Akbar's rule.[42] Akbar ruled from Agra and Fatehpur Sikri.[43]

In the 18th century, after the fall of Mughal authority, the power vacuum was filled by the Maratha Empire, in the mid-18th century, the Maratha army invaded the Uttar Pradesh region, which resulted in Rohillas losing control of Rohilkhand to the Maratha forces led by Raghunath Rao and Malha Rao Holkar. The conflict between Rohillas and Marathas came to an end on 18 December 1788 with the arrest of Ghulam Qadir, the grandson of Najeeb-ud-Daula, who was defeated by the Maratha general Mahadaji Scindia. In 1803–04, following the Second Anglo-Maratha War, when the British East India Company defeated the Maratha Empire, much of the region came under British suzerainty.[44]

Starting from Bengal in the second half of the 18th century, a series of battles for north Indian lands finally gave the British East India Company accession over the state's territories.[46] Ajmer and

Jaipur kingdoms were also included in this northern territory, which was named the "North-Western Provinces" (of Agra). Although UP later became the fifth-largest state of India, NWPA was one of the smallest states of the British Indian empire.[47] Its capital shifted twice between Agra and Allahabad.[48]

Due to dissatisfaction with British rule, a serious rebellion erupted in various parts of North India, which became known as the Indian Rebellion of 1857; Bengal regiment's sepoy stationed at Meerut cantonment, Mangal Pandey, is widely considered as its starting point.[49] After the revolt failed, the British divided the most rebellious regions by reorganising their administrative boundaries, splitting the Delhi region from 'NWFP of Agra' and merging it with Punjab Province, while the Ajmer–Marwar region was merged with Rajputana and Oudh was incorporated into the state. The new state was called the North Western Provinces of Agra and Oudh, which in 1902 was renamed as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.[50] It was commonly referred to as the United Provinces or its acronym UP.[51][52]

In 1920, the capital of the province was shifted from Allahabad to Lucknow.[53] The high court continued to be at Allahabad, but a bench was established at Lucknow.[54] Allahabad continues to be an important administrative base of today's Uttar Pradesh and has several administrative headquarters.[55] Uttar Pradesh continued to be central to Indian politics and was especially important in modern Indian history as a hotbed of the Indian independence movement. The state hosted modern educational institutions such as the Aligarh Muslim University, Banaras Hindu University and Darul Uloom Deoband. Nationally known figures such as Ram Prasad Bismil and Chandra Shekhar Azad were among the leaders of the movement in Uttar Pradesh, and Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Madan Mohan Malaviya and Govind Ballabh Pant were important national leaders of the Indian National Congress. The All India Kisan Sabha was formed at the Lucknow session of the Congress on 11 April 1936, with the famous nationalist Sahajanand Saraswati elected as its first president,[56] to address the longstanding grievances of the peasantry and mobilise them against the zamindari landlords attacks on their occupancy rights, thus sparking the Farmers movements in India.[57] During the Quit India Movement of 1942, Ballia district overthrew the colonial authority and installed an independent administration under Chittu Pandey. Ballia became known as "Baghi Ballia" (Rebel Ballia) for this significant role in India's independence movement.[58]

After India's independence, the United Provinces were renamed "Uttar Pradesh" (lit. 'northern province'), preserving UP as the acronym,[59][60] with the change coming into effect on 24 January 1950.[1] The new state was formed after the merger of several princely states and territories, including the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, and the Delhi territory. The state has provided nine of India's prime ministers which is more than any other state and is the source of the largest number of seats in the Lok Sabha. Despite its political influence since ancient times, its poor record in economic development and administration, poor governance, organised crime and corruption have kept it among India's backward states. The state has been affected by repeated episodes of caste-related and communal violence.[61] In December 1992 the disputed Babri Mosque located in Ayodhya was demolished by Hindu activists, leading to widespread violence across India.[62] In 2000, northern districts of the state were separated to form the state of Uttarakhand.[63]

Uttar Pradesh, with a total area of 240,928 square kilometres (93,023 sq mi), is India's fourth-largest state in terms of land area and is roughly of same size as United Kingdom. It is situated on the northern spout of India and shares an international boundary with Nepal. The Himalayas border the state on the north,[64] but the plains that cover most of the state are distinctly different from those high mountains.[65] The larger Gangetic Plain region is in the north; it includes the Ganges-Yamuna Doab, the Ghaghra plains, the Ganges plains and the Terai.[66] The smaller Vindhya Range and

plateau region are in the south.[67] It is characterised by hard rock strata and a varied topography of hills, plains, valleys and plateaus. The Bhabhar tract gives place to the terai area which is covered with tall elephant grass and thick forests interspersed with marshes and swamps.[68][69] The sluggish rivers of the bhabhar deepen in this area, their course running through a tangled mass of thick undergrowth. The terai runs parallel to the bhabhar in a thin strip. The entire alluvial plain is divided into three sub-regions.[70] The first in the eastern tract consisting of 14 districts which are subject to periodical floods and droughts and have been classified as scarcity areas. These districts have the highest density of population which gives the lowest per capita land. The other two regions, the central and the western, are comparatively better with a well-developed irrigation system.[71] They suffer from waterlogging and large-scale user tracts.[72] In addition, the area is fairly arid. The state has more than 32 large and small rivers; of them, the Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Sarayu, Betwa, and Ghaghara are larger and of religious importance in Hinduism.[73]

Cultivation is intensive in the state.[74] Uttar Pradesh falls under three agro-climatic zones viz. Middle Gangetic Plains region (Zone–IV), Upper Gangetic Plains region (Zone–V) and Central Plateau and Hills region (Zone–VIII).[75] The valley areas have fertile and rich soil. There is intensive cultivation on terraced hill slopes, but irrigation facilities are deficient.[76] The Siwalik Range which forms the southern foothills of the Himalayas, slopes down into a boulder bed called 'bhabhar'. [77] The transitional belt running along the entire length of the state is called the terai and bhabhar area. It has rich forests, cutting across it are innumerable streams which swell into raging torrents during the monsoon.[78]

Uttar Pradesh has a humid subtropical climate and experiences four seasons.[79] The winter in January and February is followed by summer between March and May and the monsoon season between June and September.[80] Summers are extreme with temperatures fluctuating anywhere between 0–50 °C (32–122 °F) in parts of the state coupled with dry hot winds called the Loo.[81] The Gangetic plain varies from semiarid to sub-humid.[80] The mean annual rainfall ranges from 650 mm (26 inches) in the southwest corner of the state to 1,000 mm (39 inches) in the eastern and south eastern parts of the state.[82] Primarily a summer phenomenon, the Bay of Bengal branch of the Indian monsoon is the major bearer of rain in most parts of state. After summer it is the southwest monsoon which brings most of the rain here, while in winters rain due to the western disturbances and north-east monsoon also contribute small quantities towards the overall precipitation of the state.[79][83]

The rain in Uttar Pradesh can vary from an annual average of 170 cm (67 inches) in hilly areas to 84 cm (33 inches) in Western Uttar Pradesh.[79] Given the concentration of most of this rainfall in the four months of the monsoon, excess rain can lead to floods and shortage to droughts. As such, these two phenomena, floods and droughts, commonly recur in the state. The climate of the Vindhya Range and plateau is subtropical with a mean annual rainfall between 1,000 and 1,200 mm (39 and 47 inches), most of which comes during the monsoon.[80] Typical summer months are from March to June, with maximum temperatures ranging from 30–38 °C (86–100 °F). There is a low relative humidity of around 20% and dust-laden winds blow throughout the season. In summer, hot winds called loo blow all across Uttar Pradesh.[79]

Uttar Pradesh has an abundance of natural resources.[87] In 2011 the recorded forest area in the state was 16,583 km² (6,403 sq mi) which is about 6.9% of the state's geographical area.[88] In spite of rapid deforestation and poaching of wildlife, a diverse flora and fauna continue to exist in the state. Uttar Pradesh is a habitat for 4.2% of all species of Algae recorded in India, 6.4% of Fungi, 6.0% of Lichens, 2.9% of Bryophytes, 3.3% of Pteridophytes, 8.7% of Gymnosperms, 8.1% of Angiosperms.[89] Several species of trees, large and small mammals, reptiles, and insects are found

in the belt of temperate upper mountainous forests. Medicinal plants are found in the wild[90] and are also grown in plantations. The Terai–Duar savanna and grasslands support cattle. Moist deciduous trees grow in the upper Gangetic plain, especially along its riverbanks. This plain supports a wide variety of plants and animals. The Ganges and its tributaries are the habitat of large and small reptiles, amphibians, fresh-water fish, and crabs. Scrubland trees such as the Babool (*Vachellia nilotica*) and animals such as the Chinkara (*Gazella bennettii*) are found in the arid Vindhya.[91][92] Tropical dry deciduous forests are found in all parts of the plains. Since much sunlight reaches the ground, shrubs and grasses are also abundant.[93] Large tracts of these forests have been cleared for cultivation. Tropical thorny forests, consisting of widely scattered thorny trees, mainly babool are mostly found in the southwestern parts of the state.[94]

Uttar Pradesh is known for its extensive avifauna.[95] The most common birds which are found in the state are doves, peafowl, junglefowl, black partridges, house sparrows, songbirds, blue jays, parakeets, quails, bulbuls, comb ducks, kingfishers, woodpeckers, snipes, and parrots. Bird sanctuaries in the state include Bakhira Sanctuary, National Chambal Sanctuary, Chandra Prabha Wildlife Sanctuary, Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary, Kaimoor Wildlife Sanctuary, and Okhla Sanctuary.[96][97][98][99][100][101]

Other animals in the state include reptiles such as lizards, cobras, kraits, and gharials. Among the wide variety of fishes, the most common ones are mahaseer and trout. Some animal species have gone extinct in recent years, while others, like the lion from the Gangetic Plain, the rhinoceros from the Terai region, Ganges river dolphin primarily found in the Ganges have become endangered.[102] Many species are vulnerable to poaching despite regulation by the government.[103]

Uttar Pradesh is divided into 75 districts under these 18 divisions:[104]

The following is a list of top districts from state of Uttar Pradesh by population, ranked in respect of all India.[105]

Each district is governed by a District Magistrate, who is an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer appointed Government of Uttar Pradesh and reports to Divisional Commissioner of the division in which his district falls.[106] The Divisional Commissioner is an IAS officer of high seniority. Each district is divided into subdivisions, governed by a Sub-Divisional Magistrate, and again into Blocks. Blocks consists of panchayats (village councils) and town municipalities.[107] These blocks consists of urban units viz. census towns and rural units called gram panchayat.[106]

Uttar Pradesh has more metropolitan cities than any other state in India.[108][109] The absolute urban population of the state is 44.4 million, which constitutes 11.8% of the total urban population of India, the second-highest of any state.[110] According to the 2011 census, there are 15 urban agglomerations with a population greater than 500,000.[111] There are 14 Municipal Corporations,[112][113] while Noida and Greater Noida in Gautam Budha Nagar district are specially administered by statutory authorities under the Uttar Pradesh Industrial Development Act, 1976.[114][115]

In 2011, state's cabinet ministers headed by the then Chief Minister Mayawati announced the separation of Uttar Pradesh into four different states of Purvanchal, Bundelkhand, Avadh Pradesh and Paschim Pradesh with twenty-eight, seven, twenty-three and seventeen districts, respectively,

later the proposal was turned down when the Akhilesh Yadav–lead Samajwadi Party came to power in the 2012 election.[116]

Religion in Uttar Pradesh (2011)[117]

Languages of Uttar Pradesh from 2011 census[118]

Uttar Pradesh has a very large population and a high population growth rate. From 1991 to 2001 its population increased by over 26 per cent.[119] It is the most populous state in India, with 199,581,477 people on 1 March 2011.[120] The state contributes to 16.2 per cent of India's population. As of 2021, the estimated population of the state is around 240 million people.[121][122] The population density is 828 people per square kilometre, making it one of the most densely populated states in the country.[123] It has the largest scheduled caste population whereas scheduled tribes are less than 1 per cent of the total population.[124][125]

The sex ratio in 2011, at 912 women to 1000 men, was lower than the national figure of 943.[11] The low sex ratio in Uttar Pradesh, is a result of various factors, such as sex-selective abortion, female infanticide, and discrimination against girls and women.[126][127] The state's 2001–2011 decennial growth rate (including Uttarakhand) was 20.1 per cent, higher than the national rate of 17.64 per cent.[128][129] It has a large number of people living below the poverty line.[130] As per a World Bank document released in 2016, the pace of poverty reduction in the state has been slower than the rest of the country.[131] Estimates released by the Reserve Bank of India for the year 2011–12 revealed that the state had 59 million (59,819,000) people below the poverty line, the most for any state in India.[130][132] The central and eastern districts in particular have very high levels of poverty. The state is also experiencing widening consumption inequality. As per the report of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released in 2020, the state per capita income is below ₹80,000 (US\$1,000) per annum.[133]

As per 2011 census, Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state in India, is home to the highest numbers of both Hindus and Muslims.[134] The literacy rate of the state at the 2011 census was 67.7 per cent, which was below the national average of 74 per cent.[135][136] The literacy rate for men is 79 per cent and for women 59 per cent. In 2001 the literacy rate in the state stood at 56 per cent overall, 67 per cent for men and 43 per cent for women.[137] A report based on a National Statistical Office (NSO) survey[a] revealed that Uttar Pradesh's literacy rate is 73 per cent, less than the national average of 77.7 per cent. According to the report, in the rural region, the literacy rate among men is 80.5 per cent and women is 60.4 per cent, while in urban areas, the literacy rate among men is 86.8 per cent and women is 74.9 per cent.[138] Additionally, the report indicates that the state still faces significant challenges in improving literacy rates, particularly among women and girls, and in certain regions with lower levels of development.

Hindi is the primary official language and is spoken by the majority of the population.[8] Bhojpuri is the second most spoken language of the state,[139] it is spoken by almost 11 per cent of the population. Most people speak regional languages classified as dialects of Hindi in the census. These include Awadhi spoken in Awadh in central Uttar Pradesh, Bhojpuri spoken in Purvanchal in eastern Uttar Pradesh, and Braj Bhasha spoken in the Braj region in Western Uttar Pradesh. These languages have also been recognised by the state government for official use in their respective regions. Urdu is given the status of a second official language, spoken by 5.4 per cent of the population.[8][140] English is used as a means of communication for education, commerce, and governance. It is commonly spoken and employed as a language of instruction in educational institutions, as well as

for conducting business transactions and managing administrative affairs. Other notable languages spoken in the state include Punjabi (0.3 per cent) and Bengali (0.1 per cent).[140]

The state is governed by a parliamentary system of representative democracy. Uttar Pradesh is one of the seven states in India, where the state legislature is bicameral, comprising two houses: the Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly) and the Vidhan Parishad (Legislative Council).[141][142] The Legislative Assembly consists of 404 members who are elected for five-year terms. The Legislative Council is a permanent body of 100 members with one-third (33 members) retiring every two years. The state sends the largest number of legislators to the national Parliament.[143] The state contributes 80 seats to Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament, and 31 seats to Rajya Sabha, the upper house.[144][145]

The Government of Uttar Pradesh is a democratically elected body in India with the governor as its constitutional head and is appointed by the president of India for a five-year term.[146] The leader of the party or coalition with a majority in the Legislative Assembly is appointed as the chief minister by the governor, and the council of ministers is appointed by the governor on the advice of the chief minister. The governor remains a ceremonial head of the state, while the chief minister and his council are responsible for day-to-day government functions. The Council of Ministers consists of Cabinet Ministers and Ministers of State (MoS). The Secretariat headed by the Chief Secretary assists the council of ministers. The Chief Secretary is also the administrative head of the government. Each government department is headed by a minister, who is assisted by an Additional Chief Secretary or a Principal Secretary, who is usually an officer of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary serves as the administrative head of the department they are assigned to. Each department also has officers of the rank of Secretary, Special Secretary, Joint Secretary etc. assisting the Minister and the Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary.[147][148]

For administration, the state is divided into 18 divisions and 75 districts. Divisional Commissioner, an IAS officer is the head of administration on the divisional level.[147][149][150] The administration in each district is headed by a District Magistrate, who is also an IAS officer, and is assisted by several officers belonging to state services.[147][151] District Magistrate being the head of the district administration, is responsible for maintaining law and order and providing public services in the district. At the block level, the Block Development Officer (BDO) is responsible for the overall development of the block. The Uttar Pradesh Police is headed by an IPS officer of the rank of Director general of police. A Superintendent of Police, an IPS officer assisted by the officers of the Uttar Pradesh Police Service, is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining law and order and related issues in each district. The Divisional Forest Officer, an officer belonging to the Indian Forest Service manages the forests, environment, and wildlife of the district, assisted by the officers of Uttar Pradesh Forest Service and Uttar Pradesh Forest Subordinate Service.

The judiciary in the state consists of the Allahabad High Court in Prayagraj, the Lucknow Bench of Allahabad High Court, district courts and session courts in each district or Sessions Division, and lower courts at the tehsil level.[147][152] The president of India appoints the chief justice of the High Court of the Uttar Pradesh judiciary on the advice of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India as well as the governor of Uttar Pradesh.[147][153] Subordinate Judicial Service, categorised into two divisions viz. Uttar Pradesh civil judicial services and Uttar Pradesh higher judicial service are another vital part of the judiciary of Uttar Pradesh.[147][154] While the Uttar Pradesh civil judicial services comprise the Civil Judges (Junior Division)/Judicial Magistrates and civil judges (Senior Division)/Chief Judicial Magistrate, the Uttar Pradesh higher judicial service comprises civil and sessions judges.[147] The Subordinate judicial service (viz. The district court of Etawah and the

district court of Kanpur Dehat) of the judiciary at Uttar Pradesh is controlled by the District Judge.[147][154][155]

Politics in Uttar Pradesh has been dominated by four political parties – the Samajwadi Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the Indian National Congress. Uttar Pradesh has provided India with eight Prime Ministers.[156]

According to the National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC), Uttar Pradesh tops the list of states of encounter killings and custodial deaths.[157] In 2014, the state recorded 365 judicial deaths out of a total 1,530 deaths recorded in the country.[158] NHRC further said, of the over 30,000 murders registered in the country in 2016, Uttar Pradesh had 4,889 cases.[159] A data from Minister of Home Affairs (MHA) avers, Bareilly recorded the highest number of custodial death at 25, followed by Agra (21), Allahabad (19) and Varanasi (9). National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data from 2011 says, the state has the highest number of crimes among any state in India, but due to its high population, the actual per capita crime rate is low.[160] The state also continues to top the list of states with maximum communal violence incidents. An analysis of Ministers of State of Home Affairs states (2014), 23% of all incidents of communal violence in India took place in the state.[161][162] According to a research assembled by State Bank of India, Uttar Pradesh failed to improve its Human Development Index (HDI) ranking over a period of 27 years (1990–2017).[163] Based on sub-national human development index data for Indian states from 1990 to 2017, the report also stated that the value of human development index has steadily increased over time from 0.39 in 1990 to 0.59 in 2017.[164][165][166] The Uttar Pradesh Police, governed by the Department of Home and Confidential, is the largest police force in the world.[167][168][169]

Uttar Pradesh also reported the highest number of deaths – 23,219 – due to road and rail accidents in 2015, according to NCRB data.[170][171] This included 8,109 deaths due to careless driving.[172] Between 2006 and 2010, the state has been hit with three terrorist attacks, including explosions in a landmark holy place, a court and a temple. The 2006 Varanasi bombings were a series of bombings that occurred across the Hindu holy city of Varanasi on 7 March 2006. At least 28 people were killed and as many as 101 others were injured.[173][174]

In the afternoon of 23 November 2007, within a span of 25 minutes, six consecutive serial blasts occurred in the Lucknow, Varanasi, and Faizabad courts, in which 28 people were killed.[175][176][177] Another blast occurred on 7 December 2010, the blast occurred at Sheetla Ghat in Varanasi in which more than 38 people were killed.[178][179] In February 2016, a series of bomb blasts occurred at the Jhakarkati Bus Station in Kanpur, killing 2 people and injuring more than 30.[180]

figures in crores of Indian rupees

In terms of net state domestic product (NSDP), Uttar Pradesh is the second-largest economy in India after Maharashtra, with an estimated gross state domestic product of ₹14.89 lakh crore (US\$190 billion),[182] contributing 8.4% of India's gross domestic product. According to the report generated by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), in 2014–15, Uttar Pradesh has accounted for 19% share in the country's total food grain output.[183] About 70% of India's sugar comes from Uttar Pradesh. Sugarcane is the most important cash crop as the state is country's largest producer of sugar.[183] As per the report generated by Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA), total sugarcane production in India was estimated to be 28.3 million tonnes in the fiscal ending September 2015 which includes 10.47 million tonnes from Maharashtra and 7.35 million tonnes from Uttar Pradesh.[184]

With 359 manufacturing clusters, cement is the top sector of SMEs in Uttar Pradesh.[185] The Uttar Pradesh Financial Corporation (UPFC) was established in 1954 under the SFCs Act of 1951 mainly to develop small- and medium-scale industries in the state.[186] The UPFC also provides working capital to existing units with a soundtrack record and to new units under a single window scheme.[187] In July 2012, due to financial constraints and directions from the state government, lending activities were suspended except for State Government Schemes.[188] The state has reported total private investment worth over Rs. 25,081 crores during the years of 2012 and 2016.[189] According to a recent report of the World Bank on Ease of Doing Business in India, Uttar Pradesh was ranked among the top 10 states and first among Northern states.[190]

According to the Uttar Pradesh Budget Documents (2019–20), Uttar Pradesh's debt burden is 29.8 per cent of the GSDP.[191] The state's total financial debt stood at ₹2.09 lakh crore (US\$26 billion) in 2011.[192] Uttar Pradesh has not been able to witness double-digit economic growth despite consistent attempts over the years.[191] The GSDP is estimated to have grown 7 per cent in 2017–18 and 6.5 per cent in 2018–19 which is about 10 per cent of India's GDP. According to a survey conducted by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), Uttar Pradesh's unemployment rate increased 11.4 percentage points, rising to 21.5 per cent in April 2020.[193] Uttar Pradesh has the largest number of net migrants migrating out of the state.[194] The 2011 census data on migration shows that nearly 14.4 million (14.7%) people had migrated out of Uttar Pradesh.[195] Marriage was cited as the predominant reason for migration among females. Among males, the most important reason for migration was work and employment.[196]

In 2009–10, the tertiary sector of the economy (service industries) was the largest contributor to the gross domestic product of the state, contributing 44.8 per cent of the state domestic product compared to 44 per cent from the primary sector (agriculture, forestry, and tourism) and 11.2 per cent from the secondary sector (industrial and manufacturing).[198][199] Western Uttar Pradesh dominates the state's economy, contributing 51 per cent of revenues to the government. Leading economic centers in this region include Noida, Meerut, Ghaziabad, and Agra.

Noida, Meerut, and Agra rank as the top 3 districts with the highest per capita income, whereas Lucknow and Kanpur rank 7th and 9th in per capita income.[200] During the 11th five-year plan (2007–2012), the average gross state domestic product (GSDP) growth rate was 7.3 per cent, lower than 15.5 per cent, the average for all states of the country.[201][202] The state's per capita GSDP was ₹29,417 (US\$370), lower than the national per capita GSDP of ₹60,972 (US\$760).[203] Labor efficiency is higher at an index of 26 than the national average of 25. Textiles and sugar refining, both long-standing industries in Uttar Pradesh, employ a significant proportion of the state's total factory labour. The economy also benefits from the state's tourism industry.[204]

The state has the largest railway network in the country but in relative terms has only sixth-highest railway density despite its plain topography and largest population. As of 2011[update], there were 8,546 km (5,310 mi) of rail in the state.[205] The railway network in the state is controlled by two divisions of the Indian Railways viz. North Central Railway and North Eastern Railway. Allahabad is the headquarters of the North Central Railway[206] and Gorakhpur is the headquarters of the North Eastern Railway.[207][208] Lucknow and Moradabad serve as divisional Headquarters of the Northern Railway Division. Lucknow Swarna Shatabdi Express, the second fastest Shatabdi Express train, connects the Indian capital of New Delhi to Lucknow while Kanpur Shatabdi Express, connects New Delhi to Kanpur Central. This was the first train in India to get the new German LHB coaches.[209] The railway stations of Prayagraj Junction, Agra Cantonment, Lucknow Charbagh, Gorakhpur Junction, Kanpur Central, Mathura Junction and Varanasi Junction are included in the Indian Railways list of 50 world-class railway stations.[210]

The state has a large, multimodal transportation system with the largest road network in the country.[211] It has 42 national highways, with a total length of 4,942 km (3,071 miles) comprising 9.6 per cent of the total NH length in India. The Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation was established in 1972 to provide transportation in the state with connecting services to adjoining states.[212] All cities are connected to state highways, and all district headquarters are being connected with four lane roads which carry traffic between major centres within the state. One of them is Agra–Lucknow Expressway, which is a 302 km (188 miles) controlled-access highway constructed by UPEIDA.[213] Uttar Pradesh has the highest road density in India – 1,027 km (638 miles) per 1,000 km² (390 square miles) – and the largest surfaced urban-road network in the country – 50,721 km (31,517 miles).[214] The Lucknow Metro and Kanpur Metro (Orange line) has been operational.

By passenger traffic in India, Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport in Lucknow and Lal Bahadur Shastri Airport in Varanasi, are the major international airports and the main gateway to the state.[215] Another international airport has been built at Kushinagar. However, since its inauguration, Kushinagar International Airport has not yet seen any outbound flights to international destinations.[216][217] Uttar Pradesh has six domestic airports located at Agra, Allahabad, Bareilly, Ghaziabad, Gorakhpur and Kanpur.[218][219] The state has also proposed creating the Noida International Airport near Jewar in Gautam Buddha Nagar district.[220][221] [222]

Traditional sports, now played mostly as a pastime, include wrestling, swimming, kabaddi, and track-sports or water-sports played according to local traditional rules and without modern equipment. Some sports are designed to display martial skills such as using a sword or 'Pata' (stick).[223] Due to a lack of organised patronage and requisite facilities, these sports survive mostly as individuals' hobbies or local competitive events. Among modern sports, field hockey is popular and Uttar Pradesh has produced top-level players in India, such as Nitin Kumar. and Lalit Kumar Upadhyay.[224]

Recently, cricket has become more popular than field hockey.[225] Uttar Pradesh won its first Ranji Trophy tournament in February 2006, beating Bengal in the final.[226] Shaheed Vijay Singh Pathik Sports Complex is a newly built international cricket stadium with a capacity of around 20,000 spectators.[227] Wrestling has deep roots in Uttar Pradesh, with many akharas (traditional wrestling schools) spread across the state.

The Uttar Pradesh football team (UPFS) serves as the governing body for football in Uttar Pradesh. It holds authority over the Uttar Pradesh football team and is officially affiliated with the All India Football Federation.[228] The UPFS participates in sending state teams to compete in all National Football Championships organised by the All India Football Federation.[229] Additionally, the UPFS oversees two Mandal Football Associations: the Aligarh Football Association and the Kanpur Football Association.[230] The Uttar Pradesh Badminton Association is a sports body affiliated to Badminton Association of India responsible for overseeing players representing Uttar Pradesh at the national level.[231]

The Buddh International Circuit hosted India's inaugural F1 Grand Prix race on 30 October 2011.[232] Races were only held three times before being cancelled due to falling attendance and lack of government support. The government of Uttar Pradesh considered Formula One to be entertainment and not a sport, and thus imposed taxes on the event and participants.[233]

Uttar Pradesh has a prolonged tradition of education, although historically it was primarily confined to the elite class and religious schools.[234] Sanskrit-based learning formed the major part of

education from the Vedic to the Gupta periods. As cultures travelled through the region they brought their bodies of knowledge with them, adding Pali, Persian and Arabic scholarship to the community. These formed the core of Hindu-Buddhist-Muslim education until the rise of British colonialism. The present schools-to-university system of education owes its inception and development in the state (as in the rest of the country) to foreign Christian missionaries and the British colonial administration.[235] Schools in the state are either managed by the government or by private trusts. Hindi is used as a medium of instruction in most of the schools except those affiliated to the CBSE or the council for ICSE boards.[236] Under the 10+2+3 plan, after completing secondary school, students typically enroll for two years in a junior college, also known as pre-university, or in schools with a higher secondary facility affiliated with the Uttar Pradesh Board of High School and Intermediate Education or a central board. Students choose from one of three streams, namely liberal arts, commerce, or science. Upon completing the required coursework, students may enrol in general or professional degree programs. Some Uttar Pradesh schools, for example Delhi Public School (Noida), La Martinière Girls' College (Lucknow), and Step by Step School (Noida) have been ranked among the best schools in the country.[237]

Uttar Pradesh has more than 45 universities,[238] including five central universities, twenty eight state universities, eight deemed universities, two IITs in Varanasi and Kanpur, AIIMS Gorakhpur and AIIMS Rae Bareilly, an IIM in Lucknow[239][240][241][242][243]

The Integral University, a state level institution, was established by the Uttar Pradesh Government to provide education in different technical, applied science, and other disciplines.[244] The Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies was founded as an autonomous organisation by the national ministry of culture. Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Handicapped University is the only university established exclusively for the disabled in the world.[245] A large number of Indian scholars are educated at different universities in Uttar Pradesh. Notable scholars who were born, worked or studied in the geographic area of the state include Harivansh Rai Bachchan, Motilal Nehru, Harish Chandra and Indira Gandhi.

Uttar Pradesh ranks first in domestic tourist arrivals among all states of India.[246][247] Some 44,000 foreign tourists arrived in the state in 2021, and almost 110 million domestic tourists.[248] The Taj Mahal attracts some 7 million people a year, earning almost ₹78 crore (US\$9.8 million) in ticket sales in 2018–19.[249] The state is home to three World Heritage Sites: the Taj Mahal,[250] Agra Fort,[251] and the nearby Fatehpur Sikri.[252]

Religious tourism plays a significant role in the state's economy. Varanasi is a major religious hub and one of the seven sacred cities (Sapta Puri) in Hinduism and Jainism.[253][254][255] Vrindavan is considered to be a holy place for Vaishnavism.[256][257] Sravasti generally considered as revered sites in Buddhism, believed to be where the Buddha taught many of his Suttas (sermons).

Owing to the belief as to the birthplace of Rama, Ayodhya (Awadh) has been regarded as one of the seven most important pilgrimage sites.[258][259][260] Millions gather at Prayagraj to take part in the Magh Mela festival on the banks of the Ganges.[261] This festival is organised on a larger scale every 12th year and is called the Kumbh Mela, where over 10 million Hindu pilgrims congregate in one of the largest gatherings of people in the world.[262]

Buddhist attractions in Uttar Pradesh include stupas and monasteries. The historically important towns of Sarnath where Gautama Buddha gave his first sermon after his enlightenment and died at Kushinagar; both of which are important pilgrimage sites for Buddhists.[263] Also at Sarnath are the Pillars of Ashoka and the Lion Capital of Ashoka, both important archaeological artefacts with

national significance. At a distance of 80 km (50 miles) from Varanasi, Ghazipur is famous not only for its Ghats on the Ganges but also for the tomb of Lord Cornwallis, the 18th-century Governor of East India Company ruled Bengal Presidency. The tomb is maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India.[264] Jhansi Fort, located in the city of Jhansi, is closely associated with the "First War of Indian Independence", also known as the "Great Rebellion" or the Indian Rebellion of 1857.[265] The fort is constructed in accordance with medieval Indian military architecture, featuring thick walls, bastions, and various structures within its complex. The architecture reflects a blend of Hindu and Islamic styles.[266]

Uttar Pradesh has a mix of public as well as private healthcare infrastructure. Public healthcare in Uttar Pradesh is provided through a grid of primary health centers, community health centers, district hospitals, and medical colleges. Although an extensive network of public and private sector healthcare providers has been built, the available health infrastructure is inadequate to meet the demand for health services in the state.[267] In 15 years to 2012–13, the population increased by more than 25 per cent. The public health centres, which are the frontline of the government's health care system, decreased by 8 per cent.[268] Smaller sub-centres, the first point of public contact, increased by no more than 2 per cent over the 25 years to 2015, a period when the population grew by more than 51 per cent.[268] The state is also facing challenges such as a shortage of healthcare professionals, increasing cost of healthcare, a lack of essential medicines and equipment, the mushrooming of private healthcare and a lack of planning.[269] As of 2017[update], the number of government hospital in rural and urban areas of Uttar Pradesh stood at 4,442 with 39,104 beds and 193 with 37,156 beds respectively.[270]

A newborn in Uttar Pradesh is expected to live four years fewer than in the neighbouring state of Bihar, five years fewer than in Haryana and seven years fewer than in Himachal Pradesh. The state contributed to the largest share of almost all communicable and noncommunicable disease deaths, including 48 per cent of all typhoid deaths (2014); 17 per cent of cancer deaths and 18 per cent of tuberculosis deaths (2015).[268] Its maternal mortality ratio is higher than the national average at 258 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births (2017), with 62 per cent of pregnant women unable to access minimum ante-natal care.[271][272] Around 42 per cent of pregnant women, more than 1.5 million, deliver babies at home. About two-thirds (61 per cent) of childbirths at home in the state are unsafe.[273] It has the highest child mortality indicators,[274] from the neonatal mortality rate to the under-five mortality rate of 64 children who die per 1,000 live births before five years of age, 35 die within a month of birth, and 50 do not complete a year of life.[275]

Several texts and hymns of the Vedic literature were composed in Uttar Pradesh. Renowned Indian writers who have resided in Uttar Pradesh were Kabir, Ravidas, and Tulsidas, who wrote much of his Ram Charit Manas in Varanasi. The festival of Guru Purnima is dedicated to Sage Vyasa, and also known as Vyasa Purnima as it is the day which is believed to be his birthday and also the day he divided the Vedas.[276]

Hindi became the language of state administration with the Uttar Pradesh Official Language Act of 1951.[277] A 1989 amendment to the act added Urdu, as an additional language of the state.[278] Linguistically, the state spreads across the Central, East-Central, and Eastern zones of the Indo Aryan languages. The major Hindi languages of the state are Awadhi, Bagheli, Bundeli, Braj Bhasha, Kannaui, and Hindustani.[279] Bhojpuri, an Eastern Indo Aryan language, is also spoken in the state.[280]

With each district of Uttar Pradesh having its unique music and tradition, traditional folk music in Uttar Pradesh has been categorised in three different ways including music transmitted orally, music

with unknown composers and music performed by custom. The popular folk music of Uttar Pradesh includes sohar, which is sung to celebrate the birth of a child, Kajari sung during the rainy season,[281] Ghazal, Thumri and Qawwali which is a form of Sufi poetry is popular in the Awadh region, Rasiya (especially popular in Braj), which celebrate the divine love of Radha and Krishna. Khayal is a form of semi-classical singing which comes from the courts of Awadh. Other forms of music are Biraha, Chaiti, Chowtal, Alha, and Sawani.[281]

Kathak, a classical dance form, owes its origin to the state of Uttar Pradesh.[282] Ramlila is one of the oldest dramatic folk dances; it depicts the life of the Hindu deity Rama and is performed during festivals such as Vijayadashami.[283] In the gharana dance form, both the Lucknow and the Benares gharanas are situated in the state.[284] Charkula is popular dance of the Braj region.[285]

Chhath Puja is the biggest festival of eastern Uttar Pradesh.[286] The Kumbh Mela, organised in the month of Maagha (February—March), is a major festival held every twelve years in rotation at Prayagraj on the river Ganges.[287] Lathmar Holi is a local celebration of the Hindu festival of Holi. It takes place well before the actual Holi in the town of Barsana near Mathura.[288] Taj Mahotsav, held annually at Agra, is a colourful display of the culture of the Braj area.[289] Ganga Mahotsav, a festival of Kartik Purnima, is celebrated fifteen days after Diwali.[290]

Mughlai cuisine is a style of cooking developed in the Indian subcontinent by the imperial kitchens of the Mughal Empire. It represents the cooking styles used in North India, especially Uttar Pradesh, and has been strongly influenced by Central Asian cuisine. Awadhi cuisine from the city of Lucknow consists of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. It has been greatly influenced by Mughlai cuisine.[291]

Bhojpuri cuisine is a style of food preparation common among the Bhojpuri people of Uttar Pradesh. Bhojpuri foods are mostly mild and tend to be less hot in terms of spices used. The cuisine consists of both vegetable and meat dishes.[292]

Text extracted from URL 7:

The history of Uttar Pradesh, a state in India, stretches back several millennia. The region shows the presence of human habitation dating back to between 85,000 and 73,000 years ago. Additionally, the region seems to have been domesticated as early as 6,000 BC.

The early modern period in the region started in 1526 after Babur invaded the Delhi Sultanate, and established the Mughal Empire covering large parts of modern Uttar Pradesh. The remnants of the Mughal Empire include their monuments, most notably Fatehpur Sikri, Allahabad Fort, Agra Fort.

The region was the site of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, with revolts at Meerut, Kanpur, and Lucknow. The region was also a site for the Indian Independence movement with the Indian National Congress.

After independence in 1947, the United Provinces were renamed Uttar Pradesh in 1950.

In 2000, the state of Uttarakhand was carved out from Uttar Pradesh.

Archeological finds have indicated the presence of Stone Age Homo sapiens hunter-gatherers in Uttar Pradesh[1][2][3] between around[4] 85 and 73 thousand years old. Other pre-historical finds have included Middle and Upper Paleolithic artifacts dated to 21–31 thousand years old[5] and Mesolithic/Microlithic hunter-gatherer's settlement, near Pratapgarh, from around 10550–9550 BC.

Villages with domesticated cattle, sheep, and goats and evidence of agriculture began as early as 6000 BC, and gradually developed between c. 4000 and 2000 BC beginning with the Indus Valley civilization and Harappa culture to the Vedic period; extending into the Iron Age.[6][7][8]

The kingdom of Kosala, in the Mahajanapada era, was located within the regional boundaries of modern-day Uttar Pradesh.[9] According to Hindu legend, the divine king Rama of the Ramayana epic reigned in Ayodhya, the capital of Kosala.[10] Krishna, another divine king of Hindu legend, who plays a key role in the Mahabharata epic and is revered as the eighth reincarnation (Avatar) of the Hindu god Vishnu, is said to have been born in the city of Mathura, in Uttar Pradesh.[9] The aftermath of the Mahabharata yuddh is believed to have taken place in the area between the Upper Doab and Delhi, (in what was Kuru Mahajanapada), during the reign of the Pandava king Yudhishtira. The kingdom of the Kurus corresponds to the Black and Red Ware and Painted Gray Ware culture and the beginning of the Iron Age in North-west India, around 1000 BC.[9]

Most of the invaders of south India passed through the Gangetic plains of what is today Uttar Pradesh. Control over this region was of vital importance to the power and stability of all of India's major empires, including the Maurya (320–200 BC), Kushan (100–250 CE), Gupta (350–600 CE), and Gurjara-Pratihara (650–1036 CE) empires.[11] Following the Huns invasions that broke the Gupta empire, the Ganges-Yamuna Doab saw the rise of Kannauj.[12]

The Maukhari dynasty came to power with the decline of the Gupta Empire. During the reign of Harshavardhana (590–647), the Kannauj empire reached its zenith.[12] It spanned from Punjab in the north and Gujarat in the west to Bengal in the east and Odisha in the south.[9] It included parts of central India, north of the Narmada River and it encompassed the entire Indo-Gangetic plain.[13] The Pushyabhuti dynasty were followed by the Varman dynasty which achieved hegemony over North India under Yashovarman. The Ayudha dynasty succeeded them in Kannauj.

Many communities in various parts of India claim descent from the migrants of Kannauj.[14] Soon after Harshavardhana's death, his empire disintegrated into many kingdoms, which were invaded and ruled by the Gurjara-Pratihara empire, which challenged Bengal's Pala Empire for control of the region.[13] Kannauj was several times invaded by the south Indian Rashtrakuta Dynasty from the 8th century to the 10th century.[15][16]

The decline of the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty saw the rise of independent Rajput dynasties such as the Gahadvala Rajputs who ruled over present-day Uttar Pradesh. The long-term social order of the area was established under the Rajput dynasties. Besides Rajput kingdoms, there existed a number of localised dynasties belonging to Bhumihar Brahmin, Rajbhar and Pasi castes, whose identities remain influential today.

Parts or all of Uttar Pradesh were ruled by the Delhi Sultanate for 320 years (1206–1526). Five dynasties ruled over the Sultanate sequentially: the Mamluk dynasty (1206–90), the Khalji dynasty (1290–1320), the Tughlaq dynasty (1320–1414), the Sayyid dynasty (1414–51), and the Lodi dynasty (1451–1526).[17][18]

In the 16th century, Babur, a Timurid descendant of Timur and Genghis Khan from Fergana Valley (modern-day Uzbekistan), swept across the Khyber Pass and founded the Mughal Empire, covering India, along with modern-day Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh[19] The Mughals were descended from Persianised Central Asian Turks (with significant Mongol admixture). In the Mughal era, Uttar Pradesh became the heartland of the empire.[14] Mughal emperors Babur and Humayun ruled from Agra.[20][21]

In 1540 an Afghan, Sher Shah Suri, took over the reins of Uttar Pradesh after defeating the Mughal king Humayun.[22] Sher Shah and his son Islam Shah ruled Uttar Pradesh from their capital at Gwalior.[23] After the death of Islam Shah Suri, his prime minister Hemu became the de facto ruler of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and the western parts of Bengal. He was bestowed the title of Vikramaditya at his coronation in Purana Quila in Delhi. Hemu died in the Second Battle of Panipat, and Uttar Pradesh came under Emperor Akbar's rule.[24]

Akbar ruled from Agra and his newly established city, Fatehpur Sikri.[25] He was succeeded by his son Jahangir. Jahangir was succeeded by his son Shah Jahan. Shah Jahan is famous for building the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum for his queen Mumtaz Mahal located in Agra. The Taj Mahal is considered one of the most significant examples of Indo-Islamic architecture. Shah Jahan was succeeded by his son Aurangzeb, who did not share the religious tolerance of his ancestors, and was infamous for the destruction of temples. In the decades that followed the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, Mughal rule in the region largely collapsed.

After the fall of Mughal authority, the power vacuum was filled by the Maratha Empire. In the mid 18th century, the Maratha army invaded the Uttar Pradesh region, which resulted in Rohillas losing control of Rohilkhand to the Maratha rulers Raghunath Rao and Malharao Holkar. The conflict between the Rohillas and the Marathas came to an end on 18 December 1788 with the arrest of Ghulam Qadir, the grandson of Najeeb-ud-Daula. In this battle, Ghulam Qadir was defeated by the Maratha general Mahadji Shinde. In 1803, following the Second Anglo-Maratha War, when the British East India Company defeated the Maratha Empire, much of the region came under British suzerainty.[26]

Starting from Bengal in the second half of the 18th century, a series of battles for north Indian lands finally gave the British East India Company accession over the state's territories.[28] Ajmer and Jaipur kingdoms were also included in this northern territory, which was named the "North-Western Provinces" (of Agra). Although UP later became the fifth largest state of India, NWPA was one of the smallest states of the British Indian empire.[29] Its capital shifted twice between Agra and Allahabad.[citation needed] Due to dissatisfaction with British rule, a serious rebellion erupted in various parts of North India; Bengal regiment's sepoy stationed at Meerut cantonment, Mangal Pandey, is widely credited as its starting point.[30] It came to be known as the Indian Rebellion of 1857.

After the revolt failed, the British attempted to divide the most rebellious regions by reorganizing the administrative boundaries of the region, splitting the Delhi region from 'NWFP of Agra' and merging it with Punjab, while the Ajmer- Marwar region was merged with Rajputana and Oudh was incorporated into the state. The new state was called the 'North Western Provinces of Agra and Oudh', which in 1902 was renamed as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.[31] It was commonly referred to as the United Provinces or its acronym UP.[32][33]

In 1920, the capital of the province was shifted from Allahabad to Lucknow. The high court continued to be at Allahabad, but a bench was established at Lucknow. Allahabad continues to be an important administrative base of today's Uttar Pradesh and has several administrative headquarters.[34] Uttar Pradesh continued to be central to Indian politics and was especially important in modern Indian history as a hotbed of the Indian independence movement. Uttar Pradesh hosted modern educational institutions such as the Benaras Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University and the Darul Uloom Deoband. Nationally known figures such as Chandra Shekhar

Azad were among the leaders of the movement in Uttar Pradesh, and Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Madan Mohan Malaviya and Gobind Ballabh Pant were important national leaders of the Indian National Congress. The All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) was formed at the Lucknow session of the Congress on 11 April 1936, with the famous nationalist Swami Sahajanand Saraswati elected as its first President,[35] in order to address the longstanding grievances of the peasantry and mobilise them against the zamindari landlords attacks on their occupancy rights, thus sparking the Farmers movements in India.[36] During the Quit India Movement of 1942, Ballia district overthrew the colonial authority and installed an independent administration under Chittu Pandey. Ballia became known as "Baghi Ballia" (Rebel Ballia) for this significant role in India's independence movement.[37]

After India's independence, the United Provinces were reorganized as Uttar Pradesh in 1950. The state has provided seven of India's prime ministers and is the source of the largest number of seats in the Lok Sabha. Despite its political influence, its poor economic development and administrative record, organised crime and corruption kept it amongst India's backward states. The state has been affected by repeated episodes of caste and communal violence.[38]

There were incidents of communal violence in 1980 and 1987. 1992, a large group of Hindu activists demolished the 16th-century Babri Mosque in the city of Ayodhya, which is claimed to be the site of Ram Janmabhoomi. The Ayodhya dispute triggered massive protests across the state as well as nationally and internationally.

In 2000, northern districts of the state were separated to form the state of Uttarakhand. In February 2017, Yogi Adityanath became the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh. In 2019, Ayodhya Dispute was settled by The Supreme Court of India.[39] The ground-breaking ceremony of the Rama Janmabhoomi temple took place on 5 August 2020.

Uttar Pradesh has improved its performance considerably in the recent times witnessing lowest crime rate in 2020.[40]

The state has also made strides on various economic parameters in the recent times, doubling its GSDP to Rs 21.73 lakh crore (2020–21) in four years from Rs 10.90 lakh crore in 2015-16.[41] Under its Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the state also became the second most favourable destination in the country for doing business.[42]

For Paleolithic & Neolithic period:

For Copper Hoard culture:

For Painted Grey Ware culture:

For Cemetery H culture:

For Vedic Period:

For Indo-Schynthians

For Kushans:

Text extracted from URL 8: Maharashtra is the third largest state of India in terms of land area and second largest in terms of population in India. It has a long history of Marathi saints of Varakari religious movement, such as Dnyaneshwar, Namdev, Chokhamela, Eknath and Tukaram which forms

the one of bases of the culture of Maharashtra or Marathi culture.[1] Maharashtrian culture had large influence over neighbouring regions under the Maratha Empire.[2]

The state of Maharashtra spans multiple cultures which includes cultures related to Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, Christians, etc. Lord Ganesha, Maruti, Mahadeo in form of Shivlinga, Khandoba, Kalubai devi, and Lord Vitthal are some of the deities worshipped by Hindus of Maharashtra.

Maharashtra is divided into 5 regions: Konkan, Paschim Maharashtra, North Maharashtra, Marathwada, Vidarbha. Each has its own cultural identity in the form of different dialects of Marathi language,[3] folk songs, food, dress and ethnicity.

Around 80% of Maharashtrians are Hindu, and there are significant Muslim, Christian and Buddhist minorities.[4] The Maharashtrian culture consists of people from all a vast majority of religions. Due to it being huge areawise, many sub-regional cultures also exist in Maharashtra. The sub region of Vidarbha, was earlier a part of Central Provinces and Berar, hence it has that influence upon its culture.[5] There are many temples in Maharashtra, some of which are thousands of years old. These temples are constructed in a fusion of architectural styles borrowed from North and South India. The temples also blend themes from Hindu, Buddhist and Jain cultures. The temple of Lord Vitthal at Pandharpur is the most important temple for the Varkari sect. Other important religious places are the Ashtavinayaka temples of Lord Ganesha, Bhimashankar which is one of the Jyotirling (12 important Lord Shiva temples).[6][7]

Near Aurangabad are UNESCO World Heritage Sites and famous tourist attractions.[8][9] Mughal architecture can be seen in the tomb of the wife of Aurangzeb called Bibi Ka Maqbara located at Aurangabad.[10] Mumbai is the capital of Maharashtra and has humid climate throughout the year. The Gateway Of India, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Shaniwar Wada, Agakhan Palace and Deekshabhoomi are some of the historical monuments.

Maharashtra has a large number of hill, land and sea forts. Forts have played an important role in the history of Maharashtra since the time of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Some of the important forts in Maharashtra are Shivneri, Raigad, Vijaydurg, Pratapgad, Sinhagad. The majority of the forts in Maharashtra are found along the coastal region of Konkan and the adjoining Sahyadri ranges.[11]

Marathi Hindus revere many religious figures. Among the figures who originated in the region are Banka Mahar, Bhagu, Damajipanth, Kanhopatra, Karmamelam, Nirmala, Sadna, Sakhubai, Satyakam Jabali and Soyarabai.[12]

According to the 2011 census, Hinduism was the principal religion in the state at 79.83% of the total population, while Muslims constituted 11.54% of the total population. Maharashtra has the India's largest Buddhist and Jain populations. Buddhism accounted for 6% in Maharashtra's total population, with 6.53 million followers, which is 77% of all Buddhists in India. Jains, Christians and Sikhs constituted 1.2%, 1.0%, 0.2% of the population respectively.[13]

The traditional caste hierarchy was headed by the Brahmin castes-the Chitpavans, Karhades, Deshastha, Saraswat and the Chandraseniya Kayastha Prabhus.[14] In Mumbai during British rule, this included the Pathare Prabhu and the Daivadnyana Brahmin communities.[15][16][17] The Marathas are 32% in Western Maharashtra and the Kunbis were 7%, whereas the Other Backward Class population (other than the Kunbi) was 27%. The other castes in the intermediate category include: Gujjars and Rajputs who migrated centuries ago to Maharashtra from northern India - and settled in north Maharashtra. The population of the Mahars was 8%.[18]

Traditional attire in Maharashtra includes the dhoti, and pheta for men, while a choli and nine-yard saree locally known as Navwari saree for women.[19][20] Traditional attire is becoming rarer with trousers and shirts for males and five yard saree or salwar kameez for females as the popular replacements. The traditional attire is increasingly worn by Maharashtrians only during special occasions and festivals.[21]

Marathi women also wear gajra or veni made by flowers on their sarees. Maharashtra also has rich Jewellery. Jewellery such as tanmani, bormal, Ranihar, kolhapuri saaj, thushi are worn on the neck; bajuband on area of hand above elbow; painjan wore on ankles; kudi, bugdi, vajra kutka, vel, Bali on ears; Marathi nath on nose; jodave on leg fingers.

Maharashtrian cuisine has distinctive attributes, while sharing much with other Indian cuisines. Traditionally, Maharashtrians have considered their food to be more austere than others. Maharashtrian cuisine includes mild and very spicy dishes.

A typical Maharashtrian meal consists of boiled rice, bhakri or poli along with varan, aamti and cooked lentils or a spiced vegetable. Bhakri is an integral part of Maharashtrian cuisine. Bhakri is a flame roasted bucolic bread made of flour of grains like pearl millet, rice, sorghum, amaranth and many others. Unlike other types of breads like chapatis which are flattened by Rolling pin, Bhakri is flattened by hands.[22]

Batata vada, Vada pav, Puran poli, Ukdiche modak, Sabudana khichdi, Pav-bhaji and Masala Bhat are some of the popular vegetarian dishes served throughout Maharashtra.[23]

Non-vegetarian food consists of dishes mostly made of fish, chicken and mutton. Some of the popular non-vegetarian dishes include Sukka mutton, pandhra rassa, and tabmda rassa, which are originated from Kolhapur and saoji mutton which is popular in vidarbha.[23]

The cuisine of Maharashtra can be divided into two major sections the coastal and the interior. Kokan, the coastal region of Maharashtra has its own type of cuisine which is a combination of dishes influenced by Malvani, Goud Saraswat Brahmin and Goan cuisine [23]

Distinctly Maharashtrian dishes include pitla, bhakri, bharleli vangi, ukdiche modak, aluchi patal bhaji, thalipeeth, pav bhaji, Puran Poli, shrikhand, basundi, vada pav, nashik chi misal pav, and Mumbai chaat. Puneri missal, nagpuri, sambar vada, and selucha chanaare also considered to have originated from Maharashtra.[24]

The Konkan, Varadi, Agri and khandeshi cuisines are popular with tourists. The specialty dishes of Maharashtran cuisines are often strong in pepper and spice with a twist of curry leaves, coconut and peanuts; well-known dishes include vada pav, misal pav and Mumbai chaat and puneri missal, selucha chana.[24]

Typical breakfast items include misal, pohe, upma, sheera, sabudana khichadi and thalipeeth. In some households leftover rice from the previous night is fried with onions, turmeric and mustard seeds for breakfast, making phodnicha bhat. Typical Western breakfast items such as cereals, sliced bread and eggs, as well as South Indian items such as idli and dosa are also popular. Tea or coffee is served with breakfast.[citation needed] A Maharashtrian vegetarian meal with a variety of items

Vegetarian lunch and dinner plates in urban areas carry a combination of:

Apart from bread, rice, and chutney, other items may be substituted. Families that eat meat, fish and poultry may combine vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes, with rice and chapatis remaining the staples. Vegetable or non-vegetable items are essentially dips for the bread or for mixing with rice.

Traditional dinner items are arranged in a circular way. With salt placed at 12 o'clock, pickles, koshimbir and condiments are placed anti-clockwise of the salt. Vegetable preparations are arranged in a clockwise fashion with a sequence of leafy greens curry, dry vegetables, sprouted bean curry (usal) and dal. Rice is always on the periphery rather than in the center.[citation needed]

A typical Maharashtrian meal consists of bhaaji, bhakari, raw onion and pickle. In the Konkan coastal area a typical meal consists of boiled rice, bhakri made of rice or nachani flour and a vegetable.

In other areas of Maharashtra such as Desh, Khandesh, Marathwada and Vidarbha, the traditional staple was bhakri with a combination of dal, and vegetables. The bhakri is increasingly replaced by wheat-based chapatis.[citation needed]

Gudhi Padwa is celebrated as the first day of the Hindu year. Gudhi is symbol-characterized by bamboo stick with a coloured silk cloth and garlanded with flowers and sweet a top. Ganesh Chaturthi is the most important festival in Maharashtra. It is celebrated for ten days with huge fun fare.[25]

Banganga Festival, Bhaubeej, Elephanta Festival, Ellora Festival, Ganga Dashahara, Jivti Puja, Kalidas Festival, Kojagiri Pournima, Maharashtra Day, Naga Panchami, Narali Pournima, Pola, Shiv Jayanti and Vat Pournima are some of the important festivals of Maharashtra.[26]

In Diwali, kids build a replica of a fort, known locally as 'Killa', as a tribute to Great Maratha King chatrapati Shivaji maharaj. They are made of mud and rocks and decked with mustard shoots, mavalas or toy soldiers, toy cannons and miniature animals.[27]

Sports is an important part of the culture of Maharashtra. Cricket, Kabaddi, hockey, kho kho, badminton, and table tennis are popular sports in the state.[28]

The wrestling championship like Hind Kesari, Maharashtra Kesari are very popular in the rural regions of Maharashtra.[29] Cricket is the most widely followed and played sport in the state.[30] Maharashtra has produced many iconic cricketers of India, such as Sachin Tendulkar and Sunil Gavaskar.[29] Horse riding, wrestling, fencing, archery, and shooting were popular among the former rulers of Maharashtra.[28][31] Maharashtra has various domestic-level, franchise-based leagues for hockey, chess, tennis, and badminton. Viti-dandu, and marbles were traditional children's games in the past in Maharashtra.[32]. These games have been revived and organized at the district level.[33]

The Sporting activities in Maharashtra are governed by the Commissioner of Sports and Youth Services, Pune.

Lavani, Powada and Tamasha are the most popular folk songs in Maharashtra. Bhaleri, a folk song is sung by the farmers in Maharashtra. Village women of Maharashtra sing a folk song called Ovi describing husband's home. It is generally sung by women while grinding grains on jaata(जात). Suvasinis sing folk songs at the halad ceremonies in a marriage. Palane/Angai geet is a lullaby in Maharashtra.

Bhajan, Bharud, Gondhal, Kirtan, Lalita, Abhangas and Tumbadi singing are the other forms of community entertainment based on folk songs found in Maharashtra.[34]

Vasudev is a folk artist who walks from house to house in the morning

while singing different abhangas in the villages of Maharashtra and begs for food and gives blessings. The tradition of Vasudeva in Marathi culture is estimated to be around one thousand-twelve hundred years old.

The folk music and dances of Maharashtra are Koli, Powada, Banjara Holi and Lavani dance. Lavani dance form showcases many topics such as romance, tragedy, politics, society, etc. The word 'Lavani' derived from Marathi word Lavanya meaning beautiful and beauty. Powada dance form shows achievements of Shivaji. Koli dance originated from Fishermen community of Maharashtra.[35]

Other dances such as lavani, tamasha, dindi and kala, dhangari gaja, lezim, and different folk dances are also performed.[36]

It was starting in the middle of the 19th century, it flourished in the 1950s and 1960s, and includes forms like Sangeet Natak (Musical drama) and Tamasha (folk dance). Today, it continues to have a marked presence in the State of Maharashtra with a loyal audience base, when most theatres in other parts of India have had a tough time facing the onslaught of cinema and television. Its repertoire ranges from humorous social plays, farces, historical plays, musical, to experimental plays and serious drama of the 1970s onwards, by Vijay Tendulkar, P. L. Deshpande, Mahesh Elkunchwar and Satish Alekar, which have influenced theatre throughout India.[37] In the post-independence era, Bengali theatre, and Marathi theatre have been at the forefront of innovations and significant dramaturgy in Indian theatre.[38]

Marathi cinema is the oldest form of Indian cinema.[39]

The first Marathi movie released in India was Shree Pundalik by Dadasaheb Torne on 18 May 1912 at Coronation Cinematograph, Mumbai.[40]

Dadasaheb Phalke is known as the first pioneer and founder of cinema in pre-Independence India. He brought the revolution of moving images to India with his first indigenously made film Raja Harishchandra in 1913, which is considered by IFFI and NIFD as part of Marathi cinema as it used Marathi dialogues while shooting and had a fully Marathi crew.[41]

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Maharashtra (Marathi: [məha:ra:ʂtrə] ⓘ) is a state in the western peninsular region of India occupying a substantial portion of the Deccan Plateau. It is bordered by the Arabian Sea to the west, the Indian states of Karnataka and Goa to the south, Telangana to the southeast and Chhattisgarh to the east, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh to the north, and the Indian union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu to the northwest.[17] Maharashtra is the second-most populous state in India.

The state is divided into 6 divisions and 36 districts, with the state capital being Mumbai, the most populous urban area in India, and Nagpur serving as the winter capital.[18] The Godavari and Krishna are the two major rivers in the state and forests cover 16.47 per cent of the state's geographical area. The state is home to six UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, Elephanta Caves, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus), The Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai and The Western Ghats, a heritage site made up of 39 individual properties of

which 4 are in Maharashtra.[19][20] The State is the single largest contributor to India's economy with a share of 14 per cent in all-India nominal GDP.[21][22][23] The economy of Maharashtra is the largest in India, with a gross state domestic product (GSDP) of ₹35.27 trillion (US\$440 billion) and GSDP per capita of ₹242,247 (US\$3,000).[8] The service sector dominates the state's economy, accounting for 69.3 per cent of the value of the output of the country. Although agriculture accounts for 12 per cent of the state GDP, it employs nearly half the population of the state.

Maharashtra is one of the most industrialised states in India. The state's capital, Mumbai, is India's financial and commercial capital.[24] India's largest stock exchange Bombay Stock Exchange, the oldest in Asia, is located in the city, as is National Stock Exchange, which is the second largest stock exchange in India and one of world's largest derivatives exchanges. The state has played a significant role in the country's social and political life and is widely considered a leader in terms of agricultural and industrial production, trade and transport, and education.[25] Maharashtra is the ninth-highest ranking among Indian states in the human development index.[26]

The region that encompasses the state has a history going back many millennia. Notable dynasties that ruled the region include the Asmakas, the Mauryas, the Satavahanas, the Western Satraps, the Abhiras, the Vakatakas, the Chalukyas, the Rashtrakutas, the Western Chalukyas, the Seuna Yadavas, the Khaljis, the Tughlaqs, the Bahamanis and the Mughals. In the early nineteenth century, the region was divided between the Dominions of the Peshwa in the Maratha Confederacy and the Nizamate of Hyderabad. After two wars and the proclamation of the Indian Empire, the region became a part of the Bombay Province, the Berar Province and the Central Provinces of India under direct British rule and the Deccan States Agency under Crown suzerainty. Between 1950 and 1956, the Bombay Province became the Bombay State in the Indian Union, and Berar, the Deccan states and the Gujarat states were merged into the Bombay State. On 1 May 1960, the State of Bombay was bifurcated into the State of Maharashtra and State of Gujarat after a long struggle for special state for Marathi language speaking people through Samyukta Maharashtra Movement (transl. United Maharashtra movement).

The modern Marathi language evolved from Maharashtri Prakrit,[27] and the word Marhatta (later used for the Marathas) is found in the Jain Maharashtrian literature. The term Maharashtra (Marathi: महाराष्ट्र) along with Maharashtrian, Marathi, and Maratha may have derived from the same root. However, their exact etymology is uncertain.[28]

The most widely accepted theory among the linguistic scholars is that the words Maratha and Maharashtra ultimately derived from a combination of Mahā (Marathi: मह्) and Rāshtrikā (Marathi: राष्ट्रिका),[28][29] the name of a tribe or dynasty of chiefs ruling in the Deccan region.[30] An alternate theory states that the term is derived from mahā ("great") and ratha/rathi ("chariot"/"charioteer"), which refers to a skilful northern fighting force that migrated southward into the area.[30][29]

In the Harivamsa, the Yadava kingdom called Anaratta is described as mostly inhabited by the Abhiras (Abhira-praya-manusyam). The Anartta country and its inhabitants were called Surastra and the Saurastras, probably after the Rattas (Rastras) akin to the Rastrikas of Asoka's rock Edicts, now known as Maharastra and the Marattas.[31]

An alternative theory states that the term derives from the word mahā ("great") and rāshtra ("nation/dominion").[32] However, this theory is somewhat controversial among modern scholars who believe it to be the Sanskritised interpretation of later writers.[28]

Numerous Late Harappan or Chalcolithic sites belonging to the Jorwe culture (c. 1300–700 BCE) have been discovered throughout the state.[33][34] The largest settlement discovered of the culture

is at Daimabad, which had a mud fortification during this period, as well as an elliptical temple with fire pits.[35][36] In the Late Harappan period there was a large migration of people from Gujarat to northern Maharashtra.[37]

Maharashtra was ruled by Maurya Empire in the fourth and third centuries BCE. Around 230 BCE, Maharashtra came under the rule of the Satavahana dynasty which ruled it for the next 400 years.[38] The rule of Satavahana dynasty was followed by that of Western Satraps, Gupta Empire, Gurjara-Pratihara, Vakataka, Kadambas, Chalukya Empire, Rashtrakuta Dynasty, and Western Chalukya and the Yadava Dynasty. The Buddhist Ajanta Caves in present-day Aurangabad display influences from the Satavahana and Vakataka styles. The caves were possibly excavated during this period.[39]

The Chalukya dynasty ruled the region from the sixth to the eighth centuries CE, and the two prominent rulers were Pulakeshin II, who defeated the north Indian Emperor Harsha, and Vikramaditya II, who defeated the Arab invaders in the eighth century. The Rashtrakuta dynasty ruled Maharashtra from the eighth to the tenth century.[40] The Arab traveller Sulaiman al Mahri described the ruler of the Rashtrakuta dynasty Amoghavarsha as "one of the four great kings of the world".[41] Shilahara dynasty began as vassals of the Rashtrakuta dynasty which ruled the Deccan plateau between the eighth and tenth centuries. From the early 11th century to the 12th century, the Deccan Plateau, which includes a significant part of Maharashtra, was dominated by the Western Chalukya Empire and the Chola dynasty.[42] Several battles were fought between the Western Chalukya Empire and the Chola dynasty in the Deccan Plateau during the reigns of Raja Raja Chola I, Rajendra Chola I, Jayasimha II, Someshvara I, and Vikramaditya VI.[43]

In the early 14th century, the Yadava dynasty, which ruled most of present-day Maharashtra, was overthrown by the Delhi Sultanate ruler Alaaddin Khalji. Later, Muhammad bin Tughluq conquered parts of the Deccan, and temporarily shifted his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad in Maharashtra. After the collapse of the Tughluqs in 1347, the local Bahmani Sultanate of Gulbarga took over, governing the region for the next 150 years.[44] After the break-up of the Bahmani sultanate in 1518, Maharashtra split into five Deccan Sultanates: Nizamshah of Ahmednagar, Adilshah of Bijapur, Qutubshah of Golkonda, Bidarshah of Bidar and Imadshah of Elichpur. These kingdoms often fought with each other. United, they decisively defeated the Vijayanagara Empire of the south in 1565.[45] The present area of Mumbai was ruled by the Sultanate of Gujarat before its capture by Portugal in 1535 and the Faruqi dynasty ruled the Khandesh region between 1382 and 1601 before finally getting annexed in the Mughal Empire. Malik Ambar, the regent of the Nizamshahi dynasty of Ahmednagar from 1607 to 1626,[46] increased the strength and power of Murtaza Nizam Shah II and raised a large army. Ambar is said to have introduced the concept of guerrilla warfare in the Deccan region.[47] Malik Ambar assisted Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in Delhi against his stepmother, Nur Jahan, who wanted to enthrone her son-in-law.[48][49] Both Shivaji's grandfather, Maloji and father Shahaji served under Ambar.[50]

In the early 17th century, Shahaji Bhosale, an ambitious local general who had served the Ahmadnagar Sultanate, the Mughals and Adil Shah of Bijapur at different periods throughout his career, attempted to establish his independent rule.[51] This attempt was unsuccessful, but his son Shivaji succeeded in establishing the Maratha Empire.[52] Shortly after Shivaji's death in 1680, the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb launched a campaign to conquer Maratha territories as well as the Adilshahi and Goalkonda kingdoms.[53] This campaign, better known as Mughal–Maratha Wars, was a strategic defeat for Mughals. Aurangzeb failed to fully conquer Maratha territories, and this campaign had a ruinous effect on Mughal Treasury and Army.[54] Shortly after Aurangzeb's death in 1707, Marathas under Peshwa Bajirao I and the generals that he had promoted such as Ranoji

Shinde and Malharrao Holkar started conquering Mughal Territories in the north and western India, and by 1750s they or their successors had confined the Mughals to city of Delhi.[55] In the east the Bhonsale family of Nagpur expanded Maratha control all the way to Bengal.[56][57][58][59] [a]At its peak, the Maratha empire covered much of the subcontinent, encompassing a territory of over 2.8 million km². The Marathas are credited to a large extent for ending the Mughal rule in India.[53][61][62]

[63]

After their defeat at the hand of Ahmad Shah Abdali's Afghan forces in the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761, the Maratha suffered a setback. However, they soon reclaimed the lost territories and ruled central and north India including Delhi until the end of the eighteenth century. The Marathas also developed a potent Navy circa in the 1660s, which at its peak under the command of Kanhoji Angre, dominated the territorial waters of the western coast of India from Mumbai to Savantwadi.[64] It resisted the British, Portuguese, Dutch, and Siddi naval ships and kept a check on their naval ambitions. Charles Metcalfe, British Civil servant and later Acting Governor-General, said in 1806 [65]

India contains no more than two great powers, British and Maratha, and every other state acknowledges the influence of one or the other. Every inch that we recede will be occupied by them. The British East India Company slowly expanded areas under its rule during the 18th century. The Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–1818) led to the end of the Maratha Empire and the East India Company took over the empire.[66][67] The Maratha Navy dominated till around the 1730s, was in a state of decline by the 1770s and ceased to exist by 1818.[68]

The British governed western Maharashtra as part of the Bombay Presidency, which spanned an area from Karachi in Pakistan to northern Deccan. A number of the Maratha states persisted as princely states, retaining autonomy in return for acknowledging British suzerainty. The largest princely states in the territory were Nagpur, Satara and Kolhapur State; Satara was annexed to the Bombay Presidency in 1848, and Nagpur was annexed in 1853 to become Nagpur Province, later part of the Central Provinces. Berar, which had been part of the Nizam of Hyderabad's kingdom, was occupied by the British in 1853 and annexed to the Central Provinces in 1903.[69] However, a large region called Marathwada remained part of the Nizam's Hyderabad State throughout the British period. The British ruled Maharashtra region from 1818 to 1947 and influenced every aspect of life for the people of the region. They brought several changes to the legal system,[70][71][72] built modern means of transport including roads[73] and Railways,[74][75] took various steps to provide mass education, including that for previously marginalised classes and women,[76] established universities based on western system and imparting education in science, technology,[77] and western medicine,[78][79][80] standardised the Marathi language,[81][82][83][84] and introduced mass media by utilising modern printing technologies.[85] The 1857 war of independence had many Marathi leaders, though the battles mainly took place in northern India. The modern struggle for independence started taking shape in the late 1800s with leaders such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta and Dadabhai Naoroji evaluating the company rule and its consequences. Jyotirao Phule was the pioneer of social reform in the Maharashtra region in the second half of the 19th century. His social work was continued by Shahu, Raja of Kolhapur and later by B. R. Ambedkar. After the partial autonomy given to the states by the Government of India Act 1935, B. G. Kher became the first Chief Minister of the Congress party-led Government of tri-lingual Bombay Presidency.[86] The ultimatum to the British during the Quit India Movement was given in Mumbai and culminated in the transfer of power and independence in 1947.

After Indian independence, princely states and Jagirs of the Deccan States Agency were merged into Bombay State, which was created from the former Bombay Presidency in 1950.[87] In 1956, the States Reorganisation Act reorganised the Indian states along linguistic lines, and Bombay Presidency State was enlarged by the addition of the predominantly Marathi-speaking regions of Marathwada (Aurangabad Division) from erstwhile Hyderabad state and Vidarbha region from the Central Provinces and Berar. The southernmost part of Bombay State was ceded to Mysore. In the 1950s, Marathi people strongly protested against bilingual Bombay state under the banner of Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti.[88][89] The notable leaders of the samiti included Keshavrao Jedhe, S.M. Joshi, Shripad Amrit Dange, Pralhad Keshav Atre and Gopalrao Khedkar. The key demand of the samiti called for a Marathi speaking state with Mumbai as its capital.[90] In the Gujarati speaking areas of the state, a similar Mahagujarat Movement demanded a separate Gujarat state comprising majority Gujarati areas. After many years of protests, which saw 106 deaths amongst the protestors, and electoral success of the samiti in 1957 elections, the central government led by Prime minister Nehru split Bombay State into two new states of Maharashtra and Gujarat on 1 May 1960.[91]

The state continues to have a dispute with Karnataka regarding the region of Belgaum and Karwar.[92][93] The Government of Maharashtra was unhappy with the border demarcation of 1957 and filed a petition to the Ministry of Home affairs of India.[94] Maharashtra claimed 814 villages, and 3 urban settlements of Belagon, Karwar and Nippani, all part of then Bombay Presidency before freedom of the country.[95] A petition by Maharashtra in the Supreme Court of India, staking a claim over Belagon, is currently pending.[96]

Maharashtra with a total area of 307,713 km² (118,809 sq mi), is the third-largest state by area in terms of land area and constitutes 9.36 per cent of India's total geographical area. The State lies between 15°35' N to 22°02' N latitude and 72°36' E to 80°54' E longitude. It occupies the western and central part of the country and has a coastline stretching 840 kilometres[97] along the Arabian Sea.[98] The dominant physical feature of the state is its plateau character, which is separated from the Konkan coastline by the mountain range of the Western Ghats, which runs parallel to the coast from north to south. The Western Ghats, also known as the Sahyadri Range, has an average elevation of 1,200 metres (4,000 ft); its slopes gently descending towards the east and southeast.[99] The Western Ghats (or the Sahyadri Mountain range) provide a physical barrier to the state on the west, while the Satpura Hills along the north and Bhamragad-Chiroli-Gaikhuri ranges on the east serve as its natural borders.[100] This state's expansion from North to South is 720 km and East to West is 800 km. To the west of these hills lie the Konkan coastal plains, 50–80 kilometres in width. To the east of the Ghats lies the flat Deccan Plateau. The main rivers of the state are the Krishna, and its tributary, Bhima, the Godavari, and its main tributaries, Manjara, and Wardha-Wainganga and the Tapi, and its tributary Purna.[98][101] Maharashtra is divided into five geographic regions. Konkan is the western coastal region, between the Western Ghats and the sea.[102] Khandesh is the north region lying in the valley of the Tapti, Purna river.[101] Nashik, Malegaon Jalgaon, Dhule and Bhusawal are the major cities of this region.[103] Desh is in the centre of the state.[104] Marathwada, which was a part of the princely state of Hyderabad until 1956, is located in the southeastern part of the state.[98][105] Aurangabad and Nanded are the main cities of the region.[106] Vidarbha is the easternmost region of the state, formerly part of the Central Provinces and Berar.[107]

The state has limited area under irrigation, low natural fertility of soils, and large areas prone to recurrent drought. Due to this the agricultural productivity of Maharashtra is generally low as compared to the national averages of various crops. Maharashtra has been divided into nine agro-climatic zones on the basis of annual rainfall soil types, vegetation and cropping pattern.[108]

Maharashtra experiences a tropical wet and dry climate with hot, rainy, and cold weather seasons. Some areas more inland experience a hot semi arid climate, due to a rain shadow effect caused by the Western Ghats. [109] The month of March marks the beginning of the summer and the temperature rises steadily until June. In the central plains, summer temperatures rise to between 40 °C or 104.0 °F and 45 °C or 113.0 °F. May is usually the warmest and January the coldest month of the year. The winter season lasts until February with lower temperatures occurring in December and January. On the Deccan plateau that lies on eastern side of the Sahyadri mountains, the climate is drier, however, dew and hail often occur, depending on seasonal weather.[110]

The rainfall patterns in the state vary by the topography of different regions. The state can be divided into four meteorological regions, namely coastal Konkan, Western Maharashtra, Marathwada, and Vidarbha.[111] The southwest monsoon usually arrives in the last week of June and lasts till mid-September. Pre-monsoon showers begin towards the middle of June and post-monsoon rains occasionally occur in October. The highest average monthly rainfall is during July and August. In the winter season, there may be a little rainfall associated with western winds over the region. The Konkan coastal area, west of the Sahyadri Mountains receives very heavy monsoon rains with an annual average of more than 3,000 mm. However, just 150 km to the east, in the rain shadow of the mountain range, only 500–700 mm/year will fall, and long dry spells leading to drought are a common occurrence. Maharashtra has many of the 99 Indian districts identified by the Indian Central water commission as prone to drought.[112] The average annual rainfall in the state is 1,181 mm and 75 per cent of it is received during the southwest monsoon from June–to September. However, under the influence of the Bay of Bengal, eastern Vidarbha receives good rainfall in July, August, and September.[113] Thane, Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg districts receive heavy rains of an average of 2,000 to 2,500 mm or 80 to 100 in and the hill stations of Matheran and Mahabaleshwar over 5,000 mm or 200 in. Contrariwise, the rain shadow districts of Nashik, Pune, Ahmednagar, Dhule, Jalgaon, Satara, Sangli, Solapur, and parts of Kolhapur receive less than 1,000 mm or 40 in annually. In winter, a cool dry spell occurs, with clear skies, gentle air breeze, and pleasant weather that prevails from October to February, although the eastern Vidarbha region receives rainfall from the north-east monsoon.[114]

The state has three crucial biogeographic zones, namely Western Ghats, Deccan Plateau, and the West coast. The Ghats nurture endemic species, Deccan Plateau provides for vast mountain ranges and grasslands while the coast is home to littoral and swamp forests. Flora of Maharashtra is heterogeneous in composition. In 2012 the recorded thick forest area in the state was 61,939 km² (23,915 sq mi) which was about 20.13 per cent of the state's geographical area.[115] There are three main Public Forestry Institutions (PFIs) in the Maharashtra state: the Maharashtra Forest Department (MFD), the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra (FDCM) and the Directorate of Social Forestry (SFD).[116] The Maharashtra State Biodiversity Board, constituted by the Government of Maharashtra in January 2012 under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, is the nodal body for the conservation of biodiversity within and outside forest areas in the State.[117][118]

Maharashtra is ranked second among the Indian states in terms of the recorded forest area. Recorded Forest Area (RFA) in the state is 61,579 sq mi (159,489 km²) of which 49,546 sq mi (128,324 km²) is reserved forests, 6,733 sq mi (17,438 km²) is protected forest and 5,300 sq mi (13,727 km²) is unclassified forests. Based on the interpretation of IRS Resourcesat-2 LISS III satellite data of the period Oct 2017 to Jan 2018, the State has 8,720.53 sq mi (22,586 km²) under Very Dense Forest(VDF), 20,572.35 sq mi (53,282 km²) under Moderately Dense Forest (MDF) and

21,484.68 sq mi (55,645 km²) under Open Forest (OF). According to the Champion and Seth classification, Maharashtra has five types of forests:[119]

The most common animal species present in the state are monkeys, wild pigs, tiger, leopard, gaur, sloth bear, sambar, four-horned antelope, chital, barking deer, mouse deer, small Indian civet, golden jackal, jungle cat, and hare.[121] Other animals found in this state include reptiles such as lizards, scorpions and snake species such as cobras and kraits.[122] The state provides legal protection to its tiger population through six dedicated tiger reserves under the precincts of the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

The state's 720 kilometres of sea coastline of the Arabian sea marks the presence of various types of fish and marine animals. The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) found 1527 marine animal species, including molluscs with 581 species, many crustacean species including crabs, shrimps, and lobsters, 289 fish species, and 141 species types of annelids (sea worms).[123]

Maharashtra has following geographical regions:

It consists of six administrative divisions:[124]

The state's six divisions are further divided into 36 districts, 109 sub-divisions, and 358 talukas.[125] Maharashtra's top five districts by population, as ranked by the 2011 Census, are listed in the following table.

Each district is governed by a district collector or district magistrate, appointed either by the Indian Administrative Service or the Maharashtra Civil Service.[126] Districts are subdivided into sub-divisions (Taluka) governed by sub-divisional magistrates, and again into blocks.[127] A block consists of panchayats (village councils) and town municipalities.[128][129] Talukas are intermediate level panchayat between the Zilla Parishad (district councils) at the district level and gram panchayat (village councils) at the lower level.[127][130]

Out of the total population of Maharashtra, 45.22 per cent of people live in urban regions. The total figure of the population living in urban areas is 50.8 million. There are 27 Municipal Corporations in Maharashtra.[131]

According to the provisional results of the 2011 national census, Maharashtra was at that time the richest state in India and the second-most populous state in India with a population of 112,374,333. Contributing to 9.28 per cent of India's population, males and females are 58,243,056 and 54,131,277, respectively.[132] The total population growth in 2011 was 15.99 per cent while in the previous decade it was 22.57 per cent.[133][134] Since independence, the decadal growth rate of population has remained higher (except in the year 1971) than the national average. However, in the year 2011, it was found to be lower than the national average.[134] The 2011 census for the state found 55 per cent of the population to be rural with 45 per cent being urban-based.[135][136] Although, India hasn't conducted a caste-wise census since Independence, based on the British era census of 1931, it is estimated that the Maratha and the Maratha-kunbi numerically form the largest caste cluster with around 32 per cent of the population.[137] Maharashtra has a large Other Backward Class population constituting 41 per cent of the population. The scheduled tribes include Adivasis such as Thakar, Warli, Konkana and Halba.[138] The 2011 census found scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to account for 11.8 per cent and 8.9 per cent of the population, respectively.[139] The state also includes a substantial number of migrants from other states of

India.[140] Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Karnataka account for the largest percentage of migrants to the Mumbai metropolitan area.[141]

The 2011 census reported the human sex ratio is 929 females per 1000 males, which were below the national average of 943. The density of Maharashtra was 365 inhabitants per km² which was lower than the national average of 382 per km². Since 1921, the populations of Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg shrank by -4.96 per cent and -2.30 per cent, respectively, while the population of Thane grew by 35.9 per cent, followed by Pune at 30.3 per cent. The literacy rate is 83.2 per cent, higher than the national rate at 74.04 per cent.[142] Of this, male literacy stood at 89.82 per cent and female literacy 75.48 per cent.[143]

Religion in Maharashtra (2011)[144]

According to the 2011 census, Hinduism was the principal religion in the state at 79.8 per cent of the total population. Muslims constituted 11.5 per cent of the total population. Maharashtra has the highest number of followers of Buddhism in India, accounting for 5.8 per cent of Maharashtra's total population with 6,531,200 followers. Marathi Buddhists account for 77.36 per cent of all Buddhists in India.[145] Sikhs, Christians, and Jains constituted 0.2 per cent, 1.0 per cent, and 1.2 per cent of the Maharashtra population respectively.[144]

Maharashtra, and particularly the city of Mumbai, is home to two tiny religious communities. This includes 5000 Jews, mainly belonging to the Bene Israel, and Baghdadi Jewish communities.[146] Parsi is the other community who follow Zoroastrianism. The 2011 census recorded around 44,000 parsis in Maharashtra.[147]

Languages of Maharashtra (2011)[148]

Marathi is the official language although different regions have their own dialects.[5][149][150] Most people speak regional languages classified as dialects of Marathi in the census. Powari, Lodhi, and Varhadi are spoken in the Vidarbha region, Dangi is spoken near the Maharashtra-Gujarat border, Bhil languages are spoken throughout the northwest part of the state, Khandeshi (locally known as Ahirani) is spoken in Khandesh region. In the Desh and Marathwada regions, Dakhini Urdu is widely spoken, although Dakhini speakers are usually bilingual in Marathi.[151]

Konkani, and its dialect Malvani, is spoken along the southern Konkan coast. Telugu and Kannada are spoken along the border areas of Telangana and Karnataka, respectively. At the junction of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Chhattisgarh a variety of Hindi dialects are spoken such as Lodhi and Powari. Lambadi is spoken through a wide area of eastern Marathwada and western Vidarbha. Gondi is spoken by diminishing minorities throughout Vidarbha but is most concentrated in the forests of Gadchiroli and the Telangana border.

Marathi is the first language of a majority or plurality of the people in all districts of Maharashtra except Nandurbar, where Bhili is spoken by 45% of its population. The highest percentage of Khandeshi speakers are Dhule district (29%) and the highest percentage of Gondi speakers are in Gadchiroli district (24%).[148]

The highest percentages of mother-tongue Hindi speakers are in urban areas, especially Mumbai and its suburbs, where it is mother tongue to over a quarter of the population. Pune and Nagpur are also spots for Hindi-speakers. Gujarati and Urdu are also major languages in Mumbai, both are spoken by around 10% of the population.[148]

Urdu and its dialect, the Dakhni are spoken by the Muslim population of the state.[152]

The Mumbai metropolitan area is home to migrants from all over India. Many other languages are spoken in Mumbai including Telugu, Tamil, Konkani, Kannada, Sindhi, Punjabi, Bengali, Tulu to name a few.[148]

The state is governed through a parliamentary system of representative democracy, a feature the state shares with other Indian states. Maharashtra is one of the six states in India where the state legislature is bicameral, comprising the Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly) and the Vidhan Parishad (Legislative Council).[153] The legislature, the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, consists of elected members and special office bearers such as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, who are elected by the members. The Legislative Assembly consists of 288 members who are elected for five-year terms unless the Assembly is dissolved before to the completion of the term. The Legislative Council is a permanent body of 78 members with one-third (33 members) retiring every two years. The state has 48 seats in the Lok Sabha, or the lower chamber of the Indian Parliament, and 19 seats in the Rajya Sabha, or the upper chamber of the Indian Parliament.[154][155]

The government of Maharashtra is a democratically elected body in India with the Governor as its constitutional head who is appointed by the President of India for a five-year term.[156] The leader of the party or coalition with a majority in the Legislative Assembly is appointed as the Chief Minister by the Governor, and the Council of Ministers are appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister.[157] The governor remains a ceremonial head of the state, while the Chief Minister and his council are responsible for day-to-day government functions. The council of ministers consists of Cabinet Ministers and Ministers of State (MoS). The Secretariat headed by the Chief Secretary assists the council of ministers. The Chief Secretary is also the administrative head of the government. Each government department is headed by a Minister, who is assisted by an Additional Chief Secretary or a Principal Secretary, who is usually an officer of the Indian Administrative Service, the Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary serves as the administrative head of the department they are assigned to. Each department also has officers of the rank of Secretary, Special Secretary, Joint Secretary, etc. assisting the Minister and the Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary.

For purpose of administration, the state is divided into 6 divisions and 36 districts. Divisional Commissioner, an IAS officer is the head of administration at the divisional level. The administration in each district is headed by a District Magistrate, who is an IAS officer and is assisted by several officers belonging to state services. Urban areas in the state are governed by Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, Nagar Panchayats, and seven Cantonment Boards.[134][158] The Maharashtra Police is headed by an IPS officer of the rank of Director general of police. A Superintendent of Police, an IPS officer assisted by the officers of the Maharashtra Police Service, is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining law and order and related issues in each district. The Divisional Forest Officer, an officer belonging to the Indian Forest Service, manages the forests, environment, and wildlife of the district, assisted by the officers of Maharashtra Forest Service and Maharashtra Forest Subordinate Service.[159]

The judiciary in the state consists of the Maharashtra High Court (The High Court of Bombay), district and session courts in each district and lower courts and judges at the taluka level.[160] The High Court has regional branches at Nagpur and Aurangabad in Maharashtra and Panaji which is the capital of Goa.[161] The state cabinet on 13 May 2015 passed a resolution favouring the setting up of one more bench of the Bombay high court in Kolhapur, covering the region.[162]

The President of India appoints the chief justice of the High Court of the Maharashtra judiciary on the advice of the chief justice of the Supreme Court of India as well as the Governor of

Maharashtra.[163] Other judges are appointed by the chief justice of the high court of the judiciary on the advice of the Chief Justice.[164] Subordinate Judicial Service is another vital part of the judiciary of Maharashtra.[165] The subordinate judiciary or the district courts are categorised into two divisions: the Maharashtra civil judicial services and higher judicial service.[166] While the Maharashtra civil judicial services comprises the Civil Judges (Junior Division)/Judicial Magistrates and civil judges (Senior Division)/Chief Judicial Magistrate, the higher judicial service comprises civil and sessions judges.[167] The Subordinate judicial service of the judiciary is controlled by the District Judge.[164][168]

The politics of the state in the first decades after its formation in 1960 was dominated by the Indian National Congress party or its offshoots such as the Nationalist Congress Party. At present, it has been dominated by four political parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Nationalist Congress Party, the Indian National Congress and the Shivsena. The politics of the state in the last five years has seen long term alliances breaking up like that of undivided Shivsena and BJP, new ones being formed between Congress, NCP, and the Shivsena, regional parties like the Shivsena and NCP splitting up, and majority of their legislators joining a new alliance government with the BJP.

Just like in other states in India, dynastic politics is fairly common also among political parties in Maharashtra.[169] The dynastic phenomenon is seen from the national level down to the district level and even village level. The three-tier structure of Panchayati Raj created in the state in the 1960s also helped to create and consolidate this phenomenon in rural areas. Apart from controlling the government, political families also control cooperative institutions, mainly cooperative sugar factories and district cooperative banks in the state.[170] The Bharatiya Janata Party also features several senior leaders who are dynasts.[171][172] In Maharashtra, the NCP has a particularly high level of dynasticism.[172]

In the early years, the politics of Maharashtra was dominated by Congress party figures such as Yashwantrao Chavan, Vasantdada Patil, Vasantrao Naik, and Shankarrao Chavan. Sharad Pawar, who started his political career in the Congress party, has been a towering personality in state and national politics for over forty years. During his career, he has split the Congress twice with significant consequences for the state politics.[173][174] The Congress party enjoyed a near unchallenged dominance of the political landscape until 1995 when the Shiv Sena and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured an overwhelming majority in the state to form a coalition government.[175] After his second parting from the Congress party in 1999, Sharad Pawar founded the NCP but then formed a coalition with the Congress to keep out the BJP-Shiv Sena combine out of the Maharashtra state government for fifteen years until September 2014. Prithviraj Chavan of the Congress party was the last Chief Minister of Maharashtra under the Congress-NCP alliance.[176][177][178] For the 2014 assembly polls, the two alliances between NCP and Congress and that between BJP and Shiv Sena respectively broke down over seat allocations. In the election, the largest number of seats went to the Bharatiya Janata Party, with 122 seats. The BJP initially formed a minority government under Devendra Fadnis. The Shiv Sena entered the Government after two months and provided a comfortable majority for the alliance in the Maharashtra Vidhansabha for the duration of the assembly.[179] In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance secured 41 seats out of 48 from the state.[180] Later in 2019, the BJP and Shiv Sena alliance fought the assembly elections together but the alliance broke down after the election over the post of the chief minister. Uddhav Thackeray of Shiv Sena then formed an alternative governing coalition under his leadership with his erstwhile opponents from NCP, INC, and several independent members of the legislative assembly.[181][182] Thackeray served as the 19th Chief minister of Maharashtra of the Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition until June 2022.[183][184][185]

In late June 2022, Eknath Shinde, a senior Shiv Sena leader, and the majority of MLAs from Shiv Sena joined hands with the BJP.[186][187][188] Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari called for a trust vote, an action that would later on be described as a "sad spectacle" by Supreme Court of India,[189] and draw criticism from Political Observers.[190] Uddhav Thackeray resigned from the post as chief minister well as a MLC member ahead of no-confidence motion on 29 June 2022.[191] Shinde subsequently formed a new coalition with the BJP, and was sworn in as the Chief Minister on 30 June 2022.[192] BJP leader, Devendra Fadnavis was given the post of Deputy Chief Minister in the new government.[192] Uddhav Thackeray filed a lawsuit in Supreme Court of India claiming that Eknath Shinde and his group's actions meant that they were disqualified under Anti-defection law, with Eknath Shinde claiming that he has not defected, but rather represents the true Shiv Sena party.[193][194] The Supreme court delivered its verdict in May 2023. In its verdict the five-judge constitution bench of the Supreme court ruled that the Maharashtra governor and assembly speaker did not act as per the law.[195] However, the court said that it cannot order the restoration of the Uddhav Thackeray government as Thackeray resigned without facing a floor test.[196][193][194] Supreme Court also asked the Assembly Speaker to decide on the matter of disqualification of 16 MLAs including Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.[197][198] The case for decision on which faction has rights to use Shiv Sena Name and Symbol is currently being heard by Supreme Court.[199][200]

In July 2023, NCP leader Ajit Pawar, and a number of NCP state assembly members joined the Shivsena- BJP government led by Eknath Shinde.[201] Sharad Pawar, the founder of NCP, has condemned the move and expelled the rebels. Ajit Pawar has claimed support from majority of party legislators and office holders of the party, and has claimed the right to the NCP election symbol with the Election Commission of India.[202]

Figures in crores of Indian rupees

The economy of Maharashtra is driven by manufacturing, international trade, Mass Media (television, motion pictures, video games, recorded music), aerospace, technology, petroleum, fashion, apparel, and tourism.[204] Maharashtra is the most industrialised state and has maintained the leading position in the industrial sector in India.[205] The State is a pioneer in small scale industries.[206] Mumbai, the capital of the state and the financial capital of India, houses the headquarters of most of the major corporate and financial institutions. India's main stock exchanges and capital market and commodity exchanges are located in Mumbai. The state continues to attract industrial investments from domestic as well as foreign institutions. Maharashtra has the largest proportion of taxpayers in India and its share markets transact almost 70 per cent of the country's stocks.[207]

The Service sector dominates the economy of Maharashtra, accounting for 61.4 per cent of the value addition and 69.3 per cent of the value of output in the state.[208] The state's per-capita income in 2014 was 40 per cent higher than the all-India average in the same year.[209] The gross state domestic product (GSDP) at current prices for 2021-22 is estimated at \$420 billion and contributes about 14.2 per cent of the GDP. The agriculture and allied activities sector contributes 13.2 per cent to the state's income. In 2012, Maharashtra reported a revenue surplus of ₹1524.9 million (US\$24 million), with total revenue of ₹1,367,117 million (US\$22 billion) and spending of ₹1,365,592.1 million (US\$22 billion).[208] Maharashtra is the largest FDI destination of India. The FDI inflows in the State since April 2000 to September 2021 was ₹9,59,746 crore, which was 28.2 per cent of total FDI inflows at All-India level. With a total of 11,308 startups, Maharashtra has the highest number of recognised startups.

Maharashtra contributes 25 per cent of the country's industrial output[210] and is the most indebted state in the country.[211][212] Industrial activity in state is concentrated in Seven districts: Mumbai City, Mumbai Suburban, Thane, Aurangabad, Pune, Nagpur, and Nashik.[213] Mumbai has the largest share in GSDP (19.5 per cent), both Thane and Pune districts contribute about same in the Industry sector, Pune district contributes more in the agriculture and allied activities sector, whereas Thane district contributes more in the Services sector.[213] Nashik district shares highest in the agricultural and allied activities sector, but is behind in the Industry and Services sectors as compared to Thane and Pune districts.[213] Industries in Maharashtra include chemical and chemical products (17.6 per cent), food and food products (16.1 per cent), refined petroleum products (12.9 per cent), machinery and equipment (8 per cent), textiles (6.9 per cent), basic metals (5.8 per cent), motor vehicles (4.7 per cent) and furniture (4.3 per cent).[214] Maharashtra is the manufacturing hub for some of the largest public sector industries in India, including Hindustan Petroleum Corporation, Tata Petrodyne and Oil India Ltd.[215]

Maharashtra is the leading Indian state for many Creative industries including advertising, architecture, art, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, R&D, software, toys and games, TV and radio, and video games.

Maharashtra has an above-average knowledge industry in India, with Pune Metropolitan Region being the leading IT hub in the state. Approximately 25 per cent of the top 500 companies in the IT sector are based in Maharashtra.[216] The state accounts for 28 per cent of the software exports of India.[216]

Maharashtra and particularly Mumbai is a prominent location for the Indian entertainment industry, with many films, television series, books, and other media being set there.[217] Mumbai is the largest centre for film and television production and a third of all Indian films are produced in the state. Multimillion-dollar Bollywood productions, with the most expensive costing up to ₹1.5 billion (US\$19 million), are filmed there.[218] Marathi films used to be previously made primarily in Kolhapur, but now are produced in Mumbai.[219]

The state houses important financial institutions such as the Reserve Bank of India, the Bombay Stock Exchange, the National Stock Exchange of India, the SEBI and the corporate headquarters of numerous Indian companies and multinational corporations. It is also home to some of India's premier scientific and nuclear institutes like BARC, NPCL, IREL, TIFR, AERB, AECL, and the Department of Atomic Energy.[213]

With more than half the population being rural, agriculture and allied industries play an important role in the state's economy and source of income for the rural population.[220] The agriculture and allied activities sector contributes 12.9 per cent to the state's income. Staples such as rice and millet are the main monsoon crops. Important cash crops include sugarcane, cotton, oilseeds, tobacco, fruit, vegetables, and spices such as turmeric.[100] Animal husbandry is an important agriculture-related activity. The State's share in the livestock and poultry population in India is about 7 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively. Maharashtra was a pioneer in the development of Agricultural Cooperative Societies after independence. It was an integral part of the then Governing Congress party's vision of 'rural development with local initiative'. A 'special' status was accorded to the sugar cooperatives and the government assumed the role of a mentor by acting as a stakeholder, guarantor, and regulator,[221][222][223] Apart from sugar, cooperatives play a crucial role in dairy,[224] cotton, and fertiliser industries.

The banking sector comprises scheduled and non-scheduled banks.[216] Scheduled banks are of two types, commercial and cooperative. Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) in India are classified into five types: State Bank of India and its associates, nationalised banks, private sector banks, Regional Rural Banks, and others (foreign banks). In 2012, there were 9,053 banking offices in the state, of which about 26 per cent were in rural and 54 per cent were in urban areas. Maharashtra has a microfinance system, which refers to small-scale financial services extended to the poor in both rural and urban areas. It covers a variety of financial instruments, such as lending, savings, life insurance, and crop insurance.[225] The three largest urban cooperative banks in India are all based in Maharashtra.[226]

The state has a large, multi-modal transportation system with the largest road network in India.[227] In 2011, the total length of surface road in Maharashtra was 267,452 km;[228] national highways accounted for 4,176 km,[229] and state highways 3,700 km.[228] The Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) provides economical and reliable passenger road transport service in the public sector.[230] These buses, popularly called ST (State Transport), are the preferred mode of transport for much of the populace. Hired forms of transport include metered taxis and auto-rickshaws, which often ply specific routes in cities. Other district roads and village roads provide villages, accessibility to meet their social needs as well as the means to transport agricultural produce from villages to nearby markets. Major district roads provide a secondary function of linking between main roads and rural roads. Approximately 98 per cent of villages are connected either via the highways or modern roads in Maharashtra. Average speed on state highways varies between 50 and 60 km/h (31–37 mi/h) due to the heavy presence of vehicles; in villages and towns, speeds are as low as 25–30 km/h (15–18 mi/h).[231]

The first passenger train in India ran from Mumbai to Thane on 16 April 1853.[232]

Rail transportation is run by the Central Railway, Western Railway, South Central Railway, and South East Central Railway zones of the Indian Railways with the first two zones being headquartered in Mumbai, at Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CSMT) and Churchgate respectively. Konkan Railway is headquartered in Navi Mumbai.[233][234] The Mumbai Rajdhani Express, the fastest Rajdhani train, connects the Indian capital of New Delhi to Mumbai.[235] Thane and CSMT are the busiest railway stations in India,[236] the latter serving as a terminal for both long-distance trains and commuter trains of the Mumbai Suburban Railway.

The two principal seaports, Mumbai Port and Jawaharlal Nehru Port, which is also in the Mumbai region, are under the control and supervision of the government of India.[237] There are around 48 minor ports in Maharashtra.[238] Most of these handle passenger traffic and have a limited capacity. None of the major rivers in Maharashtra are navigable and so river transport does not exist in the state.

Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (formerly Bombay International Airport), is the state's largest airport. The four other international airports are Pune International Airport, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport at Nagpur, Nashik Airport, Shirdi Airport. Aurangabad Airport, Kolhapur Airport, Jalgaon Airport, and Nanded Airport are domestic airports in the state. Most of the State's airfields are operated by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) while Reliance Airport Developers (RADPL), currently operates five non-metro airports at Latur, Nanded, Baramati, Osmanabad and Yavatmal on a 95-year lease.[239] The Maharashtra Airport Development Company (MADC) was set up in 2002 to take up development of airports in the state that are not under the AAI or the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC). MADC is playing the lead role in the planning and implementation of the Multi-modal International Cargo Hub and Airport at Nagpur

(MIHAN) project.[240] Additional smaller airports include Akola, Amravati, Chandrapur, Ratnagiri, and Solapur.[241] Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Limited (Maha Metro), headquartered in Nagpur is a Joint Venture establishment of Government of India & Government of Maharashtra headquartered in Nagpur, India. Maha Metro is responsible for the implementation of all Maharashtra state metro projects, except the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. Mumbai Metro is operational since 8 June 2014.

Census of 2011 showed literacy rates in the state for males and females were around 88.38% and 75.87% respectively.[242]

Regions that comprise the present day state of Maharashtra have been known for their pioneering role in the development of the modern education system in India. Scottish missionary John Wilson, American Marathi mission, Indian nationalists such as Vasudev Balwant Phadke and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, social reformers such as Jyotirao Phule, Dhondo Keshav Karve and Bhauroo Patil played a leading role in the setting up of modern schools and colleges during the British colonial era.[243][244][245][246] The forerunner of Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute was established in 1821. The Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women's University, the oldest women's liberal arts college in South Asia, started its journey in 1916. College of Engineering Pune, established in 1854, is the third oldest college in Asia.[247] Government Polytechnic Nagpur, established in 1914, is one of the oldest polytechnics in India.[248] Most of the private colleges including religious and special-purpose institutions were set up in the last thirty years after the State Government of Vasantdada Patil liberalised the Education Sector in 1982.[249]

Schools in the state are either managed by the government or by private trusts, including religious institutions. The medium of instruction in most of the schools is mainly Marathi, English, or Hindi, though Urdu is also used. The secondary schools are affiliated with the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE), the National Institute of Open School (NIOS), and the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education. Under the 10+2+3 plan, after completing secondary school, students typically enroll for two years in a junior college, also known as pre-university, or in schools with a higher secondary facility affiliated with the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education or any central board. Students choose from one of three streams, namely liberal arts, commerce, or science. Upon completing the required coursework, students may enrol in general or professional degree programs.

Maharashtra has 24 universities with a turnout of 160,000 Graduates every year.[250][251] Established during the rule of East India company in 1857 as Bombay University, The University of Mumbai, is the largest university in the world in terms of the number of graduates.[252] It has 141 affiliated colleges.[253] According to a report published by The Times Education magazine, 5 to 7 Maharashtra colleges and universities are ranked among the top 20 in India.[254][255][256] Maharashtra is also home to notable autonomous institutes as Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Indian Institute of Information Technology Pune, College of Engineering Pune (CoEP), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University, Institute of Chemical Technology, Homi Bhabha National Institute, Walchand College of Engineering, Sangli, and Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (VJTI), Sardar Patel College of Engineering (SPCE).[257] Most of these autonomous institutes are ranked the highest in India and have very competitive entry requirements. The University of Pune (now Savitribai Phule Pune University), the National Defence Academy, Film and Television Institute of India, Armed Forces Medical College, and National Chemical Laboratory were established in Pune soon after the Indian independence in 1947. Mumbai has an IIT, has National Institute of Industrial Engineering and Nagpur has IIM and AIIMS. Other notable institutes in the

state are: Maharashtra National Law University, Nagpur (MNLUN), Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai (MNLUM), Maharashtra National Law University, Aurangabad (MNLUA), Government Law College, Mumbai (GLC), ILS Law College, and Symbiosis Law School (SLS)

Agricultural universities include Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Agricultural University, Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth, and Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth,[258] Regional universities viz. Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, North Maharashtra University, Shivaji University, Solapur University, Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, and Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University are established to cover the educational needs at the district levels of the state. deemed universities are established in Maharashtra, including Symbiosis International University, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and Tilak Maharashtra University.[259]

Vocational training in different trades such as construction, plumbing, welding, automobile mechanics is offered by post-secondary school Industrial Training Institute (ITIs).[260] Local community colleges also exist with generally more open admission policies, shorter academic programs, and lower tuition.[261]

Health indicators of Maharashtra show that they have attained relatively high growth against a background of high per capita income (PCI).[262] In 2011, the health care system in Maharashtra consisted of 363 rural government hospitals,[263] 23 district hospitals (with 7,561 beds), 4 general hospitals (with 714 beds) mostly under the Maharashtra Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and 380 private medical establishments; these establishments provide the state with more than 30,000 hospital beds.[264] It is the first state in India to have nine women's hospitals serving 1,365 beds.[264] The state also has a significant number of medical practitioners who hold the Bachelor of Ayurveda, Medicine and Surgery qualifications. These practitioners primarily use the traditional Indian therapy of Ayurveda, nevertheless, modern western medicine is used as well.[265]

In Maharashtra as well as in the rest of India, Primary Health Centre (PHC) is part of the government-funded public health system and is the most basic unit of the healthcare system. They are essentially single-physician clinics usually with facilities for minor surgeries, too.[266] Maharashtra has a life expectancy at birth of 67.2 years in 2011, ranking it third among 29 Indian states.[267] The total fertility rate of the state is 1.9.[268] The Infant mortality rate is 28 and the maternal mortality ratio is 104 (2012–2013), which are lower than the national averages.[269][270] Public health services are governed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), through various departments. The Ministry is divided into two departments: the Public Health Department, which includes family welfare and medical relief, and the Department of Medical Education and Drugs.[271][272]

Health insurance includes any program that helps pay for medical expenses, through privately purchased insurance, social insurance, or a social welfare program funded by the government.[273] In a more technical sense, the term is used to describe any form of insurance that protects against the costs of medical services.[274] This usage includes private insurance and social insurance programs such as National Health Mission, which pools resources and spreads the financial risk associated with major medical expenses across the entire population to protect everyone, as well as social welfare programs such as National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and the Health Insurance Program, which assist people who cannot afford health coverage.[273][274][275]

Although its population makes Maharashtra one of the country's largest energy users,[276][277] conservation mandates, mild weather in the largest population centres, and strong environmental

movements have kept its per capita energy use to one of the smallest of any Indian state.[278] The high electricity demand of the state constitutes 13 per cent of the total installed electricity generation capacity in India, which is mainly from fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas.[279] Mahavitaran is responsible for the distribution of electricity throughout the state by buying power from Mahanirmiti, captive power plants, other state electricity boards, and private sector power generation companies.[278]

As of 2012, Maharashtra was the largest power generating state in India, with an installed electricity generation capacity of 26,838 MW.[277] The state forms a major constituent of the western grid of India, which now comes under the North, East, West and North Eastern (NEWNE) grids of India.[276] Maharashtra Power Generation Company (MAHAGENCO) operates thermal power plants.[280] In addition to the state government-owned power generation plants, there are privately owned power generation plants that transmit power through the Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company, which is responsible for the transmission of electricity in the state.[281]

Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) is established and responsible for implementing various environmental legislations in the state principally including the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, Water (Cess) Act, 1977 and some of the provisions under Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 and the rules framed there under it including, Biomedical Waste (M&H) Rules, 1998, Hazardous Waste (M&H) Rules, 2000, and Municipal Solid Waste Rules, 2000. MPCB is functioning under the administrative control of the Environment Department of the Government of Maharashtra.[282] The Maharashtra Plastic and Thermocol Products ban became effective as law on 23 June 2018, subjecting plastic users to fines and potential imprisonment for repeat offenders.[283][284]

Maharashtrian cuisine includes a variety of dishes ranging from mild to very spicy ones. Wheat, rice, jowar, bajri, vegetables, lentils and fruit form staple food of the Maharashtrian diet. Some of the popular traditional dishes include puran poli, ukdiche modak, Thalipeeth.[285] Street food items like Batata wada, Misal Pav, Pav Bhaji and Vada pav are very popular among the locals and are usually sold on stalls and in small hotels.[286] Meals (mainly lunch and dinner) are served on a plate called thali. Each food item served on the thali is arranged in a specific way. All non-vegetarian and vegetarian dishes are eaten with boiled rice, chapatis or with bhakris, made of jowar, bajra or rice flours. A typical vegetarian thali is made of chapati or bhakri (Indian flat bread), dal, rice (varan bhaat), amti, bhaji or usal, chutney, koshimbir (salad) and buttermilk or Sol kadhi. A bhaji is a vegetable dish made of a particular vegetable or combination of vegetables. Aamti is variant of the curry, typically consisting of a lentil (tur) stock, flavoured with goda masala and sometimes with tamarind or amshul, and jaggery (gul).[286][287] Varan is nothing but plain dal, a common Indian lentil stew. More or less, most of the dishes use coconut, onion, garlic, ginger, red chili powder, green chilies, and mustard though some section of the population traditionally avoid onion and garlicks.[288][286]

Maharashtrian cuisine varies with the regions. Malvani (Konkani), Kolhapuri, and Varhadhi cuisins are examples of well known regional cuisines.[288] Kolhapur is famous for Tambda Pandhra rassa, a dish made of either chicken or mutton.[289] Rice and seafood are the staple foods of the coastal Konkani people. Among seafood, the most popular is a fish variety called the Bombay duck (also known as bombil in Marathi).

Traditionally, Marathi women commonly wore the sari, often distinctly designed according to local cultural customs.[290] Most middle-aged and young women in urban Maharashtra dress in western outfits such as skirts and trousers or shalwar kameez with the traditionally nauvari or nine-yard

luggage,[291] disappearing from the markets due to a lack of demand.[292] Older women wear the five-yard sari. In urban areas, the five-yard sari, especially the Paithani, is worn by younger women for special occasions such as marriages and religious ceremonies.[293] Among men, western dressing has greater acceptance. Men also wear traditional costumes such as the dhoti, and pheta[294] on cultural occasions. The Gandhi cap is the popular headgear among older men in rural Maharashtra.[290][295][296] Women wear traditional jewellery derived from Maratha and Peshwa dynasties. Kolhapuri saaj, a special type of necklace, is also worn by Marathi women.[290] In urban areas, western attire is dominant amongst women and men.[296]

Maharashtra and Maharashtrian artists have been influential in preserving and developing Hindustani classical music for more than a century. Notable practitioners of Kirana or Gwalior style called Maharashtra their home. The Sawai Gandharva Bhimsen Festival in Pune started by Bhimsen Joshi in the 1950s is considered the most prestigious Hindustani music festival in India, if not one of the largest.[297]

Cities like Kolhapur and Pune have been playing a major role in the preservation of music like Bhavageet and Natya Sangeet, which are inherited from Indian classical music. The biggest form of Indian popular music is songs from films produced in Mumbai. Film music, in 2009 made up 72 per cent of the music sales in India.[298] Most of the influential music composers and singers have called Mumbai their home.

In recent decades, the music scene in Maharashtra, and particularly in Mumbai has seen a growth of newer music forms such as rap.[299] The city also holds festivals in western music genres such as blues.[300] In 2006, the Symphony Orchestra of India was founded, housed at the NCPA in Mumbai. It is today the only professional symphony orchestra in India and presents two concert seasons per year, with world-renowned conductors and soloists.

Maharashtra has a long and rich tradition of folk music. Some of the most common forms of folk music in practice are Bhajan, Bharud, Kirtan, Gondhal,[301] and Koli Geet.[302]

Marathi dance forms draw from folk traditions. Lavani is popular form of dance in the state. The Bhajan, Kirtan and Abhangas of the Warkari sect (Vaishnav Devotees) have a long history and are part of their daily rituals.[303][304] Koli dance (called 'Koligeete') is among the most popular dances of Maharashtra. As the name suggests, it is related to the fisher folk of Maharashtra, who are called Kolis. Popular for their unique identity and liveliness, their dances represent their occupation. This type of dance is represented by both men and women. While dancing, they are divided into groups of two. These fishermen display the movements of waves and casting of the nets during their koli dance performances.[305][306]

Modern Theatre in Maharashtra can trace its origins to the British colonial era in the middle of the 19th century. It is modelled mainly after the western tradition but also includes forms like Sangeet Natak (musical drama). In recent decades, Marathi Tamasha has also been incorporated in some experimental plays.[307]

The repertoire of Marathi theatre ranges from humorous social plays, farces, historical plays, and musical, to experimental plays and serious drama. Marathi Playwrights such as Vijay Tendulkar, P. L. Deshpande, Mahesh Elkunchwar, Ratnakar Matkari, and Satish Alekar have influenced theatre throughout India.[308] Besides Marathi theatre, Maharashtra and particularly, Mumbai, has had a long tradition of theatre in other languages such as Gujarati, Hindi, and English.[309]

The National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCP) is a multi-venue, multi-purpose cultural centre in Mumbai which hosts events in music, dance, theatre, film, literature, and photography from India as well other places. It also presents new and innovative work in the performing arts field.

Maharashtra's regional literature is about the lives and circumstances of Marathi people in specific parts of the state. The Marathi language, which boasts a rich literary heritage, is written in the Devanagari script.[310] The earliest instance of Marathi literature is Dnyaneshwari, a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita by 13th-century Bhakti Saint Dnyaneshwar and devotional poems called abhangs by his contemporaries such as Namdev, and Gora Kumbhar. Devotional literature from the Early modern period includes compositions in praise of the God Pandurang by Bhakti saints such as Tukaram, Eknath, and Rama by Ramdas respectively.[311][312]

19th century Marathi literature includes mainly Polemic works of social and political activists such as Balshastri Jambhekar, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Hari Deshmukh, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Jyotirao Phule, and Vishnushastri Chiplunkar.

Keshavsuta was a pioneer in modern Marathi poetry. The Hindutva proponent, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was a prolific writer. His work in English and Marathi consists of many essays, two novels, poetry, and plays.

Four Marathi writers have been honoured with the Jnanpith Award, India's highest literary award. They include novelists, Vishnu Saktharam Khandekar, and Bhalchandra Nemade, Vishnu Vaman Shirwadkar(Kusumagraj) and Vinda Karandikar. The last two were known for their poetry as well.[313]

Other notable writers from the early and mid 20th century include playwright Ram Ganesh Gadkari, novelist Hari Narayan Apte, poet, and novelist B. S. Mardhekar, Sane Guruji, Vyankatesh Digambar Madgulkar, Prahlad Keshav Atre, Chintamani Tryambak Khanolkar, and Laxmanshastri Joshi. Vishwas Patil, Ranjit Desai, and Shivaji Sawant are known for novels based on Maratha history. Pu La Deshpande gained popularity in the period after independence for depicting the urban middle class society. His work includes humour, travelogues, plays, and biographies.[314] Narayan Surve, Shanta Shelke, Durga Bhagwat, Suresh Bhat, and Narendra Jadhav are some of the more recent authors

Dalit literature originally emerged in the Marathi language as a literary response to the everyday oppressions of caste in mid-twentieth-century independent India, critiquing caste practices by experimenting with various literary forms.[315]

In 1958, the term "Dalit literature" was used for the first conference of Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangha (Maharashtra Dalit Literature Society) in Mumbai.[316]

Maharashtra, and particularly the cities in the state such as Mumbai and Pune are diverse with different languages being spoken. Mumbai is called home by writers in English such as Rohinton Mistry, Shobha De, and Salman Rushdie. Their novels are set with Mumbai as the backdrop.[317] Many eminent Urdu poets such as Kaifi Azmi, Jan Nissar Akhtar, Gulzar, and Javed Akhtar have been residents of Mumbai.

The first Indian feature-length film, Raja Harishchandra, was made in Maharashtra by Dadasaheb Phalke in 1913.[321] Dadasaheb Phalke is widely considered the father of Indian cinema.[322] The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is India's highest award in cinema, given annually by the Government of India for lifetime contribution to Indian cinema.[323]

The Marathi film industry, initially located in Kolhapur, has spread throughout Mumbai. Well known for its art films, the early Marathi film industry included acclaimed directors such as Dadasaheb Phalke, V. Shantaram, Raja Thakur, Bhalji Pendharkar, Pralhad Keshav Atre, Baburao Painter, and Dada Kondke. Some of the directors who made acclaimed films in Marathi are Jabbar Patel, Mahesh Manjrekar, Amol Palekar, and Sanjay Surkar.

Durga Khote was one of the first women from respectable families to enter the film industry, thus breaking a social taboo.[324] Lalita Pawar, Sulabha Deshpande, and Usha Kiran featured in Hindi and Marathi movies. In 70s and 80s, Smita Patil, Ranjana Deshmukh, Reema Lagoo featured in both art and mainstream movies in Hindi and Marathi. Rohini Hattangadi starred in a number of acclaimed movies, and is the only Indian actress to win the BAFTA Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for her performance as Kasturba Gandhi in *Gandhi* (1982).[325] Bhanu Athaiya was the first Indian to win an Oscar in Best Costume Design category for *Gandhi* (1982).[326][327] In 90s and 2000s, Urmila Matondkar and Madhuri Dixit starred in critically acclaimed and high grossing films in Hindi and Marathi.

In earliest days of Marathi cinema, Suryakant Mandhare was a leading star.[328] In later years, Shriram Lagoo, Nilu Phule, Vikram Gokhale, Dilip Prabhavalkar played character roles in theatre, and Hindi and Marathi films. Ramesh Deo and Mohan Joshi played leading men in Mainstream Marathi movies.[329][330] In 70s and 80s, Sachin Pilgaonkar, Ashok Saraf, Laxmikant Berde and Mahesh Kothare created a "comedy film wave" in Marathi Cinema.

Maharashtra is a prominent location for the Indian entertainment industry, with enormous films, television series, books, and other media production companies being set there.[331] Mumbai has numerous film production studios and facilities to produce films.[332] Mainstream Hindi films are popular in Maharashtra, especially in urban areas. Mumbai is the largest centre for film and television production and a third of all Indian films are produced in the state. Multimillion-dollar Bollywood productions, with the most expensive costing up to ₹1.5 billion (US\$19 million), are filmed there.[333]

The state is home to more than 200 newspapers and 350 consumer magazines. The publishing industry employs more than 250,000 people.[334] There are number of Marathi news channels in the state viz News18 Lokmat, ABP Majha. As of December 2016, Sakal, published in Pune and other major cities, is the largest circulated Marathi Newspaper in Maharashtra.[335] Other major Marathi newspapers include Maharashtra Times, Loksatta, Nava Kaal, Pudhari, Lokmat and Sakal[336] Saptahik Sakal, Grihashobhika, Lokrajya, Lokprabha, and Chitralkha are some of the prominent Marathi magazines.[337] English language newspapers are confined to urban areas. Some popular among these are Daily News & Analysis, The Times of India, Hindustan Times, The Indian Express, Mumbai Mirror, Asian Age, MiD-DAY and The Free Press Journal. Some prominent financial dailies like The Economic Times, Mint, Business Standard, and The Financial Express are widely circulated.[338] Many newspapers in other Indian languages such as Nava Bharat in Hindi, Udayavani in Kannada, Mumbai Samachar in Gujarati, and The Inquilab in Urdu have Mumbai editions.[339]

The television industry in Maharashtra has been contributing significantly in the state's economy.[340] Doordarshan, a state-owned television broadcaster runs a channel named DD Sahyadri. Numerous Indian and international television channels can be watched in Maharashtra through one of the Pay TV companies or the local cable television provider. The four major Indian broadcast networks are all headquartered in Maharashtra: The Times, STAR India, CNN-IBN and ZEEL. Multi-system operators provide a range of Marathi, Bengali, Nepali, Hindi, English, and

international channels via cable. There are number of entertainment channels that exclusively streams content in Marathi including Zee Marathi, Zee Yuva, Colors Marathi, Star Pravah, Sony Marathi, and Fakt Marathi.

All India Radio airs its content through multiple channels including Air Marathi, FM Gold, and FM Rainbow. Air India's commercially successful air channel Vividh Bharti is headquartered in Mumbai. Private radio stations like Big 92.7 FM, Radio Mirchi, Red FM, Vasundhara Vahini, Radio Dhamaal 24, and My FM air in all major cities.[341] Airtel, BSNL, Jio, and VI networks provide cellular services and have covered most of the Maharashtra. Broadband internet is available in most of the towns, villages, and cities, provided by the state-run MTNL and BSNL and by other private companies.[342]

Cricket is the most popular spectator sport in Maharashtra. It is played as an exercise and recreational activity. Maharashtra is represented by three teams in Domestic Cricket namely Maharashtra, Mumbai and Vidarbha cricket team. These teams are governed by Maharashtra cricket association, Mumbai Cricket Association, and Vidarbha Cricket Association, respectively.[343][344][345] [b] Governing body of Cricket in India, BCCI, has its headquarters in Churchgate, Mumbai. The state also has Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Mumbai Indians based in Mumbai which plays its home matches at Wankhede Stadium. Brabourne Stadium, Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai and New VCA Stadium, Nagpur are international cricket stadiums, which are the venues for international cricket.[346][347]

At 2023 National games, Maharashtra won highest number of medals among the states and was first in the total medals tally behind Services. Maharashtra won 228 total medals, of which are 80 gold medals.[348]

Kabbadi, Kho kho, Kushti, and Mallakhamba are some of the traditional games that are played in the state. Kusti and bullock cart races are popular in rural areas of South-west Maharashtra, are organised by villagers during the annual fairs.[349][350][351] Amateur wrestling tournaments Hind Kesari, Maharashtra Kesari are held annually.[352] Badminton, Volleyball, Tennis are played as a recreational activity in urban areas.[353][354] The beaches of Konkan coast, mountains of Western Ghats, and the lakes formed by numerous dams in the state facilitate adventure sports such as paragliding, rock climbing, trekking, mountaineering, water sports, and scuba diving and are popular among visitors.[355][356][357]

India's only world class Tennis championship Maharashtra Open tennis championship are annually organised in Pune by governing body of tennis in the state, 'Maharashtra Lawn Tennis Association' (MLTA). The tournament is part of ATP Tour 250.[c][358][359] Mumbai and Pune hold derby races at the Mahalaxmi Racecourse and Pune Race Course respectively.[360][361] Various domestic level leagues for field hockey, chess, tennis, and badminton are organised throughout the state.[dubious – discuss][362] The Maharashtra football team represents the state in the Santosh Trophy, football tournament.

Many national-level football club are based in this state, such as Mumbai Tigers F.C., Kenkre F.C., Bengal Mumbai FC, and Air India FC.[363] Two clubs from the state participate in Elite Football League of India.[364][needs update] Mumbai Gladiators and Pune Marathas are teams based in Mumbai and Pune respectively.[365][366] Puneri Paltan, U Mumba, Pro Kabbadi, league teams are based in Pune and Mumbai respectively.

Maharashtra has a number of places that attracts national international tourists. The most popular or well known are Mumbai city, Ajanta, Ellora caves and the Nature reserves in the state.[367] Ajanta–Ellora are the UNESCO world heritage sites. Mumbai, being the biggest and the most

cosmopolitan city in India, attracts tourists from all over the world for its many attractions including colonial architecture, beaches, Bollywood, shopping, and an active nightlife.[368][369] The city attracts three million foreign and forty million domestic tourists annually. The state wants to increase the numbers by allowing retailers and entertainment venues to be open 24-hours a day, seven days a week.[370]

Pune city, along with MTDC, organises many cultural events during Pune festival which coincides with the Hindu Ganeshotsav festival.[371][372][373][374] Hill stations built during the British rule are popular tourist destinations, especially during the summer months. These include Mahabaleshwar, Lonavala, and Matheran in Western Maharashtra, and Chikhaldara in the Vidarbha region.[375] The mountainous districts of Western Maharashtra are dotted with the ruins of hundreds of mountain forts from the Deccan Sultanate and the Maratha empire eras. These forts and the surrounding hills are popular among people interested in trekking, and hiking, and heritage tourism related to Shivaji. Notable forts popular with tourists include Shivaneri, Rajgad, Sinhadgad, Raigad, and Pratapgad.[376]

A number of temples such as Trimbakeshwar, Bhavani of Tuljapur, Shani Shingnapur, Jyotiba Temple, Ashtavinayaka Ganapati temples, Lord Pandurang temple at Pandharpur attract a huge number of Hindu devotees every year. Khandoba temple of God Khandoba at Jejuri in the Pune district attract pilgrims from all over the Maharashtra where worshippers shower each other with Bhandar (turmeric powder).[377] Saibaba temple at Shirdi is visited by an average of 25,000 pilgrims a day and during religious festivals, this number can reach up to 300,000.[378] The places associated with the Warkari sect such as Pandharpur, Dehu, and Alandi remain popular throughout the year, and attract huge number of people from all over the state during religious observations.[379] Situated in Nanded, Sikh Gurudwara of Hazur Sahib, also known as Takht Sachkhand Sri Hazur Abchalnagar Sahib, is one of the five takhts in Sikhism. The area around the city of Aurangabad has many ancient and medieval sites including the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Ajanta and Ellora caves, the Daulatabad Fort, and the Bibi Ka Maqbara.[380]

The Vidarbha region of Maharashtra has numerous nature reserve parks. These include Melghat Tiger Reserve in Amravati district, Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Chandrapur district,[381] Umred Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary in Nagpur district, the Nagzira wildlife sanctuary, and Navegaon National Park (bird sanctuary) of Gondia District.

According to a survey by the government of Maharashtra, in 2009–10, domestic tourists accounted for 98% of the total number of visitors to Maharashtra and the remaining were foreign.[382] Visitors from the US, UK, Germany, and UAE each form a significant percentage of the foreign tourists.[382] The state government has established the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) for the systematic development and promotion of tourism in the state. MTDC owns and maintains resorts at all key tourist centres.[383]

In the 1750s, the "frontier" extended north to Delhi. In this period, the Mughal government directly controlled little territory further than fifty miles from the capital. Even this was fiercely fought over. Jats and Rohillas disputed for the territory; factions fought for the throne, and the Afghan king, Ahmad Shah Abdali, periodically descended on the capital.

...

For the Marathas, probably the two most significant events of the whole chaotic period in Delhi were a treaty in 1752, which made them protector of the Mughal throne (and gave them the right to

collect chauth in the Punjab), and the civil war of 1753, by which the Maratha nominee ended up on the Mughal throne.- [60]

Text extracted from URL 10:

The culture of Gujarat is both ancient, new, and modern.

In many Gujarati communities, the engagement ceremony is known as 'Gol Dhana', which does not include a ring ceremony. (in Gujarati script, ગોળ-ધણા),[1] which literally means "Jaggery and Coriander seeds" and refers to the practice of distributing a small amount of jaggery mixed with coriander seeds.

Marriage is a highly auspicious occasion in Indian culture. According to the Vedas, the Hindu scriptures, marriage is a sacred lifelong commitment between a man and a woman. It is considered to be the strongest of all social bonds and is the initiation into a lifetime of togetherness.

The Vedic wedding ceremony consists of prayers, invocations, and vows recited in Sanskrit, the most ancient surviving language. The Vedic wedding ceremony dates back to over five thousand years and is performed under a decorated canopy, the mandap. The four pillars that surround the mandap represent the parents of the bride and groom. This signifies the important part they have played in raising their children to become the responsible adults they are today. The ceremony is performed before a sacred fire, or agniaa, which is the eternal witness of the marriage, and all vows are taken.

Every Hindu ceremony begins with the worship of Lord Ganesha, the deity of peace and wisdom. This is done so people can find strength within themselves to remove any obstacles that may arise.

The original form of a barat is a procession from the groom's house to the bride's house for the wedding ceremony. The wedding day begins with the Mangal Vadya, the playing of Shehnai (a traditional wind instrument) and Dhol (Indian drum).

The groom and his family are greeted at the doors of the mandir (temple) by the bride's parents and family. The mother of the bride then greets and welcomes the groom and his family into her own family. She blesses the groom by placing a tilak (red dot) on his forehead. The groom is then led to the mandap, where the wedding ceremony will take place.

While the groom is sitting under the mandap, the madhuparka is performed where his feet are washed by the bride's parents. He is then offered panchamrut, a drink composed of milk, yogurt, ghee, honey, and sugar.

The bride accepts her change of status from an unmarried woman to a wife by spreading turmeric powder on her hands. Kanya Daan is performed by the father (or uncle or guardian) of the bride in the presence of a large gathering that is invited to witness the wedding.

The bride and the groom face each other, and the priest ties their garments (the bride's saree to the groom's shirt) in a knot, symbolizing the sacred union—the bride and the groom garland each other and exchange the rings. Next, the nuptial fire, symbolizing the divine witness, and the sanctifier of the sacrament, is installed and worshipped.

Both the bride and the groom grasp their hands together and pray to God for His blessings. Samagree, consisting of crushed sandalwood, herbs, sugar, rice, ghee (clarified butter), and twigs, is offered into the sacred fire to seek God's blessings for the couple.

The groom holds the bride by the hand, and both walk four times around the sacred fire. Both offer oblations and recite appropriate Vedic hymns to Gods for prosperity, good fortune, and conjugal fidelity. They touch each other's hearts and pray for the union of their hearts and minds.

This is the most important rite of the entire ceremony. Here the bride and the groom take seven steps together around the sacred fire (Agni) and make the following seven promises to each other:

As per the Vedic rituals, the groom sings, "With God as our guide, let us take":

The Satapadi ceremony concludes with a prayer that the union is indissoluble. At the end of this ceremony, the groom and the bride become husband and wife.

The Mangal Sutra Dharana is the tying of the thread containing the marks of the Vishnu or Shiva on the neck of the bride by the groom.

The groom places sindoor (red powder) on the bride's hair, symbolizing her as a married woman.

Aashirvaad (Blessing)

The groom's parents bless the couple and offer clothes or flowers to the bride, symbolizing her joining the groom's family. All those assembled at the ceremony shower flowers on the couple and blessed them completing the marriage.

Kanya Viday;- The Bride is taking ashirwad from his relatives (Father, mother, brother, sister, Mamas and all the relatives), the most difficult moments for Father, who is now handing over his daughter to the groom's Family forever with very much emotional posture, it's very a difficult time, everyone is with tears in their eyes, that's why its called Vasmi Viday.

The traditional folk dance forms include Garba, Dandiya Raas, Tippani, Padhar, Sidi, and Dangi.

Dandiya Raas is a romantic, very energetic, colourful, and playful dance originating in the state of Gujarat. Its roots lay from the days of Lord Krishna, who played raas on the shores of Yamuna river on a moonlit night with his beloved Gopis.

Men and women dressed in colorful clothes dance in two concentric circles - one moving clockwise, one moving counter-clockwise. Men and women carry two bamboo sticks called dandiyas in their hands. In addition to footwork, one of the most enjoyable parts of this dance is the creative use of dandiyas.

The song sung on occasion is essentially an amorous one. Raas is a very playful dance providing the opportunity for acting and exchanging messages through eye contact. It is no wonder that many romances bloom during Navratri and hence the popularity of the dance among the younger generation.

Garba is a very graceful form of dance mainly performed by females in a circular formation. It is in reverences of goddess Ambaji. The basics of the dance are singing and clapping rhythmically while going around the goddess. Today many modifications are prevalent to the basic pattern, and even men are free to join in. Women are dressed in exquisitely embroidered, set in mirrors cholis, ghaghra, and bandhani dupattas! Extensive jewelry in the form of necklaces, bracelets and anklets are also worn. The typical dress code of men is kehediya, chudidhar, and a turban.

Originally men used to perform this dance. It was on the way back from a battle that the victorious army would start dancing to couplets and amorous songs sung by the Charanswar, or the narrators who used to go to the front to raise the spirit during the battle by singing songs of valour. The dance was characteristic for its forceful movements, which would fascinate viewers. Today, however, even females participate in the dance.

It is performed by a rural community living around Nal Lake. In it, performers simulate the rhythmic movements of roving mariners and the undulating sea waves. The Bhil tribes, who live close to border tracts, and the Adivasis of Dangs district, have particularly lively folk dances.

The traditional forms of theatre include Bhavai and Akhyana.

Before the arrival of talkies, there were several silent films that were closely related to Gujarati people and culture. Many film directors, producers, and actors who are associated with silent films were Gujarati and Parsi. There were twenty leading film companies and studios owned by Gujaratis between 1913 and 1931. They were mostly located in Bombay (now Mumbai). There were at least forty-four leading Gujarati directors during this period.[2]

The Gujarati cinema dates back to 9 April 1932, when the first Gujarati film Narsinh Mehta was released.[2][3] Leeludi Dharti (1968) was the first colour film of Gujarati cinema.[4] After flourishing through the 1960s to 1980s, the industry saw a decline. The industry is revived in recent times. The film industry has produced more than one thousand films since its inception.[5] In 2005, the Government of Gujarat announced a 100% entertainment tax exemption for Gujarati films.[6]

Gujarati cinema is chiefly based on scripts from mythology to history and social to political. Since its origin, Gujarati cinema has experimented with stories and issues from Indian society. The films are generally targeted at the rural audience but after recent revival also caters audience with urban subjects.[2]

Gujarat is inhabited by people belonging to varied castes, religions, and communities. Due to that, a number of varied languages are spoken in the state. The official language of the state is Gujarati. It is an Indo-Aryan language derived from Sanskrit. Gujarati is the 26th-most widely spoken language in the world. In addition, it has eleven dialects, spoken in different parts of the state.

Gujarat shares its borders with the states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. Therefore, there is a small population that speaks the respective languages of the different states also, namely Marwari, Hindi, and Marathi. Apart from this, Urdu and Sindhi are also spoken in Gujarat. Kutch is one of the important areas in the state. It has an independent identity and is growing popular among tourists. The mother tongue of the people of Kutch is Kachchi. It is an important language of the region.

Another part of Gujarat is Saurashtra, which is also referred to as West Gujarat or Kathiyawad. The mother tongue of these people is Kathiyawadi Gujarati which is spoken in seven different districts in Saurashtra. Rajkot is the financial capital of Saurashtra. Saurashtra is also known for giving many saints and great men like Mahatma Gandhi. The young population migrated to different cities like Ahmedabad, Surat, and Vadodara due to employment problems.

Gujarati literature's history may be traced to 1000 AD. Since then, literature has flourished till date. Well-known laureates of Gujarati literature are Hemchandracharya, Narsinh Mehta, Mirabai, Akho, Premanand Bhatt, Shamal Bhatt, Dayaram, Dalpatram, Narmad, Govardhanram Tripathi, Mahatma Gandhi, K. M. Munshi, Umashankar Joshi, Suresh Joshi, Pannalal Patel, and Rajendra Keshavlal Shah .

Kavi Kant and Kalapi are famous Gujarati poets.

Gujarat Vidhya Sabha, Gujarat Sahitya Sabha, and Gujarati Sahitya Parishad are Ahmedabad based literary institutions promoting the spread of Gujarati literature. Saraswatichandra is a landmark novel by Govardhanram Tripathi. Writers like Suresh Dalal, Jyotindra Dave, Tarak Mehta, Harkisan Mehta, Chandrakant Bakshi, Vinod Bhatt, Kanti Bhatt, Makarand Dave, and Varsha Adalja have influenced Gujarati thinkers.

A huge contribution to Gujarati language literature came from the Swaminarayan paramhanso, like Bramhanand, Premanand, with prose like Vachanamrut and poetry in the form of bhajans.

Gujarati theatre owes a lot to bhavai. Bhavai is a musical performance of stage plays. Ketan Mehta and Sanjay Leela Bhansali explored the artistic use of bhavai in films such as Bhavni Bhavai, Oh Darling! Yeh Hai India! and Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam. Dayro (gathering) involves singing and conversation, reflecting on human nature.

In Gujarat, there has been several great religious figures. Sant Dadu Dayal (1554–1660) a saint-poet and a major Bhakti figure from Ahmedabad, treated equally both Rama as names of God and became popular in Northern India. He wrote, "The illusion of Rama hath been dispelled by my mind; since I see Thee in all." [7]

Gujarat is also the home of Gandhi, who preached unity between all religions and became a worldwide figure for peaceful struggle against tyranny.

Gujarat is a part of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization. Many Hindu religious traditions developed in Gujarat.

Gujarat is the birthplace of Lord Shiva's Avatar Lakulisa (Staff-God). He established the Pasupata Shaivite tradition (one of the six major schools of Shaivism) in 2 A.D. or 3 A.D. According to some traditions he was born in Kayarohana or Kayavatara in Saurashtra while other traditions hold that it was Karavana, in the modern-day town of Dabhoi Taluka near Baroda, [8] another that it was Ulkapuri (modern Avakhal) [9] and another that it was in Braoch or Bharuch. [10] From Gujarat, it spread north to Kashmir, [11] South to Tamil Nadu, [12] East to Nepal [13] (where the Pashupatinath Temple stills exist popularly.)

The Bhakti movement was very popular in Gujarat, where devotees of both Islam and Hinduism focused on the worship of God, trying to rid any separations based on faith in God.

Swami Chakradhara was another major figure of the Bhakti movement, born in Gujarat in 1194 A.D. [14] and he is believed to be the avatar of Vishnu. Chakradhar Swami established the Mahanubhava, Vaishnavite sect, which spread to Maharashtra as well. The sect still exists today in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Sant Kilha was another Vaishnavite saint of Gujarat born to a Subedar (army man) father. [15] He was the disciple of Krishnasdas (of Jaipur) and became his successor at the seat of Galta - Kilha's branch became known as the "Tapasa branch". [16] Besides Ram Bhakti (devotion to Lord Rama), he was also inclined towards yog-sadhana and this is why he was made acharya of the Galta Gaddi. [17] He is said to be the founder of the Khati sect. [18]

Jalaram, a devotee of Lord Rama is another popular figure. Jalarama's birthday is still celebrated by Gujarati (in Gujarat and abroad) as Jalaram Jayanti.

Swami Sahajanand, better known as Swaminarayan settled in Gujarat from Uttar Pradesh. Today the Swaminarayan movement is very large in Gujarat.

Gujarat is home to one of the largest Jain communities in India.

Shrimad Rajchandra was a Jain poet, philosopher, scholar, and reformer, best known for his teachings on Jainism and as a spiritual guide of Mahatma Gandhi.

Gandhi's mother was also Jain.[citation needed]

Zoroastrianism first arrived in Gujarat around 9th century AD. Parsis migrated from Greater Iran to Gujarat and Sindh between the 8th and 10th century CE to avoid the persecution of Zoroastrians following the Muslim conquest of Persia. Since then, the Zoroastrians have flourished in the present day Gujarat and Mumbai.

The holy cities of Parsis are also located in Gujarat, like Udvada, their primary site.

Arrival in Gujarat: According to the Qissa-i Sanjan, the only existing account of the early years of Zoroastrian refugees in India composed at least six centuries after their tentative date of arrival, the first group of immigrants originated from Greater Khorasan.[18] This historical region of Central Asia is in part in northeastern Iran, where, it constitutes modern Khorasan Province, part of western/northern Afghanistan, and in part in three Central-Asian republics, namely Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. According to the Qissa, the immigrants were granted permission to stay by the local ruler, Jadi Rana, on the condition that they adopt the local language (Gujarati), that their women adopt local dress (the sari), and that they henceforth cease to bear arms.[19] The refugees accepted the conditions and founded the settlement of Sanjan, which is said to have been named after the city of their origin (Sanjan, near Merv, modern Turkmenistan).[18] This first group was followed by a second group from Greater Khorasan within five years of the first, and this time having religious implements with them (the alat). In addition to these Khorasanis or Kohistanis "mountain folk", as the two initial groups are said to have been initially called,[20] at least one other group is said to have come overland from Sari, Iran.[21]

This religion founded by Zarathustra Spitma (better known as "Zoroaster") resembles Hinduism in many ways (although differing as a strict monotheism too.)

For example, in this religion, the cow is very sacred. In the 9th chapter of the Vendidad of the Avesta, the purificatory power of cow urine is dilated upon.[19] It is declared to be a panacea for all bodily and moral evils. It is drunk as well as applied externally as is done by Hindus also.[19] The urine of the bull, called "nirang," is brought to the house of an orthodox Parsi every morning and is (like cow milk) applied to the face, hands, and feet.[19]

The Zoroastrians—a.k.a. Parsi and Irani, due to their ancient heritage—entered Gujarat from the Persian Empire.

They have many businesses in India and are economically very powerful.

The term "Gujarati Muslim" is usually used to signify an Indian Muslim from the State of Gujarat who speaks the Gujarati language as a mother-tongue (first language) and follows certain customs different from the rest of Indian Muslims.

Gujarat was one of the first places the Muslims came to India. King Arjun of Gujarat permitted a Muslim trader from Ormuz to build a mosque in Gujarat and even paid for the expenses of a certain

Shiite festival. (p. 185 An Advanced History of India By Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Kalikinkar Datta, Hemchandra Raychaudhuri)

The Sufi saints are very popular in Gujarat. Shaykh Makhu was a Sufi saint of the Shattari lineage (p. 185 An Advanced History of India By Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Kalikinkar Datta, Hemchandra Raychaudhuri). Since Gujarat is situated on the western border of India, there was a direct interaction with the people of Arabia and Persia. Many Gujarati Saints and Sufis became famous. Among them, the names of Sheikh Ganjul lim (1381), Syed Burhanuddin (1411), and Sheikh Wajihuddin Alvi are well known.[20]

Gujarati Muslims are very prominent in industry and sports, and there is a very large Gujarati Muslim community in Mumbai. Several Gujarati Muslim communities are:

There are many famous Gujarati Muslims:

Around more than a 1000 festivals are celebrated in Gujarat—the state is known as the land of fairs and festivals. Some of these fairs and festivals are as follows:

The Bhavnath Mahadev Temple, situated at the foot of Mount Girnar in the city of Junagadh, is the site of the Bhavnath Mahadev fair held for five days in February, during the festival of Mahashivratri. The Mahapuja of Lord Shiva takes place at midnight in this temple on the 14th day of the dark half of the month of Magh. When the puja (prayer ceremony), Naga Bavas (naked sages) living nearby move towards the fair seated on elephants, holding flags and blowing conch shells. It is firmly believed that Lord Shiva himself visits the shrine on this occasion. Visitors are served free meals by the organizers. Special stalls sell idols, rosaries, or holy beads (brought by vendors from Ayodhya and Mathura), utensils of brass and copper, sweets, and fruits. The Bhavnath Mahadev Temple is surrounded by many equally ancient and holy places.

Dangs Darbar is the name of the annual fair held every year in Ahwa, the most important town in the Dangs, a few days before Holi. The Dangs is one of the most delightful districts of Gujarat and is located high in the Saputara hills, the original home of the adivasis, the tribal population of Gujarat. The name "Darbar" dates back to the time of the British, when a darbar of Rajas and Naiks of neighbouring area used to assemble there. Today it is called Jamabandi Darbar, and the District Collector officiates at it. Thousands of tribal people flock to Ahwa from all over the district, dressed in bright colours, sounding the Shehnai, and beating their drums. Folk dances, dramas, and songs enliven the air during the festival.

This fair, one of the largest purely Adivasi (tribal) fairs, is attended by around 60,000 to 70,000 tribal people. It takes place every year in the village of Gunbhakhari in Sabarkantha district, very near the borders of Rajasthan. It is held a fortnight after Holi, the festival of colours. The site of the fair is attractive as the temple overlooks the rivers Sabarmati, Akul, and Vyakul. The name of the fair is derived from Chitrangada and Vichitraviraya, the sons of King Shantanu, who are believed to have lived there and been cured of diseases which afflicted them. The fair attracts large numbers of Bhils (tribals) who come from all the surrounding districts using every imaginable form of transport. The Garasis and Bhil tribals dress in their customary colourful costumes. The costume of the men generally consists of a blue shirt, dhoti, and a red or saffron turban. Women don ghaghra (embroidered skirts), which have a circumference of as much as 20 yards (18 m) and are covered from head to foot with ornate and heavy silver jewellery. They use liquid kumkum (vermilion) to colour their cheeks and lips a brilliant red, while their eyes are outlined with kaji (kohl). Every group that comes to the fair carries its own drum making the atmosphere come alive with the incessant beat of numerous drums. The women sing folk songs, and everyone dances. The dancing and

drumming continue for hours until everyone is exhausted. Over a hundred stalls hold food and drink and sweets of various kinds. Silver ornaments can be bought, and household articles, as well. Here, as in other fairs, there is a giant wheel and a merry-go-round which never ceases to spin.

Around 40 km from Bhuj, it is known for the samadhi of the famous saint Mekran Dada who served the community with great love and dedication and won their devotion. He was supposed to be the incarnation of Lakshmanji. A large fair is held on Magh Vad when a large number of Dada's followers from different parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan come to the Samadhi and participate in religious rituals.

The small hamlet of Tarnetar, about 75 kilometers from Rajkot, is the site for one of Gujarat's most well-known annual fairs, held here during the first week of Bhadrapad (September–October). This fair is primarily a "marriage mart" or "Swayamvar" for the tribal youth of today who still visit Tarnetar, to find them a suitable bride. The tribal youth elegantly dressed in colourful dhotis, waistcoats, and eye-catching turbans come to be chosen by village belles dressed in colourful finery. Like all important tribal fairs, it is attended by tribes from the adjoining areas who indulge in dancing, competitive sports, and other such forms of entertainment. There are over 300 stalls selling food, refreshments, exhibiting embroidery and cattle shows. The bachelors are usually identified by their large, colourful embroidered umbrellas and their distinctive hairstyles. These umbrellas, which have become emblems of the fair, are embroidered by the tribal youth for over a year. The fair is held around the Trinetrishwar Temple, which was dedicated to the three-eyed Lord Shiva and built at the beginning of the century. There is a kund (reservoir) here, and it is popularly believed that a dip in its waters is as holy as a dip in the sacred River Ganges. The reservoir is also known as papanshu (the destroyer of sins).

This fair is held every year at Vautha where two rivers, the Sabarmati and the Vatrak, meet. Like most fair sites in India, this also has both mythological and current religious associations. The Vautha Mela site is 3 square miles (7.8 km²) in the area. Legends hold that Kartik Swami or Kartikeya, the son of Lord Shiva, visited the site. This is why the fair is held during Kartika Purnima, the full moon night of the month of Kartik, corresponding to November. The site, also known as Saptasangam, is at the confluence of seven rivers. The most important Shiva temple here is the temple of Siddhanath.

What is most significant about this fair is that it is the only major animal trading fair in Gujarat and is on par with the famous camel fair at Pushkar, Rajasthan. However, the only animals traded here are donkeys. About 4,000 donkeys are brought every year for sale, usually by Vanjara (gypsy) traders. The pilgrims who visit Vautha during the fair are from several communities and include farmers, labourers, and people belonging to several castes.

The Shamlaji Melo, also called the Kartik Purnima fair, is held in the month of November every year and lasts for about two weeks. It is attended by almost two hundred thousand people from adjoining districts and even from Rajasthan. Devotees belong to various castes and communities, including the Garasias and Bhils throng to this festival. These pilgrims come in groups, singing devotional songs and carrying religious banners to have a darshan (worship) of the deity at the Shamlaji Temple. The Shamlaji Temple is a renowned Vaishnav Shrine, and the deity housed here is known by various names included Gadadhar (bearer of the mace) and Shaksi Gopal. The fair is also popular with the tribal people of the area, particularly the Bhils, who revere Shamlaji, the deity they refer to as "Kalio Bavji", the dark divinity. The temple is of great archaeological significance as it was built in the 11th century. Apart from a darshan of the deity in the temple, the pilgrims consider a bath in the river Meshwo essential.

The Venkatarreddy Tarnetar Fair is one of the most happening events in Gujarat and is held at the Temple of Shiva or Trinetreshwar (three-eyed god), popularly known as Tarnetar. Popular belief associates the village with the Swayamwar (marriage) of Draupadi after Arjun performed the Mastsyavedh, an unparalleled feat of archery. Villagers from all over the state, dressed in their brilliant traditional costumes and exquisite jewelry, flock to Tarnetar. A veritable feast for the eyes is the Rasada, a captivating folk dance performed by hundreds of women moving gracefully in a single circle, dancing gaily to the accompaniment of four drums and jodja pava (double flutes). It is in district Surendranagar.

The Kutch Mahotsava, is usually organized during the end of February and the beginning of March. The Kutch region in Gujarat abounds with splendid beaches, fascinating wildlife, and beautiful palaces and monuments.

The Sanskruti Kunj Festival shows the different cultures of the states of India. It is organized in the winter session in the capital city, Gandhinagar. All the competitors of India come during this fair and show their state's culture & dance.

It is a 10-day long festival, and this located on the bank of river Sabarmati over 12-hector landscaped land. Timing for Sanskruti Kunj between 2.00 pm to 10.00 pm and every evening from 7.30 pm, the folk song and dance performances would be presented.

The Shamlaji shrine and the site boast of an ancient and glorious heritage. Thousands of tribal people flock to the Shamlaji fair. (Shamlaji is also known as Gadadhar Dev, whose Name is also reflected in the Thousand Name of Lord Vishnu Also known as Vihnu Sahastra Nama, who Created Bhrahma, and Bhrahma Created This World. Those who had crossed Bhrahma Is known as Parbhrahma, who claim Himself as Allah but He also does not know that in Lord Vishnu, who seems to be idle in whom Thousands of Universe takes birth every moment and get destroyed every moment. Still, he fulfills the desire of Bhakta. Bhakta associates or joins himself with Lord Vishnu, who is also known as Shree Krishna. Famous Saint Narsimh Mehta write Hundi on the name of Shmalia Sheth in the time of his distress, a type of promissory note which was honored by Shree Krishna. Shri Narsimh Mehta wrote poetry in the honor of Shri Krishna that became Mahatma Gandhi's prayer song.

Situated at the confluence of two rivers near Ahmedabad, the site attracts people of all communities. Animals, particularly donkeys and camels, are sold in large numbers during this fair.

Other than nationally observed festivals, some festivities are specific to Gujarat.

The Kite Flying Festival takes place in mid-January and marks the time when the sun's direct rays reach the Tropic of Capricorn after the winter solstice. It is celebrated with much folk music, dance and kite flying. People of Gujarat gather on terraces to fly kites of various colours to celebrate Makar Sakranti or Uttarayana, the welcome to the sun after the cold winter months. Glass-strengthened threads of the Indian fighter kites are matched against each other in the air — the kite fighter who cuts the other thread is the victor. At night, kites with Chinese lanterns are flown and held aloft. Food such as Undhiya, sugar cane juice, and local sweets is typically served to celebrate the day.

Resting on a knoll in the village of Modhera are the ruins of the 11th-century Sun Temple. The outer walls of the temple are covered with sculptures in which the figures of Surya, the sun god, are prominent. The Sun Temple is the site of an annual festival of Indian classical dances organized by the Tourism Corporation of Gujarat. The idea is to present classical dance forms in the atmosphere they were originally presented in.

The 'Kutch Festival' or the 'Rann festival' is celebrated at the time of the Shiv Ratri in February/ March. The centre of the festival is Bhuj in Kutch. It has crafts, fairs, and folk dances and music and cultural shows, all organized by the Gujarat Tourism. Tours are also conducted out to the ruins of Dhola Vera, a city that was once a part of the Indus Valley civilization.

The full moon of Bhadrapad is one of the four most important festival days of the year when farmers and agriculturists come to Ambaji, a place that derives its name from Goddess Ambaji, whose shrine is located there. On this occasion, a large fair is organized on full moon days. In the evening, performances of Bhavai, the folk drama of the state are held, and Garba programmes are organized. The devout attend readings of the Saptashati, the seven hundred verses in praise of the goddess, and visit the temple for a darshan (worship) of her. The Ambaji shrine is the principal shrine of the goddess in Gujarat, and its origins are still unknown. The Temple of Ambaji is recognized as one of the original Shakti Pithas (religious texts) where, according to the ancient Scriptures, the heart of the goddess Ambaji fell to earth when her body was dismembered. A triangular Vishwa Yantra, inscribed with figures and the syllable 'Shree' in the centre, represents the deity. There is no idol, which testifies the temple's antiquity. Idol worship became popular much later.

The food served in the South of Gujarat is influenced by the cuisine of Maharashtra. In South Gujarat, people usually consume Jowar, whereas, in Saurashtra and North Gujarat, the diet consists mainly of Bajra and Maize. In Baroda, you will find a blend of all tastes due to its location. In earlier times, wheat was consumed only by the elite and by the middle class during the festive season. With changing time, things have changed. Today, wheat forms an integral part of the Gujarati platter and is used in a number of ways.

Sweets

Snacks

Pulses (Dals)Kadhi

Vegetables

The chewing of the betel leaf, known as paan in Gujarati, is part of many Asian cultures, especially those of China and Vietnam. Preparation techniques vary from using hands to feet to help in grinding and extracting exotic flavours. The nut is either slivered or grated, often flavored with spices according to local tradition and usually wrapped in a betel leaf (betel leaf comes from the betel pepper plant, Piper betle, which is not botanically related to the betel palm, Areca catechu), along with some lime (calcium oxide or calcium hydroxide) to better extract the alkaloids. Some people also chew tobacco, marijuana, or cocaine along with betel nut. After about 20 minutes of chewing, the fibrous residue which remains of the nut is spat out onto the street, where it remains visible due to its characteristic bright red color.

In Gujarat, betel (paan) chewing is as popular as tobacco smoking is global. Paan is often served wrapped in a betel leaf.

In Gujarat and the rest of India, paan has played an important part in social life and customs for hundreds of years. In the courts of Medieval Rulers, the betel leaf or paan was offered as part of hospitality, friendship, and love. Kings also relished betel leaves after sex.[citation needed]

In Gujarat, an annual "Khemcho Majama" competition is held where the participants are rewarded based on their thook-cho art.[clarification needed What on earth does this mean?]

The different types of paans are:

Using paan with tobacco significantly increases the risk of mouth cancers. Even without tobacco, the use of paan has been associated with changes in the lining of the mouth that increase the risk of cancer of the mouth.

Text extracted from URL 11:

Gujarat (/ˌɡʊdʒəˈrɑːt/ GUUJ-ə-RAHT, Gujarati: [ˈɡudʒəɾɑt̪] ⓘ) is a state along the western coast of India. Its coastline of about 1,600 km (990 mi) is the longest in the country, most of which lies on the Kathiawar peninsula. Gujarat is the fifth-largest Indian state by area, covering some 196,024 km² (75,685 sq mi); and the ninth-most populous state, with a population of 60.4 million in 2011. It is bordered by Rajasthan to the northeast, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu to the south, Maharashtra to the southeast, Madhya Pradesh to the east, and the Arabian Sea and the Pakistani province of Sindh to the west. Gujarat's capital city is Gandhinagar, while its largest city is Ahmedabad.[13] The Gujaratis are indigenous to the state and their language, Gujarati, is the state's official language.

The state encompasses 23 sites of the ancient Indus Valley civilisation (more than any other state). The most important sites are Lothal (the world's first dry dock), Dholavira (the fifth largest site), and Gola Dhoro (where 5 uncommon seals were found). Lothal is believed to have been one of the world's first seaports.[14] Gujarat's coastal cities, chiefly Bharuch and Khambhat,[15] served as ports and trading centres in the Maurya and Gupta empires and during the succession of royal Saka dynasties in the Western Satraps era.[16][17]

Along with Bihar, Mizoram and Nagaland, Gujarat is one of four Indian states to prohibit the sale of alcohol.[18] The Gir Forest National Park in Gujarat is home to the only wild population of the Asiatic lion in the world.[19]

The economy of Gujarat is the fourth-largest in India, with a gross state domestic product (GSDP) of ₹16.55 trillion (equivalent to ₹19 trillion or US\$230 billion in 2023) and has the country's 10th-highest GSDP per capita of ₹215,000 (US\$2,700).[6] Gujarat has the highest exports of all states, accounting for around one-third of national exports.[20] It ranks 21st among Indian states and union territories in human development index.[21] Gujarat is regarded as one of the most industrialised states and has a low unemployment rate,[22]

but the state ranks poorly on some social indicators and is at times affected by religious violence.[23]

Gujarat is derived from the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty, who ruled Gujarat in the 8th and 9th centuries CE.[24][25][26][27] Parts of modern Rajasthan and Gujarat have been known as Gurjarat or Gurjarabhumi for centuries before the Mughal period.[28]

Gujarat was one of the main central areas of the Indus Valley civilisation, which is centred primarily in modern Pakistan.[29] It contains ancient metropolitan cities from the Indus Valley such as Lothal, Dholavira and Gola Dhoro.[30] The ancient city of Lothal was where India's first port was established.[14] The ancient city of Dholavira is one of the largest and most prominent archaeological sites in India, belonging to the Indus Valley civilisation. The most recent discovery was Gola Dhoro. Altogether, about fifty Indus Valley settlement ruins have been discovered in Gujarat.[31]

The ancient history of Gujarat was enriched by the commercial activities of its inhabitants. There is clear historical evidence of trade and commerce ties with Egypt, Bahrain and Sumer in the Persian Gulf during the time period of 1000 to 750 BCE.[31][33] There was a succession of various Indian empires such as the Mauryan dynasty, Western Satraps, Satavahana dynasty, Gupta Empire, Chalukya dynasty, Rashtrakuta Empire, Pala Empire and Gurjara-Pratihara Empire, as well as the Maitrakas and then the Chaulukyas.

The early history of Gujarat includes the imperial grandeur of Chandragupta Maurya who conquered a number of earlier states in what is now Gujarat. Pushyagupta, a Vaishya, was appointed the governor of Saurashtra by the Mauryan regime. He ruled Girinagar (modern-day Junagadh) (322 BCE to 294 BCE) and built a dam on the Sudarshan lake. Emperor Ashoka the Great, the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, not only ordered his edicts engraved in the rock at Junagadh, but also asked Governor Tusherpha to cut canals from the lake where an earlier Indian governor had built a dam. Between the decline of Mauryan power and Saurashtra coming under the sway of the Samprati Mauryas of Ujjain, there was an Indo-Greek defeat in Gujarat of Demetrius. In 16th century manuscripts, there is an apocryphal story of a merchant of King Gondophares landing in Gujarat with Apostle Thomas. The incident of the cup-bearer torn apart by a lion might indicate that the port city described is in Gujarat.[34][35]

For nearly 300 years from the start of the 1st century CE, Saka rulers played a prominent part in Gujarat's history. The weather-beaten rock at Junagadh gives a glimpse of the ruler Rudradaman I (100 CE) of the Saka satraps known as Western Satraps, or Kshatrapas. Mahakshatrap Rudradaman I founded the Kardamaka dynasty which ruled from Anupa on the banks of the Narmada up to the Aparanta region bordering Punjab. In Gujarat, several battles were fought between the Indian dynasties such as the Satavahana dynasty and the Western Satraps. The greatest and the mightiest ruler of the Satavahana dynasty was Gautamiputra Satakarni who defeated the Western Satraps and conquered some parts of Gujarat in the 2nd century CE.[36]

The Kshatrapa dynasty was replaced by the Gupta Empire with the conquest of Gujarat by Chandragupta Vikramaditya. Vikramaditya's successor Skandagupta left an inscription (450 CE) on a rock at Junagadh which gives details of the governor's repairs to the embankment surrounding Sudarshan lake after it was damaged by floods. The Anarta and Saurashtra regions were both parts of the Gupta empire. Towards the middle of the 5th century, the Gupta empire went into decline. Senapati Bhatarka, the general of the Guptas, took advantage of the situation and in 470 set up what came to be known as the Maitraka state. He shifted his capital from Giringer to Valabhi, near Bhavnagar, on Saurashtra's east coast. The Maitrakas of Vallabhi became very powerful with their rule prevailing over large parts of Gujarat and adjoining Malwa. A university was set up by the Maitrakas, which came to be known far and wide for its scholastic pursuits and was compared with the noted Nalanda University. It was during the rule of Dhruvasena Maitrak that Chinese philosopher-traveler Xuanzang/ I Tsing visited in 640 along the Silk Road.[38]

Gujarat was known to the ancient Greeks and was familiar with other Western centers of civilisation through the end of the European Middle Ages. The oldest written record of Gujarat's 2,000-year maritime history is documented in a Greek book titled *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea: Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean* by a Merchant of the First Century.[39][40]

In the early 8th century, the Arabs of the Umayyad Caliphate established an empire in the name of the rising religion of Islam, which stretched from Spain in the west to Afghanistan and modern-day Pakistan in the east. Al-Junaid, the successor of Qasim, finally subdued the Hindu resistance within Sindh and established a secure base. The Arab rulers tried to expand their empire southeast, which

culminated in the Caliphate campaigns in India fought in 730; they were defeated and expelled west of the Indus river, probably by a coalition of the Indian rulers Nagabhata I of the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty, Vikramaditya II of the Chalukya dynasty and Bappa Rawal of the Guhila dynasty. After this victory, the Arab invaders were driven out of Gujarat. General Pulakeshin, a Chalukya prince of Lata, received the title Avanijanashraya (refuge of the people of the earth) and honorific of "Repeller of the unrepellable" by the Chalukya emperor Vikramaditya II for his victory at the battle at Navsari, where the Arab troops suffered a crushing defeat.[41]

In the late 8th century, the Kannauj Triangle period started. The three major Indian dynasties – the northwestern Indian Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty, the southern Indian Rashtrakuta dynasty and the eastern Indian Pala Empire – dominated India from the 8th to 10th centuries. During this period the northern part of Gujarat was ruled by the northern Indian Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty and the southern part of Gujarat was ruled by the southern Indian Rashtrakuta dynasty.[42] However, the earliest epigraphical records of the Gurjars of Broach attest that the royal bloodline of the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty of Dadda I, II and III (650–750) ruled south Gujarat.[43] Southern Gujarat was ruled by the Indian Rashtrakuta dynasty until it was captured by the Indian ruler Tailapa II of the Western Chalukya Empire.[44]

Zoroastrians from Greater Iran migrated to the western borders of India (Gujarat and Sindh) during the 8th or 10th century,[45] to avoid persecution by Muslim invaders who were in the process of conquering Iran. The descendants of those Zoroastrian refugees came to be known as the Parsi.[46][47][48][49]

Subsequently, Lāṭa in southern Gujarat was ruled by the Rashtrakuta dynasty until it was captured by the Western Chalukya ruler Tailapa II.[44][50]

The Chaulukya dynasty[51] ruled Gujarat from c. 960 to 1243. Gujarat was a major center of Indian Ocean trade, and their capital at Anhilwara (Patan) was one of the largest cities in India, with a population estimated at 100,000 in the year 1000. After 1243, the Solankis lost control of Gujarat to their feudatories, of whom the Vaghela chiefs of Dholka came to dominate Gujarat. In 1292 the Vaghelas became tributaries of the Yadava dynasty of Devagiri in the Deccan. Karandev of the Vaghela dynasty was the last Hindu ruler of Gujarat. He was defeated and overthrown by the superior forces of Alauddin Khalji from Delhi in 1297. With his defeat, Gujarat became part of the Delhi Sultanate, and the Rajput hold over Gujarat would never be restored.

Fragments of printed cotton from Gujarat have been discovered in Egypt, providing evidence for medieval trade in the western Indian Ocean.[52] These fragments represent the Indian cotton traded in Egypt during the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk periods, from the tenth to sixteenth centuries. Similar cotton was also traded as far east as Indonesia.[52]

After the Ghori had assumed a position of Muslim supremacy over North India, Qutbuddin Aibak attempted to conquer Gujarat and annex it to his empire in 1197, but failed in his ambitions.[53] An independent Muslim community continued to flourish in Gujarat for the next hundred years, championed by Arab merchants settling along the western coast. From 1297 to 1300, Alauddin Khalji, the Turko-Afghan Sultan of Delhi, destroyed the Hindu metropolis of Anhilwara and incorporated Gujarat into the Delhi Sultanate. After Timur sacked Delhi at the end of the 14th century, weakening the Sultanate, Gujarat's Muslim Khatri governor Zafar Khan Muzaffar (Muzaffar Shah I) asserted his independence, and his son, Sultan Ahmed Shah (ruled 1411–1442), established Ahmedabad as the capital. Khambhat eclipsed Bharuch as Gujarat's most important trade port. Gujarat's relations with Egypt, which was then the premier Arab power in the Middle East, remained

friendly over the next century and the Egyptian scholar, Badruddin-ad-Damamimi, spent several years in Gujarat in the shade of the Sultan before proceeding to the Bahmani Sultanate on the Deccan Plateau.[54][55]

Shah e Alam, a famous Sufi saint of the Chishti order who was the descendant of Makhdoom Jahaniyan Jahangasht from Bukhara, soon arrived in a group that included Arab theologian Ibn Suwaid, several Sayyid Sufi members of the Aydarus family of Tarim in Yemen,[56] Iberian court interpreter Ali al-Andalusi from Granada,[57] and the Arab jurist Bahraq from Hadramaut who was appointed a tutor of the prince.[58] Among the illustrious names who arrived during the reign of Mahmud Begada was the philosopher Haibatullah Shah Mir from Shiraz, and the scholar intellectual Abu Fazl Ghazaruni from Persia[59][60] who tutored and adopted Abu'l-Fazl ibn Mubarak, author of the Akbarnama.[61] Later, a close alliance between the Ottoman Turks and Gujarati sultans to effectively safeguard Jeddah and the Red Sea trade from Portuguese imperialism, encouraged the existence of powerful Rumi elites within the kingdom who took the post of viziers in Gujarat keen to maintain ties with the Ottoman state.[62][63][64][65][66]

Humayun also briefly occupied the province in 1536, but fled due to the threat Bahadur Shah, the Gujarat king, imposed.[67] The Sultanate of Gujarat remained independent until 1572, when the Mughal emperor Akbar conquered it and annexed it to the Mughal Empire.[68]

The Surat port (the only Indian port facing west) then became the principal port of India during Mughal rule, gaining widespread international repute. The city of Surat, famous for its exports of silk and diamonds, had reached a par with contemporary Venice and Beijing, great mercantile cities of Europe and Asia,[69] and earned the distinguished title, Bab al-Makkah (Gate of Mecca).[16][17]

Drawn by the religious renaissance taking place under Akbar, Mohammed Ghaus moved to Gujarat and established spiritual centers for the Shattari Sufi order from Iran, founding the Ek Toda Mosque and producing such devotees as Wajihuddin Alvi of Ahmedabad whose many successors moved to Bijapur during the height of the Adil Shahi dynasty.[70] At the same time, Zoroastrian high priest Azar Kayvan who was a native of Fars, immigrated to Gujarat founding the Zoroastrian school of illuminationists which attracted key Shi'ite Muslim admirers of the Safavid philosophical revival from Isfahan.

Early 14th-century Maghrebi adventurer, Ibn Batuta, who famously visited India with his entourage, recalls in his memoirs about Cambay, one of the great emporia of the Indian Ocean that indeed:

Cambay is one of the most beautiful cities as regards the artistic architecture of its houses and the construction of its mosques. The reason is that the majority of its inhabitants are foreign merchants, who continually build their beautiful houses and wonderful mosques – an achievement in which they endeavor to surpass each other. Many of these "foreign merchants" were transient visitors, men of South Arabian and Persian Gulf ports, who migrated in and out of Cambay with the rhythm of the monsoons. But others were men with Arab or Persian patronyms whose families had settled in the town generations, even centuries earlier, intermarrying with Gujarati women, and assimilating everyday customs of the Hindu hinterland.[71]

The Age of Discovery heralded the dawn of pioneer Portuguese and Spanish long-distance travel in search of alternative trade routes to "the East Indies", moved by the trade of gold, silver and spices. In 1497, Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama is said to have discovered the Europe-to-India sea route which changed the course of history, thanks to Kutchi sailor Kanji Malam, who showed him the route from the East African coasts of Mozambique sailing onwards to Calicut off the Malabar coast in India.[72][73][74] Later, the Gujarat Sultanate allied with the Ottomans and Egyptian Mamluks naval

fleets led by governor-generals Malik Ayyaz and Amir Husain Al-Kurdi, vanquished the Portuguese in the 1508 Battle of Chaul resulting in the first Portuguese defeat at sea in the Indian Ocean.[75]

To 16th-century European observers, Gujarat was a fabulously wealthy country. The customs revenue of Gujarat alone in the early 1570s was nearly three times the total revenue of the whole Portuguese empire in Asia in 1586–87, when it was at its height.[76] Indeed, when the British arrived on the coast of Gujarat, houses in Surat already had windows of Venetian glass imported from Constantinople through the Ottoman empire.[77] In 1514, the Portuguese explorer Duarte Barbosa described the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Rander known otherwise as City of Mosques in Surat province, which gained the fame and reputation of illustrious Islamic scholars, Sufi-saints, merchants and intellectuals from all over the world:[78]

Ranel (Rander) is a good town of the Moors, built of very pretty houses and squares. It is a rich and agreeable place ... the Moors of the town trade with Malacca, Bengal, Tawasery (Tannasserim), Pegu, Martaban, and Sumatra in all sort of spices, drugs, silks, musk, benzoin and porcelain. They possess very large and fine ships and those who wish Chinese articles will find them there very completely. The Moors of this place are white and well dressed and very rich they have pretty wives, and in the furniture of these houses have china vases of many kinds, kept in glass cupboards well arranged. Their women are not secluded like other Moors, but go about the city in the day time, attending to their business with their faces uncovered as in other parts. The conquest of the Kingdom of Gujarat marked a significant event of Akbar's reign. Being the major trade gateway and departure harbour of pilgrim ships to Mecca, it gave the Mughal Empire free access to the Arabian sea and control over the rich commerce that passed through its ports. The territory and income of the empire were vastly increased.[79]

For the best part of two centuries, the independent Khatri Sultanate of Gujarat was the cynosure of its neighbours on account of its wealth and prosperity, which had long made the Gujarati merchant a familiar figure in the ports of the Indian Ocean.[54][80] Gujaratis, including Hindus and Muslims as well as the enterprising Parsi class of Zoroastrians, had been specialising in the organisation of overseas trade for many centuries, and had moved into various branches of commerce such as commodity trade, brokerage, money-changing, money-lending and banking.[81]

By the 17th century, Chavuse and Baghdadi Jews had assimilated into the social world of the Surat province, later on their descendants would give rise to the Sassoons of Bombay and the Ezras of Calcutta, and other influential Indian-Jewish figures who went on to play a philanthropical role in the commercial development of 19th-century British Crown Colony of Shanghai.[82] Spearheaded by Khoja, Bohra, Bhatiya shahbandars and Moorish nakhudas who dominated sea navigation and shipping, Gujarat's transactions with the outside world had created the legacy of an international transoceanic empire which had a vast commercial network of permanent agents stationed at all the great port cities across the Indian Ocean. These networks extended to the Philippines in the east, East Africa in the west, and via maritime and the inland caravan route to Russia in the north.[83]

Tomé Pires, a Portuguese official at Malacca, wrote of conditions during the reigns of Mahmud I and Mozaffar II:

"Cambay stretches out two arms; with her right arm she reaches toward Aden and with the other towards Malacca"[84] He also described Gujarat's active trade with Goa, the Deccan Plateau and the Malabar. His contemporary, Duarte Barbosa, describing Gujarat's maritime trade, recorded the import of horses from the Middle East and elephants from Malabar, and lists exports which included muslins, chintzes and silks, carnelian, ginger and other spices, aromatics, opium, indigo and other

substances for dyeing, cereals and legumes.[85] Persia was the destination for many of these commodities, and they were partly paid for in horses and pearls taken from Hormuz.[86] The latter item, in particular, led Sultan Sikandar Lodi of Delhi, according to Ali-Muhammad Khan, author of the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, to complain that the

support of the throne of Delhi is wheat and barley but the foundation of the realm of Gujarat is coral and pearls[87] Hence, the sultans of Gujarat possessed ample means to sustain lavish patronage of religion and the arts, to build madrasas and *kānaqāhs*, and to provide douceurs for the literati, mainly poets and historians, whose presence and praise enhanced the fame of the dynasty.[88]

Even at the time of Tomé Pires' travel to the East Indies in the early 16th century, Gujarati merchants had earned an international reputation for their commercial acumen and this encouraged the visit of merchants from Cairo, Armenia, Abyssinia, Khorasan, Shiraz, Turkestan and Guilans from Aden and Hormuz.[89] Pires noted in his *Suma Orientale*: [90]

These [people] are [like] Italians in their knowledge of and dealings in merchandise ... they are men who understand merchandise; they are so properly steeped in the sound and harmony of it, that the Gujaratees say that any offence connected with merchandise is pardonable. There are Gujaratees settled everywhere. They work some for some and others for others. They are diligent, quick men in trade. They do their accounts with fingers like ours and with our very writings. Gujarat was one of the twelve original subahs (imperial top-level provinces) established by Mughal Emperor (Badshah) Akbar, with seat at Ahmedabad, bordering on Thatta (Sindh), Ajmer, Malwa and later Ahmadnagar subahs.

Aurangzeb, the sixth Mughal Emperor, was born in Dahod, Gujarat. He was the third son and sixth child of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal.[91] At the time of his birth, his father, Shah Jahan, was then the Subahdar (governor) of Gujarat, and his grandfather, Jehangir, was the Mughal Emperor. Before he became emperor, Aurangzeb was made Subahdar of Gujarat subah as part of his training and was stationed at Ahmedabad.[citation needed]

Aurangzeb had great love for his place of birth. In 1704, he wrote a letter to his eldest son, Muhammad Azam Shah, asking him to be kind and considerate to the people of Dahod as it was his birthplace. Muhammad Azam was then the Subedar (governor) of Gujarat.[92]

In his letter, Aurangzeb wrote:[92]

My son of exalted rank, the town of Dahod, one of the dependencies of Gujarat, is the birthplace of this sinner. Please consider a regard for the inhabitants of that town as incumbent on you. When the cracks had started to develop in the edifice of the Mughal Empire in the mid-17th century, the Marathas were consolidating their power in the west, Chatrapati Shivaji, the great Maratha ruler, attacked Surat in southern Gujarat twice first in 1664 and again in 1672.[93] These attacks marked the entry of the Marathas into Gujarat. However, before the Maratha had made inroads into Gujarat, the Europeans had made their presence felt, led by the Portuguese, and followed by the Dutch and the English.

The Peshwas had established sovereignty over parts of Gujarat and collected taxes and tributes through their representatives. Damaji Rao Gaekwad and Kadam Bande divided the Peshwa territory between them,[94] with Damaji establishing the sway of Gaekwad over Gujarat and making Baroda (present day Vadodara in southern Gujarat) his capital. The ensuing internecine war among the

Marathas was fully exploited by the British, who interfered in the affairs of both Gaekwads and the Peshwas.

In Saurashtra, as elsewhere, the Marathas were met with resistance.[95] The decline of the Mughal Empire helped form larger peripheral states in Saurashtra, including Junagadh, Jamnagar, Bhavnagar and a few others, which largely resisted the Maratha incursions.[95]

In the 1600s, the Dutch, French, English and Portuguese all established bases along the western coast of the region. Portugal was the first European power to arrive in Gujarat, and after the Battle of Diu, acquired several enclaves along the Gujarati coast, including Daman and Diu as well as Dadra and Nagar Haveli. These enclaves were administered by Portuguese India under a single union territory for over 450 years, only to be later incorporated into the Republic of India on 19 December 1961 by military conquest.

The British East India Company established a factory in Surat in 1614 following the commercial treaty made with Mughal Emperor Nuruddin Salim Jahangir, which formed their first base in India, but it was eclipsed by Bombay after the English received it from Portugal in 1668 as part of the marriage treaty of Charles II of England and Catherine of Braganza, daughter of King John IV of Portugal. The state was an early point of contact with the west, and the first British commercial outpost in India was in Gujarat.[96]

17th-century French explorer François Pyrard de Laval, who is remembered for his 10-year sojourn in South Asia, bears witness in his account that the Gujaratis were always prepared to learn workmanship from the Portuguese, and in turn imparted skills to the Portuguese:[97]

I have never seen men of wit so fine and polished as are these Indians: they have nothing barbarous or savage about them, as we are apt to suppose. They are unwilling indeed to adopt the manners and customs of the Portuguese; yet do they regularly learn their manufactures and workmanship, being all very curious and desirous of learning. In fact, the Portuguese take and learn more from them than they from the Portuguese. Later in the 17th century, Gujarat came under control of the Hindu Maratha Empire that arose, defeating the Muslim Mughals who had dominated the politics of India. Most notably, from 1705 to 1716, Senapati Khanderao Dabhade led the Maratha Empire forces in Baroda. Pilaji Gaekwad, first ruler of Gaekwad dynasty, established the control over Baroda and other parts of Gujarat.

The British East India Company wrested control of much of Gujarat from the Marathas during the Second Anglo-Maratha War in 1802–1803. Many local rulers, notably the Maratha Gaekwad Maharajas of Baroda (Vadodara), made a separate peace with the British and acknowledged British sovereignty in return for retaining local self-rule.

An epidemic outbreak in 1812 killed half the population of Gujarat.[98]

Gujarat was placed under the political authority of the Bombay Presidency, with the exception of Baroda State, which had a direct relationship with the Governor-General of India. From 1818 to 1947, most of present-day Gujarat, including Kathiawar, Kutch and northern and eastern Gujarat were divided into hundreds of princely states, but several districts in central and southern Gujarat, namely Ahmedabad, Broach (Bharuch), Kaira (Kheda), Panchmahal and Surat, were governed directly by British officials. In 1819, Sahajanand Swami established the World's First Swaminarayan Mandir in Kalupur, Ahmedabad.

Initially there was confusion over whether Junagadh would join India or Pakistan. This was resolved in 1947 with a plebiscite for full union with India following the next year.[99]

After Indian independence and the partition of India in 1947, the new Indian government grouped the former princely states of Gujarat into three larger units; Saurashtra, which included the former princely states on the Kathiawad peninsula, Kutch, and Bombay state, which included the former British districts of Bombay Presidency together with most of Baroda State and the other former princely states of eastern Gujarat. Bombay state was enlarged to include Kutch, Saurashtra (Kathiawar) and parts of Hyderabad state and Madhya Pradesh in central India. The new state had a mostly Gujarati-speaking north and a Marathi-speaking south. Agitation by Gujarati nationalists, the Mahagujarat Movement, and Marathi nationalists, the Samyukta Maharashtra, for their own states led to the split of Bombay state on linguistic lines; on 1 May 1960, it became the new states of Gujarat and Maharashtra. In 1969 riots, at least 660 died and properties worth millions were destroyed.[100][101]

The first capital of Gujarat was Ahmedabad. The capital of Gujarat was moved to Gandhinagar in 1970. Nav Nirman Andolan was a socio-political movement of 1974. It was a students' and middle class people's movement against economic crisis and corruption in public life. This was the first and last successful agitation after the Independence of India that ousted an elected government.[102][103][104]

Gujarat has emerged as an important industrial hub in India. In Western India Surat was among the strongest industrial clusters in the 1970s. Between 1971 and 1981 diamond cutting was established as industry in Surat. At the same time the production of artificial silk and a substantial petrochemical industry became a fixture in Surat.[105]

The Morvi dam failure, in 1979, resulted in the death of thousands of people and large economic loss.[106] In the 1980s, a reservation policy was introduced in the country, which led to anti-reservation protests in 1981 and 1985. The protests witnessed violent clashes between people belonging to various castes.[107]

The 2001 Gujarat earthquake was located about 9 km south-southwest of the village of Chobari in the Bhachau taluka of Kutch District. This magnitude 7.7 shock killed around 20,000 people (including at least 18 in South-eastern Pakistan), injured another 167,000 and destroyed nearly 400,000 homes.[108]

In February 2002, the Godhra train burning led to statewide riots, resulting in the deaths of 1044 people – 790 Muslims and 254 Hindus, and hundreds missing still unaccounted for.[109] Akshardham Temple was attacked by two terrorists in September 2002, killing 32 people and injuring more than 80 others. National Security Guards intervened to end the siege killing both terrorists.[110] On 26 July 2008 a series of seventeen bomb blasts rocked Ahmedabad, killing and injuring several people.[111]

Gujarat borders the Tharparkar, Badin and Thatta districts of Pakistan's Sindh province to the northwest, is bounded by the Arabian Sea to the southwest, the state of Rajasthan to the northeast, Madhya Pradesh to the east, and by Maharashtra, the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu to the south. Historically, the north was known as Anarta, the Kathiawar peninsula, "Saurashtra", and the south as "Lata".[112] Gujarat was also known as Pratichya and Varuna.[113] The Arabian Sea makes up the state's western coast. The capital, Gandhinagar is a planned city. Gujarat has an area of 75,686 sq mi (196,030 km²) with the longest coastline (24% of Indian sea coast) 1,600 km (990 mi), dotted with 41 ports: one major, 11 intermediate and 29 minor.

The Narmada is the largest river in Gujarat followed by the Tapi. The Sabarmati has the longest course through the state.

The Sardar Sarovar Project is built on Narmada, one of the major rivers of peninsular India where it is one of only three major rivers that run from east to west – the others being the Tapi and the Mahi. It is about 1,312 km (815 mi) long. Several riverfront embankments have been built on the Sabarmati River.

The eastern borders have fringes of low mountains of India, the Aravalli, Sahyadri (Western Ghats), Vindhya and Saputara. Apart from this the Gir hills, Barda, Jessore and Chotila together make up a large minority of Gujarat. Girnar is the tallest peak and Saputara is the only hill-station (hilltop resort) in the state.

Rann (રણ) is Gujarati for desert. The Rann of Kutch is a seasonally marshy saline clay desert in the Thar Desert biogeographic region between the Pakistani province of Sindh and the rest of the state of Gujarat; it commences 8 km (5.0 mi) from the village of Kharaghoda, Surendranagar District.

In the early 1980s, palaeontologists found dinosaur egg hatcheries and fossils of at least 13 species in Balasinor.[114] The most important find was that of a carnivorous abelisaurid dinosaur named *Rajasaurus narmadensis* which lived in the Late Cretaceous period.[114][115] A notable discovery in the village of Dholi Dungri was that of *Sanajeh indicus*, a primitive madtsoiid snake that likely preyed on sauropod dinosaur hatchlings and embryos.[115][116]

According to the India State of Forest Report 2011, Gujarat has 9.7% of its total geographical area under forest cover.[117] Among the districts, The Dangs has the largest area under forest cover. Gujarat has four national parks and 21 sanctuaries. It is the only home of Asiatic lions and, outside Africa, is the only present natural habitat of lions.[118] Gir Forest National Park in the southwest part of the state covers part of the lions' habitat. Apart from lions, Indian leopards are also found in the state. They are spread across the large plains of Saurashtra and the mountains of South Gujarat. Other National Parks include Vansda National Park, Blackbuck National Park, Velavadar and Narara Marine National Park, Gulf of Kutchh, Jamnagar. Wildlife sanctuaries include Wild Ass Wildlife Sanctuary, Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary, Porbandar Bird Sanctuary, Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary, Kutch Bustard Sanctuary, Narayan Sarovar Sanctuary, Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary, Anjal, Balaram-Ambaji, Barda, Jambughoda, Khavda, Paniya, Purna, Rampura, Ratan Mahal, and Surpaneshwar.

In February 2019, a Bengal tiger claimed to be from Ratapani in Madhya Pradesh was spotted in the area of Lunavada in Mahisagar district, in the eastern part of the state,[119][120] before being found dead later that month, likely from starvation.[121]

The population of Gujarat was 60,439,692 (31,491,260 males and 28,948,432 females) according to the 2011 census data.[123] The population density is 308 persons per square kilometre (800 persons/sq mi), lower than other Indian states. As per the census of 2011, the state has a sex ratio of 918 females for every 1000 males, one of the lowest (ranked 24) among the 29 states in India.

While Gujarati speakers constitute a majority of Gujarat's population, the metropolitan areas of Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Surat are cosmopolitan, with numerous other ethnic and language groups. Marwaris compose large minorities of economic migrants; smaller communities of people from the other states of India have also migrated to Gujarat for employment. Luso-Indians, Anglo-Indians, Jews and Parsis also live in the areas.[124] Sindhi presence is traditionally important here following the Partition of India in 1947.[125] The Koli forms the largest caste-cluster, comprising 24% of the total population of the state.[126][127]

Religion in Gujarat (2011)[128]

According to 2011 census, the religious makeup in Gujarat was 88.57% Hindu, 9.67% Muslim, 0.96% Jain, 0.52% Christian, 0.10% Sikh, 0.05% Buddhist and 0.03% others. Around 0.1% did not state any religion.[128] Hinduism is the majority religion, and is over 93% in rural areas. Muslims are the biggest minority in the state accounting for 9.7% of the population. Gujarat has the third-largest population of Jains in India, following Maharashtra and Rajasthan, almost all of whom live in urban areas like Vadodara, Ahmedabad and Surat.[129] Languages of Gujarat (2011)

Gujarati is the official language of the state. It is spoken natively by 86% of the state's population, or 52 million people (as of 2011). Hindi is the second-largest language, spoken by over 6% of the population. Marathi is also spoken in urban areas.[130]

People from the Kutch region of Gujarat also speak in the Kutchi mother tongue, and to a great extent understand Sindhi as well. Memoni is the mother tongue of Kathiawar and Sindhi Memons, most whom are Muslims.

Almost 88% of the Gujarati Muslims speak Gujarati as their mother tongue, whilst the other 12% speak Urdu. A sizeable proportion of Gujarati Muslims are bilingual in the two languages; Islamic academic institutions (Darul Uloom) place a high prestige on learning Urdu and Arabic, with students' memorising the Quran and ahadith, and emphasising the oral and literary importance of mastering these languages as a compulsory rite of religion.

In rural areas among the tribals, various Bhil dialects are spoken by around 1.37% of the population. In the northeast, Bhili is spoken, in the central part is spoken Bhili, Bhilali and Vasava, while in the southeast is spoken Dangri, Varli Chodri and Dhodia which are related to Marathi.

Apart from this, English, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Marwari, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and others are spoken by a considerable number of economic migrants from other states of India seeking employment.[131]

The languages taught in schools under the three-language formula are:[132]

First language: Gujarati/Hindi/English

Second language: Gujarati/English

Third language: Hindi

"Structurally Gujarat is divided into districts (Zila), Prant (subdivisions), Taluka (blocks) & villages. The state is divided into 33 districts, 122 prants, 248 talukas.[133] There are 08 municipal corporations, 156 municipalities and 14,273 Panchayats, for administrative purposes.'

Gujarat has 33 districts and 250 talukas.[134][135]

Gujarat is governed by a Legislative Assembly of 182 members. Members of the Legislative Assembly are elected on the basis of adult suffrage from one of 182 constituencies, of which 13 are reserved for scheduled castes and 27 for scheduled tribes. The term of office for a member of the Legislative Assembly is five years. The Legislative Assembly elects a speaker who presides over the meetings of the legislature. A governor is appointed by the President of India, and is to address the state legislature after every general election and the commencement of each year's first session of the Legislative Assembly. The leader of the majority party or coalition in the legislature (Chief Minister) or his or her designee acts as the Leader of the Legislative Assembly. The administration of the state is led by the Chief Minister.

After the independence of India in 1947, the Indian National Congress (INC) ruled the Bombay State (which included present-day Gujarat and Maharashtra). Congress continued to govern Gujarat after the state's creation in 1960.

During and after India's State of Emergency of 1975–1977, public support for the INC eroded, but it continued to hold government until 1995 with the brief rule of nine months by Janata Morcha. In the 1995 Assembly elections, the Congress lost to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by Keshubhai Patel who became the Chief Minister. His government lasted only two years. The fall of that government was provoked by a split in the BJP led by Shankersinh Vaghela. BJP again won election in 1998 with clear majority. In 2001, following the loss of two assembly seats in by-elections, Keshubhai Patel resigned and yielded power to Narendra Modi. BJP retained a majority in the 2002 election, and Narendra Modi remained as Chief Minister. On 1 June 2007, Narendra Modi became the longest serving Chief Minister of Gujarat.[136][137][138] BJP retained the power in subsequent elections in 2007 and 2012 and Narendra Modi continued as the chief minister. After Narendra Modi became the prime minister of India in 2014, Anandiben Patel became the first female chief minister of the state. Vijay Rupani took over as chief minister and Nitin Patel as deputy chief minister on 7 August 2016 after Anandiben Patel resigned earlier on 3 August. Bhupendrabhai Patel became chief minister in September 2021 after the resignation of Vijay Rupani.

The incumbent chief secretary of Gujarat is Raj Kumar[139] and director general of police (DGP) is Vikas Sahay.[140]

During the British Raj, Gujarati businesses played a major role in enriching the economies of Karachi and Mumbai.[141] Major agricultural produce of the state includes cotton, groundnuts (peanuts), dates, sugar cane, milk and milk products. Industrial products include cement and petrol.[142]

Gujarat is ranked number one in the pharmaceutical industry in India, with a 33% share in drug manufacturing and 28% share in drug exports. The state has 130 USFDA certified drug manufacturing facilities. Ahmedabad and Vadodara are considered as pharmaceutical hubs, as there are many big and small pharmaceutical companies established in these cities.[143]

Gujarat has the longest coastline in India (1600 km), and its ports (both private and public sector) handle around 40% of India's ocean cargo, with Mundra Port located in Gulf of Kutch being the largest port of India by cargo handled (144 million tons) due to its favourable location on the westernmost part of India and closeness to global shipping lanes. Gujarat also contributes around 20% share in India's industrial production and merchandise exports. According to a 2009 report on economic freedom by the Cato Institute, Gujarat is the most free state in India (the second one being Tamil Nadu).[144] Reliance Industries operates the oil refinery at Jamnagar, which is the world's largest grass-roots refinery at a single location. The world's largest shipbreaking yard is in Gujarat near Bhavnagar at Alang. India's only Liquid Chemical Port Terminal at Dahej, developed by Gujarat Chemical Port Terminal Co Ltd. Gujarat has two of the three liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals in the country (Dahej and Hazira). Two more LNG terminals are proposed, at Pipavav and Mundra.

Gujarat has 85% village connectivity with all-weather roads.[145] Nearly 100% of Gujarat's 18,000 villages have been connected to the electrical grid for 24-hour power to households and eight hours of power to farms, through the Jyotigram Yojana.[146] As of 2015[update], Gujarat ranks first nationwide in gas-based thermal electricity generation with a national market share of over 8%, and second nationwide in nuclear electricity generation with national market share of over 1%.[147]

The state registered 12.8% agricultural growth in the last five years against the national average of 2%.^[148]

Gujarat records highest decadal agricultural growth rate of 10.97%. Over 20% of the S&P CNX 500 conglomerates have corporate offices in Gujarat.^[149] As per RBI report^[which?], in year 2006–07, 26% of total bank finance in India was in Gujarat.^[citation needed]

According to a 2012 survey report of the Chandigarh Labour Bureau, Gujarat had the lowest unemployment rate of 1% against the national average of 3.8%.^[150]

Legatum Institute's Global Prosperity Index 2012 recognised Gujarat as one of the two highest-scoring among all states of India on matters of social capital.^[151] The state ranks 15th alongside Germany in a list of 142 nations worldwide: higher than several developed nations.^[152]

The tallest tower in Gujarat, GIFT One was inaugurated on 10 January 2013. One other tower called GIFT Two has been finished and more towers are planned.^[153]

Gujarat's major cities include Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot, Jamnagar and Bhavnagar. In 2010, Forbes' list of the world's fastest growing cities included Ahmedabad at number 3 after Chengdu and Chongqing from China.^[154]^[155] The state is rich in calcite, gypsum, manganese, lignite, bauxite, limestone, agate, feldspar, and quartz sand, and successful mining of these minerals is done in their specified areas. Jamnagar is the hub for manufacturing brass parts. Gujarat produces about 98% of India's required amount of soda ash, and gives the country about 78% of the national requirement of salt. It is one of India's most prosperous states, having a per-capita GDP significantly above India's average. Kalol, Khambhat, and Ankleshwar are today known for their oil and natural gas production. Dhuvaran has a thermal power station, which uses coal, oil, and gas. Also, on the Gulf of Khambhat, 50 km (31 mi) southeast of Bhavnagar, is the Alang Ship Recycling Yard (the world's largest). MG Motor India manufactures its cars at Halol near Vadodara, Tata Motors manufactures the Tata Nano from Sanand near Ahmedabad, and AMW trucks are made near Bhuj. Surat, a city by the Gulf of Khambhat, is a hub of the global diamond trade. In 2003, 92% of the world's diamonds were cut and polished in Surat.^[156] The diamond industry employs 500,000 people in Gujarat.^[157]

At an investor's summit entitled "Vibrant Gujarat Global Investor Summit", arranged between 11 and 13 January 2015, at Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar, the state government signed 21000 Memoranda of Understanding for Special Economic Zones worth a total of ₹ 2.5 million crores (short scale).^[158] However, most of the investment was from domestic industry.^[159] In the fourth Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors' Summit held at Science City, Ahmedabad, in January 2009, there were 600 foreign delegates. In all, 8668 MOUs worth ₹ 12500 billion were signed, estimated to create 2.5 million new job opportunities in the state.^[160] In 2011, Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors' Summit MOUs worth ₹ 21 trillion (US\$ 463 billion) were signed.

Gujarat is a state with surplus electricity.^[161] The Kakrapar Atomic Power Station is a nuclear power station run by NPCIL that lies in the proximity of the city of Surat. According to the official sources, against demand of 40,793 million units during the nine months since April 2010, Gujarat produced 43,848 million units. Gujarat sold surplus power to 12 states: Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal.^[162]

As of April 2022, the peak power requirement of state is 20,277 MW.^[164] Total installed power generation capacity is 44,127.43 MW. Of this 25,688.66 MW belongs to thermal power generation

capacity while 17,879.77 MW belongs to renewable energy generation capacity. The rest 559 MW is nuclear power generation capacity.[165] The renewable energy installed capacity includes 9,209 MW wind power and 7,180 MW solar power, as of March 2022.[166]

The total geographical area of Gujarat is 19,602,400 hectares, of which crops take up 10,630,700 hectares.[verification needed][167] The three main sources of growth in Gujarat's agriculture are from cotton production, the rapid growth of high-value foods such as livestock, fruits and vegetables, and from wheat production, which saw an annual average growth rate of 28% between 2000 and 2008 (According to the International Food Policy Research Institute).[168] Other major produce includes bajra, groundnut, cotton, rice, maize, wheat, mustard, sesame, pigeon pea, green gram, sugarcane, mango, banana, sapota, lime, guava, tomato, potato, onion, cumin, garlic, isabgol and fennel. Whilst, in recent times, Gujarat has seen a high average annual growth of 9% in the agricultural sector, the rest of India has an annual growth rate of around 3%. This success was lauded by former President of India, APJ Abdul Kalam.[169]

The strengths of Gujarat's agricultural success have been attributed to diversified crops and cropping patterns; climatic diversity (8 climatic zones for agriculture); the existence of 4 agricultural universities in the state, which promote research in agricultural efficiency and sustainability;[170] co-operatives; adoption of hi-tech agriculture such as tissue culture, green houses and shed-net houses; agriculture export zones; strong marketing infrastructure, which includes cold storage, processing units, logistic hubs and consultancy facilities.[171]

Gujarat is the main producer of tobacco, cotton, and groundnuts in India. Other major food crops produced are rice, wheat, jowar, bajra, maize, tur, and gram. The state has an agricultural economy; the total crop area amounts to more than one-half of the total land area.[172]

Animal husbandry and dairying have played vital roles in the rural economy of Gujarat. Dairy farming, primarily concerned with milk production, functions on a co-operative basis and has more than a million members. Gujarat is the largest producer of milk in India. The Amul milk co-operative federation is well known all over India, and it is Asia's biggest dairy.[173] Among the livestock raised are, buffaloes and other cattle, sheep, and goats. As per the results of livestock census 1997, there were 20.97 million head of livestock in Gujarat State. In the estimates of the survey of major livestock products, during the year 2002–03, Gujarat produced 6.09 million tonnes of milk, 385 million eggs and 2.71 million kg of wool. Gujarat also contributes inputs to the textiles, oil, and soap industries.

The adoption of cooperatives in Gujarat is widely attributed to much of the success in the agricultural sector, particularly sugar and dairy cooperatives. Cooperative farming has been a component of India's strategy for agricultural development since 1951. Whilst the success of these was mixed throughout the country, their positive impact on the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat have been the most significant. In 1995 alone, the two states had more registered co-operatives than any other region in the country. Out of these, the agricultural cooperatives have received much attention. Many have focused on subsidies and credit to farmers and rather than collective gathering, they have focused on facilitating collective processing and marketing of produce. However, whilst they have led to increased productivity, their effect on equity in the region has been questioned, because membership in agricultural co-operatives has tended to favour landowners whilst limiting the entry of landless agricultural labourers.[174] An example of co-operative success in Gujarat can be illustrated through dairy co-operatives, with the particular example of Amul (Anand Milk Union Limited).

Amul was formed as a dairy cooperative in 1946,[175] in the city of Anand, Gujarat. The cooperative, Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd.

(GCMMF), is jointly owned by around 2.6 million milk producers in Gujarat. Amul has been seen as one of the best examples of cooperative achievement and success in a developing economy and the Amul pattern of growth has been taken as a model for rural development, particularly in the agricultural sector of developing economies. The company stirred the White Revolution of India (also known as Operation Flood), the world's biggest dairy development program, and made the milk-deficient nation of India the largest milk producer in the world, in 2010.[176] The "Amul Model" aims to stop the exploitation by middlemen and encourage freedom of movement since the farmers are in control of procurement, processing and packaging of the milk and milk products.[177] The company is worth 2.5 billion US dollars (as of 2012[update]).[178]

70% of Gujarat's area is classified as semi-arid to arid climatically, thus the demand on water from various economic activities puts a strain on the supply.[179] Of the total gross irrigated area, 16–17% is irrigated by government-owned canals and 83–84% by privately owned tube wells and other wells extracting groundwater, which is the predominant source of irrigation and water supply to the agricultural areas. As a result, Gujarat has faced problems with groundwater depletion, especially after demand for water increased in the 1960s. As access to electricity in rural areas increased, submersible electric pumps became more popular in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the Gujarat Electricity Board switched to flat tariff rates linked to the horsepower of pumps, which increased tubewell irrigation again and decreased the use of electric pumps. By the 1990s, groundwater abstraction rates exceeded groundwater recharge rate in many districts, whilst only 37.5% of all districts has "safe" recharge rates. Groundwater maintenance and preventing unnecessary loss of the available water supplies is now an issue faced by the state.[180] The Sardar Sarovar Project, a debated dam project in the Narmada valley consisting of a network of canals, has significantly increased irrigation in the region. However, its impact on communities who were displaced is still a contested issue. In 2012 Gujarat began an experiment to reduce water loss due to evaporation in canals and to increase sustainability in the area, by constructing solar panels over the canals. In a one megawatt (MW) solar power project set up at Chandrasan, Gujarat uses solar panels fixed over a 750-metre stretch of an irrigation canal. Unlike many solar power projects, this one does not take up large amounts of land since the panels are constructed over the canals, and not on additional land. This results in lower upfront costs since land does not need to be acquired, cleared or modified to set up the panels. The Chandrasan project is projected to save 9 million litres of water per year.[181]

The Government of Gujarat, to improve soil management and introduce farmers to new technology, started on a project which involved giving every farmer a Soil Health Card. This acts like a ration card, providing permanent identification for the status of cultivated land, as well as farmers' names, account numbers, survey numbers, soil fertility status and general fertiliser dose. Samples of land from each village are taken and analysed by the Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertiliser Corporation, State Fertiliser Corporation and Indian Farmers Fertilisers Co-operative. 1,200,000 soil test data from the villages was collected as of 2008, from farmer's field villages have gone into a database. Assistance and advice for this project was given by local agricultural universities and crop and soil-specific data was added to the database. This allows the soil test data to be interpreted and recommendations or adjustments made in terms of fertiliser requirements, which are also added to the database.[182]

Gujarat is home for the Gujarati people. Gujarat was also the home of Mahatma Gandhi, a worldwide figure known for his non-violent struggle against British rule, and Vallabhbhai Patel, a founding father of the Republic of India.

The history of Gujarati literature may be traced back to 1000 CE. Well-known laureates of Gujarati literature include Hemchandracharya, Narsinh Mehta, Mirabai, Akho, Premanand Bhatt, Shamal Bhatt, Dayaram, Dalpatram, Narmad, Govardhanram Tripathi, Mahatma Gandhi, K. M. Munshi, Umashankar Joshi, Suresh Joshi, Swaminarayan, Pannalal Patel and Rajendra Shah.[183]

Kavi Kant, Zaverchand Meghani and Kalapi are famous Gujarati poets.

Gujarat Vidhya Sabha, Gujarat Sahitya Sabha, and Gujarati Sahitya Parishad are Ahmedabad based literary institutions promoting the spread of Gujarati literature.

Saraswatichandra is a landmark novel by Govardhanram Tripathi. Writers like Aanand Shankar Dhruv, Ashvini Bhatt, Balwantray Thakore, Bhaven Kachhi, Bhagwatikumar Sharma, Chandrakant Bakshi, Gunvant Shah, Harindra Dave, Harkisan Mehta, Jay Vasavada, Jyotindra Dave, Kanti Bhatt, Kavi Nanalal, Khabardar, Sundaram, Makarand Dave, Ramesh Parekh, Suresh Dalal, Tarak Mehta, Vinod Bhatt, Dhruv Bhatt and Varsha Adalja have influenced Gujarati thinkers.

A notable contribution to Gujarati literature came from the Swaminarayan paramhanso, like Brahmanand Swami, Premanand, with prose like Vachanamrut and poetry in the form of bhajans.[184]

Shrimad Rajchandra Vachnamrut and Shri Atma Siddhi Shastra, written in 19th century by Jain philosopher and poet Shrimad Rajchandra (Mahatma Gandhi's guru) are very well known.[185][186]

Gujarati theatre owes a lot to Bhavai. Bhavai is a folk musical performance of stage plays. Ketan Mehta and Sanjay Leela Bhansali explored artistic use of bhavai in films such as Bhavni Bhavai, Oh Darling! Yeh Hai India and Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam. Dayro (gathering) involves singing and conversation reflecting on human nature.

Mumbai theatre veteran, Alyque Padamsee, best known in the English-speaking world for playing Muhammad Ali Jinnah in Sir Richard Attenborough's Gandhi, was from a traditional Gujarati-Kutchi family from Kathiawar.[187]

Gujarati food is primarily vegetarian. The typical Gujarati thali consists of rotli or bhakhari or thepala or rotlo, dal or kadhi, khichdi, Bhat and shak. Athanu (Indian pickle) and chhundo are used as condiments. The four major regions of Gujarat all bring their own styles to Gujarati food. Many Gujarati dishes are distinctively sweet, salty, and spicy at the same time. In the Saurashtra region, chhash (buttermilk) is believed to be a must-have in their daily food.

The Gujarati film industry dates back to 1932, when the first Gujarati film, Narsinh Mehta, was released.[188][189][190] After flourishing through the 1960s to 1980s, the industry saw a decline. The industry is revived in recent times. The film industry has produced more than one thousand films since its inception.[191] The Government of Gujarat announced a 100% entertainment tax exemption for Gujarati films in 2005[192] and a policy of incentives in 2016.[193]

Gujarati folk music, known as Sugam Sangeet, is a hereditary profession of the Barot community. Gadhvi and Charan communities have contributed heavily in modern times. The omnipresent instruments in Gujarati folk music include wind instruments, such as turi, bungal, and pava, string instruments, such as the ravan hattho, ektaro, and jantar and percussion instruments, such as the manjira and zanz pot drum.[194]

The folk traditions of Gujarat include bhavai and raas-garba. Bhavai is a folk theatre; it is partly entertainment and partly ritual, and is dedicated to Amba. The raas-garba is a folk dance done as a celebration of Navratri by Gujarati people. The folk costume of this dance is chaniya choli for women

and kedia for men. Different styles and steps of garba include dodhiyu, simple five, simple seven, popatiyu, trikoniya (hand movement which forms an imagery triangle), lehree, tran taali, butterfly, hudo, two claps and many more. Sheri garba is one of the oldest form of garba where all the women wear red patola sari and sing along while dancing. It is a very graceful form of garba.[195] Makar Sankranti is a festival where people of Gujarat fly kites. In Gujarat, from December through to Makar Sankranti, people start enjoying kite flying. Undhiyu, a special dish made of various vegetables, is a must-have of Gujarati people on Makar Sankranti. Surat is especially well known for the strong string which is made by applying glass powder on the row thread to provide it a cutting edge.[196]

Apart from Navratri and Uttarayana, Diwali, Holi, Janmashtami, Mahavir Janma Kalyanak, Eid, Tazia, Paryushan and others are also celebrated.

Due to close proximity to the Arabian Sea, Gujarat has developed a mercantile ethos which maintained a cultural tradition of seafaring, long-distance trade, and overseas contacts with the outside world since ancient times, and the diffusion of culture through Gujarati diaspora was a logical outcome of such a tradition. During the pre-modern period, various European sources have observed that these merchants formed diaspora communities outside of Gujarat, and in many parts of the world, such as the Persian Gulf, Middle East, Horn of Africa, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Philippines.[197] long before the internal rise of the Maratha dynasty, and the British Raj colonial occupation.[198]

Early 1st-century Western historians such as Strabo and Dio Cassius are testament to Gujarati people's role in the spread of Buddhism in the Mediterranean, when it was recorded that the sramana monk Zarmanochegas (Ζαρμανοχηγὰς) of Barygaza met Nicholas of Damascus in Antioch while Augustus ruled the Roman Empire, and shortly thereafter proceeded to Athens where died by setting himself on fire to demonstrate his faith.[199][200] A tomb to the sramana, was still visible in the time of Plutarch,[201] which bore the mention "ΖΑΡΜΑΝΟΧΗΓΑΣ ΙΝΔΟΣ ΑΠΟ ΒΑΡΓΟΣΗΣ" ("The sramana master from Barygaza in India").[202]

The progenitor of the Sinhala language is believed to have been Prince Vijaya, son of King Simhabahu, who ruled Simhapura (modern-day Sihor near Bhavnagar).[203] Prince Vijaya was banished by his father for his lawlessness and set forth with a band of adventurers. This tradition was followed by other Gujaratis. For example, in the Ajanta frescoes, a Gujarati prince is shown entering Sri Lanka.[204]

Many Indians migrated to Indonesia and the Philippines, most of them Gujaratis. King Aji Saka, who is said to have come to Java in Indonesia in year 1 of the Saka calendar, is believed by some to have been a king of Gujarat.[205] The first Indian settlements in the Philippines and Java Island of Indonesia are believed to have been established with the coming of Prince Dhruvavijaya of Gujarat, with 5000 traders.[205] Some stories propose a Brahmin named Tritresta was the first to bring Gujarati migrants with him to Java, so some scholars equate him with Aji Saka.[206] A Gujarati ship has been depicted in a sculpture at Borabudur, Java.[204]

Gujarat's natural environment includes the Great Rann of Kutch and the hills of Saputara, and it is the sole home of pure Asiatic lions in the world.[207] During the historic reigns of the sultans, Hindu craftsmanship blended with Islamic architecture, giving rise to the Indo-Saracenic style. Many structures in the state are built in this fashion. It is also the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, great iconic figures of India's Independence movement. Amitabh Bachchan is currently the brand ambassador of Gujarat Tourism.[208]

Gujarat has a variety of museums on different genres that are run by the state's Department of Museums located at the principal state museum, Baroda Museum & Picture Gallery in Vadodara,[209] which is also the location of the Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum. The Kirti Mandir, Porbandar, Sabarmati Ashram, and Kaba Gandhi No Delo are museums related to Mahatma Gandhi, the former being the place of his birth and the latter two where he lived in his lifetime. Kaba Gandhi No Delo in Rajkot exhibits part of a rare collection of photographs relating to the life of Mahatma Gandhi. Sabarmati Ashram is the place where Gandhi initiated the Dandi March. On 12 March 1930 he vowed that he would not return to the Ashram until India won independence.[210]

The Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum is housed within Lakshmi Vilas Palace, the residence of the erstwhile Maharajas, located in Vadodara.

The Calico Museum of Textiles is managed by the Sarabhai Foundation and is one of the most popular tourist spots in Ahmedabad.[citation needed]

The Lakhota Museum at Jamnagar is a palace transformed into museum, which was residence of the Jadeja Rajputs. The collection of the museum includes artefacts spanning from 9th to 18th centuries, pottery from medieval villages nearby and the skeleton of a whale.

Other well-known museums in the state include the Kutch Museum in Bhuj, which is the oldest museum in Gujarat founded in 1877, the Watson Museum of human history and culture in Rajkot,[211] Gujarat Science City and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Memorial in Ahmedabad. In October 2018, the world's tallest statue commemorating the independence leader Sardar Patel was unveiled. At 182 metres tall the Statue of Unity is the newest tourist attraction with over 30,000 visitors every day.[212][213]

Religious sites play a major part in the tourism of Gujarat. Somnath is the first of the twelve Jyotirlingas, and is mentioned in the Rigveda. The Dwarakadheesh Temple, Radha Damodar Temple, Junagadh and Dakor are holy pilgrimage sites with temples dedicated to Lord Krishna. The Sun Temple, Modhera is a ticketed monument, handled by the Archaeological Survey of India.[214] Other religious sites in state include Ambaji, Dakor, Shamlaji, Chotila, Becharaji, Mahudi, Shankheshwar etc. The Palitana temples of Jainism on Mount Shatrunjaya, Palitana are considered the holiest of all pilgrimage places by the Svetambara and Digambara Jain community.[215] Palitana is the world's only mountain with more than 900 temples.[216] The Sidi Saiyyed Mosque and Jama Masjid are holy mosques for Gujarati Muslims.

A five-day festival is held during Maha Shivaratri at the fort of Girnar, Junagadh, known as the Bhavanth Mahadev Fair (Gujarati: ભવન્થ મહાદેવ નો મેળો). The Kutch Festival or Rann Festival (Gujarati: રણ ઉત્સવ or રણ ઉત્સવ) is a festival celebrated at Kutch during Mahashivratri. The Modhra Dance Festival is a festival for classical dance, arranged by the Government of Gujarat's Cultural Department, to promote tourism in state and to keep traditions and culture alive.[217]

The Ambaji Fair is held in the Hindu month of Bhadrapad (around August–September) at Ambaji, during a time which is particularly suitable for farmers, when the busy monsoon season is about to end. The Bhadrapad fair is held at Ambaji which is in the Danta Taluka of Banaskantha district, near the Gujarat-Rajasthan border. The walk from the bus station to the temple is less than one kilometre, under a roofed walkway. Direct buses are available from many places, including Mount Abu (45 km away), Palanpur (65 km away), Ahmedabad and Idar. The Bhadrapad fair is held in the centre of the Ambaji village just outside the temple premises. The village is visited by the largest number of sanghas (pilgrim groups) during the fair. Many of them go there on foot, which is particularly enriching as it happens immediately after the monsoon, when the landscape is rich with

greenery, streams are full of sparkling water and the air is fresh. About 1.5 million devotees are known to attend this fair each year from all over the world. Not only Hindus, but some devout Jains and Parsis also attend the functions, whilst some Muslims attend the fair for trade.

The Tarnetar Fair is held during the first week of Bhadrapad, (September–October according to Gregorian calendar), and mostly serves as a place to find a suitable bride for tribal people from Gujarat. The region is believed to be the place where Arjuna took up the difficult task of piercing the eye of a fish, rotating at the end of a pole, by looking at its reflection in the pond water, to marry Draupadi.[218]

Other fairs in Gujarat include Dang Durbar, Shamlaji Fair, Chitra Vichitra Fair, Dhrang Fair and Vautha Fair.

The Government of Gujarat has banned alcohol since 1960.[219] Gujarat government collected the Best State Award for 'Citizen Security' by IBN7 Diamond States on 24 December 2012.[220]

There are three international airports (Ahmedabad and Surat, Vadodara), nine domestic airports (Bhavnagar, Bhuj, Jamnagar, Kandla, Porbandar, Rajkot, Amreli, Keshod), two private airports (Mundra, Mithapur) and three military bases (Bhuj, Jamnagar, Naliya) in Gujarat. Two more airports (Ankleshwar, Rajkot) are under construction. There are three disused airports situated at Deesa, Mandvi and Mehsana; the last serving as a flying school. Gujarat State Aviation Infrastructure Company Limited (GUJSAIL) has been established by the Government of Gujarat to foster development of aviation infrastructure in the state.[221]

These airports are operated and owned by either the Airports Authority of India, Indian Air Force, Government of Gujarat or private companies.[222][223]

Gujarat comes under the Western Railway Zone of the Indian Railways. Ahmedabad Railway Station is the most important, centrally located and biggest railway station in Gujarat which connects to all important cities of Gujarat and India. Surat railway station and Vadodara Railway Station is also the busiest railway station in Gujarat and the ninth busiest railway station in India. Other important railway stations are Palanpur Junction, Bhavnagar Terminus, Rajkot Railway Station, Sabarmati Junction, Nadiad Junction, Valsad Railway Station, Bharuch Junction, Gandhidham Junction, Anand Junction, Godhra Railway Station, etc. Indian Railways is planning a dedicated rail freight route Delhi–Mumbai passing through the state.

The 39.259 km (24.394 mi) long tracks of the first phase of MEGA, a metro rail system for Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar is under construction. It is expected to complete by 2024. The construction started on 14 March 2015.[224][225]

Gujarat State has the longest sea coast of 1214 km in India. Kandla Port is one of the largest ports serving Western India. Other important ports in Gujarat are the Port of Navlakhi, Port of Magdalla, Port Pipavav, Bedi Port, Port of Porbandar, Port of Veraval and the privately owned Mundra Port. The state also has Ro-Ro ferry service.[226]

Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation (GSRTC) is the primary body responsible for providing the bus services within the state of Gujarat and also with the neighbouring states. It is a public transport corporation providing bus services and public transit within Gujarat and to the other states in India. Apart from this, there are a number of services provided by GSRTC.

Apart from this, the GSRTC provides special bus services for festivals, industrial zones, schools, colleges and pilgrim places also buses are given on contract basis to the public for certain special occasions.[227]

Auto rickshaws are common mode of transport in Gujarat. The Government of Gujarat is promoting bicycles to reduce pollution by the way of initiative taken by free cycle rides for commuters..

The Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board (GSHSEB) are in charge of the schools run by the Government of Gujarat. However, most of the private schools in Gujarat are affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) board. Gujarat has 13 state universities and four agricultural universities.

Institutes for Engineering and Research in the area include IIT Gandhinagar, Indian Institute of Information Technology Vadodara (IIITV), Institute of Infrastructure Technology Research and Management (IITRAM), Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology (DA-IICT) also in Gandhinagar, Sardar Vallabhbhai National Institute of Technology (SVNIT) and P P Savani University in Surat, Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University (PDPU) in Gandhinagar, Nirma University in Ahmedabad, M.S. University in Vadodara, Marwadi Education Foundation's Group of Institutions (MEFGI) in Rajkot and Birla Vishwakarma Mahavidyalaya (BVM) in Vallabh Vidyanagar (a suburb in Anand district).

Mudra Institute of Communications Ahmedabad (MICA) is an institute for mass communication.

In addition, Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) is one of the leading sectoral institution in rural management. IRMA is a unique institution in the sense that it provides professional education to train managers for rural management. It is the only one of its kind in all Asia.

The National Institute of Design and development (NID) in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar is internationally acclaimed as one of the foremost multi-disciplinary institutions in the field of design education and research. Centre for Environmental Planning & Technology University, popularly known as (CEPT) is one of the best planning and architectural school not in India, but across the world; providing various technical and professional courses.

In the emerging area of legal education, a premier institution Gujarat National Law University was founded in the capital city Gandhinagar which started imparting education in 2004 and is ranked in top institutions in the country.

Lalubhai Dalpatbhai College of Engineering (LDCE) is also one of the top engineering college of the state.

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, is a premier university of Gujarat. It is one of the oldest universities of Gujarat and provides education in Faculty of Fine Arts, Engineering, Arts, Journalism, Education, Law, Social Work, Medicine, Science and Performing Arts. Originally known as the Baroda College of Science (established 1881), it became a university in 1949 after the independence of the country and later renamed after its benefactor Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III, the former ruler of Baroda State.

Gujarat University, Kadi Sarva Vishwavidyalaya, Sardar Patel University, Ahmedabad University, Saurashtra University, Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, Dharmsinh Desai University and Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University are also among reputed universities, affiliating many reputed colleges.

The Space Applications Centre (SAC) is an institution for space research and satellite communication in Ahmedabad, India, under the aegis of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Vikram Sarabhai, a renowned scientist, industrialist, and visionary Gujarati, played an important role in it. He also founded Physical Research Laboratory, a research institute encompasses Astrophysics, Solar System, and cosmic radiation. He also envisioned Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, one of the internationally reputed management research institute that is located in Gujarat's commercial capital Ahmedabad and is the top ranked management institutes in the country.[228][229]

Central Salt and Marine Chemicals Research Institute has been established under Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Government of India at Bhavnagar. It was inaugurated by Late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India on 10 April 1954, with a view to carry out research on marine salt, and salt from inland lakes and sub-soil brine. It is working on reverse osmosis, electro membrane process, salt and marine chemicals, analytical science, marine biotechnology, and other related fields. The Gujarat National Law University situated at Gandhinagar is the 5th Best Law School currently in India.

Gujarat Science City,[230] is a government initiative to draw more students towards education in science, which hosts India's first IMAX 3D theatre, an energy park, a hall of science, an amphitheatre, and dancing musical fountains among others. Institute of Management under Nirma University is constantly ranked among the top MBA colleges in India. International Institute of Management and Technical Studies affiliated with Gujarat Knowledge Society, European Association for Distance Learning, Association of Indian Management Schools and Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association has performed globally for its higher education certification courses for working professionals. IIMT STUDIES also launched GET SET GO programme in 2013 in affiliation with Gujarat Technological University and Gujarat Knowledge Society, Department of Technical Education-Government of Gujarat.[231][232][233][234][235] B.K. School of Business Management is ranked sixth in financial management. K. S. School of Business Management is also an MBA college in Gujarat University providing a five-year integrated MBA course. Shanti Business School in Ahmedabad is a business school offering a post-graduate diploma in management through a corporate citizenship initiative.

The Institute of Seismological Research (ISR) was established by the Science and Technology Department, Government of Gujarat, in 2003 and is registered as a society. ISR campus is at Raisan, Gandhinagar, on the banks of Sabarmati river. Aims and objectives include assigning optimum seismic factors for buildings in different regions and long-term assessment of potential. The ISR is the only institute in India fully dedicated to seismological research and is planned to be developed into a premier international institute in few years time.

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The culture of Bengal defines the cultural heritage of the Bengali people native to eastern regions of the Indian subcontinent, mainly what is today Bangladesh and the Indian states of West Bengal and Tripura, where they form the dominant ethnolinguistic group and the Bengali language is the official and primary language. Bengal has a recorded history of 1,400 years.[1]

The Bengalis are the dominant ethnolinguistic group. The Bengal region has been a historical melting point, blending indigenous traditions with cosmopolitan influences from pan-Indian

subcontinental empires. Dhaka (Dacca) became the capital of Mughal Bengal (Bengal Subah) and the commercial (financial) capital (1610-1757) of Mughal India. Dhaka is the largest and richest Bengali (Bangali) mega city in the world and also the 3rd largest and richest mega city in (Indian sub continent) after Mumbai (Bombay or MMR) and Delhi (NCR). Dhaka is a Beta (β) Global City (Moderate Economic Centre). As a part of the Bengal Presidency, Bengal also hosted the region's most advanced political and cultural centers during British rule.[1]

Bengal has produced leading figures of Indian classical music, including Alauddin Khan, Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan. Common musical instruments include the sitar, tabla and sarod. The Baul tradition is a unique regional folk heritage. The most prominent practitioner was Lalou Shah. Other folk music forms include Gombhira, Bhatiali and Bhawaiya (Jhumur). Folk music in Bengal is often accompanied by the ektara, a one-stringed instrument. Other instruments include the dotara, dhol, bamboo flute, and tabla. Songs written by Rabindranath Tagore (Rabindra Sangeet) and Kazi Nazrul Islam (Nazrul geeti) are highly popular. Bangladesh is the center of Bangla rock, as well as indie, Sufi rock and fusion folk music.

Bengali theater traces its roots to Sanskrit drama under the Gupta Empire in the 4th century CE. It includes narrative forms, song and dance forms, supra-personae forms, performance with scroll paintings, puppet theatre and the processional forms like the Jatra.

Bengal has an extremely rich heritage of dancing dating back to antiquity. It includes classical, folk and martial dance traditions.[2][3] Dances in Bengal includes-

Miniature and scroll painting flourished in Mughal Bengal. Kalighat painting or Kalighat Pat originated in 19th-century Calcutta, in the vicinity of Kalighat Kali Temple of Kolkata, and from being items of souvenir taken by the visitors to the Kali temple, the paintings over a period of time developed as a distinct school of Indian painting. From the depiction of Hindu gods other mythological characters, the Kalighat paintings developed to reflect a variety of themes.

Modern painting emerged in Calcutta with the Bengal school. East Pakistan developed its own contemporary painting tradition under Zainul Abedin. Modern Bangladeshi art has produced many of South Asia's leading painters, including SM Sultan, Mohammad Kibria, Shahabuddin Ahmed, Kanak Chanpa Chakma, Kafil Ahmed, Saifuddin Ahmed, Qayyum Chowdhury, Rashid Choudhury, Quamrul Hassan, Rafiqun Nabi and Syed Jahangir among others.[5]

The earliest fortified cities in the region include Wari-Bateshwar, Chandraketugarh and Mahasthangarh. Bengal has a glorious legacy of terracotta architecture from the ancient and medieval periods. The architecture of the Bengal Sultanate saw a distinct style of domed mosques with complex niche pillars that had no minarets. Ivory, pottery and brass were also widely used in Bengali art. The style includes many mosques, temples, palaces, forts, monasteries and caravanserais. Mughal Dhaka was known as the City of Mosques and the Venice of the East. Indo-Saracenic architecture flourished during the British period, particularly among the landed gentry. British Calcutta was known as the City of Palaces. Modernist terracotta architecture in South Asia by architects like Muzharul Islam and Louis Kahn.

Bengali village housing is noted as the origin of the bungalow.

Ancient Bengal was home to the Pala-Sena school of Sculptural Art.[6] Ivory sculptural art flourished across the region under the Nawabs of Bengal. Notable modernist sculptors include Novera Ahmed and Nitun Kundu.

Muslin production in Bengal dates back to the 4th century BCE. The region exported the fabric to Ancient Greece and Rome.[6]

Bengali silk was known as Ganges Silk in the 13th century Republic of Venice.[7] Mughal Bengal was a major silk exporter. The Bengali silk industry declined after the growth of Japanese silk production. Rajshahi silk continues to be produced in northern Bangladesh. Murshidabad and Malda are the centers of the silk industry in West Bengal.

After the reopening of European trade with medieval India, Mughal Bengal became the world's foremost muslin exporter in the 17th century. Mughal-era Dhaka was a center of the worldwide muslin trade.

Mughal Bengal's most celebrated artistic tradition was the weaving of Jamdani motifs on fine muslin, which is now classified by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage. Jamdani motifs were similar to Iranian textile art (buta motifs) and Western textile art (paisley). The Jamdani weavers in Dhaka received imperial patronage.[8][9]

Modern Bangladesh is one of the world's largest textile producers, with a large cotton based ready made garments industry.

In rural areas, older women wear the shari with hijab while the younger generation wear the selwar kamiz with hijab, both with simple designs. In urban areas, the selwar kamiz and the combination of niqab-burqa-chador is more popular, and has distinct fashionable designs. Islamic clothing is really common among Bengali Muslims. World Hijab Day is an annual event founded by a Bengali-American, Nazma Khan in 2013, taking place on 1 February each year. Traditionally urban Bengali men wore the jama, though costumes such as the panjabi[10] with selwar or pyjama have become more popular within the past three centuries. The popularity of the fotua, a shorter upper garment, is undeniable among Bengalis in casual environments. The lungi and gamcha are a common combination for rural Bengali men. During special occasions, Bengali women commonly wear either sharis, selwar kamizes or abayas, covering their hair with hijab or orna; and men wear a panjabi, also covering their hair with a tupi, toqi, pagri or rumal.

Jama is the long, loose fitting, stitched garment of Bengali Women. Jama was originally worn by Bengali Women in the Mughal court as a symbol of status and wealth. Over time, it has now been more widely adopted by women in other parts of Bengal, including Bangladesh. Jama may also fulfill some interpretations of Islamic rules. Jama is similar to dress.

At Jorashanko (Rabindranath Tagore's home in Kolkata) different drapes of sari were improvised on so that women could step out of the andarmahal (inner house) where they were relegated. This had Tagore's sister-in-law, Jnanadanandini Devi, bringing the Parsi way of draping the sari from Mumbai to Bengal.[11] Chitra Deb, in her book 'Thakurbarir Andarmahal', describes the entire process of how the Parsi sari was adapted into Bengali culture.[12] Before Devi's invention, Bengali women used to wear sari without a blouse underneath and stay in "Andarmahal" to follow "purdah", a concept of modesty bought by Muslims native to Bengal and was followed by both Hindus and Bengali Muslims. Dhakai is another attire of women unique to Bengal. There are several variations of Shari (Bengali Sari) such as Jamdani, Tant, Muslin, Tangail, Kantha, Rajshahi Silk, Dhakai reshom, Baluchari etc. Bengali women also wear Fotua, Bengali Kurti and Kapor which are also unique to Bangladesh. Men wear Gamucha, Panjabi, Lungi, Mujib Coat, Genji and Kaabli which are unique to the men of Bangladesh.

Bengal has produced several of South Asia's leading fashion designers, including Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Bibi Russell, Rukhsana Esrar Runi and Rina Latif.

Rice is the staple food of Bengal. Bhortas (lit-"mashed") are a really common type of food used as an additive too rice. there are several types of Bhortas such as Ilish bhorta shutki bhorta, begoon bhorta and more. Fish and other seafood are also important because Bengal is a riverine region.

Some fishes like puti (*Puntius* species) are fermented. Fish curry is prepared with fish alone or in combination with vegetables. Shutki maach is made using the age-old method of preservation where the food item is dried in the sun and air, thus removing the water content. This allows for preservation that can make the fish last for months, even years in Bangladesh.[13]

Bengali pickles are an integral part of Bengali cuisine, adding a burst of flavors to meals. These pickles are made by preserving various fruits, vegetables, and even fish or meat in a mixture of spices, oil, and vinegar or lemon juice, which is why pickles of Bangladesh are unique to the country.

Side Dishes or (Torkari) are commonly eaten with meals in Bengal which are cooked with special Bengali spices. The main dish is almost always served with side dishes. Some typical Bengali dishes are Shorshe Ilish, Macher Jhol, Kala bhuna, Shutki Shira, Bhorta, Chingri Malaikari, Daab Chingri, Katlar kaliya, Dal, Padar jhal, Ilish Pulao, Chingri Pulao, Rui Pulao, Haji biryani, etc. Bengali sweets like Chomchom, Rasmalai, Mishti Doi, Curd of Bogra, Muktagachhar monda, Sandesh, Roshogolla, Chhanamukhi and Pithas are even popular outside of Bangladesh. Pitha and Shemai originally came from the Bengali Muslim community but most of the other Bengali sweets which are made with chenna are usually invented by Hindu and Jain sweets makers of Bengal.

Shutki maach is made using the age-old method of preservation where the food item is dried in the sun and air, thus removing the water content. This allows for preservation that can make the fish last for months, even years in Bangladesh.[14]

Kolkata is the only city in India to have a tram network. The trams are claimed to slow down other traffic, leading to groups who currently voice abolishing the trams, though the environment-friendliness and the old charm of the trams attract many people.

Kolkata was also the first city in South Asia to have an underground railway system that started operating from 1984. It is considered to have the status of a zonal railway. The metered-cabs are mostly of the brand "Ambassador" manufactured by Hindustan Motors (now out of production). These taxis are painted with yellow colour, symbolising the transport tradition of Kolkata.

Bangladesh has the world's largest number of cycle rickshaws. Its capital city Dhaka is known as the Rickshaw Capital of the World. The country's rickshaws display colorful rickshaw art, with each city and region have their own distinct style. Rickshaw driving provides employment for nearly a million Bangladeshis. Historically, Kolkata has been home to the hand-pulled rickshaw. Attempts to ban its use have largely failed.

There are 150 different types of boats and canoes in Bengal. The region was renowned for shipbuilding in the medieval period, when its shipyards catered to major powers in Eurasia, including the Mughals and Ottomans. The types of timber used in boat making are from local woods Jarul (*dipterocarpus turbinatus*), sal (*shorea robusta*), sundari (*heritiera fomes*) and Burma teak (*tectons grandis*).

Bengali weddings includes many rituals and ceremonies that can span several days. Although Muslim and Hindu marriages have their distinctive religious rituals, there are many common secular rituals.[15][16] The Gaye Holud ceremony is held in Bengali weddings of all faiths.

Major organisations responsible for funding and promoting Bengali culture are:

Both Bangladesh and West Bengal have many festivals and fairs throughout the year.

Kolkata and Dhaka are the centers of Bengali cinema. The region's film industry is notable for the history of art films in South Asia, including the works of Academy Award winning director Satyajit Ray and the Cannes Film Festival award-winning director Tareque Masud.

Traditional Bengali sports consisted of various martial arts and various racing sports, though the British-introduced sports of cricket and football are now most popular amongst Bengalis.

Lathi khela (stick-fighting) was historically a method of duelling as a way to protect or take land and others' possessions. The Zamindars of Bengal would hire lathials (trained stick-fighters) as a form of security and a means to forcefully collect tax from tenants.[17] Nationwide lathi khela competitions used to take place annually in Kushtia up until 1989, though its practice is now diminishing and being restricted to certain festivals and celebrations.[18] Chamdi is a variant of lathi khela popular in North Bengal during festivities such as Eid and Shab e Barat. Kushti (wrestling) is also another popular fighting sport and it has developed regional forms such as Jobbarer boli khela (wrestling of Jobbar/the great) and Mokkar Boli Khela (wrestling of Mecca) which was introduced in 1889 by Zamindar Qadir Bakhsh of Chittagong. A merchant known as Abdul Jabbar Saodagar adapted the sport in 1907 with the intention of cultivating a sport that would prepare Bengalis in fighting against British colonials.[19][20] In 1972, a popular contact team sport called Kabadi was made the national sport of Bangladesh. It is a regulated version of the rural Hadudu sport which had no fixed rules. The Amateur Kabaddi Federation of Bangladesh was formed in 1973.[21] Butthan, a 20th-century Bengali martial arts invented by Grandmaster Mak Yuree, is now practiced in different parts of the world under the International Butthan Federation.[22]

The Nouka Baich is a Bengali boat racing competition which takes place during and after the rainy season when much of the land goes under water. The long canoes were referred to as khel nao (meaning playing boats) and the use of cymbals to accompany the singing was common. Different types of boats are used in different parts of Bengal.[23] Horse racing was patronised most notably by the Dighapatia Rajas in Natore, and their Chalanbeel Horse Races have continued to take place annually for centuries.

The oldest native football clubs of Bengal was Mohun Bagan A.C., which was founded in 1889, and Mohammedan SC, founded in 1891. Mohun Bagan's first major victory was in 1911, when the team defeated an English club known as the Yorkshire Regiment to win the IFA Shield. Since then, more and more clubs emerged in West Bengal, such as Mohun Bagan's main rival SC East Bengal, a team of East Bengali Hindus who had migrated to West Bengal following the 1947 Partition of India. The rivalry also portrayed the societal problems at that time as many of the Mohun Bagan fans were Ghotis who hated the East Bengali immigrants, though Hindu. Mohammed Salim of Calcutta became the first South Asian to play for a European football club in 1936.[32] In his two appearances for Celtic F.C., he played the entire matches barefoot and scored several goals.[33] In 2015, Hamza Choudhury became the first Bengali to play in the Premier League and is predicted to be the first British Asian to play for the England national football team.[34]

Bengalis are very competitive when it comes to board and home games such as Pachisi and its modern counterpart Ludo, as well as Latim, Carrom Board, Chor-Pulish, Kanamachi and Chess. Rani Hamid is one of the most successful chess players in the world, winning championships in Asia and Europe multiple times. Ramnath Biswas was a revolutionary soldier who embarked on three world tours on a bicycle in the 19th century. Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, Soumya Sarkar, Liton Das from Bangladesh and Pankaj Roy, Sourav Ganguly, Manoj Tiwary, Wriddhiman Saha, Mohammed Shami from West Bengal are internationally known cricketers .[35] Local games include sports such as Kho Kho and Kabaddi, the latter being the national sport of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's Prothom Alo is the largest circulated Bengali newspaper in the world. It is followed by Ananda Bazar Patrika, which has the largest circulation for a single-edition, regional language newspaper in India. Other prominent Bengali newspapers include the Ittefaq, Jugantor, Samakal, Janakantha and Bartaman. Major English-language newspapers in Bangladesh include The Daily Star, New Age, and the weekly Holiday. The Statesman, published from Kolkata, is the region's oldest English-language publication.

Bengal has one of the most developed literary traditions in Asia. A descent of ancient Sanskrit and Magadhi Prakrit, the Bengali language evolved circa 1000–1200 CE under the Pala Empire and the Sena dynasty. It became an official court language of the Sultanate of Bengal and absorbed influences from Arabic and Persian. Middle Bengali developed secular literature in the 16th and 17th centuries. It was also spoken in Arakan. The Bengali Renaissance in Calcutta developed the modern standardized form of the language in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Rabindranath Tagore became the first Bengali writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913, and was also the first non-European Nobel laureate. Kazi Nazrul Islam became known as the Rebel Poet of British India. After the partition of Bengal, a distinct literary culture developed in East Bengal, which later became East Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The works of ancient philosophers from Bengal have been preserved at libraries in Tibet, China and Central Asia. These include the works of Atisa and Tilopa.[36] Medieval Hindu philosophy featured the works of Chaitanya.

Sufi philosophy was highly influential in Islamic Bengal. Prominent Sufi practitioners were disciples of Jalaluddin Rumi, Abdul-Qadir Gilani and Moinuddin Chishti. One of the most revered Sufi saints of Bengal is Shah Jalal.

Text extracted from URL 13:

Lores

Genres

Institutions

Awards

Folk genres

Devotional

Classical genres

Modern genres

People

Instruments

Dance

Theater

Organizations

People

Bengalis (Bengali: বাঙালি, বাঙ্গালী [baŋali, baŋgali] [ⓘ]), also rendered as Bangalee,[16][17] are an Indo-Aryan ethnolinguistic group originating from and culturally affiliated with the Bengal region of South Asia. The current population is divided between the sovereign country Bangladesh and the Indian states of West Bengal and Tripura, Barak Valley, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Jharkhand and part of Meghalaya and Manipur.[18] Most speak Bengali, a language from the Indo-Aryan language family. Sub-section 2 of Article 6 of the Constitution of Bangladesh states, "The people of Bangladesh shall be known as Bengalis as a nation and as Bangladeshis as citizens." [19]

Bengalis are the third-largest ethnic group in the world, after the Han Chinese and Arabs.[20] Thus, they are the largest ethnic group within the Indo-Europeans and the largest ethnic group in South Asia. Apart from Bangladesh and the Indian states of West Bengal, Tripura, Manipur, and Assam's Barak Valley, Bengali-majority populations also reside in India's union territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, with significant populations in the Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh, Delhi, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Mizoram, Nagaland and Uttarakhand as well as Nepal's Province No. 1.[21][22] The global Bengali diaspora (Bangladeshi Bengalis and Indian Bengalis) have well-established communities in the Middle East, Pakistan, Myanmar, the United Kingdom, the United States, Malaysia, Italy, Singapore, Maldives, Canada, Australia, Japan and South Korea.

Bengalis are a diverse group in terms of religious affiliations and practices. Today, approximately 68% are adherents of Islam with a large Hindu minority and sizeable communities of Christians and Buddhists. Bengali Muslims, who live mainly in Bangladesh, primarily belong to the Sunni denomination. Bengali Hindus, who live primarily in West Bengal, Tripura, Assam's Barak Valley, Jharkhand and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, generally follow Shaktism or Vaishnavism, in addition to worshipping regional deities.[23][24][25] There also exist small numbers of Bengali Christians, a large number of whom are descendants of Portuguese voyagers, as well as Bengali Buddhists, the bulk of whom belong to the Bengali-speaking Barua group in Chittagong and Rakhine (who should not be confused with other Buddhists of Bangladesh that belong to different ethnic groups).

Like every large culture group in history, Bengalis have greatly influenced and contributed to diverse fields, notably the arts and architecture, language, folklore, literature, politics, military, business, science and technology.

The term Bengali is generally used to refer to someone whose linguistic, cultural or ancestral origins are from Bengal. The Indo-Aryan Bengalis are ethnically differentiated from the non-Indo-Aryan tribes inhabiting Bengal. Their ethnonym, Bangali, along with the native name of the language and region Bangla, are both derived from *Baṅgālah*, the Persian word for the region. Prior to Muslim expansion, there was no unitary territory by this name as the region was instead divided into numerous geopolitical divisions. The most prominent of these were *Vaṅga* (from which *Baṅgālah* is thought to ultimately derive from) in the south, *Rāṛha* in the west, *Puṇḍravardhana* and *Varendra* in

the north, and Samatāṭa and Harikela in the east. In ancient times, the people of this region identified themselves with respect to these divisions. Vedic texts such as the Mahābhārata makes mention of the Puṇḍra people.

The historic land of Vaṅga (bôngô in Bengali), situated in present-day Barisal,[26] is considered by early historians of the Abrahamic and Dharmic traditions to have originated from a man who had settled in the area though it is often dismissed as legend. Early Abrahamic genealogists had suggested that this man was Bang, a son of Hind who was the son of Ham (son of Noah).[27][28][29] In contrast, the Mahabharata, Puranas and the Harivamsha state that Vaṅga was the founder of the Vaṅga Kingdom and one of the adopted sons of King Vali. The land of Vaṅga later came to be known as Vaṅgāla (Bôngal) and its earliest reference is in the Nesari plates (805 CE) of Govinda III which speak of Dharmapāla as its king. The records of Rajendra Chola I of the Chola dynasty, who invaded Bengal in the 11th century, speak of Govindachandra as the ruler of Vaṅgāladeśa (a Sanskrit cognate to the word Bangladesh, which was historically a synonymous endonym of Bengal).[30][31] 16th-century historian Abu'l-Fazl ibn Mubarak mentions in his 'Ain-i-Akbarī that the addition of the suffix "al" came from the fact that the ancient rajahs of the land raised mounds of earth 10 feet high and 20 in breadth in lowlands at the foot of the hills which were called "al".[32] This is also mentioned in Ghulam Husain Salim's Riyāz us-Salāṭīn.[27]

In 1352 CE, a Muslim nobleman by the name of Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah united the region into a single political entity known as the Bengal Sultanate. Proclaiming himself as Shāh-i-Bangālīyān,[33] it was in this period that the Bengali language also gained state patronage and corroborated literary development.[34][35] Thus, Ilyas Shah had effectively formalised the socio-linguistic identity of the region's inhabitants as Bengali, by state, culture and language.[36]

Archaeologists have discovered remnants of a 4,000-year-old Chalcolithic civilisation such as Dihar[37] and Pandu Rajar Dhibi[38] in the greater Bengal region, and believe the finds are one of the earliest signs of settlement in the region.[39] However, evidence of much older Palaeolithic human habitations were found in the form of a stone implement and a hand axe in the upper Gandeshwari, Middle Dwarakeswar, Upper Kangsabati, Upper Tarafeni and Middle Subarnarekha valleys of the Indian state West Bengal,[40] and Rangamati and Feni districts of Bangladesh.[41] Evidence of 42,000 years old human habitation has been found at the foothills of the Ajodhya Hills in West Bengal.[42][43][44] Hatpara on the west bank of Bhagirathi River has evidence of human settlements dating back to around 15,000-20,000 years.[45]

Artefacts suggest that the Chandraketugarh, which flourished in present-day North 24 Parganas, date as far back as 600 BC to 300 BC,[46] and Wari-Bateshwar civilisation, which flourished in present-day Narsingdi, date as far back as 400 BC to 100 BC.[47][48] Not far from the rivers, the port city of Wari-Bateshwar, and the riverside port city of the Chandraketugarh,[49] are believed to have been engaged in foreign trade with Ancient Rome, Southeast Asia and other regions.[49] The people of this civilisation live in bricked homes, walked on wide roads, used silver coins[50] and iron weaponry among many other things. The two cities are considered to be the oldest cities in Bengal.[51]

It is thought that a man named Vanga settled in the area around 1000 BCE founding the Vanga Kingdom in southern Bengal. The Atharvaveda and the Hindu epic Mahabharata mentions this kingdom, along with the Pundra Kingdom in northern Bengal. The spread of Mauryan territory and promotion of Buddhism by its emperor Ashoka cultivated a growing Buddhist society among the people of present-day Bengal from the 2nd century BCE. Mauryan monuments as far as the Great Stupa of Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh mentioned the people of this region as adherents of Buddhism.

The Buddhists of the Bengal region built and used dozens of monasteries, and were recognised for their religious commitments as far as Nagarjunakonda in South India.[52]

One of the earliest foreign references to Bengal is the mention of a land ruled by the king Xandrammes named Gangaridai by the Greeks around 100 BCE. The word is speculated to have come from Gangahrd ('Land with the Ganges in its heart') in reference to an area in Bengal.[53] Later from the 3rd to the 6th centuries CE, the kingdom of Magadha served as the seat of the Gupta Empire.

One of the first recorded independent kings of Bengal was Shashanka,[54] reigning around the early 7th century, who is generally thought to have originated from Magadha, Bihar, just west of Bengal.[55] After a period of anarchy, a native ruler called Gopala came into power in 750 CE. He originated from Varendra in northern Bengal,[56] and founded the Buddhist Pala Empire.[57] Atiśa, a renowned Buddhist teacher from eastern Bengal, was instrumental in the revival of Buddhism in Tibet and also held the position of Abbot at the Vikramashila monastery in Bihar.

The Pala Empire enjoyed relations with the Srivijaya Empire, the Tibetan Empire, and the Arab Abbasid Caliphate. Islam first appeared in Bengal during Pala rule, as a result of increased trade between Bengal and the Middle East.[58] The people of Samatata, in southeastern Bengal, during the 10th century were of various religious backgrounds. Tilopa was a prominent Hindu priest from modern-day Chittagong, though Samatata was ruled by the Buddhist Chandra dynasty. During this time, the Arab geographer Al-Masudi and author of *The Meadows of Gold*, travelled to the region where he noticed a Muslim community of inhabitants residing in the region.[59] In addition to trade, Islam was also being introduced to the people of Bengal through the migration of Sufi missionaries prior to conquest. The earliest known Sufi missionaries were Syed Shah Surkhul Antia and his students, most notably Shah Sultan Rumi, in the 11th century. Rumi settled in present-day Netrokona, Mymensingh where he influenced the local ruler and population to embrace Islam.

The Pala dynasty was followed by a shorter reign of the Hindu Sena Empire. Subsequent Muslim conquests helped spread Islam throughout the region.[60] Bakhtiyar Khalji, a Turkic general, defeated Lakshman Sen of the Sena dynasty and conquered large parts of Bengal. Consequently, the region was ruled by dynasties of sultans and feudal lords under the Bengal Sultanate for the next few hundred years. Many of the people of Bengal began accepting Islam through the influx of missionaries[citation needed] following the initial conquest. Sultan Balkhi and Shah Makhdum Rupos settled in the present-day Rajshahi Division in northern Bengal, preaching to the communities there. A community of 13 Muslim families headed by Burhanuddin also existed in the northeastern Hindu city of Srihatta (Sylhet), claiming their descendants to have arrived from Chittagong.[61] By 1303, hundreds of Sufi preachers led by Shah Jalal, who some biographers claim was a Turkistan-born Bengali,[62] aided the Muslim rulers in Bengal to conquer Sylhet, turning the town into Jalal's headquarters for religious activities. Following the conquest, Jalal disseminated his followers across different parts of Bengal to spread Islam, and became a household name among Bengali Muslims.

The establishment of a single united Bengal Sultanate in 1352 by Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah finally gave rise to a "Bengali" socio-linguistic identity.[33] The Ilyas Shahi dynasty acknowledged Muslim scholarship, and this transcended ethnic background. Usman Serajuddin, also known as Akhi Siraj Bengali, was a native of Gaur in western Bengal and became the Sultanate's court scholar during Ilyas Shah's reign.[63][64][65] Alongside Persian and Arabic, the sovereign Sunni Muslim nation-state also enabled the language of the Bengali people to gain patronage and support, contrary to previous states which exclusively favoured Sanskrit, Pali and Persian.[34][35] The born-Hindu Sultan Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah funded the construction of Islamic institutions as far as Mecca and

Madina in the Middle East. The people of Arabia came to know these institutions as al-Madaris al-Bangaliyyah (Bengali madrasas).

The Mughal Empire conquered Bengal in the 16th century, ending the independent Sultanate of Bengal and defeating Bengal's rebellion Baro-Bhuiyan chieftains. Mughal general Man Singh conquered parts of Bengal including Dhaka during the time of Emperor Akbar and a few Rajput tribes from his army permanently settled around Dhaka and surrounding lands, integrating into Bengali society.[66] Akbar's preaching of the syncretic Din-i Ilahi, was described as a blasphemy by the Qadi of Bengal, which caused huge controversies in South Asia. In the 16th century, many Ulama of the Bengali Muslim intelligentsia migrated to other parts of the subcontinent as teachers and instructors of Islamic knowledge such as Ali Sher Bengali to Ahmedabad, Shah Manjhan to Sarangpur, Usman Bengali to Sambhal and Yusuf Bengali to Burhanpur.[67]

By the early 17th century, Islam Khan I had conquered all of Bengal and was integrated into a province known as the Bengal Subah. It was the largest subdivision of the Mughal Empire, as it also encompassed parts of Bihar and Odisha, between the 16th and 18th centuries.[citation needed] Described by some as the "Paradise of Nations"[68] and the "Golden Age of Bengal", [69] Bengalis enjoyed some of the highest living standards and real wages in the world at the time.[70] Singlehandedly accounting for 40% of Dutch imports from Asia,[71] eastern Bengal was globally prominent in industries such as textile manufacturing and shipbuilding,[72] and was a major exporter of silk and cotton textiles, steel, saltpetre, and agricultural and industrial produce in the world.

Mughal Bengal eventually became a quasi-independent monarchy state ruled by the Nawabs of Bengal in 1717. Already observing the proto-industrialization, it made direct significant contribution to the first Industrial Revolution[73][74][75][76] (substantially textile manufacture during the Industrial Revolution).

Bengal became the basis of the Anglo-Mughal War.[77][78] After the weakening of the Mughal Empire with the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, Bengal was ruled independently by three dynasties of Nawabs until 1757, when the region was annexed by the East India Company after the Battle of Plassey.

In Bengal, effective political and military power was transferred from the Afshar regime to the British East India Company around 1757–65.[79] Company rule in India began under the Bengal Presidency. Calcutta was named the capital of British India in 1772. The presidency was run by a military-civil administration, including the Bengal Army, and had the world's sixth earliest railway network. Great Bengal famines struck several times during colonial rule, notably the Great Bengal famine of 1770 and Bengal famine of 1943, each killing millions of Bengalis.

Under British rule, Bengal experienced deindustrialisation.[75] Discontent with the situation, numerous rebellions and revolts were attempted by the Bengali people. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was initiated on the outskirts of Calcutta, and spread to Dhaka, Jalpaiguri and Agartala, in solidarity with revolts in North India. Havildar Rajab Ali commanded the rebels in Chittagong as far as Sylhet and Manipur. The failure of the rebellion led to the abolishment of the Mughal court completely and direct rule by the British Raj.

Many Bengali labourers were taken as coolies to the British colonies in the Caribbean during the 1830s. Workers from Bengal were chosen because they could easily assimilate to the climate of British Guyana, which was similar to that of Bengal.

Swami Vivekananda is considered a key figure in the introduction of Vedanta and Yoga in Europe and America,[80] and is credited with raising interfaith awareness, and bringing Hinduism to the status of a world religion during the 1800s.[81] On the other hand, Ram Mohan Roy led a socio-Hindu reformist movement known as Brahmoism which called for the abolishment of sati (widow sacrifice), child marriage, polytheism and idol worship.[82][83] In 1804, he wrote the Persian book *Tuḥfat al-Muwahḥidīn* (A Gift to the Monotheists) and spent the next two decades attacking the Kulin Brahmin bastions of Bengal.[84]

Bengal played a major role in the Indian independence movement, in which revolutionary groups such as Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar were dominant. Many of the early proponents of the independence struggle, and subsequent leaders in the movement were Bengalis such as Shamsheer Gazi, Chowdhury Abu Torab Khan, Hada Miah and Mada Miah, the Pagal Panthis led by Karim Shah and Tipu Shah, Haji Shariatullah and Dudu Miyan of the Faraizi movement, Titumir, Ali Muhammad Shibli, Alimuddin Ahmad, Prafulla Chaki, Surendranath Banerjee, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, Bagha Jatin, Khudiram Bose, Sarojini Naidu, Aurobindo Ghosh, Rashbehari Bose, and Sachindranath Sanyal.

Leaders such as Subhas Chandra Bose did not subscribe to the view that non-violent civil disobedience was the best way to achieve independence, and were instrumental in armed resistance against the British. Bose was the co-founder and leader of the Japanese-aligned Indian National Army (distinct from the army of British India) that challenged British forces in several parts of India. He was also the head of state of a parallel regime, the Azad Hind. A number of Bengalis died during the independence movement and many were imprisoned in the notorious Cellular Jail in the Andaman Islands.

The first partition in 1905 divided the Bengal region in British India into two provinces for administrative and development purposes. However, the partition stoked Hindu nationalism. This in turn led to the formation of the All India Muslim League in Dhaka in 1906 to represent the growing aspirations of the Muslim population. The partition was annulled in 1912 after protests by the Indian National Congress and Hindu Mahasabha.

The breakdown of Hindu-Muslim unity in India drove the Muslim League to adopt the Lahore Resolution in 1943, calling the creation of "independent states" in eastern and northwestern British India. The resolution paved the way for the Partition of British India based on the Radcliffe Line in 1947, despite attempts to form a United Bengal state that was opposed by many people.

The rise of self-determination and Bengali nationalism movements in East Bengal, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This eventually culminated in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War against the Pakistani military junta. The war caused millions of East Bengali refugees to take shelter in neighbouring India, especially the Indian state of West Bengal, with Calcutta, the capital of West Bengal, becoming the capital-in-exile of the Provisional Government of Bangladesh. The Mukti Bahini guerrilla forces waged a nine-month war against the Pakistani military. The conflict ended after the Indian Armed Forces intervened on the side of Bangladeshi forces in the final two weeks of the war, which ended with the surrender of East Pakistan and the liberation of Dhaka on 16 December 1971. Thus, the newly independent People's Republic of Bangladesh was born from what was previously the East Pakistan province of Pakistan.

Bengalis constitute the largest ethnic group in Bangladesh, at approximately 98% of the nation's inhabitants.[85] The Census of India does not recognise racial or ethnic groups within India,[86] the CIA Factbook estimated that there are 100 million Bengalis in India constituting 7% of the country's

total population. In addition to West Bengal, Bengalis form the demographic majority in Assam's Barak Valley and Lower region as well as parts of Manipur.[18] The state of Tripura as well as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands union territory, which lies in the Bay of Bengal, are also home to a Bengali-majority population, most of whom are descendants of Hindus from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) that migrated there following the 1947 Partition of India.[87]: 3–4 [88][89] Bengali migration to the latter archipelago was also boosted by subsequent state-funded Colonisation Schemes by the Government of India.[90][91]

Bengali ethnic descent and emigrant communities are found primarily in other parts of the subcontinent, the Middle East and the Western World. Substantial populations descended from Bengali immigrants exist in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United Kingdom where they form established communities of over 1 million people. The majority of the overseas Bengali diaspora are Muslims as the act of seafaring was traditionally prohibited in Hinduism; a taboo known as *kala pani* (black/dirty water).[92]

The introduction of Islam to the Bengali people has generated a connection to the Arabian Peninsula, as Muslims are required to visit the land once in their lifetime to complete the Hajj pilgrimage. Several Bengali sultans funded Islamic institutions in the Hejaz, which popularly became known by the Arabs as Bengali madrasas. As a result of the British conquest of Bengal, some Bengalis decided to emigrate to Arabia.[93] Notable examples include Mawlana Murad, an instructor of Islamic sciences based in Mecca in the early 1800s,[94] and Najib Ali Choudhury, a participant of the Battle of Shamli.[95] Notable people of Bengali-origin in the Middle East include the renowned author and journalist Ahmad Abd al-Ghafur Attar of Saudi Arabia and Qur'an translator Zohurul Hoque from Oman. The family of Princess Sarvath al-Hassan, wife of Jordanian prince Hassan bin Talal, are descended from the Suhrawardy family of Midnapore.[96]

Earliest records of Bengalis in the European continent date back to the reign of King George III of England during the 16th century. One such example is I'tisam-ud-Din, a Bengali Muslim cleric from Nadia in western Bengal, who arrived to Europe in 1765 with his servant Muhammad Muqim as a diplomat for the Mughal Empire.[97] Another example during this period is of James Achilles Kirkpatrick's hookah-bardar (hookah servant/preparer) who was said to have robbed and cheated Kirkpatrick, making his way to England and stylising himself as the Prince of Sylhet. The man, presumably from Sylhet in eastern Bengal, was waited upon by the Prime Minister of Great Britain William Pitt the Younger, and then dined with the Duke of York before presenting himself in front of the King.[98] Today, the British Bangladeshis are a naturalised community in the United Kingdom, running 90% of all South Asian cuisine restaurants and having established numerous ethnic enclaves across the country – most prominent of which is Banglatown in East London.[99]

An important and unifying characteristic of Bengalis is that most of them use Bengali as their native tongue, believed to belong to the Indo-Iranian language family.[100] With about 226 million native and about 300 million total speakers worldwide, Bengali is one of the most spoken languages, ranked sixth in the world,[101][102] and is also used a lingua franca among other ethnic groups and tribes living within and around the Bengal region. Bengali is generally written using the Bengali script and evolved circa 1000–1200 CE from Magadhi Prakrit, thus bearing similarities to ancient languages such as Pali. Its closest modern relatives may include other Eastern Indo-Aryan languages such as Assamese, Odia and the Bihari languages. Though Bengali may have a historic legacy of borrowing vocabulary from languages such as Persian and Sanskrit,[100] modern borrowings primarily come from the English language.

Various forms of the language are in use today and provide an important force for Bengali cohesion. These distinct forms can be sorted into three categories. The first is Classical Bengali (সাধু ভাষা Śādhu Bhaśa), which was a historical form restricted to literary usage up until the late British period. The second is Standard Bengali (চলিত ভাষা Čôlitô Bhaśa or শুদ্ধ ভাষা Śuddho Bhaśa), which is the modern literary form, and is based upon the dialects of the divided Nadia region (partitioned between Nadia and Kushtia). It is used today in writing and in formal speaking, for example, prepared speeches, some radio broadcasts, and non-entertainment content. The third and largest category by speakers would be Colloquial Bengali (আঞ্চলিক ভাষা Añčôlik Bhaśa or কথ্য ভাষা Kôththô Bhaśa). These refer to informal spoken language that varies by dialect from region to region.

Bengali people may be broadly classified into sub-groups predominantly based on dialect but also other aspects of culture:

Bengalis Hindus are socially stratified into four castes, called chôturbôrnô. The caste system derived from Hindu system of bôrnô (type, order, colour or class) and jāti (clan, tribe, community or sub-community), which divides people into four colours: White, Red, Yellow and Black. White people are Brahmôn, who are destined to be priests, teachers and preachers; Red people are Kkhôtriyô, who are destined to be kings, governors, warriors and soldiers; Yellow people are Bôisśô, who are born to be cattle herders, ploughmen, artisans and merchants; and Black people are Shūdrô, who are born to be labourers and servants to the people of twice-born caste.[106][107] People from all caste denominations exist among Bengali Hindus. Ram Mohan Roy, who was born Hindu, founded the Brahmo Samaj which attempted to abolish the practices of casteism, sati and child marriage among Hindus.[82]

The largest religions practised in Bengal are Islam and Hinduism.[111] Among all Bengalis, more than two-thirds are Muslims. The vast majority follow the Sunni denomination though there are also a small minority of Shias. The Bengali Muslims form a 90.4% majority in Bangladesh,[112] and a 30% minority among the ethnic Bengalis in the entirety of India.[113][114][115][116][117] In West Bengal, Bengali Muslims form a 66.88% majority in Murshidabad district, the former seat of the Shia Nawabs of Bengal, a 51.27% majority in Malda, which contains the erstwhile capitals of the Sunni Bengal Sultanate, and they also number over 5,487,759 in the 24 Parganas.[118]

Just less than a third of all Bengalis are Hindus (predominantly, the Shaktas and Vaishnavists),[23] and as per as 2011 census report, they form a 70.54% majority in West Bengal, 50% plurality in Southern Assam's Barak Valley region,[119] 60% majority in the India's North Eastern state of Tripura,[120] 30% plurality in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 9% significance population in India's Eastern state of Jharkhand[121] and 8.54% minority in Bangladesh.[122][116] In Bangladesh, Hindus are mostly concentrated in Sylhet Division where they constitute 17.8% of the population, and are mostly populated in Dhaka Division where they number over 2.5 million. Hindus form a 56.41% majority in Dacope Upazila, a 51.69% majority in Kotalipara Upazila and a 51.22% majority in Sullah Upazila. In terms of population, Bangladesh is the third largest Hindu populated country of the world, just after India and Nepal. The total Hindu population in Bangladesh exceeds the population of many Muslim majority countries like Yemen, Jordan, Tajikistan, Syria, Tunisia, Oman, and others.[123] Also the total Hindu population in Bangladesh is roughly equal to the total population of Greece and Belgium.[124] Bengali Hindus also worship regional deities.[23][24][25]

Other religious groups include Buddhists (comprising around 1% of the population in Bangladesh) and Bengali Christians.[111][117] A large number of the Bengali Christians are descendants of Portuguese voyagers. The bulk of Bengali Buddhists belong to the Bengali-speaking Baruas who reside in Chittagong and Rakhine.[citation needed]

Bengalis commemorate the Islamic holidays or Hindu festivals depending on their religion. People are dressed in their new traditional clothing.[citation needed] During the major Islamic holidays Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr, charity is distributed. Children are given clothes or money. Relatives, friends, and neighbours visit and exchange food and sweets.[125]

Significant cultural events or celebrations are also celebrated by the community annually. Pohela Boishakh is a celebration of the new year and arrival of summer in the Bengali calendar and is celebrated in April. It features a funfair, music and dance displays on stages, with people dressed in colourful traditional clothes, parading through the streets.[126] Festivals like Pahela Falgun (spring) are also celebrated regardless of their faith. The Bengalis of Dhaka celebrate Shakrain, an annual kite festival. The Nabanna is a Bengali celebration akin to the harvest festivals in the Western world.

The recorded history of art in Bengal can be traced to the 3rd century BCE, when terracotta sculptures were made in the region. The architecture of the Bengal Sultanate saw a distinct style of domed mosques with complex niche pillars that had no minarets. Ivory, pottery and brass were also widely used in Bengali art.

Bengali attire shares similarities with North Indian attire. In rural areas, older women wear the shari while the younger generation wear the selwar kamiz, both with simple designs. In urban areas, the selwar kamiz is more popular, and has distinct fashionable designs. Traditionally Bengali men wore the jama, though the costumes such as the panjabi with selwar or pyjama have become more popular within the past three centuries. The popularity of the fotua, a shorter upper garment, is undeniable among Bengalis in casual environments. The lungi and gamcha are a common combination for rural Bengali men. Islamic clothing is also very common in the region. During special occasions, Bengali women commonly wear either sharis, selwar kamizes or abayas, covering their hair with hijab or orna; and men wear a panjabi, also covering their hair with a tupi, toqi, pagri or rumal.

Mughal Bengal's most celebrated artistic tradition was the weaving of Jamdani motifs on fine muslin, which is now classified by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage. Jamdani motifs were similar to Iranian textile art (buta motifs) and Western textile art (paisley). The Jamdani weavers in Dhaka received imperial patronage.[127]

The traditional attire of Bengali Hindus is dhoti and kurta for men, and saree for women.

Bengal has an extremely rich heritage of performing arts dating back to antiquity. It includes narrative forms, songs and dances, performance with scroll paintings, puppet theatre and the processional forms like the Jatra and cinema. Performing of plays and Jatras were mentioned in Charyapada, written in between the 8th and 12th centuries.[128] Chhau dance is a unique martial, tribal and folk art of Bengal. Wearing an earthy and theatrical Chhau mask, the dance is performed to highlight the folklore and episodes from Shaktism, Ramayana – Mahabharata and other abstract themes.[129][130] In 2010 the Chhau dance was inscribed in the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.[131]

Bengali film is a glorious part of the history of world cinema. Hiralal Sen, who is considered a stalwart of Victorian era cinema, sowed the first seeds of Bengali cinema.[129][132] In 1898, Sen founded the first film production company, named Royal Bioscope Company in Bengal, and possibly the first in India.[133] Along with Nemai Ghosh, Tapan Sinha and others, the golden age of Bengali cinema begins with the hands of Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen and Ritwik Ghatak.[134] Chinnamul was recognised as the first neo-realist film in India that deals with the partition of India.[135][136] Ray's first cinema Pather Panchali (1955) achieved the highest-ranking Indian film on any Sight & Sound

poll at number 6 in the 1992 Critics' Poll.[137] It also topped the British Film Institute's user poll of Top 10 Indian Films of all time in 2002.[138] In the same year, *Titash Ekti Nadir Naam*, directed by Ritwik Ghatak with the joint production of India and Bangladesh, got the honour of best Bangladeshi films in the audience and critics' polls conducted by the British Film Institute.[139]

Bengali cuisine is the culinary style of the Bengali people. It has the only traditionally developed multi-course tradition from South Asia that is analogous in structure to the modern service à la russe style of French cuisine, with food served course-wise rather than all at once. The dishes of Bengal are often centuries old and reflect the rich history of trade in Bengal through spices, herbs, and foods. With an emphasis on fish and vegetables served with rice as a staple diet, Bengali cuisine is known for its subtle flavours, and its huge spread of confectioneries and milk-based desserts. One will find the following items in most dishes; mustard oil, fish, panch phoron, lamb, onion, rice, cardamom, yogurt and spices. The food is often served in plates which have a distinct flowery pattern often in blue or pink. Common beverages include shorbot, borhani, ghol, matha, lachhi, falooda, Rooh Afza, natural juices like Akher rosh, Khejur rosh, Aamrosh, Dudh cha, Taler rosh, Masala cha, as well as basil seed or tukma-based drinks.

Bangladeshi and West Bengali cuisines have many similarities, but also many unique traditions at the same time. These kitchens have been influenced by the history of the respective regions. The kitchens can be further divided into the urban and rural kitchens. Urban kitchens in Bangladesh consist of native dishes with foreign Mughal influence, for example the Haji biryani and Chevron Biryani of Old Dhaka.

Traditional Bengali Dishes:

Shorshe ilish, Biryani, Mezban, Khichuri, Macher Patodi, Chingri Malai Curry, Mishti Doi, etc. are some of the traditional dishes of the Bengali's.

Bengali literature denotes the body of writings in the Bengali language, which has developed over the course of roughly 13 centuries. The earliest extant work in Bengali literature can be found within the Charyapada, a collection of Buddhist mystic hymns dating back to the 10th and 11th centuries. They were discovered in the Royal Court Library of Nepal by Hara Prasad Shastri in 1907. The timeline of Bengali literature is divided into three periods – ancient (650–1200), medieval (1200–1800) and modern (after 1800). Medieval Bengali literature consists of various poetic genres, including Islamic epics by the likes of Abdul Hakim and Syed Sultan, secular texts by Muslim poets like Alaol and Vaishnava texts by the followers of Krishna Chaitanya. Bengali writers began exploring different themes through narratives and epics such as religion, culture, cosmology, love and history. Royal courts such as that of the Bengal Sultanate and the Kingdom of Mrauk U gave patronage to numerous Bengali writers such as Shah Muhammad Saghir, Daulat Qazi and Dawlat Wazir Bahram Khan.

The Bengali Renaissance refers to a socio-religious reform movement during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, centered around the city of Calcutta and predominantly led by upper-caste Bengali Hindus under the patronage of the British Raj who had created a reformed religion known as the Brahmo Samaj. Historian Nitish Sengupta describes the Bengal renaissance as having begun with Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1775–1833) and ended with Asia's first Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941).[76]

Though the Bengal Renaissance was predominantly representative to the Hindu community due to their relationship with British colonisers,[140] there were, nevertheless, examples of modern Muslim littérateurs in this period. Mir Mosharraf Hossain (1847–1911) was the first major writer in

the modern era to emerge from the Bengali Muslim society, and one of the finest prose writers in the Bengali language. His magnum opus *Bishad Shindhu* is a popular classic among Bengali readership. Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899–1976), notable for his activism and anti-British literature, was described as the Rebel Poet and is now recognised as the National poet of Bangladesh. Begum Rokeya (1880–1932) was the leading female Bengali author of this period, best known for writing *Sultana's Dream* which was subsequently translated into numerous languages.

A marriage among Bengalis often consists of multiple events rather than just one wedding. Arranged marriages are arguably the most common form of marriage among Bengalis and are considered traditional in society.[141] Marriage is seen as a union between two families rather than just two people,[142][143] and they play a large part in developing and maintaining social ties between families and villages. The two families are facilitated by Ghotoks (mutual matchmakers), and the first event is known as the Paka Dekha/Dekhadekhhi where all those involved are familiarised with each other over a meal at the bride's home. The first main event is the Paan-Chini/Chini-Paan, hosted by the bride's family. Gifts are received from the groom's family and the marriage date is fixed in this event.[144] An adda takes place between the families as they consume a traditional Bengali banquet of food, paan, tea and mishti. The next event is the mehndi (henna) evening also known as the gaye holud (turmeric on the body). In Bengali Muslim weddings, this is normally followed by the main event, the walima, hosting thousands of guests. An aqd (vow) takes place, where a contract of marriage (Kabin nama) and is signed. A qazi or imam is usually present here and would also recite the Qur'an and make dua for the couple. The groom is required to pay mohor (dowry) to the bride. For Bengali Hindu weddings, a Hindu priest is present, and the groom and bride follow Hindu customs culminating in the groom putting sindoor (vermillion) on the head of the bride to indicate that she is now a married woman. The Phirajatra/Phirakhaowa consists of the return of the bride with her husband to her home, which then becomes referred to as Naiyor, and payesh and milk are served. Other post-marriage ceremonies include the Bou Bhat which takes place in the groom's home.

Arranged marriages are arguably the most common form of marriage among Bengalis and are considered traditional in society.[141] Though polygamy is rarity among Bengalis today, it was historically prevalent among both Muslims and Hindus prior to British colonisation and was a sign of prosperity.[145]

The contribution of Bengalis to modern science is pathbreaking in the world's context. Qazi Azizul Haque was an inventor who is credited for devising the mathematical basis behind a fingerprint classification system that continued to be used up until the 1990s for criminal investigations. Abdus Suttar Khan invented more than forty different alloys for commercial application in space shuttles, jet engines, train engines and industrial gas turbines. In 2006, Abul Hussam invented the Sono arsenic filter and subsequently became the recipient of the 2007 Grainger challenge Prize for Sustainability.[146] Another biomedical scientist, Parvez Haris, was listed among the top 1% of 100,000 scientists in the world by Stanford University.[147]

Fazlur Rahman Khan was a structural engineer responsible for making many important advancements in high rise designs.[148] He was the designer of Willis Tower, the tallest building in the world until 1998. Khan's seminal work of developing tall building structural systems are still used today as the starting point when considering design options for tall buildings.[149] In 2023, the billion-dollar Stable Diffusion deep learning text-to-image model was developed by Stability AI founded by Emad Mostaque.[150][151][152]

Jagadish Chandra Bose was a polymath: a physicist, biologist, botanist, archaeologist, and writer of science fiction^[153] who pioneered the investigation of radio and microwave optics, made significant contributions to plant science, and laid the foundations of experimental science in the subcontinent.^[154] He is considered one of the fathers of radio science,^[155] and is also considered the father of Bengali science fiction. He first practicalised the wireless radio transmission but Guglielmo Marconi got recognition for it due to European proximity. Bose also described for the first time that "plants can respond", by demonstrating with his crescograph and recording the impulse caused by bromination of plant tissue.

Satyendra Nath Bose was a physicist, specialising in mathematical physics. He is best known for his work on quantum mechanics in the early 1920s, providing the foundation for Bose–Einstein statistics and the theory of the Bose–Einstein condensate. He is honoured as the namesake of the boson. He made first calculations to initiate Statistical Mechanics. He first hypothesised a physically tangible idea of photon. Bose's contemporary was Meghnad Saha, an astrophysicist and politician who contributed to the theorisation of thermal ionization. The Saha ionization equation, which was named after him, is used to describe chemical and physical conditions in stars.^{[156][157]} His work allowed astronomers to accurately relate the spectral classes of stars to their actual temperatures.^[158]

Several Bengali economists and entrepreneurs have made pioneering contributions in economic theories and practices supporting poverty alleviation. Amartya Sen is an economist and philosopher, who has made contributions to welfare economics, social choice theory, economic and social justice, economic theories of famines, decision theory, development economics, public health, and measures of well-being of countries. He was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences^[159] in 1998 and India's Bharat Ratna in 1999 for his work in welfare economics. Muhammad Yunus is a social entrepreneur, banker, economist and civil society leader who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for founding the Grameen Bank and pioneering the concepts of microcredit and microfinance. Abhijit Banerjee is an economist who shared the 2019 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences with Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer "for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty".^{[160][161]}

Traditional Bengali sports consisted of various martial arts and various racing sports, though the British-introduced sports of cricket and football are now most popular amongst Bengalis.

Lathi khela (stick-fighting) was historically a method of duelling as a way to protect or take land and others' possessions. The Zamindars of Bengal would hire lathials (trained stick-fighters) as a form of security and a means to forcefully collect tax from tenants.^[162] Nationwide lathi khela competitions used to take place annually in Kushtia up until 1989, though its practice is now diminishing and being restricted to certain festivals and celebrations.^[163] Chamdi is a variant of lathi khela popular in North Bengal. Kushti (wrestling) is also another popular fighting sport and it has developed regional forms such as boli khela, which was introduced in 1889 by Zamindar Qadir Bakhsh of Chittagong. A merchant known as Abdul Jabbar Saodagar adapted the sport in 1907 with the intention of cultivating a sport that would prepare Bengalis in fighting against British colonials.^{[164][165]} In 1972, a popular contact team sport called Kabadi was made the national sport of Bangladesh. It is a regulated version of the rural Hadudu sport which had no fixed rules. The Amateur Kabaddi Federation of Bangladesh was formed in 1973.^[166] Butthan, a 20th-century Bengali martial arts invented by Grandmaster Mak Yuree, is now practised in different parts of the world under the International Butthan Federation.^[167]

The Nouka Baich is a Bengali boat racing competition which takes place during and after the rainy season when much of the land goes under water. The long canoes were referred to as khel nao (meaning playing boats) and the use of cymbals to accompany the singing was common. Different types of boats are used in different parts of Bengal.[168] Horse racing was patronised most notably by the Dighapatia Rajas in Natore, and their Chalanbeel Horse Races have continued to take place annually for centuries.

Football is the most popular sports among Bengalis.[175] Bengal is the home to Asia's oldest football league, Calcutta Football League and the fourth oldest cup tournament in the world, Durand Cup. East Bengal and Mohun Bagan are the biggest clubs in the region and subsequently India, and amongst the biggest in Asia. East Bengal and Mohun Bagan participate in Kolkata Derby, which is the biggest sports derby in Asia. Mohun Bagan, founded in 1889, is the oldest native football club of Bengal. The club is primarily supported by the Ghotis, who are the native inhabitants of West Bengal. East Bengal, on the contrary, was founded on 1 August 1920 and is a club Primarily supported by the ethnic eastern Bengalis. Mohun Bagan's first major victory was in 1911, when the team defeated an English club known as the Yorkshire Regiment to win the IFA Shield. In 2003, East Bengal became the first Indian club to win a major international trophy in the form of ASEAN Club Championship. While Mohun Bagan currently holds the most amount of national titles (6 in total), East Bengal is the stronger side in the Kolkata derby, having won 138 out of a total of 391 matches in which these two teams participated. East Bengal also takes the crown for having won the most major trophies in India (109 compared to the 105 of Mohun Bagan). Mohammed Salim of Calcutta became the first South Asian to play for a European football club in 1936.[176] In his two appearances for Celtic F.C., he played the entire matches barefoot and scored several goals.[177] In 2015, Hamza Choudhury became the first Bengali to play in the Premier League and is predicted to be the first British Asian to play for the England national football team.[178]

Bengalis are very competitive when it comes to board and home games such as Pachisi and its modern counterpart Ludo, as well as Latim, Carrom Board, Chor-Pulish, Kanamachi and Chess. Rani Hamid is one of the most successful chess players in the world, winning championships in Asia and Europe multiple times. Ramnath Biswas was a revolutionary soldier who embarked on three world tours on a bicycle in the 19th century.

Text extracted from URL 14:

- Economy of Telangana
- Telangana Movement
- Telangana cuisine

The Culture of Telangana in India has a cultural history of about 5,000 years. The region emerged as the foremost centre of culture in Indian subcontinent during the rule of Kakatiyas, the Qutb Shahis and Asaf Jahi dynasties— (also known as the Nizams of Hyderabad). The rulers patronage and interest for culinary, arts and culture transformed Telangana into a multi-cultural region where two different cultures coexist together, thus making Telangana the representative of the Deccan Plateau and its heritage with Warangal and Hyderabad being its epicenter. Hyderabad cuisine and Kakatiya architecture both from Telangana, are on the list of UNESCO creative city of gastronomy and UNESCO World Heritage Site. The regions major cultural events celebrated are "Kakatiya Festival"

and Deccan Festival along with religious festivals Bonalu, Bathukamma, Dasara, Ugadi, Sankranthi, Milad un Nabi and Ramadan.[1]

Telangana State has long been a meeting place for diverse languages and cultures. It is known as "South of North and North of South".[2] It is also known for its Ganga-Jamuna Tehzeeb and the capital Hyderabad is an epicenter of oriental culture making it first Heritage city of India.[3][4][5]

About 76% of the population of Telangana speak Telugu, 12% speak Urdu, and 12% speak other languages.[6][7] Before 1948, Urdu was the official language of Hyderabad State, and due to a lack of Telugu-language in educational institutions, Urdu was spoken by the educated people of Telangana, including the elite. After 1948, once Hyderabad State joined the new Republic of India, Telugu became the language of government, and as Telugu was introduced as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges, the use of Urdu among non-Muslims decreased.[8]

Poets of Telangana from the early era include Bammara Pothana, Kancherla Gopanna or Bhakta Ramadasu, Malliya Rechana, Gona Budda Reddy, Kuppambika, Palkurthi Somanatha, Mallinātha Sūri, and Hulukki Bhaskara. In the modern era poets include such figures as Padma Vibhushan Kaloji Narayana Rao, Sahitya Akademi Award recipient Daasarathi Krishnamacharyulu, and Jnanpith Award recipient C. Narayana Reddy, as well as P. V. Narasimha Rao, ninth Prime Minister of India. Samala Sadasiva was selected for the Kendra Sahitya Puraskaram distinction. His book Swaralayalu on the subject of Hindustani classical music won the award for the year 2011.[9]

Urdu literature has always enjoyed patronage from successive rulers of the Qutb Shahi and Asaf Jahi era. Mohammed Quli Qutb Shah, the fifth ruler of the Qutb Shahi dynasty is regarded as one of the pioneers of early Urdu poetry.

During the rule of Nizams of Hyderabad, printing was introduced in the area. The 18th-century courtesan and poet Mah Laqa Bai are also regarded as a pioneer of this time. During the 18th 19th and 20th centuries, many Urdu scholars emigrated to Hyderabad seeking the patronage of the Nizam. This included Fani Badayuni, Josh Malihabadi and Dagh Dehlavi. Other scholars of repute from Telangana included Makhdoom Mohiuddin and Sayyid Shamsullah Qadri.

The major religions of the people are Hinduism and Islam,[10] though Buddhism was the dominant religion up to the 6th century. Hinduism was revived during the time of the Chalukyas and the Kakatiyas in the 12th century. The Vijayanagar rule saw the glorious days of Hinduism when the famed emperors, Krishnadeva Raya in particular, built new temples and beautified the old ones. Shiva, Vishnu, Hanuman and Ganapati have been the popular Hindu Gods. The Vugra Narasimha Swami Temple at Yadagirigutta and Thousand Pillar Temple at Warangal are among the oldest shrines in the state attracting people from different parts of the country for hundreds of years.

In terms of influence, Islam occupies the second place. It started spreading from the 14th century onwards. Mosques began to come up in many parts of the region during the Muslim rule. Christianity began to spread from 1701, especially among the socially disabled people. Educational institutions and churches grew in number in the Circars in the 18th-19th centuries when the East India Company and later the British government encouraged them. Other European countries were also active in building churches and taking care of the weaker sections of the people.

Yadadri : Lord Vishnu (whose reincarnation is Lord Narasimha). The main deity is Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy.[11] Located in Yadadri District. In Ancient days Sri Yada Maharshi son of Sri Rushyashrunga Maharshi with the Blessings of Anjaneya Swamy had performed great penance for Lord Narasimha Swamy. After securing blessing for his penance Lord Narasimha had come into existence in Five

Avatharas called as Sri Jwala Narasimha, Sri Yogananda Narasimha, Sri Ugra Narasimha, Sri Gandaberunda Narasimha, Sri Lakshmi Narasimha. As such this is known

Bhadrachalam Temple is a Lord Sree Sita Ramachandra Swamy Temple in Bhadrachalam, Bhadrachalam District. Bhadrachalam-The name derived from Bhadrachalam (Mountain of Bhadrachalam-a boon child of Meru and Menaka). According to an Ithihasas, the significance of this shrine dates back to the Ramayana Era. This coherent hill place existed in "Dandakaranya" Of Ramayana period where Rama with his consort Sita and brother Laxmana had spent their vanavasa- and Parnashaala (the place connected to the famous Golden Deer and the place from where Sita was abducted by Ravana.) is also in the vicinity of this temple site. It is at this Mandir site that, long after Ramavatara, Bhagawan Mahavishnu manifested Himself as Rama again to fulfil a promise He made to His Bhakta Bhadrachalam, who continued his Tapas through Yugas, praying for the grace of the Bhagawan Sri Ramachandra murthy.[12]

Karmanghat Hanuman TempleThe Karmanghat Hanuman Temple is one of the oldest and popular Hindu temples in Hyderabad, in the state of Telangana, India. The presiding deity of the temple is Lord Hanuman and the temple complex also houses other deities viz. Lord Rama, Lord Shiva, Goddess Saraswathi, Goddess Durga, Goddess Santoshimata, Lord Venugopala Swamy, and Lord Jagannath. The temple is located at Karmanghat, near Santoshnagar and closer to the Nagarjuna Sagar Ring Road.

Jamalapuram Temple is a Lord Sree Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Jamalapuram, near Errupalem, Khammam District is a famous temple in Khammam district of Telangana and is famously known as Telangana Tirupathi. The presiding deity in this temple is Lord Balaji and is said to be a swayambhu Lord, who self-manifested in this place. Since it is a swayambhoo temple, this temple seems to have been in existence from thousands of years. It was renovated by Sri Krishna Devarayalu, the emperor of Vijayanagara kingdom. The temple is located in a serene pleasant ambience surrounded by lush green hills. The temple has sub-shrines for Padmavathi Ammavaru, Sri Alivelu Ammavaru, Lord Shiva, Lord Ganesh, Lord Ayyappa, and Lord Anjaneya. Gadwal jogulamba temple.

Alampur Jogulamba TempleJogulamba temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to Goddess Jogulamba, a form of Shakti located in Alampur, Telangana, India. The temple is one of the Maha Shakti Peethas, a group of eighteen (Ashtadasa) temples considered the most significant shrines and pilgrimage destinations in Shaktism. Alampur is located on the banks of the Tungabhadra river near its confluence with Krishna river. Jogulamba temple is located in the same complex as that of the Navabrahma Temples, a group of nine Shiva temples built in the seventh-eighth century CE.

Sri Raja Rajeshwara temple, Vemulawada is a site of pilgrimage for both Hindu (particularly devotees of Vishnu and Shiva) and Muslim worshippers. Built by Chalukya Kings between AD 750 and 975, the complex is named for its presiding deity Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy, an incarnation of Lord Shiva. It houses several temples dedicated to other deities including Sri Rama, Lakshmana, Lakshmi, Ganapathy, Lord Padmanabha Swamy and Lord Bhimeshwara.This Shrine is popularly known as 'Dakshina Kashi' [Southern Banaras][13] and also as "Harihara Kshetram" for their being two Vaishnava Temples in main Temple complex i.e., Sri Anantha Padmanabha Swamy Temple & Sri Seetharama Chandra Swamy Temple The complex also contains a 400-year-old mosque which stands as an ample evidence for religious tolerance. The temple is located in Karimnagar District. kondagattu hanuman temple located in jagithyal district.

Birla Mandir, Hyderabad: Built on a 280 feet (85 m) high hillock called Naubath Pahad on a 13 acres (53,000 m2) plot in Hyderabad

Basara: Gnana Saraswati Temple (Goddess of Knowledge) is located on the Deccan plateau

Mecca Masjid, is one of the oldest mosques in Hyderabad, Telangana in India, And it is one of the largest Mosques in India. Makkah Masjid is a listed heritage building in the old city of Hyderabad, close to the historic landmarks of Chowmahalla Palace, Laad Bazaar, and Charminar. Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, the fifth ruler of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, commissioned bricks to be made from the soil brought from Mecca, the holiest site of Islam, and used them in the construction of the central arch of the mosque, thus giving the mosque its name. It formed the centerpiece around which the city was planned by Muhammad Quli Qutub Shah.[14]

Medak Church at Medak in Telangana, India, is the largest church in Telangana and has been the cathedral church of the Diocese of Medak of the Church of South India since 1947. Originally built by British Wesleyan Methodists, it was consecrated on 25 December 1924. The Medak diocese is the single largest diocese in Asia and the second in the world after the Vatican.[15] The church was built under the stewardship of the Methodist Christian, the Reverend Charles Walker Posnett, who was driven by the motto My best for my Lord. Charles Posnett had arrived in Secunderabad in 1895, and after first ministering among British soldiers at Trimullghery, had launched into the villages and had reached Medak village in 1896.[16]

Jairam Bapuji,[17] Sevy Bapuji[18] are the very famous Banjara Or Lambadi Spiritual Persons from Balu Thanda / Jairam Thanda, Madgul Mandal, Mahabubnagar District, Telangana.

Festivals are celebrated with much fervor and people used to go to temples on these days to offer special prayers. Some of the Festivals are Bathukamma, Dasara, Bonalu, Eid ul fitr, Bakrid, Ugadi, Makara Sankranti, Guru Purnima , Sri Rama Navami, Hanuman Jayanti, Holi, Peerla Panduga, Rakhi Pournami, Vinayaka Chaviti , Nagula Panchami, Krishnashtami, Deepavali, Mukkoti Ekadasi, Karthika Purnima and Ratha Saptami.

Telangana's citizens (Telanganites) also celebrate festivals like 'Bonalu, Batukamma' which are specific to the region of Telangana[19] all over Telangana districts, Yedupayala Jatara in Medak, Sammakka Saralamma in Warangal district. Nirmal paintings are a popular form of painting done in Nirmal in Adilabad District. The paintings have golden hues.[20][21]

The region is well known for its Golconda and Hyderabad painting styles which are branches of Deccan painting.[22] Developed during the 16th century, the Golconda style is a native style blending foreign techniques and bears some similarity to the Vijayanagara paintings of neighbouring Mysore. A significant use of luminous gold and white colours is generally found in the Golconda style.[23] The Hyderabad style originated in the 17th century under the Nizams. Highly influenced by Mughal painting, this style makes use of bright colours and mostly depicts regional landscape, culture, costumes and jewellery.[22]

Ramappa Temple:It lies in a valley at Palampet village of Venkatapur Mandal, in erstwhile Mulug Taluq of Warangal district, a tiny village long past its days of glory in the 13th-14th centuries.[24] An inscription in the temple dates it to the year 1213 and said to have been built by a General Recherla Rudra, during the period of the Kakatiya ruler Ganapati Deva.

This medieval temple is a Shivalaya (where Shiva is worshipped) and named after the sculptor Ramappa. It is the only temple in the world named after its sculptor/architect. Its presiding deity, Ramalingeswara, is the form of Shiva and a personal god of the Avatar of Vishnu, Rama. The history says that it took 40 years to build this temple. Planned and sculpted by Ramappa, the temple was built on the classical pattern of being lifted above the world on a high star-shaped platform. Intricate

carvings line the walls and cover the pillars and ceilings. Starting at its base to its wall panels, pillars and ceiling are sculpted figures drawn from Hindu mythology.[25] The roof (garbhalayam) of the temple is built with bricks, which are so light that they are able to float on water.[26]

Alampur Temples: There are a total of nine temples in Alampur, all dedicated to Shiva. These temples date back to the 7th century A.D, and were built by the Badami Chalukyas rulers, who were great patrons of art and architecture. Even after a time span of several hundred years, these grand temples still stand firm reflecting the rich architectural heritage of the country.

The temples are emblematic of the Northern and Western Indian styles of architecture. They do not reflect the Dravidian style of architecture as is generally common with the temples in this region. The shikharas of all these temples have a curvilinear form and are adorned with the miniature architectural devices. The plans and decoration similar to that of the rock cut temples. The Alampur Navabhrama Temples are historically important and reflect remarkable architectural skills.

Alampur was previously known as Halampuram, Hamalapuram And Alampuram. Name of this place as Hatampura, mentioned in the inscription dated AD 1101 belongs to Western Chalukya[27]

The best examples of architecture under the Kakatiya dynasty (1163–1323) are the ruins of the Warangal Fort.

In The Thousand Pillar Temple is one of the very old temples of South India that was built by the Kakatiyas.[28] It stands out to be a masterpiece and achieved major heights in terms of architectural skills by the ancient Kakathiya Vishwakarma Sthapathis. It is believed that the Thousand Pillar Temple was built by Queen Rudrammadevi in 1163 AD. The Thousand Pillar Temple is a specimen of the Kakatiyan style of architecture of the 12th century.

It was destroyed by the invasion of Tuglaq dynasty to South India.

However, Mir Osman Ali Khan, the 7th Nizam of Hyderabad, contributed immensely towards rebuilding the temple.[29]

The temple consists of one building and temple building.

There are one thousand pillars in the building and the temple, but no pillar obstructs a person in any point of the temple to see the god/deity in the other temple.

Apart from Warangal, the Kakatiya dynasty constructed many hill forts including Golconda,[note 1] Medak and Elgandal, and subsequent additions to these forts were made by the Bahmani and Qutb Shahi Sultanates.

Early Indo-Islamic style of architecture is reflected in the monuments built by the Golconda Sultanate in Hyderabad. These include the Charminar, Golconda Fort and Qutb Shahi tombs.

During the reign of the Nizams of Hyderabad, European styled palaces and buildings became prevalent in the city of Hyderabad. Among the oldest surviving examples of architecture of this time is the Chowmahalla Palace, which showcases a diverse array of architectural styles, from the Baroque Harem to its Neoclassical royal court. The other palaces include Falaknuma Palace (inspired by the style of Andrea Palladio), Purani Haveli and King Kothi Palace all of which were built during the 19th century.

In the early 20th century, British Architect Vincent Esch was invited to Hyderabad by Asaf Jah VII. He designed the Kachiguda railway station (1914), the High Court (1916), the City College (1920) and Osmania General Hospital (1921) in the Indo-Saracenic Revival style, which combines Indo-Islamic and European architectural styles.[30] Telangana has many museums which depicts the culture of the erstwhile kingdoms of the state. The Salar Jung Museum is an art museum located on the southern bank of the Musi river in the city of Hyderabad, Telangana, India. It is one of the three National Museums of India.[31] The museum's collection was sourced from the property of the Salar Jung family. The Salar Jung Museum is the third largest museum in India housing the biggest one-man collections of antiques in the world. It is well known throughout India for its prized collections belonging to different civilizations dating back is very largest collection to the 1st century.

The Telangana State Archaeology Museum in Hyderabad also houses a collection of rare Indian sculpture, art, artifacts as well as its most prized exhibit, an Egyptian mummy. The other prominent Museums are Nizam Museum, Warangal Museum, City Museum, Hyderabad and Birla Science Museum.

Telangana has two types of cuisines, the Telugu cuisine and Hyderabadi cuisine. Telugu cuisine is the part of South Indian cuisine characterized by their highly spicy food. The Telangana state lies on the Deccan plateau and its topography dictates more millet and roti (leavened bread) based dishes. Jowar and Bajra features more prominently in their cuisine. Due to its proximity with Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and northwest Karnataka, it shares some similarities of the Deccan plateau cuisine. Telangana has some unique dishes in its cuisine, such as jonna rotte (sorghum), sajja rotte (penisetum), or Uppudi Pindi (broken rice). In Telangana a gravy or curry is called Koora and Pulusu (Sour) in based on Tamarind. A deep fry reduction of the same is called Vepudu. Kodi pulusu and Mamsam (meat) vepudu are popular dishes in meat. Vankaya Brinjal Pulusu or Vepudu, Aritikaya Banana pulusu or Vepudu are one of the many varieties of vegetable dishes.[32] Telangana palakoora is a spinach dish cooked with lentils eaten with steamed rice and rotis. Peanuts are added as special attraction and in Karimnagar District, cashew nuts are added.

Sakinalu also called as Chakinalu, is one of the most popular savory in Telangana, is often cooked during Makara Sankranti festival season. This a deep-fried snack made of rice flour, sesame seeds and flavoured with ajwain (carom seeds or vaamu in Telugu). Garijelu is a dumpling dish similar to the Maharashtrian karanji, which in Telangana is cooked with sweet stuffing or a savory stuffing with mutton or chicken kheema.[33]

Hyderabadi cuisine, an amalgamation of Persian cuisine, Mughlai, Telugu, Turkish cuisines, developed by the Qutb Shahi dynasty and the Nizams of Hyderabad. It comprises a broad repertoire of rice, wheat and meat dishes and various spices and herbs.[34][35]

Hyderabadi cuisine is the cuisine of the Hyderabadi Muslims, and an integral part of the cuisines of the former Hyderabad State that includes the state of Telangana and the regions of Marathwada (now in Maharashtra) and Kalyana-Karnataka (now in Karnataka). The Hyderabadi cuisine contains city specific specialties like Hyderabad (Hyderabadi Biryani and Hyderabadi Haleem)[36] and Aurangabad (Naan Qalia), Gulbarga (Tahari), Bidar (Kalyani Biryani) and others. The use of dry coconut, tamarind, and red chillies along with other spices are the main ingredients that make Hyderabadi cuisine different from the North Indian cuisine

Perini Sivatandavam or Perini Thandavam is an ancient dance from Telangana which has been revived in recent times.[37]

The Perini Thandavam is a dance form usually performed by males. It is called 'Dance of Warriors'. Warriors before leaving to the battlefield enact this dance before the idol of Lord Shiva. The dance form, Perini, reached its pinnacle during the rule of the 'Kakatiyas' who established their dynasty at Warangal and ruled for almost two centuries. It is believed that this dance form invokes 'Prerana' (inspiration) and is dedicated to supreme dancer, Lord Shiva.

Bonalu

The folk festival of Bonalu in the Telangana region brings with it celebrations which see the colourfully dressed female dancers balancing pots (Bonalu), step to the rhythmic beats and tunes in praise of the village deity Mahakali.

Male dancers called Pothuraju's precede the female dancers to the temple lashing whips and neem leaves adding colour to the festivity.

Telangana has a diverse variation of music from carnatic music to folk music. [Kancherla Gopanna,[38] popularly known as Bhakta Ramadasu or Bhadrachala Ramadasu was a 17th-century Indian devotee of Rama and a composer of Carnatic music. He is one among the famous vaggeyakaras (a person who not only composes the lyrics but also sets them to music; vāk = word, speech; geya = singing, singable; geyakāra = singer) in the Telugu language. there are many types of instruments in telangana

The folk songs of Telangana had left a profound impact on the Statehood movement[39] as it played a significant role in the success of the Dhoom-Dham, a cultural event that was a vital part of the agitations.

Some of the known folk singers who took active part in the Telangana movement are Gaddar, Belli Lalitha, Sai Chand, Vimalakka and singers like Deshapati Srinivas and Rasamayi Balakishan.

Oggu Katha or Oggukatha is a traditional folklore singing praising and narrating the stories of Hindu gods Mallana, Beerappa and Yellamma.[40] It originated among the Yadav and Kuruma Golla communities, who devoted themselves to the singing of ballads in praise of Lord Shiva's son Sri Mallanna swamy (also called Sri Mallikarjuna swamy).[41] Oggus are the traditional priests of the Yadavas and perform the marriage of Mallanna with Bhramaramba.

The narrator and his chorus i.e. two or more narrators-help in dramatizing the narration as very often, they transform themselves into two characters. The dramatization of the narrative is what gives the Oggu Katha its predominant place in the ballad tradition in Telangana, where Oggu Katha is prevalent. The singers visit the shrine of Komuravelli Mallanna swamy Temple every year.

Telugu cinema, also known by its sobriquet as Tollywood, is a part of Indian cinema producing films in the Telugu language, and is centered in the Hyderabad, Telangana neighbourhood of Film Nagar.[42]

The industry holds the Guinness World Record for the largest film production facility in the world, is one of the best tourist attraction in hyderabad Ramoji Film City.[43] The Prasads IMAX located in Hyderabad is one of the largest 3D IMAX screen, and the most attended cinema screen in the world.[44][45][46] As per the CBFC report of 2012, the industry is placed second in India, in terms of films produced yearly.[47] because of the film "Bahubali" (I and ii) casting Prabhas and Anushka.

Telangana (/ˌtɛlənˈɡɑːnə/; Telugu: [ˈtɛlɒŋɡaːɳa] ⓘ) is a state in India situated in the southern part of the Indian peninsula on the high Deccan Plateau.[13] It is the eleventh-largest state and the twelfth-most populated state in India as per the 2011 census.[14] On 2 June 2014, the area was separated from the northwestern part of United Andhra Pradesh as the newly formed state of Telangana, with Hyderabad as its capital.

The economy of Telangana is the ninth-largest in India, with a gross state domestic product (GSDP) of ₹9,572,071 million (equivalent to ₹11 trillion or US\$140 billion in 2023) and has a GSDP per capita of ₹320,000 (US\$4,000).[15][16] Telangana scored 0.705 on the Human Development Index during 2017-2018.[10]

The state has emerged as a major focal point for IT software companies, industry and the services sector. The state is also the main administrative center of many Indian defence aerospace and research labs including Bharat Dynamics Limited, Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory, Defence Research and Development Organisation and Defence Research and Development Laboratory.[17]

One popular etymology derives the word "Telangana" from Trilinga desha ("land of three lingas"), a region named after 3 important Shaivite shrines present in it: Kaleshwaram (present day Telangana), Srisailem and Draksharama (present day Andhra Pradesh).[18]

According to Jayadheer Tirumala Rao - a scholar of history; the name Telangana is of Gondi origin. Rao asserts that it is derived from "Telangadh", which means "south" in Gondi and has been referred in "Gond script dating back to about 2000 years".[19]

One of the earliest uses of a word similar to Telangana can also be seen in a name of Malik Maqbul Tilangani (14th century CE), who was called the Tilangani, which implies that he was from Telangana. He was the commander of the Warangal Fort (Kataka Pāludu) and later Wazir— Minister under Firuz Shah Tughlaq.[20][21]

A 16th-century travel writer, Firishta, recorded in his book:

During the just reign of Ibrahim Kootb Shah, Tulingana, like Egypt, became the mart of the whole world. Merchants from Toorkistan, Arabia, and Persia resorted to it; and they met with such encouragement that they found in it inducements to return frequently. The greatest luxuries from foreign parts daily abounded at the king's hospitable board.[22] The word "Telinga" changed over time to "Telangana" and the name "Telangana" was designated to distinguish the predominantly Telugu-speaking region of the erstwhile Hyderabad State from its predominantly Marathi-speaking one, Marathwada. After Asaf Jahi's ceded the Seemandhra region to the British, the rest of the Telugu region retained the name Telangana and the other parts were called Madras Presidency's Circars and Ceded.[23]

Throughout antiquity and the Middle ages, the Telangana region was part of multiple Indian empires; such as the Mauryans, Satavahanas, Vishnukundinas, Chalukyas, Cholas, Rashtrakutas, Kakatiyas, Delhi Sultanate, Bahmani Sultanate and Golconda Sultanate. During the 17th—19th centuries, the region was ruled by the Mughals and Nizam of Hyderabad.[24][25] In 1823, the Nizam's ceded Northern Circars—(Coastal Andhra) and Ceded Districts—(Rayalseema) to the British India under subsidiary alliance which reduced it to that of a landlocked princely state bounded on all sides by the British India. Following the Indian Independence in 1947—the Hyderabad state joined the Union of India in 1948 after a police action. In 1956, the Hyderabad State was dissolved—and its Telugu speaking region Telangana was merged with the Andhra State to form Andhra Pradesh. A

peasant-driven movement began to advocate for separation from Andhra Pradesh starting in the early 1950s, and continued until Telangana was granted statehood on 2 June 2014.[26]

The historic city Golconda in Hyderabad established itself as a diamond trading centre, and until the end of the 19th century, the Golconda market was the primary source of the finest and largest diamonds in the world. Thus, the legendary name Golconda Diamonds became synonymous with Golconda itself.

From 230 BCE to 220 CE the Satavahana dynasty became the dominant power in this area. It originated from the lands between the Godavari and Krishna rivers and was based at Amaravathi and Dharanikota.[27] After the decline of the Satavahanas, various dynasties, such as the Vakataka, Vishnukundina, Chalukya, Rashtrakuta and Western Chalukya, ruled the area.[28]

The Telangana area experienced its golden age during the reign of the Kakatiya dynasty, which ruled most parts of the present-day Andhra Pradesh and Telangana from 1083 to 1323 CE.[28] Rudrama Devi and Prataparudra II were prominent rulers from the Kakatiya dynasty. The dynasty weakened with the attack of Malik Kafur in 1309 and was dissolved after the defeat of Prataparudra by the forces of Muhammad bin Tughluq in 1323.[29][30]

The area came under the rule of the Delhi Sultanate in the 14th century, followed by the Bahmani Sultanate. Quli Qutb Mulk, a governor of Golconda, revolted against the Bahmani Sultanate and established the Qutb Shahi dynasty in 1518. On 21 September 1687, the Golconda Sultanate came under the rule of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb after a year-long siege of the Golconda fort.[31]

During the early seventeenth century a strong cotton-weaving industry existed in Telangana. Large quantities of cotton were produced for domestic and exports consumption. High quality plain and patterned cloth made of muslin and calico was produced.[32]

In 1712, Qamar-ud-din Khan was appointed by emperor Farrukhsiyar as the viceroy of Deccan with the title Nizam-ul-Mulk (meaning "Administrator of the Realm"). He was later recalled to Delhi, with Mubariz Khan appointed as the viceroy. In 1724, Qamar-ud-din Khan defeated Mubariz Khan to reclaim the Deccan suba, establishing it as an autonomous province of the Mughal empire. He took the name Asif Jah, starting what came to be known as the Asaf Jahi dynasty.[28] He named the area Hyderabad Deccan. Subsequent rulers retained the title Nizam ul-Mulk and were called Asif Jahi Nizams or nizams of Hyderabad. The Medak and Warangal divisions of Telangana were part of their realm.[33]

When Asif Jah I died in 1748, there was political unrest due to contention for the throne among his sons, who were aided by opportunistic neighbouring states and colonial foreign forces. In 1769, Hyderabad city became the formal capital of the Nizams. The Nizam Nasir-ud-dawlah, Asaf Jah IV signed the subsidiary alliance with the British in 1799 and lost its control over the state's defence and foreign affairs. Hyderabad State became a princely state among the presidencies and provinces of British India.[33]

In 1787, heavy flooding killed over 20,000 causing a plague which killed about 10,656,000 Telugus again in Telangana.[34]

When India became independent from the British Empire in 1947, the Nizam of Hyderabad did not want to merge with the Indian Union and wanted to remain independent. The Government of India annexed Hyderabad State on 17 September 1948 after a military operation called Operation Polo.[28] It appointed a civil servant, M. K. Vellodi, as first chief minister of Hyderabad State on 26 January 1950.[35] He administered the state with the help of English-educated bureaucrats from the

Madras and Bombay states, who were familiar with British systems of administration unlike the bureaucrats of Hyderabad State who used a completely different administrative system. The official language of the state was switched from Urdu to English.

In 1952, Dr. Burgula Ramakrishna Rao was elected chief minister of the Hyderabad State in its first democratic election. During this time, there were violent agitations by some Telanganites to send the Madras state bureaucrats back and implement a rule by the natives (mulkis) of Hyderabad (Syed Alam Sharjil) was elected chief minister of Hyderabad after (Dr. Burgula Ramakrishana Rao) for one year after he resigned from the post.[36]

The Telangana Rebellion was a peasant revolt supported by the communists. It originated in the Telangana regions of the Hyderabad State between 1946 and 1951, led by the Communist Party of India (CPI).[37]

The revolt began in the Nalgonda district against the feudal lords of Reddy and Velama castes. It quickly spread to the Warangal and Bidar districts. Peasant farmers and labourers revolted against the local feudal landlords (jagirdars and deshmukhs) and later against the Nizam Osman Ali Khan. The violent phase of the movement ended after the government of India's Operation Polo.[38] Starting in 1951, the CPI shifted to a more moderate strategy of seeking to bring communism to India within the framework of Indian democracy.[39]

In December 1953, the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) was appointed to form states on a linguistic basis.[40] An agreement was reached between Telangana leaders and Andhra leaders on 20 February 1956 to merge Telangana and Andhra with promises to safeguard Telangana's interests.[41] After reorganisation in 1956, the region of Telangana was merged with Andhra State to form Andhra Pradesh.

Following this Gentlemen's agreement, the central government established the unified state of Andhra Pradesh on 1 November 1956.[42][43][44] G.O 553 of 1959 from the united Andhra Pradesh state moved two revenue divisions of Bhadrachalam from East Godavari and Aswaraopeta from West Godavari to Khammam for administrative convenience.

There had been several movements to revoke the merger of Telangana and Andhra, major ones occurring in 1969, 1972, and 2009. The movement for a new state of Telangana gained momentum in the 21st century by an initiative of Kalvakuntla Chandrashekhara Rao from Bharat Rashtra Samithi later joined by the Telangana Political Joint Action Committee (TJAC), including political leadership representing the Telangana area.[45] On 9 December 2009 the government of India announced the process of formation of the Telangana state. Violent protests led by people in the Coastal Andhra and Rayalseema regions occurred immediately after the announcement, and the decision was put on hold on 23 December 2009.

The movement continued in Hyderabad and other districts of Telangana.[46] There were hundreds of claimed suicides,[47] strikes, protests and disturbances to public life demanding separate statehood.

On 30 July 2013, the Congress Working Committee unanimously passed a resolution to recommend the formation of a separate Telangana state. After various stages the bill was placed in the Parliament of India in February 2014.[48] In February 2014, Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 bill was passed by the Parliament of India for the formation of Telangana state, comprising ten districts from north-western Andhra Pradesh.[49] The bill received the assent of the president and was published in the Gazette on 1 March 2014.[50]

The state of Telangana was officially formed on 2 June 2014. Kalvakuntla Chandrashekar Rao was elected as the first chief minister of Telangana, following elections in which the Bharat Rashtra Samithi party secured a majority.[51] Hyderabad would remain as the joint capital of both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh for a period. Within the decade, Hyderabad would become the capital of the state of Telangana, and a new capital was selected for Andhra Pradesh.[52] Andhra Pradesh picked Amaravati as its capital and relocated its secretariat in 2016 and its legislature in 2017.[53][54]

Telangana is situated on the Deccan Plateau, in the central stretch of the eastern seaboard of the Indian Peninsula. It covers 112,077 square kilometres (43,273 sq mi).[2] The region is drained by two major rivers, with about 79% of the Godavari River catchment area and about 69% of the Krishna River catchment area, but most of the land is arid.[2] Telangana is also drained by several minor rivers such as the Bhima, the Maner, the Manjira, the Musi, and the Tungabhadra.

The annual rainfall is between 900 and 1500mm in northern Telangana and 700 to 900mm in southern Telangana, from the southwest monsoons. Telangana contains various soil types, some of which are red sandy loams (Chalaka), Red loamy sands (Dubba), lateritic soils, salt-affected soils, alluvial soils, shallow to medium black soils and very deep black cotton soils. These soil types allow the planting of a variety of fruits and vegetable crops such as mangoes, oranges, coconut, sugarcane, paddy, banana and flower crops.[55][56][57]

Telangana is a semi-arid area and has a predominantly hot and dry climate. Summers start in March, and peak in mid-April with average high temperatures in the 37–38 °C (99–100 °F) range. The monsoon arrives in June and lasts until Late-September with about 755 mm (29.7 inches) of precipitation. A dry, mild winter starts in late November and lasts until early February with little humidity and average temperatures[58] in the 22–23 °C (72–73 °F) range.

The Central Deccan Plateau dry deciduous forests ecoregion covers much of the state, including Hyderabad. The characteristic vegetation is woodlands of *Hardwickia binata* and *Albizia amara*. Over 80% of the original forest cover has been cleared for agriculture, timber harvesting, or cattle grazing, but large blocks of forest can be found in Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve and elsewhere.[59] The more humid Eastern Highlands moist deciduous forests cover the Eastern Ghats in the eastern part of the state.

Telangana has three National Parks: Kasu Brahmananda Reddy National Park in Hyderabad district, and Mahavir Harina Vanasthali National Park and Mrugavani National Park in Ranga Reddy district.

Wildlife Sanctuaries in Telangana include Eturunagaram Wildlife Sanctuary and Pakhal Wildlife Sanctuary in Warangal District, Kawal Tiger Reserve and Pranahita Wildlife Sanctuary in Adilabad district, Kinnerasani Wildlife Sanctuary in Khammam district, Manjira Wildlife Sanctuary in Medak district, Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve in Nalgonda and Mahbubnagar districts, Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuary in Medak and Nizamabad districts, Shivaram Wildlife Sanctuary in Karimnagar district.

Sacred groves are small areas of forest preserved by local people. Sacred groves provide sanctuary to the local flora and fauna. Some are included within other protected areas, like Kadalivanam in Nagarjunsagar–Srisailem Tiger Reserve, but most stand alone. There are 65 sacred groves in Telangana—two in Adilabad district, thirteen in Hyderabad district, four in Karimnagar district, four in Khammam district, nine in Mahbubnagar district, four in Medak district, nine in Nalgonda district, ten in Ranga Reddy district, and three in Warangal district.[60]

Languages of Telangana (2011)[61]

Telugu one of the classical languages of India is the official language of Telangana and Urdu is the second official language of the state.[62] About 75% of the population of Telangana speak Telugu and 12% speak Urdu.[63][64] Before 1948, Urdu was the official language of Hyderabad State, and due to a lack of Telugu-language educational institutions, Urdu was the language of the educated elite of Telangana.[65] After 1948, once Hyderabad State joined the new Republic of India, Telugu became the language of government, and as Telugu was introduced as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges, the use of Urdu among non-Hyderabad Muslims decreased.[66] Both Telugu and Urdu are used in services across the state, such as the Telangana Legislature website, with Telugu and Urdu versions of the website available,[67] as well as the Hyderabad metro, wherein both languages are used on station names and signs along with English and Hindi.[68] The Urdu spoken in Telangana is called Hyderabad Urdu, which in itself is a dialect of the larger Dakhini Urdu dialects of South India. Although the language is spoken by most Hyderabad Muslims, the language in a literary context has long been lost, and standard Urdu is used.[69] Hindi is spoken mainly in Hyderabad, as well as some other urban areas like Warangal. Lambadi, a language related to Rajasthani dialects, is used across the state. Marathi is predominant in regions bordering Maharashtra, especially in the old Adilabad district, while Kannada is spoken by significant minorities along some parts of the Karnataka border. The old Adilabad district has a large number of speakers of tribal languages such as Gondi and Kolami, while Koya is a language spoken by significant numbers in Bhadradi Kothagudem district and along the Chhattisgarh border.[70]

Religion in Telangana (2011)[71]

According to the 2011 census, Hindus form 85.1% of the State's population. Muslims form 12.7% and Christians form 1.3%.[71]

Religious edifices like the Lakshmi Narasimha Temple in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, Makkah Masjid in Hyderabad, the ancient Bhadrakali Temple and Govinda Rajula Gutta in Warangal, Alampur Jogulamba Temple in Jogulamba Gadwal district and Medak Cathedral, Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy Temple, Kothakonda Veerabhadra Swamy Temple, Lord Shiva temple in Vemulawada of Rajanna-Sircilla district are several of its most famous places of worship. Buddhism also flourished in the region and many Aramams can be found.

Hyderabad cuisine and Kakatiya architecture both from Telangana, are on the list of creativity UNESCO creative city of gastronomy and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The cultural centers of Telangana, Hyderabad and Warangal, are noted for their wealth and renowned historical structures – Ramappa Temple (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Charminar, Qutb Shahi Tombs, Falaknuma Palace, Chowmahalla Palace, Warangal Fort, Kakatiya Kala Thoranam, Thousand Pillar Temple and the Bhongir Fort.

According to the 2011 census, Telangana's literacy rate is 66.46%. Male literacy and female literacy are 74.95% and 57.92%, respectively.[2] Hyderabad district has the highest literacy rate with 80.96% and Mahabubnagar district has the lowest with 56.06%.[72]

In a 2019 report, the Key Indicators of Household Social Consumption on Education in India, by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Telangana has a literacy rate of 72.8% which is the fourth lowest among large states. It also has the second lowest literacy rate among rural women at 53.7%. 37.1% of the population aged 3–35 years received free education at pre-primary and higher levels in Telangana.[11]

The state is divided into 33 districts. The latest two new districts, Mulugu and Narayanpet, were formed on 17 February 2019.[73] The districts are divided into 70 revenue divisions which are further divided into 584 mandals.[74][75] There are a total of 10,909 revenue villages and 12,769 gram panchayats in the state.[76]

The districts in the state are:

There are a total of 12 cities in the state. Hyderabad is the biggest city in the state and 4th largest city in India. There are 13 municipal corporations and 132 municipalities in the state.

Telangana is governed by a parliamentary system of representative democracy, a feature the state shares with other Indian states. Universal suffrage is granted to residents. There are three branches of government.

Auxiliary authorities known as panchayats, for which local body elections are regularly held, govern local affairs. The state contributes seats to Lok Sabha.

The main political parties in the regional politics are the Bharat Rashtra Samithi, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian National Congress. Following the Telangana Legislative Assembly Election in 2014, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi under Kalvakuntla Chandrashekar Rao was elected to power.

The economy of Telangana is mainly driven by agriculture. Two important rivers of India, the Godavari and Krishna, flow through the state,

providing irrigation. Farmers in Telangana mainly depend on rain-fed water sources for irrigation. Rice is the major food crop. Other important crops are cotton, sugar cane, mango, and tobacco. Recently, crops used for vegetable oil production such as sunflower and peanuts have gained favour. There are many multi-state irrigation projects in development, including Godavari River Basin Irrigation Projects and Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, the world's highest masonry dam.[77][78]

The state has also started to focus on the fields of information technology and biotechnology. Telangana is one of top IT-exporting states of India. There are 68 Special Economic Zones in the state.[79]

Telangana is a mineral-rich state, with coal reserves at Singareni Collieries Company.[80]

Rice is the major food crop and staple food of the state. Other important crops are maize, tobacco, mango, cotton and sugar cane.[81] Agriculture has been the chief source of income for the state's economy. The Godavari and Krishna rivers flow through the state, providing irrigation. Apart from major rivers, there are small rivers like Tunga Bhadra, Bima, Dindi, Kinnerasani, Manjeera, Manair, Penganga, Pranahitha, peddavagu and Taliperu. There are many multi-state irrigation projects in development, including Godavari River Basin Irrigation Projects and Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, the world's highest masonry dam.[82]

Agri Export Zones for the following produce have been proposed for the following locations:[83][citation needed]

In 2019, environmental anthropologist Andrew Flachs raised concerns regarding the financial and social pressures experienced by small cotton farmers in Telangana after conducting ethnographic research in the area. The GM (genetically modified) seeds he focused on were introduced to combat pests and low yields. Within 10 years, GM cottonseeds, which are solely bred by private breeders, were able to capture more than 90% of the Indian market, which was formerly a public market. The

privatisation of seed brands in formerly public markets has been accompanied by pesticides, fertilisers, consultations, and herbicides which are needed to manage the new monocultures. He found that this introduction, however, negatively impacted farmers' ecological knowledge about seed choices and cotton-plant management.[84]

Flachs surveyed farming households about their experiences with GM hybrid cottonseeds from 2012 to 2016. His research initially focused on the agricultural decision-making process among Telangana cotton farmers in the wake of genetically modified seed market expansion, then later on the concept of *manci digubadi* as a script. *Manci digubadi* means "good yields," with a more extended phrasing being "*manci digubadi annakunthunnu*," which translates to "I'm hoping for good yields." The concept of *manci digubadi*, as described by Flachs, posits that seed choice should be made based on whether or not it has "good yields," which is dependent solely on what the individual believes is "good." Flachs further argues that this script is used in the absence of reliable experiential knowledge in the face of agricultural development and GMOs. This is because, in the pursuit of a good yield, cotton farmers learn little about the seeds they use before they switch to the next promising new brands, some of which have been smuggled in or bought on the black market. Marketing, the constant influx of new options, and the fear of missing out on popular seeds also contribute to the high turnover. This high turnover and the resulting lack of experiential knowledge have resulted in cotton farmers unwittingly planting the same type of seed multiple times because they are under different brand names. In contrast to this, farmers adopt and abandon seeds from public-sector-bred crops like rice and heirloom vegetables more slowly so they can rely more on experiential knowledge to make decisions.[84]

Telangana cotton farmers are at risk for debt and suicide caused by agricultural pressures such as unreliable credit, pest problems, and agricultural management uncertainty. Flachs argues that seed choices and the rationalisation behind the choice are central to the agricultural political economy, as seed choice is "the first decision that cotton farmers make and one that they cannot take back." [84] Flachs argues that cotton seed choices are driven less by economic rationalism and more by an aspiration to overcome generational poverty and historical marginalisation.[84] Flachs found evidence in his work suggesting that many farmers' seed choices are influenced by the choices of their neighbours or more wealthy landowners. As an example of *manci digubadi* being used in place of experiential knowledge, Flachs gives the story of a farmer who had planted the Mahyco company's Neeraja cottonseed for nine years abandoned that seed in favour of Kaveri's Jaadoo seed after hearing reports that the Jaadoo seeds had done well in a neighbouring village. Farmers also seek advice from non-household experts such as pesticide shop managers and university extension agents. There is no objective cost-benefit analysis because the costs and benefits are ambiguous due to things variations of factors like weather and pests and farmers having no reliable measure for what constitutes a good yield for cotton.[84]

Several major manufacturing and services industries are in operation mainly around Hyderabad. Automobiles and auto components, spices, mines and minerals, textiles and apparels, pharmaceutical, horticulture, and poultry farming are the main industries in Telangana.[85]

In terms of services, Hyderabad is nicknamed "Cyberabad" due to the location of major software industries in the city.[86][87] Prior to secession, it contributed 10% to India's and 98% to Andhra Pradesh's exports in the IT and ITES sectors in 2013[88] With Hyderabad in the front line of Telangana's goal to promote information technology in India, the city boasts the HITEC City as its premier hub. IT companies/hubs have also been set up in Warangal,[89] Karimnagar, and Khammam.[90]

The state government is in the process of developing industrial parks at different places, for specific groups of industries. The existing parks are Software Park at Hyderabad, HITEC City for software units, Apparel Park at Gundlapochampalli, Export Promotion Park at Pashamylaram, Biotechnology park at Turkapally.[citation needed]

Hyderabad is also a major site for healthcare-related industries including hospitals and pharmaceutical organisations such as Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, Yashoda Hospitals, LV Prasad Eye Care, Akruti Institute of cosmetic and plastic surgery, Fever Hospital, Durgabai Deshmukh, Continental Hospitals and Apollo Hospitals. Many pharmaceutical and pharmaceutical-related companies like Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Shantha Biotechnics and Aragen (Formerly GVK BIO) are based out of Hyderabad.

In addition, Hyderabad-based healthcare non-profits include the Indian Heart Association, a cardiovascular disease NGO.[91]

Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation (TSTDC) is a state government agency which promotes tourism in Telangana.[92] Telangana has a variety of tourist attractions including historical places, monuments, forts, waterfalls, forests and temples.

The print media mainly consists of Telugu and English newspapers. Nava Telangana, Sakshi, Andhra Jyothi, Eenadu and Namaste Telangana are all Telugu newspapers. Mainly in English newspapers are Deccan Chronicle, The Times Of India, The Hindu, Telangana Today and The Hans India.[95] Notable Urdu newspapers include Etemaad Daily, The Munsif Daily, and The Siasat Daily.

The state is well connected with other states by means of road, rail and airways. The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) is the major public transport corporation that connects all the cities and villages.[96] Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station (M.G.B.S) in Hyderabad is the central bus-station of the state.[97][98] Jubilee Bus Station in Secunderabad serves inter city bus services.

The state has a total of 16 national highways and accounts for a total length of 3,550.69 km (2,206.30 mi).[99]

The history of railways in this region dates back to the time of Nizam of Hyderabad in 1874. The Nizam's Guaranteed State Railway, which had its beginnings in a line built privately by the HEH the Nizam. Much to the dismay of the British authorities, The Nizam bore all the expenses for the construction of the line.[100]

It operates under the auspices of the South Central Railway founded in 1966. The landmark building Rail Nilayam in Secunderabad is the Zonal Headquarters office of South Central Railway. Secunderabad and Hyderabad are the main divisions of the South Central Railway that fall in the state.[101]

Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at Shamshabad is an international airport serving the city of Hyderabad. It is the largest airport in the state and one of the busiest airports in the country. The government has plans to upgrade Warangal Airport, Nizamabad Airport[102] and Ramagundam Airport - it also plans to construct airports in Ramagundam and Kothagudem using the UDAN scheme.[103]

Warangal has a domestic airport in Mamunooru which was established in the year 1930 during the Nizam period. All the exports and imports of Azam Jahi Mills, Warangal were done through the Warangal Airport.[citation needed]

The state has a rich tradition in classical music, painting and folk arts such as Burra Katha, shadow puppet show, and Perini Shivatandavam, Gusadi Dance, Kolatam and Bathukamma.

The important festivals of the state are Bonalu and Bathukamma.

Badami Chalukya architecture is spread across the state, notable temple is Alampur Jogulamba Temple.

Chalukyas of Vemulavada built many Temples in Vemulawada, Bheemeshvara temple, Raja Rajeswara Temple, Vemulawada. Medieval forts such as the Bhongir Fort, Khammam Fort, and Rachakonda Fort are spread across the state. Among the notable ones is the Warangal Fort, which served as the capital of the Kakatiya dynasty.[104] The Kakatiya Kala Thoranam within the fort has become a symbol of Telangana, and features on the state emblem.[105] Ramappa Temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The fort complex, and Thousand Pillar Temple are on the tentative list of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.[104]

Samsthanams built Temples in Dravidian architecture, Kollapur, and Jataprole Samsthanams, Gadwal Samsthanam built temples in Dravidian architecture.

The Qutb Shahi dynasty established the city of Hyderabad as their capital. The Charminar, Golconda Fort, and Qutb Shahi tombs in Hyderabad were built by the Qutb Shahi dynasty.[106]

The Nizam era saw the construction of palaces such as the Chowmahalla Palace and Falaknuma Palace, as well as elaborate public buildings such as the Osmania General Hospital, all in Hyderabad.

There are religious worship centres of different religions in the state.

Hindu worship destinations include Bhadrachalam Temple, Gnana Saraswati Temple, Yadagirigutta Temple, Ramappa Temple, Vemulawada Raja Rajeshwara temple, Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy Temple the Thousand Pillar Temple, Statue of Equality (Ramanuja).

The Muslim worship destinations such as Makkah Masjid near Charminar, Khairtabad Mosque, Mian Mishk Masjid, Toli Masjid and Spanish Mosque.

Christian worship centres include the Diocese of Dornakal of the Church of South India, Bahe Church of South India, and Medak Cathedral. There are also some Buddhist destinations, such as Nelakondapalli, Dhulikatta, Phanigiri and Kolanpaka.[107]

Telugu cinema, also known by its sobriquet as Tollywood, is a part of Indian cinema producing films in the Telugu language, and is centred in the Hyderabad, Telangana neighbourhood of Film Nagar.[108] In the early 1990s, the Telugu film industry had largely shifted from Chennai to Hyderabad. The Telugu film industry is the second-largest film industry in India next to Bollywood.[109] In the years 2005, 2006 and 2008 the Telugu film industry produced the largest number of films in India, exceeding the number of films produced in Bollywood.[110][111] The industry holds the Guinness World Record for the largest film production facility in the world.[112]

Telangana cuisine is a unique and delicious cuisine that is influenced by the region's rich history of deccan and Telugu culture.[113] The cuisine is known for its use of spices,[114] millets,[115] and rotis. Telangana cuisine also features a variety of other dishes, including biryani, haleem, and kebabs.[116]

Indigenous art forms of Telangana include the Cheriyal scroll painting,[117] Nirmal paintings, and Karimnagar Silver Filigree.[118] A distinctive Persianate style of painting, called Deccan painting developed in the region during the medieval period.[119]

Notable museums in the state include the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad, which is one of the largest in India.[120] Other museums include the Telangana State Archeology Museum, City Museum, and Nizam Museum in Hyderabad, Warangal Museum in Warangal, and Alampur Museum in Alampur.

Telangana has multiple institutes of higher education universities along with numerous primary and secondary schools. The Department of Higher Education deals with matters relating to education at various levels in the state of Telangana.

According to a 2019 report, the state has a literacy rate of 72.8%, which is one of the lowest in India.[11] Schools in Telangana are run by the state government or private organisations, which include religious institutions. Some specialised schools such as the Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas are run by agencies of the central government.[121] As of 2017[update], there are 41,337 schools in the state, with about 70% of them being government schools.[122]

Telangana is home to 27 universities, which include 3 central universities, 17 state universities, 2 deemed universities, and 5 private universities. The Osmania University in Hyderabad, established in 1918, is the oldest modern university in the state, and one of the largest university systems in the world. The University of Hyderabad consistently ranks among the top universities in the country.[123] Apart from these, specialised institutes of national importance in the state include AIIMS Bibinagar, IIT Hyderabad, and NIT Warangal.[124]

Other notable institutions include Indian School of Business, ICFAI Business School Hyderabad, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad, Kakatiya University, International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad, NALSAR University of Law, Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences, National Institute of Fashion Technology Hyderabad, Footwear Design and Development Institute, National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Hyderabad, and Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies, Basar, among others.[125]

The Hyderabad FC is a professional football club based in Hyderabad and plays in top-tier league of India, the Indian Super League. The home ground of the club is G.M.C Balayogi Athletic Stadium, in Gachibowli.[126]

The Hyderabad cricket team is represented in the Ranji Trophy and has won twice. The Sunrisers Hyderabad, an Indian Premier League franchise, is based in Hyderabad and has won the trophy once. Deccan Chargers, a currently defunct franchise from Hyderabad, also won the Indian Premier League once. The Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium is the home ground of both Hyderabad cricket team and Sunrisers Hyderabad. It hosts international as well as domestic matches.

The Hyderabad Hunters, a Premier Badminton League franchise; the Telugu Titans, a Pro Kabaddi League franchise; the Hyderabad Sky, a UBA Pro Basketball League franchise and the Telugu Tigers, a Premier Futsal franchise are also based in Hyderabad. Hyderabad Hunters have won the Premier Badminton League title.

Other stadiums include G. M. C. Balayogi Athletic Stadium, Lal Bahadur Shastri Stadium and Gachibowli Indoor Stadium.

Government

General information

Text extracted from URL 16:

Karnataka (/kərˈnɑːtəkə/; ISO: Karnāṭaka, Kannada: [kərˈnaːt̪eɳe]), also known colloquially as Karunāḍu, is a state in the southwestern region of India. It was formed as Mysore State on 1 November 1956, with the passage of the States Reorganisation Act, and renamed Karnataka in 1973. The state is bordered by the Lakshadweep Sea to the west, Goa to the northwest, Maharashtra to the north, Telangana to the northeast, Andhra Pradesh to the east, Tamil Nadu to the southeast, and Kerala to the southwest. With 61,130,704 inhabitants at the 2011 census, Karnataka is the eighth-largest state by population, comprising 31 districts. The state was part of the Carnatic region in British terminology. With 15,257,000 residents, the state capital Bangalore is the fourth-most populated city in India.[13]

The economy of Karnataka is one of the most productive in comparison to other states in the country, with ₹20.5 trillion (US\$260 billion) in gross domestic product and a per capita GDP of ₹305,000 (US\$3,800).[14][15]. The state of Karnataka has one of the highest economic growth rates comparatively to other states in the country, with a GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) growth of 9.5% in the 2021–22 fiscal year.[16][17] After Bangalore Urban, Dakshina Kannada Hubli-Dharwad and Belagavi districts contribute the highest revenue to the state respectively. The capital of the state, Bangalore, is known as the Silicon Valley of India, for its immense contributions to the country's information technology sector. A total of 1,973 companies in the state were found to have been involved in the IT sector as of 2007.[18]

Karnataka is the only southern state to have land borders with all of the other four southern Indian sister states. The state covers an area of 191,791 km² (74,051 sq mi), or 5.83 per cent of the total geographical area of India.[19] It is the sixth-largest Indian state by area.[19] Kannada, one of the classical languages of India, is the most widely spoken and official language of the state. Other minority languages spoken include Urdu, Konkani, Marathi, Tulu, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kodava and Beary. Karnataka also contains some of the only villages in India where Sanskrit is primarily spoken.[20][21][22]

Though several etymologies have been suggested for the name Karnataka, the generally accepted one is that Karnataka is derived from the Kannada words karu and nādu, meaning "elevated land". Karu Nadu may also be read as karu, meaning "black" and nadu, meaning "region", as a reference to the black cotton soil found in the Bayalu Seeme region of the state. The British used the word Carnatic, sometimes Karnatak, to describe both sides of peninsular India, south of the Krishna.[23]

With an antiquity that dates to the paleolithic, Karnataka has been home to some of the most powerful empires of ancient and medieval India. The philosophers and musical bards patronised by these empires launched socio-religious and literary movements which have endured to the present day. Karnataka has contributed significantly to both forms of Indian classical music, the Carnatic and Hindustani traditions.

Karnataka's pre-history goes back to a paleolithic hand-axe culture evidenced by discoveries of, among other things, hand axes and cleavers in the region.[24] Evidence of neolithic and megalithic cultures have also been found in the state. Gold discovered in Harappa was found to be imported from mines in Karnataka, prompting scholars to hypothesise about contacts between ancient Karnataka and the Indus Valley civilisation c. 3300 BCE.[25][26]

Prior to the third century BCE, most of Karnataka formed part of the Nanda Empire before coming under the Mauryan empire of Emperor Ashoka. Four centuries of Satavahana rule followed, allowing them to control large areas of Karnataka. The decline of Satavahana power led to the rise of the

earliest native kingdoms, the Kadambas and the Western Gangas, marking the region's emergence as an independent political entity. The Kadamba Dynasty, founded by Mayurasharma, had its capital at Banavasi;[27][28] the Western Ganga Dynasty was formed with Talakad as its capital.[29][30]

These were also the first kingdoms to use Kannada in administration, as evidenced by the Halimidi inscription and a fifth-century copper coin discovered at Banavasi.[31][32] These dynasties were followed by imperial Kannada empires such as the Badami Chalukyas,[33][34] the Rashtrakuta Empire of Manyakheta[35][36] and the Western Chalukya Empire,[37][38] which ruled over large parts of the Deccan and had their capitals in what is now Karnataka. The Western Chalukyas patronised a unique style of architecture and Kannada literature which became a precursor to the Hoysala art of the 12th century.[39][40] Parts of modern-day Southern Karnataka (Gangavadi) were occupied by the Chola Empire at the turn of the 11th century.[41] The Cholas and the Hoysalas fought over the region in the early 12th century before it eventually came under Hoysala rule.[41]

At the turn of the first millennium, the Hoysalas gained power in the region. Literature flourished during this time, which led to the emergence of distinctive Kannada literary metres, and the construction of temples and sculptures adhering to the Vesara style of architecture.[42][43][44][45] The expansion of the Hoysala Empire brought minor parts of modern Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu under its rule. In the early 14th century, Harihara and Bukka Raya established the Vijayanagara empire with its capital, Hosapattana (later named Vijayanagara), on the banks of the Tungabhadra River in the modern Bellary district. Under the rule of Krishnadevaraya, a distinct form of literature and architecture evolved.[46][47] The empire rose as a bulwark against Muslim advances into South India, which it completely controlled for over two centuries.[48][49] In 1537, Kempe Gowda I, a chieftain of the Vijayanagara Empire, widely held as the founder of modern Bangalore, built a fort and established the area around it as Bengaluru Pete.[50]

In 1565, Karnataka and the rest of South India experienced a major geopolitical shift when the Vijayanagara empire fell to a confederation of Islamic sultanates in the Battle of Talikota.[51] The Bijapur Sultanate, which had risen after the demise of the Bahmani Sultanate of Bidar, soon took control of the Deccan; it was defeated by the Moghuls in the late 17th century.[52][53] The Bahmani and Bijapur rulers encouraged Urdu and Persian literature and Indo-Saracenic architecture, the Gol Gumbaz being one of the high points of this style.[54] During the sixteenth century, Konkani Hindus migrated to Karnataka, mostly from Salcette, Goa,[55] while during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Goan Catholics migrated to North Canara and South Canara, especially from Bardes, Goa, as a result of food shortages, epidemics and heavy taxation imposed by the Portuguese.[56]

In the period that followed, parts of northern Karnataka were ruled by the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Maratha Empire, the British, and other powers.[57] In the south, the Mysore Kingdom, a former vassal of the Vijayanagara Empire, was briefly independent.[58] With the death of Krishnaraja Wodeyar II, Haidar Ali, the commander-in-chief of the Mysore army, gained control of the region. After his death, the kingdom was inherited by his son Tipu Sultan.[59] To contain European expansion in South India, Haidar Ali and later Tipu Sultan fought four significant Anglo-Mysore Wars, the last of which resulted in Tipu Sultan's death and the incorporation of Mysore into British India in 1799.[60] Mysore was restored to the Wodeyars, and the Kingdom of Mysore became a princely state outside but in a subsidiary alliance with British India.[59]

As the "doctrine of lapse" gave way to dissent and resistance from princely states across the country, Kittur Chennamma, Queen of Kittur, her military leader Sangolli Rayanna, and others, spearheaded rebellions in part of what is now Karnataka in 1830, nearly three decades before the Indian Rebellion of 1857. However, Kitturu was taken over by the British East India Company even

before the doctrine was officially articulated by Lord Dalhousie in 1848.[61] Other uprisings followed, such as the ones at Supa, Bagalkot, Shorapur, Nargund and Dandeli. These rebellions—which coincided with the Indian Rebellion of 1857—were led by Mundargi Bhimarao, Bhaskar Rao Bhawe, the Halagali Bedas, Raja Venkatappa Nayaka and others. By the late 19th century, the independence movement had gained momentum; Karnad Sadashiva Rao, Aluru Venkata Raya, S. Nijalingappa, Kengal Hanumanthaiah, Nittoor Srinivasa Rau and others carried on the struggle into the early 20th century.[62]

After the independence of British India, the Maharaja, Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar, signed an instrument of accession to accede his state to the new India. In 1950, Mysore became an Indian state of the same name; the former Maharaja served as its Rajpramukh (head of state) until 1975. Following the long-standing demand of the Ekikarana Movement, Kodagu- and Kannada-speaking regions from the adjoining states of Madras, Hyderabad and Bombay were incorporated into the Mysore state, under the States Reorganisation Act of 1956. The thus expanded state was renamed Karnataka, seventeen years later, on 1 November 1973.[63] In the early 1900s through the post-independence era, industrial visionaries such as Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvarayya, played an important role in the development of Karnataka's strong manufacturing and industrial base.[64][65]

The state has three principal geographical zones: The bulk of the state is in the Bayaluseeme region, the northern part of which is the second-largest arid region in India.[66] The highest point in Karnataka is the Mullayanagiri hills in Chikmagalur district which has an altitude of 1,925 m (6,316 ft). The two main river systems of the state are the Krishna and its tributaries, the Bhima, Ghataprabha, Vedavathi, Malaprabha and Tungabhadra in North Karnataka, and the Kaveri and its tributaries, the Hemavati, Shimsha, Arkavati, Lakshmana Thirtha and Kabini, in South Karnataka. Most of these rivers flow out of Karnataka eastward, reaching the sea at the Bay of Bengal. Other prominent rivers such as the Sharavati in Shimoga and Netravati in Dakshina Kannada flow westward to the Lakshadweep Sea. A large number of dams and reservoirs are constructed across these rivers which richly add to the irrigation and hydroelectricity power generation capacities of the state.[citation needed]

Karnataka consists of four main types of geological formations[67] – the Archean complex made up of Dharwad schists and granitic gneisses,[68] the Proterozoic non-fossiliferous sedimentary formations of the Kaladgi and Bhima series,[69] the Deccan trappean and intertrappean deposits and the tertiary and recent laterites and alluvial deposits.[70] Laterite cappings that are found in many districts over the Deccan Traps were formed after the cessation of volcanic activity in the early tertiary period. Eleven groups of soil orders are found in Karnataka, viz. Entisols, Inceptisols, Mollisols, Spodosols, Alfisols, Ultisols, Oxisols, Aridisols, Vertisols, Andisols and Histosols.[67][71] Depending on the agricultural capability of the soil, the soil types are divided into six types, viz. red, lateritic, black, alluvio-colluvial, forest and coastal soils.[71]

About 38,284 km² (14,782 sq mi) of Karnataka (i.e. 16% of the state's geographic area) is covered by forests.[72][73] The forests are classified as reserved, protected, unclosed, village and private forests.[72] The percentage of forested area is slightly less than the all-India average of about 23%,[72] and significantly less than the 33% prescribed in the National Forest Policy.[74]

Karnataka experiences four seasons. The winter in January and February is followed by summer between March and May, the monsoon season between June and September and the post-monsoon season from October till December. Meteorologically, Karnataka is divided into three zones –

coastal, north interior and south interior. Of these, the coastal zone receives the heaviest rainfall with an average rainfall of about 3,638.5 mm (143 in) per annum, far in excess of the state average of 1,139 mm (45 in). Amagaon in Khanapura taluka of Belgaum district received 10,068 mm (396 in) of rainfall in 2010.[75] In 2014 Kokalli in Sirsi taluka of Uttara Kannada district received 8,746 mm (344 in) of rainfall.[76] Agumbe in Thirthahalli taluka and Hulikal of Hosanagara taluka in Shimoga district were the rainiest cities in Karnataka, situated in one of the wettest regions in the world.[77]

The state is projected to warm about 2.0 °C (4 °F) by 2030. The monsoon is set to provide less rainfall. Agriculture in Karnataka is mostly rainfed as opposed to irrigated, making it highly vulnerable to expected changes in the monsoon.[78] The highest recorded temperature was 45.6 °C (114 °F) in Raichuru district. The lowest recorded temperature was 2.8 °C (37 °F) at Bidar district.[79]

Karnataka is home to a variety of wildlife. It has a recorded forest area of 38,720 km² (14,950 sq mi) which constitutes 12.3% of the total geographical area of the state.[80] These forests support 25% of the elephant and 10% of the tiger population of India. Many regions of Karnataka are as yet unexplored, so new species of flora and fauna are found periodically. The Western Ghats, a biodiversity hotspot, includes the western region of Karnataka. The Bandipur and Nagarhole National Parks were included in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve in 1986, a UNESCO designation.[81] The Indian roller and the Indian elephant are recognised as the state bird and animal while sandalwood and the lotus are recognised as the state tree and flower respectively. Karnataka has five national parks: Anshi, Bandipur, Bannerghatta, Kudremukh and Nagarhole.[82] It also has 27 wildlife sanctuaries of which seven are bird sanctuaries.[83][80]

Wild animals that are found in Karnataka include the elephant, the tiger, the leopard, the gaur, the sambar deer, the chital or spotted deer, the muntjac, the bonnet macaque, the slender loris, the common palm civet, the small Indian civet, the sloth bear, the dhole, the striped hyena, the Bengal fox and the golden jackal. Some of the birds found here are the great hornbill, the Malabar pied hornbill, the Ceylon frogmouth, herons, ducks, kites, eagles, falcons, quails, partridges, lapwings, sandpipers, pigeons, doves, parakeets, cuckoos, owls, nightjars, swifts, kingfishers, bee-eaters and munias.[82][84][85] Some species of trees found in Karnataka are *Calophyllum tomentosum*, *Calophyllum wightianum*, *Garcinia cambogia*, *Garcinia morella*, *Alstonia scholaris*, *Flacourtia montana*, *Artocarpus hirsutus*, *Artocarpus lacucha*, *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*, *Grewia tiliifolia*, *Santalum album*, *Shorea talura*, *Embllica officinalis*, *Vitex altissima* and *Wrightia tinctoria*. Wildlife in Karnataka is threatened by poaching, habitat destruction, human-wildlife conflict and pollution.[82]

There are 31 districts in Karnataka. Each district (zila) is governed by a district commissioner (ziladar). The districts are further divided into sub-districts (talukas), which are governed by sub-commissioners (talukdars); sub-divisions comprise blocks (tehsils/hobli), which are governed by block development officers (tehsildars), which contain village councils (panchayats), town municipal councils (purasabhe), city municipal councils (nagarasabhe), and city municipal corporations (mahanagara palike).

According to the 2011 census of India,[86] the total population of Karnataka was 61,095,297 of which 30,966,657 (50.7%) were male and 30,128,640 (49.3%) were female, or 1000 males for every 973 females. This represents a 15.60% increase over the population in 2001. The population density was 319 per km² and 38.67% of the people lived in urban areas. The literacy rate was 75.36% with 82.47% of males and 68.08% of females being literate.[86]

In 2007 the state had a birth rate of 2.2%, a death rate of 0.7%, an infant mortality rate of 5.5% and a maternal mortality rate of 0.2%. The total fertility rate was 2.2.[87]

Karnataka's private sector speciality health care competes with the best in the world.[88][89] Karnataka has also established a modicum of public health services having a better record of health care and child care than most other states of India. In spite of these advances, some parts of the state still suffer from the lack of primary health care.[90]

Adi Shankara (788–820 CE) chose Sringeri in Karnataka to establish the first of his four mathas (monastery). Madhvacharya (1238–1317) was the chief proponent of Tattvavada (philosophy of reality), popularly known as Dvaita or Dualistic school of Hindu philosophy – one of the three most influential Vedanta philosophies. Madhvacharya was one of the important philosophers during the Bhakti movement. He was a pioneer in many ways, going against standard conventions and norms. According to tradition, Madhvacharya is believed to be the third incarnation of Vayu (Mukhyaprana), after Hanuman and Bhima. The Haridasa devotional movement is considered one of the turning points in the cultural history of India. Over a span of nearly six centuries, several saints and mystics helped shape the culture, philosophy, and art of South India and Karnataka in particular by exerting considerable spiritual influence over the masses and kingdoms that ruled South India.[citation needed]

This movement was ushered in by the Haridasas (literally "servants of Hari") and took shape in the 13th century – 14th century CE, period, prior to and during the early rule of the Vijayanagara empire. The main objective of this movement was to propagate the Dvaita philosophy of Madhvacharya (Madhva Siddhanta) to the masses through a literary medium known as Dasa Sahitya. Purandara dasa is widely recognised as the "Pithamaha" of Carnatic Music for his immense contribution. Ramanuja, the leading expounder of Vishishtadvaita, spent many years in Melkote. He came to Karnataka in 1098 CE and lived here until 1122 CE. He first lived in Tondanur and then moved to Melkote where the Cheluvanarayana Swamy Temple and a well-organised matha were built. He was patronised by the Hoysala king, Vishnuvardhana.[91]

In the twelfth century, Lingayatism emerged in northern Karnataka as a protest against the rigidity of the prevailing social and caste system. Leading figures of this movement were Basava, Akka Mahadevi and Allama Prabhu, who established the Anubhava Mantapa which was the centre of all religious and philosophical thoughts and discussions pertaining to Lingayats. These three social reformers did so by the literary means of "Vachana Sahitya" which is very famous for its simple, straight forward and easily understandable Kannada language. Lingayatism preached women equality by letting women wear Ishtalinga i.e. Symbol of god around their neck. Basava shunned the sharp hierarchical divisions that existed and sought to remove all distinctions between the hierarchically superior master class and the subordinate, servile class. He also supported inter-caste marriages and Kaay Ta tTatva of Basavanna. This was the basis of the Lingayat faith which today counts millions among its followers.[92]

The Jain philosophy and literature have contributed immensely to the religious and cultural landscape of Karnataka.[citation needed]

Islam, which had an early presence on the west coast of India as early as the tenth century, gained a foothold in Karnataka with the rise of the Bahamani and Bijapur sultanates that ruled parts of Karnataka.[93] Christianity reached Karnataka in the sixteenth century with the arrival of the Portuguese and St. Francis Xavier in 1545.[94]

Buddhism was popular in Karnataka during the first millennium in places such as Gulbarga and Banavasi. A chance discovery of edicts and several Mauryan relics at Sannati in Kalaburagi district in

1986 has proven that the Krishna River basin was once home to both Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism. There are Tibetan refugee camps in Karnataka.[citation needed]

Mysore Dasara is celebrated as the Nada habba (state festival) and this is marked by major festivities at Mysore. Bangalore Karaga, celebrated in the heart of Bangalore, is the second most important festival celebrated in Karnataka.[95] Ugadi (Kannada New Year), Makara Sankranti (the harvest festival), Ganesh Chaturthi, Gowri Habba, Ram Navami, Nagapanchami, Basava Jayanthi, Deepavali, and Balipadyami are the other major festivals of Karnataka.[citation needed]

Languages of Karnataka (2011 census)[96]

Kannada is the official language of the state of Karnataka, as the native language of 66.46% of its population as of 2011 and is one of the classical languages of India. Urdu is the second largest language, spoken by 10.83% of the population, and is the language of Muslims outside the coastal region. Telugu (5.84%) is a major language in areas bordering Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka as well as Bangalore, while Tamil (3.45%) is a major language of Bangalore and in the Kolar district. Marathi (3.29%) is concentrated in areas of Uttara Kannada, Belgaum and Bidar districts bordering Maharashtra. Lambadi is spoken by the Lambadis scattered throughout North Karnataka, while Hindi is spoken in Bangalore. Tulu (2.61%), Konkani (1.29%), and Malayalam (1.27%) are all found in linguistically diverse Coastal Karnataka, where a number of mixed and distinct dialects such as Are Bhashe, Beary Bhashe, and Nawayathi are found. Kodava Takk is the language of Kodagu.[96][97][98]

Kannada played a crucial role in the creation of Karnataka: linguistic demographics played a major role in defining the new state in 1956. Tulu, Konkani and Kodava are other minor native languages that share a long history in the state. Urdu is spoken widely by the Muslim population. Less widely spoken languages include Beary bashe and certain languages such as Sankethi. Some of the regional languages in Karnataka are Tulu, Kodava, Konkani and Beary.[99][100][101]

Kannada features a rich and ancient body of literature including religious and secular genre, covering topics as diverse as Jainism (such as Puranas), Lingayatism (such as Vachanas), Vaishnavism (such as Haridasa Sahitya) and modern literature. Evidence from edicts during the time of Ashoka (reigned 274–232 BCE) suggest that Buddhist literature influenced the Kannada script and its literature. The Halmidi inscription, the earliest attested full-length inscription in the Kannada language and script, dates from 450 CE, while the earliest available literary work, the Kavirajamarga, has been dated to 850 CE. References made in the Kavirajamarga, however, prove that Kannada literature flourished in the native composition metres such as Chattana, Beddande and Melvadu during earlier centuries. The classic refers to several earlier greats (purvacharyar) of Kannada poetry and prose.[102]

Kuvempu, the renowned Kannada poet and writer who wrote Jaya Bharata Jananiya Tanujate, the state anthem of Karnataka[103]

was the first recipient of the Karnataka Ratna, the highest civilian award bestowed by the Government of Karnataka. Contemporary Kannada literature has received considerable acknowledgement in the arena of Indian literature, with eight Kannada writers winning India's highest literary honour, the Jnanpith award.[104][105]

Tulu is the majority language in the coastal district of Dakshina Kannada and is the second most spoken in the Udupi district.[106] This region is also known as Tulu Nadu.[107] Tulu Mahabharato, written by Arunabja in the Tigalari script, is the oldest surviving Tulu text.[108] Tigalari script was

used by Brahmins to write Sanskrit language. The use of the Kannada script for writing Tulu and non-availability of print in Tigalari script contributed to the marginalisation of Tigalari script.[citation needed]

In Karnataka Konkani is mostly spoken in the Uttara Kannada and Dakshina Kannada districts and in parts of Udupi, Konkani use the Devanagari Script (which is official)/Kannada script(Optional) for writing as identified by government of Karnataka.[109][110]

The Kodavas who mainly reside in the Kodagu district, speak Kodava Takk. Kodagu was a separate State with its own Chief Minister and Council of Ministers till 1956. Two regional variations of the language exist, the northern Mendale Takka and the southern Kiggaati Takka.[111] Kodava Takk has its own script, Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy has accepted I. M. Muthanna's script which was developed in 1970 as the official script of Kodava Thakk. English is the medium of education in many schools and widely used for business communication in most private companies.[citation needed]

All of the state's languages are patronised and promoted by governmental and quasi-governmental bodies. The Kannada Sahitya Parishat and the Kannada Sahitya Akademi are responsible for the promotion of Kannada while the Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Akademi,[112] the Tulu Sahitya Akademi and the Kodava Sahitya Akademi promote their respective languages.[citation needed]

Karnataka has a parliamentary system of government with two democratically elected houses, the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. The Legislative Assembly consists of 224 members who are elected for five-year terms.[113] The Legislative Council is a permanent body of 75 members with one-third (25 members) retiring every two years.[113]

The government of Karnataka is headed by the Chief Minister who is chosen by the ruling party members of the Legislative Assembly. The Chief Minister, along with the council of ministers, executes the legislative agenda and exercises most of the executive powers.[114] However, the constitutional and formal head of the state is the Governor who is appointed for a five-year term by the President of India on the advice of the Union government.[115] The people of Karnataka also elect 28 members to the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament.[116] The members of the state Legislative Assembly elect 12 members to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament.[citation needed] For administrative purposes, Karnataka has been divided into four revenue divisions, 49 sub-divisions, 31 districts, 175 taluks and 745 hoblies / revenue circles.[117] The administration in each district is headed by a Deputy Commissioner who belongs to the Indian Administrative Service and is assisted by a number of officers belonging to Karnataka state services. The Superintendent of Police, an officer belonging to the Indian Police Service and assisted by the officers of the Karnataka Police Service, is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining law and order and related issues in each district. The Deputy Conservator of Forests, an officer belonging to the Indian Forest Service, is entrusted with the responsibility of managing forests, environment and wildlife of the district, he will be assisted by the officers belonging to Karnataka Forest Service and officers belonging to Karnataka Forest Subordinate Service. Sectoral development in the districts is looked after by the district head of each development department such as Public Works Department, Health, Education, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, etc. The judiciary in the state consists of the Karnataka High Court (Attara Kacheri) in Bangalore, Hubballi-Dharwad, and Kalaburagi, district and session courts in each district and lower courts and judges at the taluk level.[citation needed]

Politics in Karnataka has been dominated by three political parties, the Indian National Congress, the Janata Dal (Secular) and the Bharatiya Janata Party.[118] Politicians from Karnataka have played prominent roles in federal government of India with some of them having held the high positions of Prime Minister and Vice-President. Border disputes involving Karnataka's claim on the Kasaragod[119] and Solapur[120] districts and Maharashtra's claim on Belagavi are ongoing since the states reorganisation.[121]

The official emblem of Karnataka has a Ganda Berunda in the centre. Surmounting this are four lions facing the four directions, taken from the Lion Capital of Ashoka at Sarnath. The emblem also carries two Sharabhas with the head of an elephant and the body of a lion.[citation needed]

Karnataka had an estimated GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) of about US\$115.86 billion in the 2014–15 fiscal year.[122] The state registered a GSDP growth rate of 7% for the year 2014–2015.[123] Karnataka's contribution to India's GDP in the year 2014–15 was 7.54%.[122] With GDP growth of 17.59% and per capita GDP growth of 16.04%, Karnataka is on the 6th position among all states and union territories.[124][125] In an employment survey conducted for the year 2013–2014, the unemployment rate in Karnataka was 1.8% compared to the national rate of 4.9%.[126] In 2011–2012, Karnataka had an estimated poverty ratio of 20.91% compared to the national ratio of 21.92%.[127]

Nearly 56% of the workforce in Karnataka is engaged in agriculture and related activities.[128] A total of 12.31 million hectares of land, or 64.6% of the state's total area, is cultivated.[129] Much of the agricultural output is dependent on the southwest monsoon as only 26.5% of the sown area is irrigated.[129]

Karnataka is the manufacturing hub for some of the largest public sector industries in India, including Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, National Aerospace Laboratories, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, Bharat Earth Movers Limited and HMT (formerly Hindustan Machine Tools), which are based in Bangalore. Many of India's premier science and technology research centres, such as Indian Space Research Organisation, Central Power Research Institute, Bharat Electronics Limited and the Central Food Technological Research Institute, are also headquartered in Karnataka. Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited is an oil refinery, located in Mangalore.[citation needed]

The state has also begun to invest heavily in solar power centred on the Pavagada Solar Park. As of December 2017, the state has installed an estimated 2.2 gigawatts of block solar panelling and in January 2018 announced a tender to generate a further 1.2 gigawatts in the coming years: Karnataka Renewable Energy Development suggests that this will be based on 24 separate systems (or 'blocks') generating 50 megawatts each.[130][131][132]

Since the 1980s, Karnataka has emerged as the pan-Indian leader in the field of IT (information technology). In 2007, there were nearly 2,000 firms operating in Karnataka. Many of them, including two of India's biggest software firms, Infosys and Wipro, are also headquartered in the state.[133] Exports from these firms exceeded ₹500 billion (equivalent to ₹1.6 trillion or US\$20 billion in 2023) in 2006–07, accounting for nearly 38% of all IT exports from India.[133] The Nandi Hills area in the outskirts of Devanahalli is the site of the upcoming \$22 billion, 50 km² BIAL IT Investment Region, one of the largest infrastructure projects in the history of Karnataka.[134] All this has earned the state capital, Bangalore, the sobriquet Silicon Valley of India.[135][136][137]

Karnataka also leads the nation in biotechnology. It is home to India's largest biocluster, with 60% of the country's biotechnology firms being based here.[138][139][140] The state has 18,000 hectares of

land under flower cultivation, an upcoming industry which supplies flowers and ornamental plants worldwide.[141][142]

Seven of India's banks, Canara Bank, Syndicate Bank, Corporation Bank, Vijaya Bank, Karnataka Bank, ING Vysya Bank and the State Bank of Mysore originated in this state.[143] The coastal districts of Udupi and Dakshina Kannada have a branch for every 500 persons—the best distribution of banks in India.[144] In March 2002, Karnataka had 4767 branches of different banks with each branch serving 11,000 persons, which is lower than the national average of 16,000.[145]

A majority of the silk industry in India is headquartered in Karnataka, much of it in Doddaballapura in Bangalore Rural district and the state government intends to invest ₹700 million (equivalent to ₹1.4 billion or US\$18 million in 2023) in a "Silk City" at Muddenahalli in Chikkaballapura district.[146][147][148]

Air transport in Karnataka, as in the rest of the country, is still a fledgling but fast expanding sector. Karnataka has airports at Bangalore, Mangalore, Belgaum, Hubli, Hampi, Bellary, Gulbarga, and Mysore with international operations from Bangalore and Mangalore airports.[149][150] Shimoga and Bijapur airports are being built under the UDAN Scheme.[151][152][153][150]

Karnataka has a railway network with a total length of approximately 3,089 km (1,919 mi). Until the creation of the South-Western Railway Zone headquartered at Hubballi in 2003, the railway network in the state was in the Southern Railway zone, South-Central Railway Zone and Western Railway zone. Several parts of the state now come under the South Western Railway zone with 3 Railway Divisions at Bangalore, Mysore, Hubli, with the remainder under the Southern Railway zone and Konkan Railway Zone, which is considered one of India's biggest railway projects of the century due to the difficult terrain.[154] Bangalore and other cities in the state are well-connected with intrastate and inter-state destinations.[citation needed]

Karnataka has 11 ports, including the New Mangalore Port, a major port and ten minor ports, of which three were operational in 2012.[155] The New Mangalore port was incorporated as the ninth major port in India on 4 May 1974.[156] This port handled 32.04 million tonnes of traffic in the fiscal year 2006–07 with 17.92 million tonnes of imports and 14.12 million tonnes of exports. The port also handled 1015 vessels including 18 cruise vessels during the year 2006–07. Foreigners can enter Mangalore through the New Mangalore Port with the help of Electronic visa (e-visa).[157] Cruise ships from Europe, North America and UAE arrive at New Mangalore Port to visit the tourist places across Coastal Karnataka.[158][159] The port of Mangalore is among the 4 major ports of India that receive over 25 international cruise ships every year.[160]

The total lengths of National Highways and State Highways in Karnataka are 3,973 and 9,829 km (2,469 and 6,107 mi), respectively.[161][162]

The state transport corporations, transports an average of 2.2 million passengers daily and employs about 25,000 people.[163] The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) and The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) headquartered in Bangalore, The Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (KKRTC) headquartered in Gulbarga, and The North Western Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) headquartered in Hubballi are the 4 state-owned transport corporations.[citation needed]

The diverse linguistic and religious ethnicities that are native to Karnataka, combined with their long histories, have contributed immensely to the varied cultural heritage of the state. Apart from Kannadigas, Karnataka is home to Tuluvas, Kodavas and Konkanis. Minor populations of Tibetan

Buddhists and tribes like the Soligas, Yeravas, Todas and Siddhis also live in Karnataka. The traditional folk arts cover the entire gamut of music, dance, drama, storytelling by itinerant troupes, etc. Yakshagana of Tulu Nadu, Uttara Kannada, and Malnad regions Karnataka, a classical dance drama, is one of the major theatrical forms of Karnataka. Contemporary theatre culture in Karnataka remains vibrant with organisations like Ninasam, Ranga Shankara, Rangayana and Prabhat Kalavidaru continuing to build on the foundations laid by Gubbi Veeranna, T. P. Kailasam, B. V. Karanth, K V Subbanna, Prasanna and others.[164] Veeragase, Kamsale, Kolata and Dollu Kunita are popular dance forms. The Mysore style of Bharatanatya, nurtured and popularised by the likes of the legendary Jatti Tayamma, continues to hold sway in Karnataka, and Bangalore also enjoys an eminent place as one of the foremost centres of Bharatanatya.[165]

Karnataka also has a special place in the world of Indian classical music, with both Karnataka[166] (Carnatic) and Hindustani styles finding place in the state, and Karnataka has produced a number of stalwarts in both styles. The Haridasa movement of the sixteenth century contributed significantly to the development of Karnataka (Carnatic) music as a performing art form. Purandara Dasa, one of the most revered Haridasas, is known as the Karnataka Sangeeta Pitamaha ('Father of Karnataka a.k.a. Carnatic music').[167] Celebrated Hindustani musicians like Gangubai Hangal, Mallikarjun Mansur, Bhimsen Joshi, Basavaraja Rajaguru, Sawai Gandharva and several others hail from Karnataka, and some of them have been recipients of the Kalidas Samman, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan awards. Noted Carnatic musicians include Violin T. Chowdiah, Veena Sheshanna, Mysore Vasudevachar, Doreswamy Iyengar and Thitte Krishna Iyengar.[citation needed]

Gamaka is another classical music genre based on Carnatic music that is practised in Karnataka. Kannada Bhavageete is a genre of popular music that draws inspiration from the expressionist poetry of modern poets. The Mysore school of painting has produced painters like Sundarayya, Tanjavur Kondayya, B. Venkatappa and Keshavayya.[168] Chitrakala Parishat is an organisation in Karnataka dedicated to promoting painting, mainly in the Mysore painting style.[citation needed]

Saree is the traditional dress of women in Karnataka. Women in Kodagu have a distinct style of wearing the saree, different from the rest of Karnataka. Dhoti, known as Panche in Karnataka, is the traditional attire of men. Shirt, Trousers and Salwar kameez are widely worn in Urban areas. Mysore Peta is the traditional headgear of southern Karnataka, while the pagadi or pataga (similar to the Rajasthani turban) is preferred in the northern areas of the state.[citation needed]

Rice and Ragi form the staple food in South Karnataka, whereas Jolada rotti, Sorghum is staple to North Karnataka. Bisi bele bath, Jolada rotti, Ragi mudde, Uppittu, Benne Dose, Masala Dose and Maddur Vade are some of the popular food items in Karnataka. Among sweets, Mysore Pak, Karadantu of Gokak and Amingad, Belgaavi Kunda and Dharwad pedha are popular. Apart from this, coastal Karnataka and Kodagu have distinctive cuisines of their own. Udupi cuisine of coastal Karnataka is popular all over India.[citation needed]

As per the 2011 census, Karnataka had a literacy rate of 75.60%, with 82.85% of males and 68.13% of females in the state being literate.[169]

The Indian Institute of Science and Manipal Academy of Higher Education were ranked within the top 10 universities of India by NIRF 2020.[170] The state is home to some of the premier educational and research institutions of India such as the Indian Institute of Management – Bangalore, the Indian Institute of Technology – Dharwad the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences – Bangalore, the National Institute of Technology Karnataka – Surathkal and the National Law School of India University – Bangalore.[171]

In March 2006, Karnataka had 54,529 primary schools with 252,875 teachers and 8.495 million students,[172] and 9498 secondary schools with 92,287 teachers and 1.384 million students.[172] There are three kinds of schools in the state, viz., government-run, private aided (financial aid is provided by the government) and private unaided (no financial aid is provided). The primary languages of instruction in most schools are Kannada and English.[citation needed]

The syllabus taught in the schools is either of KSEEB (SSLC) and Pre-University Course (PUC) of the State Syllabus, the CBSE of the Central Syllabus, CISCE, IGCSE, IB, NIOS, etc., are all defined by the Department of Public Instruction of the Government of Karnataka. The state has two Sainik Schools – Kodagu Sainik School in Kodagu and Bijapur Sainik School in Bijapur.[citation needed]

To maximise attendance in schools, the Karnataka Government has launched a mid-day meal scheme in government and aided schools in which free lunch is provided to the students.[174]

Statewide board examinations are conducted at the end of secondary education. Students who qualify are allowed to pursue a two-year pre-university course, after which they become eligible to pursue under-graduate degrees.[171]

There are 481-degree colleges affiliated with one of the universities in the state, viz. Bangalore University, Rani Channamma University, Belagavi, Gulbarga University, Karnatak University, Kuvempu University, Mangalore University and Mysore University.[175] In 1998, the engineering colleges in the state were brought under the newly formed Visvesvaraya Technological University headquartered in Belgaum, whereas the medical colleges are run under the jurisdiction of the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences headquartered in Bangalore. Some of these baccalaureate colleges are accredited with the status of a deemed university. There are 186 engineering, 39 medical and 41 dental colleges in the state.[176] Udupi, Sringeri, Gokarna and Melkote are well-known places of Sanskrit and Vedic learning. In 2015 the Central Government decided to establish the first Indian Institute of Technology in Karnataka at Dharwad.[177] Tulu and Konkani[178] languages are taught as an optional subject in the twin districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi.[179]

Christ University, Jain University, CMR University, Dayananda Sagar University, PES University and REVA University are notable private universities in Karnataka.[citation needed]

On 9 February 2022, Karnataka shut its schools for three days after the regional administration-backed schools imposed a hijab ban, leading to widespread protests and violence. Other universities in the state began enforcing prohibitions after Hindu students, supported by right-wing Hindu groups, argued that if hijabs were allowed in classrooms, they should wear saffron shawls. On 5 February 2022, the Karnataka state government advised colleges to guarantee that "clothes which disturb equality, integrity, and public law and order should not be worn" in apparent support of schools' ability to enforce a ban.[180]

The era of Kannada newspapers started in the year 1843 when Hermann Mögling, a missionary from Basel Mission, published the first Kannada newspaper called Mangaluru Samachara in Mangalore. The first Kannada periodical, Mysuru Vrittanta Bodhini was started by Bhashyam Bhashyacharya in Mysore. Shortly after Indian independence in 1948, K. N. Guruswamy founded The Printers (Mysuru) Private Limited and began publishing two newspapers, Deccan Herald and Prajavani. Presently The Times of India and Vijaya Karnataka are the largest-selling English and Kannada newspapers respectively.[181][182] A vast number of weekly, biweekly and monthly magazines are under publication in both Kannada and English. Udayavani, Kannadaprabha, Samyukta Karnataka,

VarthaBharathi, Sanjevani, Eesanje, Hosa digantha, Karavali Ale are also some popular dailies published from Karnataka.[citation needed]

Doordarshan is the broadcaster of the Government of India and its channel DD Chandana is dedicated to Kannada. Prominent Kannada channels include Colors Kannada, Zee Kannada, Star Suvarna and Udaya TV.[citation needed]

Karnataka occupies a special place in the history of Indian radio. In 1935, Aakashvani, the first private radio station in India, was started by Prof. M.V. Gopalaswamy in Mysore.[183] The popular radio station was taken over by the local municipality and later by All India Radio (AIR) and moved to Bangalore in 1955. Later in 1957, AIR adopted the original name of the radio station, Aakashvani as its own. Some of the popular programs aired by AIR Bangalore included Nisarga Sampada and Sasya Sanjeevini which were programs that taught science through songs, plays, and stories. These two programs became so popular that they were translated and broadcast in 18 different languages and the entire series was recorded on cassettes by the Government of Karnataka and distributed to thousands of schools across the state.[183] Karnataka has witnessed a growth in FM radio channels, mainly in the cities of Bangalore, Mangalore and Mysore, which has become hugely popular.[184][185]

Karnataka's smallest district, Kodagu, is a major contributor to Indian field hockey, producing numerous players who have represented India at the international level.[186] The annual Kodava Hockey Festival is the largest hockey tournament in the world.[187] Bangalore has hosted a WTA tennis event and, in 1997, it hosted the fourth National Games of India.[188] The Sports Authority of India, the premier sports institute in the country, and the Nike Tennis Academy are also situated in Bangalore. Karnataka has been referred to as the cradle of Indian swimming because of its high standards in comparison to other states.[189]

One of the most popular sports in Karnataka is cricket. The state cricket team has won the Ranji Trophy seven times, second only to Mumbai in terms of success.[190] Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore regularly hosts international Cricket matches and is also the home of the National Cricket Academy, which was opened in 2000 to nurture potential international players. Many cricketers have represented India and in one international match held in the 1990s; players from Karnataka composed the majority of the national team.[191][192] The Royal Challengers Bangalore, an Indian Premier League franchise, the Bengaluru Football Club, an Indian Super League franchise, the Bengaluru Yodhas, a Pro Wrestling League franchise, the Bengaluru Blasters, a Premier Badminton League franchise and the Bengaluru Bulls, a Pro Kabaddi League franchise are based in Bangalore. The Karnataka Premier League is an inter-regional Twenty20 cricket tournament played in the state for eight seasons till 2019.[193] After 2019, it was replaced by Maharaja Trophy KSCA T20 tournament.[193]

Notable sportsmen from Karnataka include B.S. Chandrasekhar, Roger Binny, E. A. S. Prasanna, Anil Kumble, Javagal Srinath, Rahul Dravid, Venkatesh Prasad, Robin Uthappa, Vinay Kumar, Gundappa Vishwanath, Syed Kirmani, Stuart Binny, K. L. Rahul, Mayank Agarwal, Manish Pandey, Karun Nair, Ashwini Ponnappa, Mahesh Bhupathi, Rohan Bopanna, Prakash Padukone who won the All England Badminton Championships in 1980 and Pankaj Advani who has won three world titles in cue sports by the age of 20 including the amateur World Snooker Championship in 2003 and the World Billiards Championship in 2005.[194][195]

Bijapur district has produced some of the best-known road cyclists in the national circuit. Premalata Sureban was part of the Indian contingent at the Perlis Open '99 in Malaysia. In recognition of the

talent of cyclists in the district, the state government laid down a cycling track at the B.R. Ambedkar Stadium at a cost of ₹4 million (US\$50,000).[196]

By virtue of its varied geography and long history, Karnataka hosts numerous spots of interest for tourists. There is an array of ancient sculptured temples, modern cities, scenic hill ranges, forests and beaches. Karnataka has been ranked as the fourth most popular destination for tourism among the states of India.[199] Karnataka has the second highest number of nationally protected monuments in India, second only to Uttar Pradesh,[200] in addition to 752 monuments protected by the State Directorate of Archaeology and Museums. Another 25,000 monuments are yet to receive protection.[201][202]

The districts of the Western Ghats and the southern districts of the state have popular eco-tourism locations including Kudremukh, Madikeri and Agumbe. Karnataka has 25 wildlife sanctuaries and five national parks. Popular among them are Bandipur National Park, Bannerghatta National Park and Nagarhole National Park. The ruins of the Vijayanagara Empire at Hampi and the monuments of Pattadakal are on the list of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. The cave temples at Badami and the rock-cut temples at Aihole representing the Badami Chalukyan style of architecture are also popular tourist destinations. The Hoysala temples at Beluru and Halebidu, which were built with Chloritic schist (soapstone) are proposed UNESCO World Heritage sites.[203] The Gol Gumbaz and Ibrahim Rauza are famous examples of the Deccan Sultanate style of architecture. The monolith of Gomateshwara Bahubali at Shravanabelagola is the tallest sculpted monolith in the world, attracting tens of thousands of pilgrims during the Mahamastakabhisheka festival.[204]

The waterfalls of Karnataka and Kudremukh are considered by some to be among the "1001 Natural Wonders of the World".[205] Jog Falls is India's tallest single-tiered waterfall with Gokak Falls, Unchalli Falls, Magod Falls, Abbey Falls and Shivanasamudra Falls among other popular waterfalls.[205]

Several popular beaches dot the coastline, including Murudeshwara, Gokarna, Malpe and Karwar. In addition, Karnataka is home to several places of religious importance. Several Hindu temples including the famous Udupi Sri Krishna Matha, the Marikamba Temple at Sirsi, the Kollur Mookambika Temple, the Sri Manjunatha Temple at Dharmasthala, Kukke Subramanya Temple, Janardhana and Mahakali Temple at Ambalpadi, Sharadamba Temple at Shringeri attract pilgrims from all over India. Most of the holy sites of Lingayatism, like Kudalasangama and Basavana Bagewadi, are found in northern parts of the state. Shravanabelagola, Mudabidri and Karkala are famous for Jain history and monuments. Jainism had a stronghold in Karnataka in the early medieval period with Shravanabelagola as its most important centre. The Shettihalli Rosary Church near Shettihalli, an example of French colonial Gothic architecture, is a rare example of a Christian ruin, is a popular tourist site.[206][207]

Karnataka has become a center of health care tourism and has the highest number of approved health systems and alternative therapies in India. Along with some ISO certified government-owned hospitals, private institutions which provide international-quality services, Hospitals in Karnataka treat around 8,000 health tourists every year.[208]

Text extracted from URL 17:

Karnataka, a southern state in India, has a distinct art style and culture informed by a long history of diverse linguistic and religious ethnicities. Apart from Kannadigas, Karnataka is home to Tuluvas,

who also consider themselves as Kannadigas. Minor populations of Tibetan Buddhists, Siddhi tribes, and a few other ethnic groups also live in Karnataka.

The traditional folk arts are major theatrical forms in coastal Karnataka. Contemporary theatre culture in Karnataka is one of the most vibrant in India, with organizations like Ninasam, Ranga Shankara, and Rangayana on foundations laid by the Gubbi Veeranna Nataka Company. Veeragase, Kamsale, and Dollu Kunitha are popular dance forms. Bharatanatya also enjoys wide patronage in Karnataka.

Karnataka is the only Indian state where c singers flourish. North Karnataka is predominantly famous for Hindustani music and South Karnataka is well known for Carnatic music.

With the rise of Vaishnavism and the Haridasa movement came Karnataka composers like Purandaradasa, whose Kannada language works were lucid, devotional and cultural and hence appealing to the masses. Other haridasas of medieval times were Kanakadasa, Vyasatirtha, Jayatirtha, Sripadaraya, Vadirajatirtha etc., who composed several devara nama. One of the earliest and prominent composers in South India was the saint, and wandering bard of yore Purandara Dasa. Though historians claim Purandara Dasa composed 75,000 - 475,000 songs in Sanskrit and Kannada,[1] only a few hundred of them are known today.[2][3] He was a source of inspiration to the later composers like Tyagaraja.[4] Owing to his contribution to the Carnatic Music he is referred to as the Father of Carnatic Music (Karnataka Sangeeta Pitamaha).[3][5][6]

Purandaradasa codified and consolidated the teaching of Carnatic music by evolving several steps like sarali, jantai(Janti), thattu varisai (Thattu Varise), alankara and geetham (geethe) and laid down a framework for imparting formal training in this art form.[7] Later in the 17th and 18th centuries, the haridasa movement would once again contribute to music in Karnataka in the form of haridasas such as Vijaya Dasa, Gopaladasa, Jagannathadasa who are just a few among a vast galaxy of devotional saints.[8][9][10][11]

Karnataka has achieved a prominent place in the world of Hindustani music as well. Several of Karnataka's Hindustani musicians won the Kalidas Sanman, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan awards. Some famous performers are Gangubai Hangal,[12] Puttaraj Gawai, Pt. Bhimsen Joshi,[13] Pt. Mallikarjun Mansur,[14] Basavaraj Rajguru,[15] Sawai Gandharva[15] and Kumar Gandharva.[16]

Folk music is popular in Karnataka. Many singers have recorded numerous folk songs in Kannada including B. K. Sumitra, Bangalore Latha, B. R. Chaya and many. Folk songs including Bhagyada balegara, Nimbiya Banada, Ghallu Ghallenuta, Munjaneddu Kumbaranna, Mayadantha Male Bantanna, Maralladyane and many, are popular, recreated and reused in films as well.

Yakshagana a form of dance drama is one of the major theatrical forms in coastal Karnataka. A fusion of folk and classical tradition makes Yakshagana a unique form of art which includes colourful costumes, music, dance, singing, and most importantly dialogs composed on the fly. Award-winning performers include Keremane Shambhu Hegde, Chittani Ramachandra Hegde. Yakshagana and Dollu Kunitha are two of the popular dance forms of Karnataka. Gamaka is a unique music form based on Karnataka Sangeetha.

Pilivesha a dance form popularly displayed on the streets and temples around the coastal Karnataka. The speciality of this dance form is that it requires the dancer to paint his body with the picture of a tiger

The Bengal Renaissance, along with the general influence of the Ravi Varma school of painting, influenced the Mysore school of painting. King Krishnaraja Wadiyar III patronised famous painters

including Sundarayya, Tanjavur Kondayya and Alasinrayya. King Krishna Raja Wadiyar IV patronised K. Venkatappa, Keshavayya, Y. Nagaraju, Y. Subramanya Raju, Paavanje, and Kamadolli. The Chamarajendra Academy of Visual Arts (CAVA), Jaganmohan Art Gallery and Venkatappa Art Gallery are reminders of this heyday.[17] Chitrakala Parishat is an organisation in Karnataka dedicated to promoting visual arts, particularly folk and traditional art.

Utsav Rock Garden includes multiple sculptures depicting the rural life of Karnataka, as well as a variety of paintings.

Text extracted from URL 18:

Arunachal Pradesh (/ɑːrəˌnɑːtʃəl prəˈdeʃ/, [18] lit. 'Dawn-Lit Mountain Province')[19] is a state in northeast India. It was formed from the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) region, and India declared it as a state on 20 February 1987. Itanagar is its capital and largest town. It borders the Indian states of Assam and Nagaland to the south. It shares international borders with Bhutan in the west, Myanmar in the east, and a disputed 1,129 km border with China's Tibet Autonomous Region in the north at the McMahon Line.[20] Arunachal Pradesh is claimed by China as part of the Tibet Autonomous Region;[21] China occupied some regions of Arunachal Pradesh in 1962 but later withdrew its forces.[22][23]

As of the 2011 Census of India, Arunachal Pradesh has a population of 1,383,727 and an area of 83,743 square kilometres (32,333 sq mi). With only 17 inhabitants per square kilometre, it is the least densely populated state of India. It is an ethnically diverse state, with predominantly Monpa people in the west, Tani people in the centre, Mishmi and Tai people in the east, and Naga people in the southeast of the state. About 26 major tribes and 100 sub-tribes live in the state,[citation needed] including Nocte, Adi, Nyshi, Singpho, Galo, Tagin, Apatani. The Nyishi are the largest ethnic group in the region. The Mishmi tribe has three sub-tribes, namely Idu-Mishmi, Digaru-Mishmi and Miju-Mishmi.

The residents of eastern Arunachal Pradesh and some parts of Tibet in ancient Tibetan text were called Lhobha people and the place as Lhoyü[24] and western Arunachal Pradesh which includes the present Tawang district and Kameng District in Tibetan text were called Monyul (low land).[25]

People's Republic of China (PRC) and Republic of China (ROC) claim the land as South Tibet (Chinese: 藏南 pinyin: Zàngnán).[26]

Arunachal Pradesh means Land of the Dawn-Lit Mountains, which is the sobriquet for the state in Sanskrit.[27]

Very little ancient history is known about the region apart from the Northwestern corner, and the areas bordering now Assam.

Northwestern parts of this area came under the control of the Monpa kingdom of Monyul under Tibet which flourished between 500 BCE and 600 CE. The Monpa and Sherdukpen keep historical records of the existence of local chiefdoms in the northwest as well.[28]

According to Tibetan chronicles, Monyul was ruled by Gongkar Gyal, descendent of an exiled Tibetan ruler named Lhase Tsangma, the brother of Tibetan king Ralpacan who arrived in Monyul in 837 A.D or earlier.[29]

A descendant of Gongkar Gyal became the ruler of Trashiyangtse region of Bhutan and Gapde Tsan another descendant was the ruler of Khorwong valley in Thembang town (now West Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh).[30]

Later, the second son of Gongkar Gyal, Wongme Palde who returned to Tibet owing to the poverty in Khorwong valley came back to Monyul to become its ruler.[30]

The Rgyal rigs text written in 1668 or 1728 contains a record of taxes collected. Taxes were paid via coins, foodstuffs, or livestock from area around present-day Kameng district and Tawang district.[31]

The Monpas (Tibetan: མོན་པ་) known to the Chinese as Monbas[32] were responsible for trade between Assam and Tibet and held the Koriapar Dooar at Sonitpur district of Assam. The Monpa chief were subordinate to the ruler of Tawang who in turn were subordinate to the Government of Tibet or Ganden Phodrang in Lhasa.[33] The Tibetan government at Lhasa appointed Tibetan officials called Gellongs to supervise the local Monpa chief. The Monpa chief who looked after the Duar were called Tsorgon, a position created in the 16th century.[33]

According to historical Tibetan text the state of Arunachal Pradesh known as Lhoyu came under the control of Tubo Kingdom or Tibetan Empire in the 7th century CE.[34]

In the 17th century, the 5th Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1617–1682), who achieved political

supremacy over Tibet in 1642, imposed a tax called Khrey over Monyul and instructed the construction of fortresses in Monpa area called Dzong which served as centers for administration and tax collection.[36]

The fortresses built were Dirang Dzong, Taklung Dzong and Gyangkhar Dzong to collect tax from the Dirang Monpa, Kalaktang Monpa and Tawang Monpa respectively. The officials who collected the taxes were called Dzongpon.[36]

The tax was carried to Tawang Monastery and then to Lhasa via Tsona city (present-day China).[36]

The 6th Dalai Lama Tsangyang Gyatso (1683–1706) was born in Tawang and died in Amdo (present-day China) on his way to Beijing after being kidnapped by the Mongol forces under Lha-bzang Khan, the last ruler of Khoshut Khanate on the approval of Kangxi Emperor of the Qing dynasty.

Before his death the 6th Dalai Lama instructed the construction of notable buildings like Tromzikhang in Barkhor, Lhasa.

Arunachal Pradesh falls under Kham (Tibetan: ཁམ་ཁུ་) and Ü-Tsang (Tibetan: དབུས་གཙང་) cultural region of Tibet which also includes the Brahmaputra River watershed.

The foothills and the plains, were under the control of the Chutia kings of Assam. Inner parts of the state remained independent and self-governed even though interactions with external party did exist.[37]

Recent excavations of ruins of temples, such as the 14th-century Malinithan at the foot of the Siang hills in West Siang, indicate they were built during the Chutia reign. Another notable heritage site, Bhismanagar, has led to suggestions that the Chutia people had an advanced culture and administration. The third heritage site, the 400-year-old Tawang Monastery in the extreme north-west of the state, provides some historical evidence of the Buddhist tribal people.

The main archaeological sites of the state include:[38]

In 1912–13, the British Indian government established the North-East Frontier Tracts. It was divided into three sections, which eventually came to be called the Ballipara Frontier Tract, Lakhimpur Frontier Tract and Sadiya Frontier Tract.[49]

In 1913–1914, representatives of the de facto independent state of Tibet and Britain met in India to define the borders of 'Outer Tibet' (with respect to China). British administrator Sir Henry McMahon drew the 550 miles (890 km) McMahon Line as the border between British India and Tibet, placing Tawang and other areas within British India. The Tibetan and British representatives devised the Simla Accord including the McMahon Line,[50] but the Chinese representatives did not concur.[51] The Simla Accord denies other benefits to China while it declines to assent to the Accord.[52]

The Chinese position was that Tibet was not independent from China and could not sign treaties, so the Accord was invalid, like the Anglo-Chinese (1906) and Anglo-Russian (1907) conventions.[53] British records show that the condition for the Tibetan government to accept the new border was that China must accept the Simla Convention. As Britain was not able to get an acceptance from China, Tibetans considered the McMahon line invalid.[51]

In the time that China did not exercise power in Tibet, the line had no serious challenges. In 1935, a Deputy Secretary in the Foreign Department, Olaf Caroe, "discovered" that the McMahon Line was not drawn on official maps. The Survey of India published a map showing the McMahon Line as the official boundary in 1937.[54] In 1938, two decades after the Simla Conference, the British finally published the Simla Accord as a bilateral accord and the Survey of India published a detailed map showing the McMahon Line as a border of India. In 1944, Britain established administrations in the area, from Dirang Dzong in the west to Walong in the east.

Following the conclusion of British rule, India gained independence in 1947, while the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949. Despite this, the new Chinese administration maintained its position that the McMahon Line was not valid.[51] In November 1950, the PRC was poised to take over Tibet by force, and India supported Tibet. Journalist Sudha Ramachandran argued that China claimed Tawang on behalf of Tibetans, though Tibetans did not claim Tawang is in Tibet.[55]

What is now Arunachal Pradesh was established as the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in 1954 and Sino-Indian relations were cordial until 1960. Resurgence of the border disagreement was a factor leading to the Sino-Indian War in 1962, during which China captured most of Arunachal Pradesh. During the 1962 Sino-Indian War, Tawang tract of Arunachal Pradesh was captured and temporarily controlled by the Chinese People's Liberation Army.[56][57][58] However, China soon declared victory, withdrew back to the McMahon Line and returned Indian prisoners of war in 1963.[56][57][58]

The war resulted in the termination of barter trade with Tibet, although since 2007 the Indian government has shown signs of wanting to resume barter trade.[59]

The Indian government under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, The North-East Frontier Agency was renamed Arunachal Pradesh by Bibhabasu Das Shastri, Daya Krishna Goswami and O. P. Upadhyay on 20 January 1972, and it became a union territory. Later on Arunachal Pradesh became a state on 20 February 1987 during Rajiv Gandhi government at the center.

NB: K A A Raja, as Chief Commissioner to NEFA, under Assam, whose Capital used to be Shillong, later on went to become the first Lieutenant Governor to the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh. However, he had nothing to do with naming NEFA as Arunachal Pradesh.

The 14th Dalai Lama did not originally recognise India's sovereignty over Arunachal Pradesh. As late as 2003, he said that "Arunachal Pradesh was actually part of Tibet".[60]

In January 2007, the Dalai Lama said that both Britain and Tibet had recognised the McMahon Line in 1914. In 2008, he said that Arunachal Pradesh was a part of India under the agreement signed by Tibetan and British representatives.[61] According to the Dalai Lama, "In 1962 during the India-China war, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) occupied all these areas (Arunachal Pradesh) but they announced a unilateral ceasefire and withdrew, accepting the current international boundary".[62]

In recent years, China has occasionally asserted its claims on Tawang. India rebutted these claims and told the Chinese government that Tawang is an integral part of India. India reiterated this to China when the two prime ministers met in Thailand in October 2009. A report that the Chinese Army had briefly invaded Arunachal Pradesh in 2016 was denied by India's Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kiren Rijiju.[63] In April 2017, China strongly objected to a visit to Tawang by the Dalai Lama, as it had to an earlier visit by the US ambassador to India.[64] China had objected to the Dalai Lama's previous visits to the area.[65]

Arunachal Pradesh has faced threats from insurgent groups, notably the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), who are believed to have base camps in the districts of Changlang and Tirap.[66] These groups seek to decrease the influence of Indian government in the region and merge part of Arunachal Pradesh into Nagaland.

The Indian army is present along the Tibetan border to thwart any Chinese incursion. Under the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order 1958 (India), Inner Line Permits (ILPs) are required to enter Arunachal Pradesh through any of its checkgates on the border with Assam.[citation needed]

Arunachal Pradesh suffered political crisis between April 2016 and December 2016. The Indian National Congress Chief Minister Nabam Tuki replaced Jarbom Gamlin as the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh on 1 November 2011 and continued until January 2016. After a political crisis in 2016, President's rule was imposed ending his tenure as the chief minister. In February 2016, Kalikho Pul became the Chief Minister when 14 disqualified MLAs were reinstated by the Supreme Court. On 13 July 2016, the Supreme Court quashed the Arunachal Pradesh Governor J.P. Rajkhowa's order to advance the Assembly session from 14 January 2016 to 16 December 2015, which resulted in President's rule in Arunachal Pradesh. As a result, Nabam Tuki was reinstated as the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh on 13 July 2016. But hours before floor test, he resigned as the chief minister on 16 July 2016. He was succeeded by Pema Khandu as the INC Chief Minister who later joined PPA in September 2016 along with majority of MLAs. Pema Khandu further joined BJP in December 2016 along with majority of MLAs. Arunachal Pradesh becomes second northeast Indian state to achieve ODF status.[67]

During 2017, 2021, and 2023, China compiled a list of name alterations for multiple locations in Arunachal Pradesh, in both Chinese and Tibetan languages. China asserts these areas as belonging to "Southern Tibet" and being integral parts of China. The proposed changes encompassed 11 alterations, covering geographical landmarks like mountain summits and rivers, as well as residential zones.[68] The Indian government has continued to reject Chinese claims of geographical ownership of parts of Arunachal Pradesh. National military forces on both sides have increased over the Indian-Chinese border.[69]

On 28 August 2023, China further provoked India when the PRC's Ministry of Natural Resources released its new 'standard map' in which Arunachal Pradesh was depicted as a part of PRC. Other internationally disputed lands and waters were also depicted as PRC territory on their new map.[68]

Arunachal Pradesh is located between 26.28° N and 29.30° N latitude and 91.20° E and 97.30° E longitude and has an area of 83,743 km² (32,333 sq mi).

The highest peak in the state is Kangto, at 7,060 metres (23,160 ft). Nyegi Kangsang, the main Gorichen peak, and the Eastern Gorichen peak are other tall Himalaya peaks. The state's mountain ranges, in the extreme East of India, are described as "the place where the sun rises" in historical Indian texts and named the Aruna Mountains, which inspired the name of the state. The villages of Dong (more accessible by car, and with a lookout favoured by tourists) and Vijaynagar (on the edge of Myanmar) receive the first sunlight in all of India.

Major rivers of Arunachal Pradesh include the Kameng, Subansiri, Siang (Brahmaputra), Dibang, Lohit and Noa Dihing rivers. Subsurface flows and summer snow melt contribute to the volume of water. Mountains until the Siang river are classified as the Eastern Himalayas. Those between the Siang and Noa Dihing are classified as the Mishmi Hills that may be part of the Hengduan Mountains. Mountains south of the Noa Dihing in Tirap and Longding districts are part of the Patkai Range.

The climate of Arunachal Pradesh varies with elevation. The low-altitude areas have a humid subtropical climate. High-altitude areas (3,500–5,500 m) have a subtropical highland climate and alpine climate. Arunachal Pradesh receives 2,000 to 5,000 millimetres (79 to 197 in) of rainfall annually,[70] 70%–80% obtained between May and October.

Arunachal Pradesh has among the highest diversity of mammals and birds in India. There are around 750 species of birds[71] and more than 200 species of mammals[72] in the state.

Arunachal's forests account for one-third of habitat area within the Himalayan biodiversity hot-spot.[73] In 2013, 31,273 km² (12,075 sq mi) of Arunachal's forests were identified as part of a vast area of continuous forests (65,730 km² or 25,380 sq mi, including forests in Myanmar, China and Bhutan) known as Intact forest landscapes.[74] There are three tiger reserves in the state: a reserve in Namdapha National Park, Mouling National Park and Pakke Tiger Reserve.[75]

In the year 2000, Arunachal Pradesh was covered with 63,093 km² (24,360 sq mi) of tree cover[76] (77% of its land area). It harbours over 5,000 plants, about 85 terrestrial mammals, over 500 birds and many butterflies, insects and reptiles.[77] At the lowest elevations, essentially at Arunachal Pradesh's border with Assam, are Brahmaputra Valley semi-evergreen forests. Much of the state, including the Himalayan foothills and the Patkai hills, are home to Eastern Himalayan broadleaf forests. Toward the northern border with Tibet, with increasing elevation, come a mixture of Eastern and Northeastern Himalayan subalpine conifer forests followed by Eastern Himalayan alpine shrub and meadows and ultimately rock and ice on the highest peaks. It supports many medicinal plants and within Ziro valley of Lower Subansiri district 158 medicinal plants are being used by its inhabitants.[78] The mountain slopes and hills are covered with alpine, temperate, and subtropical forests of dwarf rhododendron, oak, pine, maple and fir.[79] The state has Mouling and Namdapha national parks.

The major animal species are tiger, leopard, snow leopard, Asian elephant, sambar deer, chital deer, barking deer, sloth bear, mithun (*Bos frontalis*), gaur, dhole, giant squirrel, marbled cat, leopard cat.[80] A new subspecies of hoolock gibbon has been described from the state which has been named as the Mishmi Hills hoolock gibbon (*H. h. mishmiensis*).[81] Three new giant flying squirrels were also described from the state during the last one and half-decade. These were, Mechuka giant flying squirrel,[82] Mishmi Hills giant flying squirrel,[83] and Mebo giant flying squirrel.[84]

Arunachal Pradesh comprises three divisions, namely, Central, East and West, each headed by a divisional commissioner and twenty-five districts, each administered by a deputy commissioner. Arunachal Pradesh has a total of 25 districts, West Siang being the largest district in terms of area and Tawang being the smallest district. Papum is the largest district in terms of population and Diwang Valley is the smallest district.[85]

Below are the major towns in Arunachal Pradesh.

The chart below displays the trend of the gross state domestic product of Arunachal Pradesh at market prices by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation with figures in billions of Indian Rupees.[citation needed]

Arunachal Pradesh's gross state domestic product was estimated at US\$706 million at current prices in 2004 and US\$1.75 billion at current prices in 2012. Agriculture primarily drives the economy. Jhum, the local term used for shifting cultivation is being widely practised among the tribal groups, though owing to the gradual growth of other sources of income in the recent years, it is not being practised as prominently as it was earlier. Arunachal Pradesh has close to 61,000 km² of forests, and forest products are the next most significant sector of the economy. Among the crops grown here are rice, maize, millet, wheat, pulses, sugarcane, ginger, and oilseeds. Arunachal is also ideal for horticulture and fruit orchards. Its major industries are rice mills, fruit preservation and processing units, and handloom handicrafts. Sawmills and plywood trades are prohibited under law.[87] There are many saw mills in the state.[88]

A significant portion of India's unexplored hydroelectric capacity is attributed to Arunachal Pradesh. In 2008, the Arunachal Pradesh government entered into several memoranda of understanding with multiple companies, outlining around 42 hydroelectric projects intended to generate over 27,000 MW of electricity.[89] Construction of the Upper Siang Hydroelectric Project, which is expected to generate between 10,000 and 12,000 MW, began in April 2009.[90]

Arunachal Pradesh can be roughly divided into a set of semi-distinct cultural spheres, on the basis of tribal identity, language, religion and material culture: the Tibetic-speaking Monpa area bordering Bhutan in the west, the Tani area in the centre of the state, the Mishmi area to the east of the Tani area, the Tai/Singpho/Tangsa area bordering Myanmar, and the Naga area to the south, which also borders Myanmar. In between there are transition zones, such as the Aka/Hruso/Miji/Sherdukpen area, between the Tibetan Buddhist tribes and the animist Tani hill tribes. In addition, there are isolated peoples scattered throughout the state, such as the Sulung.

Within each of these cultural spheres, one finds populations of related tribes speaking related languages and sharing similar traditions. In the Tibetic area, one finds large numbers of Monpa tribespeople, with several subtribes speaking closely related but mutually incomprehensible languages, and also large numbers of Tibetan refugees. Within the Tani area, major tribes include the Nyishi. Apatani also live among the Nyishi, but are distinct. In the north one find the Tagin People. In the centre, one finds predominantly Galo people, with the major sub-groups of Karka, Lodu, Bogum, Lare and Pugo among others, extending to the Ramo and Pailibo areas (which are close in many ways to Galo). In the east, one finds the Adi with many subtribes including Padam, Pasi, Minyong and Bokar, among others. Milang, while also falling within the general Adi sphere, are in many ways quite distinct. Moving east, the Idu, Miju and Digaru make up the Mishmi cultural-linguistic area.

Moving southeast, the Tai Khamti are linguistically distinct from their neighbours and culturally distinct from the majority of other Arunachalese tribes. They follow the Theravada sect of Buddhism.

They also exhibit considerable convergence with the Singpho and Tangsa Naga tribes of the same area, all of which are also found in Burma. They are one of the most recent people group migrated to Arunachal region from Burma. The Nocte Naga and Wancho Naga are another two major ethnic tribes. Both the tribes exhibit very much cultural similarities. Finally, the Deori tribe is also a major community in the state, with their own distinctive identity. They are the descendants of the priestly class of Chutia people who were allowed to continue their livelihood after the defeat of the Chutias. Deoris are one of the only Arunachal tribes in the historical records – which shows they are among the first ethnic groups to inhabit the Himalayas of the districts of Dibang Valley and Lohit, before the arrival of many other tribes in the region between 1600 and 1900.

Literacy has risen in official figures to 66.95% in 2011 from 54.74% in 2001. The literate population is said to number 789,943. The number of literate males is 454,532 (73.69%) and the number of literate females is 335,411 (59.57%).[93]

Religion in Arunachal Pradesh (2011)[94]

The religious landscape of Arunachal Pradesh is diverse with no single religious group representing the majority of the population, although it is one of the few Indian states where Christianity has the most followers. A relatively large percentage of Arunachal's population are nature worshippers (indigenous religions), and follow their own distinct traditional institutions like the Nyedar Namlo by the Nyishi, the Rangfrah by the Tangsa & Nocte, Medar Nelo by the Apatani, the Kargu Gamgi by the Galo and Donyi-Polo Dere by the Adi under the umbrella of the indigenous religion the Donyi-Polo. A small number of Arunachali people have traditionally identified as Hindus,[96] although the number may grow as animist traditions are absorbed into Hinduism. Tibetan Buddhism predominates in the districts of Tawang, West Kameng, and isolated regions adjacent to Tibet. Theravada Buddhism is practised by groups living near the Myanmar border. Around 30% of the population are Christians.[97]

Buddhism arrived in Arunachal Pradesh in 8th century CE from Tibet.[98]

According to the 2011 Indian Census, the religions of Arunachal Pradesh break down as follows:[99]

In 1971, the percentage of Christians in the state was 0.79%. This increased to 10.3% by 1991 and by 2011 it had crossed 30%.[100]

Languages of Arunachal Pradesh in 2011[101]

The speakers of major languages of the state according to the 2011 census are Nyishi (20.74%), Adi (17.35%, includes Adi and Gallong), Nepali (6.89%), Tagin (4.54%), Bhotia (4.51%), Wancho (4.23%), Assamese (3.9%), Bangla (3.65%), Hindi (3.45%), Chakma (3.40%), Apatani (3.21%), Mishmi (3.04%), Tangsa (2.64%), Nocte (2.19%), Bhojpuri (2.04%) and Sadri (1.03%).

The vast majority of Arunachal Pradesh speaks Tani languages of the Tibeto Burman language family. Tani people are indigenous to central Arunachal Pradesh, including (moving from west to east) the Nyishi, the Apatani, the Tagin, the Galo, the Bokar, the Adi, the Padam, the Pasi, and the Minyong. The Tani languages are noticeably characterised by an overall relative uniformity, suggesting relatively recent origin and dispersal within their present-day area of concentration. Most of the Tani languages are mutually intelligible with at least one other Tani language, meaning that the area constitutes a dialect chain, as was once found in much of Europe; only Apatani and Milang stand out as relatively unusual in the Tani context. Tani languages are among the better-studied languages of the region.[citation needed]

To the east of the Tani area lie three virtually undescribed and highly endangered languages of the "Mishmi" group of Tibeto-Burman: Idu, Digaru and Mishmi people. A number of speakers of these languages are also found in Tibet. The relationships of these languages, both amongst one another and to other area languages, are as yet uncertain. Further south, one finds the Singpho (Kachin) language, which is primarily spoken by large populations in Myanmar's Kachin State, and the Nocte and Wancho languages, which show affiliations to certain Naga languages spoken to the south in modern-day Nagaland.

To the west and north of the Tani area are found at least one and possibly as many as four Bodic languages, including Dakpa and Tshangla language; within modern-day India, these languages go by the cognate but, in usage, distinct designations Monpa and Memba. Most speakers of these languages or closely related Bodic languages are found in neighbouring Bhutan and Tibet, and Monpa and Memba populations remain closely adjacent to these border regions.[citation needed]

Between the Bodic and Tani areas lie many almost completely undescribed and unclassified languages, which, speculatively considered Tibeto-Burman, exhibit many unique structural and lexical properties that probably reflect both a long history in the region and a complex history of language contact with neighbouring populations. Among them are Sherdukpen, Bugun, Hruso, Koro, Miji, Bangru and Puroik/Sulung. The high linguistic significance these languages is belied by the extreme paucity of documentation and description of them, even in view of their highly endangered status. Puroik, in particular, is perhaps one of the most culturally and linguistically unique and significant populations in all of Asia from proto-historical and anthropological-linguistic perspectives, and yet virtually no information of any real reliability regarding their culture or language can be found in print.[citation needed]

Finally, other than the Bodic and Tani groups, there are also certain migratory languages that are largely spoken by migratory and central government employees serving in the state in different departments and institutions in modern-day Arunachal Pradesh.[citation needed] They are classified as Non-Tribal as per the provisions of the Constitution of India.

Outside of Tibeto-Burman, one finds in Arunachal Pradesh a single representative of the Tai family, spoken by Tai Khamti, which is closely affiliated to the Shan language of Myanmar's Shan State. Seemingly, Khampti is a recent arrival in Arunachal Pradesh whose presence dates to 18th and/or early 19th-century migrations from northern Myanmar.[citation needed]

In addition to English, various Indo-Aryan languages Assamese, Bengali, Nepali and especially Hindi are making strong inroads into Arunachal Pradesh. Primarily as a result of the primary education system—in which classes are generally taught by Hindi-speaking migrant teachers from Bihar and other Hindi-speaking parts of northern India, a large and growing section of the population now speaks a semi-creolised variety of Hindi as a mother tongue. Hindi acts as a lingua franca for most of the people in the state.[102] Despite, or perhaps because of, the linguistic diversity of the region, English is the only official language recognised in the state.

Itanagar Airport, a Greenfield project serving Itanagar is being constructed at Holongi at a cost of ₹6.5 billion.[103] Alliance Air operates the only scheduled flights to the state flying from Kolkata via Guwahati to Pasighat Airport. This route commenced in May 2018 under the Government's Regional Connectivity Scheme UDAN following the completion of a passenger terminal at Pasighat Airport in 2017.[104] State-owned Daporijo Airport, Ziro Airport, Along Airport, and Tezu Airport are small and not in operation, but the government has proposed to develop them.[105] Before the state was connected by roads, these airstrips were used to distribute food.

The main highway of Arunachal Pradesh is the Trans-Arunachal Highway, National Highway 13 (1,293 km (803 mi); formerly NH-229 and NH-52). It originates in Tawang and spans most of the width of Arunachal Pradesh, then crosses south into Assam and ends at Wakro. The project was announced by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2008 for completion by 2015–16, but only became operational in 2018.

NH-15 through Assam follows the southern border of Arunachal Pradesh. Access to central Arunachal Pradesh has been facilitated by the Bogibeel Bridge, an earthquake-resistant rail and road bridge over the Brahmaputra River in Assam, opened for public use on 25 December 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. A spur highway numbered NH-415 services Itanagar.

State-owned Arunachal Pradesh State Transport Services (APSTS) runs daily bus service from Itanagar to most district headquarters including Tezpur, Guwahati in Assam, Shillong in Meghalaya, and Dimapur in Nagaland.[106][107][108][109]

As of 2007[update], every village is connected by road, thanks to funding provided by the central government. Every small town has its own bus station with daily bus service. Connections to Assam have increased commerce.

In 2014, two additional east–west highways were proposed: an Industrial Corridor Highway in the lower foothills, and a Frontier Highway along the McMahon Line.[110][111][112][113] The proposed alignment of the Frontier Highway has been published.[114]

Arunachal Pradesh got its first railway line in late 2013 with the opening of the new link line from Harmuti on the main Rangpara North–Murkongselak railway line to Naharlagun in Arunachal Pradesh. The construction of the 33-kilometre 5 ft 6 in (1,676 mm) broad-gauge railway line was completed in 2012, and the link became operational after the gauge conversion of the main line from Assam. The state capital Itanagar was added to the Indian railway map on 12 April 2014 via the newly built 20-kilometre Harmuti-Naharlagun railway line, when a train from Dekargaon in Assam reached Naharlagun railway station, 10 kilometres from the centre of Itanagar, a total distance of 181 kilometres.[115][116]

On 20 February 2015 the first through train was run from New Delhi to Naharlagun, flagged off from the capital by the Indian prime minister, Narendra Modi. India plans to eventually extend the railway to Tawang, near the border with China.[117]

The state government is expanding the relatively underdeveloped education system with the assistance of NGOs like Vivekananda Kendra, leading to a sharp improvement in the state's literacy rate. The main universities are the Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly known as Arunachal University), under which come 36 institutions offering regular undergraduate courses as well as teacher education and health sciences and nursing degrees, both under governmental and private managements, Indira Gandhi Technological and Medical Sciences University and Himalayan University[118] as well. The first college, Jawaharlal Nehru College, Pasighat, was established in 1964. The First Technical University is Established in 2014 namely North East Frontier Technical University (NEFTU). In Aalo, West Siang District by The Automobile Society India, New Delhi. There is also a deemed university, the North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology as well as the National Institute of Technology, Arunachal Pradesh, established on 18 August 2010, is located in Yupia (headquarter of Itanagar).[119] NERIST plays an important role in technical and management higher education. The directorate of technical education conducts examinations yearly so that students who qualify can continue on to higher studies in other states.

Of the above institutions, only the following institutions are accredited by NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council), in the order of their grade: Jawaharlal Nehru College, Pasighat (Grade A), St Claret College, Ziro (Grade A), Indira Gandhi Govt. College, Tezu (Grade B++), Rajiv Gandhi University (Grade B), National Institute of Technology, Arunachal Pradesh (Grade B), Dera Natung Government College, Itanagar (Grade B), Govt. College, Bomdila (Grade B), Donyi Polo Govt. College, Kamki (Grade B), and Rang Frah Govt. College, Changling (Grade C).

Wangcha Rajkumar Government College, Deomali[120] is the only college in the southeastern part of Arunachal Pradesh. It caters to the students from Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts.

There are also trust institutes, like Pali Vidyapith, run by Buddhists. They teach Pali and Khamti scripts in addition to typical education subjects. Khamti is the only tribe in Arunachal Pradesh that has its own script. Libraries of scriptures are in a number of places in Lohit district, the largest one being in Chowkham.

The state has two polytechnic institutes: Rajiv Gandhi Government Polytechnic in Itanagar established in 2002 and Tomi Polytechnic College in Basar established in 2006. There are two law colleges, namely, the private-owned Arunachal Law Academy at Itanagar and the government-owned Jarbom Gamlin Government Law College at Jote, Itanagar. The College of Horticulture and Forestry is affiliated to the Central Agricultural University, Imphal.

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Nagaland (/ˈnɑːɡələnd/) is a landlocked state in the north-eastern region of India. It is bordered by the Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh to the north, Assam to the west, Manipur to the south, and the Naga Self-Administered Zone of the Sagaing Region of Myanmar (Burma) to the east. Its capital city is Kohima and its largest city is the twin Chümoukedima–Dimapur. The state has an area of

16,579 square kilometres (6,401 sq mi) with a population of 1,980,602 as per the 2011 Census of India, making it one of the smallest states of India.[3]

Nagaland consists of 16 Administrative Districts, inhabited by 17 major tribes along with other sub-tribes. Each tribe is distinct in character from the other in terms of customs, language and dress. It is a land of folklore passed down the generations through word of mouth. The earliest recorded history of the tribes of present-day Nagaland dates back to the 13th century.[4]

In the 19th century, the British India forces began expanding their influence in Northeast India, including the Naga Hills. After India's independence in 1947, the question of the Naga Hills' political status emerged. Nagaland was a district in the State of Assam until 1957, known to others as "The Naga Hills". The Naga National Council, led by Zapu Phizo, demanded an independent Naga state and launched an armed insurgency. The Indian Government, however, maintained that Nagaland was an integral part of the Indian Union. The conflict between the Naga National Council and the Indian Government resulted in a protracted insurgency. The State of Nagaland was formally inaugurated on 1 December 1963, as the 16th State of the Indian Union, and a democratically elected government took office in 1964.

Nagaland is home to a rich variety of natural, cultural, and environmental resources. It is a mountainous state and lies between the parallels of 95° and 94° eastern longitude and 25.2° and 27.0° latitude north. The high-profile Dzüko Valley is at Viswema, in the southern region of the state. The state has significant resources of natural minerals, petroleum, and hydropower, with agriculture as the state's most important economic activity, accounting for over 70% of its economy. Other significant activities include forestry, tourism, insurance, real estate, horticulture, and miscellaneous cottage industries.[5][6][7]

The origin of the word 'Naga' is unclear.[8] A popularly accepted, but controversial, view is that it originated from the Burmese word Na-Ka[9] or 'Naga', meaning "people with earrings." Others suggest it means pierced noses.[10] In Burmese, Naka and Naga are pronounced the same way.[11]

Before the arrival of European colonialism in South Asia, there had been many wars, persecution and raids from Burma on the Nagas, Meiteis and others in India's northeast. The invaders came for "head hunting" and to seek wealth and captives from these tribes and ethnic groups. When the British inquired with Burmese guides about the people living in the northern Himalayas, they were told 'Naka'. This was recorded as 'Naga' and has been in use thereafter.[7][8]

The ancient history of the Nagas is unclear. Ethnic groups migrated at different times, each settling in the northeastern part of present India and establishing their respective sovereign mountain terrains and village states. There are no records of whether they came from the northern Mongolian region, southeast Asia, or southwest China, except that their origins are from the east of India, and historical records show the present-day Naga people settled before the arrival of the Ahoms in 1228 CE.[6][8]

According to the Burmese chronicles Tagung Yazawin, the first Chaopha of Mongkawng Samlongpha (1150–1201 CE) with the main town in Mogaung captured Naga country in the early 1200s. In the chronicle Naga country is named as "Khang Se".[12]

In Yan-aung-myin Pagoda inscription found in Pinya of Myanmar mentions that the Kingdom of Ava under Minkhaung I (1400–1421) in the early 1400s extended till the territories of the Nagas.[13]

With the arrival of the British East India Company in the early 19th century, followed by the British Raj, Britain expanded its domain over the whole of South Asia, including the Naga Hills. The first

Europeans to enter the hills were Captain Francis Jenkins and Lieutenant Robert Pemberton in 1832. The early contact with the Naga ethnic groups was characterised by suspicion and conflict. The colonial interests in Assam, such as managers of tea estates and other trading posts led defensive action against raids from the ethnic groups who were known for their bravery and "head hunting" practices. To put an end to these raids, the British troops recorded 10 military expeditions between 1839 and 1850.[8] In February 1851, at the bloody Battle of Kikrūma, people died on both the British side and the Kikrūma (Naga) side; in the days after the battle, inter-ethnic warfare followed that led to more bloodshed. After that war, the British adopted a policy of caution and non-interference with Naga ethnic groups.[14][15]

Despite this, colonists continued to move into Naga peoples' territory. Between 1851 and 1865, Naga ethnic groups continued to raid the British in Assam. The British India Government took over the holdings of the East Indian Company following the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The failings and atrocities of the East Indian Company led the British Crown to review its governance structure throughout South Asia including its northeastern region. In 1866, the British India administration established a post at Samaguting with the explicit goal of ending intertribal warfare and tribal raids on property and personnel.[6][7]

In 1869, Captain Butler was appointed to lead and consolidate the British presence in the Nagaland Hills. In 1878, the headquarters were transferred to Kohima — creating a city that remains an important center of administration, commerce, and culture for Nagaland.[8]

On 4 October 1879, British political agent G. H. Damant went to Khonoma with troops, where he was shot dead with 35 of his team.[16] Kohima was subsequently attacked and the stockade looted. This violence led to a determined effort by the British Raj to return and respond. The subsequent defeat of Khonoma marked the end of serious and persistent ultimatums in the Naga Hills.[8]

Between 1880 and 1922, the British administration consolidated their position over a large area of the Naga Hills and integrated it into its Assam operations. The British administration enforced the rupee as the currency for economic activity and a system of structured ethnic government that was very different from historic social governance practices.[6]

In parallel, since the mid-19th century, Christian missionaries from the United States and Europe, stationed in India,[17] reached into Nagaland and neighbouring states, converting Nagaland's Naga ethnic groups from animism to Christianity.[6][18]

In 1944, during World War II, the Japanese Army, with the help of the Indian National Army led by Netaji Subhashchandra Bose, invaded through Burma and attempted to take India through Kohima. The population was evacuated. British India soldiers defended the area of Kohima and having lost many of their original force were relieved by British in June 1944.

Together the British and Indian troops successfully repelled the Japanese troops.[19]

The battle was fought from 4 April to 22 June 1944 from the town of Kohima, coordinated with action at Imphal, Manipur.[20][21] The Indian National Army lost half their numbers, many through starvation, and were forced to withdraw through Burma.[22][23]

There is the World War II Cemetery, and the War Museum, in honour of those who died during World War II during the fighting between the British Empire and Japanese troops. Nearly 4,000 British Empire troops died, along with 3,000 Japanese. Many of those who died were Naga people, particularly the Angami Nagas. Near the memorial is the Kohima Cathedral, on Aradura Hill, built

with funds from the families and friends of deceased Japanese soldiers. Prayers are held in Kohima for peace and in memory of the fallen of both sides of the battle.[24][25]

In 1929, a memorandum was submitted to the Simon Statutory Commission, requesting that the Nagas be exempt from reforms and new taxes proposed in British India, should be left alone to determine their own future.[26]

The Naga Memorandum submitted by the Naga Club (which later became the Naga National Council) to the Simon Commission explicitly stated, 'to leave us alone to determine ourselves as in ancient times.'[27]

After the independence of India in 1947, the area remained a part of the province of Assam. Nationalist activities arose amongst a section of the Nagas. Phizo-led Naga National Council demanded a political union of their ancestral and native groups. The movement led to a series of violent incidents, that damaged government and civil infrastructure, attacked government officials and civilians. The central government sent the Indian Army in 1955, to restore order. In 1957, an agreement was reached between Naga leaders and the Indian government, creating a single separate region of the Naga Hills. The Tuensang frontier was united with this single political region, Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA),[28] and it became an autonomous area under Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India. It was to be "administered by the Governor as the agent of the President but will be distinct from the North East Frontier Administration"[28].

However, This was not satisfactory to the Nagas, however, and agitation with violence increased across the state – including attacks on army and government institutions, banks, as well as non-payment of taxes. In July 1960, following discussion between Prime Minister Nehru and the leaders of the Naga People Convention (NPC), a 16-point agreement was arrived at whereby the Government of India recognised the formation of Nagaland as a full-fledged state within the Union of India.[29]

Accordingly, the territory was placed under the Nagaland Transitional Provisions Regulation, 1961[30] which provided for an Interim body consisting of 45 members to be elected by tribes according to the customs, traditions and usage of the respective tribes. Subsequently, Nagaland attained statehood with the enactment of the state of Nagaland Act in 1962[31] by the Parliament. The interim body was dissolved on 30 November 1963 and the state of Nagaland was formally inaugurated on 1 December 1963 and Kohima was declared as the state capital. After elections in January 1964, the first democratically elected Nagaland Legislative Assembly was constituted on 11 February 1964.[28][32]

The rebel activity continued in many Naga inhabited areas both in India and Burma. Ceasefires were announced and negotiations continued, but this did little to stop the violence. In March 1975, a direct presidential rule was imposed by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on the state. In November 1975, some leaders of largest rebellion groups agreed to lay down their arms and accept the Indian constitution, a small group did not agree and continued their insurgent activity.[33] The Nagaland Baptist Church Council played an important role by initiating peace efforts in the 1960s.[8]

In 2004, two powerful bombs were set off on the same day and struck the Dimapur Railway Station and the Hong Kong Market, resulting in 30 deaths and wounding over 100 others in the deadliest terrorist attack in Nagaland to date.[34][35]

Over the 5-year period of 2009 to 2013, between 0 and 11 civilians died per year in Nagaland from rebellion related activity (or less than 1 death per 100,000 people), and between 3 and 55 militants died per year in inter-factional killings (or between 0 and 3 deaths per 100,000 people).[36]

In early 2017, Nagaland went into a state of civil unrest and protests in response to the announcement to implement 33% women's reservation in the Civic Elections.[37]

On 4 December 2021, a unit of the 21st Para Special Forces of the Indian Army killed six civilian labourers near Oting Village in the Mon District of Nagaland. Eight more civilians and a soldier were killed in subsequent violence. The incident was widely condemned, with many calling out to repeal and revoke the Armed Forces Special Powers Act.[38]

The most recent Nagaland Legislative Assembly election took place on 27 February 2023 to elect the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) in the 60 Assembly Constituencies in the state. A voter turnout of 87% was observed in the election.[39] The election created history by electing two women candidates for the first time in Nagaland — Hekani Jakhalu Kense and Salhoutuonuo Kruse. Both candidates were from the ruling Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP).[40][41] Salhoutuonuo Kruse later became the first woman minister of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly.[42]

Twenty per cent of the total land area of the state is covered with wooded forest, a haven for flora and fauna. The evergreen tropical and subtropical forests are found in strategic pockets in the state.[43]

Nagaland has a largely monsoon climate with high humidity levels. Annual rainfall averages around 1,800–2,500 millimetres (70–100 in), concentrated in the months of May to September. Temperatures range from 21 to 40 °C (70 to 104 °F). In winter, temperatures do not generally drop below 4 °C (39 °F), but frost is common at high elevations. Summer is the shortest season in the state, lasting only a few months. The temperature during the summer season remains between 16 and 31 °C (61 and 88 °F). Winter often arrives early, with bitter cold and dry weather striking certain regions of the state. The maximum average temperature recorded in the winter season is 24 °C (75 °F). Strong northwest winds blow across the state during the months of February and March.[44]

About one-sixth of Nagaland is covered by tropical and sub-tropical evergreen forests—including palms, bamboo, rattan as well as timber and mahogany forests. While some forest areas have been cleared for jhum cultivation, many scrub forests, rainforests, tall grassland, and reed-grass marshes remain. Ntangki National Park, Pulie Badze Wildlife Sanctuary, Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary and Rangapahar Reserve Forest are some natural reserves in Nagaland. Some noteworthy mammals found in Nagaland include the slow loris, Assamese macaque, pig-tailed macaque, stump-tailed macaque, rhesus macaque, capped langur, hoolock gibbon, Himalayan black bear, few sun bear, dhole, occasional Bengal tiger, Indian leopard, clouded leopard, marbled cat, golden cat, Indian elephants, Indian rhinoceros, gaur, red serow, common and leaf muntjac, eastern hog deer, sambar, Chinese pangolin, Malayan porcupine, Asiatic brush-tailed porcupine, and Hoary bamboo rats.[46]

Nagaland has a rich birdlife with more than 490 species.[47] The great Indian hornbill has a place in Naga culture. Blyth's tragopan, a vulnerable species of galliform, is the state bird of Nagaland. It is sighted in Mount Japfü and Dzüko Valley of Kohima District, Satoi range in Zünheboto District and Pfüterso in Phek District.[48] The state is also known as the "falcon capital of the world"[45] thanks to the hundreds of thousands of Amur falcons that stop at Doyang Reservoir to feast on flying termites on their way from China and Siberia to Africa each year.

Mithun (a semi-domesticated gaur) is the state animal of Nagaland and has been adopted as the official seal of the Government of Nagaland. It is ritually the most valued species in the state. To conserve and protect this animal in the northeast, the National Research Centre on Mithun (NRCM) was established by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in 1988.[49]

Nagaland is home to 396 species of orchids, belonging to 92 genera of which 54 having horticultural and medicinal economic importance.[50]

Several preliminary studies indicate significant recoverable reserves of petroleum and natural gas. Limestone, marble and other decorative stone reserves are plentiful, and other as yet unexploited minerals include iron, nickel, chromium, and cobalt.[51]

The Nagaland population is largely rural with 71.14% living in rural regions in 2011.[52] Census reports up to 1951 listed just one settlement in Nagaland as a town, the capital Kohima. The next two settlements, Dimapur and Mokokchung were listed as towns from 1961. Four more towns appeared in 1981, Tuensang, Wokha, Mon and Zünheboto.[53]

The relatively slow rate of urbanisation in Nagaland was described in the 1980s as being an effect of (a) the largely administrative roles of the towns, except for Dimapur which had a more diversified economy, and (b) a low level of mobility among the tribes of Nagaland, scheduled tribes constituting nearly 90% of the population.[53]

The population of Nagaland consists of almost 2.2 million people, consisting of 1.04 million males and 0.95 million females.[8] Among its districts, Kohima has the largest population (270,063) followed by Dimapur (170,000). The least populated district is Longleng (50,593). 75% of the population lives in the rural areas. As of 2013, about 10% of rural population is below the poverty line; among the people living in urban areas 4.3% of them are below the poverty line.[55]

The state showed a population drop between the 2001 census and the 2011 census, the only state to show a population drop in the census. This has been attributed, by scholars,[56] to incorrect counting in past censuses; the 2011 census in Nagaland is considered most reliable so far.[57]

The largest urban agglomerations are centred upon Dimapur (122,834) and Kohima (115,283).

Other major towns (and 2011 census populations) are Tuensang (36,774), Mokokchung (35,913), Wokha (35,004), Mon (26,328), Chümoukedima (25,885), Zünheboto (22,633), Kiphire (16,487), Kuda (16,108), Kohima Village (15,734), Phek (14,204), Pfütsero (10,371) and Diphupar 'A' (10,246).[58][59][60][61][62]

The state is home to 15 major Naga ethnic groups – Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sümi, Tikhir, Yimkhiung, Zeme-Liangmai (Zeliang) and 2 other ethnic groups namely Kuki and Kachari with decent number of community.[51][8]

Some other minor tribes or subtribes are Garo, Karbi, Chirri, Makury, and Rongmei.[63]

There are also sizeable populations of non-native communities like Bengalis, Marwaris, Nepalis, Punjabis and others living mostly around Dimapur City.

Languages of Nagaland in 2011[64][65][66]

Naga people form the majority of the population. According to the 2011 census there are 2 million people living in Nagaland. The Naga people number around 1.8 million in the state, constituting over 90% of the population. These belong mostly to the Sino-Tibetan language family.[67] Shafer came up with his own classification system for languages found in and around Nagaland.[68]

In 1967, the Nagaland Assembly proclaimed Indian English as the official language of Nagaland and it is the medium for education in Nagaland.[69] Other than English, Nagamese, a creole language based on Assamese, is widely spoken.[70]

The major languages spoken as per the 2011 census are Konyak (244,135), Ao (231,084), Lotha (177,488), Angami (151,883), Chokri (91,010), Sangtam (75,841), Bengali (74,753), Zeme (71,954; covering Zeliang, 60,399 and Zemi, 11,165), Yimkhiungrü (74,156), Chang (65,632), Khiamniungan (61,906), Rengma (61,537), Phom (53,674), Nepali (43,481), Kuzhami (34,218), Pochury (21,446), Kuki (18,391), Chakhesang (17,919), Assamese (17,201), Bodo (12,243; covering Bodo 7,372 and Dimasa 4,871), Manipuri (9,511), Sema (8,268), etc.[71]

Religion in Nagaland (2011)[72][73]

The state's population is 1.978 million, out of which over 90% are Abrahamics in general and 88% are Christians in particular.[74][75]

Nagaland is known as "the only predominantly Baptist State in the World" and "the most Baptist State in the World." [76][77][78]

Christianity arrived in Nagaland in the early 19th century. The American Baptist Naga mission grew out of the Assam mission in 1836. Miles Bronson, Nathan Brown and other Christian missionaries working out of Jaipur to bring Christianity to the Indian subcontinent, saw the opportunity for gaining converts since many parts of India's northeast was principally animist and folk religion-driven. Along with other tribal regions of the northeast, the people of Nagaland converted to Christianity.[17]

Hinduism is the second largest religion in Nagaland. Hindus are concentrated mainly in the erstwhile Dimapur District (as per the 2011 Census of India, comprising the present districts of Dimapur, Niuland, and Chümoukedima)[79] (28.75%) and Kohima District (9.51%).[72] Dimapur Kalibari is a famous temple in Nagaland.[80]

There are also folk religions practised by some Nagas, specially among the Zeliangrongs (Zemes and Rongmeis) but few among other Naga ethnic groups.[81]

The governor is the constitutional head of state, representative of the President of India. He possesses largely ceremonial responsibilities apart from law and order responsibilities.

The Democratic Alliance of Nagaland (DAN) is a state level coalition of political parties. It headed the government with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Janata Dal (United) (JDU). It was formed in 2003 after the Nagaland Legislative Assembly election, with the Naga People's Front (NPF), and the BJP.[82] The alliance was in power in Nagaland from 2003 to 2018.[83]

The NDPP–BJP–NPF alliance led UDA government has won the majority in 2018 Nagaland Legislative Assembly election and has been in power since then.[84]

The sixteen districts of Nagaland, and their headquarters, 2011 census populations,[85] areas and elevations (of the seat) are:

The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of Nagaland was about ₹12,065 crore (US\$1.5 billion) in 2011–12.[86] Nagaland's GSDP grew at 9.9% compounded annually for a decade, thus more than doubling the per capita income.[87]

Nagaland has a literacy rate of 80.1 per cent. The majority of the population in the state speaks English, which is the official language of the state. The state offers technical and medical education.[87] Nevertheless, agriculture and forestry contribute a majority of Nagaland's Gross Domestic Product. The state is rich in mineral resources such as coal, limestone, iron, nickel, cobalt, chromium, and marble.[88]

Plantation crops such as premium coffee, cardamom, and tea are grown in hilly areas in small quantities with large growth potential. Most people cultivate rice as it is the main staple diet of the people. About 80% of the cropped area is dedicated to rice. Oilseeds is another, higher income crop gaining ground in Nagaland. The farm productivity for all crops is low, compared to other Indian states, suggesting a significant opportunity for farmer income increase. Currently, the Jhum to Terraced cultivation ratio is 4:3; where Jhum is the local name for cut-and-burn shift farming. Jhum farming is ancient, causes a lot of pollution and soil damage, yet accounts for the majority of the farmed area. The state does not produce enough food and depends on the trade of food from other states of India.[51]

Tourism has a lot of potentials but was largely limited due to insurgency and concern of terrorist violence over the last five decades. More recently, a number of Small Medium Enterprises and private sector companies have actively promoted Nagaland tourism, helping initiate a growing tourism market. Tourism experts contend that the state's uniqueness and strategic location in northeast India give Nagaland an advantage in tapping into the tourism sector for economic growth.[89]

The state generates 87.98 MU compared to a demand for 242.88 MU. This deficit requires Nagaland to buy power. The state has significant hydroelectric potential, which if realised could make the state a power surplus state. In terms of power distribution, every village and town, and almost every household has an electricity connection; but, this infrastructure is not effective given the power shortage in the state.[51]

After a gap of almost 20 years, Nagaland state Chief Minister, T. R. Zeliang launched the resumption of oil exploration in Changpang and Tsori areas, under Wokha District in July 2014. The exploration will be carried out by the Metropolitan Oil & Gas Pvt. Ltd. Zeliang has alleged failures and disputed payments made to the statement made by the previous explorer, the state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC).[90]

Nagaland's rugged and mountainous landscape presents a major challenge to the infrastructural development of transport. Roads are the backbone of Nagaland's transportation network. The state has over 15,000 km of surfaced roads, but these are not satisfactorily maintained given the weather damage. Yet, in terms of population served for each kilometre of surfaced road, Nagaland is the second best state in the region after Arunachal Pradesh.[51]

Dimapur Airport, is the sole airport in Nagaland with scheduled commercial services to Kolkata, Guwahati, Imphal,[91] and Dibrugarh. It is located 7 kilometres (4.3 mi) from Dimapur, and 70 kilometres (43 mi) from Kohima. The airport's asphalt runway is 2290 metre long, at an elevation of 487 feet.[92]

Nagaland is known in India as the Land of Festivals.[93] The diversity of people and ethnic groups, each with their own culture and heritage, creates a year-long atmosphere of celebrations. In addition, the state celebrates all Christian festivities. Traditional ethnic-related festivals revolve round agriculture, as a vast majority of the population of Nagaland is directly dependent on agriculture. Some of the significant festivals for each major ethnic groups are:[8]

The Hornbill Festival[94] was launched by the Government of Nagaland in December 2000 to encourage inter-ethnic interaction and to promote cultural heritage of the state.

It is held at the Kisama Heritage Village which is about 12 km south of Kohima. All the ethnic groups of Nagaland take part in this festival. The aim of the festival is to revive and protect the rich culture of Nagaland and display its history, culture and traditions.[95]

The festival is named after the hornbill bird, which is displayed in folklores in most of the state's ethnic groups. The week-long festival unites Nagaland and people enjoy the colourful performances, crafts, sports, food fairs, games, and ceremonies. Traditional arts which include paintings, wood carvings, and sculptures are on display. Festival highlights include traditional Naga Morungs exhibition and sale of arts and crafts, food stalls, herbal medicine stalls, shows and sales, cultural medley – songs and dances, fashion shows, beauty contest, traditional archery, naga wrestling, indigenous games, and musical concerts. Additional attractions include the Konyak fire eating demonstration, pork-fat eating competitions, the Hornbill Literature Festival (including the Hutton Lectures), Hornbill Global Film Fest, Hornbill Ball, Choral Panorama, North East India Drum Ensemble, Naga King Chilli eating competition, Hornbill National Rock Contest,[96] Hornbill International Motor Rally and WW-II Vintage Car Rally.[97][98]

Kene or Naga wrestling is a folk wrestling style and traditional sport of the Nagas.[99]

Aki Kiti or Sümi kick fighting is a traditional combat sport originating from and was practised by the Sümi Nagas. It is characterised by kicking and blocking solely using the soles of the feet. The sporting event served the purpose of righting wrongs, restoring honour, or "settling scores" between tribes and tribesmen without resorting to violence. It was practised during tribal ceremonies.[100]

In Naga society, individuals were expected to find their place in the social hierarchy, and prestige was the key to maintaining or increasing social status. To achieve these goals a man, whatever his ascendancy, had to be a headhunter or great warrior, have many sexual conquests among women, or complete a series of merit feasts.[101]

The Feasts of Merit reflected the splendor and celebration of Naga life.[6] Only married men could give such Feasts, and his wife took a prominent and honoured place during the ritual which emphasised male-female co-operation and interdependence. His wife brewed the beer which he offered to the guests. The event displayed ceremonies and festivities organised by the sponsor. The Feast given by a wealthier community person would be more extravagant.[102] He would typically invite everyone from the ethnic group. This event bestowed honour to the couple from the community. After the Feast, the tribe would give the couple rights to ornaments equally.[6][103]

Nagaland's schools are run by the state and central government or by a private organisation. Instruction is mainly in English — the official language of Nagaland. Under the 10+2+3 plan, after passing the Higher Secondary Examination (the grade 12 examination), students may enroll in general or professional degree programs.

Nagaland has three autonomous colleges:

Along with one central university—Nagaland University, one engineering college—National Institute of Technology, one medical college— Nagaland Institute of Medical Science and Research, one College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry in Jalukie[104] and three private Universities— St. Joseph University,[105] Northeast Christian University (NECU)[106] and Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India University (ICFAI University).[107]

Tourism experts contend that the state's uniqueness and strategic location in northeast India give Nagaland an advantage in tapping into the tourism sector for economic growth.[89] The state has been extremely successful in promoting the great Hornbill Festival, which attracts Indian and foreign tourists alike.

The key thrusts of Nagaland's tourism are its rich culture, showcasing of history and wildlife. Tourism infrastructure is rapidly improving.[108] Local initiatives and tourism pioneers are now beginning to promote a socially responsible tourism model involving the participation of the councils, village elders, the church and the youth.[109]

Government

General information

Text extracted from URL 21:

The history of the Nagas dates back centuries, but first appear in written records of Ahom kingdom during the medieval period of Indian history. Aside from developing contacts with the Ahom kingdom, which was established in 1228 in Assam, the Nagas generally lived an isolated existence from the outside world. This changed in the 19th century, when the Burmese Empire launched several invasions of Assam between 1817 and 1826, which led the Nagas to briefly fall under Burmese rule. However, the neighboring British Empire annexed Assam in 1828 following the 1826 Treaty of Yandabo.[1][2]

During the 1830's, the British dispatched several expeditionary forces to Assam in order to solidify their control over the region; in 1845, British officials signed a non-aggression pact with several Naga chiefs to bring an end to Naga raids on British-controlled territory in Assam. However, the Naga violated the agreement and continued to launch raids on British-controlled territories.[3] During the 19th century, British attempts to subdue the Naga tribes and abolish traditional Naga practises such as headhunting and intertribal violence were resisted with guerrilla tactics from the Naga, in particular the Angami Naga. The colonial authorities responded by launching a series of successive punitive expeditions, which brought this resistance to an end.[4]

During World War I, 2,000 Nagas enlisted in the British Indian Army (BIA) and served in the Western Front. In World War II, a larger number of Nagas enlisted in the BIA and fought in the Burma campaign against invading Japanese forces.[5] After India became independent from British rule in 1947, the Naga became Indian citizens, though an ongoing ethnic conflict exists in the region since 1958.[6]

Protestant Christian missionaries from America in the nineteenth century were successful in converting many among the Nagas. It led to them dropping many customs and traditions and, along with the spread of British-style educational systems, was part of the arrival of modernity in the Naga hills. The first missionary in the Naga hills is believed to be Rev. Miles Bronson in 1839, who stayed for a short period among Nocte Naga in Namsang under Tirap district of present day Arunachal

Pradesh. In the 1870s, Dr. & Mrs. E. W. Clark worked among the Ao people. With the help of a Mr. Godhula, an Assamese Christian, they established the first church, a Baptist one, in Molungkimong (Dekha Haimong Village) in 1872.[7]

As the people adopted Christianity, they began to develop more of a "Naga" identity, a radical departure from their distinctions based on warring villages. Today, more than 95% of Naga people identify as Christians, mostly Baptist.

The Naga hills have been an area of continued resistance as they had long been isolated from outside cultures. The development of a spirit of nationalism and sense of a common identity are relatively new concepts among the Naga people. According to their traditions, each village is an independent republic; initially, they wanted to be free from all outside domination.

Modern education, together with Christian missions, contributed to the politicization of Naga ethnicity. In 1918, a group of educated Nagas formed Naga Club in 1918. The club wrote to the Simon Commission in 1929 demanding that "Nagas should not be included within the Reformed Scheme of India".[8]

On 14 August 1947, the day before India gained independence from British rule, the Nagas were the first ethnic group from the northeast to declare their territory an independent state, not belonging to the new nation. Angami Zapu Phizo led the initial movement with the Naga National Council (NNC). In the last days of the British Raj, he held talks trying to achieve a sovereign Naga nation. In June 1947, a 9-point agreement was signed which promised to bring the Nagas under a single political administrative unit and recognised the Nagas' right to self-determination after 10 years. Disputes arose over the interpretation of the agreement, and many in the NNC opposed it.[9]

Under Phizo, the NNC declared their independence from the British on 14 August 1947, a day before India. In May 1951, the NNC claimed that 99 per cent of the Naga people supported a referendum to secede from India, which was summarily rejected by the government in New Delhi. By 1952, the NNC, led a guerrilla movement. India responded by crushing it with their armed forces. Phizo escaped from the region through East Pakistan and went into exile to London. He continued to inspire the independence movement from there till his death in 1990.[10]

The State of Nagaland was formally recognised 1 December 1963, as the 16th State of the Indian Union. The State consists of eleven Administrative Districts, inhabited by 16 major ethnic groups along with other sub-groups. Each group is distinct in character in terms of customs, language and dress.

This was followed by peace overtures. A major role was taken by the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC). In its third Convention held at Wokha from 31 January – 2 February 1964 which was said to have been attended by 5,000 representatives from all ethnic groups of Nagaland, the NBCC made a historic resolution welcoming the proposed "Peace-Talk" and to request the Government to make available the services of Jayaprakash Narayan, Bimala Prasad Chaliha and Rev. Michael Scott with the object of the restoration of peace.

With this, the Peace Mission was formed. The mission was led by Rev. Michael Scott, an Anglican Churchman; Jayaprakash Narayan, a Gandhian and Sarvodaya leader; and B.P. Chaliha, 3rd CM of Assam (28 December 1957 – 6 November 1970) the Chief Minister of Assam.

The Peace Mission, supported by church leaders, headed by Rev. Longri Ao and the sponsorship of the State Government, resulted in an agreement for Cessation of Fire signed by the Governor Vishnu

Sahay, on behalf of the Government of India and the Peace Mission, and Zashei Huire, Biseto Medom and L. Zhenito signed on behalf of the NNC underground government.

Even though the agreement was officially declared on 6 September 1964 by organising public meetings and special prayer meetings all over Nagaland, the actual agreement was signed on 23 May 1964 at Sakraba Village in Phek district.

The ceasefire declaration was followed by a series of peace talks primarily between the members of the peace mission, the Naga leaders and team of peace observers. Eventually, the level of talks was raised and the venue shifted to New Delhi culminating in six rounds of talks in 1966 to 1967 between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the Naga leaders.

The first round was held on 18–19 February in New Delhi and the Naga delegation was led by Kughato Sukhai, their Prime Minister. The other members were Imkongmeren, Vice President, Issac Swu, Foreign Secretary, S. Angam, and Dallinamo. The final round of talks with Indira Gandhi was held in New Delhi on 3 October 1967. In all peace talks in New Delhi, the Naga delegation was led by Kughato Sukhai. However, no positive agreement could be reached as a result of these talks.

There were charges and counter-charges between the Security forces and the Nagas for breach of the terms of the agreement. On 3 August 1968, "Gen" Kaito, a Naga leader, was assassinated in broad daylight in the heart of Kohima town. On 8 August 1972, the Chief Minister Hokishe Sema was ambushed by suspected Naga members near Kohima. The Chief Minister escaped without any bodily harm but his daughter was seriously injured.

On 31 August 1972, the Government banned the three Naga bodies, 1) The Naga National Council, 2) the Naga Federal Government, and 3) the Federal Army. Secondly, the Government decided against a further extension of the ceasefire agreement.

Though the peace mission was dissolved when Rev. Michael Scott left India in 1966. The cessation of ceasefire ended in 1972.

The Nagaland Peace Council (NPC) was re-formed at the initiative of the Church leaders. Discussion for peace continued. The effort was stepped up with renewed vigour after President's Rule was promulgated in March 1975.

In May 1975 the Liaison Committee of the NPC, consisting of Rev. Longri Ao, Kenneth Kerhuo, L. Lungalang, M. Aram, and Lungshim Shaiza, had requested Kevi Yalley to be a spokesperson for the Nagas. Next, the Naga leaders selected six of their representatives to hold discussions with the Government. This was closely followed by a series of five talks between the Naga representatives and the Government represented by the two advisers to the Governor, Z. Zopianga, and Ramunny.

These discussions finally resulted in the Shillong Accord signed on 11 November 1975, by the Governor of Nagaland L.P Singh representing the Government of India and the NNC leadership represented by Assa and Kevi Yalley. The NNC agreed to the unconditional acceptance of the Indian Constitution and surrender of arms.

The immediate result was a large scale surrender of arms and personnel. Villages containing NNC members, persuaded them to cease their clandestine activities. Five districts of the State were almost cleared of the underground elements. For some time there was little insurgency inside Nagaland.

The accord was condemned by many Nagas and marked the beginning of factionalism among the revolutionaries. The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) was formed in the late 1970s by

Thuingaleng Muivah, Isak Chishi Swu and S. S. Khaplang. The NSCN later splintered into two, when Khaplang started another group.

Renewed violence occurred in the State from the middle of the 1980s. The fratricidal confrontations among the various Naga groups and the State authorities led to the loss of lives, disturbed public order and thwarted the economic development of the State.

Fratricidal violence among revolutionary groups continued into the 1990s. In Manipur particularly, ethnic violence erupted between the Nagas and Kukis, with both sides suffering hundreds of casualties.

On 23 January 1993, the Isaac-Muivah group of the NSCN (NSCN(IM)) was admitted to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). This was seen as a means to gain international attention to the Naga cause.

After talks with the NSCN (IM), the Government of India heeded the wishes of the people and on 25 July 1997, the Prime Minister, I. K. Gujral, in a statement in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, announced a ceasefire with effect from 1 August 1997 for a period of three months. The ceasefire declaration was followed by setting up of a Cease-fire Monitoring Cell to enforce the Ground Rules as laid down by Government of India. The ceasefire was later extended further. However, according to the UNPO, in 2009 the NSCN considered the biggest impediment to peace to be the refusal of the government of India to officially extend the ceasefire to all Naga-inhabited areas outside of Nagaland.[11] Clashes continued between the Indian army and the NSCN cadre.[12]

A complete solution for peace, which remains crucial for the people of Nagaland and the development of India's northeastern states in general, has not completely been found.[13]

Text extracted from URL 22: The culture of the Mizo people has been heavily influenced by Christianity. Mizo culture is rooted in the arts and ways of life of Mizos in India, Bangladesh and Myanmar

The Mizo people (Mizo: Mizo hnam) are an ethnic group native to north-eastern India, western Burma (Myanmar) and eastern Bangladesh; this term covers several ethnic peoples who speak various Kuki-Chin languages. Though the term Mizo is often used to name an overall ethnicity, it is an umbrella term to denote the various clans, such as the Hmar, Ralte, Lai, Lusei etc. A number of dialects are still spoken under the umbrella of Mizo;[1]

Mizo is the official language of Mizoram, along with English. Mizo language, or Mizo ṭawng, is a language belonging to the Sino-Tibetan family of languages, spoken natively by the Mizo people in Mizoram states of India and Chin State in Burma.[2]

Mizo literature is the literature written in Mizo ṭawng, the principal language of the Mizo peoples, which has both written and oral traditions. It has undergone a considerable change in the 20th century. The language developed mainly from the Lushai language, with significant influence from Pawi language, Paite language and Hmar language, especially at the literary level.[3]

Mizo folk music consists of vocals (singing) accompanied by traditional drums, gong and other native percussion instruments.[4]

Mizo people have a number of dances which are accompanied with few musical instrument like the gong and drum. The different dances of Mizoram are

Cheraw dance, Khuallam, Chheihlam, Chailam, Tlanglam, Sarlamkai and Chawnglaizawn.[5]

Mizoram shares characteristics to other regions of Northeast India and North India. The staple food of most of the Mizo people is rice, with meat and vegetables served on the side, ranging from the homely bai, a simple vegetable stew, non veg stew with sesame, garlic, onion and herbs.[6]

Text extracted from URL 23:

Mizoram (English: /mɪˈzɔːrəm/ ⓘ) is a landlocked state in northeast India, with Aizawl as its seat of government and largest city. Within India's northeast region, it is the southernmost state, sharing borders with three of the Seven Sister States, namely Tripura, Assam and Manipur, and also shares a 722-kilometre (449 mi) border with the neighbouring countries of Bangladesh and Myanmar.[5] The state spans over an area of approximately 21,087 square kilometres,[6] of which approximately 91% is forested.[7] With an estimated population of 1.25 million in 2023, it is the second least populous state in the country.[8]

Like several other northeastern states of India, Mizoram was previously part of Assam until 1972, when it was carved out as a Union Territory. In 1986, the Indian Parliament adopted the 53rd amendment of the Indian Constitution, which allowed for the creation of the State of Mizoram on 20 February 1987, as India's 23rd state.

About 95% of Mizoram's population descends from a diverse tribal origin. Mizos first began to settle the area in the 16th century, coming in waves of immigration from Southeast Asia. This immigration lasted through the 18th century.[9] Among all of the states of India, Mizoram has the highest concentration of tribal people. The Mizoram people are currently protected under the Indian constitution as a Scheduled Tribe.[10] Mizoram is one of three states of India with a Christian majority (87%).[11]

Mizoram is a highly literate agrarian economy. Slash-and-burn farming, also known as jhum, is the most common form of farming in the state.[12] In recent years, the jhum farming practices have been steadily replaced with a significant horticulture and bamboo products industry.[13][14] The state's gross state domestic product for 2012 was estimated at ₹69.91 billion (US\$880 million).[6] About 20% of Mizoram's population lives below the poverty line, with 35% rural poverty as of 2014.[15] The state has about 871 kilometres of national highways, with NH-54 and NH-150 connecting it to Assam and Manipur respectively. It is also a growing transit point for trade with Myanmar and Bangladesh.[16]

The term Mizoram is derived from two Mizo words: Mizo and ram. 'Mizo' is the endonym of the native inhabitants and 'ram' means 'land'. Thus "Mizoram" means "land of the Mizos" or "Mizo land".[17][18]

The origin of the Mizos, like those of many other tribes in the northeastern India, is shrouded in mystery. The people living in the Mizo Hills were generally referred to as the Cucis or Kukis by their neighbouring ethnic groups which was also a term adopted by the British writers. The claim that 'The Kukis are the earliest known residents of the Mizo hills area,' must be read in this light.[20] The majority of the tribes classified as "Mizo" today most likely migrated to their present territories from the neighbouring countries in several waves, starting around 1500 CE.[21]

Before the British Raj, the various Mizo clans lived in autonomous villages. The tribal chiefs enjoyed an eminent position in the gerontocratic Mizo society. The various clans and subclans practised slash-and-burn, locally called jhum cultivation - a form of subsistence agriculture.[22] The chiefs were the absolute rulers of their respective clans' territories (ram), although they remained under the nominal political jurisdictions of the rulers of Manipur, Tripura and Burma.[23]

Prior to 1895, the year that the British Raj gained political control over Mizoram, there were many reports of head-hunting in the Mizoram area via tribal raids led by the village chieftains. Head-hunting was a practice which often involved the ambushing of a rival tribe, the taking of slaves and the cutting off of the heads of the defenders. These heads would sometimes be displayed at the entrances to the tribal village of the victors.[24]

Some of the earliest records of raids and intertribal conflicts are from the early 19th century.[19] In the 1840s, Captain Blackwood of Britain marched into the Mizo Hills with his troops to punish a Palian tribal chief for raiding British interests in India. A few years later, Captain Lester was wounded in a battle with the Lusei tribe in the region that is now Mizoram. In 1849, a Lusei tribal raid killed 29 members of the Thadou tribe and added 42 captives to their clan. Colonel Lister retaliated in 1850, with the co-operation of the Thadou tribe, an event historically called the First British invasion, burning down a Lusei village of 800 tribal houses and freeing 400 Thadou captives.[19][25] British historical records on the Mizo Hills state that similar inter-ethnic tribal raids continued for decades after the First British Invasion. Such raids would be for the purpose of seeking out loot, slaves or retaliation for earlier lost battles.[26]

The Mizo Hills formally became part of British India in 1895, and practices such as head-hunting were banned in Mizoram as well as neighbouring regions.[27] The northern and southern Mizo Hills became the Lushai Hills, with Aizawl as their headquarters by declaring the whole area as an "excluded area" till India got independence from the British.[28] At the time of the British conquest, there were around 60 chiefs.[23]

By the time India gained independence from the British Empire, the number of tribal chiefs had increased to over 200. The educated elites among the Mizos campaigned against the tribal chieftdoms under the banner of the Mizo Union. As a result of their campaign, the hereditary rights of the 259 chiefs were abolished under the Assam-Lushai District ("Acquisition of Chief's Rights") Act, 1954.[23][26] Village courts were re-implemented in the Mizo region along with other parts of Assam. Few Christian missionaries came to Mizoram during the colonial period knowing that the rural hill population was busy fighting among different tribes. The missionaries propagated Christianity with the support of the British government. As a result, majority of the population converted to Christianity and changed their faiths without any resistance. The Mizos were particularly dissatisfied with the government's inadequate response to the 1959–60 mautam famine. The Mizo National Famine Front, a body formed for famine relief in 1959, later developed into a new political organisation, the Mizo National Front (MNF) in 1961.[29] A period of protests and armed insurgency followed in the 1960s, which resulted in the MNF seeking independence from India.[30]

In 1971, the government agreed to convert Mizo District into a Union Territory, which became Mizoram in 1972. In 1986, Mizoram Peace Accord (1986) was agreed between the Government and the MNF. In 1986, the Indian Parliament adopted the 53rd amendment of the Indian Constitution, which allowed for the creation of the State of Mizoram on 20 February 1987, as India's 23rd state.[31][32] Mizoram was given two seats in the Parliament, one each in the Lok Sabha and in the Rajya Sabha.[33]

Mizoram is a landlocked state in North East India whose southern part shares 722[6] kilometres long international borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh, and northern part share domestic borders with Manipur, Assam and Tripura. It is the fifth smallest state of India with 21,087 km² (8,142 sq mi). It extends from 21°56'N to 24°31'N, and 92°16'E to 93°26'E.[34] The tropic of cancer runs through the state nearly at its middle. The maximum north–south distance is 285 km, while maximum east–west stretch is 115 km.[34]

Mizoram is a land of rolling hills, valleys, rivers and lakes. As many as 21 major hill ranges or peaks of different heights run through the length and breadth of the state, with plains scattered here and there. The average height of the hills to the west of the state is about 1,000 metres (3,300 ft). These gradually rise up to 1,300 metres (4,300 ft) to the east. Some areas, however, have higher ranges which go up to a height of over 2,000 metres (6,600 ft). Phawngpui Tlang also known as the Blue Mountain, situated in the southeastern part of the state, is the highest peak in Mizoram at 2,210 metres (7,250 ft).[35] About 76% of the state is covered by forests, 8% is fallows land, 3% is barren and considered uncultivable area, while cultivable and sown area constitutes the rest.[36] Slash-and-burn or jhum cultivation, though discouraged, remains in practice in Mizoram and affects its topography.[37][38] A report by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in 2021 states that Mizoram has the highest forest cover as a percentage of its geographical area of any Indian state, being 84.53% forest.[39]

Mizoram terrain is, according to the Geological Survey of India, an immature topography, and the physiographic expression consists of several almost north–south longitudinal valleys containing series of small and flat hummocks, mostly anticlinal, parallel to sub-parallel hill ranges and narrow adjoining synclinal valleys with series of topographic highs. The general geology of western Mizoram consists of repetitive succession of Neogene sedimentary rocks of the Surma Group and Tipam Formation such as sandstone, siltstone, mudstone and rare pockets of shell limestone. The eastern part is the Barail Group.[40] Mizoram lies in seismic zone V, according to the India Meteorological Department; as with other northeastern states of India, this means the state has the highest risk of earthquakes relative to other parts of India.[41]

The biggest river in Mizoram is Chhimtuipui, also known as Kaladan (or Koladyne). It originates in Chin state in Burma and passes through Saiha and Lawngtlai districts in the southern tip of Mizoram, goes back to Burma's Rakhine state. Although many more rivers and streams drain the hill ranges, the most important and useful rivers are the Tlawng, Tut, Tuirial and Tuivawl which flow through the northern territory and eventually join the Barak River in Cachar District. The rivers have a gentle drainage gradient particularly in the south.[40]

Mizoram has a mild climate, being relatively cool in summer 20 to 29 °C (68 to 84 °F) but progressively warmer, most probably due to climate change, with summer temperatures crossing 30 degrees Celsius and winter temperatures ranging from 7 to 22 °C (45 to 72 °F). The region is influenced by monsoons, raining heavily from May to September with little rain in the dry (cold) season. The climate pattern is moist tropical to moist sub-tropical, with average state rainfall 254 centimetres (100 in) per annum. In the capital Aizawl, rainfall is about 215 centimetres (85 in) and in Lunglei, another major centre, about 350 centimetres (140 in).[40] The state is in a region where cyclones and landslides can cause weather-related emergencies.[42]

Mizoram has the third highest total forest cover with 1,594,000 hectares (3,940,000 acres), and highest percentage area (90.68%) covered by forests, among the states of India, according to 2011

Forest Survey of India.[7] Tropical semi-evergreen, tropical moist deciduous, subtropical broadleaved hill and subtropical pine forests are the most common vegetation types found in Mizoram. Bamboo is common in the state, typically intermixed with other forest vegetation; about 9,245 km² (44%) of the state's area is bamboo bearing. The state and central governments of India have cooperated to reserve and protect 67% of the land covered by forests, and additional 15% by management. Only 17% of the land is non-forested area for cultivation, industry, mining, housing and other commercial human activity. Satellite data suggests 91% of state's geographical area is covered by forests.[7]

Jhum cultivation, or slash-and-burn practice, was a historic tradition in Mizoram and a threat to its forest cover. This practice has reduced in recent decades, due to a government-supported initiative to support horticultural crops such as pineapple and banana plantations.[7]

Mizoram is host to numerous species of birds, wildlife and flora. About 640 species of birds have been identified in the state, many of which are endemic to the Himalayan foothills and southeast Asia. Of the birds found in Mizoram forests, 27 are on the worldwide threatened species lists and eight are on the critically endangered list.[47] Prominent birds spotted in Mizoram include those from the families of Phasianidae, Anatidae, Ciconiidae, Threskiornithidae, Ardeidae, Pelecanidae, Phalacrocoracidae, Falconidae, Accipitridae, Otidae, Rallidae, Heliornithidae, Turnicidae, Burhinidae, Charadriidae, Scolopacidae, Jacanidae, Laridae, Columbidae, Psittacidae, Cuculidae, Strigidae, Caprimulgidae, Apodidae, Alcedinidae, Meropidae, Bucerotidae, Ramphastidae, Picidae, Pittidae, Laniidae, Campephagidae, Dicruridae, Corvidae, Paridae, Hirundinidae, Cisticolidae, Pycnonotidae, Sylviidae, Timaliidae, Sittidae, Sturnidae, Turdidae, Dicaeidae, Chloropseidae, Ploceidae, Motacillidae, Fringillidae, Nectariniidae and Muscicapidae.[47]

The state is also host to a variety of fauna, just like its sister northeastern Indian states. Mammal species observed in the Mizoram forests include slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*), red serow (*Capricornis rubidus*), which is the state animal, goral (*Nemorhaedus goral*), tiger (*Panthera tigris*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), clouded leopard ("*Neofelis nebulosi*"), leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*), Bengal fox (*Vulpes bengalensis*), and Asiatic black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*). Primates seen include stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*), hoolock gibbon (*Hylobates hoolock*), Phayre's leaf monkey (*Trachypithecus phayrei*) and capped langur (*Trachypithecus pileatus*). The state is also home to many reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates.[48][49]

The state has two national parks and six wildlife sanctuaries – Blue Mountain (Phawngpui) National Park, Dampa Tiger Reserve (largest), Lengteng Wildlife Sanctuary, Murlen National Park, Ngengpui Wildlife Sanctuary, Tawi Wildlife Sanctuary, Khawnglung Wildlife Sanctuary, and Thorangtlang Wildlife Sanctuary.[50]

Mizoram has a population of 1,091,014 with 552,339 males and 538,675 females.[52] This reflects a 22.8% growth since 2001 census; still, Mizoram is second least populated state of India. The sex ratio of the state is 976 females per thousand males, higher than the national ratio 940. The density of population is 52 persons per square kilometre.[53]

The literacy rate of Mizoram in 2011 was 91.58 per cent,[4] higher than the national average 74.04 per cent, and second best among all the states of India. About 52% of Mizoram population lives in urban areas, much higher than India's average. Over one third of the population of Mizoram lives in Aizawl district, which hosts the capital.[52][54][55]

The great majority of Mizoram's population consists of several ethnic tribes who are either culturally or linguistically linked. These ethnic groups are collectively known as Mizos (Mi means People, Zo meaning the name of a progenitor; Mizo thus is People of Zo origin[26]).

Sometime in the 16th century CE, the first batch of Mizo crossed Tiau River and settled in Mizoram and they were called as Kukis by Bengalis.[56] The term Kuki mean the inhabitants of the interior and inaccessible mountain tracts. Sometimes grouped as Kuki-Chin tribes, The First batch were called Old Kukis, which are the Biate, Ranglong and the Hrangkhoh, and the second batch that followed include Lushei (or Lusei), Paite, Lai, Mara, Ralte, Hmar, Thadou, Shendus, and several other.[56]

The Bru (Reang), Chakma, Tanchangya are some non-Kuki tribes of Mizoram, with some suggestion that some of these are Indo-Aryan in their origins.[56] The Bnei Menashe tribe claim Jewish descent.[57]

The diversity of tribal groups reflects the historical immigration patterns. Different tribes and sub-tribes arrived in the present Mizoram, in successive waves and settled down in different parts of the state. Further, as they arrived, there were raids, fear of raids and intertribal feuds. The resulting isolation and separation created numerous tribes and sub-tribes.[56]

Other than tribal groups, other ethnic groups inhabit Mizoram including Bengalis and Nepalis.[58][59] Nepali Gorkhas, for example, were encouraged to settle in Aizawl area and other parts of Mizoram during the British colonial times. Thousands of their descendants are now residents of Mizoram.[59]

According to 2011 census, Mizoram had 1,036,115 people (nearly 95% of total) classified as Scheduled Tribe, the highest concentration of protected tribal people in all states of India.[10][60] This demographic classification, given to Mizoram tribes since the 1950s, has provided reservations and extra resources in education and government job opportunities, a preferential treatment as a means to accelerate their integration with mainstream society.[61]

Languages of Mizoram in 2011[58][62]

Mizo and English are the official languages of the state.[63]

Religion in Mizoram (2011)[64]

The majority (87%) of Mizos are Christians in various denominations, predominantly Presbyterian. Mizoram has a significant Theravada Buddhist population of 8.5%, who are mainly Chakma people, making them the largest religious minority in the region, followed by Hindus at 2.7% according to the 2011 census.[64] There are several thousand people, mostly ethnic Mizo, who have converted to Judaism claiming to be one of the lost Judaic tribe group Bnei Menashe, with descent from the biblical Menasseh.[57]

The major Christian denomination is the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, which was established by the Welsh missionary David Evan Jones starting in 1894.[65] By the time India gained independence from British Empire, some 80% of Lushei tribe people had converted to Christianity.[66] The Mizoram Presbyterian Church is one of the constituted bodies of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of India at Shillong in Meghalaya; it became the dominant Christian group in north Mizoram hills. In the southern hills of Mizoram, the Baptist Church had the dominant following.[66]

According to 2011 census report, there are 93,411 people who follow Buddhism in Mizoram.[64] The Chakmas and Tanchangya have been Buddhist since the mid-18th century.[67]

According to the 2011 census, there were 30,136 Hindus in Mizoram or about 2.75% of the population.[64]

There are also a few Mizos who practice Judaism (866 according to the 2001 census) and a modernised traditional Mizo religion called Hnam sakhua, which places a special emphasis on Mizo culture and seeks to revive traditional Mizo values while opposing the influence of Christianity on Mizo people.[68]

A total of 1,367 people practised the Mizo religion according to the 2001 census. This number included, in addition to the original Mizo religion (755 people), adherents of other tribal religions such as Lalchhungkua (279), Lalhnam (122), and Nunna Lalchhungkua (211).[69]

Originally village land, locally called ram, was the property of the tribal chief. The institution of chieftainship began in the 16th century. Each village behaved like a small state, and the chief was called Lal. The rule was hereditary, and there were no written laws (the first script for Mizo language was developed by Christian Missionaries Lorraine and Savidge about 1895).[26]

After annexation by the British in the 1890s, the northern part of Mizoram was administered as the Lushai Hills district of Assam, while southern Mizoram was part of Bengal. In 1898, the southern part was transferred from Bengal to Assam. The colonial power retained the chiefs and Mizo customs, including the socially stratified hereditary transfer of political power. In 1937, under Section 6 of the Scheduled District Act, the British administration[26] consolidated executive and legislative political power to the Deputy Commissioner and District magistrates, with village chiefs in advisory role. The political and judiciary powers of chiefs were neither final nor exclusive, thereafter. Rulings could be appealed to courts staffed with British officials. After India gained independence from the colonial rule, the region was granted autonomous status in 1952, where Mizo people formulated their own laws and delivered judicial decisions. The region was renamed as Mizo District within Assam State in April 1954 and in that year, the institution of hereditary chieftainship was abolished, and instead village courts/council were set up.[26]

The representatives of the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council and the Mizo Union pleaded with the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) to integrate the Mizo-dominated areas of Tripura and Manipur with the District Council in Assam. The tribal leaders in the northeast were unhappy with the final SRC recommendations and met in Aizawl in 1955 to form a new political party, Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU).[30]

In the 1950s, the fears of Assamese hegemony and perceived lack of government concern led to growing discontent among the Mizos. The Mizos were particularly dissatisfied with the government's inadequate response to the 1959–60 mautam famine. The Mizo National Famine Front, a body formed for famine relief in 1959, later developed into a new political organisation, the Mizo National Front (MNF) in 1961.[29] The Front sought sovereign independence for the Mizo territory, staging an armed insurrection with the 28 February 1966 uprising against the government.[30] The revolt was suppressed by the government of India, which carried out airstrikes in Aizawl and surrounding areas.[71][72]

Assam state was split, re-organised into multiple political regions, Mizo hills area was declared Mizoram after the insurgency, and it received status as a Union Territory in 1972.[26] A Peace Accord was signed between central government and insurgent groups of Mizoram on 30 June 1986.

Per the accord, insurgents surrendered their arms and Mizoram became the 23rd state of India in 1986, formalised the following year. The first election of Mizoram Legislative Assembly was held on 16 February 1987.[26] Elections have been held at 5-year intervals since then. Elections were held for 40 seats of legislative assembly on 28 November 2018. The voter turnout was 80%. The Mizo National Front led by Zoramthanga was elected to power.[73]

Kambhampati Hari Babu is the governor of Mizoram since July 2021.[74]

The Mizoram State Legislative Assembly has 40 seats and the Village Councils are the grassroots of democracy and leadership in Mizoram. The state has a chief minister, council of ministers with a portfolio of ministries responsible for different priorities and role of the government.[76]

There are eleven districts in Mizoram. A district of Mizoram is headed by a Deputy Commissioner who is in charge of the administration in that particular district. The Deputy Commissioner is the executive head of the district, responsible for implementing government regulations, the law and order situation in the district, as well as being responsible for tax collection for the government.[77]

A Superintendent of Police is responsible for the police administration of each district.[77]

The Lunglei town is managed by Lunglei Municipal Council.[78]

Mizoram gross state domestic product (GSDP) in 2011-2012 was about ₹69.91 billion (US\$880 million).[6] The state's gross state domestic product (GSDP) growth rate was nearly 10% annually over 2001-2013 period. As of 2019, the state's GSDP was US\$ 3.57 billion.[citation needed] With international borders with Bangladesh and Myanmar, it is an important port state for southeast Asian imports to India, as well as exports from India.[16]

The biggest contributors to state's GSDP growth are Agriculture, Public Administration and Construction work.[79] Tertiary sector of service sector continued to have the contribution to the GSDP with its share hovering between 58 per cent and 60 per cent during the past decade.[16][80]

As of 2013, according to the Reserve Bank of India, 20.4% of total state population is below poverty line, about same as the 21.9% average for India. Rural poverty is significantly higher in Mizoram, with 35.4% below the poverty line compared to India's rural poverty average of 25.7; while in urban areas of Mizoram, 6.4% are below the poverty line.[15]

Mizoram has a highly literate work force, with literacy rate of nearly 90% and widespread use of English. The state has a total of 4,300 kilometres of roads of which 927 kilometres are high quality national highways and 700 kilometres of state highways. The state is developing its Koladyne River for navigation and international trade. Mizoram's airport is at the capital city of Aizawl. The state is a power deficit state, with plans to develop its hydroelectric potential. After agriculture, the major employer of its people include handloom and horticulture industries. Tourism is a growth industry. In 2008, the state had nearly 7,000 registered companies. The state government has been implementing Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to encourage economic growth.[14]

Between 55% and 60% of the working population of the state is annually deployed on agriculture.[12][13] The sector's contribution to the gross state domestic product was 30% in 1994, just 14% in 2009 due to economic growth of other sectors.[81]

Agriculture has traditionally been a subsistence profession in Mizoram. It is seen as a means for generate food for one's family, ignoring its potential for commerce, growth and prosperity. Rice remains the largest crop grown in Mizoram by gross value of output.[82] Fruits have grown to become the second largest category, followed by condiments and spices.[81]

Before 1947, agriculture in Mizoram predominantly used to be slash-and-burn driven Jhum cultivation. This was discouraged by the state government, and the practice has been slowly declining.[83] A 2012 report[84] estimates the proportion of shifting cultivation area in Mizoram to be about 30% - predominant part of which was for rice production (56% to 63% depending on the year). Despite dedicating largest amount of labour, jhum cultivated and non-jhum crop area to rice, the yields are low; Mizoram average rice yields per acre is about 70% of India's average rice yield per acre and 32% of India's best yield. Mizoram produces about 26% of rice it consumes every year, and it buys the deficit from other states of India.[13]

The crop area used for jhum cultivation rotates in Mizoram; that is, the area slashed and burnt for a crop is abandoned for a few years and then jhumias return to slash and burn the same plot after a few years of non-use. The primary reasons for cyclical jhum cultivation includes, according to Goswami et al.[84]

In horticulture and floriculture, Mizoram is a significant producer and global exporter of Anthurium (over 7 million a year) and roses. It is also a significant producer and domestic supplier of banana, ginger, turmeric, passion fruit, orange and chowchow.[14] Mizoram has accomplished this horticulture success and exports in 2009, with just 6% of its cultivated land dedicated to horticulture and floriculture, indicating a large potential for further growth and economic integration with other Indian states as well export driven economy.[85] In 2013, the area dedicated to horticulture and floriculture increased to 9.4% of 1.2 million hectares potential.[6]

The agricultural productivity is very low in Mizoram.[86] The state gets a lot of rain, but its soil is porous and irrigation infrastructure very inadequate; this has affected its crop yield and reliability.[12] The yield issue that can be addressed by building irrigation infrastructure and adoption of better crop technologies. The state also has very low consumption of fertiliser and pesticides, which scholars[86] suggest offers an opportunity for organic farming particularly of vegetables and fruits.

Mizoram is one of the leading producers of bamboo in India, has 27 species of bamboo, and supplies 14% of India's commercial bamboo.[6][16] Forest products contribute about 5% to the state's gross product. The state produces about 5,200 metric tonnes of fish a year, about 12% of potential that can be sustainably achieved.[6] Sericulture is an important handicraft industry engaged by nearly 8,000 families in over 300 Mizo villages.[16]

Mizoram has two industrial estates at Zuangtui and Kolasib.[16] Another software technology park is being established in Mizoram University campus.[88] The state government has acquired 127 acres of land in Khawnuam for development of the Indo-Myanmar border trade township.[16]

The first primary school was set up in 1898 at Aizawl by Christian missionaries. The state has long enjoyed higher literacy rates than average literacy rates for India. In 1961, the literacy was 51%.[89] By 2011 census, it had reached 92%, compared to 74% average for India.[6] Mizoram is second only to Kerala.[90]

There were 3,894 schools in Mizoram as of 2012. Of these, 42% are publicly owned and managed by Central/State governments, 28% are private without government subsidies, 21% are private with government subsidies, and the rest are primary and middle schools that are government financed by run by three Autonomous District Councils of Mizoram. The teacher-pupil ratio is about 1:20 for primary, 1:9 for middle School, 1:13 for high, and 1:15 for higher secondary schools.[6]

There are several educational establishments under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education, including universities, colleges and other institutions. Within Mizoram University, there are 29 undergraduate departments including 2 professional institutions affiliated with the university. The state had 22 other colleges, and the total college enrolment was approximately 10,600 students in 2012.[6] Other well known institutes are National Institute of Technology Mizoram, ICFAI University, Mizoram, College of Veterinary Sciences & Animal Husbandry, Selesih, Aizawl, Mizoram and Regional Institute of Paramedical and Nursing Aizawl.

Mizoram is not self-sufficient in power. In 2012, the state had a demand for 107 MW of power, but had an effective installed capacity of only 29.35 MW. To bridge the gap, it purchased electricity from the national grid.[91]

The hydroelectric power potential of Mizoram was assessed to be about 3600 MW in 2010,[92] and about 4500 MW in 2012.[93] If even half of this is realised, the state could supply all its citizens and industry with 24/7 electricity, as well as earn income by selling surplus power to the national grid. The topography of Mizoram hydroelectric resources is ideal for power projects. The following rivers are suited for hydel projects with minimal impact on its biosphere – Tuivai, Tuivawl, Tlawng, Tut, Serlui, Tuirial, Kolodyne, Tuichang, Tuipui, Tiau and Mat. Beyond the major rivers, Mizoram has many small but perennial streams and rivulets with ideal condition for developing micro/mini and small hydroelectric projects.[92] The state has proposed projects to attract private investments on Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) basis with financial assistance in rehabilitating its citizens were they to be affected by the project. The largest proposed project is expected to be on Kolodyne (460 MW), and there are dozens of small to micro projects that have been identified.[92]

The main energy infrastructures in Mizoram are:

The growth of Christianity, scholars state,[104] was shaped from a foundation of cultural, religious and socio-political structure.

A consequence of Hnatlang was the culture of Tlawmngaihna, which does not have a direct English translation. Tlawmngaihna as cultural concept incorporates behaviour that is self-sacrificing, self-denying, doing what an occasion demands unselfishly and without concern for inconvenience caused, persevering, stoical, stout-hearted, plucky, brave, firm, independent, loath to lose one's good reputation.[105][106][107]

Several other cultural elements of ancient Mizo tribes, some of which became less prevalent after arrival of Christianity, included:[106][108]

Traditional festivals in Mizoram often revolved around stages of jhum cultivation or the seasons.[110] Community festivals were called kut in the local language, and there were major and minor kuts such as Chapchar Kut, Thalfavang Kut, Mim Kut and Pawl Kut. Chapchar Kut was the festival of spring (February/March), just before jhum started and land was cut-and-burnt for a new crop. Chapchar Kut was most anticipated by youth, a major festival and involved dancing and feasts. Thalfavang Kut celebrated completion of weeding of the jhum crop fields.[111]

Chapchar Kut was reintroduced and revived in 1973 by Mizo people to celebrate their heritage. Before Christianity arrived in Mizoram, home-brewed alcohol and many meat delicacies were part of the Chapchar celebrations. Now, with Mizoram's state law as a dry state, the youth busy themselves with music and community dancing.[112] Along with reviving traditional festivals, the community has been reviving the traditional dances at these festivals, for example, dances such as Cheraw, Khuallam, Chheihlam and Chai.[113]

Mizoram has many traditional dances, such as:

Mizoram's first football league debuted in October 2012. The Mizoram Premiere League had eight teams during the 2012–2013 season and is the highest level league in Mizoram. The eight clubs include Aizawl, Chanmari, Dinthar, FC Kulikawn, Luangmual, Mizoram, RS Annexe, and Reitlang. The season starts each year in October and wraps up with the finals in March.[116]

The state requires Indian citizens to have an Inner Line Permit. This is available from the Liaison officer, government of Mizoram in Kolkata, Silchar, Shillong, Guwahati and New Delhi. Those arriving by air can obtain a 15-day visit pass at Lengpui airport, Aizawl by submitting photographs and paying the fee of ₹120 (US\$1.50).[117]

Almost all foreign nationals can get the required Protected Area Permit on arrival, and face the same requirements as domestic tourists. However, they additionally have to register themselves with state police within 24 hours of arrival, a formality that most resorts can provide. Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals having their origin in these countries are required to get the pass through the Indian consulate or from the Ministry of Home Affairs in New Delhi, before they arrive in Mizoram.[117]

Mizoram is a place with flora and fauna rich landscape and pleasant climate.[118]

The state is a bird watcher's destination. For Mrs. Hume's pheasant (*Syrnaticus humiae*), Mizoram is a stronghold.[119] Wild water buffalo, Sumatran rhinoceros, elephants and other mammals have been spotted in the past.[120][121][122]

Having an estimated population of more than 100,000 per 2011 Indian census, the Chakmas have been demanding to convert the existing Chakma Autonomous District Council in Mizoram into a Union territory .[123]

In 1996, the government of Mizoram banned liquor. The church leaders (Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee) argue that state government should keep the ban and not seek to amend the law, while others argue prohibition should be lifted.[124] However, it has been difficult to enforce the ban due to the high demand for alcohol.[125]

In 2008, the Mizoram Excise and Narcotics (Wine) Rules amended the ban of 1996 to allow the manufacture, export, sale, possession and consumption of wine in Mizoram made from grapes and guava[126] which would help the economy of the state, reduce fruit waste from farms, and encourage large scale commercialisation. In 2011 the bill was amended to include apple, ginger, passion fruit, peach and pear wine.[127]

In 2013, the state assembly unanimously passed a resolution to study the impact of liquor prohibition.[128] In 2014, the state's narcotics minister noted that the liquor ban had produced some serious problems in Mizo society due to the drinking of spurious and unhealthy (locally made) liquor, known as zu. The government suggested it would introduce an amended liquor bill allowing retail shops to operate in Aizawl and other district headquarters to sell liquor – but not in bars. Furthermore, they would not consult the powerful church on the issue.[125]

The Mizoram Liquor Prohibition and Control bill of 2014 was repealed on 20 March 2019 with the Mizoram Liquor Prohibition Bill 2019,[129] it was a legislation promised by the Mizo National Front.[130]

Every 50 years, the Mautam bamboo blooms and its high-protein seeds lead to an explosion in the black rat population in the jungle, also referred to as the rat flood, which has historically destroyed

entire villages' food supplies after rats move on to farm fields and devour crops. The 1958–59 plague provoked a rural uprising during which the indigenous Mizo people launched a violent 20-year rebellion against the central government. The dispute only saw final resolution in 1986.[131] The 48-year rat problem re-occurred in Mizoram over 2006–08.[132] The crops suffered massive damage, with yields at 30-year lows; the crop yields recovered sharply to pre-mautam levels in 2009 after the mautam passed.[133]

Mizoram's media is growing quickly. Internet access is average, and private television cable channels are popular.[134] Doordarshan, the national television service of India provides terrestrial broadcasting services and All India Radio broadcast programmes related to the indigenous culture and local news. Broadband access is available. In addition to these, there are several websites in local dialects. Print journalism remains a popular news medium in Mizoram; local newspapers include Vanglaini and Zalen. The Mizoram Post, an English-language daily newspaper published from Silchar (Assam) was the most circulated newspaper in Mizoram, in 2007.[135]

Government

General information

Text extracted from URL 24:

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands is a union territory of India. It consists of 836 islands grouped into two island groups, the northern Andaman Islands and the southern Nicobar Islands, separated by a 150 km (93 mi) wide channel of which only 31 are inhabited. Port Blair is the capital and largest city of the territory, located about 1,190 km (740 mi) from Chennai and 1,255 km (780 mi) from Kolkata in mainland India. The islands are sandwiched between the Bay of Bengal to the west and the Andaman Sea to the east with the northern-most point located 901 km (560 mi) from the mouth of Hooghly river. Indira Point at 6°45'10"N and 93°49'36"E at the southern tip of Great Nicobar is the southernmost point of India.

The territory shares maritime borders with Indonesia located about 165 km (103 mi) to the south, Myanmar located 280 km (170 mi) to the north-east and Thailand located 650 km (400 mi) to the south-east. The islands occupy a total land area of approximately 8,249 km² (3,185 sq mi) with a population of 380,581 as per the 2011 census. The territory is divided into three districts: Nicobar, South Andaman, and North and Middle Andaman with the capitals at Car Nicobar, Port Blair and Mayabunder respectively.

Genetic and cultural studies suggest that the indigenous Andamanese people may have been isolated from other populations during the Middle Paleolithic era, more than 30,000 years ago. Archeological evidence of civilization has been dated back to 2,200 years. In the 11th century CE, Cholas, one of the three Tamil kingdoms, used the islands as a naval base to launch expeditions in South East Asia. The Danish were the first Europeans to arrive on the islands in 1755. The islands became part of the British Raj in 1868. During the Second World War, the islands were invaded by the Japanese Empire. After Indian Independence in 1947, the region became a province and later a union territory after the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1950.

The islands host the Andaman and Nicobar Command, the only geographical command operated jointly by the three major wings of the Indian Armed Forces: the Army, the Air Force and the Navy. While Hindi and English are the official languages, the major spoken languages include Bengali, Tamil and Telugu. Indigenous people speak any of the Andamanese or Nicobarese family of languages.

Hinduism is the majority religion in the union territory, with a significant Christian minority. The islands are also home to the Sentinelese people, an uncontacted tribe.

The name Andaman might have been derived from Handuman, after the Indian God Hanuman from the Hindu epic Ramayana.[3] The place was called with a similar name by the Malay, who used to be involved in slave trade in the region.[4] The place was also referred by various names such as Angademan by Ptolemy in the 2nd century CE and Angamanian by Marco Polo in 13th century CE.[3] Nicobar, which was located in the sea route connecting South India to South East Asia, was known as Nakkavaram, meaning "open/naked land" borrowed from Tamil language which later became Nicobar.[5] In the middle ages (500-1500 AD), Nicobar was known as Lankhabatus in Arabia, probably a mis-transcription of the name Nakkavaram. An 11th-century CE work Kathasaritsagar indicates the name as Narikel Dweep.[5] Marco Polo termed the island as Necuverann, while the islands were known as Lo-Jan Kuo in China, a translation of Nakkavar with the same meaning.[5]

Genetic and cultural studies suggest that the indigenous Andamanese people may have been isolated from other populations during the Middle Paleolithic era, which ended 30,000 years ago.[6] Archeological evidence obtained from middens have been dated the earliest civilisations back to 200-300 BCE.[7] The islands have been mentioned by Ptolemy in the 2nd century CE.[4][5]

The Nicobar islands existed on a major trade route connecting India to the South East Asia and had much contact with the outside world for centuries. But there are very few accounts of information as there was no written language with the indigenous people to document their history.[8] The islands have been mentioned in the accounts of travellers like Faxian in the 6th century CE and I-Tsing in 7th century CE.[5]

In the 11th century CE, Rajendra Chola I of the Chola dynasty of Tamilakam invaded parts of South East Asia using the Nicobar islands as an intermediate naval base.[9][10] It was part of an established Chola trade route connecting India and South East Asia, with the practice continuing in the subsequent years during the reigns of Rajendra II and Kulothunga I.[11][12] Chola inscriptions from Thanjavur, dated to 1050 CE, describe the islands as Ma-Nakkavaram meaning "great open/naked land" in Tamil.[13][14] The islands are later mentioned by Marco Polo in the 13th century CE and Friar Oderic in early 14th century CE.[5][15]

The European colonisation on the islands began when settlers from the Danish East India Company arrived on the Nicobar Islands on 12 December 1755.[16] On 1 January 1756, the Nicobar Islands were made into a Danish colony, first named Nye Danmark (New Denmark) and later Frederikshøerne (Frederick's Islands).[17] The islands were managed from the Dutch colony of Tranqebær in the Indian mainland. However, various attempts to settle on the islands were unsuccessful due to repeated outbreaks of malaria, which led to the death of the colonists.[8]

Between 1778 and 1783, William Bolts tried to establish an Austrian colony on the Nicobar islands, mistakenly assuming that the Danish had abandoned the claims to the islands, renaming them Theresa Islands.[18] In 1789, the British colonised the Andaman islands to set up a naval base and establish a penal colony.[19] In 1794, a first batch of 100 prisoners were sent to the island but the settlement was abandoned in 1796.[19]

In 1858, the British established a colony near Port Blair.[20] Between 1864 and 1868, Italy tried to buy the island from the Danish. On 16 October 1868, the Danish sold the rights to the Nicobar islands to the British, which was made part of the British India in 1869.[8] In 1872, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were united under a single command and administered by a chief commissioner based out of Port Blair. The construction of the Cellular Jail started in 1896 and was completed in

1906. The jail was used to house political prisoners and independence activists away from the Indian mainland.[21][22]

During the Second World War, the islands were invaded by the Japanese as a part of their attack on the allies in 1942. Port Blair was captured by the Japanese on 23 March 1942 and established control over the island.[23] The provisional control was passed on to the Azad Hind of Subhash Chandra Bose on 29 December 1943, based on the understanding with the Japanese with the islands renamed as Shaheed-Dweep (Martyr Island) and Swaraj-dweep (Self-rule Island).[24] Bose appointed General A. D. Loganathan as the governor of the islands, who had limited power while the real control of the islands remained with the Japanese.[24] In the years under Japanese occupation, there have been reports of widespread looting, arson, rape and extra judicial killings.[24][25]

Local people were often killed on trivial matters with the largest being the Homfreyganj massacre on 30 January 1944, where 44 local civilians were shot by the Japanese on suspicion of spying.[25] Japanese Vice Admiral Teizo Hara and Major-General Tamenori Sato surrendered to Lieutenant Colonel Nathu Singh, the commanding officer of the Rajput Regiment on 15 August 1945, on board the Royal Navy warship HMS Sandbar and the territory was officially handed back over to the British to Brigadier J. A. Salomons, commander of 116th Indian Infantry Brigade, and Chief Administrator Noel Patterson, in a ceremony performed at the Gymkhana Ground in Port Blair on 7 October 1945.[26]

During the Partition of India, the British announced their intention to retain possession of the islands and use them to resettle Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmese on these islands. The islands were claimed by the Indian National Congress for India and the Muslim League for Pakistan during the partition negotiations.[27][28] After the India Independence in 1947, the islands became part of the Dominion of India. As per the Constitution of India, the Islands were designated as the only part D territory in 1950, to be administered by a lieutenant governor appointed by the Government of India.[29] The islands were later used to resettle people displaced during the partition with a substantial number of displaced immigrants establishing agricultural colonies.[30] The islands became a separate union territory administered by the Government of India, following the re-organization in 1956.[31] The islands have been developed into a key defence establishment since the 1980 due to its strategic location in the Bay of Bengal across the Strait of Malacca.[32][33]

On 26 December 2004, the coasts of the Andaman and Nicobar islands experienced 10 m (33 ft) high tsunami waves following an undersea earthquake in the Indian Ocean which resulted in more than 2,000 casualties, 46,000 injuries and rendering at least 40,000 homeless.[34] The locals and tourists on the islands suffered the greatest casualties while the indigenous people largely survived unscathed due to movement to high grounds following the oral traditions passed down over generations that warned them to evacuate following earthquakes.[35]

There territory consists of 836 islands and islets occupying an area of 8,249 km² (3,185 sq mi), of which only 31 are permanently inhabited.[36] The islands extend from 6° to 14° North latitudes and from 92° to 94° East longitudes.[37] The islands are grouped into the north Andaman islands and south Nicobar islands, separated by the 150 km (93 mi) wide Ten Degree Channel.[36] The Andamans cover an area of 6,408 km² (2,474 sq mi) while the Nicobar group covers an area of 1,841 km² (711 sq mi).[36] The highest point is the Saddle Peak at 737 m (2,418 ft), located in North Andaman Island.[38]

The northernmost point of the islands is 901 km (560 mi) away from the mouth of the Hooghly River in the Indian mainland. The territory shares maritime borders with Indonesia located about 165 km

(103 mi) to the south, Myanmar located 280 km (170 mi) to the north-east and Thailand located 650 km (400 mi) to the south-east.[39] Indira Point, the southernmost point of India, is located at 6°45'10"N and 93°49'36"E at the southern tip of Great Nicobar.[40] The capital and largest city is Port Blair, located 1,190 km (740 mi) from Chennai and 1,255 km (780 mi) from Kolkata on the Indian mainland.[31] Barren Island, the only active volcano in India, is located in the Andaman Sea.[41][42][43]

The islands have a 1,962 km (1,219 mi) long coast-line.[44] The topography of the territory varies significantly across various islands. The islands may have sandy, rocky sandstone or marshy beaches on the coastlines and might be surrounded by shoals and coral reefs.[45] The altitude varies significantly from completely flat islands to gradually raising topography from the coast to the interior in larger islands.[45] The islands are generally surrounded by shallow seas of varying depths in the vicinity with some deep natural bays occurring along certain coasts.[45] The islands have a moderate temperature around the year with the average ranging from 23°C to 31°C.[46] The islands have a tropical climate with warm summers and not so chill winters.[46] The rainfall is dependent on the monsoons and tropical cyclones are common in late summer.[46]

The islands have mangroves interspersed with marshes, coconut trees or dispersed bushy vegetation along the coast.[45] There are twelve types of forests that occur in the islands including evergreen, deciduous, mangrove, littoral, bamboo, sub-montane and brackish water forests.[47] North Andaman is characterised by wet evergreen forests with climbing plants, Middle Andaman has moist deciduous forests and South Andaman islands have epiphytic vegetation, mostly ferns and orchids.[47] The North Nicobar islands are mostly barren with grasslands while evergreen forests form the dominant vegetation in the central and southern islands of the Nicobar group.[47] The forest coverage is estimated to be 86.2% of the total land area with about 2,200 varieties of plants of which 200 are endemic and 1,300 do not occur in mainland India.[47] There are more than 200 species used for timber.[47]

There are more than 8300 species of fauna of which 1117 are endemic to the islands.[48][49] There are about 64 species of reptiles of which half of them are endemic to the islands.[48] Most of the larger species were introduced by colonists and travellers, some of which became endemic due to their prolonged isolation. There are about 55 mammal species of which 32 are endemic with 26 species of rats and 14 species of bats, the most amongst the mammals.[47][44] The endangered Indian elephant can be found in forested or mountainous areas of the islands, which were originally introduced from the mainland to help with the timber extraction in 1883.[50] Endangered and critically endangered species endemic to the islands include the Andaman white-toothed shrew, Andaman spiny shrew, Jenkin's shrew, Nicobar spiny shrew, Nicobar tree shrew, Miller's Nicobar rat, Palm rat, Andaman teal, Nicobar scops owl, Andaman boobook and Darwin's eastern frog.[48] Other large fauna include Wild boar, Spotted deer, Barking deer and Sambar deer.[47]

There are about 270 species of birds in the islands of which 90 are endemic.[48] The islands' caves are nesting grounds for the Edible-nest swiftlet, whose nests are prized for bird's nest soup.[51] The islands serve as an intermediate resting site for birds such as Horsfield's bronze cuckoo, Zappey's flycatcher and Javan pond heron during long distance migrations.[52] The Nicobar pigeon found in the islands is the closest living relative to the extinct Dodo.[53] The territory is home for about 896 species of winged insects including 225 butterflies species.[48][47]

There are more than 1350 species of echinoderms and molluscs and 200 species of corals in the seas surrounding the islands.[44] Larger marine species include salt water crocodiles, dugongs, turtles, dolphins and whales.[44] There are more than 1350 species of fishes including 13 fresh

water species.[48] The islands are well known for prized shellfish, the commercial exploitation of which began in the early 20th century.[47] There are about nine national parks, 96 wildlife sanctuaries and one biosphere reserve in the islands.[54][44]

As per the 2011 census, the population was 380,581, of which 202,871 (53.3%) were males and 177,710 (46.7%) were females.[2] The sex ratio was 878 females per 1,000 males.[57] There were a total of 94,551 households and about 143,488 (37.7%) of the population lived in urban areas.[2] Hinduism (69.5%) is the major religion of people of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands followed by Christianity (21.7%) and Islam (8.5%).[58]

The Andaman islands were populated by the indigenous people (the Great Andamanese, the Onge, the Jarawa and the Sentinelese) who were isolated and spoke Andamanese languages for thousands of years.[59] The Nicobar islands, which was part of trade routes and was frequented by travelers, were populated by Shompen people before the islands were settled by Nicobarese people, who spoke Austroasiatic languages.[8] The islands are also home to the Sentinelese people, amongst the only known uncontacted tribe in India.[60] When the islands were first colonized, the population of the natives were estimated to be around 5,000 and while the population of islands temporarily increased during colonization, the population saw a massive spike post-1960s due to the policies of the Union Government that encouraged settlers from other parts of the country.[61] In the early 21st century, the population of indigenous people has drastically dropped and As of 2016[update], it was estimated to consist of 44 Great Andamanese, 380 Jarawas, 101 Onges, 15 Sentinelese and 229 Shompens.[62] The Government of India is trying to protect the remnant population by providing access to healthcare facilities, communication and social engagement.[63][62]

The Andamanese people speak about a dozen endangered Andamanese languages, which belong to two families, Great Andamanese and Ongan that are unrelated to each other or to any other language group.[65] There are two unattested languages: Sentinelese, spoken by Sentinelese people, who refuse contact with outsiders, which might be related to Ongan as per Anvita Abbi and Jangil, which became extinct in the 1920s.[66][67] Indigenous to the Nicobar Islands are the Shompen language, spoken by Shompen people and the five Nicobarese languages, which form part of the Austroasiatic language family and are spoken by about 29,000 people or 7.6% of the population.[68][64]

The majority of the population, however, are speakers of immigrant languages which include Bengali (28.5%), Tamil (15.2%), Telugu (13.2%), Hindi (12.9%), Malayalam (7.2%). Sadri (5.5%), and Kurukh (4%).[64] Hindi is the official language of the region, while English is declared an additional official language for communication purposes.[69]

The islands form a part of the union territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and is administered by a Lieutenant Governor on behalf of the Government of India.[70] The union territory was established in 1956 with a chief commissioner as the head of the administration.[71] In 1982, the Lieutenant Governor replaced the Chief Commissioner as the head of administration.

In 1981, a "Pradesh council" with councillors as representatives of the people was constituted to advise the Lieutenant Governor.[72] The territory sends one representative to Lok Sabha of the Indian Parliament from its Andaman and Nicobar Islands Lok Sabha constituency.[73] The territory is divided into three districts, each headed by a deputy commissioner.[74] The Calcutta High Court has jurisdiction over the islands with a permanent seat at Port Blair.[75]

The indigenous communities have their own system of administration. There are long term settlements known as baraij and short-term settlements known as chang. The coast-dwellers

(aryoto) have semi-permanent settlements and the interior groups (eremtaga) dwell on temporary settlements, which enable them to migrate during dry seasons.[7]

As of 2022[update], the GSDP was ₹0.103 lakh crore (US\$1.3 billion).[78] Agriculture is a major occupation with nearly 50% of the population engaged in the sector.[79] Only about 48,675 hectares (120,280 acres) of land, which is about 6% of the total land area, can be used for agriculture.[79] Paddy is the main food crop, grown in about 20% of the arable land.[80] Most of the food for consumption is imported from mainland India.[79] Coconut and arecanut are the cash crops grown in the Nicobar islands.[79] Other crops include pulses, oilseeds, vegetables like okra, brinjal, cucurbit and radish; spices and fruits such as mango, sapota, orange, banana, guava and pineapple.[81] Rubber, red oil, palm and cashew are grown on a limited scale in plantations.[81] The territory has an exclusive economic zone of more than 6 lakh sq. km, which contributes to the fishing industry. As of 2017[update], the region produced 27,526 tonnes of fish, mostly from marine sector with minor contribution from inland fisheries.[81]

As of 2008[update], there were 1,833 registered small-scale industries with majority being involved in engineering, woodworking and textiles apart from 21 factories.[82] District Industries Centre (DIC) is the body responsible for the development of small and medium industries in the islands.[82] Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation Limited (ANIIDCO), established in 1988, is responsible for the development and economic growth of the islands.[82]

Tourism is one of the major contributors to the economy of the islands. The islands had more than 4 lakh visitors in 2016 with a 94% contribution from domestic tourists.[79] In 2018, plans to develop facilities in various islands under the National Institute of Transforming India (NITI) Aayog was initiated by Government of India, with the aim of increasing tourist inflows.[83][79] Foreign tourists are issued Restricted Area Permits (RAP) which gives access to specific areas with conditions.[84] While domestic tourists do not require a permit to visit the accessible parts of the islands, the tribal reserves are forbidden and requires special permission for access.[85] The islands have many beaches due to its long coastline and various water sports are practised including kayaking, scuba diving and parasailing.[86]

Major attractions include the Cellular Jail, Chatham Saw Mill, Forest Museum, Samudrika Naval Marine Museum, Anthropological Museum, Fisheries Aquarium, Science Center and Carbyn's cove in Port Blair; Bharatpur, Lakshmanpur and Sitapur beaches in Shaheed Dweep; Elephant and Radhanagar beaches in Swaraj Dweep; Hudi tikri, Red, Bird and Bat islands, Amkunj beach near Rangat; Dhaninallah mangroves and Karmatang beach near Mayabunder; limestone caves and mud volcanoes near Diglipur; Craggy island and Ross & Smith islands and various national parks and protected sanctuaries.[87]

The islands are served by Veer Savarkar International Airport near Port Blair which has regular flights to major cities in India.[88] The airport operates as a civil enclave, sharing airside facilities with INS Utkrosh of the Indian Navy.[89] The airport has a single runway of 3,290 m (10,794 ft) in length, with the civilian terminal operated by the Airports Authority of India with air traffic operations managed by the Indian Navy.[90] Andaman and Nicobar Command of Indian Armed Forces operates air bases of Car Nicobar AFS, INS Kohassa, INS Utkrosh and INS Baaz.[91]

There are 23 ports along the islands with a major port at Port Blair and eight other significant ports including Diglipur, Mayabunder, Rangat, Hut Bay, Car Nicobar, Katchal and Campbell Bay.[92][93] In 2022, the Government of India proposed the development of a new container ship terminal and an airport at Great Nicobar.[94] There are 39 light houses situated across the islands.[95]

As of 2018[update], there are 422 km (262 mi) long national highways in the state with the major highway being the 230.7 km (143.4 mi) long NH 4 connecting Port Blair and Diglipur.[96][97]

There is no single power grid connecting all the islands and independent power houses caters to the power requirements of individual islands.[98] The islands have an installed power capacity of 68.46 MW with majority of the power generated from diesel power plants and a single hydroelectric powerplant of 5.25MW on Kalpong river.[99] In 2016, a new 15-megawatt diesel power plant was established in South Andaman with Japanese assistance.[100][101] IN 2022, the government proposed additional power plants and infrastructure to be developed in Great Nicobar.[102]

4G mobile service is provided by various telecom operators in the islands.[103] Till 2020, Internet was provided through satellite links and access was limited. Bharat Broadband Network started work on laying fiber optic submarine cables connecting the islands with Chennai in December 2018.[104][105] On 10 August 2020, the undersea optical fibre cable went live, which enabled high-speed broadband connections in the islands.[106][107][108]

The first primary school in the islands was established in 1881.[109] During Independence, 12 schools were functioning on the islands including one high school.[109] As of 2023[update], there are 428 schools functioning in the islands with a total enrolment of 86,081 students.[109] Jawaharlal Nehru Rajkeeya Mahavidyalaya was the first institute of higher education, established in 1967.[110] Mahatma Gandhi Government College was established in 1990 and is affiliated to Pondicherry University.[111] Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Government Polytechnic was established in 1984 and the affiliated engineering college, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Institute of Technology was established in 1989.[112] Andaman Law College is the only law college in the state, established in 2016.[113] The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Institute of Medical Sciences was established in 1963.[114]

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The Andaman Islands (/ˈændəˌmən/) are an archipelago, made up of 200 islands, in the northeastern Indian Ocean about 130 km (81 mi) southwest off the coasts of Myanmar's Ayeyarwady Region. Together with the Nicobar Islands to their south, the Andamans serve as a maritime boundary between the Bay of Bengal to the west and the Andaman Sea to the east. Most of the islands are part of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a Union Territory of India, while the Coco Islands and Preparis Island are part of the Yangon Region of Myanmar.

The Andaman Islands are home to the Andamanese, a group of indigenous people made up of a number of tribes, including the Jarawa and Sentinelese.[1] While some of the islands can be visited with permits, entry to others, including North Sentinel Island, is banned by law. The Sentinelese are generally hostile to visitors and have had little contact with any other people. The Indian government and coast guard protect their right to privacy.[2]

In the 13th century, the name of Andaman appears in Late Middle Chinese as ʔanH dɑ mʔan (晏陀蠻, pronounced yàntuómán in modern Mandarin Chinese) in the book Zhu Fan Zhi by Zhao Rukuo.[3] In Chapter 38 of the book, Countries in the Sea, Zhao Rukuo specifies that going from Lambri (Sumatra) to Ceylan, an unfavourable wind makes ships drift towards the Andaman Islands.[3][4][better source needed]

In the 15th century, Andaman was recorded as "Andaman Mountain" (安得蠻山, pronounced āndémán shān in modern Mandarin Chinese) during the voyages of Zheng He in the Mao Kun map of the Wu Bei Zhi.[5]

The earliest archaeological evidence yet documented goes back some 2,200 years; however, indications from genetic, cultural and isolation studies suggest that the islands may have been inhabited as early as the Middle Paleolithic (around 60,000 years ago).[6] The indigenous Andamanese peoples appear to have lived on the islands in substantial isolation from that time until the late 18th century.[citation needed] Rajendra I took over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.[7] He used the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as a strategic naval base to launch an expedition against the Sriwijaya Empire. The Cholas called the island Ma-Nakkavaram ("great open/naked land"), found in the Thanjavur inscription of 1050 CE. European traveller Marco Polo (12th–13th century) also referred to this island as 'Necuverann' and a corrupted form of the Tamil name Nakkavaram would have led to the modern name Nicobar during the British colonial period.[8]

In 1789, the Bengal Presidency established a naval base and penal colony on Chatham Island in the southeast bay of Great Andaman. The settlement is now known as Port Blair (after the Bombay Marine lieutenant Archibald Blair who founded it). After two years, the colony was moved to the northeast part of Great Andaman and was named Port Cornwallis after Admiral William Cornwallis. However, there was much disease and death in the penal colony and the government ceased operating it in May 1796.[9][10]

In 1824, Port Cornwallis was the rendezvous of the fleet carrying the army to the First Burmese War.[11] In the 1830s and 1840s, shipwrecked crews who landed on the Andamans were often attacked and killed by the natives and the islands had a reputation for cannibalism. The loss of the Runnymede and the Briton in 1844 during the same storm, while transporting goods and passengers between India and Australia, and the continuous attacks launched by the natives, which the survivors fought off, alarmed the British government.[12] In 1855, the government proposed another settlement on the islands, including a convict establishment, but the Indian Rebellion of 1857 forced a delay in its construction. However, because the rebellion led to the British holding a large number of prisoners, it made the new Andaman settlement and prison urgently necessary. Construction began in November 1857 at Port Blair using inmates' labour, avoiding the vicinity of a salt swamp that seemed to have been the source of many of the earlier problems at Port Cornwallis.[citation needed]

The Battle of Aberdeen was fought on 17 May 1859 between the Great Andamanese tribe and the British. Today, a memorial stands in Andaman water sports complex as a tribute to the people who died in the battle. Fearful of British intentions and with help from an escaped convict from Cellular Jail, the Great Andamanese attacked the British settlement, but they were outnumbered and soon suffered heavy casualties. Later, it was identified that an escaped convict named Dudhnath Tewari had changed sides and informed the British about the tribe's plans.[13][14][15]

In 1867, the merchantman Nineveh was wrecked on the reef of North Sentinel Island. The 86 survivors reached the beach in the ship's boats. On the third day, they were attacked with iron-tipped spears by naked islanders. One person from the ship escaped in a boat and the others were later rescued by a British Royal Navy ship.[16]

For some time, sickness and mortality were high, but swamp reclamation and extensive forest clearance continued. The Andaman colony became notorious with the murder of the Viceroy Richard Southwell Bourke, 6th Earl of Mayo, on a visit to the settlement (8 February 1872), by a Pathan from Afghanistan, Sher Ali Afridi. In the same year, the two island groups Andaman and Nicobar, were united under a chief commissioner residing at Port Blair.[11]

From the time of its development in 1858 under the direction of James Pattison Walker, and in response to the mutiny and rebellion of the previous year, the settlement was first and foremost a repository for political prisoners. The Cellular Jail at Port Blair, when completed in 1910, included 698 cells designed for solitary confinement; each cell measured 4.5 by 2.7 m (15 by 9 ft) with a single ventilation window 3 metres (10 ft) above the floor.[citation needed]

The Indians imprisoned here referred to the island and its prison as Kala Pani ("black water");[17] a 1996 film set on the island took that term as its title, *Kaalapani*. [18] The number of prisoners who died in this camp is estimated to be in the thousands.[19] Many more died of harsh treatment and the strenuous living and working conditions in this camp.[20]

The Viper Chain Gang Jail on Viper Island was reserved for extraordinarily troublesome prisoners and was also the site of hangings. In the 20th century, it became a convenient place to house prominent members of India's independence movement.[21][22][23]

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands were occupied by Japan during World War II.[24] The islands were nominally put under the authority of the *Arzi Hukumat-e-Azad Hind* (Provisional Government of Free India) headed by Subhas Chandra Bose, who visited the islands during the war, and renamed them as *Shaheed* (Martyr) & *Swaraj* (Self-rule). On 30 December 1943, during the Japanese occupation, Bose, who was allied with the Japanese, first raised the flag of Indian independence. General Loganathan, of the Indian National Army, was Governor of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which had been annexed to the Provisional Government. According to Werner Gruhl: "Before leaving the islands, the Japanese rounded up and executed 750 innocents." [25]

At the close of World War II, the British government announced its intention to shut down the penal settlement. The government proposed to employ former inmates in an initiative to develop the island's fisheries, timber, and agricultural resources. In exchange, inmates would be granted return passage to the Indian mainland, or the right to settle on the islands. J H Williams, one of the Bombay Burma Company's senior officials, was dispatched to perform a timber survey of the islands using convict labor. He recorded his findings in *'The Spotted Deer'* (published in 1957 by Rupert Hart-Davis).

The penal colony was eventually closed on 15 August 1947 when India gained independence. It has since served as a museum to the independence movement.[26]

Most of the Andaman Islands became part of the Republic of India in 1950 and was declared as a union territory of the nation in 1956, while the Preparis Island and Coco Islands became part of the Yangon Region of Myanmar in 1948.[27]

In April 1998, American photographer John S. Callahan organised the first surfing project in the Andamans, starting from Phuket in Thailand with the assistance of Southeast Asia Liveboards (SEAL), a UK owned dive charter company.[citation needed] With a crew of international professional surfers, they crossed the Andaman Sea on the yacht *Crescent* and cleared formalities in Port Blair. The group proceeded to Little Andaman Island, where they spent ten days surfing several spots for the first time, including Jarawa Point near Hut Bay and the long right reef point at the

southwest tip of the island, named Kumari Point. The resulting article in *Surfer Magazine*, "Quest for Fire" by journalist Sam George, put the Andaman Islands on the surfing map for the first time.[28] Footage of the waves of the Andaman Islands also appeared in the film *Thicker than Water*, shot by documentary filmmaker Jack Johnson.[citation needed] Callahan went on to make several more surfing projects in the Andamans, including a trip to the Nicobar Islands in 1999.[citation needed]

In November 2018, John Allen Chau, an American missionary, traveled illegally with the help of local fishermen to the North Sentinel Island off the Andaman Islands chain group on several occasions, despite a travel ban to the island. He is reported to have been killed.[29] Despite some relaxation introduced earlier in 2018 to the stringent visit permit system for the islands, North Sentinel Island was still highly protected from outside contact. Special permission to allow researchers and anthropologists to visit could be sought.[30] Chau had no special clearance and knew that his visit was illegal.[30][29]

Although a less restrictive system of approval to visit some of the islands now applies, with non-Indian nationals no longer required to obtain pre-approval with a Restricted Area Permit (RAP), foreign visitors must still show their passport at Immigration at Port Blair Airport and Seaport for verification. Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan, or other foreign nationals whose origin is any of these countries, are still required to obtain a RAP to visit Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Similarly, citizens of Myanmar who wish to visit Mayabunder or Diglipur must also apply for a RAP. In these cases, the permits must be pre-approved prior to arrival in Port Blair.[31]

On 26 December 2004, the coast of the Andaman Islands was devastated by a 10-metre-high (33 ft) tsunami following the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake, which is the longest recorded earthquake, lasting for between 500 and 600 seconds.[32] Strong oral traditions in the area warned of the importance of moving inland after a quake and is credited with saving many lives.[citation needed] In the aftermath, more than 2,000 people were confirmed dead and more than 4,000 children were orphaned or had lost one parent. At least 40,000 residents were rendered homeless and were moved to relief camps.[33] On 11 August 2009, a magnitude 7 earthquake struck near the Andaman Islands, causing a tsunami warning to go into effect. On 30 March 2010, a magnitude 6.9 earthquake struck near the Andaman Islands.

The Andaman Archipelago is an oceanic continuation of the Burmese Arakan Yoma range in the north and of the Indonesian Archipelago in the south. It has 325 islands which cover an area of 6,408 km² (2,474 sq mi),[34] with the Andaman Sea to the east between the islands and the coast of Burma.[10] North Andaman Island is 285 kilometres (177 mi) south of Burma, although a few smaller Burmese islands are closer, including the three Coco Islands.

The Ten Degree Channel separates the Andamans from the Nicobar Islands to the south. The highest point is located in North Andaman Island (Saddle Peak at 732 m (2,402 ft)).[34]: 33

The geology of the Andaman islands consists essentially of Late Jurassic to Early Eocene ophiolites and sedimentary rocks (argillaceous and algal limestones), deformed by numerous deep faults and thrusts with ultramafic igneous intrusions.[35] There are at least 11 mud volcanoes on the islands.[35] There are two volcanic islands, Narcondam Island and Barren Island, which have produced basalt and andesite. Barren Island is the only active volcano in the Indian sub-continent, with the latest eruption reported in December 2022, leading to the potential for geotourism.[36][37]

The climate is typical of tropical islands of similar latitude. It is always warm, but with sea breezes. Rainfall is irregular, usually dry during the north-east monsoons, and very wet during the south-west monsoons.[38]

The Middle Andamans harbour mostly moist deciduous forests. North Andamans is characterised by the wet evergreen type, with plenty of woody climbers.[citation needed]

The natural vegetation of the Andamans is tropical forest, with mangroves on the coast. The rainforests are similar in composition to those of the west coast of Burma. Most of the forests are evergreen, but there are areas of deciduous forest on North Andaman, Middle Andaman, Baratang and parts of South Andaman Island. The South Andaman forests have a profuse growth of epiphytic vegetation, mostly ferns and orchids.

The Andaman forests are largely unspoiled, despite logging and the demands of the fast-growing population driven by immigration from the Indian mainland. There are protected areas on Little Andaman, Narcondam, North Andaman and South Andaman, but these are mainly aimed at preserving the coast and the marine wildlife rather than the rainforests.[39] Threats to wildlife come from introduced species including rats, dogs, cats and the elephants of Interview Island and North Andaman.

Scientists discovered a new species of green algae species in the Andaman archipelago, naming it *Acetabularia jalakanyakae*. "Jalakanyaka" is a Sanskrit word that means "mermaid".[40]

Andaman forests contain 200 or more timber producing species of trees, out of which about 30 varieties are considered to be commercial. Major commercial timber species are Gurjan (*Dipterocarpus* spp.) and Padauk (*Pterocarpus dalbergioides*). The following ornamental woods are noted for their pronounced grain formation:

Padauk wood is sturdier than teak and is widely used for furniture making.

There are burr wood and buttress root formations in Andaman Padauk. The largest piece of buttress known from Andaman was a dining table of 13 ft × 7 ft (4.0 m × 2.1 m). The largest piece of burr wood was again a dining table for eight.

The Rudraksha (*Elaeocarpus sphaericus*) and aromatic Dhoop-resin trees also are found here.

The Andaman Islands are home to a number of animals, many of them endemic. Andaman & Nicobar islands are home to 10% of all Indian fauna species.[41] The islands by ratio is only 0.25% of country's geographical area, has 11,009 species, according to a publication by the Zoological Survey of India.[41]

The island's endemic mammals include

The banded pig (*Sus scrofa vittatus*), also known as the Andaman wild boar and once thought to be an endemic subspecies,[42] is protected by the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 (Sch I). The spotted deer (*Axis axis*), the Indian muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*) and the sambar (*Rusa unicolor*) were all introduced to the Andaman islands, though the sambar did not survive.

Interview Island (the largest wildlife sanctuary in the territory) in Middle Andaman holds a population of feral elephants, which were brought in for forest work by a timber company and released when the company went bankrupt. This population has been subject to research studies.

Endemic or near endemic birds include

The islands' many caves, such as those at Chalis Ek are nesting grounds for the edible-nest swiftlet, whose nests are prized in China for bird's nest soup.[43]

The islands also have a number of endemic reptiles, toads and frogs, such as the Andaman cobra (*Naja sagittifera*), South Andaman krait (*Bungarus andamanensis*) and Andaman water monitor (*Varanus salvator andamanensis*).

There is a sanctuary 72 km (45 mi) from Havelock Island for saltwater crocodiles. Over the past 25 years there have been 24 crocodile attacks with four fatalities, including the death of American tourist Lauren Failla. The government has been criticised for failing to inform tourists of the crocodile sanctuary and danger, while simultaneously promoting tourism.[44] Crocodiles are not only found within the sanctuary, but throughout the island chain in varying densities. They are habitat restricted, so the population is stable but not large. Populations occur throughout available mangrove habitat on all major islands, including a few creeks on Havelock. The species uses the ocean as a means of travel between different rivers and estuaries, thus they are not as commonly observed in open ocean. It is best to avoid swimming near mangrove areas or the mouths of creeks; swimming in the open ocean should be safe, but it is best to have a spotter around.

As of 2011[update], the population of the Andaman was 343,125,[45] having grown from 50,000 in 1960. The bulk of the population originates from immigrants who came to the island since the colonial times, mainly of Bengali, Hindustani, Telugu [1], Tamil backgrounds.[46]

A small minority of the population are the Andamanese — the aboriginal inhabitants (adivasi) of the islands. When they first came into sustained contact with outside groups in the 1850s, there were an estimated 7,000 Andamanese, divided into the Great Andamanese, Jarawa, Jangil (or Rutland Jarawa), Onge, and the Sentinelese. The Great Andamanese formed 10 tribes of 5,000 people total. As the numbers of settlers from the mainland increased (at first mostly prisoners and involuntary indentured labourers, later purposely recruited farmers), the Andamanese suffered a population decline due to the introduction of outside infectious diseases, land encroachment from settlers and conflict.

The Andaman Islands are home to the Sentinelese people, an uncontacted tribe.[47]

Due to their isolated island location, the Andaman people have mostly avoided contact with the outside world. Their languages are a great reflection of this, with distinct linguistics that have strong morphological features – root words, prefix, suffixes – with very little relation to surrounding geographic regions.[48]

Figures from the end of the 20th century estimate there remain only approximately 400–450 ethnic Andamanese still on the island, and as few as 50 speakers. The Jangil are extinct. Most of the Great Andamanese tribes are extinct, and the survivors, now just 52, speak mostly Hindi.[49] The Onge are reduced to less than 100 people. Only the Jarawa and Sentinelese still maintain a steadfast independence and refuse most attempts at contact; their numbers are uncertain but estimated to be in the low hundreds.

The indigenous languages are collectively referred to as the Andamanese languages, but they make up at least two independent families, and the dozen or so attested languages are either extinct or endangered.

Most of the tribal people in Andaman and Nicobar Islands believe in a religion that can be described as a form of monotheistic Animism. The tribal people of these islands believe that Puluga is the only deity and is responsible for everything happening on Earth.[50] The faith of the Andamanese teaches that Paluga resides on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands' Saddle Peak. People try to avoid any action that might displease Paluga. People belonging to this religion believe in the presence of souls,

ghosts, and spirits. They put a lot of emphasis on dreams. They let dreams decide different courses of action in their lives.[51]

Andamanese Mythology held that human males emerged from split bamboo, whereas women were fashioned from clay.[52] One version found by Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown held that the first man died and went to heaven, a pleasurable world, but this blissful period ended due to breaking a food taboo, specifically eating the forbidden vegetables in the Puluga's garden.[53] Thus catastrophe ensued, and eventually the people grew overpopulated and didn't follow Puluga's laws,. Hence, there was a Great Flood that left four survivors, who lost their fire.[54][55]

Other religions practiced in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are, in order of size, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism and Bahá'í Faith.[56][57]

Port Blair is the chief community on the islands, and the administrative centre of the Union Territory. The Andaman Islands form a single administrative district within the Union Territory, the Andaman district (the Nicobar Islands were separated and established as the new Nicobar district in 1974).

The only commercial airport is Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair, which has scheduled services to Kolkata, Chennai, New Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam. The airport is under the control of the Indian Navy. Prior to 2016 only daylight operations were allowed; however, since 2016 night flights have also operated.[58] A small airstrip, about 1,000 metres (3,300 ft) long, is located near the eastern shore of North Andaman near Diglipur.

Due to the length of the routes and the small number of airlines flying to the islands, fares have historically been relatively expensive, although cheaper for locals than visitors. Fares are high during the peak seasons of spring and winter, although fares have decreased over time due to the expansion of the civil aviation industry in India. Private flights are also allowed to land in Port Blair airport with prior permission.

There is also a ship service from Chennai, Visakhapatnam and Kolkata. The journey requires three days and two nights, and depends on weather.

The islands are prominently featured in Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes 1890 mystery *The Sign of the Four*. The magistrate in Lady Gregory's play *Spreading the News* had formerly served in the islands.

M. M. Kaye's 1985 novel *Death in the Andamans* and Marianne Wiggins' 1989 novel *John Dollar* are set in the islands. The latter begins with an expedition from Burma to celebrate King George's birthday, but turns into a grim survival story after an earthquake and tsunami.

Priyadarshan's 1996 film *Kaalapani* (Malayalam; *Sirai Chaalai* in Tamil) depicts the Indian freedom struggle and the lives of prisoners in the Cellular Jail in Port Blair.

Island's End is a 2011 novel by Padma Venkatraman about the training of an indigenous shaman. A principal character in the novel *Six Suspects* by Vikas Swarup is from the Andaman Islands. *The Last Wave* (2014) by Pankaj Sekhsaria is set in the islands. Brodie Moncur, the main protagonist of William Boyd's 2018 novel *Love is Blind*, spends time in the Andaman Islands in the early years of the 20th century. The Andaman Islands in the period before, during and just after the Second World War are the setting for Uzma Aslan Khan's *'The Miraculous True History of Nomi Ali'*. In 2023, Andaman islands were featured in a netflix series named *Kaala Paani* based on a fictional disease outbreak in 2027.

Notes

Sources

Text extracted from URL 26:

The Andamanese are the various indigenous peoples of the Andaman Islands, part of India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the union territory in the southeastern part of the Bay of Bengal. The Andamanese are a designated Scheduled Tribe in India's constitution.[7][8]

The Andamanese peoples are among the various groups considered Negrito, owing to their dark skin and diminutive stature. All Andamanese traditionally lived a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, and appear to have lived in substantial isolation for thousands of years.[9] It is suggested that the Andamanese settled in the Andaman Islands around the latest glacial maximum, around 26,000 years ago.[10][11]

Among the Andamanese, a division of two groups can be made. One is more open to contact with civilization and the other is hostile and resistant to communicate with the outer world.[12]

The Andamanese peoples included the Great Andamanese and Jarawas of the Great Andaman archipelago, the Jangil of Rutland Island, the Onge of Little Andaman, and the Sentinelese of North Sentinel Island.[13] At the end of the 18th century, when they first came into sustained contact with outsiders, an estimated 7,000 Andamanese remained. In the next century, they experienced a massive population decline due to epidemics of outside diseases and loss of territory. Today, only roughly over 500 Andamanese remain, with the Jangil being extinct. Only the Jarawa and the Sentinelese maintain a steadfast independence, refusing most attempts at contact by outsiders.

Until the late 18th century, the Andamanese culture, language, and genetics were preserved from outside influences by their fierce reaction to visitors, which included killing any shipwrecked foreigners, and by the remoteness of the islands. The various tribes and their mutually unintelligible languages thus are believed to have evolved on their own over millennia.

Venetian explorer Marco Polo wrote of the Andamanese in 1294, in *The Travels of Marco Polo*: [14]

The people are without a king and are idolaters, and no better than wild beasts. And I assure you all the men of this Island of Angamanain have heads like dogs, and teeth and eyes likewise; in fact, in the face they are all just like big mastiff dogs! They have a quantity of spices; but they are a most cruel generation, and eat everybody that they can catch, if not of their own race. They live on flesh and rice and milk, and have fruits different from any of ours. According to Chaubey and Endicott (2013), the Andaman Islands were settled less than 26,000 years ago, by people who were not direct descendants of the first migrants out of Africa.[15][note 2] According to Wang et al. (2011), [16]

...the Andaman archipelago was likely settled by modern humans from northeast India via the land-bridge which connected the Andaman archipelago and Myanmar around the Last Glacial Maximum (LGM), a scenario in well agreement with the evidence from linguistic and palaeoclimate studies. It was previously assumed that the Andaman ancestors were part of the initial Great Coastal Migration (South-Eur Asians or Australasians) that was the first expansion of humanity out of Africa, via the Arabian peninsula, along the coastal regions of the South Asia towards Insular Southeast Asia, and Oceania.[17][18] The Andamanese were considered to be a pristine example of a hypothesized Negrito population, which showed similar physical characteristics, and was supposed to have existed throughout southeast Asia. The existence of a specific Negrito-population is nowadays doubted.

Their commonalities could be the result of evolutionary convergence and/or a shared history.[19][20]

The Andamanese's protective isolation changed with the establishment of a British colonial presence on the islands. Lacking immunity against common infectious diseases of the Eurasian mainland, the large Jarawa habitats on the southeastern regions of South Andaman Island experienced a massive population decline due to disease within four years of the establishment of a colonial presence on the island in 1789.[21] Epidemics of pneumonia, measles and influenza spread rapidly and exacted heavy tolls, as did alcoholism.[21] In the 19th century, a measles epidemic killed 50% of the Andamanese population.[22] By 1875, the Andamanese were already "perilously close to extinction". In 1888, the British government set in place a policy of "organized gift giving" that continued in varying forms until the islands, as part of the British Raj, gained independence from the British Empire.[23]

Tensions between the colonial administration and the Andamanese increased due to British officials introducing alcohol and opium to the Andamanese.[24] During mid-19th century, the British government in India established penal colonies on the islands and an increasing number of Indian and Karen arrived, both as settlers and prisoners.[citation needed]

In 1867, the British launched the Andaman Islands expedition in order to rescue shipwrecked sailors from the Assam Valley on the Andamanese islands. The expedition was attacked by the Onge people upon their approach to the islands and were forced to withdraw. Four Victoria crosses were awarded to members of the expedition.[25][26][27]

In 1923, the British ornithologist and anthropologist Frank Finn, who visited the islands in the 1890s while working for the Indian Museum, described the Andamanese as "The World's Most Primitive People", writing:[28]

I used to envy the pigmies their simple costume, which in the case of the ladies was a wisp and a waistband, and in that of the men, nothing at all. Their interests are looked after by an English Civil Servant, who has to see that no one sells them drink, or interferes with them in any way; but even this officer-in-charge, as he is styled, dares not go among them where he is not known, and considerable tact is required in getting an introduction to the local chief. In the 1940s, the Jarawa were attacked by imperial Japanese forces for their hostility. This Japanese attack was criticized as a war crime by many observers.[29]

In 1974, a film crew and anthropologist Triloknath Pandit attempted friendly contact by leaving a tethered pig, some pots and pans, some fruit, and toys on the beach at North Sentinel Island. One of the islanders shot the film director in the thigh with an arrow. The following year, European visitors were repulsed with arrows.[30][31][32]

On 2 August 1981, the Hong Kong freighter ship *Primrose* grounded on the North Sentinel Island reef. A few days later, crewmen on the immobile vessel observed that small black men were carrying spears and arrows and building boats on the beach. The captain of the *Primrose* radioed for an urgent airdrop of firearms so the crew could defend themselves, but did not receive them. Heavy seas kept the islanders away from the ship. After a week, the crew were rescued by an Indian navy helicopter.[33]

On 4 January 1991, Triloknath Pandit made the first known friendly contact with the Sentinelese.[32]

Until 1996, the Jarawa met most visitors with flying arrows. From time to time, they attacked and killed poachers on the lands reserved to them by the Indian government. They also killed some workers building the Andaman Trunk Road (ATR), which traverses Jarawa lands. One of the earliest peaceful contacts with the Jarawa occurred in 1996. Settlers found a teenaged Jarawa boy named Enmei near Kadamtala town. The boy was immobilized with a broken foot. They took Enmei to a hospital, where he received good care. Over several weeks, Enmei learned a few words of Hindi before returning to his jungle home. The following year, Jarawa individuals and small groups began appearing along roadsides and occasionally venturing into settlements to steal food. The ATR may have interfered with traditional Jarawa food sources.[34][35][36]

On 17 November 2018, a United States missionary, John Allen Chau, was killed when he tried to introduce Christianity to the Sentinelese tribe. The Sentinelese have been protected from contact with the outside world. Trips to the Island are prohibited by Indian law.[37] Chau was brought near the island by local fishermen, who were later arrested during the investigation into his death.[38] Indian authorities attempted to retrieve Chau's remains without success.[39]

The four major groups of Andamanese are:

Jangil or Rutland Jarawa of Rutland Island, extinct by 1931.[45] By the end of the eighteenth century, there were an estimated 5,000 Great Andamanese living on Great Andaman. Altogether they comprised ten distinct tribes with different languages. The population quickly dwindled to 600 in 1901 and to 19 by 1961.[46] It has increased slowly after that, following their move to a reservation on Strait Island. As of 2010, the population was 52, representing a mix of the former tribes.[47]

The Jarawa originally inhabited southeastern Jarawa Island and have migrated to the west coast of Great Andaman in the wake of the Great Andamanese. The Onge once lived throughout Little Andaman and now are confined to two reservations on the island. The Jangil, who originally inhabited Rutland Island, were extinct by 1931; the last individual was sighted in 1907.[29] Only the Sentinelese are still living in their original homeland on North Sentinel Island, largely undisturbed, and have fiercely resisted all attempts at contact.

The Andamanese languages are considered to be the fifth language family of India, following the Indo-European, Dravidian, Austroasiatic, and Sino-Tibetan.[48]

While some connections have been tentatively proposed with other language families, such as Austronesian,[49] or the controversial Indo-Pacific family, the consensus view is currently that Andamanese languages form a separate language family – or rather, two unrelated linguistic families: Greater Andamanese[50] and Ongan.

Until contact, the Andamanese were strict hunter-gatherers. They did not practice cultivation, and lived off hunting indigenous pigs, fishing, and gathering. Their only weapons were the bow, adzes, and wooden harpoons. The Andamanese knew of no method for making fire in the nineteenth century.[51]: 229 They instead carefully preserved embers[51]: 229 in hollowed-out trees from fires caused by lightning strikes.

The men wore girdles made of hibiscus fiber which carried useful tools and weapons for when they went hunting. The women on the other hand wore a tribal dress containing leaves that were held by a belt. A majority of them had painted bodies as well. They usually slept on leaves or mats and had either permanent or temporary habitation among the tribes. All habitations were man made.[52]

Some of the tribe members were credited with having supernatural powers. They were called oko-pai-ad, which meant dreamer. They were thought to have an influence on the members of the tribe and would bring misfortune to those who did not believe in their abilities. Traditional knowledge practitioners were the ones who helped with healthcare. The medicine that was used to cure illnesses were herbal most of the time. Various types of medicinal plants were used by the islanders. 77 total traditional knowledge practitioners were identified and 132 medicinal plants were used. The members of the tribes found various ways to use leaves in their everyday lives including clothing, medicine, and to sleep on.[citation needed]

Anthropologist A.R. Radcliffe Brown argued that the Andamanese had no government and made decisions by group consensus.[53]

The native Andamanese religion and belief system is a form of animism. Ancestor worship is an important element in the religious traditions of the Andaman islands.[54] Andamanese Mythology held that humans emerged from split bamboo, whereas the women were fashioned from clay.[55] One version found by Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown held that the first man died and went to heaven, a pleasurable world, but this blissful period ended due to breaking a food taboo, specifically eating the forbidden vegetables in the Puluga's garden.[56] Thus Catastrophe ensued, and eventually the people grew overpopulated and didn't follow Puluga's laws, and hence there was a Great Flood that left four survivors, who lost their fire.[57][58]

Negritos, specifically Andamanese, are grouped together by phenotype and anthropological features. Three physical features that distinguish the Andaman islanders include: skin colour, hair, and stature. Those of the Andaman islands have dark skin, are short in stature, and have "frizzy" hair, while displaying "Asiatic facial features".[59]

Dental characteristics also group the Andamanese between Negrito and East-Asian samples.[60]

When comparing dental morphology the focus is on overall size and tooth shape. To measure the size and shape, Penrose's size and shape statistic is used. To calculate tooth size, the sum of the tooth area is taken. Factor analysis is applied to tooth size to achieve tooth shape. Results have shown that the dental morphology of Andaman Islanders resembles that of tribal populations of South Asia (Adivasi) the most, followed by Philippine Negrito groups, contemporary Southeast Asians, and East Asians. The tooth size of the Andamanese was found to be most similar to that of Han Chinese and Japanese.[59]

Genetic analysis, both of nuclear DNA[17][61] and mitochondrial DNA[62] provide information about the origins of the Andamanese. The Andamanese are most genetically similar to the Malaysian Negrito tribes, followed by contemporary East Asian people.[63]

The Andamanese show a very small genetic variation, which is indicative of populations that have experienced a population bottleneck and then developed in isolation for a long period.

An allele has been discovered among the Jarawas that is found nowhere else in the world. Blood samples of 116 Jarawas were collected and tested for Duffy blood group and malarial parasite infectivity. Results showed a total absence of both Fya and Fyb antigens in two areas (Kadamtala and R.K Nallah) and low prevalence of both Fya antigen in another two areas (Jirkatang and Tirur). There was an absence of malarial parasite Plasmodium vivax infection though Plasmodium falciparum infection was present in 27.59% of cases. A very high frequency of Fy (a-b-) in the Jarawa tribe from all the four jungle areas of Andaman Islands along with total absence of P. vivax infections suggests the selective advantage offered to Fy (a-b-) individuals against P. vivax infection.[64]

Genetic studies have revealed that the Andamanese people display affinity to the indigenous South Asian hunter-gatherers, often termed "Ancient Ancestral South Indians" (AASI), as well as to Australasian populations (AA), such as Melanesians, and contemporary East/Southeast Asian peoples (ESEA). While the Andamanese are occasionally used as an imperfect proxy for the AASI component, they are genetically closer to the 'Basal East Asian' Tianyuan man.[65][66]

Phylogenetic data suggests that an early initial eastern lineage trifurcated, and gave rise to Australasians (Oceanians), the AASI, Andamanese, as well as East/Southeast Asians,[67] although Papuans may have also received some geneflow from an earlier group (xOoA), around 2%, [68] next to additional archaic admixture in the Sahul region.[69][70] Concerning the use of Andamanese as proxy for AASI ancestry, Yelmen et al. (2019) deduced that the non West Eurasian component, termed S-component, extracted from South Asian samples would serve as a much better proxy for AASI ancestry, especially those extracted from Irula samples, than the Andamanese.[65] Overall, the Malaysian Negritos (Semang), such as the Maniq people, Jahai people, and Batek people, are the closest modern living relatives of the Andamanese people.[71][72][73][74]

When compared with ancient DNA samples, Andamanese peoples are closest to the pre-Neolithic Hoabinhians in Mainland Southeast Asia (covered by two samples from Malaysia and Laos), and display high genetic affinity to the Tianyuan man in Northern China, with both being basal to contemporary East Asians, forming a "deep Asian" ancestral lineage. Deep Asian ancestry (Tianyuan/Onge) contributed to the Peopling of Southeast Asia.[75][76][66]

The male Y-chromosome in humans is inherited exclusively through paternal descent. All sampled males of Onges (23/23) and Jarawas (4/4) belong to a sublineage of D-M174(D1a3).[79][80][81][82] However, male Great Andamanese do not appear to carry these clades. A low resolution study suggests that they belong to haplogroups K, L, O and P1 (P-M45).[79]

A 2017 study by Mondal et al. finds that the Y-chromosome of the Riang people (a Tibeto-Burmese population), sublineage D1a3 (D-M174*) and the Andamanese D1a3 (*D-Y34637) have their nearest related lineages in East Asia, splitting about 23,000 years ago from an East Asian-related population. The Jarawa and Onge shared this D1a3 lineage with each other within the last ~7,000 years, suggesting a bottleneck event. They further suggest that: "This strongly suggests that haplogroup D does not indicate a separate ancestry for Andamanese populations. Rather, haplogroup D was part of the standing variation carried by the OOA expansion, and later lost from most of the populations except in Andaman and partially in Japan and Tibet". Other haplogroups found among Andamanese include haplogroup P, and L-M20.[83]

Several studies (Hammer et al. 2006, Shinoda 2008, Matsumoto 2009, Cabrera et al. 2018) suggest that the paternal haplogroup D-M174 originated somewhere in Central Asia. According to Hammer et al., haplogroup D-M174 originated between Tibet and the Altai mountains. He suggests that there were multiple waves into Eastern Eurasia.[84] In a 2019 study by Haber et al. showed that Haplogroup D-M174 originated in Central Asia and evolved as it migrated to different directions of the continent. One group of population migrated to Siberia, others to Japan and Tibet, and another group migrated to the Andaman islands.[85]

Bulbeck (2013) shows the Andamanese maternal mtDNA is entirely mitochondrial Haplogroup M.[59] Haplogroup M (mtDNA) is a descendant of haplogroup L3, typically found in Eurasia and parts of Africa. The mtDNA M is found in all Onge and is also the predominant lineages of Negrito Semang tribes from Thailand and Malaysia, as well as of other East Asian people.[86] Analysis of mtDNA, which is inherited exclusively by maternal descent, confirms the above results.[62] Haplogroup M is

however also the single most common mtDNA haplogroup in Asia, where it represents 60% of all maternal lineages.[87][88] Haplogroup M is also relatively common in Northeast Africa of Somalis, Oromo at over 20%.[89][90] Also in the Tuareg in Mali and Burkina Faso at 18.42%.[91]

Unlike some Negrito populations of Southeast Asia, Andaman Islanders have not been found to have Denisovan ancestry.[92] However, they are estimated, like all other non-African populations, to possess approximately 1-2% Neanderthal ancestry.[93] A 2019 study concluded that all Asian and Australo-Papuan populations, including Andaman Islanders, also share between 2.6 and 3.4% of the genetic profile of a previously unknown hominin that was genetically roughly equidistant to Denisovans and Neanderthals.[94][93]

Text extracted from URL 27:

Chhattisgarh (/tʃætɪsgɑːr/, Hindi: [ˈtʃʰəʈːiːsgəʈʰ]) is a landlocked state in South East India. It is the ninth largest state by area, and with a population of roughly 30 million, the seventeenth most populous.[12] It borders seven states – Uttar Pradesh to the north, Madhya Pradesh to the northwest, Maharashtra to the southwest, Jharkhand to the northeast, Odisha to the east, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to the south.[13] Formerly a part of Madhya Pradesh, it was granted statehood on 1 November 2000 with Raipur as the designated state capital.[14]

Chhattisgarh is one of the fastest-developing states in India.[15] Its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is ₹5.09 lakh crore (US\$64 billion) (2023–24 est.),[8] with a per capita GSDP of ₹152,348 (US\$1,900)[8] (2023–24 est.). A resource-rich state, it has the third largest coal reserves in the country and provides electricity, coal, and steel to the rest of the nation.[16][17] It also has the third largest forest cover in the country after Madhya Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh with over 40% of the state covered by forests.

There are several theories as to the origin of the name Chhattisgarh, which in ancient times was known as Dakshina Kosala (South Kosala),[18] the native place of Rama's mother Kausalya. "Chhattisgarh" was popularised later during the time of the Maratha Empire and was first used in an official document in 1795.[19]

The most popular theory claims that Chhattisgarh takes its name from the 36 ancient forts (from chhattis meaning thirty-six and garh meaning fort) in the area.[citation needed] The old state had 36 demesnes (feudal territories): Ratanpur, Vijaypur, Kharound, Maro, Kautgarh, Nawagarh, Sondhi, Aukhar, Padarbhata, Semriya, Champa, Lafa, Chhuri, Kenda, Matin, Aparora, Pendra, Kurkuti-kandri, Raipur, Patan, Simaga, Singarpur, Lavan, Omera, Durg, Saradha, Sirasa, Menhadi, Khallari, Sirpur, Figeswar, Rajim, Singhangarh, Suvarmar, Tenganagarh and Akaltara.[20] However, most historians disagree with this theory as 36 forts have not been found and identified.

According to the opinion of Hiralal, it is said that at one time there were 36 strongholds in this area, that is why its name was Chhattisgarh. But even after the increase in the number of strongholds, there was no change in the name, Chhattisgarh is the State of India which has been given the status of 'Mahtari' (Mother).[citation needed] There are two regions in India which are named for special reasons – one was 'Magadha' which became "Bihar" due to the abundance of Buddhism viharas and the other was 'Dakshina Kosala' which became "Chhattisgarh" due to the inclusion of thirty-six strongholds.[citation needed]

Another view, more popular with experts and historians, is that Chhattisgarh is the corrupted form of Chedisgarh meaning Raj or "Empire of the Chedis".[citation needed] In ancient times,

Chhattisgarh region had been part of the Chedi dynasty of Kalinga, in modern Odisha. In the medieval period up to 1803, a major portion of present eastern Chhattisgarh was part of the Sambalpur Kingdom of Odisha.

Sitabengra caves are one of the earliest examples of theatre architecture in India located on Ramgarh hill of Chhattisgarh dated to Mauryan period of 3rd century BCE. Jogimara caves contain ancient Brahmi inscription and the oldest painting known in India. The inscription can be translated as either a love proclamation by a girl or a dancer-painter creating a cave theatre together.[21] In ancient times, this region was known as Dakshina Kosala. This area is also mentioned in Ramayana and Mahabharata. One of the earliest statues of Vishnu has been excavated from Shunga period site at Malhar.

Between the sixth and twelfth centuries, Sharabhpurias, Panduvanshis (of Mekala and Dakshina Kosala), Somavanshi, Kalachuri and Nagavanshi rulers dominated this region. The Bastar region of Chhattisgarh was invaded by Rajendra Chola I and Kulothunga Chola I of the Chola dynasty in the 11th century.[22][23]

Eventually most of Chhattisgarh was consolidated under the Haihaiyavanshi Kingdom, who ruled central Chhattisgarh and held smaller kingdoms like Kanker under their authority.[24][25][26] The Haihaiyavanshis continued to rule the region for 700 years until they were invaded by the Marathas in 1740 and came under their authority. Chhattisgarh was directly annexed to the Maratha Nagpur Kingdom in 1758 on the death of Mohan Singh, the last independent ruler of Chhattisgarh.[27][28]

Chhattisgarh was under Maratha Rule (Bhonsles of Nagpur) from 1741 to 1845. It came under British rule from 1845 to 1947 as the Chhattisgarh Division of the Central Provinces. Raipur gained prominence over the capital Ratanpur with the advent of the British in 1845. In 1905, the Sambalpur district was transferred to Odisha and the estates of Surguja were transferred from Bengal to Chhattisgarh.

The area constituting the new state merged into Madhya Pradesh on 1 November 1956, under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, and remained a part of that state for 44 years. Prior to that, the region was part of the Central Provinces and Berar (CP and Berar) under British rule. Some areas constituting the Chhattisgarh state were princely states under British rule, but were later on merged into Madhya Pradesh.[29]

The demand for Chhattisgarh to be a separate state first rose in the 1920s, with similar demands appearing at regular intervals; however, a well-organised movement was never initiated. Several all-party platforms were created and usually resolved around petitions, public meetings, seminars, rallies and strikes.[30] The demand was raised by the Raipur Congress unit in 1924 and was also discussed in the Indian Congress at Tripuri. A discussion about forming a Regional Congress organisation for Chhattisgarh took place. In 1954, when the State Reorganisation Commission was set up, the demand was put forward but was rejected. In 1955, the demand was raised in the Nagpur assembly of Madhya Bharat.[30]

In the 1990s, the demand became more prominent, resulting in the formation of a statewide political forum known as the Chhattisgarh Rajya Nirman Manch. The forum was led by Chandulal Chadrakar and several successful region-wide strikes and rallies were organised under it, all of which were supported by major political parties, such as the Indian National Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party.[30]

The new National Democratic Alliance government sent the Separate Chhattisgarh Bill for approval by the Madhya Pradesh Assembly, where it was unanimously approved and then submitted to the Lok Sabha. The bill was passed in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, which allowed the creation of the state of Chhattisgarh. K. R. Narayanan gave his consent to the Madhya Pradesh Reorganisation Act on 25 August 2000 and the government of India set 1 November 2000 as the day Chhattisgarh would be separated from Madhya Pradesh.[30] As such, Chhattisgarh was formed from Madhya Pradesh.[14]

The northern and southern parts of the state are hilly, while the central part is a fertile plain. The highest point in the state is the Gaurkata near Samri, Balrampur-Ramanujganj district.[31] Deciduous forests of the Eastern Highlands Forests cover roughly 44% of the state.[32]

In the north lies the edge of the great Indo-Gangetic plain. The Rihand River, a tributary of the Ganges, drains this area. The eastern end of the Satpura Range and the western edge of the Chota Nagpur Plateau form an east–west belt of hills that divide the Mahanadi River basin from the Indo-Gangetic plain. The outline of Chhattisgarh is like a sea horse.

The central part of the state lies in the fertile upper basin of the Mahanadi and its tributaries, of which Shivenath River is a major one running around 300 kms long. This area has extensive rice cultivation. The upper Mahanadi basin is separated from the upper Narmada basin to the west by the Maikal Hills (part of the Satpuras) and from the plains of Odisha to the east by ranges of hills. The southern part of the state lies on the Deccan plateau, in the watershed of the Godavari River and its tributary, the Indravati River. The Mahanadi is the chief river of the state. The other main rivers are Hasdeo (a tributary of Mahanadi), Rihand, Indravati, Jonk, Arpa and Shivenath.[33]

The state has the third largest forest by area in India. The state animal is the van bhainsa, or wild Asian buffalo. The state bird is the pahari myna, or hill myna. The state tree is the Sal (Sarai) found in Bastar division.

Chhattisgarh has the 3rd largest forest cover in the country. The state is surrounded by the forests in Madhya Pradesh (1st), Odisha (4th), Maharashtra (5th), Jharkhand and Telangana making it India's largest covered forests across state boundaries. There are multiple National Parks, Tiger Reserves across the state. Achanakmar-Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve is UNESCO recognised Biosphere with total area of 383,551 hectares (3835.51 km²).

Chhattisgarh has a tropical climate. It is hot and humid in the summer because of its proximity to the Tropic of Cancer and its dependence on the monsoons for rains. Summer temperatures in Chhattisgarh can reach up to 49 °C (113 °F).[35] The monsoon season is from late June to October and is a welcome respite from the heat. Chhattisgarh receives an average of 1,292 millimetres (50.9 in) of rain. Winter is from November to January. Winters are pleasant with low temperatures and less humidity. Ambikapur, Mainpat, Pendra Road, Samri and Jashpur are some of the coldest places in the state.[36]

Chhattisgarh has four-lane or two-lane roads that provide connectivity to major cities. A total of 20 national highways pass through the state, together measuring 3,078 km. Many national highways exist only on paper and are not fully converted into four-lane, let alone six-lane or eight-lane, highways. These include:

The state highways and major district roads constitute another network of 8,031 km.

Almost the entire railway network spread over the state comes under the geographical jurisdiction of the South East Central Railway Zone of Indian Railways centred around Bilaspur, which is the zonal

headquarters of this zone. Almost 85% of tracks are electrified, the non-electrified route is Maroda–Bhanupratappur line from Durg–Bhanupratappur branch line, which is 120 km long. The main railway junctions are Bilaspur Junction, Durg Junction and Raipur, which is also a starting point of many long-distance trains. These three junctions are well-connected to the major cities of India and also these station comes under the top 50 booking stations in India.[37]

The state has the highest freight loading in the country, and one-sixth of Indian Railway's revenue comes from Chhattisgarh. The length of the rail network in the state is 1,108 km, while a third track has been commissioned between Durg and Raigarh.[38] Construction of some new railway lines include Dalli–Rajhara–Jagdalpur rail line, Pendra Road–Gevra Road rail line, Raigarh–Mand Colliery to Bhupdeopur rail line and Barwadih–Chirmiri rail line.[39] Freight/goods trains provide services mostly to coal and iron ore industries in east–west corridor (Mumbai–Howrah route). There is a lack of passenger services to north and south of Chhattisgarh.

The air infrastructure in Chhattisgarh is gradually improving. Swami Vivekananda Airport in Raipur is the primary airport (domestic) and is well connected to all major cities of India. Besides this, the smaller Bilaspur Airport, Jagdalpur Airport and Ambikapur Airport are regionally connected with scheduled commercial services. A massive reduction in sales tax on aviation turbine fuel (ATF) from 25 to 4% in Chhattisgarh in 2003 contributed to a sharp rise in passenger flow. The passenger flow increased by 58% between 2011 and November 2012.[40]

The State Legislative assembly is composed of 90 members of the Legislative Assembly. There are 11 members of the Lok Sabha from Chhattisgarh. The Rajya Sabha has five members from the state

Chhattisgarh comprises 33 districts.[41] The following are the list of the districts of Chhattisgarh State with major cities:

Pakhanjore

Chhattisgarh's nominal gross state domestic product (GSDP) is estimated at ₹5.09 lakh crore (US\$64 billion) in 2023-24, the 17th largest state economy in India. The economy of Chhattisgarh recorded a growth rate of 11.2% in 2023-24.[8] Chhattisgarh's success factors in achieving high growth rate are growth in agriculture and industrial production.

Agriculture is counted as the chief economic occupation of the state. According to a government estimate, net sown area of the state is 4.828 million hectares and the gross sown area is 5.788 million hectares.[43] Horticulture and animal husbandry also engage a major share of the total population of the state.[44] About 80% of the population of the state is rural and the main livelihood of the villagers is agriculture and agriculture-based small industry.

The majority of the farmers are still practicing the traditional methods of cultivation, resulting in low growth rates and productivity. The farmers have to be made aware of modern technologies suitable to their holdings. Providing adequate knowledge to the farmers is essential for a better implementation of the agricultural development plans and to improve productivity.[45]

Considering this and a very limited irrigated area, the productivity of not only rice but also other crops is low, hence the farmers are unable to obtain economic benefits from agriculture and it has remained as subsistence agriculture till now.

The main crops are rice, maize,[46] kodo-kutki and other small millets and pulses (tuar[47] and kulthi); oilseeds, such as groundnuts (peanuts), soybeans[48] and sunflowers, are also grown. In the mid-1990s, most of Chhattisgarh was still a monocrop belt. Only one-fourth to one-fifth of the sown

area was double-cropped. When a very substantial portion of the population is dependent on agriculture, a situation where nearly 80% of a state's area is covered only by one crop, immediate attention to turn them into double crop areas is needed. Also, very few cash crops are grown in Chhattisgarh, so there is a need to diversify the agriculture produce towards oilseeds and other cash crops. Chhattisgarh is also called the "rice bowl of central India".[43]

In Chhattisgarh, rice, the main crop, is grown on about 77% of the net sown area. Only about 20% of the area is under irrigation; the rest depends on rain. Of the three agroclimatic zones, about 73% of the Chhattisgarh plains, 97% of the Bastar plateau and 95% of the northern hills are rainfed. The irrigated area available for double cropping is only 87,000 ha in Chhattisgarh plains and 2300 ha in Bastar plateau and northern hills. Due to this, the productivity of rice and other crops is low, hence the farmers are unable to obtain economic benefits from agriculture and it has remained as subsistence agriculture till now, though agriculture is the main occupation of more than 80% of the population.[45]

In Chhattisgarh region, about 22% of net cropped area was under irrigation as compared to 36.5% in Madhya Pradesh in 1998–99, whereas the average national irrigation was about 40%. The irrigation is characterised by a high order of variability ranging from 1.6% in Bastar to 75.0% in Dhamtari. Based on an average growth trend in the irrigated area, about 0.43% additional area is brought under irrigation every year as compared to 1.89% in Madhya Pradesh and 1.0% in the country as a whole. Thus, irrigation has been growing at a very low rate in Chhattisgarh and the pace of irrigation is so slow, it would take about 122 years to reach the 75% level of net irrigated area in Chhattisgarh at the present rate of growth.[45]

Chhattisgarh has a limited irrigation system, with dams and canals on some rivers. Average rainfall in the state is around 1400 mm and the entire state falls under the rice agroclimatic zone. The Large variation in the yearly rainfall directly affects the production of rice. Irrigation is the prime need of the state for its overall development and therefore the state government has given top priority to development of irrigation.[43]

A total of four major, 33 medium and 2199 minor irrigation projects have been completed and five major, nine medium and 312 minor projects are under construction, as of 31 March 2006.[needs update]

Chhattisgarh is one of the few states of India where the power sector is effectively developed. Based on the current production of surplus electric power, the position of the State is comfortable and profitable. The Chhattisgarh State Electricity Board (CSEB) is in a strong position to meet the electricity requirement of the state and is in good financial health. According to Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Chhattisgarh provides electricity to several other states because of surplus production.[49]

In Chhattisgarh, National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) has Sipat Thermal Power Station with a capacity of 2,980 MW at Sipat, Bilaspur; LARA Super Thermal Power Station with a nameplate capacity of 1600MW and Korba Super Thermal Power Station with a capacity of 2,600 MW at Korba, while CSEB's units have a thermal capacity of 1,780 MW and hydel capacity of 130 MW. Apart from NTPC and CSEB, there are a number of private generation units of large and small capacity. The state government has pursued a liberal policy with regard to captive generation which has resulted in a number of private companies coming up.[50]

The state has a potential of 61,000 MW of additional thermal power in terms of availability of coal for more than 100 years and more than 2,500 MW hydel capacity. To use this vast potential, substantial additions to the existing generation capacity are already underway.[50]

The steel industry is one of the biggest heavy industries of Chhattisgarh. Bhilai Steel Plant, Bhilai operated by SAIL, with a capacity of 5.4 million tonnes per year, is regarded as a significant growth indicator of the state. More than 100 steel rolling mills, 90 sponge iron plants and ferro-alloy units are in Chhattisgarh. Along with Bhilai, today Raipur, Bilaspur, Korba and Raigarh have become the steel hub of Chhattisgarh. Today, Raipur has become the centre of the steel sector, the biggest market for steel in India.[51]

The aluminium industry of Chhattisgarh was established by the erstwhile Bharat Aluminium Company (now Vedanta Resources) in Korba, Chhattisgarh, which has a capacity of around 5,700,000 tonnes each year.[51]

Gevra, Dipka, Kusmunda open cast coal mines in Korba are largest in India and biggest man-made structure visible in satellite images of India. Major coal companies are SECL, Adani, Jindal which operates multiple coal mines across north east Chhattisgarh.

The Central India Coalfields are spread over the districts of Surguja, Koriya (both in Chhattisgarh), Shahdol and Umaria (both in Madhya Pradesh). The group covers an area of about 5,345 square kilometres (2,064 sq mi) with estimated reserves of 15,613.98 million tonnes. The deposits are at a depth of 0–1200 meters. Therefore, extraction is mainly amenable to underground mining except a few blocks in eastern part of these coalfields which have opencast potential.[52]

Jhilimili Coalfield located in Surguja district is spread over an area of 180 square kilometres (69 sq mi). Estimated total reserves are 215.31 million tonnes, out of which about half have been indicated to be Grade I.[53] According to the Geological Survey of India, total reserves of non-coking coal (as of 1 January 2004) in Jhilimili Coalfield (up to a depth of 300m) was 267.10 million tonnes.[54]

The Sonhat is a large coal field representing one of the largest coal reserves in India having estimated reserves of 2.67 billion tonnes of coal.[55]

Bisrampur coal field represents one of the largest coal reserves in India having estimated reserves of 1.61 billion tonnes of coal. [56]

Chirimiri Coalfield is located in the valley of the Hasdeo River, a tributary of the Mahanadi. Opened in 1930 with production starting in 1932, and has been owned by several companies and owners such as Chirimiri Colliery Company Pvt. Ltd., Dababhoy's New Chirimiri Ponri Hill Company (Private) Limited, United Collieries Limited, K.N. Dhady and Indra Singh & Sons (Private) Limited. These were nationalized in 1973.[citation needed]

This coal field is spread over 125 square kilometres (48 sq mi) of hilly country and includes both the sections – Kurasia and Chirimiri. Total reserves in Chirimiri coalfield have been estimated to be around 312.11 million tonnes.[57][58] According to Geological Survey of India reserves of non-coking coal up to a depth of 300 m in Chirimiri Coalfield was 362.16 million tonnes.[59]

The South Chhattisgarh Coalfields is made up by the Mand Raigarh, Korba and Hasdo Arand coalfields Coalfield. Of at least twelve seams in the Mand Valley, the Mand and Taraimar seams are important.[60]

Mand Raigarh Coalfield includes the areas earlier known as North Raigarh, South Raigarh and Mand River Coalfields and is located in Raigarh district and lies in the valley of the Mand River, a tributary of the Mahanadi. This coalfield is spread over an area of 520 square kilometres (200 sq mi). The field has a potential for mining of power grade coal, much of which can be extracted through open cast mining. Gare block has been identified for captive mining by private companies.[61][62]

According to the Geological Survey of India total reserves (including proved, indicated and inferred reserves) of non-coking coal in the Mand Raigarh Coalfield is 18,532.93 million tonnes. Out of this 13,868.20 million tonnes is up to depth of 300 metres, 4569.51 million tonnes is at a depth of 300-600 metres and 95.22 million tonnes is at a depth of 600–1200 m.[63]

Chhattisgarh is rich in minerals. It produces 50% of the country's total cement production. Due to proximity to the western States of Maharashtra and Gujarat it has the highest producing coal mines in India. It has the highest output of coal in the country with second-highest reserves. It is third in iron ore production and first in tin production. Limestone, dolomite and bauxite are abundant. It is the only tin ore-producing state in India. Other commercially extracted minerals include corundum, garnet, quartz, marble, alexandrite and diamonds.

Rowghat iron ore deposits are located in the Antagarh Tahsil of Kanker district and contain the largest iron ore deposits after the Bailadila Iron Ore Mine. Rowghat Mines' reserves have been assessed at 731.93 Mn tonnes. Bailadila has reserves assessed at 1.343 Bn tonnes.[64] Iron ore deposits in Rowghat were discovered in 1899 and in 1949 Geological Survey of India investigated the area.[65]

Rowghat deposit is 29 km (18 mi) NNW of Narayanpur, and about 140 km (87 mi) from Jagdalpur. Fe content varies in the various blocks - A Block (62.58% Fe), B Block (50.29% Fe), C Block (57.00% Fe), D Block (60.00% Fe), E Block (52.93% Fe), and F Block (59.62% Fe).

In recent years, Chhattisgarh is also receiving exposure in information technology (IT) projects and consultancy. Its government is also promoting IT and has set up a body to take care of IT solutions. The body, known as CHiPS, is providing large IT projects such as Choice, Swan, and so forth.

Major companies with a presence in the state include:

Chhattisgarh's total exports were US\$353.3 million in 2009–10. Nearly 75% of exports comes from Bhilai and the remaining from Urla, Bhanpuri, and Sirgitti. The major exports products include steel, handicrafts, handlooms, blended yarn, food and agri-products, iron, aluminium, cement, minerals, and engineering products. CSIDC (Chhattisgarh State Industrial Development Corporation Limited) is the nodal agency of the government of Chhattisgarh for export promotion in the state.

Mainline print media present in Chhattisgarh are Hari Bhoomi,[66] Dainik Bhaskar, Patrika, Navabharat, and Nai Duniya.

As of 2018 Chhattisgarh state had a Human Development Index value of 0.613 (medium), ranks 31st in Indian states & union territories. The national average is 0.647 according to Global Data lab.[67]

The standard of living in Chhattisgarh is extremely imbalanced. The cities such as Durg, Raipur, Bhilai and Bilaspur have a medium to high standard of living, while the rural and forested areas lack even the basic resources and amenities. For example, Bhilai has a literacy rate of 86%, while Bastar has a literacy rate of 54%.[68]

Raipur, the capital of Chhattisgarh, is one of the fastest developing cities in India.[69] Atal Nagar (Formerly Naya Raipur[70]) is the new planned city that is touted to become the financial hub of the

Central Indian region. New world class educational institutions and hospitals have already been established in the city.[71]

Chhattisgarh has an Education Index of 0.526 according to the 2011 NHDR, which is higher than that of the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan. The Average Literacy rate in Chhattisgarh for Urban regions was 84.05 percent in which males were 90.58% literate while female literacy stood at 73.39%. Total literates in the urban region of Chhattisgarh were 4,370,966.[citation needed]

Among the marginalized groups, STs are at the bottom of the rankings, further emphasizing the lack of social development in the state. Bastar and Dantewada in south Chhattisgarh are the most illiterate districts and the dropout ratio is the highest among all the districts. The reason for this is the extreme poverty in rural areas.

Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama Narainpur serves the tribals at the abjhmajad jungle region of Chhattisgarh for their upliftment and education.[72]

As per census 2011, the State has population of 25.5 million and six medical colleges (five Government and one private) with intake capacity of 700 students and doctor patient ratio of 1:17,000.[73]

Under The NITI Aayog released Health Index report titled, "Healthy States, Progressive India", Chhattisgarh has an index of 52.02 Out of 100, which is better than states such as Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Odisha, Bihar, Assam and Uttar Pradesh.[74]

Despite different health-related schemes and programs, the health indicators such as the percentage of women with BMI<18.5, Under Five Mortality Rate and underweight children, are poor. This may be due to the difficulty in accessing the remote areas in the state. The prevalence of female malnutrition in Chhattisgarh is higher than the national average—half of the ST females are malnourished. The performance of SCs is a little better than the corresponding national and state average. The Under Five Mortality Rate among STs is significantly higher than the national average.

Chhattisgarh is one of the emerging states with relatively high growth rates of net state domestic product (NSDP) (8.2% vs. 7.1% All India over 2002–2008) and per capita NSDP (6.2% vs. 5.4% All India over 2002–2008). The growth rates of the said parameters are above the national averages and thus it appears that Chhattisgarh is catching up with other states in this respect. However, the state still has very low levels of per capita income as compared to the other states.

Out of the total population of Chhattisgarh, 23.24% live in urban regions. The total population living in urban areas is 5,937,237, of which 3,035,469 are males and the remaining 2,901,768 are females.

Raipur, Durg, Bilai Nagar, Bilaspur, Korba, Jagdalpur, Rajnandgaon, Ambikapur and Raigarh are some of the urban towns and cities in the region.[citation needed]

There are more than 13 million males and 12.9 million females in Chhattisgarh, which constitutes 2.11% of the country's population. The sex ratio in the state is one of the most balanced in India with 991 females per 1,000 males, as is the child sex-ratio with 964 females per 1,000 males (Census 2011)

Chhattisgarh has a fairly high fertility rate (2.4) as of 2017 compared to All India (2.2) and the replacement rate (2.1). It has a rural fertility rate of 2.6 and urban fertility rate of 1.9

With the exception of the hilly states of the north-east, Chhattisgarh has one of highest shares of Scheduled Tribe (ST) populations within a state, accounting for about 10 percent of the STs in India.

Scheduled Tribes make up 30.62% of the population. The tribals are an important part of the state population and mainly inhabit the dense forests of Bastar and other districts of south Chhattisgarh. The percentage increase in the population of the scheduled list of tribals during the 2001–2011 decade had been at the rate of 18.23%. The Scheduled Caste (SC) population of Chhattisgarh is 2,418,722 as per 2001 census constituting 11.6 percent of the total population (20,833,803). The proportion of Scheduled Castes has increased from 11.6 percent in 2001 to 12.8% in 2011.

The incidence of poverty in Chhattisgarh is very high. The estimated poverty ratio in 2004–05 based on uniform reference period consumption was around 50 per cent, which is approximately double the all India level. The incidence of poverty in the rural and urban areas is almost the same.

More than half of the rural STs and urban SCs are poor. In general, the proportion of poor SC and ST households in the state is higher than the state average and their community's respective national averages (except for rural SC households). Given that more than 50 percent of the state's population is ST and SC, the high incidence of income poverty among them is a matter of serious concern in the state.

This indicates that the good economic performance in recent years has not percolated to this socially deprived group, which is reflected in their poor performance in human development indicators.

In terms of access to improved drinking water sources, at the aggregate level, Chhattisgarh fared better than the national average and the SCs of the state performed better than the corresponding national average. Scheduled Tribes are marginally below the state average, but still better than the STs at the all India level.

The proportion of households with access to improved sources of drinking water in 2008–09 was 91%. This proportion was over 90% even in states like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. This was largely because these states had over 70% of their households accessing tube wells/hand-pumps as sources of drinking water.

Sanitation facilities in the state were abysmally low with only about 41 percent having toilet facilities before the Swachh Bharat Mission was Launched by the Government of India. The Urban areas of Chhattisgarh attained the title of open defecation free on 2 October 2017 and the rural areas have achieved a 90.31% sanitation coverage. What sets Chhattisgarh apart from other states of India is an approach to bring in behavioural change in order to get open defecation free status. In Chhattisgarh, people don't get toilet incentives, they have to construct the toilet with their own money, after using the toilet for 3 months they are entitled for the incentive amount.[75]

In 2020, it again won the title of cleanest state with more than 100 Urban Local Bodies, as announced by Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri following the 'Swachh Survekshan 2020'.[76]

Across states, it has been found that teledensity (telephone density) was below 10 percent in 2010 for Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, reflecting a lack of access to telephones in these relatively poorer states. But due to development of new technology the teledensity in 2017 is 68.08 percent which shows improvement of telecom infrastructure. On the other hand, for states like Delhi and Himachal Pradesh and metropolitan cities like Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai, teledensity was over 100 percent in 2010 implying that individuals have more than one telephone connection.

The total density of National Highways (NHs) in Chhattisgarh is at 23.4 km per 1,000 km² out of the total length of 3,168 km in the State, the Central Government has informed.

Chhattisgarh Government had completed construction of 5,266 cement concrete (CC) roads having a total length of 1,530 km in various villages of the State as on 31 May 2016 under 'Mukhyamantri Gram Sadak Yojana'. [77]

To bring about social reforms and with a view to discourage undesirable social practices, Chhattisgarh government has enacted the Chhattisgarh Tonhi Atyachar (Niwaran) Act, 2005 against witchery. [citation needed] Much has to be done on the issue of law enforcement by judicial authorities to protect women in this regard, bringing such persecution to an end. [78]

Some sections of tribal population of Chhattisgarh state believe in witchcraft. [78] Women are believed to have access to supernatural forces and are accused of being witches (tonhi) often to settle personal scores.

As of 2010, they are still hounded out of villages on the basis of flimsy accusations by male village sorcerers paid to do so by villagers with personal agendas, such as property and goods acquisition. [78] According to National Geographic Channel's investigations, those accused are fortunate if they are only verbally bullied and shunned or exiled from their village.

Chhattisgarh has an urban population of 23.4% (around 5.1 million people in 2011) residing in urban areas. According to a report by the government of India, [81] at least 34% are Scheduled Tribes, 12% are Scheduled Castes and over 50% belong to the official list of Other Backward Classes. The plains are numerically dominated by castes such as Teli, Satnami and Kurmi; while forest areas are mainly occupied by tribes such as Gond, Halba, Kamar/Bujia and Oraon. There is also a large Odia population. A community of Bengalis has existed in major cities since the times of the British Raj. They are associated with education, industry and services.

Religion in Chhattisgarh (2011)

According to the 2011 census, 93.25% of Chhattisgarh's population practised Hinduism, while 2.02% followed Islam, 1.92% followed Christianity and smaller number followed Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism or other religions. [82]

Hindus are the majority in the state and are the dominant religion in all districts of the state. One sect particular to Chhattisgarh are the Satnamis, who follow Guru Ghasidas, a saint who promoted bhakti towards God and against the caste system. Chhattisgarh has many famous pilgrimage sites, such as the Bambleshwari Temple in Dongargarh and Danteshwari temple in the Dantewada, one of the Shakti Peethas. Buddhism was once a major religion in Chhattisgarh.

Islam is the second-largest religion, concentrated in the urban centres. Most Christians are tribals from the Surguja region. Many tribals stated they belonged to a tribal religion such as 'Gond' in the census, especially in the Bastar region. [citation needed]

Language data from 2011 census [83]

The official language of the state is Hindi, with Chhattisgarhi being the additional official language. Chhattisgarhi, a variety of eastern Hindi, is spoken and understood by the majority of people in Chhattisgarh and is the dominant language in the Chhattisgarh plain. Chhattisgarhi is called Khaltahi by tribals and Laria in Odia. Chhattisgarhi is itself divided into many dialects, one of the most distinct being Surgujia from the Surguja region, which is sometimes considered its own language. Near the Uttar Pradesh border this dialect merges into Bhojpuri, while it merges with Bagheli near the Madhya Pradesh border. Surgujia also merges into Sadri in the northeast along the border with Jharkhand. Hindi is spoken by many migrants from outside the state, and is a major language in the

cities and industrial centres, while many whose dialect is actually Chhattisgarhi record their speech as Hindi in the census. Odia is widely-spoken in eastern Chhattisgarh especially near the Odisha border. Telugu and Marathi speaking minorities can be found along the Telangana and Maharashtra borders respectively. In the eastern Bastar region, Halbi and Bhatari are major languages.

In addition, Chhattisgarh has several tribal languages. Kurukh and Korwa are both spoken in the Surguja region. Gondi is a major language in southern Chhattisgarh: Bastar and the adjoining districts. Gondi has many dialects, such as Muria in north Bastar, which transitions to Madia further south and Dorli, transitional between Gondi and Koya, along the borders of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. In the east of Bastar. Most Gond in the north and east of Bastar, as well as the rest of the state, speak regional languages and have largely forgotten their original tongue.[84][85][86][87]

Chhattisgarh has a high female-male sex ratio (991)[88] ranking at the fifth position among other states of India. Although this ratio is small compared to other states, it is unique in India because Chhattisgarh is the 10th-largest state in India.

The gender ratio (number of females per 1,000 males) has been steadily declining over 20th century in Chhattisgarh. But it is conspicuous that Chhattisgarh always had a better female-to-male ratio compared with national average.

Rural women, although poor, are independent, better organised, and socially outspoken. According to another local custom, women can choose to terminate a marriage relationship through a custom called chudi pahanana, if she desires. Most of the old temples and shrines follow Shaktism and are goddess-centric (e.g., Shabari, Mahamaya, Danteshwari) and the existence of these temples gives insight into historical and current social fabric of this state. However, a mention of these progressive local customs in no way suggests that the ideology of female subservience does not exist in Chhattisgarh. On the contrary, the male authority and dominance is seen quite clearly in the social and cultural life.[89]

The state hosts many religious sects such as Satnampanth, Kabirpanth, Ramnami Samaj and others. Champaran is a small town with religious significance as the birthplace of the saint Vallabhacharya, increasingly important as a pilgrimage site for the Gujarati community.

Chhattisgarh has a significant role in the life of the Lord Rama. Lord Rama along with his wife Sita and his younger brother Lakshmana had started his Vanvas (exile) in the Bastar, then known as Dandakarayna. They lived more than 10 of their 14 years of Vanvas in different places of Chhattisgarh. One of the remarkable places is Shivrinarayan which is nearby Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh. Shivrinarayan was named after an old lady Shabari. When Ram visited Shabari she said "I do not have anything to offer other than my heart, but here are some berry fruits. May it please you, my Lord." [This quote needs a citation] Saying so, Shabari offered the fruits she had meticulously collected to Rama. When Rama was tasting them, Lakshmana raised the concern that Shabari had already tasted them and therefore unworthy of eating. To this Rama said that of the many types of food he had tasted, "nothing could equal these berry fruits, offered with such devotion. You taste them, then alone will you know. Whomsoever offers a fruit, leaf, flower or some water with love, I partake it with great joy." [This quote needs a citation]

The Odia culture is prominent in the eastern parts of Chhattisgarh bordering Odisha.

Chhattisgarh is a storehouse of literature, performing arts and crafts—all of which derives its substance and sustenance from the day-to-day life experiences of its people. Religion, mythology, social and political events, nature and folklore are favourite motifs. Traditional crafts include

painting, woodcarving, bell metal craft, bamboo ware, and tribal jewellery. Chhattisgarh has a rich literary heritage with roots that lie deep in the sociological and historical movements of the region. Its literature reflects the regional consciousness and the evolution of an identity distinct from others in Central India.

Chhattisgarh is known for "Kosa silk" and "Dhokra or Bell metal art". Besides saris and salwar suits, the fabric is used to create lehengas, stoles, shawls and menswear including jackets, shirts, achkans and sherwanis. Works by the internationally renowned sculptor, Sushil Sakhuja's Dhokra Nandi, are available at the government's Shabari Chhattisgarh State Emporium, Raipur.

Panthi, Raut Nacha, Pandwani, Chaitra, Kaksar, Saila, Khamb-swang, Bhatra Naat, Rahas, Raai, Maa-Pata and Soowa are the several indigenous dance styles of Chhattisgarh.

Panthi, the folk dance of the Satnami community, has religious overtones. Panthi is performed on Maghi Purnima, the anniversary of the birth of Guru Ghasidas. The dancers dance around a jaitkhamb set up for the occasion, to songs eulogising their spiritual head. The songs reflect a view of nirvana, conveying the spirit of their guru's renunciation and the teachings of saint poets like Kabir, Ramdas and Dadu. Dancers with bent torsos and swinging arms dance, carried away by their devotion. As the rhythm quickens, they perform acrobatics and form human pyramids.[90]

Pandavani is a folk ballad form performed predominantly in Chhattisgarh. It depicts the story of the Pandavas, the leading characters in the epic Mahabharata. The artists in the Pandavani narration consist of a lead artist and some supporting singers and musicians. There are two styles of narration in Pandavani, Vedamati, and Kapalik. In the Vedamati style, the lead artist narrates in a simple manner by sitting on the floor throughout the performance. The Kapalik style is livelier, where the narrator actually enacts the scenes and characters. Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan Teejan Bai is most popular artist of Pandavani[91]

Raut Nacha, the folk dance of cowherds, is a traditional dance of Yaduvanshis (clan of Yadu) as symbol of worship to Krishna from the 4th day of Diwali (Goverdhan Puja) till the time of Dev Uthani Ekadashi (day of awakening of the gods after a brief rest) which is the 11th day after Diwali according to the Hindu calendar. The dance closely resembles Krishna's dance with the gopis (milkmaids).[92][93]

In Bilaspur, the Raut Nach Mahotsav folk dance festival is organised annually since 1978. Tens of hundreds of Raut dancers from remote areas participate.[94]

Soowa or Suwa tribal dance in Chhattisgarh is also known as Parrot Dance. It is a symbolic form of dancing related to worship. Dancers keep a parrot in a bamboo-pot and form a circle around it. Then performers sing and dance, moving around it with clapping. This is one of the main dance form of tribal women of Chhattisgarh.[95]

Tribal groups like Gonds, the Baigas and the Oraons in Chhattisgarh have the Karma dance as part of their culture. Both men and women arrange themselves in two rows and follow the rhythmic steps, directed by the singer group. The Karma tribal dance marks the end of the rainy season and the advent of spring season.[clarification needed][96][97]

Theater is known as Gammat in Chhattisgarh. Pandavani is one of the lyrical forms of this theatre. Several acclaimed plays of Habib Tanvir, such as Charandas Chor, are variations of Chhattisgarhi theatre.

Chollywood is Chhattisgarh's film industries. Every year many Chhattisgarhi films are produced by local producers.

Lata Mangeshkar sang a song for Chhattisgarhi film Bhakla of Dhriti pati sarkar.

Mohammed Rafi sang a song for Chhattisgarhi film. He had also sung songs for various Chhattisgarhi films like Ghardwaar, Kahi Debe Sandesh, Punni Ke Chanda, etc.[98][99]

Chhattisgarh is known as the rice bowl of India and has a rich tradition of food culture.

The typical Chhattisgarhi thali consists of roti, bhat, dal or kadhi, curry, chutney and bhaji. Few Chhattisgarhi dishes are Aamat, Bafauri, Bhajia, Chousela, Dubkikadhi, Farra, Khurmi, Moong Bara, Thethari, and Muthia.[100][101][102][103][104][105]

Major festivals of Chhattisgarh include Bastar Dussehra/ Durga Puja, Bastar Lokotsav, Madai Festival, Rajim Kumbh Mela, and Pakhanjore Mela (Nara Narayan Mela).

Chhattisgarh, situated in the heart of India, is endowed with a rich cultural heritage and attractive natural diversity. The state is full of ancient monuments, rare wildlife, exquisitely carved temples, Buddhist sites, palaces, waterfalls, caves, rock paintings, and hill plateaus.

Maitri Bagh in Bhilai is the largest and oldest zoo of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Mainpat is mini Shimla of Chhattisgarh.

There are many waterfalls, hot springs, caves, temples, dams and national parks, tiger reserves and wildlife sanctuaries in Chhattisgarh.

India's first man-made jungle safari is also situated in Raipur.

Abujhmad Peace Marathon is the largest sports event of Narainpur.

The Chhattisgarhiya Olympics are an annual Chhattisgarhi celebration of traditional Indian games such as kabaddi and kho-kho. The inaugural 2022 edition drew in around 2.6 million participants (almost 10% of the state's population).[106]

According to the census of 2011, Chhattisgarh's literacy, the most basic indicator of education, was at 71.04 per cent. Female literacy was at 60.59 percent.

Data from Census of India, 2011.[107]

Text extracted from URL 28:

Chhattisgarh embraces a diverse cultural and traditional practices in India. As the state government has taken meticulous steps to preserve the tribal culture, these festivals and the traditions are celebrated almost from the time of ancient India.

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Madhya Pradesh (/ˌmɑːdjə prəˈdeʃ/,^[8] Hindi: [ˈməd̪ʱjə prəˈdeːʃ] ⓘ; meaning 'central province') is a state in central India. Its capital is Bhopal, and the largest city is Indore, with Gwalior, Jabalpur, Ujjain, Dewas, Sagar, Satna, and Rewa being the other major cities. Madhya Pradesh is the second largest Indian state by area and the fifth largest state by population with over 72 million residents. It borders the states of Uttar Pradesh to the northeast, Chhattisgarh to the east, Maharashtra to the south, Gujarat to the west, and Rajasthan to the northwest.^[9]

The area covered by the present-day Madhya Pradesh includes the area of the ancient Avanti Mahajanapada, whose capital Ujjain (also known as Avantika) arose as a major city during the second wave of Indian urbanisation in the sixth century BCE. Subsequently, the region was ruled by the major dynasties of India. The Maratha Empire dominated the majority of the 18th century. After the Anglo-Maratha Wars in the 19th century, the region was divided into several princely states under the British and incorporated into Central Provinces and Berar and the Central India Agency. Some years after India's independence, the Central Provinces and Berar was renamed as Madhya Pradesh with Nagpur as its capital: this state included the southern parts of the present-day Madhya Pradesh and northeastern portion of today's Maharashtra. In 1956, this state was reorganised and its parts were combined with the states of Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh and Bhopal to form the new Madhya Pradesh state, the Marathi-speaking Vidarbha region was removed and merged with the Bombay State. This state was the largest in India by area until 2000, when its southeastern Chhattisgarh region was designated a separate state.

Madhya Pradesh's economy is the 10th-largest in India, with a gross state domestic product (GSDP) of ₹9.17 trillion (US\$110 billion) and has the country's 26th highest per-capita income of ₹ 109372.^[5] Madhya Pradesh ranks 23rd among Indian states in human development index.^[10] Rich in mineral resources, Madhya Pradesh has the largest reserves of diamond and copper in India. 25.14% of its area is under forest cover.^[11] Its tourism industry has seen considerable growth, with the state topping the National Tourism Awards in 2010–11.^[12] In recent years, the state's GDP growth has been above the national average.^[13] In 2019–20, state's GSDP was recorded at 9.07.^[14]

Madhya Pradesh means "the central province".

Isolated remains of *Homo erectus* found in Hathnora in the Narmada Valley indicates that Madhya Pradesh might have been inhabited in the Middle Pleistocene era.[15] Painted pottery dated to the later mesolithic period has been found in the Bhimbetka rock shelters.[16] Chalcolithic sites belonging to Kayatha culture (2100–1800 BCE) and Malwa culture (1700–1500 BCE) have been discovered in the western part of the state.[17] Madhya Pradesh is also the world's ninth-most populous subnational entity.

The city of Ujjain arose as a major centre in the region, during the second wave of Indian urbanisation in the sixth century BCE. It has served as the capital of the Avanti kingdom. Other kingdoms mentioned in ancient epics – Malava, Karusha, Dasarna and Nishada – have also been identified with parts of Madhya Pradesh.

Chandragupta Maurya conquered northern India around 320 BCE, establishing the Mauryan Empire, which included all of modern-day Madhya Pradesh. Ashoka the greatest of Mauryan rulers, conquered it, bringing the region under firmer control. After the decline of the Maurya empire, the region was contested among the Sakas, the Kushanas, the Satavahanas, and several local dynasties during the 1st to 3rd centuries CE. Heliodorus, the Greek Ambassador to the court of the Shunga King Bhagabhadra erected the Heliodorus pillar near Vidisha.

Ujjain emerged as the predominant commercial centre of western India from the first century CE, located on the trade routes between the Ganges plain and India's Arabian Sea ports. The Satavahana dynasty of the northern Deccan and the Saka dynasty of the Western Satraps fought for the control of Madhya Pradesh during the 1st to 3rd centuries CE.

The Satavahana King Gautamiputra Satakarni inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Saka rulers and conquered parts of Malwa and Gujarat in the 2nd century CE.[18]

Subsequently, the region was conquered by the Gupta empire in the 4th and 5th centuries, and their southern neighbours, the Vakatakas. The rock-cut temples at Bagh Caves in the Kukshi tehsil of the Dhar District show the presence of the Gupta dynasty in the region, supported by the testimony of a Badwani inscription dated to the year of 487 CE.[19] The attacks of the Hephthalites or White Huns brought about the collapse of the Gupta empire, which broke up into smaller states. The King Yasodharman of Malwa defeated the Huns in 528, ending their expansion. Later, Harsha (c. 590–647) ruled the northern parts of the state. Malwa was ruled by the south Indian Rashtrakuta Dynasty from the late 8th century to the 10th century.[20] When the south Indian Emperor Govinda III of the Rashtrakuta dynasty annexed Malwa, he set up the family of one of his subordinates there, who took the name of Paramara.[21]

The Medieval period saw the rise of the Rajput clans, including the Paramaras of Malwa and the Chandelas of Bundelkhand along with the Lodhis. The Chandellas built the majestic Hindu-Jain temples at Khajuraho, which represent the culmination of Hindu temple architecture in Central India. The Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty also held sway in northern and western Madhya Pradesh at this time. It also left some monuments of architectural value in Gwalior. Southern parts of Madhya Pradesh like Malwa were several times invaded by the south Indian Western Chalukya Empire which imposed its rule on the Paramara kingdom of Malwa.[22] The Paramara King Bhoja (c. 1010–1060) was claimed to be a renowned polymath. The small Gond kingdoms emerged in the Gondwana and Mahakoshal regions of the state. Northern Madhya Pradesh was conquered by the Turkic Delhi Sultanate in the 13th century. After the collapse of the Delhi Sultanate at the end of the 14th

century, independent regional kingdoms re-emerged, including the Tomara kingdom of Gwalior and the Muslim Sultanate of Malwa, with its capital at Mandu.

The Malwa Sultanate was conquered by the Sultanate of Gujarat in 1531. In the 1540s, most parts of the state fell to Sher Shah Suri, and subsequently to the Hindu King Hemu. Hemu, who had earlier served as the General of the Islamic Suri dynasty, operated from the Gwalior Fort during 1553–56 and became the ruler of Delhi as a Vikramaditya king winning 22 battles continuously from Bengal to Gujrat and defeating Akbar's forces in the Battle of Delhi on 7 October 1556. However, he chose Delhi as his capital after his formal Coronation and left Gwalior. After Hemu's defeat by Akbar at the Second Battle of Panipat in 1556, most of Madhya Pradesh came under the Mughal rule. Gondwana and Mahakoshal remained under the control of Gond kings, who acknowledged Mughal suzerainty but enjoyed virtual autonomy.

The Mughal control weakened considerably after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707. Between 1720 and 1760, the Marathas conquered most of Madhya Pradesh, resulting in the establishment of semi-autonomous states under the nominal control of the Peshwa of Pune: the Holkars of Indore ruled much of Malwa, Pawars ruled Dewas and Dhar, the Bhonsles of Nagpur dominated Mahakoshal-Gondwana area, while the Scindias of Gwalior controlled the northern parts of the state. The most notable Maratha rulers of the region were Mahadji Shinde, Ahilyabai Holkar and Yashwantrao Holkar. Besides these, there were several other small states, including Bhopal, Orchha, and Rewa. The Bhopal state, which paid tribute to both the Marathas and the Nizam of Hyderabad, was founded by Dost Mohammed Khan, a former General in the Mughal army.

After the Third Anglo-Maratha War, the British conquered the entire region. All the sovereign states in the region became princely states of British India, governed by the Central India Agency. The Mahakoshal region became a British province: the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories. In 1861, the British merged the Nagpur Province with the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories to form the Central Provinces.

During the 1857 uprising, rebellions happened in the northern parts of the state, led by leaders like Tatya Tope, Rani Avantibai Lodhi. However, these were crushed by the British and the princes loyal to them. The state witnessed a number of anti-British activities and protests during the Indian independence movement.[23] Several notable leaders such as Chandra Shekhar Azad, B. R. Ambedkar, Shankar Dayal Sharma, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Arjun Singh were born in what is now Madhya Pradesh.

After the independence of India, Madhya Pradesh was created in 1950 from the former British Central Provinces and Berar and the princely states of Makrai and Chhattisgarh, with Nagpur as the capital of the state. The new states of Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh, and Bhopal were formed out of the Central India Agency. In 1956, the states of Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh, and Bhopal were merged into Madhya Pradesh, and the Marathi-speaking southern region Vidarbha, which included Nagpur, was ceded to Bombay state. Jabalpur was chosen to be the capital of the state but at the last moment, due to political interference, Bhopal was made the state capital.[24] In November 2000, as part of the Madhya Pradesh Reorganization Act, the southeastern portion of the state split off to form the new state of Chhattisgarh.

Madhya Pradesh literally means "Central Province", and is located in the geographic heart of India in between the latitude of 21.6°N–26.30°N and longitude of 74°9'E–82°48'E. The state straddles the Narmada River, which runs east and west between the Vindhya and Satpura ranges; these ranges

and the Narmada are the traditional boundaries between the north and south of India. The highest point in Madhya Pradesh is Dhupgarh, with an elevation of 1,350 m (4,429 ft).[25]

The state is bordered on the west by Gujarat, on the northwest by Rajasthan, on the northeast by Uttar Pradesh, on the east by Chhattisgarh, and on the south by Maharashtra.

Madhya Pradesh also has three major seasons – Summer, Monsoon, and Winter. During summer (March–June), the temperature in the entire state ranges above 34.6 °C and it has increased as it is all-time high in Madhya Pradesh. In general, the eastern parts of Madhya Pradesh are hotter than the western parts. The regions like Gwalior, Morena and Datia record temperatures of over 42 °C in May. The humidity is relatively very low and the region usually experiences frequent mild dust storms. The southwest Monsoon usually breaks out in mid-June and the entire state receives a major share of its rainfall between June and September. The south and south-east regions tend to experience a higher rainfall whereas the parts of the north-west receive less. Mandla, Balaghat, Sidhi, Jabalpur, and other extreme eastern parts receive more than 150 cm of rainfall. The districts of western Madhya Pradesh receive less than 80 cm of rainfall.[26]

The winter season starts in November. The temperature remains low in the northern parts of the state in comparison to the southern parts. The daily maximum temperature in most of the northern part of January remains between 15 and 18 °C. The climate is generally dry and pleasant with a clear sky. The average rainfall is about 1,194 mm (47.0 in). The southeastern districts have the heaviest rainfall, some places receiving as much as 2,150 mm (84.6 in), while the western and northwestern districts receive 1,000 mm (39.4 in) or less.

According to the 2011 figures, the recorded forest area of the state is 94,689 km² (36,560 sq mi) constituting 30.7% of the geographical area of the state.[27] It constitutes 12.3% of the forest area of India. Legally this area has been classified into "Reserved Forest" (65.3%), "Protected Forest" (32.8%) and "Unclassified Forest" (0.2%). Per capita forest area is 2,400 m² (0.59 acres) as against the national average of 700 m² (0.17 acres). The forest cover is less dense in the northern and western parts of the state, which contain the major urban centres. Variability in climatic and edaphic conditions brings about significant difference in the forest types of the state. In January 2019 1.5 million volunteers in the state planted 66 million trees in 12 hours along the Narmada river.[28]

The major types of soils found in the state are:

Madhya Pradesh is home to ten National Parks; Bandhavgarh National Park, Kanha National Park, Satpura National Park, Sanjay National Park, Madhav National Park, Van Vihar National Park, Mandla Plant Fossils National Park, Panna National Park, Pench National Park and Dinosaur National Park, Dhar.[29][30]

There are also a number of nature reserves, including Amarkantak, Bagh Caves, Balaghat, Bori Natural Reserve, Ken Gharial, Ghatigaon, Kuno Palpur, Narwar, Chambal, Kukdeswar, Chidi Kho, Nora Dehi, Pachmarhi, Panpatha, Shikarganj, Patalkot, and Tamia. Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve in Satpura Range, Amarkantak biosphere reserve and Panna National Park are three of the 18 biosphere reserves in India. Most of them are located in eastern Madhya Pradesh near Jabalpur.

Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Pench, Panna, and Satpura National Parks are managed as Project Tiger areas. The National Chambal Sanctuary is managed for conservation of gharial and mugger, river dolphin, smooth-coated otter and a number of turtle species. Ken-gharial and Son-gharial sanctuaries are managed for conservation of gharial and mugger. The barasingha is the state animal and the dudhraji is the state bird of Madhya Pradesh.

Based on composition, the teak and sal forests are the important forest formations in the state. Bamboo-bearing areas are widely distributed.

The Narmada is the longest river in Madhya Pradesh. It flows westward through a rift valley, with the Vindhya ranges sprawling along its northern bank and the Satpura range of mountains along the southern. Its tributaries include the Banjar, the Tawa, the Machna, the Shakkar, the Denwa and the Sonbhadra rivers. The Tapti River runs parallel to Narmada, and also flows through a rift valley. The Narmada–Tapti systems carry an enormous volume of water and provide drainage for almost a quarter of the land area of Madhya Pradesh. The Narmada river is considered very sacred and is worshipped throughout the region. It is the main source of water and acts as a lifeline to the state.

The Vindhyas form the southern boundary of the Ganges basin, with the western part of the Ganges basin draining into the Yamuna and the eastern part directly into the Ganges itself. All the rivers, which drain into the Ganges, flow from south to north, with the Chambal, Shipra, Kali Sindh, Parbati, Kuno, Sind, Betwa, Dhasan and Ken rivers being the main tributaries of the Yamuna. Shipra River is one of the most sacred rivers of Hinduism. It is the site of the Simhastha Kumbh Mela, which is held every 12 years. Shipra is stretched across Indore, Ujjain and Dewas. The land drained by these rivers is agriculturally rich, with the natural vegetation largely consisting of grass and dry deciduous forest types, largely thorny. The eastern part of the Ganges basin consists of the Son, the Tons and the Rihand Rivers. Son, which arises in the Maikal hills around Amarkantak, is the largest tributary that goes into the Ganges on the south bank and that does not arise from the Himalayas. Son and its tributaries contribute the bulk of the monsoon flow into the Ganges, because the north bank tributaries are all snow fed. The forests in their basins are much richer than the thorn forests of the northwestern part of Madhya Pradesh.

After the formation of Chhattisgarh State, the major portion of Mahanadi basin now lies in Chhattisgarh. Presently, only 154 km² basin area of Hasdeo River in Anuppur District lies in Madhya Pradesh.

The Satpuras, in the Gawilgarh and Mahadeo Hills, also contain a watershed, which is south facing. The Wainganga, the Wardha, the Pench, the Kanhan rivers, discharge an enormous volume of water into the Godavari river system. The Godavari basin consists of sub-tropical, semi-moist forests, mainly in the valley of the Indrawati. There are many important multi-state irrigation projects in development, including the Godavari River Basin Irrigation Projects.

Madhya Pradesh is divided into the following agro-climatic zones:

Madhya Pradesh is divided into 55 districts for administrative purposes. The district is the main unit of administration. These districts are arranged in 10 divisions, listed below:[36]

The population of Madhya Pradesh consists of a number of ethnic groups and tribes, castes and communities. The scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes constitute a significant portion of the population of the State 15.6% and 21.1% respectively.

The main tribal groups in Madhya Pradesh are Gond, Bhil, Baiga, Korku, Bhadia (or Bhariya), Halba, Kaul, Mariya, Malto and Sahariya. Mandla, Dhar, Dindori, Barwani, Jhabua and Alirajpur districts have more than 50% tribal population, with Jhabua and Alirajpur having nearly 90% tribal population. In Khargone, Khandwa, Burhanpur, Betul, Chhindwara, Seoni, Anuppur, Umaria, Shahdol and Singrauli districts 30–50% of the population is tribal. According to the 2011 census, the tribal population in Madhya Pradesh was 15.34 million, constituting 21.1% of the total population. There

were 46 recognised Scheduled Tribes and three of them have been identified as "Special Primitive Tribal Groups" in the State.[39]

Madhya Pradesh ranks(33rd) on the Human Development Index value of 0.606 (2018).[40] According to the SDG India Index 2020–21 compiled by the NITI AAYOG, Madhya Pradesh ranks 21 on sustainable development goals. The state's per-capita gross state domestic product (nominal GDP) is the 26th in the country (2018–19).[41] According to NITI Aayog SDGs India index the state ranks 9th on gender equality, 10th on clean water and sanitation.[42]

Languages in Madhya Pradesh (2011)[43]

The official language of the state is Hindi, which is spoken by over two-thirds of the population and is used for all government business.[4] In urban areas Standard Hindi is the main language, while Urdu is spoken by Muslims. In rural areas, however, most speak varieties counted as dialects of Hindi in the census, although most are quite distinct. In the west are Malvi and Nimadi in the Malwa and Nimar regions, which are more closely related to the Rajasthani languages. In Bundelkhand in the north and Baghelkhand in the east are spoken Bundeli and Bagheli which are eastern varieties of the Hindi languages, similar to Awadhi or Chhattisgarhi. In the southeast is spoken Chhattisgarhi and Powari is the language of the far south, both Eastern Hindi languages. Most speakers of these languages consider them to be dialects of Hindi and so report their language as 'Hindi' on the census.[43]

Marathi is another significant language. Due to Maratha rule over much of what is now Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh is home to the largest number of Marathis outside Maharashtra. Although large numbers of Marathis can be found in urban centres like Indore, the highest concentrations are in the southern areas of the state adjoining Maharashtra. Marathi is the most-spoken language in Burhanpur district, while it is a major minority language in the southern parts of Mahakoshal especially Betul, Chhindwara and Balaghat districts.[43]

There are several languages spoken by the Adivasis. The various Bhil languages are Indo-Aryan languages spoken by 50 lakh Bhils of western Madhya Pradesh. Although many, especially in the eastern parts of their range, have adopted the regional languages as mother tongue, the languages are still strong in the far-western hills especially Barwani, Jhabua and Alirajpur districts where they are in the majority. Bhili, the Bareli languages and Bhilali are the major varieties spoken in the state.

Gondi is the second-largest Adivasi language, spoken by 11 lakh Gonds in the state. A Dravidian language related to Telugu, it is mainly spoken in the southern Satpura highlands of Mahakoshal, where it is spoken with the regional languages. Some in the remoter valleys of the Satpuras speak a poorly-described Dravidian dialect called Bharia. Smaller minorities of Gondi speakers can be found in Khandwa and Dewas districts in the west as well as Anuppur, Sidhi and Singrauli districts in the east. Elsewhere in the state, the Gonds have almost totally abandoned their original language.

Korku, a Munda language, has over 400,000 speakers in the central highlands of the state. In the far-southeast of Burhanpur can be found some speakers of the language isolate Nihali who live among the Korku. All speakers of tribal languages face significant pressure to switch to the dominant regional languages while their own tongues are considered 'backward' and 'rural'. [43]

The following languages are taught in schools in Madhya Pradesh under the Three Language Formula:[44]

First language: Any Scheduled Language

Second language: Hindi, Urdu or English

Third language: Another Scheduled Language, Arabic, Persian, French, Russian

Hinduism is the main religion and is followed by 90.9% of the population. Religion in Madhya Pradesh (2011)[45]

According to the census of 2011, 90.9% of residents followed Hinduism, while minorities are Muslim (6.6%), Jain (0.8%), Buddhists (0.3%), Christians (0.3%), and Sikhs (0.2%). Madhya Pradesh is home to several pilgrimage sites including Amarkantak at the source of the Narmada and the Ghats of Omkareshwar, also on the Narmada. Temples can be found throughout the state. Buddhism and Jainism were once prominent religions in the state, especially in the central plateau near Raisen and Bhopal. Malwa is still home to a significant Jain minority. Jains are particularly concentrated in the urban centres of the Malwa region. Islam arrived with Muslim rule in the 14th century, although its influence was and is limited to major urban centres. Islam is a major religion in Bhopal and Burhanpur, and Bhopal is home to many prominent Islamic shrines. Buddhism in modern times is mainly practised by Marathis in the south. Most respondents who answered 'Other' self-identified as following Adivasi religions such as Koya Punem of the Gonds.[45]

Three sites in Madhya Pradesh have been declared World Heritage Sites by UNESCO: the Khajuraho Group of Monuments (1986) including Devi Jagadambi temple, Khajuraho, Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi (1989) and the Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka (2003). Other architecturally significant or scenic sites include

Ajaigarh, Amarkantak, Asirgarh, Bandhavgarh, Bawangaja, Bhopal, Vidisha, Chanderi, Chitrakuta, Dewas, Dhar, Gwalior, Indore, Nemavar, Jabalpur, Burhanpur, Maheshwar, Mandleshwar, Mandu, Omkareshwar, Orchha, Pachmarhi, Shivpuri, Sonagiri, Mandla and Ujjain.

Madhya Pradesh is noted for its classical and folk music. Some of the noted Hindustani classical music gharanas in Madhya Pradesh include the Maihar gharana, the Gwalior gharana and Senia gharana. Two of the medieval India's most noted singers, Tansen and Baiju Bawra, were born near Gwalior in present-day Madhya Pradesh. Noted Dhrupad exponents Aminuddin Dagar (Indore), Gundecha Brothers (Ujjain) and Uday Bhawalkar (Ujjain) were also born in present-day Madhya Pradesh.[46] Renowned classical singer Kumar Gandharva spent his life at Dewas. The birthplaces of noted playback singers Kishore Kumar (Khandwa) and Lata Mangeshkar (Indore) and singer and composer Aadesh Shrivastava (Jabalpur) are also located in MP. The local styles of folk singing are Faga, Bhartahari, Sanja geet, Bhopa, Kalbelia, Bhat, Bhand, Vasdeva, Videsia, Kalgi Turra, Nirgunia, Alha, Pandwani Gayan and Garba Garbi Govalan.[47]

The major folk dances of MP are Rai, Karma, Saila, Matki, Gangaur, Badhai, Baredi, Naurata, Ahiri and Bhagoria.[48]

Madhya Pradesh's gross state domestic product (nominal GDP) for 2013–14 was ₹ 4,509 billion (approximately US\$ 72,726,000,000). The per-capita figure was US\$ 871.45 in 2013–14, the sixth-lowest in the country.[49] Between 1999 and 2008, the annualised growth rate of the state was very low: 3.5%.[50] Subsequently, the state's GDP growth rate has improved significantly, rising to 8% during 2010–11 and 12% during 2011–12.[51]

Madhya Pradesh is also famous for honey production in district Morena.

The state has an agrarian economy.[51] The major crops of Madhya Pradesh are wheat, soybean, gram, sugarcane, rice, maize, cotton, rapeseed, mustard and arhar.[52] Minor Forest Produce (MFP), such as tendu leaves used to roll beedi, sal seed, teak seed, and lak also contribute to state's rural economy.

Madhya Pradesh has 5 Special Economic Zones (SEZs): 3 IT/ITeS (Indore, Gwalior), 1 mineral-based (Jabalpur) and 1 agro-based (Jabalpur). In October 2011, approval was given to 14 proposed SEZs, out of which 10 were IT/ITeS-based.[52] Indore is the major commercial centre of the state. Because of the state's central location, a number of consumer goods companies have established manufacturing bases in MP.[52]

The Industrial Belts of Indore-Dewas-Pithampur and Mandideep (Bhopal) are the prominent Industrial Hubs of Madhya Pradesh. Numerous industrial units and factories are present there such as Mechanical and Industrial Parts (gears, cables), Chemical Production Units, Pharmaceutical Units, Food Processing & FMCG Industries, Textile Production, Food Grain Processing Units, Leather Industry and Sanitary Products etc.

The state has the largest reserves of diamond and copper in India. Other major mineral reserves include those of coal, coalbed methane, manganese and dolomite.[52]

Madhya Pradesh has six Ordnance Factories, four of which are located at Jabalpur (Vehicle Factory, Grey Iron Foundry, Gun Carriage Factory, Ordnance Factory Khamaria) and one each at Katni and Itarsi. The factories are run by the Ordnance Factories Board, and manufacture a variety of products for the Indian Armed Forces.

There are two major Security Press Units of Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited presently operating in the state. The first unit is situated in Dewas. Also known as Bank Note Press (BNP). It is an industrial unit of SPMCIL, established in the year 1974 is wholly owned by Government of India, Ministry of Finance and Department of Economic Affairs. BNP Dewas prints Indian Currency Notes (known as Indian Rupee or INR; Symbol: '₹') of denominations ₹50, ₹100, ₹500 and ₹2000 and is capable of printing Bank Notes of any denomination. There is also a specialised Security Ink Factory at BNP Dewas which supplies specialised inks for currency and other government approved documents.

The second unit is a Security Paper Mill was established in 1968 at Hoshangabad. It produces papers for banknotes and non-judicial stamps and further prints with new enhanced unit.

Madhya Pradesh won the 10th National Award for excellent work in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005.

The state's tourism industry is growing, fuelled by wildlife tourism and a number of places of historical and religious significance. Sanchi and Khajuraho are frequented by external tourists. Besides the major cities, Bhedaghat, Jabalpur, Bhimbetka, Bhopur, Maheshwar, Mandu, Orchha, Pachmarhi, Kanha, Amarkantak and Ujjain, Tumen Vindhyavasini temple ancient temple. This south facing Ashok Nagar district located in Tuman (Tumvn).

The state has a total installed power generation capacity of 24950.60 MW as of 30 November 2020. The Madhya Pradesh Electric Board is located at Jabalpur. The Rewa Ultra Mega Solar project is a photovoltaic solar park spread over an area of 1,590 acres (6.4 km²) in the Gurh tehsil of Rewa District of Madhya Pradesh.[54] The project was commissioned with 750 MW capacity.[55] 97% households have electricity access in the state.[56]

The Singrauli region on the eastern end of Madhya Pradesh is a major energy producer enclave for the country. The region has vast reserves of coal mines, which are excavated by Northern Coalfields Limited, a subsidiary of Coal India Limited, which is in turn used in local power plants of NTPC, Sasan Power and Hindalco. The area has more than 10,000 MW installed capacity for energy production.

The region of Malwa were selected to establish Wind Energy Production units by State Government. Constant wind flows in the region are suitable for harvesting wind energy. There are more than 100 wind mills on a series of hills 13 km (8.1 mi) from Dewas, generating more than 30 megawatts of power. These were financed by a few private companies which sought a reliable power supply.

Bus and train services cover most of Madhya Pradesh. The 99,043-kilometre-long (61,542 mi) road network of the state includes 20 national highways.[52] A 4,948-kilometre-long (3,075 mi) rail network criss-crosses the state, with Jabalpur serving as headquarters for the West Central Railway Zone of the Indian Railways. The Central Railway and the Western Railway also cover parts of the state. Most of the western Madhya Pradesh comes under Ratlam Rail Division of Western Railways, including cities like Indore, Ujjain, Dewas, Mandsaur, Khandwa, Neemuch and Bairagarh in Bhopal. The state has a total of 20 major railway junctions. More than 455 trains transit through Madhya Pradesh daily. 220 trains transit through the State's capital Bhopal alone. North–South & East–West corridors cut across Madhya Pradesh, including the New Delhi–Chennai main line.

The major inter-state bus terminals are located in Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior and Jabalpur. More than 2,000 buses are conducted daily from these four cities. The intra-city transit systems mostly consist of buses, private autos and taxis.

There is convenient access to major ports such as Kandla port and Jawaharlal Nehru port in the state[57]

The state does not have a coastline. Most of the sea trade happens through the Kandla and Jawaharlal Nehru Port (Nhava Sheva) in the neighbouring states, which are well-connected to MP by road and rail networks.

Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Airport in Indore is the busiest airport in Madhya Pradesh. Raja Bhoj International Airport in Bhopal, Dumna Airport in Jabalpur, Gwalior Airport and Khajuraho Airport also have scheduled commercial passenger services. Besides these, minor airstrips are located at Chhindwara, Sagar, Neemuch, Ratlam, Mandsaur, Ujjain, Khandwa, Rewa, Guna and Satna.

The state has 55 districts hospitals, 333 community health centres, 1,155 primary health centres and 8,860 sub-centres.[58][59]

The urban infrastructure has improved considerably in the past decade. 22 projects costing above \$500 million have been sanctioned under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission for the development of Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Ujjain.[52]

Seven Cities of Madhya Pradesh Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Jabalpur, Satna, Ujjain, and Sagar have been selected under Smart cities mission[60][61]

Indore has been part of the Swachh Survekshan Cleanliness Program initiated by Government of India. It has been ranked as India's cleanest city six years in a row as per the Swachh Survekshan for the years 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Jagran, The Indian Observer, Nava Bharat, Deshbandhu, Nai Duniya, Rajasthan Patrika, Raj Express and Dainik Dabang Dunia are the leading Hindi newspapers. Other local newspapers are published in the cities. In English Times of India, Hindustan Times, The

Hitavada, Central Chronicle and Free Press have editions from Bhopal with The Hitavada also being in Jabalpur. A Sindhi daily, i.e., Challenge (Now also in Hindi) is published from Bhopal is the only Sindhi newspaper in state.

Madhya Pradesh has a 230-seat state legislative assembly. The state also sends 40 members to the Parliament of India: 29 are elected to the Lok Sabha (Lower House) and 11 to the Rajya Sabha (Upper House). The constitutional head of the state is the Governor, appointed by the President of India. The executive powers lie with the Chief Minister, who is the elected leader of the state legislature. The current governor is Mangubhai C. Patel, and the current chief minister is Mohan Yadav of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The dominant political parties in the state are the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress (INC).

Madhya Pradesh state is made up of 55 Districts, which are grouped into 10 divisions. As of 2023, the state has 55 jila (district) panchayats, 376 tehsil, 313 janpad panchayats/blocks, and 23043 gram (village) panchayats. The municipalities in the state include 18 Nagar Nigams, 100 Nagar Palikas and 264 Nagar Panchayats.[62]

According to the 2011 census, Madhya Pradesh had a literacy rate of 69.32%. According to the 2009–10 figures, the state had 105,592 primary schools, 6,352 high schools, and 5,161 higher secondary schools. The state has 208 engineering and architecture colleges, 208 management institutes, and 12 medical colleges.[52]

The state is home to some of the premier educational and research institutions of India including IIT Indore, IIM Indore, AIIMS Bhopal, AMPRI Bhopal, NIT Bhopal, IIITDM Jabalpur, IIITM Gwalior, Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM Gwalior), Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Bhopal, School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal, Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) Bhopal, National Law Institute University (NLIU) Bhopal Jabalpur Engineering College, and Dharmashastra National Law University, Jabalpur.

There are 500 degree colleges, which are affiliated with one of the universities in the state. The specialised universities include Rajiv Gandhi Technical University, Madhya Pradesh Medical Science University, Jawaharlal Nehru Agriculture University and Nanaji Deshmukh Veterinary Science University. The general universities are Awadhesh Pratap Singh University (Rewa), Barkatullah University (Bhopal), Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya (Indore), Rani Durgavati University (Jabalpur), Vikram University (Ujjain), Masarovar Global University, Jiwaji University (Gwalior), Dr. Hari Singh Gour University (Sagar), Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (Amarkantak, Anuppur), Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication (Bhopal).

The Professional Examination Board was initialised as Pre Medical Test Board by Government of Madhya Pradesh in the year 1970. After some year in 1981, Pre Engineering Board was constituted. Then after, in the year 1982 both these boards were amalgamated and named as Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board (MPPEB).

In 2013, state govt declared Mallakhamba as the state sport.[74]

Cricket, kabaddi, hockey, football, basketball, volleyball, cycling, swimming, badminton, and table tennis are the popular sports in the state. Traditional games like kho kho, gilli danda, sitoliya, kanche, and langdi are popular in the rural areas.

Snooker, a cue sport, generally regarded as having been invented in Jabalpur by British Army officers, is popular in many of the English-speaking and Commonwealth countries, with top professional players attaining multimillion-pound career earnings from the game.

Cricket is the most popular sport in Madhya Pradesh.[citation needed] There are three international cricket stadiums in the state – Nehru Stadium (Indore), Roop Singh Stadium (Gwalior) and Holkar Cricket Stadium (Indore). Madhya Pradesh cricket team's best performances in Ranji Trophy was in 1998–99, when the Chandrakant Pandit-led team ended as the runner-up. Its predecessor, the Indore-based Holkar cricket team, had won the Ranji Trophy four times. In year 2022, Chandrakant Pandit coached Madhya Pradesh cricket team defeated 41-time champion Mumbai Cricket Team in Ranji Trophy 2021–2022 season. It is Madhya Pradesh's maiden title at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium.[75]

Aishbagh Stadium in Bhopal is the home ground for World Series Hockey team Bhopal Badshahs. The state also has a football team that participates in the Santosh Trophy.

MP United FC is an Indian football that played in the 2nd Division I-League.

On 6 December 2017, the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced that players from the state would be given government jobs on winning medals in international events.

Madhu Yadav, the former Captain of the India women's national field hockey team, a 1982 Asian Games gold medallist and an Arjuna Award recipient, is from Jabalpur.[76]

Text extracted from URL 31:

The North Indian state of Himachal Pradesh is a state that has remained largely uninfluenced by Western culture. Himachal Pradesh is a multi-religion practising, multicultural and multilingual state. Some of the most commonly spoken languages are Hindi and the various Pahari languages.[1] The Hindu communities residing in Himachal include the Brahmins, Rajputs, Kannets, Rathis and Kolis. There is also a tribal population in the state which mainly comprises Gaddis, Kinnarms, Gujjars, Pangawals and Lahaulis.[2]

Himachal is well known for its handicrafts. The carpets, leather works, shawls, paintings, metalware and woodwork are worth appreciating. Pashmina shawl is one of the products which is highly in demand not only in Himachal but all over the country. Himachali caps are also famous artwork of its people.

Local music and dance reflects the cultural identity of the state. Through their dance and music, they praise their gods during local festivals and other special occasions.

There are a number of fairs and festivals celebrated in Himachal Pradesh, including the temple fairs in nearly every region that are of great significance to this state.

The day-to-day food of Himachalis is very similar to the rest of the north India. They too have lentil, broth, rice, vegetables and bread, etc. As compared to other states in north India, non-vegetarian cuisine is more preferred. Some of the specialities of Himachal include Manee, Madeera, Pateer, Chouck, Bhagjery and chutney of til.

The Annual Festival of Kasol known as Himachal Hills Festival which take place from 27 to 30 December every year in Kasol.[3]

Around 96% of the population of the state is of Hindus. The major communities include Brahmins, Rajputs, Choudharies, Kannets, Rathis and Kolis. The tribal population comprises the Gaddis, Kinnars, Jadun, Tanolis. Gujjars, Pangawals and Lahaulis. From the alpine pasture regions to the lower regions during the cold winter season are mainly Hindus. The Kinnars are the inhabitants of Kinnaur and they generally practice polyandry and polygamy. The Gujjars are nomadic people who rear buffalo herds and are mainly Muslim. The Lahaulis of Lahaul and Spiti and native of spiti, Kinnaur region mainly comprises Buddhists.[4] A percentage of people are also Tibetans. Muslim, Christian and Sikhs.

Though Hindi is the state language, many people speak the various Western Pahari languages. A majority of the population is engaged in agricultural practices, however the more educated of them are now moving towards tertiary sectors.

As per the traditional dressing norms the dress of the Brahmin male includes dhoti, kurta, coat, waistcoat, turban and a hand towel while that of the Rajput male consists of tight fitting churidar pyjamas, a long coat and a starched turban. With the changing time the dress up of the people has now become a mixed one. Though the above-mentioned style is now hardly followed, people have started wearing western style of clothes.

The typical house is constructed of clay bricks and the roofs are of slate. In some areas the slate roof is also replaced by timber.

The handicraft that comes out of this state are the carpets, leather works, shawls, metalware, woodwork and paintings. Pashmina shawl is the pretty product which is in high demand not only in Himachal but all over the country. Colourful Himachali caps are also famous art work of the people. A tribe namely Dom is expert in manufacturing bamboo items like boxes, sofas, chairs, baskets and rack. Metalware of the state include utensils, ritualistic vessels, idols, gold and silver jewelleryes.

Weaving, carving, painting, and chiselling are considered to be the part of the life of Himachalis. Himachal is well known for designing shawls especially in Kullu. The architecture, objects, shops, museums, galleries and craftsmen charm with the variety perfected through time.

Women take an active part in pottery and men in carpentry. For ages, wood is used in Himachal in the construction of homes, idols etc.

Music and dance of Himachal Pradesh reflects its cultural identity. Through their dance and music, they entreat their gods during local festivals and other special occasions. There are also dances that are specific to certain regions of the state.

Some of the dance forms of Himachal are Losar Shona Chuksam (Kinnaur), Dangi (Chamba), Gee Dance and Burah dance, (Sirmour), Naati, Kharait, Ujagjama and Chadhgebrikar (Kullu) and Shunto (Lahaul & Spiti).

The main dance form of Himachal Pradesh is nati.

People of the state generally prefer folk music. There is no classical form of music, as for the Himachal Pradesh is concerned.

Himachali dance forms are highly varied and quite complicated. These dances are a very vital part of the tribal life. It reflects the culture and the tradition of Himachal Pradesh. Hardly any festivity here is celebrated without dancing. Some of the dance forms like Dulshol, Dharveshi, Drodi, Dev Naritya, Rakshas Nritya, Dangi, Lasa, Nati and Nagas are danced all over the region.

Apart from the fairs and festivals that are celebrated all over India, there are number of other fairs and festivals also that are at the high point of Himachal Pradesh. These festivals are the time for the Himachalis to adorn colourful dress and accessories and get mixed up with the rest of their kins. Some of these fairs and festivals in the upper regions are the Kullu Dussehra, Shivratri Fair (Mandi), Shoolini Mela (Solan), Minjar Fair (Chamba), Mani Mahesh Chhari Yatra (Chamba), Renuka fair (Sirmaur), Lavi Trade Fair (Rampur), Vrajeshwari fair (Kangra), Jwalamukhi Fair (Jwalamukhi), Holi Fair (Sujanpur Tira), and Naina Devi Fair (Bilaspur), Fulaich {Kinnaur valley}. In the lower regions of Himachal are temple Fairs in Una District such as the Peeplo Fair, the Bharoli Bhagaur Fair, the 'Mairi' Guruduwara Fair, the 'Chintpurni' temple Fair, the 'Kamakhya temple' Fair, including the annual Himachal Hill Festival in the village Polian Purohitan during the fourth week of October. The centuries-old Sair festival[5] is celebrated mainly in Shimla, Kangra, Mandi, Kullu and Solan districts every year in mid-September. It is celebrated to mark the end of the crop harvest and also the rakhi thread are removed and offered to the mother sairi.

The day-to-day food of Himachalis is very similar to the rest of north India. They too have lentil, broth, rice, vegetables and bread, Rajmaha, Sidhu. As compared to other states in north India non-vegetarian cuisine is preferred. Traditionally, Himachali cuisine is dominated by red meat and wheat bread. Thick and rich gravy, with aromatic spices, is used in abundance as the base of many dishes. Dham is the traditional food served in marriages or other functions. Siddu, Patrode, Cheele, Tudkiya Bhath and Babru are the authentic snack dishes of the state. Now, steamed momos (dumplings) and noodles are also readily available and popular with travellers who want to graduate to Indian food slowly.[6] Some of the specialties of Himachal include Manee, Mandra or "Madra", "Palda", "Redu" Patrode, Chouck, Bhagjery and chutney of til (sesame seeds).

Text extracted from URL 32:

Himachal Pradesh (/hɪˌməːtʃəl prəˈdeʃ/; Hindi: [ɦɪˈməːtʃəl prəˈd̪eːʃ] ⓘ; lit. "Snow-laden Mountain Province"[9]) is a state in the northern part of India. Situated in the Western Himalayas, it is one of the thirteen mountain states and is characterised by an extreme landscape featuring several peaks and extensive river systems. Himachal Pradesh is the northernmost state of India and shares borders with the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to the north, and the states of Punjab to the west, Haryana to the southwest, Uttarakhand to the southeast and a very narrow border with Uttar Pradesh to the south. The state also shares an international border to the east with the Tibet Autonomous Region in China. Himachal Pradesh is also known as Dev Bhoomi or Dev Bhumi, meaning 'Land of Gods'[10] and Veer Bhoomi which means 'Land of the Brave'. [11]

The predominantly mountainous region comprising the present-day Himachal Pradesh has been inhabited since pre-historic times, having witnessed multiple waves of human migrations from other areas.[12] Through its history, the region was mostly ruled by local kingdoms, some of which accepted the suzerainty of larger empires. Prior to India's independence from the British, Himachal comprised the hilly regions of the Punjab Province of British India. After independence, many of the hilly territories were organised as the Chief Commissioner's province of Himachal Pradesh, which later became a Union Territory. In 1966, hilly areas of the neighbouring Punjab state were merged into Himachal and it was ultimately granted full statehood in 1971.

Himachal Pradesh is spread across valleys with many perennial rivers flowing through them. Agriculture, horticulture, hydropower, and tourism are important constituents of the state's economy. The hilly state is almost universally electrified, with 99.5% of households having electricity

as of 2016. The state was declared India's second open-defecation-free state in 2016.[13] According to a survey of CMS-India Corruption Study in 2017, Himachal Pradesh is India's least corrupt state.[14][15]

Himachal Pradesh is divided into 12 districts.

The name of the state is a reference to its setting: Himachal means "snowy slopes" (Sanskrit: hima, meaning "snow"; acal/achal meaning "slopes", or "land", or "abode"). Himachal Pradesh (ɦɪˈmaːtʃəl prəˈdeːʃ; literally "snow-laden province"). Himachal refers to being in the "aanchal" of the Himalayas hence, sheltered by the Himalayas or by the snow. It means "the land in the lap of snowy Himalayas". Pradesh means "state". Himachal was named by Diwakar Datt Sharma, a Sanskrit scholar.[16][17]

Tribes such as the Koli, Hali, Dagi, Dhaugri, Dasa, Khasa, Kanaura, and Kirata inhabited the region from the prehistoric era.[18] The foothills of the modern state of Himachal Pradesh were inhabited by people from the Indus valley civilisation, which flourished between 2250 and 1750 BCE.[19] The Kols and Mundas are believed to be the original inhabitants to the hills of present-day Himachal Pradesh, followed by the Bhotas and Kiratas.[19]

During the Vedic period, several small republics known as Janapada existed which were later conquered by the Gupta Empire. After a brief period of supremacy by King Harshavardhana, the region was divided into several local powers headed by chieftains, including some Rajputs principalities. These kingdoms enjoyed a large degree of independence and were invaded by Delhi Sultanate several times.[19] Mahmud Ghaznavi conquered Kangra at the beginning of the 11th century. Timur and Sikander Lodi also marched through the lower hills of the state, captured several forts, and fought many battles.[19] Several hill states acknowledged Mughal suzerainty and paid regular tribute to the Mughals.[20]

The Kingdom of Gorkha conquered many kingdoms and came to power in Nepal in 1768.[19] They consolidated their military power and began to expand their territory.[19] Gradually, the Kingdom of Nepal annexed Sirmour and Shimla. Under the leadership of Amar Singh Thapa, the Nepali army laid siege to Kangra. They managed to defeat Sansar Chand Katoch, the ruler of Kangra, in 1806 with the help of many provincial chiefs. However, the Nepali army could not capture Kangra fort which came under Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809. After the defeat, they expanded towards the south of the state. However, Raja Ram Singh, Raja of Siba State, captured the fort of Siba from the remnants of Lahore Darbar in Samvat 1846,[19] during the First Anglo-Sikh War.

They came into direct conflict with the British along the tarai belt, after which the British expelled them from the provinces of the Satluj.[19] The British gradually emerged as the paramount power in the region.[19] In the revolt of 1857, or first Indian war of independence, arising from several grievances against the British,[19] the people of the hill states were not as politically active as were those in other parts of the country.[19] They and their rulers, except Bushahr, remained more or less inactive.[19] Some, including the rulers of Chamba, Bilaspur, Bhagal and Dhami, rendered help to the British government during the revolt.

The British territories came under the British Crown after Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1858. The states of Chamba, Mandi and Bilaspur made good progress in many fields during the British rule.[19] During World War I, virtually all rulers of the hill states remained loyal and contributed to the British war effort, both in the form of men and materials. Among these were the states of Kangra, Jaswan, Datarpur, Guler, Rajgarh, Nurpur, Chamba, Suket, Mandi, and Bilaspur.[19]

After independence, the Chief Commissioner's Province of Himachal Pradesh was organised on 15 April 1948 as a result of the integration of 30 petty princely states (including feudal princes and zaildars) in the promontories of the western Himalayas. These were known as the Simla Hills States and four Punjab southern hill states under the Himachal Pradesh (Administration) Order, 1948 under Sections 3 and 4 of the Extra-Provincial Jurisdiction Act, 1947 (later renamed as the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, 1947 vide A.O. of 1950). The State of Bilaspur was merged into Himachal Pradesh on 1 July 1954 by the Himachal Pradesh and Bilaspur (New State) Act, 1954.[21]

Himachal became a Part 'C' state on 26 January 1950 when the Constitution of India came into effect and the Lieutenant Governor was appointed. The Legislative Assembly was elected in 1952. Himachal Pradesh became a union territory on 1 November 1956.[19] Some areas of the Punjab State, namely, Simla, Kangra, Kullu and Lahul and Spiti Districts, Lohara, Amb and Una Kanungo circles, some areas of Santokhgarh Kanungo circle and some other specified area of Una Tehsil of Hoshiarpur District, as well as Kandaghat and Nalagarh Tehsils of erstwhile PEPSU State, besides some parts of Dhar Kalan Kanungo circle of Pathankot District—were merged with Himachal Pradesh on 1 November 1966 on the enactment by Parliament of the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966.[21] On 18 December 1970, the State of Himachal Pradesh Act was passed by Parliament, and the new state came into being on 25 January 1971. Himachal became the 18th state of the Indian Union with Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar as its first chief minister.[19]

Himachal is in the western Himalayas situated between 30°22'N and 33°12'N latitude and 75°47'E and 79°04'E longitude. Covering an area of 55,673 square kilometres (21,495 sq mi),[3] it is a mountainous state. The Zaskar range runs in the northeastern part of the state and the great Himalayan range run through the eastern and northern parts, while the Dhauladhar and the Pir Panjal ranges of the lesser Himalayas, and their valleys, form much of the core regions. The outer Himalayas, or the Shiwalik range, form southern and western Himachal Pradesh. At 6,816 m, Reo Purgil is the highest mountain peak in the state of Himachal Pradesh.[22]

The drainage system of Himachal is composed both of rivers and glaciers. Himalayan rivers criss-cross the entire mountain chain. Himachal Pradesh provides water to both the Indus and Ganges basins.[23] The drainage systems of the region are the Chandra Baga or the Chenab, the Ravi, the Beas, the Sutlej, and the Yamuna. These rivers are perennial and are fed by snow and rainfall. They are protected by an extensive cover of natural vegetation.[23] Four of the five Punjab rivers flow through Himachal Pradesh, three of them originating in the state. These rivers run through a maze of valleys separated by the mountain ranges of the state. The Satluj Valley is formed by the Satluj river entering the state near Shipki La, while the Spiti and Baspa Valleys are formed by the river's two major tributaries in the state. The Beas river flows through the Kullu and the Kangra Valleys, with tributary Parvati forming the Parvati Valley. The Chenab river, formed by the confluence of the Chandra and Baga, forms much of the northern regions of Lahaul and Pangi, and the Ravi river flows principally through Chamba. The Pabbar and Giri rivers in the southeast are part of the Yamuna basin.

Due to extreme variation in elevation, great variation occurs in the climatic conditions of Himachal Pradesh. The climate varies from hot and humid subtropical in the southern tracts to, with more elevation, cold, alpine, and glacial in the northern and eastern mountain ranges.[24] The state's winter capital, Dharamsala receives very heavy rainfall, while areas like Lahaul and Spiti are cold and almost rainless. Broadly, Himachal experiences three seasons: summer, winter, and rainy season. Summer lasts from mid-April until the end of June and most parts become very hot (except in the alpine zone which experiences a mild summer) with the average temperature ranging from 28 to 32 °C (82 to 90 °F). Winter lasts from late November until mid-March. Snowfall is common in alpine

tracts. Pollution is affecting the climate of almost all the states of India. Due to steps taken by governments to prevent pollution, Himachal Pradesh has become the first smoke-free state in India which means cooking in the entire state is free of traditional chulhas.[25]

Himachal Pradesh is one of the states that lies in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR), one of the richest reservoirs of biological diversity in the world. As of 2002, the IHR is undergoing large scale irrational extraction of wild, medicinal herbs, thus endangering many of its high-value gene stock. To address this, a workshop on 'Endangered Medicinal Plant Species in Himachal Pradesh' was held in 2002 and the conference was attended by forty experts from diverse disciplines.[26]

According to 2003 Forest Survey of India report, legally defined forest areas constitute 66.52% of the area of Himachal Pradesh.[27] Vegetation in the state is dictated by elevation and precipitation. The state is endowed with a high diversity of medicinal and aromatic plants.[28] Lahaul-Spiti region of the state, being a cold desert, supports unique plants of medicinal value including *Ferula jeschkeana*, *Hyoscyamus niger*, *Lancea tibetica*, and *Saussurea bracteata*. [29][30]

Himachal is also said to be the fruit bowl of the country,[31] with widespread orchards. Meadows and pastures are also seen clinging to steep slopes. After the winter season, the hillsides and orchards bloom with wild flowers, white gladiolas, carnations, marigolds,[32] roses, chrysanthemums, tulips and lilies are carefully cultivated. Himachal Pradesh Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation Ltd. (HPMC) is a state body that markets fresh and processed fruits.[33]

Himachal Pradesh has around 463 bird, and *Tragopan melanocephalus* is the state bird of Himachal Pradesh[34] 77 mammalian, 44 reptile and 80 fish species. Himachal Pradesh has currently five National Parks.[35] Great Himalayan National Park, oldest and largest National park in the state, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Pin Valley National Park, Inderkilla, Khirganga and Simbalbara are the other national Parks located in the state.[35][36][37][38] The state also has 30 wildlife sanctuaries and 3 conservation reserves.[38] The state bird of Himachal Pradesh is the Western tragopan, locally known as the jujurana.[39] It is one of the rarest living pheasants in the world. The state animal is the snow leopard, which is even rarer to find than the jujurana.[40]

The Legislative Assembly of Himachal Pradesh has no pre-constitution history. The State itself is a post-independence creation. It came into being as a centrally administered territory on 15 April 1948 from the integration of thirty erstwhile princely states.[41]

Himachal Pradesh is governed through a parliamentary system of representative democracy, a feature the state shares with other Indian states. Universal suffrage is granted to residents. The legislature consists of elected members and special office bearers such as the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker who are elected by the members. Assembly meetings are presided over by the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker in the Speaker's absence. The judiciary is composed of the Himachal Pradesh High Court and a system of lower courts.

Executive authority is vested in the Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister, although the titular head of government is the Governor. The governor is the head of state appointed by the President of India. The leader of the party or coalition with a majority in the Legislative Assembly is appointed as the Chief Minister by the governor, and the Council of Ministers are appointed by the governor on the advice of the Chief Minister. The Council of Ministers reports to the Legislative Assembly. The Assembly is unicameral with 68 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA).[42] Terms of office run for five years, unless the Assembly is dissolved prior to the completion of the

term. Auxiliary authorities known as panchayats, for which local body elections are regularly held, govern local affairs.

In the assembly elections held in November 2022, the Indian National Congress secured an absolute majority, winning 40 of the 68 seats while the BJP won only 25 of the 68 seats. Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu was sworn in as Himachal Pradesh's 15th Chief Minister in Shimla on 11 December 2022. Mukesh Agnihotri was sworn in as his deputy the same day.

The state of Himachal Pradesh is divided into 12 districts^[43] which are grouped into three divisions, Shimla, Kangra and Mandi.^[44] The districts are further divided into 73 subdivisions, 78 blocks and 172 Tehsils.^[43]

Planning in Himachal Pradesh started in 1951 along with the rest of India with the implementation of the first five-year plan. The First Plan allocated ₹52.7 million to Himachal Pradesh.^[53] More than 50% of this expenditure was incurred on transport and communication; while the power sector got a share of just 4.6%, though it had steadily increased to 7% by the Third Plan.^[54] Expenditure on agriculture and allied activities increased from 14.4% in the First Plan to 32% in the Third Plan, showing a progressive decline afterwards from 24% in the Fourth Plan to less than 10% in the Tenth Plan.^[54] Expenditure on energy sector was 24.2% of the total in the Tenth Plan.^[54]

The total GDP for 2005–06 was estimated at ₹254 billion as against ₹230 billion in the year 2004–05, showing an increase of 10.5%.^[55] The GDP for fiscal 2015–16 was estimated at ₹1.110 trillion,^[50] which increased to ₹1.247 trillion in 2016–17, recording growth of 6.8%.^[51] The per capita income increased from ₹130,067 in 2015–16 to ₹147,277 in 2016–17.^[50]^[51] The state government's advance estimates for fiscal 2017–18 stated the total GDP and per capita income as ₹1.359 trillion and ₹158,462, respectively.^[52] As of 2018, Himachal is the 22nd-largest state economy in India with ₹1.52 lakh crore (US\$19 billion) in gross domestic product and has the 13th-highest per capita income (₹160,000 (US\$2,000)) among the states and union territories of India.^[56]

Himachal Pradesh also ranks as the second-best performing state in the country on human development indicators after Kerala.^[57] One of the Indian government's key initiatives to tackle unemployment is the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). The participation of women in the NREGA has been observed to vary across different regions of the nation. As of the year 2009–2010, Himachal Pradesh joined the category of high female participation, recording a 46% share of NREGS (National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) workdays for women. This was a drastic increase from the 13% that was recorded in 2006–2007.^[58]

Agriculture accounts for 9.4% of the net state domestic product.^[59] It is the main source of income and employment in Himachal. About 90% of the population in Himachal depends directly upon agriculture, which provides direct employment to 62% of total workers of state.^[59] The main cereals grown include wheat, maize, rice and barley with major cropping systems being maize-wheat, rice-wheat and maize-potato-wheat.^[60]^[61] Pulses, fruits, vegetables and oilseeds are among the other crops grown in the state.^[60] Centuries-old traditional Kuhl irrigation system is prevalent in the Kangra valley,^[62] though in recent years these Kuhls have come under threat from hydroprojects on small streams in the valley.^[63] Land husbandry initiatives such as the Mid-Himalayan Watershed Development Project, which includes the Himachal Pradesh Reforestation Project (HPRP), the world's largest clean development mechanism (CDM) undertaking, have improved agricultural yields and productivity, and raised rural household incomes.^[64]

Apple is the principal cash crop of the state grown principally in the districts of Shimla, Kinnaur, Kullu, Mandi, Chamba and some parts of Sirmaur and Lahaul-Spiti with an average annual

production of five lakh tonnes and per hectare production of 8 to 10 tonnes.[65] The apple cultivation constitute 49 per cent of the total area under fruit crops and 85% of total fruit production in the state with an estimated economy of ₹3500 crore.[65] Apples from Himachal are exported to other Indian states and even other countries.[66][67] In 2011–12, the total area under apple cultivation was 104,000 hectares, increased from 90,347 hectares in 2000–01.[67] According to the provisional estimates of Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, the annual apple production in Himachal for fiscal 2015–16 stood at 753,000 tonnes, making it India's second-largest apple-producing state after Jammu and Kashmir.[68] The state is also among the leading producers of other fruits such as apricots, cherries, peaches, pears, plums and strawberries in India.

Kangra tea is grown in the Kangra valley. Tea plantation began in 1849, and production peaked in the late 19th century with the tea becoming popular across the globe.[69] Production dipped sharply after the 1905 Kangra earthquake and continues to decline.[70] The tea received geographical indication status in 2005.

Himachal Pradesh is renowned as Asia's pharmaceutical hub, housing a total of 652 pharmaceutical units. The state hosts a thriving ₹40,000 crore drug manufacturing industry.[71][72]

Hydropower is one of the major sources of income generation for the state.[73] The state has an abundance of hydropower resources because of the presence of various perennial rivers. Many high-capacity hydropower plants have been constructed which produce surplus electricity that is sold to other states, such as Delhi, Punjab and West Bengal.[74] The income generated from exporting the electricity to other states is being provided as subsidy to the consumers in the state.[75] The rich hydropower resources of Himachal have resulted in the state becoming almost universally electrified with around 94.8% houses receiving electricity as of 2001, as compared to the national average of 55.9%.[75] Himachal's hydro-electric power production is, however, yet to be fully utilised.[76] The identified hydroelectric potential for the state is 27,436 MW in five river basins[74] while the hydroelectric capacity in 2016 was 10,351 MW.[76]

Tourism in Himachal Pradesh is a major contributor to the state's economy and growth. The Himalayas attracts tourists from all over the world. Hill stations like Shimla, Manali, Dharamshala, Dalhousie, Chamba, Khajjiar, Kullu and Kasauli are popular destinations for both domestic and foreign tourists.[77] The state also has many important Hindu pilgrimage sites with prominent temples like Shri Chamunda Devi Mandir, Naina Devi Temple, Bajreshwari Mata Temple, Jwala Ji Temple, Chintpurni, Baijnath Temple, Bhimakali Temple, Bijli Mahadev and Jakhoo Temple.[78] Manimahesh Lake situated in the Bharmour region of Chamba district is the venue of an annual Hindu pilgrimage trek held in the month of August which attracts lakhs of devotees.[79] The state is also referred to as "Dev Bhoomi" (literally meaning Abode of Gods) due to its mention as such in ancient Hindu texts and occurrence of a large number of historical temples in the state.[80]

Himachal is also known for its adventure tourism activities like ice skating in Shimla, paragliding in Bir Billing and Solang Valley, rafting in Kullu, skiing in Manali, boating in Bilaspur, fishing in Tirthan Valley, trekking and horse riding in different parts of the state.[81] Shimla, the state's capital, is home to Asia's only natural ice-skating rink.[82] Spiti Valley in Lahaul and Spiti District situated at an altitude of over 3000 metres with its picturesque landscapes is popular destination for adventure seekers. The region also has some of the oldest Buddhist monasteries in the world.[83]

Himachal hosted the first Paragliding World Cup in India from 24 to 31 October in 2015.[84][85] The venue for the paragliding world cup was Bir Billing, which is 70 km from the tourist town Macleod Ganj, located in the heart of Himachal in Kangra District. Bir Billing is the centre for aero sports in

Himachal and considered as best for paragliding.[84] Buddhist monasteries, trekking to tribal villages and mountain biking are other local possibilities.

There are a variety of festivals celebrated by the locals of Himachal Pradesh who worship gods and goddesses. There are over 2000 villages in Himachal Pradesh which celebrate festivals such as Kullu Dussehra, Chamba's Minjar, Renuka ji Fair, Lohri, Halda, Phagli, Losar and Mandi Shivratri.[86] There are approximately 6000 temples in Himachal Pradesh with a known one being Bijli Mahadev. The temple is seen as a 20-meter structure built in stone which, according to locals, is known to attract lightning. They say that this is a way the Gods show their blessings.[87]

The Great Himalayan National Park is found in the Kullu districts of Himachal Pradesh. It has an area of 620 km² and ranging from an altitude of 1500 meters to 4500 meters and was created in 1984. There are various forest types found here such as Deodar, Himalayan Fir, Spruce, Oak and Alpine pastures. In the Great Himalayan National Park, there are a variety of animals found such as Snow leopard, Yak, Himalayan black bear, Western tragopan, Monal and Musk deer. This National Park is a trail to many hikers and trekkers too. Moreover, there are sanctuaries which are tourist spots such as Naina Devi and Gobind Sagar Sanctuary in the Una and Bilaspur districts with an area of 220 km². There are animals such as Indian porcupine and giant flying squirrel found here. The Gobind Sagar Lake has fish species such as Mrigal, Silver carp, Katla, Mahaseer and Rohu are found here. Narkanda located in at an altitude of around 8850 feet is known for its apple orchards. It is located between the river valleys of Giri and Sutlej.[88]

Himachal has three domestic airports in Kangra, Kullu and Shimla districts, respectively.[89] The air routes connect the state with New Delhi and Chandigarh.

The only broad-gauge railway line in the whole state connects Amb Andaura–Una Himachal railway station to Nangal Dam in Punjab and runs all the way to Daultpur, Himachal Pradesh.[90] It is an electrified track since 1999. While a tiny portion of line adjacent to Kandrori(KNDI) station on either side on Pathankot-Jalandhar Section, under Ferozepur Division of Northern Railway also crosses into Himachal Pradesh, before venturing out to Punjab again.

Future constructions:

Himachal is known for its narrow-gauge railways. One is the Kalka-Shimla Railway, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and another is the Kangra Valley Railway.[91] The total length of these two tracks is 259 kilometres (161 mi). The Kalka-Shimla Railway passes through many tunnels and bridges, while the Pathankot–Jogindernagar one meanders through a maze of hills and valleys. The total route length of the operational railway network in the state is 296.26 kilometres (184.09 mi).[92][93][94]

Roads are the major mode of transport in Himachal Pradesh due to its hilly terrain. The state has road network of 28,208 kilometres (17,528 mi),[95] including eight National Highways (NH) that constitute 1,234 kilometres (767 mi) and 19 State Highways with a total length of 1,625 kilometres (1,010 mi).[95] Hamirpur district has the highest road density in the country.[96] Some roads are closed during winter and monsoon seasons due to snow and landslides. The state-owned Himachal Road Transport Corporation with a fleet of over 3,100,[97] operates bus services connecting important cities and towns with villages within the state and also on various interstate routes. In addition, around 5,000 private buses ply in the state.[98]

Himachal Pradesh has a total population of 6,864,602 including 3,481,873 males and 3,382,729 females according to the Census of India 2011. It has only 0.57 per cent of India's total population, recording a growth of 12.81 per cent.[5][100] The child sex ratio increased from 896 in 2001 to 909

in 2011.[101] The total fertility rate (TFR) per woman in 2015 stood at 1.7, one of the lowest in India.[102]

The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes account for 25.19 per cent and 5.71 per cent of the population, respectively.[103] The sex ratio stood at 972 females per 1,000 males, recording a marginal increase from 968 in 2001.[101] The main caste groups in Himachal Pradesh are Brahmins, Rajputs, Kanets, Kulindas, Girths, Raos, Rathis, Kolis, Hollis, Chamars, Drains, Rehars, Chanals, Lohars, Baris, Julahas, Dhakhis, Turis, Batwals[104]The Koli forms the largest caste-cluster, comprising 30% of the total population of Himachal Pradesh.[105]

In the census, the state is placed 21st on the population chart, followed by Tripura at 22nd place.[106] Kangra District was top-ranked with a population strength of 1,507,223 (21.98%), Mandi District 999,518 (14.58%), Shimla District 813,384 (11.86%), Solan District 576,670 (8.41%), Sirmaur District 530,164 (7.73%), Una District 521,057 (7.60%), Chamba District 518,844 (7.57%), Hamirpur district 454,293 (6.63%), Kullu District 437,474 (6.38%), Bilaspur district 382,056 (5.57%), Kinnaur District 84,298 (1.23%) and Lahaul Spiti 31,528 (0.46%).[107]

The life expectancy at birth in Himachal Pradesh increased significantly from 52.6 years in the period from 1970 to 1975 (above the national average of 49.7 years) to 72.0 years for the period 2011–15 (above the national average of 68.3 years).[108] The infant mortality rate stood at 40 in 2010, and the crude birth rate has declined from 37.3 in 1971 to 16.9 in 2010, below the national average of 26.5 in 1998. The crude death rate was 6.9 in 2010.[109] Himachal Pradesh's literacy rate has almost doubled between 1981 and 2011 (see table to right). The state is one of the most literate states of India with a literacy rate of 83.78% as of 2011.[7]: 114

Hindi is the de jure official language of Himachal Pradesh and is spoken by the majority of the population as a lingua franca.[110] Sanskrit is the additional official language of the state.[111] Although mostly encountered in academic and symbolic contexts, the government of Himachal Pradesh is encouraging its wider study and use.[112]

Most of the population, however, speaks natively one or another of the Western Pahari languages (locally also known as Himachali or just Pahari), a subgroup of the Indo-Aryan languages that includes Bhattiyali, Bilaspuri, Chambeali, Churahi, Gaddi, Hinduri, Kangri, Kullu, Mahasu Pahari, Mandeali, Pahari Kinnauri, Pangwali, and Sirmauri. Additional Indo-Aryan languages spoken include Punjabi (native to 4.4% of the population), Nepali (1.3%), Chinali, Lahul Lohar, and others. In parts of the state there are speakers of Tibeto-Burman languages like Kinnauri (1.2%), Tibetan (0.3%), Lahuli–Spiti languages (0.16%), Pattani (0.12%), Bhoti Kinnauri, Chitkuli Kinnauri, Bunan (or Gahri), Jangshung, Kanashi, Shumcho, Spiti Bhoti, Sunam, Tinani, and Tukpa.[113][114]

Languages of Himachal Pradesh (2011)[113]

Religion in Himachal Pradesh (2011)[115]

Hinduism is the major religion in Himachal Pradesh. More than 95% of the total population adheres to the Hindu faith and majorly follows Shaivism and Shaktism traditions,[116] the distribution of which is evenly spread throughout the state.[117] Himachal Pradesh has the highest proportion of Hindu population among all the states and union territories in India.[118]

Other religions that form a smaller percentage are Islam, Sikhism and Buddhism. Muslims are mainly concentrated in Sirmaur, Chamba, Una and Solan districts where they form 4.2-5.7% of the population.[117] Sikhs mostly live in towns and cities and constitute 1.16% of the state population.

The Buddhists, who constitute 1.15%, are mainly natives and tribals from Lahaul and Spiti, where they form a majority of 62%, and Kinnaur, where they form 21.5%.^[117]

Himachal Pradesh was one of the few states that had remained largely untouched by external customs, largely due to its difficult terrain. With remarkable economic and social advancements, the state has changed rapidly.^[119] Himachal Pradesh is a multilingual state like other Indian states. Western Pahari languages also known as Himachali languages are widely spoken in the state. Some of the most commonly spoken Pahadi lects are Kangri, Mandyali, Kulvi, Chambeali, Bharmauri and Kinnauri.^[120]

Himachal is well known for its handicrafts. The carpets, leather works, Kullu shawls, Kangra paintings, Chamba Rumals, stoles, embroidered grass footwear (Pullan chappal), silver jewellery, metal ware, knitted woolen socks, Pattoo, basketry of cane and bamboo (Wicker and Rattan) and woodwork are among the notable ones.^{[121][122][123]} Of late, the demand for these handicrafts has increased within and outside the country.^[122]

Himachali caps of various colour bands are also well-known local art work, and are often treated as a symbol of the Himachali identity.^[124] The colour of the Himachali caps has been an indicator of political loyalties in the hill state for a long period of time with Congress party leaders like Virbhadra Singh donning caps with green band and the rival BJP leader Prem Kumar Dhumal wearing a cap with maroon band.^{[125][126]} The former has served six terms as the Chief Minister of the state while the latter is a two-time Chief Minister.^[127] Local music and dance also reflect the cultural identity of the state. Through their dance and music, the Himachali people entreat their gods during local festivals and other special occasions.^[128]

There are national and regional fairs and festivals, including temple fairs in nearly every region.^{[128][129]} The Kullu Dussehra, Minjar mela and Mahashivratri Mandi festival is nationally known.^[130] The day-to-day cuisine of Himachalis is similar to the rest of northern India with Punjabi and Tibetan influences.^[131] Lentils (Dāl), rice (chāwal or bhāt), vegetables (sabzī) and chapati (wheat flatbread) form the staple food of the local population.^[131] Non-vegetarian food is more widely accepted in Himachal Pradesh than elsewhere in India, partly due to the scarcity of fresh vegetables on the hilly terrain of the state.^[132]

Himachali specialities include Siddu, Babru, Khatta, Mhanee, Channa Madra, Patrode, Mah ki dal, Chamba-style fried fish, Kullu trout, Chha Gosht, Pahadi Chicken, Sepu Badi, Auriya Kaddu, Aloo palda, Pateer, Makki di roti, Sarson ka saag, Chamba Chukh (Chouck), Bhagjery, Chutney of Til, etc.

At the time of Independence, Himachal Pradesh had a literacy rate of 8% – one of the lowest in the country.^[133] By 2011, the literacy rate surged to 82.8%,^{[5][134]} making Himachal one of the most-literate states in the country. There are over 10,000 primary schools, 1,000 secondary schools and more than 1,300 high schools in the state.^[135] In meeting the constitutional obligation to make primary education compulsory, Himachal became the first state in India to make elementary education accessible to every child.^[136] Himachal Pradesh is an exception to the nationwide gender bias in education levels.^[137] The state has a female literacy rate of around 76%.^[138] In addition, school enrolment and participation rates for girls are almost universal at the primary level. While higher levels of education do reflect a gender-based disparity, Himachal is still significantly ahead of other states at bridging the gap.^[139] The Hamirpur District in particular stands out for high literacy rates across all metrics of measurement.^[140]

The state government has played an instrumental role in the rise of literacy in the state by spending a significant proportion of the state's GDP on education. During the first six five-year plans, most of

the development expenditure in the education sector was utilised in quantitative expansion, but after the seventh five-year-plan the state government switched emphasis on qualitative improvement and modernisation of education.[133] To raise the number of the teaching staff at primary schools they appointed over 1000 teacher aids through the Vidya Upasak Yojna in 2001.[133] The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is another HP government initiative that not only aims for universal elementary education but also encourages communities to engage in the management of schools.[141] The Rashtriya Madhayamic Shiksha Abhiyan launched in 2009, is a similar scheme but focuses on improving access to quality secondary education.[141]

The standard of education in the state has reached a considerably high level as compared to other states in India[140] with several reputed educational institutes for higher studies. The Baddi University of Emerging Sciences and Technologies, Indian Institute of Technology Mandi, Indian Institute of Management Sirmaur, Himachal Pradesh University in Shimla, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamsala, National Institute of Technology, Hamirpur, Indian Institute of Information Technology Una, Alakh Prakash Goyal University, Maharaja Agrasen University, Himachal Pradesh National Law University are some of the notable universities in the state. Indira Gandhi Medical College and Hospital in Shimla, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Government Medical College in Kangra, Rajiv Gandhi Government Post Graduate Ayurvedic College in Paprola and Homoeopathic Medical College & Hospital in Kumarhatti are the prominent medical institutes in the state. Besides these, there is a Government Dental College in Shimla which is the state's first recognised dental institute.[142]

The state government has also decided to start three major nursing colleges to develop the healthcare system of the state.[143] CSK Himachal Pradesh Krishi Vishwavidyalya Palampur is one of the most renowned hill agriculture institutes in the world. Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry has earned a unique distinction in India for imparting teaching, research and extension education in horticulture, forestry and allied disciplines. Further, state-run Jawaharlal Nehru Government Engineering College was inaugurated in 2006 at Sundernagar.[143]

Himachal Pradesh also hosts a campus of the fashion college, National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in Kangra.

Source: Department of Information and Public Relations.[144]

Text extracted from URL 33:

Haryana (/hʌriˈɑːnə/; Hindi: [həɾiˈjaːɳɑː]) is an Indian state located in the northern part of the country. It was carved out of the former state of East Punjab on 1 November 1966 on a linguistic basis. It is ranked 21st in terms of area, with less than 1.4% (44,212 km² or 17,070 sq mi) of India's land area.[2][13] The state capital is Chandigarh, which it shares with the neighbouring state of Punjab; and the most populous city is Faridabad, which is a part of the National Capital Region. The city of Gurgaon is among India's largest financial and technology hubs.[14] Haryana has 6 administrative divisions, 22 districts, 72 sub-divisions, 93 revenue tehsils, 50 sub-tehsils, 140 community development blocks, 154 cities and towns, 7,356 villages, and 6,222 villages panchayats.[13][15]

Haryana contains 32 special economic zones (SEZs), mainly located within the industrial corridor projects connecting the National Capital Region.[13][16] Gurgaon is considered one of the major information technology and automobile hubs of India.[17][18] Haryana ranks 11th among Indian

states in human development index.[6] The economy of Haryana is the 13th largest in India, with a gross state domestic product (GSDP) of ₹7.65 trillion (US\$96 billion) and has the country's 5th-highest GSDP per capita of ₹240,000 (US\$3,000).[5]

The state is rich in history, monuments, heritage, flora and fauna and tourism, with a well-developed economy, national highways and state roads. It is bordered by Punjab and Himachal Pradesh to the north, by Rajasthan to the west and south, while river Yamuna forms its eastern border with Uttar Pradesh. Haryana surrounds the country's capital territory of Delhi on three sides (north, west and south), consequently, a large area of Haryana state is included in the economically important National Capital Region of India for the purposes of planning and development.

Anthropologists came up with the view that Haryana was known by this name because in the post-Mahabharata period, the Abhiras live here,[19] who developed special skills in the art of agriculture.[20] According to Pran Nath Chopra, Haryana got its name from Abhirayana-Ahirayana-Hirayana-Haryana.[21]

The villages of Rakhigarhi in Hisar district and Bhirrana in Fatehabad district are home to ancient sites of the Indus Valley Civilization, which contain evidence of paved roads, a drainage system, a large-scale rainwater collection storage system, terracotta brick and statue production, and skilled metalworking (in both bronze and precious metals).[22]

During the Vedic era, Haryana was the site of the Kuru Kingdom, one of India's great Mahajanapadas. The south of Haryana is the claimed location of Manu's state of Brahmapada.[23][better source needed] The area surrounding Dhosi Hill, and districts of Rewari and Mahendragarh had Ashrams of several Rishis who made valuable contributions to important Hindu scriptures like Vedas, Upanishads, Manusmriti, Brahmanas and Puranas.[24] As per Manusmriti,[25] Manu was the king of Brahmapada, the flood time state 10,000 years ago surrounded by oldest route of Sarasvati and Drishadvati rivers on the banks of which Sanatan-Vedic or present-day Hindu ethos evolved and scriptures were composed.

Ancient bronze and stone idols of Jain Tirthankara were found in archaeological expeditions in Badli, Bhiwani (Ranila, Charkhi Dadri and Badhra), Dadri, Gurgaon (Gurugram), Hansi, Hisar, Kasan, Nahad, Narnaul, Pehowa, Rewari, Rohad, Rohtak (Asthal Bohar) and Sonapat in Haryana.[26]

Pushyabhuti dynasty ruled parts of northern India in the 7th century with its capital at Thanesar. Harsha was a prominent king of the dynasty. Tomara dynasty ruled the south Haryana region in the 10th century. Anangpal Tomar was a prominent king among the Tomaras.[27]

After the sack of Bhatner fort during the Timurid conquests of India in 1398, Timur attacked and sacked the cities of Sirsa, Fatehabad, Sunam, Kaithal and Panipat. When he reached the town of Sarsuti (Sirsa), the residents fled and were chased by a detachment of Timur's troops, with thousands of them being killed and looted by the troops. From there he travelled to Fatehabad, whose residents fled and a large number of those remaining in the town were massacred. The Ahirs resisted him at Ahruni but were defeated, with thousands being killed and many being taken prisoners while the town was burnt to ashes. From there he travelled to Tohana, whose Jat inhabitants were robbers according to Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi. They tried to resist but were defeated and fled. Timur's army pursued and killed 200 Jats, while taking many more as prisoners. He then sent a detachment to chase the fleeing Jats and killed 2,000 of them while their wives and children were enslaved and their property plundered. Timur proceeded to Kaithal whose residents were massacred and plundered, destroying all villages along the way. On the next day, he came to Assandh, whose residents were "fire-worshippers" according to Yazdi, and had fled to Delhi. Next, he

travelled to and subdued Tughlaqpur fort and Salwan before reaching Panipat whose residents had already fled. He then marched on to Loni fort.[28][29]

Hem Chandra Vikramaditya, also called Hemu, claimed royal status and the throne of Delhi after defeating Akbar's Mughal forces on 7 October 1556 in the Battle of Delhi, and assumed the ancient title of Vikramaditya. The area that is now Haryana has been ruled by some of the major empires of India. Panipat is known for three seminal battles in the history of India. In the First Battle of Panipat (1526), Babur defeated the Lodis. In the Second Battle of Panipat (1556), Akbar defeated the local Haryanvi Hindu Emperor of Delhi, who belonged to Rewari. Hem Chandra Vikramaditya had earlier won 22 battles across India from 1553 to 1556 from Punjab to Bengal, defeating the Mughals and Afghans. Hemu had defeated Akbar's forces twice at Agra and the Battle of Delhi in 1556 to become the last Hindu Emperor of India with a formal coronation at Purana Quila in Delhi on 7 October 1556. In the Third Battle of Panipat (1761), the Afghan king Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Marathas.[31]

The state was part of the British Punjab province. The Delhi division of Punjab province formed the bulk of Haryana. Among the princely states that were located in the state were Jind, Kalsia, Loharu, Dujana and Pataudi, as well as parts of the Patiala State.

During the Partition of India, the Punjab province was one of two British Indian provinces, alongside Bengal, to be partitioned between India and Pakistan. Haryana, along with other Hindu and Sikh-dominated areas of Punjab province, became part of India as East Punjab state. As a result, a significant number of Muslims left for the newly formed country of Pakistan. Similarly, a huge number of Hindu and Sikh refugees poured into the state from West Punjab. Gopi Chand Bhargava, who hailed from Sirsa in present-day Haryana, became the first Chief Minister of East Punjab.

Haryana as a state came into existence on 1 November 1966 the Punjab Reorganisation Act (1966). The Indian government set up the Shah Commission under the chairmanship of Justice JC Shah on 23 April 1966 to divide the existing state of Punjab and determine the boundaries of the new state of Haryana after consideration of the languages spoken by the people. It encompassed the predominantly Hindi-speaking southern part of former Punjab, while the state of Punjab was reduced to the area where Punjabi speakers formed the majority population. The commission delivered its report on 31 May 1966 whereby the then-districts of Hisar, Mahendragarh, Gurgaon, Rohtak and Karnal were to be a part of the new state of Haryana. Further, the tehsils of Jind and Narwana in the Sangrur district – along with Naraingarh, Ambala and Jagadhri – were to be included.[32]

The commission recommended that the tehsil of Kharar, which includes Chandigarh, the state capital of Punjab, should be a part of Haryana. However, Kharar was given to Punjab.[33] The city of Chandigarh was made a union territory, serving as the capital of both Punjab and Haryana.[34]

Bhagwat Dayal Sharma became the first Chief Minister of Haryana.[35]

Religion in Haryana (2011)[43]

According to the 2011 census, of the total population of 25,351,462 in Haryana, Hindus (87.46%) constitute the majority of the state's population with Muslims (7.03%) (mainly Meos) and Sikhs (4.91%) being the largest minorities.[43]

Muslims are mainly found in the Nuh district. Haryana has the second largest Sikh population in India after Punjab, and they mostly live in the districts adjoining Punjab, such as Sirsa, Jind, Fatehabad, Kaithal, Kurukshetra, Ambala and Panchkula.[44][45]

Languages of Haryana (2011)[46]

The official language of Haryana is Hindi.[47]

Several regional languages or dialects, often subsumed under Hindi, are spoken in the state. Predominant among them is Haryanvi (also known as Bangru), whose territory encompasses the central and eastern portions of Haryana. Hindi and Punjabi is spoken in the northeast, Bagri in the west, Deshwali in the East and Ahirwati, Mewati and Braj Bhasha in the south.[12]

There are also significant numbers of speakers of Urdu and Punjabi, the latter of which was recognised as the second official language of Haryana for government and administrative purposes in 2010.[47][4] After the state's formation, Telugu was made the state's "second language" – to be taught in schools – but it was not the "second official language" for official communication. Due to a lack of students, the language ultimately stopped being taught.[48] Tamil was made the second language in 1969 by Bansi Lal to show the state's differences with Punjab although there were no Tamil speakers in Haryana at the time.[49] In 2010, due to the lack of Tamil speakers, the language was removed from its status.[49]

There are also some speakers of several major regional languages of neighbouring states or other parts of the subcontinent, like Bengali, Bhojpuri, Marwari, Mewari, and Nepali,[50] as well as smaller communities of speakers of languages that are dispersed across larger regions, like Bauria, Bazigar, Gujar, Gade Lohar, Oadki, and Sansi.[51]

Haryana has its own unique traditional folk music, folk dances, saang (folk theatre),[52] cinema,[53] belief system such as Jathera (ancestral worship),[54][55] and arts such as Phulkari and Shisha embroidery.[55]

Folk music and dances of Haryana are based on satisfying the cultural needs of primarily agrarian and martial natures of Haryanvi tribes.[56]

Haryanvi musical folk theatre's main types are Saang, Rasa lila and Ragini. The Saang and Ragini form of theatre was popularised by Lakhmi Chand.[56]

Haryanvi folk dances and music have fast energetic movements. Three popular categories of dance are festive-seasonal, devotional, and ceremonial-recreational. The festive-seasonal dances and songs are Gogaji/Gugga, Holi, Phaag, Sawan, Teej. The devotional dances and songs are Chaupaiya, Holi, Manjira, Ras Leela, Raginis). The ceremonial-recreational dances and songs are of following types: legendary bravery (Kissa and Ragini of male warriors and female Satis), love and romance (Been and its variant Nāginī dance, and Ragini), ceremonial (Dhamal Dance, Ghoomar, Jhoomar (male), Khoria, Loor, and Ragini).[54]

Haryanvi folk music is based on day-to-day themes and injecting earthly humour enlivens the feel of the songs.[54] Haryanvi music takes two main forms: "Classical folk music" and "Desi Folk music" (Country Music of Haryana),[57] and sung in the form of ballads and love, valor and bravery, harvest, happiness and pangs of the parting of lovers.[56][57][58]

Classical Haryanvi folk music is based on Indian classical music.[57] Hindustani classical ragas, learnt in gharana parampara of guru–shishya tradition, are used to sing songs of heroic bravery (such as Alha-Khand (1163–1202 CE) about the bravery of Alha and Udal, Jaimal and Patta of Maharana Udai Singh II), Brahmas worship and festive seasonal songs (such as Teej, Holi and Phaag songs of Phalgun month near Holi).[57][58] Bravery songs are sung in high pitch.[56]

Desi Haryanvi folk music, is a form of Haryanvi music, based on Raag Bhairvi, Raag Bhairav, Raag Kafi, Raag Jaijaiwanti, Raag Jhinjhoti and Raag Pahadi and used for celebrating community bonhomie to sing seasonal songs, ballads, ceremonial songs (wedding, etc.) and related religious legendary tales such as Puran Bhagat.[57][58] Relationship and songs celebrating love and life are sung in medium pitch. Ceremonial and religious songs are sung in low pitch.[56] Young girls and women usually sing entertaining and fast seasonal, love, relationship and friendship-related songs such as Phagan (song for eponymous season/month), Katak (songs for the eponymous season/month), Samman (songs for the eponymous season/month), bande-bandi (male-female duet songs), sathne (songs of sharing heartfelt feelings among female friends).[56] Older women usually sing devotional Mangal Geet (auspicious songs) and ceremonial songs such as Bhajan, Bhat (wedding gift to the mother of bride or groom by her brother), Sagai, Ban (Hindu wedding ritual where pre-wedding festivities starts), Kuan-Poojan (a custom that is performed to welcome the birth of a child by worshipping the well or source of drinking water), Sanjhi and Holi festival.[56]

Music and dance for Haryanvi people is a way of lessening societal differences as folk singers are highly esteemed and they are sought after and invited for events, ceremonies and special occasions regardless of their caste or status. These inter-caste songs are fluid in nature, and never personalised for any specific caste, and they are sung collectively by women from different strata, castes, and dialects. These songs transform fluidly in dialect, style, words, etc. This adoptive style can be seen in the adoption of tunes of Bollywood movie songs into Haryanvi songs. Despite this continuous fluid transforming nature, Haryanvi songs have a distinct style of their own as explained above.[56]

With the coming up of a strongly socio-economic metropolitan culture in the emergence of urban Gurgaon Haryana is also witnessing community participation in public arts and city beautification. Several landmarks across Gurgaon are decorated with public murals and graffiti with cultural cohesive ideologies and stand the testimony of a lived sentiment in Haryana folk.[59]

As per a survey, 13% of males and 7.8% of females of Haryana are non-vegetarian.[60] The cuisine of Haryana, rooted in its predominantly agricultural society, has maintained a simple and uncomplicated essence.[61] The regional cuisine features the staples of roti, saag, vegetarian sabzi and milk products such as ghee, milk, lassi and kheer.[62] Haryana is often referred to as the 'Land of Rotis' due to its residents' fondness for various types of rotis. Wheat rotis are ubiquitous, along with the popular baajre ki roti. In the past, rotis were commonly made from a blend of wheat, gram, and barley flour, offering a nutritious and wholesome combination. Another notable variety is the gochini atta, crafted from wheat and gram flour.[63] Haryana is renowned for its abundant livestock, including the famed Murrah buffalo and the Haryana cow. This cattle wealth ensures a plentiful supply of milk and dairy products in Haryanvi cuisine. Many households produce their own butter and ghee, which are generously incorporated into daily meals. Fresh homemade butter, known as "nooni" or "tindi ghee," is commonly churned on a daily basis. When a girl becomes a mother, it's customary for her family to present her with gifts of ghee, edible gum (gondh), laddus (sweetmeats made from gram flour), and dry fruits. Buttermilk, known as "chaaj," is a popular beverage and serves as an instant refresher during the summer months. Lassi, made from yogurt, is another beloved drink that can almost constitute a meal in itself. The Haryanvi fondness for lassi is evident in the fact that "thandai," a sweet milk-based drink, is referred to as "kachi lassi" in Haryana.[64]

Haryanvi people have a concept of inclusive society involving the "36 Jātis" or communities. Castes such as Jat, Rajput, Gurjar, Saini, Pasi, Ahirs, Ror, Meo, Charan, Bishnoi, Harijan, Aggarwal, Brahmin, Khatri and Tyagi are some of the notable of these 36 Jātis.[65][66]

Haryana is a landlocked state in northern India. It is between 27°39' to 30°35' N latitude and between 74°28' and 77°36' E longitude.[67] The total geographical area of the state is 4.42 m ha, which is 1.4% of the geographical area of the country.[68] The altitude of Haryana varies between 700 and 3600 ft (200 metres to 1200 metres) above sea level.[69] Haryana has only 4% (compared with national 21.85%) area under forests.[13] Karoh Peak, a 1,467-metre (4,813 ft) tall mountain peak in the Sivalik Hills range of the greater Himalayas range located near Morni Hills area of Panchkula district, is the highest point in Haryana.[70][71][72][73] Most of the state sits atop the fertile Ghaggar Plain, a subsection of the Indo-Gangetic Plain. Haryana has 4 states and 2 union territories on its border – Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, and Chandigarh.

Haryana has four main geographical features.[74]

The Yamuna, a tributary of the Ganges, flows along the state's eastern boundary.[75]

Northern Haryana has several northeast to west flowing rivers originating from the Sivalik Hills of Himalayas, such as Ghaggar (palaeochannel of vedic Sarasvati river),[76] Chautang (paleochannel of vedic Drishadvati river, tributary of the Ghagghar),[77][78] Tangri river (tributary of the Ghagghar),[77][78] Kaushalya river (tributary of the Ghagghar),[79] Markanda River (tributary of Ghagghar),[77][78] Sarsuti,[77][78] Dangri,[77][78] Somb river.[80] Haryana's main seasonal river, the Ghaggar-Hakra, known as Ghaggar before the Ottu barrage and as the Hakra downstream of the barrage,[76] rises in the outer Himalayas, between the Yamuna and the Satluj and enters the state near Pinjore in the Panchkula district, passes through Ambala and Sirsa, it reaches Bikaner in Rajasthan and runs for 460 km (290 mi) before disappearing into the deserts of Rajasthan.[81] The seasonal Markanda River, known as the Aruna in ancient times, originates from the lower Shivalik Hills and enters Haryana west of Ambala, and swells into a raging torrent during monsoon is notorious for its devastating power, carries its surplus water on to the Sanisa Lake where the Markanda joins the Sarasuti and later the Ghaggar.[81]

Southern Haryana has several south-west to east flowing seasonal rivulets originating from the Aravalli Range in and around the hills in Mewat region, including Sahibi River[82][83][84][85] (called Najafgarh drain in Delhi),[86][87][88][89][90] Dohan river (tributary of Sahibi, originates at Mandoli village near Neem Ka Thana in Jhunjhunu district of Rajasthan and then disappears in Mahendragarh district),[83][85] Krishnavati river (former tributary of Sahibi river, originates near Dariba and disappears in Mahendragarh district much before reaching Sahibi river)[83][85] and Indori river (longest tributary of Sahibi River, originates in Sikar district of Rajasthan and flows to Rewari district of Haryana), these once were tributaries of the Drishadvati/Saraswati river.[91][92][93]

Major canals are Western Yamuna Canal,[94][95][96] Sutlej Yamuna link canal (from Sutlej river tributary of Indus),[95][96] and Indira Gandhi Canal.[97]

Major dams are Kaushalya Dam in Panchkula district,[98] Hathnikund Barrage[94][99] and Tajewala Barrage on Yamuna in Yamunanagar district,[94][99][100] Pathrala barrage on Somb river in Yamunanagar district,[94][100] ancient Anagpur Dam near Surajkund in Faridabad district,[101][102] and Ottu barrage on Ghaggar-Hakra River in Sirsa district.[103][104][105]

Major lakes are Dighal Wetland, Basai Wetland, Badkhal Lake in Faridabad,[106][107] holy Brahma Sarovar[108][109] and Sannihit Sarovar in Kurukshetra,[110] Blue Bird Lake in Hisar,[111][112] Damdama Lake at Sohna in Gurgram district,[113][114] Hathni Kund in Yamunanagar district,[94][99] Karna Lake at Karnal,[115] ancient Surajkund in Faridabad,[101][116][117] and Tilyar Lake in Rohtak.[118][119][120]

The Haryana State Waterbody Management Board is responsible for the rejuvenation of 14,000 johads of Haryana and up to 60 lakes in National Capital Region falling within the Haryana state.[121][122]

The only hot spring in Haryana is the Sohna Sulphur Hot Spring at Sohna in Gurgaon district.[123][124] Tosham Hill range has several sacred sulphur ponds of religious significance that are revered for the healing impact of sulphur, such as Pandu Teerth Kund, Surya Kund, Kukkar Kund, Gyarasia Kund or Vyas Kund.[125]

Seasonal waterfalls include Tikkar Taal twin lakes at Morni hills, Dhosi Hill in Mahendragarh district and Pali village on the outskirts of Faridabad.

Haryana is hot in summer at around 45 °C (113 °F) and mild in winter. The hottest months are May and June and the coldest are December and January.[91] The climate is arid to semi-arid with an average rainfall of 354.5 mm. Around 29% of rainfall is received during the months from July to September as a result of the monsoon, and the remaining rainfall is received during the period from December to February as a result of the western disturbance.[68] [127]

Forest cover in the state in 2013 was 3.59% (1586 km²) and the Tree Cover in the state was 2.90% (1282 km²), giving a total forest and tree cover of 6.49%.[129] In 2016–17, 18,412 hectares were brought under tree cover by planting 14.1 million seedlings.[13] Thorny, dry, deciduous forest and thorny shrubs can be found all over the state. During the monsoon, a carpet of grass covers the hills. Mulberry, eucalyptus, pine, kikar, shisham and babul are some of the trees found here. The species of fauna found in the state of Haryana include black buck, nilgai, panther, fox, mongoose, jackal and wild dog. More than 450 species of birds are found here.[130][131][132]

Haryana has two national parks, eight wildlife sanctuaries, two wildlife conservation areas, four animal and bird breeding centers, one deer park and three zoos, all of which are managed by the Haryana Forest Department of the Government of Haryana.[133][134] Sultanpur National Park is a notable Park located in Gurgaon District

Haryana Environment Protection Council is the advisory committee and the Department of Environment, Haryana is the department responsible for the administration of the environment. Areas of Haryana surrounding Delhi NCR are the most polluted. During the smog of November 2017, the air quality index of Gurgaon and Faridabad showed that the density of fine particulates (2.5 µm diameter) was an average a score of 400 and the monthly average of Haryana was 60. Other sources of pollution are exhaust gases from old vehicles, stone crushers and brick kilns. Haryana has 7.5 million vehicles, of which 40% are old, more polluting vehicles, and 500,000 new vehicles are added every year. Other majorly polluted cities are Bhiwani, Bahadurgarh, Dharuhera, Hisar and Yamunanagar.[135]

The state is divided into 6 revenue divisions, 5 Police Ranges and 4 Police Commissionerates (c. January 2017).[136][137][138][139] Six revenue divisions are: Ambala, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Hisar, Karnal and Faridabad.[136] Haryana has 11 municipal corporations (Gurgaon, Faridabad, Ambala, Panchkula, Yamunanagar, Rohtak, Hisar, Panipat, Karnal, Sonapat, and Manesar[140]), 18 municipal councils and 52 municipalities.[141]

Within these, there are 22 districts, 72 sub-divisions, 93 tehsils, 50 sub-tehsils, 140 blocks, 154 cities and towns, 6,848 villages, 6,226 villages panchayats and numerous smaller dhanis.[15]

The Haryana Police force is the law enforcement agency of Haryana. Five Police Ranges are Ambala, Hissar, Karnal, Rewari and Rohtak.[142] Four Police Commissionerates are Faridabad, Gurgaon, Panchkula and Sonipat.[136] Cybercrime investigation cell is based in Gurgaon's Sector 51.[143]

The highest judicial authority in the state is the Punjab and Haryana High Court, with the next higher right of appeal being to the Supreme Court of India. Haryana uses an e-filing facility.[144]

The Common Service Centres (CSCs) have been upgraded in all districts to offer hundreds of e-services to citizens, including applications for new water and sanitation connections, electricity bill collection, ration card member registration, the result of HBSE, admit cards for board examinations, online admission forms for government colleges, long route booking of buses, admission forms for Kurukshetra University and HUDA plots status inquiry.[145] Haryana has become the first state to implement Aadhaar-enabled birth registration in all the districts.[145] Thousands of all traditional offline state and central government services are also available 24/7 online through single unified UMANG app and portal as part of Digital India initiative.[146][147]

Haryana's 14th placed 12.96% 2012-17 CAGR[16] estimated a 2017-18 GSDP of US\$95 billion[13] split into 52% services, 30% industries and 18% agriculture.[13]

The services sector is split across 45% in real estate and financial and professional services, 26% trade and hospitality, 15% state and central government employees, and 14% transport and logistics & warehousing.[13] In IT services, Gurgaon ranks first in India in growth rate and existing technology infrastructure, and second in startup ecosystem, innovation and livability (Nov 2016).[148]

The industrial sector is split across 69% manufacturing, 28% construction, 2% utilities and 1% mining.[13] In industrial manufacturing, Haryana produces 67% of passenger cars, 60% of motorcycles, 50% of tractors and 50% of the refrigerators in India.[13]

The service and industrial sectors are boosted by 7 operational SEZs and an additional 23 formally approved SEZs (20 already notified and 3 approved in-principle) that are mostly spread along the Delhi–Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Amritsar Delhi Kolkata Industrial Corridor and Western Peripheral Expressway.[13]

The agricultural sector is split across 93% crops and livestock, 4% commercial forestry and logging, and 2% fisheries.[13] Although Haryana has less than 1.4% of the total area of India, it contributes 15% of food grains to the central food security public distribution system,[13] and makes up 7% of total national agricultural exports, including 60% of total national basmati rice exports.[13]

Haryana is traditionally an agrarian society of zamindars (owner-cultivator farmers). About 70% of Haryana's residents are engaged in agriculture.[149] The Green Revolution in Haryana of the 1960s[150] combined with the completion of Bhakra Dam in 1963[151] and Western Yamuna Command Network canal system in 1970s resulted in the significantly increased food grain production.[150] This movement lead to large-scale investments towards improving irrigation systems, enhancing the quality of fertilizers, and investing in superior seeds.[152] As a result, Haryana is self sufficient in food production and the second largest contributor to India's central pool of food grains[153]

In 2015–2016, Haryana produced the following principal crops: 13,352,000 tonnes of wheat, 4,145,000 tonnes of rice, 7,169,000 tonnes of sugarcane, 993,000 tonnes of cotton and 855,000 tonnes of oilseeds (mustard seed, sunflower, etc.). In the northeastern area, dairy cattle, buffaloes, and bullocks play a prominent role, being utilised both for agricultural plowing and as draft animals.[154]

Vegetable production was: potato 853,806 tonnes, onion 705,795 tonnes, tomato 675,384 tonnes, cauliflower 578,953 tonnes, leafy vegetables 370,646 tonnes, brinjal 331,169 tonnes, guard 307,793 tonnes, peas 111,081 tonnes and others 269,993 tonnes.[13]

Fruits production was: citrus 301,764 tonnes, guava 152,184 tonnes, mango 89,965 tonnes, chikoo 16,022 tonnes, aonla 12,056 tonnes and other fruits 25,848 tonnes.[13]

Spices production was: garlic 40,497 tonnes, fenugreek 9,348 tonnes, ginger 4,304 tonnes and others 840 tonnes.[13]

Cut flowers production was: marigold 61,830 tonnes, gladiolus 2,448,620 million, rose 1,861,160 million and other 691,300 million.[13]

Medicinal plants production was: aloe vera 1403 tonnes and stevia 13 tonnes.[13]

Haryana is well known for its high-yield Murrah buffalo.[155][156][157][158] Other breeds of cattle native to Haryana are Haryanvi, Mewati, Sahiwal and Nili-Ravi.[159]

To support its agrarian economy, both the central government (Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes, Central Sheep Breeding Farm, National Research Centre on Equines, Central Institute of Fisheries, National Dairy Research Institute, Regional Centre for Biotechnology, Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research and National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources) and the state government (CCS HAU, LUVAS, Government Livestock Farm, Regional Fodder Station and Northern Region Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institute) have opened several institutes for research and education.[160][161][162]

Haryana State has always given high priority to the expansion of electricity infrastructure, as it is one of the most important drivers of development for the state. Haryana was the first state in the country to achieve 100% rural electrification in 1970 as well as the first in the country to link all villages with all-weather roads and provide safe drinking water facilities throughout the state.[181][better source needed]

Sources of power in the state include:

Haryana has a total road length of 26,062 kilometres (16,194 mi), including 2,482 kilometres (1,542 mi) comprising 29 national highways, 1,801 kilometres (1,119 mi) of state highways,[186] 1,395 kilometres (867 mi) of Major District Roads (MDR) and 20,344 kilometres (12,641 mi) of Other District Roads (ODR) (c. December 2017).[187] A fleet of 3,864 Haryana Roadways buses covers a distance of 1.15 million km per day, and it was the first state in the country to introduce luxury video coaches.[188]

Ancient Delhi Multan Road and Grand Trunk Road, South Asia's oldest and longest major roads, pass through Haryana. GT Road passes through the districts of Sonapat, Panipat, Karnal, Kurukshetra and Ambala in north Haryana where it enters Delhi and subsequently the industrial town of Faridabad on its way. The 135.6 kilometres (84.3 mi) Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway (KMP) will provide a high-speed link to northern Haryana with its southern districts such as Sonapat, Gurgaon, and Faridabad.[189]

The Delhi-Agra Expressway (NH-2) that passes through Faridabad is being widened to six lanes from the current four lanes.[190] It will further boost Faridabad's connectivity with Delhi.

The rail network in Haryana is covered by five rail divisions under three rail zones. Diamond Quadrilateral High-speed rail network,[191] Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (72 km)[192] and Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (177 km)[193] pass through Haryana.

Bikaner railway division of the North Western Railway zone manages the rail network in western and southern Haryana covering Bhatinda-Dabwali-Hanumangarh line, Rewari-Bhiwani-Hisar-Bathinda line, Hisar-Sadulpur line and Rewari-Loharu-Sadulpur line.[194][195] Jaipur railway division of North Western Railway zone manages the rail network in south-west Haryana covering Rewari-Reengas-Jaipur line, Delhi-Alwar-Jaipur line and Loharu-Sikar line.[196]

The Delhi railway division of the Northern Railway zone manages the rail network in north and east-central Haryana, covering Delhi-Panipat-Ambala line, Delhi-Rohtak-Tohana line, Rewari-Rohtak line, Jind-Sonepat line and Delhi-Rewari line.[197][198][199][200][201] Agra railway division of North Central Railway zone manages another very small part of the network in southeast Haryana covering only the Palwal-Mathura line.[202][203]

Ambala railway division of Northern Railway zone manages a small part of the rail network in north-east Haryana covering Ambala-Yamunanagar line, Ambala-Kurukshetra line and UNESCO World Heritage Kalka-Shimla Railway.[204]

Delhi Metro connects the national capital Delhi with the NCR cities of Faridabad, Gurgaon and Bahadurgarh. Faridabad has the longest metro network in the NCR Region consisting of 11 stations and a track length of 17 km.[205]

The Haryana and Delhi governments have constructed the 4.5-kilometre (2.8 mi) international standard Delhi Faridabad Skyway, the first of its kind in North India, to connect Delhi and Faridabad.[206]

Haryana has a statewide network of telecommunication facilities. Haryana Government has its own statewide area network by which all government offices of 22 districts and 126 blocks across the state are connected with each other, thus making it the first SWAN of the country.[207][208][209] Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and most of the leading private sector players (such as Reliance Infocom, Tata Teleservices, Bharti Telecom, Idea Vodafone Essar, Aircel, Uninor and Videocon) have operations in the state. The two biggest cities of Haryana, Faridabad and Gurgaon, which are part of the National Capital Region, come under the local Delhi Mobile Telecommunication System. The rest of the cities of Haryana come under Haryana Telecommunication System.

Electronic media channels include MTV, 9XM, Star Group, SET Max, News Time, NDTV 24x7 and Zee Group. The radio stations include All India Radio and other FM stations.

Panipat, Hisar, Ambala and Rohtak are the cities in which the leading newspapers of Haryana are printed and circulated throughout Haryana, in which Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Jagran, Punjab Kesari, The Tribune, Aaj Samaj, Hari Bhoomi[210] and Amar Ujala are prominent.

The total fertility rate of Haryana is 2.3. The infant mortality rate is 41 (SRS 2012) and the maternal mortality ratio is 146 (SRS 2010–2012).[211] The state of Haryana has various Medical Colleges including Pandit Bhagwat Dayal Sharma Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences Rohtak, Bhagat Phool Singh Medical College in District Sonapat, ESIC Medical College, Faridabad along with notable private medical institutes like Medanta, Max Hospital, Fortis Healthcare

The literacy rate in Haryana has seen an upward trend and is 76.64 per cent as per the 2011 population census. Male literacy stands at 85.38%, while female literacy is at 66.67%. In 2001, the

literacy rate in Haryana stood at 67.91%, of which males and females were 78.49% and 55.73% literate respectively.[212] As of 2013[update], Gurgaon city had the highest literacy rate in Haryana at 86.30% followed by Panchkula at 81.9% and Ambala at 81.7%.[213] In terms of districts, as of 2012[update], Rewari had the highest literacy rate in Haryana at 74%, higher than the national average of 59.5%; male literacy was 79% and female literacy was 67%.[214] In 2011, Haryana's urban literacy rate stood at 84.98%, marking a notable rise from 79.92% in 2001. Similarly, the rural literacy rate in the state experienced an improvement, reaching 68.91% in 2011 compared to 58.74% in 2001.[215]

Haryana Board of School Education, established in September 1969 and shifted to Bhiwani in 1981, conducts public examinations at middle, matriculation, and senior secondary levels twice a year. Over 700,000 candidates attend annual examinations in February and March; 150,000 attend supplementary examinations each November. The Board also conducts examinations for Haryana Open School at senior and senior secondary levels twice a year.[216] The Haryana government provides free education to women up to the bachelor's degree level.

In 2015–2016, there were nearly 20,000 schools, including 10,100 state government schools (36 Aarohi Schools, 11 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, 21 Model Sanskriti Schools, 8,744 government primary school, 3386 government middle school, 1,284 government high school and 1,967 government senior secondary schools),[217] 7,635 private schools (200 aided,[218] 6,612 recognised unaided,[219] and 821 unrecognised unaided private schools[220]) and several hundred other central government and private schools such as Kendriya Vidyalaya, Indian Army Public Schools, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya and DAV schools affiliated to central government's CBSE and ICSE school boards.

Haryana has 48 universities and 1,038 colleges,[221] including 115 government colleges, 88 government-aided colleges and 96 self-finance colleges.[222] Hisar has three universities: Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University – Asia's largest agricultural university,[223] Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology, Lala Lajpat Rai University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences); several national agricultural and veterinary research centres (National Research Centre on Equines),[224] Central Sheep Breeding Farm,[225] National Institute on Pig Breeding and Research,[226] Northern Region Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institute[227] and Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes (CIRB);[228] and more than 20 colleges including Maharaja Agrasen Medical College, Agroha.[229]

Demographically, Haryana has 471,000 women and 457,000 men pursuing post-secondary school higher education. There are more than 18,616 female teachers and 17,061 male teachers in higher education.[221]

Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad announced on 27 February 2016 that the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) would be set up in Kurukshetra to provide computer training to youth and a Software Technology Park of India (STPI) would be set up in Panchkula's existing HSIIDC IT Park in Sector 23.[230] Hindi and English are compulsory languages in schools whereas Punjabi, Sanskrit and Urdu are chosen as optional languages.[231]

In the 2010 Commonwealth Games at Delhi, 22 out of 38 gold medals that India won came from Haryana.[232] During the 33rd National Games held in Assam in 2007, Haryana stood first in the nation[233] with a medal tally of 80, including 30 gold, 22 silver and 28 bronze medals.

The 1983 World Cup winning captain Kapil Dev made his domestic-cricket debut playing for Haryana. Nahar Singh Stadium was built in Faridabad in the year 1981 for international cricket. This

ground has the capacity to hold around 25,000 people as spectators.[234] Tejli Sports Complex is an ultra-modern sports complex in Yamuna Nagar. Tau Devi Lal Stadium in Gurgaon is a multi-sport complex.[235]

Chief Minister of Haryana Manohar Lal Khattar announced the "Haryana Sports and Physical Fitness Policy", a policy to support 26 Olympic sports, on 12 January 2015 with the words "We will develop Haryana as the sports hub of the country." [236][237]

Haryana is home to Haryana Gold, one of India's eight professional basketball teams that compete in the country's UBA Pro Basketball League.

At the 2016 Summer Olympics, Sakshi Malik won the bronze medal in the 58 kg category, becoming the first Indian female wrestler to win a medal at the Olympics and the fourth female Olympic medalist from the country.

Notable badminton player Saina Nehwal is from Hisar in Haryana.[238]

Notable athlete Neeraj Chopra, who competes in Javelin Throw and won the first track and field gold medal in 2020 Tokyo Olympics for India, was born and raised in Panipat, Haryana.

Wrestling is also very prominent in Haryana, as 2 medals won in wrestling at 2020 Tokyo Olympics were from Haryana.

Notable athlete Ravi Dahiya, who was born in Nahri village of Sonapat District, won silver medal in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics for India.

Ravi Kumar is an Indian freestyle wrestler who won a silver medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in the 57 kg category. Dahiya is also a bronze medalist from 2019 World Wrestling Championships and a two-time Asian champion.

List of films, Chandrawal, Jagat Jakhar)

Text extracted from URL 34:

Haryana is a state in India. The state houses several sites from the Indus Valley Civilization, which was a cradle of civilization. In the Mahabharata, Haryana is mentioned as Bahudanayak Region.[citation needed]

Haryana has been ruled by various native and non-native polities including the Maurya Empire, Gupta Empire, Pushyabhuti dynasty, Gurjara-Pratihara Dynasty, Tomara Dynasty, Chahamanas of Shakambhari, Ghurid dynasty, Delhi Sultanate, Mughal Empire, Durrani Empire, Maratha Empire, Sikh Empire, (George Thomas), Gwalior State, Company Rule in India and British Raj.

Sikhs during Khalsa Empire ruled some parts of the Haryana region which earlier came under Punjab division. Some Sikh states in Haryana were Jind, Kaithal, Hisar, Ladwa, Kalsia and others. Mostly Sikh rulers belong to Jatt community of Punjab.[1][2][3]

During Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire, Haryana was known as Delhi Subah. Many historically significant battles have been fought in it such as Battle of Tarain, Battle of Panipat, and Battle of Karnal. The Khanzadas of Mewat ruled the Mewat region until 1527.

After the Mughals, Haryana became a Maratha Empire possession. After the treaty of Surji-Anjangaon of 1803, Haryana was annexed by the British Empire and later merged with North West Provinces. After the revolt of 1857, in April 1858 Haryana, then known as Delhi Territory, was merged with Punjab Province .[citation needed]

During the British Colonial period, from 1858 to 1947 it was administered as a part of the Punjab province. It became a separate administrative state of India in 1966. Chandigarh is the joint capital for the states of Punjab and Haryana.

History of human presence in Haryana dates back to 100,000 years ago. Archaeologists discovered cave paintings and tools in Mangar Bani hill forest in May 2021; the cave paintings are estimated to be 100,000 years old. These are believed to be the largest in the Indian subcontinent and possibly the world's oldest.[4][5] Group of 43 sites was found in this area including Ankhir, Anangpur, Anangpur Dam, Shilakhari, Mangar Bani, Dhauj, Kot, Roj ka Gujjar, Nurpur, Dhumaspur, Surajkund, etc.[6]

Paleolithic and Neolithic Stone Age (7000 BCE - 5500 BCE) find were excavated from the banks of the stream (paleochannel of Saraswati river) flowing through HMT complex,[7][8] by the Guy Ellcock Pilgrim who was a British geologist and palaeontologist, who discovered 150,000 year old prehistoric human teeth and part of a jaw denoting that the ancient people, who were intelligent hominins dating as far back as 150,000 ybp Acheulean period,[9] lived in Pinjore region near Chandigarh.[10] Quartzite tools of lower Paleolithic period were excavated in this region extending from Pinjore in Haryana to Nalagarh (Solan district in Himachal Pradesh).[11]

Neolithic are numerous in Haryana, specially the pre-IVC phases found at Bhirrana, Siswal, Rakhigarhi, Kunal,[12] etc.

Indus Valley civilisation evolved on the banks of Rigvedic rivers Indus and Saraswati rivers. Saraswati and its tributary Drishadvati river (Ghaggar) flow through north and central Haryana and there are numerous IVC sites in haryana along paleochannels of these rivers, notable among those are the Rakhi Garhi, Banawali, Bhirrana, Farmana, Jognakhera, Mitathal, Siswal, and IVC mines and smelter at Tosham. Haryana govt is undertaking projects to revive Saraswati and Rakhigarhi Indus Valley Civilisation Museum has been constructed for the conservation of the artifacts.

During the Vedic era, there were janapada in Haryana from 1500 BCE 6th century BCE, which evolved into mahajanapadas which lasted from 6th century BCE to 4th century BCE. During Janpada period Kuru janpada covered most of Haryana and their area was called Kurukshetra, except South Haryana where Matsaya janpada (700–300 BCE) covered Mewat in Haryana (and Alwar in Rajasthan) and Surasena janpada covered Braj region including parts of Haryana near Barsana (such as Punhana and Hodal). After mahabharata and subsequent ashvamedha yagna, Kuru janpada evolved into a mahajanapada which sovereignty over other janpadas. The sandy bagar tract in northwestern and westcentral Haryana on Haryana-Rajasthan border was part of the larger jangladesh which also covered thar area of Rajasthan. Lord Krishna revealed Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna at Jyotisar. Śrauta were codified in Haryana during Kuru mahajanpada era, and notable sites in Haryana related to rishi authors are Bilaspur (Vyas Puri) and Kapal Mochan both related to Rishi Ved Vyasa who wrote mahabharata on the banks of Saraswati at his ashram at Bilaspur, Dhosi Hill was ashram of Rishi Chyavana, who is mentioned in mahabharata, and he is well known for creating chyavanprash and detailed formula for which first appeared in the ayurvedic text Charaka Samhita.

In some ancient Hindu texts, the boundaries of Kurukshetra (the area under Kuru janpada, not just the modern day Kurukshetra city)[13] correspond roughly to the state of Haryana. Thus according to the Taittiriya Aranyaka 5.1.1., the Kurukshetra region is south of Turghna (Srughna/Sugh), north of Khandavprastha forest (Delhi and Mewat region), east of Maru Pradesh (marusthal or desert) and west of Parin.[14] Some of these historic places are included in the 48 Kos Parikrama of Kurukshetra.

After ousting the Huns, king Harshavardhana established his capital at Thanesar near Kurukshetra in the 7th century CE. After his death, the kingdom of his clansmen, the Pratiharas ruled over a vast region for quite a while from Harsha's adopted capital Kannauj. The region remained strategically important for the rulers of North India even though Thanesar was no more as central as Kannauj. Prithviraj Chauhan established forts at Taraori and Hansi in the 12th century. Muhammad Ghori conquered Haryana after the Second Battle of Tarain. Following his death, the Delhi Sultanate was established that ruled much of India for several centuries. The earliest reference to 'Haryana' occurs in a Sanskrit inscription dated 1328 AD kept in Delhi Museum, which refers to this region as The heaven on earth, indicating that it was fertile and relatively peaceful at that time. Firuz Shah Tughlaq established a fort at Hisar in 1354 to further fortify the region, and also constructed canals or *rajwahas* as they were referred to in the Indo-Persian historical texts.

The Khanzadas of Mewat were a ruling dynasty of Muslim Rajputs, who traced their lineage to Raja Sonpar Pal, a Yaduvanshi Rajput who converted to Islam during the Delhi Sultanate. The Khanzadas were granted the Lordship of Mewat by Firuz Shah Tughlaq in 1372. Raja Nahar Khan, formerly known as Raja Sonpar Pal, proclaimed the title of Wali-e-Mewat, solidifying a hereditary polity that endured until 1527.[15]

The three famous battles of Panipat took place near the modern town of Panipat. The first battle took place in 1526, where Babur, the ruler of Kabul defeated Ibrahim Lodi of the Delhi Sultanate, through the use of field artillery. This battle marked the beginning of the Mughal Empire in India. Hasan Khan Mewati was the son of Raja Alawal Khan, his dynasty ruled Mewat for nearly two centuries. Descended from Raja Nahar Khan, the Wali of Mewat in the 14th century, Hasan Khan Mewati assumed the role of a sovereign king. Babur acknowledged him as the leader of the 'Mewat country'.

In the First Battle of Panipat, Hasan Khan Mewati supported Ibrahim Lodi against Babur in 1526, marked a pivotal moment in the conflict between the Mughal Empire and the Delhi Sultanate. Hasan Khan Mewati later aligned himself with Rana Sanga in continued opposition against the Mughal Empire in the Battle of Khanwa, where he was killed by the forces led by Babur. [16]

In the Second Battle of Panipat (5 November 1556), Akbar's general Bairam Khan defeated Hemu, the local Haryanvi who grew up in Rewari. Hemu, who belonged to Rewari in Haryana, rose from a businessman to become adviser to Afghan kings and then Prime Minister-cum-Chief of Army. He fought and won 22 battles in between 1553 and 1556, from Punjab to Bengal against Afghans and Mughals and won all of them without losing any. Hemu defeated Akbar's army at Tughlaqabad in Battle of Delhi-1556 and became king at Delhi on 7 October 1556 declaring himself as Vikramaditya following the reigns of earlier Vedic kings.[17] Hemu died in the Second Battle of Panipat.

The Third Battle of Panipat was fought in 1761 between the Afghan Emperor Ahmad Shah Abdali and the Maratha Empire under Sadashivrao Bhau of Pune. Ahmad Shah won decisively, on 13 January 1761.

The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was started first at Ambala Cantonment, 8 hours before revolt started in Meerut, when the soldiers of 5th Indian Infantry Brigade and 60th Indian Infantry Brigade revolted but it was crushed.[18] 5th and 60th Regiments of Bengal Native Infantry rebelled at Umballa (Ambala). During the Battle of Narnaul at Nasibpur on 16 November 1857, British lost 70 British soldiers and their commanders colonel Gerrard and Captain Wallace. 40 British soldiers and officers Captain Craige, Captain Kennedy and Captain Pearse were wounded.[19] The major centers of rebellion were at Hisar, Hansi, Sirsa, Rohtak, Jhajjar, Bahadurgarh, Farrukhnagar, Ballabhgarh, Rewari, Ambala, Panipat and Thanesar.[19] Under the "Delhi Agency" there were seven Princely states, Jhajjar, Farrukhnagar, Ballabhgarh, Loharu, Pataudi and Dujana. The Chiefs of the last two estates remained loyal to the British and others rebelled.[20] The Rajput rulers of Rajasthan also kept out of the mutiny.[21]

Raja Nahar Singh was the ruler of Ballabhgarh, Rao Tula Ram ruler of Rewari and his cousin Gopal Dev, Nawab Abdur Rahman Khan Jhajjar, Nawab Ahmad Ali of Farrukhnagar, Sadruddin was the leader of Mewat, Harsukh Rai and Mirza Gauhar Ali of Palwal and Imam of Bu Ali Shah Qalandar mosque in Panipat played key role.[19]

After the failure of revolt by Indians, Haryana was taken out of North-Western Provinces and merged with Punjab as a punishment.[18]

This rebellion was partly caused by the unjust tax system implemented through the use of The Great Hedge of India, a historic inland customs border which ran through several states including Haryana.

Lala Lajpat Rai worked towards the social reform, spread of Arya Samaj, creation of mass support for the Indian independence movement and he died protesting against the Simon Commission. Lala Murlidhar of Ambala and journalist Balmukund Gupta of Rewari were the members of the founding session of congress who promoted Swadeshi movement. Chhotu Ram, Pandit Nekiram Sharma, Lala Ugrasen and Ramswaroop Jaglan of Bidhwan were also key independence activists.[18]

In 1907, two years after the 1905 Partition of Bengal, British Indian Army soldiers in the 6th Jat Light Infantry and 10th Jats mutinied and sided with Bengali revolutionaries to takeover a government treasury. Their revolt was suppressed by the colonial government and several mutineers were sentenced to prison.[18] In 1914, Kasi Ram Joshi a member of the Ghadar Party hailing from Haryana, returned to India from America. On 15 March 1915 he was hanged by the colonial rulers. Subhas Chandra Bose's Azad Hind Fauj had 2847 soldiers from Haryana, of whom 346 attained martyrdom.[18]

During the partition of India in 1947, state experienced riots at many places, which also scores of death and migration of millions of people from Haryana to Pakistan and vice versa.

Punjabi Suba movement started in Punjab started in 1947 and lasted till 1966. During this time a Hindi language movement also started in Punjab for a short period

that started on 30 April 1957 and lasted till 27 December 1957 in Hindi-speaking areas of Punjab. Movement started after government of post-independence Punjab tried to promote Punjabi as state language but many groups in modern Haryana considered Punjabi as a threat. After this movement was successful in getting the ball rolling for a Hindi-speaking state. Another movement for leftover Punjabi-speaking parts started, this Punjabi suba & Punjabi language movement demanded under which Punjabi and gurmukhi to be made official in after division.[22] After reorganisation, Haryana government banned Punjabi in the state.

In 2018, the Government of Haryana started to award ₹10,000 per month pension to the Matribhasa Satyagrahis (Hindi language activists).[23]

On 1 November 1966, Haryana was carved out of the East Punjab on linguistic grounds, with majorly consisting of the "Hindi Speaking areas". Same example was later followed in creation of Himachal Pradesh as well.

In order to analyse and find a cooperative as well as universally acceptable solution, for the long going vexed linguistic problem, being faced by Punjab, the parliament announced the formation of the Parliamentary Committee on Demand for Punjabi Suba (1966) chaired by Sardar Hukam Singh, on 23 September 1965. According to the 90 paged report, the committee initially came to an understanding that a 'co-operative solution' was not possible. Moreover, it stated that unanimity is also not possible or necessary on any matters in a democratic set-up. So, after perusing the large number of memoranda/representations received by the committee and hearing the various viewpoints expressed by the different witnesses representing the various shades of opinion, the committee suggested the re-organisation of the State of Punjab on linguistic basis. It also stated that the then Chief Minister of the Punjab State admitted that the situation needed a change and status quo in its entirety was not possible." Although a section of the people from the Punjab canvassed before the committee that the status quo might be maintained in the Punjab. Even a third argument advanced in favour of the status quo was that, any reorganisation of the State would not be in the interests of the security of the country and would weaken the defence of India, which was later struck off due to lack of authentic data or justifiable reasons.[24]

On 23 April 1966, while acting on the report submitted by the parliamentary committee, the Indian government set up the Punjab Boundary Commission under the chairmanship of Justice J. C. Shah, to divide and set up the boundaries of Punjab and Haryana. The commission gave its report on 31 May 1966. According to this report the then districts of Hissar, Mahendragarh, Gurgaon, Rohtak, and Karnal were to be a part of the new state of Haryana. Further the Tehsils of Jind (district Sangrur), Narwana (district Sangrur) Naraingarh, Ambala and Jagadhari of district Ambala were also included. The commission recommended that Tehsil Kharar (including Chandigarh) should also be a part of Haryana.[25]

'India International Horticulture Market (IIHM), Asia's largest on 537 acre with 1200 shops & 17 massive specialized marketing sheds, is set up in Ganaur on NH44 in Sonapat district of Haryana with ₹2700 crore initial assessment in construction. It entails mechanism for cleaning, branding, sorting, packing & processing units, storing, and e-auction of the goods. There will be warehouses, cold storages, hostel, residential colony for the officials, large parking and automobile workshop, 4 electricity stations, and a sewage treatment plant, etc. Shops will have marketing downstairs and office upstairs. 3 out of 17 sheds will be air conditioned and there will be specialized sheds for marketing specific commodities such as fish, dairy, flowers, tomato, potato, apple, etc. Its primary catchment area covers 14 states in the region. The construction had already started with target completion date of 2 years by 31 March 2025 (June 2023 update).[26][27]

Rakhigarhi granary

Haryana has network of canals across of state divided into 8 canal command areas. Haryana has 47% share (reduced from 70% after an agreement with Delhi in 1994) in Yamuna river water and 2% share in Sutlej river water too for which disputed Sutlej Yamuna link canal is still partially completed for several decades.[28]

Indus treaty covers a total of 168 million acre-feet (207 km³) of water, of which India can utilize 33 million acre-feet (20% of total) from the three rivers assigned to India. In 2019, India utilizes only 93–94% (30 million acre-feet) of its share, and 6–7% (2 million acre-feet, 2.5 km³ of India's unutilised share flows to Pakistan, resulting in a total of 87% water flowing to Pakistan. India is building three dams to utilize 100% of its 33 million acre-feet share (20% of total water under treaty). India is undertaking 3 projects to ensure India utilizes its full share of Indus Waters Treaty,

(a) Shahpurkandi dam project on Ravi River in Pathankot district of Punjab (b) Sutlej-Beas link in Punjab (see also Pandoh Dam) and the Ujh Dam project on Ujh River (a tributary of Ravi river) in Jammu and Kashmir.

[29]

Renukaji dam, is INR4,596.76 crore 148m high rockfill gravity dam project being built on the Giri river in Sirmour district with live storage of 0.404 MAF on 1,508 hectares to supply 23 cusec water and generate 40MW peak flow power. An agreement for its construction and sharing of cost and benefits (water and electricity) was signed by the Union Minister for Water and Chief Ministers of six states, namely Haryana (47.8% share of water), UP and Uttarakhand (33.65% joint share) Rajasthan (9.3%), Delhi (6.04%) and Himachal Pradesh (3.15), on 11 January 2019. It has been declared a national project, resulting in 90% funding from the centre govt and the rest from the stakeholder states.[30] Giri River (cord: 30.44549 °N and 77.67358 ° Ö) in the state of Uttarakhand and Himachal is a tributary of Yamuna, which in turn is a tributary of Ganges.[31]

(a) Lakhwar Dam on Yamuna in Uttarakhand, (b) Renukaji Dam on Giri river in Himachal and (c) Kishau Dam on Tons River in Uttarakhand. The agreements among the stakeholder states and centre govt has been signed for the Kishwar Dam (August 2018 and Renukaji Dam (January 2019) and the agreement for the remaining Kishau Dam is likely to be signed soon. The funding for the Kishwar Dam has already been approved for the centre govt's cabinet and the funding for the Renukaji Dam is expected to be approved soon.[30]

Renukaji dam, is INR4,596.76 crore 148m high rockfield gravity dam project being built on the Giri river in Sirmour district with live storage of 0.404 MAF on 1,508 hectares to supply 23 cusec water and generate 40MW peak flow power. An agreement for its construction and sharing of cost and benefits (water and electricity) was signed by the Union Minister for Water and Chief Ministers of six states, namely Haryana (47.8% share of water), UP and Uttarakhand (33.65% joint share) Rajasthan (9.3%), Delhi (6.04%) and Himachal Pradesh (3.15), on 11 January 2019. It has been declared a national project, resulting in 90% funding from the centre govt and the rest from the stakeholder states.[30] Giri River (cord: 30.44549 °N and 77.67358 ° Ö) in the state of Uttarakhand and Himachal is a tributary of Yamuna, which in turn is a tributary of the Ganges.[31]

Haryana has 1356 canal tailends of which 250 had not seen the water for up to 39 years. Between 2016 and 2018, govt rejuvenated all but 10 worst tailends. Specially the canals in Narnaul, Loharu and Rewari area were rehabilitated and water started to reach the tailend of canals after a gap of 39 years.[32]

Mines at Tosham Hill range from Indus Valley civilisation.

Rakhigarhi silver bronze ornaments finds and Dancing Girl ornaments.

Dancing Girl attire.

Nangal Sirohi in Mahendragarh district, 130 km from Delhi, is popular for its havelis of shekhavati architecture within NCR.[34]

Chanetic Buddhist monastic university as chronicled by Hieun Tsang.

Military establishments in Haryana:

Indian National Defence University - India's only military university, National Security Guard (NSG) HQ in Gurugram, 4 major Air Force Stations (at Ambala, Faridabad, Gurugram and Sirsa), 3 major Army Bases (at Western Command Chandimandir HQ in Panchkula, 2nd Corp HQ at Ambala and 32 Div HQ at Hisar), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) base in Gurugram, 3 Sainik Schools (Kunjapura - officially first sainik school in India, Rewari, and Matanhail).[35]

Dominance of Jats & Haryanvis in the Indian Military:

Jat caste, officially designated as the martial race, are the largest dominant ethnic group of Haryana and Punjab with 25 to 30% population. They have strong martial tradition of thousands of years of joining the military since the times of Battle of the Ten Kings in 2nd millennium BCE rigvedic era (Haryana is the native home of Bharta tribe,[36] after whom India is named as Bharat,[37][38] they defeated all other tribes in ashvamedha yagna and united them),[36] Mahabharata war in vedic era, several Battles of Panipat (Maharaj Hemchandra Vikramaditya, Marathas), several battles of Tarain (Maharaj Prithviraj Chauhan), etc.[39] Haryana has disproportionately large percentage of brave martyr soldiers who sacrificed their lives for mother India.[35] Haryana also contributes several times more soldiers and officers to the Indian military than its population share in India.[39]

Haryana, with 2% total population of India, contributes 11% soldiers of Indian Military.[35] 10% (2,000,000) of Haryana's population belongs to the immediate family of soldiers, with 200,000 serving & 400,000 retired soldiers and their 1,400,000 dependent spouse and children.[35]

Indian Air Force: Haryana (with 2% share in India's population) has the second highest number of air force officers (after Uttar Pradesh which has 11 times more population than Haryana) and the third highest number of airmen.[39]

Indian Military Academy (IMA) officers: Haryana contributes second or third highest number of military officers and it contributes 4 to 5 times more military officers than its share of India's population. In 2023, of the 373 newly graduated officer cadets, UP (63) and Bihar (33), which had more officers than Haryana (32), had the percentage of officers similar to their population share in India whereas Haryana had 4.3 times more officers than its share in India's population. Of these officers, 16.9% (63) were from Uttar Pradesh (with 16.5% population of India), 8.8% (33 officers) were from Bihar (8.6% population of India), 8.6% (32 officers) were from Haryana (2% population of India), 6.7% (25 officers) were Uttarakhand (0.84% population of India), 6.2% (23 officers) were from Punjab (2.3% population of India).[40]

Indian Army non-officer soldiers of lower rank: In 2021, of the 1,151,726 serving non-officer soldiers, Haryana, Punjab, JK and Himachal had a much higher percentage of soldiers than their population share in India, e.g. highest number of soldiers come from Uttar Pradesh which had 11 times more population but only 2.5 times soldiers than Haryana, Maharashtra and Rajasthan have 3.5 to 4.5 times more population than Haryana but they contribute only 1.2 to 1.4 times more soldiers than Haryana. Of these non-officer soldiers, 14.5% (1,67,557) soldier are from Uttar Pradesh (16.5% population of India), 7.7% (89,088) are from Punjab (2.3% population of India) in second place, 7.6% (87,835) are from Maharashtra (9.3% population of India), 6.9% (79,481) are from Rajasthan (5.6% population of India) in 4th place, 5.7% (65,987) are from Haryana (2% population of

India) in 6th place, 4.1% (47,457) are from Jammu and Kashmir including Ladakh (1% population of India) in 10th place, 4% (46,960) are from Himachal Pradesh (0.6% population of India) in 11th place.[39]

Every year more than 6,000 soldiers from Haryana join the Indian military. Bisahan in Jhajjar district, a village of 700 families with at least one person from each family in military, has a reputation of being most prolific contributor to the Indian military.[35] In Haryana, a state dominated by the martial race (jats are 30% population of Haryana) where people traditionally & culturally aspire to join the military, excelling in sports provides better opportunity to secure a military job, and military in turn also nurtures the athletes.[41][42] "Indian Army had laid the foundation for the state to become a sports nursery" as people of haryana traditionally joined the military which nurtured the sporting talent. "The state's domination in sports is somehow linked to the majority of its people's collective preference for a robust physique that helps them work the fields under a sweltering sun, get jobs in the military, and indulge in sporting activities, more likely wrestling, experts say." [42]

Pashupati Shiva in yoga pose from Indus Valley civilisation.

"Jat-dominated Haryana"[43] is known as "India's Olympian state", [44] "The Sports State of India", [45] "country's sports nursery", [42] "sports powerhouse" in "multiple disciplines", [42] and main contributor of "Jatification of Indian sport" [43] due to their dominance in India's international medals "across categories and gender". With only 1.3% area and 1.5% population of India, Haryana consistently has been a top contributor of India's medals in major international events with 30% to 70% individual medals of India won by the people from Haryana. [44][45][46][42] "Unlike other states, sports and issues related to sports in Haryana come under great scrutiny." [46]

In Olympics, Haryana has won 47% (9/19) individual medals of India. [47] In Asian Games, Haryana won 38% (18/48) individual & 26% (18/69) of total medals in 2018, [48][49] 63% (23/36) individual & 40% (23/57) of total medals in 2014. [50]

In Commonwealth Games (CWG), Haryana won 42% (20/53) of individual & 33% (20/61) of total medals in 2022 CWG, [51] 41% (22/54) individual & 33% (22/66) of total medals in 2018 CWG, [52] 32% (19/61) individual & 30% (19/64) of total medals in 2014 CWG, [52] 32% (32/101) of medals in 2010 CWG, [52] 10% (5/50) medals in 2006 CWG. [52]

Haryana (& its capital Chandigarh) is always among top 3 in the medal tally of National Games, Khelo India University Games, Khelo India Youth Games, etc.

In the last 5 Khelo India national games, Haryana stood number-1 2-times and number-2 3-times on the overall medal tally.

The actual number of medals from Haryana is much higher because Haryanvi players also represent Services and other states.

The success of Haryana is due to government's policy intervention, rich reward system and job security for the budding athletes and the winners, where deep cultural interest of martial castes in military and traditional sports meets the state infrastructure and incentives provided by the Haryana state government. [53][54][41] "Plenty of analysis pieces attribute Haryana's success in contact sports (boxing and wrestling) to the physical strength of the Jats, the influence of history and geography which has shaped the population." [46] In Haryana, a state dominated by the martial race (jats are 30% population of Haryana) where people traditionally & culturally aspire to join the

military, excelling in sports provides better opportunity to secure a military job, and military in turn also nurtures the athletes.[41] "Indian Army had laid the foundation for the state to become a sports nursery" as people of Haryana traditionally joined the military which nurtured the sporting talent. "The state's domination in sports is somehow linked to the majority of its people's collective preference for a robust physique that helps them work the fields under a sweltering sun, get jobs in the military, and indulge in sporting activities, more likely wrestling, experts say." [42]

This has created numerous inspirational national youth sports icons from Haryana and retired Haryanvi olympians also continue to nurture the new sporting talent in Haryana which further enhances Haryana's dominance in sports.[42] "Haryana succeeds in sports because everyone is aiming to excel. And by excel, they mean the Olympics. And an aim at gold." [46]

"Jatification of Indian sport", as described by Rajdeep Sardesai, is the phenomenon attributed to the dominance of jats in India's international medals.[43]

With less than India's 2% population and nearly 30% of Haryana's population, jats dominate Haryana's & India's International medal tally,[53] by contributing nearly 70% of India's Olympic medals, 40 to 70% India's Asian and Commonwealth medals.

In Olympics, jats won majority of the medals for India, 67% (4/6) in 2018, 100% (2/2) in 2016, 50% (3/6) in 2012, 67% (2/3) in 2008.

In Asian games, Jats won 35% (24/69) of India's medals including 60% (9/15) gold in 2018.

In CWG games, Jats dominate India's medal tally who won 40% (21/53) medals in 2022,[55] most dominant ethnic group in India's 54 medals in 2018,[53] 27% (27/101) individual medals for India (excludes 4 jats who won medal as part of hockey team) in 2010.[56] In 2010 CWG, Haryanvi jats won 24% (24/101) of India's & 75% of Haryana's (24/32) individual medals as well as more than half of India's gold medals.[57]

All 14 medals in April 2023 Asian Wrestling Championships in Kazakhstan, and June 2023 U21 & U17 Asian Wrestling Championship in Kyrgyzstan all 9 female medals were won by Haryanvi jats.[58]

American social anthropologist, Joseph Alter, who has extensively researched wrestling in Haryana, explains that Jats have martial war-like tradition, masculine caste group identity, and picking up martial sports such as wrestling is their tradition, they are hardworking and that is the secret to their success.[53]

In National Games of India medals tally, Haryana is always among top three states.

In Khelo India Youth Games, since it began in 2018 and till 2022, Haryana topped the medal tally in 2 editions and achieved second slot in 3 editions.

In Khelo India University Games, the universities from Haryana are always among top 3.

In National School Games, in June 2023 Haryana (109 medals) stood second behind Delhi (126),[59] both of which have same ethnic demography.

Till 2020, India has won 21 individual medals, of which 19 have been won by the Indian citizens excluding 2 individual medals won by the India-born British-citizen Norman Pritchard. Of these 19 individual medals, at least 47% (9/19) have been won by athletes with connection with Haryana.[47][44]

In 2020 Olympics, Haryana won 50% (3 out of total 6) medals for India including 100% gold (1/1), 50% (1/2) silver and 33% (1/3) bronze.[60] 67% (4/6) medals for India won by jats.

In 2016 Olympics, Haryana won 50% (1 out of total 2) medals for India.[60] 100% (2/2) medals for India won by jats.

In 2012 Olympics, 67% (4 out of total 6) medal winners are associated with Haryana.[60] 50% (3/6) medals for India won by jats.

In 2008 Olympics, 100% (3 out of total 3) medal winners are associated with Haryana.[60] Vijender Singh from Bhiwani, Abhinav Bindra from Chandigarh and Sushil Kumar's ancestral village in Sonapat. 67% (2/3) medals for India won by jats.

In 2018 Asian Games, Haryana won 38% (18/48) individual & 26% (18/69) of total medals for India.[48] Haryana (18 or 26%, 5G+5S+8B) was followed by Tamilnadu (12 or 17%) and 9 or 13% each for Delhi, UP, Kerala.[49] Jats won 35% (24/69) India's medals, including 60% (9/15) gold, 30% (7/24) silver and 27% (8/30) bronze.

In 2014 Asian Games, Haryana won 63% (23/36) individual & 40% (23/57) of total medals for India.[50]

In 2022 CWG, with a contingent of 21% (43/210) the Haryana sportspersons won 42% (20/53) of individual & 33% (20/61) of total medals for India including 43% (9/21) gold, 25% (4/16) silver and 31% (7/23) bronze.[51] Jats dominated India's medal tally, they won 40% (21/53) total, 41% (9/22), 29% (3/16), 44% (9/23) bronze medals of India.[55]

In 2018 CWG, with a contingent of 13% (28/218) the Haryana sportspersons won 41% (22/54) individual & 33% (22/66) of total medals for India including 35% (9/26) gold, 30% (6/20) silver and 35% (7/20) bronze.[52] Jats dominated the medals.[53]

In 2014 CWG, Haryana won 32% (19/61) individual & 30% (19/64) of total medals for India.[52]

In 2010 CWG, with 10% (50 from Haryana out of India's 495) athletes Haryana won 32% (32/101) of medals for India.[52] 24% (24/101) of India's & 75% of Haryana's (24/32) individual medals were won by jats from Haryana (excluding medals won by jats from other states). Haryanvi jats won more than half of India's gold medals.[57] These games had 50 Jats from all states who won 27% (27/101) individual medals for India (excludes 4 jats who won medal as part of hockey team, also excludes jats playing for other nations).[56]

In 2006 CWG, Haryana won 10% (5/50) medals for India including 5% (1/22) gold, 18% (3/17) silver and 9% (1/11) bronze.[52]

In April 2023 Asian Wrestling Championships in Kazakhstan, all 14 medals were won by Haryanvi jats.

In June, U21 & U17 Asian Wrestling Championship in Kyrgyzstan all 9 female medal winners were haryanvi jats, who won 7 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze.[58]

In 1919, first airstrip was built in Haryana when Ambala Air Force Station was established. Following the independence of India in 1947, it was also the home to the SEPECAT Jaguar of No. 5 Squadron IAF and No. 14 Squadron IAF, and aging MiG-21bis of No. 21 Squadron IAF.

In 1947–48, a Flying Instruction School (FIS) was formed here.

In 1954, FIS Ambala was moved to Tambaram near Chennai in Tamil Nadu, at Tambaram Air Force Station.

By 1964, the diversionary Indian Air Force airfield at Sirsa was ready.[61]

In 1965, Hisar airfield, spread over 194 acres (79 ha), was built for the Hisar Aviation Club. In 1999, Hisar Aviation Club was merged with Haryana Institute of Civil Aviation (HICA). The airport is managed by HICA, which provides flight training using light aircraft.[62]

In 1967, Karnal Air Strip was set up.[63] The Karnal Flying Club has been running at this airfield since 1967 year.[64]

In 1970–71, a privately managed air service was introduced from Delhi-Patiala-Hisar and Delhi which was terminated after a period of about 6 months due to being financially unviable.[65]

During the 1980s, the Gurugram Airstrip, hangar, air conditioned yoga ashram and TV studio were built by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's favorite godman and yoga guru Dharendra Brahmachari who died in 1994 in a plane crash.[66][67] Indira used to visit Brahmachari here once a week.[66][67] The 1980s teleserials "India Quiz" and Hum Log (ran from July 1984 to 17 December 1985) were shot here.[66] Brahmachari charged INR25,000 per shift for the use of ashram's TV studio facilities here for the shooting of Hum Log.[66] In 1983, Brahmachari had written letter to then Chief Minister of Haryana, Bhajan Lal, with a request to acquire 5,000 acre land around Aravalli Range, potentially up to 70,000 acres in total, to build facilities to rival Disneyland, including a yoga research and training centre, a wildlife sanctuary, folk arts and crafts centre, amusement centre and other facilities such as helipad, aquarium, planetarium and games and thrillers.[68] The aircraft hangar still has two ruined aircraft belonging to Brahmachari,[67] likely including a Maule M-5 American aircraft owned by him that landed him in investigations for tax evasions.[69] Ownership of some of the facilities is currently being disputed in the court (c. 2014), including 32 acre land and yoga studio.[67]

In 2002, the Delhi Flying Club (DFC) shifted all its flying activities and aircraft to Hisar from Safdarjung Airport in Delhi.[70]

On 31 January 2010, the Rajiv Gandhi National Centre for Aero Sports was inaugurated at Narnaul Airport. 51 acres were acquired for this purpose.[71] Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Aero Club of India President Satish Sharma were present at the inauguration ceremony. The centre was set up by Aero Club of India and the Department of Civil Aviation, Haryana. It is the first ever modern state-of-the-art aero sports centre in India to provide training in comprehensive range of various aero sports, including para-jumping (simulated parachute jump from a tower), parasailing, hot air ballooning, gliding, power flying, sky diving, aero modelling and micro light flying,[71] with the purpose of introducing the state's youth to aviation and providing the general population a cheap opportunity to experience aero sports.[72][73] On 27 November 2017, Runway 1 a quirky restaurant based inside an Airbus A320 discarded by Air India was opened on Ambala Chandigarh Expressway by a Shahabad based business family.[74]

In August 2018, pre-feasibility study and field study for 3 new greenfield airports in Haryana commenced for the and Chhara Airport (Jhajjar district), Jind Airport and Kurukshetra Airport at the cost of INR30 lakh (3 million).[75]

On 26 December 2018, Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij announced that a third domestic airport will be established under UDAN III scheme 40 km from the Ambala city at Barnala village next to the Ambala Air Force Station for which a team of Airports Authority of India has already carried out the

land survey.[76][77] The new greenfield airport at Ambala is included in the 13 airports included in the UDAN III scheme.[77] Since most of the technical formalities are complete, an early execution of the project is expected.[77] Hisar and Karnal airports are already included in the list of airports for which airlines can make proposals for the UDAN scheme.[77]

As of January 2019, all five existing government airports in Haryana will be developed to have runway of at least 5000 feet for midsize aircraft and business jets, night landing and parking hangars, as airlines have approached the Haryana government to park their spillover "Non-scheduled Air Operations" (NSOP) aircraft from the congested IGI airport at Delhi to Bhiwani and Narnaul airport. Some of this development work at Hisar, Bhiwani and Narnaul airports is already underway.[78] Hisar will be extended to 10,000 ft by March 2022 for large air crafts.

In 2021, Gurugram Heliport Hub was envisaged and implementation started in 2024.[79]

Railway in Haryana falls in 2 railway zones (Northern Railway zone and North Western Railway zone), and 3 divisions under those.

GT Road with Kos Minar and Caravanserais

The modern military history commenced with British colonial rule where George Thomas established modern European style army in 1798 to 1801,[80][81] and later Colonel James Skinner (1778 – 4 December 1841) the Anglo-Indian military adventurer in India, who founded 1st Skinner's Horse and 3rd Skinner's Horse at Asigarh Fort at Hansi in 1803, which are still part of the Indian Army.[82][83]

As of January 2020, 139 (>10%) out of 1,322 Vir Chakra in India have been awarded to soldiers from Haryana,[84] which has less than 2% population of India.

Current military installations in Haryana are:

Defunct British-era military installations in Haryana:

Other cantonments

Following Mahajanapadas are mentioned in Mahabharata had their land in Haryana: [dubious – discuss]

Ancient Khandavprastha forest mentioned in Mahabharata,[90] lay to the west of Yamuna river in modern-day Delhi territory. Pandavas cleared this forest to construct their capital city called Indraprastha. This forest was earlier inhabited by Naga tribes led by a king named Takshaka.[91] Arjuna and Krishna cleared this forest by setting up a fire. The inhabitants of this forest were displaced. This was the root cause of the enmity of the Naga Takshaka towards the Kuru kings who ruled from Indraprastha and Hastinapura.[91]

The list of Janapadas falling within Haryana:

Main sites are

List of films, Chandrawal, Jagat Jakhar)

Text extracted from URL 35:

The culture of Assam is traditionally a hybrid one, developed due to cultural assimilation of different ethno-cultural groups under various political-economic systems in different periods of its history.

The roots of culture in Assam goes back almost five thousand years when the first wave of humans, the Austroasiatic people reached the Brahmaputra valley. They mixed with the later immigrant Tibeto-Burman and the Indo-Aryan peoples out prehistoric times. The last wave of migration was that of the Tai/Shan who later formed the idea of Assamese culture and its identity. The Ahoms, later on, brought some more Indo-Aryans like the Assamese Brahmins and Ganaks and Assamese Kayasthas to Assam.[4]

According to the epic Mahabharata and on the basis of local folklore, people of Assam (Kiratas) probably lived in a strong kingdom under the Himalayas in the era before Jesus Christ, which led to early assimilation of various Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asiatic ethnic groups on a greater scale. Typical naming of the rivers and spatial distribution of related ethno-cultural groups also support this theory. Thereafter, western migrations of Indo-Aryans such as those of various branches of Irano-Scythians and Nordics along with mixed northern Indians (the ancient cultural mix already present in northern Indian states such as Magadha enriched the aboriginal culture and under certain stronger politico-economic systems, Sanskritisation and Hinduisation intensified and became prominent. Such an assimilated culture, therefore, carries many elements of source cultures, of which exact roots are difficult to trace and are a matter for research. However, in each of the elements of cultures in Assam, i.e. language, traditional crafts, performing arts, festivities, and beliefs, either indigenous local elements or the indigenous local elements in Sanskritised forms are always present.

It is believed that Assamese culture developed its roots over 750 years as the country of Kamarupa during the first millennium AD of Bodo-Kachari people assimilation with Aryan which is debatable as the idea of Assam as an entity was not present. The first 300 years of Kamarupa was under the great Varman dynasty, 250 years under the Mlechchha dynasty and 200 years under the Pala dynasty. The records of many aspects of the language, traditional crafts (silk, lace, gold, bronze, etc.) are available in different forms. When the Tai-Shans entered the region in 1228 under the leadership of Sukaphaa to establish Ahom kingdom in Assam for the next 600 years, again a new chapter of cultural assimilation was written, and thus the modern form of Assamese culture developed. The original Tai-Shans assimilated with the local culture adopted the language on one hand and on the other also influenced the culture with the elements from their own. Similarly, the Chutiya kingdom in eastern Assam, the Koch Kingdom in western Assam and the medieval Kachari and Jaintia kingdoms in southern Assam provided stages for assimilation at different intensities and with different cultural-mixes.

The Vaishnava Movement, a 15th-century religio-cultural movement under the leadership of Srimanta Sankardeva and his disciples, has provided another dimension to the Assamese culture. A renewed Hinduisation in local forms took place, which was initially greatly supported by the Koch and later by the Ahom Kingdoms. The resultant social institutions such as namghar and sattra – the Vaishnav Hermitage have become part of the Assamese way of life. The movement contributed greatly towards language, literature, and performing and fine arts. On many occasions, the Vaishnav Movement attempted to introduce alien cultural attributes and modify the way of life of the common people. Brajavali, a language specially created by introducing words from other Indian languages, failed as a language but left its traces on the Assamese language. Moreover, new alien

rules were also introduced changing people's food habits and other aspects of cultural life. This had a greater impact on the alienation of many ethnocultural and political groups in the later periods.

During periods when strong politico-economic systems that emerged under powerful dynasties, greater cultural assimilation created common attributes of Assamese culture, while under less powerful politico-economic systems or during political disintegration, more localized attributes were created with spatial differentiation. Time-factors for such integrations differentiations have also played an important role along with the position of individual events in the entire series of events.

With a strong base of tradition and history, modern Assamese culture is greatly influenced by various events that took place in under British rule of Assam and in the Post-British Era. The language was standardized by American Missionaries according to that of the Sibsagar District, the nerve center of the Ahom politico-economic system while a renewed Sanskritisation was increasingly adopted for developing Assamese language and grammar (ব্যাকরণ). A new wave of Western and northern Indian influence was apparent in the performing arts and literature.

Due to increasing efforts of standardization in the 19th and 20th centuries, the localized forms present in different districts and also among the remaining source-cultures with the less-assimilated ethnocultural groups have seen greater alienation. However, Assamese culture in its hybrid form and nature is one of the richest and is still under development. 20th century saw numerous self-determination and identity movement and many states were new states were created in the process as most indigenous tribal communities of the state refused to accept the idea of collective Assamese identity which was imposed upon them. Many indigenous tribal communities of the state still oppose the efforts of assimilation into Assamese cultural identity.

Culture in Assam in its true sense today is a 'cultural system' composed of different ethnic cultural compositions. It is more interesting to note that even many of the source-cultures of culture in Assam are still surviving either as sub-systems or as sister entities. In a broader sense, therefore, the cultural system of Assam incorporates its source-cultures and However, it is also important to keep the broader system closer to its roots.

Symbolism is an important part of culture in Assam. Various elements are being used to represent beliefs, feelings, pride, identity, etc. Symbolism is an ancient cultural practice in Assam, which is still very important for the people. Tamulpan, Xorai and Gamosa are three important symbolic elements in Assamese culture.

Tamul-paan (the areca nut and betel leaves) or guapan (gua from Goi of Bodo-Chutia language) are considered as the offers of devotion, respect, and friendship. It is an ancient tradition and is being followed since time-immemorial with roots in the aboriginal culture.

Xorai, a traditional symbol of Assam, is a manufactured bell-metal object and an article of great respect and is used as a container-medium while performing respectful offerings. It is an offering tray with a stand at the bottom similar to those found in East and South East Asia. There are Xorais with or without a cover on the top.

Traditionally Xorai is made of bell metal although nowadays they can be made from brass and/or silver. Hajo and Sarthebari are the most important centers of traditional bell-metal and brass crafts including Xorais. Xorais are used:

The Gamosa is an article of great significance for the people of Assam. Literally translated, it means 'something to wipe the body with' (Ga=body, mosa=to wipe), Its original term is Gamcha; interpreting the word "gamosa" as the body-wiping towel is misleading. It is generally a white

rectangular piece of cloth with primarily a red border on three sides and red woven motifs on the fourth (in addition to red, other colors are also used). Though it is used daily to wipe the body after a bath (an act of purification), the use is not restricted to this. It is used by the farmer as a waistcloth (tongali) or a loincloth (suriya); a Bihu dancer wraps it around the head with a fluffy knot. It is hung around the neck at the prayer hall and was thrown over the shoulder in the past to signify social status. Guests are welcomed with the offering of a gamosa and tamul (betel nut) and elders are offered gamosas (bihuwaan) during Bihu. It is used to cover the altar at the prayer hall or cover the scriptures. An object of reverence is never placed on the bare ground, but always on a gamosa. One can, therefore, very well say that the gamosa symbolizes the life and culture of Assam.

Significantly the gamosa is used equally by all irrespective of religious and ethnic backgrounds.

At par with Gamosa, there are beautifully woven symbolic clothes with attractive graphic designs being used by different cultural ethno-cultural groups as well.

There were various other traditional symbolic elements and designs in use, which are now found only in literature, art, sculpture, architecture, etc. or used for only religious purposes (in particular occasions). The typical designs of assamese-lion, dragon, flying-lion, etc. were used for symbolising various purposes and occasions.

There are several important indigenous traditional festivals in Assam. Bihu/Bwisagu(for Kacharis) is the most celebrated festival among all. There are various Indigenous traditional festivals as well as belonging to different indigenous communities which are celebrated every year around different corners of Assam.

Bihu is a series of three prominent festivals of Assam. Primarily a festival celebrated to mark the seasons and the significant points of a cultivator's life over a yearly cycle, in recent times the form and nature of celebration have changed with the growth of urban centers. Three Bihus are celebrated: Rongali, celebrated with the coming of spring and the beginning of the sowing season; Kongali, the barren Bihu when the fields are lush but the barns are empty; and the Bhogali, the thanksgiving when the crops have been harvested and the barns are full. Rongali, Kongali & Bhogali Bihu are also known as 'Bohag Bihu', 'Kati Bihu' & 'Magh Bihu' respectively. The day before each Bihu is known as uruka. There are unique features of each Bihu. The first day of 'Rongali Bihu' is called 'Goru Bihu' (the Bihu of the cows). On this day the cows are taken to the nearby rivers or ponds to be bathed with special care. Traditionally, cows are respected as sacred animals by the people of Assam. Bihu songs and Bihu dance are associated with rongali bihu.

Bwisagu is a very popular seasonal festival of the Bodo of Assam. Bwisagu means the start of the new year. Bwisagu is a Boro word which originated from the word "Bwisa" which means year or age, and "Agu" that means New Year.

Jonbeel Mela (pron: 'dʒɒnˌbi:l 'meɪlə) (Tiwa: Chunbîl Melâ) is a three-day annual indigenous Tiwa Community fair held the weekend of Magh Bihu at a historic place known as Dayang Belguri at Joonbeel. It is 3 km from Jagiroad in Morigaon district of Assam and 32 km from Guwahati. The National Highway connecting the mela is NH 37. The Joonbeel (Joon and Beel are Assamese terms for the Moon and a wetland respectively) is so-called because a large natural water body is shaped like a crescent moon.

Beshoma is a festival of Deshi people.[5] It is a celebration of sowing crop. The Beshoma starts on the last day of Chaitra and goes on until the sixth of Baisakh. With varying locations it is also called Bishma or Chait-Boishne.[6]

Ali-Ai-Ligang is the spring festival of the Mising people of Assam, India. The name of the festival is made up of three terms, 'Ali', root and seed, 'Ai', fruit and 'Ligang', to sow.

Bohuwa dance is festival of Sonowal Kacharis of Assam, India.

Assam, being the home to many ethnic groups and different cultures, is rich in folk music. The indigenous folk music has in turn influenced the growth of a modern idiom, that finds expression in the music of such artists are Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, Bishnuprasad Rabha, Parvati Prasad Barua, Bhupen Hazarika, Nirmalendu Choudhury & Utpalendu Choudhury, Pratima Barua Pandey, Luit Konwar Rudra Baruah, Parvati Prasad Barua, Jayanta Hazarika, Khagen Mahanta, Beauty Sarma Baruah. Among the new generation Zubeen Garg, Angaraag Mahanta, Kalpana Patowary, Joi Barua, Jitul Sonowal and Manoj Borah are well known.

And other than traditional Assamese music Assam's capital city Guwahati has become the country's capital for rock music other than Shillong. A number of talented rock bands have formed showcasing their talents around the world.

Assam has maintained a rich tradition of various traditional crafts for more than two thousand years. Presently, Cane and bamboo craft, bell metal and brass craft, silk and cotton weaving, toy and mask making, pottery and terracotta work, wood craft, jewellery making, musical instruments making, etc. are remained as major traditions. Historically, Assam also excelled in making boats, traditional guns and gunpowder, colours and paints, articles of lac, traditional building materials, utilities from iron, etc.

Cane and bamboo craft provides the most commonly used utilities in daily life, ranging from household utilities, weaving accessories, fishing accessories, furniture, musical instruments to building construction materials. Traditional utilities and symbolic articles made from bell metal and brass are found in every Assamese household. The Xorai and bota have been in use for centuries to offer gifts to respected persons and are two prominent symbolic elements. Hajo and Sarthebari are the most important centers of traditional bell-metal and brass crafts. Assam is the home of several types of silks, the most prominent and prestigious being Muga, the natural golden silk is exclusive only to Assam. Apart from Muga, there are other two varieties called Pat, creamy-bright-silver colored silk, and Eri, a variety used for manufacturing warm clothes for winter. Apart from Sualkuchi, the center for the traditional silk industry, in almost every part of the Brahmaputra Valley, rural households produce silk and silk garments with excellent embroidery designs. Moreover, various ethno-cultural groups in Assam make different types of cotton garments with unique embroidery designs and wonderful color combinations.

Moreover, Assam possesses unique crafts of toy and mask making mostly concentrated in the Vaishnav Hermitage, pottery and terracotta work in Western Assam districts and woodcraft, iron craft, jewelry, etc. in many places across the region. However, we can see Assam populated because of these.

Traditional clothes and fabric of the Assamese include Suriya, Pirawn, Gamusa, Jaapi, Mekhela chador, Riha, Tongali.

Painting is an ancient tradition of Assam. The ancient practices can be known from the accounts of the Chinese traveller Xuanzang (7th century CE). The account mentions that Bhaskaravarman, the king of Kamarupa has gifted several items to Harshavardhana, the king of Magadha including paintings and painted objects, some of which were on Assamese silk. Many of the manuscripts available from the Middle Ages bear excellent examples of traditional paintings. The most famous of such medieval

works are available in the Hastividyarnava (A Treatise on Elephants), the Chitra Bhagawata and in the Gita Govinda. The medieval painters used locally manufactured painting materials such as the colors of hangool and haital. The medieval Assamese literature also refers to chitrakars and patuas. Traditional Assamese paintings have been influenced by the motifs and designs in the medieval works such as the Chitra Bhagawata.

There are several renowned contemporary painters in Assam. The Guwahati Art College in Guwahati is the only government institution for tertiary education. Several art-societies and non-government initiatives exist across the state and the Guwahati Artists Guild is a front-runner organization based in Guwahati along with the Guwahati art college. There is a Department of Fine Arts in Assam University Silchar, a central government organization, and its thrust area concentrates on the art and craft of northeast India with special reference to Assam.

The song O Mur Apunar Dekh (অ' মোৰ আপোনাৰ দেশ) (O my endearing country, 'desh', phonetically 'dex', with a talôibbô xô=country), composed by Rasaraj Lakshminath Bezbaroa, is popularly accepted as the state anthem of the state of Assam.

Text extracted from URL 36:

Assam (/əˈsæm, æˈsæm/ ə-SAM, a-SAM,[10][11] Assamese: [ˈɔxɔm] ⓘ) is a state in northeastern India, south of the eastern Himalayas along the Brahmaputra and Barak River valleys. Assam covers an area of 78,438 km² (30,285 sq mi). It is the second largest state in northeastern India by area and the largest in terms of population. The state is bordered by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh to the north; Nagaland and Manipur to the east; Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram and Bangladesh to the south; and West Bengal to the west via the Siliguri Corridor, a 22-kilometre-wide (14 mi) strip of land that connects the state to the rest of India. Assamese and Boro are the official languages of Assam. Meitei (Manipuri) is the official language of Hojai district and the entirety of the Barak Valley districts, while Bengali is an official language in the three districts of Barak Valley.

The state has 35 districts with 5 divisions. Guwahati (containing the state capital Dispur) is the largest city in northeastern India. Assam is known for Assam tea and Assam silk. The state was the first site for oil drilling in Asia.[12] Assam is home to the one-horned Indian rhinoceros, along with the wild water buffalo, pygmy hog, tiger and various species of Asiatic birds, and provides one of the last wild habitats for the Asian elephant. The Assamese economy is aided by wildlife tourism to Kaziranga National Park and Manas National Park, which are World Heritage Sites. Dibru-Saikhowa National Park is famed for its feral horses. Sal tree forests are found in the state which, as a result of abundant rainfall, look green all year round. Assam receives more rainfall than most parts of India; this rain feeds the Brahmaputra River, whose tributaries and oxbow lakes provide the region with a distinctive hydro-geomorphic environment.

The first dated mention of the region comes from Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (1st century) and Ptolemy's Geographia (2nd century), which calls the region Kirrhadia, apparently after the Kirata population.[13][14] In the classical period and up to the 12th century, the region east of the Karatoya river, largely congruent to present-day Assam, was called Kamarupa, and alternatively, Pragjyotisha.[15] Though a western portion of Assam as a region continued to be called Kamrup, the Ahom kingdom that emerged in the east, and which came to dominate the entire Brahmaputra valley, was called Assam (e.g. Mughals used Asham); and the British province too was called Assam. Though the precise etymology of Assam is not clear, the name Assam is associated with the Ahom people, originally called Shyam (Shan).[16]

Assam and adjoining regions have evidences of human settlement from the beginning of the Stone Age. The hills at the height of 1,500 to 2,000 feet (460–615 m) were popular habitats probably due to availability of exposed dolerite basalt, useful for tool-making.[17]

Ambari site in Guwahati has revealed Shunga-Kushana era artefacts including flight of stairs and a water tank which may date from 1st century BCE and may be 2,000 years old. Experts speculate that another significant find at Ambari is Roman era Roman roulette pottery from the 2nd century BCE.[18][19]

According to a late text, Kalika Purana (c. 9th–10th century CE), the earliest ruler of Assam was Mahiranga Danav of the Danava dynasty, which was removed by Naraka of Mithila and established the Bhauma dynasty. The last of these rulers, also Naraka, was slain by Krishna. Naraka's son Bhagadatta became the king, who (it is mentioned in the Mahabharata) fought for the Kauravas in the battle of Kurukshetra with an army of kiratas, chinas and dwellers of the eastern coast. At the same time towards the east in central Assam, Asura Kingdom was ruled by another line of kings.[20]

Evidence indicates presence of civilisation in Assam around 2nd century BCE, a rock cut stupa at Sri Surya Pahar has been dated to 200 BCE contemporary with rock cut Karle and Bhaja caves of Maharashtra. The site is located in a hilly terrain where several rock-cut Shivalingas, votive stupas and the deities of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain pantheon are scattered.[21] Samudragupta's 4th-century-CE Allahabad pillar inscription mentions Kamarupa[22] and Davaka (Central Assam)[23] as frontier kingdoms of the Gupta Empire. Davaka was later absorbed by Kamarupa, which grew into a large kingdom that spanned from Karatoya river to near present Sadiya and covered the entire Brahmaputra valley, North Bengal, parts of Bangladesh and, at times Purnea and parts of West Bengal.[24] The kingdom was ruled by three dynasties who traced their lineage from a mlechha or Kirata Naraka; the Varmanas (c. 350–650 CE), the Mlechchha dynasty (c.655–900 CE) and the Kamarupa-Palas (c. 900–1100 CE), from their capitals in present-day Guwahati (Pragjyotishpura), Tezpur (Haruppeswara) and North Gauhati (Durjaya) respectively. All three dynasties claimed descent from Narakasura. In the reign of the Varman king, Bhaskaravarman (c. 600–650 CE), the Chinese traveller Xuanzang visited the region and recorded his travels. Later, after weakening and disintegration (after the Kamarupa-Palas), the Kamarupa tradition was extended to c. 1255 CE by the Lunar I (c. 1120–1185 CE) and Lunar II (c. 1155–1255 CE) dynasties.[17]

The Medieval Assam history may have started with the advent of Ahoms in the early part of the 13th century and covers their entire rule of 600 years till 1826. The medieval history of Assam is especially known for its conflict with Muslim powers under Turko-Afghan and Mughals, finally resulting in Assamese victory, however, this military glory was shattered in the early 19th century when it failed to resist the Burmese invasions, which led to its annexation.[25]

Chutia, a Bodo-Kachari group by origin, held the regions on both the banks of Brahmaputra with its domain in the area eastwards from Vishwanath (north bank) and Buridihing (south bank), in Upper Assam and in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. It was annexed by the Ahoms in the year 1524. The rivalry between the Chutias and Ahoms for the supremacy of eastern Assam led to a series of conflicts between them from the early 16th century.

The Dimasa, another Bodo-Kachari dynasty, (13th century–1854) ruled from Dikhow River to central and southern Assam and had their capital at Dimapur. With the expansion of Ahom kingdom, by the early 17th century, the Chutia areas were annexed and since c. 1536 the Kacharis remained only in Cachar and North Cachar, and more as an Ahom ally than a competing force.

The Ahoms, a Tai group, ruled Upper Assam for almost 600 years.[26] In the year 1228 the Tai-Ahoms came to the Brahmaputra Valley under the leadership of Sukapha along with 9,000 men from Mong Mao, a Tai state, situated in South-Western Yunnan of China, and established his kingdom in Upper Assam. In 1253, he founded the capital city in a hillock and named it Charaideo. At the time of his advent, the area was inhabited by Morans and Borahis, to the north, to the north-east was the Chutia kingdom and to the south was the Kachari kingdom and to the west on the plains were the Baro-Bhuyans.

For more than two and a half centuries, Sukapha and his descendants, while primarily focused on administering the kingdom, upheld their dominance in the valley through their military prowess.[27]

The reign of Suhungmung marked the first massive expansion of Ahom kingdom. Besides sending a punitive expeditions against the Nagas, they fought numerous battles with the Bhuyans, Chutias, Kacharis, Turko-Afghans, and the Naras. In 1522-23 the Chutia Kingdom was annexed and the captured tract was placed under the administration of Sadiya-Khowa-Gohain. After securing the eastern tract, Suhungmung then expanded his kingdom westwards through conquest and extended it till Marangi to the west of the Dhansiri river. When the Kacharis tried to regain the lost territory they were defeated and their capital Dimapur was sacked. Over the remaining part of the Kachari kingdom, a new king Detsung was placed as a tributary, but Detsung proved disloyal and revolted against the Ahoms. He was subsequently executed. A new dependent king was set up on the Kachari throne with the name of Nirbhaynarayan. Since then the Kachari kings were regarded as 'thapita sanchita' meaning - established and maintained by the Ahom rulers.

Suhungmung's reign also witnessed the first Muslim-invasions of the kingdom. After a series of battle, the invaders were roundly defeated and were chased up to Karatoya River. The Sultan of Bengal, terrified by the approaching army of Suhungmung, made peace by offering his two daughters and five paraganas, along with other articles as dowry to the king. The rising Koch king Biswa Singha also offered his submission, and the Ahom general Ton-Kham granted him all the territories that were received as dowry from the Sultan of Bengal on the condition of annual tribute.[28]

The successors of Suhungmung, Suklenmung and Sukhaamphaa, sent many expeditions against the Bhuyans and Nagas. But were significant with the wars with the Koch. During the reign of Sukhaamphaa, the Ahoms lost to a Koch army led by Chilarai and the Ahoms had to accept Koch supremacy and had to give up the tracts of north of Brahmaputra. However, the lost tract was soon recovered with further military expeditions.[29]

Soon after the death of Nara Narayan his kingdom, got divided between the sons of Nara Narayan and Chilarai as Koch Hajo and Koch Bihar. In 1609, Laxmi Narayan king of Cooch Behar accepted the vassalage of Mughals, and the Koch Hajo king Raghudev and later his son Parikshit sought assistance from Ahoms. In 1612, the Mughals attacked Koch Hajo and his territory up to Barnadi River were annexed in the Mughal domain. This brought the Mughals with direct contact with Ahoms. Meanwhile, Parikshit was trying to renew his friendship with Ahoms, but got captured, and died on his way to his kingdom. Later Balinarayan, a brother of Parikshit who had taken refuge under the Ahoms was made the king of Darrang in 1615 by the Ahom king Pratap Singha. From 1616, onwards many battles were fought the Mughal without any tangible result, with the first Battle of Samdhara till after the last battle where the treaty was concluded in 1639 which fixed the Asurar ali on the south bank and the Barnadi on the north bank of the Brahmaputra as the boundary between the two.

Pratap Singha had also enacted the Paik system and created a number of army and civil administration posts such as the Borbarua and Borphukan.

Jayadhwaj Singha taking the advantage of War of succession between the sons of Shah Jahan, occupied the imperial territories up to Dhaka. Aurangzeb after becoming the emperor, appointed Mir Jumla II, to recover the lost territory. After fail negotiations. In November 1661, Mir Jumla proceeded with a huge army and fleet to invade Ahom kingdom. Here the Ahoms, lost at several places, and then captured the Ahom capital Garhgaon. During the rainy season Mir Jumla and his army suffered immeasurable hardship due to the climatic condition of the valley in addition the guerrilla fighting resorted against the invaders. And at last no noticeable gain, negotiation started and in January 1663, Treaty of Ghilajharighat was concluded. According to the treaty, the Ahoms had to acknowledging Mughal supremacy, ceded the territory west of the Bharali on the north bank and the Kalang on the south bank along with a huge amount of war indemnity and handing over the sons of the Gohains as hostage and two Ahom princesses to the Mughal harem.

Soon after the departure of Mir Jumla, Jayadhwaj Singha died and the new king Chakradhwaj Singha began preparations to overthrow Mughal supremacy and to recover the lost territory. After numerous battles, finally after the Battle of Saraighat the Mughals were forced to retreat.

The period after 1671 was very unstable due to the rivalry among the nobles, who wanted to arrest their own political power and influence by placing their own choice of prince in the throne. In 1679, Laluksola Borphukan, in hopes of becoming king with the help of Mughals, surrendered Guwahati without any battle. But after the accession of Gadadhar Singha, fought the final Battle of Itakhuli where the Mughals were badly defeated. And the since then the border was fixed at Manah on the north bank and the Nagarbera hill on the south bank of the Brahmaputra till its annexation by the East India Company in 1826.[30][31]

Rudra Singha succeeded Gadadhar Singha, his reign is notable because of his military achievements and his socio-culture contributions. He had both subjugated the Kachari and Jaintia kingdoms, and had captured their kings and forced to accept Ahom suzerainty and agreed them to pay annual tribute. Other than that, several expeditions were sent against the Miris, the Daflas, the Naga Mishmis and the Nagas of Namsung, Dayang and the Rengma Nagas during late 17th century and early 18th century. Rudra Singha had made extensive preparations for his invasion of Bengal but remained unfulfilled due to his sudden death in 1714.

After Rudra Singha, the Ahoms achieved no notable military achievement. During this period from, Siva Singha to Rajeswar Singha, the kingdom witnessed peace and prosperity and was significant for constructive activities and other development. In the field of religion also, Ekasarana Dharma spread all over the kingdom and started to influence all aspects of people's life. The religious heads of Vaisnavite monastery exalted great influence with royal patronage and established numerous Satras and most of the people became their disciples. So got the Ahom court greatly came under the influence of Sakta Brahman priests and astrologers. The religious policies concluded by Phuleshwari and the persecutions of unfavored Satras, embroiled the situation more along with the pressure of Paik system in the 18th century.[32]

This finally resulted in the Moamoria rebellion (1769–1805), which greatly weakened the Ahom kingdom where the country was greatly depopulated and unorganised. The political rivalry between the nobles made a pathway for the Burmese to invade and weakened it more and finally leading to its annexation.

The discovery of *Camellia sinensis* in 1834 in Assam was followed by testing in 1836–37 in London. The British allowed companies to rent land from 1839 onwards. Thereafter tea plantations proliferated in Eastern Assam,[33] where the soil and the climate were most suitable. Problems with the imported Han Chinese labourers from China and hostility from native Assamese resulted in the migration of forced labourers from central and eastern parts of India. After initial trial and error with planting the Chinese and the Assamese-Chinese hybrid varieties, the planters later accepted the local *Camellia assamica* as the most suitable variety for Assam. By the 1850s, the industry started seeing some profits. The industry saw initial growth, when in 1861, investors were allowed to own land in Assam and it saw substantial progress with the invention of new technologies and machinery for preparing processed tea during the 1870s.

Despite the commercial success, tea labourers continued to be exploited, working and living under poor conditions. Fearful of greater government interference, the tea growers formed the Indian Tea Association in 1888 to lobby to retain the status quo. The organisation was successful in this, but even after India's independence, conditions of the labourers have improved very little.[34]

In the later part of the 18th century, religious tensions and atrocities by the nobles led to the Moamoria rebellion (1769–1805), resulting in tremendous casualties of lives and property. The rebellion was suppressed but the kingdom was severely weakened by the civil war. Political rivalry between Prime Minister Purnananda Burhagohain and Badan Chandra Borphukan, the Ahom Viceroy of Western Assam, led to an invitation to the Burmese by the latter,[35][36][37][38] in turn leading to three successive Burmese invasions of Assam. The reigning monarch Chandrakanta Singha tried to check the Burmese invaders but he was defeated after fierce resistance, which led to the Burmese occupation of Assam.[39][40][41]

A reign of terror was unleashed by the Burmese on the Assamese people,[42][43][44][45] who fled to neighbouring kingdoms and British-ruled Bengal.[46][47] The Burmese reached the East India Company's borders, and the First Anglo-Burmese War ensued in 1824. The war ended under the Treaty of Yandabo[48] in 1826, with the Company taking control of Western Assam and installing Purandar Singha as king of Upper Assam in 1833. The arrangement lasted until 1838 and thereafter the British gradually annexed the entire region. Thereafter the court language and medium of instruction in educational institutions of Assam was made Bengali, instead of Assamese. Starting from 1836 until 1873, this imposition of a foreign tongue created greater unemployment among the People of Assam and Assamese literature naturally suffered in its growth.[49][50]

Initially, Assam was made a part of the Bengal Presidency, then in 1906 it was made a part of Eastern Bengal and Assam province, and in 1912 it was reconstituted into a chief commissioners' province. In 1913, a legislative council and, in 1937, the Assam Legislative Assembly, were formed in Shillong, the erstwhile capital of the region. The British tea planters imported labour from central India adding to the demographic canvas.

The Assam territory was first separated from Bengal in 1874 as the 'North-East Frontier' non-regulation province, also known as the Assam Chief-Commissionership. It was incorporated into the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam in 1905 after the partition of Bengal (1905–1911) and re-established in 1912 as Assam Province.[51]

After a few initially unsuccessful attempts to gain independence for Assam during the 1850s, anti-colonial Assamese joined and actively supported the Indian National Congress against the British from the early 20th century, with Gopinath Bordoloi emerging as the preeminent nationalist leader in the Assam Congress.[citation needed] Bordoloi's major political rival in this time was Sir Saidullah,

who was representing the Muslim League, and had the backing of the influential Muslim cleric Maulana Bhasani.[52]

The Assam Postage Circle was established by 1873 under the headship of the Deputy Post Master General.[53]

At the turn of the 20th century, British India consisted of eight provinces that were administered either by a governor or a lieutenant-governor. Assam Province was one among the major eight provinces of British India. The table below shows the major original provinces during British India covering the Assam Province under the Administrative Office of the Chief Commissioner.

With the partition of India in 1947, Assam became a constituent state of India. The Sylhet District of Assam (excluding the Karimganj subdivision) was given up to East Pakistan, which later became Bangladesh.

The government of India, which has the unilateral powers to change the borders of a state, divided Assam into several states beginning in 1970 within the borders of what was then Assam. In 1963, the Naga Hills district became the 16th state of India under the name of Nagaland. Part of Tuensang was added to Nagaland. In 1970, in response to the demands of the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo people of the Meghalaya Plateau, the districts containing the Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, and Garo Hills were formed into an autonomous state within Assam; in 1972 this became a separate state under the name of Meghalaya. In 1972, Arunachal Pradesh (the North East Frontier Agency) and Mizoram (from the Mizo Hills in the south) were separated from Assam as union territories; both became states in 1986.[54]

Since the restructuring of Assam after independence, communal tensions and violence remain. Separatist groups began forming along ethnic lines, and demands for autonomy and sovereignty grew, resulting in the fragmentation of Assam. In 1961, the government of Assam passed legislation making use of the Assamese language compulsory. It was withdrawn later under pressure from Bengali speaking people in Cachar. In the 1980s the Brahmaputra valley saw a six-year Assam Agitation[55] triggered by the discovery of a sudden rise in registered voters on electoral rolls. It tried to force the government to identify and deport foreigners illegally migrating from neighbouring Bangladesh and to provide constitutional, legislative, administrative and cultural safeguards for the indigenous Assamese majority, which they felt was under threat due to the increase of migration from Bangladesh. The agitation ended after an accord (Assam Accord 1985) between its leaders and the Union Government, which remained unimplemented, causing simmering discontent.[56]

The post 1970s experienced the growth of armed separatist groups such as the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA)[55] and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB). In November 1990, the Government of India deployed the Indian army, after which low-intensity military conflicts and political homicides have been continuing for more than a decade. In recent times, ethnically based militant groups have grown. The Panchayati Raj Act has been applied in Assam, after agitation of the communities due to the sluggish rate of development and general apathy of successive state governments towards Indigenous Assamese communities.[citation needed]

Deadly floods hit the state in 2020 and 2022.[57]

A significant geographical aspect of Assam is that it contains three of six physiographic divisions of India – The Northern Himalayas (Eastern Hills), The Northern Plains (Brahmaputra plain) and Deccan Plateau (Karbi Anglong). As the Brahmaputra flows in Assam the climate here is cold and there is rainfall most of the month. Geomorphic studies conclude that the Brahmaputra, the life-line of

Assam, is an antecedent river older than the Himalayas, which has entrenched itself since they started rising. The river with steep gorges and rapids in Arunachal Pradesh entering Assam, becomes a braided river (at times 10 mi/16 km wide) and with tributaries, creates a flood plain (Brahmaputra Valley: 50–60 mi/80–100 km wide, 600 mi/1000 km long).[58] The hills of Karbi Anglong, North Cachar and those in and close to Guwahati (also Khasi-Garo Hills) now eroded and dissected are originally parts of the South Indian Plateau system.[58] In the south, the Barak originating in the Barail Range (Assam-Nagaland border) flows through the Cachar district with a 25–30 miles (40–50 km) wide valley and enters Bangladesh with the name Surma River.

Urban centres include Guwahati, one of the 100 fastest growing cities in the world.[59] Guwahati is also referred to as the "Gateway to the North-East India". Silchar, (in the Barak valley) is the second most populous city in Assam and an important centre of business. Other large cities include Dibrugarh, an oil and natural gas industry centre,[60]

With the tropical monsoon climate, Assam is temperate (summer max. at 95–100 °F or 35–38 °C and winter min. at 43–46 °F or 6–8 °C) and experiences heavy rainfall and high humidity.[58][61] The climate is characterised by heavy monsoon downpours reducing summer temperatures and affecting foggy nights and mornings in winters, frequent during the afternoons. Spring (March–April) and autumn (September–October) are usually pleasant with moderate rainfall and temperature. Assam's agriculture usually depends on the south-west monsoon rains.

Every year, flooding from the Brahmaputra and other rivers such as Barak River etc. deluges places in Assam. The water levels of the rivers rise because of rainfall resulting in the rivers overflowing their banks and engulfing nearby areas. Apart from houses and livestock being washed away by flood water, bridges, railway tracks, and roads are also damaged by the calamity, which causes communication breakdown in many places. Fatalities are also caused by the natural disaster in many places of the State.[62][63]

Assam is one of the richest biodiversity zones in the world and consists of tropical rainforests,[64] deciduous forests, riverine grasslands,[65] bamboo[66] orchards and numerous wetland[67] ecosystems; Many are now protected as national parks and reserved forests.

Assam has wildlife sanctuaries, the most prominent of which are two UNESCO World Heritage Sites[68]-the Kaziranga National Park, on the bank of the Brahmaputra River, and the Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, near the border with Bhutan. The Kaziranga is a refuge for the fast-disappearing Indian one-horned rhinoceros. The state is the last refuge for numerous other endangered and threatened species including the white-winged wood duck or deohanh, Bengal florican, black-breasted parrotbill, red-headed vulture, white-rumped vulture, greater adjutant, Jerdon's babbler, rufous-necked hornbill, Bengal tiger, Asian elephant, pygmy hog, gaur, wild water buffalo, Indian hog deer, hoolock gibbon, golden langur, capped langur, barasingha, Ganges river dolphin, Barca snakehead, Ganges shark, Burmese python, brahminy river turtle, black pond turtle, Asian forest tortoise, and Assam roofed turtle. Threatened species that are extinct in Assam include the gharial, a critically endangered fish-eating crocodilian, and the pink-headed duck (which may be extinct worldwide). For the state bird, the white-winged wood duck, Assam is a globally important area.[clarification needed][69] In addition to the above, there are three other National Parks in Assam namely Dibru Saikhowa National Park, Nameri National Park and the Orang National Park.

Assam has conserved the one-horned Indian rhinoceros from near extinction, along with the pygmy hog, tiger and numerous species of birds, and it provides one of the last wild habitats for the Asian elephant. Kaziranga and Manas are both World Heritage Sites. The state contains Sal tree forests and

forest products, much depleted from earlier times. A land of high rainfall, Assam displays greenery. The Brahmaputra River tributaries and oxbow lakes provide the region with hydro-geomorphic environment.[citation needed]

The state has the largest population of the wild water buffalo in the world.[70]

The state has the highest diversity of birds in India with around 820 species.[71] With subspecies the number is as high as 946.[72]

The mammal diversity in the state is around 190 species.[73]

Assam is remarkably rich in Orchid species and the Foxtail orchid is the state flower of Assam.[74] The recently established Kaziranga National Orchid and Biodiversity Park boasts more than 500 of the estimated 1,314 orchid species found in India.

Assam has petroleum, natural gas, coal, limestone and other minor minerals such as magnetic quartzite, kaolin, sillimanites, clay and feldspar.[75] A small quantity of iron ore is available in western districts.[75] Discovered in 1889, all the major petroleum-gas reserves are in Upper parts. A recent USGS estimate shows 399 million barrels (63,400,000 m³) of oil, 1,178 billion cubic feet (3.34×10¹⁰ m³) of gas and 67 million barrels (10,700,000 m³) of natural gas liquids in the Assam Geologic Province.[76][citation needed]

The region is prone to natural disasters like annual floods and frequent mild earthquakes. Strong earthquakes were recorded in 1869, 1897, and 1950.

The total population of Assam was 26.66 million with 4.91 million households in 2001.[78] Higher population concentration was recorded in the districts of Kamrup, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Barpeta, Dhubri, Darrang, and Cachar. Assam's population was estimated at 28.67 million in 2006 and at 30.57 million in 2011

and is expected to reach 34.18 million by 2021 and 35.60 million by 2026.[79]

As per the 2011 census, the total population of Assam was 31,169,272. The total population of the state has increased from 26,638,407 to 31,169,272 in the last ten years with a growth rate of 16.93%.[80]

Of the 33 districts, Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta, Morigaon, Nagaon, and Hailakandi, recorded growth rates ranging from 20 per cent to 24 per cent during the last decade, whereas Sivasagar and Jorhat, registered around 9 per cent population growth. These districts do not have any international border.[81]

In 2011, the literacy rate in the state was 73.18%. The male literacy rate was 78.81% and the female literacy rate was 67.27%.[80] In 2001, the census had recorded literacy in Assam at 63.3% with male literacy at 71.3% and female at 54.6%. The urbanisation rate was recorded at 12.9%.[82]

The growth of population in Assam has increased since the middle decades of the 20th century. The population grew from 3.29 million in 1901 to 6.70 million in 1941. It increased to 14.63 million in 1971 and 22.41 million in 1991.[78] The growth in the Western districts and Southern districts was high primarily due to the influx of large number of illegal immigrants from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh.[56]

The mistrust and clashes between indigenous Assamese people and Bengali Muslims started as early as 1952,[83][84] but is rooted in anti Bengali sentiments of the 1940s.[85] At least 77 people

died[86] and 400,000 people were displaced in the 2012 Assam violence between indigenous Bodos and Bengali Muslims.[87]

The People of India project has studied 115 of the ethnic groups in Assam. 79 (69%) identify themselves regionally, 22 (19%) locally, and 3 trans-nationally. The earliest settlers were Austroasiatic, Dravidian followed by Tibeto-Burman, Indo-Aryan, and Tai-Kadai people.[88] Forty-five languages are spoken by different communities, including three major language families: Austroasiatic (5), Sino-Tibetan (24) and Indo-European (12). Three of the spoken languages do not fall in these families. There is a high degree of bilingualism.[citation needed]

Religion in Assam (2011)[89]

According to the 2011 census, 61.47% were Hindus, 34.22% were Muslims.[89][90] Christian minorities (3.7%) are found among the Scheduled Tribe and Castes population.[91] The Scheduled Tribe population in Assam is around 13%, of which Bodos account for 40%.[92] Other religions followed include Jainism (0.1%), Buddhism (0.2%), Sikhism (0.1%) and Animism (amongst Khamti, Phake, Aiton etc. communities).

The three popular sects of Hinduism, namely, Shaivism, Shaktism, and Vaishnavism are prevalent here. Many Assamese Hindus are also followers of the Ekasarana Dharma sect of Hinduism.[citation needed]

Out of 32 districts of Assam, 9 are Muslim majority according to the 2011 census of India. The districts are Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta, Morigaon, Nagaon, Karimganj, Hailakandi, Darrang and Bongaigaon.[94][95][96]

Languages of Assam (2011)[97]

Assamese and Bodo are the official languages of the state, Meitei (Manipuri) is official in Hojai district and all the three districts of Barak Valley, while Bengali is official in the three districts of Barak Valley,[98][4][5] where Sylheti is most commonly spoken.[99]

According to the language census of 2011 in Assam, out of a total population of around 31 million, Assamese is spoken by more than 22 million total speakers, with more than 15 million people speaking it as their mother tongue and around 7 million as L2 speakers.[100] Although the number of speakers is growing, the percentage of Assam's population who have it as a mother tongue has fallen slightly. Assamese serves as lingua franca of the region[101] as it is spoken by over 71% of the population (including the one who have listed Assamese as their 2nd language,[100] while 48.38% of them speak it as their mother tongue.[102] According to the 24th Edition of Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Assamese is spoken by 15,327,990 persons as mother tongue across the world as of 2021.[103] However, 2016 Assam Legislative Assembly election results, have found that 10 million people speaks Assamese as their mother tongue in Assam, which is significantly fewer than the census result of 2011.[104] The Assamese speakers constituted 48% of the State population according to the 2011 Census.[105][106][107][108]

The various Bengali dialects and closely related languages are spoken by around 9 million people in Assam, and the portion of the population that speaks these languages has grown slightly as per the census. However, the number of Bengali speakers is estimated to be more than the expected census results, as 30% of the of 35% Muslim population in Assam as per 2011 are thought to speak different dialects of Bengali as their native language but during census enumeration, they have reported their mother tongue as Assamese.[109][110][111][112][113] In the Brahmaputra Valley, the main Bengali dialect is that of Mymensingh (now in Bangladesh),[114] while in the Barak Valley and Hojai district,

Sylheti is the main language which is also considered to be a dialect of Bengali in census.[115] Bodo is the third most-spoken language followed by Hindi which comes under fourth position.

Languages spoken in Brahmaputra valley (2011)[116][117]

The population of the Brahmaputra Valley is 27,580,977 according to the 2011 census report by the Assam government. Assamese is the official language of the Brahmaputra Valley and is spoken by 15 million people comprising 55.65% of the valley population. Bengali is spoken by 6.09 million people representing 22.1% of the valley, Hindi is spoken by 2.1 million comprising 7.61% of the region, Bodo is spoken by 1.41 million comprising 5.13% of the valley's population and 2.98 million people speak various indigenous tribal languages of Assam, such as Karbi, Tiwa (Lalung), Hmar, Deori, Rabha, Mishing, Koch, Rajbangshi, Garo, Dimas, Gorkha, Halam, Ao and Motak.

Traditionally, Assamese was the language of the common folk in the ancient Kamarupa kingdom and in the medieval kingdoms of Dimas Kachari, Chutiya Kachari, Borahi Kachari, Ahom and Kamata kingdoms. Traces of the language are found in many poems by Luipa, Sarahapa, and others, in Charyapada (c. 7th–8th century CE). Modern dialects such as Kamrupi and Goalpariya are remnants of this language, which blend into the Rajbanshi and Rangpuri dialects spoken in North Bengal which have the same origin. Moreover, Assamese in its traditional form was used by the ethno-cultural groups in the region as lingua-franca, which spread during the stronger kingdoms and was required for economic integration. Localised forms of the language still exist in Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

Linguistically modern Assamese traces its roots to the version developed by the American Missionaries based on the local form used near Sivasagar (Xiwôxagôr) district. Assamese (Ôxômiya) is a rich language due to its hybrid nature and unique characteristics of pronunciation and softness. The presence of Voiceless velar fricative in Assamese makes it a unique among other similar Indo-Aryan languages.[118][119]

Bodo is spoken largely in Western Assam. It is official language of the Bodoland territorial region and co-official language of the state of Assam. It is also one of twenty-two languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Spatial distribution patterns of the ethno-cultural groups, cultural traits and the phenomenon of naming all the major rivers in the North East Region with Bodo-Kachari words (e.g. Dihing, Dibru, Dihong, D/Tista, and Dikrai) reveal that it was more widely-spoken in ancient times. Other languages of Tibeto-Burman origin and related to Bodo-Kachari are Deori, Mising, Karbi, Rabha, and Tiwa.[citation needed]

There are approximately 590,000 Nepali speakers spread all over the state forming about 1.98% of Assam's total population according to 2011 census.

There are speakers of Tai languages in Assam. A total of six Tai languages were spoken in Assam. Two are now extinct.[120]

Assam has Governor Gulab Chand Kataria as the head of the state,[121] the unicameral Assam Legislative Assembly of 126 members, and a government led by the Chief Minister of Assam. The state is divided into five regional divisions.

On 19 May 2016, BJP under the leadership of Sarbananda Sonowal won the Assembly elections, thus forming the first BJP-led government in Assam.[122]

The 31 administrative districts of Assam are delineated based on geographic features such as rivers, hills, and forests.

On 15 August 2015, five new districts were formed:[123][124]

On 27 June 2016, an island in the Brahmaputra River was bifurcated from the Jorhat district and declared the Majuli district, India's first district that is a river island.[125]

On 12 January 2021, Bajali was carved out from Barpeta district and formally declared as a district. With the announcement made by Governor Jagdish Mukhi, it has become the 34th district of Assam.[126]

On 31 December 2022, existing four districts Bajali (with Barpeta), Tamulpur(with Udalguri), Biswanath (with Sonitpur) and Hojai(with Nagaon) and number of district came down to 31.

However, after the delimitation exercise was carried out in Assam, the Assam Cabinet reconstituted the 4 new districts (Bajali, Tamulpur, Biswanath and Hojai), taking the number of districts to 35 again.

The administrative districts are further subdivided into 54 "Subdivisions" or Mahakuma.[124] Every district is administered from a district headquarters with the office of the Deputy Commissioner, District Magistrate, Office of the District Panchayat and usually with a district court.

The local governance system is organised under the jila-parishad (District Panchayat) for a district, panchayat for group of or individual rural areas and under the urban local bodies for the towns and cities. There are now 2489 village panchayats covering 26247 villages in Assam.[127] The 'town-committee' or nagar-somiti for small towns, 'municipal board' or pouro-sobha for medium towns and municipal corporation or pouro-nigom for the cities consist of the urban local bodies.

For revenue purposes, the districts are divided into revenue circles and mouzas; for the development projects, the districts are divided into 219 'development-blocks' and for law and order these are divided into 206 police stations or thana.

Guwahati is the largest metropolitan area and urban conglomeration administered under the highest form of urban local body – Guwahati Municipal Corporation in Assam. The Corporation administers an area of 216.79 km² (83.70 sq mi).[128] All other urban centres are managed under Municipal Boards.

A list of 9 oldest, classified and prominent, and constantly inhabited, recognised urban centres based on the earliest years of formation of the civic bodies, before the Indian independence of 1947 is tabulated below:

The state has three autonomous councils under the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution.

The state has further statutory autonomous councils constituted under State Act-

In March 2024, the Assam cabinet had given green signal for 'Kiran Sheikh' development council for the 'Kiran Sheikh' community in Barak Valley.[140]

According to Assam Government, Assam has border dispute with four states namely Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh.[141]

Assam-Mizoram dispute

Mizoram used to be a district of Assam as Lushai hills before being carved out as a separate union territory and later, becoming another state in 1987. Because of the history, the district's borders did

not really matter for locals for a long time. Mizoram shares a border with the districts Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj which comes under Barak valley region of Assam.

Over time, the two states started having different perceptions about where the demarcation should be. While Mizoram wants it to be along an Inner Line Permit notified in 1875 to protect tribals from outside influence, which Mizos feel is part of their historical homeland, Assam wants it to be demarcated according to district boundaries drawn up much later.[141][142]

Assam-Meghalaya dispute

Meghalaya has identified close to a dozen areas on which it has a dispute with Assam about the state's borders. The chief ministers of the two states, Himanta Biswa Sarma and Meghalaya's Conrad Sangma, recently held the first-ever meeting on inter-state border dispute. Both the states have agreed to individually assess the claims for all 12 areas flagged by Meghalaya in the past. A second round of discussion between the two state CMs will be held next month of August.

On the question of the role the Union Government is playing in redressing the inter-State border dispute in the country, minister of state for home affairs Nityanand Rai said, "The approach of the Central Government has consistently been that inter-state disputes can be resolved only with the cooperation of the State Governments concerned and that the Central Government acts only as a facilitator for amicable settlement of the dispute in the spirit of mutual understanding." [141]

Assam-Nagaland dispute

The border dispute between the two states has been going on since the formation of Nagaland in 1963. The two states lay claim to Merapani, a small village next to the plains of Assam's Golaghat district. There have been reports of violent clashes in the region since the 1960s.[141][143]

Assam-Arunachal Pradesh dispute

Assam shares an 804.10 km inter-state boundary with Arunachal Pradesh. The state of Arunachal Pradesh, created in 1987, claims some land that traditionally belonged to its residents has been given to Assam. A tripartite committee had recommended that certain territories be transferred from Assam to Arunachal. The two states have since been battling it out in the Supreme court of India over the issue. Some incidents of local violence have been reported from the borders.[141][144]

Ahomland

Upper Assam's various Tai-Ahom organisations like "Ahom Tai Mangoliya Rajya Parishad" (ATMRP), has been demanding a separate Ahomland state since 1967, comprising erstwhile Un-divided Sivasagar and Lakhimpur districts (today's Upper Assam and North Assam divisions) respectively.[145] On 2023, "TAI Ahom Yuba Parishad, Assam" (TAYPA) have organised a protest at Chachal and have demanded separate Ahomland state.[146][147]

Barak state

The Barak Valley of Assam comprising the present districts of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi is contiguous to Sylhet (Bengal plains), where the Bengalis, according to historian J.B. Bhattacharjee, had settled well before the colonial period, influencing the culture of Dimasas Kacharis.[148][149] Bhattacharjee describes that the Dimasa kings spoke Bengali, the inscriptions and coins were written in Bengali script and the official language of the court was also Bengali.[149] Migrations to Cachar increased after the British annexation of the region.[149]

The native Bengali people of Southern Assam demanded separate state for themselves within the Bengali majority areas of Assam particularly Bengali majority Barak valley comprising three districts: Cachar, Hailakandi, Karimganj along with Dima Hasao and parts of Hojai was also demanded to meet the criteria for creating a separate state for themselves by carving out from Assam's Assamese majority Brahmaputra Valley post NRC.[150][151][152][153] Silchar is the proposed capital of Barak state.[154] Barak valley is the most neglected part of Assam in terms of its infrastructure development, tourism sector, educational institutions, hospitals, IT industries, G.D.P, H.D.I etc. which is still lagging behind in comparison to the Assam's mainland Brahmaputra valley which have access to all of those facilities mentioned above.[155][156][157][158][159] In fact, the Assam's Southern part have an overall indigenous Bengali majority population, particularly Hojai have overall (54%) Bengali-speaking population,[160] Barak Valley region have an overwhelming Bengali majority of about 80.3%, while Dima Hasao have approximately 30.2% significant Bengali plurality on certain pockets specially in the urban areas of the district.[116]

Bodoland

The agitation for the creation of a separate Bodoland state resulted in an agreement between the Indian Government, the Assam state government and the Bodo Liberation Tigers Force. According to the agreement made on 10 February 2003, the Bodoland Territorial Council, an entity subordinate to the government of Assam, was created to govern four districts covering 3082 Bodo Kachari-majority villages in Assam.[161][162] Elections to the council were held on 13 May 2003, and Hagrama Mohilary was sworn in as the chief of the 46-member council on 4 June.[163] Demographic wise, the Indigenous Bodo tribe constitutes half of the region's population, along with the region have also significant large number of other ethnic minorities which includes: Assamese, Koch Rajbangshi, Garo, Rabha tribe, Adivasis, Nepalis, Tea tribes, Bengalis, Biharis, Marwaris and Muslims.[116]

Dimaraji

The Dimasa people of northeast India have been demanding a separate state called Dimaraji or "Dimaland" for several decades. It would comprise the Dimasa-Kachari inhabited areas, namely Dima Hasao district, Cachar district, parts of Barak Valley, Nagaon district, Hojai district and Karbi Anglong district in Assam together with part of Dimapur district in Nagaland.

Karbiland

Karbi Anglong is one of the 35 districts of Assam. Karbi Anglong was previously known as Mikir Hills. It was part of the Excluded Areas and Partially Excluded Areas (the present North East India) in British India. The British Indian government had never included this area under their government's jurisdiction. Thereby, no government development work or activity were done, nor any tax levied from the hills including Karbi Anglong. The first memorandum for a Karbi homeland was presented to Governor Reid on 28 October 1940 by Semsonsing Ingti and Khorsing Terang at Mohongdijua.[164] The Karbi leaders were then, a part of the All Party Hill Leaders' Conference (APHLC) which was formed on 6 July 1960.[165] The movement again gained momentum when the Karbi Anglong District Council passed a resolution demanding a Separate State in 1981. Then again from 1986 through the leadership of Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC), demanded Autonomous statehood of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao under Article 244(A). In 2002, the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council passed another resolution to press for the demand of statehood. Several other memoranda were submitted at different times by several organisations. The demand for a separate state turned violent on 31 July 2013 when student demonstrators set government buildings on fire. Following the incident, the elected leaders of Karbi Anglong jointly submitted a

memorandum to the Prime Minister of India demanding a separate State. Demographic wise, more than half of the Karbi Anglong population is made up of Indigenous Karbi tribe with significant migrants from other parts of India.[116]

Assam has been a major site of migration since the Partition of the subcontinent, with the first wave being composed largely of Bengali Hindu refugees arriving during and shortly after the establishment of India and Pakistan (current day Bangladesh was originally part of Pakistan, known as East Pakistan) in 1947–1951. Between the period of first patches (1946–1951), around 274,455 Bengali Hindu refugees have arrived from what is now called Bangladesh (former East Pakistan) in various locations of Assam as permanent settlers and again in second patches between (1952–1958) of the same decade, around 212,545 Bengali Hindus from Bangladesh took shelter in various parts of the state permanently.[166][167] After the 1964 East Pakistan riots many Bengali Hindus have poured into Assam as refugees and the number of Hindu migrants in the state rose to 1,068,455 in 1968 (sharply after 4 years of the riot).[168] The fourth patches numbering around 347,555 have just arrived after Bangladesh liberation war of 1971 as refugees and most of them being Bengali speaking Hindus have decided to stay back in Assam permanently afterwards.[169] Though the governments of India and Bangladesh made agreements for the repatriation of certain groups of refugees after the second and third waves, a large presence of refugees and other migrants and their descendants remained in the state. Nevertheless, still people of Bangladesh have been immigrating to Assam on regular basis. As per reports, about 635 of Bangladeshi people mostly Hindus, use to immigrate to Assam daily.[170][171]

Besides migration caused by displacement, there is also a large and continual unregulated movement between Assam and neighbouring regions of Bangladesh with an exceptionally porous border. The situation is called a risk to Assam's as well as India's security.[172] The continual illegal entry of people into Assam, mostly from Bangladesh, has caused economic upheaval and social and political unrest.[173][174] During the Assam Movement (1979–1985), the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and others demanded that government stop the influx of immigrants and deport those who had already settled.[175] During this period, 855 people (the AASU says 860) died in various conflicts with migrants and police.[176][177] The 1983 Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act, applied only to Assam, decreed that any person who entered the Assam after Bangladesh declared independence from Pakistan in 1971 and without authorisation or travel documents is to be considered a foreigner, with the decision on foreigner status to be carried out by designated tribunals. In 1985, the Indian Government and leaders of the agitation signed the Assam accord to settle the conflict.[175]

The 1991 census made the changing demographics of border districts more visible.[178][175] Since 2010, the Indian Government has undertaken the updating of the National Register of Citizens for Assam, and in 2018 the 32.2 million residents of Assam were subject to a review of their citizenship.[179] In August 2019, India released the names of the 2 million residents of Assam that had been determined to be non-citizens and whose names had therefore been struck off the Register of Citizens, depriving them of rights and making them subject to action, and potentially leaving some of them stateless, and the government has begun deporting non-citizens, while detaining 1,000 others that same year.[180][181][182]

In January 2019, the Assam's peasant organisation Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) claimed that there are around 20 lakh Hindu Bangladeshis in Assam who would become Indian citizens if the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill is passed. BJP, however claimed that only eight lakh Hindu Bangladeshis will get citizenship.[183][184][185] According to various sources, the total number of

illegal Hindu Bangladeshis is hard to ascertain.[186][187] According to the census data, the number of Hindu immigrants have been largely exaggerated.[187]

In February 2020, the Assam Minority Development Board announced plans to segregate illegal Bangladeshi Muslim immigrants from the indigenous Muslims of the state, though some have expressed problems in identifying an indigenous Muslim person. According to the board, there are 1.4 crore Muslims in the state, of which 1 crore are of Bangladeshi origin.[188][189][190] A report reveals that out of total 33 districts in Assam, Bangladeshis dominate almost 15 districts of Assam.[191][192][193]

In the rainy season every year, the Brahmaputra and other rivers overflow their banks and flood adjacent land. Flood waters wash away property including houses and livestock. Damage to crops and fields harms the agricultural sector. Bridges, railway tracks, and roads are also damaged, harming transportation and communication, and in some years requiring food to be air-dropped to isolated towns. Some deaths are attributed to the floods.[194][195]

Unemployment is a chronic problem in Assam. It is variously blamed on poor infrastructure, limited connectivity, and government policy;[196] on a "poor work culture";[197] on failure to advertise vacancies;[198] and on government hiring candidates from outside Assam.[199]

In 2020 a series of violent lynchings occurred in the region.

Assam schools are run by the Indian government, government of Assam or by private organisations. Medium of instruction is mainly in Assamese, English or Bengali. Most of the schools follow the state's examination board which is called the Secondary Education Board of Assam. All schools under Government of Assam are assessed by Gunoutsav Assam .Almost all private schools follow the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE), Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) and Indian School Certificate (ISC) syllabuses.[citation needed]

Assamese language is the main medium in educational institutions but Bengali language is also taught as a major Indian language. In Guwahati and Digboi, many Jr. basic schools and Jr. high schools are Nepali linguistic and all the teachers are Nepali. Nepali is included by Assam State Secondary Board, Assam Higher Secondary Education Council and Gauhati University in their HSLC, higher secondary and graduation level respectively. In some junior basic and higher secondary schools and colleges, Nepali teachers and lecturers are appointed.[citation needed]

The capital, Dispur, contains institutions of higher education for students of the north-eastern region. Cotton College, Guwahati, dates back to the 19th century. Assam has several institutions for tertiary education and research.[citation needed]

Universities, colleges and institutions include:

Assam has 12 medical colleges at present with 4 more scheduled to be completed by 2026–27.

Research institutes present in the state include National Research Centre on Pig, (ICAR) in Guwahati,[216]

Assam's economy is based on agriculture and oil. Assam produces more than half of India's tea.[217] The Assam-Arakan basin holds about a quarter of the country's oil reserves, and produces about 12% of its total petroleum.[218] According to the recent estimates,[219] Assam's per capita GDP is ₹6,157 at constant prices (1993–94) and ₹10,198 at current prices; almost 40% lower than that in India.[220] According to the recent estimates,[219] per capita income in Assam has reached ₹6756 (1993–94 constant prices) in 2004–05, which is still much lower than India's.

The economy of Assam today represents a unique juxtaposition of backwardness amidst plenty.[221][full citation needed] Despite its rich natural resources, and supplying of up to 25% of India's petroleum needs, Assam's growth rate has not kept pace with that of India; the difference has increased rapidly since the 1970s.[222] The Indian economy grew at 6% per annum over the period of 1981 to 2000; the growth rate of Assam was only 3.3%.[223] In the Sixth Plan period, Assam experienced a negative growth rate of 3.78% when India's was positive at 6%.[222] In the post-liberalised era (after 1991), the difference widened further.

According to recent analysis, Assam's economy is showing signs of improvement. In 2001–02, the economy grew (at 1993–94 constant prices) at 4.5%, falling to 3.4% in the next financial year.[224] During 2003–04 and 2004–05, the economy grew (at 1993–94 constant prices) at 5.5% and 5.3% respectively.[224] The advanced estimates placed the growth rate for 2005–06 at above 6%.[219] Assam's GDP in 2004 is estimated at \$13 billion in current prices. Sectoral analysis again exhibits a dismal picture. The average annual growth rate of agriculture, which was 2.6% per annum over the 1980s, has fallen to 1.6% in the 1990s.[225] The manufacturing sector showed some improvement in the 1990s with a growth rate of 3.4% per annum than 2.4% in the 1980s.[225] For the past five decades, the tertiary sector has registered the highest growth rates of the other sectors, which even has slowed down in the 1990s than in the 1980s.[225]

Unemployment is one of the major problems in Assam. This problem can be attributed to overpopulation and a faulty education system. Every year, large numbers of students obtain higher academic degrees but because of non-availability of proportional vacancies, most of these students remain unemployed.[226][227] A number of employers hire over-qualified or efficient, but under-certified, candidates, or candidates with narrowly defined qualifications. The problem is exacerbated by the growth in the number of technical institutes in Assam which increases the unemployed community of the State. Many job-seekers are eligible for jobs in sectors like railways and Oil India but do not get these jobs because of the appointment of candidates from outside of Assam to these posts. The reluctance on the part of the departments concerned to advertise vacancies in vernacular language has also made matters worse for local unemployed youths particularly for the job-seekers of Grade C and D vacancies.[228][229]

Reduction of the unemployed has been threatened by illegal immigration from Bangladesh. This has increased the workforce without a commensurate increase in jobs. Immigrants compete with local workers for jobs at lower wages, particularly in construction, domestics, Rickshaw-pullers, and vegetable sellers.[230][231] The government has been identifying (via NRC) and deporting illegal immigrants. Continued immigration is exceeding deportation.[232][233]

In Assam among all the productive sectors, agriculture makes the highest contribution to its domestic sectors, accounting for more than a third of Assam's income and employs 69% of workforce.[234] Assam's biggest contribution to the world is Assam tea. It has its own variety, *Camellia sinensis* var. *assamica*. The state produces rice, rapeseed, mustard seed, jute, potato, sweet potato, banana, papaya, areca nut, sugarcane and turmeric.[citation needed]

Assam's agriculture is yet to experience modernisation in a real sense. With implications for food security, per capita food grain production has declined in the past five decades.[235] Productivity has increased marginally, but is still low compared to highly productive regions. For instance, the yield of rice (a staple food of Assam) was just 1531 kg per hectare against India's 1927 kg per hectare in 2000–01[235] (which itself is much lower than Egypt's 9283, US's 7279, South Korea's 6838, Japan's 6635 and China's 6131 kg per hectare in 2001[236]). On the other hand, after having strong

domestic demand, and with 1.5 million hectares of inland water bodies, numerous rivers and 165 varieties of fishes,[237] fishing is still in its traditional form and production is not self-sufficient.[238]

Floods in Assam greatly affect the farmers and the families dependent on agriculture because of large-scale damage of agricultural fields and crops by flood water.[62][63] Every year, flooding from the Brahmaputra and other rivers deluges places in Assam. The water levels of the rivers rise because of rainfall resulting in the rivers overflowing their banks and engulfing nearby areas. Apart from houses and livestock being washed away by flood water, bridges, railway tracks and roads are also damaged by the calamity, which causes communication breakdown in many places. Fatalities are also caused by the natural disaster in many places of the state.[239][240] On 30 August 2023, Nilachal Flyover was inaugurated. The flyover is Assam's longest flyover, spanning 2.63 kilometres and connecting Maligaon Chariali to Kamakhya Gate in Guwahati.[241]

Handlooms and handicrafts are traditional industries that continue to survive, especially among rural women, in the state.[242]

Assam's proximity to some neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, benefits its trade. The major Border checkpoints through which border trade flows to Bangladesh from Assam are : Sutarkandi (Karimganj), Dhubri, Mankachar (Dhubri) and Golokanj. To facilitate border trade with Bangladesh, Border Trade Centres have been developed at Sutarkandi and Mankachar. It has been proposed in the 11th five-year plan[clarification needed] to set up two more Border Trade Center, one at Ledo connecting China and other at Darrang connecting Bhutan. There are several Land Custom Stations (LCS) in the state bordering Bangladesh and Bhutan to facilitate border trade.[243]

The government of India has identified some thrust areas for industrial development of Assam:[244]

Although, the region in the eastern periphery of India is landlocked and is linked to the mainland by the narrow Siliguri Corridor (or the Chicken's Neck) improved transport infrastructure in all the three modes – rail, road and air – and developing urban infrastructure in the cities and towns of Assam are giving a boost to the entire industrial scene. The Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport at Guwahati, with international flights to Bangkok and Singapore offered by Druk Air of Bhutan, was the 12th busiest airport of India in 2012.[245] The cities of Guwahati[246][247] in the west and Dibrugarh[248][249] in the east with good rail,[250][251] road and air connectivity are the two important nerve centres of Assam, to be selected by Asian Development Bank for providing \$200 million for improvement of urban infrastructure.[252][253]

Assam is a producer of crude oil and it accounts for about 15% of India's crude output,[254] exploited by the Assam Oil Company Ltd.,[255] and natural gas in India and is the second place in the world (after Titusville in the United States) where petroleum was discovered. Asia's first successful mechanically drilled oil well was drilled in Makum way back in 1867. Most of the oilfields are located in the Eastern Assam region. Assam has four oil refineries in Digboi (Asia's first and world's second refinery), Guwahati, Bongaigaon and Numaligarh and with a total capacity of 7 million metric tonnes (7.7 million short tons) per annum. Asia's first refinery was set up at Digboi and discoverer of Digboi oilfield was the Assam Railways & Trading Company Limited (AR&T Co. Ltd.), a registered company of London in 1881.[256] One of the biggest public sector oil company of the country Oil India Ltd. has its plant and headquarters at Duliajan.

There are several other industries, including a chemical fertiliser plant at Namrup, petrochemical industries in Namrup and Bongaigaon, paper mills at Jagiroad, Hindustan Paper Corporation Ltd. Township Area Panchgram and Jogighopa, sugar mills in Barua Bamun Gaon, Chargola, Kampur, cement plants in Bokajan and Badarpur, and a cosmetics plant of Hindustan Unilever (HUL) at Doom Dooma. Moreover, there are other industries such as jute mill, textile and yarn mills, Assam silk, and silk mills. Many of these industries are facing losses and closure due to lack of infrastructure and improper management practices.[257]

Wildlife, cultural, and historical destinations have attracted visitors.

Assamese Culture is described as a hybrid and syncretic in nature developed due to the assimilation of numerous ethnic groups and cultural practices of Austroasiatic, Tibeto-Burman, Indo-aryan and Tai inhabitants. Therefore, both local elements or the local elements in Sanskritised forms are distinctly found.[258] The major milestones in the evolution of Assamese culture are:

The modern culture has been influenced by events in the British and the post-British era. Assamese language was standardised by American Baptist Missionaries such as Nathan Brown, Dr. Miles Bronson and local pundits such as Hemchandra Barua with the dialect spoken in Undivided Sibsagar District (the centre of the Ahom Kingdom) forming the standardised dialect. [citation needed]

Increasing efforts of standardisation in the 20th century alienated the localised forms present in different areas and with the less-assimilated ethno-cultural groups (many source-cultures). However, Assamese culture in its hybrid form and nature is one of the richest, still developing and in true sense is a 'cultural system' with sub-systems. Many source-cultures of the Assamese cultural-system are still surviving either as sub-systems or as sister entities, e.g. the; Bodo or Karbi or Mishing. It is important to keep the broader system closer to its roots and at the same time focus on development of the sub-systems.

Some of the common and unique cultural traits in the region are peoples' respect towards areca-nut and betel leaves, symbolic (gamosa, arnai, etc.), traditional silk garments (e.g. mekhela chador, traditional dress of Assamese women) and towards forefathers and elderly. Moreover, great hospitality and bamboo culture are common.

Symbolism is an ancient cultural practice in Assam and is still a very important part of the Assamese way of life. Various elements are used to represent beliefs, feelings, pride, identity, etc.

Tamulpan (areca nut and betel leaves),

Xorai and Gamosa are three important symbolic elements in Assamese culture. Tamulpan or guapan (gua from kwa) are considered along with the Gamosa (a typical woven cotton or silk cloth with embroidery) as the offers of devotion, respect and friendship. The Tamulpan-tradition is an ancient one and is being followed since time-immemorial with roots in the aboriginal Austric culture. Xorai is a traditionally manufactured bell-metal article of great respect and is used as a container-medium while performing respectful offers. Moreover, symbolically many ethno-cultural groups use specific clothes to portray respect and pride.

There were many other symbolic elements and designs, but are now only found in literature, art, sculpture, architecture, etc. or in use today for only religious purposes. The typical designs of Assamese-lion, dragon (ngi-ngao-kham), and flying-lion (Naam-singho) are used for symbolising various purposes and occasions. The archaeological sites such as the Madan Kamdev (c. 9th–10th

centuries CE) exhibits mass-scale use of lions, dragon-lions and many other figures of demons to show case power and prosperity. The Vaishnavite monasteries (Xatras) and many other architectural sites of the late medieval period display the use of lions and dragons for symbolic effects.

There are diversified important traditional festivals in Assam. Bihu is the most important festival of Assam and is celebrated all over the state. The Assamese new year (Ek Bohag) is celebrated in April of the Gregorian calendar.

Bihu is described as the soul and life of Assam. It is a series of three prominent festivals each associated with a certain stage during the cultivation of paddy. Primarily a secular festival celebrated to mark the seasons and the significant points of a cultivator's life over yearly cycle. Three Bihus, rongali (in the month of bohag), celebrated with the coming of spring and the beginning of the sowing season; kongali or kati, the barren bihu when the fields are lush but the barns are empty and bhogali (in the month of magh), the thanksgiving when the crops have been harvested and the granaries are full. Bihu songs and Bihu dance are associated with rongali and bhogali bihu. The day before the each bihu is known as the day of Uruka. The first day of 'Rongali bihu' is called 'Goru bihu' (the bihu of the cows), when the cows are taken to the nearby rivers or ponds to be bathed with special care. In recent times the form and nature of celebration has changed with the growth of urban centres.

Bwisagu is one of the most popular seasonal festivals of the Bodos. Baisagu is a Boro word which originated from the word "Baisa" which means year or age, and "Agu" meaning starting or beginning. Bwisagu marks the beginning of the new year. It is celebrated at the beginning of the first month of the Boro year, around mid-April in the Gregorian Calendar. It has remarkable similarities to the festival of Rongali Bihu, also celebrated at the same time in Assam. The worship of Bathow is done on the second day of the festival.

Ali-Aye-Ligang or Ali-Ai-Ligang is a spring festivity associated with agriculture celebrated by the indigenous Mising of Assam and other Northeast Indian states. It marks the beginning of the Ahu paddy cultivation in the farms. The term "Ali" denotes legumes, "Aye" means seed and "Ligang" is 'sow'. The festival is celebrated on a Wednesday of the month of Fagun of the Assamese calendar and in the month of February in English calendar. The gumrag dance is associated with this festival.

Bushu Dima or simply Bushu is a major harvest festival of the Dimas people. This festival is celebrated during the end of January. Officially 27 January has been declared as the day of Bushu Dima festival. The Dimas people celebrate by playing musical instruments- khram (a type of drum), muri (a kind of huge long flute). The people dance to the different tunes of "murithai" and each dance has its own unique name, the most prominent being the "Baidima". There are three types of Bushu celebrated by the Dimas- Jidap, Surem and Hangsou.

Me-Dam-Me-Phi is the day of the veneration of the dead ancestors for the Tai-Ahom community. It bears striking similarity in the concept of ancestor worship that the Tai-Ahoms share with other peoples originating from the Tai stock. The word 'Me' means offerings, 'Dam' means ancestors and 'Phi' means gods. According to the Buranjis, Lengdon (God of thunder), the king of Mong Phi (The heavenly kingdom), sent two of his grandsons Khunlung and Khunlai to Mong Ri Mong Ram (present day Xishuangbanna, China) and at that moment Ye-Cheng-Pha, the God of knowledge, advised them to perform Umpha, Phuralong, Mae Dam Mae Phi and Rik-khwan rituals in different months of the year on different occasions to pay respect to the Phi-Dam (Ancestral Spirit) and Khwan elements.

Since that day till now Mae Dam Mae Phi has been observed by the Tai-Ahoms. It is celebrated on 31 January every year according to the Gregorian calendar.

Rongker also called Dehal is an annual winter festival of merriment celebrated by the Karbi people of Assam. It is observed in order to appease the local deities associated with the welfare of the village and the harvest of crops and also to get rid of all evil spirits. Although the festival does have a specific time it is usually observed at the beginning of the Karbi New year (Thang thang) which falls on February of the Gregorian calendar.

Doul Mohutsav, also called Fakuwa or Doul Utsav is a festival of colours and happiness popular in Lower Assam and especially in Barpeta. It is synonymous with the festival of Holi celebrated in Northern India. Holigeets of Barpeta are sung which is incredibly popular and enthralls the heart of every Assamese. These holigeets are the exquisite compositions in praise of Lord Krishna. People from different parts of the state visit Barpeta Satra to experience this colourful and joyful festival.

Chavang Kut is a post harvesting festival of the Kuki people. The festival is celebrated on the first day of November every year. Hence, this particular day has been officially declared as a Restricted Holiday by the Assam government. In the past, the celebration was primarily important in the religio-cultural sense. The rhythmic movements of the dances in the festival were inspired by animals, agricultural techniques and showed their relationship with ecology. Today, the celebration witnesses the shifting of stages and is revamped to suit new contexts and interpretations. The traditional dances which form the core of the festival is now performed in out-of-village settings and are staged in a secular public sphere. In Assam, the Kukis mainly reside in the two autonomous districts of Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong.

Beshoma is a festival of Deshi people (one of the indigenous Muslim groups of Assam).[259] It is a celebration of sowing crop. The Beshoma starts on the last day of Chaitra and goes on until the sixth of Baisakh. With varying locations it is also called Bishma or Chait-Boishne.[260]

Moreover, there are other important traditional festivals being celebrated every year on different occasions at different places. Many of these are celebrated by different ethno-cultural groups (sub and sister cultures). Some of these are:

Christmas is observed with great merriment by Christians of various denominations, including Catholics, Protestants and Baptists, throughout Assam.

Durga Puja is widely celebrated across the state. Muslims celebrate two Eids (Eid ul-Fitr and Eid al-Adha) with much eagerness all over Assam.

Other few yearly celebrations are Brahmaputra Beach Festival, Guwahati, Kaziranga Elephant Festival, Kaziranga and Dehing Patkai Festival, Lekhapani, Karbi Youth Festival of Diphu and International Jatinga Festival, Jatinga can not be forgotten. Few yearly Mela's like Jonbeel Mela, started in the 15th century by the Ahom Kings, Ambubachi Mela, Guwahati etc.

Axom Divas or Sukapha Divas (2 December) is celebrated to commemorate the advent of the first king of the Ahom kingdom in Assam after his journey over the Patkai Hills.

Lasit Divas (24 November) is celebrated on the birth anniversary of the great Ahom general Lasit Borphukan. Sarbananda Sonowal, the chief minister of Assam took part in the Lachit Divas celebration at the statue of Lachit Borphukan at Brahmaputra riverfront on 24 November 2017.

He said, the first countrywide celebration of 'Lachit Divas' would take place in New Delhi followed by state capitals such as Hyderabad, Bangalore and Kolkata in a phased manner.

Performing arts include: Ankia Naat (Onkeeya Naat), a traditional Vaishnav dance-drama (Bhaona) popular since the 15th century CE.[citation needed] It makes use of large masks of gods, goddesses, demons and animals and in between the plays a Sutradhar (Xutrodhar) continues to narrate the story.[citation needed]

Besides Bihu dance and Husori performed during the Bohag Bihu, dance forms of tribal minorities such as; Kushan nritra of Rajbongshi's, Bagurumba and Bordoicikhla dance of Bodos, Mishing Bihu, Banjar Kekan performed during Chomangkan by Karbis, Jhumair of Tea-garden community are some of the major folk dances.[261] Sattriya (Sotriya) dance related to Vaishnav tradition is a classical form of dance. Moreover, there are several other age-old dance-forms such as Barpeta's Bhortal Nritya, Deodhani Nritya, Ojapali, Beula Dance, Ka Shad Inghlong Kardom, Nimso Kerung, etc. The tradition of modern moving theatres is typical of Assam with immense popularity of many Mobile theatre groups such as Kohinoor, Sankardev, Abahan, Bhagyadevi, Hengul, Brindabon, Itihas etc.[citation needed]

The indigenous folk music has influenced the growth of a modern idiom, that finds expression in the music of artists like Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, Bishnuprasad Rabha, Parvati Prasad Baruwa, Bhupen Hazarika, Pratima Barua Pandey, Anima Choudhury, Luit Konwar Rudra Baruah, Jayanta Hazarika, Khagen Mahanta, Dipali Barthakur, Ganashilpi Dilip Sarma, Sudakshina Sarma among many others. Among the new generation, Zubeen Garg, Jitul Sonowal, Angaraag Mahanta and Joi Barua.[citation needed]

There is an award given in the honour of Bishnu Prasad Rabha for achievements in the cultural/music world of Assam by the state government.[citation needed]

Typically, an Assamese meal consists of many things such as bhat (rice) with dayl/ daly (lentils), masor jool (fish stew), mangxô (meat stew) and stir fried greens or herbs and vegetables.[citation needed]

The two main characteristics of a traditional meal in Assam are khar (an Alkali, named after its main ingredient) and tenga (Preparations bearing a characteristically rich and tangy flavour). Khorika is the smoked or fire grilled meat eaten with meals. Pitika (mash) is another delicacy of Assam. It includes alu pitika (mashed potatoes), bilahi (tomatoes), bengena (brinjals) or even masor pitika (fish). Commonly consumed varieties of meat include Mutton, fowl, duck/goose, fish, pigeon, pork and beef (among Muslim and Christian indigenous Assamese ethnic groups). Grasshoppers, locusts, silkworms, snails, eels, wild fowl, squab and other birds, venison are also eaten, albeit in moderation.[citation needed]

Khorisa (fermented bamboo shoots) are used at times to flavour curries while they can also be preserved and made into pickles. Koldil (banana flower) and squash are also used in popular culinary preparations.[262]

A variety of different rice cultivars are grown and consumed in different ways, viz., roasted, ground, boiled or just soaked.[citation needed]

Fish curries made of free range wild fish as well as Bôralí, rôu, illish, or sitôl are the most popular. [citation needed]

Another favourite combination is luchi (fried flatbread), a curry which can be vegetarian or non-vegetarian.[citation needed]

Many indigenous Assamese communities households still continue to brew their traditional alcoholic beverages; examples include: Laupani, Xaaj, Paniyo, Jou, Joumai, Hor, Apong, etc. Such beverages are served during traditional festivities. Declining them is considered socially offensive.[citation needed]

Assamese food is generally served in traditional bell metal dishes and platters like Kanhi, Maihang and so on.[citation needed]

Assamese literature dates back to the composition of Charyapada, and later on works like Saptakanda Ramayana by Madhava Kandali, which is the first translation of the Ramayana into an Indo-Aryan language, contributed to Assamese literature.[264][265][266] Sankardeva's Borgeet, Ankia Naat, Bhaona and Satra tradition backed the 15th-16th century Assamese literature.[267][268][269][270] Written during the Reign of Ahoms, the Buranjis are notable literary works which are prominently historical manuscripts.[271] Most literary works are written in Assamese although other local language such as Bodo and Dimasa are also represented.[citation needed] In the 19th and 20th century, Assamese and other literature was modernised by authors including Lakshminath Bezbaroa, Birinchi Kumar Barua, Hem Barua, Dr. Mamoni Raisom Goswami, Bhabendra Nath Saikia, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, Hiren Bhattacharyya, Homen Borgohain, Bhabananda Deka, Rebati Mohan Dutta Choudhury, Mahim Bora, Lil Bahadur Chettri, Syed Abdul Malik, Surendranath Medhi, Hiren Gohain etc.

The archaic Mauryan Stupas discovered in and around Goalpara district are the earliest examples (c. 300 BCE to c. 100 CE) of ancient art and architectural works. The remains discovered in Daparvatiya (Doporboteeya) archaeological site with a beautiful doorframe in Tezpur are identified as the best examples of artwork in ancient Assam with influence of Sarnath School of Art of the late Gupta period.[citation needed]

Painting is an ancient tradition of Assam. Xuanzang (7th century CE) mentions that among the Kamarupa king Bhaskaravarma's gifts to Harshavardhana there were paintings and painted objects, some of which were on Assamese silk. Many of the manuscripts such as Hastividya (A Treatise on Elephants), the Chitra Bhagawata and in the Gita Govinda from the Middle Ages bear excellent examples of traditional paintings.[citation needed]

Assam has a rich tradition of crafts, Cane and bamboo craft, bell metal and brass craft, silk and cotton weaving, toy and mask making, pottery and terracotta work, wood craft, jewellery making, and musical instruments making have remained as major traditions.[272]

Cane and bamboo craft provide the most commonly used utilities in daily life, ranging from household utilities, weaving accessories, fishing accessories, furniture, musical instruments, construction materials, etc. Utilities and symbolic articles such as Sorai and Bota made from bell metal and brass are found in every Assamese household.[273][274] Hajo and Sarthebari (Sorthebaary) are the most important centres of traditional bell-metal and brass crafts. Assam is the home of several types of silks, the most prestigious are: Muga – the natural golden silk, Pat – a creamy-bright-silver coloured silk and Eri – a variety used for manufacturing warm clothes for winter. Apart from Sualkuchi (Xualkuchi), the centre for the traditional silk industry, in almost every parts of the Brahmaputra Valley, rural households produce silk and silk garments with excellent embroidery designs. Moreover, various ethno-cultural groups in Assam make different types of cotton garments with unique embroidery designs and wonderful colour combinations.

Moreover, Assam possesses unique crafts of toy and mask making mostly concentrated in the Vaishnav Monasteries, pottery and terracotta work in western Assam districts and wood craft, iron craft, jewellery, etc. in many places across the region.

Print media include Assamese dailies Amar Asom, Asomiya Khabar, Asomiya Pratidin, Dainik Agradoot, Dainik Janambhumi, Dainik Asam, Gana Adhikar, Janasadharan and Niyomiya Barta. Asom Bani, Sadin and Janambhumi are Assamese weekly newspapers. The English dailies of Assam include The Assam Tribune, The Sentinel, The Telegraph, The Times of India, The North East Times, Eastern Chronicle and The Hills Times. Thekar, in the Karbi language has the largest circulation of any daily from Karbi Anglong district. Bodosa has the highest circulation of any Bodo daily from BTR. Dainik Jugasankha is a Bengali daily with editions from Dibrugarh, Guwahati, Silchar and Kolkata. Dainik Samayik Prasanga, Dainik Prantojyoti, Dainik Janakantha and Nababarta Prasanga are other prominent Bengali dailies published in the Barak Valley towns of Karimganj and Silchar. Hindi dailies include Purvanchal Prahari, Pratah Khabar and Dainik Purvoday.

Broadcasting stations of All India Radio have been established in 22 cities across the state. Local news and music are the main priority for those stations. Assam has three public service broadcasting service stations of state-owned Doordarshan at Dibrugarh, Guwahati and Silchar. The Guwahati-based satellite news channels include Assam Talks, DY 365, News Live, News18 Assam North East, North East Live, Prag News and Pratidin Time.

Text extracted from URL 37: Assam tea is a black tea named after Assam, India, the region of its production. It is manufactured specifically from the plant *Camellia sinensis* var. *assamica* (Masters).[1][2] The Assam tea plant is indigenous to Assam—initial efforts to plant the Chinese varieties in Assam soil did not succeed.[3][4] Assam tea is now mostly grown at or near sea level and is known for its body, briskness, malty flavour, and strong, bright colour. Assam teas, or blends containing Assam tea, are often sold as "breakfast" teas. For instance, Irish breakfast tea, a maltier and stronger breakfast tea, consists of small-sized Assam tea leaves.[5]

The state of Assam is the world's largest tea-growing region by production, lying on either side of the Brahmaputra River, and bordering Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and very close to China. This part of India experiences high rainfall; during the monsoon period, as much as 250 to 300 mm (10 to 12 in) of rain falls per day. The daytime temperature rises to about 36 °C (96.8 °F), creating greenhouse-like conditions of extreme humidity and heat. This tropical climate contributes to Assam tea's unique malty taste, a feature for which this tea is well known.

Though Assam generally denotes the distinctive black teas from Assam, the region produces smaller quantities of green[6] and white teas as well, with their own distinctive characteristics.[7]

Historically, Assam has been the second commercial tea production region after southern China, the only two regions in the world with native tea plants.

The introduction of the Assam tea bush to Europe is related to Robert Bruce, a Scottish adventurer, who apparently encountered it in the year 1823. Bruce reportedly found the plant growing "wild" in Assam while trading in the region. Maniram Dewan directed him to the local Singpho chief Bessa Gam.[8] Bruce noticed local people (the Singhpos) brewing tea from the leaves of the bush and arranged with the local chiefs to provide him with samples of the leaves and seeds, which he planned to have scientifically examined. Robert Bruce died shortly thereafter, without having seen the plant properly classified. It was not until the early 1830s that Robert's brother, Charles, arranged

for a few leaves from the Assam tea bush to be sent to the botanical gardens in Calcutta for proper examination. There, the plant was finally identified as a variety of tea, or *Camellia sinensis* var. *assamica*, but different from the Chinese version (*Camellia sinensis* var. *sinensis*). The indigenous Assam tea plant was first mentioned by a historian called Samuel Baidon who published *Tea in Assam* in 1877.[9]

While on a trade expedition through the Assam area with Singpho in 1823, Robert Bruce was introduced to a plant with which the Singpho and Khamti people made beverages and food. Through his brother, Charles Alexander Bruce who was in Sadiya, samples were sent to botanist Nathaniel Wallich who mistook it for *camellia kissi*. [10] It was not until over a decade later that the Singpho's plant would be recognized as being the same plant as the *Camellia sinensis* growing in China, after Francis Jenkins and Andrew Charlton responded to the request of the British East India Company's Tea Committee for its agents to review prospects for establishing a source of tea outside of China. Charles Bruce guided a team, including Nathaniel Wallich, William Griffith and John McClelland, dispatched from the Tea Committee in 1836, to review the plant in its natural growing conditions around Sadiya. It was cultivated in the company's experimental garden with the first batch shipped to London in 1838 and auctioned in January 1839. Though it sold well the batch was noted as lacking fragrance compared to the tea from China which had been selectively cultivated for hundreds of years and having a dullness thought to be a consequence of inexperienced processing.[10]

That same year, two companies were incorporated to pursue the tea's development in Assam: the Assam Tea Association in London and the Bengal Tea Association in Kolkata, though they quickly amalgamated to form the Assam Company. Despite early proponents such as Maniram Dewan, British-led land reforms such as the Waste Lands Act to clear and privatize plots of land for agricultural purposes, the Assam Company struggled and was forced to reorganize in 1847. Similarly, despite having access to a large source of inexpensive labour, including tea-makers smuggled out of China, indentured Indians, and refugees from famine-stricken areas, Assam at the time was a sparsely-populated, hot and humid undeveloped area and many died of disease. Despite the poor results, investment came from Britain to establish additional tea gardens, such as the Jorehaut Tea Company around Jorhat, in 1860s though by 1870 56 of the 60 companies operating tea gardens in Assam went bankrupt. Industrial mechanization in the 1870s finally resulted in profitable companies as more plucked leaves were able to be dried without rotting in the humid environment. Heated withering tables and steam-powered rolling machines precipitated a need for grading so the British adapted the existing systems of tea leaf grading to sort their products. The Indian Tea Districts Association was established in London in 1879 and in Kolkata in 1881 (as the Indian Tea Association) to organize and advance these tea interests. By 1888 tea imported from India finally exceeded that from China.[11]

Most of the currently operating tea estates in Assam are members of the Assam Branch of the Indian Tea Association (ABITA), which is the oldest and most prominent body of tea producers of India.

There are between two and seven steps involved in the processing of fresh tea leaves, the addition or exclusion of any of these stages resulting in a different type of tea. Each of these procedures is carried out in a climate-controlled facility to avoid spoilage due to excess moisture and fluctuating temperatures.

Withering refers to the wilting of fresh green tea leaves. The purpose of withering is to reduce the moisture content in the leaves and to allow the flavor compounds to develop. While it can be done outdoors, controlled withering usually takes place indoors. Freshly plucked leaves are laid out in a

series of troughs and subjected to hot air forced from underneath the troughs. During the course of withering, the moisture content in the leaf is reduced by about 30%, making the leaf look limp and soft enough for rolling. Additionally, the volatile compounds in the leaf, including the level of caffeine and the flavors, begin to intensify. A short wither allows the leaves to retain a greenish appearance and grassy flavors while a longer wither darkens the leaf and intensifies the aromatic compounds.

Fixing or “kill-green” refers to the process by which enzymatic browning of the wilted leaves is controlled through the application of heat. It is held that the longer it takes to fix the leaves, the more aromatic the tea will be. Fixing is carried out via steaming, pan firing, baking or with the use of heated tumblers. Application of steam heats the leaves more quickly than pan firing, as a result of which steamed teas taste ‘green’ and vegetal while the pan-fired ones taste toasty. This procedure is carried out for green teas, yellow teas and raw pu'er teas.

Oxidation results in the browning of the leaves and intensification of their flavor compounds. From the moment they are plucked, the cells within the tea leaves are exposed to oxygen and the volatile compounds within them begin to undergo chemical reactions. It is at this stage that polyphenolic oxidase, including theaflavin and thearubigin, begin to develop within the leaves. Theaflavins lend briskness and brightness to the tea while thearubigins offer depth and fullness to the liquor that's produced. In order to bring out specific intensities in flavors, tea makers control the amount of oxidation the leaves undergo. Controlled-oxidation is typically carried out in a large room where the temperature is maintained at 25–30 °C and humidity stands steady at 60–70%. Here, withered and rolled leaves are spread out on long shelves and left to ferment for a fixed period of time, depending on the type of tea being made. To halt or slow down oxidation, fermented leaves are moved to a panning trough where they are heated and then dried. Due to oxidation, the leaves undergo a complete transformation and exhibit an aroma and taste profile that's completely different from the profile of the leaves that do not undergo this process. Less oxidized teas tend to retain most of their green color and vegetal characteristics due to lower production of polyphenols. A semi-oxidized leaf has a brown appearance and produces yellow-amber liquor. In a fully oxidized tea, amino acids and lipids break down completely, turning the leaves blackish-brown. The flavors in such a tea are more brisk and imposing.

Rolling involves shaping the processed leaves into a tight form. As a part of this procedure, wilted / fixed leaves are gently rolled, and depending on the style, they are shaped to look wiry, kneaded, or as tightly rolled pellets. During the rolling action, essential oils and sap tend to ooze out of the leaves, intensifying the taste further. The more tightly rolled the leaves, the longer they will retain their freshness.

Drying In order to keep the tea moisture-free, the leaves are dried at various stages of production. Drying enhances a tea's flavors and ensures its long shelf-life. Also, drying brings down the tea's moisture content to less than 1%. To dry the leaves they are fired or roasted at a low temperature for a controlled period of time, typically inside an industrial scale oven. If the leaves are dried too quickly, the tea can turn abrasive and taste harsh.

Aging some teas are subjected to aging and fermentation to make them more palatable. Some types of Chinese Pu-erh, for example, are fermented and aged for years, much like wine.

Tea gardens in Assam do not follow the Indian Standard Time (IST), which is the time observed throughout India and Sri Lanka. The local time in Assam's tea gardens, known as "Tea Garden Time"

or Sah Bagan Time (also used by Myanmar as MMT), is an hour ahead of the IST.[12] The system was introduced during British rule keeping in mind the early sunrise in this part of the country.

By and large, the system has subsequently been successful in increasing the productivity of tea garden workers as they save on daylight by finishing the work during daytime, and vice versa. Working time for tea laborers in the gardens is generally between 9 a.m. (IST 8 a.m.) to 5 p.m. (IST 4 p.m.) It may vary slightly from garden to garden.

Noted filmmaker Jahnu Barua has been campaigning for a separate time zone for the northeast region.[12]

The tea plant is grown in the lowlands of Assam, unlike Darjeelings and Nilgiris, which are grown in the highlands. It is cultivated in the valley of the Brahmaputra River, an area of clay soil rich in the nutrients of the floodplain. The climate varies between a cool, arid winter and a hot, humid rainy season—conditions ideal for growing tea. Because of its long growing season and generous rainfall, Assam is one of the most prolific tea-producing regions in the world. Each year, the tea estates of Assam collectively yield approximately 680.5 million kg (1,500 million pounds weight) of tea.

Assam tea is generally harvested twice, in a "first flush" and a "second flush". The first flush is picked during late March. The second flush, harvested later, is the more prized "tippy tea", named thus for the gold tips that appear on the leaves. This second flush, tippy tea, is sweeter and more full-bodied and is generally considered superior to the first flush tea. The leaves of the Assam tea bush are dark green and glossy and fairly wide compared to those of the Chinese tea plant. The bush produces delicate white blossoms.

Text extracted from URL 38:

Folk dances of Assam include the Bihu and the Bagurumba (both danced during festivals held in the spring), the Bhortal, the Ojapali dance. Assam is home to many groups: Muslim, Indo-Aryan, Rabha, Bodo, Dimasa, Karbi, Mising, Sonowal Kacharis, Mishmi and Tiwa (Lalung) etc. These cultures come together to create an Assamese culture. Residents of the state of Assam are known as "Axomiya" (Assamese). Most tribes have their own language, although Assamese is the primary language of the state.[4][5]

Many fairs and festivals are held in Assam. Nearly all tribal festivals are held in spring and celebrate cultivation or harvest. Among festivals in Assam, the Bihu is most noteworthy; it brings together all Assamese people, regardless of background.

Although the origins of Bihu dance (Assamese: **বিহু নৃত্য**) are unknown, the first official record of it is said to be when the Ahom king Rudra Singha invited Bihu dancers to perform at the Rang Ghar fields in about 1694[4] for the Rongali Bihu.[6]

The Bihu is a group dance in which males and females dance together, but maintain separate gender roles. In general, females follow stricter line or circle formations. The male dancers and musicians enter the dancing area first, maintain their lines and follow synchronized patterns. When the female dancers enter, the male dancers break up their lines to mingle with the female dancers (who maintain their stricter formation and the order of the dance). It is usually characterized by specific postures: movements of the hips, arms and wrists; twirls, squats and bends. Male and female dance movements are very similar, with only subtle differences.

The dance is performed to traditional Bihu music. The most important musicians are the drummers (dhulia), who play a twin-faced drum (the dhol, which is hung from the neck) with one stick and a palm. There are usually more than one dhulia in a performance; each plays different rhythms at different sections of the performance. These rhythmic compositions, called seus, are traditionally formal. Before entering the dancing area, the drummers play a short and brisk rhythm. The seu is changed, and the drummers usually enter the dance area in line. The mohor xingor pepa is played (usually at the beginning) by a single player, who lays out an initial plaintive motif which sets the mood for the dance. The male dancers then enter the area in formation and perform (accompanied by singing, in which all participate). Other instruments which accompany this dance are the taal, a type of cymbal; the gogona, a reed-and-bamboo instrument; the toka, a bamboo clapper and the xutuli, a clay whistle. Bamboo flutes are also often used. The songs (biyu geet) accompanying the dance have been handed down for generations. Subjects of the lyrics include welcoming the Assamese new year, describing the life of a farmer, history and satire. Although males and females perform Bihu dance, the female Bihu dance has more variations (including freehand, twisting, with a rhythmic pepa, with a kahi (traditional metal plate) and with a jaapi (Assamese conical woven hat). The performance may be long, but is enlivened by rapid changes in rhythm, mood, movements, pace and improvisation. Dancers and musicians are given opportunities to showcase their talents.

The dance takes several forms in the different northeastern Indian groups (e.g. the Deori Bihu dance, Mising Bihu dance or Rati Bihu celebrated by Morans).[7] However, the underlying goal of the dance remains the same: to express the desire to feel both pain and happiness.

Bagurumba is a folk dance in Assam which is performed by the Bodos. It is the usually practiced during Bwisagu, a Bodo festival in the Vishuva Sankranti (mid-April). Bwisagu begins with cow worship; then, young people reverentially bow down to their parents and elders.

After that, Bathow is worshiped by offering the deity chicken and zou (rice beer). Bodo women wearing colourful dokhna and aronai perform the Bagurumba dance (also known as the Bardwisikhla dance). It is accompanied by instruments such as the serja (a bowed instrument), sifung (flute), tharkha (split bamboo), kham or madal (long drum, made of wood and goatskin). The festival ends with a community prayer at Garjasali. This dance is performed in the Bodo-inhabited areas of Udaiguri, Kokrajhar, Baksa, Chirang, Bongaigaon, Nalbari, Darrang and Sonitpur Districts.

Bhortal Nritya is known to have developed by Narahari Burha Bhakat. He was a well-known Satriya artist. This Bhortal Nritya of Barpeta district is said to have derived from the classical dance form of the state. This is one of the most popular dances in the state of Assam.

Performance— this dance is performed in a group. Six or seven dancers generally present the Bhortal dance of Assam together. This dance can be performed in larger groups as well. It is performed to a very fast beat. This beat is known as 'Zhiya Nom'. The dancers are equipped with cymbals while performing this dance. The use of the cymbals makes the dance presentation appear very colorful. The dance movements are designed as such that they can produce some very colorful patters. This is the uniqueness of this dance from Assam.

Jhumur is a traditional dance form of "Adivasi" or Tea tribes community of Assam.

The dance is performed by young girls and boys together. The male members wear long traditional dresses and keep the rhythm with few traditional musical instruments, generally a Dhol or Mandar, hung on shoulders, a flute and a pair of "Taal" (two metallic discs). The girls mostly perform the dancing part, holding each other's waist and moving hands and legs forward and backward synchronously.

The dance has a huge following in the "Tea tribe" dominated districts of Assam, like Udalguri, Sonitpur, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia .

Text extracted from URL 39: Odisha (formerly Orissa) is one of the 28 states of India, located on the eastern coast. It is surrounded by the states of West Bengal to the northeast, Jharkhand to the north, Chhattisgarh to the west and northwest, and Andhra Pradesh to the south and southwest. Odia (formerly known as Oriya) is the official and most widely spoken language, spoken by 33.2 million according to the 2001 Census.[1]

The modern state of Odisha was established on 1 April 1936, as a province in British India, and consisted predominantly of Odia-speaking regions.[2] April 1 is celebrated as Odisha Day.[3]

Other cultural attractions include the Jagannatha Temple in Puri, known for its annual Rath Yatra or Chariot, tala Chitra (palm leaf engravings), the famous stone utensils of Nilgiri (Balasore) and various tribal-influenced cultures. The Sun Temple at Konark is famous for its architectural splendour while the Sambalpuri textiles equal it in artistic grandeur.

Sand sculpture is practiced on the beaches of Puri

In its long history, Odisha has had a continuous tradition of dharmic religions especially Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Ashoka's conquest of Kalinga (India) made Buddhism a principal religion in the state which led to the establishment of numerous Stupas and non religion learning centres. During Kharavela's reign Jainism found prominence. However, by the middle of the 9th century CE there was a revival of Hinduism as attested by numerous temples such as Mukteshwara, Lingaraja, Jagannath and Konark, which were erected starting from the late 7th century CE. Part of the revival in Hinduism was due to Adi Shankaracharya who proclaimed Puri to be one of the four holiest places or Char Dham for Hinduism. Odisha has, therefore, a syncretic mixture of the three dharmic religions as attested by the fact that the Jagannath Temple in Puri is considered to be holy by Hindus, Buddhists and Jains.

Presently, the majority of people in the state of Odisha are Hindus. As per the census of 2001, Odisha is the third largest Hindu-populated state (as a percentage of population) in India. However, while Odisha is predominantly Hindu it is not monolithic. There is a rich cultural heritage in the state owing to the Hindu faith. For example, Odisha is home to several Hindu saints. Sant Bhima Bhoi was a leader of the Mahima sect movement, Sarala Dasa, was the translator of the epic Mahabharata in Odia, Chaitanya Dasa was a Buddhistic-Vaishnava and writer of the Nirguna Mahatmya, Jayadeva was the author of the Gita Govinda and is recognized by the Sikhs as one of their most important bhagats. Swami Laxmananda Saraswati is a modern-day Hindu saint of Adivasi heritage.

Odisha has Christian and Muslim minorities. There are around 898,000 Christians in Odisha (2.44% of the population).[4]

The history of Odia literature has been mapped by historians along the following stages, Old Odia (900–1300 CE), Early Middle Odia (1300–1500 CE), Middle Odia (1500–1700 CE), Late Middle Odia (1700–1850 CE) and Modern Odia (from 1850 CE till the present). But this crude categorization could not skillfully draw the real picture on account of development and growth of Odia literature. Here, we split the total periods into different stages such as Age of Charya Literature, Age of Sarala Das, Age of Panchasakha, Age of Upendra Bhanja, Age of Radhanath, Age of Satyabadi, Age of Marxism or Pragati yuga, Age of Romanticism or Sabuja Yuga, Post Independent Age.

The beginnings of Odia poetry coincide with the development of Charya Sahitya, the literature thus started by Mahayana Buddhist poets.[5] This literature was written in a specific metaphor named "Sandhya Bhasha" and the poets like Luipa, Kanhupa are from the territory of Odisha. The language of Charya was considered as Prakriti.

The first great poet of Odisha is the famous Sarala Das who wrote the Mahabharata, not an exact translation from the Sanskrit original, but a full-blown independent work. Sarala Mahabharat has 152,000 verses compared to 100,000 in the Sanskrit version. Among many of his poems and epics, he is best remembered for his Sarala Mahabharata. Chandi Purana and the Vilanka Ramayana are also two of his famous creations. Arjuna Das, a contemporary to Sarala Das, wrote Rama-Bibha, a significant long poem in Odia.

Towards the 16th century, five poets emerged, though there is hundreds year gap in between them. But they are known as Panchashakhas as they believed in the same school of thought, Utkaliya Vaishnavism. The poets are Balarama Dasa, Jagannatha Dasa, Achyutananda Dasa, Ananta Dasa and Jasobanta Das. The Panchasakhas are very much Vaishnavas by thought. In 1509, Chaitanya, an Odia devotee of Vishnu whose grandfather Madhukar Mishra had emigrated to Bengal, came to Odisha with his Vaishnava message of love. Before him Jayadeva, one of the foremost composers in Sanskrit, had prepared the ground by heralding the cult of Vaishnavism through his Gita Govinda. Chaitanya's path of devotion was known as Raganuga Bhakti Marga, but the Panchasakhas differed from Chaitanya's and believed in Gyana Mishra Bhakti Marga, which has similarities with the Buddhist philosophy of Charya Literature stated above. At the end of the age of Panchasakha, the prominent poets are Dinakrushna Das, Upendra Bhanja and Abhimanyu Samanta Simha. Verbal jugglery, obscenity and eroticism as the characteristics of Shringara Kavyas, became the trend of this period to which Upendra Bhanja took a leading role. His creations were Baidehisha Bilasa, Koti Brahmanda Sundari, Lavanyabati were proved a landmark in Odia literature. Upendra Bhanja was conferred with the title Kabi Samrat of Odia literature for the aesthetic poetic sense and verbal jugglery proficiency. Dinakrushna Das's Rasokallola and Abhimanyu Samanta Simhara's Bidagdha Chintamani are prominent kavya of this time.

The first Odia printing typeset was cast in 1836 by the Christian missionaries which heralded a great revolution in Odia literature, instead of palm leaf inscription. The books were being printed and the periodicals and journals were published. The first Odia Magazine of Bodha Dayini was published from Balasore in 1861. The main object of this magazine was to promote Odia literature and to draw attention to the lapses in government policy. The first Odia paper, The Utkal Deepika made its appearance in 1866 under the editorship of late Gouri Sankar Ray with the help of late Bichitranda. The publication of these papers during the last part of the 19th century encouraged the modern literature and acted as a media to provide a wide readers range for the writers, The educated intellectuals came in contact with the English Literature and got influenced. Radhanath Ray (1849–1908) is the prime figure, who tried to write his poems with the influence of Western Literature. He wrote Chandrabhaga, Nandikeshwari, Usha, Mahajatra, Darbar and Chilika was the long poems or Kavyas. Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843–1918), the prime figure of modern Odia Fiction Prose is the product of that generation. He was considered the Vyasakabi or founder poet of Odia language. Fakir Mohan Senapati is well known for his novel Chha Maana Atha Guntha. It is the first Indian novel to deal with the exploitations of landless peasants by the Feudal Lords. It was written much before the October revolution of Russia or much before the emerging of Marxist ideas in India.

With the rise of a freedom movement, a literary thought emerged with the influence of Gandhiji, and idealistic trend of Nationalism formed as a new trend in Odia literature. Much respected personality of Odishan culture and history, Utkalmani Gopabandhu Dash (1877–1928) had founded a

school at a village Satyabadi near Sakshigopal of Odisha and an idealistic literary movement influenced the writers of this age. Godabarisha Mohapatra, Kuntala-Kumari Sabat is the other renowned names of this age. The progressive movement in Odia literature was initiated with the formation of the Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad in 1935. The main proponents of Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad were Ananta Patnaik and Bhagabati Panigrahi, while they were students at Ravenshaw College. Thereafter many others joined in. The mouthpiece of Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad was Adhunik. Bhagabati Panigrahi was the editor and Ananta Patnaik was the managing editor of Adhunik. Ananta Patnaik was mainly a poet though he has written many short stories as well as dramas. Bhagabati Panigrahi was mainly a short story writer. Influenced by the romantic thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore, during the thirties when the progressive Marxian movements were in full flow in Odia literature, Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, the brother of Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi, the founder of Marxian Trend in Odisha, formed a group during 1920 called Sabuja Samiti. Mayadhar Mansingh was a renowned poet of that time though he was considered as a romantic poet, he kept the distance away from the influence of Rabindranath Tagore successfully. As the successor of Sachi babu, two poets Guruprasad Mohanty (popularly known as Guru Prasad) (1924–2004) and Bhanuji Rao came with T. S. Eliot and published their co-authored poetry book Nutan Kabita. Later, Ramakanta Rath modified the ideas. Sitakanta Mohapatra, Soubhagya Kumar Mishra, Rajendra Kishore Panda, Brajanath Rath, Jayanta Mahapatra, Kamalakant Lenka, J. P. Das, Brahmotri Mohanty, Mamata Dash, Amaresh Patnaik, Goutam Jena, Hrushikesh Mallick, Sunil Kumar Prusty, Sucheta Mishra, Aparna Mohanty, Pritidhara Samal, Basudev Sunni, Gajanan Mishra, Bharat Majhi are some poets of this contemporary age. In the Post-Independence era Odia fiction assumed a new direction. The trend which Fakir Mohan had started actually developed more after the 1950s. Gopinath Mohanty (1914–1991), Surendra Mohanty and Manoj Das (1934–2021) are considered as three jewels of this time. The other significant fiction writers are Chandrasekhar Rath, Shantanu Acharya, Mohapatra Nilamani Sahoo, Rabi Patnaik, Jagadish Mohanty, Kanheilal Das, Satya Mishra, Ramchandra Behera, Padmaja Pal, Yashodhara Mishra and Sarojini Sahoo are few writers whose writings have created a new age in the field of fiction. After 1970, the women wing of Odia writers emerged as a prime voice of feminism. Jayanti Ratha, Susmita Bagchi, Paramita Satpathy, Hiranmayee Mishra, Chirashree Indrasingh, Supriya Panda, Gayatri Saraf, Mamata Chowdhry are few fiction writers in this period. But, among all the women writers Sarojini Sahoo played a significant role for her feministic and sexuality approach in fiction. For feminism she is considered as the Simone de Beauvoir of India, though theoretically, she denies the Hegelian theory of "Others" developed by Simone in her *The Second Sex*. Unlike to Simone, Sarojini claims the women are "Others" from masculine perspective but as a human being, she demands similar right as Plato recommended.

In the field of drama, the traditional Odia theatre is the folk opera, or Jatra, which flourishes in the rural areas of Odisha. Modern theatre is no longer commercially viable. But in 1960, experimental theatre made a mark through the works of Manoranjan Das, who pioneered the new theatre movement with his brand of experimentalism. Bijay Mishra, Biswajit Das, Kartik Rath, Ramesh Chandra Panigrahi, Ratnakar Chaini, Ranjit Patnaik continued the tradition.

Odissi music is the traditional classical music of the state of Odisha. Born as a seva in the Jagannatha temple of Puri, it was developed by great composers such as Jayadeva, Upendra Bhanja, Dinakrusna

Dasa, Banamali Dasa, Kabisurjya Baladeba Ratha, Gopalakrusna Pattanayaka and others. Odissi music has a history of over 2000 years, several native shastras or treatises, unique ragas and talas and a distinctive style of rendition.

Being a part of the rich culture of Odisha, its music is also as much charming and colourful. Odissi music is more two thousand five hundred years old and comprises several categories. Of these, the five broad ones are Tribal Music, Folk music, Light Music, Light-Classical Music and Classical Music. Anyone who is trying to understand the culture of Odisha must take into account its music, which essentially forms a part of its legacy.

In ancient times, some saint-poets wrote the lyrics of poems and songs that were sung to rouse the religious feelings of people. It was by the eleventh century that the music of Odisha, in the form of Triswari, Chatuhswari, and Panchaswari, underwent a transformation and was converted into the classical style.

Folk music like Jogi Gita, Kendara Gita, Dhuduki Badya, Prahallada Nataka, Pala, Sankirtana, Mogal Tamasa, Gitinatya, Kandhei Nacha, Kela Nacha, Ghoda Nacha, Danda Nacha and Daskathia are popular in Odisha.

Almost every tribal group has its own distinct song and dance style.

Odissi dance and music are classical forms. Odissi has a tradition of 2,000 years, and finds mention in the *Natyashastra* of Bharatamuni, possibly written circa 200 BCE. However, the dance form nearly became extinct during the British period, only to be revived after India's independence by a few proponents, such as Guru Deba Prasad Das, Guru Pankaj Charan Das, Guru Raghunath Dutta and Kelucharan Mohapatra. Odissi classical dance is about the divine love of Krishna and his consort Radha, mostly drawn from compositions by the notable Odia poet Jayadeva, who lived in the 12th century CE.

Chhou dance is a form of tribal (martial) dance attributed to origins in Mayurbhanj princely state of Odisha and seen in the Indian states of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha. There are three subtypes of the dance, based on the original places where the subtypes were developed. Seraikella Chhou was developed in Seraikella, the administrative head of the Seraikela Kharsawan district of Jharkhand, Purulia Chhou in Purulia district of West Bengal and Mayurbhanj Chhou in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha.

Mahari Dance is one of the important dance forms of Odisha. Mahari dance originated in the temples of Odisha. History of Odisha provides evidence of the Devadasi cult in Odisha. Devadasis were dancing girls who were dedicated to the temples of Odisha. The Devadasis in Odisha were known as Maharis and the dance performed by them came to be known as Mahari Dance.

It was during the reign of Chodagangadeva, Maharis were employed in the temples of Puri. After Chodagangadeva's death, Ananabhimadeva built *Natyamandapa* in the Jagannath temple for the dance performances inside the temple. Moreover, in those days, the Mahari dancers belonged to different categories namely, the Nachunis (dancers), the Bahara Gauni, the Bhitara Gauni and the Gaudasanis.

The Mahari Dancers of Odisha are supposed to follow certain restrictions, such as:

In Odisha, one can also come across another type of Mahari dancers, who are known as Samarpada Niyoga. The duty of the Samarpada Niyoga is to dance during the ceremonial procession of the deities. These dancers perform during the Ratha Yatra, Jhulana Yatra, Dola Yatra, etc.

Western Odisha has also a great variety of dance forms unique to Odisha culture. The children's verses are known as "Chhiollai", "Humobauli" and "Doligit"; the adolescent poems are "Sajani", "Chhata", "Daika", "Bhekani"; the youth compositions are "Rasarkeli", "Jaiphul", "Maila Jada",

"Bayamana", "Gunchikuta" and "Dalkhai"; the workman's poetry comprises "Karma" and "Jhumer" about Lord Vishwakarma and the "Karamashani" Goddess. The professional entertainers perform Dand, Danggada, Mudgada, Ghumra, Sadhana, Sabar–Sabarein, Disdigo, Machina–Bajnia, Samparda and Sanchar. They are performed during all occasions with varieties of rhythm and rhyme.

Pala is a unique form of balladry in Odisha, which artistically combines elements of theatre, classical Odissi music, highly refined Odia and Sanskrit poetry, wit, and humour. The literal meaning of Pala is turned. It is more sophisticated than the other Odia ballad tradition, Daskathia. Pala can be presented in three different ways. First one is known as Baithaki Pala or 'seated', in which the performers sit on the ground throughout. The other one is Thia Pala or 'standing', which is considerably more popular and aesthetically more satisfying. The third one is called the Badi Pala, which is a kind of Thia Pala, in which two groups vie for excellence. This is the most entertaining, as there is an element of competition.

Gotipua dance is another form of dance in Odisha. In Odia colloquial language Gotipua means single boy. The dance performance done by a single boy is known as Gotipua dance. When decadence and declination came in to Devadasi or Mahari tradition due to various reasons this Gotipua dance tradition evolved as a sequel as these performances were practised to please God. It is totally unknown that when exactly this danced form came in to practice. Still, some historians say that this dance tradition appears to have originated during the region of Prataprudradev (1497 CE to 1540 CE) and gained popularity in the subsequent Muslim rule. Ray Remananda the famous Vaishnavite Minister of King Pratapruda and ardent follower of Sri Chaitanya is the originator of this boy dancing tradition, as the Vaishnavas were not approving of the females into dance practices so it possible that the dance tradition must have come after Sri Chaitanya came to Odisha. The Gotipua Dance Tradition is now seen in the village Raghurajpur situated 10 km away from Puri town, situated on the banks of river Bhargabi. It is otherwise known as the Crafts Village as various Odishan handicrafts' craftsmen reside in this village contributing their expertise in Pattachitra painting and other handicrafts.

Jhumair is a folk dance from North and Western Odisha. It is performed during harvest season and festivals. The Odia film production in the initial years was very slow. After the first Odia film Sita Bibaha, only two films were produced until 1951. A joint consortium of landlords and businessmen who collected fund after 1948 produced those two movies. The 1951 production Roles to Eight was the first Odia film having an English name. It was released after 15 years of the first Odia film Sita Bibaha. It was the fourth Odia film produced by Ratikanta Padhi. The eleventh Odia film Sri Lokenath was the first Odia film, which got National Award in 1960 directed by Prafulla Sengupta.[6]

The name of Prashanta Nanda would always come while dealing with Odia Film Industry. He was present in Odia films since 1939, but he became super active only after 1976. Nanda served Odia Film Industry as an actor, director, screenplay writer, and lyricist and even as a playback singer. Such a versatile genius is quite rare in Indian cinema history. Uttam Mohanty, whose debut film Abhiman won accolades, was one of the ruling heroes of the Odia Film Industry. His wife Aparajita Mohanty is a very successful leading lady of Odia films.

Odisha has a culinary tradition spanning centuries. The kitchen of the famous Jagannath Temple in Puri is reputed to be the largest in the world, with a thousand chefs, working around 752 wood-burning clay hearths called chulas, to feed over 1,00,000 people each day.

Rasagola, one of the most popular desserts in India, is an extension of the early cuisine of Odisha and later West Bengal. It had been enjoyed and originated in Odisha for centuries and later

extended into neighbouring Bengal, like the well-known odia rice pudding, kheeri (kheer), that is relished all over India.

Chena Poda is another famous sweet delicacy in Odisha with the origin from Nayagarh District, Odisha.

Pakhala, a dish made of rice, water, and yoghurt, that is fermented overnight, is very popular in summer, particularly in the rural areas. Odias are very fond of sweets and no Odia repast is considered complete without some dessert at the end. A typical meal in Odisha consists of a main course and dessert. Typically bread is served as the main course for breakfast, whereas rice is eaten with lentils (dals) during lunch and dinner. The main course also includes one or more curries, vegetables and pickles. Given the fondness for sweet foods, the dessert course may include generous portions of more than a single item. Odia desserts are made from a variety of ingredients, with milk, chhenna (a form of ricotta cheese), coconut, rice, and wheat flour being the most common.

The western-style dress has gained greater acceptance in cities and towns among men, although the people prefer to wear traditional dresses like Dhoti, Kurtha and Gamucha during festivals or other religious occasions. Women normally prefer to wear the Sari Sambalpuri Sari, or the Shalwar kameez; western attire is becoming popular among younger women in cities and towns.

The Saree of Odisha is much in demand throughout the entire world. The different colours and varieties of sarees in Odisha make them very popular among the women of the state. The handloom sarees available in Odisha can be of four major types; these are Sambalpuri kapta, Sambalpuri Bandha, Sambalpuri Bomkai and Sambalpuri Saptaper. Odisha sarees are also available in other colours like cream, maroon, brown and rust. The tie-and-dye technique used by the weavers of Odisha to create motifs on these sarees is unique to this region. This technique also gives the sarees of Odisha an identity of their own.

Text extracted from URL 40:

Odisha (English: /əˈdɪʃə/,^[16] Odia: [oɽiˈsa] [ⓘ]), formerly Orissa (/ɒˈrɪsə, ɔː-, oʊ-/^[17] the official name until 2011), is an Indian state located in Eastern India. It is the eighth-largest state by area, and the eleventh-largest by population, with over 41 million inhabitants. The state also has the third-largest population of Scheduled Tribes in India.^[18] It neighbours the states of Jharkhand and West Bengal to the north, Chhattisgarh to the west, and Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to the south. Odisha has a coastline of 485 kilometres (301 mi) along the Bay of Bengal in Indian Ocean.^[19] The region is also known as Utkalā and is mentioned by this name in India's national anthem, Jana Gana Mana.^[20] The language of Odisha is Odia, which is one of the Classical Languages of India.^[21]

The ancient kingdom of Kalinga, which was invaded by the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka in 261 BCE resulting in the Kalinga War, coincides with the borders of modern-day Odisha.^[22] The modern boundaries of Odisha were demarcated by the Indian government when Orissa Province was established on 1 April 1936, consisting of the Odia-speaking districts of Bihar and Orissa Province.^[22] The 1st of April is celebrated as Utkala Dibasa (lit. 'Odisha Day').^[23] Cuttack was made the capital of the region by Anantavarman Chodaganga in c. 1135,^[24] after which the city was used as the capital by many rulers, through the British era until 1948. Thereafter, Bhubaneswar became the capital of Odisha.^[25]

The economy of Odisha is the 16th-largest state economy in India with ₹5.86 trillion (US\$73 billion) in gross domestic product and a per capita GDP of ₹127,383 (US\$1,600).[5] Odisha ranks 32nd among Indian states in Human Development Index.[26]

The terms Odisha and Orissa (Odia: ଓଡ଼ିଶା, Oṛissa) derive from the ancient Prakrit word "Odda Visaya" (also "Udra Bibhasha" or "Odra Bibhasha") as in the Tirumalai inscription of Rajendra Chola I, which is dated to 1025.[27] Sarala Das, who translated the Mahabharata into the Odia language in the 15th century, calls the region 'Odra Rashtra' as Odisha. The inscriptions of Kapilendra Deva of the Gajapati Kingdom (1435–67) on the walls of temples in Puri call the region Odisha or Odisha Rajya.[28]

In 2011, the English rendering of ଓଡ଼ିଶା was changed from "Orissa" to "Odisha", and the name of its language from "Oriya" to "Odia", by the passage of the Orissa (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2010 and the Constitution (113th Amendment) Bill, 2010 in the Parliament. The Hindi rendering उड़ीसा (uṛīsā) was also modified to ओड़िशा (oṛiśā). After a brief debate, the lower house, Lok Sabha, passed the bill and amendment on 9 November 2010.[29] On 24 March 2011, Rajya Sabha, the upper house of Parliament, also passed the bill and the amendment.[30] The changes in spelling were made with the intention of having the English and Hindi renditions conform to the Odia transliteration.[31] However, the underlying Odia texts were nevertheless transliterated incorrectly as per the Hunterian system, the official national transliteration standard, in which the transliterations would be Orisha and Oria instead.

Prehistoric Acheulian tools dating to Lower Paleolithic era have been discovered in various places in the region, implying an early settlement by humans.[32] Kalinga has been mentioned in ancient texts like Mahabharata, Vayu Purana and Mahagovinda Suttanta.[33][34]

According to political scientist Sudama Misra, the Kalinga janapada originally comprised the area covered by the Puri and Ganjam districts.[35] The Sabar people of Odisha have also been mentioned in the Mahabharata.[36][37] Baudhayana mentions Kalinga as not yet being influenced by Vedic traditions, implying it followed mostly tribal traditions.[38]

Ashoka of the Mauryan dynasty conquered Kalinga in the bloody Kalinga War in 261 BCE,[39] which was the eighth year of his reign.[40] According to his own edicts, in that war about 100,000 people were killed, 150,000 were captured and more were affected.[39] The resulting bloodshed and suffering of the war is said to have deeply affected Ashoka. He turned into a pacifist and converted to Buddhism.[40][41]

By c. 150 BCE, Emperor Kharavela, who was possibly a contemporary of Demetrius I of Bactria,[42] conquered a major part of the Indian sub-continent. Kharavela was a Jain ruler. He also built the monastery atop the Udayagiri hill.[43] Subsequently, the region was ruled by monarchs, such as Samudragupta[44] and Shashanka.[45] It was also a part of Harsha's empire.[46]

The city of Brahmapur in Odisha is also known to have been the capital of the Pauravas during the closing years of 4th century CE. Nothing was heard from the Pauravas from about the 3rd century CE, because they were annexed by the Yaudheya Republic, who in turn submitted to the Mauryans. It was only at the end of 4th century CE, that they established royalty at Brahmapur, after about 700 years.

Later, the kings of the Somavamsi dynasty began to unite the region. By the reign of Yayati II, c. 1025 CE, they had integrated the region into a single kingdom. Yayati II is supposed to have built the Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneswar.[22] They were replaced by the Eastern Ganga dynasty. Notable

rulers of the dynasty were Anantavarman Chodaganga, who began reconstruction on the present-day Shri Jagannath Temple in Puri (c. 1135), and Narasimhadeva I, who constructed the Konark temple (c. 1250).[47][48]

The Eastern Ganga Dynasty was followed by the Gajapati Kingdom. The region resisted integration into the Mughal empire until 1568, when it was conquered by Sultanate of Bengal.[49] Mukunda Deva, who is considered the last independent king of Kalinga, was defeated and was killed in battle by a rebel Ramachandra Bhanja. Ramachandra Bhanja himself was killed by Bayazid Khan Karrani.[50] In 1591, Man Singh I, then governor of Bihar, led an army to take Odisha from the Karranis of Bengal. They agreed to treaty because their leader Qutlu Khan Lohani had recently died. But they then broke the treaty by attacking the temple town of Puri. Man Singh returned in 1592 and pacified the region.[51]

In 1751, the Nawab of Bengal Alivardi Khan ceded the region to the Maratha Empire.[22]

The British had occupied the Northern Circars, comprising the southern coast of Odisha, as a result of the Second Carnatic War by 1760, and incorporated them into the Madras Presidency gradually.[52] In 1803, the British ousted the Marathas from the Puri-Cuttack region of Odisha during the Second Anglo-Maratha War. The northern and western districts of Odisha were incorporated into the Bengal Presidency.[53]

The Orissa famine of 1866 caused an estimated 1 million deaths.[54] Following this, large-scale irrigation projects were undertaken.[55] In 1903, the Utkal Sammilani organisation was founded to demand the unification of Odia-speaking regions into one state.[56] On 1 April 1912, the Bihar and Orissa Province was formed.[57] On 1 April 1936, Bihar and Orissa were split into separate provinces.[58] The new province of Orissa came into existence on a linguistic basis during the British rule in India, with Sir John Austen Hubback as the first governor.[58][59] Following India's independence, on 15 August 1947, 27 princely states signed the document to join Orissa.[60] Most of the Orissa Tributary States, a group of princely states, acceded to Orissa in 1948, after the collapse of the Eastern States Union.[61]

Odisha lies between the latitudes 17.780N and 22.730N, and between longitudes 81.37E and 87.53E. The state has an area of 155,707 km², which is 4.87% of total area of India, and a coastline of 450 km.[62] In the eastern part of the state lies the coastal plain. It extends from the Subarnarekha River in the north to the Rushikulya River in the south. The lake Chilika is part of the coastal plains. The plains are rich in fertile silt deposited by the six major rivers flowing into the Bay of Bengal: Subarnarekha, Budhabalanga, Baitarani, Brahmani, Mahanadi and Rushikulya.[62] The Central Rice Research Institute (CRRI), a Food and Agriculture Organization-recognised rice gene bank and research institute, is situated on the banks of Mahanadi in Cuttack.[63] The stretch between Puri and Bhadrak in Odisha juts out a little into the sea, making it vulnerable to any cyclonic activity.[64]

Three-quarters of the state is covered in mountain ranges. Deep and broad valleys have been made in them by rivers. These valleys have fertile soil and are densely populated. Odisha also has plateaus and rolling uplands, which have lower elevation than the plateaus.[62] The highest point in the state is Deomali at 1,672 metres in Koraput district. Some other high peaks are: Sinkaram (1,620 m), Golikoda (1,617 m), and Yendrika (1,582 metres).[65]

The state experiences four meteorological seasons: winter (January to February), pre-monsoon season (March to May), south-west monsoon season (June to September) and north east monsoon season (October–December). However, locally the year is divided into six traditional seasons (or

rutus): Grishma (summer), Barsha (rainy season), Sharata (autumn), Hemanta (dewy), Sheeta (winter season) and Basanta (spring).[62]

According to a Forest Survey of India report released in 2012, Odisha has 48,903 km² of wild forest, covering 31.41% of the state's total area. The forests are classified into areas of dense forest (7,060 km²), medium dense forest (21,366 km²), open forest (forest without closed canopy; 20,477 km²) and scrub forest or scrubland (4,734 km²). The state also has bamboo forests (10,518 km²) and tidal areas of mangrove swamp (221 km²). The state is gradually losing its wilderness areas to timber smuggling, deforestation, destructive mining, and general urban industrialisation, as well as livestock grazing. There have been attempts at conservation and reforestation.[67]

Due to the climate and good rainfall, Odisha's evergreen and moist forests are uniquely suitable habitats for wild orchids. Around 130 species have been reported from the state.[68] Around 97 of them are found in Mayurbhanj district alone. The Orchid House of the Nandankanan Zoological Park maintains some of these species.[69]

Simlipal National Park is a protected wildlife area and Bengal tiger reserve spread over 2,750 km² of the northern part of Mayurbhanj district. The park has around 1,078 species of plants, including 94 of the aforementioned orchids. The sal is the primary tree species. For fauna, the park is home to around 55 species of mammal, including the Bengal tiger, chital, chousingha, common langur, gaur, Indian elephant, Indian giant squirrel, jungle cat, leopard, muntjac, sambar, small Indian civet and wild boar. There are over 300 species of birds in the park, such as the common hill myna, as well as grey, Indian pied and Malabar pied hornbills. There are also some 60 species of reptiles and amphibians, including the famed king cobra, plus banded krait and tricarinate hill turtle. There is also a mugger crocodile breeding programme in nearby Ramtirtha.[70]

The Chandaka Elephant Sanctuary is a 190 km² protected area near the capital city, Bhubaneswar. However, urban expansion and over-grazing have reduced the forests, driving the herds of elephants to migrate away, as well as increasing human-elephant conflicts—which sometimes results in injury and death (on both sides). Some elephants have died in conflicts with villagers, while some have died during migration after being accidentally electrocuted by power lines or even hit by trains. Outside the protected area, they are killed by ivory poachers. In 2002, there were about 80 elephants, but by 2012, their numbers had been reduced to 20. Many of the animals have migrated toward the Barbara Reserve forest, Chilika, Nayagarh district, and Athagad.[71][72] Besides elephants, the sanctuary also has leopards, jungle cats and herds of chital.[73]

The Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district covers 650 km², of which 150 km² are mangroves. Gahirmatha Beach, in Bhitarkanika, is the world's largest nesting site for olive ridley sea turtles.[74] In 2013, the Indian Coast Guard initiated Operation Oliver to protect the endangered sea turtle population of the region.[75] Other major nesting grounds for the turtle in the state are Rushikulya, in Ganjam district,[76] and the mouth of the Devi river.[77] The Bhitarkanika sanctuary is also noted for its large population of saltwater crocodiles and Asian water monitors,[78] the second-largest lizard species on earth,[79] in addition to axis deer and rhesus macaques.[78] The coastal mangrove environments are home to several types of mudskippers, including the barred, Boddart's blue-spotted and great blue-spotted mudskippers.[78]

In winter, Bhitarkanika is also visited by migratory birds. Among the many species, both resident and migratory, are kingfishers (including black-capped, collared and common kingfishers), herons (such as black-crowned night, grey, purple and striated herons), Indian cormorants, openbill storks,

Oriental white ibis, pheasant-tailed jacana, sarus cranes, spotted owlets and white-bellied sea-eagles.[80][78] The possibly endangered horseshoe crab is also found in this region.[81]

Chilika Lake is a brackish water lagoon on the east coast of Odisha with an area of 1,105 km². It is connected to the Bay of Bengal by a 35-km-long narrow channel and is a part of the Mahanadi delta. In the dry season, the tides bring in salt water. In the rainy season, the rivers falling into the lagoon decrease its salinity.[82] Birds from places as far as the Caspian Sea, Lake Baikal (and other parts of Russia), Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Ladakh and the Himalayas migrate to the lagoon in winter.[83] Among the waterfowl and wading birds spotted there are Eurasian wigeon, pintail, bar-headed goose, greylag goose, greater flamingo, common mallard and Goliath heron.[84][85] The lagoon also has a small population of the endangered Irrawaddy dolphins.[86] The state's coastal region has also had sightings of the rare finless porpoise, as well as the more common bottlenose dolphin, humpback dolphin and spinner dolphins in its waters.[87]

Satapada is situated close to the northeast cape of Chilika Lake and Bay of Bengal. It is famous for dolphin watching in their natural habitat. There is a tiny island en route for watching dolphins, where tourists often take a short stop. Apart from that, this island is also home for tiny red crabs.

According to a census conducted in 2016, there are around 2000 elephants in the state.

[88]

All states in India are governed by a parliamentary system of government based on universal adult franchise.[90][91]

The main parties active in the politics of Odisha are the Biju Janata Dal, the Indian National Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party. Following the Odisha State Assembly Election in 2019, the Naveen Patnaik-led Biju Janata Dal stayed in power for the sixth consecutive term, he is the 14th chief minister of Odisha since 2000.[92]

The Odisha state has a unicameral legislature.[93] The Odisha Legislative Assembly consists of 147 elected members,[92] and special office bearers such as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, who are elected by the members. Assembly meetings are presided over by the Speaker, or by the Deputy Speaker in the Speaker's absence.[94] Executive authority is vested in the Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister, although the titular head of government is the Governor of Odisha. The governor is appointed by the President of India. The leader of the party or coalition with a majority in the Legislative Assembly is appointed as the Chief Minister by the governor, and the Council of Ministers are appointed by the governor on the advice of the Chief Minister. The Council of Ministers reports to the Legislative Assembly.[95] The 147 elected representatives are called Members of the Legislative Assembly, or MLAs. One MLA may be nominated from the Anglo-Indian community by the governor.[96] The term of the office is for five years, unless the Assembly is dissolved prior to the completion of the term.[94]

The judiciary is composed of the Odisha High Court, located at Cuttack, and a system of lower courts.

Odisha has been divided into 30 districts. These 30 districts have been placed under three different revenue divisions to streamline their governance. The divisions are North, Central and South, with their headquarters at Sambalpur, Cuttack and Berhampur respectively. Each division consists of ten districts and has as its administrative head a Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC).[97] The position of the RDC in the administrative hierarchy is that between that of the district administration

and the state secretariat.[98] The RDCs report to the Board of Revenue, which is headed by a senior officer of the Indian Administrative Service.[97]

Each district is governed by a collector and district magistrate, who is appointed from the Indian Administrative Service or a very senior officer from Odisha Administrative Service.[100][101] The collector and district magistrate is responsible for collecting the revenue and maintaining law and order in the district. Each district is separated into sub-divisions, each governed by a sub-collector and sub-divisional magistrate. The sub-divisions are further divided into tahasils. The tahasils are headed by tahasildar. Odisha has 58 sub-divisions, 317 tahasils and 314 blocks.[99] Blocks consists of Panchayats (village councils) and town municipalities.

The capital and largest city of the state is Bhubaneswar. The other major cities are Cuttack, Rourkela, Berhampur and Sambalpur. Municipal Corporations in Odisha include Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Berhampur, Sambalpur and Rourkela.

Other municipalities of Odisha include Angul, Balangir, Balasore, Barbil, Bargarh, Baripada, Basudevpur, Belpahar, Bhadrak, Bhanjanagar, Bhawanipatna, Biramitrapur, Boudh, Brajarajnagar, Byasanagar, Chhatrapur, Deogarh, Dhenkanal, Gopalpur, Gunupur, Hinjilicut, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Jeypore, Jharsuguda, Joda, Kendrapara, Kendujhar, Khordha, Konark, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Nayagarh, Nuapada, Paradeep, Paralakhemundi, Phulbani, Puri, Rajgangpur, Rayagada, Sonapur, Sundargarh, Talcher, Titilagarh, Karanjia, Chatrapur, Asika, Kantabanji, Baudhgarh, and Umerkote.

Auxiliary authorities known as panchayats, for which local body elections are regularly held, govern local affairs in rural areas.

Odisha is experiencing a rapid economic growth post-Covid. The impressive growth in gross domestic product of the state has been reported by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Odisha's growth rate is above the national average.[102] The central Government's Urban Development Ministry has recently announced the names of 20 cities selected to be developed as smart cities. The state capital Bhubaneswar is the first city in the list of smart Cities released in January 2016, a pet project of the Indian Government. The announcement also marked with sanction of Rs 508.02 billion over the five years for development.[103]

Odisha has abundant natural resources and a large coastline. Odisha has emerged as the most preferred destination for overseas investors with investment proposals.[104] It contains a fifth of India's coal, a quarter of its iron ore, a third of its bauxite reserves and most of the chromite.

Rourkela Steel Plant[105] was the first integrated steel plant in the public sector in India, built with collaboration of Germany.

Arcelor-Mittal has also announced plans to invest in another mega steel project amounting to \$10 billion. Russian major Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Company (MMK) plans to set up a 10 MT steel plant in Odisha, too. Nippon Steel Corporation has recently announced to set up their own plants, one of which will be the world's largest and most advanced steel plant in Odisha, with a production capacity of 30 MT annually.[106] Bandhabahal is a major area of open cast coal mines in Odisha. The state is attracting an unprecedented amount of investment in aluminium, coal-based power plants, petrochemicals, and information technology as well. In power generation, Reliance Power (Anil Ambani Group) is putting up the world's largest power plant with an investment of US\$13 billion at Hirma in Jharsuguda district.[107]

In 2009 Odisha was the second top domestic investment destination with Gujarat first and Andhra Pradesh in third place according to an analysis of ASSOCHAM Investment Meter (AIM) study on corporate investments. Odisha's share was 12.6 per cent in total investment in the country. It received an investment proposal worth ₹2.01 trillion (equivalent to ₹4.5 trillion or US\$56 billion in 2023) in 2010. Steel and power were among the sectors which attracted maximum investments in the state.[108]

The recently concluded Make in Odisha Conclave 2022 saw the state generate investment proposals worth ₹10.5 trillion with an employment potential for 10,37,701 people. Out of the total investment proposals received, the metals, ancillary and downstream sectors fetched ₹5.50 lakhs crore (trillion), power, green energy, and renewable energy sector fetched ₹2.38 trillion, and chemicals-petrochemicals and logistics-infrastructure sector attracted ₹76,000 crores and ₹1.20 trillion, respectively. Odisha has the potential to become a trillion-dollar economy by 2030.

Odisha has a network of roads, railways, airports and seaports. Bhubaneswar is well connected by air, rail and road with the rest of India. Some highways are getting expanded to four lanes.[109][110] Odisha Government Plans Mega Metro Rail Project to Connect Puri and Bhubaneswar [111] The metro rail proposal was given to connect trains between Puri- Bhubaneswar – Cuttack.[112] The Odisha government has planned a new Expressway that will connect Biju Patnaik International Airport airport at Bhubaneswar with the proposed Shri Jagannath International Airport at Puri.[113]

Odisha has a total of three operational airports, 16 airstrips and 16 helipads.[114][115][116] The airport at Jharsuguda was upgraded to a full-fledged domestic airport in May 2018. Rourkela Airport became operational in December 2022. The Dhamra Port Company Limited plans to build Dhamra Airport 20 km from Dhamra Port.[117]

Odisha has a coastline of 485 kilometres (301 mi). It has one major port at Paradip and few minor ports. some of them are:[118][119]

Major cities of Odisha are well connected to all the major cities of India by direct daily trains and weekly trains. Most of the railway network in Odisha lies under the jurisdiction of the East Coast Railway (ECOR) with headquarters at Bhubaneswar and some parts under South Eastern Railway and South East Central Railway.

According to the 2011 census of India, the total population of Odisha is 41,974,218, of which 21,212,136 (50.54%) are male and 20,762,082 (49.46%) are female, or 978 females per 1000 males. This represents a 13.97% increase over the population in 2001. The population density is 270 per km². [3]

The literacy rate is 73%, with 82% of males and 64% of females being literate, according to the 2011 census.

The proportion of people living below the poverty line in 2004–2005 was 57.15% which was nearly double the Indian average of 26.10%. Since 2005 the state has reduced poverty rate dramatically by 24.6 percentage points. According to current estimate proportion of people living under poverty line was 32.6% [121][122]

Data of 1996–2001 showed the life expectancy in the state was 61.64 years, higher than the national value of years. The state has a birth rate of 23.2 per 1,000 people per year, a death rate of 9.1 per 1,000 people per year, an infant mortality rate of 65 per 1000 live birth and a maternal mortality rate of 358 per 1,000,000 live births. Odisha has a Human Development Index of 0.606 as of 2018. [123]

Religion in Odisha (2011)[124]

The majority (almost 94%[124]) of people in Odisha are Hindu and there is also a rich cultural heritage in the state. For example, Odisha is home to several Hindu figures. Sant Bhima Bhoi was a leader of the Mahima sect. Sarala Das, a Hindu Khandayat, was the translator of the epic Mahabharata into Odia. Chaitanya Das was a Buddhistic-Vaishnava and writer of the Nirguna Mahatmya. Jayadeva was the author of the Gita Govinda.

The Odisha Temple Authorisation Act of 1948 empowered the government of Odisha to open temples for all Hindus, including Dalits.[125]

Perhaps the oldest scripture of Odisha is the Madala Panji from the Puri Temple believed from 1042 AD. Famous Hindu Odia scripture includes the 16th-century Bhagabata of Jagannatha Dasa.[126] In the modern times Madhusudan Rao was a major Odia writer, who was a Brahmo Samajist and shaped modern Odia literature at the start of the 20th century.[127]

Christians in Odisha are 2.8% of the population, mainly tribals and Dalits. Odia Muslims live in the urban areas of coastal Odisha. The Sikh, Buddhist and Jain communities together account for 0.1% of the population.[124]

Languages of Odisha (2011)[128]

Odia is the official language of Odisha[129] and is spoken by 82.70% of the population according to the 2011 census of India.[128] It is also one of the classical languages of India. English is the official language of correspondence between state and the union of India. Spoken Odia is not homogeneous as one can find different dialects spoken across the state. Some of the major dialects found inside the state are Sambalpuri, Cuttacki, Puri, Baleswari, Ganjami, Desiya, Kalahandia and Phulbani. The standard language is based on the Cuttacki dialect. In addition to Odia, significant populations of people speaking other major Indian languages like Hindi, Telugu, Urdu and Bengali are also found in the state, mainly in cities.[130]

The different tribal (Adivasi) communities who mostly reside in western and southern Odisha have their own languages belonging to Munda and Dravidian family of languages. Some of these major tribal languages are Santali, Kui, Mundari and Ho. Due to increasing contact with outsiders, migration and socioeconomic reasons many of these indigenous languages are slowly getting extinct or are on the verge of getting extinct.[131]

The Odisha Sahitya Academy Award was established in 1957 to actively develop Odia language and literature. The Odisha government launched a portal in 2018 to promote Odia language and literature.[132]

Entry to various institutes of higher education especially into engineering degrees is through a centralised Odisha Joint Entrance Examination, conducted by the Biju Patnaik University of Technology (BPUT), Rourkela, since 2003, where seats are provided according to order of merit.[135] Few of the engineering institutes enroll students by through Joint Entrance Examination. For medical courses, there is a corresponding National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test.

Odisha has a culinary tradition spanning centuries. The kitchen of the Shri Jagannath Temple, Puri is reputed to be the largest in the world, with 1,000 chefs, working around 752 wood-burning clay hearths called chulas, to feed over 10,000 people each day.[136][137]

The syrupy dessert Pahala rasagola made in Odisha is known throughout the world.[138] Chhenapoda is another major Odisha sweet cuisine, which originated in Nayagarh.[139] Dalma (a mix of dal and selected vegetables) is widely known cuisine, better served with ghee.[citation needed]

The "Odisha Rasagola" was awarded a GI tag 29 July 2019 after a long battle about the origin of the famous sweet with West Bengal.[140]

Odissi dance and music are classical art forms. Odissi is the oldest surviving dance form in India on the basis of archaeological evidence.[141] Odissi has a long, unbroken tradition of 2,000 years, and finds mention in the Natyashastra of Bharatamuni, possibly written c. 200 BC. However, the dance form nearly became extinct during the British period, only to be revived after India's independence by a few gurus.

The variety of dances includes Ghumura dance, Chhau dance, Jhumair, Mahari dance, Dalkhai, Dhensa and Gotipua.

The state of Odisha has hosted several international sporting events, including the 2018 Men's Hockey World Cup, 2022 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup and 2023 Men's Hockey World Cup.

Sports stadiums in Odisha include:

There are some High Performance Centres in the state as well which have been set up at Kalinga Stadium for the development of respective sports in Odisha. Some of the HPCs are as follows:

The Lingaraja Temple at Bhubaneswar has a 150-foot (46 m) high deula while the Jagannath Temple, Puri is about 200 feet (61 m) high and dominates the skyline. Only a portion of the Konark Sun Temple at Konark in Puri district, the largest of the temples of the "Holy Golden Triangle" exists today, and it is still staggering in size. It stands out as a masterpiece in Odisha architecture. Sarala Temple, regarded as one of the most spiritually elevated expressions of Shaktism is in Jagatsinghpur district. It is also one of the holiest places in Odisha and a major tourist attraction. Maa Tarini Temple situated in Kendujhar district is also a famous pilgrimage destination. Every day thousands of coconuts are given to Maa Tarini by devotees for fulfilling their wishes.[147]

Odisha's varying topography – from the wooded Eastern Ghats to the fertile river basin – has proven ideal for evolution of compact and unique ecosystems. This creates treasure troves of flora and fauna that are inviting to many migratory species of birds and reptiles. Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapada district is famous for its second largest mangrove ecosystem. The bird sanctuary in Chilika Lake (Asia's largest brackish water lake). The tiger reserve and waterfalls in Simlipal National Park, Mayurbhanj district are integral parts of eco-tourism in Odisha, arranged by Odisha Tourism.[148]

Daringbadi is a hill station in the Kandhamal district. It is known as "Kashmir of Odisha", for its climatic similarity. Chandipur, in Baleswar district is a calm and serene site, is mostly unexplored by tourists. The unique speciality of this beach is the ebb tides that recede up to 4 km and tend to disappear rhythmically.

In the western part of Odisha, Hirakud Dam in Sambalpur district is the longest earthen dam in the World. It also forms the biggest artificial lake in Asia. The Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary is situated near Hirakud Dam. Samaleswari Temple is a Hindu temple in Sambalpur city, dedicated to the goddess known as 'Samaleswari', the presiding deity of Sambalpur, is a strong religious force in western part of Odisha and Chhattisgarh state. The Leaning Temple of Huma is located near

Sambalpur. The temple is dedicated to the Hindu god Lord Bimaleshwar. Sri Sri Harishankar Devasthan, is a temple on the slopes of Gandhamardhan hills, Balangir district. It is popular for its scenes of nature and connection to two Hindu lords, Vishnu and Shiva. On the opposite side of the Gandhamardhan hills is the temple of Sri Nrusinghanath, is situated at the foothills of Gandhamardhan Hill near Paikmal, Bargarh district.

In the southern part of Odisha, The Taratarini Temple on the Kumari hills at the bank of the Rushikulya River near Berhampur city in Ganjam district. Here worshiped as the Breast Shrine (Sthana Peetha) and manifestations of Adi Shakti. The Tara Tarini Shakti Peetha is one of the oldest pilgrimage centers of the Mother Goddess and is one of four major ancient Tantra Peetha and Shakti Peethas in India. Deomali is a mountain peak of the Eastern Ghats. It is located in Koraput district. This peak with an elevation of about 1,672 m, is the highest peak in Odisha.

The share of foreign tourists' arrival in the state is below one per cent of total foreign tourist arrivals at all India level.[149]

Text extracted from URL 41:

Dadra and Nagar Haveli is a district of the union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu in western India. It is composed of two separate geographical entities: Nagar Haveli, wedged in between Maharashtra and Gujarat states 1 kilometre (0.62 mi) to the north-west, and the smaller enclave of Dadra, which is surrounded by Gujarat. Silvassa is the administrative headquarters of Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

Unlike the surrounding areas, Dadra and Nagar Haveli was ruled by the Portuguese from 1783 until the mid-20th century. The area was captured by pro-India forces in 1954 and administered as the de facto state of Free Dadra and Nagar Haveli before being accessioned to India as a union territory, the union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli in 1961.[4] The union territory was merged with the neighbouring union territory of Daman and Diu to form the new union territory of "Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu" on 26 January 2020. The territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli then became one of the three districts of the new union territory, as the Dadra and Nagar Haveli district.[5]

The history of Dadra and Nagar Haveli begins with the defeat of the Koli chieftains of the region by the Rajput kings. In the year 1262, a Rajput prince from Rajasthan named Ram Singh established himself as the ruler of Ramnagar, the present-day Dharampur, which consisted of 8 parganas (a group of villages) and assumed the title Maharana. Nagar Haveli was one of the Parganas, and its capital was Silvassa.

In 1360, Rana Dharamshah shifted his capital from Nagar Haveli to Nagar Fatehpur.

With the rise of Maratha power, Shivaji Maharaj viewed Ramnagar as an important locality. He captured the region, but Somshah Rana recaptured it in 1690.

After the Treaty of Vasai (6 May 1739), Vasai and the surrounding territories came under the Maratha rule.[6]

Soon after, the Marathas captured Ramnagar but reinstated the ruler, Ramdeo, under conditions. Thus the Marathas acquired the rights to collect revenue, known as chauthai, from Nagar Haveli and two other Parganas.

During the time of Dharamdeo, the son of Ramdeo, due to his change of policies (he neglected the conditions imposed earlier by the Marathas), the Marathas captured Nagar Haveli and the surrounding region.

The Portuguese were granted the area of Nagar Haveli on 10 June 1783 on the basis of the Friendship Treaty executed on 17 December 1779 as compensation for damage to the Portuguese frigate Santana by the Maratha Navy in 1772.[7] The treaty allowed the Portuguese to collect revenue from 72 villages in Nagar Haveli. Then, in 1785 the Portuguese purchased Dadra, annexing it to Portuguese State of India (Estado Português da Índia).

In 1818, the Maratha Empire was defeated by the British in the Third Anglo-Maratha War, and the Portuguese ultimately became the effective rulers of Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

Under the Portuguese rule, Dadra and Nagar Haveli were part of the Distrito de Damão (Daman district) of the Estado da Índia (Portuguese State of India). The two territories formed a single concelho (municipality), named "Nagar Haveli", with its head in Darará until 1885 and, after that, with its head in the town of Silvassa. The local affairs were overseen by an elected câmara municipal (municipal council), with the higher level affairs administrated by the district governor of Daman, who was represented in Nagar Haveli by an administrator.

The Nagar Haveli concelho was itself divided in the following freguesias (civil parishes): Silvassa, Noroli, Dadra, Quelalunim, Randá, Darará, Cadoli, Canoel, Carchonde, and Sindonim.

The Portuguese occupation lasted until 1954, when Dadra and Nagar Haveli were liberated by supporters of the Indian Union. It was the first possession to be detached from the colonial Empire by the integration with the Indian Union in 1954, after nearly two centuries of Colonial rule.[8]

After India attained independence in 1947, the residents of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, with the help of volunteers of organisations like the United Front of Goans (UFG), the National Movement Liberation Organisation (NMLO), and the Azad Gomantak Dal, conquered the territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli from Portuguese India in 1954.[9]

As time passed, the Indian independence struggle picked up momentum. On 18 June 1946, Ram Manohar Lohia was arrested in Goa. This was the beginning of the independence struggle in Goa. He was deported to India. On 15 August 1947, India became independent from British rule, but the Portuguese and other European colonies were not immediately incorporated.

The Goan struggle continued for many years. Atmaram Narsinh Karmalkar, an officer in the Banco Colonial (Portuguese Bank) at Panaji (in Goa) (then known as Panjim), who was popularly known as Appasaheb Karmalkar, was indirectly involved in the freedom struggle in Goa. He was dismissed from the bank and finally took up the struggle to liberate Goa. In the course of time, he realised that the liberation of DNH was crucial if Goa was to be liberated. Karmalkar reached Vapi and met Jayantibhai Desai from Dadra. He also met Bhikubhai Pandya from Nani Daman and Vanmali Bhavsar from Silvassa.

Azad Gomantak Dal under the leadership of Vishwanath Lavande, Dattatreya Deshpande, Prabhakar Sinar and others, the Communist Party under the leadership of Shamrao Parulekar and Godavaribai Parulekar, and the United Front of Goans under the leadership of Francis Mascarenhas, J.M. D'Souza, Waman Desai and others were also attempting the liberation of DNH.

On 18 June 1954, many leaders met at Lavachha. Lavachha and Vapi were Indian territories. The order in which these places lie (from east to west) is Nagar Haveli, Lavachha, Dadra, Vapi and Daman

(on the sea coast). So Portuguese officers required transit permits through the Indian territories of Lavachha and Vapi to travel between N.H., Dadra, and Daman.

On the night of 22 July 1954, 15 volunteers of the United Front of Goans under the leadership of Francis Mascarenhas and Waman Desai sneaked into the territory of Dadra and reached the police station. There were only three personnel at the police station. One was attacked with a knife by one of the volunteers, and the other two were overpowered. The Indian tricolour was hoisted and the Indian National Anthem was sung. Dadra was declared the "Free territory of Dadra".

On the night of 28 July, around 30 to 35 volunteers of Azad Gomantak Dal proceeded to Naroli from Karambele (Karambeli) by swimming across the rivulets. June to September is the rainy season in the region, and the rivers are usually flooded during this season. The Daman Ganga river was flooded and no help could reach Naroli. This was the reason to choose this date for proceeding to Naroli. There were only six police personnel. The volunteers and the villagers reached the police station and asked them to surrender or face death. They immediately surrendered. The Portuguese rule of Naroli came to an end.

The Special Reserve Police in the Indian Territory did not intervene. J.D. Nagarwala, the Dy. Inspector General of the Special Reserve Police in the Indian Territory, without entering DNH, asked Captain Fidalgo, the Administrator of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, to surrender to the Indian Forces along with his paramilitary forces before they would be executed by the liberators.

Leaving about 50 policemen and five civilian officers posted at Silvassa, Captain Fidalgo fled to Udva passing through Rakholi, Dappada, and Khanvel and surrendered to the SRP on 11 August. They were later allowed to go to Goa.

In the meanwhile, there were several rumours and the officers at Silvassa were in confusion. On 1 August, the liberators took advantage of the situation and proceeded from Dadra and Naroli and liberated Pipariya. The five police officers surrendered without resistance.

During the night, the volunteers divided themselves into three batches and reached the police chowky at Silvassa. The police chowky at Silvassa was protected by sandbags. There were three policemen on guard on three sides. Vasant Badve, Vishnu Bhople, and Shantaram Vaidya overpowered them from behind when least expected. The other policemen surrendered without resistance on seeing the other volunteers. The volunteers spent the night awake at the police chowky.

On the morning of 2 August 1954, the liberators reached the town of Silvassa to find it free of any Portuguese occupation. The liberation of Dadra and Nagar Haveli was complete.

Senhor Luis de Gama, the eldest nationalist, hoisted the Indian National Flag and declared the territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli liberated and the Indian National Anthem was sung.

From 1954 to 1961, Dadra and Nagar Haveli existed as a de facto state known as Free Dadra and Nagar Haveli. It was administered by a body called the Varishta Panchayat of Free Dadra and Nagar Haveli,[10][11] with administrative help from the government of India. Although it enjoyed de facto independence, Dadra and Nagar Haveli were still recognised internationally (e.g. by the International Court of Justice) as Portuguese colony.[12]

In 1961, amidst Indian preparation for the invasion of Goa, Daman, and Diu, K.G. Badlani, an officer of the Indian Administrative Service was, for one day, designated the Prime Minister of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, so that, as Head of State, he could sign an agreement with the Prime Minister of India,

Jawaharlal Nehru, and formally merge Dadra and Nagar Haveli with the Republic of India. The Tenth Amendment of the Constitution of India was passed to incorporate Dadra and Nagar Haveli as a union territory, effective 11 August 1961.

On 31 December 1974 a treaty was signed between India and Portugal on recognition of India's sovereignty over Goa, Daman, Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli.[13]

In December 2019, the Parliament of India passed legislation to merge Dadra and Nagar Haveli with the nearby union territory of Daman and Diu to create a single union territory to be known as Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu on 26 January 2020. Dadra and Nagar Haveli will be one of the three districts of the new union territory.[14][15][16]

The area of Dadra and Nagar Haveli is spread over 491 square kilometres (190 sq mi). Its population density is 698 square kilometres (269 sq mi). Though landlocked between Gujarat to the north and Maharashtra to the south, it is close to the western coast of India (between 20°0' and 20°25' N latitude and between 72°50' and 73°15' E longitude),[17] and the Arabian Sea can be reached via Vapi in Gujarat.

Dadra and Nagar Haveli comprises two separate geographical units. The larger part—Nagar Haveli—spans a roughly C-shaped area upriver from the city of Daman on the coast, at the centre of which, straddling the border with Gujarat, is the Madhuban reservoir. The smaller enclave of Dadra is a short distance to the northwest.

Dadra and Nagar Haveli is in the middle of the undulating watershed of the Daman Ganga River, which flows through Nagar Haveli and later forms the short southern border of Dadra. The towns of Dadra and Silvassa lie on the north bank of the river. The Western Ghats range rises to the east, and the foothills of the range occupy the eastern portion of the district.

Dadra and Nagar Haveli is surrounded by Valsad District of Gujarat on the west, north, and east, and by Thane District of Maharashtra on the south and southeast (after the division of Thane District, it is now surrounded by the newly formed Palghar District).[18]

Maghval is a small enclave village belonging to Gujarat that is located within Nagar Haveli, just south of Silvassa.[19][20]

The nearest railway station are Bhilad & Vapi in Gujarat on the Mumbai-Delhi route (Western Railways) .[21][22] Bhilad is about 14 km west of Silvassa & Vapi is about 18 km northwest of Silvassa. Mumbai is approximately 180 km from Silvassa. Surat city is about 140 km away. Mumbai and Surat are the nearest airports.

The stretch of the main southern area is hilly terrain especially towards the northeast and east where it is surrounded by ranges of the Sahyadri mountains (Western Ghats). The central alluvial region of the land is almost plain and the soil is fertile and rich. The river Damanganga rises in the Ghat 64 km from the western coast and discharges itself in the Arabian Sea at the port of Daman after crossing Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Its three tributaries, Varna, Pipri and Sakartond, join Daman Ganga within the territory.[23][24]

Dadra and Nagar Haveli lies within the North Western Ghats moist deciduous forests ecoregion, characterised by forests of teak (*Tectona grandis*) and other dry-season deciduous trees.[25]

About 43% of the land is under forest cover. However, the reserved forest territory constitutes about 40% of the total geographical area. The protected forests constitute 2.45% of the total land area.

According to satellite data taken in 2008, DNH has roughly about 114 square kilometres (28,000 acres) of moderately dense forest and 94 square kilometres (23,000 acres) open forest. According to the Forest Survey of India, DNH has two major forest types: tropical moist deciduous forest and tropical dry deciduous forest. The major produce is khair wood and general timber. Teak, sandra, khair, mahara and sisam are the major tree species in the region.[24]

Tree cover has been estimated around 27 km² from the six-year data (2002–08), which is around 5.5% of the total geographical area of DNH.[26]

The Dadra and Nagar Haveli Wildlife Sanctuary covers 91.39 square kilometres, or about 19% of the union territory's total area. The sanctuary provides a habitat for leopard (*Panthera pardus*), wildcat (*Felis silvestris*), striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*), fox (*Vulpes* spp.), golden jackal (*Canis aureus*), nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*), four-horned antelope (*Tetracerus quadricornis*), sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*), and chital deer (*Axis axis*), and birds including black drongo, bulbul, kingfisher, egret, hoopoe, mynah, heron, and red jungle fowl. In 2014 an additional eco-sensitive area was designated in the 100-meter buffer zone around the wildlife sanctuary, with an area of 26.57 square kilometres.[27]

The rich biodiversity makes it a habitat for a variety of birds and animals and thus a destination for inland and coastal safari and eco-tourism. Silvassa's hills and wide, forested buffer land attract wildlife enthusiasts.

There is a wildlife protected area located,

The climate of Dadra and Nagar Haveli is typical of its type. Being near the coast, all but the sparsely inhabited easternmost parts have a typical north Indian Ocean maritime climate. The summers are hot and become in their later part more humid with temperatures reaching as high as 39 °C in the month of May. The monsoon starts in the month of June and extends until September. The rainfall is brought by southwest monsoon winds. It is known as the Cherrapunji that covers the bulk of western India (apart from the Thar Desert) which produces most of the annual rainfall of 200–250 cm. Winters are between maritime temperate and semi-tropical with temperatures ranging from 14 °C to 30 °C, reliably, as with the monsoon, with scant deviation from this range.[28][29]

Dadra and Nagar Haveli covers an area of 487 km² and consists of two sub-districts:

Dadra is the headquarters of Dadra taluka, comprising Dadra town and two other villages.

Silvassa is the headquarters of Nagar Haveli taluka, comprising Silvassa town and 68 other villages.[30]

Dadra and Nagar Haveli's gross state domestic product for 2004 is estimated at \$218 million in current prices. Its nominal GDP increased to \$360 million in the year 2009 with a per capita GDP of \$1,050. The economy of DNH relies on five major activities viz. agriculture, industries, forestry, animal husbandry and tourism.[24][31][32][33]

The basic economic activity of the territory is agriculture involving about 60% of the working population. The total land area under cultivation is 236.27 square kilometres (58,380 acres) i.e. 48% of the total geographical area. The area under high yielding crops is 12,000 acres (49 km²). The main food crops cultivated in this area are paddy (40% of the net sown area), ragi, small millets, jowar, sugarcane, tur, nagli and val. Vegetables like tomato, cauliflower, cabbage and brinjal and fruits like mango, chikoo, guava, coconut and banana are also grown.[34] Agriculture sector has given a major boost to the economy of DNH.

The local population is also involved in forestry and animal husbandry. 92.76% of the farmers belong to the weaker sections and 89.36% of them are tribal farmers.[34] There is a full-fledged veterinary hospital and nine veterinary dispensaries. Mass vaccination against various diseases is done regularly free of cost by the Animal Husbandry Department.[18]

Another major contributor to the economy is the manufacturing industries. Due to heavy industrialisation in the region owing to tax sops for industries in the union territories, steady growth in employment has been observed. The employment generation is increasing at a pace of 5% per annum.

Industrialisation in the area began in 1965 when the first industrial unit in the UT was started at Piparia, Silvassa in the cooperative sector by Dan Udyog Sahakari Sangh Ltd, following which three industrial estates were established at Masat (1976), Khadoli (1982) and Silvassa (1985). Earlier (before 1965) only traditional craftsmen who made clay pots, leather items, viz., chappals, shoes and some other items of bamboo were present. Since there was no sales tax in the UT, it attracted many entrepreneurs. Around 30 new units comprising Engineering, fabric weaving units and dyeing and printing units were established until 1970.

In 1971, UT was declared as an industrially backward area by Government of India and increased the cash subsidy to 15 to 25% for the industrial units on their capital investment which resulted in the speedy industrial development. The scheme was however terminated from 30 September 1988. Sales Tax Act was implemented from January 1984 until 1998 under which industries enjoyed sales tax exemption for 15 years from the start-up date. VAT was introduced in 2005. At present, the newly established units get Central Sales Tax exemption which will continue until 2017.[32]

There are more than 2710 units functioning providing employment to about 46000 people with a capital investment of ₹377.8310 million (US\$4.7 million).[18]

According to the 2011 census Dadra and Nagar Haveli has a population of 343,709.[36][37] This gives it a ranking of 566th in India, out of a total of 640 districts.[36] It has a population density of 698 inhabitants per square kilometre (1,810/sq mi), and its population growth rate over the decade from 2001 to 2011 was 55.5 percent, which is the highest percentage growth among all Indian states and union territories.[36][38] Dadra and Nagar Haveli has a sex ratio of 775 females for every 1,000 males, and a literacy rate of 77.65%.[36]

Tribal groups make up a large part of the population viz 62%. The most prominent are Dhodia (16.90%), Kokna (16.85%) and Warli (62.94%), with small groups of Koli, Kathodi, Naika, and Dubla scattered across the territory, collectively representing 3.31% of the population. Dhodias and Dublas mainly populate the Northern part, whereas Koknas and Warlis are found all over the Union Territory. They worship the primary deities of Dis (Sun) and Chand (Moon), and Narandev, Kanasari, Himai, Hirva, Veer, Rangtai and Vagdev.

One prominent feature of this territory is that people from all over India form a part of non-tribal residents. DNH has many industries due to tax concessions granted to industry and therefore people from all over the country have migrated to the region.

North Indians have a prime influence in the area. Gujarati is one of the three official languages, the others being Hindi and English. Besides Gujarati persons, one can find Marathi, Rajasthani, Bihari, Udia, Tamil, Uttar Pradesh and people from several other states. The prime reason for such a diverse population is the industrial hub. Employment opportunities, good climate, and the landscape are highly appealing.

As per the 2001 Census, out of the 137,225 ST persons of the UT, almost all were Hindus except for 3,796 Christians (2.8%).[39] As a former Portuguese enclave, Silvassa has a significant Roman Catholic population. Kokna has the highest Christian population in 2001, 6.7%. Svetambara Jains have a temple in Dadra and Silvassa and recently Digambara Jains have also constructed a temple in the Silvassa.

Religion in State (2011)[40]

There are 72 villages, mainly inhabited by various tribal communities like the Warli (Warlie), Kokna, Dhodia, Koli, Kathodi, Naika, Dubla and Kolgha. The tribal communities are locally known as Adivasi (which means original inhabitant). Each community has its own culture, traditions and languages and dialects. None of these languages have had written literature until recently. The tribal communities consist of approximately 60% of the population of DNH. (Earlier in the eighties it was more than 80%, but after influx from different parts of the country, the percentage has reduced). But the influx has helped the tribal people in increasing their earnings and standard of living.

Warli is the language spoken by the Warli people. Agri the dialect of Marathi which is spoken by Agri community.

Languages Dadra and Nagar Haveli (2011)[41]

The languages taught in schools in Dadra and Nagar Haveli under the three-language formula are as follows:[42]

A former Portuguese enclave, Silvassa has a significant Roman Catholic population, speaking a distinct dialect of Portuguese. Marathi and Gujarati languages are widely spoken.[43] Hindi and Marathi are also understood.[43]

The main tribes are Warlis, Dhodia Kokna, etc.[44]

The prominent castes occupying this territory are Rajputs, Ahirs, Chamar, Mahar, and associated castes.

Warli

Although commonly associated with Maharashtra, and also found in Gujarat, Warlis consider the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli to be their original home. The Warlis speak an Indo-Aryan language related to Marathi and Konkani and are the largest tribal group in the territory and constitute ~ 63% (62.94%) of the total tribal population.

Rituals are extremely important to the Warlis; they are nature worshipers who regard the Sun and the Moon as the eyes of God. Their main deities are Naran dev, Hirwa, Himai, and Waghio, and stone images of these deities are found in tree groves. A Bhagat plays the Ghangal (a musical instrument made from gourd, bamboo and iron strings) and performs the rituals.

Traditionally the Warlis wear a loin cloth with a small waist coat and a turban. The women wear a knee-length, one-yard saree – lugde – and adorn themselves with silver and white metal ornaments.[45]

Dhodia

The term Dhodia seems to be derived from Dhundi, which means a small thatched hut, and the Dhodias are primarily hut dwellers. They reside mostly in the northern part of Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

They are known to be the most educated among all the tribes and are good cultivators. Some own enough farmland to be able to earn a decent livelihood.

Traditionally the men wear a white knee-length dhoti with a shirt or waistcoat, white or coloured caps, and ornaments like earrings and silver chains around their waist. The women wear a knee-length dark blue saree with an aanchal worn from the front and left loose at the back. Popular accessories include colourful bead necklaces, and metal ornaments such as bangles or thick kadaas around their ankles.[45]

Kokna

The Koknas derive their name from the Konkan region in West India. They have land of their own, produce paddy and are better cultivators than the Warlis. With the introduction of formal education many of them have moved up the social ladder.

Koknas well built and both men and women often tattoo their bodies, especially their foreheads. The men wear a dhoti up to the knees, with a waistcoat or shirt and a turban. The women wear traditional colourful sarees that are either knee-length or full length.[45]

Kathodia

The Kathodis, called Katkari in the Thane district of Maharashtra, make up 0.08% of the total tribal population of Dadra & Nagar Haveli. Their name is derived from their profession of kattha or catechew making.

They are considered to be at the bottom of the tribal social ladder. They usually live in forests, in semi-permanent settlements. Most of them cut wood and collect charcoal. The government has tried to improve their standard of living by engaging them in permanent professions.

They wear minimal jewelry; what is worn adorns the women only.[45]

15th century

16th century

15th century

16th century

17th century

18th century

19th century

16th century

17th century

15th century

16th century

Portuguese India

17th century

Portuguese India

18th century

Portuguese India

16th century

17th century

19th century

Portuguese Macau

20th century

Portuguese Macau

15th century [Atlantic islands]

16th century [Canada]

16th century

17th century

18th century

19th century

Text extracted from URL 42:

Daman and Diu (/də'mɑ:n ... 'di:u:/; locally⁽ⁱ⁾) was a union territory in northwestern India. With an area of 112 km² (43 sq mi), it was the smallest administrative subdivision of India on the mainland. The territory comprised two districts, Daman and Diu island, geographically separated by the Gulf of Khambat. The state of Gujarat and the Arabian Sea bordered the territory. A Portuguese colony since the 1500s, the territories were taken by India with the Annexation of Goa in 1961. Daman and Diu were administered as part of the union territory of Goa, Daman and Diu between 1961 and 1987, after the Goa Opinion Poll they became a separate union territory. In 2019, legislation was passed to merge the union territory of Daman and Diu with its neighbouring union territory, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, to form the new union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu with effect from 26 January 2020.[1]

For over 450 years, the coastal enclaves of Daman (Portuguese: *Damão*) and Diu on the Arabian Sea coast were part of Portuguese India, along with Goa and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Goa, Daman and Diu were incorporated into the Republic of India on 19 December 1961, by military conquest. Portugal did not recognise the Indian annexation of these territories until the Carnation Revolution of 1974. The territory has also been ruled by Kolis.[2][3]

The territory of Goa, Daman and Diu was administered as a single union territory until 30 May 1987, when Goa was granted statehood, leaving Daman and Diu as a separate union territory. Each enclave constituted one of the union territory's two districts. Daman and Diu are approximately 650 kilometres away from each other by road.

On 3 November 2019, Daman Collector Rakesh Minhas issued a Section 144 order banning peaceful assembly of four or more persons, slogan-shouting and the use of loudspeakers across the entire and ordered the conversion of Government High School, Bhimpore and the Government Sarvottam High School, Moti Daman into 'temporary jails'.[4] This was in response to a land ownership dispute between the local indigenous fishing community and the local administration[5] that had confiscated their land and bulldozed their homes. The ensuing 2019 Daman Indigenous Land Clearing Protests resulted with the detention of 70 protesters in the 'temporary jails' and another 8 arrests. Few of the adivasi fisherfolk were rehoused whilst most languished traumatised and homeless on the streets near the rubble of their razed homes.[6]

In December 2019, the Parliament of India passed legislation to merge Daman and Diu with the nearby union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli to create a new union territory to be known as Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.[7][8][9]

According to the 2011 census, Daman and Diu had a literacy rate of 87.1%, higher than the national average of 74.04%.[11] Male and female literacy rates are 91.5 and 79.5 per cent respectively. The lowest female-to-male ratio in India (618 females per thousand males) was recorded in Daman and Diu.[12] The Daman district, with a sex ratio of 533:1000 (F:M), is among the lowest of all the districts.

Hinduism is the most common religion in Daman and Diu. Muslims are also now the second-largest religious group in the territory, followed by the indigenous Christians. The Catholic Christians of Daman and Diu are pastorally served by the Metropolitan Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Goa and Daman, which has its see in Goa, the primatial see of India.

Languages of Daman and Diu (2011)[14]

Gujarati was the mother tongue of most of the territory's population, as they belong to the Gujarati-speaking Damaniya sub-caste. Along with Gujarati, Hindi and English are also widely used. Daman and Diu were once part of a combined union territory along with Goa (a Konkani-speaking region) before Goa became a state in 1987.

The use of Portuguese, which was the territory's official language during the colonial period, is in decline and relegated to home use. It is also used as a liturgical language by the territory's Catholics. Standard Portuguese exists in a post-creole continuum while Daman and Diu Portuguese is spoken by about 10,000–12,000 people in Daman.

The languages taught in schools in Daman and Diu under the three-language formula were:[15]

According to the Constitution of India, the administration of Daman and Diu was carried out by an Administrator, appointed by the President of India as an agent of the President, not a head of state/government or a governor. He was assisted by several other officers in carrying out his duty.

The union territory of Daman and Diu had two districts:

15th century

16th century

15th century

16th century

17th century

18th century

19th century

16th century

17th century

15th century

16th century

Portuguese India

17th century

Portuguese India

18th century

Portuguese India

16th century

17th century

19th century

Portuguese Macau

20th century

Portuguese Macau

15th century [Atlantic islands]

16th century [Canada]

16th century

17th century

18th century

19th century

Text extracted from URL 43:

The culture of Andhra Pradesh embodies some very exclusive and special entities.

Women wear Venkatagiri, Pedana, Bandarulanka, Uppada, Mangalagiri, Dharmavaram sarees. The exclusive metal ware, brass, stone and wood carving from Budithi in Srikakulam District and Veenas from Bobbili and colourful toys from Etikoppaka and Kondapalli highlight the immense talent of the Andhra Pradeshis.

Andhra Pradesh is home to Hindu saints of all castes. An important figure is Saint Yogi Potuluri Veerabrahmam, who was a Viswa Brahmin who even had Brahmin, Shudra Harijan and Muslim disciples.[1] Fisherman Raghu was also a Shudra.[2]

Several important Hindu modern-day saints are from Andhra Pradesh. These include Nimbarka who founded Dvaitadvaita, Mother Meera who advocated the Indian Independence and Aurobindo Mission, Sri Sathya Sai Baba and Swami Sundara Chaitanyanandaji.

Vodi Biyyam (Vodi means the Womb and Biyyam means rice grains) is a traditional ceremony performed for married couples in some communities. The ceremony starts before the marriage. After marriage, the ceremony is performed at least once in three years, wherein the parents or the brother(s) of the married woman invite all the relatives for the ceremony celebration.[3]

The parents of the married woman give money to buy clothes for the ceremony. A good quantity of rice is mixed with turmeric, dried coconut core and other ingredients. Five married women (not widowed) come one after another and put rice in a cloth wrapped around the neck and spread out in the front. There is another food item which is hot chilli powder and rice.

Andhra Pradesh has many museums, including the Archaeological Museum at Amaravati Stupa near Guntur City that features relics of nearby ancient sites; the Visakha Museum in Visakhapatnam, which displays the history of the pre-Independence Madras Presidency in a rehabilitated Dutch bungalow; and Victoria Jubilee Museum in Vijayawada, which has a collection of ancient sculptures, paintings, idols, weapons, cutlery, and inscriptions.

Other elements that have long defined Telugu culture include Bapu's paintings, Nanduri Subbarao's Yenki Paatalu (Songs on/by a washerwoman called Yenki), the mischievous Budugu (a character by Mullapudi), Annamayya's songs, Aavakaaya (a variant of mango pickle in which the kernel of the mango is retained), Gongura (a chutney from the Roselle plant), Atla Taddi (a seasonal festival

predominantly for teenage girls), the banks of the river Godavari, and Dudu basavanna (the ceremonial ox decorated for door-to-door exhibition during the harvest festival Sankranti). The village of Durgi is known for originating stone craft, carvings of idols in soft stone that must be exhibited in the shade because they are prone to weathering.

There are two distinct architectural traditions in Andhra Pradesh. The first traces back to the building of the city of Amaravati under Satavahanas. This unique style of architecture emphasises the use of intricate and abstract sculpture with inspiration from religious themes. The second tradition draws on the enormous granite and limestone reserves of the region and is reflected in the various temples and forts built over a very long period of time.

As an ancient language, Telugu has a rich and deep literary culture. Nannaya, Tikkana, Yerrapragada, Srinatha, Molla, and Tarikonda Venkamamba made the Telugu language alluring- a lingua franca for religion, musical composition and philosophy. The contributions of Charles Phillip Brown, Vemana, Sri Sri and Viswanatha Satyanarayana made Telugu a vibrant and evolving modern language. The contributions of various Telugu/Tamil/Sanskrit grammarians to the formalisation of English grammar gave Telugu literary traditions a truly global reach.

Telugu literature is highly influenced by Sanskrit literature and Hindu scriptures. Nannayya, Tikkana, and Yerrapragada form the trinity who translated the great epic Mahabharatha into Telugu. Bammara Potana is another great poet from Vontimitta (Kadapa district), famous for his great classic Sri Madandhra Maha Bhagavatamu, a Telugu translation of Sri Bhagavatam (authored by Veda Vyasa in Sanskrit). Nannayya derived the present Telugu script (lipi) from the old Telugu-Kannada script. Emperor Krishna Deva Raya wrote and also made the famous statement: "Desha Bhashalandu Telugu lessa" meaning "Telugu is the sweetest among all Indian languages". Famous Tamil poet Mahakavi Bharathiyar wrote "Sundhara telungunil paatisaithu", which literally means "create songs in beautiful Telugu". Philosophical poems by Yogi-Vemana are quite famous. Modern writers include Jnanpith Award winner Sri Viswanatha Satya Narayana. Revolutionary poets like SriSri and Joshua are popular.

The Andhra Pradesh cuisine includes bandar laddu, avakaya, gongura, pulusu, pappucharu, jonna kudu, bobbattu, kaja, and arisa. It uses spices, fruit and vegetable harvests of the region.

Rice is the staple food and is used in a wide variety of ways. Typically, rice is either boiled and eaten with curry, or made into a batter for use in a crepe-like dish called attu (pesarattu) or dosas. The rice is usually eaten with pappu, a simple curry. Pesarattu is different from attu and dosas; it has sprouts ground into the batter, making it green.

Meat, vegetables, and greens are prepared with different masalas into a variety of strongly flavored dishes.

The influential musical contributions of Annamacharya and Tyagaraja to the "grammar of sound" made the Telugu language the preferred language of composition for Carnatic music. Their influence not only on Carnatic but global classical music and the organisation of sound as a medium of emotional resonance is unparalleled. Kuchipudi, as a refinement of the ancient art of Bharatanatyam, and in the context of the unique religious and cultural traditions of Andhra Pradesh, stands on par with all the great global traditions of classical dance.

Jayapa Senani (Jayapa Nayudu) was the first known author to write about the dance forms prevalent in Andhra Pradesh.[4] Both Desi and Margi forms of dance have been included in his

Sanskrit treatise Nritya Ratnavali, which contains eight chapters. Folk dance forms like Perani, Prenkhana, Suddha Nartana, Carcari, Rasaka, Danda Rasaka, Shiva Priya, Kanduka Nartana, Bhandika Nrityam, Carana Nrityam, Chindu, Gondali and Kolatam are described. In the first chapter the author discusses the differences between Marga and Desi, Tandava and Lasya, Natya and Nritya. In the second and third chapters, he deals with Angi-Kabhinaya, Caris, Sthanakas and Mandalas. In the fourth chapter, Karnas, Angaharas and Recakas are described. In the following chapters, he describes local dance forms, e.g., Desi Nritya. In the last chapter, he deals with the art and practice of dance.

Classical dance in Andhra can be performed by both men and women; nowadays, women tend to learn it more often. Traditionally it was done by men and female temple dancers. Women did not dance it in public, and men played female parts in Kuchipudi ballets. As time went by, women began to learn it as an art as well. This started when women danced in kings' courts. Kuchipudi is the best-known classical dance form of Andhra Pradesh. The various dance forms that existed through the state's history are Chenchu Bhagotam, Kuchipudi, Bhamakalapam, Burrakatha, Veeranatyam, Butta bommalu, Dappu, Tappeta Gullu, Dhimsa, and Kolaatam.

The state has a rich musical heritage. Many legends of the Carnatic music, including two among the Trinity of Carnatic music (Thyagaraja and Syama Sastri), were of Telugu descent. Other composers include Annamacharya, Kshetrappa, and Bhadrachala Ramadasu. Folk songs are also popular in the rural areas of the state.

Andhra Pradesh is home to some of the finest historical cloth-making, fashion and dying traditions of the world. Its rich cotton production, with its innovative plant dye extraction history stand next to its diamond mining, pearl harvesting and jewelry traditions to form an impressive fashion tradition that has stood the test of time. The ancient Kollur mine is the mother of the numerous legendary gems such as the Koh-i-Noor and Hope Diamond. Andhra Pradesh had a virtual monopoly in the global jewelry industry till 1826 (founding of the diamond mines in Rhodesia, Africa) and eight of the ten most valuable jewelry pieces on earth today trace their history back to Andhra Pradesh. Langa-Voni (Half saree), Sarees made in Kalamkari, Venkatagiri are the result of this 3000-year-old fashion tradition. Vaddaanam, Aravanke, Kashulahaaram, Buttalu and various standard gold jewelry designs are fine examples of this continuously evolving ancient tradition.

Text extracted from URL 44:

Rajanna Dora Peedika (YSRCP)

Budi Mutyala Naidu (YSRCP)

Amzath Basha Shaik Bepari (YSRCP)

Andhra Pradesh (English: /ˌɑːndrə prəˈdɛʃ/,^[11] Telugu: [aːndʱre predeːʃ] ⓘ abbr. AP) is a state in the southern coastal region of India. It is the seventh-largest state with an area of 162,970 km² (62,920 sq mi)^[5] and the tenth-most populous state with 49,577,103 inhabitants.^[4] It shares borders with Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and the Bay of Bengal. It has the second-longest coastline in India at about 974 km (605 mi).^[5] After existence as Andhra State and unified Andhra Pradesh, the state took its present form on 2 June 2014, when the new state of Telangana was formed through bifurcation.^[12] Amaravati is the capital of the state, with the largest city being Visakhapatnam. Water sharing disputes and asset division with Telangana are not yet resolved. Telugu, one of the classical languages of India used by the majority of people, is the first official language.

As per the 8th century BCE Rigvedic text Aitareya Brahmana, the Andhras left North India off the banks of the Yamuna river and migrated to South India. In the third century BCE, Andhra was a vassal kingdom of Ashoka of the Mauryan Empire. After his death, it became powerful and extended its empire to the whole Maratha country and beyond under the rule of the Satavahana dynasty. After that, the major rulers included the Pallavas, Eastern Chalukyas, Kakatiyas, Vijayanagara Empire, Qutb Shahi dynasty, Nizam dynasty, East India Company, and British Raj.

The Eastern Ghats are a major dividing line separating coastal plains and peneplains. The coastal plains are part of Coastal Andhra. These are mostly delta regions formed by the Krishna, Godavari, and Penna rivers. Peneplains are part of Rayalaseema. 60% of the population is engaged in agriculture and related activities. Rice is the state's major food crop and staple food. The state contributes 10% of total fish production and over 70% of shrimp production in India. Industry sectors such as food products, non-metallic minerals, textiles, and pharmaceuticals are the top employment providers. The automotive sector accounts for 10% of India's auto exports. The state has about one-third of India's limestone reserves, large deposits of baryte and galaxy granite, and reserves of oil and natural gas.[13] Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), known as Sriharikota Range (SHAR), at the barrier island of Sriharikota in Tirupati district, is the satellite launching station of India.

Some of the unique products from the state are Banganapalle mangoes, Bandar laddu, Kondapalli toys, Tirupati laddu, and saris made in Dharmavaram and Machilipatnam. Kuchipudi is the official dance form. Many composers of Carnatic music, like Annamacharya, Kshetrappa, and Tyagaraja, were from this region. The Tirumala Venkateswara temple near Tirupati is the most visited Hindu religious place in the world. The state is home to a variety of other pilgrimage centres and natural attractions.

Epigraphist Iravatham Mahadevan interprets the Sanskrit word 'āndhra' as a corruption of the masculine nominative suffix '-anru' of Early Telugu language (c.800 BCE).[14]

According to the Sanskrit text Aitareya Brahmana (800–500 BCE), a group of people named Andhras left North India off the banks of the Yamuna and settled in South India.[15][16][17] The Satavahanas were mentioned by the names Andhra, Andhrara-jateeya, and Andhrabhrtiya in the Puranic literature.[18][19] They did not refer to themselves as Andhra in any of their coins or inscriptions; it is possible that they were termed as Andhras because of their ethnicity or because their territory included the Andhra region.[20][21]

The Assaka mahajanapada, one of the sixteen Vedic mahajanapadas, included Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Telangana.[22] Archaeological evidence from places such as Bhattiprolu, Amaravati, Dharanikota, and Vaddamanu suggests that the Andhra region was part of the Mauryan empire. Amaravati might have been a regional centre under Mauryan rule. After the death of Emperor Ashoka, Mauryan rule weakened around 200 BCE and was replaced by several smaller kingdoms in the Andhra region.[23] One of the earliest examples of the Brahmi script, the progenitor of several scripts, including Telugu, comes from Bhattiprolu, where the script was used on an urn containing the relics of Buddha.[24]

The Satavahana dynasty dominated the Deccan plateau from the 1st century BCE to the 3rd century CE.[25] It had trade relations with the Roman Empire.[26] The later Satavahanas made Dharanikota, near Amaravati, their capital. According to the Buddhists, Nagarjuna, the philosopher of Mahayana, lived in this region.[27][28][29] The Andhra Ikshvakus, with their capital at Vijayapuri, succeeded the Satavahanas in the Krishna River valley in the latter half of the 2nd century.[30] The Salankayanas were an ancient dynasty that ruled the Andhra region between Godavari and Krishna with their

capital at Vengi (modern Pedavegi) from 300 to 440 CE.[31] Telugu Cholas ruled present-day Rayalaseema from the fifth to the eleventh centuries from Cuddapa and Jammalamadugu. The Telugu inscription of Erikal Mutturaju Dhananjaya Varma, known as Erragudipadu sasanam, was engraved in 575 CE in the present Kadapa district. It is the earliest written record in Telugu.[32]

The Vishnukundinas were the first dynasty in the fifth and sixth centuries to hold sway over most of Andhra Pradesh, Kalinga, and parts of Telangana.[33] The Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi, whose dynasty lasted for around five hundred years from the 7th century until 1130 CE, eventually merged with the Chola dynasty. They continued to rule under the protection of the Chola dynasty until 1189 CE. [34] At the request of King Rajaraja Narendra, Nannaya, considered the first Telugu poet, took up the translation of the Mahabharata into Telugu in 1025 CE.[35]

Kakatiyas ruled this region and Telangana for nearly two hundred years between the 12th and 14th centuries. They were defeated by the Delhi Sultanate. Musunuri Nayaks and Bahamani Sultanate took over when Delhi Sultanate became weak. The Reddi kingdom ruled parts of this region in the early 14th century. They constructed Kondaveedu Fort and Kondapalli Fort. After their rule, Gajpathis and Bahmani sultans ruled this region in succession before this region, along with most of present-day Andhra Pradesh, became part of the Vijayanagar empire.[36][37][38]

The Vijayanagara empire originated on the Deccan plateau in the early 14th century. It was established in 1336 by Harihara Raya I and his brother Bukka Raya I of the Sangama dynasty, who served as treasury officers of the Kakatiyas of Warangal.[39] During their rule, the Pemmasani Nayaks controlled parts of Andhra Pradesh and had large mercenary armies that were the vanguard of the empire in the 16th century.[40] The empire's patronage enabled fine arts and literature to reach new heights in Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, and Sanskrit, while Carnatic music evolved into its current form.[41] The Lepakshi group of monuments built during this period have mural paintings of the Vijayanagara kings, Dravidian art, and inscriptions.[42] These are put on the tentative list of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.[43]

Following the defeat of the Vijayanagara empire, the Qutb Shahi dynasty held sway over Andhra Pradesh.[44] This region passed under the rule of the Nizams under the Mughal Empire. Soon, Nizam established himself as the sovereign ruler. In 1611, an English trading post by the name of "East India Company" was established in Masulipatinam on India's east coast.[45] In the early nineteenth century, Northern Circars was ceded to the British East India Company and became part of its Madras Presidency. Eventually, this region emerged as the Coastal Andhra region, the northern parts of which were later known as North Andhra. Later, the Nizam ceded five territories to the British, which eventually became the Rayalaseema region. The local chieftains, known as Poligars, revolted in 1800 against the company's rule, which was suppressed by the company.[citation needed]

Raja Viziam Raz (Vijayaram Raj) established a sovereign kingdom by claiming independence from the Kingdom of Jeypore in 1711. It formed alliances with the French and British East India Companies to conquer the neighbouring principalities of Bobbili, Kurupam, Paralakhemundi, and the kingdom of Jeypore. It fell out with the British and, as a result, was attacked and defeated in the battle of Padmanabham. It was annexed as a tributary estate like other principalities and remained so until their accession to the Indian Union in 1949.[46]

Following the Indian rebellion of 1857, the British crown ruled this region, until India became independent in 1947. The No Tax Campaign in Chirala and Perala in 1919, led by Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya, the Rampa Revolt led by Alluri Sitarama Raju in 1921, and the Salt Satyagraha in Dendulur in 1930 are some of the protests against British rule.[citation needed] Tanguturi Prakasam

was arrested and jailed for more than three years for participating in the Quit India movement of 1942. He served as prime minister of the Madras presidency in 1946–47.[47]

Dowleswaram Barrage, built in 1850 by Arthur Cotton, brought unused lands in the Godavari river basin into cultivation and transformed the economy of the region.[48] Charles Philip Brown did pioneering work in transforming Telugu to the print era and introduced Vemana poems to English readers.[49] Kandukuri Veeresalingam is considered the father of the Telugu Renaissance Movement, as he encouraged the education of women and the remarriage of widows and fought against child marriage and the dowry system.[50] Gurajada Apparao, a pioneering playwright who used spoken dialect, wrote the play *Kanyasulkam* in 1892. It is considered the greatest play in the Telugu language.[51]

In an effort to gain an independent state based on linguistic identity and to protect the interests of the Telugu-speaking people of Madras State, Potti Sreeramulu fasted to death in 1952. The Telugu-speaking area of Andhra State was carved out of Madras State on 1 October 1953, with Kurnool as its capital city. Tanguturi Prakasam became the first chief minister. On the basis of the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1956, the States Reorganisation Act created Andhra Pradesh by merging the neighbouring Telugu-speaking areas of the Hyderabad State with Hyderabad as the capital on 1 November 1956.[52]

The Indian National Congress (INC) ruled the state from 1956 to 1982. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy became the first chief minister. Among Congress chief ministers, P. V. Narasimha Rao is known for implementing land reforms and land ceiling acts and securing reservation for lower castes in politics.[53] In 1983, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) won the state elections, and N. T. Rama Rao became the chief minister of the state for the first time after launching his party just nine months earlier.[54] This broke the long-time single-party monopoly enjoyed by the INC. He transformed the sub-district administration by forming mandals in place of earlier taluks, removing hereditary village heads, and appointing non-hereditary village revenue assistants.[55] Nara Chandrababu Naidu, Rao's son-in-law, came to power in 1995 with the backing of a majority of the MLAs. He introduced e-governance by launching e-Seva centres in 2001 for paperless and speedy delivery of government services. He is credited with transforming Hyderabad into an IT hub by providing incentives for tech companies to set up centres.[56] In 2004, Congress returned to power with a new chief ministerial face, YS Rajasekhara Reddy, better known as YSR. The main emphasis during Reddy's tenure was on social welfare schemes such as free electricity for farmers, health insurance, tuition fee reimbursement for the poor, and the national rural employment guarantee scheme. He was elected chief minister again but was killed in a helicopter crash that occurred in September 2009. [57]

During its 58 years as a unified state, the state weathered separatist movements from Telangana (1969) and Andhra (1972) successfully.[58] A new party called Telangana Rashtra Samithi, formed in April 2001 by Kalvakuntla Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), reignited the Telangana movement. When the central government decided to initiate the process to form an independent Telangana in December 2009, Samaiyandhra movement to keep the state united took shape. The agitations continued for nearly 5 years, with the Telangana side led by Telangana Joint Action Committee[59] harping on the marginalisation of food, culture, language, and unequal economic development and the Samaiyandhra movement focusing on the shared culture, language, customs, and historical unity of Telugu-speaking regions.[60] The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act bill was passed by the parliament of India for the formation of the Telangana state, comprising ten districts, despite opposition by the state legislature.[61] The new state of Telangana came into existence on 2 June 2014 after approval from the president of India, with the residual state continuing as Andhra Pradesh.[62]

In the final elections held in the unified state in 2014, the TDP got a mandate in its favour, defeating its nearest rival, the YSR Congress Party, a breakaway faction of the Congress founded by Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, son of former Chief Minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy. N. Chandrababu Naidu, the chief of the TDP, became the chief minister on 8 June 2014.[63] In 2017, the government of Andhra Pradesh began operating from its new greenfield capital, Amaravati, for which 33,000 acres were acquired from farmers through an innovative land pooling scheme.[64][65] Interstate issues with Telangana relating to the division of assets of public sector institutions and organisations of the united state and the division of river waters are not yet resolved.[66][67]

The state is bordered by Telangana to the north and west, Chhattisgarh and Orissa to the north, the Bay of Bengal to the east, Tamil Nadu to the south, and Karnataka to the west. Yanam district, an enclave of Puducherry, is in the state bordering Kakinada district.[68] It has a coastline of around 974 kilometres (605 mi), which makes it the second-longest coastline in the nation.[5]

The Eastern Ghats are a major dividing line separating coastal plains and peneplains in the state's geography. The Eastern Coastal Plains comprise the area of coastal districts up to the Eastern Ghats as their border along the Bay of Bengal, with variable width. These are, for the most part, delta regions formed by the Krishna, Godavari, and Penna rivers. Most of the coastal plains are put to intensive agricultural use. The Eastern Ghats are discontinuous, and individual sections have local names. The ghats become more pronounced towards the south and extreme north of the coast. These consist of the Papikonda range, the Simhachal hill range, the Yarada hills, the Nallamala Hills, the Papi hills, the Seshachala hills, and the Horsley hills. The Kadapa Basin,[69] formed by two arching branches of the Eastern Ghats, is a mineral-rich area. Peneplains, part of Rayalaseema, slope towards the east, with the Eastern Ghats as their eastern border.[70]

The total forest cover of the state is 29,784.3 square kilometres (11,499.8 sq mi), amounting to 18.28% of the total area.[71] The Eastern Ghats region is home to dense tropical forests, while the vegetation becomes sparse as the ghats give way to the peneplains, where shrub vegetation is more common. The vegetation found in the state is largely of dry deciduous types, with a mixture of teak, Terminalia, Dalbergia, Pterocarpus, Anogeissus, etc. The state possesses some rare and endemic plants like *Cycas beddomei*, *Pterocarpus santalinus*, *Terminalia pallida*, *Syzygium alternifolium*, *Shorea talura*, *Shorea tumburgia*, *Psilotum nudum*, etc.[72] Coringa is an example of mangrove forests and salt-tolerant forest ecosystems near the sea. The area of these forests is 582 km² (225 sq mi), accounting for about 9% of the local forest area of the state.[73]

The diversity of fauna includes tigers, leopards, dholes, black bucks, cheetals, sambars, sea turtles, and a number of birds and reptiles. The estuaries of the Godavari and Krishna rivers support rich mangrove forests with fishing cats and otters as keystone species.[72] The state has many sanctuaries and national parks, such as Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve, Kolleru Bird Sanctuary, and Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary.[74]

The state, with its varied geological formations, contains a variety of industrial minerals and building stones. It is listed at the top of the list of mica deposits in India. Minerals found in the state include limestone, manganese, asbestos, iron ore, ball clay, fire clay, gold, diamonds, graphite, dolomite, quartz, tungsten, steatitic, feldspar, and silica sand. It has reserves of oil and natural gas. It has about one-third of India's limestone reserves and is known for large exclusive deposits of baryte and galaxy granite.[75] The largest reserves of uranium are in Tummalapalli village, Vemula mandal, of YSR district.[76]

The climate varies considerably, depending on the geographical region. Summers last from March to June. In the coastal plain, the summer temperatures are generally higher than in the rest of the state, with temperatures ranging between 20 and 41 °C (68 and 106 °F). July to September is the season for tropical rains from the southwest monsoon. During October to December, low-pressure systems and tropical cyclones form in the Bay of Bengal along with the northeast monsoon, bringing rains to the southern and coastal regions of the state. November to February are the winter months. Since the state has a long coastal belt, the winters are not very cold. The range of winter temperatures is generally 12 to 30 °C (54 to 86 °F). Lambasingi in Visakhapatnam district is nicknamed the "Kashmir of Andhra Pradesh" as its temperature ranges from 0 to 10 °C (32 to 50 °F).[77][78] The normal rainfall for the state is 966 mm (38.0 in), and the actual rainfall for June 2020–May 2021 was 1,191 mm (46.9 in).[79]

Based on the 2011 Census of India, the population of Andhra Pradesh is 49,577,103, with a density of 304/km² (790/sq mi). 70.53% of the population is rural, and 29.47% is urban.[5] The state has 17.08% Scheduled Caste and 5.53% Scheduled Tribe populations.[80] Children in the age group of 0–6 years number 5,222,384, constituting 10.6% of the total population. Among them, 2,686,453 are boys and 2,535,931 are girls. Adults in the age group of 18–23 account for 5,815,865 (2,921,284 males, 2,894,581 females).[81]

The state has a sex ratio of 997 females per 1000 males, higher than the national average of 926 per 1000. The literacy rate in the state stands at 67.35%. Erstwhile West Godavari district has the highest literacy rate of 74.32%, and erstwhile Vizianagaram district has the least with 58.89%.[5] The state ranks 27th of all Indian states in the Human Development Index (HDI) scores for the year 2018.[82] As of 1 January 2023[update], there are 39,984,868 voters (19,759,489 males, 20,221,455 females, and 3,924 third-gender voters). Kurnool district has the maximum number of voters at 1,942,233, while ASR district has the minimum at 729,085.[83]

Languages of Andhra Pradesh[a] (2011)[84]

Telugu is the first official language, and Urdu is the second official language of the state.[6] Telugu is the mother tongue of nearly 90% of the population. Rajahmundry is the cultural capital of Andhra Pradesh, as the Telugu language has roots from this region.[84][85][86] Urdu, spoken by about 6% of the population, was a second official language in fifteen districts of united Andhra Pradesh[87] and was made the second official language on 17 June 2022.[7]

Tamil, Kannada, and Odia are spoken in the border areas. Lambadi, Koya, Savara, Konda, Gadaba, and a number of other languages are spoken by the Scheduled Tribes of the state.[88] 19% of the population aged 12+ years has the ability to read and understand English, as per the IRS Q4 2019 survey.[89]

Religion in Andhra Pradesh (2011)[90]

According to the 2011 census, the major religious groups in the state are Hindus (90.89%), Muslims (7.30%), and Christians (1.38%).[b][90]

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) 2019–21 data provides an insight into the economic and health status of households. 85% of households in the state have pucca houses. 76% of households (59% urban, 83% rural) own a house. Almost all houses have an electricity connection. 84% of households use clean fuel for cooking. 22% have piped water. 85% of all households (urban areas 97%, rural areas 80%) have access to a toilet facility. Almost all urban households (96%) and

most rural households (89%) use a mobile phone. 96% of households use bank or post office savings accounts. 97% of childbirths during 2014–2019 happened in a health facility. The state health insurance scheme (Dr. YSR Arogya Sri), the employee health scheme, the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), the employees' state insurance scheme (ESIS), and the central government health scheme cover 70% of households with at least one member covered.[91]

Andhra Pradesh comprises two regions, namely Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema. The northern part of Coastal Andhra is sometimes mentioned separately as North Andhra, particularly after the bifurcation to raise voice against underdevelopment.[92]

The state is further divided into 26 districts, with North Andhra comprising 6 districts, Coastal Andhra comprising 12 districts, and Rayalaseema comprising 8 districts.[93] These districts are made up of 76 revenue divisions,[94] 679 mandals[94] and 13,324 village panchayats as part of the administrative organisation.[95]

North Andhra:

Coastal Andhra:

Rayalaseema:

There are 123 urban local bodies, comprising 17 municipal corporations, 79 municipalities, and 27 nagar panchyats, in the state. The urban population is 14.9 million (1.49 crores) as per the 2011 census.[96] There are two cities with more than one million inhabitants, namely Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada.[97]

GSDP at current prices for the year 2022–23 is estimated at ₹1,317,728 crore (US\$170 billion) (advanced estimates) against ₹1,133,837 crore (equivalent to ₹12 trillion or US\$150 billion in 2023) (first revised estimates) for the year 2021–22. The share of agriculture's contribution to the GSDP is at 36.19%, while industry is at 23.36%, and services are at 40.45%. The state posted a record growth of 7.02% at constant prices (2011–12) against the country's growth of 7%. GDP per capita is estimated at ₹219,518 (US\$2,700).[5][98] AP achieved an overall 4th rank in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Report for the year 2020–21, with a first rank in SDG-7 (affordable energy) and a second rank in SDG-14 (life below water).[9]

In 2014–15, the first year after bifurcation, the state ranked eighth in GSDP at current prices, which stood at ₹520,030 crore (equivalent to ₹7.8 trillion or US\$98 billion in 2023). It recorded 12.03% growth compared to the previous fiscal, which was ₹464,184 crore (equivalent to ₹7.4 trillion or US\$93 billion in 2023).[99][100]

The agricultural economy comprises agriculture, livestock, poultry farming, and fisheries.[79] Four important rivers in India, the Godavari, Krishna, Penna, and Tungabhadra, flow through the state and provide irrigation. 60% of the population is engaged in agriculture and related activities. Rice is the state's major food crop and staple food. The state has three agricultural export zones: the undivided Chittoor district for mango pulp and vegetables, the undivided Krishna district for mangoes, and the undivided Guntur district for chillies.[101] Besides rice, farmers grow jowar, bajra, maize, minor millet, many varieties of pulses, oil seeds, sugarcane, cotton, chilli pepper, mango, and tobacco. Crops used for vegetable oil production, such as sunflower and peanuts, are popular.[102]

The state contributes 10% of total fish production and over 70% of shrimp production in India.[103] The geographical location of the state allows marine fishing as well as inland fish production. The most exported marine products include Vannamei shrimp.[104]

As per the annual survey of industries 2019–20, the number of factories was 12,582 with 681,224 employees. The top 4 employment providers are food products (25.48%), non-metallic minerals (11.26%), textiles (9.35%), and pharmaceuticals (8.68%). Gross value added (GVA) contributed by the industrial sector is ₹55,035 crore (US\$6.9 billion), of which food products (18.95%), pharmaceuticals (17.01%), and non-metallic minerals (16.25%) are the top 3 contributors. From a district perspective, the top three districts were undivided Visakhapatnam, Chittoor, and Krishna.[105]

The defence administered Hindustan Shipyard Limited built the first ship in India in 1948.[106] Sri City, located in Tirupati district, is an integrated business city that is home to several multinational companies.[107] The state has 36 big auto players, such as Ashok Leyland, Hero Motors, Isuzu Motors India, and Kia Motors, with investments of over US\$2.8 billion. It accounts for 10% of India's auto exports.[108]

Industrial minerals, dimensional stones, building materials, and sand are the main minerals. The mining sector contributed ₹3,390 crore (US\$420 million) in revenue to the state during 2021–22.[109] As of April 2023,[update] Ravva Block, in the shallow offshore area of the Krishna Godavari Basin, had produced nearly 311 million barrels of crude oil and 385 billion cubic feet of natural gas since its initial production in March 1994.[110] The state accounts for 2.7% of crude oil production in India, with 827.8 thousand metric tonnes from its Krishna Godavari basin.[111] 809 million metric standard cubic metres of natural gas are produced from onshore sites, which accounts for 2.4% of India's production.[112]

The value of information technology exports from the state in 2021–22 was ₹926 crore (US\$120 million), which is 0.14% of the IT exports from India. Exports have remained below 0.2% in the past five years.[113]

The state is ranked third in domestic tourist footfalls for the year 2021, with 93.2 million domestic tourists, which amounts to 13.8% of all domestic tourists in India. A major share of the tourists visit temples in Tirupati, Vijayawada, and Srisailem.[114]

The legislative assembly is the lower house of the state with 175 members, and the legislative council is the upper house with 58 members. In the Parliament of India, the state has 11 seats in the Rajya Sabha and 25 seats in the Lok Sabha.[115] There are a total of 175 assembly constituencies in the state.[116][117]

In the 2019 elections, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, leader of the YSR Congress Party, became the chief minister with a resounding mandate by winning 151 out of 175 seats.[118]

For 2021–22, total receipts of the Andhra Pradesh government were ₹2.05 lakh crore (US\$26 billion), inclusive of ₹53,284 crore (US\$6.7 billion) of loans. States' own tax revenue was ₹70,979 crore (US\$8.9 billion). The top three sources of non-tax revenue are state goods and services tax (GST) (₹23,809 crore (US\$3.0 billion)), sales tax/value added tax (VAT) (₹20,808 crore (US\$2.6 billion)), and state excise (₹14,703 crore (US\$1.8 billion)).[98] The government earned a revenue of ₹7,345 crore (US\$920 million) from 2.574 million transactions for registration services. Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Guntur, and Tirupati are the top contributors to the revenue.[119]

The government's total expenditure was ₹1,91,594 crore, which includes debt repayment of ₹13,920 crore. The fiscal deficit was ₹25,013 crore, which was 2.1% of the GSDP. Revenue expenditure was ₹1,59,163 crore and capital expenditure was ₹16,373 crore. Welfare expenditures got the maximum share. Education accounted for ₹25,796 crore, energy ₹10,852 crore, and irrigation ₹7,027 crore.[98]

Outstanding debt was ₹3.89 lakh crore, an increase of almost ₹40,000 crore compared to the previous year. This accounts for 32.4 per cent of the GSDP.[120] The outstanding guarantee estimate was ₹1,38,875 crore, of which ₹38,473 are for the power sector, which equals 12% of GSDP.[98]

In August 2020, the Andhra Pradesh legislative assembly passed the Andhra Pradesh decentralisation and inclusive development of all regions act. It provided for limiting Amaravati as legislative capital while naming Vizag as executive capital and Kurnool as judicial capital.[121] The events leading to this decision resulted in widespread and continuing protests by the farmers of Amaravati.[122] The act has been challenged in the Andhra Pradesh High Court, which ordered to maintain status quo until the court completes its hearing. The government, led by Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, withdrew the act when the High Court hearing reached the final stage. The chief minister said that his government would bring a better and more complete bill.[123] The protesters under the banner of Amaravati Parirakshana Samithi (APS) and the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of Amaravati received support from all the political parties barring the ruling YCP when they held their long marches across the state seeking support for their agitation.[124]

On 3 March 2022, the High Court ruled that the government could not abandon the development of Amaravati as the capital city after farmers parted with 33,000 acres of land against the agreement with Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) to develop it as the capital city and ₹15,000 crore was sunk in it over development expenditure. It asked the government to develop Amaravati within six months.[125] When the government appealed to the Supreme Court, it got a stay on the judgement regarding developing the city within six months. The Supreme Court is set to hear it in April 2024, following its decision on 3 January 2024 about the government's request for expedited hearing.[126][127]

There are 91 institutions under schedule IX with assets of ₹1.42 lakh crore, 142 institutions under schedule X with assets of ₹24,018.53 crore, and another 12 institutions not mentioned in the act with assets of ₹1,759 crore, which are to be split between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana following the bifurcation. An expert committee headed by Sheela Bhide gave a recommendation for bifurcation of 89 out of the 91 schedule IX institutions. Telangana selectively accepted the recommendations, while Andhra Pradesh asked for their acceptance in total. The division of the RTC headquarters and the Deccan Infrastructure and Landholdings Limited (DIL) with huge land parcels has become contentious. Despite several meetings of the trilateral dispute resolution committees, no progress was made. The Andhra Pradesh government filed a suit in the Supreme Court.[66]

Andhra Pradesh and Telangana continue to dispute the water share of the Krishna River. In 1969, the Bachawat tribunal for the allocation of water shares among the riparian states allocated 811 tmcft of water to Andhra Pradesh. The Andhra Pradesh government of that time split it in a 512:299 tmcft ratio between Andhra Pradesh (including the basin area of Rayalaseema) and Telangana, respectively. It was based on the utilisation facilities established at that time. Though the tribunal recommended the use of the Tungabhadra Dam (a part of the Krishna Basin) to provide water to the drought-prone Mahabubnagar area of Telangana, this was not implemented. The bifurcation act advised the formation of the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) and the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB) for resolving disputes between the new states. In 2015, the two states agreed to share water in the 66:34 (AP:Telangana) ratio as an interim arrangement in a meeting with the central water ministry, which is to be reviewed every year. This practice continued without further review. Telangana filed a suit in the Supreme Court for a 70% share. Following the assurance of the formation of a tribunal to resolve the issue, Telangana withdrew its suit. The centre formulated the terms of reference for KWDT-2 in Oct 2023.[128][67]

Andhra Pradesh got 1172.78 tmcft of Godavari water. Telangana is utilising 433 tmcft for its completed projects, while Andhra Pradesh's share is 739 tmcft. The Andhra Pradesh government has opposed Telangana submitting a detailed project report for additional utilisation through new or upgraded projects such as Kaleswaram, Tupakulagudem, Sitarama, Mukteswaram, and Modikunta lift irrigation projects.[129]

The 1.50-metre increase in the height of the Polavaram coffer dam to 44 metres raised the suspicion that it led to flooding of Bhadrachalam and nearby villages in Telangana along the Godavari river in 2022. Three mandals that were originally part of Andhra State were transferred back to Andhra Pradesh, excluding Bhadrachalam town, to support the Polavaram project, as those areas are likely to be submerged. Telangana would like to take back five villages on the river banks for ease of movement of its government machinery to provide rehabilitation support to its other villages beyond them, to which the Andhra Pradesh government is objecting.[130]

Polling is scheduled for 13 May, while counting will be done on 4 June.[131] NDA alliance consisting of TDP, Jana sena and BJP is pitted mainly against YSRCP in 2024 Loksabha and assembly elections. For Loksabha election, TDP competes in 17, while BJP contests in 6 and Janasena in 2. For the state assembly, TDP competes in 144 seats, while JSP contests in 21 and BJP in 10.[132] Indian National Congress as part of Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance(INDIA) under the leadership of Y. S. Sharmila, younger sister of Jagan, is trying to revive its fortunes.[133] According to an analysis in the English media, special category status for state, capital issue, Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy's murder, attack on Jagan Mohan Reddy,[134] and cases against N. Chandrababu Naidu are the key issues.[135]

The state has a total major road network of 47,244.83 km (29,356.58 mi). This comprises 8,163.72 km (5,072.70 mi) of national highways, 12,595.60 km (7,826.54 mi) of state highways, and 26,485.51 km (16,457.33 mi) of major district roads.[136] NH 16, with a highway network of around 1,000 km (620 mi) in the state, is a part of the Golden Quadrilateral project undertaken by the National Highways Development Project. The proposed Anantapuram–Amaravati Expressway is changed to Anantapur–Guntur national highway 544D, with implementation expected to begin in January 2023.[137]

1.828 million transport vehicles and 13.7 million non-transport vehicles are registered in the state. In the transport category, 0.98 million are goods carriages, constituting 53.61%; 0.66 million are auto rickshaws, constituting 36.21%; and 0.109 million are cabs, constituting 5.96%. In the non-transport category, 12.2 million are motorcycles, constituting 89.5%, and 1.067 million are four-wheelers, constituting 7.29%. [138] The integrated road accident database project, an initiative of the Ministry Of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH) is under implementation in the state. Construction of the Institute of Driver Training and Research Facilities at Darsi, Praksam district, and Dhone, Nandyal district, in partnership with Maruti Suzuki and Ashok Leyland, respectively, is in progress.[139] Automation of driving test tracks in nine district capitals is expected to be completed by 31 March 2023.[140]

The state government-owned Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) is the public bus transport provider. It is split into 129 depots across four zones. It has a fleet strength of 11,098 buses and a staff count of 49,544. It operates 1.11 billion kilometres and serves 3.68 million passengers daily.[141] Pandit Nehru Bus Station (PNBS) in Vijayawada is the second-largest bus terminal in Asia.[142]

Andhra Pradesh has a total broad-gauge railway route of 3,969 km (2,466 mi).[143] The rail density of the state is 24.36 km per 1000 square kilometres. The railway network in Andhra Pradesh is under the South Central Railway, East Coast Railway, and South Western Railway zones.[144][145][146]

During 2014–2022, 350 km of new lines were constructed at a rate of 44 km per year in Andhra Pradesh under the South Central Railway division. The rate of construction was only 2 km per year in the preceding five years.[147] The Nadikudi–Srikalahasti line of 308.70 km sanctioned at a budget of ₹22.89 billion (US\$290 million) in 2011–12 as a joint project of the centre and state is progressing slowly, with only phase 1 of 46 km between New Piduguralla station and Savalyapuram completed in 2021–22.[148]

There are three A1 and 23 A-category railway stations in the state, as per the assessment in 2017.[149] Visakhapatnam has been declared the cleanest railway station in the country, as per the assessment in 2018.[150] The railway station in Shimiliguda was the first highest broad gauge railway station in the country in terms of altitude.[151]

A new railway zone South Coast Railway Zone (SCoR), with headquarters in Visakhapatnam, was announced as the newest railway zone of the Indian Railways in 2019, but is yet to be implemented as of May 2023[update].[152]

Visakhapatnam Airport, Vijayawada Airport, and Tirupati Airport are international airports in the state. The state has three domestic airports, namely Rajahmundry airport, Kadapa airport, and Kurnool airport.[153] A privately owned airport for emergency flights and chartered flights is at Puttaparthi.[154]

The state has one major port at Visakhapatnam under the administrative control of the central government and 15 notified ports, including three captive ports, under the control of the state government.[155][156] The other famous ports are Krishnapatnam Port, Gangavaram Port, and Kakinada Port. Gangavaram port is a deep seaport that can accommodate ocean liners up to 200,000–250,000 DWT.[157]

The AP statewide area network (APSWAN) connects 2,164 offices of state administration at 668 locations down to the level of mandal headquarters. The network supports both data and video communications. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and the National Knowledge Network (NKN) link district headquarters with state headquarters with a bandwidth of 34 Mbit/s. Mandal headquarters are connected with a bandwidth of 8 Mbit/s.[158][159]

Andhra Pradesh State FiberNet Limited (APSFNL) operates an optical fibre network. This provides internet connectivity, telephony, and Internet protocol television (IPTV) with fibre to private and corporate users in Andhra Pradesh.[160]

The state has 40 major and medium rivers and 40,000 minor irrigation sources. Godavari, Krishna, and Penna are the major rivers. The total cultivable area is 19.904 million acres. Major, medium, and minor irrigation projects irrigate 10.311 million acres.[161] The Polavaram project under construction suffered setbacks with damage to its diaphragm wall during the 2022 floods.[162] The Veligonda project is delayed despite plan to commission by September 2023, as only the tunnels are completed in January 2024.[163][164] The Annamayya project, washed away in the 2021 floods, is set to be redesigned at a cost of 787 crore.[165][166]

Thermal, hydel and renewable power plants supply power to the state. The installed capacity share of the state in the public sector generating stations was 7,245 MW. Private sector installed capacity was 9,370 MW, which includes independent power producer capacity of 1,961 MW. The total installed capacity was 16,615 MW. Peak power demand for the state in 2021–22 was 12,032 MW and per capita consumption was 1,285 kilowatt hours. The energy consumed is 68972 million units.[167]

The government is spending 7.3% of the state budget on healthcare, compared to an average of 4 to 4.5 per cent overall in the country.[168] The 108 service provides fast emergency management services by shifting patients to a nearby healthcare facility. The 104 service provides health care services at the doorstep of villages through mobile medical units that visit at least once a month.[169]

All the poor families are covered by the free state health insurance scheme called Arogyasri up to a limit of ₹500,000 (US\$6,300). The services are provided in government and private hospitals under the network. During 2014–2018, though the nominal mean claim amount of Arogyasri beneficiaries went up significantly, it decreased after accounting for inflation. Mortality rates have significantly decreased, which indicates better outcomes are being achieved at a lower cost.[170]

Primary and secondary school education is imparted by government and private schools, regulated by the School Education Department of the state.[171][172] The government decided to stop financial aid to aided schools, forcing them to handover the schools with the aided staff to government or become private in 2021.[173] The Government runs several residential schools including separate schools for BC and SC/ST categories.[174] As per the child info and school information report (2018–19), there were a total of 7,041,568 students[175] enrolled in 62,063 schools.[176] 605,052 students have appeared for the April 2023 Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exam in the regular stream. The overall pass percentage was 72.26%, with 100% in 933 schools.[177] In March–April 2023, 379,758 students appeared for intermediate second-year examinations. 272,001 candidates, amounting to 71%, were declared passed.[178]

The state initiated education reforms in 2020 by creating six types of schools: satellite foundation schools (pre-primary), foundational schools (pre-primary – class II), foundational school plus (pre-primary – class V), pre-high school (class III – class VII/VIII), high school (class III – class X), and high school plus (class III – class XII).[179] The transition to English-medium education in all government schools started in the academic year 2020–2021 and is expected to reach completion by 2024–25. 1000 government schools are affiliated to the CBSE in the years 2022–23 as an initial step, and the bilingual text book scheme was adopted to ease the transition.[180] The state government is going ahead with the English medium based on the parents survey despite protests and court cases.[181] The state initiative is being funded in part by a loan from the World Bank to the tune of \$250 million over 2021–2026 through the "Supporting Andhra's Learning Transformation" (SALT) project to improve the learning outcomes of children up to class II level.[182]

There were 510 industrial training institutes (ITI) in the year 2020–21 in Andhra Pradesh, with 82 under government management and 417 under private management. The total available seats in 2021 were 93,280, out of which 48.90% were filled. 10,053 students completed ITI education in the year 2020.[183]

There are 169 government-aided degree colleges and 55 private-aided degree colleges in the state. 66 government colleges and 48 private-aided colleges have valid NAAC grades. There are 85 government-aided and 175 private polytechnic colleges with a sanctioned strength of 75,906

students.[184] The AP State Council of Higher Education organises various entrance tests for different streams and conducts counselling for admissions.[185] The AP State Skill Development Corporation is set up to support skill development and placement for the educated.[186]

There are a total of 36 universities, which comprise 3 central universities, 23 state public universities, 6 state private universities, and 4 deemed universities.[187] Andhra University is the oldest of the universities in the state, established in 1926.[188][189] The government established Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT) in 2008 to cater to the education needs of the rural youth of Andhra Pradesh.[190] Dr. Y.S.R University of Health Sciences oversees medical education in 348 affiliated colleges spanning the entire range from traditional medicine to modern medicine.[191] The public universities, including the legacy universities such as Andhra, Sri Venkateswara, and Nagarjuna, are suffering from a severe fund crunch and staff shortage, managing with only 20% of sanctioned full-time staff.[192] The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education for the age group 18–23 for the state is at 35.2% for the year 2019–20, which compares favourably with the GER for all of India at 27.1%. With a female GER of 35.3 and a male GER of 38.2, the Gender Parity Index is 0.84. The corresponding ratio for India is 1.01.[193]

Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation University (KL College of Engineering) bagged the 50th rank, while Andhra University in Visakhapatnam bagged the 76th rank in the overall category of India rankings for 2023 as per the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) of the Union Ministry of Education. 2,478 institutions, including 242 institutions from the state, participated in the ranking.[194]

Andhra Pradesh has 2,510 public libraries, including 4 regional libraries and 13 district central libraries under government management.[195] Saraswata Niketanam at Vetapalem in Bapatla district, one of the oldest libraries established under private management in 1918, is losing its attraction as the Internet spreads.[196] The government is planning to develop digital libraries at the village panchayat level.[197]

As of 20 June 2023,[update] there are 190 science and technology organisations in Andhra Pradesh, including 12 central labs and research institutions.[198] Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), known as Sriharikota Range (SHAR), on the barrier island of Sriharikota in Tirupati district, is a satellite launching station operated by the Indian Space Research Organisation.[199] It is India's primary orbital launch site. India's lunar orbiter Chandrayaan-1 was launched from the centre on 22 October 2008.[200]

Yellapragada Subba Rao, a pioneering biochemist hailing from the state, discovered the function of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) as an energy source in the cell and developed drugs for cancer and filariasis.[201][202] Yelavarthy Nayudamma, a chemical engineer, worked extensively for the Central Leather Research Institute in Chennai and rose to become the director general of the Center for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), India.[203] C. R. Rao was an Indian-American mathematician and statistician and an alumnus of Andhra University. His work on statistics influenced various sciences.[204]

The total number of registered newspapers and periodicals in the state for the years 2020–21 was 5,798. There were 1,645 dailies, 817 weeklies, 2,431 monthlies, and 623 fortnightlies. 787 Telugu dailies had a circulation of 9,911,005. 103 English dailies had a circulation of 1,646,453.[205][206] Eenadu, Sakshi, and Andhra Jyothi are the top 3 Telugu daily newspapers widely published in Andhra Pradesh in terms of circulation and the top 3 Telugu news sites.[207][208] BBC Telugu News was

launched on 2 October 2017.[209][210] Several privately owned news media outlets are considered biased towards specific political parties in the state.[211][212]

There were 10 general entertainment channels, 23 news channels, 2 health channels, 6 religious channels, 2 other channels, and 2 cable distribution channels, for a total of 45 channels empanelled by the Andhra Pradesh Information and Public Relations Department.[213] All India Radio has several channels operating from several locations in the state. Red FM operates from four locations.[214]

Andhra Pradesh has 17 geographical indications in the categories of agriculture, handicrafts, foodstuffs, and textiles as per the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.[215][216] Some of the GI products are Banaganapalle mangoes,[217] Bandar laddu,[218] Kondapalli toys, Tirupati laddu, and saris made in Dharmavaram and Machilipatnam.[216]

Machilipatnam and Srikalahasti Kalamkari are the two unique textile art forms practised in India.[219] There are other notable handicrafts present in the state, like the soft limestone idol carvings of Durgi.[220] Etikoppaka in Visakhapatnam district is notable for its lac industry, which produces lacquered wooden toys.[221]

[222]

Nannayya, Tikkana, and Yerrapragada form the trinity who translated the Sanskrit epic Mahabharata into Telugu. Nannayya wrote the first treatise on Telugu grammar, called Andhra Shabda Chintamani in Sanskrit.[223] Pothana translated Sri Bhagavatam into Telugu as Andhra Maha Bhagavatamu. Vemana was an Indian philosopher. He wrote Telugu poems using simple language and native idioms on a variety of subjects, including yoga, wisdom, and morality. Potuluri Veerabrahmendra swami, a clairvoyant and social reformer, wrote Kalagnanam, a book of predictions written in the 16th century.[224][225]

Telugu literature after Kandukuri Veeresalingam is termed Adhunik Telugu Sahityam (modern Telugu literature). He is known as Gadya Tikkana and was the author of the Telugu social novel Satyavati Charitam. Viswanatha Satyanarayana was conferred the Jnanpith Award. Sri Sri brought new forms of expressionism into Telugu literature.[226]

Sankranti is the major harvest festival celebrated across the state.[227] It is celebrated for four days in the second week of January. On Bhogi, the day before Makara Sankranti, people throw old items into bonfires. Children are showered with jujube as a symbol of protection from evil. Sweet meats made of rice flour and sesame seeds called Arisalu are enjoyed. Next day, women and young girls make elaborate geometric patterns called Rangoli before the entrance to the house and decorate them with flowers. Children fly kites. On the subsequent two days, Kanuma and Mukkanuma, people feed cattle and offer prayers for a good harvest. The first day of Telugu New Year Ugadi which occurs during March/April is also a special festival with preparation and sharing of pickle (pachhadi) made from raw mangoes, neem flowers, pepper powder, jaggery and tamarind. Tasting this pickle which is mix of different tastes teaches the importance of taking positive/negative life experiences in one's stride. Celebrations end with the recitation of the coming year's astrological predictions called Panchanga sravanam. Vijaya Dasami known commonly as Dussera and Deepavali, the festival of lights are other major Hindu festivals.[228]

Eid is celebrated with special prayers.

[229]

Rottela Panduga is celebrated at Bara Shaheed Dargah in Nellore with participation across religious lines.[230]

Kuchipudi, the cultural dance recognised as the official dance form of the state of Andhra Pradesh, originated in the village of Kuchipudi in Krishna district.[15] Many composers of Carnatic music like Annamacharya, Kshetrappa, Tyagaraja, and Bhadrachala Ramadas were of Telugu descent. Modern Carnatic music composers and singers like Ghantasala and M. Balamuralikrishna are of Telugu descent. The Telugu film industry hosted many music composers and playback singers, such as S. P. Balasubrahmanyam, P. Susheela, S. Janaki, and P. B. Sreenivas. Folk songs are very important and popular in the many rural areas of the state. Forms such as the Burra katha and Poli are still performed today.[231] Harikatha Kalakshepam (or Harikatha) involves the narration of a story, intermingled with various songs relating to the story. Harikatha was originated in Andhra Pradesh.[232] Burra katha is an oral storytelling technique in which the topic is either a Hindu mythological story or a contemporary social issue.[233] Rangasthala is an Indian theatre in the Telugu language, based predominantly in Andhra Pradesh.[234] Gurajada Apparao wrote the play Kanyasulkam in 1892, which is often considered the greatest play in the Telugu language.[235] C. Pullaiah is cited as the father of the Telugu theatre movement.[236][237]

Andhra Pradesh State Film, Television & Theatre Development Corporation offers incentives to promote the industry.[238] The government is asking the film industry to make Vizag its hub.[239] The Telugu film industry (known as "Tollywood"), which produces 300 films annually, is primarily based in Hyderabad, though several films are shot in Vizag.[240] Film producer D. Ramanaidu holds a Guinness record for the most films produced by a person.[241] In the years 2005, 2006, and 2008, the Telugu film industry produced the largest number of films in India, exceeding the number of films produced in Bollywood.[242][243] "Naatu Naatu" from the film RRR became the first song from an Indian film to win the Academy Award for Best Original Song and the Golden Globe Award for Best Original Song, as well as the first song from an Asian film to win the former.[244][245]

Andhra meals are combinations of spicy, tangy, and sweet flavours. Chillies, which are abundantly produced in Andhra Pradesh, and curry leaves are used copiously in most preparations of curries and chutneys. Various types of Pappu are made using lentils in combination with tomatoes, spinach, gongura, ridge gourd, etc. Apart from curries, pulusu, a stew made using tamarind juice in combination with vegetables, sea food, chicken, mutton, etc., is popular. Pachchadi, a paste usually made with a combination of groundnuts, fried vegetables, and chillies, is a must in a meal. Pickles made using mangoes, gooseberries, lemons, etc. are enjoyed in combination with Pappu. Buttermilk and yoghurt mixed with rice and eaten towards the end of the meal soothe the body, especially after eating spicy food items earlier. Ariselu, Burelu, Laddu, and Pootharekulu are some of the sweets made for special festivals and occasions.[246][247]

Some of the popular religious pilgrim destinations include Tirumala Venkateswara temple at Tirupati, Srialahasti temple, Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha temple, Simhachalam, Shahi Jamia Masjid in Adoni, Gunadala Church in Vijayawada, and Buddhist centres at Amaravati and Nagarjuna Konda. Tirumala Venkateswara temple is the world's most visited Hindu temple, with footfalls of 30,000–40,000 daily and about 75,000 on New Year's Eve.[248] The region is home to a variety of other pilgrimage centres, such as the Pancharama Kshetras, Mallikarjuna Jyotirlinga, Kanaka Durga Temple and Kodanda Rama Temple. [249]

The state has several beaches in its coastal districts, such as Rushikonda, Mypadu, Suryalanka, etc.;[250] caves such as Borra Caves;[251] Indian rock-cut architecture depicting Undavalli Caves;[252] and the country's second-longest cave system, the Belum Caves.[253] The valleys and

hills include Araku Valley, Horsley Hills, Papi Hills, and Gandikota Gorge.[254][255] Arma Konda, located in Visakhapatnam district, is the highest peak in the Eastern Ghats.[256]

The state has 32 museums,[257][c] which feature a varied collection of ancient sculptures, paintings, idols, weapons, cutlery, inscriptions, and religious artefacts. The Amaravati Archaeological Museum has several archaeological artefacts.[258] Visakha Museum and Telugu Samskruthika Niketanam in Visakhapatnam display historical artefacts of the pre-independence era. Bapu Museum in Vijayawada displays a large collection of artefacts. Advanced projection mapping with graphic, animation, and laser displays is used to tell the history of Kondapalli Fort, utilising the irregular landscapes, ruins, and buildings present in the fort as a screen. It was launched in 2019.[259]

The Archaeological Survey of India identified 135 centrally protected monuments in the state of Andhra Pradesh. These include the reconstructed monuments at Anupu and Nagarjunakonda.[260]

The Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh is the governing body that looks after the infrastructure development, coaching, and administration of sports promotion schemes.[261] Dr. YSR Sports School, with classes for grades 4–10 and a focus on tapping rural sports talent, was established in Putlampalli, YSR district, in December 2006.[262]

The ACA-VDCA stadium in Visakhapatnam hosted ODI, T20I, and IPL matches.[263] Andhra Pradesh secured 16 medals at the 36th National Games held in 2022. It was ranked twenty-first in the competition. It won the most medals in athletics. Two silvers and one bronze were won in weightlifting.[264]

Karnam Malleswari is the first female Indian to win an Olympic medal.[265] Pullela Gopichand is a former Indian badminton player. He won the All England Open Badminton Championships in 2001, becoming the second Indian to win after Prakash Padukone.[266][267] Srikanth Kidambi, a badminton player, is the first Indian to reach the world championships final in 2021 in the men's singles and win a silver medal.[268]

Text extracted from URL 45:

Goa is a state of India. Goans are commonly said to be born with music and football in their blood because both are deeply entrenched in Goan culture.[1][2][3]

According to the 1909 statistics in the Catholic Encyclopedia, the total Catholic population was 293,628 out of a total population 365,291 (80.33%).[4] Within Goa, there has been a steady decline of Christianity due to Goan emigration, and a steady rise of other religions, due to massive non-Goan immigration since the Annexation of Goa. Native Goans are outnumbered by non-Goans in Goa, but Christianity remains prevalent in the state, with a higher percentage of Christians than the national average. [5] Conversion seems to play little role in the demographic change. According to the 2011 census, in a population of 1,458,545 people, 66.1% were Hindu, 25.1% were Christian, 8.3% were Muslim and 0.1% were Sikh.[6]

The most popular celebrations in the Indian state of Goa include the Goa Carnival, (Konkani: Intruz), Shigmo and São João (Feast of John the Baptist).[7] The most popular festivals in Goa include Ganesh Chaturthi (Konkani: Chavath),[8] Diwali,[9] Christmas (Konkani: Natalam),[10] Easter (Konkani: Paskanchem Fest), Samvatsar Padvo or Sanvsar Padvo and the feast of St. Francis Xavier, who is known as Goencho Saib by the Catholic Community in Goa.[11][12]

Rice with fish curry (Xit kodi in Konkani) is the staple diet in Goa.[13] Goan cuisine is renowned for its rich variety of fish dishes cooked with elaborate recipes. Coconut and coconut oil is widely used in Goan cooking along with chili peppers, spices and vinegar giving the food a unique flavour. Pork and beef dishes such as Vindalho,[14][15] Xacuti and Sorpotel are cooked for major occasions among the Catholics. An exotic Goan vegetable stew, known as Khatkhate, is a very popular dish during the celebrations of festivals, Hindu and Christian alike. Khatkhate contains at least five vegetables, fresh coconut, and special Goan spices that add to the aroma. A rich egg-based multi-layered sweet dish known as bebinca is a favourite at Christmas.[16] Cashew feni is made from the fermentation of the fruit of the cashew tree, while coconut feni is made from the sap of toddy palms.

The architecture of Goa shows a distinct Portuguese influence. Fontainhas in Panaji has been declared a cultural quarter, showcasing the life, architecture and culture of Goa.[17]

The Churches and Convents of Goa are a group of six churches that are a UNESCO World Heritage Site.[18] The Basilica of Bom Jesus holds the mortal remains of St. Francis Xavier, the patron saint of Goa.[19] Once every ten years, the body is taken down for veneration and for public viewing. The last such event was conducted in 2014.[20]

Influences from other eras (Kadambas of Goa, Maratha Empire) are visible in some of Goa's temples, notably the Mahadev Temple[21] and Saptakoteswar Temple.[22]

Football is the most popular sport in Goa along with Cricket.[23] Athletics, chess, hockey, swimming, table tennis and basketball are other popular sports in Goa. Fishing is also a popular recreational activity.

Goan Catholics have been performing Western classical music since the 1500s, because it is an integral part of the Catholic liturgy. Mando, dekhnni, dulpod and tiatr are traditional Goan musical forms in Konkani developed from Western Music.

Goan Hindus are very fond of Natak, Bhajan and Kirtan. Many famous Indian Classical singers hail from Goa, such as, Kishori Amonkar, Kesarbai Kerkar, Jitendra Abhisheki, Prabhakar Karekar.

Some traditional Goan dance forms are dekhnni, fugdi, corridinho and dashavatara. Western social dancing is a part of most celebrations.

Goans are very fond of theatre and acting. Kalo and dashavatar were popular art forms. Marathi Natak have been very popular among Hindus in Goa for the past two centuries. Tiatr is the major Goan form of theatre common amongst Catholics and is the most commercial offering as it has entertained Goans not only in Goa but also in Mumbai and Pune (which are major cities of India and have a sizeable Goan population) and in the Gulf regions of UAE, Kuwait and so on.

The majority of Goans speak Konkani as their first language, while the remaining speak other languages, like Hindi, Portuguese or Marathi as their primary language. However, practically all Goans can speak and understand Konkani. Konkani is an important part of the Goan identity that binds together all Goans.

Goa developed an international reputation in the 1960s as one of the prime stops on the legendary India-Nepal "hippie trail". In the mid-1960s, several Westerners, including "Eight Finger Eddie" walked over the hill to Calangute, and decided to create a community for Westerners. In the early years, Calangute and Baga were the center of this scene, but it grew over the years to include other nearby cities like Anjuna Beach, which became, and arguably still is, the center of the Western youth culture of Goa. By the mid-1980s, there were over 8000 Westerners living in Goa, mostly from

Western Europe. The scene was marked by drug culture, trance music and free love. Goa remains today an international center of youth culture.

Starting in the late 1990s, Goa began to attract a more "upscale" audience, which in turn drove prices up, which in turn drove many in the "hippie" community to other less-expensive areas. Arambol—the beach community furthest away from "civilization", like electricity and running water—became the center of a battle between those wanting to turn Goa into a more traditional upscale resort area, and those wanting Goa to retain its traditional rustic counterculture appeal.

Text extracted from URL 46:

Goa (Konkani pronunciation: [gõːj], Portuguese: [ˈgoɐ] ⓘ) is a state on the southwestern coast of India within the Konkani region, geographically separated from the Deccan highlands by the Western Ghats.[7][8] It is bound by the Indian states of Maharashtra to the north, and Karnataka to the east and south, with the Arabian Sea in the west. It is India's smallest state by area and fourth-smallest by population. Goa has the highest GDP per capita among all Indian states,[4][9] two and a half times as high as the GDP per capita of the country as a whole.[10] The Eleventh Finance Commission of India named Goa the best-placed state because of its infrastructure, and India's National Commission on Population rated it as having the best quality of life in India (based on the commission's "12 Indicators").[10] It is the second-highest ranking among Indian states in the human development index.[5]

Panaji is the state's capital, while Vasco da Gama is its largest city. The historic city of Margão in Goa still exhibits the cultural influence of the Portuguese, who first voyaged to the subcontinent in the early 16th century as merchants, and conquered it soon thereafter, whereupon Goa became an overseas territory of the Portuguese Empire, part of what was then known as Portuguese India, and remained as such for about 456 years until it was annexed by India in 1961.[11][12] Goa's official language, which is spoken by a majority of its inhabitants, is Konkani.

Goa is visited by large numbers of international and domestic tourists each year because of its white-sand beaches, active nightlife, places of worship, and World Heritage-listed architecture. It also has rich flora and fauna because it lies very close to the North Western Ghats rainforests, one of the rare biodiversity hotspots of the world.

After the Bahmani-Bijapuri city of Goa was captured by Afonso de Albuquerque in AD 1510, and made the capital of the Estado da Índia, the city gave its name to the contiguous territories.[citation needed]

The origin of the city name "Goa" is unclear. In ancient literature, Goa was known by many names, such as Gomanchala, Gopakapattana, Gopakapattam, Gopakapuri, Govapuri, Govem, and Gomantak.[13] Other historical names for Goa are Sindapur, Sandabur, and Mahassapatam.[14]

Rock art engravings found in Goa are one of the earliest known traces of human life in India.[15] Goa, situated within the Shimoga-Goa Greenstone Belt in the Western Ghats (an area composed of metavolcanics, iron formations and ferruginous quartzite), yields evidence for Acheulean occupation.[16] Rock art engravings (petroglyphs) are present on laterite platforms and granite boulders in Usgalimal near the west flowing Kushavati river and in Kajur.[17] In Kajur, the rock engravings of animals, tectiforms and other designs in granite have been associated with what is considered to be a megalithic stone circle with a round granite stone in the centre.[18] Petroglyphs, cones, stone-axe, and choppers dating to 10,000 years ago have been found in various locations in

Goa, including Kazur, Mauxim, and the Mandovi-Zuari basin.[19] Recently these petroglyphs have been included in the tentative list of UNESCO world heritage sites.

Evidence of Palaeolithic life is visible at Dabolim, Adkon, Shigao, Fatorpa, Arli, Maulinguinim, Diwar, Sanguem, Pilerne, and Aquem-Margaon. Difficulty in carbon dating the laterite rock compounds poses a problem for determining the exact time period.[20]

Early Goan society underwent radical change when Indo-Aryan and Dravidian migrants amalgamated with the aboriginal locals, forming the base of early Goan culture.[21]

In the 3rd century BC, Goa was part of the Maurya Empire, ruled by the Buddhist emperor, Ashoka of Magadha. Buddhist monks laid the foundation of Buddhism in Goa. Between the 2nd century BC and the 6th century AD, Goa was ruled by the Bhojas of Goa. Chutus of Karwar also ruled some parts as feudatories of the Satavahanas of Kolhapur (2nd century BC to the 2nd century AD), Western Kshatrapas (around 150 AD), the Abhiras of Western Maharashtra, Bhojas of Goa, and the Konkan Mauryas as feudatories of the Kalachuris.[22] The rule later passed to the Chalukyas of Badami, who controlled it between 578 and 753, and later the Rashtrakutas of Malkhed from 753 to 963. From 765 to 1015, the Southern Silharas of Konkan ruled Goa as the feudatories of the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas.[23] Over the next few centuries, Goa was successively ruled by the Kadambas as the feudatories of the Chalukyas of Kalyani. They patronised Jainism in Goa.[24]

In 1312, Goa came under the governance of the Delhi Sultanate. The kingdom's grip on the region was weak, and by 1370 it was forced to surrender it to Harihara I of the Vijayanagara Empire. The Vijayanagara monarchs held on to the territory until 1469 when it was appropriated by the Bahmani sultans of Gulbarga. After that dynasty crumbled, the area fell into the hands of the Adil Shahis of Bijapur, who established as their auxiliary capital the city known under the Portuguese as Velha Goa (or Old Goa).[25]

In 1510, the Portuguese defeated the ruling Bijapur sultan Yusuf Adil Shah with the help of a local ally, Thimmayya[26] or Timoji, a privateer.[27] They set up a permanent settlement in Velha Goa (Old Goa). This was the beginning of Portuguese colonial rule in Goa that would last for four and a half centuries, until its annexation by India in 1961. The Goa Inquisition, a formal tribunal, was established in 1560, and was finally abolished in 1812.[28]

From the latter decades of the eighteenth century, the territory of Goa was composed of two segments: the central nucleus of the Velhas Conquistas (Old Conquests)—Bardes, Ilhas de Goa, and Salcette—which territories had been under Portuguese administration since the sixteenth century; and the Novas Conquistas (New Conquests)—Bicholim, Canacona, Pernem, Quepem, Sattari, and Sanguem—territories which had been successively added through the eighteenth century.[citation needed]

In 1787, Goa experienced its first revolt from its Catholic elite, with the Pinto Revolt led by a Goan noble family who revolted against the Portuguese due to racial discrimination in administration and clergy. They were betrayed by a member of the revolt. The Portuguese government executed some of the family members, while others, such as Abbe Faria, went on to join the French Revolution. This remains legend in Goa today.

In 1843, the Portuguese moved the capital to the Cidade da Nova Goa (City of New Goa), today known as Panaji (Panjim), from Velha Goa (Old Goa). By the mid-18th century, Portuguese expansions lost other possessions in India until their borders stabilised and formed the Goa, Daman

and Diu, which included Silvassa prior to the Annexation, it was known as Estado da Índia in Portuguese, that is the "State of Portuguese India".[citation needed]

Some wealthy Goan zamindars such as Baron Dempo and Viscount Deshprabhu were included in the Portuguese nobility.[citation needed]

After India gained independence from British rule in 1947, India requested that Portuguese territories on the Indian subcontinent be ceded to India. Portugal refused to negotiate on the sovereignty of its Indian enclaves. On 19 December 1961, the Indian Army invaded with Operation Vijay resulting in the annexation of Goa, and of Daman and Diu islands into the Indian union. Goa, Daman and Diu, were organised as a single centrally administered union territory of India.[29] On 16 January 1967 a referendum was held in Goa, to decide the future of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu. It was the only referendum to have been held in independent India. The referendum offered the people of Goa a choice between continuing as a union territory or merging with the state of Maharashtra and the majority chose the former.[30][31][32] On 30 May 1987, the union territory was split, and Goa was made India's twenty-fifth state, with Daman and Diu remaining a union territory.[33]

Goa encompasses an area of 3,702 km² (1,429 sq mi). It lies between the latitudes 14°53′54″ N and 15°40′00″ N and longitudes 73°40′33″ E and 74°20′13″ E.[citation needed]

Goa is a part of the coastal country known as the Konkan, which is an escarpment rising up to the Western Ghats range of mountains, which separate it from the Deccan Plateau. The highest point is the Sonsogor Peak, with an altitude of 1,026 m (3,366 ft). Goa has a coastline of 160 km (99 mi).[citation needed]

Goa's seven major rivers are the Mandovi, Zuari, Terekhol, Chapora, Galgibag, Cumbarjua canal, Talpona, and the Sal.[34] The Zuari and the Mandovi are the most important rivers, interspaced by the Cumbarjua canal, forming a major estuarine complex.[34] These rivers are fed by the Southwest monsoon rain and their basin covers 69% of the state's geographical area.[34] These rivers are some of the busiest in India. Goa has more than 40 estuarine, eight marine, and about 90 riverine islands. The total navigable length of Goa's rivers is 253 km (157 mi). Goa has more than 300 ancient water tanks built during the rule of the Kadamba dynasty and over 100 medicinal springs.[citation needed]

Mormugao harbour on the mouth of the Zuari river is considered one of the best natural harbours in South Asia.[citation needed]

Most of Goa's soil cover is made up of laterites rich in ferric-aluminum oxides and reddish in colour. Further inland and along the riverbanks, the soil is mostly alluvial and loamy. The soil is rich in minerals and humus, thus conducive to agriculture. Some of the oldest rocks in the Indian subcontinent are found in Goa between Molem and Anmod on Goa's border with Karnataka. The rocks are classified as Trondjemeitic Gneiss estimated to be 3,600 million years old, dated by rubidium isotope dating. A specimen of the rock is exhibited at Goa University.[citation needed]

Goa features a tropical monsoon climate under the Köppen climate classification. Goa, being in the torrid zone and near the Arabian Sea, has a hot and humid climate for most of the year. The month of May is usually the hottest, seeing daytime temperatures of over 35 °C (95 °F) coupled with high humidity. The state's three seasons are southwest monsoon period (June–September), post-monsoon period (October–January), and pre-monsoon period (February–May).[34] Over 90% of the average annual rainfall (3,048 mm or 120 in) is received during the monsoon season.[34]

The state is divided into two civil districts—North Goa and South Goa. Each district is administered by a District Collector, appointed by the Government of India.[citation needed]

Panaji (Panjim) is the headquarters of North Goa district and is also the capital of Goa. North Goa is further divided into three subdivisions—Panaji, Mapusa, and Bicholim; and five talukas (subdistricts)—Tiswadi (Panaji), Bardez (Mapusa), Pernem, Bicholim, and Sattari (Valpoi). Margao (Madgaon) is the headquarters of the South Goa district. It is also the cultural and commercial capital of Goa. South Goa is further divided into five subdivisions—Ponda, Mormugao-Vasco, Margao, Quepem, and Dharbandora; and seven talukas—Ponda, Mormugao, Salcete (Margao), Quepem, and Canacona (Chaudi), Sanguem, and Dharbandora.[citation needed]

Goa's major cities are—Panaji, Margao, Vasco-Mormugao, Mapusa, Ponda, Bicholim, and Valpoi. Panaji (Panjim) has the only Municipal Corporation in Goa.[citation needed] There are thirteen Municipal Councils—Margao, Mormugao (merged with Vasco), Pernem, Mapusa, Bicholim, Sanquelim, Valpoi, Ponda, Cuncolim, Quepem, Curcholem, Sanguem, and Canacona. Goa has a total number of 334 villages.[37]

The politics of Goa are a result of the uniqueness of this region due to 450 years of Portuguese rule, in comparison to three centuries of British rule experienced by the rest of India. The Indian National Congress was unable to achieve electoral success in the first two decades after the State's incorporation into India.[38] Instead, the state was dominated by the regional political parties like Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party and the United Goans Party.[39]

Goa has two members of parliament (MP) elected from each district representing the state in the Lok Sabha (House of the People), the lower house of the national Parliament of India. It also has one member of parliament in the Rajya Sabha (Council of the States), the upper house of the Indian parliament.[citation needed]

Goa's administrative capital is based in Panaji, often referred to as Panjim in English, Pangim in Portuguese and Ponjê in Konkani, the official language of the state. It lies on the left bank of the Mandovi river. The seat of the Goa Legislative Assembly is in Porvorim, across the Mandovi from Panaji. The state's highest judiciary is the Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court, a branch of the Bombay High Court permanently seated at Panjim. Unlike other states, which follow the model of personal laws framed for individual religions introduced in the days of British Raj, the Portuguese Civil Code of Goa and Damaon, a uniform code based on the Napoleonic code was retained in Goa as well as the union territory of Damaon, Diu & Silvassa.[citation needed]

Goa has a unicameral legislature, the Goa Legislative Assembly, of 40 members, headed by a speaker. The chief minister heads the executive, which is made up of the party or coalition elected with a majority in the legislature. The governor, the head of the state, is appointed by the president of India. After having stable governance for nearly thirty years up to 1990, Goa is now notorious for its political instability having seen fourteen governments in the span of the fifteen years between 1990 and 2005.[40]

In March 2005, the assembly was dissolved by the Governor and President's Rule was declared, which suspended the legislature. A by-election in June 2005 saw the Indian National Congress coming back to power after winning three of the five seats that went to polls. The Congress Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are the two largest parties in the state. In the assembly poll of 2007, the INC-led coalition won and formed the government.[41] In the 2012 Vidhan Sabha Elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party along with the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party won a clear

majority, forming the new government with Manohar Parrikar as the Chief Minister. Other parties include the United Goans Democratic Party, the Nationalist Congress Party.[42]

In the 2017 assembly elections, the Indian National Congress gained the most seats, with the BJP coming in second. However, no party was able to gain a majority in the 40 member house. The BJP was invited to form the Government by Governor Mridula Sinha. The Congress claimed the use of money power on the part of the BJP and took the case to the Supreme Court. However, the Manohar Parikkar led Government was able to prove its majority in the Supreme Court mandated "floor test".[43][44][45]

Equatorial forest cover in Goa stands at 1,500 km² (579 sq mi),[13] most of which is owned by the government. Government-owned forest is estimated at 1,300 km² (502 sq mi) whilst private is given as 200 km² (77 sq mi). Most of the forests in the state are located in the interior eastern regions of the state. The Western Ghats, which form most of eastern Goa, have been internationally recognised as one of the biodiversity hotspots of the world. In the February 1999 issue of National Geographic Magazine, Goa was compared with the Amazon and the Congo basins for its rich tropical biodiversity.[46]

Goa's wildlife sanctuaries boast of more than 1512 documented species of plants, over 275 species of birds, over 48 kinds of animals and over 60 genera of reptiles.[47] Nanda Lake is the first and the only Ramsar wetland site in Goa.[48]

Goa is also known for its coconut cultivation. The coconut tree has been reclassified by the government as a palm (like grass), enabling farmers and real estate developers to clear land with fewer restrictions.[citation needed]

Rice is the main food crop, and pulses (legume), Ragi (Finger Millet), and other food crops are also grown. Main cash crops are arecanut, coconut, cashew nut, sugar cane, and fruits like banana, mango, and pineapple.[13] Goa's state animal is the Gaur, the state bird is the Flame-throated Bulbul, and the state tree is the Indian Laurel.[citation needed]

The important forest products are bamboo canes, Maratha barks, chillar barks, and the bhirand. Coconut palm trees are common throughout Goa barring the elevated regions. A variety of deciduous trees, such as teak, Sal tree, cashew, and mango trees are present. Fruits include jackfruit, mango, pineapple, and blackberry. Goa's forests are rich in medicinal plants.[citation needed]

Foxes, wild boar and migratory birds are found in the jungles of Goa. The avifauna (bird species) includes kingfisher, myna and parrot. Numerous types of fish are also caught off the coast of Goa and in its rivers. Crab, lobster, shrimp, jellyfish, oysters, and catfish are the basis of the marine fishery. Goa also has a high snake population. Goa has many famous "National Parks", including the renowned Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary on the island of Chorão. Other wildlife sanctuaries include the Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary, Molem Wildlife Sanctuary, Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary, Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary, and Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary.[citation needed]

Goa has more than 33% of its geographic area under government forests (1,224.38 km² or 472.74 sq mi) of which about 62% has been brought under Protected Areas (PA) of Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Park. Since there is a substantial area under private forests and a large tract under cashew, mango, coconut, etc. plantations, the total forest and tree cover constitutes 56.6% of the geographic area.[citation needed]

Goa's state domestic product for 2017 is estimated at \$11 billion at current prices. Goa is India's richest state with the highest GDP per capita—two and a half times that of the country—with one of

its fastest growth rates: 8.23% (yearly average 1990–2000).[50] Tourism is Goa's primary industry: it gets 12%[51] of foreign tourist arrivals in India. Goa has two main tourist seasons: winter and summer. In winter, tourists from abroad (mainly Europe) come, and summer (which, in Goa, is the rainy season) sees tourists from across India. Goa's net state domestic product (NSDP) was around US\$7.24 billion in 2015–16.[52]

The land away from the coast is rich in minerals and ores, and mining forms the second largest industry. Iron, bauxite, manganese, clays, limestone, and silica are mined. The Mormugao port handled 31.69 a million tonnes of cargo in 2007, which was 39% of India's total iron ore exports. Sesa Goa (now owned by Vedanta Resources) and Dempo are the lead miners. Rampant mining has been depleting the forest cover as well as posing a health hazard to the local population. Corporations are also mining illegally in some areas. During 2015–16, the total traffic handled by Mormugao port was recorded to be 20.78 million tonnes.[citation needed]

Agriculture, while of shrinking importance to the economy over the past four decades, offers part-time employment to a sizeable portion of the populace. Rice is the main agricultural crop, followed by areca, cashew, and coconut. Fishing employs about 40,000 people, though recent official figures indicate a decline in the importance of this sector and also a fall in the catch, due perhaps, to traditional fishing giving way to large-scale mechanised trawling.[citation needed]

Medium-scale industries include the manufacturing of pesticides, fertilizers, tires, tubes, footwear, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, wheat products, steel rolling, fruits and fish canning, cashew nuts, textiles, brewery products.[citation needed]

Currently, there are 16 planned SEZs in Goa. The Goa government has recently decided to not allow any more Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Goa after strong opposition to them by political parties and the Goa Catholic Church.[53]

Goa is also notable for its low-priced beer, wine, and spirits prices due to its very low excise duty on alcohol. Another main source of cash inflow to the state is remittance, from many of its citizens who work abroad, to their families. It is said to have some of the largest bank savings in the country.[citation needed]

In 1976 Goa became the first state in India to legalise some types of gambling. This enabled the state to levy taxes on gambling, thereby strengthening the economy. There are several casinos available in Goa. In 2018-2019 tax revenue from casinos reached Rs 414 crore.[54]

Goa is the second state in India to achieve a 100 per cent automatic telephone system with a solid network of telephone exchanges. As of September 2017, Goa had a total installed power generation capacity of 547.88 MW. Goa is also one of the few states in India to achieve 100 per cent rural electrification.[55]

A native of Goa is called a Goan. Goa has a population of 1.459 million residents as of 2011,[57] making it the fourth least populated state of India after Sikkim, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh. Population density of Goa is 394 per km² which is higher than national average 382 per km². Goa is the state with highest proportion of urban population with 62.17% of the population living in urban areas. The sex ratio is 973 females to 1,000 males. The birth rate was 15.70 per 1,000 people in 2007. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes make up 1.74% and 10.23% of the population respectively. As of the 2011 census, over 76% of the population was born in Goa, while just over half of migrants to the state are from the neighbouring states of Karnataka and Maharashtra.[58] As per

a 2021 report, over 50% of the permanent resident population is of non-Goan origin, outnumbering the native ethnic Goan population.[59]

Languages in Goa (2011)[60][61]

The Official Language Act, 1987, of the erstwhile Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu makes Konkani in the Devanagari script the sole official language of Goa, but provides that Marathi may also be used "for all or any of the official purposes". Portuguese was the sole official language during Portuguese colonial rule. The government also has a policy of replying in Marathi to correspondence received in Marathi.[62] There have been demands for according Konkani in the Roman script official status in the state. There is widespread support for keeping Konkani as the sole official language of Goa.[63]

Konkani is spoken as a first language by about 66.11% of the people in the state, but almost all Goans can speak and understand Konkani. A large population of people can speak and understand English as well. Other linguistic groups in the state per the 2011 census are speakers of Marathi (10.89%), Hindi (8.64%), Kannada (4.65%), Urdu (2.83%), and Portuguese language (1%).[64]

Historically, Konkani was neither the official nor the administrative language of the many rulers of the State. Under the Kadambas (c. 960–1310), the court language was Kannada. When under Muslim rule (1312–1370 and 1469–1510), the official and cultural language was Persian. Various stones in the Archaeological Museum and Portrait Gallery from the period are inscribed in Kannada and Persian.[65] During the period in between the two periods of Muslim rule, the Vijayanagara Empire, which had control of the state, mandated the use of Kannada and Telugu.[65]

Religion in Goa (2011)[57]

According to the 2011 census, in a population of 1,458,545 people, 66.1% were Hindu, 25.1% were Christian, 8.3% were Muslim, and 0.1% were Sikh.[57]

According to the 1909 statistics in the Catholic Encyclopedia, the total Catholic population in Portuguese controlled Goa was 293,628 out of a total population of 365,291 (80.33%).[66] Since the 20th century, the percentage of Goan Catholics has been facing continual decline caused by a combination of permanent emigration from Goa to cosmopolitan Indian cities (e.g. Bombay, Poona, Bangalore) and foreign countries (e.g. Portugal, the United Kingdom)[67] with the mass immigration of non-Christians from the rest of India since the 20th century.[68] As of 2021, ethnic Goans represent less than 50% of the state's residents.[59]

The Catholics in Goa state and Daman and Diu union territory are served by the Metropolitan Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Goa and Daman, the primatial see of India, in which the titular Patriarchate of the East Indies is vested.[69]

Tourism is generally focused on the coastal areas of Goa, with lower tourist activity inland. In 2010, there were more than 2 million tourists reported to have visited Goa, about 1.2 million of whom were from abroad.[70] As of 2013[update], Goa was a destination of choice for Indian and foreign tourists, particularly Britons and Russians, with limited means who wanted to vacation outside of their countries. The state was hopeful that changes could be made which would attract a more upscale demographic.[71]

Goa stands 6th in the Top 10 Nightlife cities in the world in National Geographic Travel.[72] One of the biggest tourist attractions in Goa is water sports. Beaches like Baga and Calangute offer jet-

skiing, parasailing, banana boat rides, water scooter rides, and more. Patnem beach in Palolem stood third in CNN Travel's Top 20 Beaches in Asia.[73]

Over 450 years of Portuguese rule and the influence of the Portuguese culture presents to visitors to Goa a cultural environment that is not found elsewhere in India. Goa is often described as a fusion between Eastern and Western culture with Portuguese culture having a dominant position in the state be it in its architectural, cultural or social settings. The state of Goa is famous for its excellent beaches, churches, and temples.[74]

Historic sites and neighbourhoods

Goa has one World Heritage Site: the Bom Jesus Basilica[75] with churches and convents of Old Goa. The basilica holds the mortal remains of Francis Xavier, regarded by many Catholics as the patron saint of Goa (the patron of the Archdiocese of Goa is actually Saint Joseph Vaz). These are both Portuguese-era monuments and reflect a strong European character. The relics are taken down for veneration and for public viewing, per the prerogative of the Church in Goa, not every ten or twelve years as popularly thought and propagated. The last exposition was held in 2014.[76]

The Velhas Conquistas regions are known for Goa-Portuguese style architecture. There are many forts in Goa such as Tiracol, Chapora, Corjuem, Aguada, Reis Magos, Nanus, Mormugao, Fort Gaspar Dias and Cabo de Rama.[78]

In many parts of Goa, mansions constructed in the Indo-Portuguese style architecture still stand, though, in some villages, most of them are in a dilapidated condition. Fontainhas in Panaji has been declared a cultural quarter, showcasing the life, architecture and culture of Goa. Influences from the Portuguese era are visible in some of Goa's temples, notably the Shanta Durga Temple, the Mangueshi Temple, the Shri Damodar Temple and the Mahalasa Temple. After 1961, many of these were demolished and reconstructed in the indigenous Indian style.[79]

Goa has three important museums: the Goa State Museum, the Naval Aviation Museum and the National Institute of Oceanography. The aviation museum is one of three in India (the others are in Delhi and Bengaluru). The Goa Science Centre is in Miramar, Panaji.[80] The National Institute of Oceanography, India (NIO) is in Dona Paula.[81] Museum of Goa is a privately owned contemporary art gallery in Pilerne Industrial Estate, near Calangute.[82]

Most of the beauty of Goa is present on the beaches. The coastline of about 103 km has some of the most attractive beaches flanked by the Arabian Sea. The beaches of Goa are counted among the most beautiful in the world.[83][non-primary source needed] Some of the beaches include Anjuna Beach, Baga Beach, Bambolim Beach, Betul Beach, Calangute Beach, Candolim Beach, Cavelossim Beach, Colva Beach, Majorda Beach and Miramar Beach.[citation needed]

Having been a Portuguese territory for over 450 years, Goan culture is an amalgamation of both Eastern and Western styles, with the latter having a more dominant role. The tableau of Goa showcases religious harmony by focusing on the Deepastambha, the Cross, and Ghode Modni followed by a chariot. European royal attire of kings is as much part of Goa's cultural heritage as are regional dances performed depicting a unique blend of different religions and cultures of this State. Prominent local festivals are Christmas, Easter, Carnival, Diwali, Shigmo, Chavoth, Samvatsar Padvo, Dasara etc. The Goan Carnival and Christmas-new year celebrations attract many tourists.[citation needed]

The Gomant Vibhushan Award, the highest civilian honour of the state of Goa, is given annually by the Government of Goa since 2010.[84][85]

Traditional Goan art forms are Dekhnni, Fugdi, Corridinho, Mando, Dulpod and Fado.[86]

Goan Hindus are very fond of Natak, Bhajan and Kirtan.[citation needed] Many famous Indian classical singers hail from Goa, including Mogubai Kurdikar, Kishori Amonkar, Kesarbai Kerkar, Jitendra Abhisheki and Pandit Prabhakar Karekar.[citation needed]

Natak, Tiatr (most popular) and Jagor are the chief forms of Goa's traditional performance arts. Other forms are Ranmale, Dashavatari, Kalo, Goulankala, Lalit, Kala and Rathkala.[citation needed] Stories from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata along with more modern social subjects are narrated with song and dance.[87][88]

"Jagor", the traditional folk dance-drama, is performed by the Hindu Kunbi and Christian Gauda community of Goa, to seek the Divine Grace for protection and prosperity of the crop. The literal meaning of Jagor is "jagran" or wakeful nights. The strong belief is that the night-long performance awakens the deities once a year and they continue to remain awake throughout the year guarding the village.[citation needed]

Perni Jagor is the ancient mask dance – drama of Goa, performed by Perni families, using well crafted and painted wooden masks, depicting various animals, birds, super natural power, deities, demons, and social characters.[citation needed]

Gauda Jagor is an impression of social life, that displays all the existing moods and modes of human characters. It is predominantly based on three main characters, Gharasher, Nikhandar, and Parpati wearing shining dresses and headgears. The performance is accompanied by vibrant tunes of Goan folk instruments like Nagara/Dobe, Ghumat, Madale, and Kansale.[citation needed]

In some places, Jagor performances are held with the participation of both Hindus and the Christian community, whereby, characters are played by Hindus and musical support is provided by Christian artistes.[89]

Tiatr (Teatro) and its artists play a major role in keeping the Konkani language and music alive. Tiatrs are conducted solely in the Roman script of Konkani as it is primarily a Christian community-based act. They are played in scenes with music at regular intervals, the scenes are portrayals of daily life and are known to depict social and cultural scenarios. Tiatrs are regularly held especially on weekends mainly at Kala Academy, Panaji, Pai Tiatrist Hall at Ravindra Bhavan, Margao and most recent shows have also started at the new Ravindra Bhavan, Baina, Vasco. Western Musical Instruments such as Drums, Bass, Keyboards, and Trumpets. are part of the show and most of them are played acoustically.[citation needed] It is one of Goa's few art forms that is renowned across the world with performances popular among Goans in the Middle-East, Americas and Europe.[citation needed]

Konkani cinema is an Indian film industry, where films are made in the Konkani language, which is spoken mainly in the Indian states of Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka and to a smaller extent in Kerala. Konkani films have been produced in Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala.[90]

The first full-length Konkani film was Mogacho Anvddo, released on 24 April 1950, and was produced and directed by A. L. Jerry Braganza, a native of Mapusa, under the banner of ETICA Pictures.[91][92] Hence, 24 April is celebrated as Konkani Film Day.[93] Since 2004, starting from the 35th edition, the International Film Festival of India moved its permanent venue to Goa, it is

annually held in the months of November and December.[94] Konkani film Paltadcho manis has been included in the world's best films of 2009 list.[95]

Konkani films are eligible for the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Konkani. The most commercially successful Konkani film, as of June 2011[update], is O Maria directed by Rajendra Talak.[96] In 2012, the whole new change was adopted in Konkani Cinema by introducing Digital Theatrical Film The Victim directed by Milroy Goes.[97] Some old Konkani films are Sukhachem Sopon, Amchem Noxib, Nirmonn, Mhoji Ghorkarn, Kortubanco Sonvsar, Jivit Amchem Oxem, Mog ani Moipas, Bhuierantlo Munis, Suzanne, Boglantt, Padri and Bhogsonne. Ujwadu is a 2011 Konkani film directed by Kasargod Chinna and produced by KJ Dhananjaya and Anuradha Padiyar.[citation needed]

Rice with fish curry (xit koddi in Konkani) is the staple diet in Goa. Goan cuisine is famous for its rich variety of fish dishes cooked with elaborate recipes. Coconut and coconut oil are widely used in Goan cooking along with chili peppers, spices, and vinegar, used in the Catholic cuisine, giving the food a unique flavor. Goan cuisine is heavily influenced by Portuguese cuisine.[citation needed]

Goan food may be divided into Goan Catholic and Goan Hindu cuisine with each showing very distinct tastes, characteristics, and cooking styles. Pork dishes such as Vindalho, Xacuti, chouriço, and Sorpotel are cooked for major occasions among the Goan Catholics. A mixed vegetable stew, known as Khatkhate, is a very popular dish during the celebrations of festivals, Hindu and Christian alike. Khatkhate contains at least five vegetables, fresh coconut, and special Goan spices that add to the aroma.[citation needed] Sannas, Hitt, are local rice cakes and Polle, Amboli, and Kailoleo are rice pancakes; all are native to Goa. A rich egg-based, multi-layered baked sweet known as bebinca is traditional at Christmas.[citation needed]

The most popular alcoholic beverage in Goa is feni. Cashew feni is made from the double distillation of the fermented fruit juice of the cashew tree, while coconut feni is made from the double distillation of the fermented sap of toddy palms. Urrak is another local liquor prepared from the single distillation of the fermented cashew fruit juice. In fact the bar culture is one of the unique aspects of the Goan villages where a local bar serves as a meeting point for villagers to unwind.[98] Goa also has a rich wine culture due to Portuguese rule.[99][100]

The architecture of Goa is a combination of native Goan, Ottoman and Portuguese styles. Since the Portuguese ruled and governed for four centuries, many churches and houses bear a striking element of the Portuguese style of architecture. Goan Hindu houses do not show any Portuguese influence, though the modern temple architecture is an amalgam of original Goan temple style with Dravidian, Hemadpanthi, Islamic, and Portuguese architecture.[101] The original Goan temple architecture fell into disuse as the temples were demolished by the Portuguese and the Sthapati known as Thavayi in Konkani were converted to Christianity though the wooden work and the Kavi murals can still be seen.[102]

Famous people from Goa encompass various categories, such as architects, artists, engineers, governors, indologists & archaeologists, lawyers & judges, military personnel, models and pageant winners, politicians, individuals in the field of education, scientists and researchers, athletes, writers, editors, and journalists, as well as activists.

Goa is served by almost all television channels available in India. Channels are received through cable in most parts of Goa. In the interior regions, channels are received via satellite dishes. Doordarshan, the national television broadcaster, has two free terrestrial channels on air.[103]

DTH (Direct To Home) TV services are available from Dish TV, Videocon D2H, Tata Sky and DD Direct Plus. The All India Radio is the only radio channel in the state that broadcasts on both FM and AM bands. Two AM channels are broadcast, the primary channel at 1287 kHz and the Vividh Bharati channel at 1539 kHz. AIR's FM channel is called FM Rainbow and is broadcast at 105.4 MHz. A number of private FM radio channels are available, Big FM at 92.7 and Radio Indigo at 91.9 MHz. There is also an educational radio channel, Gyan Vani, run by IGNOU broadcast from Panaji at 107.8 MHz. In 2006, St Xavier's College, Mapusa, became the first college in the state to launch a campus community radio station "Voice of Xavier's".[104]

Major cellular service operators include Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Essar, Idea Cellular (merged with Vodafone in 2018), Telenor, Reliance Infocomm, Tata DoCoMo, BSNL CellOne and Jio.[citation needed]

Local publications include the English language O Heraldo (Goa's oldest, once a Portuguese language paper), The Gomantak Times and The Navhind Times. In addition to these, The Times of India and The Indian Express are also received from Mumbai and Bangalore in the urban areas. The Times of India has recently started publication from Goa itself, serving the local population news directly from the state capital. Among the list of officially accredited newspapers are O Heraldo, The Navhind Times and The Gomantak Times in English; Bhaangar Bhuin in Konkani (Devanagari script); and Tarun Bharat, Gomantak, Navprabha, Goa Times, Sanatan Prabhat, Govadoot and Lokmat (all in Marathi). All are dailies. Other publications in the state include Planet Goa (English, monthly), Goa Today (English, monthly), Goan Observer (English, weekly), Vauraddeancho Ixtt (Roman-script Konkani, weekly) Goa Messenger, Vasco Watch, Gulab (Konkani, monthly), Bimb (Devanagari-script Konkani).[105]

One electronic mailing list that is based in Goa is Goanet.[106][107][better source needed]

Normally other states are fond of cricket but association football is the most popular sport in Goa and is embedded in Goan culture as a result of the Portuguese influence[108] Its origins in the state are traced back to 1883 when the visiting Irish priest Fr. William Robert Lyons established the sport as part of a "Christian education".[108][109] On 22 December 1959 the Associação de Futebol de Goa was formed, which continues to administer the game in the state under the new name Goa Football Association.[108] Goa, along with West Bengal and Kerala[108] is the locus of football in India and is home to many football clubs in the national I-League. The state's football powerhouses include Salgaocar, Dempo, Churchill Brothers, Vasco, Sporting Clube de Goa and FC Goa. The first Unity World Cup was held in Goa in 2014. The state's main football stadium, Fatorda Stadium, is located at Margao and also hosts cricket matches.[110] The state hosted few matches of the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup and several matches of the 2022 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in Fatorda Stadium.[111][112]

A number of Goans have represented India in football and six of them, namely Samir Naik, Climax Lawrence, Brahmanand Sankhwalkar, Bruno Coutinho, Mauricio Afonso and Roberto Fernandes have all captained the national team. Goa has its own state football team and league, the Goa Professional League. It is probably the only state in India where cricket is not considered the most important of all sports. Goan's are avid football fans, particularly of the football teams from Portugal (Benfica, Sporting), and Brazil especially during major football events such as the 'European Cup' and the 'World Cup' championships. The Portuguese footballer Ronaldo and Brazilian Neymar, are revered superstar football players in Goa.[citation needed]

Goa also has its own cricket team. Dilip Sardesai and Shikha Pandey remain the only Goans to date to play international cricket for India.[113] Another Goan cricketer, Suyash Prabhudessai was selected by the Royal Challengers Bangalore for a base price of ₹20 lakh in IPL 2021 and for ₹30 lakh in IPL 2022.[114][115]

India (Goa) is a member of the 'Lusophony Olympic Games' which are hosted every four years in one of the Portuguese CPLP member countries, with 733 athletes from 11 countries. Most of the countries competing are countries that are members of the CPLP (Community of Portuguese Language Countries), but some are countries with significant Portuguese communities or have a history with Portugal. This event is similar in concept to the Commonwealth Games (for members of the Commonwealth of Nations) and the Jeux de la Francophonie (for the Francophone community).[citation needed]

Goa had India's earliest educational institutions built with European support. The Portuguese set up seminaries for religious education and parish schools for elementary education. Founded c. 1542 by Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Paul's College, Goa was a Jesuit school in Old Goa, which later became a college. St Paul's was once the main Jesuit institution in the whole of Asia. It housed the first printing press in India and published the first books in 1556.[citation needed]

Medical education began in 1801 with the offering of regular medical courses at the Royal and Military Hospital in the old City of Goa. Built-in 1842 as the Escola Médico-Cirúrgica de (Nova) Goa (Medical-Surgical School of Goa), Goa Medical College is one of Asia's oldest medical colleges and has one of the oldest medical libraries (since 1845).[116] It houses the largest hospital in Goa and continues to provide medical training to this day.[citation needed]

According to the 2011 census, Goa has a literacy rate of 87%, with 90% of males and 84% of females being literate.[117] Each taluka is made up of villages, each having a school run by the government. Private schools are preferred over government-run schools. All schools come under the Goa Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, whose syllabus is prescribed by the state education department. There are also a few schools that subscribe to the all-India ICSE syllabus or the NIOS syllabus. Most students in Goa complete their high school with English as the medium of instruction. Most primary schools, however, use Konkani and Marathi (in private, but government-aided schools). As is the case in most of India, enrolment for vernacular media has seen a fall in numbers in favour of English medium education. Per a report published in The Times of India, 84% of Goan primary schools were run without an administrative head.[118]

Some notable schools in Goa include Sharada Mandir School in Miramar, Loyola High School in Margao and The King's School in São José de Areal. After ten years of schooling, students join a Higher Secondary school, which offers courses in popular streams such as Science, Arts, Law, and Commerce. A student may also opt for a course in vocational studies. Additionally, they may join three-year diploma courses. Two years of college is followed by a professional degree programme. Goa University, the sole university in Goa, is located in Taleigão and most Goan colleges are affiliated with it.[citation needed]

There are six engineering colleges in the state. Goa Engineering College and National Institute of Technology Goa are government-funded colleges whereas the private engineering colleges include Don Bosco College of Engineering at Fatorda, Shree Rayeshwar Institute of Engineering and Information Technology at Shiroda, Agnel Institute of Technology, and Design (AITD), Assagao, Bardez and Padre Conceicao College of Engineering at Verna. In 2004, BITS Pilani one of the premier institutes in India, inaugurated its second campus, the BITS Pilani Goa Campus, at Zuarinagar near

Dabolim. The Indian Institute of Technology Goa (IIT Goa) began functioning from its temporary campus, located in Goa Engineering College since 2016. The site for permanent campus was finalised in Cotali, Sanguem.[119]

There are colleges offering pharmacy, architecture and dentistry along with numerous private colleges offering law, arts, commerce and science. There are also two National Oceanographic Science related centres: the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research in Vasco da Gama and the National Institute of Oceanography in Dona Paula.[citation needed] Goa Institute of Management located at Sanquelim, near Panaji is one of India's premier business schools.[citation needed] In addition to the engineering colleges, there are government polytechnic institutions in Panaji, Bicholim and Curchorem, and aided institutions like Father Agnel Polytechnic in Verna and the Institute of Shipbuilding Technology in Vasco da Gama which impart technical and vocational training.[120]

Other colleges in Goa include Shri Damodar College of Commerce and Economics, V.V.M.'s R.M. Salgaocar Higher Secondary School in Margao, G.V.M.'s S.N.J.A higher secondary school, Don Bosco College, D.M.'s College of Arts, Science and Commerce, St Xavier's College, Carmel College, The Parvatibai Chowgule College, Dhemphe College, Damodar College, M. E. S. College of Arts & Commerce, S. S. Samiti's Higher Secondary School of Science and Rosary College of Commerce & Arts. As the result of renewed interest in the Portuguese language and culture, Portuguese at all levels of instruction is offered in many schools in Goa, largely private ones. In some cases, Goan students do student exchange programs in Portugal.[citation needed]

Goa is served by two international Airports. Goa International Airport, is a civil enclave at INS Hansa, a Naval airfield[121] located at Dabolim, near Vasco da Gama while the Manohar International Airport is located in the North at Mopa.[122]

Within five months of its inception, Mopa airport began handling 30 per cent of all air traffic of Goa.[123]

The airports cater to scheduled domestic and international air services, with the new airport having started international operations from March 2023.[124]

Goa has scheduled international connections to Doha, Dubai, Muscat, Sharjah and Kuwait in the Middle East by airlines like Air Arabia, Air India, GoAir, IndiGo, Oman Air, SpiceJet and Qatar Airways.

Goa's public transport largely consists of privately operated buses linking the major towns to rural areas. Government-run buses, maintained by the Kadamba Transport Corporation, link major routes (like the Panaji–Margao route) and some remote parts of the state. The Corporation owns 15 bus stands, 4 depots and one Central workshop at Porvorim and a Head Office at Porvorim.[125] In large towns such as Panaji and Margao, intra-city buses operate. However, public transport in Goa is less developed, and residents depend heavily on their own transportation, usually motorised two-wheelers and small family cars.[citation needed]

Goa has four National Highways passing through it. NH-66 (ex NH-17) runs along India's west coast and links Goa to Mumbai in the north and Mangalore to the south. NH-4A running across the state connects the capital Panaji to Belgaum in east, linking Goa to cities in the Deccan. The NH-366 (ex NH-17A) connects NH-66 to Mormugao Port from Cortalim. The new NH-566 (ex NH-17B) is a four-lane highway connecting Mormugao Port to NH-66 at Verna via Dabolim Airport, primarily built to ease pressure on the NH-366 for traffic to Dabolim Airport and Vasco da Gama. NH-768 (ex NH-4A) links Panaji and Ponda to Belgaum and NH-4. Goa has a total of 224 km (139 mi) of national

highways, 232 km (144 mi) of state highway and 815 kilometres (506 miles) of district highway. National Highways in Goa are among the narrowest in the country and will remain so for the foreseeable future, as the state government has received an exemption that allows narrow national highways. In Kerala, highways are 45 metres (148 feet) wide. In other states National Highways are grade separated highways 60 metres (200 feet) wide with a minimum of four lanes, as well as 6 or 8 lane access-controlled expressways.[126][127]

Hired forms of transport include unmetered taxis and, in urban areas, auto rickshaws. Another form of transportation in Goa is the motorcycle taxi, operated by drivers who are locally called "pilots". These vehicles transport a single pillion rider, at fares that are usually negotiated. Other than buses, "pilots" tend to be the cheapest mode of transport.[128] River crossings in Goa are serviced by flat-bottomed ferry boats, operated by the river navigation department.[citation needed]

Goa will get two new expressways in the coming years, which will connect the state and will enhance connectivity and commute with the rest of the country. They are as follows:

Goa has two rail lines – one run by the South Western Railway and the other by the Konkan Railway. The line run by the South Western Railway was built during the colonial era linking the port town of Vasco da Gama, Goa with Belgaum, Hubli, Karnataka via Margao. The Konkan Railway line, which was built during the 1990s, runs parallel to the coast connecting major cities on the western coast.[citation needed]

In 2018, a metro rail was planned by the NITI Aayog, linking the capital city of Panaji. In the future, it would be extended from South Goa till the coastal city of Karwar in Karnataka, close to the Kanataka-Goa border.[132]

The Mormugao Port Trust near the city of Vasco handles mineral ore, petroleum, coal, and international containers. Much of the shipments consist of minerals and ores from Goa's hinterland. Panaji, which is on the banks of the Mandovi, has a minor port, which used to handle passengers steamers between Goa and Mumbai till the late 1980s. There was also a short-lived catamaran service linking Mumbai and Panaji operated by Damania Shipping in the 1990s.[citation needed]

Text extracted from URL 47:

The culture of Kerala has developed over the past millennia, influences from other parts of India and abroad.[1][2] It is defined by its antiquity and the organic continuity sustained by the Malayali people.[3] Modern Kerala society took shape owing to migrations from different parts of India and abroad throughout Classical Antiquity.[2][4][5]

Kerala traces its non-prehistoric cultural genesis to its membership (around the AD 3rd century) in a vaguely defined historical region known as Thamizhagom – a land defined by a common Tamil culture and encompassing the Chera, Chola, and Pandya kingdoms. At that time, the music, dance, language (first Dravida Bhasha – "Dravidian language (possibly Proto-Tamil)"[6] – then Tamil), and Sangam (a vast corpus of Tamil literature composed between 1,500–2,000 years ago) found in Kerala were all similar to that found in the rest of Thamizhagom (today's Tamil Nadu). The culture of Kerala evolved through the Sanskritization of Dravidian ethos, revivalism of religious movements and reform movements against caste discrimination.[7][8][9] Kerala showcases a culture unique to itself developed through accommodation, acculturation and assimilation of various faculties of civilized lifestyle.

Native traditions of classical performing arts include koodiyattom, a form of Sanskrit drama or theatre and a UNESCO-designated Human Heritage Art. Kathakali (from *katerumbu* ("story") and *kali* ("performance")) is a 500-year-old form of dance-drama that interprets ancient epics; a popularized offshoot of kathakali is Kerala natanam (developed in the 20th century by dancer Guru Gopinath). Meanwhile, koothu is a more light-hearted performance mode, akin to modern stand-up comedy; an ancient art originally confined to temple sanctuaries, it was later popularized by Mani Madhava Chakyar. Other Keralite performing arts include mohiniyaattam ("dance of the enchantress"), which is a type of graceful choreographed dance performed by women and accompanied by musical vocalizations. Thullal, Thirayattam, padayani, and theyyam are other important Keralite performing arts. Thirayattam is one of the most outstanding Ethnic art of Kerala. This vibrant ritualistic annual performing art form enacted in courtyards of "Kaavukal"(sacred groves) and village shrine.[10]

Kerala also has several tribal and folk art forms. For example, Kummattikali is the famous colorful mask-dance of South Malabar, performed during the festival of Onam. The Kannyar Kali dances (also known as Desathukali) are fast-moving, militant dances attuned to rhythmic devotional folk songs and asuravadyas. Also important are various performance genres that are Islam- or Christianity-themed. These include oppana, which is widely popular among Keralite Muslims and is native to Malabar. Oppana incorporates group dance accompanied by the beat of rhythmic hand-clapping and Vishal vocalizations.

Margam Kali is one of the ancient round group dance of Kerala practiced by Saint Thomas Christians.[11]

However, many of these native art forms largely play to tourists or at youth festivals and are not as popular among ordinary Keralites. Thus, more contemporary forms – including those heavily based on the use of often risqué and politically incorrect mimicry and parody – have gained considerable mass appeal in recent years.[citation needed] Indeed, contemporary artists often use such modes to mock socioeconomic elites. In recent decades, Malayalam cinema, yet another mode of widely popular artistic expression, have provided a distinct and indigenous Keralite alternative to both Bollywood and Hollywood.

The ragas and talas of lyrical and devotional Carnatic music – another native product of South India – dominates Keralite classical musical genres. Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma, a 19th-century king of Travancore and patron and composer of music, was instrumental in popularising carnatic music in early Kerala.[12][13] Additionally, Kerala has its own native music system, sopanam, which is a lugubrious and step-by-step rendition of raga-based songs. It is Sopanam, for example, that provides the background music used in Kathakali. The wider traditional music of Kerala also includes melam (including the paandi and panchari variants), as style of percussive music performed at temple-centered festivals using an instrument known as the chenda. Up to 150 musicians may comprise the ensembles staging a given performance; each performance, in turn, may last up to four hours. Panchavadyam is a differing type of percussion ensemble consisting of five types of percussion instruments; these can be utilised by up to one hundred artists in certain major festivals. In addition to these, percussive music is also associated with various uniquely Keralite folk arts forms. Lastly, the popular music of Kerala – as in the rest of India – is dominated by the filmi music of Indian cinema.

The most remembered name in Kerala music culture is of Great Indian musician Sri K. J. Yesudas.

The Sangam literature can be considered as the ancient predecessor of Malayalam.[14] Malayalam literature is ancient in origin, and includes such figures as the 14th century Niranam poets (Madhava Panikkar, Sankara Panikkar and Rama Panikkar), whose works mark the dawn of both modern

Malayalam language and indigenous Keralite poetry. Some linguists claim that an inscription found from Edakkal Caves, Wayanad, which belongs to 3rd century CE (approximately 1,800 years old), is the oldest available inscription in Malayalam, as they contain two modern Malayalam words, *Ee* (This) and *Pazhama* (Old), those are not found even in the Oldest form of Tamil.[15] Sangam works can be considered as the ancient predecessor of Malayalam.[14] The origin of Malayalam calendar dates back to year 825 CE.[16][17][18] It is generally agreed that the Quilon Syrian copper plates of 849/850 CE is the available oldest inscription written in Old Malayalam. For the first 600 years of Malayalam calendar, the literature mainly consisted of the oral Ballads such as *Vadakkan Pattukal* (Northern Songs) in North Malabar and *Thekkan Pattukal* (Southern songs) in Southern Travancore.[14] The earliest known literary works in Malayalam are *Ramacharitham* and *Thirunizhalmala*, two epic poems written in Old Malayalam. Malayalam literature has been presented with 6 Jnanapith awards, the second-most for any Dravidian language and the third-highest for any Indian language.[19][20]

Designated a "Classical Language in India" in 2013,[21] it developed into the current form mainly by the influence of the poets *Cherusseri Namboothiri* (Born near Kannur),[22][23] *Thunchaththu Ezhuthachan* (Born near Tirur),[23] and *Poonthanam Nambudiri* (Born near Perinthalmanna),[23][24] in the 15th and the 16th centuries of Common Era.[23][25] *Kunchan Nambiar*, a Palakkad-based poet also significantly influenced the growth of modern Malayalam literature in its early form, through a new literary branch called *Thullal*. [23] The prose literature, criticism, and Malayalam journalism, began following the latter half of 18th century CE. The first travelogue in any Indian language is the Malayalam *Varthamanappusthakam*, written by *Paremmakkal Thoma Kathanar* in 1785.[26][27]

The *Bharathappuzha* river, also known as *River Ponnani*, and its tributaries, have played a major role in the development of modern Malayalam Literature.[23] The words used in many of the Arabi Malayalam works those date back to 16th-17th centuries of Common Era are also very closer to the modern Malayalam language.[23][28] *Unnayi Variyar* of 17th-18th centuries, based at *Thrissur*, played a major role in the development of *Attakkatha* Literature.[23] The words used in many of the Arabi Malayalam works those date back to 16th-17th centuries of Common Era are also very closer to the modern Malayalam language.[23][28] The Triumvirate of poets (*Kavithrayam*: *Kumaran Asan*, *Vallathol Narayana Menon* and *Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer*) are recognized for moving keralian poetry away from archaic sophistry and metaphysics and towards a more lyrical mode. The modern Malayalam grammar is based on the book *Kerala Panineeyam* written by *A. R. Raja Raja Varma* in late 19th century CE.[29]

In the second half of the 20th century, Jnanpith winning poets and writers like *G. Sankara Kurup*, *S. K. Pottekkatt*, *Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai*, *M. T. Vasudevan Nair*, *O. N. V. Kurup*, and *Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri*, had made valuable contributions to the modern Malayalam literature.[30][31][32][33][34] Later, writers like *O. V. Vijayan*, *Kamaladas*, *M. Mukundan*, *Arundhati Roy*, and *Vaikom Muhammed Basheer*, have gained international recognition.[35][36][37][38] Poets like *Changampuzha*, *Uroob*, *Edasseri Govindan Nair*, *M. T. Vasudevan Nair*, *Kamala Surayya*, *Pallathu Raman*, and *Edappally Raghavan Pillai* also contributed to bring Malayalam poetry to the common man. Later, such contemporary writers as Booker Prize winner *Arundhati Roy* (whose 1996 semi-autobiographical bestseller *The God of Small Things* is set in the Kottayam town of *Ayemenem*) have garnered international recognition. From 1970 to early 1990s, a lot of Malayalam Novelists and story writers contributed to the Literature of Kerala. The contributions from *Thakazhi Sivashankara Pillai*,

Vaikom Muhammed Basheer *P. Kesavadev*, *Uroob*, *OV Vijayan*, *T Padmanabhan*, *Sethu*, *Perumbadavam Sreedharan*, *Kovilan*, *M. Mukundan*, *Kakkanadan*, *Anand* and *Paul Zacharia*, have

been remarkable. Significant contributions from poets and songwriters such as Vayalar Rama Varma, P. Bhaskaran and ONV Kurup have influenced contemporary literature. Critics such as Kuttikrishna Marar and M.P. Paul till the sixties and later, M Krishnan Nair, S. Gupthan Nair, M. K. Sanu, Sukumar Azhikode, K.P. Appan, Narendra Prasad and M. Leelavathy have added value by providing critical analysis of the books written during the recent past. The writers like Kavalam Narayana Panicker have contributed much to Malayalam drama.[14] Contemporary Malayalam literature deals with social, political, and economic life context. The tendency of the modern poetry is often towards political radicalism.[39]

Arabi Malayalam (also called Mappila Malayalam[40][41] and Moplah Malayalam) was the traditional Dravidian language[42] of the Mappila Muslim community in Malabar Coast. The poets like Moyinkutty Vaidyar and Pulikkottil Hyder have made notable contributions to the Mappila songs, which is a genre of the Arabi Malayalam literature.[43][44] The Arabi Malayalam script, otherwise known as the Ponnani script,[45][46][47] is a writing system – a variant form of the Arabic script with special orthographic features – which was developed during the early medieval period and used to write Arabi Malayalam until the early 20th century CE.[48][49] Though the script originated and developed in Kerala, today it is predominantly used in Malaysia and Singapore by the migrant Muslim community.[50][51]

The folklore of Kerala includes elements from the traditional lifestyle of the people of Kerala. The traditional beliefs, customs, rituals etc. are reflected in the folkart and songs of Kerala.

Kerala has a rich tradition of Folklore.[52] Folklore in this region is a spontaneous expression of human behavior and thoughts. Generally speaking, Folklore could be defined as the lore of the common people who had been marginalized during the reign of feudal Kings. The Keralites have their culture and lore which were mostly part of agricultural. Sowing, planting of nharu (seedling), clearing out the weeds, harvests etc. are the different stages of agriculture which have their typical rituals. Njattupattu are songs sung during the seedling time. Numerous songs and performing arts are accompanied with them. Kanyar Kali, Padayani, Mudi yettu, Thirayattam, Malavaiyattam, Theyyam, Kothamooriyattam, Nira, Puthari, etc. are some of the ritual folklore of Kerala. It was under the rule of Kolathiris, the Kings of Kolathunadu, and they codified the rituals, beliefs, taboos and folk performing arts. Even the dates of specific fertility rituals and folk performances were decided by the Kolathiris of which many are continuing even today. The Theyyam festivals, even now, are conducted as per the dates once fixed by the King.

The folk arts of Kerala can be broadly classified under two heads:[53] ritualistic and non-ritualistic. Ritualistic folk arts can be further divided into two: devotional and magical.

Devotional folk arts are performed to propitiate a particular God or Goddess. Theyyam, thirayattam, poothamthira, kanyarkali, kummatti, etc., are some of them. Forms like panappattu and thottampattu are composed in the form of songs. In kolkali, margamkali, daffumuttukkali, etc., the ritualistic element is not very strong. Magical folk arts seek to win general prosperity for a community or exorcise evil spirits or to beget children. Gandharvas and nagas are worshipped in order to win these favours. The magical folk arts include pambin thullal, pooppadathullal, kolam thullal, malayankettu, etc.

(Malayalam: ഒണം) Onam is a harvest festival celebrated extravagantly by the people of Kerala, India. It is also the state festival of Kerala with State holidays on 4 days starting from Onam Eve (Uthradom) to the 4th Onam Day. Onam Festival falls during the Malayalam month of Chingam (Aug – Sep) and marks the commemoration of Vamana avatara of Vishnu and the subsequent

homecoming of King Mahabali, who Malayalees consider to be just and fair King who was exiled to the underworld. Onam is reminiscent of Kerala's agrarian past, as it is considered to be a harvest festival. It is one of the festivals celebrated with the most number of cultural elements. Some of them are Vallam Kali, Pulikkali, Pookkalam, Onatthappan, Thumbi Thullal, Onavillu, Kazhchakkula, Onapottan, Atthachamayame etc.

Another distinct feature of the festival is 'Onam Sadhya' (Onam Feast) and consists of numerous dishes served on a banana leaf and 'Onam Kodi' (new dress for the special occasion). Usual the Onam Sadhya consist of numerous side dishes along with rice and Onam Kodi is traditional dress. Both are eagerly observed by the youth with excitement.

The people of Kerala are very fond of politics. Majority of keralites belong to either one of the political alliances namely United Democratic Front (UDF) or Left Democratic Front (LDF). Regional parties such as Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), various factions of Kerala Congress, various factions of Revolutionary Socialist Party and a host of smaller parties add spice to Kerala political scene. Religious leaders have high influence in Kerala political movements. For many Keralites it is nostalgic to remember the political discussions and debates they had done in the *chaya kada* (local tea shops where youngsters go to sip a cup and read newspapers) in their younger ages.

Kerala also has its own indigenous form of martial art – Kalarippayattu, derived from the words *kalari* ("place", "threshing floor", or "battlefield") and *payattu* ("exercise" or "practice"). Influenced by both Kerala's Brahminical past and Ayurvedic medicine, kalaripayattu is attributed by oral tradition to Parasurama. After some two centuries of suppression by British colonial authorities, it is now experiencing strong comeback among Keralites while also steadily gaining worldwide attention. Other popular ritual arts include *theyyam* and *poorakkali* – these originate from northern Malabar, which is the northernmost part of Kerala. Nevertheless, these have in modern times been largely supplanted by more popular sports such as cricket, kabaddi, soccer, badminton, and others. 'Kochi Tuskers Kerala' playing in the Indian Premier League (IPL) is from Kerala. *Kolkkali* is a folk art performed in Malabar region of Kerala, India. The dance performers move in a circle, striking small sticks and keeping rhythm with special steps.[54] Kerala is currently the home of the football clubs Kerala Blasters and Gokulam Kerala FC. Viva Kerala and FC Kochin were the other two major football clubs from the state in the past.

Kerala also has an indigenous ancient solar calendar – the Malayalam calendar – which is used in various communities primarily for timing agricultural and religious activities.

The elephants are an integral part of the culture and daily life in Kerala. These Indian elephants are given a prestigious place in the state's culture. They are often christened names by which they're known across the entire state. Elephants in Kerala are often referred to as the 'sons of the *sahya*' and are indispensable for temple festivals. The elephant is the state animal of Kerala and is featured on the emblem of the Government of Kerala.

Sarpa Kavu (meaning Sacred Grove of the Serpent) is a typically small traditional grove of trees seen in the Kerala state of South India. These pristine groves usually have representations of several *Naga Devatas* (serpent gods), which were worshipped by the joint families or *taravads*. This was part of *Nagaradhana* (snake worship) which was prevalent among Keralites during past centuries. It had been practised by nearly every Hindu community in Kerala ranging from Nambudiri Brahmins to tribal communities.

Kerala has a large number of temples. The temples celebrate annual festivals which are not only unique to the region but sometimes have features that are unique to each temple. Each temple

describes each interesting history behind its creation. In the Malabar, distinct art form called Theyyam attract tourists, and mini carnivals are also held along with temple festivals. Temple festivals are taken up with great pride by the residents and patrons of the temple and celebrated with much ado. Thrissur pooram is one of the most popular among the temple festivals.

Text extracted from URL 48:

Kerala (English: /ˈkərələ/ KERR-ə-lə), called Keralam in Malayalam (Malayalam: [ke:re[ɐm] ⓘ), is a state on the Malabar Coast of India.[15] It was formed on 1 November 1956, following the passage of the States Reorganisation Act, by combining Malayalam-speaking regions of the erstwhile regions of Cochin, Malabar, South Canara, and Travancore.[16][17] Spread over 38,863 km² (15,005 sq mi), Kerala is the 21st largest Indian state by area. It is bordered by Karnataka to the north and northeast, Tamil Nadu to the east and south, and the Lakshadweep Sea[18] to the west. With 33 million inhabitants as per the 2011 census, Kerala is the 13th-largest Indian state by population. It is divided into 14 districts with the capital being Thiruvananthapuram. Malayalam is the most widely spoken language and is also the official language of the state.[19]

The Chera dynasty was the first prominent kingdom based in Kerala. The Ay kingdom in the deep south and the Ezhimala kingdom in the north formed the other kingdoms in the early years of the Common Era (CE). The region had been a prominent spice exporter since 3000 BCE.[20] The region's prominence in trade was noted in the works of Pliny as well as the Periplus around 100 CE. In the 15th century, the spice trade attracted Portuguese traders to Kerala, and paved the way for European colonisation of India. At the time of Indian independence movement in the early 20th century, there were two major princely states in Kerala: Travancore and Cochin. They united to form the state of Thiru-Kochi in 1949. The Malabar region, in the northern part of Kerala, had been a part of the Madras province of British India, which later became a part of the Madras State post-independence. After the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, the modern-day state of Kerala was formed by merging the Malabar district of Madras State (excluding Gudalur taluk of Nilgiris district, Lakshadweep Islands, Topslip, the Attappadi Forest east of Anakatti), the taluk of Kasaragod (now Kasaragod District) in South Canara, and the erstwhile state of Thiru-Kochi (excluding four southern taluks of Kanyakumari district, and Shenkottai taluks).[17]

Kerala has the lowest positive population growth rate in India, 3.44%; the highest Human Development Index (HDI), 0.784 in 2018 (0.712 in 2015); the highest literacy rate, 96.2% in the 2018 literacy survey conducted by the National Statistical Office, India;[10] the highest life expectancy, 77.3 years; and the highest sex ratio, 1,084 women per 1,000 men. Kerala is the least impoverished state in India according to NITI Aayog's Sustainable Development Goals dashboard and Reserve Bank of India's 'Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy'.[21][22] Kerala is the second-most urbanised major state in the country with 47.7% urban population according to the 2011 Census of India.[23] The state topped in the country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals according to the annual report of NITI Aayog published in 2019.[24] The state has the highest media exposure in India with newspapers publishing in nine languages, mainly Malayalam and sometimes English. Hinduism is practised by more than half of the population, followed by Islam and Christianity.

The economy of Kerala is the 8th-largest in India with ₹8.55 trillion (US\$110 billion) in gross state domestic product (GSDP) and a per capita net state domestic product of ₹222,000 (US\$2,800).[25] The tertiary sector contributes around 65% to state's GSVA, while the primary sector contributes

only 8%.[26] The state has witnessed significant emigration, especially to the Arab states of the Persian Gulf during the Gulf Boom of the 1970s and early 1980s, and its economy depends significantly on remittances from a large Malayali expatriate community. The production of pepper and natural rubber contributes significantly to the total national output. In the agricultural sector, coconut, tea, coffee, cashew and spices are important. The state is situated between Arabian Sea to the west and Western Ghats mountain ranges to the east. The state's coastline extends for 595 kilometres (370 mi), and around 1.1 million people in the state are dependent on the fishery industry, which contributes 3% to the state's income. Named as one of the ten paradises of the world by National Geographic Traveler,[27] Kerala is one of the prominent tourist destinations of India, with coconut-lined sandy beaches, backwaters, hill stations, Ayurvedic tourism and tropical greenery as its major attractions.

The word Kerala is first recorded as Keralaputo ('son of Chera [s]') in a 3rd-century-BCE rock inscription left by the Maurya emperor Ashoka (274–237 BCE), one of his edicts pertaining to welfare.[28] At that time, one of three states in the region was called Cheralam in Classical Tamil: Chera and Kera are variants of the same word.[29] The word Cheral refers to the oldest known dynasty of Kerala kings and is derived from the Proto-Tamil-Malayalam word for 'lake'.[30] Keralam may stem from the Classical Tamil cherive-alam 'declivity of a hill or a mountain slope'[31] or chera alam 'land of the Cheras'.

One folk etymology derives Kerala from the Malayalam word kera 'coconut tree' and alam 'land'; thus, 'land of coconuts',[32] which is a nickname for the state used by locals due to the abundance of coconut trees.[33]

The earliest Sanskrit text to mention Kerala as Cherapadha is the late Vedic text Aitareya Aranyaka. Kerala is also mentioned in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the two Hindu epics.[34] The Skanda Purana mentions the ecclesiastical office of the Thachudaya Kaimal who is referred to as Manikkam Keralar, synonymous with the deity of the Koodalmanikyam temple.[35][36] The Greco-Roman trade map Periplus Maris Erythraei refers to Kerala as Celobotra.[37]

Kerala was alternatively called Malabar in the foreign trade circles. Earlier, the term Malabar had also been used to denote Tulu Nadu and Kanyakumari which lie contiguous to Kerala on the southwestern coast of India, in addition to the modern state of Kerala.[38][39] The people of Malabar were known as Malabars. Until the arrival of the East India Company, the term Malabar was used as a general name for Kerala, along with the term Kerala.[16] From the time of Cosmas Indicopleustes (6th century CE) itself, the Arab sailors used to call Kerala as Male. The first element of the name, however, is attested already in the Topography written by Cosmas Indicopleustes. This mentions a pepper emporium called Male, which clearly gave its name to Malabar ('the country of Male'). The name Male is thought to come from the Malayalam word Mala ('hill').[40][41] Al-Biruni (973–1048 CE) is the first known writer to call this country Malabar.[16] Authors such as Ibn Khordadbeh and Al-Baladhuri mention Malabar ports in their works.[42] The Arab writers had called this place Malibar, Manibar, Mulibar, and Munibar. Malabar is reminiscent of the word Malanad which means the land of hills.[43] According to William Logan, the word Malabar comes from a combination of the Malayalam word Mala (hill) and the Persian/Arabic word Barr (country/continent).[43]

According to the Sangam classic Purananuru, the Chera king Senkuttuvan conquered the lands between Kanyakumari and the Himalayas.[44] Lacking worthy enemies, he besieged the sea by throwing his spear into it.[44][45] According to the 17th-century Hindu mythology work Keralolpathi, the lands of Kerala were recovered from the sea by the axe-wielding warrior sage Parasurama, the

sixth avatar of Vishnu (hence, Kerala is also called Parasurama Kshetram 'The Land of Parasurama' in Hindu mythology).[46] Parasurama threw his axe across the sea, and the water receded as far as it reached. According to the legendary account, this new area of land extended from Gokarna to Kanyakumari.[47] The land which rose from sea was filled with salt and unsuitable for habitation; so Parasurama invoked the Snake King Vasuki, who spat holy poison and converted the soil into fertile lush green land. Out of respect, Vasuki and all snakes were appointed as protectors and guardians of the land. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar theorised, that Senguttuvan may have been inspired by the Parasurama legendary account, which was brought by early Aryan settlers.[48]

Another much earlier Puranic character associated with Kerala is Mahabali, an Asura and a prototypical just king, who ruled the earth from Kerala. He won the war against the Devas, driving them into exile. The Devas pleaded before Lord Vishnu, who took his fifth incarnation as Vamana and pushed Mahabali down to netherworld to placate the Devas. There is a belief that, once a year during the Onam festival, Mahabali returns to Kerala.[49] The Matsya Purana, among the oldest of the 18 Puranas,[50][51] uses the Malaya Mountains of Kerala (and Tamil Nadu) as the setting for the story of Matsya, the first incarnation of Vishnu, and Manu, the first man and the king of the region.[52][53]

Ophir, a port or region mentioned in the Bible,[54] famous for its wealth, is often identified with some coastal areas of Kerala. According to the account, the King Solomon received a cargo from Ophir every three years (1 Kings 10:22) which consisted of gold, silver, sandalwood, pearls, ivory, apes, and peacocks.[55] A Dictionary of the Bible by Sir William Smith, published in 1863,[56] notes the Hebrew word for parrot Thukki, derived from the Classical Tamil for peacock Thogkai and Cingalese Tokei,[57] joins other Classical Tamil words for ivory, cotton-cloth and apes preserved in the Hebrew Bible. This theory of Ophir's location in Tamilakam is further supported by other historians.[58][59][60][61] The most likely location on the coast of Kerala conjectured to be Ophir is Poovar in Thiruvananthapuram District (though some Indian scholars also suggest Beypore as possible location).[62][63] The Books of Kings and Chronicles tell of a joint expedition to Ophir by King Solomon and the Tyrian king Hiram I from Ezion-Geber, a port on the Red Sea, that brought back large amounts of gold, precious stones and 'algum wood' and of a later failed expedition by king Jehoshaphat of Judah.[i] The famous 'gold of Ophir' is referenced in several other books of the Hebrew Bible.[ii] The legend of Cheraman Perumals is the medieval tradition associated with the Cheraman Perumals (literally the Chera kings) of Kerala.[64] The validity of the legend as a source of history once generated much debate among South Indian historians.[65] The legend was used by Kerala chieftdoms for the legitimation of their rule (most of the major chiefly houses in medieval Kerala traced its origin back to the legendary allocation by the Perumal).[66][67] According to the legend, Rayar, the overlord of the Cheraman Perumal in a country east of the Ghats, invaded Kerala during the rule of the last Perumal. To drive back the invading forces the Perumal summoned the militia of his chieftains (like Udaya Varman Kolathiri, Manichchan, and Vikkiran of Eranad). The Cheraman Perumal was assured by the Eradis (chief of Eranad) that they would take a fort established by the Rayar.[68] The battle lasted for three days and the Rayar eventually evacuated his fort (and it was seized by the Perumal's troops).[68] Then the last Cheraman Perumal divided Kerala or Chera kingdom among his chieftains and disappeared mysteriously. The Kerala people never more heard any tidings of him.[64][66][67] The Eradis of Nediyruppu, who later came to be known as the Zamorins of Kozhikode, who were left out in cold during allocation of the land, was granted the Cheraman Perumal's sword (with the permission to "die, and kill, and seize").[67][68]

According to the Cheraman Juma Mosque and some other narratives,[69][70] "Once a Cheraman Perumal probably named Ravi Varma[70] was walking with his queen in the palace, when he

witnessed the splitting of the moon. Shocked by this, he asked his astronomers to note down the exact time of the splitting. Then, when some Arab merchants visited his palace, he asked them about this incident. Their answers led the King to Mecca, where he met the Islamic prophet Muhammad and converted to Islam.[71][72][73] It is assumed that the first recorded version of this legend is an Arabic manuscript of anonymous authorship known as Qissat Shakarwati Farmad.[74] The 16th century Arabic work Tuhfat Ul Mujahideen authored by Zainuddin Makhdoom II of Ponnani, as well as the medieval Malayalam work Keralolpathi, also mention about the departure of last Cheraman Perumal of Kerala into Mecca.[75][76]

However, S. N. Sadasivan contends in A Social History of India that Kalimanja, the king of the Maldives, was the one who converted to Islam. The story of Tajuddeen in the Cochin Gazetteer may have originated because Mali, as it was known to sailors at the time, was mistaken for Malabar (Kerala).[77]

A substantial portion of Kerala including the western coastal lowlands and the plains of the midland may have been under the sea in ancient times. Marine fossils have been found in an area near Changanassery, thus supporting the hypothesis.[78] Pre-historical archaeological findings include dolmens of the Neolithic era in the Marayur area of the Idukki district, which lie on the eastern highland made by Western Ghats. They are locally known as "muniyara", derived from muni (hermit or sage) and ara (dolmen).[79] Rock engravings in the Edakkal Caves, in Wayanad date back to the Neolithic era around 6000 BCE.[80][81] Archaeological studies have identified Mesolithic, Neolithic and Megalithic sites in Kerala.[82] The studies point to the development of ancient Kerala society and its culture beginning from the Paleolithic Age, through the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Megalithic Ages.[83] Foreign cultural contacts have assisted this cultural formation;[84] historians suggest a possible relationship with Indus Valley civilisation during the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age.[85]

Kerala has been a major spice exporter since 3000 BCE, according to Sumerian records and it is still referred to as the "Garden of Spices" or as the "Spice Garden of India".[86][87]: 79 Kerala's spices attracted ancient Arabs, Babylonians, Assyrians and Egyptians to the Malabar Coast in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE. Phoenicians established trade with Kerala during this period.[88] Arabs and Phoenicians were the first to enter Malabar Coast to trade Spices.[88] The Arabs on the coasts of Yemen, Oman, and the Persian Gulf, must have made the first long voyage to Kerala and other eastern countries.[88] They must have brought the Cinnamon of Kerala to the Middle East.[88] The Greek historian Herodotus (5th century BCE) records that in his time the cinnamon spice industry was monopolised by the Egyptians and the Phoenicians.[88]

The Land of Keralaputra was one of the four independent kingdoms in southern India during Ashoka's time, the others being Chola, Pandya, and Satiyaputra.[89] Scholars hold that Keralaputra is an alternate name of the Cheras, the first dominant dynasty who ruled Kerala, and had its capital at Karur.[90][91] These territories once shared a common language and culture, within an area known as Tamilakam.[92] The region around Coimbatore was ruled by the Cheras during Sangam period between 1st and the 4th centuries CE and it served as the eastern entrance to the Palakkad Gap, the principal trade route between the Malabar Coast and Tamil Nadu.[93] Along with the Ay kingdom in the south and the Ezhimala kingdom in the north, the Cheras formed the ruling kingdoms of Kerala in the early years of the Common Era (CE).[94] It is noted in Sangam literature that the Chera king Uthiyan Cheralathan ruled most of modern Kerala from his capital in Kuttanad,[95][96] and controlled the port of Muziris, but its southern tip was in the kingdom of Pandyas,[97] which had a trading port sometimes identified in ancient Western sources as Nelcynda (or Neacyndi) in Quilon.[98] Tyndis was a major centre of trade, next only to Muziris, between the Cheras and the Roman Empire.[99] The lesser known Ays and Mushikas kingdoms lay to the south and north of the

Chera regions, respectively.[100][101] Pliny the Elder (1st century CE) states that the port of Tyndis was located at the northwestern border of Keprobotos (Chera dynasty).[102] The North Malabar region, which lies north of the port at Tyndis, was ruled by the kingdom of Ezhimala during Sangam period.[16] The port at Tyndis which was on the northern side of Muziris, as mentioned in Greco-Roman writings, was somewhere around Kozhikode.[16] Its exact location is a matter of dispute.[16] The suggested locations are Ponnani, Tanur, Beypore-Chaliyam-Kadalundi-Vallikkunnu, and Koyilandy.[16]

According to the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, a region known as Limyrike began at Naura and Tyndis. However the Ptolemy mentions only Tyndis as the Limyrike's starting point. The region probably ended at Kanyakumari; it thus roughly corresponds to the present-day Malabar Coast. The value of Rome's annual trade with the region was estimated at 50,000,000 sesterces. According to Pliny the Elder, goods from India were sold in the Empire at 100 times their original purchase price.[103] Pliny the Elder mentioned that Limyrike was prone to raids by pirates.[104] The Cosmas Indicopleustes mentioned that the Limyrike was a source of Malabar peppers.[105][106] In the last centuries BCE the coast became important to the Greeks and Romans for its spices, especially Malabar pepper. The Cheras had trading links with China, West Asia, Egypt, Greece, and the Roman Empire.[107] In foreign-trade circles the region was known as Male or Malabar.[108] Muziris, Tyndis, Naura, Nelcynda, and Barace, were among the principal ports at that time.[109] Contemporary Sangam literature describes Roman ships coming to Muziris in Kerala, laden with gold to exchange for Malabar pepper. One of the earliest western traders to use the monsoon winds to reach Kerala was Eudoxus of Cyzicus, around 118 or 166 BCE, under the patronage of Ptolemy VIII, king of the Hellenistic Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt. Roman establishments in the port cities of the region, such as a temple of Augustus and barracks for garrisoned Roman soldiers, are marked in the Tabula Peutingeriana, the only surviving map of the Roman *cursus publicus*. [110][111]

Merchants from West Asia and Southern Europe established coastal posts and settlements in Kerala.[112] The Israeli (Jewish) connection with Kerala started in 573 BCE.[113][114][115] Arabs also had trade links with Kerala, starting before the 4th century BCE, as Herodotus (484–413 BCE) noted that goods brought by Arabs from Kerala were sold to the Israelis [Hebrew Jews] at Eden.[109] In the 4th century, the Knanaya or Southist Christians also migrated from Persia and lived alongside the early Syriac Christian community known as the St. Thomas Christians who trace their origins to the evangelistic activity of Thomas the Apostle in the 1st century.[116][117] Mappila was an honorific title that had been assigned to respected visitors from abroad; Israelite (Jewish), Syrian Christian, and Muslim immigration account for later names of the respective communities: Juda Mappilas, Muslim Mappilas, and Nasrani Mappilas.[118][119] The earliest Saint Thomas Christian Churches,[120] Cheraman Jumu'ah Masjid (traditionally dated to "629 CE" by the Mappilas)—regarded as "the first mosque of India"[121]—and Paradesi Synagogue (1568 CE)—the oldest active synagogue in the Commonwealth of Nations[122]—were built in Kerala.[123]

A second Chera Kingdom (c. 800–1102), also known as Kulasekhara dynasty of Mahodayapuram (present-day Kodungallur), was established by Kulasekhara Varman,[125] which ruled over a territory comprising the whole of modern Kerala and a smaller part of modern Tamil Nadu. During the early part of the Kulasekhara period, the southern region from Nagercoil to Thiruvalla was ruled by Ay kings, who lost their power in the 10th century, making the region a part of the Kulasekhara empire.[126][127] Under Kulasekhara rule, Kerala witnessed a developing period of art, literature, trade and the Bhakti movement of Hinduism.[128] A Keralite identity, distinct from the Tamils, became linguistically separate during this period around the seventh century.[129] The origin of Malayalam calendar dates back to year 825 CE.[130][131][132] For local administration, the empire

was divided into provinces under the rule of Naduvazhis, with each province comprising a number of Desams under the control of chieftains, called as Desavazhis.[128] Mamankam festival, which was the largest native festival, was held at Tirunavaya near Kuttippuram, on the bank of river Bharathappuzha.[43][16] Athavanad, the headquarters of Azhvanchery Thamprakkal, who were also considered as the supreme religious chief of the Nambudiri Brahmins of Kerala, is also located near Tirunavaya.[43][16]

Sulaiman al-Tajir, a Persian merchant who visited Kerala during the reign of Sthanu Ravi Varma (9th century CE), records that there was extensive trade between Kerala and China at that time, based at the port of Kollam.[133] A number of foreign accounts have mentioned about the presence of considerable Muslim population in the coastal towns. Arab writers such as Al-Masudi of Baghdad (896–956 CE), Muhammad al-Idrisi (1100–1165 CE), Abulfeda (1273–1331 CE), and Al-Dimashqi (1256–1327 CE) mention the Muslim communities in Kerala.[134] Some historians assume that the Mappilas can be considered as the first native, settled Muslim community in South Asia.[135][136] The known earliest mention about Muslims of Kerala is in the Quilon Syrian copper plates.[124]

The inhibitions, caused by a series of Chera-Chola wars in the 11th century, resulted in the decline of foreign trade in Kerala ports. In addition, Portuguese invasions in the 15th century caused two major religions, Buddhism and Jainism, to disappear from the land. It is known that the Menons in the Malabar region of Kerala were originally strong believers of Jainism.[137] The social system became fractured with divisions on caste lines.[138] Finally, the Kulasekhara dynasty was subjugated in 1102 by the combined attack of Later Pandyas and Later Cholas.[126] However, in the 14th century, Ravi Varma Kulasekhara (1299–1314) of the southern Venad kingdom was able to establish a short-lived supremacy over southern India.

After his death, in the absence of a strong central power, the state was divided into thirty small warring principalities; the most powerful of them were the kingdom of Zamorin of Kozhikode in the north, Kollam in the far-south, Kochi in the south, and Kannur in the far north. The port at Kozhikode held the superior economic and political position in Kerala, while Kollam (Quilon), Kochi, and Kannur (Cannanore) were commercially confined to secondary roles.[139] The Zamorin of Calicut was originally the ruler of Eranad, which was a minor principality located in the northern parts of present-day Malappuram district.[16][140] The Zamorin allied with Arab and Chinese merchants and used most of the wealth from Kozhikode to develop his military power. Kozhikode became the most powerful kingdom in the Malayalam speaking region during the Middle Ages.[141][140] In the 14th century, Kozhikode conquered larger parts of central Kerala after the seizure of Tirunavaya from Valluvanad, which were under the control of the king of Perumbadappu Swaroopam (Cochin). The ruler of Perumpadappu was forced to shift his capital (c. CE 1405) further south from Kodungallur to Kochi. In the 15th century, the status of Cochin was reduced to a vassal state of Kozhikode.[141][140] The ruler of Kolathunadu (Kannur) had also come under the influence of Zamorin by the end of the 15th century.[16][141][140]

At the peak of their reign, the Zamorins of Kozhikode ruled over a region from Kollam (Quilon) in the south to Panthalayini Kollam (Koyilandy) in the north.[141][140] Ibn Battuta (1342–1347), who visited the city of Kozhikode six times, gives the earliest glimpses of life in the city. He describes Kozhikode as "one of the great ports of the district of Malabar" where "merchants of all parts of the world are found". The king of this place, he says, "shaves his chin just as the Haidari Fakeers of Rome do... The greater part of the Muslim merchants of this place are so wealthy that one of them can purchase the whole freightage of such vessels put here and fit-out others like them".[142] Ma Huan (1403 AD), the Chinese sailor part of the Imperial Chinese fleet under Cheng Ho (Zheng He)[143] states the city as a great emporium of trade frequented by merchants from around the world. He

makes note of the 20 or 30 mosques built to cater to the religious needs of the Muslims, the unique system of calculation by the merchants using their fingers and toes (followed to this day), and the matrilineal system of succession (Marumakkathayam). Abdur Razzak (1442–43), Niccolò de' Conti (1445), Afanasy Nikitin (1468–74), Ludovico di Varthema (1503–1508), and Duarte Barbosa witnessed the city as one of the major trading centres in the Indian subcontinent where traders from different parts of the world could be seen.[144][145]

The king Deva Raya II (1424–1446) of the Vijayanagara Empire conquered the entirety of present-day state of Kerala in the 15th century.[140] He defeated the Zamorin of Kozhikode, as well as the ruler of Kollam around 1443.[140] Fernão Nunes says that the Zamorin had to pay tribute to the king of Vijayanagara Empire.[140] Later Kozhikode and Venad seem to have rebelled against their Vijayanagara overlords, but Deva Raya II quelled the rebellion.[140] As the Vijayanagara power diminished over the next fifty years, the Zamorin of Kozhikode again rose to prominence in Kerala.[140] He built a fort at Ponnani in 1498.[140]

The maritime spice trade monopoly in the Arabian Sea stayed with the Arabs during the High and Late Middle Ages. However, the dominance of Middle East traders was challenged in the European Age of Discovery. After Vasco Da Gama's arrival in Kappad Kozhikode in 1498, the Portuguese began to dominate eastern shipping, and the spice-trade in particular.[146][147][148] Following the discovery of sea route from Europe to Malabar in 1498, the Portuguese began to expand their territories and ruled the seas between Ormus and the Malabar Coast and south to Ceylon.[149][150] They established a trading centre at Tangasseri in Quilon during 1502 as per the invitation of the then Queen of Quilon to start spices trade from there.[151] The Zamorin of Kozhikode permitted the new visitors to trade with his subjects such that Portuguese trade in Kozhikode prospered with the establishment of a factory and a fort. However, Portuguese attacks on Arab properties in his jurisdiction provoked the Zamorin and led to conflicts between them.

The ruler of the Kingdom of Tanur, who was a vassal to the Zamorin of Calicut, sided with the Portuguese, against his overlord at Kozhikode.[16] As a result, the Kingdom of Tanur (Vettathunadu) became one of the earliest Portuguese Colonies in India. The ruler of Tanur also sided with Cochin.[16] Many of the members of the royal family of Cochin in 16th and 17th centuries were selected from Vettom.[16] However, the Tanur forces under the king fought for the Zamorin of Calicut in the Battle of Cochin (1504).[43] However, the allegiance of the Mappila merchants in Tanur region still stayed under the Zamorin of Calicut.[152]

The Portuguese took advantage of the rivalry between the Zamorin and the King of Kochi allied with Kochi. When Francisco de Almeida was appointed as Viceroy of Portuguese India in 1505, his headquarters was established at Fort Kochi (Fort Emmanuel) rather than in Kozhikode. During his reign, the Portuguese managed to dominate relations with Kochi and established a few fortresses on the Malabar Coast.[153] Fort St Angelo or St. Angelo Fort was built at Kannur in 1505 and Fort St Thomas was built at Kollam (Quilon) in 1518 by the Portuguese.[154] However, the Portuguese suffered setbacks from attacks by Zamorin forces in South Malabar; especially from naval attacks under the leadership of Kozhikode admirals known as Kunjali Marakkars, which compelled them to seek a treaty. The Kunjali Marakkars are credited with organising the first naval defence of the Indian coast.[155] Tuhfat Ul Mujahideen written by Zainuddin Makhdoom II (born around 1532) of Ponnani in 16th-century CE is the first-ever known book fully based on the history of Kerala, written by a Keralite.[156][157][158] It is written in Arabic and contains pieces of information about the resistance put up by the navy of Kunjali Marakkar alongside the Zamorin of Calicut from 1498 to 1583 against Portuguese attempts to colonise Malabar coast.[158][156] Thunchaththu Ezhuthachan,

who is considered as the father of modern Malayalam literature, was born at Tirur (Vettathunadu) during Portuguese period.[43][16]

In 1571, the Portuguese were defeated by the Zamorin forces in the battle at Chaliyam Fort.[159] An insurrection at the Port of Quilon between the Arabs and the Portuguese led to the end of the Portuguese era in Quilon. The Muslim line of Ali Rajas of Arakkal kingdom, near Kannur, who were the vassals of the Kolathiri, ruled over the Lakshadweep islands.[160] The Bekal Fort near Kasaragod, which is also largest fort in the state, was built in 1650 by Shivappa Nayaka of Keladi.[161]

In 1602, the Zamorin sent messages to Aceh promising the Dutch a fort at Kozhikode if they would come and trade there. Two factors, Hans de Wolff and Lafer, were sent on an Asian ship from Aceh, but the two were captured by the chief of Tanur, and handed over to the Portuguese.[162] A Dutch fleet under Admiral Steven van der Hagen arrived at Kozhikode in November 1604. It marked the beginning of the Dutch presence in Kerala and they concluded a treaty with Kozhikode on 11 November 1604, which was also the first treaty that the Dutch East India Company made with an Indian ruler.[16] By this time the kingdom and the port of Kozhikode was much reduced in importance.[162] The treaty provided for a mutual alliance between the two to expel the Portuguese from Malabar. In return the Dutch East India Company was given facilities for trade at Kozhikode and Ponnani, including spacious storehouses.[162]

The Portuguese were ousted by the Dutch East India Company, who during the conflicts between the Kozhikode and the Kochi, gained control of the trade.[163] They lost to Dutch at Quilon after 1661 and later, the Portuguese left south-western coast.[164] The arrival of British on Malabar Coast can be traced back to the year 1615, when a group under the leadership of Captain William Keeling arrived at Kozhikode, using three ships.[16] It was in these ships that Sir Thomas Roe went to visit Jahangir, the fourth Mughal emperor, as British envoy.[16] In 1664, the municipality of Fort Kochi was established by Dutch Malabar, making it the first municipality in the Indian subcontinent, which got dissolved when the Dutch authority got weaker in the 18th century.[165]

The Dutch in turn were weakened by constant battles with Marthanda Varma of the Travancore Royal Family, and were defeated at the Battle of Colachel in 1741.[166] An agreement, known as "Treaty of Mavelikkara", was signed by the Dutch and Travancore in 1753, according to which the Dutch were compelled to detach from all political involvement in the region.[167][168][169] In the 18th Century, Travancore King Sree Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma annexed all the kingdoms up to Cochin through military conquests, resulting in the rise of Travancore to pre-eminence in Kerala.[170] The Kochi ruler sued for peace with Anizham Thirunal and the northern and north-central parts of Kerala (Malabar District), along with Fort Kochi, Tangasseri, and Anchuthengu in southern Kerala, came under direct British rule until India became independent.[171][172] Travancore became the dominant state in Kerala by defeating the powerful Zamorin of Kozhikode in the battle of Purakkad in 1755.[173]

The island of Dharmadom near Kannur, along with Thalassery, was ceded to the East India Company in 1734, which were claimed by all of the Kolattu Rajas, Kottayam Rajas, and Arakkal Bibi in the late medieval period, where the British initiated a factory and English settlement following the cession.[174][43] In 1761, the British captured Mahé, and the settlement was handed over to the ruler of Kadathanadu.[175] The British restored Mahé to the French as a part of the 1763 Treaty of Paris.[175] In 1779, the Anglo-French war broke out, resulting in the French loss of Mahé.[175] In 1783, the British agreed to restore to the French their settlements in India, and Mahé was handed over to the French in 1785.[175]

In 1757, to resist the invasion of the Zamorin of Kozhikode, the Palakkad Raja sought the help of the Hyder Ali of Mysore.[140] In 1766, Hyder Ali defeated the Zamorin of Kozhikode – an East India Company ally at the time – and absorbed Kozhikode into his state.[140] The smaller princely states in northern and north-central parts of Kerala (Malabar region) including Kolathunadu, Kottayam, Kadathanadu, Kozhikode, Tanur, Valluvanad, and Palakkad were unified under the rulers of Mysore and were made a part of the larger Kingdom of Mysore.[176] His son and successor, Tipu Sultan, launched campaigns against the expanding British East India Company, resulting in two of the four Anglo-Mysore Wars.[177][178] Tipu ultimately ceded the Malabar District and South Kanara to the company in the 1790s as a result of the Third Anglo-Mysore War and the subsequent Treaty of Seringapatam; both were annexed to the Bombay Presidency (which had also included other regions in the western coast of India) of British India in the years 1792 and 1799, respectively.[179][180][181] Later in 1800, both of the Malabar District and South Canara were separated from Bombay presidency to merge them with the neighbouring Madras Presidency.[16] The company forged tributary alliances with Kochi in 1791 and Travancore in 1795.[182]

By the end of the 18th century, the whole of Kerala fell under the control of the British, either administered directly or under suzerainty.[183] Initially the British had to suffer local resistance against their rule under the leadership of Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja, who had popular support in Thalassery-Wayanad region.[16] The municipalities of Kozhikode, Palakkad, Fort Kochi, Kannur, and Thalassery, were founded on 1 November 1866[184][185][186][187] of the British Indian Empire, making them the first modern municipalities in the state of Kerala. The Malabar Special Police was formed by the colonial government in 1884 headquartered at Malappuram.[188]

There were major revolts in Kerala during the independence movement in the 20th century; most notable among them is the 1921 Malabar Rebellion and the social struggles in Travancore. In the Malabar Rebellion, Mappila Muslims of Malabar rebelled against the British Raj.[189] The Battle of Pookkottur adorns an important role in the rebellion.[190] Some social struggles against caste inequalities also erupted in the early decades of the 20th century, leading to the 1936 Temple Entry Proclamation by Travancore Maharaja Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma that opened Hindu temples in Travancore to all castes.[191]

After India was partitioned in 1947 into India and Pakistan, Travancore and Kochi, part of the Union of India were merged on 1 July 1949 to form Travancore-Cochin.[192] On 1 November 1956, the taluk of Kasargod in the South Kanara district of Madras, the Malabar district of Madras (excluding the islands of Lakshadweep), and Travancore-Cochin, without four southern taluks and Sengottai taluk (which joined Tamil Nadu), merged to form the state of Kerala under the States Reorganisation Act.[17][193][194] A Communist-led government under E. M. S. Namboodiripad resulted from the first elections for the new Kerala Legislative Assembly in 1957.[194] It was one of the earliest elected Communist governments anywhere.[195][196][197] His government implemented land and educational reforms which in turn, reduced income inequality in the state.[198]

The state is wedged between the Lakshadweep Sea and the Western Ghats. Lying between northern latitudes 8°18' and 12°48' and eastern longitudes 74°52' and 77°22', [199] Kerala experiences humid tropical rainforest climate with some cyclones. The state has a coast of 590 km (370 mi)[200] and the width of the state varies between 11 and 121 kilometres (7 and 75 mi).[201] Geographically, Kerala can be divided into three climatically distinct regions: the eastern highlands; rugged and cool mountainous terrain, the central mid-lands; rolling hills, and the western lowlands; coastal plains.[87]: 110 Pre-Cambrian and Pleistocene geological formations compose the bulk of Kerala's terrain.[202][203] A catastrophic flood in Kerala in 1341 CE drastically modified its terrain and consequently affected its history; it also created a natural harbour for spice transport.[204]

The eastern region of Kerala consists of high mountains, gorges and deep-cut valleys immediately west of the Western Ghats' rain shadow.[87]: 110 41 of Kerala's west-flowing rivers,[205] and 3 of its east-flowing ones originate in this region.[206][207] The Western Ghats form a wall of mountains interrupted only near Palakkad; hence also known Palghat, where the Palakkad Gap breaks.[208] The Western Ghats rise on average to 1,500 metres (4,900 feet) above sea level,[209] while the highest peaks reach around 2,500 metres (8,200 feet).[210] Anamudi in the Idukki district is the highest peak in south India, is at an elevation of 2,695 m (8,842 ft).[211] The Western Ghats mountain chain is recognised as one of the world's eight "hottest hotspots" of biological diversity and is listed among UNESCO World Heritage Sites.[212] The chain's forests are considered to be older than the Himalaya mountains.[212] The Athirappilly Falls, which is situated on the background of Western Ghat mountain ranges, is also known as The Niagara of India.[213] It is located in the Chalakudy River and is the largest waterfall in the state.[213] Wayanad is the sole Plateau in Kerala.[214] The eastern regions in the districts of Wayanad, Malappuram (Chaliyar valley at Nilambur), and Palakkad (Attappadi Valley), which together form parts of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and a continuation of the Mysore Plateau, are known for natural Gold fields, along with the adjoining districts of Karnataka.[215] Minerals including Ilmenite, Monazite, Thorium, and Titanium, are found in the coastal belt of Kerala.[216] Kerala's coastal belt of Karunagappally is known for high background radiation from thorium-containing monazite sand. In some coastal panchayats, median outdoor radiation levels are more than 4 mGy/yr and, in certain locations on the coast, it is as high as 70 mGy/yr.[217]

Kerala's western coastal belt is relatively flat compared to the eastern region,[87]: 33 and is criss-crossed by a network of interconnected brackish canals, lakes, estuaries,[218] and rivers known as the Kerala Backwaters.[219] Kuttanad, also known as The Rice Bowl of Kerala, has the lowest altitude in India, and is also one of the few places in world where cultivation takes place below sea level.[220][221] The country's longest lake Vembanad, dominates the backwaters; it lies between Alappuzha and Kochi and is about 200 km² (77 sq mi) in area.[222] Around eight percent of India's waterways are found in Kerala.[223] Kerala's 44 rivers include the Periyar; 244 kilometres (152 mi), Bharathapuzha; 209 kilometres (130 mi), Pamba; 176 kilometres (109 mi), Chaliyar; 169 kilometres (105 mi), Kadalundipuzha; 130 kilometres (81 mi), Chalakudipuzha; 130 kilometres (81 mi), Valapattanam; 129 kilometres (80 mi) and the Achankovil River; 128 kilometres (80 mi). The average length of the rivers is 64 kilometres (40 mi). Many of the rivers are small and entirely fed by monsoon rain.[224] As Kerala's rivers are small and lacking in delta, they are more prone to environmental effects. The rivers face problems such as sand mining and pollution.[225] The state experiences several natural hazards like landslides, floods and droughts. The state was also affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami,[226] and in 2018 received the worst flooding in nearly a century.[227]

With around 120–140 rainy days per year,[228]: 80 Kerala has a wet and maritime tropical climate influenced by the seasonal heavy rains of the southwest summer monsoon and northeast winter monsoon.[229] Around 65% of the rainfall occurs from June to August corresponding to the Southwest monsoon, and the rest from September to December corresponding to Northeast monsoon.[229] The moisture-laden winds of the Southwest monsoon, on reaching the southernmost point of the Indian Peninsula, because of its topography, divides into two branches; the "Arabian Sea Branch" and the "Bay of Bengal Branch".[230] The "Arabian Sea Branch" of the Southwest monsoon first hits the Western Ghats,[231] making Kerala the first state in India to receive rain from the Southwest monsoon.[232][233] The distribution of pressure patterns is reversed in the Northeast monsoon, during this season the cold winds from North India pick up moisture from the Bay of Bengal and precipitate it on the east coast of peninsular India.[234][235] In Kerala, the influence of

the Northeast monsoon is seen in southern districts only.[236] Kerala's rainfall averages 2,923 mm (115 in) annually.[237] Some of Kerala's drier lowland regions average only 1,250 mm (49 in); the mountains of the eastern Idukki district receive more than 5,000 mm (197 in) of orographic precipitation: the highest in the state. In eastern Kerala, a drier tropical wet and dry climate prevails. During the summer, the state is prone to gale-force winds, storm surges, cyclone-related torrential downpours, occasional droughts, and rises in sea level.[238]: 26, 46, 52 The mean daily temperature ranges from 19.8 °C to 36.7 °C.[239] Mean annual temperatures range from 25.0 to 27.5 °C in the coastal lowlands to 20.0–22.5 °C in the eastern highlands.[238]: 65

Most of the biodiversity is concentrated and protected in the Western Ghats. Three-quarters of the land area of Kerala was under thick forest up to the 18th century.[240] As of 2004[update], over 25% of India's 15,000 plant species are in Kerala. Out of the 4,000 flowering plant species; 1,272 of which are endemic to Kerala, 900 are medicinal, and 159 are threatened.[241]: 11 Its 9,400 km² of forests include tropical wet evergreen and semi-evergreen forests (lower and middle elevations—3,470 km²), tropical moist and dry deciduous forests (mid-elevations—4,100 km² and 100 km², respectively), and montane subtropical and temperate (shola) forests (highest elevations—100 km²). Altogether, 24% of Kerala is forested.[241]: 12 Four of the world's Ramsar Convention listed wetlands—Lake Sasthamkotta, Ashtamudi Lake, Thrissur-Ponnani Kole Wetlands, and the Vembanad-Kol wetlands—are in Kerala,[242] as well as 1455.4 km² of the vast Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and 1828 km² of the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve.[243] Subjected to extensive clearing for cultivation in the 20th century,[244]: 6–7 much of the remaining forest cover is now protected from clearfelling.[245] Eastern Kerala's windward mountains shelter tropical moist forests and tropical dry forests, which are common in the Western Ghats.[246][247] The world's oldest teak plantation 'Conolly's Plot' is in Nilambur.[248]

Kerala's fauna are notable for their diversity and high rates of endemism: it includes 118 species of mammals (1 endemic), 500 species of birds, 189 species of freshwater fish, 173 species of reptiles (10 of them endemic), and 151 species of amphibians (36 endemic).[249] These are threatened by extensive habitat destruction, including soil erosion, landslides, salinisation, and resource extraction. In the forests, sonokeling, *Dalbergia latifolia*, anjili, mullumurikku, *Erythrina*, and *Cassia* number among the more than 1,000 species of trees in Kerala. Other plants include bamboo, wild black pepper, wild cardamom, the calamus rattan palm, and aromatic vetiver grass, *Vetiveria zizanioides*. [241]: 12 Indian elephant, Bengal tiger, Indian leopard, Nilgiri tahr, common palm civet, and grizzled giant squirrels are also found in the forests.[241]: 12, 174–75 Reptiles include the king cobra, viper, python, and mugger crocodile. Kerala's birds include the Malabar trogon, the great hornbill, Kerala laughingthrush, darter and southern hill myna. In the lakes, wetlands, and waterways, fish such as Kadu, Red Line Torpedo Barb and choottachi; orange chromide—*Etroplus maculatus* are found.[250][241]: 163–65 Recently, a newly described tardigrade (water bears) species collected from Vadakara coast of Kerala named after Kerala State; *Stygarcus keralensis*. [251]

The state's 14 districts are distributed among six regions: North Malabar (far-north Kerala), South Malabar (north-central Kerala), Kochi (central Kerala), Northern Travancore, Central Travancore (southern Kerala) and Southern Travancore (far-south Kerala). The districts which serve as administrative regions for taxation purposes are further subdivided into 27 revenue subdivisions and 77 taluks, which have fiscal and administrative powers over settlements within their borders, including maintenance of local land records. Kerala's taluks are further sub-divided into 1,674 revenue villages.[253][254]

Since the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution of India, the local government institutions function as the third tier of government, which constitutes 14 District Panchayats, 152 Block panchayats, 941 Grama Panchayats, 87 Municipalities, six Municipal Corporations and one Township.[255]

Mahé, a part of the Indian union territory of Puducherry,[256] though 647 kilometres (402 mi) away from it,[257] is a coastal exclave surrounded by Kerala on all of its landward approaches. The Kannur District surrounds Mahé on three sides with the Kozhikode District on the fourth.[258]

In 1664, the municipality of Fort Kochi was established by Dutch Malabar, making it the first municipality in the Indian subcontinent, which got dissolved when the Dutch authority got weaker in the 18th century.[165] The municipalities of Kozhikode, Palakkad, Fort Kochi, Kannur, and Thalassery, were founded on 1 November 1866[184][185][186][187] of the British Indian Empire, making them the first modern municipalities in the state of Kerala. The Municipality of Thiruvananthapuram came into existence in 1920. After two decades, during the reign of Sree Chithira Thirunal, Thiruvananthapuram Municipality was converted into Corporation on 30 October 1940, making it the oldest Municipal Corporation of Kerala.[259] The first Municipal Corporation founded after the independence of India as well as the second-oldest Municipal Corporation of the state is at Kozhikode in the year 1962.[260] There are six Municipal corporations in Kerala that govern Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode, Kochi, Kollam, Thrissur, and Kannur.[261] The Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation is the largest corporation in Kerala while Kochi metropolitan area named Kochi UA is the largest urban agglomeration.[262] According to a survey by economics research firm Indicus Analytics in 2007, Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode, Kochi, Kollam, Thrissur are among the "best cities in India to live"; the survey used parameters such as health, education, environment, safety, public facilities and entertainment to rank the cities.[263]

The state is governed by a parliamentary system of representative democracy. Kerala has a unicameral legislature. The Kerala Legislative Assembly also known as Niyamasabha, consists of 140 members who are elected for five-year terms.[264] The state elects 20 members to the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament, and 9 members to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house.[265]

The Government of Kerala is a democratically elected body in India with the governor as its constitutional head and is appointed by the president of India for a five-year term.[266] The leader of the party or coalition with a majority in the Legislative Assembly is appointed as the chief minister by the governor, and the council of ministers are appointed by the governor on the advice of the chief minister.[266] The governor remains a ceremonial head of the state, while the chief minister and his council are responsible for day-to-day government functions. The council of ministers consists of Cabinet Ministers and Ministers of State (MoS). The Secretariat headed by the Chief Secretary assists the council of ministers. The Chief Secretary is also the administrative head of the government. Each government department is headed by a minister, who is assisted by an Additional Chief Secretary or a Principal Secretary, who is usually an officer of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary serve as the administrative head of the department they are assigned to. Each department also has officers of the rank of Secretary, Special Secretary, Joint Secretary etc. assisting the Minister and the Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary

Each district has a district administrator appointed by government called District collector for executive administration. Auxiliary authorities known as panchayats, for which local body elections are regularly held, govern local affairs.[267] The judiciary consists of the Kerala High Court and a system of lower courts.[268] The High Court, located in Kochi,[269] has a Chief Justice along with 35

permanent and twelve additional pro tempore justices as of 2021[update].[270] The high court also hears cases from the Union Territory of Lakshadweep.[271][272]

In Kerala, local government bodies such as Panchayats, Municipalities, and Corporations have existed since 1959. However, a significant decentralization initiative began in 1993, aligning with constitutional amendments by the central government.[273] The Kerala Panchayati Raj Act and Kerala Municipality Act were enacted in 1994, establishing a 3-tier system for local governance.[274] This system includes Gram Panchayat, Block Panchayat, and District Panchayat.[275] The Acts define clear powers for these institutions.[273] For urban areas, the Kerala Municipality Act follows a single-tier system, equivalent to Gram Panchayat. These bodies receive substantial administrative, legal, and financial powers to ensure effective decentralization.[276] Currently, the state government allocates around 40% of the state plan outlay to local governments.[277] Kerala was declared the first digital state of India in 2016 and, according to the India Corruption Survey 2019 by Transparency International, is considered the least corrupt state in India.[278][279] The Public Affairs Index-2020 designated Kerala as the best-governed state in India.[280]

Kerala hosts two major political alliances: the United Democratic Front (UDF), led by the Indian National Congress; and the Left Democratic Front (LDF), led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)). As of[update] 2021 Kerala Legislative Assembly election, the LDF is the ruling coalition; Pinarayi Vijayan of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is the Chief Minister, while V. D. Satheesan of the Indian National Congress is the Leader of the Opposition. According to the Constitution of India, Kerala has a parliamentary system of representative democracy; universal suffrage is granted to residents.[281]

After independence, the state was managed as a social democratic welfare economy.[284] From the 1990s, liberalisation of the mixed economy allowed Licence Raj restrictions against capitalism and foreign direct investment to be lightened, leading to economic expansion and an increase in employment. In the fiscal year 2018–19, the nominal gross state domestic product (GSDP) was ₹7.82 lakh crore (US\$98 billion).[285] GSDP growth; 11.4% in 2018–2019[285] and 10.5% in 2017–2018[285] had been high compared to an average of 2.3% annually in the 1980s and between 5.1%[286]: 8 and 6.0%[287] in the 1990s.[286]: 8 The state recorded 8.9% growth in enterprises from 1998 to 2005, higher than the national rate of 4.8%.[288][289] The "Kerala phenomenon" or "Kerala model of development" of very high human development and in comparison low economic development has resulted from a strong service sector.[238]: 48 [290]: 1 In 2019–20, the tertiary sector contributed around 63% of the state's GSVA, compared to 28% by secondary sector, and 8% by primary sector.[26] In the period between 1960 and 2020, Kerala's economy was gradually shifting from an agrarian economy into a service-based one.[26]

The state's service sector which accounts for around 63% of its revenue is mainly based upon hospitality industry, tourism, Ayurveda and medical services, pilgrimage, information technology, transportation, financial sector, and education.[291] Major initiatives under the industrial sector include Cochin Shipyard, shipbuilding, oil refinery, software industry, coastal mineral industries,[216] food processing, marine products processing, and Rubber based products. The primary sector of the state is mainly based upon cash crops.[292] Kerala produces a significant amount of national output of the cash crops such as coconut, tea, coffee, pepper, natural rubber, cardamom, and cashew in India.[292] The cultivation of food crops began to reduce since the 1950s.[292] The migrant labourers in Kerala are a significant workforce in its industrial and agricultural sectors. Being home to only 1.18% of the total land area of India and 2.75% of its population, Kerala contributes more than 4% to the gross domestic product of India.

Kerala's economy depends significantly on emigrants working in foreign countries, mainly in the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, and the remittances annually contribute more than a fifth of GSDP.[293] The state witnessed significant emigration during the Gulf Boom of the 1970s and early 1980s. In 2008, the Persian Gulf countries together had a Keralite population of more than 2.5 million, who sent home annually a sum of US\$6.81 billion, which is the highest among Indian states and more than 15.1% of remittances to India in 2008.[294] In 2012, Kerala still received the highest remittances of all states: US\$11.3 billion, which was nearly 16% of the US\$71 billion remittances to the country.[295] In 2015, NRI deposits in Kerala have soared to over ₹1 lakh crore (US\$13 billion), amounting to one-sixth of all the money deposited in NRI accounts, which comes to about ₹7 lakh crore (US\$88 billion).[296] Malappuram district has the highest proportion of emigrant households in state.[26] A study commissioned by the Kerala State Planning Board, suggested that the state look for other reliable sources of income, instead of relying on remittances to finance its expenditure.[297]

A decline of about 300,000 in the number of emigrants from the state was recorded during the period between 2013 and 2018.[298] The total remittances received by the emigrants stood at ₹851 billion (US\$11 billion) in the year 2018.[298] According to a study done in 2013, ₹175 billion (US\$2.2 billion) was the total amount paid to migrant labourers in the state every year.[299] The tertiary sector comprises services such as transport, storage, communications, tourism, banking, insurance and real estate. In 2011–2012, it contributed 63.2% of the state's GDP, agriculture and allied sectors contributed 15.7%, while manufacturing, construction and utilities contributed 21.1%.[300] Around 600 varieties[241]: 5 of rice, which is Kerala's most used staple and cereal crop,[301]: 5 are harvested from 3105.21 km²; a decline from 5883.4 km² in 1990.[301]: 5 6,88,859 tonnes of rice are produced per year.[302] Other key crops include coconut; 899,198 ha, tea, coffee; 23% of Indian production,[303]: 13 or 57,000 tonnes,[303]: 6–7 rubber, cashews, and spices—including pepper, cardamom, vanilla, cinnamon, and nutmeg.

As of March 2002, Kerala's banking sector comprised 3341 local branches: each branch served 10,000 people, lower than the national average of 16,000; the state has the third-highest bank penetration among Indian states.[304] On 1 October 2011, Kerala became the first state in the country to have at least one banking facility in every village.[305] Unemployment in 2007 was estimated at 9.4%;[306] chronic issues are underemployment, low employability of youth, and a low female labour participation rate of only 13.5%,[307]: 5, 13 as was the practice of Nokku kooli, "wages for looking on".[308] (On 30 April 2018, the Kerala state government issued an order to abolish Nokku Kooli, to take effect on 1 May.[309]) By 1999–2000, the rural and urban poverty rates dropped to 10.0% and 9.6%, respectively.[310]

The state's budget of 2020–2021 was ₹1.15 lakh crore (US\$14 billion).[311] The state government's tax revenues (excluding the shares from Union tax pool) amounted to ₹674 billion (US\$8.4 billion) in 2020–21; up from ₹557 billion (US\$7.0 billion) in 2019–20. Its non-tax revenues (excluding the shares from Union tax pool) of the Government of Kerala reached ₹146 billion (US\$1.8 billion) in 2020–2021.[311] However, Kerala's high ratio of taxation to GSDP has not alleviated chronic budget deficits and unsustainable levels of government debt, which have impacted social services.[312] A record total of 223 hartals were observed in 2006, resulting in a revenue loss of over ₹20 billion (US\$250 million).[313] Kerala's 10% rise in GDP is 3% more than the national GDP. In 2013, capital expenditure rose 30% compared to the national average of 5%, owners of two-wheelers rose by 35% compared to the national rate of 15%, and the teacher-pupil ratio rose 50% from 2:100 to 4:100.[314]

The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board is a government owned financial institution in the state to mobilise funds for infrastructure development from outside the state revenue, aiming at overall infrastructure development of the state.[315][316]

In November 2015, the Ministry of Urban Development selected seven cities of Kerala for a comprehensive development program known as the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).[317] A package of ₹2.5 million (US\$31,000) was declared for each of the cities to develop service level improvement plan (SLIP), a plan for better functioning of the local urban bodies in the cities of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, Kochi, Thrissur, Kozhikode, and Palakkad.[318] The Grand Kerala Shopping Festival (GKSF) was started in 2007, covering more than 3000 outlets across the nine cities of Kerala with huge tax discounts, VAT refunds and huge array of prizes.[319] Lulu International Mall at Thiruvananthapuram is the largest Shopping Mall in India.[320]

Despite of many achievements, Kerala facing many challenges like high levels of unemployment that disproportionately impact educated women, a high degree of global exposure and a very fragile environment.[321]

Traditional industries manufacturing items; coir, handlooms, and handicrafts employ around one million people.[322] Kerala supplies 60% of the total global produce of white coir fibre. India's first coir factory was set up in Alleppey in 1859–60.[323] The Central Coir Research Institute was established there in 1959. As per the 2006–2007 census by SIDBI, there are 1,468,104 micro, small and medium enterprises in Kerala employing 3,031,272 people.[324][325] The KSIDC has promoted more than 650 medium and large manufacturing firms in Kerala, creating employment for 72,500 people.[326] A mining sector of 0.3% of GSDP involves extraction of ilmenite, kaolin, bauxite, silica, quartz, rutile, zircon, and sillimanite.[302] Other major sectors are tourism, medical sector, educational sector, banking, ship building, oil refinery, infrastructure, manufacturing, home gardens, animal husbandry and business process outsourcing.

The major change in agriculture in Kerala occurred in the 1970s when production of rice fell due to increased availability of rice all over India and decreased availability of labour.[327] Consequently, investment in rice production decreased and a major portion of the land shifted to the cultivation of perennial tree crops and seasonal crops.[328][329] Profitability of crops fell due to a shortage of farm labour, the high price of land, and the uneconomic size of operational holdings.[330] Only 27.3% of the families in Kerala depend upon agriculture for their livelihood, which is also the least corresponding rate in India.[331]

Kerala produces 97% of the national output of black pepper[332] and accounts for 85% of the natural rubber in the country.[333][334] Coconut, tea, coffee, cashew, and spices—including cardamom, vanilla, cinnamon, and nutmeg are the main agricultural products.[87]: 74 [335][336][337][338][339] Around 80% of India's export quality cashew kernels are prepared in Kollam.[340] The key cash crop is Coconut and Kerala ranks first in the area of coconut cultivation in India.[341] In 1960–61, about 70% of the Coconuts produced in India were from Kerala, which have reduced to 42% in 2011–12.[341] Around 90% of the total Cardamom produced in India is from Kerala.[26] India is the second-largest producer of Cardamom in world.[26] About 20% of the total Coffee produced in India are from Kerala.[292] The key agricultural staple is rice, with varieties grown in extensive paddy fields.[342] Home gardens made up a significant portion of the agricultural sector.[343] Related animal husbandry is touted by proponents as a means of alleviating rural

poverty and unemployment among women, the marginalised, and the landless.[344][345] The state government promotes these activities via educational campaigns and the development of new cattle breeds such as the Sunandini.[346][347]

Though the contribution of the agricultural sector to the state economy was on the decline in 2012–13, through the strength of the allied livestock sector, it has picked up from 7.0% (2011–12) to 7.2%. In the 2013–14 fiscal period, the contribution has been estimated at a high of 7.8%. The total growth of the farm sector has recorded a 4.4% increase in 2012–13, over a 1.3% growth in the previous fiscal year. The agricultural sector has a share of 9.3% in the sectoral distribution of Gross State Domestic Product at Constant Price, while the secondary and tertiary sectors have contributed 23.9% and 66.7%, respectively.[348]

There is a preference for organic products and home farming compared to synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.[349][350] Forest gardens are common and known by the name home gardens. According to the English horticulturist Robert Hart, Kerala is "from the agroforestry point of view, perhaps the world's most advanced country, with an extraordinary intensivity of cultivation of some forest gardens." [351]

With 590 kilometres (370 miles) of coastal belt,[352] 400,000 hectares of inland water resources[353] and approximately 220,000 active fishermen,[354] Kerala is one of the leading producers of fish in India.[355] According to 2003–04 reports, about 11 lakh (1.1 million) people earn their livelihood from fishing and allied activities such as drying, processing, packaging, exporting and transporting fisheries. The annual yield of the sector was estimated as 6,08,000 tons in 2003–04.[356] This contributes to about 3% of the total economy of the state. In 2006, around 22% of the total Indian marine fishery yield was from Kerala.[357] During the southwest monsoon, a suspended mud bank develops along the shore, which in turn leads to calm ocean water, peaking the output of the fishing industry. This phenomenon is locally called *chakara*. [358][359] The waters provide a large variety of fish: pelagic species; 59%, demersal species; 23%, crustaceans, molluscs and others for 18%. [357] Around 1050,000 (1.050 million) fishermen haul an annual catch of 668,000 tonnes as of a 1999–2000 estimate; 222 fishing villages are strung along the 590-kilometre (370-mile) coast. Another 113 fishing villages dot the hinterland.

Kerala has 331,904 kilometres (206,236 mi) of roads, which accounts for 5.6% of India's total.[26][360] This translates to about 9.94 kilometres (6.18 mi) of road per thousand people, compared to an average of 4.87 kilometres (3.03 mi) in the country.[26][360] Roads in Kerala include 1,812 kilometres (1,126 mi) of national highway; 1.6% of the nation's total, 4,342 kilometres (2,698 mi) of state highway; 2.5% of the nation's total, 27,470 kilometres (17,070 mi) of district roads; 4.7% of the nation's total, 33,201 kilometres (20,630 mi) of urban (municipal) roads; 6.3% of the nation's total, and 158,775 kilometres (98,658 mi) of rural roads; 3.8% of the nation's total.[361] Kottayam has the maximum length of roads among the districts of Kerala, while Wayanad accounts for minimum.[362] Most of Kerala's west coast is accessible through the NH 66 (previously NH 17 and 47); and the eastern side is accessible through state highways.[363] New projects for hill and coastal highways were recently announced under KIIFB.[364] National Highway 66, with the longest stretch of road (1,622 kilometres (1,008 mi)) connects Kanyakumari to Mumbai; it enters Kerala via Talapady in Kasargod and passes through Kannur, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Guruvayur, Kochi, Alappuzha, Kollam, Thiruvananthapuram before entering Tamil Nadu.[363] Palakkad district is generally referred to as the Gateway of Kerala, due to the presence of the Palakkad Gap in the Western Ghats, through which the northern (Malabar) and southern (Travancore) parts of Kerala are connected to the rest of India via road and rail. The state's largest checkpoint, Walayar, is on NH

544, in the border town between Kerala and Tamil Nadu, through which a large amount of public and commercial transportation reaches the northern and central districts of Kerala.[365]

The Department of Public Works is responsible for maintaining and expanding the state highways system and major district roads.[366] The Kerala State Transport Project (KSTP), which includes the GIS-based Road Information and Management Project (RIMS), is responsible for maintaining and expanding the state highways in Kerala. It also oversees a few major district roads.[367][368] Traffic in Kerala has been growing at a rate of 10–11% every year, resulting in high traffic and pressure on the roads. Traffic density is nearly four times the national average, reflecting the state's high population. Kerala's annual total of road accidents is among the nation's highest. The accidents are mainly the result of the narrow roads and irresponsible driving.[369] National Highways in Kerala are among the narrowest in the country and will remain so for the foreseeable future, as the state government has received an exemption that allows narrow national highways. In Kerala, highways are 45 metres (148 feet) wide. In other states, national highways are grade separated, 60 metres (200 feet) wide with a minimum of four lanes, as well as 6 or 8-lane access-controlled expressways.[370][371] The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has threatened the Kerala state government that it will give higher priority to other states in highway development since political commitment to better highways in Kerala has been lacking.[372] As of 2013[update], Kerala had the highest road accident rate in the country, with most fatal accidents taking place along the state's national highways.[373]

Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) is a state-owned road transport corporation. It is one of the country's oldest state-run public bus transport services. Its origins can be traced back to Travancore State Road Transport Department, when the Travancore government headed by Sri. Chithra ThirunnaI decided to set up a public road transportation system in 1937.

The corporation is divided into three zones (North, Central and South), with the headquarters in Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala's capital city). Daily scheduled service has increased from 1,200,000 kilometres (750,000 mi) to 1,422,546 kilometres (883,929 mi),[374] using 6,241 buses on 6,389 routes. At present the corporation has 5373 buses running on 4795 schedules.[375][376]

The Kerala Urban Road Transport Corporation (KURTC) was formed under KSRTC in 2015 to manage affairs related to urban transportation.[362] It was inaugurated on 12 April 2015 at Thevara.[377]

Southern Railway zone of Indian Railways operates all railway lines in the state connecting most major towns and cities except those in the highland districts of Idukki and Wayanad.[378] The railway network in the state is controlled by two out of six divisions of the Southern Railway; Thiruvananthapuram Railway division headquartered at Thiruvananthapuram and Palakkad Railway Division headquartered at Palakkad.[379] Thiruvananthapuram Central (TVC) is the busiest railway station in the state.[380] Kerala's major railway stations are:

The first railway line in the state was laid from Tirur to Chaliyam (Kozhikode), with the oldest Railway Station at Tirur, passing through Tanur, Parappanangadi, Vallikkunnu, and Kadalundi.[381][382] The railway was extended from Tirur to Kuttippuram through Tirunavaya in the same year.[382] It was again extended from Kuttippuram to Shoranur through Pattambi in 1862, resulting in the establishment of Shoranur Junction railway station, which is also the largest railway junction in the state.[382] Major railway transport between Chaliyam–Tirur began on 12 March 1861,[382] from Tirur–Shoranur in 1862,[382] from Shoranur–Cochin Harbour section in 1902, from Kollam–Sengottai on 1 July 1904, Kollam–Thiruvananthapuram on 4 January 1918, from Nilambur–Shoranur in 1927, from Ernakulam–Kottayam in 1956, from Kottayam–Kollam in 1958, from

Thiruvananthapuram–Kanyakumari in 1979 and from the Thrissur-Guruvayur Section in 1994.[383] The Nilambur–Shoranur line is one of the shortest broad gauge railway lines in India.[384] It was established in the British era for the transportation of Nilambur teaks and Angadipuram Laterite to United Kingdom through the port at Kozhikode.[384] The presence of Palakkad Gap on Western Ghats makes the Shoranur Junction railway station important as it connects the southwestern coast of India (Mangalore) with the southeastern coast (Chennai).[93]

Kochi Metro is the metro rail system in the city of Kochi. It is the only metro rail system in Kerala. Construction began in 2012, with the first phase being set up at an estimated cost of ₹51.81 billion (US\$650 million).[385][386] The Kochi Metro uses 65-metre long Metropolis train sets built and designed by Alstom.[387][388][389] It is the first metro system in India to use a communication-based train control (CBTC) system for signalling and telecommunication.[390] In October 2017, Kochi Metro was named the "Best Urban Mobility Project" in India by the Urban Development Ministry, as part of the Urban Mobility India (UMI) International Conference hosted by the ministry every year.[391]

Kerala has four international airports: Kollam Airport, established under the Madras Presidency, but since closed, was the first airport in Kerala.[392] Kannur had an airstrip used for commercial aviation as early as 1935 when Tata airlines operated weekly flights between Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram – stopping at Goa and Kannur.[393] Trivandrum International Airport, managed by the Airport Authority of India, is among the oldest existing airports in South India. Calicut International Airport, which was opened in 1988, is the second-oldest existing airport in Kerala and the oldest in the Malabar region.[394] Cochin International Airport is the busiest in the state and the seventh busiest in the country. It is also the first airport in the world to be fully powered by solar energy[395] and has won the coveted Champion of the Earth award, the highest environmental honour instituted by the United Nations.[396] Cochin International Airport is also the first Indian airport to be incorporated as a public limited company; it was funded by nearly 10,000 non-resident Indians from 30 countries.[397]

Other than civilian airports, Kochi has a naval airport named INS Garuda. Thiruvananthapuram airport shares civilian facilities with the Southern Air Command of the Indian Air Force. These facilities are used mostly by central government VIPs visiting Kerala.

Kerala has one major port, four intermediate ports, and 13 minor ports. The major port in the state is at Kochi, which has an area of 8.27 km². [398] The Vizhinjam International Seaport, which is currently classified as an intermediate port, is an upcoming major port under construction.[398] Other intermediate ports include Beypore, Kollam, and Azheekal.[398] The remaining ports are classified as minor which include Manjeshwaram, Kasaragod, Nileshwaram, Kannur, Thalassery, Vadakara, Ponnani, Munambam, Manakodam, Alappuzha, Kayamkulam, Neendakara, and Valiyathura.[398] The Kerala Maritime Institute is headquartered at Neendakara, which has an additional subcentre at Kodungallur too.[398] The state has numerous backwaters, which are used for commercial inland navigation. Transport services are mainly provided by country craft and passenger vessels. There are 67 navigable rivers in the state while the total length of inland waterways is 1,687 kilometres (1,048 mi).[399] The main constraints to the expansion of inland navigation are; lack of depth in waterways caused by silting, lack of maintenance of navigation systems and bank protection, accelerated growth of the water hyacinth, lack of modern inland craft terminals, and lack of a cargo handling system.

The 616 kilometres (383 mi) long West-Coast Canal is the longest waterway in state connecting Kasaragod to Poovar.[377] It is divided into five sections: 41 kilometres (25 mi) long Kasaragod-Nileshwaram reach, 188 kilometres (117 mi) long Nileshwaram-Kozhikode reach, 160 kilometres (99 mi) Kozhikode-Kottapuram reach, 168 kilometres (104 mi) long National Waterway 3 (Kottapuram-Kollam reach), and 74 kilometres (46 mi) long Kollam-Vizhinjam reach.[26] The Conolly Canal, which is a part of West-Coast Canal, connects the city of Kozhikode with Kochi through Ponnani, passing through the districts of Malappuram and Thrissur. It begins at Vadakara.[400] It was constructed in the year 1848 under the orders of then District collector of Malabar, H. V. Conolly, initially to facilitate movement of goods to Kallayi Port from hinter lands of Malabar through Kuttiady and Korapuzha river systems.[400] It was the main waterway for the cargo movement between Kozhikode and Kochi through Ponnani, for more than a century.[400] Other important waterways in Kerala include the Alappuzha-Changanassery Canal, Alappuzha-Kottayam-Athirampuzha Canal, and Kottayam-Vaikom Canal.[398]

Kochi Water Metro (KWM) is an integrated ferry transport system serving the Greater Kochi region in Kerala, India. It is the first water metro system in India and the first integrated water transport system of this size in Asia, which connects Kochi's 10 island communities with the mainland through a fleet of 78 battery-operated electric hybrid boats plying along 38 terminals and 16 routes spanning 76 kilometres.[401] It is integrated with the Kochi Metro and serves as a feeder service to the suburbs along the rivers where transport accessibility is limited.[402]

Kerala is home to 2.8% of India's population; with a density of 859 persons per km², its land is nearly three times as densely settled as the national average of 370 persons per km². [404] As of 2011[update], Thiruvananthapuram is the most populous city in Kerala.[405] In the state, the rate of population growth is India's lowest, and the decadal growth of 4.9% in 2011 is less than one third of the all-India average of 17.6%. [404] Kerala's population more than doubled between 1951 and 1991 by adding 15.6 million people to reach 29.1 million residents in 1991; the population stood at 33.3 million by 2011.[404] Kerala's coastal regions are the most densely settled with population of 2022 persons per km², 2.5 times the overall population density of the state, 859 persons per km², leaving the eastern hills and mountains comparatively sparsely populated.[406] Kerala is the second-most urbanised major state in the country with 47.7% urban population according to the 2011 Census of India.[23] Around 31.8 million Keralites are predominantly Malayali.[404] The state's 321,000 indigenous tribal Adivasis, 1.1% of the population, are concentrated in the east.[407]: 10–12

There is a tradition of matrilineal inheritance in Kerala, where the mother is the head of the household.[408] As a result, women in Kerala have had a much higher standing and influence in the society. This was common among certain influential castes and is a factor in the value placed on daughters. Christian missionaries also influenced Malayali women in that they started schools for girls from poor families.[409] Opportunities for women such as education and gainful employment often translate into a lower birth rate,[410] which in turn, make education and employment more likely to be accessible and more beneficial for women. This creates an upward spiral for both the women and children of the community that is passed on to future generations. According to the Human Development Report of 1996, Kerala's Gender Development Index was 597; higher than any other state of India. Factors, such as high rates of female literacy, education, work participation and life expectancy, along with favourable sex ratio, contributed to it.[411]

Kerala's sex ratio of 1.084 (females to males) is higher than that of the rest of India; it is the only state where women outnumber men.[290]: 2 While having the opportunities that education affords

them, such as political participation, keeping up to date with current events, reading religious texts etc., these tools have still not translated into full, equal rights for the women of Kerala. There is a general attitude that women must be restricted for their own benefit. In the state, despite the social progress, gender still influences social mobility.[412][413][414]

Kerala has been at the forefront of LGBT issues in India.[415] Kerala is one of the first states in India to form a welfare policy for the transgender community. In 2016, the Kerala government introduced free sex reassignment surgery through government hospitals.[416][417][418] Queerala is one of the major LGBT organisations in Kerala. It campaigns for increased awareness of LGBT people and sensitisation concerning healthcare services, workplace policies and educational curriculum.[419] Since 2010, Kerala Queer Pride has been held annually across various cities in Kerala.[420]

In June 2019, the Kerala government passed a new order that members of the transgender community should not be referred to as the "third gender" or "other gender" in government communications. Instead, the term "transgender" should be used. Previously, the gender preferences provided in government forms and documents included male, female, and other/third gender.[421][422]

In the 2021 Mathrubhumi Youth Manifesto Survey conducted on people aged between 15 and 35, majority (74.3%) of the respondents supported legislation for same-sex marriage while 25.7% opposed it.[423]

Under a democratic communist local government, Kerala has achieved a record of social development much more advanced than the Indian average.[425] As of 2015[update], Kerala has a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.770, which is in the "high" category, ranking it first in the country.[9] It was 0.790 in 2007–08[426] and it had a consumption-based HDI of 0.920, which is better than that of many developed countries.[426] Comparatively higher spending by the government on primary level education, health care and the elimination of poverty from the 19th century onwards has helped the state maintain an exceptionally high HDI;[427][428] the report was prepared by the central government's Institute of Applied Manpower Research.[429][430] However, the Human Development Report 2005, prepared by Centre for Development Studies envisages a virtuous phase of inclusive development for the state since the advancement in human development had already started aiding the economic development of the state.[427] Kerala is also widely regarded as the cleanest and healthiest state in India.[431]

According to the 2011 census, Kerala has the highest literacy rate (94%) among Indian states. In 2018, the literacy rate was calculated to be 96%. In the Kottayam district, the literacy rate was 97%.[432][11][433] The life expectancy in Kerala is 74 years, among the highest in India as of 2011[update].[434] Kerala's rural poverty rate fell from 59% (1973–1974) to 12% (1999–2010); the overall (urban and rural) rate fell 47% between the 1970s and 2000s against the 29% fall in overall poverty rate in India.[435] By 1999–2000, the rural and urban poverty rates dropped to 10.0% and 9.6%, respectively.[310] The 2013 Tendulkar Committee Report on poverty estimated that the percentages of the population living below the poverty line in rural and urban Kerala are 9.1% and 5.0%, respectively.[436] These changes stem largely from efforts begun in the late 19th century by the kingdoms of Cochin and Travancore to boost social welfare.[437][438] This focus was maintained by Kerala's post-independence government.[238][289]: 48

Kerala has undergone a "demographic transition" characteristic of such developed nations as Canada, Japan, and Norway.[290]: 1 In 2005, 11.2% of people were over the age of 60.[289] In 2023,

the BBC reported on the problems and benefits which have arisen from migration away from Kerala, focussing on the village of Kumbanad.[439]

In 2004, the birthrate was low at 18 per 1,000.[440] According to the 2011 census, Kerala had a total fertility rate (TFR) of 1.6. All district except Malappuram district had fertility rate below 2. Fertility rate is highest in Malappuram district (2.2) and lowest in Pathanamthitta district (1.3).[441] In 2001, Muslims had the TFR of 2.6 as against 1.5 for Hindus and 1.7 for Christians.[442] The state also is regarded as the "least corrupt Indian state" according to the surveys conducted by CMS Indian Corruption Study (CMS-ICS)[443] Transparency International (2005)[444] and India Today (1997).[445] Kerala has the lowest homicide rate among Indian states, with 1.1 per 100,000 in 2011.[446] In respect of female empowerment, some negative factors such as higher suicide rate, lower share of earned income, child marriage,[447] complaints of sexual harassment and limited freedom are reported.[411] The child marriage is lower in Kerala. The Malappuram district has the highest number of child marriage and the number of such cases are increasing in Malappuram. The child marriages are particularly higher among the Muslim community.[448][449] In 2019, Kerala recorded the highest child sex abuse complaints in India.[450]

In 2015, Kerala had the highest conviction rate of any state, over 77%.[451] Kerala has the lowest proportion of homeless people in rural India, <0.1%,[452] and the state is attempting to reach the goal of becoming the first "Zero Homeless State", in addition to its acclaimed "Zero landless project", with private organisations and the expatriate Malayali community funding projects for building homes for the homeless.[453] The state was also among the lowest in the India State Hunger Index next only to Punjab. In 2015 Kerala became the first "complete digital state" by implementing e-governance initiatives.[454]

Kerala is a pioneer in implementing the universal health care program.[455] The sub-replacement fertility level and infant mortality rate are lower compared to those of other states, estimated from 12[238][440]: 49 to 14[456]: 5 deaths per 1,000 live births; as per the National Family Health Survey 2015–16, it has dropped to 6.[457] According to a study commissioned by Lien Foundation, a Singapore-based philanthropic organisation, Kerala is considered to be the best place to die in India based on the state's provision of palliative care for patients with serious illnesses.[458] However, Kerala's morbidity rate is higher than that of any other Indian state—118 (rural) and 88 (urban) per 1,000 people. The corresponding figures for all India were 55 and 54 per 1,000, respectively as of 2005[update].[456]: 5 Kerala's 13.3% prevalence of low birth weight is higher than that of many first world nations.[440] Outbreaks of water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis, and typhoid among the more than 50% of people who rely on 3 million water wells is an issue worsened by the lack of sewers.[459]: 5–7 As of 2017, the state has the highest number of diabetes patients and also the highest prevalence rate of the disease in India.[460]

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization designated Kerala the world's first "baby-friendly state" because of its effective promotion of breast-feeding over formulas.[461][462] Over 95% of Keralite births are hospital delivered and the state also has the lowest infant mortality rate in the country. The third National Family Health Survey ranks Kerala first in "Institutional Delivery" with 100% births in medical facilities.[463] Ayurveda,[464]: 13 siddha, and endangered and endemic modes of traditional medicine, including kalari, marmachikitsa and vishavaidyam, are practised. Some occupational communities such as Kaniyar were known as native medicine men in relation to the practice of such streams of medical systems, apart from their traditional vocation.[465] These propagate via gurukula discipleship,[464]: 5–6 and comprise a fusion of both medicinal and alternative treatments.[464]: 15 The Arya Vaidya Sala established by Vaidyaratnam P. S. Warrier at Kottakkal (about 10 km from Malappuram) in 1902, is the largest

Ayurvedic medicinal network and health centre in the state.[466][467][468] It is also one of the largest Ayurvedic medicinal brands in the world.[466][467][468]

In 2014, Kerala became the first state in India to offer free cancer treatment to the poor, via a program called Sukrutham.[469] People in Kerala experience elevated incidence of cancers, liver and kidney diseases.[470] In April 2016, the Economic Times reported that 250,000 residents undergo treatment for cancer. It also reported that approximately 150 to 200 liver transplants are conducted in the region's hospitals annually. Approximately 42,000 cancer cases are reported in the region annually. This is believed to be an underestimate as private hospitals may not be reporting their figures. Long waiting lists for kidney donations has stimulated illegal trade in human kidneys, and prompted the establishment of the Kidney Federation of India which aims to support financially disadvantaged patients.[471] As of 2017–18, there are 6,691 modern medicine institutions under the department of health services, of which the total bed strength is 37,843; 15,780 in rural areas and 22,063 in urban.[472]

Languages of Kerala (2011)[473]

Malayalam is the official language of Kerala,[474] and one of the six Classical languages of India.[475] There is a significant Tamil population throughout Kerala mainly in Idukki district and Palakkad district which accounts for 17.48% and 4.8% of its total population.[476] Tulu and Kannada are spoken mainly in the northern parts of Kasaragod district, each of which account for 8.77% and 4.23% of total population in the district, respectively.[476][477]

Religion in Kerala (2011)[478]

Kerala is very religiously diverse with Hindus, Muslims and Christians having a significant population throughout the state, Kerala is often regarded as one of the most diverse states in all of India.[479][480] Hinduism is the most widely professed faith in Kerala, with significant Muslim and Christian minorities. In comparison with the rest of India, Kerala experiences relatively little sectarianism.[481] According to 2011 Census of India figures, 54.7% of Kerala's residents are Hindus, 26.6% are Muslims, 18.4% are Christians, and the remaining 0.3% follow another religion or have no religious affiliation.[482] Hindus represent the biggest religious group in all districts except Malappuram, where they are outnumbered by Muslims.[483] Kerala has the largest population of Christians in India.[484] As of 2016, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others account for 41.9%, 42.6%, 15.4% and 0.2% of the total child births in the state, respectively.[485]

The mythological legends regarding the origin of Kerala are Hindu in nature. Kerala produced several saints and movements. Adi Shankara was a religious philosopher who contributed to Hinduism and propagated the philosophy of Advaita. He was instrumental in establishing four mathas at Sringeri, Dwarka, Puri and Jyotirmath. Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri was another religious figure who composed Narayaniyam, a collection of verses in praise of the Hindu God Krishna.

Islam arrived in Kerala, a part of the larger Indian Ocean rim, via spice and silk traders from the Middle East. Historians do not rule out the possibility of Islam being introduced to Kerala as early as the seventh century CE.[486][487] Notable has been the occurrence of Cheraman Perumal Tajuddin, the mythical Hindu king that moved to Arabia to meet the Muhammad and converted to Islam.[488][489][490] Kerala Muslims are generally referred to as the Mappilas. Mappilas are but one among the many communities that forms the Muslim population of Kerala.[491][492] According to the Legend of Cheraman Perumals, the first Indian mosque was built in 624 CE at Kodungallur with the mandate of the last the ruler (the Cheraman Perumal) of Chera dynasty, who converted to

Islam during the lifetime of Muhammad (c. 570–632).[493][494][135][495] According to Qissat Shakarwati Farmad, the Masjids at Kodungallur, Kollam, Madayi, Barkur, Mangalore, Kasaragod, Kannur, Dharmadam, Panthalayini, and Chaliyam, were built during the era of Malik Dinar, and they are among the oldest Masjids in the Indian subcontinent.[74] It is believed that Malik Dinar died at Thalangara in Kasaragod town.[496] According to popular tradition, Islam was brought to Lakshadweep islands, on the western side of Kerala, by Ubaidullah in 661 CE. His grave is believed to be located on the island of Andrott.[497] A few Umayyad (661–750 CE) coins were discovered from Kothamangalam in the eastern part of Ernakulam district.[498]

According to some scholars, the Mappilas are the oldest settled Muslim community in South Asia.[499][498] The monopoly of overseas spice trade from Malabar Coast was safe with the West Asian shipping magnates of Kerala ports.[500] The Muslims were a major financial power to be reckoned within the kingdoms of Kerala and had great political influence in the Hindu royal courts.[501][500] The Koyilandy Jumu'ah Mosque contains an Old Malayalam inscription written in a mixture of Vatteluttu and Grantha scripts which dates back to the 10th century CE.[502] It is a rare surviving document recording patronage by a Kerala king to the Muslims of Kerala.[502] A 13th century granite inscription, written in a mixture of Old Malayalam and Arabic, at Muchundi Mosque in Kozhikode mentions a donation by the king to the mosque.[503] Travellers have recorded the considerably huge presence of Muslim merchants and settlements of sojourning traders in most of the ports of Kerala. Immigration, intermarriage and missionary activity/conversion—secured by the common interest in the spice trade—helped in this development.[504] Most of the Muslims in Kerala follow the Shāfi'ī school of religious law (Samastha Kerala Jamiat-ul-Ulema) while a large minority follow movements that developed within Sunni Islam. The latter section consists of majority Salafists (Kerala Nadvathul Mujahideen). There is a large Keralan diaspora in the Middle East.[505][506]

Ancient Christian tradition says that Christianity reached the shores of Kerala in 52 CE with the arrival of Thomas the Apostle, one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ.[116][507][508][509] Saint Thomas Christians include Syro-Malabar Catholic,[510] Syro-Malankara Catholic,[511] Jacobite Syrian Christian Church,[512] Mar Thoma Syrian Church,[513] Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church,[514] the Syrian Anglicans of the CSI[515] and Pentecostal Saint Thomas Christians.[516] The origin of the Latin Catholic Christians in Kerala is the result of the missionary endeavours of the Portuguese Padroado in the 16th century.[517][518][519] As a consequence of centuries of mixing with colonial immigrants, beginning with the Portuguese, Dutch, French, British and other Europeans, there is a community of Anglo-Indians in Kerala of mixed European and Indian parentage or ancestry. Kerala has the highest population of Christians among all the states of India.[520]

Judaism reached Kerala in the 10th century BCE during the time of King Solomon.[521] They are called Cochin Jews or Malabar Jews and are the oldest group of Jews in India.[113][522] There was a significant Jewish community which existed in Kerala until the 20th century, when most of them migrated to Israel.[523] The Paradesi Synagogue at Kochi is the oldest synagogue in the Commonwealth.[524] Jainism has a considerable following in the Wayanad district.[525][526]

Buddhism was popular in the time of Ashoka[527] but vanished by the 12th century CE.[528] Certain Hindu communities such as the Samantan Kshatriyas, Ambalavasis, Nairs, Thiyyas and some Muslims around North Malabar used to follow a traditional matrilineal system known as marumakkathayam,[529][530] although this practice ended in the years after Indian independence.[531] Other Muslims, Christians, and some Hindu castes such as the Namboothiris, most of the Ambalavasi castes and the Ezhavas followed makkathayam, a patrilineal system.[532][533] Owing to the former matrilineal system, women in Kerala enjoy a high social

status.[198] However, gender inequality among low caste men and women is reportedly higher compared to that in other castes.[534]: 1

The Kerala school of astronomy and mathematics flourished between the 14th and 16th centuries. In attempting to solve astronomical problems, the Kerala school independently created a number of important mathematics concepts, including series expansion for trigonometric functions.[535][536] The Kerala School of Astronomy and Mathematics was based at Vettathunadu (Tirur region).[535] In the early decades of the 19th century, the modern educational transformation of Kerala was triggered by the efforts of the Church Mission Society missionaries to promote mass education.[537][538][539][540][541] Following the recommendations of the Wood's despatch of 1854, the princely states of Travancore and Cochin launched mass education drives mainly based on castes and communities, and introduced a system of grant-in-aid to attract more private initiatives.[542] The efforts by leaders such as Vaikunda Swami, Narayana Guru, Ayyankali, and Kuriakose Elias Chavara in aiding the socially discriminated castes in the state—with the help of community-based organisations like Nair Service Society, SNDP, Muslim Educational Society, Muslim Mahajana Sabha, Yoga Kshema Sabha (of Nambudiris) and congregations of Christian churches—led to the further development of mass education in Kerala.[542]

According to the first economic census, conducted in 1977, 99.7% of the villages in Kerala had a primary school within 2 kilometres (1.2 mi), 98.6% had a middle school within 2 kilometres (1.2 mi) and 96.7% had a high school or higher secondary school within 5 kilometres (3.1 mi).[87]: 62 In 1991, Kerala became the first state in India to be recognised as completely literate, although the effective literacy rate at that time was only 90%.[543] In 2006–2007, the state topped the Education Development Index (EDI) of the 21 major states in India.[544] As of 2007[update], enrolment in elementary education was almost 100%; and, unlike other states in India, educational opportunity was almost equally distributed among sexes, social groups, and regions.[545] According to the 2011 census, Kerala has a 93.9% literacy, compared to the national literacy rate of 74.0%.[433] In January 2016, Kerala became the first Indian state to achieve 100% primary education through its Athulyam literacy programme.[546]

The educational system prevailing in the state's schools specifies an initial 10-year course of study, which is divided into three stages: lower primary, upper primary, and secondary school—known as 4+3+3, which signifies the number of years for each stage.[545] After the first 10 years of schooling, students typically enroll in Higher Secondary Schooling in one of the three major streams—liberal arts, commerce, or science.[547] Upon completing the required coursework, students can enroll in general or professional undergraduate (UG) degree-college programmes. The majority of public schools are affiliated with the Kerala Board of Public Examination (KBPE). There are 15,892 schools under KBPE, of which 5,986 are government schools, 8,183 are aided schools, and the rest are either un-aided or technical schools.[548] Other educational boards are the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE), and the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). English is the language of instruction in most self-financing schools, while government and government-aided schools offer instruction in English or Malayalam.[547] Though the cost of education is generally considered low in Kerala,[549] according to the 61st round of the National Sample Survey (2004–2005), per capita spending on education by the rural households was reported to be ₹41 (51¢ US) for Kerala, more than twice the national average. The survey also revealed that the rural-urban difference in household expenditure on education was much less in Kerala than in the rest of India.[550]

CMS College, Kottayam, established in 1817, is the first western-style college, and one of the oldest colleges, in India. Government Brennen College, Thalassery, founded by philanthropist Edward

Brennen in 1862, and Government Victoria College, Palakkad, founded in 1866, are among the oldest educational institutions in India.

The KITE Kerala is a state owned special purpose company under education department of the Government of Kerala.[551][552] It was developed to support ICT enabled education for schools in the state. The erstwhile IT@School Project was transformed into KITE for extending its scope of operations in August 2017.[553][554] Kerala is the first Indian state to have ICT-enabled education with hi-tech classrooms in all public schools.[555][556] Kerala topped in the School Education Quality Index published by NITI Aayog in 2019.[557]

The Indian Naval Academy, located at Ezhimala, is Asia's largest, and the world's third-largest, naval academy.[558][559]

The culture of Kerala is composite and cosmopolitan in nature and it is an integral part of Indian culture.[34] It is a synthesis of Aryan, Dravidian, Arab, and European cultures,[560] developed over millennia, under influences from other parts of India and abroad.[561] It is defined by its antiquity and the organic continuity sustained by the Malayali people.[562] It was elaborated through centuries of contact with neighbouring and overseas cultures.[563] However, the geographical insularity of Kerala from the rest of the country has resulted in the development of a distinctive lifestyle, art, architecture, language, literature and social institutions.[34] Over 10,000 festivals are celebrated in the state every year.[564] The Malayalam calendar, a solar sidereal calendar started from 825 CE in Kerala,[565] finds common usage in planning agricultural and religious activities.[566] Malayalam, one of the classical languages in India, is Kerala's official language.[567] Over a dozen other scheduled and unscheduled languages are also spoken.[473] Kerala has the greatest consumption of alcohol in India.[568]

Many of the temples in Kerala hold festivals on specific days of the year.[569] A common characteristic of these festivals is the hoisting of a holy flag which is brought down on the final day of the festival after immersing the deity.[570] Some festivals include Poorams, the best known of these being the Thrissur Pooram.[571] "Elephants, firework displays and huge crowds" are the major attractions of Thrissur Pooram.[572] Other known festivals are Makaravilakku,[573] Chinakkathoor Pooram, Attukal Pongala and Nenmara Vallangi Vela[574] Other than these, festivals locally known as utsavams are conducted by many temples mostly on annual basis. Temples that can afford it will usually involve at least one richly caparisoned elephant as part of the festivities. The idol in the temple is taken out on a procession around the countryside atop this elephant. When the procession visits homes around the temple, people will usually present rice, coconuts, and other offerings to it.[575] Processions often include traditional music such as Panchari melam or Panchavadyam.[576] Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are celebrated by the Muslim community of the state while the festivals like Christmas and Easter are observed by the Christians.[16] Onam is a harvest festival celebrated by the people of Kerala and is reminiscent of the state's agrarian past.[577][578] It is a local festival of Kerala[579] consisting of a four-day public holidays; from Onam Eve (Uthradam) to the fourth Onam Day.[580] Onam falls in the Malayalam month of Chingam (August–September)[581] and marks the commemoration of the homecoming of King Mahabali.[582] The total duration of Onam is 10 days and it is celebrated all across Kerala. It is one of the festivals celebrated with cultural elements such as Vallam Kali,[583] Pulikali,[584] Pookkalam,[585] Thumbi Thullal[586] and Onavillu.[587]

Kerala is home to a number of performance arts. These include five classical dance forms: Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, Koodiyattom, Thullal and Krishnanattam, which originated and developed in the temple theatres during the classical period under the patronage of royal houses.[588] Kerala natanam, Thirayattam,[589] Kaliyattam, Theyyam, Koothu and Padayani are other dance forms

associated with the temple culture of the region.[590] Some traditional dance forms such as Oppana and Duffmuttu were popular among the Muslims of the state,[591] while Margamkali and Parichamuttukali are popular among the Syrian Christians and Chavittu nadakom is popular among the Latin Christians.[592][593] The development of classical music in Kerala is attributed to the contributions it received from the traditional performance arts associated with the temple culture of Kerala.[594] The development of the indigenous classical music form, Sopana Sangeetham, illustrates the rich contribution that temple culture has made to the arts of Kerala.[594] Carnatic music dominates Keralite traditional music. This was the result of Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma's popularisation of the genre in the 19th century.[563] Raga-based renditions known as sopanam accompany kathakali performances.[595] Melam; including the paandi and panchari variants, is a more percussive style of music:[596] it is performed at Kshetram-centered festivals using the chenda. Panchavadyam is a form of percussion ensemble, in which artists use five types of percussion instrument.[596] Kerala's visual arts range from traditional murals to the works of Raja Ravi Varma, the state's most renowned painter.[594] Most of the castes and communities in Kerala have rich collections of folk songs and ballads associated with a variety of themes; Vadakkan Pattukal (Northern Ballads), Thekkan pattukal (Southern Ballads), Vanchi pattukal (Boat Songs), Mappila Pattukal (Muslim songs) and Pallipattukal (Church songs) are a few of them.[597]

Malayalam films carved a niche for themselves in the Indian film industry with the presentation of social themes.[598][599] Directors from Kerala, like Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Mankada Ravi Varma, G. Aravindan, Bharathan, P. Padmarajan, M.T. Vasudevan Nair, K.G. George, Priyadarshan, John Abraham, Ramu Karyat, K S Sethumadhavan, A. Vincent and Shaji N Karun have made a considerable contribution to the Indian parallel cinema. Kerala has also given birth to numerous actors, such as Mohanlal, Mammooty, Satyan, Prem Nazir, Madhu, Sheela, Sharada, Miss Kumari, Jayan, Adoor Bhasi, Seema, Bharath Gopi, Thilakan, Vijaya Raghavan, Kalabhavan Mani, Indrans, Shobana, Nivin Pauly, Sreenivasan, Urvashi, Manju Warrier, Suresh Gopi, Jayaram, Murali, Shankaradi, Kavya Madhavan, Bhavana Menon, Prithviraj, Parvathy (actress), Jayasurya, Dulquer Salmaan, Oduvil Unnikrishnan, Jagathy Sreekumar, Nedumudi Venu, KPAC Lalitha, Innocent and Fahad Fazil. Late Malayalam actor Prem Nazir holds the world record for having acted as the protagonist of over 720 movies.[600] Since the 1980s, actors Mohanlal and Mammooty have dominated the movie industry; Mohanlal has won five National Film Awards (four for acting), while Mammooty has three National Film Awards for acting.[601] Malayalam Cinema has produced a few more notable personalities such as K.J. Yesudas, K.S. Chitra, M.G. Sreekumar, Vayalar Rama Varma, V. Madhusoodanan Nair, M.T. Vasudevan Nair and O.N.V. Kurup,[602] the last two mentioned being recipients of Jnanpith award, the highest literary award in India.[603] Resul Pookutty, who is from Kerala, is only the second Indian to win an academy award for sound design, for the breakthrough film *Slumdog Millionaire*. As of 2018, Malayalam cinema has got 14 awards for the best actor, 6 for the best actress, 11 for the best film, and 13 for the best film director in the National Film Awards, India.[604]

The Sangam literature can be considered as the ancient predecessor of Malayalam.[605] Malayalam literature starts from the Old Malayalam period (9th–13th century CE) and includes such notable writers as the 14th-century Niranam poets (Madhava Panikkar, Sankara Panikkar and Rama Panikkar),[606][607] and the 16th-century poet Thunchaththu Ezhuthachan, whose works mark the dawn of both the modern Malayalam language and its poetry.[608] For the first 600 years of Malayalam calendar, the literature mainly consisted of the oral Ballads such as Vadakkan Pattukal in North Malabar and Thekkan Pattukal in Southern Travancore.[609] Designated a "Classical Language in India" in 2013,[610] it developed into the current form mainly by the influence of the poets Cherusseri Namboothiri,[611][612] Thunchaththu Ezhuthachan,[612] and Poonthanam Nambudiri,[612][613] in the 15th and the 16th centuries of Common Era.[612][614] Unnayi

Variyar,[615] a probable poet of the 17th/18th century CE, and Kunchan Nambiar, a poet of the 18th century CE, have also influenced a lot in the growth of modern Malayalam literature in its pre-mature form.[612] The Bharathappuzha river, also known as River Ponnani, and its tributaries, have played a major role in the development of modern Malayalam Literature.[616]

Paremmakkal Thoma Kathanar and Kerala Varma Valiakoi Thampuran are noted for their contribution to Malayalam prose.[617][618][619] The "triumvirate of poets" (Kavithrayam): Kumaran Asan, Vallathol Narayana Menon, and Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer, are recognised for moving Keralite poetry away from archaic sophistry and metaphysics, and towards a more lyrical mode.[620][621][622] The poets like Moyinkutty Vaidyar and Pulikkottil Hyder have made notable contributions to the Mappila songs, which is a genre of the Arabi Malayalam literature.[623][624] The first travelogue in any Indian language is the Malayalam Varthamanappusthakam, written by Paremmakkal Thoma Kathanar in 1785.[625][626] The prose literature, Malayalam journalism, and criticism began after the latter-half of the 18th century.[625] Contemporary Malayalam literature deals with social, political, and economic life context. The tendency of the modern literature is often towards political radicalism.[627] Malayalam literature has been presented with 6 Jnanapith awards, the second-most for any Dravidian language and the third-highest for any Indian language.[628][629] In the second half of the 20th century, Jnanpith winning poets and writers like G. Sankara Kurup, S. K. Pottakkatt, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, M. T. Vasudevan Nair, O. N. V. Kurup, and Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri, had made valuable contributions to the modern Malayalam literature.[630][631][632][633][634] Later, writers like O. V. Vijayan, Kamaladas, M. Mukundan, Arundhati Roy, Vaikom Muhammed Basheer, have gained international recognition.[635][636][637][638]

Kerala cuisine includes a wide variety of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes prepared using fish, poultry, and meat. Culinary spices have been cultivated in Kerala for millennia and they are characteristic of its cuisine.[639] Rice is a dominant staple that is eaten at all times of day.[640] A majority of the breakfast foods in Kerala are made out of rice, in one form or the other (idli, dosa, puttu, pathiri, appam, or idiyappam), tapioca preparations, or pulse-based vada.[641] These may be accompanied by chutney, kadala, payasam, payar pappadam, appam, chicken curry, beef fry, egg masala and fish curry.[335] Porotta and Biryani are also often found in restaurants in Kerala. Thalassery biryani is popular as an ethnic brand. Lunch dishes include rice and curry along with rasam, pulisherry and sambar.[642] Sadhya is a vegetarian meal, which is served on a banana leaf and followed with a cup of payasam.[643] Popular snacks include banana chips, yam crisps, tapioca chips, Achappam, Unni appam and kuzhalappam.[644][645][646] Seafood specialties include karimeen, prawns, shrimp and other crustacean dishes.[647] Thalassery Cuisine is varied and is a blend of many influences.

Elephants have been an integral part of the culture of the state. Almost all of the local festivals in Kerala include at least one richly caparisoned elephant. Kerala is home to the largest domesticated population of elephants in India—about 700 Indian elephants, owned by temples as well as individuals.[648] These elephants are mainly employed for the processions and displays associated with festivals celebrated all around the state. More than 10,000 festivals are celebrated in the state annually and some animal lovers have sometimes raised concerns regarding the overwork of domesticated elephants during them.[564] In Malayalam literature, elephants are referred to as the "sons of the sahya".[649] The elephant is the state animal of Kerala and is featured on the emblem of the Government of Kerala.[650]

The media, telecommunications, broadcasting and cable services are regulated by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).[651] The National Family Health Survey – 4, conducted in 2015–

16, ranked Kerala as the state with the highest media exposure in India.[652] Dozens of newspapers are published in Kerala, in nine major languages,[653] but principally Malayalam and English.[654] Kerala has the highest media exposure in India.[655][656] The most widely circulated Malayalam-language newspapers are Malayala Manorama, Mathrubhumi, Deshabhimani, Madhyamam, Kerala Kaumudi, Mangalam, Chandrika, Deepika, Janayugam, Janmabhumi, Siraj Daily and Suprabhaatham. Major Malayalam periodicals include Mathrubhumi Azhchappathippu, Vanitha, India Today Malayalam, Madhyamam Weekly, Grihalakshmi, Dhanam, Chithrabhumi and Bhashaposhini. The Hindu is the most read English language newspaper in the state, followed by The New Indian Express.[657] Other dailies include Deccan Chronicle, The Times of India, DNA, The Economic Times and The Financial Express.

DD Malayalam is the state-owned television broadcaster. Multi system operators provide a mix of Malayalam, English, other Indian language and international channels. Some of the popular Malayalam television channels are Asianet, Asianet News, Asianet Plus, Asianet Movies, Surya TV, Surya Movies, Mazhavil Manorama, Manorama News, Kairali TV, Kairali News, Flowers, Media One TV, Mathrubhumi News, Kappa TV, Amrita TV, Reporter TV, Jaihind, Janam TV, Jeevan TV, Kaumudy TV and Shalom TV. With the second-highest internet penetration rate in India,[658] Digital medias including Social medias and OTT services are a main source of information and entertainment in the state. Malayalam version of Google News was launched in September 2008.[659] A sizeable People's science movement has taken root in the state, and such activities as writer's cooperatives are becoming increasingly common.[290][660] BSNL, Airtel, Vodafone Idea Limited, Jio are the major cell phone service providers.[661] Broadband Internet services are widely available throughout the state; some of the major ISPs are BSNL, Asianet Satellite Communications, Reliance Communications, Airtel, Vodafone Idea Limited, MTS, RailWire and VSNL. According to a TRAI report, as of June 2018 the total number of wireless phone subscribers in Kerala is about 43.1 million and the wireline subscriber base is at 1.9 million, accounting for the Telephone Density of 124.15.[662] Unlike in many other states, the urban-rural divide is not visible in Kerala with respect to mobile phone penetration.[663]

By the 21st century, almost all of the native sports and games from Kerala have either disappeared or become just an art form performed during local festivals; including Poorakkali, Padayani, Thalappandukali, Onathallu, Parichamuttukali, Velakali, and Kilithattukali.[664] However, Kalaripayattu, regarded as "the mother of all martial arts in the world", is an exception and is practised as the indigenous martial sport.[665] Another traditional sport of Kerala is the boat race, especially the race of Snake boats.[664]

Cricket and football became popular in the state; both were introduced in Malabar during the British colonial period in the 19th century. Cricketers, like Tinu Yohannan, Abey Kuruvilla, Chundangapoyil Rizwan, Sreesanth, Sanju Samson and Basil Thampi found places in the national cricket team. A cricket franchise from Kerala, the Kochi Tuskers, played in the Indian Premier League's fourth season. However, this team was disbanded after the season because of conflicts of interest among its franchises.[666][667] Kerala has only performed well recently in the Ranji Trophy cricket competition, in 2017–18 reaching the quarterfinals for the first time in history.[664][668] Football is one of the most widely played and watched sports with huge in this state support for club and district level matches. Kochi hosts Kerala Blasters FC in the Indian Super League. The Blasters are one of the most widely supported clubs in the country as well as the fifth most followed football club from Asia in the social media.[669][670][671] Also, Kozhikode hosts Gokulam Kerala FC in the I-League as well as the Sait Nagjee Football Tournament. Kerala is one of the major footballing states in India along with West Bengal and Goa and has produced national players like I. M. Vijayan, C. V.

Pappachan, V. P. Sathyan, U. Sharaf Ali, Jo Paul Ancheri, Ashique Kuruniyan, Muhammad Rafi, Jiju Jacob, Mashoor Shereef, Pappachen Pradeep, C.K. Vineeth, Anas Edathodika, Sahal Abdul Samad, and Rino Anto.[672][673][674][675][676] The Kerala state football team has won the Santhosh Trophy seven times; in 1973, 1992, 1993, 2001, 2004, 2018, and 2022. They were also the runners-up eight times.[677]

Among the prominent athletes hailing from the state are P. T. Usha, Shiny Wilson and M.D. Valsamma, all three of whom are recipients of the Padma Shri as well as Arjuna Award, while K. M. Beenamol and Anju Bobby George are Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna and Arjuna Award winners. T. C. Yohannan, Suresh Babu, Sinimol Paulose, Angel Mary Joseph, Mercy Kuttan, K. Saramma, K. C. Rosakutty, Padmini Selvan and Tintu Luka are the other Arjuna Award winners from Kerala.[664][678] Volleyball is another popular sport and is often played on makeshift courts on sandy beaches along the coast.[679] Jimmy George was a notable Indian volleyball player, rated in his prime as among the world's ten best players.[680] Other popular sports include badminton, basketball and kabaddi.[681] The Indian Hockey team captain P. R. Shreejesh, ace goalkeeper hails from Kerala. International Walkers from the state include K. T. Irfan.[682]

For the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup in India, the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (Kochi), was chosen as one of the six venues where the game would be hosted in India.[683] Greenfield International Stadium at located at Kariavattom in Thiruvananthapuram city, is India's first DBOT (design, build, operate and transfer) model outdoor stadium and it has hosted international cricket matches and international football matches including 2015 SAFF Championship.[684]

Kerala's culture and traditions, coupled with its varied demographics, have made the state one of the most popular tourist destinations in India. In 2012, National Geographic's Traveller magazine named Kerala as one of the "ten paradises of the world"[685][686] and "50 must see destinations of a lifetime".[687] Travel and Leisure also described Kerala as "One of the 100 great trips for the 21st century".[685][688] In 2012, it overtook the Taj Mahal to be the number one travel destination in Google's search trends for India.[689] CNN Travel listed Kerala among its '19 best places to visit in 2019'.[690] Kerala was named by TIME magazine in 2022 among the 50 extraordinary destinations to explore in its list of the World's Greatest Places.[691]

Kerala's beaches, backwaters, lakes, mountain ranges, waterfalls, ancient ports, palaces, religious institutions[692] and wildlife sanctuaries are major attractions for both domestic and international tourists.[693] The city of Kochi ranks first in the total number of international and domestic tourists in Kerala.[694][695] Until the early 1980s, Kerala was a relatively unknown destination compared to other states in the country.[696] In 1986 the government of Kerala declared tourism an important industry and it was the first state in India to do so.[697] Marketing campaigns launched by the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation, the government agency that oversees the tourism prospects of the state, resulted in the growth of the tourism industry.[698] Many advertisements branded Kerala with the tagline Kerala, God's Own Country.[698] Kerala tourism is a global brand and regarded as one of the destinations with highest recall.[698] In 2006, Kerala attracted 8.5 million tourists, an increase of 23.7% over the previous year, making the state one of the fastest-growing popular destinations in the world.[699] In 2011, tourist inflow to Kerala crossed the 10-million mark.[700]

Ayurvedic tourism has become very popular since the 1990s, and private agencies have played a notable role in tandem with the initiatives of the Tourism Department.[696] Kerala is known for its ecotourism initiatives which include mountaineering, trekking and bird-watching programmes in the Western Ghats as the major activities.[701] The state's tourism industry is a major contributor to the state's economy, growing at the rate of 13.3%.[702] The revenue from tourism increased five-fold

between 2001 and 2011 and crossed the ₹ 190 billion mark in 2011. According to the Economic Times[703] Kerala netted a record revenue of INR 365280.1 million from the tourism sector in 2018, clocking an increase of Rs 28743.3 million from the previous year. Over 16.7 million tourists visited Kerala in 2018 as against 15.76 million the previous year, recording an increase of 5.9%. The industry provides employment to approximately 1.2 million people.[700]

The state's only drive-in beach, Muzhappilangad in Kannur, which stretches across five kilometres of sand, was chosen by the BBC as one of the top six drive-in beaches[704] in the world in 2016. Idukki Dam, the world's second arch dam, and Asia's first is at Idukki. The major beaches are at Kovalam, Varkala, Kozhikode, Fort Kochi, Cherai, Alappuzha, Ponnani, Kadalundi, Tanur, Chaliyam, Payyambalam, Kappad, Muzhappilangad and Bekal. Popular hill stations are at Ponmudi, Wayanad, Vagamon, Munnar, Peermade, Ramakkalmedu, Arimbra, Paithalmala of Kannur district, Kodikuthimala, and Nelliampathi.[705] Munnar is 4,500 feet above sea level and is known for tea plantations, and a variety of flora and fauna.[706] Kerala's ecotourism destinations include 12 wildlife sanctuaries and two national parks: Periyar Tiger Reserve, Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary, Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, Thattekad Bird Sanctuary, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Kadalundi Bird Sanctuary, Karimpuzha Wildlife Sanctuary, Muthanga Wildlife Sanctuary, Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary, Eravikulam National Park, and Silent Valley National Park are the most popular among them.[707] The Kerala backwaters are an extensive network of interlocking rivers (41 west-flowing rivers), lakes, and canals that centre around Alleppey, Kumarakom, Ponnani, Nileschwaram, and Punnamada (where the annual Nehru Trophy Boat Race is held in August), Pathiramanal a small island in Muhamma. Padmanabhapuram Palace and the Mattancherry Palace are two nearby heritage sites.[708][709]

Text extracted from URL 49:

Manipur (/ˌmʌnɪˈpʊər/, [8] US also /ˌmæniˈpʊər/; [9] Meitei: Kangleipak[a] [10][11][12]) is a state in northeast India, with the city of Imphal as its capital. [13] It is bounded by the Indian states of Nagaland to the north, Mizoram to the south and Assam to the west. It also borders two regions of Myanmar, Sagaing Region to the east and Chin State to the south. The state covers an area of 22,327 km² (8,621 sq mi). The official and most widely spoken language is the Meitei language (officially known as Manipuri). Native to the Meitei people, it is also used as a lingua franca by smaller communities, who speak a variety of other Tibeto-Burman languages. [14] Manipur has been at the crossroads of Asian economic and cultural exchange for more than 2,500 years. [15] This exchange connects the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia to Southeast Asia, East Asia, Siberia, regions in the Arctic, Micronesia and Polynesia enabling migration of people, cultures and religions. [16][17]

During the days of the British Raj, the Kingdom of Manipur was one of the princely states. [18] Between 1917 and 1939, some people of Manipur pressed the princely rulers for democracy. By the late 1930s, the princely state of Manipur negotiated with the British administration its preference to continue to be part of the British Raj rather than part of British-ruled Burma, which was being separated from India. These negotiations were cut short with the outbreak of World War II in 1939. On 11 August 1947, Maharaja Budhachandra signed an Instrument of Accession, joining the new Indian Union. [19][20] Later, on 21 September 1949, he signed a Merger Agreement, merging the kingdom into India, which led to its becoming a Part C State. [21][22] This merger was later disputed by groups in Manipur, as having been completed without consensus and under duress. [23] The dispute and differing visions for the future has resulted in a 50-year insurgency in the state for

independence from India, as well as in repeated episodes of violence among ethnic groups in the state.[24] From 2009 through 2018, the conflict was responsible for the violent deaths of over 1000 people.[25]

The Meitei people[26] represent around 53% of the population of Manipur state, followed by various Naga ethnic groups at 24% and various Kuki/Zo tribes (also known as Chin-Kuki-Mizo people) at 16%.[27] Manipur's ethnic groups practice a variety of religions.[28] According to 2011 census, Hinduism and Christianity are the major religions of the state.[28][29] Between the 1961 and 2011 censuses of India, the share of Hindus in the state declined from 62% to 41%, while the share of Christians rose from 19% to 41%.[30]

Manipur has primarily an agrarian economy, with significant hydroelectric power generation potential. It is connected to other areas by daily flights through Imphal Airport, the second largest in northeastern India.[31] Manipur is home to many sports and the origin of Manipuri dance,[32] and is credited with introducing polo to Europeans.[33]

The name Manipur (Sanskrit: मणिपुर, romanized: *maṇipura*, lit. "city of jewels") was chosen by Gharib Nawaz, a convert to Hinduism, in the eighteenth century. It is named after a kingdom of the same name mentioned in the Hindu epic Mahabharata. Previously, it had been known as Kangleipak (Meitei: ꯀꯪꯂꯩꯄꯪꯂꯩꯄꯪ, romanized: Kangleipak)[10][34] or Meitei: ꯀꯪꯂꯩꯄꯪꯂꯩꯄꯪ, Meiteileipak, transl: land of the Meiteis, [35] Later, the work Dharani Samhita (1825–34) popularised the Sanskrit legends of the origin of Manipur's name.[36]

Other names include Sanaleibak (Meitei: ꯀꯪꯂꯩꯄꯪꯂꯩꯄꯪ, transl: the land of gold, golden land), not given because Manipur has a lot of the gold mines, but because of its happiness and prosperity.[37][38] This name was mentioned in the 11th-12th century constitution, the Loiyumba Shinyen.10 and is still heard in the official song of Manipur, Sana Leibak Manipur.

The history of Manipur Meiteis is chronicled in Puyas or Puwaris (stories about the forefathers), namely, the Ningthou Kangbalon, Cheitharol Kumbaba, Ningthourol Lambuba, Poireiton Khunthokpa, Panthoibi Khongkul, and so forth in the Meitei script, which is comparable to the Thai script. The historical accounts presented here were recordings from the eyes and the judgment of Meitei kings and Maichou [simple] (Meitei scholars). Hill tribes have folk tales, myths, and legends. Manipur was known by different names at various periods in its history, such as Tilli-Koktong, Poirei-Lam, Sanna-Leipak, Mitei-Leipak, Meitrabak or Manipur (present day). Its capital was Kangla, Yumphal or Imphal (present day). Its people were known by various names, such as Mi-tei, Poirei-Mitei, Meetei, Maitei or Meitei. The Puwaris, Ningthou Kangbalon, Ningthourol Lambuba, Cheitharol Kumbaba, Poireiton Khunthokpa, recorded the events of each King who ruled Manipur over more than 3500 years until 1955 CE (a total of more than 108 kings).[citation needed]

According to the Tai chronicles, Manipur (Kahse) is one of the territories conquered by Samlongpha (1150–1201), the first Chao Pha of Mogaung.[39] A 14th-century inscription from Pagan, Myanmar, mentions Kasan (Manipur) as one of the 21 states under the Mong Mao ruler Thonganbwa (1413–1445/6); he later was captured by the Governor of Taungdwingyi.[40] Ningthou Kangba (15th century BCE) is regarded as the first and foremost king of Manipur. There were times when the country was in turmoil without rulers, and long historical gaps exist between 1129 BCE and 44 BCE.

In 1891 CE, as a result of the British defeat of the Meiteis in the Anglo-Manipuri war of Khongjom, Manipur lost the sovereignty which it had maintained for more than three millennia. From 1926 until 4 January 1947, Manipur was just one of the Pakokku Hill Tracts Districts of British Burma. Manipur

regained its separate identity on 14 August 1947 and, on 15 October 1949, was unified with India.[41]

By the medieval period, marriage alliances between the royal families of Manipur, Ahom kingdom and Burma had become common.[41] Medieval era manuscripts discovered in the 20th century, particularly the Puya, provide evidence that Hindus from the Indian subcontinent had married Manipur royalty by at least the 14th century. In centuries thereafter, royal spouses came also from what is now Assam, Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh and from other South Indian kingdoms as well.[42] Another manuscript suggests that Muslims arrived in Manipur in the 17th century, from what is now Bangladesh, during the reign of Meidingu Khagemba.[42] The socio-political turmoil and wars, particularly the persistent and devastating Anglo-Burmese wars, affected the cultural and religious demography of Manipur.[43]

In 1824, the ruler of Manipur entered into a subsidiary alliance with the British Empire in the Indian subcontinent, which became responsible for Manipur's external defence. The British recognised that the state remained internally self-governing, as a princely state.[44] During World War II, Manipur was the scene of many fierce battles between Japanese invaders and British Indian forces. The Japanese were beaten back before they could enter Imphal, which was one of the turning points of the overall war in South Asia.[45] The Battle of Imphal, known to the Manipuris as Japan Laan, are among the lesser-known battles of the Second World War. Yet the Allied Victory in this battle was a turning point against the Japanese in East Asia.[46][47][48][49]

After the war, India moved towards independence, and the princely states which had existed alongside it became responsible for their own external affairs and defence, unless they joined the new Indian Union or Pakistan. The Manipur State Constitution Act of 1947 established a democratic form of government, with the Maharaja continuing as the head of state.[50] Maharaja Bodhchandra was summoned to Shillong, to merge the kingdom into the Union of India.[51] He is believed to have signed the merger agreement under duress.[52] Thereafter, the legislative assembly was dissolved, and in October 1949 Manipur became part of India.[53] It was made a Union Territory in 1956.[54] and a fully-fledged state in 1972 by the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.[55]

Manipur has a long record of insurgency and inter-ethnic violence.[56][57] Its first armed opposition group, the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), was founded in 1964 aiming to achieve independence from India and establish Manipur as a new country. Over time, many more groups formed, each with different goals, and deriving support from diverse ethnic groups in Manipur. The People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK) was formed in 1977, and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 1978, suspected by Human Rights Watch of receiving arms and training from China.[58] In 1980, the Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP) was formed. These groups began a spree of bank robberies and attacks on police officers and government buildings.[58] The state government appealed to the central government in New Delhi for support in combating this violence.[24]

From 1980 to 2004, the Indian government referred to Manipur as a disturbed area. This term (designated by the Ministry of Home Affairs or a state governor) refers to a territory where extraordinary laws under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act can be used. The laws allow the military to treat private and public spaces in the same manner, detain individuals for up to 24 hours with unlimited renewals, perform warrantless searches, and to shoot and kill individuals who break laws, carry weapons, or gather in groups larger than four. Legal immunity applies to the military.[59] Since 1980, the application of AFSPA has been at the heart of concerns about human rights violations in the region, such as arbitrary killings, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment,

and forced disappearances. Its continued application has led to numerous protests, notably the longstanding hunger strike by Irom Sharmila Chanu.[60][61]

In 2004, the government lifted the disturbed status after a violent attack on a local woman. The rape of a Manipuri woman, Thangjam Manorama Devi, by members of the Assam Rifles paramilitary had led to wide protests including a nude protest by the Meira Paibi women's association.[62]

In May 2023, an ethnic clash between Meitei people and Kuki people led to extensive violence and arson, resulting in 60,000 people displaced from their homes and hundreds more dead and hospitalized.[63] According to data released by Manipur Police, as on September 15, 2023; 175 people have been killed; 1,118 people were injured, and 33 people were missing. 96 bodies remained unclaimed. 5,172 cases of arson including destruction of 4,786 houses and 386 religious places, out of which there were 254 churches and 132 temples, were reported since May. Out of 5,668 arms lost; 1,329 arms, 15,050 ammunition and 400 bombs were recovered.[64][65][66] Indian army troops were deployed to control the situation.[67] International outrage resulted from a report that two Kuki women had been paraded naked and allegedly gang-raped by a mob of Meitei men.[68][69][70]

The state lies at a latitude of 23°83'N – 25°68'N and a longitude of 93°03'E – 94°78'E. The total area covered by the state is 22,327 km² (8,621 sq mi). The capital lies in an oval-shaped valley of approximately 700 sq mi (2,000 km²), surrounded by blue mountains, at an elevation of 790 m (2,590 ft) above sea level.[71] The slope of the valley is from north to south. The mountain ranges create a moderate climate, preventing the cold winds from the north from reaching the valley and barring cyclonic storms.[72]

The state is bordered by the Indian states of Nagaland to its north, Mizoram to its south, Assam to its west, and shares an international border with Myanmar to its east.[73]

The state has four major river basins: the Barak River Basin (Barak Valley) to the west, the Manipur River Basin in central Manipur, the Yu River Basin in the east, and a portion of the Lanye River Basin in the north.[74] The water resources of Barak and Manipur river basins are about 1.8487 Mham (million hectare metres). The overall water balance of the state amounts to 0.7236 Mham in the annual water budget.[75] (By comparison, India receives 400 Mham of rain annually.[76])

The Barak River, the largest of Manipur, originates in the Manipur Hills and is joined by tributaries, such as the Irang, Maku, and Tuivai. After its junction with the Tuivai, the Barak River turns north, forms the border with Assam State, and then enters the Cachar Assam just above Lakhimpur. The Manipur river basin has eight major rivers: the Manipur, Imphal, Iril, Nambul, Sekmai, Chakpi, Thoubal and Khuga. All these rivers originate from the surrounding hills.[77]

Almost all the rivers in the valley area are in the mature stage and therefore deposit their sediment load in the Loktak Lake.[71] The rivers draining the Manipur Hills are comparatively young, due to the hilly terrain through which they flow. These rivers are corrosive and become turbulent in the rainy season. Important rivers draining the western area include the Maku, Barak, Jiri, Irang, and Leimatak. Rivers draining the eastern part of the state, the Yu River Basin, include the Chamu, Khunou and other short streams.[77]

Manipur may be characterised as two distinct physical regions: an outlying area of rugged hills and narrow valleys, and the inner area of flat plain, with all associated landforms. These two areas are distinct in physical features and are conspicuous in flora and fauna. The valley region has hills and mounds rising above the flat surface. The Loktak Lake is an important feature of the central plain.

The total area occupied by all the lakes is about 600 km². The altitude ranges from 40 m at Jiribam to 2,994 m at Mount Tempü peak along the border with Nagaland.

The soil cover can be divided into two broad types, viz. the red ferruginous soil in the hill area and the alluvium in the valley. The valley soils generally contain loam, small rock fragments, sand, and sandy clay, and are varied. On the plains, especially flood plains and deltas, the soil is quite thick. The topsoil on the steep slopes is very thin. Soil on the steep hill slopes is subject to high erosion, resulting in gullies and barren rock slopes. The normal pH value ranges from 5.4 to 6.8.[78]

Natural vegetation occupies an area of about 17,418 km² (6,725 sq mi),[79] or 77.2% of the total geographical area of the state, and consists of short and tall grasses, reeds and bamboos, and trees. About a third of Manipur's forests are protected: 8.42% of the forested land is categorized under Reserved Forests, and 23.95 % under Protected Forests.[80]

There are six major types of forests in Manipur, and 10 subtypes. The six major forest types, according to the state's Forest Department, include Tropical Wet Evergreen Forest, Tropical Moist Deciduous Forests, Sub-Tropical Pine Forest, Tropical Dry Deciduous Forest, Montane Wet Temperate Forest and Sub-alpine Forest.[80]

There are forests of teak, pine, oak, uningthou, leihao, bamboo, and cane. Rubber, tea, coffee, orange, and cardamom are grown in hill areas. Rice is a staple food for Manipuris.[73]

Manipur's climate is largely influenced by the topography of the region. Lying 790 metres above sea level, Manipur is wedged among hills on all sides. This northeastern corner of India enjoys a generally amiable climate, though the winters can be chilly. The maximum temperature in the summer months is 32 °C (90 °F). The coldest month is January, and the warmest July.[citation needed]

The state receives an average annual rainfall of 1,467.5 mm (57.78 in) between April and mid-October. Precipitation ranges from light drizzle to heavy downpour. The capital city Imphal receives an annual average of 933 mm (36.7 in). Rainfall in this region is caused by The South Westerly Monsoon picking up moisture from the Bay of Bengal and heading towards the Eastern Himalaya ranges. This normal rainfall pattern of Manipur enriches the soil and much of the agrarian activities are dependent on it as well.

Manipur is already experiencing climate change, especially changes in weather, with both increased variability in rain as well as increasingly severe changes in temperature.[81]

Manipur has a population of 2,855,794 as per 2011 census.[83] Of this total, 57.2% live in the valley districts and the remaining 42.8% in the hill districts. The valley (plain) is mainly inhabited by the Meitei speaking population (native Manipuri speakers). The hills are inhabited mainly by several ethno-linguistically diverse tribes belonging to the Nagas, the Kukis and smaller tribal groupings. Naga and Kuki settlements are also found in the valley region, though less in numbers. There are also sizable population of Nepalis, Bengalis, Tamils and Marwaris living in Manipur.[citation needed][verification needed]

The distribution of area, population and density, and literacy rate as per the 2001 Census provisional figures are as below:[citation needed]

The Meiteis[26] (synonymous to the Manipuris) constitute the majority of the state's population. They inhabit the Imphal Valley. Nagas and Kuki-Zo are the major tribe conglomerates of tribes inhabiting the surrounding hills. The Kuki-Zos consist of several tribes including Gangte, Hmar, Paite,

Simte, Sukte, Thadou, Vaiphei, Zou, and some smaller tribes. They speak Kuki-Chin languages and predominate the southern hill districts of Manipur. The prominent Naga tribes are Angami, Kabui, Kacha Naga, Mao, Maram, Poumai, Sema and Tangkhul, each speaking its own language. They predominate the northern hill districts of Manipur. In addition, several smaller tribes that were classified as "Old Kuki" by the British administrators populate Chandel and neighbouring districts. Some of them now classify themselves as Nagas while others retain the Kuki classification.[b][85][86][87]

of Total Pop.

Languages in Manipur (2011)[89]

The official language of the state is Meitei (also known as Manipuri). It is a scheduled language in the Republic of India,[90] and serves as the lingua franca in Manipur.[91]

Other than Meitei language, in Manipur, there is a huge amount of linguistic diversity, as is the case in most of the Northeast India. Almost all of the languages are Sino-Tibetan, with many different subgroups represented. There are multiple Kuki-Chin languages, the largest being Thadou and is spoken in all the hill districts. Another major language family is the Naga languages, like Tangkhul, Poula, Rongmei and Mao. Less than 5% speak Indo-European languages, mostly Nepali and Sylheti (also considered as a dialect of Bengali), which is the major language of Jiribam district.[92]

The Directorate of Language Planning and Implementation (AKA Department of Language Planning and Implementation) of the Government of Manipur works for the development and the promotion of Meitei language and other local vernaculars of Manipur.[93]

Religion in Manipur (2011)[94]

Hinduism and Christianity are the major religions practiced in Manipur. Between the 1961 and 2011 censuses of India, the share of Hindus in the state declined from 62% to 41%, while the share of Christians rose from 19% to 41%.[95] The religious groups of the Meitei-speaking people include Hindus, Sanamahists, Meitei Christians and Meitei Pangals. Besides these, the non Meitei-speaking communities (tribals) are mostly Christians.

The Meitei ethnicity (aka Manipuri people) is the majority group following Hinduism in Manipur, beside other minor immigrants following the same faith in the state. Among the indigenous communities of Manipur, Meiteis are the only Hindus as no other indigenous ethnic groups follow this faith.

According to the 2011 Census of India, about 41.39% of the Manipuri people practice Hinduism. The Hindu population is heavily concentrated in the Meitei dominant areas of the Manipur Valley (Imphal Valley), among the Meitei people. The districts of Bishnupur, Thoubal, Imphal East, and Imphal West all have Hindu majorities, averaging 67.62% (range 62.27–74.81%) according to the 2011 census data.[94]

Vaishnavite Hinduism was the state religion of the Kingdom of Manipur. In 1704, Meitei King Charairongba accepted Vaishnavism and changed his traditional Meitei name into Hindu name, Pitambar Singh.[96] However, the first Hindu temples were constructed much earlier. A copper plate excavated from Phayeng dating back to 763 CE (believed to be of the reign of Meitei King Khongtekcha) was found to contain inscriptions about the Hindu deities in Sanskrit words.[97] During the 13th century, Meitei King Khumomba constructed a Lord Hanuman temple.[98] The Vishnu temple at Lamangdong was constructed during 1474 CE (during the reign of Meitei King

Kiyamba), by Brahmins immigrating from the neighborhood Shan State. As per the legends, the temple was constructed to house the Vishnu emblem given to King Kiyamba by King Khekhomba of Shan. Phurailatpam Shubhi Narayan was the first Brahmin priest of this temple.[99]

Christianity is the religion of 41% of the people in the state, but is the majority in rural areas with 53%, and is predominant in the hills. It was brought by Protestant missionaries to Manipur in the 19th century. In the 20th century, a few Christian schools were established, which introduced Western-type education. Christianity is the predominant religion among tribals of Manipur and tribal Christians make up the vast majority (over 96%) of the Christian population in Manipur.[100]

The Meitei Pangals (Meitei: ꯏꯝꯐꯥꯟ ꯏꯝꯐꯥꯟ), also known as Meitei Muslims or Manipuri Muslims, are the third largest religious majority group in the state, comprising about 8.3% of the state population. They belong to the Sunni group of the Hanafi school of Islamic thought and they include Arabs, Bangladeshis, Turanis, Bengalis and Chaghtai Turks.[101]

Sanamahism is the indigenous, polytheistic and animistic ethnic religion of the Meitei people.[102] Sanamahist worship concentrates on the household deity Lainingthou Sanamahi. The ancient Meiteis worshiped a Supreme deity, Salailen, and followed their ancestors. Their ancestor worship and animism was based on Umang Lai – ethnic governing deities worshiped in the sacred groves. Some of the traditional Meitei deities, or Lais are Atiya Sidaba, Pakhangba, Sanamahi, and Panthoibi. Out of the 233,767 people who opted for the "Other religion" option, 222,315 were Sanamahists.[citation needed]

The various other religions were mostly followers of tribal folk religions, 6,444 were Heraka, 2,032 were Jewish and 1,180 were from other tribal religions such as Tingkao Ragwang Chapriak.[citation needed]

The government of Manipur is a collective assembly of 60 elected members, of which 19 are reserved for Scheduled Tribes and 1 for Scheduled Castes.[103] The state sends two representatives to the Lok Sabha of the Parliament of India. The state sends one representative to the Rajya Sabha. The legislature of the state is Unicameral.[104] Representatives are elected for a five-year term to the state assembly and the Indian parliament through voting, a process overseen by the offices of the Election Commission of India.[105]

The state has one autonomous council.

There were many public movements in Manipur against the government:

The violence in Manipur extends beyond the conflict between Indian security forces and insurgent armed groups. There is violence between the Meitei ethnicity, various Naga tribes, various Kuki tribes, and other tribal groups.[24]

Splinter groups have arisen within some of the armed groups, and disagreement between them is rife. Other than the UNLF, PLA, and PREPAK, Manipuri insurgent groups include the Revolutionary Peoples Front (RPF), Manipur Liberation Front Army (MLFA), Kanglei Yawol Kanba Lup (KYKL), Revolutionary Joint Committee (RJC), Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), Peoples United Liberation Front (PULF), Manipur Naga People Front (MNPf), National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-K), National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM), United Kuki Liberation Front (UKLF), Kuki National Front (KNF), Kuki National Army (KNA), Kuki Defence Force (KDF), Kuki Democratic Movement (KDM), Kuki National Organisation (KNO), Kuki Security Force (KSF), Chin Kuki Revolutionary Front (CKRF), Kom Rem Peoples Convention (KRPC), Zomi Revolutionary Volunteers (ZRV), Zomi

Revolutionary Army (ZRA), Zomi Reunification Organisation (ZRO), and Hmar Peoples Convention (HPC).[107][24]

The Meitei insurgent groups seek independence from India. The Kuki insurgent groups want a separate state for the Kukis to be carved out from the present state of Manipur. The Kuki insurgent groups are under two umbrella organisations: the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United Peoples Forum.[108] The Nagas wish to annex part of Manipur and merge with a greater Nagaland or Nagalim, which is in conflict with Meitei insurgent demands for the integrity of their vision of an independent state. There have been many tensions between the tribes and numerous clashes between Naga and Kukis, Meiteis and Muslims.[24]

According to SATP in 2014, there had been a dramatic decline in fatalities in Manipur since 2009. In 2009, 77 civilians died (about 3 per 100,000 people).[25] From 2010 onward, about 25 civilians have died in militant-related violence (about 1 per 100,000 people), dropping further to 21 civilian deaths in 2013 (or 0.8 per 100,000 people). However, there were 76 explosions in 2013 compared to 107 in 2012. Different groups have claimed responsibility for the explosions, some claiming they were targeting competing militant groups, others claiming their targets were state and central government officials.[109]

As a point of comparison, the average annual global rate of violent death between 2004 and 2009 was 7.9 per 100,000 people.[110]

The 2012–2013 gross state domestic product of Manipur at market prices was about ₹10,188 crore (US\$1.3 billion).[111] Its economy is primarily agriculture, forestry, cottage and trade driven.[112] Manipur acts as India's "Gateway to the East" through Moreh and Tamu towns, the land route for trade between India and Burma and other countries in Southeast Asia, East Asia, Siberia, the Arctic, Micronesia and Polynesia. Manipur has the highest number of handicraft units and the highest number of craftspersons in the northeastern region of India.[113]

Manipur produced about 0.1 GWh (0.36 TJ) of electricity in 2010 with its infrastructure.[114] The state has hydroelectric power generation potential, estimated to be over 2 GWh (7.2 TJ). As of 2010, if half of this potential is realised, it is estimated that this would supply 24/7 electricity to all residents, with a surplus for sale, as well as supplying the Burma power grid.[115]

Manipur's climate and soil conditions make it ideally suited for horticultural crops. Growing there are rare and exotic medicinal and aromatic plants.[113] Some cash crops suited for Manipur include Lychee, Cashew, Walnut, Orange, Lemon, Pineapple, Papaya, Passion Fruit, Peach, Pear and Plum.[112] The state is covered with over 3,000 km² (1,200 sq mi) of bamboo forests, making it one of India's largest contributor to its bamboo industry.[113]

Agriculture in Manipur includes a number of smallholding farms, many of whom are owned by women.[116] Climate change, especially changes in temperature and weather are hurting small farmers in the state.[117] Like rural women in other parts of the world, women in agriculture in Manipur are harmed more by the changes in weather, because of less access to support from local governments.[116]

Tuliha Airport, Changangei, Imphal, the only airport of Manipur, connects directly with Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati, and Agartala. It has been upgraded to an international airport. As India's second largest airport in the northeast, it serves as a key logistical centre for northeastern states. The Tuliha Airport has been renamed Bir Tikendrajit Airport.[31] National Highway NH-39 links Manipur with

the rest of the country through the railway stations at Dimapur in Nagaland at a distance of 215 km (134 mi) from Imphal.[citation needed][verification needed]

National Highway 53 (India) connects Manipur with another railway station at Silchar in Assam, which is 269 km (167 mi) away from Imphal. The road network of Manipur, with a length of 7,170 km (4,460 mi) connects all the important towns and distant villages. However, the road condition throughout the state is often deplorable.[118][119] In 2010, Indian government announced that it is considering an Asian infrastructure network from Manipur to Vietnam.[120] The proposed Trans-Asian Railway (TAR), if constructed, will pass through Manipur, connecting India to Burma, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

The tourist season is from October to February when it is often sunny without being hot and humid.[citation needed] The culture features martial arts, dance, theatre and sculpture. Greenery accompanies a moderate climate. The seasonal Shirui Lily plant at Ukhrul (district), Dzüko Valley at Senapati, Sangai (Brow antlered deer) and the floating islands at Loktak Lake are among the rarities of the area. Polo, which can be called a royal game, originated in Manipur.

The Keibul Lamjao National Park (KLNP), which is the world's only floating national park, located in the Loktak lake,[121][122] is under the tentative lists of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, under the title "Keibul Lamjao Conservation Area (KLCA)", additionally covering the buffer of Loktak Lake (140 sq km) and Pumlun Pat (43 sq. km), besides the 40 sq km of the KLNP.[123][124]

The Kangla (officially called the Kangla Fort), which was the historic seat of administration of the Meitei rulers of Manipur Kingdom, is also moved in the Indian Parliament, to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage Site list.[125][126]

The city is inhabited by the Meitei people and other communities. The city contains the Tulihal Airport. The district is divided into East and West. The Khuman Lampak Sports Complex was built for the 1997 National Games. The stadium is used for a sports venue. It also contains a cyclists' velodrome. Most of the imported goods are sold at Paona Bazaar, Gambhir Singh Shopping Complex and Leima Plaza. Kangla Fort, Marjing Polo Statue, Sanamahi Kiyong, Ima Market, Samban-Lei Sekpil, Shree Govindajee Temple, Andro village, and Manipur State Museum are in the city.

48 km (30 mi) from Imphal, lies the largest fresh water lake in northeast India, the Loktak Lake, a miniature inland sea. There is a tourist bungalow atop Sendra Island. Life on the lake includes small islands that are floating weed on which live the lake people, the blue waters of the lake, and colourful water plants. There is a Sendra tourist home with an attached cafeteria in the middle of the lake. Floating islands are made out of the tangle of watery weeds and other plants. The wetland is swampy and is favourable for a number of species. It is in the district of Bishnupur. The etymology of Loktak is "lok = stream / tak = the end" (End of the Streams).[71] Sendra park and resort is opening on the top of Sendra hills and attracting the tourist.

Kaina is a hillock about 921 m (3,022 ft) above sea level. It is a sacred place for Manipuri Hindus. The legend is that, Shri Govindajee appeared in the dream of his devotee, Shri Jai Singh Maharaja, and asked the saintly king to install in a temple, an image of Shri Govindajee. It was to be carved out of a jack fruit tree, which was then growing at Kaina. It is 29 km (18 mi) from Imphal. The Dzüko Valley is in Senapati district bordering with Kohima. There are seasonal flowers and number of flora and fauna. It is at an altitude of 2,438 m (7,999 ft) above sea level, behind Mount Japfü in Nagaland. The rare Dzüko lily is found only in this valley.[citation needed]

Keibul Lamjao National Park, 48 km (30 mi) away from Imphal is an abode of the rare and endangered species of brow antlered deer. This ecosystem contains 17 rare species of mammals.[71] It is the only floating national park of the world.[130][citation needed]

Six km (3.7 mi) to the west of Imphal, at the foot of the pine growing hillocks at Iroisemba on the Imphal-Kangchup Road are the Zoological Gardens. Some brow antlered deer (Sangai) are housed there.

Sadu Chiru waterfall is near Ichum Keirap village[131] 27 km (17 mi) from Imphal, in the Sadar hill area, Senapati district. This consists of three falls with the first fall about 30 m (98 ft) high. Agape Park is in the vicinity.

Thalon Cave (around 910 m (2,990 ft) above sea level) is one of the historical sites of Manipur under Tamenglong district. It is around 185 km (115 mi) from the state capital and around 30 km (19 mi) from Tamenglong district headquarters in north side. From Thalon village, this cave is 4–5 km (2.5–3.1 mi).[132] Khangkhui Cave is a natural limestone cave in Ukhrul district. The big hall in the cave is the darbar hall of the Devil King living deep inside while the northern hall is the royal bedroom, according to local folklore. During World War II, villagers sought shelter here. This cave is an hour's trek from Khangkhui village.[133]

Manipur schools are run by the state and central government or by private organisation. Instruction is mainly in English. Under the 10+2+3 plan, students may enroll in general or professional degree programs after passing the Higher Secondary Examination (the grade 12 examination). The main universities are Manipur University, Central Agricultural University, National Institute of Technology, Manipur, Indian Institute of Information Technology, Manipur, Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences, Regional Institute of Medical Sciences and Indira Gandhi National Tribal University.

Manipur is home to India's first floating elementary school: Loktak Elementary Floating School in Loktak Lake.

Imphal International Airport is situated in the capital Imphal which connects direct flights from Imphal to Kolkata, Guwahati, New Delhi, Bangalore and Agartala.

Manipur is connected to all its neighbouring states with National Highways.

Manipur has one operational railway station, Jiribam. Imphal railway station, is an under-construction railway station in Imphal, the capital of Manipur.

Secular theatre is mostly confined to themes that are not religious; it is performed in the secular or profane spheres. In these are Shumang lila and Phampak lila (stage drama). Shumang lila is very popular. Etymologically Shumang lila is the combination of "Shumang" (courtyard) and "Lila" (play or performance). It is performed in an area of 13×13 ft in the centre of any open space, in a very simple style without a raised stage, set design, or heavy props such as curtains, background scenery, and visual effects. It uses one table and two chairs, kept on one side of the performance space. Its claim as the "theatre of the masses" is underlined by the way it is performed in the middle of an audience that surrounds it, leaving one passage as entrance and exit.[citation needed]

The world of Phampak lila (stage drama) performed in the proscenium theatre is similar, in form, to the Western theatrical model and Indian Natyasastra model though its contents are indigenous. The so-called modern theatre descended on Manipur theatre culture with the performance of Pravas Milan (1902) under the enthusiastic patronage of Sir Churchand Maharaj (1891–1941). The pace of theatrical movement was geared up with the institution of groups such as Manipur Dramatic Union

(MDU) (1930), Arian Theatre (1935), Chitrangada Natya Mandir (1936), Society Theatre (1937), Rupmahal (1942), Cosmopolitan Dramatic Union (1968), and the Chorus Repertory Theatre of Ratan Thiyam (1976).[citation needed] These groups started experimenting with types of plays apart from historical and Puranic ones. Today Manipur theatre is well respected because of excellent productions shown in India and abroad. Manipur plays, both Shumang lila and stage lila, have been a regular feature in the annual festival of the National School of Drama, New Delhi.[citation needed]

Iskcon led by Bhaktisvarupa Damodara Swami started a network of schools in Northeastern India, where more than 4,000 students receive education centred on Vaishnava spiritual values. In 1989 he founded "Ranganiketan Manipuri Cultural Arts Troupe", which has approximately 600 performances at over 300 venues in over 15 countries. Ranganiketan (literally "House of Colorful Arts") is a group of more than 20 dancers, musicians, singers, martial artists, choreographers, and craft artisans.[citation needed] Some of them have received international acclaim.

Manipuri dance also known as Jagoi,[134] is one of the major Indian classical dance forms,[135] named after the state of Manipur.[136][137] It is particularly known for its Hindu Vaishnavism themes, and exquisite performances of love-inspired dance drama of Radha-Krishna called Raslila.[136][134][138] However, the dance is also performed to themes related to Shaivism, Shaktism and regional deities such as Umang Lai during Lai Haraoba.[139][140] The roots of Manipur dance, as with all classical Indian dances, is the ancient Hindu Sanskrit text Natya Shastra, but with influences from the culture fusion between India and Southeast Asia, East Asia, Siberia, Micronesia and Polynesia.[141]

The auditorium of the theatre is on the outskirts of Imphal and the campus stretches for about 2 acres (8,100 m²). It has housing and working quarters to accommodate self-sufficiency of life. The theatre association has churned out internationally acclaimed plays like Chakravyuha and Uttarpriyadashi. Its 25 years of existence in theatre had disciplined its performers to a world of excellence. Chakravyuha taken from the Mahabharat epic had won Fringe Firsts Award, 1987 at the Edinburgh International Theater Festival. Chakravyuha deals with the story of Abhimanyu (son of Arjun) of his last battle and approaching death, whereas Uttarpriyadashi is an 80-minute exposition of Emperor Ashoka's redemption.[citation needed]

Mukna is a popular form of wrestling.[142] Mukna Kangjei, or Khong Kangjei, is a game which combines the arts of mukna (wrestling hockey) and Kangjei (Cane Stick) to play the ball made of seasoned bamboo roots.[143][144]

Yubi lakpi is a traditional full contact game played in Manipur, India, using a coconut, which has some notable similarities to rugby.[144] Yubi lakpi literally means "coconut snatching". The coconut is greased to make it slippery. There are rules of the game, as with all Manipur sports.[145] The coconut serves the purpose of a ball and is offered to the king, the chief guest or the judges before the game begins. The aim is to run while carrying the greased coconut and physically cross over the goal line, while the other team tackles and blocks any such attempt as well as tries to grab the coconut and score on its own. In Manipur's long history, Yubi lakpi was the annual official game, attended by the king, over the Hindu festival of Shree Govindajee.[146] It is like the game of rugby,[147] or American football.[148]

Oolaobi (Woo-Laobi) is an outdoor game mainly played by females. Meitei mythology believes that UmangLai Heloi-Taret (seven deities—seven fairies) played this game on the Courtyard of the temple of Umang Lai Lairembi. The number of participants is not fixed but are divided into two groups (size as per agreement). Players are divided as into Raiders (Attackers) or Defenders (Avoiders).[144]

Hiyang Tannaba, also called Hi Yangba Tanaba, is a traditional boat rowing race and festivity of the Panas.[144]

The origin of modern polo can be traced to Manipur where the world's oldest polo ground lies, Imphal Polo Ground.[149][150] Captain Robert Stewart and Lieutenant Joseph Sherer[151] of the British colonial era first watched locals play a rules-based pulu or sagolkangjei (literally, horse and stick) game in 1859. They adopted its rules, calling the game polo, and playing it on their horses. The game spread among the British in Calcutta and then to England.[33][152]

Apart from these games, some outdoor children's games are fading in popularity. Some games such as Khutlokpi, Phibul Thomba, and Chaphu Thugaibi remain very popular elsewhere, such as in Cambodia. They are played especially during the Khmer New Year.[153]

First of its kind in India, National Sports University will be constructed in Manipur.[154]

The festivals of Manipur are Lui-ngai-ni Ningol Chakouba, Shirui Lily festival, Yaoshang, Gan-ngai, Chumpha, Cheiraoba, Kang and Heikru Hidongba, as well as the broader religious festivals Eid-UI-Fitr, Eid-UI-Adha and Christmas. Most of these festivals are celebrated on the basis of the lunar calendar. Almost every festival celebrated in other states of India is observed.

On 21 November 2017, the Sangai Festival 2017 was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind in Manipur. Held for 10 days, the festival is named after Manipur's state animal, the brow-antlered Sangai deer. The Sangai Festival showcases the tourism potential of Manipur in the field of arts and culture, handloom, handicrafts, indigenous sports, cuisine, music and adventure sports.

Held on 9 November,[157] this is a social festival of the Meitei people of Manipur where married women (Ningol) are invited (Chakouba, literally calling to a meal; for dinner or lunch) to a feast at their parental house accompanied by their children. Besides the feast, gifts are given to the women/invitees and to their children. It is the festival that binds and revives the family relations between the women married away and the parental family. Nowadays, other communities have started celebrating this kind of a family-bonding festival.

Held after the Harvest festival in November,[158][159] this festival predominantly celebrated by Kuki-Chin-Mizo tribes in Manipur has become one of the leading festivals of the state. Kut is not restricted to a community or tribe — the whole state populace participates in merriment. On 1 November of every year, the state declared holiday for Kut celebration.

Held in February or March,[160] Yaosang is considered to be one of the biggest festivals of Manipur. It is the Holi festival (festival of colour) but Yaosang is the regional name given by the people of Manipur.

Khuado Pawi is the harvest festival of the Tedim people who were recognised as Sukte and Zomi in India and Myanmar respectively. The word Pawi means festival in Tedim Zomi language. It is celebrated every year in the month of September–October after harvesting.[161]

Also known as Sajibugi Nongma Panba and held in March or April, Cheiraoba is the new year of Manipur.[148] It is observed on the first lunar day of the lunar month Sajibu (March/April) and so it is also popularly known as Sajibu Cheiraoba. People of Manipur immaculate and decorate their houses and make a sumptuous variety of dishes to feast upon after offering food to the deity on this day. After the feast, as a part of the ritual, people climb hilltops; in the belief that it would excel them to greater heights in their worldly life.[148]

Government

General information

Text extracted from URL 50: The culture of Meitei civilization evolved over thousands of years, beginning in Ancient Kangleipak, continuing most notably into Medieval Kangleipak, while influencing the neighboring states and kingdoms, till present times.

Dogs are mentioned as friends or companions of human beings, in many ancient Meitei tales and texts. In many cases, when dogs died, they were given respect by performing elaborate death ceremonies, equal to that of human beings.[6]

Being wise is appreciated in Meitei society, but cunning is treated with suspicion. If a person is very cunning, they may be pejoratively be called foxy.[7] Foxes appear in a number of Meitei folktales, including The Clever Fox (ꯏꯪꯂꯩꯄ ꯏꯪꯂꯩꯄ, Lamhui Loushing),[8] The Fox and the Jackal (ꯏꯪꯂꯩꯄ ꯏꯪꯂꯩꯄ ꯏꯪꯂꯩꯄ, Lamhui amashung Keishal),[9] and The Fox's Trick (ꯏꯪꯂꯩꯄ ꯏꯪ ꯏꯪꯂꯩꯄ, Lamhui gi Tat).[10]

The architectural works of the Meitei ethnicity is best known through its Meitei temples as well as ancient buildings including palaces, court halls, offices, entrance gates and so on.

“Dance and music play a vital role in the life span of Manipuri people. The most flourishing branch of Manipuri culture is dance. The Manipuri synonym of dance is jagoi and in this dance, body movements create either circle or ellipse. Rasa dance is the finest product of Manipuri culture. Maharaj Bhagyachandra innovated it and it was first performed in Manipur in 1779 in the fullmoon of Kartik.” Meitei literature dates back right from the 15th century BC, during the era of Tangcha Lee La Pakhangpa (Tangja Leela Pakhangba) (1445 BC-1405 BC) in Ancient Manipur. The Puya (Meitei texts) account for most of the accounts for the literary works till Medieval Manipur.[12]

Some of the most prominent Puyas, written in Meitei language (Manipuri language),[13] are given below in alphabetical order:

Important days fall in different times of a year according to Meitei calendar. Some are as follows in alphabetical order:

Sanamahism, the Meitei religion, has thousands of Meitei deities. The List of figures in Meitei mythology accounts for the characters in Meitei mythology, the receptacle of the Meitei religion.

The "Lai Haraoba" festival is an ancient ritualistic music and dance festival, often performed in order to please the Umang Lais and the Lam Lais, whose pantheons are found scattered in the plains of Manipur still today.[14][15][16][17][18][19]

Jagori, originally spelled as Chatkoi, is the traditional form of dancing, performed by the devotees to please the deities.

Here is a list of the "Chatkoi"s ("Jagoi"s) :

C

K

L

M

P

T

The Meitei people perform four types of death ceremony since time immemorial. These are:

In Meitei mythology and Meitei folklore of Manipur, deforestation is mentioned as one of the reasons to make mother nature (most probably goddess Leimarel Sidabi) weep and mourn for the death of her precious children. In an ancient Meitei language narrative poem named the "Hijan Hirao" (Old Manipuri: "Hichan Hilao"), it is mentioned that King Hongnem Luwang Ningthou Punsiba of Luwang dynasty once ordered his men for the cutting down of woods in the forest for crafting out a beautiful royal Hiyang Hiren. His servants spotted on a gigantic tree growing on the slope of a mountain and by the side of a river. They performed traditional customary rites and rituals before chopping off the woods on the next day. In the middle of the night, Mother nature started weeping in the fear of losing her child, the tree.[20][21][22] Her agony is described as follows:

At dead of night

The mother who begot the tree

And the mother of all giant trees, The queen of the hill-range

And the mistress of the gorges

Took the tall and graceful tree

To her bosom and wailed:

"O my son, tall and big,

While yet an infant, a sapling

Didn't I tell you To be an ordinary tree?

The king's men have found you out And bought your life with gold and silver. * *

At daybreak, hacked at the trunk

You will be found lying prostrate. No longer will you respond

To your mother's call Nor a likeness of you

Shall be found, when I survey The whole hillside.

Who shall now relieve my grief?"

Text extracted from URL 51:

Meghalaya (/ˌmeɪɡəˈleɪə/,^[5] or /meɪˈɡɑːləjə/,^[6] lit. "the abode of clouds"^[7]) is a state in northeast India. Meghalaya was formed on 21 January 1972 by carving out two districts from the state of Assam: (a) the United Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills and (b) the Garo Hills.^[8] The estimated population of Meghalaya in 2014 was 3,211,474.^[9] Meghalaya covers an area of approximately 22,429 square kilometres, with a length-to-breadth ratio of about 3:1.^[10]

The state is bound to the south by the Bangladeshi divisions of Mymensingh and Sylhet, to the west by the Bangladeshi division of Rangpur, and to the north and east by India's State of Assam. The capital of Meghalaya is Shillong. During the British rule of India, the British imperial authorities

nicknamed it the "Scotland of the East".[11] English is the official language of Meghalaya. Unlike many Indian states, Meghalaya has historically followed a matrilineal system where the lineage and inheritance are traced through women; the youngest daughter inherits all wealth and she also takes care of her parents.[11]

The state is the wettest region of India, with the wettest areas in the southern Khasi Hills recording an average of 12,000 mm (470 in) of rain a year.[10] About 70 per cent of the state is forested.[12] The Meghalaya subtropical forests ecoregion encompasses the state; its mountain forests are distinct from the lowland tropical forests to the north and south. The forests are notable for their biodiversity of mammals, birds, and plants.

Meghalaya has predominantly an agrarian economy with a significant commercial forestry industry. The important crops are potatoes, rice, maize, pineapples, bananas, papayas, and spices. The service sector is made up of real estate and insurance companies. Meghalaya's gross state domestic product for 2012 was estimated at ₹16,173 crore (US\$2.0 billion) in current prices.[13] The state is geologically rich in minerals, but it has no significant industries.[11] The state has about 1,170 km (730 mi) of national highways. It is also a major logistical center for trade with Bangladesh.[10]

In July 2018, the International Commission on Stratigraphy divided the Holocene epoch into three,[14][15] with the late Holocene being called the Meghalayan stage/age,[16][17] since a speleothem in Mawmluh cave indicating a dramatic worldwide climate event around 2250 BCE had been chosen as the boundary stratotype.[18]

One of the biggest Central Institutes, the North Eastern Council Secretariat, is also situated in Shillong.

The word Meghālaya means "the abode of clouds"; derives from a compound of the Sanskrit words megha "cloud" + ālaya "abode".[7][19]

Meghalaya, alongside neighbouring Indian states, has been of archaeological interest. People have lived in Meghalaya since the Neolithic period. Neolithic sites discovered so far are located in areas of high elevation in Khasi Hills, Garo Hills and in neighbouring states, where Neolithic style jhum or shifting cultivation is practised even today. The highland plateaus fed by abundant rains provided safety from floods and a rich soil.[20] The importance of Meghalaya is its possible role in human history via domestication of rice. A theory for the origin of rice is by Ian Glover while states, "India is the center of greatest diversity of domesticated rice with over 20,000 identified species and Northeast India is the most favorable single area of the origin of domesticated rice." [21] The limited archaeology done in the hills of Meghalaya suggest human settlement since ancient times.[22]

After the Conquest of Taraf in 1304, Shah Arifin Rafiuddin, a disciple of Shah Jalal, migrated and settled in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills where he preached Islamic monotheism to the local people. His khanqah remains in Sarping / Laurergarh on the Bangladeshi border but the part containing his mazar is in Meghalaya on top of Laur Hill.[23]

Bhaitbari is an archaeological site first discovered and excavated by A. K. Sharma in 1993, a fortification of burnt brick with mud core was discovered at Meghalaya - Assam border and is dated to 4th-8th century AD, the city has been speculated to have been one of the capital cities of Kamarupa.[24]

The British discovered *Camellia sinensis* (tea shrub) in 1834 in Assam and later companies started renting land from 1839 onwards.[25][clarification needed]

The Khasi, Garo, and Jaintia tribes had their own kingdoms until they came under British administration in the 19th century. Later, the British incorporated Meghalaya into Assam in 1835.[11] The region enjoyed semi-independent status by virtue of a treaty relationship with the British Crown. When Bengal was partitioned on 16 October 1905 by Lord Curzon, Meghalaya became a part of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. When the partition was reversed in 1912, Meghalaya became a part of the province of Assam. On 3 January 1921 in pursuance of Section 52A of the Government of India Act of 1919, the governor-general-in-council declared the areas now in Meghalaya, other than the Khasi states, as "backward tracts." Subsequently, the British administration enacted the Government of India Act 1935, which regrouped the backward tracts into two categories: "excluded" and "partially excluded" areas.[citation needed]

At the time of Indian independence in 1947, present-day Meghalaya constituted two districts of Assam and enjoyed limited autonomy within the state of Assam. A movement for a separate hill state began in 1960.[8] On 11 September 1968, the Government of India announced a scheme for constituting an autonomous state within the state of Assam comprising certain areas specified in Part A of the table appended to paragraph 20 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution.[26] Accordingly, the Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act of 1969 was enacted for the formation of an autonomous state.[27] Meghalaya was formed by carving out two districts from the state of Assam: the United Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills, and the Garo Hills.[8] The name 'Meghalaya' coined by geographer S.P. Chatterjee in 1936 was proposed and accepted for the new state.[28][29] The Act came into effect on 2 April 1970, with the autonomous state having a 37-member legislature in accordance with the Sixth Schedule to the Indian constitution.

In 1971, the Parliament passed the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971, which conferred full statehood on the autonomous state of Meghalaya. Meghalaya attained statehood on 21 January 1972, with a Legislative Assembly of its own.[8]

Meghalaya is one of the Seven Sister States of northeast India. The state of Meghalaya is mountainous, with stretches of valley and highland plateaus, and it is geologically rich. It consists mainly of Archean rock formations. These rock formations contain rich deposits of valuable minerals like coal, limestone, uranium and sillimanite.[30] The name Meghalaya was given by Shiba P. Chatterjee, a geography professor at Kolkata University.[31]

Meghalaya has many rivers. Most of these are rainfed and seasonal. The important rivers in the Garo Hills region are Ganol, Daring, Sanda, Bandra, Bugai, Dareng, Simsang, Nitai and the Bhupai. In the central and eastern sections of the plateau, the important rivers are Khri, Umtrew, Digaru, Umiam or Barapani, Kynshi (Jadukata), Umngi, Mawpa, Umiam Khwan, Umngot, Umkhen, Myntdu and Myntang. In the southern Khasi Hills region, these rivers have created deep gorges and several waterfalls.[citation needed]

The elevation of the plateau ranges between 150 m (490 ft) to 1,961 m (6,434 ft). The central part of the plateau comprising the Khasi Hills has the highest elevations, followed by the eastern section comprising the Jaintia Hills region. The highest point in Meghalaya is Shillong Peak, which is a prominent IAF station in the Khasi Hills overlooking the city of Shillong. It has an altitude of 1961 m. The Garo Hills region in the western section of the plateau is nearly plain. The highest point in the Garo Hills is Nokrek Peak with an altitude of 1515 m.[citation needed]

With the average annual rainfall as high as 12,000 mm (470 in) in some areas, Meghalaya is the wettest place on Earth.[32] The western part of the plateau, comprising the Garo Hills region with lower elevations, experiences high temperatures for most of the year. The Shillong area, with the

highest elevations, experiences generally low temperatures. The maximum temperature in this region rarely goes beyond 28 °C (82 °F),[33] whereas sub-zero winter temperatures are common.

The town of Sohra (Cherrapunji) in the Khasi Hills south of capital Shillong holds the world record for most rain in a calendar month, while the village of Mawsynram, near Sohra (Cherrapunji), holds the record for the most rain in a year.[34][35]

About 70% of the state is forested, of which 9,496 km² (3,666 sq mi) is dense primary subtropical forest.[12] The Meghalayan forests are considered to be among the richest botanical habitats of Asia. These forests receive abundant rainfall and support a vast variety of floral and faunal biodiversity. A small portion of the forest area in Meghalaya is under what are known as "sacred groves" (see Sacred groves of India). These are small pockets of an ancient forest that have been preserved by the communities for hundreds of years due to religious and cultural beliefs. These forests are reserved for religious rituals and generally remain protected from any exploitation. These sacred groves harbour many rare plant and animal species. The Nokrek Biosphere Reserve in the West Garo Hills and the Balphakram National Park in the South Garo Hills are considered to be the most biodiversity-rich sites in Meghalaya.[citation needed] In addition, Meghalaya has three wildlife sanctuaries. These are the Nongkhyllem Wildlife Sanctuary, the Siju Sanctuary, and the Baghmara Sanctuary, which is also the home of the insect-eating pitcher plant *Nepenthes khasiana* also called "Me'mang Koksi" in the Garo language.[citation needed]

Due to diverse climatic and topographic conditions, Meghalaya forests support a vast floral diversity, including a large variety of parasites, epiphytes, succulent plants and shrubs. Two of the most important tree varieties are *Shorea robusta* (sal tree) and *Tectona grandis* (teak). Meghalaya is also the home to a large variety of fruits, vegetables, spices, and medicinal plants. Meghalaya is also famous for its large variety of orchids — nearly 325 of them. Of these, the largest variety is found in the Mawmai, Mawmluh and Sohrarim forests in the Khasi hills.

Meghalaya also has a large variety of mammals, birds, reptiles and insects.[38] The important mammal species include elephants, bear, red pandas,[39] small Indian civets, mongooses, weasels, rodents, gaur, wild buffalo,[40] deer, wild boar and a number of primates. Meghalaya also has a large variety of bats. The limestone caves in Meghalaya such as the Siju Cave are home to some of the nation's rarest bat species. The hoolock gibbon is found in all districts of Meghalaya.[41]

Common reptiles in Meghalaya are lizards, crocodiles and tortoises. Meghalaya also has a number of snakes including the python, copperhead, green tree racer, Indian cobra, king cobra, coral snake and vipers.[42]

Meghalaya's forests host 660 species of birds, many of which are endemic to Himalayan foothills, Tibet and Southeast Asia. Of the birds found in Meghalaya forests, 34 are on worldwide threatened species list and 9 are on the critically endangered list.[36] Prominent birds spotted in Meghalaya include those from the families of Phasianidae, Anatidae, Podicipedidae, Ciconiidae, Threskiornithidae, Ardeidae, Pelecanidae, Phalacrocoracidae, Anhingidae, Falconidae, Accipitridae, Otidae, Rallidae, Heliornithidae, Gruidae, Turnicidae, Burhinidae, Charadriidae, Glareolidae, Scolopacidae, Jacanidae, Columbidae, Psittacidae, Cuculidae, Strigidae, Caprimulgidae, Apodidae, Alcedinidae, Bucerotidae, Ramphastidae, Picidae, Campephagidae, Dicruridae, Corvidae, Hirundinidae, Cisticolidae, Pycnonotidae, Sylviidae, Timaliidae, Sittidae, Sturnidae, Turdidae, Nectariniidae and Muscicapidae.[36] Each of these families have many species. The great Indian hornbill is the largest bird in Meghalaya. Other regional birds found include the grey peacock

pheasant, the large Indian parakeet and the common green pigeon.[43] Meghalaya is also home to over 250 species of butterflies, nearly a quarter of all butterfly species found in India.

In 2020, scientists have discovered the largest known subterranean fish in Meghalaya's Jaintia Hills.[44]

Tribal people make up the majority of Meghalaya's population. The Khasis are the largest group, followed by the Garos then the Jaintias. These were among those known to the British as "hill tribes." Other groups include the Bengali, Hajongs, the Biates, the Koches and related Rajbongshis, the Boros, Dimasa, Kuki, Lakhar, Tiwa (Lalung), Karbi, Rabha and Nepali.[citation needed]

Meghalaya recorded the highest decennial population growth of 27.82% among all the seven north-eastern states, as per the provisional report of census 2011. The population of Meghalaya as of 2011 has been estimated at 2,964,007 of which females constitute 1,492,668 and males 1,471,339. As per the census of India 2011, the sex ratio in the state was 986 females per 1,000 males which was far higher than the national average of 940. The urban female sex ratio of 985 was higher than the rural sex ratio of 972.[2]

Religion in Meghalaya (2011)[46]

Meghalaya is one of three states in India to have a Christian majority. About 75% of the population practices Christianity, with Presbyterians, Baptists, Church of God, and Catholics the more common denominations.[46] The religion of the people in Meghalaya is closely related to their ethnicity. Close to 90% of the Garo tribe and nearly 80% of the Khasi are Christian, while more than 97% of the Hajong, 98.53% of the Koch, and 94.60% of the Rabha tribes are Hindu.[47]

Hindus are the largest religious minority in Meghalaya with 11.52% of the total state's population as of 2011 census[46] Hindus are concentrated mainly in West Garo Hills, East Khasi Hills and Ri-Bhoi with 19.11 per cent, 17.55 per cent and 11.96 per cent respectively. The Nartiang Durga Temple is a major Hindu temple in Meghalaya and it is one of the 51 Shakti peethas on Earth.[48]

Muslims constitute 4.39 % of the population[46] The Muslims are concentrated mainly in West Garo Hills with 16.60 %.[49]

Conversion from indigenous to Christianity began in the 19th century during the British colonial era. In the 1830s, American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society had become active in Northeast India to convert indigenous tribes to Christianity.[50] Later, they were offered to expand and reach into Cherrapunji Meghalaya, but they declined out of the lack of resources. Taking up the offer, the Welsh Presbyterian Mission began work at the Cherrapunji mission field. By the early 1900s, other Protestant denominations of Christianity were active in Meghalaya. The outbreak of World Wars forced the preachers to return home to Europe and America. It is during this period that Catholicism took root in Meghalaya and neighbouring regions. In the 20th century, Union Christian College started operations at Umiam, Shillong. Currently, Presbyterians and Catholics are two most common Christian denominations found in Meghalaya.[51]

Languages of Meghalaya in 2011

[52]

English is the official language of the state.[53] The most spoken languages in Meghalaya are Khasi (33.82%) and Garo (31.60%) followed by Pnar (10.69%), Bengali (6.44%), Nepali (1.85%), War (1.73%), Hindi (1.62%), Hajong (1.40%) and Assamese (1.34%).[52]

Khasi (also spelled Khasia, Khassee, Cossyah, and Kyi) is a branch of the Mon–Khmer family of the Austroasiatic stock and according to 2001 census, Khasi is spoken by about 1,128,575 people residing in Meghalaya. Many words in the Khasi language have been borrowed from Indo-Aryan languages such as Assamese, Bengali and Nepali. Moreover, the Khasi language originally had no script of its own. The Khasi language is one of the very few surviving Mon–Khmer languages in India today.[citation needed]

The Garo language has a close affinity with the Bodo languages, a small family of Tibeto-Burman languages. Garo, spoken by the majority of the population, is spoken in many dialects such as Abeng or Ambeng,[54] Atong, Akawe (or Awe), Matchi Dual, Chibok, Chisak Megam or Lyngngam, Ruga, Gara-Ganching and Matabeng.

Pnar is spoken by many people of both the West and East Jaintia Hills. The language is related to the Khasi language. Apart from the main languages, various local dialect are being spoken by the War Jaintia (West Jaintia Hills), Maram and Lymngam (West Khasi Hills), War Pynursla (East Khasi Hills), Tiwa language by Tiwa peoples of Ri-Bhoi district. Another example is the Biate language spoken by many people inhabiting the south-eastern part of Meghalaya bordering Assam.[citation needed]

Indo-Aryan languages like Assamese, Bengali, Hajong, Hindi and Nepali are spoken by many people residing mostly in the East Khasi Hills district and the West Garo Hills district.[52]

English is spoken as a common language across the diverse ethnic and demographic groups. In urban centres most of the people can speak English; rural residents vary in their ability.[citation needed]

Meghalaya currently has 12 districts.[55]

Jaintia Hills:

Khasi Hills Division:

Garo Hills Division:

The Jaintia Hills district was created on 22 February 1972. It has a total geographical area of 3,819 square kilometres (1,475 sq mi) and a population of 295,692 as per the 2001 census. The district headquarters is in Jowai. Jaintia Hills district is the largest producer of coal in the state. Coal mines can be seen all over the district. Limestone production in the state is increasing, as there is high demand from cement industries.

Recently, the one big district was divided into two: West Jaintia Hills and East Jaintia Hills

The East Khasi Hills district was carved out of the Khasi Hills on 28 October 1976. The district has covered an area of 2,748 square kilometres (1,061 sq mi) and has a population of 660,923 as per the 2001 census. The headquarters of East Khasi Hills is located in Shillong.

The Ri-Bhoi district was formed by the further division of East Khasi Hills district on 4 June 1992. It has an area of 2,448 square kilometres (945 sq mi). The total population of the district was 192,795 in the 2001 census. The district headquarters is at Nongpoh. It has a hilly terrain, and a large part of the area is covered with forests. The Ri-Bhoi district is known for its pineapples and is the largest producer of pineapples in the state.

The West Khasi Hills district is the largest district in the state with a geographical area of 5,247 square kilometres (2,026 sq mi). The district was carved out of Khasi Hills District on 28 October 1976. The district headquarters are located at Nongstoin.

The East Garo Hills district was formed in 1976 and has a population of 247,555 as per the 2001 census. It covers an area of 2,603 square kilometres (1,005 sq mi). The District Headquarters are at Williamnagar, earlier known as Simsangiri. Nongalbibra, a town in this district, has many coal mines. The coal is transported to Goalpara and Jogighopa via NH62.

The West Garo Hills district lies in the western part of the state and covers a geographical area of 3,714 square kilometres (1,434 sq mi). The population of the district is 515,813 as per the 2001 census. The district headquarters are located at Tura.

The South Garo Hills district came into existence on 18 June 1992 after the division of the West Garo Hills district. The total geographical area of the district is 1,850 square kilometres (710 sq mi). As per the 2001 census the district has a population of 99,100. The district headquarters are at Baghmara.

In 2012, there were 11 districts, 16 towns and an estimated 6,026 villages in Meghalaya.[56] A 12th district, Eastern West Khasi Hills, was created in 2021.[57]

The table below shows the human development index of various districts of Meghalaya, as of 2021.[58]

Meghalaya schools are run by the state government or by private organisations, including religious institutions. Instruction is only in English. Other Indian languages like Assamese, Bengali, Garo, Hindi, Khasi, Mizo, Nepali and Urdu are taught as optional subjects. The secondary schools are affiliated with the council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE), the National Institute of Open School (NIOS) or the Meghalaya Board of School Education.

Under the 10+2+3 plan, after completing secondary school, students typically enroll for two years in a junior college, also known as pre-university, or in schools with a higher secondary facility affiliated with the Meghalaya Board of School Education or any central board. Students choose from one of three streams: liberal arts, commerce or science. Upon completing the required coursework, students may enroll in general or professional degree programs.

Meghalaya's Governor is Phagu Chauhan since February 2023.[61][62]

The Meghalaya Legislative Assembly has 60 members at present. Meghalaya has two representatives in the Lok Sabha, one each from Shillong and Tura. It also has one representative in the Rajya Sabha.

Since the creation of the state the Gauhati High Court has jurisdiction in Meghalaya. A Circuit Bench of the Guwahati High Court has been functioning at Shillong since 1974. In March 2013, the Meghalaya High Court was separated from the Gauhati High Court and now the state has its own High Court.

To provide local self-governance machinery to the rural population of the country, provisions were made in the Constitution of India; accordingly, the Panchayati Raj institutions were set up. Because of distinct customs and traditions prevalent in the northeast region, it was felt necessary to have a separate political and administrative structure in the region.[citation needed] Some of the tribal communities in the region had their own traditional political systems, and it was felt that Panchayati Raj institutions may come into conflict with these traditional systems. The Sixth Schedule was appended to the Constitution on the recommendations of a subcommittee formed under the leadership of Gopinath Bordoloi, and the constitution of Autonomous District Councils is provided in certain rural areas of the northeast including areas in Meghalaya.

The ADCs in Meghalaya are the following:

Meghalaya is predominantly an agrarian economy. Agriculture and allied activities engage nearly two-thirds of the total workforce in Meghalaya. This sector's contribution to the state's NSDP is about one-third. Agriculture in the state is characterised by low productivity and unsustainable farm practices. Despite the large percentage of the population engaged in agriculture, the state imports food from other Indian states.[citation needed] Infrastructural constraints have also prevented the economy of the state from creating high-income jobs at a pace commensurate with that of the rest of India.

Meghalaya's gross state domestic product for 2012 was estimated at ₹16,173 crore (US\$2.0 billion) in current prices.[13] As of 2012, according to the Reserve Bank of India, about 12% of total state population is below the poverty line, with 12.5% of the rural Meghalaya population is below the poverty line; while in urban areas, 9.3% are below the poverty line.[63]

Meghalaya is basically an agricultural state with about 80% of its population depending entirely on agriculture for their livelihood. Nearly 10% of the geographical area of Meghalaya is under cultivation. Agriculture in the state is characterised by limited use of modern techniques, low yields, and low productivity. As a result, despite the vast majority of the population being engaged in agriculture, the contribution of agricultural production to the state's GDP is low, and most of the population engaged in agriculture remain poor. A portion of the cultivated area is under the traditional shifting agriculture known locally as Jhum cultivation.

Meghalaya produced 230,000 tonnes of food grains in 2001. Rice is the dominant food grain crop accounting for over 80% of the food grain production in the state. Other important food grain crops are maize, wheat, and a few other cereals and pulses. Besides these, potato, ginger, turmeric, black pepper, areca nut, Bay leaf (*Cinnamomum tamala*), betel, short-staple cotton, jute, mesta, mustard and rapeseed etc. are some of the important cash crops. Besides the major food crops of rice and maize, the state is renowned for its horticultural crops like orange, lemon, pineapple, guava, litchi, banana, jack fruits and fruits such as plum, pear, and peach.[64]

Grains and staples production covers about 60% of the land area dedicated to crops. With the introduction of different crops of high yielding varieties in the mid-1970s, a remarkable increase in food grain production has been made. A major breakthrough was achieved when high yielding varieties of paddy[65] such as Masuri, Pankaj IR 8, RCPL and other improved varieties series – especially IR 36 which is suitable for Rabi season – allowing three crops to be grown every year. Another milestone was reached when Megha I and Megha II, which are cold tolerant rice varieties developed by the ICAR North East Region at Umroi near Shillong, was released in 1991–92 for the higher altitude regions where there was no high yielding rice varieties earlier. Today the state can claim that about 42% area under paddy has been covered with high yielding varieties with the average productivity of 2,300 kg/ha (2,100 lb/acre). As is the case with maize and wheat where the productivity has increased tremendously with the introduction of HYV from 534 kg/ha (476 lb/acre) during 1971–72 to 1,218 kg/ha (1,087 lb/acre) of maize and from 611 kg/ha (545 lb/acre) to 1,490 kg/ha (1,330 lb/acre) of wheat.[66]

Oilseeds such as rapeseed, mustard, linseed, soybean, castor, and sesame are grown on nearly 100 km² (39 sq mi). Rape and mustard are the most important oilseeds[67] accounting for well over two-thirds of the oilseed production of nearly 6.5 thousand tonnes. Fiber crops such as cotton, jute, and mesta are among the only cash crops in Meghalaya, grown in Garo Hills.[68] These have been losing popularity in recent years as indicated by their declining yield and area under cultivation.

Climatic conditions in Meghalaya permit a large variety of horticulture crops including fruits, vegetables, flowers, spices, mushrooms, and medicinal plants.[64] These are considered to be higher value crops, but home food security concerns have prevented farmers at large from embracing them. The important fruits grown include citrus fruits, pineapples, papayas, and bananas. In addition to this, a large variety of vegetables are grown in the state, including cauliflower, cabbages, and radishes.

Areca nut plantations can be seen all over the state, especially around the road from Guwahati to Shillong. Other plantation crops like tea, coffee and cashews have been introduced lately and are becoming common. A large variety of spices, flowers, medicinal plants and mushrooms are grown in the state.

Meghalaya has a rich base of natural resources. These include minerals such as coal, limestone, sillimanite, Kaolin and granite among others. Meghalaya has a large forest cover, rich biodiversity, and numerous water bodies. The low level of industrialisation and the relatively poor infrastructure base acts as an impediment to the exploitation of these natural resources in the interest of the state's economy. In recent years two large cement manufacturing plants with production capacity more than 900 MTD have come up in Jaintia Hills district and several more are in pipeline to use the rich deposit of very high-quality limestone available in this district.

Meghalaya, with its high mountains, deep gorges, and abundant rains has a large, unused hydroelectric potential. The assessed generation capacity exceeds 3000 MW. The current installed capacity in the state is 185 MW, but the state itself consumes 610 MW. In other words, it imports electricity.[69] The economic growth of the state suggests rising demand for electricity. The state has the potential to export net hydroelectric-generated electricity and earn income for its internal development plans. The state also has large deposits of coal, thus being a candidate for thermal power plants.

Several projects are under works. The proposed Garo Hills thermal project at Nangalbibra is expected to generate an additional 751 MW of power. There is a proposal for setting up a 250 MW thermal power plant in West Khasi Hills. The State Government aims to increase its power generation output by about 2000-2500 MW, of which 700-980 MW will be thermal based while 1400-1520 MW will be hydroelectricity. The State Government has outlined a cost-shared public-private partnership model to accelerate private sector investments in its power sector.[70] The generation transmission, transformation and distribution of electricity is entrusted to the Meghalaya Energy Corporation Limited which was constituted under the Electricity Supply Act, 1948. At present, there are five hydel power stations and one mini hydel including Umiām Hydel Project, Umtrew Hydel Project, Myntdu-Leshka-I Hydel Project, and the Sunapani Micro Hydel (SESU) Project.

For the 12th five-year plan of India, there is a proposal to set up more hydel power projects in the state: Kynshi (450 MW), Umngi –1 (54 MW), Umiām-Umtrew -V (36 MW), Ganol (25 MW), Mawphu (120 MW), Nongkolait (120 MW), Nongnaw (50 MW), Rangmaw (65 MW), Umngot (260 MW), Umduna (57 MW), Myntdu-Leshka-II (60 MW), Selim (170 MW) and Mawblei (140 MW).[71] Of these, Jaypee Group has committed itself to building the Kynshi and Umngot projects in Khasi hills.[72]

Meghalaya had a literacy rate of 62.56 as per the 2001 census and is the 27th most literate state in India. This increased to 75.5 in 2011. As of 2006, the state had 5851 primary schools, 1759 middle schools, and 655 higher secondary schools respectively. In 2008, 518,000 students were enrolled in

its primary schools, and 232,000 in upper primary schools. The state monitors its school for quality, access, infrastructure and teachers training.[73]

Institution for higher studies like Indian Institute of Management, the University of Technology and Management (USTM) which is in Shillong is the first Indian university to introduce cloud computing engineering as a field of study, in collaboration with IBM and the University of Petroleum and Energy Studies. IIM Shillong is one of the top ranked management institutes in the country.[74]

The state has 13 state government dispensaries, 22 community health centres, 93 primary health centres, 408 sub-centres. There were 378 doctors, 81 pharmacists, 337 staff nurses and 77 lab technicians as of 2012. A special program has been launched by the state government for the treatment of tuberculosis, leprosy, cancer and mental diseases. Though there has been a steady decline in the death rate, improvement in life expectancy and an increase in health infrastructure, about 42.3% of the state's population is still uncovered by health care, according to the status paper prepared by the Health Department. There are numerous hospitals being set up, both private and government, some of them are Civil Hospital, Ganesh Das Hospital, K.J.P. Synod Hospital, NEIGRIHMS, North Eastern Institute of Ayurveda & Homoeopathy (NEIAH), R P Chest Hospital, Wood Land Hospital, Nazareth Hospital, Christian Hospital etc.

The main tribes in Meghalaya are the Khasis, the Garos, and the Jaintias. Each tribe has its own culture, traditions, dress, and language.

The majority of the population and the major tribal groups in Meghalaya follow a matrilineal system where lineage and inheritance are traced through women. The youngest daughter inherits all the property and she is the caretaker of aged parents and any unmarried siblings.[11] In some cases, such as when there is no daughter in the family or other reasons, the parents may nominate another girl such as a daughter in law as the heir of the house and all other property they may own.

The Khasi and Jaintia tribesmen follow the traditional matrilineal norm, wherein the Khun Khatduh (or the youngest daughter) inherits all the property and responsibilities for the family. The male line, particularly the mother's brother, may indirectly control the ancestral property since he may be involved in important decisions relating to property including its sale and disposal. In case a family has no daughters, the Khasi and Jaintia (also called Syntengs) have the custom of *ia rap iing*, where the family adopts a girl from another family, perform religious ceremonies with the community, and she then becomes *ka trai iing* (head of the house).[75]

In the Garo lineage system, the youngest daughter inherits the family property by default, unless another daughter is so named by the parents. She then becomes designated as *nokna* meaning 'for the house or home'. If there are no daughters, a chosen daughter-in-law (*bohari*) or an adopted child (*deragata*) comes to stay in the house and inherit the property. This adopted girl child is then the head of the house.[citation needed]

Meghalaya has one of the world's largest surviving matrilineal cultures.

Meghalaya's civil society considers the people of the state as a collective community that exists through civil society organisations (CSOs), and serves the general interests of the public.[76] These organisations include a wide spectrum of non-government organisations (NGOs), other community associations, and foundations. The current status of Meghalaya's civil society and the effectiveness of the many programs is debated by scholars.

There are currently over 181 NGOs within Meghalaya that vary from charities to volunteer services and social empowerment groups.[77][78] Most civil society organisations are also ethnically

affiliated as the interests of different groups are championed between each organisation. This in turn causes them to become representatives of ethnic communities around the state since the same individuals from such communities also participate in corresponding organisations that protect their ethnic interests. Three student organisations that represent the major ethnic groups of Meghalaya: Khasi Students' Union (KSU), Jaintia Students' Union (JSU), and Garo Students' Union (GSU) embody this example into their overall functions as CSOs by applying pressure to local government in order to ensure that certain rights are being met.[76]

There also exists many forms of community associations that revolve around the idea of community building. This includes examples such as sports, religious, educational, and other clubs that aim to establish individuals into different social circles based on their interests.[78]

Philanthropic foundations in Meghalaya's civil society strive for the overall well-being of its citizens. The Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) has recently partnered with the government of Meghalaya to improve public health in many rural parts of the state by first strengthening the abilities of non-government organisations to perform such services.[79]

Scholars are divided on the effectiveness Meghalaya's civil society. Some argue for its important role in state development through CSOs, while others point out that their impact is not only limited from above by the central government and its military, but also from below by insurgent groups .[80]

Concerns over national security, such as the unification of neighbouring hostile countries and local insurgent groups for a possible attack on the Indian state, has served as the longstanding point of emphasis on how the Indian Central Government operates in the Northeast. Different administrative programs have been created to establish peace and stability in this region through economic development.[81] The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) that was passed in 1958 by the Indian Government granted the Indian Army exclusive powers to maintain order in this area. Many insurgent organisations were also developed alongside cultural and political movements, making it very difficult to distinguish them from what constitutes a civil society.[80] These two factors have combined to enable CSOs to be easily deemed as insurgencies and grouped with other insurgent organisations that were banned by the government, thus restricting Meghalaya's civil society as a whole.[80][82]

All the three major ethnic tribal groups, namely, the Khasis, Jaintias and the Garos also have their own traditional political institutions that have existed for hundreds of years. These political institutions were fairly well developed and functioned at various tiers, such as the village level, clan level, and state level.[83]

In the traditional political system of the Khasis, each clan has its own council known as the Dorbar Kur which is presided over by the clan headman. The council or the Dorbar managed the internal affairs of the clan. Similarly, every village has a local assembly known as the Dorbar Shnong, i.e. village Durbar or council, which is presided over by the village headman. The inter-village issues were dealt with through a political unit comprising adjacent Khasi Villages. The local political units are known as the raids, under by the supreme political authority is known as the Syiemship. The Syiemship is the congregation of several raids and is headed an elected chief known as the Syiem or Siem (the king).[83] The Siem rules the Khasi state through an elected State Assembly, known as the Durbar Hima. The Siem also has his mantris (ministers) whose counsel he would use in exercising executive responsibilities. Taxes were called pynsuk, and tolls were called khrong, the latter being

the primary source of state income. In the early 20th century, Raja Dakhor Singh was the Siem of Khymir.[83]

The Jaintias also have a three-tier political system somewhat similar to the Khasis, including the Raids and the Syiem.[85] The raids are headed by Dolois, who are responsible for performing the executive and ceremonial functions at the Raid level. At the lowest level are the village headmen. Each administrative tier has its own elected councils or durbars.

In the traditional political system of the Garos, a group of Garo villages form the A-king. The A-king functions under the supervision of the Nokmas, which is perhaps the only political and administrative authority in the political institution of the Garos. The Nokma performs both judicial and legislative functions. The Nokmas also congregates to address inter-A-king issues. There are no well-organised councils or durbars among the Garos.[citation needed]

Being a Christian majority state, Christmas is one of the biggest festivals of Meghalaya, celebrated in almost all of the parts of the state—villages, towns with great fervour and enthusiasm by native Christian Tribes.[86][87] The entire state comes alive with Christmas trees, carols and lights during 25 December. Shillong and Cherrapunji are best definition for tourists who want to see and celebrate Christmas.[88]

Dance is central to the culture of Khasi life, and a part of the rites of passage. Dances are performed in Shnong (village), a Raid (group of villages), and a Hima (conglomeration of Raids). Some festivals includes Ka Shad Suk Mynsiem, Ka Pom-Blang Nongkrem, Ka-Shad Shyngwiang-Thangiap, Ka-Shad-Kynjoh Khaskain, Ka Bam Khana Shnong, Umsan Nongkharai, Shad Beh Sier.[84]

Festivals of the Jaintia Hills, like others, is integral to the culture of people of Jaintia Hills. It celebrates nature, balance and solidarity among its people. Festivals of Jaintias includes Behdienkhlam, Laho Dance, Sowing Ritual Ceremony.[84]

For Garos, festivals sustain their cultural heritage. They were often dedicated to religious events, nature and seasons as well as community events such as stages of jhum cultivation. The main festivals of Garos are Den Bilsia, Wangala, Rongchu gala, Mi Amua, Mangona, Grengdik BaA, Jamang Sia, Ja Megapa, Sa Sat Ra Chaka, Ajeaor Ahaoea, Dore Rata Dance, Chambil Mesara, Do'KruSua, Saram Cha'A, A Se Mania or Tata.[84]

Hajongs celebrate traditional festivals and Hindu festivals. The entire plain belt of Garo Hills is inhabited by the Hajongs, they are an agrarian tribe. Major traditional festivals include Pusne', Biswe', Kati Gasa, Bastu Puje' and Chor Maga.

The Biates had many kinds of festivals, including Nûlding Kût, Pamchar Kût, Lebang Kût and Favang Kût, for different occasions. They no longer practise or observe most, except Nûlding Kût ("renewal of life") every January, with singing, dancing and traditional games. A priest (thiampu) prays to Chung Pathian to bless Biates in every sphere of life.

In southern Meghalaya, located in Mawsynram, is the Mawjymbuin cave. Here a massive stalagmite has been shaped by nature into a Shivalinga. According to legend, from the 13th century, this Shivalinga (called Hatakeswarat) has existed in the Jaintia Hills under the reign of Ranee Singa.[89] Tens of thousands of the Jaintia tribe members participate over the Hindu festival of Shivratri (Night of Lord Shiva) every year.[90][91]

The practice of creating living root bridges can be found in Meghalaya. Here, functional, living, architecture is created by slowly training the aerial roots of the *Ficus elastica* (rubber tree). Examples

of these structures can be found as far west as the valley east of Mawsynram,[92] and as far east as the East Jaintia Hills District,[93] meaning that they are made by both Khasis and Jaintias. Large numbers[94] of these man-made living structures exist in the mountainous terrain along the southern border of the Shillong Plateau, though as a cultural practice they are fading, with many individual examples having disappeared recently, either falling in landslides or floods or being replaced with more standard steel bridges.[95]

The partition of the country in 1947 created severe infrastructural constraints for the Northeastern region, with merely 2% of the perimeter of the region adjoining the rest of the country. A narrow strip of land often called the Siliguri Corridor or the Chicken's Neck, connects the region with the state of West Bengal. Meghalaya is a landlocked state with many small settlements in remote areas. The road is the only means of transport. While the capital Shillong is relatively well connected, road connectivity in most other parts is relatively poor. A significant portion of the roads in the state is still unpaved. Most of the arrivals into the Meghalaya take place through Guwahati in neighbouring Assam, which is nearly 103 km away. Assam has a major railhead as well as an airport with regular train and air services to the rest of the country.

When Meghalaya was carved out of Assam as an autonomous state in 1972, it inherited a total road length of 2786.68 km including 174 km of National Highways with road density of 12.42 km per 100 square kilometre. By 2004, total road length has reached up to 9,350 km out of which 5,857 km were surfaced. The road density had increased to 41.69 km per 100 square kilometre by March 2011. Meghalaya is far below the national average of 75 km per 100 km². To provide better services to the people of the state, the Meghalaya Public Works Department is taking steps for improvement and up-gradation of the existing roads and bridges in phased manner.[56]

Meghalaya has a road network of around 7,633 km, out of which 3,691 km is black-topped and the remaining 3942 km is gravelled. Meghalaya is also connected to Silchar in Assam, Aizawl in Mizoram, and Agartala in Tripura through national highways. Many private buses and taxi operators carry passengers from Guwahati to Shillong. The journey takes from 3 to 4 hours. Day and night bus services are available from Shillong to all major towns of Meghalaya and also other capitals and important towns of Assam and the northeastern states.

Meghalaya has a railhead at Mendipathar and regular train service connecting Mendipathar in Meghalaya and Guwahati in Assam, has started on 30 November 2014.[96] The Cherra Companyganj State Railways was a former mountain railway through the state.[97] Guwahati (103 kilometres (64 mi) from Shillong) is the nearest major railway station connecting the north-east region with the rest of the country through a broad gauge track network. There is a plan for extending the rail link from Guwahati to Byrnihat (20 kilometres (12 mi) from Guwahati) within Meghalaya and further extending it up to state capital Shillong.

State capital Shillong has an airport at Umroi 30 kilometres (19 mi) from Shillong on the Guwahati-Shillong highway. A new terminal building was built at a cost of ₹30 crore (US\$3.8 million) and inaugurated in June 2011.[98] Air India Regional operates flights to Kolkata from this airport. There is also a helicopter service connecting Shillong to Guwahati and Tura. Baljek Airport near Tura became operational in 2008.[99] The Airports Authority of India (AAI) is developing the airport for operation of ATR 42/ATR 72 type of aircraft.[100] Other nearby airports are in Assam, with Borjhar, Guwahati airport (IATA: GAU), about 124 kilometres (77 mi) from Shillong.

Until 1955, foreign tourists required special permits to enter the areas that now constitute the state of Meghalaya, which are sometimes compared to Scotland for their highlands, fog and scenery.[11]

Meghalaya has some of the thickest primary forests in the country and therefore constitutes one of the most important ecotourism circuits in India. The Meghalaya subtropical forests support a vast variety of flora and fauna. The state has two national parks and three wildlife sanctuaries.

Meghalaya also offers many adventure tourism opportunities in the form of mountaineering, rock climbing, trekking, and hiking, caving (spelunking) and water sports. The state offers several trekking routes, some of which also afford an opportunity to encounter rare animals. The Umiak Lake has a water sports complex with facilities such as rowboats, paddleboats, sailing boats, cruise-boats, water-scooters, and speedboats.

Cherrapunji is a tourist destination in north-east of India. It lies to the south of the capital Shillong. A rather scenic 50-kilometre long road connects Cherrapunji with Shillong.

Living root bridges are also a tourist draw, with many examples located near Cherrapunji.[101] The Double-Decker root bridge, along with several others, is found in the village of Nongriat, which is tourist friendly. Many other root bridges can be found nearby, in the villages of Nongthymmai, Mynteng, and Tynrong.[92] Other areas with root bridges include Riwai village, near the tourist village of Mawlynnong, Pynursla, especially the villages of Rangthyllaing and Mawkyrnot, and the area around Dawki, in the West Jaintia Hills district, where there are many living root bridges scattered throughout the nearby villages.[93]

The most visited waterfalls in the state include the Elephant Falls, Shadthum Falls, Weinia falls, Bishop Falls, Nohkalikai Falls, Langshiang Falls and Sweet Falls.[citation needed] The hot springs at Jakrem near Mawsynram are believed to have curative and medicinal properties.

Nongkhnum Island located in the West Khasi Hills district is the biggest river island in Meghalaya and the second biggest in Asia. It is 14 kilometres from Nongstoin. The island is formed by the bifurcation of Kynshi River into the Phanliang River and the Namliang River. Adjacent to the sandy beach the Phanliang River forms a lake. The river then moves along and before reaching a deep gorge, forms a waterfall about 60 meters high called Shadthum Fall.

Meghalaya is also known for its "sacred groves". They are small or large areas of forests or natural vegetation that are usually dedicated to local folk deities or tree spirits or some religious symbolism over many generations, often since ancient times. These spaces are found all over India, are protected by local communities, and in some cases, the locals would neither touch leaves or fruits or in other ways damage the forest, flora or fauna taking refuge in them. This guardianship creates a sacred area where nature and wildlife thrive. The Mawphlang sacred forest, also known as "Law Lyngdoh," is one of the most famous sacred forests in Meghalaya. It's located about 25 kilometres from Shillong. It's a scenic nature destination, and one can find the sacred Rudraksha tree here.[103]

Meghalaya rural life and villages offer a glimpse in northeast mountain life.[tone] The Mawlynnong village located near the India-Bangladesh border is one such village. It has been featured by travel magazine Discover India.[104] The village is geared for tourism and has a Living Root Bridges, hiking trails and rock formations.

Meghalaya also has many natural and manmade lakes. The Umiak Lake (popularly known as Bara Pani meaning Big water) on the Guwahati-Shillong road is a major tourism attraction for tourist. Meghalaya has several parks; Thangkharang Park, the Eco-park, the Botanical Garden and Lady Hydari Park to name a few. Dawki, which is located at about 96 Kilometres from Shillong is the gateway to Bangladesh and affords a scenic view of some of the tallest mountain ranges in Meghalaya and the Bangladesh borderlands.

Thadlaskein Lake also Pung Sajar Nangli is the only historical Lake of Meghalaya. It is located besides National Highway 6 by the side of a small village called Mukhla village which falls under West Jaintia Hills district Jowai. It is about 35 mile from the city of Shillong

Balpakram National Park with its pristine habitat and scenery is a major attraction.[105] The Nokrek National Park, also in Garo Hills has its own charm with a lot of wildlife.[106]

Meghalaya has an estimated 500 natural limestone and sandstone caves spread over the entire state including most of the longest and deepest caves in the sub-continent. Krem Liat Prah is the longest cave, and Synrang Pamiang is the deepest cave. Both are located in the Jaintia Hills. Cavers from the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Ireland, and the United States have been visiting Meghalaya for over a decade exploring these caves. Few have been developed or promoted adequately as major tourist destinations.

Meghalaya is famous for its living root bridges, a kind of suspension bridge made over rivers using intertwined roots of *Ficus elastica* trees planted on opposite banks of the river or hill slopes. These bridges can be seen around Cherrapunji, Nongtalang, Kudeng Rim and Kudeng Thymmai villages (War Jaintia). A double-decker bridge exists in Nongriat village.

Other important places of tourism interest Meghalaya include:

The significant issues in the state include illegal migrants from Bangladesh, incidences of violence, political instability and deforestation from traditional cut-and-burn shift farming practices. There are several clashes between Khasi people and Bangladeshi in Meghalaya.

Illegal immigration has become a major issue in Indian states that surround Bangladesh – West Bengal to the west, Meghalaya and Assam to the north, and Tripura, Mizoram, and Manipur to the east.[107] Dozens of political and civic groups have demanded that this migration be stopped or controlled to manageable levels.[108] The border between Meghalaya and Bangladesh is about 440 kilometres long, of which some 350 is fenced; but the border is not continuously patrolled and is porous. Efforts are underway to fence it completely and introduce means to issue ID cards.[109]

Chief Minister Mukul Sangma, in August 2012, called upon Government of India to take corrective measures to stop the illegal immigration of Bangladeshis into the northeast of the country before the situation goes out of hand.[110]

Between 2006 and 2013, between 0 and 28 civilians have died per year in Meghalaya (or about 0 to 1 per 100,000 people), which the state authorities have classified as terror-related intentional violence.[111] The world's average annual death rate from intentional violence, in recent years, has been 7.9 per 100,000 people.[112] The terror-related deaths are from conflicts primarily between different tribal groups and against migrants from Bangladesh. Along with political resolution and dialogue, various Christian organisations have taken the initiative to prevent violence and help the process of discussion between groups.[113]

There have been repeated clashes with Assam e.g. Mukroh.[114]

The state has had 23 state governments since its inception in 1972, with a median life span of less than 18 months. Only three governments have survived more than three years. Political instability has affected the state's economy in the past.[115] Over recent years, there has been increasing political stability. The last state assembly elections were held in 2013, after a five-year government that was elected in 2008.[116]

Jhum farming, or cut-and-burn shift cultivation, is an ancient practice in Meghalaya.[22] It is culturally engrained through folklores. One legend states the god of wind with the god of hail and storm shook off seeds from the celestial tree, which were picked up and sown by a bird known as do'amik. These were the seeds of rice. The god gave the human beings some of those celestial seeds, provided instruction on shift agriculture and proper rice cultivation practice, with the demand that at every harvest a portion of the first harvest must be dedicated to him. Another folktale is from the Garo Hills of Meghalaya where a man named Bone-Neripa-Jane-Nitepa harvested rice and millet from a patch of land he cleared and cultivated near the rock named misi-Kokdok. He then shared this knowledge with others, and named the different months of the year, each of which is a stage of shifting cultivation.[117]

In modern times, shift cultivation is a significant threat to the biodiversity of Meghalaya.[118] A 2001 satellite imaging study showed that shift cultivation practice continues and patches of primary dense forests are lost even from areas protected as biosphere.[119] Jhum farming is a threat not only for natural biodiversity, it is also a low yield unproductive method of agriculture. It is a significant issue in Meghalaya, given majority of its people rely on agriculture to make a living.[120][121] Shift farming is a practice that is not unique to northeastern Indian states such as Meghalaya, but the issue is found throughout southeast Asia.[122]

Some major media outlets in the state are:[citation needed]

Over the years there have been several weeklies and Dailies that have come up. To name a few:

Weekly Employment Newsletter which is distributed throughout the state:

Text extracted from URL 52: Europe

North America

Oceania

Punjabi culture grew out of the settlements along the five rivers (the name Punjab, is derived from two Persian words, Panj meaning "Five" and Âb meaning "Water") which served as an important route to the Near East as early as the ancient Indus Valley civilization, dating back to 3000 BCE.[1] Agriculture has been the major economic feature of the Punjab and has therefore formed the foundation of Punjabi culture, with one's social status being determined by landownership.[1] The Punjab emerged as an important agricultural region, especially following the Green Revolution during the mid-1960's to the mid-1970's, has been described as the "breadbasket of both India and Pakistan".[1] Besides being known for agriculture and trade, the Punjab is also a region that over the centuries has experienced many foreign invasions and consequently has a long-standing history of warfare, as the Punjab is situated on the principal route of invasions through the northwestern frontier of the Indian subcontinent, which promoted to adopt a lifestyle that entailed engaging in warfare to protect the land.[1] Warrior culture typically elevates the value of the community's honour (izzat), which is highly esteemed by Punjabis.[1]

Bhangra is one of the many Punjabi musical art forms that are increasingly listened to in the West and becoming a mainstream favourite.[2] Punjabi music is used by western musicians in many ways, such as mixing with other compositions to produce award-winning music. Sufi music and Qawali, commonly practiced in Pakistani Punjab; are other important genres in the Punjab region.[3][4]

History of Modern Music

Punjabi music started to develop and alter in the 20th century as it was impacted by Western musical genres including pop, rock, and hip-hop. As a result, a brand-new genre of Punjabi music emerged, fusing contemporary beats and production methods with traditional instruments and melodies. Gurdas Maan was a trailblazer of the new Punjabi music scene, becoming well-known in the 1980s with singles like "Challa" and "Mamla Gadbad Hai." Traditional Punjabi folk tunes were blended with contemporary production methods in Maan's music, while societal themes including drug misuse, poverty, and governmental corruption were frequently touched upon in his lyrics.[5]

Punjabi dances are performed either by men or by women. The dances range from solo to group dances and also sometimes dances are done along with traditional musical instruments. Bhangra is one of the most famous dances originating in the Punjab by farmers during the harvesting season. It was mainly performed while farmers did agricultural chores. As they did each farming activity they would perform bhangra moves on the spot.[6] This allowed them to finish their job in a pleasurable way. For many years, farmers performed bhangra to showcase a sense of accomplishment and to welcome the new harvesting season.[7] Traditional bhangra is performed in a circle[8] and is performed using traditional dance steps. Traditional bhangra is now also performed on occasions other than during the harvest season.[9][10] Ghidra is also a famous dance from Punjab. This dance is for women and originates thousands of years ago, it resembles femininity and beauty.[citation needed]

Painting in the Punjab developed during the reign of Iltutmish of the Khilji dynasty, who had patronized it.[11] A historical reference to this was made in the Tarikh-i-Ferozeshahi.[11] Sikh art, including Sikh painting, is mostly derived from Punjab's art traditions.[11] B.N. Goswamy argues that painting in the Punjab goes back to the 16th century and became influenced by the Mughal school in the early half of the 18th century.[12] Punjabi Sikh forays into painting were mostly limited to wall paintings decorating the walls of religious sites up until the early 19th century.[13] Miniature painting depicting Hindu religious scenes and themes was popular in the Punjab Hills amongst the various Pahari Rajput states.[13]

Between 1810–1830, the Sikhs began to commission these Pahari artists to paint Sikh subjects and settings, mostly Sikh royalty and nobility.[13] After Sikhs began to progressively come into more and more contact with Europeans after 1830, the main influence on Punjabi Sikh art shifted from Pahari styles and methods to European ones.[13] The Punjabi form and localization of Company paintings would be born out of this increased interaction between European and Punjabi artists.[13] Thus, Pahari-influenced traditional miniature paintings began to be surmounted by European-influenced Company school paintings.[13] Lahori and Amritsari artists increasingly abandoned using the traditional Indic medium of gouache for watercolour techniques.[13]

In 1838–39, a British visitor hired local Punjabi artists to produce pictures covering the various kinds of inhabitants of northern India using British-supplied paper and bound into an album.[13] Images of the Sikh royals and military were documented in these British-patronized local paintings.[13] Many Europeans were employed by the Lahore Durbar, such as the Frenchman Jean-François Allard, and were sponsors of the local arts.[13] A few European artists who visited the Sikh court of Lahore and left a deep impact on the local art were: G. T. Vigne (visited in 1837), William G. Osborne (visited in 1838), Emily Eden (visited in 1838 alongside her brother), and August Schoefft (arrived in 1841).[13] Eden had a large impact, as her published work *Portraits of the Princes and People of India* (which included lithographic depictions of Sikhs and Punjabis) was a big success and many copies of the work made their way to Punjab where they ended up giving further shape to the emerging Punjabi

Company School.[13] Schoefft spent over a year in Punjab painting various local scenes and subjects.[13] During the Anglo-Sikh Wars, many of the British officials and soldiers who made their way to Punjab were artists.[13] An example is Henry Lawrence, who painted local residents of various walks of life.[13] Many Indian artists who followed the Company school were hired to paint Punjabi subjects and settings.[13] When the Sikh Empire was annexed in 1849, local Punjabi artists working in the Company style created works based upon stock sets for the purpose of selling them to European tourists in the local bazaars.[13] These Punjabi paintings geared towards a European audience depicted "Sikh rulers, heroes, occupations, and costumes".[13]

Murals (including frescoes) feature prominently in Punjab and showcase various themes.[14] Punjabi murals differ from Punjabi miniature paintings in that the wall paintings were far more readily accessible and viewable by the general masses rather than being mostly an affair restricted to the privileged classes of the society, as in the case of miniatures.[14] Since murals could be seen by all walks of society, the things depicted in them were commonly understood subjects that required no specialized knowledge.[14] Punjabi murals can depict religious or secular settings.[14]

Religious-themed murals are often found at religious shrines, such as Hindu and Sikh temples.[14] Scenes from Indic mythology, such as the Mahabharata, are commonly found, an example being the unveiling of Draupadi.[14]

Religious murals depicting female figuratives were often Shaktist in-nature.[14] A prevailing theme of the divine (the Shakti) incarnating in feminine form (these unique forms are given various names, such as Kali) to battle with negative forces (that are hostile to the deities and mankind), including demons (such as Mahishasura) and giants (such as Shumbha and Nishumbha), is a commonly witnessed scene of Punjabi murals.[14] The scenes depicted by this category of wall paintings are seemingly drawn from the Markandeya Purana, which promotes the reverence of Shakti as the divine-mother figure.[14]

Other scenes found in Punjabi wall paintings seem to stem from the stories of the Bhagavata Purana.[14] An example of a type of mural scene derived from it is Radha being surrounded by youthful gopis.[14] Krishna is also commonly depicted alongside gopis in this sort of mural.[14] Krishna is sometimes shown playing his flute whilst the gopis perform the ras-lila around him or he is shown stealing clothes from the gopis, an episode known as chira-harana.[14]

Aside from Hindu themes, there are also depictions based upon Sikh history and themes, such as Sikh gurus, martyrs (shaheeds), and religious figures (an example being bhagats).[14]

Amid the murals based on profane subjects, depictions of scenes from traditional Punjabi folklore are commonplace, such as Heer Ranjha, Mirza Sahiban, Sohni Mahiwal, Sassi Pannu, Laila Majnun, Raja Rasalu, and more.[14] A lot of the depicted stories are ultimately based upon bardic literature, such as the legends of Shah Behram and Husan Banu.[14] There are also paintings based upon traditional folk ballads, such as Puran Bhagat.[14] Additionally, there are paintings of various Nayika themes, including the Ashta-nayika (eight heroines).[14] There also exists wall paintings based upon the Sat Sai of Bihari.[14] There are further depictions of various royal figures, such as Rani Jindan.[14] Many Punjabi wall paintings depict women and girls in the process of a variety of actions, such as feeding parrots, peacocks, or bucks.[14] Women are also depicted fondling pets or writing love letters in these wall paintings.[14]

Usually displayed less conspicuously, there were also wall painting depicting sexual or erotic themes.[14] It was a common practice to decorate the walls of Islamic and Hindu palaces with erotic scenes.[14] The Sikh royalty and nobility during the reign of the Sikh Empire had their residences

embellished with these erotic wall paintings. General Paolo Avitabile had his private residence quarters decorated with figures of scantily clad dancing girls and Indic deities in the act of making love.[14] At the Rani Mahal of erstwhile Nabha State, there are wall paintings of couples having sex in various positions, settings, and emotions based upon the Koka Shastra treatise.[14] However, it is important to note that these erotic-based murals were limited mostly to the areas frequented by the upper-classes of the Punjabi society at the time.[14]

Punjabi wedding traditions and ceremonies are traditionally conducted in Punjabi and are a strong reflection of Punjabi culture. While the actual religious marriage ceremony among Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists and Christians may be conducted in Arabic, Urdu, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Hindi or Pali by the Qazi, Pundit, Granthi or Priest, there are commonalities in ritual, song, dance, food, and dress. The Punjabi wedding has many rituals and ceremonies that have evolved since traditional times and itself have evolved in Pakistani Punjab and Indian Punjab.

The local cuisine of Punjab is heavily influenced by the agriculture and farming lifestyle prevalent from the times of the ancient Indus Valley civilization. Dishes similar to tandoori chicken may have existed during the Harappan civilization during the Bronze Age of India. According to the archeologist Professor Vasant Shinde, the earliest evidence for a dish similar to tandoori chicken can be found in the Harappan civilization and dates back to 3000 BC. His team has found ancient ovens at Harappan sites which are similar to the tandoors that are used in the state of Punjab. Physical remains of chicken bones with char marks have also been unearthed.[15][16][17] Harappan houses had keyhole ovens with central pillars which was used for roasting meats and baking breads.[18] Sushruta Samhita records meat being cooked in an oven (kandu) after marinating it in spices like black mustard (rai) powder and fragrant spices.[19] According to Ahmed (2014), Harappan oven structures may have operated in a similar manner to the modern tandoors of the Punjab.[20]

Basmati rice is the indigenous variety of Punjab, and various meat- and vegetable-based rice dishes have been developed using it.[21][22][23]

The Punjabi language is written with the Gurmukhi alphabet in India and with the Shahmukhi alphabet in Pakistan. Approximately 130 million people speak the Punjabi language.[25]

The earliest writings in Punjabi belong to Nath Yogi era from 9th to 14th century.[26] They referred to God with various names such as "Alakh Nirajan" which are still prevalent in Punjabi vernacular.[26]

The Punjabi literary tradition is popularly seen to commence with Fariduddin Ganjshakar (1173–1266).[24] Roughly from the 12th century to the 19th century, Punjabi Sufi poetry developed under Shah Hussain (1538–1599), Sultan Bahu (1628–1691), Shah Sharaf (1640–1724), Ali Haider (1690–1785), Bulleh Shah (1680–1757), Saleh Muhammad Safoori (1747–1826), Mian Muhammad Baksh (1830–1907) and Khwaja Ghulam Farid (1845–1901). In contrast to Persian poets, who had preferred the ghazal for poetic expression, Punjabi Sufi poets tended to compose in the Kafi.[27]

Punjabi Sufi poetry also influenced other Punjabi literary traditions particularly the Punjabi Qissa, a genre of romantic tragedy which also derived inspiration from Indic, Persian and Quranic sources. The Qissa of Heer Ranjha by Waris Shah (1706–1798) is among the most popular of Punjabi qisse. Other popular stories include Sohni Mahiwal by Fazal Shah, Mirza Sahiba by Hafiz Barkhudar (1658–1707), Sassi Punhun by Hashim Shah (1735?–1843?), and Qissa Puran Bhagat by Qadaryar (1802–1892).

A Dastar is an proud of headgear associated with Sikhism and is an important part of the Punjabi and Sikh culture. Among the Sikhs, the dastār is an article of faith that represents equality, honour, self-respect, courage, spirituality, and piety. The Khalsa Sikh men and women, who keep the Five Ks, wear the turban to cover their long, uncut hair (kesh). The Sikhs regard the dastār as an important part of the unique Sikh identity. After the ninth Sikh Guru, Tegh Bahadur, was sentenced to death by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru created the Khalsa and gave five articles of faith, one of which is unshorn hair, which the dastār covers.[28] Prior to Sikhi, only kings, royalty, and those of high stature wore turbans, but Sikh Gurus adopted the practice to assert equality and sovereignty among people.[29]

A Punjabi suit that features two items - a qameez (top), salwar (bottom) is the traditional attire of the Punjabi people.[30][31][32] Shalwars are trousers which are atypically wide at the waist but which narrow to a cuffed bottom. They are held up by a drawstring or elastic belt, which causes them to become pleated around the waist.[33] The trousers can be wide and baggy, or they can be cut quite narrow, on the bias. The kameez is a long shirt or tunic.[34] The side seams are left open below the waist-line (the opening known as the chaak[[note 1](#)]), which gives the wearer greater freedom of movement. The kameez is usually cut straight and flat; older kameez use traditional cuts; modern kameez are more likely to have European-inspired set-in sleeves. The combination garment is sometimes called salwar kurta, salwar suit, or Punjabi suit.[36][37] The shalwar-kameez is a widely-worn,[38][39] and national dress,[40] of Pakistan. When women wear the shalwar-kameez in some regions, they usually wear a long scarf or shawl called a dupatta around the head or neck.[41] The dupatta is also employed as a form of modesty—although it is made of delicate material, it obscures the upper body's contours by passing over the shoulders. For Muslim women, the dupatta is a less stringent alternative to the chador or burqa (see hijab and purdah); for Sikh and Hindu women, the dupatta is useful when the head must be covered, as in a temple or the presence of elders.[42] Everywhere in South Asia, modern versions of the attire have evolved; the shalwars are worn lower down on the waist, the kameez have shorter length, with higher splits, lower necklines and backlines, and with cropped sleeves or without sleeves.[43]

The Punjabi Muslims typically observe the Islamic festivals.[44][45] The Punjabi Sikhs and Hindus typically do not observe these, and instead observe Lohri, Basant and Vaisakhi as seasonal festivals.[46] The Punjabi Muslim festivals are set according to the lunar Islamic calendar (Hijri), and the date falls earlier by 10 to 13 days from year to year.[47] The Hindu and Sikh Punjabi seasonal festivals are set on specific dates of the luni-solar Bikrami calendar or Punjabi calendar and the date of the festival also typically varies in the Gregorian calendar but stays within the same two Gregorian months.[48]

Some Punjabi Muslims participate in the traditional, seasonal festivals of the Punjab region: Baisakhi, Basant and to a minor scale Lohri, but this is controversial. Islamic clerics and some politicians have attempted to ban this participation because of the religious basis of the Punjabi festivals,[49] and they being declared haram (forbidden in Islam).[50]

In recent years, efforts have been made to preserve and promote Punjabi culture and heritage. One notable example is the Panjab Digital Library (PDL), founded by Davinder Pal Singh. The library's mission is to digitize and preserve historical manuscripts, books, and other materials related to Punjabi language, history, and culture. This initiative has helped to safeguard and promote Punjabi culture for future generations.[51]

Text extracted from URL 53:

Europe

North America

Oceania

Punjab (/pʌnˈdʒɑːb, -ˈdʒæb, ˈpʊn-/; Shahmukhi: پنجاب; Gurmukhi: ਪੰਜਾਬ; Punjabi: [pəŋˈdʒäːb] ①; also romanised as Panjāb or Panj-Āb)[b] is a geopolitical, cultural, and historical region in South Asia. It is specifically located in the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent, comprising areas of modern-day eastern-Pakistan and northwestern-India. Punjab's major cities are Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Multan, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Sialkot, Chandigarh, Shimla, Jalandhar, Patiala, Gurugram, and Bahawalpur.

Punjab grew out of the settlements along the five rivers, which served as an important route to the Near East as early as the ancient Indus Valley civilization, dating back to 3000 BCE,[3] followed by migrations of the Indo-Aryan peoples. Agriculture has been the major economic feature of the Punjab and has therefore formed the foundation of Punjabi culture.[3] The Punjab emerged as an important agricultural region, especially following the Green Revolution during the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, and has been described as the "breadbasket of both India and Pakistan." [3]

Punjab's history is a tapestry of conflict, marked by the rise of indigenous dynasties and empires. Following Alexander the Great's invasion in the 4th century BCE, Chandragupta Maurya allied with Punjabi republics to establish the Maurya Empire.[4] Successive reigns of the Indo-Greek Kingdom, Kushan Empire, and Indo-Scythians followed, but were ultimately defeated by Eastern Punjab Janapadas such as the Yaudheya, Trigarta Kingdom, Audumbaras, Arjunayanas, and Kuninda Kingdom.[5][6] In the 5th and 6th centuries CE, Punjab faced devastating Hunnic invasions, yet the Vardhana dynasty emerged triumphant, ruling over Northern India.[7] The 8th century CE witnessed the Hindu Shahis rise, known for defeating the Saffarid dynasty and the Samanid Empire. Concurrently, the Tomara dynasty and Katoch Dynasty controlled eastern Punjab, resisting Ghaznavid invasions.[8] Islam took hold in Western Punjab under Ghaznavid rule. The Delhi Sultanate then succeeded the Ghaznavids in which the Tughlaq dynasty and Sayyid dynasty Sultans are described as Punjabi origin.[9][10] The 15th century saw the emergence of the Langah Sultanate in south Punjab, acclaimed for its victory over the Lodi dynasty.[11] After the Mughal Empire's decline in the 18th century, Punjab experienced a period of anarchy. In 1799 CE, the Sikh Empire established its rule, undertaking conquests into Kashmir and Durrani Empire held territories, shaping the diverse and complex history of Punjab.

The boundaries of the region are ill-defined and focus on historical accounts and thus the geographical definition of the term "Punjab" has changed over time. In the 16th century Mughal Empire the Punjab region was divided into three, with the Lahore Subah in the west, the Delhi Subah in the east and the Multan Subah in the south. In British India, until the Partition of India in 1947, the Punjab Province encompassed the present-day Indian states and union territories of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, and Delhi, and the Pakistani regions of Punjab, and Islamabad Capital Territory.

The predominant ethnolinguistic group of the Punjab region are the Punjabi people, who speak the Indo-Aryan Punjabi language. Punjabi Muslims are the majority in West Punjab (Pakistan), while Punjabi Sikhs are the majority in East Punjab (India). Other religious groups include Hinduism, Christianity, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Ravidassia.

The name Punjab is of Persian origin, with its two parts (پنج, panj, 'five' and آب, āb, 'water') being cognates of the Sanskrit words पञ्च, pañca, 'five' and अप्, āp, 'water', of the same meaning.[2][12] The word pañjāb is thus calque of Indo-Aryan "pañca-āp" and means "The Land of Five Waters", referring to the rivers Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas.[13] All are tributaries of the Indus River, the Sutlej being the largest. References to a land of five rivers may be found in the Mahabharata, in which one of the regions is named as Panchanada (Sanskrit: पञ्चनद, romanized: pañca-nada, lit. 'five rivers').[14][15] Earlier, the Punjab was known as Sapta Sindhu or Hapta Hendu in Avesta, translating into "The Land of Seven Rivers", with the other two being Indus and Kabul.[16] The ancient Greeks referred to the region as Pentapotamía (Greek: Πενταποταμία), which has the same meaning as that of Punjab.[17][18][19]

The Punjab region is noted as the site of one of the earliest urban societies, the Indus Valley Civilization that flourished from about 3000 BCE and declined rapidly 1,000 years later, following the Indo-Aryan migrations that overran the region in waves between 1500 BCE and 500 BCE.[20] Frequent intertribal wars stimulated the growth of larger groupings ruled by chieftains and kings, who ruled local kingdoms known as Mahajanapadas.[20] The rise of kingdoms and dynasties in the Punjab is chronicled in the ancient Hindu epics, particularly the Mahabharata.[20] The epic battles described in the Mahabharata are chronicled as being fought in what is now the state of Haryana and historic Punjab. The Gandharas, Kambojas, Trigartas, Andhra, Pauravas, Bahlikas (Bactrian settlers of the Punjab), Yaudheyas, and others sided with the Kauravas in the great battle fought at Kurukshetra.[21] According to Fauja Singh and L. M. Joshi: "There is no doubt that the Kambojas, Daradas, Kaikayas, Andhra, Pauravas, Yaudheyas, Malavas, Saindhavas, and Kurus had jointly contributed to the heroic tradition and composite culture of ancient Punjab." [22]

The earliest known notable local king of this region was known as King Porus, who fought the famous Battle of the Hydaspes against Alexander the Great. His kingdom spanned between rivers Hydaspes (Jhelum) and Acesines (Chenab); Strabo had held the territory to contain almost 300 cities.[23] He (alongside Abisares) had a hostile relationship with the Kingdom of Taxila which was ruled by his extended family.[23] When the armies of Alexander crossed Indus in its eastward migration, probably in Udabhandapura, he was greeted by the-then ruler of Taxila, Omphis.[23] Omphis had hoped to force both Porus and Abisares into submission leveraging the might of Alexander's forces and diplomatic missions were mounted, but while Abisares accepted the submission, Porus refused.[23] This led Alexander to seek for a face-off with Porus.[23] Thus began the Battle of the Hydaspes in 326 BC; the exact site remains unknown.[23] The battle is thought to be resulted in a decisive Greek victory; however, A. B. Bosworth warns against an uncritical reading of Greek sources who were obviously exaggerative.[23]

Alexander later founded two cities—Nicaea at the site of victory and Bucephalous at the battle-ground, in memory of his horse, who died soon after the battle.[23][c] Later, tetradrachms would be minted depicting Alexander on horseback, armed with a sarissa and attacking a pair of Indians on an elephant.[23][24] Porus refused to surrender and wandered about atop an elephant, until he was wounded and his force routed.[23] When asked by Alexander how he wished to be treated, Porus replied "Treat me as a king would treat another king".[25] Despite the apparently one-sided results, Alexander was impressed by Porus and chose to not depose him.[26][27][28] Not only was his territory reinstated but also expanded with Alexander's forces annexing the territories of Glausaes, who ruled to the northeast of Porus' kingdom.[26]

After Alexander's death in 323 BCE, Perdiccas became the regent of his empire, and after Perdiccas's murder in 321 BCE, Antipater became the new regent.[29] According to Diodorus, Antipater

recognized Porus's authority over the territories along the Indus River. However, Eudemus, who had served as Alexander's satrap in the Punjab region, treacherously killed Porus.[30]

Chandragupta Maurya, with the aid of Kautilya, had established his empire around 320 BCE. The early life of Chandragupta Maurya is not clear. Kautilya enrolled the young Chandragupta in the university at Taxila to educate him in the arts, sciences, logic, mathematics, warfare, and administration. Megasthenes' account, as it has survived in Greek texts that quote him, states that Alexander the Great and Chandragupta met, which if true would mean his rule started earlier than 321 BCE. As Alexander never crossed the Beas river, so his territory probably lied in Punjab region.[citation needed] He has also been variously identified with Shashigupta (who has same etymology as of Chandragupta) of Paropamisadae (western Punjab) on the account of same life events.[31] With the help of the small Janapadas of Punjab, he had gone on to conquer much of the North West Indian subcontinent.[32] He then defeated the Nanda rulers in Pataliputra to capture the throne. Chandragupta Maurya fought Alexander's successor in the east, Seleucus when the latter invaded. In a peace treaty, Seleucus ceded all territories west of the Indus and offered a marriage, including a portion of Bactria, while Chandragupta granted Seleucus 500 elephants.[citation needed] The chief of the Mauryan military was also always a Yaudheyana warrior according to the Bijaygadh Pillar inscription, which states that the Yaudheyas elected their own chief who also served as the general for the Mauryans.[33][34] The Mauryan military was also made up vastly of men from the Punjab Janapadas.[35]

Chandragupta's rule was very well organised. The Mauryans had an autocratic and centralised administration system, aided by a council of ministers, and also a well-established espionage system. Much of Chandragupta's success is attributed to Chanakya, the author of the Arthashastra. According to Buddhist sources Chanakya was native of the Punjab who resided in Taxila. Much of the Mauryan rule had a strong bureaucracy that had regulated tax collection, trade and commerce, industrial activities, mining, statistics and data, maintenance of public places, and upkeep of temples.[citation needed]

In the 9th century, the Hindu Shahi dynasty originating from the region of Oddiyana,[36][37][38] replaced the Taank kingdom, ruling Western Punjab along with eastern Afghanistan.[20] The tribe of the Gakhars/Khokhars, formed a large part of the Hindu Shahi army according to the Persian historian Firishta.[39] The most notable rulers of the empire were Lalliya, Bhimadeva and Jayapala who were accredited for military victories.

Lalliya had reclaimed the territory at and around Kabul between 879 and 901 CE after it had been lost under his predecessor to the Saffarid dynasty.[38][page needed] He was described as a fearsome Shahi. Two of his ministers reconstructed by Rahman as Toramana and Asata are said to of have taken advantage of Amr al-Layth's preoccupation with rebellions in Khorasan, by successfully raiding Ghazna around 900 CE.[38][page needed]

After a defeat in Eastern Afghanistan suffered on the Shahi ally Lawik, Bhimadeva mounted a combined attack around 963 CE.[38][page needed] Abu Ishaq Ibrahim was expelled from Ghazna and Shahi-Lawik strongholds were restored in Kabul and adjacent areas.[38][page needed] This victory appears to have been commemorated in the Hund Slab Inscription (HSI).[38][page needed]

The Turkic Ghaznavids in the tenth century overthrew the Hindu Shahis and consequently ruled for 157 years in Western Punjab, gradually declining as a power until the Ghurid conquest of Lahore by Muhammad of Ghor in 1186, deposing the last Ghaznavid ruler Khusrau Malik.[41] Following the

death of Muhammad of Ghor in 1206 by Punjabi assassins near the Jhelum river, the Ghurid state fragmented and was replaced in northern India by the Delhi Sultanate.

The Tughlaq dynasty's reign formally started in 1320 in Delhi when Ghazi Malik assumed the throne under the title of Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq after defeating Khusrau Khan at the Battle of Lahrawat.

During Ghazi Malik's reign, in 1321 he sent his eldest son Jauna Khan, later known as Muhammad bin Tughlaq, to Deogarh to plunder the Hindu kingdoms of Arangal and Tilang (now part of Telangana). His first attempt was a failure.[42] Four months later, Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq sent large army reinforcements for his son asking him to attempt plundering Arangal and Tilang again.[43] This time Jauna Khan succeeded and Arangal fell, it was renamed to Sultanpur, and all plundered wealth, state treasury and captives were transferred from the captured kingdom to the Delhi Sultanate. The Muslim aristocracy in Lakhnauti (Bengal) invited Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq to extend his coup and expand eastwards into Bengal by attacking Shamsuddin Firoz Shah, which he did over 1324–1325 AD,[42] after placing Delhi under control of his son Ulugh Khan, and then leading his army to Lakhnauti. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq succeeded in this campaign.

After his father's death in 1325 CE, Muhammad bin Tughlaq assumed power and his rule saw the empire expand to most of the Indian subcontinent, its peak in terms of geographical reach.[44] He attacked and plundered Malwa, Gujarat, Lakhnauti, Chittagong, Mithila and many other regions in India.[45] His distant campaigns were expensive, although each raid and attack on non-Muslim kingdoms brought new looted wealth and ransom payments from captured people. The extended empire was difficult to retain, and rebellions became commonplace all over the Indian subcontinent.[46] Muhammad bin Tughlaq died in March 1351[47][page needed] while trying to chase and punish people for rebellion and their refusal to pay taxes in Sindh and Gujarat.[48]

After Muhammad bin Tughlaq's death, the Tughlaq empire was in a state of disarray with many regions assuming independence; it was at this point that Firuz Shah Tughlaq, Ghazi Malik's nephew, took reign. His father's name was Rajab (the younger brother of Ghazi Malik) who had the title Sipahsalar. His mother Naila was a Punjabi Bhatti princess (daughter of Rana Mal) from Dipalpur and Abohar according to the historian William Crooke.[49][50] The southern states had drifted away from the Sultanate and there were rebellions in Gujarat and Sindh, while "Bengal asserted its independence." He led expeditions against Bengal in 1353 and 1358. He captured Cuttack, desecrated the Jagannath Temple, Puri, and forced Raja Gajapati of Jajnagar in Orissa to pay tribute.[51][52] He also laid siege to the Kangra Fort and forced Nagarkot to pay tribute.[53] During this time, Tatar Khan of Greater Khorasan attacked Punjab, but he was defeated and his face slashed by the sword given by Feroz Shah Tughlaq to Raja Kailas Pal who ruled the Nagarkot region in Punjab.[54]

Khizr Khan established the Sayyid dynasty, the fourth dynasty of the Delhi Sultanate after the fall of the Tughlaqs.[55]

Following Timur's 1398 sack of Delhi,[56] he appointed Khizr Khan as deputy of Multan (Punjab).[57] He held Lahore, Dipalpur, Multan and Upper Sindh.[58][59] Khizr Khan captured Delhi on 28 May 1414 thereby establishing the Sayyid dynasty.[57] Khizr Khan did not take up the title of sultan, but continued the fiction of his allegiance to Timur as Rayat-i-Ala (vassal) of the Timurids - initially that of Timur, and later his son Shah Rukh.[60][61] After the accession of Khizr Khan, the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Sindh were reunited under the Delhi Sultanate, where he spent his time subduing rebellions.[62] Punjab was the powerbase of Khizr Khan and his successors as the bulk of the Delhi army during their reigns came from Multan and Dipalpur.[63]

Khizr Khan was succeeded by his son Mubarak Shah after his death on 20 May 1421. Mubarak Shah referred to himself as Muizz-ud-Din Mubarak Shah on his coins, removing the Timurid name with the name of the Caliph, and declared himself a Shah.[64][65] He defeated the advancing Hoshang Shah Ghori, ruler of Malwa Sultanate and forced him to pay heavy tribute early in his reign.[66] Mubarak Shah also put down the rebellion of Jasrath Khokhar and managed to fend off multiple invasions by the Timurids of Kabul.[67]

The last ruler of the Sayyids, Ala-ud-Din, voluntarily abdicated the throne of the Delhi Sultanate in favour of Bahlul Khan Lodi on 19 April 1451, and left for Badaun, where he died in 1478.[68]

In 1445, Sultan Qutbudin, chief of Langah (a Jat Zamindar tribe),[69][70][71][72] established the Langah Sultanate in Multan after the fall of the Sayyid dynasty. Husseyn Langah I (reigned 1456–1502) was the second ruler of Langah Sultanate. He undertook military campaigns in Punjab and captured Chiniot and Shorkot from the Lodis. Shah Husayn successfully repulsed attempted invasion by the Lodis led by Tatar Khan and Barbak Shah, as well as his daughter Zeerak Rumman.[11]

The Mughals came to power in the early 16th century and gradually expanded to control all of the Punjab from their capital at Lahore. During the Mughal era, Saadullah Khan, born into a family of Punjabi agriculturalists[73] belonging to the Thaheem tribe[74] from Chiniot[75] remained grand vizier (or Prime Minister) of the Mughal Empire in the period 1645–1656.[75] Other prominent Muslims from Punjab who rose to nobility during the Mughal Era include Wazir Khan,[76] Adina Beg Arain,[77] and Shahbaz Khan Kamboh.[78] The Mughal Empire ruled the region until it was severely weakened in the eighteenth century.[20] As Mughal power weakened, Afghan rulers took control of the region.[20] Contested by the Marathas and Afghans, the region was the center of the growing influence of the misls, who expanded and established the Sikh Confederacy as the Mughals and Afghans weakened, ultimately ruling the Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and territories north into the Himalayas.[20]

In the 19th century, Maharajah Ranjit Singh established the Sikh Empire based in the Punjab.[79] The empire existed from 1799, when Ranjit Singh captured Lahore, to 1849, when it was defeated and conquered in the Second Anglo-Sikh War. It was forged on the foundations of the Khalsa from a collection of autonomous Sikh misls.[80][81] At its peak in the 19th century, the Empire extended from the Khyber Pass in the west to western Tibet in the east, and from Mithankot in the south to Kashmir in the north. It was divided into four provinces: Lahore, in Punjab, which became the Sikh capital; Multan, also in Punjab; Peshawar; and Kashmir from 1799 to 1849. Religiously diverse, with an estimated population of 3.5 million in 1831 (making it the 19th most populous country at the time),[82] it was the last major region of the Indian subcontinent to be annexed by the British Empire.

The Sikh Empire ruled the Punjab until the British annexed it in 1849 following the First and Second Anglo-Sikh Wars.[83] Most of the Punjabi homeland formed a province of British India, though a number of small princely states retained local rulers who recognized British authority.[20] The Punjab with its rich farmlands became one of the most important colonial assets.[20] Lahore was a noted center of learning and culture, and Rawalpindi became an important military installation.[20] Most Punjabis supported the British during World War I, providing men and resources to the war effort even though the Punjab remained a source of anti colonial activities.[84]: 163 Disturbances in the region increased as the war continued.[20] At the end of the war, high casualty rates, heavy taxation, inflation, and a widespread influenza epidemic disrupted Punjabi society.[20] In 1919, Colonel Reginald Dyer ordered troops under command to fire on a crowd of demonstrators, mostly Sikhs in Amritsar. The Jallianwala massacre fueled the Indian independence movement.[20]

Nationalists declared the independence of India from Lahore in 1930 but were quickly suppressed.[20] When the Second World War broke out, nationalism in British India had already divided into religious movements.[20] Many Sikhs and other minorities supported the Hindus, who promised a secular multicultural and multireligious society, and Muslim leaders in Lahore passed a resolution to work for a Muslim Pakistan, making the Punjab region a center of growing conflict between Indian and Pakistani nationalists.[20] At the end of the war, the British granted separate independence to India and Pakistan, setting off massive communal violence as Muslims fled to Pakistan and Hindu and Sikh Punjabis fled east to India.[20]

The British Raj had major political, cultural, philosophical, and literary consequences in the Punjab, including the establishment of a new system of education. During the independence movement, many Punjabis played a significant role, including Madan Lal Dhingra, Sukhdev Thapar, Ajit Singh Sandhu, Bhagat Singh, Udham Singh, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Bhai Parmanand, Choudhry Rahmat Ali, and Lala Lajpat Rai. At the time of partition in 1947, the province was split into East and West Punjab. East Punjab (48%) became part of India, while West Punjab (52%) became part of Pakistan.[85] The Punjab bore the brunt of the civil unrest following partition, with casualties estimated to be in the millions.[86][87][88][89]

Another major consequence of partition was the sudden shift towards religious homogeneity occurred in all districts across Punjab owing to the new international border that cut through the province. This rapid demographic shift was primarily due to wide scale migration but also caused by large-scale religious cleansing riots which were witnessed across the region at the time. According to historical demographer Tim Dyson, in the eastern regions of Punjab that ultimately became Indian Punjab following independence, districts that were 66% Hindu in 1941 became 80% Hindu in 1951; those that were 20% Sikh became 50% Sikh in 1951. Conversely, in the western regions of Punjab that ultimately became Pakistani Punjab, all districts became almost exclusively Muslim by 1951.[90]

The geographical definition of the term "Punjab" has changed over time. In the 16th century Mughal Empire it referred to a relatively smaller area between the Indus and the Sutlej rivers.[91][92]

At its height in the first half of the 19th century, the Sikh Empire spanned a total of over 200,000 sq mi (520,000 km²).[93][94][95]

The Punjab was a region straddling India and the Afghan Durrani Empire. The following modern-day political divisions made up the historical Punjab region during the Sikh Empire:

After Ranjit Singh's death in 1839, the empire was severely weakened by internal divisions and political mismanagement. This opportunity was used by the East India Company to launch the First and Second Anglo-Sikh Wars. The country was finally annexed and dissolved at the end of the Second Anglo-Sikh War in 1849 into separate princely states and the province of Punjab. Eventually, a Lieutenant Governorship was formed in Lahore as a direct representative of the Crown.[84]: 221

In British India, until the Partition of India in 1947, the Punjab Province was geographically a triangular tract of country of which the Indus River and its tributary the Sutlej formed the two sides up to their confluence, the base of the triangle in the north being the Lower Himalayan Range between those two rivers. Moreover, the province as constituted under British rule also included a large tract outside these boundaries. Along the northern border, Himalayan ranges divided it from Kashmir and Tibet. On the west it was separated from the North-West Frontier Province by the Indus, until it reached the border of Dera Ghazi Khan District, which was divided from Baluchistan by the Sulaiman Range. To the south lay Sindh and Rajputana, while on the east the rivers Jumna and

Tons separated it from the United Provinces.[105] In total Punjab had an area of approximately 357 000 km square about the same size as modern day Germany, being one of the largest provinces of the British Raj.

It encompassed the present day Indian states of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, and some parts of Himachal Pradesh which were merged with Punjab by the British for administrative purposes (but excluding the former princely states which were later combined into the Patiala and East Punjab States Union) and the Pakistani regions of the Punjab, Islamabad Capital Territory and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In 1901 the frontier districts beyond the Indus were separated from Punjab and made into a new province: the North-West Frontier Province. Subsequently, Punjab was divided into four natural geographical divisions by colonial officials on the decadal census [data:\[106\]](#): 2 [107]: 4

The struggle for Indian independence witnessed competing and conflicting interests in the Punjab. The landed elites of the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities had loyally collaborated with the British since annexation, supported the Unionist Party and were hostile to the Congress party-led independence movement.[108] Amongst the peasantry and urban middle classes, the Hindus were the most active National Congress supporters, the Sikhs flocked to the Akali movement whilst the Muslims eventually supported the Muslim League.[108]

Since the partition of the sub-continent had been decided, special meetings of the Western and Eastern Section of the Legislative Assembly were held on 23 June 1947 to decide whether or not the Province of the Punjab be partitioned. After voting on both sides, partition was decided and the existing Punjab Legislative Assembly was also divided into West Punjab Legislative Assembly and the East Punjab Legislative Assembly. This last Assembly before independence, held its last sitting on 4 July 1947.[109]

Historically, Lahore has been the capital of the Punjab region and continues to be the most populous city in the region, with a population of 11 million for the city proper. Faisalabad is the 2nd most populous city and largest industrial hub in this region. Other major cities are Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Multan, Ludhiana, Amritsar, Jalandhar, and Chandigarh are the other cities in Punjab with a city-proper population of over a million.

The climate has significant impact on the economy of Punjab, particularly for agriculture in the region. Climate is not uniform over the whole region, as the areas adjacent to the Himalayas generally receive heavier rainfall than those at a distance.[110]

There are three main seasons and two transitional periods. During the hot season, from mid-April to the end of June, the temperature may reach 49 °C (120 °F). The monsoon season, from July to September, is a period of heavy rainfall, providing water for crops in addition to the supply from canals and irrigation systems. The transitional period after the monsoon season is cool and mild, leading to the winter season, when the temperature in January falls to 5 °C (41 °F) at night and 12 °C (54 °F) by day. During the transitional period from winter to the hot season, sudden hailstorms and heavy showers may occur, causing damage to crops.[111]

The major language is Punjabi, which is written in India with the Gurmukhi script, and in Pakistan using the Shahmukhi script.[119] The Punjabi language has official status and is widely used in education and administration in Indian Punjab, whereas in Pakistani Punjab these roles are instead fulfilled by the Urdu language.

Several languages closely related to Punjabi are spoken in the various parts of the region. Dogri,[120] Kangri,[121] and other western Pahari dialects are spoken in the north-central and northeastern parts of the region, while Bagri[122] is spoken in south-central and southeastern sections. Meanwhile, Saraiki is generally spoken across a wide belt covering the southwest, while in the northwest there are large pockets containing speakers of Hindko and Pothwari.[123]

Hinduism is the oldest of the religions practised by Punjabi people, however, the term Hindu was also applied over a vast territory with much regional diversity.[124] The historical Vedic religion constituted the religious ideas and practices in the Punjab during the Vedic period (1500–500 BCE), centered primarily in the worship of Indra.[125][126][127][128] The bulk of the Rigveda was composed in the Punjab region between circa 1500 and 1200 BC,[129] while later Vedic scriptures were composed more eastwards, between the Yamuna and Ganges rivers. An ancient Indian law book called the Manusmriti, developed by Brahmin Hindu priests, shaped Punjabi religious life from 200 BC onward.[130]

Later, the spread of Buddhism and Jainism in the Indian subcontinent saw the growth of Buddhism and Jainism in the Punjab.[131] Islam was introduced via southern Punjab in the 8th century, becoming the majority by the 16th century, via local conversion.[132][133] There was a small Jain community left in Punjab by the 16th century, while the Buddhist community had largely disappeared by the turn of the 10th century.[134] The region became predominantly Muslim due to missionary Sufi saints whose dargahs dot the landscape of the Punjab region.[135]

The rise of Sikhism in the 1700s saw some Punjabis, both Hindu and Muslim, accepting the new Sikh faith.[130][136] A number of Punjabis during the colonial period of India became Christians, with all of these religions characterizing the religious diversity now found in the Punjab region.[130]

A number of Punjabis during the colonial period of India became Christians, with all of these religions characterizing the religious diversity now found in the Punjab region.[137] Additionally during the colonial era, the practice of religious syncretism among Punjabi Muslims and Punjabi Hindus was noted and documented by officials in census reports:

"In other parts of the Province, too, traces of Hindu festivals are noticeable among the Muhammadans. In the western Punjab, Baisakhi, the new year's day of the Hindus, is celebrated as an agricultural festival, by all Muhammadans, by racing bullocks yoked to the well gear, with the beat of tom-toms, and large crowds gather to witness the show, The race is called Baisakhi and is a favourite pastime in the well-irrigated tracts. Then the processions of Tazias, in Muharram, with the accompaniment of tom-toms, fencing parties and bands playing on flutes and other musical instruments (which is disapproved by the orthodox Muhammadans) and the establishment of Sabils (shelters where water and sharbat are served out) are clearly influenced by similar practices at Hindu festivals, while the illuminations on occasions like the Chiraghan fair of Shalamar (Lahore) are no doubt practices answering to the holiday-making instinct of the converted Hindus." [106]: 174 "Besides actual conversion, Islam has had a considerable influence on the Hindu religion. The sects of reformers based on a revolt from the orthodoxy of Varnashrama Dharma were obviously the outcome of the knowledge that a different religion could produce equally pious and right thinking men. Laxity in social restrictions also appeared simultaneously in various degrees and certain customs were assimilated to those of the Muhammadans. On the other hand the miraculous powers of Muhammadan saints were enough to attract the saint worshipping Hindus, to allegiance, if not to a total change of faith... The Shamsis are believers in Shah Shamas Tabrez of Multan, and follow the Imam, for the time being, of the Ismailia sect of Shias... they belong mostly to the Sunar

caste and their connection with the sect is kept a secret, like Freemasonry. They pass as ordinary Hindus, but their devotion to the Imam is very strong." [106]: 130

The Indo-Gangetic Plain West geographical division included Hisar district, Loharu State, Rohtak district, Dujana State, Gurgaon district, Pataudi State, Delhi, Karnal district, Jalandhar district, Kapurthala State, Ludhiana district, Malerkotla State, Firozpur district, Faridkot State, Patiala State, Jind State, Nabha State, Lahore District, Amritsar district, Gujranwala District, and Sheikhupura District. [106]: 2 [107]: 4

The Himalayan geographical division included Sirmoor State, Simla District, Simla Hill States, Bilaspur State, Kangra district, Mandi State, Suket State, and Chamba State. [106]: 2 [107]: 4

The Sub-Himalayan geographical division included Ambala district, Kalsia State, Hoshiarpur district, Gurdaspur district, Sialkot District, Gujrat District, Jhelum District, Rawalpindi District, and Attock District. [106]: 2 [107]: 4

The North-West Dry Area geographical division included Montgomery District, Shahpur District, Mianwali District, Lyallpur District, Jhang District, Multan District, Bahawalpur State, Muzaffargarh District, Dera Ghazi Khan District, and the Biloch Trans-Frontier Tract. [106]: 2 [107]: 4

In the present-day, the vast majority of Pakistani Punjabis are Sunni Muslim by faith, but also include significant minority faiths, such as Shia Muslims, Ahmadi Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians.

Sikhism, founded by Guru Nanak is the main religion practised in the post-1966 Indian Punjab state. About 57.7% of the population of Punjab state is Sikh, 38.5% is Hindu, with the remaining population including Muslims, Christians, and Jains. [150] Punjab state contains the holy Sikh cities of Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib, Tarn Taran Sahib, Fatehgarh Sahib and Chamkaur Sahib.

The Punjab was home to several Sufi saints, and Sufism is well established in the region. [151] Also, Kirpal Singh revered the Sikh Gurus as saints. [152]

The Punjab region is diverse. Historic census reports taken in the colonial era details the main castes are represented, alongside numerous subcastes and tribes (also known as Jāti or Barādārī), formed parts of the various ethnic groups in the region, contemporarily known as Punjabis, Saraikis, Haryanvis, Hindkowans, Dogras, Paharis, and more.

The historical region of Punjab produces a relatively high proportion of the food output from India and Pakistan. [citation needed] The region has been used for extensive wheat farming. In addition, rice, cotton, sugarcane, fruit, and vegetables are also grown. [160]

The agricultural output of the Punjab region in Pakistan contributes significantly to Pakistan's GDP. Both Indian and Pakistani Punjab is considered to have the best infrastructure of their respective countries. The Indian state of Punjab is currently the 16th richest state or the eighth richest large state of India. Pakistani Punjab produces 68% of Pakistan's foodgrain production. [161] Its share of Pakistan's GDP has historically ranged from 51.8% to 54.7%. [162]

Called "The Granary of India" or "The Bread Basket of India", Indian Punjab produces 1% of the world's rice, 2% of its wheat, and 2% of its cotton. [160] In 2001, it was recorded that farmers made up 39% of Indian Punjab's workforce. [163] In the Punjab region of Pakistan, 42.3% of the labour force is engaged in the agriculture sector. [164]

Alternatively, Punjab is also adding to the economy with the increase in employment of Punjab youth in the private sector. Government schemes such as 'Ghar Ghar Rozgar and Karobar Mission' have brought enhanced employability in the private sector. As of October 2019[update], more than 32,000 youths have been placed in different jobs and 12,000 have been skill-trained.[165]

Text extracted from URL 54:

Sikkim (/ˈsɪkɪm/ SIK-im; Nepali pronunciation: [ˈsɪkːim]) is a state in northeastern India. It borders the Tibet Autonomous Region of China in the north and northeast, Bhutan in the east, Koshi Province of Nepal in the west, and West Bengal in the south. Sikkim is also close to the Siliguri Corridor, which borders Bangladesh. Sikkim is the least populous and second-smallest among the Indian states. Situated in the Eastern Himalaya, Sikkim is notable for its biodiversity, including alpine and subtropical climates, as well as being a host to Kangchenjunga, the highest peak in India and third-highest on Earth.[10] Sikkim's capital and largest city is Gangtok. Almost 35% of the state is covered by Khangchendzonga National Park – a UNESCO World Heritage Site.[11]

The Kingdom of Sikkim was founded by the Namgyal dynasty in the 17th century. It was ruled by Buddhist priest-kings known as the Chogyal. It became a princely state of the British Indian Empire in 1890. Following Indian independence, Sikkim continued its protectorate status with the Union of India after 1947 and the Republic of India after 1950. It enjoyed the highest literacy rate and per capita income among Himalayan states. In 1973, anti-royalist riots took place in front of the Chogyal's palace. In 1975, after the Indian Army took over the city of Gangtok, a disputed referendum was held that led to the dissolution of the monarchy and Sikkim joining India as its 22nd state.[12]

Modern Sikkim is a multiethnic and multilingual Indian state. The official languages of the state are English, Nepali, Sikkimese, and Lepcha.[4] Additional official languages include Gurung, Limbu, Magar, Mukhia, Newari, Rai, Sherpa and Tamang for the purpose of preservation of culture and tradition in the state.[5] English is taught in schools and used in government documents. The predominant religion is Hinduism, with a significant Vajrayana Buddhism minority. Sikkim's economy is largely dependent on agriculture and tourism. As of 2019[update], the state had the fifth-smallest GDP among Indian states,[13] although it is also among the fastest-growing.[14][15]

Sikkim achieved its ambition to convert its agriculture to fully organic between 2003 and 2016, and became the first state in India to achieve this distinction.[16][17][18][19] It is also among India's most environmentally conscious states, having banned plastic water bottles "in all government functions and meetings" and polystyrene products (throughout the state).[20][21]

The name Sikkim is believed to be a combination of the Limbu words su "new" and khyim "palace" or "house".[22] The Tibetan name for Sikkim is Drenjong (Wylie-transliteration: bras ljongs), which means "valley of rice",[23] while the Bhutias call it Beyul Demazong, which means "the hidden valley of rice".[24] According to folklore, after establishing Rabdentse as his new capital, Bhutia king Tensung Namgyal built a palace and asked his Limbu Queen to name it. The Lepcha people, the original inhabitants of Sikkim, called it Nye-mae-el, meaning "paradise".[24] In historical Indian literature, Sikkim is known as Indrakil, the garden of the war god Indra.[25]

The Lepchas are considered to be the earliest inhabitants of Sikkim.[26] However the Limbus and the Magars also lived in the inaccessible parts of West and South districts as early as the Lepchas perhaps lived in the East and North districts.[27] The Buddhist saint Padmasambhava, also known as

Guru Rinpoche, is said to have passed through the land in the 8th century.[28] The Guru is reported to have blessed the land, introduced Buddhism, and foretold the era of monarchy that would arrive in Sikkim centuries later.[citation needed]

According to legend, Khye Bumsa, a 14th-century prince from the Minyak House in Kham in eastern Tibet, received a divine revelation instructing him to travel south to seek his fortunes. A fifth-generation descendant of Khye Bumsa, Phuntsog Namgyal, became the founder of Sikkim's monarchy in 1642, when he was consecrated as the first Chogyal, or priest-king, of Sikkim by the three venerated lamas at Yuksom.[29]

Phuntsog Namgyal was succeeded in 1670 by his son, Tensung Namgyal, who moved the capital from Yuksom to Rabdentse (near modern Pelling). In 1700, Sikkim was invaded by the Bhutanese with the help of the half-sister of the Chogyal, who had been denied the throne. The Bhutanese were driven away by the Tibetan people, who restored the throne to the Chogyal ten years later. Between 1717 and 1733, the kingdom faced many raids by the Nepalese in the west and Bhutanese in the east, culminating with the destruction of the capital Rabdentse by the Nepalese.[30] In 1791, China sent troops to support Sikkim and defend Tibet against the Gorkha Kingdom. Following the subsequent defeat of Gorkha, the Chinese Qing dynasty established control over Sikkim.[31]

Following the beginning of British rule in neighbouring India, Sikkim allied with Britain against their common adversary, Nepal. The Nepalese attacked Sikkim, overrunning most of the region including the Terai. This prompted the British East India Company to attack Nepal, resulting in the Gurkha War of 1814.[33] Treaties signed between Sikkim and Nepal resulted in the return of the territory annexed by the Nepalese in 1817. However, ties between Sikkim and the British weakened when the latter began taxation of the Morang region. In 1849, two British physicians, Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker and Archibald Campbell, the latter being in charge of relations between the British and Sikkimese governments, ventured into the mountains of Sikkim unannounced and unauthorised.[34] The doctors were detained by the Sikkimese government, leading to a punitive British expedition against the kingdom, after which the Darjeeling district and Morang were annexed to British India in 1853. The Chogyal of Sikkim became a titular ruler under the directive of the British governor as a result of the invasion.[35]

Sikkim became a British protectorate in the later decades of the 19th century, formalised by a convention signed with China in 1890.[36][37][38] Sikkim was gradually granted more sovereignty over the next three decades,[39] and became a member of the Chamber of Princes, the assembly representing the rulers of the Indian princely states, in 1922.[38]

Prior to Indian independence, Jawaharlal Nehru, as the Vice-President of the Executive Council, pushed through a resolution in the Indian Constituent Assembly to the effect that Sikkim and Bhutan, as Himalayan states, were not 'Indian states' and their future should be negotiated separately.[40] A standstill agreement was signed in February 1948.[41]

Meanwhile, Indian independence and its move to democracy spurred a fledgling political movement in Sikkim, giving rise to the formation of Sikkim State Congress (SSC), a pro-accession political party. The party sent a plate of demands to the palace, including a demand for accession to India. The palace attempted to defuse the movement by appointing three secretaries from the SSC to the government and sponsoring a counter-movement in the name of Sikkim National Party, which opposed accession to India.[42]

The demand for responsible government continued, and the SSC launched a civil disobedience movement. The Chogyal Palden Thondup Namgyal asked India for help in quelling the movement,

which was offered in the form of a small military police force and an Indian Dewan. In 1950, a treaty was agreed between India and Sikkim which gave Sikkim the status of an Indian protectorate. Sikkim came under the suzerainty of India, which controlled its external affairs, defence, diplomacy and communications.[43] In other respects, Sikkim retained administrative autonomy.[citation needed]

A state council was established in 1953 to allow for constitutional government under the Chogyal. Despite pressures from an India "bent on annexation", Chogyal Palden Thondup Namgyal was able to preserve autonomy and shape a "model Asian state" where the literacy rate and per capita income were twice as high as neighbouring Nepal, Bhutan and India.[44] Meanwhile, the Sikkim National Congress demanded fresh elections and greater representation for Nepalis in Sikkim. People marched on the palace against the monarchy.[44] In 1973, anti-royalist riots took place in front of the Chogyal's palace.

In 1975, the Prime Minister of Sikkim Kazi Lhendup Dorjee, appealed to the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi for Sikkim to become a state of India. In April of that year, the Indian Army took over the city of Gangtok and disarmed the Chogyal's palace guards. Thereafter, a referendum of questionable legitimacy was held in which 97.5 per cent of voters supposedly supported abolishing the monarchy, effectively approving union with India. India is said to have stationed 20,000–40,000 troops in a country of only 200,000 during the referendum.[45] On 16 May 1975, Sikkim became the 22nd state of the Indian Union, and the monarchy was abolished.[46] To enable the incorporation of the new state, the Indian Parliament amended the Indian Constitution. First, the 35th Amendment laid down a set of conditions that made Sikkim an "Associate State", a special designation not used by any other state. A month later, the 36th Amendment repealed the 35th Amendment, and made Sikkim a full state, adding its name to the First Schedule of the Constitution.[47]

In 2000, the seventeenth Karmapa, Urgyen Trinley Dorje, who had been confirmed by the Dalai Lama and accepted as a tulku by the Chinese government, escaped from Tibet, seeking to return to the Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim. Chinese officials were in a dilemma on this issue, for any protests to India would mean an explicit endorsement of India's governance of Sikkim, which China still recognised as an independent state occupied by India. The Chinese government eventually recognised Sikkim as an Indian state in 2003, in return for India declaring Tibet as a "part of" the territory of China;[48][49] New Delhi had accepted Tibet as part of China in 1954, but China appears to have believed that the agreement had lapsed.[50][51] The 2003 agreement led to a thaw in Sino-Indian relations.[52] On 6 July 2006, the Sikkimese Himalayan pass of Nathu La was opened to cross-border trade, becoming the first open border between India and China.[53] The pass, which was first opened during the 1904 Younghusband Expedition to Tibet,[54] had remained closed since the 1962 Sino-Indian War.[53]

On 18 September 2011, a magnitude 6.9Mw earthquake struck Sikkim, killing at least 116 people in the state and in Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Tibet.[55] More than 60 people died in Sikkim alone, and the city of Gangtok suffered significant damage.[56]

Situated in the Himalayan mountains, the state of Sikkim is characterised by mountainous terrain. Almost the entire state is hilly, with an elevation ranging from 280 metres (920 ft) in the south at the border with West Bengal to 8,586 metres (28,169 ft) in the northern peaks near Nepal and Tibet. The summit of Kangchenjunga, the world's third-highest peak, is the state's highest point, situated on the border between Sikkim and Nepal.[57] For the most part, the land is unfit for agriculture because of the rocky, precipitous slopes. However, some hill slopes have been converted into terrace farms.[citation needed]

Numerous snow-fed streams have carved out river valleys in the west and south of the state. These streams combine into the major Teesta River and its tributary, the Rangeet, which flow through the state from north to south.[58] About a third of the state is heavily forested. The Himalayan mountains surround the northern, eastern and western borders of Sikkim. The Lower Himalayas, lying in the southern reaches of the state, are the most densely populated.[citation needed]

The state has 28 mountain peaks, more than 80 glaciers,[59] 227 high-altitude lakes (including the Tsongmo, Gurudongmar and Khecheopalri Lakes), five major hot springs, and more than 100 rivers and streams. Eight mountain passes connect the state to Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal.[60]

Sikkim's hot springs are renowned for their medicinal and therapeutic value. Among the state's most notable hot springs are those at Phurchachu, Yumthang, Borang, Ralang, Taram-chu and Yumey Samdong. The springs, which have a high sulphur content, are located near river banks; some are known to emit hydrogen.[61] The average temperature of the water in these hot springs is 50 °C (122 °F).[62]

The hills of Sikkim mainly consist of gneiss and schist[63] which weather to produce generally poor and shallow brown clay soils. The soil is coarse, with large concentrations of iron oxide; it ranges from neutral to acidic and is lacking in organic and mineral nutrients. This type of soil tends to support evergreen and deciduous forests.[64]

The rock consists of phyllites and schists, and is highly susceptible to weathering and erosion. This, combined with the state's heavy rainfall, causes extensive soil erosion and the loss of soil nutrients through leaching. As a result, landslides are frequent, often isolating rural towns and villages from the major urban centres.[65]

The state has five seasons: winter, summer, spring, autumn, and monsoon season. Sikkim's climate ranges from sub-tropical in the south to tundra in the north. Most of the inhabited regions of Sikkim experience a temperate climate, with temperatures seldom exceeding 28 °C (82 °F) in summer. The average annual temperature for most of Sikkim is around 18 °C (64 °F).[citation needed]

Sikkim is one of the few states in India to receive regular snowfall. The snow line ranges from 6,100 metres (20,000 ft) in the south of the state to 4,900 metres (16,100 ft) in the north.[66] The tundra-type region in the north is snowbound for four months every year, and the temperature drops below 0 °C (32 °F) almost every night.[61] In north-western Sikkim, the peaks are frozen year-round;[67] because of the high altitude, temperatures in the mountains can drop to as low as −40 °C (−40 °F) in winter.

During the monsoon, heavy rains increase the risk of landslides. The record for the longest period of continuous rain in Sikkim is 11 days. Fog affects many parts of the state during winter and the monsoons, making transportation perilous.[68]

Sikkim is situated in an ecological hotspot of the lower Himalayas, one of only three among the ecoregions of India.[70][71] The forested regions of the state exhibit a diverse range of fauna and flora. Owing to its altitudinal gradation, the state has a wide variety of plants, from tropical species to temperate, alpine and tundra ones, and is perhaps one of the few regions to exhibit such a diversity within such a small area. Nearly 81 per cent of the area of Sikkim comes under the administration of its forest department.[72]

Sikkim is home to around 5,000 species of flowering plants, 515 rare orchids, 60 primula species, 36 rhododendron species, 11 oak varieties, 23 bamboo varieties, 16 conifer species, 362 types of ferns and fern allies, 8 tree ferns, and over 900 medicinal plants.[70][10] A relative of the Poinsettia,

locally known as "Christmas Flower", can be found in abundance in the mountainous state. The Noble Dendrobium is the official flower of Sikkim, while the rhododendron is the state tree.[73]

Orchids, figs, laurel, bananas, sal trees and bamboo grow in the Himalayan subtropical broadleaf forests of the lower altitudes of Sikkim. In the temperate elevations above 1,500 metres (4,900 ft) there are Eastern Himalayan broadleaf forests, where oaks, chestnuts, maples, birches, alders, and magnolias grow in large numbers, as well as Himalayan subtropical pine forests, dominated by Chir pine. Alpine-type vegetation is typically found between an altitude of 3,500 to 5,000 metres (11,500 to 16,400 ft). In lower elevations are found juniper, pine, firs, cypresses and rhododendrons from the Eastern Himalayan subalpine conifer forests. Higher up are Eastern Himalayan alpine shrub and meadows and high-altitude wetlands, which are home to a wide variety of rhododendrons and wildflowers.[71][10]

The fauna of Sikkim include the snow leopard,[74] musk deer, Himalayan tahr, red panda, Himalayan marmot, Himalayan serow, Himalayan goral, muntjac, common langur, Asian black bear, clouded leopard,[75] marbled cat, leopard cat,[76] dhole, Tibetan wolf, hog badger, binturong, and Himalayan jungle cat. Among the animals more commonly found in the alpine zone are yaks, mainly reared for their milk, meat, and as a beast of burden.

The avifauna of Sikkim include the impeyan pheasant, crimson horned pheasant, snow partridge, Tibetan snowcock, bearded vulture and griffon vulture, as well as golden eagles, quails, plovers, woodcocks, sandpipers, pigeons, Old World flycatchers, babblers and robins. Sikkim has more than 550 species of birds, some of which have been declared endangered.[71]

Sikkim also has a rich diversity of arthropods, many of which remain unstudied.[71] Some of the most understudied species are Sikkimese arthropods, specifically butterflies. Of the approximately 1,438 butterfly species found in the Indian subcontinent, 695 have been recorded in Sikkim.[77] These include the endangered Kaiser-i-hind, the Yellow Gorgon and the Bhutan Glory.[78]

List of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries of Sikkim:

According to the Constitution of India, Sikkim has a parliamentary system of representative democracy for its governance; universal suffrage is granted to state residents. The government structure is organised into three branches:

In 1975, after the abrogation of Sikkim's monarchy, the Indian National Congress gained a majority in the 1977 elections. In 1979, after a period of instability, a popular ministry headed by Nar Bahadur Bhandari, leader of the Sikkim Sangram Parishad Party, was sworn in. Bhandari held on to power in the 1984 and 1989 elections. In the 1994 elections, Pawan Kumar Chamling of the Sikkim Democratic Front became the Chief Minister of the state. Chamling and his party had since held on to power by winning the 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014 elections.[35][80][81] However, the 2019 legislative assembly elections were won by the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha party and the chief minister since then is Prem Singh Tamang.[82][83] The current Governor of Sikkim is Lakshman Acharya.[84]

Sikkim has six districts – Gangtok District, Mangan District, Namchi District, Pakyong District, Geyzing District and Soreng District. The district capitals are Gangtok, Mangan, Namchi, Pakyong, Gyalshing and Soreng respectively.[85] These six districts are further divided into 16 subdivisions; Pakyong, Rongli, Rangpo and Gangtok are the subdivisions of the Gangtok and Pakyong Districts. Soreng, Yuksom, Gyalshing and Dentam are the subdivisions of the Geyzing and Soreng district. Chungthang, Dzongu, Kabi and Mangan are the subdivisions of the Mangan district. Ravongla, Jorethang, Namchi and Yangyang are the subdivisions of the Namchi district.[86]

Each of Sikkim's districts is overseen by a state government appointee, the district collector, who is in charge of the administration of the civilian areas of the district. The Indian Army has control over a large part of the state, as Sikkim forms part of a sensitive border area with China. Many areas are restricted to foreigners, and official permits are needed to visit them.[87]

Sikkim's nominal state gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at US\$4.6 billion in 2019, with GDP per capita being \$7,530 (₹ 5,50,000) thus constituting the third-smallest GDP among India's 28 states.[14] The state's economy is largely agrarian based on the terraced farming of rice and the cultivation of crops such as maize, millet, wheat, barley, oranges, tea, and cardamom.[88][89] Sikkim produces more cardamom than any other Indian state and is home to the largest cultivated area of cardamom.[90]

Because of its hilly terrain and poor transport infrastructure, Sikkim lacks a large-scale industrial base. Brewing, distilling, tanning and watchmaking are the main industries and are mainly located in the southern regions of the state, primarily in the towns of Melli and Jorethang. In addition, a small mining industry exists in Sikkim extracting minerals such as copper, dolomite, talc, graphite, quartzite, coal, zinc, and lead.[91] Despite the state's minimal industrial infrastructure, Sikkim's economy has been among the fastest-growing in India since 2000; the state's GDP expanded by 89.93% in 2010 alone.[92] In 2003, Sikkim decided to fully convert to organic farming and achieved this goal in 2015 becoming India's first "organic state".[17][18][19][16]

In recent years, the government of Sikkim has extensively promoted tourism. As a result, state revenue has increased 14 times since the mid-1990s.[93] Sikkim has furthermore invested in a fledgling gambling industry promoting both casinos and online gambling. The state's first casino, the Casino Sikkim, opened in March 2009.[94] In the year 2010 the government subsequently issued three gambling licences for casinos and online sports betting in general.[95] The Playwin lottery has been a notable success in the state.[96][97]

The opening of the Nathu La pass on 6 July 2006, connecting Lhasa, Tibet, to India, was billed as a boon for Sikkim's economy. Trade through the pass remains hampered by Sikkim's limited infrastructure and government restrictions in both India and China, though the volume of traded goods has been steadily increasing.[98][99]

Sikkim did not have any operational airport for a long time because of its rough terrain. However, in October 2018, Pakyong Airport, the state's first airport, located in Pakyong Town at a distance of 30 km (19 mi) from Gangtok, became operational after a four-year delay.[101][102] It has been constructed by the Airports Authority of India on 200 acres of land. At an altitude of 4,700 feet (1,400 m) above sea level, it is one of the five highest airports in India.[103][104] The airport is capable of operating ATR aircraft.[105]

Before October 2018, the closest operational airport to Sikkim was Bagdogra Airport near Siliguri in northern West Bengal. The airport is located about 124 km (77 mi) from Gangtok, and frequent buses connect the two.[106] A daily helicopter service run by the Sikkim Helicopter Service connects Gangtok to Bagdogra; the flight is thirty minutes long, operates only once a day, and can carry four people.[80] The Gangtok helipad is the only civilian helipad in the state.

National Highway 10 (NH 10; formerly NH 31A) links Siliguri to Gangtok. Sikkim Nationalised Transport runs bus and truck services. Privately run bus, tourist taxi, and jeep services operate throughout Sikkim and also connect it to Siliguri. A branch of the highway from Melli connects western Sikkim. Towns in eastern, southern and western Sikkim are connected to the hill stations of

Kalimpong and Darjeeling in northern West Bengal.[107] The state is furthermore connected to Tibet by the mountain pass of Nathu La.

List of National Highways of Sikkim:

Sikkim lacks significant railway infrastructure. The closest major railway stations are Siliguri Junction and New Jalpaiguri in neighbouring West Bengal.[109] However, the New Sikkim Railway Project has been launched to connect the town of Rangpo in Sikkim with Sevoke on the West Bengal border. This line is Sevoke-Rangpo Railway Line from Sivok railway station to Rangpo railway station.[110] The five-station line is intended to support both economic development and Indian Army operations and was initially planned to be completed by 2015,[111][112] though as of 2023 its construction has met with delays.[113] In 2019, the railway line up to Rangpo was expected to be completed in 2021.[114] In the second phase the line will be extended up to Gangtok.[115] In addition, the Ministry of Railways proposed plans in 2010 for railway lines linking Mirik in West Bengal to Namchi, Daramdin, Ranipool, and Gangtok.[116]

Sikkim's roads are maintained by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), an offshoot of the Indian Army. The roads in southern Sikkim are in relatively good condition, landslides being less frequent in this region. The state government maintains 1,857 kilometres (1,154 mi) of roadways that do not fall under the BRO's jurisdiction.[117]

Sikkim receives most of its electricity from 19 hydroelectric power stations.[93] Power is also obtained from the National Thermal Power Corporation and Power Grid Corporation of India.[118] By 2006, the state had achieved 100 per cent rural electrification.[119] However, the voltage remains unstable and voltage stabilisers are needed. Per capita consumption of electricity in Sikkim was approximately 182 kWh in 2006. The state government has promoted biogas and solar power for cooking, but these have received a poor response and are used mostly for lighting purposes.[120] In 2005, 73.2 per cent of Sikkim's households were reported to have access to safe drinking water,[117] and the state's large number of mountain streams assures a sufficient water supply.

On 8 December 2008, it was announced that Sikkim had become the first state in India to achieve 100 per cent sanitation coverage, becoming completely free of public defecation, thus attaining the status of "Nirmal State".[121][122]

Sikkim is India's least populous state, with 610,577 inhabitants according to the 2011 census.[3] Sikkim is also one of the least densely populated Indian states, with only 86 persons per square kilometre. However, it has a high population growth rate, averaging 12.36% per cent between 2001 and 2011. The sex ratio is 889 females per 1,000 males, with a total of 321,661 males and 286,027 females recorded in 2011. With around 98,000 inhabitants as of 2011, the capital Gangtok is the most significant urban area in the mostly rural state; in 2005, the urban population in Sikkim constituted around 11.06 per cent of the total.[117] In 2011, the average per capita income in Sikkim stood at ₹ 81,159 (US\$1,305).[124]

Languages of Sikkim (2011 census)[125]

The official languages of the state are Nepali, Sikkimese, Lepcha and English. Additional official languages include Gurung, Limbu, Magar, Mukhia, Newar, Rai, Sherpa and Tamang for the purpose of preservation of culture and tradition in the state.

Nepali is the lingua franca of Sikkim, while Sikkimese (Bhutia) and Lepcha are spoken in certain areas.[126] English is also spoken and understood in most of Sikkim. Other languages include Dzongkha, Groma, Hindi, Majhi, Majhwar, Thulung, Tibetan, and Yakha.[127]

The majority of Sikkim's residents are Nepali Indians.[128] The native Sikkimese include the Bhutias, who migrated from the Kham district of Tibet in the 14th century, and the Lepchas, who are believed to pre-date the Bhutias and are the oldest known inhabitants. Tibetans reside mostly in the northern and eastern reaches of the state. Migrant resident communities known as Plainsmen Sikkimese include Bengalis, Biharis and Marwaris, who are prominent in commerce in South Sikkim and Gangtok, only those who are the native residents since 1946.[129]

Religion in Sikkim (2011)[130]

According to the 2011 census, 57.8% follow Hinduism, making it the state's majority religion. Buddhism is followed by 27.4% of the population, while Christianity is followed by 9.9%.[133] Between 2001 and 2011, Christianity was the fastest growing religion in the state, going from 6.67% to 9.91% of the population.[133] It was thus the fourth state with the highest Christian growth in the period, behind only Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Meghalaya.[132][134] As of 2014, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Sikkim is the largest Christian denomination in Sikkim.[135] Hinduism, on the other hand, declined from 60.93% to 57.76% of the population in the same period.[132][133] Sikkim was the fourth state with the biggest decline in the percentage of Hindus, behind only Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Assam.[134] Vajrayana Buddhism, which accounts for 27.3% of the population, is Sikkim's second-largest, yet most prominent religion. Prior to Sikkim's becoming a part of the Indian Union, Vajrayana Buddhism was the state religion under the Chogyal. Sikkim has 75 Buddhist monasteries, the oldest dating back to the 1700s.[136] The public and visual aesthetics of Sikkim are executed in shades of Vajrayana Buddhism and Buddhism plays a significant role in public life, even among Sikkim's majority Nepali Hindu population. Other religious minorities include Muslims of Bihari ethnicity and Jains, who each account for roughly 1% of the population.[137] The traditional religions of the native Sikkimese account for much of the remainder of the population.

Although tensions between the Lepchas and the Nepalese escalated during the merger of Sikkim with India in the 1970s, there has never been any major degree of communal religious violence, unlike in other Indian states.[138][139] The traditional religion of the Lepcha people is Mun, an animist practice which coexists with Buddhism and Christianity.[140]

There are 6 districts in Sikkim, each overseen by a Central Government appointee, the district collector, who is in charge of the administration of the civilian areas of the districts. The Indian Army has control of a large territory, as the state is a sensitive border area. Many areas are restricted and permits are needed to visit them.

The six districts are:

Sikkim's Gorkhali majority celebrate all major Hindu festivals, including Tihar (Diwali) and Dashain (Dashera). Traditional local festivals, such as Maghe Sankranti, Ramnavmi, Janmastami, Holi, Shivaratri, Navratri, Sakela, Chasok Tangnam and Bhimsen Puja, are popular.[142] Losar, Saga Dawa, Lhabab Duechen, Drupka Teshi and Bhumchu are among the Buddhist festivals celebrated in Sikkim. During the Losar (Tibetan New Year), most offices and educational institutions are closed for a week.[143]

Sikkimese Muslims celebrate Eid ul-Fitr and Muharram.[144] Christmas has been promoted in Gangtok to attract tourists during the off-season.[145]

Western rock music and Indian pop have gained a wide following in Sikkim. Nepali rock and Lepcha music are also popular.[146] Sikkim's most popular sports are football and cricket, although hang gliding and river rafting have grown popular as part of the tourism industry.[147]

Noodle-based dishes such as thukpa, chow mein, thenthuk, fakthu, gyathuk and wonton are common in Sikkim. Momos – steamed dumplings filled with vegetables, chicken, mutton, beef or pork and served with soup – are a popular snack.[148]

Beer, whiskey, rum and brandy are widely consumed in Sikkim,[149] as is tongba, a millet-based alcoholic beverage that is popular in Nepal and Darjeeling. Sikkim has the third-highest per capita alcoholism rate amongst all Indian states, behind Punjab and Haryana.[150]

In 1957, a Nepali monthly magazine Kanchenjunga became the first news outlet for the masses in Sikkim.[151]

The southern urban areas of Sikkim have English, Nepali and Hindi daily newspapers. Nepali-language newspapers, as well as some English newspapers, are locally printed, whereas Hindi and English newspapers are printed in Siliguri. Important local dailies and weeklies include Hamro Prajashakti (Nepali daily), Himalayan Mirror (English daily), the Samay Dainik, Sikkim Express (English), Kanchanjunga Times (Nepali weekly), Pragya Khabar (Nepali weekly) and Himali Bela.[152] Furthermore, the state receives regional editions of national English newspapers such as The Statesman, The Telegraph, The Hindu and The Times of India. Himalaya Darpan, a Nepali daily published in Siliguri, is one of the leading Nepali daily newspapers in the region. The Sikkim Herald is an official weekly publication of the government. Online media covering Sikkim include the Nepali newspaper Himgiri, the English news portal Haalkhabar and the literary magazine Tistarangit. Avyakta, Bilokan, the Journal of Hill Research, Khabar Khagaj, Panda, and the Sikkim Science Society Newsletter are among other registered publications.[153]

Internet cafés are well established in the district capitals, but broadband connectivity is not widely available. Satellite television channels through dish antennae are available in most homes in the state. Channels served are largely the same as those available in the rest of India, although Nepali-language channels are also available. The main service providers include Airtel digital TV, Tata Sky, Dish TV, DD Free Dish and Nayuma.

In 2011, Sikkim's adult literacy rate was 82.2 per cent: 87.29 per cent for males and 76.43 per cent for females.[154] There are a total of 1,157 schools in the state, including 765 schools run by the state government, seven central government schools and 385 private schools.[155] There is one Institute of National Importance,[156] one central university[157] and four private universities[158] in Sikkim offering higher education.

Recently, Government of Sikkim has approved the open school board named Board of Open Schooling and Skill Education,[159] BOSSE to provide Secondary Education, Senior Secondary as well as Skill & Vocational Education up to pre-degree level and to provide opportunity to continue education to such students who have missed the opportunity of school education. Sikkim has a National Institute of Technology, currently operating from a temporary campus in Ravangla, South Sikkim,[160] which is one among the ten newly sanctioned NITs by the Government of India under the 11th Five year Plan, 2009.[161] The NIT Sikkim also has state of art super computing facility named PARAM Kanchenjunga which is said to be fastest among all 31 NITs.[162] Sikkim University is the only central university in Sikkim. The public-private funded institution is the Sikkim Manipal University of Technological Sciences, which offers higher education in engineering, medicine and management. It also runs a host of distance education programs in diverse fields.[163][164]

Medhavi Skills University is a private university located in the state of Sikkim, India. It was established in 2021 under the Sikkim Private Universities, (Amendment) Act, 2021. The university aims to provide skill-based education to students and bridge the gap between academia and industry.[165][164]

There are two state-run polytechnic schools – the Advanced Technical Training Centre (ATTC) and the Centre for Computers and Communication Technology (CCCT) – which offer diploma courses in various branches of engineering. ATTC is situated at Bardang, Singtam, and CCCT at Chisopani, Namchi.

Sikkim University began operating in 2008 at Yangang, which is situated about 28 kilometres (17 mi) from Singtam.[166] Many students, however, migrate to Siliguri, Kolkata, Bangalore and other Indian cities for their higher education.

The campus of the National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT), under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology of the Government of India, is at Pakyong in East Sikkim, and offers formal and informal education in the IT/ITES sector.

The major towns and cities of Sikkim are as follows:

Gangtok, Pakyong, Namchi, Jorethang, Rangpo, Singtam, Gyalshing, Mangan, Soreng, Pelling, Rhenock, Rongli, Rorathang, Ravangla, Chungthang, Ranipool, Lachen, Nayabazar, Lachung, Dikchu, Majitar, Legship, Melli, Yuksom, Sherathang, Namthang, Rinchenpong, Singhik, Hee Burmiok, Tashiding, Kumrek, Makha, Yangang, and Damthang.

The popular sports played in Sikkim include football, cricket, archery, volleyball, tennis, badminton, and athletics. Adventure sports like paragliding, Hiking and mountain biking are also popular in Sikkim.

The stadiums of Sikkim are as follows:

Text extracted from URL 55:

The Kingdom of Sikkim (Classical Tibetan and Sikkimese: འབྲས་ལྗོངས།, Drenjong), officially Dremoshong (Classical Tibetan and Sikkimese: འབྲས་ལྗོངས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་ཁབ།) until the 1800s, was a hereditary monarchy in the Eastern Himalayas which existed from 1642 to 16 May 1975, when it was annexed[5][6][7] by India. It was ruled by Chogyals of the Namgyal dynasty.[8]

According to legend, Khye Bumsa, a 14th-century prince from the Minyak House in Kham in eastern Tibet, received a divine revelation instructing him to travel south to seek his fortunes. A fifth-generation descendant of Khye Bumsa, Phuntsog Namgyal, became the founder of Sikkim's monarchy in 1642, when he was consecrated as the first Chogyal, or priest-king, of Sikkim by the three venerated lamas at Yuksom. Phuntsog Namgyal was succeeded in 1670 by his son, Tensung Namgyal, who moved the capital from Yuksom to Rabdentse (near modern Pelling). by the time of it's fundation, Sikkim became a protectorate of the Tibet (which at the time was part of The Khoshut Khanate until 1717, when became part of the Dzungar Khanate and later to The Qing Dynasty in 1720.)

In the mid-18th century, Sikkim was invaded by both Nepal (then the Gorkha Kingdom) and Bhutan (then ruled by Gedun Chomphel) and was under both the Gorkha and the Bhutanese rule for more than 40 years. Between 1775 and 1815, almost 180,000 ethnic Nepalis[9] from Eastern and Central

Nepal migrated to Sikkim.[citation needed] After the British colonisation of India, however, Sikkim allied itself with British India in order to fight Nepal, their common enemy at the time.[citation needed] The Nepalese then attacked Sikkim, overrunning most of the region including the Terai. This prompted the British East India Company to attack Nepal in 1814, resulting in the Anglo-Nepalese War.[citation needed] The Sugauli Treaty between Britain and Nepal and the Treaty of Titalia between Sikkim and British India resulted in territorial concessions by Nepal, which ceded Sikkim to British India.[10]

Under the 1861 Treaty of Tumlong, Sikkim became a British protectorate, then an Indian protectorate in 1950.[11]

Thutob Namgyal, the 9th Chogyal of Sikkim, looked to the Dalai Lama for spiritual leadership and during his reign the Tibetan government started to regain political influence over Sikkim. In 1888 the British sent a military expedition to expel Tibetan forces from Sikkim.

In 1975, allegations of discrimination against Nepali Hindus in Sikkim led to resentment against the Chogyal.[12][13] Their instigation led to Indian Army personnel moving into Gangtok. According to Sunanda K. Datta-Ray of The Statesman, the army killed the palace guards and surrounded the palace in April 1975.[11]

After disarming the palace, a referendum on the monarchy was held under questionable circumstances, in which the Sikkimese people supposedly overwhelmingly voted to abolish the monarchy, and the new parliament of Sikkim, led by Kazi Lhendup Dorjee, proposed a bill for Sikkim to become an Indian state, which was promptly accepted by the Government of India.[11][14]

In culture and religion, Sikkim was linked closely with Tibet, from which its first king migrated, and Bhutan, with which it shares borders. The presence of a large ethnic Nepali population, mainly from eastern and central Nepal, also leads to cultural linkages with Nepal.

Text extracted from URL 56:

Tamil culture is the culture of the Tamil people. The Tamil people speak the Tamil language, one of the ancient languages in the world. Archaeological evidence points to the Tamilakam region being inhabited for more than 400 millennia and has more than 5,500 years of continuous cultural history. Hence, the culture has seen multiple influences over the years and have developed diversely. With Tamils migrating world-wide, the culture has become diverse and forms a significant part of the life of the people in India and other regions with significant Tamil diaspora such as Sri Lanka, South East Asia and Caribbean.

Historically, the Tamilakam region, the home of the Tamil people, had been inhabited for more than 400 millennia ago and has more than 5,500 years of continuous cultural history.[1][2] The Tamils speak Tamil language, one of the oldest surviving classical languages.[3] The Tamilakam region has been ruled over by many kindgoms, major of which are the Sangam era (300 BC–AD 300) rulers of the Chera, Chola, and Pandya clans, the Pallava dynasty (3rd–9th century), and the later Vijayanagara Empire (14th–17th century).[4] Before the Indian Independence in 1947, the region was under European colonization for two centuries during which the Tamils migrated and settled in various regions across the globe.[5][6] Hence, Tamil culture have seen multiple influences over the years and have developed diversely.

Tamil people speak Tamil, which is one of the oldest languages and was the first to be recognized as a classical language in India.[7] Various varieties of Tamil is spoken across regions such as Madras Bashai in northern Tamil Nadu, Kongu Tamil in Western Tamil Nadu, Madurai Tamil around Madurai, Nellai Tamil in South-eastern Tamil Nadu, Malaysian Tamil in Malaysia and various Sri Lankan Tamil dialects in Sri Lanka.[8][9] Tamils have a strong attachment to the Tamil language, which is often venerated in literature as *Tamilānnai* or *Tamilthaai* ("Tamil mother").[10] It has historically been, and to large extent still is, central to the Tamil identity.[10] Like the other languages of South India, it is part of the Dravidian languages and unrelated to the Indo-European languages of northern India.[11] The Tamil language preserves many features of Proto-Dravidian, though modern-day spoken Tamil in Tamil Nadu freely uses loanwords from other languages such as Sanskrit and English.[12] The language does not have many commonly used alphabets in English language and Devanagiri.[13] The existent Tamil grammar is largely based on the 13th-century grammar book *Naṇṇūl* based on the *Tolkāppiyam* and the Tamil grammar consists of five parts, namely *eḷuttu*, *sol*, *poruḷ*, *yāppu*, *aṇi*. [14]

Tamil literature is of considerable antiquity and the Classical Tamil literature, which ranges from lyric poetry to works on poetics and ethical philosophy, is remarkably different from contemporary and later literature in other Indian languages. The earliest epigraphic records found on rock edicts and hero stones date from around the 3rd century BC.[15] Tamil literature represents one of the oldest bodies of literature in South Asia.[16] The historical sangam era spanned from 300 BCE to 300 CE.[17] Early Tamil literature was composed in three successive poetic assemblies known as Tamil Sangams, the earliest of which, according to ancient tradition, were held on a now vanished continent far to the south of India.[18] The oldest surviving book is the *Tolkāppiyam*, a treatise on Tamil grammar.[19] The existent Tamil grammar is largely based on the 13th-century grammar book *Naṇṇūl* based on the *Tolkāppiyam* and the Tamil grammar consists of five parts, namely *eḷuttu*, *sol*, *poruḷ*, *yāppu*, *aṇi*. [20] The available literature from this period was categorized and compiled in the tenth century CE into two categories based roughly on chronology as the *paṭiṇṇēṁṁēḷkaṇakku* ("the eighteen greater text series") comprising *Ettuthogai* (or *Ettuttokai*, "Eight Anthologies") and the *Pattuppāṭṭu* ("Ten Idylls").[21] The Tamil literature that followed in the next 300 years after the Sangam period is generally called the "post-Sangam" literature.[22][23] The Tamil literary works from the period are the twin epics *Silappatikaram* and *Manimekalai*. [24] Another book of the era is the *Tirukkural*, a book on ethics, by *Thiruvalluvar*. [25]

In the beginning of the middle age, Vaishnava and Saiva literature became prominent following the Bhakti movement in sixth century CE with hymns composed by Alwars and Nayanmars. [26][27][28] In the following years, Tamil literature again flourished with notable works including *Ramavataram*, written in 12th century CE by *Kambar*. [29] After a lull in the intermediate years due to various invasions and instability, the Tamil literature recovered in the 14th century CE, with the notable work being *Tiruppugal* by *Arunagirinathar*. [30]

In 1578, the Portuguese published a Tamil book in old Tamil script named '*Thambiraan Vanakkam*', thus making Tamil the first Indian language to be printed and published. [31] *Tamil Lexicon*, published by the University of Madras, is the first among the dictionaries published in any Indian language. [32] The 19th century gave rise to Tamil Renaissance and writings and poems by authors such as *Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai*, *U.V.Swaminatha Iyer*, *Ramalinga Adigal*, *Maraimalai Adigal* and *Bharathidasan*. [33][34] During the Indian Independence Movement, many Tamil poets and writers sought to provoke national spirit, social equity and secularist thoughts, notably *Bharathiar* and *Bharathidasan*. [35]

According to Sangam literature, there are 64 artforms called aayakalaigal.[36] The art is classified into two broad categories: kavin kalaigal (beautiful art forms) which include architecture, sculpture, painting and poetry and nun kalaigal (fine art forms) which include dance, music and drama.[37]

There are a number of rock-cut cave-temples established by the ancient Tamil kings and later by Pandyas and Pallavas.[38] The Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram, built by the Pallavas in the 7th and 8th centuries has more than forty rock-cut temples and monoliths including one of the largest open-air rock reliefs in the world.[39][40]

Dravidian architecture is the distinct style of rock architecture in Tamil Nadu.[41] In Dravidian architecture, the temples considered of porches or Mantapas preceding the door leading to the sanctum, Gate-pyramids or Gopurams in quadrangular enclosures that surround the temple and Pillared halls used for many purposes and are the invariable accompaniments of these temples. Besides these, a South Indian temple usually has a tank called the Kalyani or Pushkarni.[42] The Gopuram is a monumental tower, usually ornate at the entrance of the temple forms a prominent feature of Koils and Hindu temples of the Dravidian style.[43] They are topped by the kalasam, a bulbous stone finial and function as gateways through the walls that surround the temple complex.[44] The gopuram's origins can be traced back to the Pallavas who built the group of monuments in Mahabalipuram and Kanchipuram.[45] The Cholas later expanded the same and by the Pandya rule in twelfth century, these gateways became a dominant feature of a temple's outer appearance.[46][47] The state emblem also features the Lion Capital of Ashoka with an image of a Gopuram on the background.[48] Vimanam are similar structures built over the garbhagriha or inner sanctum of the temple but are usually smaller than the gopurams in the Dravidian architecture with a few exceptions including the Brihadisvara Temple in Thanjavur.[49][50]

With the Mugal influence in medieval times and the British later, a rise in the blend of Hindu, Islamic and Gothic revival styles, resulting in the distinct Indo-Saracenic architecture with several institutions during the British era following the style.[51][52] By the early 20th century, the art deco made its entry upon in the urban landscape.[53] After Independence, the architecture witnessed a rise in the Modernism with the transition from lime-and-brick construction to concrete columns.[54]

Most visual arts are religious in some form and usually centers on Hinduism, although the religious element might be a vehicle to represent universal and, occasionally, humanist themes.[56] Tamil sculpture ranges from stone sculptures in temples, to detailed bronze icons.[57] The bronze statues of the Cholas are considered to be one of the greatest contributions of Tamil art.[58] Unlike most Western art, the material does not influence the sculpture forms and instead, the artist imposes his/her vision of the form on the material in Tamil sculpture.[59]

Sittanavasal is a rock-cut monastery and temple attributed to Pandyas and Pallavas which consist of frescoes and murals from the 7th century, painted with vegetable and mineral dyes in over a thin wet surface of lime plaster.[60][61][62] Similar murals are found in temple walls, the most notable examples are the murals on the Ranganathaswamy Temple, Srirangam and the Brihadeeswarar temple of Thanjavur.[63] One of the major forms of Tamil painting is Thanjavur painting, which originated in the 16th century where a base made of cloth and coated with zinc oxide is painted using dyes and then decorated with semi-precious stones, as well as silver or gold threads.[64]

The ancient Tamil country had its own system of music called Tamil Pannisai described by Sangam literature such as the Silappatikaram.[65] A Pallava inscription dated to seventh century CE has one of the earliest surviving examples of Indian music in notation.[66] There are many traditional instruments from the region dating back to the Sangam period such as parai, tharai, yazh, ekkalam

and murasu.[67][68] Nadaswaram, a reed instrument that is often accompanied by the thavil, a type of drum instrument are the major musical instruments used in temples and weddings.[69] Melam is a group of Maddalams and other similar percussion instruments from the ancient Tamilakam which are played during events.[70] The traditional music of Tamil Nadu is known as Carnatic music, which includes rhythmic and structured music by composers such Muthuswami Dikshitar.[71] Gaana, a combination of various folk musics is sung mainly in the working-class area of North Chennai.[72] Villu Paatu is an ancient form of musical story-telling method where narration is interspersed with music played from a string bow and accompanying instruments.[73]

Tyagaraja Aradhana is an annual music festival devoted to composer Tyagaraja. In Tiruvaiyaru in Thanjavur district, thousands of music artists congregate every year.[74] Chennaiyil Thiruvaiyaru is a music festival which has been conducted from 18 to 25 December every year in Chennai.[75] Madras Music Season, initiated by Madras Music Academy in 1927, is celebrated every year during the month of December and features performances of traditional Carnatic music by artists from the city.[76]

Bharatanatyam is a major genre of Indian classical dance that originated in Tamilakam.[77][78] It is one of the oldest classical dance forms of India.[77][79] The dancer is usually dressed in a colorful silk sari with various jewelry and anklets called salangai, made up of small bells.[80] All dancers[81][82] The dance is characterized by the fixed upper torso with bent legs or flexed out knees combined with various footwork and a number of gestures known as abhinaya using various hand mudras, expressions using the eyes and other face muscles.[83]

There are many folk dance forms that originated and are practiced in the region. Karakattam involves dancers balancing clay or metal pot(s) on the head while making movements with the body.[84][85] Kavadiattam is a ceremonial act of sacrifice, wherein the dances bear a kavadi, a wooden stick balanced on the shoulders with weights on both the ends.[86][87] Kolattam is usually performed by women in which two small sticks (kols), one in each hand are crisscrossed to make specific rhythms while singing songs.[88][89] Kummi is similar to Kolattam, with the difference being that hands are used to make sounds while dancing instead of sticks used in the later.[90][91] In Mayilattam, dancers dressed as peacocks with peacock feathers, glittering head-dresses and beak perform to various folk songs and tunes.[92][93]

Oyilattam, a traditional war dance where few men wearing ankle bells would stand in a line with pieces of colored cloth perform rhythmic steps to the accompanying music.[94][95][96] Paampu attam is a snake dance performed by young girls, who wear specifically designed costumes like a snake skin and emulate movements of a snake.[97][98] Paraiattam is a traditional dance that involves dancing while playing the parai, an ancient percussion instrument.[99][100] Puliyattam is performed by male dancers who paint themselves in yellow and black and wear masks, fuzzy ears, paws, fangs and a tail, and perform movements imitating a tiger.[101] Puravaiattam involves dancers getting into a wooden frame designed like the body of a horse on his/her hips and make prancing movements.[102][103] Other folk dances include Bhagavatha nadanam, Chakkaiattam, Devarattam, Kai silambattam, Kuravanji, Sevaiattam and Urumiattam.[104]

Koothu is a form of street theater that consists of a play performance which consists of dance along with music, narration and singing.[105] The performers wear elaborate wooden headgear, special costumes with swirling skirts, ornaments such as heavy anklets along with prominent face painting and make-up.[106] The art is performed during festivals in open public places and is usually dedicated to goddesses such as Mariamman or Draupadi with stories drawn from Hindu epics such as Ramayana and Mahabharata, mythology and folklore.[106]such as temples or village

squares.[106] The dance is accompanied by music played from traditional instruments and a kattiyakaran narrates the story during the performance.[106]

Bommalattam is a type of puppetry that uses various doll marionettes made of wood are manipulated by rods and strings attached to them.[107][108][109] The puppeteers operate the puppets behind a screen illuminated by oil lamps and wear bells which are sounded along with the movements with background music played by traditional instruments.[108] The themes are drawn from various Hindu scriptures such as the Puranas and epics and/or with local folklore.[108] Chennai Sangamam is a large annual open Tamil cultural festival held in Chennai with the intention of rejuvenating the old village festivals, art and artists.[110]

Silambattam is a martial dance using a silambam, a long staff of about 168 cm (66 in) in length, often made of wood such as bamboo.[111][112] It was used for self-defense and to ward off animals and later evolved into a martial art and dance form.[113] Adimurai is a martial art specializing in empty-hand techniques and application on vital points of the body.[114] Varma kalai is a Tamil traditional art of vital points which combines alternative medicine and martial arts, attributed to sage Agastiyar and might form part of the training of other martial arts such as silambattam, adimurai or kalari.[115] Malyutham is the traditional form of combat-wrestling.[116] Vaalveechu is the traditional form of sword fighting.[117]

Tamil martial arts uses various types of weapons such as valari (iron sickle), maduvu (deer horns), vaal (sword) and kedayam (shield), surul vaal (curling blade), itti or vel (spear), savuku (whip), kattari (fist blade), aruval (mchete), silambam (bamboo staff), kuttu katai (spiked knuckleduster), kathi (dagger), vilambu (bow and arrow), tantayutam (mace), soolam (trident), valari (boomerang), chakaram (discus) and theepandam (flaming baton).[118][119] Since the early Sangam age, war was regarded as an honourable sacrifice and fallen heroes and kings were worshipped in the form of a Hero stone and heroic martyrdom was glorified in ancient Tamil literature. The Tamil kings and warriors followed an honour code and committed martial suicide to save their honor.[120]

Tamil Nadu is also home to the Tamil film industry nicknamed as "Kollywood" and is one of the largest industries of film production in India.[121][122] The term "Kollywood" is a blend of Kodambakkam and Hollywood.[123] Samikannu Vincent, who had built the first cinema of South India in Coimbatore, introduced the concept of "Tent Cinema" in the early 1900s, in which a tent was erected on a stretch of open land close to a town or village to screen the films. The first of its kind was established in Madras, called "Edison's Grand Cinemamegaphone".[124][125][126] The first silent film in South India was produced in Tamil in 1916 and the first talkie was a multi-lingual film, Kalidas, which released on 31 October 1931, barely seven months after India's first talking picture Alam Ara.[127][128]

Tamil women traditionally wear a sari, a garment that consists of a drape varying from 5 yards (4.6 m) to 9 yards (8.2 m) in length and 2 feet (0.61 m) to 4 feet (1.2 m) in breadth that is typically wrapped around the waist, with one end draped over the shoulder, baring the midriff, as according to Indian philosophy, the navel is considered as the source of life and creativity.[129][130] Ancient Tamil poetry such as the Silappadhikaram, describes women in exquisite drapery or sari.[131] Women wear colourful silk sarees on special occasions such as marriages.[132] The men wear a dhoti, a 4.5 metres (15 ft) long, white rectangular piece of non-stitched cloth often bordered in brightly coloured stripes. It is usually wrapped around the waist and the legs and knotted at the waist.[133]

A colourful lungi with typical batik patterns is the most common form of male attire in the countryside.[134] People in urban areas generally wear tailored clothing, and western dress is popular. Western-style school uniforms are worn by both boys and girls in schools, even in rural areas.[134] Kanchipuram silk sari is a type of silk sari made in the Kanchipuram region in Tamil Nadu and these saris are worn as bridal & special occasion saris by most women in South India. It has been recognized as a Geographical indication by the Government of India in 2005–2006.[135][136] Kovai Cora Cotton is a type of cotton saree made in the Coimbatore.[136][137]

Rice is the diet staple and is served with sambar, rasam, and poriyal as a part of a Tamil meal.[138] Coconut and spices are used extensively in Tamil cuisine. The region has a rich cuisine involving both traditional non-vegetarian and vegetarian dishes made of rice, legumes, and lentils with its distinct aroma and flavour achieved by the blending of flavourings and spices.[139][140] The traditional way of eating a meal involves being seated on the floor, having the food served on a banana leaf,[141] and using clean fingers of the right hand to take the food into the mouth.[142] After the meal, the fingers are washed; the easily degradable banana leaf is discarded or becomes fodder for cattle.[143] Eating on banana leaves is a custom thousands of years old, imparts a unique flavor to the food, and is considered healthy.[144] Idli, dosa, uthappam, pongal, and paniyaram are popular breakfast dishes in Tamil Nadu.[145] A Tamil cuisine includes a typical virundhu for lunch with poriyal, kootu and kuzhambu.[146] Other dishes particular to the Tamil people include sevai, paniyaram, parotta and opputtu.[147]

Pongal is a major and multi-day harvest festival celebrated by Tamils.[148] It is observed in the month of Thai according to the Tamil solar calendar and usually falls on 14 or 15 January.[149] It is dedicated to the Surya, the Sun God and the festival is named after the ceremonial "Pongal", which means "to boil, overflow" and refers to the traditional dish prepared from the new harvest of rice boiled in milk with jaggery offered to Surya.[150][151][152] Mattu Pongal is meant for celebration of cattle when the cattle are bathed, their horns polished and painted in bright colors, garlands of flowers placed around their necks and processions.[153] Jallikattu is a traditional event held during the period attracting huge crowds in which a bull is released into a crowd of people, and multiple human participants attempt to grab the large hump on the bull's back with both arms and hang on to it while the bull attempts to escape.[154]

Puthandu is known as Tamil New Year which marks the first day of year on the Tamil calendar. The festival date is set with the solar cycle of the solar Hindu calendar, as the first day of the Tamil month Chithirai and falls on or about 14 April every year on the Gregorian calendar.[156] Karthikai Deepam is a festival of lights that is observed on the full moon day of the Kartika month, called the Kartika Pournami, falling on the Gregorian months of November or December.[157][158] Thaipusam is a Tamil festival celebrated on the first full moon day of the Tamil month of Thai coinciding with Pusam star and dedicated to lord Murugan. Kavadi Aattam is a ceremonial act of sacrifice and offering practiced by devotees which is a central part of Thaipusam and emphasizes debt bondage.[159][160] Aadi Perukku is a Tamil cultural festival celebrated on the 18th day of the Tamil month of Adi which pays tribute to water's life-sustaining properties. The worship of Amman and Ayyanar deities are organized during the month in temples across Tamil Nadu with much fanfare.[70] Panguni Uthiram is marked on the purnima (full moon) of the month of Panguni and celebrates the wedding of various Hindu gods.[161]

As per the sangam era works, the Sangam landscape was classified into five categories known as thinais, which were associated with a Hindu deity: Murugan in kurinji (hills), Thirumal in mullai (forests), Indiran in marutham (plains), Varunan in the neithal (coasts) and Kotravai in palai (desert).[162] Thirumal is indicated as a deity during the Sangam era, who was regarded as

Paramporul ("the supremet one") and is also known as Māyavan, Māmiyon, Netiyōn, and Māl in various sangam literature.[163][164] While Shiva worship existed in the Shaivite culture as a part of the Tamil pantheon, Murugan became regarded as the Tamil kadavul ("God of the Tamils").[165][166][167]

Jainism existed from the sangam era with inscriptions and drip-ledges from first century BC to sixth century AD and temple monuments likely built by Digambara Jains in the ninth century found in Chitharal and several Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions, stone beds and sculptures from more than 2,200 years ago found in Samanar hills.[168][169] The Kalabhra dynasty, who were patrons of Jainism, ruled over the ancient Tamil country in the 3rd–7th century CE.[170][171] Buddhism had an influence in Tamil Nadu before the later middle ages with ancient texts referring to a Vihāra in Nākappaṭṭinam from the time of Ashoka in 3rd century BCE and Buddhist relics from 4th century CE found in Kaveripattinam.[172][173] Around the 7th century CE, the Pandyas and Pallavas, who patronized Buddhism and Jainism, became patrons of Hinduism following the revival of Saivism and Vaishnavism during the Bhakti movement led by Alvars and Nayanmars.[174][26]

In Tamil tradition, Murugan is the youngest son of Shiva and Parvati and Pillayar is regarded as the eldest son, who is venerated as the Mudanmudar kadavul ("foremost god").[175] The worship of Amman, also called Mariamman, is thought to have been derived from an ancient mother goddess, and is also very common.[176][177] In rural areas, local deities, called Aiyyanār (also known as Karuppan, Karrupasami), are worshipped who are thought to protect the villages from harm.[176][178]

The Christian apostle, St. Thomas, is believed to have preached Christianity in the area around Chennai between 52 and 70 CE and the Santhome Church, which was originally built by the Portuguese in 1523, is believed to house the remains of St. Thomas, was rebuilt in 1893 in neo-Gothic style.[179] Islam was introduced due to the influence of the Muslim rulers from the north in the medieval ages and the majority of Tamil Muslims speak Tamil rather than Urdu as their mother tongue.[180][181]

As of the 21st century, majority of the Tamils are adherents of Hinduism.[182] Atheist, rationalist, and humanist philosophies are also adhered by sizeable minorities, as a result of Tamil cultural revivalism in the 20th century, and its antipathy to what it saw as Brahminical Hinduism.[183]

There are more than 34,000 temples in Tamil Nadu built across various periods some of which are several centuries old.[184] Most temples follow the Dravidian architecture, a distinct style of rock architecture.[41] 84 of the 108 Divya Desams, which are Vishnu and Lakshmi temples that is mentioned in the works of the Alvars are located in Tamil Nadu.[185] Paadal Petra Sthalam are 276 Shaivite temples that are revered in the verses of Nayanars in the 6th-9th century CE.[186] Pancha Bhuta Sthalam refers to temples dedicated to Shiva, each representing a manifestation of the five prime elements of nature.[187] Arupadaiveedu are six temples which are dedicated Murugan.[188] Madurai also called as "Temple city" consists of many temples including the massive Meenakshi Amman Temple with Kanchipuram, considered as one of the seven great holy cities being another major temple town with many temples dating back to the Pallava period.[189][190] Srirangam Ranganathaswamy Temple is the largest temple complex in India and the biggest functioning Hindu temple in the world with a 236 feet (72 m) tall Rajagopuram, one of the tallest in the world.[191]

Ramanathaswamy Temple located at Rameswaram island forms a part of Ram setu and is said to be sanctified by the lord Rama when he crossed the island on his journey to rescue his wife, Sita from the Ravana.[192] Namakkal Anjaneyar Temple hosts a 18 ft (5.5 m) tall Hanuman statue, one of the

tallest in India.[193] There are a lot of temples devoted to lord Ganesha, major of which are the Uchippillaiyar temple in Tiruchirappalli, Eachanari Vinayagar temple in Coimbatore hosting a 6.3 ft (1.9 m) tall idol and Karpaka Vinayakar temple in Pillayarapatti.[194][195] There are a number of hill temples dedicated to lord Murugan and Amman temples across the state.[196] Swami Vivekananda is said to have attained enlightenment on a rock, located off the coast of Kanniyakumari, which houses the Vivekananda Rock Memorial since 1970.[197] There are various Hindu temples in countries with significant population of Tamil people and people of Tamil origin including South East Asia notably in Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia and Myanmar, other countries with significant people of Tamil origin like Fiji, Mauritius, Seychelles, Reunion, South Africa and Canada, Caribbean countries including Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname, countries with significant Indian migrants including United States and Australia.[198] In Sri Lanka, Murugan is predominantly worshiped by Tamil people and numerous Murugan temples exist throughout the island including Kataragama temple, Nallur Kandaswamy temple and Maviddapuram Kandaswamy Temple.[199][200] Sri Subramanyar Temple at Batu Caves temple complex in Malaysia is dedicated to Murugan, which has a 42.7-m-high statue of Murugan at the entrance, one of the largest Murugan statues in the world.[201][202]

Erwadi in Ramanathapuram district houses an 840-year-old mosque and Nagore Dargah are important places of worship for Islam.[203][204] The 16th-century Basilica of Our Lady of Good Health is located at Velankanni and was declared as a holy city by the pope is known as the 'Lourdes of the East'.[205] Major Jain temples include Kanchi Trilokyanatha temple, Chitharal Jain Temple, Mannargudi Mallinatha Swamy Temple, Vijayamangalam Jain temple, Alagramam Jain Temple, Poondi Arugar Temple, Thanjavur Adisvaraswamy Jain Temple and Kumbakonam Chandraprabha Jain Temple.[206][207] Tirumalai is an ancient Jain temple complex in the outskirts of Tirvannamalai that houses caves and Jain temples and a 16 feet (4.9 m) high sculpture of Neminatha dated from the 12th century and the tallest Jain image in Tamil Nadu.[208] The Chudamani Vihara in Nagapattinam was built by the Srivijaya king Maravijayottunggavarman under the patronage of Raja Raja Chola I in early 11th century CE.[209]

Text extracted from URL 57:

Tamil Nadu (/ˌtæmɪl ˈnɑːduː/; Tamil: [ˈtamiɻ ˈnaːɻu] ⓘ, abbr. TN) is the southernmost state of India. The tenth largest Indian state by area and the sixth largest by population, Tamil Nadu is the home of the Tamil people, who speak the Tamil language, one of the longest surviving classical languages and serves as its official language. The capital and largest city is Chennai.

Located on the south-eastern coast of the Indian peninsula, Tamil Nadu is straddled by the Western Ghats and Deccan Plateau in the west, the Eastern Ghats in the north, the Eastern Coastal Plains lining the Bay of Bengal in the east, the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait to the south-east, the Laccadive Sea at the southern cape of the peninsula, with the river Kaveri bisecting the state. Politically, Tamil Nadu is bound by the Indian states of Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh, and the union territory of Puducherry and shares an international maritime border with the Northern Province of Sri Lanka at Pamban Island.

Archaeological evidence points to Tamil Nadu being inhabited for more than 400 millennia and has more than 5,500 years of continuous cultural history. Historically, the Tamilakam region was inhabited by Tamil-speaking Dravidian people and was ruled by several regimes over centuries, such as the Sangam era triumverate of the Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas, the Pallavas (3rd–9th century CE),

and the later Vijayanagara Empire (14th–17th century CE). European colonization began with establishing trade ports in the 17th century, with the British controlling much of South India as the Madras Presidency for two centuries before the Indian Independence in 1947. After independence, the region became the Madras State of the Republic of India and was further re-organized when states were redrawn linguistically in 1956 into the current shape. The state was renamed as Tamil Nadu, meaning "Tamil Country", in 1969. Hence, culture, cuisine and architecture have seen multiple influences over the years and have developed diversely.

As the most urbanised state of India, Tamil Nadu boasts an economy with gross state domestic product (GSDP) of ₹23.65 lakh crore (US\$300 billion), making it the second-largest economy amongst the 28 states of India. It has the country's 9th-highest GSDP per capita of ₹275,583 (US\$3,500) and ranks 11th in human development index. Tamil Nadu is also one of the most industrialised states, with the manufacturing sector accounting for nearly one-third of the state's GDP. With its diverse culture and architecture, long coastline, forests and mountains, Tamil Nadu is home to a number of ancient relics, historic buildings, religious sites, beaches, hill stations, forts, waterfalls and four World Heritage Sites with the state's tourism industry, the largest among the Indian states. Forests occupy an area of 22,643 km² (8,743 sq mi) constituting 17.4% of the geographic area of which protected areas cover an area of 3,305 km² (1,276 sq mi), around 15% of the recorded forest area of the state and consists of three biosphere reserves, mangrove forests, five National Parks, 18 wildlife sanctuaries and 17 bird sanctuaries. The Tamil film industry, nicknamed as Kollywood, plays an influential role in the state's popular culture.

The name is derived from Tamil language with nadu meaning "land" and Tamil Nadu meaning "the land of Tamils". The origin and precise etymology of the word Tamil is unclear with multiple theories attested to it.[5]

Archaeological evidence points to the region being inhabited by hominids more than 400 millennia ago.[6][7] Artifacts recovered in Adichanallur by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) indicate a continuous history from more than 3,800 years ago.[8] Neolithic celts with the Indus script dated between 1500 and 2000 BCE indicate the use of the Harappan language.[9][10] Excavations at Keezhadi have revealed a large urban settlement dating to the 6th century BCE, during the time of urbanization in the Indo-Gangetic plain.[11] Further epigraphical inscriptions found at Adichanallur use Tamil Brahmi, a rudimentary script dated to 5th century BCE.[12] Potsherds uncovered from Keeladi indicate a script which is a transition between the Indus Valley script and Tamil Brahmi script used later.[13]

The Sangam period lasted for about eight centuries, from 500 BCE to 300 CE with the main source of history during the period coming from the Sangam literature.[14][15] Ancient Tamilakam was ruled by a triumvirate of monarchical states, Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas.[16] The Cheras controlled the western part of Tamilkam, the Pandyas controlled the south, and the Cholas had their base in the Kaveri delta. The kings called Vendhar ruled over several tribes of Velala (peasants), headed by the Velir chiefs.[17] The rulers patronized multiple religions including vedic religion, Buddhism and Jainism and sponsored some of the earliest Tamil literature with the oldest surviving work being *Tolkāppiyam*, a book of Tamil grammar.[18][19]

The kingdoms had significant diplomatic and trade contacts with other kingdoms to the north and Romans.[20] Much of the commerce from the Romans and Han China were facilitated via seaports including Muziris and Korkai with spices being the most prized goods along with pearls and silk.[21][22] From 300CE, the Kalabhras much of Tamilkam, who are believed to be of the Vellalar community of warriors who were possibly once the feudatories of the ancient Tamil kingdoms.[23]

The Kalabhra era is referred to as the "dark period" of Tamil history, and information about it is generally inferred from any mentions in the literature and inscriptions that are dated many centuries after their era ended.[24] The twin Tamil epics Silappatikaram and Manimekalai were written during the era.[25] Tamil classic Tirukkural by Valluvar, a collection of couplets is attributed to the same period.[26][27]

Around the 7th century CE, the Kalabhras were overthrown by the Pandyas and Cholas, who patronised Buddhism and Jainism before the revival of Saivism and Vaishnavism during the Bhakti movement.[28] Though they existed previously, the period saw the rise of the Pallavas in the sixth century CE under Mahendravarman I, who ruled parts of South India with Kanchipuram as their capital.[29] Pallavas were noted for their patronage of architecture with the origins of massive gopuram, ornate towers at the entrance of temples, traced back to the Pallavas. They built the group of rock-cut monuments in Mahabalipuram and temples in Kanchipuram.[30] Throughout their reign, Pallavas remained in constant conflict with the Cholas and Pandyas. The Pandyas were revived by Kadungon towards the end of the 6th century CE and with the Cholas in obscurity in Uraiyur, the Tamil country was divided between the Pallavas and the Pandyas.[31] The Pallavas were finally defeated by Aditya I in the 9th century CE.[32]

The Cholas became the dominant kingdom in the 9th century under Vijayalaya Chola, who established Thanjavur as Chola's new capital with further expansions by subsequent rulers. In the 11th century CE, Rajaraja I expanded the Chola empire with conquests of entire Southern India and parts of present-day Sri Lanka, Maldives and increasing Chola influence across the Indian Ocean.[33][34] Rajaraja brought in administrative reforms including the reorganisation of Tamil country into individual administrative units.[35] Under his son Rajendra Chola I, the Chola empire reached its zenith and stretched as far as Bengal in the north and across the Indian Ocean.[36] The Cholas built many temples in the Dravidian style with the most notable being the Brihadisvara Temple at Thanjavur, one of the foremost temples of the era built by Raja Raja and Gangaikonda Cholapuram built by Rajendra.[37]

The Pandyas again reigned supreme early in the 13th century under Maravarman Sundara I.[38] They ruled from their capital of Madurai and expanded trade links with other maritime empires.[39] During the 13th century, Marco Polo mentioned the Pandyas as the richest empire in existence. Pandyas also built a number of temples including the Meenakshi Amman Temple at Madurai.[40]

In the 13th and 14th century, there were repeated attacks from Delhi Sultanate.[41] The Vijayanagara kingdom was founded in 1336 CE.[42] The Vijayanagara empire eventually conquered the entire Tamil country by c. 1370 and ruled for almost two centuries until its defeat in the Battle of Talikota in 1565 by a confederacy of Deccan sultanates.[43][44]

Later, the Nayaks, who were the military governors in the Vijaynagara Empire, took control of the region amongst whom the Nayaks of Madurai and Nayaks of Thanjavur were the most prominent.[45][46] They introduced the palayakkararar system and re-constructed some of the well-known temples in Tamil Nadu including the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai.[47]

In the 18th century, the Mughal empire administered the region through the Nawab of the Carnatic with his seat at Arcot, who defeated the Madurai Nayaks.[48] The Marathas attacked several times and defeated the Nawab after the Siege of Trichinopoly (1751-1752).[49][50][51] This led to a short-lived Thanjavur Maratha kingdom.[52]

Europeans started to establish trade centers from the 16th century along the eastern coast. The Portuguese arrived in 1522 and built a port named São Tomé near present-day Mylapore in

Madras.[53] In 1609, Dutch established a settlement in Pulicat and the Danish had their establishment in Tharangambadi.[54][55] On 20 August 1639, Francis Day of the British East India Company met with the Vijayanager emperor Peda Venkata Raya and obtained a grant for land on the Coromandel coast for their trading activities.[56][57][58] A year later, the company built Fort St. George, the first major English settlement in India, which became the nucleus of the British Raj in the region.[59][60] By 1693, French established trading posts at Pondichéry. The British and French competed to expand the trade which led to Battle of Wandiwash as part of the Seven Years' War.[61] The British regained control in 1749 through the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle and resisted a French siege attempt in 1759.[62][63] The Nawabs of the Carnatic surrendered much of its territory to the British East India Company in the north and bestowed tax revenue collection rights in the South, which led to constant conflicts with the Palaiyakkarars known as the Polygar Wars. Puli Thevar was one of the earliest opponents, joined later by Rani Velu Nachiyar of Sivagangai and Kattabomman of Panchalakurichi in the first series of Polygar wars.[64][65] The Maruthu brothers along with Oomaithurai, the brother of Kattabomman formed a coalition with Dheeran Chinnamalai and Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja, which fought the British in the Second Polygar Wars.[66] In the later 18th century, the Mysore kingdom captured parts of the region and engaged in constant fighting with the British which culminated in the four Anglo-Mysore Wars.[67]

By the 18th century, the British had conquered most of the region and established the Madras Presidency with Madras as the capital.[68] After the defeat of Mysore in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War in 1799 and the British victory in the second Polygar war in 1801, the British consolidated most of southern India into what was later known as the Madras Presidency.[69] On 10 July 1806, The Vellore mutiny, which was the first instance of a large-scale mutiny by Indian sepoys against the British East India Company took place in Vellore Fort.[70][71] After the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the British Raj was formed after the British crown took over the control of governance from the company.[72]

Failure of the summer monsoons and administrative shortcomings of the Ryotwari system resulted in two severe famines in the Madras Presidency, the Great Famine of 1876–78 and the Indian famine of 1896–97 which killed millions and the migration of many Tamils as bonded laborers to other British countries eventually forming the present Tamil diaspora.[73] The Indian Independence movement gathered momentum in the early 20th century with the formation of Indian National Congress, which was based on an idea propagated by the members of the Theosophical Society movement after a Theosophical convention held in Madras in December 1884.[74][75] Tamil Nadu was the base of various contributors to the Independence movement including V. O. Chidambaram Pillai, Subramaniya Siva and Bharatiyar.[76] The Tamils formed a significant percentage of the members of the Indian National Army (INA), founded by Subhas Chandra Bose.[77]

After the India Independence in 1947, Madras presidency became Madras state, comprising present-day Tamil Nadu and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. Andhra state was split from the state in 1953 and the state was further re-organized when states were redrawn linguistically in 1956 into the current shape.[78][79] On 14 January 1969, Madras State was renamed Tamil Nadu, meaning "Tamil country".[80][81] In 1965, agitations against the imposition of Hindi and in support of continuing English as a medium of communication arose which eventually led to English being retained as an official language of India alongside Hindi.[82] After independence, the economy of Tamil Nadu conformed to a socialist framework, with strict governmental control over private sector participation, foreign trade, and foreign direct investment. After experiencing fluctuations in the decades immediately after Indian independence, the economy of Tamil Nadu consistently exceeded national average growth rates from the 1970s, due to reform-oriented

economic policies.[83] In the 2000s, the state has become one of the most urbanized states in the country with and a higher standard of living.[84]

Tamil Nadu covers an area of 130,058 km² (50,216 sq mi) and is the tenth-largest state in India.[84] It is located on the south-eastern coast of the Indian peninsula, Tamil Nadu is straddled by the Western Ghats and Deccan Plateau in the west, the Eastern Ghats in the north, the Eastern Coastal Plains lining the Bay of Bengal in the east, the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait to the south-east, the Laccadive Sea at the southern cape of the peninsula.[85] Politically, Tamil Nadu is bound by the Indian states of Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh, and the union territory of Puducherry and shares an international maritime border with the Northern Province of Sri Lanka at Pamban Island. The Palk Strait and the chain of low sandbars and islands known as Rama's Bridge separate the region from Sri Lanka, which lies off the southeastern coast.[86][87] The southernmost tip of mainland India is at Kanyakumari where the Indian Ocean meets the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.[88]

The Western Ghats runs south along the western boundary with the highest peak at Doddabetta (2,636 m (8,648 ft)) in the Nilgiri Hills.[89][90] The Eastern Ghats run parallel to the Bay of Bengal along the eastern coast and the strip of land between them forms the Coromandel region.[91] They are a discontinuous range of mountains intersected by Kaveri river.[92] Both mountain ranges meet at the Nilgiri mountains which run in a crescent approximately along the borders of Tamil Nadu with northern Kerala and Karnataka, extending to the relatively low-lying hills of the Eastern Ghats on the western portion of the Tamil Nadu–Andhra Pradesh border.[93]

The Deccan plateau is the elevated region bound by the mountain ranges and the plateau slopes gently from West to East resulting in major rivers arising in the Western Ghats and flowing east into the Bay of Bengal.[94][95][96]

Tamil Nadu has a 1,076 km (669 mi) coastline long and is the second longest coastline in the country after Gujarat.[97] There are coral reefs located in the Gulf of Mannar and Lakshadweep islands.[98] Tamil Nadu's coastline was permanently altered by the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004.[99]

Tamil Nadu falls mostly in a region of low seismic hazard with the exception of the western border areas that lie in a low to moderate hazard zone; as per the 2002 Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) map, Tamil Nadu falls in Zones II and III.[100] The volcanic basalt beds of the Deccan were laid down in the massive Deccan Traps eruption, which occurred towards the end of the Cretaceous period, between 67 and 66 million years ago.[101] Layer after layer was formed by the volcanic activity that lasted many years and when the volcanoes became extinct, they left a region of highlands with typically vast stretches of flat areas on top like a table.[102] The predominant soils of Tamil Nadu are red loam, laterite, black, alluvial and saline. Red soil with a higher iron content, occupies a larger portion of the state and all the inland districts. Black soil is found in western Tamil Nadu and parts of southern coast. Alluvial soil is found in the fertile Kaveri delta region with laterite soil found in pockets and saline soil across the coast where the evaporation is high.[103]

The region has a tropical climate and depends on monsoons for rainfall.[104] Tamil Nadu is divided into seven agro-climatic zones: northeast, northwest, west, southern, high rainfall, high altitude hilly, and Kaveri delta.[105] A tropical wet and dry climate prevails over most of the inland peninsular region except for a semi-arid rain shadow east of the Western Ghats. Winter and early summer are long dry periods with temperatures averaging above 18 °C (64 °F); summer is exceedingly hot with temperatures in low-lying areas exceeding 50 °C (122 °F); and the rainy season lasts from June to September, with annual rainfall averaging between 750 and 1,500 mm (30 and 59 in) across the

region. Once the dry northeast monsoon begins in September, most precipitation in India falls in Tamil Nadu, leaving other states comparatively dry.[106] A hot semi-arid climate predominates in the land east of the Western Ghats which includes inland south and south central parts of the state and gets between 400 and 750 millimetres (15.7 and 29.5 in) of rainfall annually, with hot summers and dry winters with temperatures around 20–24 °C (68–75 °F). The months between March and May are hot and dry, with mean monthly temperatures hovering around 32 °C (90 °F), with 320 millimetres (13 in) precipitation. Without artificial irrigation, this region is not suitable for agriculture.[107]

The southwest monsoon from June to September accounts for most of the rainfall in the region. The Arabian Sea branch of the southwest monsoon hits the Western Ghats from Kerala and moves northward along the Konkan coast, with precipitation on the western region of the state. The lofty Western Ghats prevent the winds from reaching the Deccan Plateau; hence, the leeward region (the region deprived of winds) receives very little rainfall.[108][109] The Bay of Bengal branch of the southwest monsoon heads toward northeast India, picking up moisture from the Bay of Bengal and the Coromandel coast does not receive much rainfall from the southwest monsoon, due to the shape of the land. Northern Tamil Nadu receives most of its rains from the northeast monsoon.[110] The northeast monsoon takes place from November to early March, when the surface high-pressure system is strongest.[111] The North Indian Ocean tropical cyclones occur throughout the year in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, bringing devastating winds and heavy rainfall.[112][113] The annual rainfall of the state is about 945 mm (37.2 in) of which 48 per cent is through the northeast monsoon, and 52 per cent through the southwest monsoon. The state has only 3% of the water resources nationally and is entirely dependent on rains for recharging its water resources, monsoon failures lead to acute water scarcity and severe drought.[114][115]

Forests occupy an area of 22,643 km² (8,743 sq mi) constituting 17.4% of the geographic area.[116] There is a wide diversity of plants and animals in Tamil Nadu, resulting from its varied climates and geography. Deciduous forests are found along the Western Ghats while tropical dry forests and scrub lands are common in the interior. The southern Western Ghats have rain forests located at high altitudes called the South Western Ghats montane rain forests.[117] The Western Ghats is one of the eight hottest biodiversity hotspots in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.[118] There are about 2,000 species of wildlife that are native to Tamil Nadu, 5640 species of Angiosperms (including 1,559 species of medicinal plants, 533 endemic species, 260 species of wild relatives of cultivated plants, 230 red-listed species), 64 species of gymnosperms (including four indigenous species and 60 introduced species) and 184 species of Pteridophytes apart from bryophytes, lichen, fungi, algae, and bacteria.[119] Common plant species include the state tree: palmyra palm, eucalyptus, rubber, cinchona, clumping bamboos (*Bambusa arundinacea*), common teak, *Anogeissus latifolia*, Indian laurel, *grewia*, and blooming trees like Indian laburnum, *ardisia*, and *solanaceae*. Rare and unique plant life includes *Combretum ovalifolium*, ebony (*Diospyros nilagrica*), *Habenaria rariflora* (orchid), *Alsophila*, *Impatiens elegans*, *Ranunculus reniformis*, and royal fern.[120]

Important ecological regions of Tamil Nadu are the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve in the Nilgiri Hills, the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve in the Agastya Mala-Cardamom Hills and Gulf of Mannar coral reefs.[121] The Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve covers an area of 10,500 km² (4,100 sq mi) of ocean, islands and the adjoining coastline including coral reefs, salt marshes and mangroves. It is home to endangered aquatic species, including dolphins, dugongs, whales and sea cucumbers.[122][123] Bird sanctuaries including Thattekad, Kadalundi, Vedanthangal, Ranganathittu, Kumarakom, Neelapattu, and Pulicat are home to numerous migratory and local birds.[124][125]

Protected areas cover an area of 3,305 km² (1,276 sq mi), constituting 2.54% of the geographic area and 15% of the 22,643 km² (8,743 sq mi) recorded forest area of the state.[116] Mudumalai National Park was established in 1940 and was the first modern wildlife sanctuary in South India. The protected areas are administered by the Ministry of Environment and Forests of Government of India and the Tamil Nadu Forest Department. Pichavaram consists of a number of islands interspersing the Vellar estuary in the north and Coleroon estuary in the south with mangrove forests. The Pichavaram mangrove forests is one of the largest mangrove forests in India covering 45 km² (17 sq mi) and supports the existence of rare varieties of economically important shells, fishes and migrant birds.[126][127] The state has five National Parks covering 307.84 km² (118.86 sq mi)—Anamalai, Mudumalai, Mukurthi, Gulf of Mannar, a marine national park and Guindy, an urban national park within Chennai.[128] Tamil Nadu has 18 wildlife sanctuaries.[128][129] Tamil Nadu is home to one of the largest populations of endangered Bengal tigers and Indian elephants in India.[130][131] There are five declared elephant sanctuaries in Tamil Nadu as per Project Elephant—Agasthyamalai, Anamalai, Coimbatore, Nilgiris and Srivilliputtur.[128] Tamil Nadu participates in Project Tiger and has five declared tiger reserves—Anamalai, Kalakkad-Mundanthurai, Mudumalai, Sathyamangalam and Megamalai.[128][132][133] There are seventeen declared bird sanctuaries in Tamil Nadu.[128][134][135]

There is one conservation reserve at Tiruvidaimarudur in Thanjavur district. There are two zoos recognised by the Central Zoo Authority of India namely Arignar Anna Zoological Park and Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, both located in Chennai.[136] The state has other smaller zoos run by local administrative bodies such as Coimbatore Zoo in Coimbatore, Amirthi Zoological Park in Vellore, Kurumpampatti Wildlife Park in Salem, Yercaud Deer Park in Yercaud, Mukkombu Deer Park in Tiruchirapalli and Ooty Deer Park in Nilgiris.[128] There are five crocodile farms located at Amaravati in Coimbatore district, Hogenakkal in Dharmapuri district, Kurumbapatti in Salem district, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust in Chennai and Sathanur in Tiruvannamalai district.[128] Threatened and endangered species found in the region include the grizzled giant squirrel,[137] grey slender loris,[138] sloth bear,[139] Nilgiri tahr,[140] Nilgiri langur,[141] lion-tailed macaque,[142] and the Indian leopard.[143]

Chennai is the capital of the state and houses the state executive, legislative and head of judiciary.[149] The administration of the state government functions through various secretariat departments. There are 43 departments of the state and the departments have further sub-divisions which may govern various undertakings and boards.[150] The state is divided into 38 districts, each of which is administered by a District Collector, who is an officer of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) appointed to the district by the Government of Tamil Nadu. For revenue administration, the districts are further subdivided into 87 revenue divisions administered by Revenue Divisional Officers (RDO) which comprise 310 taluks administered by Tahsildars.[151] The taluks are divided into 1349 revenue blocks called Firkas which consist of 17,680 revenue villages.[151] The local administration consists of 15 municipal corporations, 121 municipalities and 528 town panchayats in the urban and 385 panchayat unions and 12,618 village panchayats, administered by Village Administrative Officers (VAO).[152][151][153] Greater Chennai Corporation, established in 1688, is the second oldest in the world and Tamil Nadu was the first state to establish town panchayats as a new administrative unit.[154][152]

In accordance with the Constitution of India, the governor is a state's de jure head and appoints the chief minister who has the de facto executive authority.[155] The Indian Councils Act 1861 established the Madras Presidency legislative council with four to eight members but was a mere advisory body and the strength was increased to 20 in 1892 and 50 in 1909.[156][157] Madras

legislative council was set-up in 1921 by the Government of India Act 1919 with a term of three years and consisted of 132 Members of which 34 were nominated by the Governor and the rest were elected.[158] The Government of India Act 1935 established a bicameral legislature with the creation of a new legislative council with 54 to 56 members in July 1937.[158] The first legislature of Madras state under the Constitution of India was constituted on 1 March 1952 after the 1952 elections. The number of seats post the re-organization in 1956 was 206, which was further increased to 234 in 1962.[158] In 1986, the state moved to a unicameral legislature with the abolishment of the legislative council by the Tamil Nadu Legislative Council (Abolition) act, 1986.[159] The Tamil Nadu legislative assembly is housed at the Fort St. George in Chennai.[160] The state elects 39 members to the Lok Sabha and 18 to the Rajya Sabha of the Indian Parliament.[161]

The Madras High Court was established on 26 June 1862 and is the highest judicial authority of the state with control over all the civil and criminal courts in the state.[162] It is headed by a Chief Justice and has a bench at Madurai since 2004.[163] The Tamil Nadu Police, established as Madras state police in 1859, operates under the Home ministry of Government of Tamil Nadu and is responsible for maintaining law and order in the state.[164] As of 2023[update], it consists of more than 1.32 lakh police personnel, headed by a Director General of Police.[165][166] Women form 17.6% of the police force and specifically handle violence against women through 222 special all-women police stations.[167][168][169] As of 2023[update], the state has 1854 police stations, the highest in the country, including 47 railway and 243 traffic police stations.[167][170] The traffic police under different district administrations is responsible for the traffic management in the respective regions.[171] The state is consistently ranked as one of the safest for women with a crime rate of 2.2 per lakh in 2018.[172]

Elections in India are conducted by the Election Commission of India, an independent body established in 1950.[173] Politics in Tamil Nadu was dominated by national parties till 1960s and regional parties have ruled ever since. The Justice Party and Swaraj Party were the two major parties in the erstwhile Madras Presidency.[174] During the 1920s and 1930s, the Self-Respect Movement, spearheaded by Theagaroya Chetty and E. V. Ramaswamy (commonly known as Periyar), emerged in the Madras Presidency and led to the formation of Justice party.[175] The Justice Party eventually lost the 1937 elections to the Indian National Congress and Chakravarti Rajagopalachari became the chief minister of the Madras Presidency.[174] In 1944, Periyar transformed the Justice party into a social organisation, renaming the party Dravidar Kazhagam, and withdrew from electoral politics.[176] After independence, Indian National Congress dominated the political scene in Tamil Nadu in the 1950s and 1960s under the leadership of K. Kamaraj, who led the party after the death of Jawaharlal Nehru and ensured the selection of Prime Ministers Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi.[177][178] C. N. Annadurai, a follower of Periyar, formed the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in 1949.[179]

The Anti-Hindi agitations of Tamil Nadu led to the rise of Dravidian parties that formed Tamil Nadu's first government, in 1967.[180] In 1972, a split in the DMK resulted in the formation of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) led by M. G. Ramachandran.[181] Dravidian parties continue to dominate Tamil Nadu electoral politics with the national parties usually aligning as junior partners to the major Dravidian parties, AIADMK and DMK.[182] M. Karunanidhi became the leader of the DMK after Annadurai and J. Jayalalithaa succeeded as the leader of AIADMK after M. G. Ramachandran.[183][177] Karunanidhi and Jayalalithaa dominated the state politics from the 1980s to early 2010s, serving as chief ministers combined for over 32 years.[177]

C. Rajagopalachari, the first Indian Governor General of India post independence, was from Tamil Nadu. The state has produced three Indian presidents, namely, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan,[184] R. Venkataraman,[185] and APJ Abdul Kalam.[186]

As per the 2011 census, Tamil Nadu had a population of 7.21 crores and is the seventh most populous state in India.[1] The population is projected to be 7.68 crores in 2023 and to grow to 7.8 crores by 2036.[188] Tamil Nadu is one of the most urbanized states in the country with more than 48.4 per cent of the population living in urban areas.[84] As per the 2011 census, the sex ratio was 996 females per 1000 males, higher than the national average of 943.[189] The sex ratio at birth was recorded as 954 during the fourth National Family Health Survey (NFHS) in 2015-16 which reduced further to 878 in the fifth NFHS in 2019–21, ranking third worst amongst states.[190] As per the 2011 census, Literacy rate was 80.1%, higher than the national average of 73%.[191] The literacy rate was estimated to be 82.9% as per the 2017 National Statistical Commission (NSC) survey.[192] As of 2011[update], there were about 23.17 million households with 7.42 million children under the age of six.[193] A total of 14.4 million (20%) belonged to Scheduled Castes (SC) and 0.8 million (1.1%) to Scheduled tribes (ST).[194]

As of 2017[update], the state had the lowest fertility rate in India with 1.6 children born for each woman, lower than required for sustaining the population.[195] As of 2021[update], the Human Development Index (HDI) was 0.686, higher than that of India (0.633) but ranked medium.[196] As of 2019[update], the life expectancy at birth was 74 years, one of the highest amongst Indian states.[197] 2.2% of the people live below the poverty line as per the Multidimensional Poverty Index in 2023, one of the lowest amongst Indian states.[198]

The capital of Chennai is the most populous urban agglomeration in the state with more than 8.6 million residents, followed by Coimbatore, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli and Tiruppur, respectively.[199]

Religion in Tamil Nadu (2011)[200]

The state is home to a diverse population of ethno-religious communities.[201][202] According to the 2011 census, Hinduism is followed by 87.6% of the population. Christians form the largest religious minority in the state with 6.1% of the population; Muslims form 5.9% of the population.[203] Tamils form a majority of the population with minorities including Telugus,[204] Marwaris,[205] Gujaratis,[206] Parsis,[207] Sindhis,[208] Odias,[209] Kannadigas,[210] Anglo-Indians,[211] Bengalis,[212] Punjabis,[213] and Malayalees.[214] The state also has a significant expatriate population.[215][216] As of 2011[update], the state had 3.49 million immigrants.[217]

Distribution of languages in Tamil Nadu (2011)[218]

Tamil is the official language of Tamil Nadu, while English serves as the additional official language.[2] Tamil is one of the oldest languages and was the first to be recognized as a classical language of India.[219] As per the 2011 census, Tamil is spoken as the first language by 88.4% of the state's population, followed by Telugu (5.87%), Kannada (1.58%), Urdu (1.75%), Malayalam (1%) and other languages (1.53%)[218] Various varieties of Tamil is spoken across regions such as Madras Bashai in northern Tamil Nadu, Kongu Tamil in Western Tamil Nadu, Madurai Tamil around Madurai and Nellore Tamil in South-eastern Tamil Nadu.[220][221] It is part of the Dravidian languages and preserves many features of Proto-Dravidian, though modern-day spoken Tamil in Tamil Nadu freely uses loanwords from other languages such as Sanskrit and English.[222][223] Korean,[224]

Japanese,[225] French,[226] Mandarin Chinese,[227] German[228] and Spanish are spoken by foreign expatriates in the state.[226]

The LGBT rights in Tamil Nadu are among the most progressive in India.[229][230] In 2008, Tamil Nadu set up the Transgender welfare board and was the first to introduce a transgender welfare policy, wherein transgender people can avail free sex reassignment surgery in government hospitals.[231] Chennai Rainbow Pride has been held in Chennai annually since 2009.[232] In 2021, Tamil Nadu became the first Indian state to ban conversion therapy and forced sex-selective surgeries on intersex infants, following the directions of the Madras High Court.[233][234][235] In 2019, the Madras High Court ruled that the term "bride" under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 includes trans-women, thereby legalizing marriage between a man and a transgender woman.[236]

Tamil women traditionally wear a sari, a garment that consists of a drape varying from 5 yards (4.6 m) to 9 yards (8.2 m) in length and 2 feet (0.61 m) to 4 feet (1.2 m) in breadth that is typically wrapped around the waist, with one end draped over the shoulder, baring the midriff, as according to Indian philosophy, the navel is considered as the source of life and creativity.[237][238] Ancient Tamil poetry such as the Silappadhikaram, describes women in exquisite drapery or sari.[239] Women wear colourful silk sarees on special occasions such as marriages.[240] The men wear a dhoti, a 4.5 metres (15 ft) long, white rectangular piece of non-stitched cloth often bordered in brightly coloured stripes. It is usually wrapped around the waist and the legs and knotted at the waist.[241] A colourful lungi with typical batik patterns is the most common form of male attire in the countryside.[242] People in urban areas generally wear tailored clothing, and western dress is popular. Western-style school uniforms are worn by both boys and girls in schools, even in rural areas.[242] Kanchipuram silk sari is a type of silk sari made in the Kanchipuram region in Tamil Nadu and these saris are worn as bridal & special occasion saris by most women in South India. It has been recognized as a Geographical indication by the Government of India in 2005–2006.[243][244] Kovai Cora Cotton is a type of cotton saree made in the Coimbatore.[244][245]

Rice is the diet staple and is served with sambar, rasam, and poriyal as a part of a Tamil meal.[246] Coconut and spices are used extensively in Tamil cuisine. The region has a rich cuisine involving both traditional non-vegetarian and vegetarian dishes made of rice, legumes, and lentils with its distinct aroma and flavour achieved by the blending of flavourings and spices.[247][248] The traditional way of eating a meal involves being seated on the floor, having the food served on a banana leaf,[249] and using clean fingers of the right hand to take the food into the mouth.[250] After the meal, the fingers are washed; the easily degradable banana leaf is discarded or becomes fodder for cattle.[251] Eating on banana leaves is a custom thousands of years old, imparts a unique flavor to the food, and is considered healthy.[252] Idli, dosa, uthappam, pongal, and paniyaram are popular breakfast dishes in Tamil Nadu.[253]

Tamil Nadu has an independent literary tradition dating back over 2500 years from the sangam era.[254] Early Tamil literature was composed in three successive poetic assemblies known as Tamil Sangams, the earliest of which, according to ancient tradition, were held on a now vanished continent far to the south of India.[255] This includes the oldest grammatical treatise, Tholkappiyam, and the epics Silappatikaram and Manimekalai.[256] The earliest epigraphic records found on rock edicts and hero stones date from around the 3rd century BCE.[257]

[258] The available literature from the Sangam period was categorised and compiled into two categories based roughly on chronology: Pathinenmaelkanakku consisting of Eṭṭuttokai and the Pattupattu and Pathinenkilkanakku. The existent Tamil grammar is largely based on the 13th-century grammar book Naṇṇūl based on the Tolkāppiyam and the Tamil grammar consists of five parts,

namely eḷuttu, sol, poruḷ, yāppu, aṇi.[259] Tirukkural, a book on ethics, by Thiruvalluvar is amongst the most popular works of Tamil literature.[260]

In the beginning of the middle age, Vaishnava and Saiva literature became prominent following the Bhakti movement in sixth century CE with hymns composed by Alvars and Nayanmars.[261][262][263] In the following years, Tamil literature again flourished with notable works including Ramavataram, written in 12th century CE by Kambar.[264] After a lull in the intermediate years due to various invasions and instability, the Tamil literature recovered in the 14th century CE, with the notable work being Tiruppugal by Arunagirinathar.[265] In 1578, the Portuguese published a Tamil book in old Tamil script named 'Thambiraan Vanakkam', thus making Tamil the first Indian language to be printed and published.[266] Tamil Lexicon, published by the University of Madras, is the first among the dictionaries published in any Indian language.[267] The 19th century gave rise to Tamil Renaissance and writings and poems by authors such as Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, U.V.Swaminatha Iyer, Ramalinga Adigal, Maraimalai Adigal and Bharathidasan.[268][269] During the Indian Independence Movement, many Tamil poets and writers sought to provoke national spirit, social equity and secularist thoughts, notably Bharathiar and Bharathidasan.[270]

Dravidian architecture is the distinct style of rock architecture in Tamil Nadu.[271] In Dravidian architecture, the temples considered of porches or Mantapas preceding the door leading to the sanctum, Gate-pyramids or Gopurams in quadrangular enclosures that surround the temple and Pillared halls used for many purposes and are the invariable accompaniments of these temples. Besides these, a South Indian temple usually has a tank called the Kalyani or Pushkarni.[272] The Gopuram is a monumental tower, usually ornate at the entrance of the temple forms a prominent feature of Koils and Hindu temples of the Dravidian style.[273] They are topped by the kalasam, a bulbous stone finial and function as gateways through the walls that surround the temple complex.[274] The gopuram's origins can be traced back to the Pallavas who built the group of monuments in Mahabalipuram and Kanchipuram.[30] The Cholas later expanded the same and by the Pandya rule in twelfth century, these gateways became a dominant feature of a temple's outer appearance.[275][276] The state emblem also features the Lion Capital of Ashoka with an image of a Gopuram on the background.[277] Vimanam are similar structures built over the garbhagriha or inner sanctum of the temple but are usually smaller than the gopurams in the Dravidian architecture with a few exceptions including the Brihadisvara Temple in Thanjavur.[278][279]

With the Mugal influence in medieval times and the British later, a rise in the blend of Hindu, Islamic and Gothic revival styles, resulting in the distinct Indo-Saracenic architecture with several institutions during the British era following the style.[280][281] By the early 20th century, the art deco made its entry upon in the urban landscape.[282] After Independence, the architecture witnessed a rise in the Modernism with the transition from lime-and-brick construction to concrete columns.[283]

Tamil Nadu is a major centre for music, art and dance in India.[284] Chennai is called the Cultural capital of South India.[285] In the Sangam era, art forms were classified into: iyal (poetry), isai (music) and nadakam (drama).[286] Bharatanatyam is a classical dance form that originated in Tamil Nadu and is one of the oldest dances of India.[287][288][289] Other regional folk dances include Karakattam, Kavadi, Koodiyattam, Oyilattam, Paraiattam and Puravaiattam.[290][291][292][293] The dance, clothing, and sculptures of Tamil Nadu exemplify the beauty of the body and motherhood.[294] Koothu is an ancient folk art, where artists tell stories from the epics accompanied by dance and music.[295]

The ancient Tamil country had its own system of music called Tamil Pannisai described by Sangam literature such as the Silappatikaram.[296] A Pallava inscription dated to seventh century CE has one of the earliest surviving examples of Indian music in notation.[297] There are many traditional instruments from the region dating back to the Sangam period such as parai, tharai, yazh and murasu.[298][299] Nadaswaram, a reed instrument that is often accompanied by the thavil, a type of drum instrument are the major musical instruments used in temples and weddings.[300] Melam is a group of Maddalams and other similar percussion instruments from the ancient Tamilakam which are played during events.[301] The traditional music of Tamil Nadu is known as Carnatic music, which includes rhythmic and structured music by composers such Muthuswami Dikshitar.[302] Gaana, a combination of various folk musics is sung mainly in the working-class area of North Chennai.[303]

The state is home to many museums, galleries, and other institutions which engage in arts research and are major tourist attractions.[304] Established in the early 18th century, Government Museum and National Art Gallery are amongst the oldest in the country.[305] The museum inside the premises of Fort St. George maintains a collection of objects of the British era.[306] The museum is managed by the Archaeological Survey of India and has in its possession, the first Flag of India hoisted at Fort St George after the declaration of India's Independence on 15 August 1947.[307]

Tamil Nadu is also home to the Tamil film industry nicknamed as "Kollywood" and is one of the largest industries of film production in India.[308][309] The term Kollywood is a blend of Kodambakkam and Hollywood.[310] The first silent film in South India was produced in Tamil in 1916 and the first talkie was a multi-lingual film, Kalidas, which released on 31 October 1931, barely seven months after India's first talking picture Alam Ara.[311][312] Samikannu Vincent, who had built the first cinema of South India in Coimbatore, introduced the concept of "Tent Cinema" in which a tent was erected on a stretch of open land close to a town or village to screen the films. The first of its kind was established in Madras, called "Edison's Grand Cinemamegaphone".[313][314][315]

Pongal is a major and multi-day harvest festival celebrated by Tamils.[316] It is observed in the month of Thai according to the Tamil solar calendar and usually falls on 14 or 15 January.[317] It is dedicated to the Surya, the Sun God and the festival is named after the ceremonial "Pongal", which means "to boil, overflow" and refers to the traditional dish prepared from the new harvest of rice boiled in milk with jaggery offered to Surya.[318][319][320] Mattu Pongal is meant for celebration of cattle when the cattle are bathed, their horns polished and painted in bright colors, garlands of flowers placed around their necks and processions.[321] Jallikattu is a traditional event held during the period attracting huge crowds in which a bull is released into a crowd of people, and multiple human participants attempt to grab the large hump on the bull's back with both arms and hang on to it while the bull attempts to escape.[322]

Puthandu is known as Tamil New Year which marks the first day of year on the Tamil calendar. The festival date is set with the solar cycle of the solar Hindu calendar, as the first day of the Tamil month Chithirai and falls on or about 14 April every year on the Gregorian calendar.[324] Karthikai Deepam is a festival of lights that is observed on the full moon day of the Kartika month, called the Kartika Pournami, falling on the Gregorian months of November or December.[325][326] Thaipusam is a Tamil festival celebrated on the first full moon day of the Tamil month of Thai coinciding with Pusam star and dedicated to lord Murugan. Kavadi Aattam is a ceremonial act of sacrifice and offering practiced by devotees which is a central part of Thaipusam and emphasizes debt bondage.[327][328] Aadi Perukku is a Tamil cultural festival celebrated on the 18th day of the Tamil month of Adi which pays tribute to water's life-sustaining properties. The worship of Amman and Ayyanar deities are organized during the month in temples across Tamil Nadu with much

fanfare.[301] Panguni Uthiram is marked on the purnima (full moon) of the month of Panguni and celebrates the wedding of various Hindu gods.[329]

Tyagaraja Aradhana is an annual music festival devoted to composer Tyagaraja. In Tiruvaiyaru in Thanjavur district, thousands of music artists congregate every year.[330] Chennaiyil Thiruvaiyaru is a music festival which has been conducted from 18 to 25 December every year in Chennai.[331] Chennai Sangamam is a large annual open Tamil cultural festival held in Chennai with the intention of rejuvenating the old village festivals, art and artists.[332] Madras Music Season, initiated by Madras Music Academy in 1927, is celebrated every year during the month of December and features performances of traditional Carnatic music by artists from the city.[333]

The economy of the state consistently exceeded national average growth rates, due to reform-oriented economic policies in the 1970s.[334] As of 2022[update], Tamil Nadu's GSDP was ₹23.65 lakh crore (US\$300 billion), second highest amongst Indian states which had grown significantly from ₹2.19 lakh crore (US\$27 billion) in 2004.[3] The per-capita NDSP is ₹275,583 (US\$3,500).[4] Tamil Nadu is the most urbanized state in India.[335] Though the state had the lowest % of people under the poverty line, rural unemployment rate is considerably higher at 47 per thousand compared to the national average of 28.[198][336] As of 2020[update], the state had the most number of factories at 38,837 units with an engaged work-force of 2.6 million.[337][338]

The state has a diversified industrial base anchored by different sectors including automobiles, software services, hardware, textiles, healthcare and financial services.[339][340] As of 2022[update], services contributed to 55% of the GSDP followed by manufacturing at 32% and agriculture at 13%.[341] There are 42 Special Economic Zones (SEZ) in the state.[342] As per a report by Government of India, Tamil Nadu is the most export competitive state of India in 2023.[343]

As of 2022[update], the state is amongst the major Information technology (IT) exporters of India with a value of ₹57,687 crore (US\$7.2 billion).[344][345] Established in 2000, Tidel Park in Chennai was amongst the first and largest IT parks in Asia.[346] The presence of SEZs and government policies have contributed to the growth of the sector which has attracted foreign investments and job seekers from other parts of the country.[347][348] In the 2020s, Chennai has become a major provider of SaaS and has been dubbed the "SaaS Capital of India".[349][350]

The state has two stock exchanges, Coimbatore Stock Exchange, established in 2013 and Madras Stock Exchange, established in 2015 and India's third-largest by trading volume.[351][352] Madras bank, the first European-style banking system in India was established on 21 June 1683 followed by first commercial banks such as Bank of Hindustan (1770) and General Bank of India (1786).[353] Bank of Madras merged with two other presidency banks to form Imperial Bank of India in 1921 which in 1955 became the State Bank of India, the largest bank in India.[354] More than 400 financial industry businesses including six banks are headquartered in the state.[355][356][357][358] The state hosts the south zonal office of the Reserve Bank of India, the country's central bank, along with its zonal training center and staff college at Chennai.[359] There is a permanent back office of the World Bank in the state.[360]

Manufacturing in various states are governed by state owned industrial corporation Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TTDC) apart from central government owned companies. Electronics hardware is a major manufacturing industry with an output of \$5.37 billion in 2023, largest amongst Indian states.[361][362] A large number of automotive companies have their manufacturing bases in the state with the automotive industry in Chennai accounting for more than 35% of India's overall automotive components and automobile output, earning the nickname

"Detroit of India".[363][364][365] Integral Coach Factory in Chennai manufactures railway coaches and other rolling stock for Indian Railways.[366]

Another major industry is textiles with the state being home to more than half of the operating fiber textile mills in India.[367][368] Coimbatore is often referred to as the Manchester of South India due to its cotton production and textile industries.[369] As of 2022[update], Tiruppur exported garments worth \$480 billion, contributing to nearly 54% of the all the textile exports from India and the city is known as the knitwear capital due to its cotton knitwear export.[370][371] As of 2015[update], the textile industry in Tamil Nadu accounts for 17% of the total invested capital in all the industries.[372] As of 2021[update], 40% of leather goods exported from India worth ₹9,252 crore (US\$1.2 billion) are being manufactured in the state.[373] The state supplies two-thirds of India's requirements of motors and pumps, and is one of the largest exporters of wet grinders with "Coimbatore Wet Grinder", a recognized Geographical indication.[374][375]

There are two ordnance factories in Aruvankadu and Tiruchirappalli.[376][377] AVANI, headquartered in Chennai manufactures Armoured fighting vehicles, Main battle tanks, tank engines and armored clothing for the use of the Indian Armed Forces.[378][379] ISRO, the Indian space agency operates a propulsion facility at Mahendragiri.[380]

Agriculture contributes 13% to the GSDP and is a major employment generator in rural areas.[341] As of 2022[update], the state had 6.34 million hectares under cultivation.[381][382] Rice is the staple food grain with the state being one of the largest producer with an output of 7.9 million tonnes in 2021–22.[383] The Kaveri delta region is known as the Rice Bowl of Tamil Nadu.[384] Among non-food grains, sugarcane is the major crop with an annual output of 16.1 million tonnes in 2021–22.[385] The state is a producer of spices and is the top producer of oil seeds, tapioca, cloves and flowers in India.[386] The state accounts for 6.5% of fruit and 4.2% of vegetables production in the country.[387][388] The state is a leading producer of banana and mango with more than 78% of the area under fruit cultivation.[389] As of 2019[update], the state was the second largest producer of natural rubber and coconuts.[390] Tea is a popular crop in hill-stations with the state being a major producer of a unique flavored Nilgiri tea.[391][392]

As of 2022[update], the state is a largest producer of poultry and eggs with an annual production of 20.8 billion units, contributing to more than 16% of the national output.[393] The state has a fishermen population of 1.05 million and the coast consists of 3 major fishing harbors, 3 medium fishing harbors and 363 fish landing centers.[394] As of 2022[update], the fishing output was 0.8 million tonnes with a contribution of 5% to the total fish production in India.[395] Aquaculture include shrimp, sea weed, mussel, clam and oyster farming across more than 6000 hectares.[396] M. S. Swaminathan, known as the "father of the Indian Green Revolution" was from Tamil Nadu.[397]

The state accounts for nearly 4% of the land area and 6% of the population, but has only 3% of the water resources of the country and the per capita water availability is 800 m³ (28,000 cu ft) which is lower than the national average of 2,300 m³ (81,000 cu ft).[398] The state is dependent on the monsoons for replenishing the water resources. There are 17 major river basins with 61 reservoirs and about 41,948 tanks with a total surface water potential of 24,864 million cubic metres (MCM), 90% of which is used for irrigation. The utilizable groundwater recharge is 22,423 MCM.[398] The major rivers include Kaveri, Bhavani, Vaigai and Thamirabarani. With most of the rivers originating from other states, the states depends on neighboring states for considerable quantum of water which has often led to disputes.[399] The state has 116 large dams.[400] Apart from the rivers, majority of the water comes from rainwater stored in more than 41,000 tanks and 16.8 lakh wells across the state.[381]

Water supply and sewage treatment are managed by the respective local administrative bodies such as the Chennai MetroWater Supply and Sewage Board in Chennai.[401][402] Desalination plants including the country's largest at Minjur provide alternative means of drinking water.[403] As per the 2011 census, only 83.4% of the households have access to safe drinking water, less than the national average of 85.5%.[404] Water sources are also threatened by environmental pollution and effluent discharge from industries.[405]

The state is one of the leading states in terms of sanitation facilities with more than 99.96% of people having access to toilets.[406] The state has robust health facilities and ranks higher in all health related parameters such as high life expectancy of 74 years (sixth) and 98.4% institutional delivery (second).[197][407] Of the three demographically related targets of the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations and expected to be achieved by 2015, Tamil Nadu achieved the goals related to improvement of maternal health and of reducing infant mortality and child mortality by 2009.[408][409]

The health infrastructure in the state includes both government-run and private hospitals. As of 2023[update], the state had 404 public hospitals, 1,776 public dispensaries, 11,030 health centers and 481 mobile units run by the government with a capacity of more than 94,700 beds.[410][411] The General Hospital in Chennai was established on 16 November 1664 and was the first major hospital in India.[412] The state government administers free polio vaccine for eligible age groups.[413] Tamil Nadu is a major center for medical tourism and Chennai is termed as "India's health capital".[414] Medical tourism forms an important part of the economy with more than 40% of total medical tourists visiting India making it to Tamil Nadu.[415]

Tamil Nadu is one of four Indian states connected by undersea fibre-optic cables.[416][417][418] As of 2023[update], four mobile phone service companies operate GSM networks including Bharti Airtel, BSNL, Vodafone Idea and Reliance Jio offering 4G and 5G mobile services.[419][420] Wireline and broadband services are offered by five major operators and other smaller local operators.[420] Tamil Nadu is amongst the states with a high internet usage and penetration.[421] In 2018, the state government unveiled a plan to lay 55,000 km (34,000 mi) of optical fiber across the state to provide high-speed internet.[422]

Electricity distribution in the state is done by the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board headquartered at Chennai.[423] As of 2023[update], the average daily consumption is 15,000 MW with only 40% of the power is generated locally with the remaining 60% met through purchases.[424] As of 2022[update], the state was the fourth largest power consumer with a per capita availability of 1588.7 Kwh.[425][426] As of 2023[update], the state has the third highest installed power capacity of 38,248 MW with 54.6% from renewable resources.[427][428] Thermal power is the largest contributor with more than 10,000 MW.[427] Tamil Nadu is the only state with two operational nuclear power plants at Kalpakkam, the first fully indigenous nuclear power station in India and Kudankulam, the largest nuclear power station in India and generates nearly one-third of the total nuclear power generated in the country.[429][430][431] Tamil Nadu has the largest established wind power capacity with over 8,000 MW mostly based out of two regions, Palghat Gap and Muppandal, one of the largest operational onshore wind farms in the world.[432]

Newspaper publishing started in the state started with the launch of the weekly The Madras Courier in 1785.[433] It was followed by the weeklies The Madras Gazette and The Government Gazette in 1795.[434][435] The Spectator, founded in 1836 was the first English newspaper to be owned by an Indian and became the first daily newspaper in 1853.[436] The first Tamil newspaper, Swadesamitran was launched in 1899.[437][438] The state has a number of newspapers and

magazines published in various languages including Tamil, English and Telugu.[439] The major dailies with more than one lakh circulation per day include The Hindu, Dina Thanthi, Dinakaran, The Times of India, Dina Malar and The Deccan Chronicle.[440] Several periodicals and local newspapers prevalent in select localities also bring out editions from multiple cities.[441]

Government run Doordarshan broadcasts terrestrial and satellite television channels from its Chennai center set up in 1974.[442] DD Podhigai, Doordarshan's Tamil language regional channel was launched on 14 April 1993.[443] There are more than 30 private satellite television networks including Sun Network, one of India's largest broadcasting companies is the state, established in 1993.[444] The cable TV service is entirely controlled by the state government while DTH and IPTV is available via various private operators.[445][446] Radio broadcasting began in 1924 by the Madras Presidency Radio Club.[447] All India Radio was established in 1938.[448] There are many AM and FM radio stations operated by All India Radio, Hello FM, Suryan FM, Radio Mirchi, Radio City and BIG FM among others.[449][450] In 2006, the government of Tamil Nadu distributed free televisions to all families, which has led to high penetration of television services.[451][452] From the early 2010s, Direct to Home has become increasingly popular replacing cable television services.[453] Tamil television serials form a major prime time source of entertainment.[454]

Fire services are handled by the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services which operates 356 operating fire stations.[455] Postal service is handled by India Post, which operates more than 11,800 post offices in the state.[456] The first post office was established on 1 June 1786 at Fort St. George on 1 June 1786.[457]

Tamil Nadu has an extensive road network covering about 2.71 lakh km as of 2023 with a road density of 2,084.71 kilometres (1,295.38 mi) per 1000 km² which is higher than the national average of 1,926.02 kilometres (1,196.77 mi) per 1000 km². [458] The Highways Department (HD) of the state was established in April 1946 and is responsible for construction and maintenance of national highways, state highways, major district roads and other roads in the state.[459] It operates through eleven wings with 120 divisions and maintains 73,187 kilometres (45,476 mi) of highways in the state.[460][461]

There are 48 national highways of length 6,805 kilometres (4,228 mi) in the state and the National Highways Wing of the highways department of Tamil Nadu, established in 1971, is responsible for the maintenance of National Highways as laid down by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).[462][463] There are state highways of length 6,805 kilometres (4,228 mi) which connect district headquarters, important towns and national highways in the state.[464][461] As of 2020, 32,598 buses are operated with the state transport units operating 20,946 buses along with 7,596 private buses and 4,056 mini buses.[465] Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (TNSTC), established in 1947 when private buses operating in Madras presidency were nationalized, is the primary public transport bus operator in the state.[465] It operates buses along intra and inter state bus routes, as well as city routes with eight divisions including the State Express Transport Corporation Limited (SETC) which runs long-distance express services. Metropolitan Transport Corporation in Chennai and State Express Transport Corporation.[465][466] As of 2020, Tamil Nadu had 32.1 million registered vehicles.[467]

The rail network in Tamil Nadu forms a part of Southern Railway of Indian Railways, which is headquartered in Chennai with four divisions in the state namely Chennai, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Salem.[468] As of 2023, the state had a total railway track length of 5,601 km (3,480 mi) covering a route length of 3,858 km (2,397 mi).[469] There are 532 railway stations in the state with Chennai Central, Chennai Egmore, Coimbatore Junction and Madurai Junction being the top revenue

earning stations.[470][471] Indian railways also has a coach manufacturing unit at Chennai, electric locomotive sheds at Arakkonam, Erode and Royapuram, diesel locomotive sheds at Erode, Tiruchirappalli and Tondiarpet, Steam locomotive shed at Coonoor along with various maintenance depots.

[472][473]

Chennai has a well-established suburban railway network operated by Southern railway, covering 212 km (132 mi) which was established in 1928.[474][475] The Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS) is an elevated urban mass transit system established in 1995 operating on a single line from Chennai Beach to Velachery.[474][476] Chennai Metro is a rapid transit rail system in Chennai which was opened in 2015 and consists of two operational lines operating across 54.1 km (33.6 mi) in 2023.[477] Nilgiri Mountain Railway is a 1,000 mm (3 ft 3+3/8 in) metre gauge railway in Nilgiris district which was built by the British in 1908 and is the only rack railway in India.[478][479][480]

The aviation history of the state began in 1910, when Giacomo D'Angelis built the first powered flight in Asia and tested it in Island Grounds.[481] In 1915, Tata Air Mail started an airmail service between Karachi and Madras marking the beginning of civil aviation in India.[482] On 15 October 1932, J. R. D. Tata flew a Puss Moth aircraft carrying air mail from Karachi to Bombay's Juhu Airstrip and the flight was continued to Madras piloted by aviator Nevill Vintcent marking the first scheduled commercial flight.[483][484] There are three international, one limited international and six domestic or private airports in Tamil Nadu.[485][486]

Chennai airport, which is the fourth busiest airport by passenger traffic in India is a major international airport and the main gateway to the state.[487] Other international airports in the state include Coimbatore and Tiruchirappalli while Madurai is a customs airport with limited international flights.[487] Domestic flights are operational to certain airports like Tuticorin and Salem while flights are planned to be introduced to more domestic airports by the UDAN scheme of Government of India.[488] The region comes under the purview of the Southern Air Command of the Indian Air Force. The Air Force operates three air bases in the state Sullur, Tambaram and Thanjavur.[489] The Indian Navy operates airbases at Arakkonam, Uchipuli and Chennai.[490][491] In 2019, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) announced the setting up a new rocket launch pad near Kulasekharapatnam in Thoothukudi district.[492]

There are three major ports Chennai, Ennore and Thoothukudi which are managed by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways of Government of India.[493] There is an intermediate sea port at Nagapattinam and sixteen other minor ports which are managed by the department of highways and minor ports of Government of Tamil Nadu.[458] Tamil Nadu forms part of both the Eastern Naval Command and Southern Naval Command the Indian Navy which has a major base at Chennai and logistics support base at Thoothukudi.[494][495]

Tamil Nadu is one of the most literate states in India with a literacy rate was estimated to be 82.9% as per the 2017 National Statistical Commission survey, higher than the national average of 77.7%.[192][496] The state had seen one of the highest literacy growth since the 1960s due to the midday meal scheme introduced on a large scale by K. Kamaraj to increase school enrollment.[497][498] The scheme was further upgraded in 1982 to 'Nutritious noon-meal scheme' to combat malnutrition.[499][500] As of 2022[update], the state has one of the highest enrollment to secondary education at 95.6%, far above the national average of 79.6%.[501]

An analysis of primary school education by Pratham showed a low drop-off rate but poor quality of education compared to certain other states.[502]

As of 2022[update], the state had over 37,211 government schools, 8,403 government-aided schools and 12,631 private schools which educate 54.71 lakh, 28.44 lakh and 56.9 lakh students respectively.[503][504] There are 3,12,683 teachers with 80,217 teachers in government-aided schools with an average teacher-pupil ratio of 1:26.6.[505] Public schools are all affiliated with the Tamil Nadu State Board, while private schools may be affiliated with either of Tamil Nadu Board of Secondary Education, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (ICSE) or National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).[506] School education starts with two years of Kindergarten from age three onwards and then follows the Indian 10+2 plan, ten years of school and two years of higher secondary education.[507]

As of 2023[update], there are 56 universities in the state including 24 public universities, four private universities and 28 deemed-to-be universities.[508] University of Madras was founded in 1857 and is one of India's first modern universities.[509] There are 510 engineering colleges including 34 government colleges in the state.[510][511] Indian Institute of Technology Madras is a premier institute of engineering and College of Engineering, Guindy, Anna University founded in 1794 is the oldest engineering college in India.[512] Officers Training Academy of the Indian Army is headquartered at Chennai.[513] There are also 496 polytechnic institutions with 92 government colleges and 935 arts and science colleges in the state including 302 government run colleges.[510][514][515] Madras Christian College (1837), Presidency College (1840) and Pachaiyappa's College (1842) are amongst the oldest arts and science colleges in the country.[516]

There are over 870 medical, nursing and dental colleges in the state including 21 for traditional medicine and four for modern medicine.[517] Madras Medical College was established in 1835 and is one of the oldest medical colleges in India.[518] As per the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings in 2023, 26 universities, 15 engineering, 35 arts science, 8 management and 8 medical colleges from the state are ranked amongst the top 100 in the country.[519][520] As of 2023[update], the state has a 69% reservation in educational institutions for socially backward sections of society, the highest among all Indian states.[521] There are ten institutes of national importance in the state.[522] Research institutes including Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Central Institute for Cotton Research, Sugarcane Breeding Research Institute, Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB) and Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education are involved in agricultural research.[523][524][525]

As of 2023[update], the state has 4622 public libraries.[526] Established in 1896, Connemara Public Library is one of the oldest and is amongst the four National Depository Centres in India that receive a copy of all newspapers and books published in the country and the Anna Centenary Library is the largest library in Asia.[527][528] There are many research institutions spread across the state.[529] Chennai book fair is an annual book fair organized by the Booksellers and Publishers Association of South India (BAPASI) and is typically held in December–January.[530]

With its diverse culture and architecture and varied geographies, Tamil Nadu has a robust tourism industry. In 1971, Government of Tamil Nadu established the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, which is the nodal agency responsible for the promotion of tourism and development of tourist related infrastructure in the state.[531] It is managed by the Tourism, Culture and Religious Endowments Department.[532] The tag line "Enchating Tamil Nadu" was adopted in the tourism promotions.[533][534] In the 21st century, the state has been amongst the top destinations for domestic and international tourists.[534][535] As of 2020[update], Tamil Nadu recorded the most tourist foot-falls with more than 140.7 million tourists visiting the state.[536]

Tamil Nadu has a 1,076 kilometres (669 mi) long coastline with many beaches dotting the coast.[537] Marina Beach spanning 13 km (8.1 mi) is the second-longest urban beach in the world.[538] As the state is straddled by the Western and Eastern ghats, it is home to many hill stations, popular amongst them are Udagamandalam (Ooty) situated in the Nilgiri Hills and Kodaikanal in the Palani hills.[539][540][541] There are a number of rock-cut cave-temples and more than 34,000 temples in Tamil Nadu built across various periods some of which are several centuries old.[542][543] With many rivers and streams, there are a number of waterfalls in the state including the Courtallam and Hogenakkal Falls.[544][545] There are four World Heritage Sites declared by UNESCO in the state: Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram,[546] Great Living Chola Temples,[37] Nilgiri Mountain Railway,[547][548] and Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.[549][550]

Kabaddi is a contact sport which is the state game Tamil Nadu.[551][552] Pro Kabaddi League is the most popular region based franchise tournament with Tamil Thalaivas representing the state.[553][554] Chess is a popular board game which originated as Sathurangam in the seventh century A.D.[555] Chennai is often dubbed "India's chess capital" as the city is home to multiple chess grandmasters including former world champion Viswanathan Anand and the state played host to the World Chess Championship 2013 and 44th Chess Olympiad in 2022.[556][557][558][559] Traditional games like Pallanguzhi,[560] Uriyadi,[561] Gillidanda,[562] Dhaayam[563] are played across the region. Jallikattu and Rekla are traditional sporting events involving bulls.[564][565] Traditional martial arts include Silambattam,[566] Gatta gusthi,[567] and Adimurai.[568]

Cricket is the most popular sport in the state.[569] The M.A. Chidambaram Stadium established in 1916 is among the oldest cricket stadiums in India and has hosted matches during multiple ICC Cricket World Cups.[570][571][572] Established in 1987, MRF Pace Foundation is a bowling academy based in Chennai.[573] Chennai is home to the most successful Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket team Chennai Super Kings and hosted the finals during the 2011 and 2012 seasons.[574][575] Football is also popular with the Indian Super League being the major club competition and Chennaiyin FC representing the state.[576][577][578]

There are multi-purpose venues in major cities including Chennai and Coimbatore, which host football and athletics and also houses a multi-purpose indoor complex for volleyball, basketball, kabaddi and table tennis.[579][580] Chennai hosted the 1995 South Asian Games.[581] Tamil Nadu Hockey Association is the governing body of hockey in the state and Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium in Chennai was the venue for the international hockey tournaments, the 2005 Men's Champions Trophy and the 2007 Men's Asia Cup.[582] Madras Boat Club (founded in 1846) and Royal Madras Yacht Club (founded in 1911) promote sailing, rowing and canoeing sports in Chennai.[583] Inaugurated in 1990, Madras Motor Race Track was the first permanent racing circuit in India and hosts formula racing events.[584] Coimbatore is often referred to as "India's Motorsports Hub" and the "Backyard of Indian Motorsports" and hosts the Kari Motor Speedway, a Formula 3 Category circuit.[585][586] Horse racing is held at the Guindy Race Course and the state has three 18-hole golf courses, the Cosmopolitan Club, the Gymkhana Club and the Coimbatore Golf Club.[587]

Text extracted from URL 58:

The culture of Tripura is distinct and a bit similar to other people of Northeast India. However like Assam, Manipur, Burma and Southeast Asia culture of Tripura is characterized in small portion where people live in plain and hill areas. Tripura is a state in North East India. In the 2001 census of

India, Bengalis represented almost 70% of the population and the Tripuri population comprised 30% of Tripura's population. The Tripuri population (indigenous population) comprises some clans and ethnic groups with diverse languages and cultures. The largest native group was the Tripuri who had a population of 543,848 in 2001 census,[1] representing 16.99% of the state population and 54.7% of the scheduled tribe population.[1] The other group of people in order of decreasing population were Chakma (6.5%), Halam (4.8%), Mog (3.1%), Munda, Kuki tribes and Garo Hajong.[1] Bengali is the most spoken language, due to the dominance of Bengali people in the state. Kokborok (Tripuri/Tiprakok) is a common language among Tripuris and lingua franca in Tripura. Several other languages belonging to Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan families are spoken by the different tribe

Tripura has several diverse ethno-linguistic groups, which has given rise to a composite culture. The dominant cultures are Tripuris who are:[2] Tripura, Debbarma, Jamatia, Reang, Noatia, Koloi, Murasing, Rupini Uchoi, and tribes like Chakma, Halam, Garo, Hajong, Kuki, Mizo, Mogh, Munda, Oraon, Santhal.

Tripuris have their own traditional dress, similar in style to that of other North-East Indian peoples. It is, however, different in pattern and design. The clothing for the lower half of the body is called rignai in Tripuri and for the upper half of the body, the clothing has two parts, the risa and rikutu.

The risa covers the chest area and the rikutu covers the whole of the upper half of the body. Formerly, these garments were woven by women using home-spun cotton thread. Nowadays, the threads are bought from the market and the risa is not worn; instead a blouse is worn by most Tripuri women. Girls wear rignai with tops, too.

Each Tripuri clan has its own rignai pattern and design. The patterns of the rignai are so distinct that the clan of a Tripuri woman can be identified by the pattern of her rignai. However, there is intermingling of the rignai: Clans wear the rignai of other clans freely and new designs are being woven.

The rikutu is plain cloth of a different colour and shade than the other items of clothing. Today, the rikutu is woven by Tripuri women.

Some fashion types that are woven in the rignai borok by Tripuri women are as follows:

It is said that at the time of Subrai Raja, the most famous and legendary King of Tripura, through his 250 wives he had invented 250 designs of rignai. He married those women who invented a new design. But all these designs have been lost over time and only a few remain. An effort to rediscover the lost designs is in process.

The male counterpart for the loin area is rikutu and for the upper part of the body is the kamchwlwi borok. Today, however, very few men wear this style of dress except in rural Tripura and by the working class. Males have adopted more modern dressing styles.

Tripura is noted for bamboo and cane handicrafts.[3] Bamboo played important part in the jhumia (shifting cultivation) of the tribes. It was used to make watch stations on stilts and was devised to carry food and water. Besides these usages, bamboo, woods and cane were used to create an array of furniture, utensils, hand-held fans, replicas, mats, baskets, idols and interior decoration materials.[4][5]

Music and dances are integral part of the tribal people of Tripura. Some of their indigenous musical instruments are the sarinda, chongpreng, and sumui (a kind of flute). Songs are sung during religious occasions, weddings, and other festivals. Each tribal community has their own repertoire of songs

and dances. The Tripuri and Jamatia tribe perform gorja dance during the Gorja puja. Jhum dance (also called tangbiti dance) in the harvest season, lebang dance, mamita dance, and mosak sulmani dance are other Tripuri dances.[6] Reang community, the second largest tribe of the state, are noted for their hojagiri dance performed by young girls balancing on earthen pitchers.[6] The Bizhu dance is performed by the Chakmas during the Bizhu festival (the last day of the month of Chaitra). Other tribal dances are wangala dance of the Garo people, hai-hak dance of the Halam branch of Kuki people, sangrai dance and owa dance of the Mog tribe, and others.[6] Besides tribal music, Indian classical music is also practiced among the residents. Sachin Dev Burman of the royal family was a maestro in the filmi genre of Indian music, creating many popular tunes in the Bollywood films.

Hindus believe that Tripureshwari is the patron goddess of Tripura and an aspect of Shakti. Several fertility gods are also worshiped by the tribes, such as Lam-Pra (the twin deities of sky and sea), Mailu-ma (goddess of corn, identified with Lakshmi), Khulu-ma (goddess of the cotton plant), and Burha-sa (god of healing). Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Ashokastami and the worship of the Chaturdasha deities are important festivals. Several festivals represent confluence of several tribal traditions, such as Ganga puja, Garia puja, Kherchi puja, Ker puja.[7][8]

Unakoti, Pilak, and Devtamura are historic sites where large collections of stone carvings and rock sculptures are noted.[3][9] These sculptures are evidence of the presence of Buddhism and Hindu orders for centuries. These sculptures represent a rare artistic fusion of traditional religions and tribal influence.[10][11][12]

Football and cricket are the most popular sports in the state. The state capital Agartala has its own club football championships every year where many local clubs compete in a league and knockout format. Tripura participates as an eastern state team in the Ranji Trophy, the Indian domestic cricket competition. The state also is a regular participant of the Indian National Games and the North Eastern Games. Tripura produced a few nationally successful players in gymnastics and swimming, but overall contribution in athletics, cricket, football and indoor games remained poor.[13]

Text extracted from URL 59:

Tripura (/ˈtrɪpʊrə, -əɾə/)[10] is a state in Northeast India. The third-smallest state in the country, it covers 10,491 km² (4,051 sq mi); and the seventh-least populous state with a population of 3.67 million.[11] It is bordered by Assam and Mizoram to the east and by Bangladesh to the north, south and west.[12] Tripura is divided into 8 districts and 23 sub-divisions, where Agartala is the capital and the largest city in the state. Tripura has 19 different tribal communities[13] with a majority Bengali population. Bengali, English and Kokborok are the state's official languages.[7]

The area of modern Tripura — ruled for several centuries by the Manikya Dynasty — was part of the Tripuri Kingdom (also known as Hill Tippera). It became a princely state under the British Raj during its tenure, and acceded to independent India in 1947. It merged with India in 1949 and was designated as a 'Part C State' (union territory).[14] It became a full-fledged state of India in 1972.

Tripura lies in a geographically isolated location in India, as only one major highway, National Highway 8, connects it with the rest of the country. Five mountain ranges — Baramura, Atharamura, Longtharai, Shakhan and Jampui Hills — run north to south, with intervening valleys; Agartala, the capital, is located on a plain to the west. The state has a tropical savanna climate, and receives seasonal heavy rains from the south west monsoon.

Forests cover more than half of the area, in which bamboo and cane tracts are common. Tripura has the highest number of primate species found in any Indian state. Due to its geographical isolation, economic progress in the state is hindered. Poverty and unemployment continue to plague Tripura, which has a limited infrastructure. Most residents are involved in agriculture and allied activities, although the service sector is the largest contributor to the state's gross domestic product.

According to the 2011 census, Tripura is one of the most literate states in India, with a literacy rate of 87.75%. Mainstream Indian cultural elements coexist with traditional practices of the ethnic groups, such as various dances to celebrate religious occasions, weddings and festivities; the use of locally crafted musical instruments and clothes; and the worship of regional deities. The sculptures at the archaeological sites Unakoti, Pilak and Devtamura provide historical evidence of artistic fusion between organised and indigenous religions.

The name Tripura is linked to the Hindu goddess Tripura Sundari, the presiding deity of the Tripura Sundari Temple at Udaipur, one of the 51 Shakti Peethas (pilgrimage centres of Shaktism),^{[15][16]} and to the legendary tyrant king Tripur, who reigned in the region. Tripur was the 39th descendant of Druhyu, who belonged to the lineage of Yayati, a king of the Lunar Dynasty.^[17]

There are alternative theories regarding the origin of the name Tripura, such as a possible etymological reinterpretation to Sanskrit of a Tibeto-Burman (Kokborok) name. Variants of the name include Tipra, Tuipura and Tippera, which can all denote the indigenous people inhabiting the area.^[15] A Kokborok etymology from *tüi* (water) and *pra* (near) has been suggested; the boundaries of Tripura extended to the Bay of Bengal when the kings of the Tipra Kingdom held sway from the Garo Hills of Meghalaya to Arakan, the present Rakhine State of Burma; so the name may reflect vicinity to the sea.^{[15][16][18]}

Although there is no evidence of lower or middle Paleolithic settlements in Tripura, Upper Paleolithic tools made of fossilised wood have been found in the Haora and Khowai valleys.^[19] The Indian epic, the Mahabharata; ancient religious texts, the Puranas; and the Edicts of Ashoka – stone pillar inscriptions of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka dating from the third century BC – all mention Tripura.^[17] An ancient name of Tripura (as mentioned in the Mahabharata) is Kirat Desh (English: "The land of Kirat"), probably referring to the Kirata Kingdoms or the more generic term Kirata.^{[20]: 155} However, it is unclear whether the extent of modern Tripura is coterminous with Kirat Desh.^[21] The region was under the rule of the Twipra Kingdom for centuries, but when this dynasty began is not documented. The Rajmala, a chronicle of Tripuri kings which was first written in the 15th century,^[22] provides a list of 179 kings, from antiquity up to Krishna Kishore Manikya (1830–1850),^{[23]: 3 [24][25]} but it is not a reliable source.^[26]

The boundaries of the kingdom changed over the centuries. At various times, the borders reached south to the jungles of the Sundarbans on the Bay of Bengal; east to Burma; and north to the boundary of the Kamarupa kingdom in Assam.^[22] There were several Muslim invasions of the region from the 13th century onward,^[22] which culminated in Mughal dominance of the plains of the kingdom in 1733,^[22] although their rule never extended to the hill regions.^[22] The Mughals had influence over the appointment of the Tripuri kings.^[22]

Tripura became a princely state during British rule in India. The kings had an estate in British India, known as Tippera district or Chakla Roshanbad (now the Comilla district of Bangladesh),^{[27][28]} in addition to the independent area known as Hill Tippera, roughly corresponding to the present-day Tripura state.^[22] Udaipur, in the south of Tripura, was the capital of the kingdom, until the king Krishna Manikya moved the capital to Old Agartala in the 18th century. It was moved to the new city

of Agartala in the 19th century. Bir Chandra Manikya (1862–1896) modelled his administration on the pattern of British India, and enacted reforms including the formation of Agartala Municipal Corporation.[29]

Following the independence of India in 1947, Tippera district – the estate in the plains of British India – became Comilla district of East Pakistan, and Hill Tippera remained under a regency council until 1949. The Maharani Regent of Tripura signed the Tripura Merger Agreement on 9 September 1949, making Tripura a Part C state of India.[30]: 3 It became a Union Territory, without a legislature, in November 1956 and an elected ministry was installed in July 1963.[30]: 3 Full statehood was conferred in 1971 by the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971. The geographic partition that coincided with the independence of India resulted in major economic and infrastructural setbacks for the state, as road transport between the state and the major cities of the newly-independent India had to follow a more circuitous route, around East Pakistan. The road distance between Kolkata and Agartala before the partition was less than 350 km (220 mi), and increased to 1,700 km (1,100 mi), as the route now avoided East Pakistan.[31] The geopolitical isolation was aggravated by an absence of rail transport.[32][33]: 93

After the partition of India, many Bengali Hindus migrated to Tripura as refugees fleeing religious persecution in Muslim-majority East Pakistan, especially after 1949.[30]: 3–4 Settlement by Hindu Bengalis increased during the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971. Parts of the state were shelled by the Pakistan Army during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971. Following the war, the Indian government reorganised the North East region to ensure effective control of the international borders – three new states came into existence on 21 January 1972:[34] Meghalaya, Manipur, and Tripura.[34] Before Tripura's merger with the Union of India, majority of the population composed of indigenous Tripuri people.[30]: 9 Ethnic strife between the Tripuri tribe and the predominantly immigrant Bengali community led to scattered violence,[35] and an insurgency spanning decades, including occasional massacres such as the 1980 Mandai massacre.[36] This gradually abated following the establishment of a tribal autonomous district council and the use of strategic counter-insurgency operations.[37] Tripura remains peaceful, as of 2016.[38] In retaliation of the communal violence against the Hindu minority in neighbouring Bangladesh, mosques in several areas in Tripura were attacked from 19 to 26 October 2021.[39]

Tripura is a landlocked state in North East India, where the seven contiguous states – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura – are collectively known as the Seven Sister States. Spread over 10,491.69 km² (4,050.86 sq mi), Tripura is the third-smallest among the 29 states in the country, behind Goa and Sikkim. It extends from 22°56'N to 24°32'N, and 91°09'E to 92°20'E.[30]: 3 Its maximum extent measures about 178 km (111 mi) from north to south, and 131 km (81 mi) east to west. Tripura is bordered by the country of Bangladesh to the west, north and south; and the Indian states of Assam to the north east; and Mizoram to the east.[30]: 3 It is accessible by national highways passing through the Karimganj district of Assam and Mamit district of Mizoram.[40]

The physiography is characterised by hill ranges, valleys and plains. The state has five anticlinal ranges of hills running north to south, from Baramura in the west, through Atharamura, Longtharai and Shakhan, to the Jampui Hills in the east.[41]: 4 The intervening synclines are the Agartala–Udaipur, Khowai–Teliamura, Kamalpur–Ambasa, Kailasahar–Manu and Dharmanagar–Kanchanpur valleys.[41]: 4 At an altitude of 939 m (3,081 ft), Betling Shib in the Jampui range is the state's highest point.[30]: 4 The small isolated hillocks interspersed throughout the state are known as tillas, and the narrow fertile alluvial valleys, mostly present in the west, are called Doóng/lungas.[30]: 4 A number of rivers originate in the hills of Tripura and flow into

Bangladesh.[30]: 4 The Khowai, Dhalai, Manu, Juri and Longai flow towards the north; the Gumti to the west; and the Muhuri and Feni to the south west.[41]: 73

The lithostratigraphy data published by the Geological Survey of India dates the rocks, on the geologic time scale, between the Oligocene epoch, approximately 34 to 23 million years ago, and the Holocene epoch, which started 12,000 years ago.[41]: 73–4 The hills have red laterite soil that is porous. The flood plains and narrow valleys are overlain by alluvial soil, and those in the west and south constitute most of the agricultural land.[30]: 4 According to the Bureau of Indian Standards, on a scale ranging from I to V in order of increasing susceptibility to earthquakes, the state lies in seismic zone V.[42]

The state has a tropical savanna climate, designated Aw under the Köppen climate classification. The undulating topography leads to local variations, particularly in the hill ranges.[43] The four main seasons are winter, from December to February; pre-monsoon or summer, from March to April; monsoon, from May to September; and post-monsoon, from October to November.[44] During the monsoon season, the south west monsoon brings heavy rains, which cause frequent floods.[30]: 4 [41]: 73 The average annual rainfall between 1995 and 2006 ranged from 1,979.6 to 2,745.9 mm (77.94 to 108.11 in).[45] During winter, temperatures range from 13 to 27 °C (55 to 81 °F), while in the summer they fall between 24 and 36 °C (75 and 97 °F).[44] According to a United Nations Development Programme report, the state lies in "very high damage risk" zone from wind and cyclones.[46]

Like most of the Indian subcontinent, Tripura lies within the Indomalayan realm. According to the Biogeographic classification of India, the state is in the "North-East" biogeographic zone.[49] In 2011 forests covered 57.73% of the state.[50] Tripura hosts three different types of ecosystems: mountain, forest and freshwater.[51] The evergreen forests on the hill slopes and the sandy river banks are dominated by species such as *Dipterocarpus*, *Artocarpus*, *Amoora*, *Elaeocarpus*, *Syzygium* and *Eugenia*. [52] Two types of moist deciduous forests comprise the majority of the vegetation: moist deciduous mixed forest and *Sal* (*Shorea robusta*)-predominant forest.[52] The interspersions of bamboo and cane forests with deciduous and evergreen flora is a peculiarity of Tripura's vegetation.[52] Grasslands and swamps are also present, particularly in the plains. Herbaceous plants, shrubs, and trees such as *Albizia*, *Barringtonia*, *Lagerstroemia* and *Macaranga* flourish in the swamps of Tripura. Shrubs and grasses include *Schumannianthus dichotoma* (*shitalpati*), *Phragmites* and *Saccharum* (*sugarcane*).[52]

According to a survey in 1989–90, Tripura hosts 90 land mammal species from 65 genera and 10 orders,[53] including such species as elephant (*Elephas maximus*), bear (*Melursus ursinus*), binturong (*Arctictis binturong*), wild dog (*Cuon alpinus*), porcupine (*Artherurus assamensis*), barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*), sambar (*Cervus unicolor*), wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), gaur (*Bos gaurus*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*), and many species of small cats and primates.[53] Out of 15 free ranging primates of India, seven are found in Tripura; this is the highest number of primate species found in any Indian state.[53] The wild buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*) is extinct now.[54] There are nearly 300 species of birds in the state.[55]

Wildlife sanctuaries of the state are Sipahijola, Gumti, Rowa and Trishna wildlife sanctuaries.[56] National parks of the state are Clouded Leopard National Park and Rajbari National Park.[56] These protected areas cover a total of 566.93 km² (218.89 sq mi).[56] Gumti is also an Important Bird Area.[57] In winter, thousands of migratory waterfowl throng Gumti and Rudrasagar lakes.[58]

In January 2012, major changes were implemented in the administrative divisions of Tripura. There had previously been four districts – Dhalai (headquarters Ambassa), North Tripura (headquarters Kailashahar), South Tripura (headquarters Udaipur, Tripura), and West Tripura (headquarters Agartala). Four new districts were carved out of the existing four in January 2012 – Khowai, Unakoti, Sipahijala and Gomati.[59] Six new subdivisions and five new blocks were also added.[60] Each is governed by a district collector or a district magistrate, usually appointed by the Indian Administrative Service. The subdivisions of each district are governed by a sub-divisional magistrate and each subdivision is further divided into blocks. The blocks consist of Panchayats (village councils) and town municipalities. As of 2012, the state had eight districts, 23 subdivisions and 58 development blocks.[61] National census and state statistical reports are not available for all the new administrative divisions, as of March 2013. Agartala, the capital of Tripura, is the most populous city. Other major towns with a population of 10,000 or more (as per 2015 census) are Sabroom, Dharmanagar, Jogendranagar, Kailashahar, Pratapgarh, Udaipur, Amarpur, Belonia, Gandhigram, Kumarghat, Khowai, Ranirbazar, Sonamura, Bishalgarh, Teliamura, Mohanpur, Melaghar, Ambassa, Kamalpur, Bishramganj, Kathaliya, Santirbazar and Baxanagar.

Tripura is governed through a parliamentary system of representative democracy, a feature it shares with other Indian states. Universal suffrage is granted to residents. The Tripura government has three branches: executive, legislature and judiciary. The Tripura Legislative Assembly consists of elected members and special office bearers that are elected by the members. Assembly meetings are presided over by the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker in case of Speaker's absence. The Assembly is unicameral with 60 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA).[62] The members are elected for a term of five years, unless the Assembly is dissolved prior to the completion of the term. The judiciary is composed of the Tripura High Court and a system of lower courts.[63][64] Executive authority is vested in the Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister. The Governor, the titular head of state, is appointed by the President of India. The leader of the party or a coalition of parties with a majority in the Legislative Assembly is appointed as the chief minister by the governor. The Council of Ministers are appointed by the governor on the advice of the chief minister. The Council of Ministers reports to the Legislative Assembly.

Tripura sends two representatives to the Lok Sabha (the lower house of the parliament of India) and one representative to the Rajya Sabha (parliament's upper house). In the 2019 Indian general election, both parliament lower house seats were won by the Bharatiya Janata Party.[65] Panchayats, (local self-governments) elected by local body elections operate in many villages for self-governance. Tripura also has a unique tribal self-governance body, the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council.[66] This council is responsible for some aspects of local governance in 527 villages with high density of the scheduled tribes.[66][67]

The main political parties are the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Left Front, the All India Trinamool Congress and Indian National Congress along with regional parties like the IPFT and INPT. Until 1977, the state was governed by the Indian National Congress.[68]: 255–66 The Left Front was in power from 1978 to 1988, and then again from 1993 to 2018.[69] In 1988–93, the Congress and Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti were in a ruling coalition.[70] In the 2013 Tripura Legislative Assembly election, the Left Front won 50 out of 60 seats in the Assembly.[71] The 2018 assembly election resulted in loss for the Left Front; the Bharatiya Janata Party won an overall majority in the state, resulting in the end of the Communist Party's uninterrupted twenty-five year rule.[72] The BJP won 44 out of 60 seats in the Assembly by coalition with the IPFT. The CPI (M) only got 16 seats and Indian National Congress lost by huge margins in all constituencies.

Communism in the state had its beginnings in the pre-independence era, inspired by freedom struggle activities in Bengal, and culminating in regional parties with communist leanings.[73]: 362 It capitalised on the tribal dissatisfaction with the mainstream rulers,[73]: 362 and has been noted for connection with the "sub-national or ethnic searches for identity".[74]

Since the 1990s, there has been an ongoing irredentist Tripura rebellion, involving militant outfits such as the National Liberation Front of Tripura and the All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF); terrorist incidents involving the ATTF claimed a recorded number of 389 victims in the seven-year period from 1993 to 2000.[75] The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) was first enforced in Tripura on 16 February 1997 when terrorism was at its peak in the state. The Act, as per its provisions, was subsequently reviewed and extended every six months. However, in view of the improvement in the situation and fewer terrorist activities being reported, the Tripura government in June 2013 reduced operational areas of the AFSPA to 30 police station areas. The last six-month extension to AFSPA was approved in November 2014, and after about 18 years of operation, it was repealed on 29 May 2015.[72][76]

figures in crores Indian rupee

Tripura's gross state domestic product for 2022-23 was ₹640 billion (US\$8.0 billion) at constant price (2022–23),[77] recording 10.38% growth over the previous year. In the same period, the GDP of India was ₹277,520 billion (US\$3.5 trillion), with a growth rate of 8.55%.[77] Annual per capita income at current price of the state was ₹157,752 (US\$2,000), compared to the national per capita income ₹197,280 (US\$2,500).[78] In 2009, the tertiary sector of the economy (service industries) was the largest contributor to the gross domestic product of the state, contributing 53.98 per cent of the state's economy compared to 23.07 per cent from the primary sector (agriculture, forestry, mining) and 22.95 per cent from the secondary sector (industrial and manufacturing).[78] According to the Economic Census of 2005, after agriculture, the maximum number of workers were engaged in retail trade (28.21% of total non-agricultural workforce), followed by manufacturing (18.60%), public administration (14.54%), and education (14.40%).[79]

Tripura is an agrarian state with more than half of the population dependent on agriculture and allied activities.[80] However, due to hilly terrain and forest cover, only 27% of the land is available for cultivation.[80] Rice, the major crop of the state, is cultivated in 91% of the cropped area.[80] According to the Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Tripura, in 2009–10, potato, sugarcane, mesta, pulses and jute were the other major crops cultivated in the state.[81] Jackfruit and pineapple top the list of horticultural products.[81] Traditionally, most of the indigenous population practised jhum method (a type of slash-and-burn) of cultivation. The number of people dependent on jhum has declined over the years.[82]: 37–9

Fish farming has made significant advances in the state. At the end of 2009–10, the state produced a surplus of 104.3 million fish seeds, primarily carp.[83] Rubber and tea are the important cash crops of the state. Tripura ranks second to Kerala in the production of natural rubber in the country.[84] The state is known for its handicraft, particularly hand-woven cotton fabric, wood carvings, and bamboo products. High quality timber including sal, garjan, teak and gamar are found abundantly in the forests of Tripura. Tata Trusts signed a pact with Government of Tripura in July 2015 to improve fisheries and dairy production in the state.[85]

The industrial sector of the state continues to be highly underdeveloped – brickfields and tea industry are the only two organised sectors.[79] Tripura has considerable reservoirs of natural gas.[41]: 78–81 According to estimates by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), the state has

400 billion metres³ reserves of natural gas, with 16 billion metres³ is recoverable.[84] ONGC produced 480 million metres³ natural gas in the state, in 2006–07.[84] In 2011 and 2013, new large discoveries of natural gas were announced by ONGC.[86] Tourism industry in the state is growing – the revenue earned in tourism sector crossed ₹10 million (US\$130,000) for the first time in 2009–10, and surpassed ₹15 million (US\$190,000) in 2010–11.[87] Although Bangladesh is in a trade deficit with India, its export to Tripura is significantly more than import from the state; a report in the newspaper The Hindu estimated Bangladesh exported commodities valued at about ₹3.5 billion (US\$44 million) to the state in 2012, as opposed to "very small quantity" of import.[88] Alongside legal international trade, unofficial and informal cross-border trade is rampant.[89] In a research paper published by the Institute of Developing Economies in 2004, the dependence of Tripura's economy on that of Bangladesh was emphasised.[90]: 313

The economy of Tripura can be characterised by the high rate of poverty, low capital formation, inadequate infrastructure facilities, geographical isolation and communication bottlenecks, inadequate exploration and use of forest and mineral resources, slow industrialisation and high unemployment. More than 50% of the population depends on agriculture for sustaining their livelihood.[91] However agriculture and allied activities contribution to Gross State Domestic Production (GSDP) is only 23%, this is primarily because of low capital base in the sector. Despite the inherent limitation and constraints coupled with severe resource shortages for investing in basic infrastructure, this has brought consistent progress in the quality of life and income of people across all sections of society. The state government through its Tripura Industrial Policy and Tripura Industrial Incentives Scheme, 2012, has offered heavy subsidies in capital investment and transport, preferences in government procurement, waivers in tender processes and fees, yet the impact has not been much significant beyond a few industries being set up in the Bodhjungle Industrial Growth Center.[92]

The Planning Commission estimates the poverty rate of all North East Indian states by using headcount ratio of Assam (the second largest state in North East India after Arunachal Pradesh). According to 2001 Planning Commission assessment, 22 per cent of Tripura's rural residents were below the poverty line. However, the Tripura government's independent assessment, based on consumption distribution data, reported that, in 2001, 55 per cent of the rural population was below the poverty line.[79] Geographic isolation and communication bottlenecks coupled with insufficient infrastructure have restricted economic growth of the state.[80] High rate of poverty and unemployment continues to be prevalent.[80]

Air

Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport, located 12 km northwest of Agartala at Singerbhal, is the second busiest airport in northeast India after Guwahati. There are direct flights to Kolkata, Imphal, Delhi, Shillong, Guwahati, Bangalore, Dibrugarh, Aizawl, Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Chittagong. The major airlines are flybig, Air India, Akasa Air, Spicejet and IndiGo.[93] Passenger helicopter services are available between the capital and major towns (Kailashahar, Dharmanagar) as well as to more remote areas such as Kanchanpur, Belonia and Gandacherra.[94]

Railway

Agartala was connected to India's railway network with the advent of the railways in the subcontinent in 1853 but the link was broken when India was partitioned in 1947. Railway services were established in Tripura in 1964 by constructing 1,000 mm (3 ft 3+3/8 in) metre gauge track from Lumding in Assam to Dharmanagar and Kailashahar in Tripura but the track did not reach Agartala.

Rail transport was absent in the state until 2008–09 when the railway track was extended to the capital Agartala.[94] The metre gauge rail track was connected to 5 ft 6 in (1,676 mm) broad gauge at Lumding. The major railway stations in this line are in Agartala, Dharmanagar, and Kumarghat. This metre gauge track was converted to 1,676 mm (5 ft 6 in) broad gauge in 2016 and now trains run from Agartala to Kolkata and Delhi. The total length of this railway track in Tripura state is 153 km. It is a single line without electrification. The Agartala sabroom line was coupled and became fully operational from 2019.

A new railway line is being laid westwards from Agartala to Akhaura in Bangladesh. This will reduce the distance between Agartala and Kolkata by over 1000 km and provide rail access to Chittagong port.

Some major Express trains that operate from Agartala are -

Agartala - Anand Vihar Terminal Rajdhani Express

Road

Only one major road, the National Highway 8 (NH-8), connects Tripura to the rest of India.[94] Starting at Sabroom in southern Tripura, it heads north to the capital Agartala, turns east and then north-east to enter the state of Assam. Locally known as "Assam Road", the NH-8 is often called the lifeline of Tripura.[94] However, the highway is single lane and of poor quality; often landslides, rains or other disruptions on the highway cut the state off from its neighbours.[41]: 73 [82]: 8 Another National Highway, NH 108, connects the town of Panisagar in northern Tripura with Aizawl, Mizoram.[40] The Tripura Road Transport Corporation is the government agency overlooking public transport on road. A hilly and land-locked state, Tripura is dependent mostly on roads for transport.[94] The total length of roads in the state is 16,931 km (10,520 mi) of which national highways constitute 88 km (55 mi) and state highways 689 km (428 mi), as of 2009–10.[94] Residents in rural areas frequently use waterways as a mode of transport.[95]: 140

Tripura has an 856 km (532 mi) long international border with Bangladesh, of which 777.4 km (483.1 mi) is fenced, as of 2012.[96] Several locations along the border serve as bilateral trading points between India and Bangladesh, such as Akhaura near Agartala, Raghna, Srimantpur, Belonia, Khowai and Kailasahar.[88] A bus service exists between Agartala and Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh.[97][98] In 2013, the two countries signed an agreement to establish a 15 km (9.3 mi) railway link between Agartala and the Akhaura junction of Bangladesh.[99] Citizens of both countries need visa to legally enter the other country; however, illegal movement and smuggling across the border are widespread.[90]: 314 [100]

Doordarshan (DD) has a television station in Agartala. Other full-time based channels are Headlines Tripura,[101] News Vanguard, PB 24, Prime Television Network, Chini Khorang, Swrangchati News and many more.

As of 2014, 56 daily and weekly newspapers are published in Tripura.[102] Most of the newspapers are published in Bengali, except for one Kokborok daily (Hachukni Kok), one Manipuri weekly (Marup), two English dailies and three bilingual weeklies.[102] Notable dailies include Ajkal Tripura, Daily Desher Katha, Dainik Sambad and Syandan Patrika.[102] In a study by Indian Institute of Mass Communication in 2009, 93% of the sampled in Tripura rated television as very effective for information and mass education.[103] In the study, 67% of the sampled listened to radio and 80–90% read newspaper.[103] Most of the major Indian telecommunication companies are present in the state, such as Airtel, Vi, Jio and BSNL. Mobile connections outnumber landline connections by a

wide margin. As of 2011, the state-controlled BSNL has 57,897 landline subscribers and 325,279 GSM mobile service connections.[94] There are 84 telephone exchanges (for landlines) and 716 post offices in the state, as of 2011.[94]

Till 2014, Tripura was a power deficit state. In late 2014, Tripura reached surplus electricity production capacity by using its recently discovered natural gas resources, and installing high efficiency gas turbine power plants. The state has many power-generating stations. These are owned by Tripura State Electricity Corporation (TSECL), natural gas-powered thermal power stations at Rokhia and Baramura, and the ONGC Tripura Power Company in Palatana.[104] The ONGC plant has a capacity of 726.6 MW, with the second plant's commissioning in November 2014.[105][106] It is the largest individual power plant in the northeast region.[107]

The state also has a hydro power station on the Gumti River. The combined power generation from these three stations is 100–105 MW.[108] The North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO) operates the 84 MW Agartala Gas Turbine Power Plant near Agartala.[108] As of November 2014, another thermal power plant is being built at Monarchak.[109]

With the newly added power generation capacity, Tripura has with enough capacity to supply all seven sister states of northeast India, as well export power to neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh.[110] With recent discoveries, the state has abundant natural gas reserves to support many more power generation plants, but lacks pipeline and transport infrastructure to deliver the fuel or electricity to India's national grid.

As of 2011, 255,241 hectares (985 sq mi) of land in Tripura cultivable, of which 108,646 hectares (419 sq mi) has the potential to be covered by irrigation projects. However, only 74,796 hectares (289 sq mi) is irrigated.[111] The state lacks major irrigation projects; it depends on medium-sized projects sourced from Gumti, Khowai (at Chakmaghat) and Manu rivers, and minor projects administered by village-level governing bodies that utilise tube wells, water pumps, tanks and lift irrigation.[111]

ONGC and Chambal Fertilizers & Chemicals are jointly building a fertiliser plant to leverage ONGC's natural gas discoveries in Tripura.[112] Expected to be in operation by 2017, the 1.3 million tonnes per year plant will supply the northeastern states.[113]

Drinking Water and Sanitation (DWS) wing] of Public Works Department manages the drinking water supply in the state.[114] Schools and Anganwadi Centers have been specifically targeted to improve drinking water supply as well as attendance to these institutions. Many areas of Tripura have the problem of excessive iron content in groundwater requiring the installation of Iron Removal Plants (IRP). Tripura State has received the best State Award for Water & Sanitation under the category of Small States in the IBN7 Diamond State Award function for doing commendable work to provide drinking water supply to the people with the sparsely distributed tribal population in hamlets of hilly regions of the State. However, a study by the DWS Department found a depleting water table and excessive contamination.[115] Still, packaged drinking water under brands "Tribeni", "Eco Freshh", "Blue Fina", "Life Drop" and "Aqua Zoom" among others is manufactured and sold in the state. Filters of many types and brands, in addition to locally manufactured ceramic type filters, are sold in the state although their acceptance in rural areas is less.

As per 2011 census, the literacy rate of Tripura was 87.75 per cent, the fourth-highest in India (which had a national literacy rate of 74.04 per cent).[117] A state government survey in 2013 announced that Tripura has the highest literacy rate in India at 94.65 per cent.[117] Schools in Tripura are run by the state government, TTAADC or private organisations, which include religious

institutions. Instruction in schools is mainly in Bengali or English, though Kokborok and other regional languages are also used. Some of the special schools include Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, residential schools run by Tripura Tribal Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TTWREIS),[118] missionary organisations like St. Paul's,

St. Arnold's, Holy Cross, Don Bosco, and St. John's. The schools are affiliated to the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE), the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) or the Tripura Board of Secondary Education.[119] Under the 10+2+3 plan, after completing secondary school, students typically enroll for two years in a junior college or in a higher secondary school affiliated either to the Tripura Board of Secondary Education or to other central boards. Students choose from one of the three streams—liberal arts, commerce or science.[119] As in the rest of India,[120] after passing the Higher Secondary Examination (the grade 12 examination), students may enroll in general degree programs such as bachelor's degree in arts, commerce or science, or professional degree programs such as engineering, law or medicine.

According to the Economic Review of Tripura 2010–11, Tripura has a total of 4,455 schools, of which 2,298 are primary schools.[116] The total enrolment in all schools of the state is 767,672.[116] Tripura has one Central University (Tripura University), one State University (M. B. B. University) and one private university (a branch of the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India). There are 15 general colleges, three engineering colleges (Tripura Institute of Technology, National Institute of Technology, Agartala and NIELT, Agartala), two medical colleges (Agartala Government Medical College and Tripura Medical College),[121][122] three nursing or paramedical colleges, three polytechnic colleges, one law college, one Government Music College Archived 1 July 2015 at the Wayback Machine, one College of Fisheries, Institute of Advance Studies in Education, one Regional College of Physical Education at Panisagar and one art college.[116][123]

Healthcare in Tripura features a universal health care system run by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare of the Government of Tripura.[125] The health care infrastructure is divided into three tiers – the primary health care network, a secondary care system comprising district and sub-divisional hospitals and tertiary hospitals providing speciality and super speciality care. As of 2010–11, there are 17 hospitals, 11 rural hospitals and community health centres, 79 primary health centres, 635 sub-centres/dispensaries, 7 blood banks and 7 blood storage centres in the state.[126] Homeopathic and Ayurvedic styles of medicine are also popular in the state.[126] The National Family Health Survey – 3 conducted in 2005–06 revealed that 20% of the residents of Tripura do not generally use government health facilities, and prefers the private medical sector.[127] This is overwhelmingly less than the national level, where 65.6% do not rely on government facilities.[127] As in the rest of India, Tripura residents also cite poor quality of care as the most frequent reason for non-reliance over the public health sector. Other reasons include distance of the public sector facilities, long waiting time, and inconvenient hours of operation.[127] As of 2010, the state's performance in major public health care indices, such as birth rate, infant mortality rate and total fertility rate is better than the national average.[124] The state is vulnerable to epidemics of malaria, diarrhoea, Japanese encephalitis and meningitis. In summer 2014 the state witnessed a major malaria outbreak.[128]

Tripura ranks second to Assam as the most populous state in North East India. According to the provisional results of 2011 census of India, Tripura has a population of 3,671,032 with 1,871,867 males and 1,799,165 females.[132] It constitutes 0.3% of India's population. The sex ratio of the state is 961 females per thousand males,[132] higher than the national ratio 940. The population

density is 350 persons per square kilometre.[133] The literacy rate of Tripura in 2011 was 87.75%,[132] above the national average of 74.04%, and third highest among all the states.

Tripura ranked sixth in Human Development Index (HDI) among 35 states and union territories of India, according to the 2006 estimate by India's Ministry of Women and Child Development; the HDI of Tripura was 0.663, better than the all-India HDI of 0.605.[134]

In 2011, the police in Tripura recorded 5,803 cognisable offences under the Indian Penal Code, a number second only to Assam (66,714) in North East India.[135] The crime rate in the state was 158.1 per 100,000 people, less than the all-India average of 192.2.[136] However, 2010 reports showed that the state topped all the states for crime against women, with a rate of 46.5 per 100,000 people, significantly more than the national rate of 18.[137]

According to the 2001 census of India, Bengalis represented almost 70 per cent of Tripura's population while the Tripuri population amounted to 30 per cent.[138] The state's "scheduled tribes", recognised by the country's constitution, consist of 19 ethnic groups and many sub-groups,[139] with diverse languages and cultures. In 2001, the largest such group were Kokborok-speaking Tripuris, who had a population of 543,848, representing 17.0 per cent of the state's population and 54.7 per cent of the "scheduled tribe" population.[138] The other major groups, in descending order of population, were the Reang (16.6 per cent of the indigenous population), Jamatia (7.5 per cent), Chakma (6.5 per cent), Halam (also known as old kuki because they belong to the kuki-chin-tribe)(4.8 per cent), Mog (3.1 per cent), Munda (1.2 per cent), Kuki (1.2 per cent) and Garo (1.1 per cent).[138]

Languages of Tripura (2011)[140]

The official languages of the state are Bengali, English and Kokborok (Tripuri).[141][142] Bengali is the most widely spoken language,[141][143] while Kokborok is the most prominent language among the Tripuri people.[141] Other minority languages such as Mog, Odia, Bishnupriya Manipuri, Manipuri, Halam(oldkuki), Garo and Chakma belonging to Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan families are spoken in the state.[141] Thadou, a nearly extinct language, was spoken by only four people in one village as of 2012.[144]

Religion in Tripura (2011)[145]

According to 2011 census, Hinduism is the majority religion in the state, followed by 83.40% of the population.[146] Muslims make up 8.60% of the population, Christians 4.35%, and Buddhists 3.41%.[146] Christianity is chiefly followed by members of the Kuki tribes (Halam, Ranglong, Hrangkhoh, Lushai, Darlong, Thadou people etc. also known as Old Kukis) and as per 2011 census has 159,882 adherents.[145][95]: 135–6

Before Indian independence, Tripura was a tribal majority state.[151] In 1941, the native Tripuris made up 62.06% of the population in present-day Tripura while the non-Tripuri people, mainly Bengalis and non-Bengalis occupies rest of the percentage.[148] The percentage of Tripuris decreased from 62.06% in 1941 (before partition) to 48.65% (after partition) in 1951 due to East Bengali refugees who were coming from East Pakistan present-day-Bangladesh. Since 1971, the indigenous Tripuri population of Tripura has increased from 28.44% in 1981 to 31.05% in 2001.[152] The 2011 census stated that indigenous Tripuri constitute 31.78% of the state population which is up from the previous census record of 31.05% in 2001.[149]

Most of the area of Tripura is part of the TTAADC area, which is an Autonomous Region within Tripura under 6th schedule of the Indian Constitution and the western part of Tripura is called the General ward area, where Bengalis formed the overwhelming majority of the population.[153]

The total area of the TTAADC is about 7,132.56 km², which covers about 68% of the total area (10,491 km²) of Tripura respectively. It's a thinly populated area of the state with vast area.[153]

Ethnicity in TTAADC area (2011 Census)[153]

The population of the TTAADC area is 1,216,465 out of which the Native Scheduled Tribes (Tripuris) are 1,021,560, constituting an overwhelming 83.4% of the region's population.[153] While the population of General ward area of Tripura is 2,457,452 but out of total 10,491 km² state area, the General region have a total area of only 3,358.44 km², which covers only about 32% of the total area of the state.

Out of the total population of 3,673,917 (as per 2011 census) the population of Scheduled Tribes is 1,166,813 (31.76% of the state population).[154] Therefore, the number of Scheduled Tribes of the state who reside in the TTAADC area is 87.55% of the total Indigenous population of Tripura as a whole, while small segments of the native Tribes population also reside in General ward area.

During the Partition of Bengal in 1947, hundreds of thousands of Bengali refugees fled from East Pakistan into India's Tripura following the Partition of India. It is estimated that between the years 1947–51, around 610,000 Bengalis — a figure almost equal to the state's total population poured into the state leading to a profound demographic change during this first phase.[155] Again during the Bangladesh liberation war of 1971, in the second phase of migration, around 1.038 million Bengalis (most being Hindus) moved into various parts of Tripura as refugees with most of them settling down permanently afterwards.[156] Until Bangladesh liberation war, Tripura had sheltered around 1.3 million refugees. The number of the refugees was almost equal to the indigenous population and the majority of them were rehabilitated and permanently settled in Tripura, altering the demography which became the basis of changes in resource distribution, economy, culture, polity, society and a cause of conflicts between the immigrants and the indigenous peoples.[157]

The diverse ethno-linguistic groups of Tripura have given rise to a composite culture.[160][161] The major Tripuri clans are: Tripura, Debbarma, Jamatia, Reang, Noatia, and Murasing. And there are tribal groups such as Chakma, Halam(old kuki), Garo, Kuki, Mizo, Uchoi, Dhamai, Roaza, Mag, Munda, Oraon and Santhal who migrated in Tripura as tea labourers.[139] Bengali people represent the largest ethno-linguistic community of the state. Bengali culture, as a result, is the main non-indigenous culture. The Tripuri Maharajas were great patrons of Bengali culture, especially literature;[162] Bengali language replaced Kokborok as the language of the court.[163] Elements of Bengali culture, such as Bengali literature, Bengali music, and Bengali cuisine are widespread, particularly in the urban areas of the state.[164]: 110 [165]

Tripura is noted for bamboo and cane handicrafts.[161] Bamboo, wood and cane are used to create an array of furniture, utensils, hand-held fans, replicas, mats, baskets, idols and interior decoration materials.[33]: 39–41 [166] Music and dance are integral to the culture of the state. Some local musical instruments are the sarinda, chongpreng (both string instruments), and sumui (a type of flute).[20]: 344–5 Each indigenous community has its own repertoire of songs and dances performed during weddings, religious occasions, and other festivities. The Tripuri and Jamatia people perform gorja dance during the Gorja puja. Jhum dance (also called tangbiti dance), lebang dance, mamita dance, and mosak sulmani dance are other Tripuri dance forms.[167] Reang community, the second largest scheduled tribe of the state, is noted for its hojagiri dance that is performed by young girls

balanced on earthen pitchers.[167] Bizhu dance is performed by the Chakmas during the Bizhu festival (the last day of the month of Chaitra in Hindu calendar). Other dance forms include wangala dance of the Garo people, hai-hak dance of the Halam branch of Kuki people, and sangrai dance and owa dance of the Mog.[167] Alongside such traditional music, mainstream Indian musical elements such as Indian classical music and dance, Rabindra Sangeet are also practised.[168] Sachin Dev Burman, a member of the royal family, was a maestro in the filmi genre of Indian music.[169]

Hindus believe that Tripura Sundari is the patron goddess of Tripura and an aspect of Shakti.[23]: 30 Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Dolyatra, Ashokastami and the worship of the Chaturdasha deities are important festivals in the state. Some festivals represent confluence of different regional traditions, such as Ganga puja, Garia puja, Kharchi puja and Ker puja.[170][171] Unakoti, Pilak and Devtamura are historic sites where large collections of stone carvings and rock sculptures are noted.[161][172] Like Neermahal is a cultural Water Palace of this state. Sculptures are evidence of the presence of Buddhist and Brahmanical orders for centuries, and represent a rare artistic fusion of traditional organised religions and tribal influence.[173][174][175]

Tripura had a wide collection of notable art and cultural displays.[176][177]

Other dance forms of minority groups include Sangrai dance and Owa dance of Mog, Hai-hak dance of Halam, Wangla dance of Garo, Bizhu dance of Chakma.[167] Alongside such traditional music, mainstream Indian musical elements such as Indian classical music and dance are also practised.[168] Sachin Dev Burman, a member of the Tripuri royal family, was a maestro in the filmi genre of Indian music.[169]

Local musical instruments are:

Football and cricket are the most popular sports in the state. The state capital Agartala has its own club football championships every year in which many local clubs compete in a league and knockout format. The Tripura cricket team participates in the Ranji Trophy, the Indian domestic cricket competition. The state is a regular participant of the Indian National Games and the North Eastern Games.[179][180]

Tennis player Somdev Devvarman, who won the gold medal in the Men's Singles event at the 2010 Asian Games, has family roots in Tripura.[181] He was the first Indian to win a gold medal in the men's singles tennis event of the Asian Games.[182]

In 2016, Dipa Karmakar from Agartala became the first ever female gymnast from India to qualify for the Olympics when she qualified for the women's artistic gymnastics event of 2016 Summer Olympics.[183] Other notable gymnasts from Tripura include Mantu Debnath, Kalpana Debnath, and Bishweshwar Nandi.[184]

General information

Text extracted from URL 60:

Uttarakhand (English: /ˈʊtərəːkənd/,[19] /ˈʊtərəːkənd/[20] or /ˈʊtəːrækənd/;[21] Hindi: [ˈʊtːərəːkʰəɳd̪], lit. 'Northern Land'), formerly known as Uttaranchal (English: /ˈʊtəːræntʃəl/; the official name until 2007),[22] is a state in northern India. The state is divided into two divisions, Garhwal and Kumaon, with a total of 13 districts. The winter capital and largest city of the state is Dehradun, which is also a railhead. On 5 March 2020, Bhararisain, a town in the Gairsain Tehsil of

the Chamoli district, was declared as the summer capital of Uttarakhand.[23][24] The High Court of the state is located in Nainital, but is to be moved to Haldwani in future.[25]

Uttarakhand borders the Tibet Autonomous Region of China to the north; the Sudurpashchim Province of Nepal to the east; the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh to the south and Himachal Pradesh to the west and north-west. It is often referred to as the "Devbhumi" (lit. 'Land of the Gods')[26] due to its religious significance and numerous Hindu temples and pilgrimage centres found throughout the state. Uttarakhand is known for the natural environment of the Himalayas, the Bhabar and the Terai regions.

In 1816, most of modern Uttarakhand was ceded to the British as part of the Treaty of Sugauli. Although the erstwhile hill kingdoms of Garhwal and Kumaon were traditional rivals, the proximity of different neighbouring ethnic groups and the inseparable and complementary nature of their geography, economy, culture, language, and traditions created strong bonds between the two regions, which further strengthened during the Uttarakhand movement for statehood in the 1990s.

The natives of the state are generally called Uttarakhandi, or more specifically either Garhwali or Kumaoni depending on their region of origin. According to the 2011 Census of India, Uttarakhand has a population of 10,086,292, making it the 20th most populous state in India.[27]

Uttarakhand's name is derived from the Sanskrit words *uttara* (उत्तर) meaning 'north', and *khaṇḍa* (खण्ड) meaning 'section' or 'part', altogether simply meaning 'Northern Part'. The name finds mention in early Hindu scriptures as the combined region of "Kedarkhand" (present day Garhwal) and "Manaskhand" (present day Kumaon). Uttarakhand was also the ancient Puranic term for the central stretch of the Indian Himalayas.[28]

However, the region was given the name Uttaranchal by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led union government and Uttarakhand state government when they started a new round of state reorganisation in 1998. Chosen as per BJP claims for its allegedly less-separatist connotations, since the proposed state name Uttarakhand had been used exclusively in all major statehood protests. The name change generated widespread controversy among many activists and citizens who saw it as a political act meant to hijack credit from the activist party Uttarakhand Kranti Dal.[29] The name Uttarakhand remained popular in the region, while Uttaranchal was promulgated only through official usage.[citation needed]

In August 2006, Union Council of Ministers assented to the demands of the Uttaranchal Legislative Assembly and leading members of the Uttarakhand statehood movement to rename Uttaranchal state as Uttarakhand. Legislation to that effect was passed by the Uttaranchal Legislative Assembly in October 2006,[30] and the Union Council of Ministers brought in the bill in the winter session of Parliament. The bill was passed by the Parliament and signed into law by then President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam in December 2006, and since 1 January 2007 the state has been known as Uttarakhand.[31]

Archaeological evidence supports the existence of humans in the region since prehistoric times.[32] Though initially, it was believed that due to harsh climate and mountainous terrain, this was a barren and uninhabited land. But after various excavations and the study of ancient literature, it is now established that the history of Uttarakhand goes back to Stone Age.[33] Evidences of Stone Age settlements have been found in various parts of Kumaon and Garhwal, particularly notable are the rock shelters at Lakhudiyar, Almora.[34]

The region formed a part of the Uttarakuru Kingdom during the Vedic age of Ancient India. Among the first major dynasties of Kumaon were the Kunindas in the second century BCE who practised an early form of Shaivism. Ashokan edicts at Kalsi show the early presence of Buddhism in this region.

Ancient rock paintings, rock shelters, paleolithic age stone tools (hundreds of thousands of years old), and megaliths provide evidence that the mountains of the region have been inhabited since prehistoric times. There are also archaeological remains that show the existence of early Vedic (c. 1500 BCE) practices in the area.[35] The Pauravas, Khasas, Kiratas, Nandas, Mauryas, Kushanas, Kunindas, Guptas, Karkotas, Palas, Gurjara-Pratiharas, Katyuris, Raikas, Chands, Parmars or Panwars, Mallas, Shahs and the British have ruled Uttarakhand in turns.[28]

Among the first major dynasties of Garhwal and Kumaon were the Kunindas in the second century BCE who practised an early form of Shaivism and traded salt with Western Tibet. It is evident from the Ashokan edict at Kalsi in Western Garhwal that Buddhism made inroads in this region. Shamanic Hindu practices deviating from Hindu orthodoxy also persisted here. However, Garhwal and Kumaon were restored to nominal Vedic Hindu rule due to the travels of Shankaracharya and the arrival of migrants from the plains.[citation needed]

Between the 4th and 14th centuries, the Katyuri dynasty dominated lands of varying extents from the Katyur valley (modern-day Baijnath) in Kumaon. The historically significant temples at Jageshwar are believed to have been built by the Katyuris and later remodeled by the Chands. Other peoples of the Tibeto-Burman group known as Kirata are thought to have settled in the northern highlands as well as in pockets throughout the region, and are believed to be ancestors of the modern day Bhotiya, Raji, Jad, and Banrawat people.[36]

During the medieval period, the region was consolidated under the Katyuri rulers of Kumaon also known as 'Kurmanchal Kingdom'. [37] After the fall of Katyuris, the region was divided into the Kumaon Kingdom and the Garhwal Kingdom.

By the medieval period, the region was consolidated under the Garhwal Kingdom in the west and the Kumaon Kingdom in the east. During this period, learning and new forms of painting (the Pahari school of art) developed.[38] Modern-day Garhwal was likewise unified under the rule of Parmars who, along with many Brahmins and Rajputs, also arrived from the plains.[39] In 1791, the expanding Gorkha Empire of Nepal overran Almora, the seat of the Kumaon Kingdom. It was annexed to the Kingdom of Nepal by Amar Singh Thapa. In 1803, the Garhwal Kingdom also fell to the Gurkhas. After the Anglo-Nepalese War, this region was ceded to the British as part of the Treaty of Sugauli and the erstwhile Kumaon Kingdom along with the eastern region of Garhwal Kingdom was merged with the Ceded and Conquered Provinces.

In 1816, the Garhwal Kingdom was re-established from a smaller region in Tehri as a princely state. In the southern part of Uttarakhand in Haridwar district (earlier part of Saharanpur till 1988), the dominance and kingship (rajya) was exercised by Gujar chiefs, the area was under control of Parmar (Panwar or Khubars) Gujars in eastern Saharanpur including Haridwar in kingship of Raja Sabha Chandra of Jabarhera (Jhabrera). Gujars of the Khubar (Panwar) gotra held more than 500 villages there in upper Doab, and that situation was confirmed in 1759 in a grant by a Rohilla governor of 505 villages and 31 hamlets to one Manohar Singh Gujar (written in some records as Raja Nahar Singh son of Sabha Chandra). In 1792 Ram Dayal and his son Sawai Singh were ruling the area but due to some family reasons Ramdayal left Jhabrera and went to Landhaura village, now some villages were under the control of Raja Ramdayal Singh at Landhaura, and some under his son Sawai Singh at Jhabrera. Hence, there were two branches of Jabarhera estate (riyasat) main branch at

Jabarhera and the second one at Landhaura, both father and son were ruling simultaneously without any conflicts till the death of Raja Sawai Singh of Jabarhera in 1803. After the death of Sawai Singh total control of powers transferred to Ram Dayal Singh at Landhaura, but some villages were given to descendants of Sawai Singh and her widow to collect revenue.

By 1803 the Landhaura villages numbered 794 under Raja Ram Dayal Singh. Raja Ram Dayal Singh died on 29 March 1813.[40] These holdings, at least those in the original grant made by the Rohilla governor, were initially recognised by the British in land settlements concluded with Ram Dayal and his heirs. As the years passed, more and more settlements appear to have been made with the village communities, however, and by 1850 little remained of the once vast estate of the Landhaura Khübars.[41]

After India attained independence from the British, the Garhwal Kingdom was merged into the state of Uttar Pradesh, where Uttarakhand composed the Garhwal and Kumaon Divisions.[42] Until 1998, Uttarakhand was the name most commonly used to refer to the region, as various political groups, including the Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (Uttarakhand Revolutionary Party), began agitating for separate statehood under its banner. Although the erstwhile hill kingdoms of Garhwal and Kumaon were traditional rivals the inseparable and complementary nature of their geography, economy, culture, language, and traditions created strong bonds between the two regions.[43] These bonds formed the basis of the new political identity of Uttarakhand, which gained significant momentum in 1994, when demand for separate statehood achieved almost unanimous acceptance among both the local populace and national political parties.[44]

The most notable incident during this period was the Rampur Tiraha firing case on the night of 1 October 1994, which led to a public uproar.[45] On 24 September 1998, the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly and Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council passed the Uttar Pradesh Reorganisation Bill, which began the process of forming a new state.[46] Two years later the Parliament of India passed the Uttar Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2000 and thus, on 9 November 2000, Uttarakhand became the 27th state of the Republic of India.[47]

Uttarakhand is also well known for the mass agitation of the 1970s that led to the formation of the Chipko environmental movement[48] and other social movements. Though primarily a livelihood movement rather than a forest conservation movement, it went on to become a rallying point for many future environmentalists, environmental protests, and movements the world over and created a precedent for non-violent protest.[49] It stirred up the existing civil society in India, which began to address the issues of tribal and marginalised people. So much so that, a quarter of a century later, India Today mentioned the people behind the "forest satyagraha" of the Chipko movement as among "100 people who shaped India".[50] One of Chipko's most salient features was the mass participation of female villagers.[51] It was largely female activists that played pivotal role in the movement. Gaura Devi was the leading activist who started this movement, other participants were Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Sunderlal Bahuguna, and Ghanshyam Raturi, the popular Chipko poet.[52]

Uttarakhand has a total area of 53,566 km² (20,682 sq mi),[53] of which 86% is mountainous and 65% is covered by forest.[53] Most of the northern part of the state is covered by high Himalayan peaks and glaciers. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the expanding development of Indian roads, railways, and other physical infrastructure was giving rise to concerns over indiscriminate logging, particularly in the Himalaya. Two of the most important rivers in Hinduism originate in the glaciers of Uttarakhand, the Ganges at Gangotri and the Yamuna at Yamunotri. They are fed by myriad lakes, glacial melts, and streams.[54] These two along with Badrinath and Kedarnath form the Chota Char Dham, a holy pilgrimage for the Hindus.[55][56][57][58]

The state hosts the Bengal tiger in Jim Corbett National Park, the oldest national park of the Indian subcontinent. The Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the upper expanses of Bhyundar Ganga near Joshimath in Gharwal region, is known for the variety and rarity of its flowers and plants.[59] One who raised this was Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, who visited the region. As a consequence, Lord Dalhousie issued the Indian Forest Charter in 1855, reversing the previous laissez-faire policy. The following Indian Forest Act of 1878 put Indian forestry on a solid scientific basis. A direct consequence was the founding of the Imperial Forest School at Dehradun by Dietrich Brandis in 1878. Renamed the 'Imperial Forest Research Institute' in 1906, it is now known as the Forest Research Institute.[citation needed]

The model "Forest Circles" around Dehradun, used for training, demonstration and scientific measurements, had a lasting positive influence on the forests and ecology of the region. The Himalayan ecosystem provides habitat for many animals (including bharal, snow leopards, leopards and tigers), plants, and rare herbs.[citation needed]

Uttarakhand lies on the southern slope of the Himalaya range, and the climate and vegetation vary greatly with elevation, from glaciers at the highest elevations to subtropical forests at the lower elevations. The highest elevations are covered by ice and bare rock. Below them, between 3,000 and 5,000 metres (9,800 and 16,400 ft) are the western Himalayan alpine shrub and meadows. The temperate western Himalayan subalpine conifer forests grow just below the tree line. At 3,000 to 2,600 metres (9,800 to 8,500 ft) elevation they transition to the temperate western Himalayan broadleaf forests, which lie in a belt from 2,600 to 1,500 metres (8,500 to 4,900 ft) elevation. Below 1,500 metres (4,900 ft) elevation lie the Himalayan subtropical pine forests. The Upper Gangetic Plains moist deciduous forests and the drier Terai-Duar savanna and grasslands cover the lowlands along the Uttar Pradesh border in a belt locally known as Bhabar. These lowland forests have mostly been cleared for agriculture, but a few pockets remain.[60]

In June 2013 several days of extremely heavy rain caused devastating floods in the region, resulting in more than 5000 people missing and presumed dead. The flooding was referred to in the Indian media as a "Himalayan Tsunami".[citation needed]

On 7 February 2021, floods emerged from the Nanda Devi mountain glaciers, devastating locations along the Rishi Ganga, Dhaulti Ganga and Alaknanda Rivers, resulting in many people reported missing or killed, yet to be numbered. The damages include Rini village, several river dams and the Tapovan Vishnugad Hydropower Plant.[citation needed]

Uttarakhand has a diversity of flora and fauna. It has a recorded forest area of 34,666 km² (13,385 sq mi), which constitutes 65% of the total area of the state.[61] Uttarakhand is home to rare species of plants and animals, many of which are protected by sanctuaries and reserves. National parks in Uttarakhand include the Jim Corbett National Park (the oldest national park of India) in Nainital and Pauri Garhwal District, and Valley of Flowers National Park & Nanda Devi National Park in Chamoli District, which together are a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A number of plant species in the valley are internationally threatened, including several that have not been recorded from elsewhere in Uttarakhand.[62] Rajaji National Park in Haridwar, Dehradun and Pauri Garhwal District and Govind Pashu Vihar National Park & Gangotri National Park in Uttarkashi District are some other protected areas in the state.[63]

Leopards are found in areas that are abundant in hills but may also venture into the lowland jungles. Smaller felines include the jungle cat, fishing cat, and leopard cat. Other mammals include four kinds

of deer (barking, sambar, hog and chital), sloth, Brown and Himalayan black bears, Indian grey mongooses, otters, yellow-throated martens, bharal, Indian pangolins, and langur and rhesus monkeys. In the summer, elephants can be seen in herds of several hundred. Marsh crocodiles (*Crocodylus palustris*), gharials (*Gavialis gangeticus*) and other reptiles are also found in the region. Local crocodiles were saved from extinction by captive breeding programs and subsequently re-released into the Ramganga river.[64] Several freshwater terrapins and turtles like the Indian sawback turtle (*Kachuga tecta*), brahminy river turtle (*Hardella thurjii*), and Ganges softshell turtle (*Trionyx gangeticus*) are found in the rivers. Butterflies and birds of the region include red helen (*Papilio helenus*), the great eggfly (*Hypolimnos bolina*), common tiger (*Danaus genutia*), pale wanderer (*Pareronia avatar*), jungle babbler, tawny-bellied babbler, great slaty woodpecker, red-breasted parakeet, orange-breasted green pigeon and chestnut-winged cuckoo.[65] In 2011, a rare migratory bird, the bean goose, was also seen in the Jim Corbett National Park. A critically endangered bird, last seen in 1876 is the Himalayan quail endemic to the western Himalayas of the state.[66]

Evergreen oaks, rhododendrons, and conifers predominate in the hills. *Prunus cerasoides* (pahiyya), sal (*Shorea robusta*), silk cotton tree (*Bombax ciliata*), *Dalbergia sissoo*, *Mallotus philippensis*, *Acacia catechu*, *Bauhinia racemosa*, and *Bauhinia variegata* (camel's foot tree) are some other trees of the region. *Albizia chinensis*, the sweet sticky flowers of which are favoured by sloth bears, are also part of the region's flora.[65]

A decade long study by Prof. Chandra Prakash Kala concluded that the Valley of Flowers is endowed with 520 species of higher plants (angiosperms, gymnosperms and pteridophytes), of these 498 are flowering plants. The park has many species of medicinal plants including *Dactylorhiza hatagirea*, *Picrorhiza kurroa*, *Aconitum violaceum*, *Polygonatum multiflorum*, *Fritillaria roylei*, and *Podophyllum hexandrum*. [67][68]

In the summer season of 2016, a large portion of forests in Uttarakhand caught fires and rubbed to ashes during Uttarakhand forest fires incident, which resulted in the damage of forest resources worth billions of rupees and death of 7 people with hundreds of wild animals died during fires. During the 2021 Uttarakhand forest fires, there was widespread damage to the forested areas in Tehri district.[69]

A number of native plants are deemed to be of medicinal value.[70] The government-run Herbal Research and Development Institute carries out research and helps conserve medicinal herbs that are found in abundance in the region. Local traditional healers still use herbs, in accordance with classical Ayurvedic texts, for diseases that are usually cured by modern medicine.[71]

The native people of Uttarakhand are generally called Uttarakhandi and sometimes specifically either Garhwali or Kumaoni depending on their place of origin in either the Garhwal or Kumaon region. According to the 2011 Census of India, Uttarakhand has a population of 10,086,292 comprising 5,137,773 males and 4,948,519 females, with 69.77% of the population living in rural areas. The state is the 20th most populous state of the country having 0.83% of the population on 1.63% of the land. The population density of the state is 189 people per square kilometre having a 2001–2011 decadal growth rate of 18.81%. The gender ratio is 963 females per 1000 males.[27][73][74] The crude birth rate in the state is 18.6 with the total fertility rate being 2.3. The state has an infant mortality rate of 43, a maternal mortality rate of 188 and a crude death rate of 6.6.[75]

Uttarakhand has a multiethnic population spread across two geocultural regions: Garhwal, and Kumaon. A large portion (about 35%) of the population is Kshatriya (various clans of erstwhile landowning rulers and their descendants), including members of the native Garhwalis, and Kumaonis as well as a number of migrants.[76][77] According to a 2007 study by Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Uttarakhand has the highest percentage of Brahmins of any state in India, with approximately 20% of the population.[78] Uttarakhand is among the few Indian states where the historic Upper Caste forms a major share of the population.[78]

Of the rest 18.3% of the population is classified as Other Backward Classes (OBCs).[79] 18.76% of the population belongs to the Scheduled Castes (an official term for the lower castes in the traditional caste system in India).[74] Scheduled Tribes such as the Jaunsaris, Bhotiyas, Tharus, Buksas, Rajis, Jads and Banrawats constitute 2.89% of the population.[74] Several non-scheduled tribal groups such as Shaukas and Gurjars are also found here. Gurjars and Bhotiyas are nomadic tribes while Jaunsaris are completely settled tribe.[80]

Languages in Uttarakhand (2011 census)[81]

The official language of Uttarakhand is Hindi,[3] which according to the 2011 census is spoken natively by 43% of the population (primarily concentrated in the south),[81] and also used throughout the state as a lingua franca.

The major regional languages of Uttarakhand are Garhwali, which according to the 2011 census is spoken by 23% of the population, mostly in the western half of the state, Kumaoni, spoken in the eastern half and native to 20%, and Jaunsari, whose speakers are concentrated in Dehradun district in the southwest and make up 1.3% of the state's population. These three languages are closely related, with Garhwali and Kumaoni in particular making up the Central Pahari language subgroup. The languages have been part of various scattered conservation efforts due to their active decline beginning in the later quarter of the 20th century. The decline is hypothesized to be the result of heavy state-sponsored promotion of Hindi as the official language.[82]

All the languages enumerated so far belong to the Indo-Aryan family. Apart from a few other minority Indo-Aryan languages, like Buksa Tharu and Rana Tharu (of Udham Singh Nagar district in the south-east), Mahasu Pahari (found in Uttarkashi in the north-west), and Doteli,[83] Uttarakhand is also home to a number of indigenous Sino-Tibetan languages, most of which are spoken in the north of the state. These include Jad (spoken in Uttarkashi district in the north-west), Rongpo (of Chamoli district), and several languages of Pithoragarh district in the north-east: Byangsi, Chaudangsi, Darmiya, Raji and Rawat.[84] Another indigenous Sino-Tibetan language, Rangas, became extinct by the middle of the 20th century. Additionally, two non-indigenous Sino-Tibetan languages are also represented: Kulung (otherwise native to Nepal) and Tibetan.[83]

The Indian classical language Sanskrit has been declared a second official language,[85][86] by the BJP government for its allegedly historic association with the region. At present the language has no native speakers and its use is constrained to educational and religious settings.[citation needed]

There are also sizeable populations of speakers of some of India's other major languages: Urdu (4.2%) and Punjabi (2.6%), both mostly found in the southern districts, Bengali (1.5%) and Bhojpuri (0.95%), both mainly present in Udham Singh Nagar district in the south-east, and Nepali (1.1%, found throughout the state, but most notably in Dehradun and Uttarkashi).[81]

Religion in Uttarakhand (2011)[87]

More than four-fifths of Uttarakhand's residents are Hindus.[35] Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, and Jains make up the remaining population, with the Muslims being the largest minority.[35] Hill regions are almost entirely Hindu, while the plains regions have a significant minority of Muslims and Sikhs.[74]

Following the Constitution of India, Uttarakhand, like all Indian states, has a parliamentary system of representative democracy for its government.

The Governor is the constitutional and formal head of the government and is appointed for a five-year term by the President of India on the advice of the Union government. The present Governor of Uttarakhand is Gurmit Singh.[88] The Chief Minister, who holds the real executive powers, is the head of the party or coalition garnering the majority in the state elections. The current Chief Minister of Uttarakhand is Pushkar Singh Dhami.[89]

The unicameral Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly consists of 70 members, known as Members of the Legislative Assembly or MLAs,[90] and special office bearers such as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, elected by the members. Assembly meetings are presided over by the Speaker, or the Deputy Speaker in the Speaker's absence. The Uttarakhand Council of Ministers is appointed by the Governor of Uttarakhand on the advice of the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand and reports to the Legislative Assembly. Leader of the Opposition leads the Official Opposition in the Legislative Assembly. Auxiliary authorities that govern at a local level are known as gram panchayats in rural areas, municipalities in urban areas and municipal corporations in metro areas. All state and local government offices have a five-year term. The state also elects 5 members to Lok Sabha and 3 seats to Rajya Sabha of the Parliament of India.[91] The judiciary consists of the Uttarakhand High Court, located at Nainital, and a system of lower courts. The incumbent Acting Chief Justice of Uttarakhand is Sanjaya Kumar Mishra.[92]

Politics in Uttarakhand is dominated by the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Despite the prominence of the regional political party Uttarakhand Kranti Dal pre-statehood, since the formation of the state only the BJP and the INC have ruled the state. Following the hung mandate in the 2012 Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly election, the Indian National Congress, having the maximum number of seats, formed a coalition government headed by Harish Rawat that collapsed on 27 March 2016, following the political turmoil as about nine MLAs of the INC rebelled against the party and supported the opposition party BJP, causing Harish Rawat government to lose the majority in assembly.

However, on 21 April 2016 the High Court of Uttarakhand quashed the President's rule questioning its legality and maintained a status quo prior to 27 March 2016 when 9 rebel MLAs of the INC voted against the Harish Rawat government in assembly on state's money appropriation bill. On 22 April 2016 the Supreme Court of India stayed the order of High Court till 27 April 2016, thereby once again reviving the President's rule. In later developments regarding this matter, the Supreme Court ordered a floor test to be held on 10 May with the rebels being barred from voting. On 11 May at the opening of sealed result of the floor test, under the supervision of Supreme Court, the Harish Rawat government was revived following the victory in floor test held in Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly.[citation needed]

There are 13 districts in Uttarakhand, which are grouped into two divisions, Kumaon and Garhwal. Each division is administered by a divisional commissioner. Four new districts named Didihat, Kotdwar, Ranikhet, and Yamunotri were declared by then Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Ramesh Pokhriyal, on 15 August 2011 but yet to be officially formed.[93]

Each district is administered by a district magistrate. The districts are further divided into sub-divisions, which are administered by sub-divisional magistrates; sub-divisions comprise tehsils which are administered by a tehsildar and community development blocks, each administered by a block development officer.[citation needed]

Urban areas are categorised into three types of municipalities based on their population; municipal corporations, each administered by a municipal commissioner, municipal councils and, nagar panchayats (town councils), each of them administered by a chief executive officer. Rural areas comprise the three tier administration; district councils, block panchayats (block councils) and gram panchayats (village councils).[citation needed]

According to the 2011 census, Haridwar, Dehradun, and Udham Singh Nagar are the most populous districts, each of them having a population of over one million.[73]

Among the prominent local crafts is wood carving known as Likhai, which appears most frequently in the ornately decorated temples of the Kumaon region in Uttarakhand. Intricately carved designs of floral patterns, deities, and geometrical motifs also decorate the doors, windows, ceilings, and walls of village houses. Paintings and murals are used to decorate both houses and temples.

File:Abhisarika-nayika-mola-ram.jpg|Abhisarika Nayika, a painting by Mola Ram

Garhwali Miniature painting is a form of miniature painting that flourished in the region between the 17th and 19th century. Mola Ram is credited as the true father of the Garhwali Branch of the wider Pahari School. Kumaoni art often is geometrical in nature, while Garhwali art is known for its closeness to nature.

Aipan is a GI certified Kumaoni ritual folk art[94] done mainly during special ceremonies, the festival of Diwali, marriages and other religious rituals. It's predominantly female practitioners believe that it invokes a divine power which brings about good fortune and deters evil. The art is special as it is done on empty walls, which are brick-red in color, called Geru. The actual art is done with a white paste made of rice flour.[95]

Jyuti patta is a class of water color paintings done on rituals, called Jyuti. Some scholars also consider Jyuti to be synonymous with the word mother of the world. To give concrete form to the deity, two-dimensional geometry is given expression in the form of frescoes. This is a geometric or decorative semi-graphic structure in which different colors and symbols are used. This structure called Jyuti also gets a new dimension by the use of ocher or biswar of Tepan. Jyuti is prepared on the surface of wall or paper and the composition is given with cotton and a brush of limiter. In this artform, various qualities of a specific deity are shown.[96]

Other crafts of Uttarakhand include handcrafted gold jewellery, basketry from Garhwal, woollen shawls, scarves, and rugs. The latter are mainly produced by the Bhotiyas of northern Uttarakhand.[citation needed]

Uttarakhand's diverse ethnicities have created a rich literary tradition in languages including Hindi, Garhwali, Kumaoni, Jaunsari, and Tharu. Many of its traditional tales originated in the form of lyrical ballads and chanted by itinerant singers and are now considered classics of Hindi literature. Abodh Bandhu Bahuguna, Badri Datt Pandey, Ganga Prasad Vimal; Mohan Upreti, Naima Khan Upreti, Prasoon Joshi, Shailesh Matiyani, Shekhar Joshi, Shivani, Taradutt Gairola, Tom Alter; Lalit Kala Akademi fellow – Ranbir Singh Bisht; Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardees – B. M. Shah, Narendra Singh Negi; Sahitya Akademi Awardees – Leeladhar Jagudi, Shivprasad Dabral Charan, Manglesh Dabral, Manohar Shyam Joshi, Ramesh Chandra Shah, Ruskin Bond and Viren Dangwal; Jnanpith

Awardee and Sahitya Akademi fellow Sumitranandan Pant are some major literary, artistic and theatre personalities from the state. prominent philosophers, Indian independence activists and social-environmental activists; Anil Prakash Joshi, Basanti Devi, Gaura Devi, Govind Ballabh Pant, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Deep Joshi, Hargovind Pant, Kalu Singh Mahara, Kunwar Singh Negi, Mukandi Lal, Nagendra Saklani, Sri Dev Suman, Ram Prasad Nautiyal, Sunderlal Bahuguna and Vandana Shiva are also from Uttarakhand.[citation needed]

The primary food of Uttarakhand is vegetables with wheat being a staple, although non-vegetarian food is also served. A distinctive characteristic of Uttarakhand cuisine is the sparing use of tomatoes, milk, and milk-based products.

Coarse grain with high fibre content is very common in Uttarakhand due to the harsh terrain. Crops most commonly associated with Uttarakhand are Buckwheat (locally called Kotu or Kuttu) and the regional crops, Maduwa and Jhangora, particularly in the interior regions of Kumaon and Garhwal. Generally, either Desi Ghee or Mustard oil is used for the purpose of cooking food. Simple recipes are made interesting with the use of hash seeds Jakhya as spice, chutney made of Bhang is also a regional cuisine.

Bal Mithai is a popular fudge-like sweet. Other popular dishes include Dubuk, Chains, Kap, Bhatiya, Jaula, Phana, Paliyo, Chutkani and Sei. In sweets; Swal, Ghughut/Khajur, Arsa, Mishri, Gatta and Gulgulas are popular.

Many regional variations of Kadhi called Jhoi or Jholi is also popular.[97] Another staple of the Kumaon region is a black soybean dal referred to as Bhatt or chudkani. A grinded dal chaisu is also popular in the Garhwal region.

The state has a predominant non-vegetarian population, with some estimates suggesting 75% of the population being non-vegetarian. Various boar, chicken, mutton and hare recipes are popular in the region. A popular mutton dish bhutwa, is made from goat intestine and other offcuts.

The dances of the region are connected to life and human existence and exhibit myriad human emotions. Langvir Nritya is a dance form for males that resembles gymnastic movements. Barada Nati folk dance is another dance of Jaunsar-Bawar, which is practised during some religious festivals. Other well-known dances include Hurka Baul, Jhora-Chanchri, Chhapeli, Thadya, Jhumaila, Pandav, Chauphula, and Chholiya.[98][99]

Music is an integral part of the Uttarakhandi culture. Popular types of folk songs include Mangal, Basanti, Khuder and Chhopati.[100] These folk songs are played on instruments including Dhol, Damau, Turri, Ransingha, Dholki, Daur, Thali, Bhankora, Mandan and Mashakbaja. "Bedu Pako Baro Masa" is a popular folk song of Uttarakhand with international fame and legendary status within the state. It serves as the cultural anthem of Uttarakhandi people worldwide.[101][102]

Music is also used as a medium through which the gods are invoked. Jagar is a form of spirit worship in which the singer, or Jagariya, sings a ballad of the gods, the ballads envoke local deities with allusions to great epics, like Mahabharat and Ramayana, that describe the adventures and exploits of the god being invoked.

B. K. Samant, Basanti Bisht, Chander Singh Rahi, Girish Tiwari 'Girda', Gopal Babu Goswami, Heera Singh Rana, Jeet Singh Negi, Meena Rana, Mohan Upreti, Narendra Singh Negi and Pritam Bhartwan are popular folk singers and musicians from the state, so are Bollywood singer Jubin Nautiyal and country singer Bobby Cash.[103]

One of the major Hindu pilgrimages, Haridwar Kumbh Mela, takes place in Uttarakhand. Haridwar is one of the four places in India where this mela is organised. Haridwar most recently hosted the Purna Kumbh Mela from Makar Sankranti (14 January 2010) to Vaishakh Purnima Snan (28 April 2010). Hundreds of foreigners joined Indian pilgrims in the festival, which is considered the largest religious gathering in the world.[104]

Kumauni Holi, in forms including Baithki Holi, Khari Holi, and Mahila Holi, all of which start from Vasant Panchami, are festivals and musical affairs that can last almost a month. Ganga Dashahara, Vasant Panchami, Makar Sankranti, Ghee Sankranti, Khatarua, Vat Savitri, and Phul Dei (The festival of spring) are other major festivals. In addition, various fairs like Kanwar Yatra, Kandali Festival, Ramman, Kauthig, Nauchandi Mela, Giddi Mela, Uttarayani Mela and Nanda Devi Raj Jat take place.[citation needed]

Harela is a kumaoni festival hypothesized to date back to the indigenous population. 10-11 days before the Sankranti of Shravan, a bed is made by adding soil in bamboo pots etc. Grains grown during the rainy season like paddy, maize, urad etc. are sown, this is called Hariyala. Harakali Mahotsav, Idols of Gauri Maheshwar, Ganesha and Karkitkeya are made from clay, colored in them and worshiped with various fruits, flowers, dishes and sweets in a bed of greenery on the night of the month of Sanat. On the second day, the Harela of Uttarang Puja is placed on the head. Sisters and daughters-in-law apply tilak and tilak and put Harela on their heads. They are given gifts.[105]

The festivals of Kumbh Mela at idwar, Ramlila, Ramman of Garhwal, the traditions of Vedic chantings and Yoga are included in the list of Intangible cultural heritage of the UNESCO.[106][107][108][109][110]

The Uttarakhand state is the second fastest growing state in India.[111] Its gross state domestic product (GSDP) (at constant prices) more than doubled from ₹24,786 crore in FY2005 to ₹60,898 crore in FY2012. The real GSDP grew at 13.7% (CAGR) during the FY2005–FY2012 period. The contribution of the service sector to the GSDP of Uttarakhand was just over 50% during FY 2012. Per capita income in Uttarakhand is ₹ 198738 (FY 2018–19), which is higher than the national average of ₹ 126406 (FY 2018–19).[112][113] According to the Reserve Bank of India, the total foreign direct investment in the state from April 2000 to October 2009 amounted to US\$46.7 million.[114]

Like most of India, agriculture is one of the most significant sectors of the economy of Uttarakhand. Basmati rice, wheat, soybeans, groundnuts, coarse cereals, pulses, and oil seeds are the most widely grown crops. Fruits like apples, oranges, pears, peaches, lychees, and plums are widely grown and important to the large food processing industry. Agricultural export zones have been set up in the state for lychees, horticulture, herbs, medicinal plants, and basmati rice. During 2010, wheat production was 831 thousand tonnes and rice production was 610 thousand tonnes, while the main cash crop of the state, sugarcane, had a production of 5058 thousand tonnes. As 86% of the state consists of hills, the yield per hectare is not very high. 86% of all croplands are in the plains while the remaining is from the hills.[115] The state also holds the GI tag for Tejpatta (*Cinnamomum tamala*) or Indian bay leaf, which is known to add flavour to dishes and also possesses several medicinal properties.[116]

figures in crores of Indian rupees

Other key industries include tourism and hydropower, and there is prospective development in IT, ITES, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and automobile industries. The service sector of Uttarakhand mainly includes tourism, information technology, higher education, and banking.[115]

During 2005–2006, the state successfully developed three Integrated Industrial Estates (IIEs) at Haridwar, Pantnagar, and Sitarganj; Pharma City at Selakui; Information Technology Park at Sahastradhara (Dehradun); and a growth centre at Sigaddi (Kotdwar). Also in 2006, 20 industrial sectors in public private partnership mode were developed in the state.[118]

Uttarakhand has 2,683 km (1,667 mi) of roads, of which 1,328 km (825 mi) are national highways and 1,543 km (959 mi) are state highways.[118] The State Road Transport Corporation (SRTC), which has been reorganised in Uttarakhand as the Uttarakhand Transport Corporation (UTC), is a major constituent of the transport system in the state. The corporation began to work on 31 October 2003 and provides services on interstate and nationalised routes. As of 2012, approximately 1000 buses are being plied by the UTC on 35 nationalised routes along with many other non-nationalised routes. There are also private transport operators operating approximately 3000 buses on non-nationalised routes along with a few interstate routes in Uttarakhand and the neighbouring state of U.P.[119] For travelling locally, the state, like most of the country, has auto rickshaws and cycle rickshaws. In addition, remote towns and villages in the hills are connected to important road junctions and bus routes by a vast network of crowded share jeeps.[citation needed]

The air transport network in the state is gradually improving. Jolly Grant Airport in Dehradun, is the busiest airport in the state with six daily flights to Delhi Airport. Pantnagar Airport, located in Pantnagar of the Kumaon region have 1 daily air service to Delhi and return too. The government is planning to develop Naini Saini Airport in Pithoragarh,[120] Bharkot Airport in Chinyalisaur in Uttarkashi district and Gauchar Airport in Gauchar, Chamoli district. There are plans to launch helipad service in Pantnagar and Jolly Grant Airports and other important tourist destinations like Ghangaria and Hemkund Sahib.[121]

As over 86% of Uttarakhand's terrain consists of hills, railway services are very limited in the state and are largely confined to the plains. In 2011, the total length of railway tracks was about 345 km (214 mi).[118] Rail, being the cheapest mode of transport, is the most popular. The most important railway station in Kumaun Division of Uttarakhand is at Kathgodam, 35 kilometres away from Nainital. Kathgodam is the last terminus of the broad gauge line of North East Railways that connects Nainital with Delhi, Dehradun, and Howrah. Other notable railway stations are at Pantnagar, Lalkuan and Haldwani.[citation needed]

Dehradun railway station is a railhead of the Northern Railways.[122] Haridwar station is situated on the Delhi–Dehradun and Howrah–Dehradun railway lines. One of the main railheads of the Northern Railways, Haridwar Junction Railway Station is connected by broad gauge line. Roorkee comes under Northern Railway region of Indian Railways on the main Punjab – Mughal Sarai trunk route and is connected to major Indian cities. Other railheads are Rishikesh, Kotdwar and Ramnagar linked to Delhi by daily trains.[citation needed]

Uttarakhand has many tourist spots due to its location in the Himalayas. There are many ancient temples, forest reserves, national parks, hill stations, and mountain peaks that draw large number of tourists. There are 44 nationally protected monuments in the state.[123] Oak Grove School in the state is on the tentative list for World Heritage Sites.[124] Two of the most holy rivers in Hinduism the Ganges and Yamuna, originate in Uttarakhand. Binsar Devta is a popular Hindu temple in the area.[citation needed]

Uttarakhand has long been called "Land of the Gods"[53] as the state has some of the holiest Hindu shrines, and for more than a thousand years, pilgrims have been visiting the region in the hopes of salvation and purification from sin. Gangotri and Yamunotri, the sources of the Ganges and Yamuna,

dedicated to Ganga and Yamuna respectively, fall in the upper reaches of the state and together with Badrinath (dedicated to Vishnu) and Kedarnath (dedicated to Shiva) form the Chota Char Dham, one of Hinduism's most spiritual and auspicious pilgrimage circuits. Haridwar, meaning "Gateway to the God", is a prime Hindu destination. Haridwar hosts the Haridwar Kumbh Mela every twelve years, in which millions of pilgrims take part from all parts of India and the world. Rishikesh near Haridwar is known as the preeminent yoga centre of India. The state has an abundance of temples and shrines, many dedicated to local deities or manifestations of Shiva and Durga, references to many of which can be found in Hindu scriptures and legends.[125] Uttarakhand is, however, a place of pilgrimage for the adherents of other religions too. Piran Kaliyar Sharif near Roorkee is a pilgrimage site to Muslims, Gurudwara Darbar Sahib, in Dehradun, Gurudwara Hemkund Sahib in Chamoli district, Gurudwara Nanakmatta Sahib in Nanakmatta and Gurudwara Reetha Sahib in Champawat district are pilgrimage centres for Sikhs. Tibetan Buddhism has also made its presence with the reconstruction of Mindrolling Monastery and its Buddha Stupa, described as the world's highest at Clement Town, Dehradun.[126][127]

Auli and Munsiri are well-known skiing resorts in the state.[citation needed]

The state has 12 national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, which cover 13.8 per cent of the total area of the state.[128] They are located at different altitudes varying from 800 to 5400 metres. The oldest national park on the Indian sub-continent, Jim Corbett National Park, is a major tourist attraction.[63] Vasudhara Falls, near Badrinath is a waterfall with a height of 122 metres (400 ft) set in a backdrop of snow-clad mountains.[129] The state has always been a destination for mountaineering, hiking, and rock climbing in India. A recent development in adventure tourism in the region has been whitewater rafting in Rishikesh. Due to its proximity to the Himalaya ranges, the place is full of hills and mountains and is suitable for trekking, climbing, skiing, camping, rock climbing, and paragliding.[130] Roopkund is a trekking site, known for the mysterious skeletons found in a lake, which was featured by National Geographic Channel in a documentary.[131] The trek to Roopkund passes through the meadows of Bugyal.[citation needed]

New Tehri city has Tehri Dam, with a height of 260.5 metres (855 ft) is the tallest dam in India. It is currently ranked No 10 on the List of Tallest Dams in the world. Tehri Lake with a surface area of 52 km² (20 sq mi), is the biggest lake in the state of Uttarakhand. It has good options for Adventure Sports and various water sports like Boating, Banana Boat, Bandwagon Boat, Jet Ski, Water Skiing, Para-sailing, Kayaking.[citation needed]

As of 30 September 2010[update], there were 15,331 primary schools with 1,040,139 students and 22,118 working teachers in Uttarakhand.[132][133][134] At the 2011 census the literacy rate of the state was 78.82% with 87.4% literacy for males and 70% literacy for females.[10] Dehradun, Uttarakhand has multiple multinational companies like Tanicsys . 1

The language of instruction in the schools is either English or Hindi. There are mainly government-run, private unaided (no government help), and private aided schools in the state. The main school affiliations are CBSE, CISCE or UBSE, the state syllabus defined by the Department of Education of the Government of Uttarakhand.[citation needed] Furthermore, there is an IIT in Roorkee, AIIMS in Rishikesh and an IIM in Kashipur.[citation needed]

The high mountains and rivers of Uttarakhand attract many tourists and adventure seekers. It is also a favourite destination for adventure sports, such as paragliding, sky diving, rafting and bungee jumping.[135]

More recently, golf has also become popular with Ranikhet being a favourite destination.[citation needed]

The Cricket Association of Uttarakhand is the governing body for cricket activities. The Uttarakhand cricket team represents Uttarakhand in Ranji Trophy, Vijay Hazare Trophy and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Dehradun is the home ground of Uttarakhand cricket team.[citation needed]

The Uttarakhand State Football Association is the governing body for association football. The Uttarakhand football team represents Uttarakhand in the Santosh Trophy and other leagues. The Indira Gandhi International Sports Stadium in Haldwani is the home ground of Uttarakhand football team.[citation needed]

Government

General information

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Panch Prayag - The Five Sacred Rivers Fairs & Festivals 21 Festivals of Uttarakhand - India's Devbhoomi Adventure 7 Enthralling Treks In Uttarakhand For Adventure Seekers Adventure 10 Treks in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh for Beginners Adventure Enthralling Places For Camping in Uttarakhand Travelogue The Faraway Travel – Sari Village in Uttarakhand #TWC Travelogue Trek in Uttarakhand: How I survived the cloudburst Travelogue 5 Life Lessons Learnt on a Himalayan Trek #TWC Travelogue My First Encounter with the Majestic Himalayas #TWC Travelogue Trekking in Uttarakhand To Shikar Varnavat #TWC Food of Uttarakhand : Scrumptious Delicacies From The Land of Natural Beauty Social Are You Ready To Watch The Most Awaited Man vs Wild Episode Yet? Adventure The Mystery of the Skeletal Remains at Roopkund Lake Backpacking 137 More Peaks Opened For Trekking in Himalayas: Good or Bad? Adventure Experience Nature At It's Best At This Mid-Himalayan Range in Uttarakhand! Fairs & Festivals Uttarakhand Food Festival To Be Held This Week – What Are Your plans? Travelogue The Journey To And Through The Hidden Valleys Of Uttarakhand Social Junoon in the Hills, a Homestay Just 300 Kms from Delhi! News Uttarakhand Is Set to Get a Summer Capital! News 4 Very Rare Snow Leopards Sighted in Uttarakhand! Read More Here Delving into the forbidden – the Nelang Valley Wildlife & Nature National Parks in Uttarakhand Uttarakhand Honeymoon Packages Badrinath Kedarnath Tour Packages 3 Days Tour Package in India: Char Dham Yatra By Helicopter Uttarakhand Religious Tour Package Best Resorts in Uttarakhand Best 5-Star Hotels In Uttarakhand Stunning Workations in Uttarakhand Explore Holidify Currency Travel Agent? Buy Travel Leads (100% phone and email verified leads for holiday package) Need help with tour packages?

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Text extracted from URL 62: Our editors will review what you've submitted and determine whether to revise the article. Our editors will review what you've submitted and determine whether to revise the article. India shares borders with Pakistan to the northwest; with Nepal, China, and Bhutan to the north; and with Myanmar and Bangladesh to the east. The island country of Sri Lanka is situated some 40 miles (65 kilometres) off the southeast coast of India. The expansive alluvial plains of the Indus and Ganges (Ganga) river basins in India provided the environment and focus for the rise of two great phases of city life: the civilization of the Indus valley, known as the Indus civilization, during the 3rd millennium BCE; and, during the 1st millennium BCE, that of the Ganges. The major secular holidays are Independence Day (August 15) and Republic Day (January 26). The most popular religious festivals celebrated over the greater part of India are Vasantpanchami, in honour of Sarasvati, the goddess of learning; Holi, a time when traditional hierarchical relationships are forgotten and celebrants throw coloured water and powder at one another; Dussehra, when the story of the Ramayana is reenacted, and Diwali (Divali), a time for lighting lamps and exchanging gifts. India, country that occupies the greater part of South Asia. India is made up of 28 states and eight union territories, and its national capital is New Delhi, built in the 20th century just south of the historic hub of Old Delhi to serve as India's administrative centre. Its government is a constitutional republic that represents a highly diverse population consisting of thousands of ethnic groups and hundreds of languages. India became the world's most populous country in 2023, according to estimates by the United Nations. It is known from archaeological evidence that a highly sophisticated urbanized culture—the Indus civilization—dominated the northwestern part of the subcontinent from about 2600 to 2000 bce. From that period on, India functioned as a virtually self-contained political and cultural arena, which gave rise to a distinctive tradition that was associated primarily with Hinduism, the roots of which can largely be traced to the Indus civilization. Other religions, notably Buddhism and Jainism, originated in India—though their presence there is now quite small—and throughout the centuries residents of the subcontinent developed a rich intellectual life in such fields as mathematics, astronomy, architecture, literature, music, and the fine arts. Throughout its history, India was intermittently disturbed by incursions from beyond its northern mountain wall. Especially important was the coming of Islam, brought from the northwest by Arab, Turkish, Persian, and other raiders beginning early in the 8th century ce. Eventually, some of those raiders stayed; by the 13th century much of the subcontinent was under Muslim rule, and the number of Muslims steadily increased. Only after the arrival of the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama in 1498 and the subsequent establishment of European maritime supremacy in the region

did India become exposed to major external influences arriving by sea, a process that culminated in the decline of the ruling Muslim elite and absorption of the subcontinent within the British Empire. Direct administration by the British, which began in 1858, effected a political and economic unification of the subcontinent. When British rule came to an end on August 14-15, 1947, celebrated annually as Independence Day, the subcontinent was partitioned along religious lines into two separate countries—India, with a majority of Hindus, and Pakistan, with a majority of Muslims; the eastern portion of Pakistan later split off to form Bangladesh. Many British institutions stayed in place (such as the parliamentary system of government); English continued to be a widely used lingua franca; and India remained within the Commonwealth. Hindi became the official language (and a number of other local languages achieved official status), while a vibrant English-language intelligentsia thrived. India remains one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. Apart from its many religions and sects, India is home to innumerable castes and tribes, as well as to more than a dozen major and hundreds of minor linguistic groups from several language families unrelated to one another. Religious minorities, including Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains, still account for a significant proportion of the population. Earnest attempts have been made to instill a spirit of nationhood in so varied a population, but tensions between neighbouring groups have remained and at times have resulted in outbreaks of violence. Yet social legislation has done much to alleviate the disabilities previously suffered by formerly “untouchable” castes, tribal populations, women, and other traditionally disadvantaged segments of society. At independence, India was blessed with several leaders of world stature, most notably Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, who were able to galvanize the masses at home and bring prestige to India abroad. The country has played an increasing role in global affairs. Contemporary India’s increasing physical prosperity and cultural dynamism—despite continued domestic challenges and economic inequality—are seen in its well-developed infrastructure and a highly diversified industrial base, in its pool of scientific and engineering personnel (one of the largest in the world), in the pace of its agricultural expansion, and in its rich and vibrant cultural exports of music, literature, and cinema. Though the country’s population remains largely rural, India has three of the most populous and cosmopolitan cities in the world—Mumbai (Bombay), Kolkata (Calcutta), and Delhi. Three other Indian cities—Bengaluru (Bangalore), Chennai (Madras), and Hyderabad—are among the world’s fastest-growing high-technology centres, and most of the world’s major information technology and software companies now have offices in India. The history section of the articles Pakistan and Bangladesh discuss those countries since their creation. India’s frontier, which is roughly one-third coastline, abuts six countries. It is bounded to the northwest by Pakistan, to the north by Nepal, China, and Bhutan; and to the east by Myanmar (Burma). Bangladesh to the east is surrounded by India to the north, east, and west. The island country of Sri Lanka is situated some 40 miles (65 km) off the southeast coast of India across the Palk Strait and Gulf of Mannar. The land of India—together with Bangladesh and most of Pakistan—forms a well-defined subcontinent, set off from the rest of Asia by the imposing northern mountain rampart of the Himalayas and by adjoining mountain ranges to the west and east. In area, India ranks as the seventh largest country in the world. Much of India’s territory lies within a large peninsula, surrounded by the Arabian Sea to the west and the Bay of Bengal to the east; Cape Comorin, the southernmost point of the Indian mainland, marks the dividing line between those two bodies of water. India has two union territories composed entirely of islands: Lakshadweep, in the Arabian Sea, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which lie between the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. It is now generally accepted that India’s geographic position, continental outline, and basic geologic structure resulted from a process of plate tectonics—the shifting of enormous, rigid crustal plates over the Earth’s underlying layer of molten material. India’s landmass, which forms the northwestern portion of the Indian-Australian Plate, began to drift slowly northward toward the much larger Eurasian Plate several hundred

million years ago (after the former broke away from the ancient southern-hemispheric supercontinent known as Gondwana, or Gondwanaland). When the two finally collided (approximately 50 million years ago), the northern edge of the Indian-Australian Plate was thrust under the Eurasian Plate at a low angle. The collision reduced the speed of the oncoming plate, but the underthrusting, or subduction, of the plate has continued into contemporary times. The effects of the collision and continued subduction are numerous and extremely complicated. An important consequence, however, was the slicing off of crustal rock from the top of the underthrusting plate. Those slices were thrown back onto the northern edge of the Indian landmass and came to form much of the Himalayan mountain system. The new mountains—together with vast amounts of sediment eroded from them—were so heavy that the Indian-Australian Plate just south of the range was forced downward, creating a zone of crustal subsidence. Continued rapid erosion of the Himalayas added to the sediment accumulation, which was subsequently carried by mountain streams to fill the subsidence zone and cause it to sink more. India's present-day relief features have been superimposed on three basic structural units: the Himalayas in the north, the Deccan (peninsular plateau region) in the south, and the Indo-Gangetic Plain (lying over the subsidence zone) between the two. Further information on the geology of India is found in the article Asia.

Text extracted from URL 63:

Lores

Genres

Institutions

Awards

Folk genres

Devotional

Classical genres

Modern genres

People

Instruments

Dance

Theater

Organizations

People

The culture of West Bengal is an Indian culture which has its roots in Bengali literature, music, fine arts, drama and cinema. Different geographic regions of West Bengal have subtle as well as more pronounced variations between each other, with Darjeeling Himalayan hill region and Duars showing particularly different socio-cultural aspects.

West Bengal's capital Kolkata—as the former capital of India—was the birthplace of modern Indian literary and artistic thought,[1] and is referred to as the "cultural [or literary] capital of India".[2][3] The presence of *paras*, which are cluster of neighbourhoods that possess a strong sense of

community, is characteristic of West Bengal.[4] Typically, each para has its own community club and, on occasion, a playing field.[4] Residents engage in addas, or leisurely chats, that often take the form of freestyle intellectual conversation. However, with the growth of apartments, expansion of neighbourhoods and rapid urbanization, this culture is on decline.[5][6]

The Bengali language boasts a rich literary heritage, shared with neighbouring Bangladesh. West Bengal has a long tradition in folk literature, evidenced by the Charyapada, Mangalkavya, Shreekrishna Kirtana, Thakurmar Jhuli, and stories related to Gopal Bhar. In the nineteenth and twentieth

century, Bengali literature was modernized in the works of authors such as Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, and Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay. Coupled with social reforms led by Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, and others, this constituted a major part of the Bengal Renaissance.[7] The middle and latter parts of the 20th century witnessed the arrival of post-modernism, as well as literary movements such as those espoused by the Kallol movement, hungryalists and the little magazines.[8]

Bengal has a long tradition of indigenous theater that dates back to the 1770s and consists of popular tales enacted through dance, music, and narration. Modern theater was introduced by Europeans in the mid-19th century and sustained by colonial educational institutions. The mythological and historical plays dominated the last quarter of the 19th and first quarter of the 20th century, but gradually gave way to urban middle-class predilections in society. The Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) was founded in 1943 and produced plays with far-reaching impacts. In the 1950s, amateur group theater emerged to address contemporary sociopolitical and financial issues. Star Theatre, Academy of Fine Arts, Rabindra Sadan, Nahabat, and Girish Manch are the most popular Bengali theaters, known for their development and socially conscious plays.[9] Among other types of theater, West Bengal has a tradition of folk drama known as jatra.[10][11] Kolkata is the home of the Bengali cinema industry, dubbed "Tollywood" for Tollygunj, where most of the state's film studios are located.[12] Its long tradition of art films includes globally acclaimed film directors such as Academy Award-winning director Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, Tapan Sinha, and contemporary directors such as Aparna Sen, Buddhadeb Dasgupta, Goutam Ghose, Koushik Ganguly, Rituparno Ghosh, Anjan Dutt, Kamaleswar Mukherjee, Sandip Ray.[13] Uttam Kumar was the most popular lead actor for decades, and his romantic pairing with actress Suchitra Sen in films attained legendary status.[14] Soumitra Chatterjee, who acted in many Satyajit Ray-films, and Prosenjit Chatterjee are among other popular lead male actors. As of 2020[update], Bengali films have won India's annual National Film Award for Best Feature Film twenty-two times in sixty seven years, the highest among all Indian languages.

The Baul tradition is a unique heritage of Bengali folk music, which has also been influenced by regional music traditions.[15] Other folk music forms include Kabigaan, Gombhira, Bhawaiya, kirtans, and Gajan festival music. Folk music in West Bengal is often accompanied by the ektara, a one-stringed instrument. West Bengal also has a heritage in North Indian classical music. The state is recognised for its appreciation of rabindrasangeet (songs written by Rabindranath Tagore) and Indian classical music. Nazrul Geeti is another classical music of Bengal, which is written and composed by poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. He was person in Bengal music who created the first Bengali ghazals.[citation needed]

Popular music genres include adhunik songs.[16][17] Since the early 1990s, new genres have emerged, including one comprising alternative folk–rock Bengali bands.[16] Another new style,

jibonmukhi gaan ("songs about life"), is based on realism.[18] UNESCO selected The Rural Craft Hub of Bengal to showcase their artwork in Paris in 2015.[19]

West Bengal is known for its diverse culture, and dance plays a significant role in showcasing this. Each region has its own unique dance form that not only reflects the culture and history of the area but also incorporates worldwide themes. The Brita dance is a traditional folk dance performed by women to seek blessings from the Gods for their children's wishes to come true or to celebrate recovery from illness. The Gambhira dance is a devotional folk dance that addresses social, political, and moral issues of contemporary society, and it is popular during festivals in North Bengal. The Santhal dance celebrates nature and addresses gender issues and land rights, and it is performed by both men and women of the Santhali tribe. The Lathi dance is a well-known form of dance that expresses various emotions of human life, including celebration, anger, pain, and love. Finally, the Chhau is a widely practiced tribal dance that incorporates martial arts, athletics, and religion, with stories taken from the great epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.[20]

Though Bengali women traditionally wear the special Benarasi sari and Jamdani, Western attire has gained acceptance among younger and professional women.[21] Western-style dress has greater acceptance among men, although the traditional costumes like dhoti, panjabi, kurta, pyjama and lungi are seen during weddings and major festivals. Like any other metropolis, Kolkata also has an eclectic mix of western wears with a tinge of ethnic wears. People are found dressed in jeans along with kurtas, or sari along with an overcoat. women usually do a good makeup which attracts men and keeps them respected

West Bengal is famous for its culture and festivals are an inevitable part of this culture. Some festivals are celebrated statewide, while others are local in nature. There are also various other village fairs and seasonal tribal festivals. Durga Puja is the biggest and most important festival of West Bengal, and it features colourful pandals, decorative idols of Hindu goddess Durga and her family, lighting decoration and immersion processions. Other major festivals are Kali Puja, Diwali, Dol, Saraswati Puja, Jagaddhatri Puja, Rath Jatra, Kojagori Lakshmi Puja, Vishwakarma Puja, Poush Parbon, Poila Boishakh, Christmas. Kolkata Book Fair, Kolkata International Film Festival and Dover Lane Music Festival are major annual cultural events of Kolkata, whereas Poush Mela, Ganga Sagar Mela, Jhapan are some of the major annual fairs of the state. The diverse ethnic populace of Darjeeling Himalayan hill region celebrates several local festivals such as Losar, Dusshera or Fulpati, Tihar, Ram Navami, Maghe Sankranti, Chotrul Duchon, Buddha Jayanti, Tendong Lho Rumfaat, Eid al-Fitr etc.

West Bengal has a long tradition of popular literature, music and drama largely based on Bengali folklore and Hindu epics and Puranas.

Text extracted from URL 64:

West Bengal (/benˈɡoːl/, Bengali: Poshchim Bongo, pronounced [ˈpoʃtʃim ˈbɔŋɡo] ⓘ, abbr. WB) is a state in the eastern portion of India. It is situated along the Bay of Bengal, along with a population of over 91 million inhabitants within an area of 88,752 km² (34,267 sq mi) as of 2011. The population estimate as of 2023 is 102,552,787.[12] West Bengal is the fourth-most populous and thirteenth-largest state by area in India, as well as the eighth-most populous country subdivision of the world. As a part of the Bengal region of the Indian subcontinent, it borders Bangladesh in the east, and Nepal and Bhutan in the north. It also borders the Indian states of Jharkhand, Odisha, Bihar, Sikkim and Assam. The state capital is Kolkata, the third-largest metropolis, and seventh largest city by

population in India. West Bengal includes the Darjeeling Himalayan hill region, the Ganges delta, the Rarh region, the coastal Sundarbans and the Bay of Bengal. The state's main ethnic group are the Bengalis, with the Bengali Hindus forming the demographic majority.

The area's early history featured a succession of Indian empires, internal squabbling, and a tussle between Hinduism and Buddhism for dominance. Ancient Bengal was the site of several major Janapadas, while the earliest cities date back to the Vedic period. The region was part of several ancient pan-Indian empires, including the Vangas, Mauryans, and the Guptas. The citadel of Gauda served as the capital of the Gauda Kingdom, the Pala Empire, and the Sena Empire. Islam was introduced through trade with the Abbasid Caliphate, but following the Ghurid conquests led by Bakhtiyar Khalji and the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, the Muslim faith spread across the entire Bengal region. During the Bengal Sultanate, the territory was a major trading nation in the world, and was often referred by the Europeans as the "richest country to trade with". It was absorbed into the Mughal Empire in 1576. Simultaneously, some parts of the region were ruled by several Hindu states, and Baro-Bhuyan landlords, and part of it was briefly overrun by the Suri Empire. Following the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in the early 1700s, the proto-industrialised Mughal Bengal became a semi-independent state under the Nawabs of Bengal, and showed signs of the first Industrial revolution.[13][14] The region was later annexed into the Bengal Presidency by the British East India Company after the Battle of Buxar in 1764.[15][16] From 1772 to 1911, Calcutta was the capital of all of East India Company's territories and then the capital of the entirety of India after the establishment of the Viceroyalty.[17] From 1912 to India's Independence in 1947, it was the capital of the Bengal Province.[18]

The region was a hotbed of the Indian independence movement and has remained one of India's great artistic and intellectual centres.[19] Following widespread religious violence, the Bengal Legislative Council and the Bengal Legislative Assembly voted on the Partition of Bengal in 1947 along religious lines into two independent dominions: West Bengal, a Hindu-majority Indian state, and East Bengal, a Muslim-majority province of Pakistan which later became the independent Bangladesh. The state was also flooded with Hindu refugees from East Bengal (present-day Bangladesh) in the decades following the 1947 partition of India, transforming its landscape and shaping its politics.[20][21] The early and prolonged exposure to British administration resulted in an expansion of Western education, culminating in developments in science, institutional education, and social reforms in the region, including what became known as the Bengali Renaissance. Several regional and pan-Indian empires throughout Bengal's history have shaped its culture, cuisine, and architecture.

Post-Indian independence, as a welfare state, West Bengal's economy is based on agricultural production and small and medium-sized enterprises.[22] The state's cultural heritage, besides varied folk traditions, ranges from stalwarts in literature including Nobel-laureate Rabindranath Tagore to scores of musicians, film-makers and artists. For several decades, the state underwent political violence and economic stagnation after the beginning of communist rule in 1977 before it rebounded.[23] In 2023–24, the economy of West Bengal is the sixth-largest state economy in India with a gross state domestic product (GSDP) of ₹17.19 lakh crore (US\$220 billion),[5] and has the country's 20th-highest GSDP per capita of ₹121,267 (US\$1,500)[24] as of 2020–21. Despite being one of the fastest-growing major economies, West Bengal has struggled to attract foreign direct investment due to adverse land acquisition policies, poor infrastructure, and red tape.[25][26] It also has the 26th-highest ranking among Indian states in human development index, with the index value being lower than the Indian average.[8][22] The state government debt of ₹6.47 lakh crore (US\$81 billion), or 37.67% of GSDP, has dropped from 40.65% since 2010–11.[27][5] West Bengal has

three World Heritage sites and ranks as the eight-most visited tourist destination in India and third-most visited state of India globally.[28][29]

The origin of the name Bengal (Bangla and Bongo in Bengali) is unknown. One theory suggests the word derives from "Bang", the name of a Dravidian tribe that settled the region around 1000 BCE.[30] The Bengali word Bongo might have been derived from the ancient kingdom of Vanga (or Banga). Although some early Sanskrit literature mentions the name Vanga, the region's early history is obscure.[31]

In 1947, at the end of British rule over the Indian subcontinent the Bengal Legislative Council and the Bengal Legislative Assembly voted on the Partition of Bengal along religious lines into two separate entities: West Bengal, which continued as an Indian state and East Bengal, a province of Pakistan, which came to be known as East Pakistan and later became the independent Bangladesh.[11][32]

In 2011 the Government of West Bengal proposed a change in the official name of the state to Paschim Banga (Bengali: পশ্চিমবঙ্গ Pôshchimbônggô).[33] This is the native name of the state, literally meaning "western Bengal" in the native Bengali language. In August 2016 the West Bengal Legislative Assembly passed another resolution to change the name of West Bengal to "Bengal" in English and "Bangla" in Bengali. Despite the Trinamool Congress government's efforts to forge a consensus on the name change resolution, the Indian National Congress, the Left Front and the Bharatiya Janata Party opposed the resolution.[34] However, the central government has turned down the proposal maintaining the state should have one single name for all languages instead of three and it should not be the same as that of any other territory (pointing out that the name 'Bangla' may create confusion with neighbouring Bangladesh).[34][35][36]

Stone Age tools dating back 20,000 years have been excavated in the state, showing human occupation 8,000 years earlier than scholars had thought.[37] According to the Indian epic Mahabharata the region was part of the Vanga Kingdom.[38] Several Vedic realms were present in the Bengal region, including Vanga, Rarh, Pundravardhana and the Suhma Kingdom. One of the earliest foreign references to Bengal is a mention by the Ancient Greeks around 100 BCE of a land named Gangaridai located at the mouths of the Ganges.[39] Bengal had overseas trade relations with Suvarnabhumi (Burma, Lower Thailand, the Lower Malay Peninsula and Sumatra).[40] According to the Sri Lankan chronicle Mahavamsa, Prince Vijaya (c. 543 – c. 505 BCE), a Vanga Kingdom prince, conquered Lanka (modern-day Sri Lanka) and named the country Sinhala Kingdom.[41]

The kingdom of Magadha was formed in the 7th century BCE, consisting of the regions now comprising Bihar and Bengal. It was one of the four main kingdoms of India at the time of the lives of Mahavira, the principal figure of Jainism and Gautama Buddha, founder of Buddhism. It consisted of several janapadas, or kingdoms.[42] Under Ashoka, the Maurya Empire of Magadha in the 3rd century BCE extended over nearly all of South Asia, including Afghanistan and parts of Balochistan. From the 3rd to the 6th centuries CE, the kingdom of Magadha served as the seat of the Gupta Empire.[43]

Two kingdoms—Vanga or Samatata, and Gauda—are said in some texts to have appeared after the end of the Gupta Empire although details of their ascendancy are uncertain.[44] The first recorded independent king of Bengal was Shashanka, who reigned in the early 7th century.[45] Shashanka is often recorded in Buddhist annals as an intolerant Hindu ruler noted for his persecution of the Buddhists. He murdered Rajyavardhana, the Buddhist king of Thanesar, and is noted for destroying

the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya, and replacing Buddha statues with Shiva lingams.[46] After a period of anarchy,[47]:36 the Pala dynasty ruled the region for four hundred years beginning in the 8th century. A shorter reign of the Hindu Sena dynasty followed.[48]

Rajendra Chola I of the Chola dynasty invaded some areas of Bengal between 1021 and 1023.[49]

Islam was introduced through trade with the Abbasid Caliphate.[50] Following the Ghurid conquests led by Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji and the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, it spread across the entire Bengal region. Mosques, madrasas and khanqahs were built throughout these stages. During the Islamic Bengal Sultanate, founded in 1352, Bengal was a major world trading nation and was often referred by the Europeans as the richest country with which to trade.[51] Later, in 1576, it was absorbed into the Mughal Empire.[52]

Subsequent Muslim conquests helped spread Islam throughout the region.[53] It was ruled by dynasties of the Bengal Sultanate and feudal lords under the Delhi Sultanate for the next few hundred years. The Bengal Sultanate was interrupted for twenty years by a Hindu uprising under Raja Ganesha. In the 16th century, Mughal general Islam Khan conquered Bengal. Administration by governors appointed by the court of the Mughal Empire gave way to semi-independence under the Nawabs of Murshidabad, who nominally respected the sovereignty of the Mughals in Delhi. Several independent Hindu states were established in Bengal during the Mughal period, including those of Pratapaditya of Jessore District and Raja Sitaram Ray of Bardhaman. Following the death of Emperor Aurangzeb and the Governor of Bengal, Shaista Khan, the proto-industrialised Mughal Bengal became a semi-independent state under the Nawabs of Bengal, and showed signs of the world's first Industrial revolution.[13][14] The Koch dynasty in northern Bengal flourished during the 16th and 17th centuries; it weathered the Mughals and survived until the advent of the British colonial era.[54][55]

Several European traders reached this area in the late 15th century. The British East India Company defeated Siraj ud-Daulah, the last independent Nawab, in the Battle of Plassey in 1757. The company gained the right to collect revenue in Bengal subah (province) in 1765 with the signing of the treaty between the East India company and the Mughal emperor following the Battle of Buxar in 1764.[56] The Bengal Presidency was established in 1765; it later incorporated all British-controlled territory north of the Central Provinces (now Madhya Pradesh), from the mouths of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra to the Himalayas and the Punjab. The Bengal famine of 1770 claimed millions of lives due to tax policies enacted by the British company.[57] Calcutta, the headquarters of the East India company, was named the capital of British-held territories in India in 1773.[58] The failed Indian rebellion of 1857 started near Calcutta and resulted in a transfer of authority to the British Crown,[59] administered by the Viceroy of India.[60]

The Bengal Renaissance and the Brahmo Samaj socio-cultural reform movements significantly influenced the cultural and economic life of Bengal.[61] Between 1905 and 1911 an abortive attempt was made to divide the province of Bengal into two zones.[62] Bengal suffered from the Great Bengal famine in 1943, which claimed three million lives during World War II.[63] Bengalis played a major role in the Indian independence movement, in which revolutionary groups such as Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar were dominant.[19] Armed attempts against the British Raj from Bengal reached a climax when news of Subhas Chandra Bose leading the Indian National Army against the British reached Bengal. The Indian National Army was subsequently routed by the British.[64]

When India gained independence in 1947, Bengal was partitioned along religious lines. The western part went to the Dominion of India and was named West Bengal. The eastern part went to the

Dominion of Pakistan as a province called East Bengal (later renamed East Pakistan in 1956), becoming the independent nation of Bangladesh in 1971.[65] In 1950 the Princely State of Cooch Behar merged with West Bengal.[66] In 1955 the former French enclave of Chandannagar, which had passed into Indian control after 1950, was integrated into West Bengal; portions of Bihar were also subsequently merged with West Bengal. Both West and East Bengal experienced large influxes of refugees during and after the partition in 1947. Refugee resettlement and related issues continued to play a significant role in the politics and socio-economic condition of the state.[66]

During the 1970s and 1980s, severe power shortages, strikes and a violent Marxist–Maoist movement by groups known as the Naxalites damaged much of the city's infrastructure, leading to a period of economic stagnation and deindustrialisation.[23] The Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 resulted in an influx of millions of refugees to West Bengal, causing significant strains on its infrastructure.[67] The 1974 smallpox epidemic killed thousands. West Bengal politics underwent a major change when the Left Front won the 1977 assembly election, defeating the incumbent Indian National Congress. The Left Front, led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), governed the state for the next three decades.[68]

The state's economic recovery gathered momentum after the central government introduced economic liberalisations in the mid-1990s. This was aided by the advent of information technology and IT-enabled services. Beginning in the mid-2000s, armed activists conducted minor terrorist attacks in some parts of the state.[69][70] Clashes with the administration took place at several controversial locations over the issue of industrial land acquisition.[71][72] This became a decisive reason behind the defeat of the ruling Left Front government in the 2011 assembly election.[73] Although the economy was severely damaged during the unrest in the 1970s, the state has managed to revive its economy steadily throughout the years.[74][75][76] The state has shown improvement regarding bandhs (strikes)[77][78][79] and educational infrastructure.[80] Significant strides have been made in reducing unemployment,[81] though the state suffers from substandard healthcare services,[82][83] a lack of socio-economic development,[84] poor infrastructure,[85] unemployment and civil violence.[86][87] In 2006 the state's healthcare system was severely criticised in the aftermath of the West Bengal blood test kit scam.[88][89]

West Bengal is on the eastern bottleneck of India, stretching from the Himalayas in the north to the Bay of Bengal in the south. The state has a total area of 88,752 square kilometres (34,267 sq mi).[3] The Darjeeling Himalayan hill region in the northern extreme of the state is a part of the eastern Himalayas mountain range. In this region is Sandakfu, which, at 3,636 m (11,929 ft), is the highest peak in the state.[90] The narrow Terai region separates the hills from the North Bengal plains, which in turn transitions into the Ganges delta towards the south. The Rarh region intervenes between the Ganges delta in the east and the western plateau and high lands. A small coastal region is in the extreme south, while the Sundarbans mangrove forests form a geographical landmark at the Ganges delta.[91]

The main river in West Bengal is the Ganges, which divides into two branches. One branch enters Bangladesh as the Padma, or Pôdda, while the other flows through West Bengal as the Bhagirathi River and Hooghly River. The Farakka barrage over the Ganges feeds the Hooghly branch of the river by a feeder canal. Its water flow management has been a source of lingering dispute between India and Bangladesh.[92] The Teesta, Torsa, Jaldhaka and Mahananda rivers are in the northern hilly region. The western plateau region has rivers like the Damodar, Ajay and Kangsabati. The Ganges delta and the Sundarbans area have numerous rivers and creeks. Pollution of the Ganges from indiscriminate waste dumped into the river is a major problem.[93] Damodar, another tributary of the Ganges and once known as the "Sorrow of Bengal" (due to its frequent floods), has several dams

under the Damodar Valley Project. At least nine districts in the state suffer from arsenic contamination of groundwater, and as of 2017 an estimated 1.04 crore people were afflicted by arsenic poisoning.[94]

West Bengal's climate varies from tropical savanna in the southern portions to humid subtropical in the north. The main seasons are summer, the rainy season, a short autumn and winter. While the summer in the delta region is noted for excessive humidity, the western highlands experience a dry summer like northern India. The highest daytime temperatures range from 38 °C (100 °F) to 45 °C (113 °F).[95] At night, a cool southerly breeze carries moisture from the Bay of Bengal. In early summer, brief squalls and thunderstorms known as Kalbaisakhi, or Nor'westers, often occur.[96] West Bengal receives the Bay of Bengal branch of the Indian Ocean monsoon that moves in a southeast to northwest direction. Monsoons bring rain to the whole state from June to September. Heavy rainfall of above 250 centimetres (98 in) is observed in the Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and Cooch Behar district. During the arrival of the monsoons, low pressure in the Bay of Bengal region often leads to the formation of storms in the coastal areas. Winter (December–January) is mild over the plains with average minimum temperatures of 15 °C (59 °F).[95] A cold and dry northern wind blows in the winter, substantially lowering the humidity level. The Darjeeling Himalayan Hill region experiences a harsh winter, with occasional snowfall.[97]

The "India State of Forest Report 2017", recorded forest area in the state is 16,847 km² (6,505 sq mi),[98][99] while in 2013, forest area was 16,805 km² (6,488 sq mi), which was 18.93% of the state's geographical area, compared to the then national average of 21.23%.[100] Reserves and protected and unclassified forests constitute 59.4%, 31.8% and 8.9%, respectively, of forested areas, as of 2009.[101] Part of the world's largest mangrove forest, the Sundarbans in southern West Bengal.[102]

From a phytogeographic viewpoint, the southern part of West Bengal can be divided into two regions: the Gangetic plain and the littoral mangrove forests of the Sundarbans.[103] The alluvial soil of the Gangetic plain, combined with favourable rainfall, makes this region especially fertile.[103] Much of the vegetation of the western part of the state has similar species composition with the plants of the Chota Nagpur plateau in the adjoining state of Jharkhand.[103] The predominant commercial tree species is *Shorea robusta*, commonly known as the sal tree. The coastal region of Purba Medinipur exhibits coastal vegetation; the predominant tree is the *Casuarina*. A notable tree from the Sundarbans is the ubiquitous sundari (*Heritiera fomes*), from which the forest gets its name.[104]

The distribution of vegetation in northern West Bengal is dictated by elevation and precipitation. For example, the foothills of the Himalayas, the Dooars, are densely wooded with sal and other tropical evergreen trees.[105] Above an elevation of 1,000 metres (3,300 ft), the forest becomes predominantly subtropical. In Darjeeling, which is above 1,500 metres (4,900 ft), temperate forest trees like oaks, conifers and rhododendrons predominate.[105]

3.26% of the geographical area of West Bengal is protected land, comprising fifteen wildlife sanctuaries and five national parks—Sundarbans National Park, Buxa Tiger Reserve, Gorumara National Park, Neora Valley National Park and Singalila National Park.[101] Extant wildlife includes Indian rhinoceros, Indian elephant, deer, leopard, gaur, tiger and crocodiles, as well as many bird species. Migratory birds come to the state during the winter.[106] The high-altitude forests of Singalila National Park shelter barking deer, red panda, chinkara, takin, serow, pangolin, minivet and kalij pheasants. The Sundarbans are noted for a reserve project devoted to conserving the endangered Bengal tiger, although the forest hosts many other endangered species such as the

Gangetic dolphin, river terrapin and estuarine crocodile.[107] The mangrove forest also acts as a natural fish nursery, supporting coastal fishes along the Bay of Bengal.[107] Recognising its special conservation value, the Sundarbans area has been declared a Biosphere Reserve.[101]

West Bengal is governed through a parliamentary system of representative democracy, a feature the state shares with other Indian states. Universal suffrage is granted to residents. There are two branches of government. The legislature, the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, consists of elected members and special office bearers such as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, who are elected by the members. Assembly meetings are presided over by the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker in the Speaker's absence. The judiciary is composed of the Calcutta High Court and a system of lower courts. Executive authority is vested in the Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister although the titular head of government is the Governor. The Governor is the Head of State appointed by the President of India. The leader of the party or coalition with a majority in the Legislative Assembly is appointed as the Chief Minister by the Governor. The Council of Ministers is appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister. The Council of Ministers reports to the Legislative Assembly. The Assembly is unicameral with 295 members, or MLAs,[108] including one nominated from the Anglo-Indian community. Terms of office run for five years unless the Assembly is dissolved before the completion of the term. Auxiliary authorities known as panchayats, for which local body elections are regularly held, govern local affairs. The state contributes 42 seats to the Lok Sabha[109] and 16 seats to the Rajya Sabha of the Indian Parliament.[110]

Politics in West Bengal is dominated by the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC), and the Left Front alliance (led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) or CPI(M)). Following the West Bengal State Assembly Election in 2011, the All India Trinamool Congress and Indian National Congress coalition under Mamata Banerjee of the All India Trinamool Congress was elected to power with 225 seats in the legislature.[111]

Prior to this, West Bengal was ruled by the Left Front for 34 years (1977–2011), making it the world's longest-running democratically elected communist government.[68] Banerjee was re-elected twice as Chief Minister in the 2016 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election and 2021 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election with 211 and 215 seats respectively, an absolute majority by the Trinamool Congress.[112] The state has one autonomous region, the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration.[113]

As of 1 November 2023,[update] West Bengal is divided into 23 districts.[114]

Each district is governed by a district collector or district magistrate, appointed by either the Indian Administrative Service or the West Bengal Civil Service.[115] Each district is subdivided into sub-divisions, governed by a Sub-Divisional Magistrate, and again into blocks. Blocks consists of panchayats (village councils) and town municipalities.[116]

The capital and largest city of the state is Kolkata—the third-largest urban agglomeration[117] and the seventh-largest city[118] in India. Asansol is the second-largest city and urban agglomeration in West Bengal.[117]

Major planned cities of West Bengal include Bidhannagar, New Town, Kalyani, Haldia, Durgapur and Kharagpur. Kolkata has some planned neighbourhoods like New Garia, Tollygunge, and Lake Town. Siliguri is an economically important city, strategically located in the northeastern Siliguri Corridor

(Chicken's Neck) of India.[119] Other larger cities and towns in West Bengal are Howrah, Chandannagar, Bardhaman, Baharampur, Jalpaiguri, and Purulia etc.[120]

(figures in crores of Indian rupees)

As of 2015[update], West Bengal has the sixth-highest GSDP in India. GSDP at current prices (base 2004–2005) has increased from Rs 2,086.56 billion in 2004–05 to Rs 8,00,868 crores in 2014–2015,[122] reaching Rs 10,21,000 crores in 2017–18.[123] GSDP per cent growth at current prices varied from a low of 10.3% in 2010–2011 to a high of 17.11% in 2013–2014. The growth rate was 13.35% in 2014–2015.[124] The state's per capita income has lagged the all India average for over two decades. As of 2014–2015, per capita NSDP at current prices was Rs 78,903.[124] Per-capita NSDP growth rate at current prices varied from 9.4% in 2010–2011 to a high of 16.15% in 2013–2014. The growth rate was 12.62% in 2014–2015.[125]

In 2015–2016, the percentage share of Gross Value Added (GVA) at factor cost by economic activity at the constant price (the base year 2011–2012) was Agriculture-Forestry and Fishery—4.84%, Industry 18.51% and Services 66.65%. It has been observed that there has been a slow but steady decline in the percentage share of industry and agriculture over the years.[126] Agriculture is the leading economic sector in West Bengal. Rice is the state's principal food crop. Rice, potato, jute, sugarcane and wheat are the state's top five crops.[127]: 14 Tea is produced commercially in northern districts; the region is well known for Darjeeling and other high-quality teas.[127]: 14 State industries are localised in the Kolkata region, the mineral-rich western highlands, and the Haldia Port region.[128] The Durgapur-Asansol colliery belt is home to a number of steel plants.[128] Important manufacturing industries include: engineering products, electronics, electrical equipment, cables, steel, leather, textiles, jewellery, frigates, automobiles, railway coaches and wagons. The Durgapur centre has established several industries in the areas of tea, sugar, chemicals and fertilisers. Natural resources like tea and jute in nearby areas have made West Bengal a major centre for the jute and tea industries.[129]

Years after independence, West Bengal is dependent on the central government for help in meeting its demands for food; food production remained stagnant, and the Indian green revolution bypassed the state. However, there has been a significant increase in food production since the 1980s and the state now has a surplus of grains.[130] The state's share of total industrial output in India was 9.8% in 1980–1981, declining to 5% by 1997–1998. In contrast, the service sector has grown at a rate higher than the national rate.[130] The state's total financial debt stood at ₹1,918,350 million (US\$24 billion) as of 2011.[131]

In the period 2004–2010, the average gross state domestic product (GSDP) growth rate was 13.9% (calculated in Indian rupee terms) lower than 15.5%, the average for all states of the country.[127]: 4

The economy of West Bengal has witnessed many surprising changes in direction. The agricultural sector in particular rose to 8.33% in 2010–11 before tumbling to –4.01% in 2012–13.[132] Many major industries such as the Uttarpara Hindustan Motors car manufacturing unit, the jute industry, and the Haldia Petrochemicals unit experienced shutdowns in 2014. In the same year, plans for a 300 billion Jindal Steel project was mothballed. The tea industry of West Bengal has also witnessed shutdowns for financial and political reasons.[133] The tourism industry of West Bengal was negatively impacted in 2017 because of the Gorkhaland agitation.[134]

However, over the years due to effective changes in the stance towards industrialisation, ease of doing business has improved in West Bengal.[135][136][137] Steps are being taken to remedy this situation by promoting West Bengal as an investment destination. A leather complex has been built

in Kolkata. Smart cities are being planned close to Kolkata, and major roadway projects are in the offing to revive the economy.[138] West Bengal has been able to attract 2% of the foreign direct investment in the last decade.[139]

As of 2011, the total length of surface roads in West Bengal was over 92,023 kilometres (57,180 miles);[127]: 18 national highways comprise 2,578 km (1,602 mi)[140] and state highways 2,393 km (1,487 mi).[127]: 18 As of 2006, the road density of the state was 103.69 kilometres per square kilometre (166.87 miles per square mile), higher than the national average of 74.7 km/km² (120.2 mi/sq mi).[141]

As of 2011, the total railway route length was around 4,481 km (2,784 mi).[127]: 20 Kolkata is the headquarters of three zones of the Indian Railways—Eastern Railway and South Eastern Railway and the Kolkata Metro, which is the newly formed 17th zone of the Indian Railways.[142][143] The Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) serves the northern parts of the state. The Kolkata metro is the country's first underground railway.[144] The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, part of NFR, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.[145]

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport at Dum Dum, Kolkata, is the state's largest airport. Bagdogra Airport near Siliguri is a customs airport that offers international service to Bhutan and Thailand, besides regular domestic service. Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport, India's first private sector airport, serves the twin cities of Asansol-Durgapur at Andal, Paschim Bardhaman.[146][147]

Kolkata is a major river port in eastern India. The Kolkata Port Trust manages the Kolkata and the Haldia docks.[148] There is passenger service to Port Blair on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Cargo ship service operates to ports in India and abroad, operated by the Shipping Corporation of India. Ferries are a principal mode of transport in the southern part of the state, especially in the Sundarbans area. Kolkata is the only city in India to have trams as a mode of transport; these are operated by the Calcutta Tramways Company.[149]

Several government-owned organisations operate bus services in the state, including: the Calcutta State Transport Corporation, the North Bengal State Transport Corporation, the South Bengal State Transport Corporation, the West Bengal Surface Transport Corporation and the Calcutta Tramways Company.[150] There are also private bus companies. The railway system is a nationalised service without any private investment.[151] Hired forms of transport include metered taxis and auto rickshaws, which often ply specific routes in cities. In most of the state, cycle rickshaws and in Kolkata, hand-pulled rickshaws and electric rickshaws are used for short-distance travel.[152]

According to the provisional results of the 2011 national census, West Bengal is the fourth-most-populous state in India with a population of 91,347,736 (7.55% of India's population).[3] The state's 2001–2011 decennial population growth rate was 13.93%,^[3] lower than the 1991–2001 growth rate of 17.8%^[3] and lower than the national rate of 17.64%.[154] The gender ratio is 947 females per 1,000 males.[154] As of 2011, West Bengal had a population density of 1,029 inhabitants per square kilometre (2,670/sq mi) making it the second-most densely populated state in India, after Bihar.[154]

The literacy rate is 77.08%, higher than the national rate of 74.04%.[155] Data from 2010 to 2014 showed the life expectancy in the state was 70.2 years, higher than the national value of 67.9.[156][157] The proportion of people living below the poverty line in 2013 was 19.98%, a decline from 31.8% a decade ago.[158] Scheduled castes and tribes form 28.6% and 5.8% of the population, respectively, in rural areas and 19.9% and 1.5%, respectively, in urban areas.[130]

In September 2017, West Bengal achieved 100% electrification, after some remote villages in the Sunderbans became the last to be electrified.[159]

As of September 2017, of 125 towns and cities in Bengal, 76 have achieved open defecation free (ODF) status. All towns in the districts of: Nadia, North 24 Parganas, Hooghly, Bardhaman and East Medinipur are ODF zones, with Nadia becoming the first ODF district in the state in April 2015.[160][161]

A study conducted in three districts of West Bengal found that accessing private health services to treat illness had a catastrophic impact on households. This indicates the importance of the public provision of health services to mitigate poverty and the impact of illness on poor households.[162]

The latest Sample Registration System (SRS) statistical report shows that West Bengal has the lowest fertility rate among Indian states. West Bengal's total fertility rate was 1.6, lower than neighbouring Bihar's 3.4, which is the highest in the entire country. Bengal's TFR of 1.6 roughly equals that of Canada.[163]

Bengalis, consisting of Bengali Hindus, Bengali Muslims, Bengali Christians and a few Bengali Buddhists, comprise the majority of the population.[164] Marwari, Maithili and Bhojpuri speakers are scattered throughout the state; various indigenous ethnic Buddhist communities such as the Sherpas, Bhutias, Lepchas, Tamangs, Yolmos and ethnic Tibetans can be found in the Darjeeling Himalayan hill region. Native Khortha speakers are found in Malda district.[165]

Surjapuri, a language considered to be a mix of Maithili and Bengali, is spoken across northern parts of the state.[166] The Darjeeling Hills are mainly inhabited by various Gorkha communities who overwhelmingly speak Nepali (also known as Gorkhali), although there are some who retain their ancestral languages like Lepcha. West Bengal is also home to indigenous tribal Adivasis such as: Santhal, Munda, Oraon, Bhumij, Lodha, Kol and Toto.

There are a small number of ethnic minorities primarily in the state capital, including : Chinese, Tamils, Maharashtrians, Odias, Malayalis, Gujaratis, Anglo-Indians, Armenians, Jews, Punjabis and Parsis.[167] India's sole Chinatown is in eastern Kolkata.[168]

Languages of West Bengal (2011)[169]

The state's official languages are Bengali and English;[4] Nepali has additional official status in the three subdivisions of Darjeeling district.[4] In 2012, the state government passed a bill granting additional official status to Hindi, Odia, Punjabi, Santali and Urdu in areas where speakers exceed 10% of the population.[4] In 2019, another bill was passed by the government to include Kamtapuri, Kurmali and Rajbanshi as additional official languages in blocks, divisions or districts where the speakers exceed 10% of the population.[4] On 24 December 2020, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced Telugu as an additional official language.[4] As of the 2011 census, 86.22% of the population spoke Bengali, 5.00% Hindi, 2.66% Santali, 1.82% Urdu and 1.26% Nepali as their first language.[169]

Religion in West Bengal (2011)[170]

West Bengal is religiously diverse, with regional cultural and religious specificities. Although Hindus are the predominant community, the state has a large minority Muslim population. Christians, Buddhists and others form a minuscule part of the population. As of 2011, Hinduism is the most common religion, with adherents representing 70.54% of the total population.[171] Muslims, the second-largest community, comprise 27.01% of the total population,[172] Three of West Bengal's

districts: Murshidabad, Malda and Uttar Dinajpur, are Muslim-majority. Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism and other religions make up the remainder.[173] Buddhism remains a prominent religion in the Himalayan region of the Darjeeling hills; almost the entirety of West Bengal's Buddhist population is from this region.[174] Christianity is mainly found among the tea garden tribes at tea plantations scattered throughout the Dooars of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar districts.

The Hindu population of West Bengal is 64,385,546 while the Muslim population is 24,654,825, according to the 2011 census.[175]

The Bengali language boasts a rich literary heritage it shares with neighbouring Bangladesh. West Bengal has a long tradition of folk literature, evidenced by the Charyapada, a collection of Buddhist mystic songs dating back to the 10th and 11th centuries; Mangalkavya, a collection of Hindu narrative poetry composed around the 13th century; Shreekrishna Kirtana, a pastoral Vaishnava drama in verse composed by Boru Chandidas; Thakurmar Jhuli, a collection of Bengali folk and fairy tales compiled by Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumder; and stories of Gopal Bhar, a court jester in medieval Bengal. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Bengali literature was modernised in the works of authors such as Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, whose works marked a departure from the traditional verse-oriented writings prevalent in that period;[178] Michael Madhusudan Dutt, a pioneer in Bengali drama who introduced the use of blank verse;[179] and Rabindranath Tagore, who reshaped Bengali literature and music. Indian art saw the introduction of Contextual Modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[180] Other notable figures include Kazi Nazrul Islam, whose compositions form the avant-garde genre of Nazrul Sangeet,[181] Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, whose works on contemporary social practices in Bengal are widely acclaimed,[182] and Manik Bandyopadhyay, who is considered one of the leading lights of modern Bengali fiction.[183] In modern times, Jibanananda Das has been acknowledged as "the premier poet of the post-Tagore era in India".[184] Other writers include: Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay, best known for his work Pather Panchali; Tarashankar Bandopadhyay, well known for his portrayal of the lower strata of society;[185] Manik Bandopadhyay, a pioneering novelist; and Ashapurna Devi, Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay, Saradindu Bandopadhyay, Buddhadeb Guha, Mahashweta Devi, Samarendra Majumdar, Sanjeev Chattopadhyay, Shakti Chattopadhyay, Buddhadeb Basu,[186] Joy Goswami and Sunil Gangopadhyay.[187][188]

A notable music tradition is the Baul music, practised by the Bauls, a sect of mystic minstrels.[189] Other folk music forms include Gombhira and Bhawaiya. Folk music in West Bengal is often accompanied by the ektara, a one-stringed instrument. Shyama Sangeet is a genre of devotional songs, praising the Hindu goddess Kali; kirtan is devotional group songs dedicated to the god Krishna.[190] Like other states in northern India, West Bengal also has a heritage in North Indian classical music. Rabindrasangeet, songs composed and set to words by Rabindranath Tagore, and Nazrul geeti (by Kazi Nazrul Islam) are popular. Also prominent are Dwijendralal, Atulprasad and Rajanikanta's songs, and adhunik or modern music from films and other composers.[191] From the early 1990s, new genres of music have emerged, including what has been called Bengali Jeebonmukhi Gaan (a modern genre based on realism). Bengali dance forms draw from folk traditions, especially those of the tribal groups, as well as the broader Indian dance traditions. Chhau dance of Purulia is a rare form of masked dance.[192]

West Bengali films are shot mostly in studios in the Kolkata neighbourhood of Tollygunge; the name "Tollywood" (similar to Hollywood and Bollywood) is derived from that name. The Bengali film industry is well known for its art films, and has produced acclaimed directors like Satyajit Ray who is widely regarded as one of the greatest filmmakers of the 20th century,[193] Mrinal Sen whose films were known for their artistic depiction of social reality, Tapan Sinha,[194] and Ritwik Ghatak. Some

contemporary directors include veterans such as: Buddhadeb Dasgupta, Tarun Majumdar, Goutam Ghose, Aparna Sen, and Rituparno Ghosh, and a newer pool of directors such as Kaushik Ganguly and Srijit Mukherji.[195][196][197] Uttam Kumar was the most popular lead actor for decades, and his romantic pairing with actress Suchitra Sen in films attained legendary status.[198] Soumitra Chatterjee, who acted in many Satyajit Ray-films, and Prosenjit Chatterjee are among other popular lead male actors. As of 2020[update], Bengali films have won India's annual National Film Award for Best Feature Film twenty-two times in sixty seven years, the highest among all Indian languages.

There are significant examples of fine arts in Bengal from earlier times, including the terracotta art of Hindu temples and the Kalighat paintings. Bengal has been in the vanguard of modernism in fine arts. Abanindranath Tagore, called the father of modern Indian art, started the Bengal School of Art, one of whose goals was to promote the development of styles of art outside the European realist tradition that had been taught in art colleges under the British colonial administration. The movement had many adherents, including: Gaganendranath Tagore, Ramkinkar Baij, Jamini Roy and Rabindranath Tagore. After Indian Independence, important groups such as the Calcutta Group and the Society of Contemporary Artists were formed in Bengal and came to dominate the art scene in India.[199][200]

The capital, Kolkata, was the workplace of several social reformers, including Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Swami Vivekananda. Their social reforms eventually led to a cultural atmosphere that made it possible for practices like sati, dowry, and caste-based discrimination, or untouchability, to be abolished.[201] The region was also home to several religious teachers, such as Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, Prabhupada and Paramahansa Yogananda.[201]

Rice and fish are traditional favourite foods, leading to a saying in Bengali, "machhe bhate bangali", that translates as "fish and rice make a Bengali".[202] Bengal's vast repertoire of fish-based dishes includes hilsa preparations, a favourite among Bengalis. There are numerous ways of cooking fish depending on its texture, size, fat content and bones.[203] Most of the people also consume eggs, chicken, mutton, and shrimp. Panta bhat (rice soaked overnight in water) with onion and green chili is a traditional dish consumed in rural areas.[204] Common spices found in a Bengali kitchen include cumin, ajmoda (radhuni), bay leaf, mustard, ginger, green chillies and turmeric.[205] Sweets occupy an important place in the diet of Bengalis and at their social ceremonies. Bengalis make distinctive sweetmeats from milk products, including Rôshogolla, Chômchôm, Kalojam and several kinds of sondesh. Pitha, a kind of sweet cake, bread, or dim sum, are specialties of the winter season. Sweets such as narkol-naru, til-naru, moa and payesh are prepared during festivals such as Lakshmi puja.[206] Popular street foods include Aloor Chop, Beguni, Kati roll, biryani, and phuchka.[207][208]

Bengali women commonly wear the sari, often distinctly designed according to local cultural customs. In urban areas, many women and men wear western attire. Among men, western dress has greater acceptance. Particularly on cultural occasions, men also wear traditional costumes such as the panjabi with dhuti while women wear salwar kameez or sari.[209]

West Bengal produces several varieties of cotton and silk saris in the country. Handlooms are a popular way for the state's rural population to earn a living through weaving. Every district has weaving clusters, which are home to artisan communities, each specialising in specific varieties of handloom weaving. Notable handloom saris include tant, jamdani, garad, korial, baluchari, tussar and muslin.[210]

Durga Puja is the biggest, most popular and widely celebrated festival in West Bengal.[211] The five-day-long colourful Hindu festival includes intense celebration across the state. Pandals are erected in

various cities, towns, and villages throughout West Bengal. The city of Kolkata transforms Durga Puja. It is decked up in lighting decorations and thousands of colourful pandals are set up where effigies of the goddess Durga and her four children are displayed and worshipped. The idols of the goddess are brought in from Kumortuli, where idol-makers work throughout the year fashioning clay models of the goddess. Since independence in 1947, Durga Puja has slowly changed into more of a glamorous carnival than a religious festival. Today people of diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds partake in the festivities.[212] On Vijayadashami, the last day of the festival, the effigies are paraded through the streets with riotous pageantry before being immersed into the rivers.[213]

Rath Yatra is a Hindu festival which celebrates Jagannath, a form of Krishna. It is celebrated with much fanfare in Kolkata as well as in rural Bengal. Images of Jagannath are set upon a chariot and pulled through the streets.[214]

Other major festivals of West Bengal include: Poila Baishakh the Bengali new year, Dolyatra or Holi the festival of lights, Poush Parbon, Kali Puja, Nabadwip Shakta Rash, Saraswati Puja, Deepavali, Lakshmi Puja, Janmashtami, Jagaddhatri Puja, Vishwakarma Puja, Bhai Phonta, Rakhi Bandhan, Kalpataru Day, Shivratri, Ganesh Chaturthi, Maghotsav, Karam festival, Kartik Puja, Akshay Tritiya, Raas Yatra, Guru Purnima, Annapurna Puja, Charak Puja, Gajan, Buddha Purnima, Christmas, Eid ul-Fitr, Eid ul-Adha and Muharram. Rabindra Jayanti, Kolkata Book Fair, Kolkata Film Festival, and Nazrul Jayanti. All are important cultural events.[214]

Eid al-Fitr is the most important Muslim festival in West Bengal. They celebrate the end of Ramadan with prayers, alms-giving, shopping, gift-giving, and feasting.[215]

Christmas, called Bôrodin (Great day) is perhaps the next major festival celebrated in Kolkata, after Durga Puja. Although Hinduism is the major religion in the state, people show significant passion to the festival. Just like Durga Puja, Christmas in Kolkata is an occasion when all communities and people of every religion take part. Large masses of people go to parks, gardens, museums, parties, fairs, churches and other places to celebrate the day. A lot of Hindus go to Hindu-temples and the festival is celebrated there too with Hindu rituals.[216][217] The state tourism department organises a gala Christmas Festival every year in Park Street.[218] The whole of Park Street is hung with colourful lights, and food stalls sell cakes, chocolates, Chinese cuisine, momo, and various other items. The state invites musical groups from Darjeeling and other North East India states to perform choir recitals, carols, and jazz numbers.[219]

Buddha Purnima, which marks the birth of Gautama Buddha, is one of the most important Hindu/Buddhist festivals and is celebrated with much gusto in the Darjeeling hills. On this day, processions begin at the various Buddhist monasteries, or gumpas, and congregate at the Chowrasta (Darjeeling) Mall. The Lamas chant mantras and sound their bugles, and students, as well as people from every community, carry the holy books or pustaks on their heads. Besides Buddha Purnima, Dashain, or Dusshera, Holi, Diwali, Losar, Namsoong or the Lepcha New Year, and Losoong are the other major festivals of the Darjeeling Himalayan region.[215]

Each year between July and August (on the eve of the month of Shravan) in Tarakeswar Yatra held, nearly 10 million devotees come from various part of India bringing holy water of Ganga from Nimai Tirtha Ghat of Baidyabati, which is almost 39 km (25 mi) from Tarakeswar, in order to offer it to Lord Shiva. During that month, a line of people in saffron-dyed clothes stretches over the full 39 km (25 mi). It is the longest and largest Mela of West Bengal.

Poush Mela is a popular winter festival of Shantiniketan, with performances of folk music, Baul songs, dance, and theatre taking place throughout the town.[215]

Ganga Sagar Mela coincides with the Makar Sankranti, and hundreds of thousands of Hindu pilgrims converge where the river Ganges meets the sea to bathe en masse during this fervent festival.[214]

West Bengal schools are run by the state government or private organisations, including religious institutions. Instruction is mainly in English or Bengali, though Urdu is also used, especially in Central Kolkata. Secondary schools are affiliated with the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE), the National Institute of Open School (NIOS), West Bengal Board of Secondary Education, or the West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education.[220]

As of 2016 85% of children within the 6 to 17-year age group attend school (86% do so in urban areas and 84% in rural areas). School attendance is almost

universal among the 6 to 14-year age group then drops to 70% with the 15 to 17-year age group. There is a gender disparity in school attendance in the 6 to 14-year age group, more girls than boys are attending school.

In Bengal, 71% of women aged 15–49 years and 81% of men aged 15–49 years are literate. Only 14% of women aged 15–49 years in West Bengal have completed 12 or more years of schooling, compared with 22% of men. 22% of women and 14% of men aged 15–49 years have never attended school.[221]

Some of the notable schools in the city are: Ramakrishna Mission Narendrapur, Baranagore Ramakrishna Mission, Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Hindu School, Hare School, La Martiniere Calcutta, Calcutta Boys' School, St. James' School (Kolkata), South Point School, Techno India Group Public School, St. Xavier's Collegiate School, and Loreto House, Loreto Convent, Pearl Rosary School are some of which rank amongst the best schools in the country.[222] Many of the schools in Kolkata and Darjeeling are colonial-era establishments housed in buildings that are exemplars of neo-classical architecture. Darjeeling's schools include: St. Paul's, St. Joseph's North Point, Goethals Memorial School, and Dow Hill in Kurseong.[223]

West Bengal has eighteen universities.[224][225] Kolkata has played a pioneering role in the development of the modern education system in India. It was the gateway to the revolution of European education during the British Raj.[226] Sir William Jones established the Asiatic Society in 1794 to promote oriental studies. People such as Ram Mohan Roy, David Hare, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Alexander Duff and William Carey played leading roles in setting up modern schools and colleges in the city.[215]

The University of Calcutta, the oldest and one of the most prestigious public universities in India, has 136 affiliated colleges. Fort William College was established in 1810. The Hindu College was established in 1817. The Lady Brabourne College was established in 1939. The Scottish Church College, the oldest Christian liberal arts college in South Asia, started in 1830. The Vidyasagar College was established in 1872 and was the first purely Indian-run private college in India.[227] In 1855 the Hindu College was renamed the Presidency College.[228] The state government granted it university status in 2010 and it was renamed Presidency University. Kazi Nazrul University was established in 2012. The University of Calcutta and Jadavpur University are prestigious technical universities.[229] Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan is a central university and an institution of national importance.[230]

Other higher education institutes of importance in West Bengal include: St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (the first IIM), Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kolkata, Indian Statistical Institute, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (the first IIT), Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur (the first IEST), Indian Institute of Information Technology, Kalyani, Medical College, Kolkata, National Institute of Technology, Durgapur, National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training and Research, Kolkata, National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Kolkata, and West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences. In 2003 the state government supported the creation of West Bengal University of Technology, West Bengal University of Health Sciences, West Bengal State University, and Gour Banga University.[231]

Jadavpur University (Focus area—Mobile Computing and Communication and Nano-science), and the University of Calcutta (Modern Biology) are among two of the fifteen universities selected under the "University with Potential for Excellence" scheme. University of Calcutta (Focus Area—Electro-Physiological and Neuro-imaging studies including mathematical modelling) has also been selected under the "Centre with Potential for Excellence in a Particular Area" scheme.[232]

In addition, the state is home to Kalyani University, The University of Burdwan, Vidyasagar University, and North Bengal University all well established and nationally renowned schools that cover education needs at the district level and the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kolkata. Apart from this there is a Deemed university run by the Ramakrishna mission named Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University at Belur Math.[233]

There are several research institutes in Kolkata. The Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science is the first research institute in Asia. C. V. Raman was awarded the Nobel Prize for his discovery (Raman Effect) done at the IACS. The Bose Institute, Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, S. N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences, Indian Institute of Chemical Biology, Central Glass and Ceramic Research Institute, Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute Durgapur, Central Research Institute for Jute and Allied Fibers, National Institute of Research on Jute and Allied Fibre Technology, Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG), Kalyani, and the Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre are the most prominent.[231]

Notable scholars who were born, worked, or studied in the geographic area of the state include physicists: Satyendra Nath Bose, Meghnad Saha,[234] and Jagadish Chandra Bose;[235] chemist Prafulla Chandra Roy;[234] statisticians Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis and Anil Kumar Gain;[234] physician Upendranath Brahmachari;[234] educator Ashutosh Mukherjee;[236] and Nobel laureates Rabindranath Tagore,[237] C. V. Raman,[235] Amartya Sen,[238] and Abhijit Banerjee[239]

In 2005 West Bengal had 505 published newspapers,[240] of which 389 were in Bengali.[240] Ananda Bazar Patrika, published in Kolkata with 1,277,801 daily copies, has the largest circulation for a single-edition, regional language newspaper in India.[240] Other major Bengali newspapers are: Bartaman, Sangbad Pratidin, Aajkaal, Jago Bangla, Uttarbanga Sambad and Ganashakti. Major English language newspapers include The Telegraph, The Times of India, Hindustan Times, The Hindu, The Statesman, The Indian Express and Asian Age. Some prominent financial dailies such as: The Economic Times, Financial Express, Business Line and Business Standard are widely circulated. Vernacular newspapers such as those in Hindi, Nepali, Gujarati, Odia, Urdu and Punjabi also exist.[241]

DD Bangla is the state-owned television broadcaster. Multi system operators provide a mix of Bengali, Nepali, Hindi, English and international channels via cable. Bengali 24-hour television news

channels include ABP Ananda, News18 Bangla, Republic Bangla, Kolkata TV, News Time, Zee 24 Ghanta, TV9 Bangla, Calcutta News and Channel 10.[242][243] All India Radio is a public radio station.[243] Private FM stations are available only in cities like Kolkata, Siliguri, and Asansol.[243] Vodafone Idea, Airtel, BSNL, Jio are available cellular phone providers. Broadband Internet is available in select towns and cities and is provided by the state-run BSNL and by other private companies. Dial-up access is provided throughout the state by BSNL and other providers.[244]

Cricket and association football are popular. West Bengal, unlike most other states of India, is noted for its passion and patronage of football.[245][246][247] Kolkata is one of the major centres for football in India[248] and houses top national clubs such as Mohun Bagan Super Giant, East Bengal Club and Mohammedan Sporting Club.[249]

West Bengal has several large stadiums. Eden Gardens was one of only two 100,000-seat cricket stadiums in the world;[250] renovations before the 2011 Cricket World Cup reduced the capacity to 66,000.[251] The stadium is the home to various cricket teams such as the Kolkata Knight Riders, the Bengal cricket team and the East Zone. The 1987 Cricket World Cup final was hosted in Eden Gardens. The Calcutta Cricket and Football Club is the second-oldest cricket club in the world.[252]

Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK), is a multipurpose stadium in Kolkata, with a current capacity of 85,000. It is the largest stadium in India by seating capacity.[253] Before its renovation in 2011, it was the second-largest football stadium in the world, having a seating capacity of 120,000. It has hosted many national and international sporting events like the SAF Games of 1987 and the 2011 FIFA friendly football match between Argentina and Venezuela featuring Lionel Messi.[254] In 2008 legendary German goalkeeper, Oliver Kahn played his farewell match on this ground.[255] The stadium hosted the final match of the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup.

Notable sports persons from West Bengal include former Indian national cricket team captain Sourav Ganguly, Pankaj Roy, Olympic tennis bronze medallist Leander Paes and chess grand master Dibyendu Barua.[245][246][247]

Text extracted from URL 65:

Chandigarh (/ˌtʃʌndɪˈɡɑːr/) is a union territory and planned city in northern India, serving as the shared capital of the surrounding states, namely Punjab to the north, west and the south, and Haryana to the east. Chandigarh constitutes the bulk of the Chandigarh Capital Region or Greater Chandigarh, which also includes the adjacent satellite cities of Panchkula in Haryana and Mohali in Punjab. It is situated near the foothills of the Himalayas, 260 km (162 miles) north of New Delhi and 229 km (143 miles) southeast of Amritsar.

Chandigarh is one of the earliest planned cities in post independence India and is internationally known for its architecture and urban design.[8] The master plan of the city was prepared by Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier, which built upon earlier plans created by the Polish architect Maciej Nowicki and the American planner Albert Mayer. Most of the government buildings and housing in the city were designed by a team headed by Le Corbusier, Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry. Chandigarh's Capitol Complex—as part of a global ensemble of Corbusier's buildings—was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO at the 40th session of the World Heritage Conference in July 2016.[9]

Chandigarh has grown greatly since its initial construction, and has also driven the development of Mohali and Panchkula; the "tri-city" metropolitan area has a combined population of over 1,611,770.[10] The city has one of the highest per capita incomes in the country. The union territory

has one of the highest Human Development Index among Indian states and territories.[11] In 2015, a survey by LG Electronics ranked it as the happiest city in India on the happiness index.[12][13][14] In 2015, an article published by BBC named Chandigarh one of the few master-planned cities in the world to have succeeded in terms of combining monumental architecture, cultural growth, and modernisation.[15]

The name Chandigarh is a compound of Chandi and Garh. Chandi refers to the Hindu goddess Chandi and Garh means fortress.[16] The name is derived from Chandi Mandir, an ancient temple devoted to the Hindu Goddess Chandi near the city in Panchkula District.[17]

The motif or sobriquet of "The City of Beauty" was derived from the City Beautiful movement, which was a popular philosophy in North American urban planning during the 1890s and 1900s. Architect Albert Mayer, the initial planner of Chandigarh, lamented the American rejection of City Beautiful concepts and declared, "We want to create a beautiful city..."[18] The phrase was used as a logo in official publications in the 1970s and is now how the city describes itself.[19][20]

As part of the partition of India in 1947, the former Indian province of Punjab was divided into two parts, the mostly Hindu and Sikh East Punjab in India, and the mostly Muslim West Punjab in Pakistan.[21] The capital of undivided Punjab, Lahore, had become part of Pakistan after the partition. Instead of shifting the capital to an already existing and established city, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, envisioned an altogether new and modern city to be built to serve as the capital of Punjab.[22][23] Partap Singh Kairon, then the Chief Minister of East Punjab, and Edward Nirmal Mangat Rai, then the Chief Secretary of East Punjab, were instrumental in creating Chandigarh as the capital of the state.[24] In 1949, the American planner and architect Albert Mayer was commissioned to design a new city to be called "Chandigarh". The government carved out Chandigarh from about fifty Puadhi-speaking villages in the then-state of East Punjab, India.[25] Shimla was the temporary capital of the state until Chandigarh was completed.

Albert Mayer developed a superblock-based city interspersed with green spaces, with an emphasis on cellular neighbourhoods and traffic segregation. His site plan took advantage of natural land characteristics; the land's gentle grade promoted proper drainage. Mayer stopped his work on the city after his architect-partner Matthew Nowicki died in a plane crash in 1950. Government officials recruited Le Corbusier to succeed Mayer and Nowicki, who utilised many elements of Mayer's original plan without attributing them to him.[26]

Le Corbusier designed many administration buildings, including the High Court, the Palace of Assembly, and the Secretariat Building. Le Corbusier also designed the general layout of the city, dividing it into sectors. Chandigarh hosts the largest of Le Corbusier's many Open Hand sculptures, standing 26 metres high. The Open Hand (La Main Ouverte) is a recurring motif in Le Corbusier's architecture, a sign for him of "peace and reconciliation. It is open to give and open to receive." It represents what Le Corbusier called the "Second Machine Age".[9] Two of the six monuments planned in the Capitol Complex which has the High Court, the Assembly, and the Secretariat, remain incomplete. These include Geometric Hill and Martyrs Memorial. Drawings were made, and they were begun in 1956, but they were never completed.[27]

The capital city was officially shifted from Shimla to Chandigarh on 21 September 1953, though Chandigarh was formally inaugurated by India's first president, Rajendra Prasad on 7 October 1953.[28]

During excavations at the time of the building of the city, some Indus Valley artefacts were discovered, suggesting that the area that is today Chandigarh was home to some settlements of the Indus Valley civilisation.[29]

On 1 November 1966, after a long-drawn movement demanding the formation of a Punjabi state, the former state of Punjab was split in two. The western and northern mostly Punjabi-speaking portion became the present-day state of Punjab, while the eastern and southern Hindi- and Haryanvi-speaking areas became Haryana. Chandigarh ended up being located on the border of the two states, and both of them moved to incorporate the city into their respective territories. However, the city of Chandigarh was controlled directly by the central government and was to serve as the shared capital of the two states until a resolution could be reached.[30]

Present-day Chandigarh was also the site of a short-lived late 18th-century principality, with a small fort at Mani Majra. As of 2016, many villages that predate the city are still inhabited within the modern blocks of some sectors, including Burail and Attawa, while several other such villages lie on the margins of the city.[31]

Chandigarh is located by the foothills of the Shivalik Range of the Himalayas in northwest India. It covers an area of approximately 114 km². [23] It borders the states of Punjab and Haryana. The exact geographic coordinates of Chandigarh are 30°44′N 76°47′E / 30.74°N 76.79°E / 30.74; 76.79.[32] It has an average elevation of 321 metres (1053 ft).

The city, lying in the northern plains, includes a vast area of flat, fertile land. Its northeast covers sections of Bhabar, while the remainder of its terrain is part of the Terai.[33] Its surrounding cities are Mohali, New Chandigarh, Patiala, Zirakpur and Rupnagar in Punjab, and Panchkula and Ambala in Haryana.

Chandigarh is situated 44 km (28 miles) north of Ambala, 229 km (143 miles) southeast of Amritsar, and 250 km (156 miles) north of Delhi.

Chandigarh has a humid subtropical climate (Köppen: Cwa) characterised by a seasonal rhythm: very hot summers, mild winters, unreliable rainfall, and great temperature variation (−1 to 45 °C or 30.2 to 113.0 °F). The average annual rainfall is 1,110.7 millimetres or 43.73 inches.[34] The city also receives occasional winter rains from the Western Disturbance originating over the Mediterranean Sea. The western disturbances bring rain predominantly from mid-December until the end of April, which can be heavier sometimes with strong wind and hail if the weather turns colder (during March–April months), which usually proves disastrous to local crops. Cold winds usually tend to come from the Himalayas that lie to the north, which receive snowfall during wintertime.[citation needed]

The city experiences the following seasons and the respective average temperatures:

Most of Chandigarh is covered by dense banyan and eucalyptus plantations. Ashoka, cassia, mulberry and other trees flourish in the forested ecosystem.[37] The city has forests surrounding itself that sustain many animal and plant species.[38] Deer, sambars, barking deer, parrots, woodpeckers, and peacocks inhabit the protected forests. Sukhna Lake hosts a variety of ducks and geese and attracts migratory birds from parts of Siberia and Japan in the winter season.

The Parrot Bird Sanctuary Chandigarh provides a home to a large number of parrots. Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1998.

Many trees in Chandigarh are given the status of the natural heritage of the city. The Chandigarh government has identified a list of 31 trees as Heritage Trees. The Department of Forest & Wildlife Chandigarh Administration is the nodal department for this purpose and has published a detailed booklet about it. The trees in the city that are 100 years or more old have been given heritage status.

Sukhna Lake, a 3 km² artificial rain-fed lake in Sector 1,[39] was created in 1958 by damming the Sukhna Choe, a seasonal stream coming down from the Shivalik Hills.[40]

Chandigarh has a belt of parks running from sectors. It is known for its green belts and other special tourist parks. Sukhna Lake itself hosts the Garden of Silence.[41] The Rock Garden,[42][43] is located near the Sukhna Lake and has numerous sculptures made by using a variety of different discarded waste materials.[44] The Zakir Hussain Rose Garden (which is also Asia's largest rose garden) contains nearly 825 varieties of roses in it and more than 32,500 varieties of other medicinal plants and trees.[45] Other gardens include the Garden of Fragrance in Sector 36, Garden of Palms in Sector 42, Butterfly Park in Sector 26, Valley of Animals in Sector 49, the Japanese Garden in Sector 31, the Terraced Garden in Sector 33, Shanti Kunj Garden, the Botanical garden and the Bougainvillea Garden.[46] There is also a Government museum and art gallery in Sector 10, Chandigarh.

As of 2011[update] India census, Chandigarh had a population of 1,055,450,[2][3] giving it a density of about 9,252 (7,900 in 2001) persons per square kilometre.[48][49]

Males constitute 55% of the population and females 45%. The sex ratio is 818 females for every 1,000 males.[1] The child-sex ratio is 880 females per thousand males. Chandigarh has an effective literacy rate of 86.77% (based on population 7 years and above), higher than the national average; with male literacy of 90.81% and female literacy of 81.88%.[1] 10.8% of the population is under 6 years of age.[1] The population of Chandigarh formed 0.09 per cent of India in 2011.[3]

There has been a substantial decline in the population growth rate in Chandigarh, with just 17.10% growth between 2001 and 2011. Since the 1951–1961 period, the growth rate has decreased from 394.13% to 17.10%, a likely cause being the rapid urbanisation and development in neighbouring cities.[50] The urban population constitutes 97.25% of the total and the rural population makes up 2.75%, as there are only a few villages within Chandigarh, situated on its Western and South-Eastern border, and the majority of people live in the heart of Chandigarh.[citation needed]

Languages of Chandigarh (2011)[51][52]

English is the sole official language of Chandigarh.[4] The majority of the population speaks Hindi (67.76%) while Punjabi is spoken by 22.02%.[52][53] Government schools use English, Hindi, and Punjabi textbooks.[54] The percentage of Punjabi speakers has fallen from 36% in 1981 to 22% in 2011, while that of Hindi speakers has increased from 51% to 78%.[55]

Hinduism is the predominant religion of Chandigarh followed by 80.71% of the population. Sikhism is the second most followed religion in the city, followed by 13.11% of the people, followed by Islam at 4.87%. Minorities are Christians at 0.83%, Jains at 0.19%, Buddhists at 0.11%, those that didn't state a religion at 0.10%, and others are 0.02%.[56]

There are several places of worship located all over the city, with many in each sector, including the historic Mata Basanti Devi Mandir in Sector 24.[57] The temple is dedicated to Goddess Shitala and specially visited by devotees during first Tuesday of Chaitra month after Holi. Chandi Mandir, Mata Mansa Devi Mandir and Mata Jayanti Devi Mandir are important Hindu temples located near Chandigarh.[58][59]Nada Sahib Gurudwara, a famous place for Sikh worship lies in its vicinity.[60]

Apart from this, there are a couple of historical mosques in Manimajra and Burail.[61] The Diocese of Simla and Chandigarh serves the Catholics of the city, with a co-cathedral in the city, which also governs most of the convent schools in Chandigarh.

The table below shows the data from the district nutrition profile of children below the age of 5 years, in Chandigarh, as of year 2020.

The table below shows the district nutrition profile of Chandigarh of women between the ages of 15 to 49 years, as of year 2020.

Article 239 of the Constitution of India provides for the administration of the Union Territories by the President through an administrator.[63] Since 1984 the Governor of Punjab has served concurrently as the administrator of Chandigarh. Banwarilal Purohit has been the administrator of the union territory since September 2021.[64]

Chandigarh, as a union territory, is not entitled to a state-level election: thus State Assembly elections are not held and it is directly controlled by the central government. One seat for Chandigarh is allocated in the Lok Sabha elections held every five years.

Kirron Kher (BJP) is the Member of Parliament elected in 2019 from the Chandigarh Lok Sabha constituency.

The city is governed by a civic administration or local government headed by Municipal Commissioner Anindita Mitra and Mayor Sarbjit Kaur.[65][66] The city comprises 35 wards represented by 35 elected councillors, and also nominates 9 councillors.[67][68]

On 27 March 2022, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced that the Chandigarh employees who were working under the Punjab service rules until 2022, would be working under the central civil services rules from 1 April 2022. The move was criticised by political parties such as the AAP, the INC and the Akali Dal.[69]

Composition of Chandigarh Municipal Corporation after 2021 Chandigarh Municipal Corporation election as of December 2021:

The prime responsibilities of the civic body Municipal Corporation Chandigarh, are to ensure cleanliness and sanitation in the city, illumination of street lights, maintenance of parks, and sewerage disposal.[70] The city has both brick and pipe sewers laid in four phases.[71] In September 2020, the civic body announced that it would upgrade and renew the 50-year-old sewerage system.[71] The pilot project for the 24x7 water supply is expected to begin in Chandigarh in May 2021, which was initially to start in September 2020 and end in March 2022. On 8 April 2021, the Chandigarh Smart City Ltd (CSCL) board is yet to take the final decision.[72]

In 2021, the BJP-ruled corporation had increased the water tariff by 1.5 to 2.5 times.[73] This created a widespread discontent among the residents.[74]

In 2021, there was an acute shortage of parking spaces. The problem was aggravated by an increase of 17% in parking rates by the Municipal Corporation.[75] The increase in the waste collection charges, water tariff and property tax rates during the last five years 2016 to 2021 were unpopular among the public.[74]

During the COVID-19 pandemic in India, concerns were raised about whether sufficient relief measures had been taken by the local government. The sitting Councillors were accused of not being found to be approachable when the public needed support.[74]

In 2016, Chandigarh was the second cleanest city of India.

In 2021, Chandigarh fell 66 positions in the list of cleanest cities in India. The garbage piled up at the Dadu Majra garbage dump site.[74][76] The city's cleanliness was once a point for the city, and its decline became an important poll issue.[74]

Chandigarh has been rated as one of the "Wealthiest Towns" of India.[77] The Reserve Bank of India ranked Chandigarh as the third-largest deposit center and seventh-largest credit center nationwide as of June 2012. With an average household monthly income of ₹199,000 (US\$2,500), Chandigarh is one of the richest towns in India.[78] Chandigarh's gross state domestic product for 2014–15 is estimated at ₹290 billion (short scale) (US\$4.3 billion) at current prices. According to a 2014 survey, Chandigarh is ranked 4th in the top 50 cities identified globally as "emerging outsourcing and IT services destinations" ahead of cities like Beldong (Amritsar).[79]

The government is a major employer in Chandigarh, with three governments having their base here, those being the Chandigarh Administration, the Punjab government, and the Haryana government. A significant percentage of Chandigarh's population, therefore, consists of people who are either working for one of these governments or have retired from government service, mainly armed forces. For this reason, Chandigarh is often called a "Pensioner's Paradise".[80] Ordnance Cable Factory of the Ordnance Factories Board has been set up by the Government of India. There are about 15 medium-to-large industries, including two in the public sector. In addition, Chandigarh has over 2,500 units registered under the small-scale sector. [citation needed] The city's important industries are paper manufacturing, basic metals and alloys, and machinery. Other industries in the city are food products, sanitary ware, auto parts, machine tools, pharmaceuticals, and electrical appliances.[citation needed]

The main occupation here is trade and business.[81][82] However, the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), the availability of an IT Park, and more than a hundred government schools provide other job opportunities to people.

Four major trade promotion organisations have their offices in Chandigarh. These are The Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry, ASSOCHAM India[83] in Sector 8, Chandigarh, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry, (FICCI) the PhD Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) which has its regional headquarters at Sector 31, Chandigarh.[84][85]

Chandigarh IT Park (also known as Rajiv Gandhi Chandigarh Technology Park) is the city's attempt to break into the information technology world. Chandigarh's infrastructure, proximity to Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh, and the IT talent pool attract IT businesses looking for office space in the area. Major Indian firms and multinational corporations like Quark, Infosys, EVRY, TechMahindra, Airtel, Amadeus IT Group, DLF have set up base in the city and its suburbs.

The work of the Chandigarh Metro was slated to start by 2019. It was opposed by the Member of Parliament from Chandigarh, Kirron Kher.[86] With an estimated cost of around ₹109 billion including 50% funds from the governments of Punjab and Haryana and 25% from Chandigarh and government of India, funds from the Japanese government were proposed to include approximately 56% of the cost.[87][88] However, the project was turned down owing to its non-feasibility. Kher promised a film city for Chandigarh. After winning the seat, she said that she had difficulty in acquiring land in Chandigarh.[89] Her proposal was accepted by the Chandigarh Administration and the film city is proposed to be set up in Sarangpur, Chandigarh.[90] This has been considered as a source of employment in the future.

Every year, in September or October during the festival of Navratri, many associations and organisations hold a Ramlila event, which has been conducted here for over 50 years.[91]

The Rose Festival in Zakir Hussain Rose Garden every February shows thousands of subspecies of roses.[92]

The Mango Festival is held during the monsoons, and other festivals are held at Sukhna Lake.

Punjabi historic festivals like Lohri, Basant, Vaisakhi are also celebrated with great fervor and enthusiasm across the city.[93]

Unified Transport Metropolitan Authority, Chandigarh was made in 2023 to plan and execute the transportation needs of the Chandigarh Metropolitan Region.[94]

Chandigarh has the largest number of vehicles per capita in India.[95] Wide, well-maintained roads and parking spaces all over the city ease local transport.[96] The Chandigarh Transport Undertaking (CTU) operates public transport buses from its Inter State Bus Terminals (ISBT) in Sectors 17 and 43 of the city.[97] CTU also operates frequent bus services to the neighbouring states of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and to Delhi.

Chandigarh is well-connected by road to the following nearby cities, by the following highway routes:

Chandigarh Airport has scheduled commercial flights to the major cities of India. An international terminal was completed in 2015, and international flight routes to Dubai and Sharjah were started. The runway is located in Chandigarh, while the terminal is in Mohali. The governments of Punjab and Haryana each have a 24.5% stake in the international terminal building, while the Airports Authority of India holds a 51% stake.[98]

Chandigarh Junction railway station lies in the Northern Railway zone of the Indian Railways network and provides connectivity to most of the regions of India. The railway station also serves the neighbouring town of Panchkula. There were long-standing proposals to develop a metro rail system in the city, which were formally scrapped in 2017.[citation needed]

There are numerous educational institutions in Chandigarh. These range from privately and publicly operated schools to colleges. These include Panjab University, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Punjab Engineering College, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, National Institute of Technical Teacher Training

and Research (NITTTR), Post Graduate Government College, and DAV College.

According to the Chandigarh administration's department of education, there are a total of 115 government schools in Chandigarh,[99] including Government Model Senior Secondary School, Sector 16, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Bhavan Vidyalaya,[100] convent schools like St. Anne's Convent School, St. John's High School, Chandigarh, Sacred Heart Senior Secondary School[101] and Carmel Convent School, and other private schools like Delhi Public School[102] and D.A.V. Public School.[103]

The Sector 16 Stadium has been a venue of several international cricket matches, but it has lost prominence after the PCA Stadium was constructed in Mohali. It still provides a platform for cricketers in this region to practice and play inter-state matches.[104]

The Chandigarh Golf Club has a 7,202-yard, 18-hole course known for its challenging narrow fairways, dogleg 7th hole, and floodlighting on the first nine holes.[105]

The main tourist attractions in Chandigarh are:[106][107]

Nehru said of Chandigarh when he first visited the site of the new city in 1952: "Let this be a new town, symbolic of the freedom of India, unfettered by the traditions of the past, an expression of the nation's faith in the future".[108] For Nehru, Chandigarh represented a vision of how a new planned city could be a canvas for the regeneration of the nation itself after centuries of oppression under British colonial rule and the dilution of Indian character from the nation's towns. Guided by the architectural optics of Le Corbusier, the development of Chandigarh was part of a state-driven exercise to break from the traditions of imperialism in city making and begin the process of healing from the injustices suffered.[109]

To the extent that Chandigarh epitomises the destructive influence of the British, in the impetus of its creation as a solution to the otherwise violent partitioning of territory between India and Pakistan, it represents an early ideological symbol for the birth of India's future. The selection of the physical site involved an extensive vetting process. Many existing towns in Punjab were surveyed as options for the new capital and dismissed for poor performance concerning factors such as military defensibility and capacity for accommodating potential refugee influxes. The construction of a new town in Chandigarh was determined to be the best option due to its relative strength in these factors as well as its proximity to the national capital, New Delhi, its central location within the state of Punjab, its abundance of fecund land and its beautiful natural landscape.[110]

Off the back of this conflation of assets Chandigarh then was well poised to serve a function as a city-building project in national identity. From a federal policy perspective, the development of the new town became a tool in India for modernisation and an intended driver of economic activity, legal reform, and regional growth as well as a significant agent for the decolonisation project.[111] As Britain's grip on their empire began to weaken their accelerated withdrawal between the beginning of the second world war and 1947 left their former colony in states of disarray and disorganisation, and policymakers for the new Indian government were required to contend with issues such as rapid rural depopulation, urban congestion, and poverty. As well as in Chandigarh this policy tool was implemented in the creation of new capital cities in Bhubaneswar and Gandhinagar, and more broadly throughout India in the 112 planned cities created between independence and 1971, purposed to absorb migration from those regions in demise after being abandoned by the British and provide hubs for growing industries such as in steel and energy.[112]

These examples from a genealogy of utopian urban forms developed in post-independence India as a panacea for issues related to underdevelopment as well as post-independence complications to do with separatist religious conflict and the resulting diplomatic tensions. Chandigarh is the first example of a state-funded master-planned modernisation scheme. These "urban utopias" attempt to enforce nation-building policies through a federalised rule of law at a regional level, and diffuse postcolonial urbanism which codes justice in its design.[113] The intent is that the economic success and progressivism of cities such as Chandigarh as a lightning rod for social change would gradually be emulated at the scale of the nation. Chandigarh was for Nehru and Le Corbusier an embodiment of the egalitarian potential offered by modernism, where the machine age would complete the liberation of the nation's citizens through the productive capacity of industrial technology and the relative ease of constructing civic facilities such as dams, hospitals, and schools; the very antithesis of the conservative and traditional legacy of colonialism.[111] Though built as a state capital Chandigarh came to be focused on industry and higher education.[112] The specialisation of these new towns in particular functions represents a crucial aspect of the modernisation process as a decolonising enterprise, in completing a national portfolio where each town forms a part of the utopian model for contemporary India.

The post-colonialism of Chandigarh is rooted in the transformation of the political ideas of those such as Nehru who generated a new Indian nationalism through the design of newly built forms.[114] Scholars such as Edward Said have emphasised the sinister nature of nostalgia and the romanticisation of colonial architecture in newly independent colonies as artefacts that perpetuate the ideological legacy of the hegemony and replicate the hierarchy of power even after decolonisation.[115] Insofar as modernism in architecture (which defined town planning under the Nehru era of rule) represents an active radical break from tradition and a colonial past even the very presence of Le Corbusier has been recognised as an indelible resistance to the British construction legacy, as he provided the first non-British influence on design thinking in India, enabling a generational shift in the contemporary cohort of architects and planners to be hired by the state throughout the rest of the century who were initiated under Modernist conditioning.[114]

As early as the 1950s the presence of the International Style could be detected in the design of houses in India, "whether mistri or architect-designed".[116] The development of low-cost housing was a priority for Chandigarh, and the modern forms designed by Corbusier are characterised by a dispensing with colonial forms focused on classic aesthetics and a refocusing on strategies such as using narrow frontages and orientation for minimising direct exposure to the sun and maximising natural ventilation and efficient cost while providing modern amenities in the International Style aesthetic.[117] These developments are credited as the beginning of a "Chandigarh architecture", inspiring gradual experimentation with form and an "Indianising" of the International Style which precipitated the formation of the country's new cultural identity in town design.[114]

Criticisms are well established regarding the implementation of the postcolonial vision of Nehru and Le Corbusier and the critical emphasis on its influence. Claims have been made that the focus on Corbusier's architect-centred discourse erases the plural authorship of the narrative of Chandigarh's development, arguing that it was, in fact, a hybridity of values and of "contested modernities" of Western and indigenous Indian origin and cultural exchanges rather than an uncontested administrative enterprise.[118] Such criticism is consistent with claims that decolonisation in India has marked a shift from segregation based on race to segregation based on class and that planned cities are truly "designed" ones which represent the values and interests of a westernised middle-class Indian elite which ignore the complexities of India's diverse ethnic and cultural landscape and enabled neocolonial hierarchies such as the imposition of the Hindi language on non-conforming castes.[109][111][114]

Brent C. Brolin argues that Le Corbusier ignored Indian preferences in designing the housing and communities and that the residents have done what they can to recreate their accustomed lifestyle.[119] Furthermore, the early over-saturation of the minimalist International Style in building design in Chandigarh has attracted criticisms of effecting a "democratic, self-effacing banality", though this criticism is perhaps negligent of how this was necessary for galvanising higher standards of urban living throughout the country.[120]

List of films, Chandrawal, Jagat Jakhar)

Text extracted from URL 66:

The culture of Kashmir encompasses the spoken language, written literature, cuisine, architecture, traditions, and history of the Kashmiri people native to the northern part of the Indian subcontinent. The culture of Kashmir was influenced by the Persian as well as Central Asian cultures after the Islamic rule of Kashmir. Kashmiri culture is influenced by Hinduism, Buddhism and later by Islam.[1]

Vedic art and culture grew in Kashmir, and some early Vedic hymns were composed there.[2]

The Bharata Natya Shastra, which is notable as an ancient encyclopedic treatise on the arts which has influenced dance, music and literary traditions in Indian culture, originated in Kashmir.[3]

2nd century BC writer Patanjali compiled his compendium on Yoga in Kashmir.[2]

The Panchatantra is also said to have originated in this region.[4]

At the time when Pali was the primary language for Buddhist literature in the rest of India, all the Buddhist literature produced in Kashmir was in Sanskrit.

Kashmiri women held high status in society, as Bilhana records that Kashmiri women were fluent both in Sanskrit and Pali.[citation needed]

Kosh Shastra, a work on the science of sex, second to the Kamasutra, was developed in Kashmir.[5]

Some more examples of the major texts that also originated in Kashmir are the Vigyan Bhairav Tantra, Yoga Sutras, Sapndi Karkika[6] Tantra Loka[7] and Para-Trisika-Vivarana.[8]

Rice is the staple food of Kashmiris and has been so since ancient times.[9] Meat, along with rice, is the most popular food item in Kashmir.[10] Kashmiris consume meat voraciously.[11] Despite being Brahmins, most Kashmiri Hindus are meat eaters.[12] Kashmiri beverages include Noon Chai or Sheer Chai and Kahwah or Kehew.

The Kashmir Valley is noted for its bakery tradition. Bakers sell various kinds of breads with golden brown crusts topped with sesame and poppy seeds. Tsot and tsochvor are small round breads topped with poppy and sesame seeds, which are crisp and flaky; sheermal, baqerkhayn (puff pastry), lavas (unleavened bread) and kulcha are also popular. Girdas and lavas are served with butter. Kashmiri Bakarkhani has a special place in Kashmiri cuisine. It is similar to a round naan in appearance, but crisp and layered, and sprinkled with sesame seeds.[13] It is typically consumed hot during breakfast.[14]

Primary festivals of Kashmiri Hindus include:

Primary festivals of Kashmiri Muslims include:

Kashmiri (English: /kæʃˈmɪəri/)[15] or Koshur (Kashmiri pronunciation: [kəːʃur/]; کٲشُر, कॉशुर,𑆑𑆳𑆳𑆳𑆳𑆳),[16] is a language from the Dardic subgroup of Indo-Aryan languages, spoken by around 7 million Kashmiris, primarily in the Indian administered territory of Jammu and Kashmir. There are also speakers in parts of the neighbouring Pakistani territory of Azad Kashmir.

The official languages of Jammu and Kashmir are Koshur, Dogri, Hindi-Urdu and English. Kashmiri is recognised as a regional language in the state and is also among the 22 scheduled languages of India.

Kashmiri has split ergativity and the unusual verb-second word order.

Although Kashmiri was traditionally written in the Sharda script,[17][18][19] it is not in common use today, except for religious ceremonies of the Kashmiri Pandits.[20]

Today it is written in Perso-Arabic and Devanagari scripts (with some modifications).[21]

The Perso-Arabic script is recognised as the official script of Kashmiri language by the Jammu and Kashmir government and the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.[22][23][24][25]

Nowadays, the Perso-Arabic script has come to be associated with Kashmiri Muslims, while the Devanagari script has come to be associated with the Kashmiri Hindu community.[26]

The Bharata Natya Shastra is notable as an ancient encyclopedic treatise on the arts one which has influenced dance, music and literary traditions in India, originated in Kashmir.

Kashmiri Music primarily includes:

Media related to Culture of Kashmir at Wikimedia Commons

Text extracted from URL 67:

Jammu and Kashmir[b] is a region administered by India as a union territory[1] and consists of the southern portion of the larger Kashmir region, which has been the subject of a dispute between India and Pakistan since 1947 and between India and China since 1959.[3] The Line of Control separates Jammu and Kashmir from the Pakistani-administered territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan in the west and north. It lies to the north of the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab and to the west of Ladakh which is administered by India as a union territory.[2]

Provisions for the formation of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir were contained within the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, which was passed by both houses of the Parliament of India in August 2019. The act re-constituted the former state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, one being Jammu and Kashmir and the other being Ladakh, with effect from 31 October 2019.[18]

Jammu and Kashmir is named after the two regions it encompasses – the Jammu region and the Kashmir Valley. As per Government of India, Kashmir region encompasses the region under Indian control and the territory under Pakistan control known as "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir" (POK).[19][20] While Pakistan considers the Indian controlled territory as a part of "Indian-occupied Kashmir" (IOK) or "Indian-held Kashmir" (IHK),[21][22] neutral sources use "Indian-administered Kashmir"/"Pakistan-administered Kashmir" and "Indian-controlled Kashmir"/"Pakistan-controlled Kashmir" to demarcate the areas.[23]

The state of Jammu and Kashmir was accorded special status by Article 370 of the Constitution of India. In contrast to other states of India, Jammu and Kashmir had its own constitution, flag, and administrative autonomy.[24] Indian citizens from other states were not allowed to purchase land or property in Jammu and Kashmir.[25]

Jammu and Kashmir had three distinct areas: Hindu-majority Jammu region, Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley, and Buddhist-dominated Ladakh.[26] Unrest and violence persisted in the Kashmiri Valley and, following a disputed state election in 1987, an insurgency persisted in protest over autonomy and rights.[26][27]

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in the 2014 Indian general election and five years later included in their 2019 election manifesto the revocation of Article 370 of the Constitution of India, in order to bring Jammu and Kashmir to equal status with other states.[26]

A resolution to repeal Article 370 was passed by both the houses of the Parliament of India in August 2019. At the same time, a reorganisation act was also passed, which would reconstitute the state into two union territories, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.[28] The reorganisation took effect from 31 October 2019.[18]

In September 2019, nearly 4,000 people, including two former Chief Ministers and hundreds of other politicians, were arrested by the Indian authorities in Kashmir;[29] the state was put under a lockdown and communication and internet services were suspended.[30][31]

Jammu and Kashmir is home to several valleys such as the Kashmir Valley, Tawi Valley, Chenab Valley, Poonch Valley, Sind Valley, and Lidder Valley.[32] The Kashmir valley is 100 km (62 mi) wide and 15,520.3 km² (5,992.4 sq mi) in area.[33] The Himalayas divide the Kashmir valley from the Tibetan plateau while the Pir Panjal range, which encloses the valley from the west and the south, separates it from the Punjab Plain of the Indo-Gangetic Plain.[34] Along the northeastern flank of the Valley runs the main range of the Himalayas.[35] This valley has an average height of 1,850 metres (6,070 ft) above sea-level,[33] but the surrounding Pir Panjal range has an average elevation of 10,000 feet (3,000 m).[36] The Jhelum River is the major Himalayan river which flows through the Kashmir valley.[37] The southern Jammu region is mostly mountainous, with the Shivaliks, the middle and the great Himalayas running parallel to each other in a southeast–northwest direction. A narrow southwestern strip constitutes fertile plains. The Chenab, Tawi and Ravi are important rivers flowing through the Jammu region.[38]

The climate of Jammu and Kashmir varies with altitude and across regions. Southern and southwestern areas have a sub tropical climate, with hot summers and cool winters. This region receives most of its rainfall during the monsoon season. In the east and north, summers are usually pleasant. The effect of the monsoon diminishes in areas lying to the leeward side of the Pir Panjal, such as the Kashmir valley, and much of the rainfall happens in the spring season due to western disturbances. Winters are cold, with temperatures reaching sub-zero levels. Snowfall is common in the valley and the mountain areas.

The union territory of Jammu and Kashmir consists of two divisions: Jammu Division and Kashmir Division, and is further divided into 20 districts.[39]

Jammu and Kashmir has two major airports at the two capitals of the territory: Jammu Airport at Jammu and Srinagar Airport at Srinagar, which is also the only international airport in the territory. These airports have regular flights to Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chandigarh and other major cities of the country.

The under-construction Jammu-Baramulla line of the Northern Railways is the only railway line in the territory. Once complete, the line will connect the two regions of Jammu and Kashmir and will also provide a rail link to the Kashmir valley from other parts of the country.

The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, a segment of the NH44, is the main highway in the territory connecting the two capitals by road. National Highways 1, 144, 144A, 444, 501, 701 and 701A are the other NHs in the territory.

As per the 2011 census, Jammu and Kashmir has a total population of 12,267,013. The sex ratio is 889 females per 1000 males. Around 924,485 (7.54%) of the population is scheduled caste and 1,275,106 (10.39%) belong to the scheduled tribes, mainly Gujjar, Bakerwal, and Gaddi. The SCs are mostly concentrated in the Jammu region. The region also has a minority Christian community.

Muslims constitute the majority of the population of Jammu and Kashmir with a large Hindu minority.[60] The Kashmir Division is predominantly Muslim (96.41%) with a small Hindu (2.45%) and Sikh (0.81%) population. Only 808 Kashmiri Hindu Pandit families remain in the valley after their forced displacement by Islamic militants.[61] Shias are mostly concentrated in the Budgam district, where they form about 30-40% of the population.[62][63]

The Jammu Division is predominantly Hindu (66%) with a significant Muslim population (30%). The Muslims form a majority in the Rajouri (63%), Poonch (90%), Doda (54%), Kishtwar (58%) and Ramban (71%) districts of Jammu, while the Hindus form a majority in Kathua (88%), Samba (86%), Jammu (84%) and Udhampur (88%) districts. Reasi district has an almost equal number of Hindus and Muslims.[64] The Dogras and various organisations of Hindu-majority Jammu region have demanded a separate state after bifurcation of the territory, on the basis of cultural, linguistic and religious differences from neighbouring Kashmiris (who are predominantly Muslim by faith).[65][66][67]

Languages in Jammu & Kashmir 2011 Census of India.[68]

Kashmiri is the most-spoken language, is mainly spoken in the Kashmir Valley and in the upper reaches of the Chenab Valley, with a sizeable number of speakers in Jammu City. Dogri, related to Punjabi and Pahari, is spoken throughout the plains areas of Jammu division, as well as in parts of the hills. The hill people speak several languages. In the Pir Panjal Range, bordering Pakistan-administered Kashmir, the main language is Pahari-Pothwari, a western variety of Punjabi, as well as Gojri, the language of the Gujjar tribe. In the eastern hills of Jammu division are spoken various Western Pahari languages such as Siraji and Bhaderwahi, which merge with the dialects of western Himachal Pradesh.[68] Urdu is also widely understood and spoken, particularly in the Kashmir region where it acts as the lingua franca alongside Kashmiri and also serves as a medium of instruction along with English, while Hindi is taught and understood in the southern areas of Jammu.[citation needed]

According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate in Jammu and Kashmir was 67.17%, male literacy was 75%, while female literacy was at 56.43%.

Kashmir University located in Srinagar is the main university in the territory. Other universities include Jammu University, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Islamic University of Science & Technology, etc. Major institutions of higher education are NIT Srinagar, IIT Jammu, IIM Jammu, NIFT Srinagar and IHM Srinagar. Medical colleges include SKIMS, and the Government Medical College in Srinagar and AIIMS Vijaypur.

The union territory of Jammu and Kashmir is administered under the provisions of Article 239 of the Constitution of India. Article 239A, originally formulated for the union territory of Puduchery, is also applicable to Jammu and Kashmir.[69]

The President of India appoints a Lieutenant Governor for the union territory.[69]

A Council of Ministers led by a Chief Minister is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor from the membership of the legislative assembly. Their role is to advise the Lieutenant Governor in the exercise of functions in matters under the jurisdiction of the legislative assembly. In other matters, the Lieutenant Governor is empowered to act in his own capacity.[69]

The legislative branch of government is a unicameral legislative assembly, whose tenure is five years. The legislative assembly may make laws for any of the matters in the State List of the Constitution of India except "public order" and "police", which will remain the preserve of the central Government of India. The Lieutenant Governor also has the power to promulgate ordinances which have the same force as the acts of the legislative assembly.[69]

Elections for the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly are to be held to be expected in 2024 along with general election.[70]

The union territory is under the jurisdiction of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, which also serves as the high court for Ladakh.[69] Police services are provided by the Jammu and Kashmir Police.[71]

The main political parties active in the region are the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (President: Farooq Abdullah) the Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party (President: Mehbooba Mufti) the Bharatiya Janata Party (State President: Ravinder Raina), the Indian National Congress (State President: Ghulam Ahmad Mir), and the Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference (President: Sajjad Gani Lone). Other parties with a presence in the region include the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party, and the Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (President: Altaf Bukhari).

Jammu and Kashmir sends five members (MPs) to the lower house of the Indian parliament (the Lok Sabha) and four members to the upper house (the Rajya Sabha).

Jammu and Kashmir's economy is primarily services-based and agriculture-oriented.[72] The gross domestic product of Jammu and Kashmir was estimated at ₹1.76 lakh crore (equivalent to ₹2.1 trillion or US\$26 billion in 2023) in 2020–21.[73] In the fiscal year 2023–2024, it is expected that Jammu and Kashmir's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will exceed Rs 2.30 lakh crore, with a growth rate of 10 per cent.[74] Along with horticulture and agriculture, tourism is an important industry for Jammu and Kashmir, accounting for about 7% to its economy.[75]

The Kashmir Valley is known for its sericulture and cold-water fisheries.[76] Wood from Kashmir is used to make high-quality cricket bats, popularly known as Kashmir Willow.[77] Major agricultural exports from Jammu and Kashmir include apples, pears, cherries, plums, saffron and walnuts.[78] The traditional Kashmiri handicrafts industry employs a large workforce of around 340 thousand artisans and has potential for producing export goods.[72] Small-scale cottage industries include carpet weaving, silks, shawls, basketry, pottery, copper and silverware, papier-mâché and walnut wood.[72] The horticulture sector is the next biggest source of income in the economy. The temperature of Jammu and Kashmir is also suited to floriculture and can support various species of flora.[72]

Over 500 mineral blocks are present in Jammu and Kashmir, 261 of which are in the Kashmir Division alone.[79] Kishtwar is known as the 'land of sapphire and saffron'.[80] Resources such as timber, herbs and medicinal shrubs, edibles such as mushroom, chilgoza, black zeera, and saffron are available in the forests.[81] The sapphire reserve mines of Machail, Paddar are a source of mineral wealth.[81] Jammu and Kashmir is the only administrative unit in India with a large amount of borax and sapphire resources.[79] It possesses 36 per cent of the graphite, 21 per cent marble and 14 per cent of gypsum present in India.[79] Coal, limestone and magnesite are found scattered among the different districts of the union territory.[79]

Other minerals of significance that occur are bauxite, ball clay and china clay in Udhampur; bentonite in Jammu; diaspore in Rajouri and Udhampur; graphite in Baramulla; lignite and marble in Kupwara; quartz and silica sand in Anantnag, Doda and Udhampur; and quartzite in Anantnag district.[79] In addition, the Department of Geology and Mining has determined the presence of minerals such as magnetite, dolomite, fuel mineral, decorative building stones, slate, and gemstones. All are materials with commercial and industrial uses in many products and factories.[79]

In the fiscal year 2019–20, total exports from Jammu and Kashmir amounted to ₹188.18 million (equivalent to ₹220 million or US\$2.8 million in 2023).[72] The Jammu & Kashmir Bank, which is listed as a NIFTY 500 conglomerate, is based in the union territory.[82] Jammu and Kashmir is one of

the largest recipients of grants from the central government annually.[83] According to the Sustainable Development Goals Index 2021, 10.35 per cent of the population of Jammu and Kashmir live below the national poverty line, the third-highest among union territories in the country.[84]

The apple industry is a significant source of employment in Jammu and Kashmir, generating the highest number of jobs. It provides approximately 400 man-days of work per year per hectare of orchards, supporting a workforce of 3.5 million people. Moreover, it contributes approximately 10 per cent to the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). In the year 2020–2021, the apple production in Kashmir was reported to be 1,695,000.00 metric tonnes, while in the Jammu Division, it stood at 24,415.69 metric tonnes. The combined apple production for the entire Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir amounted to 1,719,415.69 metric tonnes. Notably, the Kashmir Valley is the primary contributor to these numbers, accounting for 75 per cent of India's total apple production and exporting around 1.8 million metric tonnes of apples annually.[85]

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) regulates all major aspects pertaining to media and telecommunications in Jammu and Kashmir.[86] In addition, the Jammu and Kashmir administration released their media policy in 2020 which enabled government officers to sanction journalists and media organisations for disseminating "fake news", and is valid for the next five years.[87] The policy attracted criticism for allegedly reducing people to "passive recipients of the information the government intends to disseminate." [88] The Press Council of India (PCI) expressed concern over the provisions of fake news in the policy, as it "interferes with the free functioning of the press." [89]

Major periodicals in Jammu and Kashmir include Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir, Kashmir Times, Daily Excelsior, Elite Kashmir and Kashmir Monitor.[90] DD Kashir is the state-owned television broadcaster.[91] Popular private television channels are ETV Urdu and Gulistan News.[92] In association with All India Radio, DD Kashir has established high power transmitters along the India–Pakistan border.[93] Radio Sharda, a worldwide community radio service for Kashmiri Pandits, was started by Ramesh Hangloo.[94] FM Tadka 95.0, BIG FM 92.7, Radio Mirchi and Red FM 93.5 are private FM radio stations.[95]

Internet shutdowns are frequent in Jammu and Kashmir. As of February 2021, the region had 300 internet shutdowns since 2012. In 2020 alone, this number was 115, the highest of any year.[96]

Sports tournaments in Jammu and Kashmir are organised by both the Indian army and police, as well as mainstream political parties and the All Parties Hurriyat Conference.[97] Sportspersons who represent India in tournaments face stigmatisation from separatists.[97]

Jammu and Kashmir has 18 stadiums, 23 training centres, three indoor sports complexes and 42 government-maintained playing fields.[98] Srinagar is home to the Sher-i-Kashmir Stadium, a stadium where international cricket matches have been played.[99] The Maulana Azad Stadium in Jammu is one of the home venues for the Jammu and Kashmir cricket team.[100] The Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar, named after Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, hosts football matches.[101]

Institutions such as the Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering and Winter Sports provides mountaineering, skiing and adventure courses.[102] The Royal Springs Golf Course, Srinagar, located on the banks of Dal lake, is considered one of the best golf courses in India.[103] Jammu and Kashmir was also host to the first Khelo India Winter Games, held in 2020 in Gulmarg.[104] Jammu and Kashmir came first with the most gold medals at 26, followed by the Indian Army team with 8 gold medals.[105] The second edition of the winter games were also held in Gulmarg in 2021, with Jammu and Kashmir coming first again.[106]

Some major tourist attractions in Jammu and Kashmir are Srinagar, the Mughal Gardens, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Patnitop, Bhaderwah and Jammu. Every year, thousands of Hindu pilgrims visit holy shrines of Vaishno Devi and Amarnath which has had significant impact on the state's economy.[107]

The Kashmir valley is one of the top tourist destinations in India.[108] Gulmarg, one of the most popular ski resort destinations in India, is also home to the world's highest green golf course.[109] The decrease in violence in the state has boosted the state's economy, specifically tourism.[110] Jammu and Kashmir is also famous for its scenery, flower gardens and apple farms. It attracts tourists for its unique handicrafts and the famous Kashmir shawls.[citation needed]

Text extracted from URL 68: The culture of Ladakh refers to the traditional customs, belief systems, and political systems that are followed by Ladakhi people in India. The languages, religions, dance, music, architecture, food, and customs of the Ladakh region are similar to neighboring Tibet. Ladakhi is the traditional language of Ladakh. The popular dances in Ladakh include the khatok chenmo, cham, etc. The people of Ladakh also celebrate several festivals throughout the year, some of the most famous are Hemis Tsechu and Losar.

Ladakh is the northmost part of India. Ladakh shares a border with Tibet to the east, the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh and the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir to the south, and Gilgit-Baltistan to the west. It extends from the Siachen Glacier in the Karakoram range in the north to the Great Himalayas to the south.[1] Formerly, it was a part of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, but after the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act (2019), it was separated from Jammu and Kashmir and was converted to a Union Territory.[2] Parts of Ladakh have been the subject of dispute between India, Pakistan, and China since 1947.[3]

Ladakh incorporates parts of the Himalayan and Karakoram mountain ranges and the upper Indus River valley. It is the only cold desert in India.[4] Its topography is barren and population sparse inhabited along the river banks of different valleys namely Indus, Nubra, Changthang, and Zaskar.[4] Women in Ladakh enjoy high status in comparison to rest of the nation, especially rural areas.[5] Ladakh's languages, religions, dance, music, architecture, food, and customs are similar to neighboring Tibet.[6]

The Ladakhi language is a Tibetic language spoken in Ladakh, which is also called Bhoti or Bodhi.[7] As per the 2011 census, approximately 110,826 people speak Ladakhi.[8] Ladakhi has absorbed words from the silk route trade.[9] It is usually written using Tibetan script with the pronunciation of Ladakhi being much closer to written Classical Tibetan.

The traditional music of Ladakh includes instruments like linyu (flute), damnyan (stringed instrument) pivang, khakong, (sitar) daph (dafli) daman, surna, and piwang (shehnai and drum). Chanting of mantras in Sanskrit and the Tibetan language plays an important role in Ladakhi music.[10][11] Folk music is an integral part of Ladakh's culture. Music is often inspired by the surrounding physical features.[12] Morup Namgyal is an avid preservationist and during his 30-year career working at Ladakh's only radio station (All India Radio, Leh) he recorded a vast archive of Ladakhi folk songs.[13]

The popular dances in Ladakh include the Khatok Chenmo which is headed by a respectable family member, Shondol,[14] Some other dance forms include Kompa Tsum-tsak Jabro Chaams: Chabs-Skyan Tses Raldi Tses and Alley Yaato.[15] The music of Ladakhi monastic festivals, like various forms of Tibetan music, often involves chanting as an integral part of the religion. Traditionally, 360

variants of dances existed in the early times, but today only a few are preserved. These chants are complex, often recitations of sacred texts and manuscripts or in celebration of different festivals. Some forms of dance narrate the story of the fight between good and evil, ending with the eventual victory of the former.[16]

Ladakhi food is much common as Tibetan food, the most prominent dishes being thukpa, a type of noodle soup and tsampa, known in Ladakhi as ngampe, which is a type of roasted barley flour. Strictly Ladakhi dishes include skyu and chutagi, both heavy and rich soup pasta dishes, skyu being made with root vegetables and meat, and chutagi with leafy greens and vegetables.[17] As Ladakh tourism and modernization increased in Ladakh, foods from the plains of India are becoming more common.[18]

Ladakh has several festivals throughout the year, including Hemis Tsechu and Losar.[19] Ladakh's festivals comprise mask dances performed by people, games such as camel races, river rafting and archery, regional music and dance performances, thangka exhibitions, etc.[20] People of Ladakh also celebrate several festivals throughout the year, some of the most famous ones are Hemis Tsechu and Saka Dawa. A lot of their time is also spent in making stone jewellery, woolen clothes, and mural paintings on the walls of the monasteries.[21] Weaving is considered as an essential part of traditional life in eastern Ladakh.[22] Some festivals of Ladakh are:

Buddhist monasteries are often situated on an isolated hillock in the vicinity of villages. These monasteries provide the focus for the faith of the religious Buddhist people.[31] Some monasteries and cultural centers of Ladakh are:

Both Leh and Shey monasteries have carved Buddhas, mostly of the Maitreya.[32]

Text extracted from URL 69:

Ladakh (/ləˈdɑːk/)[10] is a region administered by India as a union territory[1] and constitutes an eastern portion of the larger Kashmir region that has been the subject of a dispute between India and Pakistan since 1947 and India and China since 1959.[2] Ladakh is bordered by the Tibet Autonomous Region to the east, the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh to the south, both the Indian-administered union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Pakistan-administered Gilgit-Baltistan to the west, and the southwest corner of Xinjiang across the Karakoram Pass in the far north. It extends from the Siachen Glacier in the Karakoram range to the north to the main Great Himalayas to the south.[11][12] The eastern end, consisting of the uninhabited Aksai Chin plains, is claimed by the Indian Government as part of Ladakh, and has been under Chinese control.[13]

In the past, Ladakh gained importance from its strategic location at the crossroads of important trade routes,[14] but as Chinese authorities closed the borders between Tibet Autonomous Region and Ladakh in the 1960s, international trade dwindled. Since 1974, the Government of India has successfully encouraged tourism in Ladakh. As Ladakh is strategically important, the Indian military maintains a strong presence in the region.

The largest town in Ladakh is Leh, followed by Kargil, each of which headquarters a district.[15] The Leh district contains the Indus, Shyok and Nubra river valleys. The Kargil district contains the Suru, Dras and Zaskar river valleys. The main populated regions are the river valleys, but the mountain slopes also support pastoral Changpa nomads. The main religious groups in the region are Muslims (mainly Shia) (46%), Buddhists (mainly Tibetan Buddhists) (40%), and Hindus (12%) with the

remaining 2% made of other religions.[16][17] Ladakh is one of the most sparsely populated regions in India. Its culture and history are closely related to those of Tibet.[18]

Ladakh was established as a union territory of India on 31 October 2019, following the passage of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act. Prior to that, it was part of the Jammu and Kashmir state. Ladakh is both the largest and the second least populous union territory of India.[19][citation needed]

The classical name in Tibetan: ལ་དྭགས, Wylie: La dwags, THL: la dak means the "land of high passes". Ladak is its pronunciation in several Tibetan dialects. The English spelling Ladakh is derived from Persian: ladāx.[20][21]

The region was previously known as Maryul (see page for etymology).

Medieval Islamic scholars called Ladakh the "Great Tibet" (derived from Turko-Arabic Ti-bat, meaning "highland"); Baltistan and other trans-Himalayan states in Kashmir's vicinity were referred to as "Little Tibets".[22][23][b]

It has also been called Ma-Lo-Pho (by Hiuen Tsang) or Lal Bhumi. Names in the local language include Kanchapa (Land of snow) and Ripul (Country of mountains).[25]

Rock carvings found in many parts of Ladakh indicate that the area has been inhabited from Neolithic times.[26] Ladakh's earliest inhabitants consisted of nomads known as Kampa.[27] Later settlements were established by Mons from Kullu and Brokpas who originated from Gilgit.[27] Around the 1st century, Ladakh was a part of the Kushan Empire. Buddhism spread into western Ladakh from Kashmir in the 2nd century. The 7th-century Buddhist traveller Xuanzang describes the region in his accounts.[28] Xuanzang's term of Ladakh is Mo-lo-so, which has been reconstructed by academics as *Malasa, *Marāsa, or *Mrāsa, which is believed to have been the original name of the region.[29][30]

For much of the first millennium, western Tibet comprised Zhangzhung kingdom(s), which practised the Bon religion. Sandwiched between Kashmir and Zhangzhung, Ladakh is believed to have been alternatively under the control of one or other of these powers. Academics find strong influences of Zhangzhung language and culture in "upper Ladakh" (from the middle section of the Indus valley to the southeast).[31] The penultimate king of Zhangzhung is said to have been from Ladakh.[32]

From around 660 CE, the Tang dynasty and the Tibetan Empire started contesting the "four garrisons" of the Tarim Basin (present day Xinjiang), a struggle that lasted three centuries. Zhangzhung fell victim to Tibet's ambitions in c. 634 and disappeared. Karkota Empire and the Umayyad Caliphate too joined the contest for Xinjiang soon afterwards. Baltistan and Ladakh were at the centre of these struggles.[33] Academics infer from the slant of Ladakhi chronicles that Ladakh may have owed its primary allegiance to Tibet during this time, but that it was more political than cultural. Ladakh remained Buddhist and its culture was not yet Tibetan.[34]

In the 9th century, Tibet's ruler Langdarma was assassinated and Tibet fragmented. Kyide Nyimagon, Langdarma's great-grandson, fled to West Tibet c. 900 CE, and founded a new West Tibetan kingdom at the heart of the old Zhangzhung, now called Ngari in the Tibetan language.

Nyimagon's eldest son, Lhachen Palgyigon, is believed to have conquered the regions to the north, including Ladakh and Rutog. After the death of Nyimagon, his kingdom was divided among his three sons, Palgyigon receiving Ladakh, Rutog, Thok Jalung and an area referred to as Demchok Karpo (a holy mountain near the present-day Demchok village). The second son received Guge–Purang (called

"Ngari Korsum") and the third son received Zaskar and Spiti (to the southwest of Ladakh). This three-way division of Nyimagon's empire was recognised as historic and remembered in the chronicles of all the three regions as a founding narrative.

He gave to each of his sons a separate kingdom, viz., to the eldest Dpal-gyi-gon, Maryul of Mngahris, the inhabitants using black bows; ru-thogs [Rutog] of the east and the Gold-mine of Hgog [possibly Thok Jalung]; nearer this way Lde-mchog-dkar-po [Demchok Karpo]; ... [citation needed]

The first West Tibetan dynasty of Maryul founded by Palgyigon lasted five centuries, being weakened towards its end by the conquests of the Mongol/Mughal noble Mirza Haidar Dughlat. Throughout this period the region was called "Maryul", possibly from the original proper name *Mrasa (Xuangzhang's, Mo-lo-so), but in the Tibetan language it was interpreted to mean "lowland" (the lowland of Ngari). Maryul remained staunchly Buddhist during this period, having participated in the second diffusion of Buddhism from India to Tibet via Kashmir and Zaskar.

Between the 1380s and early 1510s, many Islamic missionaries propagated Islam and proselytised the Ladakhi people. Sayyid Ali Hamadani, Sayyid Muhammad Nur Baksh and Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi were three important Sufi missionaries who propagated Islam to the locals. Mir Sayyid Ali was the first one to make Muslim converts in Ladakh and is often described as the founder of Islam in Ladakh. Several mosques were built in Ladakh during this period, including in Mulbhe, Padum and Shey, the capital of Ladakh.[36][37] His principal disciple, Sayyid Muhammad Nur Baksh also propagated Islam to Ladakhis and the Balti people rapidly converted to Islam. Noorbakshia Islam is named after him and his followers are only found in Baltistan and Ladakh. During his youth, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin expelled the mystic Sheikh Zain Shahwalli for showing disrespect to him. The sheikh then went to Ladakh and proselytised many people to Islam. In 1505, Shamsuddin Iraqi, a noted Shia scholar, visited Kashmir and Baltistan. He helped in spreading Shia Islam in Kashmir and converted the overwhelming majority of Muslims in Baltistan to his school of thought.[37]

It is unclear what happened to Islam after this period and it seems to have received a setback. Mirza Muhammad Haidar Dughlat who invaded and briefly conquered Ladakh in 1532, 1545 and 1548, does not record any presence of Islam in Leh during his invasion although Shia Islam and Noorbakshia Islam continued to flourish in other regions of Ladakh.[36][37]

King Bhagan reunited and strengthened Ladakh and founded the Namgyal dynasty (Namgyal means "victorious" in several Tibetan languages). The Namgyals repelled most Central Asian raiders and temporarily extended the kingdom as far as Nepal.[26] During the Balti invasion led by Raja Ali Sher Khan Anchan, many Buddhist temples and artefacts were damaged. Ali Sher Khan took the king and his soldiers as captives. Jamyang Namgyal was later restored to the throne by Ali Sher Khan and given the hand of a Muslim princess in marriage. Her name was Gyal Khatun or Argyal Khatoom. She was to be the first queen and her son was to become the next ruler. Historical accounts differ upon who her father was. Some identify Ali's ally and Raja of Khaplu Yabgo Shey Gilazi as her father, while others identify Ali himself as the father.[38][39][40][41][42][43] In the early 17th century efforts were made to restore the destroyed artefacts and gonpas by Sengge Namgyal, the son of Jamyang and Gyal. He expanded the kingdom into Zaskar and Spiti. Despite a defeat of Ladakh by the Mughals, who had already annexed Kashmir and Baltistan, Ladakh retained its independence.

Islam begins to take root in the Leh area in the beginning of the 17th century after the Balti invasion and the marriage of Gyal to Jamyang. A large group of Muslim servants and musicians were sent along with Gyal to Ladakh and private mosques were built where they could pray. The Muslim musicians later settled in Leh. Several hundred Baltis migrated to the kingdom and according to oral

tradition many Muslim traders were granted land to settle. Many other Muslims were invited over the following years for various purposes.[44]

In the late 17th century, Ladakh sided with Bhutan in its dispute with Tibet which, among other reasons, resulted in its invasion by the Tibetan Central Government. This event is known as the Tibet–Ladakh–Mughal war of 1679–1684.[45] Kashmiri historians assert that the king converted to Islam in return for the assistance by Mughal Empire after this, however, Ladakhi chronicles do not mention such a thing. The king agreed to pay tribute to the Mughals in return for defending the kingdom.[46][47] The Mughals, however, withdrew after being paid off by the 5th Dalai Lama.[48] With the help of reinforcements from Galdan Boshugtu Khan, Khan of the Zungar Empire, the Tibetans attacked again in 1684. The Tibetans were victorious and concluded a treaty with Ladakh then they retreated back to Lhasa in December 1684. The Treaty of Tingmosgang in 1684 settled the dispute between Tibet and Ladakh but severely restricted Ladakh's independence.

In 1834, the Sikh Zorawar Singh, a general of Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, invaded and annexed Ladakh to Jammu under the suzerainty of the Sikh Empire. After the defeat of the Sikhs in the First Anglo-Sikh War, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was established as a separate princely state under British suzerainty. The Namgyal family was given the jagir of Stok, which it nominally retains to this day. European influence began in Ladakh in the 1850s and increased. Geologists, sportsmen, and tourists began exploring Ladakh. In 1885, Leh became the headquarters of a mission of the Moravian Church.

Ladakh was administered as a wazarat under Dogra rule, with a governor termed wazir-e-wazarat. It had three tehsils, based at Leh, Skardu and Kargil. The headquarters of the wazarat was at Leh for six months of the year and at Skardu for six months. When the legislative assembly, called Praja Sabha, was established in 1934, Ladakh was given two nominated seats in the assembly.

Ladakh was claimed as part of Tibet by Phuntsok Wangyal, a Tibetan Communist leader.[49]

At the time of the partition of India in 1947, the Dogra ruler Maharaja Hari Singh chose to remain independent of India or Pakistan. Pakistani soldiers from Gilgit invaded in October and had reached Ladakh. To get defence assistance from India, Singh was told by Nehru to sign the Instrument of Accession to India, and military operations were initiated to counter the invasion. The wartime conversion of the pony trail from Sonamarg to Zoji La by army engineers permitted tanks to move up and successfully capture the pass. The advance continued. Dras, Kargil and Leh were liberated and Ladakh cleared of the infiltrators.[50]

In 1949, China closed the border between Nubra and Xinjiang, blocking old trade routes. In 1955 China began to build roads connecting Xinjiang and Tibet through the Aksai Chin area. The Indian effort to gain control of Aksai Chin led to the Sino-Indian War of 1962, which India lost. China also built the Karakoram highway jointly with Pakistan. India built the Srinagar-Leh Highway during this period, cutting the journey time between Srinagar and Leh from 16 days to two. The route, however, remains closed during the winter months due to heavy snowfall. Construction of a 6.5 km (4.0 mi) tunnel across Zoji La pass is under consideration to make the route functional throughout the year.[26][51]

The Kargil War of 1999, codenamed "Operation Vijay" by the Indian Army, saw infiltration by Pakistani troops into parts of Western Ladakh, namely Kargil, Dras, Mushkoh, Batalik and Chorbitla, overlooking key locations on the Srinagar-Leh highway. Extensive operations were launched in high altitudes by the Indian Army with considerable artillery and air force support. Pakistani troops were evicted from the Indian side of the Line of Control which the Indian government ordered was to be

respected and which was not crossed by Indian troops. The Indian government was criticised by the Indian public because India respected geographical co-ordinates more than India's opponents: Pakistan and China.[52][page needed]

The Ladakh region was divided into the Kargil and Leh districts in 1979. In 1989, there were violent riots between Buddhists and Muslims. Following demands for autonomy from the Kashmiri-dominated state government, the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council was created in the 1990s. Leh and Kargil districts now each have their own locally elected Hill Councils with some control over local policy and development funds. In 1991, a Peace Pagoda was erected in Leh by Nipponzan Myohoji.

There was a heavy presence of Indian Army and Indo-Tibetan Border Police forces in Ladakh. These forces and People's Liberation Army forces from China have, since the 1962 Sino-Indian War, had frequent stand-offs along the Ladakh portion of the Line of Actual Control. Out of the 857-kilometre-long (533 mi) border in Ladakh, only 368 km (229 mi) is the International Border, and the remaining 489 km (304 mi) is the Line of Actual Control.[53][54] The stand-off involving the most troops was in September 2014 in the disputed Chumar region when 800 to 1,000 Indian troops and 1,500 Chinese troops came into close proximity to each other.[55]

On 8 February 2019, Ladakh became a separate Revenue and Administrative Division within Jammu and Kashmir, having previously been part of the Kashmir Division. As a division, Ladakh was granted its own Divisional Commissioner and Inspector General of Police.[56]

Leh was initially chosen to be the headquarters of the new division however, following protests, it was announced that Leh and Kargil will jointly serve as the divisional headquarters, each hosting an Additional Divisional Commissioner to assist the Divisional Commissioner and Inspector General of Police who will spend half their time in each town.[57]

The people of Ladakh had been demanding Ladakh to be constituted as a separate territory since 1930s, because of perceived unfair treatment by Kashmir and Ladakh's cultural differences with predominantly Muslim Kashmir valley, while some people in Kargil opposed union territory status for Ladakh.[26][58] The first organised agitation was launched against Kashmir's "dominance" in the year 1964. In late 1980s, a much larger mass agitation was launched to press their demand for union territory status.[59]

In August 2019, a reorganisation act was passed by the Parliament of India which contained provisions to reconstitute Ladakh as a union territory, separate from the rest of Jammu and Kashmir on 31 October 2019.[3][60][61][62] Under the terms of the act, the union territory is administered by a Lieutenant Governor acting on behalf of the Central Government of India and does not have an elected legislative assembly or chief minister. Each district within the union territory continues to elect an autonomous district council as done previously.[63]

The demand for Ladakh as separate union territory was first raised by the parliamentarian Kushok Bakula Rinpoche around 1955, which was later carried forward by another parliamentarian Thupstan Chhewang.[64] The former Jammu and Kashmir state used to obtain large allocation of annual funds from the union government based on the fact that the large geographical area of the Ladakh (comprising 65% of total area), but Ladakh was allocated only 2% of the state budget based on its relative population.[64] Within the first year of the formation of Ladakh as separate union territory, its annual budget allocation has increased 4 times from ₹57 crore to ₹232 crore.[64]

Ladakh is the highest plateau in India with most of it being over 3,000 m (9,800 ft).[17] It extends from the Himalayan to the Kunlun[65] Ranges and includes the upper Indus River valley.

Historically, the region included the Baltistan (Baltiyul) valleys (now mostly in Pakistani-administered Kashmir), the entire upper Indus Valley, the remote Zaskar, Lahaul and Spiti districts to the south, much of Ngari (including the Rudok region and Guge in the east), Aksai Chin in the northeast, and the Nubra Valley to the north, over Khardong La in the Ladakh Range. Contemporary Ladakh borders Tibet to the east, the Lahaul and Spiti regions to the south, the Vale of Kashmir, Jammu and Baltiyul regions to the west, and the southwest corner of Xinjiang, China across the Karakoram Pass in the far north. The historically vague divide between Ladakh and the Tibetan Plateau commences to the north in an intricate maze of ridges to the east of Rudok, including Aling Kangri and Mavang Kangri, continuing southeastward toward northwestern Nepal. Before partition, Baltistan, now part of Pakistan, had been a district of Ladakh; Skardu was the winter capital of Ladakh, with Leh being the summer capital.

The mountain ranges in this region were formed over 45 million years by the folding of the Indian Plate into the more stationary Eurasian Plate. The drift continues, causing frequent earthquakes in the Himalayan region.[c][66] The peaks in the Ladakh Range are at a medium altitude close to the Zoji-la (5,000–5,500 m or 16,400–18,000 ft) and increase toward southeast, culminating in the twin summits of Nun-Kun (7,000 m or 23,000 ft).

The Suru and Zaskar Valleys form a great trough, enclosed by the Himalayas and the Zaskar Range. Rangdum is the highest inhabited region in the Suru valley, after which the valley rises to 4,400 m (14,400 ft) at Pensi-la, the gateway to Zaskar. Kargil, the only town in the Suru Valley, is the second-most important town in Ladakh. It was an important staging post on the routes of trade caravans prior to 1947, being more-or-less equidistant (at about 230 kilometres) from Srinagar, Leh, Skardu and Padum. The Zaskar Valley lies in the troughs of the rivers Stod and Lungnak. The region experiences heavy snowfall; the Pensi-la is open only between June and mid-October. Dras and the Mushkoh Valley form the western extremity of Ladakh.

The Indus River is the backbone of Ladakh. Most major historical and current towns – Shey, Leh, Basgo and Tingmosgang (but not Kargil), are close to the Indus River. After the Indo-Pakistani War of 1947, the stretch of the Indus flowing through Ladakh became the only part of this river, which is greatly venerated in the Hindu religion and culture, that still flows through India.

The Siachen Glacier is in the eastern Karakoram Range in the Himalaya Mountains along the disputed India-Pakistan border. The Karakoram Range forms a great watershed that separates China from the Indian subcontinent and is sometimes called the "Third Pole." The glacier lies between the Saltoro Ridge immediately to the west and the main Karakoram Range to the east. At 76 km (47 mi) long, it is the longest glacier in the Karakoram and second-longest in the world's non-polar areas. It falls from an altitude of 5,753 m (18,875 ft) above sea level at its source at Indira Col on the China border down to 3,620 m (11,880 ft) at its snout. Saser Kangri is the highest peak in the Saser Muztagh, the easternmost subrange of the Karakoram Range in India, Saser Kangri I having an altitude of 7,672 m (25,171 ft).

The Ladakh Range has no major peaks; its average height is a little less than 6,000 m (20,000 ft), and few of its passes are less than 5,000 m (16,000 ft). The Pangong range runs parallel to the Ladakh Range for about 100 km (62 mi) northwest from Chushul along the southern shore of the Pangong Lake. Its highest point is about 6,700 m (22,000 ft) and the northern slopes are heavily glaciated. The region comprising the valley of the Shayok and Nubra rivers is known as Nubra. The Karakoram

Range in Ladakh is not as mighty as in Baltistan. The massifs to the north and east of the Nubra–Siachen line include the Apsarasas Group (highest point at 7,245 m or 23,770 ft) the Rimo Muztagh (highest point at 7,385 m or 24,229 ft) and the Teram Kangri Group (highest point at 7,464 m or 24,488 ft) together with Mamostong Kangri (7,526 m or 24,692 ft) and Singhi Kangri (7,202 m or 23,629 ft). North of the Karakoram lies the Kunlun. Thus, between Leh and eastern Central Asia there is a triple barrier – the Ladakh Range, Karakoram Range, and Kunlun. Nevertheless, a major trade route was established between Leh and Yarkand.

Ladakh is a high-altitude desert; the Himalayas create a rain shadow which generally denies passage of any monsoon clouds. The main source of water is the winter snowfall on the mountains. Recent flooding in the region (e.g., the 2010 floods) has been attributed to abnormal rain patterns and retreating glaciers, both of which have been found to be linked to global climate change.[67] The Leh Nutrition Project, headed by Chewang Norphel—also known as the "Glacier Man"—creates artificial glaciers as one solution for retreating glaciers.[68][69]

The regions on the north flank of the Himalayas – Dras, the Suru valley and Zangskar – experience heavy snowfall and remain cut-off from the rest of the region for several months during the year, just as the entire region remains isolated by road from the rest of the country. Summers are short, though they are long enough to grow crops; summer weather is dry and pleasant. Peak temperatures range from 3 to 35 °C (37 to 95 °F) in the summer and minimums range from –20 to –35 °C (–4 to –31 °F) in winter.[70]

The Zaskar (along with its tributaries) is the primary waterway of the region. The Zaskar freezes solid during the winter, and the famous Chadar trek takes place on the magnificent frozen river.

Vegetation is extremely sparse in Ladakh except along streambeds and wetlands, on high slopes, and irrigated places. About 1250 plant species, including crops, were reported from Ladakh.[71] The plant *Ladakiella klimesii*, growing up to 6,150 metres (20,180 ft) above sea level, was first described here and named after this region.[72] The first European to study the wildlife of this region was William Moorcroft in 1820, followed by Ferdinand Stoliczka, an Austrian-Czech palaeontologist, who carried out a massive expedition there in the 1870s. There are many lakes in Ladakh such as Kyago Tso.

The bharal (or blue sheep) is the most abundant mountain ungulate in the Ladakh region, although it is not found in some parts of Zangskar and Sham areas. The bharal is one of the preferred choices of prey of the rare snow leopard.[73] The Asiatic ibex is a mountain goat that is distributed in the western part of Ladakh. It is the second-most abundant mountain ungulate in the region, with a population of about 6,000 individuals. It is adapted to rugged areas where it easily climbs near-vertical rock faces when threatened.[74] The Ladakhi urial is another unique mountain sheep that inhabits the mountains of Ladakh. The population is declining, however, and there are not more than 3,000 individuals left in Ladakh.[75] The urial is endemic to Ladakh, where it is distributed only along two major river valleys, namely the Indus and Shayok. The animal is often persecuted by farmers, whose crops are allegedly damaged by flocks of urial. Its population declined dramatically in the late twentieth century, due to indiscriminate shooting by hunters along the Leh-Srinagar Highway.

The Tibetan argali (or nyan) is the largest wild sheep species in the world, standing 1.1 to 1.2 metres (3.5 to 4 ft) at the shoulder, possessing very large, curled horns measuring 900–1,000 mm (35–39 in). It is distributed on the Tibetan Plateau and its marginal ranges, encompassing a total home range of 2.5 million km² (0.97 million sq mi); however, there is only a small population, of about 400 animals,

in Ladakh. Unlike other mountain sheep and goat species, the argali prefers open, grassy fields and rolling hills as it prefers to run, rather than climb into steep terrain, to flee from danger.[76] The endangered Tibetan antelope, or chiru in Indian English (or Ladakhi tsos), has traditionally been hunted for its wool (shahtoosh), a natural fibre of some of the finest quality. The wool of the Tibetan antelope is prized for its lightweight feel and as a status symbol. The wool must be pulled out by hand, a process done after the animal is killed. The fibre is smuggled into Kashmir and woven into exquisite shawls by Kashmiri workers. Ladakh is also home to the Tibetan gazelle, which inhabits the vast rangelands in eastern Ladakh bordering Tibet.[77]

The kiang, or Tibetan wild ass, is common in the grasslands of Changthang, numbering about 2,500 individuals. These animals are in conflict with the nomadic people of Changthang who hold the Kiang responsible for pasture degradation.[78] There are about 200 snow leopards in Ladakh of an estimated 7,000 worldwide. The Hemis High Altitude National Park in central Ladakh is an especially good habitat for this predator as it has abundant prey populations. The Eurasian lynx, is another rare cat that preys on smaller herbivores in Ladakh. It is mostly found in Nubra, Changthang and Zangskar.[79] The Pallas's cat, which looks somewhat like a house cat, is very rare in Ladakh and not much is known about the species. The Tibetan wolf, which sometimes preys on the livestock of the Ladakhis, is the most persecuted amongst the predators.[80] There are also a few brown bears in the Suru Valley and the area around Dras. The Tibetan sand fox has been discovered in this region.[81] Among smaller animals, marmots, hares, and several types of pika and vole are common.[82]

Scant precipitation makes Ladakh a high-altitude desert with extremely scarce vegetation over most of its area. Natural vegetation mainly occurs along water courses and on high altitude areas that receive more snow and cooler summer temperatures. Human settlements, however, are richly vegetated due to irrigation.[83]

Natural vegetation commonly seen along watercourses includes seabuckthorn (*Hippophae* spp.), wild roses of pink or yellow varieties, tamarisk (*Myricaria* spp.), caraway, stinging nettles, mint, *Physochlaina praealta*, and various grasses.[84]

Under the terms of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, Ladakh is administered as a union territory without a legislative assembly or elected government. The head of government is a Lieutenant Governor appointed by the President of India who is assisted by civil servants of the Indian Administrative Service.[86]

Ladakh is divided into two districts:

Each district of Ladakh is administered by an autonomous district council, they are:

The two autonomous district councils work with village panchayats to take decisions on economic development, healthcare, education, land use, taxation, and local governance which are further reviewed at the block headquarters in the presence of the chief executive councillor and executive councillors.[87] The government of Jammu and Kashmir looks after law and order, the judicial system, communications and the higher education in the region.

The two autonomous district councils continue to exist following the formation of the union territory of Ladakh on 31 October 2019.[63]

Ladakh is under the jurisdiction of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.[88] The union territory of Ladakh has its own police force headed by a director general of police.[89]

Ladakh sends one member (MP) to the lower house of the Indian parliament the Lok Sabha. The MP for the Ladakh constituency in the current Lok Sabha is Jamyang Tsering Namgyal from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).[90][91]

The land is irrigated by a system of channels which funnel water from the ice and snow of the mountains. The principal crops are barley and wheat. Rice was previously a luxury in the Ladakhi diet, but, subsidised by the government, has now become a cheap staple.[17]

Naked barley (Ladakhi: nas, Urdu: grim) was traditionally a staple crop all over Ladakh. Growing times vary considerably with altitude. The extreme limit of cultivation is at Korzok, on the Tso-moriri lake, at 4,600 m (15,100 ft), which has what are widely considered to be the highest fields in the world.[17]

A minority of Ladakhi people were also employed as merchants and caravan traders, facilitating trade in textiles, carpets, dyestuffs and narcotics between Punjab and Xinjiang. However, since the Chinese Government closed the borders between Tibet Autonomous Region and Ladakh, this international trade has completely dried up.[26][92]

Indus river flowing in the Ladakh region is endowed with vast hydropower potential. Solar and wind power potentials are also substantial. Though the region is a remote hilly area without all-weather roads, the area is also rich in limestone deposits to manufacture cement from the locally available cheap electricity for various construction needs.[93]

Since 1974, the Indian Government has encouraged a shift in trekking and other tourist activities from the troubled Kashmir region to the relatively unaffected areas of Ladakh. Although tourism employs only 4% of Ladakh's working population, it now accounts for 50% of the region's GNP.[26]

This era is recorded in Arthur Neves *The Tourist's Guide to Kashmir, Ladakh, and Skardo*, first published in 1911.[92]

There are about 1,800 km (1,100 mi) of roads in Ladakh of which 800 km (500 mi) are surfaced.[94] The majority of roads in Ladakh are looked after by the Border Roads Organisation. There are two main roads that connect Ladakh with the rest of the country, NH1 connecting Srinagar to Kargil and Leh, and NH3 connecting Manali to Leh. A third road to Ladakh is the Nimmu–Padam–Darcha road, which is under construction.[95]

There is an airport in Leh, Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport, from which there are daily flights to Delhi and weekly flights to Srinagar and Jammu. There are two airstrips at Daulat Beg Oldie and Fukche for military transport.[96] The airport at Kargil, Kargil Airport, was intended for civilian flights but is currently used by the Indian Army. The airport is a political issue for the locals who argue that the airport should serve its original purpose, i.e., should open up for civilian flights. Since past few years the Indian Air Force has been operating AN-32 air courier service to transport the locals during the winter seasons to Jammu, Srinagar and Chandigarh.[97][98] A private aeroplane company Air Mantra landed a 17-seater aircraft at the airport, in presence of dignitaries like the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, marking the first ever landing by a civilian airline company at Kargil Airport.[99][100]

The sex ratio for Leh district declined from 1011 females per 1000 males in 1951 to 805 in 2001, while for Kargil district it declined from 970 to 901.[101] The urban sex ratio in both the districts is about 640. The adult sex ratio reflects large numbers of mostly male seasonal and migrant labourers and merchants. About 84% of Ladakh's population lives in villages.[102] The average annual population growth rate from 1981 to 2001 was 2.75% in Leh District and 2.83% in Kargil district.[101]

Religions in Ladakh (2011)[103]

The Dras and Dha-Hanu regions are inhabited by Brokpa, Drokpa, Dard and Shina tribes and Shina people respectively, who are predominately followers of Islam while small minorities follow Tibetan Buddhism and Hinduism.[104] The region's population is split roughly in half between the districts of Leh and Kargil. 76.87% population of Kargil is Muslim (mostly Shia),[105][103] with a total population of 140,802, while that of Leh is 66.40% Buddhist, with a total population of 133,487, as per the 2011 census.[103][106][107] Majority Ladakhis, Changpa and Brokpa follow Buddhism.

An increasing number of Muslim men and Ladakhi Buddhist women are marrying each other following a decline in the Buddhist population in Ladakh, leaving more Buddhist men without a spouse.[108][109]

Languages of Ladakh (2011 census)[110]

The predominant mother-tongue in Leh district is Ladakhi (also called Bauti), a Tibetic language.[110] Purkhi, sometimes considered a dialect of Balti, is the predominant mother-tongue of Kargil district.[110][111] Within Ladakh, there is a range of dialects, so that the language of the Chang-pa people may differ markedly from that of the Purig-pa in Kargil, or the Zangskaris, but they are all mutually comprehensible. Most Ladakhi people (especially the younger generations) speak fluently in English and in Hindi too, due to the languages education at school.[112] Administrative work and education are carried out in English.[113]

Ladakhi culture is similar to Tibetan culture.[114]

Ladakhi food has much in common with Tibetan food, the most prominent foods being thukpa (noodle soup) and tsampa, known in Ladakhi as ngampe (roasted barley flour). Edible without cooking, tsampa makes useful trekking food. Strictly Ladakhi dishes include skyu and chutagi, both heavy and rich soup pasta dishes, skyu being made with root vegetables and meat, and chutagi with leafy greens and vegetables.[115] As Ladakh moves toward a cash-based economy, foods from the plains of India are becoming more common.[116] As in other parts of Central Asia, tea in Ladakh is traditionally made with strong green tea, butter, and salt. It is mixed in a large churn and known as gurgur cha, after the sound it makes when mixed. Sweet tea (cha ngarmo) is common now, made in the Indian style with milk and sugar. Most of the surplus barley that is produced is fermented into chang, an alcoholic beverage drunk especially on festive occasions.[117]

The music of Ladakhi Buddhist monastic festivals, like Tibetan music, often involves religious chanting in Tibetan as an integral part of the religion. These chants are complex, often recitations of sacred texts or in celebration of various festivals. Yang chanting, performed without metrical timing, is accompanied by resonant drums and low, sustained syllables. Religious mask dances are an important part of Ladakh's cultural life. Hemis monastery, a leading centre of the Drukpa tradition of Buddhism, holds an annual masked dance festival, as do all major Ladakhi monasteries. The dances typically narrate a story of the fight between good and evil, ending with the eventual victory of the former.[118] Weaving is an important part of traditional life in eastern Ladakh. Both women and men weave, on different looms.[119]

The most popular sport in Ladakh is ice hockey, which is played only on natural ice generally mid-December through mid-February.[120] Cricket is also very popular.[citation needed]

Archery is a traditional sport in Ladakh, and many villages hold archery festivals, which are as much about traditional dancing, drinking and gambling, as they are about the sport. The sport is conducted with strict etiquette, to the accompaniment of the music of surna and daman (shehnai and drum).

Polo, the other traditional sport of Ladakh, is indigenous to Baltistan and Gilgit, and was probably introduced into Ladakh in the mid-17th century by King Singge Namgyal, whose mother was a Balti princess.[121]

Polo, popular among the Baltis, is an annual affair in the Dras region of Kargil district.[122][123][124][125]

The Ladakh Marathon is a high-altitude marathon held in Leh every year since 2012. Held at a height of 11,500 to 17,618 feet (3,505 to 5,370 m), it is one of the world's highest marathons.[126]

A feature of Ladakhi society that distinguishes it from the rest of the state is the high status and relative emancipation enjoyed by women compared to other rural parts of India. Fraternal polyandry and inheritance by primogeniture were common in Ladakh until the early 1940s when these were made illegal by the government of Jammu and Kashmir. However, the practice remained in existence into the 1990s especially among the elderly and the more isolated rural populations.[127] Another custom is known as khang-bu, or 'little house', in which the elders of a family, as soon as the eldest son has sufficiently matured, retire from participation in affairs, yielding the headship of the family to him and taking only enough of the property for their own sustenance.[17] Tibetan medicine has been the traditional health system of Ladakh for over a thousand years. This school of traditional healing contains elements of Ayurveda and Chinese medicine, combined with the philosophy and cosmology of Tibetan Buddhism. For centuries, the only medical system accessible to the people have been the amchi, traditional doctors following the Tibetan medical tradition. Amchi medicine remains a component of public health, especially in remote areas.[128]

Programmes by the government, local and international organisations are working to develop and rejuvenate this traditional system of healing.[128][129] Efforts are underway to preserve the intellectual property rights of amchi medicine for the people of Ladakh. The government has also been trying to promote the sea buckthorn in the form of juice and jam, as some claim it possess medicinal properties.

The National Research Institute for Sowa-Rigpa in Leh is an institute for research into traditional medicine and a hospital providing traditional treatments.[130]

According to the 2001 census, the overall literacy rate in Leh District is 62% (72% for males and 50% for females), and in Kargil District 58% (74% for males and 41% for females).[131] Traditionally there was little or nothing by way of formal education except in the monasteries. Usually, one son from every family was obliged to master the Tibetan script in order to read the holy books.[17]

The Moravian Mission opened a school in Leh in October 1889, and the Wazir-i Wazarat (ex officio Joint Commissioner with a British officer) of Baltistan and Ladakh ordered that every family with more than one child should send one of them to school. This order met with great resistance from the local people who feared that the children would be forced to convert to Christianity. The school taught Tibetan, Urdu, English, Geography, Sciences, Nature study, Arithmetic, Geometry and Bible study.[132] It is still in existence today. The first local school to provide western education was opened by a local Society called "Lamdon Social Welfare Society" in 1973. Later, with support from Dalai Lama and some international organisations, the school, now known as Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School, has grown to accommodate approximately two thousand pupils in several branches. It prides itself on preserving Ladakhi tradition and culture.[133]

Schools are well distributed throughout Ladakh but 75% of them provide only primary education. 65% of children attend school, but absenteeism of both students and teachers remains high. In both districts the failure rate at school-leaving level (class X) had for many years been around 85%–95%, while of those managing to scrape through, barely half succeeded in qualifying for college entrance (class XII). Before 1993, students were taught in Urdu until they were 14, after which the medium of instruction shifted to English.

As of January 2022, there were 904 Government run schools in Ladakh and 113 publicly run private schools in Ladakh [134]

In 1994 the Students' Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL) launched Operation New Hope (ONH), a campaign to provide "culturally appropriate and locally relevant education" and make government schools more functional and effective.[135] Central Institute of Buddhist Studies a Deemed University in Leh is the oldest institution in this region which mainly focuses on Buddhist philosophy but also offer degrees in different fields.[136]

The University of Ladakh with its two campuses (One each in Kargil & Leh) and its constituent colleges enables students to pursue higher education without having to leave Ladakh.[137] A central University has also been approved to be set up in Ladakh by the Union Cabinet.[138] The Indian Astronomical Observatory is located in Hanle and is operated by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics.[139]

In December 2019, the union minister of state for home affairs Mr G Kishan Reddy, in a written response has stated in Parliament that the Government of India has approved to establish a Medical College and National Research Institute for Sowa-Rigpa in the district of Leh.[140]

In August 2021, the Parliament of India amended the Central Universities Act to establish a central university in Ladakh named "Sindhu Central University".[141][142]

The government radio broadcaster All India Radio (AIR)[143] and government television station Doordarshan[144] have stations in Leh that broadcast local content for a few hours a day. Beyond that, Ladakhis produce feature films that are screened in auditoriums and community halls. They are often made on fairly modest budgets.[145] On 14 December 2021, the first FM radio station in Ladakh was established in Leh.[146]

There are a handful of private news outlets.

Some publications that cover Jammu and Kashmir as a whole provide some coverage of Ladakh.

Text extracted from URL 70:

Lakshadweep (Malayalam: [ləkʂəd̪β̞wiːb̞ɨ̌]) is a union territory of India. It is an archipelago of 36 islands[b] divided into three island subgroups: the Laccadive Islands in the middle with the Amindivi Islands in the north separated roughly by the 11th parallel north and the atoll of Minicoy to the south separated by the Nine Degree Channel along the 9th parallel north. The islands are sandwiched between the Arabian Sea to the west and the Laccadive Sea to the east with the islands located about 220–440 km (140–270 mi) off the Malabar Coast of mainland India.

The islands occupy a total land area of approximately 32.62 km² (12.59 sq mi) with a population of 64,473 as per the 2011 census in the 10 inhabited islands. The islands have a 132 km (82 mi) long coastline with a lagoon area of 4,200 km² (1,600 sq mi), territorial waters of 20,000 km²

(7,700 sq mi) and an exclusive economic zone of 400,000 km² (150,000 sq mi). The islands are the northernmost of the Lakshadweep–Maldives–Chagos group of islands, which are the tops of a vast undersea mountain range, the Chagos-Lakshadweep Ridge. The entire union territory is administered as a single district with Kavaratti as the capital.

Archaeological evidence from Kalpeni indicate the existence of human settlement in the region from at least 1500 BCE with the earliest reference to the islands are from the Buddhist Jataka tales presumably from the third century BCE. There are references to the control of the islands by the Cheras, one of the three kingdoms of ancient Tamilakam in the Tamil Sangam literature *Patirruppattu*. The region was captured by the Pallavas in the 7th century CE before Islam is presumed to have been brought to the region with the arrival of Muslims. In the 11th century CE, the region was part of the Chola kingdom, forming a part of the trade route which connected the Middle East with South Asia. It was briefly under the control of the Kingdom of Kannur before it came under the control of Portuguese in the late 15th century. After the expulsion of Portuguese in 1545, the region was ruled by the Arakkal kingdom, who were vassals to the Kolathiri Rajas of Kannur. The region came under the influence of Mysore kingdom in the late 18th century, which was annexed to the British empire, following the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War in 1799. The region became part of the Dominion of India following the Indian Independence in 1947 and became a union territory in 1956.

The name Lakshadweep means "one lakh islands" (*Lakṣadvīpa*; one hundred thousand islands) in Malayalam and Sanskrit, though the islands are part of an archipelago of few islands. English is designated as the official language while Jeseri, a dialect of Malayalam, is the widely spoken native language in the territory with Dhivehi being the most spoken in Minicoy Island. The region comes under the judicial jurisdiction of the Kerala High Court. Fishing and agriculture are the major occupations in the islands.

The name Lakshadweep is derived from *Lakṣadvīpa* meaning "one hundred thousand islands" presumably from Sanskrit or Malayalam.[5] Laccadive is an Anglicization of the given name during the British Raj.[6] The native name of Minicoy was *Maliku*, with the given name was the Anglicized version derived from *Minikaa-raajje* meaning "land of the cannibals" in Nicobarese as the island was known then in the Andaman and Nicobar.[7] *Amindivi* derives its name from the *Amindivi* people, who were earliest inhabitants of Amini Island.[8]

While it was presumed that Lakshadweep could have been part of the early human migration from Africa, genetic evidence points to the contrary with majority of human ancestry in the islands derived from South Asia.[9] Archaeological evidence from Kalpeni indicate the existence of human settlement in the region from at least 1500 BCE.[10] Jataka tales of Buddhism, dated to 300 BCE, mention the islands.[11][10] Archeological evidence also support the spread of Buddhism to the islands during the time with *Sanghmitra*, daughter of Ashoka presumed to have visited the island in the third century BCE.[12] There are references to the rule over the region by the Cheras in the Sangam period (300 BCE to 300CE), one of the three kingdoms of ancient Tamilakam in the Tamil Sangam literature *Patirruppattu*. [13]

The islands have long been known to sailors, first indicated by an anonymous reference in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* from the 1st century CE to the islands off the coast of Damirica as a source of a turtle shell.[14][15] Ptolemy in 150 CE mentions 1378 islands located opposite to Taprobane with names of some of the islands given by Kanathara (Kavaratti), Argidion (Agatti), Ammine (Amini) and Monache (Minicoy).[15] The islands were part of a trade route with the Roman empire, with archeological evidence from as early as 2nd century CE obtained from Kadamath and

Androth.[15] Travelers and historians such as Ammianus Marcellinus (4th century CE), Faxian (5th century CE) and Cosmas (6th century CE) mention the islands.[15]

Local traditions attribute the first settlement on the islands to Cheraman Perumal, the last Chera king of Kerala, though no historical evidence exist apart from the ancient Hindu social stratification.[16] According to popular tradition, Islam was brought to the islands by Ubaidullah in 661 CE, whose purported grave is located in Andrott.[16] Inscriptions from Vayalur indicate naval battles during the reign of Narasimhavarman II (680-720 CE), which resulted in the capture of the territory by the Pallavas of Kanchi in the late 7th century CE.[15] Inscriptions indicate the capture of the region of Kavadi Dvepa, presumably Kavaratti, by the Kadambas in the 10th century CE.[15] In the 11th century, the islands came under the rule of the Cholas.[17] Chola inscriptions from Thanjavur, indicate that the region was captured by Rajendra Chola I in 1018-19 CE.[18][19] In the late 11th century CE, it became part of a small Hindu kingdom before being passed on to the Kingdom of Kannur in early 12th century CE.[14] The islands are mentioned by travelers Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta in the 13th-14th century CE.[20][14]

In the late 15th century CE, the islands came under the control of the Portuguese, who utilized the same for coir production, until the islanders revolted and expelled them in 1545.[21][14] In the mid 16th century CE, all the inhabited islands were conferred as jagir on the ruling family of the Kannur by the Chirakkal or Kolattiri Raja in order to grant protection from the Portuguese.[22][23] The Aminidivi islands came under the rule of Tipu Sultan of Mysore Kingdom in 1787 which were later annexed to the British Raj in 1799 after the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War.[14] The rest of the islands remained under the suzerainty of the Arakkal family in return for a payment of annual tribute.[24] The British took over the administration of those islands in 1908 for nonpayment of arrears and attached it to the Madras Presidency.[25]

After the India Independence in 1947, the islands became part of the Dominion of India and became part of the Madras State under the Constitution of India in 1950.[26] In 1956, the islands which were had been divided between the South Canara and Malabar districts of Madras state, was organized into a separate union territory administered by the Government of India, following the States Reorganisation Act.[27][28] The territory which was known as Laccadive, Minicoy, and Amindivi Islands became Lakshadweep islands on 1 November 1973.[16] The headquarters of the new union territory remained at Kozhikode until 1964, when the seat of administrator of the islands was shifted to Kavaratti.[29] The islands have been developed into a key naval establishment due to its strategic location to protect the vital shipping lanes to the Middle East.[30]

Lakshadweep is an archipelago of 36 islands and islets that includes 12 atolls, three reefs and five submerged banks.[5] The islands are sandwiched between the Arabian Sea to the west and the Laccadive Sea to the east with the islands located about 220–440 km (140–270 mi) off the Malabar Coast of mainland India.[14][5] The territory is divided into three island subgroups: the Laccadive Islands in the middle with the Amindivi Islands in the north separated roughly by the 11th parallel north and the atoll of Minicoy to the south separated by the Nine Degree Channel along the 9th parallel north.[31] The islands occupy a total land area of approximately 32.62 km² (12.59 sq mi) in 10 inhabited islands, 17 uninhabited islands attached islets, four newly formed islets and five submerged reefs.[2][32] The islands have a 132 km (82 mi) long coastline with a lagoon area of 4,200 km² (1,600 sq mi), territorial waters of 20,000 km² (7,700 sq mi) and an exclusive economic zone of 400,000 km² (150,000 sq mi).[32]

The islands are the northernmost of the Lakshadweep–Maldives–Chagos group of islands, which are the tops of a vast undersea mountain range, the Chagos-Lakshadweep Ridge.[33] While there are no

conclusive theories about the formation of the atolls, Charles Darwin proposed in 1842 that the subsidence of a volcanic island which resulted in the formation of a fringing reef with the continual subsidence allowing it to grow upwards.[8] The islands are small with none more than 1 mile in breadth with most inhabited islands situated on the eastern side of the islands away from the low-lying lagoons on the western side.[14] The soils are generally sandy, derived from the coral.[14] According to a 2017 report, the Parali I island of Bangaram atoll has eroded and inundated completely with the other four islands in the atoll also showing various degrees of erosion: Parali II (80%), Thinnakara (14.4%), Parali III (11.4%) and Bangaram (9.9%).[4]

The islands have a tropical monsoon climate, bordering on a tropical savanna climate. The weather is warm throughout the year with temperatures ranging from 20 to 32 degree Celsius. While tropical cyclones arising in the Arabian Sea rarely strike the islands due to its smaller size, winds and waves associated with them can alter the features of the islands considerably.[14]

The Lakshadweep archipelago is part of the Maldives-Lakshadweep-Chagos Archipelago tropical moist forests ecoregion.[36] There are no forests in the islands.[37] Nearly 400 species of flowering plants have been documented, including three species of sea grasses *Cymodocea isoetifolia*, *Syringodium isoetifolium* and *Thalassia hemprichii*, other angiosperms such as *Pandanus*, *Heliotropium foertherianum*, *Tournefortia argentea* and *Pemphis acidula*, fungi, algae and lichens. The common flora of the atolls include coconut groves and coastal shrubs such as *Pemphis acidula*, *Cordia subcordata*, *Scaevola taccada*, *Thespesia populnea*, *Suriana maritima*, *Dodonaea viscosa*, *Guettarda speciosa* and seaweeds such as sea lettuces, *Codium* and *Hypnea*. [38][39]

There are over 600 recorded species of marine fishes, 78 species of corals, 82 species of seaweed, 52 species of crabs, 2 species of lobsters, 48 species of gastropods and 12 species of bivalves.[38][40] It is one of the four coral reef regions in India.[41]

Cetacean diversity off the Lakshadweep Islands and in adjacent areas include various whales (e.g. pygmy blue, Bryde's, sperm, orca, pilot whale) and dolphins.[42][43][44] The commonly seen are introduced cattle and poultry.[8] Other notable marine fauna include sharks, bonitos, tunas, snappers, flying fish, Manta rays, octopuses, crabs and turtles.[14] There are 101 species of birds, common amongst them include the brown noddy and sooty tern and water birds such as herons, teals and gulls.[14][38][8] Pitti island is a declared bird sanctuary and an important breeding place for sea turtles and a number of pelagic birds including the brown noddy, lesser crested tern and greater crested tern.[45]

The islands form a part of the union territory of Lakshadweep and is administered by a Lieutenant Governor on behalf of the Government of India.[47] The union territory was established in 1956 and constitutes a single Indian district.[48] The headquarters of the union territory remained at Kozhikode until 1964, when the seat of administrator of the islands was shifted to Kavaratti.[49]

For administration, the territory is divided into ten sub-divisions headed by sub-divisional officers except in Minicoy and Agatti, which are headed by deputy collectors.[50] The ten inhabited islands have village panchayats with total of 88 members across islands which form a district panchayat which has 26 directly elected members including the chairpersons of the ten village panchayats and the Member of Parliament for Lakshadweep Lok Sabha Constituency.[51] The territory is also divided into five community development blocks: Kavaratti, Amini, Andrott, Minicoy and Kiltan, each administered by Collector-cum-Development Commissioner, who is in charge of revenue, land settlement, law and order.[49] The commissioner also serves as a District magistrate and is assisted by an additional district magistrate and ten executive magistrates for enforcement of law and

order.[49] The administrator acts as Inspector General of Police and has command and control of the Lakshadweep Police, which has a sanctioned strength of 349 personnel across nine police stations.[50] The administration secretariat is based in Kavaratti.[50]

The territory elects one member to the lower house of the Indian parliament, the Lok Sabha.[52] The Lakshadweep is a reserved constituency for Scheduled Tribes.[53] The union territory falls under the judicial jurisdiction of the Kerala High Court at Kochi, and corresponds to a system of lower courts under it. There is a district and sessions court in Kavaratti since 1997 and two munsiff courts in Andrott and Amini.[54]

According to the 2011 census, Lakshadweep has a population of 64,473 of which 33,123 (51.3%) were males and 31,350 (48.7%) were females.[3] The territory had a sex ratio with 946 females per 1,000 males in 2011.[58] It also recorded the highest sex ratio at birth as per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) in 2021.[59] There were a total of 11,574 households and about 50,332 (78%) of the population lived in urban.[3] The literacy rate was 92.28%, the second highest amongst Indian territories, as per the NSO survey in 2017.[60] As per the NFHS, the fertility rate was 1.4, significantly below the national average of 2.0.[61]

Islam (96.6%) is the major religion of people of the islands with Sunni Islam being the predominant denomination, followed by Hinduism (2.8%) and Christianity (0.5%).[62][63] Most of the people of the islands are descendants of migrants from the Malabar coast of southwest India and are ethnically similar to the Mappilas of Kerala.[64] According to popular tradition, Islam was brought to the islands by Ubaidullah in 661 CE.[16] Although Islam is the predominant religion currently, the earliest settlers were probably Hindus with the religious orientation, social stratification and matrilineal kinship system evidences of the same.[14] The southernmost island of Minicoy have an ethnically Mahls population also native to the Maldives.

English is the official language with Malayalam classified as an additional official language.[66] Jeseri (also known as Dweep Basha), a dialect of Malayalam is the widely spoken language in Amindivi and Laccadive islands with the Mahl, a dialect of Dhivehi spoken in Minicoy.[67] There are minor variations of the same dialect across islands.[68]

Malayalam written in the Malayalam script was introduced as the primary language of Lakshadweep during the British Raj, while previously a type of Arabic script, which is also known as Ponnani script or Arabi Malayalam script, was used for writing the language.[69] The policy is continued with Malayalam serving as a link language on the islands including Minicoy.[70]

The economy is dependent on agriculture and allied industry and fishery with tourism, a developing industry.[14] As of 2013[update], there were 72 registered micro and small industries majorly involved in public sector, food products and furniture.[37] Major exports are coconut products including Coconut fibre (coir) and fishes.[37] While the actual arable land is minimal at 2.58 hectares, major agriculture produce is coconuts.[37] There are five coir factories, five production demonstration centers and seven curling units run by the government which produce coir fiber, yarn and mattings.[71]

With a vast lagoon area and an exclusive economic zone of 400,000 km² (150,000 sq mi), fishery is a major industry.[72] The estimated annual production is 21,016 tonnes of which 60% is tuna and related fishes with 60% of the total converted to dried products with 40% allocated for local consumption.[72] Commercial fishing is concentrated around 11 islands with skipjack tuna and yellowfin tuna being the only commercial varieties fished.[72] Fishing is done using mechanized

fishing boats, traditional country crafts and country crafts fitted with motors.[72] The government runs a tuna canning factory.[72]

The tourist industry in Lakshadweep traces to 1974, when the Bangaram atoll was opened for international tourism.[73][74] According to India tourism statistics, 10,435 domestic tourists and 1,313 foreign tourists visited the islands in 2018.[75] The government is promoting tourism as a means to increase the income of local population with the islands of Bangaram and Kadmat, promoted as tourist destinations.[74] With marine fauna and coral reefs, various water sports activities such as scuba diving, wind surfing, snorkelling, surfing, kayaking, canoeing, water skiing, sportfishing, yachting and night sea voyages have been established to promote tourism.[74] Tourists need a permission to visit the islands and foreign nationals are not permitted to visit certain islands.[76] According to the current alcohol laws of India, alcoholic beverage consumption is not permitted in the islands except on Bangaram island.[77] The government has proposed programmes to improve infrastructure and promote tourism.[78] The potential negative effects of tourism on the environment and ecosystem of the islands is a subject of debate.[79]

There is no single power grid connecting the islands and independent power houses caters to the power requirements of individual islands.[80] Minicoy was the first island to be electrified in 1962 followed by Kavaratti in 1964 and others later, with Bitra being the last island to be electrified in 1982.[80] Two diesel generators were established in 1962, generating 51.6 Kilo Watt.[80] As of 2012[update], the installed capacity is 18.5 Mega Watt from 41 diesel generators and 12 solar photovoltaic systems.[80]

The world's first ever experimental low-temperature thermal desalination plant opened on Kavaratti in 2005, which uses the temperature difference between warm surface seawater and much colder seawater at 500 m (1,600 ft) depth to generate potable water as well as energy, was put in place to produce 100,000 litres/day of potable water from seawater.[81][82] The technology was developed by the National Institute of Ocean Technology and government announced plans to build three further plants.[83]

Mobile communication service is provided by state-owned BSNL across all inhabited islands and Airtel in two islands of Kavaratti and Agatti.[84] In 2020, the government announced a project to install under-sea fiber optic cable for high-speed mobile and internet connectivity between Kochi and 11 islands of Lakshadweep.[85] India Post operates nine post offices that provide mail service.[37] There are four hospitals with 200 beds, four primary health centers, and 14 sub-health centers operated by the government.[37]

The islands are served by Agatti Airport on Agatti island, the only airport in the territory.[86] As the current 1.2 km (0.75 mi) long runway is capable of handling only smaller turboprop aircraft, the government has announced a plan in early 2024 to extend the runway to enable it to handle larger narrow body aircraft and expand the infrastructure to convert the airport into dual-use for civilian and military purposes.[87] A new greenfield airport is also proposed to be constructed at Minicoy Island.[87] Two helicopters are operated by Pawan Hans which serve for passenger transport and emergency medical evacuation across islands.[88]

As of 2019[update], there are 228 km (142 mi) of paved roads and no railway in the territory.[37][89] As of 2024[update], additional roads have been planned including a peripheral road at Kavaratti and beach front roads at Kadamath and Agatti islands.[90] As of 2023[update], seven ships operate passenger services between Kochi and the islands with seasonal boat/ferry service between islands.[91] In 2024, the government unveiled a plan to develop three ports at

Androth, Kalpeni and Kadamath islands as a part of the Sagar Mala project.[90] There are fifteen lighthouses in the islands.[92] The Minicoy Island Lighthouse was the first modern light house, established in 1885.[93]

Indian Navy operates INS Dweeprakashak, a naval base under the Southern Naval Command, commissioned in 2012.[94] There are ten minor ports, one each on all inhabited islands.[95]

The first public school was opened in Amini in 1904 with an elementary school opened in Kiltan in 1911 and Kadmat in 1925.[96] As of 2023[update], there are 50 schools catering to 8,350 students.[97] There are four government colleges affiliated to Pondicherry University and two colleges and three university centers affiliated to Calicut University in the territory.[98][99]

Text extracted from URL 71:

Pondicherry (/ˌpɒndɪˈtʃəri/ PON-dih-CHERR-ee) is the capital and most populous city of the Union Territory of Puducherry in India. The city is in the Puducherry district on the southeast coast of India and is surrounded by the Bay of Bengal to the east and the state of Tamil Nadu, with which it shares most of its culture, heritage, and language.[2]

Puducherry, formerly known as Pondicherry, gained its significance as "The French Riviera of the East" after the advent of French colonialisation in India. Puducherry is the Tamil interpretation of "new town" and mainly derives from "Poduke", the name of the marketplace or "port town" for Roman trade in the 1st century, as mentioned in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea. The settlement was once an abode of learned scholars versed in the Vedas, hence it was also known as Vedapuri.[3]

The history of Puducherry can broadly be classified into two periods: pre-colonial and colonial. The pre-colonial period started with the reign of the Pallavas, who ruled the empire from 325 to 900, after which came the Chola dynasty, from 900 to 1279, and the Pandya dynasty, from 1279 to 1370. During the 14th century, the city was under the rule of Naikship of Gingee of the Vijayanagara Empire, from 1370 to 1614, when it was conquered by the Sultan of Bijapur, who ruled it from 1614 to 1638. It was during this period that Portuguese and Danish merchants used it as a trading center.

The colonial period began with the Portuguese, the first Europeans to conduct trade in textiles, in 1521, and subsequently, the Dutch and the Danes in the 17th century.

The prospering trade of Puducherry attracted the French, and the predominant feature of the town was laid by the French pioneer Francois Martin in the form of a French settlement, in 1674. In 1693, Puducherry was captured by the Dutch and subsequently restored in 1699, with the Treaty of Ryswick.

The French acquired Mahé in 1720, Yanam in 1731, and Karaikal in 1738. The British captured the city from the French but returned it following the Treaty of Paris, in 1763. This Anglo-French war continued until 1814, where France found itself in control of the settlements of Puducherry, Mahé, Yanam, Karaikal, and Chandernagor, even during the British period, until 1954. It was a reign of 138 years under the French, who on 31 October 1954 left Indian shores following a de facto transfer of power.

Nearby places such as Arikamedu, Ariyankuppam, Kakayanthoppe, Villianur, and Bahour, which were colonised by the French East India Company over a period of time and later became the union territory of Pondicherry, have recorded histories that predate the colonial period.

Poduke or Poduca (marketplace) was a Roman trading destination from the third century BCE.[4] Poduca has been identified as possibly being Arikamedu (now part of Ariyankuppam), located about 2 miles (3.2 km) from the modern city of Pondicherry. The area was part of the Pallava Kingdom of Kanchipuram in the 4th century. The Cholas of Thanjavur held it from the 10th to the 13th centuries, until it was replaced by the Pandya Kingdom, in the 13th century. The Vijayanagar Empire took control of almost all of southern India in the 14th century and maintained control until 1638, when they were supplanted by the Sultan of Bijapur.

In 1674, the French East India Company set up a trading centre at Pondicherry, and this outpost eventually became the chief French settlement in India. The French governor François Martin made remarkable improvements to the city and its commercial ties, facing at the same time strong opposition from the Dutch and the English. He entered into extended negotiations with the sultans of Golconda through the intercession of several roving French merchants and doctors who were in favour with the sultan. Trading in jewellery and precious stones, which had become highly fashionable in European courts, was one among many activities. Five trading posts were established along the south Indian coast between 1668 and 1674. The city was separated by a canal into the French Quarter and the Indian Quarter.[5]

On 21 August 1693, during the Nine Years' War, Pondicherry was captured by the Dutch. The governor of Dutch Coromandel, Laurens Pit the Younger, sailed with a fleet of seventeen ships and 1,600 men from Nagapattinam and bombarded Pondicherry for two weeks, after which François Martin surrendered it. At the Peace of Ryswick, it was agreed by all parties to return conquered territories, and in 1699, Pondicherry was handed back to the French.[6]

On 16 January 1761, the British captured Pondicherry from the French, but it was returned under the Treaty of Paris (1763), at the conclusion of the Seven Years' War.[7] The British took control of the area again in 1793, at the Siege of Pondicherry, amid the Wars of the French Revolution, and returned it to France in 1814.

On 18 March 1954, a number of resolutions were passed by the municipalities in Pondicherry, demanding an immediate merger with India. Some days later, similar resolutions were passed by the municipalities in Karaikal. The resolutions had the full support of the French Indian Councillors, popularly known as ministers, and the president of the representative assembly. These municipalities represented roughly 90% of the population of the French possessions, and they called upon the government of France to take urgent and necessary measures to give effect to the wishes of the people.[8] The government of India had made it clear that the cultural and other rights of the people would be fully respected. They were not asking for the immediate transfer of de jure sovereignty of France. Their suggestion was that a de facto transfer of the administration should take place immediately, while French sovereignty should continue until the constitutional issue had been settled. Both India and France would have to make necessary changes in their respective constitutions. All this would take time, while the demand of the people was for an immediate merger without a referendum. The government of India was convinced that the suggestion which they made would help to promote a settlement, which they greatly desired.[8]

On 18 October 1954, in a general election involving 178 people in municipal Pondicherry and the Commune of Panchayat, 170 people were in favour of the merger, and eight people voted against.

The de facto transfer of the French Indian territories from French governance to the Indian union took place on 1 November 1954 and was established as the union territory of Pondicherry. The treaty effecting the de jure transfer was signed in 1956. However, due to opposition in France, the ratification of this treaty by the French National Assembly only took place on 16 August 1962.

The topography of Pondicherry is the same as that of coastal Tamil Nadu. Pondicherry's average elevation is at sea level and includes a number of sea inlets, referred to locally as "backwaters". Pondicherry experiences extreme coastal erosion as a result of a breakwater constructed in 1989,[9] just to the south of the city. Where there was once a broad, sandy beach, now the city is protected against the sea by a 2-km-long seawall that sits at a height of 8.5 m above sea level. Whilst there was an early seawall made by the French government in 1735, this was not "hard structure coastal defence" so much as an adjunct to the old shipping pier and a transition from the beach to the city.[10]

Today, the seawall consists of rows of granite boulders reinforced every year in an attempt to stop erosion. As a consequence of the seawall, there is severe seabed erosion and turbulence at the coastal margin, resulting in an extreme loss of biodiversity within the critical intertidal zone. Whenever gaps appear as the stones fall into the continually eroding seabed, the government adds more boulders. Pondicherry's seawall has also caused beach erosion to migrate further up the coast, to the fishing villages in Puducherry and Tamil Nadu to the north of the city.[citation needed]

In 2012, the Ministry of Power inaugurated the "Smart Grid" project in Puducherry.[11] Farming around Pondicherry includes crops such as rice, pulses, sugarcane, coconuts, and cotton.

In 2016, the Pondicherry State Government Employees Central Federation presented a status paper on the fiscal and social crisis in Puducherry to Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh. The report stated that a "combination of a staggering debt, stagnant tax revenues and rampant misappropriation of funds has throttled the economy of the Union Territory" and called for measures on a war footing to "deliver good governance and end corruption".[12]

The climate of Pondicherry is classified by the Köppen climate classification as tropical wet and dry,[13] similar to that of coastal Tamil Nadu. Summer lasts from April to early June, when maximum temperatures may reach 41 °C (106 °F). The average maximum temperature is 36 °C (97 °F). Minimum temperatures are in the order of 28–32 °C (82–90 °F). This is followed by a period of high humidity and occasional thundershowers from June until September.

The northeast monsoon sets in during the middle of October, and Pondicherry gets the bulk of its annual rainfall during the period from October to December. The annual average rainfall is 1,355 millimetres or 53 inches.[14] Winters are very warm, with highs of 30 °C (86 °F) and lows often dipping to around 18–20 °C (64–68 °F).

According to the 2011 census of India, Pondicherry had a population of 244,377, with 124,947 females and 119,430 males. It had an average literacy rate of 80.6%, with male literacy at 84.6% and female literacy at 76.7%. Ten per cent of the population was under six years of age.[1]

The majority of people in Pondicherry speak Tamil. There is a community of French people and a number of French institutions, such as a French consulate, the French Institute of Pondicherry, and L'Alliance française.[17]

The city of Puducherry comprises two municipalities, Puducherry and Uzhavarkarai. Both the municipalities and the commune panchayats in the Union Territory of Puducherry function under the administrative control of the local administration department.[18] The Puducherry municipality,

under the Puducherry district, comprises the former communes of Puducherry and Mudaliarpet, with its headquarters in Puducherry. It has a total of 42 wards spread over an area of 19.46 km² (7.51 sq mi).[19] Wards 1–10 are north of the city; wards 11–19 are in Boulevard Town, and the remaining wards are southwest of the city centre.[20]

There are two proposals by the Puducherry government, firstly to merge Pondicherry and Oulgaret municipalities and upgrade the Pondicherry municipality into a "municipal corporation", and secondly to upgrade Villianur and Ariyankuppam commune panchayats into municipalities, which would increase the Pondicherry region's urban area around 155 km² (60 sq mi) of the total 292 km² (113 sq mi).

Pondicherry is connected to Chennai via the East Coast Road through Mahabalipuram.[21] There are daily bus services from several main stops from Chennai. The Pondicherry Road Transport Corporation runs buses within the city and outside.[22] The Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation operates air-conditioned bus services from Chennai to Pondicherry.[23]

Pondicherry is connected by train to all major Indian cities, such as Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata (Howrah), Mumbai, Kanyakumari, Hyderabad, Nagpur, Bhubaneswar, Bengaluru, Visakhapatnam, and Mangalore.[24][25] Moreover, Villupuram Junction, which is at a distance of around 24 mi (39 km), is connected to several other Indian cities.[26]

Pondicherry Airport is located at Lawspet, an Assembly Constituency in the Union Territory of Puducherry.[27] It has direct flights to Hyderabad[27] and Bengaluru.

Pondicherry is a tourist destination. The city has many colonial buildings, churches, temples, and statues which, combined with the town planning and French-style avenues in the old districts, still preserve much of the colonial ambiance.

While the sea is a draw for tourists, Pondicherry no longer has the sandy beaches that once graced its coastline.[citation needed] The breakwater to the harbour and other hard structures constructed on the shore caused extreme coastal erosion, and the sand from Pondicherry's Promenade Beach has disappeared entirely. As a result of the city's seawall and groyne construction, the beaches further up the coast to the north have also been lost. An enormous deposition of sand has accrued to the south of the harbour breakwater, but this is not a large beach and is not easily accessible from the city.[citation needed]

The government has taken steps to construct a reef and re-dose the sand. The sea is accessible by a small patch of land at Promenade Beach (Goubert Avenue).[28] Moreover, the beach is one of the cleanest in India and has been selected for Blue Flag certification.[29]

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram, located on Rue de la Marine, is one of the most important ashrams in India, founded by the freedom fighter and spiritual philosopher Sri Aurobindo.[30] Auroville (City of Dawn) is an "experimental" township located 8 km (5.0 mi) northwest of Pondicherry.

There are a number of old and large churches in Pondicherry, most of which were built in the 18th and 19th centuries. A number of heritage buildings and monuments are present around Promenade Beach, such as the Children's Park and Dupleix Statue, Gandhi statue, Nehru statue, Le Café, French War Memorial, 19th Century Light House, Bharathi Park, Governors Palace, Romain Rolland Library, Legislative Assembly, Pondicherry Museum, and the French Institute of Pondicherry at Saint Louis Street.

Puducherry Botanical Gardens is located south of the New Bus Stand. Chunnambar Backwater resort is 8 km (5.0 mi) from Pondicherry, along Cuddalore Main Road. This tropical resort is flanked by a creek on one side.

Arulmigu Manakula Vinayagar Devasthanam on Manakula Vinayagar Street is a Hindu temple to Ganesha. Sri Manakula Vinayagar Temple was in existence before the French came and settled in Pondicherry in 1666.[31]

Sengazhuneer Amman at Veerampattinam village is one of the oldest temples in Pondicherry, situated about 7 km (4.3 mi) away from the city centre. The car festival conducted in mid-August is famous in Puducherry and other neighbouring states. The festival takes place on the fifth Friday since the commencement of the Tamil month of 'Aadi' every year.[32]

Thirukaameeswarar Temple is located in a rural town called Villianur,[33] located about 10 km (6.2 mi), towards Villupuram.

Text extracted from URL 72:

Puducherry (/ˌpʊdʊˈtʃəri/ PUU-duu-CHERR-ee), also known as Pondicherry (/ˌpɒndɪˈtʃəri/ PON-dih-CHERR-ee; French: Pondichéry), is a union territory of India, consisting of four small geographically unconnected districts. It was formed out of four territories of former French India, namely Pondichéry (then Puducherry), Karikal (Karaikal), Mahé and Yanam (now Yanam), excluding Chandannagar (Chandernagore), and it is named after the largest district, Puducherry, which was also the capital of French India. Historically known as Pondicherry (Pāṇṭiccēri), the territory changed its official name to Puducherry on 1 October 2006.[8][9]

The Union Territory of Puducherry lies in the southern part of the Indian Peninsula. The areas of Puducherry district and Karaikal district are bound by the state of Tamil Nadu, while Yanam district and Mahé district are enclosed by the states of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, respectively. Puducherry is the 29th most populous of the 36 states and union territories of India, and the third most densely populated union territory. It has a gross domestic product (GDP) of ₹210 billion (US\$2.6 billion) and ranks 25th in India.[10]

The name Puducherry is a compound of the Tamil words putu and cēri meaning "new slum"; its old name Pondicherry is a gallicised version of Pāṇṭicēri meaning "slum of Pandis".

Puducherry has five official names, owing its linguistic diversity, past-French heritage and the legacy of British India.[11]

The earliest recorded history of the municipality of Puducherry can be traced to the second century CE. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea mentions a marketplace named Poduke or Poduka (ch 60). G. W. B. Huntingford suggested this might be a site about 2 miles from the modern Puducherry, which was possibly the location of Arikamedu (now part of Ariyankuppam). Huntingford noted that Roman pottery was found at Arikamedu in 1937. In addition, archaeological excavations between 1944 and 1949 showed that it was "a trading station to which goods of Roman manufacture were imported during the first half of the 1st century" Subsequent investigation by Vimala Begley from 1989 to 1992 modified this assessment, and now place the period of occupation from the third or second century BCE to the eighth century CE.[15][16]

In 1674, the municipality of Pondicherry (Pondichéry) became a colony in the French colonial empire. Together with Chandernagor (already French since 1673), Mahé (since 1721), Yanam

(Yanaon) (since 1723), Karaikal (Karikal) (since 1739) and Masulipatam (1760), it formed the colony of French India, under a single French governor in Pondicherry, although French rule over one or more of these enclaves was repeatedly interrupted by British occupations. The territories of French India were completely transferred to the Republic of India de facto on 1 November 1954, and de jure on 16 August 1962, when French India ceased to exist, becoming the present Indian union territory of Pondicherry, combining four coastal enclaves. The fifth, Chandannagar, merged with the state of West Bengal in 1954. Immediately after the de facto transfer, the area was renamed the 'State of Pondicherry' by the "French Establishments (Change of Name) Order, 1954" issued by the Ministry of External Affairs of India.[17]: 37 The State of Pondicherry continued to be under the direct control of Government of India under the aegis of the Ministry of External affairs until 31 August 1964. Meanwhile, with effect from 1 July 1963, the State of Pondicherry officially became the Union Territory of Pondicherry and after 31 August 1964 it came under the control of the Ministry of Home Affairs.[17]: 37

Until 2016, the de jure transfer day (i.e. 16 August) was a public holiday with no official celebrations taking place.[18][19] In 2016, Lt. Governor of Puducherry, Kiran Bedi, made it a holiday as "De Jure Transfer Day."

Since 2010, de facto transfer day (i.e. 1 November) has been celebrated as Liberation day throughout Puducherry.[20] In 2014, Liberation day was declared as a public Holiday. This initiative was taken shortly after the NDA government came to power in 2014 and newly appointed Lt. Governor A. K. Singh issued a notification regarding that decision of the central government.[21]

The Union Territory of Puducherry consists of four small unconnected districts: Puducherry district (293 km² or 113 sq mi), Karaikal district (161 km² or 62 sq mi) and Yanam district (20 km² or 7.7 sq mi) on the Bay of Bengal and Mahé district (9 km² or 3.5 sq mi) on the Laccadive Sea, covering a total area of 483 km² (186 sq mi). Puducherry and Karaikal have the largest areas and population, and are both enclaves of Tamil Nadu. Yanam and Mahé are enclaves of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, respectively. Its population, as per the 2011 Census, is 1,394,467. Puducherry is the smallest union territory in terms of sea coastline with 30.6 km length.

Some of Puducherry's regions are themselves amalgamations of non-contiguous enclaves, often called "pockets" in India. The Puducherry region is made of 11 such pockets, some of which are very small and entirely surrounded by the territory of Tamil Nadu. Mahé region is made up of three pockets. This unusual geography is a legacy of the colonial period with Puducherry retaining the borders of former French India.

All four regions of Puducherry are located in the coastal region. Five rivers in Puducherry district, seven in Karaikal district, two in Mahé district and one in Yanam district drain into the sea, but none originates within the territory.

Religion in Puducherry

Hinduism is the major religion, adhered to by 87.3% of the population. Other religions practiced in the territory include Christianity (6.3%) and Islam (6.1%).[23]

Puducherry is a union territory of India rather than a state, which implies that governance and administration fall directly under federal authority. It is one of three union territories (with the National Capital Territory of Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir) entitled by a special constitutional amendment to an elected legislative assembly and cabinet of ministers, thereby conveying partial statehood.[24] There has been some interest by the territory's government in receiving full

statehood, but budgetary issues remain a consideration. Also, Mahe and Yanam may oppose such a change of status.[25]

The central government is represented by the Lieutenant Governor, who resides at the Raj Nivas (Le Palais du Gouverneur) at the Park, the former palace of the French governor. The central government is more directly involved in the territory's financial well-being unlike states, which have a central grant that they administer. Consequently, Puducherry has at various times, enjoyed lower taxes, especially in the indirect category.

According to the Treaty of Cession of 1956, the four territories of former French India territorial administration are permitted to make laws with respect to specific matters. In many cases, such legislation may require ratification from the federal government or the assent of the President of India.

Article II of the Treaty states:

Ces établissements conserveront le bénéfice du statut administratif spécial en vigueur avant le 1er novembre 1954. Toute modification constitutionnelle à ce statut ne pourra intervenir, le cas échéant, qu'après consultation de la population. (The Establishments will keep the benefit of the special administrative status which was in force prior to 1 November 1954. Any constitutional changes in this status which may be made subsequently shall be made after ascertaining the wishes of the people). The most widely spoken first language is Tamil, which is native to 88.2% of the population. There are also speakers of Telugu (6.0%), Malayalam (3.8%) and Urdu (0.7%). The official languages of Puducherry are French,[26] Tamil, Telugu (in Yanam), Malayalam (in Mahe) and English. An official mention in Rajya Sabha Parliamentary debates during 2006 confirms that Puducherry have all these five languages as official.[27]

Distribution of languages in Union Territory of Puducherry (2011)[28]

Even after the de facto transfer of the French Indian settlements in November 1954, French continued to remain as the official language according to Article XXVIII of the Traité de Cession (Treaty of Cession) of 1956.

Article XXVIII of the Treaty states:

Le français restera langue officielle des Établissements aussi longtemps que les représentants élus de la population n'auront pas pris une décision différente. (The French language shall remain the official language of the Establishments so long as the elected representatives of the people shall not decide otherwise). The 1963 Pondicherry representative assembly resolution also voted for continuance of French as official language and addition of other languages spoken in Puducherry such as Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam along with English and Hindi.[26]: 151–152

Considering the 1956 Treaty of cession and 1963 Assembly resolution, the 1963 Union Territories Act reconfirmed the 1963 resolution that French shall continue to be used as an official language unless the legislative assembly decides otherwise. The 1963 act allowed provision for inclusion of more official languages. Two years later, new official languages were recognised by The Pondicherry Official Language Act, 1965 which makes no mention of French (but also not officially denying it) implying the implicit continuation of its official language status. The same act stated that the Tamil language shall be the language to be used for all or any of the official purposes of the Union territory and the same official recognition is given for English. The same act also recognized officially Malayalam and Telugu in the Mahé and Yanam districts respectively.[4]

The widespread anti-Hindi agitations in the mid-1960s in South India would have prompted for inclusion of all the languages suggested in the 1963 assembly resolution except Hindi in the list of official languages of Puducherry. While the Union Territory official gazette's name is in French (*La Gazette de L'État de Poudouchéry*), it is published exclusively in English.[29]

The jurisdiction of the Madras High Court has been extended to Pondicherry with effect from 6 November 1962.[note 1]

The Chief Justice of the Madras High Court is the head of the judiciary of Puducherry. The present chief justice is S. V. Gangapurwala.[30][31]

The gross domestic product of Puducherry, at market prices estimated by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation with figures in millions of Indian rupees grew from 1,840 to 258,190 million rupees from 1980 to 2014.

The potential for fisheries is substantial in the Union Territory. The four regions of the Union Territory have a coastline of 45 km with 675 of inshore waters, 1.347 hectares (3.33 acres) of inland water and 800 ha of brackish water. 27 marine fishing villages and 23 inland fishing villages host a fishermen population of about 65,000 of which 13,000 are actively engaged in fishing. Tanks and ponds are also tapped for commercial fish rearing.

Puducherry is one of the most popular tourist spots in India for national and international tourists. Puducherry was the residence of Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950) and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram still operates from Puducherry. A unique experimental city Auroville, the brainchild of the Mother, whose inhabitants are drawn from all parts of the world is situated on the outskirts of the city. There are several temples, churches, monuments, parks, and mosques which attract tourists.

Puducherry is connected by a railway branch line from the five-way junction at Viluppuram and Chennai. The railway line is a broad gauge line with 16 originating trains and 17 terminating trains.[35]

Meanwhile Karaikal and Mahe also well connected by railway lines. Several railway lines are also under construction in Karaikal district.[36] The nearest major railway station to Yanam is Kakinada (CCT) in Andhra Pradesh (33 KM).

Puducherry has an airport called Puducherry Airport. It has flight operations between Puducherry and Hyderabad.[37] A new airport is proposed in Karaikal which is called as Karaikal Airport.[38] The nearest airport to Yanam is Rajahmundry Airport (IATA: RJA, ICAO: VORY), 90 KM away.

Puducherry U.T. has several ports namely Karaikal port, Puducherry port, Mahe port. Among them, the largest port is Karaikal Port.[39]

Puducherry has a network all-weather metalled roads connecting the territory. Puducherry has a road length of 2,552 km (road length per 4.87 km²), the highest in the country. PRTC buses play a vital role in Puducherry U.T.

According to the 2011 census, Puducherry had a literacy rate of 86.55.[40] Pondicherry University is a university centrally located in Puducherry.[41] Other educational institutions include Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (JIPMER), Indira Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute (Govt. of Puducherry), Mahatma Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Dental Science (Govt. of Puducherry), Tagore Arts and Science College, Indira Gandhi College of Arts and Science (Govt. of Puducherry), Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute, National Institute of Technology, Puducherry, Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Institute of Engineering and

Technology,[42] Pondicherry Engineering College, Mother Theresa Post Graduate and Research Institute of Health Sciences, Acharya College of Engineering Technology (ACET), Rajiv Gandhi College of Engineering and Technology, Rajiv Gandhi College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi Medical College & Research Institute, Sri Manakula Vinayagar Engineering College, RAAK college of Engineering and Technology, Sri Manakula Vinayagar Medical College Hospital, Sri Lakshmi Narayana College of Engineering, and Sri Venkateshwaraa Medical College Hospital and Research Centre.

