**India introduction**

**India**, officially the **Republic of India** (*Bhārat Gaṇarājya*),[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India" \l "cite_note-15)[[c]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-16) is a country in [South Asia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Asia). It is the [seventh-largest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_and_outlying_territories_by_total_area) country by area, the [second-most populous](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population) country with [over 1.2 billion people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_India), and the most populous [democracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy) in the world. Bounded by the [Indian Ocean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Ocean) on the south, the [Arabian Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_Sea) on the south-west, and the [Bay of Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay_of_Bengal) on the south-east, it shares land borders with [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan) to the west;[[d]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-17) [China](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China), [Nepal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal), and [Bhutan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhutan) to the north-east; and [Myanmar (Burma)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myanmar) and [Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh) to the east. In the Indian Ocean, India is in the vicinity of [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka) and the [Maldives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maldives); in addition, India's [Andaman and Nicobar Islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andaman_and_Nicobar_Islands) share a maritime border with [Thailand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thailand) and [Indonesia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia).

Home to the ancient [Indus Valley Civilisation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indus_Valley_Civilisation) and a region of historic trade routes and vast empires, the [Indian subcontinent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_subcontinent) was identified with its commercial and cultural wealth for much of its long history.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEStein199816.E2.80.9317-18) Four religions—[Hinduism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism_in_India), [Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Buddhism_in_India), [Jainism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jainism_in_India), and [Sikhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikhism_in_India)—originated here, whereas [Zoroastrianism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoroastrianism_in_India) and the [Abrahamic religions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abrahamic_religion) of [Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism), [Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_India), and [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_India) arrived in the 1st millennium [CE](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Era) and also helped shape the region's [diverse culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_India). Gradually annexed by and brought under the administration of the [British East India Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Company_rule_in_India) from the early 18th century and [administered directly by the United Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj) after the [Indian Rebellion of 1857](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Rebellion_of_1857), India became an independent nation in 1947 after a[struggle for independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_independence_movement) that was marked by [non-violent resistance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-violent_resistance) led by [Mahatma Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohandas_Karamchand_Gandhi).

The [Indian economy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_India) is the world's [seventh-largest by nominal GDP](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)) and [third-largest by purchasing power parity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)) (PPP).[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-imf2-12) Following [market-based economic reforms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_liberalisation_in_India) in 1991, India became one of the [fastest-growing major economies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_real_GDP_growth_rate_(latest_year)); it is considered a [newly industrialised country](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newly_industrialised_country). However, it continues to face the challenges of [poverty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_in_India), [corruption](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corruption_in_India), [malnutrition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malnutrition_in_India), [inadequate public healthcare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Healthcare_in_India), and [terrorism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism_in_India). A [nuclear weapons state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_weapons_state) and a [regional power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_(international_relations)#Power_as_status), it has the [third-largest standing army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_number_of_troops) in the world and ranks [ninth in military expenditure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_military_expenditures) among nations. India is a [federal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federalism) [constitutional republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_republic) governed under a [parliamentary system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_system) consisting of [29 states and 7 union territories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/States_and_territories_of_India). India is a[pluralistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pluralism_(political_philosophy)), [multilingual](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_India), and a multi-ethnic society. It is also home to a diversity of [wildlife](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_of_India) in a variety of [protected habitats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protected_areas_of_India).

Etymology

*Main article:*[*Names of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_India)

The name *India* is derived from *Indus*, which originates from the [Old Persian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Persian_language) word *[Hinduš](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindus" \o "Hindus)*. The latter term stems from the [Sanskrit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanskrit) word *Sindhu*, which was the historical local appellation for the [Indus River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indus_River).[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEOxford_English_Dictionary-19) The [ancient Greeks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece) referred to the Indians as *Indoi* , which translates as "the people of the Indus".

The geographical term *Bharat* ,which is recognised by the [Constitution of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_India) as an official name for the country,[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMinistry_of_Law_and_Justice_2008-21) is used by [many Indian languages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Names_of_the_Republic_of_India_in_its_official_languages) in its variations. The [eponym](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eponym) of *Bharat* is [Bharata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharata_(emperor)" \o "Bharata (emperor)), a theological figure that Hindu scriptures describe as a legendary emperor of ancient India.

[*Hindustan*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindustan)  was originally a [Persian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_language) word that meant "Land of the Hindus"; prior to 1947, it referred to a region that encompassed northern India and [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan). It is occasionally used to solely denote India in its entirety.

### Ancient India

The earliest authenticated [human](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatomically_modern_humans) remains in [South Asia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Asia) date to about 30,000 years ago. Nearly contemporaneous [Mesolithic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesolithic) rock art sites have been found in many parts of the Indian subcontinent, including at the [Bhimbetka rock shelters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhimbetka_rock_shelters" \o "Bhimbetka rock shelters) in [Madhya Pradesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhya_Pradesh). Around 7000 BCE, the first known [Neolithic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neolithic) settlements appeared on the subcontinent in [Mehrgarh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mehrgarh" \o "Mehrgarh) and other sites in western Pakistan. These gradually developed into the [Indus Valley Civilisation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indus_Valley_Civilization), the first urban culture in South Asia; it flourished during 2500–1900 BCE in Pakistan and western India along the river valleys of Indus and [Sarasvati](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarasvati_river" \o "Sarasvati river). Centred on cities such as [Mohenjo-daro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohenjo-daro" \o "Mohenjo-daro), [Harappa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harappa), [Dholavira](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dholavira" \o "Dholavira), and [Kalibangan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalibangan" \o "Kalibangan), and relying on varied forms of subsistence, the civilisation engaged robustly in crafts production and wide-ranging trade.

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Vedic_India.png)

Map of the Indian subcontinent during the [Vedic period](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedic_period)

During the period 2000–500 BCE, in terms of culture, many regions of the subcontinent transitioned from the [Chalcolithic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chalcolithic) to the [Iron Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Age).The [Vedas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedas), the oldest scriptures of [Hinduism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism), were composed during this period, and historians have analysed these to posit a [Vedic culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedic_period) in the [Punjab region](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab_region) and the upper [Gangetic Plain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Gangetic_Plain" \o "Indo-Gangetic Plain). Most historians also consider this period to have encompassed several waves of [Indo-Aryan migration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Aryan_migration) into the subcontinent. The [caste system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caste_system) arose during this period, which created a hierarchy of priests, warriors, free peasants and traders, and lastly the indigenous peoples who were regarded as impure; and small tribal units gradually coalesced into monarchical, state-level polities. On the [Deccan Plateau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deccan_Plateau), archaeological evidence from this period suggests the existence of a chiefdom stage of political organisation. In southern India, a progression to sedentary life is indicated by the large number of [megalithic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megalith) monuments dating from this period, as well as by nearby traces of agriculture, irrigation tanks, and craft traditions.

### Medieval India

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Big_Temple-Temple.jpg)

The granite [tower](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gopuram) of[Brihadeeswarar Temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brihadeeswarar_Temple) in[Thanjavur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanjavur) was completed in 1010 CE by [Raja Raja Chola I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raja_Raja_Chola_I).

The Indian early medieval age, 600 CE to 1200 CE, is defined by regional kingdoms and cultural diversity. When [Harsha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harsha" \o "Harsha) of [Kannauj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kannauj" \o "Kannauj), who ruled much of the Indo-Gangetic Plain from 606 to 647 CE, attempted to expand southwards, he was defeated by the [Chalukya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chalukya_dynasty" \o "Chalukya dynasty) ruler of the Deccan. When his successor attempted to expand eastwards, he was defeated by the [Pala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pala_Empire) king of [Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal). When the Chalukyas attempted to expand southwards, they were defeated by the [Pallavas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pallava" \o "Pallava) from farther south, who in turn were opposed by the [Pandyas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandyas" \o "Pandyas) and the [Cholas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cholas) from still farther south. No ruler of this period was able to create an empire and consistently control lands much beyond his core region. During this time, pastoral peoples whose land had been cleared to make way for the growing agricultural economy were accommodated within caste society, as were new non-traditional ruling classes. The caste system consequently began to show regional differences.

In the 6th and 7th centuries, the first [devotional hymns](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhakti) were created in the Tamil language. They were imitated all over India and led to both the resurgence of Hinduism and the development of all [modern languages of the subcontinent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_India). Indian royalty, [big](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharaja) and [small](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samanta), and the temples they patronised, drew citizens in great numbers to the capital cities, which became economic hubs as well. Temple towns of various sizes began to appear everywhere as India underwent another urbanisation. By the 8th and 9th centuries, the effects were felt in South-East Asia, as South Indian culture and political systems were exported to lands that became part of modern-day [Myanmar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myanmar), [Thailand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thailand), [Laos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laos), [Cambodia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambodia), [Vietnam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam), [Philippines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippines), [Malaysia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia), and [Java](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Java). Indian merchants, scholars, and sometimes armies were involved in this transmission; South-East Asians took the initiative as well, with many sojourning in Indian seminaries and translating Buddhist and Hindu texts into their languages.

### Early modern India

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Moghul.1590-95%D0%B3%D0%B3.jpg)

Writing the will and testament of the Mughal king court in Persian, 1590–1595

In the early 16th century, northern India, being then under mainly Muslim rulers, fell again to the superior mobility and firepower of a new generation of Central Asian warriors. The resulting [Mughal Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_Empire) did not stamp out the local societies it came to rule, but rather balanced and pacified them through new administrative practices and diverse and inclusive ruling elites, leading to more systematic, centralised, and uniform rule. Eschewing tribal bonds and Islamic identity, especially under [Akbar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akbar), the Mughals united their far-flung realms through loyalty, expressed through a Persianised culture, to an emperor who had near-divine status. The Mughal state's economic policies, deriving most revenues from agriculture and mandating that taxes be paid in the well-regulated silver currency, caused peasants and artisans to enter larger markets. The relative peace maintained by the empire during much of the 17th century was a factor in India's economic expansion, resulting in greater patronage of [painting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_painting), literary forms, textiles, and [architecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_architecture). Newly coherent social groups in northern and western India, such as the [Marathas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maratha_Empire), the [Rajputs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajputs" \o "Rajputs), and the [Sikhs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikh_empire), gained military and governing ambitions during Mughal rule, which, through collaboration or adversity, gave them both recognition and military experience. Expanding commerce during Mughal rule gave rise to new Indian commercial and political elites along the coasts of southern and eastern India. As the empire disintegrated, many among these elites were able to seek and control their own affairs. The "single most important power" that emerged in the early modern period was the [Maratha confederacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maratha_Empire).

By the early 18th century, with the lines between commercial and political dominance being increasingly blurred, a number of European trading companies, including the English [East India Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_India_Company), had established coastal outposts. The East India Company's control of the seas, greater resources, and more advanced military training and technology led it to increasingly flex its military muscle and caused it to become attractive to a portion of the Indian elite; both these factors were crucial in allowing the Company to gain control over the [Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal) region by 1765 and sideline the other European companies. Its further access to the riches of Bengal and the subsequent increased strength and size of its army enabled it to annex or subdue most of India by the 1820s. India was then no longer exporting manufactured goods as it long had, but was instead supplying the [British Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire) with raw materials, and many historians consider this to be the onset of India's colonial period. By this time, with its economic power severely curtailed by the British parliament and itself effectively made an arm of British administration, the Company began to more consciously enter non-economic arenas such as education, social reform, and culture.

### Modern India

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:British_Indian_Empire_1909_Imperial_Gazetteer_of_India.jpg)

The British Indian Empire, from the 1909 edition of [*The Imperial Gazetteer of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Imperial_Gazetteer_of_India). Areas directly governed by the British are shaded pink; the [princely states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princely_state) under British [suzerainty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suzerainty) are in yellow.

Historians consider India's modern age to have begun sometime between 1848 and 1885. The appointment in 1848 of [Lord Dalhousie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Broun-Ramsay,_1st_Marquess_of_Dalhousie) as Governor General of the [East India Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Company_rule_in_India) set the stage for changes essential to a modern state. These included the consolidation and demarcation of sovereignty, the surveillance of the population, and the [education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Education_Act_1835) of citizens. Technological changes—among them, railways, canals, and the telegraph—were introduced not long after their introduction in Europe. However, disaffection with the Company also grew during this time, and set off the [Indian Rebellion of 1857](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Rebellion_of_1857). Fed by diverse resentments and perceptions, including invasive British-style social reforms, harsh land taxes, and summary treatment of some rich landowners and princes, the rebellion rocked many regions of northern and central India and shook the foundations of Company rule. Although the rebellion was suppressed by 1858, it led to the dissolution of the East India Company and to the [direct administration of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj) by the British government. Proclaiming a unitary state and a gradual but limited British-style parliamentary system, the new rulers also protected princes and landed gentry as a feudal safeguard against future unrest. In the decades following, public life gradually emerged all over India, leading eventually to the founding of the [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) in 1885.

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nehru_gandhi.jpg)

[Jawaharlal Nehru](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jawaharlal_Nehru) (left) became India's first prime minister in 1947.[Mahatma Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi) (right) led the independence movement.

The rush of technology and the commercialization of agriculture in the second half of the 19th century was marked by economic setbacks—many small farmers became dependent on the whims of far-away markets. There was an increase in the number of large-scale [famines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Famine_in_India), and, despite the risks of infrastructure development borne by Indian taxpayers, little industrial employment was generated for Indians. There were also salutary effects: commercial cropping, especially in the newly canalled Punjab, led to increased food production for internal consumption. The railway network provided critical famine relief, notably reduced the cost of moving goods, and helped nascent Indian-owned industry. After World War I, in which approximately [one million Indians served](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Army_during_World_War_I), a new period began. It was marked by [British reforms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montagu%E2%80%93Chelmsford_Reforms) but also [repressive legislations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rowlatt_act), by more strident Indian calls for self-rule, and by the beginnings of a [nonviolent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolent) movement of non-cooperation, of which [Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohandas_Karamchand_Gandhi) would become the leader and enduring symbol. During the 1930s, slow legislative reform was enacted by the British; the Indian National Congress won victories in the resulting elections. The next decade was beset with crises: [Indian participation in World War II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India_in_World_War_II), the Congress's final push for non-cooperation, and an upsurge of Muslim nationalism. All were capped by the advent of independence in 1947, but tempered by the [partition of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Partition_of_India) into two states: India and Pakistan.

Vital to India's self-image as an independent nation was its constitution, completed in 1950, which put in place a secular and democratic republic; upon Indian independence in 1947 [George VI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_VI) ceased to be the [Emperor of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor_of_India), a title rescinded retroactively by an Act of Parliament on 22 June 1948, and became [King of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_of_India) until 26 January 1950. In the 60 years since, India has had a mixed record of successes and failures. It has remained a democracy with civil liberties, an active Supreme Court, and a largely independent press. Economic liberalisation, which was begun in the 1990s, has created a large urban middle class, transformed India into [one of the world's fastest-growing economies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(real)_growth_rate), and increased its geopolitical clout. Indian movies, music, and spiritual teachings play an increasing role in global culture. Yet, India is also shaped by seemingly unyielding poverty, both rural and urban; by [religious](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_violence_in_India) and [caste-related violence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caste-related_violence_in_India); by [Maoist-inspired Naxalite insurgencies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naxalite); and by [separatism in Jammu and Kashmir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insurgency_in_Jammu_and_Kashmir) and [in Northeast India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insurgency_in_Northeast_India). It has unresolved territorial disputes with [China](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China%E2%80%93India_relations#1960s) and with [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Pakistani_wars_and_conflicts). The India–Pakistan nuclear rivalry came to a head in 1998. India's sustained democratic freedoms are unique among the world's new nations; however, in spite of its recent economic successes, freedom from want for its disadvantaged population remains a goal yet to be achieved.

Geography

*Main article:*[*Geography of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_India)

*See also:*[*Geology of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geology_of_India)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:India_topo_big.jpg)

A topographic map of India

India comprises the bulk of the Indian subcontinent, lying atop the [Indian tectonic plate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Plate), and part of the [Indo-Australian Plate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Australian_Plate). India's defining geological processes began 75 million years ago when the Indian plate, then part of the southern supercontinent [Gondwana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gondwana" \o "Gondwana), began a north-eastward[drift](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plate_tectonics) caused by [seafloor spreading](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seafloor_spreading) to its south-west, and later, south and south-east. Simultaneously, the vast [Tethyn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tethys_Ocean" \o "Tethys Ocean) [oceanic crust](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oceanic_crust), to its northeast, began to [subduct](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subduction" \o "Subduction) under the [Eurasian plate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasian_plate). These dual processes, driven by convection in the Earth's [mantle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mantle_(geology)), both created the [Indian Ocean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Ocean) and caused the Indian [continental crust](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental_crust) eventually to under-thrust Eurasia and to uplift the [Himalayas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Himalayas). Immediately south of the emerging Himalayas, plate movement created a vast [trough](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trough_(geology)) that rapidly filled with river-borne sediment and now constitutes the [Indo-Gangetic Plain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Gangetic_Plain). Cut off from the plain by the ancient [Aravalli Range](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aravalli_Range" \o "Aravalli Range) lies the [Thar Desert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thar_Desert" \o "Thar Desert).

The original Indian plate survives as [peninsular India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_India), the oldest and geologically most stable part of India. It extends as far north as the [Satpura](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satpura_Range" \o "Satpura Range) and[Vindhya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vindhya_Range) ranges in central India. These parallel chains run from the Arabian Sea coast in Gujarat in the west to the coal-rich [Chota Nagpur Plateau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chota_Nagpur_Plateau" \o "Chota Nagpur Plateau) in Jharkhand in the east. To the south, the remaining peninsular landmass, the [Deccan Plateau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deccan_Plateau), is flanked on the west and east by coastal ranges known as the [Western](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Ghats) and [Eastern Ghats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Ghats); the plateau contains the country's oldest rock formations, some over one billion years old. Constituted in such fashion, India lies to the north of the equator between 6° 44' and 35° 30' north latitude[[e]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-123) and 68° 7' and 97° 25' east longitude.

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:KedarRange.jpg)

The Kedar Range of the Greater Himalayas rises behind [Kedarnath Temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kedarnath_Temple" \o "Kedarnath Temple) (Indian state of [Uttarakhand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uttarakhand" \o "Uttarakhand)), which is one of the twelve *[jyotirlinga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jyotirlinga" \o "Jyotirlinga)*[shrines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jyotirlinga" \o "Jyotirlinga).

India's coastline measures 7,517 kilometres (4,700 mi) in length; of this distance, 5,423 kilometres (3,400 mi) belong to peninsular India and 2,094 kilometres (1,300 mi) to the Andaman, Nicobar, and Lakshadweep island chains. According to the Indian naval hydrographic charts, the mainland coastline consists of the following: 43% sandy beaches; 11% rocky shores, including cliffs; and 46% [mudflats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mudflat) or marshy shores.

Major Himalayan-origin rivers that substantially flow through India include the [Ganges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganges) and the [Brahmaputra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahmaputra_River), both of which drain into the [Bay of Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay_of_Bengal). Important tributaries of the Ganges include the [Yamuna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yamuna) and the [Kosi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kosi_River" \o "Kosi River); the latter's extremely low gradient often leads to severe floods and course changes. Major peninsular rivers, whose steeper gradients prevent their waters from flooding, include the [Godavari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godavari_River), the [Mahanadi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahanadi_River), the[Kaveri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaveri_River), and the [Krishna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna_River), which also drain into the Bay of Bengal; and the [Narmada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narmada_River) and the [Tapti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tapti_River), which drain into the [Arabian Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_Sea). Coastal features include the marshy [Rann of Kutch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rann_of_Kutch" \o "Rann of Kutch) of western India and the alluvial [Sundarbans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sundarbans" \o "Sundarbans) delta of eastern India; the latter is shared with Bangladesh. India has two archipelagos: the [Lakshadweep](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lakshadweep), coral atolls off India's south-western coast; and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a volcanic chain in the [Andaman Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andaman_Sea).

The [Indian climate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_of_India) is strongly influenced by the Himalayas and the Thar Desert, both of which drive the economically and culturally pivotal summer and winter [monsoons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monsoon). The Himalayas prevent cold Central Asian [katabatic winds](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katabatic_wind) from blowing in, keeping the bulk of the Indian subcontinent warmer than most locations at similar latitudes. The Thar Desert plays a crucial role in attracting the moisture-laden south-west summer monsoon winds that, between June and October, provide the majority of India's rainfall. Four major climatic groupings predominate in India: [tropical wet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_of_India#Tropical_wet), [tropical dry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_of_India#Tropical_dry), [subtropical humid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_of_India#Subtropical_humid), and [montane](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_of_India" \l "Mountain" \o "Climate of India).

Biodiversity

*Main article:*[*Wildlife of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_of_India)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pfau_imponierend.jpg)

The [Indian peafowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_peafowl) (*Pavo cristatus*) is the Indian national bird. It roosts in moist and dry-deciduous forests, cultivated areas, and village precincts.[[131]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEAliRipleyDick199690-136)

India lies within the [Indomalaya ecozone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indomalaya_ecozone" \o "Indomalaya ecozone) and contains three [biodiversity hotspots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biodiversity_hotspot). One of 17 [megadiverse countries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megadiverse_countries" \o "Megadiverse countries), it hosts 8.6% of all mammalian, 13.7% of all avian, 7.9% of all reptilian, 6% of all amphibian, 12.2% of all piscine, and 6.0% of all flowering plant species. About 21.2% of the country's landmass is covered by forests (tree canopy density >10%), of which 12.2% comprises moderately or very dense forests (tree canopy density >40%). [Endemism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endemism) is high among plants, 33%, and among [ecoregions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ecoregions_in_India" \o "List of ecoregions in India) such as the [shola](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shola) [forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Western_Ghats_montane_rain_forests). Habitat ranges from the[tropical rainforest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropical_and_subtropical_moist_broadleaf_forests) of the [Andaman Islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andaman_Islands), [Western Ghats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Ghats), and [North-East India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeast_India) to the [coniferous forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temperate_coniferous_forest) of the Himalaya. Between these extremes lie the moist deciduous [sal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shorea_robusta" \o "Shorea robusta) forest of eastern India; the dry deciduous [teak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teak) forest of central and southern India; and the [babul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acacia_nilotica)-dominated [thorn forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deserts_and_xeric_shrublands) of the central Deccan and western Gangetic plain. The medicinal [neem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neem" \o "Neem), widely used in rural Indian herbal remedies, is a key Indian tree. The luxuriant[pipal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_fig) fig tree, shown on the seals of [Mohenjo-daro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohenjo-daro" \o "Mohenjo-daro), shaded Gautama Buddha as he sought enlightenment.

Many Indian species descend from [taxa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxon) originating in Gondwana, from which the [Indian plate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_plate) separated more than 105 million years [before present](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Before_Present). [Peninsular India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Plate)'s subsequent [movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plate_tectonics) towards and collision with the [Laurasian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laurasia" \o "Laurasia) landmass set off a mass exchange of species. [Epochal volcanism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deccan_Traps) and climatic changes 20 million years ago forced a mass extinction Mammals then entered India from Asia through two [zoogeographical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoogeography" \o "Zoogeography)passes flanking the rising Himalaya. Thus, while 45.8% of reptiles and 55.8% of amphibians are endemic, only 12.6% of mammals and 4.5% of birds are. Among them are the [Nilgiri leaf monkey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nilgiri_langur" \o "Nilgiri langur) and [Beddome's toad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bufo_beddomii" \o "Bufo beddomii) of the Western Ghats. India contains 172 [IUCN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Conservation_Union)-designated [threatened animal species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_endangered_animals_in_India), or 2.9% of endangered forms. These include the [Asiatic lion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asiatic_lion), the [Bengal tiger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tiger), the [snow leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snow_leopard) and the [Indian white-rumped vulture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-rumped_vulture), which, by ingesting the carrion of[diclofenac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diclofenac)-laced cattle, nearly went extinct.

Politics

*Main article:*[*Politics of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_India)

*See also:*[*Constitution of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_India)

A parliamentary joint session being held in the [Sansad Bhavan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_India" \l "Building" \o "Parliament of India).

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rashtrapati_Bhavan_Wide_New_Delhi_India.jpg)

The [Rashtrapati Bhavan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashtrapati_Bhavan" \o "Rashtrapati Bhavan) is the official residence of the president of India.

India is the world's most populous democracy.[[145]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEUnited_Nations_Population_Division-150) A [parliamentary republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_republic) with a [multi-party system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multi-party_system),[[146]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBurnellCalvert1999125-151) it has six [recognised](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Election_Commission_of_India" \o "Election Commission of India) [national parties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_recognised_political_parties_in_India#National), including the [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) and the [Bharatiya Janata Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharatiya_Janata_Party" \o "Bharatiya Janata Party) (BJP), and more than 40 [regional parties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_recognised_political_parties_in_India#State).[[147]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEElection_Commission_of_India-152) The Congress is considered centre-left in Indian [political culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_culture),[[148]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India" \l "cite_note-153) and the BJP [right-wing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right-wing_politics).[[149]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMalikSingh1992318-336-154)[[150]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBBC2012-155)[[151]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBanerjee20053118-156) For most of the period between 1950—when India first became a republic—and the late 1980s, the Congress held a majority in the parliament. Since then, however, it has increasingly shared the political stage with the BJP,[[152]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India" \l "cite_note-FOOTNOTESarkar200784-157)as well as with powerful regional parties which have often forced the creation of multi-party [coalitions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coalition_government) at the centre.[[153]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEChander2004117-158)

In the Republic of India's first three general elections, in 1951, 1957, and 1962, the [Jawaharlal Nehru](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jawaharlal_Nehru)-led Congress won easy victories. On Nehru's death in 1964, [Lal Bahadur Shastri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lal_Bahadur_Shastri" \o "Lal Bahadur Shastri) briefly became prime minister; he was succeeded, after his own unexpected death in 1966, by [Indira Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indira_Gandhi), who went on to lead the Congress to election victories in 1967 and 1971. Following public discontent with the [state of emergency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Emergency_(India)) she declared in 1975, the Congress was voted out of power in 1977; the then-new [Janata Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janata_Party" \o "Janata Party), which had opposed the emergency, was voted in. Its government lasted just over three years. Voted back into power in 1980, the Congress saw a change in leadership in 1984, when Indira Gandhi was assassinated; she was succeeded by her son [Rajiv Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajiv_Gandhi), who won an easy victory in the general elections later that year. The Congress was voted out again in 1989 when a [National Front](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Front_(India)) coalition, led by the newly formed [Janata Dal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janata_Dal" \o "Janata Dal) in alliance with the [Left Front](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Left_Front_(India)), won the elections; that government too proved relatively short-lived, lasting just under two years.[[154]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBhambhri1992118.2C_143-159) Elections were held again in 1991; no party won an absolute majority. But the Congress, as the largest single party, was able to form a [minority government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minority_government) led by [P. V. Narasimha Rao](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P._V._Narasimha_Rao).

### Government

*Main article:*[*Government of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_India)

*See also:*[*Elections in India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_India)

India is a [federation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federation) with a [parliamentary system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_system) governed under the [Constitution of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_India), which serves as the country's supreme legal document. It is a constitutional republic and[representative democracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Representative_democracy), in which "[majority rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Majority_rule) is tempered by [minority rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minority_rights) protected by [law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_India)". [Federalism in India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federalism#India) defines the power distribution between the federal government and the[states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/States_and_territories_of_India). The government abides by constitutional [checks and balances](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separation_of_powers). The Constitution of India, which came into effect on 26 January 1950,[[160]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPylee2003a4-165) states in its [preamble](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Preamble_to_the_Constitution_of_India) that India is a[sovereign](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sovereignty), [socialist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism_in_India), [secular](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism), [democratic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_democracy) [republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic).[[161]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDutt1998421-166) India's form of government, traditionally described as "quasi-federal" with a strong centre and weak states,[[162]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWheare198028-167) has grown increasingly federal since the late 1990s as a result of political, economic, and social changes.[[163]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEEcheverri-Gent200219.E2.80.9320-168)[[164]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESinha200425-169)

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| --- | --- |
| [**National symbols**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_symbols_of_India)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTENational_Informatics_Centre2005-1) | |
| **Flag** | [Tiranga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiranga) |
| **Emblem** | [Sarnath Lion Capital](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emblem_of_India) |
| **Anthem** | [*Jana Gana Mana*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jana_Gana_Mana) |
| **Song** | [*Vande Mataram*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vande_Mataram) |
| **Currency** | *₹* ([Indian rupee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_rupee)) |
| **Calendar** | [Saka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_national_calendar) |
| **Animal** | [Tiger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger) (land) [River dolphin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Asian_river_dolphin) (aquatic) |
| **Bird** | [Indian peafowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_peafowl) |
| **Flower** | [Lotus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelumbo_nucifera) |
| **Fruit** | [Mango](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mango) |
| **Tree** | [Banyan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficus_benghalensis) |
| **River** | [Ganga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganga) |
| **Game** | Not declared[[165]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-170) |

The federal government comprises **three** branches:

* [Executive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_(government)): The [President of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_India) is the head of state[[166]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESharma200731-171) and is elected indirectly by a national [electoral college](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral_college)[[167]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESharma2007138-172) for a five-year term.[[168]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEGledhill1970112-173)The [Prime Minister of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_India) is the [head of government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_of_government) and exercises most [executive power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_(government)).[[169]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESharma1950-174) Appointed by the president,[[170]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESharma2007162-175) the prime minister is by convention supported by the [party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_party) or political alliance holding the majority of seats in the lower house of parliament.[[169]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESharma1950-174) The executive branch of the Indian government consists of the president, the vice-president, and the [Council of Ministers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Ministers_of_Republic_of_India)—the [cabinet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabinet_(government)) being its executive committee—headed by the prime minister. Any minister holding a portfolio must be a member of one of the houses of parliament.[[166]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESharma200731-171) In the Indian parliamentary system, the executive is subordinate to the legislature; the prime minister and his council are directly responsible to the lower house of the parliament.[[171]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMathew2003524-176)
* [Legislative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legislature): The legislature of India is the [bicameral](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bicameralism) [parliament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_India). It operates under a [Westminster-style](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westminster_system) parliamentary system and comprises the upper house called the [Rajya Sabha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajya_Sabha" \o "Rajya Sabha) ("Council of States") and the lower called the [Lok Sabha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lok_Sabha" \o "Lok Sabha) ("House of the People").[[172]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEGledhill1970127-177) The Rajya Sabha is a permanent body that has 245 members who serve in staggered six-year terms.[[173]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESharma2007161-178) Most are elected indirectly by the [state and territorial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/States_and_territories_of_India) legislatures in numbers proportional to their state's share of the national population.[[170]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESharma2007162-175) All but two of the Lok Sabha's 545 members are directly elected by popular vote; they represent individual [constituencies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constituency) via five-year terms.[[174]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESharma2007143-179) The remaining two members are nominated by the president from among the [Anglo-Indian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Indian) community, in case the president decides that they are not adequately represented.[[175]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESharma2007360-180)
* [Judicial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judiciary): India has a unitary three-tier [independent judiciary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_judiciary)[[176]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTENeuborne2003478-181) that comprises the [Supreme Court](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_India), headed by the [Chief Justice of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chief_Justice_of_India), 24[High Courts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_Courts_of_India), and a large number of trial courts.[[176]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTENeuborne2003478-181) The Supreme Court has [original jurisdiction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Original_jurisdiction) over cases involving [fundamental rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamental_Rights_in_India) and over disputes between states and the centre; it has [appellate jurisdiction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appellate_jurisdiction) over the High Courts.[[177]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESharma2007238.2C_255-182) It has the power both to declare the law and to strike down union or state laws which contravene the constitution.[[178]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESripati1998423.E2.80.93424-183) The Supreme Court is also the ultimate interpreter of the constitution.[[179]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPylee2003b314-184)

**States**

1. [Andhra Pradesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andhra_Pradesh)
2. [Arunachal Pradesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arunachal_Pradesh)
3. [Assam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assam)
4. [Bihar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bihar)
5. [Chhattisgarh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chhattisgarh)
6. [Goa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goa)
7. [Gujarat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gujarat)
8. [Haryana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haryana)
9. [Himachal Pradesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Himachal_Pradesh)
10. [Jammu and Kashmir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jammu_and_Kashmir)
11. [Jharkhand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jharkhand)
12. [Karnataka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karnataka)
13. [Kerala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerala)
14. [Madhya Pradesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhya_Pradesh)
15. [Maharashtra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharashtra)
16. [Manipur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manipur)
17. [Meghalaya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meghalaya)
18. [Mizoram](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mizoram)
19. [Nagaland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagaland)
20. [Odisha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odisha)
21. [Punjab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab,_India)
22. [Rajasthan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajasthan)
23. [Sikkim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikkim)
24. [Tamil Nadu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_Nadu)
25. [Telangana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telangana)
26. [Tripura](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tripura)
27. [Uttar Pradesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uttar_Pradesh)
28. [Uttarakhand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uttarakhand)
29. [West Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bengal)

**Union territories**

1. [Andaman and Nicobar Islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andaman_and_Nicobar_Islands)
2. [Chandigarh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chandigarh)
3. [Dadra and Nagar Haveli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dadra_and_Nagar_Haveli)
4. [Daman and Diu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daman_and_Diu)
5. [Lakshadweep](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lakshadweep)
6. [National Capital Territory of Delhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi)
7. [Puducherry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puducherry)

## Foreign relations and military

*Main articles:*[*Foreign relations of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_relations_of_India)*and*[*Indian Armed Forces*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Armed_Forces)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Putin_shakes_hand_with_Modi_at_the_6th_BRICS_summit.jpeg)

[Narendra Modi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narendra_Modi) meets [Vladimir Putin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Putin)at the [6th BRICS summit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/6th_BRICS_summit). India and Russia share extensive economic, defence, and technological [ties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India%E2%80%93Russia_relations).

Since its independence in 1947, India has maintained cordial relations with most nations. In the 1950s, it strongly supported decolonisation in [Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa" \o "Africa)and [Asia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asia) and [played a lead role](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India_and_the_Non-Aligned_Movement) in the [Non-Aligned Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement).[[182]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTERothermund200048.2C_227-187) In the late 1980s, the Indian military twice intervened abroad at the invitation of neighbouring countries: a [peace-keeping operation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Peace_Keeping_Force) in Sri Lanka between 1987 and 1990; and an armed intervention to prevent a [1988 coup d'état attempt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1988_Maldives_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat) in Maldives. India has [tense relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Pakistani_relations) with neighbouring Pakistan; the two nations [have gone to war four times](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Pakistani_wars_and_conflicts): in [1947](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Pakistani_War_of_1947), [1965](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Pakistani_War_of_1965), [1971](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Pakistani_War_of_1971), and [1999](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kargil_War). Three of these wars were fought over the [disputed territory of Kashmir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kashmir_conflict), while the fourth, the 1971 war, followed from India's support for the[independence of Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh_Liberation_War).[[183]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEGilbert2002486.E2.80.93487-188) After waging the 1962 [Sino-Indian War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sino-Indian_War) and the 1965 war with Pakistan, India pursued close military and economic[ties with the Soviet Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India-Soviet_Union_relations); by the late 1960s, the Soviet Union was its largest arms supplier.[[184]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESharma199956-189)

Aside from ongoing strategic [relations with Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India%E2%80%93Russia_relations), India has wide-ranging [defence relations with Israel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India%E2%80%93Israel_relations" \o "India–Israel relations) and [France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France%E2%80%93India_relations). In recent years, it has played key roles in the [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Asian_Association_for_Regional_Cooperation) and the [World Trade Organisation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Trade_Organisation). The nation has provided 100,000 [military](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Armed_Forces) and [police](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_enforcement_in_India" \o "Law enforcement in India)personnel to serve in 35 UN peacekeeping operations across four continents. It participates in the [East Asia Summit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Asia_Summit), the [G8+5](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G8%2B5), and other multilateral forums.[[185]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEAlford2008-190) India has close economic ties with [South America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_America),[[186]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-AmericasQuarterly-191) Asia, and Africa; it pursues a ["Look East" policy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Look_East_policy) that seeks to strengthen partnerships with the [ASEAN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Association_of_Southeast_Asian_Nations) nations, [Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India%E2%80%93Japan_relations), and [South Korea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India%E2%80%93South_Korea_relations) that revolve around many issues, but especially those involving economic investment and regional security.[[187]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEGhosh2009282.E2.80.93289-192)[[188]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESisodiaNaidu20051.E2.80.938-193)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:INS_Vikramaditya_during_trials.jpg)

[INS *Vikramaditya*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/INS_Vikramaditya), the Indian Navy's biggest warship.

China's [nuclear test of 1964](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/596_(nuclear_test)), as well as its repeated threats to intervene in support of Pakistan in the 1965 war, convinced India to develop nuclear weapons.[[189]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPerkovich200160.E2.80.9386.2C_106.E2.80.93125-194) India conducted its [first nuclear weapons test](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smiling_Buddha) in 1974 and carried out [further underground testing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokhran-II) in 1998. Despite criticism and military sanctions, India has signed neither the [Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comprehensive_Nuclear-Test-Ban_Treaty) nor the [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty), considering both to be flawed and discriminatory.[[190]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEKumar2010-195) India maintains a "[no first use](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_first_use)" nuclear policy and is developing a [nuclear triad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_triad) capability as a part of its "[minimum credible deterrence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimum_Credible_Deterrence)" doctrine.[[191]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTENair2007-196)[[192]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEPandit2009-197) It is developing a [ballistic missile defence shield](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Ballistic_Missile_Defense_Program) and, in collaboration with Russia, a [fifth-generation fighter jet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukhoi/HAL_FGFA).[[193]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEThe_Hindu_2011-198) Other indigenous military projects involve the design and implementation of [*Vikrant*-class aircraft carriers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vikrant_class_aircraft_carrier) and *[Arihant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arihant_class_submarine" \o "Arihant class submarine)*[-class nuclear submarines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arihant_class_submarine" \o "Arihant class submarine).[[193]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEThe_Hindu_2011-198)

## Economy

*Main article:*[*Economy of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_India)

*See also:*[*Economic history of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_history_of_India)*,*[*Economic development in India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_development_in_India)*,*[*Tourism in India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_India)*and*[*Transport in India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transport_in_India)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Washing_Iron_Ore_in_Orissa_India.jpg)

A washing plant for mined [iron ore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_ore)in [Orissa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orissa). India's iron ore reserves of 25 billion tonnes comprise 6% of global reserves. India is the world's 4th largest producer and 3rd largest exporter.

According to the [International Monetary Fund](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Monetary_Fund) (IMF), as of April 2015, the Indian economy is nominally worth US$2.306 trillion; it is the 7th-largest economy by market exchange rates, and is, at US$7.996 trillion, the third-largest by [purchasing power parity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purchasing_power_parity), or PPP.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-imf2-12) With its average annual GDP growth rate of 5.8% over the past two decades, and reaching 6.1% during 2011–12,[[208]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEInternational_Monetary_Fund_20112-213) India is one of the [world's fastest-growing economies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_real_GDP_growth_rate).[[209]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTENayakGoldarAgrawal2010xxv-214)However, the country ranks 140th in the world in [nominal GDP per capita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)_per_capita) and 129th in [GDP per capita at PPP](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)_per_capita).[[210]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEInternational_Monetary_Fund-215) Until 1991, all Indian governments followed [protectionist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protectionism) policies that were influenced by socialist economics. Widespread [state intervention and regulation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Licence_Raj) largely walled the economy off from the outside world. An acute [balance of payments crisis in 1991](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1991_India_economic_crisis) forced the nation to [liberalise its economy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_liberalisation_in_India" \o "Economic liberalisation in India);[[211]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWolpert2003xiv-216) since then it has slowly moved towards a free-market system[[212]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEOrganisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development_2007-217)[[213]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEGargan1992-218) by emphasising both foreign trade and direct investment inflows.[[214]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEAlamgir200823.2C_97-219) India's recent economic model is largely capitalist.[[213]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEGargan1992-218) India has been a member of [WTO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WTO) since 1 January 1995.[[215]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWTO_1995-220)

The 486.6-million worker [Indian labour force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labour_in_India) is the [world's second-largest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_labour_force), as of 2011.[[201]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTECentral_Intelligence_Agency-206) The service sector makes up 55.6% of GDP, the industrial sector 26.3% and the agricultural sector 18.1%. Major agricultural products include rice, wheat, oilseed, cotton, jute, tea, sugarcane, and potatoes.[[180]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTELibrary_of_Congress2004-185)Major industries include textiles, telecommunications, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, food processing, steel, transport equipment, cement, mining, petroleum, machinery, and software.[[180]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTELibrary_of_Congress2004-185) In 2006, the share of external trade in India's GDP stood at 24%, up from 6% in 1985.[[212]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEOrganisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development_2007-217) In 2008, India's share of world trade was 1.68%;[[216]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEThe_Times_of_India_2009-221) In 2011, India was the world's [tenth-largest importer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_imports) and the [nineteenth-largest exporter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_exports).[[217]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWorld_Trade_Organisation_2010-222) Major exports include petroleum products, textile goods, jewellery, software, engineering goods, chemicals, and leather manufactures.[[180]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTELibrary_of_Congress2004-185) Major imports include crude oil, machinery, gems, fertiliser, and chemicals.[[180]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTELibrary_of_Congress2004-185) Between 2001 and 2011, the contribution of petrochemical and engineering goods to total exports grew from 14% to 42%.[[218]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEEconomist_2011-223) India was the second largest textile exporter after China in the world in calendar year 2013.[[219]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-224)

Averaging an economic growth rate of 7.5% for several years prior to 2007,[[212]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India" \l "cite_note-FOOTNOTEOrganisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development_2007-217) India has more than doubled its hourly wage rates during the first decade of the 21st century.[[220]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBonner2010-225) Some 431 million Indians have left poverty since 1985; India's middle classes are projected to number around 580 million by 2030.[[221]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEFarrellBeinhocker2007-226) Though ranking 51st in [global competitiveness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Competitiveness_Report), India ranks 17th in financial market sophistication, 24th in the banking sector, 44th in business sophistication, and 39th in innovation, ahead of several advanced economies, as of 2010.[[222]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESchwab2010-227) With 7 of the world's top 15 information technology outsourcing companies based in India, the country is viewed as the second-most favourable outsourcing destination after the United States, as of 2009.[[223]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESheth2009-228)India's consumer market, currently the world's [eleventh-largest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_consumer_markets), is expected to become fifth-largest by 2030.[[221]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEFarrellBeinhocker2007-226)

India's [telecommunication industry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communications_in_India), the world's fastest-growing, added 227 million subscribers during the period 2010–11,[[224]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTETelecom_Regulatory_Authority_2011-229) and after the first quarter of 2013, India surpassed Japan to become the third largest smartphone market in the world after China and the U.S.[[225]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-230)

## Culture

*Main article:*[*Culture of India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_India)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:A_Warli_painting_by_Jivya_Soma_Mashe,_Thane_district.jpg)

A [Warli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warli" \o "Warli) tribal painting by [Jivya Soma Mashe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jivya_Soma_Mashe" \o "Jivya Soma Mashe) from [Thane](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thane_district), Maharashtra

Indian cultural history spans more than 4,500 years.[[268]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEKuiper201015-273) During the [Vedic period](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedic_period) (c. 1700 – 500 BCE), the foundations of [Hindu philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_philosophy), [mythology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_mythology" \o "Hindu mythology),[theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_theology) and [literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_texts) were laid, and many beliefs and practices which still exist today, such as *[dhárma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharma" \o "Dharma)*, *[kárma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karma" \o "Karma)*, *[yóga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga" \o "Yoga)*, and *[mokṣa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moksha" \o "Moksha)*, were established.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEKuiper201086-20) India is notable for its [religious diversity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_religions), with [Hinduism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism), [Buddhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism), [Sikhism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikhism), [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam), [Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity), and [Jainism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jainism) among the nation's major religions.[[269]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHeehs20022.E2.80.935-274) The predominant religion, Hinduism, has been shaped by various historical schools of thought, including those of the [*Upanishads*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upanishads),[[270]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDeutsch19693.2C_78-275) the[*Yoga Sutras*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga_Sutras_of_Patanjali), the [*Bhakti* movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhakti),[[269]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHeehs20022.E2.80.935-274) and by [Buddhist philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_philosophy).[[271]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTENakamura1999-276)

### Art and architecture

Much of [Indian architecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architecture_of_India), including the [Taj Mahal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taj_Mahal" \o "Taj Mahal), other works of [Mughal architecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_architecture), and [South Indian architecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dravidian_architecture), blends ancient local traditions with imported styles.[[272]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEKuiper2010296.E2.80.93329-277) [Vernacular architecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_vernacular_architecture) is also highly regional in it flavours. *[Vastu shastra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vastu_shastra" \o "Vastu shastra)*, literally "science of construction" or "architecture" and ascribed to [Mamuni Mayan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamuni_Mayan" \o "Mamuni Mayan),[[273]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESilverman200720-278) explores how the laws of nature affect human dwellings;[[274]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEKumar20005-279) it employs precise geometry and directional alignments to reflect perceived cosmic constructs.[[275]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTERoberts200473-280) As applied in [Hindu temple architecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_temple_architecture), it is influenced by the *[Shilpa Shastras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shilpa_Shastras" \o "Shilpa Shastras)*, a series of foundational texts whose basic mythological form is the *Vastu-Purusha mandala*, a square that embodied the "[absolute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absolute_(philosophy))".[[276]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTELangMoleski2010151.E2.80.93152-281) The Taj Mahal, built in [Agra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agra) between 1631 and 1648 by orders of Emperor [Shah Jahan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shah_Jahan) in memory of his wife, has been described in the [UNESCO World Heritage List](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO_World_Heritage_List) as "the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world's heritage".[[277]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEUnited_Nations_Educational.2C_Scientific.2C_and_Cultural_Organisation-282) [Indo-Saracenic Revival architecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Saracenic_Revival_architecture), developed by the British in the late 19th century, drew on [Indo-Islamic architecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Islamic_architecture).[[278]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEChopra201146-283)

### Literature

The earliest literary writings in India, composed between 1700 BCE and 1200 CE, were in the Sanskrit language.[[279]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHoibergRamchandani2000-284)[[280]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESarma2009-285) Prominent works of this [Sanskrit literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanskrit_literature) include [epics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_epic_poetry) such as the[*Mahābhārata*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahabharata) and the [*Ramayana*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramayana), the dramas of [Kālidāsa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C4%81lid%C4%81sa" \o "Kālidāsa) such as the *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* ([*The Recognition of Śakuntalā*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Recognition_of_%C5%9Aakuntal%C4%81)), and poetry such as the *[Mahākāvya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanskrit_Classical_poetry" \o "Sanskrit Classical poetry)*.[[281]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJohnson2008-286)[[282]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMacDonell20041.E2.80.9340-287)[[283]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEK.C4.81lid.C4.81saJohnson2001-288) [Kamasutra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamasutra" \o "Kamasutra), the famous book about [sexual intercourse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_intercourse) also originated in India. Developed between 600 BCE and 300 CE in South India, the *[Sangam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sangam_literature" \o "Sangam literature)*[literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sangam_literature" \o "Sangam literature), consisting of 2,381 poems, is regarded as a predecessor of [Tamil literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_literature).[[284]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEZvelebil199712-289)[[285]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEHart1975-290)[[286]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEEncyclop.C3.A6dia_Britannica2008-291)[[287]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTERamanujan1985ix.E2.80.93x-292) From the 14th to the 18th centuries, India's literary traditions went through a period of drastic change because of the emergence of [devotional poets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhakti_movement) such as [Kabīr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabir" \o "Kabir), [Tulsīdās](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tulsidas" \o "Tulsidas), and [Guru Nānak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guru_Nanak). This period was characterised by a varied and wide spectrum of thought and expression; as a consequence, medieval Indian literary works differed significantly from classical traditions.[[288]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDas2005-293) In the 19th century, Indian writers took a new interest in social questions and psychological descriptions. In the 20th century, Indian literature was influenced by the [works](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Works_of_Rabindranath_Tagore) of Bengali poet and novelist [Rabindranath Tagore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabindranath_Tagore).[[289]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDatta2006-294)

### Performing arts

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Indian_village_musicians.jpg)

Folk musicians in Hyderabad

[Indian music](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_of_India) ranges over various traditions and regional styles. [Classical music](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_classical_music) encompasses two genres and their various folk offshoots: the northern[Hindustani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindustani_classical_music) and southern [Carnatic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnatic_music) schools.[[290]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMasseyMassey1998-295) Regionalised popular forms include [filmi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filmi" \o "Filmi) and [folk music](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_folk_music); the syncretic tradition of the *[bauls](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baul" \o "Baul)* is a well-known form of the latter. [Indian dance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dance_in_India) also features diverse folk and classical forms. Among the better-known [folk dances](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Indian_folk_dances) are the *[bhangra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhangra_(dance)" \o "Bhangra (dance))* of Punjab, the *[bihu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bihu_dance" \o "Bihu dance)* of Assam, the *[chhau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chhau_dance" \o "Chhau dance)* of Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand, *[garba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garba_(dance)" \o "Garba (dance))* and *[dandiya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dandiya_Raas" \o "Dandiya Raas)* of Gujarat, *[ghoomar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghoomar" \o "Ghoomar)* of Rajasthan, and the *[lavani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavani" \o "Lavani)* of Maharashtra. Eight dance forms, many with narrative forms and mythological elements, have been accorded [classical dance status](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_Indian_dance) by India's [National Academy of Music, Dance, and Drama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sangeet_Natak_Akademi). These are: *[bharatanatyam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharata_Natyam" \o "Bharata Natyam)* of the state of Tamil Nadu, *[kathak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathak" \o "Kathak)* of Uttar Pradesh, *[kathakali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathakali" \o "Kathakali)* and *[mohiniyattam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohiniyattam" \o "Mohiniyattam)* of Kerala, *[kuchipudi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuchipudi" \o "Kuchipudi)* of Andhra Pradesh, *[manipuri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manipuri_dance" \o "Manipuri dance)* of Manipur, *[odissi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odissi" \o "Odissi)* of Odisha, and the *[sattriya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sattriya" \o "Sattriya)* of Assam.[[291]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEEncyclop.C3.A6dia_Britannica_b-296) [Theatre in India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre_in_India) melds music, dance, and improvised or written dialogue.[[292]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTELal200423.2C_30.2C_235-297) Often based on Hindu mythology, but also borrowing from medieval romances or social and political events, Indian theatre includes the *[bhavai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhavai" \o "Bhavai)* of Gujarat, the *[jatra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jatra_(Bengal)" \o "Jatra (Bengal))* of West Bengal, the *[nautanki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nautanki" \o "Nautanki)* and *[ramlila](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramlila" \o "Ramlila)* of North India, *[tamasha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamasha" \o "Tamasha)* of Maharashtra, *[burrakatha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burrakatha" \o "Burrakatha)* of Andhra Pradesh, *[terukkuttu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terukkuttu" \o "Terukkuttu)* of Tamil Nadu, and the *[yakshagana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yakshagana" \o "Yakshagana)* of Karnataka.[[293]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEKaranth200226-298)

### Motion pictures, television

The [Indian film industry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_India) produces the world's most-watched cinema.[[294]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDissanayakeGokulsing2004-299) Established regional cinematic traditions exist in the [Assamese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_Assam), [Bengali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_Bengal), [Bhojpuri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhojpuri_cinema), [Hindi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bollywood), [Kannada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_Karnataka), [Malayalam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayalam_cinema), [Punjabi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_Punjab),[Gujarati](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gujarati_cinema), [Marathi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marathi_cinema), [Odia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_Odisha), [Tamil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_cinema), and [Telugu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telugu_cinema) languages.[[295]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTERajadhyakshaWillemen1999652-300) South Indian cinema attracts more than 75% of national film revenue.[[296]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEThe_Economic_Times-301)

Television broadcasting began in India in 1959 as a state-run medium of communication, and had slow expansion for more than two decades.[[297]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-302)[[298]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEKaminskyLong2011684.E2.80.93692-303) The [state monopoly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doordarshan) on television broadcast ended in the 1990s and, since then, satellite channels have increasingly shaped popular culture of Indian society.[[299]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMehta20081.E2.80.9310-304) Today, television is the most penetrative media in India; industry estimates indicate that as of 2012 there are over 554 million TV consumers, 462 million with satellite and/or cable connections, compared to other forms of mass media such as press (350 million), radio (156 million) or internet (37 million).[[300]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMedia_Research_Users_Council_2012-305)

### Society

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:India_Christian_wedding_Madurai_Tamil_Nadu.jpg)

A Christian wedding in [Madurai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madurai), Tamil Nadu. Christianity is believed to have been introduced to India by the late 2nd century by [Syriac-speaking Christians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_India" \l "Early_Christianity_in_India" \o "Christianity in India).

Traditional Indian society is sometimes defined by social hierarchy. The [Indian caste system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caste_system_in_India) embodies much of the social stratification and many of the social restrictions found in the Indian subcontinent. Social classes are defined by thousands of endogamous hereditary groups, often termed as *[jātis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C4%81ti" \o "Jāti)*, or "castes".[[301]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTESchwartzberg2011-306) India declared untouchability to be illegal[[302]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India" \l "cite_note-307) in 1947 and has since enacted other anti-discriminatory laws and social welfare initiatives. At the workplace in urban India and in international or leading Indian companies, the caste related identification has pretty much lost its importance.[[303]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMessner200951-53-308)[[304]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMessner201227-28-309) Family values are important in the Indian tradition, and multi-generational patriarchal joint families have been the norm in India, though nuclear families are becoming common in urban areas.[[305]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMakar2007-310) An overwhelming majority of Indians, with their consent, have [their marriages arranged](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arranged_marriage_in_the_Indian_subcontinent) by their parents or other family members.[[306]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMedora2003-311) Marriage is thought to be for life,[[306]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India" \l "cite_note-FOOTNOTEMedora2003-311) and the divorce rate is extremely low.[[307]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEJonesRamdas2005111-312) [Child marriages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_marriage)are common, especially in rural areas; many [women in India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_India) wed before reaching 18, which is their legal marriageable age.[[308]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTECullen-Dupont200996-313) [Female infanticide in India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_infanticide_in_India) and [female foeticide in India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_foeticide_in_India) have caused a discrepancy in the sex ratio, as of 2005 it was estimated that there were 50 million more males than females in the nation.[[309]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBunting2011-314)[[310]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEAgnivesh2005-315) However the recent report from 2011 shown improvement among the gender ratio.[[311]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-316) The payment of [dowry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dowry_system_in_India), although[illegal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dowry_law_in_India), remains widespread across class lines.[[312]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-317) [Deaths resulting from dowry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dowry_deaths), mostly from [bride burning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bride_burning), are on the rise.[[313]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-318)

Many [Indian festivals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_holidays_in_India) are religious in origin; among them are [Chhath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chhath" \o "Chhath), [Christmas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas_worldwide#Republic_of_India), [Diwali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diwali), [Durga Puja](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durga_Puja" \o "Durga Puja), [Bakr-Id](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eid_al-Adha" \o "Eid al-Adha), [Eid ul-Fitr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eid_ul-Fitr" \o "Eid ul-Fitr), [Ganesh Chaturthi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganesh_Chaturthi), [Holi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holi" \o "Holi), [Makar Sankranti or Uttarayan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makar_Sankranti" \o "Makar Sankranti), [Navratri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navratri" \o "Navratri), [Thai Pongal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thai_Pongal), and [Vaisakhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaisakhi" \o "Vaisakhi). India has [three national holidays](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_holidays_in_India) which are observed in all states and union territories:[Republic Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_Day_(India)), [Independence Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence_Day_(India)), and [Gandhi Jayanti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gandhi_Jayanti). Other sets of holidays, varying between nine and twelve, are officially observed in individual states.

Throughout India, many people practice customs and religious rituals, such as "[Saṃskāra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sa%E1%B9%83sk%C4%81ra" \o "Saṃskāra)", which is a series of "personal sacraments and rites conducted at various stages throughout life".[[314]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-319)

### Clothing

*Main article:*[*Clothing in India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clothing_in_India)

[Cotton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_cotton) was domesticated in India by 4000 BCE. Traditional [Indian dress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clothing_in_India) varies in colour and style across regions and depends on various factors, including climate and faith. Popular styles of dress include draped garments such as the [*sari*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sari) for women and the [*dhoti*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhoti) or [*lungi*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lungi) for men. Stitched clothes, such as the *[shalwar kameez](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalwar_kameez" \o "Shalwar kameez)* for women and *[kurta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurta" \o "Kurta)*–*[pyjama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pajamas" \o "Pajamas)* combinations or European-style trousers and shirts for men, are also popular.[[315]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTETarlo1996xii.2C_xii.2C_11.2C_15.2C_28.2C_46-320) Use of delicate jewellery, modelled on real flowers worn in ancient India, is part of a tradition dating back some 5,000 years; gemstones are also worn in India as talismans.[[316]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEEraly2008160-321)

### Sports

*Main article:*[*Sport in India*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sport_in_India)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Viswanathan_Anand_08_14_2005.jpg)

Indian chess grandmaster and former world champion[Vishwanathan Anand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vishwanathan_Anand) competes at a chess tournament in 2005. Chess is commonly believed to have originated in India in the 5th century CE.

In India, several traditional indigenous sports remain fairly popular, such as *[kabaddi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabaddi" \o "Kabaddi)*, *[kho kho](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kho_kho" \o "Kho kho)*, *[pehlwani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pehlwani" \o "Pehlwani)* and *[gilli-danda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilli-danda" \o "Gilli-danda)*. Some of the earliest forms of Asian [martial arts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_martial_arts), such as *[kalarippayattu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalarippayattu" \o "Kalarippayattu)*, *[musti yuddha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musti_yuddha" \o "Musti yuddha)*, *[silambam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silambam" \o "Silambam)*, and *[marma adi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marma_adi" \o "Marma adi)*, originated in India. [Chess](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chess), commonly held to have [originated in India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_chess#India)as *[chaturaṅga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chaturanga" \o "Chaturanga)*, is regaining widespread popularity with the rise in the number of Indian [grandmasters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grandmaster_(chess)).[[317]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEWolpert20032-322)[[318]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTERediff_2008_b-323) *[Pachisi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pachisi" \o "Pachisi)*, from which [parcheesi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parcheesi" \o "Parcheesi) derives, was played on a giant marble court by [Akbar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akbar).[[319]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBinmore200798-324)

The improved results garnered by the [Indian Davis Cup team](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India_Davis_Cup_team) and other [Indian tennis players](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Indian_tennis_players) in the early 2010s have made tennis increasingly popular in the country.[[320]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEThe_Wall_Street_Journal_2009-325) India has a [comparatively strong presence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Indian_sport_shooters) in shooting sports, and has won several medals at the [Olympics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympic_Games), the [World Shooting Championships](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISSF_World_Shooting_Championships), and the Commonwealth Games.[[321]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBritish_Broadcasting_Corporation_2010_b-326)[[322]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEThe_Times_of_India_2010-327) Other sports in which Indians have succeeded internationally include badminton[[323]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEBritish_Broadcasting_Corporation_2010_a-328) ([Saina Nehwal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saina_Nehwal" \o "Saina Nehwal) is the top ranked female [badminton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Badminton) player in the world), boxing,[[324]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMint_2010-329) and wrestling.[[325]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEXavier2010-330) [Football](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Football_in_India) is popular in [West Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bengal), [Goa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goa), [Tamil Nadu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_Nadu),[Kerala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerala), and the [north-eastern states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Sister_States).[[326]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEMajumdarBandyopadhyay20061.E2.80.935-331)

[Field hockey in India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Field_hockey_in_India) is administered by [Hockey India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hockey_India). The [Indian national hockey team](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India_men%27s_national_field_hockey_team) won the 1975 [Hockey World Cup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hockey_World_Cup) and have, as of 2012, taken eight gold, one silver, and two bronze Olympic medals, making it the sport's most successful team in the Olympics.

India has also played a major role in popularising [cricket](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cricket). Thus, cricket is, by far, the most popular sport in India. The [Indian national cricket team](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India_national_cricket_team) won the[1983](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1983_Cricket_World_Cup) and [2011 Cricket World Cup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Cricket_World_Cup) events, the [2007 ICC World Twenty20](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007_ICC_World_Twenty20), shared the [2002 ICC Champions Trophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002_ICC_Champions_Trophy) with Sri Lanka, and won [2013 ICC Champions Trophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013_ICC_Champions_Trophy). [Cricket in India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cricket_in_India) is administered by the [Board of Control for Cricket in India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Board_of_Control_for_Cricket_in_India) (BCCI); the [Ranji Trophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranji_Trophy" \o "Ranji Trophy), the [Duleep Trophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duleep_Trophy" \o "Duleep Trophy), the [Deodhar Trophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deodhar_Trophy" \o "Deodhar Trophy), the [Irani Trophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irani_Trophy" \o "Irani Trophy), and the [NKP Salve Challenger Trophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NKP_Salve_Challenger_Trophy) are domestic competitions. The BCCI is also responsible for conducting an annual[Twenty20](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twenty20) competition known as the [Indian Premier League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Premier_League).

India has hosted or co-hosted several international sporting events: the [1951](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1951_Asian_Games) and [1982 Asian Games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1982_Asian_Games); the [1987](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1987_Cricket_World_Cup), [1996](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1996_Cricket_World_Cup), and [2011 Cricket World Cup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Cricket_World_Cup) tournaments; the [2003 Afro-Asian Games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003_Afro-Asian_Games); the [2006 ICC Champions Trophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_ICC_Champions_Trophy); the [2010 Hockey World Cup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010_Men%27s_Hockey_World_Cup); and the [2010 Commonwealth Games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010_Commonwealth_Games). Major international sporting events held annually in India include the [Chennai Open](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chennai_Open), the[Mumbai Marathon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumbai_Marathon), the [Delhi Half Marathon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi_Half_Marathon), and the [Indian Masters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Masters). The first [Indian Grand Prix](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Grand_Prix) featured in late 2011 but has been discontinued from the F1 season calendar since 2014.[[327]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-FOOTNOTEDehejia2011-332)

India has traditionally been the dominant country at the [South Asian Games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Asian_Games). An example of this dominance is the [basketball competition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basketball_at_the_South_Asian_Games) where [Team India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India_national_basketball_team) won three out of four tournaments to date.[[328]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India#cite_note-333) The [Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rajiv_Gandhi_Khel_Ratna) and the [Arjuna Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arjuna_Award" \o "Arjuna Award) are the highest forms of government recognition for athletic achievement; the [Dronacharya Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dronacharya_Award" \o "Dronacharya Award) is awarded for excellence in coaching.