

India, officially the **Republic of India** (*Hindi: Bhārat Gaṇarājya*),^[26] is a country in **South Asia**. It is the **seventh-largest country** by area, the **second-most populous** country, and the most populous **democracy** in the world. Bounded by the **Indian Ocean** on the south, the **Arabian Sea** on the southwest, and the **Bay of Bengal** on the southeast, it shares land borders with **Pakistan** to the west;^[f] **China**, **Nepal**, and **Bhutan** to the north; and **Bangladesh** and **Myanmar** to the east. In the Indian Ocean, India is in the vicinity of **Sri Lanka** and the **Maldives**; its **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** share a maritime border with **Thailand**, Myanmar, and **Indonesia**. The nation's capital city is **New Delhi**.

Modern humans arrived on the **Indian subcontinent** from Africa no later than 55,000 years ago.^{[27][28][29]} Their long occupation, initially in varying forms of isolation as hunter-gatherers, has made the region highly diverse, second only to Africa in human **genetic diversity**.^[30] **Settled life** emerged on the subcontinent in the western margins of the **Indus river basin** 9,000 years ago, evolving gradually into the **Indus Valley Civilisation** of the third millennium BCE.^[31] By 1200 BCE, an **archaic form** of **Sanskrit**, an **Indo-European language**, had **diffused** into India from the northwest,^{[32][33]} **unfolding** as the language of the ***Rigveda***, and recording the dawning of **Hinduism** in India.^[34] The **Dravidian languages** of India were supplanted in the northern and western regions.^[35] By 400 BCE, **stratification** and **exclusion** by **caste** had emerged within Hinduism,^[36] and **Buddhism** and **Jainism** had arisen, proclaiming **social orders** unlinked to heredity.^[37] Early political consolidations gave rise to the loose-knit **Maurya** and **Gupta Empires** based in the **Ganges Basin**.^[38] Their collective **era** was suffused with wide-ranging creativity,^[39] but also marked by the declining status of women,^[40] and the incorporation of **untouchability** into an organised system of belief.^[g]^[41] In **South India**, the **Middle kingdoms** exported Dravidian-languages scripts and religious cultures to the kingdoms of **Southeast Asia**.^[42]