

= Kalimpong =

Kalimpong ( Bengali : কালিম্পং , Nepali : कलिम्पङ्ग ) is a hill station in the Indian state of West Bengal . It is located at an average elevation of 1 @, @ 250 metres ( 4 @, @ 101 ft ) . The town is set to be the headquarters of the announced district of Kalimpong . The Indian Army 's 27 Mountain Division is located on the outskirts of the town .

The Kalimpong is known for its educational institutions , many of which were established during the British colonial period . It used to be a gateway in the trade between Tibet and India before China 's annexation of Tibet and the Sino @-@ Indian War . Kalimpong and neighbouring Darjeeling were major centres calling for a separate Gorkhaland state in the 1980s , and more recently in 2010 .

The municipality sits on a ridge overlooking the Teesta River and is a tourist destination owing to its temperate climate , magnificent Himalayan beauty and proximity to popular tourist locations in the region . Horticulture is important to Kalimpong : It has a flower market notable for its wide array of orchids ; nurseries , which export Himalayan grown flower bulbs , tubers and rhizomes , contribute to the economy of Kalimpong . Home to ethnic Nepalis , indigenous Lepchas , other ethnic groups and non @-@ native migrants from other parts of India , the town is a religious centre of Buddhism . The Buddhist monastery Zang Dhok Palri Phodang holds a number of rare Tibetan Buddhist scriptures .

The Kalimpong Science Centre , established under the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council ( DGHC ) in 2008 is a recent addition to its many tourist attractions . The Science Centre , which provides for scientific awareness among the students of the town and the locals sits atop the Deolo Hill .

= = Name origin = =

The precise etymology of the name Kalimpong remains unclear . There are many theories on the origin of the name . One widely accepted theory claims that the name " Kalimpong " means " Assembly ( or Stockade ) of the King 's Ministers " in Tibetan , derived from kalon ( " King 's ministers " ) and pong ( " stockade " ) . It may be derived from the translation " ridge where we play " from Lepcha , as it was known to be the place for traditional tribal gatherings for summer sporting events . People from the hills call the area Kalempung ( " the black spurs " ) .

According to K.P. Tamsang , author of The Untold and Unknown Reality about the Lepchas , the term Kalimpong is deduced from the name Kalenpung , which in Lepcha means " Hillock of Assemblage " ; in time , the name was distorted to Kalebung , and later further contorted to Kalimpong . Another possible derivation points to Kaulim , a fibrous plant found in abundance in the region .

= = History = =

Until the mid @-@ 19th century , the area around Kalimpong was ruled in succession by the Sikkimese and Bhutanese kingdoms . Under Sikkimese rule , the area was known as Dalingkot . In 1706 , the king of Bhutan won this territory from the Sikkimese monarch and renamed it Kalimpong . Overlooking the Teesta Valley , Kalimpong is believed to have once been the forward position of the Bhutanese in the 18th century . The area was sparsely populated by the indigenous Lepcha community and migrant Bhutia and Limbu tribes . Later in 1780 , the Gurkhas invaded and conquered Kalimpong . After the Anglo @-@ Bhutan War in 1864 , the Treaty of Sinchula ( 1865 ) was signed , in which Bhutanese held territory east of the Teesta River was ceded to the British East India Company . At that time , Kalimpong was a hamlet , with only two or three families known to reside there . The first recorded mention of the town was a fleeting reference made that year by Ashley Eden , a government official with the Bengal Civil Service . Kalimpong was added to district of Darjeeling in 1866 . In 1866 ? 1867 an Anglo @-@ Bhutanese commission demarcated the common boundaries between the two , thereby giving shape to the Kalimpong subdivision and the Darjeeling district .

After the war , the region became a subdivision of the Western Duars district , and the following

year it was merged with the district of Darjeeling . The temperate climate prompted the British to develop the town as an alternative hill station to Darjeeling , to escape the scorching summer heat in the plains . Kalimpong 's proximity to the Nathu La and Jelep La passes ( La means " pass " ) , offshoots of the ancient Silk Road , was an added advantage . It soon became an important trading outpost in the trade of furs , wools and food grains between India and Tibet . The increase in commerce attracted large numbers of migrants from Nepal , leading to an increase in population and economic prosperity . Britain assigned a plot within Kalimpong to the influential Bhutanese Dorji family , through which trade and relations with Bhutan flowed . This later became Bhutan House , a Bhutanese administrative and cultural center .

The arrival of Scottish missionaries saw the construction of schools and welfare centres for the British . Rev. W. Macfarlane in the early 1870s established the first schools in the area . The Scottish University Mission Institution was opened in 1886 , followed by the Kalimpong Girls High School . In 1900 , Reverend J.A. Graham founded the Dr. Graham 's Homes for destitute Anglo - Indian students . By 1907 , most schools in Kalimpong started offering education to Indian students . By 1911 , the population had swollen to 7 @, @ 880 .

Following Indian independence in 1947 , Kalimpong became part of the state of West Bengal , after Bengal was partitioned between India and Pakistan . With China 's annexation of Tibet in 1959 , many Buddhist monks fled Tibet and established monasteries in Kalimpong . These monks brought many rare Buddhist scriptures with them . In 1962 , the permanent closure of the Jelep Pass after the Sino - Indian War disrupted trade between Tibet and India , and led to a slowdown in Kalimpong 's economy . In 1976 , the visiting Dalai Lama consecrated the Zang Dhok Palri Phodang monastery , which houses many of the scriptures .

Between 1986 and 1988 , the demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland and Kamtapur based on ethnic lines grew strong . Riots between the Gorkha National Liberation Front ( GNLF ) and the West Bengal government reached a stand @-@ off after a forty @-@ day strike . The town was virtually under siege , and the state government called in the Indian army to maintain law and order . This led to the formation of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council , a body that was given semi @-@ autonomous powers to govern the Darjeeling district , except the area under the Siliguri subdivision . Since 2007 , the demand for a separate Gorkhaland state has been revived by the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha and its supporters in the Darjeeling hills . The Kamtapur People 's Party and its supporters ' movement for a separate Kamtapur state covering North Bengal have gained momentum .

= = Geography = =

The town centre is on a ridge connecting two hills , Deolo Hill and Durpin Hill , at an elevation of 1 @, @ 247 m ( 4 @, @ 091 ft ) . Deolo , the highest point in Kalimpong , has an altitude of 1 @, @ 704 m ( 5 @, @ 591 ft ) and Durpin Hill is at an elevation of 1 @, @ 372 m ( 4 @, @ 501 ft ) . The River Teesta flows in the valley below and separates Kalimpong from the state of Sikkim . The soil in the Kalimpong area is typically reddish in color . Occasional dark soils are found due to extensive existence of phyllite and schists . The Shiwalik Hills , like most of the Himalayan foothills , have steep slopes and soft , loose topsoil , leading to frequent landslides in the monsoon season . The hills are nestled within higher peaks and the snow @-@ clad Himalayan ranges tower over the town in the distance . Mount Kanchenjunga at 8 @, @ 586 m ( 28 @, @ 169 ft ) the world 's third tallest peak , is clearly visible from Kalimpong .

Kalimpong has five distinct seasons : spring , summer , autumn , winter and the monsoons . The annual temperature ranges from a high of 30 ° C ( 86 ° F ) to a low of 9 ° C ( 48 ° F ) . Summers are mild , with an average maximum temperature of 30 ° C ( 86 ° F ) in August . Summers are followed by the monsoon rains which lash the town between June and September . The monsoons are severe , often causing landslides which sequester the town from the rest of India . Winter lasts from December to February , with the maximum temperature being around 15 ° C ( 59 ° F ) . During the monsoon and winter seasons , Kalimpong is often enveloped by fog .

= = Economy = =

Tourism is the most significant contributor to Kalimpong 's economy . The summer and spring seasons are the most popular with tourists , keeping many of town 's residents employed directly and indirectly . The town ? earlier an important trade post between India and Tibet ? hopes to boost its economy after the reopening of the Nathu La ( pass ) in April 2006 . Though this has resumed Indo ? China border trades , it is expected that Kalimpong will have a better chance of revival as a hub for Indo ? China trades if the demand of local leaders for reopening of Jelep La pass also is met .

Kalimpong is a major ginger growing area of India . Kalimpong and the state of Sikkim together contribute 15 percent of ginger produced in India . The Darjeeling Himalayan hill region is internationally famous for its tea industry . However , most of the tea gardens are on the western side of Teesta river ( towards the town of Darjeeling ) and so tea gardens near Kalimpong contribute only 4 percent of total tea production of the region . In Kalimpong division , 90 percent of land is cultivable but only 10 percent is used for tea production . Kalimpong is well known for its flower export industry ? especially for its wide array of indigenous orchids and gladioli .

A significant contributor to the town 's economy is education sector . The schools of Kalimpong , besides imparting education to the locals , attract a significant number of students from the plains , the neighbouring state of Sikkim and countries such as Bhutan , Bangladesh , Nepal and Thailand .

Many establishments cater to the Indian army bases near the town , providing it with essential supplies . Small contributions to the economy come by the way of the sale of traditional arts and crafts of Sikkim and Tibet . Government efforts related to sericulture , seismology , and fisheries provide a steady source of employment to many of its residents .

Kalimpong is well renowned for its cheese , noodles and lollipops . Kalimpong exports a wide range of traditional handicrafts , wood @-@ carvings , embroidered items , bags and purses with tapestry work , copper ware , scrolls , Tibetan jewellery and artifacts .

= = Transport = =

Kalimpong is located off the National Highway 31A ( NH31A ) , which links Sevoke to Gangtok . The NH31A is an offshoot of the NH 31 , which connects Sevoke to Siliguri . These two National Highways together , via Sevoke , links Kalimpong to the plains . Regular bus services and hired vehicles connect Kalimpong with Siliguri and the neighbouring towns of Kurseong , Darjeeling and Gangtok . Four wheel drives are popular means of transport , as they can easily navigate the steep slopes in the region . However , road communication often get disrupted in the monsoons due to landslides . In the town , people usually travel by foot . Residents also use bicycle , two @-@ wheelers and hired taxis for short distances .

The nearest airport is in Bagdogra near Siliguri , about 80 kilometres ( 50 mi ) from Kalimpong . Air India , Jet Airways and Druk Air ( Bhutan ) are the four major carriers that connect the airport to Delhi , Calcutta , Paro ( Bhutan ) , Guwahati and Bangkok ( Thailand ) . The closest major railway station is New Jalpaiguri , on the outskirts of Siliguri , which is connected with almost all major cities of the country .

= = Demographics = =

At the 2011 India census , Kalimpong town area had a population of 42 @,@ 988 , of which 52 % were male and 48 % female .

At the 2001 census , Kalimpong had an average literacy rate of 79 % , higher than the national average of 59 @.@ 5 % : male literacy was 84 % , and female literacy was 73 % . In Kalimpong , 8 % of the population was under 6 years of age . The Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes population for Kalimpong was 5 @,@ 100 and 5 @,@ 121 respectively .

= = Civic administration = =

Kalimpong is the headquarters of the Kalimpong subdivision of the Darjeeling district . The semi autonomous Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council ( DGHC ) , set up by the West Bengal government in 1988 , administers this subdivision as well as the Darjeeling Sadar and Kurseong subdivisions . Kalimpong elects eight councillors to the DGHC , who manages the departments of Public Health , Education , Public Works , Transport , Tourism , Market , Small scale industries , Agriculture , Agricultural waterways , Forest ( except reserved forests ) , Water , Livestock , Vocational Training and Sports and Youth services . The district administration of Darjeeling , which is the authoritative body for the departments of election , panchayat , law and order , revenue etc . , also acts as an interface of communication between the Council and the State Government . The rural area in the subdivision covers three community development blocks Kalimpong I , Kalimpong II and Gorubathan consisting of forty two gram panchayats . A Sub Divisional Officer ( SDO ) presides over the Kalimpong subdivision . Kalimpong has a police station that serves the municipality and 18 gram panchayats of Kalimpong ? I CD block .

The Kalimpong municipality , which was established in 1945 , is in charge of the infrastructure of the town such as potable water and roads . The municipal area is divided into twenty three wards . Kalimpong municipality is constructing additional water storage tanks to meet the requirement of potable water , and it needs an increase of water supply from the ' Neora Khola Water Supply Scheme ' for this purpose . Often , landslides occurring in monsoon season cause havoc to the roads in and around Kalimpong . The West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Corporation Limited ( WBSEDCL ) that provides electricity here , needs to resolve issues like voltage fluctuations , unstable electrical supply and faulty electrical meters etc. faced by people of Kalimpong . Renewable Energy Development Agency of the state has plans to promote usage of solar street lights in Kalimpong and proposed an energy park here to sell renewable energy gadgets . The Public Works Department is responsible for the road connecting the town to the National Highway ? NH 31A . The Kalimpong municipality has a total of 10 health care units , with a total of 433 bed capacity .

The Kalimpong assembly constituency , which is an assembly segment of the Darjeeling parliamentary constituency , elects one member of the Vidhan Sabha of West Bengal .

= = People , culture , and cuisine = =

The original settlers of Kalimpong are the Lepchas although the majority of the populace are ethnic Nepali , having migrated from Nepal to Kalimpong in search of jobs while it was under British rule .

Indigenous ethnic groups include the Newars , Bhutia , Sherpas , Limbus , Rais , Magars , Chettris , Bahuns , Thakuris , Gurungs , Tamangs , Yolmos , Bhujels , Sunuwars , Sarkis , Damais and the Kamis . The other non native communities are the Bengalis , Marwaris , Anglo Indian , Chinese , Biharis and Tibetans who escaped to Kalimpong after fleeing the Communist Chinese invasion of Tibet . Kalimpong is home to Trinley Thaye Dorje ? one of the 17th Karmapa incarnations . Kalimpong is the closest Indian town to Bhutan 's western border , and has a small number of Bhutanese nationals residing here . Hinduism is the largest religion followed by Buddhism and Christianity . Islam has a minuscule presence in this region , mostly Tibetan Muslims who fled in 1959 after Chinese invasion of Tibet . The Buddhist monastery Zang Dhok Palri Phodang holds a number of rare Tibetan Buddhist scriptures . There is a mosque in the bazaar area of Kalimpong .

Popular Hindu festivals include Dashain , Tihar and the Buddhist festival of Losar . Languages spoken in Kalimpong include Nepali , which is the predominant language ; Lepcha , Limbu , Tamang , Kirat , Hindi , English and Bengali . Though there is a growing interest in cricket as a winter sport in Darjeeling Hills , football still remains the most popular sport in Kalimpong . Every year since 1947 , the Independence Shield Football Tournament is organized here as part of the two day long Independence Day celebrations . Former captain of India national football team , Pem Dorjee hails from Kalimpong . A popular snack in Kalimpong is the momo , steamed dumplings made up of pork , beef or vegetable cooked in a wrapping of flour and served with watery soup . Wai Wai is a packaged Nepalese snack made of noodles which are eaten either dry or in soup form . Churpee , a kind of hard cheese made from yak 's or chauri 's ( a hybrid of yak and cattle ) milk , is

sometimes chewed . A form of noodle called Thukpa , served in soup form is popular in Kalimpong . There are a large number of restaurants which offer a wide variety of cuisines , ranging from Indian to continental , to cater to the tourists . Tea is the most popular beverage in Kalimpong , procured from the famed Darjeeling tea gardens . Kalimpong has a golf course besides Kalimpong Circuit House .

The cultural centres in Kalimpong include , the Lepcha Museum and the Zang Dhok Palri Phodang monastery . The Lepcha Museum , a kilometre away from the town centre , showcases the culture of the Lepcha community , the indigenous peoples of Sikkim . The Zang Dhok Palri Phodang monastery has 108 volumes of the Kangyur , and belongs to the Gelug of Buddhism .

= = Media = =

Kalimpong has access to most of the television channels aired in the rest of India . Cable Television still provides service to many homes in the town and it 's outskirts , while DTH connections are now practically mandatory throughout the country . Besides mainstream Indian channels , many Nepali @-@ language channels such as Dainandini DD , Kalimpong Television KTV , Haal Khabar ( an association of the Hill Channel Network ) , Jan Sarokar , Himalayan People 's Channel ( HPC ) , and Kalimpong Times are broadcast in Kalimpong . These channels , which mainly broadcast locally relevant news , are produced by regional media houses and news networks , and are broadcast through the local cable network , which is now slowly becoming defunct due to the Indian government 's ruling on mandatory digitization of TV channels .

Newspapers in Kalimpong include English language dailies The Statesman and The Telegraph , which are printed in Siliguri , and The Economic Times and the Hindustan Times , which are printed in Kolkata ( Calcutta ) .

Among other languages , Nepali , Hindi and Bengali are prominent vernacular languages used in this region . Newspapers in all these four languages are available in the Darjeeling Hills region . Of the largely circulated Nepali newspapers Himalay Darpan , Swarnabhumi and some Sikkim @-@ based Nepali newspapers like Hamro Prajashakti and Samay Dainik are read most . The Tibet Mirror was the first Tibetan @-@ language newspaper published in Kalimpong in 1925 @.@ while Himalayan Times was the first English to have come out from Kalimpong in the year 1947 , it was closed down in the year 1962 after the Chinese aggression but was started once again and is now in regular print . It is known for its bold and aggressive stand on all local issues . Internet service and Internet cafés are well established ; these are mostly served through broadband , data card of different mobile services , WLL , dialup lines , Kalimpong News ( [http : / / kalimpongnews.net](http://kalimpongnews.net) ) , Kalimpong Online News ( [http : / / kalimpongonlinenews.blogspot.com](http://kalimpongonlinenews.blogspot.com) ) , Kalimpong Times ( [http : / / www.kalimpongtimes.com /](http://www.kalimpongtimes.com/) ) and KTV ( [http : / / www.kalimpongtv.com /](http://www.kalimpongtv.com/) ) are the main online news sites that collect and present local and North Bengal & Sikkim news from its own agencies like KalimNews and other newspapers . Besides this there are others like [kalimpong.info](http://kalimpong.info) , [kalimpongexpress.blogspot.com](http://kalimpongexpress.blogspot.com) and several others . All India Radio and several other National and Private Channels including FM Radio are received in Kalimpong .

The area is serviced by major telecommunication companies of India with most types of cellular services in most areas .

= = Education = =

There are fifteen major schools in Kalimpong , the most notable ones being Scottish Universities Mission Institution , Dr. Graham 's Homes , St Joseph 's Convent , St. Augustine 's School , Rockvale Academy , Saptashri Gyanpeeth , Springdale Academy , St. Philomenas School , Kalimpong Girls ' High School , Kumdini Homes and Gandhi Ashram School . The Scottish Universities Mission Institution was the first school that was opened in 1886 . Schools offer education up to class high secondary , following which students may choose to join a Junior College or carry on with an additional two years of schooling .

Kalimpong College , Cluny Women 's College and Rockvale Management College are the main

colleges in the town . Former two are affiliated to the North Bengal University and the later affiliated to West Bengal University of Technology apart from these Good Shepherd IHM ( Hotel management Institution ) offer courses on hospitality sectors . Most students however , choose to further their studies in Siliguri , Calcutta , and other colleges in the Indian metropolis . The Tharpa Choling Monastery , at Tirpai Hill near Kalimpong , is managed by Yellow Hat sect and has a library of Tibetan manuscripts and thankas .

= = Flora and fauna = =

The area around Kalimpong lies in the Eastern Himalayas , which is classified as an ecological hotspot , one of only three among the ecoregions of India . Neora Valley National Park that lies within the Kalimpong subdivision and is home to tigers . Acacia is the most commonly found species at lower altitudes , while cinnamon , ficus , bamboo , cacti and cardamom , are found in the hillsides around Kalimpong . The forests found at higher altitudes are made up of pine trees and other evergreen alpine vegetation . Seven species of rhododendrons are found in the region east of Kalimpong . The temperate deciduous forests include oak , birch , maple and alder . Three hundred species of orchid are found around Kalimpong , and Poinsettia and sunflower are some of the wild species that line the roads of Kalimpong .

The Red panda , Clouded leopard , Siberian weasel , Asiatic black bear , barking deer , Himalayan tahr , goral , gaur and pangolin are some of the fauna found near Kalimpong . Avifauna of the region include the pheasants , cuckoos , minivets , flycatchers , bulbuls , orioles , owls , partridges , sunbirds , warblers , swallows , swifts and woodpeckers .

Kalimpong is a major production centre of gladioli in India , and orchids , which are exported to many parts of the world . The Rishi Bankim Chandra Park is an ecological museums within Kalimpong . Citrus Dieback Research Station at Kalimpong works towards control of diseases , plant protection and production of disease free orange seedlings .

Kalimpong is also famous for their rich practice of cactus cultivation . Its nurseries attract people from far and wide for the absolutely stunning collection of cacti which they host . The strains of cacti , though not indigenous to the locale , has been carefully cultivated over the years , and now town boasts one of the most fascinating and exhaustive collection of the Cactaceae family . The plants have adapted well to the altitude and environment , and now proves to be one of the chief proponents of tourism to the township .