**Kolkata** ([UK](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_English): [/kɒlˈkɑːtə/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/English)[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-lexico-13) or [/kɒlˈkʌtə/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/English),[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-longman-14) [US](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_English): [/koʊlˈkɑːtɑː/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/English),[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-MB-15) Bengali: [[kolˈkata]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/Bengali) [ⓘ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bn-%E0%A6%95%E0%A6%B2%E0%A6%95%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BE.oga), [IAST](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Alphabet_of_Sanskrit_Transliteration): *Kōlkātā*; also known as **Calcutta** [/kælˈkʌtə/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/English)[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-longman-14)[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-MB-15) which was [the official name until 2001](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_renamed_places_in_India#West_Bengal)) is the capital and largest city of the Indian [state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/States_and_union_territories_of_India) of [West Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bengal). It lies on the eastern bank of the [Hooghly River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hooghly_River), 80 km (50 mi) west of the border with [Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh). It is the primary [financial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial_center) and [commercial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commercial_area) center of [eastern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_India) and [northeastern India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeast_India).[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-worldbank20162-16) Kolkata is the [seventh most populous city](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cities_in_India_by_population) of [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) with an estimated [city proper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_proper) population of 4.5 million (0.45 crore).[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-Cities1Lakhandabove-17) It is the centre of the [Kolkata Metropolitan Region](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata_Metropolitan_Region), one of the [most populous metropolitan areas in the world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_cities) with a population of over 15 million (1.5 crore) residents. Kolkata is the [*de facto*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_facto) cultural capital of [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) and historically and culturally significant city in the historic [region of Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-Kolkata_Culture-1)[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-18)[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-19) It is the second largest [Bengali-speaking city](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengali_language) in the world. It has the highest number of [Nobel laureates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nobel_Prize) among all cities in India.

The three villages that predated Calcutta were ruled by the [Nawab of Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nawab_of_Bengal) under [Mughal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_emperors) [suzerainty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suzerainty). After the Nawab granted the [East India Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_India_Company) a trading [licence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Licence" \o "Licence) in 1690,[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-20) the area was developed by the Company into [Fort William](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_William,_India). Nawab [Siraj ud-Daulah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siraj_ud-Daulah) occupied the fort in 1756 but was defeated at the [Battle of Plassey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Plassey) in 1757, after his general Mir Jafar mutinied in support of the Company, and was later made the Nawab for a brief time.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-21) Under [company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Company_rule_in_India) and later [crown rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crown_rule_in_India), Calcutta served as the *de facto* [capital of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_of_India) until 1911. Calcutta was the second largest city in the [British Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire), after [London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London),[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-22) and was the center of bureaucracy, politics, law, education, science and [the arts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_arts) in India. The city was associated with many of the figures and movements of the [Bengali Renaissance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengali_Renaissance). It was the hotbed of the [Indian nationalist movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_nationalist_movement).[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata#cite_note-23) The [University of Calcutta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Calcutta) and its affiliated colleges produced many leading figures of South Asia.