India

Location

India is located in southern Asia and has an area of total 3,287,590 sq. km with land comprising 2,973,190 sq. km and water 314,400 sq. km. India lies to the north of the equator between 8°4 min. and 37° 6 min. north latitude and 68°7 min. and 97°25 min. east longitude. The country measures 3214 Km from north to south and 2933 km from east to west. India has a long coastline with the Arabian Sea at the west and the Bay of Bengal at the east of main peninsula, and at the south is the Indian Ocean. India borders Pakistan on the west and China, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh on the east.

Geography

India is the seventh largest country in the world. Northern, northeastern and eastern parts of the country are covered with the Himalayan range and the southern part of the Indian Peninsula is covered in the middle by the Deccan Plateau. A desert is in the northwest part of the country, with plains in the northern center of the country. Vindhayachal range run from west to east in central India.

Climate

India’s climate is also very diverse. In northern India climate is very different throughout the year. In winters it doesn’t snow but temperatures go as low as 0°C,
comparable to summers with as high as 48°C. Therefore, the area has four main seasons --

spring, summer, rainy and winter. As a result of these seasons, different kinds of crops can be
grown throughout the year. In the south the weather is not cold in winter and hot in the
summer, but it has a lot of rainfall.

**History**

*India gained its independence on August 15, 1947. Before that,*

*India was a colony of Britain and was dependant for a lot of things on*

*Britain. After independence, new changes had to be made in agriculture*

*and trade. After 1947, several economical and social changes occurred*

*that brought about a lot of progress.*

**Important dates**

Important dates on India’s calendar are August 15th – India’s Independence Day; January
26th; Republic Day of India; and October 2nd, Gandhi Jayanti (birth anniversary of Mahatma
Gandhi).

One of the most important event in Indian history was the partition of India into, Pakistan
and India at the time of independence.
Population

Today (2001) the population of India has already crossed the 1,000 million people mark and is the world’s second most populous country after China. Still, the population is growing at the rate of 1.6%.

Currency

The official currency of India is the Rupee (Rs.) where 1 Rupee = 100 paise. Coins in circulation are of 10, 25, 50 paise and also 1, 5 rupees. Bills are in amount of 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1000 Rs. One U.S. dollar is currently (2001) equal to approximately 47 Rs.

Education

Indian government provides very inexpensive education for children 6 to 18 years of age. Education is not free but is of very nominal cost. Also, education is not compulsory for all, so therefore a lot of children don’t study after 3-4 years of education. Even graduation is not very expensive in certain fields. At the same time, there are a lot of private institutes which provide better education at some levels and are in stiff competition with government institutes.

Overall literacy rate is 52% (defined by persons 15 and over who can read and write). According to 1995 figures, literacy for males was 65.5%, and for females was 37.7%.

Children in urban areas and in major cities have much more access to education than children from rural areas. Hence a lot of farmers are not educated.
Child labor often keeps children out of school and from being educated.

**Language**

There are more than 1600 languages and dialects spoken in India. Twenty-four with more than 1 million speakers. Hindi is spoken by more than 35% of the people and is the national language.

**Trade**

In 1991, India opened the industrial sectors to greater international and domestic competition. Financial systems have been strengthened and India is well developed.

India in recent years (2001) has emerged as one of the leading destinations for investors from developed countries. India’s major trading partners are European countries (Import 24.8%, Export 27.7%), Germany (Imp 7.6%, Exp. 6.6 %), U.K. (Imp 5.4%, Exp. 6.4 %) OPEC (Imp 21.1 %, Exp. 3.6 %), Non OPEC developing countries (Imp. 19.9 %, Exp. 23.9 %), U.S.A. (Imp 10.1%, Exp. 19.1 %), Japan (Imp 7.1 %, Exp. 9.2 %), Eastern Europe & CIS (Imp 2.4 %, Exp. 7.7 %) and others (Imp 14.6 %, Exp. 9.8 %). Main commodities India exports are textiles goods (6,352 $ M), garments (3,282 $ M), cotton textiles (2,234 $ M), handicraft (5,328 $ M), gems and jewelry (4,501 $ M), chemicals (2,434 $ M), leather (1,611 $ M), fish (1,126 $ M) and rice (384 4 M).

India imports capital goods (6,367 $ M), petroleum & crude (5,928 $ M), chemical and plastics (3,383 $ M), uncut precious stones (1,629 $ M), fertilizers (1,052 $ M), iron and steel (1,082 $ M), non ferrous metals (718 $ M), pulp and paper (448 $ M) cashew nuts (220 $ M), and edible oils (199 $ M)
**Food**

Indian meals are mostly vegetarian with a diet rich in proteins and carbohydrates. Eighty percent of the population is Hindu and Hindus don’t take meat in there diet. A major part of there diet is of wheat, rice and vegetables. People do eat meat but in very small quantities. Mostly food is cooked with a lot of spices and is served with milk or milk products. Also there is a lot of consumption of milk and milk products. People are used to have two heavy meals a day one in morning at around 10 am and another at around 6:30 at night.

**Agriculture**

Indians live mainly in villages. There are 600,000 of them. The villages remain the basic unit of Indian society and roughly 65% of the population is rural. They constitute the backbone of what is still largely an agricultural economy. Agriculture is the mainstay of the majority of the population in India. Extremes in climate and a variety of soil conditions have made possible the cultivation of almost every item from cash crops to food grains.

India’s agricultural exports (excluding tea, coffee, marine products and raw cotton) during 1994-95 was Rs. 70,490 million. Important items of agricultural exports are rice, cashew nuts, coffee, tea, horticulture and floriculture products.

There are two major cropping seasons in India, namely Kharif and Rabi. The Kharif season is during the southwest monsoon (July- October). During this season agricultural activities take place both in rain fed areas and irrigated areas. The Rabi season is during the winter months, when agricultural activities take place only in the irrigated areas.
The animal husbandry and dairy development sector is estimated to account for nearly 26% of the total value of agricultural output. India has the world’s highest production of milk. India possesses twenty-six breeds of buffaloes. India’s cattle are renowned around the world over for their quality of endurance and resistance to tropical diseases. In the 1987 census, India has about 195.87 million cattle, 76.77 million buffaloes, 44.84 million sheep, 99.41 million goats, 10.76 million pigs, 2.9 million pack animals and 258.34 million poultry birds.

**Landmarks**

There are a lot of places in almost every part of India which attract tourists. One of the biggest tourist attractions is the Taj Mahal at Agra, built by Shah Jahan in loving memory of his loving wife Noor Jahan. Kutub Minar in New Delhi, built by Qutab-ud-din Aibak, is 72.5 meters high. The 5-storied Minar of red sandstone has an ornamental figure of Qoranic inscriptions. Red fort, also built by Shah Jahan, is in New Delhi. India Gate is also one of the landmarks of this city. Golden temple in Amritsar, Sun temple in Bhubneshwar Nalanda, one of the world’s earliest Universities is in east India. Ajantha and Ellora near Mumbai are two ancient caves which have been carved out of the Maharastra plateau with a lot of paintings and sculptures from that time. Also, Elephanta Caves (near Mumbai on an Island), believed to be built by Pulakkesin II of the Chalukya kingdom in AS 634, are renowned for their exquisite carvings depicting the myths of Lord Shiva. Gol Gumbaj is the second largest dome in the world after St. Peter’s, the Vatican city in Rome.