



Background

The civilization of India is one of the oldest civilizations in the World, spanning more than 4000 years and witnessing the rise and fall of several Empires, and projecting a unique assimilation of various cultures and heritage. The Country has always been portrayed as a land of spiritual integrity with professors of Philosophy, who have engineered the magnanimity of its nationalism. One of the oldest scriptures in the World, the four-volume Vedas that many regard as the repository of national thoughts, which have anticipated some of the modern scientific discoveries, has been created in the orb of this myth oriented Country. This strong affinity with religion and mythology has been reflected time and again through various art forms and performing arts, which are symbolical of the composite culture of India. Unity in diversity is another facet of the Country's inherent nationalism, which had been fused by the feeling of national fervour incited by various foreign invasions that ever made its way to the Indian shores. Religious tolerance and cultural amalgamation have given shape to a uniquely secular Nation, which has created an impressive status of itself in the global arena.

Capital

New Delhi

Government type

Federal Republic

Geography

- Location South Asia bordering the Arabian Sea to the west and the Bay of Bengal to the east. India shares land boundaries with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China, Nepal, and Pakistan

Climate:

The climate of India can broadly be classified as a tropical monsoon one. But, in spite of much of the northern part of India lying beyond the tropical zone, the entire country has a tropical climate marked by relatively high temperatures and dry winters. There are four seasons - winter (December-February), (ii) summer (March-June), (iii) south-west monsoon season (June-September), and (iv) post monsoon season (October- November).Area 3,287,590 sq km

Indian Standard Time:

GMT + 05:30

Population

Total - 1,014,003,817 (July 2000 est.)
Urban population (% of total) - 28.4

Age structure:

- *0-14 years:* 34% (male 175,228,164; female 165,190,951)
- *15-64 years:*62% (male 324,699,562; female 301,821,383)
- *65 years and over:*4% (male 23,925,371; female 23,138,386) (2000 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.8% (2000 est.)

Birth rate: 24.79 births/1,000 population (2000 est.)

Death rate: 8.88 deaths/1,000 population (2000 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 64.9 deaths/1,000 live births (2000 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

- total population: 62.9 years
- male: 62 years
- female: 63.13 years (2000 est.)

Ethnic groups: Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid and other 3%

Religions

Hindu 80%, Muslim 14%, Christian 2.4%, Sikh 2%, Buddhist 0.7%, Jains 0.5%, other 0.4%

Administrative Divisions:

28 States and 7 Union Territories

Languages

English enjoys associate status but is the most important language for national, political, and commercial communication. The major official language of the Indian Union is Hindi, which is the primary tongue of 30% of the people. Besides Hindi, other official languages include: Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Malayalam, Kannada, Oriya, Punjabi, Assamese, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Sanskrit, and Hindustani (a popular variant of Hindi/Urdu spoken widely throughout northern India). 700 dialects are also spoken. English has become a sort of "lingua franca" and is the accepted language for business and government.

Literacy

definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 52%
male: 65.5%
female: 37.7% (1995 est.)

Administrative divisions

29 states and 6 union territories*; Andaman and Nicobar Islands*, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh*, Dadra and Nagar Haveli*, Daman and Diu*, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep*, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Pondicherry*, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Uttaranchal, Chattisgarh.

Independence

15 August 1947 (from U.K.)

Legal system

based on English common law; limited judicial review of legislative acts;

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Work week

Monday to Friday. Many offices work half day on Saturday. Government offices are closed on Saturday.

Financial Year

April 1 to March 31

Entry/Exit requirements

A passport and visa are required for entry into India for tourism or business. All visitors must obtain visas at an Indian Embassy or Consulate abroad prior to entering the country. There are no provisions for visas upon arrival, and those arriving in India without visas bearing the correct validity dates and number of entries are subject to deportation.

Economy 2005-06

- GDP (U.S. \$ billion) - 691
- GDP growth rate (percent)- 7
- GDP per capita (U.S. \$)- 603
- Foreign Exchange Reserves (U.S. \$ billion) - 146
- Inflation (%) - 5.5
- Unemployment (%) - 7.3
- Average rupee exchange rate to a U.S. \$ - 44
- Agriculture (% of GDP) - 24.7
- Industry (% of GDP) - 27
- Services, etc., (% of GDP)- 50

Trade Statistics (U.S. India Trade - 2005)

- Exports to U.S. - U.S.\$ 18.81 billion
- Imports from U.S. - U.S. \$ 7.96 billion

Currency (Code):

Indian Rupee (INR)

Fiscal Year:

1st April to 31st March