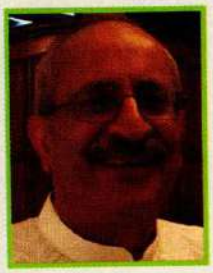
The Spirit of India

2018-2019



Dear Friends,

Many of us, myself included, don't know much about our own country. Most people live in one state and visit a few other states. For myself, I have not been to some of the eastern states, and have been to only three southern states. Come to think of it, I haven't been to some of the central states!

In school, I learned about things that effected the whole country, but very little about the individual states, their culture, their politics, their history.

India, the whole sub-continent, has been one country for less than 100 years. Many of the contemporary states are less than 40 years old. **There is a spirit that binds us together.**

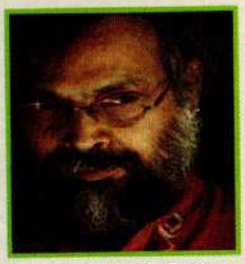
So I decided to dig into this and here is what I found. I hope you will be interested - and educated - and enjoy these little histories.

In this Calendar I present *The Spirit of India*

Burman

Pradip Burman

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Gautam Partho Roy

We told him that we were showcasing the variety and beauty of the costumes of our country, from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. That's all we said. He asked, "Which states?" We gave him a list and he disappeared for a month.

He came back with painted costumes, but not like models in magazines. No. Not him. He paints a girl, wearing a salwar kurta, on the cross bar of a bicycle and a young man, wearing a turban, riding it. That's not all. He then decides to put in meaningful, historic structures of the State and relevant countryside. You know. The Jallianwala Bagh Memorial, wheat fields and other Punjabi icons. He makes the state fit the costumes.

We are now thinking about the next calendar, trying to figure out what we can choose that he CAN'T paint. Suggestions welcome.

Gautam Partho Roy holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Rabindra Bharat University, Kolkata.

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The Spirit of India

India is not just a country. It is a sub-continent. It was secluded from the rest of the world by the Himalayas on the north and lower ranges on the west, north and east. The Indian Ocean secured the south. The only way to get into the Indian sub-continent was the Khyber and Bolan passes on the western border, which the Aryans and the Moghuls used.

Our beautiful country is blessed. It has mountains, rivers, deserts, forests and fertile plains. It has many languages, different cuisines, assorted festivals and many cultures, ecologies and regional costumes.

For centuries we were not one nation. Many kingdoms, large and small, were ruled by Sultans, and Maharajahs. We had our little disagreements and fought each other and stole one another's kingdoms, but socially, nothing changed. We built our temples, mosques and churches, we share all the festivals. Our civilisation has survived.

The closest we got to one nation, was during the reign of Ashoka, the Guptas, the Moghuls and the British. Then came Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the Mahatma, the Great Soul. He preached non-violence and peaceful protests. India followed his path to Independence and democracy. Suddenly we were one country.

States were defined on linguistic lines, which also have their own cultures. But they are still Indians.

The way we dress, the food we eat, the festivals we celebrate, how we dance, marry, punish and award, are as variable as our languages. But, in all our hearts, we are Indians.

Bharat Mata ki Jai !!!!!

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Andhra Pradesh

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Capital : **Hyderabad** - Population : **5.36 Crore** - Language : **Telegu**

Andhra is situated on the southeastern coast of the country. The largest cities in this state are Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada.

In 2014, the north-western portion of Andhra Pradesh was separated to form the state of Telangana. The capital Hyderabad, went to Telangana as a part of the division. It is still the temporary capital of Andhra Pradesh, which has 10 years to finish their new capital, to be named Amarvati.

The economy is mainly supported by agriculture and livestock. **Chillies from Guntur district** *are world famous and are exported to Asia, Canada and Europe, while tons of chilli powder are exported to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Middle East, South Korea, U.K., USA and Latin America.*

The state is also rich in mica, iron, limestone, bauxite, granite, oil and gas.

The Indian Space Research Organisation has their primary orbital launch site on the island of Sriharikota in Nellore district has a launch record of **104 satellites in a single rocket**, *and putting one of the heaviest satellites in space. 2017 proved to be a year of breaking records for ISRO. Other countries send their satellites from thee.*

The **Tirumala Venkateswara Temple** *in* **Tirupati** *is one of the world's most visited religious sites with 18.25 million visitors per year.*

The temple in Puttapurthi, built by the Satya Sai Baba is visited by thousands of devotees, even after his death. The Baba also built an ashram and a big free hospital. It was funded by donations to the temple.

Kuchipudi *is one of the eight major Indian classical dances and is named for it's origin in a village named Kuchipudi in Andhra Pradesh.*

The beaches of Visakapatnam, hill stations like Araku and Horsley Hills and the island of Konaseema in the Godavari delta are magnets for tourists.

The Telugu film industry shifted from Chennai to Hyderabad, which now holds the **Guinness World Record for the largest film production facility in the world.**

Holidays are the same as most states, except Ugadhi. This feast requires a clean up of the house, mango leaf garlands over the doors and colourful chalk designs at the door. Pachadi, which is a must for the feast is a special chutney which is sweet, bitter, salty and sour. These flavours are a reminder that in life everyone should feel all these emotions.

WELCOME TO TAWANG

Arunachal Pradesh

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Capital : **Itanagar** - Population : **16.80 Lakh** - Language : **Nyishi/Adi**

It is the northeastern-most state of the country. Arunachal Pradesh borders the states of Assam and **Nagaland** *to the south and shares international borders with* **Bhutan** *in the west,* **Myanmar** *in the east and is separated from* **China** *in the north by the* **McMahon Line**. *A major part of the state is claimed by the the People's* **Republic of China** *referring to it as* **"South Tibet"**. *The part of the state which is claimed by China was temporarily occupied by Chinese forces during the* **1962 war**.

In **Sanskrit**, *Arunachal means, "Land of the Dawn-Lit Mountains". It is also known as the Orchid State of India or the Paradise of the Botanists. Geographically, it is the largest of the Seven Sisters as the north-eastern states are known. It was a Union Territory before it became a state in February 1987.*

A glimpse of the history of the state only became available in the **Ahom** *and* **Chutiya** *chronicles and from the* **Monpa** *and* **Sherdukpen** *tribes, who keep historical records of the existence of local chiefdoms. The* **Ahoms** *held these areas until the annexation of India by the British in 1858. However, most Arunachali tribes remained, in practice, largely autonomous, until India's independence in 1947.*

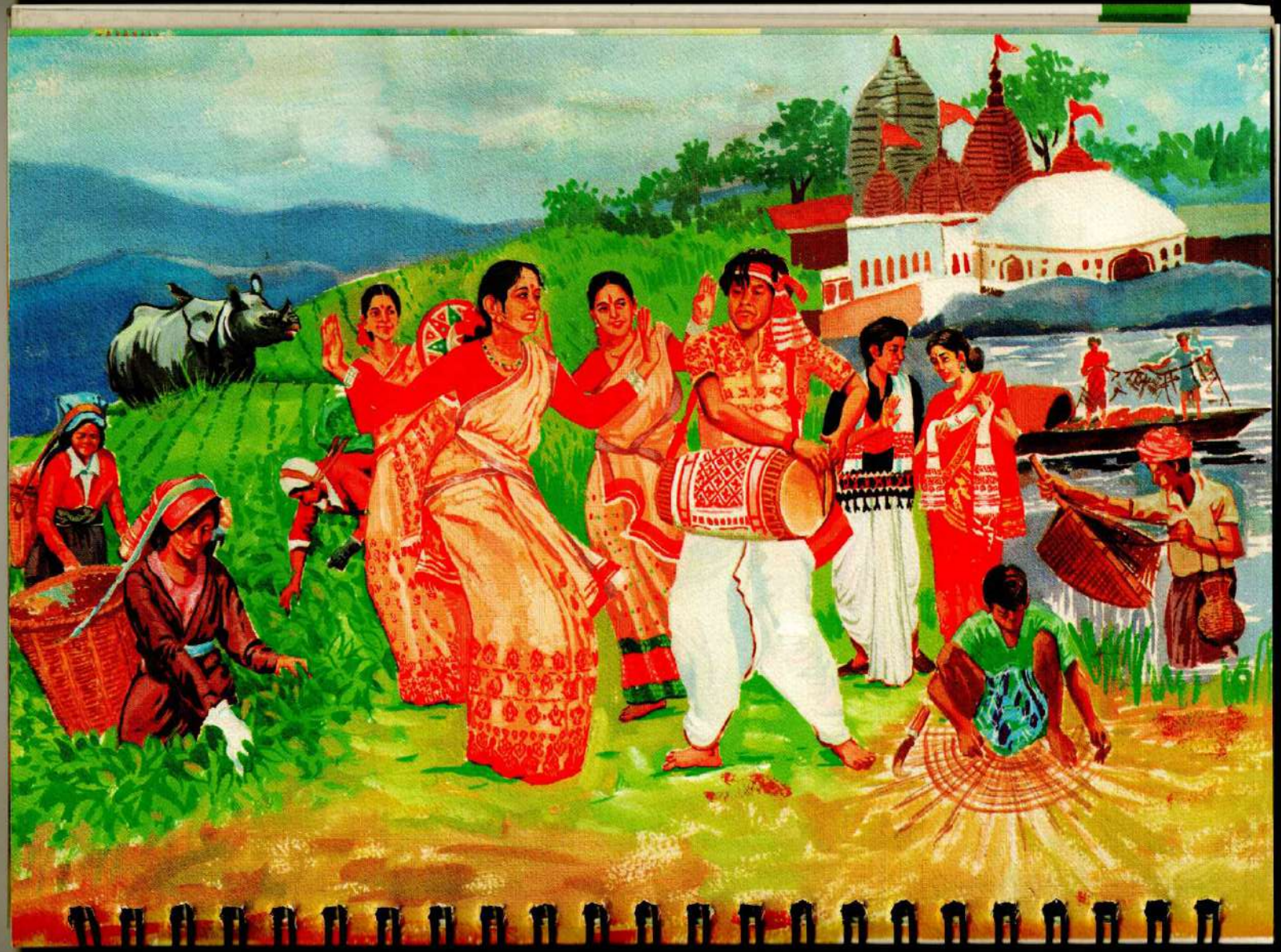
In 1962 during the India-China war, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) occupied part of Arunachal Pradesh, but they announced a unilateral ceasefire and withdrew, accepting the current international boundary.

The Hindu texts, the Kalika Purana and the Mahabharata, mention the Prabhu Mountains, where the sage Parashurama washed away his sins, the sage Vyasa meditated, King Bhismaka founded his kingdom and Lord Krishna married his consort, **Rukmini**.

When China annexed Tibet, the Dalai Lama fled to a monastery in the Tawang Valley and is still sheltered there.

Choekhor *is celebrated in the seventh month of the lunar calendar, to protect the crops before harvest.*

The food in **Arunachal Pradesh** *varies with the region. The staple food is rice along with fish, meat and many green vegetables. There are different varieties of rice beer with different flavours. Apong or rice beer, made from fermented rice or millet is popular, because it doesn't bring on hangovers.*



Assam

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Capital : **Dispur** - Population : **3.48 Crore** - Language : **Assamese**

Assam is a state in Northeast India, situated south of the eastern Himalayas along the Brahmaputra and Barak River. Most of the 17th century saw the **Ahoms** *defeating the Mughals. The Burmese invasion of Assam in the early 19th century caused the Ahoms to sign the British Treaty of Yandaboo. The Britishers defeated the Burmese, but took control of Assam. The Siliguri Corridor, a 22 kilometre narrow strip of land between Nepal and Bangladesh connects the state to the rest of India.*

Assam is famous for it's tea gardens and silk. The state has conserved the one-horned Indian rhinoceros, the wild water buffalo, the pygmy hog, tigers and various species of Asiatic birds from near extinction. It also provides one of the last wild habitats for the Asian elephant. Assam has the **heaviest monsoon rainfall** *which feeds the Brahmaputra River, whose tributaries and oxbow lakes provide the region with water for the rest of the year. The first oil well in Asia was in Assam.*

The **tea in India comes mostly from Assam** *where vast tea gardens thrive. Naturally, the best tea is exported. Most Indians prefer to boil the tea leaves with milk and sugar. For this, CTC (CutTornCurled) tea is appropriate. But tea made in a tea-pot needs full leaves, dried and rolled, and that is what is exported. Tea bags contain tea leaf powder, which is also exported.*

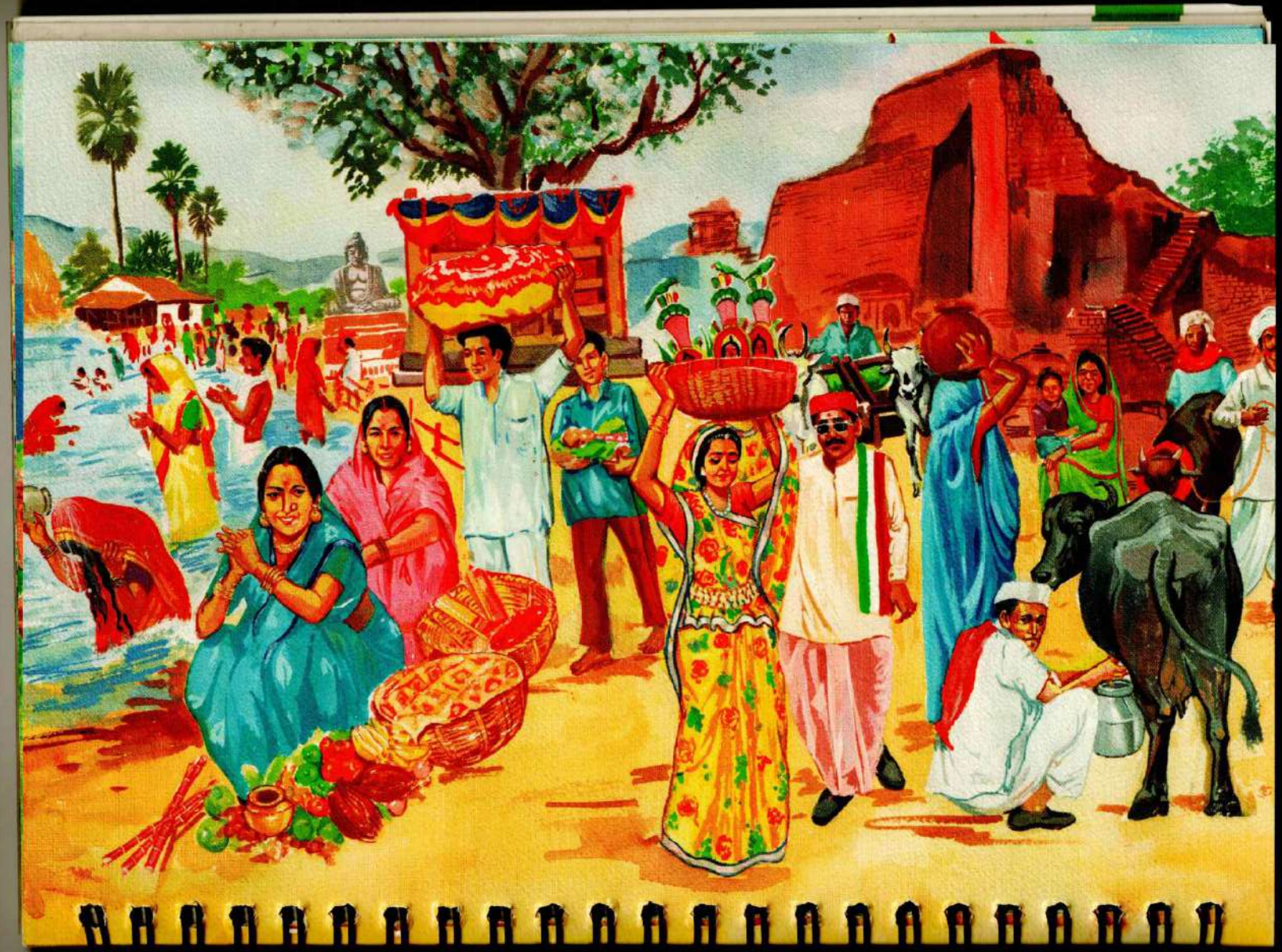
Muga silk *is the product of a particular silkworm, Antheraea assamensis. It is endemic to Assam. The larvae of these moths feed on som and sualu leaves. The silk produced is known for its glossy fine texture and durability. It was previously reported that muga silk could not be dyed or bleached due to "low porosity". This is incorrect. Muga takes dye like any other silk and can be hand-washed, with its lustre increasing after every wash. Very often the silk outlives its owner.*

Assamese diet includes rice, fish and birds. There is very little use of spices and strong flavours, mainly due to the use of exotic fruits and vegetables that are either fresh, dried or fermented. The preferred oil for cooking is the pungent mustard oil.

The most vibrant celebrations in Assam is the **Bihu** *festival, which lasts for a month, marking the beginning of the agricultural season. The Losar festival in Tawang sees people cleaning their homes and discarding all unused old items, to bring good health, peace and prosperity into the house.*

Assam has many tribes and as many costumes, but best known is the mekhla-chadar, like a saree in two pieces. The pallav is separate.

The Kamakhya Temple in Guahati is one of the 51 Shakti Peeths.



Bihar

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Capital : **Patna** - Population : **12.1 Crore** - Language : **Bihari**

Bihar consists of three distinct regions, each with its own distinct history and culture. They are Magdh, Mithila and Bhojpur, mentioned in religious texts and epics of ancient India. Sita, consort of Lord Ram, was a princess of Mithila.

The Maghada region of **Bihar** was the centre of power, learning and culture for a thousand years. Two major pacifist religions, Buddhism and Jainism, arose from the region. The **Maurya Emperor Ashoka**, looked at the battle field at Kalinga and saw the death and destruction he had caused. He vowed never to go to war again and devoted himself completely to Buddhism.

The Gupta and the Pala empires unified large parts of the Indian subcontinent. Their capital, **Patiliputra**, was an important political, military and economic centre.

It is no accident, therefore, that the original author of the Hindu epic, The Ramayana, Maharishi Valmiki lived in Ancient Bihar.

Nalanda University was a centre of learning from the fifth century CE to 1200 CE. It is now a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

The Buddha died under the Bodhi tree and in 1972, a beautiful Japanese temple was built in Bodh Gaya. **Chhath Puja is an important festival** that is mainly celebrated in Bihar. The puja is dedicated to the worship of the Sun god and his wife Usha. Bihar is **rich in minerals**. Iron and copper, bauxite -the ore for aluminium-, is also found here. This state has a reserve of pyrites, limestone, graphite, chromite, manganese, nickel and especially mica, which is essential for electronics.

Many Indians, mainly Biharis, became indentured labourers to escape the widespread poverty and famine. Some travelled alone; whereas others brought their families to settle in the colonies they worked in. They were sent, sometimes in large numbers, to plantation colonies producing high value crops such as sugar in Africa, Mauritius and the Caribbean. The demand for Indian indentured labourers increased dramatically after the abolition of slavery in 1834. Their descendants have little businesses, shops and restaurants -selling Indian food.

Gram and/or barley grains are dry roasted in a large iron pot and made into a powder, which is called '**sattu**'. It is an important food because it does not need cooking, never goes bad and is very nutritious. Labourers can carry it in a bag and all they have to do is mix it with water to make a soft dough. At home, it can be a sweet rich dessert when jaggery (gur), fresh fruit and milk are added.

Bihari men wear the dhoti-kurta combination and most villagers wear heavy silver ear rings. Women wear sarees and solid silver neck collars. Silver chains, in a T formation, adorn their heads along the hairline and the parting.

Chhattisgarh

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Capital : **Raipur** - Population : **9.92 Lakh** - Language : **Hindi**

Some people say that Chhattisgarh means Thirty-Six Forts. Experts do not agree with this, as 36 forts cannot be archaeologically identified in the region. Another view, more popular with experts and historians, is that Chhattisgarh is the corrupted form of Chedisgarh which means Raj or ***"Empire of the Chedis"****. Chhattisgarh region had been part of the Chedi dynasty of* ***Kaling****, in modern Odisha. In the medieval period up to 1803, a major portion of present eastern Chhattisgarh was part of the* ***Sambalpur*** *Kingdom of Odisha. The state was formed on 1st of November 2000 by partitioning ten* ***Chhattisgarhi*** *and six* ***Gondi speaking*** *southeastern districts of Madhya Pradesh.*

It is a tribal area, that is resource-rich and is one of the fastest-developing states. Its seven rivers, produce hydro-electricity, which is exported to other states. 15% of the iron in India is produced here and coal is abundant.

The northern and southern parts of the state are hilly, while the central part lies in the basin of the Mahanadi river and its tributaries. This fertile plain promotes rice cultivation. The deciduous forests of its eastern highlands are rich in wildlife and cover roughly 44% of the state.

Raipur has been in existence since the 9th century; the old site and ruins of the fort can be seen.

The old inscriptions of ***Ratanpur****, Rajim and Khallari refer to the reign of Kalachuri kings. Raipur was the capital of the* ***Kalachuri dynasty*** *whose rulers controlled the forts of Chhattisgarh for a considerable period.*

Raipur was once part of the ***Dakshina Kosala Kingdom*** *and later became part of the* ***Maurya Empire****. In the 4th century CE, Gupta king* ***Samudragupta*** *conquered this region.*

The southern part lies in the watershed of the ***Godavari River*** *and its tributary, the Indravati. The Chitrakoot Waterfalls on the River Indravati are located near Jagdalpur in Bastar district. During the monsoon season, it is called the Niagra Falls of India.*

The bill to separate Chhattisgarh from Madhya Pradesh was passed and India had a new state on the 1st of November, 2000.

The tribals save their money and buy silver jewellery and put it on their women. The jewellery is not only interesting but lethal. They are potential weapons, with knuckle-duster rings and bangles an inch thick, tapering to a knife edge.

The ***tendu*** *tree is found widely across central India. Leaves are used to wrap bidis, the poor man's cigarette. Tobacco is a lucrative crop.*

Aamat *is a sort of sambar. It is made with dal, mixed vegetables with ginger-garlic paste and spices.*

Goa

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Capital : **Panaji** - Population : **33.40 Lakh** - Language : **Konkani**

Goa is a tiny emerald state on the west coast of India. The first Portuguese landed in Goa in 1504 and colonised it after General Alberqueque defeated the ruler, Adil Shah. Goa was a part of the Portuguese empire for about 450 years. The missionary, St Francis Xavier, converted many Goans to Christianity. He died on a mission to China and his body was brought back to Goa. His body lies in a glass coffin in the Bom Jesus Cathedral in Old Goa, and has still not putrified.

After Independence in 1947, Goa was the last place in India which was ruled by a foreign power. Prime Minister Nehru tried to bring Goa back to India peacefully but the Portuguese were not ready to negotiate. When a group of Goan and Indian protesters staged a liberation march in Goa, the Portuguese shot and killed more than 20 people. In November 1961, the Portuguese opened fire on Indian fishing boats. Prime Minister Nehru lost his patience, and on December 17th, India invaded Goa using overwhelming force. The Portuguese governor had only 3,000 men, opposing an army of 30,000, not counting bomber planes and battleships with very nasty guns. The Governor blew up a few bridges to delay the invaders. But his situation was plainly hopeless and he surrendered. There was almost no resistance and very few casualties. India shipped all the Portuguese to Portugal, allowing them to take their personal belongings. Fort Aguada is a remnant of Portuguese rule.

Goa is now the 25th state of India. It has a unique mix of Indian and Portuguese cultures. The elders still speak Portuguese. Along with local language, Konkani. The Goans also speak English and very fractured Hindi. The blue sea, golden beaches, music, international cuisine, the no-hurry, happy-go-lucky attitude towards life attracts an estimated 2.5 million tourists each year, a large percentage of which are Indians.

The no-hurry thing can be very frustrating when your roof water tank starts leaking. But the man will come eventually, with a broad smile, and fix it in a jiffy.

*Casinos are not allowed on land, so huge ships that never sail are anchored in the middle of the **Mandovi River** as it flows through Panaji. They function 24/7 and serve free food, snacks and drinks - hard and soft. They attract people from neighbouring states and for high rollers, they even provide accommodation.*

***The College of Hospitality, the largest in India,** turns out chefs, hotel and restaurant managers, who are recruited by 5 star hotels and restaurants all over India and the Middle East. Iron mines in Goa are privately owned. The Pharma industry is mainly based in Goa because of the climate and cheap labour.*

Christians constituted 64% and Hindus 35% in the 1851 census. Currently, Christians constitute 27%, Hindus 66% and 7% Muslims. Goa has never had a religious riot.

Gujarat

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Capital : **Gandhinagar** - Population : **6.8 Crore** - Language : **Gujarati**

The capital of the state is named after **Mahatma Gandhi**, *the Great Soul, who led India to independence. Dwarka has one of the foremost Char dhams of the four* **Hindu** *pilgrimage sites. It is located where the Gomti River joins the* **Arabian Sea**. *This Gomti is not the same as the Gomti in Uttar Pradesh.*

Gujarat has a long coastline along the Arabian Sea and its western border is Pakistan's eastern border. Gujarat was formed in 1960, when Bombay Presidency was split into Gujarat and Maharashtra on linguistic lines.

Gujarat accepted the Zoroastrian refugees from Iran, where they were persecuted for their religion. They are called Parsees, a derivative of Pharsi, the Hindi name for Persia.

Dwarka district is believed to be the ancient kingdom of Lord Krishna.

The 5-storied **Dwarkadish temple** *is dedicated to Him. The temple is also known as Jagat Mandir. The roof is supported by 72 pillars covered in carvings. Archaeological findings suggest it is over 2,000 years old.*

The Britisher's sent thousands of Gujaratis, as well as other Indians, as labourers to Kenya, S. Africa and Uganda, Mauritius and Guiana. Their descendants still live there, but are now affluent, owning shops and small businesses.

12,000 fishing boats from Gujarat go out to sea every day and aquaculture produces over 3000 metric tons of fish a year. The sea fish are exported and the farmed fish are sold in India. In Gujarat, chickens laid 127 crore eggs in 2009. Shrimp production has reached 3,032 MT.

Gujarat is very industrialised. It makes vehicles - from trucks to scooters and fits making cars in between. Factories produce plastics, cement and textiles. Gujarat **buys uncut diamonds**, *cuts and polishes them and sells them for 600% of the uncut price.*

50% of the land is under cultivation. The main crops are bajra, jowar, rice and wheat. Major cash crops are groundnut, tobacco, cotton, linseed, sugarcane, isabgul (Psyllium husk), cumin, mangoes and bananas.

Hindu Gujaratis were vegetarians but a decade ago, a survey by Anthropological Survey of India said that 70 per cent of the state was now non-vegetarian.

Where **garba**, *the folk dance of Gujarat, is spreading all over western India. A circle of dancing women use painted batons to clash against other batons in time with the music. When you see ladies putting ice on their knuckles, it is because someones danda missed the target.*

Haryana

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Capital : **Chandigarh** - Population : **2.83 Crore** - Language : **Hindi**

Haryana is one of the new states carved out of Punjab in 1966. Chandigarh is the shared capital city of Punjab and Haryana. Both are farming states in northern India. Both governments have offices located here.

The river Yamuna forms the eastern district boundary with Uttar Pradesh. Chandi Mandir, on the outskirts of Chandigarh, is a large military base.

According to ancient Hindu texts, the boundaries of the historical battleground of ***Kurukshetra****, of Mahabharata fame, corresponds roughly to the borders of Chandigarh. Panipat, another battleground, is also in Haryana but closer to Delhi.*

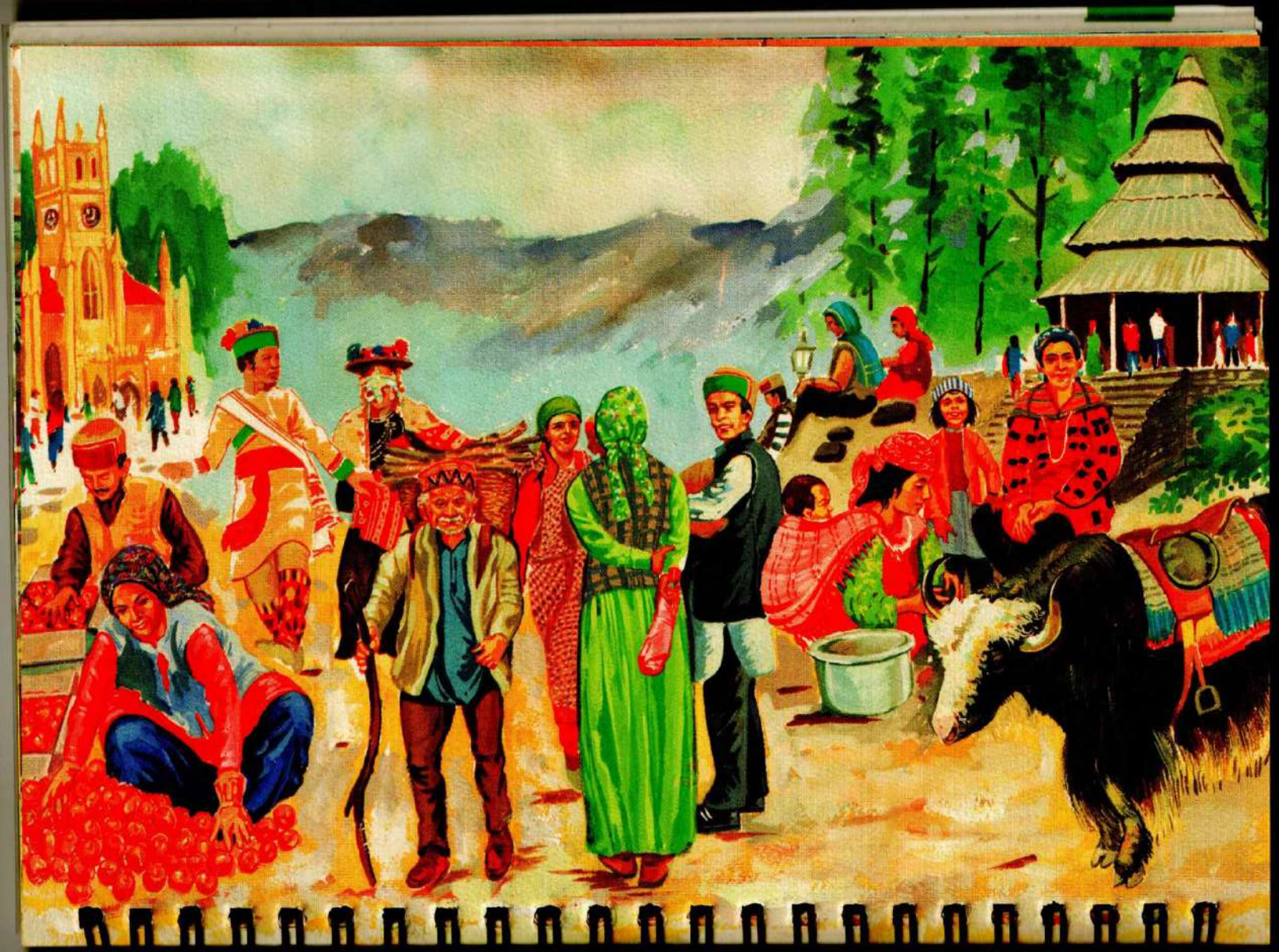
In the 7th century, King Harshavardhana established his capital, Kannauj. Kurukshetra and Panipat saw many wars. Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodhi and established the Mughal dynasty. Akbar's general, Bairam Khan defeated a militant Haryanvi named Hemu, who subsequently won 22 battles, including one against the Moghuls at Tughlaqbad. He crowned himself king, taking the name of Vikramaditya. His reign was very brief, as he was killed in the 2nd battle of Panipat. In 1857, the major centre of rebellion against the British was in Haryana.

Haryana covers a little over 1% of India, but has large companies making everything, from cars - diesel and petrol - to surgical instruments and kitchen gadgets. Large business houses have offices just across the Delhi border in Gurgaon. Gurgaon is now a suburb of Delhi, with multi-storied apartment blocks, some with gardens, swimming pools, squash and tennis courts. New-age architecture has created some beautiful and some weird, but attractive, office buildings.

Haryanvi farmers grow everything, from artichokes to zucchini, besides grains, oil seeds and pulses. It owes thanks to the network of canals provided for irrigation by an efficient State Government. They have a hungry market in Delhi, which can enjoy fresh vegetables from next door. Faridabad is another city in Haryana which is just outside Delhi. It is the largest city in Haryana and a leading industrial centre. It is the most populous city in the state of Haryana. The Government of India included it in the second list of Smart Cities Mission on 24 May 2016. Faridabad has been described as the eighth fastest growing city in the world and third most in India.

Haryana is the home of the Jaats, who bring Olympic medals back to India. They are good sportsmen and recently, sportswomen too.

Jaats are farmers, but they are also warriors, whether Hindu or Sikh. They like good food and drinks, they are jovial, fun loving and adventurous, but they can also knock you out if you annoy them.



Himachal Pradesh

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Capital : **Simla** - Population : **68.6 Lakh** - Language : **Hindi**

Himachal nestles in the high foothills of the Himalayas. It shares borders with the states of Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand. It is a post-Independence creation and came into being as a centrally administered territory on 15 April 1948, formed by the integration of thirty princely states. It is one of the richest reservoirs of biological diversity in the world.

Simla, *is at a height of 2000 metres. A narrow gauge railway runs from Chandigarh to Simla.* **Kulu, Manali** *and* **Kasauli** *are hosts to many tourists escaping the summer heat of the plains.*

Outdoor activities, such as rock climbing, mountain biking, paragliding, ice-skating, and heli-skiing are popular tourist attractions.

Himachal is the **fruit bowl of India**. *It is the largest provider of apples, besides other cool weather fruits. Although the state is deficit in food grains, it has other spheres of production, such as seed-potatoes, ginger, vegetables, mushrooms, hops, olives and figs.*

The native women are famous for intricate weaving, specially for dupattas. Shoes, made from grass to keep their feet warm.

The costumes *of Himachal Pradesh reflect the* **plethora of cultures**. *There are Brahmins, Rajputs and indigenous tribes.*

Dhoti-clad Brahmins wear a kurta, waistcoat, coat, turban and for some reason, a towel over their shoulders.

A Himachali can be identified by his **round cap**, *which has a band of brightly coloured embroidery.*

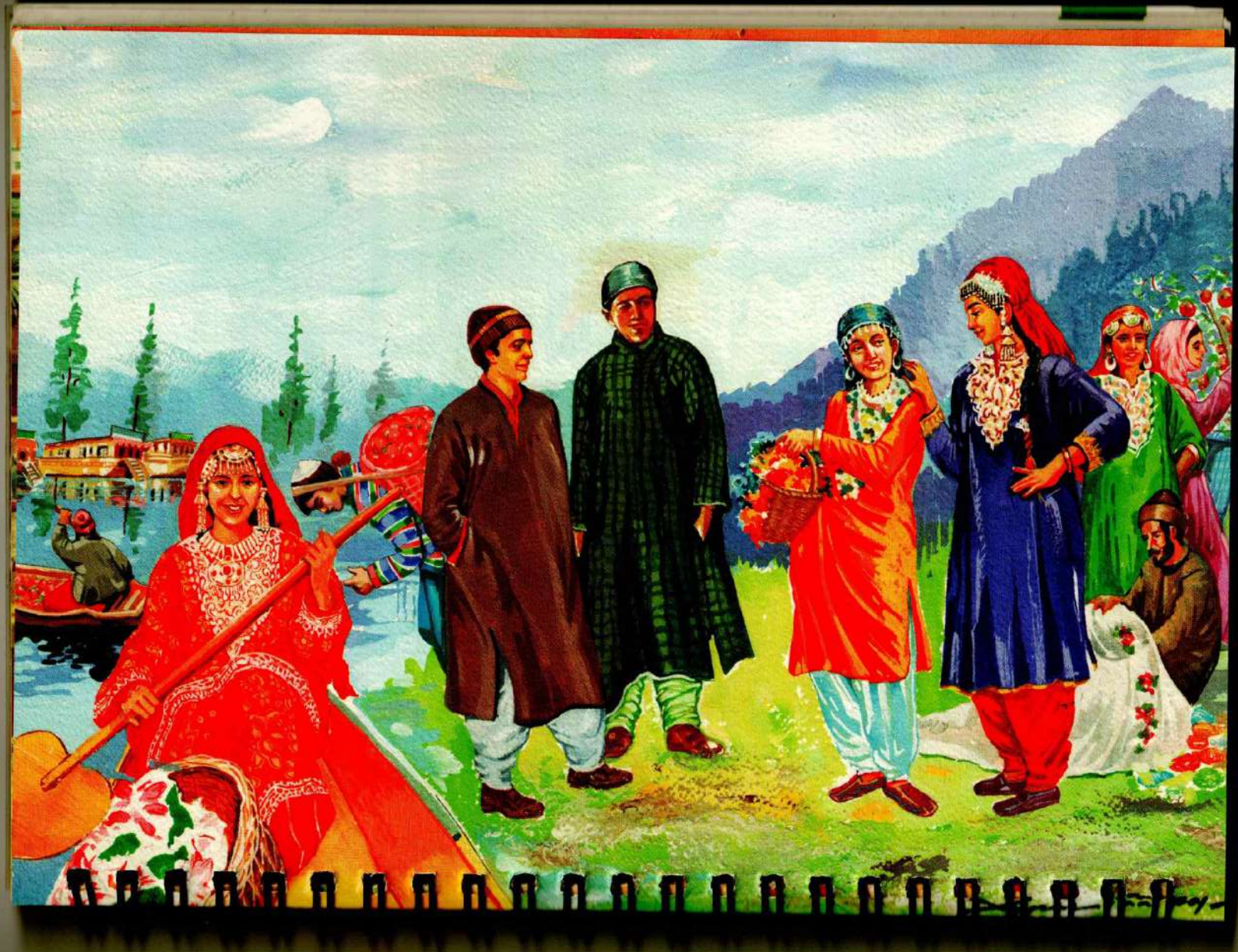
The Rajputs wear sherwani, pyjamas, a starched turban and shoes with pointed toes, called juttis. Long moustaches are a symbol of manliness in Rajput society.

The women mostly wear kurtas with 'ghagras' (long full skirts) and a dupatta. The men wear a kurta, a loincloth and a cap. They wear long pyjamas for ceremonies like marriages and festivals. The women of the **Chamba** *tribe wear head-scarves of bright printed cotton cloth, knotted at the back.*

Wool weaving is a major cottage industry. The embroidered 'Dhobroo', 'Pattu' and 'Thapada' blouses and embroidered caps are in demand.

Jewellery, usually silver, is worn on the neck, head, nose, ears and on the ankles - very decorative, and weighing kilos!

No festivities of Himachal are considered complete without **Dham**. *It is a dish, prepared by the Brahmins of the regions of Chamba, by cooking red kidney beans (rajma), green lentils (moong daal) and rice in curd.*



Jammu & Kashmir

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Capital : **Srinagar** - Population : **1.43 Crore** - Language : **Kashmiri**

Kashmir is the Switzerland of India. Historically, the area was limited to the Kashmir Valley. Emperor Shah Jehan said of Kashmir, " If there is a heaven on earth, this is it, this is it, this is it."

Article 370 of the Constitution gives Kashmir special status and ***their own flag****. Pakistan tried to take over Kashmir, but the Indian Army took care of that.*

Today, it is a larger area, called Jammu and Kashmir, which consists of Jammu, the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh. Seventeen rivers flow through the state, including the Jamuna and the Chinab.

The Shalimar and Nishat gardens were created by the Moghul ***Emperor Jehangir*** *for his wife, Noor Jahan. Two beautiful lakes, Dal and Nagin, are dotted with houseboats and are featured in many Bollywood films.*

Shikaras*, narrow row-boats, are like taxis, transporting people across the rivers and lakes. Kashmiris create beautiful handicrafts. Wood is carved to make trays, screens and bowls, where the leaf of the chinar (sycamore) tree is the main motif; silk and wool carpets are made, some are too beautiful to leave on the floor and are hung on walls.* ***Papier mache*** *bowls and boxes are elaborately painted with flowers. Kaftans, kurtas and* ***shawls are embroidered*** *with flowers and leaves, which are sold to hordes of tourists. Kashmiri silk is the lightest and softest in the world. The traditional 'Pheran' is the most popular form of dress for both, men and women.*

Kashmir hosts thousands of tourists, most of them Indian. Skiing in Gulmarg and water-skiing on the lakes is another attraction.

Saffron *(kesar), Kashmiri cherries and apples are in great demand.*

Hindu *men usually wear* ***churidars*** *while the* ***Muslims*** *wear salwars. In winter, a kangri - a small metal vessel carrying hot coals, is carried under the pheran. One wonders how people, or their clothes, never get burned. Kashmiri Brahmins are the only ones of their caste that eat meat. Many of the Mughal administrators were Kashmiri Pandits.*

Jammu *is a sleepy little town at the foot of the Himalayas. It is the winter capital of J&K and has the last railway station on the way to Kashmir, from here you take a bus or a car.*

The Chinab River is one of the tributaries of the Indus. Its water is snow-melt and is silvery with silt. Jammu is irrigated by a system of canals drawn from the Chinab. Farmers dig channels from the canals to water fields and orchards. The water is icy cold. People put bottles of water into bags which are submerged in the canals to cool drinking water. Who needs refrigerators!!

Jharkhand

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Capital : **Ranchi** - Population : **3.63 Crore** - Language : **Hindi**

History tells us that there was already a distinct geo-political, cultural entity called Jharkhand even before the Magadha Empire. In 1765, the region came under the control of the British East India Company, which resulted in a spontaneous resistance from the local people. A hundred years before the Indian Independence movement from 1770 to 1900, the Adivasis regularly revolted against British colonial rule. Jharkhand came into being on 15th of November 2000, as the 28th State of the Union

After Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand has the **most mineral wealth.** Iron, coal, copper, mica, bauxite, graphite, limestone and uranium, thus producing 40 % of the mineral resources of India. Jharkhand's **vast forest** sustains crocodiles, elephants and tigers. They have four bird sanctuaries, a crocodile breeding centre near the Tilaya Dam, Jawaharlal Nehru Zoological Garden in Bokaro, the Dalma Wild Life Sanctuary near Jamshedpur, the **Tata Steel** Zoological Park in Jamshedpur, the Palkote Wild Life Sanctuary, the Birsa Deer Sanctuary, Betla National Park in Palamau, Hazaribagh National Park, Tatoloi Hot Water Streams and the Saranda Forest.

Jharkhand was the centre of the **Naxalite-Maoist insurgency,** partly due to the fact that the state had an abundance of natural resources, while its people were destitute 40% per cent of the population are below the poverty line and 20% of children under five years of age are malnourished. The tribal rulers, some of whom continue to thrive till today, were known as the Munda Rajas, who had ownership rights to large farmlands.

The State is primarily a rural state, as only **24% of the population reside in cities.** Dhanbad, Deogarh and Ranchi are the major cities, not counting Jamshedpur and Bhokaro, which are steel cities. According to the 1991 census, the state has a population of over 20 million, of which 28% is tribal while 12% of the people are scheduled castes. Only 45% have access to electricity while only 8,484 villages are connected by roads.

In Jharkhandi cuisine, spices are rarely used and rice and vegetables are the staple diet. Local alcoholic drinks include rice beer, **Handia,** named after the earthen pot which used to make it. This drink is consumed by both men and women, on occasions like marriages and other festivals. Another common liquor is called **Mahu,** made from fruit/flowers of the "Mahua" tree.

Karnataka

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Capital : **Bengaluru** - Population : **3.63 Crore** - Language : **Kanada**

The pre-historic culture of Karnataka is called the hand-axe culture. Paleolithic hand axes and cleavers, made with quartz have been found. Neolithic sites provided evidence that man begun to domesticate animals such as cows and sheep, used copper and bronze weapons, wore bangles, rings, necklaces of beads and had burial chambers. During the Megalithic age, people in Karnataka began to use swords, sickles, axes, hammers, spikes, chisels and arrows, all made of iron.

Karnataka was a part of the Maurya Empire. The first Mauryan Emperor, Chandragupta Maurya, died in Shravanbelgola around 298 BCE, where he spent last days of his life as Jain ascetic. Parts of Karnataka were conquered by the Chola Empire in the 11th century.

In the early 14th century, the Vijayanagara Empire, rose to successfully challenge the Muslim invasions into the South. The Wodeyars of Mysore, leased the state from the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb in the 15th century. After the death of the **Haider Ali**, *General of the Mysore Army, assumed control over the region. After his death, the kingdom was passed to Tipu Sultan. Attempting to contain European expansion in South India,* **Tipu Sultan**, *known as the* **Tiger of Mysore**, *fought four significant Anglo-Mysore Wars, the last resulted in his death and the incorporation of Mysore into the British Raj.*

The two main river systems of the state are the Krishna and its five tributaries in the north, and the Kaveri and its four tributaries in the south.

In 1950, Mysore became the Karnataka, which included Kannada-speaking regions from the states of Madras, Hyderabad and Bombay. The district of Coorg, which has their own language, provided **16 athletes** *for the Rio Olympics.*

Karnataka is the hub for most of the largest public sector industries in India, including Hindustan Aeronautics, National Aerospace Laboratories, Bharat Heavy Electricals , Bharat Earth Movers and HMT. Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited, Bharat Electronics Limited, are also headquartered in Karnataka, **Indian Space Research Organisation**, *Central Power Research Institute and the Central Food Technological Research Institute. Nearly 56% of the workforce is engaged in agriculture.*

Mysore silk *sarees are much in demand because the silk is heavy, which makes pleats fall well and don't tear at the hem. Karnataka includes a wide range that include Udupi, Malnadu and Mangalorean cuisines. Ragi, a sort of millet, and rice is the staple food item for Karnataka especially in the south region of the state, whereas people in coastal regions mainly consume fish.*

Kerala

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Capital : **Thiruvananthapuram** - Population : **3.73 Crore** - Language : **Malayalam**

The ancient name, Cheranadu, is now Kerala. It was created on linguistic lines in 1956. It's population is now 100% literate!

It was a **major spice trade centre** and had contacts with **Mediterranean and Red Sea ports**, as well as the **Far East**. It was an independent kingdom during Ashoka's time. One myth tells of the creation of Kerala from the sea by Parasurama, an Avatar of Vishnu. He threw his battle axe into the sea and the land of Kerala arose. Carvings in the **Edakkal Caves** feature pictorial writings dating around 5,000 BC.

Adi Shankara was an early 8th century philosopher and theologian, who consolidated the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta. He was born in the village of Kalady, close to the River Periyar. He is credited with unifying and establishing the main currents of thought in Hinduism. He is believed to have died, aged 32, at Kedarnath, Uttarakhand.

The Portuguese, French, Dutch and English established trading posts for **spices**. They built forts from the 15th to the 18th centuries,

The Pardesi Synagogue, constructed in 1567, the oldest active synagogue in the Commonwealth, is located in Kochi.

The **Boat Festival** is one of the biggest festivals in Kerala and is held every year. The long slim canoes are called 'snake boats'. Races take place at several locations. These races are held to mark the great harvest festival of **Onam**. The Nehru Trophy Boat Race on the Champakulam Lake draws the biggest crowd. Another race is held on the Punnamada Lake. The participants decorate their boats, which have various shapes, unlike the snake boats.

Pongal is a harvest festival The name 'Pongal' means 'to boil over' and refers to the offering of kheer, a porridge made of rice, brown molasses, grated coconut, nuts and raisins, which women prepare.

The classical dances, Kathakali and Mohiniyatam, come from Kerala.

The **Periyar National Park**, on the Western Ghats is a wildlife sanctuary and is home to tigers and a significant elephant population, as well as rare lion-tailed macaques, sambar deer, leopards and Indian bison. Periyar Lake, in the north of the park, is popular for boat rides. Further north, spice plantations surround the town of Kumily.

Kerala is the home of Ayurveda, the Indian science of holistic healing. **Panch karma therapy** is famous and patients come from all over the world. There are many Ayurvedic hospitals.

Kerala has 100% literacy.

Madhya Pradesh

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Capital : **Bhopal** - Population : **7.96 Crore** - Language : **Hindi**

Surrounded by Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh, this state is the heart of India. It was the largest state in India, until a part of it was carved out to make Chattisgarh. Another part, where Marathi was the language, went to Maharashtra.

For centuries Ujjain was the capital. It was the Prime Meridien of ancient times. Part of its north-eastern area has the largest reserves of diamond and copper in India. **Wheat, soya** *and* **cotton** *are the major crops.* **Medicinal plants,** *such as amla, are abundant. More than 30% of its area is under forest cover. 16 different tribes live in the forests and ravines. The Kanha National Forest is also a tiger reserve.*

The forests harboured gangs of dacoits, one of which was led by Phoolan Devi was the focus of the movie, "Bandit Queen".

Cave dwellings *have been discovered with primitive wall paintings and the temples of Khajuraho are world famous for their intricate carvings. The* **Great Stupa** *at Sanchi is one of the oldest stone structures in India and was commissioned by the Emperor Ashoka when he turned to Buddhism.*

The rich, black soil supports cotton, India's best rice called basmati (for its fragrance) and soya, which has a high protein content.

The Bhopal tragedy was a gas leak on the night of 2–3 December 1984, at the Union Carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal. It was considered to be the world's worst industrial disaster. Thousands of people were affected by it.

The **Bhagoria Haat** *Festival, coincides with the end of the harvest. Part of the festival is a sort of swyamvar, where girls are allowed to select their husbands. Girls and boys are allowed to pick a potential husband or wife. The boy puts red powder on the face of the girl he fancies. If she is willing to marry him, she puts red powder on his face and then they run away. When they come back, the villagers accept them as husband and wife.*

The traditional lehnga-choli has mostly been given up for sarees, but young girls still wear them. Silver ornaments are very popular, especially bangles, anklets and toe rings. **Maheshwari, Bandhani** *and* **Chanderi sarees** *that came from M.P. Bandhini is a tedious process. Small pinches of cloth are tightly tied up with thread. The cloth is then dyed, but the dye cannot reach the tied part. This process can be repeated on the same cloth, and can be dyed again with another colour. The result log the first tie remains white, while the fabric is dyed yellow. The second tie is then done and the fabric is dyed blue. When the fabric dries, the thread is removed to reveal white and yellow circles.*

Indore is the commercial capital of Madhya Pradesh. It is also the food capital of central India. Sarafa Bazaar is famed for it street food.

Maharashtra

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Capital : **Mumbai** - Population : **12.14 Crore** - Language : **Marathi**

Maharashtra is recorded in history in the 2nd century BC, by the discovery of the Ajanta and Ellora caves. The Elephanta Caves are a short boat ride from Mumbai, but the carvings inside them have not weathered well. The oldest stone inscriptions in Marathi can be seen at **Shravana Belgola** in modern-day Karnataka, at the foot of the Bahubali Statue.

Maharashtra was part of the Maurya Empire in the 3rd and 4th century BCE. The early 14th century Yadava dynasty, which ruled most of present-day Maharashtra, was overthrown by the **Ala-ud-din Khilji**. The Islamic rule of the Deccan had started when **Shivaji** founded the **Maratha Empire**. He annexed a portion of the Bijapur Sultanate in 1674, led rebellions against the **Mughal** rule and became a symbol of Hindu resistance and self-rule. He established a government that included such modern concepts as a cabinet, foreign affairs and internal intelligence. The areas controlled by his heirs, the Peshwas, were annexed by the East India Company in 1818.

The 20th century saw the rise of **Dr Ambedkar**, who led the campaign for the rights of Dalits and played a pivotal role in writing the **Constitution of India**.

Ganesh Chaturthi is a major festival of the Maharashtrians. Ganesh idols are in every Hindu house. A clay image of Lord Ganesh is brought home and worshipped for 10 days. Many neighbourhoods collect money to buy a large image and install it in their area, with many decorations. On the 10th day, the statues are taken in procession, accompanied by drums and even bands, to a source of water - the sea, a lake or a pond or a nearby river - and there they are immersed.

Another feast is for **Lord Krishna**, alias **Makhan Chor**. An earthen pot of curds is tied to the middle of a rope which is stretched tightly at a height of about 20 to 25 feet. Agile youths make a human pyramid to reach the pot. Malkhamb is a smooth, oiled pole, about 18 inches circumference at the bottom, tapering to 6 inches at the top. The challenge is to climb to the top with nothing but your underwear. This was originally to train soldiers to climb to the ramparts of forts. Maybe ladders were not invented then.

The climb from Mumbai to the Deccan plateau is the Western Ghats. Little towns like Khandala and Lonavala are holiday destinations, escaping the humidity and heat of the plains. On the plateau, towns like Pune and Nashik actually have a sort of one-sweater-in-the-evening winter.

Nava Sheva, near Mumbai, is the largest container port in India and handles 55% of the containers. India's other **twelve** public ports **together** handle the balance 45 %.

Manipur

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Capital : **Imphal** - Population : **32.70 Lakh** - Language : **Manipuri / Bengali**

One of the 7 sisters, **Manipur**, was known as "Kangleipak" in ancient times. It appears to have absorbed **Bronze Age** cultural traits from Thailand and Upper Burma, where an indigenous early metal age culture developed around 4000 BC. The oval-shaped state has an exotic landscape with gentle blue hills, lush valleys, lakes, plentiful rivers and deep forests. Little islands of bio mass floating on the lakes are nesting sites for water birds.

The **Meitei people** are the main ethnic community of the state, along with other tribal groups such as Kukis and Nagas, Christians and Hindus. The people of the state are primarily into agriculture and forest based sustainable livelihoods.

For thousands of years they lived in peace in the valleys, alongside the Hao people, who lived in the hills. They were Ancestor worshippers, performing various rites and rituals which were observed through the year.

Meitei Pangal Muslims settled in the valleys during the 16th Century. Manipur came under British rule in 1891. It was the last independent state to be incorporated into **British India.**

The Meiteis invented polo, a sort of hockey on horse back. Traditionally, the first match is played between the chiefs of different clans. The East India Company adopted the game and it is still played in India, U.K. and the USA. In the USA, it is sometimes played on motor bikes instead of horses.

The **Second World War** came to Manipur when the Japanese Air Force bombed Imphal. The first bombing on 10th May 1942, and another on 16th May, caused many civilian casualties. The Japanese were beaten back before the **Allies** could enter Imphal. This was one of the turning points of the war.

The Manipuri dance, also known as Jagoi, is one of the major **Indian classical dance forms**. The dance is a team performance, with its unique costumes and a performance that is graceful, fluid, sinuous with emphasis on hand and upper body gestures. According to tradition of the Manipuri people, the dancers are the Gandharvas - celestial musicians and dancers. Men wear a dhoti, jacket and a white turban. Women's wear is a sarong tied around the waist, a loose short-sleeved blouse and a dupatta/scarf around the shoulders. The **Ima** market in Imphal is **run by women.**

The staple diet of Manipur consists of rice, fish, large varieties of leafy vegetables. Manipuris typically raise seasonal vegetables in a kitchen garden and rear fishes in small ponds around their houses. The taste is very different from other Indian cuisines because of the use of regional aromatic herbs and roots.

Meghalaya

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Capital : **Shillong** - Population : **35.30 Lakhs** - Language : **Khasi**

In 1970, in response to the demands of the tribals of the Meghalaya Plateau, the Khasi, Garo and Jaintia hills were formed into an autonomous state within Assam. Meghalaya became a separate state in 1972.

Neolithic sites discovered, so far, are located in Khasi and Garo Hills and in neighbouring states. Neolithic shifting cultivation is practiced even today.

Meghalaya's forests host 660 species of birds, including the peacock pheasant. Its forests support a vast diversity of flora. Two of the most important tree varieties are sal and teak. Meghalaya is also famous for its ***variety of orchids****. Around 325 species have been catalogued. It also hosts a large variety of mammals, reptiles and insects. Besides elephants and bears, there are red pandas, civets, gaur, wild buffalo, deer, wild boar and the hoolock gibbon. The* ***limestone caves*** *in Meghalaya are home to the nation's* ***rarest bat species****. These are found in all districts of Meghalaya. Bio mass makes little floating islands on the lakes, where water birds can make their nests. Besides lizards, crocodiles and tortoises, Meghalaya also has a large variety of snakes, including the python, copperhead, green tree racer, Indian cobra, king cobra, coral snake and vipers. Except for the python, all these are deadly. Meghalaya is also home to over* ***250 species of butterflies****, nearly a quarter of all butterfly species found in India.*

Christian missionaries arrived with the British. They set up schools which taught English and converted the tribals. Today, they still speak English and their mother-tongue.

Jadoh is basically red rice*, cooked with generous amounts of pork, chicken or fish.* ***Nakhmam Bitchi*** *is a popular soup, made with dried fish and flavoured with lots of chillies and pepper. Pumaloi (powdered rice, which has been steamed) is a favorite rice dish of Meghalayan cuisine.*

Mizoram

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Capital : **Aizawl** - Population : **15.80 Lakhs** - Language : **Mizo**

Geologically, the **Mizo Hills** *form a part of the Rakhine (or Arakan) mountains. After Indian independence, it was called the Lushai Hills district under the Government of Assam. In 1972 the district was declared a union territory and was given a more culturally inclusive name, Mizoram. Ultimately Mizoram became a full-fledged federal state of Indian Union in 1986. The head of the village, the Chief, or Lal, allocates lands for cultivation, settled all disputes in the villages, feeds and cares for the poor and offers shelter to anyone seeking refuge. The Mizo history in the 18th and 19th centuries is marked by many instances of tribal raids and retaliatory expeditions.*

More than three-fourths of the land *area of Mizoram is* **forested.** *Thick, evergreen forests contain valuable timber trees. The woodlands also provide habitats for many animals, including elephants, tigers, bears, deer, monkeys, gibbons and serows which are wild goat-like mammals. These animals are protected in a number of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.*

The residents of Mizoram consist almost entirely of Scheduled Tribes, loosely called Mizo, One tribe, the **Chakma,** *speaks an* **Indo-Aryan language,** *but Mizo and English are the principal languages. Having no script of its own, Mizo uses the Roman alphabet. They worshipped all sorts of objects and natural phenomena.*

Aizawl is the state's only large city. Agriculture engages more than two-thirds of the workforce. Institutionalised education is attributable largely to Christian missionaries, who established the first schools around the turn of the 19th/20th century. By early 21st century, Mizoram had 2,000 schools. It's literacy is one of the highest in the Indian states. They eat vegetables, but they prefer to add some meat, - duck is the favourite - or fish. Mustard oil or water are the cooking mediums, but they use very little. Bamboo shoots, ducks, eggs and lentils are staples.

The **Meetei people** *are the main ethnic community of the state, along with other tribal groups such as Kukis and Nagas. The economy is based on agriculturists and forest based sustainable livelihoods. Tourism is a large part of the economy.*

Their Cheraw dance seems like training for dodging snakes. Two long bamboo poles are held by two men, one at each end. The poles are clashed together in time to the beat of drums. The dancers have to jump into the space and out before the poles crack their ankle bones.

Khullaum *is a dance where two rings of people, one ring for men and inner circle for women. They sway the shawls across their shoulders. Gradually they join the circles and dance with partners. The music is provided by drums and a gong.*

WELCOME

Nagaland

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Capital : **Kohima** - Population : **32.00 Lakhs** - Language : **Nagamese**

Between the decade of 1960 / 1970, Assam lost much of its territory to a new state. In 1963 the Naga Hills district became Nagaland and is **one of the smallest states of India**. It is mostly mountainous, except those areas bordering the Assam valley. The mountain range forms a natural barrier between Nagaland and Burma.

Nagaland is inhabited by **16 tribes**. Each tribe is unique in character with its own distinct customs, language and dress. They took the heads of their enemies, believing that would absorb the strengths and powers of their victims. Most villages had a skull house and each man in the village was expected to contribute to the collection. The taking of a head is symbolic of courage, and the men who had no heads were dubbed women or cows. The head taking custom is now abandoned.

Two common threads bind the eastern states. Language and religion. English is in predominant use and the people are mostly Christian.

Nagaland became the 16th state of India on 1st December, 1963. The Nagaland Assembly proclaimed **English as the official language** of Nagaland and it is the medium of education in Nagaland. Every tribe has its own mother tongue but communicates with other tribes in English.

Sixteen rivers flow through Nagaland. The four major rivers are the **Doyang, Dikhu, Dhansiri** and the **Tizu**. The Tizu is the only one that does not flow westward into the Brahmaputra river.

Agriculture is the most important economic activity. Rice is the major crop, but maize, linseed, potato, pulses, soyabean, sugarcane, jute, gram, cotton and castor are also farmed. However, self sufficiency in foodgrains is yet to be achieved and the state is still dependent on imports. Besides agriculture, economic activity includes forestry, tourism, insurance, real estate and miscellaneous cottage industries.

The gayal, also known as 'mithun', is a large domestic bovine distributed in Northeast India and Bangladesh. They look like a buffalo trying to be a cow. They are a source of milk.

The question is, why are so many Bengali men named 'Mithun'?

The state has experienced insurgency, as well as inter-ethnic conflict, but is now peaceful. The state has a rich variety of flora and fauna. The most important of all festivals in Nagaland is the Hornbill Festival, which takes place from 1st to 10th December. Along with traditional dance, song, food, wrestling, craft and archery, There is also the Naga chilli-eating championship!

Odisha

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Capital : **Bhubaneshwar** - Population : **4.57 Crores** - Language : **Oriya**

In different eras, this region and various parts of the region were known by different names. The boundaries have varied over the ages. The ancient kingdom of Kalinga coincides with the borders of modern-day Odisha.

Ashoka of the Mauryan dynasty, conquered the region in the Kalinga War, near present-day Bhubaneswar. The bloodshed and suffering of the war deeply affected Ashoka. He became a pacifist and converted to Buddhism. He sent peace emissaries to various neighbouring nations. The event caused the spread of Buddhism in Asia. Later, the kings of the Somavamsi dynasty began to unite the region. By the reign of Yayati II, around 1025 CE, they had integrated the region into a single kingdom. Yayati II is supposed to have built the Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneswar. They were replaced by the Eastern Ganga dynasty. Notable rulers of the dynasty were Anantavarman Chodaganga, who began re-construction of the present-day **Shri Jagannath Temple** *in Puri, and King Narasimhadeva I, who constructed the* **Konarak**, *the Sun Temple.*

The year 1568 CE is considered a pivotal point in the region's history. In 1568 CE, the region was conquered by the armies of the Sultanate of Bengal led by General Kalapahad. The region lost its political identity. The following rulers of the region were more tributary lords than actual kings. After 1751, the Marathas gained control of the region for almost fifty years. In 1803, the region was taken over by the British, who divided the region into parts of other provinces. The province of Odisha was formed in 1936.

The coal-fields in the Mahanadi and Ib river basins are the richest sites for fossils.

Kumar Purnima *occurs on the first full moon day of the month of Ashvin, the birthday of the handsome god Kartikeya. It is a harvest festival marking the end of the monsoon. It is celebrated by unmarried girls who pray for a handsome husband.*

The Shree Jagannath Temple of Puri is an important Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Jagannath - a form of lord Vishnu. It one of the **Char Dhams**. *Puri and the Jagannath Temple were invaded 18 times by Hindu and Muslim rulers, from the 4th century AD till the early 19th century, looting the treasures of the temple. Odisha, including Puri and its temple, were part of British India from 1803 till India attained independence. Puri is now a tourist attraction, both for the temple and the beach, which is the site of the annual Puri Beach Festival.*

Punjab

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Capital : **Chandigarh** - Population : **3.00 Crore** - Language : **Punjabi**

The name of the state denotes "Five Rivers", but after Partition, Pakistan has three. Somehow, ancient Punjab was always the first place people visited, examples are Fa Hien, Huen Tsuen and Alexander of Macedon. Travellers and invaders came through the Khyber and Bolan passes in Afghanistan.

Archaeological discoveries show that, by about 3300 BCE, the small communities in and around the **Indus River** *basin had evolved, giving rise to the* **Indus Valley Civilisation**, *the earliest civilisation in human history. At its height, it boasted large cities like* **Harrapa** *and* **Mohenjodaro**, *in West Punjab (now Pakistan). Punjab was one of the states that gave the Britishers a hard time.*

The 13th of April 1919 was the **festival of Baisakhi**, *the main* **Sikh** *festival. Many villagers had gathered at Jallianwala Bagh. Major Dyer had banned assemblies. He took an armed force to a raised bank overlooking the Bagh. He ordered them to shoot at the crowd. Dyer continued the firing for about ten minutes, until the ammunition supply was almost exhausted. Dyer later stated that 1,650 rounds had been fired. Official* **British Indian** *sources gave a figure of 379 identified dead with approximately 1,100 wounded. The casualty number estimated by the* **Indian National Congress** *was more than* **1,500 injured**, *with approximately* **1,000 dead**. *The episode was one of the reasons for India to take decisive steps to end the Britisher's British rule in India.*

The **Bhakra Dam** *on the Sutlej River made Punjab the granary of India. Punjabis, including Sikhs, are mostly farmers. They supply India 10% of the cotton, 20% of the wheat and 11% of rice. When Pakistan was formed, Hindu and Sikh refugees came to India with just clothes on their backs. They left their houses, their fields and their businesses, but very soon were prosperous again. They are* **hard working, enterprising, boisterous and fun loving**. *There is a joke that says the State Bird of Punjab is Tandoori chicken! The " bhangra", a harvest festival dance, is today danced at every marriage procession in North India, in which the groom arrives at the bride's home on a white horse, followed on foot by his family, friends and a noisy usually tuneless band. Bollywood loves the Bhangra.*

Punjabis are a martial race. They love a nice fight, are faithful friends and mostly very jovial. They are very keen on sports and Punjab supplies India most of the Olympic athletes. There is a custom in most families that their second son joins one of the Armed Forces.

Rajasthan

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Capital : **Jaipur** - Population : **7.56 Crores** - Language : **Hindi**

Rajasthan means 'The Place of Kings'. It is the largest state of the India, but most of it is desert. Camels are transportation and a source of milk.

The history of Rajasthan goes back to 5,000 years ago. Excavations at Kalibanga in northern Rajasthan revealed the existence of human settlements on the banks of a river, believed to be the Saraswati, which dried up later. It was a part of the Maurya Empire around 321-184 BCE. Most of Rajasthan is the wide and inhospitable Thar Desert, which shares a border with Pakistan. Part of Rajasthan came under the Mughals. Emperor Akbar arranged matrimonial alliances to gain the trust of the Rajputs. He married to **Jodha Bai**, *Princess of Amer, and granted high offices to Rajput princes like Raja Man Singh. But* **Rana Pratap**, *who never accepted Akbar as his ruler, was constantly at war with him.*

If Rajput rulers lost to invaders, their womenfolk would commit **Jauhar** *(suicide by throwing themselves on a pyre) to protect their chastity and self-respect.*

Rajasthan's independent kingdoms created a rich architectural and cultural heritage, seen today in their numerous forts and palaces. The palace of Udaipur was built in the middle of a lake. It is now a many-starred hotel. So is the Neemrana in Chitorgardh, which is palace/fort, clinging to a cliff. Many other palaces were sold to hotel chains when their owners could not finance their upkeep. The most modern palace is in Jodhpur, which was built in 1930. The **Hawa Mahal** *was built in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh. Its unique five-storey exterior is akin to the honeycomb of a beehive with its 953 small windows decorated with intricate* **latticework**. *The original intent was to allow royal ladies to observe everyday life and festivals celebrated in the street below, without being seen. This architectural feature also allows cool air to pass through. Most people assume the street view of the Hawa Mahal is the front of the palace, but it is actually the back.*

The famous **Jaisalmer Desert Festival** *is a three day annual event, held in the month of February every year. Cultural and colourful events, from camel races to turban tying competitions are enjoyed. The rich culture of the region is on display with performing arts like* **Kalbelia dances**, *folk songs and music.*

No one could ever forget the famous Gair and Fire dancers, which are a major attraction. Camel races and turban tying competitions are organised. It is held in February, every year, in Rajasthan.

The Rajasthani turban is bigger than the heads they adorn. The womens' ghagra- cholis are covered with mirror insets and their dupattas are bright coloured, bringing life to the dreary, sandy colour of their background.

Sikkim

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Capital : **Gangtok** - Population : **6.60 Lakhs** - Language : **Sikkimese**

Nestling in the Himalayan mountains is the state of Sikkim. ***Kanchenjunga****, the world's third-highest peak is situated on the border between Sikkim and Nepal. Most of the land is unfit for agriculture because of the rocky, precipitous slopes. Some hill slopes have now been converted to terrace farms. About a third of the state is heavily forested. Sikkim is the least populous and second smallest of the Indian states.*

Numerous snow-fed streams combine to create the ***Teesta River*** *and its tributary, the Rangeet. About a third of the state is heavily forested. The mountains surround Sikkim, are lower in the southern reaches, which are the most densely populated. 35% of the state is covered by the* ***Khangchendzonga National Park****. Gangtok is the largest city.*

The earliest records of Sikkim date from the 17th Century. The ***Chogyals*** *were absolute monarchs of Sikkim from 1642 to 1975, when the monarchy was abolished and its people voted to make Sikkim India's 22nd state.*

Sikkim is notable for its biodiversity, including alpine and subtropical climates. Modern Sikkim is a multiethnic and multilingual Indian state. Sikkim has 11 official languages: Besides Sikkimese, Nepali, and English, there are seven other languages. English is taught in schools and used in government documents. The predominant religions are Hinduism and Vajrayana Buddhism.

The ***Karmapa Lama*** *is the head of the Karma Kagyu, one of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism.*

The historical seat of the Karmapas is Tsurphu Monastery in the Tolung valley of Tibet. After the Chinese took Tibet, the Karmapa's principal seat in exile is the ***Dharma Chakra Centre*** *at* ***Rumtek Monastery*** *in Sikkim. The Karmapas are the holders of the Black Crown and are thus sometimes known as* ***"the Black Hat Lamas"****.*

Sikkim's economy is largely dependent on tourism and the state had the third-smallest GDP among Indian states. The state is ***completely organic*** *and is also among the fastest-growing. Vegetables are grown on terraced fields. Private dealers import fruit and vegetables to sell in market places.*

The State Government imports grains and oils from other states, which is distributed to people holding ration cards, that state the number of family members and their age. Men and some couples go to cities in India to find work and send money back to their relatives.

Tamil Nadu

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Capital : **Chennai** - Population : **8.88 Crores** - Language : **Tamil**

The region of **Tamil Nadu** *has continuous human habitation from 15,000 BCE. It has a 580 km coastline.*

The three ancient Tamil empires of **Chera, Chola** *and* **Pandya** *had a unique culture and language, contributing to the growth of* **some of the oldest literature** *in the world. The Cholas, who re-emerged from obscurity in the 9th century, defeated the Pallavas and the Pandyas, and extended their empire over the entire southern peninsula, upto the* **Bay of Bengal.** *Rapid changes due to* **incursions of Muslim armies** *in the 14th century, the* **Tamil country** *became part of the* **Vijayanagara Empire.** *The* **European trading companies** *appeared during the 17th century and eventually took over the country. By the 18th century, the* **Madras Presidency** *comprised most of southern India. In 1956, the areas where Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam speakers were separated, and Madras state was renamed* **Tamil Nadu.**

It is the largest textile hub of India. *The textile industry plays a significant role in the Indian economy. It provides direct employment to an estimated 35 million people and thereby contributing 4% of GDP and 35% of gross export earnings.*

Pongal is an important festival, which thanks the Sun God for a successful harvest. It is celebrated by Tamils all over the world. The festival marks the day when the sun starts its journey to the north. Part of the celebration is the boiling of the first rice of the season, consecrated to the Sun - the Surya Mangalyam. The rice has to be boiled in sun light

Jallikattu, a bull taming sport, *played in the villages of Tamil Nadu, differs from the Spanish Running of The Bulls, in that the bulls called by the name Jallikattu Kaalais are not killed in the end and the bullfighters are not allowed to carry weapons to the field. Jallikattu is usually conducted as part of the Pongal celebrations especially on Mattu Pongal day. A specific breed of cattle is bred for this purpose.*

Tamil Nadu is the second largest state economy after Maharashtra. *Due to changes in science and technology, agricultural practices have undergone radical improvement since Independence. The change is visible not only in agricultural practices but the crops they grow.*

In Madurai stands the beautiful **Meenakshi Temple.** *Built in 17th Century, it has the largest covered area in India. There is a vast hall called the 'Hall of a Thousand Pillars'. Every inch of the pillars is carved and each pillar is a work of art. Every year thousands of pilgrims visit the temple.*

Lakhs of people emigrate seeking work, mostly to Malaysia, South Africa, and the UK.

Telangana

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Capital : **Hyderabadi** - Population : **3.96 Crores** - Language : **Telegu**

The terrain of Telangana comprises mostly of hills, mountain ranges and thick dense forests. On 2nd of June, 2014, the area was separated from the north western part of Andhra Pradesh as the newly formed 29th state. Telangana was awarded separate statehood on 2nd June, 2014. Hyderabad was its historic capital.

There are other major cities including Warangal, Nizamabad, Khammam and Karimnagar. It is the twelfth largest state and the twelfth-most populated state in India.

It has ELEVEN wildlife sanctuaries, including two tiger sanctuaries.

The **Falaknuma Palace** *has 60 rooms and 22 halls. The ceiling of the State Reception room is decorated with frescoes. The ballroom contains a two ton manually operated, said to be the only one in the world. The library has a carved walnut wood roof, a replica of the one at Windsor Castle. The dining hall can seat 101 guests and the chairs are carved rosewood. There are two identical billiard tables, one in Buckingham Palace and the other in the Falaknuma Palace. It was the private property of the Nizam's family and was not open to the public until 2000.*

The **Salar Jung Museum** *in Hyderabad is one of the three National Museums and is one of the largest in the world. The museum's collection was the property of the Salar Jung family.*

Daggers that belonged to Empress Noor Jehan, Emperors Jehangir and Shah Jehan; the turbans and chair of Tippu Sultan; furniture and paintings on display. Among the sculpture is the world famous **"Veiled Rebecca"** *by the Italian sculpture, Benzoni. The beautiful sculpture is visible through a veil of marble!!!*

When in Independence came in 1947, nearly all of these states agreed to become part of India. But the Nizam emigrated to Australia with all his wealth.

The Dussehra is also called 'Jumbo Savari' for the grand elephant procession, where elephants carry ornate howdahs and are adorned with golden head dresses and elaborately painted trunks. The Charminar, there Golconda, Bhongir and Khammam Forts and the Nagarjunasagar are magnets for tourists. Hyderabad continues to be the capital of both, Telengana and Andhra. But Andhra will have to make their own capital by 2024.

The economy of Telangana is mainly driven by agriculture but the state is also the main administrative centre to a large number of Indian defence aero-space and research labs like Bharat Dynamics Limited, Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory, Defence Research and Development Organisation. The state is also the main administrative centre to a large number of Indian defence, aero-space and research labs.

Tripura

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Capital : **Agartala** - Population : **45.60 Lakh** - Language : **Bengali**

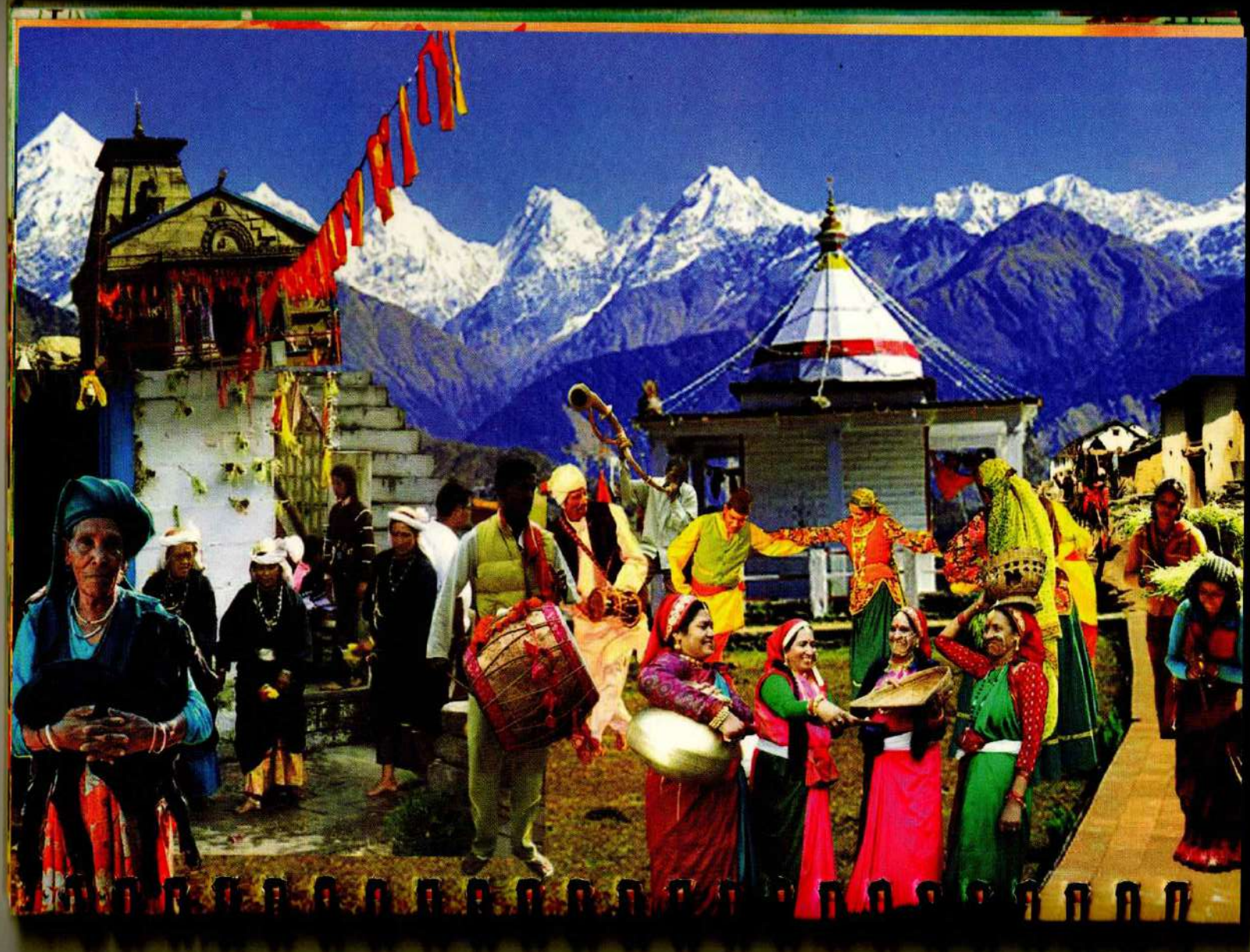
The State of Tripura has a long history. During the 14th and 15th centuries AD., the Kingdom of Tripura was at its peak. It included the whole eastern region of Bengal from the Brahmaputra River in the north and west, the Bay of Bengal in the south and Burma to the east. The last ruler of Tripura was **Kirit Bikram Bahadur**, *who reigned from Agartala 1947 to 1949, after which the kingdom merged with India on 9th September, 1949.*

The origins of the kingdom are shrouded in the myths in the chronicles of the Kings of Tripura, which meanders from Hindu mythology to Tripuri folklore. The 14th century was their most glorious period. Their power and fame was acknowledged by the Mughals.

In 1871, the British Indian government appointed an "agent" to assist the Maharaja in the administration. The capital was shifted to Agartala in the early part of 19th century and remains the capital.

Tripura joined the Republic of India in October 1947.

Sachin Dev Burman *and his only son* **RD Burman** *came from Tripura, they rise to be music directors in Bollywood. SD was a composer, and his musical talent made him one of the most influential music directors of the* **Indian film industry**. *The Burmans composed musical scores for 331 films from the 1960s to the 1990s. "Dum Maro Dum" from the film* **Hare Rama Hare Krishna** *was a huge hit, and is still a favourite.*



Uttarakhand

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Capital : **Dehradun** - Population : **1.03 Crore** - Language : **Garhwali/Kumaoni**

Uttarakhand was the ancient Puranic term for the central stretch of the Himalayas. In ancient times its peaks and valleys were known as Devbhumi, the abode of dieties and source of the sacred river Ganges. The **Badrinath temple** *was re-established as a major pilgrimage site by Adi Shankara in the 7th century. In earlier days, pilgrims used to walk hundreds of miles to visit the temple. It has been repeatedly destroyed by earthquakes and avalanches. As late as 1945, the town consisted only of the 20-odd huts used by the temple's staff. In recent years its popularity has increased, with an estimated 6 lakh pilgrims visiting during the 2006 season, compared to less than 1 lakh in 1961. Besides Benaras,* **Haridwar** *is also a place where people go to immerse the ashes of their relatives.*

It is the youngest state in India, carved out of northern Uttar Pradesh in 2000, as the 27th State of India. It lies on the southern slope of the Himalaya range and the climate and vegetation vary greatly with elevation, from glaciers at the highest elevations to subtropical forests, closer to the plains. It has two divisions, Garhwal and Kumaon. The state hosts the Bengal tiger in **the Corbett National Park**, *the oldest national park in the Indian subcontinent.*

Rishis and Sadhus go there to visit the temples to meditate and attain Nirvan and pilgrims go to Badrinath and Kedarnath. Uttarakhand has the highest percentage of Brahmins of any state in India. **Trekking and rafting** *attracts a different type of tourists.*

The Valley of Flowers is home to a large variety of flowers, as the name suggests. Sir Joseph Hooker, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens in England, visited the region and realised this. The result was the founding of the Forest Research Institute in 1878 in Dehradun. The Valley of Flowers is a UNESCO World Heritage site, located near the Jyoshinath temple.

The Himalayan ecosystem provides habitats for many animals including bharal (mountain goats), snow leopards and tigers as well as plants and rare herbs.

Uttar Pradesh

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Capital : **Lucknow** - Population : **22 Crore** - Language : **Hindi / Santhali**

Lucknow, Agra and Varanasi are part of the Uttar Pradesh Heritage Arc.

U.P, the Hindi heartland, hosts over two hundred million people, the largest population in India. Archeological evidence suggests this region was inhabited by Stone Age hunter/gatherers 85 thousand years ago. The state is a strategic military position as it touches Tibet and Nepal on the northern border of the country.

The sacred **Ganges River** *and it's major tributary, the* **Jamuna**, *flow through the state. In Allahabad is the 'sangam', the merging of the Ganges and Jamuna rivers. Varanasi and Allahabad are pilgrimage destinies, as it is believed that a dip in the sacred water will wash away all sins.*

Agra was the capital of the Moghul dynasty for centuries. The Taj Mahal and the Agra Fort were built there before the Moghuls moved to Delhi. Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Lucknow was exiled to Burma by the British after the revolt of the Sepoys in 1857.

Millions of Hindus go to Varanasi to take a dip in the holy river Ganga and purify themselves. Varanasi is also a centre of **silk weaving**. *No Indian bride goes to her new home without a gold-bordered* **Banarasi** *saree. Many old people and widows go to Varanasi to die. Some because they want to spend their last days near the holy river and sadly, some who are evicted by their families. There are charitable places where they can live.*

Close to Varanasi is Sarnath, where the Buddha preached his first sermon and died under the Bodhi tree, where a huge Buddhist temple was built by the Japanese.

Other major cities in the state are Kanpur, Lucknow and Allahabad. Moradabad has the largest production of brass. Lucknow is famous for **chikankari**, *a type of embroidery that is usually seen on kurtas, male and female.*

The **Kumbh Melas** *are held periodically, by rotation, at Haridwar, (Uttarakhand), Allahabad (U.P), Nashik (Maharashtra) and Ujjain (Rajasthan). The main festival site is Allahabad, where the rivers Ganges, Yamuna and the invisible Sarasvati join together. Over 1 crore pilgrims bathe in the river.*

The origin of the classical dance, Kathak, originated in U.P. under Wajid Ali Shah, ruler of Awadh. The term Kathak is derived from the Sanskrit word Katha which means "story" and Kathaka which means "the one who tells a story".

Chikankari embroidery is a speciality of Lucknow. It is used to adorn kurtas around the neck and the buttons are sometimes dotted all over the kurta. Winter wear is woollen, shin-long sherwanis with stand-up collars. Shawls emerge from metal trunks, where neem leaves had protected them from pests. Sandals are replaced by jootis.

West Bengal

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Capital : **Kolkata** - Population : **9.9 Crore** - Language : **Bengali**

The delta of the conjoined **Ganges** *and the* **Brahmaputra** *rivers split into more than 50 rivers, which run through Bengal and Bangladesh, making it one of the most fertile areas in the world. The Mughal Empire considered it as the wealthiest province. In 1757, Siraj-ud-Daula was defeated by Robert Clive in the battle of Plassey. This was the turning point for the British East India Company. They started making laws and enforcing them. Calcutta was the capital of India and the headquarters of the East India Company until 1930. The Bengal famine of 1943, during* **World War II**, *was due to the failure of the monsoon. Because the administration did not move the grain to where it was needed, an estimated 2.1 million died from starvation, malaria and other diseases.*

After Independence, **Bengal was divided** *along religious lines, into two entities: West Bengal in India and* **East Bengal**, *part of newly created* **East Pakistan**. *In 1972, East Bengal became the independent country of Bangladesh.*

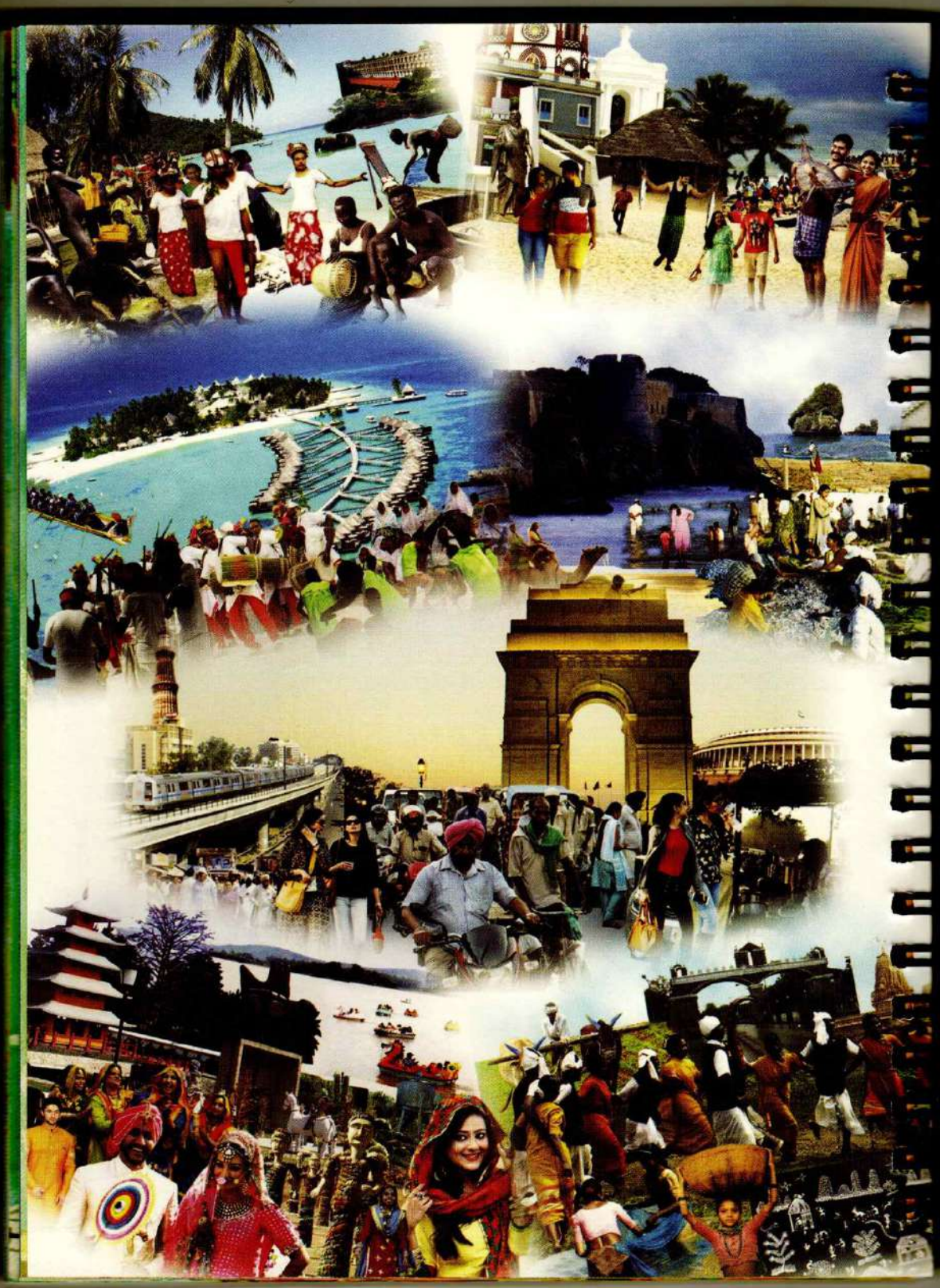
The symbol of Kolkata is the massive **Howrah Bridge** *over the Hooghly River. It is a cantilever bridge, which means the span does not rest on pillars. It is the 6th longest cantilever bridge in the world. Another landmark is the* **Victoria Memorial**, *built of white* **Makrana marble**. *The design echoes the Taj Mahal, with its dome and corner towers.*

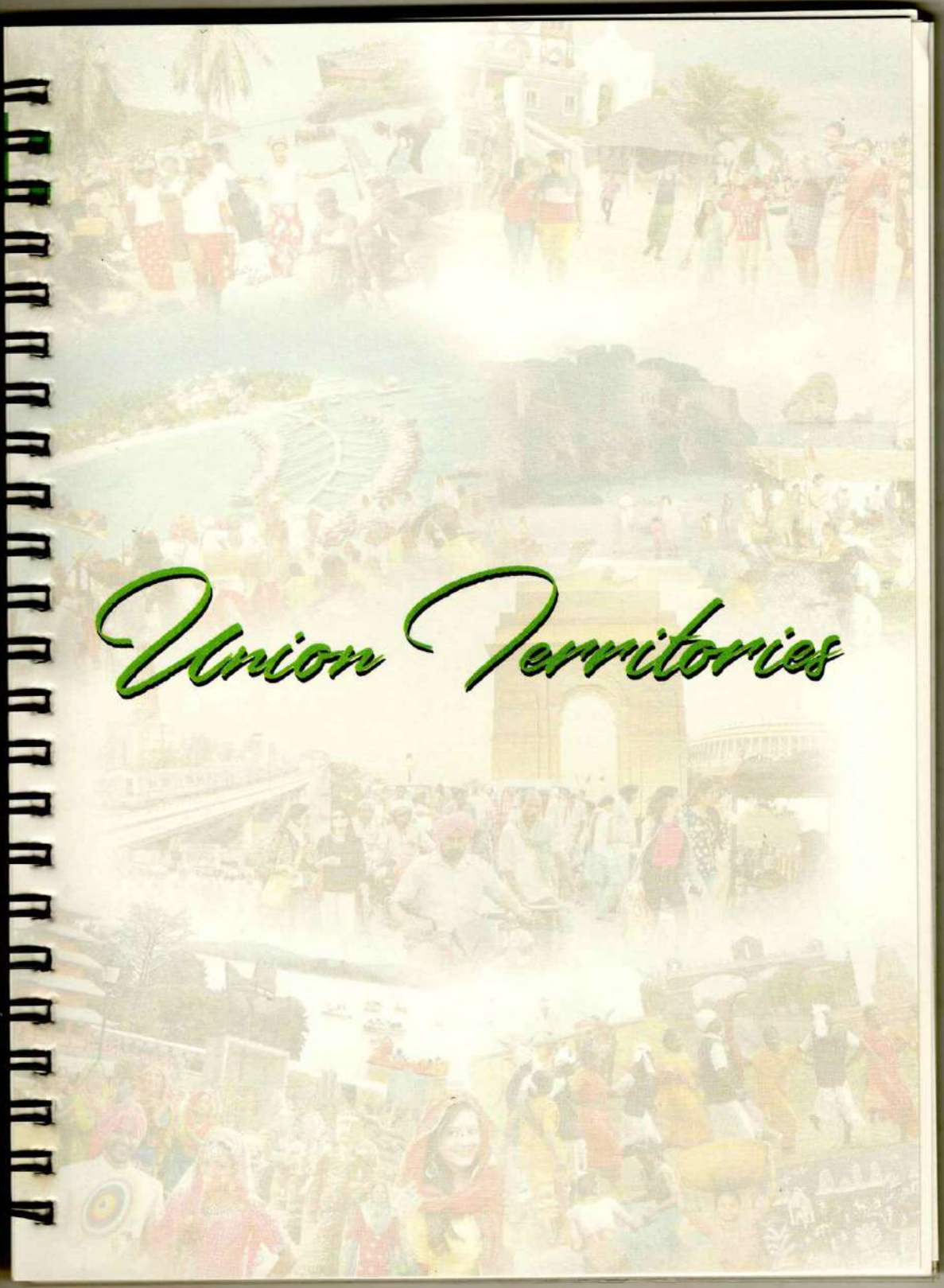
Many Indian Nobel Laureates are from Bengal. Scientist Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose was a **polymath** *and an early writer of* **science fiction**. *Satyanand Bose who collaborated with Einstein, discovered the atomic particle, which is named the 'boson' in his honour. And of course, the immortal Rabindranath Tagore, who needs no introduction. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was a polymath and a key figure of the Bengal Renaissance. (He was a philosopher, academic educator, writer, translator, printer, publisher, reformer, entrepreneur and philanthropist.)*

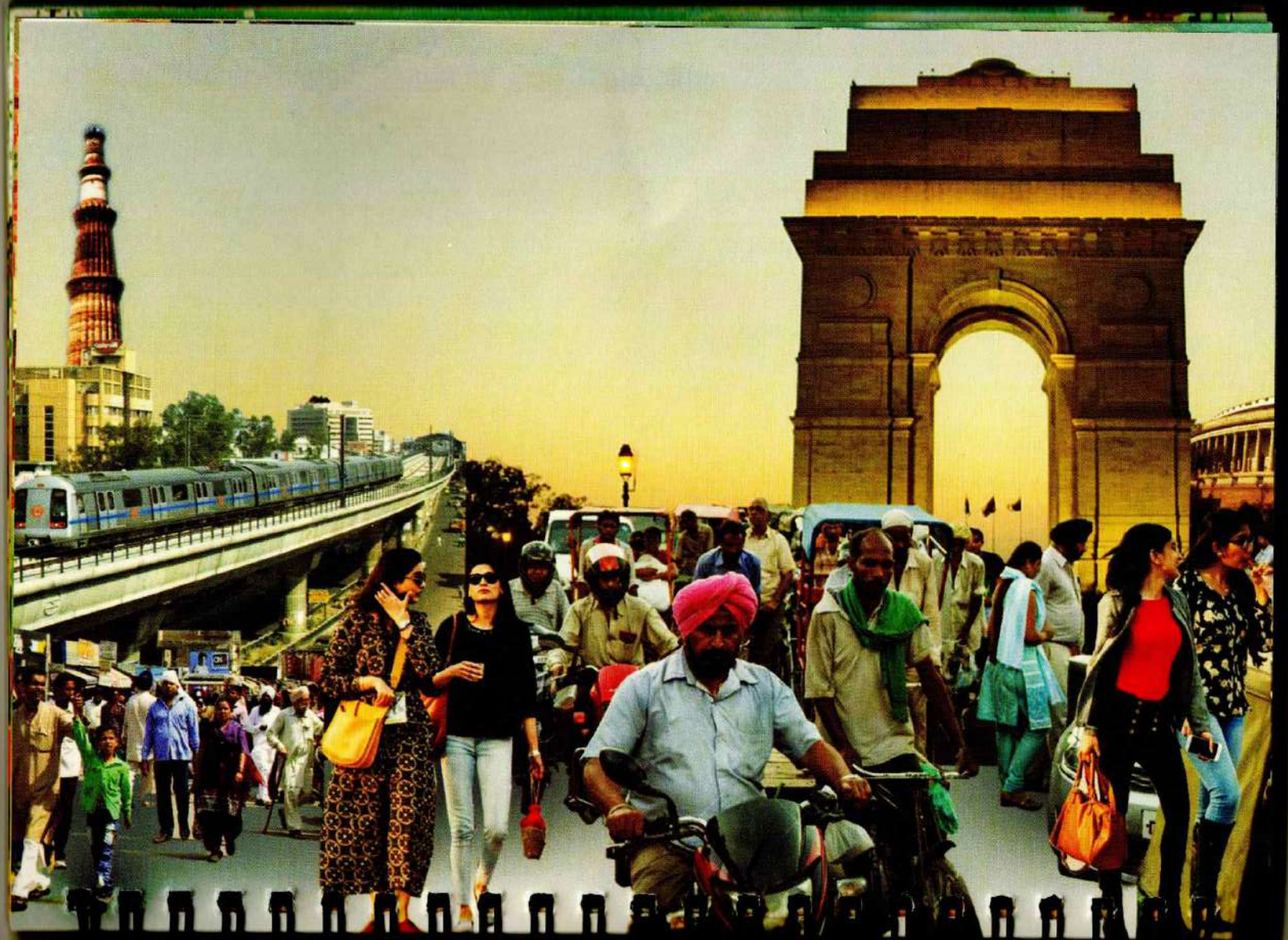
Durga Puja *is the major festival in Bengal. Celebrated in the Hindu month of Ashwin (October), coinciding with Dussehra. This marks the victory of Goddess* **Durga** *over the demon,* **Mahishasura** *-symbolic of the victory of good over evil. Her images are all over the city, set in elaborately decked pandals.*

"Maach", Bengali for fish, is the staple protein in Bangla. Food is cooked in raw mustard oil, which takes non-Bengalis by surprise as it is quite pungent.

Men wear the usual dhoti-kurta, but the Bengali dhoti is resplendent, with the most pleats. It is easy to recognise a Bengali housewife. She ties her keys to a corner of her pallav, which goes under the left arm and over the right shoulder, It is very practical because they can't be lost and no one can steal them.




Union Territories



Delhi

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(National Capital Territory) - Population : **2.98 Crore** - Language : **Hindi**

The Delhi we see now is two Delhis. **Old** *and* **New**. *But before these cities there were previous Delhis. The history books talk of the* **Seven Cities of Delhi**. *In actual fact, there were many more. So, depending on whom you ask or what you're reading, Siri is either the second, third or fourth city.*

The Tomar Rajputs are credited for founding Delhi. Prithviraj Chauhan took over and extended the city called Qila Rai Pithora. The ruins of the fort are still visible in the Qutab Minar area. Prithviraj, left his slave, Qutubuddin Aibak, as his viceroy and went off to battle Mohammed Ghori in 1192, Qutubuddin captured Delhi from the Chauhans and, after Ghori died, he assumed the throne and was the first Sultan of Delhi. He built the Qutab Minar, which is the tallest brick building in the world. Razia Sultan, his grand daughter, the first woman to rule in India, reigned for a mere three years. They were followed by the line of Khilji rulers. Built by Sultan Ala-ud-Din Khilji in 1303, Siri is the third city of Delhi. Siri Fort had the Palace of Thousand Pillars, which is now in ruins. In the 1320s Ghias-ud-din Tughlak invaded India and created the city of Tughlakabad, the fourth Delhi.

One of the Tughlak rulers, Firoze Tughlak created the fifth city of Delhi, Firozabad or Firozeshah Kotla next to the river Yamuna. Shergarh is the sixth city, founded by Humayun, where only the Purana Qila survives. Shah Jehan, the man who gave the Taj Mahal to the world, also created the city of Shahjehanabad, the fifth city of Delhi - in the area that is now known as Old Delhi.

Delhi passed into the direct control of British Government in 1857 and a new city was designed by the Edwin Lutyens. **Rashtrapati Bhavan** *and Nehru's house were the palace of the Governor General of India and the Army Commander's house respectively.*

All the Maharajahs were ordered to make houses in New Delhi, that is why you see Patiala House, Hyderabad House etc. Houses were built for Government officers and many contractors who were building New Delhi, were also 'urged' to buy properties.

New Delhi was officially declared the seat of the Government of India after independence in 1949. *Delhi now has spread its colonies into Harayana and U.P. From being a sleepy Government town it is now a hub of industry and commerce.*

Andaman and Nicobar

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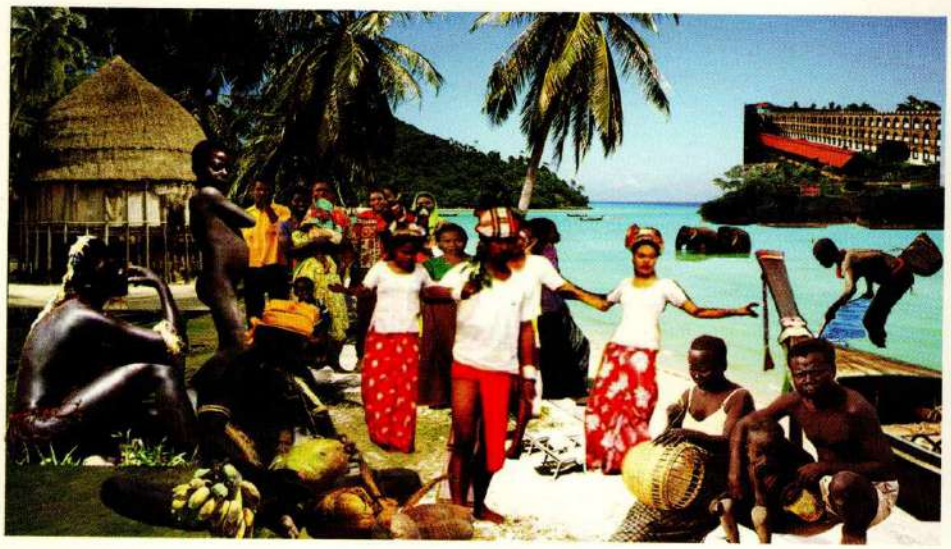
Capital : **Port Blair** - Population : **4.27 Lakh** - Language : **Bengali**



One of the seven union territories of India, they are a group of islands at the juncture of the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea. There are two groups of islands, Andamans and Nicobar. There are 572 islands in the territory. Out of these, about 38 are permanently inhabited.

The Islands are home to the **indigenous Andamanese people.** *The are the only people in the world who have not reached further than a Paleolithic level of technology. The Andamanese have diversified into distinct linguistic, cultural and territorial groups. They shun contact with any non-Andamanese.*

The **Danish East India Company** *arrived in the Nicobar Islands in December of 1755 and were made a Danish colony. The Danes deserted the islands due to constant outbreaks of malaria and sold the rights to the Nicobar Islands to Britain in 1868, which made them part of British India. The primary purpose was to set up a penal colony for convicts from the Indian subcontinent.*

Presently, the islands host the Andaman and Nicobar Command of the Indian Armed Forces, comprising all three Services.

The islands now have a key position in India's strategic role in the Bay of Bengal and the Malacca Straits.

Andaman and Nicobar

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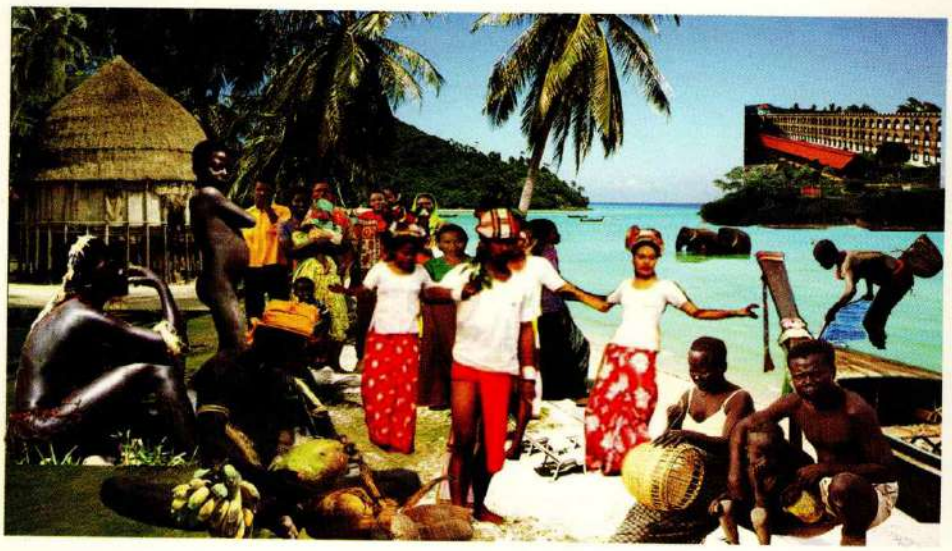
Capital : **Port Blair** - Population : **4.27 Lakh** - Language : **Bengali**



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Chandigarh

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Population : **12.30 Lakh** - Language : **Punjabi**

It is a capital and a union territory. It serves as the capital of the two neighbouring states of Haryana and Punjab. The city is unique. It is not a part of either state, but is directly administered by the Union Government. The master plan of the city was prepared by Swiss-French architect **Le Corbusier**. *The BBC named Chandigarh one of the perfect cities of the world, in terms of architecture, cultural growth and modernisation.*

The city has one of the highest per capita incomes and one of the cleanest in India. It also heads the list of Indian states and territories according to Human Development Index. In 2015 it ranked it as the **happiest city in India**. *The Capital Complex buildings includes joint Punjab and Haryana Secretariat and Assembly. Sculptures like Open Hand, Martyrs Memorial, Geometric Hill and the Tower of Shadow, are situated in parks and Government gardens, where everyone can enjoy them. Their water reservoir is an artificial lake, surrounded by a park.*

Dadra & Nagar Haveli

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Capital : **Silvassa** - Population : **4.12 Lakh** - Language : **Marathi/Gujarti**

It is a land of spell-binding beauty, green forests, winding rivers, golden beaches, distant mountain ranges, the gentle gurgle of streams and a kaleidoscope of flora and fauna. The Daman Ganga river flows through Nagar Haveli and then forms the southern border of Dadra. The towns of Dadra and Silvassa lie on the north bank of the river.

Nagar Haveli is wedged between Maharashtra and Gujarat and 1km to the northwest, is the smaller enclave of Dadra, surrounded by Gujarat.

Curiously, smacked in the middle of Nagar Haveli, lies the village of Mughval - which belongs to Gujarat!!

These territories were earlier ruled by the Koli chiefs until the Marathas and later the French, annexed their territories. They made no change in their customs or their art, myths, songs and folklore. They are mostly nature worshippers, believing that the sun and the moon are the two eyes of God.

Over 60% of the population consists of four major tribes. Be it a wedding, a birth or a harvest, it is not complete without folk dances and a feast. Women wear knee length sarees, beaded necklaces, metal bangles and a coin sized nose pin/nose ring inserted in one nostril. The main ornamentation is tattoos for men and women. Men wear dhotis and a waistcoat for formal occasions and daily wear is a sarong/lungi, pulled up to the knees.

Daman and Diu

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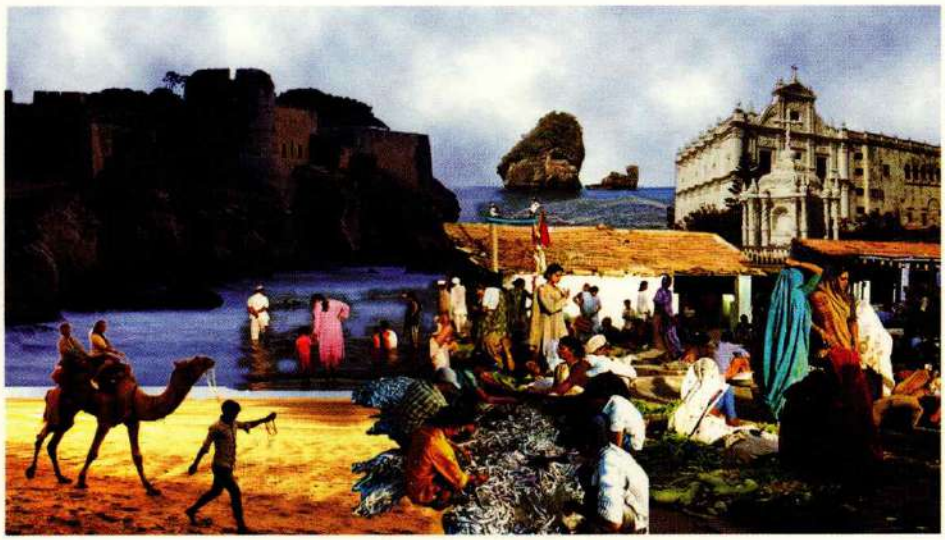
Capital : **Daman (Union Territory)** - Population : **3.14 Lakhs** - Language : **Gujarti**



This union territory is in Western India. With an area of 112 square km, it is the smallest federal division of India on the mainland. The territory has two distinct regions, Daman on the mainland and Diu which is an island. They are geographically separated by the Gulf of Khambhat. The sea and Gujarat are their borders.

From the 8th to13th century, Daman and Diu were the stronghold of the Chowda Rajputs, who were beaten by the Waghalas, who were conquered by Muslims in the early 13th century, till they were ousted by the Portuguese in 1510.

The territories were joined to India in 1961, after the Indian Army threw out the Portuguese, who obviously hadn't heard about Goa.

***Diu, Daman** and Goa formed one political unit until Goa became a state. **Daman** and **Diu** received the status of a Union Territory in 1978.*

The indigenous people prefer to live in villages for farming and fishing. Various Portuguese dances are well preserved and still widely presented. Tribal dances with caustic social comments are much in vogue. Fish and vegetables dominate menus, and the flavours are very like their neighbour, Gujarat.

Lakshwadeep

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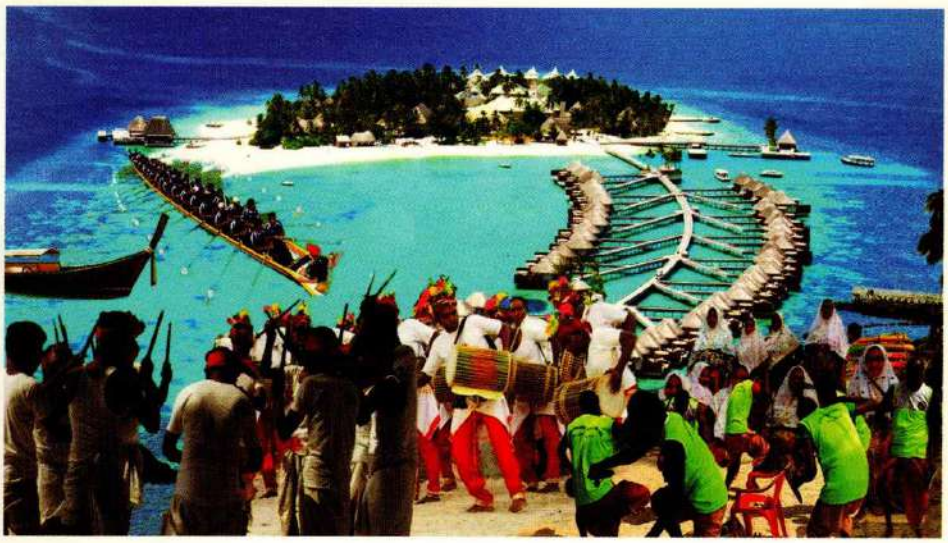
Capital : **Kavarati** - Population : **87 K** - Language : **Malayalam**



The islands of Lakshwadeep lie ***off the coast of Kerala.*** *It is an archipelago of 36 islands, It was part of the Chola empire, and later, part of Tippu Sultan's kingdom. The first European to set foot on an island was Vasco Da Gama, who build a fort. The Portuguese did two things. It made the islands a hub of maritime trade, and years of plunder, pillage, oppression and tyranny.*

Five islands remained with Tippu Sultan. The British seized the rest as payment for a debt the Chirakkal empire didn't pay, and after Tippu's defeat and death, took the last five islands.

In 1947 the islands were given back to India and was and still is, a Union Territory.

Silver, beads and shells are the choice for jewellery.

Men dress themselves in the customary lungis and shirts. They have to undertake an under-sea expedition before he is allowed to wear regular trousers. A strip of twisted cloth is his belt.

On the island of Minicoy, women wear a blue or green under-garment, along with a long cloak, called 'Libus', stretching from shoulder to ankle - like a cloak. The Libus is usually brick coloured cloth with black stripes.

The majority follows Islam, therefore the islands celebrate all the major Islamic Festivals like the Eids and Muharram.

Sea food, meat and vegetables are cooked in spicy gravies, and fried, obviously, in coconut oil.

Pondicherry

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(Union Territory) - Population : **14.10 Lakh** - Language : **Tamil/Telegu**

Puducherry was apparently an important destination for Roman trade with India. Roman pottery was found in 1937. Archaeological excavations revealed that it was a trading station where Roman manufacture was imported during the first half of the 1st century AD.

In 1674 the French East India Company set up a trading centre at Pondicherry. This outpost eventually became the chief French settlement in India.

Puducherry remained a part of French India until when, on March 18, 1954, the members of the executive council, the mayors of Pondicherry and seven adjoining communes proclaimed their decision to merge with India without a referendum.

A lot of France remains in Puducherry. On the 14th of July it still celebrates Bastille Day, the start of the French Revolution which made it a democracy. Uniformed, retired soldiers still march down the streets. The French consulate and French citizens pay solemn tributes to war heroes at French War Memorial on Goubert Avenue. Fireworks illuminate the beach and bands play the French and Indian anthems. It is community living, where everyone shares the work.

The famous city of **Auroville** *was created by the followers of Shri Aurobindo, a mystic and philosopher. Many foreigners come to live there.*

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