

India: a land of contrasts



Geography

India is the seventh largest country in the world with a population of 1.2 billion people – that's the second biggest in the world. The highest mountain is Kangchenjunga in the Himalayas (8,586 m) and the Ganges is the longest river. New Delhi is the capital, but the largest city is Mumbai with a population of nearly 14 million people.



The landscape of India is very diverse: there's the Thar desert in the north-west and **rainforests** and jungles in the south-west. The Ganges **Plain** in the north and east is the main agricultural area. The Himalayas are in the far north.

People think of India as a hot country, but in the mountains of the north there's an **average** annual temperature of only 6 °C, **whereas** the average temperature is 26 °C in the south, where there are monsoons from June to September. Did you know that 65,000 species of wildlife live in India including lions, tigers, elephants, **rhinos**, **snakes**, river dolphins and thousands of tropical birds?



High-tech companies of Bengaluru



India today

Millions of Indians live in extreme poverty in **overcrowded** cities. In remote villages, poor people live simple lives that haven't changed for hundreds of years. In contrast, there are millions of well-educated, **wealthy** people with comfortable lifestyles that live and work in modern cities.

India's economy has grown very fast since 1990 and is becoming one of the most important in the world. Bengaluru is called 'The Silicon Valley of India' because it has become a centre for international IT and electronics companies.

India has a very rich traditional culture. You can still see this today in the many Hindu festivals, such as Diwali, which are important social occasions for everyone. However, Indian culture today is changing. The lifestyle of many young Indians is the same as young people in the western world. They prefer jeans and T-shirts to traditional Indian clothes, for example. Modern Indian culture accepts these new trends and combines them with traditions from the past.



Glossary

rainforests

foreste pluviali

plain

pianura

average

media

whereas

invece

rhinos

rinoceronti

snakes

serpenti

overcrowded

sovraffollato

wealthy

benestante



Culture note

People now use the original names of Indian cities instead of the names the British gave them.

Mumbai for Bombay

Bengaluru for Bangalore

Kolkata for Calcutta

Writing strategies

Quando scrivi un testo, organizzalo in paragrafi. Un paragrafo è composto da alcune frasi sullo stesso argomento.

Comincia un nuovo paragrafo per ogni nuovo argomento.

Guarda il testo a pagina 58. Quanti paragrafi ci sono? Qual è l'argomento di ogni paragrafo?

Reading

1 WARM UP Look at the photos. What do they tell you about India?

2 **2.09** Read and listen to the text. Then complete the fact file, using the map, too.

Fact File India

Population: (1)

Highest point: (4)

Capital city: (2)

Seas: (5)

Largest city: (3)

Neighbouring countries: (6)

3 ES Re-read the text 'India today' and answer the questions.

How many Indians live in poverty? *Millions of Indians live in poverty.*

- Where do the poorest people live?
- What are the lives of poor people in villages like?
- Where do the rich people live?
- How has India's economy changed since 1990?
- Why is Bengaluru called the 'Silicon Valley of India'?

Listening

4 **2.10** **K** Rasul is in India on holiday. Listen to the dialogue and complete the gaps.

Rasul has been in India since *...Saturday...*

- He has been in India for a
- Rasul has been to before.
- He hasn't visited before.
- He thinks the city is very
- He has already eaten lots of times.
- He went to his cousin's yesterday.

Speaking

5 K T In pairs, ask questions about:

- India's population?
- climate?
- Himalayas?
- biggest city?
- capital city?
- wild animals?

Writing

6 ES You're on holiday in India. Write a postcard to a friend using the notes.

arrived last week / visit rainforest next week / visited Amritsar – fantastic golden temple! / New Delhi – interesting / seen elephants and lots of monkeys / photo – just uploaded