

India

A Reading A-Z Level S Leveled Book
Word Count: 995

LEVELED BOOK • S

India

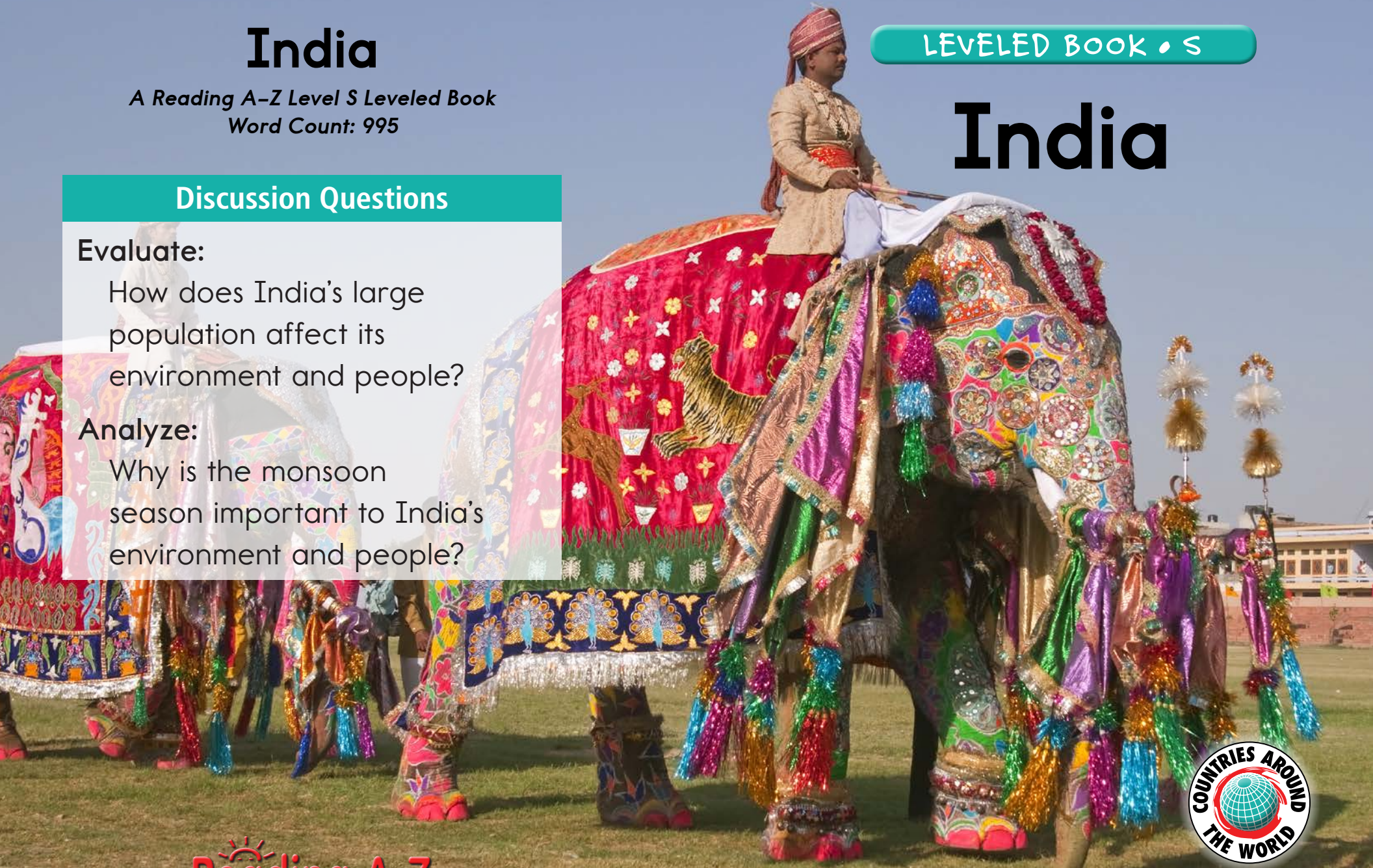
Discussion Questions

Evaluate:

How does India's large population affect its environment and people?

Analyze:

Why is the monsoon season important to India's environment and people?



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Front and back cover: Elephants are used in India for many parades and festivals such as the Elephant Festival in Jaipur (JEYE-poor).

Title page: Many people think the Taj Mahal, built in the 1600s, is one of the most beautiful buildings in the world.

Page 3: The male Indian peacock spreads his colorful feathers to attract a mate.

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Countries Around the World
Level S Leveled Book
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Correlation

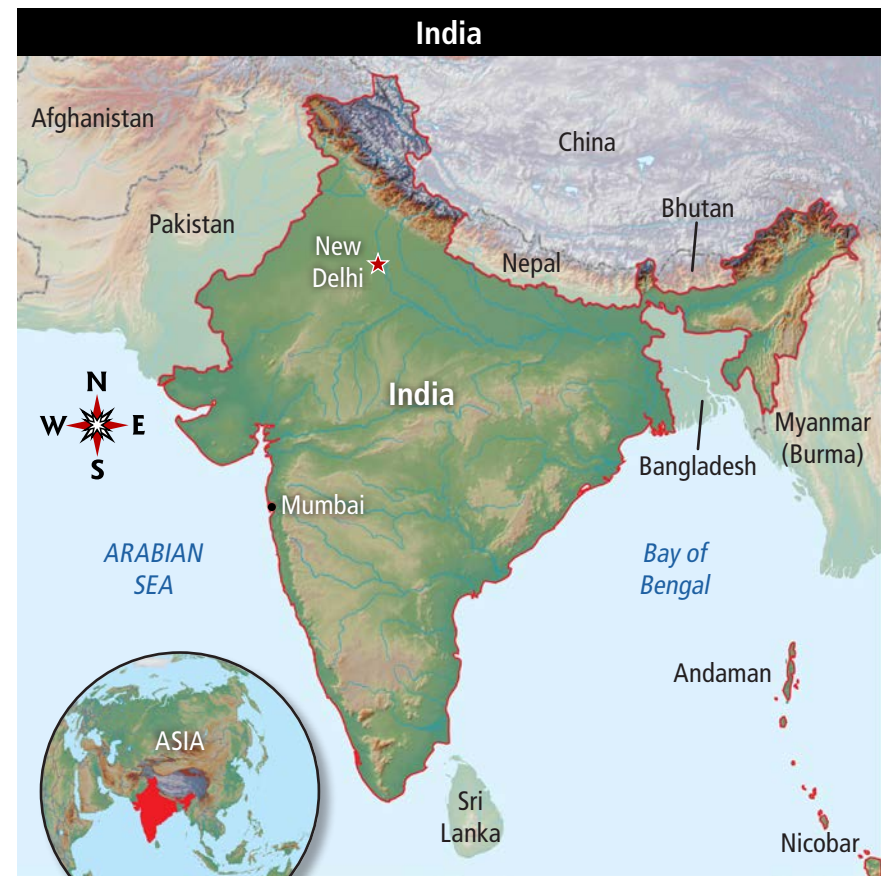
LEVEL S

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Where Is It?

India is a country in Asia that is mainly a **peninsula**. Along the northern edge of India are the countries of Pakistan, China, Nepal, and Bhutan. To the east are Bangladesh and Myanmar, or Burma. Just south of India is the island of Sri Lanka. To the southwest of India is the Arabian Sea. To the southeast is the Bay of Bengal. India also includes some groups of islands.

People

More than one billion people live in India. Only China has more people. Most Indian people live in the countryside, even though India does have some large cities. Most homes in the rural areas don't have running water, so people must go to a well and bring home water every day. About half of the people in rural areas don't have electricity, either.

Half of the people in India make their living growing crops, mainly grains. They also raise cattle, water buffalo, and other animals. However, Indian people do not raise cattle to eat, because most Indians belong to the **Hindu** religion. For Hindus, cows are **sacred**. They use cattle for plowing their fields and for transportation, and they raise sheep, goats, and chickens for meat.



Delhi



New Delhi

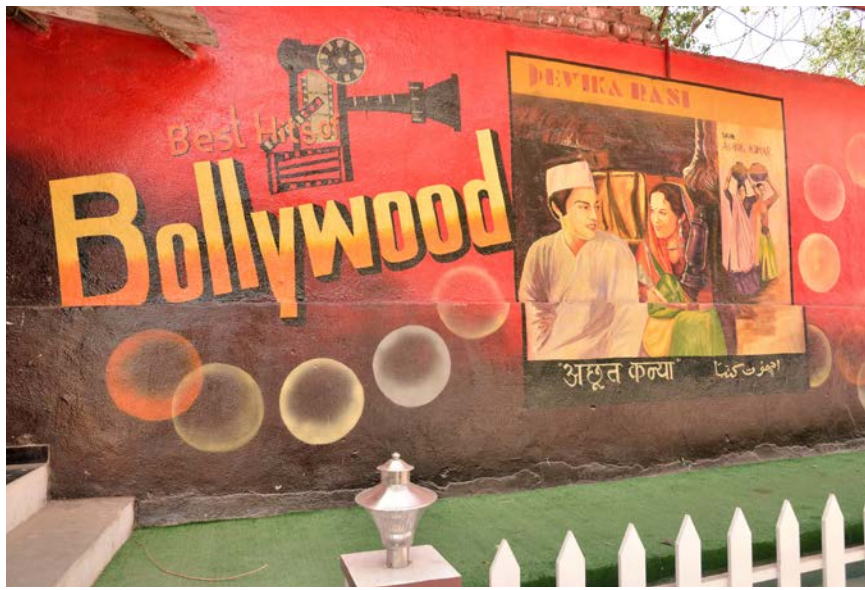
New Delhi was built nearly one hundred years ago inside the older city of Delhi to be the capital of British India.

The capital of India is New Delhi (DEL-ee), which is part of the larger city of Delhi. The two areas are very different. Delhi is a very old city, but New Delhi was built in the 1920s and 1930s. Delhi is a complex maze of small streets crowded with small shops, while New Delhi has wide streets and modern shopping centers. More than twenty million people live in Delhi and New Delhi combined.



The Taj Mahal

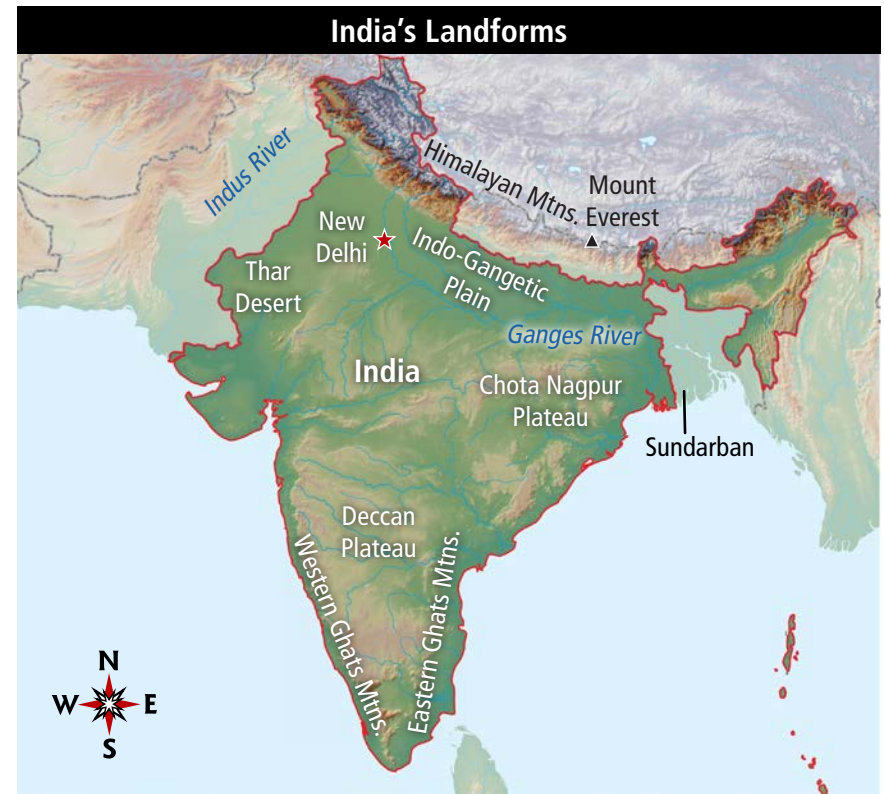
The Taj Mahal is one of the most well-known landmarks in India. It was built by the emperor Shah Jahan as a loving tribute to his wife Mumtaz Mahal after she died. It took workers twenty-two years to complete all of the buildings that make up the Taj Mahal.



Bollywood is a combination of the words *Bombay* and *Hollywood*. Its films are known around the world for elaborate sets, singing, and dancing.

Most Indian cities are extremely crowded. Many people live in apartment buildings along very narrow streets. Because India has such a large population, it has been hard for the country's electricity supply to keep up with the demand. In some Indian cities, it's very common for the power to go out.

Movies are a very popular form of entertainment in India. The center of the film business is Mumbai, which used to be known as Bombay. Mumbai releases more than a thousand films per year and is often called *Bollywood*.



Land

The Himalayas form India's northern border. They are the highest mountains in the world and cut off India from the rest of Asia. This is why India is sometimes called a **subcontinent**.

A low-lying plain stretches across northern India. This rich land was formed long ago as rivers flooded and left soil behind. The Thar Desert is in western India.



The Ganges River is sacred to Hindus, who often bathe in its waters.

The Ganges and Indus rivers lie in the northern plains of India. For Hindus, the Ganges is a sacred river. Hindus from all over India travel to the river to enter its waters. South of the Indus and Ganges rivers lies raised land that takes up more than half of India and includes low hills as well as the coast.

In May or June every year, rain-bearing winds blow northward from the Indian Ocean, bringing the **monsoon** season. During this season, rain falls almost every day in the afternoon. Most of India's rain falls during this hot, wet season.



Diwali is a festival of lights that honors the Hindu goddess of wealth.

Celebrations

People in India celebrate many special days. Diwali (dih-WAH-lee) is a festival that lasts for five days. During this time, people light small candles. They shoot firecrackers and give sweets and other gifts to friends and family.

Holi (HOH-lee) is a spring Hindu celebration known as the festival of colors. During Holi, people celebrate the end of winter. They throw colored water and powder, such as one called *kumkum*, on each other. Children enjoy using water guns filled with colored water to spray colors on their friends. People also sing, dance, and enjoy special foods and drinks.



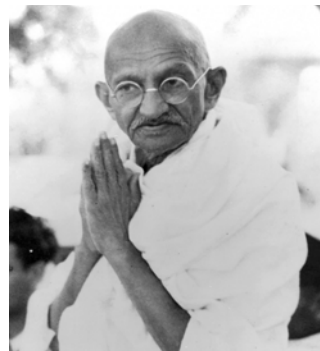
During Holi, many children also throw water balloons filled with colored water at each other.

History

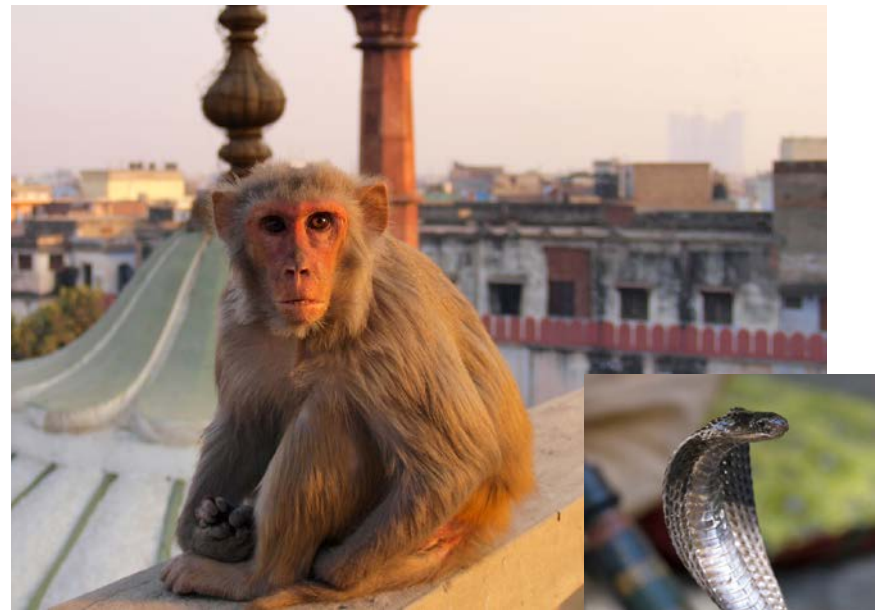
India's civilization is very old. About 2,300 years ago, people living in the land now known as India had been united under one ruler. About 1,300 years ago **Muslims** invaded India and set up a kingdom with Delhi at its center.

Muslim rule lasted until the 1600s. Europeans had arrived in India as early as 1498. That's when Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama sailed to India. By 1858, Great Britain had taken control of the country.

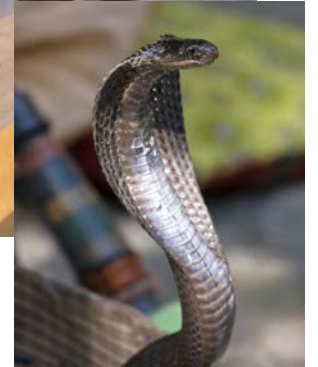
In the 1920s, a lawyer named Mohandas Gandhi began asking his fellow Indians to resist British rule—but not with fists or weapons. He asked them to protest British rule in nonviolent, or peaceful, ways. By 1947, India was free. Since that time, India has faced wars, **poverty**, and the strain of a growing population, but it continues to develop. In 2007, it elected its first woman to serve as president.



Gandhi is honored as a hero by people from all over the world.



(Main) Monkeys are a common sight in cities such as Delhi because people regularly feed them. (Inset) The cobra spreads its hood when it is alarmed.



Animals

India's wildlife includes many exciting species. India is the only country in the world with both lions and tigers. It is also the home of two kinds of leopards. The snow leopard of the Himalayas is very rare.

One of India's most famous reptiles is the cobra. The Indian cobra hunts small animals, such as rats and mice. It has been known to bite humans because its prey often lives in towns and villages.

The Indian elephant is very strong. People once used it to lift logs in India's forests and to carry crops and people. Some people still use the elephant to help them with their work. Today, wild Indian elephants are found in most parts of India, but they are **endangered** because of the loss of their habitat.

Near the Bay of Bengal, the **mangrove** forests provide a special habitat for sea turtles, sharks, and crocodiles. This saltwater swamp is also the largest home of Bengal tigers in the world. A male Bengal tiger can grow to 3 meters (10 ft.) in length and weigh as much as 230 kilograms (500 lbs.). The tigers often swim in the waters of the swamp to catch prey.



The Bengal tiger is an endangered animal. Scientists are working hard to protect it.

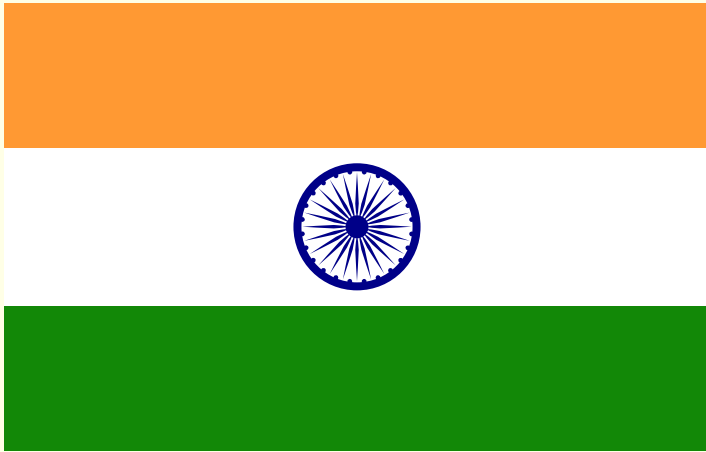


India is a land of many ancient customs, such as the wearing of a long, colorful cloth called a *sari* (SAH-ree).

Conclusion

India has a long history and a very large, diverse population. It's a country trying to find a balance between caring for its people and maintaining its natural beauty. Fascinating animals and interesting people make India a unique country with much to learn about.

India



Population: 1,236,344,631

Land: 2,973,193 sq km (1,147,956 sq. mi.)

Capital City: New Delhi

Primary Language: Hindi

Primary Religion: Hinduism

Currency: Rupee (ROO-pee)



Source: Central Intelligence Agency (July 2014),
World Bank

Glossary

- endangered** (*adj.*) in danger of dying out completely (p. 13)
- Hindu** (*adj.*) of or relating to the major religion in India that includes many gods and the belief in reincarnation (p. 6)
- mangrove** (*n.*) a tropical tree that grows in swamps or shallow salt water (p. 13)
- monsoon** (*n.*) a seasonal storm that brings heavy rain to an area (p. 9)
- Muslims** (*n.*) people who follow the religion of Islam (p. 11)
- peninsula** (*n.*) a long piece of land almost completely surrounded by water (p. 4)
- poverty** (*n.*) the state of being poor (p. 11)
- sacred** (*adj.*) related to a religious or spiritual purpose (p. 6)
- subcontinent** (*n.*) a large land area that is a part of a continent (p. 8)