

INDIA

Location

South Asia.

Area

3,166,414 sq km (1,222,582 sq miles).

Population

1.2 billion (2009).

Population Density

370 per sq km.

Capital

New Delhi.

Population: 16.6 million (2007).

Government

Republic since 1947.

Language

The main language is Hindi which is spoken by about 40% of the population; English is also enshrined in the constitution for a wide range of official purposes. In addition, 17 regional languages are recognized by the constitution. These include Bengali, Gujarati, Oriya and Punjabi, which are widely used in the north, and Tamil and Telugu, which are common in the south. Other regional languages include Kannada, Malayalam and Marathi. The Muslim population largely speaks Urdu.

Religion

About 82% Hindu, 12% Muslim, with Sikh, Christian, Jain, Parsi and Buddhist minorities.

Time

GMT + 5.5.

Electricity

230-240 volts AC, 50Hz. Some areas have a DC supply. Plugs used are of the round two- and three-pin type.

Head of Government

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh since 2004.

Head of State

President Pratibha Patil since July 2007.

Telephone

Country code: 91.

Mobile Telephone

Roaming agreements exist with most international mobile phone companies. Coverage is limited to major towns but is increasing all the time.

Internet

E-mail can be accessed from an increasing number of hotels and from Internet cafés across the country, many now with Wi-Fi.

Media

The state's TV monopoly was broken in 1992, resulting in a boom of private channels. News and entertainment shows are especially popular, with news programs often attracting the larger audiences. A number of 24-hour news channels operate in India. Public TV is

run by Doordarshan, while STAR Plus, owned by News Corporation, is one of the most popular private channels. Private radio stations were sanctioned in 2000, but only public All India Radio is allowed to broadcast news. Newspaper circulation has risen, thanks to a growing middle class, as has the number of Internet users. Many newspapers are in English; the most important include *The Economic Times*, *The Hindu*, *Hindustan Times*, *Indian Express*, *Navbharat Times*, *Punjab Kesari*, *Deccan Herald*, *The Statesman*, *Pioneer* and *The Times of India*.

Post

Airmail service to Western Europe takes up to two weeks.

Post office hours: Regional variations, but generally Mon-Sat 1000-1300 and 1330-1630 in bigger towns and cities.

Note

(a) * Only the secular holidays of Republic Day, Independence Day and Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday are universally observed. Public holidays in India tend to be observed on a strictly regional basis. The above dates are Government of India holidays, when government offices will be closed nationwide. In addition, there are numerous festivals and fairs which are also observed in some states as holidays, the dates of which change from year to year. For more details, contact Incredible India (see *General Info*). (b) Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of various phases of the moon and the dates given above are approximations. During the lunar month of Ramadan that precedes Eid al-Fitr, Muslims fast during the day and feast at night and normal business patterns may be interrupted. Many restaurants are closed during the day and there may be restrictions on smoking and drinking. (c) Although not government official holidays, Christmas Day (25 Dec) and New Year's Day (1 Jan) are widely observed nationally.

Below are listed the Public Holidays & OR Festivals for the January 2011-December 2011 period.

Jan 01 – New Year's day	Jan 05 -Guru Govind B'Day	Jan 14 – Makar Sankranti	Jan 14 – Pongal
Jan 20 – Sarasvati Puja	Jan 26 – Republic Day	Feb 08 – Vasant Panchami	Mar 03 – Maha Shivratri
Mar 19 - Holi	Mar 20 - Navroz	Apr 04 - Ugadi	Apr 04 – Gudi Padva
Apr 12 - Ramnavami	Apr 16 – Mahavir Jayanti	Apr 18 – Hanuman Jayanti	Apr 22 – Good Friday
Apr 13 - bausakhi	Apr 14 – Tamil New Year	Apr 24 - Easter	May 17 – Buddha Purnima
Jul 15 – Guru Purnima	Aug 13 - Rakshabandhan	Aug 15 – Independence Day	Aug 22 – Janmashtami
Aug 31 – Idu'l Fitr	Sep 01 - Onam	Sep 01 – Ganesh Chaturthi	Sep 28 – Navratri Begins
Oct 2 – Gandhi Jayanti	Oct 05 – Navratri Ends	Oct 06 - Dashara	Oct 12 – Sharad Purnima
Oct 16 – Karva Chauth	Oct 25 – Dhan Teras	Oct 26 - Diwali	Oct 26 – Bhai Duj
Oct 27 – Govardhan Puja	Nov 06 – Idu'l Zuha	Nov 10 – Guru Nanak's B'Day	Nov 26 – Muharram
Dec 25 - Christmas			