

Facts of Uttar Pradesh

- **Area**

2,40,928 square kilometres

- **Population**

1,998 lakh

- **Capital**

Lucknow

- **Languages spoken**

Hindi, English, Urdu and other Indian languages

- **Time**

GMT +5:30

- **Currency**

Indian Rupee

- **Climate**

Summer (March–June): Hot & dry (30-45 °C)

Monsoon (June–September): 85% of average annual rainfall of 990 mm.

Winter (October–February): Cold (15-01 °C)

State Information

Uttar Pradesh is the rainbow land where the multi-hued Indian Culture has blossomed from times immemorial. Blessed with a variety of geographical land and many cultural diversities, Uttar Pradesh, has been the area of activity of historical heroes like - Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Mahavira, Ashoka, Harsha, Akbar and Mahatma Gandhi. Rich and tranquil expanses of meadows, perennial rivers, dense forests and fertile soil of Uttar Pradesh have contributed numerous golden chapters to the annals of Indian History. Dotted with various holy shrines and pilgrim places full of joyous festivals, it plays an important role in the politics, education, culture, industry, agriculture and tourism of India.

Garlanded by the Ganga and Yamuna. The two pious rivers of Indian mythology, Uttar Pradesh is surrounded by Bihar in the East, Madhya Pradesh in the South, Rajasthan, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana in the west and Uttaranchal in the north and Nepal touch the northern borders of Uttar Pradesh, it assumes strategic importance for Indian defence. Its area of 2,36,286 sq kms. lies between latitude 24 deg to 31 deg and longitude 77 deg to 84 deg East. Area wise it is the fourth largest State of India. In sheer magnitude it is half of the area of France, three times of Portugal, four times of Ireland, seven times of Switzerland, ten times of Belgium and a little bigger than England.

The British East India Company came into contact with the Awadh rulers during the reign of IIIrd Nawab of Awadh. There is no doubt that the history of Uttar Pradesh has run concurrently with the history of the country during and after the British rule, but it is also well-known that the contribution of the people of the State in National Freedom Movement had been significant.

Natural Wealth

Uttar Pradesh is endowed with natural wealth in abundance. This wealth lies hidden below a variety of rocks of different ages found in lofty mountain ranges of the Himalayas in the North and Vindhyan ranges in the South. The diversity of flora and fauna displayed here due to vast area, big and small rivers, varieties of climatic conditions, and different kinds of soil are hard to find elsewhere.

Minerals

The minerals found in Uttar Pradesh include limestone which is found in Guruma-Kanach-Bapuhari in Mirzapur district and Kajrahat in Sonebhadra district; dolomite in Mirzapur, Sonebhadra and Banda, glass-sand in Karchhana of Allahabad district, Karwi in Banda district and Mau district; marble in Mirzapur and Sonebhadra; bauxite in Rajhewan in Banda district; non-plastic fireclay in Bansi and Makri-Khoh area of Mirzapur district; and Uranium in Lalitpur district. Besides, Barytes and Edalusite are found in the districts of Mirzapur and Sonebhadra. Sand-stone, pebbles, reh, salt punter, maurang, sand and other minor minerals are also found in the State.

Vegetation and Flora



Tropical Moist Deciduous Forests are found in the moist region of Terai. They grow in regions which record 100 to 150 cm. of rainfall annually, have an average temperature between 26 degree to 27 degree centegrade and have considerable degree of humidity.

Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests are found in all parts of the plains, and usually in central eastern and western regions. Important trees are Sal, Palas, Amaltas, Bel, fig etc. Neem, Peepal, Sheesham, Mango, Jamun, Babool, Imli (Trmarind) etc. grow along river banks and in other moist regions.

Tropical Thorny Forests are mostly found in south-western parts of the State. Such forests are confined to the areas which have low annual rainfall (50-70 cms), mean annual temperature between 25 degree to 27 degree centegrade and low humidity (less than 47 percent). Widely scattered thorny trees, mainly, Babool, Thorny, legumes and Euphorhias are extensively found here. The diversity of fauna living in water and land in the air are found in the State.

Fauna: Animals depend on forest not only of food but also for habitat. The diversity of fauna living in water and land in the air are found in the State. Since their list is long, mention shall be made here only of important species mainly found in the State :

Fish - Mahaser, Hilsa, Saul, Tengan, Parthan, Rasela, Vittal, Rohu, Mirgal, Kata, Labi, Mangur, Cuchia, Eel, Einghi, Mirror Carp, Trout.

Amphibia - Frog and Toad.

Reptiles - Bamania, Pit-viper, Lizard, Goh, Cobra, Tortoise, Krait, Dhaman and Crocodile.

Aves - Cheel, Vulture, Peacock, Nightingale, Pigeon, Parrot, Owl, Nilkanth and Sparrow.

Mammals - Shrew, Porcupine, Squirrel, Hare, Mongoose, Cow, Buffalo and Mouse.

Other common species found here are Tiger, Panther, Snow Leopard, Sambhar, Cheetal, Kastura, Chinkara, Black Deer, Nilgai, Back-brown Bear, Mountain Goat, Hyena, Hill Dog, Elephant etc. Among the birds Fowl, Pheasant, Partridge, Florican, Duck, Goose and Wader are common.



Cultural Wealth

Uttar Pradesh is one of the most ancient cradles of Indian culture. While it is true that no Harappa and Mohan-Jodaro have been discovered in the State, the antiquities found in Banda (Bundelkhand), Mirzapur and Meerut link its History to early Stone Age and Harappan era. Chalk drawings or dark red drawings by primitive men are extensively found in the Vindhyan ranges of Mirzapur districts. Utensils of that age have also been discovered in Atranji-Khera, Kaushambi, Rajghat and Sonkh. Copper articles have been found in Kanpur, Unnao, Mirzapur, Mathura and advent of the Aryans in this State. It is most probable that snapped links between the Indus Valley and Vedic civilizations lie buried under the ruins of ancient sites found in this State.

Vedic Period

There is hardly any mention of the area comprising present Uttar Pradesh in Vedic hymns. Even the sacred rivers, the Ganga and Yamuna, appear only on the distance horizon of the land of the Aryans. In the later Vedic age, the importance of Sapta Sindhu recedes and Brahmarshi Desh or Madhya Desh assumes significance. The region comprising Uttar Pradesh at that time became a holy place of India and foremost center of Vedic culture and knowledge.

The new States of Kuru-Panchal, Kashi and Kosal find mention in late-Vedic texts as prominent centers of Vedic culture. The people of Kuru-Panchal were regarded as the best representatives of Vedic culture. They enjoyed great respect as outstanding orators of Sanskrit. The conduct of schools and institutions by them was laudable. The life of their kinds was a model for other kings and their Brahmins were held in high esteem for their piety and scholarship. The Upanishads prominently mention the Panchal Parishad. The scholars from Kuru-Panchal were specially visited by the Vidush king on the occasion of Ashwamedh Yajna. The Panchal king Pravahan Jaivali himself was a great thinker who was praised even by Brahmin scholars like Shilika, Dalabhya, Shvetketu and his father Uddalak Aruni. Ajatshatru of Kashi was another great-philosopher king whose superiority was acknowledged by Brahmin scholars like Driпти, Valhaki, Gargya etc., Literature in various disciplines was authored on an extensive scale during this age culminating in the Upanishads. They signify the highest reach of human imagination. The Upanishad literature was the product of meditation in the Ashrams of the sages, several of which were in Uttar Pradesh, Eminent sages like Bharadwaj, Yajnavalkya, Vashishta, Valmiki and Atri have either their Ashrams here or were otherwise connected with this State. Some Aranyans and Upanishads were, in written in the Ashrams located in this State.

Post-Vedic Period

The cultural heritage of Uttar Pradesh was maintained in the period of the Ramayan and Mahabharat i.e. the epic period. The story of Ramayan revolves round the Ikshwaku dynasty of Kosal and of Mahabharat a round the 'Kuru' dynasty of Hastinapur. Local people firmly believe that the Ashram of Valmiki, the author of Ramayan, was in Brahmavart (Bithoor in Kanpur District) and it was in the surroundings of Naimisharany (Nimsar-Misrikh in Sitapur district) that Suta narrated the story of Mahabharat as he had heard it from Vyasji. Some of the Smritis and Puranas were also written in this State. Gautam Buddha, Mahavir, Makkhaliputta Goshal and great thinkers brought about a revolution in Uttar Pradesh in 6th century B.C. Out of these, Makkhaliputta Goshal, who was born at Shravan near Shravasti, was the founder of Ajivika sect. Mahavir, the 24th Trithankar of Jains was born in Bihar but had a large number of followers in Uttar Pradesh. He is said to have lived twice during rainy season in this State—once in Shravasti and the second time in Padrauna near Deoria. Pawa proved to be his last resting place. In fact, Jainism had entrenched itself in this State even before the arrival of Mahavir. Several Tirthankars such as Parshwanath, Sambharnath and Chandraprabha were born in different cities in this State and attained 'Kaivalya' here. Jainism must have retained its popularity in this State in subsequent centuries also. This fact is borne by the ruins of several ancient temples, buildings, etc. The remains of a magnificent Jain Stupa have been dug out near Kankali Tila in Mathura, while Jain shrines built in early middle Age are still preserved in Deogarh, Chanderi and other places.

The Age of Buddha

The founder of Buddhism, Gautam the Buddha, was born in Lumbini in Nepal. His father, King Shuddodhan, was the ruler of a small State, Kapilvastu (now in Siddharthnagar district). His mother, Maya, belonged to the ruling family of another small state, Deodah (now in Deoria district).

The Buddha attained Enlightenment at Bodh Gaya in Bihar but it was in Isipattan or Mrigdav in Sarnath in U.P. that he preached his first sermon and laid the foundation of his Order. From this point of view, Sarnath has the distinction of being the birth place of 'Dhamma' and 'Sangha', the two elements of the Holy Trinity of Buddhism, the third being the Buddha himself. Other notable places in Uttar Pradesh followed by Buddha's association are Kushinara of Kushinagar (in Deoria district) where he attained 'Mahaparinirvana, Shravasti the capital of



Kisal where he performed a great miracle, and Sankashyar Sankisa (in Etah district) where another miracle of his life occurred. The rulers of several states in the then Uttar Pradesh were greatly influenced by the teaching of Buddha.

The People of the State also did not lag behind in showing love and devotion to the Tathagat, greater part of whose monastic life was spent in Uttar Pradesh. Thus it will be no exaggeration to describe Uttar Pradesh as the Cradle of Buddhism. Besides Buddhism and Jainism, Pauranic Brahmanism also had deep roots in the state. Ancient images of Gods and Goddesses of Brahmanical order, a temple of Kushan period has been found which alludes to Brahmanism. In fact Mathura can be said to be the birthplace of Indian sculpture. Other temples of this faith built in different periods are in Varanasi, Allahabad, Ballia, Ghazipur, Jhansi and Kanpur.

Middle Age of Synthesis

In successive centuries after Buddha, Ayodhya, Prayag, Varanasi, Mathura and several other cities continued to play important role in the making of religious and cultural history in India. Several kings who ruled the region became immortal because of Vedic rituals performed by them and patronage extended by them to learning. Scholars like Ashwaghosh, Kalidas, Ban, Mayur, Diwakar, Vakpati, Bhavbhuti, Rajshekhar, Laxmidhar, Sri Harsh and Krishna Misra adorned their courts. Yuan-chwang says that the people of Uttar Pradesh were full masters of the language and spoke it correctly, their pronunciation was like that of the Devas, elegant, beautiful, and their intonation clear and distinct, worthy of emulation by others, the rules framed by these people were accepted by all.

Varanasi continued to be a prominent centre of learning as in the past. Ayodhya and Mathura acquired fame as birth places of Ram and Krishna. Pilgrims from every corner of the country continued to throng to Prayag and as such it was called the Tirtharaj. Similarly, the north mountain region, where Kailash and Mansarovar are situated and from where the holy rivers of the country originate, also remained sacred for the pilgrims. The Shankaracharya established one of the four prominent sacred Dhams in Badrikashram in this region.



Middle Age

The liberal traditions continued to flourish in Uttar Pradesh in the middle age as well. Varanasi remained a prominent centre of Hindu learning and Jaunpur, under the Sharqi rulers, a prominent center of Islamic culture. Jaunpur was describing as the 'Shiraz' of India. The Sharqi rulers were patrons of music also and there were many famous musicians in their court. Brij region was an important center of devotional music in those days. It was in Uttar Pradesh that 'Sufis' took inspiration from Hindu thought and philosophy. Ramanand and his famous disciple Kabir and other saints like Ravidas, Darya Shah and Guru Gorakhnath were some of the great men of those times who gave a new direction to the life and culture of this State.

The Hindu teachers laid emphasis on monotheism (oneness of God) and focused attention on the meaninglessness of the caste system. The Muslim sufis were greatly influenced by mysticism. All these saint-poets contributed to the enrichment of both Hindi and Urdu literature. A notable contribution was made by Sultan Feroz Tughlaq who got Sanskrit works translated into Persian among the authors of this age, Zia-ud-din Barni will always be held in high esteem. The tradition of cultural synthesis, which was started by the sufis and saints during the rule of Sultans received great impetus during the reign of wise Mughals. It was a time when a distinct liberal outlook was discernible in all the spheres of human life such as religion, art and literatures.

Many Madaras and Makatabs were opened for muslim education and Varanasi became the traditional center of Hindu education. Hindi and Urdu literatures developed further and work of translation of Sanskrit books into Persian gained momentum. Tulsidas, Surdas, Keshavdas, Bhushan, Malik Mohammad Jayasi, Raskhan, Matiram, Ghananand, Bihari, Dev and Giridhar Kavirai were some of the great poets who brought into being, laurels to Uttar Pradesh. After the disintegration of the Mughal empire, smaller states which came also pursued a policy of giving patronage to poets and musicians.

Architecture, Art and Craft

Several styles of architecture can be seen in Uttar Pradesh. There are buildings built in the Hindu Buddhist styles and Royal memorials and monuments of Indo-Islamic architecture. Buildings constructed in Avadh and Sharqi styles of architecture are also remarkable. In the Jatakas and other ancient works, we find description of several such cities, palaces and forts. Almost the same fate met the Stupas, etc., which were built by Shakya, Malla and other rulers in this State in 6th century B.C. The famous Jain stupa whose ruins have been found in Kankali Tila in Mathura was also built during this period.

