



# India

*Joined the Commonwealth in 1947 - visited by the Queen in 1997*



**India is a peninsular nation to the north of the Indian Ocean**

Pop: (2012) 1,236,687,000    Capital: New Delhi    Area: 3,287,263 sq km

India is the second most populous country in the world. Its infinite natural resources support a growing population and supply one of the world's largest, most successful and diverse industrial economies. However, 70% of its population still lives off, and depends on agriculture. With Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist and Jain, cultural life is very colourful with numerous festivals and feast days throughout the year.

Rivers rising in the Himalayas in the north feed the River Ganges which flows eastwards across a vast alluvial and densely populated plain to the Bay of Bengal. These rivers are fed in summer by the seasonal rains of the monsoon. The Deccan plateau, bordered by the Western and Eastern Ghats, forms the peninsula area. The Thar desert lies to the north west.

India's vegetation varies according to topography and climatic variation from alpine to mountain forests through to mixed deciduous forests and scrub. Exotic wildlife is abundant. There are 83 national parks and 447 wildlife sanctuaries. The tiger, protected since 1973, is the national animal and its numbers are slowly increasing.



*The Taj Mahal*

*An iconic image of India*

