

## Haryana

State (pop., 2008 est.: 23,778,000), northwestern India.

The name of Haryana instantly conjures up the image of a State which astonishingly combines both-antiquity and plenty. The Vedic land of Haryana has been a cradle of Indian culture and civilization. Indian traditions regard this region as the matrix of creation of northern altar' where Brahma performed the pristine sacrifice and created the universe. This theory of creation has been confirmed to a large extent by archaeological investigations carried out by Guy E. Pilgrim in 1915, who has established that 15 million years ago, early man lived in the Haryana Shivaliks. The Vamana Purana states that King Kuru ploughed the field of Kurukshetra with a golden ploughshare drawn by the Nandi of Lord Shiva and reclaimed an area of seven Kosas.

Replete with myths, legends and vedic references, Haryana's past is steeped in glory. It was on this soil that saint Ved Vyas wrote Mahabharata. It was here, 5,000 long years ago that Lord Krishna preached the gospel of duty to Arjuna at the onset of the great battle of Mahabharata: "Your right is to do your duty and not to bother about the fruits (Outcome) thereof !" Since then, this philosophy of the supremacy of duty has become a beacon to succeeding generations.

The Mahabharata knows Haryana as the land of plentiful grains (Bahudhanyaka) and immense riches (Bahudhana). Before the Mahabharata war, a battle of ten kings took place in the Kurukshetra region. But it was the Mahabharata fought for the highest values of righteousness which gave to the region world-wide fame because of the profound and sophisticated thought expounded in the holy Bhagavadgita by Lord Krishna recited to the quivering Arjuna.

The region has been the scene of many a war because of its being 'A Gateway to North India'. As years rolled by, successive streams of the Huns, the Turks and the Tughlaqs invaded India and decisive battles were fought on this land. At the end of the 14 century, Tamur led an army through this area to Delhi. Later, the Mughals defeated the Lodhis in the historic battle of Panipat in the year 1526. Another decisive battle was fought in the year 1556 at this very site, establishing the supremacy of the Mughals for centuries to come.

Towards the middle of the 18th century, the Marathas had established their sway over Haryana. The intrusion of Ahmed Shah Durrani into India, culminating Maratha ascendancy and the rapid decline of the Mughal empire, leading ultimately to the advent of the British rule.

Indeed, the history of Haryana is the saga of the struggle of a virile, righteous, forthright and proud people. From ancient times, the people of Haryana have borne the main brunt of invaders and foreign hordes with their known traits of bravery and valour. They have survived many an upheaval, upholding the traditional glory and greatness of the land to this day. The epoch-making events of yore, the martyrdom in the First War of Indian Independence in 1857, the great sacrifices in the freedom struggle, and the display of outstanding valour, unflinching courage, and heroism in recent years are all in keeping with the character of this land of action. Bold in spirit and action, the people of Haryana have formed a bulwark against forces of aggression and anti-nationalism.

Haryana has always remained a rendezvous for diverse races, cultures and faiths. It is on this soil that they met, fused and crystallized into something truly Indian. Hindu Saints and Sikh Gurus have traversed the land of Haryana spreading their message of universal love and brotherhood. Sihi in Faridabad, the birth place of great Hindi poet Surdas, is another nucleus of culture in Haryana while the legend of Lord Krishna is very evident in the lives of the people. The love for cattle and the abundance of milk in the diet of Haryanavis persists to this day which gave to the region world-wide fame.

Haryana emerged as a separate State in the federal galaxy of the Indian Republic on November 1,1966. With just 1.37% of the total geographical area and less than 2% of India's population, Haryana has carved a place of distinction for itself during the past three decades. Whether it is agriculture or industry, canal irrigation or rural electrification, Haryana has marched towards modernity with leaps and bounds. Today, it enjoys the unique distinction in India of having provided electricity, metalled roads and potable drinking water to all its villages within record time. Haryana is among the most prosperous states in India, having one of the highest per-capita income in the country.

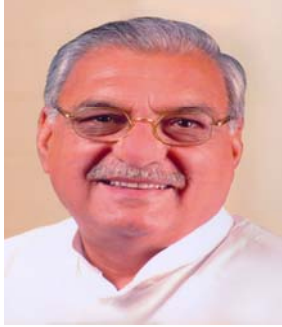
HARYANA AT A GLANCE							
Item	Unit	1967-68	1990-91	1995-96	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>AREA AND POPULATION</b>							
Geographical Area	Sq. Kms.	44222	44212	44212	44212	44212	44212
Population (Estimated mid-financial year)	Lakh	91.10	162.98	184.24	227.07	231.40	235.69
<b>STATE INCOME</b>							
Net State Domestic Product at 1999-2000 Prices	Rs. crores	364*	5719@	21254***	63849	69159	76614
Per Capita Net State Domestic Product at 1999-2000 Prices	Rs.	399*	3509@	11545	31655	33564	36423
Annual Growth Rate of NSDP	Percent	19.7*	10.4@	2.5	8.8	8.3	10.8
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>							
Net Area Sown	Lakh Hect.	35.14	35.75	35.86	35.28	35.66(P)	...
Total Cropped Area	-do-	51.50	59.19	59.74	64.80	65.08(P)	...
Foodgrain Production	Lakh Tonnes	39.70	95.59	101.72	130.57	130.05(P)	...




Area under H.Y.V. of Foodgrains	Lakh Hect.	1.41	27.34	27.02	35.22	...	...
Fertilizer Consumption (Nutrients)	Kg. per Hect.	6.31	99.05	121.16	174.00	162.00(P)	...
Tubewells/ Pumping Sets	No.	38461	497571	549296	611598	618023(P)	...
<b>IRRIGATION</b>							
Net Area Irrigated	Lakh Hect.	11.32	26.00	27.60	29.54	29.36(P)	...
Gross Area Irrigated	-do-	17.80	42.37	46.73	54.34	54.51(P)	...
Net Area Irrigated by Canals	-do-	8.89	13.37	13.75	14.26	13.30(P)	...
<b>ELECTRICITY</b>							
Villages Electrified	No.	1312	All Villages were electrified in November, 1970.				
Electricity Consumed	Lakh KWH	5429	60514	83522	138072	152227	166070
All, Types of Connections	Lakh	3.50	25.14	31.71	38.75	40.01	41.46
Per Capita Consumption	KWH	58	371	454	609	660	700
Consumption for Agricultural Purposes	Percentage	20.4	44.8	46.7	41.2	41.1	40.3
<b>ANIMAL HUSBANDRY</b>							
Veterinary Hospitals/ Dispensaries	No.	196	1174	1405	1487	1672	1672
Inoculations and Vaccination performed	Lakh	12.74	120.2	123.47	249.73	201.97	223.84
<b>ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT</b>							
P.W.D. Metalled Roads	Kms.	6024	21797	22568	22941	23013	23090
Villages connected with Pucca Roads	No.	1500	6677	6678	6761	6756	6756

Fleet Strength of Haryana Roadways	-do-	567	3521	3884	3294	3332	3420
Kilometerage Operated Daily	Lakh Kms.	1.08	9.55	11.40	11.28	11.36	11.13
Passengers Carried Daily	Lakh	1.11	15.16	16.73	11.19	10.99	11.16
<b>INDUSTRY</b>							
Registered Working Factories (as on 31st Dec.)	No.	1200	4843	6498	9164	9282	9636(P)
Workers in Regd. Working Factories (as on 31st Dec.)	Thousands	75.5	269.4	391.4	557.3	574.6	630.6(P)
<b>CO-OPERATION</b>							
Societies of all types	No.	12550	11141	15100	18424	...	...
Total Membership	Lakh	9.58	31.21	39.36	50.59	...	...
Total Loan Advanced	Rs. crores	10.31	321.94	1443.06	...	...	...
<b>HEALTH</b>							
Health Institutions	No.	785	3037	3071	3220	3176	...
(as on 31st Dec.)							
Family Welfare Centre/Clinics (Govt.)	-do-	91	149	149	145	109	...
Beds Available	-do-	5064	10631	11328	11082	9584	...
Per Capita Expenditure on Health	Rs.	4.63	65.90	84.48	185.90	199.40	...
<b>EDUCATION</b>							
<b>Number of Institutions</b>							
(i) Colleges (All types)	No.	54	168	181	273	282	287
(ii) High/Sr. Sec. Schools	-do-	713	2356	2998	5222	5317	5505




(iii) Middle Schools	-do-	747	1399	1499	2269	2168	2544
(iv) Primary Schools (Excluding Pre-Primary)	-do-	4346	5109	5474	11800	12152	6081#
<b>Number of Scholars</b>							
(a) In colleges (General Education only)	Thousand	35	138	121	194	218	218
(b) In Schools	-do-	1216	2884	3128	4244	4152	4369
(c) Teachers in Schools	No.	33717	77495	87587	124691	129981	131802
<b>HARYANA GOVT. EMPLOYEES</b>							
(i) No. of Employees	No.	96412	278040	309795	313775	...	...
(ii) Non-Gazetted	-do-	94404	267246	296570	295937	...	...
(iii) Gazetted	-do-	2008	10794	13225	17838	...	...
(iv) Female	-do-	10657	56307	74756	83258	...	...
(v) Male	-do-	85755	221733	235039	230517	...	...
(vi) Total Wage Bill**	Rs. crore	26.69	612.88	1286.75	3231.88	...	...
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>							
Villages provided with safe drinking water facilities	No.	203	6354	All Covered	All Covered	All Covered	All Covered
*-At 1960-61 Prices		@-At 1980-81 Prices		R-Revised Estimates			
**-On Basic Pay, Dearness Allowance and Interim Relief only .		...-Not Available.		P-Provisional Estimates			
***- At 1993-94 Prices		#-Only Independent Primary Schools.					
Q-Quick Estimates							

**HARYANA GOVERNMENT  
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT  
CABINET SECRETARIAT**

Sr. No.	Name	Residence H.No./Sec and Phone No.	Departments	
1.	Sh. Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Chief Minister  4th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh  Phone No: 2749396  2749409  EPBAX Ext. 2401, 2402	Kothi No. 1, Sector - 3 Chandigarh.  2749394 2749395	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Administration of Justice</li> <li>2. Architecture</li> <li>3. Development &amp; Panchayats</li> <li>4. General Administration &amp; Administrative Reforms</li> <li>5. Home</li> <li>6. Jails</li> <li>7. Public Relations &amp; Cultural Affairs</li> <li>8. Personnel &amp; Training</li> <li>9. Raj Bhawan Affairs</li> <li>10. Town &amp; Country Planning and Urban Estates</li> <li>11. Excise &amp; Taxation</li> <li>12. Elections</li> <li>13. Revenue &amp; Disaster Management</li> <li>14. Technical Education &amp; Industrial Training</li> <li>15. Mines &amp; Geology</li> <li>16. Sports &amp; Youth Affairs</li> <li>17. Housing</li> <li>18. Archeology &amp; Museums</li> </ol>	

			<p>19. Archives 20. Law &amp; Legislative</p> <p>and any other department not specifically allotted to any Minister</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p>Capt. Ajay Singh</p> <p>Room no. 34, 8th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh Phone No: 2740010 EPBAX Ext. 2834</p>	75/7 2790777	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finance and Institutional Finance &amp; Credit Control</li> <li>2. Planning</li> <li>3. Irrigation</li> <li>4. Forests</li> <li>5. Environment</li> </ol>	
<b>3</b>	<p>Sh. Randeep Singh Surjewala</p> <p>Room No. 40, 5th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh Phone No: 2740212 EPBAX Ext. 2540</p>	48/2 2741280	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public Health Engineering</li> <li>2. Parliamentary Affairs</li> <li>3. Electronics &amp; Information Technology</li> <li>4. Science &amp; Technology</li> <li>5. PWD (B&amp;R)</li> </ol>	
<b>4</b>	<p>Sh. Mahendar Partap Singh</p> <p>Room No. 49, 8th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt.,</p>	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Power</li> <li>2. Renewable Energy</li> <li>3. Labour &amp; Employment</li> <li>4. Food &amp; Supplies</li> <li>5. Urban Local Bodies</li> <li>6. Industries &amp;</li> </ol>	

	Chandigarh		Commerce	
5	Sh. Om Parkash Jain  Room No. 31, 8th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Transport</li> <li>2. Tourism</li> <li>3. Civil Aviation</li> <li>4. Hospitality</li> </ol>	
.6	Sh. Paramvir Singh  Room No. 43-A, 8th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agriculture</li> <li>2. Animal Husbandry &amp; Dairying</li> <li>3. Fisheries</li> <li>4. Cooperation</li> </ol>	
7	Smt. Geeta Bhukkal  Room No. 42, 6th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Education &amp; Languages</li> <li>2. Social Justice &amp; Empowerment</li> <li>3. Women &amp; Child Development</li> <li>4. Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes</li> <li>5. Health</li> <li>6. Printing &amp; Stationery</li> </ol>	

<b>Minister Of State</b>				
<b>1.</b>	<p>Pt. Shiv Charan Lal Sharma</p> <p>Room No. 40-B, 6th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh</p>	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revenue &amp; Disaster Management (Attached with CM)</li> <li>2. Consolidation (Independent Charge)</li> <li>3. Rehabilitation (Independent Charge)</li> </ol>	
<b>2.</b>	<p>Sh. Gopal Kanda</p> <p>Room No. 32, 8th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh</p>	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Home (Attached with CM)</li> <li>2. Sports &amp; Youth Affairs (Attached with CM)</li> <li>3. Industries &amp; Commerce (Attached with Industries Minister)</li> </ol>	
<b>3.</b>	<p>Sh. Sukhbeer</p> <p>Room No. 47, 8th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh</p>	-	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agriculture (Attached with Agriculture Minister)</li> <li>2. Cooperation (Attached with Cooperation Minister)</li> </ol>	

**CHIEF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY**

	<p><b>Smt. Anita Yadav</b></p> <p><b>1. Room No. 44, 8th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh</b></p>		
	<p><b>Sh. Rao Dan Singh</b></p> <p><b>2 Room No. 26, 8th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh</b></p>		
	<p><b>Sh. Dharambir Singh</b></p> <p><b>3 Room No. 45, 8th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh</b></p>		
	<p><b>Sh. Jaivir Balmiki</b></p> <p><b>4 Room No. 52, 8th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh</b></p>		

**5. Sh. Jaleb Khan**

## Room No. 47, 6th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh

6	<p><b>Sh. Prehlad Singh Gillakhera</b></p> <p><b>Room No. 30, 9th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh</b></p>	-	-	
7	<p><b>Miss. Sharda Rathore</b></p> <p><b>Room No. 48, 7th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh</b> Phone No: 2740311 EPBAX Ext. 2748</p>	-	-	
8	<p><b>Sh. Ram Kishan Fouji</b></p> <p><b>Room No. 34, 9th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh</b> Phone No: 2740669 EPBAX Ext. 2934</p>	-	-	
9	<p><b>Sh. Sultan Singh</b></p> <p><b>Room No. 43, 7th Floor, Haryana Civil Sectt., Chandigarh</b></p>	-	-	

It is bordered by the states of Rajasthan, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, by the union territory and city of Chandigarh, and by the Delhi national capital territory and occupies an area of 17,070 sq mi (44,212 sq km). The city of Chandigarh is the joint administrative capital of Haryana and Punjab. The region is the legendary birthplace of Hinduism, and its festivals attract many pilgrims. Most of Haryana lies on the flat Indo-Gangetic Plain, an area that has experienced waves of migration since the time of Alexander the Great. It came under the control of the British East India Company in 1803, became a part of Punjab in 1858, and became a separate state in 1966. Its economy is mainly agricultural.

This state is in north-central India. It is bounded on the northwest by the state of Punjab and the union territory of Chandigarh, on the north and northeast by the states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, on the east by the state of Uttar Pradesh and the union territory of Delhi, and on the south and southwest by the state of Rajasthan. The city of Chandigarh, within the Chandigarh union territory, serves as the capital of not only that territory but also of the states of Haryana and Punjab.

Haryana was constituted on Nov. 1, 1966, as a result of the partition of the former state of Punjab into two separate states—Punjabi-speaking Punjab and Hindi-speaking Haryana. Although the reorganization followed demands made by the Sikh community for a Punjabi *suba* (Punjabi-speaking province), it also substantially met the aspirations of people in the Hindi-speaking region of Punjab for a Vishal Haryana (Greater Haryana). The name Haryana, from Hari (the Hindu god Vishnu) and *aryana* (home), means “The Abode of God.” Area 17,070 square miles (44,212 square km). Pop. (2008 est.) 23,778,000.

### **Land**

Haryana has two major physiographic regions: the flat alluvial plain covering most of the state and, in the northeast, a strip of the highly dissected Siwali (Shiwalik) Range (including the narrow foothill zone). Remnants of the Aravalli Range, which stretches from southwestern Rajasthan to Delhi, are evident in parts of southern Haryana.

The alluvial plain lies at an elevation of 700 to 900 feet (210 to 270 metres) and is drained by only one perennial river, the Yamuna, located on the state’s eastern border. Many seasonal streams flowing from the Siwalik Range pass through the area, however. The most notable of these is the Ghaggar (near the state’s northern boundary), which once flowed far enough to join the Indus River, in what is now Pakistan.

### **Soils**

The soils of Haryana are generally deep and fertile. There are some exceptions, however, including the eroded lands of the hilly northeast and the sandy areas of the southwest that fringe the Thar (Great Indian) Desert of Rajasthan. Most of the state’s land is arable, but much requires irrigation.

## Climate

The climate of Haryana is hot in the summer and markedly cold in winter; maximum temperatures in May and June may exceed 110 °F (43 °C), and in January, the coldest month, low temperatures may drop below the freezing point.

Most of the state experiences arid to semiarid conditions; only in the northeast are conditions relatively humid. Precipitation averages about 18 inches (450 mm) annually, most falling between July and September. Although the state has a system of canal irrigation and tube wells, there are chronic drought-prone areas, particularly in the southern and southwestern regions. By contrast, the areas surrounding tributaries of the Yamuna and the Ghaggar are subject to occasional floods.

## Plant and animal life

Little natural vegetation remains in Haryana. Eucalyptus trees are planted along the highways and in wastelands. *Shisham* (*Dalbergia sissoo*) trees grow along the roads and canals in the northern half of the state, while small, spiny *kikar* (*Acacia arabica*) trees and scrub are found in southern and southwestern Haryana.

Haryana is home to a variety of mammals. Larger species, including leopards, jackals, wild boars, and several types of deer, among others, are generally limited to the hilly regions of the northeast and the far south. Small mammals, such as bats, squirrels, mice, rats, and gerbils, are common in the plains. Ducks and teals of various sorts are found near the rivers. Pigeons and doves are common in the agricultural areas, as are small, colourful birds such as parakeets, buntings, sunbirds, bulbuls, and kingfishers. Several species of snakes are found in the state; among these are pythons, boas, and rat snakes, as well as poisonous kraits and vipers. Other reptiles, including various lizards, frogs, and tortoises, also inhabit Haryana.

## Population composition

Hindus constitute the great majority of Haryana's population. Sikhs and Muslims each form a small but significant minority; there is also a tiny community of Christians. Most of the state's Sikh population is located in the northeast and northwest, while Muslims are concentrated in the southeastern districts adjoining Delhi. Jats (members of the peasant caste) form the backbone of Haryana's agricultural economy. They also are prominent in India's armed forces.

## Settlement patterns

Roughly three-fourths of Haryana's population remained rural in the early 21st century; however, cities have continued to grow rapidly as commercial, industrial, and agricultural marketing centres. The state's largest cities include Faridabad, Rohtak, Panipat, Hisar, Sonipat, and Karnal. With the exceptions of Rohtak, which is in central Haryana, and Hisar, which is in the northwest, most of the major urban centres lie in the eastern part of the state.

## **Agriculture**

An agriculturally prosperous state, Haryana contributes a large amount of wheat and rice to the Central Pool (a national repository system of surplus food grain). In addition, the state produces significant quantities of cotton, rape and mustard seed, pearl millet, chickpeas, sugarcane, sorghum, corn (maize), and potatoes. Dairy cattle, buffaloes, and bullocks, which are used for plowing the land and as draft animals, are prominent in the northeastern region.

Haryana's agricultural productivity is largely attributable to the so-called Green Revolution, an international movement launched in the 1960s to diminish world hunger. As a result of this movement, large-scale investments have been made in irrigation, fertilizers, and high-quality seeds. In the early 21st century, nearly two-fifths of the state's workforce was employed in agriculture.

## **Manufacturing**

Haryana has made rapid strides in the development of agriculture-based manufacturing. Among the most important of such industries are cotton and sugar processing and the production of farm machinery. Haryana also manufactures chemicals as well as a great variety of consumer goods, most notably bicycles.

## **Transportation**

Haryana has long been well connected to surrounding states and to the rest of India. A number of major highways and railway lines—including the historic Grand Trunk Road and the main line of the Northern Railway—pass through the state to converge on Delhi. State-owned bus service operates between most of Haryana's larger towns and cities. The state is served by a domestic airport in Chandigarh.

## **Constitutional framework**

The governmental structure of Haryana, like that of most Indian states, is defined by the national constitution of 1950. The governor, appointed by the president of India, is the head of the state. The Council of Ministers, which is led by a chief minister and is accountable to the state's Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha), assists and advises the governor. Haryana's legislature is a unicameral body; members are normally elected to a five-year term. The state has a common High Court with Punjab.

Haryana comprises four divisions, each of which consists of a number of districts. Divisional commissioners oversee the divisions, while each district is headed by a deputy commissioner. The council (*panchayat*) system of self-government operates at the village level.

## **Health and welfare**

A network of district and subdivisional hospitals and primary health centres provides health and medical services throughout Haryana. Since the early 1990s all villages in the state have had

access to safe drinking water. The state government provides loans and grants to members of traditionally disadvantaged communities for agricultural, industrial, and business activities.

### **Education**

Education has been given a high priority in the state's development program, and both the government and private organizations have made a significant contribution to the promotion of education at all levels. However, while thousands of primary and secondary schools have ensured that basic education is available throughout the state, much of the population—especially rural women—remained unable to read in the early 21st century. In an effort to reverse this tendency, the state has continued to provide assistance to students from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue education of all sorts.

Several universities and hundreds of smaller colleges offer postsecondary education in or near Haryana's larger towns and cities. Among the state's most prominent tertiary institutions are the National Dairy Research Institute (1923) at Karnal and Kurukshetra University (1956) and the National Institute of Technology (1963), both at Kurukshetra, in the northeastern region; Maharshi Dayanand University (1976) at Rohtak, in central Haryana; and Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University (1970; including a renowned college of veterinary sciences) and Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology (1995), both at Hisar, in the northwest. Of the smaller colleges, most provide general education, and many are exclusively for women.

### **Cultural life**

Haryana's cultural life reflects both the seasonal rhythm of its agricultural economy and a treasure of traditions and legends with roots in ancient India. The boisterous spring festival of Holi is celebrated by people showering coloured powder (or coloured powder mixed with water) on each other, irrespective of age or social status. Janmashami, the birthday of Krishna (an incarnation of the god Vishnu), is of special religious importance in Haryana because it was on a battlefield at Kurukshetra that Krishna is said to have delivered to the warrior Arjuna the teachings contained in the *Bhagavadgita* (a part of the epic known as the *Mahabharata*). Festivals in honour of other deities and saints are also an important element of the state's cultural life, as are cattle fairs, which are held at a number of locations.

Many prominent pilgrimage sites are located in Haryana. The solar eclipse bathing festival at Kurukshetra invariably attracts hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from various parts of India. Pehowa, in north-central Haryana, is an important pilgrimage centre as well. Situated on the bank of the sacred Sarasvati River (identified with Sarasvati, a Hindu goddess of learning and the arts), it is considered a premier place for performing propitiatory rites for ancestors (*shraddha*). Rites to ensure the salvation of the souls of those who died unnatural deaths or who died in bed are also performed at Pehowa.

Haryana's traditional family homes, called *haveli*, are known for their unique architectural features, especially their gates and podiums. The elaborate gates of these homes ultimately impart a medieval—and aesthetically pleasing—character to Haryana's alleys, while the

buildings themselves have richly decorated podiums that are used for various social and religious functions. These podiums indicate the social status of the owner of the *haveli*.

### **History**

The Vedas, the most ancient manuscripts of the Vedic religion, stem from the area that is now known as Haryana. These Sanskrit documents were written by the Aryans, who descended into the region from the north between 2000 and 1500 bce. Haryana is also considered to be the birthplace of Hinduism, which began to take discernible shape by the 2nd century bce and had developed two distinct branches by the 4th century ce.

Lying across the route of overland incursion into India, Haryana has experienced many waves of migration over the millennia; a notable invasion was led by Alexander the Great in 326 bce. The area also has been the site of numerous decisive battles of Indian history. Among the most significant of these conflicts were the Battles of Panipat, which occurred in 1526, when the Mughal leader Bābur defeated Ibrāhīm Lodī and established Mughal rule in India; in 1556, when Afghan forces were defeated by the army of the Mughal emperor Akbar; and in 1761, when Aḡmad Shah ḤAbdāli decisively defeated the Marathas, paving the way for British control in India. Also important was the Battle of Karnal, in 1739, when Nāder Shah of Persia dealt a blow to the crumbling Mughal Empire.

The area included in the present state of Haryana was ceded to the British East India Company in 1803. In 1832 it was transferred to the then North-Western Provinces of British India, and in 1858 Haryana became a part of Punjab. The union between Haryana and Punjab was awkward, however, largely because of religious and linguistic differences between the two regions: Punjabi-speaking Sikhs of Punjab vis-à-vis Hindi-speaking Hindus of Haryana. By the first decades of the 20th century, agitation for a separate state of Haryana was well under way, led most notably by Lala Lajpat Raia and Asaf Ali, both prominent figures in the Indian national movement, as well as by Neki Ram Sharma, who headed a committee to cultivate the concept of an autonomous state.

Haryana remained part of Punjab after the partition of India and Indian independence in 1947, but the demand for separate states—supported by both Hindus and Sikhs—continued, undiminished. Indeed, the movement gained momentum, reaching its fullest intensity in the early 1960s. Finally, with the passage of the Punjab Reorganization Act (and in accordance with the earlier recommendations of the States Reorganization Commission), Haryana was separated from Punjab in 1966 to become the 17th state of India.

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