

Uttar Pradesh

State (pop., 2008 est.: 190,891,000), north-central India.

The history of the State of Uttar Pradesh is very ancient and interesting. It is recognised in the later Vedic Age as Brahmarsa Desha or Madhya Desha. Many great sages of the Vedic times like Bharadwaja, Gautam, Yagyavalkya, Vasishta, Vishwamitra and Valmiki flourished in this state. Several sacred books of the Aryans were also composed here. Two great epics of India, **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata**, appear to have been inspired by Uttar Pradesh.

In the sixth century B.C., Uttar Pradesh was associated with two new religions - Jainism and Buddhism. It was at Sarnath that Buddha preached his first sermon and laid the foundations of his order, and it was in Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh, where Buddha breathed his last. Several centres in Uttar Pradesh like Ayodhya, Prayag, Varanasi and Mathura became reputed centres of learning. In the medieval period, Uttar Pradesh passed under Muslim rule and led the way to new synthesis of Hindu and Islamic cultures. Ramananda and his Muslim disciple Kabir, Tulsidas, Surdas and many other intellectuals contributed to the growth of Hindi and other languages.

Uttar Pradesh at A Glance

Area	2,36,286 sq. km.
Population (2001 Census)	16,60,52,859
Male	8,74,66,301
Female	7,85,86,558
Decennial Growth Rate	25.80 per cent
Female literacy	42.98 per cent
Districts	70
Cities	631
Nagar Nigams	11
Members of Vidhan Sabha	404
Members of Vidhan Parishad	100
Fruits	Mango, Guava
Main Industries	Cement, Vegetable oils, Textiles, Cotton yarn, Sugar, Jute, Lock & Scissors, Carpet, Brassware, Glassware & Bangles
Main Folklores	Kajari, Chaiti, Alha, Puran Bhagat, Dhola Bhartrihari, Birha, Rasiya
Main Rivers	Ganga, Yamuna, Gomti, Ramganga & Ghaghara
Main Folk Dances	Pandav, Karma, Charkula, Paidanda, Tharu, Dhobiya, Rai and Shera

Tourist & Historical Places

Sarnath(Varanasi), Piprahwa, Kaushambi, Shravasti, Kushinagar, Agra, Lucknow, Chitrakut, Jhansi and Merrut.

Known for ages for its rich ancient traditions, Uttar Pradesh abounds in places of religious importance. There are also a large number of places which cannot be only called places of pilgrimage but which have great importance from historical and tourist point of view also. The State is specially known for its cultural centers.

Tourism Places

Western UP: Hastinapur (Meerut), Vrindavana (Mathura), Mathura, Garhmukteshwara (Ghaziabad), Agra, Fatehpur Sikri (Agra), Peeran Kaliyar (Sahranpur), Golagokarannath (Kheri), Sankissa, Kannauj, Kampil (Farrukhabad), Soron (Etah), Naimisharanya, Chakratirtha (Sitapur), Shukratal (Muzaffaranagar), Bithur (Kanpur), Lucknow, Deva Sharif (Barabanki).



Eastern UP: Gorakhnath Temple (Gorakhpur), Sarnath (Varanasi), Saidpur Bhitri (Ghazipur), Shringverpur (Allahabad), Kaushambi, Chunar, Vindhyachala (Mirzapur), Devipatan (Gonda), Magahar (Basti), Bhrigu Temple (Ballia), Shravasti, Ayodhya (Faizabad), Kushinagar, Chitrakut, Jaunpur etc



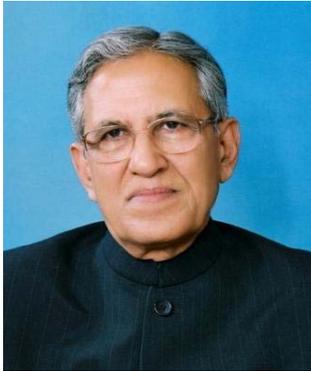
Keeping ample and abundant prospects of tourism in the State in view, it has been declared an industry by the Government for providing basic tourist facilities to the people, developing tourist spots and earning foreign exchange.



Budhist Circuit : This includes Sarnath, Piprahwa, Samhita, Shrawasti and Kaushambi.



Bundelkhand Region : This includes all the tourist spots of the Jhansi Division.



His Excellency - Shri B.L. Joshi The Governor of Uttar Pradesh



Ms. MAYAWATI Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

It is bordered by Nepal; the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Uttarakhand; and Delhi national capital territory. Uttar Pradesh covers an area of 93,933 sq mi (243,286 sq km). Its capital is Lucknow. The state is the most populous in the country. It lies largely in the plains formed by the Ganges and Yamuna rivers. The region was the setting of two great Sanskrit epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, and was the scene of the rise of Buddhism after the 6th century bce. It was ruled by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka in the mid-3rd century bce, the Gupta dynasty in the 4th–6th centuries ce, and King Harsha in 606–647. The Mughals gained control in the 16th century, at which time the city of Agra became a chief centre. The British arrived in the late 18th century; by the 1830s they held sway and organized the region as the North-Western Provinces (later renamed the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh; eventually shortened to the United Provinces). The area was the main scene of the Indian Mutiny of 1857–58. Following Indian independence in 1947, the United Provinces became the state of Uttar Pradesh. In 2000 the state's northern portion was made into the new state of Uttaranchal (now Uttarakhand). Agriculture is the most important economic sector. Noted tourist meccas are Agra and Varanasi.

It is the most populous state of India. Lying in north-central India, it is bordered by the state of Uttarakhand and the country of Nepal to the north, the state of Bihar to the east, the states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh to the southeast, the state of Madhya Pradesh to the south, and the states of Rajasthan and Haryana and the national capital territory of Delhi to the west. On Jan. 26, 1950, when India became a republic, the state was given its present name, Uttar Pradesh (literally, "Northern State"). Its capital is Lucknow. Area 93,933 square miles (243,286 square km). Pop. (2008 est.) 190,891,000.

Land

The state can be divided into two physiographic regions: the central plains of the Ganges (Ganga) River and its tributaries (part of the Indo-Gangetic Plain) and the southern uplands. The vast majority of Uttar Pradesh lies within the Gangetic Plain, which is composed of alluvial deposits brought down from the Himalayas by the Ganges network. Most of this area is a featureless, though fertile, plain varying in elevation from about 1,000 feet (300 metres) in the northwest to about 190 feet (60 metres) in the extreme east. The southern uplands form part of the highly dissected and rugged Vindhya Range, which rises generally toward the southeast. The elevation of this region rarely exceeds 1,000 feet.

The state is well drained by a number of rivers originating in either the Himalayas to the north or the Vindhya Range to the south. The Ganges and its main tributaries—the Yamuna, the Ramganga, the Gomati, the Ghaghara, and the Gandak—are fed by the perpetual snows of the Himalayas. The Chambal, the Betwa, and the Ken, originating from the Vindhya Range, drain the southwestern part of the state before joining the Yamuna. The Son, also originating in the Vindhya Range, drains the southeastern part of the state and joins the Ganges beyond the state borders (in Bihar).

Soils

Much of the area of Uttar Pradesh is covered by a deep layer of alluvium spread by the slow-moving rivers of the Ganges system. These extremely fertile alluvial soils range from sandy to clayey loam. The soils in the southern part of the state are generally mixed red and black or red-to-yellow.

Climate

The climate of Uttar Pradesh is the tropical monsoon type, with warm weather year-round. Average high temperatures in Lucknow range from about 70 °F (low 20s C) in January to over 100 °F (38 °C) in May and June. High temperatures of around 120 °F (50 °C) have been recorded at Gonda.

Annual rainfall in the state ranges from 40–80 inches (1,000–2,000 mm) in the east to 24–40 inches (600–1,000 mm) in the west. About 90 percent of the rainfall occurs during the southwest monsoon, lasting from about June to September. With most of the rainfall concentrated during this four-month period, floods are a recurring problem and can cause fatalities and heavy damage to crops and property, particularly in the eastern part of the state. Periodic failure of monsoons results in drought conditions.

Plant and animal life

The vegetation of Uttar Pradesh consists mostly of scrub. Forests are generally concentrated in the southern uplands. Animals of the region include tigers, leopards, elephants, wild boars, and crocodiles, as well as pigeons, doves, wild ducks, partridges, peafowls, blue jays, quails, and woodpeckers. Several species, such as lions from the Gangetic Plain, have become extinct. To preserve its wildlife, the state has established several game sanctuaries.

People

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India. In the early 21st century it had an overall population density of more than twice the national average. The Gangetic Plain supports the overwhelming majority of the state's population.

Population composition

Roughly one-fifth of the state's people belong to groups known as Scheduled Castes (formerly called "untouchables"; groups that officially occupy a low position within the caste system). A tiny percentage of the people belong to Scheduled Tribes (a term generally applied to indigenous peoples who fall outside the predominant Indian social hierarchy). The vast majority of the people, including members of all levels of the caste hierarchy, are Hindus. Muslims are the largest religious minority. There also are relatively small groups of Sikhs, Christians, Jains, and Buddhists. Hindi is an official language of the state and the mother tongue of most of the people. Urdu, additionally an official language, is primarily spoken by Muslims. The vernacular Hindustani is widely understood.

Settlement patterns

The majority of the state's population lives in rural areas. The rural settlements are characterized by compact villages in the western part of the state, groupings of hamlets in the eastern part, and a combination of the two in the central part. A traditional village in Uttar Pradesh is a cluster of mud huts with roofs made of thatch (such as straw) or clay tiles and few amenities of modern living. Villages near the cities, however, are likely to have cement-plastered homes, paved roads, and electricity.

Most urban inhabitants live in cities with populations of more than 100,000. Among the largest cities of Uttar Pradesh are Kanpur, Lucknow, Agra, Varanasi, Meerut, and Allahabad. Kanpur, located in the central portion of the state, is the premier industrial city of Uttar Pradesh. Lucknow, the state capital, is about 30 miles (48 km) northeast of Kanpur. Agra, in the western part of the state, is the site of the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum built by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahān (ruled 1628–58) in memory of his wife; it is the most famous tourist attraction in India. Varanasi, the city most sacred to Hindus, is one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities. Meerut, northeast of Delhi, is an important centre of transportation, trade, and industry. Allahabad (on the site of the ancient holy city of Prayag), located at the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamuna River, is another city sacred to Hindus.

Demographic trends

The population of Uttar Pradesh continues to grow at a high rate. Because of this high growth rate and a substantial reduction in infant mortality in the 20th century, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of young adults and children. The sex ratio also has improved; in 2001 there were 898 females per 1,000 males, up from 876 per 1,000 in 1991. Toward the end of the 19th century, dire poverty and the promise of better opportunities forced many people of the region to migrate to distant lands, such as South Africa, Mauritius, Fiji, and the West Indies. In more recent years, migration from Uttar Pradesh has been mainly to other parts of India, particularly to large cities such as Kolkata (Calcutta), Mumbai (Bombay), and Delhi.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the mainstay of the state's economy. The chief crops are rice, wheat, and sugarcane. Since the late 1960s, with the introduction of high-yielding varieties of seed for wheat and rice, greater availability of fertilizers, and increased use of irrigation, the state has become a major producer of food grains in the country. Many of its farmers, however, still suffer from two major constraints: small landholdings and insufficient resources to invest in the technology required for improved production. Livestock and dairy farming often provide a supplementary source of income.

Resources and power

Silica, limestone, and coal are found in considerable quantities in Uttar Pradesh. There also are small reserves of gypsum, magnesite, phosphorite, and bauxite. The national government has supported the development of coal fields in the southeastern area around Mirzapur.

The state often suffers from shortages of power. Installed capacity has greatly increased since Indian independence, but the gap between supply and demand remains wide. Power is generated at the Obra-Rihand complex (in southeastern Uttar Pradesh), one of India's biggest thermal stations; at a number of hydroelectric power plants in various parts of the state; and at a nuclear power station in the western district of Bulandshahr (near Delhi).

Manufacturing

Textiles and sugar refining, both long-standing industries in Uttar Pradesh, employ an important percentage of the state's total factory labour. Other resource-based industries in Uttar Pradesh produce vegetable oil, jute, and cement. The Indian government established a number of large factories that manufacture heavy equipment, machinery, steel, aircraft, telephone and electronics equipment, and fertilizers. The national government has funded an oil refinery at Mathura. The state government has promoted medium- and small-scale industries.

The state's exports include such products as footwear, leather goods, and sporting gear. Handicrafts constitute a significant portion of exports as well. Carpets from Bhadohi and Mirzapur, for example, are prized worldwide. Among other local specialties are the silks and brocades of Varanasi, ornamental brass ware from Moradabad, chikan embroidery from Lucknow, ebony work from Nagina, glassware from Firozabad, and carved woodwork from Saharanpur.

Tourism

Tourism in the state is of growing economic importance. Many visitors flock to Hindu centres such as Varanasi, Allahabad, Ayodhya, and the Mathura-Vrindavan area; Buddhist centres such as Sarnath, Kasia (site of Kushinagara, where the Buddha died), and Shravasti; and other historic places such as Agra, Lucknow, and Kannauj.

Transportation

The state's cities and towns are connected by a vast network of roads, including a number of national highways, and railways. Major cities in Uttar Pradesh are connected by air to Delhi and other large cities

of India. The three inland waterways of the Ganges, Yamuna, and Ghaghara rivers also are an integral part of the state's transportation system.

Constitutional framework

The government of Uttar Pradesh, like that of most other states in India, is determined by the national constitution of 1950 and consists of executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The executive branch comprises the governor and the Council of Ministers (headed by a chief minister), which aids and advises the governor. The governor is appointed by the president of India; the governor in turn appoints the chief minister and the other ministers. The Council of Ministers is responsible to the legislature. The legislature consists of two houses: the upper house, the Legislative Council (Vidhan Parishad), which comprises both elected and appointed members; and the lower house, the Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha), whose members are popularly elected. The judiciary includes the High Court, headed by a chief justice, and a subordinate justice system. Below the state level, dozens of district governments are responsible for local administration.

Health and welfare

Health care in the state is provided by a number of hospitals and clinics, as well as by private practitioners of allopathic (Western), homeopathic, Ayurvedic (traditional Hindu), and Unanī (traditional Muslim) medicine. Since independence many national and state welfare programs have provided improved opportunities in education, employment, and political representation to members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Education

Beginning in the 1950s, both the number of schools in Uttar Pradesh and the number of students enrolled at all levels grew dramatically. In 1951 only about 12 percent of the population was literate; by 2001 the literacy rate had risen to about 57 percent, a figure close to the national rate. Hindi is the medium of instruction at the primary-school level (English is used at some private schools), Hindi and English are required courses for high school students, and English is generally the medium of instruction at the university level.

The state has more than a dozen universities, hundreds of affiliated colleges, and several medical colleges. Some of the oldest universities in Uttar Pradesh are Aligarh Muslim University (1875), founded by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan; Banaras Hindu University (1916), founded by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya; and the University of Lucknow (1921). Among the state's many institutes for specialized studies and research are the Indian Institute of Technology at Kanpur (1959), the Indian Institute of Management at Lucknow (1984), the Indian Institute of Information Technology at Allahabad (1999), and several polytechnic schools, engineering institutes, and industrial training institutes.

The arts

Uttar Pradesh is the springhead of the ancient civilization of the Hindus. A substantial portion of the subcontinent's ancient Vedic literature had its origin in the area's many hermitages, as did the great Indian epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (which includes the Bhagavadgita [Sanskrit: "Song of the Lord"]). Sculptures and architecture of the Buddhist-Hindu period (c. 600 bce to c. 1200 ce) have

contributed greatly to the Indian cultural heritage. Since 1947 the emblem of the government of India has been based on the four-lion capital of a pillar (preserved in a museum at Sarnath, near Varanasi) left by the 3rd-century-bce Mauryan emperor Ashoka.

Architecture, painting, music, and dance all flourished during the Mughal period (16th–18th centuries). Mughal architecture reached its height under the emperor Shah Jahān, who built the spectacular Taj Mahal at Agra. Paintings of the period were generally portraits or illustrations of religious and historic texts. Much of the musical tradition in Uttar Pradesh also was developed during the period. The type of music performed by Tansen and Baiju Bawra, contemporaries of the Mughal emperor Akbar, is still well known in the state and throughout India. The sitar (a stringed instrument of the lute family) and the tabla (consisting of two small drums)—perhaps the two most popular instruments of Indian music—were developed in the region during this period. The kathak classical dance style, which originated in the 18th century as a devotional dance in the temples of Vrindavan and Mathura, is the most popular form of classical dance in northern India.

As the birthplace of Hindi, an official language of the state and the country, Uttar Pradesh is an important centre of Hindi literature. Although various vernacular forms of the language developed over the centuries, literary Hindi (like Urdu) did not take its present form until the 19th century. Bhartendu Harishchandra (1850–85) of Varanasi was one of the first major writers to use this form of Hindi as a literary medium.

Cultural institutions

Among the prominent art museums in Uttar Pradesh are the State Museum at Lucknow; the Archaeological Museum at Mathura; the Sarnath Museum, specializing in Buddhist antiquities; the Bharat Kala Bhavan, a museum of art and archaeology at Varanasi; and the Municipal Museum at Allahabad. Colleges of arts and Hindustani music at Lucknow and the Prayag Sangeet Samiti, a music institute based in Allahabad, have contributed immensely to the development of the fine arts and of classical music in the country. Such organizations as the Nagri Pracharni Sabha, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, and the Hindustani Academy have been instrumental in the development of Hindi literature. In addition, the Uttar Pradesh Urdu Academy was set up by the state government for the preservation and enrichment of Urdu literature.

Festivals and holidays

Most of the festivals and holidays in the state are tied to the Hindu calendar. They include Dussehra, celebrating the victory of Rama over Ravana, the symbol of evil on earth; Diwali, a festival of lights devoted to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth; Shivaratri, a day devoted to the worship of the god Shiva; Holi, a colourful spring festival; and Janmashtami, celebrating the birthday of the god Krishna. Important religious occasions for Muslims in Uttar Pradesh include mawliids, birthdays of holy figures; Muḥarram, commemorating the martyrdom of the hero al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿĀli; Ramadan, a month devoted to fasting; and the canonical festivals of ʿĪd al-Fiṭr and ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā. Buddha Purnima (also known as Wesak or Vesak), commemorating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death; Mahavira Jayanti, marking the birthday of the saviour Mahavira; Guru Nanak's birthday; and Christmas are important to Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, and Christians, respectively, but are celebrated by people of all faiths. More than 2,000 fairs take place annually in the state. The largest religious festival of India, the Kumbh Mela, held at Allahabad every 12 years, attracts millions of people.

History

The history of Uttar Pradesh can be divided into five periods: (1) prehistory and mythology (up to c. 600 bce), (2) the Buddhist-Hindu period (c. 600 bce to c. 1200 ce), (3) the Muslim period (c. 1200 to c. 1775), (4) the British period (c. 1775 to 1947), and (5) the postindependence period (1947 to the present). Because of its position in the heart of the Indo-Gangetic Plain, it has often been the focal point in the history of all of northern India.

Prehistory and mythology

Archaeology has shed new light on the prehistoric civilization of what is now Uttar Pradesh. The remains of several human skeletons found in the area of Partapgarh (Pratapgarh) have been dated to about 10,000 bce. Other knowledge of the area prior to the 7th century bce has been gained largely through Vedic literature (of the ancient Indian Vedic religion) and the two great Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which describe the Gangetic Plain within Uttar Pradesh. The setting of the Mahabharata is the area around Hastinapur, in the western part of the present-day state, while the Ramayana is set in and around Ayodhya, the birthplace of Rama (an incarnation of the god Vishnu and the hero of the story). Another fountainhead of mythology in the state is the area around the holy cities of Mathura, where Krishna (another incarnation of Vishnu) was born, and nearby Vrindavan.

The Buddhist-Hindu period

A systematic history of India and the area of Uttar Pradesh dates to the end of the 7th century bce, when 16 mahajanapadas (great states) in northern India were contending for supremacy. Of these, seven fell entirely within the present-day boundaries of Uttar Pradesh. From the 5th century bce to the 6th century ce, the region was mostly under the control of powers centred outside the modern boundaries of the state, first at Magadha in present-day Bihar and later at Ujjain in present-day Madhya Pradesh. Among the great kings who ruled over the region were Chandragupta (reigned c. 321–297 bce) and Ashoka (3rd century bce), both Mauryan emperors, as well as Samudra Gupta (4th century ce) and Chandra Gupta II (reigned c. 380–415). A later famous ruler, Harsha (reigned c. 606–647), was based within the state's present borders. From his capital at Kanyakubja (present-day Kannauj), he was able to control the whole of Uttar Pradesh as well as parts of what are now Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan.

Meanwhile, by the 6th century bce, the ancient Vedic religion had largely evolved into Brahmanism, which in turn would evolve into classical Hinduism by the 2nd century bce. According to tradition, it was during this period—likely sometime between the 6th and 4th centuries bce—that the Buddha preached his first sermon at Sarnath, near Varanasi. The religion he founded, Buddhism, spread not only across India but also to many distant lands, such as China and Japan. The Buddha is said to have attained parinirvana (complete nirvana) at Kushinagara (now in Kasia, in eastern Uttar Pradesh).

At first, Buddhist and Brahmanic or Hindu culture flourished side by side. Sculptures and architecture replete with Buddhist symbolism reached their zenith during the 3rd-century-bce reign of Ashoka. Hindu art saw its greatest development during the period of rule by the Gupta dynasty (4th to 6th centuries ce). After the death of Harsha, about 647, there was a gradual downfall of Buddhism accompanied by a revival of Hinduism. The chief architect of this revival, the philosopher Shankara, born in southern India,

visited Varanasi, traveled through the plains of Uttar Pradesh, and is thought to have established the famous temple at Badrinath (now in Uttarakhand) in the Himalayas.

The Muslim period

Although Muslim incursions into the area occurred as early as 1000–30 ce, Muslim rule over northern India was not established until the last decade of the 12th century, when Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Sām (Muḥammad Ghūrī) defeated the Gahadavalas (who occupied much of Uttar Pradesh) and other competing dynasties. For nearly 600 years Uttar Pradesh, like much of India, was ruled by one Muslim dynasty or another, each centred in or near Delhi.

In 1526 Bābur—a descendant of the conquerors Genghis Khan and Timur—defeated Sultan Ibrāhīm Lodī of Delhi and laid the foundation of the most successful of the Muslim dynasties, the Mughals, whose empire, centred in what is now Uttar Pradesh, dominated the subcontinent for more than 200 years. The greatest extent of the empire came under Akbar (reigned 1556–1605), who constructed a grand new capital, Fatehpur Sikri, near Agra. His grandson, Shah Jahān (reigned 1628–58), built at Agra one of the world’s greatest architectural achievements, the Taj Mahal (a mausoleum constructed in memory of his favourite wife, who died in childbirth). Shah Jahān also built several other architecturally important buildings in Agra as well as in Delhi.

The Mughal Empire promoted the development of a new composite culture. Akbar, its greatest exponent, employed in his court men preeminent in architecture, literature, painting, and music, irrespective of their caste or creed. Several new sects seeking a common ground between Hinduism and Islam, as well as between the various castes of India, developed during this period. Ramananda (c. 1400–70), a Brahman (Hindu priest), founded a bhakti (devotional) sect that claimed that salvation was not dependent on one’s sex or caste; Kabīr (1440–1518) preached the essential unity of all religions. The downfall of the Mughals in the 18th century led to the shifting of the centre of this composite culture from Delhi to Lucknow, the seat of the nawab (ruler) of Oudh (now Ayodhya), where art, literature, music, and poetry flourished in an atmosphere of communal harmony.

British period

The area of present-day Uttar Pradesh was gradually acquired by the East India Company (a British trading company) over a period of about 75 years, from the last quarter of the 18th century to the mid-19th century. Territories wrested from a number of powers in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent—the nawabs, the Sindhias of Gwalior (now in Madhya Pradesh), and the Gurkhas of Nepal—were first placed within the British province known as the Bengal Presidency, but in 1833 they were separated to form the North-Western Provinces (initially called the Agra Presidency). The kingdom of Oudh, annexed by the company in 1856, was united with the North-Western Provinces in 1877. The resulting administrative unit had borders almost identical to those of the future state of Uttar Pradesh. In 1902 the name was changed to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (later shortened to the United Provinces).

The Indian Mutiny, a widespread revolt against the East India Company in 1857–58, was centred in the United Provinces. Sparked by a mutiny of soldiers at Meerut on May 10, 1857, the revolt spread within months to more than 25 cities. In 1858, with the revolt virtually crushed, administration of the United

Provinces and the rest of British India were transferred from the East India Company to the British crown.

With the rise of Indian nationalism beginning in the late 1880s, the United Provinces stood at the forefront of the movement for independence. It gave India many of the most important nationalist political leaders, such as Motilal Nehru, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Purushottam Das Tandon. Mahatma Gandhi's noncooperation movement of 1920–22, designed to shake the foundations of the British Empire in India, spread throughout the United Provinces, but mob violence in the village of Chauri Chaura (in the eastern part of the provinces) caused Gandhi to suspend the movement. The United Provinces was also a centre of Muslim League politics.

Throughout the British period, there was extensive development of canals, railways, and other means of communication within the provinces. The British also promoted the growth of modern education, and a number of colleges and universities were established.

Uttar Pradesh since Indian independence

In 1947 the United Provinces became one of the administrative units of the newly independent Dominion of India. Two years later the autonomous states of Tehri-Garhwal (now in Uttarakhand), Rampur, and Varanasi, all within its borders, were incorporated into the United Provinces. With the adoption of a new Indian constitution in 1950, the United Provinces were renamed Uttar Pradesh and became a constituent state of the Republic of India.

Since independence, the state has maintained a dominant role within India. It has given the country several prime ministers, including Jawaharlal Nehru; Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi; and Atal Bihari Vajpayee of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Prominent leaders of national opposition (minority) parties, such as Acharya Narendra Dev, one of the founders of the Praja Socialist Party, also have hailed from Uttar Pradesh. At the state level, politics have tended to be fractious.

Soon after the formation of Uttar Pradesh, unrest developed in the Himalayan regions of the state. The people there felt that the state's very large population and physical dimensions made it impossible for the government, seated in Lucknow, to look after their interests. Widespread unemployment and poverty and an inadequate infrastructure contributed to their discontent. Their demand for a separate state gained momentum in the 1990s. Agitation was heightened by a violent incident in Muzaffarnagar on Oct. 2, 1994, when police fired at pro-statehood demonstrators; a number of people were killed. Finally, in November 2000 the new state of Uttaranchal (renamed Uttarakhand in 2007) was carved out of the northwestern part of Uttar Pradesh.
