

Uttarakhand

It was formerly called as **Uttaranchal**

It is located in the northwestern part of the country. It is bordered to the northwest by the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, to the northeast by the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, to the southeast by Nepal, to the south and southwest by the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, and to the west by a tiny segment of the Indian state of Haryana. Its capital is the northwestern city of Dehra Dun.

On Nov. 9, 2000, the state of Uttaranchal—the 27th state of India—was carved out of Uttar Pradesh; in January 2007 the new state changed its name to Uttarakhand, meaning “northern region,” which was the traditional name for the area. Area 19,739 square miles (51,125 square km). Pop. (2008 est.) 9,497,000.

Land

Uttarakhand has a highly varied topography, with snow-covered peaks, glaciers, deep canyons, roaring streams, beautiful lakes, and a few patches of dusty plains in the south. Some of the highest mountains in the world are found in Uttarakhand. Most notably, these include Nanda Devi (25,646 feet [7,817 metres]), which is the second highest peak in India, Kamet (25,446 feet [7,756 metres]), and Badrinath (23,420 feet [7,138 metres]).

Uttarakhand can be divided into several physiographic zones, all running parallel to each other from northwest to southeast. The northern zone, popularly known as the Himadri, contains segments of the Zaskar and the Great Himalaya ranges, with elevations ranging roughly from 10,000 to 25,000 feet (3,000 to 7,600 metres). Most of the major peaks are located in this zone. Adjacent to and south of the Great Himalayas is a zone containing the Lesser Himalayas, known popularly as the Himachal, with elevations between about 6,500 and 10,000 feet (2,000 to 3,000 metres); the zone has two linear ranges—the Mussoorie and the Nag Tibba. To the south of the Himachal is a stretch of the Siwalik Range. The entire area containing the Himadri, the Himachal, and the Siwaliks is broadly known as the Kumaun Himalayas. The southern edge of the Siwalik Range merges with a narrow bed of gravel and alluvium known as the Bhabar, which interfaces to the southeast with the marshy terrain known as the Tarai. The combined Siwalik-Bhabar-Tarai area ranges in elevation from 1,000 to 10,000 feet (300 to 3,000 metres). South of the Siwaliks are found flat-floored depressions, known locally as duns, such as the Dehra Dun.

The state is drained by various rivers of the Ganges (Ganga) system. The westernmost watershed is formed by the Yamuna River and its major tributary, the Tons. The land to the east of this basin is drained by the Bhagirathi and the Alaknanda—which join to form the Ganges at the town of Devprayag—and the Mandakini, Pindar, and Dhauliganga, all principal tributaries of the Alaknanda. To the east again are the southward-flowing Ramganga and Kosi rivers, and draining to the southeast in the same region are the Sarju and Goriganga, both of which join the Kali at Uttarakhand’s eastern border with Nepal.

Soils

Uttarakhand has various types of soil, all of which are susceptible to soil erosion. In the north, the soil ranges from gravel (debris from glaciers) to stiff clay. Brown forest soil—often shallow, gravelly, and rich in organic content—is found farther to the south. The Bhabar area is characterized by soils that are coarse-textured, sandy to gravelly, highly porous, and largely infertile. In the extreme southeastern part of the state, the Tarai soils are mostly rich, clayey loams, mixed to varying degrees with fine sand and humus; they are well suited to the cultivation of rice and sugarcane.

Climate

The climate of Uttarakhand is temperate, marked by seasonal variations in temperature but also affected by tropical monsoons. January is the coldest month, with daily high temperatures averaging below freezing in the north and near 70 °F (21 °C) in the southeast. In the north, July is the hottest month, with temperatures typically rising from the mid-40s F (about 7 °C) to about 70 °F daily. In the southeast, May is the warmest month, with daily temperatures normally reaching the low 100s F (about 38 °C) from a low around 80 °F (27 °C). Most of the state's roughly 60 inches (1,500 mm) of annual precipitation is brought by the southwest monsoon, which blows from July through September. Floods and landslides are problems during the rainy season in the lower stretches of the valleys. In the northern parts of the state, 10 to 15 feet (3 to 5 metres) of snowfall is common between December and March.

Plant and animal life

Four major forest types are found in the Uttarakhand, including alpine meadows in the extreme north, temperate forests in the Great Himalayas, tropical deciduous forests in the Lesser Himalayas, and thorn forests in the Siwalik Range and in parts of the Tarai. According to official statistics, more than 60 percent of Uttarakhand is under forest cover; in actuality, however, the coverage is much less. The forests provide not only timber and fuel wood but also extensive grazing land for livestock. Only a small portion of the state's total land area has permanent pastures.

Common tree species of the temperate forests include Himalayan cedar (Deodar cedar), Himalayan (blue) pine, oak, silver fir, spruce, chestnut, elm, poplar, birch, yew, cypress, and rhododendron. Tropical deciduous forests of sal, teak, and shisham—all hardwoods—occur in the submontane tract. Thorn forests of dhak (a type of flowering tree), babul (a type of acacia), and various bushes occur in the south.

Uttarakhand has a rich array of animal life. Tigers, leopards, elephants, wild boars, and sloth bears are among the state's large mammals. Common birds include pigeons, doves, ducks, partridges, peacocks, jays, quail, and woodpeckers. Crocodiles are found in some areas. Lions and rhinoceroses have become extinct in the region. A number of national parks and sanctuaries have been established to preserve Uttarakhand's wildlife.

Population composition

Uttarakhand has a multiethnic population spread across two recognized geocultural regions: the Gahrwal, which corresponds roughly to the northwestern half of the state, and the Kumaun, which spans the southeast. Rajputs (various clans of landowning rulers and their descendants)—including members of the indigenous Garhwali, Gujjar, and Kumauni communities, as well as a number of immigrant peoples—constitute a large portion of the population. Of the total population, nearly one-fifth belongs to the Scheduled Castes (an official designation for those groups that traditionally have occupied a low position within the Indian caste system); these people are collectively called Kols or Doms. Scheduled Tribes (an official category embracing indigenous peoples who fall outside the Indian social system), such as the Raji, who live near the border with Nepal, account for less than 5 percent of the population.

Most of the people of Uttarakhand speak Indo-Aryan languages. Hindi is the official language of the state. Hindustani, which contains words from both Hindi and Urdu, is the principal spoken language. Other languages used in Uttarakhand include Garhwali and Kumauni (both Pahari languages), Punjabi, and Nepali.

More than four-fifths of Uttarakhand's residents are Hindu. Muslims constitute the largest religious minority, accounting for about one-tenth of the population. Smaller communities of Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, and Jains make up most of the remainder of Uttarakhand's people.

Settlement patterns

The sparse population of Uttarakhand is unevenly distributed throughout the state. Most people live in rural settlements, which usually take the form of small linear villages set alongside paths or roads. Typical rural houses have two stories, with part of the lower level used for keeping animals. Most are built from local stone with mud used as mortar. Roofs are generally made of slate tiles or corrugated iron sheets. Although such homes may have few amenities compared with their urban counterparts, the ever-increasing network of paved roads, as well as the availability of electricity and consumer goods, such as radios and televisions, has drawn much of Uttarakhand's rural population into the mainstream of state and national society.

About one-fourth of the total population lives in several dozen urban centres, located primarily in the southern part of the state. Northern and eastern Uttarakhand have experienced a comparatively slow rate of urbanization. With the exception of Dehra Dun and several other cities—including Haridwar, Haldwani, Roorkee, Kashipur, and Rudrapur—most of Uttarakhand's urban centres are actually large towns, with populations of less than 50,000.

Agriculture and forestry

Although roughly three-fifths of the working population of Uttarakhand is engaged in agriculture, less than one-fifth of the total area of Uttarakhand is cultivable. Steep slopes require careful terracing and irrigation, with water drained from the upper levels used to irrigate the lower ones. This method of terrace cultivation allows fields to be sown more than once per year. Wheat is the most widely cultivated crop, followed by rice and various types of millets, which are planted on the drier leeward slopes. Sugarcane is grown extensively in the gently rolling

foothills of the southern region. Other important crops include pulses (legumes) such as peas and chickpeas, oilseeds such as soybeans, peanuts, and mustard seeds, and assorted fruits and vegetables.

Many farmers of Uttarakhand practice animal husbandry. The largest concentration of cattle to support dairy farming is found in the southern foothills. Goats and sheep are more common in the mountainous areas, although some cattle are kept in every village. The search for flourishing grassland has resulted in a tradition of transhumance, whereby livestock are led to graze in the mountain pastures during the warmer months but are transferred to the lower elevations for the winter. Some communities in the Siwalik Range historically have specialized in such seasonal herding.

Forests in Uttarakhand provide timber for construction, fuel wood, and various manufacturing activities, including handicrafts. Reforestation programs sponsored by the state government have moderately increased production, which, in turn, has facilitated development of additional forest-based industries.

Resources and power

Uttarakhand lacks mineral and energy resources sufficient for rapid industrialization. Aside from silica and limestone, which are the only minerals that are found—and mined—in considerable quantities, there are small reserves of gypsum, magnesite, phosphorite, and bauxite.

Perennial rivers fed by the perpetual snowfields of the Great Himalaya and the Zaskar ranges carry tremendous potential for the generation of hydroelectric power. Indeed, many small hydroelectric stations supply a portion of Uttarakhand's energy. The Tehri Dam on the Bhagirathi River, conceived in the mid-20th century and begun in the 1970s, is one of the largest hydroelectric projects in Asia. The project generated considerable controversy, however, and by the end of the first decade of the 21st century, it had yet to be put into operation. Consequently, Uttarakhand has continued to rely on the central pool (a national power storage scheme) to meet its energy needs.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing activities have continued to expand in Uttarakhand; within just a few years of attaining statehood, the contribution of the sector to the state's gross product, at about 25 percent, had exceeded that of agriculture. The government assists agriculture-based and food-processing industries such as sugar milling, as well as the manufacture of wood and paper products, woolen garments, and leather goods. Among Uttarakhand's other notable manufactures are cement, pharmaceuticals, automobiles and other transportation equipment, and electrical products.

Services

The government of Uttarakhand has invested heavily in the services sector, particularly in the development of the information-technology and tourism industries. In the first decade of the 21st century, the sector already accounted for more than half of the state's gross product. The

tourism industry has shown significant growth, as the state's snow-capped peaks, glaciers, lush green river valleys, waterfalls, lakes, flora and fauna, wildlife sanctuaries, and pilgrimage sites attract a large number of domestic and international visitors.

Transportation

Roads of various descriptions connect nearly all towns of Uttarakhand. Although the central and southern portions of the state are served by several national highways, the northern border zones are not connected by official roads at all; rather, an extensive network of mountain trails links the villages with nearby towns. Several railway tracks extend from the plains of Uttar Pradesh into the valleys of southern and eastern Uttarakhand. Major towns served by these railways include Dehra Dun, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Ramnagar, Kathgodam, and Tanakpur. Airports at Dehra Dun and Pantnagar offer domestic service.

Constitutional framework

The structure of Uttarakhand's government, like that of other states of India, is determined by the national constitution of 1950. It is a parliamentary system, consisting of executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The chief executive is the governor, who is appointed by the president of India. The governor is aided and advised by the Council of Ministers, which is led by a chief minister. The Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha) is a unicameral body whose members are elected for a five-year term. The final court in Uttarakhand is the High Court at Nainital, which is headed by a chief justice. Appeals may be made from the High Court to the Supreme Court of India. Below the High Court are district, sessions, civil, and magistrates' courts.

The state is divided into more than one dozen districts, each administered by a district magistrate. Districts are subdivided into smaller units called tehsils, each of which embraces numerous villages and, in some cases, a few towns. The towns and villages are grouped into blocks for development purposes.

Health

Health care in the state is provided by a number of district hospitals, several dozen community health centres, and, in the rural areas, hundreds of primary health centres and subcentres. Treatment is also available from private practitioners. The government recognizes and supports allopathic (Western), Ayurvedic (traditional Indian), Unanī (a traditional Muslim system using prescribed herbs and shrubs), and homeopathic medicine. The state participates in many of the national programs to control (or eradicate) diseases such as leprosy, tuberculosis, and malaria, as well as HIV/AIDS infection and various vector-borne diseases. It also has joined countrywide programs for the prevention of blindness and hearing loss.

Education

In the area that now constitutes Uttarakhand, there has been a virtual explosion since the mid-20th century in the number of schools and students enrolled at all levels. In the first decade of the 21st century, the state's literacy rate (more than 70 percent) significantly exceeded the national average. Hindi is the medium of instruction at the primary school level, although there

are several private residential schools where the medium of teaching is English. Hindi and English are required courses for high school students, and English is generally the medium of instruction at the university level.

Uttarakhand has a number of government universities, the most prominent of which include, in the southeast, the Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology (1960) in Pantnagar and Kumaun University (1973), with campuses in Nainital and Almora; in the western region, the Indian Institute of Technology (formerly University of Roorkee; 1847) in Roorkee; and in west-central Uttarakhand, Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University (formerly Garhwal University; 1973) in Srinagar. There are also a number of smaller colleges affiliated with these or other government institutions. The University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (2003) in Dehra Dun is one of the notable private institutions. Other universities and colleges offer specialized training in such areas as forest research, Sanskrit and other Indian studies, engineering, and various technical fields.

Pilgrimage centres

Some of Hinduism's holiest shrines and temples, which are also pilgrimage centres, are located in the mountains of Uttarakhand. The Yamnotri temple, in the western part of the Garhwal region, lies at an elevation of about 10,600 feet (3,200 metres). Its chief deity is Yamuna, the Hindu river goddess. The Yamuna River emerges from the Yamnotri glacier nearby. The shrine of Gangotri, in the northwestern part of the state, is situated in a cedar- and pine-wooded area at an elevation of nearly 10,000 feet (3,000 metres); submerged in a river at the site is the natural rock linga (phallic symbol of the god Shiva) where, according to mythology, Shiva sat when he received the goddess Ganga in his matted locks. At Kedarnath, somewhat to the southeast of Gangotri at an elevation approaching 12,000 feet (3,500 metres), is a stone temple to Shiva that is considered to be more than 1,000 years old; a large statue of the bull Nandi, one of Shiva's chief attendants, stands outside the temple door. The Badrinath temple, located at an elevation of some 10,300 feet (3,100 metres) on the bank of Alaknanda River, is the abode of the god Vishnu; the temple's idol of Vishnu, made of black granite, is said to have been installed by the 8th-century philosopher Shankara.

An important Sikh shrine and pilgrimage site is Hemkund Sahib. Perched at an elevation above 13,000 feet (4,000 metres) in north-central Uttarakhand, the shrine honours the 10th Guru of Sikh religion, Gobind Singh. It marks the place where the Guru spent years in meditation.

Festivals

Most of Uttarakhand's festivals are tied to the Hindu calendar. Among the most popular of these events is Dussehra, which celebrates the victory of the prince Rama over the demon king Ravana (as recounted in the Indian epic Ramayana); it is usually held in September or October. Diwali, which takes place in October or November, is a festival of lights dedicated to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Also important is Shivaratri, a day—normally in February—that is devoted to the worship of Shiva. Holi, a spring celebration held in February or March, is perhaps the most colourful of the Hindu festivals.

Most of the major Muslim holidays and observances follow the lunar calendar, meaning that the time of their celebration shifts from year to year. The holiday of Muḥarram commemorates the martyrdom of the hero al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī. Ramadan is a month devoted to fasting, the close of which is marked by the canonical festival of ʿĪd al-Fiṭr. ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā signals the completion of the hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) and is celebrated by Muslims worldwide.

Within the Buddhist tradition, Buddha Purnima is a major festival commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha; it usually takes place in April or May. Mahavira Jayanti, the principal Jain celebration, honours the birth of Mahavira, the great reformer of the Jain monastic community. The birthday of Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism, is observed by the Sikh population. Christmas is the biggest religious holiday for Uttarakhand's Christians. In addition to faith-based festivities, hundreds of smaller-scale fairs and festivals are held annually across the state; many of these are unique to particular villages.

Recreation

Uttarakhand is known for its spectacular natural environment. Among the favourite destinations of residents and visitors are the Valley of Flowers and Nanda Devi national parks (together designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1988) in the northern Kumaun Himalayas, Rajaji National Park in the western Siwaliks, and Corbett National Park in the Himalayan foothills. Many also enjoy visiting the state's mountain lakes and glaciers, as well as its forested valleys and bugyals (lush mountain meadows). Mussoorie, Nainital, Ranikhet, Kausani, Almora, and Auli are popular mountain resorts, some of which offer fine slopes for skiing.

History

Uttarakhand is a land steeped in many layers of history, culture, ethnicity, and religion. Ancient rock paintings, rock shelters, Paleolithic stone tools (hundreds of thousands of years old), and megaliths indicate that the mountains of the region have been inhabited by humans since prehistoric times. Archaeological remains also support the existence of early Vedic (c. 1500 bce) practices in the area.

Aside from what has been learned from such archaeological evidence, very little is known about the early history of Uttarakhand. Early scriptures mention a number of tribes that inhabited the Garhwal and Kumaun regions of what is now Uttarakhand. Among these early residents were the Akas, Kol-Munds, Nagas Paharis (Khasas), Hephthalites (Hunas), Kiratas, Gujjars, and Aryans. The Paharis were the dominant group in both the Garhwal and the Kumaun areas until the coming of the Rajputs and high-caste Brahmans from the plains around the 13th century.

It was only in postindependence India that the Uttarakhand region began to receive significant attention in the regional literature, when the autonomous princely state of Tehri-Garhwal was incorporated into the United Provinces of India in 1949. With the adoption of a new Indian constitution in 1950, the United Provinces was renamed Uttar Pradesh and became a constituent state of India. Grappling with a large population and a vast land area, the government of the new state—seated at the southeastern city of Lucknow—found it difficult to address the interests of the people in the far-northern region. Unemployment, poverty, lack of adequate infrastructure, and general underdevelopment ultimately led the people of

Uttarakhand to call for a separate state shortly after the creation of Uttar Pradesh. Initially, protests were weak, but they gathered strength and momentum in the 1990s. The tension reached a climax on Oct. 2, 1994, when police fired on a crowd of demonstrators in the northwestern town of Muzaffarnagar, killing a number of people.

The separatists continued their agitation for the next several years. Finally, in November 2000 the new state of Uttaranchal was created. In 2007 Uttaranchal became Uttarakhand, reclaiming the name by which the region had been known prior to statehood.



Alva, Smt. Margaret, the Governor

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1.			GENERAL INFORMATION	
(A)			Geographical Data	
1.		Latitude	28°43' N to 31°27' N	
2.		Longitude	77°34' E to 81°02' E	
3.	Geographical Area	2009	Sq. Km.	53483
	(i) Hill	2009	Sq. Km.	46035
	(ii) Plain	2009	Sq. Km.	7448
4.	Forest Area	2009	Sq. Km.	34651
(B)			Meteorological Data	
1.	Average Rainfall	2008	m. ms.	1606
2.			Temperature	
(i) Minimum	2008		° C	-5.4
(Mukteshwar)				
(ii) Maximum	2008		° C	40.2
(Pantnagar)				
(C)			Administrative Units	
1.	Divisions	2009	No.	02
2.	Districts	2009	No.	13
3.	Tehsils	2009	No.	78
4.	Development Blocks	2009	No.	95
5.	Nyaya Panchayats	2009	No.	670
6.	Gram Panchayats	2009	No.	7541
7.	Census Villages	2001	No.	16826
	(As per 01 census)			

(i) Inhabited Villages (Including Forest Settlements)	2001	No.	15761
(ii) Un-inhabited Villages	2001	No.	1065
8.		Town/ Urban Agglomeration	
(i) Municipal Corporation	2009	No.	01
(ii) Nagar Palika Parishads	2009	No.	32
(iii) Nagar Panchayats	2009	No.	30
(iv) Cantonment Boards	2009	No.	09
(v) Census Towns	2001	No.	13
(vi) Industrial Townships	2001	No.	02
9.	Development Authority	2009	No. 06
10.	Lok Sabha Constituency	2009	No. 05
11.	Rajya Sabha Constituency	2009	No. 03
12.	Vidhan Sabha Constituency	2009	No. 70
13.	Police Stations	2009	No. 121
a. (i) Rural	2009	No.	49
(ii) Urban	2009	No.	72
b.(i) G.R.P.	2009	No.	4
