



Understand South India

SOUTH INDIA TODAY.....408

Facts and figures to help you understand today's South India at a glance.

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Weave together the disparate strands that comprise the vibrant tapestry that is South Indian history.

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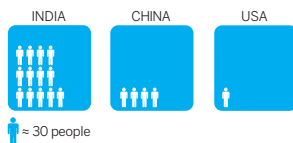
From ancient temple dances to a dynamic performing-arts scene, South India is nothing short of astonishing.

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Historic and contemporary architecture that captures the imagination and stirs the soul.



population per sq km



South India Today

The Kashmir Epic

In 2010 the violence between pro-independence protesters and Indian security forces in the Kashmir Valley had turned deadly. The protesters called for India to remove its troops from Kashmir. They stoned police and paramilitary and burned police vehicles, all while demanding *azadi* – freedom. Security forces responded with gunfire, and more than 100 protesters died.

The predominantly Muslim Kashmir Valley is claimed by both India and Pakistan – and now, Kashmiris – and the impasse has plagued relations between the two countries since Partition in 1947 (see p424). After three India-Pakistan wars and countless skirmishes, there's still no solution in sight – this is a hot topic of debate right around India, including the south.

By 1989, Kashmir had an armed insurgency. A militant fringe of Kashmiris revolted against the Indian government, joined by armed supporters from Afghanistan and Pakistan. India accused Pakistan of assisting insurgents; Pakistan countered that India was denying Kashmiris the right to self-determination. Thousands of civilians have been killed in the course of the conflict. India-Pakistan relations sunk even lower in 1998 when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP; Indian People's Party) government detonated five nuclear devices in the Rajasthan desert and Pakistan responded in kind. A border conflict was averted, but nukes were now in the picture.

By the time the Congress Party government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh came to power in 2004, relations were strained but cordial; the reopening of cross-border transport links, among other measures, helped calm the situation. But talks were derailed when in Mumbai (Bombay) in 2008, a team of terrorists killed at least 163 people, some of whom were tortured, at 10 sites around the city during three days of coordinated bombings and shootings. The one sniper caught alive, a Pakistani, had ties to

- » Population: 1.21 billion
- » GDP: US\$1.4 trillion (2009)
- » Unemployment rate: 10.8%
- » Employed in agriculture: 52%
- » Literacy rate (female/male): 65/82%
- » Sex ratio (female/male): 940/1000

Dos & Don'ts

- » Dress conservatively. Avoid tight clothes and keep shoulders and knees covered. Outside Goa, this applies to swimming too.
- » Public kissing, cuddling or holding hands is not condoned.
- » Remove shoes before entering people's homes and holy sites.
- » Your right hand is for eating and shaking hands; don't use the left (aka 'toilet') hand.
- » Ask before photographing people or holy places.
- » That head wobble? It can mean yes, maybe or I have no idea. Just go with the flow.

Greetings

- » Saying '*namaste*' with hands together in a prayer gesture is a traditional, respectful Hindu greeting and a universally accepted way to say hello or goodbye.
- » Hugs between strangers don't really happen.