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The Indian **subcontinent** includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. The Himalayas separate it from the rest of Asia. It is called a subcontinent because of its unique geological history and because it is separated from the rest of Asia by a natural barrier in the north, the Himalayas. This has given it distinctive geographical and cultural features.

Physical Features of India

India is physically diverse, with high mountains, mighty rivers, fertile plains, ancient plateaus and picturesque islands. The mainland is divided into four major physical regions.

- the northern mountains
- the northern plains
- the peninsular plateau
- the coastal plains

ACTIVITY

Locate the major physical regions on the physical map of India. Note India's latitudinal and longitudinal extent.

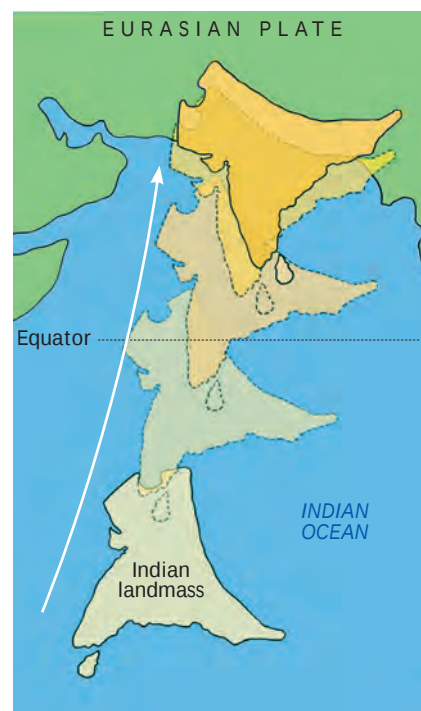
Apart from the mainland, India has two main groups of islands.



The Northern Mountains

The northern mountains form the northern boundary of India and separate the Indian subcontinent from the rest of Asia. They have two main ranges—the Karakoram Range and the Himalayas. These are young fold mountains that were formed nearly 50 million years ago.

Birth of the northern mountains Earth's surface is made of moving pieces called plates. Long ago, the Indian plate was part of a large landmass called Gondwana in the southern hemisphere. About 120 million years ago, it broke away and started moving north towards the Eurasian plate. The collision of these two plates around 50 million years ago folded up the seabed, forming the northern mountain ranges like the Himalayas, Karakoram and Hindu Kush. As the plates continue to converge and push against each other, they are causing the mountains to rise by about 5 mm a year even now.



Karakoram Range The Karakoram lies to the north of the Himalayas. The second-highest peak in the world and the highest peak in India—K2, or Mount Godwin Austen (8,611 m)—lies in the Karakoram. The Karakoram Range also has extensive glaciers.



Fig. 1.5 The Hemis Monastery, Ladakh, built in the 17th century



Fig. 1.6 Pangong Tso, Ladakh, the world's highest saltwater lake ('tso' means lake).

Ladakh is known for its ancient monasteries. Life is simple and deeply rooted in tradition. People celebrate festivals like Losar (Tibetan New Year) and the Hemis Festival.

The Himalayas The mighty Himalayas (*him* = snow; *alaya* = abode) lie south of the Karakoram Range, stretching 2,500 km from the Indus valley in the west to the Brahmaputra river in the east. The Himalayas are divided into three main parallel ranges.

The **Great Himalayas**, or **Himadri**, is the northernmost Himalayan range and has some of the world's tallest peaks, which remain snow clad all year round. Glaciers originating here feed the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Indus. These important rivers are the main source of water for millions of people and make agriculture and industry possible in the northern plains.

Notable peaks include Mount Everest (8,849 m) in Nepal, and Kanchenjunga (8,586 m), Nanga Parbat (8,126 m) and Nanda Devi (7,817 m) in India.

The severe cold and rugged terrain make life difficult. There are few human settlements here as it is difficult to grow crops.

The **Lesser Himalayas**, or **Himachal**, lies south of the Himadri and has lower peaks that are home to popular hill stations like Shimla, Dalhousie, Nainital, Mussoorie and Darjeeling. With its moderate climate, the region attracts tourists. Many species of plants and animals flourish here.



The world's highest peak, Mount Everest, once a symbol of untouched beauty, now suffers severe pollution. Tonnes of waste left by climbers (like oxygen cylinders, food wrappers and human waste) accumulate every year. This trash contaminates glaciers (slow-moving masses of ice) and their meltwater that feeds rivers. This poses health and environmental risks to downstream communities that depend on this water.



GOING FURTHER

COOL TIDBITS

Space travel has given us some of the most unforgettable words in history. In 1969, when American astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first human to walk on the moon, he said, “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” Earlier, in 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the first person in space, looked down from his spacecraft and said, “I see Earth. It is beautiful.”

India has also made its mark in space history. In 1984, Rakesh Sharma became the first Indian astronaut to travel to space. During a live conversation with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, he was asked how India looked from space. He quoted the lines from a famous patriotic poem, “*Sare jahan se achcha*”—meaning ‘better than the entire world’. His words continue to inspire pride in India’s space programme.

COOL TIDBITS

When the British came to India, they had a difficult time adapting to the hot and humid summers of the Indian plains. During the summer months they would retire to small towns in the Himachal, which had a more comfortable climate. This led to the rise of many hill stations that are popular even today. Shimla, Mussoorie and Nainital are some examples.

You may have read books by the author Ruskin Bond. He was born and brought up in the hills of North India and most of his stories are about life in the hills. *The Blue Umbrella*, *The Room on the Roof* and *Rusty, the Boy from the Hills* are some of his most well-known works.



TRY IT OUT

1. Look at the physical map of India in an atlas. What do the different colours on the map mean? Use the key to find out.
2. Use the Internet to find out which part of India is called ‘Moonland’. Make a PowerPoint presentation on it.
3. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep face many natural challenges. In 2004, a devastating tsunami struck the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, causing serious destruction. The southernmost point of India, Indira Point, located on the island of Great Nicobar in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, was partially submerged due to the tsunami’s impact. Despite these challenges, both island groups contribute to India’s economy and efforts in environmental conservation. They also play a crucial role in the country’s security and serve as strategic outposts in the Indian Ocean. The 2004 tsunami caused destruction in other countries too. Find out what a girl called Tilly Smith did on her vacation in Thailand.

Weather



The weather at a place describes the state of the atmosphere at that place at a given time—whether it is hot or cold, sunny or cloudy, humid, rainy or windy. It includes details such as temperature, atmospheric pressure, wind speed and direction, humidity, rainfall or snowfall, and the state of the sky. Weather is not fixed; it changes from day to day and can even vary within the same day. These changes matter to us in many ways—what we wear, how we travel and the plans we make, all depend on the weather.

I hope tomorrow is not cloudy and gloomy.



ACTIVITY

We use words like **hot**, **cold**, **humid**, **windy**, **rainy**, **snowy**, **clear** and **cloudy** in English to describe weather conditions. Find out the words used for the following in your mother tongue.

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| • summer | • autumn |
| • winter | • cloudy weather |
| • rainy season | • dry weather |
| • spring | • sticky weather |

The Atmosphere

The atmosphere is a layer of gases surrounding the earth, extending more than a thousand kilometres above its surface. It is held in place by the earth's gravity, which prevents the gases from escaping into space. Nitrogen (78%) and oxygen (21%) are its main components, along with small amounts of carbon dioxide, argon, neon, helium and water vapour.

From the surface upward, the atmosphere is divided into five layers—the troposphere, stratosphere, mesosphere, thermosphere and exosphere. These layers do not have fixed boundaries and often overlap. Their thickness varies. For instance, the troposphere extends up to 18 km above the equator but only about 8 km above the poles.

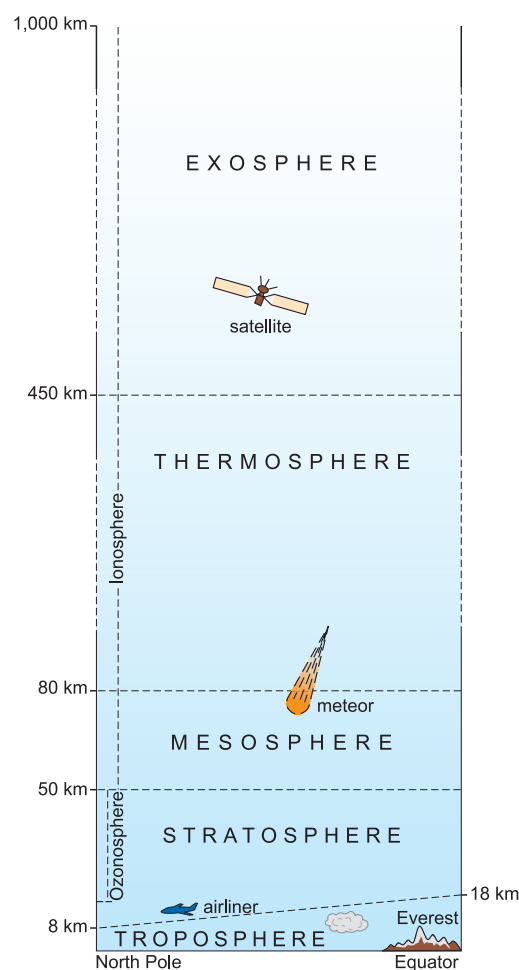


Fig. 2.1 Layers of the atmosphere

movement of air from an area of high pressure to an area of low pressure is called wind. Winds arise due to differences in air pressure. Meteorologists study two main aspects of wind—**direction** and **speed**.



Fig. 2.8 Anemometer with wind vane

Wind direction A wind is named after the direction from which it blows—for example, a north wind comes from the north. A **wind vane** (weather vane) shows wind direction with the aid of a pointer and tail fin mounted on a rod. The wind pushes the tail, turning the pointer to face the direction from which the wind is coming. Airports and seaports also use a **windsock**, a conical cloth tube mounted on a pole. The windsock extends in the direction the wind is blowing. It extends more fully when the wind is stronger. Windsocks are especially useful for pilots and sailors.



Fig. 2.7 A windsock

Wind speed Wind speed depends on the pressure difference between two regions. The greater the difference, the faster the air moves—sometimes reaching over 100 km/h during storms. It is measured with an **anemometer**,

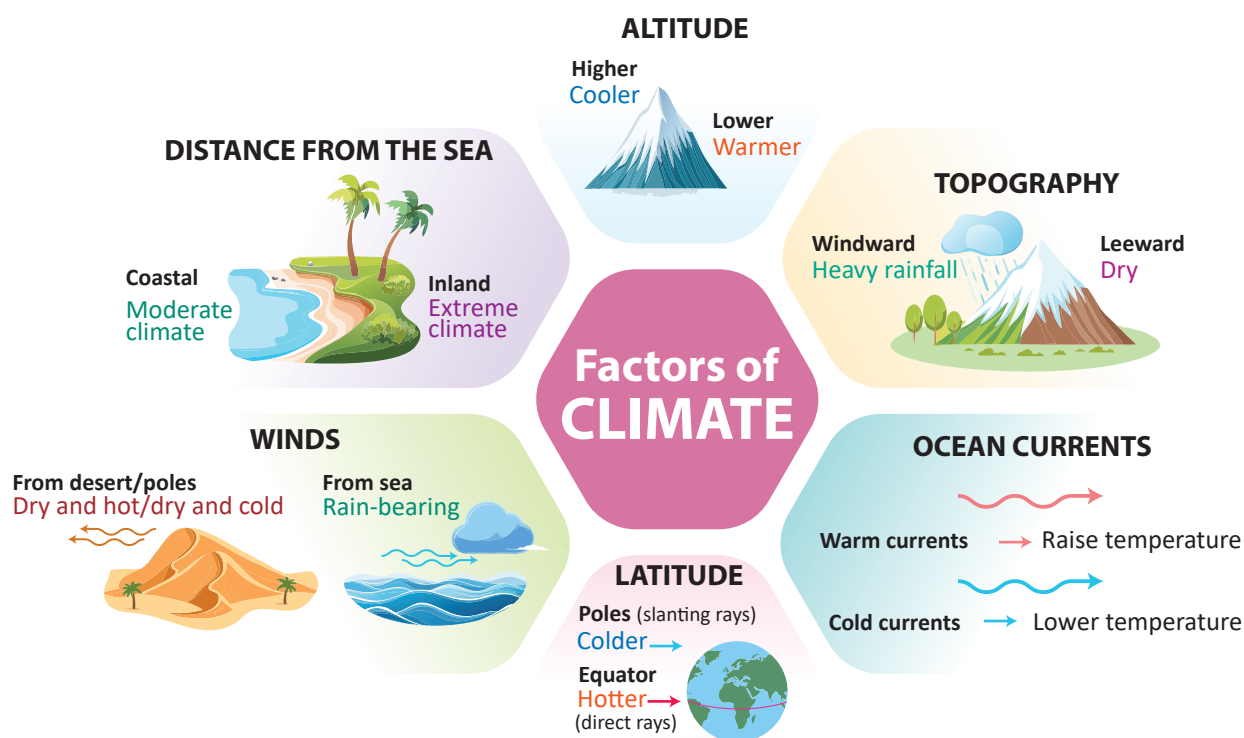


The seeds of many plants like dandelion, moringa and semal are light and feathery. They can be carried easily by the wind which deposits them at different places where new plants then grow.



POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The average weather conditions in a place over a period of 30 years or more is called its climate. Climate varies from region to region.
- Seasons occur mainly due to the tilt of the earth's axis and revolution around the sun.
- India officially has four seasons—winter, summer, monsoon and post-monsoon—and six traditional *ritus*.
- The climate of a place depends on several factors—latitude, altitude, distance from the sea, winds, topography and ocean currents.
- India experiences a wide variety of climates due to its vast size and factors such as latitude, altitude, distance from the sea, winds, topography and ocean currents.
- A monsoon is a wind system that changes (reverses) direction according to seasons. In summer, the south-west monsoon brings rain to most of India. It has two branches—the Arabian Sea branch and Bay of Bengal branch.
- In winter, the north-east monsoon blows from land to sea. These winds are dry but bring some rain to coastal Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh after collecting moisture over the Bay of Bengal.
- Climate affects the economy of India. Good monsoons support crops; weak ones cause drought. Hydroelectric power generation is also affected by the monsoon.
- The frequency and intensity of natural disasters like cyclones, floods, droughts and landslides is increasing due to climate change.
- Human actions like burning fossil fuels and deforestation contribute to climate change. Climate change leads to global warming, rising sea levels, floods and heatwaves.





SAY IT RIGHT

Word	Say	Word	Say
janapada	juh-nuh-puh-duh (not juh-nuh-puh-daa)	Mahavira	muh-haa-veer-uh
mahajanapada	muh-haa-juh-nuh-puh-duh	Shakya	shaa-kyuh
Kosala	ko-shuh-luh	varna	vur-nuh
Vatsa	vut-suh	brahmana	braah-muh-nuh
Magadha	muh-guh-dhuh	kshatriya	kshuh-tri-yuh
Asmaka	ush-muh-kuh	vaishya	vaish-yuh
Rajagriha	raa-juh-gri-huh	shudra	shoo-druh
Virata	vi-raa-tuh	Ramayana	raa-maa-yuh-nuh
Mahabharata	muh-haa-bhaa-ruh-tuh	Takshashila	tak-shuh-shi-laa
Varuna (river)	vuh-roo-naa	Pataliputra	paa-tuh-li-pu-truh
Surasena	shoo-ruh-se-nuh	Kamarupa	kaa-muh-roo-puh
Matsya	mut-syuh	Pragjyotisha	praag-jyo-ti-shuh
Malla	mul-luh	Purana (religious text)	pu-raa-nuh

Remember, the 'uh' at the end is soft, and sounds like 'a' in the word 'about'.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The Indus-Saraswati Civilisation was the beginning of urban life in the Indian subcontinent. But its cities began to decline around 1900 BCE.
- Around 1000 BCE, early political units called janapadas started to emerge. People in the janapadas began to use iron tools.
- Around the 6th century BCE, some janapadas grew into mahajanapadas. Ancient Indian texts mention sixteen mahajanapadas. Some of the important ones were Kosala, Vatsa, Magadha, Vajji and Avanti.
- The centres of craft, trade and administration of the mahajanapadas grew into cities. This was the second urbanisation in the history of the Indian subcontinent.
- In the Early Vedic period (1500 BCE–1000 BCE), Indian society was organised into tribes. Each tribe was led by a chief known as rajan. The rajan was advised by a sabha (council of elders) and a samiti (all adult members of the tribe).

against a local king named Porus. Porus fought bravely, but was ultimately defeated and captured. Ancient sources say Alexander asked Porus how he wished to be treated. Porus replied, "Like a king." Impressed by his courage, Alexander made Porus a satrap and allowed him to continue ruling his kingdom.

Alexander then wanted to march east towards the Gangetic plain. But his soldiers were tired of wars and fearful of the Nanda army with its thousands of war elephants. So, they refused to go on. Alexander was forced to turn back. On his way home, he died in Babylon around 323 BCE.

Fall of the Nandas

After Alexander left India, his satraps in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent began to lose control over their territories. At the same time, the Nanda empire under Dhana Nanda was growing unpopular.

During this period of instability, a scholar named **Kautilya** (also known as Chanakya or Vishnugupta) emerged as a key figure in Indian history. Kautilya was a teacher at Takshashila, a renowned centre of learning in ancient India. According to legend, Dhana Nanda insulted Kautilya in the Nanda royal court. Deeply angered, Kautilya vowed to end Nanda rule. He soon met a young man named Chandragupta Maurya and became his mentor. Together, they built an army and fought the Nandas. After years of struggle, Dhana Nanda was defeated.

Around 321 BCE, Chandragupta Maurya ascended the throne of Magadha. This marked the beginning of the **Mauryan empire**.

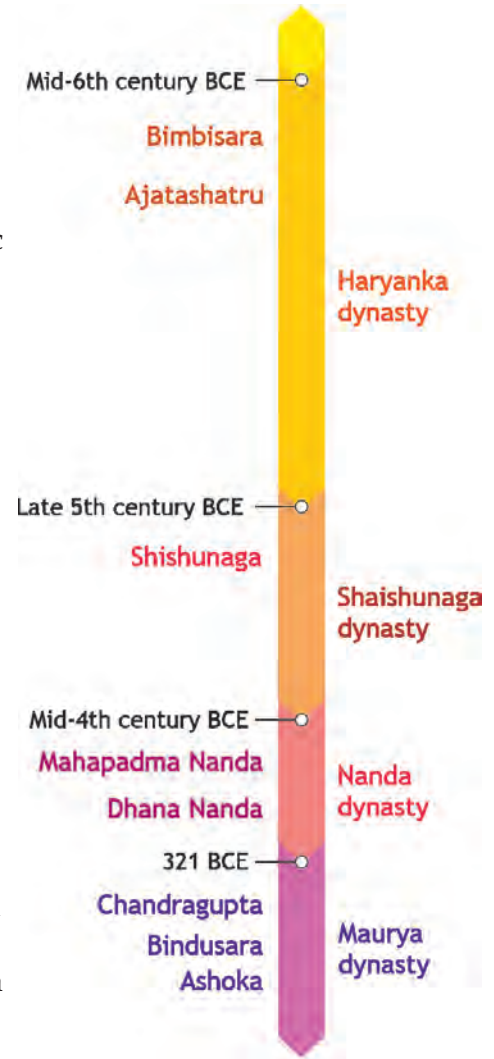


Fig. 2.3 Alexander's route from Macedonia to north-western India and his return journey



The lion capital found at Sarnath

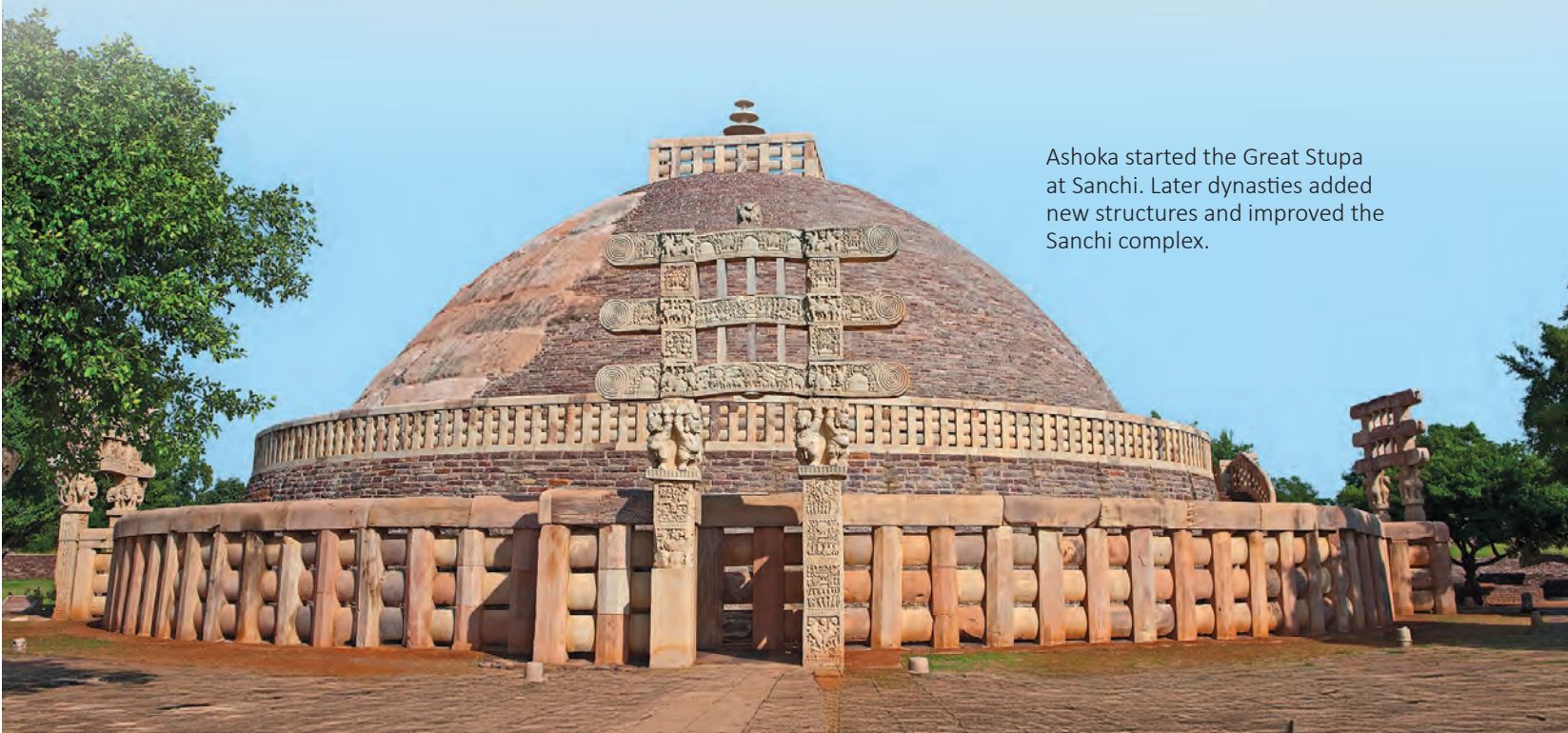


During the Maurya period, many stone rings and discs with beautiful designs were made.

Terracotta figurines of the Maurya period often had fine details.

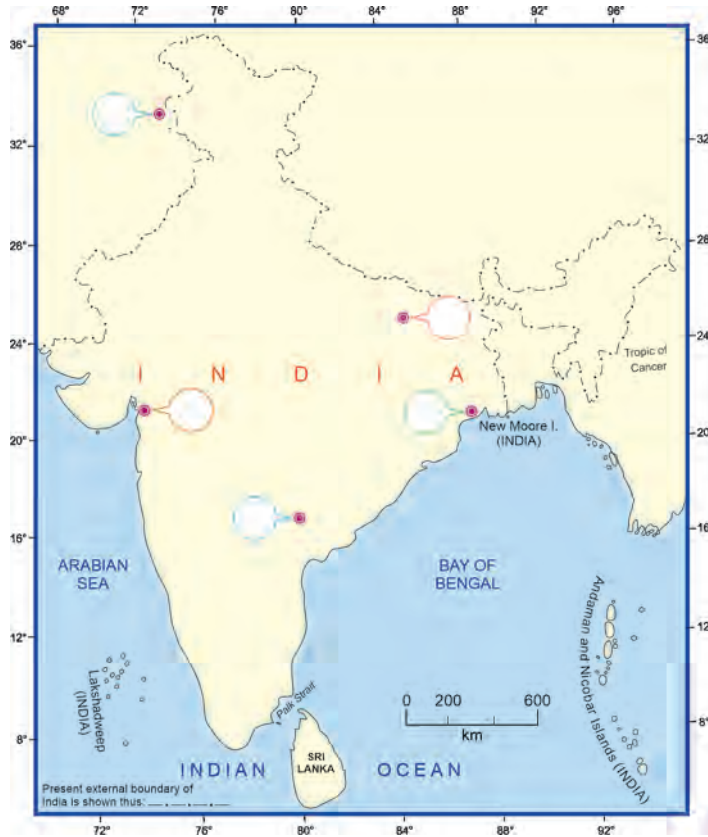


This intricately carved and polished sandstone sculpture was found in Didarganj, Bihar. It is dated to the Maurya period. The female figure is shown holding a *chauri* (fly-whisk) in her hand.



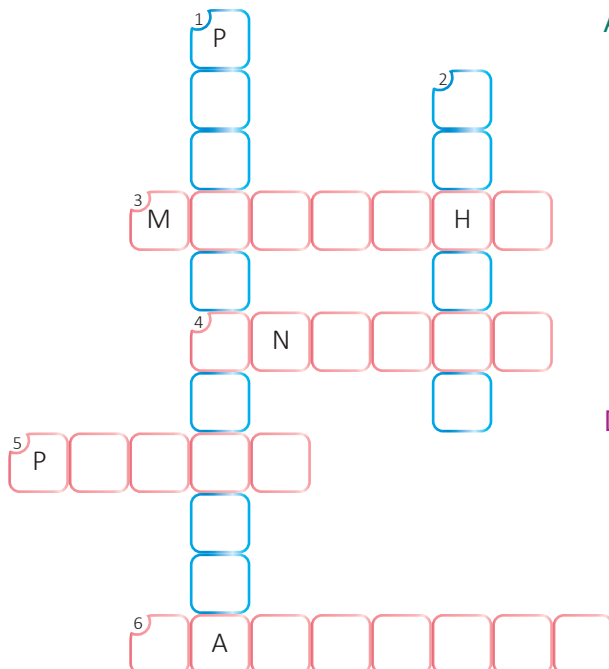
Ashoka started the Great Stupa at Sanchi. Later dynasties added new structures and improved the Sanchi complex.

D Look at the spots marked on the map. Use the list of places given below and write the correct number next to each spot.



1. Pataliputra
2. Amaravati
3. Takshashila
4. Tamralipti
5. Bhrigukachchha

E Solve the crossword using the clues given below.



Across →

3. Most powerful of the sixteen mahajanapadas
4. Book written by Megasthenes
5. The king who was defeated by Alexander on the bank of the river Jhelum
6. Advisor to Chandragupta Maurya

Down ↓

1. Capital of the Mauryan empire
2. The Maurya ruler who conquered Kalinga

Art The Kushana period is famous for its art. There was a shift in the presentation of religious themes in art. The depiction of deities in human form became popular. For example, earlier the Buddha was usually represented by symbols like the wheel, the lotus or the Bodhi tree. Now statues of the Buddha in human form became common.

Two major art styles developed during this time—**Gandhara art** and **Mathura art**.

Gandhara art Gandhara art developed in the north-west, in modern-day Pakistan and Afghanistan. It blended Greek, Roman and Indian elements. Many sculptures of the Buddha and bodhisattvas (enlightened beings in Buddhist tradition) were made in this style. The figures usually have sharp features, wavy hair and flowing robes. Initially, most of the sculptures were carved from grey-black schist stone, which splits easily into thin layers and allows fine details.



Standing Buddha

Head of the Buddha



A bodhisattva



A statue of Kubera

Standing Buddha

Mathura art Mathura art developed around Mathura in northern India. Sculptors mainly used red sandstone and followed a style that was more Indian in character. They made images of the Buddha, Mahavira and Hindu deities. The Buddha figures look strong and often have curly hair and smiling faces.

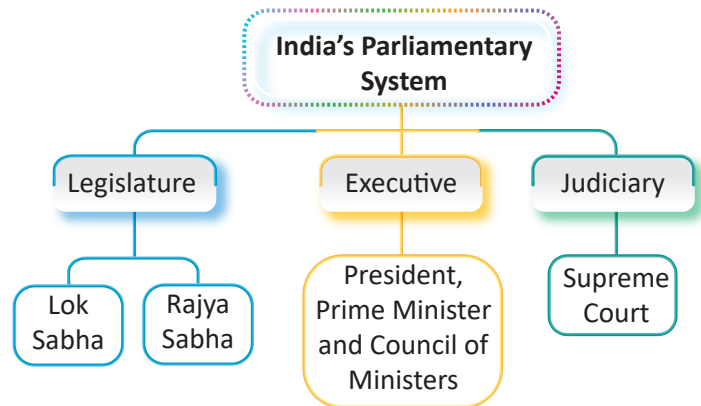
A statue of Kanishka found near Mathura shows him wearing a long coat and heavy boots. The head and arms of the statue are missing, but an inscription at the base identifies the figure as Kanishka. The inscription reads: *maharaja rajadhiraja devaputra kanishka* (great king, king of kings, son of god Kanishka). The statue is carved in red sandstone typical of the Mathura style, but Kanishka's clothes and boots reflect the Central Asian heritage of the Kushanas.



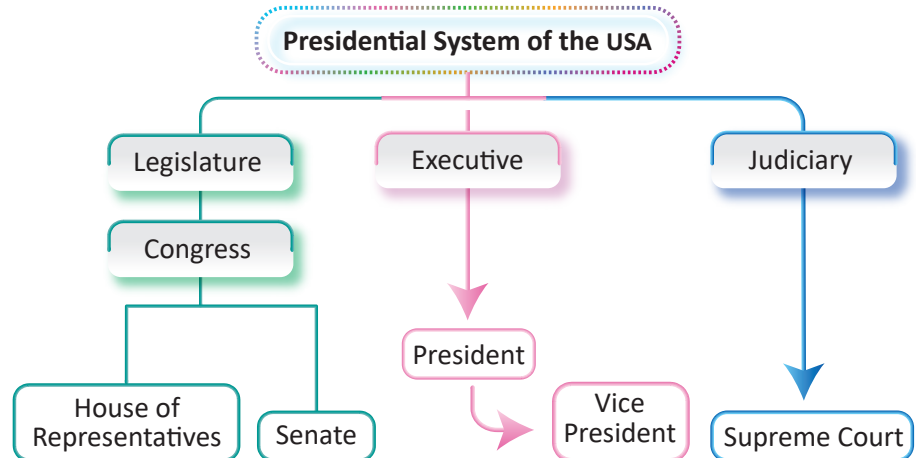
In a representative democracy, governments are elected for a fixed term, with elections being held at regular intervals. For example, India holds national elections every five years, while countries like Germany and the USA conduct theirs every four years. Some of the oldest democracies include the USA, Switzerland, Canada, the UK and New Zealand.

Today, most democracies are representative in nature, but their workings differ. Representative democracy can be of two types: **presidential system**, as seen in the USA; and **parliamentary system**, as followed in India and the UK.

Parliamentary democracy In this system, citizens elect representatives to a parliament. The executive branch—consisting of the prime minister and council of ministers—is then formed from these elected members. The government remains in power as long as it has the support of the majority in the parliament. If it loses that support, it must step down. Examples of countries with parliamentary democracy include India, UK, Canada, Ireland, Japan and Australia.



Presidential democracy In this system, the executive branch, headed by the president, is elected directly by the people, independently of the legislature. The president wields significant power and does not need the support of the parliament to remain in office. There is clear division of powers among the executive,



legislative and judicial branches in this system. Examples of countries with presidential form of government include the USA, Brazil, Indonesia and South Korea.

In most democratic countries with a **bicameral legislature** (two houses), the lower house holds more power because it is directly elected by the people. It plays a key role in making laws, passing the budget and holding the government accountable. The upper house, on the other hand, is often indirectly elected or nominated, and acts as a reviewing chamber. These houses go by different names in different countries, for example, Lok Sabha (lower) and Rajya Sabha (upper) in India; House of Commons (lower) and House of Lords (upper) in the UK; House of Representatives (lower) and Senate (upper) in the USA (where the Senate is very powerful and both houses are directly elected).



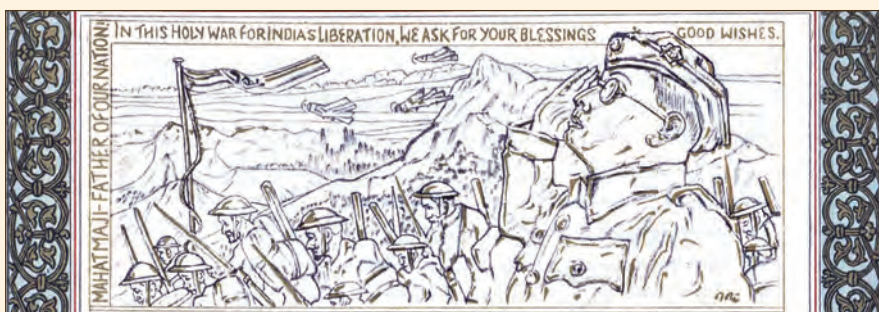
A scene from the Mahabharata, showing Krishna preaching the Gita to Arjuna



Seals from the Indus Valley Civilisation



Mahavira in a meditative state, symbolising principles of non-violence and truth



Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose with the Azad Hind Fauj



A seal from the ancient Nalanda university



A postage stamp in honour of Nandalal Bose



A scene from the Ramayana showing Rama's conquest of Lanka

Fig. 2.3 The illustrations in the original copy of the Constitution depict our rich cultural and historical heritage.



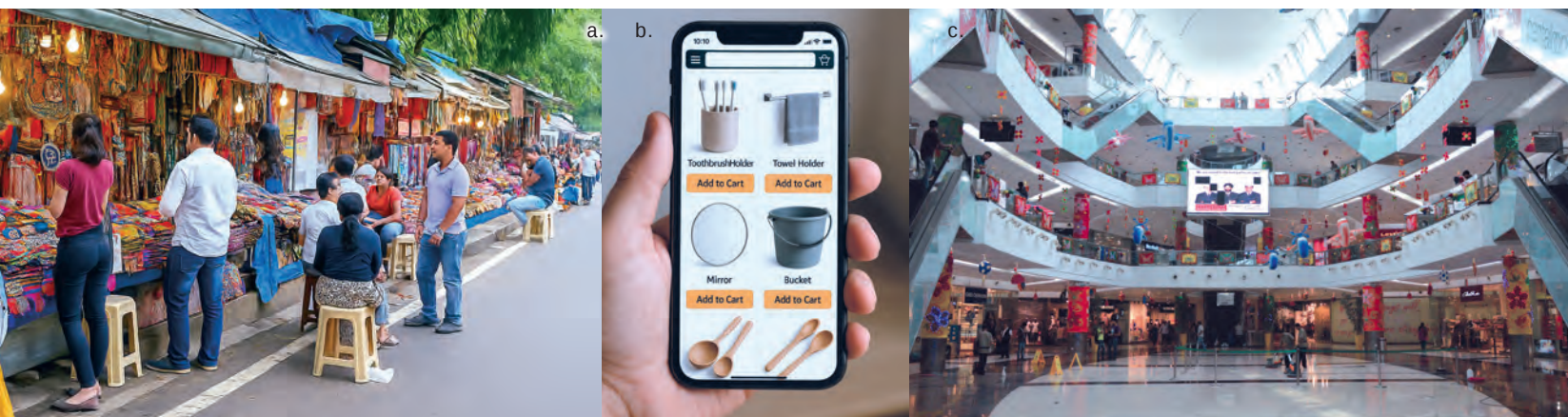
Understanding Markets Around Us

Every day, we purchase various items, from fruits and vegetables to new clothes and shoes. But have you ever felt curious about their journey? Where do all these things come from? Who makes them? And how do they reach the shop near your home, or appear on your screen when you buy something online? Markets play an important role in making this journey happen. In the previous chapter, we saw how trade evolved from bartering goods to using money as a way to buy and sell goods. However, trade involves much more than just the money we pay. It also involves where and how people buy and sell things. In this chapter, we will explore how markets function, who participates in them, the different kinds of markets around us, how products reach our homes and what role the government plays.

What Is a Market?

A market is a place where buyers and sellers come together to buy and sell goods and services. It can be either physical (like a shop or market stall) or virtual (such as an online store). Markets include shopping complexes, malls, street bazaars and weekly markets. In addition, smaller entities like the snack shop outside your school and the vendor selling roasted corn near the playground are also part of the market system. A weekly market is called so because it is held on a specific day of the week, like a Monday market. Traders set up their shops in the morning and pack them up by evening. These markets offer a wide variety of goods, often at lower prices than regular shops, making them popular with many buyers. In cities, many shops located close together form shopping complexes, while malls are large indoor spaces with multiple stores under one roof.

Fig. 2.1 Different ways of shopping: **a.** a street market **b.** an online shopping app **c.** a shopping mall



ACTIVITY

Here is a table showing the types of retail markets and what they are. Fill in their examples here.

Type of retail market	What it is	Examples
Department store	large stores divided into sections (departments) for different product categories	_____
Supermarket	large self-service stores selling groceries, household items and more	_____
Kirana shops	small local shops selling items of daily need	_____
Mall	large enclosed spaces with multiple brand outlets, food courts, entertainment zones	_____
Specialty store	focus on a specific product category (clothes, books or electronics)	Croma, Decathlon
Online retail / e-commerce	buying and selling products through websites and apps	_____
Weekly market / haat	temporary markets held on specific days, often in villages or small towns	_____
Street vendors / pushcarts	small-scale sellers operating on footpaths or carts	_____
Cooperative store	owned and run by a group (farmers or community members) to sell at fair prices	Kendriya Bhandar, Apna Bazar
Factory outlet	owned by a manufacturer where products are sold directly to customers at lower prices	_____

Distribution

Before reaching retail shops, goods generally pass through **distributors**, an important link in the **supply chain**. Distributors buy goods in bulk from manufacturers or wholesalers and supply them to retailers. They store products in warehouses and deliver smaller quantities to shops, including shops in remote areas. For example, a distributor may deliver snacks or soft drinks to kirana stores each week. This helps retailers keep shelves stocked without visiting wholesale markets.

A supply chain is the journey of a product from raw materials to the customer. It includes steps like producing, storing, transporting and selling. For example, in the supply chain of an apple, a farmer grows it, a wholesaler stores it and a shopkeeper sells it to the customer.

In online markets, sellers work in different ways. Some buy goods in bulk from factories or wholesalers, while others sell their own handmade items like crafts or snacks. Some use **dropshipping**, where the supplier ships products directly to the customer, and the seller doesn't keep any stock.

Large online platforms, called **aggregators**, collect products from manufacturers in central