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INDIAN UNION

>>>> BEGIN FACTS AND DEMOGRAPHIC BOX

Indian Union: India (In-dee-ah)

Population: 966,235,000

Prominent Languages: Hindi, English

States: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal

Government Type: Bi-Cameral Parliamentary Democracy

Bordering Countries: Bangla Commonwealth, Khalistan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tibet

Geography: The northwest of the Indian Union is dominated by the Punjab Plain and Thar Desert, which give way to the deeply-forested Chin and Kachin Hills, the footsteps of the Himalayas, in the northeast. Down from the Himalayas run several major rivers, including the Ganges and Indus rivers, forming the Indo-Gangetic Plain. South of this lies the heavily forested Chota Nagpur Plateau and the Mahandi River Valley; the plateaus, highlands, and river valleys all eventually give way to the narrow coastal plains and river deltas.

Notable Features: Ganges River Valley, Indus River Valley

Flag: [Use Real World Flag]

>>>> END FACTS AND DEMOGRAPHICS BOX

A BRIEF HISTORY

India was ground zero for the VITAS epidemic; it appeared in New Delhi and four hundred and fifty million Indians died of the disease by 2012. Political tensions in the Republic of India reflected the divisions that surrounded it. Tibet sealed itself off in 2011, by 2013 China had begun to splinter, and the Awakening brought about a religious furor in India and the surrounding countries.

When VITAS II broke out in Mumbai in 2021, political and religious unrest solidified in a series of secession attempts. Unable to receive any support from the United Nations to cope with the second outbreak, its internal troubles, or the chaos of the nations surrounding it, India withdrew from the UN in protest.

The Crash of '29 crippled India's technological base, and the Indian and Chinese administration in Kashmir and the Punjab was almost nonexistent. A Sikh rebellion arose, declaring the new state of Khalistan. India attempted to forcibly put down the rebels, and Pakistan moved military units into the Kashmir valley to intervene, which prompted a limited tactical nuclear exchange, the fallout of which drifted into Khalistan. Other Indian states took this opportunity to secede, and joined the Bangla Commonwealth.

In 2031 the Indian Unity Party ascended to power with the support of several megacorporations and voted on a new constitution, renaming the country the Indian Union, accepting the Business Recognition Accords, rejoining the UN, and consolidating, streamlining the bloated Indian government bureaucracy and laws, and beginning a massive program of reconstruction and advancement.

The Indian subcontinent is one of the oldest inhabited regions on the planet, with an incredible density of cultures and religions. Approximately 80% of the Indian Union is Hindu, whose members are organized into a caste system (jāti), which can be a primary factor of life in many parts of the country, determining social status and interaction, clothing and mannerism, and acceptable areas of employment. In major cities, caste is generally less rigidly adhered to, with many individuals choosing to ignore or deny their jāti; on the other hand, jāti politics remain an important aspect of the new Indian Union, and vital enough to warrant several pages in the new constitution.

The Indian Rupee (INR) remains the national currency, but the nuyen is widely accepted in urban areas.

MAJOR CITIES

New Delhi, the capital of the Indian Union, is located within the ancient and sprawling **Delhi Metroplex**, though the two are politically distinct. Continually inhabited since at least the sixth century B.C.E., Delhi is one of the oldest and largest cities in the world, home to major architectural wonders and monuments, including the Bahá'í Lotus Temple, the India Gate, the Rashtrapati Bhavan, and Humayun's Tomb. Megacorporate investment and urban advancement have transformed Delhi into a modern sprawl, though large parts of it consist of high-density housing complexes and retail centers to house and cater to the ever-growing population.

Mumbai (Bombay) is the largest city in the Indian Union, despite repeated VITAS infections and insect spirit infestations during the 2050s, which were cleared out by magicians and adepts of the Brahmin and Kshatriya jātis, with the support of Ares Firewatch teams. Mumbai is the largest port of the Union on the Indian Ocean. The

Bollywood entertainment industry is also centered in the city, and produces some of the most acclaimed international simsense and trideo productions in the world. Wuxing, Horizon and Evo are major players in this area for their willingness to employ any individual regardless of caste; both operate extensive high-tech production and shipping facilities in Mumbai.

Kolkata (Calcutta) was heavily damaged by fires started in 2011 by rioters, who blamed the spread of VITAS on the lower castes dwelling in the city's vast slums. The massive damage required the reconstruction of nearly the entire metroplex, except for a few historical buildings that could be saved. Reconstruction provided a larger central business district designed to accommodate the Navratnas, the Indian Union's twenty government-owned corporations; up-and-coming Indian megacorps like Kotak Mahindra Financial Services, Siti Matrix Services, Akasha Construction Limited, and Jute-Pavani Limited. Temporary housing intended for construction crews have since become the cheap, overpopulated ghettos of the new Kolkata. The appeal to corporate investment has significantly benefited the economy, and Kolkata is now the economic powerhouse of the Indian Union.

Varanasi (Benares), situated on the banks of the Ganges, is considered the most holy city by Hindus, and a holy city by Buddhists, Jains, and Senthoo as well. It draws the bulk of its economy from tourism, pilgrimages, and the support of its religious institutions, with some smaller local industries. The city benefited significantly from the purification of the Ganges in 2061.

SPECIAL LOCATIONS

The **Ganges River**, which begins in the Himalayas and empties into the Bay of Bengal, is one of India's major waterways, and is considered a holy river in Hinduism and Buddhism. The Ganges, along with the **Indus** and **Jamana** rivers, Awakened as powerful manalines, and in 2012 each of the rivers was magically purified by unknown means. The Indian Union has instituted extensive economic reforms and the use of water spirits in an effort to maintain the purity of these sacred river systems.

In 2061, hundreds of saddhu and Hindus bathing in the Ganges were caught in an astral flashflood—a brief, intense mana surge that traveled down the length of the manaline—which triggered multiple cases of SURGE, all of which pertained to forms from Indian legend and belief. This phenomenon has repeatedly irregularly since then, particularly in Varanasi.

Many Indian temples and sacred sites were revealed to be magically active, but the most renowned is the **Orissa Triangle**. The area described by the triangle is crisscrossed by a complex network of manalines, and astral shallows and the appearance of alchera is fairly common in this area. Twelve powerful manalines connect the three Great Dhams which form the vertices of the Orissa Triangle to the twelve Shivan jyotirlinga (“pillars of light”) shrines. At each of these manaline nexi, a powerful manaline extends into the sky to the edge of the manosphere. Researchers still do not know why or how this occurs but continue to study the phenomenon.

> Is it worth mentioning that India has a highly enlightened view of cyberware? Some of them see it as freeing part of the soul from their bodies to continue the kharmic cycle or whatever.

> Butch

> I'll keep that in mind the next time one of the urban kshatriyas is handing me my ass. The sudden appearance of giant talking snakes, four-armed elephant-headed changelings, and monkey men was enough for the whole bloody country to get religion again, and half the jāti reforms look to have gotten kicked out the window.

> Kane

> Not to mention the horror that ensued when they had that hellcow outbreak. Cattle are sacred critters and laws against killing them or eating beef are ancient and revered. When the first momma hellcow dropped a couple calves and started running, the poor Hindus literally got torn apart by those things. Of course, now some of 'em even see the damn *bos malus* as divine critters, provided they aren't around when it's time to give birth.

> Sticks

> Speaking of the naga, there are quite a few here. Most of the adults today were raised by Brahmins and indoctrinated in the local laws and religions, acting as guards to temples and families; the ones in the wild are an unpredictable lot. I know of at least one village where a young girl was married to a naga for religious reasons—they're lucky the damn thing didn't try to eat her.

> Mihoshi Oni

> I'll be the one to mention that as untamed, overpopulated, and poverty-stricken as India is, it remains the single most economically stable and viable country on the subcontinent (okay,

after the Bengal Commonwealth, but India is bigger). The Indian Rupee (hard currency available) is widely accepted in Nepal, Khalistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Burma, and the Kashin State, places where the nuyen might not be enough to get you what you need.

> Mr. Bonds

> Words of wisdom to all of us. It's always a mistake to go into a place you don't understand and attempt to conduct business on your own terms; you'll either be ignored or destroyed. India represents unique challenges and opportunities for all of us. By paying attention to the castes of the people we deal with, knowing how we are perceived in their society, and being aware of their rules and how to use or get around them, we can maximize our potential profits and minimize the many-bladed, bullet-laden, energy-weapons-primed, fireball-on-line, tooth and claw threats to our lives.

> FastJack