



# THE BEAUTIFUL INDIA

## ASSAM



Chief Editor:  
S.A. Rahman

*Maare Jahan Se Achcha Hindostan Hamara'* (Our India is the best among all lands in the world) said Dr. Iqbal, the poet of East. Now this poetic line has evolved into a symbolic expression for the greatness of our country. This is sung frequently and used widely for an easy, prompt and soft pronouncement of the greatness and novelty of our country.

No doubt, India is great and illustrious. Its on top as far as its heritage, history, philosophy and culture is concerned. Our team of authors and editors has made their best efforts to depict the same greatness of our country and nation in this series. Here is a treasure, bound into books. This is the best example of 'knowledge in a nutshell'.

Needless to say that India is known for its unity in diversity, with its kaleidoscopic variety, it emerges as a wonderful nation. With one of the oldest civilizations in the world, this country has a rich cultural heritage. After independence, through 58 years, India has achieved multifaceted socio-economic progress in addition to creating a niche in the international community and the new world order.

India is a federation of states and union territories. As of now, there are 28 states and 7 union territories in the country, all these states have made tremendous progress in almost every sphere since 1947, when the nation had attained freedom. Various Indian states have shown an all round advancement and stupendous progress in political, cultural, economic and social areas.

India is a vast country. All states enjoy autonomy to a great extent and flourish in their own manner. Some states are similar to each other while others are quite different from the rest. People of one state have little authentic knowledge about other states. This situation, in some cases, creates problems and difficulties with no ready solution at hand. Hence this comprehensive and exhaustive encyclopaedic work. Every state and union territory has been covered in a separate book, each book, devoted to one state or U.T. covers life and people under various heads – Land, People, Heritage, History, Geography, Economy, Polity, Tourism, etc.

***The Beautiful India*** series is an asset for all scholars, researchers, teachers, students and ofcourse, the general readers.



S.A. Rahman (Syed Amanur Rahman), a post-graduate from Delhi University with a post-graduate Diploma in Advanced Studies in Publishing from Oxford Brookes University, is a scholar and an academic in his own right. Formerly, he was Editor, National Book Trust India (under Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India). During his tenure, spanning over twenty five years, he served as Language Editor and Series Editor. He looked after NBT's prestigious series, *Adaan-Pradaan*, *National Biography Series* and was involved in exchange of literary works of major Indian languages. Over the years, he has been acknowledged as an expert on Indian literature and culture. He represented NBT in London Book Fair and Cairo World Book Fair, apart from various book fairs and book exhibitions held in India.

Rahman has visited United Kingdom, France, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Egypt, etc.

He has several books to his credit, most of them being on Indian literature and culture. Now, he has edited this research based voluminous series: **The Beautiful India**, covering all Indian States and Union Territories in separate books.

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# The Beautiful India

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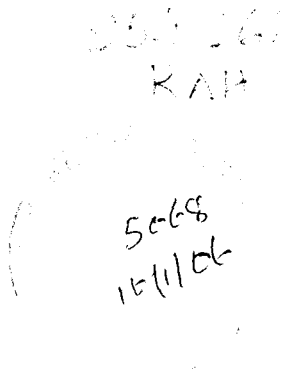
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## STATE AT A GLANCE

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**Area:** 78,438 sq. km.; **Capital:** Dispur; **Language:** Assamese, (Bengali for Barak Valley); **Districts:** 23; **Population:** 2,66,38,407; **Males:** 13,787,799; **Females:** 12,850,608; ; **Growth Rate** (per cent) 1991-2001:18.85; **Density** (persons per sq km.): 340; **Urban Population:**12.72%; **Sex Ratio** (Females per 1000 Males): 932; **Literacy:** 64.28%; **Males:** 71.93; **Females:** 56.03.

**Governor:** Lt. Gen. (Rtd.) Ajai Singh. **Chief Minister:** Tarun Gogoi (Congress I). It is believed that Assam is only the anglicised version of 'Asom'— the name the Ahoms gave to the country, when they conquered it.

**Physiography :** Geographically Assam is a shadow of its former self. It has been reduced to one-third of its original size in thirty years.

In the partition of India (1947) Assam lost Sylhet district, except a major portion of Karimganj sub-division, to East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. Out of the 27 lakh population of Sylhet, Assam retained only 7 lakh, the rest going to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Thereafter, Assam continued to lose territory and population step by step as Nagaland,

Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh were separated from it.

Assam, as it is today, may be divided into two important physical regions—the Barak valley and the Brahmaputra valley.

Assam is dominated by the Brahmaputra river. (length: 2900 km). Its drainage area is roughly 935,500 sq. km.

Rainfall, one of the highest in the world (between 178 and 305 cm), is concentrated in 4 months, June to September. The state experiences floods and droughts.

**History :** An ideal meeting ground for diverse races, Assam gave shelter to streams of human waves carrying with them distinct cultures and trends of civilization. Austro-Asiatics, Negritos, Dravidians, Alpines, Indo - Mongoloids, Tibeto-Burmese and Aryans penetrated into Assam through different routes and contributed in their own way towards the unique fusion of a new community which came to be known in later history as the Assamese. Assam, however, remained predominantly a land of the Tibeto - Burmese. The vast section of the people of Assam belong either to this stock or owe, their origin to the fusion of this stock with other racial groups.

Assam, known in ancient lore as Kamarupa, originally included in addition to modern Assam, parts of modern Bengal and Bangladesh. Guwahati, the pulsating centre of Assam, is an ancient town whose history goes back to the puranic days. The city, anciently known as Pragjyotishpur, was said to have been founded by King Narakasur, who is mentioned in the puranas and epics. His son Bhagadatta led a large elephant force to the battlefield of Kurukshetra, and fell fighting on the side of the Kauravas.

In the 13th century, the country was conquered by the Ahoms under Sukapha, a prince of the Shan tribe, in the upper Irravaddy Valley.

The advent of the Ahoms changed the course of Assam's history. They appointed Barphukans (Viceroys) to rule Kamarupa and Gauhati became the capital of these Viceroys. The last of the Viceroys was Badanchandra, who in an ill-advised bid for power invited the Burmese to help him. The Burmese dislodged the Ahoms and dismissed their Viceroy, Badanchandra. The Ahoms appealed to the British for help.

The British defeated the Burmese in several battles, in what has since been called the First Burmese War. With the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826, the Burmese vacated Assam, leaving the British in possession.

The conquered territory was placed under the administration of an Agent to the Governor General. In 1832 Cachar was annexed to Assam. In 1835, the Jaintia Hills were made part of Assam. (Upper Assam was annexed to Bengal in 1839). In 1874 a separate province of Assam under a Chief Commissioner was created, with Shillong as capital.

On the partition of Bengal in 1905, Assam was united to the eastern districts of Bengal under a Lt. Governor. From 1912 the Chief Commissionership of Assam was revived, and in 1921 a Governorship was created.

On the partition of India almost the whole of the predominantly Muslim district of Sylhet was merged with East Bengal (present Bangladesh). Dewanagiri in North Kamarupa was ceded to Bhutan in 1951.

In 1948, the North East Frontier Agency was separated from Assam, for security reasons. In 1963, Nagaland was carved out of Assam as a full-fledged state. On 21st Jan. 1972, Meghalaya was cut out of Assam, as a separate state and Mizoram became a Union Territory. In 1987, Mizoram was granted statehood.

**Administration :** The Legislature consists of only one house—the Legislative Assembly (126 members).

**Districts**

<i>District</i>	<i>Area (sq. km.)</i>	<i>Population (2001)</i>	<i>Headquarter</i>
Barpeta	3,245	1,642,420	Barpeta
Bongaigaon	2,510	906,315	Bongaigaon
Cachar	3,786	1,442,141	Silchar
Darrang	3,481	1,503,943	Mangaldoi
Dhemaji	3,237	569,468	Dhemaji
Dhubri	2,838	1,634,589	Dhubri
Dibrugarh	3,381	1,172,056	Dibrugarh
Goalpara	1,824	822,306	Goalpara
Golaghat	3,502	945,781	Golaghat
Hailakandi	1,327	542,978	Hailakandi
North Cachar Hills	4,888	186,189	Haflong
Jorhat	2,851	1,009,197	Jorhat
Kamrup	4,345	2,515,030	Guwahati
Karbi Anglong	10,434	8112,320	Diphu
Karimganj	1,839	1,003,678	Karimganj
Kokrajhar	3,129	930,404	Kokrajhar
Lakhimpur	2,277	889,325	North Lakhimpur
Morigaon	1,704	775,874	Morigaon
Nagaon	3,831	2,315,387	Nagaon
Nalbari	2,257	1,138,184	Nalbari
Sibsagar	2,668	1,052,802	Sibsagar
Sonitpur	5,225.2	1,677,874	Tezpur
Tinsukia	3,476.0	1,150,146	Tinsukia

**Economy** : Assam is rich in mineral wealth: oil, coal, limestone, refractory clay, dolomite and natural gas. Tea is a major industry. There are nearly 750 tea plantations in the state. Assam contributes 15.6% of world's tea production and 55% of the country's tea output. Assam is first state in the

country where oil was struck in 1889 at Digboi. The state has four oil refineries. There is also a public sector fertilizer factory at Namrup. The Numaligarh refinery (3m. tonnes capacity, cost Rs. 2350 crore) was commissioned on July 9, 1999. Other industries are sugar, jute, silk, paper, plywood, rice and oil drilling. Important cottage industries are handloom, sericulture, manufacture of cane and bamboo articles, carpentry, smithy and manufacture of brass utensils. Assam is the largest producer in the world of the golden coloured 'muga' silk.

Total length of roads: 33,110 km. Railway network: 3,816 km.

There are six civil airports, at Dibrugarh, Guwahati, Jorhat, Silchar, Lakhimpur and Tezpur.

The government has demanded a Rs.1000-crore central assistance for the construction of a permanent capital at Dispur.

### **Universities and Institutes**

1. Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, Pin: 785 013;
2. Assam University, Silchar, Pin: 788 011;
3. Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Pin: 786 004;
4. Guwahati University, Gopinath Bardoloi Nagar, Guwahat  
Pin : 781 014;
4. Guwahati University, Guwahati, Pin: 781 014;
5. Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, Pin: 787 001;
6. Tezpur University, Tezpur, Pin: 784 025.

**Tourist Centres** : Guwahati-Kaziranga-Sibsagar and Guwahati-Manas are two travel circuits promoted by the Union Government. Additional circuits proposed by the state:  
1. Guwahati- Bhairabkunda- Orang- Bhaluking Tezpur,  
2. Guwahati-Diphu-Haflong-Silchar. Kaziranga National Park, famous for one-horned rhinos and elephants and Manas are two important national parks.