INDIA

HISTORY

India's story is one of the oldest in the world. Great empires rose here, and in 1947 India became a free country.

The Indus Valley Cities

About 4,500 years ago, people built large cities along the Indus River. Two of the biggest, Mohenjo-daro (moh-HEN-joh DAR-oh) and Harappa, are in Pakistan today. Their streets ran in straight lines, and covered drains carried waste water away. Traders marked goods with small stone seals carved with animals. No one can read their writing yet.

Early Kingdoms and the Buddha

More than 3,000 years ago, people in the north began to chant hymns called the Vedas (VAY-duhz). The Vedas are holy to Hindus today. Kingdoms grew along the Ganges River. About 2,500 years ago, a prince named Siddhartha Gautama left his palace to learn why people suffer. People called him the Buddha, and his teachings became Buddhism.



Ashoka and the Mauryas

Around 320 BC, Chandragupta Maurya founded an **empire** that grew to cover most of India. His grandson Ashoka fought a war to win Kalinga, on the east coast. The war cost many lives, and Ashoka felt sorry. He became a Buddhist and promised to rule by kindness. He had his rules carved on rocks and pillars and built a **stupa** at Sanchi.

The Gupta Golden Age

From about AD 320 to 550, the Gupta kings ruled much of northern India. This time is often called a golden age. The astronomer Aryabhata (ar-yah-BAH-tah) taught that the Earth spins. Indian mathematicians found a way to write any number with just ten digits, including zero. We still use these numbers today.



The Mughal Empire

In 1526, Babur, a ruler from Central Asia, won the Battle of Panipat and founded the Mughal Empire. His grandson Akbar ruled for nearly 50 years and invited people of many religions to share their beliefs at his court. Later, Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal. Mughal builders mixed Persian and Indian styles in forts, gardens and mosques.

British Rule and Independence

In 1600, English merchants formed the East India Company to trade for spices and cotton cloth. Over time, the Company built an army and took control of much of India. In 1857, Indian soldiers in its army rose up. The British won, and in 1858 the British government took over. Mohandas Gandhi led millions in peaceful **protest**. In 1930, he walked about 240 miles to the sea to make salt, against a British salt tax. On August 15, 1947, India won its **independence**. The land was also divided to form a new country, Pakistan. Today India has more people than any other country, and its spacecraft have reached the Moon and Mars.

INDIA THROUGH TIME

2500 BC	261 BC	AD 320	1526	1600	1632	1858	1930	1947
Indus Valley cities thrive	Ashoka wins Kalinga	Gupta rule begins	Mughal Empire begins	East India Company forms	Taj Mahal is begun	British rule begins	Gandhi's Salt March	India becomes independent

PEOPLE TO KNOW

The Buddha	Teacher whose ideas began Buddhism
Ashoka	Maurya emperor who turned to peace
Akbar	Mughal emperor who welcomed all faiths
Rabindranath Tagore	Poet who wrote India's national anthem
Mahatma Gandhi	Led peaceful protest for independence

WORDS TO KNOW

empire	many lands and peoples ruled by one government
stupa	a dome-shaped building that holds holy objects
protest	speaking or acting out against something
independence	freedom from being ruled by another country