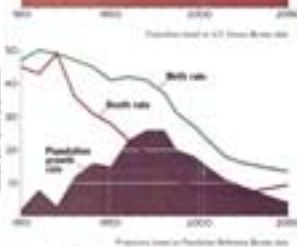
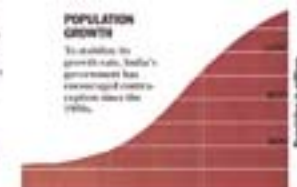


By the turn of the century, India will be home to more than a billion people. By mid-century it will surpass China as the world's most populous country. Although there is much of the nation's population—most of modern India, many urbanized cities, and some rural areas—has been growing slowly, the population is now growing at a rate of nearly 2 percent a year. The government's most urgent priorities, but significant decreases are in the decades ahead. Until then the country must try to keep up with the housing, health, and education needs of 14 million more people every year.

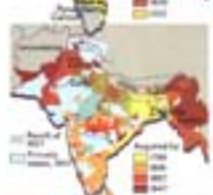
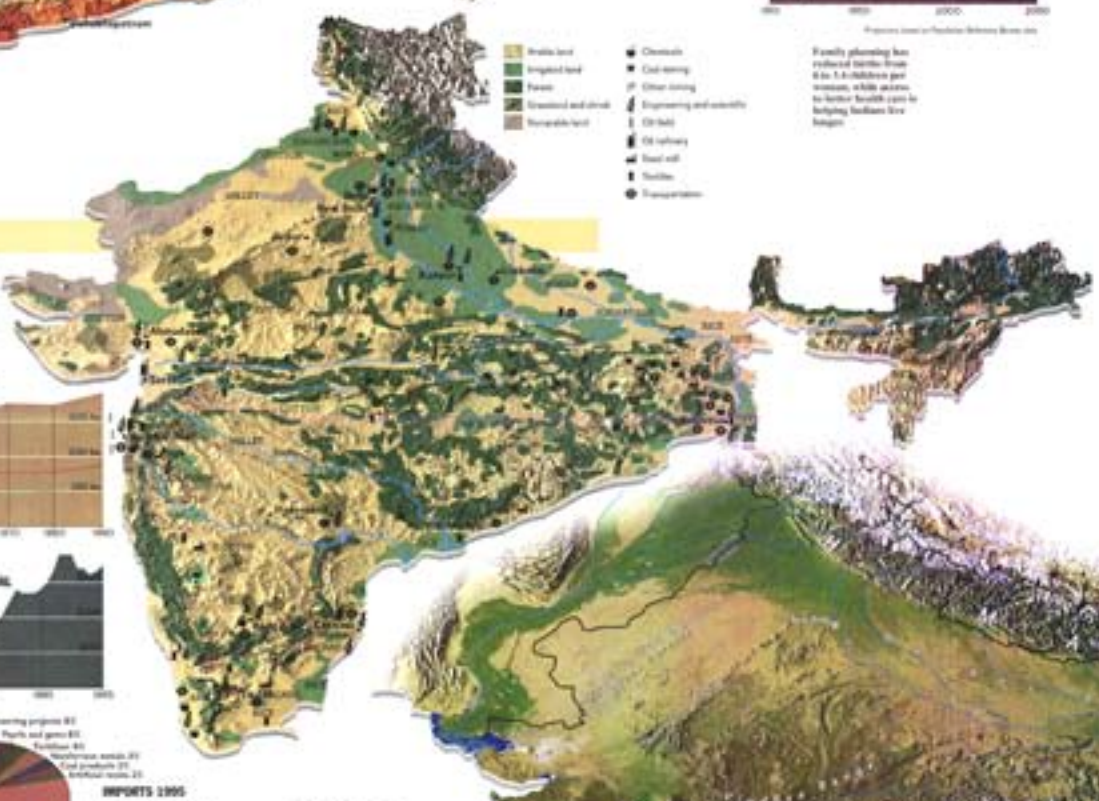
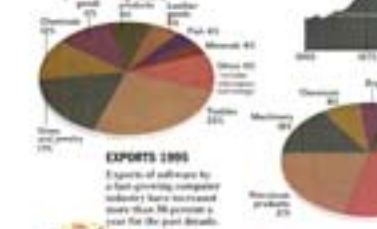


Family planning has reduced India's birth rate from 5 to 3 children per woman, while access to better health care is helping Indian life expectancy.

ECONOMIC BREAKTHROUGHS

Since the green revolution introduced high-yield rice and wheat to India in the late 1960s, the country has become a market of agricultural success. Production of grains alone contributes more than 25 percent of the economy each year. India even exports surplus grains to other nations, helping to support its slogan: "We may not be able to explore other planets," said Vikram Sarabhai, the father of India's space program, "but we must be second to none in applying technology to food problems."

The green farming begins in the 1,500-mile-wide northern plains, dominated by the fertile valleys of the Brahmaputra and Ganges Rivers. While subsistence farmers across the country raise wheat, millet, and other staples from dry upland hillsides, commercial growers with thousands of acres raise rice in the water-logged fields of the world's leading producer of rice and sugarcane.



The Gupta Empire

The classical period of Hindu art, literature, and science (c. 320 to 650) took root during the Gupta dynasty, reaching its peak during the reign of Chandragupta II (c. 395 to 415). Building on the campaigns of his father, Samudragupta, he extended the empire's northern and western borders. The Gupta rulers promoted Buddhism, an early form of Hinduism, throughout their realm. Through the use of Gupta's coinage, Chandragupta held his empire together in the fifth century, the empire soon collapsed.

Sultanate of Delhi

One invading force after another played and reshaped India from the 11th to the 17th centuries, an era of political turmoil and shifting boundaries. An Islam arrived in a Muslim sultanate was established in Delhi in 1206. It soon expanded north, founding the Sultanate of Delhi. The sultanate's domain of the powerful Tughlaq dynasty (1320-1414) a Muslim (Jahangir) ruled central Asia, followed the last Delhi sultan and established the Mughal Empire that would shape the subcontinent for the next 300 years.

Mughal Empire

In the 16th century began to rise with Akbar (reign 1556-1605) a new ruler. Akbar and his successors made trade agreements with powerful Hindu empires such as the Marathas (1700-1800) to set a series of religious tolerance. His son and grandson presided over an era of growth in art and architecture. Akbar's grandson eventually overthrew the empire, which held its power as a 150 million subjects as its struggle between ruling after his death in 1707.

British Expansion

Taking advantage of the lack of central power in China, the British East India Company began taking over parts of the subcontinent through the conflicts between local rulers and growing British strength in the region. By the mid-18th century, British rule had spread across the subcontinent. The British were determined to protect their interests, and British rule spread across the subcontinent. In 1858, the British government took direct control of India, and British rule spread across the subcontinent. In 1947, British rule spread across the subcontinent.

Road to Independence

British control of the East India Company's India in 1757. British rule spread across the subcontinent. In 1858, the British government took direct control of India, and British rule spread across the subcontinent. In 1947, British rule spread across the subcontinent.

INDIA FROM SPACE

A satellite image reveals a subcontinent still in the making. Using a historic plane, the year 1947 that became India remained in the Asian continent and favored the Himalayas range spread into elevations of 10,000 feet. From there, the Indian subcontinent is river-bounded and crop-rich plains. In the Great Indian Desert, in the west, irrigation from Indian River subarctic supports millet cultivation. The Deccan Plateau, flanked by the low mountains of the Eastern and Western Ghats, sits in the Western Ghats, just north of Andhra Pradesh at 3,541 feet the highest peak south of the Himalayas.

With the world's highest mountains to the north and the Indian Ocean tracking all other sides, the subcontinent is locked into the monsoon weather systems of monsoon winds.



On the eve of the 21st century India is positioning itself as an emerging economic power—already, because of its sheer size, the fifth largest economy in the world. The country counts among its 850 million people a growing middle class. Well-educated, they represent a new market whose impact on the economy can already be felt in their demand for consumer goods and services. Seven years ago most of India received one television station; today there are more than 50 cable channels. Automobile sales are expected to double to nearly 500,000 by the year 2000, and wealthy Indians are clamoring to buy the \$6,000 Maruti, a Japanese-style minicar.

Despite this new affluence, India still suffers one of the world's lowest per capita incomes, with illiteracy, unemployment, and



India

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