South Asia includes the Indian subcontinent and its nearby islands. It is a region of ancient cultures, spectacular landforms, and rapidly growing populations.

**PLACE** The Taj Mahal, at Agra, India, is said to be one of the world's most beautiful buildings. Constructed of marble, it was built in the 17th century by Emperor Shah Jahan as a tomb for his wife.
RESEARCH WEB LINKS
LOCATION
South Asia is mainly a triangular peninsula that juts out from the Asian mainland into the Indian Ocean.
REGION
The seven countries of South Asia have great cultural and religious diversity.
HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION
Life in South Asia is greatly influenced by its varied landforms and its extreme weather, especially the seasonal monsoons.
For more information on South Asia . . .

Elephants wearing richly decorated cloth coverings are central figures in the 14-night Esala Perahera festival in Kandy, Sri Lanka. It is one of many religious festivals held in South Asia.

LOCATION
Elephants wearing richly decorated cloth coverings are central figures in the 14-night Esala Perahera festival in Kandy, Sri Lanka. It is one of many religious festivals held in South Asia.

REGION
The world’s highest mountains, the majestic snow-capped Himalayas, form the northern border of the Indian subcontinent. Mt. Everest, to the right, is the world’s tallest peak at 29,035 feet.
Today, South Asia faces the issues previewed here. As you read Chapters 24 and 25, you will learn helpful background information. You will study the issues themselves in Chapter 26. In a small group, answer the questions below. Then have a class discussion of your answers.

**Exploring the Issues**

1. **POPULATION** What might be some of the effects of rapid population growth on both humans and the environment?

2. **EXTREME WEATHER** Consider news stories that you have heard or read about that refer to extreme weather in various parts of South Asia. Make a list of the types of extreme weather that affect South Asians.

3. **TERRITORIAL DISPUTE** Search the Internet for the latest information about the dispute over Kashmir. What position does each side hold?

**POPULATION EXPLOSION**

How can South Asia’s population growth be managed?

Many problems come with rapid population growth, including crowded cities. Kolkata, pictured here, had a population of more than 4 million in the 1990s, and a population density of more than 61,900 persons per square mile.

For more on these issues in South Asia . . .

hmhsocialstudies.com

**CURRENT EVENTS**
How do people cope with extreme weather?
People find a way to continue with their lives despite the severe flooding that plagues South Asia during the summer monsoons. Residents of Dhaka, Bangladesh, shown here, navigate flooded streets as best they can.

Case Study
How can India and Pakistan resolve their dispute over Kashmir?

India and Pakistan have spent millions of dollars to develop nuclear weapons in their continuing dispute over Kashmir. This has left less money to spend on improving the lives of their citizens.
Use the Unit Atlas to add to your knowledge of South Asia. As you look at the maps and charts, notice geographic patterns and specific details about the region. For example, the chart to the right gives details about the rivers and mountains of South Asia.

After studying the illustrations, graphs, and physical map on these two pages, jot down in your notebook the answers to the following questions.

### Making Comparisons

1. How much longer is the Nile than each of the three major rivers of South Asia?

2. Compare the size and population of South Asia to that of the United States. Which is larger in terms of size? Which is larger in terms of population?

3. How do the tallest mountains of South Asia compare to the tallest U.S. mountain?

---

**Comparing Data**

#### Landmass

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Area (sq mi)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>1,656,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental United States</td>
<td>3,165,630</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>1,538,503,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>307,212,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Rivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>River</th>
<th>Length (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ganges</td>
<td>1,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmaputra</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indus</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>2,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nile</td>
<td>4,160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### World’s Tallest Mountains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mountain</th>
<th>Height (feet)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Everest</td>
<td>29,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. McKinley</td>
<td>20,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K2</td>
<td>28,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanchenjunga</td>
<td>28,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makalu</td>
<td>27,824</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Physical Geography**

Patterns of landmass and specific geographic details about the region.
The first great civilization of South Asia developed along the banks of the Indus River more than 4,000 years ago. Study the historical map of the Indus Valley civilization and the political map of South Asia on these two pages. In your notebook, jot down the answers to these questions.

**Making Comparisons**

1. In which countries of modern South Asia was the Indus Valley civilization located? Which of these countries is the larger country?

2. What might have been some of the reasons for a civilization developing at that location?

3. What modern city or cities are closest to the locations of ancient Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, Kalibangan, and Lothal? (In some cases, more than one city will be an acceptable answer.)
These two pages contain a graph and three thematic maps. The graph shows the religions of South Asia. The maps show other important information about religion, population density, and economics. Study these two pages and then jot down in your notebook the answers to the questions below.

Making Comparisons
1. What percentage of the population of Sri Lanka is Hindu, and where are most of the Hindus located? Why might Hindus have settled in Sri Lanka rather than in other areas?
2. Which is the most densely populated country of South Asia?
3. What is the main economic activity in much of South Asia?
Study the information on the countries of South Asia. In your notebook, jot down the answers to these questions.

**Making Comparisons**

1. Which two South Asian countries have the fewest people? Are they the smallest in area? Locate them on the map.

2. Which nation do you think is the poorest? Which factors did you consider in making your choice?

**Sources:**
- Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook, 2010*
- *The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 2010*
- World Health Organization (WHO), 2007

**Notes:**
- GDP (purchasing power parity) is defined as the sum value of all goods and services produced in the country valued at prices prevailing in the United States.
- Includes land and water, when figures are available.

---

**Profile of South Asia**

[Graph showing elevation changes along the Indus River and surrounding areas such as Punjab and Delhi.]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Life Expectancy (years)</th>
<th>Birthrate (per 1,000 pop.)</th>
<th>Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births)</th>
<th>Doctors (per 100,000 pop.) (2000–2004)</th>
<th>GDP* (billions $US)</th>
<th>Import/Export (billions $US)</th>
<th>Literacy Rate (percentage)</th>
<th>Televisions (per 1,000 pop.)</th>
<th>Passenger Cars (per 1,000 pop.)</th>
<th>Total Area* (square miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Dhaka</td>
<td>156,051,000</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>242.2</td>
<td>20.22/15.91</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>55,599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>Thimphu</td>
<td>691,000</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.53/0.51</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>18,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>New Delhi</td>
<td>1,156,898,000</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3,561</td>
<td>253.9/165</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,269,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>396,000</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.76/0.09</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Kathmandu</td>
<td>28,563,000</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.63/0.91</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>56,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Islamabad</td>
<td>174,579,000</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>448.1</td>
<td>28.31/17.87</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>310,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Colombo</td>
<td>21,325,000</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>9.6/7</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>307,212,000</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>14,260.0</td>
<td>1,445/994.7</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>3,794,083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* GDP and Import/Export data are estimates for the year 2010.

Map of South Asia showing the Brahmaputra River, Indus River, Himalaya Mountains, Mt. Everest, and the profile line.
Chapter 24

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF SOUTH ASIA

The Land Where Continents Collided

Essential Question
How do the region’s mountains and rivers affect life in South Asia?

What You Will Learn
In this chapter you will explore a region characterized by extremes of elevation and climate.

SECTION 1
Landforms and Resources

SECTION 2
Climate and Vegetation

SECTION 3
Human–Environment Interaction

Spectacular mountain peaks tower above a valley floor in northern Pakistan.
Landforms and Resources

Main Ideas
- South Asia is a subcontinent of peninsulas bordered by mountains and oceans.
- A wide variety of natural resources helps sustain life in the region.

Places & Terms
Himalaya Mountains
subcontinent
alluvial plain
archipelago
atoll

Connect to the Issues
TERRITORIAL DISPUTE
Kashmir is an area in the western Himalayas on the border of India and Pakistan. It has been a source of dispute between the two countries.

A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE
Thousands of years ago, the Hindus of what is now north India imagined a gigantic mountain reaching more than 80,000 miles into the sky. They believed that this enormous peak, called Mt. Meru, was the center of the physical and spiritual world. In their writings, they described “rivers of sweet water” flowing down the sides of the mountain. While Mt. Meru exists only in myth, it did have a real-life inspiration—Mt. Everest, the world’s tallest mountain peak at 29,035 feet above sea level. Mt. Everest and the other towering peaks of the Himalaya Mountains have been a lure to mountain climbers around the world. Many climbers had died on Everest’s icy slopes before Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, his Sherpa guide, became the first people to reach its summit in 1953.

Mountains and Plateaus
The Himalayas are part of South Asia, a region that includes seven countries—India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. South Asia is sometimes called a subcontinent, a large landmass that is smaller than a continent. In fact, it is often referred to as the Indian subcontinent because India dominates the region. Although South Asia is about half the size of the continental United States, it has more than one billion inhabitants—one-fifth of the world’s population.

Formation of the Himalayas

The land now called the Indian subcontinent was once separated from Asia by an ocean. About 180 million years ago, this land began drifting north toward Asia. About 50 million years ago, the two land masses collided. The land in the collision zone was forced upward to form the Himalayas.
As you saw on the map on page 543, natural barriers help to separate the South Asian subcontinent from the rest of Asia. The Himalayas and other mountain ranges form the northern border, while water surrounds the rest of the region. The South Asian peninsula, which extends south into the Indian Ocean, is bordered by the Arabian Sea to the west and the Bay of Bengal to the east.

**NORTHERN MOUNTAINS** Millions of years ago, the land that is now South Asia was actually part of East Africa. About 50 million years ago, it split off and drifted northward. As the illustration on page 551 shows, it collided with Central Asia. The gradual collision of these two large tectonic plates forced the land upward into enormous mountain ranges. These mountains, which are still rising, now form the northern edge of the South Asian subcontinent.

The magnificent Himalayas are a system of parallel mountain ranges. They contain the world’s highest mountains, with nearly two dozen peaks rising to 24,000 feet or above. The Himalayas stretch for 1,500 miles and form a giant barrier between the Indian subcontinent and China. Mt. Everest, the world’s tallest peak, sits at the heart of the Himalayas. Nestled high up within these mountains are the remote, landlocked kingdoms of Nepal and Bhutan.

The Hindu Kush are mountains that lie at the west end of the Himalayas. They form a rugged barrier separating Pakistan from Afghanistan to the north. For centuries, the Hindu Kush stood in the way of Central Asian tribes trying to invade India. Bloody battles have been fought over control of major land routes through these mountains, including the Khyber Pass. The mighty Karakoram Mountains rise in the northeastern portion of the chain. They are the home of the world’s second highest peak, K2.

**SOUTHERN PLATEAUS** The collision of tectonic plates that pushed up the Himalayas also created several smaller mountain ranges in central India, including the Vindhya (VIHN•dyuh) Range. To the south lies the Deccan Plateau. This large tableland tilts east, toward the Bay of Bengal, and covers much of southern India. Two mountain ranges, the Western Ghats and the Eastern Ghats, flank the plateau, separating it from the coast. These mountains also block most moist winds and keep rain from reaching the interior. As a result, the Deccan is a largely arid region.

**Rivers, Deltas, and Plains**

The Northern Indian Plain, or Indo-Gangetic Plain, lies between the Deccan Plateau and the northern mountain ranges. This large lowland region stretches across northern India and into Bangladesh. It is formed by three great river systems: the Indus, the Ganges, and the Brahmaputra.

**GREAT RIVERS** The three great rivers of South Asia have their origins among the snowcapped peaks of the high
Himalayas. The Indus flows west and then south through Pakistan to the Arabian Sea. The Ganges drops down from the central Himalayas and flows eastward across northern India. The Brahmaputra winds its way east, then west and south through Bangladesh. The Ganges and Brahmaputra eventually meet to form one huge river delta before entering the Bay of Bengal.

**FERTILE PLAINS** These rivers play a key role in supporting life in South Asia. Their waters provide crucial irrigation for agricultural lands. They also carry rich soil, called alluvial soil, on their journey down from the mountains. When the rivers overflow their banks, they deposit this soil on **alluvial plains**, lands that are rich farmlands. As a result, the Indo-Gangetic Plain is one of the most fertile farming regions in the world.

The Indo-Gangetic Plain is also the most heavily populated part of South Asia. In fact, the area contains about three-fifths of India’s population. Many of the subcontinent’s largest cities, including New Delhi and Kolkata in India, and Daka in Bangladesh, are located there. Population densities at the eastern end of the plain, particularly in the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta, are especially high, as you can see on the map on page 547. To the west, in the area between the Indus and Ganges rivers, the plain becomes drier and requires more irrigation. To the south lies one of the world’s most arid regions—the Thar, or Great Indian Desert.

**Offshore Islands**

Two island groups are also countries of South Asia—Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Sri Lanka is located in the Indian Ocean just off India’s southeastern tip. The Maldives island group is situated farther off the Indian coast to the southwest.

**SRI LANKA: THE SUBCONTINENT’S “TEAR DROP”**

Sri Lanka (sree LAHNG-kuh) is a large, tear-shaped island country. It is a lush tropical land of great natural beauty. Dominating the center of the island is a range of high, rugged mountains that reach more than 8,000 feet in elevation. Many small rivers cascade from these mountains to the lowlands below. The northern side of the island consists of low hills and gently rolling farmland. Circling the island is a coastal plain that includes long, palm-fringed beaches.

**THE MALDIVES ARCHIPELAGO** The Maldives comprise an **archipelago**, or island group, of more than 1,200 small islands. These islands stretch north to south for almost 500 miles off the Indian coast near the equator. The islands (shown at right) are the low-lying tops of submerged volcanoes, surrounded by coral reefs and shallow lagoons. This type of island is called an **atoll**. The total land area of the Maldives is 115 square miles (roughly twice the size of Washington, D.C.). Only about 200 of the islands are inhabited.
Natural Resources

The natural beauty of the southern islands is just one of the many physical assets of South Asia. In fact, the subcontinent boasts a wide variety of natural resources that support human life. At the same time, South Asia’s rapidly growing population puts great pressure on its land and resources.

WATER AND SOIL South Asia relies heavily on its soil and water resources to provide food through farming and fishing. The great river systems that bring alluvial soil down from the mountains help enrich the land. They also bring the water necessary for crops to grow. Both small- and large-scale irrigation projects divert the water to the farmlands that need it. Many types of fish are also found in South Asian rivers and coastal waters, including mackerel, sardines, carp, and catfish.

South Asian waters also provide a means of transportation and power. Boats travel the rivers and coastlines, carrying goods and people from town to town. Governments also are working to harness hydroelectric energy from the waters. For example, India and Pakistan have a number of hydroelectric and irrigation projects underway.

FORESTS Timber and other forest products are another important resource in South Asia. Rain forests in India produce hardwoods like sal and teak, along with bamboo and the fragrant sandalwood. Highland forests in Bhutan and Nepal have thick stands of pine, fir, and other softwood trees. Deforestation is a severe problem, however. It causes

Background

Only one-tenth of India’s original forest cover remains uncut.
soil erosion, flooding, landslides, and loss of wildlife habitats. Overcutting has devastated formerly dense forests in India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

**MINERALS** Much of South Asia’s energy is still generated from mineral resources. For example, India ranks fourth in the world in coal production and has enough petroleum to supply about half its oil needs. India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh also have important natural gas resources. Uranium deposits in India provide fuel for nuclear energy.

South Asia also has large iron-ore deposits, particularly in India’s Deccan Plateau. India is one of the world’s leading exporters of iron ore, which is also used in that country’s large steel industry. Other South Asian minerals include manganese, gypsum, chromium, bauxite, and copper.

India supplies most of the world’s mica, a key component in electrical equipment. This is one of the reasons that India has a growing computer industry. Mica is also found in Nepal. India and Sri Lanka both have substantial gemstone deposits. India is traditionally known for its diamonds, while Sri Lanka produces dozens of types of precious and semi-precious stones. The island is most famous for its beautiful sapphires and rubies.

In this section, you read about the landforms and resources of South Asia. In the next section, you will learn about climate and vegetation.
Every April and May, much of South Asia bakes in the heat. People endure temperatures that regularly top 100°F. Dust fills the air, and streams dry up. People walk for miles looking for water. Then—when it seems that no one can survive another day—the clouds roll in. The skies open up, and the rains come. People celebrate when the land turns green.

But their celebration is short-lived, as the downpour continues. Soon, the ground can hold no more water. Rivers overflow their banks. Families are forced from their homes as towns and cities are flooded. Thousands may die before the waters eventually recede, and the land dries out. South Asians see this cycle repeat itself each year.

Half of the climate zones that exist on Earth can be found in South Asia. This means that South Asians must adapt to widely varying conditions.

South Asia has six main climate zones, as you can see on the map on page 557. The highland zone has the coldest climate. This is the area of the Himalayas and other northern mountains, where snow exists year-round. The lower elevations, which include the lush foothills and valleys of Nepal, Bhutan, and northern India, are much warmer. They are in the humid subtropical zone that stretches across South Asia. The Indo-Gangetic Plain also occupies much of this region.

The semiarid zone—a region of high temperatures and light rainfall—is found at the western end of the Plain and in parts of the Deccan Plateau. The desert zone covers much of the lower Indus Valley, in the borderlands of western India and southern Pakistan. The driest part of the desert is home to the Thar Desert, which straddles the borderlands of northwest India and southeast Pakistan.

What does this photo show about the climate and vegetation of the Thar Desert?
this area, the Thar Desert, gets very little rain—averaging 10 inches a year. The tropical wet zone is found along the western and eastern coasts of India and in Bangladesh. Temperatures are high, and rainfall is heavy. In fact, Cherrapunji in northeastern India holds the world’s record for rainfall in a month—366 inches. Southern Sri Lanka also has a tropical wet climate, while the north is tropical wet and dry.

**MONSOONS AND CYCLONES** Although climate varies in South Asia, the region as a whole is greatly affected by **monsoons**, or seasonal winds. Each year, from October through February, dry winds blow across South Asia from the northeast. From June through September, the winds blow in from the southwest, bringing moist ocean air. Heavy rains fall, especially in the southwestern and Ganges Delta portions of South Asia. The illustration on page 598 shows how the monsoons blow across the region.

This rainfall is crucial to life on the subcontinent. Yet, the monsoons can cause severe hardship for millions, especially those living in the lowlands of India and Bangladesh. The monsoons also are highly unpredictable. Some areas may get too little rain, while others get too much. The monsoons are a sometimes beneficial, sometimes difficult feature of life in South Asia.

The most extreme weather pattern of South Asia is the **cyclone**, a violent storm with fierce winds and heavy rain. Cyclones are most destructive in Bangladesh, a low-lying coastal region where high waves can swamp large parts of the country. A severe cyclone can cause...
Saving the Tigers
South Asia’s magnificent Bengal Tiger was nearing extinction in the early 1970s. Hunters killed them for sport and skins and as a source of traditional medicine. Only about 1,800 remained.

Today, through the efforts of conservationists and governments, the Bengal Tiger is a protected species. Tigers roam in protected jungle and grassland areas mainly in India and Bangladesh, but also in parts of Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar. Yet they remain at risk. In 2007, some experts estimated that the number of tigers in India had dropped from 3,700 in 2002 to about 1,500.

Vegetation: Desert to Rain Forest
Plant life in South Asia varies according to climate and altitude. As you can see on the map on page 557, vegetation ranges from desert shrub and temperate grasslands to dense forests in the wettest areas.

VEGETATION ZONES The most forested parts of South Asia lie within the tropical wet zone, particularly the western coast of India and southern Bangladesh. Lush rain forests of teak, ebony, and bamboo are found there, along with mangroves in the delta areas. In the highland zone, which includes northern India, Nepal, and Bhutan, there are forests of pine, fir, and other evergreens. The river valleys and foothills of the humid subtropical zone have forests of sal, oak, chestnut, and various palms. But deforestation is a problem everywhere. For example, less than one-fifth of India’s original forests remain. Cutting down forests has caused soil erosion, flooding, climate changes, and lost wildlife habitats.

In the semiarid areas of South Asia, such as the Deccan Plateau and the Pakistan-India border, there is less vegetation. The main plant life is desert shrubs and grasses. The driest areas, like the Thar Desert, have little plant life, and as a result, few people live there. The tropical wet and dry climate of northern Sri Lanka produces both grasses and trees. How South Asians interact with their environment will be discussed in the next section.

Using the Atlas Use the atlas on pages 543 and 547. What is the average population density in the Thar Desert?

Assessment

1 Places & Terms Explain the importance of each of the following places and terms.
   * monsoon
   * cyclone

2 Taking Notes
   PLACE Review the notes you took for this section.
   Climate and Vegetation
   * How many different climate zones does South Asia have?
   * What percentage of India’s original forest remains today?

3 Main Ideas
   a. In what part of South Asia is there a desert climate?
   b. What are monsoons, and when do they affect South Asia?
   c. Where are South Asia’s tropical rain forests located?

4 Geographic Thinking
   Making Inferences What might be some of the long-term effects of deforestation on life in South Asia?
   Think about:
   * soil erosion and flooding
   * climate changes
   * lost wildlife habitats

SEEING PATTERNS Do more research on the different trees that grow in South Asia, such as teak, ebony, and bamboo. Create a sketch map of the region that shows where these various trees grow.
Reading a Weather Map

Suppose you have decided to take a trip to South Asia and want to know what the weather in the area you are going to visit will be like. To see what the weather is predicted to be for the next several days, you would look at a weather map. Most daily newspapers and news broadcasts show weather maps for a region or a country every day.

**THE LANGUAGE OF MAPS** A weather map shows weather conditions and patterns for a specific area at a point in time. Weather maps show temperatures, precipitation, weather fronts (rapid changes in weather), and air pressure. The weather map below shows weather conditions in South Asia on a typical February day during the winter monsoon season.

### Weather Map of South Asia

1. **Temperature in °F (°C)**
   - Over 90°F (32°C)
   - 70° to 90°F (21° to 32°C)
   - 50° to 70°F (10° to 21°C)
   - 30° to 50°F (-1° to 10°C)
   - 10° to 30°F (-12° to -1°C)
   - Rain
   - Snow

2. **High pressure**
3. **Low pressure**
4. **Cold front**
5. **Warm front**
6. **Stationary front**

### Reading a Weather Map

Suppose you have decided to take a trip to South Asia and want to know what the weather in the area you are going to visit will be like. To see what the weather is predicted to be for the next several days, you would look at a weather map. Most daily newspapers and news broadcasts show weather maps for a region or a country every day.

**THE LANGUAGE OF MAPS** A weather map shows weather conditions and patterns for a specific area at a point in time. Weather maps show temperatures, precipitation, weather fronts (rapid changes in weather), and air pressure. The weather map below shows weather conditions in South Asia on a typical February day during the winter monsoon season.

### Map and Graph Skills Assessment

1. **Drawing Conclusions**
   - Which South Asian cities are having temperatures over 70°F?

2. **Making Comparisons**
   - Which area of South Asia would have the most pleasant weather conditions for a visitor at the time?

3. **Making Inferences**
   - Judging from the map, will the weather in northwestern India stay the same or change?
A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE Hinduism is the religion of most Indians. During one Hindu religious festival, millions of Indians gather near the city of Allahabad, where the Ganges and Yamuna rivers meet. A temporary tent city goes up, complete with markets, temples, and teahouses. People visit the market stalls and pray at the temples. They also watch plays based on Hindu myths and legends.

Mainly, though, the Hindus wait for the appointed moment when they will wade into the Ganges and wash their sins away in its holy waters. To Hindus, the Ganges River is not only an important water resource, but it is also a sacred river. It is the earthly home of the Hindu goddess Ganga.

Living Along the Ganges

The Ganges is the most well-known of all the South Asian rivers. It flows more than 1,500 miles from its source in a Himalayan glacier to the Bay of Bengal. Along the way, it drains a huge area nearly three times the size of France. This area is home to about 350 million people. Although it is shorter than both the Indus and Brahmaputra rivers, the impact of the Ganges on human life in the region is enormous.

A SACRED RIVER The Ganges is extremely important for the livelihood of Indians. It provides water for drinking, farming, and transportation. Just as important, though, is the spiritual significance of the river. The Ganges is known in India as Gangamai, which means “Mother Ganges.” In Bangladesh, where the Ganges joins the Brahmaputra, the river is called the Padma. According to Hindu beliefs, the Ganges is a sacred river that brings life to its people. As you read above, the Hindus worship the river as a goddess, and they believe its waters have healing powers.

Many temples and sacred sites line the banks of the Ganges. In some places, wide stone steps lead down to the water. Pilgrims come from all parts of the world to drink and bathe in its waters. They also come to scatter the ashes of deceased family members on the river.

At Varanasi (shown at right), one of the most sacred sites on the Ganges, thousands of people gather every day. As the sun rises, Hindu pilgrims enter the water for purification and prayer. They float baskets of flowers and burning candles on the water, as bells ring and trumpeters blow on conch shells. It is a daily celebration of their faith in the Ganges and its sacred waters.
A POLLUTED RIVER  Unfortunately for the people of India, the Ganges is in trouble. After centuries of intense human use, it has become one of the most polluted rivers in the world. Millions of gallons of raw sewage and industrial waste flow into the river every day. The bodies of dead animals float on the water. Even human corpses are thrown into the river. As a result, the water is poisoned with toxic chemicals and deadly bacteria. Thousands of people who bathe in the river or drink the water become ill with stomach or intestinal diseases. Some develop life-threatening illnesses, such as hepatitis, typhoid, or cholera.

Since 1986, the Indian government has tried to restore the health of the river. Plans have called for a network of sewage treatment plants to clean up the water and for tougher regulations on industrial polluters. So far, however, progress has been slow. Few of the proposed treatment plants are in operation, and factories and cities are still dumping waste into the river.

Pollution in the Ganges remains an enormous problem. It will take a great deal of time, effort, and money to clean up the river. It will also require a change in the way people view the river. According to many Hindu believers, the Ganges is too holy to be harmed by pollution. If there is a problem with the water, they believe that “Mother Ganges” will fix it.

MOVEMENT  Each year, millions of Hindu pilgrims come to the city of Varanasi, in northern India, to bathe in the waters of the Ganges—the sacred river of their religion.

The Ganges River

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>1,560 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Gangotri glacier, western Himalayas, 10,302 feet above sea level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouth</td>
<td>Bay of Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta Area</td>
<td>65,500 square miles in India and Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name, in Hindi</td>
<td>Gangamai, or Ganga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REGION Which countries are part of the Ganges river basin?
Controlling the Feni River

Just as the Ganges is the lifeblood of India, the rivers of Bangladesh are crucial to that country’s survival. Many rivers emerge from the Chittagong Hills in the southeast. One of these rivers is the Feni, which flows into the Bay of Bengal just east of the huge delta that makes up most of the southern part of the country. The Feni begins as a small hill stream, but it becomes a wide, slow-moving river by the time it enters the bay.

A RIVER OVERFLOWS The Feni flows through a low-lying coastal plain that borders the Bay of Bengal before it reaches the sea. This flat, marshy area is subject to flooding during the wet season. At that time, monsoon rains swell the river and may cause it to overflow its banks. Also a problem are the cyclones that sweep across the Bay of Bengal. They bring high waters—called storm surges—that swamp low-lying areas. You saw a photo of this area on page 552.

Over the years, storm surges at the mouth of the Feni River have caused tremendous hardship. Sea water surges up the river and onto the coastal flatlands. Villages and fields are flooded, causing great destruction. On smaller streams, villagers sometimes build earthen dikes to block the water and protect their farmlands. But such structures are not effective against the flooding of large rivers.

In the 1980s, engineers in Bangladesh proposed building an earthen dam for the Feni. Closing the Feni to build the dam would be very difficult, though. The mouth of the river is nearly a mile wide, posing major problems for dam construction. The cost of building such a dam would also be enormous. A poor country like Bangladesh has limited financial and technological resources.

USING PEOPLE POWER Bangladesh did have one key asset for such a project—abundant human resources. With its large population, the country had plenty of unskilled workers available for construction work. To help plan the job, Bangladesh hired engineers from the Netherlands. As you read in Unit 4, the Dutch have had great experience in flood control.
From the beginning in 1984, the project emphasized the use of cheap materials and low-tech procedures. The first step was to lay down heavy mats made of bamboo, and reeds weighted with boulders. This was done to prevent erosion of the river bottom. Workers piled more boulders on top and then covered them with clay-filled bags. After six months’ work, they had built a partial closure across the mouth of the Feni River.

At that point, gaps in the wall still allowed water to flow in and out. Engineers had chosen February 28, 1985—the day of lowest tides—as the day to close the river. When the tide went out, 15,000 workers rushed to fill in the gaps with clay bags. In a seven-hour period, they laid down 600,000 bags. When the tide came back, the dam was closed.

**COMPLETING THE DAM** After that, dump trucks and earthmovers added more clay to raise the dam to a height of 30 feet. Then, workers placed concrete and brick over the sides of the dam and built a road on top. Bangladesh now had the largest estuary (an arm of the sea at the lower end of a river) dam in South Asia. But a crucial question remained—would the dam hold against a major storm?

The test came three months later, when a cyclone roared into the Bay of Bengal. A storm surge hit the dam, but the dam held. The lands and villages behind the dam were spared the worst effects of the storm. The success of the Feni River closure offers hope for similar solutions in other low-lying areas of Bangladesh and South Asia.

In this chapter, you read about the physical geography of South Asia. In the next chapter, you will learn about the human geography of the region—its history, government, economy, and culture.
Reviewing Places & Terms

A. Briefly explain the importance of each of the following.

1. Himalaya Mountains
2. subcontinent
3. archipelago
4. atoll
5. monsoon
6. cyclone
7. Hinduism
8. Ganges River
9. storm surge
10. estuary

B. Answer the questions about vocabulary in complete sentences.

11. What geographic term above can be used to describe the Maldives?
12. What is the religion of most of India’s people?
13. Where is the world’s tallest mountain peak?
14. Which river is home to the Hindu goddess Gangamai?
15. What is the most extreme weather pattern in South Asia?
16. What is another name for South Asia’s landmass?
17. What is the name of the broad seaward end of a river mouth?
18. What is caused by the cyclones that sweep across the Bay of Bengal?
19. What seasonal winds play a large role in South Asia?
20. What island type is the top of a submerged volcano surrounded by coral reefs?

Main Ideas

Landforms and Resources (pp. 551–555)

1. Which mountain ranges resulted from the collision of what is now the Indian subcontinent with Asia?
2. What two tectonic plates were involved in this collision?
3. In which directions do the three major rivers originating in the Himalayas flow?
4. Why is India’s supply of mica important?

Climate and Vegetation (pp. 556–559)

5. When are South Asia’s monsoon seasons?
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the southwest monsoons?
7. Why are the people in Bangladesh vulnerable to cyclones?

Human-Environment Interaction (pp. 560–563)

8. Why is the Ganges River so polluted?
9. Why do Hindu pilgrims bring the ashes of deceased family members to the river?
10. How long did it take the Bangladeshi people to build a dam across the Feni River?
Critical Thinking

1. Using Your Notes
Use your completed chart to answer these questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landforms</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

a. Where is the Deccan Plateau?
b. What is the most heavily populated plain in South Asia?

2. Geographic Themes
a. LOCATION Which bay is located south of Bangladesh?
b. PLACE Which island’s center is dominated by a range of high rugged mountains?

3. Identifying Themes
How can you explain the enormous wall of mountain ranges that separate South Asia from the rest of Asia? Which of the five themes applies to this situation?

4. Making Inferences
Why might the Khyber Pass be considered of crucial military importance?

5. Making Generalizations
How does weather cause suffering in South Asia?

Geographic Skills: Interpreting Maps

Precipitation in South Asia
Use the maps at right to answer the following questions.

1. REGION In which season does South Asia get most of its precipitation?
2. REGION How much precipitation does central India receive during the winter?
3. PLACE How much rainfall does Bangladesh receive in the summer?

 GeoActivity
Do more research on precipitation in South Asia. Focus on the drought that struck the region in 2000—what some observers have called the worst drought in 100 years. Use presentation software to share your results.

For Additional Test Practice
hmhsocialstudies.com

MULTIMEDIA ACTIVITY
Use the links at hmhsocialstudies.com to do research on the different kinds of wildlife that are found in South Asia. Try to identify specific areas in the region where these different animals live.

Creating a Sketch Map Use your research to create a sketch map that shows the locations of different animal habitats. Add pictures and captions to your map. Use the captions to explain why the locations are suited to specific animals.
Chapter 25
HUMAN GEOGRAPHY OF SOUTH ASIA
A Region of Contrasts

Essential Question
How have various cultures affected South Asia’s past and present?

What You Will Learn
In this chapter you will trace the impact of various peoples on the human geography of South Asia.

SECTION 1
India

SECTION 2
Pakistan and Bangladesh

SECTION 3
Nepal and Bhutan

SECTION 4
Sri Lanka and the Maldives

Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on each subregion of South Asia—its history, economics, culture, and modern life.
India

A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE At midnight on August 14, 1997, India celebrated the 50th anniversary of its independence from Great Britain. Thousands of people flooded the streets of the capital, New Delhi, and waved the orange, white, and green flag of India. Fifty years before, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had spoken to the nation. “A moment comes,” he said, “when we step out from the old to the new, . . . and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance [expression].” Since then, India has emerged as a modern and powerful country. But it has also preserved its links to the past.

Invasions, Empires, and Independence

India is an ancient land. Its culture and history date back more than 4,000 years. For centuries, foreign invaders came to conquer India but were absorbed into Indian life. As a result, Indian culture is a blend of many different customs and traditions.

EARLY HISTORY Indian civilization began in the Indus Valley (now in Pakistan) around 2500 B.C. A thousand years later, invaders crossed the mountains of the Hindu Kush and spread across northern India. They were Aryans, a light-skinned people from the plains north of Iran. Aryan culture played a key role in the development of Indian civilization.

The Aryans established small kingdoms on the Ganges Plain. They pushed darker-skinned, native Indians, called Dravidians, toward the south. Later, Persian and Greek invaders occupied the Indus Valley. But they did not conquer the Aryan kingdoms of the Ganges.

Two great Indian empires eventually emerged on the lower Ganges. Beginning in 321 B.C., the Mauryan Empire united most of India. The great Mauryan leader Asoka helped spread Buddhism throughout Asia. Several centuries later, the Gupta Empire came to power. It ruled over northern India during an age of peace and prosperity.

New waves of invaders from Central Asia and, later, Southwest Asia began entering India in the A.D. fifth century. Muslims conquered the Indus

Main Ideas

• India is the largest country in South Asia and has the most developed economy.
• Indian culture is deeply influenced by religion.

Places & Terms

Mughal Empire
raj
nonviolent resistance
land reform
Green Revolution
caste system

Connect to the Issues

POpULATION India’s huge and diverse population presents many social, economic, and political challenges.
Valley and then occupied the Ganges Plain. By the early 1500s, they had established the **Mughal Empire** throughout much of India. Muslim rule brought new customs that sometimes conflicted with those of the native Hindus.

**EUROPEANS ARRIVE** Also in the 1500s, European traders came to India, looking for spices, cloth, and other goods not available in Europe. They soon established trade relations with India’s rulers. French, Dutch, and Portuguese traders set up trading colonies in India—but it was the British who finally won out.

Through its trading arm, the British East India Company, Britain gained control over India’s trade with Europe in 1757. In 1857, the British government put down a revolt and established direct rule over India. The period of direct British control, called the **raí**, lasted for nearly 90 years.

British rule brought some benefits to India, but most Indians did not like colonialism. The great Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi began an opposition movement based on **nonviolent resistance**—a protest movement that does not use violence to achieve its goals. Eventually, Britain gave in and granted India its freedom. At midnight on August 14, 1947, India became independent.

Independence also brought the division of India. The Muslims of West and East Pakistan (now Pakistan and Bangladesh, respectively) chose to separate from India, which was strongly Hindu, and form a separate country. This division caused violence to break out between Hindus and Muslims. Mass migrations across the new borders caused great hardship and suffering.

**Governing the World’s Largest Democracy**

India’s first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was an associate of Gandhi. Under Nehru’s leadership, India adopted a constitution and became a democratic republic in 1950. With a population of more than one billion, India is presently the world’s largest democracy.
Indian democracy reflects elements of both the American and the British systems. Like the United States, India is a federation of states held together by a strong central government. However, like Britain, it is a parliamentary democracy. The leader of the majority party in parliament becomes prime minister and head of the government.

Many different ethnic, cultural, and religious factors influence Indian politics. One major factor is relations between Hindus and Muslims. India is strongly Hindu, but its Muslim minority numbers around 150 million people. So, Indian leaders must take Muslim interests into account. Two other minorities, Sikhs and Tamils, also play a key role in Indian politics. In 1984, Sikhs who were angered by Indian policies assassinated Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the daughter of Nehru. Seven years later, Tamil extremists assassinated Indira Gandhi’s son, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Despite such violence, India manages to resolve most of its political conflicts peacefully. In a challenging post-colonial world, Indian democracy has survived.

**Economic Challenges**

Another challenge for India is to promote economic growth and raise standards of living. The government has adopted a variety of policies to achieve these goals. But progress has been slow. India has one of the world’s largest economies, but per capita income remains low. About half of India’s people live in poverty.

**DEPENDENCE ON FARMING**

About two-thirds of India’s people rely on farming for their livelihood. The majority of farms, however, are very small, and crop yields are low. Most farm families struggle to survive on what they can grow for themselves.

One solution being considered for this problem is land reform—a more balanced distribution of land among farmers than now exists. In the late 1990s, 5 percent of India’s farm families owned nearly 25 percent of India’s farmland. Because the large landowners have great political influence, land-reform proposals have never made much progress.

One change has made a major difference, though. After a series of famines in the 1960s, agricultural scientists introduced new
farming techniques and higher-yielding grain varieties to improve production. This program, later called the Green Revolution, increased crop yields. The increases were especially dramatic for wheat, but rice production also expanded. Still, many peasant farmers lack the land and money to take advantage of these technological improvements.

**GROWING INDUSTRY** Although agriculture is the main economic activity in India, industry is also an important element. Cotton textiles have long been a major product of India. Beginning in the late 1940s, however, other industries began to develop. As the map on page 569 shows, India is now a major producer of iron and steel, chemicals, machinery, and food products. The main industrial regions are centered around Kolkata (Calcutta) in the east, Mumbai (Bombay) and Ahmadabad in the west, Chennai (Madras) in the south, and Delhi in the north.

The western industrial zone has led the way in the modernization of Indian industry. Today, Mumbai is India’s most prosperous city and leading commercial center. Its industries include metals, chemicals, and electronics. Other areas are now following Mumbai’s lead. The southern city of Bangalore has become India’s high-tech center. It is home to hundreds of computer software companies that are taking advantage of India’s low wages and highly skilled workers. To some observers, Bangalore represents the future of the modern Indian economy.

**Life in Modern India**

While India’s economy is modernizing, many Indians still live and work in traditional ways. This blend of old and new is typical of modern life in India.

**DAILY LIFE** Marriage and family remain at the center of Indian life. Most Indians follow the custom of arranged marriages—in which marriage partners are chosen by their families. But more affluent urban young people increasingly choose their own spouses. Indian families are large. Often many relatives from several generations live under one roof. Marriages are usually male-dominated, and divorce is rare.

Most Indians eat a largely vegetarian diet based on rice, legumes, and flatbreads called *chapati* or roti. Some Indians eat meat, fish, and chicken, often in spicy dishes called curry. But meat consumption is limited by both Muslim and Hindu religious practices.

Indians enjoy sports, music, and movies. Some of the country’s most popular sports are soccer, field hockey, and cricket—a sport similar to baseball adopted from the British. Classical Indian music, featuring traditional instruments such as the sitar and the tabla, still has a large audience. But modern pop music is finding favor with India’s youth. They also flock to movie theaters, where foreign films compete with local productions. The Indian film industry is based in Mumbai.
These young women from the state of Rajasthan dress in traditional clothing to attend a fair. Festivals of all kinds are part of life for people of all ages in India. The traditional clothing worn by females in India includes embroidered skirts, head shawls, and lots of jewelry. In many places, however, Western-style clothing has replaced the traditional, especially for young people. Even though changes are taking place, females in India are treated differently from males both inside and outside the home. Females, for example, have more family responsibilities and less access to higher education and professional jobs.

If you lived in India, you would pass these milestones:

- You would receive some schooling, as Indian law provides free education from age 6 through age 14. In some areas, though, you could be working even before the age of 10.
- In school, you would study history, geography, science, math, and moral education.
- You might be married at age 16 if you were a female living in a rural area and at age 17 if you were a female in an urban area.
- You could enter the military at age 17 if you were a male.
- You could vote at age 18.

**EDUCATION** Most Indians still work on farms or in small craft industries. As the economy changes, though, more people are finding work in factories and offices. Education is a key factor in this change. In towns and cities, most middle-class children attend school. Literacy—the ability to read and write—has risen steadily since the 1950s. In city slums and rural areas, however, school attendance is irregular and literacy rates are low. The government has placed a high priority on improving public education to better prepare its citizens for the future.

**Indian Culture**

The culture of India is a rich blend of the different linguistic, ethnic, and religious groups.

**MANY LANGUAGES** The Indian constitution recognizes 18 major language groups, but more than 1,000 languages and dialects are spoken in India. Hindi is the official language. English, too, is widely spoken as a common language, especially by those working in government and business. Southern India is a distinct subregion, dating back to the Aryan conquest of northern India. The language and ethnicity of this region is Dravidian rather than Indo-European. Southern India has four major languages: Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam.

**HINDUISM** India is a land of great variety, but the dominant force in the lives of most Indians is Hinduism. Hinduism is a complex religion with roots in Aryan culture. Hindus, who make up around 80 percent of the population, believe in many gods. They also believe in reincarnation—the rebirth of souls after death. The moral consequences of a person’s actions, known as karma, help determine how a person is reincarnated.
The **caste system** was the Aryan system of social classes. Today, it remains one of the cornerstones of Hinduism. Four basic castes made up the original system: the Brahmans (priests and scholars), the Kshatriyas (rulers and warriors), the Vaisyas (farmers and merchants), and the Sudras (artisans and laborers).

Over time, these castes were further divided into smaller groupings. Outside the system altogether were the dalits, or untouchables, who had the lowest status in Indian society. (This class was officially eliminated in the Indian constitution.)

According to Hindu belief, each person is born into a caste and has a certain moral duty, known as dharma, that is specific to that caste. A person can move into a different caste only through reincarnation. While the system brought social order, it also caused discrimination and limited people’s ability to improve their lot in life.

**OTHER RELIGIONS** Other faiths also play a key role in Indian life. These include Jainism, Christianity, Sikhism, and Buddhism—which originated in northern India. Islam also exerts a strong cultural influence in certain parts of the country. But millions of Muslims left the country after India won independence in 1947. They chose to move to the new Muslim states founded in the northwestern and northeastern parts of the subcontinent. You will read about those states—now called Pakistan and Bangladesh—in the next section.
A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE Some workers in the port of Chittagong, Bangladesh, have an unusual job. They are ship breakers. When ocean-going ships reach the end of their useful life, they take their last voyage to Chittagong. There, ship breakers wait on the beach with sledgehammers, crowbars, torches, and wrenches. They attack each ship, tearing it apart piece by piece. Within weeks, they can dismantle a ship. Then, they sell its scrap metal for recycling purposes. The job doesn’t pay very well, but it is necessary work for the shipping industry, the workers, and the Bangladeshi economy.

New Countries, Ancient Lands
Like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are young countries with an ancient history and with rapidly growing populations. They, too, are striving to make their way in the modern world.

EARLY HISTORY The largest of the world’s first civilizations arose in what is now Pakistan. The Indus Valley civilization began around 2500 B.C. It featured well-planned cities like Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, which had brick buildings (shown below) and sophisticated sanitation systems. The map on page 544 depicts the extent of the civilization at the height of its power. It fell around 1500 B.C., and the Aryans invaded soon after. Later on, the Mauryan, Gupta, and Mughal empires ruled the territory that included modern Pakistan and Bangladesh. The British were the next to take control of the region.
PARTITION AND WAR  The end of British rule in 1947 brought the partition, or division, of British India. Two new countries were created—India (predominantly Hindu) and mainly Muslim Pakistan (separated into West Pakistan and East Pakistan). Partition led to much violence between Muslims and Hindus. About one million people died in the conflict. Another 10 million fled across national borders. Muslims in India moved to Pakistan, while Hindus in Pakistan crossed into India.

West Pakistan and East Pakistan shared a religious bond, but ethnic differences and their 1,100-mile separation eventually drove them apart. The people of East Pakistan began to call for their own state. But the government in West Pakistan opposed such a move. Civil war broke out in 1971. That year, with help from India, East Pakistan won its independence as Bangladesh.

MILITARY RULE Both Pakistan and Bangladesh have had political struggles since independence. Short periods of elected government have alternated with long periods of military rule. Political corruption has plagued both countries. Pakistan also has fought several destructive wars with India over the territory of Kashmir. These wars are discussed in the Case Study in Chapter 26. Both Bangladesh and Pakistan have had women prime ministers, a rarity in the Muslim world.

Struggling Economies

Pakistan and Bangladesh have large, rapidly growing populations. In fact, Bangladesh is the eighth most populous country in the world. Both
have economies that depend primarily on agriculture. As in India, per capita incomes are low, and much of the population lives in poverty. Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in the world.

**SUBSISTENCE FARMING** Most farmers in Pakistan and Bangladesh work small plots of land and struggle to grow enough crops to feed their families. The government has tried to help modernize farming methods, but many farmers continue to follow less productive traditional ways. Climate also hinders crop yields. Large areas of Pakistan are arid, while Bangladesh is severely affected by seasonal monsoons and cyclones.

The most productive farming areas of Pakistan are the irrigated portions of the Indus Valley. Here, farmers grow enough cotton and rice to allow for export. The farmers also produce substantial amounts of wheat for domestic consumption. The moist delta lands of Bangladesh are ideal for the cultivation of rice, the country’s principal food crop. The main export crop is jute (a plant used in the production of rope, carpets, and industrial-quality sacks). Fishing, mainly for freshwater fish, is also vital to the economy of Bangladesh.

**SMALL INDUSTRY** Neither Pakistan nor Bangladesh is highly industrialized. Most factories are relatively small and lack the capital, resources, and markets required for expansion. Even so, both countries are trying to increase their industrial base. They have growing textile industries that provide an important source of revenue and employment. Both countries export cotton garments, and Pakistan also exports wool carpets and leather goods.

An important economic development has been the introduction of microcredit. This policy makes small loans available to poor entrepreneurs, people who start and build a business. Businesses that are too small to get loans from banks can often join forces to apply for these microloans. They then accept joint responsibility for repaying the loan. This program, begun in Bangladesh, has helped small businesses grow in South Asia and has raised living standards for many producers, especially women.
One Religion, Many Peoples

Most of the people of Pakistan and Bangladesh are Muslims. In both countries, Islam is an important unifying force. At the same time, ethnic differences promote cultural diversity, particularly in Pakistan.

**ISLAMIC CULTURE** Islam has long played an important role in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Both lands were key parts of the Muslim Mughal Empire that ruled the Indian subcontinent for centuries, and their cultures bear the stamp of Islam. The faithful observe Islamic customs. These include daily prayer and participation in Ramadan, a month-long period of fasting from sunrise to sunset. Mosques in both countries are often large and impressive structures.

The two countries differ somewhat in their Islamic practices, however. In general, Pakistan is stricter in imposing Islamic law on its citizens. For example, many Pakistanis follow the custom of purdah, the seclusion of women. This custom prevents women from having contact with men who are not relatives. When women appear in public, they must wear veils. In Bangladesh, purdah is much less common and religious practices are less strict.

**ETHNIC DIVERSITY** Pakistan is also more ethnically diverse than Bangladesh. Pakistan has five main ethnic groups—Punjabis, Sindhis, Pathans, Muhajirs, and Balochs. Each group has its own language. The Punjabis make up almost half of the population. Each group has its own regional origins within the country except for the Muhajirs, who migrated from India as a result of the partition in 1947. To avoid favoring one region or group over another, the government chose Urdu—the language of the Muhajirs—as the national language. Today, most Pakistanis understand Urdu, even though they may use another language as their primary language.

In contrast, the people of Bangladesh are mainly Bengalis. Bengal is the historic region that includes Bangladesh (once known as East Bengal) and the Indian state of West Bengal. Bengalis speak a language based on Sanskrit, the ancient Indo-Aryan language. Bangladesh also has a small population of Urdu-speaking Muslims and various non-Muslim tribal groups. About 16 percent of the population are Hindus.

**Modern Life and Culture**

As in India, life in Pakistan and Bangladesh revolves around the family. Arranged marriages are common, and families tend to be large. Most people live in small villages, in simple homes made of such materials as sun-baked mud, bamboo, or wood. The large cities are busy places,
crowded with traffic and pedestrians. People in both countries enjoy sports such as soccer and cricket, and also enjoy going to see movies.

**A LOVE OF POETRY** Poetry is a special interest in both Pakistan and Bangladesh, where the tradition of oral literature is strong. Many Pakistanis memorize long poems and can recite them by heart. Poets are popular figures, and poetry readings—called *mushairas*—can draw thousands of people, much like a rock concert does in some countries.

The greatest literary figure in Bangladesh is the poet Rabindranath Tagore, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. Although Tagore was born in Calcutta (now Kolkata), India, he wrote about the Ganges and his Bengal homeland. Bangladesh adopted his song, "My Golden Bengal," as its national anthem.

**MUSIC AND DANCE** Music and dance are also important forms of expression in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Both countries share music traditions similar to those of India. Folk music of various types is popular in cities and in rural areas. *Qawwali*—a form of devotional singing performed by Muslims known as Sufis—is famous not only in South Asia but also in parts of Europe and the United States. Bangladesh also has a long tradition of folk dances, in which elaborately costumed dancers act out Bengali myths, legends, and stories.

You have been reading about Pakistan and Bangladesh, India’s western and eastern neighbors. Next, you will learn about India’s northern neighbors, Nepal and Bhutan.

---

**GeoActivity**

**Making Comparisons** Review the information about Islam on page 576. Then use the Internet or an encyclopedia to compare Islam in Pakistan or Bangladesh with a Muslim country in either Africa or Southwest Asia. Create a chart comparing the two countries using such topics as treatment of women, eating practices, and how strictly a country enforces Islamic law.
The Cyclone of 1970

On November 13, 1970, a violent tropical storm struck Bangladesh, bringing death and destruction in its wake. Hundreds of thousands of people and their homes, crops, and animals were swept away in the fury of the 20th century’s worst tropical storm. The cyclone’s winds, rains, and floods claimed an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 lives. Also, approximately one million were left homeless, roughly 80 percent of the rice crop was lost, and about 70 percent of the country’s fishing boats were wrecked. More than any other South Asian country, Bangladesh—with its low-lying coastal plain—suffers from these frequently occurring storms.
RESEARCH WEB LINKS

ANNOUNCING THE DAMAGE
Use the Internet to research the cyclone of November 1970. Read accounts of its destructive force. Gather data on the storm itself and the damage it caused. Then prepare a press release about the storm.
• Begin with an overview of the storm.
• Provide a map and statistics.
• Present your press release to a group of student reporters.

The damage inflicted on this village in Bangladesh in 1991 is typical of the destructive force of a cyclone’s winds and the torrential rains and floods that are a part of this weather system.

TROPICAL STORMS
Violent tropical storms are called cyclones in the Indian Ocean, typhoons in the northwestern Pacific Ocean, and hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean. These storms:
• develop over tropical waters in the late summer and fall when ocean temperatures are warmest
• usually begin as a cluster of thunderstorms that start to spiral and then form a single violent storm
• may be as wide as 675 miles
• have winds that range from 75 to 150 miles per hour
• generally last a week but some may take two or three weeks to die out
• produce heavy flooding that is the cause of most of the destruction and deaths
• inflict most of their damage along coastlines

OTHER BANGLADESHI STORMS
• May 28–29, 1963—22,000 deaths
• May 11–12, 1965—17,000 deaths
• June 1–12, 1965—30,000 deaths
• April 30, 1991—139,000 deaths

Concrete shelters constructed on stilts, as shown here, and reinforced school buildings are refuges from high floodwaters and winds that can knock down all but the strongest buildings.
Nepal and Bhutan

Main Ideas
• Nepal and Bhutan are land-locked Himalayan kingdoms.
• Rugged terrain and an isolated location have had a great impact on life in Nepal and Bhutan.

Places & Terms
constitutional monarchy
Sherpa
Siddhartha Gautama
mandala

Connect to the Issues
Economic Development
Decades of isolation and difficult topography have limited economic growth in Nepal and Bhutan.

Mountain Kingdoms

Nepal and Bhutan share a number of important characteristics. Both are located in the Himalayas, a factor that has had a great impact on their history and economic development. Both also are kingdoms with strong religious traditions.

Geographic Isolation
The main geographic feature of Nepal and Bhutan is their mountainous landscape. Each country consists of a central upland of ridges and valleys leading up to the high mountains, with a small lowland area along the Indian border. The towering, snow-capped Himalayas run along the northern border with China. They are craggy and forbidding and have steep mountain passes and year-round ice fields. The world’s tallest mountain peak, Mt. Everest, is located there.

The rugged landscape of Nepal and Bhutan has isolated the two countries throughout their histories. Their mountainous terrain and landlocked location—neither country has access to the sea—made them hard to reach and difficult to conquer and settle. China controlled Bhutan briefly in the 18th century. In the 19th century, Great Britain had influence over both countries because of its control of neighboring India. But Nepal and Bhutan generally remained independent and isolated. In fact, until the past few decades, foreigners rarely entered either country.

Evolving Monarchies
For much of their history, Nepal and Bhutan were split into small religious kingdoms or ruling states. Hindu kings ruled in Nepal, while Buddhist priests controlled Bhutan. In time, unified kingdoms emerged in both countries, led by hereditary monarchs who passed the throne on to their heirs.

Today, the governments of both Nepal and Bhutan are constitutional monarchies—kingdoms in which the ruler’s powers are limited by a

A Human Perspective
In the novel Lost Horizon, James Hilton described an imaginary mountain valley called Shangri-La, hidden high in the Himalayas. He wrote, “The floor of the valley, hazily distant, welcomed the eye with greenness; sheltered from winds...completely isolated by the lofty and sheerly unscalable ranges on the further side.” Shangri-La was an earthly paradise: a land of peace, harmony, and beauty, where hunger, disease, and war did not exist. Hilton located this mythical land somewhere in Tibet, but it could just as easily have been in Nepal or Bhutan. Although neither of these countries is a paradise, both are remote lands of great beauty and peace.

Region
Richly decorated cloths that display Buddhist religious symbols, such as the cloth shown below, have covered the thrones of Bhutanese rulers. Why might there be religious symbols on a throne cloth used by secular rulers?
A blend of the old and the new is evident in the architecture of this square in Kathmandu, Nepal’s capital city. Why might this rich cultural tradition make Kathmandu attractive to tourists?

Developing Economies

Decades of isolation and difficult topography have limited economic development in Nepal and Bhutan. Now each country is trying to find effective ways to promote economic growth.

LIMITED RESOURCES Nepal and Bhutan are poor countries with economies based mainly on agriculture. Because of the mountainous terrain, neither country has much land suitable for cultivation. Most farm plots are small, soils are poor, and erosion is a problem. Farmers create terraces on the mountainsides to increase the amount of farmland and limit soil loss, a process you read about in Chapter 9. Common farm products include rice, corn, potatoes, and wheat. Common livestock are cattle, sheep, and yaks—longhaired animals related to the ox. In Bhutan, the government has promoted the growing of fruit for export and has tried to improve farming practices.

The timber industry is very important to both countries, although deforestation is a problem. The forests of Nepal are being cut down at a rate of more than 1 percent a year. But some timberlands remain. Around 70 percent of Bhutan is still forested. A growing manufacturing sector of the economy includes wood products, food processing, and cement production. Most trade for both countries is with India.

INCREASING TOURISM One of the fastest growing industries in Nepal is tourism. Tourists come from around the world to visit the valley of Kathmandu, the capital, and to climb the Himalayas. Hotels and restaurants, transportation, and other services have grown to meet the needs of the tourist industry. But tourism is a mixed blessing. It has

Geographic Thinking

Making Comparisons

What activities are important to the economies of Nepal and Bhutan?
HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION
The Sherpa are known for their mountaineering skills and their ability to carry heavy loads at high altitudes. Why might mountain climbers seek out the Sherpas as guides and porters?

Rich Cultural Traditions

Visitors to Nepal and Bhutan come not only for the spectacular mountain scenery but also for a glimpse of the rich cultural traditions of the Himalayan people.

A MIX OF PEOPLES Various ethnic groups inhabit the Himalayan region. In Nepal, the majority of the people are Indo-Nepalese Hindus whose ancestors came from India many centuries ago. These groups speak Nepali, a variation of Sanskrit, an ancient Indo-Aryan language. Nepal also has a number of groups of Tibetan ancestry. Among them are the Sherpas. These people from the high Himalayas are the traditional mountain guides of the Everest region.

The main ethnic group in Bhutan is the Brote, who also trace their origins to Tibet. Most Botes live in two-story houses made of wood and stone. The families live on the second floor, while the first floor is reserved for livestock. Bhutan also has a sizable Nepalese minority in the southern lowlands. The Nepalese have preserved their language and customs, even though the government of Bhutan has tried to assimilate them into national life.

RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS Religion is a powerful force in both Nepal and Bhutan. Although the great majority of Nepalese are Hindus, Buddhism also has deep roots in Nepal. The founder of Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha, was born on the borders of present-day

damaged the environment, particularly on mountain slopes, where increased trash and pollution have been most noticeable.

Bhutan, which offers many of the same natural attractions as Nepal, has taken a different approach to tourism. Concerned about the impact of tourists on national life, Bhutan regulates the tourist industry. It allows only limited numbers of visitors and keeps some areas of the country off-limits. Even so, tourism is providing increasing revenues to Bhutan and offers significant economic potential for the future.
Nepal and India in the sixth century B.C. Buddhist teachings initially took hold in Nepal but were later replaced by Hinduism when Hindu rulers came to power. Today, Hindu practices still show traces of Buddhist influence.

Buddhism is the official religion of Bhutan. The Bhutanese people practice a Tibetan style of Buddhism, which includes the use of mandalas—geometric designs that are symbols of the universe and aid in meditation. Early communities in Bhutan were organized around large fortress-monasteries, which are still found in many parts of the country. Also scattered around the countryside are small shrines that were built to house sacred relics and are excellent examples of Buddhist architecture.

THE ARTS AND RECREATION Folk art and festivals are an important feature of Himalayan culture. Artisans make beautiful metal bells, swords, and jewelry, and carve intricate wooden sculptures. They also weave colorful textiles from silk, cotton, and wool. During festivals in Nepal and Bhutan, musicians play traditional songs on flutes, drums, and long brass horns. At the same time, people in elaborate costumes perform dances based on religious stories. Bhutan is also famous for its archery competitions. This tradition goes back to ancient times, when Bhutanese warriors were known as the finest archers in the Himalayas.

In this section, you read about life in South Asia’s mountainous north. Next, you will learn about life in the southern islands.

**Geographic Thinking**

**Seeing Patterns**
Why might archery have been a particularly useful military option in Bhutan?

**Regional Review**

**Places & Terms**

- constitutional monarchy
- Sherpa
- Siddhartha Gautama
- mandala

**Taking Notes**

- **REGION** Review the notes you took for this section.

**Main Ideas**

a. What kind of government do Nepal and Bhutan have today?

b. How is tourism affecting the economies of these two countries?

c. What are some of the important features of Himalayan culture?

**Geographic Thinking**

**Drawing Conclusions** How has the physical geography of Nepal and Bhutan affected their development? **Think about:**

- the mountainous landscape
- their landlocked location

Sri Lanka and the Maldives

Main Ideas

• Sri Lanka and the Maldives are island countries with strong connections to the South Asian subcontinent.
• Sri Lanka and the Maldives face difficult challenges that affect their political and economic development.

Places & Terms

Sinhalese
Tamils
sultan

Connect to the Issues

TERRITORIAL DISPUTE
Tamil rebels in Sri Lanka are fighting to establish an independent state.

A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE

For centuries, Sri Lanka and the Maldives have been ports of call for ships from around the world. The Greeks, Romans, Persians, Chinese, and Arabs all knew about these islands. Arab traders referred to Sri Lanka as Serendib, and they called the Maldives the “Money Isles” for their abundance of cowrie shells—seashells first used in ancient times as currency. Later, European traders came for spices, ivory, pearls, and other goods. Throughout history, visitors have been drawn to these islands in the Indian Ocean. The explorer Marco Polo referred to the Maldives as “one of the wonders of the world.”

History of the Islands

Because the islands are close to India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives have strong ties to the Indian subcontinent. Even so, each country has its own distinct history.

SETTLEMENT OF SRI LANKA

In the sixth century B.C., people from the northern plains of India crossed the narrow strait separating the subcontinent from Sri Lanka. They came to be known as the Sinhalese. They absorbed the island’s native inhabitants and created an advanced civilization on Sri Lanka. They adopted Buddhism and built sophisticated irrigation systems that allowed farming on land that was dry. In the fourth century A.D., another group of Indians began to arrive. These were the Tamils—Dravidian Hindus from southern India. The Tamils brought a different culture and language to Sri Lanka. They settled the northern end of the island, while the Sinhalese moved farther south.

Europeans began to colonize Sri Lanka in the 16th century. First came the Portuguese, followed by the Dutch. The British took control of the island—which they called Ceylon—in 1796 and ruled until its independence in 1948. In 1972, Ceylon changed its name to Sri Lanka and became a republic.

After independence, tensions grew between the Sinhalese and Tamil populations. The minority Tamils (about 18 percent of the population) claimed discrimination at the hands of the Sinhalese majority (about 74 percent). They began to call for an independent state to be called Tamil Eelam (Precious Land of the Tamils). In the 1980s, civil war broke out between the government and the rebels, who were called the Tamil Tigers. Violence had claimed at least 70,000 lives before the Tamil Tigers were finally defeated by Sri Lankan government troops in 2009.

A MUSLIM STATE IN THE MALDIVES

The Maldives were settled by Buddhists and Hindus from Sri Lanka and India some time around
the sixth century B.C. Later, Arab traders made frequent visits. By the 12th century, the population had converted to Islam. Six dynasties of Muslim rulers, or sultans, governed the Maldives after that, despite periods of foreign intervention. In 1968, the Maldives declared itself a republic, headed by an elected president. With its 1,200 islands comprising a land area of just 115 square miles and its population of only about 396,000 people, the Maldives is one of the world’s smallest independent countries.

**Life in the Islands**

As in the rest of South Asia, religion and ethnicity are key factors in the social and cultural life of Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

**ETHNIC MOSAIC OF THE ISLANDS** Sri Lanka is a diverse mix of ethnic and religious groups. Sinhalese Buddhists make up about 69 percent of the population, while Tamil Hindus make up about 18 percent. Almost 8 percent of the people are Muslims, who are descended from the early Arab traders. There is also a small community of Christians of mixed European descent, known as Burghers.

Most Sinhalese live in the southern, western, and central parts of the country. The Tamils are concentrated in the northern Jaffna Peninsula, where much of the fighting has taken place. Another group of Tamils lives in the central highlands. These people are the descendants of Indian migrants who came to work on British plantations in the 19th century. Muslims live mainly in the eastern lowlands. The capital city, Colombo, is a busy urban center. But most Sri Lankans continue to live in smaller towns and villages scattered across the country.

The population of the Maldives is also multi-ethnic. Most of the people are descended from the early Sinhalese and Dravidian inhabitants, who mixed with Arab, Southeast Asian, and Chinese traders over the centuries. The official language is Divehi, a language unique to the Maldives. Arabic, Hindi, and English are also commonly spoken.

**CULTURAL LIFE IN SRI LANKA** Religion plays a key role in the culture of Sri Lanka. Buddhist and Hindu temples, Muslim mosques, and Christian churches dot the landscape.
Art and literature are strongly influenced by those religious traditions. Folk dancing is a notable cultural tradition. The most famous style is *Kandyan* dancing, the national dance. The dances tell the stories of local kings and heroes and are performed at Buddhist festivals. During the yearly *Perahera* festival, dancers dressed in glittering silver headpieces and jewelry leap and spin in complex, acrobatic movements.

**Cultural Life in the Maldives** Muslim customs have a strong influence on the culture of the Maldives. Islam is the state religion, and no other religions are allowed. One of the highlights of Maldivian culture is *bodu beru* ("big drum") music and dance based on drumming. In a *bodu beru* performance, dancers sway to the drumbeat with increasing intensity. This musical tradition has strong African influences.

**Economic Activity in the Islands**

Like small countries everywhere, the Maldives and Sri Lanka face tough economic challenges. Yet, each country has made good use of its resources to promote economic growth. Today, Sri Lanka has the highest per capita income in South Asia, and the Maldives is not far behind.

**Economic Strengths** Like most of South Asia’s economies, the economy of Sri Lanka is based on agriculture—mainly rice farming. But unlike most other countries of the region, Sri Lanka has large areas devoted to plantation agriculture. These large farms produce crops such as tea, rubber, and coconuts for export. While this type of agriculture is...
One of the world's most famous gems—a star sapphire called the "Star of India"—is actually from Sri Lanka.

The economy of the Maldives is different from the economies of the rest of South Asia. Farming is limited by a lack of land, and most food has to be imported. Fishing—for tuna, marlin, and sharks—was long the main economic activity. It still provides one-fourth of the jobs and a large share of the country's export earnings. But it has been replaced in importance by tourism. The islands' beautiful beaches, coral reefs, and impressive marine life draw visitors from around the world.

TOUGH CHALLENGES Until the 1980s, tourism was also growing in Sri Lanka. Then civil war began, and the tourist industry collapsed. Warfare has also disrupted other economic activities and damaged the country's infrastructure—its roads, bridges, power systems, and other services. Until peace returns to Sri Lanka, the economy is likely to struggle. While the Maldives is at peace, it faces a challenge of a different kind: global warming. The islands lie very low in the water, and any rise in sea level—caused by melting of the polar icecaps—could flood them completely. Scientists say this could happen by the end of the 21st century.

In this chapter, you read about modern life in South Asia. In the next chapter, you will read about issues facing South Asians.
Musical Instruments

No one is certain when or where people began to make music or what the first musical instrument was. Scholars believe, though, that music has been part of all cultures, possibly even from the earliest times. The first musical instrument may have been the human voice mimicking the sound of birds. People also used their own bodies to make rhythms, by clapping their hands or stomping their feet. When people began to make instruments, they adapted available materials, such as wood and animal skins. Eventually, musicians developed four basic types of instruments: percussion, wind, string, and keyboard. Today, there are thousands of different musical instruments. Some are closely associated with certain countries or regions.

The bagpipe is a wind instrument that is associated with Scotland, although it is played in other countries. It consists of an animal skin or rubberized cloth bag fitted with one or more pipes that produce a continuous flow of sound when blown.

The drum is a percussion instrument from Africa that probably was made first from wood or stone. It is played by striking with hands or other objects. These drums are made of skins stretched over frames.
The sitar is a stringed instrument from India. It has a wooden body and is used mainly to play classical music. Anoushka Shankar, shown here with her sitar, is the daughter of famed sitarist Ravi Shankar, who brought the instrument to the world’s attention with his playing in the 1960s.

The didgeridoo is a wind instrument played by aboriginal people in Australia. Made of bamboo or a hollow sapling, it can be as long as five feet. It is generally painted and used in ritual ceremonies.

FORMING A BAND
With a small group, research other musical instruments. Plan a band that includes at least one of each of the four types of instruments. Then create a multimedia presentation.

- Provide visuals of each instrument.
- Write a description of each instrument’s sound.
- Make an audiotape that has the sound of each instrument and play it in class.

OTHER INSTRUMENTS

ASIA
- Empty conch shells with broken tips give off a loud sound when blown and have been used in ceremonies for centuries in many regions, including the islands of Polynesia.

EUROPE
- The organ is the oldest keyboard instrument and was found in ancient Greece more than 2,000 years ago. It gave birth to other keyboard instruments such as the harpsichord, clavichord, and piano.

THE AMERICAS
- Native American cultures have strongly emphasized the voice in making music.

AFRICA
- Wall paintings in 4,000-year-old tombs in Egypt show musicians playing lutes.
- Some African cultures still use a stone gong—a hanging stone that gives off a sound when struck.
Reviewing Places & Terms

A. Briefly explain the importance of each of the following.

1. Mughal Empire
2. nonviolent resistance
3. caste system
4. partition
5. Kashmir
6. microcredit
7. Sherpa
8. mandala
9. Sinhalese
10. Tamils

B. Answer the questions about vocabulary in complete sentences.

11. How did the great Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi protest British control of India?
12. Over which territory have India and Pakistan fought several wars?
13. What financial aid do poor South Asian entrepreneurs seek?
14. How was the country of West and East Pakistan formed after Indian independence?
15. What did the Muslims establish in India during the 16th century?
16. What people arrived in Sri Lanka from southern India and occupied the northern portion of the island?
17. Who created an advanced civilization in Sri Lanka and built sophisticated irrigation systems?
18. Who guides mountain climbers in the Everest region?
19. What are geometric designs that are symbols of the universe and aid in meditation?
20. What is a Hindu system of social classes?

Main Ideas

India (pp. 567–572)

1. How did Britain gain control of India?
2. What are the major economic activities in India?
3. What are the major languages of India?

Pakistan and Bangladesh (pp. 573–579)

4. What are some of the characteristics of the Indus Valley civilization?
5. What manufactured products are produced in Pakistan and Bangladesh?
6. What type of literature is important in Pakistan and Bangladesh?

Nepal and Bhutan (pp. 580–583)

7. What are some of the groups of people that live in Nepal?
8. What are some important religious customs in Bhutan?

Sri Lanka and the Maldives (pp. 584–589)

9. What are the two major ethnic groups in Sri Lanka and where did they come from?
10. What are some of the challenges facing the economies of Sri Lanka and the Maldives?
Critical Thinking

1. Using Your Notes
Use your completed chart to answer these questions.

a. What role does agriculture play in the economies of the South Asian countries?
b. What are the major religions practiced in the region?

2. Geographic Themes

a. **HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION** How did the mountainous terrain and the landlocked location of Nepal and Bhutan affect their development?
b. **LOCATION** How do the landforms and location of the Maldives ensure that its economy is different from other South Asian countries?

3. Identifying Themes

What groups of people first populated the Indian subcontinent and eventually helped to populate all of South Asia? Which of the five themes apply to this situation?

4. Making Comparisons

How do Pakistan and Bangladesh differ in their practice of Islam?

5. Determining Cause and Effect

What are some of the reasons for the ongoing violence between the Tamils and the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka?

Geographic Skills: Interpreting Maps

Languages of South Asia

Use the map at right to answer the following questions.

1. **LOCATION** How many major languages are spoken in South Asia?
2. **REGION** Which language group is the most commonly spoken?
3. **MOVEMENT** How might the number of languages in South Asia affect its developing economies?

**GeoActivity**

Choose a country in South Asia in which more than one language is spoken, and prepare a chart showing the number of people speaking each language. Use library references or the Internet for your research.

**Writing About Geography** Write a report about your findings. Use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation in your report. List the Web sites that you used as sources.
Chapter 26
TODAY'S ISSUES
South Asia

Essential Question
How can the people and governments of South Asia work together to solve the region’s challenges?

What You Will Learn
In this chapter you will examine the stresses that rapid population growth and weather extremes put on the people of South Asia.

SECTION 1
Population Explosion

SECTION 2
Living with Extreme Weather

CASE STUDY
Territorial Dispute

For more on these issues in South Asia...

Kolkata is one of India’s most densely populated cities.

Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on each issue and to analyze the causes and effects of some aspect of each issue.
Main Ideas
• Explosive population growth in South Asia has contributed to social and economic ills in the region.
• Education is key to controlling population growth and improving the quality of life in South Asia.

Places & Terms
basic necessities
illiteracy

A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE On May 11, 2000, at 5:05 A.M., a baby girl was born in a New Delhi hospital. Her parents named her Astha, which means “faith” in the Hindi language. Ordinarily, Astha’s birth would not have made news. After all, an estimated 70,000 babies are born in India every day—25,637,000 each year. Astha, however, was special. With this child’s birth, the population of India officially hit 1 billion. It was the second country to reach a billion in population; China was the first.

Growing Pains
India’s milestone was a mixed blessing. Its population at the beginning of the 21st century is growing so quickly that many of its citizens lack life’s basic necessities—food, clothing, and shelter. The question for India, and for South Asia as a whole, is how to manage population growth so that economic development can continue.

POPULATION GROWS When India gained its independence from Britain in 1947, the population stood at 300 million. By 2000, the population had more than tripled. India’s population is so large that even an annual growth rate of less than 2 percent is producing a population explosion. Unless that growth slows down, in 2045, India will be home to more than 1.5 billion people—all living in a land about one-third the size of the United States. India will be the most populous country in the world, surpassing China.

India is not alone in its skyrocketing population. In fact, of the 10 most populous countries in the world in 2010, three were located in South Asia: India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. South Asia is home to 27 percent of the world’s population. But these people live on less than 3 percent of the world’s land area.

INADEQUATE RESOURCES As South Asia’s population has increased, regional governments have found it more and more difficult to meet the needs of their people. Widespread poverty and illiteracy, the inability to read or...
write, have left millions without hope that their lives would improve. Poor sanitation and the lack of health education have led to outbreaks of disease, which have overwhelmed the region’s limited health care systems.

Officials estimate that in order to keep pace with population growth, India will have to do the following every year: build 127,000 new village schools, hire nearly 400,000 new teachers, construct 2.5 million new homes, create 4 million new jobs, and produce an additional 6 million tons of food.

Managing Population Growth

South Asia has struggled for decades to find solutions to its population explosion. But efforts have met with only limited success.

**SMALLER FAMILIES** Today, India spends much of its nearly $1 billion annual health-care budget encouraging Indians to have smaller families. “Let’s have small families for a stronger India” is one of the slogans of the campaign. For many reasons, however, these programs have had only limited success. Indian women usually marry before age 18 and start having babies early. Also, for the very poor, children are a source of income. They can beg for money in the streets as early as their third birthday and can work the fields not too many years later.

For many Indians, children represent security in old age. The more children a family has, the more likely someone will be around to take care of the parents when they are elderly. Also, the infant mortality rate...
is very high in South Asia—around 51 per 1,000 live births in India, 59 per 1,000 in Bangladesh, and 67 per 1,000 in Pakistan, compared to 6 per 1,000 in the United States. As a result, parents try to have many children to ensure that at least some will reach adulthood.

**EDUCATION IS A KEY** Many factors that affect population growth can be changed through education. However, South Asia’s governments have a difficult task ahead of them because education funds are limited. For example, India spends about $300 per pupil annually on primary and secondary education. (Only a small fraction of this sum is spent on girls.) By contrast, annual per pupil spending on education in the United States is $6,582 for primary students and $8,157 for secondary students. That is more than 20 times as much.

Education is essential to break the cycle of poverty. It also helps to improve the status of females by giving them job opportunities outside the home. Better health education also can reduce the need for large families by ensuring that more babies reach adulthood. The future development of South Asia depends on the success of such efforts to control population growth.

The Indian government recently took a big step to improve education. In 2009, the government made education a fundamental right by approving “The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act.”

---

**BACKGROUND**

Statistics for 2007 showed that about 91 percent of Indian boys aged 6 to 12 are in school, compared to about 88 percent of girls.

---

**Places & Terms**

Explain the importance of each of the following terms and places.

- basic necessities
- illiteracy

**Taking Notes**

**PLACE** Review the notes you took for this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue 1: Population</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How much did India’s population grow in the second half of the 20th century?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If this growth rate continues, what will India’s population be in 2045?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Main Ideas**

a. Why is the size of India’s population a problem?

b. How has the government of India addressed population issues?

c. Why have government programs had mixed success?

**Geographic Thinking**

Making Inferences How does the population density in India compare to that in the United States? Think about:

- population size
- territorial size

**HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION** The rural poor build settlements on unused land in many cities, such as these in Ahmadabad, India.

**Why might the rural poor be attracted to urban areas?**

**GeoActivity**

Carry out further research focused on comparing 20th-century population growth in a city in India and one in the United States. Use the data that you gather to create a line graph that compares population growth in these two cities.
Reading a Population Pyramid

Every nation has a certain distribution of population by age group. India, for instance, has a young population; the majority of people are under the age of 30. To show how the population of a country is distributed by age, a population pyramid is a very useful tool.

**THE LANGUAGE OF GRAPHS** A population pyramid is a type of bar graph. It shows the number or percentage of people that fall into specific age groups. It may also compare the distribution of age groups by sex, ethnic group, or some other category. The population pyramid below shows the distribution of age groups by sex in India.

**Population of India, 2010**

The horizontal axis shows population in millions. The vertical axis lists age groups. The left side of the pyramid shows the population distribution of males in India. The right side shows females.

1. Analyzing Data
   - Find the bar on the pyramid that would be your age and sex. How many millions of persons fall into that group in India?
2. Making Comparisons
   - What age group is the largest?
   - What is the largest age group by sex?
3. Making Inferences
   - Notice that there is a steady drop in population as Indians reach their late teens. This indicates that the life expectancy of Indians is relatively short.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base
A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE  In May 1996, a fierce tornado tore through northern Bangladesh, leaving more than 700 people dead and 30,000 injured. Winds reached speeds of 125 mph. Within 30 minutes, nearly 80 villages had been destroyed. In the town of Rampur, Reazuddin Ahmed and his family sought shelter behind a concrete wall. All the while, houses were tossed into the air around them. Babul Ahmed, Reazuddin’s 10-year-old son, described his family’s terror: “It was dust and wind everywhere. We prayed to God: ‘Save us.’” The tornado that terrorized the family was not unusual. It was just one of many types of extreme weather that plague South Asia and make life both difficult and dangerous.

The Monsoon Seasons

South Asia is home to an annual cycle of powerful, destructive weather, including the monsoon. The monsoon is a wind system, not a rainstorm. There are two monsoon seasons—the moist summer monsoon and the dry, cool winter monsoon. (The illustrations on the next page show the monsoon pattern in winter and summer.)

The summer monsoon is a wind system that blows from the southwest across the Indian Ocean toward South Asia from June through September. These winds stir up powerful storms that release vast amounts of rain and cause severe flooding.

The winter monsoon is a wind system that blows from the northeast across the Himalayas toward the sea from October through February. Unlike the summer monsoon, the winter winds carry little moisture. A drought can result if the summer monsoon has failed to bring normal levels of moisture. From March through May, there are no strong prevailing wind patterns.

Impact of the Monsoons

The monsoon winds shape the rhythms of life for South Asia’s people and also affect relations between its countries.

PHYSICAL IMPACT  The rains that accompany the summer monsoons are critical to the agriculture of...
South Asia, as the farming calendar on page 597 shows. They help nourish the rain forests, irrigate crops, and produce the floodwaters that deposit layers of rich sediment to replenish the soil. However, heavy flooding can also damage crops.

At the same time, the summer monsoon can cause tremendous devastation. Cyclones are common and deadly companions to the summer monsoon. (These storms are called hurricanes in North America.) Cyclones destroy farmland, wipe out villages, and cause massive flooding. Their fury is legendary. As you read in the Disasters! feature on pages 578–579, the 1970 cyclone that struck the southern coast of Bangladesh killed more than 300,000 people. It left hundreds of thousands homeless and destitute. In fact, because of the monsoons, Bangladesh was the site of some of the worst natural disasters of the 20th century.

The droughts that come with the dry winter monsoon bring their own problems. Lush landscapes can become arid wastelands almost overnight. These droughts—along with storms and floods—cause havoc for the people and economies of South Asia.

ECONOMIC IMPACT The climate of South Asia makes agriculture difficult. Crops often disappear under summer floodwaters or wither in drought-parched soil. With so many mouths to feed, the countries of South Asia must buy what they cannot grow, and the threat of famine is ever present. But the people suffer from more than just crop failures. They may also lose their homes and families to weather-related catastrophes. Most people are too poor to rebuild their homes and lives, and
governments often lack the necessary resources to provide significant help. However, the people of South Asia have taken some steps to prevent or lessen damage. These include building houses on stilts, erecting concrete cyclone shelters, and building dams to control floodwaters.

The region also receives international aid. Other governments and international agencies have lent billions of dollars to South Asian nations. But often this aid does not go far because of the frequency of disasters. Also, the aid burdens these countries with heavy debts.

**POLITICAL TENSIONS** Conditions caused by the weather patterns in South Asia have also caused political disputes. For instance, to bring water to the city of Kolkata, India constructed the Farakka dam across the Ganges at a point just before it enters Bangladesh. (See map on page 545.) Because India and Bangladesh share the Ganges, the dam left little water for drinking and irrigation in southern Bangladesh. Many Bangladeshi farmers lost farmland, and some illegally fled to India.

The two countries finally settled the dispute in 1997, when they signed a treaty giving each country specific water rights to the Ganges. Still, the dispute provided a graphic example of the role weather plays in both the politics and economics of South Asia. In the Case Study that follows, you will read about another political conflict—a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan.
Kashmir is a territory of towering mountains, dense forests, and fertile river valleys. It is strategically located at the foot of the Himalayas and is surrounded by India, Pakistan, and China. Since 1947, India and Pakistan have fought to control this territory of 12 million people. The territorial dispute has caused three Indo-Pakistani wars and, in just the last decade alone, cost up to 75,000 lives. It poses a threat to the political stability of South Asia and the economic well-being of the countries involved. And, because both India and Pakistan have nuclear weapons, the Kashmir conflict has the potential to lead to nuclear war.

**A Controversy Over Territory**

In 1947, the British government formally ended its colonial rule over the Indian subcontinent after 90 years. It partitioned, or divided, the subcontinent into two independent countries. India had a predominantly Hindu population. Pakistan was mostly Muslim. Britain gave each Indian state the choice of joining either country or remaining independent. Muslim states joined with Pakistan, while Hindu states remained part of India. Kashmir, however, had a unique problem.

**POLITICS AND RELIGION** Kashmir was mainly Muslim, but its leader, the Maharajah of Kashmir, was a Hindu. Faced with a difficult decision, the maharajah tried to keep Kashmir independent. But the plan failed. The maharajah then ceded Kashmir to India in 1947, but Pakistani soldiers invaded Kashmir. After a year’s fighting, India still controlled much of the territory. Since then, India and Pakistan have fought two
more wars, in 1965 and in 1971. Although a cease-fire was signed in 1972, the situation remains unresolved. As you can see on the map below, India and Pakistan each control part of the disputed territory. Even China controls a portion, having seized a remote northern mountain area in 1962.

A QUESTION OF ECONOMICS There’s more to this conflict than just politics and religion. The Indus River flows through Kashmir, and many of its tributaries originate in the territory. The Indus is a critical source of drinking and irrigation water for all of Pakistan. As a result, the Pakistanis are unwilling to let India control such a vital resource. Kashmir has become a strategic prize that neither country is willing to give up.

A Nuclear Nightmare

In 1998, India and Pakistan each tested nuclear weapons. The rest of the world was horrified by the thought that the 50-year-old dispute over Kashmir might finally end with vast areas of South Asia destroyed by nuclear bombs. After the tests, both nations vowed to seek a political solution to the conflict. But the possibility of a nuclear war has made the dispute even more dangerous. Despite frequent cease-fires, the border clashes have continued. Also, Pakistan is supporting Muslims in Kashmir who have been fighting Indian rule since the late 1980s.

A QUESTION OF PRIORITIES

Both India and Pakistan have large populations and widespread poverty. The money that they have spent on troops, arms, and nuclear programs might have been used to educate millions of children and to address many social problems.

Resolving the status of Kashmir would offer the people of India, Pakistan, and Kashmir the peace they need to begin improving the quality of their lives. It would also reduce political tensions in the region. The Case Study Project and primary sources that follow will help you to explore the Kashmir question.
A Newspaper Feature

Suggested Steps
1. Divide into small groups representing ordinary Kashmiris (such as women, farmers, and rebel soldiers), as well as Indian and Pakistani officials or soldiers. Then begin gathering personal accounts about the conflict from newspapers, magazines, and Internet sites.
2. Search for visuals—illustrations, maps, photographs, political cartoons, charts, and graphs—that help illustrate the points you are making.
3. When everyone in the class has collected enough material, work together to plan the feature story.
4. When you have finished planning, prepare the feature.
5. Share your project with other groups at your school or in your community.

Materials and Supplies
- Reference books, newspapers, and magazines
- Computer with Internet access and printer

In order to find an early and just solution to the 50-year old ... Kashmir dispute, Pakistan has welcomed offers of good offices and third-party mediation. It has encouraged the international community to play an active role and facilitate the peaceful settlement of disputes between Pakistan and India.

While Pakistan is committed to a peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, adequate measures have been taken to safeguard the country’s territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Pakistan will continue to extend full political, diplomatic and moral support to the legitimate Kashmiri struggle for their right to self-determination as enshrined in the relevant United Nations resolutions. In the context of the bilateral dialogue, it calls on India to translate its commitments into reality.

It has been suggested that the Indian subcontinent is the most dangerous place in the world today, and Kashmir is a nuclear flashpoint. These alarmist descriptions will only encourage those who want to break the peace and indulge in terrorism and violence. The danger is not from us who have declared solemnly that we will not be the first to use nuclear weapons, but rather it is from those who refuse to make any such commitment.

We are publicly committed to the abolition of nuclear weapons together with other nuclear powers who possess them in awesome stockpiles capable of destroying the world many times over. India does not threaten any other country and will not engage in an arms race, but India will maintain a minimum credible nuclear deterrent—no more, no less—for her own security.
Everything has changed, mostly for the worse. Take just the physical destruction of whatever we had, the schools, the colleges, the roads, the bridges, the buildings, everything we had for the last 50 years, that has been more or less destroyed. We used to have a very good education system, with very good teachers, but now that has gone. . . .

I think Kashmir finally has to become a bridge between India and Pakistan. Finally. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but after some years, it is finally going to become a bridge. Have an open relationship. It’s a dream!

We never know when the shell will come. . . . For the last three years, no one sleeps well there. Whoever flees leaves everything there. He takes nothing with him. The cattle are left on their own. Nobody cares for them, so we don’t know what happens to them. . . .

Before, tourism was OK. Before the shelling there used to be 25 hotels, but now I don’t think any hotel is open. We can’t calculate the damage. . . .

The children’s education is stopped, and whoever is ill dies because there is no medication nor anyone to care for them. Whoever resides in Kargil, does so at his own risk.
Reviewing Places & Terms

A. Briefly explain the importance of each of the following.

1. basic necessities
2. illiteracy
3. summer monsoon
4. winter monsoon

B. Answer the questions about vocabulary in complete sentences.

5. Which winds stir up powerful storms in South Asia that release vast amounts of rain and cause severe flooding?
6. Which winds blow from the southwest across the Indian Ocean toward South Asia from June through September?
7. Food, shelter, and clothing are all examples of what?
8. Which winds blow from the northeast across the Himalayas from October through February?
9. What is the term for the inability to read or write?
10. What was the Indian government finding difficult to provide for its people?

Main Ideas

Population Growth (pp. 593–596)

1. Currently, about how many babies are born in India every day? Annually?
2. Why might the lack of basic necessities in a region concern demographers—people who study population?
3. Why might a high rate of infant mortality affect the size of families?
4. What percentage of the world’s population is found in South Asia?
5. How would education play an important role in slowing population growth?

Living with Extreme Weather (pp. 597–599)

6. What are South Asia’s two monsoon seasons? How do they differ?
7. When do these wind seasons occur?
8. What are some of the precautions that people in South Asia have taken to lessen the damage caused by cyclones?
9. What type of international aid have the countries of South Asia received?
10. What political tensions have resulted from the effects of extreme weather?

Case Study: Territorial Dispute over Kashmir (pp. 600–603)

11. Where is Kashmir located?
12. What countries have fought three wars over control of Kashmir?
13. When and why did the dispute over Kashmir begin?
14. Why are world leaders particularly concerned about the dispute?
15. What might happen if the dispute were resolved?
Critical Thinking

1. Using Your Notes
Use your completed chart to answer these questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Weather</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Why might parents in India want a large family?
b. Why is Kashmir economically important to Pakistan?

2. Geographic Thinking

a. REGION  How is the religious make-up of Kashmir related to conflict over the territory?
b. MOVEMENT  Why might people in India and the other heavily populated countries in South Asia move to other parts of the world?

3. Identifying Themes
Why is Bangladesh especially vulnerable to the cyclones that occasionally devastate the region? Which of the five themes applies to this situation?

4. Making Comparisons
Why might India and Bangladesh fear the weather that can arrive during the summer?

5. Determining Cause and Effect
How might the dispute over Kashmir affect the social and educational programs in the region?

Geographic Skills: Interpreting Graphs

Ethnic Indian Population Outside of India

Use the graph at right to answer the following questions.

1. PLACE  On what continent outside of South Asia do most Indians live?
2. PLACE  About how many Indians live in South America?
3. LOCATION  Why do you think most ethnic Indians living outside of India live in South Asian countries?

GeomActivity

Carry out research on people from India who live in the United States. Create a table of the five cities with the largest populations of people from India.

hmhsocialstudies.com

MULTIMEDIA ACTIVITY

Use the links at hmhsocialstudies.com to continue research on population growth in India. Focus on how the limited availability of basic necessities has affected the daily life of the country’s people.

Creating a Multimedia Presentation  Use your research to create an electronic presentation. Combine charts, maps, images, objects, and written accounts to provide your audience with a picture of daily life in India.