### Main Facts about West Bengal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Area</strong></th>
<th>88752 Km²</th>
<th><strong>Area rank:</strong> 13th</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>91,347,736 (7.55% of India's population)</td>
<td>(4th most populous state)</td>
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<td><strong>Principal official Language</strong></td>
<td>Bengali and English</td>
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<td><strong>Established</strong></td>
<td>15 August 1947 (province) and statehood in 26 Jan. 1950</td>
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<td><strong>Neighbouring States/UTs</strong></td>
<td>Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Sikkim</td>
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<td><strong>Capital</strong></td>
<td>Kolkata</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Members of Parliament</strong></td>
<td>Lok Sabha 42 (Rajya Sabha Seats: 16)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legislature</strong></td>
<td>Unicameral (Assembly seats 295)</td>
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<td><strong>Airports</strong></td>
<td>Dum-Dum International, Kolkata, Bagdogra, Kalaikunda, Panagarh, Coochbehar</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ports</strong></td>
<td>Kolkata, Haldia</td>
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<td><strong>Festivals</strong></td>
<td>Durga Puja is the most favourite, Kali Puja, Diwali, Vasant Panchami, Lakshmi Puja, Holi, Shivratri, Janma-Shhti, Id-Ul-Fitr</td>
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<td><strong>Economy Size</strong></td>
<td>US$ 138.27 billion, Service industries contributes 58% of state GDP while Agriculture just 18%.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Industries</strong></td>
<td>Engineering, Automobile, Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Aluminium, Jute, Cotton Textile, Tea, Pepper, Leather, Footbear, Bicycle, Dairy, Poultry</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy</strong></td>
<td>77.08%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Density</strong></td>
<td>1,029/persons/km² (2,700/sq mi)</td>
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<td><strong>Districts</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sex Ratio (as per 2011 census)</strong></td>
<td>947/Thousand Male</td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Principal Dances</strong></td>
<td>Chhau (Purulia), Ravindra Nritya</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Principal Rivers</strong></td>
<td>Bhagirathi, Ganga, Mayurakshi, Damodar, Teesta, Torsha, Jaldhaka, Mahananda, Subarnarekha and Rupnrayan</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Principal Minerals</strong></td>
<td>Coal, China Clay, Petroleum</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Main Crops</strong></td>
<td>Rice, Wheat, Maize, Barley, Gram, Peas, Jute, Tea, Pan Leaf, Oilseeds, Tobacco, Sugarcane</td>
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<td><strong>Tourist Spots</strong></td>
<td>Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (Toy Train), Jaldapara National Park, Shantiniketan, Bishnupur Terracotta Temples, Howrah Bridge, Sunderbans delta of India, Howrah station, Eden Gardens, Belur Math</td>
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| **Religions** | - Hinduism (70.53%)  
- Islam (27.01%)  
- Christianity (0.72%)  
- Buddhism (0.30%)  
- Sikhism (0.07%)  
- Jainism (0.06%)  
- Other Religions (1.03%)  
- Atheist (0.001%) |
Know Your State: West Bengal

- **Forest Area:** 16,847 km² (6,505 sq mi)
- **State animal:** Fishing Cat (Prionailurus viverrinus)
- **State bird:** White-throated kingfisher
- **State flower:** Night-flowering jasmine
- **State tree:** Devil tree
- **Nick Names:** City of Palaces, City of Joy, The cultural capital of India, City of Processions.
- **Highest Peak:** Sandakfu - 636 m (11,929 ft)
- **National Border:** Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Sikkim, and Assam.
- **International Border:** Bangladesh, Nepal & Bhutan
- **National Parks:** Sundarbans National Park, Buxa Tiger Reserve, Gorumara National Park, Neora Valley National Park, and Singalila National Park.
- **First Chief Minister:** Prafulla Chandra Ghosh
- **1st Governor of Bengal (1757)** - Robert Clive
- **1st Governor-General of Bengal (1773)** - Warren Hastings
- **1st Governor-General of India (1833)** - William Bentinck
- **The sorrow of Bengal:** Damodar River (due to its frequent floods)
- **Major Rivers (Northern Hilly Region):** Teesta, Torsa, Jaldhaka, and Mahananda
- **Major Rivers (Western Plateau region):** Damodar, Ajay, and Kangsabati
- **UNESCO World Heritage Site:** Darjeeling Himalayan Railway
- **India’s first private-sector airport:** Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport
- **First ODF district:** Nadia
- **Music:** Baul, Gombhira, Bhawaiya, Shyama Sangeet, Kirtan, Rabindra Sangeet, Nazrul Geeti, Jeebonmukhi Gaan.
- **Dance:** Chaau dance (Purulia), Rabindra Nritya
- **Largest Stadium (seating capacity):** Salt Lake Stadium/ Vivekananda Yuva Bharati Krirangan (85,000 seating capacity)
- **First Governor:** C Rajagopalachari (1947-48)
- **Present Governor:** Jagdeep Dhankhar (2019- Present day)
- **First Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court:** Fanibhushan Chakrabarty
- **Present Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court:** Thottathil B. Radhakrishnan (2017-2021)
- **The Calcutta High Court is located in Kolkata, which has jurisdiction over the whole of West Bengal and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**
- **of Blocks/Panchayat Samiti:** 341
- **of Gram Panchayats:** 3342
- **Panchayat polls were first held in West Bengal in 1978**
- **West Bengal Legislative Assembly is located in B.B.D Bagh.**
- **Members of Legislative Assembly:** 295 Members of Legislative Assembly. (294 members directly elected from single-seat constituencies and one nominated from the Anglo-Indian community.) Its term is five years, unless sooner dissolved.
- **Hon’ble Speaker:** Biman Banerjee
- **Hon’ble Deputy Speaker:** Sukumar Hansda
- **Hon’ble Leader of Opposition:** Shri Abdul Mannan
- **Leader of the House (Chief Minister):** Mamata Banerjee, AITC since 20 May 2011
- **The secretariat is located in Howrah, in the Nabanna**
- **The main river in West Bengal is the Ganges, which divides into two branches. One branch enters Bangladesh as the Padma, or Pôdda, while the other flows through West Bengal as the Bhagirathi River and Hooghly**
- **The state capital is Kolkata (Calcutta) the seventh-largest city in India and the center of the third-largest metropolitan area in the country.**
- **Asansol** is the second-largest city and urban agglomeration in West Bengal.
- West Bengal was ruled by the Left Front for 34 years (1977–2011), making it the world’s longest-running democratically elected communist government.
- Bardhaman was bifurcated into Purba Bardhaman and Paschim Bardhaman in 2017.
- Howrah station is the busiest station in India. It also has the biggest station complex
- Howrah Bridge which is a cantilever suspension type bridge was built in the year 1943.
  - At the time of construction, it was the third-longest bridge in the world and now it is the sixth-longest cantilever type bridge.
  - This bridge is the iconic face of West Bengal.
  - It was renamed Rabindra Setu in 1965.
  - About 1 lakhs vehicles and 1.5 lakhs pedestrians pass through this bridge daily making it the busiest bridge in the world.
- The Botanical Garden of Kolkata has been the house of the world’s largest tree: A banyan tree whose circumference is more than 330 meters.
- Eden Gardens: Called “Cricket’s answer to the Colosseum”.
  - In addition, it is the second-largest cricket stadium in the world.
- Port of Kolkata is the oldest operating port of India, built-in 1870 by the East India Company.
- Mohun Bagan is one of the oldest football clubs in Asia, having been established in 1889.
- The National Library of India, situated in Kolkata, is the largest public library in the country.
- Victoria Memorial hall is a popular museum in Kolkata, which is made up of white marble.
  - Queen Victoria died in the year 1901 and it was built in her memory by Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India.
  - It was opened to the public in the year 1921.
- Belur Math was envisaged and founded by Swami Vivekanand.
  - It was designed by Swami Vijnananda who was not only a disciple of Ramkrishna Paramhansa but also a civil engineer.
  - Its construction was completed in the year 1938. It is also the headquarters of Ramkrishna Mission.
- Digha is a seaside resort and tourist town lying in Purba Medinipur. It is the most popular sea resort and known for its beaches.
- Bandhan Express, an international train runs between Kolkata to Khulna of Bangladesh. This train covers a distance of 172 Km in 4-1/2 hrs. The first inaugural journey was on 9th Nov 2017.
  - Besides Bandhan Express, there is one more international train between India and Bangladesh – Maitree Express between Dhaka and Kolkata running since 2008.
- The state accounts for 66.5% country’s jute production, which is the highest of all Indian states.
- Mineral Resources of West Bengal – Coal and China clay are two important minerals of the state.
  - West Bengal stands third in the country in terms of mineral production.
  - West Bengal is the third largest state for coal production, accounting for about half of India’s total.
- Industries of West Bengal – Engineering, automobiles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, aluminium, ceramics, jute, cotton textiles, tea, paper, leather, footwear etc.
- Murshidabad and Baluchari silk sarees are famous products of West Bengal.
- Agricultural Products of West Bengal – Rice, Wheat, Pulses, oilseed, potato
- Kolkata’s Metro rail project, which was the first of its type in India, was opened for public service in 1984.
- Kolkata and Haldia are the two main ports of West Bengal.
- Tourist spots of West Bengal- Victoria Memorial, Indian Museum, Zoological garden, Pareshnath Temple, Kalighat Temple, Nakhoda mosque, Jorasanko Thakurbari (birthplace of Rabindranath Tagore), and Howrah Bridge (Rabindra Setu).
- West Bengal is the only Indian state, which has The Himalayas, The Duars Forests, the vast beaches of The Bay of Bengal, and innumerable rivers. This is called “Accident of Geography”.
- Kolkata was the capital of British India from 1756 to 1911, because of which you find British monuments in every part of the city.
- Bengali women were the first Indian women to go to school, pursue higher studies, and start working.

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Undivided Bengal was the first place in India where Sati, polygamy and child-marriage was abolished and widow-remarriage was established by the British laws.

The National Song of India, “Vande Mataram”, was written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, another Bengali.

Bengali is the only language that takes pride in gifting two countries their national anthems; India and Bangladesh. Both were written by Rabindranath Tagore.

Most Educated District: (Male)- East Midnapore (93.14%)
Most Educated District: (Female)- Kolkata (84.98%)
Least Educated District: (Male)- North Dinajpore (66.65%)
Least Educated District: (Female)- Purulia (51.29%)

Seats in Bidhan Sabha (General): 210
Seats in Bidhan Sabha (Scheduled Caste): 68
Seats in Bidhan Sabha (Scheduled Tribe): 16

Seats in Lok Sabha (General): 30
Seats in Lok Sabha (Scheduled Caste): 10
Seats in Lok Sabha (Scheduled Tribe): 2

Percentage of Forest in W.B- 14.2%

Two UNESCO World Heritage Site: Sundarbans National Park (Announced: 1987) and Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (Announced: 1999)

“Land of Thunder”- Darjeeling
“Rice Bowl of WB”- Burdwan

Largest District-South 24 Paraganas
Smallest district- Kolkata

Highest Populated district: North 24 Paraganas
Least Populated district: South Dinajpur

Highest Mountain Peak: Sandakphu (3636m)
Driest Place of WB: Mayurshwar (Birbhum, Rainfall- 95 c)

Hottest Place of WB: Asansol (Burdwan)
Coldest Place of WB: Darjeeling

West Bengal/ India’s first all-girls school: Baptist Mission School (Kolkata)

WB’s first college: Fort William College (Kolkata, Estd- 1800)
West Bengal’s first Women’s College: Bethune College (Kolkata, 1849)

First Medical College: Bengal Medical College (Presently known as Kolkata Medical College, Estd- 1835)

First Train in WB ran between Howrah and Hooghly (15 August 1854)

Largest Railway Station of WB: Howrah
Busiest Railway Station of WB: Sealdah
Longest Platform of WB: Kharagpur (West Medinipur, 1.072.50m)
Highest Platform of WB: Ghum (Darjeeling, 2,254m above sea level)

West Bengal’s/ India’s first newspaper: Bengal Gazette (James Hickey, 1780)

West Bengal’s first Bengali language newspaper: Samachar Darpan (Serampore, Hooghly)
Highest sold newspaper of WB: Anandabazaar Patrika

Oldest Library of WB: William Currie Library (Serampore, 1800)
WB/ India’s biggest planetarium- Birla Planetarium (Kolkata)
WB’s biggest palace: Hazar Duari (Murshidabad)

WB’s highest memorial: Victoria Memorial (56 meters)
WB’s highest Minaret: Shahid Minar (48 meters)
WB’s largest museum: Indian Museum (1814)

Largest Zoo: Zoological Gardens (Alipore, Kolkata)

Largest Garden: Botanical Garden (Shibpur, Howrah)

Oldest Hydroelectricity project: Sidrapong, Darjeeling (1897)

Metro rail started in WB/ India in the year 1984
First Telegraph line: Between Kolkata- Howrah

Largest Fair: Gangasagar Mela (Makar Sankranti)
- **WB’s longest bridge**: Rupnarayan Setu (Kolaghat, 3313 ft)
- **Longest Barrage**: Farakka Barrage (2245 m, built on River Ganges)
- **Longest river**: Bhagirathi- Hooghly River (530 KM)
- **Longest Cable Bridge**: Vidyasagar Setu (2700 ft)
- **Largest Cantilever Bridge**: Howrah Bridge (457 m)
- **WB/ India’s oldest Hockey tournament**: Betton Cup (1895)
- **WB’s oldest Football Club**: Calcutta- Dalhousie Club (1880)
- **WB’s highest pass**: Jelep La Pass (13,999 ft)
- **WB/ India’s first Solar Power Station**: Seebpore Solar Power Station (Jamuria, Asansol)

**Facts about Kolkata**

- Kolkata is the **sixth capital of West Bengal** (First- Gour (Malda), Second- Nadia, Third- Rajmahal, Fourth- Dhaka, Fifth- Murshidabad)
- **Oldest Church of Kolkata**: Armenia Church, 1724 (China Bazaar)
- **William Jones** established the **Asiatic Society** in 1784
- **Presidency College** (Earlier Hindu College) was established in 1817.
- **Calcutta University** was established in **1857**.
- **General Post Office** (GPO) was established in **1868**.
- **Nilratan Sarkar Medical** College was known as **Campbell Medical School**
- First Bengali Mayor of Calcutta Corporation: **Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das** (1920) [Mayor is the first citizen of Kolkata Metropolitan]
- Calcutta Corporation was established in **1847**.
- **First Graduate** from Calcutta University: **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Jadu Nath Basu**

This is the 13th topic under the West Bengal Geography Notes for WBCS Module. The links to the previous chapters are listed below:

1. [Introduction to West Bengal Geography](#)
2. [Physiographic divisions of West Bengal](#)
3. [Rivers of West Bengal](#)
4. [Soil and Climate of West Bengal](#)
5. [Mineral Resources of West Bengal](#)
6. [National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries in West Bengal](#)
7. [Agriculture in West Bengal](#)
8. [Irrigation and Hydropower Projects in West Bengal](#)
9. [Transport System in West Bengal](#)
10. [Districts of West Bengal](#)
11. [Demographic Profile of West Bengal](#)
12. [Schemes of West Bengal Government](#)

Next: **Miscellaneous Topics**