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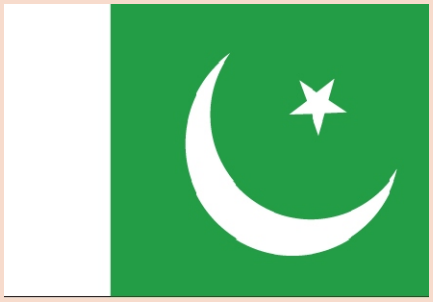
INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31/D

INDIA: country profile

Capital: New Delhi
Population: About 1.2 billion
Currency: Rupee
Religion: Hinduism (80%), Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism
Language: 17 major languages, 844 dialects and English





PAKISTAN: country profile

Capital: Islamabad
Population: About 158 million
Currency: Rupee
Religion: Muslim (97%), Hinduism and Christianity
Language: Urdu, other regional languages and English

India and Pakistan became two independent states in 1947 when British rule came to an end. This box contains a variety of objects from both countries.

Ganges water



The Ganges is the most important Hindu sacred river. Most Hindus have an ambition to bathe in the Ganges at least once in their lives. There is a picture of the river on the right.

This copper container holds water from the Ganges. At home a drop might be added to a bath. Many elderly Hindus travel to the Ganges to die and then have their ashes scattered in the sacred waters, but if this isn't possible, a drop of water might be the last thing they are given before they die.



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Moon Metal Earrings and Ceremonial necklace

There are two examples of traditional jewellery from India and Pakistan in the box. This type of jewellery can be worn in everyday life and also plays an important part in ceremonies.

In a Hindu wedding ceremony the bride is thought to be like Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and good luck, and so wears a beautiful sari with lots of jewellery to match. She wears necklaces, earrings, finger rings, pins in her hair and bangles. The groom's parents also give gifts of jewellery to the bride during the ceremony.

The earrings in the box may have been worn for a wedding, but could have also been worn as typical everyday jewellery. They are made from an inexpensive metal, which has a silvery appearance.





The ceremonial necklet is interesting because it has two crowns embroidered into the centrepieces. This might mean that it was made at the time of Queen Victoria's Jubilee either the Golden in 1887 or Diamond in 1897.

Seed necklace

This necklace is made of seeds that come from a plant native to India called Rattan. The Rattan is a type of palm and other parts of it are used to make furniture and baskets.





Seeds are often used to make jewellery as they are not only attractive but also very tough. Such necklaces are sometimes worn by a *sadhu* or Hindu holy man. The pictures on the right show two sadhu wearing rattan seed necklaces.



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Elephant bell



Bells like these are attached to Indian elephants along with other decorations as part of ceremonies, festivals and processions. You can always recognise an elephant bell by the long thin pieces of metal hanging down from the rim. The style of the bell has not changed for hundreds of years and it makes a very rich sound.

Statue of the god Shiva



This statue would have been used as part of a family shrine in the home. The shrines vary in size from a small table to an entire room.

The statue is of the god Shiva. He is holding a different object in each hand. In his top right hand (as you face the statue) he is holding a damru, which is a type of musical instrument used in Hindu temples. In his bottom right hand he is holding a shield and in the bottom left a sword. These items are needed for protecting good over evil which is why Shiva is slaying a demon in this statue. In his top left hand he holds a snake - an important animal in the hindu religion.

The central belief of Hinduism is that there is a soul, or God, found in everything called Brahman. Brahman can take the form of many different gods, which people worship.

Hindus believe in reincarnation, which means that when you die you are reborn again in a different body. They believe that the things you did in your previous life/lives affect your present life. This is called Karma.

There are many Hindu holy days and festivals. Two of the most popular are Diwali and Holi. Diwali takes place in October and November and is known as the festival of light because fireworks are set off to scare away evil spirits. Holi is the most colourful festival and takes place in February or March. It is a happy time when people go into the streets and cover each other with coloured powder, ink and paint!

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Elephant



Carved wooden elephants are very popular ornaments. This one is carved from the wood of a coconut palm tree.

You can tell this is an Indian elephant because it has small ears and two humps on its head. The African species has larger ears, a smooth head and is generally bigger.

The Hindu god Ganesh has the head of an elephant. He is a jovial and good-natured god.



Box

The beautiful little box is made from papier-mâchè, which is a technique using pieces of paper stuck together with a wet paste. The decoration is in the traditional style of Kashmir. Kashmir is an area in the north of India that has been at the centre of a fierce argument between Pakistan and India, who both want to claim it as part of their own country.



