



Interesting Facts about Assam - History, Environment and Economy GK Notes

Apart from the cultural, geographical and political aspects, Assam is also rich in natural resources such as natural oil, gas, rubber, tea and minerals such as granite, limestone and kaolin. The state is home to a large ecosystem consisting of forests, wetlands, mountains, a huge variety of animals, etc. Therefore, we'll be looking at the history, environment and economy of this state.

Do you know which state has two **Natural World Heritage Sites in India**? Which state contributes to the **maximum production of TEA** in India?

Let's start with the first aspect –

History of Assam

The history and origin of the Indian state of Assam is believed to have mythological roots. The state of Assam has a rich and ancient history.

Ancient History (350 – 1206 or 4th century to 12th century):

- The historical account of Assam begins with **Varman Dynasty**.
- Varman Dynasty was established by Pushyavarman in 4th century in Kamrup.
- It extends from the Karatoya in the west to Sadiya in the east.
- Varman Dynasty reached its height during Bhaskarvarman's rule in the 7th century.
- During Bhaskarvarman's rule Chinese traveller Xuanzang visited his court and wrote a significant account of Assam.
- After Bhaskarvarman's death the control of the dynasty went to Salastambha and he established a new dynasty called **Mlecha Dynasty**.
- The Mlecha Dynasty ruled Kamrupa from 650 – 900.
- Their capital was at Hadapeshvar (Tezpur).
- In the 9th century, their downfall started and a new ruler came up. Their ruler was elected like the Palas of Bengal.
- But the Palas of Bengal were Buddhists, the Palas of Kamrup were Hindu.
- Their capitals were Hadapeshvar (Tezpur), Durjaya (North-Guwahati), Kmarupnagara (Guwahati).
- Their kings were Ratna Pal, Indra Pala, Gopala, Harsha Pala, Dharmapala, Jayapala.
- Pala kingdom came to an end when Kamrupa was invaded by Gaur King Ramapal (Bengal) (1072-1126).
- The work of Pala Dynasty is reflected in Madan Kamdev Sculpture.
- After this kingdom, the Ancient History of Assam declined and new history period began.



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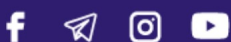
[Image Source: Wikipedia]

Medieval History (1206 – 1826):

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- In the 13th century, Sandhya, a Kamrupanagar king moved his capital to Kamatapur as the Turks of Bengal were attacking and he established Kamata Kingdom.
- The last kings of the Kamata Kingdom were removed by Alauddin Hussain Shah (Sultan of Bengal) in 1498.
- Although Shah started ruling but they could not establish a kingdom because of Bhuyan Chieftains.
- Bhuyan Chieftains were local warrior or landlords of Assam who protected the land.
- In the beginning of the 16th century, Biswa Singha (Koch Tribe) established the Koch Dynasty in Kamata Kingdom.
- During the period of Nara Narayan and Bir Chilari, sons of Biswa Singha this dynasty reached its height.
- Similarly, in eastern part, the Kachari and the Chutिया kingdom arose with some Bhuyan Chieftains.
- **Birpal** was the founder of Chutिया Kingdom and he formed his first kingdom in Swarnagiri (Swansiri River) in 1187.
- Ratradhaajpal, son of Birpal later shifted the capital of Ratnapur (Majuli) and absorbed the Pala Dynasty and finally moved to Sadiya in 1248.
- The founder of Kachari kingdom is not known.
- They are also known as **Dimasa** Kingdom.
- In this period only a Shan Group from China entered Assam and they established Ahom Kingdom.
- The 16th century was very crucial for Assam as the Ahom defeated the indigenous groups of Assam Chutिया Kingdom, Kachari Kingdom.
- It was also the period of growth of Eksarana Dharma of Srimanta Sankardeva.
- During this period, the Koch king Nara Narayan died and the Kamata Kingdom was divided into two parts – Koch Bihar (West) and Koch Hajo (East).
- There started the conflict between the groups which resulted in the entry of Mughals and extension of Ahom Kingdom.
- The 17th century was important for the conflict between Ahom-Mughal and the most important **Battle of Saraighat** took place in 1671 which finally ended in 1682 defeating the Mughals at Itakhuli in Guwahati.
- Ahom Kingdom was led by Lachit Borphukan at Brahmaputra River, Saraighat.
- Ahom Army was weaker than Mughal's but with brilliant tactics they won the battle.
- Battle of Itakhuli was fought in 1682 between Ahom and Mughals.
- In this battle of Ahom pushed back then Mughal to the west of the Manas River.
- The main battle was fought between Mughal Fauzdar Mansur Khan and the Ahom Commander Dihingia Alun Borborua and the Mughals were defeated.
- With this Ahom recovered Sarkar Kamrup from Mughals.
- In 18th century Ahom Kingdom lost its power under the hands of Moamoria Rebellion.
- The Moamoria Rebellion (1769-1805) was the 18th century conflict between Ahom and the Motok (Chutिया and Moran)
- The Ahom kingdom was entering a crisis as the Paik system on which the state was based unable to adapt to the changing economy and emerging social classes.
- The rise of the Sattras was one of the reasons for the leakage for manpower from the Paik system.
- Under the Paik system, adult and male between 16-50 years of age were obliged to render services to the state and forms its militia and in return they received a piece of land for cultivation.
- So there arose conflicts between the Ahom and those who were building sattras and the Moamoria Rebellion took place.

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Colonial Period (1826 – 1947):

- The colonial Assam started with the **Treaty of Yandaboo** between the British and Burmese.
- By this treaty the Burmese were expelled from Assam by the British after the **Anglo-Burmese war, 1824**.
- After that the Assam Valley came into the hands of the British and the period of Colonization started.
- The British annexed all the local group of Kings of Ahom, Chutia, Kachari, etc.
- They include Assam under Bengal Province.
- The plantation of tea also started in this period.
- The British brought some Chinese labour to grow tea and also Chinese plant of tea, they mixed both Assam and Chinese tea and found it successful to grow in Assam.
- They established a company ASSAM TEA COMPANY in 1839.
- They also brought labours from central India and treated them as slaves. The British started ruling everywhere in the state and the people of Assam started to protest against the British.
- The first person who came against the British was GOMDHAR KUNWAR, but he suppressed by the British.
- Later on, some other people arose against the British- Dhananjay Burhagohain, Piyali Phukan, Jiuram Medhi.
- But these people were sentenced to death in 1830.
- In 1857 people of Assam also took part in the Indian rebellion.
- Maniram Dewan and Piyali Baruah were the leaders of this rebellion in Assam, but they were arrested.
- Again in 1861 – the peasants of Nagaon were violently suppressed at Phulaguri Ghat, because they protested against the tax on beetel-nut and paan.
- Again in 1874, Assam was separated from Bengal province and Sylhet was included in Assam under Chief Commissioner's Province.
- The capital of Assam was made at Shillong.
- The official language was changed to Bengali from Assamese.
- Meanwhile, **oil was discovered in Digboi** and apparently the OIL Refineries grew up.
- In 1903 – Assam Association was formed and Manik Chandra Baruah was the first secretary.
- In 1905, Bengal was partitioned and East Bengal was added to Chief Commissioner's province.
- It led to the migration of people from Bengal to Assam and they started to settle in the riverine tracts (Char) of Brahmaputra Valley.
- These people were encouraged to grow different variety of crops by the British.
- Between 1905 and 1921, many people migrated to Assam Valley which continued later on and give rise to Assam Agitation of 1979.
- In 1912, Assam legislative council was made with 25 members.
- Later on, it was transformed to Assam Pradesh Congress Committee in 1920-21 and under Government of India Act, 1919 its members were increased to 53 and in under Government of India Act, 1935, the council expanded the members into 108.
- Gopinath Bordoloi and Muhammad Saadulah rose at this period.

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[Image Source: Wikipedia]

Coming on the second aspect –

Environment of Assam

The state is blessed with rich mineral, water, forest, agricultural and human resources of great potential and value, offering immense possibilities of becoming one of the frontline states of India.

- The recorded forest area of Assam is **26,832 sq. km** accounting for 34.21% of its geographical area.
- According to their legal status, Reserved Forests constitute 66.58% and unclassed forests 33.42% of the total forest area.
- **Subansiri Dam:** The Subansiri Lower Dam, officially named **Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project (SLHEP)**, is an under-construction gravity dam on the Subansiri River in Northeast India. It lies in Dhemaji district and lower Subansiri district on the border of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The construction began in December 2007.



[Image Source: SANDRP]

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- The state has the highest diversity of birds in India with around 820 species.
- The estimated tree cover in the state is 1564 sq. km which is 1.99% of geographical area of the state.

National Parks:

1. **Kaziranga National Park:** The Park was established in 1908 with an area of 430 sq. km. It is not only a National Park but also a Wildlife Sanctuary. Located in Nagaon and Golaghat districts, it became **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1985. The three important rivers that flow through this area, Brahmaputra, Diphul and Mora Dhansiri. Due to these rivers the soil here is fertile and alluvial which is formed because of the soil erosion and silt deposition. The park is very famous for the one-horned rhinoceros i.e. 2400 which is equal to **2/3rd** of World's Rhinoceros Population are found here. Apart from one-horned rhinoceros, Wild Water Buffalo, Hispid Hare, Bengal fox are also found here.
2. **Manas National Park:** The Park was established in **1990** with an area of 950 sq. km. It is **Project Tiger Reserve, Elephant Reserve, Biosphere Reserve and UNESCO World Heritage Site**. Its name was removed by UNESCO from the list of World Heritage Sites in danger in **2011**. It lies in the Foothills of the Himalayas. The park is famous for its population of the Wild Water Buffalo. Manas River flows through this area which is the tributary of Brahmaputra. It lies at the border dividing India and Bhutan. The two biomes found are Grasslands and Forest. The Himalayan subtropical broadleaf forests are found here. Terai formations also takes place. The animals which are predominantly found in this park are Assam Roofed Turtle, Hispid Hare, and Golden Langoor and Rygmy hog.
3. **Dibru Saikhova National Park:** It is not only a National Park but also a Biosphere Reserve. It lies in Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts. It is the largest **salix swamp forest**. The park is bounded by Brahmaputra and Lohit River in the North and by Dibru River in the South. Tropical Monsoon Climate consisting moist mixed semi evergreen forests, moist mixed deciduous forests and grasslands. The animal species found are White-winged wood duck, Pig tailed Macaque, Dhole, etc.
4. **Nameri National Park:** Nameri is a birdwatcher's paradise with over 300 species. It lies in Sonitpur district, about 35 km from Tezpur. It is located in the Foothills of Eastern Himalayas. They are semi-evergreen, moist deciduous forests with cane and bamboo brakes and narrow strips of open grassland along rivers. Birds found are White-winged duck, Great Hornbill, Black Stork, etc. Nameri shares its boundary with the **Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary of Arunachal Pradesh**.
5. **Orang National Park:** This Park is also known as **Rajiv Gandhi National Orang Park**. It is also known as **Mini Kaziranga National Park** since the two parks have a similar landscape made up of marshes, streams and grasslands. It is located in Darang and Sonitpur districts. The park is an important part of Indo-Burmese biodiversity hotspot. The rivers that flow through this area are Pachnoi, Behiri and Dhansiri. It lies in North bank bordered by Brahmaputra River. The Climate is of Sub-Tropical Monsoon. The animal species are One-horned rhinoceros, Bengal tiger, Wild Buffalo, etc.



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[Image Source: Wikipedia]

Wildlife Sanctuaries:

1. **Bornadi Wildlife Sanctuary:** It is situated on the foothills of Himalayas bordering Bhutan in the North and in Udalguri district and Baksa district of Assam. The Wildlife Sanctuary is named after the river Bornadi which flows on its western border. This was established in **1980** to protect the Hispid Hare and Pigmy Hog.
2. **Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary:** A Wildlife Sanctuary on the southern bank of Brahmaputra in Morigaon district in Assam. It was declared in 1987 and consists of **15 grass species**. It covers 38.85 sq.km. The Wildlife Sanctuary provides grasslands and wetlands habitats for the Indian Rhinoceros.

Economy of Assam

Agriculture plays the chief role of revenue earning in Assam economy. Around 69% of the population is engaged in Agriculture. So, let's understand the economy of Assam –

- The state's rank in terms of GDP is **17th** with 4.09 lakh crore.
- The GDP growth is **8.5%**
- GDP by sector is –

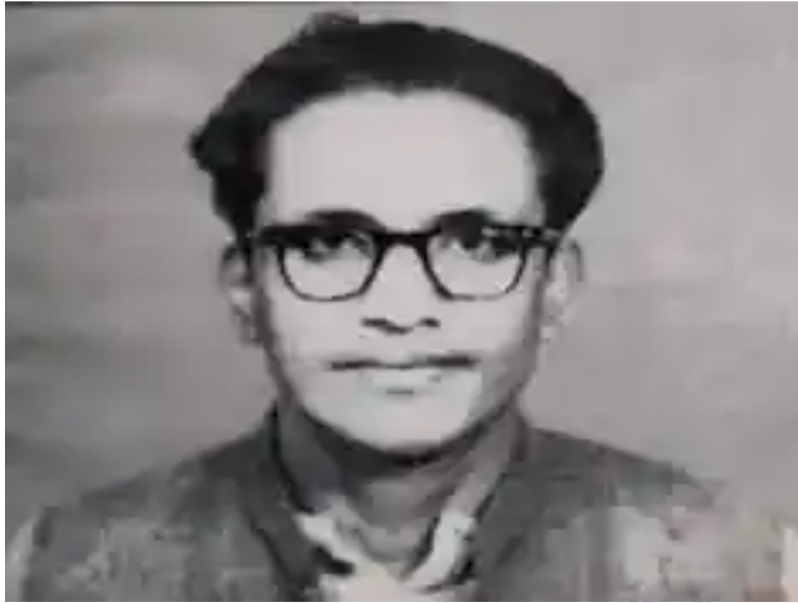
Agriculture – **17%**

Industry – **39%**

Services – **44%**

- The First Assamese Economist and Research Scholar to initiate formal extensive research on economy of Assam for 5 centuries right from the time for Srimanta Sankardev was **Principal Bhabananda Deka**.

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[Image Source: India Online]

- The first ever research based Assamese book on Assam Economics was **Asomor Arthaneeti** (Economy of Assam).
- Tea Production occupies an important place and plays a very useful part in the National Economy. The Production in the state reached 682.44 million kgs in 2019-20 (Till January 2020).
- As of February 2020, Assam had a total installed power generation capacity of 1756.69 MW, of which 1253.64 MW was under central utilities, 69.83 MW was under private utilities and 433.22 MW was under state sector.
- Government introduced Jyotisman Asom Scheme under Budget 2020-21, to provide free electricity to all households whose monthly electricity consumption is up to 30 units.

Education of Assam

The literacy rate of the state is **72.19%** which is pretty well as it is slightly below the national average of 74.04%. The colleges in Assam are divided into region wise. The government Ayurvedic College in Assam also offers courses on the age-old principle of Ayurveda.

The language used for instruction is Assamese, Bodo, Bengali and Hindi. Many State Government affiliated schools and all the CBSE affiliated schools in the state use English as their medium of instruction at the Higher Secondary Level.

Sports of Assam

The sports are very essential for one's overall development.

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- **The Sports and Youth Welfare Department** was created in the year 1988-89.
- The objective is to bring all-round development in the field of Sports and Youth Welfare in the state.
- The next major objective was to vigorously pursue and implement the scheme of Physical Education, Youth Welfare, Adventure and Sports, Mountaineering.
- The Assam cricket team is a domestic cricket team based in the Indian state of Assam, run by the **Assam Cricket Association**. They compete and represent the state annually in the first-class Ranji Trophy tournament, limited-overs Vijay Hazare Trophy tournament and the Twenty20 Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.
- **Somdev Devbarman** is the popular Tennis player who hail from Guwahati in Assam.



[Image Source: The Times of India]

Here are **some of the Interesting Facts of Assam** –

- The **Dhola-Sadiya Bridge**, also referred to as the Bhupen Hazarika Setu, is a beam bridge in India, connecting the northeast states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The bridge spans the Lohit River, a major tributary of Brahmaputra River, from the village of Dhola (Tinsukia district) in the South to Sadiya to the North.
- **Robert Bruce** in 1823 discovered tea plants growing wild in Upper Brahmaputra Valley. Assam tea is basically famous for its malty flavour, body, briskness strong and bright colour. It is mostly grown at or near sea. India is the largest producer of tea in India and second in the World after China. Approximately **52%** of the total area produced in India comes from the state of Assam.
- **Arnab Goswami** is the popular news journalist and anchor on channel Times Now. He was born in Guwahati.
- **Digboi** is a town in Tinsukia district in Assam. Digboi is also known as **Oil City of Assam** where the first oil well in Asia was drilled in 1866. The first refinery was started here as early as 1901. It has the oldest oil well in operation.
- **Seema Biswas** is the popular Hindi film actress who got birth in Nalbari district of Assam. She gained popularity for the role of Phoolan Devi in film "**Bandit Queen**" in 1994.



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[Image Source: Hindustan Times]

Therefore, we complete this article with some Interesting Facts. In the next blog, we would be discussing some interesting facts and trivia about the state of Chattisgarh. Click here for 'Know Your State Chattisgarh - Geography, Climate and Culture GK Notes'. Hope this will help in your competitive exams such as **BANK PO, SSC 10+2, SSC CGL, NDA** and many more. For more such content, stay tuned with us.

Did you know that the seven states of Northeast India are called sister states? This is because they are all interdependent on one another and are connected to the rest of the country through the Siliguri Corridor. To find out interesting information about each of these states, click on the links given below.

Click here to read '[Interesting Facts about Arunachal Pradesh- Geography, Climate and Culture GK Notes](#)', '[Interesting Facts about Meghalaya - Geography, Climate and Culture GK Notes](#)', '[Interesting Facts about Mizoram - Geography, Climate and Culture GK Notes](#)', '[Interesting Facts about Nagaland - Geography, Climate and Culture GK Notes](#)', '[Interesting Facts about Manipur - Geography, Climate and Culture GK Notes](#)' and '[Interesting Facts about Tripura - Geography, Climate and Culture GK Notes](#)'.

Thank You.