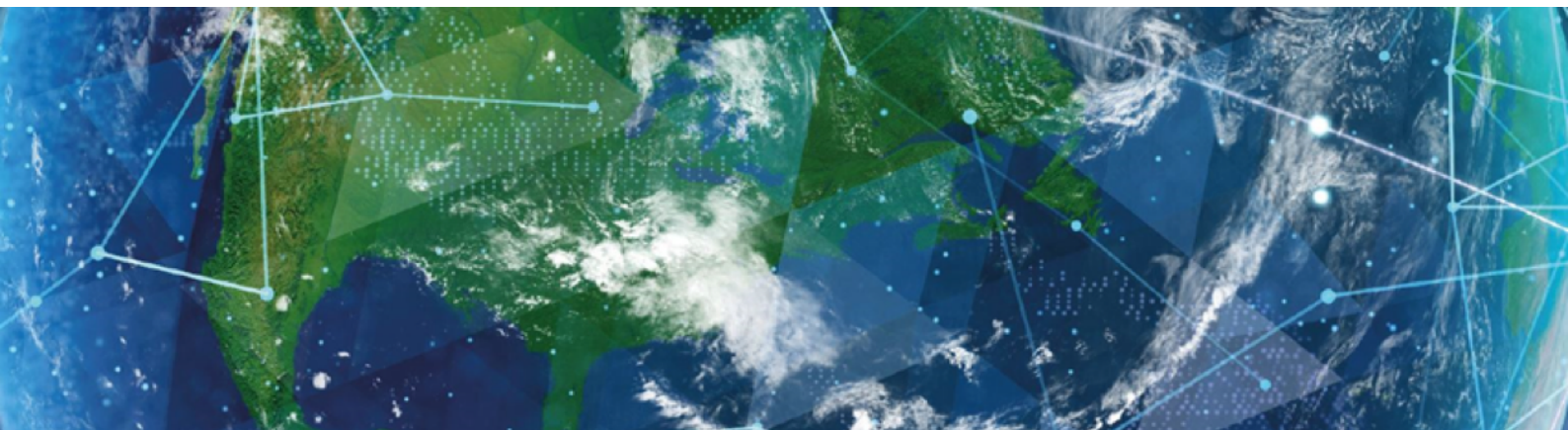


Country Travel Advice Report

India

Overall Risk Rating: **Moderate** | 3.25



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Country Risk Rating Breakdown

Country Overall Risk Rating				Moderate 3.25	
Security	Environmental	Infrastructural	Political	Medical	
Moderate 3.25	Moderate 3.25	Moderate 3.25	Low - Moderate 2.50	Moderate 3.25	

Country Overview

Moderate | 3.25

The world's largest democracy, India has enjoyed peaceful transitions of power since independence, despite its significant ethnic and religious diversity. Corruption within government and business also remains a hindrance for outsiders looking to do business in the country despite multiple governments' pledges to crack down on graft and eliminate red tape.

Demonstrations are common and occasionally spark violence, though they are rarely directed at foreign interests. The risk of military conflict remains low, despite ongoing tensions with nuclear-armed neighbors Pakistan and China over border disputes. Domestic and transnational terror groups pose a credible threat and have launched high-profile attacks against transport, government buildings, religious sites, luxury hotels, and urban areas. Counter-terror operations and related arrests occur frequently, though no significant attack targeting civilians has occurred since 2008. Insurgents are active in parts of the country and mainly attack government and military targets, though their capabilities and presence are constantly declining. Petty crime against visitors is common in urban areas and on transportation. Violent crimes against foreigners are less common. Overland travel can be hazardous, as roads are sometimes poorly maintained, and driving standards can be limited. Medical facilities are generally adequate in major cities but may be limited in rural areas.

Security

Moderate | 3.25

Overview

India faces a number of security-related concerns ranging from multiple insurgencies to a credible terrorist threat. Domestic and transnational terrorist outfits have launched several high-profile attacks against major urban centers. Insurgent groups are active in several states and carry out periodic attacks, although these occur primarily in rural or remote areas. The primary security concern for travelers stems from petty crime, especially pickpocketing, petty theft, and snatch-and-grab thefts. Violent crime against foreigners is relatively rare. However, foreigners can be exposed to incidental violence stemming from frequent unrest that is common across much of India.

Political

Low - Moderate | 2.50

Overview

India is a largely stable multi-party democracy. The country has enjoyed peaceful democratic transitions at both the state and federal levels. Indian authorities, however, have struggled to contend with widespread and systemic corruption, counteract a sluggish economy, address deep-rooted sectarian and communal unrest, as well as bring an end to multiple long-running insurgencies. As stated above, corruption is endemic and affects most levels of the government and bureaucracy. Despite some progress and frequent government pledges to address the issue, limited enforcement efforts and low conviction rates in corruption investigations have hindered these efforts.

Infrastructural

Moderate | 3.25

Overview

There are no major concerns with India's air service industry, although flight disruptions and delays are common.

Road conditions vary considerably between urban centers and rural areas, while driving standards are generally poor and the enforcement of traffic regulations is lackadaisical at best.

The ports in India are considered efficient.

Power outages are common in both rural and urban areas. While internet connectivity is generally fast and reliable in major cities, coverage decreases considerably in more remote towns and villages.

Cyber-crime poses a significant threat, with individuals, corporations, and government agencies systematically targeted.

Environmental

Moderate | 3.25

Overview

Parts of India, particularly the northern and northeastern states, are vulnerable to periodic tremors of varying intensities. Damages and casualties are occasionally reported, with earthquakes also capable of triggering landslides. Torrential precipitation that occurs annually during monsoon season can trigger widespread flooding and cause significant overland travel disruptions and human displacement. Both of the county's eastern and western coastlines experience occasional tropical cyclones and storms, which generally form from April through December.

Medical

Moderate | 3.25

Overview

The quality of medical care and facilities varies considerably between the major cities - which often boast excellent hospitals and clinics - and smaller urban centers and more rural areas. Medicines are generally available at pharmacies in cities, but can be harder to secure in rural towns and villages. The primary health risks stem from vector-borne diseases, such as malaria, chikungunya, and dengue, as well as as more common ailments such as food poisoning. Tap water is not safe for drinking, and its consumption can cause travelers' diarrhea.

Fact Box

Government Type	Federal Parliamentary Republic
Population	1,326,801,576 (2016 Est)
Currency	Indian Rupee
Languages	Hindi (most widely spoken) 41%, Bengali 8%, Telugu 7%, Marathi 7%, Tamil 6%, Urdu 5%, Other, (including Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Punjabi, Assamese, Maithili) 26%. English is the most important language for business, politics and commerce.
Time Zone	UTC+5.5
Religions	Hindu 80%, Muslim 14%, Other, including Christian and Sikh 4%
Traffic	Drives on the left
Plug Types	Type C, Type D, Type M
Ethnicities	Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid and other 3%
Drinking Water	Not Safe to Drink
Additional Information	<p>Significant Dates:</p> <p>January 26 - Republic Day February 21 - Maha Shivaratri March 10 - Holi April 2 - Rama Navami April 6 - Mahavir's Birthday April 10 - Good Friday May 7 - Buddha Purnima (Buddha's Birthday) May 25 - Eid-ul-Fitr July 31 - Eid-ul-Adha August 12 - Janmashtami August 15 - Independence Day August 29 - Muharram / Ashura October 2 - Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday October 25 - Dussehra October 29 - Milad un-Nabi November 14 - Diwali November 30 - Guru Nanak's Birthday December 25 - Christmas Day</p>
International Country Code	+91

Travel Risk Advice

Vaccinations and Key Health Risks

Travellers should visit a health care professional at least four to six weeks prior to the trip and ensure that they have routine vaccination courses and boosters. Routine vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, varicella (chickenpox), polio and the annual flu vaccine.

Zika virus and other mosquito-borne illnesses are present in the country, and mosquito prevention efforts are recommended.

There is no vaccination to prevent Zika, and comprehensive mosquito protection methods are recommended. This is particularly important for those who are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, suffer from a severe/chronic medical condition or have a medical condition that weakens the immune system. Female travellers who are pregnant or who wish to become pregnant, including their partners, may wish to seek additional medical advice.

Most travellers will require vaccines for:

- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid

Dependent on work, reason for travel or underlying health conditions, some travellers may require vaccines for:

- Cholera
- Hepatitis B
- Japanese Encephalitis
- Rabies
- Yellow Fever

Pre-departure

- India faces a number of security-related concerns. A risk assessment should have been completed against the travel itinerary before travelling. Travellers should receive a pre-travel security brief, and should have undertaken annual travel security training. Female travellers should receive a security brief on the threats specific to female travellers, particularly in terms of sexual violence. Travel to Jammu and Kashmir will likely require additional security measures which should be factored into planning.
- Corruption continues to be widespread in India, and business travellers should undertake bribery and corruption training before travelling.
- The quality of medical facilities and care varies considerably. Travellers should undertake a pre-deployment medical brief, and personal medical information should be recorded. Travellers should also ensure they have sufficient supplies of prescriptions or medicines to cover delays or lack of availability; pharmacies in rural areas may be very basic or unavailable. Travellers should identify possible sources of medical support in India, such as the availability of a hotel-provided doctor for minor ailments.
- Travellers should have adequate travel insurance in place to enable rapid medical treatment or emergency extraction from India, and should ensure that detailed contingency operations, business continuity, crisis management and evacuation plans are in place should the situation in country deteriorate significantly.
- The travel itinerary should avoid sensitive areas, symbolic places and locations of frequent unrest or common targets where practicable. This is especially the case during the period surrounding days of national significance, such as Republic Day (26 January) and Independence Day (15 August).
- Travellers should provide friends and family a copy of their travel itinerary, make a copy of important travel and identification documents and, if applicable, obtain their visa prior to arrival. Travellers should also have information on their meeting host, accommodation, relevant embassies and trusted local contacts easily accessible. Travellers are advised to consider tracking their movements, such as via a smartphone app, and should seek to liaise with company HQ on a daily basis.

- Travellers should seek to register the trip and maintain regular communications with the appropriate diplomatic missions in India. Additional permission is required to visit parts of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, near the Chinese border; parts of Rajasthan near the Pakistani border; parts of Jammu & Kashmir near the LOC with Pakistan and portions of Ladakh; and parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, the Andaman and Nicobar Island, and all areas of the Lakshadweep, Lacadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands.
- Travellers should implement a comprehensive suite of IT security measures for electronic devices, such as travelling with “clean” devices, ensuring that all personal identity information and sensitive files are sanitised, and implementing a Full Disk Encryption (FDE). Travellers should also not check business or personal electronic devices with their luggage at the airport.

On Arrival

- Travellers should have a meet and greet procedure in place, proceed through arrivals in a timely manner, and depart as soon as practicably possible.
- Travellers should continually reassess the security and threat environment through a range of multi-source intelligence advisories.
- Travellers should carry a copy of their travel documents at all times.

In Transit

- Travellers should use vetted transport providers with security-trained drivers in low-profile vehicles. The use of an Executive Protection Agent or a security coordinator will also likely be required due to language difficulties. Travel should be pre-booked as much as possible in order that safe routes may be identified. Travellers should further phone ahead to their destinations before departure and should not detour from the planned itinerary.
- Travel to Jammu and Kashmir (and other border areas with Pakistan), Assam, Manipur and Nagaland, will require a comprehensive journey management plan with Executive Protection Agents or a security coordinator. Vehicles should carry additional fuel where practicable. Routes and times of planned movement should be varied, and nighttime movement and any unplanned journeys should be avoided. Consideration should be given to tracking all travel. Travellers should have access to security assets 24/7.
- Travellers should vary routes and times and should minimise road travel after dark
- Travellers should only travel with minimal non-essential valuable items, and valuables should not be displayed publicly.

At Your Hotel

- Travellers should stay at reputable hotels with good standards of international-level security and should avoid hotels that have scheduled high-profile conferences during the stay. Hotels should be located in areas of town that have not previously witnessed protests or demonstrations, terrorist attacks and have not been marred by ethnic or political tensions. Ideally, hotels should be away from chokepoints.
- Secure transportation should be available between the hotel and airports. The hotel should have emergency power generators in good working condition, with adequate access to a fuel supply and emergency communications.
- On arrival at the hotel, ensure the driver stays on site until check-in has been confirmed. Similarly, before departing to the airport when leaving the hotel, ensure the driver waits until flight check-in is confirmed.
- Travellers should favour rooms on floors between 2 and 6 and as far as possible from the main entrance and principal public areas. Rooms with access from a side balcony or fire escape should be avoided.
- Travellers should always lock the door (and any connecting doors) to their room and use the chain or spy hole when receiving a visitor. Do not open the door to the hotel room, especially late at night, until the visitor’s identity has been confirmed; meet strangers in the lobby, not in the hotel room.
- Travellers should leave any electronic equipment at the office or with their hosts and, before retiring, secure valuables and confidential documents.
- Travellers should monitor airlines’ flight schedule and status.

In the Street

- Travellers should avoid leaving the hotel, or secure accommodation, alone after dark. This is especially true for females, as there is an increased risk of sexual assault.
- Travellers should be aware of the national culture and behavioural expectations. Women in particular should consider the local dress codes and customs and should defer travel to isolated areas when alone. Same-sex sexual activity between consenting adults has been decriminalised as per a 2018 Supreme Court ruling, but is often still met with severe discrimination within the country.
- During periods of heightened tension, travellers should avoid symbolic places - such police stations, government buildings, high-end restaurants and banks – and locations of previous protests. Travellers should keep a low profile and should not become involved in local political issues and avoid discussing politically sensitive topics in public. Travellers should avoid any demonstrations, protests and rallies which may attract security forces and law enforcement officers and present a dynamic and volatile environment. During any protests in the locale, travellers should avoid major roads, squares and high traffic areas, as they are likely to become crowded with protesters and/or rioters.
- Travellers should be aware that photographing government buildings or military facilities may result in detention by authorities. Travellers should ask permission before taking pictures of locals, especially women.
- Travellers should observe any curfews or orders issued by the government and heed all other advice.
- Petty crime is prevalent throughout India. Travellers should avoid overt displays of wealth and dress discreetly and appropriately to the environment. Do not display money, jewelry or valuables, and keep a low profile.
- Travellers should settle small bills with cash, and use only small denominations of the Indian Rupee, keeping large amounts of cash and cards in a separate place on their person. Travellers should reduce the contents of wallets and/or purses, particularly cards which may denote affiliations, memberships and accounts. Credit or debit cards should only be used in absolutely necessity and then only at respected, well-known retail and service establishments.
- Travellers should ensure that their mobile phone is carried with sufficient battery life and programmed with appropriate emergency numbers. Also carry an ID card or passport and emergency medical information.
- Travellers should be aware of their location and surroundings. Avoid high-crime areas and of walking through dimly lit streets after dark. Travellers should know routes and carry a map if necessary, but keep it concealed.
- In crowded situations, travellers should be aware of jostling, as this may be a ploy for pickpockets. Travellers should also be aware of people loitering and also that attackers may first pass their victim to attack from behind.
- Travellers should ignore verbal 'bait' from passers-by; do not get into an argument, and avoid eye contact with strangers.
- LGBT+ travellers should note that discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity remains widespread in India, though the Supreme Court in 2018 decriminalised same-sex sexual activity between consenting adults. Public displays of same-sex affection can lead to harassment or violence. Attitudes in cities such as Mumbai and New Delhi will be somewhat more liberal, while rural areas are significantly more conservative on average.

COVID-19 Information

Travel Restrictions: Indian authorities will slightly reduce COVID-19-related restrictions effective Feb. 13 in response to lower international disease activity. Under the new directives, international travelers from mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Thailand will not be required to submit pre-departure COVID-19 tests and upload self-health declaration forms on the Air Suvidha portal.

Additionally, authorities strongly advise all incoming international travelers to be fully vaccinated. Officials may mandate the use of precautionary measures, such as public facemasks and physical distancing, at all entry points. Inbound passengers exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms will be isolated from other travelers and moved to a designated medical facility for treatment. Officials may amend the existing measures at short notice.

Domestic Measures

Officials may require travelers to take COVID-19 tests to enter certain public places. Most interstate travel is no longer restricted; however, some regions with protected tribal populations, such as the Ladakh Union Territory and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, continue requiring such documents or on-arrival testing.

International Travel Restrictions

All inbound travelers will be subject to random testing upon arrival at all ports of entry; minors under 12 years of age are exempt from post-arrival random testing. Officials require symptomatic arriving passengers to segregate from other passengers and isolate at a designated facility; the quarantine duration will likely vary by state.

Incoming travelers will undergo thermal screening on arrival and may be required self-monitor for up to 14 days after entering the country. Officials may modify restrictions at short notice depending on disease activity and bilateral agreements. State-specific quarantine and testing requirements may also change at short notice, especially during localized spikes in COVID-19 cases; travelers applying for exemptions and waivers must do so from authorities in all intended destination and transit states before arrival.

Additional Information: <https://boi.gov.in/content/advisory-travel-and-visa-restrictions-related-covid-19-1>

Threat Scale Reference

Threat Rating	Implication
1 - Negligible	The operating environment is benign and there are only isolated threats to business and/or travel.
2 – Low	The operating environment is generally permissive, although there are a limited number of threats to business and/or travel that requires basic mitigations.
3 – Moderate	The operating environment is challenging and there are serious threats to business and/or travel that requires some mitigations.
4 – High	The operating environment is hostile and there are significant threats to business, personal safety and/or travel, requiring comprehensive mitigations and planning.
5 – Extreme	The operating environment is characterised by pervasive direct threats to business, personal safety and/or travel, requiring strict risk management procedures.

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