Bhopal

Bhopāl pronunciation (Hindi: भोपाल IPA: [bʰoːpɑːl], Marathi-भोपळ) is a city in central India. It is the capital of the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh and the administrative headquarters of Bhopal District and Bhopal Division. Bhopal is the second largest city in Madhya Pradesh after Indore. Bhopal is known as the City of Lakes as its landscape is dotted with a number of natural as well as manmade lakes.[1]

Historically, Bhopal was also the capital of the Bhopal state. The city attracted international attention as a consequence of the Bhopal disaster, when the Union Carbide plant (now a part of Dow Chemical Company) leaked deadly methyl isocyanate gas during the night of December 3, 1984. The plant was operated by a separate Indian subsidiary, Union Carbide India Limited. The poisonous gas killed thousands of people in the city and its neighbouring areas, and thousands of others still suffer from its effects even two decades later. Since then, Bhopal has been a center of protests and campaigns which have been joined by many people across the globe.

On 11 April 2005, the Indian Space Research Organisation established a Master Control Facility in Ayodhya Nagar, to control the movements of satellites.[2] It is the second of its kind in the country (the first being at Hassan [3]). Bhopal is one of the six cities chosen to have a All India Institute of Medical Sciences campus apart from Delhi.[4] The land has been allotted by the government and construction work has been started for the same.

Contents

- History
  - 1 Bhopal disaster
- Geography and Climate
- Economy
- Government and Politics
- Transport
- Demographics
- Culture
- Sports
- Education
- Places to Visit
- Further reading
- References
- External links

History

See also: Bhopal (state)

Bhopal is said to have been founded by the Parmara King Bhoj (1000–1055), who had his capital at Dhar. The city was originally known as Bhopal named after Bhoj and the dam ('pal') that he is said to have constructed to form the lakes surrounding Bhopal. The fortunes of Bhopal rose and fell with that of its reigning dynasty. As the Parmaras declined in power, the city was ransacked several times and finally faded away into obscurity.

An Afghan soldier called Dost Mohammad Khan (not to be confused with the later Afghan King carrying the same name) laid out the present city at the same site following the death of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707. He brought with himself the Islamic influence on the culture and architecture of Bhopal, the ruins of which can be found at Islam Nagar. Bhopal, the second largest Muslim state in pre-independence India[5] was ruled by four Begums from 1819 to 1926. Qudisa Begum was the first female ruler of Bhopal, who was succeeded by her only daughter Sikandar, who in turn was succeeded by her only daughter, Shahjehan. Kaikhusrau Jahan Begum was the last female ruler, and stepped down to her son. The succession of the ‘Begums’ gave the city such innovations as waterworks, railways and a postal system. Several monuments still stand in the city as

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8/31/2008
reminders of this glorious period in its history. A municipality was constituted in 1907.[6]

It was one of the last princely states to sign the 'Instrument of Accession' 1947. Though India achieved Independence in August 1947, the ruler of Bhopal acceded to the Indian government only on 1 May 1949. Sindhi refugees from Pakistan were accommodated in Bairagarh, a western suburb of Bhopal. According to the States Reorganization Act of 1956, Bhopal state was integrated into the state of Madhya Pradesh, and Bhopal was declared as its capital. The population of the city rose rapidly henceforth.

**Bhopal disaster**

On December 3, 1984, a Union Carbide plant in Bhopal leaked 40 tons of toxic methyl isocyanate gas, leading to the Bhopal disaster. According to BBC, the death toll of the disaster was about 3,000 initially, with at least 20,000 additional deaths from related illnesses in the years following the disaster.[7] Greenpeace cites a total casualty figure of 20,000 as its conservative estimate.[8] The Bhopal disaster is often cited as the world's worst industrial disaster.[9][10] December 3 is observed as black day every year all government offices in Bhopal remain closed on this day.

**Geography and Climate**

Bhopal has an average elevation of 499 metres (1637 feet). Bhopal is located in the central part of India, and is just north of the upper limit of the Vindhya mountain ranges. Located on the Malwa plateau, it is higher than the north Indian plains and the land rises towards the Vindhya Range to the south. The city has uneven elevation and has small hills within its boundaries. The major hills in Bhopal comprise of Idgah hills and Shyamala hills in the northern region and Arera hills in the central region. Bhopal has a sub-tropical climate with hot summers from April to June, the wet monsoon season from July to September and a cool winter from November to February.

The municipality covers 286 square kilometres. It has two very beautiful lakes, collectively known as the Bhoj Wetland. These lakes are the Upper Lake (built by King Bhoj) and the Lower Lake. Locally these are known as the Bada Talab and Chota Talab respectively. The catchment area of the Upper Lake is 361 km² while that of the Lower Lake is 9.6 km². The Upper Lake drains into the Kolans River. The Van Vihar National Park is a national park situated beside the Upper Lake. The national park also has a museum in its premises. Kheoni Wild Life Sanctuary is situated 125 km from Bhopal.

**Economy**

The city is divided into two major areas, the old city and the new city. The major industries in the old city are electrical goods, cotton, chemicals and jewellery. Other industries include cotton and flour milling, cloth weaving and painting, as well as matches, sealing wax, and sporting equipment.[11] The residents here also engage in small retail businesses. Handicraft is a major product of the old city. There is a huge demand for its very famous zardozi work, which is a kind of embroidery done on bridal dresses, sherwanis, and purses. Another famous handicraft of Bhopal is 'Batua', a small string purse, usually used with Indian traditional dresses.[12] There are a large number of garages in the older city which specialise in automobile conversion. These garages produce custom-modified and tuned cars, SUVs and motorbikes.

Being a state capital, the new city has a majority of residents working for the State and Central Government Departments. There are two major office complexes on Arera Hills named Satpura and Vindhyachal, which house a number of State Government offices and projects. Adjacent to them is the State Secretariat, Vallabh Bhavan. In their vicinity are other State and Central Government offices which include major national banks and insurance companies. Bhopal's major commercial area is Maharana Pratap Nagar, which accommodates many business houses. There are a number of hardware as well as software vendors in this part of the city. Other businesses include daily newsletter offices and press, hotels and restaurants, coaching and tuition centers and entertainment.

Bhopal has a cantonment in the old city as well as military presence near Bairagarh and the airport. The cantonment houses one of the Services Selection
board centers that recruits troops and officers for the armed forces.

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, the largest engineering and manufacturing enterprise in India, has a unit in Bhopal. It occupies a large area on the eastern side of the city and maintains a suburb named after it. A majority of the residents of the suburb are employed by the unit. Mandideep is an industrial suburb of Bhopal. It is located to the South of Bhopal on the Bhopal-Itarsi highway and houses a number of plants belonging to some of the reputed companies of India like Procter & Gamble, Fujitsu, Eicher, L&T, HEG and VA Tech Hydro. A North Western suburb of Bhopal called Bairagarh, which was earlier a camp for Sindhi refugees from Pakistan, has developed into market for textiles.

Bhopal is also home to the Bhaskar Group which is a Rs. 1700 crore (Rs. 17 billion) business conglomerate with strong presence in newspapers, television, entertainment, printing, textiles, fast moving consumer goods, oils, solvents and internet services. Its head office is located in Maharana Pratap Nagar. Manjul Publishing House, located in the old city, is a major publishing house made famous by the translation of the Harry Potter series of novels into Hindi.[13]

The Madhya Pradesh State Electronics Development Corporation Ltd. is going to develop a Software & Hardware Technology Park in Bhopal.[14] Multinational companies like Genpact,[15] Fujitsu and Taurus Microsystems are expected to open their centers in the Technology Park. aditya vikram

Government and Politics

Bhopal is the capital city of Madhya Pradesh. It houses the State Legislative Assembly, or the Vidhan Sabha, which seats 230 members of Legislative Assembly. The twelfth (and current) Vidhan Sabha was elected in May, 2003.[16] Currently, the party in the majority in Vidhan Sabha is Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which is led by Shivraj Singh Chauhan. Bhopal district elects four seats to the Assembly.

The administration of Bhopal city is handled by Bhopal Municipal Corporation, also known as BMC. The total area under BMC is 285 km². The city is divided into 66 wards. Each ward elects a corporator. The winning party elects a council of members, who are responsible for various departments. The council members chose the Mayor among themselves. At present, there are ten members in the council. The Commissioner of Bhopal is the highest officer of Municipal Corporate Office, which is responsible for the departments of public works, revenue and tax, water supply, planning and development, fire brigade, health and sanitation, finance & accounts etc. The Commissioner of Bhopal currently is nikunj shrivastava.[17]

Transport

Within Bhopal, city buses — known as 'mini bus', from their size — are the most common means of transport. Most of these are in a dilapidated condition, but their reach is comprehensive and fare, reasonable. Recently 'Starbuses' have been plying on the roads. These are bigger and more comfortable buses and charge nominally more than their smaller counterparts. Autorickshaws are another major means of transport. They are particularly known for their ornate make-up and blaring sound systems. In some routes in the older city, bigger diesel rickshaws - known as 'bhat', the shortened name for 'bhat-suar' - are used as shared means of transport.

Road conditions have been improving over the years and are becoming wider. Lot of hard work and money is being spent both by government and industrial giants for developing and maintaining huge infrastructures in Bhopal. The personal transport of the locals is mainly two-wheeler, but the number of four-wheelers is growing at an amazing rate. National Highway 12 passes through Bhopal which connects it to Jabalpur in the East and Jaipur in the West. National Highway 86 connects Bhopal to Sagar in the East to Indore in the West. There are numerous daily buses to Indore (186 km), Ujjain (188 km), Gwalior (423 km), Jabalpur (295 km), Khajuraho (383 km), Sanchi (46 km), Pachmarhi (195 km) and Vidisha (65 km). A state-of-the-art Interstate Bus Terminus is coming up near the Habibganj station.[18]

Bhopal is a major railway station and a small junction. It is well connected by rail to all parts of the country being on the main North-South line of the country. A list of all major trains passing through Bhopal can be found here. It is also close to the main East-West junction, Itarsi. Habibganj is the other major station of Bhopal which has a state-of-the-art building and also boasts of being the first ISO 9000:2001 certified station in India.[19] Bhopal Express : Shaan - E - Bhopal, with its headquarter at Habibganj station, is also the first train in India to obtain an ISO 9001:2000 certificate.[20] Bhopal has a domestic airport with very basic amenities that connects it to Delhi, Mumbai, Indore, Gwalior and Jabalpur and many major cities of India. The Raja Bhoj airport is located near the satellite town Bairagarh.[21]

Demographics
Bhopal has a population of 1,482,718, which is divided into 781,282 men and 701,436 women, according to the census of 2001. This results in a sex ratio of 898 women for every 1000 men. The population consists of 56% Hindus and 38% Muslims, with the rest of the population including Christians, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists. The Old City of Bhopal is a predominantly Muslim area with large Pathan population but New Bhopal is a demographically cosmopolitan area.

The chief languages are Hindi, Urdu and English, but there are a substantial number of Marathi speakers as well. In the princely state of Bhopal, Persian was the court language until nineteenth century. The common street Hindi spoken in Bhopal is termed as Bhopali and is the subject of comedy in Bollywood movies. An example of the language is used by actor Jagdeep in the film Sholay.

Bhopal is known to its residents and visitors as a calm and peaceful city. Except for the 1992 riots as an aftermath of felling of Babri Masjid, the city has remained comparatively unperturbed by the recent spate in communalist activities. The city, specially the new city, is quite clean and green. It has always been a favourite among the retirees who want to settle down, which has resulted in a sudden interest in the development of new areas outside the city outskirts.

- Population: 1.5 million
- Total waste generation: 600 ton/day
- Waste generation per capita: 0.43 kg/person per day

**Culture**

Bhopal is known for its exquisite manners and high culture. To this day, shairis and poetry recitals are as popular in Bhopal as in movies. Typical Bhopalis, residing in the old city, are known for their nafasat, or sophistication. Bhopal is famous for its culture of parda, zarda, garda aur namarda. Parda is a curtain, which was used to veil the women of the house from outsiders, zarda is a kind of tobacco product which is quite famous with Bhopalis, garda is loose dirt that used to blow around specially during hot summer days, and namarda meaning a eunuch. Basically found in the old city areas of Itwara, Mangalwara, Budhwara etc., they roam around the city and collect chanda, or donation, for every big festival such as Diwali, Holi, Eid etc. At special occasions like marriage or a child birth, they visit the families and demand huge sums for donations. At this moment they showcase their talent, which is singing and dancing. They have also started to contest elections at local and state levels.

Bhopal has an extensive culture of paan eating. Paan is a preparation with a betel leaf topped with variety of seasonings, the most common being chuna, kattha and supari. Bhopali people treat paan preparation as a science and an art, which is perfected among the streets of Bhopal, a tradition passed down generations. The paans in Bhopal are wide in variety and innovations.

Bhopalis celebrate all festivals with equal fervor. Diwali is celebrated with equal pomp and glory as Eid. People still visit each others houses and greet each other on various occasions. Gifts and sweets are exchanged and donations made to the poor. Diwali is celebrated by performing puja of the wealth goddess Lakshmi. Later in the night, firecrackers are burst in the open by young and old with equal enthusiasm. Eid is special to the city as all the Hindus take time out to visit their Muslim friends and greet them and get treated with delicacies, the specialty of the day being sweet sewai. Bhopali culture is such that both Hindus and Muslims visit each other on their respective festivals to greet and exchange sweets. During Ganesh puja and Durga Puja (Navratras), idols of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Durga are established in jhankis throughout the city. People throng to offer prayers to their deities. At the end of Navratras, on the day of Vijayadashmi, or Dussehra, huge effigies of Ravan are burnt in different parts of the city. Some of them are organized by the local administration and stand as tall as 60 feet.

Bharat Bhavan is the main cultural centre of the city and of the most important cultural centers of India. It has an art gallery, an open-air amphitheatre facing the Upper Lake, two other theatres and a tribal museum. Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (National Museum of Humans) showcases the various hutments that tribals of across India use for shelter. The popular holiday spots near Bhopal include Bhojpur (famous for a Shiva temple and Jain shrines), Sanchi (notable for the rock shelters of Bhimbetka (a World Heritage Site of archaeological interest).

Bhopal has many mosques including Taj-ul-Masajid (one of the largest mosques in Asia), Dhai Seedi ki Masjid (one of the smallest mosques in Asia), Jama Masjid (built by Qudsiya Begum in 1837) and Moti Masjid (built by Sikander Begum in 1860). Some of the major historical buildings in Bhopal include Shaukat Mahal (a mixture of Indo-Islamic and European styles of architecture), Gohar Mahal (built by Qudsia Begum, fusion of Hindu and Mughal architecture), Sadar Manzil (used by the Begums for public audience, now used as the head office of the Municipal Corporation) and Purana
Kila (part of the 300-year-old fort of Queen Kamalapati, situated in the Kamala Nehru Park). Lakshmi Narayan Temple (or Birla Mandir), situated to the south of Lower Lake, is a temple devoted to Lord Vishnu and his consort Laxmi. An annual fare is held on Kartik Purnima at Manua Bhan Ki Tekri (Mahavir Giri), a Jain pilgrimage center located around seven kilometres away from Bhopal.

The Udaygiri Caves, located near the town of Vidisha, are cut into the side at a sandstone hill, date back from A.D. 320 to 606. An inscription in one of these caves states that it was carved out during the reign of Chandragupta II (A.D. 382–401). A three-day Ijtima (religious congregation) used to be held in the precincts of the Taj-ul-Masjid annually. It draws scores at Muslim pilgrims from all parts of India. It has now been shifted outside the city limits. Every year in January/February, the villages of the Manav Sangrahalaya hosts the potters' workshops, folk music and dance, and open-air plays. It showcases the tribals of the region who demonstrate their skills in painting, weaving, and the fashioning of bell metal into exquisite works of art.

**Sports**

Cricket is popular in Bhopal. Although it does not have any stadium of international level, cricket at various levels is played at the Babe Ali stadium and the Bharat Heavy Electrical Ltd. Sports Complex; the latter has even hosted a few matches at the national level.[27] At local level, cricket is played at Old Campion ground. Other tennis ball matches also take place in various parts of the city. The youngest captain of the Indian cricket team, Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, was born and brought up in Bhopal. The Taty Tope Stadium, located in the heart of the city, was a cricket stadium and held matches at local and state level. [28] But it has lately been converted into a multi-purpose stadium, with facilities for athletics, football, tennis, squash, table tennis, volleyball, basketball, skating, martial arts and a gymnasium.

Bhopal is also known for its hockey lovers. The Aishbagh stadium is synonymous for hockey players. Many players reach different grounds for practice. The city has produced many national and international players for Indian hockey team. The more famous one being Aslam Sher Khan, who represented India in several international games and was a part of the World Cup winning team in 1975. He later joined politics and went on to become a Member of Parliament. He also served the national hockey by being a part of the national selection committee. His father, Ahmed Sher Khan, represented India at the Berlin Olympics in 1936 along with Major Dhyan Chand.[29]

Another popular sport of Bhopalis is bodybuilding. In the old city, there are a number of gyms where youngsters workout everyday to make their body muscular. Slowly, this trend has caught up even in the new city where more modern equipments are being employed to help their members get into better shape. Body builders from the local gyms participate at national level and have tasted success at the state level. Apart from this, at school and college level, table tennis, volleyball, basketball, football and swimming are also popular sports. Every summer, Sports Authority of India holds camps which provide coaching to students of various ages games and sports of their choices.

Another famous son of Bhopal is (Late) J P Narayanan. A graduate Mechanical Engineer from Maulana Azad College of Technology, (MACT), Bhopal, Narayanan had to his credit broadcasting running commentaries in English for 100 One-Day Internationals and 44 Test matches in his career as a cricket commentator for All India Radio (AIR). The third One-Day International match between India and Pakistan played at Keenan Stadium, Jamshedpur in India on April 9, 2005 was his last assignment as a cricket commentator. An employee of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, the BHEL sports complex was renamed to JP Narayanan Sports Complex, BHEL in an effort to honor his contribution to cricket in Bhopal and nationally as well.

Bhopal is also coming up as a center of adventure sports. Trekking camps are being organised by Youth Hostels and other private clubs[30] and their destinations are Budhni Ghat, Narsingarh, Ratapani Sanctuary, Delwadi, Bhimbetka, Manuabhan Ki Tekri etc. The government has also established India's first National Sailing Club[31] at the Boat Club, in the Upper Lake. This club offers various water sports such as kayaking, canoeing, rafting, water skiing, para-sailing etc. Since its inception, it has hosted Canoeing and Kayaking Championships at national[32] as well as international[33] levels. Other adventure sports include parasailing, paragliding, hot air ballooning etc.

**Education**

Bhopal has a number of state government run schools (affiliated to the Madhya Pradesh Board). There are, also, four center run Central schools(Kendriya Vidyalaya) in the city (affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education). Additionally, there are numerous private schools and a few Convent schools, which are run by the missionaries; these schools are affiliated to either the M.P. Board or C.B.S.E. Some examples of C.B.S.E schools of Bhopal are Saint Joseph's Convent school, Delhi public school, Sagar Public school, Mother Teresa Senior Secondary Co-Ed school, Campion School, these all schools are the top schools of Bhopal. With greatly Qualified teachers, SO In this way Bhopal is developing at high speed in case of Education.
Colleges in Bhopal are abundant, including many for technical education (there are 23 engineering colleges in and around Bhopal),\[34\] apart from Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology, which is one of the eight earliest Regional Engineering College of India. The Regional Institute of Education (RIE), a premier institution catering to Teacher Education is situated on top of Shyamla Hill. This is a constituent unit of the National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT) and is one of four such institutions in the country. Medical Education: Gandhi Medical College oldest(1956) of all, offers bachelor's and master's degrees in the field of medicine. Peoples College of Medical Sciences is the recent(2004) addition. All India Institute of Medical Sciences has already been sanctioned and the construction is in progress. Foundation of Mahavir (Jain) Medical College has recently(2008) been laid by Chief Minister of MP construction in progress. There are five Dental Colleges in the city namely Peopels College of Dental Sciences, Peoples Academy of Dental Sciences, Rishiraj Dental College, RKDF Dental College and Mansarovar Dental College. There are number of nursing colleges mainly Pragyan, Arbindo, Kushbhau Thakre, Kasturba (BHEL) College of Nursing. Two University Institutes of Technology (previously know as Government Engineering College) are affiliated to Rajiv Gandhi Technical University: University of Technology of Madhya Pradesh, which provides degree courses in all the technical fields throughout the state of Madhya Pradesh, and Barkatullah University, which affiliates numerous technical and non-technical colleges in the city. Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University provides long distance courses to students in all types of fields. Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism runs various courses in the fields of journalism, mass communication, information technology and library sciences. National Law Institute University, which stands 3rd in ranking among Indian law schools and American law school, is also located here. Bhopal also houses The National Judicial Academy near Bhabhada, the only of its kind in the country for the training and update of judges. The academy is run directly under the agies of The Chief Justice, Supreme Court of India. Indian Institute of Forest Management is a management institute located on the south western outskirts of the city which specializes in research and training in the forest and allied sectors. It is a CAT-allied, autonomous institute set up with the help of Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. Another specialist management institute in Bhopal is the Institute for Hotel Management, which is one of the premier institutes providing such course.

**Places to Visit**

- **Hathaikheda** - A beautiful place full with river water, trees of mango, date and scenic fields having wheat, soyabean, sugar cane crops. Specially in rainy season, this place become charming. One can visit Hathaikheda via Phanda which is off Bhopal-Indore highway. Hathaikheda is just 19 kilometers from Bhopal railway station.
- **Mahavir Tekri** - A picturesque temple and a park atop a hill that overlooks the Upper Lake. A wonderful spot for picnic while watching the sunset or the sunrise.
- **Kerwa dam** - A scenic dam about 15 km from bhopal off Kotra Sultanabad. This is an excellent spot to enjoy a nice picnic. The place is best visited in the rains as the water level is low in summers.
- **Bhojpur** - About 35 km from the city lies the town of Bhojpur which has a huge temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. But the main attraction is the nearby river and the valley leading to it. Again best seen in the rains.
- **Raisen Fort** - About 50 km from the city lies Raisen a small town. There stands a huge fort built right into the mountain dating back centuries. Walking around is easier in winter without the sun or the rains. A must-see for anyone visiting Bhopal.
- There are course Bhimbetka and Sanchi both known for their historical significance.

**Further reading**


**References**

7. ^ BBC — On This Day. 3rd December, 1984: Hundreds die in Bhopal chemical accident.
8. ^ Green Peace international.Nightmare in Bhopal
9. ^ Bhopal - The world's worst industrial disaster

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10. ^ ABC 20th anniversary of world's worst industrial disaster. Simi Chakrabarti

External links

- Official Website of Bhopal City
- Bhopal Municipal Corporation Website
- Bhopal travel guide from Wikitravel
- Bhopal Airport

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Categories: Indian capital cities | Cities and towns in Madhya Pradesh | Bhopal | Bhopal railway division | Divisions of Indian Railways
Hidden categories: Articles containing potentially dated statements from 2001 | All articles containing potentially dated statements