

# livelihoods

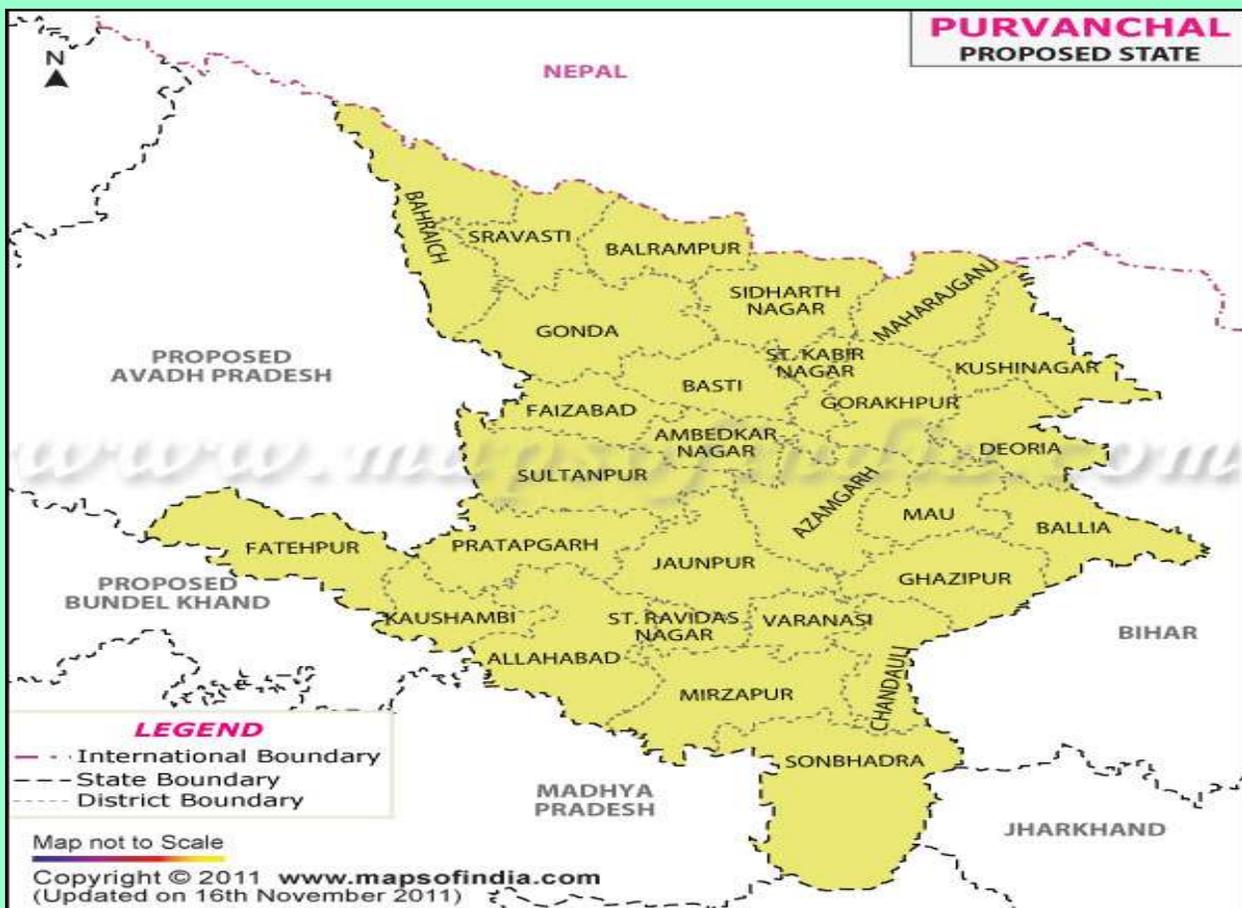
today and tomorrow

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‘Kshetram’

## Purvanchal Region

Purvanchal region lies on the Indo-Gangetic plain of northern India. Comprising of the eastern part of Uttar Pradesh (UP) & western part of Bihar, it is the most densely populated area in the world! The region is bounded by Nepal in the North, Bihar to the East, Bagelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh (MP) state to the South, Awadh region of UP to the West & end of Lower Doab (Kanpur-Fatehpur-Allahabad region) in UP to its Southwest.



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On the administrative front, Purvanchal region has 17 districts in it. They are – Azamgarh, Ballia, Basti, Bhadohi, Chandauli, Deoria, Ghazipur, Gorakhpur, Jaunpur, Kushinagar, Maharajganj, Mau, Mirzapur, Sant Kabir Nagar Siddhartnagar, Varanasi, Sonbhadra. Let us try to know more about the districts in detail.

Azamgarh district covers an area of 4,054 square kilometers (1.565 sq mi), and lies between the Ganges & Ghagahara. The district is surrounded by districts of Mau in the east, Gorakhpur in the north, Ghazipur in the south-east, Jaunpur in the south-west, Sultanpur in the west & Ambedkar Nagar in the north-west. Azamgarh is divided into 7 sub-districts, 22 development blocks, and 4,106 villages; out of which, 314 are uninhabited. Azamgarh district has features of parallel ridges, and between the ridges are low-lying rice lands, interspersed with numerous natural reservoirs. Ballia district is situated in the east of UP, and falls under Azamgarh division. It covers 6 tehsils i.e., Bansdih, Rasra, Bairija, Sikandarpur & Belthara. It is also home to an Indo-Aryan language group, having both Devanagari & Kaithi scripts.

Basti district lies between the newly created district of Sant Kabir Nagar on the east & Gonda on the west. The original name of the district was Basisthi which got shortened over time. The district comprises of 4 tehsils; Basti, Harriya, Bhanpur & Rudhali; 15 development blocks, 139 Nyay Panchayats, 2 Parganas named Amorha & Nagar and 10 Gram Panchayats (GP). Languages spoken in the district include Awadhi in western areas, Bhojpuri in eastern side & khari boli Hindi. Purvanchal's smallest district called Bhadohi district (or Sant Ravidas Nagar district) is situated in the plains of Ganges, which form the southwestern border of the district. Ganges, Varuna & Morva are the main rivers flowing in the district. Area of the district is 1055.99 km<sup>2</sup>. The district is divided into three tehsils - Aurai Tehsil, Bhadohi and Gyanpur, and six blocks - Bhadohi, Suriawan, Gyanpur, Deegh, Abholi and Aurai. There are 1075 populated and 149 uninhabited villages along with 79 Nyay Panchayats and 489 GPs in the district.

Chandauli district, once part of ancient kingdom of Kashi, falls under the Varanasi division. The famous railway junction Mughalsarai, which connects Northern & Eastern India, is located in the district. It has 5 tehsils - Chandauli, Sakaldiha, Naugarh, Mughalsarai and Chakia; and 9 blocks - Barahani, Chandauli, Niyamtabad, Chahaniya, Sakaldeeha, Dhanapur, Chakia, Shahabganj and Naugarh. Major rivers flowing through the district are Ganga, Karmanasha, Chandraprabha & Garai. Chandauli also has many lakes. Crops cultivated in the region are paddy, wheat. The district is famously known as "rice-bowl of UP." Deoria district derived its name from Devaranya. It is surrounded by Kushinagar district in the north, Gopalganj & Siwan districts of Bihar in the east, Mau & Ballia districts in the south, Gorakhpur district in the west. Deora's main rivers include Ghaghara, Rapti & Chhoti Gandak. It consists of 16 blocks. Bhojpuri is predominantly spoken here.

Ghazipur district, which is part of Varanasi Division, is famous for production of its unique rose-scented spray. Gorakhpur district is the largest district of UP, covering an area of 3,321 square kilometers. It is bounded by Maharajganj district on the north, Kushinagar & Deoria districts in the east, Ambedkar Nagar, Azamgarh & Mau districts to the south, Sant Kabir Nagar district to the west. Jaunpur district, which falls under Varanasi division, lies in the eastern part of state. It has the distinct feature of having highest sex ratio of 1024 females per 1000 males. Jaunpur is situated in the North-West part of Varanasi Division. Gomti and Sai are its main rivers. Besides these, Varuna, Basuhi, Pili. Mamur and Gangi are the smaller rivers here. The rivers Gomti and Basuhi divide the district into nearly four equal landmasses. It is often affected by the disaster of floods and drought. The district has climate which is consistent with that of Northern Plain & Central Highlands, including the Aravalli range. It receives rainfall

of 1,098 millimetres. Monsoon occurs from third week of June to October. On the geological front, the district had quaternary sediments (salt, sand and clay).

Kushinagar district, situated in the easternmost part of the state, is a famous Buddhist pilgrimage site earlier known as Padarauna. It is bounded by Bihar on the east, Deoria on the southwest, Gorakhpur on the west and Maharajganj in the northwest. Maharajganj district is part of Gorakhpur division and is bounded by Nepal in the north, Kushinagar in the east, Gorakhpur to the south, Siddharthnagar & Sant Kabir Nagar in the west. It covers an area of 2,951 km and has 2 Nagarpalikas and 7 Nagar Panchayats. Mau district is part of Azamgarh division, and is situated in south-eastern part of the state. It is surrounded by Ghazipur district on the south, Ballia district in the east, Azamgarh district in the west and Gorakhpur & Deoria districts on the north.

Mirzapur district is bounded on the north by Sant Ravidas Nagar and Varanasi districts, on the east by Chandauli district, on the south by Sonbhadra district and on the northwest by Allahabad district. It occupies an area of 4521 km and consists of 4 tehsils - Mirzapur (sadar), Lalganj, Marihan and Chunar. Sant Kabir Nagar district is part of Basti division and has Khaliabad city as its district headquarters. Siddharthnagar district shares borders with Nepal's Kapilvastu district on the north and Rupandehi district on the northeast. The district covers an area of 2,752 km<sup>2</sup>.

Varanasi district, also called as Kashi, is considered one of most holy places of Hindus. The district occupies an area of 1,535 sq. km. and is made up of three tehsils - Varanasi, Pindra & Rajatalab. Ganga flows through the district. Sonbhadra district is the only district in India which borders four states namely, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar. The northern part of the district lies on a plateau north of the Kaimur Range, and is drained by tributaries of the Ganges, including the Belan and Karmanasha rivers. South of the steep escarpment of the Kaimur Range is the valley of the Son River, which flows through the district from west to east. The southern portion of the district is hilly, interspersed with fertile stream valleys. The Rihand River, which rises to the south in the highlands of Surguja district of Chhattisgarh, flows north to join the Son in the center of the district. The Govind Ballabh Pant Sagar, a reservoir on the Rihand, lies partly in the district and partly in Madhya Pradesh. East of the Rihand, the Kanhar River, which originates in Chhattisgarh, flows north to join the Son. The district has historic, cultural, and ecological affinities with the Bagelkhand region. Robertsganj is the district headquarters.

Overall, Purvanchal region has a subtropical climate with high variations between summer and winter temperatures. During summer, the average temperature is around 45 degrees while in winter it drops to 2 degrees. Monsoon commences from June to October and weather is pleasant from July to October. The region has numerous rivers flowing through it. The ecology has moist deciduous forests and fertile lands. Soils in the region are loamy, sand, clay loam, alluvial and sandy loams. The plains region has soils that are highly fertile. Sonbhadra district is an industrial zone, and has minerals like bauxite, limestone, coal, gold etc..

## Demographics

On the demographic front, the region has interesting points to note as per 2011 census. Azamgarh district has a population of 46,13,913, of which 84.06% are Hindus followed by 15.58% Muslims. It has a population density of 1,139 inhabitants per sq. km. Sex ratio in the district is 1019 for every 1000 males, while literacy rate is 72.96%. Ballia district has a population of 32,23,642 and a population density of 1,081 inhabitants per sq.km. Sex ratio is 933 for 1000 males & literacy rate is 73.82%. Basti district has a population of 24,61,056. It ranks among the populous districts in India with a population density of 916 inhabitants per sq. km. Sex ratio is 959 for every 1000 males, above national sex ratio of 940.27; while child sex ratio of Basti is 922, which is better than the national average of 914 female children per 1000 males. Bhadohi district has a population of 15,54,203 and a population density of 1,531 inhabitants per sq. km. It has a sex ratio of 950 females for every 1000 males and literacy rate of 89.14%. Chandauli district has a population of 19,52,756. The literacy rate has shown remarkable growth at 71.48% compared to 59.72% of 2001, which is higher than the national average of 59.50%.

Deoria district has a population of 30,98,637, with a population density of 1,220 inhabitants per sq. km. The district has a sex ratio of 1013 females for every 1000 males and literacy rate of 73.53%. Ghazipur district has 1.82% of the

population of UP. Its population is 36,22,727, with a population density of 1,072 inhabitants per sq. km. The district has sex ratio of 951 females for every 1,000 males & literacy rate of 74.27%. Kushinagar district has a population of 35,60,830, with a population density of 1,226 inhabitants per sq. km. Sex ratio is 955 for every 1000 males & literacy rate is 67.66%. Mau Nathi Bhanjan district has a population of 22,05,170, & a population density of 1,287 inhabitants per sq. km. Sex ratio is 978 females for every 1000 males, while literacy rate is 75.16%. Mirzapur district is one of the most backward districts and was receiving BRGF until recently. It has a population of 24,94,533 and a population density of 561 inhabitants per sq. km. Sex ratio is stands dismally at 900 females for every 1000 males and literacy rate is 70.38%. Female literacy rate is 54%.

Sonbhadra district has a population of 18,62,559, with a population density of 270 persons per sq. km. Siddharthnagar district has a population of 25,53,526, with a population density of 882 inhabitants per sq. km, sex ratio of 970 females for every 1000 males, and literacy rate of 67.81%. This district is below national average on socio-economic and basic amenities parameters. Maharajganj district has a population of 26,65,292, with a population density of 903 inhabitants per sq. km, sex ratio of 938 females for every 1000 males and literacy rate of 64.30%. Jaunpur district has a population of 44,76,072, with a density of 1,100 km per sq. km, sex ratio of 1024, and literacy rate of 71.55%. The district receives average annual precipitation of 987 mm. Gorakhpur district has a population of 44,40,895, with a population density of 1,337 inhabitants per sq. km, sex ratio of 944 females and literacy rate of 70.83%. Varanasi district has a population of 36,82,194, with a population density of 2,399 inhabitants per sq. km. The district has a sex ratio of 909 females and literacy rate of 77.05%. Population wise, the top three districts are Azamgarh, Jaunpur and Gorakhpur. In terms of population density, Ghaziabad, Varanasi and Bhadohi top the list. Sex ratio is higher in Jaunpur, Azamgarh, Deoria and Mau districts. It is interesting to note that older districts like Basti, Jaunpur and Western Mirzapur have Awadhi speaking population in large numbers. Literacy rate among women is found to be low. Jain community in the region has high literacy rates. Sikh and Hindu communities have very poor sex-ratios. On the amenities index, public goods is low in this region of UP. Less than 5% have access to tap water in this region.

### Flora & Fauna

Purvanchal region has abundance of forest cover, and is home to various flora and fauna species Including - mango (*Mangifera indica*), mahua (*Madhuca longifolia*), sal (*Shorea robusta*), and bamboo (*Bambusa arundinacea*) trees. Some of the wild animals of the region are the nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*), antelok (*Anelok cervicapra*), pig (*Sus scrofa*), wolf (*Canis lupus*), jackal (*Canis aureus*), fox (*Vulpes bengalensis*), hare (*Lepus ruficandatus*), monkey (*Macaca mulatta*), wildcat (*Felis bengalensis*) and the porcupine (*Hystric leucura*). Several species of game birds are also seen, including the peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*), black partridge (*Frencolinus francolinus*) and gray partridge (*Francalinus pondicervanus*). A number of migratory water fowls visit the water bodies of the region in winter, such as the goose (*Anser anser*), common teal (*Anas crecca*), red-crested pochard (*Netta rufina*), white-eyed pochard (*Aythya rufa*) and the wigeon (*Mareca penelope*). The cobra (*Naja naja*), krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*) and rat-snake (*Ptyas mucosus*) are commonly found. The Indian crocodile or naka (*Crocodylus palustris*), and the ghariyal (*Gavialis gangeticus*) are also found in the river Ghaghra. The common fish species are rohu (*Lebeo rohita*), bhakur (*Catla catla*), nain (*Cirrhina mrigala*), parhin (*Wallagonia attu*), krunch (*Labeo calbasu*), and tengan (*Mystus seenghala*). The region is home to some of the finest wildlife sanctuaries i.e., Chandraprabha wildlife sanctuary, Sohagibarwa Wildlife sanctuary, Bakhira Bird Sanctuary, Jai Prakash Narain Bird Sanctuary.

### Economy

Due to the large area it covers, Purvanchal region has a diverse economy. In Azamgarh district, economy revolves around agriculture and it was receiving funds from Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme (BRGF). Ballia district's economy is centered around agriculture. It is also home to numerous sugar mills & cotton weaving industries. Whereas, Basti district is famous for its cotton textiles & sugar industries, and it also has numerous cottage industries & small-scale industries including manufacturing units of brassware, iron, carpentry, goods, agricultural

implements, bricks, agro-products, foot-wear, soaps, candles & pottery. On agriculture front, various crops such as sugarcane, maize, paddy, pulses, wheat, barley & potato are cultivated. Livelihoods of populations are centered around agriculture and its allied sectors. Carpet weaving is famous industries of this region, especially Bardohi, and has a history dating back to 16th century. The region is one the biggest carpet manufacturing centres in India and is renowned for its hand-knotted carpets.

The Mirzapur-Bhadohi region has the largest number of weavers involved in handmade carpet weaving and engaging close to 3.2 million people in its 100% export oriented industry. The organisations account for about 75% of Rs. 44 billion of total carpets exports from India & annual turnover of carpet exports from Bhadohi was around Rs. 25 billion in 2010. The region also received Geographical Indication (GI) tag for carpets manufactured in nine districts of the region are Bhadohi, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Ghazipur, Sonebhadra, Kaushambi, Allahabad, Jaunpur and Chandauli. The production is aimed at foreign countries. Well-known carpet types from Bhadohi include cotton Dhurries, Chhapra Mir, Abusan, Persian, Loribaft, Indo Gabbeh, Nepalese carpets and more recent shaggy type carpets.

In Chandauli district, local populations are engaged in agriculture and sheep rearing activities. The district has large scale sheep breeding farms. Naugarh is the second largest sheep breeding farm in Asia, spread across 5000 acres. Gorakhpur district is a flood prone area in eastern part of UP. Due to extreme events annually, around 20% of population is affected by floods with huge loss of life and livelihoods of the poor. The district earlier was one of the country's 250 most backward districts and was receiving funds from BRGF. Jaunpur district's main economic activity is agriculture and allied sectors. In the present times, the district is fast developing with good infrastructure, quality education and skill development. Local populations are expanding their livelihoods from agriculture, animal husbandry and allied sectors to other areas by learning new skills. The district has agriculture crops such as rice, maize, pigeon pea, pearl millet, blackgram, wheat and chickpea. Onions, potatoes are also grown and used for fodder. In the district, crops grown here are both rainfed and under irrigation.

Animal Husbandry in the district has both local low yielding and crossbred cattle, and 29% of the local population is engaged in this livelihood activity. Remaining are engaged in manufacturing, trade, commerce, transportation and dairy farms. The various manufacturing units in Jaunpur district include perfume (jasmine oil & attar), incense, furniture, carpets, chemical fertilizers and cement. There are tertiary & service industries, which include repair workshops, print shops, along with a Special Economic Zone (SEZ). Local population's livelihoods are earned by working in the above-mentioned manufacturing and service industries. Maharajganj district is one of the backward districts of UP, and was earlier receiving BRGF. The local populations are engaged in agriculture and its allied activities. In Deoria district, livelihoods are centered around private sector employment, followed by cultivators, agriculture wage labour, household industries and others work as marginal workers. In Ghazipur district, more than 80% population live in rural areas, and livelihoods of local populations revolve around agriculture, wage labour working in household industries and working as marginal workers.

Kushinagar district was earlier receiving BRGF and is a backward district. Close to 54% of local population earns livelihood by engaging in marginal activities and the earning spans for a period of six months only. The remaining population earns livelihood through main employment, agriculture work and agriculture labour activities. In Mau district, populations earn their livelihood through wage employment and less than 50% are engaged in agriculture and allied activities. Mirzapur district's economy and livelihoods is centered on manufacturing of carpets and metal pots made of brass. Whereas Siddharthnagar & Sant Kabir nagar districts are one of the poorest districts and earlier were receiving BRGF. Local populations are engaged in agriculture, wage labour and other allied works, which provide them income for a period of six months only.

Sonebhadra district is also known as energy capital of India as the region has many electrical power stations around Govind Ballabh Pant Sagar. NTPC (a leading power generation company in India) has three coal-based thermal power plants.

1. Singrauli Super Thermal Power Station, Shaktinagar 2000 MW (India's first NTPC Power Plant)
2. Vindhyachal Thermal Power Station (largest capacity in India, 4760 MW)
3. Rihand Thermal Power Station, Renukut 3000 MW.

Local populations work in the above-mentioned industrial units. The other factories are of cement. This region is home to three cement factories, one of the biggest aluminum plants, a carbon plant, a chemical factory. It is an energy hub of India which generates 11000 MW with

Other power stations are at Anpara (UPRVUNL), Oba (UPRVUNL), Renukut (Hindalco) and Pipri-Hydro (UPRVUNL). NCL (a branch of Coal India Limited) has its headquarters and many coal mines in this region. Hindalco has a major aluminium plant at Renukut.

plans to reach 20000 MW. The whole country is benefiting from this region, which was once full of forests and hills, which seemed like infertile land. Varanasi district's economy is based on sectors such as tourism, handloom, handicraft, education, hospitality and government. Tourism sector contributes close to 50% of the economy and local population earns through tourism and allied sectors. The region is one of the most ancient regions of India, with rich heritage and culture. It has played an important role in development of Buddhism too.

Purvanchal region has fertile lands, abundance of water, human resources, culture and heritage and a huge potential for becoming a rich region. Where it certainly lacks is in development! There is a need for equitable distribution of economic resources and implementation of state and central government schemes in true spirit for the development of region. ❖