



India, that is Bharat: The Ongoing Debate

For Prelims: [Article 1](#), Origin of the Name Bharat and India, Vishnu Purana, [Constituent Assembly](#).

For Mains: Historical Perspectives on the Names "India" and "Bharat"

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, invitations for the upcoming [G-20 Summit](#) in New Delhi have introduced a noteworthy alteration. Instead of the conventional **"President of India,"** the invitations now bear the term **"President of Bharat"**, renewing a **broader conversation regarding the nation's nomenclature** and its historical connotations.

What are the Historical Perspectives on the Names "India" and "Bharat"?

- **Constitutionality:**
 - [Article 1 of the Indian Constitution](#) already uses both **"India"** and **"Bharat"** interchangeably, stating, **"India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States."**
 - The preamble of the Indian Constitution begins with "We the People of India," but the **Hindi version uses "Bharat" instead of India**, indicating interchangeability.
 - Additionally, some government institutions, such as the **Indian Railways**, already have Hindi variants that include **"Bharatiya."**
- **Origin of the Name Bharat:**
 - The term "Bharat" has deep historical and cultural roots. It can be traced back to **Puranic literature and the epic Mahabharata**.
 - Vishnu Purana describes **"Bharata" as the land between the southern sea and the northern snowy Himalayan mountain**.
 - It signifies a religious and socio-cultural entity more than a mere political or geographical one.
 - **Bharata is also the name of a legendary ancient king**, considered the ancestor of the **Rig Vedic tribes of Bharatas**, symbolizing the progenitor of all subcontinent's people.
- **Origin of the Name India:**
 - The name India is derived from the word **Indus**, which is the name of a river that flows through the northwestern part of the subcontinent.
 - The ancient **Greeks** called the people living beyond the **Indus as Indoi**, which means **"the people of Indus"**.
 - Later, the Persians and the Arabs also used the term Hind or Hindustan to refer to the land of Indus.
 - The Europeans adopted the **name India from these sources**, and it became the official name of the country after the British colonial rule.



▪ **Constitutional Assembly Deliberation Regarding India and Bharat:**

- The debate surrounding the country's name is not new. When the [Constituent Assembly](#) was framing the **Constitution in 1949**, there was a division of opinions regarding the name.
 - Some members felt that **"India" was a reminder of colonial oppression** and sought to prioritize "Bharat" in official documents.
 - **Seth Govind Das from Jabalpur advocated for placing "Bharat" above "India,"** emphasizing that the latter was merely a translation of the former in English.
 - **Hari Vishnu Kamath** cited the example of the Irish Constitution, which changed the name of the country upon achieving independence, as a **precedent for using "Bharat."**
 - **Hargovind Pant** argued that the people wanted **"Bharatvarsha"** and rejected the term "India" imposed by foreign rulers.

▪ **Recent Development:**

- In 2015, **Centre opposed a name change**, stating that the issue had been extensively deliberated upon during the Constitution's drafting.
 - The [Supreme Court](#) has twice rejected pleas to rename 'India' to 'Bharat', **once in 2016 and then in 2020**, reaffirming that **"Bharat" and "India" both find mention in the Constitution.**

What is the Historical Significance of the Name "Hindustan"?

- The term "Hindustan" has historical significance and was popular in Punjab. Sikh founder Guru Nanak Dev mentioned **"Hindustan" in Gurbani, and Guru Teg Bahadur is known as the protector of "Hind" and religion.**
- Shah Muhammad documented conflicts between the British and Sikhs as a war between "Hind" and Punjab.
- The **Ghadar Party and freedom struggle activists used "Hindustan"** in their movements, making it relevant in Punjab's history.

SOME COUNTRIES THAT RENAMED THEMSELVES

2022	2019	2018	2002	1997	1972
Turkiye <i>Previous Name</i> <i>Turkey</i>	Myanmar <i>Previous Name</i> <i>Burma</i>	Eswatini <i>Previous Name</i> <i>Swaziland</i>	Timor-Leste <i>Previous Name</i> <i>East Timor</i>	Congo DRC <i>Previous Name</i> <i>Zaire</i>	Sri Lanka <i>Previous Name</i> <i>Ceylon</i>
					
1935	1939	1949	1957	1966	
Iran <i>Previous Name</i> <i>Persia</i>	Thailand <i>Previous Name</i> <i>Siam</i>	Jordan <i>Previous Name</i> <i>Transjordan</i>	Ghana <i>Previous Name</i> <i>Gold Coast</i>	Botswana <i>Previous Name</i> <i>Bechuanaland</i>	
					

© BCCL 2023. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Legal Insight: [Legal Perspectives of Renaming India to Bharat](https://www.drishtijudiciary.com/)

(<https://www.drishtijudiciary.com/>)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/india-that-is-bharat-the-ongoing-debate>