

Mahajanapadas

- The Mahajanapadas were sixteen kingdoms or oligarchic republics that lived in ancient India during the sixth to fourth centuries BCE during the second urbanisation era.
- The 6th–5th century BCE are typically seen as key turning points in early Indian history; after the death of the Indus Valley Civilization, India's first great cities formed during this period.

Mahajanapadas

- The **Janapadas** were the main kingdoms of **Vedic India**.
- The Aryans were the most powerful tribes of the time, and they were referred to as 'Janas.'
- Janapada, which means "people" and "foot," was born as a result of this.
- By the sixth century BCE, there were possibly **22 distinct Janapadas**.
- **Socioeconomic achievements**, notably the use of iron instruments in agriculture and warfare, as well as religious and political advances, resulted in the establishment of the **Mahajanapadas** from small kingdoms known as Janapadas.
- Rather than the tribe or jana, the residents formed a strong connection to the land or **Janapada** to which they belonged.
- This is also considered the second urbanisation era, after the **Harappan civilisation**.
- The **political centre** shifted from the west to the east of the **Indo-Gangetic plains** during this period.
- Higher land fertility as a result of increased rainfall and rivers was linked to this.
- This area was also closer to iron-producing areas.

Anga

Capital – Champa

- The Mahabharata and Atharva Veda both mention Anga Mahajanapada.
- It was seized by the Magadha Empire under the reign of Bimbisara.
- It is found in modern-day Bihar and West Bengal.

- Champa, its capital, was situated at the confluence of the Ganga and Champa rivers.
- Merchants travelled from here to Suvarnabhumi, since it was a key commercial centre on the trading routes (South East Asia)

Magadha

Capital – Rajagriha

- The Atharva Veda mentions Magadha.
- It was near Anga in modern-day Bihar, separated by the Champa River.
- Later, Magadha became a Jain centre, and Rajagriha hosted the first Buddhist Council.

Kasi

- Varanasi was the location.
- According to the Matsya Purana, this city was named after the rivers Varuna and Asi.
- Kosala apprehended Kasi.

Vatsa

Capital – Kaushambi

- Vatsa is often spelled Vamsa.
- Located on the Yamuna's banks.
- This Mahajanapada was governed in a monarchical manner.
- Kausambi/Kaushambi was the capital (which was at the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna).
- This was a commercially important city.
- In the sixth century, trade and commerce flourished.
- Following Buddha's ascension, the monarch Udayana established Buddhism as a state religion.

Kosala

- **Shravasti (northern), Kushavati (southern)**
- It was in Uttar Pradesh's current Awadh area.
- Ayodhya, a significant city linked with the Ramayana, was also included in the territory.

- Kosala also includes the tribal republican territory of Kapilavastu's Sakyas.
- Gautama Buddha was born at Kapilavastu in Lumbini.
- Prasenajit (Buddha's contemporaries) was an important ruler.

Shurasena

Capital – Mathura

- During Megasthenes' time, this location was a centre of Krishna devotion.
- The disciples of the Buddha also held sway.
- Awantipura is a powerful king (Disciple of Buddha).
- Mathura, its capital, was located on the banks of the Yamuna.

Panchala

Capital- Ahichchatra and Kampilya

- Its capital for northern Panchala was Ahichchatra (modern Bareilly), and its capital for southern Panchala was Kampilya (modern Farrukhabad).
- Kannauj, the famed city, was located in the Kingdom of Panchala.
- Later, the form of government changed from monarchy to republic.

Kuru

Capital – Indraprastha

- Kuru Mahajanapada was probably born in the vicinity of Kurukshetra.
- It adopted a republican form of government.
- The Mahabharata, an epic poem, describes a war between two branches of the ruling Kuru clan.

Matsya

Capital – Viratanagara

- It lay to the west of the Panchalas and to the south of the Kurus.
- Viratanagara was the capital (modern Bairat).
- It is located in the Rajasthan region of Jaipur, Alwar, and Bharatpur.
- Founder – Virata

Chedi

Capital – Sothivathi

- This is mentioned in the Rigveda.
- Sothivati/Shuktimati/Sotthivatinagara was the capital.

- It is now located in the Bundelkhand area (Central India).
- Shishupala is the King. During the Rajasuya sacrifice of Pandava monarch Yudhishtira, he was murdered by Vasudeva Krishna.

Avanti

Capital - Ujjaini or Mahishmati

- Avanti had an important role in the emergence of Buddhism.
- Avanti's capitals were Ujjaini (northern section) and Mahishmati (southern part).
- It was located in what is now Malwa and Madhya Pradesh.
- Pradyota was a powerful king.

Gandhara

Capital- Taxila

- Taxila was the capital (Takshashila).
- Modern Peshawar and Rawalpindi, Pakistan, as well as the Kashmir valley.
- The Atharva Veda mentions Gandhara.
- The people were well-versed in the art of fighting.
- It was noteworthy in terms of international trade.
- Pushkarasarin is a powerful king.
- Gandhara was captured by the Persians in the late sixth century BCE.

Kamboja

Capital- Poonch

- Poonch was the capital of Kamboja.
- It is located in modern-day Kashmir and the Hindukush.
- Kamboja was a republic, according to several literary sources.
- Kambojas had an exceptional horse breed.

Asmaka

Capital - Potali/Podana

- It was on the banks of the Godavari.
- It was the only Mahajanapada in Dakshinapatha, located south of the Vindhya Range.
- It includes the Pratisthan or Paithan area.

Vajji

Vaishali

- The Vajjis ruled the state north of the Ganga in the Tirhut division.
- The most powerful clans were the Lichchavis (Capital – Vaishali), Videhans (Capital – Mithila), and Jnatrikas (based in Kundapura).
- Mahavira was a member of the Jnatrikas clan.
- Ajatashatru triumphed over the Vajjis.

Malla

Kusinara

- It is mentioned in Buddhist and Jain scriptures, as well as in the Mahabharata.
- Malla was a democratic republic.
- Its territory extended to the Vajji state's northern boundary.
- Kusinara and Pava are the capitals.
- Both capitals are significant in Buddhist history.
- The Buddha ate his final supper at Pava before entering Mahaparinirvana in Kusinara.