

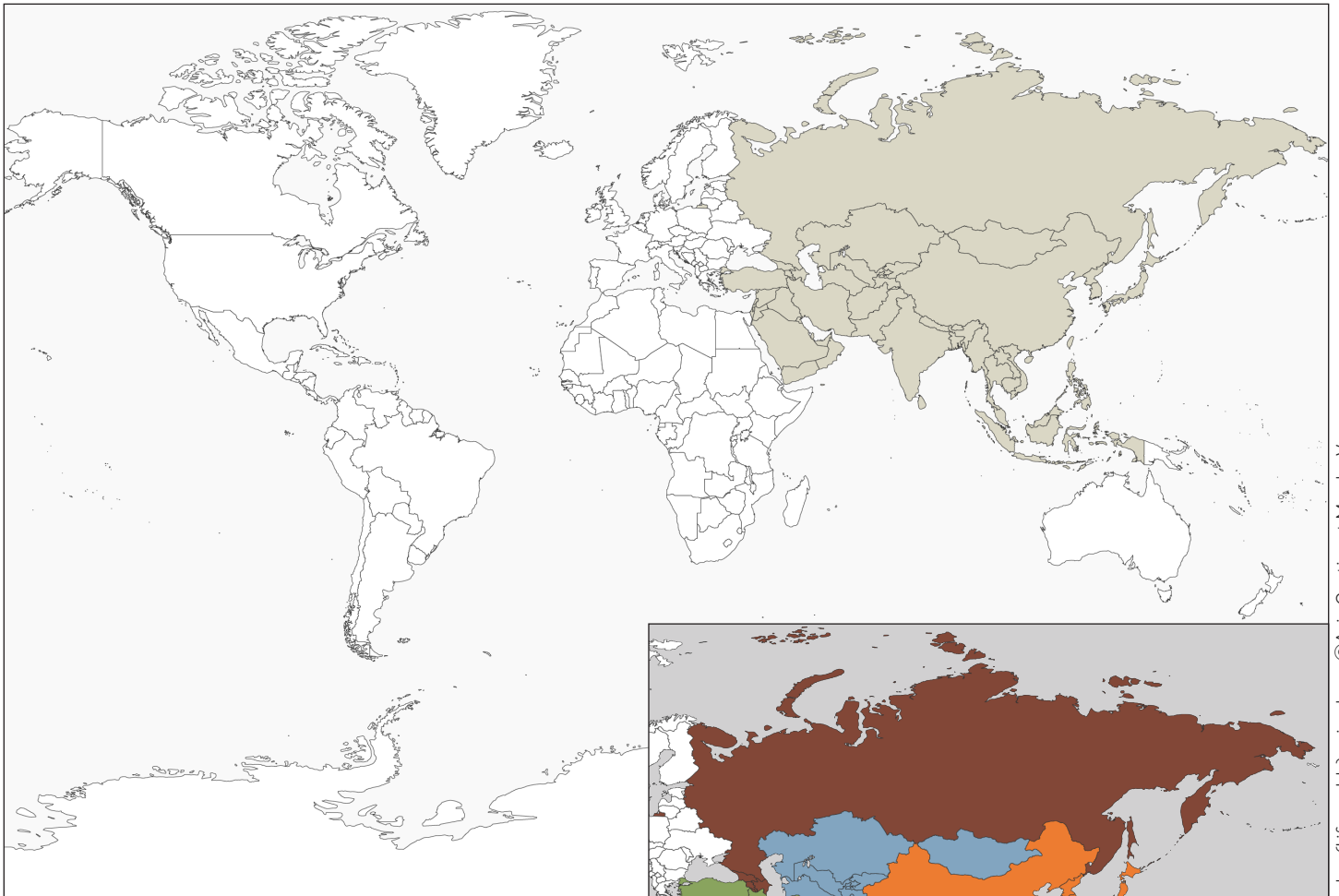


IN THE FRAME: ASIA

Asia is the world's largest continent and region both in area and in population. It is a powerhouse of the global economy but also home to some of the poorest people on Earth. Asia boasts diverse and dramatic landscapes and is the birthplace of great civilizations and multiple world religions.

In the Frame: Asia provides key insights into this fascinating area and on how it compares and fits in with the rest of the world.

📍 Where in the world?



Asia is a large continent made up of around 52 territories.* It is often divided into sub regions as shown in the inset map to the right.

Russia and Turkey are **transcontinental countries** that bridge Asia and Europe. The majority of their land area lies in Asia.

* Disagreements about which are in Asia or Europe and disputed territories means that this number can vary.

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| ● Western Asia (Middle East) | ● Central Asia |
| ● Southern Asia | ● South-Eastern Asia |
| ● Russia and the Caucasus | ● Eastern Asia |

Land



Asia - 34.9%

Rest of the World - 65.1%

Proportion of global area



Sagarmāthā (Mt Everest) in Nepal is the world's highest mountain at 8,849 metres.

All 108 mountain peaks over 7,200 metres are in Asia.



With 8,153,120 km² of forest, **Russia has 20% of the world's forests** - more than any other country. Most of the forest is in Russian Asia.

China's **forested areas grew by 44% between 1990 and 2023**. This is an increase of 684,763 km² - bigger than the size of France or Norway.



The Yangtze river (China) is the **world's 3rd longest at 6,300 km** and has the world's largest hydro-electric dam (Three Gorges Dam) producing 22,500 MW.

Asia has the world's longest coastline (62,800 km), its hottest place (Lut desert, Iran at 70°C), and its lowest point (Dead Sea, Israel at -430 metres). It is the most ecologically diverse continent on the planet with tropical rainforests, vast grasslands, Arctic tundra, arid deserts and fertile river valleys.



People

Total population (2025): **4,979,317,454**



Percentage of the World population (2025): **60%**

Asia's Top 5 populated countries (2025):

Country	Population	World Rank
India	1,463,865,525	1
China	1,416,096,094	2
Indonesia	285,721,236	4
Pakistan	255,219,554	5
Bangladesh	175,686,899	8



Population distribution (2024)

Quick facts

Asia has a population of almost **5 billion** people in 2025.

6 in every 10 people in the world live in Asia.

4 of the Top 5 and **12 of the Top 20** most populated countries in the world are in Asia.

The top 5 most populated countries in Asia (see table left), make up almost **44% of the world's total population**.

The world's three largest cities are all in Asia:

Tokyo (Japan) 37.4 million

Delhi (India) 29.3 million

Shanghai (China) 26.3 million

7 of the Top 10 largest cities are located in Asia.



Economy

Asia is the world's largest economy with close to 5 billion people. It is also the fastest growing economic region of the world.

Total GDP (2024):

US\$ 41,390,960 million

Percentage of the World GDP (2024):

37.6%

Average GDP per person US\$ (2024):

Yemen - US\$ 427

Afghanistan - US\$ 473

Pakistan - US\$ 1,529

India - US\$ 2,689

Philippines - US\$ 4,009

Vietnam - US\$ 4,523

Thailand - US\$ 7,347

China - US\$ 13,091

Turkey - US\$ 14,588

Oman - US\$ 20,005

South Korea - US\$ 35,702

Hong Kong - US\$ 55,472

Qatar - US\$ 72,970

Singapore - US\$ 90,863

There is considerable difference in average GDP across Asia.



Quick facts

3 of the top 5 richest world economies in 2024 are in Asia: China, Japan, India.

Asia is the **world's largest producer** of rice, oil palm, crude oil, tea, electronics, clothing, cars.

Asia has around **60% of the world's known oil reserves**, mostly in the Middle East (48%).

China is the world's biggest renewable energy producer accounting for **40% of wind and solar energy** in 2024.

South Asia was the **world's fastest growing economic region** in 2025.

Asian countries produce **60% of the world's cars** with China alone producing 1 in every 3 cars.

Asian countries produce almost **70% of world electronics** (computers, TVs, mobiles etc).

Photo by Kristina Sergeychik on Unsplash





Culture

Major world religions originating in Asia and the number of global followers.

Israel/Palestine*
Christianity, 2.5 billion
Judaism, 14.8 million

China
Confucianism, 8.8 million
Taoism 8.8 million

Saudi Arabia
Islam, 1.9 billion

Japan
Shintō, 2.8 million

Iran
Bahá'í, 9.2 million
Zoroastrianism, 0.2 million

India
Buddhism, 530.6 million
Hinduism, 1.1 billion
Jainism, 6.3 million
Sikhism, 29.3 million

* Christianity originated in Judea which is a region in modern-day Israel/Palestine. Judaism originated in Caanan, an area in modern day Israel.



IN THE FRAME: ASIA



Asia's people speak over **2,300** languages, more than any other continent than Africa. The biggest languages spoken in Asia are:

Mandarin Chinese - 1.3 billion

Arabic - 313 million

Russian - 260 million

Hindu - 615 million

Indonesian - 270 million

Bengali - 230 million



The games of chess and snakes and ladders originated in India. Chess developed from an ancient game called **Chaturanga** and a game called **Moksha Patam** is the origin of snakes and ladders.



Popular sports in Asia include football, baseball, basketball, cricket, and badminton. Asian sports include **Kabaddi in South Asia** (it is the national sport of Bangladesh) and **Sepak Takraw in South East Asian** (it is the national sport of Malaysia) and **Sumo wrestling in Japan** where it is the national sport.



Many **martial arts originate in Asia** including Karate (Japan), Taekwondo (Korea), Kung Fu (China), Judo (Japan), Jiu-Jitsu (Japan), Tai Chi (China), Aikido (Japan), Muay Thai (Thailand), Kendo (Japan).



Yoga originated in India and has become a globally popular physical and stress reducing activity. Its roots lie in Hinduism and in meditation, but has also been influenced by Buddhism in its more global form.



Asia has the **worlds biggest film industry** in terms of the number of films made. In 2023 India produced 2,562 films, China 792, and Japan 676, compared with 510 from the USA. 'Bollywood' is the name given to Hindi language films made in and around Mumbai (formerly Bombay from where the name comes). Anime is a form of animated film originating in Japan.

Photo by Rob Bowden/Listening Eye Images

