Contents

1

Natural Resources and Their Importance

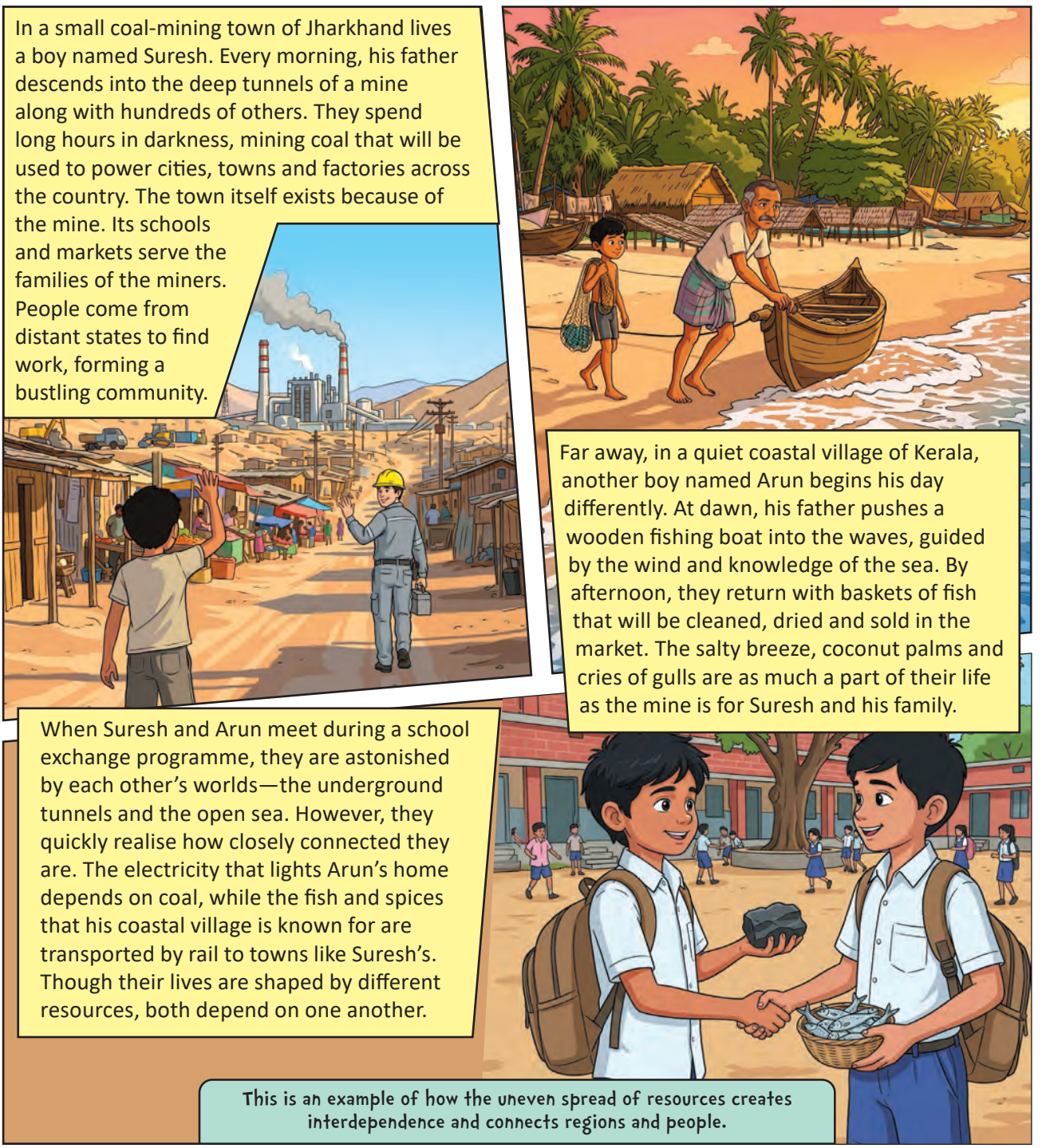
Nature as a Resource

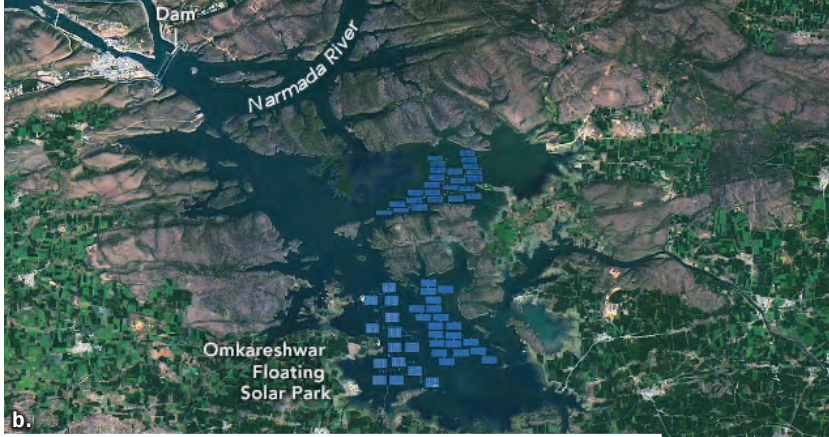
Everything we see around us comes from nature, directly or indirectly. Cotton grown in Gujarat produces fabric for shirts, while sugarcane grown in Uttar Pradesh gives us sugar and jaggery. The steel from which your bicycle is made may be made from iron ore mined in Odisha and the cement used in buildings may contain limestone mined in Madhya Pradesh. Even a plastic button could perhaps trace its origins to petroleum refined in Assam. The silicon chips used in computers and mobile devices all over the world are made from silicon obtained from silica. The glass used in windows comes from sand. No matter how advanced a product seems, its roots can always be traced back to nature.

Anything that satisfies human needs is called a resource. Resources may be natural resources, human-made resources and human resources. Resources like air, water, sunlight, minerals, forests and wildlife are provided by nature and are called natural resources. Human

Interdependence and trade

Trade within a country and with other countries depends on where natural resources are found. When people use their knowledge and skills with these resources, they can make special products that are prized for their quality. In ancient times, craftsmen from South India used local materials and skill to make wootz steel, which was valued in West Asia and Europe for its strength and pattern. The spices of Kerala, such as pepper and cardamom, and fine cotton textiles from Bengal, such as muslin, calico and chintz, were highly valued in Arabia, Africa and Europe. In return, India imported gold, silver, horses, silk, glassware and, later,





The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a global initiative launched in 2015 by India and France to promote solar energy and reduce dependence on fossil fuels to combat climate change. The ISA aims to make solar power affordable and accessible, especially for developing countries. India has played a key role by sharing technical expertise and supporting low-cost financing for member nations. The Bhadla Solar Park in Rajasthan (a) is the biggest solar park in India. The floating solar plant at Omkareshwar in Madhya Pradesh (b) built on the Omkareshwar reservoir saves space, reduces water evaporation and improves panel efficiency due to cooling by placing solar panels on water.

Damage to soil life and pollinators The overuse of fertilisers and pesticides results in the death of living organisms that keep the soil fertile. When the soil loses its organisms, it loses its fertility and crop growth suffers. Healthy ecosystems depend on pollinators such as bees, butterflies, birds and bats. Yet their numbers are declining because of pesticide use and habitat loss.

Solutions

- Farmers can protect pollinators by planting flowering borders and avoiding the use of pesticides during flowering.
- They can also keep bee colonies. Agencies like India's National Bee Board encourage such practices.

Hidden costs of construction and cement Cement is essential for building homes, schools, hospitals, bridges and roads. However, the production of cement releases fine dust that harms human and animal lungs, settles on leaves and pollutes soil and water.

Solutions

- The Central Pollution Control Board's guidelines for cement factories should be followed.
- Use cleaner alternatives where possible, such as traditional materials like stone and mud, plant-based building materials and products made by recycling waste plastic.

These examples may seem unrelated, but taken together, they show what happens when we use or pollute natural resources faster than they can recover.

Restoring balance

When resources are overused, we need to change our methods and give nature time to recover. India's own traditions hold valuable lessons in this. The ancient science of *vriksayurveda* described how to match crops to soils, manage irrigation and use natural pest repellents. It treated the soil as a living being to be nourished, not exploited. Many of its ideas, such as composting, crop rotation and mixed cropping, are being used in sustainable agriculture today.

The state of Sikkim shows how these principles can work in modern times. By 2016, Sikkim had switched all its farmland to organic farming, banning chemical fertilisers and promoting

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The Delhi Sultanate

In the late 12th century CE, a group from Afghanistan called the Ghurids tried to extend their control into the Indian subcontinent. Their leader, Muhammad Ghori, first captured some territories in the north-west and then clashed with Prithviraj Chauhan, the ruler of Ajmer and Delhi. They fought two battles at Tarain. Prithviraj won the First Battle of Tarain in 1191, but was defeated in the Second Battle of Tarain in 1192. The Ghurids then occupied Ajmer and Delhi and began to expand their influence in India.

Soon after, Muhammad Ghori returned home, leaving his slave and general Qutb-ud-din Aibak in charge of his Indian territories. After Muhammad Ghori's death in 1206, Aibak declared himself sultan (a title for a Muslim ruler) of the Turkish territories in India. This is considered the beginning of the Delhi Sultanate, a kingdom ruled by sultans from the 13th to the early 16th centuries CE.

In this chapter, you will learn how the sultans of Delhi tried to build a powerful state, how people lived under their rule and how some regions resisted or broke away from their control.

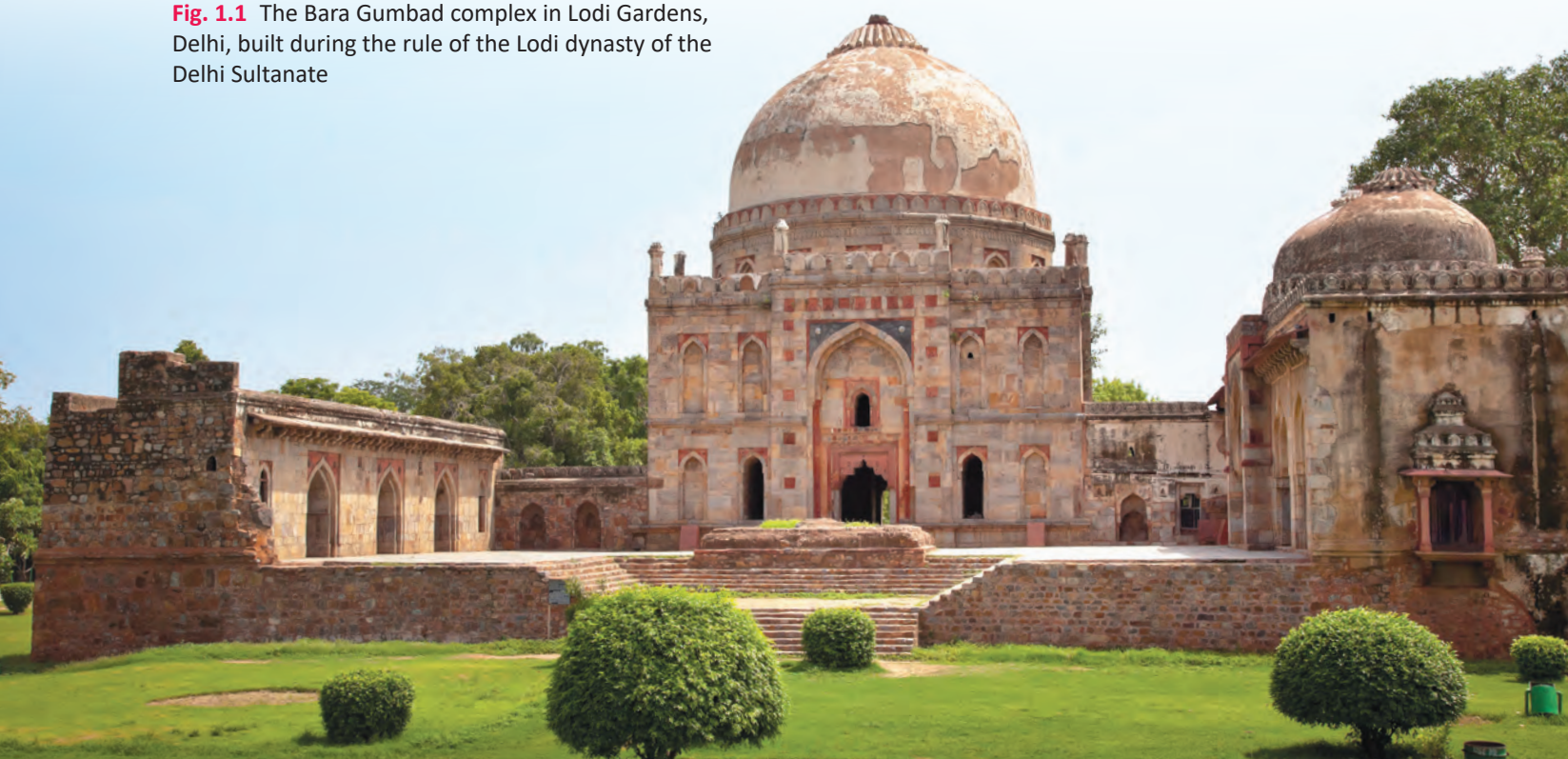

Fig. 1.1 The Bara Gumbad complex in Lodi Gardens, Delhi, built during the rule of the Lodi dynasty of the Delhi Sultanate

One of the most important rulers of Vijayanagara was Krishnadevaraya. He strengthened the frontiers of the kingdom and made it more secure. His court was known for the *ashtadiggajas*, eight great Telugu poets who helped Telugu literature flourish. Krishnadevaraya himself wrote a Telugu poem called *Amuktamalyada*. In it, he says that a good king should follow dharma, rely on wise ministers and care for the welfare of his people. He also gave generous gifts to temples.

Fig. 1.13 Part of the Vitthala temple complex

The Vijayanagara rulers often fought the Deccan sultanates for forts, fertile lands such as the Raichur doab, and control of trade routes. The Gajapatis of Odisha also put pressure on Vijayanagara from the east. After Krishnadevaraya's death, quarrels over succession weakened the empire. In 1565, a group of Deccan sultanates defeated Vijayanagara in the Battle of Talikota. The capital city was plundered, and the empire broke up into smaller states.

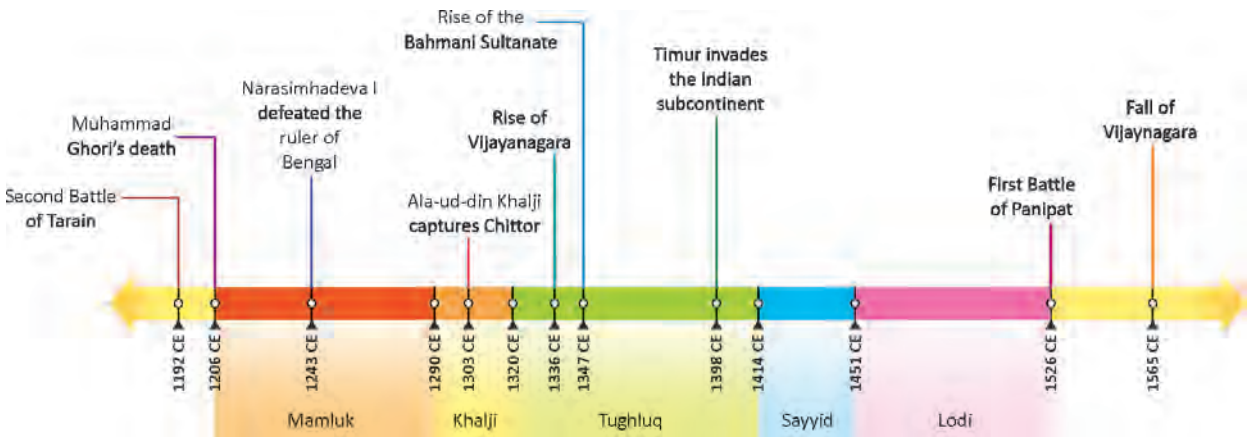

Fig. 1.14 Ruins of the fort at Golconda

Think & Link

A **How did the geography of their regions help different groups to resist Mughal expansion?**

B **Look closely at these decorative marble panels found on monuments built during the Mughal period. Name the technique used and describe how it is made.**

C **Solve the riddle and identify the Mughal ruler.**

My reign saw trade and fine crafts grow,
But my own sons turned into bitter foes.
One seized the throne and locked me away,
Which 'king of the world' ended his life that way?

1 _____

I gained an empire that was shaky and wide,
But Sher Shah's sharp attacks forced me outside.
I returned to Delhi, then fell from a height,
Which unlucky Mughal am I—can you get it right?

2 _____

A child on the throne, too young for command,
My regent beat Hemu with a firm, steady hand.
With Rajput nobles I strengthened my domain,
Which Mughal emperor brought both peace and gain?

3 _____

Timur and Chenghiz in my family tree,
Gunpowder and matchlock guns came with me.
I wrote my life in a book you still can see,
Which early Mughal ruler could I be?

4 _____

I raised the Mughal banner proud and high,
Yet years of Deccan wars bled the empire dry.
Taxes and tension rose again and again,
Which stern Mughal ruler was this, tell me then?

5 _____

I walked the path my famous father made,
While rebel sons and nobles schemed in shade.
In my court 'Light of the World' held much sway,
Which Mughal emperor ruled in such a way?

6 _____

D **Look at the Assertion (A) and Reason (R) statements. Say if the statements are true. If true, say if the reason correctly explains the assertion. Some have been solved for you.**

- Assertion (A) Babur could defeat Ibrahim Lodi even though his army was smaller.
  Reason (R) Babur used gunpowder weapons and a well trained cavalry, while Lodi's army was poorly organised.
  Answer Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.

devotional poems called *abhangs*. Eknath taught devotion and right conduct in daily life. Ramdas spoke of devotion, duty and strength.

These saints used Marathi, so their words reached all sections of society. Many of them spoke against caste discrimination and they praised simple living.

Over time, the bhakti saints helped to create a sense of shared culture in Maharashtra. Later, when Maratha leaders like Shivaji called on people to fight for *swaraj* (self-rule), many were ready to follow.

Shivaji's Rise to Power

Family and childhood

Shivaji Bhonsle was the most important leader in the rise of the Marathas. He was born in 1630 at the hill fort of Shivneri, in what is now Pune district of Maharashtra. His father, Shahaji Bhonsle, was a Maratha general. Shahaji served different Deccan sultanates at different times. He held jagirs in the Deccan and spent many years on campaigns in South India.

Fig. 3.2 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

Shahaji was often away from home on military duties. He placed his Pune jagir under the care of his trusted officer Dadoji Konddev. Many accounts say that Konddev supervised young Shivaji's training in administration and warfare. Shivaji's mother, Jijabai, also played an important role in his upbringing. Later tradition says that she told him stories from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and other tales of kings and warriors, and that these stories helped shape his ideas of courage and good rule.

Early conquests

Shivaji grew up in and around Pune. He often saw armies passing through the countryside. Villages were looted and fields were destroyed. Peasants had to pay heavy taxes. These experiences made him wish for a kinder and fairer rule.

When Shivaji was about sixteen, he began to act on this wish. With a small group of loyal companions, he started to capture hill forts near Pune. One of his early successes was capturing the fort of Torna, followed by other forts such as Purandar. He usually launched surprise attacks and avoided open battles. He repaired the forts, filled them with grain and weapons, and placed trusted commanders in charge.

Many of his followers came from the nearby hills. They knew the forest paths and river crossings very well. Shivaji planned quick raids using this local knowledge. His men attacked suddenly and then withdrew into safe ground. This way of fighting is now called guerrilla warfare. It uses speed, surprise and good knowledge of the land to trouble large armies.

Understanding Elections in India

The ECI conducts elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state legislative assemblies and the offices of the president and vice president. Elections to panchayats (villages) and municipalities (towns and cities) are conducted by the State Election Commission (SEC). Each type of election has its own process, rules and importance in keeping our democracy strong and functioning.

Fig. 1.3 Voters in Odisha after casting their votes in the general elections of 2024

Election to the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies

The country is divided into 543 constituencies for Lok Sabha elections, with each constituency electing one member of Parliament (MP). India uses a system called first-past-the-post (FPTP), which means that the candidate who gets the highest number of votes in a constituency wins, even if they have less than 50% of the total votes.

Once voting is over and results are declared, the next step is to form the government. At the national level, the political party that wins a majority of the 543 Lok Sabha seats gets the chance to form the government. Several parties may also join hands to form a coalition, that is, a group of two or more parties working together to form a government.

The leader of the majority party is typically chosen as the prime minister. Similarly, at the state level, the leader of the majority party in the state legislative assembly becomes the chief minister.

COOL TIDBITS

Article 330 and 332 of the Indian Constitution reserve seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. As of 2025, 84 Lok Sabha seats are reserved for SCs and 47 for STs—ensuring their voices are heard at the highest levels of law-making. Can you find out how many general seats are there?

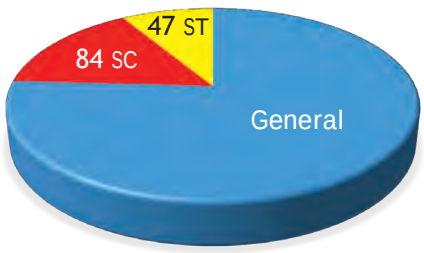

Fig. 1.4 Steps in the voting process: **a.** A voter's name and ID being checked **b.** Finger being inked **c.** A voter casting his vote

	Union Executive	State Executive
Constitutional head	President (5-year term)	Governor (appointed by President for 5 years)
Executive head	Prime Minister (leader of majority party/coalition in the Lok Sabha)	Chief Minister (leader of majority party/coalition in the Vidhan Sabha)
Council of Ministers	Chosen and led by the PM	Chosen and led by CM
	Union Legislature	**State Legislature**
Structure	Bicameral (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha)	Unicameral (Vidhan Sabha) or bicameral (with Vidhan Parishad)
Term	5 years (Lok Sabha)	5 years (Vidhan Sabha)
Presiding officer (lower house)	Speaker of Lok Sabha	Speaker of Vidhan Sabha
Makes laws on	Union List and Concurrent List	State List and Concurrent List

State Legislature and Executive

The state government is organised in a way that closely follows the structure of the union government. Let us now understand how the legislature, the executive and the judiciary function at state level.

State legislature

Each state has its own legislature. In most states, the legislature includes the governor and one house, called the Vidhan Sabha (legislative assembly). Some states have two houses. In these cases, the Vidhan Sabha is the lower house and the Vidhan Parishad (legislative council) is the upper house. A legislature with only one house is called unicameral.

As of 2025, the states in India that have a Vidhan Parishad are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

Fig. 2.5 Vidhana Soudha, the seat of the Karnataka state legislature

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Factors of Production: The Building Blocks of an Economy

Every product we use in our daily lives, clothes, food, gadgets, comes from a process called production. Production is the process of using inputs such as land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship to create or increase the usefulness of goods and services. These inputs, or resources, are known as the factors of production.

Businesses use the factors of production as the inputs to create goods and services. For example, to make a shirt, cotton is required. Cotton is grown on land and harvested by farmers (labour). It is then transported to factories where machines and equipment (capital) convert the cotton into thread and later into cloth. Throughout this process, the entrepreneur coordinates all these activities, from procuring raw cotton to manufacturing the cloth and finally selling the finished product in the market.

Let us study the four factors of production: land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship.

Technology is not a separate factor of production like land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship. It is the knowledge of better methods of producing goods and services. When producers use new technology, the same land, labour and capital can produce more and better output. So we can say that technology is the know-how that helps the four factors of production work faster, better and cheaper.

Fig. 1.1 Production of various goods: **a.** textiles, **b.** steel, **c.** beverages

countries closed, ships were delayed and transport was restricted. As a result, several businesses in India could not get parts or raw materials on time, and production fell even though workers and machines were ready. This shows why many firms now try to use both local and global sources to make their supply chains more resilient.

Process of manufacturing electric two-wheelers

Electric scooters and bikes are becoming popular in India because they use electricity instead of petrol, cost less to run and cause less air pollution. Many Indian companies now design and assemble these vehicles, creating jobs for engineers, factory workers, sales staff and mechanics. Let us study how the factors of production are connected in the manufacture of electric two-wheelers.

Setting up the factory (one-time step)		The entrepreneur chooses a suitable location, buys or rents land, builds the factory and installs machines and equipment. (This needs a lot of capital and careful planning but is done only once, not for every scooter.)
Design and planning the scooter		Engineers and designers decide the look, speed and price of the scooter. They also plan how many scooters to make in a month and how the work will be organised inside the factory.
Parts and materials		The company brings in batteries, motors, frames, wheels, body parts and electronic parts (some made in India, others from abroad).
Assembly in the factory		Workers fit the frame, wheels, motor, battery, wires, brakes, lights and panels. Here land (factory), labour (workers), capital (machines, tools) and entrepreneurship (planning and risk-taking) come together, guided by technology.
Testing, sales and service		Each scooter is tested for safety and performance. Then it is sent to showrooms or sold online. Mechanics are trained to repair and service it, and charging points or home chargers help users charge their scooters easily.

This example shows how many people, resources and ideas work together to produce a modern, eco-friendly vehicle.

Responsibilities towards Factors of Production

The resources used to produce different goods are finite and must be managed responsibly so that the well-being of future generations is not adversely affected. When they are overused