

SPORTS IN INDIA

CRICKET



NATIONAL RELEVANCE: Cricket has acquired the status of a religion in India with the cricketers enjoying a demi-god status. India was admitted to the International Cricket Council (ICC) in 1929.

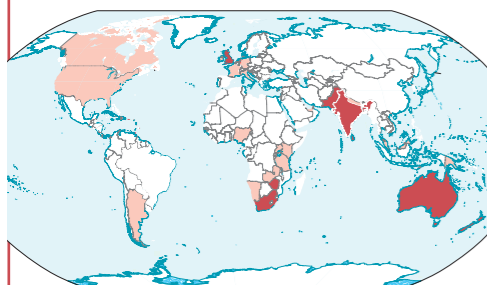
RULES: There are two teams. Teams bat in attempt to score runs, while the opposing team attempts to bring an end to the other team's innings. The team with the most runs wins.

STADIUM: Eden Gardens, Kolkata, capacity 90'000, the oldest cricket ground in India (oldest outside Great Britain) and is also one of the finest in the world.

ORGANIZATION: Indian Cricket League (ICL), Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

IMPORTANT MATCHES: 1952 Test victory against England, 2001 Kolkata Test, World Cup Victory in 1983

ATHLETES: Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid



FOOTBALL



NATIONAL RELEVANCE: Football is one of the most popular games in India. The fact that some of the world's oldest football tournaments are played in India underlines the rich legacy of the game.

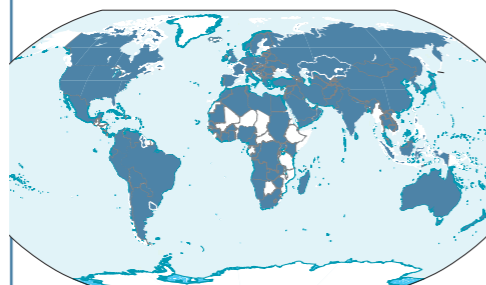
CLUBS: Mohun Bagan, oldest football club in India, East Bengal Club. The Kolkata derby between East Bengal and Mohun Bagan is one of the oldest and most interesting derbies in the world.

STADIUM: Salt Lake Stadium, Kolkata, capacity 120'000, second largest capacity in the world.

ORGANIZATION: All India Football Federation (AIFF), Indian Football Association (IFA)

IMPORTANT MATCHES: Gold medals in 1951/1962 Asian Games, 1956 Melbourne Olympics first Asian nation to reach the semi-final.

ATHLETES: Bhaichung Bhutia, P. K. Banerjee, Chuni Goswami, Jarnail Singh



KABADDI



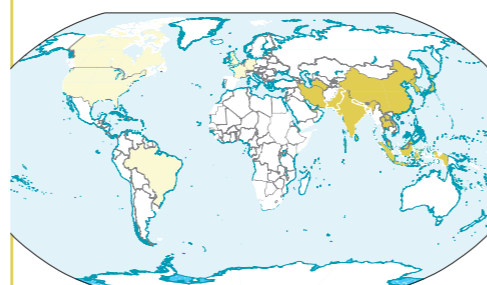
NATIONAL RELEVANCE: It is a 4000 year old game for men and women. The oldest sport, one that goes back to the time of the Hindu epics. It's a rather simple game, and neither requires a massive playing area, nor any expensive equipment. This explains the popularity of the game.

RULES: There are two teams. The raider's aim is to eliminate the opposing side by touching any or all players, and return to his court in one breath while chanting a particular tune. The defending team tries to hold the raider, and stop him from returning to his own court, until he takes another breath. Each team alternates in sending a player into the opponents court.

ORGANIZATION: Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI)

IMPORTANT MATCHES: India won the world cup defeating Iran 55-27.

ATHLETES: Manpreet Singh, Rakesh Kumar, Navneet Gautam, Anup Kumar



POLO SPORT



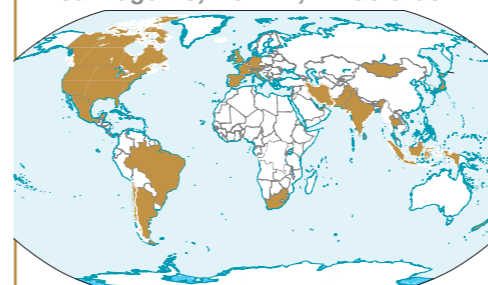
NATIONAL RELEVANCE: Polo was the national sport of India until the end of sixteenth century. In India, the popularity of polo has waned and risen many time. However, it has never lost its regal status. Today, polo is not just restricted to the royalty and the Indian Army, many companies and firms too patronise the sport.

RULES: A polo game is comprised of two teams of four players each. The game takes place during seven-minute segments, called chukkas, and a full match is generally made up of between four and eight chukkas. Players wield long-handled mallets from horseback, and attempt to move a small white ball across a goal line at either end of the field.

CLUB: Calcutta Polo Clubs, 1862 oldest still existing Polo Club

ORGANIZATION: Indian Polo Association (IPA)

ATHLETES: Syed Shamsheer, Estrada, Mr Santiago De, Mazzini, Mr Gerardo



HOCKEY



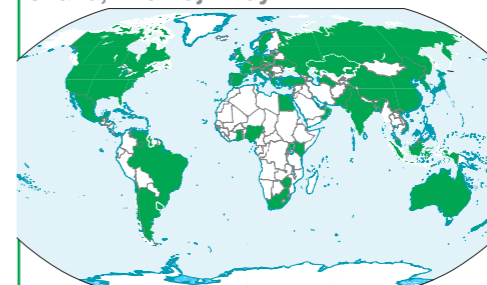
NATIONAL RELEVANCE: Despite being defined as India's national game, hockey lags far behind cricket and other games in the popularity stakes. When Indian sportspersons are rapidly asserting themselves in the world stage, India's hockey fortune is plummeting to an abyss in the international fora. With success being far and few between, hockey is losing out to other popular sports that have brought India international success.

CLUB: Bengal Hockey Association

ORGANIZATION: Indian Hockey Federation (IHF)

IMPORTANT MATCHES: Making its Olympic debut at the 1928 Amsterdam Games, Indian hockey team cruised home to its first Olympic gold without conceding a single goal. From 1928 to 1956, India won six straight Olympic gold medals while winning 24 consecutive matches.

ATHLETES: Gagan Ajit Singh, Dhyan Chand, Dhanraj Pillay



LARGEST FOOTBALL STADIUMS

Pyongyang, Rungrado May Day, 150 000

Kolkata, Saltlake Stadium, 120 000

Mexico City, Estadio Azteca, 105 064

Melbourne, Cricket Ground, 100 000

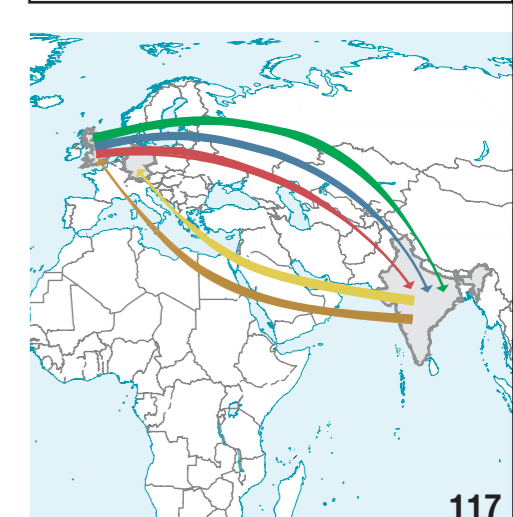
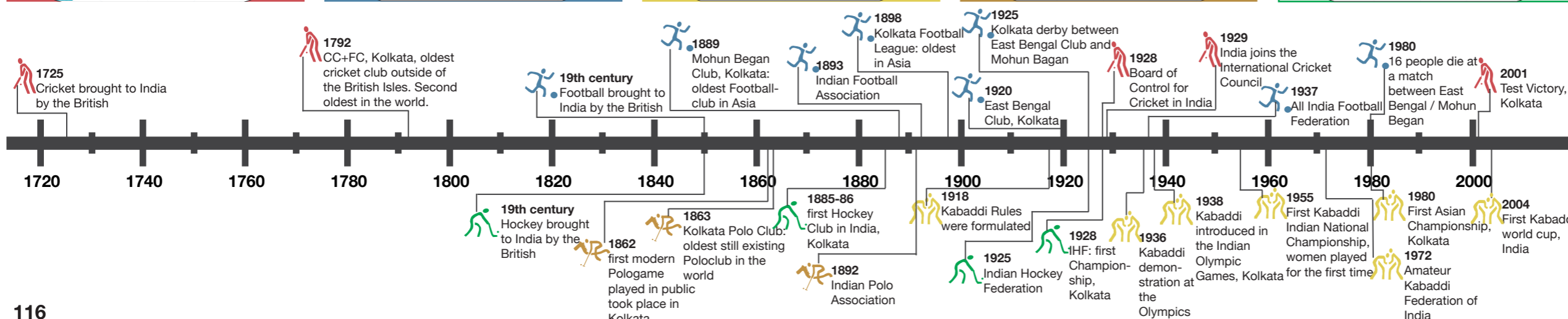
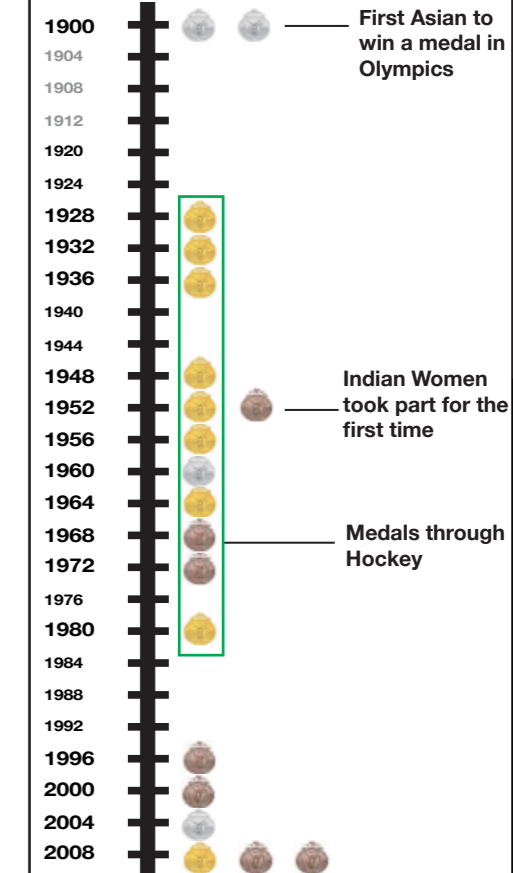
LARGEST CRICKET GROUNDS

Melbourne, Cricket Ground, 100 000

Kolkata, Eden Gardens, 90 000

Sydney, ANZ Stadium, 83 500

INDIA'S MEDALS AT SUMMER OLYMPICS



SPORTS AND RECREATION KOLKATA



Salt Lake Stadium, 1984
second largest capacity in the world, hosts u.o. the Mohun Bagan club, the oldest Football club in Asia



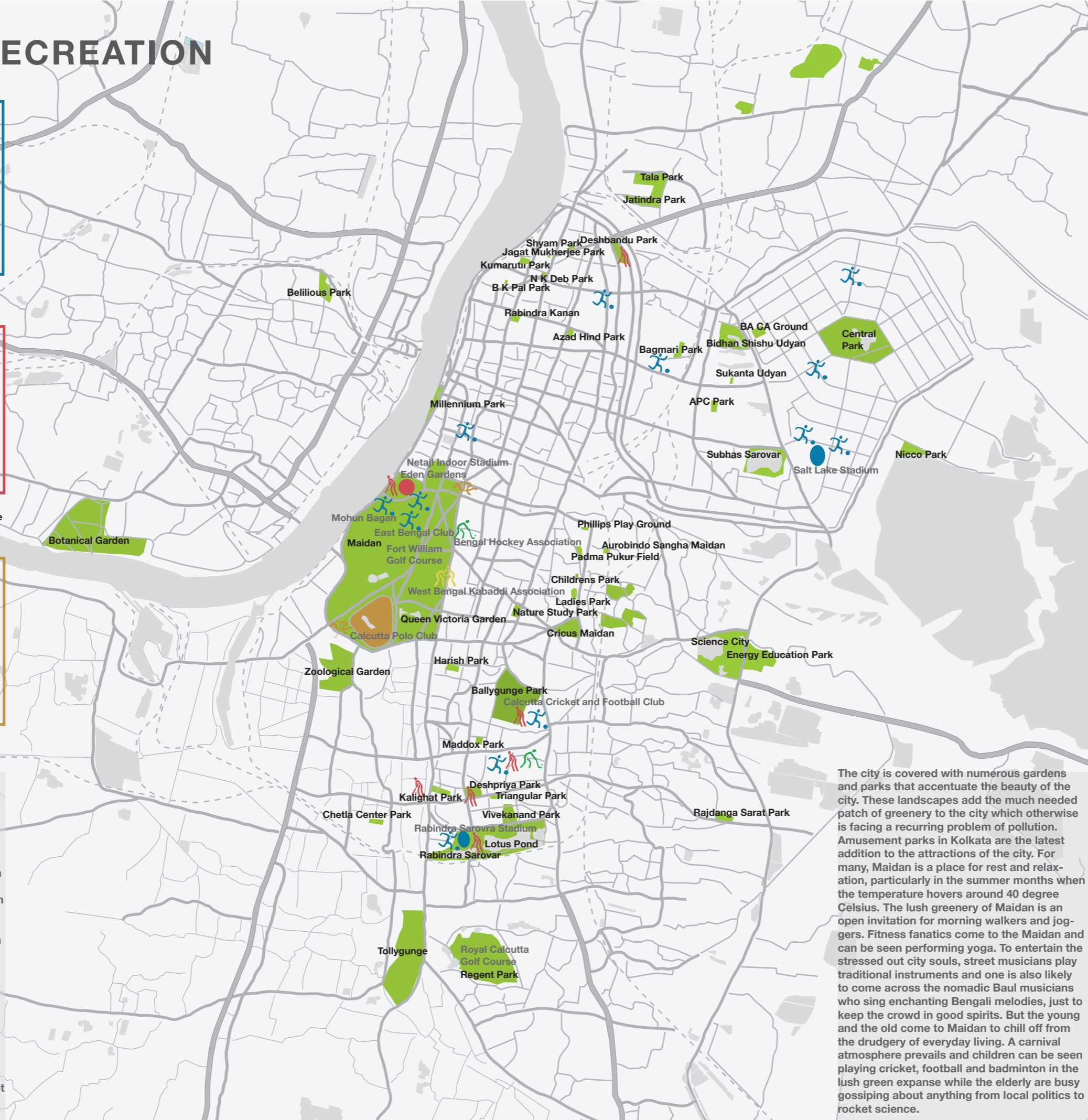
Eden Gardens, 1864
second largest capacity of cricket grounds, hosts the Calcutta Cricket & Football Club, oldest cricket club outside the British Isles



Calcutta Polo Club, 1863
oldest still existing Polo Club in the world, first modern Pologame ever took place in Kolkata

Sports clubs are like an integral part of Kolkata's culture. A sports club serves as a place where people can relax their mind and body. Not only that, it also acts as a perfect destination to socialize and get along with friends. Sports in Kolkata is as famous as the Durga Puja (local celebration) of the city. The Kolkatans are huge sports lover and are very much passionate about their sports. Most people in Kolkata have two 'religions' - the faith in which they were born, and their choice of support for one of the big football teams in the city - East Bengal, Mohan Bagan and Mohammedan Sporting - who are among the top football clubs of India.

Cricket as well as Football were introduced to Kolkata through the British. In colonial India cricket had the meaning of challenging the British by defeating them on their own turf. Cricket used to be a game for the privileged. To promote cricket in Kolkata the Indians established their own ground at Ballygunge and recruited the best talents in the country, irrespective of their social background. Cricket in Kolkata/India became urban whereby in England it's a rural game.



Maidan, 1781
the most picturesque part of the city, the centre of almost every action and attraction of the city.



Botanical Garden, 1786
one of Asia's biggest Botanical Gardens, entry is free



Millennium Park, 2000
latest addition to the list of parks, to promote tourism and to beautify the riverfront, entry Rs.3/-



Rabindra Sarovar, 1920
area for residential use with artificial lakes, parks, raising land and constructing roads.



Zoological Garden, 1876
first Zoo in Asia, entry Rs.5/- per person.

The city is covered with numerous gardens and parks that accentuate the beauty of the city. These landscapes add the much needed patch of greenery to the city which otherwise is facing a recurring problem of pollution. Amusement parks in Kolkata are the latest addition to the attractions of the city. For many, Maidan is a place for rest and relaxation, particularly in the summer months when the temperature hovers around 40 degree Celsius. The lush greenery of Maidan is an open invitation for morning walkers and joggers. Fitness fanatics come to the Maidan and can be seen performing yoga. To entertain the stressed out city souls, street musicians play traditional instruments and one is also likely to come across the nomadic Baul musicians who sing enchanting Bengali melodies, just to keep the crowd in good spirits. But the young and the old come to Maidan to chill off from the drudgery of everyday living. A carnival atmosphere prevails and children can be seen playing cricket, football and badminton in the lush green expanse while the elderly are busy gossiping about anything from local politics to rocket science.