

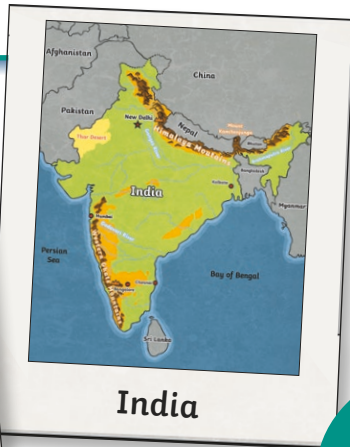
River Ganges

The Ganges, or Ganga, is a river that begins in the Himalayan mountains and runs through northern India. It is one of the great rivers of Asia and is very important in the Hindu Dharma way of life.

Geography



River Ganges



India

The Ganges drains into the Bay of Bengal on the north-east coast of India. The area around the river basin is very fertile and supports hundreds of millions of people. The Ganges delta is the largest water system in the world. During the monsoon season, the area is prone to powerful cyclones.

Hindu Dharma Beliefs

The river is regarded as holy by followers of the Hindu Dharma faith. The water is believed to be pure and has the power to cleanse people of their sins or help them achieve salvation. Some Hindu Dharma practitioners bathe in the river to wash away their sins. Some mourners throw the cremated ashes of their relatives into the Ganges, hoping their loved ones will go straight to heaven. Many places of pilgrimage are located along the Ganges and attract huge numbers of visitors every year.

Kumbh Mela

This is a very important festival in Hindu Dharma. It is celebrated every 12 years on the Ganges, with a 'half Kumbh' taking place every 6 years. Millions of pilgrims travel to the area in India where the Ganges and Yamuna rivers meet to bathe in the holy water.

Varanasi



Varanasi

Varanasi, in northern India, is one of the oldest and most sacred cities in the Hindu Dharma faith. The Ganges runs through it and many miles of steps, known as ghats, have been built on the riverbanks to help people access the water for bathing. Millions of pilgrims visit Varanasi each year.



Kumbh Mela crowds