

4. GANGES JOURNEY

When Kumbhamela is celebrated every four years, Ganges visits different rivers in India. Maha kumbhamela is celebrated every 12 years at Prayag (also known as Allahabad). From Haridwar the river follows an 800 km (500 miles) winding course passing through the city of Kanpur, before being joined by the Yamuna from the southwest at Allahabad. This point, known as the Sangam, is a sacred place in Hinduism. According to ancient Hindu texts, at one time a third river, the Saraswati River, met the two rivers at this point.



After Allahabad, Ganga reaches to City of Lord Shiva which is known by the name of Kashi. Then river Ganga reaches Mirzapur, Patna, Bhagalpur and after crossing Bhagalpur Ganga reaches to the southern part of the nation. Joined by numerous rivers such as the Kosi, Son, Gandak and Ghaghra, the Ganges forms a formidable current in the stretch between Allahabad and Malda in West Bengal.

Whenever devotees dip in any water they recite the *Punya Nadhi* (River Hymn) sloka. The meaning of sloka is that seven rivers are sacred and Ganga stands first. Hindus always keep Ganges water at home and mix it with other waters. Just by adding a drop of Ganga water they consider the whole water is from the Ganges. Ganga provides water to 11 states of India and nearly about 500 million people are getting nourished by it which makes 40% of India's population.

