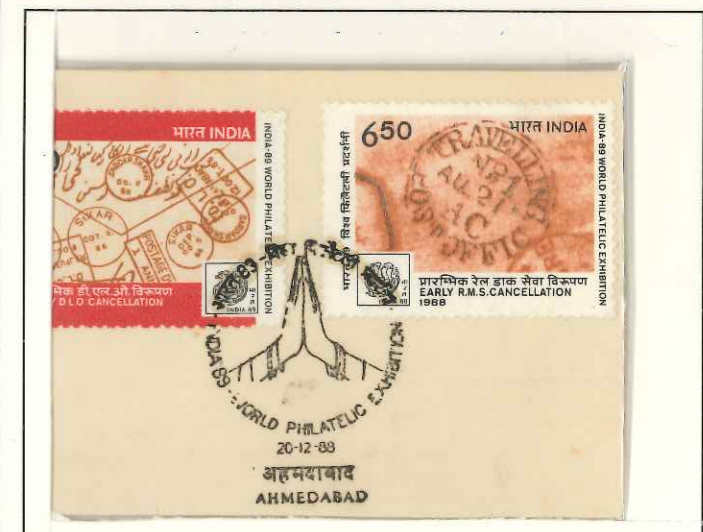
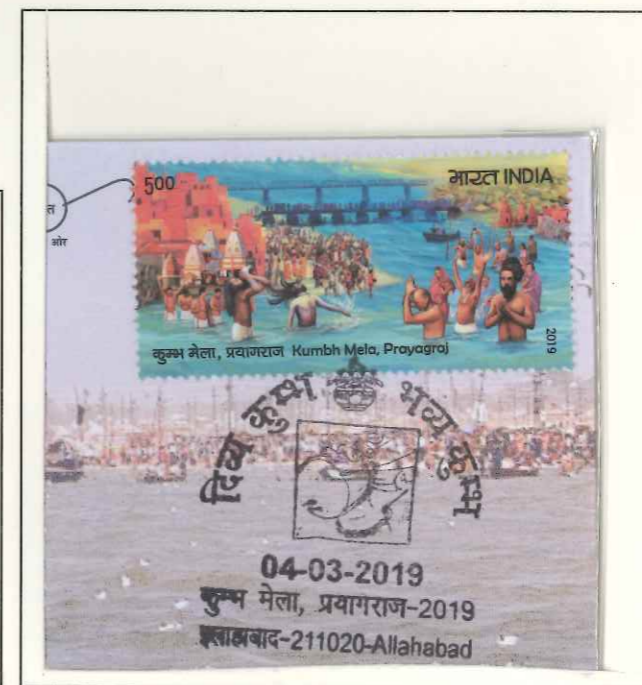


7. SACRED KUMBH MELA-A LARGEST HUMAN GATHERING

During the Kumbh Mela, a number of ceremonies take place; the traditional procession of Akharas called 'Peshwai' on elephant backs, horses and chariots, the shining swords and rituals of Naga Sadhus during 'Shahi Snaan' and many other cultural activities that attract millions of pilgrims to attend the Kumbh Mela.



Hindus consider the waters of the Ganges to be both pure and purifying. Among all hymns devoted to the Ganges, there are none more popular than the ones expressing the worshipers wish to breathe his/her last surrounded by her waters. The *Gangashtakam* expresses this longing fervently:

O Mother! ... Necklace adorning the worlds!
Banner rising to heaven!
I ask that I may leave of this body on your banks,
Drinking your water, rolling in your waves,
Remembering your name, bestowing my gaze upon you.

To,
Dr. V. Upender,
Postmaster General, Southern Region,
Maduari - 625 002 Tamilnadu