

Millions of Hindus to Celebrate the Kumbh Mela

What is the Kumbh Mela?

- The Kumbh Mela is one of the most important festivals in Hinduism.
- 120 million pilgrims will attend the festival in the city of Prayagraj, India.

Yesterday was the start of the Kumbh Mela, one of **Hinduism**'s most important festivals. Millions of people will bathe in two **sacred** rivers.

The people planning the festival expect around 120 million pilgrims to attend over the next 49 days. That's nearly double the number of people who live in the UK!

The Kumbh Mela is an incredibly important festival for Hindus. Millions travel from across India and around the world to celebrate it in the city of Prayagraj, northern India.

This is where the Ganges and Yamuna rivers meet. Hindu tradition says that this was one of the four spots where Lord Vishnu released drops of immortality.

Millions of Hindus will bathe themselves in these holy waters to wash away their sins and save their souls.

It's a colourful and joyful festival! There are loud processions of **sadhus** walking to the riverbank. One **procession** on Sunday even included horses, camels and elephants!

There's also lots of music and dancing throughout the city. Artists in Prayagraj have even painted the city walls with colourful art to celebrate this festival!

It's not easy making sure that millions of people can safely wash in the holy rivers. To make sure everyone can share in the experience, the police have said that people can only bathe for 41 seconds.

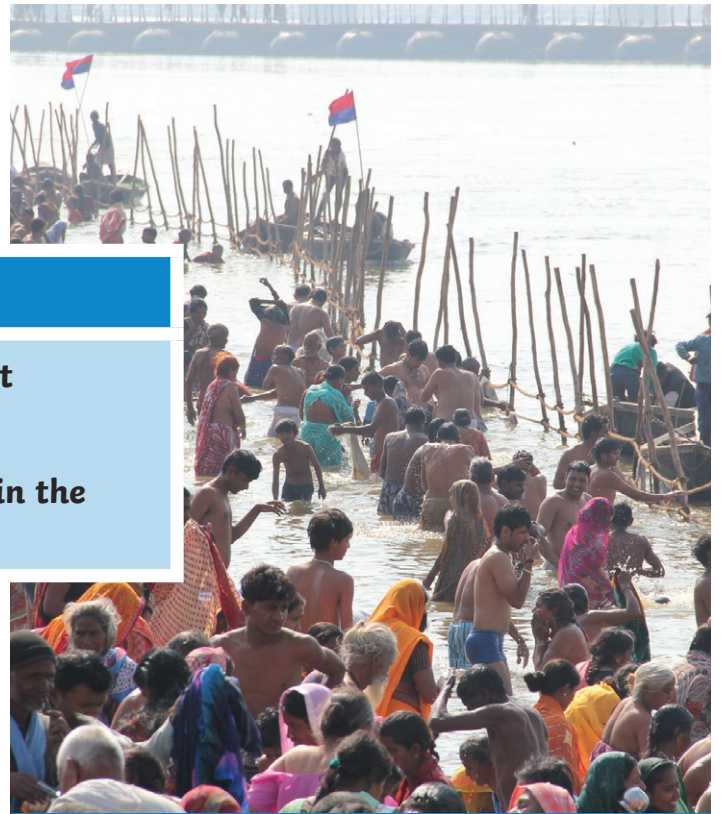


Photo: Hindus bathe during the Kumbh Mela.

They've also set up a huge tent city to give travellers somewhere to sleep, as well as providing 120,000 toilets. There are also 15 lost-and-found shelters for people who become lost in the busy crowds.

The last Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj was held in 2013. This year's festival will last from 15th January until 4th March.

Glossary

Hinduism	A major religion in Asia, with over a billion followers.
sacred	Holy; connected with God or a god or given to a religious purpose.
sadhus	Hindu monks or holy people, who live a life of simplicity, focusing on prayer.
procession	A number of people moving together in an organised way.

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