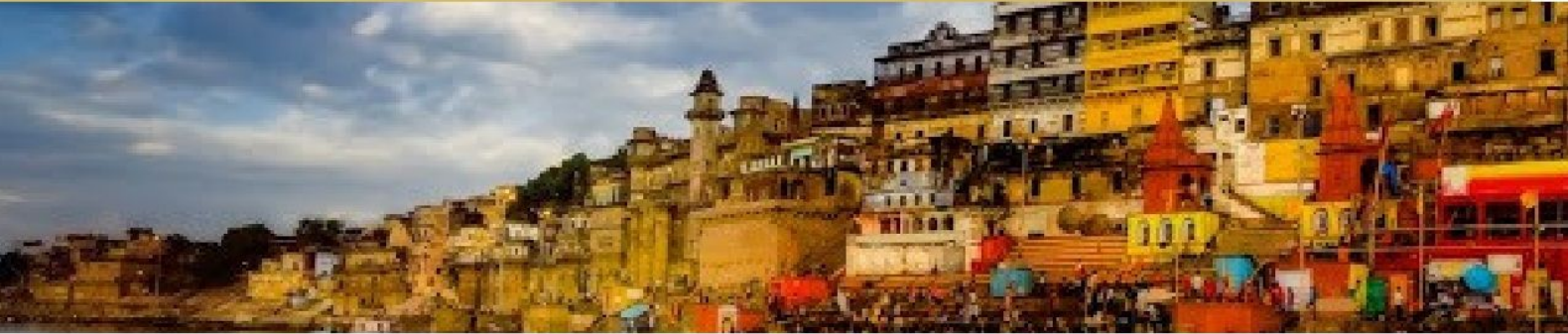


EASTERN UTTAR PRADESH Muslims in Varanasi, India

Questions? Want to explore moving here?



Regarded as the spiritual capital of India, Varanasi draws Hindu pilgrims who bathe in the Ganges River's sacred waters and perform funeral rites.

500,000

Muslims

163,000

Shaikh Muslims

155,000

Ansari Muslims

URDU

Language

MAP OF INDIA



ABOUT VARANASI

Varanasi lies strategically in the heart of India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh (**which has over 200 million Muslims and Hindus and 0.1% identify as Christians**). Varanasi hosts over 6 million domestic tourists and nearly 1 million foreign tourists every year.

While it is the most sacred of the seven holy cities in Hinduism and Jainism because of the river Ganges, and the site of Buddha's first sermon, Muslims also have a rich history in Varanasi. Many believers have labeled the Urdu-speaking Muslims of Varanasi unreachable because of lack of fruit. But such claims beg to be proven wrong, because not many are trying.

LIVABILITY

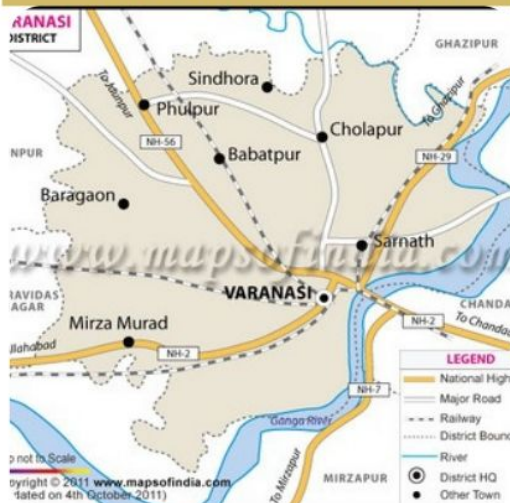
Varanasi is one of India's most famous religious and cultural centers. As **such, tourism is the city's second largest industry in spite of the hot climate that boasts average highs of 100+ degrees (F) for a full three months per year.**

Varanasi has the feel of many of North India's second tier cities, which is more laid back and slower paced, but is quickly changing after being **selected to become one of the new administration's 'high tech cities'.** **This means the government is upgrading much of the city.**

There is an international airport and many new housing complexes and restaurants. It is possible that Varanasi will become a first tier city in the next five years. Even though it is becoming increasingly livable, residents must still contend with pollution and congestion.

Education is another notable part of city life. Banaras Hindu University (BHU) houses over 20,000 students, making it one of the largest residential Universities in all of Asia. *Students, anyone?!*

VARANASI DISTRICT



MUSLIMS IN VARANASI

Overview & OPPORTUNITIES

Questions? Want to explore moving here?

SPIRITUAL AND ENTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the Muslims of Varanasi's reputation for being unreachable, a recent vision trip found the opposite to be true. Several Muslims (including religious leaders) were eager to engage in deep, spiritual conversations. One Christian fellowship also joined along to meet Muslims, and—to their surprise—they also received a warm welcome from their Muslim neighbors. The overarching impression from the vision trip was simple: the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

Vocational opportunities exist in design, IT, tourism, business English and export. However, these businesses must be done at a large, public level. The religious significance of the city causes the Indian government to highly monitor activities, especially among foreigners. If the foreigner is willing to do his or her job with excellence, their presence will be welcomed and appreciated. Designing textiles for a foreign market could provide a niche opportunity.

Finally, while the local Christian population is small, there are emerging possibilities to partner with national believers.



ECONOMY

Thousands of domestic and foreign tourists flock to the city annually, and tourism related activities constitute a significant component of the local economy.

While tourism and religion give Varanasi its distinct flavor and reputation, manufacturing remains the most important industry, accounting for 40% of official jobs. Within the manufacturing industry, 51% are employed in textiles and 15% deal in metals.

Varanasi is a major regional transportation hub. It is an important railway junction and is connected by highways to other cities in Uttar Pradesh and surrounding states. Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport lies about 12 miles (20 km) from the city center.

Student visas are an option for the first few years to learn language and culture.

Is God speaking to your heart about the Muslim people in India? Varanasi offers a unique opportunity for influencing how Muslims throughout India learn about the Kingdom of God.