

INTERESTING FACTS

- In Hindu mythology, Gandak is believed to have been created from the sweat on the cheeks of Lord *Vishnu*, when he was performing austerities near its source.
- In Hinduism, the River is considered holy, as it carries *Shaligrams*, an ammonite fossil from the Devonian period that is used as a non-anthropomorphic representation of Lord *Vishnu*.
- The famous Hariharnath temple, where the mythical battle of Gaj (elephant) and Graha (crocodile) took place, is situated on the River's banks.
- In Hindu mythology, it is believed that Rishi Valmiki lived and composed Ramayana on the banks of the Gandak River.
- Vaishali, which is the world's first republic, birthplace of Lord Mahavira and the site of Lord Buddha's last sermon, is situated on the banks of Gandak.
- Nalanda, a renowned ancient Buddhist centre of learning in Magadh (modern-day Bihar), is situated along the Gandak.

DRIVERS OF RIVERSCAPE CHANGE

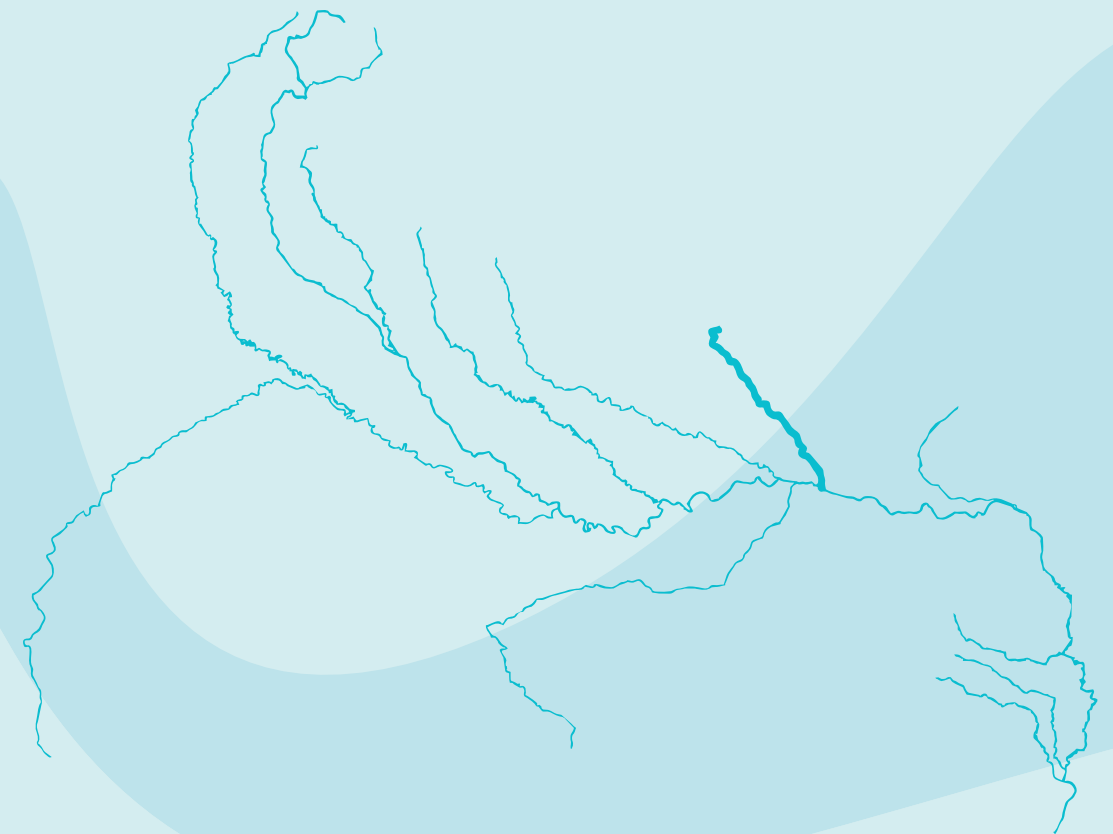
- Sand mining, agricultural runoff and untreated sewerage discharged into the River affect the habitat of key aquatic fauna.
- Lateral erosion due to floods contributes to habitat fragmentation during the rainy season.
- Unsustainable fishing affects the availability of prey base for key aquatic fauna.
- Illegal trade and poaching is a major threat to the turtle population.
- The Gandak Barrage regulates the River at the Indo-Nepal border in the West Champaran District of Bihar. Diversion of water into the Nepal West Gandak Canal and Nepal East Canal affects the River's hydrology.

VIBRANT GANGA



Gandak River

THE KNOT OF PRAYER



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GENERAL INFORMATION

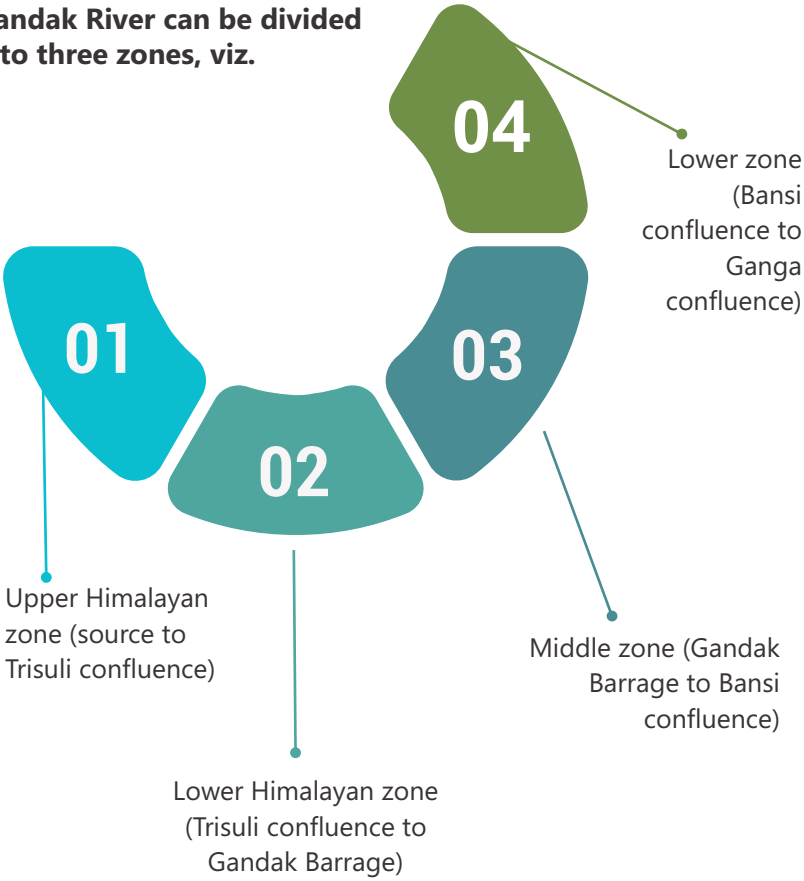
- Gandak River originates from the north of Dhaulagiri mountain in Tibet near the Nepal border, at an altitude of 7,620 m asl.
- After flowing through Tibet and Nepal, Gandak enters India in the West Champaran District of Bihar. After which, the River flows in a southerly direction and meets the Ganga at Hajipur, Bihar.
- The River has a length of 749 km, of which 292 km falls in India. It drains an area of 46,300 km², with 7,620 km² falling in India.
- The snow-fed Gandak River is the second transboundary left bank tributary of the Ganga River.
- Gandak falls in the Gangetic Plains biogeographic zone (7A & 7B) and passes through the densely populated Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
- The climate of the Gandak River Basin varies from sub-humid to humid-monsoon type.
- Budhi Gandaki, Marshyangdi, Madi, Seti Gandaki, Daraudi and Kali Gandaki are some of the tributaries of Gandak.



SALIENT FEATURES

- Gandak River is known as ‘Kali Gandaki’ and ‘Narayani’ after its confluence with the Trisuli River in Nepal. Within Himalayan reaches, it is known as ‘Sapt Gandaki’ as it receives water and sediment from seven different rivers.
- Flowing through some of the world’s highest mountain peaks like Dhaulagiri and Annapurna, the River forms the world’s deepest gorge and canyon, so the drainage pattern is antecedent.
- The basin is dominated by tropical moist deciduous forests type with small patches of semi-evergreen forests and grasslands. A total of 233 plant species have been documented from the River.

Gandak River can be divided into three zones, viz.



- Gangetic dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) and smooth-coated otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) are reported from the Gandak River.
- Gandak River is home to two crocodilian species, gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) and mugger (*Crocodylus palustris*).
- The River is one of India’s five important Turtle Priority Areas, as it supports nine turtle species including eight freshwater and one land turtle species.
- 83 waterbirds species have been recorded from the Gandak River.
- The Indian stretch of the Gandak River is home to 54 fish species, of which the Cyprinidae family represents the maximum number.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Reptiles
Indian narrow-headed softshell turtle
Indian softshell turtle

Avifauna
Pallas’s fish-eagle

Mammals
Gangetic dolphin

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED
Reptiles
Gharial
Three-striped roofed turtle

KEY PROTECTED AREAS

- Chitwan National Park (Nepal)
- Valmiki National Park (India)
- Sohagi-Barwa Wildlife Sanctuary (India)
- Udaipur Bird Sanctuary (India)
- Kanwar Lake Bird Sanctuary (India)

