

INTERESTING FACTS

- In India, the River is also known as Saryu. As per Ramayana, the River was a lifeline of Ayodhya, where King Dasharatha ruled.
- Hindu devotees consider a holy dip in the Saryu to be moksha dayini as Lord Rama is supposed to have immersed himself in the Saryu River to return to his heavenly form.
- The battle between Babur's Mughal armies and Sultan Nusrat Shah's Sultanate of Bengal forces was fought on the banks of the Ghaghra River in 1529. The Battle of Ghaghra was crucial in the Mughal Empire's conquest of India. It came after the First Battle of Panipat.
- The upper zone of the River is regarded as one of the best rafting rivers.

DRIVERS OF RIVERSCAPE CHANGE

- The construction of Girija Barrage in 1976 for irrigation flood control measures has significantly fragmented the dolphin population upstream of the barrage in Nepal.
- Human settlements near or on the banks of the Ghaghra River, construction of ghats, agricultural practices have aggravated lateral erosion during low discharge period in the River, which has resulted in the loss of habitat.
- Seasonal cultivation on the River's sandy banks disturbs key nesting and roosting habitats of different avian and reptilian species.
- The wetlands of the Ghaghra basin are under serious threat due to the siltation, depletion or complete drying of lakes, growth of water hyacinth, and encroachment of wetlands due to urbanisation.
- Unsustainable sand mining and water harvesting alter the flow and disturb the habitat.
- Sewerage and drains carrying untreated effluent from cities like Faizabad, Gorakhpur, Deoria, Ballia have degraded the water quality and led to high concentrations of heavy metals in the River.
- About 350 km stretch of Ghaghra River has been declared National Waterway (NW-40). River modification activities such as dredging and River training may disturb the habitat.

VIBRANT GANGA



Ghaghra River

THE TURQUOISE LIFELINE OF NORTH INDIA



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GENERAL INFORMATION

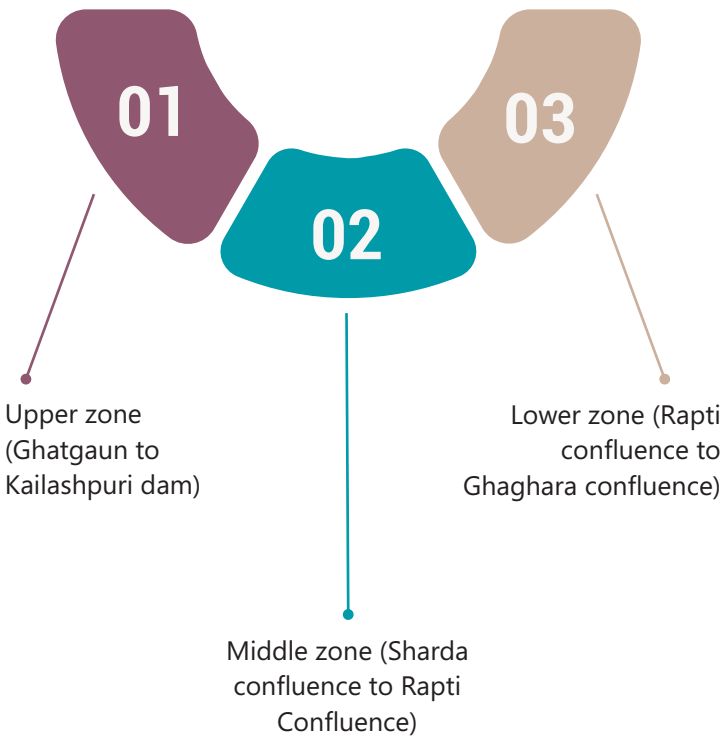
- Ghaghra is a perennial transboundary river originating on the Tibetan Plateau near Lake Manasarovar. In Nepal, it is known as Karnali.
- The River cuts through the Himalayas and joins the Sharda River at Brahmaghat in Barabanki district, Uttar Pradesh.
- Ghaghra has a total 1,27,950 km² catchment area, of which 45% falls under India.
- The Ghaghra is the largest tributary of Ganga by volume and the second longest tributary after the Yamuna.
- In India, the River traverses through the Gangetic Plains Biogeographic zone.
- The Sharda, Saryu, Chauka, Kuwana, Rapti, Chhoti Gandak, and Jharahi are the major tributaries of Ghaghra in India. The West Rapti, the Kali (or Mahakali), and the little Gandak are the other tributaries originating in Nepal.
- The River's hydrology is influenced by the southwest monsoon and glacial melt in the Himalayas.
- It adopts a meandering path through the alluvial plains, frequently shifting its course and forming oxbow lakes.



SALIENT FEATURES

- The River flows for about 1080 km, of which 507 km is in Nepal.
- Geomorphologically, the region exhibits an upland terrace surface, river valley terrace surface, present-day river channel with narrow flood plains, natural levee, and point-bar deposits.
- 247 plant species have been documented from the Ghaghra River.
- Gangetic dolphins (*Platanista gangetica*) Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) and smooth-coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) are reported from the Ghaghra River basin.

Ghagra River can be divided into three zones, viz.



- A total of 62 species of fish belonging to 24 families have been reported from the Ghaghra River.
- 57 species of waterbirds were recorded from Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, and 63 species of waterbirds were documented from the Girwa River of the Ghaghra river basin.
- The portion of Girwa River in Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, in the Ghaghra basin, is a breeding habitat for gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) and mugger (*Crocodylus palustris*) population.
- 14 species of turtles have been reported from Ghaghra River Basin.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

- Reptiles**
Indian narrow-headed softshell turtle
- Avifauna**
Indian skimmer
- Mammals**
Gangetic dolphin
- CRITICALLY ENDANGERED SPECIES**
Reptiles
Gharial,
Three-striped roofed turtle

KEY PROTECTED AREAS

- Bardia National Park (Nepal)
- Rara National Park (Nepal)
- Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary (India)
- Dudhwa National Park (India)

