

PROVIDENCE CHURCH Prayer for the Nations

BANGLADESH

- Dhaka is the most populous city in Bangladesh. An estimated population of over 12 million.
- It is the one of the largest and **most densely populated cities in the world**.
- Dhaka is known as the City of Mosques.
- Also described as the Rickshaw Capital of the World, with 400,000 **cycle rickshaws** running on its streets every day.
- Most residents of Dhaka speak **Bengali**, the national language.



Ganesh is the Hindu god of good fortune, remover of obstacles, and giver of wisdom. He is an elephantine fellow in every sense, sporting not only a rotund belly but also the head of an elephant, a symbol of his wisdom and understanding. Many South Asian

businesspeople pay daily tribute to Ganesh idols in their shops, rickshaw drivers stamp their dashboards with Ganesh stickers, and the foyers of posh hotels feature elephant statues festooned with jasmine and candlelight. Ganesh worship is a regular affair in South Asia, but during Ganesh Chaturthi, his ten-day birthday celebration, the elephant god rules the stage of Hindu culture.

Like Easter, Ganesh Chaturthi follows the phases of the moon and usually falls in late August or early September. And just as Christian families ring in the Yuletide with a bedecked evergreen tree, Hindu families anticipate “Chaturthi season” by displaying Ganesh idols in their homes, perching them under a brightly colored umbrella and trimming them with flowered garlands. They perform “poojas” before the idol for ten days, offering prayers, chants, and fruit.

On the eleventh and last day of the festival, Hindu worshippers gather in the streets to see their god safely off. Elaborate and boisterous, these processions parade their Ganesh idols down to the local lake, river, or seashore. The clay idols are finally sunk into the water and dissolve away, symbolizing that Ganesh has departed, taking their trouble and bad fortune with him. The worshippers send the elephant god on his way with much pomp and circumstance, but the immersion is a moment of deep disappointment for them, for they must now face a full year without his reassuring presence.

For all their fanfare, Hindus do not know the joy that comes from the God who has forever removed every obstacle, who will never melt like dust in water, and who resides within us always, not only for ten days a year. Let us ask the Living God to replace their idols with His presence and their dissonant chants with shouts of joy.

Prayer request: IMB - God is working through a Community Transformation Training (CTT) that was started in a slum. The team goes in and offers simple health teaching, as well as Bible stories and prayer. Some have come to know true healing through a relationship with Jesus Christ. Pray that God will continue to bring healing to Dhaka’s millions of lost people.