

Email

Dear Friend,

As we enter our second week of prayer for India, we focus on the strategic cities of Delhi and Mumbai, where many different people groups live. We begin the week reading about a Frontiers team who saw movements to Christ among a Muslim people group, who in turn began to disciple other Muslim groups as well as those of different cultures and religions. This is what we long to see happening all over this nation! Nothing is impossible with God!

We long to see movements to Christ among the two unreached people groups we will be praying for; the Ansaris and West Bengali Muslims. We also have a testimony from an Indian Muslim lady who shares her remarkable journey to becoming a follower of Jesus.

May God mightily bless you as you pray and intercede this week.

For His Glory in the Nations

Charlie

Prayer Coordinator

Monday 16th May

Making disciples

"I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings." 1 Cor 9: 22-23

This story is from a Frontiers team member in the region:

"Husam is a Muslim-background believer and one of our team's closest national partners. As a result of our partnership, several groups of Muslims have started studying God's Word. Those groups are multiplying as people discover Jesus Christ, grow as His disciples and become trained as house-church leaders. In monthly gatherings, Husam leads these Muslim-background church leaders in a time of encouragement and training on how to make disciples of Christ in their communities.



In recent meetings, they've been studying Paul's exhortations in the book of Romans. As a Jew himself, Paul insisted that God's plan wasn't limited to the Jews. It extended to the Gentiles too. As the church leaders considered this, they realised that they too could reach out to other Muslim people groups and those of other faiths in their communities.

In the weeks following that meeting, several Muslim-background believers started Bible studies with men

and women who belong to other cultural and religious groups—even with those they’d been taught to view as their enemies.

This is the model we follow in order to win others for the sake of the gospel as described in 1 Corinthians 9:19–23.”

In strategic cities where there is often a mix of people groups and cultures, it is this attitude that wins others to Christ. As we pray for the cities of Delhi and Mumbai this week and for the people groups there, our prayer is that each group will be discipled and will become discipled to other people groups around them.

- Let’s take time to praise God for moving in the hearts of new believers and using them to reach past cultural and religious barriers to share the gospel with all peoples.
- Pray for the growth of the Kingdom in Muslim communities, and pray for it to expand to other communities and people groups.
- Let’s thank God for our workers as they seek to disciple others and for those leaders in the Muslim communities who are willing to reach their own people and others around them. Let’s ask God to bless, inspire and encourage them.

Tuesday 17th May

Delhi Muslim pop: Approximately 3 million

“And seek the peace of the city ... , and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace. ... For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” Jeremiah 29:7, 11

Delhi is a mix of broad tree-lined boulevards, beautiful estates and parks, gleaming sky-scrapers, and over-crowded older neighbourhoods built in ancient times, as well as many densely-populated slums. The vast, bustling, over-crowded, and never-sleeping city is filled with countless motorised rickshaws, cars, buses and people. Even though Delhi is a wealthy city, there is widespread poverty.



The National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT) includes New Delhi, the capital of India.

This video of the city gives great insight and inspiration for prayer: <https://prayercast.com/delhi.html>

30 million people call the Delhi metropolitan area home, making it the third largest urban area in the world. Of these, 82% are Hindu, 13% Muslim, 3.5% Sikh and remainder made up of other religious groups.

The first Muslim empire in India was founded in Delhi in 1206. Muslim Sultans in Delhi ruled the Hindu majority in parts of India for 650 years. Today there are seven Muslim neighbourhoods in Delhi. Numerous national and international Muslim organisations are based in the city. The decrees issued by Ahmed Bukhari, the Imam of Jama Masjid in Delhi (India's largest mosque), hold great sway among Muslims nationwide.

In each of the Muslim communities there are at least a handful of believers and in some there are regular gatherings of people studying the Bible. There are people ministering in Muslim enclaves across Delhi and in the communities surrounding the tombs of Muslim saints. Yet, there does not appear to be any sizeable movement of Muslims to Christ in the city. Perhaps this will begin to change in this time of great upheaval affecting India and Delhi too. The coronavirus pandemic has had a great impact on those living in the capital city, especially Muslims who often live in poor conditions and in low-paid jobs. Restrictions are in place. Many have lost their jobs and are relying on food handouts for survival. Others who have tried to leave the city and have become stranded are living in desperate conditions.

- Pray for courageous gospel witnesses in every Muslim neighbourhood and ghetto, especially at this time of crisis. Let's pray that these disciples will reach out to other religious groups across this vast city.
- Pray for the love of Jesus, through His followers, to meet urgent physical and spiritual needs among those suffering there at this time. Let's ask that they would come to know God, who has a plan for their lives to give them a hope and a future.
- Pray for Muslim students as they study the Qu'ran, to continue to search for Truth and find it in Jesus.

Source of most material: <https://prayercast.com/delhi.html>

Wednesday 18th May

Mumbai Muslim pop: Approximately 2 million

"For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come." Hebrew 13:14

Mumbai, formerly Bombay, is on the west coast of India and is the country's financial and commercial centre and home to the country's arts and entertainment industry. The world's largest film industry, Bollywood, is based there. The cost of living is high; Mumbai has some of the world's highest real estate prices. In great contrast, half of the population lives in informal settlements, the result of rapid urbanisation. Many migrants discover that the unskilled and semi-skilled positions they can find fall short of providing the better life they were seeking.



While there are many poor Muslims in Mumbai, invariably much of the city's economy is driven by Muslims who are Bollywood stars and directors, as well as mafia leaders in the city's informal underground economy. Yet the Muslim population makes up only 18% of the total, Hindus making up the majority at 67%, with Buddhist and Christians making up 5% and 4% respectively. Though there are Muslims at every economic level in the city, the Muslim community feels that it has been deliberately side-lined as a minority. Mumbai has a history of intense Hindu/Muslim religious riots.

Both Sunni and Shia Muslims live there, representing many people groups. There are 16 Muslim people groups with populations over 2,000. The largest is the Ansari who we will be praying for tomorrow.

While there are mission agencies and workers in Mumbai, few have workers living among Muslims. Imagine the difference if more workers went there with a heart for the Muslim people. Imagine if they were able to disciple them and if they, in turn, were able to disciple their own people and then those of other cultural and religious backgrounds. Imagine if there were movements to Christ in this diverse city!

- There are emerging churches in the city. Let's pray for church leaders to reach out to Muslims and disciple them, bringing them the good news.
- Many go to Mumbai to make money and many are disappointed. Let's ask that they find a greater treasure in a relationship with Jesus.
- Mumbai has major needs and opportunities for God's people to go and introduce Muslim followers of Islam to their Saviour. Let's pray for people to go there and make a difference, just like those we read about on Monday.

Thursday 19th May

Ansaris Pop in India: Approximately 10.7 million

"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." John 15:13–14

The Ansaris live in many parts of India, but most live in the north-eastern state of Uttar Pradesh and in Delhi.

Many Muslim Ansaris are industrious weavers producing India's fine silks in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Sahil sits in front of his hand-operated loom, a contraption that fills an entire room in his family's small home. With a series of rapid clanks, he adds silk threads one by one to the jewel-coloured, shimmering fabric. Just like his father and grandfathers before him, he has spent his life weaving silk.

The narrow-laned Muslim neighbourhood where Sahil lives and works is often crowded with Hindus shopping for the highest-quality silks the country has to offer.

Like most Ansari Muslims, Sahil is extremely friendly—even to Hindus, in spite of the tension that simmers between the two religious groups. He always strives to live up to his people's reputation as helpers. As tradition goes, Ansaris are descendants of those who helped Muhammad by welcoming him into their homes after he fled from his enemies in Mecca. But the Ansaris still don't know that Jesus Christ waits to be welcomed into their homes.

- Pray that the kind Ansaris will encounter the Friend who laid down His life for them to be with Him for eternity.
- Pray for churches to grow among Ansari Muslims and to multiply into movements that reach other people groups.
- Pray that Ansaris will delight in Jesus' commands and spread His blessings across the nation, just as their beautiful silks bring widespread joy.

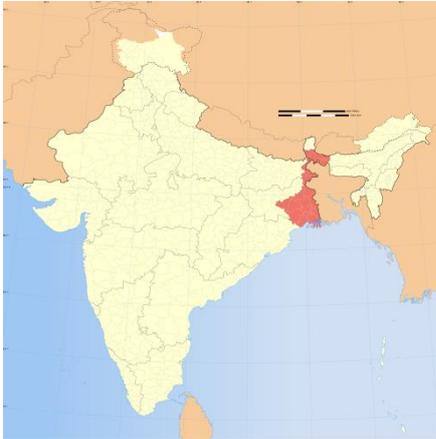
Friday 20th May

Najma's testimony

As we have prayed this week for Muslims to come to know Christ as Lord and Saviour, let's read Najma's remarkable testimony.

Najma comes from an Orthodox Sunni Muslim family in India. Her mother was a Christian when she married her father who was a Muslim. Her mum prayed for her dad's salvation and after five years he became a believer. His parents were so angry about this, that they would regularly beat her mum and even burn her Bibles. Najma began to hate Jesus. She saw him as the cause of all the trouble in her family.

One night, her grandparents poisoned her mum, but she kept calling on the name of Jesus. Miraculously she survived. When her grandparents arrived the next morning, they were astounded to see her mum was still alive. They called the shaman (witch) to curse her, but instead she declared that the God her mum worshipped was the God who created the universe!



Finally the village clan got together and determined to kill her parents and send the children to a madrassa to learn how to be good Muslims. As they began beating her parents and were about to behead them, the local imam arrived and told them to let her parents go. The whole family were told to leave the village. They left the next day taking nothing with them and a fatwa was declared against them.

As Najma wondered how they would all survive, she saw God provide for them with food and shelter. She remembered how God had healed her mum and rescued her parents from certain death. She made a decision to follow Jesus. He has taught her to forgive her enemies and pray for those who persecuted her. It took her thirteen years, but now she loves her aunts and uncles and has forgiven them and prays for their salvation. Today she works among Muslims in India.

You can listen to her full testimony here: <https://prayercast.com/najma.html>

- Pray for Najma as she works among Muslims in India today, sharing her testimony and the good news of the gospel.
- Pray for Muslim background believers in India who are being persecuted for their faith even now.
- God loves Muslims and died to save them. Let's take time to thank Him for continually drawing Muslims to Himself.

Saturday 21st May

Bengali (Shaikh) Muslims in the Murshidabad District of West Bengal

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Heb 4:12

Over 3.8 million Bengali Muslims, making up 65% of the population, live in Murshidabad, a district in the north part of West Bengal. This is an area of rich historical significance and long-ago British influence. Today the area appears completely unengaged with no evidence of any field workers or locals intentionally engaging these people.

Despite its former wealth, this agricultural area has been designated as one of India's most 250 underdeveloped districts, currently receiving welfare funds. It is also the ninth most populous in India. It suffers from flooding from the Bay of Bengal from August to October and from a lack of infrastructure. The Bengalis live a simple life in rural villages where they own and work the land. For

young Bengali Muslims, farming is their main work opportunity, but this district already suffers from over farming. Other Bengali Muslims work in home-based silk weaving and craft businesses.

Bengalis are known for their hospitality. It is considered a matter of great honour to provide something to eat or drink for any guests, even among families who are struggling to provide for themselves. However, they have a reputation for keeping to themselves, making it hard to build relationships with them.

- There are Muslim followers of Jesus living in fairly close proximity. Let's pray that they will catch the vision to disciple the Bengalis, just like Husam and the other church leaders that we read about on Monday.
- Pray for the Bengali Muslims in the Murshidabad District who need to hear and know the Word of God. Let's ask God to prepare many of His people to understand how to reach Bengali religious leaders so they can bring the truth of God's Word to their people.
- Prayer changes things. Let's pray that as a result of earnest intercession, this group will have believers who will disciple others in this district and state, both Muslim and those of other faiths, so that movements to Christ begin all over this region!