

**MELVIN:** Ready? Your fourth checkpoint is Varnassi.

**BRIAN:** Varnasi. Varanasi... (attempting pronunciation).

**MELVIN:** Varahnasi.

**BRIAN:** Varanasi.

**MELVIN:** Where do you think? Get the map out. Varanasi.

**BRIAN:** It's there, look. Right, so that is in India. That is on the Ganges.

**NARRATOR:** In northern India, the fourth checkpoint, Varanasi. This ancient city has been continuously inhabited for over 3000 years. Considered to be an abode of Lord Shiva, it is one of the seven sacred cities of Hinduism. Every year, more than a million people make a pilgrimage here to visit the mandir and purify themselves by bathing in the River Ganges.

**BRIAN:** To get to India, it's going to be a long way away.

**MELVIN:** Ooh! "It is not possible for the race to continue over land "across the Himalayas." "You must fly..."

**BOTH:** "to Kathmandu."

**BRIAN:** "where the race will resume." Whoa!

**MELVIN:** Wasn't expecting this.

**BRIAN:** Now Kathmandu is in...

**MELVIN:** Nepal.

**BRIAN:** ...Nepal, isn't it? This is a double country leg.

**MELVIN:** So that's exciting.

**BRIAN:** Melv, it's going to be tough but let's go for it. We're here, Melv. Sun shining at last.

**NARRATOR:** Having flown from China to arrive in Nepal's capital city of Kathmandu, first-time race leaders Brian and Melvin.

**BRIAN:** Watch the cars.

**MELVIN:** Nepal feels quite vibrant. It's um, it's a different atmosphere to China. It's more colourful already.

**BRIAN:** Nepal looks to be completely different from anywhere that I've been to before, so it'll be a bit nerve wracking. But I'm looking forward to some new adventures.

**NARRATOR:** Nepal's north is dominated by the Himalayas. It is a land where many use the phrase "guest is God" and natives offer homestays as a source of income, allowing budget-conscious visitors to experience the true heart of the country... ..while those hungry for adventure flock for the great outdoors.

**BRIAN:** We're in Nepal. One of the things we have to do, Melv, is cross the border into India at some point. So where are we going?

**NARRATOR:** It is the shortest leg of the race so far at just under 800 kilometres. But without the ease of bullet trains, teams will be at the whim of Nepal's basic road infrastructure. To reach Varanasi, teams could head west to take in Nepal's rural communities and abundance of wildlife. Or they could travel a similar distance southward but enter India sooner, directly into the country's spiritual heartland.