

Soon, helicopter taxi service to connect tourism destinations in Uttar Pradesh



The heli taxi service is likely to begin from December this year (Picture used for representational purpose only)

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh tourism department has decided to launch chopper taxi service to connect prominent destinations across the state.

The service is likely to begin from December this year.

With many people avoiding overcrowded trains and flights in view of Covid-19 pandemic, the tourism department feels the 'fast and luxurious' option could find many takers in UP.

Officials said that while the heliport in Agra is ready, the process to prepare heliports at places of other tourism significance has begun. The project would be based on the private-public partnership (PPP) model and to find suitable private players, a consultant would be appointed in two weeks, confirmed principal secretary, tourism and culture, Mukesh Kumar Meshram.

Talking to TOI, he said there are tourists who don't want to travel in crowded transportation mediums like trains and aeroplanes more so after the Corona pandemic outbreak.

There are also many who can afford the expensive choppers, he said, adding the helicopter taxi service would cater to the needs of such tourists. Most of the tourists, especially foreigners, visit Agra to see the Taj Mahal because of good connectivity but same tourists skip equally important other tourist destinations due to poor connectivity.

"This service will give an option to such people," said another official.

For many routes, the service will ensure tourists reach destinations and return back in a day, Meshram said.

Other than Agra, which is very near to New Delhi, there are other important destinations which would certainly be explored by tourists if they are able to save time, he said.

Besides a heliport near Agra airport, Meshram said the government already had an airport at [Vindhyachal](#), [Prayagraj](#), [Lucknow](#) and Varanasi etc.

According to officials, an Agra-like heliport with basic amenities to run the service is also being constructed at [Mathura and Prayagraj](#).

To ensure that tourists stays for a night in Varanasi, the helicopter service to nearby destinations like Chandauli-based Chandraprabha Wildlife, 12 to 15 minutes of Ganga Darshan and ghats of Varanasi will also be started.

Similarly, helicopters would be available for tourists to Buddhist sites in Bodhgaya, [Kushinagar](#) etc.

Helicopter services would also be available for nearby tourist destinations in Lucknow and also places like Imambara, Residency, [Roomi Darwaza](#), etc in the state capital.

For places like Dudhwa tiger reserve, the department is planning to use the runway strip.

"Runway strips will be used for helicopter landing at places where there are no heliports," said Meshram.