

Surveys peg Kashi footfalls at 8-fold rise in nos as compared to Goa in '22

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Independent surveys have pegged footfalls in Varanasi at an eight-fold increase in numbers as compared to Goa in 2022. A survey by ICICI Direct suggested that while Varanasi received a footfall of 7.2 crore tourists in 2022, Goa, by comparison, was far behind with 85 lakh tourists. The impact of the boost, the PM pointed out, is being felt on lives and livelihoods.

The survey said Varanasi's tourism-related income ballooned by 20-65%, while employment in the tourism sector shot up by 34.2%.

This ties into the tourism ministry's own data, which pegs over 60% of tourism in India in the religious and spiritual tourism category. Ministry data also suggests that

economies surrounding places of worship in India raked in close to Rs 1.3 lakh crore in 2022, up from Rs 65,070 crore in 2021.

Modi also said that while Varanasi leads in footfalls, other temple towns such as Ayodhya, Mathura and Ujjain are also not far behind. Modi also referenced two American pilgrims, who undertook the Amarnath Yatra inspired by the experiences of Swami Vivekananda.

"They got so inspired that they themselves came for the Amarnath Yatra. They consider it as the blessings of Lord Bholenath. This is the specialty of India that she accepts everyone, gives something or the other to everyone," he said. The PM also lauded the efforts of French yoga practitioner Charlotte Chopin, who

despite being over 100 years, is a prominent face of India's science of yoga and its strength.

In his monthly address, the PM also urged people to embrace one's heritage, and to present it responsibly to the world, while drawing the country's attention to one such effort being made in Ujjain. "Here 18 painters from all over the country are making attractive picture story books based on the Puranas. These paintings will be made in many distinctive styles such as the Bundi style, Nathdwara style, Pahari style and Apabhramsh style. These will be displayed in Ujjain's Triveni Museum... after some time, when you visit Ujjain; you will be able to see another divine site along with Mahakal Mahalok," Modi said.