

Excitement and exuberance were literally in the air as the first flight to Ayodhya took off for the all-new Maharishi Valmiki International Airport, which will bolster the region's tourism prospects in the years to come



Ayodhya's tourism takes flight

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It's been a fantastic start to the year for the people of Ayodhya. The new year promises to usher in great tourism prospects for the city. As the Maharishi Valmiki International Airport Ayodhya Dham has begun operations and the government has declared it as an international airport, pilgrims, devotees, and tourists will now have access to the ancient and holy city of Ayodhya through multiple routes and mediums of travel.

Ayodhya has gained substantial importance as a tourist destination as has the state of Uttar Pradesh, which has some of the most ancient and culturally vibrant destinations of the world. Already served via rail and road routes, an air travel alternative will add to the connectivity of Ayodhya and the nearby regions.

As the first flight to Ayodhya took off after the Prime Minister inaugurated the new airport, there was visible excitement among the passengers onboard the maiden flight. Passengers in their happiness and excitement, rechristened the flight Airbus A320 as a 'Pushpak Vimaan'. A resident of

Bengaluru, Sashi Kant Sharma, even carried soil and water from 'Kishkindha Parvat' (believed to be the birthplace of Hanuman) to Ayodhya. The pilot of the aircraft too addressed the passengers over the in-flight PA system much to everyone's enthusiasm and appreciation.

In another first of its kind flight

from Ahmedabad to Ayodhya, passengers dressed as their favourite deities and boarded the flight adding thrill and fervour to the journey. It is projected that currently the airport can accommodate 10 lakh passengers annually and once the second phase will be completed it is expected to accommodate 60 lakh passengers

annually.

Besides all the excitement and hype of the new airport, there is an unmissable focus on development and progress that the city is witnessing. As per the city's master plan 2031, Ayodhya will be redeveloped over 10 years with investments of over Rs 85,000 crore.

OTHER UPCOMING PROJECTS AROUND AYODHYA AIRPORT

- Expansion of the Ayodhya railway station and construction of a five-kilometre-long flyover
- Hotels and resorts ranging from three to five-star category will come up in Ayodhya to cater to the higher influx of visitors
- Large hospitality groups have announced green-field hotel projects for the city which when ready will be the first branded hotels in the city
- State and national agencies including NHAI and the public works department of UP government are working together to give a new look and feel to the city
- Data by Uttar Pradesh tourism department has shown that 3,25,000 tourists visited Ayodhya in 2021 and the numbers increased to 23.9 million in the following year



The development projects for Ayodhya have been categorised into eight broad themes:

1. Aesthetic Ayodhya
2. Clean Ayodhya
3. Efficient Ayodhya
4. Accessible Ayodhya
5. Experiential Ayodhya
6. Modern Ayodhya
7. Cultural Ayodhya
8. Healthy Ayodhya

