

# Leap of faith: Major surge in tourist footfall in Ayodhya over last 5 years

From 2L In  
2017 To Over  
2Cr In 2023

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**Lucknow:** For every 15 tourists, who headed to Uttar Pradesh in 2023, one headed to the temple town of Ayodhya. Officials in the state tourism department believe that they were intrigued by the desire to catch a glimpse of the Ram Temple.

Citing data, an official spokesperson said that people from all over the world are willing to visit Ayodhya which was never the case before 2017. "In 2017, over two lakh tourists visited Ayodhya whereas the footfall was over



V Sunil (File Photo)

## TEMPLE TOWN READY FOR JAN 22

2.03 crores in 2022," the spokesperson said.

A closer look at the numbers revealed that in 2023, 6.3% of total number of tourists who visited UP headed to Ayodhya. UP's tourist footfall crossed the 32 crore mark in the first nine months. Of the total, Ayodhya's contribution was 2.03 crore and this increase has been over 85 times in comparison to 2017 figures.

Also, tourist footfall in Ayodhya saw an incremental rise every month – from about 9.5 lakh in January to 52.4 lakh in September. Estimates

are that the number would have gone up further in October and November because of the Ayodhya Deepotsava and Kartik Maas rituals. But the number is yet to be officially released.

Crediting the interest in Ayodhya to steps taken by the Yogi Adityanath government to boost tourism infrastructure and activities in the district, a government spokesperson said, "While on one hand, a new Ayodhya was conceptualised under the head of Navya Ayodhya, government organised the Deepotsava which restored its global identity and earned the Guinness record for the state."

Tourism sector experts pointed out that infrastructural development in Ayodhya has been remarkable. "Ayodhya is the only place to have air, road and rail connectivity. And all the three are functio-

## Tourism dept to start chopper services

**Lucknow:** With less than two weeks to go until the Ayodhya Ram Temple inauguration on January 22, state tourism and culture minister Jaiveer Singh said on Monday that the department will start helicopter services soon as a large number of visitors are expected to attend the ceremony. The minister, however, did not give a specific date. "The services will start before January 22." "It will be ensured that all facilities are being provided to devotees who will be thronging the city to witness the inauguration," he added. He said that the capacity of the railways will also be increased in view of the expected surge in the number of visitors to the city. TNN

nal even before the temple is ready," said Mahant Girishpati Tripathi, Ayodhya mayor, who has been working to conserve traditions through a volunteer group called 'Friends of Ayodhya'.

A number of hotels, including starred category hotels, are in the making, while scores of brand stores have already opened outlets in the city. Meanwhile, the changing face of Ayodhya triggered the

trend of reverse migration with many natives returning to their hometown to start something of their own.

Talking to TOI, principal secretary Muskesh Meshram said: "Post Covid-19 lull, in-bound tourism has recorded a surge in the country and Ayodhya has served as a natural magnet for tourists and pilgrims. Ayodhya is developing as the most beautiful city in the world."