

# UP to become No. 1 tourist destination, says minister

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**Lucknow:** Minister for tourism Jaiveer Singh on Friday said that state has broken all records in terms of tourism footfall.

Speaking with reference to the surge of pilgrims and tourists to Ayodhya and Varanasi, he said: "As many as 31,85,62,573 tourists visited the state in 2023 which is a new record. It will place UP on the number one slot in terms of domestic tourism when the official stats are released by the Union ministry." He added that in 2023, about 5.76 crore people visited Ayodhya and about 8.55 crore people visited Kashi. "This number is approximately 3.36 crore more than the number of tourists who arrived in Ayodhya in 2022 and approximately 1.42 crore more than the number of tourists who arrived in Kashi," the minister said.

Claiming that Ayodhya witnessed a two-fold increase in tourists' count before the consecration of Ram Lalla's idol, he added that the daily average footfall in Ayodhya had increased to two lakh now.

Talking about Ayodhya, he said: "As many as 2,39,10,479 tourists visited Ayodhya in 2022 out of which 2,39,09,014 were domestic and 1,465 foreign tourists whereas, 5,75,70,896 people visited Ayodhya in 2023. This included 5,75,62,428 domestic and 8,468 foreign tourists. While only 1,465 foreign tourists arrived in Ayodhya in 2022."

Officials said that after the consecration ceremony on Jan 22 Ayodhya has been witnessing rush of devotees and tourists. Everyday lakhs of people are arriving for worship and sightseeing. Every temple and other tourist sites in Ayodhya are being beautified. Excellent connectivity is being provided through air, rail and road.

Tent cities, hotels and other arrangements are being made for the tourists. With all these preparations, Ayodhya is ready to register its presence on the tourism map of the country and the world.