

Ayodhya tops list of UP's preferred tourist destinations: IIM-L study

Gives Insight Into Branding Of Key Cities

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: Ayodhya has emerged as the top tourist destination of Uttar Pradesh with focus on Ram temple, according to a research project conducted by IIM-Lucknow and commissioned by the state tourism department.

"The extensive research project was conducted by the Centre for Marketing in Emerging Economies (CMEE) at IIM-Lucknow. Led by Prof Satya Bhushan Dash, Prof Priyanka Sharma and Mohan Krishnan, the study aimed at evaluating image perception of destinations. Conducted with the help of an agency, Market Excel, the research has provided critical insights into the branding and marketing of Uttar Pradesh's diverse tourist destinations," an official spokesperson said.

"This research incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods to gauge awareness and understanding of key image attributes which motivate travellers. It also aimed to measure the perceived destination image across various socio-demographic groups," he added.

"Online platforms influence tourists holiday plans. For

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS

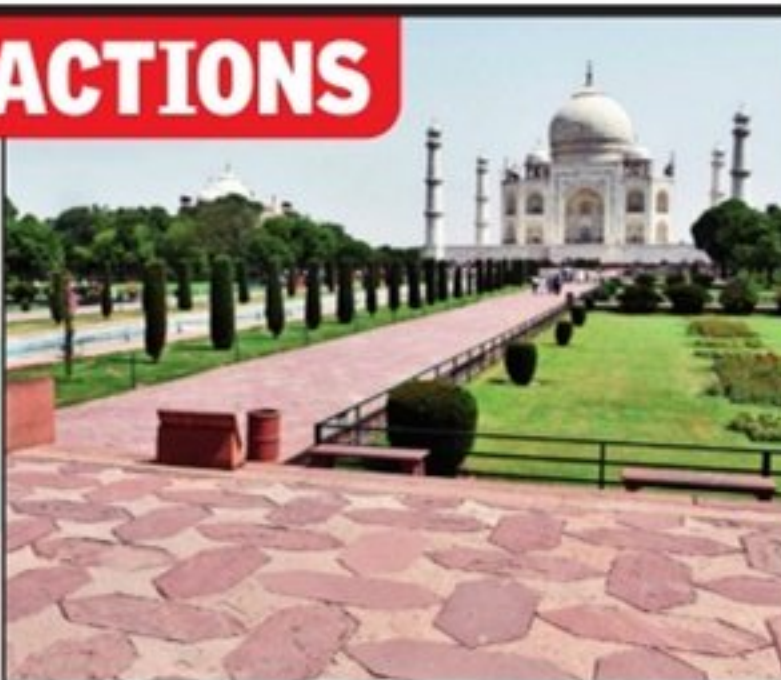
➤ Agra remains a convenient destination for quick visits

➤ Mathura, Vrindavan, Varanasi, and Prayagraj are easy to reach

➤ An emerging trend in selection of destination is attraction to festivals and religious activities, making Ayodhya popular

➤ Kanpur is recognized as a value-for-money destination, ideal for short trips. Varanasi is setting itself apart as a luxury destination

➤ Lucknow offers culinary variety, featuring iconic eateries, alongside historical monuments



➤ Charkhari in Mahoba boasts of a pleasant climate, perfect for family outings

➤ Jhansi stands out with its iconic monuments, sharing this uniqueness with Kaushambi

➤ Kalinjar is noted for excellent roads, transportation services, and quality hotel accommodations

➤ Kushinagar appreciated for cleanliness, low pollution, pristine experiences, and value for money

domestic tourists, top motivations for choosing a destination include spending quality time with loved ones, destinations with historical and cultural significance, and safety and security. Unique destination imagery has emerged as a crucial driver for tourism growth in UP," he said.

The researchers identified three distinct tourist segments –searchers, traditionalists, and maximisers. Each group exhibits unique travel behaviours and preferences, from seeking hidden spots and natural beauty to adhering to strict budgets and prioritizing historical and cultural experi-

ences. Speaking about the research, tourism minister Jai-veer Singh said, "The insights provided by this research are invaluable for shaping the future of tourism. We are committed to enhancing the tourism experience by focusing on cleanliness, improved transportation facilities, and budget-friendly accommodations. In recent years, UP has become a bastion of tourism, boasting improved infrastructure, connectivity, and facilities. With 12 dedicated tourism circuits, we cater to every tourist's preference, offering a destination for every taste. Our goal is to ensure that eve-

3D centre to give tourists a quick virtual tour of Ayodhya

Ayodhya/Lucknow: Ayodhya will soon have a three-dimensional (3D) virtual reality experience centre to give its tourists a reality-based experience of religious sites.

For this, Yogi Adityanath govt on Monday announced that the process to select an agency has been initiated.

In line with Yogi's vision to transform and boost religious tourism in Ayodhya by 2047, the task of setting up the experience centre has been given to Ayodhya Development Authority and agencies interested in setting up the project are being scouted.

The key pilgrimage sites which would have their digital twin include Ram temple, Hanuman Garhi, Nageshwar Nath temple, Ram ki Paidi, Chhoti Devkali temple, Badi Devkali temple, Kanak Bhavan temple, and Dashrath Mahal temple. Additionally, sites like Rang Mahal temple, Surya Kund, Bharat Kund, Guptar Ghat, Ram Heritage Walk (from Saket Petrol Pump to Lata Mangeshkar Chowk), Ram Gulela temple, Shringi Rishi's ashram, Makhauda Dham, Siyaram fort, Jain temple, Chha-

ry visitor leaves with cherished memories and a desire to return."

The study determines the importance of cognitive and

pia Swaminarayan Temple and Amawa temple will also be integrated into the virtual reality experience.

The grandeur and excitement of Deepotsav would be also reconstructed and captured digitally along with recreated scenes from the epic Ramayana playing in the background. The agency which would establish the centre would also have to operate it for the next 10 years and provide the update, software, technology and other resources to integrate the latest advances being made in the field of augmented reality.

Users will get an option to discover the digital replica of the selected sites by interacting and engaging with them as well.

"The centre would offer the virtual simulation of the religious procedure that is followed at the prominent temples," said a senior officer from the authority. With several families coming to the city from other states for a short duration, the govt wanted to create a facility which provides quick tours of the other important religious sites in the temple town of Ayodhya. TNN

affective factors in destination choice, such as uniqueness, convenience, attractions, and overall emotional appeal of the destinations.