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Priyanka Sharma | ASST PROF, IIM-LUCKNOW



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Yatindra Mishra | POET & AUTHOR



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Pankaj Bhadouria | MASTERCHEF

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Ravi Ranjan | MD, UP TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



“Big players in the healthcare sector are present in UP. Healthcare facilities in Lucknow are cheaper by 25% as compared to metro cities”

Pramit Mishra | UNIT HEAD, MAX SUPER SPECIALITY HOSPITAL

UP, a tourist marvel, has resources and avenues to scale new heights

Experts Share Insights On Booming Tourism In UP & Discuss Measures To Take The Sector To New Heights

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From cuisines to historical icons to religious spots to business and solo travellers, Uttar Pradesh has turned into a tourist marvel. The state has enough resources and opportunities to take the tourism sector to new heights in terms of business and tourist pleasure.

This formed the core theme of a panel discussion on the topic “Rethinking Tourism” at the Tourism Conclave organised by The Times Of India in Lucknow on the World Tourism Day on Friday.

The six eminent panellists — managing director of UP state tourism development corporation (UPSTDC) Ravi Ranjan; master chef Pankaj Bhadouria; poet and author Yatindra Mishra; IIM assistant professor Priyanka Sharma, unit head of Max Super Speciality Hospital in Lucknow, Pramit Mishra, and managing director of Mayfair Travels, Sharad Thadani — shared their insights on the booming tourism sector.

UPSTDC MD Ravi Ranjan said that among the emerging trends, the footfall of both business and solo travellers is seeing a rising trend. “Those coming for business meetings to key cities in UP now prefer travelling to nearby destinations by extending their stay. Similarly, solo travellers are also exploring popular locations and sites in the state,” said the 2014 batch IAS officer.

Bhadouria suggested that being home to delectable varieties of vegetarian and non-vegetarian



RETHINKING TOURISM: (From left) Max hospital's unit head Pramit Mishra, IIM-L assistant professor Priyanka Sharma, UPSTDC MD Ravi Ranjan, moderator Arpit Gupta, MD, Mayfair Travels, Sharad Thadani, poet & author Yatindra Mishra, and India's first masterchef Pankaj Bhadouria

cuisines, UP can emerge as a preferred destination for people looking for culinary experiences. Emphasising the importance of experiencing new food items, she said 30% of global tourism is focused on experiencing local food items and cuisines.

Yatindra Mishra, whose writings have enlightened readers about various facets of the state, sounded a note of caution. “A section of influencers and vloggers are spreading misleading information through reels and videos on UP. I request all the content creators to mention the details about the historic events and incidents and their chronology correctly. I have seen a lot of misleading content on Ayodhya. I also urge travellers to understand the ethos of the city rather than following the usual itinerary,” said Mishra.

IIM assistant professor Priyanka Sharma shared details of a study conducted by the premier institute

which stated that religious tourism in UP has gone up substantially post-Covid. Youth in the 20-35 age group prefer staying closer to nature rather than staying in a hotel. Digital initiatives are also helping in catering to a wider audience as online darshan facilities are also getting popular, she said.

Pramit Mishra of Max Super Speciality Hospital, Lucknow, spoke about healthcare and the trend of medical tourism. “You may have noticed all the big players in the healthcare sector are present in UP.

Healthcare facilities in Lucknow are cheaper by 25% compared to metro cities. In Singapore, an individual has to pay Rs 12 lakh for cardiac surgery, whereas in our country it costs around Rs 4 lakh in a specialised hospital. UP needs to tap into the opportunity,” said Mishra.

Pointing out that global insurance policies have made it easier for patients to seek treatment in foreign destinations, Mishra said that patients and their kin coming for IVF, dental procedures, and cosmetic or face-lifting surgeries could be

encouraged to plan a longer stay in UP. Consul, Lucknow consulate Kingdom of Netherlands and managing director Mayfair Travels, Sharad Thadani, said, “To make UP an attractive global destination, cultural exchange programmes should be organised. We need to promote such programme through diplomacy. Such initiatives will also help in securing investments and creating a positive brand.”

As the discussion veered towards conclusion, master chef Bhadouria pointed out that with Braj, Awadh, Purvanchal, and Bundelkhand regions offering different cuisines, UP could be put on the global map for food enthusiasts. “Braj region food is traditionally cooked without onion or garlic. Tourism department must upgrade their properties and depute trained staff members to offer a better experience to the visitors,” she suggested.

“UP has an industry-friendly tourism policy, which provides economic thrust to making Uttar Pradesh a trillion-dollar economy by 2027 and creating an ‘Uttam Pradesh’ for private sector participation, and promoting ease of doing business”

Mukesh Meshram | PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, TOURISM & CULTURE



INFLUENCERS FETED

(From left) Deepak Nishad, Shitanishu Sagar, Alok Srivastava (blue tie), Ashutosh Mishra, Vivek Gupta, Vivek Maurya, Shourya Kumar Sonkar, UPSTDC MD Ravi Ranjan, Priyank Srivastava, Aisha Ameen, tourism director Prakhhar Mishra, Saurabh Chandra, Rahul Verma, Shivam Singh, Smriti Anand, Maroof Umar, Pavendra Rajput, Rohit Prajapati, Vishad Tripathi, and Suryanshu Shukla



QUIZ TIME: Participants at the TOI Tourism Conclave participating in a quiz