

{ METAPHOR LITFEST ENDS }

# Chopper, cruise services likely during Mahakumbh

Tourism dept also planning guided tours in Chitrakoot, Ayodhya, Varanasi, Naimisharanya and Mirzapur, besides heritage walks in Prayagraj, says Mukesh Meshram

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**LUCKNOW:** The upcoming Mahakumbh Mela promises to be a confluence of cultures and traditions as 40 crore people are anticipated to throng Prayagraj when the fair begins there next month. Amid the ongoing mega-scale preparations for the event, the principal secretary of culture and tourism, Mukesh Meshram, outlined his department's plans for the next two months at a session 'Mahakumbh-Snan, Daan, Dhyan aur Adhyatma' held on the final day of Metaphor Lucknow LitFest on Sunday.

He said the department had planned guided tours in Chitrakoot, Ayodhya, Varanasi, Naimisharanya and Mirzapur, besides heritage walks in Prayagraj, during the duration of Mahakumbh.

"We have tour packages compiled for people from different parts of the world. Helicopters have been set up so that people who wish to get an aerial view of the Mela can do so by availing helicopter services. Cruise tours have also been planned along with Sanskriti Gram, which will showcase research works related to Mahakumbh in digital form. Bibliophiles will get to read them in libraries and buy books from a book fair," said Meshram.

"As many as 167 projects, which cost about Rs 5,500 crores, are adding to the grandeur of Sangam city as it prepares for Mahakumbh. These include better connectivity to Rae Bareilly, the expansion of the Prayagraj airport and that construction of 84 pillars that depict 84 lakh life forms as per Hindu culture. Also, a 12 km flyover from Phaphamau to Naag Vasuki temple has been made. It will make it even convenient for people to reach the ghats. Toilets and parking facilities have also been created," added Meshram.

Acharya Deendayal Tripathi and Prof. Bharat Bhushan, who were also present, spoke about the importance of Mahakumbh. They said it was rooted in ancient astrological wisdoms and aligned with celestial events.



Mukesh Meshram, the principal secretary of culture and tourism, Acharya Deendayal Tripathi and Prof. Bharat Bhushan attend a session at Metaphor Lucknow LitFest on Sunday. DEEPAK GUPTA/HT

## 'Etiquettes were hallmark of Oudh rulers'



Urdu poetry connoisseur (right) Irfan Ali Mirza spoke about the city's mannerisms at the time of Oudh rulers. DEEPAK GUPTA/HT

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**LUCKNOW:** The rulers of Oudh had a focus on architecture, fine, performing art forms and literature.

This was shared during a discussion 'Lucknow: Tareekh, Tehzeeb aur Zabaan' during 'Metaphor Lucknow LitFest' here on Sunday.

Urdu poetry connoisseur and great-grandson of Wajid Ali Shah Irfan Ali Mirza shared that perfection and idealism were part of the spoken language.

"Words like 'lappad', 'chanta' and 'tamacha' were not allowed during the times of Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Haider Shah (last Nawab Wazir of Oudh). Even sneezing, coughing and

scratching in public places was considered wrong in terms of manners. Such was the mannerism of the city," Mirza said.

It was the British rule which depleted the future of Urdu in the city by dethroning the Nawab. They should apologise to us for these mistakes, he added.

"There was focus on fine, performing arts and architecture which helped the artforms flourish in the region," said scholar and poet Anis Ashfaq.

He also said there were times when as part of mannerism people were taught from their early childhood to not speak too loudly.

"Youngsters were taught to walk four steps away from their elders on the right, in front of them while descending the stairs and beside them while climbing the stairs," said Ashfaq.

## Former CRPF DG stresses on 'integrity' & 'conviction' in character

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**LUCKNOW:** Former director general of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) AP Maheshwari, during a discussion on his book 'Cut Above the Normal', spoke about how his father inspired him for the book.

"Leading a better life is possible by neutralising our thoughts," he said in a conversation with Kumkum Ray on the final day of two-day Metaphor Lucknow LitFest here on Sunday.

He said the inspiration behind the title of the book was his father's advice, 'bhooth ki jaise peechhe padjaye to hoga kyu nahi', to him to relentlessly pursue his goals.

"When you have conviction and integrity in his character, then your advice will make sense to people. My father always told me that one should not be afraid of risks as 'we are

**'NEUTRALISING THE MIND' WAS THE KEY TO LEADING A BETTER LIFE, SAID AP MAHESHWARI**

our risks," said Maheshwari.

He spoke about his own experiences, lessons from his father and the teachings of old poets and religious scriptures which could help one in leading a better life.

He highlighted the importance of determination and self-belief.

"My father used to read religious scriptures, which also led me to read them and the ultimate lesson in all of them is to let go of things. When philosophy of life is clear we can also lead our lives with ease. The main idea for a better life is to neutralise the mind, which is also one of the most difficult things in life," he added.



Former CRPF DG AP Maheshwari discusses his book 'Cut Above the Normal', at the event. HT

## KIDS ADVISED TO HELP TACKLE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS



Former additional chief secretary in the UP government Anita Bhatnagar Jain speaking at session "Gajju Chalne Laga". DEEPAK GUPTA/HT

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**LUCKNOW:** Former additional chief secretary, U.P. government, Anita Bhatnagar Jain on Sunday raised awareness among the kids about the ill-effects of poor air quality.

She was speaking at an interactive session "Gajju Chalne Laga" during the concluding day of the two-day "Metaphor Lucknow LitFest" in the state capital.

On the occasion, she narrated a story "Bahut Kuch Kiya Ja Sakta Hai, Kuch Karoge Kya?" written by her and encouraged children to lend their hands in tackling environmental problems.

"Is the air we are breathing worth inhaling? We have been thinking about the air quality index (AQI), according to which we have one of the most polluted capital cities in the world," Jain added.

"However, breathing fresh air is our right which comes with several responsibilities such as eradicating pollution by pooling vehicles, using solar energy as much as possible and doing other such things," she said.

On questions related to the Earth, pollution and harmful substances like suspended particulate matter, she stressed the importance of understanding the environmental issues.

Jain emphasised the need for unity, stating that collective efforts lead to more effective solutions.

"Along with air, we are also inhaling particulate matters 2.5 and 10 while PM 10 mostly comprises dust, PM 2.5 can affect our health as they can get mixed with the blood stream," she said.

## Prefer making films to web series, says Prakash Jha

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**LUCKNOW:** Film producer, actor, director and screenwriter Prakash Jha said he was more interested in making movies than web series.

At a session at Metaphor Lucknow LitFest on Sunday, he said while a film could be written in 130 pages one season of a web series needs to be written in at least 400-500 pages.

"I enjoy writing but at my own pace. It takes a long time for me to write a story. So, if I am asked

**THE FILMMAKER SAID HE WOULD BE A PART OF THE OPPOSITION NO MATTER WHO WAS IN POWER**

to choose between the two, I believe I would prefer films over web series," said Jha.

On the choice of his projects, he said that he was "permanently a part of the opposition" no matter who was in power.

"Once in power, people make

mistakes to retain the power which can affect people. Ten years ago, things were a bit different. We have become judgmental about people who oppose governments now. This is evident even in Turkey, Europe and South America. There has been a strong authoritarianism in which people are investing their faith in. This is not sudden but a gradual change," he noted.

He added he was a storyteller, and so he looked for stories around him that could make a change in society.



Prakash Jha and others at the literary festival on Sunday. HT