

Mahakumbh opens today with ₹25K cr revenue hope

400 mn may join the 45-day congregation; UP expects ₹2 trn economic spinoff



Arrangements are in place on the eve of the start of Mahakumbh, on Sunday

PHOTO: PTI

UP's 76TH DISTRICT: MAHAKUMBHNAGAR

For the duration of the Mahakumbh, the sprawling tent city has been designated Uttar Pradesh's 76th district. Here's a glimpse of the massive arrangements, in numbers:

4,000

hectares: The area of the tent city

160,000

tents, including 2,200 luxury tents

10,000

CCTV cameras, including 329 AI cameras



56 police stations and **133** police posts

67,000 streetlights

1,249-km-long water pipelines

16 ghats stretching for 12 km

7,000 buses to ferry devotees

ARCHIS MOHAN
New Delhi, 12 January

The 45-day Mahakumbh Mela, formerly known as Purna Kumbh, will begin Monday on the banks of Sangam in Prayagraj, with approximately one million devotees expected to take part on its first day ahead of Makar Sankranti. The Uttar Pradesh government forecasts 400 million visitors between January 13 and February 26, preparing for a logistical challenge of massive proportions.

Although some estimates remain more conservative, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and state officials project that Mahakumbh 2025 could generate ₹25,000 crore in government revenues and result in a ₹2 trillion economic spinoff. The event is expected to benefit local self-help groups, artisans, hoteliers, homestay owners, restaurant operators, and food vendors, with major brands such as Dabur, Mother Dairy, and ITC anticipated to spend ₹3,000 crore.

Official estimates are that the 2019 Kumbh saw participation of 240 million devotees, while the 2013 Purna Kumbh at what was then known as Allahabad had 120 million visitors. The 2016 Kumbh at Ujjain had 75 million devotees visit it.

The Adityanath-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in UP has launched 549 projects, ranging from infrastructure to sanitation, for the Mahakumbh worth ₹6,900 crore. In 2019, it had launched 700 projects at a cost of

₹3,700 crore.

The state government has made elaborate arrangements to ensure that the Mahakumbh Mela passes off without any untoward incidents. The successful management of the fair is a crucial part of its narrative to build "brand UP" to achieve its objective of becoming a \$1 trillion economy.

Its success will add to the Adityanath government's commitment to "cultural revival", with the construction of the Kashi Vishwanath Dham corridor and the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

According to Adityanath, only 283,000 tourists visited Ayodhya in 2016, which increased to 134.4 million for the year 2024 until September because of the construction of the temple, and the final figure for the year would likely be nearly 160 million. Similarly, the annual tourist footfall in Varanasi earlier was 5 million, which increased to 60 million after the construction of the Kashi Vishwanath Dham corridor.

However, Kumbh Melas have been known to witness tragedies – Kumbh Melas of 1954, 1986 and 2013 saw stampedes that killed dozens. The state administration has made arrangements to ensure that Mahakumbh 2025 replicates the success of 2019 Kumbh. Six days of "shahi snan", including January 13 and February 26, will be crucial for crowd management. Another success of the 2019 Kumbh was its efficient sanitation with 122,500 toilets, 20,000 dustbins and 160 waste transport vehicles. It also suc-

cessfully experimented with "odour dispelling solution", first tested during the 2018 Magh Mela; manufactured daily on site by student researchers during the 2019 Kumbh, 65,000 litres of solution was manufactured daily.

The Mahakumbh tent city, spread over 4,000 hectares has been declared the 76th district of UP for the duration of the religious fair.

It will have 56 police stations and 133 police posts. The tent city will have 67,000 streetlights, 7,000 saffron-coloured buses to ferry devotees, 1,249 km long water pipelines, 300,000 saplings planted, 16 ghats, including temporary ghats stretching for 12 km, provisions for uninterrupted power supply, 100 special trains will connect Prayagraj with the rest of the country during the duration of the festival and the number of flights to the city, and parking bays for aircraft are being increased at the Prayagraj airport.

As many as 329 AI cameras are being installed for security, including a total of 10,000 CCTV cameras. The opening ceremony will feature 2,500 'Make in India' drones.

The state government has put up 160,000 tents, including 2,200 luxury tents. Prayagraj also has 218 hotels, 204 guest houses, 90 dharamshalas and several homestays. There are also high-end alternatives on the banks of the river with tariffs of up to ₹80,000 a day, such as the Dome City spread over 3.25 acres on the Aerial Ghat.