

Religious tourism leads domestic travel

Accounts For 60% With UP Leading The Pack

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Lucknow: In a report released by the Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi Chamber of Commerce, over 60% of domestic travel in India is directed towards religious destinations.

In that context, with Uttar Pradesh emerging as a key religious tourism hub in the country, the state is looking at a massive positive impact on its

economy. A govt spokesperson said that UP is home not just to Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Ram, but also to Braj, the land of Lord Krishna, Mathura, Barsana, Nandgaon, and Govardhan. With around 40 crore devotees expected to attend the ongoing Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, UP is expecting a huge push to its economy. Temporary employment for lakhs of individuals is anticipated, boosting local businesses and creating opportunities for vendors, artisans, and service providers.

"Religious tourism is emerging as a significant driver of economic development

and cultural exchange. To maximise its potential, experts stress the need for world-class infrastructure, seamless road and air connectivity, enhanced security, and exceptional services at religious sites. The state govt has initiated a massive exercise to improve infrastructure at religious sites and also beautify the area, leading to a massive jump in footfalls at such sites," said the official.

He said that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is working to leverage UP's religious tourism potential. Every year, lakhs of devotees come to offer Khichdi to Guru Go-

rakhnath in a fair held for about a month from Makar Sankranti on the Gorakhnath temple premises in Gorakhpur. This year alone, around 15 lakh people visited the temple on Makar Sankranti, he said.

Among the major religious sites under development is the under-construction Ram Temple in Ayodhya, slated for completion in 2025. The city is witnessing rapid development, with nearly 36 projects worth thousands of crores in progress. The recently completed Shri Kashi Vishwanath Corridor in Varanasi has drawn an annual footfall of

nearly 10 crore visitors since its inauguration, and projects like Vindhyadham and Nath Corridor are underway.

The state has also taken up the celebration of festivals in a large way, such as the Deepotsav in Ayodhya, Dev Deepawali in Varanasi, Holi in Barsana, and Janmashtami in Mathura. "Maha Kumbh is another highlight of UP's religious tourism. The CM is committed to ensuring a smooth, safe, and grand execution of this event. With crores of devotees expected to attend, the Maha Kumbh is set to significantly impact the state's economy," the official added.