

Surge of devotees spurs economic growth in Ayodhya

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ayodhya/Lucknow: Since the opening of the Ram Temple's doors to devotees, Ayodhya has witnessed a significant surge in commercial activities, driven by the large number of visitors arriving daily. According to the state govt, with over 3 lakh visitors coming each day, more than 13.5 crore people have visited the temple town in the past year. As the city celebrates the first anniversary of Ram Lalla's consecration ceremony, tourism department officials emphasise that the influx of visitors has not only amplified the city's spiritual significance but also fueled considerable economic growth in the surrounding area.

"While no official survey to gauge the economic activity has been conducted so far, assuming each visitor has spent at least Rs 300 during their visit, the overall econo-



Devotees during the 'Pratishtha Dwadashi', marking the first anniversary of the consecration of the Ram Lalla idol at the Ram temple, in Ayodhya on Saturday

my of the city and state has grown by at least Rs 3,900 crore in the last year," said a senior officer from the tourism department.

With the number of com-

mercial establishments—including hotels, restaurants, guesthouses, fuel stations, shops, and taxi operators—growing, the local community has benefited the most

from the temple's inauguration. Atul Singh, promoter of the city's first shopping mall and representative of the UP Udyog Vyapar Mandal, said, "Economic activity has

grown across the entire region since the Ram temple was established."

Echoing similar sentiments, hotelier Sharad Kapoor said, "Room tariffs and occupancy levels have increased in the past year. Our business has grown, though there is potential for more improvement through policy intervention and strategic planning."

Hundreds of eateries, hotels, and restaurants have mushroomed in Ayodhya. "Until early 2022, the volume of registered hotels and guesthouses in Ayodhya was in the single digits. Now, we have about 180 registered with the local development authority," said a senior officer.

Opening another avenue for income, thousands of property owners have converted their residential properties into homestays. Over the past year, 1,143 homestays have been registered, provid-

ing an additional source of income to families, many of which are independently operated.

Similarly, initial teething troubles, such as extensive barricading, diversions, and no-entry curbs, which had created hurdles for local businessmen and traders, were eased with time. Passes were issued to residents and traders to facilitate the movement of their vehicles and commercial goods.

Real estate prices have also skyrocketed, with land within the city becoming scarce and land on the outskirts growing more expensive. Vinod Kumar, food and beverages manager at a starred hotel near Acharya Narendra Dev Nagar railway station, said, "I have been able to get jobs for 13 youths from my native village in the past year. Employment opportunities have also grown substantially."