

# Wetlands can also help boost economic opportunities: Yogi

## 'UP Govt Aims To Promote Eco-Tourism'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Lucknow:** Insisting that environmental conservation is also linked to the economic growth of a region, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday stressed that wetlands play a role in groundwater conservation, irrigation, drinking water availability, flood control, and carbon storage.

Presiding over an event to mark World Wetlands Day held at Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary in Gonda, Yogi said, "While preserving vegetation, wildlife, and bird species, the wetlands have a huge potential to boost economic opportunities in a place and need to be developed to attract tourists."

Formed by the Saryu river hundreds of years back, Yogi highlighted the exceptional landscape Parvati Arga has shaped along the Nawabganj-Mankapur highway.

Speaking about the conservation efforts of both central and state govt, Yogi noted that under PM Narendra Modi, the number of Ramsar sites in the



CM Yogi at an event at Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary in Gonda on Sunday

country increased significantly from 23 to 89 over the past decade. He expressed concerns such as unauthorised encroachment and unplanned construction, which would threaten the wetlands in the long run, and urged local administration to proactively deal with such issues to restore the ecological balance. Referring to the 1971 Ramsar International Wetland Convention, Yogi said it was the first major step taken to conserve and preserve the wetlands. The economic aspects of environmental conservation were a key focus of the CM's address. He highlighted how eco-tourism, heritage tourism, and spiritual tourism have become major employment generators in UP.

Sharing Ayodhya's remarkable example before the audi-

ence, Yogi said that the number of tourists surged from 2.35 lakh in 2016 to over 16.1 crore in 2024, a scenario resulting in creating thousands of opportunities for the local youths and economic growth.

The CM urged local officials to explore options that could lead to increased income for the local population with the help of tourism opportunities around Parvati Arga Sanctuary to boost the income of the local villagers.

The CM announced plans to develop the Tikri forest in Mankapur into an open safari, aiming to establish Gonda and the Awadh region as significant eco-tourism destinations.

"Environmental sustainability remains our priority to support the vision of PM Modi and progress towards net zero

emission by 2070," said Yogi.

He highlighted the successful transition to cleaner cooking fuels being provided to households under the Ujjwala scheme.

"Green cover in UP expanded significantly, with 210 crore saplings planted over eight years, maintaining a 70% survival rate," he said.

The CM also noted Gonda's transformation from being ranked among the dirtiest districts in the country eight years back to its current status. He mentioned the empowerment of the previously marginalised Vantangiya community as another significant achievement.

Union state minister and Gonda MP Kirti Vardhan Singh, cabinet minister Dara Singh Chauhan, and independent state environment and forest minister Arun Kumar Saxena, among other local representatives, were also present.

As part of the event, Yogi felicitated the top three winners, all young girls. While Shraddha Maurya (class 8) secured the top spot in all three painting competitions, Aditi Langori (class 9) won the quiz competition and Archita Singh (Class 12) won the street play competition.

All three got a cash reward and a certificate.