

{ REVITALISING LOCAL ECONOMIES }

234 villages chosen for rural tourism initiative

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LUCKNOW : The state government has launched an ambitious initiative aimed at integrating rural areas into the state's tourism landscape. The tourism department's plan will develop 234 villages as "tourist villages," with several already ready to host visitors. Villages such as Shringverpur in Prayagraj, Jait in Mathura, Kachhpura in Agra, and Bhavant in Mainpuri are fully prepared, while an additional 30 villages are nearing completion, an official said.

Mukesh Meshram, principal secretary of tourism and culture, affirmed that the initiative is a step towards diversifying the

state's tourism sector while supporting rural development. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore historical and cultural landmarks while engaging directly with rural life. The program's ultimate goal is to connect tourism with the rural economy and generate employment opportunities for local communities.

"The 234 villages are being transformed into complete rural tourism destinations. Accommodations like homestays and farm stays, equipped with modern amenities, are available at affordable prices," the department said. Tourists can enjoy local cuisines, participate in activities such as pottery-making and boating, wear traditional

clothing, and explore local handicrafts, each tailored to the unique characteristics of the village.

In Shringverpur, Prayagraj, a place of religious significance, tourists can visit the site where Lord Ram is believed to have met Nishadraj. The village also boasts other attractions like Shri Ram Ghat and the remains of Nishadraj's fort, which is protected by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Meanwhile, in Jait, Mathura, visitors connect with local folklore through stories passed down by guides. One of the key attractions in Jait is the Kaliya Naag Temple, where tourists can immerse themselves in the village's history.