

UP govt to sponsor pilgrimages for Buddhist and Sikh devotees

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In a move to fulfil the spiritual aspirations of Buddhist and Sikh devotees, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced two new pilgrimage schemes—'Bauddha Teerth Darshan Yojana' and 'Panch Takht Yatra Yojana'.

Chairing a high-level meeting on Saturday, the CM said it is the state's responsibility to help citizens visit sites of religious importance, as pilgrimages are key to spiritual upliftment and social harmony. Under these schemes, financial assistance will be provided to ensure easy access to sacred destinations.

According to the Chief Minister's vision, the purpose of the Bauddha Teerth Darshan Yojana is to help Hindu/Bud-

dhist residents of Uttar Pradesh undertake pilgrimages to major Buddhist sites across the country. He directed that Buddhist monks be given priority in the selection of beneficiaries under this scheme.

Similarly, the Panch Takht Yatra Scheme will benefit Sikh devotees. Under this scheme, Sikh devotees from Uttar Pradesh will be taken on a pilgrimage to the five sacred Takht Sahib sites of Sikhism. These sites include Shri Anandpur Sahib (Punjab), Shri Akal Takht Sahib (Amritsar, Punjab), Shri Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo, Punjab), Shri Takht Sachkhand Shri Hazur Sahib (Nanded, Maharashtra), and Shri Harmandir Ji Sahib (Patna Sahib, Bihar).

Under both proposed schemes, a minimum of Rs 10,000 per person will be pro-

vided as financial assistance. CM Yogi instructed that the application process for both schemes be fully online, with complete transparency in the selection process, giving priority to individuals from economically weaker sections. Both schemes will be operated in collaboration with IRCTC.

The Chief Minister directed officials to implement the schemes with the highest focus on the convenience, safety, and religious sentiments of the devotees. He added that these initiatives would strengthen the state's inclusive development policy and the spirit of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'. The schemes will give a new dimension to religious harmony and tourism in the state, and further embody the vision of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'.