

{ BEFORE GREEN SIGNAL }

UP launches ground audit of ₹500-crore tourism projects

HT Correspondent

letters@htlive.com

LUCKNOW: In a shift from paper-based approvals to on-ground verification, the Uttar Pradesh government has begun a state-wide review of tourism and religious infrastructure projects, making field inspections, public utility and accountability the cornerstones of project approval.

The exercise, which will cover all 18 administrative divisions of the state, started on Monday with a detailed review of projects proposed from the Agra and Aligarh divisions. Together, the two divisions presented 80 tourism and religious infrastructure proposals worth over ₹500 crore, marking the beginning of what is expected to be a comprehensive audit of the state's tourism development pipeline for the 2026-27 financial year.

Unlike conventional review meetings that rely largely on

departmental presentations, the new process focuses on verifying the viability of projects on the ground. Every proposal is being scrutinised for land ownership, site readiness, technical feasibility, historical or religious relevance and its potential to benefit both visitors and local communities before receiving final approval.

The review also integrates feedback from legislators, district administrations and executing agencies, ensuring that proposed projects are aligned with local needs rather than remaining confined to official files.

Additional chief secretary Amrit Abhijat said that Agra division alone placed 58 tourism proposals before the government, carrying an estimated cost of around ₹273 crore. These include projects from Mathura, Agra, Firozabad and Mainpuri. Alongside these, the Religious Affairs Department proposed three major projects in Mathura

THE REVIEW ALSO INTEGRATES FEEDBACK FROM LEGISLATORS, DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIONS AND EXECUTING AGENCIES

worth nearly ₹245 crore, taking the total value of projects reviewed during the first meeting to well over ₹500 crore.

Among the largest proposals are the integrated development of Baldev Tirth Kshetra, including a tourism facilitation centre and improved approach roads, eco-restoration of 36 religiously significant forests, conservation of the historic Keshav Qila precinct, development of the Gokul Parikrama route and Yamuna riverfront, and restoration of Hansa Rani Ghat in Mathura.

The review also examined ongoing tourism works worth nearly ₹91 crore in Mathura. Officials were directed to furnish detailed reports on physical and financial progress. In Agra district, proposals include the second phase of heritage conservation at Bateswar Dham, visitor facilities at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Memorial, restoration of Kothi Meena Bazaar, and development of parking and tourist amenities around key heritage sites.

Firozabad's proposals include development of the Arya Sankriti Sankul in Sirsaganj with landscaping, QR-coded digital signage and visitor facilities, expansion of the Baba Neem Karoli Museum, tourism information centres at district entry points and improved amenities at Mahua Wali Kalika Mata Temple.

Mainpuri has proposed tourism infrastructure around Sheetla Mata Temple, cultural

complexes, parking facilities and development works at several important temples, including Ram Janaki Temple and Mankameshwar Temple.

The Religious Affairs Department also presented ambitious proposals, including restoration and development of 15 ancient religious sites such as Narayan Sarovar, Kshir Sagar, Surabhi Kund, Rudra Kund, Prahlad Kund and Durvasa Rishi Temple. The meeting also reviewed the proposed Shri Banke Bihari Ji Maharaj Corridor, estimated to cost around ₹150 crore, besides another proposal worth over ₹50 crore to create visitor amenities at several pilgrimage destinations across Mathura district.

The Aligarh Division presented 19 tourism proposals from Aligarh, Kasganj, Etah and Hathras, focusing primarily on basic tourism infrastructure such as multipurpose halls, drinking water facilities, public toilets, pathways and lighting.