

U.P.'s spiritual, cultural push to woo tourists, investors

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LUCKNOW : Uttar Pradesh is set to play a pivotal role in boosting cultural engagement with its strategic participation in the 'Japan Tourism Expo 2025' from September 25 to 28.

The state is positioning its rich spiritual and cultural heritage as a soft-power tool to attract Japanese tourists and investors, according to an official release issued here.

A 54-square-metre pavilion to be set up at the event will offer a high-tech, immersive glimpse into the state's ancient roots and modern tourism potential, the pavilion would be themed around its Buddhist Circuit, folk arts, and traditional wellness systems, the release said.

This initiative is part of a broader vision to build stronger people-to-people connections between India and Japan -- two nations linked by centuries-old spiritual bonds, especially through Buddhism.

With Japanese tourist arrivals in India reaching 2.4 lakh in 2024 and contributing over Rs 1,200 crore to the economy, the Yogi Adityanath government sees an opportunity to further tap into this niche with targeted outreach, according to the government release.

To promote inbound tourism and investment, Uttar Pradesh will also highlight its strengths

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during the Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show (UPITS-2025), to be held simultaneously in Greater Noida.

The state will unveil a 465-square-meter experiential pavilion featuring live performances of Kathak, Mayur, and Tribal dances; selfie zones themed around mythological and rural figures; and interactive exhibits on One District One Product (ODOP) crafts and wellness tourism.

"Uttar Pradesh is not just a place to visit; it's a place to invest in heritage, experience spirituality, and witness living traditions," a senior tourism official said.

"Through our presence in Japan, we aim to connect on a deeper cultural level and open doors for economic collaboration, especially in hospitality and wellness," the official added.

The Buddhist Circuit, spanning sites like Sarnath, Kushinagar, Shravasti, and Kaushambi, will be the centrepiece of U.P.'s

HOW GOVT PLANS TO ATTRACT JAPANESE VISITORS

- Focus on Buddhist Circuit, wellness, and folk culture
- Japan Expo Pavilion: 54 sq metre; UPITS Pavilion: 465 sq metre
- Bilingual brochures, app integration for real-time info
- Live folk dance shows, AR selfie booths
- Investment focus on heritage tourism under PPP model

pitch. These locations, significant to the life of Gautam Buddha, have long drawn Japanese pilgrims. Complementing this spiritual narrative, the state will also promote yoga, naturopathy, rural homestays, and cultural trails aimed at wellness-seeking travellers, the release said.

To facilitate tourism, U.P. will launch bilingual promotional material in Japanese and English, along with app-based guides and digital booking platforms for tourists.

The pavilion in Japan will feature AR-based selfie spots, digital LED displays, and multilingual kiosks to help visitors explore travel options, according to the release.