



Madhya Pradesh Tourism Sets New Record

Why in News?

According to the sources, **Madhya Pradesh** greeted over **110 million tourists in 2023**, achieving a **historic milestone for the state's** tourism.

Key Points

- The year 2023 witnessed a significant increase in the number of tourists, with a remarkable 112.1 million visitors, compared to 34.1 million in 2022.
 - **Ujjain**, known as one of **India's most sacred cities**, emerged as the most **popular destination**, drawing over 52.8 million pilgrims and travelers.
- **Five of the state's top ten most visited places** were revered religious sites, including **Ujjain, Maihar, Chitrakoot, Omkareshwar, and Salkanpur**, highlighting the growing appeal of **spiritual tourism**.
 - Key initiatives such as [Mahakal Lok in Ujjain](#) and [Ektma Dham in Omkareshwar](#) played a **pivotal role in bolstering visitor numbers**.
- The 24th of May, commemorating the foundation day of the [Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation \(MPSTDC\)](#), doubles up as **Madhya Pradesh Tourism Day**, symbolizing the state's commitment to nurturing its tourism sector.

Shri Mahakal Lok

- The temple is believed to be governed by **Mahakaleshwar**, which means the '**Lord of time**' i.e., **Lord Shiva**. As per Hindu mythology, the temple was **constructed by Lord Brahma** and is presently located alongside the **holy river Kshipra**.
- Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga in Ujjain is **one of the 12 jyotirlingas** considered the most sacred abodes of Shiva. The shrine is revered as **one the 18 Maha Shaktia Peeth** in India.
 - It is the **only jyotirlinga facing the south**, while all the others face east. This is because the direction of death is believed to be the south.
- In fact, people worship Mahakaleshwar to prevent an untimely death.
- According to the Puranas, **Lord Shiva pierced the world as an endless pillar of light, called the jyotirlinga**.
 - Besides Mahakal, these include **Somnath and Nageshwar** in Gujarat, **Mallikarjuna** in Andhra Pradesh, **Omkareshwar** in Madhya Pradesh, **Kedarnath** in Uttarakhand, **Bhimashankar, Triyambakeshwar and Grishneshwar** in Maharashtra, **Viswanath** at Varanasi, **Baidyanath** in Jharkhand, and **Rameswaram** in Tamil Nadu.