



Ayodhya Overtakes Taj Mahal as UP's Top Tourist Destination (2024)

Why in News?

Recently, [Ayodhya](#) overtook **Agra (Taj Mahal)** to become the **most visited destination** in **Uttar Pradesh** for 2024.

Key Points

- **Ayodhya Becomes Top Destination**
 - **Ayodhya** attracted **135.5 million domestic tourists** and **3,153 international visitors** between January and September 2024.
 - This spike in tourism is mainly driven by the **inauguration of the Ram Temple**, positioning the city as the **epicenter of spiritual tourism** in India.
 - Ayodhya has seen a 70% increase in religious tour bookings, with the [Pran Pratishtha](#) ceremony at the Ram Temple drawing large crowds and expected to grow further during its anniversary celebrations in January 2025.
- **Agra (Taj Mahal)**
 - **Agra**, home to the iconic [Taj Mahal](#), recorded **125.1 million visitors** in 2024, with **115.9 million domestic** and **924,000 international tourists**.
 - **Taj Mahal** continues to be a major draw for **international tourists**, with **foreign arrivals** increasing from **2.684 million** in **2022-23** to **27.7 million** in **2023-24**.
 - However, **domestic visitor numbers** to the Taj Mahal have slightly decreased by **193,000**.
- **Tourism Growth in Uttar Pradesh**
 - **Uttar Pradesh** has seen a remarkable surge in tourism in 2024, with **476.1 million tourists** visiting the state from **January to September 2024**.
 - The state's tourism performance in 2024 is on track to surpass the **480 million** tourists recorded in **2023**.
 - Apart from **Ayodhya**, other spiritual destinations in Uttar Pradesh, including **Varanasi** (62 million domestic, 184,000 international), **Mathura** (68 million, 87,229 foreigners), **Prayagraj** (48 million), and **Mirzapur** (11.8 million), have also experienced significant growth in 2024.
 - The [Buddhist Circuit in Kushinagar](#) saw 1.62 million visitors, including 153,000 international tourists, reflecting Uttar Pradesh's efforts to diversify its tourism beyond Ayodhya's spiritual appeal.