CHAPTER - 2

ABOUT ALLAHABAD

Allahabad has a colourful history. Lord Rama is believed to have passed through Prayag during his exile from Ayodhya; the earliest Aryan settlements were established here; it was the capital of the Gupta’s and acquired the name Allahabad under Akbar in 1584. The story goes that in 1575, Akbar sailed down the river, intending to visit Prayag. Smitten with its beauty, he stayed on to lay the foundations of a new city that was to be called Illahabaś. This name gradually evolved into Illahadad before Akbar’s city finally came to be known as Allahabad.

The City

Allahabad is one of India’s oldest cities in the southern half of the state of Uttar Pradesh where it is the fifth largest city. Fertile Uttar Pradesh is considered to be the gift of the Ganga in the same manner in which Egypt is considered to be the Nile. The main crops in and around Allahabad are rice, millets, pulses, oil-seeds tea and fruit. Transport is fairly easy, as the Ganga and Yamuna make good waterways. The
flatness of the terrain in and around the city has facilitated the construction of railways. There is a dense network, which connects Allahabad to major cities and towns of northern India. The Allahabad city has population about 14 lacs.

The Geography

Allahabad is strategically located in Indo-Gangetic plain, which lies between the northern bounds of peninsular India and the Himalayan range of mountains. It is situated at the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. The Sangam, as the confluence is called, is the venue of many sacred fairs and rituals, and attracts thousands of pilgrims throughout the year. The two rivers of Ganga and Yamuna are above the ground while the third river Saraswati is believed to flow underground towards the Sangam. The place is also known as Triveni. The city covers an area of 70.07 sq. kms.

The Climate

The climate of Uttar Pradesh is that of tropical monsoon. The city of Allahabad is at a height of 95 m above sea level and enjoys an invigorating climate. The summers are bright and sunny, but hot and dry, with temperatures ranging from 27°C to 46.6°C. In winter, the temperature ranges from 10.5°C to 25.6°C.
Culture, Fair And Festivals

Uttar Pradesh was the heart of ancient Indian culture. The festivals of Holi, Divali and Durga puja are celebrated with both devotion and festivity in Allahabad every year. But the two most important festivals in the city are the Magh Mela, held annually, and the Kumbh Mela, held every twelfth year.

The magh mela is held annually in January at the Sangam with being the main Sanan Parva (Bathing Festival) lasting for 15 days.

The Kumbh Mela is pre-eminently festival of devotion and a symbol of self-sacrifice. It is celebrated every twelfth year, when the sun is in the Zodiacal sign of Kumba (water bearer), or Aquarius. The Kumba Mela celebrated in Allahabad one year moves on for celebration in Nasik three years later. Then to Ujjain a further three years later and then, three years later to Haridwar before returning to Allahabad in the 12th year.

The Traveling

Allahabad is well connected by air, rail and road to all the major cities and towns of northern India. For local transport there are taxis, auto rickshaws, cycle rickshaws and tongas, all but taxis having stands at the main street corners. City buses also run regularly on definite routes.
Rail

Allahabad is best connected by rail to major cities on India. There are three railway stations in the city. The main station is Allahabad junction, in the central part of the city, just south of the Civil Lines area. The city station is three km away. When traveling to Allahabad from Kanpur or Lucknow, the first station reached in Allahabad is the Prayag station.

Road

Allahabad is on National Highways 2 and 27. State transport buses ply regularly from Allahabad to all parts of north India. Visitors can therefore travel easily to places around the city.